

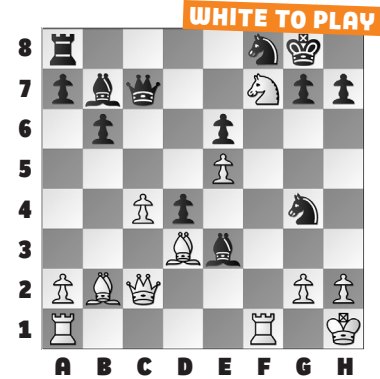
QUIET MOVES FROM THE K-12

This week's exercises all come from the **2024 National High School (K-12) Championships**. They also have a theme in common. Every position

begins with a somewhat "quiet" move. This could be a trade of equal material, or a threat that does not come with a check or capture. All of these moves are to overlook when blunder-checking.

In our **example**, White really wants to break in with **Bd3xh7+**. So he plays the straightforward **21. Ba3!** and it turns out there is no way to defend. Black played **21. ... Nf6** **22. exf6 Qxf7** **23. Bxf8 Rxf8** **24. Bxh7+ Kh8** **25. Bg6** and Black

resigned nine moves later in Luo – Pisan, Baltimore, 2024.



1. BLACK TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) Black trades into a winning pawn endgame: **50. ... Qb2+** and Black wins. (Salbinaz – Padhye, Baltimore, 2024) **2)** White begins with a trade that is easy to dismiss. **18. Bxh6! Bxh6** **19. Nf6+** There's an Exchange! **19. ... Kf8** **20. Nxd7+** and **Black resigned** shortly. (Chasin – Hua, Baltimore, 2024) **3)** **47. ... g5** This move puts White in *zugzwang*. **48. Ke3 Kc4** **49. Ke4 Kb3!** Black's pawns are better: **50. Kd5 Kxa3** **51. Kc6**

Kxb4 **52. Kxc7** Or **52. d5 Kc4** also wins. **52. ... Kc4!** and Black wins. (Hsiao – Vanapalli, Baltimore, 2024) **4)** **15. ... Bxf3** Again, Black begins with a trade, giving up a powerful bishop "just" to damage White's pawn structure. **16. gxf3 Bxh2+** Or not! **17. Kxh2 Qh4+** **18. Kg1 Qg5+** **19. Kh2 Rf6** and **White resigned**. (Grimaldi – Raghav, Baltimore, 2024) **5)** Black's best move was a check that appeared to lose material. **27. ... Ng3+!** Instead, after

27. ... Kxg7?? Black won after **28. Nd1??**, hanging **28. ... Qf1** mate. But White could have held with **28. Rg1!** **28. hxg3 Kxg7** and ... **Re8-h8** mate is coming. (Yehamandram – Cruz, Baltimore, 2024, analysis) **6)** **29. Be3** Too slow to be forcing, as Black's rook can move, right? **29. ... Rc2** **30. Ba4** But now it moves again? **30. ... Rc4**. If **30. ... Re2**, then **31. Bd1** also wins. **31. Bb3** Forced material gain without a check or capture. (Kumar – Modzelewski, Baltimore, 2024)