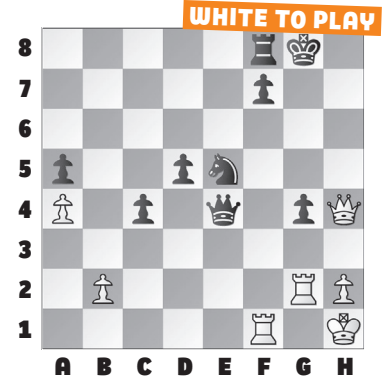


rapid elimination matchups and blitz playoffs. We continue our series this week with six more highlights from St. Louis!

In our **example**, from the Elimination Bracket final So – Robson, Black’s kingside defenses are hanging on by a thread. White smashed through with **39. Qg5+ Kh7 40. Rf4 Qe3 41. Qh4+** The trick was to make sure Black could never trade the queens off. **41. ... Kg7 42. Rgxg4+ Ng6** or **42. ... Nxg4 43. Rgxg4+**

mates shortly. After **43. Qf6+ Kh7 44. Rxg6!**, Black resigned.



AMERICAN CUP HIGHLIGHTS, PT. 2

This week continues our series from the **2024 American Cup**, where GM Levon Aronian and IM Alice Lee won their events after numerous

1. BLACK TO PLAY

2. BLACK TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. WHITE TO PLAY

6. BLACK TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 38. ... Nxd2! Black simply removes the last defender from the e4-bishop. **39. Bxg6** White must have thought this saved the piece. **39. ... Nf3+ 40. Kg2 Nh4+ 41. Qxh4 Bxg6** and White is piece-up (Tokhirjonova – Lee, St. Louis, 2024) **2) 33. ... Nd6** Anything can happen in time trouble. This simple fork eliminated White. (Shankland – Dominguez, St. Louis, 2024) **3) Both sides have scary passed pawns, but**

after 44. ... Qxd5 Not 44. ... Rcx7?? 45. Qxa5, as played in the time scramble, **45. Bxd5 Bxf5**, Black’s is safely defended while White’s is not. For instance, trying to win the c2-pawn with **46. Bb3 Rcx7 47. Rxe7 Rxe7 48. Bxc2?** loses to **48. ... Rc7** with the pin. (Tokhirjonova – Lee, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) **4) 46. ... Kf5!** White’s king moves towards the b-pawn, but now Black wins on the kingside. **47. Rb1 Kf4 48. Kc4 Rb8 49. Rb2 Kg3 50. Kd4 Kxh4** and **White**

resigned 12 moves later. (Robson – Aronian, St. Louis, 2024) **5) 28. Rg8+ Kd7 29. g6 Rd3** There is no way to stop the g-pawn! **30. Ra8 Bb7 31. g7 Bxa8 32. g8=Q** and **Black resigned** shortly. (Dominguez – Shankland, St. Louis, 2024) **6) 37. ... Rh1+ 38. Kf2 Rxf1+** This was the sac Black missed, although she still won the game. **39. Kxf1 Rh1+** Or **39. ... Qd2** also wins. **40. Ke2 Bg4** winning the queen and the game. (Yu – Tokhirjonova, St. Louis, 2024)