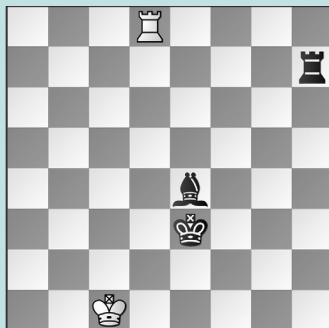


SAINT LOUIS RAPID & BLITZ, PT. 2

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

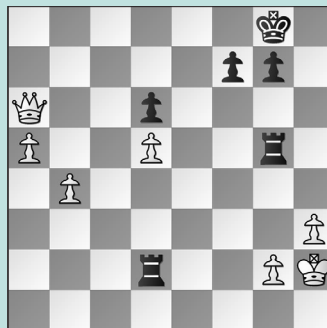
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



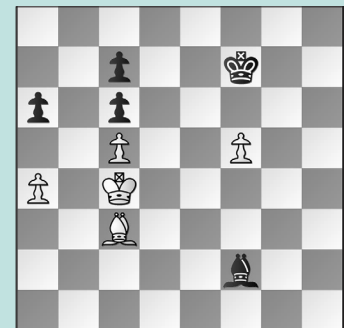
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 108. ... Rb7 White came so close to drawing the dreaded “rook-and-bishop versus rook” endgame, but his last move allowed Black to force mate! **White resigned.** (Vachier-Lagrave – Nakamura, St. Louis, 2024)

PUZZLE 2. 33. Qf1! Nothing fancy, just solid defense. The connected passers are decisive. **33. ... Rb2 34. a6 Rxb4 35. a7 Ra4 36. Qb1!** Eventually, **Black resigned.** (Vachier-Lagrave – Nepomniachtchi, St. Louis, 2024)

PUZZLE 3. 43. ... Ke7 Black’s a-pawn is a goner, but it’s not too late to stop White’s a-pawn! In the game, after **43. ... Be3?? 44. Kb4 Bf2 45. Ka5 Bxc5 46. Kxa6 Be3 47. a5**, the a-pawn is breaking through. Note that

43. ... Ke8, with the same idea, is just as good of a home as the e7-square. **44. Kb4 Kd7 45. Ka5 Bxc5 46. Kxa6 Kc8** White’s king is stuck! (Vachier-Lagrave – Dominguez, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) **PUZZLE 4. 50. ... Ne3!** Black chose the more obvious, but less effective **50. ... Ng3?!** allowing **51. Bg1 Rc2** when 52. Rb6+ would have kept fight alive, although White lost swiftly after **52. Rxc5 f3 53. Rxc3 hxc3+ 54. Kxc3 Rxc2+**, when he is losing the bishop. **51. Bxe3** Cut off from the g1-square, White has nothing better. If, e.g. 51. Rb2 then 51. ... Nf1+ 52. Kh1 Ng3+ gets the knight to g3 with a double-check, so there is no time for Bb6-g1 blockading. **51. ... fxe3 52. Rb3 Re1!** Black wins, since White’s king cannot approach.

(Dominguez – Firouzja, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) **PUZZLE 5. 33. ... bxa6!** Black’s only defense. In the game, **33. ... b6??** lost to **34. Rc7 Bxb5 35. Rxa7 Ra3 36. Ra8+ Kf7 37. a7 Ra6 38. Bxb6 Bc6** winning. **34. bxa6 Bb5** Now, Black is fine. (Firouzja – Nakamura, St. Louis, 2024, analysis) **PUZZLE 6. 21. Qe3** After **21. Rf2?? 0-0-0 22. Qe3 Rhg8 23. dxc6 Qxc6+ 24. d5 Qg6 25. Qe4 Bc5**, White resigned. **21. ... Bg2+** Or 21. ... Rg8 22. Rxf4 Bg2+ 23. Kg1 Bh3+ 24. Kf2 Rg2+ 25. Kf3 when Black has to find 25. ... 0-0-0 (not 25. ... Rxb2? 26. Kg3 equalizing material) to stay afloat. **22. Kg1 Nxd5 23. Nxd5 Bxd5 24. Bxd5 cxd5 25. Rae1** Reaching an arguably equal position. (Praggnanandhaa – Caruana, St. Louis, 2024, analysis)