

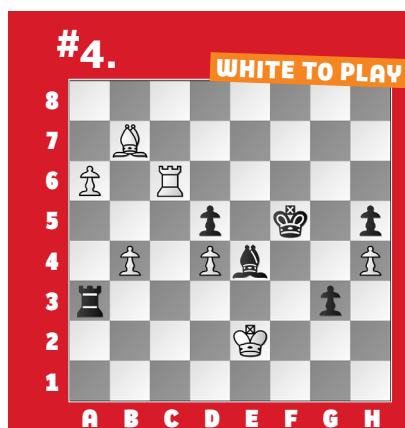
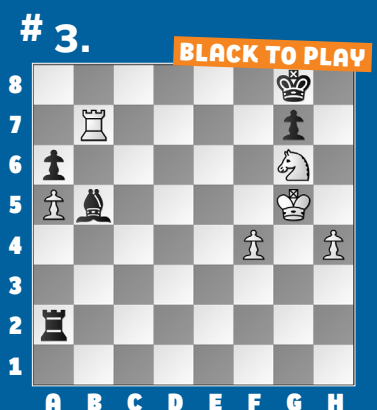
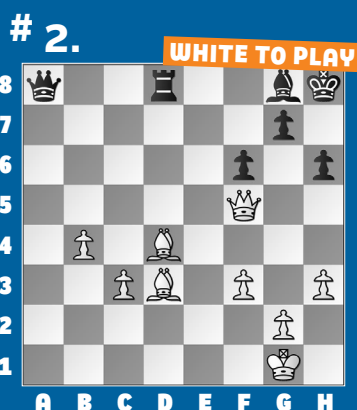
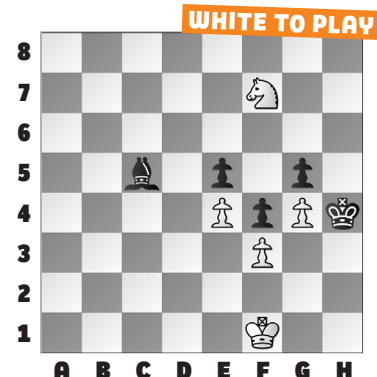
## ST. LOUIS RAPID & BLITZ, PT. 1

This week features tactics from last month's **Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz**, where GM Levon Aronian took clear first ahead of Olympiad teammates

GMs Fabiano Caruana and Wesley So. Enjoy some time scramble tricks!

In our **example**, Black had been hoping for a draw despite the bad bishop. This looks tenuous after Nf7xe5, but stranger things have happened in time scrambles. Then, White uncorked **51. Kg2!** and Black resigned. Why? Well, it's mate once White's knight gets to either the f5- or g6-square. Black's bishop was powerless against the knight's many

routes along different diagonals in Dominguez – Shankland.



## SOLUTIONS

**1) 36. Rh3** Black had resigned two moves prior, anticipating this queen trap. (So – Oparin, St. Louis, 2025)  
**2) 31. Qxf6** Other moves might win. But they don't get style points. **31. ... gxf6** Oparin allowed this mate to be played out, which is classy!  
**32. Bxf6** mate. (Gukesh – Oparin, St. Louis, 2025) **3) 49. ... Rg2+** Winning the knight. **50. Kf5** Even worse would be 50. Kh5 Be2 mate. **50. ... Bd3+** The g6-knight falls, and

Black's king can reach safety on the h7-square. (Vachier-Lagrave – Le, St. Louis, 2025). **4) 57. Bc8+** An easy move to miss in time trouble! White played 57. Rc8?? and after 57. ... g2, resigned just five moves later. **57. ... Kf4** Black's only legal move, which should tell you what's coming. **58. Rf6+** The only defense is ... Be4-f5, when either capture from White wins. (Caruana – Le, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **5) 23. Rxe6+ fxe6 24. Qxe6+ Re7** Or 24. ... Kf8 25. Qxf6+

Kg8 26. Rd8+ still wins the h8-rook. **25. Qc8+ Kf7 26. Qxh8** There is no perpetual, as White shows. **26. ... Qe3+** **27. Rd2** The knight is poisoned, due to Qh8-h7+ with mating threats. (Shankland – Gukesh, St. Louis, 2025) **6) 38. Nd4** White removes the guard while and threatens Nd4-c6+. **38. ... Nf1+** If 38. ... Rxf4 39. Nc6+ and White is piece-up. **39. Kg2 Rxf4** Black's rook is still overloaded! **40. Nc6+** and **Black resigned** soon. (Aronian – Gukesh, St. Louis, 2025)