

Chess Moves

The Newsletter of the English Chess Federation | March 2014 edition

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From the Editor

Welcome to the March/April edition of Chess Moves.

As a long-time subscriber to B.H. Wood's magazine Chess from the 1970s, I used to be tickled by the continuing string of apologies for the late appearance of the issue in question and the ever-optimistic assurances that time would be caught up in the coming weeks and months. The life of a chess magazine editor was obviously a never-ending battle against the clock, which to the outsider had more than a touch of humour.

While I would not presume to compare my modest efforts on the ECF's magazine with the astonishing achievement of "B.H.", I do find myself having to apologise for the late appearance of the current issue. A back injury preventing me from sitting at the computer for more than a few minutes at a time for a period of about three weeks – unfortunately, the very same three weeks set aside for preparation of this issue's articles – has delayed publication for a couple of weeks. Normal service should be resumed next time.

In the meantime, I hope that you enjoy the current issue. We are celebrating Keith Arkell's magnificent achievement in winning the inaugural European Seniors Championship for players aged 50 or over. See how Keith came out on top by playing through all of his games from the event. As well as news of other events, there is a report on the thought-provoking Chess and Education Conference held at the London Chess Classic last December. Readers of Chess Moves over the last couple of years will know that we like to delve into the game's rich history from time to time, and this month we have an article on the sixth world champion, Mikhail Botvinnik, which I hope will be of interest.

Chess Moves is **your** magazine. If we are not getting the balance right in terms of content, tell us! Comments and suggestions for future articles are always welcome by e-mail to office@englishchess.org.uk. Or why not write something yourself and submit it, addressed to the editor, c/o the same address?

ECF NEWS

ECF President resigns

The following notice was posted on the ECF website on 8th March:

"The English Chess Federation Board resolved nem con on 7 March 2014 to amicably settle an internal matter.

"The Board has today accepted the resignation of Andrew Paulson as President. The Board gratefully recognises Andrew Paulson's contributions to English chess, from his organising of the FIDE Grand Prix and Candidates Tournaments in London to his untiring service since his election as President. Further, the Board nominates Andrew Paulson for the position of Deputy President of the European Chess Union and looks forward to a close and constructive collaboration between the ECU and the ECF. The Board recommends that the ECF Council at its April meeting approves a Motion to give Andrew Paulson standing during the ECU General Assembly election meeting in Tromsø in August by designating him as the official ECF Delegate at that meeting."

This announcement came in the wake of the earlier revelation, on the ECF's website on 15th February, that a Board meeting had been held a week prior to this, specifically to discuss matters relating to some Board members' dissatisfaction with the President's actions since October 2013 and to vote on whether the ECF President retained the confidence of the Board:

"The English Chess Federation regrets to state that the Chief Executive asked the President to resign, and the Board passed a motion expressing no confidence in the President. The President is not satisfied with these actions. The matter will be referred to Council at an appropriate time, to be coordinated. Background may be found in the draft minutes of the Board meeting of 8 February 2014."

The draft minutes mentioned may be found on the ECF website. Pending confirmation that they are a true and fair record of the meeting, Chess Moves refrains from further comment.

Member representatives will have the opportunity to question the Board on this matter at the Finance Council meeting on Saturday, 12th April. As well as the usual business of the Finance Council, representatives will be asked to vote on the motion "that Andrew Paulson be designated as the official ECF Delegate at the 2014 ECU [European Chess Union] General Assembly." Andrew Paulson has been nominated by the ECF Board to stand for the position of Deputy President of the ECU, on a ticket with Presidential candidate, Zurab Azmaiparashvili.

Finance Council meeting

The next meeting of the ECF Finance Council will take place at the Euston Square Hotel, 152-156 North Gower Street, London NW1 2LU on Saturday, 12th April, starting at 1.30 p.m.

At the time of writing, the Agenda was available on the ECF website but the supporting papers were not. Members are encouraged to watch for the publication of the papers and to make their views known to their representatives.

Keith Arkell - European Seniors Over-50 Champion!

To the delight of his many friends and supporters on the English weekend congress circuit, Keith Arkell came clear first in the European Seniors Championships in Oporto, Portugal. For the first time, the event included a championship for players aged 50+, allowing Keith (born 8 January 1961) to enter. Based on ratings, he was third seed, behind GM Zurab Sturia (Georgia) and IM Evgeny KALEGIN (Russia).

In the opening round, Keith encountered stubborn resistance in the form of untitled German player, Dieter Kurka. Even after Black's loss of a pawn on move 31, allowing a small combination starting with 32.Nxd5, he was by no means lost. A second oversight towards the time control, however, proved fatal.

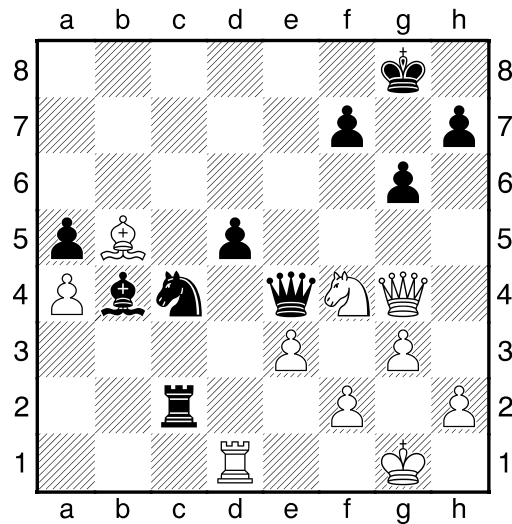
Keith Arkell (2448) - Dieter Kurka (2045) [D37]

Round 1, 09.03.2014

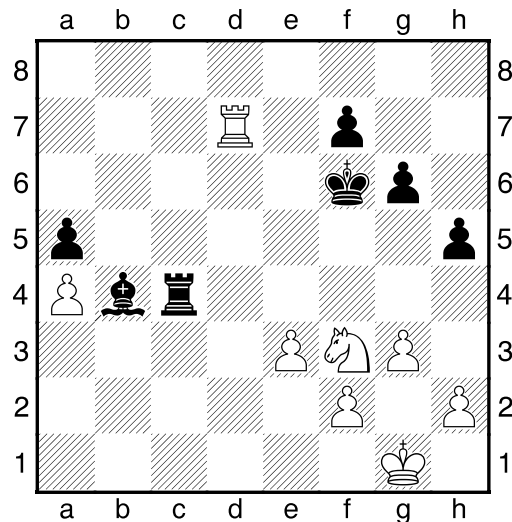
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Be7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 c6 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Qc2 0-0 9.Bd3 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.b4 a6 13.a4 g6?! 14.b5 a5 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.Ne2 Bd7 17.Rab1 Be7 18.Ne5 Rc8 19.Rb7 Bd6 20.Nxd7 Nxd7 21.Qb3 Re7 22.g3 Bb4 23.Qc2 c5 24.dxc5 Rxc5 25.Qd1 Ne5 26.Rxe7 Qxe7 27.Nf4 Nc4 28.Qe2 Nb6 29.Bb5 Qe4 30.Rd1 Rc2 31.Qg4 Nc4?



Keith is congratulated by another chess enthusiast after his victory



32.Nxd5! Qxg4 33.Nf6+ Kg7 34.Nxg4 h5 35.Bxc4 Rxc4 36.Ne5 Re4 37.Nf3 Rc4 38.Rd7 Kf6?



39.h4 Ba3 40.Rxf7+! 1-0

Keith continued his good start with a second win against a German in the second round. For many, the words “Keith Arkell” and “won a nicely played rook and pawn ending” go together as inevitably as “mountain” and “fountain” in bad verse.

Matthias Kierzek (2251) – Keith Arkell [E15]

Round 2, 10.03.2014

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.Qb3 Nc6 6.Nbd2 Bb4 7.d5 Bxd2+ 8.Nxd2 Nd4 9.Qc3 c5 10.e3 Nf5 11.Bd3 0-0 12.0-0 d6 13.Nf3 Ne7 14.e4 e5 15.Nh4 Bc8 16.f4 exf4 17.Bxf4 Bh3 18.Bg5 Nd7

Presumably Keith didn't like the look of the position after 18...Bxf1, when White's attack does look threatening. My materialistic silicon friend grabs the material and claims a plus for Black.

19.Rf2 f6 20.Bd2 Ne5 21.Bf1 Bd7 22.Nf5 Nxf5 23.exf5 Qc7 24.Be2 a6 25.a4 Qb7 26.Rff1 b5 27.axb5 axb5 28.Rxa8 Rxa8 29.cxb5 Bxb5 30.Bxb5 Qxb5 31.Bf4 Re8 32.Ra1 Qe2 33.Bxe5 Qxe5

33...fxe5 looks very good for Black.

34.Qxe5 Rxe5 35.Ra8+ Kf7 36.Ra7+ Kf8 37.Ra8+ Kf7 38.Ra7+ Ke8 39.Ra8+ Ke7 40.Ra7+ Kd8 41.Rxg7 h5 42.Kf2

Rxf5+ 43.Ke3 Ke8 44.b4 Re5+ 45.Kf3 cxb4 46.Rb7 Rxd5 47.Rxb4 Kf7 48.Ke4 Rd2 49.h3 Ke6 50.Rb5 d5+ 51.Kf4 Rd4+ 52.Kf3 Ke5 53.Rb8 Rd3+ 54.Kf2 h4 55.gxh4 Rxh3 56.Re8+ Kf4 57.Rd8 Rh2+ 58.Ke1 d4 59.Rd7

59.Rxd4+?? Ke3 costs White his rook.

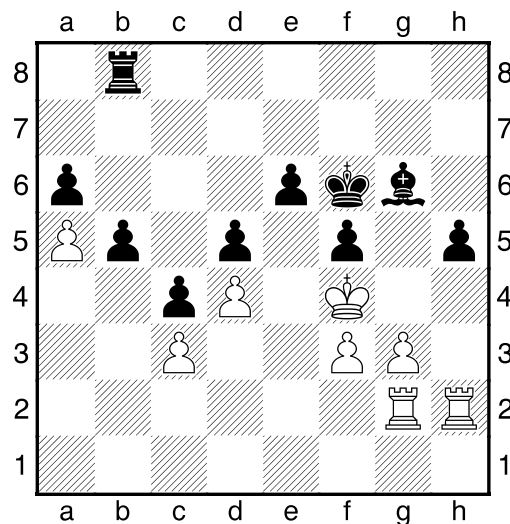
59...f5 60.Rd8 Kg3 61.Rxd4 f4 62.Rd8 Rxh4 63.Rg8+ Kf3 64.Rf8 Rh1+ 65.Kd2 Rf1 66.Rg8 Kf2 67.Rh8 f3 0–1

In round 3, Keith was drawn against Scottish IM Craig Pritchett. The result was another tough endgame:

Keith Arkell – Craig Pritchett (2351) [A46]

Round 3, 11.03.2014

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c3 c5 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nbd2 d5 6.e3 Nc6 7.Bd3 Qb6 8.Rb1 h6 9.Bh4 Bd7 10.Ne5 Nxe5 11.dxe5 Ng8 12.Bg3 h5 13.h4 Bc6 14.0–0 g6 15.b4 c4 16.Bc2 Nh6 17.Nf3 Nf5 18.Bxf5 gxf5 19.b5 Bd7 20.Bf4 Qa5 21.Qd4 Bxb5 22.Bg5 Bxg5 23.Nxg5 Bc6 24.Rb2 b6 25.Rfb1 Qa3 26.Qd2 Qe7 27.Rb4 Rg8 28.Qd4 Rxg5 29.hxg5 Qxg5 30.g3 Qg4 31.a4 Qxd4 32.exd4 Ke7 33.Kg2 f6 34.exf6+ Kxf6 35.Rh1 Be8 36.Kf3 Rc8 37.Kf4 Rc7 38.Rb2 Rh7 39.Ra2 Re7 40.Re1 Rb7 41.f3 Rg7 42.Rh1 Re7 43.a5 b5 44.Re2 Rb7 45.Rb2 Rg7 46.Rh4 a6 47.Rg2 Bg6 48.Rg1 Re7 49.Re1 Rb7 50.Rhh1 Rb8 51.Rb1 Rb7 52.Rb2 Rb8 53.Rhh2 Rb7 54.Rbf2 Rb8 55.Rfg2



55...Rb7

55...b4! 56.cxb4 c3 looks equal.

56.g4 fxg4 57.fxg4 Be4 58.Rg3 b4 59.cxb4 Rxb4 60.Rxh5 Rb3 61.g5+ Kg7 62.Rhh3 Rb1 63.Ke5 Bf5 64.Rh2 Re1+ 65.Kd6 Ra1?

Moving the king to f7 or g6 would have offered better chances of holding on. Now, Black is lost.

66.g6! c3 67.Rh7+ Kg8 68.Rxc3 Bxg6 69.Ra7 Bf7 70.Rg3+ 1–0

Entering the fourth round, Keith was one of only two players left on 100%. The other, IM Evgeny Kargin from Russia, out-rated him by five points and had the benefit of the white pieces. Under the circumstances, a short draw was an acceptable result from the Englishman's perspective.

Evgeny Kargin (2453) – Keith Arkell [B17]

Round 4, 12.03.2014

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Ng5 Ngf6 6.Bd3 Nb6 7.N1f3 Bg4 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Nxf3 e6 10.0–0 Be7 11.Re1 0–0 12.c4 c5 13.Be3 cxd4 14.Bxd4 Nbd7 15.Qe2 Qc7 16.Rac1 Bc5 17.Bc3 a5 18.a3 a4 ½–½

This draw allowed two other players to catch the leaders by winning their fourth round games. Keith was drawn (once again with the black pieces) against the stronger of these, top seed GM Zurab Sturua from Georgia.

Zurab Sturua (2524) – Keith Arkell [A40]

Round 5, 13.03.2014

1.d4 e6 2.c4 Bb4+ 3.Nc3 c5 4.e3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 Ne7 6.Bd3 d6 7.f4 Nbc6 8.Nf3 b6 9.0–0 Qd7 10.e4 Ba6 11.d5 Na5 12.Ng5 Bxc4 13.Bxc4 Nxc4 14.dxe6 fxe6 15.Qg4

Keith had a long think before making his next move. Black is clearly under pressure and decides that he has no alternative but to give up the exchange.

15...0–0–0 16.Nf7 g6 17.a4 Nc6 18.Nxh8 Rxh8 19.f5?!

This helps Black by clearing the way for the backward d-pawn to advance. Moves such as 19.Qe2 or Rb1 might have been more testing, with a plus for White.

19...exf5 20.exf5 d5

It's equal now.

21.Qh4 gxf5 22.Qf6 Re8 23.Ra2?!

An odd choice. Capturing on f5 with either queen or rook maintains equality.

23...d4 24.cxd4 Nxd4

It's a little surprising that Endspielmeister Arkell did not take the opportunity to force the exchange of queens with 24...Qxd4+ 25.Qxd4 Nxd4 when Black seems to be doing very well. Still, with black against the top seed, and having suffered somewhat during the first twenty moves. Keith can be forgiven for taking the half-point.

$\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$

Kalegin won in round 5 to move to 4½ points, so for the first time Keith was not in a share for first. Nevertheless, with draws secured against his two strongest rivals, there were grounds for optimism for the English GM, whose enormous tournament experience would be likely to see him in good stead if the leader should slip up.

After having faced the top two seeds with black in the previous rounds, Keith may well have felt that a downfloat to meet Italian IM Fabio Bruno (on 3½) was only fair and a good opportunity to regain some ground. This turned out to be the case, although perhaps not in the way he might have predicted.

Keith Arkell – Fabio Bruno (2410) [E11]

Round 6, 14.03.2014

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 a5 5.Nc3 b6 6.g3 Bb7 7.Bg2 0–0 8.0–0 d6 9.b3 Nbd7 10.a3 Bxc3 11.Bxc3 Be4 12.Bh3 c6 13.Nd2 Bg6 14.Bg2 d5 15.a4 h6 16.Bb2 b5 17.axb5 cxb5 18.Ba3 b4 19.Bb2 Ra7 20.Re1 a4 21.bxa4 Nb6 22.Qb3 Qa8 23.a5 Rxa5 24.Qxb4 Na4 25.Bc3 Ra6 26.Qa3 Qa7 27.c5?!

27.Bb4 Rc8 (27...Ra8 28.Qe3 Rb8 29.Ba3) 28.cxd5 Nxd5 29.e4 looks more promising for White.

27...Ra8 28.Qc1 Nxc3 29.Rxa6 Nxe2+ 30.Rxe2 Qxa6 31.Re1 Qa5 32.Nf3 Nd7 33.Qe3 Be4 34.Rc1 Bxf3 35.Bxf3 Rc8 36.Rb1 Qc7 37.Be2 e5 38.Bg4 exd4 39.Qxd4 Ne5 40.Be2

Lose 10 points for 40.Bxc8?? Nf3+.

40...Nc6 41.Qxd5 Ne7 42.Qe4 Qxc5 43.Ba6 Qc6 44.Qd3 Rf8 45.Bc4 g6 46.Ra1 Rc8 47.Rc1 Kg7 48.Rc2 Qf6 49.Ra2 Nf5 50.Ra7 Rd8 51.Qf3 ½–½

While this was going on, Sturua (4) beat Kalegin (4½) with black in an 83-move marathon to leapfrog into first place. Nipping at his heels was a growing pack of players on 4½ points: Arkell, Kalegin, Jan Rooze, Antonio Fernandes and Janez Barle. An exciting last three rounds was in store.

To relieve the tension, let us pause momentarily to 'enjoy' the following catastrophe which befell Portuguese player Vitor Morais against Scotland's Craig Pritchett:

Craig Pritchett (2351) – Vitor Morais (2033) [E91]

Round 6, 14.03.2014

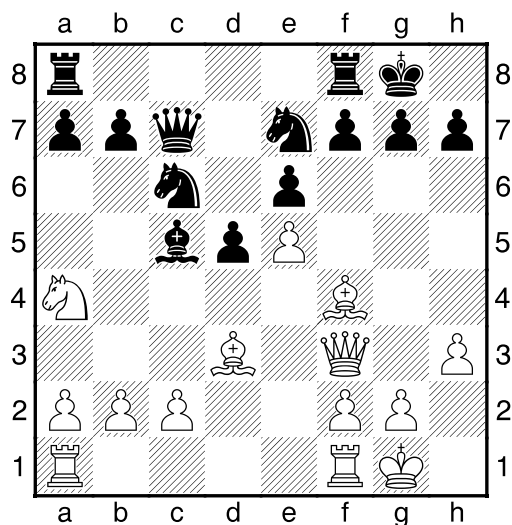
1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0–0 6.Be2 c5 7.0–0 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Nc6 9.Be3 Ng4?? 10.Bxg4 Nxd4 11.Bxc8 Rxc8 12.Bxd4 (Time to count the pieces...) 1–0

Next up for Keith in round 7 was Belgian FM Jan Rooze. The result was a comfortable win, with the Belgian proving to be too casual when it came to hanging onto his pawns, a suicidal strategy against Keith Arkell.

Jan Rooze (2342) – Keith Arkell [B12]

Round 7, 15.03.2014

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Bb5 Qa5+ 7.Nc3 e6 8.Bd2 Qc7 9.Be3 Nge7 10.0–0 Nf5 11.Bf4 Bxc5 12.h3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 0–0 14.Bd3 Nfe7 15.Na4?!



Driving the bishop to a square where it attacks the pawn on e5 is an odd choice. When the e-pawn falls, White's position starts to look very shaky.

15...Bd4 16.Rae1 Ng6 17.Bg3?!

17.Bxg6 is hardly a move that White wants to play, giving up his better bishop, but it was preferable to what now happens.

17...Bxe5 18.Bxg6 hxg6 19.Bxe5 Nxe5 20.Qf4 Qc4

Note that this move only works because of the loose knight on a4.

21.Qxe5 Qxa4 22.b3 Qxa2 23.Re2 Qa6 24.Rfe1 Rac8 25.h4 Qc6 26.h5 gxh5 27.Qxh5 Qc3 28.Re3 g6 29.Qh4 Qg7 30.Qb4?! Rxc2 31.Qxb7 Qd4

Now Black has two extra pawns AND the more active pieces.

32.Rf3 a5 33.Qe7 Rc6 34.Rh3 Rfc8 35.Qg5 Qg7 36.Kh2 Rc3 37.Ree3 d4 38.Rd3 Rxd3 39.Rxd3 e5 40.Qd2 Rc5 41.Qg5 f6 42.Qg4 Qh6+ 43.Rh3 Qf4+ 44.Qxf4 exf4 45.Rd3 Rd5 46.g3 fxg3+ 0–1

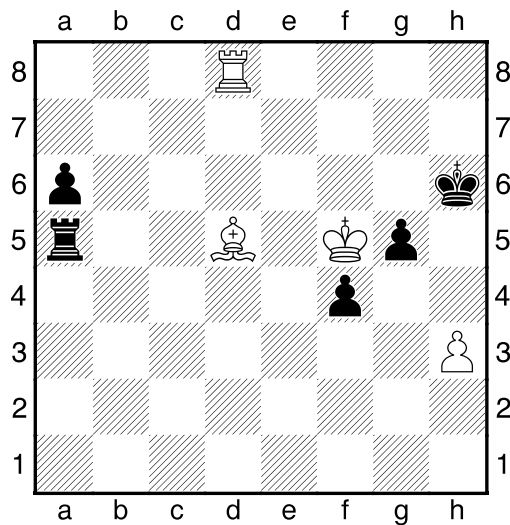
Sturua was only able to draw against Barle, so with Kalegin having returned to winning ways against Fernandes, there was a three-way tie at the top on 5½ points: Arkell, Kalegin and Sturua.

In round 8, Keith was drawn with white against his lowest-rated opponent since the opening round, untitled Moshe Gal from Israel. Spectators hoping for an easy win were made to wait but were rewarded with a fascinating technical ending:

Keith Arkell - Moshe Gal (2165) [E60]

Round 8, 16.03.2014

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 c5 4.Nc3 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nc6 6.e4 d6 7.Be2 Bg7 8.Be3 0–0 9.0–0 Nxd4 10.Bxd4 a6 11.Rc1 Qa5 12.f3 Be6 13.a3 Rac8 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Bxd4+ 16.Qxd4 Bf5 17.Rc3 Qc5 18.Qxc5 dxc5 19.Re1 Rfe8 20.Rb3 Rc7 21.Rb6 Kf8 22.b4 Bc8 23.Kf2 Rd8 24.Rb1 Rd6 25.bxc5 Rxc5 26.Rxd6 exd6 27.Ke3 Ke7 28.Kd4 Kd8 29.g4 Ra5 30.Rb3 Ra4 31.Kc3 Kc7 32.Kb2 Bd7 33.Rc3 Ra5 34.f4 Rc5 35.f5 gxf5 36.g5 b5 37.Rh3 bxc4 38.Kc3 Rxd5 39.Rxh7 f4 40.g6 fxg6 41.Bg4 Rd3+ 42.Kxc4 Rxa3 43.Rxd7+ Kc6 44.Rf7 g5 45.Bd7+ Kc7 46.Be6+ Kd8 47.h3 Ra5 48.Bg4 Ke8 49.Rf6 Ke7 50.Re6+ Kf7 51.Rxd6 Kg7 52.Kd4 Kf7 53.Rb6 Kg7 54.Bc8 Ra3 55.Ke5 Re3+ 56.Kd4 Ra3 57.Bf5 Ra5 58.Ke4 Kf7 59.Be6+ Kf6 60.Bd5+ Kg7 61.Rd6 Kh7 62.Ke5 Kg7 63.Ke6 Ra4 64.Ke5 Ra5 65.Rd8 Kg6 66.Rg8+ Kh5 67.Rh8+ Kg6 68.Ke6 Kg7 69.Rc8 Ra4 70.Kf5 Ra5 71.Rg8+ Kh7 72.Rd8 Kh6



73.Kg4?

It would have been nice if Keith's hard work had been capped with mate (73.Kf6 Kh7 74.Be4+ Rf5+ 75.Bxf5+ Kh6 76.Rh8# - something he would undoubtedly have seen with more time on the clock), but no serious damage is done.

73...Ra3 74.Rd6+ Kg7 75.Bf3 Kf7 76.Rd5 Rb3 77.Rf5+ Kg7 78.Rxg5+ Kh6 79.Rc5 Rb6 80.Be4 Kg7 81.Kxf4 Kf6 82.Rh5 Kg7 83.Rh7+ Kg8 84.Ra7 Rh6 85.Bf5 Rb6 86.Ke5 Kh8 87.Be6 a5 88.Kf6 a4 89.Re7 1–0

The other top two games were drawn, meaning that Keith had a half-point lead entering the final round and only had to match the results of Kalegin and Sturua to win first place outright. The final round draw at the head of the table was as follows:

Janez Barle (5½)	-	Keith Arkell (6½)
Suat Soyly (5½)	-	Evgeny Kalegin (6)

First to finish was board 3, where Sturua could make no headway against his opponent's solid play:

Zurab Sturua – Luis Santos (2369) [A43]

Round 9, 17.03.2014

1.d4 c5 2.d5 g6 3.e4 d6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.Be2 0–0 7.0–0 Bg4 8.Nd2 Bxe2 9.Qxe2 Re8 10.Nc4 Nfd7 11.Bf4 Nb6 12.Ne3 Qd7 13.h4 Na4 14.Nxa4 Qxa4 15.c4 Nd7 16.b3 Qa3 17.Rab1 Reb8 18.h5 a6 19.Bg5 Re8 20.Rfc1 Qa5 21.Rc2 b5 22.Ng4 Bd4 23.Be3 Bxe3 24.Nxe3 Rab8 25.Ng4 Nf6 26.Nxf6+ exf6 27.Qf3 Qd8 28.Re1 Re5 29.hxg6 hxg6 30.Re3 ½–½

Last round tension was high as the top two boards were played out. Kalegin never looked like winning his game, and indeed seemed to be losing for much of it:

Suat Soyly (2411) – Evgeny Kalegin [B40]

Round 9, 17.03.2014

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 Nge7 5.0–0 d5 6.exd5 Nxd5 7.d4 Nf6 8.Ne5 Nxe5 9.dxe5 Qxd1 10.Rxd1 Nd7 11.f4 a6 12.Be3 Ra7 13.Nd2 b6 14.Nc4 Bb7 15.Rd2 Bxg2 16.Kxg2 Be7 17.Rad1 Rb7 18.Kf3 Nb8 19.Rd6 Nd7 20.a4 Rc7 21.R6d2 f6 22.Ke4 fxe5 23.fxe5 h6 24.a5 bxa5 25.b3 Rf8 26.Nd6+ Bxd6 27.Rxd6 Rf7 28.Rxe6+ Re7 29.Rdd6 c4 30.Rxe7+ Kxe7 31.Rg6 cxb3 32.cxb3 Kf8 33.Rxa6 Rc3 34.Bd4 Rxb3 35.Rxa5 Ke7 36.Kd5 Rb1 37.Ra7 Rd1 38.g4 Ke8 39.Rb7 Rd2 40.h4 Rg2 41.e6 Nf6+ 42.Bxf6 gxf6 43.Rh7 Rxg4 44.Rxh6 Ra4 45.Rh8+ Ke7 46.Rh7+ Kf8 47.e7+ Ke8 48.Ke6 Re4+ 49.Kxf6 Re6+ 50.Kxe6 ½–½

Keith, on the other hand, always seemed to be doing well. In the end, he preferred to clinch the title with a draw rather than risk the possibility of going wrong in complications by seeking the win:

Janez Barle (2337) – Keith Arkell [B01]

Round 9, 17.03.2014

1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 Nf6 4.Nc3 cxd5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Bc4 Nb6 7.Bb3 Nc6 8.Nf3 g6 9.d4 Bg7 10.Be3 0–0 11.d5 Na5 12.0–0 Bg4 13.h3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Nxb3 15.axb3 Nc8 16.Rfd1 a6 17.h4 Nd6 18.h5 Nf5 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Bg5 Qd7 21.d6 Nxd6 22.Nd5 Rae8 23.Qe3 f6 24.Bh6 g5 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.Rac1 Rf7 27.Nc7 Rc8 28.Ne6+ Kg8 29.Rxc8+ Qxc8 30.Rc1 Qe8 31.Qd3 Rh7 32.Qd5 Kh8 33.g3 Rh6 34.Re1 Qh5 35.Nc7 Rh7 36.Re3 Qg6 37.Qd1 Qf5 38.Rc3 Qh3 39.Qd5 Qh2+ 40.Kf1 Qh1+ 41.Ke2 Qxd5 42.Nxd5 f5 43.Re3 Ne4 44.Nc3 Nd6 45.Nd5 Ne4 46.Nc3 ½–½

To the frustration of online viewers, the live transmission broke down at the crucial stage of Kalegin's game, making it unclear whether the draw on the top board preceded the result on board 2 (although it was evident that Kalegin was not going to win, barring something quite astonishing).

Commenting on the English Chess Forum, Keith gave an insight into the pressures of the situation: "... I'm sure you'll forgive me for making a bee-line for the draw once I knew that this would guarantee me the title. For example, I saw that 38...Qe4 and 41...Qb1 (the moves my hand wanted to play) would almost certainly win, but as I was getting a bit emotional and excited, I didn't want to risk missing something while the positions remained complicated."

At the same time, Keith took the opportunity to thank the Friends of Chess and several individuals who had responded to his appeal before the event for support with the costs. With no financial backing available from the ECF, entry, travel and accommodation expenses were of such a level that even unshared first prize (€1000) was insufficient to cover



costs. This is a sad reflection on the financial realities for the professional chessplayer, and the question of future support for English participation in this championship is surely a matter that the ECF will wish to consider.

Final standings:

1. Keith Arkell 7/9; =2-3 Kalegin, Sturua 6½; =4-7 Bruno, Barle, Rooze, Soyly 6; =8-11 Pritchett, Santos, Furman, Leirós Vila 5½

Back in the Saddle Again!

GM Matthew Sadler made a welcome return to the English weekend congress scene in March, dominating the 38th Blackpool Chess Conference with an impressive 5/5. (For a summary of the congress results, see the Congress Round-up elsewhere in this issue.)

So that Chess Moves readers may have the opportunity to emulate his winning methods, here's how Matthew did it:

Matthew Sadler (2645) - Paul Cawley (2070) [C60]

Blackpool (Round 1), 07.03.2014

1.e4 Nc6 2.Nf3 e5 3.Bb5 Nge7 4.Nc3 g6 5.h4 h5 6.d4 exd4 7.Nd5 Nxd5 8.exd5 Qe7+ 9.Kf1 Ne5 10.Bg5 f6 11.Nxe5 Qxe5 12.Qd3 Kf7 13.Re1 Qd6 14.Rh3 Bg7 15.Rf3 a6 16.Bc4 b5 17.Bb3 Bb7 18.Bf4 Qc5 19.d6+ Bd5 20.Re7+ 1-0

Mike Surtees (2091) – Matthew Sadler [C00]

Blackpool (Round 2), 08.03.2014

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 Nc6 5.bxc5 f6 6.Bd3 Nh6 7.Nf3 fxe5 8.fxe5 Bxc5 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Bb2 Nxe5 11.Qe2 Nxf3+ 12.gxf3 Qh4+ 13.Kd1 a6 14.a4 Bd7 15.a5 Rae8 16.Ba3 Bxa3 17.Rxa3 Qf4 18.Rb3 Bc6 19.Rf1 e5 20.Rb6 Nf5 21.Bxf5 Qxf5 22.Rxc6 bxc6 23.Qxa6 Qh3 24.Qe2 e4 25.f4 Ra8 26.a6 Qc8 27.Qe3 Rxa6 0-1

Matthew Sadler – Daniel Fernandez (2373) [B17]

Blackpool (Round 3), 08.03.2014

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Ng5 h6 6.Ne6 Qb6 7.Nxf8 Nxf8 8.c3 Nf6 9.Bd3 Bg4 10.Ne2 Bh5 11.0-0 Bg6 12.Bc4 N8d7 13.Nf4 Bf5 14.Re1 e6 15.d5 cxd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Qxd5 Qc6 18.Qxc6 bxc6 19.Bf4 a5 20.Bd6 Nb6 21.Be2 Na4 22.g4 Bh7 23.Rad1 Nxb2 24.Rd4 Rd8 25.Bf3 Rc8 26.Re5 Nd3 27.Rxa5 e5 28.Rc4 Kd7 29.Bxe5 Nxe5 30.Rxe5 Rhe8 31.Rxe8 Kxe8 32.Rxc6 Rb8 33.Rc7 Rb1+ 34.Kg2 Ra1 35.Bc6+ Kf8 36.Bd5 Bg6 37.f4 Rd1 38.c4 Rd2+ 39.Kg3 Rd3+ 40.Kf2 f5 41.gxf5 Be8 42.Ra7 1-0

Mark Hebden (2545) - Matthew Sadler [A46]

Blackpool (Round 4), 09.03.2014

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.e3 b6 4.Bd3 Bb7 5.0-0 d5 6.c4 dxc4 7.Bxc4 a6 8.Qe2 Nbd7 9.Rd1 c5 10.Nc3 b5 11.Bb3 Qb6 12.d5 Nxd5 13.Nxd5 exd5 14.Bxd5 Bxd5 15.Rxd5 Qb7 16.e4 Be7 17.Bg5 Nb6 18.Rf5 0-0 19.e5 Rfe8 20.Bxe7 Rxe7 21.Qc2 Nd7 22.h4 Rae8 23.Rd1 g6 24.Rg5 Nxe5 25.Nxe5 Rxe5 26.Qc3 Qe4 27.Rxe5 Rxe5 28.g3 b4 29.Qd2 Kg7 30.b3 Qe2 31.Kg2 c4 32.bxc4 Qxc4 33.Qb2 Qc6+ 34.Kg1 Qc3 35.Qd2 a5 36.Kg2 Qxd2 37.Rxd2 a4 38.Kf3 b3 39.axb3 axb3 40.Rb2 Rb5 41.Ke4 Kf6 42.Kd4 Kf5 43.f3 g5 44.h5 Rb7 45.Kd5 g4 46.f4 Rd7+ 47.Kc4 Ke4 0-1

Matthew Sadler – Alexander Cherniaev (2430) [B30]

Blackpool (Round 5), 09.03.2014

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.Bxc6 bxc6 5.d3 Ne7 6.Qe2 d5 7.b3 f6 8.e5 Ng6 9.Bb2 Be7 10.g3 0-0 11.Nbd2 a5 12.a4 Rb8 13.h4 Nh8 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.Ne5 Qc7 16.f4 c4 17.dxc4 c5 18.0-0-0 d4 19.Nd3 Be7 20.Nf3 Bb7 21.Rhe1 Bxf3 22.Qxf3 Rb6 23.Re4 Nf7 24.Rde1 Nd8 25.Ba3 Bd6 26.Qe2 Rc6 27.Kb1 Ra6 28.Ka2 Rc6 29.Qg2 Ra6 30.R1e2

Qc8 31.Qh3 Qc7 32.Qh1 Qc8 33.Qe1 Qc7 34.Bc1 Ra7 35.Bd2 Ra6 36.h5 Ra7 37.g4 Ra6 38.Qh1 Ra7 39.Qh4 Be7 40.Qh3 Bd6 41.Bc1 Ra8 42.Ba3 Ra6 43.Qh4 Be7 44.Qe1 Bd6 45.Rf2 Rc6 46.Qe2 Qc8 47.f5 exf5 48.Rxf5 Nb7 49.Rxf8+ Bxf8 50.Re8 Qd7 51.Qe4 Rc7 52.Rb8 Qe7 53.Qxe7 1–0

Tradewise Gibraltar Masters 2014

The 12th Tradewise Gibraltar Masters took place from 28th January to 6th February at the Caleta Hotel. With a staggering field of 254 players, including 68 GMs (ten rated over 2700), 38 IMs, 7 WGMs and 16 FIDE masters, the event has grown into top open tournament in the chess calendar. The prize fund of nearly £200,000 for the chess festival as a whole, including a first prize of £20,000 for the winner of the open and £15,000 for the best-placed female player, ensures that aspiring players in their droves descend on the Rock of Gibraltar.

One of the pre-tournament favourites, England's Michael Adams, put in a solid performance and remained unbeaten over the ten rounds, but the six draws he conceded meant that his 7 points was only good enough for a tie of 10th to 26th(!) place. Here are a couple of his wins, beginning with a typically smooth technical performance in the opening round:

Emilio Miguel Sanchez Jerez (2287) - Michael Adams (2754) [A00]

Gibraltar (1), 28.01.2014

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Be7 6.d4 Na5 7.Be2 d6 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Qa4+ c6 10.Nxe5 Nf6 11.0–0 Qc7 12.Nf3 0–0 13.Bg5 Re8 14.e5 Nd7 15.Bf4 Nc5 16.e6 Nxa4 17.Bxc7 b6 18.exf7+ Kxf7 19.Ne5+ Kg8 20.Nxc6 Bf6 21.Bb5 Bd7 22.Bxa4 Bxc6 23.Bxc6 Nxc6 24.Na3 Bxc3 25.Rab1 Nd4 26.Rfd1 Re2 27.Nb5 Nxb5 28.Rxb5 Bd4 29.Rf5 Rxa2 30.g4 Ra1 31.Rxa1 Bxa1 32.Rd5 Kf7 33.f4 Rc8 34.Bd8 Rc4 35.Rf5+ Ke8 36.Bh4 a5 37.Kg2 Rc5 38.Rxc5 bxc5 39.Kf3 a4 0–1

GM Mikhail Antipov (2511) - Michael Adams [C65]

Gibraltar (5), 01.02.2014

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.0–0 Nd4 6.Nxd4 Bxd4 7.c3 Bb6 8.Nd2 c6 9.Ba4 0–0 10.Nc4 Bc7 11.Ne3 d5 12.Qf3 d4 13.cxd4 Qxd4 14.Bc2 Be6 15.Nf5 Bxf5 16.Qxf5 Bb6 17.Rb1 Qd6 18.Kh1 a5 19.f4 Nd7 20.fxe5 Nxe5 21.Bf4 Bd4 22.Bb3 g6 23.Bxe5 Bxe5 24.Bxf7+ Kg7 25.Qe6 Rad8 26.g3??

White should have exchanged queens, after which Black could claim at most a small edge. Now, the bishop on f7 has nowhere to go.

26...Qc7 27.b4 Rd7 28.d4 Bxd4 29.Rbd1 Rd6 30.Qc4 Rxf7 0–1

A previous winner of the event on more than one occasion, Nigel Short will have been disappointed by his 2014 showing, although 6½ points is hardly an embarrassing score in such a strong competition.

A scrappy win from early in the event:

Nigel Short (2683) - Stefan Doc, (2458) [A00]

Gibraltar (3), 30.01.2014

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.e3 Nc6 4.g4 d5 5.g5 d4 6.gxf6 dxc3 7.fxg7 cxd2+ 8.Bxd2 Bxg7 9.Bc3 Qe7 10.Ne2 Bd7 11.Rg1 f6 12.Qb3 0–0–0 13.0–0–0 h5 14.Bg2 Bh6 15.Bd5 Qc5 16.Ng3 h4 17.Ne4 Qe7 18.Qb5 Bf8 19.f4 a6 20.Qb3 Bh6 21.Rge1 Rhf8 22.fxe5 fxe5 23.Kb1 Bg4 24.Rc1 Rf3 25.Bxc6 bxc6 26.Ka1 Bxe3 27.Qa4 Bxc1 28.Bb4 Re3 29.Rxc1 c5??

29...Qxb4 30.Qxb4 Rxe4 keeps Black in the game, with an interesting ending in prospect.

30.Bxc5 1–0

Selected scores by other English players:

6½	Glenn Flear
6	Lawrence Trent, Stephen Gordon
5	David Spence, Robert Bellin, Jovanka Houska, Terry Chapman, Alan Walton, Alan Byron
4½	Martin Burrows, Ashley Stewart, Rufus Duff

After the ten rounds, three players were tied for first on 8 points: Vassily Ivanchuk, Nikita Vitiugov and Ivan Cheparinov. Of these, popular Ukrainian super-GM Ivanchuk had had the toughest tournament, leading the way until draws in the last two rounds allowed others to catch up. By contrast, Cheparinov appeared as if from nowhere with an impressive run of three straight wins at the end, moving from 5/7 (equal 16th) to the top in double-quick time.

Cheparinov's good run continued into the play-offs, in which two of the three tied players had to contest a mini-match of rapid and, if necessary, blitz games, with the winner having to repeat the act against the lucky person who had been drawn to sit out the preliminary stage. As it happened, Cheparinov was the lucky 'spectator', able to watch Vitiugov beat crowd favourite Ivanchuk 2-0 in the blitz games, having achieved two draws at the rapid-play stage. Cheparinov won the opening game of the mini-match against Vitiugov and held the second to secure the £20,000 first prize.

It was not all bad news for Ukraine (a country with plenty of other things on its mind at present), as Mariya Muzychuk captured the £15,000 prize for best performance by a female player with 7 points.

WEEKEND CONGRESS ROUND-UP

Bristol Winter Congress, 17-19 January (Record entry!)

OPEN: 1st Chris Beaumont (Bristol & Clifton) 4/5; 2nd= Gareth Morris (Bristol & Clifton), Carl Bicknell (Lichfield), Michael Harris (Horfield & Redland), Matthew Payne (Worthing), David Buckley (Bath), David Graham (Worthing) 3½. (32 players)

MAJOR (U155): 1st Tony Harvey (South Bristol) 4½; 2nd= Robert Lowery (Patchway), Roy Harron (Horfield & Redland) 4. (33 players)

MINOR (U125): Daniel Rowan (Banbury) 4½; 2nd= Jack Walpole (Bristol University), Paul Jackson (Morecambe), Richard Porter (Bristol University) 4. (43 players)

1st Golders Green Weekend Congress, 18-19 January (New congress!)

U2200: 1st= V Haribalu (IND), Ali Jaunooby, Philip Bonafont, Adam Taylor 4/5. (33 players)

U1900: 1st Georgios Gazis 4½/5; 2nd= Jonathan Landau, Tim Joslin, Vladimirs Bovtramovics, Neil Cossins, Elizaveta Sheremetyeva 4. (52 players)

37th Kidlington Congress, 1-2 February (Entry significantly up on recent years!)

U225: 1st= Jim Burnett, James Jackson 4/5; 3rd= Peter Batchelor, Donald Mason 3½. (22 players)

U180: 1st Scott Crockart 4½; 2nd= Phil Neatherway, Ray Starkie 4. (46 players)

U145: 1st= Simon Terrington, Zoe Varney 5; 3rd= Peter Hemmings, Nikolai Hinterreither, Maria Mate 4 (59 players)

U120: 1st James Ramsden 4½; 2nd= Nikhil Hakeem, Lee Collins, Rajagopal Panicker, Stephen Crockett 4. (43 players)

Frodsham Weekend Congress, 7-9 February (Record entry!)

U210: 1st Jim Burnett (Doncaster) 4½/5; 2nd Oliver Jackson (no club) 4; 3rd Jeff Smith (Chester) 3½. (23 players)

U160: 1st= Mark Cromwell (Frodsham), Richard Desmedt (Wombwell) 4½; 3rd= Reg Clucas (Altrincham & Hale), Mick Connor (Great Lever/Widnes), Jozef Nemcek (Chester) 4. (54 players)

U120: 1st Roy Watson (Kenilworth) 4½; 2nd= Tim Allen (Battersea), Paul Broderick (Newport, Shropshire), Colin Gardiner (Newmarket), Chris Volk (no club) 4. (55 players)

Hampstead U2200 Weekend Congress, 15-16 February

1st Ali Jaunooby 5/5; 2nd Ben Keohane 4½; 3rd= Thomas Villiers, Stephen Prior, Jonathan Landau, David Cork 4. (55 players)

2nd e2e4 West Bromwich Congress, 21-23 February (Significantly increased entry!)

OPEN: 1st GM Mark Hebden (Leicester) 4½/5; 2nd= GM Daniel Gormally (Blackthorn Russ), Philip Tozer (Athenaeum), John Fawole 4. (47 players)

MAJOR: 1st= Gary Jackson (Banbury), Martyn Harris (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Lukasz Walijewski (Walsall Kipping) 4. (29 players)

MINOR: 1st= Tim Allen (Battersea), Derek Simpson (Berkhamstead), Roy Watson (Kenilworth), John Merry (Salford) 4. (31 players)

4th Castle Chess Dudley Congress, 22-23 February

OPEN: 1st Matthew Harborne 4½/5; 2nd Alan Crombleholme 3½; 3rd= Richard Bryant, Nicholas Fordham 3. (10 players)

MAJOR (U160): 1st Alex Rossiter 4½; 2nd= Richard Desmedt, Tim Puleston 3½. (16 players)

MINOR (U120): 1st Jennifer Goldsmith 4; 2nd= Paul Broderick, Stephen Crockett 3½. (12 players)

22nd Doncaster Congress, 28 February-2 March

OPEN: 1st Jonathan Hawkins 4½/5; 2nd= Peter Shaw, Ali Jaunooby 4. (33 players)

MAJOR: 1st Ron Plater 4½; nine players tied for 2nd place with 3½ points. (40 players)

INTERMEDIATE: 1st= Keith Marshall, Shabir Okhai 4½; 3rd= Evie Hollingworth, Janos Wagenbach, Robert Clegg 4. (56 players)

MINOR: 1st John Grasham 4½; seven players tied for 2nd place with 4 points. (66 players)

39th East Devon Congress, 28 February-2 March

OPEN: 1st Roger de Coverly 4½/5; 2nd= Graham Bolt, Jack Rudd 4. (43 players)

MAJOR (U155): 1st= James Fewkes, Frank Pittman 4; six players tied for 3rd place with 3½ points. (30 players)

MINOR (U125): 1st= Lee Bullock, Robert Fursman, Norman Tidy 4½. (53 players)

Warwickshire Open Congress, 1-2 March

OPEN: 1st IM Ameet Ghazi (Birmingham) 4½/5; 2nd= James Jackson (Northampton), IM Peter Poobalasingam (Richmond & Twickenham) 4. (26 players)

MAJOR (U170): 1st Robert Taylor (Preston) 4½; 2nd Keith Jewsbury (Solihull) 4; 3rd= Gary Jackson (Banbury), Kevin Yeomans (Olton) 3½. (26 players)

INTERMEDIATE (U145): 1st= Rajagopal Panicker (no club), Stephen Williams (Cwmbran) 4; 3rd= Tim Allen (Battersea), George Georgiou (Swindon), Trevor Holt (Olton) 3½. (25 players)

MINOR (U120): 1st= Stephen Crockett (Redditch), Rowan Swiers (Warwick University) 4; 3rd= Adam Hirst (Bishops Stortford), Marek Schroeder (Birmingham) 3½. (22 players)

38th Blackpool Chess Conference, 7-9 March

PUMA LANCASHIRE OPEN: 1st Matthew Sadler 5/5; 2nd David J Walker 4½; 3rd= Alexander Cherniaev, Daniel Fernandez, Mark Hebden, Philip Wheldon 4. (48 players)

IMPERIAL MAJOR (U181): 1st Alex Gillies 4½; 2nd= Jason Lau, Philip Olbison, Nathanael Paul, Joshus Pink 4. (70 players)

MEDIAN (U155): 1st= Neil Coward, Andrew Hargreaves 4½; 3rd= Robert Clegg, Jon Reese, Mark Thomas 4. (78 players)

INTERMEDIATE (U135): 1st= Tom Green, Paul Horman, Mark Keady, Conor Reid 4½. (82 players)

MINOR (U115): 1st= Alan Fraser, Caroline Robson 4½; 3rd= Jennifer Goldsmith, Eric Lesnik, Roy Watson 4. (73 players)

Hampstead U2200 Weekend Congress, 8-9 March

1st Ali Jaunooby 5/5; 2nd= Stephen Prior, Jonathan Landau 4. (37 players)

6th Castle Chess Hereford Congress, 14-16 March

OPEN: 1st Nathanael Paul 4½/6, 2nd= Richard Bryant, Lutz Franke, Perry Walker 4. (12 players)

MAJOR (U160): 1st Stuart Iles 5½; 2nd Richard Desmedt, 4½; 3rd= Roy Watson, Tim Woodward 4. (19 players)

MINOR (U120): 1st Stephen Crockett 5; 2nd John Lightowler 4½; 3rd= Alan Fraser, Marek Schroeder, Adrian Cucu 4. (16 players)

e2e4 High Wycombe Congress, 14-16 March

OPEN: 1st= GM Alexander Cherniaev (Russia), IM Gediminas Saraukas (Guildford), IM Daniel Fernandez (Marple) 4/5. (34 players)

CHALLENGERS (U2050): 1st Alex Bullen (Cardiff) 5; 2nd= Peter Lane (no club), Roger de Coverly (Bourne End), Shane McCabe (no club) 4. (50 players)

MAJOR (U1750): 1st David Grobler (Stannington) 4½; 2nd Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking) 4; five players tied for 3rd place on 3½ points. (39 players)

Chess and Education

In welcoming the delegates to the inaugural Chess and Education Conference at the start of the London Chess Classic festival in Kensington Olympia, the Chief Executive of the charity, Chess in Schools and Communities, Malcolm Pein, remarked that the easiest argument to sell to politicians, educators and potential sponsors is the great things that chess does for children.

His comments came at the start of a two-day conference held over the weekend of 7th-8th December 2013. Present were over eighty interested parties from the worlds of chess and education, eager to hear presentations from an impressively international array of speakers, pulled together by the conference originator and organiser, Stefan Loeffler. This, the first conference on the subject to be held in England, was an opportunity to share in the experiences of other countries' chess in schools programmes and to develop lines of communication with a network of useful contacts.

Key questions

Certain key questions recurred over the course of the weekend:

1. Is teaching chess to children beneficial to their development, and if so, in what ways?
2. Is 'chess in schools' predominantly about education or about chess?
3. Who are the best people to teach chess in schools, chess players or professional educators?

The first question is interesting. The assumption that the answer is 'yes' seems to be widespread, practically unquestioned, in the chess world, and there is remarkably little resistance to the idea in primary school education and other circles, such as politics. I use the word "remarkably" quite deliberately because robust academic research demonstrating a benefit to children is largely absent. Those involved in, or witness to, chess in schools programmes consistently vouch for its beneficial effects, so advocates for such initiatives are not hard to find, but the proof is still elusive.

The second question was a source of slight tension, albeit always friendly, between conference delegates from the chess world (typically players involved in coaching) and those from the academic or educational spheres. It was evident to me that chess-players – myself included – found it hard to divorce themselves entirely from the notion that chess success is one of the desired objectives of a schools chess programme. For the educators, however, this is beside the point: what matters are the benefits to the children in terms of cognitive skills, social behaviour and other areas. Whether the children emerge as good chess-players was irrelevant, except to the extent that this might support the broader goals and, since chess is after all a game, that the children might find it an enjoyable pastime as they grow. After a question posed by a chess coach that focused on success in developing chess strength, I was amused to overhear one of the delegates (organiser of a successful chess in schools programme) mutter with the patience of the long-suffering to his colleague, "Ah, chess-players..."

The third question was a practical one, based on the issue of whether it is easier to train professional educators about chess or to teach chess-players how to be good teachers. The two groups are not mutually exclusive, of course, and moreover the ideal solution may prove to be a partnership of both.

These themes will appear in what follows, which is an inevitably selective review of the conference highlights. For more details, readers are encouraged to visit the Chess in Schools and Communities website at <http://www.londonchessclassic.com/conference/presentations.htm> where the speakers' presentations and other useful materials may be found.

The Opening Session

The conference proper began with a report from perhaps the most famous schools chess programme in the

world: Armenia. Prof. Aram Hajian, alongside GM Smbat Lputian, described how Armenia introduced mandatory chess instruction in primary schools. As a country which had already produced one world chess champion, Tigran Petrosian, Armenia had a pre-existing chess culture which meant that the game was already widespread, popular and respected – a state of affairs not all countries can boast. It also helped considerably that the President of the country and the President of the Armenian Chess Federation were one and the same man.

Delegates were shown a video clip of a typical lesson, with primary school children being asked by a teacher nicknamed the “drill sergeant” to work through the moves of Scholar’s Mate (and then the defence against it) blindfold, before being asked to envisage a simple problem – again without sight of the board – and find the mate in one. It was undeniably impressive and – from the perspective of a chess-player – just a little scary!

Although clearly convinced of the value of their schools chess programme, the Armenians recognise the need for academic research to support their belief. The scale of the programme offers a large dataset, and the year above the tranche first introduced to the chess lessons has been used as the comparison group. The results, said to be very encouraging, have been published in the Russian language.

Each class receives two 45-minute chess lessons a week over the course of a three-year programme. 2013/14 will mark the completion of this programme for the first generation of children.

By way of counterpoint, the second presentation, by Prof. Fernand Gobet of the University of Liverpool approached the subject from the perspective of rigorous academic research standards. Prof. Gobet, whose field is cognitive psychology, addressed the critical issue of “transfer”, i.e. if you learn to play chess, what else does it benefit? While the chess community appears to have a clear belief in the existence of transfer in this context, the scientific community’s position is a resounding “Don’t know”.

A 2002 study by Gobet and Capitelli on the question of transfer surveyed about 700 studies into the subject and concluded that only 7 or 8 were scientifically valid, due to inadequacies in methodology or other aspects in the other 690 or so. The conclusion from the few valid studies was that there was no clear evidence of transfer. A decade on, Prof. Gobet asserted that the conclusions remained valid.



The difficulty in these studies is that there are factors that may influence children's development which are present in chess teaching but not specific to it, namely:

- The teachers tend to be highly motivated and passionate;
- The topic is novel;
- A game is involved, i.e. it's fun;
- It is a competitive activity;
- It shows that school can be fun and interesting.

These points are true of chess, but they would be true of lessons in video games as well. Can it be demonstrated that chess lessons are particularly effective?

Prof. Gobet made the case for an experiment based on three groups:

1. The group receiving the 'treatment', i.e. the chess lessons;
2. A group receiving no changes to the normal curriculum;
3. A 'placebo' group, i.e. undergoing lessons in an 'educationally neutral' topic.

It was evident that this provoked considerable interest among delegates and not a little concern. How, it was asked, could a genuine 'placebo' be identified? This difficulty appeared never to be entirely resolved.

The Research Session

After an interlude in which the conference was treated to short presentations about four different chess programmes from overseas ("Corsica, Land of Chess"; the Italian "Psychomotricity" scheme; Israel's work on Kindergarten Chess and the "Chess Palace Programme" launched in Hungary with the involvement of the Judit Pólgar Foundation), the focus turned to further examinations of the academic researches into the possible benefits of teaching chess to children.

Dr Michelle Ellefson, despite battling with a cold throughout, delivered a fascinating presentation on the topic, 'Does Chess Make Children Smart? Insights from Cognitive Science'. Of all the presentations at the conference, this seemed the most encouraging from the perspective of combining both scientific rigour and positive outcomes, although Dr Ellefson was at pains to stress that the results were still at a very early stage.

Dr Ellefson's work focused specifically on 'executive functions' (EF), which is a term used to refer to processes involving 'goal-directed behaviours'. The interested reader is referred to the presentation available online. Cutting to the chase, the very early results from this research project are showing the positive effect of chess in the following areas:

- Task Switching (accuracy and efficiency)
- Sustained Attention Task (accuracy)
- Planning (accuracy and response time)
- Executive decision making (response time)

Dr Ellefson also highlighted a 2011 study which concluded that the most effective programmes do more than just train EF, but also attend to social and emotional factors. Chess appears to achieve this.

After this encouraging news, Roberto Trinchero and Giuliano d'Ereditá presented the conclusions from an Italian programme, suggesting that a chess intervention with in-presence lessons and online training can significantly improve the scores of children on the OECD-Pisa Mathematics Scale, an internationally accepted standard.

Johanna Valentin reported on an inspiring Swedish project exploring the scope for using chess in the social and intellectual development of children with learning disabilities. Particularly striking was a video of a large room, filled with 350 children, of whom some 6% had been diagnosed with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Although the sound was at high volume, one could hear a pin drop, so absorbed were the children in the

chess activity.

Responding to the earlier cautionary notes regarding rigorous validation, Johanna made the point that chess does not necessarily have to be better than other tools in education; it only has to be as good as other working memory training methods to be preferable, because chess is also fun, usable and social.

The 'research' section of the conference was completed by an engaging presentation by Prof. Christopher Chabris, whose work has made the leap from academia to a successful popular science book, *The Invisible Gorilla*. From personal experience, I can vouch for the impact of this book, which is highly recommended. If you want to understand the title, just put "invisible gorilla" into your search engine (or buy the book!).

Prof. Chabris's message echoed the cautionary note sounded by Prof. Gobet's keynote address. Picking up the themes from his *Invisible Gorilla* book, he demonstrated how readily the human mind's tendency to see patterns in randomness and to see causality which is not present can lead to belief in a conclusion which is in fact unproved. It is very easy to understand why so many of us believe that "teaching chess causes improvement", but until the science provides objective confirmation of this, it is no more than an assertion based on anecdote and faith.

The Best Practice Session

The presentations in this session were designed to generate discussion about the best methods of teaching chess in schools and to show the approaches adopted in some countries.

The first speaker, Carl Fredrik Johansson from the Swedish Chess Federation, took as his theme, 'Who are the chess teachers of the future?' In Sweden, they have taught some 20,000 ten-year-olds to play chess and have trained more than 1700 teachers across more than 450 schools in how to teach the game. His background in the national chess federation notwithstanding, Carl's message was clear: their programme is based upon educational and social goals; any resulting chess success for Sweden would be a positive side-effect but not essential to the course objectives.

Carl was upfront about the anxieties of the educational establishment (and indeed the national chess federation) over using chess players to deliver the course: "Would we dare to let chess-players into the class room?" More seriously, they concluded that "it is easier for a teacher to learn chess than to teach a chess-player pedagogical skills," a message which tended to be repeated by the various speakers during the rest of the conference.

Given the fact that Carl Johansson was speaking as a representative of a chess federation, it seemed to carry more weight when he advised that it was up to the chess community to exploit the opportunity created by the increase in the number of people who play chess as a result of a schools chess programme. There should be no question of relying on the programme itself to incorporate the objective of chess success into its goals.

Ferenc von Maurer from the Judit Pólgar Chess Foundation confirmed that the Hungarians had reached the identical conclusion: the right people to teach young children chess are professional teachers. (He did indicate that there was an after-school programme for stronger players, effectively serving as Hungary's talent search scheme.) In a way, this approach is particularly interesting in a country like Hungary where there existed a strong tradition of pure chess teaching with the goal of producing strong chess players. Their schools programme is remarkably indifferent to the question of whether it produces good chess players, provided that it delivers on the educational purpose.

The session concluded with two variations on the principal theme: Jérôme Maufra on the use of "mini-games" to teach problem-solving, planning and a scientific approach and Marisa van der Merve on the use of 'Mini Chess' in South Africa with children as young as 5. The video presentation of Mini Chess in action in a school in Thembisa was both impressive and moving.

The Workshop Session

Having established the foundations of the subject, the conference proceeded in a more active direction, giving delegates the opportunity to break up into various groups to discuss specific topics. Feedback from these sessions was provided on the Sunday afternoon using the novel approach of having had professional artists present at each group's discussion and depicting the output in a combination of words and images.

Working sessions on the Sunday morning covered the themes of funding; training and supporting primary school teachers; lesson ideas and variations for chess classes; chess curriculum development and evaluation; and a 'strategy bootcamp' subtitled "School Chess and Your Federation." The positive buzz from the conference was an indication that others found these sessions as useful as I did.

The Final Afternoon

The conference concluded with a typically passionate argument in favour of the benefits of chess to society by Leontxo Garcia, followed by a panel discussion on the theme, 'Should Chess Organisations Rethink Their Approach to School Chess?' This proved to be somewhat delayed, due to another call upon the time of star panellist Garry Kasparov, but there was no evidence that anyone wanted to leave before they had heard from the man himself.

Kasparov was joined by Leontxo Garcia, Léo Battesti, Carl Fredrik Johansson and panel chairman John Foley (from Chess in Schools and Communities). There is no denying that the energy in the room changed with the former world champion's appearance, and a political element was introduced which had been absent hitherto. Nevertheless, it made for an absorbing 45 minutes or so.

Inevitably, there is likely to be interest in what Garry had to say, so I shall do my best to summarise here. He spoke of the need to define the role of national federations with regard to promoting chess and bringing more people into the game, as well as the reality that there could be as many as a hundred times more people who know how to play chess compared with the number of registered players. How can these huge numbers of casual players be connected with the federations? Garry's conclusion was that federations have to go to the bottom of this "huge pyramid", i.e. the schools. For him, there is no conflict between the interests of chess per se and chess in schools; it is in the game's interest to promote itself in schools.

Asked by Phil Ehr, ECF Chief Executive, to comment on the gap between what FIDE is currently doing for chess in schools and what it should be doing, Kasparov remarked that, if FIDE were fulfilling its duties, it would have organised and funded a conference like this. The role of FIDE was not to give orders and receive money; it should raise money and support the member federations using its access to worldwide information. FIDE has, in Kasparov's opinion, been concentrating exclusively on top players, and yet the way to increase the financial rewards for these players is to expand the 'pyramid'.

Garry asserted that chess was able to deliver demonstrable educational benefits and was inexpensive. The game ticked the boxes on sponsors' wish-lists but we were not selling ourselves well. People were still struggling with the argument, 'How can we compete with football and the like on TV?' Garry's response: "Who cares? Life is here [holding up his iPhone]."

It was suggested that it would be more fruitful to concentrate efforts on persuading teachers to adopt chess programmes, because funds were available for educational purposes. Kasparov agreed, saying that he could confirm from his own experience of visiting many other countries that educational budgets were often the only ones that were growing (sometimes due to demographics). Nevertheless, a case had to be presented with convincing evidence if chess was going to have access to these funds.

Asked to comment on what chess would look like in ten years' time, Garry replied that he was an optimist. We live in a time when people believe in the intellect and in technology, and it would be the worst blunder we could make not to exploit this opportunity. People talk of 'draw death', he said, but look at Magnus Carlsen. "It's about attitude."

By this stage, the questions had moved some way from the theme of chess in schools. The subject of corruption in the international rating system was raised, to which Kasparov responded with the proposal that all rating systems should be unified and should cover games played at any rate of play. He suggested that it was anomalous that two world championship matches should have been decided by rapidplay games which, as a consequence, were excluded from the rating system.

A questioner commented on news reports that FIDE was intending to charge a rating fee for every game and asked whether Kasparov agreed with this. Garry replied that he should feel grateful to his opponents for suggesting such unwelcome changes and indicated that he would, if elected, reduce and, he hoped, eliminate FIDE rating fees.

Having strayed this far from the main theme, it is time to conclude. The Chess & Education Conference remained thought-provoking to the last and was undoubtedly worthwhile. The news that a follow-up conference is being considered for 2014 is good news indeed.

- Andrew Farthing

Q&A – ANDREW FARTHING

Having recently passed his milestone 50th birthday, your editor forsook the obvious celebratory route of winning the European Seniors Championship (so as not to cramp Keith Arkell's style) and instead chose a slice of shameless self-indulgence by submitting himself to the terrifying ordeal of the Chess Moves questionnaire ...



1. Tell us a little about your background.

Born and raised in Cheltenham. Studied modern languages at university before embarking on a career in banking with Lloyds. After eighteen exhausting but enjoyable years, I decided to change tracks and have spent the last eight years in various voluntary roles, including a stint as ECF Chief Executive. My greatest enthusiasm has always been reading, and living in a house full of books has been one of the constants in my life.

2. How long have you been playing chess?

I learned the moves from my mother while I was at primary school but didn't become properly interested in the game until age 11. I gave it up for about seven years when long working hours meant that I didn't have the time or energy to play.

3. What attracts you to the game?

That's hard to say. I seem to be one of those people for whom the misery of losing outweighs the pleasure of winning, so I'm never quite sure how much I really enjoy the game. I do like the fact that it's a contest of minds with no element of chance and that – in theory, at least – improvement is possible through study, even in the absence of any obvious natural gift for the game. The richness of chess's history and literature (and the fact that games are reproducible so perfectly in print) appeals to me.

4. How important to you is improving your chess, and how do you go about it?

I'm reconciled to the reality of life as a middling club-player but cling to the belief that small incremental improvement is possible. Whenever I've been able to settle into the routine of solving a number of tactical puzzles every day, I've noticed that my results improve, but life intervenes and the routine rarely lasts. Books are my main tool for improvement, although I do use Fritz to help me analyse my games. I've occasionally tried using chess DVDs, but they just don't do it for me.

5. What is your favourite chess book and/or DVD, and why?

I could list dozens, but there are two books which I've reread several times with enormous pleasure. Korchnoi's autobiography *Chess is My Life*, is the most gripping story of a player's life I've ever read and inspires me every time I pick it up. *David Bronstein – Chess Improviser* by Boris Vainstein (but with annotations to the 24 games of the 1951 world championship match by Bronstein himself) is wonderful. There have been games collections with better annotations, but the games in this book are so fantastic and the spirit of Bronstein so infectious that I am drawn back to it again and again.

6. Who is your favourite player, and why?

Petrosian and Karpov, with a sneaking admiration for Ulf Andersson as well. My own chess is very boring and I draw far too many games. My liking for these three players may stem from the foolish fantasy that if I could just work on my technique a little more I could mimic their subtle masterpieces. At their best (i.e. when they try to win), Petrosian, Karpov and Andersson make other top players' games look like the crude thrashing-about of primitives.

7. What are you looking for in a chess congress, and do you have a favourite?

A nice slow rate of play to give my ageing brain time to think, good company and (ideally) a seaside location with time to enjoy it. Paignton ticks all the boxes for me.

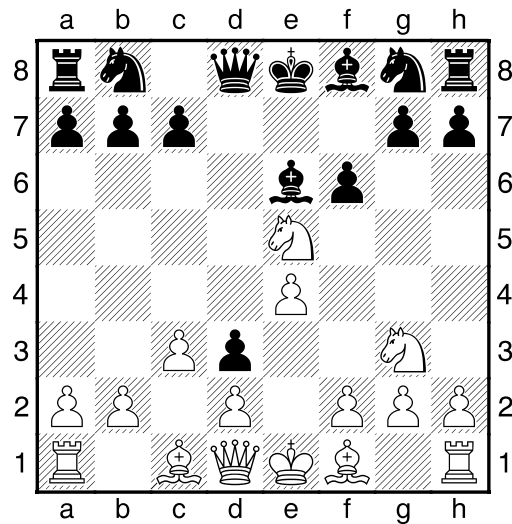
8. Do you have a most memorable or favourite game?

Overall, I have a pretty low opinion of my games and struggle to remember any good ones! I do have a positive memory of the following effort from the weekend tournament in the middle of the Torquay British Championships in 2009. It's not a great game by any means, but it was one of those rare occasions when I managed to put together a decent performance when I needed to in the last round of a congress.

Andrew Farthing (145) - Colin Byrne (153)

Soanes weekender, Torquay (5), 02.08.2009

1.Nc3 d5 2.e4 d4 3.Nce2 e5 4.Ng3 Be6 5.Nf3 f6 6.c3 d3 7.Nxe5!?



A standard idea in this opening. White emerges with an impressive central phalanx of pawns for the sacrificed piece. His plan is crude but challenging, particularly if facing it for the first time: exchange pieces and roll over Black's position with the pawns.

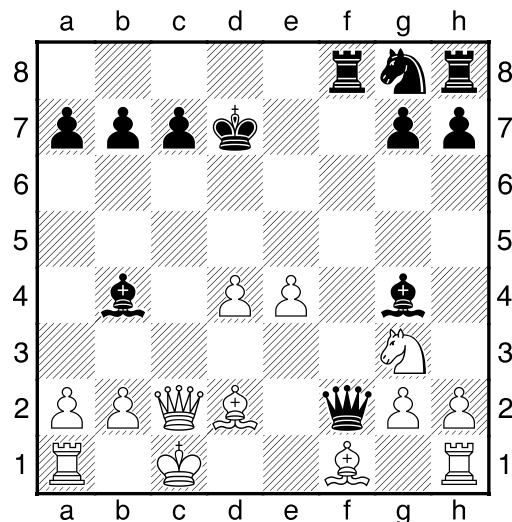
7...fxe5 8.Qh5+ Kd7 9.Qxe5 Nc6 10.Qb5 Bd6 11.Qxd3 Qf6 12.Qc2 Rf8?!

12...Re8 is better. Black's attack on f2 is easily met by the move that White is itching to play anyway.

13.d4 Nxd4!

I wasn't expecting this at all. At first, I thought that it was desperation but quickly realised that White is going to be forced to block his defence of the f2 square with Bd2, leaving his king exposed.

14.cxd4 Bb4+ 15.Bd2 Qxf2+ 16.Kd1 Bg4+ 17.Kc1



17...Qxd4??

A horrible blunder, but Black had used a lot of time on the opening with long thinks at moves 7 and 8 and the pressure told. He needed to exchange twice on d2 and try to hold the ending. White would have had a plus, but there was still everything to play for.

18.Qa4+ Kc8 19.Qxb4 Qd7??

Shocked by the events of the game, Black made a final blunder and resigned before I could take the rook on f8. He is lost in any event. **1-0**

BOOK REVIEWS - Gary Lane

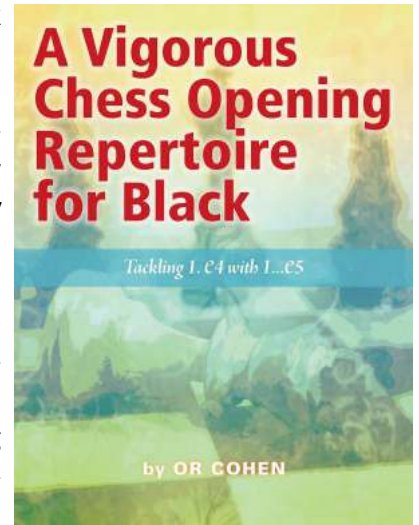
A Vigorous Chess Opening Repertoire for Black

by Or Cohen

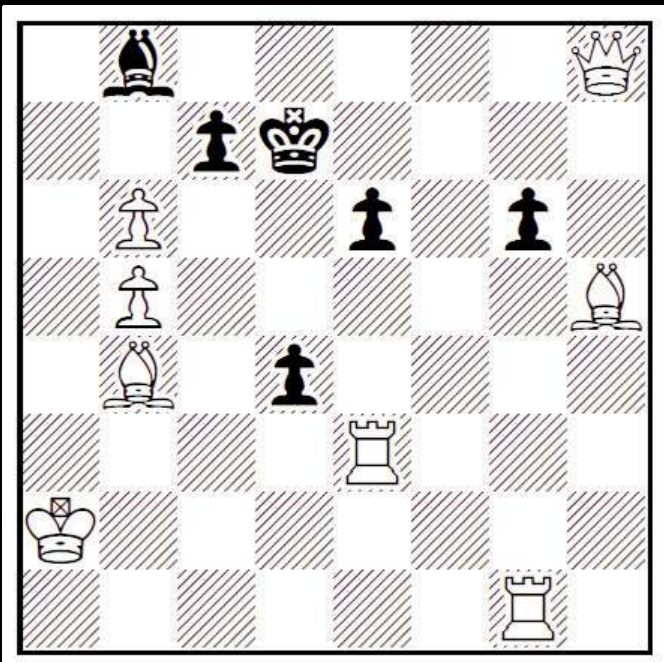
(320 pp.; published by New In Chess, £ 19.95)

The first thing you do when reading about a 'vigorous' opening repertoire for Black against 1.e4 is to wonder casually whether it concerns the Dragon, maybe a Latvian Gambit or even some sort of Phildor Gambit. In fact, he is advancing the benefits of the Petroff/Russian (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 and now 2...Nf6), which is generally used by grandmasters as a drawing weapon. A more honest title was used by Chessbase in promoting their DVD on the same opening by Leonid Kritz called *Play it safe, play the Petroff*.

Still, I know from my own experience that authors do not always have the ultimate say on the name of the book, so initially I had some sympathy for him, which evaporated after reading the introduction. He writes "I don't believe in pretentious books titled 'Winning with the ...', especially when they deal with an opening repertoire for Black." If you are wondering who he is referring to, then the possible answer is on page 420 of his own book where there is a half a page dedicated to an advert for a book called '*Winning with the Najdorf*' by his publisher.



The problem of writing an opening repertoire is cramming in all your ideas and not going over 1000 pages. Therefore, with limited space, you have to think up good practical solutions, but in reality it can't be the perfect line without adding numerous extra games. While it is true that nowadays computer software helps the cause, a wise author should probably refrain from extravagant claims such as, "I honestly believe that my recommendations against the Vienna Game and the King's Gambit are unique and very powerful." It is understandable that Cohen has faith in his own work, but this is an open invitation to investigate further, so I had a good look at his eleven pages on the Vienna and found nothing new. There are a couple of games by Ivanchuk played in 1992 and 1999, while the third is by the author from 2005, where he eventually reaches a lost position and wins due to his opponent's phone ringing. The King's Gambit is also dismissed in eleven pages, but this time he admits to following Mihail Marin's recommendation from *Beating the Open Games* with a twist at the end. Basically, on move six after declining the gambit Cohen suggests a side-line to ensure an equal position and has a move in the line that does appear to be unique but the position is just level.



I think his greatest strength as a writer is revealed when he is dealing with the Petroff, an opening about which he is obviously passionate. After ploughing through 200 pages on the subject anyone would be ready to play it. At weekend tournaments, I have seen grown men sigh when playing Black and the following line appears on the board 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.Qe2 Qe7 6.d3 Nf6 7.Bg5 and the queens are soon exchanged with a draw the usual outcome. Cohen makes the fair point that there are drawish lines in other openings and gives five pages dedicated to showing how an advantage can be wrestled out of such a dull position. There is a frank admission at the conclusion of the chapter: "...if you are an ambitious player, the Petroff should not be your only defence against 1.e4 in a must-win situation."

A great book for those who play the Petroff.

Carlsen's Assault on the Throne

by Vassilios Kotronias & Sotiris Logothetis

(hardback edition, 304 pp., published by Quality Chess, £24.95)

'This is the book on Carlsen that has the World Championship games and the iconic photo of Magnus celebrating his triumph after being pushed into the swimming pool' - an answer that I have given on numerous occasions

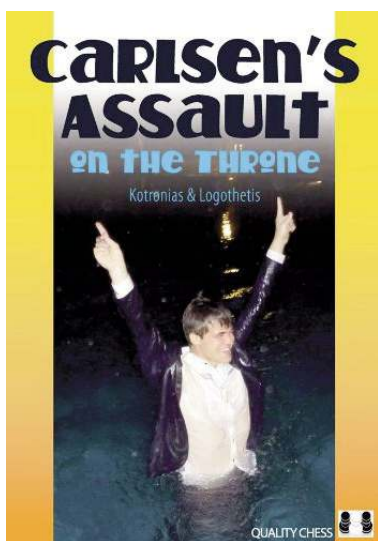
to friends who are seeking out something on the Norwegian wonder kid but recent enough to include the World Championship.

Basically, the Greek authors cover the Candidates games in London and then move on to Chennai. Grandmaster Kotronias provides excellent coverage of the games, while Logothetis adds the background words concerning the state of play or even the weather.

I think what really makes this book stand out compared to the instant World Championship books from the 1980s are the numerous photos. The majority were taken by Anastasiya Karlovich and are fantastic, providing a real insight into what is going on. Of course, these have already been posted on the Internet as she was the official photographer for the event, but they are still charming. For example, watch out for a full page photo of Englishman Lawrence Trent alongside Tania Sachdev (they were an enormous hit as online commentators in India) while I also spotted

Malcolm Pein and Adam Raoof. Even so, on page 150 they are not sure who it is, so "amused woman" is the description. I can't help thinking that more of an effort could have been made on social media to discover her identity if not for lack of time.

A World Championship book that is a must for fans of Magnus.



BOOKSHELF

The Man at the Heart of the Machine, or the Machine at the Heart of the Man?

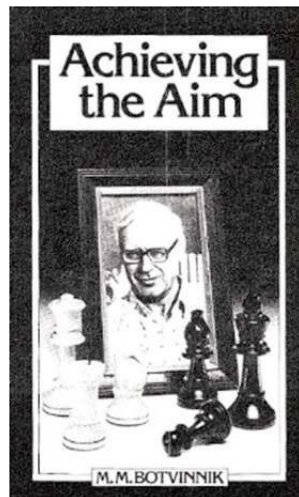
The sixth world chess champion, Mikhail Botvinnik, competed on English soil four times during his career. While still establishing his name, he came close to undoing his burgeoning reputation at Hastings 1934-5, where he could only manage a share of fifth place. By the time of his next visit, he had secured good results in the major tournaments in Moscow 1935 and 1936 (equal first and second respectively). His shared first place with Capablanca in the very strong Nottingham tournament of 1936 sealed his status as one of the game's stars and was important for showing that he could repeat his successes away from home. A quarter of a century would pass before Botvinnik, now world champion again after losing and regaining the title a couple of times, returned to Hastings and ran away with the 1961-2 tournament with 8 points out of 9. His final performance in England was again at Hastings, in 1966-7. Now once again ex-champion, he came first with 6½/9 and a fair slice of good fortune.

With the publication of a new biography of the 'Patriarch' of Soviet chess, Chess Moves attempts to come to grips with one of chess history's most challenging figures.

A hard man to know

For someone who wrote so extensively about his life, games, and approach to chess, Mikhail Botvinnik (17 August 1911 – 5 May 1995) remains something of a puzzle as a person.

The cover of the British edition of his memoirs, *Achieving the Aim*¹ offers a visual representation of the problem. Typically, autobiographies and games collections of famous players feature a photograph, painting or sketch of the player concerned. In Botvinnik's case, we are confronted with a picture of a photograph of the world champion, enclosed within a thick wooden frame. Arranged in front of the picture frame are various chess pieces. To me, this creates the impression of a shrine, while the use of the framed photo has a distancing effect, as if saying to the reader that the contents have been carefully packaged and presented and that the man himself may be hard to pick out from the pages.



Rereading *Achieving the Aim* in preparation for this article, I was reminded of how much of the book is NOT about Botvinnik's playing career. He was a professional engineer as well as a chess-player, and it is hard to judge which of these activities rated higher in importance in Botvinnik's mind. It seems fair to assume that readers of the book were (and are) drawn to it from the world of chess rather than engineering, with perhaps some students of the inner working of the former Soviet Union thrown into the mix.

I remember my disappointment on first encountering these memoirs that the story I wanted to read, i.e. the chess career, was continually and extensively interrupted by the tale of the author's drawn-out attempts to complete his studies, of his subsequent engineering work (the descriptions of which seemed somewhat obscure) and finally of his endeavours to develop a successful chess-playing computer program. Thirty years later, Botvinnik's

approach intrigues me for the questions it raises about his self-image, personality and attitude to chess.

With the benefit of other perspectives – since first reading *Achieving the Aim* in the early 1980s, I have come across many accounts by others of the same period of Soviet chess and of dealings with Botvinnik – and of the freer flow of information about the former Soviet Union since its dissolution, it is possible to see where the ‘official’ account of the champion’s life begs questions. On the one hand, Botvinnik’s autobiography seems quite brief (it runs to 226 A5 pages in the British edition), and the jumping from subject to subject can make it feel like the edited version of a longer work. On the other hand, the reader finds himself so frequently engaged in looking between the lines of the written text for what is **not** said, that it could be argued that there is much more to it than its modest length suggests.

So, who was Mikhail Botvinnik? What are we to make of this remarkable man at the centre of the formidable Soviet chess ‘machine’? To many, he seems a forbidding figure in chess history, hard to know and hard to like, whose later efforts to develop a machine which would put his firm principles of the correct way to play chess into practice could be interpreted as the attempt by a former champion to diminish his successors by replacing them with a computer.

Learning *joie de vivre*

By his own account, Botvinnik was a man who appreciated a good laugh. In his autobiography, he describes the positive influence of Grishka Rabinovich, whom he met in 1926:

“We became very friendly and he was to be a great supporter of mine throughout my whole chess life. [...] Before my friendship with him I was very retiring, but my new acquaintance made me full of *joie de vivre*.”³

Subsequently, the reader will encounter the story of how Botvinnik “died laughing”⁴ watching a comrade, Rokhlin, sprinkling passengers on a train with disinfectant (Botvinnik’s mother had been worried by rumours of a typhus epidemic as her son was due to depart for the 8th USSR Championship). Years later in 1942, amid the grimness of the Second World War, Botvinnik would encounter Rokhlin again:

“Rokhlin cracked a joke and I burst out laughing. ‘Well, everything’s all right,’ he said, ‘you laugh like you used to. The war hasn’t been able to change that.’”⁵

Much later, years after Botvinnik had relinquished the responsibilities of the world championship title, his cheeriness was unabated. Working on a tricky endgame problem in joint analysis with Paul Keres, Botvinnik’s arch-rival for so many years, finds the answer:

“We looked at each other and burst out laughing. For a long time we couldn’t calm down, so simple, unexpected and elegant was the decision Paul found.”⁶

It could be argued, of course, that by this time (1969) both players’ world championship aspirations were behind them and that the friendly comradeship suggested by this anecdote was understandable.

The difficulty for anyone trying to understand the enigma that was Botvinnik is that the above is **his** account. By just about everyone else’s, it seems, he was a profoundly serious man, frighteningly dedicated to achievement of his ambitions (which, to be fair, he seems genuinely to have believed matched those of his country) and utterly unforgiving. Belief in the correctness of his judgements in Botvinnik seemed to take on the rigidity of steel.

To give one example among the many available, here are the comments of Botvinnik’s successor (and predecessor!) as world champion, Vassily Smyslov, commenting on their differing accounts of events leading to Botvinnik’s rejection from the Soviet team for the 1952 Olympiad in Helsinki:

“What can I say? If you know Mikhail Moisevich you may know that his character is such that if he holds

an opinion he will stick to it for the rest of his life. For that reason I will not argue with him about what happened exactly in this case. As it is impossible to change his mind anyway.”⁷

In the next sentence, Smyslov adds, “But we have good relations.” One’s impression is that Smyslov had a maturity and flexibility which was beyond Botvinnik.

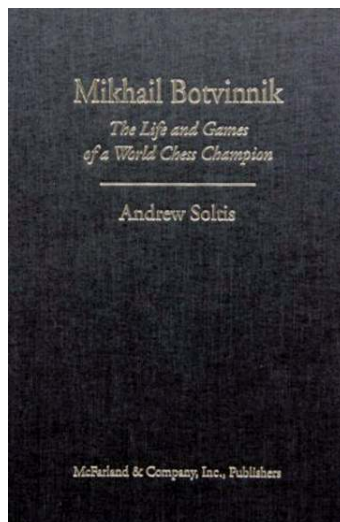
Achieving the Aim is not a book replete with tales of forgiveness and reconciliation. I was struck upon rereading it for this article that the only such instance I could identify concerned a player whose character was perhaps the polar opposite of Botvinnik’s, Bent Larsen. Without dwelling on the details⁸, I think it is reasonable to conclude that Botvinnik acted in such a way at the 1967 Palma de Majorca event as to cause a rift between the two players (“Diplomatic relations with Bent were broken off”). This continued until the tournament’s closing banquet, when Botvinnik describes what happened:

“We sat with local players who freely criticised Franco. Their attitude towards us, Soviet citizens, was friendly. I heard behind me the voice of Larsen, ‘Mr Kotov, is it at all possible to use you as intermediary and ask Mr. Botvinnik for his autograph?’

“I turned round, we both started laughing, shook hands and were reconciled.”

I think that it is significant that it was Larsen who ‘blinked’. Despite arguably being the ‘wronged’ party, he initiated a reconciliation, characteristically using humour in the process. I fear that Mikhail Botvinnik was incapable of such behaviour, and that a reconciliation was only possible in this instance because Botvinnik may have accepted (in his own mind, never publicly) that he had been responsible for the original breakdown in relations.

A “cold personality”



A handsome new biography of Mikhail Botvinnik has appeared, *Mikhail Botvinnik – The Life and Games of a World Chess Champion*, written by Andrew Soltis and published by McFarland⁹. On the very first page, the author raises the troublesome matter of his subject’s personality:

“Why, my wife asked me, would anyone want to read about such a cold personality as Mikhail Botvinnik? That’s not fair, I began to reply. But at that point I was already half way through researching this book and yet hadn’t asked myself another question: Why did I want to *write* about him?”

Soltis admits that as a 14-year-old he struggled to understand Botvinnik’s games and did not like what he saw as the “clinical, methodical antithesis of the games of my hero, Mikhail Tal”. However, he goes on to say that he grew to appreciate Botvinnik’s play, his career record against other superstars of his time, his contributions to opening and endgame theory and his development of the “professional approach to chess”.

This approach led initially to the all-too-brief triumph of Bobby Fischer – not something which would have

pleased Botvinnik, who plainly despised the American for both his politics and his character faults – and then to the enduring dominance of his pupil, Garry Kasparov. Even today, when the emergence of Magnus Carlsen suggests a reduction in the emphasis on preparation away from the board, it is clear that the game as a whole is still deeply influenced by the professionalism developed and implemented by the sixth world champion. For this alone, Botvinnik would be a key figure in chess history, worthy of study. As it is, the debates about his personality and his influence on the careers of his rivals mean that a balanced, objective reassessment is much to be welcomed.

On the whole, Andrew Soltis delivers this in his new biography. As the Bibliography and Notes on Sources indicate, he has read quite broadly on his subject, including Botvinnik's own writings alongside books by and interviews with those who competed against or worked with the 'Patriarch'. Soltis acknowledges upfront the contradictions between Botvinnik's account and the views of his rivals and admits the difficulty of piecing together the truth under such circumstances. He chooses to highlight the inconsistencies in the body of the text, without necessarily always feeling able to offer a view on the relative plausibility of each version.

Soltis is a prolific author whose work has grown more interesting with the years. Recently, he has written instructional works for Batsford on aspects of the game largely ignored elsewhere in chess literature, as well as best games collections of Lasker and Fischer. This is by no means his first book for McFarland. Previous works include a history of the United States Chess Championship, a book of chess lists, a history of Soviet chess and a biography of Frank Marshall. His writing style is fluid and clear, and this latest biography makes for smooth reading. The narrative of Botvinnik's life emerges much more clearly than it does from the champion's memoirs.

Unlike *Achieving the Aim*, Soltis's book is focused almost entirely on Botvinnik's chess career. Given the likely readership, this is understandable. Over the course of the 274 pages, the balance between biographical narrative and annotated games and positions is about 50:50. By my count (there is no index of complete games per se), some 96 annotated games are included, with a further 27 part-games. The annotations are light, to a depth which average players will find useful without being daunted by forests of variations.

Those familiar with any of McFarland's previous books on chess will know what to expect in terms of production standards: a handsome, large format, clothbound hardback (no dust jacket) and good quality paper. The text is presented in a smaller font than some of us might prefer, but it is clear enough. I spotted a couple of errors which escaped the proof-reader. On p.68, the first match game between Botvinnik and Salo Flohr is given with the names of the players reversed, making it appear that Flohr had the white pieces and lost, whereas in fact he was Black and won. Poor old Flohr is the victim of the second mistake too: on p.168, the caption to the photograph spells his surname "Flor".

Given the length of the book and the space given to the annotated games and positions, it is not surprising that the biographical narrative is quite brisk. In some respects, it is a masterpiece of compression, covering half a century of chess play (and fifteen years of biography at either end of this) in what amounts to less than 140 pages once the games and part-games have been excluded. Despite this brevity, Soltis succeeds in presenting a decent account of Botvinnik's career over the board and of the political manoeuvring which so often accompanied it. Space is found for more detailed discussion of certain key episodes, including a fair representation of other parties' accounts where appropriate.

The end result is mildly disappointing. It is not so much the case that what Soltis has written is bad (quite the reverse); it is that, for this reader at least, so much more could have been said. McFarland have published some weighty tomes on other figures from chess history, including 970 large pages on Amos Burn¹⁰. Surely a player of Botvinnik's stature deserved a fuller treatment than this?

It would be wrong of me to give the impression that this is a poor book. It is simply that, by this publisher's high standards, it is mediocre. By the standards of most chess literature, it is better than average, and for anyone looking for an account of Botvinnik's career that is independent of his own autobiographical works and games collections (excellent as these are), it is definitely worth considering.

Reflections on Botvinnik the man

Earlier in this article, I described Botvinnik as “hard to like” (at least, based on the evidence of the written word). Soltis does not shy away from the unyielding character of the man. Botvinnik’s iron discipline and strength of will doubtless contributed enormously to his chess success, but away from the board, they can be unattractive.

Many observers have commented on Botvinnik’s tendency to believe that there was only one correct answer to every question and that with 100% certainty he knew what it was. Most often, the ‘correct’ answer was derived from Botvinnik’s own life: whatever he did or decided was the model that everyone should follow. Soltis describes some of the “rules” which Botvinnik espoused, from the correct way to prepare for a chess event, through the correct number of games to play (more than 50 a year seemed like reckless over-activity to Botvinnik), to the correct age at which to learn chess (12 – by no coincidence at all, the age at which Botvinnik himself learned the moves). The last of these ‘rules’ led him to refuse to teach his daughter how to play chess when she was young because it was too early. Outside of chess:

“He even discouraged her when she wanted to learn to read at age 4. But when she eventually did learn, he not only told her what to read but how to hold a book. ‘From the notebook to the eye there must be 30 centimeters.’ he said. ‘One cannot look at it closer, or you’ll spoil your eyesight, as I did.’” (Soltis, p. 7)

Soltis also observes, “As profound a thinker as Botvinnik was, he could be astoundingly wrong, world-class wrong.” (p.8) Botvinnik’s belief in a chess algorithm that emphasised evaluation over calculation and brute force was utterly misguided. As events have shown, brute force produces the best results by a considerable margin. In politics, Botvinnik was a “devout Marxist-Leninist”, a true believer who kept the faith even after the Soviet Union had broken up. Most people would consider that they had lost the argument by this stage, but most people are not Mikhail Botvinnik.

I was intrigued by the suggestion made by Averbakh (cited by Soltis on p.201 of his book) that the effectiveness of Botvinnik’s training, discipline and self-belief amounted to self-hypnosis:

“This was a man who had a rare capacity for auto-suggestion, perhaps even self-hypnosis. Later, when he was occupied with computers, he thought up the special term ‘self-programmed’. If during play the noise in the tournament hall began to act on his nerves, he convinced himself: ‘But I specially trained against noise – it means the noise cannot disturb me!’ And it didn’t disturb him!”

One can only imagine how frightening it must have been to encounter this absolute certainty over the chess board.

This image of ‘Botvinnik the machine’ is occasionally offset by signs of humanity. Soltis quotes positive recollections of Botvinnik’s loyalty and willingness to help others, and the account of his actions during his wife’s illness points to a person of feeling. Like the tales of the man of laughter quoted earlier in this article, there are always details which insist upon the complexity of the individual’s character in defiance of the easy stereotype.

Botvinnik the player

As someone who held the world title for all but two of the fifteen years from 1948 to 1963, Botvinnik’s place among the game’s great players is guaranteed. Precisely how dominant a figure he was, however, is harder to judge. In the key period from 1934 to 1939, when he was trying to establish himself as the natural challenger to then world champion Alexander Alekhine, his results were good without being a class apart:

Hastings 1934-5	Equal 5th
Moscow 1935	Equal 1st with Flohr, half a point ahead of Lasker
Moscow 1936	2nd behind Capablanca
Nottingham 1936	Equal 1st with Capablanca
Match 1937	Tied match with Levenfish (then USSR champion), 5-5 (3 draws)
USSR Ch ½-final, 1938	1st

It had not struck me until Soltis commented on it in his biography how unconvincing Botvinnik's match record was. With the exception of a very convincing 5-0 win (with 7 draws) over his long-time training partner, Ragozin, in a public training match in 1940, Botvinnik did not **win** a formal match until the return match against Smyslov in 1958, a decade after Botvinnik first became world champion! This was despite the fact that he was arguably a player whose determination, self-discipline and appetite for preparation were designed for match success.

There is no doubt that Botvinnik was a worthy champion. His victory in the 1948 match-tournament for the world title vacated by Alekhine's death was utterly convincing, and none of his rivals could claim that he did not deserve the title. His triumph was reminiscent of the 1941 'Absolute Championship' of the Soviet Union, convened thanks to considerable influence from Botvinnik with the powers-that-were to redress the indignity of having only 5th-6th in the 12th Soviet Championship the year before. Again, Botvinnik came through with a dominant performance to win easily.

Politics

Mention of the 1941 Absolute Championship draws one to the question of the role political influence played in Botvinnik's career. Soltis is good on this subject, highlighting a number of instances in which the champion was helped by his supporters in positions of power in Soviet politics. For example, he draws attention not only to the circumstances leading to the holding of the 1941 event but also to the huge advantage Botvinnik had in knowing that it would take place long before his rivals did:

"Once again Botvinnik had a big clock edge on his opponents; 64 announced the match-tournament on February 19, 1941, and said it would begin less than five weeks later, on March 23. This was strange because Soviet championships were usually announced several months in advance. Voronkov believes the short notice was done so that no one else but Botvinnik could come to the board well prepared.

"Botvinnik was already analyzing openings for his Absolute opponents in December 1940."¹¹

Again and again, one encounters situations when figures behind the scenes appear to be working to ensure their man's success and arrangements which favour Botvinnik in some way. Some are extraordinary to the present-day reader: for example, during the adjournment of the 13th and, as it turned out, final game of the 1937 Levenfish match, the **chief arbiter** of the match, Nikolai Grigoriev, approached Botvinnik to offer assistance trying to find a saving line when Botvinnik phoned him to resign the game. Botvinnik declined, but the very fact of such an offer shows the extent to which the game was riddled with behind-the-scenes machinations.

Success in chess was of great importance to the Soviet Union. The key force behind the quest for world domination in the game, Nikolai Krylenko, was a very senior figure in Stalin's Russia (before being removed from office and liquidated in the purges of 1938). For him, Soviet chess success was evidence of the superiority of their political system. As evidence for this, one need look no further than the following comments by Krylenko in his foreword to the tournament book of the 1935 Moscow tournament:

"The USSR, in the person of Mikhail Botvinnik, defeated bourgeois chess culture, as his only rival, finishing in first place with him, Flohr, did not actually win this first place but received it as a kind of gift from the Soviet masters Kan and Bogatyrchuk, who beat Botvinnik and thus allowed Flohr to draw equal with his rival."¹²

Krylenko goes on to say that Botvinnik's two losses speak well for the integrity of the Soviet players, who might otherwise have avoided victory out of a "false understanding of patriotism". A certain irony attaches to these words, given the suspicions which apply to the following game from Moscow 1935, played four rounds from the end, when Botvinnik's stamina was beginning to fail:

Mikhail Botvinnik - Vitaly Chekhover

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.b3 Nf6 4.Bb2 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Be2 c6 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Nc3 a6 9.Nd4 dxc4 10.bxc4 Nc5 11.f4 Qc7 12.Nf3 Rd8 13.Qc2 Ncd7 14.d4 c5 15.Ne5 b6 16.Bd3 cxd4 17.exd4 Bb7 18.Qe2 Nf8 19.Nd1 Ra7 20.Nf2 Qb8 21.Nh3 h6 22.Ng5 hxg5 23.fxg5 N8d7 24.Nxf7 Kxf7 25.g6+ Kg8 26.Qxe6+ Kh8 27.Qh3+ Kg8 28.Bf5 Nf8 29.Be6+ Nxe6 30.Qxe6+ Kh8 31.Qh3+ Kg8 32.Rxf6 Bxf6 33.Qh7+ Kf8 34.Re1 Be5 35.Qh8+ Ke7 36.Qxg7+ Kd6 37.Qxe5+ Kd7 38.Qf5+ Kc6 39.d5+ Kc5 40.Ba3+ Kxc4 41.Qe4+ Kc3 42.Bb4+ Kb2 43.Qb1# 1-0

Subsequent analysis of this game has revealed several missed opportunities and lines left unmentioned in the tournament book and, much later, by Botvinnik himself.

Soltis comments on the game in detail, before concluding with the following:

“But questions about this game go beyond sacrifices. Botvinnik annotated seven of his nine wins, including some ho-hum crushes, in the tournament book. But the analysis of this game was strangely left to Yudovich, who was often given journeyman duties in Soviet publications. And despite the dramatic moves, the game received relatively minor treatment in the Soviet press. Moreover, Botvinnik never annotated this game while Chekhover was alive, as pointed out by critics who believed the game was composed.

“Botvinnik acknowledged the suspicion in *Analytical*. The Chekhover game ‘created such an impression that some “experts” even asserted that it had been compiled beforehand.’ His denial was less than ringing: ‘Even if it is assumed that I could have been under suspicion, would this have been fair to such an honest person as Vitaly Chekhover?’¹³

The truth is unlikely ever to be known. Botvinnik’s reputation as a player is inevitably tarnished by suspicions like this (and I have not mentioned the persistent speculation about the four games lost by Keres to Botvinnik in the 1948 world championship). That he received favourable treatment by the Soviet authorities is undeniable, as is the advantage he gained from the return match clause in the world championship matches prior to 1963¹⁴.

For those of us who believe that sport only has value if its integrity is unquestionable, this is the tragedy of this period of chess history and, to a degree, of Mikhail Botvinnik’s career in particular. It is possible that his achievements are a fair reflection of his true status as a player, but none of us can know for sure, and this, in the end, diminishes our game.

- Andrew Farthing

1 *Achieving the Aim* by Mikhail Botvinnik, published by Pergamon Press (1981). This is a translation by Bernard Cafferty of the Russian original *K Dostizheniyu Tseli* (Moscow 1978). The book is out of print, but used copies are available online. Page numbers cited in the article refer to the 1981 Pergamon edition.

2 Botvinnik himself comments on this style in the conclusion to his memoirs: “In my life, there have been abrupt transitions: from my studies to chess, from chess to scientific work. There are the same abrupt transitions in this book – I trust the reader will not censure me for them.” (*Achieving the Aim*, p.222)

3 *Achieving the Aim*, p.19

4 *Achieving the Aim*, p.28

5 *Achieving the Aim*, p.84

6 *Achieving the Aim*, p.196

7 Interview with Vassily Smyslov conducted for *New in Chess* magazine in June 1993 by Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam, reprinted in *Finding Bobby Fischer* (New in Chess, 1994), p.128.

8 Interested readers can find the account on pages 189-190 of *Achieving the Aim*, from which the following two quoted remarks are taken.

9 *Mikhail Botvinnik: The Life and Games of a World Chess Champion* by Andrew Soltis, published by McFarland (www.mcfarlandpub.com; 800-253-2187; pISBN 978-0-7864-7337-3 / eISBN 978-1-4766-1358-1). Priced \$49.95, it is available in the UK for about £30. Unless stated otherwise, all subsequent quotations in this article are taken from Soltis’s book.

10 *Amos Burn: A Chess Biography* by Richard Forster (McFarland, 2004)

11 Soltis, pp. 129-30

12 *The Second International Chess Tournament Moscow 1935* (Caissa Books, 1998), p. 8

13 Soltis, p.86

14 Botvinnik himself refused to accept that he enjoyed an unfair advantage as champion. His justification for the return match clause, given in *Achieving the Aim* (pp.159-60) was that it was important to protect against the possibility of an 'unworthy' title-holder, who won a world championship match because his opponent was unwell. Setting aside the fundamental absurdity of this – no one who emerged as challenger from the Candidates competitions was ever going to be 'unworthy' in this sense – the irony is that the player who arguably most benefitted from an unwell opponent was Botvinnik himself, against Smyslov in the 1958 return match (Smyslov claims that he had 'flu and even caught pneumonia during the match) and the 1961 return match against Tal (whose alleged poor physical condition has been widely reported).

Junior Chess

Yes2Chess

Details of an exciting new initiative announced by Chess in Schools and Communities:



What is Yes2Chess?

Yes2Chess is a free online schools' community, which schools from the UK, the USA, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Denmark are eligible to join. Each school may sign 100 pupils up to the Yes2Chess server, where they will be able to play chess against children from all over the world in a safe environment. Only children who are registered to Yes2Chess by their school teacher or chess tutor will have access to the server, and there is no chat function. We do not capture any pupil information, including pupils' names. Each child will have a unique username that only their schools will have access to.

Later this year, we will release a series of online lessons, which can be enjoyed from the comforts of home or school.

Yes2Chess are also hosting an online tournament, which will allow schools to put their chess expertise to the test. Every school can enter an unlimited number of teams, each consisting of five players, who must have been born after 1st January 2002. The winning teams from each country will receive an all expenses paid trip to London to take part in the final.

How do I sign up?

There is a short application form to complete, after which you will receive a link which will enable you to download the necessary software to your school's computers. The process is very simple and will only take a couple of minutes!

To join the Yes2Chess community, please go to <http://yes2chess.org/uk/register/>

ECF Afternoon School Chess Tournament

... Wilson's School, 29th January 2014

The fifth ECF Afternoon School Chess Tournament at Wilson's School comprised a total of 18 teams with 4 players in each team. The tournament was run as a single Swiss Tournament, with clocks being used on the top few matches. Each round was allocated 25 minutes so the whole event of 4 rounds lasted 2 hours. Of the schools taking part only Wilson's and Wallington regularly play inter-school chess. The other schools have only recently started playing inter-school chess. For Quest Academy, Selsdon this was their first ever inter-school chess tournament.

1 Wilson's A 13.5

2 Wallington A 12

3-5 Wilson's B, Wilson's C, Wallington B 11

6 Wilson's D 9

7-8 Wallington C, St Andrews A 8.5
9 Graveney 8
10 Glyn A 7.5 11-13 Glyn B, St Andrews B, Quest 7
14 Wilson's E 6.5
15 Wilson's F 5
16-17 Glyn C, Wilson's G 4
18 St Andrews C 3.5

Wilts & West of England Junior Open Congress

The Twenty Eighth West of England Championships is one of the major events on the junior circuit with sections for all age groups and standards. Over 250 players competed over the weekend playing in in: one-day intermediate (U120), U8, U9, U10, U12 challengers, U12 (part of the EPSCA U11 England trial qualifying circuit), Minor, U14 and the Major which offers a place in the 2014 British. It is expertly run by Wiltshire Junior Chess and attended by players from all over the UK.



Good to see IM Lawrence Cooper, the ECF Junior Director, spending time on Sunday with players and parents and handing out the prizes at the end of the weekend. Thanks goes to the John Robinson Trust for supporting the ECF English Youth Grand Prix, which this congress is part of.

- John Higgs

SCCU U14/U18 Jamboree

The Southern Counties Chess Union hosted their annual U14/U18 jamboree on Sunday. 146 players took part from the following counties: Berkshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Herts, Middlesex and Sussex. Teams played in the U14 Open, U14 Minor, U18 Open and U18 Minor. Three ECF graded standard games was the order of the day with some excellent chess being played at all levels.



Congratulations to Kent for winning the U18 Open; and to Sussex for winning the U18 Minor, U14 Open and U14 Minor. Thanks goes to Sussex Junior Chess (SJC) for hosting the event at the excellent Downlands Community School in Hassocks; to Carol Graham for expertly organising the event and to Susan Howell, the hard working tournament controller. And a special mention to the SJC catering team who worked flat out all day to keep us all fed and watered!

- John Higgs

Grand Prix 2013/14 Leader Boards 4th March 2014

180+

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	241589G	Jaunooby, Ali Reza	Denton	202	G4139	655
2	112455K	Hebden, Mark L	4NCL Guildford	249	G4157	648
3	252763H	Harvey, Marcus R	Witney	235	JG4440	615
4	224790C	Villiers, Thomas	Muswell Hill	195	G17811	589
5	282398G	Liang, Jake Z	Surbiton	185	JG6416	565
6	119904D	Surtees, Mike J	Bolton	197	G17950	564
7	282399J	Kalavannan, Koby	Coulsdon CF	182	JG6614	564
8	163085E	Healey, Michael W	Richmond & Twickenham	201	G3111	561
9	105817E	Arkell, Keith CC 4NCL	Cheddleton	234	G15972	560
10	263507A	Prior, Stephen CV	Grantham	187	G6569	545

160-179

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	242398E	Hjort, Helge	Hendon	175	G3467	573
2	116382G	O'Gorman, Brendan	DHSS	164	G4320	563
3	267990F	Landau, Jonathan	Hendon	171	G22677	558
4	270877C	Hayward, Alan	Streatham	176	G5803	530
5	104852B	Whitehead, Mark A	Rochdale	170	G15489	526
6	113949G	Joslin, Tim M	Lloyds TSB	161	G23798	517
7	162291C	Jackson, Paul G	Coulsdon CF	164	G4609	507
8	121366A	Wells, Jonathan C	North Norfolk	174	G14103	495
9	290163J	Shaw, Meyrick	Exmouth	176	G17941	488
10	247688F	Porter, Sam J	Trinity School	174	G21994	486

140-159

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	114423G	Lim, Yu-Chin (Peter)	Harrow *	155	G23561	592
2	112248E	Hartley, Dean M	Amber Valley	150	G4789	557
3	108722J	Connor, Michael I	Great Lever	158	S15540	544
4	140662A	Pride, Stephen C	Cambridge City	149	G3453	535
5	118873C	Shepherd, Graham C	Church Stretton	144	P6197	529
6	109622K	Desmedt, Richard E	Wombwell	153	G3411	525
7	278381C	Hewitt, Rob	Southampton University	142	G6958	510
8	111388E	Goodfellow, Russell R	Tunbridge Wells	150	G5615	509
9	288301G	Sloan, Cecil	Watford	149	S6981	502
10	283075K	Bovtramovic, Vladimir	Russia	149	G18255	500

120-139

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	259148A	Foley, Phil T	Upminster	136	G4414	594
2	178214K	Watts, Peter J	Middlesex Congresses	138	S22770	594
3	258940A	Allen, Timothy S	Battersea	127	G4415	585
4	283350F	Bullock, Lee	London *	121	G18801	585
5	123333G	Gilbert, David J	DHSS	138	G3430	525
6	264336E	Crouch, Timothy J	Kings Head	131	P5843	499

7	254003E	Billett, Stephen J	Portsmouth	120	P3458	479
8	294961B	Oliveri, Claudio	Hendon	127	G24681	473
9	256834C	Glover, Gordon L	Crusaders	122	S17628	469
10	186046L	Hudson, Jeremy	Hastings & St Leonards	135	G23511	453

U120

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	279615G	Crockett, Stephen J	Redditch	107	G6367	645
2	140257C	Fraser, Alan R	Beckenham & Bromley	112	G2908	599
3	111052E	Gardiner, Colin J	Newmarket	116	G1469	542
4	274725L	Fraser, Chris A	West Bridgford	102	S19796	488
5	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	106	G6876	486
6	267739J	Wallman, James	Dorset *	100	S16504	477
7	180180G	De Santos, Andrew R	Preston	113	S15092	474
8	113051B	Housden, Peter T	Bedford	111	G5516	466
9	181078K	Robson, Caroline J	Barnet Elizabeth	114	G4002	465
10	136890E	Broderick, Paul G	Shifnal & Telford	112	G20480	459

Women's Prix

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	284508J	Sheremetyeva, Elizaveta	Oxfordshire Juniors	123	JG6692	541
2	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	106	G6876	486
3	280882B	Varney, Zoe	Cumnor	150	JG17170	484
4	284928J	Ramaiya, Arushi	Surrey Juniors	110	JG6987	472
5	181078K	Robson, Caroline J	Barnet Elizabeth	114	G4002	465
6	291209A	Rahulan, Thivyaa	Cheddleton & Leek	88	JS17341	456
7	282541H	Green, Emily	Woodnesborough	117	JG23077	440
8	290588H	Somton, Anita	Bury Knights	123	JG6955	439
9	275645G	Sit, Victoria	Coulsdon CF	150	JG6719	438
10	288605E	Raghavendra, Mahima	Atherton	130	JG6900	436

Junior Prix

	Ref	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem No	Pts
1	252763H	Harvey, Marcus R	Witney	235	JG4440	615
2	287750J	Ahluwalia, Amardip	Sussex Juniors	131	JG17043	583
3	291106B	Misyura, Ilya	Middlesex Juniors	164	JG18705	583
4	282398G	Liang, Jake Z	Surbiton	185	JG6416	565
5	282399J	Kalavannan, Koby	Coulsdon CF	182	JG6614	564
6	291535C	Peck, Silas	Ipswich	171	JG19469	551
7	277139B	Haridas, Girinath	Kent Junior Congresses	170	JG6693	541
8	284508J	Sheremetyeva, Elizaveta	Oxfordshire Juniors	123	JG6692	541
9	279888J	Zhu, Richard	Camberley	166	JG6638	535
10	276302D	Higgs, Joshua	Sussex Juniors	169	JG6319	531



ECF English Tournament Calendar

LEGEND

- # British Championships qualifying tournament
- @ FIDE rated
- * ECF Grand Prix
- ~ ECF graded event
- Y Youth event (junior only)
- + English Youth Grand Prix

~*@ 29 Mar London Rapidplay, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW Contact: Sainbayar Tserendorj Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.london-rapidplay.co.uk> - starts 1:30pm ends 5:30pm. 6 round Swiss, 15 mins each, FIDE rated sections: Open, U2000/U170, U1700/U130, prize fund £450

~*Y+ 29 Mar Get Your First Chess Grade, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW Contact: Amu Sainbayar Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.london-rapidplay.co.uk> - starts 10.00am ends 5:10pm. 6 round Swiss, sections: U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 & U14. Players graded under 80 ECF. Winner will receive a trophy in each age category, Best Girl medal in each section. Special prize for players scoring 4.5 or more

~* 29 Mar Kings Head Rapidplay, Westbourne Grove Church, Westbourne Grove, London W11 2RW Contact: Colin Mackenzie Email: rapidplay@khcc.org.uk Website: <http://www.khcc.org.uk> - starts 11:00AM. Six round rapidplay with £700 prize fund. First prize £250 with five grading prizes of £60

~ 29 Mar Mind Sports International Rapidplay Grand Prix, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Central Square, Birmingham B1 1HH Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: <http://www.mindsportsacademy.com/> - Swiss 6 rounds, Open / Major Under 160 / Amateur Under 120. All in 30 minutes per player, per game. total prize fund £500

~*@ 29-30 Mar e2e4 English Rapidplay Championships, De Veres Uplands House, Four Ashes Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 6LB Contact: Sean Hewitt Email: info@e2e4.org.uk Website: http://www.e2e4.org.uk/high_wycombe/Mar2014_ERP/index.htm - starts 12:00PM ends 5:00PM. An 11 round FIDE rated Swiss, open to all with three sections - Open / U165 / U130 with the highest placed eligible player in each section receiving the title of English Rapidplay Champion from the English Chess Federation.

~*# 29-30 Mar 39th Nottingham Congress, Nottingham High School, Waverley Mount, Nottingham NG7 4ED Contact: Robert Richmond Email: robrchmnd@aol.com Website: www.nottsches.org - starts 09:30 ends 17:30. 5 rounds - Open, U165, U135, U110

@ 3 Apr Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz, Golders Green Unitarians Church, 31½ Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: www.hendonchessclub.com - Swiss 6 rounds Open

~@ 4-6 Apr Edinburgh Congress, David Lloyd Leisure Centre, Newhaven Place, Newhaven Harbour, Edinburgh EH6 4LX Contact: Gerry Brown Email: chessdent@yahoo.co.uk - starts 6:30PM ends 7:00PM. The largest annual weekend congress in Scotland. The Premier, an open event, is FIDE rated. All the results will be submitted via Chess Scotland. Chess & Bridge, London are supplying a bookstall for this Congress.

~ 5 Apr Teignmouth Rapidplay, The Salle, Trinity School, Buckeridge Road, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8LY Contact: Raymond Chubb Email: ray.chubb@care4free.net Website: <http://www.chessdevon.co.uk> - starts 9:30AM ends 6:30PM. 6 round Swiss rapidplay. Two sections. Open for grades 140 and above. Graded for under 140 grades. Catering available in school refectory.

@ 5 Apr Golders Green Rapidplay Congress, Golders Green Church Hall, West Heath Drive, London NW11 7QG Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: www.goldersgreenchess.blogspot.co.uk - 6 round Swiss open, £500.00 prize fund

~Y 5-6 Apr Junior Squad Championships, Daventry Court Hotel Contact: Peter Purland Email: petepurland@btopenworld.com

~* 5-6 Apr 32nd St.Albans Chess Congress, St.Columba's College, King Harry Lane, St.Albans, Herts AL3 4AW Contact: Terry Douse Email: stalbanscongress@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01727 751072 Website: www.stalbanscongress.com - starts 10:00 ends 18:30. 5 round Swiss with 5 sections: Open - No Grade Limits; Challengers 180 and below; Major 160 and below; Intermediate 140 and below; Minor 120 and below

~Y 7-9 Apr IAPS National Chess Championships, Aldro School, Lombard St, Shackleford, Godalming, Surrey GU8 6AS Contact: David Archer Email: archerd@aldro.org - starts 11:00AM ends 3:00PM. Tournament open to all IAPS prep schools. Sections suitable for different levels of players. Team and individual prizes. Championship section plus age group sections

**** 9-10 Apr 40th Maidenhead Junior Congress**, Claires Court Boys Junior School Ridgeway, Cannon Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 4QQ Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com Website: http://www.met.rdg.ac.uk/~brugge/maidenhead_junior_congress.html - starts 10:00AM ends 5:30PM. Two day junior congress in the school holidays with one-day U/9, U/10, U/11 & U/12 sections and two-day under 18 championship.

****@ 11 Apr Delancey Rapidplay & Blitz**, Wilson's School, Mollison Drive, Wallington, Surrey SM6 9JW Contact: Michael Basman & Sainbayar Tserendorj Email: ukchessacademy@gmail.com Website: <http://www.ukchessacademy.com> - starts 9:30AM ends 7:50PM. Rapidplay: Open, 7 round, 20 minutes each. Prizes: 1st £120, Total prize : £550 Trophy: U7, U9, U11, U13, U15 & U18 Blitz: open, 7 round Swiss, 5 minutes each. Prizes: 1st £100, Total Prize : £510 Trophy Best: U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 & U18

**** 11-13 Apr Bristol Spring Congress**, Holiday Inn, Bond St., Bristol BS1 3LE Contact: Graham Mill-Wilson Email: tugmw@blueyonder.co.uk Website: <http://bristolchesscongress.blogspot.co.uk/> - starts 6:45PM ends 7:00PM. 3 sections - Open, Major (U155), Minor (U125). Prizes (usually) 1st, 2nd and 3rd plus grading prize in each section.

~ 12 Apr 3rd Doncaster Rapidplay Chess Congress, New Hall, 103 Station Road, Bawtry DN10 6PU Contact: Jim Burnett Email: office@chessdirect.co.uk - starts 9:30AM ends 5:30PM. Six round Swiss system rapidplay. Hot & cold drinks & bookstall at the event. Food outlets within 5 minutes walk. Two sections: Open & Under 151

~@ 12-13 Apr Hampstead U2200 Weekend Congress, Henderson Court Day Centre, 102 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 6NS Contact: Adam Raouf Email: adamraouf@gmail.com Website: www.hampsteadchess.blogspot.co.uk - total prize fund £500

**** 12-13 Apr Staffordshire Congress**, Bloxwich Leisure Centre, High Street, Bloxwich, Walsall WS3 2DA Contact: David Anderton Email: davidanderton@blueyonder.co.uk - starts 10:00 ends 18:00. Three sections: Open, U160, U120. Open includes closed Staffordshire Individual and U21 Championships

~Y 12-13 Apr National Schools Chess Championship Girls' U19/U11 Final, St Catherine's School, Station Rd, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0DF Contact: Andrew Martin/Neville Belinfante/Julian Clissold Email: manager.schools@englishchess.org.uk Website: <http://englishchess.org.uk/NSCC14/> - starts 10am ends 6pm

**** 13 Apr Streatham Library Rapidplay**, Streatham Tate Centre, Streatham Library, 63 Streatham High Road SW16 1PN Contact: Angus French Email: angusmisc@angusf.myzen.co.uk Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/streathamrapid/> - starts 10:30AM ends 6:30PM. Six-round Swiss rapidplay with Open and U140 sections at the newly-refurbished Streatham Library

~ 13 Apr Bourne End One Day Chess Congress, Bourne End Community Centre, Wakeman Road, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire SL8 5SX Contact: David Langford Email: bebchess@yahoo.co.uk Website: <http://www.bucksvoice.net/bourneendchess> - starts 10:00AM ends 7:10PM. A rapid play competition with each player allowed a maximum of 45 min. per round. There are five rounds, and it is divided initially by rapid play grading into divisions of about 16 players each with prizes available for the top three in each division.

****#@ 17-21 Apr e2e4 Sunningdale Easter Congress**, De Veres Sunningdale Hotel, Sunningdale Park, Larch Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 0QE Contact: Sean Hewitt Email: info@e2e4.org.uk Website: <http://www.e2e4.org.uk> - starts 7:00PM ends 7:00PM. 9 round FIDE rated swiss. IM and GM norm opportunities available.

****#@ 18-19 Apr CCF Easter Congress**, 84-90 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3BA Contact: Coulsdon Chess Fellowship Email: chess@ccfworld.com Website: http://www.ccfworld.com/Chess/Adult%20Competitions/Longplays_Easter.htm - starts 9:30AM ends 10:30PM. 5 rounds - FIDE and non-FIDE sections. Number of sections and grade limits dependent on entries.

****# 18-20 Apr Bolton Easter Congress and Busy Persons Blitz**, Ukrainian Social Club, 99 Castle St, Bolton BL2 1JP Contact: Dr R Middleton Email: gmccacongress@yahoo.co.uk - starts 12:00AM. Open, Major & Knights sections. Busy Persons Blitz on Saturday 19th (afternoon)

~#@ 18-21 Apr Southend Easter Congress 2014, Southend Adult Community College, Ambleside Drive, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 2UP Contact: John Chapman Email: johnchapman9x@aol.com Website: <http://southendchess.awardspace.biz/club/9999/CongressIndex.html> - starts 9:30AM ends 10:00PM. Fide rated Open and Graded sections. Approx £6000 prize fund, Women's prize fund to be announced.

****# 18-21 Apr WECU 66th Open Easter Congress**, The Manor Hotel, Exmouth, Devon EX82AG Contact: Meyrick

Shaw Email: wecu@hotmail.co.uk Website: <http://chessdevon.co.uk> - starts 9:45AM. Three sections : Open (incl. the West of England Championship), Major U175 & Minor U140. Also included is the WECU Ladies' Championship (Elizabeth Walker Cup)

~***@ 19 Apr London Rapidplay**, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW Contact: Sainbayar Tserendorj Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.londonrapidplay.co.uk> - starts 10:00am ends 5:10pm. 6 round Swiss, FIDE rated sections: Open, U2000/U170, U1700/U130, prize fund £450

~***Y+ 19 Apr Get Your First Chess Grade**, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW Contact: Amu Sainbayar Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.londonrapidplay.co.uk> - starts 10.00am ends 5:10pm. 6 round Swiss, sections: U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 & U14. Players graded under 80 ECF. Winner will receive a trophy in each age category, Best Girl medal in each section. Special prize for players scoring 4.5 or more

~***# 19-21 Apr Golders Green Easter Congress**, Golders Green Church Hall, West Heath Drive, London NW11 7QG Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Telephone: 07855 036 537 Website: www.golders-greenchessweekender.blogspot.co.uk. Three sections - OPEN, UNDER 1900, UNDER 1600. Total prize fund £1000

~***Y 21 Apr 37th Surrey Chess Congress Junior Championships 2014**, Nonsuch High School, Ewell Road, Cheam, Sutton SM3 8AB Contact: Mike Adams Email: mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk Website: <http://www.surreychesscongress.co.uk> - starts 10:00AM ends 5:00PM. Seven sections: U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U13. Top 3 sections play with clocks and results are sent for ECF grading. See entry form for other details

~* **21 Apr The 5th Surrey County Chess Rapidplay**, Nonsuch High School, Ewell Road, Cheam, Sutton SM3 8AB Contact: Mike Adams Email: mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk Website: <http://www.surreychesscongress.co.uk> - starts 10:00AM ends 6:00PM. Based on 40-60 entries in the last 4 years we have run 2 sections: Open and U130 or U140. We reserve the right to adjust this boundary and/ or introduce an extra section(s) should entries justify it. A full refund is offered if you don't like where we put the boundary. A prize fund of (at least) £300 is guaranteed

~ **25-27 Apr 35th County Durham Open Chess Congress**, Houghton Sports Centre, Station Road, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 5EF Contact: Lara Barnes Email: larabarnes@btinternet.co.uk - starts 6.30pm ends 5.45pm. Open, Major and Minor + grading prizes

~***#@ 24-26 May The 37th Surrey Chess Congress**, The Guildford Institute, Ward Street, Guildford GU1 4LH Contact: Mike Adams Email: mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk Website: <http://www.surreychesscongress.co.uk> - starts 10:00AM ends 8:00PM. In 4 sections: Open, U180, U150 and U120. Top two sections are FIDE rated. One round on Saturday (starts 4pm), 2 rounds on each of Sunday and Monday. Guaranteed prize fund of £1,000

~* **26 Apr Poplar Rapid-Play Tournament**, Langley Hall, Saint Nicholas Church Centre, Ettrick Street, Poplar, London E14 0QD Contact: Norman Went Email: DocklandsChess@yahoo.co.uk Website: <http://www.spanglefish.com/docklandschessclub> - starts 10:30AM ends 6:30PM. 6 round Swiss pairing rapid-play tournament with 30 minutes for all moves in each of the rounds. Minimum of two grade band sections; Minor Under 130 and Major/Open. If sufficient entrants then a separate Major Under 170 will be run

~***Y 26 Apr EPSCA Under 9 Final**, Nottinghamshire Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com

~* **26 Apr Chipping Sodbury Rapidplay**, The Old Grammar School, Broad St, Chipping Sodbury BS37 6AD Contact: Graham Mill-Wilson Email: tugmw@blueyonder.co.uk Website: <http://bristolchesscongress.blogspot.co.uk/> - starts 10:30AM ends 5:50PM. Six round Swiss rapidplay in 3 sections - Open, Major (U155), Minor (U125). Nice venue in middle of old market town, with plenty of facilities on the doorstep.

~* **# 26-27 Apr The Great Yarmouth Chess Congress**, Town Hall, Hall Plain, Great Yarmouth NR30 2QF Contact: John Charman Email: jaygee@ntlworld.com Website: <http://www.norfolkchess.org/> - starts 9:30AM ends 7:00PM. 5 round Swiss. Incorporates the Norfolk Open and is part of EACU Individual Championship trilogy as well as part of EACU Grand Prix

~ **26-27 Apr National Club Championships**, De Vere Uplands House, Four Ashes Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP15 6LB MAP Contact: Guy Greenland Email: nationalclub@englishchess.org.uk - four sections - Open, Major, Intermediate, Minor - four-round team competition. Entry fee: £25 per team

~ **27 Apr 10th Chess Coaching Services Tournament and Training Day**, John Keble Church, Church Close, Edgware HA8 9NS Contact: Rob Willmoth Email: robwillmoth@hotmail.co.uk Website: <http://chesscoachingservices.co.uk> - starts 12:30AM ends 6:00PM. The only junior event of its kind in the UK. Training split into 4

different ability groups. Training plan determined beforehand so that parents can see what their child will be taught before the event. This is supplemented by an ECF rapidplay tournament in between the 4 training sessions.

@ 1 May Hendon 'First Thursday' Blitz, Golders Green Unitarians Church, 31½ Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS
Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: www.hendonchessclub.com - Swiss 6 rounds
Open

~* @ 3 May London Rapidplay, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW
Contact: Sainbayar Tserendorj Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.london-rapidplay.co.uk> - starts 1:30pm ends 5:30pm. 6 round Swiss, 15 mins each, FIDE rated sections: Open, U2000/U170, U1700/U130, prize fund £450

~*Y+ 3 May Get Your First Chess Grade, Millennium Hall, Parish Centre, St. Mary's Church, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PW
Contact: Amu Sainbayar Email: londonrapidplay@gmail.com Website: <http://www.london-rapidplay.co.uk> - starts 10.00am ends 5:10pm. 6 round Swiss, sections: U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 & U14. Players graded under 80 ECF. Winner will receive a trophy in each age category, Best Girl medal in each section. Special prize for players scoring 4.5 or more

~ @ 3-5 May 4NCL Rounds 9, 10 and 11 | Weekend 5, Hinckley Island Hotel, Daventry Court Hotel

~ @ 3-5 May Golders Green May Day Bank Holiday Congress, Golders Green Church Hall, West Heath Drive, London NW11 7QG
Congress Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: www.golders-greenchessweekender.blogspot.co.uk. Swiss with Open, Under 1900 & Under 1600 sections. Total prize fund £1000

Y 9 May ECF Afternoon Event, Wilson's School, Wallington Contact: Neill Cooper Email: manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk - starts 4.30pm ends 6.30 pm. Open to any school.

~*# 9-11 May 25th Frome Chess Congress, Selwood Academy, Berkley Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EF
Contact: Gerry Jepps Email: fromecongress@btinternet.com Website: <http://www.somersetchess.org> - starts 7:00PM. 5 round Swiss tournament with 4 sections (Open, Major - U165, Intermediate - U140, Minor - U115) and incorporating the 2014 Somerset Championships. Catering facilities (both meals and light refreshments) at the venue.

~* 9-11 May Whitby Chess Congress, The Conservative Club, Upgang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO21 3DT
Contact: Noel Boustred Email: noelboustred@yahoo.co.uk - starts 7:00PM ends 6:20PM. 2 sections: Open (for any grade) and Minor (under 146). Highest ever top prize of £230 for 5 points in Minor. 75% of entry fee (not counting grading cost) is returned as prize money. ECF Silver members or above pay zero grading fee (free grading). Beautiful place with lovely venue. Limited places, so phone 07903913786 early to make sure places are available

@ 10 May Golders Green Rapidplay Congress, Golders Green Church Hall, West Heath Drive, London NW11 7QG
Contact: Adam Raof Email: adamraof@gmail.com Website: www.goldersgreenchess.blogspot.co.uk - 6 round Swiss open, £500.00 prize fund

~Y 10 May EPSCA Under 11 Final, Northamptonshire Contact: Nigel Dennis Email: nigelwdennis@btinternet.com

~ @ 11 May 1st Grosvenor Casino Salford Chess Rapidplay, Grosvenor Casino Salford, 5 Derwent St, Salford M5 4SW
Contact: John Reyes Email: johnareyes@hotmail.com - starts 10:00AM. A one day quick play event. 6 rounds with each player having 30 minutes on the clock. ECF quick play rules to apply. Dress code: smart casual. No trainers or shorts but jeans are okay (Casino rule). Casino staff reserve the right to refuse entry. Over 18 years only.