

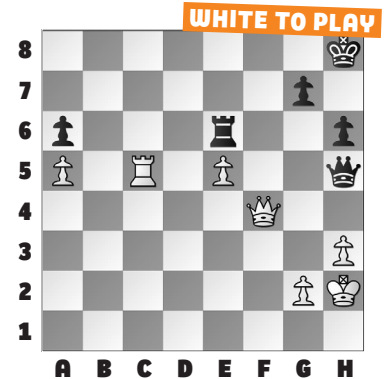
FIDE OLYMPIAD: PAWN POWER

Our month of puzzles from the **FIDE Olympiad** concludes with an ode to the pawn. When few pieces remain, pawn placement can determine

whether an attack leads to mate, or who wins the endgame.

In our **example**, White is trying to attack Black's king but only has two pieces left. A well-timed pawn thrust introduces a new attacker into the game with **37. Qf8+ Kh7 38. g4!**. The game continued **38. ... Qg5** The pawn endgame after 38. ... Qh4 39. Qf5+ Rg6 40. Rc6 is similar. **39. Qf5+ Rg6 40. Qe4!** Now, Black is paralyzed, and White is able to improve his endgame prospects. **40.**

... h5 41. Rc6 hxg4 42. Qxg6+ and **Black resigned** in Petrov – Olson.



1. BLACK TO PLAY

2. BLACK TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. WHITE TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. WHITE TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) 42. ... Ng4+ 43. Kh3 Qd3+ 44. Kxg4 h5+ They say it takes three “pieces” to launch an attack, but here a queen and two well-placed pawns suffice. **45. Kh4 Qg3** mate. (Gavarrete – Kazakouski, Budapest, 2024) **2) 43. ... Bg5+** Black keeps White’s king close to the e5-pawn in order to keep that third attacker around. **44. Kd3 Qd2+ 45. Ke4 Qe3+** Pushing the king towards the f7-pawn. **46. Kf5 Qf4** mate.

(Mkrtchyan – Song, Budapest, 2024) **3) 42. ... Re8!** This is a trick! The capture on b3 does not exploit the pawns well. Rather, the trade of rooks improves Black’s winning chances, as the h-pawn promotes on the “right color.” **43. Kd2 Rxe3 44. Kxe3 Kf6** Black’s point is that now White’s king can’t drift too far. (Lusako – Yamada, Budapest, 2024, analysis) **4) 29. Bxe5 fxe5 30. d7** Nice geometry! White’s king is safe, and the rook cannot guard

the d8-square. **30. ... Bf6 31. Re1! Rxb2 32. Rxe5** Overload! (Sonis – Warmerdam, Budapest, 2024) **5) 58. ... Rxa7** Another overload! **59. Rba6 Rf7!** Black’s pawns are too quick. **60. b6 h3!** (Demchenko, Jorqueraz, Budapest, 2024) **6) 75. Re6!** White sacrifices the bishop to threaten f3-f4 mate. **75. ... Qc7+** The only way to stop both mate threats. **76. d6 Qf7 77. Re5+! Kf6 78. Rf5+** with a skewer to follow. (Rodshtein – Mohammad Fahad, Budapest, 2024)