

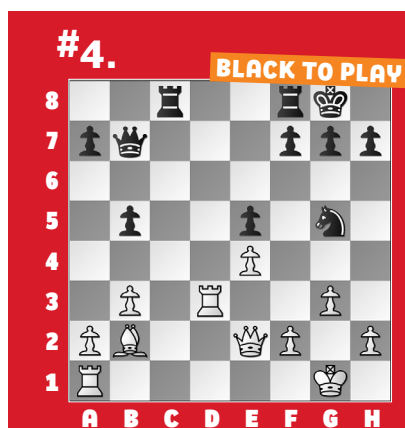
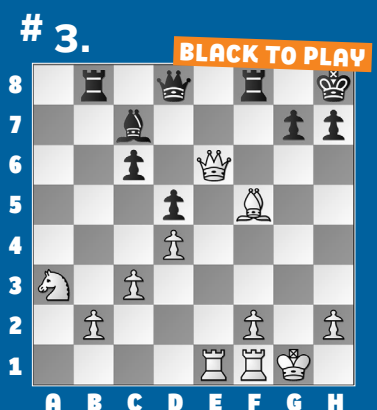
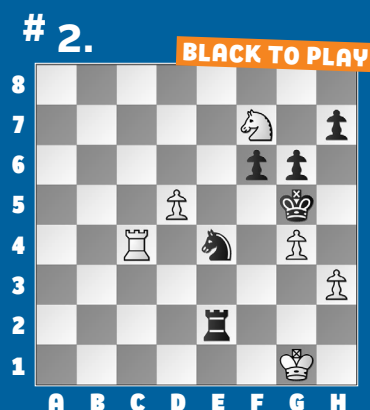
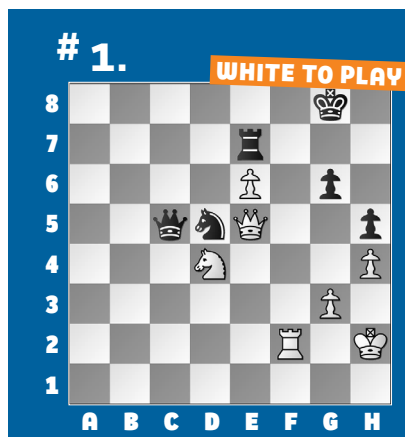
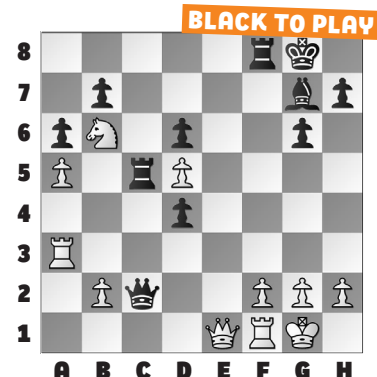
THE 125TH ANNUAL U.S. OPEN

This week's puzzles look at some key moments from the final rounds of the **U.S. Open**. Commentator WGM Sabina Foisor covered every

round on stream and annotated key moments for us. But some of them were too good, so we saved them for a puzzle pack!

Our **example** shows why we must cover our opponent's threats before executing our own! Here, Black rushed with 22. ... d3?? and after 23. Nd7! d2 24. Qe6+ Kh8 25. Nxf8 d1=Q 26. Nxc6+!, Black's d-pawn promotes, but this *zwischenzug* forced a draw in Bilych – Harsha. But, after **22. ... Rc7!**, White has

nothing better than **23. Qe6+ Rff7** **24. Qe8+ Bf8** when Black is better.



SOLUTIONS

1) 61. Rf8+ Other moves win, but this forces mate. Black resigned due to **61. ... Kxf8 62. Qh8** mate. (Balakrishnan – Williams, Middleton, 2025) **2) 57. ... Kh4!** The king helps weave a mating net. After 57. ... Kf4?? 58. d6! Kg3 59. Kf1!, White escapes. **58. Kf1 Ng3+ 59. Kg1 Kxh3 60. d6 Rg2** mate. (Cole – Ayyappan, Middleton, 2025) **3) 24. ... Qg5+!** Dominance on the dark squares! **25. Bg4 Qf4 26. Re5** White

can return material, but it doesn't stop the attack. **26. ... Bxe5 27. dxe5 Rxb2** and **White resigned** soon. (Ramer – Van Vugt, Middleton, 2025) **4) 21. ... f5!** Eye on the prize! Without the e4-pawn in the way, Black wins with ... Ng5-h3+ and ... Qb7-h1 mate. **22. Rad1** Or 22. f3 fxe4 23. fxe4 Nh3+ wins. **22. ... fxe4 23. Rd7** White has activated their rooks, but, with the f-file opened, Black continues the attack. **23. ... Qb6 24. Kg2 Qe6** The key rerouting.

(Fishbein – Zhou, Middleton, 2025) **5) 30. ... e3!** A final breakthrough. While 30. ... Qg1+ 31. Kd2 Rxf2+ can be tried, White still has counterplay. **31. fxe3** This loses instantly. White played 31. Qe4 and after 31. ... Qg1+ Black went on to win. **31. ... Qxe3+ 32. Qe2 Rf1+!** A familiar decoy! **33. Kxf1 Qg1** mate. (Fishbein – Zhou, Middleton, 2025, analysis) **6) 26. Rc6! Rxc7 27. Rxa6** Holding equality. (Peddi – Naroditsky, Middleton, 2025, analysis)