

CHESS MOVES

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Vakhidov & Mista share first place – Hastings Masters

RIP Jim Slater

13th March 1929 to 18th November 2015

Jim was a highly successful financier, but things went wrong with the stock market collapse of the mid-1970s. Later he reinvented himself, including writing children's books.

He was a chess enthusiast throughout his life and counted his sponsorship of British chess as one of his proudest achievements. The most dramatic of these was adding £50,000 to the prize money for the 1972 World Chess Championship Match. Bobby Fischer had said that the purse was inadequate and he wouldn't play. Jim's challenge, expressed on his behalf by Leonard Barden, did the trick. Bobby was duly grateful and the match resulted in a worldwide explosion of interest in chess. England benefited from this more than any other country; thus the expression 'English Chess Explosion'. He also sponsored Hastings for a couple of years.

The Slater Foundation also helped young English players develop; Leonard selected Tony Miles, Jonathan Mestel, John Nunn, Jon Speelman, Michael Stean from 1971. All became GMs in due course. Again, at Leonard's suggestion, he helped finance the 1973 World Junior Championship in Teesside where Tony Miles and Michael Stean were runners-up to Beliavsky. Tony Miles won the title the following year in the Philippines. He also offered considerable financial inducements for our players to become GMs. Tony Miles received £5000 as the first. Ray Keene and the others mentioned also received valuable sums. 45 years on, we still get benefit from the impact of that era.

It was only today that I suddenly thought (and it was remiss of me) Jim should have received the honour of 'Honorary Life Member of the ECF'. Our condolences to his wife and four children.

RIP Dennis Hemsley



Dennis died last week. His funeral will take place 11 December at 1pm at Rushen Parish Church, Isle of Man. Dennis will mainly be remembered in the chess world for being the originator and organiser of The Monarch Assurance Isle of Man International Chess Congress. This was a major event in which many strong players competed. In that period he never left the island. He hadn't played chess for many years, but his influence remained considerable and is perhaps reflected in the Poker Stars Chess Congress.

Our condolences to his family and many chess friends.
Picture by John Saunders

RIP Dennis Morton Horne

19th October 1920 to 3rd May 2015. Dennis was a British Master. He came 2nd equal in the British Championship of 1949 and 5th= in the Hastings Premier 1949-50. He played board 5 for the BCF in the 1952 Olympiad.

The information was taken from the December issue of BCM. Apologies that the information was not seen before.

— *Stewart Reuben*

ECF Board statement regarding the FIDE President

The ECF notes with concern the imposition of sanctions on FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov by the US Department of the Treasury, citing Mr Ilyumzhinov's involvement in financial transactions involving the Government of Syria. The detailed statement is here — <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0287.aspx>

The ECF is seeking advice on the matter from the FCO.

On Sunday 6th December Mr. Ilyumzhinov informed the FIDE Presidential Board that he will withdraw from any legal, financial and business operations of FIDE. The full statement is here — <http://www.fide.com/component/content/article/1-fide-news/9254-statement-from-fide.html>

The ECF Board approves the FIDE Statement as a first step to restoring public confidence.

— *Julian Clissold, NED, ECF*

FIDE Arbiters Seminar in Birmingham

A FIDE Arbiters' Seminar is being organised on the weekend of 29th-31st January, 2016 at the Holiday Inn, Birmingham Airport, alongside the 7th 4NCL Congress. Information about it can be found here — http://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_fide_arbiters.htm

This is an excellent opportunity for players wishing to become arbiters, and for current arbiters to attain FIDE Arbiter Norms.

ECF Competition Rules

The ECF is regularly asked about whether or not certain changes to the Laws of Chess are permitted in order for a competition to be graded. Therefore, a set of competition rules is being published that sets out the variances tolerated for these purposes. It also includes information stored separately on various other documents in order to unite all of this information in one place.

The full ECF Competition Rules can be found here - <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/grading/ecf-competition-rules/>

— *Alex Holowczak, Director of Home Chess – 3rd January, 2016*



Tournament Round-Up

World Seniors Round 11 – final round

50+

Keith was unfortunate to be paired in the last round with Predrag Nikolic with the black pieces. Predrag was the number one seed, but needed to win in the last round to secure outright first. The Bosnian secured a small edge, and then Keith seemed to become paralysed in the endgame. Thus Keith finished with 7/11. Overall leading results:

TPR refers to tournament performance rating. That is according to Ratings.com, which is not very accurate.

	Rating		TPR
Predrag Nikolic	2603	9.5/11	2706
Eduardas Rozenatlis	2553	9	2651
Georg Mohr	2443	8.5	2537
Carlos Garcia Palermo	2446	8	2508
Keith Arkell	2499	7	2411
Meyrick Shaw	2020	6	2256
Brian Hewson	2058	5.5	2169
Owen Phillips	1941	5	1860*

65+

Vladimir Okhatnik	2442	9.5	2605
Anatoly Vaisser	2505	8.5	2512
Viktor Kupreichik	2369	8	2479
Evgeni Vasiukov	2392	8	2460
Valentin Bogdanov	2374	8	2381
Algimantas Butnoris	2370	8	2370
Oliver Jackson	2035	6.5	2155
Anthony Ashby	2114	5.5	2097
Ivan Myall	2040	5.5	2049
Julian Farrand	2018	5.5	1993
Ian Reynolds	2078	4.5	1896

** It was more like 1940. I think Results.com assume unrated players are 1000, which was nonsense in the case of one of Owen's opponents*

You can see at a glance that Meyrick. Brian and Oliver did well relative to their pre-event rating. In particular, Meyrick scored over 200 points above his rating on his debut in international senior chess.

Both tournaments were very strong. These events are becoming stronger because. not only of the demographics, but also the prestige.

— Stewart Reuben

Hampshire Chess Association 2015 Congress

— Eastleigh, 6th – 8th November 2015

Tony Corkett has retained the Hampshire Championship and the Silver Rook, but only by the narrowest of margins. Tony was one of three players who finished with 4 points, but the real winner was Rowan Brown with the splendid score of 5½ points. Rowan is from Sussex, and is not eligible to be the Hampshire champion. Second

place was a tie between Tony Corkett and Gavin Lock.

The Under-175 grading prize was won by Horia Bogdan with 4 points. Horia could have claimed a share of 2nd prize, but as sole winner of the grading prize, he received a bigger cheque.

In the Major Section Matthew Wilson again proved too strong for the opposition, scoring 5/6, although he did not have things all his own way. Raja Pentakota was runner-up, and took the Hampshire trophy, the Peter Marshall Cup, with 4½ points.

Third place was shared by Les Allen, Phil Foley and Gavin Fong, all with 4 points. And the Under-140 grading prize went to promising junior Frazer Graham.

The Minor Section was won convincingly by Stephen Gow, who won his last five games. Martin Baxter returned to chess after a long absence and achieved 2nd place with 5/6. Third place was shared by Ivor Kelly and James Wallman on 4 points.

The Under-100 grading prize went to Keven Lamb, and the Ladies prize was won by Maha Chandar, ahead of Gillian Moore.

Here are the full results ---

Open

1st (5½ pts) Rowan Brown (Hove)

2nd = (4 pts) Tony Corkett (Fareham) and Gavin Lock (Horsham)

Under-175 Grading Prize (4 pts) Horia Bogdan (Southampton University)

13 started, 12 finished.

Major

1st (5 pts) Matthew Wilson (Paignton)

2nd (4½ pts) Raja Pentakota (Southampton) winning the Peter Marshall Trophy

3rd= (4 pts) Les Allen (Southampton), Phil Foley (Upminster) and Gavin Fong (Southampton University)

Under-140 Grading prize (3½ pts) Frazer Graham (Fareham)

23 started, 17 finished.

Minor

1st (5½ pts) Stephen Gow (Southampton University) holds the Parsons Trophy for one year

2nd (5 pts) Martin Baxter (Cowplain)

3rd = (4 pts) Ivor Kelly (Camberley) and James Wallman (Verwood)

Under-100 Grading Prize (3½ pts) Keven Lamb (Chandlers Ford).

20 started, 17 finished.

Ladies Prize (the Gillian Moore Cup)

1st (3 pts) Maha Chandar (Chandlers Ford)

— *John Wheeler (Secretary, Hampshire CA)*

Jovanka Houska wins Silver at the ETCC

IM Jovanka Houska has won Silver for Board 1 in the Women's event at the European Team Championships! She achieved a wonderful 87.5% which was equal to that of GM Mariya Muzychuk (Ukraine) who won Gold, but she lost out on the tie-break. Her performance yielded her an excellent tournament rating of 2614, 10 points ahead of Bronze winner, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (Russia), who scored 68.8 %.

The Championships was a triumph for Russia who won Team Gold in both the Open and Women's event and is something of a shot in the arm for their dominance of the chess world which has been under some threat in recent years. It remains to be seen what they can achieve at the next Olympiad where a Russian Gold is certainly

no longer a foregone conclusion.

The result of the Open is as follows:

Gold: Russia 15; Silver: Armenia 13; Bronze: Hungary 13; France also 13. Commiserations to France for losing out on a medal by tie-break!

After the 1-3 drubbing by the Netherlands in round 7, England, who had not had an easy tournament, looked as if they might be heading for another below par performance. However, wins over Turkey in round 8 and Romania in round 9 pushed them up the table. They finished on =7 or 10 place on tie-break which, given their seeding of 5 is a little disappointing. However, if one analyses the average ratings of the teams one finds that those ranked from 3 all the way down to 18 were pretty evenly matched so there were few easy pairings at the top half of the table and many of the matches could have gone either way. In consequence, most of the top seeded teams had a difficult time and all the medals were up for grabs right until the last round although Russia was certainly favourite for Gold by round 5.

Turning to the performances of individual England team members, Michael Adams scored a solid 50% against mostly strong opposition on Board 1, only lost once, and achieved a headline grabbing win over Aronian in round 4, the day after the latter had despatched a somewhat off-form Carlsen. David Howell scored +1 on board 2, including an important win in round 8, but draws against some lower rated opposition lost him a few rating points. Luke McShane, appearing somewhat off-form, lost three times and won once but will no doubt rebound from adversity in future events. Nigel Short on board 4 started slowly but was, perhaps, more unlucky than off form. After a rest in rounds 6 and 7 he came back with two crucial wins which were instrumental in ensuring a respectable position for England in the final table. Gawain Jones had an excellent tournament with an enormous performance rating at the end of round 6. A loss in round 7 followed by draws in the final rounds brought his performance rating down somewhat, but he gained some Elo points and one hopes his play here signals a return to the kind of form he was in a few months ago.

The three team medal winners in the Women's event ended well ahead of the pack:

Gold: Russia 17; Silver: Ukraine 15; Bronze: Georgia 14

Russia, as can be deduced from their score, conceded a solitary match draw throughout the event and was dominant throughout despite being seeded 3. Ukraine, who drew against Russia, and Georgia proved to be the best of the rest by some margin, reflected in the fact that the pack were left three points behind Bronze on 11.



Ranked at 18 in the Women's event, it was likely that England would have a difficult tournament and so it proved. Their 23rd position in the final standings was somewhat disappointing although as little as an extra draw match would have yielded them at least a par performance. The outstanding performance in the team was, of course, that of Jovanka Houska [pictured left] who scythed through her opposition on board 1 and only conceded 2 draws. She gained 18 well deserved Elo points which will take her rating above 2400 in the next list. Dagne Ciuksyte found the going tough on Board 2 and although she started well with a draw over GM Zhukova in the first round, she was

unable to keep up the impetuous. Sabrina Chevannes found herself against very classy opposition on board 3 and, losing her first 3 games, was unable to recover and was only able to claim a draw throughout the event. Zivile Sarakauskiene on board 4 managed 50% by efficiently defeating the weaker opposition but she was unable to make much headway against higher rated opponents and, in consequence, lost some Elo points. Kanwal Bhatia put in a solid performance

So the star-studded European Team Championships proved to be a very exciting event with lots of interesting

games and close matches. Both England teams performed slightly below expectations but the Open event saw us with a very respectable placing. We can take heart from Adams win over Aronian and Gawain Jones excellent performance and positively celebrate Jovanka Houska's Silver medal on board 1 of the Women's event!

Well done Jovanka!

— from Mark Jordan, ECF Publicity Manager

London Chess Classic – conclusion

The London Chess Classic, which concluded on Sunday, is a mammoth undertaking very well executed and brought dozens of GMs, other titled players, and hundreds of amateurs to do battle in the plush conference suite of Kensington Olympia. The highlight of the LCC was of course the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour, which brought 10 of the top players in the world to London, and this rather overshadowed the other events which were pretty stupendous in their own right. It should also not be forgotten that the event is a fundraiser for Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC), the brainchild of Tournament Director and now ECF International Director, Malcolm Pein, and the success of this venture was well evidenced by the number of schools attending the junior events and picking up prizes. Junior chess in England has experienced something of a lull over the past couple of decades but one hopes the efforts of CSC will bear fruit in producing lots of amateurs with a life-long love for chess and perhaps a few masters and Grand Masters who can raise England to the heights reached a couple of decades back. Going by the enthusiasm of the juniors at the LCC and the fact that many young players are playing in the festival events and are much in evidence in tournaments elsewhere, a healthy measure of optimism is not misplaced.



[pictures by Ray Morris-Hill l-r — Magnus Carlsen, Benjamin Bok, Luke McShane & Garry Kasparov with Jennifer Shahade]

The final leg of the Grand Chess Tour was, as reported in previous articles, something of a slow burner. Players were criticised for wheeling out the ultra-solid and notoriously drawish Berlin variation against the Ruy Lopez, which actually accounted for 27% of openings in all games (!), and there were only 10 decisive results out of 45 games. The rule that a draw could not be agreed before move 40, except in the case of a three-fold repetition, did not work terribly well as the players, if they wished to agree a draw, were very skilled at ensuring that the necessary repetition did indeed occur. Nonetheless, many of the draws were fighting affairs and simply represented a fair result between evenly matched opponents or, on occasion as with Caruana's failure to bring home the bacon against Grischuk despite a completely won position, represented opportunities lost. Caruana, who drew all his games, will be somewhat disappointed with this result and it was not, as a rule, for want of trying. Adams, who also drew all his games despite being under some pressure in a number of them, will be happier but will need to consider why he often found himself in inferior positions from the opening which then needed to be defended, often very accurately.

Carlsen, who often gets off to a slow start, excelled himself on this occasion, drawing his first 6 games. The fact that 3 other players had done the same and no-one was forging ahead ensured, however, that he remained in touch. At the end of round 6, $\frac{1}{2}$ a point separated the leading 8! Therefore Carlsen's win against Nakamura in round 7 propelled him into equal second place together with Giri, Aronian and Grischuk the latter who had

defeated a suffering Topalov. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave's win over Anand pushed him up to sole first place on +2 but, with still only 1 point separating the top 8 and 2 rounds to go, he could hardly relax.

Round 7 had been exceptional for this tournament with 3 decisive games but round 8 returned to the norm with a single win, this time by Giri over Nakamura, the latter, who now having lost two in a row, was out of contention both in the tournament and the Grand Chess Tour Standings. Giri likened his win to "An angry little pussycat versus a wounded lion" though Nakamura more prosaically put it down to miss-assessing the position and failing to see the danger. The win put Giri in equal first with Vachier-Lagrave and it was a matter of waiting to see if Carlsen would join them after his long and technical battle against Topalov.. The position looked drawn but Carlsen continued to make progress but, as he said afterwards, fell afoul of the 50-move rule which states that a game is drawn if nothing is taken and thno pawns have moved move after 50 moves. Carlsen pointed out that he was making real if slow progress throughout and, if the 50-move rule did not exist, he would eventually have found his way to a win. A win in this game would have been very significant for the tournament standings and, potentially for the result of the Grand Chess Tour, and Carlsen both has a point and a reason to feel aggrieved. Whilst any similar situation has ro be rare it will be interesting to see, given this game, whether it prompts a discussion by FIDE as to the scope of the 50-move rule and what the result of that discussion might be. In the event, Carlsen's draw placed him in equal third with Aronian and Grischuk, just behind the leaders.

The ninth and final round saw both leaders draw which allowed Carlsen to catch up with a win over Grischuk. This could have been otherwise as Grischuk missed a drawing line but the result left the tournament in a 3-way draw for first which, under the tie-break rules, necessitated a three-way play-off and a very late night. To decide on the structure of the tie-break the Sonnenborn-Berger tiebreak method was used which dictated that Carlsen, by virtue of his win over Grischuk, came out on top and, therefore, Giri and MVL had to play first for the chance to take on Carlsen in a further play-off for the tournament. Each play-off would consist of two rapid play games and, if there was no decision, an Armageddon game in which White would have 5 minutes to Black's 6.

In the first game of the tie-break Giri wheeled out yet another Berlin against MVL's Ruy Lopez and the position looked drawish until the latter erred and Black achieved an advantage which he capitalised on by playing a brilliant attack. Both players ended very short of time and the game was decided when MVL blundered a piece in nail-biting circumstances. The end of the game generated a spontaneous round of applause in the commentary room.

Giri had only to draw with White in the second game to meet Carlsen in the final and set out to do just that. However things did not go to plan, whether through nerves of exhaustion, and a series of inaccuracies gave MVL the advantage and then the game. So to the Armageddon where MVL won the toss and chose Black, thus benefiting from the extra minute on the clock. He chose a Grunfeld, equalised easily and won convincingly.

The result of this match set up an intriguing situation. If MVL won he would not only win the tournament but would be equal first with Carlsen in the Grand Chess Tour standings which would necessitate another play-off! The fact that he had already had to play against Giri before facing Carlsen really stacked all the cards in Carlsen's favour, as Giri. As it happened however, no further play-off was necessary as Carlsen won the first game and efficiently drew the second to win both the tournament and the grand Chess Tour. A further consequence of the way tie-breaks are decided on the Grand Chess Tour is that, despite winning the first tie-break, the placings for the tournament rely on the original Sonnenborn-Berger calculation, which leaves MVL in third place rather than second! A further consequence of this is he ended fourth in the Grand Chess Tour standings. Since the qualification for next year's Grand Chess Tour is either a top three placing in this edition or is based on an average of ratings over the year, MVL, who had suffered a lean period and had fought his way back up the ratings, will lose out on both scores and will not qualify for the next series. All of this seems very unsatisfactory and one would hope that the tie-break and qualification rules for the Grand Chess Tour will be revisited to avoid a repeat of what seems like a substantial injustice in future.

So Carlsen won the final tournament of the Grand Chess Tour at the London Chess Classic and with it Grand Chess Tour itself but really with a following wind and by the skin of his teeth! He still remains World Champion and top of the rankings and this hardly magisterial win will, perhaps, inspire him to new heights, but one cannot escape the fact that, as things stand, his rivals are catching him up and his position at the top of the chess world is under

some threat.

The importance of the Grand Chess Tour has rather over-shadowed the other events t The London Chess Classic which, in any other context, would be headline grabbers themselves! The Weekday Open was immensely strong and closely fought and featured well over 50 titled players, including several world class GMs. It ended in a triumph for GM Benjamin Bok who, beating GM Lenderman in the last round, scored 8/9 a clear point ahead of the multiple tie for second among whom was English GM, Jonathan Hawkins.

The Super Rapidplay was even stronger headed by Matthew Sadler and Rustam Kasimdzanov, who unexpectedly won the FIDE World Championships in 2004 when it was in knockout format, at the expense of our own Michael Adams who he met in the final round. Neither of the two favourites, however, had particularly good tournaments and were not in contention for the top prize. The run-away winner was Luke McShane who had an unassailable 9/9 before the last round. He worked hard in the final game against Lenderman to make that an incredible 10/10 but had to be content with a draw which was probably not a major disappointment!

As if all of this was not enough for the chess fan, the London Chess Classic was also honoured with a visit from the incomparable Kasparov who still has an aura of greatness about him despite having been retired from serious play for some years. The present writer got as close to chess stardom as he is ever going to get finding himself sharing the lift with Mr K on the way out, whilst resisting the urge to ask him that well known question that chess players traditionally hear when visiting a London pub with a chess set: “Oi mate, fancy a game for a tenner?”

So an incredible chess event and an amazing experience is concluded and all there is to do is look forward to next year!

— *from Mark Jordan, ECF Publicity Manager*

Junior Chess

WYCC - Round 11 report and results

Today is an early start for the whole England Team. The weather remains fine and for the older players, it is a final stroll/mini-train ride to the venue. Inside the atmosphere is buzzing with parents and loved ones taking last minute photos. Our players are easily spotted wearing their smart team shirts for one last game. Good luck messages are conveyed and then once everyone has left the hall, the final games commence on time, at 10am.

Today saw another inter-team pairing – and so once again our maximum score is 22. Despite being the last round, the majority of England players had long games showing determination till the end. This commitment paid off, with the official ECF Team scoring 12 points; over half marks (55%).

For the boys there were individual wins for Adam, Michael, Koby, Girinath, Ilya, Dhruv and Savin; for the girls, Thivyaa and Nilomi.

Our top scorers of the tournament were Akshaya and Nilomi on 7/11 with Adam, Aditya, Dhruv and Savin close behind on 6.5/11. England had a further 8 players on 50% or more. Overall for the 11 rounds we scored 51% which considering we had a number of players new to International tournaments, was a significant achievement.

Well done to all the players, parents and coaches for making this such a fantastic trip – we hope to emulate such success in the future!

A safe trip home to all concerned. The full (summarised) table of results is shown below —

Section	Title	Name	Grade	Starting Rank	Points	Final Position
Open U18	FM	Taylor Adam C	2292	47	6.5	34
Girls U18		Head Louise	1955	40	4.0 *	
Open U16	FM	Haria Ravi	2445	7	6	58
Open U16		Ashworth Michael	1936	113	4.5	120
Girls U16		Weaver Lauren	1521	84	3.5	93
Open U14		Moreby James	2108	62	6	61
Open U14		Kalavannan Koby	2063	67	6	71
Open U14		Jayawarna Nugith	1984	90	6	76
Open U14		Grieve Harry	1971	93	6	72
Open U14		Haridas Girinath	1903	108	5.5	98
Open U14		Anilkumar Anantha P	1747	136	5	108
Open U14		Hinterreither Nikolai	1565	165	5	126
Girls U14		Kalaiyalahan Akshaya	2233	2	7	17
Open U12		Golding Alex	2088	31	5	123
Open U12		Brozel Sacha	1933	67	4.5	140
Open U12		Misyura Ilya	1751	112	6	87
Open U12		Munshi Aditya	1621	137	6.5	56
Girls U12		Davidson Laura	1448	82	4.5	93
Girls U12		Rahulan Thivyaa	1342	93	4.5	86
Open U10		Ratnesan Ranesh	1613	78	6	75
Girls U10		Desai Nilomi	1420	39	7	26
Open U08		Radhakrishnan Dhruv	1442	26	6.5	39
Open U08		Dias Savin	1357	39	6.5	42
Girls U08		Ratnesan Radha	0	74	4.5	62

* Louise played 8 games only



English Youth Grand Prix 2016

The English Youth Grand Prix 2016 is now well underway with twenty-four titles available from ages 7-18 years old, a prize of £100 for each winner and the opportunity to play for England in an international tournament. The latest standings can be found here - <http://englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/play/english-youth-gp/>

To participate in the English Youth Grand Prix 2016 and qualify for the titles:

You must be aged between 7-18 years old in 2016 (year of birth 1998-2009).

You should renew or take out a Junior Membership of the ECF for the year to 31 August 2016. If you have not previously been a member of the ECF then you may take out one year's free Junior Silver Membership.

Play in a minimum of three qualifying tournaments.

Full details, including information on the qualifying tournaments and sections, can be found in the English Youth Grand Prix Rules 2016 [<http://englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/play/english-youth-gp/english-youth-championship-grand-prix/>]. Note that ECF Junior Members who are FIDE-registered with other national federations are not eligible to participate in the English Youth Grand Prix.

The opportunity to play in an international tournament is subject to the rules of the Junior Selection Policy. The 2016 Junior Selection Policy and an associated Expression of Interest Form will be published shortly on this website.

For children aged between 7-16 years old in 2016 (year of birth 2000-2009), the London Junior Chess Championships (LJCC) at the University of Westminster in Harrow from 12-13 and 28-30 December 2015 are the next qualifying events in this year's English Youth Grand Prix. Further information on the LJCC and other tournaments included in the English Youth Grand Prix can be found in the ECF Calendar [<http://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>].

The English Youth Grand Prix 2016 is generously sponsored by the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust.

— *Traci Whitfield, Director of Junior Chess and Education*

Quadrangular at Liverpool College

--- December 5th and 6th 2015

This annual event was again held at Liverpool College and maintained its reputation for fighting chess and a good spread of winners. At U12 level, Wales were known to be very strong and so it proved. They won all their matches comfortably, totalling 23.5 points, 9.5 ahead of Scotland in second place with North on 11.5 and Midlands on 11. Ben Volland of Scotland won all his games as did Susanna Fraser, Hiya Ray and David McIntosh of Wales. In the U14s last year's U12 winners, North, showed they had lost none of their flair by romping home with 23.5 point and six players, Nugith Jayawarna, Tom Carrol, Mahima Raghavendra, Riyaan Yesudian, Seth Collinson and James Maffitt all scoring 100%. Scotland were second on 17, Wales (who had Rachel McIntosh on 3/3) on 13.5 and Midlands on 6. At U16 level no player managed a clean sweep and the final match decided the event. Scotland beat Midlands to win with 14.5 points followed by Midlands 10, North 8.5 and Wales 2.

— *Peter Purland*

National Schools Girls' Under 19 Chess Championships

- sponsored by St Catherine's, Bramley

Entries are still welcome! Contact: Andrew Martin Email: a.martin2007@yahoo.co.uk

Online entry here – <http://englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/girls-under-19-20152016/>

Any school (or sixth form college) with female pupils can enter, teams of 3 female players. No age handicapping. The Southern Semi-Final takes place on Sunday 17th January 2016 at St Catherine's School, Bramley, near Guildford, Surrey, and the Northern Semi-Final on Saturday 13th February 2016 at St Edward's Academy, Leek, Staffordshire.

The Under 19 Girls National Finals will be held on the 2nd and 3rd April 2016 at St Catherine's School, Bramley ...

World Schools event – cancellation

Please note that the World Schools Individual Chess Championships, which was to have taken place in Tunisia, has been cancelled by FIDE. This event now shows as TBC pending any further news.

Tradewise Grand Prix Leader Boards - 3 January 2016

Please note - these are only top fifteens for each category. The full leader boards can be found online at --- <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/competitions-plp/ecf-grand-prix/>

Open 180+

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	112455K	Hebden, Mark L	4NCL Guildford	242	G4157	594
2	119904D	Surtees, Mike J	Bolton	194	G17950	584
3	282399J	Kalavannan, Kobay	Coulsdon CF	192	JG6614	557
4	105817E	Arkell, Keith CCGM	4NCL Cheddleton	241	G15972	557
5	121366A	Wells, Jonathan C	North Norfolk	182	G14103	526
6	156101H	Burnett, Jim	Mansfield	196	G9194	520
7	241589G	Jaunooby, Ali Reza	Denton	202	G4139	512
8	273236B	Oyama, Akito	Cambridge City	204	JG17242	467
9	245951G	Jones, Steven A	Surbiton	203	G6739	445
10	109494E	de Coverly, Roger D	Bourne End	186	G1489	442
11	154721F	Cherniaev, Alexander	Hackney	239	S25369	442
11	283656H	Golding, Alex	Coulsdon CF	181	JG17052	442
13	283303H	Willow, Jonah B	West Nottingham	181	JG21061	438
14	245535D	Iyengar, Ilya	Wycombe & Hazlemere	192	G3986	437
15	248590E	Levene, Joseph	Q Elizabeth School Barnet	184	G6042	427

Women 180+

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	280020C	Kalaiyalahan, Akshaya	Coulsdon CF	196	JG6425	239
2	264085F	Head, Louise	Crowthorne	184	JG6409	189
3	291537G	Sucikova, Svetlana	Hertford	197	JG20260	171
4	123515B	Houska, Jovanka	Wood Green, Hilsmark Kingfisher	227	G4245	140
5	263500J	Ciuksyte, Dagne	4NCL Guildford	216	G5675	138
6	185204J	Hegarty, Sarah N	Marple	186	G3108	88
7	222273F	Norinkeviciute, Rasa	Hastings & St Leonards	186	S19204	68
8	142397G	Bhatia, Kanwal K	4NCL Barbican	194	G1303	32
9	277113F	Maroroa, Sue Y	4NCL White Rose	213	G20434	30
10	262210F	Hoare, Amy B	4NCL Sussex Smart Controls	187	JG5602	19

Open 160-179

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	118171D	Rogers, Tim L	Hendon	174	G6485	530
2	162291C	Jackson, Paul G	Coulsdon CF	165	G4609	527
3	242398E	Hjort, Helge	Hendon	179	G3467	514
4	260370G	Davison, Chris	Cambridge City	179	G4613	497
5	119124L	Slinger, AJ (Tony)	Undercliffe	164	G6481	484
6	107574D	Bryant, Richard BE	Chester	178	G2289	473
7	181426G	Burns, Martin J	Stockport	168	G6185	445
8	117410B	Price, Andrew	Leamington	160	G2613	434
9	163643B	Coward, Neil	Blackpool	167	G4561	413
10	115269F	McDonnell, James J	Streatham	167	S19848	398
11	234765K	McDonagh, Michael	Capenhurst	164	G18605	381
12	104852B	Whitehead, Mark A	Rochdale	172	G15489	380
13	259332E	Burke, Mitchell R	3Cs	175	G15044	366
14	110413F	Faldon, David J	Broadstairs	175	G18907	363
15	106176J	Barasi, Paul DL	Wimbledon	167	G19033	355

Women 160-179

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	117791G	Regan, Natasha K	4NCL Barbican	169	G23698	310
2	298915D	Matta, Francesca	Bicester	176	S27491	143
3	240315J	Grigoryan, Meri	Cavendish	170	G2304	90
4	252646D	Mate, Maria	Cowley	164	S19405	44
5	269274A	Zhu, Yao Yao	Urmston	175	G17024	41
6	154790C	Atkins, Rita	Cambridgeshire *	175	G24474	22

Open 140-159

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	111388E	Goodfellow, Russell R	Tunbridge Wells	148	G5615	558
2	122453A	Finnegan, Oliver	Loughton	154	G17636	557
3	116382G	O’Gorman, Brendan	DHSS	153	G4320	527
4	140662A	Pride, Stephen C	Cambridge City	145	G3453	504
5	220688C	Papier, Alan R	Bristol & Clifton	151	G6187	502
6	128713J	Wilson, Matthew R	Devon *	159	G17805	499
7	259148A	Foley, Phil T	Upminster	142	G4414	495
8	230106E	Clegg, Robert	Huddersfield	157	G3088	490
9	112597H	Hibbitt, Arthur M	Bristol Grendel	152	G17515	480
10	109622K	Desmedt, Richard E	Wombwell	152	G3411	473
11	144928L	Pepe, Salvatore	Hendon	144	G6894	470
12	104806F	Cawston, M John	Lady Anne Mdlton	152	G9196	447
13	127076L	Woodward, Tim F	Trowbridge	154	G6434	436
14	108722J	Connor, Michael I	Great Lever	153	S15540	428
15	116801A	Patrick, David A	Courier Halifax	158	G5137	394

Women 140-159

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	108565H	Headlong, Fenella	4NCL Brown Jack	148	G6024	56
2	281559L	Roberts, Lynda	Thornbury Bristol	153	S17779	54
3	121303K	Green, Fiona	Chorlton-cum-Hardy	145	G17190	29
4	272105D	York-Andersen, Anna	Cambridge University	141	G26242	16

Open 120-139

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	274725L	Fraser, Chris A	West Bridgford	120	S19796	570
2	114423G	Lim, Yu-Chin (Peter)	Harrow *	136	G23561	559
3	300350E	Wiltshir, Rich	Rushall	138	G28232	536
4	279615G	Crockett, Stephen J	Redditch	128	G6367	524
5	118502A	Sartain, Patrick P	Hanham Folk Centre	126	G20508	507
6	258940A	Allen, Timothy S	Battersea	121	G4415	490
7	108147A	Chadaway, Stephen M	Olton	133	G17617	489
8	170919H	Williams, Stephen	Cwmbran	136	S25816	472
9	123333G	Gilbert, David J	DHSS	137	G3430	464
10	264336E	Crouch, Timothy J	Kings Head	127	P5843	448
11	283350F	Bullock, Lee	London *	132	G18801	436
12	276572L	Egan, William J	Scunthorpe	130	G6039	422
13	283243E	Mitchell, Robert S	New Zealand	128	G17014	411
14	106888L	Blencowe, Ian P	Gloucester	134	G2910	381
15	101486K	Carter, KFJKFJ	Muswell Hill	138	G23323	381

Women 120-139

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	105540K	Ainscow, Faye	Kings Head	131	S18122	217
2	281105E	Heffer, Judith	Bishops Stortford	135	S19372	210
3	240374C	Moore, Gillian A	Southampton	139	G4997	180
4	295211H	Pacion, Dorota	South Bristol	125	S27306	170
5	285525C	O’Brien, Megan E	Plymouth	126	S21545	157
6	253266K	Mountford, Corinne	Hertford	134	G5771	130
7	263175B	Milson, Amy F	Louth	137	G17148	91
8	120714D	Camp, Syringa Lyn	Colwyn Bay	133	S6100	80
9	247136L	Denning, Julie L	Horsham	137	P6531	65
10	290173A	Milewska, Agnieszka	West London	137	S22605	55
11	116277K	Norman, Dinah M	Wokingham *	131	G17233	54
12	287733J	Orsagova, Erika	Greater London Chess Club	136	S21509	44

Open U120

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	140257C	Fraser, Alan R	Beckenham & Bromley	107	G2908	579
2	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	108	G6876	544
3	191456L	Maber, Martyn J	Taunton	103	G25858	507

4	111052E	Gardiner, Colin J	Newmarket	107	S1469	492
5	274379G	Macdonald, John R	Kings Head	111	G6972	455
6	163954H	Miles, Barry S	Coulsdon CF	117	G4976	433
7	293495E	Fisher, Neal	Peterborough	112	G23435	415
8	181078K	Robson, Caroline J	Barnet Elizabeth	107	G4002	399
9	111696E	Gretton, Margaret L	Gambit	102	S21042	386
10	180180G	De Santos, Andrew R	Preston	113	G15092	373
11	154123H	Daly, Grant	Downend & Fishponds	104	G24519	368
12	292592J	Hawthorne, Julian NH	Kidsgrove	113	S18820	366
13	153516L	Carr, John W	Portsmouth	98	G3441	357
14	104846G	Welch, Hazel	Seaton	107	G2831	349
15	142748K	Coleman, Patrick N	Lytham ex-Servicemen	99	S21332	347

Women U120

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	108	G6876	544
2	181078K	Robson, Caroline J	Barnet Elizabeth	107	G4002	399
3	111696E	Gretton, Margaret L	Gambit	102	S21042	386
4	104846G	Welch, Hazel	Seaton	107	G2831	349
5	178127D	Blackburn, Sandra G	Holmes Chapel	113	S15026	245
6	179055K	Boztas, Lana	Coulsdon CF	115	G1809	184
7	287646C	Woollard, Josephine	Sheffield Nomads	74	S17016	170
8	176063E	Chadwick, Susan E	Brighton & Hove	105	G2429	144
9	297321C	Carr, Wendy	Havant *	45	G26347	134
10	103414F	Fraser, Susan A	Darlington	107	G2267	130
11	115894G	Mosse, Denise M	Gateshead	118	P8579	129
12	122659K	Cox, Marian	Southampton *	87	G17114	111
13	296558G	Gardiner, Rebecca LG	Newmarket	54	S25949	86

Junior Prix

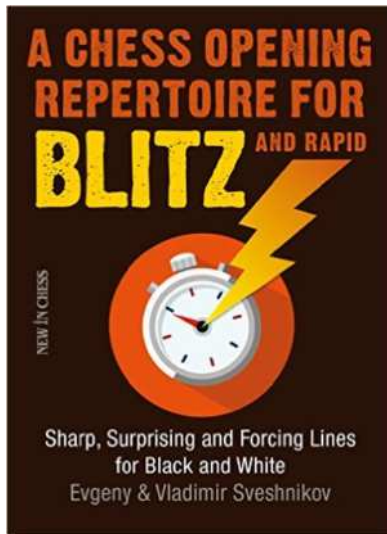
	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	294993D	Yoon, Jacob D	Middlesex Juniors	116	JG24229	614
2	282399J	Kalavannan, Koby	Coulsdon CF	192	JG6614	557
3	300010C	Saidmurodov, Shahjahon	Kent Junior Congresses	95	JG28149	538
4	295006G	Dias, Savin	Herts Juniors	117	JG24485	520
5	280882B	Varney, Zoe	Cumnor	171	JG17170	510
6	300121A	Royal, Shreyas	London E *	72	JG28166	486
7	279727G	Balouka-Myers, Gabriel	Garden Suburb S	148	JG17131	478
8	283704D	Rocco, Federico	Garden Suburb S	162	JG18859	474
9	283316F	Ramaiya, Anshu	Surrey Congresses	154	JG6986	474
10	289729F	Cocks, Elliot	Essex Juniors	157	JG24214	473
11	294266F	Sheikh, Anum	Middlesex Juniors	113	JG24565	470
12	284161H	Varney, Daniel	Cumnor	151	JG17169	467
13	273236B	Oyama, Akito	Cambridge City	204	JG17242	467
14	283657K	Golding, James	Ashtead	170	JG17053	465
15	279873G	Gallagher, Daniel GH	Maldon	178	JG17251	460



A Chess Opening Repertoire for Blitz & Rapid

by Evgeny & Vladimir Sveshnikov

Published by New In Chess, 459 pages £19.99



The title certainly makes you think and wonder. What is the secret of playing chess quickly and what openings can lead to success? The answers if you are playing with the black pieces are apparently the Alekhine Defence against 1 e4 and the Queen's Gambit Accepted against 1 d4. The father and son authors make a convincing case for their choice of openings with the emphasis on provoking the opponent and playing sound, but fairly unusual lines. The key to winning with White starts with 1 e4 and the traditional Ruy Lopez is overlooked in favour of the Vienna Game. Evgeny makes a good case for the Vienna by pointing out there are less moves to be remembered and Black has limited options in replying compared to the more famous openings. The Sicilian Defence is countered by 2 b3 while the Caro-Kann is taken care of with 2 Nc3 and 3 Nf3. The French Defence is also slightly unusual with 2 Nf3 and 3 Nc3 in keeping with the style against the Caro, although admittedly the diagram introducing the French has 9 black pawns which is either a blip in typesetting or a one minute game gone wrong. The translation is performed by Englishman Steve Giddins and it reads well. If you are wondering what the

Sveshnikovs think about the Scandinavian, the Pirc or Modern then I can't help you because they are not mentioned. The problem of a repertoire book is that you cannot do a comprehensive survey because the book would need 1001 pages, so something needs to be cut. I would personally prefer a few lines on some of the lesser known openings rather than nothing at all. The procedure when facing the Réti and English Openings is to cover everything in 17 pages, which I think is acceptable because some things have to be limited. I like the insight that has gone into choosing the openings and believe that anyone studying them will improve.

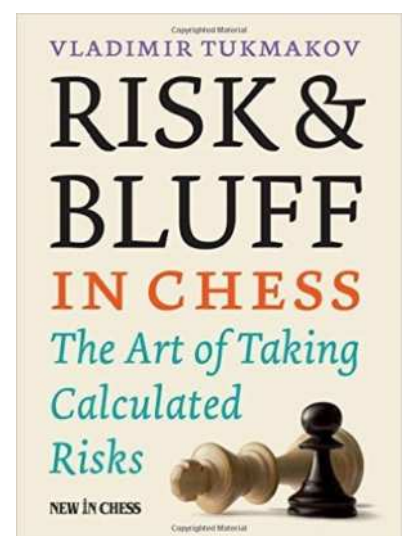
A repertoire that would suit any tournament player who wants to win.

Risk & Bluff in Chess

by Vladimir Tukmakov

Published by New In Chess, 224 pages £18.99

There are some who have noticed Anish Giri's bodyguard who has made regular appearances at the London Chess Classic. I had been told he was ex-KGB and somebody claimed he was a martial arts expert but what I saw was an Ukrainian grandmaster. Giri's coach is a formidable senior player who has recently been putting out well received books for New In Chess. In his latest tome the theme is The Art of Taking Calculated Risks which has generally lots of old games as examples. Normally, I would wonder if this represents old material that had been previously been used but as Tukmakov played in many of the tournaments, he has more than the benefit of the doubt. An author who has finished second three times in the formidable Soviet Championship is ideally placed to make interesting comments on his contemporaries and also offer numerous tips. The games do not represent perfect play but often involve a psychological angle such as sacrificing a pawn to avoid a draw or accelerate an attack. The last game in the book is also the most recent one being from Zurich 2014 and featuring the World Champion.



The right way to improve.

ECF Event Calendar

~@ 16 Jan 4NCL Rounds 3 and 4 / Weekend 2, Park Inn Telford (Division 3 South, Division 4 South) De Vere Wychwood Park (Division 3 North)

~* @ 16-17 Jan 8th Golders Green Congress, Golders Green Parish Church Hall, West Heath Drive, London NW11 7QG

Contact: Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Tel: 07855 036 537 Web:

<http://goldersgreenschessweekender.blogspot.co.uk> - starts 10:30AM ends 5:30PM. Our 8th Congress is in three sections: Under 2200 / U1900 / and an ECF graded section Under 135 from 16-17 January 2016

~*Y 17 Jan KJCA GP 4, The Cornwallis Academy, Hubbards Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME17 4HX Contact: Krishna Shiatis

Email: webmaster@kjca.org Website: <http://www.kjca.org/event/117> - starts 9:00AM ends 5:30PM. ECF Graded rapid-play. All juniors welcome!

~ 17 Jan Southend Junior Tournament, Prince Avenue Academy, Hornby Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0LG

Contact: Dave Hawkins Email: davehawkins126@googlemail.com Tel: 020 8531 5066 Web: <http://www.ejca.co.uk> - starts 9:30AM ends 5:30PM. Essex Junior Grand Prix 2015-16 Round 3

~* 23 Jan Poplar Rapid-Play, Langley Hall, St.Nicholas Church Centre, Ettrick Street, Poplar, London E14 0QD Contact:

Norman Went Email: DocklandsChess@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07905 360659 Web: <http://www.spanglefish.com/dockland-schessclub> - starts 10:30AM ends 6:00PM. 6 round Swiss seeded rapid-play tournament with two grade banded sections; Minor Under 130 and Major Under 171

~Y 23 Jan Maidenhead Junior Club Tournament, Claires Court Junior Boys School, Cannon Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Postcode of Entrance Drive SL64QQ Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com Tel: 01491 576052 Web: <http://www.maidenheadchess.btik.com> - starts 9.30am ends 1.00pm. Under 110 Rapid Play Section, and Delancey UK

Chess Challenge Tournament Qualifying for the MegafinalY

23 Jan EPSCA Rapidplay, Broadgreen International School, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 5UQ Contact: Julian Clissold Email: julian.clissold@outlook.com Website: <http://www.epsca.org.uk/> - EPSCA Junior Rapidplay with age groups from Under 8 to Under 11. Each age section has both a standard and a "new-to-chess" section. The Open Under 11 Section is a qualifying event for the EPSCA Squad

~@ 23-24 Jan 4NCL Rounds 3 and 4 / Weekend 2, Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport (Divisions 1 and 2) Contact: Mike Truran Email: mike@truranfamily.co.uk

~Y 24 Jan RGS Guildford School Team Tournament, Royal Grammar School, High Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3BB

Contact: Alan Thorn Email: a.thorn@rgs-guildford.co.uk Tel: 01483 880600 Website: <http://www.rgs-guildford.co.uk> - 5-round team Swiss event for secondary school teams of 4 players

~@ 29-31 Jan 4th 4NCL FIDE Rated Congress, Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport, Coventry Road B26 Contact: Mike Truran

Email: mike@truranfamily.co.uk - FIDE Open, ECF U175, ECF U135. Five rounds Friday 7pm – Sunday 7pm. For entry forms, information – www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information.htm

~* @ 30 Jan 6th Muswell Hill Rapidplay, The Clissold Arms, 105 Fortis Green, East Finchley, London N2 9HR Contact:

Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Tel: 07855036537 Web: <http://www.muswellhillchess.blogspot.co.uk/> - starts 10:30AM ends 5:45PM. SWISS 6 ROUNDS; Open, Major U160, Amateur U120; Time Control : G25+5 seconds a move throughout; £500 prize fund

~Y 30-31 Jan The 22nd South of England Junior Chess Championships, Yateley Manor School, 51 Reading Rd, Yateley,

Hampshire GU46 7UQ Contact: Amy Grieve Email: amy.grieve@ntlworld.com Tel: 01276504849 - Championships from U7- U16. A long-standing event

~Y 31 Jan Barnet Junior Chess Tournament and Training Day, St Paul's C of E Primary School, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill,

LONDON NW7 1QU Contact: Laurie Winston Email: training@barnetjuniorchess.com Tel: 07804 047647 Web:

<http://www.barnetjuniorchess.com> - starts 12:00PM ends 5:00PM. ECF graded games and training from professional coaches in small groups. Age group prizes, certificates, medals and cash awards. Children are fully supervised - parents do not need to stay

Y 31 Jan English Chess Challenge Qualifier, Wimbledon Park Primary School, Havana Road, Wimbledon Park, Surrey SW19

8EJ Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web:

http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Junior%20Home%20Page/ECC_Qual_info.htm - starts 10:45AM ends 6:00PM. A 7 round open Swiss for juniors born after 31 August 1997

~* 31 Jan 30th Stockport Rapidplay, The Davenport Hotel, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 Contact: Peter Taylor Email:

pht@rover12.wanadoo.co.uk - One day 6 Round Swiss event. Four sections: Open, Major (U170), Intermediate (U140), Minor (U110). Each player has 30 minutes for all moves. Prizes: £130, £80, £40 and Grading £40 each section. Stockport League Trophies, Veteran, Junior and Buxton prizes. New large venue close to the M60 motorway

~ 31 Jan 27th Nottingham Rapidplay, Nottingham High School, Waverley Mount, Nottingham NG7 4ED Contact: Robert Richmond Email: Robrchmnd@aol.com Tel: 0115 9455908 Website: <http://Nottschess.org> - starts 10.00AM ends 6.30PM.

OPEN / U160 / U135 / U110. Entry Form and on-line entry available on Notts chess website

2 Feb Training with GM Bogdan Lalic, 84-90 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3BA Contact: Scott Freeman

Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web:

<http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Adult%20Competitions/Lalic%20Coaching.htm> - starts 7:30AM ends 9:30PM. A series of 5 two hour sessions, repeating the very successful sessions held in the early part of last year

@ 4 Feb Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz Chess Tournament, Golders Green Unitarians Church, 31½ Hoop Lane, Golders Green, London NW11 8BS Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Tel: 07855 036 537 Web:

<http://www.hendonchessclub.com/blitz/> - starts 7:30PM ends 10:00PM. One section, Swiss system tournament. 1st prize £20, 2nd Prize £10 and £10 prize for the highest Hendon Chess Club member.

Y 5 Feb Champions' League Chess (Kent), Unicorn Primary School, Creswell Drive, Off South Eden Park Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3AL Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web:

http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Results/2016-03-05_CLC_K.htm - starts 1:30PM ends 6:00PM. 2nd leg of qualification towards the Summer Term final

*** 5-7 Feb Frodsham Congress**, Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham, Cheshire West and Chester WA6 Contact: Pat Ridley Email: patrick.ridley@ntlworld.com - a 5-round weekend tournament. Further details will be provided at a later date ...

~Y 6 Feb Sussex Junior Eastbourne Rapidplay, Bishop Bell School, Priory Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 7BE Contact: Sandra Manchester Email: entrymanager@sussexjuniorchess.org Website: <http://www.sussexjuniorchess.org> - 6 round Swiss in 4 sections - U18 Major, U18 Minor, U11 Major, U11 Minor. Open to all aged under 18 on 31st August 2015

~* 6 Feb Poplar Rapid-Play, Langley Hall, St.Nicholas Church Centre, Ettrick Street, Poplar, London E14 0QD Contact: Norman Went Email: DocklandsChess@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07905 360659 Web: <http://www.spanglefish.com/dockland-schessclub> - starts 10:30AM ends 6:00PM. 6 round Swiss seeded rapid-play tournament with two grade banded sections; Minor Under 130 and Major Under 171

~* 6-7 Feb 39th Annual Kidlington Chess Tournament, Exeter Hall, Kidlington, Oxfordshire Contact: Gerard O'Reilly Email: gerard@fianchetto.co.uk Website: <https://kidlingtonchess.org.uk/> - 5-round congress (3 rounds on Saturday, 2 on Sunday) in 4 sections: U225, U180, U145, and U120. Total prize fund approx. £2000. Time limit: 90 minutes plus 15 seconds added from move 1. Bookstall provided by Chess Direct.

@ 6-16 Feb FIRST SATURDAY GM-IM-FM tournament, Budapest, Hungary, MEDOSZ hotel, district No.6. Jokai square 9. 1006 Contact: IO Nagy Laszlo Email: firstsat@hu.inter.net Tel: +36-30-2301914 Web: <http://www.firstsaturday.hu> - International all-play-all tournaments for the GM-IM-norms and FIDE ELO ratings

~ 7 Feb Norfolk Rapidplay Congress, Gas Social Club, Roundtree Way, Norwich NR7 8SQ Contact: John Wickham Email: j.r.wickham@btinternet.com Tel: 07808876785 - starts 9:45AM ends 6:00:00PM. 6 round Swiss - 3 sections --- Championship, Challengers (U140), U100

~*Y 7 Feb KJCA GP 5, Dulwich College, Dulwich Common, Dulwich, Kent SE21 7LD Contact: Krishna Shiatis Email: webmaster@kjca.org Website: <http://www.kjca.org/event/118> - starts 9:00AM ends 5:30AM. KJCA GP 5 at the fabulous location of Dulwich College. ECF graded rapidplay, all juniors welcome.

~* @ 13 Feb Golders Green Rapidplay Congress, Golders Green Church Hall, W Heath Dr, London NW11 7QG Contact: Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Web: www.goldersgreengreenchess.blogspot.co.uk/ - Open, Under 170, Under 145 and Under 120 sections, 6 round Swiss open, £500.00 prize fund

~Y 13 Feb Maidenhead Junior Club Tournament, Claires Court Junior Boys School, Cannon Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire Postcode of Entrance Drive SL64QQ Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com Tel: 01491 576052 Web: <http://www.maidenheadchess.btik.com> - starts 2.00pm ends 6.00pm. Under 110 Rapid Play Section, and Delancey UK Chess Challenge Tournament Qualifying for the Megafinal

~@ 13-14 Feb 4NCL Rounds 5 and 6 / Weekend 3, Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport (Divisions 1 and 2), Park Inn Telford (Division 3 South, Division 4 South), Cedar Court Hotel (Division 3 North) Contact: Mike Truran Email: mike@truranfamily.co.uk

~* 19-21 Feb Castle Chess Congress - 9th Portsmouth (Fareham), Lysses House Hotel, 51 High Street, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 7BQ Contact: Tony Corfe / Marc Shaw Email: tony@castlechess.co.uk Tel: 07973 516718 Website: <http://castlechess.co.uk> - starts 7:30PM ends 6:00PM. Three sections: OPEN incl. Premier U180, MAJOR U160 incl. Intermediate U140, MINOR U120 incl. Challengers U100. Guaranteed Prize Fund: £150 per Event. Limited single rooms available, otherwise single supplement applied in double rooms. Delightful family run hotel central in Fareham. Book via Tony Corfe

~*#@ 19-21 Feb e2e4 Gatwick Congress, Crowne Plaza Hotel Gatwick Airport, Langley Drive, Crawley, Sussex RH11 7SX Contact: Sean Hewitt Email: gatwick@e2e4.org.uk Tel: 0845 463 9798 Web: <http://www.e2e4.org.uk/gatwick> - starts 7:00PM ends 7:00PM. Three FIDE rated sections: Open, U1950 and U1700. Free entry to female players

~*#Y+ 20-21 Feb Wiltshire & West of England Junior Open Championships, St. Joseph's Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 3LR Contact: Bev Schofield Email bev@schofieldhall.co.uk - starts 9:45AM ends 6:13PM. Although this 30th Junior Open Congress is organised by Wiltshire Junior Chess, it is open to ANY chess player under 18 on the 31st August 2015

~@ 20-21 Feb 36th Hampstead Congress U1900/U2200/U135, Henderson Court Day Centre, 102 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 6NS Contact: Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com - an Under 2200 (ECF 200) / Under 1900 (ECF 160) / Under 135 (ECF graded not FIDE rated) congress every month! NOW IN SECTIONS. All moves in 60 minutes each PLUS 30 seconds a move throughout. £150 1st, £75 2nd in each section PLUS rating prizes. Space STRICTLY limited space, so enter

early! <http://www.hampsteadchess.blogspot.co.uk> for details of times and fees (ECF Gold Membership required for ENGLISH players)

~ **20-21 Feb 2016 British Universities' Championships**, Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport, Coventry Road, Birmingham B26 3QW Contact: Alex Holowczak Email: alexholowczak@gmail.com Tel: 07913976768 Web: <http://www.buca.org.uk> - British universities only

~*# **26-28 Feb Doncaster Chess Congress 2016**, Hall Cross School, Thorne Road, Doncaster DN1 2HY Contact: Steve Mann Email: sjmann@gmx.co.uk Tel: 01709 379209 - starts 7:00PM ends 6:40PM. 4 Swiss sections: Open, Under 176, Under 146, Under 126. Entry fee £31 adults, £26 juniors; less for ECF membership (above Bronze) £7 adults, £5 juniors. Entries, to Steve Mann, by post, e-mail or phone.

~***@ 26-28 Feb Bristol Spring Congress**, Bristol Grammar School, University Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1SR Contact: Alan Papier Email: chinadoc@chinadoc.force9.co.uk Tel: 07899826515 Web: <http://www.chessit.co.uk> - starts 6:45PM ends 7:00PM. 5 round Swiss. 3 sections - Open, Major (U155), Minor (U125). Open section FIDE rated. Time controls (all sections) - 90 mins. with 30 secs. increments

~ **26-28 Feb Wiltshire Championship 2016**, Welsey Road Social Club, Wesley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 0AX Contact: Tony Ransom Email: chesssalsa@aol.com Tel: 01225774538 - starts 7:00PM ends 10:30PM. 1 overall tournament with 3 sections Major (players graded above 145), Intermediate (players graded above 115 and under 146) and Minor (players graded under 116) The winner of the Major will be the 2016 Wiltshire Champion, the winner of the Intermediate will be the 2016 Wiltshire Intermediate Champion and the winner of the Minor will be the 2016 Wiltshire Minor Champion. In the event of there being less than 6 players in a section the right is reserved to transfer entrants to another section.

Y 27 Feb West of England & South Wales Junior Teams Jamboree [U9, U11, U14] Contact: Chris Strong Email: cms121@btopenworld.com

~**Y 27 Feb Maidenhead Junior Club Tournament**, Claires Court Junior Boys School, Cannon Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire Postcode of Entrance Drive SL64QQ Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com Tel: 01491 576052 Web: <http://www.maidenheadchess.btik.com> - starts 9.30am ends 1.00pm. Under 110 Rapid Play Section, and Delancey UK Chess Challenge Tournament Qualifying for the Megafinal

@ 27 Feb Leyland 9 Round FIDE Blitz Chess Tournament, Wellfield Business and Enterprise College, Yewlands Drive, Leyland PR25 2TP MAP Contact: Bob or Janet Email: mailto:leylandrapidplay2016@gmail.com Tel: 07866 944563

~ **28 Feb Leyland Rapidplay Chess Congress**, Wellfield Business and Enterprise College, Yewlands Drive, Leyland PR25 2TP MAP Contact: Bob or Janet Email: mailto:leylandrapidplay2016@gmail.com Tel: 07866 944563 – Six rounds - Major (U180), Intermediate (U130) and Minor (U100) sections. January 2016 grading list will be used

28 Feb KJCA Coaching Day 4, Bradbourne Park Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LB Contact: Krishna Shiatis Email: webmaster@kjca.org Website: <http://www.kjca.org/event/124> - starts 6:55AM ends 4:15PM - Coaching days for KJCA are designed to teach children from beginner level all the way to advanced. Please see KJCA website for the different classes and levels. The coaching programme is run by and has been designed by Chris Ward GM.

@ 3 Mar Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz Chess Tournament, Golders Green Unitarians Church, 31½ Hoop Lane, Golders Green, London NW11 8BS Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Tel: 07855 036 537 Web: <http://www.hendonchessclub.com/blitz/> - starts 7:30PM ends 10:00PM. One section, Swiss system tournament. 1st prize £20, 2nd Prize £10 and £10 prize for the highest Hendon Chess Club member.

~* **4-6 Mar East Devon Chess Congress 2016**, Exeter Corn Exchange, Market Street, Exeter EX1 1BW Contact: Dr Tim Paulden Email: timpaulden@gmail.com Tel: 07809464639 Web: <http://chessdevon.co.uk> - the 41st East Devon Chess Congress. Five round Swiss tournament in central Exeter location. Well run tournament in spacious playing conditions with bar and refreshments available. Book and chess equipment stall present.

~***@ 5 Mar Golders Green Rapidplay Congress**, Golders Green Church Hall, W Heath Dr, London NW11 7QG Contact: Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com Web: www.goldersgreengchess.blogspot.co.uk/ - Open, Under 170, Under 145 and Under 120 sections, 6 round Swiss open, £500.00 prize fund

~* **5-6 Mar Warwickshire Open Chess Championships**, Coventry Rugby Club, Butts Park Arena, Butts Road, Coventry CV1 3GE Contact: Ed Goodwin Email: enquiries@congress.warwickshirechess.org Tel: 07528 611483 Web: <http://www.congress.warwickshirechess.org> - starts 9:30AM ends 5:30PM. Sections: Open, U170, U145, U120. Qualifier for British Chess Championship. £2,000 prize fund guaranteed

@ 5-15 Mar FIRST SATURDAY GM-IM-FM tournament, Budapest, Hungary, MEDOSZ hotel, district No.6. Jokai square 9. 1006 Contact: IO Nagy Laszlo Email: firstsat@hu.inter.net Tel: +36-30-2301914 Web: <http://www.firstsaturday.hu> - International all-play-all tournaments for the GM-IM-norms and FIDE ELO ratings

~**Y+ 6 Mar Bury St Edmunds Junior Chess Congress**, Moreton Hall Community Centre, Symonds Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7EE Contact: Bob Jones Email: bjoneschess@btinternet.com Tel: 01284 811555 Web: <http://www.buryknightschess.org.uk> - starts 9:30AM ends 5:00PM. A six-round rapidplay in four age-group sections - u18, u14, u11 and u9. Organised by the Bury Knights Junior Chess Club.

~**Y 6 Mar Barnet Junior Chess Tournament and Training Day**, St Paul's C of E Primary School, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, LONDON NW7 1QU Contact: Laurie Winston Email: training@barnetjuniorchess.com Tel: 07804 047647 Web: <http://www.barnetjuniorchess.com> - starts 12:00PM ends 5:00PM. ECF graded games and training from professional

coaches in small groups. Age group prizes, certificates, medals and cash awards. Children are fully supervised - parents do not need to stay

8 Mar Training with GM Bogdan Lalic, 84-90 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3BA Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web:

<http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Adult%20Competitions/Lalic%20Coaching.htm> - starts 7:30AM ends 9:30PM. A series of 5 two hour sessions, repeating the very successful sessions held in the early part of last year

~# 11-13 March 40th Blackpool Chess Conference, The Imperial Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool FY1 2HB Contact: Simon Woodcock Email: blackpoolchessconference@yahoo.co.uk Web: <http://www.blackpoolchess.org.uk> - starts 7:00PM ends 6:15PM. Five sections - Lancashire Open with a £1500 1st prize, The Imperial Major graded below 181, The Intermediate graded below 155, The Minor graded below 135 and The Standard graded below 115. The total prize fund is £7250. There will be an online entry section on the Website. No telephone entries will be accepted. The final closing date for entries Thursday 10th March at 18:00hrs. No entries on the day

~* 11-13 Mar Castle Chess - 8th Hereford Congress, The Green Dragon Hotel, Broad Street, Hereford HR4 9BG Contact: Tony Corfe / Marc Shaw Email: tony@castlechess.co.uk Tel: 07973 516718 Website: <http://castlechess.co.uk> - starts 7:00PM ends 6:00PM. OPEN incl. Premier U180, MAJOR U160 incl. Intermediate U140, MINOR U120 incl. Challenger U100. Guaranteed Prize Fund £150 per event. This delightful hotel is only a short 5 minute walk to the central Hereford Cathedral. The Green Dragon hosted a masters tournament in 1885 where the winner was JH Blackburne

Y 12 Mar Champions' League Chess (Surrey East & Sussex), Chipstead Valley Primary School, Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3BW Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web: http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Results/2016-03-12_CLC_SE.htm - starts 1:30PM ends 6:00PM. 2nd leg of qualification for a Summer term final

~* 12 Mar Poplar Rapid-Play, Langley Hall, St.Nicholas Church Centre, Ettrick Street, Poplar, London E14 0QD Contact: Norman Went Email: DocklandsChess@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07905 360659 Web: <http://www.spanglefish.com/docklandschessclub> - starts 10:30AM ends 6:00PM. 6 round Swiss seeded rapid-play tournament with two grade banded sections; Minor Under 130 and Major Under 171

12 Mar EPSCA Under 9 Zones Contact: Nigel Dennis

~Y+ 12-13 Mar Junior 4NCL, Park Inn Birmingham West, Birmingham Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 6RS Contact: Mike Truran Email: mike@truranfamily.co.uk

13 Mar Rothay Manor Chess Holiday, Rothay Manor Hotel, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0EH Contact: Peter Cloudsdale Email: cloudsdales_c@hotmail.co.uk - 7 round Swiss tournament, 4 tutorial sessions on openings, middle games, endings and tactics

Y 13 Mar Champions' League Chess (Surrey West), Wimbledon Park Primary School, Havana Road, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 8EJ Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web: http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Results/2016-03-13_CLC_SW.htm - starts 1:30PM ends 6:00PM. 2nd leg of qualification for a Summer term final

19 Mar EPSCA Under 11 Zones Contact: Nigel Dennis

~@ 19-20 Mar 4NCL Rounds 7 and 8 / Weekend 4, Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport (Divisions 1 and 2), Park Inn Telford (Division 3 South, Division 4 South), Cedar Court Hotel (Division 3 North) Contact: Mike Truran Email: mike@truranfamily.co.uk

~@ 12-13 Mar 37th Hampstead Congress U1900/U2200/U135, Henderson Court Day Centre, 102 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 6NS Contact: Adam Raoof Email: adamraoof@gmail.com - an Under 2200 (ECF 200) / Under 1900 (ECF 160) / Under 135 (ECF graded not FIDE rated) congress every month! NOW IN SECTIONS. All moves in 60 minutes each PLUS 30 seconds a move throughout. £150 1st, £75 2nd in each section PLUS rating prizes. Space STRICTLY limited space, so enter early! <http://www.hampsteadchess.blogspot.co.uk> for details of times and fees (ECF Gold Membership required for ENGLISH players)

Y 20 Mar Champions' League Chess (Middlesex), Edward Woods Community Centre, 60-70 Norland Road, London W11 4TX Contact: Scott Freeman Email: chess@ccfworld.com Tel: 020 8645 9586 Web: http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Results/2016-03-20_CLC_M.htm - starts 1:30PM ends 6:00PM. 2nd leg of qualification for a Summer term final

~ 20 Mar Bourne End (Rapid Play) One Day Chess Congress, Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire SL8 5SX Contact: David Langford Email: langford@thamesinternet.com Tel: 01628520065 Web: <http://www.bucksvoice.net/bourneendchess> - starts 10:00AM ends 7:10PM. Now in its 41st year, this is a rapid play tournament with 45 minutes on each clock. A cafe and a bar will be open for refreshments. Prize giving is at approximately 7.30 p.m. Entry forms will be on the Bourne End Chess Club web site from late January.

Russian Revenge in Reykjavik

Some 43 years after the Match of the Century, Russian players returned to the same Reykjavik venue and were very successful in the European Team Championships. England team member Kanwal Bhatia reports, while Malcolm Pein annotates the key games

For a small nation that has never featured too competitively on the international stage, Iceland has a surprisingly strong history of affection for chess. The country famously gave sanctuary to an outlawed Bobby Fischer, at a time when he had little to offer in return in terms of chess. Of course, by then, Fischer had already made his contribution. The Laugardalshöll arena in Reykjavik played host to the 1972 'Match of the Century'; in November, chess returned to the same venue for the 2015 European Team Championships.

England were represented (in board order) by Michael Adams, David Howell, Luke McShane and Nigel Short, and by Jovanka Houska, Dagne Ciuksyte, Sabrina Chevannes, Zivile Sarakauskiene and myself, in probably the strongest teams in a recent years. David Openshaw captained the Open team, with Peter Wells accompanying as coach and trainer, while Jonathan Speelman was in charge of the women's team. Scotland were the only other home nation represented, with Stephen Mannion, Alan Tate, Graham Morrison, Andrew Muir and Andrew Burnett in the Open.

In these events, it is customary for the host nation to be allowed more than one team to even numbers (the 2010 Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk included three Russian teams!). Instead of a more predictable team of up-and-coming youth, Iceland chose to honour its legends. All players were over 50, with former FIDE President GM Friðrik Ólafsson belying his 80 years to play board five. Other notable participants were the team from Kosovo making their debut, and a Norwegian team headed by the current world champion, who was rather out of sorts, blundering against Yannick Pelletier and also going down against one of his main rivals at the top of the rating list.

M.Carlsen-L.Aronian
Norway vs Armenia
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♗f6 4 d3 ♖c5
5 0-0 ♗d4 6 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 7 c3 ♗b6
8 ♗a3 c6 9 ♖a4 d6 10 ♗b3 a5!

A bold move declaring that the bishop will retreat only to a7 not c7.

11 ♗c4 ♖a7 12 a4 0-0 13 ♖g5 h6
14 ♖xf6?!

A questionable decision, as Black becomes extremely active with two bishops and a roving queen, while the white knight is out of play for much of the game. 14 ♖h4 was better.

14... ♗xf6 15 ♗xa5 d5!



16 ♖c2

16 exd5 cxd5 17 ♖xd5 ♗d8! 18 ♖xb7 ♖xb7
19 ♗xb7 ♗c7 20 ♗f3 ♗ab8 wins the knight
and White's pawns are insufficient compensation.

16...dxe4 17 dxe4 ♗d8 18 ♖e1 ♗g5!

Intending ...♗d2 and ...♖h3.

19 ♗h1 ♗d2 20 ♖d1 ♖e6! 21 b4

21 ♗xb7 ♖c4 wins as f2 falls.

21... ♗ad8



22 ♗xb7??

22 ♖e2 ♗d7 23 ♗d1 ♗xd1 24 ♖xd1
♗c1 25 ♖b3 ♗xe1 26 ♗xe1 ♖xb3
27 ♗xb3 ♖xf2 28 ♗b1 is somewhat better
for Black, but this was White's best.

22... ♖c4!! 23 ♗xd8 ♖xf1 24 ♗xf1 ♗xf2
25 ♗g1 ♗a2! 26 ♗xa2 ♖xg1 27 ♖xg1 ♗c1
27... ♗xd8 28 ♖e2 ♗b6+ 29 ♖f1 ♗e3
30 a5 ♗f4+ 31 ♖e1 ♗xe4 32 ♗a1 ♗c2
33 ♖f1 ♗xc3 also wins.

28 ♖f2 ♗xd1 29 ♗xc6 ♗b3 30 ♗d2
♗xc3 31 ♗d6 ♗b2+ 32 ♖e3 ♗a3+
33 ♖f2 ♗xa4



There is no time to construct a fortress.
The queen feasts.

34 ♗xe5 ♗c2+ 35 ♖f3 f5! 36 ♗d3 ♖xe4+
37 ♖xe4 ♗xg2+ 38 ♗f3 ♗g4+ 39 ♖e3
g5 40 ♖f2 ♗f5 41 ♗d8+ ♖g7 42 ♖g2 g4
43 ♗d2 ♗e6 44 ♗f1 ♗c6+ 0-1

The quickest win. The rook falls after
45 ♖g3 ♗c7+ or 45 ♖f2 ♗b6+.

The Russian contingent is, of course, always noteworthy for its sheer strength. Aside from the players themselves, you could form a competitive team from their accompanying seconds (and there were enough of them present). Despite this, and despite their invariable top seeding, the last time Russia won the Open section was in 2007. The women's team on the other hand has dominated this event, with three golds and one silver over the same time period. This

year, however, without the Kosintseva sisters, they were seeded only second after Georgia.

The tournament format has remained consistent over recent years – matches feature teams of four players, chosen from a squad of up to five, with the order set at the start of the tournament. The final ranking after nine rounds is based on team match points. In four-board matches this means that every game has a significant impact and, to do well as a team, not more than one player can be out-of-form. The England men's team started solidly enough, with a win over Italy followed by draws against Georgia, Croatia and eventual silver-medallists Armenia. However, having one team member suffering from illness from the start of the tournament took its toll and the team entered the rest day with a narrow loss to Germany.

M.Adams-L.Aronian England vs Armenia Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 ♗f6 4 0-0 ♗xe4 5 d4 ♗d6 6 ♗xc6 dxc6 7 dxe5 ♗f5 8 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 9 h3 ♗e8

Another important game in Reykjavik, Grischuk-Fressinet, saw instead 9...h6 10 ♗d1+ ♗e8 11 ♗c3 ♗e7 (Black has lots of time for manoeuvres as his solid position or 'Berlin Wall' cannot be stormed quickly) 12 b3 ♗f5 13 ♗d4 ♗h7 14 ♗ce2 ♗d8 15 ♗b2 a6 (preparing to kick the knight away without allowing ♗b5; 15...♗d5 was Caruana-Carlsen, Norway Chess 2015, where Black lost and the text looks like an improvement) 16 c4 c5 17 ♗f3 ♗c6 18 ♗f4 ♗c2 (Black might have tried 18...♗e4 19 ♗f1 ♗xf3 20 gxf3 ♗d4 21 ♗g2 ♗e7 22 ♗xd4 cxd4) 19 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 20 e6 f6 (20...♗xe6 21 ♗e1 ♗g8 22 ♗xe6 fxe6 23 ♗xe6+ ♗e7 doesn't look too terrible) 21 ♗c1 ♗f5 22 ♗e1 ♗d6 23 ♗h4! ♗c2 24 ♗h5!.



Black now had to contort to such an extent that Grischuk was able to consolidate his e-pawn: 24...♗h7 25 f4 ♗c6 26 g4 ♗d4 27 f5 (a strategically winning position, but Grischuk was, as ever, down to just a few minutes on the clock) 27...a5 28 ♗f2 a4 29 bxa4 ♗xa4 30 ♗e3 b6 31 ♗g6 ♗d8 32 ♗d3 ♗c8 33 ♗e3 ♗c2 34 ♗a3 ♗xe6 35 fxe6



Gawain Jones looks relaxed and had a pretty decent tournament, but in this match against Holland was to suffer defeat at the hands of Sergei Tiviakov, with the Dutch winning 3-1.

♗xg6 36 ♗a8+ ♗b7 37 ♗g8 f5 38 ♗xg7 ♗xh5 39 gxf5 ♗c6 40 a4! ♗b7 41 ♗f6 ♗c6 42 ♗g7 ♗h8 43 ♗xc7+ 1-0.

10 ♗c3 h5 11 ♗e2 ♗e7 12 ♗g5

Logical. Black's prize asset is the bishop-pair, so Adams exchanges one.

12...♗e6 13 ♗f4 ♗d5 14 ♗xd5 cxd5 15 ♗ad1 c6 16 ♗fe1

Black cannot castle so White is slightly better as the black king is not as secure as it looks: for example, 16...♗xg5 17 ♗xg5 ♗e7 18 c4 dxc4 19 e6!.

16...h4 17 ♗d3 ♗h5 18 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 19 ♗ed1



Simple chess, Black has to make some positional concessions to prevent the opening of the d-file after c2-c4.

19...♗d8 20 c4 d4 21 b4 b6 22 ♗f1 c5

If 22...♗d7 23 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 24 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 25 ♗xd4 ♗xe5 26 ♗xh4 with an extra pawn.

23 bxc5 bxc5 24 ♗a3 ♗d7 25 ♗e1!

Adams identifies c5 as a target and Black is obliged to contort to hold it.

25...♗h6 26 ♗d3 ♗c6 27 ♗b1 ♗dc7 28 ♗f4 ♗d7 29 ♗b8!



Threatening 30 ♗d5+ ♗e6 31 ♗d8+ which puts Black in a bid.

29...g5

Losing, but there were no good options.

30 ♗d5+ ♗e6 31 ♗e8+ ♗e7 32 ♗e2 ♗b6

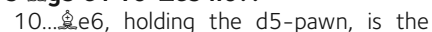
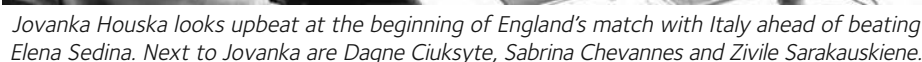
Black is helpless too after 32...a6 33 ♗f3 ♗c8 34 ♗f6+ ♗xe5 35 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 36 ♗xe7. **33 ♗d3 ♗b2 34 ♗a6+ ♗b6 35 ♗xb6 axb6 36 ♗xb6+ ♗xe5 37 ♗c6 ♗f5 38 ♗xc5+ ♗f6 39 ♗b8 ♗g6 40 ♗b6+ ♗e7 41 ♗xg5 ♗f4+ 42 ♗e4 1-0**

The women's team meanwhile was performing to par – winning against teams seeded below us, but losing to ones above us, without yet being paired against a similarly-rated team. The clear highlight, however, was Jovanka Houska amassing 4½/5 against strong opposition on board 1.

In the tournament overall, Russia had already made their mark by this stage. With seedings not accounted for in the draw, the men's team faced second seeds Ukraine in round 4. Wins for Svidler and Nepomniachtchi secured the match. A following draw with third

But back to the chess itself. The men's team resumed with a comfortable win over Sweden. Gawain Jones had a good tournament overall; despite being on board 5, he played 8 games and his crucial win in this round was characteristically fiery.

22 c5 ♖aa8 23 ♘g5 ♙xg5 24 ♙xg5
♙d5 25 ♘d6 ♚e6 keeps an edge for White.
22...h5!? 23 ♘c7 ♖a3 24 ♘d5



The women also had a convincing win over hosts Iceland with Jovanka continuing her good form. However, round 7 was disappointing for both English teams, but the men recovered well to win their last two matches and finish seventh equal (10th on tie-break). The women's team was disappointed to only score one match point from the last two rounds. My own score of ½/2 from positions where the computer's advantages total double figures soured what had up until then been a good tournament personally. In contrast, Jovanka Houska had not been so lax in her final games, and a final individual score of 8/9 represented a performance rating of 2614 and gave her the silver medal for board 1!

standard continuation favoured by theory.

11 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗xd5 ♜xe5 13 dxe5 ♗xe5 14 ♗xc4 ♖c7

14...♗h3 15 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 was a better chance to fight for a draw.

15 ♖b3 ♗h3 16 ♖fc1 ♖ac8 17 ♗d5 ♖c5?



Now it's White to play and win. Houska created two threats and won:

18 ♗f4! ♗xf4 19 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 20 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 21 gxf4 ♗f5 22 ♖d1 ♖cc7 23 f3 ♗h7 24 e4 ♗g6 25 f5 ♗h5 26 ♖d8 ♖c5 27 ♖e6 1-0

In the overall championship a key match was France-Russia in round 7. The only decisive game featured yet another victory over the Berlin Defence, this time by Grischuk over Fressinet, as seen above. This left Russia three points clear with two matches to play, and they were able to share the points with Armenia and Hungary to win gold. The latter two teams were the surprising silver and bronze medal winners (given their 11th and 8th positions after five rounds), respectively, and one has to feel for France who despite being in second place until after round 8, somehow finally missed out on a medal on tie-break.

The women's event was never in doubt. Russia continued their dominance and conceded just one match point to third seeds and silver-medallists Ukraine. Georgia took bronze.

The closing ceremony was a relaxed and

Board 1 - OPEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Viktor Bologan	2630	Moldova	2845	7,0	77,8	9
Silver	GM Levon Aronian	2781	Armenia	2835	6,0	66,7	9
Bronze	GM M. Vachier-Lagrave	2765	France	2835	6,0	66,7	9
Board 2 - OPEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Richard Rapport	2693	Hungary	2828	6,5	72,2	9
Silver	GM Pavel Eljanov	2753	Ukraine	2821	5,0	71,4	7
Bronze	GM Gabriel Sargissian	2689	Armenia	2808	5,5	68,8	8
Board 3 - OPEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Levan Pantsulaia	2567	Georgia	2868	6,5	81,3	8
Silver	GM Arkadij Naiditsch	2689	Azerbaijan	2773	5,5	68,8	8
Bronze	GM Zoltan Almasi	2689	Hungary	2758	5,5	68,8	8
Board 4 - OPEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Hrant Melkumyan	2632	Armenia	2770	6,5	72,2	9
Silver	GM Dmitry Jakovenko	2735	Russia	2756	5,0	71,4	7
Bronze	GM Vladislav Tkachiev	2658	France	2723	4,0	66,7	6
Board 1 - WOMEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Mariya Muzychuk	2542	Ukraine	2772	7,0	87,5	8
Silver	IM Jovanka Houska	2391	England	2614	7,0	87,5	8
Bronze	GM Alexandra Kosteniuk	2534	Russia	2604	5,5	68,8	8
Board 2 - WOMEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	WGM Jovana Vojinovic	2295	Serbia	2576	6,5	81,3	8
Silver	GM Kateryna Lahno	2523	Russia	2569	6,5	72,2	9
Bronze	IM Lela Javakhishvili	2479	Georgia	2559	5,5	78,6	7
Board 3 - WOMEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	GM Natalia Zhukova	2480	Ukraine	2556	6,0	75,0	8
Silver	WGM Petra Papp	2303	Hungary	2464	6,0	75,0	8
Bronze	WGM Elena-Luminita Cosma	2303	Romania	2456	6,0	75,0	8
Board 4 - WOMEN		Elo	Team	TPR	Pts.	%	Games
Gold	WGM Aleksandra Goryachkina	2478	Russia	2668	7,0	87,5	8
Silver	GM Anna Ushenina	2438	Ukraine	2593	6,0	85,7	7
Bronze	WIM Anna-Christina Kopinits	2231	Austria	2443	5,5	68,8	8

mercifully short affair, despite the presence of the Icelandic Prime Minister, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson. Overall, team spirit in the England camp was good and we are already looking forward to the Olympiad in Baku next year!



The board 1 medalists in the Women's event receive their prizes. In the middle we have Alexandra Kosteniuk, women's world champion Mariya Muzychuk, and Jovanka Houska.



England board 2 Dagne Ciuksyte began by holding Natalia Zhukova as Black as England went down narrowly 1½-2½ to Ukraine.

Fear and Loathing in Challengers C



UK Chess Challenge supremo Mike Basman reports on the on-the-board drama from the Challengers 'C' section held alongside the Terafinal in Loughborough

The Terafinal is the climax of the 50,000 player strong junior chess event held from January to August every year. The top section gets most of the attention and most of the prize money. This year the deserved winner was Matthew Wadsworth who scooped the £2,000 top prize ahead of Joseph McPhillips, while the girls' prize of £1,000 was shared between Chantelle Foster and Victoria Sit (Akshaya Kalaiyalahan, having decided to opt for an international event in Vienna). For the third year out of four, Alex Golding won the Under-11 prize of £1,000. All these players did exceptionally well in the British Chess Championships a few weeks earlier.

But the Terafinal is not the only event held on that August weekend. There were also three super-strong Challengers events in which players who had come second or third in the Gigafinal were invited. For them the top prize was £500 in each section.

For many years the Challengers sections featured a few strong players and a long tail, but now these events are extremely competitive as the standard of play among our younger players has improved exponentially. We shall look at one of the most competitive sections, the Challengers C.

The leading members of the cast, in order of grade were as follows:

1. **Harry Li (ECF 191), U17,**
Leeds Grammar, Yorkshire
2. **Joseph Levene (184), U18,**
Queen Elizabeth Boys, Middlesex
3. **Tharshan Kuhendiran (179), U14,**
Wilson's School, Surrey
4. **James Moreby (178), U12,**
RGS Newcastle, Northumberland
5. **Alfie Onslow (167), U12,**
Hampton School, Middlesex
6. **Zheming Zhang (166), U13,**
RGS Newcastle, Northumberland
7. **Gwilym Price (159), U15,**
Winchester College, Hampshire
8. **George Ivanov (157), U13,**
Queen Elizabeth Boys, Middlesex
9. **Cassie Graham (151), U14,**
Worthing School, Sussex
10. **Darshan Kumaresan, U12,**
Tiffin Boys, Surrey (133)

All these players made a considerable

contribution to the battle for top honours in the two-day, six-round event.

First up was Harry Li, the top seed, but he was almost blown away against a well-prepared Gwilym Price (pictured below):



G.Price-H.Li
Round 3



This position arose from the sharpest of Sicilian Najdorfs, and at this point Gwilym unleashed his prepared sacrifice:

14 ♖xe6!?

The sacrifice is a little hard to credit. Granted, after 14...fxe6 15 ♗xe6, White's knights are crawling all over Black's position,

but what about the natural 14...bxc3? Surely then White will have to add more fuel to the fire with 15 ♖xf7+?

14...bxc3 15 ♗d5!

White stays his hand. He is ready to use the f5-square for his centralised knight.

15...cxb2+ 16 ♖b1 ♗b7

Here White could try 17 e5, but he goes down another path.

17 ♗f5 ♖c8 18 ♗b3 ♗xd5 19 exd5 ♗c5 20 ♗xg7+ ♖f8 21 ♖c3 ♗g8 22 ♗f5 ♗a4 23 ♖xc7 ♖xc7



24 ♗d4!

Although Black has the extra piece, disentangling himself is not easy.

24...♗b6 25 ♗e1 f6 26 h4 fxg5 27 fxg5 ♗g6

Black still has no squares for his pieces and 28 ♗e3 ♗c4 29 ♗xe7 looks good for White.

28 ♗d3 ♗c4!

Now Black is back in it. The knight is headed to e5.

29 ♖c3! ♗d8 30 ♗d4!

Another killer shot. It's hard to believe that White is still a piece down.

30...♗d2+ 31 ♖xb2 ♗b7+ 32 ♖c1 ♗a5!

A last throw of the dice. If the rook on c3 moves, Black is planning 33...♗b1 mate!

33 ♗xd2?

White had a winning line here: 33 ♖c8+ ♗f7 34 c3! and Black is in a horrible tangle.

33...♖c7! ½-½

A draw was agreed here, although after 34 ♗c6 ♖xc3+ 35 ♖xc3 White still looks better. But I should mention the time control: the game was played to a two and a half hour session with one hour to complete 30 moves each and the rest of the game to be finished

with 15 minutes each on the clock, without increments. In view of that fast time limit, a game of this quality is quite remarkable.

Meanwhile, on board 2 the second seed appeared to be coasting home against George Ivanov.

J. Levene-G. Ivanov

Round 3



In this position White is 'all over Black like a rash'. Black is three pawns and his king is in dire peril with a monster knight sitting right next to him. Moves such as 28 ♖h1 or 28 f4 spring to mind, but instead White rushed on:

28 ♖g2 ♕h8! 29 ♖xg5?? ♖g8!

What a terrible move to have to face only one move before the time control! The double pin wins white's queen, and after...

30 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8

...Black naturally went on to win.

With the top seeds faltering, the baton passed to other players in the tournament and round 4 saw clashes between James Moreby and George Ivanov, and between Alfie Onslow and Zheming Zhang, the only players on full marks.



James Moreby is something of a positional maestro, not least with his favourite 1 c4.

J. Moreby-G. Ivanov

Round 4

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♖f6 3 g3 ♖c6 4 ♕g2 ♕c5

5 e3 d6 6 ♗ge2 ♕g4 7 h3 ♕h5 8 0-0 ♖e7 9 a3 a5 10 ♖b3 ♕b6 11 ♖e1

Although White's opening looks rather passive, it is in fact a reverse Sicilian, and the Sicilian is one of the most dynamic openings. White can plan at leisure his pawn advances, whereas the black pieces sit awkwardly in front of their own pawns.

11...♕xe2?!

Black cuts the Gordian knot by parting with one of his bishops. A better choice looks to be to play 11...g5! followed by ...♕g6 and ...h5, hoping to stir up trouble on the king's wing.

12 ♖xe2 0-0 13 ♖c2 ♖ae8 14 d3 ♖d8 15 b4 axb4? 16 axb4



Black is being effortlessly outplayed, and there will be no miracle escape this time. The white bishop at g2 is overbearing, White controls the a-file and his pawns are still fluid.

16...c6 17 ♕a3 ♖e6 18 ♖e1 ♕h8 19 ♖eb1 ♖g8 20 b5 c5

An awful concession to have to make. White's bishop is even more powerful now and the black bishop at b6 is in danger of being buried alive under its own pawn mass.

21 ♖d5 ♖d8 22 ♕c1 ♖e7 23 ♖xb6!

A surprising decision, to exchange Black's dead bishop, but White reasons that he has so many advantages, he can afford to give some away to speed up the victory.

23...♖xb6 24 ♖a2! ♖a8 25 ♖ba1 ♖xa2 26 ♖xa2

White still dominates the edge file and central diagonal.

26...♖c8 27 ♖a8 d5 28 ♕xd5 ♖c7 29 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 30 ♕xb7 ♖d6 31 ♕g2 f5



The time control is passed and Black's knights cut sorry figures compared to the long-range bishops.

32 ♖a7 ♖e6 33 ♖a6 ♖d8 34 ♕b2!

The bishop awakens to administer the last rites over the corpse of black's position.

34...e4 35 dxe4 fxe4 36 ♕e5! 1-0

Everything falls.

After this positional masterpiece, Moreby looked odds-on favourite to win the event, but there was yet another rival in the running for top place, in the shape of Moreby's Northumberland stable-mate Zheming Zhang. The two met in round 5 and drew a turgid game, which I will not inflict upon the reader.

This fifth round draw gave the top seed Harry Li the chance to recover ground. After his draw against Gwilym Price in round 3, Harry won a close game against third seed Tharshan Kuhendiran in round 4, and now in round 5 he was up against the Surrey player, Darshan Kumaresan, graded almost 60 points below him.

D. Kumaresan-H. Li

Round 5



Harry had won two pawns earlier in the game, at the expense of king safety. Unfortunately, instead of placing his knights solidly on d7 and f6, they wandered over the centre line, and now Harry finally pushed his luck too far with **23...♖c3??**. White smacked him hard with **24 d7+!**, and it was game over. Since 24...♕xd7 loses the queen to 25 ♖xb5+, there was no alternative to **24...♖xd7 25 ♖xe4**, when White won a piece and eventually the game.

In chess, one move can completely alter the game.

Round 6, the last round, arrived with the following scenario on the top boards.

- 1: James Moreby (13) vs Gwilym Price (13)
- 2: George Ivanov (12) vs Zheming Zhang (13)
- 3: Darshan Kumaresan (12) vs Joseph Levene (12)

The numbers beside the names of the players are the points scored in the tournament according to the 3-1 system, three points for a win and one point for a draw.

In a normal (i.e. moribund) tournament with a 1, ½, 0, score line, the players on the top board would agree a perfunctory draw, knowing that those behind them could only tie first in the event of a win. But under the 3-1 system, any draw on the top two boards could allow the leaders to be overtaken by players on 12 points. This meant that each player *had* to go for a win, because first place,

or even equal first, was by no means guaranteed in the event of a draw.

Starting with board 3, Darshan Kumaresan, buoyed up by his victory over the top seed in round 5, had his knives out for another scalp.

D.Kumaresan-J.Levene Round 6



After a complicated opening and middlegame, White sets the cat among the pigeons with a devastating stroke.

25 ♖xe6!

Black clearly cannot capture the knight, but nor can he take the pawn at c5, because of the back-rank mate. Levene could find nothing better than:

25...♜b8 26 ♕c2! ♜e5 27 ♕xh7+ ♜xh7 28 ♜d4 ♜c8 29 ♜b3

White is a pawn ahead, but now the fight back begins, as Black lays siege to the pawn at c5.

29...♜ed7 30 ♜c2 b6 31 axb6 axb6 32 c6 ♜e5 33 ♜d4 ♜d5

In view of Black's forthcoming ..♜b4, White is unable to maintain his extra pawn and decides to jettison it.

34 c7 ♜xc7 35 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 36 ♜f1 ♜g6 37 ♜e2 f6 38 f4 ♜c4 39 ♜e4 ♜d5 40 ♜c2 ♜f5 41 ♜f2 ♜e6 42 g3 ♜d6 43 ♜e4+ ♜c7 44 ♜d3 b5 45 g4 ♜b6 46 h4 ♜a5 47 ♜c5 ♜b4+ 48 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 49 ♜e6 ♜a3 50 ♜xg7



This ferocious battle was fought out with both sides having 15 minutes each to make the last of their moves. In normal (i.e. moribund) tournaments, both sides would have had limitless time increments so the game could have trundled on for hundreds more moves, the audience would have died of



George Ivanov was in the running until the last round, when he couldn't get by Zheming Zhang.

boredom and everyone would have missed their tea. The beauty of playing out these games to a fixed time limit is that the tournament runs to schedule and a decision is made one way or another.

The rest of the moves were not recorded, but Black managed to carry the day with his outside passed pawn.

This meant that Joseph Levene now had 15 points and could win the tournament in the event of draws on the upper boards.

Turning to board 2, the position erupted around about move 24 and, once again, not to the advantage of the higher-graded player.



G.Ivanov-Z.Zhang Round 6



24 ♕xg7!

Deadly. Now 24...♜xg7 25 f6+ ♜xf6 26 ♜g3+ ends the game. Black scrambles a defence.

24...♜g5 25 ♕xh6 ♜xe3+ 26 ♜xe3

White is two pawns up. It should be only a matter of time.

26...f6 27 ♜fe1 ♜f7 28 ♕f4 ♜h8 29 ♜c1 ♜h4 30 ♕h2 b5 31 b3 ♜hh8 32 c4 ♜ac8 33 ♜e2! ♜h5?! 34 cxd5 ♜g5 35 ♜xc6

It looks all over for Black. Four pawns down, pieces out of play... can the clock save him?

35...♜hh8 36 ♜ec2 ♜xc6 37 ♜xc6 ♜d8 38 d6 ♜e4 39 ♜c7+

White gets a little carried away. He should activate his king and pawns with 39 g4 and ♜g2.

39...♜f8 40 d7? ♜e7!

At least the pawn is stopped, but there are plenty of others in reserve.

41 ♜xa7 ♜xd7 42 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 43 ♜f1 ♜c6! 44 ♜e2 ♜c3+ 45 ♜d3 ♜xa2 46 ♜e4? ♜c3+ 47 ♜d3 ♜a2 48 g4 ♜c1+



The annoying knight buzzes around like an angry wasp, and White is driven to distraction.

So Ivanov decides to abandon his b-pawn,

a very risky proposition as Black now gets a passed pawn of his own.

49 ♖e4 ♜xb3

The win for White is tricky here, but it looks like 50 ♕f4, controlling the knight, would lead to victory. White could then advance his h-pawn down the board whilst his own king stops the black b-pawn. But this is very difficult to see when the time is running down on your clock.

50 d5+? ♜d7 51 d6 b4 52 ♖d3 ♜c5+ 53 ♖c2 b3+ 54 ♖b2 ♜d3+ 55 ♖xb3 ♜f2

Still three pawns down, but Black is fighting like mad. His knight puts all the white pawns in jeopardy.

56 ♖g1 ♜xh3 57 ♕d4 ♖xd6 58 ♕xf6 ♜f2 59 g5 ♜e4 60 ♖c4 ♜g3! 61 ♖d4 ♜xf5+ 62 ♖e4 ♖e6 63 ♕d8 ♜d6+ 64 ♖f4 ♜f7 ½-½

With the last pawn about to fall, the game was agreed drawn.

With this miraculous save, Zheming Zhang eventually gained third place and £200 prize money, whereas George Ivanov had to be satisfied with fourth equal.

The top board game between James Moreby and Gwilym Price was no less dramatic.

J.Moreby-G.Price

Round 6

King's Indian Defence

1 c4 g6 2 d4 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 ♖g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 a6 6 ♖e3 ♜c6 7 ♞d2 ♜b8 8 ♜ge2 b5

One of the most uncompromising openings in chess is the Sämisch variation of the King's Indian. Black simply challenges White on every part of the board on the grounds that White has overextended himself.

These openings were the subject of extended debate in the early part of the last century, when the term hypermodern chess was coined. Chess players in general are a fairly pragmatic lot, and as a result chess theory has not caught up with practice. Chess theory does not explain why you should be able to succeed by both occupying and neglecting the centre.

9 ♜g3 bxc4 10 ♕xc4 0-0 11 0-0 ♜d7 12 ♜fb1 ♜b4 13 b3 ♜b6 14 ♞d3 ♕xc4 15 bxc4 ♕e6



Black is relying on tactics to resolve his



The top section of the UK Chess Challenge, the Terafinal, was won by Matthew Wadsworth, with Chantelle Foster (left) and Victoria Sit (right) sharing the £1,000 girls' prize.

problems with the white central pawns. In the event of 16 d5, he has 16...♜e5 17 ♞c2 ♜xc4 18 dxe6 ♜xc3!. The alternative was 15...f5.

16 ♜d5!

Pink and greedy. This knight sortie into the centre of the board sends Black scuttling back home.

16...♜b8 17 ♜e2 f5 18 ♜ec3 fxe4 19 fxe4 ♜d7

White's central pawns, three abreast, have yet to be breached, with the result that Black has no secure outposts for his pieces in the centre. Now White ratchets up the pressure on the b-file.

20 ♜b3! a5 21 ♜ab1 ♕xd5 22 cxd5 ♜b4 23 ♞e2 ♜a8

Unfortunately, the little pawn at a2 moving up to a3 will be the undoing of Black's game. He cannot maintain his knight blocking the b-file and so the tide will turn inexorably against him.

24 a3 ♜a6 25 ♞d3 ♜fb8 26 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 27 ♞b5! ♞d8 28 ♜e2



The beginning of a triumphal manoeuvre which will end up on the e6-square.

28...♜d7 29 ♜c1 ♜f6

29...♜f8 with plans of ...e6 would have been more promising.

30 ♞d3 ♞b8 31 ♜f4 ♜g4 32 ♜e6 ♜a7 33 ♜d2 ♞b6 34 ♜b1 ♞a6

This allows a swift finish, but Black's ship was leaking anyway – on the right, on the left and down the centre!

35 ♜b8+ ♜f7 36 ♞f3+ ♜f6 37 ♜g5# 1-0

Thus concluded an outstanding tournament for James Moreby, who reinforced the good impression he had made in the Major Open tournament at the British Championship a few weeks earlier. He did not, indeed, play the two top seeds, Harry Li and Joseph Levene, but he did decisively defeat the two opponents who had caused these players the most trouble. Also significantly improving their grades were Zheming Zhang, George Ivanov and Gwilym Price.

Footnote

In November this year the ECF sent a 25-strong squad to Greece for the World Junior Championships, which included FMs Ravi Haria (2445) and Adam C. Taylor (2292), Akshaya Kalaiyalahan, Alex Golding, James Moreby and Challenger's B winner, Harry Grieve. Although none of the players was seriously in contention for a medal, the average score was 50%.

The squads from China, Russia, USA and Germany were considerably larger and stronger than ours, but we compared favourably with many of the other countries entering. When we factor in the above article, and take into account that the Challengers 'C' section was only one of three very strong sections and above them was the 50-player Terafinal, we can conclude that rumours concerning the imminent demise of chess in the UK are exaggerated.



How Good is Your Chess?

by Grandmaster Daniel King



Maxime Vachier-Lagrave was on good form at the European Team Championships in Iceland. Playing board 1 for a French team with evident *esprit de corps*, he was motivated to produce an excellent result, finishing with 6/9 against top opposition. As well as his game against Vallejo that we are about to see, his outplaying of Aronian from an (almost) level endgame position was a great achievement.

I last featured a win of MVL just over year ago, and we are about to see the variation in that game again. Allow me to refresh your memory: Motylev-Vachier-Lagrave, Biel 2014, proceeded 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♙e3 ♘g4 7 ♙g5 h6 8 ♙h4 g5 9 ♙g3 ♙g7.



Here Motylev played 10 ♙e2, the most popular move: 10...h5 11 h4 ♘c6 12 ♘b3 gxf4 13 ♙xh4, later sacrificing a piece. A wild game. Do check the September 2014 edition of *CHESS* for the details.

MVL also had a game with this line at the recent World Blitz Championship in Berlin, though this time he wasn't successful: 10 ♙e2 h5 11 ♙xg4 hxf4 (this variation was hot stuff in the late 1990s when Kasparov was employing it) 12 0-0 ♘c6 13 ♘f5 ♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♙a5 15 ♙xg4 f6 16 f4 (16 ♙ab1 was played in Shirov-Kasparov, Sarajevo 1999) 16...♙xf5 17 exf5 gxf4 18 ♙xf4 ♙xc3 19 ♙ae1 ♘d7 (19...♙f7! looks like a safer square for the king) 20 ♙e4 ♙ag8 21 ♙e3 ♙d4 22 ♙e6+ ♘c7 23 ♙f2 ♙g4 24 ♙d5 ♙g5 25 ♙b1 ♙b8 26 ♙c3 ♘d8 27 h3 ♙f4 28 ♙xc6 bxc6 29 ♙xb8+ ♘c7 30 ♙b3 1-0, Socko-Vachier-Lagrave, Berlin (blitz) 2015.

Perhaps one needs a little more time to negotiate the complexities of this position... In the game we are about to see, Vallejo plays instead 10 h4 and that takes the game in another direction.

I have given the times for each move. Single or double digit indicates seconds, e.g. [41] or [6]; three or more digits indicates minutes and seconds, e.g. [6:13].

Cover the page with a card or sheet of paper, lowering it gradually to reveal a line at a time. Begin after the first diagram. Whenever White has moved, stop and try to guess Black's reply which will be on the next line. Try to analyse as much as you would in a game – it could earn you bonus points. The article will test your standard of play or, if you prefer, just enjoy a fine game.

F.Vallejo Pons-M.Vachier-Lagrave European Team Ch., Reykjavik 2015

1 e4 [41] 1...c5 [0] 2 ♘f3 [7] 2...d6 [0] 3 d4 [6] 3...cxd4 [0] 4 ♘xd4 [5] 4...♘f6 [0] 5 ♘c3 [4] 5...a6 [0] 6 ♙e3 [5] 6...♘g4 [48] 7 ♙c1 [20] 7...♘f6 [4] 8 ♙e3 [3] 8...♘g4 [4] 9 ♙g5 [42] 9...h6 [5] 10 ♙h4 [3] 10...g5 [3] 11 ♙g3 [4] 11...♙g7 [7] 12 h4 [35]



12...♙c6 [6:13]

Three points. Although this is a slightly unusual position, we should still hold to some basic rules: we need to bring out our pieces.

12 h4 isn't as popular as 12 ♙e2, but it has been played by some decent players and in many ways makes sense: Black's g-pawn has advanced outrageously, so let's give it a tickle.

Compare with the Spanish where White so often plays a4 in reaction to Black's ...b5.

Alternatively, 12...♙b6 has been played here, and objectively it might not be too bad, but I am reluctant to reward such an early queen sortie. In reply 13 ♘b3 is sensible, and 13 ♘d5 is definitely worth a look.

13 ♘xc6 [38]

Let me fill in the theoretical details: 13 ♘b3 has also been played here, and Ivanchuk-Nepomniachtchi, Havana 2012, continued 13...gxf4 14 ♙xh4 h5, etc; but the continuation that appeals to me is 13...♙xc3+!? 14 bxc3 ♙g8 15 ♙d2 ♙e6 16 ♘d4 ♙a5 17 hxf5 hxf5 18 ♙e2 ♘ge5 19 ♘xe6 fxe6 20 ♘f1 0-0-0, etc, A.Ivanov-Malisauskas, Kostroma 1985. Exchanging off that glorious dark-squared bishop looks sinful, but it's all about maintaining the pawn on g5 and securing control of the e5-square for the knight, not to mention creating targets on the queenside.

13...bxc6 [15]

One point.

14 ♙c4

We have transposed back into a relatively well-known variation (the more usual move order is 12 ♙c4 ♘c6 13 ♘xc6 bxc6 14 h4). My database shows that around 20 games have reached this position.



14...♙a5 [20:06]

Four points. The twenty-minute think indicates that Maxime was finding his bearings. The queen move is effective: pressure is brought to bear on the knight,



Maxime Vachier-Lagrave was in fine form on top board for France in the European Team Championship in Reykjavik, going through undefeated while beating both Aronian and Vallejo.

reminding White's king that it needs to find a safe home; and the queen has a powerful influence along the fourth rank.

14...♖b6 (two points), as tried by several strong players, is reasonable, though White closes the b-file with 15 ♙b3, and then the queen looks less well placed. Anand-Topalov, Linares 1998, continued 15...♙d7 16 hgx5 0-0-0 17 ♖d2 hgx5 18 ♙xh8 ♙xh8 19 0-0-0 ♙e5 20 f3, and White was comfortably placed.

14...♙e5 has been tried, but 15 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 16 hgx5 hgx5 17 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 18 ♖h5 gives White a strong initiative.

From a positional viewpoint, I dislike 14...gxh4. It doesn't matter which way White recaptures, Black is losing control over the e5-square.

In this position 14...♙xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♖a5 is poor. White plays 16 ♖d4 and Black's position is creaky.

15 ♖f3 [1:59]

15...♙e5 [9]

Seven points. If you found this profound idea, congratulations. But did it take you nine seconds?

There are a few alternatives. 15...♙e6 (four points) is reasonable, and has been tested. White can force a draw with 16 ♙xe6 fxe6 17 ♖xg4 ♙xc3+ 18 bxc3 ♖xc3+ 19 ♙e2 ♖c4+ 20 ♙d2 ♖d4+ ½-½ (Ivanchuk-Dominguez Perez, Beijing (blitz) 2013), or play for more: 17 hgx5 hgx5 18 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 19 ♙f1 ♙e5 20 ♖e2 ♙d7, Ponomarev-Topalov, Las Vegas 1999. Topi went on to lose this game, but around here Black looks fine: he holds the centre and can play round the edges.

15...♙f8 (two points) feels very pedestrian compared to the game, but it isn't easy for White to gain the advantage: 16 ♙b3 ♙e5 17 ♖e3 ♙e6, Ni Hua-Xu Jun, Hebei Zonal 2001.

My computer seems to think that 15...0-0 is a reasonable move, but, for a human being, this would be suicide.

16 ♙xe5 [2:11]

There wasn't much alternative. Instead, 16 ♖e2 ♙xc4 17 ♖xc4 ♙b8 gives Black the two bishops and a splendid initiative.

16...♖xe5 [7]

Two points. The queen stands beautifully in the centre of the board. This is better than 16...♙xe5 17 ♙xf7+ ♙d8 18 hgx5 hgx5 19 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 20 0-0-0. Compared to the game White has some initiative.

17 ♙xf7+ [11:23]

17 ♖xf7+ is worse: 17...♙d8 18 0-0-0 ♙f8 19 ♖g6 ♙xf2; or 18 hgx5 ♖xg5 19 g3 ♙f8 20 ♖h5 ♙b8 21 ♖xg5 hgx5 22 ♙b3 ♙b4 with the initiative.

17...♙d8 [21]

One point. Don't bother with the alternatives. 17...♙f8 is ludicrous and 17...♙d7 gets in the way of the bishop.

What has happened over the last couple of moves? Black has forced White to give up the bishop-pair, but it has cost him a pawn. Is the king poorly placed in the middle? Not really. As is so often the case in the Najdorf, we see that Black's centre pawns provide excellent cover.

18 hgx5 [28]



18...♙b8 [3:38]

Five points. This little in-between move makes a big difference to Black's chances. The subtleties are not easy to spot.

18...hxg5 (two points) is also possible, with some compensation: 19 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 20 0-0-0 ♙b8 21 ♙b3 ♙c7. In the game, MVL keeps all the rooks on the board, and that allows him to put more pressure on White's position.

I'm not keen on 18...♖xg5 as Black loses some control over the centre: 19 ♙h5 ♖g4 20 ♖xg4 ♙xg4 21 ♙h4 ♙d7. I don't think Black is significantly worse here, even though he is a pawn down, but it's not as good as the game.

19 ♙b3 [17:48]

White does best to avoid 19 0-0-0 ♖xg5+ 20 ♙d2 ♙f8. The pins are too much.

19...♙f8 [14:50]

Three points. 19...♖xg5 (three points) also offers excellent compensation.

19...hxg5 misses the point. It's the same story as on the previous move: 20 ♙xh8+ ♙xh8 21 0-0-0 gives White the chance to find counterplay on the kingside using his rook on the h-file.

20 ♖e3 [2:46]

20...♖xg5 [1:30]

Four points. A remarkably confident move. In spite of his pawn deficit, MVL calmly offers his opponent an endgame.

20...hxg5 (one point) also provides Black with compensation, but in this case White's king is able to escape to the left: 21 0-0-0. The king is safer than in the game and b2 is protected, taking away some of the pressure. While White can use the h-file, Black still has to take care of his king, and don't forget a potential queen slide into a7. Therefore 21...♖f4 22 ♖xf4 gxf4 23 ♙h7 ♙e5 24 ♙dh1. Compared to the game White has excellent coordination and could even stand better.

21 ♖xg5 [9:54]

21...hxg5 [35]

One point. In this case, White cannot easily bring his king to safety on the queenside. For a start the f-pawn hangs.

22 f3 [6:33]

Remedying the problem?



22...g4 [3:35]

Five points. The minority attack creates a weakness and keeps White on the defensive.

A move such as 22...e5 is pretty, but ineffective. After 23 0-0-0 White has been able to coordinate the rooks and bring his king to safety.

23 e2 [5:23]

Not exactly where the king wants to be, but 23 f1 also wasn't ideal: 23...gxf3 24 gxf3 (or 24 fxf3 f8) 24...h3 25 g1 xc3+ 26 bxc3 fxf3. Black has tremendous compensation for the pawn: the g- and e-pawns are isolated, and White still can't castle (watch out for ...g4).

23...a5 [3:09]

Three points. I love the bishops. White's king is about to be sent a greeting from a6. The pressure also increases on the b-file.

24 a4 [2:44]**24...a6+** [6:55]

One point.

25 c4 [27]

After this committal move I can imagine MVL's confidence growing. The dark-squared bishop cuts across the board with nothing to stop it. The alternative was to play 25 e3, but I can understand Vallejo's reluctance: 25...c5 (threatens ...d4+) 26 c3 b5. The knight is trapped on the edge and there is a constant threat to exchange and break through on b2.

25...b4 [2:41]

Two points. Another threat.

26 ac1 [5:08]**26...gxf3+** [22]

One point.

27 gxf3 [3]**27...d4** [7]

Two points. A dream square. This could also have been played on the last turn (balance your score if you did so). Why did Maxime choose to exchange on f3 on the previous move? With the bishop stationed on d4 White is unable to use the g-file, although Black might.

28 c2 [13:39]**28...c5** [4:58]

Three points. Bolting the bishop in the middle, so there'll be no unpleasant surprises from a stray attack.

29 h2 [4:04]**29...g8** [3:28]

Three points. Black takes control of the open file and the pressure increases again.

There was another promising strategy: 29...b7 30 c3 c6 (threatening ...a4) 31 d5 xd5 32 cxd5 a4 33 c4 xb2. The opposite-coloured bishops certainly don't guarantee White an easy life. In fact with all the rooks on the board, White's king could find itself under heavy fire.

30 c1 [2:41]**30...c8** [8:18]

Three points. On a6 the bishop has just one idea, and White has countered it. But this manoeuvre sets White fresh problems.

30...b7 (*two points*) is still possible, although with care White can hold: 31 c3 c6 32 d3 a4 33 d1. This is not a happy position to defend.

30...e5 (*three points*) is a tricky move, putting a very awkward question to the rook. Whichever direction it chooses, a compromise is made: for example, 31 h5 xb2 32 bxb2 g2+ 33 d3 fxb2, or 31 f2 e6 and ...d5.

31 c3 [4:55]**31...e6** [10]

One point. The pressure is reaching critical proportions.

32 d3 [2:22]

Instead, 32 a4 d7 33 c3 a4 breaks through.

**32...g3** [1:23]

Two points.

33 e2 [1:36]

Instead, how would you meet 33 f1? Answer on the next line.

33...h3 34 d1 fxf3+ breaks the defence (*one point*).

33...xc4+ [33]

One point.

34 d2 [4:17]

34 xc4 fxb2+ 35 e1 g1+ 36 f1 fh2 wouldn't help White.

34...xf3 [23]

Two points. That's the most flexible capture, keeping all the advantages of Black's position. Having said that, 34...xb3 (*one point*) is quite good.

35 xc4 [19]

Capitulation, but there really was no decent defence. If 35 c2 d3+ and ...c4 – that's why it was good to keep the two bishops. Or 35 ch1 xb3 36 axb3 xc3+ 37 bxc3 fxb3. Two extra pawns and more to follow.

35...xb2+ [10]

One point. Winning material, so White resigned (**0-1**).

One of those games that looks so smooth, you have to wonder where White went wrong. That's a consequence of Vachier-Lagrave's accurate technique, constantly setting his opponent practical problems. Let's recap some of the most important moments.

First, his keen judgement in playing 15...e5. It is hard to say whether this was preparation or not (I am guessing it wasn't, given the long think on the previous turn), but it's a moot point. In either case, the pawn sacrifice requires a deep understanding of the position.

Moves 18-22 were forceful, ensuring that White's king remained in the middle of the board, and slowly but surely the position opened in Black's favour.

There were a couple of moments when Maxime could have chosen to push his centre pawns (with ...e6 and perhaps ...d5), but I don't think it is an accident that he declined to do so. Maintaining the strong pawn chain was an excellent practical decision, ensuring that Black's king remained secure throughout the entire game. Incidentally, we shouldn't forget that White was partly responsible for creating Black's strong pawn centre by exchanging knights on c6.

I'm not so silly as to ascribe White's defeat to this one decision; he had reasons for doing this, not least that the light-squared bishop could immediately move to an excellent diagonal (c4). However, later on, the downsides to the exchange were clear: Black no longer had to worry about a piece landing on d5, and he could operate on the b-file.

Now add up your points:

- 0-16** Unlucky
- 17-33** Average Club Player
- 34-42** Strong Club Player
- 43-50** FIDE Master
- 51-56** International Master
- 57-62** Grandmaster

If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Daniel directly through his website www.danielking.biz.