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The Whisky Immortal

Craig Pritchett reports back from Scotland's strongest ever tournament

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Guildford: The Inside Story - Roger Emerson on how the 4NCL was again conquered

An Elite Test - Matthew Sadler explains how he neutralised Richard Rapport as Black

Celebrating a Club Centenary - Phil Crocker explains how Chester marked 100 years

Chess

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The 4NCL Round-Up

Guildford's only defeat, the relegation battle and some fine chess as the season ended

As we have just seen, Guildford once again dominated the 4NCL and unsurprisingly many of their players racked up huge scores. Nick Pert finished with 10/11, while Jean-Pierre le Roux headed up the individual big-hitting table until a final round defeat to James Adair saw him finish on a mere 9½/11. We should also mention Luke McShane's highly impressive 6½/7, as well as the 4/5 and 6/8 scored respectively by Michael Adams and Gawain Jones.

For the new force on the block, Manx Liberty, Romanian Grandmasters Mircea-Emilian Parigras and Constantin Lupulescu top-scored with 7/9 and 6½/9 respectively, while David Howell turned in another decent display on top board for third-placed Cheddleton, finishing with 8/11. However, the best performance in the whole of Division One undoubtedly went to Jonathan Hawkins, who reminded everyone of his great talent as he racked up 10/11 on board 2 for Cheddleton which equated to a 2770 performance. The acclaimed coach and author of *Amateur to IM* also inflicted on Guildford their only individual defeat of the season.

J.Hawkins-L.Fressinet Cheddleton vs Guildford *Semi-Slav Defence*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♗f6 4 ♖c3 e6 5 e3 ♗bd7 6 ♚c2 ♗d6 7 ♗d3 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 b5 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♗d1 ♗c7 12 ♗d2

Modest development, but we are deep in theory and Hawkins is in no rush to advance his e-pawn. After 12...♗fe8 13 ♗ac1 a6 White might well, however, and 14 e4 e5 15 ♗d5! ♗d8 (15...♗xd5 16 exd5 exd4 17 dxc6 ♗xe2 18 cxb7 ♗xb7 19 ♗xd4 ♗ee8 20 ♗c6 sees White continuing to press, but Black should be able to hold) 16 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 17 ♗c3 gave him an edge in Bluebaum-Korobov, Bundesliga 2019.

12...e5 13 ♗ac1 a6 14 b4!?

This fits in well with the development of the bishop to d2. Clamping down on the liberating ...c5 break makes a lot of sense, although so too does 14 dxe5 ♗xe5 15 ♗g5! followed by bringing a knight to e4.

14...♗fe8

Of course, 14...♗xb4? 15 ♗xb5 axb5 16 ♗xb4 would merely significantly increase White's grip on the position.

15 ♗d3

Activating and preventing 15...e4, but now 15...exd4!? 16 exd4 h6 followed by ...♗b6 would have been rock-solid for Black, who should be OK despite that imprisoned bishop on b7.

15...h6 16 ♗e4

Forcing the pace, rather than waiting with, say, 16 a3 ♗ad8 17 h3 when the position would have remained roughly balanced.

16...♗xe4 17 ♗xe4 exd4 18 ♗xd4!?



Gambitting h2, rather than 18 ♗xc6 when 18...d3! (18...dxe3 19 ♗xe3 ♗ac8 should just be a draw) 19 ♗c3 ♗xb4 20 ♗xb4 ♗xc6 21 ♗d4 ♗e5 might even be slightly annoying for White. It wasn't too late for 18 exd4 though, but after 18...♗f6 19 ♗xc6 (19 ♗d3 c5! liberates Black's bishop and feels dangerous for White) 19...♗ac8 20 d5! ♗xd5 21 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 22 ♗b3 ♗ed8 only Black, if anyone, should be able to exert nominal pressure.

18...♗e5?

The first new move of the game, and a major error. Previously, 18...♗ac8 19 ♗xc6 (19 ♗h7+!? ♗h8 20 ♗f5 ♗xh2+ 21 ♗f1 ♗e5 22 ♗b3 offers White reasonable positional compensation for a pawn) 19...♗xh2+ 20 ♗h1 ♗e5 21 ♗d3? ♗xc6! 22 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 23 ♗xc6 ♗h5 24 ddc1 ♗e5 25 ♗e4 f5 26 ♗d5+ ♗h7 had left White in deep trouble in Pavlicek-Meissner, correspondence 2010. If Black was content to play solidly for a draw, he might, though, have gone in for 18...♗xh2+ 19 ♗h1 ♗d6 20 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 21 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 22 ♗xc6 ♗f8, which would surely have been completely OK for him.

19 ♗f5 ♗f8 20 ♗c3

Fressinet had no doubt seen this move in advance, but had presumably failed to realise that even after competing for control of the long dark-square diagonal, Black will remain under heavy pressure.

20...g6

20...c5? 21 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 22 bxc5 and if 22...♗xc5? 23 ♗xg7! ♗xg7 24 ♗f5 would not have been wise, and even after 20...a5 21 a3! White remains in full control of the position.

21 ♗g3 ♗e7

Possibly only now did Fressinet spot that 21...♗g7 22 f4 ♗c4 would have failed to

23 ♗xg6!, and if 23...fxg6 24 ♗xg6 ♗f7 25 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 26 ♗d7+ or 23...♗xe3 24 ♗h7+ ♗h8 25 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 26 ♗h5+ ♗f8 27 ♗c3 when Black won't survive. Notably so bad already is Black's position that the engines want to ditch a pawn with 21...f5!?, hoping to grovel on after 22 ♗xe5 (22 f4 is also pretty promising) 22...♗xe5 23 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 24 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 25 ♗xc6 ♗f7.

22 h3



Preparation for a timely f2-f4, but amazingly there was a sacrificial blow: 22 ♗xg6!! ♗xg6 (22...fxg6 23 f4 ♗c4 24 ♗xg6+ ♗g7 25 ♗f5 is easier to grasp) 23 ♗h5 when Black is quite lost due to the threats down the long diagonal, and if 23...♗e5 24 ♗f5 ♗g7 25 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 26 f4.

22...♗g7 23 ♗b3

Even here Black remains under pressure, on the kingside and due to his problematic piece on b7.

23...♗h8 24 ♗e2 ♗ac8 25 ♗d4

Rerouting the knight to e2 made sense, but only if White intended to follow up with 25 ♗f4! when he would have maintained a clear advantage: for example, 25...♗cd8 (not 25...♗c4? 26 ♗xg6!, and 25...c5 26 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 remains tactically flawed, as shown by 27 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 28 bxc5 ♗exc5 29 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 30 ♗xg6+! fxg6? 31 ♗d8+) 26 ♗xe5! (forcing the pace; White might also wait with, say, 26 a3) 26...♗xd1+ 27 ♗xd1 ♗xe5 28 ♗d3 ♗f6 29 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 30 ♗c3! and White's far superior light-squared bishop continues to make its presence felt.

25...♗c4 26 ♗xg7+

The knight on c4 is a thorn in White's side and one not easily dealt with by 26 ♗d3, in view of 26...♗xd4 27 ♗xd4 c5! when Black suddenly liberates his forces (27...♗xe3 28 fxe3 ♗xe3+ 29 ♗h2 ♗xd4 30 ♗xf7 isn't so effective). White didn't, however, have to trade bishops and 26 ♗c3!? ♗xd4 27 ♗xd4 ahead of ♗d3 would have preserved a



The star performer in this season's 4NCL, Jonathan Hawkins, who made a whopping 10/11.

definite and healthy plus.

26...♗xg7 27 ♔d3 ♘e5 28 ♖c3

Hawkins has drifted a little, but even so retains the more pleasant position due to his greater freedom of movement. A radical alternative was 28 ♔e4 ♘c4 29 ♔f3!? c5 30 ♔xb7 ♖xb7 31 a4!, which would also have retained a definite degree of pressure.

28...♗g8 29 ♘f4 c5!?



At last Fressinet is able to carry out his ideal advance, although he didn't have to break and might have continue to hunker down with 29...♗ed8 30 ♔e4 ♘c4.

30 bxc5 ♘d7?

Hawkins might have drifted a little, but has done well to ensure that Black was never able to effect ...c5 when it completely equalises. Here he has prepared a little tactic to prevent Black from easily regaining the pawn on c5. As such, 30...♗ed8! was essential when Black wouldn't have been doing too badly, since it's far from trivial to improve the white pieces. 31 ♖b4 ♗d7 32 a4 is the most direct plan and after 32...♘d3 33 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 34 ♘xd3 ♖e4 35 ♖xe4 ♔e4 36 ♘b2 White remains a pawn to the good, but Black is certainly not without his chances to hold.

31 ♔xg6!

Boom! Now 31...fxg6 32 ♘xg6 pretty much forces the hopeless 32...♖g7 33 ♗xd7! ♖xc3 (33...♖xd7 34 ♖h8+ ♔f7 35 ♖h7+

♔e6 36 ♘f4+ wins the queen) 34 ♗xc3 and, like the game, 31...♘xc5 32 ♔h5 ♘e6 33 ♖e5 leaves White a pawn up and in full control.

31...♗xc5 32 ♖b3 ♗xc1 33 ♗xc1 ♘e5 34 ♔b1 ♖g5

Hoping to trouble the white monarch as well as cover the gaping holes around his own king, but that knight on f4 is a monster and White will be able to invade down the c-file.

35 ♔f1 ♔a8 36 ♗c5 ♖f6 37 ♖c3 ♗d6 38 ♔c2 ♔b7 39 ♘h5 ♔f8 40 ♔g1!



Good prophylaxis as White continues to move in for the kill by preparing f2-f4 and not allowing 40 f4? ♘c4.

40...♘c4

This doesn't help matters, but in any case the game had gone for Fressinet with the engine's suggestion of 40...b4 41 ♖xb4 ♘d7 42 ♗c4 ♖xb4 43 ♗xb4 merely resulting in a hopeless endgame.

41 ♖g7+ ♔e7 42 ♗f5 ♗f8 43 ♘f4

All game White has enjoyed the superior coordination and never more so than now.

43...♔e8 44 ♗f6 ♖e5 45 ♘g6! 1-0

With Manx creating a big three at the head of Division One, best of the rest was fourth place with that award once again going to White Rose. The Yorkshire side did defeat Manx, but were also a little fortunate to finish fourth – the young guns of Wood Green

would have done so had they drawn their final round match with Cheddleton, not lost 4½–3½ after a pressing Justin Tan tragically overstepped the time limit against Jonathan Hawkins on move 71.

Wood Green captain Lawrence Cooper, once the highly successful force behind Midland Monarchs back in the nineties when they won three 4NCL titles, could at least enjoy Adam Taylor's IM norm, while White Rose supremo Paul Townsend was able to celebrate another decent season for his team. Two of the stars of the White Rose team are Daniel Alsina Leal and James Adair, both of whom won instructive encounters during the May weekend.

J.Adair-K.Arkell

White Rose vs Cheddleton
Scandinavian Defence

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xd5 4 c4 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 g6 6 g3 ♔g7 7 ♔g2 0-0 8 0-0 c6 9 ♘c3 ♔g4 10 ♔e3 ♘bd7 11 ♖b3 ♔xf3 12 ♔xf3 ♖b6

White has obtained an ideal set-up and already Black's position is unpleasant, since he can't easily liberate his pieces. 12...♖c7 13 ♗fe1 e5 is the direct attempt to do so, but after 14 d5 followed by, say, 14...♗fe8 15 ♗ad1 e4 16 ♔g2 White retains a clear plus.

13 ♖a3 ♖d8 14 ♗fd1 ♔e8 15 b4!?

15 ♔f4 was, of course, possible, but Adair sees no reason not to exploit the position of his bishops by advancing on the queenside.

15...♘b6

Black also comes under significant pressure after 15...e5 16 dxe5 ♗xe5 17 ♔d4 ♔e8 18 b5.

16 ♖b3 ♖d7 17 ♔g2

Calmly improving his pieces and avoiding any notion of ...♖h3 followed by ...♘g4, ahead of crashing through in the centre.

17...♖e6



18 d5! cxd5 19 c5!

19 ♘xd5 ♘bxd5 20 cxd5 ♖d7 21 ♗ac1 would have maintained a pleasant edge, but Adair rightly plays for more having worked out that Black's threats down the long diagonal are not actually so serious.

19...♘e4 20 ♘xd5

20 ♔xe4 ♔xc3 21 ♖xc3 ♖xe4+ 22 f3 ♖c4 was the tactical point behind Black's last, although even here 23 ♖b3 ♖xb3 24 axb3 ♘d7 25 b5 would have left him under

heavy pressure.

20...♖xd5 21 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 22 ♜xd5 ♖xa1 23 ♖xe4 This is the position which Adair had to correctly assess before going 19 c5. White is a whole exchange in arrears, but ♜d7 is threatened and his bishops and queenside majority mean that he is clearly better.

23...f5 24 ♖f3 ♜ad8

24...b6 might have been an option had it not been for 25 ♜d1, and if 25...♖c3 26 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 27 b5! bxc5 28 ♖xc5 with excellent winning chances for White.

25 ♜xd8 Pocketing the b-pawn, but the calm 25 b5 could have been even stronger.

25...♜xd8 26 ♖xb7



26...♖d4?

It might appear that Keith Arkell's only mistake in this game was to play a rather passive opening, but trading the bishops merely makes White's task easier. Watching from the adjacent board I expected him to try 26...♜d3! 27 b5 ♜xe3 28 fxe3 ♖f7, hoping for salvation with the opposite-coloured bishops. Whether this is enough to draw isn't obvious as after, say, 29 ♖d5+ e6 30 ♖b3 ♖e7 31 a4 ♖c3 32 b6 axb6 33 cxb6 White's queenside pawns and bishop are ideally placed.

However, by aiming to blockade the pawns Black retains definite drawing chances, i.e. 33...♖a5 (33...♖d7 34 b7 ♖c7? 35 ♖xe6 ♖xb7 36 ♖g8 h6 37 ♖h7 ♖d2 38 ♖f3 g5 39 ♖xf5 is winning for White as his extra pawns are four files apart) 34 b7 ♖c7 35 a5 ♖d6 36 a6 ♖b8 followed by ...♖c5-b6. Breaking through on the kingside is not such an easy business for White and the hasty 37 h4 ♖c5 38 ♖xe6? ♖b5 39 ♖g8 h6 40 ♖h7 ♖xa6 41 ♖xg6 ♖xb7 42 ♖xf5 ♖c6 is certainly but a draw.

27 ♖f3 ♖xe3 28 ♖xe3 ♜d1 29 b5

Black's rook might be actively placed, but he cannot halt White's rampant majority.

29...♖f7 30 a4 ♖e6 Alternatively, 30...♜a1 31 c6 ♜c1 32 a5 ♖e6 33 b6 with an easy win. **31 a5 ♜e1+ 32 ♖d2 ♜f1 33 ♖e2 ♜c1 34 b6!**



The decisive breakthrough. The game is up. **34...♜xc5 35 bxa7 ♜xa5 36 a8 ♜ ♜xa8 37 ♖xa8 ♖f6 38 ♖d3 g5 39 ♖d4 g4 40 ♖c6 e6 41 ♖b5 h5 42 ♖e8 h4 43 gxh4 1-0**

D. Alsina Leal-D. Gormally
White Rose vs Blackthorne Russia
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♖g5 e6 7 f4 ♖e7 8 ♜f3 ♜c7 9 0-0-0 ♖bd7 10 g4 b5 11 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 12 g5 ♖d7 13 f5 ♖xg5+

Black's most solid choice rather than allow White his ideal initiative with 13...♖c5 14 f6 gxf6 15 gxf6 ♖f8 16 ♜g1 or head for the trendy waters of 13...0-0!?

14 ♖b1 ♖e5 15 ♜h5 ♜e7 16 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 17 fxe6 g6 18 exf7+ ♖xf7 19 ♜h3 ♖g7 20 ♖d5 ♜d8 21 ♖e2



Black is very solid, but I've always found this line to be a little unpleasant for him, a view which the game has done nothing to change and neither would have 21 ♜c3!? ♜c8 22 ♜a3 ♜c6 23 ♖e2, which maintains a pleasant edge for White.

21...♜f8 22 ♜hf1 ♜a7!

Gormally unravels well, looking to the f-file for simplification and even some counterplay.

23 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 24 ♜f1 ♜f7 25 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 26 ♜g3

Thus far White's play might appear rather simplistic. Moreover, both sides have a good outpost for their knights and the bishops are of opposite colours, but the position is far from a dead draw due to the potential weakness of the black queenside.

26...♖h6?

The right diagonal if Black wants to hassle the white king, but it turns out that the bishop actually does little here. 26...h6 27 h4 ♖d8 28 h5 g5 may have felt unpleasant, but should be tenable for Black, since he can obtain counterplay with a timely ...g4. There was also 26...♖f6!?, angling for ...♖c4 when Black should be able to draw.

27 ♜g1?

27 h4! ♜a7 28 c3 was the correct way to secure a clear advantage.

27...♜b7?

This might appear solid, but Alsina Leal will now demonstrate that the defence is most uncomfortable. As such, 27...♖f3 was necessary, and if 28 ♜g2 (28 ♖xf3 ♜xf3 29 ♜a7+ ♖g8 30 ♜a8+ ♖f8 is nothing for Black to fear with his queen so active) 28...♖d2+ 29 ♖a1 ♖f4! when Black seems to have enough counterplay.

28 h4! ♖h8 29 a3



White is fully back on track. His queen is more active than its counterpart and he can exert pressure on the kingside with the h-pawn.

29...♖g7 30 h5! gxh5 31 ♜g5

31 ♖xh5 ♖c4 32 ♜g5! was a better way of going about things, when 32...♜d7 33 c3 ♖e5 still leaves Black solidly placed, but also under pressure right across the board (White might even regroup with 34 ♜g1 and ♜b6).

31...♜f7 32 ♖a2?

Even after 32 ♜xh5! ♜xh5 33 ♖xh5 ♖d7! 34 b4 ♖f6 35 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 36 ♖a2 ♖g7 37 ♖b3 White is for choice due to his more mobile pawns, although one would imagine that, with care, Black should be able

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to hold.

32...h6?

Gormally continues to underestimate the danger. 32...♖g4! was correct, and if 33 ♙xg4 (or 33 ♗d8+ ♗f8 34 ♗b6 ♖f6 35 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 36 ♗b8+ ♗f8) 33...hxg4 34 ♗xg4 h5 when he would have secured sufficient counterplay to maintain the balance.

33 ♗xh5 ♗xh5

Black didn't have to consent to this exchange, but 33...♗f8 34 c3 ♗d8 35 ♗f5 would also have been most unpleasant for him (White can combine ideas of ♖b4 with those of ♙h5, targeting the black king).

34 ♙h5



The h-pawn still isn't going anywhere and meanwhile Black's queenside pawns are vulnerable.

34...♖c4 35 c3 ♖d2?

Now White is too fast. As pointed out by Alsina Leal after the game, 35...♙e5 36 ♖c7 d5! had to be tried, when 37 ♖xd5 ♗g7 38 ♖b4 ♗f6 39 ♖xa6 ♗g5 40 ♙e8 ♖d6 41 ♙d7 h5 supplies some much-needed counterplay and might yet just about save the day for Black.

36 ♖c7 ♖xe4 37 ♖xa6 d5 38 ♙f3 ♖xc3+

Desperation, and desperation which becomes entirely understandable once you've considered the lines 38...♖d6 39 ♙xd5 h5 40 ♖c7 h4 41 ♙c6 and 38...♙e5 39 ♖b4 ♗g7 40 ♖xd5 ♖g3 41 ♗b3 ♙d6 42 a4 bxa4+ 43 ♗xa4 ♖f5 44 b4, both of which should be winning for White.

39 bxc3 ♙xc3 40 ♖c7 ♗g7 41 ♖xd5 ♙a5 42 ♙h5!

The bishop returns to its former outpost with some effect. Now Black can't even activate his king and White was able to win without needing to resort to bishop and knight against king. All game the Catalan Grandmaster has oozed class and unsurprisingly made no mistake from here on.



42...♙e1 43 ♗b3 ♙g3 44 ♖c3 ♙e1 45 ♖xb5 ♗f6 46 ♖d4 ♙f2 47 ♖f3 ♗e6 48 ♗c4 ♙d6 49 ♗b5 ♖c7 50 a4 ♙e3 51 ♖e5 ♙f2 52 ♖g4 ♙e1 53 ♖xh6 ♙d2 54 ♖f5 ♙e1 55 ♖d4 ♙d2 56 ♙f3 ♙e3 57 ♖c2 ♙b6 58 ♖b4 ♙a7 59 ♖d5+ ♖d6 60 ♖b6 1-0

An Anti-Climax

We mentioned in our May pages that after round 7, "The Demotion Pool [table did] not read so badly for those sides who joined it via Pool A, at least not yet." As readers will be all too aware, chess editors, like football pundits, should not make predictions, and that final clause turned out to be a saviour. Come the final weekend, none of Oxford, West is Best, North East England or Alba strengthened, in contrast to their rivals from Pool B – 3Cs, Wood Green Monarchs, Grantham Sharks and Celtic Tigers – who all at least fielded all their strongest regular players.

As well as improving their seeding system to balance the pools better, dare we suggest that the 4NCL could do well to consider a return to a 12-team all-play-all for the top flights, something which would likely make Division One that bit more competitive and quite possibly also reduce the number of dead-rubber matches?

Oxford were undoubtedly hit by exam clashes for their students, losing to 3Cs and the Sharks before serving a reminder that they are ever a dangerous side by upsetting Wood Green Monarchs 5½-2½. Unfortunately for Oxford that was a classic case of too late, too late, while elsewhere North East England and West is Best fought hard, but were generally outclassed.

The main surprise in the relegation places was that of Alba, especially as the Scottish side averaged over 2300 for the final rounds, but that didn't prevent them losing 6-2 to both the slightly lower-rated Monarchs and 3Cs,

as well as 4½-3½ to the Tigers. Collectively Alba were a bit unlucky and their play likely too loose, as exemplified by even one of their key players, Clement Sreeves, who earlier in the season had outplayed James Adair.

C.Sreeves-K.Szczepkowska
Alba vs Celtic Tigers
King's Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♙c4 ♖e7 4 ♖c3 c6 5 d4 ♖g6 Surely too materialistic and one might have thought that Black's play had prepared the thematic central counter 5...d5.

6 ♖f3 6 ♗f3 or even 6 ♗h5!? would have forced any ...d5 break to be played as a pawn sacrifice and left White with good chances to emerge with the upper hand.

6...♙e7 7 ♗e2 d6 8 ♙d2 Officially a novelty, but preparing to go long is not illogical, if a little unusual in the King's Gambit.

8...b5?!

8...0-0 9 0-0-0 and only then 9...b5 would have been somewhat more prudent.

9 ♖xb5!

Sreeves takes up the challenge, having recognised that even after Black's next (and not 9...cxb5? 10 ♙d5), White will emerge with a strong centre in return for the piece.

9...d5 10 exd5 cxb5 11 ♙xb5+ ♗f8



12 d6?? Far too swashbuckling. It's hard to assess whether White has more than enough for the piece after 12 c4, but his clump of central pawns certainly should not be underestimated and neither should Black's jammed-up kingside.

12...♙xd6 13 ♗e4

The materialistic point behind his last, but there is a simple refutation, which unsurprisingly the Polish WGM and IM finds.

13...♗e7 14 ♖e5 ♙b7 0-1

2018-2019 4NCL Division 1 Relegation Pool											
Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts	
1 3Cs	X	6-2	5½-2½	3½-4½	6-1½	3½-4½	5½-2½	6-2	36	10	
2 Wood Green Monarchs	2-6	X	4½-3½	4½-3½	2½-5½	5-3	5½-2½	6-2	30	10	
3 Grantham Sharks	2½-5½	3½-4½	X	4-4	6-2	5½-2½	4½-3½	5½-2½	31½	9	
4 Celtic Tigers	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4	X	3½-4½	4-4	4-3	4½-3½	28	8	
5 Oxford	1½-6	5½-2½	2-6	4½-3½	X	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4	25½	7	
6 West is Best	4½-3½	3-5	2½-5½	4-4	3½-4½	X	4-4	3½-4½	25	4	
7 North East England	2½-5½	2½-5½	3½-4½	3-4	4½-3½	4-4	X	4-4	24	4	
8 Alba	2-6	2-6	2½-5½	3½-4½	4-4	4½-3½	4-4	X	22½	4	

Find the Winning Moves

24 puzzles to test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from many different recent events, not least the final 4NCL weekend of the season. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 54.



Warm-up Puzzles



(1) P.Neatherway-B.Kocan
Oxford 2019
White to Play



(2) A.Crombleholme-R.Taylor
English Over-65 Ch., Solihull 2019
White to Play



(3) N.Woltery-M.Burrows
Stevenage 2019
Black to Play



(4) K.Arakhamia-Grant-D.Kolbus
Edinburgh 2019
White to Play



(5) B.Amin-M.Vachier-Lagrave
Abidjan (rapid) 2019
Black to Play



(6) V.Anand-D.Navara
Gashimov Memorial, Shamkir 2019
Black to Play and Draw

move; instead, 1...♖a1+? 2 ♜e2 ♜xh1 3 c6 ♜xg2 4 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 5 cxd7+ ♜xd7 6 ♜xe5+ would have left White with at least enough play to draw) **2 cxd6 0-1** Jobava actually resigned after playing this, no doubt unhappy with how his creative early play had backfired. After 2...♜c5! 3 d7+ ♜e7 4 ♜f5 ♜xb7 5 ♜xe5 ♜e6 Black has everything covered.

24) Ding Liren-P.Harikrishna

White decisively broke through in the game

after 1...♜d6? 2 d5 ♜g6 3 ♜h7 ♜d6 4 a5!, but as pointed out by David Cummings in his fine notes for ChessPublishing.com, **1...♜xe3+!** would have drawn: **2 ♜xe3** (2 fxe3? f2 3 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 only leaves Black with winning chances thanks to his powerful e-pawn and king) **2...♜xf2 3 ♜g4+** (3 ♜d1+? ♜e2 4 ♜h1 ♜c7+ 5 ♜d5 e3 is winning) **3...♜xg3 4 ♜xg5 f2 5 ♜xf2+ ♜xf2 6 d5 e3 7 ♜d3 e2 8 ♜f5+ ♜e1 9 ♜e5 ♜d1** and the draw becomes inevitable.

Never Mind the Grandmasters (from page 47)

Many people think this is the obvious route: 1 ♜e5 dxe5 2 d5 e4 3 d6 e3 4 d7 exd2 (4...e2 5 d8♜ e1♜+ 6 ♜f7+ forces mate) 5 d8♜? d1♜. However, the correct way is to promote to a knight, not a queen, and then give mate on f7, the lesson being that we do not always have to promote to a queen.

This Month's New Releases



Opening Repertoire: 1 d4 with 2 c4

Cyrus Lakdawala, 448 pages
Everyman Chess

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Lakdawala's books polarise opinion. Some readers do not enjoy the flowery prose, but others think the chatty style helps to break down barriers and make the books fun to read.

There can be no doubting Lakdawala's hard work and commitment. This is his 40th chess book, which is a remarkable achievement. How can he write so many? The page-counts show they are not merely weekend potboilers. The only way to produce so much material is to put in a serious amount of hours; day in, day out.

This new book was borne out of the author's mid-life crisis, linking neatly with this being book number 40. "My buddy IM Tony Saily sent an admonishing email about my opening choices. He politely opined that I was a disgrace to the white pieces with my choices of the London and Colle Systems and Ulf Anderssen's ultra-safe 1 ♜f3 instant end-game repertoire." This led to the insistence that "This trend must end and that I take up an aggressive 1 d4 and 2 c4! repertoire."

It is not easy to switch back from London systems and the like to a repertoire based on main lines, as the author is quick to admit. "With old age comes a loss of our former confidence and an increase in caution, and my philosophy has been that the more distrusting of sharp lines I am, the longer I will survive." One point is that it is almost impossible to match younger players in terms of keeping up to date with the latest theory. More mature chess players have a lot more 'real life' matters filling up their time.

Therefore it is essential to work with a repertoire that will stand the test of time while also offering a challenge to any defence Black cares to play. Lakdawala's chosen lines against the big hitters are: 4 f3 against the Nimzo-Indian; the Petrosian System against the King's Indian;

the 'Pseudo-London' against the Grünfeld, i.e. 5 ♜f4; the 'Flick-Knife Variation' against the Modern Benoni; 5 f3 against the Benko Gambit; and the Exchange Variation against the Queen's Gambit Declined. Less commonly encountered defences such as the Budapest Gambit and Albin Counter-Gambit are covered also.

The illustrative games go up to 2017 and include heavyweight battles between Carlsen and Kramnik. The earliest game is from 1957 and shows Petrosian grinding out a win against Nikolaevsky in a typical King's Indian game. The age of the game doesn't matter; the quality of Petrosian's play does. Lakdawala is clearly a fan:

"You can't see me right now, but I'm on my knees, with hands together in prayer position, pleading with every reader to fire up their database and gather every book they own on Petrosian, call up all of the great Tigran Petrosian's King's Indian battles and study them carefully. I promise you that your time will be profitably spent and your understanding of the structure's subtlety is guaranteed to grow with time."

It is ironic that one of the most instructive games against the King's Indian comes from Petrosian's bitterest rival. It does, however, add further proof that the real giants of chess understood such positions so well.

V.Korchnoi-J.Plachetka Ostrava 1994



I wonder how many people would even have Korchnoi's next as a candidate move:

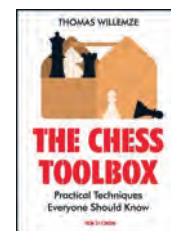
26 ♜xd4!! ♜xd4+ The next few moves are highly instructive too. **27 ♜h1 ♜g7 28 ♜f3 ♜f6 29 ♜g3! ♜h8 30 ♜g5!!**

And Black resigned on move 38.

Any book encouraging players to head back to the main lines of 1 d4 and 2 c4 should be welcomed by players on both sides of the board. White players will add a lot more depth to their game than can be achieved by playing the London System in every game and those playing as Black will finally get to use their favourite defences again.

The book also represents Lakdawala's personal journey in switching back to the main lines. He admits there is more to learn to get the repertoire up and running as compared to his previous books. "If you are a theory hater, this repertoire may not be right for you. The lines tend to be high-maintenance dances, whose steps you need to commit to memory." A fair point, but anyone trying the recommended repertoire will be making a clear statement of intent over the board and making it clear victory is in mind. The fully accessible material presented here will help readers take that big step.

Sean Marsh



The Chess Toolbox

Thomas Willenze, 400 pages, New in Chess
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Subtitled 'Practical techniques everyone should know', this book – designed with

ambitious club players in mind – aims to equip the club player with a thoroughly reliable and enduring set of tools for them to be able to construct more chess victories. The blurb states that: “If a chess hardware store would exist, most amateur chess players would be clueless what to ask for” before adding, “International Master and experienced chess trainer Thomas Willemze is the handyman you are looking for.”

The author is a former National Youth Coach for the Dutch Chess Federation and understands that learning about chess should be fun. “Therefore, I have added quizzes, puzzles and as many entertaining subjects as possible. Think, for instance, of beautiful combinations like the Windmill and Lasker’s double bishop sacrifice.” Those classics do indeed make appearances in this book, cued in by the theme of piece coordination, which is central to the entire book.

John Watson, the well-respected writer and expert reviewer, has contributed a foreword and he describes this book as “A unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature of chess improvement, as well as contributing new insights into several areas of the game”. Watson even goes as far as to say: “I can’t think of another book that would be more helpful to the average player who is intent upon improving his chess.”

It is certainly a very good book, with an abundance of fine material and excellent advice. The material challenges the reader from the start, spelling out various methods of improvement, starting with the art of exchanging pieces. “The more you improve, the more you realise that decisions that involve an exchange of material are the hardest ones to take in chess.” This is interesting and the examples given by the author are very good. Careful study of this part of the book will lead to a change in the way any player handles exchanges and will help to reduce the element of laziness that is within nearly all of us; choosing the simplest solution to a problem is not always the best way to proceed. There are illustrative games, lots of explanatory prose, exercises, and even pages to act as flashcards, to drive home various instructive points.

The book is structured in five main parts, namely: Exchange your way to victory; Unleash your rooks; Attack and defence; Getting ready to use your new tools; and then over 100 pages covering the solutions to the exercises. Some of the material is set out in ways I have not seen before in other instructional books: for example, there is a full page of exercises asking the reader to assess whether a Greek Gift sacrifice is the best way to proceed and another on whether or not a ♗xe6 sacrifice is good. Another excellent section covers positions featuring the IQP and looks at the best ways to fight with it and against it.

Here is a sample exercise from the aforementioned section on the Greek Gift.

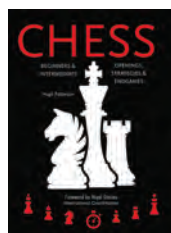
F.Pasztor-L.Nadasi Hungarian League 2010



Should Black take the plunge and sacrifice the bishop on h2, or not? One has to assess the two possible approaches of the white king, who could try to defend passively or actively after the initial sacrifice. Plenty to ponder – and I am not going to give the answer here.

The Chess Toolbox is a treasure trove of instructional material. Inexperienced club players will certainly be able to build up their toolbox of chess ideas by carefully studying the prose explanation and more advanced players will find plenty of the exercises challenging.

Sean Marsh



Chess: Beginners & Intermediate

Hugh Patterson, 176 pages, paperback
RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

With a foreword from Nigel Davies, this spiral-bound and heavily illustrated new work aims to take the reader from mastering the rules of the game to understanding the basics, not least the rudiments behind opening, attacking and middlegame play.

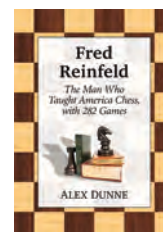


Endgames of the World Champions Volume 2 – from Steinitz to Spassky

Karsten Müller, PC-DVD; running time: 13 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

ChessBase’s endgame guru presents another DVD on his favourite phase of the game and a DVD which has a most impressive running length. Müller’s inspiration is once again the world champions and so viewers

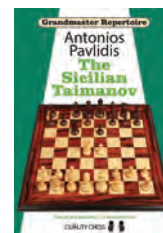
see highly instructive examples of the endgame prowess of everyone from Steinitz to Kasparov, with the final hour or so a welcome if perhaps unexpected bonus on the endgame strength of Paul Morphy.



Fred Reinfeld: The Man Who Taught America Chess, with 282 Games

Alex Dunne, 202 pages, paperback
SPECIAL PRICE £37.95

We have become accustomed to finely produced hardbacks from McFarland, but while this work is a softback, that does not mean any skimping has occurred with regards to the production qualities. Reinfeld’s name will long be known for his writing, but did you realise that he was also a pretty strong player, with a plus score against Reshevsky no less? Dunne tells Reinfeld’s story, while presenting and putting into context some of his best commentary and annotations.

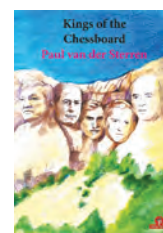


Grandmaster Repertoire: The Sicilian Taimanov

Antonios Pavlidis, 480 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

The young Greek Grandmaster has made extensive use of the Taimanov Sicilian, 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗c6 , throughout his career. His expertise shines through in this latest work for Quality Chess, which maps out a typically detailed repertoire for Black with the opening and one featuring much cutting-edge analysis.

As usual for a new work from Quality Chess, if you would prefer your copy of *Grandmaster Repertoire: The Sicilian Taimanov* in hardback format, do just add £4 to your order.



Kings of the Chessboard

Paul van der Sterren, 264 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

We have always been enthralled by the true greats of chess: Alekhine, Tal, Kasparov and

Carlsen being but four. In this fascinating new work for Thinkers Publishing, the retired but once pretty strong Dutch Grandmaster takes a look at the play of all the world champions and some of their 19th century forerunners. Each player receives a brief biography before van der Sterren sets out to explain what made them truly great. Those with gaps in their knowledge of chess history will certainly enjoy the read and even the experienced reader may well wish to dip into the book to peruse some fine stories and insight.

Komodo Chess 13

ChessBase PC-DVD;

64 Bit Multiprocessor Version

RRP £79.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £71.99**

Inspired by the success of *AlphaZero* and *Leela*, programmers Larry Kaufman and Mark Lefler have continued to develop their award-winning program. Once again both the standard version of *Komodo* and a 'Monte Carlo Tree Search' one are included, the latter now being some 350 points stronger than its *Komodo 12* predecessor.



Learning Chess Workbook: Step 1

Cor Van Wijgerden, 64 pages, paperback

RRP £5.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £5.39**

This is the first workbook in a six-part series designed by Rob Brunia and Cor van Wijgerden to teach children how to play chess. Their step-by-step approach has been successful across Europe and features a great number of puzzles, with teachers being able to download the answers. Also new in stock at Chess & Bridge is the second volume in the series, *Learning Chess Workbook: Step 2* (64 pages, RRP £5.99, Subscribers – £5.39), but with initial take-up high, do please contact the shop in advance if you're interested in ordering a copy of either volume.



Learning from the Mistakes of Others

Franco Zaninotto, 160 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The Italian FM's focus for German publisher Joachim Beyer Verlag is the games of players below 2000 level. As such, a great many mistakes commonly made at club level are examined, in clear fashion and with helpful

conclusions drawn which the reader should then be able to apply in their own games.

Also just in from Joachim Beyer Verlag is *The Reti Opening: Properly Played* by Jerzy Konikowski & Uwe Bekemann (292 pages, RRP £19.99, Subscribers – £17.99), which sees the authors continue their fairly basic opening series by showing how White should handle 1 $\text{d}\text{f}3$ d5 2 c4.



Monster Your Middlegame Planning Volume 1

Efstratios Grivas, 264 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The prolific author and leading Greek trainer returns for Chess Evolution by examining one of the most important features in chess, planning. Grivas's target audience is those in the 1500-2200 range with the book chiefly consisting of 78 game fragments, in each of which the reader must work out the correct plan.

Strategy Training: How to Make a Plan

Robert Ris, PC-DVD; running time: 8 hours

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The ChessBase DVD production crew have certainly been busy of late and this is another bumper offering, partly due to the 50 interactive exercises which fill up more than half of the DVD. Unsurprisingly structure and improving one's worst-placed piece are topics covered by the Dutch IM and acclaimed coach, but Ris also looks at how to create a target and how one should best judge when to maintain the tension, not rush into a hasty exchange.

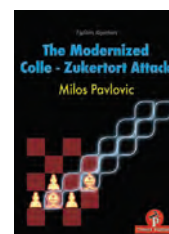


The Colle-Koltanowski System

Simon Williams, PC-DVD; running time: 5 hours

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The Colle-Koltanowski, or Colle-Zukertort as it is also known, has long been a fairly popular choice at club level. Going 1 d4 d5 2 $\text{d}\text{f}3$ $\text{d}\text{f}6$ 3 e3 e6 4 $\text{d}3$ c5 5 b3 may not seem all that ambitious, but White's set-up packs a certain attacking punch. Williams covers the key lines via a fine selection of classic Colle games, while not being afraid to show some of Black's better lines, both in the classical mainline of the Colle and when he avoids an early ...e6.



The Modernized Colle-Zukertort Attack

Milos Pavlovic, 202 pages, paperback

RRP £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**

Call it what you will, but the Colle where White develops his queenside with b3, $\text{d}b2$ and $\text{d}bd2$ looks set for a new wave of popularity, Pavlovic's work for Thinkers Publishing coming out at the same time as Williams's ChessBase DVD. Both are keen to show how easily White can obtain a strong attack against classical but sub-optimal black development. Williams is arguably stronger on the general ideas; Pavlovic preferring to delve quite deeply into the theory and, at times, possible transpositions to other openings.

The Sicilian Accelerated Dragon

Peter Heine Nielsen & Carsten Hansen, 368 pages, paperback

RRP £18.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.05**

Back in 1998 Magnus Carlsen's future trainer teamed up with fellow Dane Carsten Hansen to produce a definitive guide to their favourite Accelerated Dragon. The book is now back in print, having been self-published by Hansen, who has added some extra games and segments.

Carsten Hansen has certainly been busy of late, having also self-published *Daily Chess Training: Chess Tactics – Volume 1* (330 pages, RRP £18.99/Subs' £17.09), and *Specialized Chess Opening Tactics: Budapest & Fajarowicz Gambits* (220 pages, RRP £9.99/Subs' £8.99). If interested in ordering one of these works, do please first contact Chess & Bridge by phone or email to check on stock levels.



The Torre Attack

Simon Williams, PC-DVD; running time: 7 hours

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

While visiting the ChessBase studio in Hamburg, the GingerGM also found the time to record a DVD on a second club player favourite, and one in which he himself has been known to dabble. As ever, Williams explains the key ideas behind White's set-up in clear fashion, while also discussing such important issues as can White play the Torre when Black avoids 2...e6 and 2...g6 after 1 d4 $\text{d}\text{f}6$ 2 $\text{d}\text{f}3$. The coverage is also fairly cutting-edge in places and viewers may not be surprised to see the odd appearance by 'Harry the h-pawn'.