

4NCL Weekend 2: Gawain's Houdini impression

After 2 weekends of the 2018-19 4NCL, there are three clear leaders in Division 1: Guildford 1, Cheddleton 1 and Chess.com Manx Liberty, who have each won all their 4 matches.

The big news at the January 12-13 weekend in Daventry was the appearance of England No. 1 Mickey Adams for reigning champions Guildford 1, bolstering their already stellar lineup to a rating average of 2607. Round 4 saw the toughest test of the season to date for Guildford 1, as Wood Green held them to a relatively hard-fought 5-3 win despite Adams' victory over Jon Speelman on board 1.

The weekend's 'Harry Houdini' award for rook & pawn ending escapology must surely go to Gawain Jones, who won a worse position in Round 3 against Matthew Rose, then pulled off an improbable draw against Daniel Fernandez in Round 4, despite being three pawns down just six moves from the end of the game.

The nearest chasing teams in Division 1 A are Barbican 4NCL 1 and White Rose, who are both on 6/8 match points after Barbican 1 scored a key 6-2 win over White Rose 1 to overtake them in 2nd place.

In Division 1 B, Cheddleton 1 and Chess.com Manx Liberty are duking it out for top spot, with Cheddleton currently edging the Manx team by 23.5 to 23 game points.

Among the leading individual scores so far are:

Jean-Pierre Le Roux 4/4; Nick Pert, Jonathan Hawkins, Mircea-Emilian Parligras 3.5/4.

Division 1 results and standings:

Division 1 A

Round 3

Oxford 1 0.5-7.5 Guildford 1

Wood Green 6.5-1.5 Alba

North East England 1.5 – 6.5 Barbican 4NCL 1

White Rose 1 5.5-2.5 West is Best 1

Round 4

Guildford 1 5-3 Wood Green

Barbican 4NCL 1 6-2 White Rose 1

Alba 4-4 Oxford 1

West is Best 1 4-4 North East England

Division 1 A - Standings after Round 4:

8: Guildford 1 (27 GP)

6: Barbican 4NCL 1 (19 GP), White Rose 1 (18 GP)

4: Wood Green (20 GP)

3: North East England (12 GP), Alba (10.5 GP)

1: West is Best 1 (12.5 GP), Oxford 1 (9 GP)

Division 1 B

Round 3

Guildford 2 3-5 Chess.com Manx Liberty

Cheddleton 6-2 Grantham Sharks

3Cs 1 3.5-4.5 Celtic Tigers 1

Wood Green Monarchs 2.5-5.5 Blackthorne Russia

Round 4

Chess.com Manx Liberty 1 4.5-3.5 3Cs 1

Celtic Tigers 1 2.5-5.5 Guildford 2

Grantham Sharks 1 3.5-4.5 Wood Green Monarchs

Blackthorne Russia 3-5 Cheddleton 1

Division 1 B - Standings after Round 4:

8: Cheddleton 1 (23.5 GP), Chess.com Manx Liberty: (23 GP)

4: Guildford 2 (18 GP), Celtic Tigers 1 (12 GP)

3: Blackthorne Russia (16 GP)

2: 3Cs 1 (13 GP), Wood Green Monarchs (10 GP)

1: Grantham Sharks (11.5 GP)