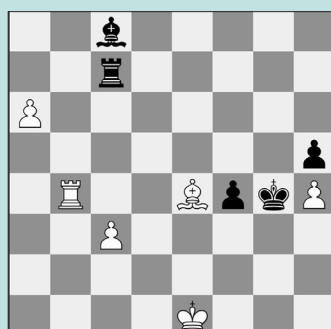


CHARLOTTE CC 2025 U.S. MASTERS

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ DECEMBER 03, 2025

BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



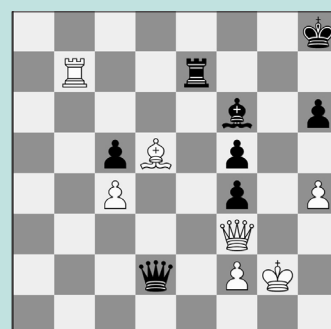
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



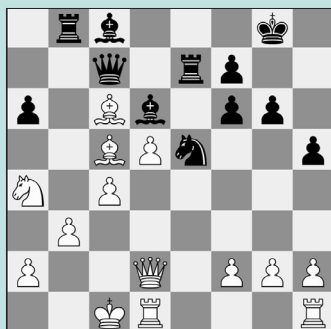
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



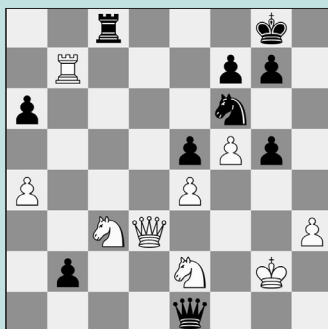
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



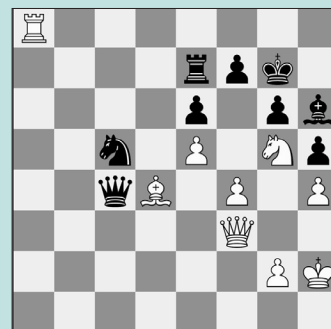
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 41. Rb7! A simple lightning bolt of a conversion tactic. 41. ... Rc4 If 41. ... Rxb7 42. axb7 wins. If 41. ... Bxb7 then 42. axb7 punishes the rook's lack of distance from the pawn. 42. Rg7+ The immediate 42. Bd5 also won. 42. ... Kxh4 43. Bd5 and White went on to win. (Fishbein – Budisavljevic, Charlotte, 2025) **PUZZLE 2.** 24. ... Bb4 A multi-tiered deflection! 25. Qxb4 Rxd4! 26. Bc4 Not 26. Qxd4 Rxe1 mate. 26. ... Rxc4 27. Qd2 Rxe1+ and White resigned. (Adu – Samant, Charlotte, 2025) **PUZZLE 3.** 37. Rxe7 Move order matters! After 37. Qh5?? f3+ 38. Kh3 Qf4!, White had nothing more than a draw with 39. Rb8+ Qxb8 40. Qxh6+ Rh7 41. Qxf6+, although

the game went on a little longer. 37. ... Bxe7 38. Qh5 f3+ 39. Kh3 Qf4 Without rooks on the board, however, this is too little too late, due to: 40. Qe8+ Kg7 41. Qf7+ Kh8 42. Qg8 mate. (Rodrigue-Lemieux – Groff, Charlotte, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 4.** 20. ... Nxc4 21. Bxd6 If 21. bxc4, then 21. ... Bf5! is winning. 21. ... Qxd6 22. bxc4 Qa3+ 23. Nb2 Bf5 and White resigned. (Nasta – Xiong, Charlotte, 2025) **PUZZLE 5.** 34. ... Qc1!! Calculate smarter, not harder. Quite simply, Black defends the c-pawn, and threatens to promote. Instead, Black played 34. ... Nh5 35. Qd5! Rf8 36. Rxb2 and resigned 21 moves later. Note: 34. ... Qa1 is worse because 35. Qc2 (or 35. Qd2) allows White to go after the b-pawn yet again. 35. Nd5 Rc2! 36. Nxf6+ gxf6

37. Qd8+ Kg7 38. Rxf7+ White can force a perpetual now, and has nothing better. (Putnam – Muetsch, Charlotte, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 6.** 39. f5!! White threatens mate! More accurately, and shockingly, White forces mate with this unexpected blow. Instead, White played 39. Bxc5 Qxc5 40. Ne4 Qd4 41. g3 and later drew. The immediate 39. Qc6 is only good for a draw thanks to 39. ... Qxd4 40. Qc8 Qxf4+ when Black has a perpetual check. 39. ... exf5 Not 39. ... Qxd4 40. f6 mate. If 39. ... gxf5, 40. Qg3 still threatens mate, and 40. ... Qxd4 41. Ne4+ wins by force. 40. Qc6 White switches gears to Qc6-f6+ after the e-pawn moves. 40. ... Re6 41. Qc8 And now to the back rank! Black can resign. (Fus – Bok, Charlotte, 2025, analysis)