

ENGLISH CHESS FEDERATION



OFFICIAL CHESS YEARBOOK 2020

English Chess Federation

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Compiled and laid out by Andrew Walker | AW would like to thank IM Richard Palliser for his invaluable assistance



REPORT OF THE BOARD TO COUNCIL - OCTOBER 2019

Approved by the Board in September 2019

INTRODUCTION

This report has, as last year, been prepared in accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Constitutional and Governance Review Commission that “instead of individual Directors reporting to Council, there should be a single report of the Board, approved by it beforehand”. The report focuses on what has been achieved during 2018/2019. The Board has reviewed the Strategy and Business Plan document, also included in the papers to Council, and has made a few relatively minor changes. The Board is happy that the document sets out the Board’s proposed direction of travel over the coming years and the objectives that the Board has set itself for 2019/2020 and beyond.

2018/2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

The Board has –

Finance

- In accordance with Council’s previous approval, worked with the Chess Trust to transfer £70,500 from the PIF No 1 Fund to the Chess Trust. This money will be used over a three-year period to fund strategic/developmental initiatives that are not resourced through core operational funding from the ECF membership. There will be a further joint ECF/Chess Trust review during June 2020 to determine how much, if any, of the remaining PIF 1 Fund money should be transferred to the Chess Trust.
- Secured Council’s approval at the April 2019 Finance Council to the first year (2019/20) of the ECF’s two-year plan for income and expenditure, including membership fee levels. The second year (2020/21) of the two-year plan has been agreed in principle by Council and will be presented at the April 2020 Finance Council meeting for formal approval.
- Started work on reallocating Office roles and responsibilities to achieve a clearer split between finance- and administration-related tasks.

Governance

- Worked with the Governance Committee on a review of the ECF’s articles of association for presentation to Council at this year’s AGM.

Junior

- Organised several successful junior international trips. Highlights included Nina Pert’s 7th place in the World Schools Under 11 Girls Championship, Harry Zheng’s 4th place in the European Schools Under 9 Championship, Patrick Damodaran’s 6th place in the European Schools Under 7 Championship, Sanjit Kumar’s 8th place in the European Schools Under 9 Championship, Thisumi Jayawarna’s 9th place in the European Schools Under 9 Girls Championship, Tashika Arora’s 10th

place in the European Schools Under 11 Girls Championship and Savin Dias' 10th place in the European Schools Under 13 Championship.

- Saw England win the Gilbert Cup (Under 18 Girls) and Robinson Cup (Under 14) in the annual tournaments against France, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland and Wales.
- In partnership with the United Kingdom Chess Challenge, continued the development and expansion of the International Programme at the ECF Chess Academy. 19 % of attendees on the study weekends are now female.
- Supported the Chess Trust in further developing the Accelerator Programme for our elite junior players.
- Initiated the English Girls Championship, held at Blenheim Palace on 19-20 October.
- Continued to work with junior organisations such as UKCC to roll out free first year junior Silver membership.

Women

- Held the most successful English Women's Championships to date at the Royal Hotel Hull, with no fewer than 34 entrants. This formed the centrepiece of the English Women's Chess Festival, where, as with last year's British Championships, we collaborated with Hull and District Chess Association, Hull City Council, Hull Culture & Leisure and private sponsors to put together an excellent programme including coaching for players and local girls, talks, simultaneous displays, commentary and a barbecue reception.
- Gave conditions support to women participating in the 2019 British Championship held at Torquay; also held a women's reception there.
- Supported women to compete individually and in team events overseas.
- Provided financial support to several non-ECF events such as the Teesside International Women's Invitational, Paignton Chess Congress and the Hammersmith Chess Club Women's Chess Month and agreed to support the Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress. We also provided financial support to allow the 4NCL and Chess England to offer free female entry at some of their weekend congresses.
- Worked in partnership with CSC, FIDE and ECU to organise the 7th London Chess Conference, which will take place on 30 November and 1 December 2019 at the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith, and the theme of which will be "Chess and Female Empowerment". This is a major achievement and is probably the first time ever that ECF, FIDE and ECU have cooperated together in a major international chess conference. All ECF women members will be allowed free entry to the conference.

Home

- Presided over a very successful British Championships at the Riviera Centre, Torquay. Our thanks are due to the officers and members of the Devon County Chess Association for their support of the Championships in many ways, including providing a very comprehensive and enjoyable social programme. Negotiations for next year's venue have proved problematic, with our first-choice venues seeking to renegotiate prices late in the day. Torquay, however, are very keen to have us back, and we therefore feel that this is the best option given the significantly lower venue costs.
- Successfully organised the second UK Open Blitz Championships, which achieved a total of 453 entrants in total. The total number is a significant improvement on last year's inaugural event which achieved a total of 333 entrants, and we hope to continue growing this highly successful event with further increases in participation levels next year.
- Organised the Finals Day of the 100th County Championship Finals. Kettering Conference and Leisure Centre proved to be an excellent venue and received plaudits from many players, and we accordingly intend to take up the option to hold the next two years' Finals Days there. The new venue, although central, still unfortunately resulted in Devon defaulting in their match; we will be looking at ways to avoid this next year, maybe by allowing counties to make alternative arrangements if certain geographical conditions are met.
- Reinstated the English Seniors Individual Championship with a highly successful event held in Solihull in April 2019. The Event was held over four days, with the winners from the two sections becoming English Over 50 and Over 65 champions for 2019/2020.
- Developed draft anti-cheating guidelines for discussion with arbiters and organisers.

Membership

- Presided over an increase in membership numbers from 9,946 (9,441 paying) at the end of the 2015-16 season to 12,717 (10,598 paying) at the end of the 2018-19 season. While the underlying increase in paying members is very welcome, the ECF's challenge is to retain a large proportion of the free junior Silver membership increase as longer-term paying members.
- Continued to improve the service and options available to members on the new membership system (Azolve), including giving members the opportunity to pay their subscriptions by direct debit.
- Continued to improve the service and options available to members on the new membership system (Azolve), including giving members the opportunity to pay their subscriptions by direct debit.
- Continued to roll out the League Management System, which has been used with great success in 2018-19 by a number of leagues.

- Launched the new Supporter category, which is targeted principally at casual/social players. Take-up thus far has been slow, and one of the ECF's challenges this coming year will be to advertise and market the Supporter category much more widely.
- Extended the range of benefits available to ECF members and supporters. In particular, we have ---
 - Set up arrangements with Chess Direct and Chess & Bridge for ECF members to be able to shop at discounted prices;
 - In partnership with a number of online chess providers, put in place facilities for ECF members and supporters to play online as members of ECF teams / clubs. The platform will allow members and supporters to take part in regular ECF rated competitions hosted by their preferred online provider(s), and to gain ECF internet ratings which will be published monthly based on their results in these events. The platform will also allow the ECF to run national and international online team events for members and supporters.
- Moved forward with the monthly grading project. We have had some very good discussions with the Welsh Chess Union, the outcome of which is that the two federations will be working together on implementing the planned new monthly grading system. The project is being led on the ECF side by Director of Membership Dave Thomas and Manager of Grading Brian Valentine. We have now produced the detailed specifications document that will enable the requisite monthly grading programming to take place.
- Put in place detailed membership statistics and key performance indicators which are now available on the website.

International

- Supported our international efforts in what has been a great year for English international chess in which the Open team built on their excellent 5th placing at the Batumi Olympiad in 2018 with a silver medal in the World Team Championships at Astana, our best results in nearly 20 years. Our leading players also enjoyed individual success with Luke McShane, Gawain Jones and Michael Adams all qualifying for the 2019 World Cup meaning that England has three players involved for the first time in many years. Gawain Jones won the Sigeman Masters and became the fifth English player to go over 2700 as our top 5 five all hovered around 2680-2700, and we improved our position in the world rankings from 12th to 11th at the time of writing. England managed to field five teams in the 2018 European Club Cup, with entry fees paid for as usual by the 4NCL, although it remains an objective to get one of the stronger teams there. There were promising signs on the norms and titles front, with a number of our younger players achieving success; IM titles were achieved by Brandon Clarke, Joseph McPhillips, Adam Taylor and Matthew Wadsworth, who also scored a GM result in the 4NCL.
- Organised English teams' participation in the European Senior Team Chess Championships in Croatia, sending 16 players this year as opposed to only five for last year's event.

- Provided financial and operational support to the growing number of international tournaments in England, including the Northumbria Masters, the 4NCL's Hull International GM norm tournament and the Caplin Hastings International Chess Tournament.
- Put in place detailed international key performance indicators which are now available on the website.

Office

- Transformed the Yearbook into an annual news digest, a process which will be further developed in 2020 in partnership with Chess & Bridge. Contact information for clubs, leagues, counties, unions etc is now held where it should be, on the ECF website and on local organisations' websites.
- Continued with our overhaul of the website to make the content and resources clearer and more easily available.

All Directorates

- Appointed a new Development Officer to work with the Board to grow chess at all levels across the country. This is a remunerated role, and our thanks go to the Chess Trust for funding this (see above).
- Increased the level of engagement with ECF members through the monthly newsletter, mailshots, surveys on key issues including monthly grading, and a much-improved social media presence.
- In partnership with the 4NCL, appointed a new Social Media Manager to oversee the ECF's and the 4NCL's social media activity.
- Reached out to territories under the aegis of the ECF from FIDE's point of view (the Falklands, Gibraltar and Isle of Man in particular) to develop a closer relationship between them and the ECF.

Conclusion

As last year, the pace of change has continued to be rapid. Although a lot has been achieved, this has on occasion been at a slower pace than the Board might have hoped for – as is inevitable in an underfunded organisation with a high dependency on volunteers. Although there have been 'a few bumps in the road', as our new political masters like to put it, the Board has in the main been cohesive, stable and collegiate in its work to improve the state of English chess. The Board would again like to take this opportunity to thank the various Committees of the ECF for their support, and in particular the many unsung volunteers of the ECF who do so much for English chess, at times with precious little recognition. The Board hopes that this report, together with the Strategy and Business document, gives a good idea of what has been achieved in the past year, where we hope the ECF is heading and of what is needed to take us towards that aspiration.

STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

Furthering the Cause of English Chess

The ECF will lead the development and organisation of chess for all players in England and our international teams. This will encompass ---

- Extending the number of active competitive and social chess players.
- Increasing the number of juniors playing competitive chess and transitioning to becoming adult competitive players.
- Encouraging the development of women's and social chess as part of a wider commitment to increasing the diversity of participation in chess.
- Increasing the awareness of chess and its wider social benefits outside the existing ECF membership.
- Building the financial strength of chess and chess organisations.
- Developing the number of elite players and individual players of exceptional talent.

Priority areas

A Director for Women's Chess has been appointed to the Board. Our ambition is to increase participation in chess among women of all standards to 15% of ECF membership (including ECF Supporters) within four years, and to facilitate the transition from junior, to adult, to senior.

We have already begun, and we will continue to develop and refine, programmes to encourage participation among junior players and to help them achieve their potential.

We will continue, and improve, our support to English players taking part in international competitions, with the aspiration of re-establishing England as a force in the chess world.

Our biggest asset is our membership. We will continue to improve the attractiveness of membership through good communication and enhanced membership services and offerings. We recognise that the ECF needs to grow its membership and improve the attractiveness of the game in order to sustain a viable future. The Board will continue to focus on these targets.

We will work with member organisations, supported by the Development Officer, to grow chess activity at all levels across England, focussing in particular on junior, women's and social chess.

We will keep the operation of the membership system under review, ensuring the system is well maintained, remains fit for purpose and provides additional benefits to members.

We will continue to provide support to chess organisers, and we will keep under continuous review all competitions organised for which we are responsible, including the British Championships, the UK Open Blitz Championships, the County Championships and the Women's English Championships.

Commercial sponsorship generates additional income that can help us to make extra investment in areas such as junior, women's and international chess. We will continue to seek out new sponsorship opportunities and build on our relationship with existing sponsors, and support them to build their brands.

We will actively engage with other chess organisations in England and elsewhere to improve coordination, efficiency and knowledge-sharing across English chess.

We will continue to develop a set of key performance indicators in order to monitor our progress against our objectives.

Business Planning

The Board will produce an annual business plan. That will set out how we propose to deliver the priorities set out in this statement. As part of the business planning process we will refine our strategic intentions and financial planning in consultation with Council and in accordance with prevailing circumstances.

The Board

Directors will work collegiately both within the Board and with other chess organisations. We will encourage a culture where we actively invite comment and feedback. We will ensure our governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

Funding

Our core activities will continue to be funded through membership fees. We will use sponsorship and donations/bequests to support strategic and developmental projects and initiatives, ensuring that sponsors' own objectives are addressed. We will avoid the use of external funding as a substitute for core activity funding. We will work closely with the Chess Trust and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust in particular regarding funding for strategic and developmental projects and initiatives.

Office

We are committed to maintaining the central functions of an ECF Office. The Office endeavours to provide a high quality and efficient service to ECF members and other chess organisations, and gives support to ECF directors and officials as required. Staff will be offered opportunities for professional development on an individual basis.

Communications

Initiatives such as introducing a monthly e-newsletter and press releases, developing our social media presence, overhauling the website and direct emailing of members and Council have helped to improve communication to members. We want stronger partnerships with chess players and chess organisations and will continue to develop communications across a range of platforms and seek greater engagement with members to help shape our policies and plans.

BUSINESS PLAN

Finance

Objective: Support the overall objectives of the English Chess Federation and the agreed plans of the Executive Directors.

- Grow income in such a way as to enable the Board's plans to be achieved, taking into account funds received from donations, sponsorship and other sources.

- Use membership income to fund ongoing operational expenditure, using sponsorship, bequests and donations for new initiatives and developments.
- Maintain a reserve of £100,000 over the five-year planning cycle.
- Seek to achieve an annual break-even financial position over the five-year planning cycle.
- Ensure that all finance activities are performed transparently, efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure accounting records and accounts are maintained in an accurate and timely manner.
- Simplify the overall financial structure consolidating funds into the ECF and the Chess Trust. This will remove the requirements for the active use of the BCF, Chess Centre Ltd and the Permanent Invested Fund.
- Promote our direct debit facility for the membership scheme.
- Improve the presentation of finance information to directors and to members.
- Complete the reallocation of Office roles and responsibilities between financial- and administration-related tasks.

Governance

Objective: Ensure that the ECF's governance processes and constitutional structure are effective and fit for purpose.

- Continue to review compliance with most appropriate governance practice.
- Undertake a detailed review of the articles of association.

Junior

Objective: Improve participation levels in and the profile of junior chess in England and reduce the current rate of attrition in the transition to adulthood.

- Continue to develop the ECF Chess Academy in partnership with our chosen partners as the development route of choice for our top juniors.
- Support the Chess Trust as it continues to develop its Accelerator Programme for our elite junior players.
- Encourage junior chess organisations' activities in England and promote the development of collaborative working.
- Understand why so many girls stop playing chess in school and put in place actions accordingly, liaising closely with the Director of Women's Chess and junior organisers.
- Understand the core issues which make girls stop playing when they go to secondary school, liaising closely with the Director of Women's Chess and junior organisers.
- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve the quality of support to junior players.
- Develop competitive chess in schools with a particular emphasis on those pupils aged over 11.
- Develop chess playing opportunities that encourage girls to continue playing chess in adulthood.
- Encourage adult chess clubs and leagues to integrate, support and develop junior players.
- Review and improve junior financial management processes.
- Identify and work with top junior players to increase participation in non-ECF events, in particular FIDE-rated tournaments.
- Extend take-up of the new Supporter category among parents of juniors.

Women

Objective: Work towards delivering our ambition to increase participation in chess among women of all standards to 15% of ECF membership (including ECF Supporters) within four years.

- Increase participation in the English Women's Championships.
- Work with independent organisers to increase female participation in non-ECF events and in particular FIDE rated events.
- Increase the profile of women's chess so that girls/teenagers/women have something to aspire to.
- Reach out to non-chess women's organisations to encourage female take-up of and participation in chess.
- Extend take-up of the new Supporter category among girls and women.
- Implement the proposals in the paper "Development of Women's Chess: Progress Plan" to be presented at the April 2020 Finance Council meeting.

Home

Objective: Support the Board in its goal of increasing the perceived added value that the ECF provides to its members.

- Continue the roll-out of the new League Management System.
- Keep the format of competitions organised by the ECF, in particular the British Chess Championships, the County Championships, the English Women's Championships and the UK Open Blitz Championships, under review.
- Develop official ECF online chess events.
- Provide more effective support and advice to independent event organisers.
- Provide effective support, advice and training for new and existing arbiters.
- Introduce and maintain official anti-cheating procedures based on similar organisations' best practice elsewhere in the world.
- Extend take-up of the new Supporter category across the casual/social/online chess playing population.
- Increase use of social media.

Membership

Objective: Oversee the operation of the membership system and ensure that it is maintained and improved as necessary.

- Improve communication to and facilities for consultation with corporate and individual members.
- Improve the documentation of the requirements for the administration of membership and of the operation of the new system.
- Identify selling points which might make membership attractive to individuals who are not themselves competitive players in order to increase the ECF's potential membership base.
- Complete the move to monthly grading once the investigation into detailed requirements (currently in progress) is completed.
- Review junior membership arrangements, including the effectiveness of our free first year membership offer, with a view to improving junior membership retention.
- Complete the move to a full membership organisation and review whether game fee and pay-to-play fees can be replaced with a flat fee per event approach.
- Promote our new casual/social chess player Supporter category.
- Review the operation of the Membership Organisation scheme with a view to augmenting or replacing it with facilities for managing club membership which exist within the Azolve membership system.

International

Objective: Improve the performance of our international teams.

- Work with the Directors of Junior and Women's Chess to identify and nurture top talent.
- Identify and use sponsorship money to improve conditions, training etc for international players.
- Review how the ECF can better capture the views and insights of top players in England.
- Seek to foster an environment to support top chess players to maximise their potential while also developing a career outside chess.

Office

Objective: Continue to provide a high-quality service to stakeholders.

- Complete the reallocation of Office roles and responsibilities between financial-and administration-related tasks.
- Work with De Montfort University Leicester to manage the transfer of the library from the Office to the DMU Special Collections facility.
- Complete the evolution of the yearbook from a paper-based directory to an annual news digest, transferring all information about clubs, leagues, associations etc onto the ECF website in an easily accessible and updatable format.
- Complete the project to diarise all key Office internal and external deadlines.



Chess in Prisons

A report for the ECF Yearbook 2020 by Carl Portman, Manager of Prisons Chess

Background

The job specification is 'to foster the pursuit of chess in prisons.' It is a broad church of a job with plenty of scope. Prisons I have visited in 2019 are - HMP Channings Wood; HMP Buckley Hall; HMP Hewell; HMP Wandsworth; and HMP Stafford. The players at Stafford were particularly strong and I look forward to going back to their chess 'open day' to see how they are getting on.



The huge development for 2019 was the World online prison chess championships, whereby the ECF was invited by Sheriff Thomas Dart from Cook County Department of Corrections in tandem with Dr. Mikhail Korenman to represent England amongst several other countries in a two-day online prison competition of four prisoners per team. I invited Chess in Schools and Communities to the party and we worked together to facilitate the English input. HMP Wandsworth was the lucky prison chosen, as CSC representative Peter Sullivan was doing most of the spadework in getting access and permissions. He is to be congratulated on his efforts. The event was a raging success and although the England team did not do so well, we look forward to another go next time where there will be more time to prepare.

I have continued my chess column for *INSIDE TIME*, the prison chess newspaper. This is independent of the ECF, but it potentially reaches some 60,000 prisoners in the UK and abroad. I continue to receive a healthy volume of correspondence from inmates telling me about their love of chess, and the way it changes their lives for the better on the inside.

My ECF prison visits include the donation of chess equipment, meeting the governor or his/her representative, holding a chess Q&A and coaching session for the prisoners and then giving a simultaneous exhibition. There are some very good players in prisons who would benefit any chess club.

I have plans for 2020, and I am already lined up to visit several prisons including my 'hometown' one in Birmingham, better known as Winson Green before the name change. It has had well documented and significant problems in the last few years, and I want to see how well chess is received there.

Many thanks also to Chess & Bridge of London for donating magazines for prisons. Finally, I want to thank members of the chess community for donating books and equipment. I promise you that they are not only well-utilised but treasured when donated to prisons. You all make a tangible difference.



The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust

Founded in 2006 - charity registration number 1116981

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust was founded in 2006 and is an independent grant-making charity (registration number 1116981). The Trust was created following the death of Mr. John Robinson on 1st February 2006.

Applications for financial support are invited and should be emailed to the Chairman (see the email address below). The aim of the Trust is to support junior chess and grants are made to individuals, chess organizations and events. The Trust supports ENG players under the age of 21.

Grants made in 2019 --- UK Chess Challenge Megafinal Bursary Fund (ongoing); 95th Hastings International Congress (for the event and for junior entries into the Masters); British Chess Championship; 4NCL Hull International Congress; Friends of Fishergate; Cambridge Girls Chess Initiative; Northumbria Junior Chess Association; English Women's Chess Festival 2019; and funding for individual junior players (FM & IM level) to play in events at home and overseas.

In 2019 the Trust suffered the loss of one of our founding Trustees, Mr David Welch. Mr Welch, one of the most well-known arbiters in the UK, was a stalwart supporter of junior chess and always encouraged juniors at events each year. He will be sorely missed. If you wish to enquire about the work of the Trust please contact the Chairman Dr. John Higgs by email at john.higgs@englishchess.org.uk

The Chess Trust - Report for 2019

The Trust is now well established and 2019 has been a year in which the Trustees have been able to actively deliver on their objectives. It now has funds to support junior activities and provide donations to the British Chess Championships. The Trust's funding has been principally provided from the Richard Haddrell bequest and the Carr family donation (Junior) and from the John Robinson bequest (Championships) via a transfer of the former fund in the BCF's Permanent Invested Fund.

Additionally, the Trust has received the funds of the Bloodworth/Glorney and the British Chess Education Trusts in a transfer arrangement to consolidate and simplify the funding of chess

activities. Both these trusts have now been closed. The Chess Trust will continue to meet the obligations of both these trusts into the future.



For 2019 the Trust has continued to develop its Accelerator Programme which is designed to develop young players to become the titled and international players of the future. The Trust has appointed a director for the Programme, Grandmaster Peter Wells, and has funded activities in mentoring, coaching and support for attendance at agreed events. Approximately ten candidates are invited to join the Programme by a Selection Committee and progress is reviewed regularly. This has been the second year of the Programme and the Trustees regard this as a long-term initiative; performance should be assessed in that light.

The Trust along with the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust donated £10,000 to support the British Chess Championships in Torquay 2019. In addition the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust provided funds to support the Junior coaching activities at the event. A place on the UK Chess Academy scheme, the Neil Carr Award, was presented to Sanjit Kumar for his performance in the Under 10 Championship at Torquay 2019. The Trustees are pleased to also have provided support to a few young players to advance their chess careers.

Donations

For any large donations or bequests, the trustees will take into consideration specific requests by donors / bequeathers as to how their gift should be applied, subject to it being consistent with the objectives of the trust. Donations and bequests attract reliefs from taxation. Any bequests made to a charity may reduce inheritance taxes that may be due on an estate.

Donations made by an individual who is a UK taxpayer will enable the Trust to reclaim basic rate tax on the value of a donation through the government's Gift Aid scheme. Thus a donation of £100 will enable the Trust to reclaim £25, making the total donation worth £125 to the Trust.

A donation made by an individual who pays UK tax at the higher rate of 40% or 45% will be able to reclaim the difference between the basic and higher rates through their tax return.

The Trust will be establishing a regular donations scheme so that donors will be able to make small regular payments to the Trust, which will have the benefits of the Gift Aid Scheme.

Donations should be sent to The Chess Trust at the English Chess Federation Office, The Watch Oak, Chain Lane, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0YD. If you would like to donate directly to the Chess Trust by BACS, the sort code is 601015 and the account number is 87899590. If you choose this method, please let the office know by email at office@englishchess.org.uk so that the Trustees can be informed.

The Chess Trust – Registered Charity Number 1160881

--- *David Eustace, Trustee*

Chess Congress Online Entry software

Introduction

The ECF is promoting a software application to English tournament chess organisers to help them manage entries, registration and payment online. The software, written by Malcolm Peacock, has evolved over a number of years and a few tournaments currently use it as their method of taking online entries. It is suitable for most weekend tournaments, FIDE-rated or ECF graded events. Malcolm is happy for English chess tournaments to use this software.

What the software provides

Online entry provides for the collection of all the individual player data items to enable the player to be entered into the tournament. For players on the ECF grading list, all they need to do is to enter their name and select it from the database. All other tournament data are automatically retrieved from the appropriate databases. Once entry is complete, the player is taken through to the PayPal payment system. Here players can select to pay by credit/debit card or PayPal. Once payment is complete, the software adds the player to the entries webpage automatically and sends an email back to the player and the organiser.

Organiser requirements

The organiser needs to create their own PayPal account or use an existing PayPal account. Whilst no IT programming skills are required, it would be beneficial for the organiser to have some IT literacy skills. No programming is required, as everything is configured via web inputs.

Flexibility – organiser customisation

The organiser has all the options available to set up the parameters for each individual tournament, including specific tournament elements such as rating/grading limits and prizes etc, plus the entry fees and discounts associated with each tournament.

Non-online entries

For people who enter by mail or telephone, the organiser can add these entries to the software so the participants can be displayed on the entries page automatically.

Linking into your existing tournament website

The software can be linked to an existing website by reference with a URL link.

Standalone options

The software provides the ability to display tournament information. A facility is available for the entry of text information and, if required, can include most tournament information generally found on standard entry forms.

Reports and integration to pairing software

Various reports can be printed/downloaded, including entry files for Swiss Manager and Vega.

Charging fees

There are currently no charging fees, but a modest donation is expected on an annual basis depending on the size of the congress.

Features

- The congress organiser logs in to add a new congress, specifying late entry date, number of sections etc.
- The congress participant fills in online form and selects themselves from the grading list (ECF or Chess Scotland)
- The congress participant fills in an on-line form to enter details and is directed to PayPal to pay.
- When the participant has paid via PayPal, this triggers his entry to appear on the list of entrants on the website. The software sends him a confirmation email and it sends a confirmation email to the congress organiser.
- The congress organiser can log in and amend entries if necessary (e.g. late bye requests).
- The congress organiser can log in and manually add entries, eg postal entries.
- The system automatically calculates an estimated FIDE rating from an ECF rating or vice versa if necessary.
- The grading type of each section can be set to FIDE, ECF, or Chess Scotland.
- The congress organiser can extract a list of entrants into Excel which can be fed into Swiss Manager or Tournament Director or used with a word template to print pairing cards or wall charts.
- A report is created adding up entries by section and accounting for PayPal's fees for your treasurer. It also reports instances where the entrant has claimed to be an ECF Silver member but is not.
- When someone enters, a login ID is automatically created for them; if they then request a password they can login using this so that they do not need to specify their details each time and can remove or add themselves to mailing lists.
- The congress organiser can send a mass email to previous entrants of congresses in their organisation or to entrants of a particular congress.

Contact information

If you wish to make further enquiries regarding this software application, please use the contact form on the website at <http://congress.org.uk/contact>

ECF League Management Software

Features of the ECF League Management Software include ---

- Team captains can login and update match results to which they have been given access. Players are selected from pre-defined drop-down lists
- The LMS can be used for Team Leagues, Team Knockouts, Individual Swiss, Individual All Play All
- League tables are updated automatically
- Administrators can login to define the league structure, events, teams, number of boards etc.
- The LMS automatically generates a file for ECF grading
- The LMS provide automatic League Fixture generation, taking into account dates to avoid and teams with which to avoid clashes

- There are reports to track games played by non-members, late matches, adjournments.
- You can keep track of club details, team captains, and all the information to manage your league

The LMS is a web-based system. No software is downloaded onto your machine. Everything is done through your web browser. There is a home page for each organisation. People login to update the system. An organisation is usually a league, but it could be just a club who wish to run a club championship.

There is a short video online at <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/14084> showing an introduction for new users.

If you want to use the system for your league, then proceed as follows ---

- Decide who is going to administer the league.
- Using the contact form, request that an Organisation is created, and provide the email address of the league administrator.
- The ECF LMS administrator will then create the new organisation, create a login id for the administrator and give them access to it.
- The league administrator(s) associate clubs with their newly created organisation, create events, teams and fixtures.
- The league administrator can request that the ECF create login IDs for other people. There people can be assigned to clubs by the league admin so that they have the power to enter match results.
- To enter a match result, select the players and match score. League tables are updated automatically.

If you want to use it for a club championship ---

- Decide who is going to administer the event.
- Using the contact form, request that an Organisation is created for the club, and provide the email address of the administrator.
- The ECF LMS administrator will then create the new organisation, create a login id for the administrator and give them access to it.
- Set up a player list (possibly by adding your club to the organisation)
- Create an event.
- See the help on the left (ECF League Management System, Organisation Owner Tasks, Organisation for just a club)

The ECF LMS is online at <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/>

Home News 2019

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January 2019

BRIDGEND – The South Wales Winter Congress (4-6 January) saw a three-way tie for first in the Open ...

Open - 1-3 Gregorz Toczek (Cardiff), David Sands (Barking), Conor Gay (Holmes Chapel) 4/5

Major - 1-2 Duncan Macarthur (Keynsham), Dai James (Pontypridd) 4½, 3-9 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Tom Bennett (Penarth), Scott Hammett (Haverfordwest), Les Philpin, Andrew Smith (both Swansea), David Parsons (Swindon), Mark Cooke (Barry) 3

HASTINGS – The Masters, the top section of the Tradewise Hastings International Chess Congress (28 December - 6 January), is only one of the tournaments which make up this large and impressive event, another being the closing weekender, which was won by David Howell no less.

Christmas 'A' - 1-2 Chaski Patrick (Uckfield), Paul Batchelor (Brighton) 4/5, 3-7 Aditya Verma, Paul Jackson (both Coulsdon), Helge Hjort (Hendon), Chris Howell, Oliver Howell (both Redhill) 3½.

Christmas 'B' - 1 Batuhan Kaya (Hastings) 4½, 2-3 Carl Gartside (Clay Cross), Edward Gray (Brighton) 4.

Christmas 'C' - 1 Mason Woodhams 4½, 2 Marc Bryant (both Hastings) 4, 3 Lee Bullock (Hackney) 3½.

New Year Morning 'A' - 1-3 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon), Richard Jennings (Aberdeen), Nigel Dennis (Maidenhead) 4.

New Year Morning 'B' - 1-2 Chris Snook-Lumb (Wells), Mason Woodhams 4, 3-4 Jeremy Hudson, Andrew Watson (all Hastings) 3½.

New Year Afternoon 'A' - 1-2 David Cutmore, (Albany), Richard Jennings (Aberdeen) 4, 3 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon) 3½.

New Year Afternoon 'B' - 1 Chris Lake (Brighton) 4½, 2-3 Brendan O’Gorman (Coulsdon), Chris Hann (Hastings) 4.

New Year Afternoon 'C' - 1 Peter Wood, (Hastings) 5, 2-5 Colin Denham (Cardigan), Lee Bullock (Hackney), Mark Heffer (Bishops Stortford), James McKenna (Crystal Palace) 3½.

Weekend Open - 1 David Howell (Battersea) 5, 2-3 Madara Orlovska (Lewisham), Aditya Verma (Coulsdon) 4.

Weekend Intermediate - 1-2 Rajeiv Ratnesan (Surbiton), Adrian Waldock (East Grinstead) 4½, 3 Bernard Chan (Leeds) 4.

Weekend Minor - 1-2 Lee Bullock (Hackney), Barry Miles (South Norwood) 4½, 3-4 Adrian Riley (Cowley), Carlton Bradbury (London) 4.

HULL – The Royal Hull Hotel hosted a successful rapidplay for 70 players on 6th January.

Open - 1 Mike Surtees (Great Lever) 4½/5, 2-3 John Cooper (Hull), Miles Edwards-Wright (Sheffield) 4.

Major - 1-2 Stephen Crow, Giles Dunn 4, 3 Bryan Hesler (all Hull) 4.

Minor - 1 Richard Atkinson 5, 2-3 Steve Thrower (both Hull), Steven Brooks (Doncaster) 4.

LONDON – The year began with sad news for the English chess community from St George’s Hospital, Tooting, where popular 67-year-old FM Steve Berry passed away following complications arising from various causes.

A proud Yorkshireman, Berry graduated in history from the University of Hull before moving to Sutton Coldfield to work on this very magazine for BH Wood, often producing the How Good is Your Chess? column in the seventies. He would then emigrate to Germany to work in IT. There he encountered one of the all-time greats in a simul and would hold his own in a complex positional struggle.

V. Korchnoi - S. Berry, Darmstadt (simul) 1980 - Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 dxc5 Qa5 9 e4 Nc7 10 Qd4 f6 11 Qb4 Nc6 12 Qxa5 Nxa5 13 Rb1 e5 14 Bd2 Ne6?!

14...Be6 followed by ...O-O or ...Bc4 would have left Black with full play for his positional pawn sacrifice, which is nowadays one of the main lines.

15 Rb5 Nc6 16 Be3 Ke7 17 Bc4 Nc7 18 Rb1 Rd8 19 Ne2?!

Allowing the black knight to return to the rim with some effect. 19 f4! Na5 20 Be2 would have left White pressing.

19...Na5 20 Ba2 Bd7?!

As Berry himself later indicated, 20...Rb8 21 Kf2 Be6 22 Bxe6 Nxe6 23 Rb4 Rdc8 was correct.

21 Kf2 Rac8 22 c4 Na6 23 Bd2 Nc6 24 Rxb7 Nxc5 25 Rbb1 Be6



Even here Black retains a decent degree of positional compensation.

26 Be3 Na5 27 Nc3 Rd3 28 Rhc1 Nxc4 29 Bxc4 Bxc4 30 Bxc5+?

Effectively acquiescing to a draw. There was a tactical solution available and 30 Nb5! Rdd8! 31 Nxa7 Nd3+ 32 Kg3 Nxc1 33 Nxc8+ Rxc8 34 Rxc1 Be6 35 Bc5+ would have left White with some chances in the resulting pawn-up endgame.

30...Rxc5 31 Rb7+ Rd7 ½-½

Steve Berry was known for his down-to earth nature, frankness and dry sense of humour. His good friend Andrew Stone recalls once attending a Middlesex-Yorkshire cricket match at Lord's. "We wandered past the Nursery Ground and he stopped to see a Yorkshire batsman in the nets. The ball came down and the batsman took a good swing at the ball and missed. 'Well left Sir!' boomed Steve. The batsman turned around and looked at Steve totally bemused." Like Korchnoi himself, Berry's strength hardly seemed to decline with age. He was still graded 221 and Surrey Champion at the point of his untimely death, while just last year he played for the England team as they finished joint fourth in the World Over-65 Team Championship. Indeed, Berry was a captain's dream, playing a great many matches over the years for Kings Head, Mitcham and especially in recent years, Wimbledon and Surrey.

Wimbledon CC colleague Paul Barasi recalls that Steve "liked to chat and relate to everyone. He was brave and relentless in attack. What impressed me was his intuitive understanding of positions. He'd say something like 'positions like this are always a win for White' – then he'd find how to win it, rather than analysing it first and then deciding who stands better. This may have helped him be such a strong player of resumed adjourned games and a good adjudicator."

Elsewhere in the capital, the latest Golders Green Rapidplay took place on January 5th.

Open - 1-2 V. Haribalu (India), Federico Rocco (Hendon) 5/6, 3 John Pigott (Kings Head) 4½.

Major - 1-2 Yaoyao Zhu (3Cs), Raghu Kamath (Richmond) 5, 3-4 Michael Saunders (London), Anum Sheikh (Ilford) 4½.

Minor - 1 Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) 5½, 2 Mohsen Abedian (west London) 5, 3-6 Luke King (London), Niall Clarke (Elstree), Paul Chantrell (south-east London), Dave Bluestone (London) 4.

Amateur - 1 Ashir Valjee (Metropolitan) 6, 2 Mark Johnson (Colchester) 4½, 3-5 Faye Ainscow (Kings Head), Timothy Demetris (Hendon), Nigel White (Wanstead) 4.

Improver - 1-2 Milo Mallaby (Ealing), Gul Kapur (Enfield) 5.

Earlier the London Junior Championships took place at the University of Westminster's Harrow Campus over the weekend of 15th-16th December and also the 28th-30th.



Federico Rocco (above left) takes on James Golding en-route to becoming London U21 Champion [picture by John Stubbs]

FIDE-rated Open - 1 Federico Rocco (Hendon; London Under-21 and Under-18 Champion) 5/6, 2-4 Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon), James Golding (Guilford), John Merriman (Petts Wood) 4½.

Under-16 - 1 David Jacob Yoon (Enfield) 5½, 2-3 Shahjahon Saidmurodov (Newham), Alex Barlov (Richmond) 4½.

Under-14 - 1 Malanta Eryl (Fleet) 5½, 2-6 Arjun Kolani (Brighton), Robert Akeya-Price (Coulsdon), Saahil Bansal (Orpington), Han-Sen Choong (Hampstead), Xavier Cowan (Richmond) 4½.

Under-12 - 1 Edison Xu (Newport) 8/9, 2 Kennan Kesterson (Pimlico) 7, 3 Nadhmi Auchy (Barnet) 6½.

Under-10 - 1-3 Denis Dupuis (Battersea), Hou Ning Zhu (Maidenhead), Jude Shearsby (Coventry) 6/7.

Under-8 - 1 Billy Fellowes (Warwick) 6½, 2-6 Sohum Kumar, Aayush Dewangan (both Maidenhead), Thisumi Jayawarna (Manchester), Patrick Damodaran (Kent), Kameron Grose (Wetherby) 6.

Of course, we mainly associate the period just before Christmas with chess at Olympia, which once again provided the main venue for the London Chess Classic (9-17 December). While the top players were absent from Olympia until the final weekend, each weekday hundreds of children received tuition from Chess in Schools & Communities ahead of the Open beginning at 4.30pm. Once again, the Open was a very strong, truly international event, with Nick Pert impressing en route to collecting £4,500.

FIDE Open - 1-2 Jules Moussard (France), Nick Pert (Sandhurst) 7½/9, 3-7 Sebastian Bogner (Switzerland), Daniil Yuffa (Russia), Andrei Istratescu (Romania), Tiger Hillarp Persson (Sweden), Ameet Ghazi (Richmond) 7.

Weekday Under-2050 - 1-3 Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Joel Bird (Muswell Hill), Robert Jacobs (Tunbridge Wells) 4½/5.

Under-1750 - 1 Tibo Rushbrooke (Westminster School) 5, 2-3 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton), Sune du Toit (South Africa) 4½.

Weekend Open - 1-2 Koby Kalavannan (Surbiton), Ryszard Maciol (Cambridge) 4½/5, 3-5 James Holland (Surbiton), Michael Healey (Richmond), William Taylor (Drunken Knights) 4.

Under-2050 - 1 Harry Li (Alwoodley) 5, 2-6 Ivan Myall (Chelmsford), Eldar Alizada (Cumnor), Brendan Ruane (Hastings), Jacob Watson (Petts Wood), Oliver Stubbs (Downend) 4.

Under-1825 - 1 Finlay Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen) 5, 2 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) 4½, 3-8 Matthew Hortin (Old Whitgiftians) Bernard Chan (Leeds), Lukasz Piecha (Winchester), Charles Musselman (USA), Rajeiv Ratnesan (Surbiton), Tim Valentine (Battersea) 4.

Under-1600 - 1-2 Shir Satil (Israel), Samuel Ward-Riggs (London) 5, 3 Hengrui Cao (China) 4½.

TELFORD – Ameet Ghasi scooped the £1,000 first prize at the Shropshire Congress (4-6 January), where Mark Hebden and Alan Merry finished outside the prizes.

Open - 1 Ameet Ghasi (Richmond) 4½/5, 2 Tomasz Sygnowski (Sutton Coldfield) 4, 3-4 David Berczes (Hungary), Ryzard Maciol (Cambridge) 3½.

Major - 1 Graham Ashcroft (Preston) 4½, 2 Finlay Bowcott-Terry 4, 3-10 Dustin Bowcott (both Halesowen), Matthew Clark (Shrewsbury), Robert Dean (Pudsey), Ian Emery (Birmingham), Sam Gibbs (Lancaster), Ed Goodwin (Coventry), David Gostelow (Telford), Anita Somton (Nottingham) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Gary White (Priorslee) 5, 2-3 Graham Shepherd (Church Stretton), Dimitar Kirachen (Oswestry) 4/5

Minor - 1 Jeff Wilson (Oldham) 4½ 2 Khalid Khan (Bradford) 4, 3-5 Ansh Agrawal (Harborne), Silas Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen), Ben Newnham (Tattenhall) 3½.

T. Sygnowski - A. Merry, Telford 2019



36 Qxg5+!

The less spectacular 36 Rxe3 Qxe3 37 Qxf6 also works.

36...Ng6

36...fxg5 37 Nh6+ Kh8 38 Be5# is a lovely finish.

37 Nh6+ 1-0

February 2019



BATTERSEA – The old complaint that ‘chess players couldn’t even organise a piss-up in a brewery’ is unlikely to be new to readers, but ... sometimes they actually can [see left]! Step forward two of London’s largest and most dynamic clubs, Battersea and Hammersmith, who organised ‘Chess-Up in a Brewery’, a handicap rapidplay held at the Sambrook Brewery, won, despite the time handicap, by the top two seeds, Blair Connell and Ryszard Maciol.

CAMBRIDGE – Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer (2/8/1927-26/12/2018) was best known for his

work in the fields of computer science, mathematics and university administration. However, he once forced a change in the rules of bridge and was also a pretty competent chess player when younger. Swinnerton-Dyer’s father, Sir Leonard, was BCF President in the 1950s, while Sir Peter represented

Cambridge in four Varsity matches. Leonard Barden remembered that “Sir Peter played, and I think defeated, Jacques Mieses in the Hastings Premier Reserves in 1949-50. He was thus among the last Morphy three survivors via the Mieses-Bird and Mieses-Paulsen routes.”

CLEVEDON – The Somerset New Year Congress (12-13 January) clashed with the second 4NCL weekend but didn't feature an Open.

Major - 1 Martyn Harris (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 4/5, 2-3 George Miller (Keynsham), George Georgiou (Swindon) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran) 4, 2-7 Timothy Jones (Bristol), Duncan Macarthur (Keynsham), Peter Dimond (Bath), Rod Langham (Oxford), Joshua Gittins (Gloucester), Martin Jones (Wales) 3½.

Minor - 1 Gul Kapur (Enfield) 4½, 2-3 John Jeremiah (Wellington), Jonathan Jones (Steynton) 4.

FRODSHAM – The Frodsham Congress (1-3 February) now boasts a FIDE-rated Open.

Open - 1-2 Oliver Jackson (Cheshire), Thomas Carroll (Hoylake) 4/5, 3-4 Chris Vassiliou (Chorlton), Ronald Schult (Germany) 3½.

Major - 1 Greg Hughes (Wallasey) 4½, 2 Geoff Laurence (Macclesfield) 4, 3-7 Sam Davies (Southport), Andrew Barber (Buckley), Kevin Winter (Bradford), Mark Cromwell (Frodsham), Michael Farthing (Morecambe) 3½.

Minor - 1 David Price (Crewe) 4½, 2-4 Julian Hawthorne (Kids Grove), Paul Jackson (Lancaster), Andrew Beswick (Chorlton) 4.

HARROGATE – Danny Gormally has been in good form of late and triumphed at the latest 4NCL Congress, which was held at the impressive setting of the Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate (18-20 January). Gormally drew with Peter Wells in round 4 to reach 3½/4 and then turned around an unpleasant position against Alan Merry.

Open - 1 Danny Gormally (Alnwick) 4½/5, 2-4 Keith Arkell (Paignton), Keith Arkell (Swindon), Jonah Willow (Nottingham) 4.

Major - 1-3 Paul Kendal (Beverley), Brian Coop (Harrogate), Tim Hilton (Denton) 4½.

Minor - 1 Michael Johnson (Harrogate) 5, 2-4 Daniel Dufton (Keighley), Simeon Bott (Cambridge), Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 4.

Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with, but had no answer to the attacking verve of Peter Wells.

P. Wells - J. Willow, Harrogate 2019 - Caro-Kann Defence

1 Nf3 c5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 g6 5 d4 cxd4 6 exd4 d5 7 cxd5 Nxd5

Play has now transposed to a line of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, also commonly reached via 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Nf3 g6 7 cxd5 Nxd5.

8 Qb3 e6 9 Bg5 Be7 10 Bh6 Bf8 11 Bxf8 Kxf8 12 Bb5 Kg7?!

Now Black too will be saddled with pawn weaknesses. The superior 12...Nce7 13 0-0 Kg7 14 Rac1 Rf8 15 Rfd1 Nf6 looked a better bet in Jones-Saric, Spanish Team Championship 2017, although White may retain a pull even here.

13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 0-0 Qb6 15 Rfc1

Beginning to lay siege to c6. 15 Qc2 was also strong.

15...Nf4?!

Shorn of counterplay, Willow tries to go active, but he should have hunkered down for solid defence in a slightly worse position after 15...Qxb3 16 axb3 Ne7 17 Ne4 Rd8.

16 Qc2 Ba6 17 Qe4 Nd3 18 Na4!



The beginning of a strong plan. Wells races his queen's knight to its best outpost, unafraid to offer the exchange in the process.

18...Qb5 19 Nc5! Nxc1 20 Qe5+ f6

Desperately trying to complicate. The alternative was 20...Kg8 21 Rxc1 when Black has one rook well and truly out of play and will surely be cleaned up on the dark squares: for example, 21...Rd8 (21...h6 22 b4 Rh7 is the best the silicon can do, but looks horrendous and also permits the simple

23 a4 Qe2 24 Ne4) 22 Qf6 Rf8 23 d5!! (a notable concept and precursor to the game) 23...cxd5 (23...exd5 24 Nd7 Re8 25 Ng5 is White's other idea) 24 Nxe6 fxe6 25 Qxe6+ Rf7 (or 25...Kg7 26 Rc7+ Kh6 27 Qh3#) 26 Ne5 Qb7 27 Rc8+ Kg7 28 Rxh8 Kxh8 29 Nxf7+ Kg7 30 Nd6 and there's no defence.

21 Qc7+ Kh6 22 Qf4+ Kg7 23 Nxe6+! Kf7

White also wins after 23...Kg8 24 Rxc1 Qxb2 25 Re1 Qb7 26 Nc5.

24 Qc7+ Kxe6 25 Rxc1 Rxc8

A similar finish would have occurred after 25...Rhe8 26 d5+! (or just 26 Rxc6+ Kf5 27 Rc5+) 26...Qxd5 (if 26...cxd5 27 Nd4# or 26...Kf5 27 Nd4+) 27 Re1+ Kf5 28 g4+! Kxg4 29 Qg3+ followed by

29...Kf5

30 Nh4# or 29...Kh5 30 Qh4#.

26 Re1+ Qe2



27 d5+! 1-0

Willow had seen enough. His king won't escape, as shown by 27...Kxd5 (if 27...cxd5 28 Nd4# or 27...Kf5 28 Qd7+ Kf4 29 Qd6+ Kf5 30 Rxe2 Bxe2 31 Qe6+ Kf4 32 Qxf6+) 28 Qd7+ Ke4 29 Qe6+ Kf4

HULL – Chess continues to thrive in Hull as news broke that the 2019 English Women's Championship will take place at the city's iconic station hotel over the weekend of August 30th to September 1st. ECF Director of Women's Chess Chris Fegan commented, "The holding of the EWC 2019

in Hull builds on the very successful 2018 British Championships, also held in Hull, and I am sure that the EWC 2019 will exceed all previous records." We should also mention that the ECF have announced a resurrection of the English Seniors Championships, which will take place in Solihull, 4th-7th April. Both the Over-50 and Over-65 sections will be FIDE-rated, six round Swisses.

KIDLINGTON – FM Marcus Harvey defeated Mark Hebden in the final round to become the 2019 Oxfordshire Champion at the popular Kidlington Congress (2-3 February).

Open - 1 Marcus Harvey (Southampton Uni) 4½/5, 2 James Jackson (Banbury) 4, 3-4 Jon Manley (Oxford), Shabir Okhai (Syston) 3½.

Under-180 - 1-3 Roger de Coverly (Bourne End), Csaba Koszta (Witney), Robert Taylor (Syston) 4.

Under-145 - 1-2 David Dyer (Cowley), Steven Harris (Bracknell) 4½, 3-5 Peter Lim (Harrow), Callum Evans (Aylesbury), Hashim Jusoh (Oxford) 4.

Under-120 - 1 Ryan Cheung (Southampton) 5, 2 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford) 4½/5, 3-6 William Stock (Hastings), Barry Miles (Coulsdon), Robin Carr (Cumnor), Tim Cutter (Guildford) 4.

The outcome of the tournament might have been different, however, had James Jackson not adopted a safety-first, if very natural, move at a key point late on the Saturday evening ---

J. Jackson - M. Harvey, Kidlington 2019



48 Rh2?

48 a6 (or 48 b5) 48...h2 (the white pawns are simply too strong and fast after 48...Rh7 49 b5 Ra7 50 Kb4) 49 Rxh2 Rxh2 50 b5 was correct, reaching an important position to know. The old adage is that “two connected passed pawns on the sixth defeat a rook” and here Black cannot stop them getting there and so is completely lost: for example, 50...Ke6 (or 50...Rh1 51 a7 Ra1 52 b6 Ke6 53 b7) 51 b6 Kd6 52 a7 Rh8 53 b7 Kc7 54 a8Q and White wins by a tempo.

48...Ke7 49 a6 Kd6 50 a7 Rh8 51 Kc4 Kc6 52 Rxh3

The tactical motif which no doubt attracted White to 48 Rh2, but with his pawn already on a7 he will be unable to break Black's blockade.

52...Rc8 53 Rh5 Kb7+ 54 Rc5 Rh8 5 Ra5 Rh4+ 56 Kb3 Ka8 57 Ra6 Rh3+ 58 Ka4 Rh1 59 Kb3

White's main issue is highlighted by the line 59 Ka5 Ra1+ 60 Kb6 Rxa6+ 61 Kxa6 and stalemate.

59...Rh3+ 60 Kc2 Rh7 ½-½

KIRKCALDY – The Kirkcaldy Congress took place at the Dean Park Hotel (19-20 January), and featured both a small Open and an Under-2200 section.

Open - 1-2 Calin Gheorghiu (Edinburgh), Hamish Olson (Aberdeen) 3/4, 3-4 Declan Shafi (Dundee), Junhao Xian (Glasgow) 2½.

Under-2200 - 1 Stephen Hogg (Dundee) 3½, 2-4 Ian Marks (Cumbernauld), Daniel Thomas (East Kilbride), Benjamin Ridge (Edinburgh) 3.

Under-1800 - 1 Richard Dowling (Corstorphine) 3½, 2-3 Keith Aitchison (Edinburgh), Jim Robertson (East Kilbride) 3.

Under-1400 - 1-2 Iain Hope (Musselburgh), Gordon Greig (Dunfermline) 3½, 3-5 Walter Pearson (Auchendinny), Pranav Saravanan (Aberdeen), Ishan Kumar (Kirkintilloch) 3.

Junior Under-800 - 1 Michael Moroz (Glasgow) 4½, 2-4 Rishab Anthuvan, Ishan Rohatgi (both Kirkintilloch), Nivedita Suyal (Corstorphine) 4.

LONDON – Already this year Adam Raoof has staged two Hampstead Under-2200 Congresses. The first (19-20 January) saw Marcus Osborne (Wimbledon) amass 4½/5 to edge out Federico Rocco (Hendon), Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coudson), and Ben Keohane (London) by half a point. Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) won the Under-1900 section with the same score, coming clear of Oliver Finnegan (Loughton), while ‘+4’ was also enough for Eric Eedle (Barnet) to win the Under-135 section ahead of Gert de Block (Cambridge). Marcus Osborne, however, had to settle for second place over the weekend of February 16th-17th, as he was edged out in the top section by Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough), who racked up 4½/5. John Bussmann (Surbiton) and Sarah Weersing (Linton) shared first place with the same score in the Under-1900, while Nigel White (Guildford), Chris Eliadis (Woking) and Lee Bullock (Hackney) tied for first on 4/5 in the Under-135.

John Merriman triumphed at the latest Golders Green Rapidplay, which was a touch weaker than usual due to a clash with the 4NCL in Telford.

Open - 1 John Merriman (Petts Wood) 5½/6, 2-3 Tom Eckersley-Waites, Ieuan Ward (both

Battersea) 4½.

Major - 1 Saahil Bansal (Kent) 5, 2-4 Kier Eyles (Emsworth), David Lawrence (Oxford), Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) 4½.

Minor - 1-3 Tomas Vesciunas (Lithuania), David McNish (Enfield), Mark Davies (Emsworth) 5.

Amateur - 1 Alexander Funk (Kings Head) 5, 2-4 Harry Minor (Isle of Man), David Dunne (Nottingham), Geoffrey Simms (Surbiton) 4½.

Improvers - 1-2 Aaron Dhillon (Kent), Alex Kuropatwa (Middlesex) 5½, 3 Haridhra Balachandar (Kent) 4½.

Under-80 - 1 Johann Bruhn (London) 4½, 2 Riccardo Rebonato (Kew) 4.

NEWRY – To celebrate the recent reaffiliation of the Ulster Chess Union to the Irish Chess Union, a rapidplay on February 2nd was sponsored by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Top seed Conor O'Donnell lost to both Danny Roberts (Civil Service Chess Club, Belfast) and Gabor Horvath (Strand Chess Club, Belfast). Roberts would finish clear second on 5/6, half a point behind Horvath. 16-year-old James Wong (Strand, Belfast) won the Intermediate section with 5/6, finishing half a point ahead of Adrian Gilmore (Omagh), while the Junior tournament was won, also with 5/6, by Paul Anderson (Ballynafeigh Chess Club, Belfast).

NOTTINGHAM – Ameet Ghasi swept aside the field at a very successful Nottingham Rapidplay on January 20th.

Open - 1 Ameet Ghasi (Richmond) 6/6, 2 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 5, 3-7 Shabir Okhai (Syston), Samuel Milson (Louth), Daniel Pousada Garcia (Bolton), Kishan Modi (Leicester), Florian Biermann (Nottingham) 4.

Major - 1-2 Sam Davies (Southport), Ethan Rowe (Northampton) 4½, 3-5 Shane Bhayat (Nottingham), Robert Henfrey (Shepshed), David Patrick (Halifax) 4.

Intermediate - 1-2 Matthew Bubis (Derby), Robert Mitchell (Shepshed) 5, 3-7 Dushan Malimage, Ben Gilpin (both West Bridgford), Michael Johnson (Coventry), Richard Stokes (Stamford), Neil Roberts (Lincoln) 4½.

Minor - 1 Kajus Mikalajunas (Leicester) 5½, 2-5 Raymond Bettam (Coleshill), Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Kian Chan, Alexandra Arlachova (both West Nottingham) 5.

PERTH – Unlike Kirkcaldy, the Perth Congress (8-10 February) only had three sections for adults and was once again a major success.

Open - 1 Junhau Xian 4½, 2-4 Helge Magnusssen (both Glasgow), Hamish Olson (Aberdeen), Stephen Hogg (Dundee) 4.

Major - 1-6 Joseph Watson-McFie (Renfrewshire), Steven Harvey (Oban), Mark Monaghan (Cumbernauld), Jan Barron-Majerick (Inverness), Jonathan McKay (Aberdeen), Gwenole Le Feuvre (Perth) 4.

Minor - 1-2 Gordon Greig (Dunfermline), Callum Robertson (Dunbar) 4½, 3-5 Derek Coope (Oban), Allan Buchan (Edinburgh), Iwo Labuda (Perth) 4.

STOCKPORT – The Stockport Rapidplay attracted 140 players to the town's Guildhall on January 27th. In the Open, Adam Ashton (3Cs) and Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) both scored 5/6, while Phil Seery (Bare Village) won the Major with 5½. Mick Norris (Bury) also scored 5½ in the Intermediate, as did Denzel Supatan (Ashton) in the Minor.

TORQUAY – Keith Arkell triumphed at the Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress (25-27 January), which was held at the same venue as the Paignton Congress uses these days, the Livermead House Hotel.

Open - 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 5/5, 2 Alan Punnett (Guildford) 3½, 3-6 John Stephens (Exmouth), Peter Anderson (Lowestoft), Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Stephen Piper (Salisbury) 3.

Major - 1 Yasser Tello (Wimbledon) 4, 2-4 Brian Gosling (East Budleigh), Raymond Gamble (Spondon), John Nyman (Kings Head) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Robert Wilby (Plymouth) 4, 2-4 George Lekoudis (Hastings), Dinah Norman (Guildford), Eddie Fierek (Gloucester) 3½.

Minor - 1 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford) 4½, 2 Graham Mill-Wilson (Plymouth) 4, 3-6 Timothy Allen (Battersea), David Peacock (London), Barry Lippard, Steven Cawser (both Brixham) 3.

March 2019

BELFAST – Ahead of venturing down to County Claire for the Bunratty Congress (see p.48), Luke McShane gave a simul at Belfast's Stormont Hotel on February 20th. Leading Strand CC member Gabor Horvath managed to win, with the Civil Service's Danny Roberts securing an honourable draw as the leading English GM won the remaining 27 boards on what was a memorable night for chess in Ulster.

BLACKPOOL – Mark Hebden and Joseph McPhillips each won £550 as they shared first prize in arguably Britain's most competitive weekend event overall, namely the Blackpool Congress (8-10 March).

Open - 1-2 Mark Hebden (Leicester), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4½/5, 3-9 Ismael Molano Lafiente (Spain), Phil Watson (Bradford), Matthew Parsons (Huddersfield), Stuart White (Bearsden), Peter Gayson (Dunstable), Roy Ellames (Lytham St Annes), Elliot Frew (Troon) 3½.

Major - 1-2 Nick Burrows (Cowley), Joshua Pink (Stockport) 4½, 3-6 Robert Newton (Rochdale), Chris Doran (Chester), Phil Bull (Wolverhampton), Ravi Wariyar (Forest Hall) 4.

Intermediate - 1 Martin Brejter (Edinburgh) 5, 2 Ralph Stirrat (Cumbernauld) 4½, 3-4 Robert Dean (Pudsey), George Harman (Worsley) 4.

Minor - 1 Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 2 David Teague (Harrogate) 4½, 3-7 James Rigby (Liverpool), Pawel Szutkowski (Spalding), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Jade Stirrup (3Cs), John Illingworth (Newham) 4.

Standard - 1 Robert Arthurton (Skegness) 5, 2 Phillip Shaughnessy (Urmston) 4½, 3-8 Jeff Foy (Liverpool), John MacDonald (Kings Head), George Viszokai (Maddocks), Kevin Waterman (Hartlepool), Nick Holmes (Shrewsbury), David Scorer (Clitheroe) 4.

BRISTOL – Keith Arkell was held to a draw in the final round by Chris Beaumont, but that ensured outright first for the weekend tournament expert in the FIDE-rated Open at the Bristol Winter Congress (15-17 February).

Leading scores - 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 4½/5, 2-3 Chris Beaumont (Bristol), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4.

COVENTRY – The Warwickshire Open Championships took place in Coventry (22-24 February), with Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow winning the Open for the second successive year, while Henrik Stepanyan retained his Warwickshire title.

Open - 1 Jonah Willow 4½/5, 2-4 Aditya Munshi (both Nottingham), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Ranesh Ratnesan (Surbiton) 4.

Under-1975 - 1 Graham Ashcroft (Preston) 4½, 2-5 Rohan Pal (Birmingham), Ben Graff (Kenilworth), Adithya Pramod Paleri (Wimbledon), Neil Homer (Northampton) 4.

Under-140 - 1-4 Chinmay Monga (Birmingham), John Conway (Coventry), Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Tomas Fabik (Rugby) 4.

Under-110 - 1 John Rayner (Nuneaton) 4½, 2-3 Ben Larkin (Stratford), Kajus Mikalajunas (Leicestershire) 4.

DONCASTER – The popular Doncaster Congress once again took place at Hall Cross Academy (22-24 February).

Open - 1-2 Peter Shaw (Wakefield), Ali Jaunooby (Denton) 4/5, 3-6 John Anderson (Lowestoft), Chris Izod (Jesmond), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Leo Keely (Huddersfield) 3½.

Major - 1 Paul Robson (Chester-le-Street) 4, 2-6 Jim Davis (Worksop), Mark Collinson (Hull), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Tim Turner (Beverley), Karl Potter (Syston) 3½.

Intermediate - 1-5 Steven Watson, Phil Bawden (both Hull), Noel Stewart (York), Andrew Allen (Worksop), Chris Tinker (Wakefield) 4.

Minor - 1 Farrell Clifford (Doncaster) 4½, 2-7 David Dunne (Nottingham), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Dave Peardon (Hetton Lyons), Chris Stratford (Huddersfield), Roger Walker (Belper), Chris Fraser (Spondon) 4.

GOODWICK – The Dyfed Congress once again took place at the Fishguard Bay Hotel (22-24 February). Victory in the Open went to regular competitor FM Sven Zeidler, while one of the Under-1700 grading prizes went to 14-year old Cardiff schoolgirl Susanna Fraser who performed some 350 points above her rating.

Open - 1 Sven Zeidler (Devizes) 5/5, 2 Gerry Heap (Carmarthen) 4, 3-9 Paul Byway (Hertford), Iolo Jones (Cardigan), Adam May, Alan Young (both Llanelli), Mike Waddington (Dorchester), John Waterfield (Caerleon), Howard Williams (Cardigan) 3½.

Major - 1 Scott Hammett (Haverfordwest) 5, 2 Ben Brewer (Cardigan) 4, 3-4 Paul Scott (Abergavenny), Robert Narayan-Taylor (Carmarthen) 3½.

LEYLAND – The Leyland Rapidplay saw a three-way tie for first in the top, Under-195 section on February 24th.

Major - 1-3 Phil Armstrong (Oldham), Peter Jowett (Preston), Graham Dobson (Lancaster) 4½/6.

Intermediate - 1 Phil Ramsey (Southport) 5½, 2 Kevin Winter (Bradford) 5, 3 Anthony Tatar (Hoylake) 4½.

Minor - 1 Edward Jackson (3Cs) 5½, 2-3 Andrew de Santos (Preston), David Willey (Carlisle) 4½.

LONDON – Former Latvian Minister of Finance and ECU Vice-President Dana Reizniece-Ozola gave a simul at the London Latvian House on February 15th. The event raised money for Latvian charities and saw the WGM finish with an impressive +13 =2 -0.

On 2nd March the 137th Varsity match took place at the RAC Club, Pall Mall. Featuring Hou Yifan on top board, Oxford out-rated Cambridge by on average almost 200 points per board, but despite having white the Chinese star was fairly comfortably held by Matthew Wadsworth. Isaac Sanders, Filip Mihov and at the death Daniel Abbas won for the Dark Blues, as they were pushed all the way by a determined Light Blue side and only eventually got home 4½-3½. Both Gwilym Price and Gustavo Leon Cazares defeated higher-rated opposition for Cambridge who still lead overall by 59-56, with 22 draws.

TELFORD – A regular 4NCL venue also hosted this year's British Universities Chess Association (BUCA) Championships (23-24 February), in which Imperial College, London triumphed in both the Open and separate Plate competition. Meanwhile University College London won the Bowl, but the capital was denied a clean sweep as the University of the West of England, Bristol triumphed in the Shield.

Imperial's first team was Yeoh Li Tian, Constantin Müller, Aron Eu Wen Teh, and Adam A. Taylor. Their top board, a 2522-rated young Malaysian IM, certainly knows how to attack as seen in the following game ---

M. Fernandez - Yeoh Li Tian, Southampton I vs Imperial I - King's Indian Defence

In classic reversed KIA and AlphaZero-approved fashion Black had rammed the white kingside with his h-pawn and now struck. Note too how White had been far too slow to open queenside lines for counterplay.



23...Bxd4!

The decisive blow is struck not on the kingside, but in the centre where Black is about to enjoy two highly dangerous and mobile pawns.

24 exd4 Nxd4 25 Qd2 Nf3 26 Qe2 d4 27 Bc1 e3 28 Bxe3 dxc3 29 Rd1 Qf6 30 Bd3 Bxd3 31 Qxd3 Rxe3! 0-1

Finishing in style by removing the guardian of f2.

April 2019

BELFAST – March 23rd saw the Ulster Rapidplay Championships take place in their modern home, the Falls Bowling Club. Teenager Daniil Zelenchuk (Strand) proved too strong, his 6/6 a point-and-a-half more than Danny Roberts (Civil Service) made. The Intermediate, Under-1400 section also saw a 100% score, achieved by Adrian Dornford-Smith, with Ciaran Rowan and young Taufik Kamal (all Strand) back on 4½/6.

BIRMINGHAM – Mark Hebden triumphed in the Birmingham Rapidplay at the Quinborne Community Centre on March 31st.

Open - 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 2 Lawrence Cooper (Stafford) 5½, 3-6 Tomasz Sygnowski, Henrik Stepanyan (both Sutton Coldfield), Shabir Okhai (Syston), Andrew Brett (Writtle) 4½.

Major - 1 Oleg Cukovs (Poulton-le-Fylde) 5½, 2-4 Shahab Quraishi (West Bromwich), Gheorghe Albu (Braunstone), Dustin Bowcott (Halesowen) 5.

Intermediate - 1 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 6½, 2 Gary White (Telford) 6, 3-5 Steve Whatmore (Rugeley), Christopher Evans (Mutual Circle, Birmingham), Tony Shaw (Worcester) 5.

Minor - 1 Don Curry (Halesowen) 6, 2-4 Granville Hill (Latimer), Ansh Agrawal (Harborne), Victor Brown (Walsall Kipping) 5½.

CHESTER – GM Stephen Gordon was held to a draw by both Paul Townsend and John Carleton, but still scooped the £250 first prize as Chester Chess Club celebrated turning 100 with the Chester Centenary Rapidplay on April 7th.

Open - 1 Stephen Gordon (Wood Green) 5/6, 2-4 John Carleton (Chester), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Paul Townsend (York) 4½.

Major - 1-2 Philip Zabrocki (Shrewsbury), Michael Connor (Great Lever) 5, 3-4 Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Tim Jones (Bristol) 4½.

Minor - 1 Robert Owens (Formby) 5½, 2-4 Andrew Hughes (Rhyl), Barry Edgar (Hetton Lyons), Vijay Kakarparthi (Altrincham) 4.

EDINBURGH – Two grandmasters and two IMs were four of the players who shared first place in the Open at the strong and popular Edinburgh Congress (5-7 April).

Open - 1-6 Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant (Edinburgh West), Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Michael Kopylov (Ukraine), Adam Hunt (Woodbridge), Alan Tate (Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh), Junhao Xian (Glasgow University) 4/5.

Major - 1-2 Joy Durno (Newmachar), Michael Ash (Musselburgh) 4½/5, 3-5 Ewan Taylor, Neil Fleming (both Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh), Martin Robinson (Edinburgh West) 4.

Bishops - 1 Vagif Ramazanov (Bon Accord, Aberdeen) 4½, 2-7 Jamie Hand (Edinburgh University), Louise Adrian (France), David Teague (Harrogate), Steve Gibson (Musselburgh), Andrew Whalley (Edinburgh), Pranav Arcot (Aberdeen) 4.

Knights - 1 Greig Gordon (Dunfermline) 5, 2 Gary Clarke (Gosforth) 4½, 3-6 Graham Wilson (Corstorphine), David Cubitt (Edinburgh), Iain Hope (Musselburgh), William James (Edinburgh University) 4.

Don't forget that if you're ever in Edinburgh on a Thursday or Sunday afternoon to drop by the Fountain Cafe in the stunning setting of Princes Street Gardens beneath the castle, where from 2-5pm Chess in the Park takes place, often attracting 40 players of all ages.

HULL – It was great to see the 2018 British Chess Championships being shortlisted in the Remarkable Tourism Category at the Remarkable East Yorkshire (REYTA) Awards. Unfortunately, that award went to the Humber Street Sesh, although we were pleased to see the Remarkable East Yorkshire Passion Award being presented to Graham Chesters, a strong chessplayer and the chair of Hull's Freedom Festival.

LONDON – What to do when you come up against powerhouse Wood Green in the London League? Battersea Chess Club had a novel solution on April 10th. Rather than field their normal line-up, they allowed 10 England juniors to gain experience against titled opposition. Aditya Verma lost to Luke McShane on top board and Shreyas Royal to Stephen Gordon on board 3, but 11-year-old Luca Buanne drew with Richard Pert and 17-year-old Jacob Watson with John Emms, as Wood Green ran out 9-1 winners.

Latvian FM Dmitrijs Tokranovs triumphed at the latest Golders Green Rapidplay on March 2nd.

Open - 1 Dmitrijs Tokranovs (Latvia) 5½/6, 2 Davit Mirzoyan (King's College) 5, 3 Charles Tippleson (Northampton) 4½.

Major - 1-2 Jonathan Arnott (Sheffield), Neil Davies (Pimlico) 5, 3 Nicholas Mohnblatt (France) 4½.

Minor - 1 Georgi Aleksiev (Bulgaria) 6, 2 Paul Chantrell (Kings Head) 5, 3-4 Matthew Ball (St Albans), Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) 4½.

Amateur: 1 Alexander Funk (Kings Head) 6, 2 Frankie Badacsonyi (Muswell Hill) 4½, 3-6 Allyn Blake (Golders Green), Faye Ainscow (Kings Head), David Dane (Letchworth), Geoffrey Simms (Surbiton) 4.

Improver - 1 Michal Kajda (Newham) 5, 2-3 Aaron Dhillon (Kent), Andrew Jacobs (London) 4½.

Under-80 - 1 Vladislav Negura (Bloomberg) 5½, 2 Nick Silver (Middlesex) 5, 3 Oliver Dorn (Hertfordshire) 4½.

Stephen Prior (Grantham) bagged sole first with 4½/5 at the Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (9-10 March), finishing half a point ahead of Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon), Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough) and Marcus Osborne (Wimbledon). All of James McDonnell (Streatham), Oliver Finnegan (Loughton), Arnav Srivastava, Steve Pride (both Cambridge), and David Smith (Maidstone) shared first place with 4/5 in the Under-1900 section, while Gert de Block (Cambridge) won the Under-135 with 4½/5, finishing half a point ahead of Michal Kajda (Newham).

NEWBURGH – To celebrate discovering a chessboard and pieces featuring in a 500-year-old inventory of Lindores Abbey, on the edge of the small Fife town, the Lindores Abbey Distillery are putting on a very special chess event over the weekend of May 25th and 26th. None other than the world champion, Magnus Carlsen, will be taking part in a unique tournament, with Vishy Anand and Ding Liren two of the other three players confirmed. To celebrate the occasion the distillery are creating a special edition of their Aqua Vitae spirit.



NOTTINGHAM – The Nottingham Congress (23-24 March) featured an incremental time control and computerised pairings, with IM Alan Merry holding off two GMs to pocket the £1,000 first prize.

Open - 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 4½/5, 2-4 Mark Hebden (Leicester), Oleg Korneev (Spain), Jonah Willow (West Nottingham) 4.

Major - 1 Stefan Walentowicz (West Bridgford) 4½, 2-3 Jim Davis (Sheffield), John Cawston (Selby) 4.

Intermediate - 1-4 Neal Fisher (Peterborough), Alan Ruffle (Swadlincote), Andrew Allen (Worksop), Bill Egan (Scunthorpe) 4.

Minor - 1 Leonard Barham (Peterborough) 4½, 2-4 Ben Larkin (Stratford-upon-Avon), Lijith Job, Douglas Bramley (both Spondon) 4.

One of Alan Merry's victims was Aditya Munshi [*left, picture by Brendan O'Gorman*], but the Nottingham High School pupil bounced back with a

fine queen sacrifice en route to finishing on 3/5.

A. Munshi - J. Garnett, Nottingham 2019 - Scandinavian Defence

e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Bg4 4 Bb5+ Nbd7 5 Be2

5 f3 is the main move, but sharper.

5... Bxe2 6 Qxe2 Nxd5 7 c4 N5b6 8 Nf3 g6 9 Nc3 Bg7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Bf4 e6 12 a4

Provoking Black's next to make Qb5 more powerful.

12...a5 13 c5 Nd5 14 Nxd5 exd5 15 Qb5 b6 16 cxb6 Nxb6 17 Rac1 Nc4



18 b3! Rb8 19 bxc4!

Also, the engine's top suggestion after some thought.

19... Rxb5 20 cxb5

Black is hopelessly uncoordinated.

20... Qe7 21 Bxc7 Qb4 22 b6 Bxd4 23 Nxd4 Qxd4 24 b7 Qxa4 25 Rb1!

The most precise. White is now winning.

25... Kg7 26 Bd6 Rd8 27 b8Q Rxb8 28 Rxb8 Qe4 29 Bf8+ Kf6 30 Rb6+ Kf5 31 Bg7 a4 32 Rf6+ Kg5 33 Rf3

Threatening Bf6+ and intending to meet 33...h5 with 34 h4+! Kxh4 35 Bf6+ Kg4 36 Rd1.
33...f5 34 Rg3+ Kh5 35 Rh3+ Kg5 36 f4+ Kg4 37 Bf6 g5 38 Bxg5 Qd4+ 39 Kh1 1-0

PENCOED – Tom Brown (Cardiff) triumphed with 5½/6 in the Welsh Rapidplay Championship on March 23rd. Grzegorz Toczek (Cardiff) and Ian Jones (Swansea) shared second on 4½, while in the subsequent Welsh Blitz Championship, Alex Bullen (Cardiff) finished first with 9/11, half a point ahead of Toczek, with Brown and Robert Taylor (Malpas) a further half point back.

SOLIHULL – Paul Littlewood and Kevin Bowmer became the English Over-50 and Over-65 Champions respectively at the English Seniors Championships (4-7 April).

ST ALBANS – Thanks to a final round victory over IM Richard Bates, John Merriman triumphed ahead of plenty of titled opposition at the St Albans Congress (6-7 April).

Open - 1 John Merriman (Petts Wood) 4½, 2-3 Richard Pert (Billericay), Chris Ward (Beckenham) 4.

Challengers - 1 Joshua Pink (Stockport) 4½, 2 Brendan Ruane (Hastings) 4, 3-6 Victor Jamroz (Petts Wood), Ernest Karumazondo (Watford), Robert Collopy (St Albans), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale) 3½.

Major - 1 Andrew Brocklehurst (Civil Service) 4½ 2-5 Alan Prince (Edinburgh), Gavin Hughes (Brentwood), Stephen Mitchell (Slough), Vladimir Bovtramovics (Woking) 4.

Intermediate - 1 Dave Turner (Bourne End) 4½, 2-5 Simon Moth (Loughton), Dennis Wright (Barnet), Francois Swiegers (Stevenage), Simon Morris (Hertford) 4.

Minor - 1 Anthony Dunford (Exeter) 5, 2 Steven Ashworth (Ely) 4½, 3-8 Gul Kapur (Enfield), Tim Cutter (Guildford), Joan Gardner (Buckinghamshire), Patrick Sartain (Harrow), Tomy Joseph (Watford), William Stock (Hastings) 4.

May 2019

BOLTON – Joseph McPhillips gained revenge for being defeated by Mike Surtees in the final round of last year's Bolton Congress when the same pairing occurred again this year (19-21 April).

Open - 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 5/5, 2-6 Martin Goodger (Ely), Tim Hilton (Oldham), Don Mason (Shirley & Wythall), Joao Rita (Wallasey), Simeon Sakic (Bolton) 3½.

Major - 1 Martin Burns (Stockport) 4½, 2-3 Michael Fisher (Oldham), Dean Hartley (Amber Valley) 4.

Knights - 1 Arpad Busznyak (Bolton) 4½, 2-4 Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Parshottambhi Patel (Bolton), Andrew Swales (Burnley) 4.

Busy Persons Blitz - 1-2 Stephen Gordon (Wood Green), Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 7/8, 3 Martyn Goodger (Ely) 6½.

CARDIFF – Tim Kett secured his fourth national title at the Welsh Chess Championships, held over the Easter weekend in north Cardiff (19-22 April).

Championship - 1 Tim Kett (Cardiff) 5½/7, 2-5 Tom Brown (Reading), Jason Garcia (Llanelli), David Jameson (Colwyn Bay), David Sands (Barking) 4½; Welsh Under-21 and Ladies Champion: Imogen Camp (Colwyn Bay) 4.

Open-Major - 1 Thomas Van Veelan (Swansea) 5½, 2-4 David Roberts, Charles Summers (both Cardiff), Chris Timmins (Bristol) 5.

Minor - 1 Ryan Cheung (Cardiff) 6, 2 Neil Stuart (Port Talbot) 5, 3-4 Chris Peters, Marcel Vesz (both Cardiff) 4.

Kett began with 4½/5 ahead of cruising home with two draws. His opening round encounter showed him at his aggressive best.

T. Kett - G. Yeo Welsh Championship, Cardiff 2019 - Closed Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 g3 Rb8 4 Bg2 b5 5 d3 e6?! 6 a3!? g6 7 Be3 Nd4 8 b4

This rather asks for trouble. 5...d6 6 Be3 g6 is a safer choice.

6 a3!? g6 7 Be3 Nd4 8 b4

Creative play from Kett, but there was nothing wrong with the conventional 8 Nce2 Bg7 9 c3 Nxe2 10 Nxe2 d6 11 d4, with a very pleasant edge.

8...Bg7 9 bxc5?



Consistent with his early queenside advance, but he should really have nudged the rook away from a1.

9...Nf3+?

Now White's strategy is rewarded. Black needed to find 9...Qa5 10 Bd2 b4!, and if 11 Nce2 (naturally not 11 axb4?? Qxa1!) 11...Nxc2+! 12 Qxc2 Bxa1 13 Bxb4 Rxb4! 14 axb4 Qxb4+ 15 Qd2 Qxc5 when he certainly cannot be worse.

10 Nxf3 Bxc3+ 11 Bd2 Bxa1 12 Qxa1

White has all the dark squares and a pawn for the exchange – far more than enough compensation.

12...f6 13 0-0 Bb7 14 Nh4 Kf7 15 f4 Ne7 16 Bc3 Nc6 17 d4 Re8 18 f5!?

The more straightforward 18 d5 exd5 19 exd5 Na5 20 g4 would also have been rather effective.

18...gxf5?

White's centre is a sight to behold after 18...exf5 19 g4 Qe7! 20 gxf5 g5, but Black had to try this.

19 d5 Na5



20 Nxf5!

Olé! Black will find himself a whole rook ahead, but fittingly is completely undone on the dark squares.

20...exf5 21 Rxf5 Re7 22 Bxa5 Qxa5 23 Qxf6+ Kg8 24 Rg5+ 1-0

EDINBURGH – We reported last month on the successful Edinburgh Congress. There the £50 best game prize was shared between Danny Gormally and Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant for their final round draw, which saw “Spectators three deep trying to watch this epic”.

D. Gormally - K. Arakhamia-Grant, Edinburgh 2019 - Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6 4 0-0 Bg7 5 Nc3 e5 6 Bxc6 dxc6 7 d3 Qe7 8 Nd2 Nf6 9 Nc4 Be6 10 Nxe5 Nxe4 11 Nxe4 Bxe5 12 Re1 0-0-0 13 Ng5 Qd6 14 Nxe6 Bxh2+ 15 Kh1 fxe6 16 g3 Bxg3?

16...Rh8! was a better way to sacrifice, and if 17 Qe2 (or 17 Bf4 Rxf4 18 gxf4 Qxf4 19 Rxe6 Qh6 with full compensation for the exchange) 17...Bxg3 18 fxg3 Qxg3 19 Be3 Rd5 20 Qg2 Qh4+ 21 Kg1 Rff5 when White is perhaps fortunate that after 22 Qe4! Black has nothing better than a repetition. 17 fxg3 Qxg3 18 Re3 Qh4+ 19 Kg2 Rhf8 20 Qe2 Qg5+ 21 Rg3 Qd5+ 22 Kg1 Rf5



23 c4

The simpler 23 Be3 would also have left Black with three pawns and not quite enough for the piece.

23...Qd4+ 24 Kg2 Re5 25 Be3

The alternative was 25 Qf2 Qxf2+ 26 Kxf2 Rf8+ 27 Rf3 Rxf3+ 28 Kxf3 Re1 29 b3, with decent winning chances.

25...Qxd3 26 Qxd3 Rxd3 27 Kf2 Rh5 28 Ke2 Rd7 29 Rf1 b6 30 Rf6 Rh2+ 31 Bf2 Rh1 32 Rg1 Rh2 33 Ke3 Kb7 34 b3 e5 35 Ke4 Rd2 36 Be3 Rxa2 37 Rf7+ Ka6!

Both involving the black king and keeping it safe.

38 Rd1 Ka5 39 Rxa7+ Kb4 40 Rb7 Kxb3 41 Rxb6+ Kxc4 42 Rxc6 Rh4+ 43 Kxe5 Rh5+ 44 Kd6



Black has defended very well thus far and now after 44...Rf5!? 45 Bxc5 Rf6+ 46 Kd7 Rxc6 47 Kxc6 h5 48 Rg1 Ra8 she also most likely would have been able to avoid defending just rook against rook and bishop.

44...Ra8 45 Rc1+ Kd3 46 Bxc5 Ke4 47 Re1+ Kf3 48 Bb6 Ra3 49 Ke7 Rf5 50 Rh1 Rh5 51 Rf1+ Kg2 52 Rg1+ Kh3 53 Bc7 Re3+ 54 Kd7 Rd5+ 55 Kc8 Red3 56 Rh1+ Kg4 57 Rxh7 g5

Gormally has done well to win two pawns, but his coordination remains an issue and the g-pawn will save the day for Black.

58 Rh1 Rd1 59 Rh8 R1d3 60 Rf8 Rd1 61 Bb6 R1d3 62 Rh8 Rd6 63 Rc4+

Kf5 64 Kb7 Rd7+ 65 Kc8 R7d6 66 Bc7 R6d4 67 Rc6 Rd5 68 Rf8+ Kg4 69 Re6 Rc3 70 Rf7 Rdc5 71 Kb7 Rb3+ 72 Bb6 Rf5 73 Rd7 Rfb5 74 Rd1 Kf5 75 Rc6 g4 76 Kc7 g3 77 Bd4 Rd5 78 Rf1+ Kg4 79 Rc4 Rd3 80 Bc5+ Kh3 81 Rh1+ Kg2 82 Rg1+ Kf3 83 Rc2 Rd1 84 Rc3+ R5d3 85 Rxd1 Rxc3 86 Kd6 Rxc5! 87 Kxc5 g2 88 Kd4 Kf2 89 Rd2+ ½-½



EXMOUTH – Bob Jones reports from the West of England Championships (19-22 April) - “The presence of a grandmaster or two in a relatively small provincial event can be guaranteed to raise the interest level and attract further entries. In recent years this function has been provided for the West of England Championship by locally based Keith Arkell. This year, however, he was unavailable, playing instead in the World Seniors’ events on the island of Rhodes, so interest focussed on Matthew Turner [left, with WoE Ladies’ Champions Jacqui Barber-Lafon, picture by Bob Jones], resident chess master at Millfield School in Somerset. Already a five-time West of England Champion, Matthew was no stranger to the event nor the venue, but this year was able to accompany two of his pupils.

“Matthew has clearly been on-form recently, after his showing at the very strong Bunratty tournament in February, coming third with David Howell. He was streets ahead of the opposition in Exmouth, and predictably finished on 7/7, but had to work hard in some of his games, especially in the final round against Richard McMichael. However, he did get chances to shine, as in his entertaining miniature from round 5 against the joint runner-up.”

Open - 1 Matthew Turner (Street) 7/7, 2-3 Dominic Mackle (Torquay), Patryk Krzyzanowski (South Bristol) 4½.

Major - 1 Yasser Tello (Wimbledon) 5½, 2-4 Stephen Mitchell (Slough), Jamie Morgan (Cornwall), Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) 5.

Minor - 1 Patrick O’Brien (Worthing) 5½, 2 Jason Madden (Leamington Spa) 5, 3-4 Ken Alexander (East Budleigh), Jacquie Barber-Lafon (Newton Abbot) 4½.

M. Turner - P. Krzyzanowski, Exmouth 2019 - Sicilian Hyper-Accelerated Dragon

Notes by Matthew Turner

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Qa4

This line seems surprisingly challenging for Black. The most obvious approach leads to a small but enduring advantage for White after 6...d6 7 e5 dxe5 8 Nxe5 Bd7 (8...Bg7 is a more ambitious alternative) 9 Nxd7 Qxd7 10 Be3. Patryk attempts a more interesting idea, but it looks a bit dubious.

6...Bg7 7 e5 Ng8 8 Bf4 f6 9 exf6

I considered 9 e6, which looks very dangerous, but I’d probably need to invest a piece to maintain the attack which seemed a bit unnecessary.

9...Nxf6



After the game, I was amazed to learn this position had been played by both Ponomarev and Zvjaginsev as Black. I was also a little surprised that their opponents had opted for 10 Bc4. In principle this seems wrong, because it leaves the bishop on f4 undefended and brings the possibility of ...Qa5 more into play.

10 0-0-0 Nh5

Again, this is probably a bit ambitious. 10...0-0 should probably be preferred when Black can try to spread merry chaos by, for example, 11 Ng5 d5 12 Nxd5 Nxd5 13 Rxd5 Qb6.

11 Nb5 Nxf4 12 Qxf4 d6 13 Bc4 Rf8 14 Qg3

Originally I had intended 14 Qe3 here, which is the computer’s preferred move, but I didn’t see a clear way to proceed after 14...Rf6. The computer seems to think Black can get away with 14...a6 after the text, but it looks incredibly risky.

14...Ne5?



Allowing rather a pretty tactic.

15 Nxe5 Bxe5 16 Qxe5! dxe5 17 Rxd8+ Kxd8 18 Rd1+ Bd7

Not many attacking pieces left, but enough for mate after 18...Ke8 19 Nc7#.

19 Be6 a6 20 Rxd7+ Kc8 21 Nd6+! 1-0

The last little tactic. The game just about stumbles on after 21 Rxe7+ Kb8 22 Nd6 Ra7, but after 21 Nd6 Black is left with no way to carry on: 21...Kb8 22 Rxb7 is mate and 21...exd6 22 Rf7+ gets rid of both rooks.

FALMOUTH – Grant Healey became Cornish Champion as the successful Cornwall Congress (3-5 May) attracted 77 players to the Falmouth Hotel. It was the first year the tournament has been open to players from outside the county, although we note that the top, ‘championship’ section was restricted to those graded under-190.

Championship - 1-2 Jonathan Wells (Norwich), Paul Helbig 4, 3-4 Stephen Dilleigh (both Bristol), Grant Healey (Truro) 3½.

Major - 1-2 Raymond Gamble (Derby), David Teague (Harrogate) 4, 3-4 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Graham Shepherd (Shrewsbury) 3½.

Minor - 1 Harry Minor (Isle of Man) 4½, 2-3 Christine Constable (Bude), Maurice Richards (Liskeard) 4.

JERSEY – Open tournament expert Sergei Tiviakov edged out defending champion Tiger Hillarp Persson to claim the £1,500 top prize at the Polar Capital Jersey Festival (6-13 April).

Open - 1 Sergei Tiviakov (Holland) 7½/9, 2 Tiger Hillarp Persson (Sweden) 7, 3 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 6½, 4-5 Damian Lemos (Argentina), John-Pierre le Roux (France) 6.

Holiday - 1 Eric Boisyvon (France) 8, 2 Richard Morgan (Chiswick) 6½, 3-5 Russell Finch (Guernsey), David Wilson (Jersey), Mike Gunn (Guildford) 6.

LEICESTER – The Midland Open Junior Championships took place in Leicester the week before Easter (16-18 April), comprising Under-18 and Under-9 Swiss tournaments.

Under-18 - 1 Kishan Modi (Leicester) 6/6, 2 Merlin Davies (Daventry) 3½.

Under-14 - 1-2 Jason Lv (Wigston), Pavel Murawski (Oxford) 4, 3-5 Teo Rybak (Maidenhead), Imogen Dicen (South Birmingham), Adam Hussain (Truro) 3½.

Under-11 - 1 Jude Shearsby 4, 2-4 Manvith Sandhu, Margarita Sanchez (all Coventry), Tashika Arora (Oxford) 3.

Under-9 - 1 Elis Dicen (Birmingham) 6, 2 Joshua Tang (Braunstone) 5, 3 Jan Murawski (Oxford) 4.

LONDON – Grantham’s Stephen Prior triumphed with 4½/5 in the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress, finishing half a point ahead of Leo Sanitt (Hendon). Connor Clarke (Middlesex) won the Under-1900 section, also with ‘+4’, and so edged out Alan Prince, Peter Lim (Harrow) and Dylan Mize (UCL) by half a point, while victory in the Under-135 went to Michal Kajda (Newham), who amassed a perfect score to finish a point clear of Nikita Berezin (Russia).

The latest Golders Green Rapidplay on May 11th was won by Ilya Iyengar.

Open - 1 Ilya Iyengar (Hendon) 5½, 2-3 Bao Nghia Dong (Loughborough), Nadia Jaufarally (St Albans) 4½.

Major - 1-2 Gopakumar Siddharth (Basildon), George Clarkson (north-west London) 5, 3-7 Rohan Pal (Birmingham), Mohammed Alahi (London), Sydney Jacob (Lewisham), Anum Sheikh (Ilford), Colin Lyne (Camberley) 3½.

Minor - 1 Savas Stoica (Barnet) 5, 2-6 Robert Kender (Mushrooms), Georgi Aleksiev (Bulgaria), Paul Chantrell (Kings Head), Alex Funk (Hendon), Declan Kilcline (Dunmow) 4½.

Amateur - 1-2 Patrick Damodaran (Kent), Tomas Garau (Battersea) 5½, 3 Mark McLeod (Didcot) 4.

Improvers - 1-3 Aaron Dhillan (Mottingham), Tianyou Xu (Hammersmith), David Clarkson (North-West London) 5.

Under-80 - 1 Eliot Kalfon (London) 5, 2-3 Layla Bracken (Barnet), Abeer Gogia (Maidenhead) 4.

SOUTHEND – Cambridge undergraduate FM Matthew Wadsworth had another good result in the 12-player Southend Masters, sharing first place and £1,500 with an Indian IM and Argentinean GM. Leading scores: 1-3 Matthew Wadsworth (Maidenhead), Khamparia Akshat (India), Damian Lemos (Argentina) 6/9, 4-6 Iain Gourlay (Richmond), Bogdan Lalic (Sandhurst), Alex Golding (Guildford) 5½. Alongside the Masters, the traditional sections of the Southend Easter Congress took place (18-22 April).

Open - 1-2 Rhys Cumming (Hove), Antanas Zapolskis (Hendon) 6/7, 3 Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield) 5.

Under-1900 - 1 Alan Price (Edinburgh) 5½, 2-5 Alaa Gamal (Basildon), Seun Maraiyesa (London), Brendan O’Gorman (Coulsdon), William Golding (Guildford) 5.

Under-145 - 1 Christopher Willoughby, (Brentwood) 5½, 2 Olga Latypova (Chelmsford) 4½, 3-4 David Smith (Maidstone), Timothy Crouch (Kings Head) 4.

Under-95 - 1 Charlotte Willoughby (Brentwood) 6½, 2 Parag Kumar (London) 6, 3-4 Mae Catabay (Colchester), Kameron Grose (Wetherby) 4.

STEVENAGE – The 4NCL put on a strong Easter Congress at Stevenage (19-22 April).

Open - 1-2 Marcus Harvey (Southampton), Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 3-6 Graeme Buckley (Sutton), Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Jonah Willow (Nottingham), John Richardson (Hendon) 5.

Under-2050 - 1-2 Rangarirai Karu (Watford), Omowale Nelson (Welwyn Garden City) 6, 3-4 Richard Johnson (Bristol), Tony Slinger (Garforth) 5.

Under-1825 - 1-2 Ron Usharovsky (Richmond), Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 6, 3 Stephen Pride (Royston) 5.

Under-120 - 1-4 Tomy Joseph (Watford), Mo Jaufarally (St Albans), Tim Cutter (Sandhurst), Geoff Ainsley (Halifax) 5.

TELFORD – The 2018/19 4NCL season concluded in Telford, Blackrod and Daventry. On top of the action from the first division, as covered earlier in these pages, the winners and losers elsewhere were - **Division Two**: Promoted – Barbican 4NCL II, Cambridge University, Spirit of Atticus, Gonzaga; Relegated – Manchester Manticores, Wessex, Bradford DCA Knights, West is Best II.

Division Three North: Promoted – White Rose II, Manchester Manticores II.

Division Three South: Promoted – Kings Head, Check Innmates 1; Relegated – CSC II, Iceni II, Leeds University Old Boys, Sussex Martlets II.

Division Four: Promoted – Crowthorne, Ashfield, and possibly two others.

June 2019

AYR – IM Andrew Greet was defeated by FM Hamish Olson at the Ayr Congress (24-26 May), but caught up his conqueror after Olson was held to two draws on the final day.

Open - 1-2 Andrew Greet (Bearsden), Hamish Olson 4/5, 3-5 Robert Lothian (both Aberdeen), Stephen Mannion (Paisley), Alan Jelfs (East Kilbride) 3½.

Major - 1-2 William Clinton (Livingston), Paul Doherty (Bolton) 4, 3-4 Ian West, Keith Aitchison (Edinburgh) 3½.

Minor - 1 Dave Watson (Corstophine) 4½, 2-4 Sarah Smith (Ayr), Alex Waddell (Cathcart), Derek Coope (Oban) 4.

BASINGSTOKE – Mark Hebden was defeated by 12-year-old Singaporean FM Jagadeesh Siddharth in the second round of the latest 4NCL Congress in Basingstoke (24-27 May). However, while Siddharth then lost to Adam Bukojemski, Hebden would defeat Bukojemski and win his final five games to pick up the £500 first prize.

Open - 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 2 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 5½, 3-7 Marcus Harvey (Southampton), David Eggleston (Durham), James Jackson (Banbury), Adam Bukojemski (Battersea), Shabir Okhai (Syston) 5.

Under-2050 - 1-2 Chris Fegan (Ilford), Bela Botlik (Hungary) 6, 3 David Ireland (Coventry) 5½.

Under-1825 - 1 Russell Goodfellow (Tunbridge Wells) 6½, 2-3 Kevin Winter (Bradford), Peter Horlock (Godalming) 5½.

Under-120 - 1-3 Tomy Joseph (Watford), Steven Ashworth (Ely), Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood) 5½.

BELFAST – The City of Belfast Championships (25-27 May) took place at the Pavilion, which is part of the Stormont Estate. Sergio Esteve Sanchez (Queen's University) won the Nemtsov Cup on tiebreak from Gareth Annesley (South Belfast), after both had finished on 5/6.

That same score saw Barney McGahan (Ballynaveigh) triumph in the Henderson Cup by half a point from Andrew Todd (Bangor).

BRISTOL – IM James Sherwin continued to enjoy his return to the board as he triumphed at the Graeme Thomson Memorial Rapidplay in Bristol on June 2nd. Sherwin began slowly, but after defeating Cardiff-based FM Grzegorz Toczec finished on 5/6, half a point ahead of Toczec and Essex's Leon Burnett.

CREWE – The Davies father and son duo were in top form at the Crewe Rapidplay on May 19th. Sam won the Major while Nigel defeated IM Nikolav Milchev en route to a clean sweep in the Open.

Open - 1 Nigel Davies (Southport) 7/7, 2 Nikolav Milchev (Bulgaria) 5½, 3 Jonathan Blackburn (Holmes Chapel) 4½.

Major - 1 Sam Davies (Southport) 5½, 2-3 Oleg Cukovs (Poulton-le-Fylde), Richard Szwajkun (Telford) 5.

Intermediate - 1 Anthony Tatar (Hoylake) 6, 2-3 Simon Layhe (Crewe), Robert Owens (Formby) 5½.

Minor - 1-3 Nigel Gardner (Crewe), Radu Tatar (Hoylake), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Telford) 5½.

FROME – Keith Arkell cleaned up at the popular Frome Congress (17-19 May).

Open - 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 5/5, 2-7 Jane Richmond (Swindon), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Rajat Makkar (Reading), George Miller (Keynsham), Michael Duggan, Oscar Garcia (both Poole) 3½.

Major - 1 Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon) 4, 2-9 Stephen Appleby (Wimborne), Tim Woodward (Trowbridge), John Weatherlake (Poole), Duncan Macarthur (Keynsham), Matthew Wilson (Torquay), Ian Bush (Cumnor), Yasser Tello (Wimbledon), Michael Redmond (Reading) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Jack Tye (Downend) 4½, 2-3 Matthew Goatcher (Wells), Thomas Cooper (Devizes) 4.

Minor - 1 Elmira Walker (Downend) 5, 2-4 Theo Kirby (Glastonbury), Wayne Jukes (Shaftesbury) 4.

GLOUCESTER – The 51st Cotswold Congress (25-27 May) incorporated for the first time the Gloucestershire County Individual Championship, which was won by John Jenkins.

Open - 1-5 Alex Bullen (Cardiff), John Jenkins (Stroud), Dominic Mackle (Torquay), Don Mason (Shirley), Robin Moss (Carlisle) 4½/6.

Major - 1-3 Ian Clarke (Malvern), David Pinch (Milford Haven), Martin Jones (Wales) 4½.

Minor - 1-2 Paul Foster (Medway), Ben Larkin (Stratford-upon-Avon) 5, 3-4 John Constable (Bude), Kevin Langmaid (Yate) 4½.

HUDDERSFIELD – YCA President Jim Burnett became Yorkshire Champion at the Huddersfield Congress (24-26 May).

Open - 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 5/6, 2-3 Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Jim Burnett (Doncaster) 4½.

Major - 1 Dariusz Rak (Poland) 5, 2-4 David Keddie (Huddersfield), Nigel Livesey (Marple), Alec Grice (Beverley) 4½.

Minor - 1-5 Malcolm Hara (Beverley), Roger Walker (Belper), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Jim Wiseman (Liverpool), Colin Weller (Scarborough) 4½.

KETTERING – The Kettering Conference & Leisure Centre will host the ECF County Championship finals on July 13th. Surrey overcame Greater Manchester 11½-4½ and Yorkshire defeated Middlesex 10½-5½ to reach the Open final. The other finals will see -

Minor Counties – Lincolnshire vs Devon; Under-180 – Essex vs Lancashire; Under-160 – Middlesex vs Suffolk; Under-140 – Yorkshire vs Worcestershire; Under-120 – Yorkshire vs Essex; Under-100 – Staffordshire vs Nottinghamshire.

LONDON - Jonathan Pein (Hendon) triumphed with 5/6 at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on Tuesday 21st May, winning the Open with 5/6 to edge out Rory Kelly (Mushrooms) by half a point. The winner and runner-up in the Major, Andriy Peykov (Holborn) and Savas Stoica (Barnet), made the same scores, while Sam Peterson (Hampstead) managed 5½/6 to come first by a whole point and half in the Minor. The weekend before (18-19 May) P.U. Midhun (India) had won the Hampstead Under-2200 Congress with a perfect score. Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) and Harry Zheng (Essex) shared top honours in the Major with 4½/5, while the Under-135 saw a four-way tie between Steve Clare (Wallasey), Emily Maton (St Albans), Johan Mathew (Richmond) and Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood).

NEWMARKET – Graham Moore triumphed on tie-break at the EACU Closed Championships in Newmarket (31 May - 2 June).

Open - 1-3 Graham Moore (Bury St Edmunds), James Gardner (Bedford), John Anderson (Lowestoft) 4/5.

Major - 1-2 Dave Hall (Norwich), Robert Sanders (Sudbury) 4, 3-5 John Daugman (Cambridge), Julian Ray (Linton), Polina Shchepinova (Reigate) 3½.

Minor - 1 Gert De Block (Cambridge) 4½, 2-3 David McLean (Norwich), Edward Knox (Peterborough) 4.

RHYL – FM Martin Brown returned to the board and prevailed in a fairly strong Open at the Rhyl Congress (10-12 May).

Open - 1 Martin Brown (St Helens) 4, 2-3 Nigel Davies (Southport), Gary Quillan (Liverpool) 3½.

Major - 1-2 Michael Connor (Great Lever), Peter Garrett (Liverpool) 4, 3-5 Dave Patrick, Peter Hughes (both Halifax), John Taylor (Macclesfield) 3½.

Minor - 1 Dave Williams (Malpas) 4½, 2 Andrew Hughes (Rhyl) 4, 3-8 David Price (Crewe), Steve Richards (Wrexham), John Simmons, David Houston (both Rhyl), Nigel Morris (Coventry), Lewis Williams (Combined Services) 3½.

STEWARTON – The Stewarton Bonnet Guild Allegro took place on June 9th.

Open - 1 Stephen Mannion (Paisley) 4½/5, 2 Roddy McKay 4, 3-7 Alan Grant (both Cathcart), Mark Sanger (Prestwick), Philip Giulian (Giffnock), Alex Gilles (Stepps), Steven Brown (Ardrossan) 3½.

Major - 1 James Montgomery (Hawick) 4½, 2-3 John Larkin (Glasgow Polytechnic), Hamish Glen (Bellshill) 3½.

Minor - 1-2 Aryan Munshi (Kirkintilloch), Dave Watson (Corstophine) 4, 3-6 Don Garford (Dunfermline), Bernard Cassidy (Hamilton), Alex MacDonald (Edinburgh), Stephen Heggie (Largs) 3½.

July 2019

BRIDGEND – The South Wales International attracted five grandmasters, including the Welsh-registered Nigel Davies, to its new home in Bridgend (7-12 July). When the dust had settled, two of those had tied for first along with IM Jose Camacho Collados, a lecturer in Computer Science at the University of Cardiff. Notably of the first five home only Camacho Collados lost a game, bouncing back most well from a shock opening round defeat at the hands of William Phillips of Hatch End Chess Club. Camacho ground down Keith Arkell no less in round 7 ahead of defeating Davies and drawing with Chatalbashev.

Leading scores: 1-3 Jose Camacho Collados (Cardiff), Boris Chatalbashev (Denmark), Oleg Korneev (Spain) 7/9, 4-5 Peter Roberson (St Albans), Grzegorz Nasuta (Poland) 6½, 6-11 Jack Rudd (Barnstaple), Nigel Davies (Southport), Jonathan Blackburn (Holmes Chapel), Alex Bullen, Grzegorz Toczek (both Cardiff), Jagadeesh Siddharth (Singapore) 6.



Youth in action. The top boards at the Steve Boniface Memorial Congress in Bristol. On the left Alan Merry faces Jonah Willow, while right Connor Murphy will go on to defeat Keith Arkell [picture by John Stubbs]

BRISTOL – Regular Bristol winner Keith Arkell was defeated by Conor Murphy [*above*] at the Steve Boniface Memorial Congress (21-23 June), which was won by Alan Merry as the younger generation came very much to the fore.

Open - 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 4½/5, 2-5 Jonah Willow (Nottingham), Thomas Villiers (Muswell Hill), Sacha Brozel (Hendon), Conor Murphy (Charlton) 4.

Major - 1 Ben Larkin (Stratford) 4½, 2-10 Gareth Cullen (South Bristol), Robert Radford (Horfield), Tim Woodward (Trowbridge), Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Brendan O’Gorman (Coulsdon), Stephen Horrell (Abergavenny), Jude Shearsby (Coventry), David McIntosh (Chepstow), Ryan Cheung (Southampton) 3½.

Minor - 1-5 Piotr Zielinski (Horfield), John Webb (Cosham), Nigel Morris (Coventry), John Harris (Forest of Dean), Paul Greenaway (Taunton) 4.

EDINBURGH – Stewart’s Melville College in Edinburgh hosted the 128th Scottish Chess Championships (6-14 July). The Scottish Blitz was won by Ritvars Reimanis with a perfect 7/7, finishing a point ahead of Calum Macqueen (both Edinburgh). The Under-1850 event saw Michael Ash (Musselburgh), Chris Linskaill (Sandy Bells, Edinburgh) and Donald Heron (Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh) tie for both first place and the Scottish U1850 senior title on 4/5, while Alex Macdonald (Greenwood) won the Under-1500, finishing half a point ahead of Isaac Browning (Wandering Dragons, Edinburgh).

KENDAL – 12-year-old Yichen Han defeated his second grandmaster as he smoothly outplayed Nigel Davies at the South Lakes Congress in Kendal (7-9 June), despite having been defeated the round before by IM Joseph McPhillips.

Open - 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 4½/5, 2 Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4, 3 Barry Hymer (Lancaster) 3½.

Major - 1 John Milnes (Bradford) 4, 2-7 Dave Siddall (Carlisle), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Sam Davies (Huddersfield), Kevin Wilson (Darlington), Martin Seeber (Forest Hall), David Hall (Perth) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Syd Cassidy (Carlisle) 4½, 2-3 Peter Lovatt (Malpas), Steve Clare (Wallasey) 4.

Minor - 1-8 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Andrew Duffell (Norwich), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Paul Jackson (Morecombe), Tim Bowler (Maryport), Michael Foss (Woking), Stanley Johnson (South Shields), Nicholas Wright (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 3½.

KETTERING – Yorkshire won the 100th County Championship, gaining revenge for losing the previous two finals on tie-break by destroying Surrey 11-5 in Kettering on July 13th. That fixture paid a fitting tribute to the Yorkshire-born, Surrey stalwart Steve Berry who sadly passed away back in January. The whole of the finals day was well run by County Championship controller Mark Murrell and his team, who provided live games from the top match, as well as a blog and up-to-date results of all the sections throughout. Lincolnshire defeated Devon by a walkover in the Minor Counties Championship. The remaining finals were, however, closely contested, with Essex overcoming Lancashire 8½-7½ in the Under-180, the same score by which Middlesex narrowly got the better of Suffolk in the Under-160. Elsewhere Yorkshire largely outclassed Worcestershire to win 9½-6½ in the Under-140s, but Essex did the same to Yorkshire as they beat them 8-4 in the Under-120s, while Staffordshire edged out Nottingham 7-5 in the Under-100s.

KINGSTON UPON THAMES – Kingston Chess Club are now holding fairly regular rapidplay events – keep an eye on kingstonchessrapidplay.co.uk. At their latest event of 1st June, Gavin Wall

(Richmond) and Russell Granat (Wimbledon) tied for first with 5/6 in the Open. Andriy Peykov (London) won the Major with that same score, while Suyash Srikanta Prasad (Maidenhead) went half a point better in the Minor. It may not surprise you to learn that organiser extraordinaire Adam Raoof has a hand in the Kingston Rapidplay.

In another of his recent events, the Muswell Hill Rapidplay of June 25th, Ben Keohane (London) triumphed with 5/6 in the Open, as did Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) in the Major and David Lewis (Hendon) in the Minor.

The Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (15-16 June) was a little more competitive, Stephen Prior (Grantham), Chris Davison (Cambridge) and Mikhail Sedykh (Lewisham) sharing first place in the top section with 4/5. However, Georgi Aleksiev (Bulgaria) racked up a perfect score in the Under-1900 and Lee Bullock (Hackney) also came outright first, albeit with half a point less in the Minor.

LLANDUDNO – Philip Hayward had the tournament of his life at the North Wales Congress as he bounced back from an opening round defeat to win four on the trot, including defeating Nigel Davies in the final round in Llandudno.

Open - 1-3 Philip Hayward (Oxford), Adam Ashton (Oldham), Thomas Carroll (Hoylake) 4.

Major - 1-2 Graham Williamson (Stevenage), Paul Benson (Runcorn), 4, 3-7 Duncan Williams (Swansea), Robert Taylor (Ashfield), David Pinch (Steynton), Sam Davies (Southport), Paul Carlucci (London) 3½.

Minor - 1-2 Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Ken Gorman (Poulton-le-Fylde) 4½, 3-7 Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Timothy Allen (Battersea), Jeff Wilson (Oldham), Jonathan Jones (Steynton), Nick Holmes (Shrewsbury) 3½.

LONDON – A welcome new initiative was the SCCU/London Club Championships, which took place on June 29th in the same venue that the Golders Green Rapidplay uses, St Luke's Church Hall. This rapid event featured a top section for teams with a grade no higher than an average of 180. That was won by Muswell Hill with a perfect 12/12, while in the Average-150 section Hatch End edged out Pimlico on board points after both finished on 11/12 and the Average-120 was won by DHSS II with 100%.

The other big news from the capital is that the London League has finally scrapped adjournments and will now be played at a rate of 75 minutes for all the moves with a 15-second increment per move. The season just finished was blighted by leading club Drunken Knights no longer being able to play at the Plough, causing them to withdraw part way through the season. Meanwhile Wood Green continued on their merry way, winning all their matches en route to an amazing seventeenth consecutive Division One title, with Battersea second on 9½/11 and Richmond a further point in arrears.



UPPINGHAM – Supported by Winchester College, the finals of the ECF National Schools Chess Championship once again took place at Uppingham School (2-3 July). RGS Guildford averaged a whopping 195 over six boards but were defeated on board count by City of London School [*on the left in the photo, picture by Phill Beckett*], who only averaged 166. City won all four of their matches, including another board-count victory over 2018 Champions Reading School (average 176). Hampton School [*on the right in the photo*] (average

180) came second after losing 4-2 to City in the final round, with Reading School, Royal Grammar School, Guildford and Royal Grammar School, Newcastle finishing third equal on 3/4.

August 2019

BASINGSTOKE – Under his ‘GM Chess’ brand Nick Pert put on an Under-2200 Congress at the Basingstoke Country Hotel (6-7 July), which was won by Steven Jones (Basingstoke) with 4½/5, who finished half a point ahead of Oliver Howell (Coulsdon). There was also an Under-1900 section, won by Aaron Saunders (Bristol) with 4½/5, with Peter Dove (Newbury), Sanjit Kumar (Richmond) and Shardul Godbole (India) sharing second place.

COPTHORNE – Nick Pert would withdraw from the British after being defeated by his twin brother Richard in round 7 but had earlier warmed up for Torquay at the Weald Congress (13-14 July).

Open - 1-2 Oleg Korneev (Spain), Nick Pert (Sandhurst) 4½/5, 3-4 David Graham (Worthing), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) 4.

Major - 1-2 Tim Hilton (Oldham), Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking) 4½, 3-5 George Neale (Worthing), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Peter Davies (East Glamorgan) 4.

Intermediate - 1 Lee Bullock (Hackney) 4½, 2-5 Susan Chadwick (Brighton), David Agostinelli (Southampton), Paul O’Brien (Worthing), Hector Denfield (London) 4.

Minor - 1-2 Oliver Stockham (Sussex), Chris Smith (Bristol) 4½, 3-5 John Brooke (Bingley), Peter Crosby (Horsham), Norman Hawkins (East Grinstead) 4.

DUNDALK – France edged out the Netherlands due to having won their head-to-head encounter at the Glorney Cup, which was held in County Louth (22-24 July), just to the south of the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland. Both sides finished on 4/5 and 17½/25, a point ahead of England and Ireland. The Gilbert Cup (formerly the Faber) also went to the wire, with England just edging out France on board points due in no small part to the 4½/5 racked up by both Cassie Graham and Mahima Raghavendra on boards 1 and 2. England dominated the Robinson Cup, winning all five matches, with Jacob Yoon and Tristian See top scoring with ‘+4’, while Aaravamudhan Balaji made 4/5 on top board. However, England had to settle for second behind the Netherlands in the Stokes Cup, despite Luca Buanne amassing 4½/5. Alongside the junior tournaments, an allplay-all was held which Icelandic FM Vignir Stefansson won with 7/9, making an IM norm while finishing half a point ahead of Gavin Wall and Joseph McPhillips.

EDINBURGH – Top seed Matthew Turner triumphed at the Scottish Championship held at Stewart's Melville College in Edinburgh (6-14 July). Turner's federation has been Scottish for a number of years now, so he was able to become Scottish Champion after tying for first place with Latvian FM Ritvars Reimanis, who bounced back strongly after an early defeat against Danny Gormally. Leading scores: 1-2 Matthew Turner (Street), Ritvars Reimanis (Edinburgh) 7/9, 3-6 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Colin McNab (Glasgow), Alan Tate (Edinburgh), Tim Wall (Newcastle) 6½, 7-10 Alexandru-Bogdan Banzea (Romania), David Eggleston (Durham), Adam Bremner (Aberdeen), Declan Shafi (Castlehill) 6.

HASTINGS – We were delighted to see that the future of the famous Hastings International Congress is secure after the tournament gained the backing of Caplin, an IT company who specialise in creating trading software and technology for financial institutions. This year will be the 99th Hastings Congress and will take place from December 28th until January 5th. See www.hastingschess.com for more details.

LONDON – FM John Richardson triumphed at the latest Golders Green Rapidplay on August 3rd.

Open - 1 John Richardson (Hendon) 5/6, 2-4 Pjotrs Kolasa (Latvia), Chris Gant (Athenaeum), Ilia Malinovskii (Russia) 4½.

Major - 1 Jason Rihel (London) 5, 2 Andrew Hayler (West London) 4½, 3 Han-Sen Choong (Hampstead) 4.

Minor - 1 Vladimir Bovtramovics (Woking) 6, 2 Claudio Oliveri (Hendon) 5, 3 Asha Jina (Harpenden) 4½.

Amateur - 1 Adah Simon Ogah (Harrow) 5, 2-3 Faye Ainscow (Kings Head), Rebecca Carter (Barnet) 4½.

Improvers - 1-3 William Ellinger (Brighton), Djuna Tree (Kingston), Hari Singh (Wimbledon) 5.

Under-80 - 1-2 Quentin Wang (Hampstead), Seylon Kumaran (Barnet) 4½, 3-4 Alex Istari, Eliya Istari (both Edgware) 4½.

Meanwhile back on County Championship Finals day, July 13th, FM William Claridge-Hansen had warmed up for the British by visiting Golders Green.

Open - 1-2 William Claridge-Hansen (Exeter), Athar Ansari (Newport) 5/6, 3-6 David Zakarian (Oxford), Andrew Lewis (Manningtree), Hans-Peter Hansen (Buckinghamshire), Roman Ismailov (Barking) 4½.

Major - 1 Tim Joslin (Ealing) 5½, 2 Neil Staples (Banbury) 4½, 3-8 Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head), Graham Cole (Cowley), Andrew Hayler (West London), Niall Clarke (Borehamwood), Han-Sen Choong (Hampstead), Luca Buanne (Battersea) 4.

Minor - 1 Georgi Aleksiev (Bulgaria) 5½, 2-3 David McNish (Enfield), Alexander Funk (Hendon) 4½.

Amateur - 1-2 Michael Corbett (Aylesbury), Radha Ratnesan (Surbiton) 5, 3-4 Jeff Fleischer (Croydon), Faye Ainscow (Kings Head) 4½.

Improvers - 1-3 Djuna Tree (Kingston), David May (Norwich), Kapya Sakala (Sussex) 5.

Under-80 - 1 Guy Levy (Middlesex) 6, 2 Deniz Ozdenoren (Barnet) 5, 3-4 Vassily Sagyaman (Coventry), James Cowan (Hertfordshire) 4.

And, finally, back on June 14th, Ilia Malinovskii had scooped the top honours.

Open - 1 Ilia Malinovskii (Russia) 5½, 2 John Richardson (Hendon) 5, 3 Charles Tippleston (Northampton) 4½.

Major - 1 Kennan Kesterson (Richmond) 5½, 2 Ian Deswarte (Guildford) 5, 3 George Clarkson (Barnet) 4½.

Minor - 1 Salvatore Pepe 5, 2-3 Claudio Oliveri (both Hendon), Rian Sarkar (Barnet) 4½.

Amateur - 1 Mihaite-Vasile Focsa (Romania) 5½, 2-3 Ole Pedersen (Norway), Charles Sturt (Hammersmith) 4½.

Improvers - 1-3 Frank Usher (Dulwich), Gul Kapur (Enfield), Martin Scott (London) 5.

Under-80 - 1 Conor O'Sullivan (Barnet) 5, 2-4 Ishaan Patel (Barnet), Jai Kothari (Coulsdon), Kush Patel (Surrey) 4.

Elsewhere in the capital Charles Chakanyuka (Watford) triumphed with 4½/5 at the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (10-11 August), finishing half a point ahead of Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon). Timothy Davis (Farnham) also made '+4' in the Under-1900, to edge out Nicolas Mohnblatt (Imperial College) and Lukas Orgler (Barnet) by a halfpoint, while in the Under-135 Michal Kajda (Newham), Mohammad Farahi-Far (Barnet) and Kumar Banerji (Richmond) shared top honours on 4/5.

A little earlier, on July 23rd, Nasir Rizvi (Coulsdon) had triumphed at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay, racking up 5½/6 to edge out Alex Ethelontis (Barnet) by half a point. In the Major Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) prevailed with 5½/6, which was a point more than Jeremy Brockes (Hampstead) managed, while the Minor was won by Martin Jones (Oswestry) with that same score, with Adah Simon Ogah (Harrow) and Nick Goulbourne (Hendon) back on 4½.

Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst) and Gavin Wall (Richmond) shared first place with 5/6 in the Kingston Rapidplay of July 27th. Yasser Tello (Wimbledon) won the Under-160 with 5½/6, edging out Jacques Tivillier (Mushrooms) by half a point, while the Under-120 saw Henry Shaw (Crowborough), William Ellinger (Brighton) and Ashley Wilson (Epson) tie for first on 5/6.

SOUTH SHIELDS – David Walker (Leam Lane) was defeated by fellow FM Charlie Storey (Jesmond) at the South Shields FIDE-rated Blitz on July 6th, but still won the tournament with 8/9. Storey was held to a draw by Malaysian Law Zhe Kang and defeated in the final round by South Shields Champion David Mooney, who would finish third on 7/9.

TELFORD – Mark Hebden proved too strong for the chasing pack which included the future Irish Champion at the latest 4NCL Congress in Telford (19-21 July).

Open - 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 4½/5, 2-8 Conor Murphy (Charlton), Peter Sowray (Richmond), Adam Ashton (3Cs), Murad Abdulla (Aberdeen), Yichen Han (Newcastle), Shabir Okhai (Syston), Steven Jones (Basingstoke) 4.

Major - 1-5 Richard Bryant (Oswestry), Tim Spanton (Battersea), Tim Hilton (Oldham), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Martin Burns (Stockport) 4.

Minor - 1 Julian Hawthorne (Kidsgrove) 4½, 2-6 Lovinia Chidi (Wallington), Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster), Martin Jones (Haverfordwest), Peter Wood (Hastings), John Merry (Salford) 4.



TORQUAY – The British Championships proved quite a hit back at the Riviera International Centre in Torquay (26 July – 4 August). As well as a share of third, Ravi Haria also bagged the British Under-21 title, which is incorporated into the main Championship, as is the Under-18 title. That was won by Jonah Willow (West Nottingham) and Borna Derakhshani (Canterbury), who both finished on a highly creditable 5½/9. That same score was also reached by Charlie Storey (Jesmond), who made an

IM norm. Deserving of a special mention too are all of Sohum Lohia [pictured], who claimed both the Under-10 and the Under-11 titles, veteran IM James Sherwin, who tied for first in the Rapidplay, and IM Brandon Clarke who, possibly unimpressed by the prizes in the Championship, elected to enter both the Major Open and the Morning Open. Clarke would accrue £990 whilst conceding just the one draw to Adam A. Taylor.

September 2019

UK - The first two weekends of September saw 8 qualifying tournaments take place for the UK Open Blitz Championship. Many IMs and three GMs took part, possibly lured by the opportunity to win the £1,000 first prize in Solihull on Saturday, November 16th. Jonathan Pein (Durham) travelled over to **Belfast** and qualified on 13/15 along with Steve Rush (Queen's University), while in **Birmingham** Ameet Ghasi (Sutton Coldfield) amassed a perfect score, with Jonah Willow (Nottingham) also qualifying, albeit back on 12½/15. In **Bristol** the two competing grandmasters both qualified, Matthew Turner (Glastonbury) racking up 13½/15, while Keith Arkell (Paignton) also went through on 12, despite a last-round defeat at the hands of our Executive Editor. That may explain why Bristol blitz expert James Sherwin headed west and qualified in **Cardiff** on 13½/15, despite finishing half a point behind fellow, and local, IM Jose Camacho Collados, with one of the stars of last year's Blitz Final, Marcus Harvey, only able to finish third.



Bristol Grammar School hosted one of the eight qualifiers for the final of the UK Open Blitz Championship. Nearest the camera is Malcolm Pein and Matthew Turner can be seen in the distance [picture by John Stubbs]

Justin Tan may now be living in Amsterdam, but he returned to **Edinburgh** to qualify from the Scottish capital along with Andrew Greet (Bearsden) on 13/15. Perhaps surprisingly, the **London** qualifier didn't attract a single grandmaster but was still pretty strong, with John-Paul Wallace (Athenaeum) finished first on just 12/15. Fellow IM Thomas Rendle (Hammersmith) was half a point behind and also progressed, with Ravia Haria, David Haydon and Peter Roberson narrowly missing out. James Adair (Stamford Bridge) emerged triumphant with 13/15 in **Bolton**, where we were delighted to see former England captain Allan Beardsworth (Stockport) qualifying, after edging out Andrew Horton (3Cs) on tiebreak. A stronger qualifier was **Newcastle**, where blitz expert Charlie Storey could only finish on '+3'. Danny Gormally (Alnwick) was in excellent form, drawing only with Yichen Han, with Lorin D'Costa (Hendon) finishing second on 13/15.

BELFAST - 16-year-old Daniil Zelenchuk (Strand) won his first Ulster Championship as he racked up 5/6 to see off Jacob Flynn by half a point at the Europa Hotel (24-26 August). Conor Spackman (BBC) won the Intermediate with 5½/6, while Colm Hawkins (Australia) edged out Adrian Dornford-Smith (Strand) on tie-break in the Junior.

BRIDGEND - Matthew Turner (Glastonbury) triumphed at the 1st Welsh Masters in Bridgend (26-30 August). Both the Scottish Champion and Keith Arkell (Paignton) remained unbeaten, but Turner made '+6' to Arkell's '+5' in this 10 player all-play-all. Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow continues to impress and was only defeated by Turner as he finished half a point shy of a norm on 6½/9, with Jack Rudd (Barnstaple) back on 6.

CROWBOROUGH - David Norton (Horley) amassed 5½/6 to win the Berberich Cup and £150 at the Crowborough Rapidplay on September 14th. Also unbeaten was David Graham (Worthing), who was half a point behind, with Ian Snape (Beckenham), Chaski Patrick (Uckfield), and John Sugden (Hastings) a further half-point in arrears. Run on the continental model, the tournament featured just one section, with seven grading prizes of £40 awarded, while Worthing won the team award.

MANCHESTER - Joseph McPhillips scooped the £600 first prize at the Manchester Summer Congress, defeating in the final round China's Ran Song who had earlier overcome GM Stephen Gordon.

Open - 1 Joseph McPhillips (Bolton) 4½/5, 2-4 Brandon Clarke (Wood Green), Nigel Davies (Southport), Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4.

Major - 1-3 Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking), Mike Fisher (Oldham), Robert Dean (Pudsey) 4½.

Knights - 1 Aisha Benhamida (Tameside) 4½, 2-4 Tomas Adamski (Rolls Royce, Derby), Ariana Escobar (Congleton), Carl Stephens (Darlington) 4.

SHEFFIELD - Seniors dominated the Open section at the Darnall and Handsworth Rapidplay, filling the top four spots on August 31st.

Open - 1-2 Mike Surtees (Great Lever), Jim Burnett (Doncaster) 4½/6, 3-4 Chris Shephard (Sheffield), Paul Hutchinson (Scunthorpe) 4.

Major - 1-3 Robert Starley (Leeds), Jeremy Hamm (Sheffield), Andrew Stoker (Stockport) 5.

Intermediate - 1 Daniel Hill (Hull) 5½, 2 Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 3-4 Nathaniel Holroyd-Doveton (Rotherham), Ned Carmichael (Beverley) 4½.

Minor - 1-2 Aisha Benhamida (Tameside), John Light (Limewood) 5, 3 Paul Leonard (South Manchester) 4½.

October 2019

CREWE – IM Brandon Clarke defeated second seed Jonah Willow in the final round of the Crewe Congress (27-29 September), but had to settle for a share of first, having earlier drawn with Ali Jaunooby and because Rajat Makkar finished by reeling off four straight wins.

Open - 1-2 Brandon Clarke (Littlethorpe), Rajat Makkar (Reading) 4½/5, 3 Leysaa Bin-Suhayl (Peterborough) 4.

Major - 1 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 4, 2-8 David Patrick (Halifax), Reg Clucas (Altrincham), Carl Gartside (Macclesfield), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Kyle Pelling (Tameside), Peter Fisher (Wrexham), Sam Turner (Alsager) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Julian Hawthorne (Kidsgrove) 4½, 2-3 Richard Szwajkun (Telford), Michael Carroll (Great Lever) 4.

Minor - 1-2 Patrick Coleman (Lytham St Annes), Paul Broderick (Newport) 4½, 3 Adam Miller (Wallasey) 4.

LONDON – John Saunders reports from a special anniversary -

On September 29th Barclays Bank Chess Club held a double GM simul at its Canary Wharf headquarters in London to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Some 80 players lined up to face the might of Mickey Adams and Matthew Sadler, mostly from Barclays Bank CC itself, but also including some invitees from other London financial institutions. The two English super-GMs played 40 opponents each, choosing to alternate colours rather than take white on all boards. The opposition was of disparate strength, ranging from the elementary level to ratings in excess of 2200.

The simul was opened by Barclays senior management and then organiser Daniel Lindner gave a quick but informative presentation of the club's history. It is curious how many chess clubs, particularly those of public sector organisation and businesses, started up after the First World War as returning soldiers yearned for a more metaphorical form of combat. The club played for decades in the London Bank Chess League, from 1999 in the Combined Banks and Insurance Chess League and, since 2014, in the City Chess League. A number of strong players have turned out for Barclays over the years, including one grandmaster. Keith Richardson (1942-2017) worked in the New Covent Garden Market branch of Barclays some years ago and in 1975 became the country's first correspondence GM.

The grandmasters proved a little too tough for the opposition, with Sadler only conceding two draws and Adams four. Neither lost a game, but Mickey Adams was pushed back on the ropes by Chris Flowers and needed all his magic to salvage a half a point. Perhaps having Magnus Carlsen as a playing partner in the 2017 London Classic Pro-Biz Cup had rubbed off on the American financier, as he played really well. Another excellent performance was put in by Masrura Khakimova, who held Matthew Sadler to a draw and was rewarded with a prize of the Sadler and Regan book *Game Changer*.

Elsewhere in the capital, Ralf Schnabel (Germany) triumphed with 4/5 in the Open at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on September 24th, finishing half a point ahead of Gwilym Price (Godalming) and Ben Keohane (London). Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) won the Major by half a point from Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon), while the Minor was won by David Lewis (Hendon) and Tony Bynnersley (West London).

THANET – Robert Page was present as a different anniversary was marked by the Thanet Congress (16-18 August) -

The Thanet Chess Congress celebrated its 50th anniversary with some special presentations to mark the occasion. Participants from the 1970 congress were invited to attend and seven took part. Each was presented with a souvenir personalised framed record of their achievement in the first congress, and unique king trophies were awarded to winners of each of the five sections. As has become tradition at the Thanet Congress, a charity bookstall was set up which raised £134 for The Royal British Legion. 112 players took part and the Open was won by IM Alan Merry, who defeated FM Martin Taylor in the final round.

Open - 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 4½/5, 2-3 Martin Taylor (Rainham), Partha Mulay (Wanstead) 4.

Challengers - 1-5 Trefor Owens (Broadstairs), Mike Taylor (Stockport), Patrick Burns (Bridge), Paul Jackson (Coulsdon), Zia Quader (Bury St Edmunds) 3½.

Major - 1 Robert Page (Broadstairs) 4½, 2-3 Polina Shchepinova (Horsham), Orla Dorman (Coulsdon) 4.

Intermediate - 1 Manoj Natarajan (Broadstairs) 4½, 2 Derek Hadley (Bloomsbury) 4, 3-6 Timothy Soar (Colwyn Bay), Chris Soltysiak (Athenaeum), Tyrone Jefferies (Swale), Terence Greenaway (Torquay) 3½.

Minor - 1-2 Charlie Ball (St Albans), John Couzens 4½, 3-7 Joshua Vaughan, Reg Pidduck (all Broadstairs), Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood), Leon Garfield (Margate), David Archer (Godalming) 3½.

November 2019

BANGOR – John Cairns of Fruithill Chess Club, Belfast, triumphed with an unbeaten 5/6 at the Bangor Rapidplay on October 5th, which was sponsored by Mellons Hyundai. Sharing second, half a point behind, were Gabor Horvath (Strand), Michael Waters (Bray), Alex Goss (Dublin) and Walter Wilson (Newtownards), while Christopher Dorrian (Carrickfergus) won the Junior Championship with 5/6.

BIRMINGHAM – Warley Quinborne again hosted the Birmingham & District League Rapidplay on October 20th, where Mark Hebden once again proved too strong.

Open - 1 Mark Hebden (Leicester) 6/7, 2 Lawrence Cooper (Stafford) 5½, 3-6 Tomasz Sygnowski, Henrik Stepanyan (both Sutton Coldfield), Shabir Okhai (Syston), Andrew Brett (Norfolk) 4½.

Major - 1 Oleg Cukovs (Poulton-le-Fylde) 5½, 2-4 Shahab Quraishi (West Bromwich), Gheorghe Albu (Braunstone), Dustin Bowcott (Halesowen) 5.

Intermediate - 1 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 6½, 2 Gary White (Telford) 6, 3-5 Steve Whatmore (Rugeley), Christopher Evans (King's Heath), Tony Shaw (Worcester) 5.

Minor - 1 Don Curry (Halesowen) 6, 2-4 Granville Hill (Leicester), Ansh Agrawal (Birmingham), Victor Brown (Walsall Kipping) 5½.

BOURNEMOUTH – Here are the results of the Dorset Congress (11-13 October)

Open - 1 Declan Lovelock (Southbourne) 4½/5, 2-3 Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Walter Saunders (Bath) 3½.

Major - 1-2 Frank Pittman (Weymouth), Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) 4, 3-5 Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Richard Smith (Poole), Jon Catchpole (Southbourne) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Rob McClatchey (Salisbury) 4½, 2-5 Srivathsa Venkataramanan (London), John Belinger (New Milton), Paul Jackson (Bournemouth), Peter Land (Hanham) 3½.

Minor - 1 Graeme Ford (Salisbury) 4½, 2-5 Jennifer Goldsmith (Harrow), Tim Jones (New Milton), Peter Harrington (Blackburn), George Holden (Purbeck) 4.



A summery John Nunn receives first prize at Bude in September from the organiser of the Clarke Memorial Rapidplay, John Constable [picture by Bob Jones]

BRADFORD – Leading local player Phil Watson drew with Adam Ashton in the final round as the pair shared first place at the Bradford Congress (13-15 September).

Open - 1-2 Adam Ashton (3Cs), Phil Watson (Bradford) 4/5, 3-7 Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Matthew Parsons (Hebden Bridge), Jim Burnett (Doncaster), Peter Shaw (Wakefield), Robert Starley (Leeds) 3½.

Major - 1-4 Tim Spanton (Battersea), Marek Soszynski (Sutton Coldfield), Stephen Stokes (Bury), Yasser Tello (Wimbledon) 4.

Minor - 1-2 Vivien Webster (Halifax), David Ashton (Pensby) 4½, 3 David Buckell (Clitheroe) 4.

BUDE – These days GM John Nunn [left] is a member of Bude Chess Club and he won the Peter and Peggy Clarke Memorial Rapidplay in Bude with a perfect 6/6 on September 14th. Another contestant was Peggy Clarke's brother, Phil Wood, who was interviewed by Ben Graff in the August CHESS Magazine, while second place back on 4½ points was shared between Matthew Wilson (Teignmouth) and Giles Body (Exeter).

DUNDEE – Despite being outrated by more than 400 points, Richard Jennings of Bon Accord Chess Club defeated IM Andrew Greet in the opening round of the Dundee Congress (18-20 October), which won him a bottle of Lindores Abbey's Aqua Vitae.

Open - 1-4 David Findlay, Ed Spencer (both Dundee), Stephen Mannion (Paisley), Murad Abdulla (Aberdeen) 4/5.

Major - 1 Stephen Smith (Stirling) 5, 2-5 Stephen Harvey (Oban), William Clinton (Livingston), Frankie Murray (East Kilbride), Laurenzu Archip (Dundee) 4.

Minor - 1-3 Hunter McKay (Inverness), Angus Sneddon (Newport-on-Tay), Tom Wardlaw (Perth) 4½.

FAREHAM – Rolandas Lukosius became Hampshire Champion on tie-break from defending champion Matt Chapman after the pair had tied for second in the Hampshire Congress (1-3 November)

Open - 1 Cliff Chandler (Maidstone) 5/6, 2-3 Matt Chapman (Fareham), Rolandas Lukosius (Hamble) 4.

Major - 1 Matthew Wilson (Plymouth) 5, 2-4 Thomas Evans (Cosham), David Holmes (Chandlers Ford), John Torrance (Bromley) 4½.

Minor - 1-2 Chris Webb (Dorchester), Charles Bird (Battersea) 5, 3 William Taplin (Keynsham) 4½.

GLASGOW – Andrew Greet triumphed at a strong Polytechnic Centenary Quickplay on September 26th as the Glasgow Club celebrated their 100th anniversary. On display was an original stained glass artwork designed and created by member Julien Papillon, which features 100 chess pieces – one for each year of the club's existence, with the gold king representing 1988, the year Glasgow Polytechnic became the first Scottish Club to win the British National Club Championship. Leading scores: 1 Andrew Greet (Bearsden) 5/5, 2 Stephen Mannion (Paisley) 4½, 3-7 Alan Tate (Edinburgh), Graeme Nolan (Bellshill), Roddy McKay (Cathcart), Robert Mitchell (Glasgow), Rob Colston (Bearsden) 4.

GUERNSEY – Mark Hebden (Leicester) scooped the £1,200 first prize with a clean sweep at the Guernsey Open (20-26 October), finishing a point clear of Nigel Povah (Guildford) who made 6/7, with Valerio Bianco (Italy) and John Wager (Maidenhead) back on 5. Meanwhile local player Arita Strade won the Holiday tournament with 6½/7 by half a point from Peter Hoogakker (Holland), with Nigel Dennis (Maidenhead) and Bill Ingham (Teignmouth) a further point back.

HULL – A unique partnership between the 4NCL and the Hull and District Chess Association, led by Mike Truran and Stephen Greep, saw Hull stage a GM norm event (30 October - 3 November). The tournament was supported by Hull Culture and Leisure, the Friends of Chess, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust and the ECF, and joined for its latter stages by a successful 56th Hull Congress. The 10-player all-play-all always looked too competitive for anyone to make a GM norm, although Marcus Harvey's highly respectable 50% earned him an IM norm. Despite starting with only 1/3, top seed Wojtech Plat looked quite at home with the rapid pace of two games a day – and games without a time control, that being 90 minutes for the whole game plus 30 seconds a move. Plat had to survive suspect positions en route to a couple of wins, but also oozed class at times, on the board as well as the clock, as he came through to edge out Matthew Turner by a point. At the other end of the field, your editor was simply relieved not to finish on nul points, mixing playing with magazine duties. The strength of the weekend tournament was obvious as early as the second round, where Mark Hebden was held to a draw by young Yichen Han, while Peter Sowray overcame fellow FM Richard Britton. The key battle took place on the Sunday morning as Danny Gormally overpowered Hebden's favourite Marshall, ahead of making a quick draw and pocketing the £500 first prize.

Open - 1 Danny Gormally (Alnwick) 4½/5, 2-4 Jonah Willow (Nottingham), John Richardson (Hendon), Samuel Milson (Sheffield) 4.

Major - 1-2 John Thackray (Hull), Peter Wood (Lewisham) 4½, 3-5 Mick Riding (Gosforth), Denis Georgiou (Appleby Frodingham), Richard Bowman (Keighley) 4.

Minor - 1 Neil Fisher (Peterborough) 4½, 2-6 Andrew Zigmond (Harrogate), Emily Maton (St Albans), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Vivien Webster (Halifax), Milosz Kasprzyk (Hull) 4.

D. Gormally vs M. Hebden, Hull 2019 - Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 O-O Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6 12 d3 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4

The old main line after 12 d3, but these days Black usually prefers 13...Bf5, and only if 14 Qf3 Qh4.

14 g3 Qh3 15 Re4 Nf6 16 Rh4! Qf5 17 Nd2 Ng4?!

Not 17...Qxd3? 18 Rd4, but 17...g5! 18 Rh6 Ng4 19 Ne4! Nxe6 20 Nxd6 is the critical line.

18 f3 Ne5?!

Black is simply pushed backwards after this, although after the 18...Ne3 19 Qe2 Nd5 of Smeets-Hebden, Liverpool 2008, Gormally was no doubt ready with 20 Ne4 when White is better.

19 d4 Ng6 20 Bc2 Qd7 21 Rh5!

The exclamation is for bravery. The rook is quite safe on its advanced square.

21...f5 22 Bb3+ Kh8 23 f4 h6

Running down the number of squares available to the rook, but not only is White a pawn up, he can now seize the initiative.

24 Nf3 Bb7 25 Ne5 Qe8 26 g4?



This is too ambitious, however. 26 Qf3 was indicated, and if 26...Ne7 27 Rh3 Rb8 28 Qh5, retaining a clear plus, or 26...Rb8 27 g4! Ne7? 28 Qh3 with a decisive attack.

26...c5?

Far too ambitious. Instead, 26...Ne7 would have left everything to play for, and if 27 g5 c5 28 gxf6 g6 or 27 Qf3 fxf4 28 Qxf4 Bc8 29 Qh4 Rf6.

27 gxf5 Bxe5!?

Continuing down the faulty line, but 27...Ne7 28 Qg4 Bc8 29 Bc2 would have left White in complete control.

28 fxe5 Nxe5 29 dxe5 Rxf5 30 Rxf5 Qg6+ 31 Rg5 Qe4

Spurning the rook when Black would still find himself a piece in arrears.

32 Bf4! Qxf4 33 Rg3 Qe4 34 Qg4 1-0

LIVERPOOL – We were saddened to hear of the death of David Welch (1945-2019), the highly-respected former Chief Arbiter of the 4NCL and the ECF. He played a vital role in many a British Championships, as well as at Hastings and the Isle of Man and Gibraltar Internationals, not to mention countless weekend and schools' events. Born in Chesterfield, Welch studied physics at Queens' College, Cambridge, where he was even the cox for the college eight. He went on to teach physics at Liverpool College until retiring in 2000 after which his arbiting duties even managed to multiply, while he was also a decent 140/150 player for Wallasey Chess Club until suffering a stroke in Gibraltar in the summer of 2017, which left him badly paralysed. In the words of his good friend and fellow arbiter Peter Purland, who also began teaching at Liverpool College on the same day in 1968, David Welch "will be remembered as a true gentleman, polite, caring, hard working and with an excellent brain."

LONDON – Adam Raoof's monthly Hampstead Under-2200 Congresses remain popular. The September edition (21-22) saw Thomas Villiers and Remy Rushbrooke (both Barnet) tie for first on 4½/5, with Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) winning the Under-1900 section with that same score to finish half a point ahead of Nigel Norman (Coulsdon), Kamila Kolpashnikova (Oxford) and Emily Maton (St Albans). In the Under-1700 Lukasz Zarzycki (Poland) prevailed with '+4' to edge out Andrew Swales (Burnley), Travis Shafer (Bloomberg) and Avyukt Dasgupta (Watford) by half a point. Lukasz Zarzycki (Poland) once again triumphed in the Under-1700 section with 4½/5 on October 19th and 20th, Chris Flowers (Pimlico) and Frank Gillespie (Beckenham) finishing half a point adrift. There the Under 1900 went to Timur Kuzhelev (Coulsdon), also with '+4', John Cawston (Selby) and Dylan Mize (Pimlico) finishing back on 4/5, while Lorenzo Lucchi (London) and Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough) shared top honours with 4½ points in the Under-2200. There was also a Muswell Hill Rapidplay on October 22nd which even attracted a grandmaster, but Bogdan Lalic (Hastings) had to settle for a share of first with Sacha Brozel (Hendon) on 5½/6. Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) and Colin Gentile (Muswell Hill) came joint first with '+4' in the Major, while the Minor saw a four-way tie for first on 4½/6 between Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood), Tony Bynnersley (West London), Daniel Aserkoff (Barnet) and Cian Ward (Richmond).

2019 Hull 4NCL GM Tournament (Category: 9, average rating = 2455 Elo)																
	Player	Country	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	Pts	TPR
1	Vojtech	Plat	CZE	2570	*	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	½	1	6.5	2608
2	Matthew	Turner	SCO	2517	1	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	0	1	5.5	2527

3	Andrew	Greet	SCO	2414	0	½	*	½	0	½	1	½	1	1	5	2499
4	Laszlo	Gonda	HUN	2532	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	4.5	2448
5	Marcus	Harvey	ENG	2405	½	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	0	1	4.5	2461
6	Ravi	Haria	ENF	2451	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	4.5	2456
7	David	Eggleston	ENG	2392	0	0	0	½	1	½	*	1	1	½	4.5	2462
8	Peter	Roberson	ENG	2437	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	1	½	4	2420
9	Alan	Merry	ENG	2426	½	1	0	½	1	½	0	0	*	0	3.5	2381
10	Richard	Palliser	ENG	2413	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	½	1	*	2.5	2295

MOUNT MURRAY – Alongside the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss, the Isle of Man International featured Major and Minor sections under the care of International Arbiter (and IM) Jack Rudd (12-18 October).

Major - 1-4 David Ireland (Coventry), Nathanael Paul (Newport), Nicola-Alexandar Mircov (Romania), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) 5.

Minor - 1 Andrew Brocklehurst (Civil Service) 5½, 2-3 Russell Goodfellow (Tunbridge Wells), Brian Towers (South Shields) 5.

NORTH SHIELDS – Icelandic IM Gudmundur Kjartansson shared first place with Durham undergraduate and fellow IM Andrew Horton in a strong edition of the Northumberland Congress in North Shields (27-29 September).

Open - 1-2 Gudmundur Kjartansson (Iceland), Andrew Horton (3Cs) 4/5, 3-6 David Walker (South Shields), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), James Moreby (Gosforth), David Henderson (Tynemouth) 3½.

Major - 1-3 Darren Laws (Tynemouth), Howard Turner (Lewisham), Alexander Brodie (Forest Hall) 4.

Minor - 1 Morgan French (Forest Hall) 4½, 2- 4 Paul Salisbury (Leeds), Kevin Cox (Gateshead), David Hunn (Dagenham) 4.

Foundation - 1 James McKay (Gosforth) 7½/10, 2 Luke Fletcher (Gosforth) 7, 3-4 Matthew Jepson (Forest Hall), Gerald Gregory (Hertford) 6½.

SOLIHULL – Justin Tan triumphed at the final of the British Blitz Championship in Solihull on November 16th.

SOUTH NORMANTON – John Merriman played the perfect Swiss Gambit at the 23rd 4NCL Congress in South Normanton (4-6 October). The eighth seed drew his first game before winning four on the bounce, including outplaying Mark Hebden in the final round. Meanwhile top seed Brandon Clarke was defeated by Martin Burrows and could only finish on 3/5, although Clarke would quickly bounce back to form on the Isle of Man.

Open - 1 John Merriman (Orpington) 4½/5, 2 Martin Burrows (Wigston) 4, 3-10 Keith Arkell (Paignton), Mark Hebden (Leicester), Jonah Willow (Nottingham), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Aditya Verma (Orpington), Max Turner (Berwick), Rajjat Makkar (Reading), Eric Gardiner (Hull) 3½.

Major - 1-2 Tim Spanton (Battersea), Robert Taylor (Ashfield) 4, 3-10 Peter Davies (Pontypridd), Geoffrey Brown (Folkestone), John Garnett (Stockton), Richard Bryant (Oswestry), Rob Tokeley (Burnley), Robert Dean (Pudsey), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Sam Davies (Southport) 3½.

Minor - 1-2 Paul Salisbury (Leeds), Tomasz Adamski (Derby) 4, 3-9 Tas Dhillon (Syston), Neal Fisher

(Peterborough), Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Matthew Bridgeman (Morecombe), Chris Fraser (West Bridgford), Nigel Morris (Coventry), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Newport) 3½.

SWANSEA – Czech FM Daniel Kozusek triumphed at the West Wales Congress in Swansea (11-13 October).

Open - 1 Daniel Kozusek (Pontypridd) 4½/5, 2-3 Grzegorz Toczek (Cardiff), Ian Thompson (Athenaeum) 4.

Major - 1-2 David Pinch (Milford Haven), Philip Pe (Philippines) 4.

Minor - 1 Alex Lawrence (Pontypridd) 4½, 2 Paul Bevan (Swansea) 4.



WOLFSCASTLE – On October 19th Wolfscastle village green saw a plaque unveiled [left] to commemorate the life of William Davies Evans (27 January 1790 - 3 August 1872), who was born just outside the village. Captain Evans is remembered for the invention of tri-coloured safety lighting for ships at sea, although chessplayers are much more likely to know him for his gambit, **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4**. Thanks to the sterling research of Tim Harding, it was shown how Evans' frequent voyages from Ireland to Ostend (where he is buried), and from Tilbury to Cape Verde enabled him to play chess with a great number of the leading Victorian players. The Welsh

Chess Union was represented by Howard Williams, Iolo Jones and Peter Bevan at the unveiling, and commented that they were 'justifiably proud of the achievements of William Davies Evans as he was the strongest player to ever have been born in Wales to date, and his memory will never be forgotten!'

December 2019

BELFAST – There was a three-way tie for first at the Ulster Masters in Belfast (23-24 November).

Masters - 1-3 Gareth Annesley (Belfast South), Calum Leitch (Strand), Danny Roberts (Civil Service) 3½/5.

Intermediate - 1-3 Mathew Dougherty (Queen's University), James O'Fee (Bangor), Aaron Wafflart (Strand) 4.

BOLTON – Paul Macklin won the Bolton Rapidplay for a fourth consecutive occasion on December 1st, although this time he had to settle for a share of first.

Open - 1-3 Paul Macklin (Chorlton), Mike Surtees (Great Lever), Yichen Han (Forest Hall) 4½/6.

Major - 1 John Hall (Alwoodley) 5½, 2 Sam Parry (Cheddleton) 5, 3-6 Reg Clucas (Altrincham), Gerald Fletcher (Hillsborough), Peter Garrett (Waterloo), Michael Barooah (Formby) 4.

Knights - 1 David Aston (Pensby) 6, 2-5 Michal Oszczyk, Chagdarsuran Batbileg (both Eccles), Robert Owens (Formby), John Kelly (Stockport) 5.

BURY ST EDMUNDS – Two IMs tied for first at the ever popular Bury St Edmunds Congress (26-27 October).

Open - 1-2 Richard Pert (Brentwood), Antanas Zapolskis (London) 4½/5, 3 Martin Walker (Norwich) 4.

Major - 1-2 Paul Kenning (Braintree), Vladimirs Bovtramovics (Woking) 4, 3-8 Dominic Bartram (Milton Keynes), John Daugman (Cambridge), Chris Levy (Hackney), Chris Willoughby (Brentwood), Sarah Weersing (Linton), Gavith Dharmasena (Linton) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 R.K. Ranjith (Brentwood) 4½, 2-5 Marc Bryant (Hastings), Giovanni Esuperanzi (Cambridge), Colin Payne (Norwich), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 4.

Minor - 1-5 David May (Norwich), John Duff-Cole (Colchester), Paul Buswell (Hastings), Rowan Kent (Bury St Edmunds), Kameron Grose (Barnet) 4.

EXMOUTH – This year's 20th Royal Beacon Seniors Congress (4-8 November) was Bob Jones's last at the helm and we very much hope that the event will continue in Exmouth.

Seniors - 1-2 Alan Crombleholme (Walsall), William Adaway (Dorchester) 4½/5, 3-4 Peter Halmkin (Dawlish), Bill Ingham (Teignmouth) 3½.

'Juniors' - 1 Robin Moss (Carlisle) 4½, 2-3 Graham Bolt (Exeter), Mike Waddington (Dorchester) 3½.

GLASGOW – The Malawi Rapidplay raised £1410 for the Malawi Charity on November 30th.

Open - 1-3 Andrew Greet (Bearsden), Jonathan McKay (Musselburgh), Tommy Barrett (Castlehill) 4/5.

Major - 1-4 Brian Teaz (Irvine), Stuart Lampard (Troon), Eric MacKinnon (Carrick), Calum McGillivray (Edinburgh) 3½.

Minor - 1 Jainill Vadalía 4½, 2-5 Ruairidh MacKay, Ibrahim Khan (all Glasgow), James Keegan (Galston), Carolina Espinosa Cancino (Girvan) 4.

HEREFORD – The Hereford Congress saw chess return to the Green Dragon Hotel (30 November - 1 December).

Major - 1 Joseph Turner (Malpas) 4/5, 2-3 Richard George (Cirencester), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale) 3½.

Intermediate - 1 Kyle Pelling (Tameside) 4½, 2-3 Rob McClatchey (Salisbury), David Teague (Harrogate) 3½.

Minor - 1 Patrick Sartain 4½, 2-3 Jennifer Goldsmith (both Harrow), Paul Broderick (Newport) 3½.

LETCHWORTH – The indefatigable Adam Raoof's latest venture is the Letchworth Rapidplay, which takes place in the Grand Ballroom of the Broadway Hotel, just opposite the town's station. Ian Thompson triumphed on October 27th.

Open - 1 Ian Thompson (Crowthorne) 4½/6, 2-4 Peter Hunt (Leighton Buzzard), Connor Clarke (Barnet), Kennan Kesterson (Richmond) 4.

Major - 1-3 Raghu Kamath (Richmond), Haran Rasalingham (Dulwich), Matthew Ball (St Albans) 4½.

Minor - 1 Cecil Sloan (Watford) 5, 2 Dhruv Radhakrishnan (Hertfordshire) 4½, 3-4 Jean-Claude Sartenauer (Hendon), Adam Tarling (Guildford) 4.

It was then young Rajat Makkar's turn to triumph on November 17th.

Open - 1 Rajat Makkar (Reading) 6/6, 2 Ashley Stewart (Royston) 4.

Major - 1 Peter Tart (Camberley) 5½, 2-3 Peter Brocklehurst (Civil Service), Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head) 4.

Minor - 1 Hossain Mo (Bangladesh) 5½, 2-4 Cecil Sloan (Watford), Paul Walton (Royston), Alison Bexfield (Letchworth) 4.

LONDON – Ali Hill won the Open at the Central London Congress, which was once again hosted by Imperial College (1-3 November).

Open - 1 Alistair Hill (Battersea) 4½/5, 2-3 Sylvian Eche (Hammersmith), Christopher Russell (Muswell Hill) 4.

Major - 1 Julian Llewellyn (Kings Head) 4½, 2-3 Kevin Millward (Athenaeum), Will Johnston

(Hammersmith) 4.

Minor - 1 R.K. Ranjith (Brentwood) 4½, 2-3 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Timothy Woods (Sussex) 4.

Regular visitor Nicholas Tavoularis (Middlesbrough) racked up a perfect score at the latest Hampstead Under-2200 Congress (23-24 November), finishing a point ahead of Marcus Osborne (Wimbledon). Robert Cassen (Middlesex) and Lorenzo Fava (Cambridge) shared first place in the Under-1900 with 4/5, the same score as made by Nuutti Karjalainen (Finland), Frank Gillespie (Beckenham) and Robert Lankester (London) in the Under-1700.

Bogdan Lalic (Wood Green) proved far too strong at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay of November 19th, his 5½/6 two points more than Ben Keohane and Tom Quilter (both London) could muster. Elsewhere, Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) and Raghu Kamath (Richmond) tied for first in the Major and David Lewis (Hendon) won the Minor.

The latest Golders Green Rapidplay of November 9th saw a three-way tie for first in the Open.

Open - 1-3 Alexander Cherniaev (Hackney), John Pigott (Kings Head), Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst) 5/6.

Major - 1 Dave Cork (Coulsdon) 5½, 2-4 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon), John Bussman (Surbiton), Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 4½.

Minor - 1-3 Tim Shallice, George Hassabis (both London), Claudio Oliveri (Hendon) 4½.

Amateur - 1 Daniel Aserkoff (Barnet) 5, 2-4 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Keith Wicks (Sheffield), Abeer Gogia (Maidenhead) 4½.

Improvers - 1 Jai Kothari (Coulsdon) 6, 2 Reya Li (Oxford) 5.

On October 12th Jovica Radovanovic had again come first, this time outright.

Open - 1 Jovica Radovanovic (Sandhurst) 5½/6, 2-3 Roy Sagall (Barnet), Lorenzo Lucchi (Italy) 4½.

Major - 1 Timur Kuzhelev 6, 2-5 Dominic Gibbs (both Coulsdon), Christopher Levy (Hackney), Ray Tarling (Guildford), Raghu Kamath (Richmond) 4½.

Minor - 1 Claudio Oliveri (Hendon) 6, 2 Guy Levy (Harrow) 4½.

Amateur - 1-2 Eduardo Caceres (Spain), Charles Sturt (Hammersmith) 5.

Improvers - 1-2 Gul Kapur (Enfield), Krrish Patel (Harrow) 5½.

And back on September 14th it had been the turn of IM Alan Merry to triumph at Golders Green.

Open - 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 5½/6, 2 John Merriman (Petts Wood) 5.

Major - 1 Conor Gay (Battersea) 5, 2 Paul Chantrell (Kings Head) 4½.

Minor - 1 Elliot Kalfon (Metropolitan) 5½, 2 Sivastyan Balasundaram (Barnet) 4½.

Amateur - 1 David Dunne (Nottingham) 6, 2 Guy Levy (Harrow) 5.

Improvers - 1 Xavier Ensum (East London) 5½, 2-3 David Clarkson (Hendon), Krrish Patel (Harrow) 5.

NEWPORT – Experienced FM Peter Varley triumphed with a perfect score at the South Wales Autumn Congress (15-17 November).

Open - 1 Peter Varley (Newport) 5, 2 Daniel Kosusek (Czech Republic) 4, 3-4 Joseph Turner (Malpas), Joe Fathallah (Cardiff) 3.

Premier - 1 David Pinch (Steynton) 4, 2-5 Martin Jones, Peter Quinn (both Cardiff), Harrison Postans (Chepstow), Stephen Horrell (Abergavenny) 3½.

Minor - 1-2 Oliver Sapsford (Chepstow), Mark Summers (Newport) 4/5, 3 Harri Gilbert (Swansea) 3½.

OBAN – There was a three-way tie for first at the popular Oban Congress (15-17 November).

Open - 1-3 Neil Berry (Edinburgh), Richard Birkett, Andrew Newton (both Inverness) 4/5.

Challengers - 1 Ralph Stirrat (Cumbernauld) 4½, 2-4 John Cawston (Selby), Lucasz Nowak (Oban), Jonathan McKay (Musselburgh) 4.

Major - 1-3 Martin Brejter (Edinburgh), Ross Blackford (Dunbar), Tom Tait (Dalmuir) 4.

Minor: 1 Alex Keenan 4½, 2-5 Thor Saemundsson (both Hamilton), Christopher Sharp (Oban), Andrew McCulloch (Giffnock), David Watson (Edinburgh) 4.

OMAGH – Calum Leitch (Strand) triumphed with 5½/6 at the Omagh Rapidplay on November 30th, finishing a point and a half clear of both Robert Lavery (Ballynafeigh) and Samuel Moore (Bangor), while James White (Omagh) won the Junior with 5/6.

PLYMOUTH – Jos Haynes (Tiverton) and Jonathan Underwood (Seaton) tied for first on 5/6 at the Plymouth Rapidplay on December 1st, finishing half a point ahead of Steven Levy (South Hams) and Michael Stinton-Brownbridge (Plymouth).

PRESTON – IM Brandon Clarke won £300 for triumphing at the Preston Congress (15-17 November).

Open - 1 Brandon Clarke (Oxford) 4½, 2-5 Paul Littlewood (St Albans), Dietmar Kolbus (Douglas), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), James Moreby (Gosforth) 3½.

Major - 1 John Wareing (Halifax) 5, 2-4 Graham Ashcroft (Preston), Neil Coward (Blackpool), Michael Connor (Great Lever) 3½.

Minor - 1 Phil Ramsey (Southport) 4½, 2-3 Pavel Nefyodov (Stafford), Charalampos Patsos (Preston) 4.

Standard - 1-3 Alan Ruffle (Swadlincote), Keith Wicks (Sheffield), Edward Pattern (Formby) 4.

SCARBOROUGH – Despite there only being 50 players in the Open at the Scarborough Congress (25-27 October), there was a three-way tie for first.

Open - 1-3 Danny Gormally (Alnwick), Laurence Webb (Münster), James Moreby (Gosforth) 4½.

Major - 1-6 Tim Turner (Driffield), Michael Round (Rose Forgrove), Martin Cutmore (Folkestone), David Williams (Derby), Paul Jackson (Coulsdon), Martin Gawne (Ulverston) 4.

Intermediate - 1-2 Gary White (Telford), Parin Suchak (Syston) 4½, 3-5 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Richard Dowling (Edinburgh), Roger Greatorex (Llangollen) 4.

Minor - 1 Stephen Carter (Richmond) 5, 2 Gary Corcoran (Bradford) 4½, 3-4 Paul Kent (Aigburth), Nikas Zaleskis (Battersea) 4.

Foundation - 1 Bob Amos (Prescot) 4½, 2-5 John Sugden (Withernsea), Michael Siddle (Bishop Auckland), Josephine Woollard (Sheffield), Daniel Hilditch-Love (Newport) 4.

TORQUAY – Many of the players at Exmouth went straight on to the Torbay Congress (8-10 November), which was held at the Livermead House Hotel and where Keith Arkell was punished for grabbing a very hot b-pawn by Gerald Moore.

Open - 1 Gerald Moore (Broadland) 4/5, 2-7 Keith Arkell (Paignton), William Claridge-Hansen, Tim Paulden (both Exeter), Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), John Edge (Halesowen), Richard Webster (Worksop) 3½.

Major - 1 David Archer (South Hams) 4½, 2-4 Max Walker (Clevedon), Giles Body (Exeter), Meyrick Shaw (Exmouth) 4.

Intermediate - 1 Danilo Gouveia Wasques (Newton Abbot) 4½, 2 Phil Foley (Upminster) 4, 3-6 Amanda Jones (Salisbury), Lynne Fursman (Tewkesbury), Jacquie Barber-Lafon (Newton Abbot), Ian Abraham (Barry) 3½.

Foundation - 1-2 Michael Pope (Salisbury), Ian Farrow (Dons) 4½, 3 Joy Fursman (Clevedon) 4.

WITNEY – Mihov Filip triumphed at the Witney Congress (2-3 November).

Open - 1 Mihov Filip 4½/5, 2-3 David Zakarian (both Oxford), Paul Girdlestone (Witney) 3½.

Major - 1 Pawel Murawski (Oxford) 4½, 2-3 Michael Lucey (Bourne End), Carlos Ferrera Gonzalez (Didcot) 4.

Intermediate - 1-3 Adam Sieczkowski (Witney), Darrell Watson (Bourne End), Duncan MacArthur (Keynsham) 4.

Minor - 1-2 Patrick Sartain (Harrow), William Stock (Hastings) 4½, 3-4 Alexander Hertog (Oxford), Freddie Beneat (Abingdon) 4.



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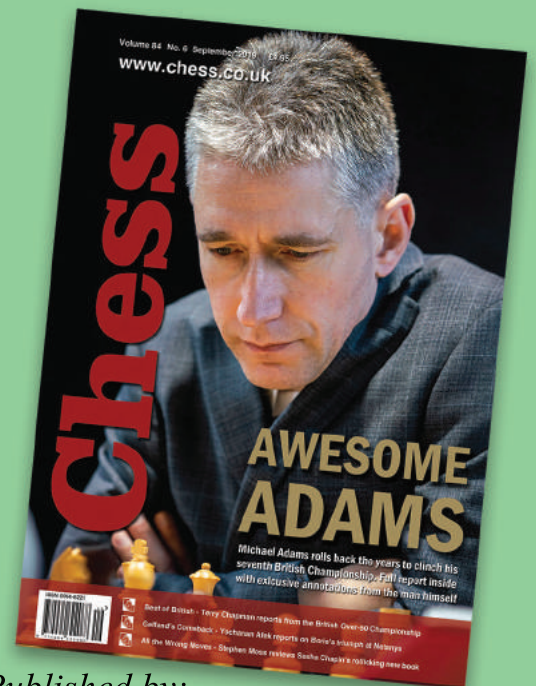
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*Published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd.
44 Baker Street, London, W1U 7RT*

order online: www.chess.co.uk or by phone: 0207 486 7015

Off the Wall

A selection of articles from 2019 from FM Tim Wall, as featured in the ECF Newsletter

March - Welcome to Yorkshire (but beware of the Moon)

Darts player - *"Stay on the road. Keep clear of the moors."*

Chess player - *"Beware the Wolf Gambit, lads."*

An American Werewolf in London, the Slaughtered Lamb scene

We've all been there, haven't we? A place that somehow you don't feel quite welcome. You walk into a picturesque village pub, like The Slaughtered Lamb in *An American Werewolf in London*, (<https://youtu.be/bHltywaQVi4>) and get the feeling that you've intruded into a private world, and it was about time you were 'on yer way'.

I've been playing a lot recently in Yorkshire – in the Woodhouse Cup, the county's famous Saturday league, for Leeds Central, and for Yorkshire in the traditional Wars of the Roses match with Lancashire. While I'm not a proper native of Yorkshire (I've lived many places in the North, but I can't trace my ancestry back to Sean Bean or Geoffrey Boycott), I have to say I have been made to feel welcome, and no one has sent me out on t' moors on a cold night to face a werewolf (or even the Wolf Gambit - **1 Nf3 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Na3 e5!?**).

It's generally been a fun experience, especially when playing team chess. Either warm beer (or the famous Yorkshire tea) has been on tap, and a curry afterwards with teammates has either helped the celebrations (or eased the commiserations).

Playing for Leeds – not the best team in the league, or the worst – there's an eclectic bunch of people: A postgrad student doing vital medical research; a globe-trotting patents lawyer; a retired English teacher with rich stories of chess in Botswana and Papua New Guinea; an Iranian guy who insists on taking selfies with his phone during games; a former immigration detention officer with a heart of gold; and an ex-Irish international with a gambit for every occasion ... the list goes on.

What is it that we play for? Is it glory, or riches? Or the smell of victory over Lancashire or Bradford in the morning? Hardly. It's a bit old-fashioned to say so, but it's the camaraderie that I like. And Yorkshire people are good at that.

The J'adoube Gambit

Sometimes discovering this spirit can be tricky, however. At the recent Doncaster Congress, I played a wild end-to-end game in the last round (against someone who shall remain nameless but wasn't from Yorkshire). Now this player attacked me from the word go, with a swashbuckling ...g5 gambit in the opening, and followed up with a series of sacrifices of varying soundness. That kind of hustling I like (when I was younger it might have been me pushing the g-pawn), but some of the accompanying actions, less so. Every move this player played, the piece was askew, anywhere except for the centre of the square. The effect was quite disconcerting, and yet it seemed to be the kind of minor infringement that didn't merit a complaint to the arbiter.

And yet ... each move it bugged me, and I ended up j'adoubing my opponent's pieces in my own time. In combination with the hustling play, it felt like I was being hustled this way, too. Not Like Botvinnik.

Then – and this is no chess player’s fault – the fire alarm went off, probably tripped by kids trespassing on school grounds. And on and on, and off, and on, for what seemed like half an hour. Staff at the school where the congress was being held didn’t seem to know how to switch it off, and after general confusion among the arbiters, we all stood around in the yard like prisoners in *The Great Escape*, kicking our heels for another 15 minutes before the games were resumed.

Presumably it wasn’t just me who felt their equanimity was completely wrecked. I nearly won the game after many adventures, but then went to pieces in the dying seconds and had to resign a rook down after my opponent’s king had wandered all the way up the board, evading my increasingly exasperated checks. I have no excuses - I just didn’t cope with the situation (that’s presumably why Botvinnik used to train by having opponents blow smoke in his face).

As a club-mate of mine is fond of saying, ‘There are only two kinds of chess games. Ones you win, and learning experiences’. What’s the learning experience here, you may ask. Well, try not to get flustered if you suspect your opponent of sharp practice (actually, you can pity someone who thinks they have to resort to it), try not to get flustered when a piercing fire alarm gives you a headache, and remember that the experience of playing chess is more often about the camaraderie than the financial outcome.

Oh, and by the way, if you do find yourself at a league match in *The Slaughtered Lamb* and your team just got a jammy win, don’t ever ask about that five-pointed star on the wall. And keep clear of the moors, especially when there’s a full moon.

May - Bunfight at the OK Tea Rooms

‘This is not ‘Nam, this is the 4NCL. There are rules.’ - Walter Sobchak, *The Big Lebowski*

It was the big showdown weekend between the big guns of the Four Nations Chess League. In Telford’s Park Inn (the Crucible Theatre of UK chess, if you will) the mighty ‘Guildford Stranglers’ took on another heavyweight team, the Chess.com-sponsored Manx ‘Liberty Vallance.’

But my tale this month is not about the professional gunslingers of Division 1, but the unsung heroes of Division Three North, grimly slugging it out for promotion up the M6 in the small village of Blackrod, Lancashire (population 5,001, and the ancient settlement’s name derives from the Olde English for ‘Dark Clearing’).

My team, White Rose 2, was doing battle against squads from 3Cs, Manchester Manticores and Shropshire (‘Tha’s not from round here, is tha’, lads?’)

With a significant rating advantage over our main rivals (and a maximum 8 wins out of 8 before the final weekend), it looked like a cake walk, but the cake specially bought in preparation for our hoped-for promotion by team manager Jonathan Arnott nearly ended up being slung in a bunfight as we struggled to draw 3-3 on the Saturday vs 3Cs.

It became clear that, while ratings are important at the top of Division 1 (Guildford’s average of 2663 gave them a big edge over Manx’s 2574 in the Round 11 top-of-the-table decider) down in Div. 3 other factors come into play –and ratings are not always what they are cracked up to be. For

example, my opponent in Round 11 (Kamil Celinski of Manchester Manticores) had a FIDE rating of 1810, but an ECF grade of 197. Then there is also the factor of who's in form, and (it has to be said) who would have preferred to be in Telford watching the Champions League rather than playing in the park on a Sunday morning.

And yet, all games were tough and hard-fought, and we only just squeezed back into Division 2 with a slender 3.5-2.5 win over Shropshire on Sunday.

'Let them eat cake'

Jonathan (who in his other life has been an MEP for North East England, formerly of UKIP, now an Independent, and is soon to be a happily ex-politician) had a rather tasty cake made up, and we scoffed half of it, before sending it down the M6 with White Rose 1 captain Paul Townsend, where it was shared with those players.

Then in Round 11, without Paul Townsend and Chris Dunworth, the remaining six of us were left to battle it out with the Manticores for the honour (and £350 prize) of winning the Division.

Things looked truly grim, however, after a couple of hours' play. Peter Shaw, who went to Blackrod with a maximum 8/8, lost his second game of the weekend – this time with his king horribly caught in a ferocious opening trap – while Jonathan Arnott similarly had his own king 'Stuck in the Middle with You' in a surreal Reservoir Dogs/Mr Blonde moment.

Then Pete Gayson (who played some fine chess through the weekend but was unlucky to lose all three games) was unable to make an early piece sac work, leaving us 0-3 down. Yet we managed somehow to pull off an unlikely recovery, with myself, Jean-Luc Weller and the dependable Jim 'Times Crossword' Burnett eventually doing the business to tie the match 3-3. Thus, by a narrow margin (2.5 game points), White Rose 2 finished first in the Division, ahead of Manticores 2 (they later suffered an even more tragic fate, as they learned that in Telford their first team had narrowly been demoted from Division 2, meaning in effect that their 2nd Team will have to play 'Up North' next season too).

The playing conditions at the Mercure Georgian House Bolton were pleasant enough – even if we could have done without two different wedding parties boogieing through the hotel on the Saturday night, and a swarm of Scottish teenagers on the Sunday (their favourite after-hours occupation seemed to be phoning up random hotel rooms in prank calls at 3am).

One of the nice features of the weekend was meeting up again with my old friend and ex-flatmate Chris Dunworth, the founder of the 4NCL back in the Nineties, and we set out for a hike on the Sunday morning with the intention of climbing one of the nearby fells. Sadly, things in the Lancashire countryside ain't what they used to be, and two hours later, after multiple barbed wire fences and not a few private roads, we gave up on the quest to find a public footpath that led to the hills.

In Telford, meanwhile, Guildford eventually triumphed over Manx 6-2. The match was watched by our team supporters Rupert Jones and Sebaga Gourlay (pictured, below) who enjoyed a different variety of bunfight ...

June - The Curse of the Carpathians

"As the Count leaned over to offer a draw and his hand touched mine ... a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal." - Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

I have crossed oceans of time to play European junior championships. And believe me, a voyage from Whitby to Constanta on the high seas, in the company of a nocturnal blitz addict playing the Frankenstein-Dracula variation, can be a pain in the neck.



(The Frankenstein-Dracula Variation: **1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nxe4 4 Qh5 Nd6 5 Bb3 Nc6 6 Nb5 g6 7 Qf3 f5 8 Qd5 Qe7 9 Nxc7+ Kd8 10 Nxa8 b6**, Ost-Hansen-Nunn, Teesside 1974)

It was in the Year of Our Lord Nineteen Ninety-Four that I first ventured as a fledgling chess trainer to the strange land of the Carpathian Mountains. My two travelling companions were Mr. Jonathan Rowson, Esquire, a budding young chess master of philosophical bent and not a few loquacious words, who seemed to be well acquainted with The Seven Deadly Chess Sins, and another slave to Caissa's needle, the fire-breathing, shell-suited Glaswegian Master, Edward ('Rab C.') Dearing.

On the winding road to our destination, the Transylvanian castle where Count Mihai Subawas waiting for us, the (En)Dearing One's large suitcase was left behind in the coaching inn, necessitating a further bumpy journey by Horse Power across the Carpathians by your humble servant to retrieve it.

In the interests of international chess diplomacy (and to share the blushes of my erstwhile young companions), I shall draw a discreet veil over the quality of the chess and the playing conditions which prevailed at the tournament in Count Suba's castle, suffice it to say that our host's overpowering hospitality was only matched by the allure of the native Transylvanian arbiters and the ferocity of young Dearing's Yugoslav Attack.

By the time I next set foot on the terra firma of Perfidious Albion above the Whitby cliffs, my life force was much weakened (indeed, during Mr. Rowson's lengthy soliloquies on angst and prophylaxis I frequently lost the will to live). And I had acquired a life-long nervous habit of playing the Hedgehog, such that I now never venture into a tournament hall during the hours of daylight without my crucifix, string of garlic around my neck and personal copy of the Count's magnum opus, *Dynamic Chess Strategy*, signed in crimson by The Master himself.

Thus, it was with not a little trepidation (and many hours of expensive psychobabble, er, therapy, on Mr. Rowson's couch) that I reluctantly agreed to accompany the English party to the current European Schools Championships in Mamaia, Romania.

I had taken the precaution of employing the services of a professional bodyguard, Sniper Master C.H. Storey, and he was riding shotgun as we sped across the Carpathian countryside in a sturdy vehicle of East European origin as he regaled me with tales of derring-do and motivational speeches about CCTV (Checks, Captures, Threats and Vulnerable DVD-watchers).

Fortified by the Sniper's compelling narrative, I was able to finally overcome my fear and loathing of Transylvanian chess players, and this week I have settled into a reasonably pleasant daily routine of coaching, pizza, watered-down beer and blitz. Our young charges seem to be enjoying the chess and their evening football ritual of putting several goals past tired chess dads.

I'm not sure whether it is the garlic, the sharpened wooden stakes we carry with us at all times, or the stout hardback copies of Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual that we wield during training sessions, but the Curse of the Carpathians, the sinister shadow of the Count, Grand Master Mihai Suba, finally seems to have been lifted. Or has it? Tune in next time to find out if we made it out of Romania alive (or undead).

August - Welcome back to Fawlt Chess Towers, we've missed you

'Don't mention the mobile phone default war. I mentioned it once, but I think I got away with it. It's all forgotten now, and let's hear no more about it. So ... it's one Rausis omelette, a scrambled Sniper, two fried FitBit watches and a D'Costa frappe coffee' - John Cleese, Arbiter-at-Large, 2019 British Championships

It's summertime, and that can only mean one thing; it's time to head to the seaside, get out your bucket, spade and Chessbase, and enter the British Championships. The 106th British, just concluded in Torquay, was for me –as I guess for a lot of people – a real roller coaster with a random mix of positive and not-so-positive emotions.

Unless you're Mickey Adams or Jovanka Houska (congratulations on your 7th and 9th British titles, respectively, your Royal Highnesses!) there were snakes as well as ladders on and off the board at the magnificent English Riviera International Centre, or as the Devon locals affectionately call it, ERIC.

In my case, there were more snakes than on a Samuel L Jackson plane to LA. Hello, embarrassing blunders. Goodbye, rating points. Oh, and an Airbnb landlady from hell, who would have given Basil Fawlty a decent run for his money as the worst hotelier in Torquay.

For other players, the losses and the pain came from unexpected directions. Lorin D'Costa, the well-liked IM and recent Olympiad coach to the England Women's team, fell foul of the rules (and the prevailing mood in professional chess after the scandalous Igors Rausis cheating affair) when his opponent, 'Sniper' FM Charlie Storey, alerted the arbiters that D'Costa was walking out of the playing hall with a knapsack on his back that might contain a mobile phone. When it was confirmed that Lorin was buying a coffee with a (switched-off) electronic device in his bag, he was duly defaulted, as prescribed under FIDE rules. D'Costa and Storey then headed, metaphorical handbags

in hand, to their favourite arenas for online post-mortems, the English Chess Forum and Facebook, to air their versions of the incident, and D'Costa sadly withdrew from the tournament. Monty Python are presumably planning a Batley Townswomen's Guild re-enactment of the affair next year to rival their classic 'The Battle of Pearl Harbour'.

I should add, mobile phone default aside, that Charlie performed well in the tournament, and delighted the fans of his swashbuckling style, as he picked up a long-overdue second IM norm.

Elsewhere, the tragicomedy was on the chessboard itself. The creative GM Daniel Fernandez deployed a dubious 'Dukes of Hazzard' opening as White against IM Richard Palliser in Round 8 that was just a little bit more than the law will allow. After just 4 bizarre moves (**1 f4 d6 2 b3?! e5 3 fxe5?! dxe5 4 g3?! h5!**) he was virtually lost (kids, do not try this at home ...)

But whether the week went well or badly for the participants, the British lived up to its deserved reputation as the flagship event of the national chess calendar. Yes, there was much fine chess on display from the leading (and up-and-coming) players, not to mention from 85-year-old James Sherwin, of 'Fischer's 60 Memorable Games' fame, who was the co-winner of the Rapidplay Championship with Andrew Lewis.

But more than that, the British was (as always) memorable for the social side of things. This might seem like an empty platitude, but I can assure you it is not. While we are all caught up in our own personal struggles during a tournament such as the British, and we never see the whole picture as individual players, there were a number of social highlights that are the superglue holding English chess together as a community.

GM Danny Gormally and IM Adam Hunt were outstanding as commentators, and the innovation of streaming live on Twitch.TV and Chess.com live from Torquay brought the thrills and spills of the Championships to a much wider audience than in previous years. The social programme, organised by local Devon chess enthusiasts, also added to the experience, with tourist excursions, quizzes and other events to divert and entertain the players and their families over the nine days.

Two other happenings typified the unofficial side of the British, beyond the control of any arbiter or ECF official. An unlicensed chess-boxing match on the ERIC front lawn between IM Adam Taylor and Kim Shek, a London restaurateur and dad to England junior Daniel Shek, attracted a large crowd of cheering junior players, and an evening of crazy blitz 'n' beers after the last round involving Ginger GM Simon Williams and friends went on until the wee hours.

In these gatherings, we meet up with new and old friends, exchange ideas, gossip and heartfelt emotions, and make memories that last for many years to come. All chess life is there in the 'after hours' activities at the British, and long may this continue.

For me, I had a special reason to be thankful that I was at this year's British in Torquay, my first there in over 20 years. It gave me a reason to be half an hour from Newton Abbot, where Sarah Wylie, a college-era sweetheart of mine from Newcastle in the 1990s, now lives.

Sarah, along with her best friend Grace Foo, were among the close-knit group of friends who formed the Newcastle University Chess Society, and we had some of the best times in life from

those days, with evenings in the pub watching Newcastle United, quizzes at the Chillingham Arms (later the famous venue for the Northumbria Masters) and fabulous dinners of Malaysian Chinese cuisine at Grace's flat (another of the group, Stefan Hartmann, holds the unique distinction that his only internationally rated game was a win in the 1996 Northumbria Masters over future British Champion Gawain Jones. OK, so Gawain was only nine at the time!). Nowadays we are a little more far-flung, with Grace running a successful chess in schools project in St. Louis, the home of the famous US chess centre, and we mostly keep in touch by social media.

The day after our marathon post-British blitz session, I blearily headed for Newton Abbot in some trepidation. Would Sarah and I be able to reconnect, a full 25 years after we had last seen each other? In the event, I needn't have worried. During a delightful afternoon of tea, conversation and stories with Sarah and her brilliant husband, James, the years fell away as we recalled times in Newcastle and caught up on some of the momentous personal events from the last quarter century. Hopefully, we will not leave it too long before we are able to get the 'Newcastle chess band' back together again.

Of course, I came away a more than a little emotional and even a little smitten again, in true Doctor Zhivago-nostalgia style. One thing Sarah said particularly stuck with me - that chess had brought our group of chess friends a lot of happiness and led to so many interesting things in life. With half a tear in my eye, waving goodbye at Newton Abbot railway station, I had to agree.

Even more than the British in Torquay, meeting with Sarah underlined for me that it is the journey we take in chess that is important, along with the lifelong friends we make along the way.

October - Chess is coming home... to Newcastle!

I'm coming home, Newcastle, ye can keep yer London wine

I'd walk the streets all day all neet, for a bottle o' the River Tyne.

I'm coming home, Newcastle, I wish I'd never been away

I'd kiss the ground for the welcome sound of me mother saying, 'Hinny, howay!'

--- *I'm Coming Home, Newcastle - Ronnie Lambert*

As a junior chessplayer in the North East of England in the recession-era 1980s, first on Teesside and then in Newcastle upon Tyne, I quickly got used to the idea that to play in big tournaments, you had to travel to London, far-flung seaside resorts or other places mostly in the south of England. Events such as the Lloyds Bank Masters were all expensive away fixtures, and the epicentre of UK chess seemed a long way away.

Almost in desperation, I suppose, I therefore started organising international tournaments in Newcastle in the mid-1990s. I felt that, while we didn't have the strongest players in the world, we could at least 'bring coals to Newcastle' and help (in particular) young local players to get the opportunities they were lacking.

Sense of camaraderie

I started with my local pub, The Chillingham Arms, asking the manager after a boozy quiz night whether we could hold a chess event in his upstairs function room. Much to my surprise, the room hire was just £10 a day, and a series of great tournaments took place. To say they were run on a shoestring would have been a big understatement, as they were literally organised from entry fees

and the odd helpful donation from The Friends of Chess and the then BCF International Director David Sedgwick's budget.

The titled players (and pretty much the majority of the other players, as I vaguely recall) simply stayed in local players' homes. Among the future stars staying in mine and my friends' spare rooms, on sofas, and even on floors in sleeping bags, were such luminaries as Jacob Aagaard, John Shaw and Danny Gormally.

Lara Barnes, now the ECF Chief Arbiter, was cutting her teeth in her first tournaments as an arbiter, and the youngsters playing their first international tournaments included a certain future British champion, Gawain Jones, then aged 9, and Indian superstar commentator Tania Sachdev, then aged 10.



*Players at the 1996 Northumbria Masters, held at The Chillingham Arms, Newcastle.
Second from the right in the front row is a young Gawain Jones
(Photo - John Wheeler)*

It is the most horrible cliché, but it was true to say, as the Monty Python Four Yorkshiremen sketch put it, 'we were poor, but we were happy'. A number of players made their first International Master norms, including Gormally and even myself. How I managed that while also organising a tournament is a complete mystery to me!

The events, some All-Play-Alls, some Northumbria Masters Swiss tournaments, were a bit rough and ready, but they were great fun. Not to toot my own horn too much, but even today, without exception, everyone I speak to remembers those events with great affection. It was not just the chess, but the camaraderie, the atmosphere and the feeling that we were all mucking in together.

Kevin Keegan and The Sniper

One occasion that particularly sticks in my memory was over Easter 1996, when future 'SniperMaster' Charlie Storey was trying to win some long endgame upstairs in the pub, while downstairs in the bar what seemed like hundreds of Newcastle United supporters were roaring as the Premier League title literally slipped from their grasp, and ill-fated manager Kevin Keegan uttered his immortal 'I would love it if we beat them ...' rant against Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson.

We chess players oscillated between watching the epic football match downstairs, and Charlie's heroic attempts to win his endgame upstairs ...

My years in exile

Then, six months later, my time in Newcastle came to an abrupt halt, as I was lured away down south to London to work for Murray Chandler's British Chess Magazine. Three years later – somewhat bizarrely – I went further afield to the great chess nations Azerbaijan and Russia, where I became a mainstream media journalist and editor. Ironically, in the chess-mad cities of Baku and Moscow, I had little time for the game (despite in 1999 interviewing a 12-year-old Teimour Radjabov, and once enduring an epic, all-night vodka-drinking marathon with Russian grandmasters at the 2014 Sochi World Championship match).

Some 20 years later, like the Geordie expat brickies from *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet* it was finally time for me to 'come home, Newcastle' in 2016. Much as I had enjoyed an interesting and mostly fulfilling career working abroad, it was a highly emotional change in my life.

The feelings that I experienced, as an economic migrant 'exiled' from the North East, have of course been experienced by many millions elsewhere, but there is nothing like returning home – and finding, like Michael Caine in the classic 1971 Newcastle noir gangster film *Get Carter*, that so much of that old world had gone forever, even while some of the old places and faces remained the same. Except that myself and my Newcastle friends were just much, much older. Almost like, as in the words of the Coming Home song, 'Ah might as well ha' been in jail ...'

Putting the band back together

About a year after I'd come back to Newcastle, it was none other than Charlie Storey who suggested in an offhand comment, 'Why don't you hold another international tournament?' The seed of an idea to put the band back together again took root, and I asked the manager of the self-same Chillingham Arms if his upstairs function room was available for a chess event. I was again pleasantly surprised to learn that the room hire was just £25 a day this time ... and in February 2018 the reborn Northumbria Masters took place in the pub, with 7 GMs and 11 IMs in a strong field of 50 players.

Once again, the event benefited from the great work of Lara Barnes, and this time new sponsors were found, including the Liverpool-based company Capital Bridging Finance Solutions, the ECF, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, and the Friends of Chess. The budget was far bigger than in the 1990s, but in modern terms it was still an event on a shoestring – and it was only made possible by the efforts of a group of local volunteers, who put up titled players in their homes again and ferried them to and from the tournament each day.

The 'chess holiday' experience

This year, the 2019 Northumbria Masters (held August 23rd-27th) was an altogether grander affair, with a great new venue, Novotel Newcastle Airport, organised in conjunction with Bridge Overseas/Guaranteed Events Ltd, the Bridgend-based company that organises accommodation for the 4NCL and other major UK chess events. This meant we could expand the number of players to 120 in four different sections, reaching maximum capacity in a large conference suite. The playing conditions were excellent, and all the players could enjoy a full trestle table per board to themselves and their opponent.

Like the 2018 and 1990s events, there was a great diversity in the makeup of the tournaments, with players from 11 different nations taking part. GM Roeland Pruijssers of the Netherlands won the Masters with 7.5/9 ahead of German GM Alexander Donchenko and English IM Alan Merry on 7/9. The Masters' field of 52 players again was very strong, including a total of 6 GMs and 6 IMs.

The FIDE-rated Under 2050 (180 ECF) and Under 1825 (150 ECF) tournaments were also well supported, with many club players travelling to Newcastle over the Bank Holiday weekend. It was particularly pleasing to see some 30 juniors playing in the 9-round FIDE-rated tournaments, many with the support of bursaries from the John Robinson Youth ChessTrust.

To me, this level of success showed that it is entirely possible to organise strong and attractive international tournaments in a city a fair way away from London. To quote the baseball film *Field of Dreams*, if you build it, they will come.

One of the things that seemed to go down very well at this year's Northumbria Masters was the tourist excursions I organised for families and players who wished to take up to three half-point byes. Two carloads of chess tourists enjoyed walking around the historic Durham Castle and Cathedral, the Vindolanda Roman Fort along Hadrian's Wall, and – my personal favourite – Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland. Against the backdrop of the Northumberland cliffs, after we toured the castle, we sat cross-legged on picnic blankets to watch as a richly-comic, open-air performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was performed by an all-female quartet of cycling actors, the aptly-named Handlebards [*below*].



I should, perhaps, offer a word to the wise for other would-be international tournament organisers in regional centres such as Liverpool, Leeds, Bristol and Norwich - it can be a huge undertaking, and one that requires quite some efforts from a team of dedicated volunteers to make it work. But the payoff is the huge amount of positive feedback we have received about the event from players and families who would like to return next year.

I am glad to say that preparations are already well underway for next year's Northumbria Masters, with the provisional dates of August 27th-31st, 2020. We are hoping to include more excursions for players and their families, to make it again an enjoyable chess holiday –at the same time as being a

serious and prestigious international chess festival. These are likely to include a visit to Alnwick Castle, the famous location of the Harry Potter films...

For me, personally, the renaissance of the Northumbria Masters is about more than just retying the knot of history. It is hopefully a way in which chess at all levels can be revived in the various regions of the country –and serve as an example to other local organisers: If you build it, they will come.

December - No castling, please – we're British

rokirovka = the Russian for castling

This week at the London Chess Classic, the world was turned upside down. Magnus Carlsen was knocked out, Ding Liren won the Grand Chess Tour, and American actor Woody Harrelson beat tournament director Malcolm Pein in a five-minute game.

OK, one of those three statements was maybe a little bit of a porky. But Woody almost beat Malcolm, according to commentator Maurice Ashley ...

The Hollywood star popped into the Olympia Conference Centre to make the ceremonial first move for Magnus Carlsen vs. Lev Aronian –and for once managed to keep to the script. Magnus asked for 1. d4, and got it (last year, in Game 1 of the World Championship match, Fabiano Caruana asked Harrelson to play 1. e4. He played 1. d4, then playfully tipped over Fabi's king, the little tinker!)

The other major upset was the decision to change the rules of chess – to ban castling (in a two-game exhibition match between the 3rd and 4th place players in the British Knockout Championship, anyway).

Yep, 500 years of Ruy Lopez, QGD & Sicilian Dragon theory down the drain. But maybe 1 g4 will now make a comeback? We feel the mysterious hand of the Grobmeister of Chessington, Mike Basman, at work somewhere ...

As it happened, the No-Castling mini-match ended with honours even to Gawain Jones and Luke McShane. But at least the London System seems to score zero percent in No-Castling chess, based on this extensive (AlphaZero-like) research.

So, will No-Castling emerge as the hot new chess variant everyone is talking about? Well, according to my information – based on many years of teaching primary school kids – Vladimir Kramnik, the London Classic, and FIDE are actually a long way behind on this one.

I can now exclusively reveal that in junior chess clubs and Chess in Schools and Communities Year 4 classes up and down the UK, a secret training programme has been underway for years, refining the latest nuances in No-Castling theory.

Never mind the Artificial Intelligence, Vlad, we've crowd-sourced the answer already.

Particularly among the Key Stage 2 crowd, our research has found – contrary to Alpha Zero's self-play games – statistically, the largest percentage of No-Castling chess games ends with ... 4 Qxf7 mate.

We think Kramnik should be told. This vital new discovery could alter the whole way we think about chess.

But there is more good news. A little bird tells me that, at next year's French Championship, any playoff will have to include No-En Passant chess – and a Spanish variation on this variant, ¡No pasarán! chess, will not allow either side to cross the fifth rank.

But from Russia, there are sinister rumblings that No-Castling Chess may be banned altogether. This is because, of course, Vladimir Putin may want to castle for a third (and maybe a fourth) time with his long-serving current prime minister, Dmitry Medvedev ...

As ever, we shall endeavour to keep you abreast of all the latest developments here, via the ECF Newsletter.

And meanwhile, kids, don't listen to that bad Mr. Kramnik fellow. Please do keep castling (life is hard enough for chess teachers, you know)!



The British Chess Championships 2019

Final Rankings crosstable

Rank	Title	Name	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	Points
1	GM	Adams Michael	25b1	33w1	19w1	3b½	4w1	6b½	2b½	17w1	5w1	7,5
2	GM	Howell David Wl	34w1	4b½	50w1	43w1	6b½	10b1	1w½	3b½	9w1	7,0
3	IM	Haria Ravi	28b1	20w1	37b1	1w½	16b0	17w½	22b1	2w½	8b1	6,5
4	IM	Palliser Richard Jd	29w1	2w½	32b+	9b+	1b0	11b1	5w½	21b1	7w½	6,5
5	GM	Gordon Stephen J	15b0	40w1	25b½	39w1	50b1	16w1	4b½	6w1	1b0	6,0
6	GM	Tan Justin Hy	41w1	22b½	12w1	7b1	2w½	1w½	8b½	5b0	16w1	6,0
7	IM	Houska Jovanka	36b½	45w1	23b1	6w0	32b½	20w1	16b½	25w1	4b½	6,0
8	GM	Emms John M	27b1	23w½	24b½	17w½	33b½	19w1	6w½	11b1	3w0	5,5
9	GM	Arkell Keith C	46w1	14b½	22w1	4w-	27b0	24w1	13b1	10w1	2b0	5,5
10	IM	Wadsworth Matthew J	37b0	51w1	28b1	24w1	43b1	2w0	21w½	9b0	25b1	5,5
11	IM	Eggleston David J	38b1	15w1	43b0	37w1	17b½	4w0	27b1	8w0	24b1	5,5
12	FM	Willow Jonah B	31b½	36w1	6b0	32w0	28b½	37w1	43b1	24w½	27b1	5,5
13	IM	Bradbury Neil H	40b½	31w½	39b½	49w½	30b1	33w½	9w0	36b1	21w1	5,5
14	FM	Derakhshani Borna	53b1	9w½	17b0	33w0	39b1	31w1	18b1	16w½	15b½	5,5
15	FM	Storey Charles H	5w1	11b0	16b0	36w1	49b½	50w1	23b½	22w1	14w½	5,5
16	GM	Williams Simon K	42w1	19b0	15w1	34b1	3w1	5b0	7w½	14b½	6b0	5,0
17	IM	Pert Richard G	35w½	44b1	14w1	8b½	11w½	3b½	32w1	1b0	0	5,0
18	GM	Ward Chris G	51w1	43b0	27w0	29b½	41w1	34b1	14w0	26b1	19b½	5,0
19	FM	Ashton Adam G	52w1	16w1	1b0	27b½	21w½	8b0	26w½	35b1	18w½	5,0
20	FM	Claridge-Hansen William	54w1	3b0	46w1	50b0	29w1	7b0	35w½	31b½	37w1	5,0
21	GM	Fernandez Daniel H	45b½	37w0	40b1	25w1	19b½	23w1	10b½	4w0	13b0	4,5
22	IM	Lane Gary W	30b1	6w½	9b0	31w½	37b1	43w1	3w0	15b0	28w½	4,5
23	IM	Bates Richard A	48w1	8b½	7w0	42b½	38w1	21b0	15w½	28b½	31w½	4,5
24	IM	Pein Malcolm	44w½	35b1	8w½	10b0	42w1	9b0	38w1	12b½	11w0	4,5
25	IM	Rudd Jack	1w0	47b1	5w½	21b0	48w1	49w1	33b1	7b0	10w0	4,5
26		Moore Graham J	32b0	39w0	36b½	52w1	47b½	29w1	19b½	18w0	43b1	4,5
27	WGM	Toma Katarzyna	8w0	48b1	18b1	19w½	9w1	32b0	11w0	33b1	12w0	4,5
28		Stoyanov Viktor	3w0	54b1	10w0	48b½	12w½	44b1	34w½	23w½	22b½	4,5
29		Hand Freddie	4b0	49w½	45b1	18w½	20b0	26b0	46w1	34b1	33w½	4,5
30		Modi Shyam Jagdish	22w0	41b1	34w0	35b1	13w0	42b½	36b0	51w1	45b+	4,5
31		Brewer Callum D	12w½	13b½	35w½	22b½	34w½	14b0	42w1	20w½	23b½	4,5
32	GM	Pert Nicholas	26w1	50b½	4w-	12b1	7w½	27w1	17b0	0	0	4,0
33	IM	Pigott John C	47w1	1b0	42w½	14b1	8w½	13b½	25w0	27w0	29b½	4,0
34	IM	Zapolskis Antanas	2b0	38w1	30b1	16w0	31b½	18w0	28b½	29w0	47b1	4,0

35		Crickmore Neil Eg	17b½	24w0	31b½	30w0	45b1	47w1	20b½	19w0	39b½	4,0
36		Ogunshola Olugbemiga (Ben)	7w½	12b0	26w½	15b0	44w½	48b1	30w1	13w0	40b½	4,0
37		Rocco Federico	10w1	21b1	3w0	11b0	22w0	12b0	44w1	38b1	20b0	4,0
38		Holland Chris Kd	11w0	34b0	54w1	46b1	23b0	41w1	24b0	37w0	48b1	4,0
39		Jones Steven A	50w0	26b1	13w½	5b0	14w0	46b½	51w½	41b1	35w½	4,0
40		Starley Robert	13w½	5b0	21w0	47b0	52b1	45w½	53b1	43w½	36w½	4,0
41	FM	Wall Tim P	6b0	30w0	52b½	53w1	18b0	38b0	54w1	39w0	51b+	3,5
42		Merriman John	16b0	52w1	33b½	23w½	24b0	30w½	31b0	48w½	44b½	3,5
43	FM	Smith Andrew P	49b1	18w1	11w1	2b0	10w0	22b0	12w0	40b½	26w0	3,5
44		Yoon Jacob D	24b½	17w0	49b0	45w1	36b½	28w0	37b0	52w1	42w½	3,5
45	CM	Villiers Thomas	21w½	7b0	29w0	44b0	35w0	40b½	52b1	53w1	30w-	3,0
46		Player Edmund C	9b0	53w1	20b0	38w0	51b½	39w½	29b0	47w0	54b1	3,0
47		Krzyzanowski Patryk	33b0	25w0	53b½	40w1	26w½	35b0	48w0	46b1	34w0	3,0
48	WFM	Longson Sarah N	23b0	27w0	51b1	28w½	25b0	36w0	47b1	42b½	38w0	3,0
49	IM	Taylor Adam C	43w0	29b½	44w1	13b½	15w½	25b0	0	0	0	2,5
50	IM	D'costa Lorin Ar	39b1	32w½	2b0	20w1	5w0	15b0	0	0	0	2,5
51	FM	Ledger Dave J	18b0	10b0	48w0	54b1	46w½	53w½	39b½	30b0	41w-	2,5
52		Donaldson Thomas R	19b0	42b0	41w½	26b0	40w0	54b½	45w0	44b0	53w1	2,0
53		Jaufarally Nadia	14w0	46b0	47w½	41b0	54w1	51b½	40w0	45b0	52b0	2,0
54	AIM	Kahn Tito	20b0	28w0	38b0	51w0	53b0	52w½	41b0	-1	46w0	1,5

BCC Prizewinners' List 2019

British Championship 1st – Michael Adams 2nd – David Howell 3rd= Richard Palliser (York); Ravi Haria (Wood Green 4NCL) 5th= Stephen Gordon; Justin Tan; Jovanka Houska

English Champion – Michael Adams; British Women's Champion – Jovanka Houska; British Women's Runner-up – Katarzyna Toma (West Is Best)

British U21 Champion – Ravi Haria (Wood Green 4NCL); British U21 Runners-up – Matthew Wadsworth; Jonah Willow (West Nottingham); Borna Derakhshani (Wood Green); Joint British U18 Champions – Jonah Willow (West Nottingham); Borna Derakhshani (Wood Green)

Rating Prizes 2201-2350 – Charlie Storey (Chess Fun Clubs) 2051-2200 – Callum Brewer (Brighton & Hove) Under 2050 – Jacob Yoon (Ealing Juniors)

Major Open 1st – Brandon Clarke (Wood Green) 2nd= Adam Taylor; Max Turner (Berwick) Rating Prize 1950-2150 – Michael Ashworth (Wotton Hall) Rating Prize under 1950 – Matthew Forster (Horsham)

Qualifying for 2020 British Championships are the above plus – David Graham (Worthing); Alexandros Ethelontis (Muswell Hill); Dominic Miller; Gwilym Price (Godalming); Robert Eames (Hackney); Oscar Pollack (Hendon); Ioannis Lentzos (4NCL Grantham Sharks); Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon CF); Mark Cleary (Southampton)

Over 65 1st= Mark Page (Kenilworth); Brian Hewson (Tiverton); David Friedgood (Cavendish)

Over 50 1st= Oliver Jackson; Terry Chapman (Barbican 4NCL); Mark Josse (Surbiton)

Under 16 1st – Calum Salmons (Sussex Juniors) 2nd= Devan Patel (Rushall); David Phillips (CCA); Leo Sanitt (Barnet Knights) Girls Champion – Susanna Fraser (North Cardiff)

Under 14 1st – Aaravamudhan Balaji (Petts Wood & Orpington) 2nd – Jacob Yoon (Ealing Juniors) 3rd= Adithya Pramod Paleri (Wimbledon); Toby Cox (Bedford); Polina Shchepinova (Sussex Juniors) Girls Champion – Polina Shchepinova (Sussex Juniors)

Under 12 1st – James Merriman (Orpington) 2nd= Manvith Sandhu (Hallfield School); Luke Fleri (Swieqi); Shivam Agrawal (Richmond Juniors) Girls Champion – Tarini Jayawarna (Heywood)

Under 11 1st – Sohum Lohia Joint Girls Champions – Tashika Arora (Oxford); Nina Pert (Brentwood) 2nd= George Clarkson (Barnet Knights); Tashika Arora (Oxford); Nina Pert (Brentwood)

Under 10 1st – Sohum Lohia 2nd – Sanjit Kumar (Kings College School) 3rd= Denis Dupuis (Battersea); Elis Denele Diden (CCA); Max Pert (Brentwood) Girls Champion – Elis Denele Diden (CCA)

Under 9 1st – Theo Khoury (Maidenhead Juniors) Joint Girls Champions – Elis Denele Diden (Coventry Chess Academy); Thisumi Jayawarna (Tameside Juniors) 2nd= Jude Shearsby (Coventry Chess Academy); Soham Kumar (Maidenhead Juniors); Max Bird (Barnet Knights); Elias Ruzhansky (CCF)

Under 8 1st – Elias Ruzhansky Girls Champion – Alannah Ashton 2nd= Kameron Grose; Alfred Soulier; Anirudh Muppidi

Morning Open 1st – Brandon Clarke (Wood Green) 2nd – Nugith Jayawarna (Heywood) 3rd – Raghav Nayak (Hendon) 4th= Mikhail Sedykh (Lewisham); Nigel Blades (Greater London); Jonathan Wells (Norwich Dons); Steve Hodge (Hull); Tom Brown (Braunstone); Joe Fathallah (Cardiff)

Under 2050 1st= Mike Waddington (Dorchester); Joel Bird (Muswell Hill); Tristian See; William Graham (Sussex Martlets); Samuel Woolacott

Under 1900 1st= Tim Hilton (Blue Club); Matthew Britnell (Lewes) 3rd= Mick Riding (Gosforth); Ben Graff (Kenilworth); Colin Ramage (Barking)

Under 1750 1st= Matthew Howell (CCF); Devan Patel (Rushall) 3rd – Soham Kumar (Maidenhead Juniors) 4th= Ben Sadler (Norfolk & Norwich); Arthur Hibbitt (Grendel); Andrew Zigmond

(Harrogate); Hambel Willow (Newcastle-Under-Lyme); Max Bennett (Worthing); Daniel Shek (Yateley Manor)

Under 120 1st – Simon Sellick (Bracknell) 2nd= Ben Wood (Hillsborough); Callum Smith (North Cardiff); Roy Watson (Kenilworth); Ellison Smith (North Cardiff)

Under 100 1st – Sanjit Baber (Weybridge Tough Chess) 2nd= James Gibbs (Newton Abbot); Oli Garrett (Sheldwich Primary School); Doreen Anderton (Walsall Kipping); Everson Correa (3C's); Charlie Ball (St Albans); Joseph Whelan (Ashted)

Weekender Atkins 1st – Aditya Verma (Kent Juniors) 2nd= James Poulton; Philip Tozer; Mike Waddington (Dorchester) Grading Prize U1898 – Samuel Woolacott

Weekender Soanes 1st – Carl Gartside (Macclesfield) 2nd= Graham Ashcroft (Preston); Sydney Jacob (Lewisham); Russell Goodfellow (Tunbridge Wells); William Drennan (Battersea); Ryan Cheung (SASRA) Grading Prize 1695-1580 – Robert Taylor; Hugh Tassell; Pat O'Hanlon; David Deacon; Matthew Ball; Samuel Parry; Peter Horlock; Cheuk Nam Wong Grading Prize 1579 and under – Ethan CJ Chung; Syam Karanam; Niall Troughton; Terence Greenaway; Diego Anton Cordova Lopez; Daniel Xingyu Chen

Weekender Yates 1st= Chris Fraser (Spondon); Christopher Greenaway (Taunton) 3rd= Barry Miles (South Norwood); Philip Owen (Chippenham); Daniel Gliddon (CCF) Grading Prize 105-82= Lucas Bienvenu; Emily Maton; Robert Appleby; Robin Agelin Grading Prize 81 and Under – Prakash Pasari

Rapidplay 1st= Andrew Lewis (Manningtree); James Sherwin 3rd= Tim Paulden (Exeter); Daniel Sutton (Harvard Uni) Rating 1600-1401 – Manvith Sandhu (Hallfield School) Rating u1400 – Luke Fleri (Swieqi)

Blitz 1st = Keith Arkell (4NCL Cheddleton); Matthew Payne (Worthing) 3rd – Stephen Jones (Basingstoke) 4th= Mitchell Burke (3Cs); Shyam Modi Grading prize U1800 – Jem Gurner (Jersey) Grading prize U1700 – Christopher Tombolis (Ealing Juniors) Grading prize U1575 – Kishan Modi; Andrew Kirby (Crowthorne) Grading prize U1450 – Polina Shchepinova (Sussex Juniors)

Boxall Plate – David Eustace

Roy Clues Trophy – Chirag Guha & Ifan Rathbone-Jones

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Home Chess Director Adrian Elwin's Round-up

The 106th British Chess Championships resulted in successful defences by both Michael Adams and Jovanka Houska. Michael led from start to finish without ever being able to build up a lead of more than half a point. David Howell led the chase but dropped draws in rounds 2 and 5. He had caught up by the time he and Mickey faced off in round 7 (game drawn), but a draw against Ravi Haria in round 8 left him needing Michael to drop points in the last round to catch him. Michael's win against Stephen Gordon decided the Championship.

After 5 rounds, Jovanka trailed WGM Toma Katarzyna, but a strong run-in left her with a clear 1.5-point advantage.

Congratulations to Charlie Storey who got an IM norm. In the subsidiary tournaments, Brandon Clarke had excellent results, winning both the AM Open and the Major Open, conceding a solitary draw in the Major Open. Both Senior tournaments were hard fought and resulted in 3-way ties, while all Junior tournaments had individual winners. Seniors are obviously more amenable to sharing.

A few oddities ...

Some people may have noticed that Richard Palliser had default wins in rounds 3 and 4 of the British Championship. But this also happened to a player in the Soanes tournament the first weekend. And the only player to ask for a bye in the AM Open was the only player to win a subsequent game by default. These things don't happen very often and three times in a single tournament or festival is extremely rare.

A player reported being disturbed by something beeping. He reported this to an arbiter, who started investigating, then reported it to another. With both arbiters calling in help, there were four arbiters trying to find the beep. Finally, one checked the player's own bag to find a clock beeping every 10 seconds. The moral? Check yourself and your equipment before complaining.

Finally, a player comes into the congress office and asks the British Championship Manager what he needs to do about getting his winnings. The BCM asks which section he is in and receives the reply 'Open'. Assuming he means the Major Open, he is directed to the person taking bank details. At this point, two members of the control team quietly point out that the player was GM Stephen Gordon who had just lost to Mickey Adams on Board 1 in the Championship. Not quite as bad as asking Magnus Carlsen's nationality, but getting there!

Awesome Adams

Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk



Michael Adams [picture by Chris Stratford]

Michael Adams finished powerfully and displayed his usual impressive pragmatism as he saw off David Howell at the British. Adams and Katarzyna Toma annotate ...

Michael Adams finished strongly as he outstayed David Howell to win his seventh British Championship. Adams is not quite the force he was when world no.4, but for now he still looks like Britain's strongest player.

After 9 days in Torquay Adams was at his dominant best, but just like when he triumphed in Hull last year, his performance wasn't flawless. Again, he arrived having not played for a couple of months and initially appeared a little rusty, not least in the opening round against the fast-moving Devon IM Jack Rudd.

J. Rudd - M. Adams, Round 1 - Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4

Adams would later twice face another fairly drawish variation, namely 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 d4 exd4 5 Nxd4. After 5...Bb4 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 Bd3 he tried 7...0-0 8 0-0 Re8!? 9 Bg5 h6 10 Bh4 Be7, which was playable, but also slightly better for White in Haria-Adams. As such, the main line 7...d5 8 exd5 cxd5 9 0-0 0-0 was preferred in the later Tan-Adams. Of course, both sides can play to win this unbalanced middlegame, but after 10 h3 Rb8 11 Qf3 d4 (11...Bb7 12 Bg5 Be7 keeps pieces on) 12 Ne4 Nxe4 13 Bxe4 Bd6 14 Rd1 Re8 the players elected to repeat with 15 Bd5 Be6 16 Bc6 Bd7 17 Bd5, etc.

3...Bc5 4 c3 Nf6 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 Bb4+ 7 Bd2

Jack Rudd can be a dangerous attacker, but here sets his stall out for a solid draw.

7...Nxe4

Allowing a fair degree of simplification, if also unbalancing the position. The alternative is 7...Bxd2+ 8 Nbx d2 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Qb3 when many games have seen 10...Na5 11 Qa4+ Nc6 12 Qb3 and an early handshake, although Black can prefer 12...Nce7 and hope to grind away, extremely solidly placed though White is.

8 Bxb4 Nxb4 9 Bxf7+ Kxf7 10 Qb3+ d5 11 Ne5+ Ke6 12 Qxb4 Qf8 13 Qxf8 Rxf8



You may have seen this position before. Black does have the long-term advantage of bishop against knight, but White has a fine outpost on e5 and can aim to unsettle the advanced black king.

14 f3 Ng5 15 0-0 Kd6 16 Nc3 c6 17 f4!?

This feels a little committal. 17 Rfe1 Bf5 18 Rad1 was a more solid approach when b2-b4 and/or Na4-c5 may follow.

17...Ne6 18 Ne2 g6

18...b6!? 19 f5 Ng5 20 Ng3 c5 is the engine's bold preference, but assessing 21 h4 Nf7 22 f6 g6 is no easy task, not least some way in

advance.

19 Rac1 a5

Restraining any minority attack, but now Rudd is able to get going on the other flank.

20 Rc3 a4 21 g4 Ra7?

This prophylactic move turns out well, but Black should really have preferred to follow up the advance of the a-pawn with 21...Ra5! 22 Rh3 Rb5 when 23 b3 axb3 24 axb3 Rb4 maintains a rough balance.

22 Rh3 b6 23 f5! gxf5



Thus far Rudd has played very well, but he now loses the thread and misses a glorious opportunity. 24 Rxf5 was preferable to the game continuation, although Black is slightly better after 24...Rxf5 25 gxf5 Nxd4 26 Nxd4 Rg7+! 27 Kf2 Kxe5 28 Nxc6+ Kxf5. However, 24 Rh6! would have created an awkward pin on the sixth rank, as well as another down the f-file. Following 24...Rg7 25 Ng3! f4 26 Kh1 Black would have been fighting for his life, seemingly have nothing better than the slightly desperate exchange sacrifice 26...Rg5! (26...Kc7 27 Nf5 Rgg8? 28 Rxh7+ would be a complete nightmare for Black) 27 h4 Rxe5 28 dxe5+ Kxe5.

24 gxf5? Rg7+ 25 Kh1 Rf6!

Cutting out Rh6 ideas for good and now White's overextended central construction is about to collapse.

26 Rc1 Nxd4! 27 Nxd4 Kxe5 28 Nxc6+ Kd6 29 Nd4 Bxf5 30 Nxf5+

Black's rooks take over after this, but 30 Rc6+ Ke7 31 Nxf5+ Rxf5 32 Rc7+ Kf6 33 Rxd7 Kxg7 34 Kg2 Kf6!? 35 Rxh7 d4 may well just be lost too.

30...Rxf5 31 Rh6+ Rg6! 32 Rxh7 Rf2 33 Rhc7 Rgg2

Doubling on the seventh is rarely a bad idea and quickly gets the job done here.

34 R7c6+ Ke5 35 Re1+ Kf5 36 Rce6? Rxh2+ 37 Kg1 Rfg2+ 38 Kf1 Rxb2 0-1

Adams proceeded to exploit an early mistake from IM John Pigott to win in only 26 moves for which he was rewarded, perhaps surprisingly, with a second White against Adam Ashton. After a small wobble, Adams would outmanoeuvre his FM opponent in trademark fashion, but he would concede his first half-point in the next round, offering a fairly early draw in a slightly worse position against young IM Ravi Haria. Sensing that Adams was perhaps suffering from a summer cold and pleasantly surprised with how a type of Dragadorf had turned out, I did wonder if my early queenside attack might lead somewhere when facing the defending champion in round 5. We both missed a couple of small details, but in short Adams shored up a slightly shaky-looking king position, centralised his remaining forces and was quick to ruthlessly exploit my timetrouble collapse. With David Howell held to his second draw of the event by Justin Tan, Adams found himself back on top board when it was his turn to face the Australian GM and former Edinburgh University student in round 6. Tan was in super-solid mode and Adams wisely allowed an early repetition to save some energy for the 'money rounds', which would begin with the eagerly-awaited clash Howell versus Adams, with both on '+4'.

D. Howell - M. Adams, Round 7 - Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4

A surprise as Howell has generally been avoiding such potentially theoretical waters in recent years.

2...e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 d5 5 cxd5 exd5

Romanishin's 5...Qxd5 6 Nf3 Qf5 continues to hold up quite well for Black. Adams has been known to employ it, but despite being surprised decided to remain true to a recent favourite and trust his own analysis.

6 Bg5 h6 7 Bh4 0-0

The sensible choice, although the razorsharp 7...c5 8 dxc5 g5 9 Bg3 Ne4 has been seen much more often.

8 e3 c5 9 dxc5 Be6 10 Nf3 Nbd7 11 Be2 Rc8



12 c6

Very similar play arose after 12 Nd4 Nxc5 13 Bxf6 Qxf6 14 0-0 Nd7! (to saddle White with his own isolated pawns) 15 Qa4 Bxc3 16 bxc3 a6 17 Qb4 Rc7 18 a4 Rfc8, which was rock-solid for Black who went on to triumph in Dreev-Adams, Bilbao 2014.

12...Rxc6!?

Adams had earlier preferred 12...bxc6 13 0-0 Qa5 against Shirov in the same European Club Cup as he faced Dreev, but he may have been unable to find an equaliser against Viding's 14 Nd4.

13 Nd4 Rc8

Black loses some time, but once again will saddle White with a weak pawn on c3.

14 0-0 Qe7 15 Qb3 Bxc3 16 bxc3 Nc5 17 Bxf6

This exchange likely needed to be made at some point and does avoid the possibility of 17 Qa3 g5! (Black can also sit tight with 17...a6) 18 Bg3 Nfe4 19 Qxa7 Nxc3 20 Qa3 Nxe2+ 21 Nxe2, when White might be slightly better, but a draw is the most likely result.

17...Qxf6 18 Qb4 b6!?

Black can allow White to probe with this, but there was also 18...a6 19 a4 Rc7, as per Dreev-Adams.

19 a4 Qg6! 20 a5 Ne4



Activating just in the nick of time. Howell's next gives up any hope of being better, but in any case Black seems to be fine, as shown by 21 axb6 (21 Rfc1 Qf6 22 Bf3 Rc4 also maintains a rough balance) 21...Bh3 22 Bf3 axb6 23 Kh1 Bf5 24 Ra6 Rb8 when White can go a pawn up with 25 Nxf5 Qxf5 26 Bxe4 Qxe4 27 Rxb6, but it won't last long after 27...Rxb6 28 Qxb6 Qd3 29 Rc1 Qd2.

21 Nxe6 Qxe6 ½-½

At this stage it appeared that a third British Championship in a row might yet end with a rapid play-off, but Howell was to be frustrated by Ravi Haria in round 8, whereas Adams made the most of finishing with two whites as he brutally claimed the £5,000 first prize, along with £1,500 for the English Championship.

M. Adams - R. Pert, Round 8 - Caro-Kann Defence

Notes by Michael Adams

1 e4 c6

I wasn't really expecting this but had decided to try the Advance Caro where my opponent didn't have extensive experience.

2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5

It's always seemed surprising to me that Black can get away with this cheeky move, but it has now become a very serious line.

4 Nf3 Nc6 5 c4 cxd4 6 Nxd4 e6 7 Nc3 Bc5 8 Nxc6 bxc6

White has a few options here, but I was attracted to an idea of Wesley So's, heading for quick development.

9 Be2 Ne7 10 O-O Ng6 11 Na4 Be7

11...Bb6! is also worth considering.

12 f4 O-O 13 Be3 f6 14 exf6 Bxf6 15 Bd3!



Moving the bishop again to eye the knight on g6.

15...d4?

All White's minor pieces are well-placed and the c5-square is a tempting spot for the knight to aim for. Fixing the structure doesn't work well here; the pawn on d4 will impede Black's best piece, the bishop on f6. Better were 15...Re8 or 15...e5, as played by David Navara against Wesley So.

16 Bd2 e5 17 Qh5!

Richard's plan was 17 f5?! Nf4!, and if 18 Bxf4 (or 18 Be4 Bg5) 18...exf4 19 Rxf4 Bg5 when Black gets active, but the queen move paralyses the

knight on g6, consolidating a large advantage for White.

17...exf4 18 Bxf4 Qd7

18...Be6!? 19 Nc5 Bf7 20 Ne4 is also tough for Black, as shown by 20...Be7 21 Bd6! Bxd6? 22 Ng5 and wins.

19 h3

Not 19 Nc5? Qg4!, releasing the pressure.

19...Qf7 20 Nc5 Be7?



A mistake in a bad position. Unsurprisingly allowing a discovered attack doesn't work out well. After 20...Be6 I was intending 21 b3 Rfe8, but I didn't realise at the board that the classy continuation 22 Rae1! (if 22 Ne4 Ne5!) 22...Nf8 23 Qd1 with Ne4 to follow is the best way forward.

21 Bd6! Qe8

Giving up the queen is also hopeless: 21...Qxf1+ 22 Rxf1 Rxf1+ 23 Kxf1 Bxd6 24 Bxg6 hxg6 25 Qxg6 Bxc5 26 Qxc6, etc.

22 Rfe1

A deadly pin.

22...Rf7

22...Bxd6 23 Rxe8 Rxe8 24 Bxg6 hxg6 25 Qxg6 is crushing.

23 Bxg6 hxg6 24 Qe5!

Avoiding the game-changing blunder 24 Qxg6? Rf1+, winning White's queen.

24...Kf8

After 24...d3 25 Bxe7 d2 26 Re2 the d-pawn isn't threatening.

25 Qxd4 Kg8

Both 25...Qd8 26 Bxe7+ and 25...a5 26 Qh4! are crushing.

26 Qe5 Kf8 27 Re3 a5

27...Qd8 is refuted by 28 Rae1 Qxd6 29 Qxd6 Bxd6 30 Re8 mate.

28 Rae1 Ra7 29 Qg5!



Now 29...Bf5 30 Qh4! would deal the fatal blow.

29...Qd8 30 Qh4!

A pleasing way to exploit the multiple pins.

30...Ke8

There is no defence: 30...Qxd6 31 Qh8 mate or 30...Kg8 31 Bxe7 Qd2 32 Bg5, menacing Re8+.

31 Bxe7 1-0

Black resigned, due to 31...Raxe7 32 Qh8+!. I didn't feel I had much luck with the pairings earlier, but another white game in the last round was very handy.

M. Adams - S. Gordon, Round 9 - Sicilian Moscow – Notes by Michael Adams

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+ Nd7 4 Ba4

The latest fashion. This is quite a clever idea, keeping options of c2-c3 or c2-c4 depending on Black's response.

4...Ngf6 5 0-0 a6

The point is that 5...Nxe4 6 Re1 Nef6 7 d4 is very dangerous, so White doesn't have to defend the pawn immediately.

6 c4



6...e5

6...Nxe4 7 Re1 Nef6 8 d4 is still not easy, and 8...e6 9 d5! e5 10 Nxe5! shows one of the attacking concepts. Stephen's move fixes the centre, but White has the clearer plan to begin play on the b-file.

7 d3 g6

After 7...Be7, 8 Nh4!? is possible when 8...g6 (I think Black's best bet is to jettison a pawn for active play: 8...0-0!? 9 Nf5 b5 10 cxb5 Nb6) 9 Nc3 (maybe 9 Bh6!? Ng8 10 Bg7 Bxh4 11 Bxh8) 9...0-0 10 Bh6 Re8 11 h3 looks pleasant for White.

8 Nc3 Bg7 9 Rb1 0-0 10 h3

I thought it important to deny the bishop the g4-square and prepare Be3 (10 Be3?! Ng4 helps Black to push ...f5), but 10 b4 cxb4 11 Rxb4 Nc5 12 h3 was another way of doing it.

10...Ne8

A natural way to prepare ...f5, but it will cost more time when the knight returns to the action. In fact, the knight will now be stuck on the back rank until the last move of the game.

11 b4

I wasn't that convinced by 11 Bg5 f6 12 Be3 f5 and 11 Nd5 is well met by 11...Nc7.

11...cxb4 12 Rxb4 Nc5 13 Nd5

I wanted to play 13 Be3 but thought it impossible due to 13...Qa5 14 Qb1 Nxd3. However, after 15 Qxd3! Qxb4 16 Rb1 Black's queen is snared: 16...Qa5 17 Bb6 or 16...Qa3 17 Rb3.

13...b5?

This is tactically flawed, but I was happy with my position after the better options too: a) 13...Be6 14 Nb6 Rb8 15 Bc2 f5 16 exf5 Bxf5 17 Be3 with d3-d4 to follow looks good. b) 13...Nc7 14 Nb6 Rb8 15 Bg5 f6

16 Be3 f5 17 Nxc8 Qxc8 18 exf5 gxf5 19 Rb6 and Black's position looks a bit loose.

14 cxb5 Bd7

After 14...axb5 15 Bxb5 Rxa2 16 Bg5 Black's undefended rook on a2 is vulnerable, and if 16...f6 (or 16...Qa5 17 Bc4) 17 Bc4 fxg5 18 Bxa2 Kh8 19 Rb8.

15 b6!



A deadly idea. The passed pawn is not only close to queening, but it also paralyses the knight on e8.

15...Nxa4

Throwing in 15...a5 doesn't change much, as shown by 16 Rc4 Nxa4 17 Rxa4 Bxa4 18 Qxa4 h6 19 Be3 f5 20 b7 Rb8 21 Bb6.

16 Rxa4 Bxa4 17 Qxa4 f6

17...h6 18 Be3 f5 19 b7 Rb8 20 Bb6! leaves the black queen embarrassed.

18 Nd2

18 Be3!? Rf7 19 Nd2 was also good.

18...Rf7 19 Nc4 Qd7

Swapping queens is hardly desirable, but 19...f5 20 Na5 is no fun either.

20 Qxd7 Rxd7 21 Be3 f5 22 f3 Bf6

The natural 22...Nf6 is refuted by direct play: 23 Rb1 Nxd5 24 exd5 Bf6 (or 24...e4 25 dxe4 fxe4 26 fxe4 Bc3 27 Rb3) 25 b7 Rb8 26 Na5 Bd8 27 Ba7 and wins.

23 Rb1 Bd8 24 Na5 Rb8

Or if 24...Kf7 25 b7 Rb8 26 Ba7.

25 Nc6



25...Rbb7

25...Rc8 26 b7 Rxb7 27 Rxb7 Rxc6 28 Rb8 picks up a piece.

26 Na5 Rb8 27 Nc6 Rbb7 28 a4 Kf7

Also quite lost is 28...Nf6 29 Nxd8 Nxd5 30 Nxb7 Nxe3 31 Na5.

29 a5 Nf6 30 Ndb4 1-0

Stronger than 30 Nxd8+ Rxd8 31 Bg5 Nxd5 32 Bxd8 Nf4 which gives a few practical hopes. Black resigned here, as after 30...Ke6 31 Nxa6 White plans Nab8, or if 30...d5 31 Nxe5+.

David Howell may not enjoy the best of head-to-head records with Adams, but the top seed pushed him all the way in an attempt to win his third outright British title in the English Riviera alone. While Adams generally oozes professionalism, Howell's games are more likely to have the crowd gripped. He generally uses all of his time and often even relies on the increment alone for several moves. The Sussex star has a pretty impressive all-round game but is not immune from being drawn into a hand-to-hand duel.

While it was hard to argue that Michael Adams wasn't a highly worthy British Champion, things might have been different had David Howell also not had Black against Justin Tan and Ravi Haria, who both emerged with highly creditable draws. The former defended like a lion from move 40 to peace being signed on move 61; the latter remained impressively solid for some 89 moves. Winning as Black really can be a very tough business.



John Emms [picture by Chris Stratford]

Howell must have been dismayed to see Adams' fine exchange sacrifice in the final round but impressively, still remained knuckled down to business against Keith Arkell, winning the game not once but twice after allowing Black's counterplay to get out of control just before the time control. His reward was clear second with a hardly shabby 7/9.

Third place was shared between your scribe and Ravi Haria. The rising Hertfordshire star began with 3/3 and only found Simon Williams' Colle-Zukertort too hot to handle, while scoring highly creditable draws against Adams and Howell. That said, it might well have been John Emms, not Haria, finishing on '+4'.

J. Emms - R. Haria, Round 9 - French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Bd7 5 Nf3 Bc6 6 Bd3 Nd7 7 c3 Be7 8 0-0 Ngf6 9 Nxf6+ Bxf6 10 Re1 0-0 11 Bf4 Bxf3 12 Qxf3 c6 13 Re3 g6 14 Qg3 Re8 15 Rae1 a5 16 a4



Thus far White has nothing more than the edge usually afforded him by Black's solid choice of the Fort Knox variation. Now 16...Bh4!? 17 Qg4 h5 might have been sensible to discombobulate, whereas Haria's choice was but to encourage White in his attacking ambitions.

16...Qb6? 17 h4! Bg7 18 h5 Qb3

Not what Black wanted to do, of course, but White would have enjoyed an overwhelming

initiative after 18...Qxb2? 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 Rb1 Qa2 21 Rxb7.

19 Qh4 Bf6 20 Qg4 Bg7 21 hxg6 hxg6 22 Rh3 e5!?

In dire straits Haria desperately tries to mix things up.

23 dxe5

23 Qxd7! Red8 24 Qg4 would actually have been very strong in view of 24...exf4 25 Bxg6! fxc6 26 Qxg6. The killer threat is 27 Re7 and 26...Kf8 (or 26...Qf7 27 Rh8+!) 27 Rh5 Rd5 28 Rh7 Rd7 29 Re5! is totally hopeless for Black.

23...Nf8 24 Qh4 Qxa4 25 b3! Qxb3 26 Bh6 Rxe5 27 Bxg7 Rh5 28 Qf6

Even cleaner would have been 28 Qf4 Rxh3 29 gxh3 Kxg7 30 Bc4.

28...Nh7



29 Qe7??

A horrible miscalculation as time-trouble began to bite. Correct was 29 Qf4 Rxh3 (29...Kxg7 30 Bc4 Qc2 31 Qxf7+ Kh8 32 Rhe3 is overwhelming too) 30 Bc4! with the twin threats of mate and 31 Bxb3.

29...Rxh3 30 gxh3 Kxg7 31 Bxg6 Nf6

Even 31...Kxg6 32 Re3 Kg7 would have worked, but in any case White is about to come up painfully short.

32 Bc2 Qxc2 33 Kh1 Qf5 34 Rg1+ Kh8 35 Qe3 Qe4+ 0-1

The organisation of this year's British from Kevin Staveley and his team was rightly praised, but we must hope that they will now look to build on a third highly successful Championships in a row by securing a new sponsor. Unlike Llandudno and Hull, Torquay was not sponsored, meaning that the first prize fell from £10,000 to £5,000 and only after a little money for conditions was found from an ECF budget were the Championships able to attract Adams and Howell. With next year's Olympiad scheduled to take place from August 1-15 there appears to be a possibility that the British will revert back to a two-week format; the Championship being held over the first week, with the many junior championships in the second. That might just work, but could backfire if a lack of sponsorship fails to attract the leading British players. And let us just hope that no grandmaster will ever again walk into the Congress Office and fail to be recognised by a leading force in the organising team, as remarkably occurred after the final round this year.

We must also hope that our leading women will continue to play the British. In Torquay Jovanka Houska secured her ninth British Women's title, a remarkable achievement and one more outright championship than Rowena Bruce managed (although she also tied for first in a further three). Houska gave the impression of having worked hard on her game of late. She was typically professional, as when holding Nick Pert with the black pieces, which is never an easy task, and performed defensive miracles when somehow holding a piece-down, wild middlegame with both kings highly exposed against Simon Williams no less. Houska's fine positional intuition has long

been a major strength, but en route to finishing on '+3' for a 2487 performance she also showed that she can attack with verve when given the chance. So too can Katarzyna Toma, who will make her debut for England in the European Team Championships this autumn and who finished second in the British Women's Championship, while winning the game of the tournament.

R. Bates - J. Houska, Round 3 - Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Bd3 Nbd7 6 0-0 Bd6 7 Nc3

Acquiescing to a transposition into a sharp line of the Meran.

7...dxc4 8 Bxc4 b5 9 Bd3 Bb7 10 e4 e5

An essential central reaction as the battle already heats up.

11 dxe5 Nxe5 12 Nxe5 Bxe5 13 f4

Critical, but White may do well to delay the advance, such as in favour of 13 Qe2.

13...Bd4+

13...Bc7? 14 e5 Ng4 15 Qxg4 Qxd3 16 Rd1 was superb for White in Kasparov-Short, Reykjavik (rapid) 2004, although somehow Short eventually saved the game.

14 Kh1 h5!

A thematic idea in such positions, exploiting Black's control of the g1-a7 diagonal.

15 e5 Ng4 16 Ne4 Qh4 17 h3 c5



Threatening 18...Bxe4 19 Bxe3 Qg3!. 17...0-0-0 18 Bd2 c5 also turned out well for Black in Thompson-Pein, 4NCL 2013.

18 Bxb5+

18 Qe1? would but be meek and leave White suffering after 18...Qxe1 19 Rxe1 0-0-0.

18...Kf8 19 Qf3

Wisely covering some key squares and preparing to defend with 20 Qg3.

19...Bxe4 20 Qxe4 Rb8

Black had to avoid 20...Qg3?? 21 Qxa8+ Ke7 22 Qb7+! Kf8 23 Qb8+ Ke7

24 Qd6#, but 20...Rd8 was also possible.

21 Qd5?

A bad miscalculation, whereas 21 Qf3! Nf2+ 22 Kh2 would have led to a draw. Possibly Bates was rather concerned about 22...Rxb5, but after 23 Qa8+ Ke7 24 Qxa7+ Kd8 25 Bd2 Black's king is also in trouble and it transpires that White has counterplay sufficient for a draw, as with 25...Ng4+ 26 Kh1 Rh6 27 Ba5+ Ke8 28 Qa8+ Kd7 29 Qa7+ when 29...Ke6? 30 f5+! Kxe5 31 Rae1+ Ne3 32 Bd2 would be most inadvisable.

21...Qg3!



The rook on b8 can be allowed to fall with check as Houska completes a textbook attacking combination.

22 Qd6+ Kg8 23 Qxb8+ Kh7 0-1

The move White must have initially missed is 24 Bd3+ g6 25 Bxg6+ Kg7! when he will either be mated on h2 or by 26 hxc4 Qh4#.

K. Toma - K. Arkell, Round 5 - Modern Defence

Notes by Katarzyna Toma

1 e4 g6 2 d4 Bg7 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 d5

There is also a plan with 4...b5?!, but Black shouldn't play with the pawns on the queenside when behind in development, as demonstrated by Malakhov-S.Novikov, Moscow (blitz) 2015: 5 Bd3 d6 6 h3 Nd7 7 0-0 Qc7 8 Re1 Bb7 9 Bg5 e5 10 d5 b4 11 dxc6 Bxc6 12 Nd5 Bxd5 13 exd5 Ngf6 14 Bb5 and White had instructively taken control.

5 h3 dxe4 6 Nxe4 Nd7 7 Bd3

Another possibility in this Modern and Caro-Kann hybrid is 7 Bc4 Ngf6 8 Nxf6+ Nxf6 9 0-0 0-0 10 Re1 Bf5 11 Bf4 Be4 12 Be5 Bd5 13 Bf1, after which White beautifully outplayed Black in Kryvoruchko-V.Onischuk, Ukrainian Championship, Kharkov 2007.

7...Ngf6 8 c3 0-0 9 0-0 b6

A bit too slow. It was more natural to play 9...Nxe4 10 Bxe4 c5 11 Be3 and although White might be slightly better, Black has a normal, playable position.

10 Neg5!? h6?



Black had no sense of danger that day, although even after 10...Bb7 11 Ne5 e6 12 Qe2 White has more space and the more enjoyable position.

11 Nxf7!

My coach Marcin Tazbir showed me this idea in a similar position without h3 and ...b6 included. I was told the best reply is ...Rxf7 as ...Kxf7 falls under a strong attack after Nh4.

11...Kxf7

After 11...Rxf7!? 12 Bxg6 Qf8 13 Nh4 Nd5 14 Qd3 N7f6 15 c4 White enjoys ongoing, promising compensation.

12 Nh4 g5 13 Ng6

Black's position is already very tough.

13...Re8



Not much better is 13...Ba6 14 Nxf8 Bxd3 15 Nxd7 Bxf1 16 Ne5+, while after 13...Bb7 14 f4 c5 15 fxg5 hxg5 16 Bxg5 White's pieces surround Black's king so smoothly that there is no need to regain the exchange at the cost of the initiative.

14 Ne5+

14 f4 was probably more accurate, avoiding any piece exchanges for the time being. After 14...gxf4 15 Bxf4 e6 (or 15...Bb7 16 Qd2) 16 Ne5+ Black is forced to exchange as otherwise his queen is trapped, but he is still in serious trouble after 16...Nxe5 17 dxe5 Kg8 18 exf6 Qxf6 19 Qh5 Bd7 20

Bg6.

14...Kg8

14...Nxe5 15 dxe5 Nd5 was the alternative, but after 16 Qh5+ Kg8 17 f4 White is still doing extremely well: a) 17...g4 18 f5 with the idea of playing Bh6. b) 17...e6 18 fxg5 Rf8 19 Rxf8+ Qxf8 20 gxh6 breaks through. c) 17...Rf8 18 fxg5 Rxf1+ 19 Bxf1 hxg5 (or 19...Bxe5 20 Bd3) 20 Bd3 when Bg5 and Rf1 are coming. d) 17...Nxf4 18 Bxf4 gxf4 19 Qg6 and wins.

15 f4!

Allowing the rook and dark-squared bishop to join in the attack.

15...gxf4 16 Bxf4

Now Nc6 is again threatened.

16...Nxe5 17 dxe5 Nd5

White is also winning after 17...Be6 18 exf6 exf6 19 Qf3 Qd7 20 Rad1, so the best chance for Black was 17...Qd5 18 exf6 exf6 19 Qc2 when he is still alive and can put up some resistance.

18 Bxh6!



I was smiling inside when I found this move.

18...Bxh6 19 Qh5 Nf4 20 Rxf4 Qxd3 21 Qxe8+ Kh7 22 Qxe7+ Kg8

Suddenly, I couldn't find checkmates anymore and no longer felt so cold blooded! Here 23 Qe8+ Kh7 24 Rf7+ Bg7 25 Raf1 Bxh3 26 Qe7 Qg3 27 Rxf7+ Qxf7 28 Rf7 was the easiest and fastest way of winning.

23 Qf7+ Kh8 24 Rf3 Qd7 25 Qg6 Qg7 26 Qe8+ Qg8 27 Qxc6 Be6



White is still winning, but has allowed Black to develop his pieces, so I was annoyed at myself for ruining my hard work. It took me a moment to clear my thoughts and, thankfully, I then came up with the deadly plan of Rd1-d4-h4.

28 Rd1 Re8 29 Rd4! Re7 30 Rh4 Qg5 31 Qa8+ Kh7 32 Qe4+ Kg8 33 Kh2 Rg7 34 Rf6 Qg3+ 35 Kh1 1-0



Jovanka Houska receives her now almost customary British Women's Championship trophy from ECF Director of Home Chess, Adrian Elwin. Houska was at her very best in Torquay [picture by Chris Stratford]

ECF Awards 2019

The President's Award for Services to Chess

Vassos Georgiou

After 30 years of service, Vassos Georgiou is finally stepping down as President of Gerrards Cross Chess Club. Through his passion, dedication and leadership the club is now one of the largest in Buckinghamshire. Over the past 36 years Vassos has coached and inspired hundreds of children and adult players at the club and working with local schools..

Robin Kneebone

The current healthy state of Cornish chess is in no small regard the legacy of Robin Kneebone. His strong organising ability has served the Cornwall CA well for 30 years as County Secretary, President and Secretary for Junior Chess. He has captained a number of club teams, currently three at the Carrick Club and organised a variety of events from the Annual Congress to many junior events. He has also represented the county on the BCF/ECF council.

George Spalding

Until the end of last season George had been both the League and Minutes secretary of the Oxfordshire Chess Association for more than 15 years, responsible for the day-to-day running of local chess in the county. For part of this time he was also OCA Press Officer. He has also been the linchpin at his own club, Wantage, for more than 20 years, helping with its vibrant junior section.

John D. Wheeler

The current President of the NCA, John has taken an active part in Northumberland chess for 40 years. In that time, he has been Chairman, County Secretary, Championship Organiser, Team Captain, NCCU and ECF delegate and most noticeably Bulletin editor. In 1987 he took over the Bulletin, which he produced regularly five times a year for 30 years. He continues to contribute to the magazine under its new editor. He has written several books on the history of Chess in Northumberland.

Mike Wiltshire

Mike is Secretary/Treasurer of Dartford Chess Club. He helps organise and run the Kent County teams and fixtures. He is a tremendous promoter of the game and has taught children at school level. He is a member of the Chess Collectors Society and has met and forged friendships with chess lovers throughout the world. Now in his early 70s he has been associated with chess for many years.

Club of the Year

There were six excellent nominations for clubs this year. However, the colourful citation from Warwick Chess, the chess club based at the University of Warwick, stood out from the others and they win the award this time. The citation is online here --- <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WARWICK-CHESS.pdf>

Small Club of the Year

There were two nominations in this category, and Seaton Chess Club from Devon with only ten members win the 2019 award. See the citation here --- <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SEATON-CHESS-CLUB.pdf>

Congress of the Year

There were no nominations for Congress of the Year this year. This is a shame – this award differs from most of the others in that the nominations come from congress goers, rather than from the congress organisers, and a nomination for the award should be a good way to say ‘thank you’ for giving us an enjoyable event.

Website of the Year

There were no fewer than twelve entries in this section, including standard club websites, Facebook pages, chess blogs and full-scale web magazines. The Awards Committee were almost unanimous in giving the award this year to the Battersea Chess Club website – www.batterseachessclub.org.uk

Player of the Year

There were insufficient nominations to hold a vote this year.

Magazine of the Year

The Northumberland Chess Bulletin was nominated this year. It has 100 regular subscribers plus casual sales. Sufficient copies of recent issues were received from new editor to send some to all members of the Awards Committee and produced such comments as ‘a very good magazine’, ‘impressive’ and ‘I enjoyed reading it’. We recommend that it receive the award.

— *Paul Bielby, Chairman, ECF Awards Committee*

Book of the Year 2019



The choice this year fell between two contrasting volumes: a fascinating history of one of the greatest world champions Emanuel Lasker, (publisher Excelsior Verlag) and a book dealing with the highly contemporary subject of Artificial Intelligence, not only in chess, but also in wider society. The latter was the unanimous choice of the judges ...

Game Changer by GM Matthew Sadler and WIM Natasha Regan
New in Chess paperback pp 415 £19.95

The two energetic authors complement each other very well (they won the BOY 2016 with Chess for Life) and in this new book have explored in detail the new software AlphaZero (AZ), which is making such an impact on the chess world. The origins of AZ are remarkable – the moves of chess were fed into a powerful computer which then played millions of games against itself in the process

learning the intricacies of the game, and eventually it became stronger than any other player, human or computer in the world.

The wider implications of this development in the field of artificial intelligence are considered by Garry Kasparov and Demis Hassabis, the inspiration behind AZ. Can AZ's playing and learning be used for other, wider applications? Hassabis certainly thinks so.

The authors had the opportunity to understand the chess approach of AZ and explore how it played in a series of games against Stockfish, one of the best human designed computer chess-playing programs. AZ won convincingly. Sadler looked at AZ's games and found a unique style of play with many distinctive features, for example, piece activity, the initiative even at the cost of material and going after the enemy king, are just a few. Not unlike the young Tal perhaps, but more soundly based.

Chess players will find a splendid collection of games with many comparing AZ with players and games of the past. Very readable, there is nothing in the book that cannot be understood or enjoyed. The book is beautifully presented by New in Chess and is excellent value. The ultimate accolade came from Carlsen who said that AZ had influenced his approach to chess. Game Changer may also influence yours.

— Ray Edwards, Julian Farrand, Sean Marsh

British Chess Educational Trust Awards 2019

With funds provided by the generosity of the late Sir George Thomas (now administered by the British Chess Educational Trust) the English Chess Federation annually awards shields to schools which have shown outstanding achievements or enthusiasm in chess. We have made six awards as follows -

Ackworth School | Bristol Grammar School | Coventry Chess Academy | Winslow Church of England School | East Sheen Primary School | St Josephs Catholic Primary School, Oxford

The citations can be found here -

<https://www.ecfresource.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BCET-Nominations-2019-compressed.pdf>



Final Grand Prix Leader Boards 2018/19

Open 180+						
	Grade/code	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1=	306442G	Han, Yichen	Forest Hall	215	G16482	664
1=	105817E	Arkell, Keith C	Halesowen	242	G8596	664
3	283303H	Willow, Jonah B	West Nottingham	233	G8025	632
4	112455K	Hebden, Mark L	4NCL Guildford	238	G9773	627

5	302259G	Xu, Edison	Newport (Shropshire)	182	G4567	620
6	266464B	Pink, Joshua	Stockport	181	G8318	611
7	258768D	Merry, Alan B	4NCL Barbican	238	G426	607
8	283704D	Rocco, Federico	Q Elizabeth School Barnet	214	G16862	600
9	302581A	Bowcott-Terry, Finlay	Halesowen	189	G5023	598
10	294585L	Ratnesan, Ranesh	Kings College Junior School	195	G12861	589
11	267851C	McPhillips, Joseph	Bolton	236	G8208	589
12	294993D	Yoon, Jacob D	City of London S	190	G6720	576
13	119904D	Surtees, Mike J	Great Lever	197	G10785	575
14	290756C	Tombolis, Christopher	Ealing	187	G2955	571
15	224790C	Villiers, Thomas	Hon Members LCCL	207	G15517	568
16	282441D	Verma, Aditya	Coulsdon CF	200	G271	556
17	179708G	Tavoularis, Nicholas	Middlesbrough	203	B11188	555
18	103545K	Gormally, Daniel W	4NCL Blackthorne Russia	245	G18726	554
19	115448F	Merriman, John	Petts Wood & Orpington	214	G7915	547
20	300121A	Royal, Shreyas	Kent Junior Congresses	195	G14508	541
21	312931H	Makkar, Rajat	Reading	197	JS12819	538
22	101997B	Bates, Richard A	Hackney	225	G13162	538
23	289709L	Balaji, Aaravamudhan	St Olaves GS	192	G45	535
24	299313C	Stoyanov, Viktor	Battersea	220	G16104	533
25	282543A	Watson, Mikey J	Kent Junior Congresses	193	G10789	526
26	230044J	Jamroz, Krzysztof	Petts Wood & Orpington	185	G8953	511
27	245535D	Iyengar, Ilya	Hendon	180	G6469	505
28	153139G	Waddington, Mike P	Dorchester	188	G10742	498
29	277163K	Boswell, Jacob Connor	Cheddleton & Leek	192	G6722	498
30	245951G	Jones, Steven A	Basingstoke	196	G15101	496
31	121366A	Wells, Jonathan C	Norwich Dons	186	G14103	495
32	293755E	Modi, Kishan J	Leicestershire Juniors	188	G8899	493
33	282399J	Kalavannan, Koby	Hampton School	237	G8916	493
34	193581B	Okhai, Shabir	Syston	198	G26024	490
35	292972H	Modi, Shyam Jagdish	Leicestershire Juniors	210	G14521	488
36	297586F	Jaufarally, Nadia	St Albans	185	G10945	480
37	109679F	Dilleigh, Stephen P	Horfield & Redland	182	G15041	480
38	115042L	Mason, Donald J	Shirley & Wythall	190	G4435	480
39	156101H	Burnett, Jim	Mansfield	189	G7384	478
40	115710D	Moore, Gerald	Broadland	197	G5554	476
41	118171D	Rogers, Tim L	Hackney	181	G15713	472
42	303863E	Zapolskis, Antanas	Lithuania	214	G1449	471

43	260370G	Davison, Chris	Cambridge City	194	G2945	470
44	263507A	Prior, Stephen CV	Grantham	195	G14851	469
45	105715H	Anderson, John	Suffolk *	200	G7925	466
46	103486J	Wall, Tim P	Forest Hall	211	G15652	455
47	116521F	Osborne, Marcus E	Wimbledon	206	G9647	455
48	293662J	Hosdurga, Chirag	Bristol GS	184	G2736	452
49	165369G	Ackley, Peter JE	Chesterfield	191	G12490	446
50	254632C	Starley, Robert	Leeds University	195	G13467	444

Women 180+						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	297586F	Jaufarally, Nadia	St Albans	185	G10945	480
2	276682G	Graham, Cassie M	Worthing	180	G2580	286
3	185204J	Longson, Sarah N	Stockport	195	G3108	185
4	222273F	Norinkeviciute, Rasa	Hastings & St Leonards	180	S12874	181
5	291537G	Sucikova, Svetlana	4NCL White Rose	196	S15256	146
6	142397G	Bhatia, Kanwal K	4NCL Barbican	196	G8492	142
7	264085F	Head, Louise	University of Warwick	200	G9338	128
8	307054C	Orlovska, Madara	Crystal Palace	190	S9489	125
9	123515B	Houska, Jovanka	4NCL Wood Green	233	G8343	123
10	113450E	Jackson, Sheila	4NCL Spirit of Atticus	185	G4204	112
11	263500J	Ciuksyte, Dagne	4NCL Guildford	213	G3250	102
12	163004A	Lauterbach, Ingrid	4NCL Barbican	184	G4150	95
13	240315J	Grigoryan, Meri	Cavendish	192	G10348	87
14	111099J	Richmond, Jane	4NCL Check Inn Mates	187	S7129	79
15	261202B	Milliet, Sophie	4NCL Guildford	244	B14718	75
16	280020C	Kalaiyalahan, Akshaya	4NCL Guildford	200	JG6425	59
17	103888G	Hunt, Harriet V	4NCL Blackthorne Russia	223	G5953	55
18	105877A	James, Ann-Marie	South Birmingham	180	G3387	54
19	305272C	Toma, Katarzyna	4NCL West is Best	230	G33465	53
20	240148E	Smith, Olivia	Athenaeum	191	G11617	45

Open 160-179						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	122453A	Finnegan, Oliver	British Bangla Chess Association	160	G11526	645
2	152545B	Ashcroft, Graham J	Preston	161	G25273	582
3	264465E	Ansari, Athar	Newport (Shropshire)	179	G1850	552
4	178373H	Bussmann, John	Surbiton	161	G7703	545
5	104852B	Whitehead, Mark A	Rochdale	167	G9834	517

6	247156F	Rubeck, Jonathan	Hendon	171	G8112	513
7	107574D	Bryant, Richard BE	Oswestry	171	G13077	500
8	282176L	Hilton, Tim	Blue Club (Oldham)	170	G15663	500
9	116801A	Patrick, David A	Courier Halifax	161	G3742	499
10	285268J	Finn, Peter	Wycombe & Hazlemere	179	G18079	493
11	181426G	Burns, Martin J	Stockport	163	G9906	489
12	106951C	Bolt, Graham	Exeter	175	G5755	483
13	109494E	de Coverly, Roger D	Bourne End	177	G13678	479
14	113386L	Ireland, David J	Coventry Chess	177	G3550	474
15	313177E	Lundback, Anders L	Athenaeum	161	G1050	457
16	259664H	Cukovs, Oleg	Poulton-le-Fylde	171	G11511	457
17	132638H	Spanton, Tim R	Battersea	168	G3649	456
18	130537C	Kelly, Paul J	Hastings & St Leonards	163	G11982	452
19	230802C	Gardiner, Eric D	Hull DCA	173	G4820	450
20	286368G	Gopakumar, Siddharth	4NCL All Anands on Deck	166	G14537	448
21	125474B	Newton, Robert A	Blue Club (Oldham)	173	G13343	447
22	173310C	Ingham, H William	Teignmouth	163	G16296	445
23	112178K	Harris, Martyn J	Kendal	160	S10017	435
24	111451H	Gostelow, David W	Telford	167	G3844	432
25	162291C	Jackson, Paul G	Coulsdon CF	160	G11980	429
26	220716D	Miller, George I	Keynsham	160	G5515	425
=27	106631G	Benson, Paul J	Braille CA	162	G12026	410
=27	269274A	Zhu, Yaoyao	3Cs	165	G19162	410
29	139298A	Robson, Paul E	Durham City	169	G11827	409
30	155319H	Doran, Chris	Chester	175	G2931	408
31	288310H	Ruane, Brendan J	Hastings & St Leonards	169	G2321	403
32	111078A	Garnett, John S	The Buffs	169	G7687	399
33	113348C	Ilett, Raymond J	New England	165	G12898	397
34	150309B	Lim, Mark	Linton	162	G9787	390
35	290835K	Bott, Simeon	University of Warwick	165	G14558	387
36	117937J	Riding, Mick D	Gosforth	171	G10708	385
37	176286C	Turner, Tim M	Beverley	167	S15647	384
38	148377J	Hymers, Barry J	Lancaster	178	G1955	377
39	119124L	Slinger, AJ (Tony)	Undercliffe	170	G1544	375
40	128865K	Fallowfield, Nicholas	Stourbridge	168	G11160	374
41	284233G	Wei, Naomi	Wanstead	164	JG6475	363
42	302092H	Brown, Geoffrey M	Folkestone	172	G5422	361
43	190315K	Reed, John S	East Cheshire	171	G7787	355
44	120826D	Vassiliou, Chris	Chorlton-cum-Hardy	171	G2802	348

45	285981G	Adaway, William	Dorchester	165	P16319	341
46	110474D	Faulkner, Martin J	Coulsdon CF	174	G9933	338
=47	115643D	Mitchell, Stephen R	Slough	166	G14874	331
=47	240954K	Hutchinson, Norman A	Cambridge City	173	G11477	331
49	280882B	Varney, Zoe	Millfield School	174	JG17170	329

Women 160-179						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	269274A	Zhu, Yaoyao	3Cs	165	G19162	410
2	284233G	Wei, Naomi	Wanstead	164	JG6475	363
3	280882B	Varney, Zoe	Millfield School	174	JG17170	329
4	290364H	Gamal, Alaa	Basildon	162	G418	176
5	281559L	Smith, Lynda	Thornbury Bristol	165	G9467	148
6	117791G	Regan, Natasha K	4NCL Barbican	173	G23698	137
7	268368E	Giles, Yasmin	Lancaster University	160	G16470	133
8	275563E	Lampard, Alice	Bristol University	174	G865	41

Open 140-159						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	114423G	Lim, Yu-Chin (Peter)	Harrow	152	G12498	614
2	115269F	McDonnell, James J	Streatham	155	S7061	593
3	316400H	Tomlinson, Zak	Barnby Dun	149	G16981	592
4	116382G	O'Gorman, Brendan	DHSS	154	G2324	581
5	144928L	Pepe, Salvatore	Hendon	144	G14033	577
6	120211L	Tello, Yasser	Wimbledon	159	G17152	570
7	127076L	Woodward, Tim F	Trowbridge	153	G15712	555
8	230106E	Clegg, Robert	Huddersfield	151	G13367	528
9	256206G	Lake, Chris	Brighton & Hove	157	S2930	527
10	201363A	Chantrell, Paul	Kings Head	143	G12002	525
11	170919H	Williams, Stephen	Cwmbran	141	S14916	525
12	108722J	Connor, Michael I	Great Lever	147	G10443	519
13	293975H	Maraiyesa, Seun Wole	British Bangla Chess Association	154	G14380	516
14	303624J	Cheung, Ryan	Southampton	147	S13973	516
15	228399C	Winter, Kevin	Bradford	153	G8786	514
16	268139A	Abedian, Mohsen	London W *	140	G10873	506
17	111035E	Gamble, Raymond J	Spondon	155	G12955	506
18	185037E	Prince, Alan R	Scotland	153	G446	500
19	109533L	Dean, Robert A	Pudsey	148	G13394	498
20	143011H	White, Gary M	Maddocks	141	G5273	495

21	128713J	Wilson, Matthew R	Teignmouth	159	G10158	486
22	104806F	Cawston, M John	Undercliffe	155	G9196	485
23	284872H	May, Paul	Limewood & Scarcroft	157	G11990	475
24	274098K	Lekoudis, George	Hastings & St Leonards	144	G20253	466
25	240296J	Livesey, R Nigel	4NCL Manchester Manticores	154	G11351	461
26	305128G	Dehghan-Afifi, Sajjad	Northenden	141	S14026	460
27	170309C	Dunkley, Michael	Peterborough	152	G10510	457
28	156824D	Lloyd, Stephen M	Chester	147	G14870	457
29	111388E	Goodfellow, Russell R	Tunbridge Wells	146	G13934	448
30	104775K	Taylor, Robert P	Ashfield	151	G2378	445
31	301941L	Holi, Siefaldin A	Wakefield	147	G14546	444
32	149122C	Georgiou, George	Swindon	147	G5433	435
33	271951E	Sheikh, Nasarullah	Ilford *	155	G10970	435
34	162936A	Hall, David G	Scotland	154	G3962	425
35	109622K	Desmedt, Richard E	Wombwell	141	G13080	425
36	309202B	Valjee, Ashir V	Metropolitan	143	G1811	419
37	258818D	Hughes, Peter	Yorks Copper Works	154	G12244	419
38	112597H	Hibbitt, Arthur	Banbury	144	G1733	415
39	105395E	Boulden, David	Denton	149	G3620	414
40	103615E	Waters, Andrew C	Rainham (Kent)	159	G1247	410
41	117410B	Price, Andrew	Leamington	142	G1302	409
42	113949G	Joslin, Tim M	Ealing	159	G15633	394
43	117487D	Procter, Colin S	Yorks Copper Works	156	G3152	389
44	118692K	Sellwood, Colin	Camborne & Redruth	142	G3097	384
45	284375E	Bush, Ian	Cumnor	152	G6351	379
46	311712B	Carmichael, Ned	Beverley	141	S11037	368
47	122817B	Horlock, Peter J	Guildford	144	G12332	365
48	113478E	Jacob, Sydney J	Lewisham	156	G15260	364
49	283620J	Pitkeathly, Hamish AG	Athenaeum	142	G5892	360
50	283075K	Bovtramovics, Vladimirs	Woking	157	S16166	353

Women 140-159						
	Grade/code	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	108565H	Headlong, Fenella	4NCL Check Inn Mates	141	G4995	182
2	240374C	Moore, Gillian A	Southampton	144	G5589	158
3	320041D	Gorrepati, Soumya	London *	156	G19179	150
4	290173A	Milewska, Agnieszka	Ealing	146	G344	130
5	257973L	Hutchinson, Joanne	Scunthorpe	147	G7423	129
6	285525C	O'Brien, Megan E	Plymouth	156	G10324	83

7	252646D	Mate, Maria	Cowley	142	S17154	67
8	281105E	Heffer, Judith	Bishops Stortford	147	G8368	45
9	120714D	Camp, Syringa Lyn	Colwyn Bay	143	G15265	41

Open 120-139						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	283350F	Bullock, Lee	Hackney	131	G9106	628
2	274725L	Fraser, Chris A	West Bridgford	121	G2887	605
3	140662A	Pride, Stephen C	Cambridge City	137	G14881	559
4	292592J	Hawthorne, Julian N	Kidsgrove	128	G8401	545
5	276572L	Egan, William J	York RI	122	G16401	529
6	315964E	Ball, Matthew P	St Albans	137	G10104	528
7	293495E	Fisher, Neal	Peterborough	130	G11035	514
8	305592K	Brookes, Jeremy P	Hampstead	138	G7282	514
9	295884D	Weersing, Nathan	Linton	123	G10997	500
10	307468H	Valentine, Tim	Battersea	135	G15635	499
11	108147A	Chadaway, Stephen M	Olton	132	G14979	495
12	264336E	Crouch, Timothy J	Kings Head	123	P15702	486
13	127012G	Wood, Peter C	Hastings *	132	G12267	484
14	106888L	Blencowe, Ian P	Wotton Hall	128	G6353	475
15	151595A	O'Brien, Paul W	Worthing	128	G11884	475
16	123783E	Oliver, Bruce R	Hull DCA	134	G2444	469
17	137840F	McKenna, James F	Crystal Palace	133	G6837	469
18	286100J	Owens, Robert	Formby	121	S13554	466
19	111701E	Grice, Alec	Beverley	138	G612	464
20	174167G	Macarthur, Duncan M	Keynsham	134	S4496	462
21	163752G	Weller, Colin	Scarborough	122	S3117	451
22	285392K	Walker, Kate	Telepost (Shrewsbury)	126	G8548	446
23	298115E	Livermore, Richard EA	Downend & Fishponds	129	S13140	446
24	259148A	Foley, Phil T	Upminster	139	G12630	445
25	220302K	Teague, David	Harrogate	139	G3757	441
26	274534D	Parry, Jacques H	London EC/WC *	139	G6754	438
27	275780B	Fernando, Manel	4NCL The Pitstop	121	G9592	436
28	292788D	Belinger, John	New Milton	134	S7701	435
29	148726H	Harris, John B	Forest of Dean	122	S7512	432
30	308956D	Lambton, David	Southampton University	128	G3877	430
31	295064K	Wootton, Stephen G	Rolls Royce Derby	127	G15008	425
32	152143D	Edwards, Steve A	Sutton Coldfield	130	S14837	421
33	107586L	Buckell, David J	Clitheroe	129	S3855	415

34	118422C	Salisbury, Paul	Yorks Copper Works	130	G11828	414
35	298586L	Illingworth, John B	Newham	125	G7643	413
36	275941L	Homer, Neil S	4NCL The Pitstop	138	G11066	409
37	312940J	McLean, David E	St Johns Norwich	130	G3612	409
38	101814A	Haddock, Paul	Pimlico	127	G11877	406
39	319581J	Ward-Riggs, Samuel	London *	126	G18949	406
40	288301G	Sloan, Cecil	Watford	139	G2592	405
41	114167D	Layhe, Neville	Crewe	126	S11139	403
42	124335E	Ashton, David N	Pensby	128	S3573	403
43	113921G	Jones, Timothy M	Bristol Cabot	137	G15686	399
44	118154D	Rogers, David R	Exmouth	132	G3785	396
45	139288J	Boustred, Noel J	Gosforth	124	S11460	395
46	314033H	Turner, Sam	Horfield & Redland	122	G14065	387
47	264399G	Kelly, Ronan	London	134	G13781	385
48	110795B	Foster, Paul	Medway	130	G11948	384
49	309447K	Jiping, Li	Sheffield University	120	P18739	382
50	120998L	Walker, Roger W	Belper	126	P13630	381

Women 120-139						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	285392K	Walker, Kate	Telepost (Shrewsbury)	126	G8548	446
2	275780B	Fernando, Manel	4NCL The Pitstop	121	G9592	436
3	116277K	Norman, Dinah M	4NCL Icen	134	G4332	360
4	243690F	Webster, Vivien	Calderdale	128	G16155	350
5	110994H	Fursman, Lynne J	Tewkesbury	129	S9470	342
6	309807C	Jones, Amanda	Salisbury	133	G958	267
7	284548K	Willow, Hambel M	Newcastle-under-Lyme	138	G5889	266
8	314569E	Barua, Dipli	London *	123	G17441	221
9	182561G	Lazarevic, Ljubica	Kingston	134	S9283	204
10	247109H	Haslehurst, Harriet	Crowthorne	121	G5955	85
11	319011A	Mohd Misbahul Munir, Nur Izzah	University of Warwick	120	S18007	81
12	110950K	Frostick, Helen M	4NCL CSC	137	G37339	80
13	274751A	Chowdhury, Feroza	Luton *	122	G5004	73
14	128118F	Barber-Lafon, Jacquie	Newton Abbot	125	S6751	72
15	247136L	Denning, Julie L	Horsham	126	P6531	65
=16	253266K	Mountford, Corinne	Hertford	129	G3205	45
=16	306960G	Casti, Cristina	Norfolk & Norwich	122	S3232	45
18	257469L	Hiley, Catherine	Rugeley	134	S2589	35
19	115894G	Mosse, Denise M	Gateshead	125	S8579	29

20	212972D	Bexfield, Alison M	Letchworth *	121	S26194	28
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Open U120						
	Grade/code	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	163954H	Miles, Barry S	Coulsdon CF	119	G4976	568
2	118502A	Sartain, Patrick P	Harrow	113	G11764	560
3	246658C	Jackson, Paul Robert	Lancashire *	118	G11933	535
4	135624A	Cutter, Tim G	Guildford	112	G15623	516
5	306623L	Kapur, Gul	Enfield	111	G5840	512
6	274379G	Macdonald, John R	Kings Head	109	G7774	509
7	111052E	Gardiner, Colin J	Barnstaple	99	S3094	509
8	305312L	Wilson, Jeff	Blue Club (Oldham)	102	G7223	506
9	231804A	Morris, Nigel W	Coventry Chess	119	G29263	506
10	103658A	Stock, William	Hastings & St Leonards	111	G16402	501
11	258940A	Allen, Timothy S	Battersea	107	G15701	491
12	186045J	Constable, Christine F	Bude	119	S2872	488
13	295791H	White, Nigel	Wanstead	100	G11318	479
14	107186F	Bramley, Douglas	Spondon	103	S4466	477
15	165517G	Dunne, David C	Nomads (Notts)	117	S3837	476
16	267739J	Wallman, James	Dorset CCA	91	G6848	465
17	154123H	Daly, Grant	Downend & Fishponds	117	G5780	463
18	301133B	Beswick, Andrew	Chorlton-cum-Hardy	111	S1114	463
19	302343G	Ashworth, Steven M	Ely	114	G15099	460
20	123932G	Scorer, David M	Clitheroe	107	S3989	456
21	148400L	Watson, Andrew	Wales	115	G17529	449
22	180180G	De Santos, Andrew R	Preston	107	G1097	445
23	111439G	Gorman, Ken	Poultton-le-Fylde	101	S8678	440
24	115080H	Matilal, Tamal K	Cowley Workers	97	G15284	439
25	316727G	Maurus, Pavel	London SW *	89	G12134	439
26	283113C	Goulbourne, Nick	Hendon	103	G11240	432
27	142748K	Coleman, Patrick N	Lytham St Annes	104	S11769	431
28	311029B	Zhu, Feng	Maidenhead *	111	G4996	426
29	113241G	Hunt, Ray K	Devon *	109	S12903	425
30	309808E	Kajda, Michal	Alfil	110	S10694	423
31	131398J	Soltysiak, Chris J	British Bangla Chess Association	117	G2982	419
32	157123A	Bohm, Richard D	Bury	78	S13218	411
33	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	97	G7263	410
34	287792C	Taplin, William	Keynsham	113	S16366	408
35	179950C	Dean, John E	Plymouth	109	S7536	407

36	316077E	Maton, James J	St Albans	102	P6995	406
37	249525K	Pope, Michael R	Salisbury	112	S10471	400
38	107788A	Buswell, Paul	Hastings & St Leonards	100	S11897	395
39	260002L	Duffell, Andrew	Norfolk CCA	114	G1238	391
40	299270L	Kelly, Alan	Wallasey	108	S555	390
41	110465C	Farrow, Ian	Dons	104	G6282	389
42	280744A	McCulloch, Andrew	Scotland	84	S1242	385
43	165690K	Murphy, Martin P	Denton	113	S16698	385
44	154688A	Gillespie, Frank	Beckenham & Bromley	103	G19584	384
45	264472B	Szwajkun, Steve	Telford	94	G14952	383
46	316078G	May, David C	St Johns Norwich	92	G3710	382
47	107845J	Bynnersley, AG (Tony)	West London	107	G1525	380
48	133519E	Fancourt, Leslie J	Derby	103	G9204	380
49	133475L	May, Philip	Limewood & Scarcroft	94	S12543	380
50	269503A	Collis, Paul S	Godalming	99	G11964	379

Women U120						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	186045J	Constable, Christine F	Bude	119	S2872	488
2	111361G	Goldsmith, Jennifer	Harrow	97	G7263	410
3	286763B	Hastilow, Sarah	Coulsdon CF	78	G14229	336
4	104846G	Welch, Hazel	Seaton	82	G6075	318
5	118287A	Rowles, Sarah	4NCL Icen	100	G14234	300
6	314376E	Bienvenu, Laurence	France	95	S9054	263
7	308849C	Walker, Elmira	Downend & Fishponds	117	S4754	249
8	176063E	Chadwick, Susan E	Brighton & Hove	111	G15236	221
9	105540K	Ainscow, Faye	Kings Head	113	G4968	217
10	287646C	Woollard, Josephine	Sheffield Nomads	105	S8251	207
=11	178127D	Blackburn, Sandra G	Cheddleton & Leek	112	S14198	197
=11	179055K	Boztas, Lana	Coulsdon CF	115	G9011	197
13	152293A	Fursman, Joy P	Clevedon	106	S8346	187
14	112468H	Helbig, Doreen J	Hanham Folk Centre	92	S4440	186
15	298513F	Wells, Heather Enid	Broadland	76	S6077	181
16	281603K	Sengenberger, Sara	Cowley	116	S14227	165
17	315425H	Tree, Djuna L	Kingston	92	S4357	153
18	315639E	Royce, Anastasija	Desert Penguins (London)	99	G1041	144
19	308696D	Kluckova, Alzbeta	Castleford Roses	66	G943	137
20	110326L	Evans, Helen I	Essex *	115	G6085	130

Junior Prix						
	Grade/code	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	306442G	Han, Yichen	Forest Hall	215	G16482	664
2	283303H	Willow, Jonah B	West Nottingham	233	G8025	632
3	306635G	Shearsby, Jude	Warwickshire Juniors	141	G8365	622
4	302259G	Xu, Edison	Newport (Shropshire)	182	G4567	620
5	306918H	Pal, Rohan	Warwickshire Juniors	145	G13711	616
6	296499F	Clarkson, George	London NW *	158	G5471	612
7	310869H	Kumar, Soham	Maidenhead Junior	121	G14695	608
8	283704D	Rocco, Federico	Q Elizabeth School Barnet	214	G16862	600
9	302581A	Bowcott-Terry, Finlay	Halesowen	189	G5023	598
10	310644F	Dicen, Elis Denele	Warwickshire Juniors	117	G4707	590
11	307103A	Arora, Tashika	Oxfordshire Juniors	132	G15325	589
12	294585L	Ratnesan, Ranesh	Kings College Junior School	195	G12861	589
13	300903J	Srivastava, Arnav	Cambridge City	163	G1676	589
14	311723G	Damodaran, Patrick	Kent Juniors	108	G11773	586
15	294993D	Yoon, Jacob D	City of London S	190	G6720	576
16	311230F	Li, Ethan bingxuan	Middlesex Juniors	134	G4902	572
17	290756C	Tombolis, Christopher	Ealing	187	G2955	571
18	295925C	Zakarian, Dimitrios Levon	Oxfordshire Juniors	158	G4330	563
19	315368L	Hobson, Kenneth	Oxfordshire Juniors	132	G8696	562
20	304297C	Lv, Jason	Leicestershire Juniors	146	G7154	558
21	282441D	Verma, Aditya	Coulsdon CF	200	G271	556
22	310371H	Evans, Ruben	Nottinghamshire Juniors	130	G13883	555
23	308966G	Farahi-Far, Arman	Buckinghamshire Juniors	126	G1669	555
24	303694H	Usharovsky, Tom	Surrey Juniors	148	G15771	554
25	312923J	Kumar, Sanjit S	Richmond Juniors	125	G14216	554
26	306887A	Sandhu, Manvith	Halesowen	151	G9610	552
27	305124K	Dupuis, Denis K	Battersea	149	G4174	550
28	313055B	Maton, Emily	Hertfordshire Juniors	113	JP4787	546
29	300121A	Royal, Shreyas	Kent Junior Congresses	195	G14508	541
30	305788E	Karas, Eugenia	North London Collegiate School	133	G4912	541
31	307391K	Murawski, Jan	Oxfordshire Juniors	102	G7119	540
32	312931H	Makkar, Rajat	Reading	197	JS12819	538
33	302472G	Hirst, Joe	Newcastle-under-Lyme	148	G7435	537
34	289559G	Davies, Sam	Tiger Chess	164	G14094	537
35	301310J	Zheng, Harry Z	Northumberland Juniors	146	G5919	536
36	289709L	Balaji, Aaravamudhan	St Olaves GS	192	G45	535

37	298992L	Pert, Nina P	Essex Juniors	138	G11412	533
38	299313C	Stoyanov, Viktor	Battersea	220	G16104	533
39	293687C	Clarke, Connor	Middlesex Juniors	153	G3175	532
40	309737H	Jayawarna, Thisumi	Tameside Juniors	111	G15450	532
41	305373J	Kesterson, Kennan	Kent Junior Congresses	166	G8691	531
42	310451F	Mathew, Johan	Surbiton	119	G7489	531
43	299356K	Pert, Max P	Billericay *	129	G10271	527
44	293599F	Volovich, Julia	Cambridge City	162	G8373	527
45	282543A	Watson, Mikey J	Kent Junior Congresses	193	G10789	526
46	301864H	Cox, Toby	Bedford	164	G15755	521
47	295496F	Weersing, Abigail R	RA Butler School	152	G129	519
48	306071J	Pelling, Kyle	Tameside	140	G8988	515
49	308713L	Fava, Lorenzo	Cambridgeshire Junior	150	G9302	511
50	312853C	Dewangan, Aayush	Maidenhead Junior	128	G87	508

Junior Prix - Women						
	Grade	Name	Club/Area	Grade	Mem. No	Points
1	310644F	Dicen, Elis Denele	Warwickshire Juniors	117	G4707	590
2	307103A	Arora, Tashika	Oxfordshire Juniors	132	G15325	589
3	313055B	Maton, Emily	Hertfordshire Juniors	113	JP4787	546
4	305788E	Karas, Eugenia	North London Collegiate School	133	G4912	541
5	298992L	Pert, Nina P	Essex Juniors	138	G11412	533
6	309737H	Jayawarna, Thisumi	Tameside Juniors	111	G15450	532
7	293599F	Volovich, Julia	Cambridge City	162	G8373	527
8	295496F	Weersing, Abigail R	RA Butler School	152	G129	519
9	294266F	Sheikh, Anum	Middlesex Juniors	164	G1593	508
10	290588H	Somton, Anita	West Nottingham	171	JG6955	502
11	296859K	Ratnesan, Radha	Surrey Juniors	127	G12760	498
12	289789B	Headlong, Georgia	Wiltshire Juniors	134	G5532	486
13	297586F	Jaufarally, Nadia	St Albans	185	G10945	480
14	300650F	Jayawarna, Tarini	Tameside	125	G15315	471
15	303053C	Hamilton, Melissa	Portsmouth Junior	124	G10340	464
16	304523H	Dicen, Imogen	South Birmingham	152	G6475	463
17	305719H	Ball, Katie C	Hertfordshire Juniors	103	G8561	463
18	304535D	Mellor, Jessica	Guildford	156	G7326	459
19	302699B	Chaban, Roxolana	Kent Junior Congresses	118	G13836	448

A Silver Lining – World Team Championships 2019

Russia won the World Team Championship in Astana, but there was also plenty for England to celebrate. Michael Adams and Luke McShane annotate ... *Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk*

The 2019 World Team Championship saw 10 countries meet in Astana, the oil-funded modern capital of Kazakhstan. It was a long voyage to the steppe for most teams and unfortunately during their 12+ hour journeys, both Michael Adams and team analyst and emergency reserve, Jon Speelman, became ill. Even if all of Luke McShane, David Howell and Gawain Jones could remain fighting fit, it wasn't a great start for England in their first appearance in the World Team Championship since 1997.

Top seeds, averaging a whopping 2759, were China, represented by Ding Liren, Yu Yangyi, Wei Yi, Bu Xiangzhi and Ni Hua. Russia were only a smidgen behind at 2758 and even with Vladimir Kramnik having retired, one wouldn't have wanted to write off their team of Sergey Karjakin, Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alexander Grischuk, Dmitry Andreikin and Vladislav Artemiev.

You might well ask, but what about the USA? As the World Teams fell just before the U.S. Championship, their entire Olympiad team was absent, as was new recruit Lenier Dominguez Perez, leaving another new signing, 2655-rated Dariusz Swiercz, on top board. As such, if everyone could stay well and especially play well, there were hopes that England might be able to finish third, at least if they could hold off the Mamedyarov-absent Azeris and the dangerous Iranian teenage stars.

Round 1 – China Blast Out of the Blocks

India	3½-½	Sweden
Iran	1½-2½	Russia
Egypt	½-3½	USA
China	3½-½	Azerbaijan
England	2½-1½	Kazakhstan

Clinical was the only description one could apply to world champions China's defence of their title. They required 54, 92 and 86 moves to win on the top three boards, but always looked like getting there and against the hardly shabby technically Azeris. India were without Anand and Harikrishna, but also began well.

Russia were indebted to the in-form Vladislav Artemiev who badly outclassed Alireza Firouzja on bottom board, sensibly keeping the position free of the tactical mess the 15-year-old Iranian revels in before wrapping up matters with the aid of une petite combinaison. Meanwhile England faced the hosts and after Michael Adams grabbed a hot pawn, he was never able to recover against Rinat Jumabayev.

A loss on top board as White would normally herald an early reversal for England, but this team showed that they are built of sterner stuff. David Howell's opponent's early piece sacrifice on board 3 was always looking extremely optimistic and sure enough David ran away with his king to seal victory. That left Luke McShane wriggling in a dodgy-looking position in the time scramble, but Luke wriggled well to hold, leaving Gawain Jones to convert his extra piece and so win both board 4 and the match.

Round 2 – Big Wins for England and the U.S.

Sweden	1-3	Kazakhstan
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Azerbaijan	1½-2½	England
USA	2½-1½	China
Russia	3-1	Egypt
India	2-2	Iran

Azerbaijan rather outclassed England in the Batumi Olympiad, but revenge was to be England's. Gadir Guseinov got nowhere against David Howell's Berlin Wall and while Arkady Naiditsch's choice of a Berlin sideline (6 dxe5 Nxb5 7 a4) saw him go on to grind down Michael Adams, both Luke McShane and Gawain Jones won. The latter smoothly outplayed Eltaj Safarli ahead of converting two extra pawns in an endgame.

L. McShane - R. Mamedov, England vs Azerbaijan - Sicilian Sveshnikov

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bg5 a6 8 Na3 b5 9 Nd5 Be7 10 Bxf6 Bxf6 11 c4

The modern main line of the Sveshnikov, at least if White elects not to follow in Caruana's 7 Nd5 footsteps.

11...b4 12 Nc2 0-0 13 g3 Bg5 14 h4 Bh6 15 Bh3!

An exchange of light-squared bishops would serve to increase White's hold over d5. Now 15...Be6 would be normal, but strangely Mamedov was happy to ignore White's aim.

15...a5? 16 Bxc8 Rxc8 17 b3 Kh8 18 Qe2 Qe8 19 Rd1



The opening has gone like a dream for White, who controls the board. Luke now improves his forces and gradually edges forwards on the kingside.

19...Qe6

19...f5? simply doesn't work due to 20 exf5 Rxf5 21 g4 and 19...g6? 20 h5 would also but have created further weaknesses in the black camp.

20 Kf1 g6 21 h5

21 g4!? f6 22 h5 was another way of doing things, and if 22...Kg7 23 Rd3, but in any case White enjoys strong pressure. Black's 15...a5 really wasn't

a good move.

21...Kg7

Enabling Black to recapture with his hpawn while preparing his next.

22 Rd3!

A fine post for the rook, preparing a timely doubling via h3.

22...f5!

Perhaps this doesn't fully work, but it was still a good practical try, obtaining some much needed counterplay and placing a number of options before White.

23 hxc6!

Keeping things simple. 23 g4!? fxg4 24 Rg3 might also look tempting, but after 24...Bf4! 25 Qxg4 Qxg4 26 Rxg4 g5 27 h6+ Kh8 it's not actually clear just how well White is doing, partly because Black will

be quick to open lines with ...Ra8 and ...a4.

23...Qxg6

Alternatively, 23...hxc6? 24 exf5 gxf5 would have failed to, amongst others, 25 Qh5 Qg6 (or 25...Rh8 26 g4! Bc1 27 gxf5! Rxh5 28 Rxh5) 26 Qxg6+ Kxg6 27 Ne7+! Nxe7 28 Rxd6+, while 23...fxe4

24 Qxe4 Qxg6 25 Qxg6+ hxg6 26 Ke2 would have seen White's positional control and trumps persisting into the endgame.

24 exf5 Rxf5 25 g4!



Preparation for completing the rook manoeuvre.

25...Rf7 26 Rdh3 Rcf8 27 R1h2?

This seems very natural, but 27 f3! was correct. After 27...Bg5 28 Rxh7+ Qxh7 29 Rxh7+ Kxh7 30 Qe4+ Kg7 31 Kg2, like in the game, Black either has to wait or consent to an ending with a bad bishop and rather weak light squares after 31...Rxf3 32 Qxf3 Rxf3 33 Kxf3.

27...Bg5 28 Rxh7+ Qxh7 29 Rxh7+ Kxh7 30 Kg2 Kg7?!

Now White gets back on track. The reason 30...Rxf2+! was correct was 31 Qxf2 Rxf2+ 32 Kxf2 e4!, keeping the white king out of e4 after which

Black should be able to hold.

31 f3!



31...Nd4!?

A big decision, but evidently Mamedov didn't want to sit and wait.

32 Nxd4 exd4 33 Qe4 Rxf3 34 Qxd4+! Kh6 35 Qe4 Rf2+ 36 Kg3 Rxa2?

Now McShane's judgement of the transformation of the position over the past few moves proves correct. However, 36...Rf1 would have been a much tougher nut to crack. White can't really allow ...Bd2, so 37 Ne3 would surely have been played and yet after 37...Bf4+ 38 Kg2 Bxe3 39 Qxe3+ Kg6 40 Kg3 R8f6 Black might well just have a fortress.

37 Ne7! Bxe7

Forced, but now the queen is quick to wreak havoc.

38 Qxe7 Raf2 39 Qxd6+ R8f6 40 Qe5 Kg6

Reaching the time control and now Luke worked out the winning method. His king will hide on h4, while Black will be unable to both halt the c-pawn and deal with his own exposed king position.

41 c5 R2f3+

41...a4!? 42 c6 R2f3+ 43 Kh4 Rc3! was perhaps a better try when White would still have faced some technical obstacles after 44 Qe8+ Kg7 45 Qe7+ Kg6 46 Qxb4 Rfxc6 47 Qxa4.

42 Kh4 Kf7? 43 Qc7+ Kg6 44 Qxa5 Rxb3



Black had clearly relied on this recapture when he retreated his king to f7, but White is able to exploit Black's temporary loss of coordination.

45 Qa2 Rff3

Now White crashes through, but he had May 2019 to avoid 45...Rc3? 46 Qg8+ Kh6 47 g5#.

46 Qa6+ Kg7 47 Kg5! Rbe3 48 Qg6+ Kf8 49 Qd6+ Re7 50 c6 Ke8 51 c7 1-0

Round 3 – Clash of the Titans

Iran	3½-½	Sweden
Egypt	½-3½	India
China	1½-2½	Russia

England	2-2	USA
Kazakhstan	2-2	Azerbaijan

The unseeded draw meant that China came straight off a shock defeat to facing their main rivals. Even for this fairly young and ultra-professional side, it was a task too far. Ding Liren pressed against Sergey Karjakin on top board, but the Minister of Defence held firm. Ian Nepomniachtchi meanwhile completely dismantled Yu Yangyi's Petroff and Russia almost won too on board 3, where Alexander Grischuk was on top in a complex struggle with Wei Yi, but eventually unable to convert his extra pawn. Russian fans did, however, have their hearts in their mouths overboard 4 where Vladislav Artemiev was forced into desperate defensive measures.

England couldn't really complain about four draws with the U.S. Michael Adams was finally on the scoreboard and while Luke McShane's handling of the Czech Benoni was extremely creative, it perhaps shouldn't have been fully sufficient. Still that left England well placed on 5/6, level with India and a point behind Russia.

Round 4 – Draw Fest

Sweden	3-1 Azerbaijan
USA	2-2 Kazakhstan
Russia	2-2 England
India	2-2 China
Iran	3-1 Egypt

It was no surprise to see Iran dismantle African Champions Egypt, but almost from nowhere Sweden bounced right back to form to destroy Azerbaijan. The home fans were also delighted as Denis Makhnev's win on bottom board over Zviad Izoria earned Kazakhstan a decent draw. For China, Yu Yangyi lost again, to Surya Shekhar Ganguly, but their blushes were saved by Bu Xiangzhi on bottom board.

And what of the big match? Well, England were surprised to see Sergey Karjakin rested and Michael Adams held comfortably against Ian Nepomniachtchi. David Howell also sat tight against Dmitry Andreikin and Gawain Jones allowed an early repetition after being move ordered by Vladislav Artemiev. Only board 2 was looking a little shaky, but Alexander Grischuk unusually decided not to roll the dice and Luke McShane's defence held tight.

Round 5 – Russia Pulls Away

Egypt	1½-2½	Sweden
China	2½-1½	Iran
England	2-2	India
Kazakhstan	1-3	Russia
Azerbaijan	3-1	USA

It was Azerbaijani's turn to bounce back to form and China were also pleased to win. Ding Liren against Parham Maghsoodloo was a hard-fought draw, but while Wei Yi and Bu Xiangzhi won, Ni Hua was outplayed by Alireza Firouzja. Russia too could be happy to extend their lead, despite Sergey Karjakin's collapse. Alexander Grischuk and Dmitry Andreikin ground well, winning in 82 and 79 moves respectively, while Vladislav Artemiev was perhaps a little fortunate.

England didn't get anywhere with the white pieces, Michael Adams being frustrated by Baskaran Adhiban and David Howell by Surya Shekhar Ganguly. Unfortunately, Gawain Jones was beginning

to go down with the same virus as Jon Speelman and also found S.P. Sethuraman in fine technical form, but fortunately England didn't lose, Luke McShane outclassing Krishnan Sasikiran.

K. Sasikiran - L. McShane, India vs England - Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 d3 Bc5 5 c3 a6 6 a4 d6 7 0-0 Ba7 8 b4 0-0 9 Re1 h6 10 h3

White's decision to now combine central play with his early queenside expansion fails to convince. Instead, 10 Nbd2 Re8 (as in our main game, Black might do better with 10...Ne7, and if 11 Nf1 c6) 11 Nf1 Be6 12 Bxe6 Rxe6 13 Ng3 Ne7 14 d4 had seemed much better timed in Aronian-Carlsen, Saint Louis 2018, where White was certainly slightly spoiled for choice after 14...Ng6 15 Qc2 c6 16 h3.

10...Ne7 11 d4 exd4

11...d5!? was possible straight away, and if 12 exd5 exd4 13 cxd4 Nexd5, transposing.

12 cxd4 d5 13 exd5?!

The thematic counterstrike and now

White really had to try 13 e5 Ne4 14 Bd3 Bf5. Even here he looks overextended, but that bishop on a7 is out of play for now and the clever 15 Ra3! enables him to free his position after 15...Nc6 16 Nbd2.

13...Nexd5 14 b5 axb5 15 axb5 Be6 16 Qb3 Bb6



Luke improves his worst-placed piece and while White will be able to catch up in terms of development, he has serious weaknesses to nurse for the foreseeable future.

17 Rxa8 Qxa8 18 Bd2 Ba5 19 Nc3 Bxc3!

An excellent decision, lumbering White with an ineffectual dark-squared bishop ahead of preparing to centralise.

20 Bxc3 Re8 21 Bd2 Qc8 22 Re5 Qd7

White's position is already uncomfortable, even if the ultra-calm silicon sees no immediate danger and displays its favourite '0.00'. Sasikiran had

already fallen low on time and now, unable to find a good plan, rather collapsed.

23 Ne1?! Nb6! 24 Bxe6 Rxe6 25 Nd3 Rxe5!

Enabling White to improve his structure, but Black dominates the light squares and will keep an eye on b5 while seeking to increase his initiative.

26 dxe5 Ne4 27 Be3?!

White needed to find 27 Ba5 and if 27...Qd5 28 Qxd5 Nxd5 29 Nb4!, when he is just in time to maintain the rough balance after 29...Nec3 30 Nxd5 Nxd5 31 Kf1 Kf8 32 Ke2 Ke7 33 Kd3 Ke6 34 Ke4.

27...Qd5 28 Qc2

Now 28 Qxd5 Nxd5 is quite uncomfortable for White, and if 29 Nc5 Nxc5 30 Bxc5 Nc3 31 b6 cxb6 32 Bxb6 Nd5: for example, 33 Bd4 g5! 34 g3 Kh7 35 Kg2 Kg6 36 Kf3 Kf5 37 g4+ Ke6 38 Ke4 b5 with excellent winning chances for Black, as pointed out by our Executive Editor.

28...Nc4



A better try than 14 a3 which I had been anticipating.

14...Qb6 15 Rb1 Rfd8

I need to recycle the knight from a6, but my queen is awkwardly placed after 15...Nc7 16 Ne5.

16 0-0 Rac8

I didn't like 16...Nc7 17 a4 Ncd5 18 a5, but the stronger 17...Ned5! 18 a5 Qd6 gives my queen an escape route.

17 Rfc1

17 a4!? gives Black the option to look for mass liquidation 17...Qxb4 18

Qxb4 Nxb4 19 Rxb4 Rxc3 20 Rxb7, although this still requires care.

17...Nc7 18 Ne5 Ncd5 19 Nc4

19 Nxd7 Rxd7 20 Nxd5 Rxc1+ 21 Rxc1 Nxd5 22 Rc8+ Rd8 leads nowhere.

19...Qc7 20 Ne4 Qb8 21 b5

A good decision, taking more space, whereas 21 Ned6 Rc6 22 e4 (22 Nxf7 Kxf7 23 Ne5+ Kg8 24 Nxc6 Nxc6 is fine for Black) 22...Nb6 23 e5 Nxc4 24 Bxc4 Nc8 25 Ne4 Nb6 swaps enough material to survive.

21...Be8



White is a bit better, but as my last few moves were forced, this enabled me to catch up on the clock, and although my position is cramped, it remains solid.

22 a4 b6 23 g3 Nf5 24 Ned2

24 Ne5 is met by 24...Nc3 25 Rxc3 Qxe5.

24...Nf6

Dodging the fork, and trying to manoeuvre the knight towards c5.

25 Bf1

The calm 25 Rc2! looks best, doubling rooks whilst keeping all options

open.

25...Nd6

Now 25...Nd7 26 e4! is annoying.

26 Ne5 Nde4 27 Ndc4

After this my knights are better placed than my opponent's. 27 Nxe4! Nxe4 28 Bg2 was the most testing choice, aiming to land a minor piece on c6: 28...Nc3!? (28...Nc5?! 29 Rc4 is very good for White and 28...Rxc1+ 29 Rxc1 Nc5 30 Ra1 slightly better for him) 29 Nxf7! (29 Rxc3 Qxe5 equalises) 29...Nxa4 30 Qa3 Rxc1+ 31 Rxc1 Kxf7 32 Qxa4 a5!. This still looks a bit shaky, but the protected passed a-pawn may compensate for the other defects in my position.

27...Nd5 28 f3?!

Finally, both black steeds have found good posts and 28 Bg2 Nc5 is nothing special. Now my opponent started drifting; I don't like the game move, weakening the kingside.

28...Nc5 29 e4?!

44 e5! is a better try, but after 44...h5 45 Qc7 Rg6 46 Qxb6 hxc4 47 f4 a4 48 Qa5 g3 49 Qxa4 Rg4 the fact that only kingside pawns remain won't save White with ...g5 coming.

44...h5 45 gxh5

45 Rxb6 hxc4 46 f4 Rh5 47 e5 Qg3 48 Rd6 Rb8 is also hopeless.

45...Qxh5 46 Kf1

If 46 Rxb6 Qxf3.

46...b5 47 Rc1 Rxc2!?

Simplifying the position, but after 47...Qh2! White is so passively placed it is easy to nudge the pawns forward.

48 Kxc2 Qg5+ 49 Kh3 Rxd3 50 Qxd3 Qxc1 51 Qxb5



My technique was far from impressive, but there isn't much hope here for White.

51...Qf4 52 Kg2 Qd2+ 53 Kh3 Qd8 54 Qc6 g6 55 Kg4 Qd2 56 Qb5 Qc3 57 f4 Kg7 58 e5 Qd2 59 Qa4 Qb4 60 Qd1 a4 61 Qd8 Qf8 62 Qa5 Qe8!

62...a3?! 63 Kg3 leaves my queen awkwardly placed.

63 Qa7 Qc6 64 Kh4

After 64 Qe7 Qa8 65 Kg5 a3 66 Qf6+ Kg8 White doesn't have any threats.

64...Qe4 65 Kg4 Qf5+ 66 Kg3 Qd3+ 67 Kh4 a3 68 Qe7 a2 69 Qa7 Qd2 0-1

Notes by Luke McShane

It was an honour for England to be invited to the World Team Championships, on account of our fifth place at the Batumi Olympiad last year, so I was keen to perform well in Astana. Iran have a dangerous young squad, so I expected this match to be tough – all the more so since Gawain Jones had to rest due to illness. I felt somewhat below par myself that day, so I resolved to play cautiously. Playing 'for two results' with White is always a sound policy in a four-board match, and here it worked out perfectly.

L. McShane - P. Idani, England vs Iran - Reti Opening

1 c4 e6 2 g3 d5 3 Bg2 Nf6 4 Nf3 dxc4 5 Qa4+ Bd7 6 Qxc4 c5 7 Ne5 Qc8 8 Nc3

The sophisticated 8 Qd3 is actually White's most popular move, to discourage Black from capturing on d7 with the queen.

8...Nc6 9 Nxd7 Qxd7

Bishops are better than knights. Here, Black has no lead in development or structural advantage, so the bishop-pair promises an edge. Still, Black develops smoothly with a solid position. Many players are happy to make this trade-off – a small concession for an easy path to the middlegame.

10 0-0 Be7 11 d3 Rc8 12 Bg5 Nd4

Instead, 12...0-0 13 Bxf6 forces a recapture with the pawn, since 13...Bxf6 14 Qxc5! is a safe pawn to grab: 14...Nd4 15 Qxa7 and Black has no follow-up.

13 a4 0-0

I was intending to meet 13...b6 with 14 e3 Nc6 15 Qb5!? with the idea of 15...0-0 16 a5 to put pressure on the queenside. 13...Ng4!? is an idea I didn't consider during the game. After 14 Bf4 g5 15 Bd2 Ne5 16 Qa2 h5!? things look quite unclear.

14 e3 Nc6



Here I saw an opportunity to ditch the bishop-pair and gain a central pawn majority, by exchanging my b2-pawn for the c5-pawn.

15 Bxf6 Bxf6

15...gxf6 is a concession, but not a big one, so it might have been a better option.

16 Ne4

My intended follow-up, although 16 Qxc5 Qxd3 17 Rfd1 wasn't bad either.

16...Bxb2 17 Rab1

17 Ra2!? is a cute idea from the engine. Now if Black plays 17...Na5 then 18 Qb5! wins material. Instead, 17...Bf6 18 Nxc5 Qe7 19 Qb5 gives White a pleasant advantage like in the game.

17...Na5 18 Nxc5! Qd6 19 Qb4 Bc3

Not 19...Rxc5? 20 d4! and White wins material, while 19...Qxc5 20 Qxb2 is similar to the game. White will bring a rook to the c-file next.

20 Qxc3 Rxc5 21 Qa3!

An important detail, as Black doesn't have time to get control of the c-file.

21...Qc7

21...Rfc8 22 d4 R5c6 23 Qxd6 Rxd6 24 Bxb7 wins a clean pawn.

22 Rfc1

Here too, 22...Rfc8 would drop a pawn on b7 after the exchanges on c5.

22...Rxc1+ 23 Rxc1 Qd7



White has the advantage, but Black intends ...Rf8-c8 to alleviate the pressure. After 24 Qc3 b6 it isn't clear what to do about the pawn on a4. I was pleased when I found a neat solution:

24 Qb4! b6 25 Qb5!

Just 'poking' Black's queen away from c8, so Black's rook can't mount a challenge. Exchanging queens would leave the pawn on a7 very weak.

25...Qe7 26 d4 Rd8 27 h4

A typical advance to slightly increase the pressure.

27...Nb7 28 Bxb7

What the textbooks call a 'transformation of advantages'. In fact, during the game I wasn't sure if it was wise to give up my healthy bishop for this knight. However, I also wasn't sure how to arrange my pieces after ...Nd6, and taking the chance to advance my a-pawn looked like a nuisance for my opponent. Besides that, I was running short of time so I was happy with a slight simplification.

28...Qxb7 29 a5 g6

29...Qd5 makes things much worse: 30 Qxd5 exd5 31 a6! and with Rc1-c7 coming, Black has an awful endgame.

30 Rc6 Rc8!?

A decent practical decision, giving up a pawn to go into an endgame which is unpleasant, but by no means hopeless. 30...Rd5 31 a6! Qe7 32 Qc4 is the position I considered promising when I captured on b7. White intends to somehow invade with the queen and rook, using the b7-square as a 'hook' if necessary. 30...Rb8 31 a6! Qd7 32 Qc4 is even worse for Black, as the b-pawn is much too slow.

31 Rxc8+ Qxc8 32 axb6 axb6 33 Qxb6



People sometimes assume that grandmasters know definitively whether such positions are winning or drawn. In fact, the best we can do is draw comparisons. In general queen and three pawns versus queen and two, all on one side, is quite drawish. However, adding two pawns each significantly increases White's winning chances, because there is a plan of creating a passed d-pawn, without exposing White's king.

33...Qa8 34 Qb5 h5 35 Qe5 Qa1+ 36 Kg2 Qc3 37 Qb8+ Kg7 38 Qe5+ Kg8 39 e4 Qb2

Maintaining the pin on the d-pawn makes it difficult for White to make progress.

40 Qd6 Qe2 41 Qb8+ Kg7 42 Qf4 Qd3 43 Qe3 Qc4 44 Qd2?

An awful blunder (44 Kf3 defends the e-pawn, and White can try to wiggle forward). Our captain Malcolm Pein spotted what both players had missed, and carefully disguised that fact!

44...Kf8?

Such double blunders seem most common when the flow of the game is all one way, so neither player even looks for active resources for the defending side. 44...e5! wins a pawn on the spot. 45 d5 is a desperate attempt to avoid the draw, but after 45...Qxe4+ 46 f3 Qf5 47 d6 Qd7 48 Qd5 Kf6 Black has nothing to fear.

45 Kh2? Ke8?

OK, that's a quadruple, super-sized blunder. 45...e5 46 dxe5 Qxe4 doesn't quite win a pawn, but Black is much closer to a draw here.

46 Qb2

Now Qb8+ is possible, so normal service resumes.

46...Qc6 47 Qb8+ Ke7 48 Qe5 Kd7 49 Kg2



49...f6?!

49...Qc3 still leaves it unclear how White should make progress. But that misses the point, as Black still has plenty to worry about. What about 50 Qf4 followed by d4-d5? What about 50 Qb5+, followed by offering a queen exchange on c5? Is the pawn ending a draw? Worrying about these things wears a defender down, so it is quite natural that Black tries to force matters.

50 Qf4 f5?

50...Ke7 was still playable, but was clearly not Black's intention.

51 d5!

51 Kf3 was my initial idea, as I didn't like allowing Black a dangerous passed d-pawn, but after some time it dawned on me that White's g-pawn will be just as fast.

51...exd5 52 exf5 d4+ 53 Kh2 d3

After 53...gxf5 54 Qxf5+ White will grab not the h-pawn, but rather grab the d-pawn or force an exchange of queens: for example, 54...Kd6 (or 54...Kd8 55 Qf8+ Kd7 56 Qg7+) 55 Qf6+ Kc5 56 Qxc6+ Kxc6 57 Kg2! Kd5 58 Kf3 Kc4 59 Ke2 and wins.

54 Qd4+ Qd6 55 Qg7+ Kc6 56 fxg6

This is the position I aimed for when playing 51 d5!. Black's exposed king helps White to gain a crucial tempo.

56...d2 57 Qc3+ Kb5 58 g7 1-0

When both sides promote, Black's king won't last long in the double queen ending.

The rest day did not prove so happy for both Sergey Karjakin who lost again, and as White to Arkadij Naiditsch, or to China who were unable to cash in against Egypt after Ahmed Adly continued a decent tournament

by outplaying Wei Yi. That meant that China remained on just 50% and some four points behind Russia who led with 10/12, closely pursued by India (9), England (9), and the USA (8). Were England possibly on for bronze after all, or even something better?

Round 7 – England Go Clear Second

China	2½-1½	Sweden
England	2½-1½	Egypt
Kazakhstan	1½-2½	Iran
Azerbaijan	2-2	India
USA	1½-2½	Russia

Russia rested their out-of-form board one, but found the U.S. at their most solid on the top three boards. Once again, it was left to rising star Vladislav Artemiev to bring home the bacon, after Zviad Izoria overlooked a little trick in a queenless middlegame. Meanwhile England got off to a flyer against Egypt thanks to David Howell.

D. Howell - A. Fawzy, England vs Egypt - English Opening

1 Nf3 c5 2 c4 Nc6 3 e3 e5 4 Nc3 d6?!

Allowing White to take over in the centre. There's a good reason why Maxime Vachier-Lagrave prefers to uphold 4...Nf6 5 d4 e4.

5 d4 cxd4 6 exd4 Bg4 7 Be2 f5?!

This merely compounds matters. 7...Bxf3 8 Bxf3 Nxd4 9 Bxb7 would have clearly favoured White too, so likely Black had to settle for solid but slightly passive development with 7...Be7 8 0-0 Nf6 9 Be3 0-0.

8 d5

Forcing the pace. 8 0-0 would also have been good, and if 8...e4? 9 Ng5, or even 8 Qa4!?.

8...Bxf3 9 gxf3!?



White wants an extra pawn with which to assault the black kingside.

9...Nce7?!

Falling further behind in development, although even 9...Nd4 10 Be3 Nxe2 11 Qxe2 Nf6 12 0-0-0 Be7 13 f4 e4 14 Nb5!, as pointed out by our Executive Editor, would have been pretty grim for Black thanks to his light-square weaknesses.

10 h4

10 f4! might well have been even stronger, and if 10...exf4 (or 10...e4 11 Nb5) 11 Qa4+ Kf7 (11...Qd7? 12 Nb5! is very strong) 12 Bxf4 Nf6 13 0-0-0.

10...g6?! 11 h5 Bh6 12 f4 Nf6

Talk about a dream opening for White and now 12...Bxf4? 13 Bxf4 exf4 14 Qd4 would win a whole rook.

13 hxg6 Bxf4

The Egyptian IM is already in dire straits, as 13...hxg6? 14 fxe5 exploits the open h-file.

14 Bxf4 exf4 15 gxh7 Qb6



16 Qb3

A simple approach. White might also have won by force with 16 Rh6!, and if 16...Qxb2 (or 16...Rxh7 17 Rxf6 Rh1+ 18 Bf1) 17 Rc1 Ne4 18 Bh5+ Kd7 19 Nxe4 fxe4 20 c5! dxc5 21 Qg4+ (Pein).

16...Qd4?

Now Black will lose pretty much by force after all, although surely even after 16...Qxb3 17 axb3 a6 18 Kd2 Rxh7 19 Rxh7 Nxh7 20 Rh1 Nf8 21 Bh5+ Kd7 22 Rg1 he wouldn't have survived in the long run.

17 Nb5 Qb6 18 Qc3 Kf7 19 Bh5+! Nxh5 20 Rxh5 Raf8 21 0-0-0

Black has been completely outplayed and David is now quick to finish him off.

21...Qxf2 22 Nxd6+ Kg6 23 Rhh1 Qe3+ 24 Kc2 Qxc3+ 25 Kxc3 Kg7 26 Nxb7 Ng6

It's White's mobile pawns which decide proceedings after 26...Rxh7 27 Rxh7+ Kxh7 28 d6 Nc6 29 b4.

27 d6 Ne5 28 d7 Nf7 29 c5 1-0

Once again, Gawain Jones ground – and well. Luke McShane was, however, held by Ahmed Adly, who was having his best tournament in many a year, while Michael Adams unfortunately became the second player in Astana to overlook a queen-trapping ...g5 advance. That cost him a piece and, despite heroic resistance, ultimately the game against Bassem Amin.

Elsewhere India lost ground on England as all four games of their match with Azerbaijan were drawn, while China's hopes of a late charge seemingly remained slim, despite a narrow victory. The well-prepared Swedish side held them on the top three boards, although by means of borrowing Gawain Jones's favourite ...Nbd7 line of the Classical King's Indian, Ni Hua did manage to overcome IM Linus Johansson.

Round 8 – The Dragon Awakens

Sweden	½-3½	Russia
India	2-2	USA
Iran	2-2	Azerbaijan
Egypt	2½-1½	Kazakhstan
China	3-1	England

Come the money rounds and it was clear that the Russians really meant business. Sergey Karjakin was restored to their line-up to draw with Nils Grandelius, but elsewhere the Russians were absolutely merciless. Alexander Grischuk crashed through in the centre to overpower Hans Tikkanen's French Defence, while Dmitry Andreikin and Vladislav Artemiev smoothly outplayed, and quite quickly at that, Erik Blomqvist and Axel Smith respectively.

Round 9 – Cometh the Hour, England Deliver

England	3½-½	Sweden
Kazakhstan	1½- 2½	China
Azerbaijan	2½-1½	Egypt
USA	3-1	Iran
Russia	2½-1½	India

Russia rested their double gold-medal winning star Vladislav Artemiev, but didn't slip up against India. Eventually Ian Nepomniachtchi managed to draw, as did Sergey Karjakin and Dmitry Andreikin, which left Alexander Grischuk to gradually reel in the full point against S.P. Sethuraman. England exploited their opportunity to absolutely crush Sweden. Luke McShane came close to winning against Erik Blomqvist, but there was to be no mistake or heroic defence elsewhere, Michael Adams, David Howell and Gawain Jones all scoring good wins.

M. Adams - N. Grandelius, England vs Sweden - Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+ Nd7 4 a4!?

A semi-trendy wrinkle and we soon reach an Open Sicilian-type position.

4...e6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 b6 7 d4 cxd4 8 Qxd4 Bb7 9 0-0 Ngf6 10 Rd1 Be7 11 Be3 0-0 12 e5!

A key advance, making good use of the white queen's active location and preventing Black from continuing to arrange his pieces in classic Hedgehog fashion.

12...Bxf3 13 exd6 Bxe2 14 Nxe2 Nd5 15 dxe7 Qxe7 16 Nc3 Nxe3 17 Qxe3



Thus far Grandelius has also played very sensibly and now 17...h6!? 18 Rd2 Rfb8 (this one, as 18...Rab8 19 Qe2 would send the rook back to a8) 19 Rad1 Nf6 would have left him very close to full equality.

17...Rfd8? 18 Nd5!

Suddenly Black finds himself in serious trouble, in view of 18...Qc5 19 Qxc5 bxc5 20 Ne7+ Kf8 21 Nc6 Rdc8 22 Rxd7 Rxc6 23 Rad1 when White's rooks dominate and leave him clearly for choice. As such, Grandelius prefers to offer a pawn for some activity.

18...Qf8! 19 Nxb6 Nxb6 20 Qxb6 Rdb8 21 Qd4 Rb4 22 Qe5 Qc8

Black clearly has some compensation and Adams now elects to return the extra pawn. Incidentally, I see that my luft-loving engine touts 23 h3!?, and if 23...Qxc2 24 Qd6 Rbb8 25 b4 when Black will suffer, but likely should eventually be able to hold after 25...Rc8.

23 Rd2 f6 24 Qe2!

And naturally not 24 Qc3? Qxc3 25 bxc3 Rb2 when White finds himself too tied down and his pawns too weak to undertake any real progress.

24...Rxb2 25 Rad1 Kh8

25...Rab8!? would have been more logical, although it does require Black to ditch a pawn with 26 Rd7 Rb1! 27 Qxe6+ Kh8. However, White is rather in a tangle here and 28 Qe7 Rxd1+ 29 Rxd1 h6 30 Qe4 f5 31 Qd3 Rb4 very likely to end in a draw.

26 h3

It was also possible to begin with 26 Rd7, since c2 is taboo due to Black's back rank, and only then go 26...Rab8 27 h3.

26...h6 27 Rd6!



27...Rab8!

Good play from both sides. Of course, 27...Qxc2?? 28 R6d2! would have won a major piece, while 27...Rxc2?? fails to 28 Rd8+ Qxd8 29 Rxd8+ Rxd8 30 Qxc2.

28 R1d2 R2b6 29 Rd7 R6b7 30 R7d6 Rb6 31 c4!?

Adams begins to probe and wants to keep pieces on. The alternative was, of course, 31 Rd7 R6b7 32 Qxe6, but after 32...Rxd7 33 Rxd7 Qxc2 Black should be able to hold. White does have 34 Qxa6 Qc1+ 35 Qf1 Qc2 36

Qd3 Qxa4 37 Rxd6! Kxd6 38 Qg3+ Kh7 39 Qxb8, but this should really just be quite an easy draw for Black.

31...Rxd6

White's last move actually didn't threaten anything immediately, so it was also possible to wait with 31...a5!?

32 Rxd6 e5?

Far too materialistic. Grandelius no doubt spotted 32...Rb1+ 33 Kh2 Qc7? 34 Qxe6 Rd1 35 c5, but here Black can do much better with 33...Rb6! 34 Rxb6 Qc7+ 35 Kg1 Qxb6. After, say, 36 c5 Qxc5 37 Qxa6 Qc1+ 38 Qf1 Qc3 39 g3 e5 White retains definite winning chances, but Black should likely be able to hold.

33 Qe4

This is the problem. White now dominates the board and Black's back rank once again becomes an issue.

33...a5 34 Rd5 Qc7 35 g3

In trademark fashion Adams is in no rush, first tidying the kingside ahead of pushing the c-pawn.

35...Rc8 36 c5 Qb8

Active defence with 36...Qe7!? and if 37 Qc4 e4 was likely the last chance.

37 Qf5 Qb7 38 Rd6 Qc7 39 c6 Qb8 40 h4!

Adams continues to mercilessly turn the screw. Black won't be able to both halt the c-pawn and defend his kingside for long.

40...Qc7 41 Qe6 Kh7 42 h5 Qb8

One final desperate try. Black has been completely outmanoeuvred as we can see too from 42...Rg8 43 Rd7 and 42...Kh8 43 Rd7! Qxc6 44 Rd8+ Kh7 45 Qg8#.

43 Rd7 Qb1+ 44 Kh2 Rf8 45 Qg4 Rg8 46 c7 Qb6 47 Rxd6+! 1-0

India could perhaps feel slightly hard done by that after only losing for the first time in the final round, they were passed for the bronze medals by China, the final scores being ---

1st Russia 16/18; **2nd England 13**; 3rd China 12; 4th India 11; 5th USA 11
6th Iran 8; 7th Azerbaijan 8; 8th Kazakhstan 4; 9th Sweden 4; 10th Egypt 3

Meanwhile individual gold medals went to Baskaran Adhiban (India, board one, 6/9), Luke McShane (England, board two, 6/9), Surya Shekhar Ganguly (India, board three, 7/9), Alireza Firouzja (Iran, board four, 7/9), and Vladislav Artemiev (Russia, board five, 6½/8). To the delight of English fans, David Howell's fine 6/9 was enough to bag a bronze on board three, while Gawain Jones even claimed silver with his 5½/8 on board 4. Our congratulations to Luke, Gawain and David, as well as to team-leader Michael Adams, who chipped in with some important wins when required, analyst and reserve Jon Speelman, and England captain, Malcolm Pein.

That all just left time for the prize-giving and a slightly curious press conference, in which Alexander Grischuk, despite being seated next to Sergey Karjakin, refused to even slightly praise his team leader, while being unsurprisingly happy to heap praise on Vladislav Artemiev. The mercurial Muscovite then continued to stun journalists present by revealing that he badly feels the Candidates tournament needs to return to being a knockout-style event. Grischuk really let rip when he announced that the current all-play-all system: "Encourages prearranged games, fixed games, rigged games, whatever you call it." He clarified this: "I don't think it's going to happen more than once every three, four Candidates tournaments, but it's such a bad thing that I think it just kills everything, even if it happens so rarely." Definite food for thought ...



Michael Adams in action against the USA [picture by Maria Emelianova]



Luke McShane deep in thought during his tricky endgame with Mamedov [picture by Maria Emelianova]



David Howell takes on Alexander Onischuk of the USA [picture by David Llada]



Jon Speelman stood in for Malcolm Pein as captain in the early rounds and even played against Iran [picture by David Llada]

County Championships 2019



Congratulations to all our National Champions and particularly to centenary Open champions Yorkshire, reinforcing their dominance of recent years with their 9th Championship ...

Winners

Open – Yorkshire; Minor – Lincolnshire; U180 – Essex

U160 – Middlesex; U140 – Yorkshire; U120 – Essex; U100 – Staffordshire

On 12th December 1908 Middlesex and Yorkshire contested the first final in the Counties Championship. 99 years later, Yorkshire face Surrey on the 13th July, the 100th such contest. Yorkshire are competing for their 9th title and Surrey their 8th. Cambridgeshire, Kent, Lancashire, Middlesex and Yorkshire all have a hat-trick of successive Open titles to their credit. Only 12 counties have won the Open Championship, with Middlesex (29) and Lancashire (22) well ahead as to the most won.

The Championship has evolved over the years and will no doubt continue to do so. It was once the preserve of Union Champions only (until 1958). It took until 1921 for the competition to have a trophy (depicted above). There has even been a combined county team (Northumberland and Durham) back in 1932. Now an end of season event, prior to the Second World War the Championship was held in the winter of the following season. Second and third teams too have participated, with separate titles at different times for the most successful among these teams. The Clarendon Suite in Birmingham hosted the first Finals Day in 1996.

Today's grade limited competitions below the Open and Minor competitions were introduced in 1992 by the late Bryan Fewell, Director of Home Chess at the time, which gave the County Championship a new lease of life as weekend tournaments and rapid chess increased exponentially providing greater competition over the weekend, which was added to following the emergence of national weekend leagues. Bryan's rebranding of the competition expanded the number of competitions to cater for all playing abilities.

The Counties Championship one constant has been matches contested over multiple boards that distinguish this competition from any other. In the past 100 board matches were not uncommon. In modern times 16 or 20 have been the norm with 12 in today's U120 and U100 sections.

— Mark Murrell, Controller Counties Championship with acknowledgments to Anthony Fulton, Middlesex Open Captain and Southern Counties Chess Union archivist

Open						
	Board	Yorkshire CA	Grade		Surrey CCA	Grade
W	1	Alsina Leal, Daniel	2474	1 - 0	Kalavannan, Koby	2330
B	2	Palliser, Richard JD	0000	½ - ½	Josse, Mark	2209
W	3	Townsend, M Paul	0000	½ - ½	Kalaiyalahan, Akshaya	2212
B	4	Weller, Jean-Luc	2239	½ - ½	Granat, Russell G	2219
W	5	Dunworth, Christopher N	2222	1 - 0	Briscoe, Chris	2201
B	6	Nelson, Jonathan P	2184	½ - ½	Osborne, Marcus E	2165
W	7	Lang, Adam R	0000	½ - ½	Price, Gwilym T	2138
B	8	Hackner, Oskar A	2167	1 - 0	Emerson, Roger	2181
W	9	Shephard, Chris CW	2214	1 - 0	Frostick, Clive A	2113
B	10	Watson, Phil R	2134	0 - 1	Shepherd, Paul D	2090
W	11	Arnott, Jonathan W	2120	1 - 0	Punnett, Alan K	2018
B	12	Sucikova, Svetlana	2148	1 - 0	Rosen, Daniel B	2018
W	13	O'Driscoll, Kieran	0000	½ - ½	Heppell, Ian N	1993
B	14	Gayson, Peter M	2068	0 - 1	Lydiard, Robert G	2017
W	15	Shaw, Peter	2068	1 - 0	Haldane, Robin W	1993
B	16	Starley, Robert	2058	1 - 0	Phillips, Owen S	1908

U180						
	Board	Essex CA	Grade		Lancashire CA	Grade
B	1	Cocks, Elliot	179A	1 - 0	Newton, Robert A	179A
W	2	Coote, Trevor D	184L	½ - ½	Toole, Dave	172D
B	3	Hampton, Christopher	179B	½ - ½	Dobson, Graham W	175L
W	4	Myall, Ivan J	177A	1 - 0	Leah, Tom	171A
B	5	Rix, Steven JL	174A	½ - ½	Riley, Scott	175L
W	6	Jaszkowskyj, Peter	172A	½ - ½	Catz, Armand	169B
B	7	Kenning, Paul H	170C	0 - 1	Daryanto, Ahmad	166L
W	8	Wilson, Edgar	163L	0 - 1	Cole, Dave	170L
B	9	McCall, Martin	171D	½ - ½	Cooper, John G	165A
W	10	Ramage, Colin R	172A	½ - ½	Seery, Phillip T	163B
B	11	Hunnable, Ian D	170A	0 - 1	Owen, Dennis	160A
W	12	Marden, Larry E	170A	0 - 1	Potter, Steven	159A
B	13	Twitchell, Neville H	174B	1 - 0	O'Rourke, William	154A
W	14	White, John A	170A	1 - 0	Giles, Alan	153A
B	15	Davenport, John	169B	½ - ½	Taylor, Phil M	150C
W	16	Bui, Kyan	158A	1 - 0	Raynor, Philip N	142B

U160						
	Board	Middlesex CCA	Grade		Suffolk CCA	Grade
B	1	Patel, Rishi	144C	½ - ½	Fogg, Martin	158C
W	2	Kennelly, Paul	159A	1 - 0	Hutchings, Philip J	158B
B	3	Fincham, Leon HJ	152A	0 - 1	Pack, James	136A
W	4	Kay, Jonathan	152B	½ - ½	Usher, Michael E	148B
B	5	Cowan, Xavier	156L	0 - 1	Watkins, Alan	152D

W	6	Walsh, Steven JF	157A	1 - 0	Clapham, Michael JW	151B
B	7	Zurstiege, Frank	156B	0 - 1	Quader, Z Zia Mohammed	142L
W	8	Breed, Greg J	158B	0 - 1	John, Adam	151A
B	9	White, David J	159B	1 - 0	Kirkham, Ed	146A
W	10	McGuinness, Andrew	148E	½ - ½	Jones, Robert L	144A
B	11	Healeas, Simon	149A	1 - 0 (def)	Woodcock, Keith D	148A
W	12	Cross, Ian K	142A	½ - ½	Stephens, Robert W	135A
B	13	Hayali, Laith	151L	1 - 0	Carter, Dominic A	142B
W	14	Grant-Ross, Peter	136A	½ - ½	Little, Cameron J	136B
B	15	Colter, Nigel	137A	½ - ½	Lovell, Steve	137A
W	16	Dunn, Richard S	137L	½ - ½	Martinez, Rene M	136A

U140						
	Board	Yorkshire CA	Grade		Worcestershire CCA	Grade
B	1	Cullum, Dale H	134A	½ - ½	Spowart, David	136A
W	2	Varley, Joe	138A	0 - 1	Evans, Harry G	115L
B	3	Grice, Alec	138A	0 - 1	Bradley, Sam A	138A
W	4	Lee, Stephen K	137D	1 - 0	Seeley, Peter	135B
B	5	Tomlinson, Zak	128L	1 - 0	Shaw, Tony	135B
W	6	Hackett, Thomas L	132L	1 - 0	Waud, David	136L
B	7	Beckett, Phill J	138F	½ - ½	Asbury, Jon A	126A
W	8	Colledge, Dave	127L	½ - ½	Horwill, Eric	134A
B	9	Oliver, Bruce R	133L	1 - 0	Truscott, Ian M	132C
W	10	Grasham, John	129A	1 - 0	Stanton, T Giles	130A
B	11	Andrews, Norman G	132A	0 - 1	Holmes, Matthew A	121L
W	12	Tinker, Chris R	131A	1 - 0	Humphries, Jeremy	123A
B	13	Webster, Vivien	137A	½ - ½	Varilone, John F	121C
W	14	Matthews, Graham W	126A	½ - ½	Cleak, David	110B
B	15	Pollard, Mike A	129L	0 - 1	Alcock, Steve	097C
W	16	Strickland, Ian D	122A	1 - 0	Hesketh, John	073D

U120						
	Board	Yorkshire CA	Grade		Essex CA	Grade
B	1	Foo, John	128L	0 - 1	Bowden, Madison B	104B
W	2	Harrington, Steve	121L	0 - 1	Jassim, Omar	119E
B	3	Forbes, Stephen	118A	½ - ½	Holic, Daria-Alexandra	102F
W	4	Wood, Ben	117L	1 - 0	Johnson, Mark	114C
B	5	White, Richard	118C	0 - 1	Offord, Andrew	109B
W	6	Rajkumar, D	105L	1 - 0	Chtym, Vladimir	112A
B	7	Weller, Colin	110L	0 - 1	Siddharth, Lakshan	110L
W	8	Feather, Harry	114L	½ - ½	Reynolds, Derek	114A
B	9	Burton, Stephen	106L	0 - 1	Latypova, Olga L	091A
W	10	Summerland, David	103L	1 - 0	Barman, Devdoot	097L
B	11	Wood, Gabriel	088L	0 - 1	Nice, Nigel	111C

W	12	Wood, Philip A	071L	0 - 1	Groombridge, Leslie J	096A
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U100						
	Board	Staffordshire CA	Grade		Nottinghamshire CA	Grade
B	1	Hull, Stuart E	099C	½ - ½	Gretton, Margaret L	096B
W	2	West, Robert L	093C	0 - 1	Prowse, Nick	098L
B	3	Evans, Peter FK	087B	1 - 0	Kacprzak, Lukasz	086B
W	4	Filkin, Steve	090L	0 - 1	Arlachova, Alexandra	094L
B	5	Michalek, Lukasz	088L	1 - 0	Dawson, Ric	093B
W	6	Green, Stuart IE	083B	½ - ½	Frings, Mick J	088L
B	7	Buckley, David I	080A	0 - 1	Chan, Kian	089A
W	8	Knight, Terry	061A	1 - 0	Heath, George K	091C
B	9	Chadwick, Martin J	069L	0 - 1	Young, Alistair	087L
W	10	Coleman, Roger	068L	1 - 0	Swanwick, Steve	088C
B	11	Hackney, David	066L	1 - 0	Badhe, Abishek	085L
W	12	Perry, Robert	068B	1 - 0	Litherland, Jack	077C

[pictures below, left to right, top to bottom – the Lowenthal Trophy in all its glory; thirsty work at the top of the U140s; and down the other end as Yorkshire work towards their U140 title; John Foo awaits the arrival of the Essex Juniors; Essex U180 skip Paul Kenning receiving the U180 trophy; Paul Townsend of Yorkshire receives the Championship Trophy on behalf of Peter Ackley; U180 Champions Essex – a dedicated victory reminiscent of the U175 glory days under the late John Philpott; 100th County Championship winners, Yorkshire. IM Richard Palliser and WFM Svetlana Sucikova raise the Lowenthal; Staffordshire celebrate their first U100 Championship title | All pictures by Stephen Forbes]



English Women's Championship

Final Rankings crosstable

Rank		Name	Rtg	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Points
1	WGM	Toma Katarzyna	2229	19b1	8w1	15b1	2w½	6b1	4,5
2	WFM	Head Louise	2092	21b1	16w1	6b1	1b½	5w1	4,5
3		Varney Zoe	1975	12b1	17w1	7b0	10w1	11b1	4,0
4	AFM	Bridgeman Niamh	1511	7b0	24w1	16b1	15w1	22b1	4,0
5		Posadas Rayelynn	1885	22b1	10w½	28b1	7w1	2b0	3,5
6	WFM	Longson Sarah N	2095	20w1	26b1	2w0	18b1	1w0	3,0
7	WFM	Bhatia Kanwal K	2044	4w1	9b½	3w1	5b0	13w½	3,0
8		Zhu Yaoyao	1842	13w1	1b0	18w½	28b1	15w½	3,0
9		Headlong Fenella	1761	31b1	7w½	10b½	22w½	14b½	3,0
10		Maladkar Lavanya	1647	32w1	5b½	9w½	3b0	25w1	3,0
11		Denning Julie L	1629	25b1	15w0	12b1	17w1	3w0	3,0
12		Headlong Georgia	1482	3w0	33b1	11w0	31b1	27w1	3,0
13		Arora Tashika	1447	8b0	19w½	23b1	21w1	7b½	3,0
14		Kolpashnikova Kamila	0	18w½	20b0	29w1	32b1	9w½	3,0
15		Jaufarally Nadia	1934	27w1	11b1	1w0	4b0	8b½	2,5
16		Gamal Alaa	1762	30w1	2b0	4w0	27b½	28w1	2,5
17	WCM	Sheikh Anum	1693	33w1	3b0	27w1	11b0	20w½	2,5
18		Milewska Agnieszka	1660	14b½	23w1	8b½	6w0	19b½	2,5
19		Kumaar Sai Chinmayee	1622	1w0	13b½	30w1	25b½	18w½	2,5
20		Sengenberger Sara	1570	6b0	14w1	22b0	24w1	17b½	2,5
21		Maladkar Ritika	1561	2w0	30b1	25w½	13b0	29w1	2,5
22		Ball Katie C	1472	5w0	32b1	20w1	9b½	4w0	2,5
23		Jayawarna Tarini	1337	-½	18b0	13w0	29b½	30w1	2,0
24		Chaban Roxolana	1281	26w0	4b0	33w1	20b0	31w1	2,0
25		Jaufarally Zahra	0	11w0	-1	21b½	19w½	10b0	2,0
26		Hutchinson Joanne	1802	24b1	6w0	-½	0	0	1,5
27		Boztas Lana	1475	15b0	31w1	17b0	16w½	12b0	1,5
28		Jayawarna Thisumi	1125	-½	29b1	5w0	8w0	16b0	1,5
29		Roy Anika R	1380	-½	28w0	14b0	23w½	21b0	1,0
30		Pettit Felicity Ol	1233	16b0	21w0	19b0	33w1	23b0	1,0
31		Cakova Monika	1150	9w0	27b0	32w1	12w0	24b0	1,0
32		Brossier Nadege	0	10b0	22w0	31b0	14w0	-1	1,0
33		Mackenzie Kira	1142	17b0	12w0	24b0	30b0	0	0,0
34		Morris Priscilla	83	0	0	0	0	0	0,0

Director of Women's Chess Chris Fegan reports

The 2019 English Women's Chess Festival took place in Hull over the weekend of Friday August 30th to Sunday 1st September. The Festival itself included coaching and talks by British Women's Champion Jovanka Houska, a talk by Sean Marsh on the Friday including a reception, a rolling simultaneous display by IM Richard Palliser for local players on the Saturday afternoon, coaching for local girls on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons and a free barbecue reception on the

Saturday evening. All participants in the festival, and the championship, were given a free copy of the August 2019 CHESS Magazine courtesy of Chess & Bridge. The Championship itself was the biggest and best to date with 34 players and a record prize fund of £3000 with special and new trophies for the English Women's Senior Champion and age-related trophies.

The whole event was a partnership between the ECF, Hull & District Chess Association and Hull Council and I would also like to express my gratitude for the support for the age related trophies from Women's Enterprise in the Humber. It is fantastic news and possibly a first for English chess to have an ECF Women's event supported by the local women's business community.

The English Women's Championship was a tremendous tournament with several senior women England Internationals and top-class young women at all age levels. The tournament itself ended with an incredible last round in which the final game lasted an amazing 154 moves, resulting in a win for WGM Katarzyna Toma, and which enabled her to share the Championship with Louise Head. A full ranking list of the final standings is available at <http://chess-results.com/tnr467011.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30>

[pictures below, left to right, top to bottom – Sarah Longson, Louise Head, Rayelynn Posadas & Katarzyna Toma; ready to begin; Aga Milewska; play underway; play continues; Rayelynn Posadas; a brief respite; the trophies; Ellie Gamal; Chris Fegan, ECF Director of Women's Chess | All pictures from the CSC Blogspot - <https://cscteesside.blogspot.com>]



To Hull and Back

Sean Marsh was impressed by his visit to the English Women's Championship – courtesy of Chess Magazine - *Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk*

It is 8.40 p.m. on a Sunday evening and WGM Katarzyna Toma has just played her 154th move on board two against WFM Sarah Longson. The game, which has hung in the balance for more hours than anyone left standing can even hope to remember, is about to boil down to king and pawn against king, with an unstoppable and decisive promotion to follow. Sarah resigns – and Katarzyna has managed to catch up with Louise Head, who earlier on defeated Rayelynn Posadas in another very tough game on board one, to share the English Women's title.

Sarah and Rayelynn certainly played their part in the magnificent final round, but on this occasion both Louise and Katarzyna had that little bit extra to carry them over the line. It was an extraordinary end to a magnificent festival of chess that will surely be remembered for many years to come. Let me take you back to how it all started ...

The English Women's Chess Championship took place in Hull this year and the event attracted 34 entries, including several titled players. The oldest competitor was 72; the youngest, just 8. The Royal Hotel, which offered all of the rooms and facilities we could ever need, proved to be a worthy venue – especially as it was just one door away from the railway station, making it an easy target for travelling players and officials.

Hull is currently in the midst of a chess revolution, thanks to the hard work of some highly dedicated individuals, of whom Stephen Greep is undoubtedly the prime mover. 2018 brought the British Chess Championships to the banks of the Humber and the junior scene has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of the highly popular Summer Schools of Chess. I also delivered a CSC Training Day at the start of the year, which was well-received and ignited significant interest in various quarters.

The festival events started with coaching sessions for local juniors, by WGM and IM Jovanka Houska, who stayed on to give an excellent informal talk at the quirky Brain Jar café. The food and drink – topped off with a mint hot chocolate that simply had to be tasted to be believed – led to an extended social session complete with casual games of chess, utilising the boards and sets which inhabit the café on a permanent basis, alongside a very impressive chess library – all thanks to Stephen's community efforts. It was almost impossible to stop local chess favourite Jo Hutchinson setting up the pieces and repeatedly starting new games, but between the moves we had a fascinating discussion, with strong emphasis placed on chess for girls and women.

Unfortunately, Jovanka had to catch a train immediately after we returned from the Brain Jar, but her presence had given the festival the high profile and inspirational start it deserved – and there was still plenty more to come. I delivered two talks to everyone who was not involved in the games on the Friday evening. I had planned on doing one but did the second by request. There was still time to see the end of some of the games and it was already clear we were in for an exciting tournament.

There were so many extra touches throughout the weekend, from the Saturday night barbecue to the extraordinary cakes, depicting scenes from games featuring Katarzyna and Jovanka from the British. The first cake would have left people baffled, as a key piece had been left off the winning position, but Jovanka's was correct.

Elsewhere, there was a room for junior coaching, led by Peter Cloudsdale and Michael Pollard and an analysis room which was open to all players who wanted to study their games in the company of Richard Palliser, Tim Wall, Chris Fegan and myself. We had a steady stream of players coming along

throughout the weekend and there was a very noticeable desire from all of the players to increase their chess understanding. Tim even set up a live commentary room on the final day of the event. Meanwhile, back in the tournament hall, the players were still battling it out and the games were growing in intensity. Louise Head and Katarzyna Toma, who drew a tough game in the fourth round, shared the lead as they went into the fifth and final session. Defending co-champion Kanwal Bhatia had been pushed out of the running by a whirlwind of an attack in the penultimate round. There were plenty of fine games over the course of the weekend and this attacking gem was one of the very best.

R. Posadas - K. Bhatia, Round 4 - Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Bc5 5 Be3 Qf6 6 c3 d6 7 Bc4 Nge7 8 0-0 Ne5 9 Be2 Qg6 10 Kh1 0-0 11 Nd2 Bb6

All still theory. Black had lots of options, including the more popular 11...Ng4, trying to hunt down one of the bishops.

12 Bh5 Qf6

The black queen is quite used to travelling around in the Scotch Game and her great experience means she rarely ends up in trouble.

13 f4 N5c6 14 Nc4 Bxd4 15 Bxd4

This looks more aggressive than 15 cxd4, but is probably not quite as good.

15...Nxd4

15...Qf5, hitting both c4 and e4, would have given Black more of an opportunity to force through ...d6-d5.

16 cxd4 b6

16...d5!, traditionally the equalising break for Black, would still have been worth a thought.

17 e5 dxe5 18 fxe5 Qe6 19 Ne3 Ba6 20 Rf4



Rayelynn loves to attack, especially if she can sacrifice something along the way. This move aims at maximum mobility although there was a case for the slightly more positional 20 Bg4 Qg6 21 Rf2, hoping to utilise f5.

20...Qh6?

Quite natural at first glance, but overlooking a tactical shot. 20...c5!? is a better try, hoping to catch White before the pieces find better coordination and detonating the centre along the way.

21 Bxf7+! Kh8

21...Rxf7 22 Rxf7 Kxf7 runs into 23 Qf3+ and 24 Qxa8, with a winning advantage for White. However, White's attack quickly gathers phenomenal pace after the move played and I don't think Rayelynn's play can be improved from this point onwards.

22 Qf3 Ng6 23 Rf5 Nh4?

It is unlikely anything else would have saved the game, but this faulty fork simply loses time – which is the last thing Black wants to do.

24 Qg3 Ng6

The problem is 24...Nxf5 25 Nxf5 and the black queen cannot save herself without allowing 26 Qxg7 checkmate.

25 e6 Ne7 26 Rh5 Qf6 27 Ng4 Qxd4



Find the checkmate!

28 Rxh7+! Kxh7 29 Qh4# 1-0

Once Louise had beaten Rayelynn, it left Katarzyna needing a victory to share the title, but her game against Sarah took an extraordinary amount of twists and turns. Sarah – who deserves great credit for her efforts – certainly had her chances, but the position was always extremely difficult to navigate. Here are the closing moments of this classic encounter.

S. Longson - K. Toma, Round 5



Both players had been 'living on increment' for some considerable time. Lesser combative players would surely have exhaustedly called it a draw at various points of the game, but both players seemed determined to squeeze every last bit of play from the position. This is the last saveable moment of the game, from Sarah's point of view.

144 Rh5?

Checks are natural when short of time, but 144 Kd2 at once is an improvement here. A sample line runs 144...Bf2 145 Re7+ Kd4 146 Rxe2 Nxe2 147 Kxe2 and White just needs to move the king around – and leave

the bishop exactly where it is – to secure the draw. The problem is that after...

144...Kf4 145 Kd2 Bf2

...the rook cannot force the knight off the board and it is now too close to the king to keep the distracting checks going.

146 Rh1 e1Q+ 147 Rxe1 Bxe1+ 148 Kxe1 Ke3

Now the situation is quite different from the opposite-coloured bishop scenario mentioned above. A knight sacrifice for the a-pawn is definitely in the air and, as if by magic, the black king cannot be kept out of the key square, d3.

149 Bf7 Kd3 150 Bg6+ Kd4 151 Bf7 Nxa2! 152 Bxa2 Kc3 153 Kd1 Kb2 154 Be6 a2 0-1

And this is where we came in, with the position about to be reduced to king and pawn against king.

Congratulations to the new champions. Louise held the title in 2017, but Katarzyna was making her debut in the tournament and, as she will be representing England from now on, it is very clear she will be able to make a huge impact on our game.

It takes a lot of time, money and effort to create such a wonderful festival of chess. Stephen Greep and Chris Fegan, the ECF Director of Women's Chess, were undoubtedly the key personnel and they were helped by considerable financial support from Hull City Council, Hull and District Chess Association, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust and the ECF, as well as Women's Enterprise in the Humber and Turpin Bookkeeping Services of Hull, who jointly supplied three very nice trophies for the best juniors. Chess and Bridge supported the event too; there was a complimentary copy of the August 2019 CHESS for all participants, which was a particularly important one for women's chess. I would like to see Hull become the permanent venue for the championship, but that will be partly down to the determination and energy levels of those involved this time around and also to the availability of significant funds for next year and beyond.

Meanwhile, congratulations to everyone who played their part (organisers, arbiters, coaches and, of course, the 34 players – whether they became champions or not) in making this event such a successful and thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

A New Initiative

The Teesside International Women's Invitational Tournament promoted chess and saw the players compete for the Vera Menchik Memorial Trophy. Sean Marsh reports - *Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk*



The Famous Five on Teesside - Rayelynn, Raphaële, Jo, Gulbahor and Agnieszka - with an appropriately-attired event organiser Sean Marsh ...

"English chess needs to reinvent and reinvigorate itself to make it attractive to new players both in a social and competitive arena, and we need to do more and more to encourage women of all ages to play socially and competitively" - Chris Fegan, ECF Director of Women's Chess

"Chris, I have an idea ..." - me

I spend a lot of time planning and creating new chess events on Teesside. Some will be one-offs and others will build up a significant history over the course of many years. This October, for example, we will have the 25th Yarm Chess Championships, for school teams on Teesside, which is a significant milestone.

Amongst the plans I had for this year was a particularly ambitious one, which would require a considerable amount of preparation and organisation. It also needed financial support.

The new event wasn't going to be on the scale of Teesside's famous grandmaster event of 1972, which was one Gerry Walsh's greatest successes. That event, which was won by Bent Larsen ahead of a whole range of GMs and IMs, including Ljubojevic, Portisch and Gligoric, remains our area's

high watermark for international chess events. 1972 was, of course, an extremely important year for chess. The boom created by the Fischer-Spassky match brought widespread awareness to the game and the connections still run deep. It was for the Christmas of that year that I received my first-ever chess set and I can reveal one of the competitors of our new event was born that very same year.

This new event did, however, bring something brand new to Teesside: a women's international tournament. Certainly, we had enjoyed visits by very notable guest stars – including WIM Sarah Longson and WIM Natasha Regan – for other special events in the past, but the idea for a tournament was definitely new. Furthermore, the tournament itself was only one part of my plan for the week. I wanted the players to spend a second full day on Teesside to work with groups of our children.

For various reasons, I never like to announce plans until they are fully formed and ready to roll, so it wasn't until 3rd June, just two weeks before the event, when I revealed the details across the usual social media platforms. I stated the four main aims for the event ---

- 1) To create a new international tournament.
- 2) To impact and influence the school children and community of Teesside.
- 3) To raise the profile of women's chess and provide the children with excellent role models.
- 4) To celebrate the contribution of overseas women to English chess.

The players, the funding, the venue, the children and the trophy were all ready for action. It is never easy putting together such a jigsaw when each piece is equally important. It takes great determination and careful planning.

Here is how the various pieces found their places on the board ...

Funding was an important aspect of this event. I wanted to offer the players transport and accommodation costs. I would then cover the cost of the trophy, medals and sundry other aspects myself. It is extremely unlikely I would have found the necessary funding without the assistance of Chris Fegan, the ECF Director of Women's Chess.

Chris and I always work very closely together. I learn a lot from him and he has the fortunate habit of getting the best out of me. Chris is in his first year as Director of Women's Chess and I knew he would be looking to make an immediate impact in the role. This plan wouldn't have become a reality without the help of Chris, who secured the necessary funds from the ECF to enable it to move forward.



I had invited the players several months earlier and all five of my original choices had confirmed their places --- Gulbahor Hamdamova (Uzbekistan), Jo Hutchinson (England), Agnieszka Milewska (Poland), Rayelynn Posadas (Philippines, *pictured left*) and Raphaële Schmitz-Hastings (France). Only Agnieszka and Rayelynn had played each other prior to the event (with a score of 1-1). It was an intriguing mix of people, nationalities and personalities, all of whom would bring their own unique qualities to the two days. Raphaële was bravely making her competitive

debut. As I wanted the actual tournament to take up just one of the two days, I opted for an allplay-all format with 30 minutes on each clock.

Sean Cassidy, the current Chairperson of the Cleveland Chess Association and one of the most supportive people I have ever known, was also on hand for the two days. One of his roles was to play the spare player in each of the five rounds, although his results did not count towards the final tally.

The players were competing for the Vera Menchik Memorial Trophy. During her short life Vera Menchik became a role model and inspiration for female chess players everywhere, with her regular appearances at the famous Hastings tournament having a particular impact on chess in England. The trophy for the Women's Chess Olympiad is called the Vera Menchik Cup and Vera had a further honour bestowed upon her when she was inducted to the World Chess Hall of Fame in 2011.

I had several potential venues in mind and offered the event to The Links Primary School first. The Links was one of my very first schools; I started teaching chess there back in 1988 and we built it up to become the number one place for chess on Teesside throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. We had 24-hour fund-raising chess marathons, chess discos and regular schools of chess running through the summer, Easter and Christmas holidays. There was also the highly productive two-year partnership with Teesside High School, funded by the Department for Education and Skills ('DfES') Building Bridges project, which had the aim of connecting private and state schools for combined ventures. Chess went quiet there for nearly 15 years, but has since returned to the fold. Headteacher Louise Daly (appointed as a class teacher during my eight-year stint as a school governor) was fully supportive of this new plan and I enjoyed the assistance and understanding of all the members of staff. It felt very good indeed to be able to bring a major new event to The Links after a gap of so many years. When it comes to schools' chess, most areas have trouble keeping their girls as keen as boys. On Teesside this has not been a problem for the last 30 years. Our tournaments show a very healthy percentage of both boys and girls, with the latter frequently outscoring the former. There are many reasons for this, including special girls initiatives I put into place at the start of my time in junior chess and the emergence of a significant number of girls who are not afraid to try tournaments and who act as role models for their friends at their respective schools.

Everything was now ready, and Chris put out a rallying statement ---

"This is a fantastic new initiative which I am delighted to support and highlights the contribution made by overseas women to English chess over decades and keeps alive the spirit of Vera Menchik. The event is the type of example of new innovate and 'out of the box' thinking that is needed in English chess to move the game forward in England and to try to stop the decline of the game which we have seen in recent times." ... an appearance on Radio Tees the day before the start of the tournament added to the excitement of the build-up.

We had already had a big junior event at the Links on the day the players arrived on Teesside. Over 60 children had been in the school hall, competing in the 9th CSC Team Championship (which resulted in a tie for first place between Billingham South and Westgarth). Fellow CSC tutor Richard Harris and I met Gulbahor, Agnieszka and RaphaQle at the railway station and introduced them to Teesside with a short walk along the River Tees and a trip to one of Yarm's many restaurants. Rayelynn was already on Teesside and Jo arrived later in the evening, but was, however, the first of the players to arrive at The Links on the morning of the event.

Suddenly, after months of planning, it was time for the games to begin. Aga started the tournament with a powerful victory, but the game between Jo and Rayelynn kept everybody guessing until the very end.

J. Hutchinson - R. Posadas, Stockton-on-Tees (Rapid) 2019 - London System

1 d4 d5 2 Bf4

The London is more popular now than ever, especially since lines delaying the development of the king's knight were found to create problems for Black. It is still possible to head for a dull game in the London, but Jo always prefers to take an aggressive stance, usually involving queenside castling.

2...Nf6 3 e3 Bf5

Black needs to be careful with the development of this bishop. Indeed, White can now switch to a good version of the Queen's Gambit with an early c2-c4, the point being that the queen can emerge on b3 to attack the light squares on Black's queenside, which may end up missing the support of the bishop.

4 Nd2

Jo prefers to keep play within the world of the London, if not with peaceful intentions.

4...e6 5 Ngf3 c5 6 c3 c4

Rayelynn seizes space on the queenside and prevents White's bishop from reaching its most natural position on d3. This is a doubleedged idea though: the c4-pawn could be challenged by b2-b3 or weakened by an eventual e3-e4.

7 Ne5 Nbd7 8 g4

No messing around here.

8...Nxe5 9 dxe5

9 gxf5 could be the better of the two captures, but the move played is interesting as it offers a pawn to force the knight away from the centre.

9...Nxg4 10 h3 Nh6



It is not so easy to see how the knight will be able to rejoin the battle and meanwhile the light squares in Black's camp will start to look shaky over the next few moves.

11 Qa4+ Qd7 12 Qxd7+ Kxd7 13 0-0-0 b5

Defending against the threat of 14 Nxc4, but pawn moves cost development time and White now seizes the initiative.

14 e4 Bg6 15 exd5 exd5 16 Bg2 Ke6



The king has to personally take care of some of the trouble but this allows a shot...

17 Nf3

...which White decides not to take. 17 Nxc4! would unleash the bishop upon d5 and leave Black in trouble. Jo was after the king rather than the pawns though, which is a perfectly reasonable approach. Both players were already getting low on time – and the king's journey is far from over.

17...Bc5 18 Ng5+

18 Rxd5 was another shot worth firing: 18...Kxd5? 19 Ng5+ would then force checkmate (19...Be4 20 Bxe4 mate), but Black could try the strange resource 18...Be3+, freeing c5 as an eventual flight

square for the hyperactive king.

18...Kf5

A remarkable concept. The king attacks three pieces and they cannot all be saved.

19 Bd2

This looks, at first glance, to be the best of White's options, letting go of the e5-pawn, but keeping Black's king in danger. However, 19 Bg3 was worth a try. After 19...Kxg5 20 Rxd5 Black would not have time to save the bishop with 20...Bb6 due to the threat of 21 f4+ Kf5 22 e6+ with a crushing attack.

19...Kxe5 20 Rhe1+ Kf6 21 Bxd5 Rad8 22 Be4

White could also try 22 Bc6 to test the resilience of the queenside pawns. As played the bishop offers its opposite number the invitation for a little dance.

22...Bh5 23 Bf3 Bg6 24 Be4 Bb6 25 Bxg6 fxe6 26 Ne4+ Kf7 27 Ng5+ Kg8

The king has been walking a thin tightrope for some time and it is ironic that just when he seems to have found sanctuary his position leads to more trouble. The logical continuation of 27...Kf6 28 Ne4+ would have led to a draw.

28 Be3

A strong move. Black, with a rook and knight both sidelined on the extremities of the kingside, will struggle to match White's piece activity

28...Bxe3+ 29 fxe3 Rf8 30 Rd7 Nf7



31 Nxf7 - A slip, letting Black off the hook. Both 31 Ne6 and 31 Rf1 would have considerably intensified the pressure.

31...Rxf7 32 Rd8+ Rf8 33 Red1 Kf7

Rayelynn is an extremely resourceful player. There was very little time left on either clock now and both players had to play quickly and instinctively. The threat of 34 Rxf8+ Kxf8 35 Rd8+ is difficult to meet when under pressure, but Rayelynn found the only way. The downside is that the black king has to set off another dangerous journey.

34 R8d7+ Kf6 35 Rxa7 Re8

I was watching carefully, but it was very difficult to work out what was happening. With the moves being dashed out quickly the position flickered and changed too much to apply serious spectator analysis. A lot of pawns have the potential to drop off and with four rooks still on the board, checkmates and repetitions are never off the agenda.

36 Rf1+ Kg5 37 Rf3 Re5 38 Rxe7 h5 39 Rg3+ Kh4 40 R7xg6 Rhe8 41 Rf3 Rg5

41...Rxe3 would have maintained equality, but perhaps Rayelynn saw some ghosts around her king, prompting her to seek an exchange of rooks. Unfortunately, this is a blunder ...

42 Rgf6

... but Jo misses her chance. 42 Rf4+ would win a rook in broad daylight.

42...Rg1+

Game on again!

43 Kd2 Reg8 44 R6f4+ Kg5 45 e4 Kh6 46 Rf6+ Kh7 47 R3f5 R8g2+ 48 Ke3

And there was no more time for me to record any more moves. After further adventures Jo queened a pawn, cornered Rayelynn's king and then ... lost on time, two moves from a forced checkmate. What a battle. During the school playtime, the tournament games went on as normal, but it gave me the time and opportunity to invite a small group of children into the room to watch players in action. It was very good for them to see the concentration of the players, as well as them

writing down the moves and using the chess clocks. Additionally, I saw Louise showing a prospective new parent around the school and called them both into the chess room. The very fact that we could casually announce we were having an international chess tournament going on at The Links must have made a very good impression. Agnieszka kept the pace going in the second round, effectively ending Jo's title hopes at the same time with a destructive sacrifice.

A. Milewska - J. Hutchinson, Stockton-on-Tees (Rapid) 2019



26 Bxg6!

and the attack crashed through:

26...hxc6 27 Qxg6+ Kh8 28 Rf7 1-0

In fact, Agnieszka was on top form all day and won all of her games comfortably, except the friendly encounter with Sean Cassidy in the last round, which ended in a draw. This was more than enough to earn the inaugural title and to take home the Vera Menchik Memorial trophy.

Meanwhile, Rayelynn played very creative chess in all of her games but made an early error in the crunch encounter against the eventual winner. Jo recovered very well from her early defeats to bounce back with fine victories. Gulbahor and RaphaQle played very well too but didn't manage to consistently put together the points required to challenge for top honours.

Gulbahor found herself needing to push for a win in every round to try and catch up with the leader and she definitely had her chances in the game against Jo.

J. Hutchinson - G. Hamdamova, Stockton-on-Tees (Rapid) 2019



30 moves in and the position is very complicated. The board is ablaze, but Black's attack is the stronger of the two. The threat is to keep on pushing the a4-pawn. Jo trades queens, which is the best try, but this doesn't take away the pressure.

31 Qxb3 cxb3 32 Reh1 a3 33 Kb1 a2+ 34 Ka1 Rcc7 35 Rh6

At the time I thought 35 g6 would be worth a try, but the cold-blooded 35...Rg7 would have solved Black's problems. It is then hard to see how the white king will ever be able to tunnel its way to freedom, meaning Black would retain a significant advantage.

35...a4

It would have been better to protect e6 first, but by now time trouble and excitement were influencing matters.

36 Rxe6 a3 37 Ra6 Ra7 38 Rxa7 Bxa7

Once Jo's rook became more active, having captured on e6, it was able to contribute significantly to the defence of her king, by moving behind the dangerous pawns and then swapping off some of Gulbahor's attacking potential. The game is back in the balance, but curiously Black's queenside pawns are now actually starting to look a little on the weak side, although rounding them up is not an easy task.

39 bxa3 Bc5 40 Bc1 Ra7 41 Rd1 Bxa3 42 Bxa3 Rxa3 43 Kb2 Ra6 44 f5



44...Kg7

It was fascinating to watch this battle unfold. Which pawns are weak? Which passed pawns are strong and sustainable?

45 f6+ Kf7 46 Ra1 Ke6 47 Kxb3 Kxe5 48 Rxa2

White has made some progress, but Black should definitely keep the rooks on the board as the pawn ending is clearly lost. They both had to play too quickly by now though and inertia was taking its toll.

48...Rxa2? 49 Kxa2 Ke6 50 Kb2 Kf7 51 Kb3 Kg6 52 Kb4 Kf7 53 Kc5 Ke6 54 Kd4 Kf5 55 f7 Kxg5 56 f8Q Kg6 57 Kxd5 1-0

The chess action had still not finished for the day. After a break for tea, the players reconvened at The Buffs Chess Club to play two rounds of rapidplay chess against a team of local players. The Buffs had just finished their most successful season on Teesside, having won the B Division, finished second in the C Division and reached the final of the Tom Wise Knockout Cup, but the women eventually won the match by 6-4 (3-2 in both rounds).

Louise had very kindly granted me an assembly slot at The Links on the Friday morning, which enabled me to explain to the children about the event and to formally introduce the players to everyone. I then had six of the top Links players come out to present medals to each of the players and the Vera Menchik trophy to Agnieszka. The latter then made an impromptu speech to praise the school and children, highlighting the presence of so many girl players.

The day continued with small groups of children coming to the chess room to play against the stars and receive informal coaching. Agnieszka made special visits to the Year 5 and Year 6 classrooms to share some of her chess knowledge. We impacted on every child in Years 4, 5 and 6 over the course of the day; that is the whole of Key Stage 2.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye to our very special visitors. They had been magnificent with the children and they held universal praise for the school, the standard of play and the excellent concentration of the stars of the future. The event had achieved every one of my aims. The impact on the children and indeed the community will be recognised for many years to come.

Meanwhile, immediately after waving off the players it was time to start preparing for the next event – a Game Changer day at Yarm School, featuring Matthew Sadler and Natasha Regan, as a follow-up to last year's hugely successful Chess for Life event. But that is another story ...

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our new event such a great success. I will leave the last word to my great friend and colleague, while noting we have made a very significant start.

"It is vital that we promote chess as a game for women and to help do so we need to move away from the old-style, outdated and outmoded image – and, indeed, often reality – of chess as something played by middle-aged men in the upstairs back rooms of back street pubs." – *Chris Fegan*

UK Open Blitz

The Open and Women's Blitz Finals were held on Saturday 16th November at St John's Hotel in Solihull. The Open final had an exceptional field this year with 4 GMs, 7 IMs and 2 FMs out of a total of 16 players. The Women's final was also very strong with 1 GM, 1 WGM and 3 WFMs, and a number of rapidly improving juniors.

Open Final

As above, the Open Final had an extremely strong field this year. A notable and very welcome finalist was the renowned James Sherwin, who qualified from the Cardiff Event. James is 86 now, and played Bobby Fischer on several occasions, including of course game number 1 in *My 60 Memorable Games* with a 24-year-old Sherwin playing against a 14-year-old Bobby Fischer at the New Jersey Open in 1957 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6UxTLhDSds>

Although Game 1 was a win for Fischer, Sherwin managed to turn the tables and beat the young Fischer at the Log Cabin Tournament in the same year.

Fast forward 62 years and here is James' game from Saturday (a win this time) against IM Thomas Rendle based on an attack in the centre and along the open c file ---

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 4 Nf3 Nb5 5 Nb5 d6 6 d4 cd4 7 Qd4 a6 8 Nc3 e5 9 Qd3 h6 10 Nd2 Be6 11 Nc4 Rc8 12 Ne3 Nf6 13 O-O Be7 14 b3 Qc7 15 Bb2 O-O 16 Rfd1 Rfd8 17 Rac1 b5 18 Ncd5 Nd5 19 Nd5 Bd5 20 Qd5 Bg5 21 Rb1 Qc2 22 g3 Qc5 23 Qd3 Qc6 24 Qf3 Rd7 25 h4 Be7 26 Rd2 Qb7 27 Rbd1 Rdc7 28 Qd3 Rc6 29 Rf1 Qc7 30 Ba3 Rc3 31 Qe2 Rc2 32 Rfd1 Rd2 33 Rd2 a5 34 Qb5 d5 35 Bb2 d4 36 Qd5 Bb4 37 Re2 Qe7 38 f4 Rd8 39 Qc4 d3 40 Be5 de2 41 Qe2 Bc5 42 Kh2 Bd4 43 Bd4 Rd4 44 e5 Qd7 45 Qe3 Rd2 46 Kg1 Rd1 47 Kf2 Qd2 48 Qd2 Rd2 49 Ke3 1-0

After 15 rounds of close-fought games, GM Justin Tan finished first to become the new United Kingdom Blitz Champion, with 13 out of 15. IM Ameet Ghasi was runner up with 12. GM Danny Gormally finished 3rd with 9.5 and GMs Matthew Turner and Keith Arkell each scored 9.

Here is a key second round game in the Open Championship between GM Justin Tan and top seed IM Ameet Ghasi, with annotations provided by Justin ---

Justin Tan vs Ameet Ghasi, UK Open Blitz Championship (2.5)

Second round of the tournament, already paired with the top seed - it was clear to me, this was a must-win game.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6

The night before the tournament, I briefly checked about four openings I thought would crop up. This was one of them, another was the ambitious but slightly dubious 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 c5 3 d5 b5 4 Bg5 g6!? which I essayed in my game against Arkell (in fact, I had planned the variation for a different opponent) and another was 1 d4 from the White side, which I consigned to oblivion after committing a fingerfehler...

4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Be2

This is the variation I am most likely to recommend in an upcoming book I will be writing on 1 e4. There are two advantages to it. Firstly, it is a simple setup that doesn't require concrete memorisation of unnatural engine moves. Secondly, it has been tested in several email games with a very positive score, which suggests that it is more than a mere cop-out. Indeed, as I examined the line more deeply, I found it to be an unpleasant line to face.

5... O-O 6 O-O a6

[Black can perfectly well go for the other setup too, 6... c6 7 a4 Nbd7 8 h3 Qc7 (8... e5 9 de5 Ne5 (9... de5 10 Bc4 looks to me like a pleasant Phillidor for White.) 10 Bf4) 9 Be3 b6 10 Qd2 Bb7 11 a5 Rad8 12 a6 Ba8 13 Rfd1 b5 14 b4 1-0 (125) Havumäki,A (2415)-Murden,C (2435) AUS/M/2016 (AUS) 2016 This is following my recommendations for the White side, however I think the positions are fairly playable for Black as well.]

7 a4

[7 Bf4 Nc6 8 h3 e6 9 a4 b6 is a flexible setup for Black.] [7 Re1 is also critical, however I'm not at all sure what to make of the structure after 7... Nc6 8 d5 Ne5 (8... Nb8 9 a4 Nbd7 10 Be3 Ng4 11 Bd4 Nde5 12 Ne5 Ne5 13 f4 c5 14 Bf2 Nd7 15 Qd3) 9 Ne5 de5 On the kingside, Black can play in the style of a King's Indian Defence - as if someone accidentally knocked the d6-pawn to the e7-square :P. In the centre and queenside, it is less clear what is going on. The d6-square can now be used for a piece, but White may one day obtain a large space advantage due to the queenside majority. I used to think these positions were dubious for Black... now I accept that he may have reasonable counterplay. 10 Bc4 Bd7 (10... b5 11 Bb3 Bd7 12 Qe2 c5 13 dc6 Bc6 14 f3 is also a change in structure that I am unsure about. Black still has the idea to play for ...Nh5-f4.) 11 Qe2 Ne8 12 Bb3 Nd6]

7... b6

[I believe the critical try is 7... Nc6]

8. e5

Arguably, this is a bit premature, but I was happy to play in a direct fashion as it was blitz after all! [8 Re1 Bb7 (8... e6 9 e5 de5 10 Ne5 Bb7 11 Bf3 (11 Bg5 h6 12 Bf4 Nbd7 13 Bf3 Qc8 14 a5 b5 15 Nc6 also looks promising, although Black was able to alleviate the pressure in that game. 1/2-1/2 (40) Cusicanqui,M (2390)-Boucher,W (2385) PER-USA 2016) 11... Bf3 (11... Nd5 12 Nd5 ed5 13 Bf4) 12 Qf3 Nd5 13 a5 f6 (13... b5 14 Ne4 Nd7 15 Bg5! Qc8 (15... f6 16 Nd7 Qd7 17 Nc5 Qf7 18 Ne6 fg5 19 Qd5 Rae8 (19... Qf2 20 Kh1+»)) 20 f3 Bd4 21 Kf1 Bb2 22 Rad1+»)) 16 Nd7 Qd7 17 c3) 14 Qh3 Re8 15 Nd3R) 9 e5 de5 (9... Nfd7?? loses to 10 e6 fe6 11 Ng5) 10 Ne5 Ra7?! (10... Nfd7 is better. 11 Bf3 Ne5 12 Bb7 Ra7 13 Be4 Nc4 14 d5 Nd7 15 g3) (10... e6 transposes to the note above.) 11 Bf4 Nc6 12 Nc6 Bc6 13 Be5] Notes in this variation are extracted from my annotations for ChessPublishing to the game 1/2-1/2 (57) Kulaots,K - Duda,J 2019.]

8... de5

[8... Nfd7! is OK for Black. Note that 9 e6 fe6 10 Ng5 Nf6 11 d5 e5 is unthreatening.]

9 Ne5 Bb7 10 Bf3 Qc8 11 a5 b5 12 Be3

I learned from analysing the game that I didn't need to give this bishop a purely defensive task. [12 Qe2 Rd8 13 Rd1] [12 Re1 Rd8 didn't appeal to me, but only because I underestimated 13 b4! Bf3 14 Qf3 c6 15 Ne2 Black is too passive here, even after 15... Qf5 16 Qf5 gf5 17 Ra3 e6 18 Bg5] Instead, Black may try 18... Rd6 19 Bf6 Bf6 but 20 f4 maintains the bind.]

12... Rd8

[12... Nbd7 was better. On 13 Nc6 Re8 Black is fine because either ...e5 or ...Nb8 comes next.]

13 Qe2 Rd6

Black chooses a superficial way to develop his knight on b8.

14 Rfd1 Nc6 15 Nc6 Bc6 16 d5 Bb7 17 Bc5 Rd8

[17... Rd7 18 Rd3 (18 Be7!? Qe8 19 d6 cd6 20 Bd6 is probably why he rejected this line.)]

18 Rd3 Qf5?!

[18... Re8 is suggested by the engine, but the position remains unpleasant. Furthermore, White's position is far easier to play than Black's (which is, of course, one of the main factors in blitz).]

19 Rad1 Rd7

So far, Black's biggest problem has been piece coordination. Whenever he tries to improve a piece,

he consequently puts another piece in danger. [The engine says Black is best off going for 19... e5 20 de6 Rd3 21 Rd3 Bf3 22 Qf3 Qf3 23 ef7 Kf7 24 Rf3 which is rather depressing.]

20 g4! Qg5

[After the game, Ghasi suggested 20... Qf4 to which I contended that White would probably do well after 21 Be3 Qd6 22 Rd4 although during the game, I was unsure about (22 g5+») 22... b4? Actually the move loses for more than one reason, but easiest is 23 Na2+» (23 Na4 also works. In fact, my calculation was more than primitive here as I didn't realise after 23... Nd5 White just wins with 24 Rd5+» (Even 24 Bd5 is curtains.))]

21 Be7

[21 Be3 Qe5 22 Qd2 b4 again deceived me as a potential defence. 23 Na4+» (Even 23 Bf4 bc3 24 bc3 Ne4 25 Qe3 wins.)]

21... Qf4 22 Rd4 Qh6 23 d6

The most clearcut win, not giving Black any time to coordinate.

23... cd6

[23... Re8 24 Bb7 cd6 25 Ba6+»]

24 Bb7 Rb7 25 Qf3!

Finally, all of Black's problems culminate in real material loss.

25... Re7 26 Qa8 Re8 27 Qa6 b4 28 Rb4 Qg5 29 Qb5 d5 30 Nd5 Re5 31 Nf6 Bf6 32 Qb8 Kg7 33 a6 Ra5 34 a7 Be5 35 a8Q Bb8 36 Qb8 Re5 37 Qb7 h5 38 Qg2 h4 39 h3 Qe7 40 c3 Re2 41 Qf3 Re5 42 Rbd4 Qe6 43 Rd6 Qe7 44 Rd7 Qe6 45 R1d6 Re1 46 Kg2

After this game, the battle between Ghasi and myself had only just begun. In the end, I suppose the tournament was all about who could make the fewest number of mistakes!

Women's Final

GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant led the women's section throughout the tournament with some close fought games for the runner up positions.

Top places were as follows – GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant finished first to become the new United Kingdom Women's Blitz Champion, with a near perfect 14.5 out of 15. WGM Katarzyna Toma came second with 13 out of 15, just beating Madara Orlovska who came third with 12.5. Anita Somton finished 4th with 10 points.

There were a number of juniors playing in the Women's final with some strong performances across the board, all of which bodes well for future championship events.

Here with annotations is Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant's Blitz final game ---

Ketevan Arakhamia Grant vs Anita Somton, UK Blitz Women Finals (9)

I found out about the UK open Blitz completely by chance and since one of the qualifiers was held in Edinburgh I decided to give it a go. Apparently it was running a second year in a row and really deserves more publicity! I specially should thank the organisers for organising the separate Women's Final event, that over the time will encourage more female players to take part. This year there were a number of juniors, which is great to see. I have chosen to annotate the game from round 9, which was an interesting strategic battle. My opponent was seeded number 12th before the start of the tournament and finished equal 4th, a fine achievement.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nd2 e6 5 Nb3 Nd7 6 Nf3 h6 7 Be2 Bb4 8 Bd2 Be7?

[The check on b4 is unusual, but here Black should really exchange on d2, as by retreating a bishop to e7 she is restricting the development of her kingside. 8... Bd2 9. Qd2 Ne7=]

9 O-O Qc7 10 a4 c5? In general, this is a typical pawn break that Black wants to play in these pawn structure, however here White is ahead in development and opening the position favours White.

11. dc5 [11 c4!? was another way to break through in the centre.]

11... Nc5 12 Nc5 Bc5 13 Bb5

[I could not resist the check that denies a Black king the right to castle, however more to the point was 13 b4! Be7 14 c4 opening up the centre and the c-file, whilst Black's kingside is still underdeveloped. 14... Rd8 15 cd5 Rd5 16 Rc1¥]

13... Kf8 14 c3

[Too timid, more energetic actions were required 14 b4!? Be7 15 Rc1 and c4 next.]

14... Ne7

[It was necessary to play 14... a6 first, to secure the a7 square for the bishop and only after 15 Be2 develop the knight with 15... Ne7]

15. Qe2

[Missing out on the opportunity to win a piece immediately 15 b4+»]

15... a6 16 Bd3 Bd3 17 Qd3 g6 18 Be3 Kg7 19 Bd4 Nf5

Black solved all her problems and equalised.

20 g4

[Over ambitious, better was just to exchange bishops and accept that White don't have very much. 20 Bc5 Qc5 21 a5=]

20... Nd4 21 cd4 Be7 22 Rac1 Qb6 23 b3 Rac8 24 Rc2 Rc2

[Black could successfully fight for the open c-file with 24... Rc6!?!]

25 Qc2 h5 26 g5 Rd8

[Stronger was 26... h4! taking space on the kingside.]

27 Rc1 Qb4 28 Qc3 Rd7 29 h4 Qb6 30 Kg2 Bd8?

Preparing Rc7, but Anita must have missed White's reply.

31 Qc8¥ Re7

[And the planned 31... Rc7 is impossible, because the White Queen can take the bishop on d8, as there is no check on c1 and queen on b6 is unprotected. 32 Qd8+» and there is no check on c1 and the queen on b6 is unprotected.]

32 Rc3 Bc7 33 b4 a5 34 ba5

[34 b5¥ would have left Black nearly paralysed.]

34... Qa5 35 Rc5 Qb6?

[35... b5! this unexpected resource could have saved Black! 36 ab5 Bb6=] 36 a5+» Now White wins a piece and the rest is not too difficult.

36... Qb1 37 Rc7 Rc7 38 Qc7 Qe4 39 Qc3 Qg4 40 Kf1 Qe4 41 Qe3 Qb1 42 Kg2 Qb5 43 Qd2 Qb1 44 Qf4 Qb5 45 Qf6 Kg8 46 Qd8 Kg7 47 Qb6 Qd3 48 Qb7 Qe4 49 Qb3 Qg4 50 Kf1 Qe4 51 a6



British Knockout Championships 2019

Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk

The London Chess Classic (30 November - 8 December) was, of course, headlined by the finals of the Grand Chess Tour. Another very important event was the British Knockout Championship, which saw 16 of England's leading female and under-25 players take part in a nine-round blitz qualifier.

Speed star Marcus Harvey proved far too strong, as he amassed a huge 8½/9 to advance to the quarter-final stage, along with Brandon Clarke and Andrew Horton who were back on '+3'.

The quarter-finals saw Gawain Jones, Luke McShane and David Howell fairly comfortably get the better of Nick Pert, Andrew Horton and Brandon Clarke, all three progressing 1½-½, but there was nearly a major upset in the other quarter-final where Michael Adams was fortunate to progress against Marcus Harvey. Both classical games were drawn, which meant, in what was a rather gruelling one-day format, two blitz playoff games, in both of which Harvey defended extremely well to force an Armageddon encounter. There he had Black and despite missing an early tactical opportunity, reached a knight endgame a pawn ahead. All Adams had going for him was a passed h-pawn, which would, however, prove decisive once Harvey tragically picked the wrong moment to offer an exchange of knights.

David Howell survived a horrible position to defeat Gawain Jones in the first classical game of their semi-final, eventually advancing 15-13, the same score by which Michael Adams overcame Luke McShane. Unfortunately, with the Knockout not allowed to be played on the Auditorium's stage alongside the GCT, the final consisted only of rapid and blitz games, as Adams defeated Howell 18-10 to take the £10,000 first prize.

Quarter Finals (Sunday December 1st)													
Qtr Fina1 1		1	2	3	4	A							
HOWELL, David	2701	1	½	-	-	-	1½						
HORTON, Andrew P	2378	0	½	-	-	-	½						
Qtr Fina1 2		1	2	3	4	A							
ADAMS, Michael	2692	½	½	½	½	1	3						
HARVEY, Marcus R	2405	½	½	½	½	0	2						
Qtr Fina1 3		1	2	3	4	A							
McSHANE, Luke	2675	1	½	-	-	-	1½						
CLARKE, Brandon	2431	0	½	-	-	-	½						
Qtr Fina1 4		1	2	3	4	A							
PERT, Nicholas	2557	0	½	-	-	-	½						
JONES, Gawain	2663	1	½	-	-	-	1½						
Semi finals (December 2nd - December 4th)													
		stp		rp		blitz							
Semi final 1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	A			
HOWELL, David	2701	1	½	0	½	0	1	½	½	-	15		

JONES, Gawain	2663	0	½	1	½	1	0	½	½	-	13			
		stp		rp		blitz								
Semi final 2		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	A				
ADAMS, Michael	2692	½	½	0	1	1	½	0	1	-	15			
McSHANE, Luke	2675	½	½	1	0	0	½	1	0	-	13			
Final (December 6th - December 8th)														
		rapid				blitz						po		
Final		r1	r2	r3	r4	b1	b2	b3	b4	b5	b6	1	2	A
ADAMS, Michael	2692	½	½	1	1	½	0	½	½	1	½	-	-	18
HOWELL, David	2701	½	½	0	0	½	1	½	½	0	½	-	-	10

M. Harvey - B. Clarke, British Knockout Championship Preliminary - Reti Opening

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 b3 g6 3 Bb2 Bg7 4 e3 0-0 5 Be2 d6 6 d4 Nbd7 7 0-0 e5 8 dxe5 Ng4 9 c4 Ndx5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Nc3 Re8 12 Qd2 h5 13 Nd5 Bg4 14 h3 Be6

14...Bxe2 15 Qxe2 c6 16 Nc3 Qe7 was a better set-up.

15 Rad1 a5 16 Bc3!

Harvey excels in these 'slow' openings, where he can play quickly and gradually build up the pressure.

16...a4 17 Qb2 f6?

17...c6 18 Nf4 axb3 19 axb3 Bf5 was a less weakening defence.

18 Nf4 Bf7 19 c5!



Creating a weakness on d6.

19...f5 20 cxd6 cxd6 21 Bb5 Re7 22 Nd5!?

White could have taken on a4, but prefers to seize control of the light squares.

22...Bxd5 23 Rxd5 axb3 24 Qxb3 Kh7 25 Rfd1 Rc8? 26 Rxd6 Qc7



27 Bxe5?

27 Bb4 was the way to maintain control.

27...Rxe5?

Black no doubt saw 27...Bxe5 28 Rd7, and if 28...Qc5 29 Qc4!, but 28...Rxd7! 29 Bxd7 (and not 29 Rxd7+?? Qxd7! 30 Bxd7 Rc1+) 29...Rf8 would have enabled him to fight on.

28 Rd7 Qc5 29 Qf7 Rg8 30 Bc4 Ree8 31 Rxb7

31 R1d6! leaves Black unable to prevent mate.

31...Qe5 32 Qc7 Rgf8 33 Qxe5 1-0

M. Adams - M. Harvey
British Knockout Championship Quarter-final (Armageddon)



52...Ne5??

A tragedy. White's only trump is the h-pawn, so 52...Kg5 53 Kxc5 Kxh5 54 Nf4+ Kh4 55 Kxb4 Ne5 was indicated followed up by sacrificing the knight for the b-pawn to draw and so advance to the semi-finals.

53 Nxe5 Kxe5 54 Kxc5 f4?

54...Kf6 was necessary, drawing after 55 Kxb4 f4 56 Kc3 Kg5, although White can force a pawn-up queen ending with 55 Kd5! Kg5 56 Ke5 f4 57 h6 f3! 58 h7 f2 59 h8Q f1Q 60 Qg7+ followed by picking up b4.

55 Kc4?

55 h6 Kf6 56 Kd4 Kg6 57 Ke4 Kxh6 58 Kxf4 is a winning pawn ending.

55...Kf5?

55...f3 56 Kd3 Kf4 57 h6 Kg3! would still have drawn.

56 Kd3 Kg5 57 Ke4



57...Kxh5?

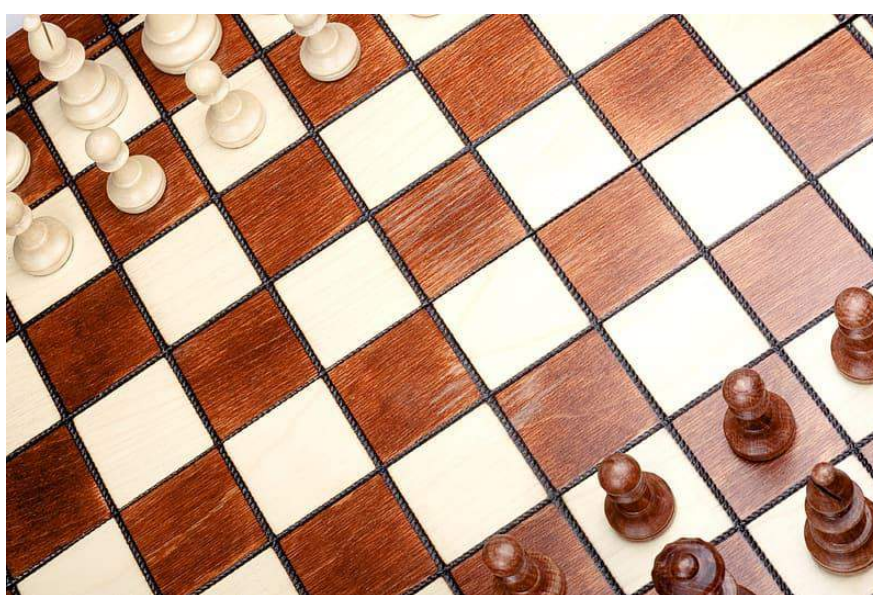
And now 57...Kg4! 58 h6 f3 59 h7 f2 60 h8Q f1Q 61 Qg7+ Kh3 was the last chance.

58 Kxf4 Kg6 59 Ke5 Kf7 60 Kd5 Ke7 61 Kc5 Kd7 62 Kxb4 Kc6 63 Ka5 Kb7 64 Kb5

Taking the opposition and so securing an elementary win.

64...Kc7 65 Ka6 Kb8 66 Kb6 Ka8 67 b4 Kb8 68 b5 Ka8 69 Kc7 Ka7 70 b6+ Ka6 71 b7 1-0

Both games annotated by Richard Palliser



Tournaments

4NCL 2018-19 - Guildford 1 wins 4NCL – by André Schulz

Last week saw the finale of the 2018/19 season of the 4NCL in Great Britain. Guildford 1 was dominant and won all bouts during the season. Second was the new team from the Isle of Man: Chess.com Manx Liberty, a team that two years ago left the German Bundesliga ('Buexit'?)

The 4NCL has been around for 20 years and the term 'Four Nations' refers to the four countries of the United Kingdom, England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland plus Ireland.

Recently, however, there's a new team that plays under the flag of the Isle of Man. Unlike most other teams that are very British, 'Chess.com Manx Liberty' is largely international. The Isle of Man also belongs to none of the Four Nations, but is, like the Channel Islands Jersey and Guernsey also, so-called Crown Dependencies — self-governing territories. The three islands will therefore not leave the EU even if Britain somehow manages to make its decision to leave in the distant future because they have never been part of the EU. Many millionaires have their legal residencies here and enjoy the freedom of being outside the national tax jurisdictions of EU countries.

'Chess.com Manx Liberty', however, is a team with an ex-pat history, because it is essentially the team that once played as SG Trier in the Bundesliga sponsored by Dietmar Kolbus. After the 2016/17 season, the team withdrew as a result of disputes with the Bundesliga, and the formerly Trier team now plays as Isle of Man in the 4NCL — and successfully. Right from the start, the team took second place in the team competition.

The booming 4NCL now consists of a whole series of staggered leagues. The first two divisions are played in an identical format: 16 teams are divided into two groups of eight teams and play in a team round-robin. Thereafter, the top four teams of the two groups form a Master group. The last four teams continue in the relegation group. In the two new groups, the teams only play against the teams they have not played against in the preliminary rounds and retain the points tally against the teams that they have already played. The winner of this group also earns the Dunworth Trophy (pictured) awarded annually to the Division 1 champs.

The first two divisions play together in the same location. On a weekend, several competitions are held. All in all, there were five game dates. The competitions are held on eight boards, with the additional rule that at least one board must be occupied by a woman. The 2018 season ended last week on the English Bank Holiday.

Once again, Guildford's team proved invincible, winning the title (and prize money) with the maximum score of 14 points from seven matches. The team is unbeaten in seven years of competition with an astounding score of 77 wins and two draws in that time.

Guildford plays with some of the best British players such as Gawain Jones, Michael Adams, Luke McShane, Matthew Sadler and Nick Pert. If needed, the team management can add a few foreigners, for instance, Laurent Fressinet, Etienne Bacrot, Romain Edouard or Jorden van Foreest. Guildford 1's top female player over the past seven seasons has usually been Ety Stefanova. However, in the 2018/19 season, because of Ety's new-born daughter, her absence has been

covered by Sophie Milliet and Elisabeth Pähtz. Hou Yifan, who studies in England, also plays occasionally. In fact, during the final weekend, Guildford was able to call on Hou Yifan, after her Oxford University exams, while Stefanova, Pähtz and Milliet joined the end-of-season festivities in the team of Guildford 2. Jones was absent at the finale as he was busy winning the TePe Sigeman tournament in Malmö.

Given this roster, the dominance of the team is not surprising, as most matches were not even close — at worst they won by 5:3!

Division 1A											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Guildford 1		5-3	7-1	7-1	7½-½	7½-½	7½-½	7½-½	49	14
2	Wood Green	3-5		5½-2½	3½-4½	6½-1½	8-0	7-1	5-3	38½	10
3	Barbican 4NCL 1	1-7	2½-5½		6-2	5-3	6½-1½	4½-3	5½-2½	31	10
4	White Rose 1	1-7	4½-3½	2-6		4½-3½	6-2	5-1	5½-2½	28½	10
5	Alba	½-7½	1½-6½	3-5	3½-4½		4-4	4-4	4½-3½	21	4
6	North East England	½-7½	0-8	1½-6½	2-6	4-4		4½-3½	4-4	16½	4
7	Oxford 1	½-7½	1-7	3-4½	1-5	4-4	3½-4½		4½-3½	17½	3
8	West is Best 1	½-7½	3-5	2½-5½	2½-5½	3½-4½	4-4	3½-4½		19½	1

Division 1B											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Chess.com Manx Liberty 1		4½-3½	5-3	6-2	4½-3½	7½-½	5-3	6-2	38½	14
2	Cheddleton 1	3½-4½		5½-2½	5-3	7½-½	6-2	7-1	6-2	40½	12
3	Guildford 2	3-5	2½-5½		4-4	7-1	5½-2½	6½-1½	5½-2½	34	9
4	Blackthorne Russia	2-6	3-5	4-4		4-4	3½-4½	5½-2½	4-4	26	5
5	3Cs 1	3½-4½	½-7½	1-7	4-4		3½-4½	6-2	5½-2½	24	5
6	Celtic Tigers 1	½-7½	2-6	2½-5½	4½-3½	4½-3½		3½-4½	4-4	21½	5
7	Wood Green Monarchs	3-5	1-7	1½-6½	2½-5½	2-6	4½-3½		4½-3½	19	4
8	Grantham Sharks 1	2-6	2-6	2½-5½	4-4	2½-5½	4-4	3½-4½		20½	2

Division 1C											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Guildford 1		6-2	6½-1½	7-1	7½-½	5-3	7-1	6½-1½	45½	14
2	Chess.com Manx Liberty 1	2-6		4½-3½	3½-4½	5-3	6½-1½	6½-1½	6-2	34	10
3	Cheddleton 1	1½-6½	3½-4½		5½-2½	5½-2½	4½-3½	7½-½	5-3	33	10
4	White Rose 1	1-7	4½-3½	2½-5½		3½-4½	4½-3½	2-6	5½-2½	23½	6
5	Guildford 2	½-7½	3-5	2½-5½	4½-3½		4-4	4½-3½	4-4	23	6
6	Wood Green	3-5	1½-6½	3½-4½	3½-4½	4-4		5½-2½	5½-2½	26½	5
7	Barbican 4NCL 1	1-7	1½-6½	½-7½	6-2	3½-4½	2½-5½		6-2	21	4
8	Blackthorne Russia	1½-6½	2-6	3-5	2½-5½	4-4	2½-5½	2-6		17½	1

Division 1D											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	3Cs 1		6-2	5½-2½	3½-4½	6-1½	3½-4½	5½-2½	6-2	36	10

2	Wood Green Monarchs	2-6		4½-3½	4½-3½	2½-5½	5-3	5½-2½	6-2	30	10
3	Grantham Sharks 1	2½-5½	3½-4½		4-4	6-2	5½-2½	4½-3½	5½-2½	31½	9
4	Celtic Tigers 1	4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4		3½-4½	4-4	4-3	4½-3½	28	8
5	Oxford 1	1½-6	5½-2½	2-6	4½-3½		4½-3½	3½-4½	4-4	25½	7
6	West is Best 1	4½-3½	3-5	2½-5½	4-4	3½-4½		4-4	3½-4½	25	4
7	North East England	2½-5½	2½-5½	3½-4½	3-4	4½-3½	4-4		4-4	24	4
8	Alba	2-6	2-6	2½-5½	3½-4½	4-4	4½-3½	4-4		22½	4

Division 2A											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Spirit of Atticus A		6½-1½	5½-2½	4-4	5-3	4½-3½	6-2	5½-2½	37	13
2	Anglian Avengers	1½-6½		4-4	5½-2½	4½-3½	5-3	5-3	4-4	29½	10
3	KJCA Kings	2½-5½	4-4		4½-3½	1½-6½	4½-3½	4½-3½	6-2	27½	9
4	Barnet Knights 1	4-4	2½-5½	3½-4½		3½-4½	5-3	6½-1½	5-3	30	7
5	The ADs	3-5	3½-4½	6½-1½	4½-3½		4½-3½	3½-4½	3½-4½	29	6
6	Warwickshire Select 1	3½-4½	3-5	3½-4½	3-5	3½-4½		6-2	6-2	28½	4
7	Manchester Manticores 1	2-6	3-5	3½-4½	1½-6½	4½-3½	2-6		5-3	21½	4
8	Bradford DCA Knights A	2½-5½	4-4	2-6	3-5	4½-3½	2-6	3-5		21	3

Division 2B											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Barbican 4NCL 2		4½-3½	4½-3½	6½-1½	2-6	4½-3½	6-1½	4½-2½	32½	12
2	Cambridge University 1	3½-4½		4½-3½	4½-3½	4-4	6-2	3-5	4½-3½	30	9
3	Sussex Martlets 1	3½-4½	3½-4½		3-5	5-3	6-2	5½-2½	7-1	33½	8
4	Gonzaga	1½-6½	3½-4½	5-3		6-2	3-5	6½-1½	6½-1½	32	8
5	Grantham Sharks 2	6-2	4-4	3-5	2-6		4-4	5½-2½	5½-2½	30	8
6	Guildford 3	3½-4½	2-6	2-6	5-3	4-4		5-3	6½-1½	28	7
7	Wessex A	1½-6	5-3	2½-5½	1½-6½	2½-5½	3-5		5-3	21	4
8	West is Best 2	2½-4½	3½-4½	1-7	1½-6½	2½-5½	1½-6½	3-5		15½	0

Division 2C											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Barbican 4NCL 2		4½-3½	5-3	6½-1½	4½-3	4½-3½	4-4	4½-3½	33½	13
2	Cambridge University 1	3½-4½		3½-4½	4½-3½	6-2	4½-3½	4½-3½	5½-2½	32	10
3	Spirit of Atticus A	3-5	4½-3½		2½-5½	4-4	4½-3½	6½-1½	5½-2½	30½	9
4	Gonzaga	1½-6½	3½-4½	5½-2½		2-6	5-3	5½-2½	5½-2½	28½	8
5	Barnet Knights 1	3-4½	2-6	4-4	6-2		4½-3½	2½-5½	3½-4½	25½	5
6	Sussex Martlets 1	3½-4½	3½-4½	3½-4½	3-5	3½-4½		5½-2½	7½-½	30	4
7	Anglian Avengers	4-4	3½-4½	1½-6½	2½-5½	5½-2½	2½-5½		4-4	23½	4
8	KJCA Kings	3½-4½	2½-5½	2½-5½	2½-5½	4½-3½	½-7½	4-4		20	3

Division 2D											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Guildford 3		4-4	5-3	4-4	6½-1½	5-3	5½-2½	6½-1½	36½	12
2	Warwickshire Select 1	4-4		3½-4½	4-4	6-2	4½-3½	6-2	5½-2½	33½	10

3	The Ads	3-5	4½-3½		5-3	3½-4½	5½-2	3½-4½	6½-1½	31½	8
4	Grantham Sharks 2	4-4	4-4	3-5		4-4	5½-2½	4-4	5½-2½	30	8
5	Manchester Manticores 1	1½-6½	2-6	4½-3½	4-4		3-5	5-3	5-3	25	7
6	Wessex A	3-5	3½-4½	2-5½	2½-5½	5-3		6½-1½	5-3	27½	6
7	Bradford DCA Knights A	2½-5½	2-6	4½-3½	4-4	3-5	1½-6½		3½-4½	21	3
8	West is Best 2	1½-6½	2½-5½	1½-6½	2½-5½	3-5	3-5	4½-3½		18½	2

Division 3 South Pool A											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Check Innmates 1		4-2	4-2	4-2	2-4	2-4	4½-1½	4½-1½	25	10
2	Kings Head	2-4		3½-2½	4-2	2½-3	3½-2½	5½-½	4-2	25	10
3	Fermented Sharks	2-4	2½-3½		4-2	2-4	4-2	4½-1½	4½-1½	23½	8
4	Iceni 1	2-4	2-4	2-4		3-3	3½-2½	3½-2½	4-2	20	7
5	Leeds University Old Boys	4-2	3-2½	4-2	3-3		1-5	2½-3½	1½-4	19	7
6	MK Phoenix 1	4-2	2½-3½	2-4	2½-3½	5-1		2-4	3½-2½	21½	6
7	Cambridge University 2	1½-4½	½-5½	1½-4½	2½-3½	3½-2½	4-2		5-1	18½	6
8	CSC 2	1½-4½	2-4	1½-4½	2-4	4-1½	2½-3½	1-5		14½	2

Division 3 South Pool B											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Surbiton		2-4	2½-3½	3-3	3½-2½	3½-2½	4½-1½	4½-1½	23½	9
2	CSC 1	4-2		3½-2½	2½-3½	3½-2½	3-3	2½-3½	4½-1½	23½	9
3	Oxford 2	3½-2½	2½-3½		4-2	4-2	2½-3½	3½-2½	3-3	23	9
4	Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	3-3	3½-2½	2-4		1½-4½	3½-2½	4½-1½	3½-2½	21½	9
5	Poisoned Pawns 1	2½-3½	2½-3½	2-4	4½-1½		3½-2½	3-3	4-2	22	7
6	The Rookies	2½-3½	3-3	3½-2½	2½-3½	2½-3½		1-5	4½-1½	19½	5
7	Iceni 2	1½-4½	3½-2½	2½-3½	1½-4½	3-3	5-1		½-5½	17½	5
8	Sussex Martlets 2	1½-4½	1½-4½	3-3	2½-3½	2-4	1½-4½	5½-½		17½	3

Division 3 South Pool C											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Kings Head		2-4	3½-2½	3½-2½	3-3	3½-2½	4-2	5½-½	25	11
2	Check Innmates 1	4-2		4-2	2½-3½	3-3	3½-2½	4-2	3½-2½	24½	11
3	Fermented Sharks	2½-3½	2-4		2½-3½	5-1	4-2	4-2	3-3	23	7
4	Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	2½-3½	3½-2½	3½-2½		3½-2½	2-4	2-3	3-3	20	7
5	CSC 1	3-3	3-3	1-5	2½-3½		3½-2½	3-3	4-2	20	7
6	Oxford 2	2½-3½	2½-3½	2-4	4-2	2½-3½		4½-1½	3½-2½	21½	6
7	Iceni 1	2-4	2-4	2-4	3-2	3-3	1½-4½		3-3	16½	4
8	Surbiton	½-5½	2½-3½	3-3	3-3	2-4	2½-3½	3-3		16½	3

Division 3 South Pool D											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	MK Phoenix 1		4-2	3-3	2-4	3½-2½	4½-1½	5-1	4-2	26	11
2	Poisoned Pawns 1	2-4		3½-2½	4½-1½	4½-1½	3-3	3-3	4-2	24½	10
3	The Rookies	3-3	2½-3½		3½-2½	3½-2½	1-5	4-2	4½-1½	22	9

4	Cambridge University 2	4-2	1½-4½	2½-3½		5-1	1½-3½	3½-2½	4-2	22	8
5	CSC 2	2½-3½	1½-4½	2½-3½	1-5		4-2	4-1½	4-2	19½	6
6	Iceni 2	1½-4½	3-3	5-1	3½-1½	2-4		3-3	½-5½	18½	6
7	Leeds University Old Boys	1-5	3-3	2-4	2½-3½	1½-4	3-3		4-2	17	4
8	Sussex Martlets 2	2-4	2-4	1½-4½	2-4	2-4	5½-½	2-4		17	2

Division 3 North						
	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
White Rose 2	11	9	2	0	47½	20
Manchester Manticores 2	11	9	2	0	45	20
3Cs 2	11	7	3	1	42	17
Shropshire 1	11	8	1	2	41	17
Jorvik	11	7	1	3	36	15
Spirit of Atticus B	11	6	0	5	33½	12
Cheddleton 2	11	5	0	6	32½	10
Bradford DCA Knights B	11	4	1	6	31	9
Manchester Manticores 3	11	4	1	6	30½	9
Manx Liberty 2	8	3	0	5	20½	6
Holmes Chapel	9	2	0	7	19½	4
Bolton & Worsley	11	1	1	9	19	3
Manchester Manticores 4	11	1	0	10	17½	2
Bradford DCA Knights C	8	1	0	7	14	2

Division 4 South						
	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Crowthorne 1	11	10	1	0	47	21
Ashfield 1	11	9	0	2	41½	18
Oxford 3	11	6	3	2	39	15
Wessex B	11	6	3	2	39	15
The Full Ponty	11	6	1	4	38	13
Celtic Tigers 2	11	4	5	2	37	13
Throw in the Tal	11	5	3	3	36	13
Poisoned Pawns - Next Generation	11	6	1	4	36	13
Fischer's Catch	11	6	1	4	33	13
MK Phoenix 2	11	5	2	4	37½	12
Shropshire 2	11	5	2	4	37	12
Warwickshire Select 2	11	4	4	3	34	12
West is Best 3	11	6	0	5	31½	12
Check Innmates 2	11	5	1	5	37½	11
Ashfield 2	11	5	1	5	37½	11
Wood Green Youth	8	5	1	2	24½	11
All Anands on Deck	9	3½	3½	2	30	10½
Watford 1	11	5	0	6	32½	10
Oxford 4	11	5	0	6	31	10
Banbury Bulldogs	11	3	4	4	27½	10
CSC 3	7	5	0	2	24½	10
Sussex Martlets 3	11	3	3	5	30½	9
Rook & Roll	10	4	1	5	28½	9

Wessex C	11	4	0	7	32½	8
Shropshire 3	11	3	2	6	29	8
Barnet Knights 2	11	3	1½	6½	26½	7½
The Pitstop	11	3	1	7	28½	7
West is Best 4	8	2½	2	3½	25½	7
Iceni 3	11	3	1	7	24½	7
Cambridge University 3	5	3	1	1	14	7
Watford 2	10	3	0	7	18½	6
Check Innmates 3	8	3	0	5	16	6
Crowthorne 2	6	2	1	3	10½	5
Barnet Knights 3	11	1	0	10	14	2
Barnet Knights 4	3	0	0	3	4	0
Barnet Knights 5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Camberley Juniors	3	0	0	3	-2½	0
Chesstivus	2	0	0	2	-3	0

Oxford 3 finish third above Wessex B on the basis of winning their individual match on board count.

The 4NCL Round-Up

Guildford's only defeat, the relegation battle and some fine chess as the season ended - *Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk*

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 Parligras 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 I their only individual defeat of the season.

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

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Qc2 Bd6 7 Bd3 dxc4 8 Bxc4 b5 9 Be2 0-0 10 0-0 Bb7 11 Rd1 Qc7 12 Bd2

Modest development, but we are deep in theory and Hawkins is in no rush to advance his e-pawn. After 12...Rfe8 13 Rac1 a6 White might well, however, and 14 e4 e5 15 Nd5! Qd8 (15...Nxd5 16 exd5 exd4 17 dxc6 Rxe2 18 cxb7 Qxb7 19 Nxd4 Ree8 20 Qc6 sees White continuing to press, but Black should be able to hold) 16 Nxf6+ Qxf6 17 Bc3 gave him an edge in Bluebaum-Korobov, Bundesliga 2019.

12...e5 13 Rac1 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 Nxe5 15 Ng5! followed by bringing a knight to e4.

14...Rfe8

Of course, 14...Bxb4? 15 Nxb5 axb5 16 Bxb4 would merely significantly increase White's grip on the position.

15 Bd3

Activating and preventing 15...e4, but now 15...exd4!? 16 exd4 h6 followed by ...Nb6 would have been rock-solid for Black, who should be OK despite that imprisoned bishop on b7.

15...h6 16 Ne4

Forcing the pace, rather than waiting with, say, 16 a3 Rad8 17 h3 when the position would have remained roughly balanced.

16...Nxe4 17 Bxe4 exd4 18 Nxd4!?



Gambitting h2, rather than 18 Bxc6 when 18...d3! (18...dxe3 19 Bxe3 Rac8 should just be a draw) 19 Qc3 Bxb4 20 Qxb4 Bxc6 21 Nd4 Ne5 might even be slightly annoying for White. It wasn't too late for 18 exd4 though, but after 18...Nf6 19 Bxc6 (19 Bd3 c5! liberates Black's bishop and feels dangerous for White) 19...Rac8 20 d5! Nxd5 21 Bxb7 Qxb7 22 Qb3 Red8 only Black, if anyone, should be able to exert nominal pressure.

18...Ne5?

The first new move of the game, and a major error. Previously, 18...Rac8 19 Bxc6 (19 Bh7+!? Kh8 20 Bf5 Bxh2+ 21 Kf1 Be5 22 Nb3 offers White reasonable positional compensation for a pawn) 19...Bxh2+ 20 Kh1 Qe5 21 Qd3? Rxc6! 22 Nxc6 Bxc6 23 Rxc6 Qh5 24 Rdc1 Ne5 25 Qe4 f5 26 Qd5+ Kh7 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...Bxh2+ 19 Kh1 Bd6 20 Bxc6 Bxc6 21 Qxc6 Qxc6 22 Rxc6 Bf8, which would surely have been completely OK for him.

19 Nf5 Bf8 20 Bc3

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 Bxb7 Qxb7 22 bxc5 and if 22...Bxc5? 23 Nxg7! Kxg7 24 Qf5 would not have been wise, and even after 20...a5 21 a3! White remains in full control of the position.

21 Ng3 Qe7

Possibly only now did Fressinet spot that 21...Bg7 22 f4 Nc4 would have failed to 23 Bxg6!, and if 23...fxg6 24 Qxg6 Qf7 25 Qxf7+ Kxf7 26 Rd7+ or 23...Nxe3 24 Bh7+ Kh8 25 Bxg7+ Kxg7 26 Nh5+ Kf8 27 Qc3 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 Bxe5 (22 f4 is also pretty promising) 22...Rxe5 23 Bxc6 Bxc6 24 Qxc6 Qxc6 25 Rxc6 Kf7.

22 h3



Preparation for a timely f2-f4, but amazingly there was a sacrificial blow: 22 Bxg6!! Nxg6 (22...fxg6 23 f4 Nc4 24 Qxg6+ Bg7 25 Nf5 is easier to grasp) 23 Nh5 when Black is quite lost due to the threats down the long diagonal, and if 23...Ne5 24 Qf5 Bg7 25 Nxg7 Kxg7 26 f4.

22...Bg7 23 Qb3

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

23...Kh8 24 Ne2 Rac8 25 Bd4

Rerouting the knight to e2 made sense, but only if White intended to follow up with 25 Nf4! when he would have maintained a clear advantage: for example, 25...Rcd8 (not 25...Nc4? 26 Bxg6!, and 25...c5 26 Bxb7 Qxb7 remains tactically flawed, as shown by 27 Bxe5 Rxe5 28 bxc5 Rxc5 29 Rxc5 Rxc5 30 Nxg6+! fxg6? 31 Rd8+) 26 Bxe5!? (forcing the pace; White might also wait with, say, 26 a3) 26...Rxd1+ 27 Rxd1 Bxe5 28 Nd3 Qf6 29 Nxe5 Rxe5 30 Qc3! and White's far superior light-squared bishop continues to make its presence felt.

25...Nc4 26 Bxg7+

The knight on c4 is a thorn in White's side and one not easily dealt with by 26 Bd3, in view of 26...Bxd4 27 Nxd4 c5! when Black suddenly liberates his forces (27...Nxe3 28 fxe3 Qxe3+ 29 Kh2 Qxd4 30 Qxf7 isn't so effective). White didn't, however, have to trade bishops and 26 Qc3!? Bxd4 27 Rxd4 ahead of Bd3 would have preserved a definite and healthy plus.

26...Kxg7 27 Bd3 Ne5 28 Qc3

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 Be4 Nc4 29 Bf3!? c5 30 Bxb7 Qxb7 31 a4!, which would also have retained a definite degree of pressure.

28...Kg8 29 Nf4 c5!?



At last Fressinet is able to carry out his ideal advance, although he didn't have to break and might have continued to hunker down with 29...Red8 30 Be4 Nc4.

30 bxc5 Nd7?

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...Red8! was essential when Black wouldn't have been doing too badly, since it's far from trivial to improve the white pieces. 31

Qb4 Rd7 32 a4 is the most direct plan and after 32...Nxd3 33 Rxd3 Rxd3 34 Nxd3 Qe4 35 Qxe4 Bxe4 36 Nb2 White remains a pawn to the good, but Black is certainly not without his chances to hold.

31 Bxg6!

Boom! Now 31...fxg6 32 Nxg6 pretty much forces the hopeless 32...Qg7 33 Rxd7! Qxc3 (33...Qxd7 34 Qh8+ Kf7 35 Qh7+ Ke6 36 Nf4+ wins the queen) 34 Rxc3 and, like the game, 31...Nxc5 32 Bh5 Ne6 33 Qe5

leaves White a pawn up and in full control.

31...Rxc5 32 Qb3 Rxc1 33 Rxc1 Ne5 34 Bb1 Qg5

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 Kf1 Ba8 36 Rc5 Qf6 37 Qc3 Qd6 38 Bc2 Bb7 39 Nh5 Kf8 40 Kg1!



Good prophylaxis as White continues to move in for the kill by preparing f2-f4 and not allowing 40 f4? Nc4.

40...Nc4

This doesn't help matters, but in any case the game had gone for Fressinet with the engine's suggestion of 40...b4 41 Qxb4 Nd7 42 Rc4 Qxb4 43 Rxb4 merely resulting in a hopeless endgame.

41 Qg7+ Ke7 42 Rf5 Rf8 43 Nf4

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

43...Ke8 44 Rf6 Qe5 45 Ng6! 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 Nf6 3 d4 Nxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nf3 g6 6 g3 Bg7 7 Bg2 0-0 8 0-0 c6 9 Nc3 Bg4 10 Be3 Nbd7 11 Qb3 Bxf3 12 Bxf3 Qb6

White has obtained an ideal set-up and already Black's position is unpleasant, since he can't easily liberate his pieces. 12...Qc7 13 Rfe1 e5 is the direct attempt to do so, but after 14 d5 followed by, say, 14...Rfe8 15 Rad1 e4 16 Bg2 White retains a clear plus.

13 Qa3 Qd8 14 Rfd1 Re8 15 b4!?

15 Bf4 was, of course, possible, but Adair sees no reason not to exploit the position of his bishops by advancing on the queenside.

15...Nb6

Black also comes under significant pressure after 15...e5 16 dxe5 Rxe5 17 Bd4 Re8 18 b5.

16 Qb3 Qd7 17 Kg2

Calmly improving his pieces and avoiding any notion of ...Qh3 followed by ...Ng4, ahead of crashing through in the centre.

17...Qe6



18 d5! cxd5 19 c5!

19 Nxd5 Nbx d5 20 cxd5 Qd7 21 Rac1 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...Ne4 20 Nxd5

20 Bxe4 Bxc3 21 Qxc3 Qxe4+ 22 f3 Qc4 was the tactical point behind Black's last, although even here 23 Qb3 Qxb3 24 axb3 Nd7 25 b5 would have left him under heavy pressure.

20...Nxd5 21 Qxd5 Qxd5 22 Rxd5 Bxa1 23 Bxe4

This is the position which Adair had to correctly assess before going 19 c5. White is a whole exchange in arrears, but Rd7 is threatened and his bishops and queenside majority mean that he is clearly better.

23...f5 24 Bf3 Rad8

24...b6 might have been an option had it not been for 25 Rd1, and if 25...Bc3 26 Bxa8 Rxa8 27 b5! bxc5 28 Bxc5 with excellent winning chances for White.

25 Rxd8

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

25...Rxd8 26 Bxb7



26...Bd4?

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...Rd3! 27 b5 Rxe3 28 fxe3 Kf7, hoping for salvation with the opposite-coloured

bishops. Whether this is enough to draw isn't obvious as after, say, 29 Bd5+ e6 30 Bb3 Ke7 31 a4 Bc3 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...Ba5 (33...Kd7 34 b7 Kc7? 35 Bxe6 Kxb7 36 Bg8 h6 37 Bh7 Bd2 38 Kf3 g5 39 Bxf5 is winning for White as his extra pawns are four files apart) 34 b7 Bc7 35 a5 Kd6 36 a6 Bb8 followed by ...Kc5-b6. Breaking through on the kingside is not such an easy business for White and the hasty 37 h4 Kc5 38 Bxe6? Kb5 39 Bg8 h6 40 Bh7 Kxa6 41 Bxg6 Kxb7 42 Bxf5 Kc6 is certainly but a draw.

27 Kf3 Bxe3 28 Kxe3 Rd1 29 b5

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

29...Kf7 30 a4 Ke6

Alternatively, 30...Ra1 31 c6 Rc1 32 a5 Ke6 33 b6 with an easy win.

31 a5 Re1+ 32 Kd2 Rf1 33 Ke2 Rc1 34 b6!



The decisive breakthrough. The game is up.

34...Rxc5 35 bxa7 Rxa5 36 a8Q Rxa8 37 Bxa8 Kf6 38 Kd3 g5 39 Kd4 g4 40 Bc6 e6 41 Bb5 h5 42 Be8 h4 43 gxh4 1-0

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

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Be7 8 Qf3 Qc7 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 g4 b5 11 Bxf6 Nxf6 12 g5 Nd7 13 f5 Bxg5+

Black's most solid choice rather than allow White his ideal initiative with 13...Nc5 14 f6 gxf6 15 gxf6 Bf8 16 Rg1 or head for the trendy waters of 13...0-0!?

14 Kb1 Ne5 15 Qh5 Qe7 16 Nxe6 Bxe6 17 fxe6 g6 18 exf7+ Kxf7 19 Qh3 Kg7 20 Nd5 Qd8 21 Be2



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 Qc3!? Rc8 22 Qa3 Rc6 23 Be2, which maintains a pleasant edge for White.

21...Rf8 22 Rhf1 Ra7!

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

23 Rxf8 Qxf8 24 Rf1 Rf7 25 Rxf7+ Qxf7 26 Qg3

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...Bh6?

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 Bd8 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...Bf6!?, angling for ...Nc4 when Black should be able to draw.

27 Qg1?

27 h4! Qa7 28 c3 was the correct way to secure a clear advantage.

27...Qb7?

This might appear solid, but Alsina Leal will now demonstrate that the defence is most uncomfortable. As such, 27...Nf3 was necessary, and if 28 Qg2 (28 Bxf3 Qxf3 29 Qa7+ Kg8 30 Qa8+ Bf8 is nothing for Black to fear with his queen so active) 28...Nd2+ 29 Ka1 Bf4! when Black seems to have enough counterplay.

28 h4! Kh8 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...Bg7 30 h5! gxh5 31 Qg5

31 Bxh5 Nc4 32 Qg5! was a better way of going about things, when 32...Qd7 33 c3 Ne5 still leaves Black solidly placed, but also under pressure right across the board (White might even regroup with 34 Qg1 and Qb6).

31...Qf7 32 Ka2?

Even after 32 Qxh5! Qxh5 33 Bxh5 Nd7! 34 b4 Nf6 35 Nxf6 Bxf6 36 Ka2

Kg7 37 Kb3 White is for choice due to his more mobile pawns, although one would imagine that, with care, Black should be able to hold.

32...h6?

Gormally continues to underestimate the danger. 32...Ng4! was correct, and if 33 Bxg4 (or 33 Qd8+ Qf8 34 Qb6 Nf6 35 Nxf6 Qxf6 36 Qb8+ Qf8) 33...hxg4 34 Qxg4 h5 when he would have secured sufficient counterplay to maintain the balance.

33 Qxh5 Qxh5

Black didn't have to consent to this exchange, but 33...Qf8 34 c3 Qd8 35 Qf5 would also have been most unpleasant for him (White can combine ideas of Nb4 with those of Bh5, targeting the black king).

34 Bxh5



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

34...Nc4 35 c3 Nd2?

Now White is too fast. As pointed out by Alsina Leal after the game, 35...Be5 36 Nc7 d5! had to be tried, when 37 Nxd5 Kg7 38 Nb4 Kf6 39 Nxa6 Kg5 40 Be8 Nd6 41 Bd7 h5 supplies some much-needed counterplay and might yet just about save the day for Black.

36 Nc7 Nxe4 37 Nxa6 d5 38 Bf3 Nxc3+

Desperation, and desperation which becomes entirely understandable once you've considered the lines 38...Nd6 39 Bxd5 h5 40 Nc7 h4 41 Bc6 and 38...Be5 39 Nb4 Kg7 40 Nxd5 Ng3 41 Kb3 Bd6 42 a4 bxa4+ 43 Kxa4 Nf5 44 b4, both of which should be winning for White.

39 bxc3 Bxc3 40 Nc7 Kg7 41 Nxd5 Ba5 42 Bh5!

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...Be1 43 Kb3 Bg3 44 Nc3 Be1 45 Nxb5 Kf6 46 Nd4 Bf2 47 Nf3 Ke6 48 Kc4 Kd6 49 Kb5 Kc7 50 a4 Be3 51

Ne5 Bf2 52 Ng4 Be1 53 Nxh6 Bd2 54 Nf5 Be1 55 Nd4 Bd2 56 Bf3 Be3 57 Nc2 Bb6 58 Nb4 Ba7 59 Nd5+ Kd6 60 Nb6 1-0

An Anti-Climax

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 Bc4 Ne7 4 Nc3 c6 5 d4 Ng6

Surely too materialistic and one might have thought that Black's play had prepared the thematic central counter 5...d5.

6 Nf3

6 Qf3 or even 6 Qh5!? 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...Be7 7 Qe2 d6 8 Bd2

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 Nxb5!

Sreeves takes up the challenge, having recognised that even after Black's next (and not 9...cxb5? 10 Bd5), White will emerge with a strong centre in return for the piece.

9...d5 10 exd5 cxb5 11 Bxb5+ Kf8



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...Bxd6 13 Qe4

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

13...Qe7 14 Ne5 Bb7 0-1



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

Rock Solid

The stars again descended on Gibraltar, where Vladislav Artemiev proved too strong – *Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk*

The Gibraltar International Chess Festival was yet again a major success. Johann Hjartarson delivered a lecture which touched on Fischer, Hikaru Nakamura and Baskaran Adhiban gave masterclasses, and the Battle of the Sexes was the usual big hit with those at the Caleta Hotel and following online. Once more Simon Williams and Jovanka Houska did an excellent job anchoring the main commentary, with Tania Sachdev playing the role of star reporter/interviewer.

Quite simply put, Gibraltar is an extremely slick and impressive production. Tournament Director Stuart Conquest has put together a highly professional behind-the-scenes team, including John Saunders who once again acted as press officer.

Once the dust had settled, after 10 extremely hard-fought rounds, the slightly surprising winner was Vladislav Artemiev. The 20-year-old Russian Grandmaster might have been seeded eleventh behind the likes of Vachier-Lagrave, Aronian, So, Yu Yangyi and Nakamura, but he was a fully deserving winner of the £25,000 first prize.

Artemiev breezed to 4½/5, displaying fine calculation and a good grasp of when to mix things up against lower-rated opposition. In the sixth round Artemiev sensibly put up the shutters against MVL and then had a second successive White, against a player synonymous with success at Gibraltar, the four-time champion Hikaru Nakamura, who ominously hadn't lost a classical game on the Rock in 10 years.

V. Artemiev - H. Nakamura, Round 7 - Reti Opening

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 d5 3 Bg2 e6 4 0-0 Be7 5 c4 0-0 6 b3 c5 7 Bb2 Nc6 8 e3 b6 9 Nc3 dxc4

This solid choice has been played by countless strong players but giving White a central majority is not without risk.

10 bxc4 Bb7 11 Qe2 Rc8 12 Rad1 Qc7 13 Ne1 Ne8!?

A new move. Nakamura echoes White's last, freeing his f-pawn for duty.

14 f4 Nd6 15 Nf3 a6 16 a4 f5

Completing the desired set-up. White finds himself unable for now to break in the centre without creating major weaknesses, so Artemiev looks to the kingside for expansion.

17 d3 Bf6 18 h3! Nb4 19 g4 g6 20 e4!?



Ratcheting up the tension and why not advance so with Black's knight having moved away from d4?

20...fxe4 21 dxe4 Nxe4?

Possibly disliking the trend of the game, Nakamura elects to force matters, but he should really have preferred 21...Bd4+ 22 Kh2 (22 Nxd4? cxd4 23 Rxd4 Qc5 is rather awkward, and if 24 Qf2 Rxf4!) 22...Ne8 (unfurling further pressure against f4) 23 Nxd4 cxd4 24 Qd2! dxc3 25 Qxc3 e5 26 Qxb4 exf4

27 Bf3 when White has the two bishops and a monster dark-squared one, but Black remains solid enough and anything might well happen in this pretty murky scenario.

22 Nxe4 Bxb2 23 Neg5 Bxf3 24 Rxf3!

Possibly the move Nakamura had underestimated. Instead, 24 Qxe6+? Kh8 25 Nxf3 Qxf4 26 Rd7 Bg7 27 Qxb6 Nc6 would have been fine for Black.

24...Bd4+ 25 Kh1

Black finds himself a pawn up, but not for long with the key e6 pivot under heavy siege.

25...Rce8 26 Nxe6 Qc6 27 f5

Cementing the octopus-like knight in place. Already in serious trouble, Nakamura now grabs a pawn.

27...Qxa4 28 fxg6!

Artemiev is not to be bluffed.

28...Rxf3 29 gxh7+ Kh8



30 Bxf3?

The human choice, but the silicon monster much prefers 30 Qxf3! and if 30...Rxe6 31 Qf8+ Kxh7 32 Rf1 when the attack is decisive, as shown by 32...Bg7 33 Qf5+ Rg6 34 Be4 Qe8 35 Qh5+ Bh6 36 Bxg6+ Qxg6 37 Rf7+, winning the queen.

30...Nc6?

Now White cleans up. The chance Artemiev has just missed would not have been easy to calculate, but one would have expected, at least if in good form, the normally highly resourceful Nakamura to have found here

30...Nd3! when 31 Qxd3 (31 Rxd3? Qxc4 is actually a little awkward for White, who must avoid 32 Rxd4 Qxe2 33 Bxe2 cxd4 34 Nxd4 Re4, picking up a piece) 31...Rxe6 32 h4 Re8 followed by ...Qd7. White is clearly better, but converting in this rather unusual position would not be so easy.

31 Nxc5! 1-0

Black finds himself losing serious material after 31...Rxe2 32 Nxa4. Loose pieces drop off, as Dr Nunn would say.

Demonstrating that there was no fluke about that fine win, Artemiev held fairly comfortably against Levon Aronian in round 8. He then made good use of a positional exchange sacrifice to outplay David Navara, before winning yet again, and with the black pieces, against a slightly nervous Yu Yangyi in the final round. Victories against such worldclass players do not come easily and Artemiev's rating performance was a whopping 2941. This is a man very much going places.

There was also a youthful surprise in the battle for second place, the final round seeing the 19-year-old Indian GM Murali Karthikeyan outplay Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. Karthikeyan began with two draws against much lower-rated opposition, then turned on the style, but was outplayed by Hikaru Nakamura and found himself on just 3/5.

To win his final five games was a fine achievement by Karthikeyan, as well as a reminder of just how important momentum can be in a tournament. In the eighth round he kept his nerve as Black in a tricky endgame against Rauf Mamedov, ahead of grinding down Maxim Matlakov and then MVL too no less.

M. Karthikeyan - M. Vachier-Lagrave, Round 10 - Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 Ng4 7 Bg5 h6 8 Bh4 g5

One of the most positionally unbalanced lines of the Najdorf. Black will gain good dynamic play on the dark squares but is creating some potentially serious weaknesses.

9 Bg3 Bg7 10 Be2 h5 11 h4 Nc6 12 Nf3 gxh4 13 Bxh4 Qa5 14 Qd2 Be6 15 Rd1 Rc8 16 0-0



16...Rg8?!

This doesn't achieve a huge amount and allows White to make sense of his 15th move novelty. Instead, Black might have regrouped with 16...Bh6 17 Qe1 Nge5 and ...Ng6 or even gone 16...Nce5!?. The threat of ...Ng6 is a little awkward for White who would rather not go 17 Nxe5? Qxe5 18 Bg3 Qc5

when the h-pawn is again primed to advance. As such, 17 Bxe7! was presumably Karthikeyan's idea when 17...Nxf3+ (17...Kxe7? 18 Nd5+) 18 gxf3 (18 Bxf3? Bxc3 19 bxc3 Kxe7 wins a piece) 18...Bxc3 19 bxc3 Kxe7 20

Qxd6+ Ke8 21 fxf4 hxg4 remains extremely unclear, but is most likely about equal.

17 Nd5! Qxd2 18 Rxd2 Bh6?!

This attempt to activate the bishop backfires. As such, Black should have settled for a solid if slightly worse position with 18...Bxd5 19 exd5 Nce5.

19 Rdd1 f6 20 c3 Bg5?!

Losing yet further time. Perhaps Black should add some cover to h5 while waiting with 20...Bf7, but in any case it's clear that things have gone wrong for him.

21 Bg3 Bh6 22 Nh4!

The knight is bound for f5. Black will pretty much have to exchange it, after which White is left in full control of the light squares.

22...Kf7 23 Nf5 Bxf5 24 exf5 Rg5 25 Bc4 Na5 26 Bd3



Karthikeyan continues to play excellent chess. Vachier-Lagrave now tries to thrash on the kingside, but the young Indian keeps his cool impressively.

26...Rcg8 27 Bf4 R5g7 28 Rfe1 Nc6 29 Be4

Overprotection of g2 while beginning to eye that rather large hole on e6.

29...h4 30 f3!

Winning material.

30...Bxf4 31 Nxf4 Nge5 32 Bd5+ Ke8 33 Bxg8 Nxf3+ 34 Kf2 Nxe1 35 Bd5 Rg5 36 Kxe1 Rxf5 37 Ng6 Rh5 38 Rd3

Rh6 39 Nf4 e5 40 Ne6 Ne7 41 Bxb7 Kd7 42 Nf8+ Kc7 43 Bxa6 d5 44 c4 f5 45 Bb5 f4 46 Ra3 1-0

Rarely does one see Vachier-Lagrave so badly outplayed.

The British challenge was led by Michael Adams, who was his typically solid and highly professional self, scoring an undefeated '+4' while never really threatening the top places. Nigel Short meanwhile reached 4/5, but was then outplayed by Levon Aronian and slid down the table. Gawain Jones would also like to have finished higher up, but had to settle for 6½/10 after being outplayed by the Indian Grandmaster Suri Vaibhav in the penultimate round. At least Jones got to share the best game prize with Alejandro Ramirez for their lively.

The star British performer was David Howell, who shared third place with a '+5' performance. That was all the more impressive considering he had overpressed against the Mongolian IM Sumiya Bilguun to find himself on just 1½/3. However, Howell came storming back, eventually pocketing £11,000 after keeping his cool against a far too optimistic Aronian.

L. Aronian - D. Howell, Round 10 - Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 Bd3 Nc6 5 c3 Qc7 6 h3 g6 7 Qc2 f6!

New and strong. Why shouldn't Black take over the centre?

8 Ne2 e5 9 0-0 Nge7 10 dxe5

If Aronian really wanted to sacrifice a piece, he should likely have tried 10 c4!? e4 11 Bxe4 dxe4 12 Nbc3, attacking e4 while threatening both Nb5 and d4-d5, although even here one would prefer to be Black after the calm 12...Bg7.

10...fxe5



11 c4?

This one stunned the crowd. After 11 Qa4 Bf5 12 Bxf5 gxf5!? Black is clearly quite comfortably placed, but White is very much still alive and fighting after, say, 13 Na3 0-0-0 14 f4!.

11...e4

Trapping the bishop.

12 Bxe4 dxe4 13 Nbc3 Bg7

Simple development as Howell trusts in the accuracy of his calculations. White has only one pawn and a couple of knight leaps for his pawn.

14 Nd5 Qd6 15 Bf4 Be5

More simple chess and it's not entirely clear what Aronian had overlooked. Certainly, on the adjacent board, Hikaru Nakamura couldn't stop shooting him incredulous looks to the amusement of the world-wide audience. Here White can bag a second pawn with 16 Qxe4, but after 16...Bf5 17 Qe3 0-0 18 Bxe5 Nxe5 19 Rad1 Rae8! his compensation for the piece is totally insufficient.

16 Rad1 Bxf4 17 Ndxf4 Qe5 18 b4!?

Desperation. The three-time British Champion now mops up well.

18...Nxb4 19 Qb3 Nbc6 20 c5 Qxc5 21 Nc3 Qb4 22 Qc2 0-0 23 Ncd5 Nxd5 24 Nxd5 Qa3 25 Rfe1 Bf5 26 Re3 Qa5 27 Qc4 Rf7 28 Nf6+ Kg7 29 Rd5 Be6 0-1



The start of one of the most surprising grandmaster games in recent years. Levon Aronian (left) was virtually unrecognisable as an early piece sacrifice backfired against David Howell

Gibraltar is arguably most famous for its efforts to attract the world's leading female players, one of whom stole the early headlines. Iranian IM Sarasadat Khademalsharieh reached 2/2 by grinding down the 2600-rated French GM Jules Moussard, the co-winner of the Open at the London Chess Classic. She then butchered the German Grandmaster Alexander Donchenko ahead of holding Levon Aronian no less. Khademalsharieh followed up with a draw with Baskaran Adhiban before the media attention possibly told as she lost her final four games. The £15,000 women's prize was bagged by former women's world champion Tan Zhongyi, who made 7/10 for a 2585 performance. Another former champion, Mariya Muzychuk, faced a stronger field and performed at 2718, but finished half a point behind Tan and had to settle for £10,000.

Leading Scores ---

1st - Vladislav Artemiev (RUS) 8½/10; 2nd - Murali Karthikeyan (IND) 8; 3-5th - Nikita Vitiugov (RUS), David Howell (ENG), David Anton Guijarro (ESP) 7½.

Junior Tournaments

World Schools 2019 in Antalya, Turkey

Round One

England scored 10/27 in the first round of the World Schools 2019, which is taking place in Antalya, Turkey. There were 9 wins, including a bye, 2 draws and 16 losses.

We have a young, enthusiastic party, many of whom are representing England for the first time and the atmosphere is buzzing. Our hotel is excellent, with great food and comfortable rooms and it will take a couple of days for the kids to acclimatise. But once they do, I am sure scores will start to pick up.

One lesson from the first round: perhaps many of the children are moving too quickly. Again, this is a question of getting used to the new level of play and calming down into the state of mind needed to play really good chess. We are looking forward to Round 2!

Round Two

The England youngsters scored 9/27 in Round 2 of the World Schools Championships. Everyone is giving their best, but almost all are finding that it takes time to adjust from domestic to international play. A routine is essential. What works at home may not work abroad. Playing styles have to be broadened. A hardened character needs to be formed to adapt to the lifestyle changes in foreign parts.

This all takes time to bed in. Simply, they are learning the ropes. Most will have a long international career ahead of them, so that looking ahead, in five years time, we will have plenty of seasoned campaigners representing England.

I see great players in the making here [meet the team here]

Currently, Denis Dupuis and Patrick Damodaran lead our scoring with 2/2. Amaan Kassey is on 1.5/2 and we have a host of players on 1/2.

Well done!

Game of the Day – Under 7s

Jacobo Caicedo Vallejo vs Patrick Damodaran

Antalya, Turkey

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d3 d5 4 ed5 ed5 5 h3 Nf6 6 Bg5 h6 7 Bh4 Be6 8 Be2 Be7 9 O-O Nc6 10 d4 c4 11 Nc3 O-O 12 Qd2 b5 13 Nb5 Ne4 14 Qe3 Bh4 15 Nh4 Qh4 16 Nc3 Nc3 17 Qc3 Qd4 18 Qd4 Nd4 19 Bg4 Bg4 20 hg4 Nc2 21 Rad1 d4 22 Rd2 d3 23 Rfd1 Rab8 24 Rb1 Rfd8 25 Rbd1 Rb2 26 a4 Ra2 27 Rc1 Ra4 28 f4 c3 29 Rdd1 Ne3 30 Re1 d2 31 Rcd1 Nd1 32 Rd1 c2 33 Rd2 c1Q 34 Kh2 Rd2 35 Kh3 Qh1 36 Kg3 Ra3# 0-1

Round Three

England scored 13/27 in Round 3 of the World Schools Chess Championships. This was a brighter day for many of our younger players, as they were able to get on the scoreboard for the first time. Patrick Damodaran continues to impress, moving smoothly to 3/3 in the U7 section. On 2 points we have Denis Dupuis, Nina Pert, Sanjit Selva Kumar, Roxolana Chaban and Eugenia Karas, followed by six children on 1.5. These tournaments are always a distance race. If you keep your energy, there are a lot of points to be scored at the back end.

On a positive note, everyone seems to be relaxed and having a great time. Early teething problems have been solved, thanks to our indestructible HOD Kim Shek and we are all now looking forward to Round Four.

Round Four

The England team scored 10.5/27 in Round 4 of the World Schools Championships. We are trying very hard to get to the 50% mark and beyond in each round, but we're finding it tough. There are no easy games, no weak players in this event

Spirits remain high among players, parents and coaches. Even the HOD, Kim Shek, is known to crack a smile from time to time. The weather is beautiful here, hot with a cooling breeze off the sea. The hotel is full to overflowing. The all-inclusive tariff, to include unlimited drinks of all kinds, is a great hit with young and old in the party.

We move forward to Round 5, past the half-way mark in a positive mood. Congratulations to all our kids. Keep it up!

Round Five

Time marches on at the World Schools Championships, with England scoring a glorious 14/27 in Rd 5, over 50% for the first time. The score might be even better if players were not repeatedly paired with opponents from the same country. One of our team is on his fourth England v England pairing in a row! Do we come here for this?

One of our party had a birthday yesterday and the entire team gathered to wish her well and to present her with a huge birthday cake. Much applause and laughter followed. To me this showed the general good mood of the party and we proceed to Round 6 determined to score well again.

Round Six

The business end of the World Schools Championships is fast approaching, and this is where lots of points will be won and lost. The last three rounds are going to reveal who has approached this tournament seriously and who has not. Who has stuck to their routine and who has not.

England scored 12.5/27 in Round 6. No controversy today. Well done everyone.

Round Seven

England scored 11.5/27 in Round 7 of the World Schools Chess Championships. The magical 50% barrier has been passed only once; let's hope we can do it with interest in Round 8.

Today, a bowling evening was organised, which was very popular with children and parents. It was great to see everyone socialising together. Thank you to the parents for getting it together. The message must be to give 100% in the last two rounds. Just go for it!

Round Eight

England scored 12/27 in Round 8 of the World Schools Chess Championships. This was a mixed bag, with good games interspersed with a higher than usual blunder ratio in many encounters. Some of the kids are getting tired, and unconsciously want to go home. They might not feel it, but you can see it in the moves.

A pattern has emerged throughout the event and that is, as a party, we have failed to achieve consistency. A steady series of wins, a good long run, has seemed impossible. Individual scores are roller-coastering from day to day. The quality of the games fluctuates from one round to another.

This is not a criticism at all, just something that everyone has to work on upon return. Consistency wins at these tournaments – that's why sticking to a routine during the tournament is the right thing to do. Ignoring this advice leads inexorably to the 50% mark. Round 9 starts at 10am. We are looking for a strong finish.

Round Nine

England finished with a bang! 15/27 in the last round, which was comfortably our best result of the tournament. Well done everyone! All the children tried very hard, but Nina Pert was the star of the show, achieving 6/9. A great score! Honourable mentions go to Patrick Damodaran, Max Pert, Roxolana Chaban and Eugenia Karas, who all scored above 50% with 5 points. On the 50% line came Sanjit S Kumar, Kavin Thooran, Denis Dupuis, Kenneth Hobson, and Sam Parry.

We have reached the end of these reports. Thank you for reading and we look forward to the European Schools in Romania at the end of May. A final round up of all scores may be viewed here — <http://chess-results.com/tnr427511.aspx?lan=1&art=25&fedb=ENG&flag=30>

— *Andrew Martin*



Glorney 2019

21st – 24th July 2019 in Ireland

The participating nations for 2019 were England, France, Netherlands, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The 2019 tournament was held at Carrickdale Hotel, Louth, Ireland between July 21st and July 24th. England did really well, winning two of the four trophies. We finished 2nd and 3rd in the remaining sections.

Arrival Day

Players, parents and coaches arrived safely. The weather was good. Desmond Beatty, Junior Officer for The Irish Chess Union gave the guests a very warm welcome and he was very helpful throughout the tournament. Venue and the rooms were very good. The hotel is situated in the scenic mountains, within an hour drive from Dublin Airport. In the afternoon, a graded friendly blitz tournament was conducted. It was open for all. A few of the parents and most of the players who arrived early played.

Aravamudhan Balaji (Under 14) scored a fantastic 8.5/9 and won a trophy finishing ahead IM David Fitzsimons. Luca Buanne won U1600 rating prize with a fine performance of 6/9.

Gilbert Cup – Under 18 girls – Winners

Cassie Graham, Mahima Raghavendra and Niamh Bridgeman scored 11.5/15 for Team England. The girls did extremely well with their style of play and focus. After Round 4, we were trailing by half point to France. We scored 2.5/3 in the final round and eclipsed France by 1 point. A thrilling finish – Cassie and Mahima scored 4.5 points each of available 5. In the tie-break, Cassie won the board prize for England as she played on the top board. Every point scored by all the three girls helped England to win the trophy.

Robinson Cup – Under 14 – Winners

Aarvamudhan Balaji, Robert Akeya-Price, Jacob Yoon, Tristian See, Finlay Bowcott-Terry and Christopher Tombolis scored a massive 26/30 points for Team England. Team England finished miles ahead of France with a huge gap of 5.5 points. The boys played exceptionally well with attacking play, sacrifices and lot of grit and determination. Round after round we increased the lead. Everyone played outstanding chess. Finlay Bowcott-Terry won the board prize playing on board 5 with a perfect 5/5. He was the only player with a perfect score of 5/5 in the whole tournament across all sections.

Stokes Cup – Under 12 – Runners-up

Arjun Kolani, Manvith Sandhu, Luca Buanne, Tom Usharovsky, Daniel Chen and Ethan Gardiner scored 17.5/30 and finished second place. Netherlands won with 19 points. Our score of 2/6 against Netherlands decided the overall result. A great performance from the young boys as half the team is still eligible to play next year. Bright prospects for next year! Luca Buanne won the board prize with a score of 4.5/5 playing on board 3.

Glorney Cup – Under 18 – 3rd Place

Sacha Brozel, Aditya Verma, Oscar Pollack, Thomas Carroll and Max Turner scored 14/25 and finished third place. France and Netherlands both scored 17.5. France won the cup on head to head record. All players from all the countries are very highly rated. Netherlands got 3 FMs on the top 3

boards. Our players played brilliantly and gave their best. Max Turner won the board prize with a score of 3.5/5 playing on board 5.

Overall across all sections, we won drawn games, we drawn the lost games, the won games are won in style. The lost games went down to the wire. Amazing to watch the quality play of our talented youngsters.

Our chess coaches

FM Tim Wall and IM Adam Hunt were available throughout the day in preparing for, and analysing, the games. Players took the opportunity of visiting the coaches in the team room as early as 8.00am. Special thanks to Tim and Adam for offering their advice and being in the playing hall, watching our players style of play.

Fun activities & team dinner

We had wonderful time with picturesque garden walks and dinner outings. We had dinner organised by the hosts. We mixed with players and parents from all countries. A great camaraderie built up. Our youngsters had a lovely time on the 3D football pitch playing their friends from other countries.

Special thanks to Desmond Beatty who organised the team dinner, transportation and – more importantly – he always wore a smile and catered to all our requests. The Irish Chess Union has set a high standard for the rest to match.

All games were played on live boards, and you can find the games at <http://www.glorneycupchess.org/>. In 2020, the tournament returns to Paris.

— Ravi Sandhu, Head of Delegation



European Youth 2019 in Bratislava, Slovakia

Day 1

The 1st round of the European Youth Chess Championship had it all for England's players: brilliant sacrifices, disappointing blunders, 'civil war,' confident wins, wild fluctuations of the computer evaluation, and new patches of grey hair for some of the parents, who were watching the games on live boards. The girls and boys scored 6 out of possible 14, a result that will definitely improve in the coming rounds, for all the players showed great determination, perseverance, and quality in their games.

Analytically, all our players, who were paired with lower graded opponents (Shreyas, Jude, and Elias), confidently won their games. Unfortunately, Julia and Nethuli had to face each other in the G14 section and, after a long game, which was equal for the most of its duration, Julia won. Four of the squad, Anika, Saahil, Johan, and Tashika, upset their much higher rated opponents and drew their games. Especially impressive was Tashika's draw against Machteld van Foreest from the Netherlands, the top-rated girl in the G12 section, who had 739 points higher rating and is one of the favourites to win the tournament. Similarly, Anika drew her game after four-and-a-half hour marathon against the Italian Kamilla Rubinshtein (1799).

As for the rest of the team, despite losing their games they played very good games, some messing up winning positions, others being outplayed by much more experienced opponents.

While I am writing these lines, the pairings for the second round are out. Considering how slow the wi-fi in the hotel has become, I can imagine that a frantic preparation of all the players and coaches for tomorrow's game has begun ...

Day 2

The second day of the European Youth Chess Championship was as tough as the first one, once again proving the chess saying that 'there are no weak opponents, especially in this type of tournament'. The effort that every player in the team made today to achieve the desired result was enormous and it largely paid off, though some players were really unlucky in the end.

The team scored 6.5 out of 15 (2 byes, 4 wins, and 1 draw), with two players keeping the 100% score. Thus, Elias (O8) and Jude (O10) scored their second consecutive wins (!!) and are in the leaders' group in their sections. It was also great to see that Arjun and Ben rapidly recovered from their yesterday's defeats and scored comfortable wins against experienced opponents.

I would also single out Johan's impressive draw in the O10 section against a very strong Turkish player Deveci Huseyin Said (1809). Despite his opponent's immense pressure throughout the game, Johan displayed untiring perseverance and managed to defend an unfavourable position by activating his pieces and forcing a perpetual check.

Tomorrow's forecast (pairings) is again quite promising: expect showers of sacrificed pieces and pawns, hard-fought battles, seized opportunities, and inevitable checkmates.

Day 3

One third of the European Youth Chess Championship is already over, and this third day turned out

to be the toughest for England's players so far. The team scored 5.5 points out of 15, with 3 wins, 5 draws, and 7 losses. However, objectively, the overall score does not fully reflect the evaluation of the positions of several games for most of their duration, and this round should truly be dubbed as a round of missed opportunities, especially as far as the younger sections are concerned. Thus, in the O-10 section Jude and Elias, who went into the round with the perfect 2/2, played interesting games and outplayed their opponents in complicated positions but failed to convert their advantage, eventually scoring only 0.5 point out of 2. Similarly, Johan (O-10) and Tashika (G-12), drew their games despite having gained huge advantage in the endgame.

In the higher categories (Open 14 and 16; Girls 14 and 16), all our players faced very experienced opponents, and despite their great effort and several-hour-long resistance, they had to admit their defeat. The exceptions were Julia, who easily outplayed Fidan Huseynova from Azerbaijan, and Laura, who recovered from two losses and drew against Amina Fock, a strong player from Germany. Similarly, Dimitrios managed to break his series of two losses by defeating Adam Omarsson from Iceland.

As for other results, Shreyas found a Houdini-like escape from a difficult position and drew his game, whereas Arjun built upon his yesterday's success and defeated Dorian Asllani from Switzerland (1854), reaching 2 points out of three in the O-12 section.

The multilingual jabbering that I can hear now coming from the corridors of the hotel prompt me that the pairings for the next round are out and the meticulous preparation for tomorrow's clashes has already begun.

Day 4

Day 4 was the best day for the England team so far (this is a sentence which I eagerly wished to write at the beginning of my reports every day after round one and I hope to do it in the remaining five days)! Despite the bad luck in some of the games, our players scored 8.5 points out of 15, winning 8 games, drawing 1, and losing 6. Five players – Nicolai, Tashika, Laura, Saahil, and Anika – opened their account of victories (if we put aside the draws), with Elias and Ben returning to wins after yesterday's losses.

Analytically, Anika defeated Adela Zetocha (1402) from Slovakia, Saahil won against Matteo Stagno (1770) from Malta, Ben gave no chance to Michael Kures (1898) from Czech Republic, Tashika and Shreyas showed their superiority against Renana Ken-Dror (Israel) and Matej Jasso (Czech Republic) respectively, Laura nicely defeated Neda Bojovic (1318) from Montenegro, and Julia in a tough game drew with Black pieces against Katharina Katter (1844) from Austria. Finally, Elias' convincing win against Casey Ryan Meszaros from Slovakia has helped him reach shared 6th rank in the O-8 section, one point behind the five leaders.

Tomorrow the tournament will cross its halfway mark with the tension steadily rising. Best of Luck to the England team in the remaining rounds! Go England!

Day 5

The fifth round was not as productive as yesterday's one for the England's team, for we scored only 5 points. It was great to see Saahil and Tashika scoring their second consecutive wins against Timo Yeh (1880) from the Netherlands and Sofya Abramova (1279) from Russia respectively. Dimitrios

outplayed and checkmated Daniel Kulich (1233) from Slovakia and Shreyas gave no chances to Nicolas Perossa (1627) from Italy. In the O-08 section Elias had been trying to break the resistance of Andrey Chernyy (1170) for over three hours but the Czech managed to hold the position and the game ended in draw. Finally, Jude managed to draw an inferior endgame against the experienced Huseyin Said Deveci (1809) from Turkey.

Despite this poor overall score, it should be mentioned that most of the games went past the fourth hour of play, with England's players putting up a good fight against much higher-rated and experienced opponents. Moreover, in a few games our players were standing to win but lack of experience did not allow them to realise their advantage leading to a painful loss. This round has undoubtedly been a great learning experience for all them!

Day 6

Round 6 was a slight improvement over round 5, for the England team scored overall 6.5 points. Already within 40 minutes Nethuli came out with a big smile delivering England's first point of the day: she had defeated experienced Milena Stagno (1394) from Malta. Soon afterwards, Anika and Saahil appeared with half a point each in their pockets taken from strong opponents. The day had successfully begun but, unfortunately, it did not continue as well because several winning and drawn positions were soon lost. Those of England's fans, coaches, and parents who were following the live transmission of some of the games once again had to endure the sight of wild fluctuations of computer's evaluation of each move, albeit this time with stoic and hard-won wisdom.

The sun, nevertheless, shone again over England's players. After many adventures, some of which were utterly self-inflicted, Jude, Shreyas, and Dimitrios won their games. Vidura drew against Manvel Asatryan (1830) from Czech Republic and Johan scored his fourth draw in the tournament against yet another much higher rated opponent (if I am not mistaken, only Armenia's Milena Gasparyan in the G14 sections has more draws: 6 draws out of 6 games!). Finally, after over a four-hour game Julia managed to hold a draw in a slightly inferior endgame.

Three more rounds to go!

Day 7

Round 7 turned out to be the second-best round for the England team in the European Youth Chess Championship. 8 points were scored, with 5 wins, 6 draws, and 4 losses. Nethuli scored her second consecutive win against Miriam Mikova (1516) from Slovakia in an interesting rook endgame; Arjun recovered after three losses to win with Black pieces having launched a crashing attack on the opponent's King; Johan nicely outplayed his opponent in the endgame and scored his first victory in Bratislava (in addition to his earlier four draws); Julia convincingly converted her advantage in the Rook + Knight + Bishop vs Queen endgame, and Tashika carried out an unstoppable attack against the uncastled king of Daria Novikova (1340) from Russia.

As for the unusual number of draws, the first three draws came from the older players of England. Saahil drew against experienced Paulius Meskenas (1974) from Denmark, and Nicolai and Laura could not overcome the resistance of the Czech players Manvel Asatryan (1830) and Nela Otahalova (1401) respectively. In the younger sections, Elias drew against Tomasz Obrycki (1190) from Poland in a nerve-racking Rook + 2 Pawns vs Rook + 2 Pawns on the opposite sides of the board; Shreyas was not able to break the resistance of Bogdan Golovchenko (1723) from Russia and

after almost a four-hour game they agreed to draw; finally, Jude managed to defend an inferior position which he reached after the opening against Vitus Bondo Medhus (1704) from Denmark.

Overall, it was an excellent day for England and let us hope that the remaining two rounds will be even better!

Day 8

The penultimate round of the European Youth Chess Championship brought the English team 7 points. The first win of the day, in less than two hours, came from Elias, who left no chances to his young opponent from Portugal. Nethuli continued her winning streak scoring another win (with a nice Bishop sacrifice!) against the strong Norwegian player Lian Marthinussen (1628); Nicolai, with Black pieces, outplayed Nikola Neshev (1675) from Bulgaria; Tashika, also with Black pieces, defeated the experienced Norwegian junior Amelia Nordquelle (1663). Finally, Arjun managed to outwit his experienced opponent in a very complicated position, scoring his second consecutive win.

Saahil scored his third successive draw with Black pieces against the strong Swiss player Igor Schlegel (2030). Shreyas, Jude, and Laura also drew their games, but to be fair to the players it should be mentioned that none of the games lacked drama and until the last minute the result was not clear (the same should undoubtedly be said about the lost games!). The final round is early in the morning so tomorrow's success will largely depend on how much sleep and rest the players will eventually get.

Day 9

The final day of the tournament saw England's team score 6.5 points, with 3 victories, 7 draws, and 5 losses.

Anika and Ben recovered from their recent misfortunes to finish the tournament on a higher note and, overall, added 12 and 30 points respectively to their rating. Elias also won his game achieving the highest rank from amongst the English players, coming 13th in his category with 6 points.

It is noteworthy that we beat the record of draws this round: 7! However, I should attest that none of them was a 'Grandmaster draw'. On the contrary, many of these games lasted for hours but without determining the winner.

With regard to rating performance, Saahil achieved the highest score, for he increased his rating with 124 point with 1905 performance. Nethuli and Jude's performances were also remarkable for they added 105 and 94 points respectively to their Elo, with Johan only slightly behind them with 64 points. Overall, out of 15 players in total 9 managed to increase their rating but it is also worth emphasising that the tournament was incredibly strong in all categories and all players have gained invaluable experience from this trip!





World Cadets 2019 in Weifang, China

Opening Ceremony

The FIDE World Cadet Chess Championships 2019 for Under 8, Under 10 and Under 12 held in Weifang, Shandong Province, China from the 21st of August 2019 to 1st of September 2019. Weifang is famous for its flamboyant kite festival celebrations that take place in Spring. The colourful opening ceremony was graced by the best female player of all time, Grandmaster Judit Polgar, who is also currently the Vice-President of FIDE, Director Zhu Goping, Vice Director Wang Yankui, and Mrs Li Ping the Deputy Mayor of Weifang City. The tournament is played 11 rounds, one game per day with one rest day after round 6.

Team England

6 players represented England at the World Cadets Chess Championships –

Under 12 Open – Manvith Sandhu, Teymour Harandi

Under 12 Girls – Amaya Macdonald

Under 10 Open – Sanjit S Kumar, William Joseph Lee

Additional Under 10 Open player – Kamran Harandi (pictured second in the gallery above)

Arrangements

The arrangements done by Chinese Chess Federation were excellent. They arranged pick-ups and drop-offs from the local train stations and airports. Students from Weifang University and surrounding universities were picked as volunteers. This helped a lot for the English-speaking people. Volunteers greeted us with placards. England luckily got the accommodation at the playing venue in a 5-star Yujing Hotel. The 14 day stay went well. Many parents from various federations were worried with the choice of food. Luckily, food is catered for vegetarians and plenty of choices for meat eaters.

Tournament Results

The tournament had lots of strong Chinese rated/unrated players along with chess powerhouse nations Russia, USA, India. England scored points in every round from the 3 sections played together. This is an achievement considering we are only 6 players. Round 4 was our best scoring 4.5/6. Rounds 2, 3 and 11 were toughest, scoring 1/6 in each round.

Medals Table

The best results were secured by Russia, USA and China -

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Federation</u>	<u>Gold</u>	<u>Silver</u>	<u>Bronze</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	RUS	3	0	0	3
2	USA	2	0	2	4
3	CHN	1	4	2	7
4	KAZ	0	2	0	2
5	MGL	0	0	1	1
6	VIE	0	0	1	1

Team England Individual Results

Manvith Sandhu scored 50% of the score with 5.5/11. He is the highest points scored player from the entire England squad. He is the only player from the squad who earned rating points +4.4. His best result came in round 8, win over a 1907 rated opponent from Slovenia.

Amaya Macdonald scored a respectable score of 4.5/11. She started the tournament with a major upset. In Round 1, she won against the 1808 German player. She did well in the tournament and lost only 1.6 rating points.

Teymour Harandi scored a respectable score of 4.5/11. He came into the tournament with no FIDE rating. Barring 2 rounds, Teymour is the last one to finish the game and come out from the England squad. He fought well under time pressure. He will gain more success if he manages the time well.

William Joseph Lee scored a decent 4/11. All the U10 boys finished on 4/10. On the tiebreak, William finished top U10 player from the England squad.

Sanjit S Kumar scored a decent 4/11. Sanjith's best result was a draw against 1878 rated player from Netherlands in the last round. All the U10 boys played a max 3/11 rated games. They faced unrated players in almost every round barring 2 to 3.

Kamran Harandi scored a decent 4/11. There is no difference from our three Under 10 players – they all matched equal.

Details can be found at <http://chess->

results.com/tnr462957.aspx?lan=1&art=25&fedb=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30

Team outing on the rest day

The team visited a local Chinese cultural centre. The players enjoyed watching some Chinese cultural dances and adventures. The players had a great fun feeding the fish, going on the water slides and some karting.

Summary

Overall the players had a great experience in playing some great chess and meeting new friends from various countries. The England team particularly made great friends with all the Mongolian players and the only one Scotland player. Children enjoyed playing chess in the chess theme park and flying kites.

England did not have a chess coach on board. The players helped each other in preparing, analysing and playing practise games. All the players worked really hard with their online chess coaches.

Though it sounds one game a day is easy on paper, practically it was tiring. 11 days of chess and being away from home - 5000+ miles away for 14+ days is not an easy task.

The routine is —

Players played the game from 14:30 and then analysed the game, ate dinner and played for some time, analysed for the next round before sleep.

In the morning after breakfast, prepared for the game for 14:30 start.

The entire England team enjoyed the experience!

- Head of Delegation – Ravi Sandhu



English Girls Championship 2019

The ECF English Girls' Chess Championships 2019 were held over the weekend of 19-20 October at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire. The main Championship title was contested over two days, five rounds, and the games were broadcast on live boards from a very quiet room with a stunning view across the Blenheim Palace grounds. There were additional one-day Rapid Chess tournaments based on age groups. The playing room for these was the fantastic Orangery. The space, playing conditions and surroundings at the venue were outstanding, and this resulted in a much more peaceful atmosphere than at many junior tournaments. Quoting one parent (but typical of comments received), 'the venue was definitely the most beautiful we have ever been to and the children were aware of it as they were all very calm, well-behaved and content'.

There were over 100 entries in total from all over England, but especially from Oxfordshire and surrounding counties. The tournaments also incorporated the inaugural Oxfordshire Girls Chess Championships as part of the annual Oxfordshire Girls' Chess Festival. Courtesy of the Oxfordshire Girls' Chess Festival, a simul was held on the Saturday evening by WFM Sarah Longson, in the

Library of the main Palace building. Parents came to watch the invited children play. Among the players, three drew and one won in a field of seventeen matched against Sarah.

The winners of the various titles in the tournaments were –

Section	English Girls	Oxfordshire Girls
Champion	Imogen Dicen	Tashika Arora
Under 9 Minor	Elis Dicen	Elisabeth Houlihan
Under 11 Minor	Elis Dicen	Cecilia Kendall
Under 14 Minor	Thisumi Jayawarna	Kristin Domingo
Under 18 Minor	Thisumi Jayawarna	Sana Kassey

Bespoke trophies and signed book prizes were to be won, the latter courtesy of WGM Jennifer Shahade, GM Judit Polgar and Chess & Bridge Ltd. In the main Championship there were also invitations to play for ECF Juniors on offer. The Dicen sisters went home with a small library's worth of signed books!

The event would not have been the success it was without the hard work of many behind the scenes beforehand and in numerous tasks at the weekend itself. I want to thank Andrew Walker (ECF) and Kathryn Gillow (Oxon Junior Chess) for going beyond the call of duty in facilitating and processing entries, the efficient and fair arbiters Jo Wildman, Priscilla Morris and Douglas Vleeshhouwer, the cheerful and hard-working volunteer Oxfordshire Junior Chess helpers, Sarah Longson, Carl Portman (photos), the Oxfordshire Girls Chess Festival committee and the staff at Blenheim Palace. Chess equipment was supplied by Kidlington Congress, the ECF and Oxfordshire Junior Chess.

— *Andrew Varney [pictures by Carl Portman left to right Tashika Arora, Elis Dicen and Imogen Dicen]*



Senior Tournaments

English Seniors 2019

The 2019 English Seniors Congress was very successful, with highly positive feedback from the players who took part over the four days.

The outright English 50+ section winner and English champion for 2019/2020 is IM Paul Littlewood, with 5.5 points out of 6 [*below left, picture by Carl Portman*]. CM Rob Willmoth and Mark Josse came equal second with 4.5 points out of 6

The outright English 65+ section winner and English champion for 2019/2020 is Kevin Bowmer with 5.5 points out of 6 [*below right, picture by Carl Portman*]. Chris Shephard came second with 5 points and Mike Surtees and CM David Anderton came equal third with 4.5 points.

More pictures including those below from Carl Portman can be found here – <https://www.carlspix.co.uk/English-Seniors-Championships-2019/>

— Ed Goodwin / Nigel Towers



European Senior Teams 2019 in Croatia

Round 1

England 2 50+ had the bye in round 1. In these team tournaments that counts as a 2-2 draw. Thus they are the only team with 2/4 in round 1 and are floated down to Spain in round 2. They had lost, with some difficulty to England 1 in round 1.

Both England 1 50+ and England 65+ won 3-1 in Round 1.

The 65+ was very clinical. Brian Ewart was first to win and John Quinn next, Norman Hutchinson bailed out to a draw in order to ensure that we won, and Brian Hewson also drew.

The England 1 50+ win over Spain was nail-biting. Andrew Ledger won an interesting game with 2 rooks against a queen. Dave Ledger lost, but Jonathan Nelson and Steve Ledger (the team captain) won. Steve had particular difficulty in a game where he was rook for knight and pawn up.

Scores of determined by match points. At the end of the tournament, only if two or more teams have the same match score do the game points become important.

We are off and the first round is underway as I write. I was always taught one should never start with a downer, so I didn't.

Sadly, Petra Nunn had a serious accident on the beach on Monday. She is currently in hospital and may not be able to play in the rest of the event. So we effectively have just 14 players – 5 in England 1 50+, 4 in England 2 50+, including two women, and 5 in England 65+. That team is playing Ireland in the first round. We are ranked 7 of 16. I stood down for the round, which is why I am able to write this report during play. England 2 50+ had the bye in Round 1 as that team is the lowest rated of the 11.

It is early days to report on the state of play – so more later ...

Round 2

Highlight of the day's play was Sheila Jackson's win on board 1 of England 2 50+ against Spain. She



50+ England Second Team (and Stewart) left to right – Peter R Wood, Majid Mashayekh, Stewart Reuben, Julie Denning (Captain), Sheila Jackson

says she had a wonderful tactic on move 23 netting a couple of pawns. However, the team scored just 1/4. The England 50+ 1st team faced the very strong Croatian team of GMs. Only Jonathan Nelson succeeded in drawing. But the delight on his face during the middlegame said it all. England 65+ were beaten very convincingly by Finland, who had 2 GMs in their line-up, 0.5-3.5. Paul Hutchinson had a very good and interesting draw by repetition with the white pieces on board 2 against GM Heikki Westerinen. I was outplayed on board 4. Brian Hewson lost his way somewhat fairly early on but resisted until the end. John Quinn

made a rare tactical error on board 1 against GM Rantanen. Eventually the GM sacrificed the exchange to get a bevy of passed pawns.

Round 3

65+

England had a resounding victory against Austria. John Quinn won convincingly on board 1. Paul Hutchinson had an edge with the black pieces. He was uncertain whether he could make an effort to win, when his opponent simplified matters to resigning when he thought, incorrectly, that he was losing a rook. I had an interesting game where I stood slightly better and might have offered a draw, were it not that there is a no draws in less than 30 moves rule. But my opponent left a pawn en prise and it was then an easy win. Brian Ewart lost on time in the inferior position.

Thus 3-1 against Austria, a team ranked slightly below us. Russia leads with 6 points from 3 matches, with Finland and Sweden 5. We are in a whole group with 4.

50+

1st team

Sadly, both Andrews (Ledger and Lewis) lost against Austria. Dave Ledger and Jonathan Nelson drew. Thus this 1-3 result reversed the 65+ result. The second team lost 0.5-3.5 against Steiermark (another Austrian team). Peter R Wood was the lone scorer on board 3. Croatia and Russia drew. They jointly have 5/6. England 1, 2 and England 2, 1.

Round 4

50+

Germany Women 2 England 2nd Team 2

Peter Wood won with some difficulty on board 3. That compensated for Julie Denning's loss on board 4. Sheila Jackson and Majid Mashayekh both drew, although the latter was winning at one point. ENG 1 had the bye and that counts as 2-2 in the international team system.

Croatia 7 lead Russia narrowly on tiebreaks, Steiermark (Austria) are placed third with 6. England 1 9th with 3/8 and England 11th with 2. The two English teams are paired together in Round 5.

65+

We lost 1.5-2.5 against Germany. John Quinn, Paul Hutchinson and Brian Hewson all drew. I was comprehensively outplayed. Thus, we now have 4/8. Finland 1 lost narrowly to Russia 1.5-2.5. Thus they have 8/8 ahead of Sweden 1.

Round 5

50+

England 1 won 4-0. But sadly, this was against England 2. The match was closer fought than the scores suggest. The second team made the first work for their victory. In particular, Sheila Jackson had chances of drawing against Andrew Ledger until running into a nasty pin.

65+

I rested myself again against Rochade Bielefeld revival of Germany. That was in the hope of getting to visit Petra Nunn in hospital, but that was not to be. John Nunn says she is now walking – with difficulty and they hope to return to England on Friday, provided the doctors give their support to this. Both John Quinn and Paul Hutchinson drew on the top boards. Sadly, Brian Hewson and Brian Ewart both lost. The game needs careful analysis, but Paul may have been winning the rook and pawn endgame.

Losinj is a pleasant island, but rather difficult to get to. It required two flights, a taxi ride, followed by a ferry and finally another taxi. It is end of season. It is billed as a 'family hotel' and there are many very young children here. Perhaps a piquant contrast to us seniors.

Round 6

65+

We resoundingly beat 4-0 CM Murado Sredice, a Croatian team. Actually, they put up good resistance for such weak opposition. Brian Ewart was first to win when his opponent carefully put a rook where it could be taken with check and promptly resigned. It wasn't totally clear that he was losing prior to that. This clearly upset my opponent, who promptly sacrificed a piece unsoundly. Paul Hutchinson won a quite difficult game where he achieved something unusual. His opponent was in zugswang with about 7 pieces each on the board. Brian Hewson was last to finish but won convincingly. The best move that his opponent made in the last 20 was resigning.

50+

England 1 won convincingly 3-1 against Ireland. England 2 lost 3-1 against Agder, a Norwegian team. Sheila Jackson won relatively quickly on board 1. Julie Denning had excellent chances in her game. She may have been winning at one stage. Then she slipped up in a complex endgame and lost.

Round 7

65+

An excellent result today, but I saw little of the play as I was busy with my own problems. John Quinn had an excellent win with the black pieces against IM Jan Rooze of Belgium. Brian Hewson, I and Brian Ewart all drew. My opponent played 1 e4 c5 2 Ne2. I was advised about 60 years ago to ignore this aberration and treat it just like 2 Nf3. Of course, I didn't and was nearly lost by move 7. But a desperate rearguard action salvaged the draw and won us the match. Our reward? Russia tomorrow who have maximum match points of 14.

50+

GER Women 1 England 1 3. The English team put in a smooth performance. Their reward tomorrow? To play on board 1, also against Russia. Czech Republic 3.5 England 0.5. The Czechs had two GMs in their team. But Sheila Jackson had another excellent result, drawing on board 1 with black.

Petra Nunn has now been out of hospital for a couple of days and is returning home on Friday, accompanied by John Nunn. Mick Stokes had intended to play. But he was hospitalised as well, in England, before the event started. Nothing daunted, he arrives Wednesday afternoon for a holiday and in time to see us win two matches against Russia?

Round 8

65+

England 1 lost 3-1 to Russia, but John Quinn succeeded in winning against 70-year-old grandmaster Yuri Balashov. John had underestimated an exchange sacrifice by the Russian, but then the GM made a gross blunder. Sadly, Paul Hutchinson lost for the first time in this event. Brian Ewart also lost. I haven't had time to analyse my game but may have made a losing blunder on move 32. Of course, if I was already lost, that wouldn't have mattered.

This means that Russia have won the gold team medals.

50+

England 1 lost 0.5-3.5 against the all GM team of Croatia. Andrew Ledger had the only draw. This means that Croatia and Russia are still neck to neck. England 2 lost 0.5 to 3.5 against a strong Austrian team. But Julie Denning showed remarkable fortitude in her game. She had lost the

previous 7. This ended up as an endgame with the opponent having Q N and 2 pawn on the same side of the board as Julie's 3 pawns. She also had an extra passed pawn on the other side of the board. Eventually her opponent, rated 500 points higher, conceded the draw.

There was more good news. Today Mick Stokes arrived after his time in hospital in England. I was able to secure for him his team badge, produced by the organisers before he had to withdraw.

Round 9

65+

Northern Moves of Finland were supposed to be a pushover, but it didn't seem that way. John Quinn was rested in order to ensure his silver medal on board 1.

Brian Ewart was given an 80th birthday present a day early of a win by default – we don't know why. The other three games went well into the endgame. Paul Hutchinson and I eventually won, but Brian Hewson was last to finish in the whole section.

THUS – our second 4-0 victory!

1. Russia – 18 from 9 matches (16 teams in total); 2. Sweden 1 – 14; 3. Germany – 14 on tie break; 4. Finland 1 – 13; 5. Switzerland – 11; 6. England – 10 originally ranked 7th; 7. Rochade – 10

At the prizegiving, Brian Ewart got another unexpected birthday present – his score of 3.5/7 (including the win by default) won him the **Silver medal** for the reserve board. He would probably have won the game he received the point by default for.

50+

England 1 lost 1-3 against the Czech Republic. Andrew Ledger put in a stellar performance, beating GM Pavel Blatny. His game is well worth visiting. England 2 lost 1.5-2.5 against Croatia 2, who outrated our team on every board. Sheila drew on board 1 and Majid Mashayekh achieved his first win on board 2. Sheila found an excellent sacrifice to force a draw.

1. Russia – 17; 2. Croatia – 17 on tiebreak; 3. ECHM SLO – 13; 6. England 1 – 9 originally seeded 5th; 13.ENG 2 – 2

— *Stewart Reuben*

European Seniors / World Senior Teams 2019 in Rhodes

There are 50 players in the 50+ of whom 8 are English. There are 64 in the 65+ of whom 5 are English.

50+ Round 1

Of course, the seedings mean there are a large number of mismatches at first. Even so, we have got off to a very good start with no losses. Keith Arkell, Andrew Lewis, Terry Chapman and Peter Gayson all won. Roy Hughes probably pulled off the upset of the round, drawing with black against Nikolas Gertnyk 2334. Peter Cusick and Kevin Winter also drew against higher rated opponents. Peter Gemmell took a half point bye.

65+ Round 1

Tony Stebbings, Oliver Jackson and Julian Farrand all won. Julian had an exceptional result, winning with black against Gerhard Kiefer FM 2279. David Morris had a win bye. Only Brian Hewson lost, but that was against GM Jens Kristiansen 2376. Kevin Winter had an exciting flight. His comment, 'I

started out helping a young lady in distress with travel stress. Calmed her down ... glass of Guinness for me to chill. Phew!'

50+ Round 2

Keith Arkell had an interesting game against WGM Marina Makropoulou 2160. Could she really have worked out the complications following Nxc7? Surely Keith must have stood better before that. Both Andrew Lewis and Terry Chapman won to reach 2/2. Gayson lost to the well-known IM Gerard Welling. Roy Hughes and Peter Gemmel shared the point. Both Cusick and Winter lost.

65+ Round 2

Tony Stebbings moved to 2/2, Oliver Jackson, Farrand and Morris lost, but Hewson won. All 4 have 1/2.

50+ Round 3

Of course, the game of the day for the ECF was Terry Chapman against Andrew Lewis, both on 2/2. That there will be some such encounters is inevitable. We, together with Germany, have the greatest number of participants in the 50+ section – 8. Their game was strategically complex, but 31...f4 looks suspect. Terry won.

Keith Arkell played his second WGM in a row. Another complex game strategically. She blundered, again on move 31 in a way that I would probably have seen. Of those on 1 point, Peter Gayson 1 and Peter Gemmel and Roy Hughes drew. Of our two players on 0.5/2, Peter Cusick drew and Kevin Winter lost.

CHAPMAN 3/3; Arkell 2.5; Gayson, Lewis 2; Gemmel, Hughes 1.5; Cusick 1; Winters 0.5

65+ Round 3

Gruzman (2) 0.5 Anthony Stebbings (2) Something went wrong with the live board for this game and it became nonsense. Of our players on 1/2, David Morris won, Oliver Jackson drew, while Julian Farrand and Brian Hewson lost.

Stebbing 2.5/3; Morris 2; O Jackson 1.5; Farrand, Hewson 1

50+ Round 4

Terry Chapman with 3/3 won with Black against the second highest rated player in the tournament and has taken the sole lead. It took him 54 moves, but it can hardly be said to be a slow grind. In several cases, the moves were beyond my pay grade. Keith Arkell on 2.5/3 had a complex game with Fabio Brunetti. 16...dxc4 may look like it wins a pawn, but it is more likely it would be death in slow motion. Keith allowed his opponent's king and opposite coloured bishop to become too dominant. Together with an outside passed pawn it was all too much. Andrew Lewis stood a bit better, but it was drawn at the end.

Terry Chapman 4/4; Bruno, Pavlovic, Sturua 3.5; Arkell, Gayson, Hughes, Lewis 2.5; Cusick, Gemmel 2; Winter 1

65+ Round 4

Tony Stebbings 2281 had a fair draw with Kalagin 2424.

Balashov, Birnboim, Chevelevitch, Kristiansen 3.5/4; Stebbings 3; Morris 2.5; Farrand, Hewson, O Jackson 2

50+ Round 5

Terry Chapman drew with black against Zurab Sturua, a previous World 50+ Champion. The game ended quite early in a draw by repetition. That brought the Englishman to 4.5/5. On board 2 it was Bruno v Pavlovic, the only two who could catch Terry. Milos was a pawn up and perhaps could have

tried for more with 42 ... Rb1. But Bruno managed a draw, so Terry is still out in front, sole leader and having gained 43.2 rating points so far.

Scores: Terry Chapman 4.5/5; Bruno, Danielsen, Pavlovic, Sturua 4; Arkell 3.5 – having lost in Round 4, Keith Arkell made a fine recovery in Round 5 – Lewis 3; Cusick, Gayson, Gemmell, Hughes 2.5; Winter 1.5

65+ Round 5

Tony Stebbings had a rather dry draw with Kolbeck, so with 3.5/5, he's just a half point behind the leaders. The problem is that there are 6 of them! Oliver Jackson has 3, Farrand, Hewson and Morris all have 2.5 – so we have nobody less than 50%.

50+ Round 6

Not England's finest five hours. GM Milos Pavlovic beat Terry Chapman. Keith Arkell drew. Milos Pavlovic 5/6; Terry Chapman, Sturua, Bruno, Danielsen, Terentiev 4.5; Keith Arkell 4 – there are six on that score – Peter Gayson 3.5; Peter Gemmell, Andrew Lewis 3; Peter Cusick, Roy Hughes 2.5; Kevin Winter 2

65+ Round 6

Balashov, KALEGIN, Kristiansen 5/6; Oliver Jackson, Tony Stebbings 4/6; Brian Hewson 3.5; Julian Farrand 3; David Morris 2.5.

50+ Round 7

Bruno, Pavlovic, Sturua 5.5/7; Keith Arkell, Danielsen, van den Bersselaar 5 – so Keith is back in the hunt – Terry Chapman 4.5; Peter Gayson, Andrew Lewis 4; Peter Gemmell, Roy Hughes 3.5; Peter Cusick 3; Kevin Winter 2.5

Terry's game with Fabio Bruno was fascinating – but then he shed a whole stable of pawns. Sandor Biro against Keith Arkell – White could have got his pawns back on move 20, then Keith gave up his queen for rook, knight and pawn – it was all too much for me.

65+ Round 7

Balashov, Kristiansen 6/7; Tony Stebbings, Gruzman, KALEGIN, Vepkhvili 5; Oliver Jackson 4.5; Julian Farrand, Brian Hewson, David Morris 3.5 – I understood Philip Guilian against Tony Stebbings – the Scot seemed to have no sense of danger from the marauding black h pawn, so Tony is third equal currently.

50+ Round 8

Pavlovic, Sturua 6.5; Danielsen 6; Bruno, Tarontiov, Welling 5.5; Keith Arkell, Terry Chapman, Andrew Lewis 5; Peter Gayson, Peter Gemmell 4.5; Roy Hughes 4; Peter Cusick 3.5; Kevin Winter 2.5

I was travelling most of Saturday and thus did not get to see the games. When I asked Keith for a comment, he said approximately, 'Look and decide for yourself.'

65+ Round 8

Balashov, Kristensen 7, Gruzman 6; Oliver Jackson, Tony Stebbings 5; Julian Farrand, Brian Hewson, David Morison 3.5

When I sent in my original reports, I did not realise that **Keith Arkell** had won **5th prize in the 50+ Championship**, and **Tony Stebbings** had won **6th prize in the 65+ Championship**. This is because neither prize was announced at the prizegiving – they announced only the gold, silver and bronze medals. In addition, I decided to award a couple of prizes for the Best Improvement in Rating among our 13 players – both were in the 50+

Roy Hughes gained 39.80 points and selected an unusual chess handkerchief; Terry Chapman gained 37.00 points and received a copy of my book 'Poker 24/7; 35 years as a Poker Pro'

Overall rating results for our 13 players in the ESCC

50+

Keith Arkell 6 (-6.30 points); Andrew Lewis 5.5 (-23.80); Terry Chapman 5.5 (37.00); Roy Hughes 4.5 (39.80); Peter Gemmell 4.5 (-99.60); Peter Cusick 4 (5.00); Peter Gayson 4 (-9.60); Kevin Winter 3.5 (-2.00)

65+

Tony Stebbings 6 (17.60); Oliver Jackson 5 (19.60); Julian Farrand 4.5 (16.00); Brian Hewson 4.5 (12.20); David Morris 4.5

David did not have a FIDE rating at the time of this event, nor had he previously played with an increment. Apparently though he had beaten me a couple of times in the past. Since he received a win bye in Round 1, this means his actual score was 3.5/8, a highly acceptable result with no previous international experience.

The first-named won the tiebreak where scores are equal for the gold, silver, bronze medals. The English players on the same score are listed in alphabetical order ...

50+ Round 9

Zurab Sturua GEO, Milos Pavlovic SRB 7.5; Sergei Terenkiev LAT 6.5; Henrik Danielsen ISR, Keith Arkell 4th equal with 6; Terry Chapman, Andrew Lewis 5.5; Roy Hughes, Peter Gemmell 4.5; Peter Cusick, Peter Gayson 4; Kevin Winter 3.5

65+ Round 9

Jans Kristensen DEN 8; Yuri Balashov RUS 7; Nathan Birnboim ISR (Bronze), Dr Evgeni Cherdevitch (GER) 6.5; Tony Stebbings 6; Oliver Jackson 5; Julian Farrand, Brian Hewson, David Morris 4.5



England 65+ have secured the **Silver medal** in the **World 65+ Team Chess Championship!**



Pictured with chief arbiter, Vadim Tsypin (left), four of the five members of the successful England Over-65 side (left to right): Robert Bellin, Nigel Povah, Ian Snape and Tony Stebbings.

This is an echo of the silver England secured in the World Team Chess Championship quite recently. After 9 rounds, Russia 65+ won with 14/18. England 1, France and Israel all scored 13/18. We got Silver on tiebreak and France bronze.

Team captain and board 2 Nigel Povah showed us his game afterwards. I thought he stood much worse, but apparently he had it more under control than

I had realised. Robert Bellin unsurprisingly had an early draw. We started the last round at 9.30am and this did not suit him at all, as with a number of our players.

England 1 vs Saint Petersburg

- 4.1 IM Bellin, Robert 2315 – IM Faibisovich, Vadim Z 2302 ½ – ½
- 4.2 IM Povah, Nigel E 2319 – IM Karasev, Vladimir I 2281 1 – 0
- 4.3 FM Stebbings, Anthony J 2281 – IM Shushpanov, Vladimir 2180 1 – 0
- 4.4 Snape, Ian L 2154 – IM Blechzin, Igor 2210 ½ – ½

St Petersburg have often played in this event. It is true we outrated them on every board, but the differences were small. We started out ranked 6 in the competition.

The other team medal we achieved was of my own invention last year – the British Isles Team with the Best Improvement in Ranking. England 65+ won this, being 8 places higher after their last round win against Wales. Runners-up were Scotland and Wales 50+ teams with 4 places improvement in ranking.

English Board Prizes at the WSTCC

- 50+ ENG 1 Board 2 Keith Arkell 6/8 Silver
- 50+ ENG 1 Board 3 John Emms 6/8 Gold
- 65+ ENG 1 Board 3 Tony Stebbings 5/7 Gold
- 65+ ENG 1 Board 4 Ian Snape 6/8 Bronze
- 65+ ENG 2 Board 5 Brian Hewson 4/6 Bronze

That is quite a haul from our 6 teams! Here are the rounds in reverse order, leading up to this pleasing result ---

50+ Round 8

England 1 vs Athens Veterans

- Jon Speelman 1 – 0 Mitradzas 2055
- Keith Arkell 1 – 0 Ilandzis 2021
- Plaskett 0.5 – 0.5 Hrisanthoploulos 1995
- Chris Ward 0.5 – 0.5 Popadimitrios 1943

It is totally inexplicable that such low rated players can have done so well in this event. In board order their 4 players have gained 21.2, 54.6, 28.2 and 59.2 rating points. That is all within the bounds of probabilities, but most unusual for an entire team. Jon Speelman won quite rapidly, BUT James Plaskett had an even quicker draw. Chris Ward could not make much impression, but Keith Arkell eventually ground out a win.

Ireland vs England 2

- Delaney 0.5 – 0.5 Andrew Lewis
- Wallace 1 – 0 Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell
- McElligott 0.5 – 0.5 Sheila Jackson
- Lyons 0 – 1 Stephen Homer

England 3 vs Finland Sisu

- Tim Thurstan 0 – 1 Pietinen
- Nigel White 1-0 Tocklin

Kevin Winter 0.5 Waita

65+ Round 8

Iceland vs England 1

Gudmundsson 0-1 Robert Bellin

Viglundsson 0.5 – 0.5 Nigel Povah

Halidorsson 0-1 Anthony Stebbings

Kristinsson 0-1 Ian Snape

Belgium vs England 2

Rooze 1 – 0 Geoff James

van der Wynkele 0 – 1 David Bray

van Herck 0.5 – 0.5 Michael Stokes

Schrickx 0 – 1 Brian Hewson

Of course, their IM on board 1 is much their best player. David Bray and Brian Hewson played very well.

England 3 vs Norresyndby Skakkclub (Denmark)

Andrew Baruch 0.5 – 0.5 Pedersen

Stewart Reuben 0.5 – 0.5 Holst

Brian Valentine 0.5 – 0.5 Hvenekilde

Trefor Thynne 0.5 – 0.5 Graylund

Brian had a perfectly reasonable very early draw. The other three games followed in fairly short order. Well, we have played 8 games without a break and they outrated us on every board. Some thought we stood a bit better on boards 1 and 2, but I was not convinced in my case.

Best Improvement by a British Isles Team seems to have concentrated in the 65+. Scotland in the 50+ are just +2 - England 1 +3; England 2 +3; England 3 +5; Wales + 3

So - my team retains the lead in this local derby, but we are playing Wales in the last round, so there is no certainty. Play starts at 9.30am local time – 2 hours earlier in Britain, and I still have to prepare for my game tomorrow against John Thornton. I have white and it is nearly midnight.

50+ Round 7

Italy 2.5 – 1.5 England 1

England 2 1.5 – 2.5 Austria – apparently Austria quizzed Andrew Lewis about Brexit before the others arrived. Is that what is called cheating?

Estonian Women 3-1 England 3

65+ Round 7

England 1 3 – 1 England 3 – this was a somewhat surreal match, as one doesn't expect a third and a first team to be paired together in Round 7. Robert Bellin won against Andrew Baruch very convincingly. Our boards 3 and 4 drew without too much of a problem. I had white against Tony Stebbings, He foxed me in the opening and, although white, I never fully equalised. I am a bit despondent, although still gaining 31.0 Rating points with 4/7.

50+ Round 6

England 1 (8) 2 – 2 Armenia (8)

England 1 vs Armenia

Jon Speelman 0.5 – 0.5 Vaganian

Keith Arkell 0.5 – 0.5 Minasian

John Emms 1 – 0 Movszisian

James Plaskett 0 – 1 Petrosian, Arshak

I was very disappointed with the English crunch match, which may decide the silver medals. I felt surely Jon Speelman stood a lot better in a complex late middlegames. Keith also seemed to have the edge.

Oslo Scachselskop vs England 2

Kristiansen 1 -0 Andrew Lewis

Berg 0 – 1 Clive Frostick

Johnson 0 – 1 Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell – I was impressed by Jeremy's technique here

Horstead 0 – 1 Sheila Jackson

England 3 vs Uruguay – this is the first time they have played in the WSTCC. It is a very long trip.

Tim Thurstan 0.5 – 0.5 Gentz

Nigel White 0.5 – 0.5 Escafet

Helen Frostick 0.5 – 0.5 Durrante

Ian Cross 0 – 1Barbaroza

65+ Round 6

Vienna vs England 1

Opi 1 – 0 Robert Bellin – thus England 1 got revenge for the win Vienna had over England 3 in the previous round

Woebe 0 – 1 Nigel Povah

Strobel 0 – 1 Ian Snape

Danner 0 – 1 John Quinn

England 2 vs Norrasundby Skakklub

Geoff James 0.5 – 0.5 Peduson

David Bray 0 – 1 Holst

Michael Stokers 0.5 – 0.5 Hvenekilde

Brian Hewson 0.5 – 0.5 Grevlund

England 3 vs Turku – a Finnish team

Andrew Baruch 1 – 0 Rantanen

Stewart Reuben 0.5 – 0.5 Ranki

Brian Valentine 1 – 0 Alkkionski

Trefor Thynne 0 – 1 Kauke

The third team match was full of incidents. First of all I sat in my room to have a short read about an hour before the start of play at 3.00pm. I fell asleep and was awakened by the telephone, warning me it was only 10 minutes before default time. Fortunately, my opponent, who had white,

seemed to have no ambitions, so we drew in about 20 moves. Trefor was the next to finish. He got a lost position early on and never looked like recovering. Both Andrew and Brian had highly accomplished technical wins.

Prize for the Best Improvement in Rank for a British Isles Team

I devised this special prize last year and Ireland won. This year England 3 is leading. We were originally ranked 22nd and are currently at 13th, an improvement of 9 places. No other team in the four federations in two sections is greater than +3 currently, but this is very volatile. There is a trophy and medals for all the members of the winning team.

50+ Round 5

England 1 vs Canada

Jon Speelman 1 – 0 David Ross

John Emms 0 – 1 Paul Ross

James Plaskett 0.5 – 0.5 Michael Barren

Chris Ward 1-0 Dmitry Chernik

England 2 vs Sweden 1

Clive Frostick 0.5 – 0.5 Lagerberg

Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell 0 – 1 Gambeck

Sheila Jackson 0.5 – 0.5 Fransen

Stephen Homer 1 – 0 Bjorn Johansson

England 3 vs Wales

Tim Thurstan 0 – 1 John Fletcher

Helen Frostick 0.5 – 0.5 Mark Adans

Kevin Winter 0.5 – 0.5 Anthony Hughes

Ian Cross 1 – 0 Lynda Smith

65+ Round 5

England 1 vs Austria (England 3 also lost to an Austrian team, they were our nemesis in Round 5)

Nigel Povah 0.5 – 0.5 Herzog

Tony Stebbings 0 – 1 Petscher

Ian Snape 0.5 – 0.5 Singer

John Quinn 0 – 1 Ager

Germany vs England 2

Knaak 0.5 – 0.5 Mark Page

Vogt 0.5 – 0.5 Geoff James

Kiefer 1 – 0 David Bray

Buchal 0.5 – 0.5 Brian Hewson

England 3 vs Vienna

Andrew Baruch 0.5 – 0.5 Opl

Stewart Reuben 0 – 1 Woeber

Brian Valentine 1 – 0 Titz

Trefor Thynne 0 – 1 Danner

50+ Round 4

Iceland 1 – 3 – ENG 1 recovering from their disappointment the previous day

Germany 3 – 1 ENG 2

Sweden 2 1.5 – 2.5 ENG 3

65+ Round 4

Sweden 1 2.5 – 1.5 ENG 1 – his was very disappointing for ENG 1 and probably puts them out of contention for a medal

Sweden 2 2 – 2 ENG 2

Norway 1 1 – 3 ENG3 – this was an excellent result for our third team, especially as this time, I only drew. I got nothing from the Nimzo-Indian, despite having white for the third time in four games. Andy Baruch and Trefor Thynne both had good wins and, at last, Brian Valentine got off the mark with a draw.

50+ Round 3

ENG 1 1.5 – 2.5 USA

Speelman 0-1 Shabalov

Arkell 0.5 – 0.5 Novikov

Emms 1 – 0 Ehlvest

Plaskett 0 – 1 Yermolinsky

This was very much a crunch match against the highest rated opponents. Both teams are all GMs. The first named person on board q1 has white.

65+ Round 3

ENG 1 2 – 2 Russia

Bellin 0.5 – 0.5 Sveshnikov

Povah 0.5 – 0.5 Balashov

Stebbins 0.5 – 0.5 Rashkovky

Snape 0.5 – 0.5 Zhelnin

Another crunch match – the Russians fielded 3 GMs and an IM, where we just had 2 IMs. The Russians adopted a familiar ploy, drawing rapidplay with black. But Ian Snape stood somewhat better in a game that was very late to finish. The third team, of which I am a member, met the Mongolian Women. I won my third game in succession; Trefor Thynne drew his first two games and won today. Andy Baruch had a reasonable draw with black, but sadly Brian Valentine has yet to score.

50+ Round 2

Iceland 1, England 1, Israel, Armenia, USA, Italy have all won their first two matches and thus have 4/4.

England 2 2 – 0 England 3

Finland 1 0.5 – 3.5 ENG 1

Israel 3.5 – 0.5 ENG 2

Oslo Schakselskap 2.5 – 1.5 ENG 3

65+ Round 2

Russia 65+, England 1, Germany 1, St Petersburg, Finland 3 all have 4/4

England 2 2 – 0 England 3

Stiftung BSW 1.5 – 2.5 ENG 1

Sweden 1 2.5 – 1.5 ENG 2

ENG 3 1.5 – 2.5 BEL

Sadly, both Andy Baruch and Brian Valentine again lost in round 2. Brian had a most unusual position in the opening with Black having no Bf8, instead there was a knight there, and one on g8. I won a ludicrous game e.g. my king reached c5 with the black pieces on move 21 with a large number of pieces on the board. I made heavy weather of the endgame, but managed to win. At least my king was well-placed for that part of the game! Trefor Thynne had a relatively placid draw with the black pieces. As there are 27 teams in this section, it means there is a bye each round. This is unnecessary, but many organisers don't care that people have come from all over the world and want to play.

50+ Round 1

As with any seeded Swiss, the results went with the seeding in round 1 –

ENG 1 4 – 0 Oslo Scakseiskay

ENG 3 0.5 – 3.5 Finland 1

ENG 2 3.5 – 0.5 Finland ISU

65+ Round 1

Only two of the Belgium team members out of four managed to arrive in time to play round 1. The rules state that a team must have at least 3 players present. So the Belgium team was awarded a 0-4 loss in round 1. The other 26 teams were paired off as usual. This demonstrates why it is desirable to arrive at least a day in advance.

ENG 1 4 – 0 Sweden 3

FIN 3 2.5 – 1.5 ENG 3

ENG 2 3.5 – 0.5 SWE 4

Finland 3 is named this way because they have two teams in the 50+. Thus they could have fielded two GMs against us, but Heikki Westerinen took round 1 off, as usual. I succeeded in winning against an FM higher rated than me. Andrew Baruch tells me he was winning easily against the Finnish GM on board 1. What a pity, that would have been a notable result against a strong team, who outrated us on every board. I was sitting next to Andrew, but still saw little of the game.

- Stewart Reuben

A Second Set of Silver!

Courtesy of CHESS Magazine published by Chess & Bridge - www.chess.co.uk

Hot on the heels of England winning the silver medals at the World Team Championship in Astana, the Over-65s followed suit in Rhodes ... Nigel Povah reports ...

England was well represented at the 7th World Seniors Team Championships held in Rhodes, Greece in April, with three teams in the Over-50s section and three in the Over-65s. The England I Over-50s team, comprising Jon Speelman, Keith Arkell, John Emms, Jim Plaskett and Chris Ward, who were seeded fourth, had a slightly disappointing tournament, finishing in sixth place on tiebreak. However, they did have two notable successes, with Keith Arkell winning the individual silver medal on board 2 with 6/8 and John Emms winning the individual gold on board 3, also with 6/8.

In the Over-65s England I started out as sixth seeds from the 27 teams, in what proved to be a very tight competition. Russia, the defending champions, were of course the clear favourites, as their team average (2467) was 120 Elo points higher than anyone else's. However, England I managed to cast doubt over the Russians' supremacy by achieving a creditable 2-2 draw in round 3.

Robert Bellin (2315)	½-½	Evgeny Sveshnikov (2481)
Nigel Povah (2319)	½-½	Yuri Balashov (2470)
Tony Stebbings (2281)	½-½	Nukhim Rashkovsky (2488)
Ian Snape (2154)	½-½	Vladimir Zhelnin (2429)

Robert managed to effectively neutralise the danger from Sveshnikov with some shrewd opening preparation.

R. Bellin - E. Sveshnikov, England vs Russia - Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 e5 5 Nf5!?

Robert has prepared an unusual sideline against the leading exponent of the Kalashnikov (5 Nb5 d6).

5...Nf6

5...d5 6 Qxd5 Qxd5 7 exd5 Bxf5 8 dxc6 bxc6 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 cxd3 0-0-0 11 Ke2 gives White a slight edge due to Black having two pawn weaknesses compared to White's one.

6 Nc3 d5 7 exd5 Bxf5 8 dxc6 bxc6

8...Qxd1+ 9 Nxd1 bxc6 10 Ne3 Be6 11 Nc4 favours White who has the better pawn structure.

9 Qf3 Qd7 10 Bc4



10...Be7

10...Bxc2 11 0-0 Be7 12 Qe2 Bg6 13 Qxe5 0-0 looks like an improvement.

11 0-0 0-0 12 Rd1 Qc8 13 Re1 Bxc2

Sveshnikov clearly wasn't too keen on his position, so offered a draw, which Robert accepted (½-½).

This draw was followed soon after by others on board 2 and 3, and we were left with Ian Snape's game.

V. Zhelnin - I. Snape, Russia vs England



We join the play after Zhelnin has played 45 Rd1-d2. In what had been a very complex game, both players were under some time pressure. Ian now attempted to secure an advantage with some enterprising pawn moves:

45...g5!? 46 f5?!

The ugly 46 fxg5 was a better way of maintaining equality.

46...a3!

A clever pawn sacrifice to deflect White's knight, since if 47 bxa3?? Bx3 with threats like ...Bd4+ and ...Rb1 in the air.

47 Nxa3 Be5 48 Qe3 Qh2+49 Kf1 Qh3+ 50 Ke2 f6 51 Qxc5?

This pawn grab is highly risky. 51 Kd3 and running to c2 was the safest and simplest way for White to play.

51...Bxg3?!

51...Qg4+! was the best continuation, but the difficulty for Black in this position is that he has so many attractive options that the best path is far from clear: 52 Kd3 (or 52 Kf1 Bxg3 53 Nc4 Kf8! 54 Qe3 Ra8! 55 Na3 Kf7 when ...Rh8 will be devastating) 52...Rd8+ 53 Kc2 Qxe4+ 54 Kd1 Qf3+ 55 Kc2 (55 Kc1 Qf1+ 56 Kc2 Qxf5+ comes to the same) 55...Qxf5+ 56 Kc1 Rxd2 57 Qc4+ Kg7 58 Kxd2 Bxg3 with a clear advantage.

52 Qd5+?

52 Qxe7 was best, as the white king will escape via d3 and c2. With both kings relatively open, a draw by perpetual check is most likely.

52...Kf8 53 Nc4 Bf4 54 Rd4



Ian, who had 12 minutes plus the 30-second increment compared to his opponent's three minutes, spent five minutes trying to find something but couldn't, so took the draw:

54...Qg4+

Instead, 54...Qg2+ makes it easier for White to go wrong. After 55 Ke1 (not 55 Kd1?? Qf1+ 56 Kc2 Qc1+ 57 Kd3 Qd1+ 58 Nd2 Qxd2+ 59 Kc4 Qxb2 when mate will soon follow and 55 Kd3?? loses in the same manner: 55...Qf1+ 56 Kc2 Qc1+ 57 Kd3 Qd1+, etc) the engines give over '+4' for Black, but seem unable to find anything more than a

repetition, as with 55...Qg1+ 56 Ke2 Qg2+ 57 Ke1, since

any attempt to advance the g-pawn will be met by White playing e4-e5 to open up Black's king.

55 Ke1 Qg1+ 56 Ke2 Qg4+ 57 Ke1 Qg1+½-½

After this impressive result we disappointingly lost our next two matches to Sweden 1, 1½-2½, and Austria, 1-3, and by this stage assumed we had blown any chances we might have had of achieving a top placing, as we were down in twelfth position with only five points from a possible 10. Meanwhile Russia weren't having everything their own way and conceded another draw to Germany, so by the end of round 5 they were joined in the lead by Israel, Iceland and Finland on 8 points.

We decided that we had nothing to lose and that we should try to do as well as possible in our remaining fixtures. Fortunately, that is exactly what happened, as we reeled off four straight

victories, enabling us to sneak through into the medal positions, as surprisingly Russia dropped further draws to France in round 8 and Sweden I in round 9. Indeed, had they lost this final match, which could have happened, we would have won the gold medals on tie-break!

Leading scores --- 1st Russia 14/18 (23.5 game points); **2nd England I 13 (23.5)**; 3rd France 13 (22.5), 4th Israel 13 (21), 5th Germany 12 (22)

Our success was down to having a great team spirit with good contributions from all five squad members - Robert Bellin 4½/8 (56%); Nigel Povah 4½/7 (64%); Tony Stebbings 5/7 (71%); Ian Snape 6/8 (75%); and John Quinn 3½/6 (58%). However, special mentions must go to Tony Stebbings for his impressive performance which secured him the individual gold medal on board 3 and to Ian Snape who was the only undefeated member of our squad with four wins and four draws, which gave him the bronze medal on board 4. An honourable mention should also go to Brian Hewson who won the board 5 bronze medal, whilst playing for England II in the Over-65s. Here is a nice win by Tony from the match against Sweden.

B. Hammar - A. Stebbings, Sweden vs England - Bogo-Indian Defence

Notes by Tony Stebbings

1 d4

Nowadays even senior players mostly have laptop computers and prepare seriously before a game. My opponent is usually an e4 player, but surprised me with d4, so I guessed he had something ready for me.

1...Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4+

At this point I decided to play the Bogo because I'd not played it for a while, so it might be unexpected.

4 Bd2 a5 5 Nc3 b6 6 g3 Bb7

6...Ba6 is the other popular choice in this position, which scores very well for Black: 7 b3 d5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Bg2 0-0 10 0-0 Re8 11 Re1 Nbd7 with a very comfortable position.

7 Bg2 0-0 8 0-0 d6 9 Qc2 Nbd7 10 Rad1 h6 11 Rfe1 Bxc3 12 Bxc3 Be4

12...Ne4 13 Nd2 looks a bit better for White.

13 Qc1 c6



Fortunately, I'd had a similar position to this before and knew what to do: try to keep his bishop on c3 out of the game and push forward on the queenside.

14 Bh3

White's plan is to expel the black bishop from e4 and try to expand in the centre with e2-e4.

14...d5 15 b3 b5 16 Nd2 Bg6 17 Bb2 Qb8

17...a4 immediately allows 18 Ba3 and 19 Bd6, improving the bishop's prospects.

18 Bg2 a4 19 h3

I assume he was worried about 19 e4 Bh5. If 19 Ba3 then either 19...b4 or 19...Rc8 is good for Black, but he really needed to play 19 c5 to close up the queenside when the position is still roughly level.

19...axb3 20 axb3 bxc4 21 bxc4 Ra2



22 Bc3?

The only move was 22 Ba3 Rc8 with a significant advantage for Black: for example, 23 e4 when 23...Qa7 either wins the pawn or sees White becoming tied up, as after 24 Bb2 Rb8 25 Ba1 Bh5 26 g4 Bg6 when it is difficult to find a decent move for White, who is under significant pressure.

22...Bc2!

He had only considered 22...Rc2.

23 e4 Bxd1 24 Rxd1 dxe4 25 Nxe4 Qb3 26 d5? Rc2 27 Qe3 Nxe4 28 Qxe4 cxd5 29 cxd5 Rxc3 30 Rb1 Qxd5 0-1

England II (Mark Page, Geoff James, David Bray, Michael Stokes and Brian Hewson) finished a creditable 10th with 10 points and England III (Andrew Baruch, Stewart Reuben, Brian Valentine and Trefor Thynne) finished 14th on 9 points. Stewart Reuben deserves a special mention, not only for his help in organising the English teams for this event, but also his splendid performance, scoring 5/9 and gaining 38 rating points, despite having just turned 80.

England I now face the challenge of following up on this result. However, with John Nunn becoming eligible for the Over- 65s next year, we hope we might be strengthened in such a way that the gold medals become a genuine possibility!



Results

London Chess League 2018-2019 League Tables

Division 1	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Wood Green 1	11	11	0	0	0	0	95	11
Battersea 1	11	9	1	1	-2	0	72.5	9.5
Richmond & Twickenham 1	11	8	1	2	0	0	71.5	8.5
Streatham & Brixton 1	11	5	2	4	0	0	61.5	6
Hackney 1	11	6	0	5	-2	0	57.5	6
Wimbledon 1	11	5	2	4	-2	0	54.5	6
Athenaeum 1	11	5	1	5	0	0	59.5	5.5
Cavendish 1	11	2	4	5	0	0	52	4
Mushrooms 1	11	2	2	7	-2	0	45	3
Kings Head 1	11	2	1	8	-2	0	45	2.5
Drunken Knights 1	11	3	0	8	-10	-0.5	19.5	2.5
Drunken Knights 2	11	1	0	10	-4	0	23.5	1

Division 2	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Imperial College 1	12	10	1	1	-2	0	81.5	10.5
Hammersmith 1	12	9	2	1	0	0	79.5	10
Metropolitan 1	12	9	2	1	0	0	79	10
Cavendish 2	12	8	1	3	0	0	73	8.5
Wanstead & Woodford 1	12	6	2	4	0	0	65	7
Lewisham 1	12	5	2	5	0	0	64	6
Hackney 2	12	5	2	5	0	0	61.5	6
Dulwich 1	12	4	2	6	-2	0	64	5
Streatham & Brixton 2	12	4	1	7	0	0	56	4.5
East Ham 1	12	4	0	8	-2	0	52.5	4
Kings Head 2	12	3	0	9	-2	0	51	3
Ilford 1	12	3	0	9	0	0	48	3
Drunken Knights 3	12	0	1	11	0	0	5	0.5

Division 3	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Beckenham & Charlton 1	12	9	3	0	0	0	79	10.5
Battersea 2	12	9	1	2	-4	0	69.5	9.5
British Bangla Chess Association 1	12	7	1	4	-2	0	72.5	7.5
Greater London 1	12	7	1	4	-2	0	71	7.5
Albany 1	12	5	3	4	-2	0	63	6.5
Athenaeum 2	12	6	1	5	0	0	60.5	6.5
Wimbledon 2	12	5	1	6	0	0	58.5	5.5
Hackney 3	12	5	1	6	0	0	55	5.5
Newham 1	12	5	0	7	-8	-0.5	54.5	4.5
Mushrooms 2	12	3	2	7	-1	0	54	4
Wanstead & Woodford 2	12	3	1	8	0	0	46.5	3.5

Metropolitan 2	12	3	1	8	-2	0	45.5	3.5
Cavendish 3	12	1	4	7	0	0	49.5	3

Division 4	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Lewisham 2	13	11	1	1	0	0	73	11.5
University College London 1	13	10	2	1	-2	0	72.5	11
DHSS 1	13	10	1	2	-2	0	67	10.5
Athenaeum 3	13	10	0	3	-3	0	59.5	10
Battersea 3	13	9	0	4	0	0	67	9
Metropolitan 3	13	8	1	4	0	0	58.5	8.5
Streatham & Brixton 3	13	7	0	6	0	0	57	7
Hammersmith 2	13	5	2	6	-2	0	59.5	6
Wanstead & Woodford 3	13	5	1	7	-7	-0.5	47.5	5
Greater London 2	13	4	0	9	-2	-0.5	42.5	3.5
Hammersmith 3	13	3	1	9	-4	0	41	3.5
Kings Head 3	13	2	0	11	-4	0	34	2
Metropolitan 4	13	1	1	11	-6	-0.5	27	1
Morley College 1	13	1	0	12	-4	0	22	1

Major	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Greater London MA	10	6	2	2	0	0	23.5	7
Hackney MA	10	4	5	1	0	0	25	6.5
East Ham MA	10	5	3	2	0	0	22	6.5
Cavendish MA	10	5	2	3	0	0	20.5	6
Hammersmith MA	10	4	3	3	-2	0	18.5	5.5
Kings Head MA	10	4	1	5	-1	0	20.5	4.5
Battersea MA	10	4	1	5	0	0	19.5	4.5
Smartacus MA	10	4	1	5	0	0	19	4.5
Football Radar MA	10	1	6	3	0	0	18	4
Lewisham MA	10	2	3	5	-2	0	17	3.5
Pimlico MA	10	2	1	7	0	0	15.5	2.5

Minor	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Pen	Pen MP	Games	Points
Battersea MI	10	8	2	0	0	0	28.5	9
British Bangla Chess Association MI	10	6	4	0	-4	0	25.5	8
Metropolitan GNOMES	10	6	2	2	-6	-0.5	23.5	6.5
Hackney MI	10	4	3	3	0	0	23.5	5.5
Hackney GORKI	10	4	1	5	0	0	19.5	4.5
Hammersmith HEDGER	10	4	1	5	-2	0	18.5	4.5
DHSS MI	10	3	3	4	-2	0	17.5	4.5
Morley College MI	10	2	3	5	-2	0	16.5	3.5
Wanstead & Woodford MI	10	3	0	7	-1	0	18	3
Athenaeum MI	10	1	4	5	-4	0	13.5	3
Greater London MI	10	1	3	6	0	0	15.5	2.5

EACU 2018-2019 County Match Results

OPEN (16 boards)						
	Suffolk	Norfolk	Cambs	Beds	Match Pts.	Game Pts.
Suffolk		8 + 7.5	9 + 8.5	10.5 + 8.5	9	52
Norfolk	8 + 8.5		7.5 + 6.5	10 + 10	7	50.5
Cambridgeshire	7 + 7.5	8.5 + 9.5		9.5 + 7	6	49
Bedfordshire	5.5 + 7.5	6 + 6	6.5 + 9		2	40.5
UNDER 160 (16 boards)						
	Suffolk	Herts	Norfolk	Cambs	Match Pts.	Game Pts.
Suffolk		12 + 7	8.5 + 10.5	9 + 9.5	10	56.5
Hertfordshire	4 + 9		8.5 + 9	9.5 + 9	10	49
Norfolk	7.5 + 5.5	7.5 + 7		9 + 7	2	43.5
Cambridgeshire	7 + 6.5	6.5 + 7	7 + 9		2	43

EACU Champions 2018-19

Open Champion - Graham Moore

Open Junior Champion - Ieysaa Bin-Suhayl

U170 Champion - David Hall

U170 Junior Champion - Polina Shchepinova

U130 Champion - Gerd de Block

U130 Champion - Yoav Pilowsky Bankirer

EACU Team Tournament Winners 2019

Open Section - Broadland

600 Section - Linton & Bury St Edmunds (jointly)

500 Section - Aylsham

400 Section – Wymondham

EACU Grand Prix 2018/19 - Top ten players

Name	Grand Prix Points
David McLean	18
James Pack	17
Rob Sanders	16.5
Steve Moore	16.25
Gerald Moore	16.25
David Hall	13.75
John Anderson	13.5
David Payne	13
Phil Bonafont	13
David May	12.75

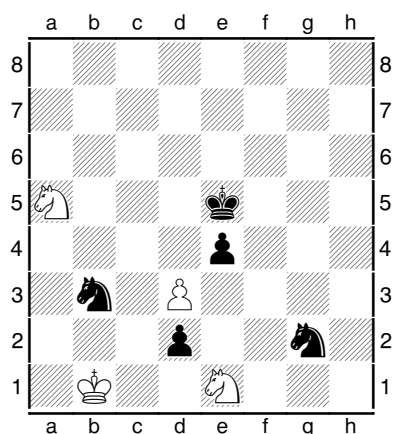
Endgame Studies in 2019 by Ian Watson

Solving endgame studies improves your over-the-board game, and it's fun! Most top players do it, and a few also compose studies. The UK has a long tradition of study composition, although composing studies is slow and hard unless you have the speed of calculation of, say, John Nunn, one of whose recent works I'll show you.

First, however, I want to celebrate the studies of Timothy Whitworth, who died in 2019. He wrote, together with John Beasley, one of the best books about studies, *Endgame Magic*; its second edition was published in 2017. He taught history and used those skills to research earlier study composers' work, producing standard editions of the studies of famous composers including Grin, Kubbel, Mattison and the Platov brothers.

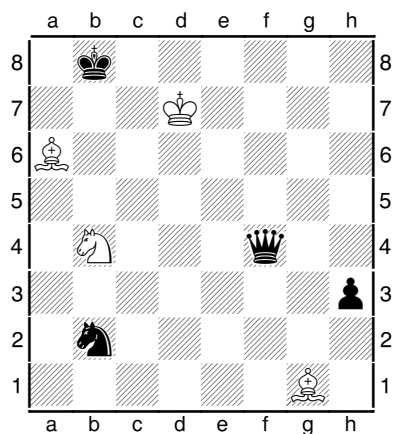
This first study of Timothy's is straightforward solving, the second is considerably more difficult, with a 12-move-long solution, but is truly satisfying to solve – I hesitate to ever use the word 'masterpiece', but maybe this deserves it. It was composed jointly by Timothy and one of his students.

T Whitworth BCM 1989



Draw

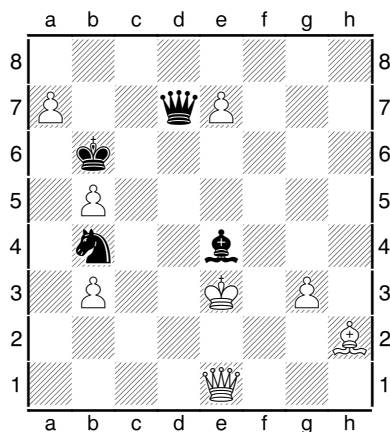
T Whitworth & W Lemmey BCM 1979



Win

Our next study, by John Nunn, was composed for a 'theme' tournament - the competition had as its theme 'Black captures a piece or pawn with check. Instead of recapturing, White interposes another piece or pawn.' This study could be tough to solve, but knowing the theme should help you.

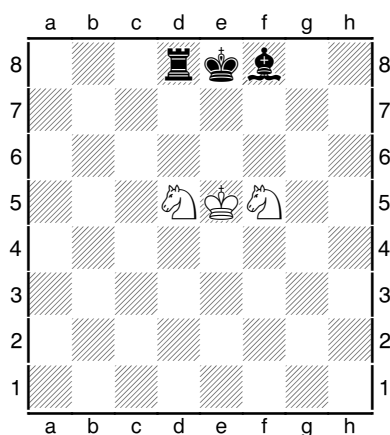
J Nunn *ARVES Jenever Ty 2019*



Win

Composers like geometrically elegant positions, as in this next study by Paul Byway. After you have solved it you have another task – set up the position again, but this time replace Black's bishop on f8 with a Black rook on f8; this is now a study by Rinck published in 1947 – the draw is achieved by a different method from how it's done in Paul's study but perhaps the two studies can be regarded as twins.

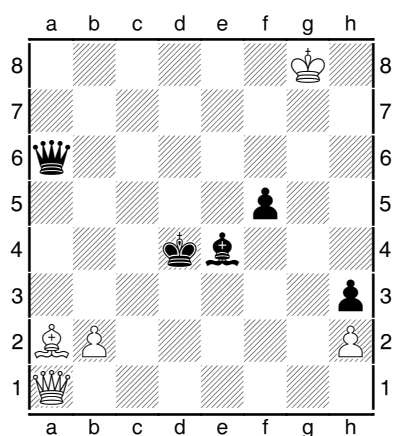
P Byway *Correspondence Chess 2019*



Draw

Now a study by another of Britain's leading study composers, Paul Michelet. This features a theme better known in the chess problem world – 'rundlauf'.

P Michelet (after V Holst) *BCM* 2019

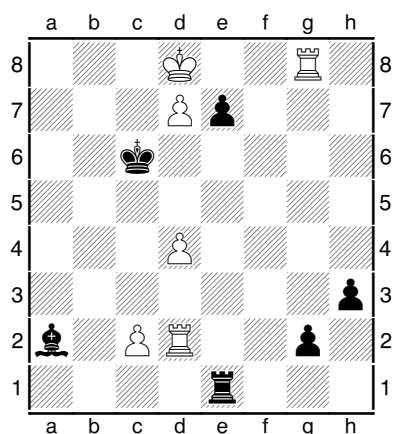


Win

Finally, to show you how complex and sophisticated studies have become in recent years, here's the study which scored the most points in the study section of the 2019 World Championship in Composing for Individuals. It helped its composer, Oleg Pervakov from Russia, to retain his World Champion title. Studies published in the years 2016 to 2018 were eligible to compete in this championship.

I hope that one day the UK will produce a World Champion in study composing – have a go, it could be you! I also encourage you to have a go at solving this study, but it's challenging, so a couple of hints: there's a four-move introductory phase, and then the main idea starts, a repeating manoeuvre; the very first move of the study is an unexpected sacrifice, and the reason for it only becomes clear near the end of the study's solution. Good luck!

O Pervakov *Uralski Problemist AT* 2018



Win

To see more endgame studies, visit the British Chess Problem Society website at www.theproblemist.org or the ARVES site at www.arves.org. There are also studies in many chess magazines; for example, I write a monthly studies column in British Chess Magazine.

Solutions

(Whitworth) 1.Nc4+ Kd4 2.Nxd2 Nxd2+ 3.Kc1 Nb3+ 4.Kd1 Ne3+ 5.Ke2 Nc1+ 6.Kd2 Nxd3 7.Nf3+ exf3 stalemate.

(Whitworth & Lemmey) 1.Bh2 Qxh2 2.Nc6+ Ka8 3.Kc8 Qb8+ 4.Nxb8 Ka7 5.Kc7 h2 6.Bb7 h1Q 7.Bxh1 Nd3 8.Nc6+ Ka6 9.Bg2 Kb5 10.Bf1 Kc4 11.Ne5+ Kd4 12.Nxd3. Splendid!

A couple of sidelines: 7...Nc4 8.Bb7 Na5 9.Bd5 Nb7 10.Nc6+ Ka8 11.Nd8, or 8...Ne5 9.Bc8 Ka8 10.Ba6 Ka7 11.Bb7. In the main line, not 8.Bb7? Nb4 9.Nd7 Na6+.

(Nunn) 1.Bg1 Kb7 2.a8Q+ Kxa8 3.e8Q+ Qxe8 4.Qxb4 Bd3+ 5.Kxd3 Qxb5+ 6.Qc4 Qxb3+ 7.Qc3 and play could continue 7...Qb1+ 8.Ke3 Qxg1+ 9.Kf4 wins (tablebase). There are several sidelines early on, which I haven't space to give here, but in the solution line Black plays for stalemate. The thematic moves are White's 6th and 7th.

(Byway) 1.Ke6 Ba3 2.Nf6+ Kf8 3.Nd7+ Kg8 4.Nf6+ Kh8 5.Nd5 Bb2 6.Nde7 Rd1 7.Kf7 and this is a fortress draw – White walks round the Ne7 on the white squares. There is a 'dual' – an alternative move for White – on move three, as 3 Nh7+ also works. Other Black first moves fail to checks and a fork. 5...Kh7 6 Nde7 draws.

The Rinck study (which has the same starting position as Paul's except the bishop is replaced with a rook) has the solution **1.Ke6 Rh8 2.Nf6+ Kf8 3.Nd7+ Kg8 4.Nf6+ and 1...Rb8 2.Nd6+ Kd8 3.Nf7+ Kc8 4.Nd6+**. Not one of Rinck's best studies – Paul has converted it into a much more interesting work.

(Michelet – after Holst) 1.Qg1+ Ke5 2.Qg7+ Qf6 3.Qc7+ Qd6 4.Qc3+ Qd4 5.Qg3+ mates or wins the Black queen. 2...Kd6 3.Qf6+. 3...Kd4 4.Qc3. Not 1.b4+? Ke3. Holst composed a study in 1903, in which the White queen moves consecutively to h8/b8/b2/h2/h8. That is called a 'rundlauf', meaning that the piece completes a tour ending up where it started. In Paul's study, the White queen makes a spiral movement a1/g1/g7/c7/c3/g3. If we continued the solution a move longer, the queen would move (after 5...Kf6 or 5...f4) to g7, and that would complete a rundlauf by the queen on the squares g7/c7/c3/g3/g7.

(Pervakov) 1.c4 Bxc4 2.d5+ Bxd5 3.Rxd5 h2 4.Kc8 Ra1 5.Rg6+ e6 6.Rd6+ Kc5 7.Rg5+ e5 8.Rd5+ Kc4 9.Rg4+ e4 10.Rd4+ Kc3 11.Rg3+ e3 12.Rd3+ Kc4 13.Rg4+ Kxd3 14.d8Q+ Ke2 15.Rxg2+ Kf1 16.Qd5 h1Q 17.Qf3+. The play is complex, as you would expect in a World Championship, but the core part of the study is easy to understand; it begins on move 5, and is an astonishing repeated manoeuvre of four pieces, in which White is trying to promote his d-pawn with check.

Judges in 21st century study tourneys have a predilection for thematic tries, so Pervakov's study has foreplay in which there is such a try: if, instead of the move 1.c4, White begins with 1.d5+ immediately, we get the same eventual position, but with the sole difference that there is a White pawn on c2. When the Black king later descends the board, that pawn's presence would allow him to hide on b2, so White has to ditch it at move one.

--- Ian Watson | ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk

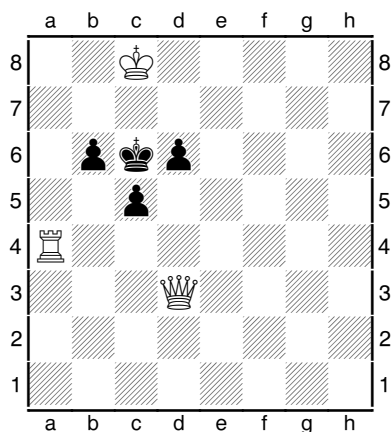
Chess Problem News *by Ian Watson*

British chess problem composers are very active, and I'm going to show you some of the compositions they published in 2019.

The problem world, however, also involves solving problems, so why not try solving all the ones here, rather than just looking at their solutions (which are at the end of this article)? The UK is active in solving competitions, too, and in 2019 our national team got the bronze medal in both the European Championship, in Athens, and in the World Championship, in Vilnius. John Nunn also got the silver medal in the individual World Championship. We in the UK are better at chess problems than we are at over-the-board play!

John Rice, a Grandmaster of Chess Composition, has composed many more complex problems than this one, but it has a lot of play for only seven men, and the merit (at least from the point of view of an over-the-board player) that it's a natural-looking position.

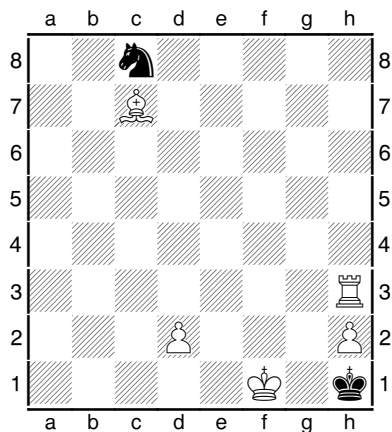
J Rice *BCM* 2019



Mate in 2

Now here's a three-mover by another stalwart of British chess problem composing.

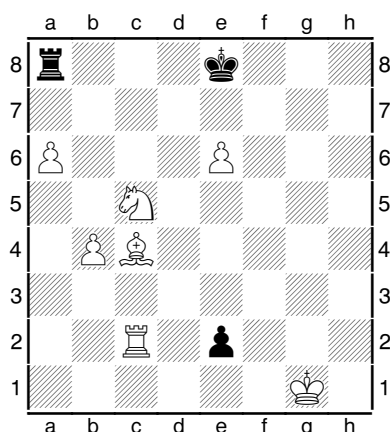
M Lipton *BCM* 2019



Mate in 3

Michael McDowell is both a strong solver and a strong composer; he probably doesn't consider this next problem one of his best, but it does show a good sense of humour! It's a helpmate, which means White and Black are co-operating together to give checkmate to the Black king. In helpmates, the move sequence is unusual in that Black plays first; in this two-move helpmate the move sequence is BWBW, with the second White move giving checkmate. This particular problem has two solutions. Remember that, in chess problems of all types, castling is assumed to be possible unless it can be proven to be illegal.

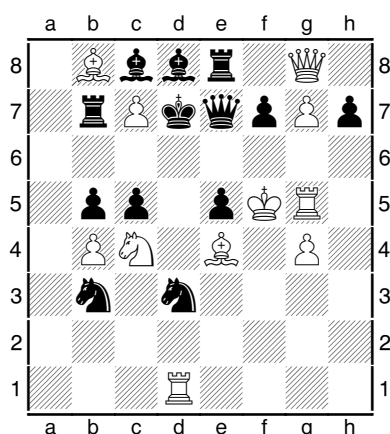
M McDowell *Quick Ty Vilnius* 2019



Helpmate in 2
2 solutions

Another unconventional type of problem is the selfmate. In this, White is trying to get himself checkmated and Black is trying to avoid giving mate. The move sequence goes, WBWB, with Black's second move giving mate.

B Chamberlain *The Problemist* 2019

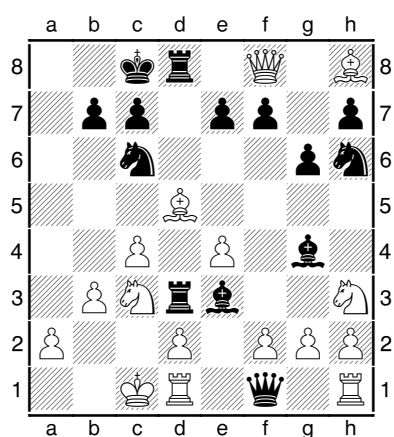


Selfmate in 2

To finish, here are two serious challenges to your skills. The first is what is called a 'proof game' – you are given a position and have to find a legal game that would lead to that position; the moves may be ones that would never occur in an over-the-board game, but they must all be legal moves. In Stephen Taylor's composition, you are told that the position arose after Black's sixteenth move. In proof games, there is only one sequence of moves that is possible, which is very useful

information to help you solve it. Of course, it's very likely that the composer has built in some surprises, so, for example, there might be promoted pieces on the board, although in this position White still has all his pawns, so if there are any promoted pieces they must be Black ones. Also, in this position, although it looks as if both players have castled queenside, that might be a deliberate deception. In proof games, you need to count how many moves it takes a piece to get to its diagram position from the initial array, and also see what limitations its getting there puts on the other pieces – so, for example, if the Rd3 was originally the a8 rook, then it could have got there via a3, but if so the White b-pawn hadn't yet moved, and so also the White c1 bishop had not yet emerged.

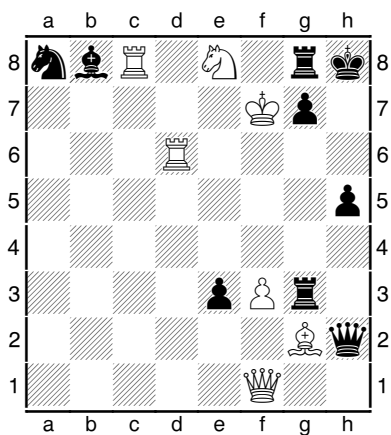
S Taylor *The Problemist* 2019



Position after Black's 16th move:
what were the moves of the game?

The final problem is White to play and force mate in forty-one moves! Don't worry, it's not nearly as impossible to solve as that suggests. The White queen will make 'staircase' walks up the long diagonal and using it as a jumping-off point to grab material with check, but you need to find a two move introductory sequence that will set that up; then, after the queen has done her work, there's an aesthetically pleasing finale that starts from move 34. Good luck!

P Michelet *BCM* 2019



Mate in 41

To see more chess problems, visit the British Chess Problem Society website at www.theproblemist.org

Solutions

(Rice) 1.Qf5. For such a simple position, there are many tempting White moves. Not, say, 1.Ra3 because of 1...d5, nor, say, 1.Rh4 because of 1...b5. There are also 1.Rb4? b5! and 1.Qh7? c4! The key makes no threat and gives the Black king a flight square on b5.

(Lipton) 1.Rd3 (threat 2.h4). 1...Nd6 2.Rxd6. Not 1.Rh4? Nd6!, nor 1.Rh6? Ne7!, nor 1.Rg3? Kxh2!

(McDowell) 1.e1R+ Bf1 2.0-0-0 Nd7 and 1.0-0-0 Nd7 2.e1R+ Bf1. This was composed for a theme tourney, and the theme required that the entries had two solutions and those solutions showed reciprocal interchange of moves one and two.

(Chamberlain) 1.bxc5 (threat 2.Nxe5+ Qxe5). 1...Qxc5/Qd6 2.Qxe8+ Kxe8; 1...Nxc5/Nd2 2.Bc6+ Kxc6; 1...bxc4/Rxb8/Bxc7/Rxg8(Rf8)/Qf8 2.c6+ Kd6/Kxc7/Kd8/Ke8/Ke7; 1...f6 2.Qe6+ Qxe6. This has what is called a 'royal battery', in which the Black king is blocking a check and White forces the king to move and so deliver mate by discovered check. In this example, the Black king is forced to move to six different squares.

(Taylor) 1.e4 g6 2.Bb5 Bh6 3.c4 Be3 4.Qa4 Nh6 5.b3 0-0 6.Bxd7 Nc6 7.Be6 Qd3 8.Bb2 Re8 9.Bh8 Kf8 10.Nc3 Ke8 11.0-0-0 Qf1 12.Qxa7 Rd3 13.Bd5 Bg4 14.Qb8+ Kd7 15.Qf8 Rd8 16.Nh3 Kc8. So, Black did castle, but on his kingside! The rook on d3 came from h8 and the one on d8 came from a8. White did castle queenside, though – which you could tell by counting how moves White must have made.

(Michelet) 1.Nc7 Rxc8 2.Rh6+ gxh6 3.Qa1+ Kh7 4.Qb1+ Kh8 5.Qb2+ ...12.Qf5+ Kh8 13.Qxc8+ Kh7 14.Qf5+ Kh8 15.Qe5+ ...21.Qb2+ Kh7 22.Qb1+ Kh8 23.Qxb8+ Kh7 24.Qb1+ ...30.Qe4+ Kh8 31.Qxa8+ Kh7 32.Qe4+ Kh8 33.Qe5+ Kh7 34.Ne6 Rxf3+ 35.Bxf3 Qxe5 36.Nf8+ Kh8 37.Ng6+ Kh7 38.Nxe5 e2 39.Be4+ Kh8 40.Kf8 e1Q 41.Nf7. Phew!

--- Ian Watson / ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk

Endgame

The winner of the Alexander Best Game Prize at the 2019 British Chess Championships

GM David Howell vs **IM Lorin D'Costa** at the Riviera International Centre, Torquay, in Round Three
[pictures – John Upham (DH) and Chris Stratford (LDC)]



1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 b6 3. Nc3 e6 4. e4 Bb7 5. Qe2 c5 6. e5 Ng8 7. d4 cd4 8. Nd4 Nc6 9. Nc6 Bc6
10. h4 Ne7 11. h5 Nf5 12. Bf4 Be7 13. Rh3 Bg5 14. Bh2 O-O 15. h6 Nh6 16. f4 Bh4 17. g3 Be7
18. O-O-O f5 19. ef6 Rf6 20. g4 Rf7 21. Qc2 Qf8 22. Bd3 Rf4 23. Bf4 Qf4 24. Kb1 Qg4
25. Re3 Kh8 26. Be4 Rf8 27. Bc6 dc6 28. Re4 Qg6 29. Rde1 Rf6 30. Qa4 Nf5 31. Qa7 h5
32. a3 Bc5 33. Ka2 Bf2 34. Rd1 Kh7 35. Qa8 c5 36. Rd8 Qf7 37. Re2 Ng3 38. Ne4 Ne4 39. Rh8 Kg6
40. Qe4 Kg5 41. Qg2 1-0

CHESS & BRIDGE

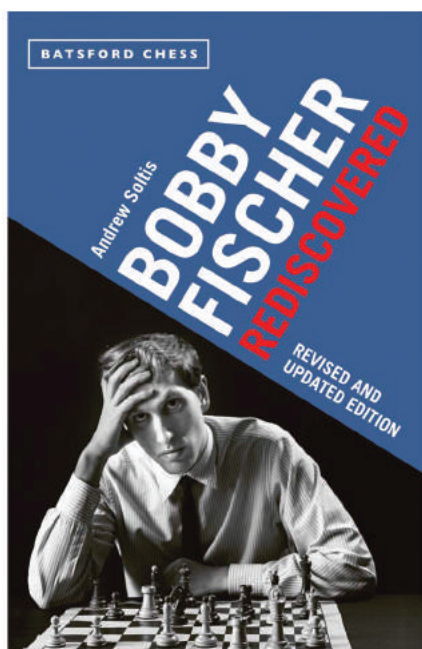
The London Chess Centre



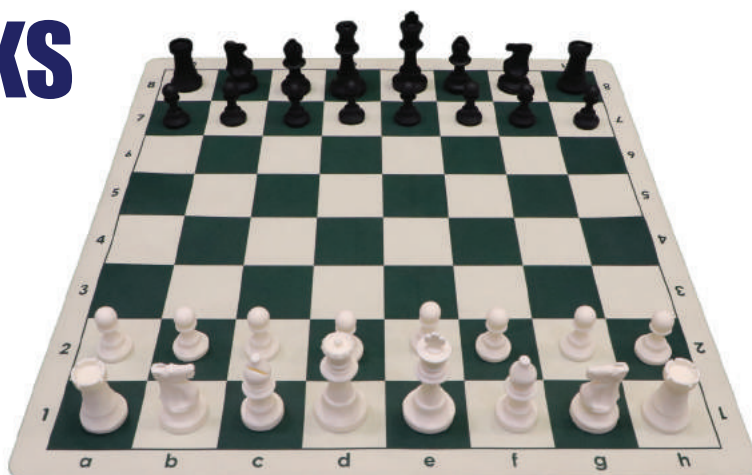
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