

NORTH AMERICAN JUNIORS

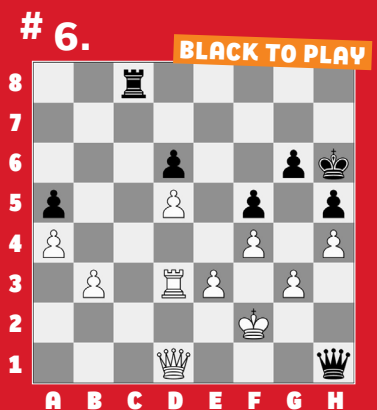
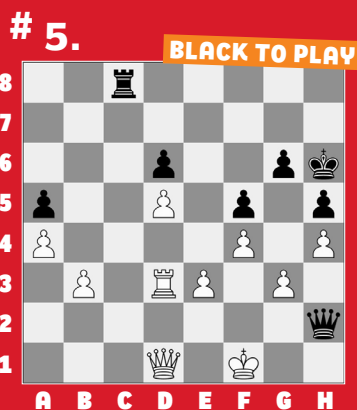
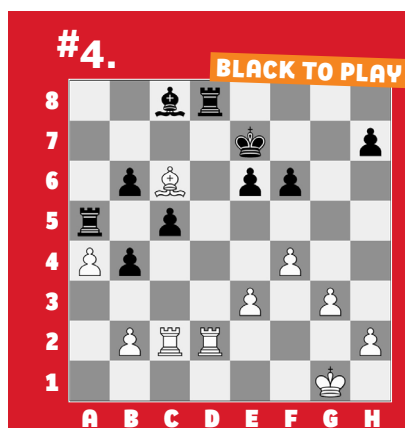
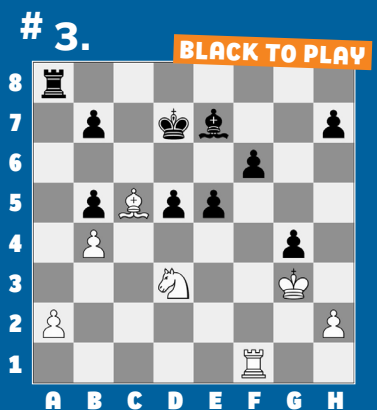
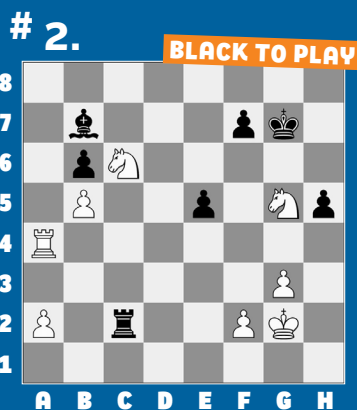
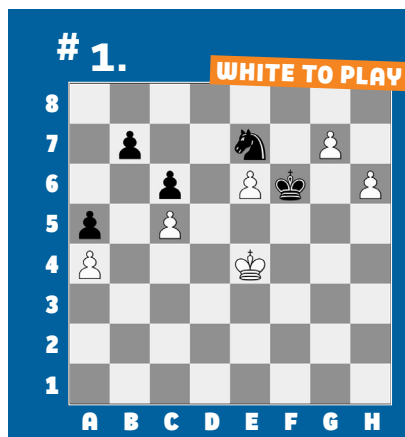
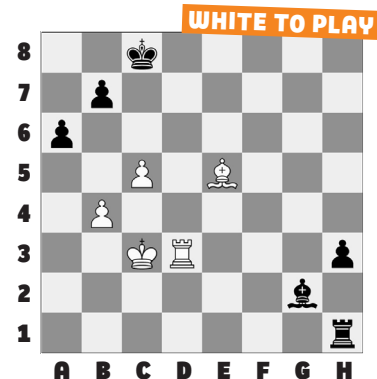
Today's puzzles come from the **North American Junior Championships**, where Americans Julian Colville and Laurie Qiu

earned gold medals in Mexico. Qiu earned a WGM norm and Colville earned a GM norm and the IM title.

In our **example**, White played **65. Rd4??** Allowing **65. ... h2!** and White had to part with a piece with **66. Bxh2 Rxh2**, winning eight moves later in Montes – Colville. Why was 65. Rd4?? such a mistake? Because, now, 66. Rd2 allows ... Rh1-c1+ and the h-pawn promotes.

Instead, a move like 65. Kd4! would meet 65. ... h2 with 66. Rd2

and a draw, as Black has no checks. In endgames, every move matters!



SOLUTIONS

1) 57. g8=Q and **Black resigned**, as the thematic h6-h7 leaves Black unable to stop both queening paths. After **57. ... Nxg8 58. h7 Kg7 59. hxg8=Q+ Kxg8 60. Ke5**, the queenside pawns all fall. For instance: **60. ... Kf8 61. Kd6 Ke8 62. Kc7**, although **62. e7** should also win on the spot. (Qiu – Castellanos, Mexico, 2025) **2) 44. ... Rxc6!** Perfect geometry! **45. bxc6 Bxc6+ 46. Re4 f5** White can't even limit the damage to

an Exchange, and Black went on to hold the draw after winning back the piece. (Fei – Gao, Mexico, 2025) **3) 30. ... Ra3** A good pin! **31. Kxg4** Or **31. Rd1 e4** is a pin-and-win. **31. ... Rxd3** and Black went on to win. (Castillo – Fei, Mexico, 2025) **4) 29. ... b3!** An ingenious removal of the guard. **30. Rxd8 bxc2** There's no way to stop promotion, so saving the rook is immaterial. (Fei – Qiu, Mexico, 2025) **5) 68. ... Rc1** Separating the king from the queen!

Instead, **68. ... Qxg3** was played and the game went on. (Yan – Montano Vicente, Mexico, 2025, analysis) **6) 67. ... Rc2+** The same idea, but a little trickier. Instead, **67. ... Qh2+** was played immediately, and **68. Kf1** reaches the previous puzzle. **68. Qxc2** Or **68. Rd2 Qxd1** is swift. **68. ... Qh2+** and the queen falls once more. An interesting motif (separation) to occur two moves in a row in one game! (Yan – Montano Vicente, Mexico, 2025, analysis)