Tactics Tuesday

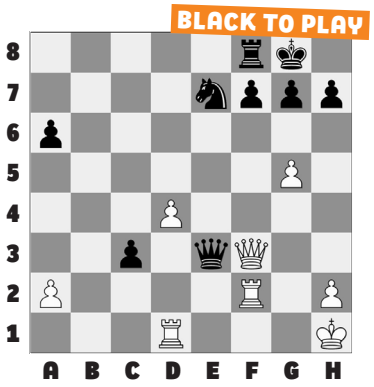
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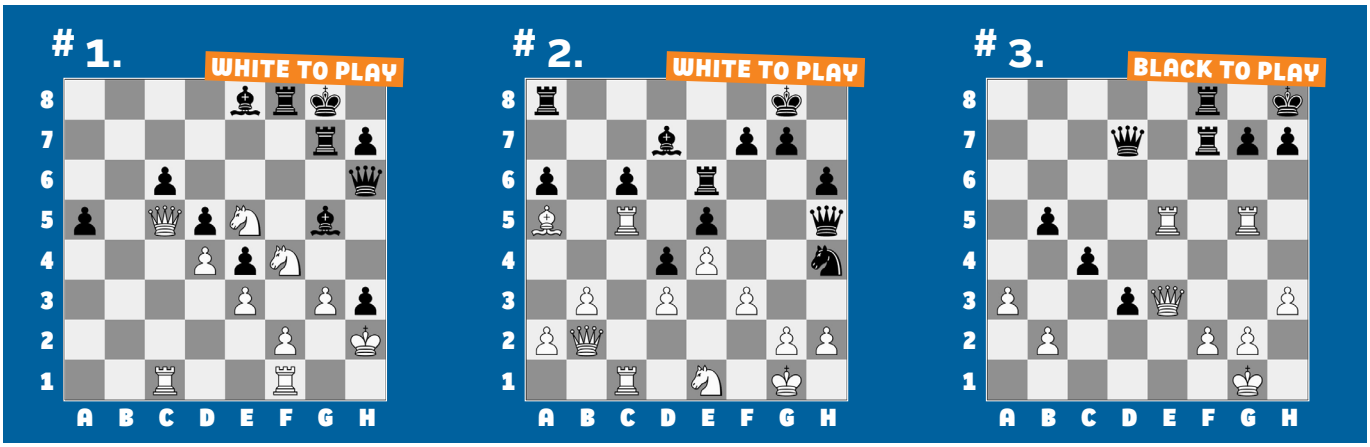
CLUTCH CHESS: SHOWDOWN

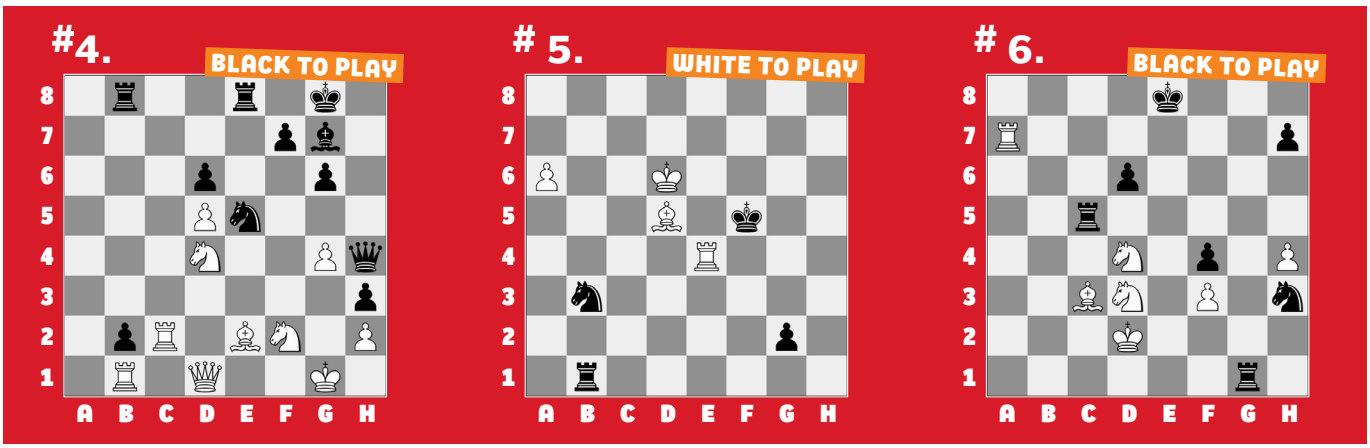
This week's exercises come from last month's **Clutch Chess: Champions Showdown** at the Saint Louis Chess Club. Uzbek **GM Javokhir Sindarov** won the rapid and blitz event ahead of Caruana, Nakamura, and Praggnanandhaa.

In our **example**, Black forced a resignation from White in Praggnanandhaa – Caruana with **32. ... c2**, ignoring the threat on the queen, since **33. Qxe3** allows **33. ... cxd1=Q+** when Black promotes while winning back the rook, emerging a full knight ahead.

The lesson? Look at all forcing moves, rather than knee-jerk assuming the e3-queen had to move!







SOLUTIONS

1) 34. Ng4 Black's queen is trapped! **34. ... Bxf4** Going down two pieces for the queen is Black's best bet. **35. Nxh6+** White went on to capture the h3-pawn and win. (Caruana – Praggnanandhaa, St. Louis, 2026) **2) 27. Qxd4** Nakamura missed the free pawn! Instead, 27. Qf2?? g5 saw Black take control and go on to win. **27. ... Qg6** No credit if you didn't consider this resource, breaking the pin on the e5-pawn with a mate threat. **28. Qf2!** But White is safely ahead now! (Nakamura – Caruana, analysis) **3) 43. ... d2** and **White resigned**, as **44. Rd5 d1=Q+** is a winning x-ray, as **45. Rxd1 Qxd1+** leaves Black up a full rook. (Nakamura – Praggnanandhaa) **4) 28. ... Rb4!** White's position collapses. **29. Nf3** Or 29. Nc6 Rf4 and White can't defend everything. **29. ... Rxg4+ 30. Kf1 Nxf3 31. Nxg4** Or 31. Bxf3 Rf4 wins. **31. ... Rxe2! 32. Rxe2 Qxg4** Black won shortly. (Nakamura – Sindarov) **5) 91. Re5+ Kf4 92. Bxg2** White got spooked, and 92. Re4+ Kg3 was enough to hold the draw. **92. ... Rd1+ 93. Bd5!** Not 93. Rd5? Ra1 when Black gets behind the pawn just in time. (Praggnanandhaa – Caruana, analysis) **6) 52. ... Rg2+** A simplification tactic to clarify into a drawn endgame. **53. Ne2 Rxc3 54. Kxc3 Rxe2 55. Rxh7 Re3** Other moves hold, but simplifying is most principled. (Caruana – Sindarov)

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