BY **JJ LANG**



CARISSA YIP: 2024 U.S. CHAMP

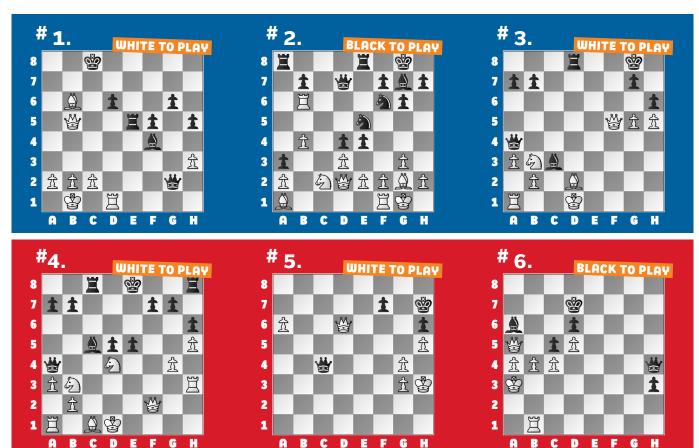
IM Carissa Yip won the **2024 U.S. Women's Championship** thanks to her spectacular 8/8 start. Most of her victories were due to her

adventurous, aggressive play mixed with active, resourceful defense, as today's puzzles will highlight.

In our **example**, White has already lost castling rights and has a hanging d4-knight. Yip found the only move **20. N2b3!**, covering everything. The d4-knight is pinned to the f2-square as 20. Nc2?? Nxf2+ nabs the h3-rook. Instead, Black was worse after **20.... Nxf2+** although 20. ... Bxd4 21. Rxd3 led to a more level game. Now, **21. Qxf2 e5**

tries to get the piece back, but see **Puzzle 4** for White's response.





SOLUTIONS

1) 34. Qc4+ Yip scoops the f4-bishop. 34. ... Kd7 35. Qxf4 (Yip – Yu, St. Louis, 2024) 2) 22. ... Nd5 The b6-rook was trapped! 23. Bxd4 White tries to minimize her material losses. 23. ... Nxb6 24. Bxb6 Nc4! The d3-pawn is pinned! (Atwell – Yip, St. Louis, 2024) 3) 32. Qe6+ White defends the b3-knight with check! 32. ... Kh8 33. bxc3 Now the bishop is truly hanging. (Yip – Paikidze, St. Louis, 2024) 4) 22. Qf5

White breaks the pin with tempo on Black's hanging c8-rook. 22. ... 0-0
23. Nc2 Everything is defended. (Yip – Paikidze, St. Louis, 2024) 5) 57.
Qf6! White maintains her defense of the a6-pawn while stopping Black's only threat of Qc4-f1+ with a perpetual. 57. ... Qa2 Black eyes a6-a7 while maintaining her connection to the f7-pawn. 58. Qf5+ Yip zigzags her queen to the e4-square to play Qe4-b7 and escort the a-pawn home. 58. ... Kg7 59. Qe5+

Kh7 60. Qe4+ Kg8 61. Qb7 (Yip – Tokhirjonova, St. Louis, 2024) 6) 48. ... Qg3+ The only win. 49. Kb2 Now Black can construct a mating net. The interposition with 49. Rb3 lost to the subtle 49. ... Qe1! 50. Rxh3 (not 50. Qxa6 Qa1 mate) 50. ... Qc1+ 51. Ka2 Bxc4+ 52. Rb3 Qc2+ when the rook hangs. 49. ... Qe5+ 50. Kc2 The game ended: 50. ... Qe2+ 51. Kc3 Qxc4+ 52. Kb2 Qd4+ 53. Kc1 Qc3+ 54. Kd1 h2 and White resigned. (Krush – Yip, St. Louis, 2024)

