

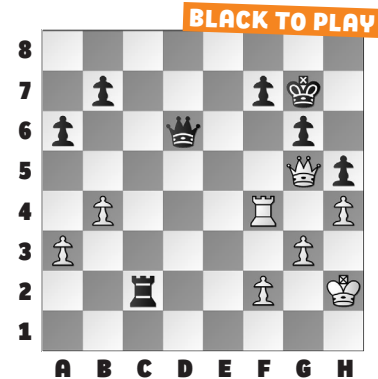
124TH ANNUAL U.S. OPEN, PT. 2

This week's exercises come from the **124th Annual U.S. Open** held last month in Norfolk, Virginia. In our **example**, Black missed a stunning

blow with **37. ... f6!** when White's queen is almost trapped, and must go to a5. Instead, Black tried 37. ... Re2 and the game raged on in Ladan – Balakrishnan. But after this move, White must force **38. Qa5** to save the queen, when **38. ... b5!** leads to forced mate.

Shockingly, White can't stop Black from playing ... Rc2-c1 and ... Qd6-d1 to force mate. This shows why it's important to not let one's pieces get cut off from the action on the edge

of the board, especially with heavy pieces in an open-board endgame.



1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. WHITE TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 42. Re1+ *Intermezzo!* Black's idea was assuming that White would recapture. Oops! (Girsch – Zhuang, Norfolk, 2024) **2) 39. g5+** White removes the guard of the e5-rook! This is why kings make bad defenders. **39. ... Kxg5** **40. Rxe5** and **Black resigned.** (Chovanec – Kamesh, Norfolk, 2024) **3) 26. ... Rxe5!** Black intends to fork the king and rook. **27. Rc4** White escapes the fork with tempo on Black's hanging

bishop. The immediate **27. fxe5** Bxe5+ leaves White down a piece. **27. ... b5!** Defending the bishop while attacking the rook! This is what White missed. Black remains up a piece. (Shibut – Adewumi, Norfolk, 2024) **4) 27. ... Rf3!** Surprising, but White's knight is out of moves! **28. Rxa7** White wants to play Nd3-f4 to cut off the defense from Black's rook, but 28. Nf4 loses to 28. ... Rxf2+. **28. ... Qxa7** **29. Nf4** **R3xf4** Or 29. ... R8xf4 is no different.

Or 29. ... Rc3 wins too. **30. gxf4 Rxf4** Black has a crushing attack. (Vedula – Wang, Norfolk, 2024) **5) 48. ... Rb1+** **49. Kc2 Qb3+** **50. Kd3 Rd1** Winni. (Lin – Kaplan, Norfolk, 2024) **6) 35. Rxd5 Qxf5+** The best try. If 35. ... Qxd5? 36. Bf3 is the idea. **36. Rd3** is simplest, but White played 36. Kd2? allowing 36. ... Rxd1+! 37. Kxd1 Qf1+ 38. Qe1?? (or 38. Kc2 Qc4+ works) 38. ... Qf3+ 39. Qe2 Qxd5+ and Black should win. (Karthigeyan – Martin, Norfolk, 2024, analysis)