

NORTH AMERICAN JUNIORS, PT. 2

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ DECEMBER 24, 2025

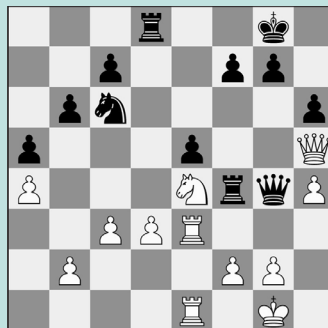
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



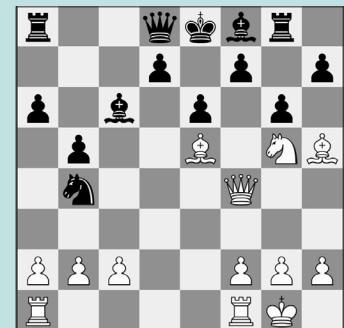
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



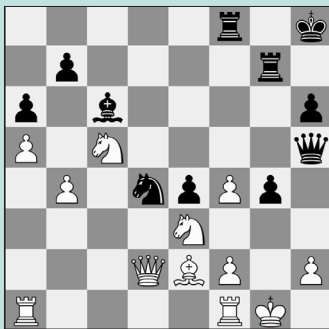
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



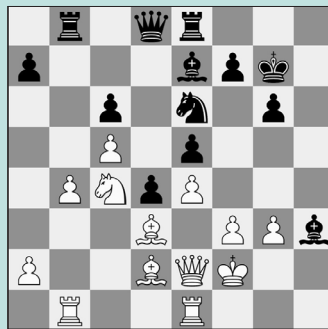
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



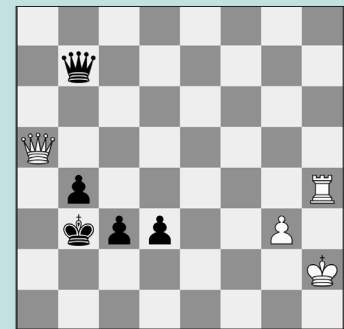
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 10. ... **Ncxe4** Winning material with a familiar theme. 11. **Nxe4** White played 11. Nd1 instead. 11. ... **Nxe4** 12. **Qxe4 Bf5** 13. **Qf3 e4** Black wins the rook. (Veenkatesh – Campos Gorgonio, Mexico, 2025, variation) **PUZZLE 2.** 31. **Nf6+** Winning Black's queen by force! 31. ... **gxf6** 32. **Rg3** and White was winning, although Black mounted a comeback. (Taylor Rodriguez – Johnson, Mexico, 2025) **PUZZLE 3.** 15. ... **f6** The fork works! 16. **Nxh7** If 16. Bxf6 Nd5 was the point. 16. ... **gxh5!** Not 16. ... fxe5?? 17. Bxg6+ when the rook cannot recapture as it is overloaded, guarding the f8-bishop, but 17. ... Ke7 18. Qxb4+ is winning for White. 17. **Nxf6+ Qxf6!** The

point! 18. **Qxf6 Rxf6** 19. **Kh1 Rxf2** 20. **Kg1 Rg2** 21. **Kh1 Rg3+** and White resigned, as Black emerges up material. (Oroci Mendoza – Colville, Mexico, 2025) **PUZZLE 4.** 40. ... **Nf3+** Going for mate! 41. **Bxf3** Not 41. Kg2 Qxh2 mate. 41. ... **gxf3** 42. **Kh1 Rg2!** The follow-up! 43. **Nxg2 fxf2** 44. **Kg1** Or 44. Kxg2 e3+! wins the queen. 44. ... **gxf1=Q+** and White resigned shortly due to the tremendous pressure Black is applying. (Johnson – Montes Orozco, Mexico, 2025) **PUZZLE 5.** 26. ... **Nf4!!** A spectacular sac that wins on the spot. Instead, Black played the slower 26. ... **Rh8?** when White had an advantage after 27. **Nxe5**, although Black later won. 27. **gxf4** Or 27. Bxf4 exf4 simply pres-

ures the e1-h4 diagonal with no risk. 27. ... **Bh4** 28. **Kg1 Bg3!** The subtle killer blow, with ... Qd8-h4 to follow. (Fogo Esquivel – Guntaka, Mexico, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 6.** 80. ... **d2** The winning pawn push. Instead, White played 80. ... **c2** when 81. Qc5 would have kept the balance, but instead 81. **Qg5?? Qc6** 82. **Qg8+ Ka3** 83. **Rc4 c1=Q** saw Black win. Note that, after the correct move, there is no ... Kb3-b2 because of Rh4xb4+. 81. **Qd8** This might be White's best try, covering the d1-square. But, unlike after Black pushed the c-pawn, now there is no coordination between White's rook and queen, so... 81. ... **Kc2** isn't the only winning move, but it's the most straightforward. (Guntaka – Carrillo, Mexico, 2025, analysis)