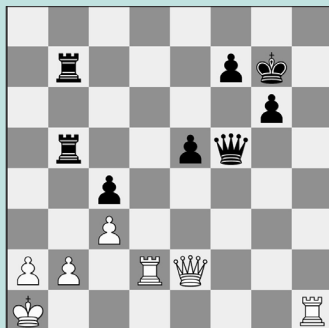


CLUTCH CHESS CHAMPIONS: DAY 3

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ NOVEMBER 12, 2025

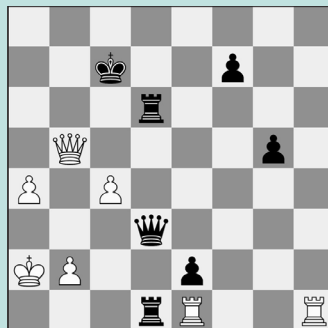
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



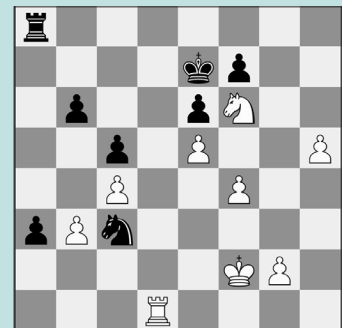
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



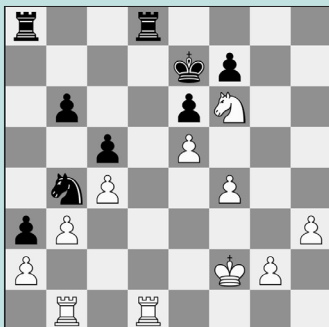
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



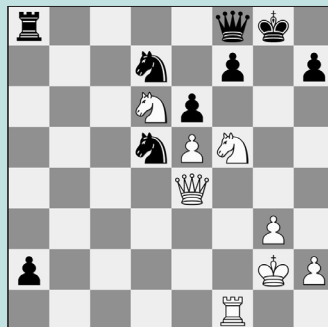
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



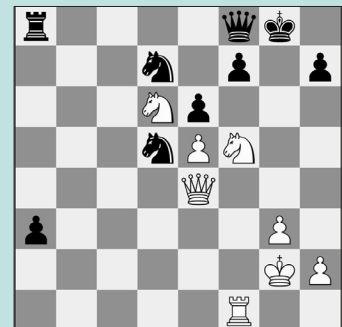
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 48. Qh2 Playing for mate. Instead, 48. Qxc4?? e4 49. Rdh2 Rd7 left Black, who eventually won, with better chances. 48. ... Rb8 49. Qh6+ Kf6 50. Qh4+! Ke6 If 50. ... Kg7 51. Rf2 with Qh4-h6+ wins. 51. Rf2! White cleans up the kingside pawns before Black can attack. (Nakamura – Caruana, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 2.** 66. Rxe2! A miracle save! Instead, 66. Qc5+?? Kb7 67. a5 Qb1+ won shortly for Black. 66. ... Rxh1 Or 66. ... Qb1+ 67. Ka3 leaves Black with nothing better than repetition. 67. Qc5+ White has a perpetual with Qc5-a7+ after any king move, while ... Rd6-c6 loses to Qc5-a7+. (Nakamura – Caruana, St. Louis, 2025)

PUZZLE 3. 37. Ra1 Don't overthink it! White's rook is passive, but Black is tied down, too. After 37. Rd7+ Kf8 38. h6 a2 39. Nh7+ Kg8 40. Nf6+ Kh8 41. Rxf7 it looks like White is forcing mate, however... 41. ... Ne4+! 42. Nxe4 a1=Q 43. Ng5 Ra2+ and Black forces mate first. (Gukesh – Nakamura, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 4.** 34. Rxd8! The point is that, now the recapture removes Black's rook from the a-file. Instead 34. h4 Rxd1 35. Rxd1 Nxa2 36. h5 Nc3 reaches the previous puzzle. 34. ... Rxd8 35. h4 Only now, as 35. ... Nxa2 36. Ra1 drops the a-pawn right back. White is still better. (Gukesh – Nakamura, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 5.** 34. Nxf7 Another tactical save! 34. ... exf5 Tricky is 34. ... Kxf7! when

35. Nd6+ Kg8 36. Qg4+! must be found (not 36. Rxf8+ Nxf8 when Black promotes). Now, 36. ... Kh8 (or 36. ... Qg7 37. Qxe6+ Kh8 38. Nf7+ with a perpetual) 37. Rxf8+ Rxf8 (not 37. ... Nxf8?? 38. Nf7 mate) 38. Qa4 making use of the deflected rook. 35. Qxd5 Hitting the a8-rook, thereby preventing ... Qf8xf7. 35. ... a1=Q 36. Rxa1 Rxa1 37. Ng5+ Kh8 38. Qxd7 with enough counterplay to draw. (Gukesh – Caruana, St. Louis, 2025) **PUZZLE 6.** 33. ... Ra5!! The only move to preserve the win. The point is, after Nd6xf7, Black can calmly play ... e6xf5 without fear of Qe4xd5 as in the previous puzzle. Instead 33. ... a2 was played, and the players drew shortly (see prev. puzzle) (Gukesh – Caruana, St. Louis, 2025, analysis)