

AMERICAN CUP 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

This week's puzzles come from the **American Cup** in St. Louis. Enjoy a number of time scramble highlights from America's top players.

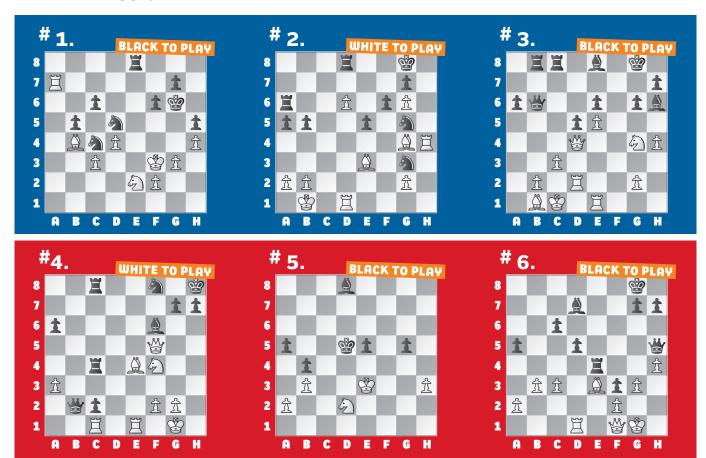
In our **example**, from IM Alice Lee's victory over GM Irina Krush, Black is so close to tying the match. All she has to do is activate her rook, right? **32.... Rf8??** Wrong! The real problem is White has threats of her own, so necessary was either 32.... Kg7 or 32.... Kh8.

Instead, now White won after **33. Qxd5+ Kg8 34. Qxd4+**. After 33. ... Rf7 34. Qxd4 Qf3+, Black can force a draw, which would still lose the match. Remember: no matter how

crushing your attack, always look for your opponent's threats first.

BY **JJ LANG**





SOLUTIONS

1) 41. ... Nd2+ and White resigned, as the e2-knight is a goner after any legal way to get out of check. (Dominguez – Caruana, St. Louis, 2024) 2) 32. Bxg5! White is now ready to deliver mate. After 32. ... fxg5 33. Be6+, Black resigned, rather than face 33. ... Kf8 34. Rh8 mate. (Lee – Tokhirjonova, St. Louis, 2024) 3) 28. ... Qxb2+ Mind your pins! The game ended after 29. Kd1 Qxb1+ 30. Ke2 Bb5+ 31.

Kf2 Qf5+ 32. Kg3 Bxd2 when Black wins material and White resigned shortly. (Abrahamyan – Yu, St. Louis, 2024) 4) 45. Qxh7+! This position made the rounds on social media after the match concluded. In severe time trouble, White missed a "textbook" mate! Instead, 45. Nd5 was played, and White went on to lose. 45. ... Nxh7 46. Ng6+ Kg8 47. Bd5 mate. (Sevian – Aronian, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) 5) 65. ... g4! The best way to win a minor piece

endgame is often to force tactical simplifications into a winning pawn endgame. 66. hxg4 Bg5+ 67. Kd3 Bxd2 68. Kxd2 Ke4 69. Ke2 Kf4 70. Kd3 e4+! 71. Kd4 e3 72. g5 e2 and White resigned. (Zatonskih – Tang, St. Louis, 2024) 6) 33. ... Rxh4 A crushing mating attack! 34. gxh4 Qg4+ 35. Kh2 Qxh4+ 36. Kg1 Bh3 Bring all your toys to the party! 37. Rd4 Qh5 38. Qd3 Bg2 and White resigned due to unstoppable mate threats. (Sevian – So, St. Louis, 2024)

