

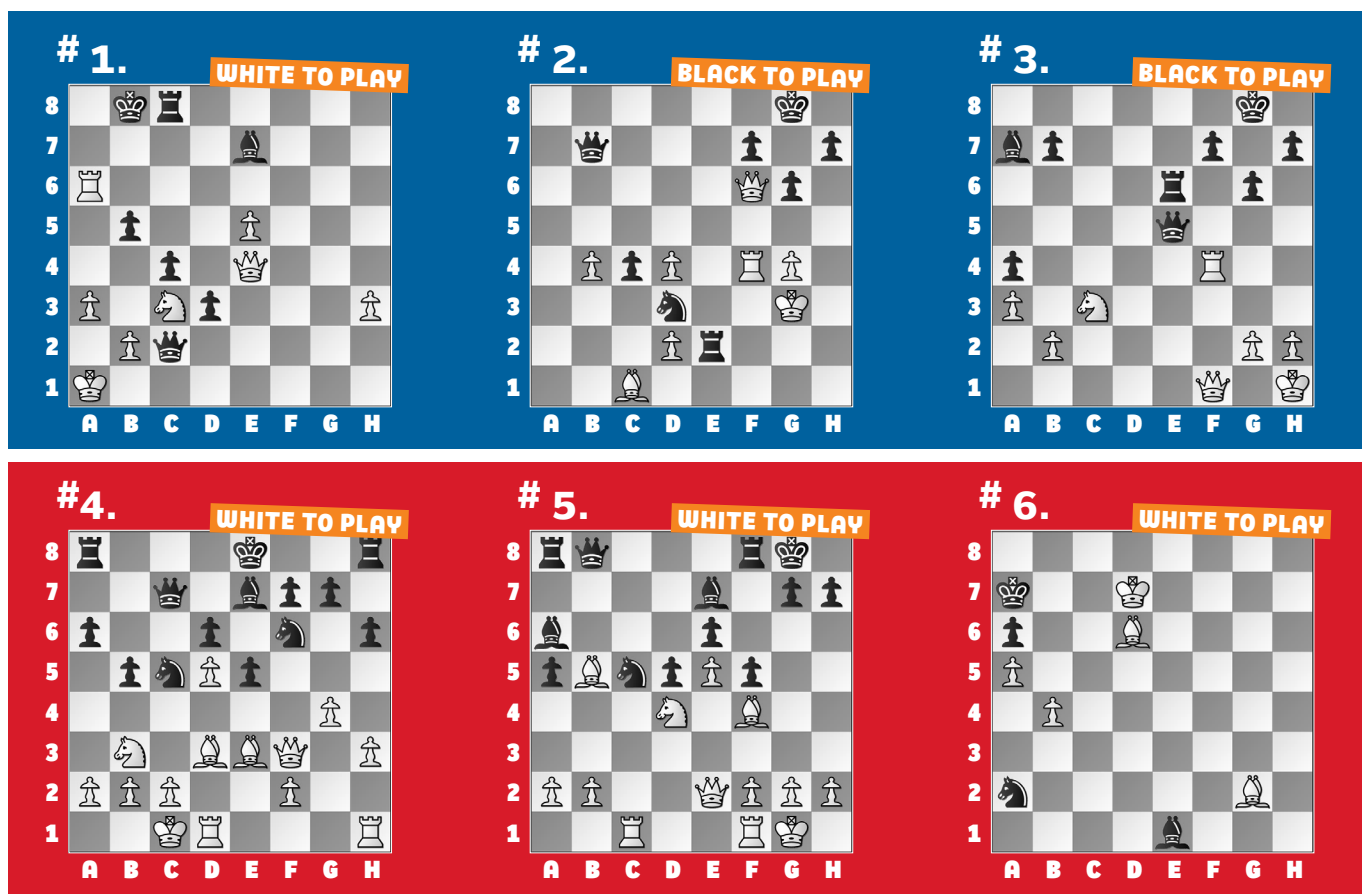
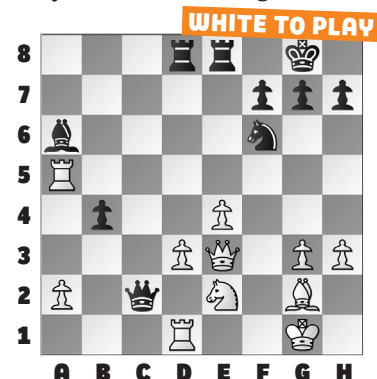
PAN-AMERICAN JUNIOR CHAMPS

Today's puzzles come from the **2025 Pan-American Junior Championship**. IM Jason Liang won gold and a GM norm, and fellow Americans IM

Nico Chasin and WGM Zoey Tang finished 2nd and 3rd, respectively.

Our **example** comes from Tang, who earned an IM norm as well. Under pressure, her opponent tried to force a queen trade with **26. Qc1?** Instead, 26. Qd2 Qxd3 27. Qxd3 Bxd3 was hard to evaluate, so rather than evaluate 28. e5 Bxe2 29. Rxd8 Rxd8 30. exf6, White hallucinated a concrete "bail-out" with **26. ... Qxe2 27. Rxa6 Nxe4** overlooking that the d3-pawn is pinned! After **28. Kh2**

Nxg3! 29. Ra7 Qe5, White resigned shortly in Melian – Tang.



SOLUTIONS

1) 50. Qa8+ White forces mate before Black can push the d-pawn. **50. ... Kc7 51. Rc6+ Kd7** The key pattern, with Black's e7-bishop clogging the escape route. **52. Qxc8** mate. (Tang – Mou, Paraguay, 2025) **2) 31. ... Qg2+** Another thematic mating net. **32. Kh4 Qh2+** Forcing White's kings towards the pawns. **33. Kg5 h6** mate (Torales – Park, Paraguay, 2025) **3) 34. ... Qxf4** Deflection! **White resigned**

in light of 35. Qxf4 Re1 36. Qf1 Rxf1 mate. (Campos Gomez – Park, Paraguay, 2025) **4) 15. Nxc5** Tactically astute, although 15. Bxc5 achieves the same result. **15. ... dxc5 16. d6!** Discovering pressure on the hanging a8-rook. **16. ... Qc8 17. dxe7** and **Black resigned** shortly. (Johnson – Martinez Flores, Paraguay, 2025) **5) 19. Bxa6** Overload! **19. ... Nxa6** Deflection! Or 19. ... Rxa6 20. Rxc5! wins, even though Black regains the piece after

20. ... Bxc5 21. Qxa6 Bxd4 because of 22. Qxe6+ Kh8 23. Qxd5 leaving White with a deadly passer. **20. Nxe6** Winning an important pawn, with threats of e5-e6 and on the d5-pawn to follow. (Brito Carrascal – Namala, Paraguay, 2025) **6) 106. Kc8!** Be honest, how much time did you spend calculating 106. Bc5+ first? Unable to stop both Bd6-c5 mate and Bd6-b8 mate next move, **Black resigned**. (Liang – Reyes Zavaleta, Paraguay, 2025)