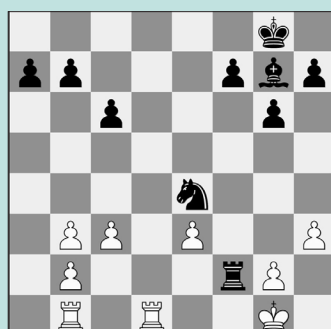


WOMEN'S OLYMPIAD: U.S. NATIONALS

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ OCTOBER 21, 2026

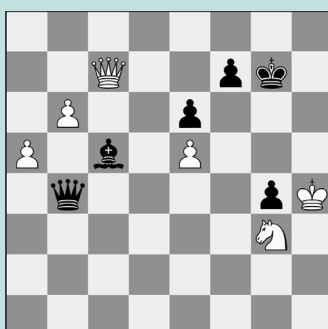
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



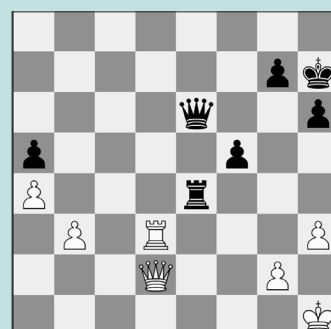
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



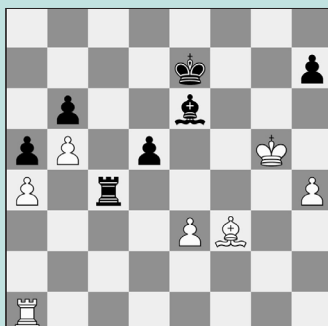
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



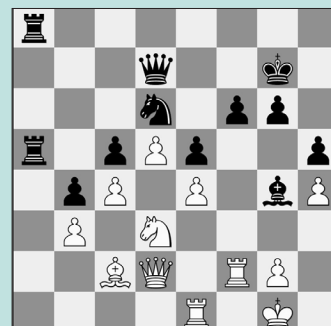
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 24. **Rd8+!** Removing the guard of the f2-rook with precision. 24. ... **Bf8** 25. **Re8!** Note: 25. **Rd4** is imprecise, as 25. ... **Nxc3** 26. **bxc3** **Rc2** gives Black better chances when the bishop isn't pinned. 25. ... **Nd2** This appeared to generate enough counterplay, but... 26. **Kxf2** **Nxb1** 27. **Rd8!** **a5** The knight was trapped! 28. **Rd1** and White went on to win. (Justo – Wefang, Samarkand, 2026) **PUZZLE 2.** 49. ... **Kg6!** The only square. Black must defend the f7-pawn while tightening the mating net. If 49. ... **Kh6** 50. **Ne4!** (not 50. **b7??** **Be7+** winning) 50. ... **Qe1+** 51. **Ng3** **Bf2**, White can claim a draw with 52. **Qxf7** **Bxg3+** 53. **Kxg4** when the last pawn falls. 50. **b7** If 50. **Ne4** **Qe1+**

51. **Ng3** **Bf2**, White is not in time to create play with 52. **b7** as 52. ... **Qe3** wins. 50. ... **Be7+** The point! 51. **Qxe7** **Qxe7+** 52. **Kxg4** **Qxb7** and White resigned. (Lazzarini – Alvarado Perez) **PUZZLE 3.** 36. ... **Qe5** The only win! Black will win the queen for the rook no matter what. After 36. ... **Re1+?** 37. **Kh2** **Qe5+** 38. **Rg3**, Black had no way to exploit the pin and soon drew. (Almeida – Alvarado Perez, analysis) **PUZZLE 4.** 23. **f5!!** Instead, 23. **Nd3??** **Kf8** would be quite safe for Black. But 23. ... **Rhc8??** again allowed 24. **f5**, although after 24. **Ne5??** **Qd6** 25. **Ng4** **h5** 26. **Ne3** **Qb4??** 27. **Nxd5+** won the game. 23. ... **gxf5** Or 23. ... **e5** 24. **Nxb7** aims to penetrate, and 24. ... **Rhc8** 25. **Qa3+** **Kf6** 26. **Na5** keeps up the pressure! 24. **Qh4+** **Ke8** 25. **Nxe6**

fxe6 26. **Rxe6+** **Kd7** 27. **Re7+**! Another finesse! 27. ... **Nxe7** 28. **Rxc7+** **Kxc7** 29. **Qxe7+** White can likely secure a draw. (Ubben – Mannhart, analysis) **PUZZLE 5.** 49. ... **h6+** Instead, 49. ... **Kf7** 50. **h5** **Kg7** consolidated! 50. **Kxh6** Or 50. **Kg6** **Rxh4** just gives Black an extra pawn with all the advantages. 50. ... **Kf6!** White has no good defense against ... **Rc4xh4**, as 51. **h5??** Allows 51. ... **Rc8** and Black forces mate. (Ramas – Katlo, analysis) **PUZZLE 6.** 36. **Rxf6!!** In the game, 36. **Qe3** **Qe7** could have held on longer, but 36. ... **Qa7** 37. **Ref1** **Rf8** 38. **Nxe5!** was a swift end. 36. ... **Kxf6** 37. **Nxe5!!** Another one! 37. ... **Kxe5** Otherwise, **Ne5-c6** and **e4-e5** should win. 38. **Qg5+** Now, White mates. 38. ... **Kd4** 39. **Qf6** mate. (Rivera Negron – Lima, analysis)