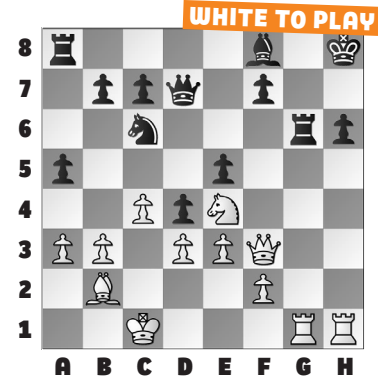


Chicago senior made waves last fall for playing 1. a3 in the U.S. Championship against GM Leinier Dominguez (and getting a great position). In New York, Liang drew Carlsen and defeated Dubov, among other accomplishments.

Our **example** is more of a **bonus**. White could win with **25. Rxc6 fxc6 26. Qf6+ Kh7** Or 26. ... Bg7 27. Rxc6+ Kg8 28. Qxc6 is no better. **27. Ng5+ Kg8 28. Qxc6+** when Liang would be pawn-up with a crushing attack.

But, what did White play instead in Liang – Ibarra?



FIDE WORLD RAPID & BLITZ, PT. 12
We conclude our 12-part series on the **2024 FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Championships with GM Awonder Liang**. The University of

1. WHITE TO PLAY

2. BLACK TO PLAY

3. BLACK TO PLAY

4. BLACK TO PLAY

5. BLACK TO PLAY

6. BLACK TO PLAY

SOLUTIONS

1) It's a Blitz event, so why not play until mate? **50. Rh7** mate. (Liang – Safarli, New York, 2024) **2)** What's the fastest mate? **40. ... Qe1+** Liang went for the slightly slower 40. ... Rc3+ 41. Ke4 Qh1+ when White resigned. **41. Kd3 Rc3** mate. (Macovei – Liang, New York, 2024) **3)** **34. ... Qf5+** From a variation, this is a nice pattern. **35. Ke3 Qf4** mate. (Adewumi – Liang, New York, 2024) **4)** **38. ... Rxh4** An easy pattern to

overlook in a blitz game. **39. Rf5 Be7** White lost after 40. Kf3, but the key point was **40. Bxd7 Bxc5 41. Rf1 Bf4+** when Black is piece-up after taking the d7-bishop next. (Lazavik – Liang, New York, 2024) **5)** **26. ... Re6** Not 26. ... fxc5?? which is punished by 27. Qxd6 winning. **27. Ng3 d4!** A sneaky point. The threat is ... d4–d3, or ... Bb7xf3 now that the f3-knight is under further pressure. Or 27. ... fxc5 28. Qxc5 d4 with a similar idea. **28. Nxd4**

cx d4 Black is winning. (Donchenko – Liang, New York, 2024) **6)** **32. ... Rxe2!** A nice mating net when **White resigned**, as the forced queen trade with 33. Qxf6+ is punished by 33. ... Qxf6 34. gxf6 Re1+ 35. Rxe1 Rxe1 mate. **Bonus) 25. Qf6+! Kg8** The point was 25. ... Rxf6 26. Nxf6 threatening both Rg1–g8 mate and Nf6xd7, when White is up a rook. **26. Rxc6+ fxc6 27. Qxc6+ Kh8. 28. Nf6!** The game ended after **28. ... Qg7 29. Rxh6+! Qxh6 30. Qg8** mate.