Tactics Tuesday

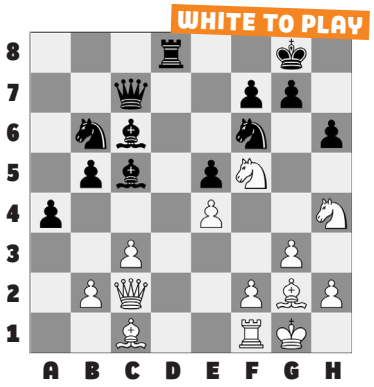
CHESSLIFE KIDS ONLINE

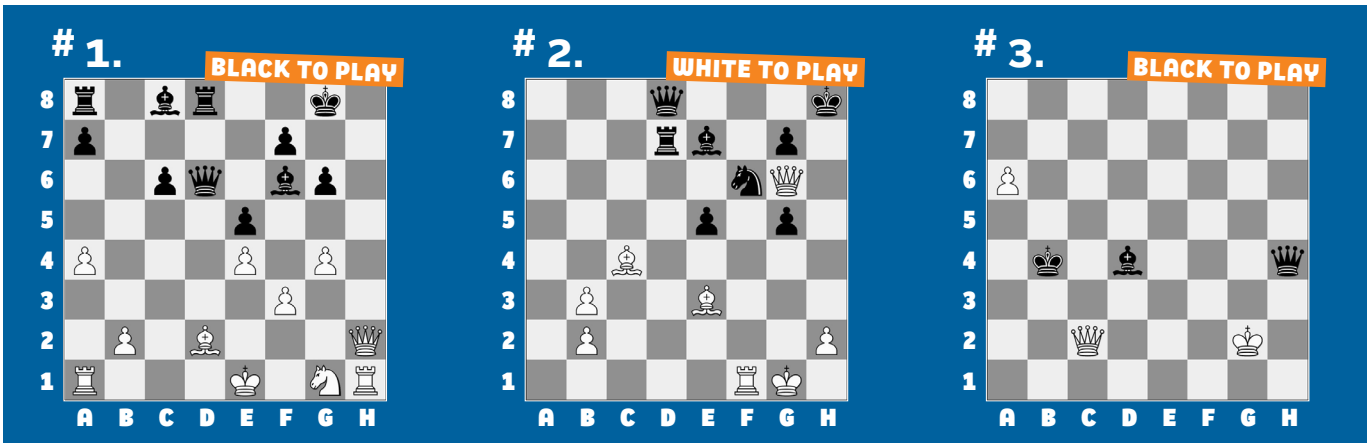
NOVEMBER 17, 2026 BY **JJ LANG**

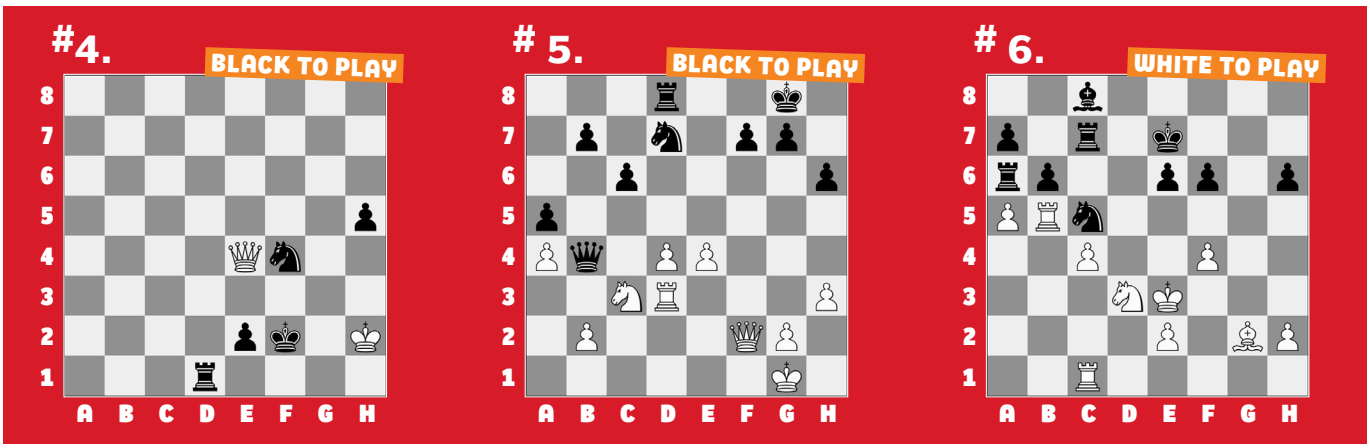
20 YEARS OF THE SPICE CUP

This week, we highlight the **20th SPICE Cup** held in Bellevue, WA. GM Liam Putnam won the Susan Polgar Foundation's 20th flagship event.

Today's **example** highlights the art of defense. Black anticipated White's sac beginning with **21. Nxg7 Kxg7 22. Bxh6+ Kxh6!**, showing familiarity with this typical double piece sac. After **23. Qc1+ Kh7!** Black avoids allowing Qc1-g5+ with check, winning back a piece. Now, **24. Qg5 Ng8 25. Nf5 Bf8!** and Black's pieces are setting up for a new game! But with two extra pieces, there's nothing White can do. Black won shortly in Suresh – Escalante with: **26. Qh5+ Nh6 27. g4 f6 28. h4 Be8** Backwards once more!







SOLUTIONS

1) 21. ... Bh4+ A defensive tactic! **22. Qxh4** Playing for mate backfires! The game continued 22. Kd1 Qd3 when White was worse. **22. ... Qxd2+ 23. Kf1 Ba6+ 24. Ne2 Bxe2+ 25. Kg1 Qe3+** White's mating threat is gone. (Mohan – Ramkumar, Bellevue, 2026) **2) 35. Rxf6** Demolition! **35. ... Bxf6** The game concluded with: 35. ... Rd1+ 36. Rf1 Rxf1+ 37. Kxf1 Qd1+ 38. Kf2 Bf6 39. Bd3 e4 40. Qe8+ Kh7 41. Bxe4+ g6 42. Qxg6+ and Black resigned. **36. Qh5** mate. (Airapetian – Venkat, variation) **3) 81. ... Qg4+** White's king is out of squares. **82. Kf1** If 82. Kh1 Qh3+ 83. Qh2 Qf1+ 84. Qg1 Qxg1 mate; Or 82. Kh2 Be5+ 83. Kh1 Qh3+ 84. Kg1 Bd4+ again works the right diagonals. **82. ... Qf3+** and **White resigned** due to **83. Ke1 Bc3+** winning. (Harish – Mikaelyan) **4) 80. ... e1=N!** Black has more than enough material for the queen. Instead, the game saw 80. ... e1=Q?? when 81. Qf3+! forced stalemate. (Taylor – Gavrish, analysis) **5) 27. ... Nc5** Winning a key pawn by exploiting the pin. **28. Rd1 Nxa4 29. Nxa4 Qxa4** Black wins by creating an outside passer. (Palathingal – Belous) **6) 35. Nb4** Black's rook is trapped! **35. ... Rxa5** Black disagrees? **36. Nc6+ Rxc6 37. Rxa5!** Black overlooked this move order, planning 37. Bxc6 Ra3+. **37. ... bxa5 38. Bxc6** Up an Exchange, White went on to win. (Sonis – Wilber)

COPYRIGHT USCHESS.ORG