



September 2021



Stormin' norms!

Well done to Ravi, Marcus, Callum and Conor

Elstree and Stafford results happiness - Malcolm Pein

Play Chess Festival in Hull – Stephen Greep

Game analysis – Marcus Harvey

ECF Creative Writing Initiative

Arkell's Endings

Michael Adams' Game of the Month

Peter Wells, Paul Littlewood, Ian Watson ... and more!



Welcome to the September edition of Chess Moves. In this edition we celebrate the very best of chess in England, with August providing a raft of congresses, norms and titles for our players. The excellent Northumbria Masters GM tournament was won jointly by Ravi Haria of Wood Green and Conor Murphy of Charlton, each with 6.5 points out of 9. Both scored a Grandmaster norm, and for Ravi it was his third, and he now needs to reach a 2500 rating to become England's next Grandmaster. Conor's GM norm was his first, and comes just three weeks after he qualified as Ireland's next IM.

We have another bumper edition with a raft of analysis, studies and commentary from England's best players. This month's Creative Writing Initiative comes from Paul Conway, and we are aiming to publish the submissions as a book. If you would like to submit a piece on any chess-related topic, please send it to manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk. We are also pleased to publish an op-ed from the previous Newsletter editor, Mark Jordan, who is back to full health.

The 2021 British will take place between the 2nd and 17th October in Hull (for the Open and Women's Championships) and Milton Keynes (for the Junior and Senior Events). You can find full details on the British Web Site at <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>, including the playing schedule and entries to date. We look forward to a return to the longest-running British chess event, following last year's break, and to some exciting over-the-board chess from our top players.

It's that time of the year again. As we slowly get back to over-the-board chess, please either join the ECF or renew your ECF subscription. Details can be found here on all the membership options - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-membership-rates-and-joining-details/>

--- Mark Rivlin [cover pictures of Ravi, Marcus and Conor courtesy of John Upham]



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HOME NEWS

Home Chess

Director of Home Chess **Nigel Towers** writes ...

ECF Online and the ongoing chess resurgence

The surge in online chess continues. I have set out below some of the headline figures for online activity over the last 18 months, which are worth reflecting on as we move into a mix of online play and increasing levels of over-the-board chess.

As we went into the lockdown starting in spring 2020, Chess.com were adding 1m members per month globally at peak, and the number of games played in live chess was up around 160% from the previous year. There was a second and bigger wave after *The Queen's Gambit* was released on Netflix in October 2020. Online play took off again, with Chess.com membership increasing by 2m per month for a while and games played continuing to increase. There was a similar picture with internet chess providers including Lichess, Chess24, iCC playChess and others, who all have seen a spike in activity following lockdown, and then a second wave starting in October 2020 and continuing into this year. Lichess's database of all games played on their platform shows 44m games per month in February 2020 and over 100m per month for March 2021. There has also been a major demographic shift with higher numbers of females and younger players playing online.

The other big increase in engagement is with viewers of chess streams, videos and content on Twitch, YouTube, Twitter and other social platforms. GM Hikaru Nakamura reached 1m followers on Twitch in February 2021 followed closely by IM Levy Rosman with 1m followers on his YouTube channel in June. The amount of readily available good quality chess content is quite something, and is changing how people engage with top players and learn about the game. We also now have an ECF Twitch Channel with an increasing number of followers in which WIM Natasha Regan and GM Matthew Sadler broadcast commentary and interviews on a regular basis.

Although the online boom is continuing, players are of course starting to go back to over-the-board chess with clubs opening up and congresses and events starting again in some numbers. As we start the return to over the board play it is looking like we will see online and over the board continuing alongside each other as part of the ongoing resurgence in chess playing which shows no signs of slowing down.

Clubs and weekly events

ECF online club memberships continue to increase with over 4,500 in the Chess.com ECF Open Club, 1,500 in the ECF Members Club and 1,200 in the Lichess English Chess Players Club. We are continuing with 8 ECF online rated club tournaments per week on Chess.com and Lichess.

ECF Online Grand Prix

The ECF Online Blitz and Rapid Grand Prix Series continues to be very popular with the sixth Blitz and Rapid events on the first and third Sundays in August. GM Keith Arkell is holding on to first place in both events based on the rounds to date, followed closely by Peter Finn in the Blitz and David Walker in the Rapid -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2021-online-grand-prix-series-blitz-leaderboards/>

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2021-online-grand-prix-series-rapid-leaderboards/>

ECF Online Counties Championship

The 2021 Online Counties have continued with the final qualifier during August. The Open Section attracted just two teams (Northumberland and Devon), who will play each other in the main Counties final. The Minor Open competition included 8 teams, who took part in a 5-round Swiss with the top

two (Essex and Northumberland) qualifying for the finals. There were 3 teams in the U1800 section which was run as an all-play-all, with Leicestershire and Northumberland qualifying. You can find the fixtures and a full set of results on the LMS page here -

<https://ecfms.org.uk/lms/node/60070/ofixtures>

All finals will take place on **Saturday 18th September** with matchups as follows ---

Open: Devon v Northumberland; **Minor Open:** Northumberland v Essex; **U1800:** Northumberland v Leicestershire

You will be able to watch the games via the Interactive Match Cards in the LMS, and we will be looking to feature some of the top games in next month's newsletter -

<https://ecfms.org.uk/lms/node/67699/efixtures>

Online Internationals

August was a big month for online internationals ---

Chess.com

We ran a couple of Nations League friendlies from the ECF Members Club. The first was a team battle using the new Chess.com Team Arena functionality with five teams competing from the League. This was followed by a 3-leg match against the very strong Romanian Federation Team where we lost all legs with some close fought games ---

<https://www.chess.com/club/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members/871968>

<https://www.chess.com/club/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members/871967>

<https://www.chess.com/club/matches/live/english-chess-federation-members/871966>

Team England continued to compete in daily chess events and Team England Live in the World and European leagues which are the two long-running live chess leagues on Chess.com, with a series of matches this month. You can read more about both teams elsewhere in the newsletter.

Lichess

The English Chess players team play in a number of leagues and series, including the regular Mega Team Battles on Friday afternoon, the Bundesliga / Quarantine League on Sunday and Thursday evenings, the midweek Champions League on Tuesday evenings and the World Nations Events on Wednesdays. We finally made it to Division 2 of the main Bundesliga and then Division 1 after a breakthrough series of wins, where we are facing some of the strongest international and national teams playing on lichess.

2021 British Online Championships II, 24 July-8 August 2021

The British Online Championships completed on 9th August. You can find all of the results on the chess results British Online page here -

<http://chess-results.com/tnr569793.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>

There was some excellent chess played and you can find a report on GM Keith Arkell's final round game against Mohammed Ismail in the second section of this newsletter. Winners of the events are shown below, with the full list of prizewinners available here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/bocc-prizewinners-list-2021/>

Congratulations go to our new British Online Champions at the various time controls as shown in the table below ...

Event	Standard	Rapidplay	Blitz	Bullet
Championship	GM Keith Arkell	IM Brandon Clarke	IM Richard Pert	Rishi Thariani
Women's	Akshaya Kalaiyalahan	Katarzyna Toma	Liza Kisteneva	
Seniors 65+	Terry Chapman	Terry Chapman	Terry Chapman	

Seniors 50+	Bogdan Lalic	Keith Arkell	Keith Arkell	
Under 18	Yichen Han	Jonathan McKay	Joshua Altman	
Under 16	Mohammed Aayan Ismail	Mohammed Aayan Ismail	Frankie Badacsonyi	
Under 14	Arjun Kolani	Arjun Kolani	James Merriman	
Under 12	Denis Dupuis	Frederick Gordon	Elis Dicen	
Under 10	Alfred Soulier	Kai Hanache	Pengxiao Zhu	
Under 8	George Zhao	Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham	Ambattu Rithvik Deepak	
Junior Bullet				Stanley Badacsonyi

Return to over-the-board

Congresses and norm events

The return to over the board play continues, with the very successful Golders Green, Muswell Hill, Wood Green Stafford Invitational, and Northumbria Masters Congress all taking place during August.

The Wood Green Invitational ran between 19th and 23rd August in Stafford. This was a ten player round robin eligible for title norms including GM, IM, WGM, WIM. Congratulations go to IM Ravi Haria who gained a GM norm (finishing first) and FM Marcus Harvey (finishing joint third) who gained an IM norm. You can see the full scores and results at <https://chess-results.com/tnr574412.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>.

The Northumbria Masters took place between 26th and 30th August and included invitational GM and IM norm events together with the main Northumbria Masters Congress. The events were all very successful, and congratulations go to GM tournament winners Ravi Hari and Ireland's Conor Murphy, who both earned GM norms. Congratulations also to Callum Kilpatrick, who managed an IM norm and Marcus Harvey, of Witney, who scored his fourth IM norm.

We feature games from the Wood Green Invitational and Northumbria Masters events elsewhere in the newsletter.

English Counties 2021/ 2022

The first two rounds of the pre-season over-the-board event have taken place. The friendlies are being played between teams in the South East with Essex playing Kent in the Major section over 2 rounds, and Essex, Kent and Hampshire taking part in the Minor which is running as an all-play-all. The final weekend will be on 25th Sept with four teams meeting up in Dartford, Kent.

The 2021/2022 OTB Counties Season will be starting soon with regional stages organised by the Unions from October onwards, with finals from May of next year.

British Championships 2021, 2nd-10th October

The British OTB Championships is scheduled for October, with separate venues in Hull and Milton Keynes. The draft schedule is as follows for the various championships ---

Hull (Canham Turner Conference Centre, University of Hull)

Open Championship Final – Saturday 2nd October to Sunday 10th October

Women's Championship Final – Thursday 14th October to Sunday 17th October

Milton Keynes (Kents Hill Park, Milton Keynes)

Senior Championships Finals (50+ and 65+) – Monday 4th October to Sunday 10th October

Junior Finals – Saturday 2nd October to Sunday 3rd October

You can find full details on the website, including entrants to date for the various sections ---
<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

Entries are still open for qualifiers from the online British in August and exempted players, including eligible GMs and IMs. For details of eligibility and qualifying go to
<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/eligibility-qualifying/>

English Clubs support

Clubs are starting to open up across England, with planning in progress for Leagues to start again in the Autumn. The Clubs Survey is still open here - <https://forms.gle/vbwmJpMLQFW27Ab47>. You can find a summary of the initial feedback received here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Clubs-Survey-Summary-Findings-August.pdf>

Please do take a look at our Clubs community page and feel free to access the survey if you would like to provide input on behalf of your club - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>

Chess for All - New to Chess, Festival/Coaching, Marathon, and ECF broadcasts

Commentary and Broadcast

WIM Natasha Regan continues to develop the ECF Twitch stream and broadcast channel which can be found at https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_commentary, with some excellent commentary on recent online events from Natasha, GM Matthew Sadler and numerous other commentators. You can find a full set of recent broadcasts on the ECF's YouTube channel here -
<https://www.youtube.com/c/EnglishChessFederation/videos>



England Online

Good luck to the England team in the FIDE Online Olympiad. More here -
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/england-at-the-fide-online-olympiad-2021/>. England are playing in Division 1 Pool D and you can follow the games here - <https://chess.com/events/2021-fide-online-chess-olympiad-division-1-pool-d>. Commentary for the events should be available on <https://chess.com/TV>



Elstree and Stafford - results happiness

Director of International Chess Malcolm Pein reports on two small towns providing big rewards ...

In my capacity as Director of International Chess of the English Chess Federation, I've been very keen to ensure that our leading young players had the chance to play as soon as the lifting of restrictions allowed.

As such, I organised a Hybrid chess qualifier for the FIDE World Cup at the Hilton Hotel in Elstree in late May. This multi-country and multi-venue event was staged by the European Chess Union and qualified 36 players for the first stage of the world chess championship cycle, which began just inland from Sochi last month. Hybrid events require each player to have access to a computer screen and an actual chess set and board. These were supplied by Chess & Bridge and I was especially grateful to arbiters Shohreh Bayat and Alex MacFarlane for ensuring everything ran smoothly.

GM Simon Williams, IM Andrew Horton, IM Ameet Ghasi, IM Ravi Haria and FM Marcus Harvey were all outrated by their GM opponents in the first round of the Elstree Qualifier. Harvey scored a fine win over Croatian chess legend Zdenko Kozul, but was outplayed in the tie-break. Only Haria, who

defeated German GM Falko Bindrich 2-0, made it to the second round, before losing to the Russian GM Ernesto Inarkiev. Haria won the first game with this spectacular rook sacrifice.

F. Bindrich - R. Haria

European Hybrid Qualifier 2021



18...Nxe5!! 19 fxe5 Rxe5

Just look at Black's bishops and attacking power! He clearly has far too much for the piece.

20 Ne4 Nxe4 21 Bxe4

21 dxe4 Rde8 22 Bc1 Rxe4! 23 Bxe4 Rxe4 24 Qh5 g6 25 Qh3 h5! (Haria) simply leaves White completely undone on the light squares.

21...Qe7?

Natural, but 21...Rde8 was the way to go, and if 22 Nf3 Rxe4! 23 dxe4 Rxe4 24 Qg2 Qd7! when the attack is just too strong.

22 Nf3 f5 23 Nxe5 fxe4 24 Rf7?

Far too optimistic, especially when White had available 24 Nf7 e3 25 Qg4 e2 26 Nh6+ Kh8 27 Nf7+ Kg8=.

24...Qg5+ 25 Qg2 Qxg2+ 26 Kxg2 Ba8



White's pieces are loose and Black's bishops and e-pawn absolute monsters.

27 Rf5

27 Rd7 Rxd7 28 Nxd7 e3+ 29 Kg1 Bf3! 30 Rc1 Bg4 (Haria) picks up the knight and the game.

27...g6 28 Rg5

28 Nf7 e3+ is very dangerous for White, but probably had to be tried. Black should be winning after 29 Kh3 gxf5 30 Nxd8 f4 or 29 Kg1 gxf5 30 Nxd8 f4 31 Ne6 f3.

28...e3+ 29 Kg1 Re8! 30 Ng4?

30 Nxg6 hxg6 31 Rxg6+ was the last try.

30...Bf4 31 Nf6+ Kf7 32 Nxe8 e2!



Fittingly the pawn has the last laugh. White might have two extra rooks, but there's just no defence.

33 Rf1 exf1Q+ 34 Kxf1 Bxg5 35 Nc7 Bc6 36 Nb5 a6 0-1

Ravi then agreed to travel to Russia for the FIDE World Cup, the only English player to do so. He memorably outplayed the experienced Russian GM Vadim Zvjaginsev to deservedly make it through to the second round of the World Cup. He then faced a formidable obstacle in the shape of Etienne Bacrot, the famous French former prodigy and still a very strong grandmaster, rated 2673. Bacrot took the first game, but Haria won the return on demand and as Black, despite his opponent plumping for the Exchange variation of the French and outplaying his opponent even in a highly simplified position. Shades of Gurevich – Short, Manila 1990. Unfortunately, Bacrot made no mistake come the tie-break, preferring 3 Nc3 en route to winning that 1.5-0.5.

Back to the Board

It's been great this month to see not just the return of Adam Raoof's famous Golders Green Rapidplay, but also his staging an IM norm all-play-all in Muswell Hill, North London, which was supported by Ben Software Ltd and the Friends of Chess Charity. Two IM norms were made, but not by English players.

Stafford Success

Like many, Wood Green captain Lawrence Cooper was frustrated by the curtailing of the 2019/20 4NCL season when several of his players were on for norms after six rounds. Rather than sulk and think what might have been, Lawrence channelled his energies into a positive direction, staging a GM and IM norm tournament in Stafford. I was pleased to be able to invest some ECF funds into such a venture, I wish we could have done more, with support also coming from the Friends of Chess, the John Robinson Trust and Lawrence himself, while arbiters Matt Carr and Aga Milewska looked after everything very well from what I could see when I dropped by one day. Aga also secured her final norm for the FIDE Arbiter title.

The playing conditions were excellent, and the tournament was held in the historic Oddfellows Hall, right in the heart of Stafford. If chess is to keep catching the public's imagination, holding tournaments

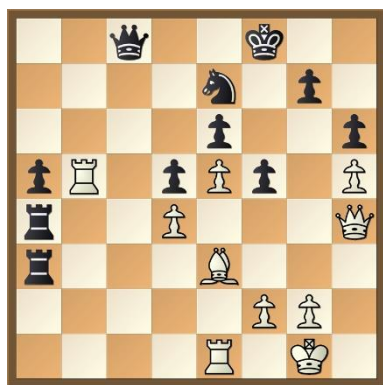
on main shopping streets can do no harm. While I was delighted to see 63-year-old GM Mark Hebden in fine form, I was naturally rooting for our young stars and, boy, did they deliver.

Ravi Haria continued his 2600-level form from the World Cup as he raced away to 5/5, defeating Jonathan Blackburn, Jonah Willow, David Fitzsimons, Tamas Fodor and Borna Derakhshani. He also overcame IM Andrew Greet, while quick draws with Hebden and Matthew Turner took him to the key score of 7 points – and with a round to spare!

Haria now has two GM norms and finished on 7.5/9, a point ahead of Hungarian GM Tamas Fodor, with Hebden and Marcus Harvey sharing third, both undefeated on 6/9. For Harvey this was an especially good result, not least when you consider he needed only 5.5 points for an IM norm. Having been an FM for what feels like absolutely ages, Marcus will now finally become an IM.

R. Haria - A. Greet

Wood Green Invitational, Stafford 2021



37 Bxh6!! gxh6

There is nothing better, if 37...Ng8 38 Bd2 followed by h5-h6.

38 Qf6+ Ke8 39 Rb8 Qxb8 40 Qh8+ Kf7 41 Qxb8 Ra1 42 Rxa1 Rxa1+ 43 Kh2 a4 44 Qh8 Rd1

Or 44...a3 45 Qh8+ Ke8 46 Qxe6 a2 47 Qa6, intending Qb5+ and Qb2.

45 Qf6+ Ke8 46 Qxe6 Rxd4 47 Qxh6 Rh4+ 48 Kg1 a3 49 e6 Rg4 50 Qf6 Rg8 51 h6 1-0



Northumbria Masters

Read Tim Wall's report here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/five-title-norms-at-the-northumbria-masters/>



Book of the Year Shortlist 2021

Ray Edwards, Jovanka Houska, Sean Marsh announce the finalists ...

The judges this year received a large number of high quality books to choose from. The shortlist was further complicated as many overlapped on subject matter which made selection more difficult and some good books did not make the cut. Unusually all four books are hardback and without exception beautifully produced, with many excellent photographs.

Masterpieces and Dramas

Sergey Voronkov

Elk and Ruby pp 534 £35.95

The full title, '... of the Soviet Championship Volume 1 (1920-1937)'. Foreword by Gary Kasparov. The book fully lives up to its title: the daunting problems of organising anything in the chaotic times of the post Russian revolution. The tournaments were of high quality (Alekhine, Bogoljubov and Botvinnik were amongst the winners) and there are many historical, dramatic, and competitive games to enjoy. A book of considerable importance, but also an absorbing read.

Smyslov, Bronstein, Geller, Taimanov and Averbakh

Andrew Soltis

McFarland pp 379 £59.95

Subtitled 'A Chess Multibiography with 220 games', Soltis says he wanted to explore the lives of five exceptionally talented chess players but different men, who survived the horrors of the second world war and brutal Soviet regime and why only one of them, Smyslov, became world champion. The way their lives entwined in the competitive, political, Russian chess world after the Second World War is fascinating. Soltis writes extremely well and the whole book is very readable.

The Chess Saga of Fridrik Olafsson

Oystein Brekke

Norske Sjakkforlag pp287 £32.95

A tribute to the Icelandic grandmaster who, besides being strong enough to play in the 1959 Candidates tournament, is an iconic figure in his native Iceland. An elegant attacking player the book contains 118 games many annotated by Olafsson. The book is much more than a collection of games; many writers contribute to describe his long life (87 years) and varied career, not all in chess. A Saga indeed. An affectionate and beautiful book in every way.

Winning

Nigel Short

Quality Chess pp413 £29.50

Tournament books have been an important part of chess literature. Short has taken an unusual approach – this is a book giving ALL the games he played himself in eight tournament he won dating from 1987 to 2016. The games are thoroughly annotated and show the drama, the good play, the practical play and sometimes survival play required to win tournaments. This is Short's first book; the personal approach, the lively style, create hopes that he will write another.



ECF Academy

The topic for the Academy is Openings and Building an Opening Repertoire. Here is a selection from the materials - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/September-taster.pdf>

For solutions please get in touch at academy@ukchess.co.uk



Lawrence's Award

ECF Alternate Director of Women's Chess Agnieszka Milewska on Lawrence Cooper's commitment and work on enhancing women's chess ...

Congratulations to Lawrence Cooper for winning the ECF Contribution to Women's Chess Award!

Lawrence has always had an interest in helping women and girls with their chess careers, dating back to when he first became a 4NCL captain in 1995. Since then, his teams have been notable for including many more than the minimum requirement of one female per team!

He co-organised the Wroxham International in 2002 which had five male and five female players and organised and funded 10 player women's events at the London Chess Classic from 2009-2013 as well as one alongside Sean Hewitt's e2e4 events in 2010. He was captain and coach of the Welsh women's team at the 2016 Olympiad where the three youngest players gained their WCM titles.

He captained teams in the 2015 and 2016 European Cup Cup for Women and four teams in the 2020 European Online Women's Club Cup. He captained the winning team in the very first women's 4NCL in 2019. Inspired by Jovanka Houska's Lichess England Women's team which boasts around 270 players, when OTB ground to a halt in March 2020 due to Covid-19 his attention switched to online chess.

A typical week for him involves the team taking part in four team battles (two on Sunday, one on Tuesday and one on Thursday). He ensures the team is registered into each event and then promotes the event to players. He also organises individual team arenas, this used to be every day of the week but as lockdown is easing these are now less frequent. These arenas have included a blitz match against the Philippines, a team battle hosted by England against other countries, monthly Nations Cup events along with the twice weekly Quarantine-Liga that we have taken part in since last summer.

Picture [below] – left to right, Agnieszka Milewska (Alternate Director of Women's Chess), Malcolm Pein (Director of International Chess) and the man himself, Lawrence Cooper.



Arbiter News

Congratulations to Hok Chiu, who has been awarded the title of FIDE Arbiter!



ECF Secondary School News

Neill Cooper reports - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ECF-Secondary-School-News-September-2021.pdf>

For older editions - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/schools-news-reports/>



ECF Elections 2021

More here on nomination procedure ahead of next month's AGM -
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/nominations-for-the-2021-elections-at-the-agm/>



Response from the Chess Clubs Survey - summary

Here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Clubs-Survey-Summary-Findings-August.pdf>



The 2021 British Chess Championships

Visit the website for details - <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>



Rating Update

The Anniversary of Starting Monthly Ratings

by Brian Valentine, Manager of ECF Rating

Monthly rating started on 1st July 2020, so has now been running for 14 months. While members would welcome more chess, it has given the rating team a hiatus to improve the excellent software provided by Steve Bush. There are enhancements still in the locker – we are slowly transferring all the online rating functionality onto the main system.

While the grades have become ratings, our envisaged title switch from grader to rating officer or rater has not taken off, so they are still graders. We have had very good feedback from graders about the new submission system. On an understandably small sample, reporting has been speeded up. One key reason being that results entered on the League Management System now are uploaded automatically on a weekly basis (this can be speeded up when volume justifies it).

To give some idea of activity, about half the results for the first 13 months were played in July 2021 and about a quarter in June on both lists. Roughly, we would expect 200,000 half results from 12,000 players in each list in a normal year. Over 13 months, on standard play 503 players recorded 2750

half results with the numbers for rapid chess being 6516 from 636. Not surprisingly the average rating for all listed players was unchanged.

We wanted to get the 1st September list in as good shape as possible. This is because we expect this one to replace the old August list (which came out mid-August) used by many Leagues. We audited the data and, with the help of the graders, sorted out some anomalies. Also, we reviewed the algorithm and made three minor changes:

- The age definition for determining juniors has shifted one year to fall in line with the FIDE definition (The top players list will fall in line soon)
- In a few cases, we found a situation where the results were not rated, they now are included
- We have simplified the calculation when fully rated players play partially rated players. While not universal, this will tend to increase full ratings. There is no effect on partial ratings

We decided that these changes would improve the quality of ratings, simplify our program and make it more straightforward to explain ratings. So, all results back to 1st July 2020 have been used to revise past ratings for this list.

I have been asked if we will do something about ratings after Covid-19, given some juniors' improvement or the rustiness of everyone else. It's not clear what, if anything, to do as things transition to the new world. The appropriate action depends on how things open up. We will be looking at developments and will react if it is necessary. This also applies to the relaxation in rules regarding changes to active players and categories.



GM and IM norms

A GM norm for Ravi Haria and an IM norm for Marcus Harvey at the Wood Green Invitational - <https://chess-results.com/tnr574412.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30> ...

... and another GM norm for Ravi Haria and a GM norm for Conor Murphy at the Northumbria Masters - <http://chess-results.com/tnr574708.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30>



Notes for new members (and their parents)

Here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/a-note-for-parents-on-ecf-membership/> - and here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/incomplete-new-memberships/>



European Senior Chess Championships

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/european-senior-chess-championship-2021/>



4NCL

26th 4NCL Congress at Woodland Grange, Leamington Spa 10-12 September – 180 players participating https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_26.htm



FIDE Trainers Seminar

Rob Willmoth writes ...

56 English coaches attend FIDE Trainers seminar

A total of 56 English chess coaches attended the FIDE Trainers Seminar held online over the weekend of 3-5 September, which featured lectures by such renowned trainers as GMs Artur Yusupov, Ivan Sokolov, Mikhail Kobalia, Jacob Aagaard, Thomas Luther and Dejan Bojkov.

The course was co-organised by Peter Long, the Secretary of the FIDE Trainers Commission, and Rob Willmoth, ECF Membership Director and Chair of the English Junior Coaches and Organisers Association (EJCOA). The initiative to hold the seminar came from EJCOA as part of its work together with the ECF to develop the professional skills of coaches around the country.

Students on the course attended a total of 16 hours of lectures on: Talent, Role of Trainers, Ways of Improvement and Different Training Methods (Yusupov); Studying the Classics & Strategic Patterns (Sokolov); Endgame Training (Luther); Analysing Your Own Games (Yusupov); Opening Repertoire & Preparation (Kobalia); Calculation Training (Aagaard); Psychology & Training Issues (Bojkov); Use of Technology (Bojkov); and the FIDE Trainers System (Long).

A two-hour written exam was held at the conclusion of the course, and the results from the exam, along with coaches' submissions of their coaching track record and relevant experience, will be used to determine the awarding of various titles - FIDE Trainer, FIDE Instructor, National Instructor and Developmental Instructor.

The titles will be published after their ratification by the FIDE Council in October.

Rob Willmoth said, 'EJCOA is very happy to have facilitated this FIDE Trainers Seminar together with the ECF, with such legendary trainers. We believe it will help the professional development of English coaches and feed through into great results for England players and teams in the future'.



Play Chess Festival in Hull

Stephen Greep reports ...



August saw the start of a three-month 'Play Chess Festival' in Hull organised by the Hull and District Chess Association (HDCA), branded with its own logo displayed on banners, badges and stickers! The event was launched at The Deep, Hull's premier tourist attraction, with Councillor Rosemary Pantelakis (portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure) playing the opening moves of the Queen's Gambit (naturally) on a giant chess set, against the backdrop of the main aquarium tank, where two divers battled it out in a game of underwater chess. A short video of the launch event, presented by Professor Graham Chesters, the HDCA President, can be found at <https://vimeo.com/582881937/d28ca1a886>

Our August events have focused on juniors with chess sessions taking place in various parks, squares and libraries (as a part of libraries' summer programme) across Hull. Sometimes as a part of wider events, sometimes as standalone chess events, these have been tremendously popular. A key event being a three-day junior summer school attended by 63 children, held at Hymers College, who provided all the facilities for free. An early and unexpected bonus was agreement from KCOM (historically Hull's own telecommunications company) to provide funding but also technical and equipment support for an online local schools league in 2022.

At an open-air chess event in Central Hull, alongside tables set with sets and boards there was a demonstration of living chess (a repeat of the event staged at the 2018 British in Hull) which saw the players decked out in tabards with illustrations representing key Hull landmarks (such as the William Wilberforce statue – bishops). The month culminated in a chess event as a part of Hull's Freedom Festival. Outside Hull Minster and the adjacent Trinity Market there was a 'rolling simul', a blitz tournament and plenty of boards for members of the public.

September is more targeted at adults with more library events. A chess café day with 10 contributing local cafés spread throughout the city is supporting a weekend with a GM visit to a local chess club, a public event with a return of Hull's now famous Grand Master ale, and a simultaneous in the glass nose cone of the Deep. At the end of the month there will be a pop-up Chess shop for three days in Hull City Centre.



October is the month for more serious chess players, with Hull hosting the British Chess Championships (2nd-10th October), the British Women's Championships (14th-17th October), a HDCA/4NCL organised Grandmaster norm event (20th-24th October) and weekend congress (22nd-24th October). All these events are being held in the prestigious Canham Turner Conference Centre, at the University of Hull. While it's too early to evaluate the outcome of the Festival, large numbers of the public have simply sat down and played chess; we have nearly 100 new junior contacts. Local newspapers, TV and radio have been promoting the events and chess in general. All the events have been well supported and we have received a tremendous amount of goodwill from partner organisations who have helped with funding, help in kind and advice, including Hull City Council, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire, The Deep, University of Hull, KCOM, ECF, 4NCL, CSC, Chesskid and others.



LJCC 2021 qualifying events

<https://www.ljcc.co.uk/>



2020-2021 Worldwide Online Championships

Peter Hornsby writes ...

Two English teams qualified for the playoffs of the 2020 Chess.com Worldwide Online Championships which took place in August. Tiger Sharks sadly had to hand back the crown they had worn so well from last season, due to most of their players being occupied at the Northumbria Masters, so it was up to Wallace Chess, led by John-Paul Wallace himself, to fly the England flag. They started with two impressive back-to-back thrilling victories over Chess Heroes (South Africa) and Chess Club Politika C (Serbia), before being undone by the eventual winners, Chess Club Politika A in the semi-final to conclude a great run in the tournament. You can see the final league table here - <https://results.scorchapp.co.uk/t/2020chess/standings/10> - with dozens of English teams taking part.

If you would like to join next season, email Peter Hornsby at director@2020chess.com. It is free to enter and Chess.com has provided a \$5000 prize pool for the top teams.



Team England Daily and Live Chess

ECF Manager for Daily Chess, Andrew Caswell reports on recent Team England successes, ECF Members Daily Chess and Team England Live Events

The ECF fields England Teams in the Chess.com Nations League (via the ECF members club) and participates in a series of Team Battle Leagues on Lichess (via the ECF English Chess Player Club). We also support the Team England and Team England Live Clubs who participate in the Chess.com Daily Leagues and the World and European Live Leagues.

Team England and ECF Members Daily Chess

Daily Chess is an internet chess based form of correspondence chess. Moves are shared over the internet via an internet chess server (e.g. Chess.com or Lichess). Daily matches are configured for a set number of days per move. For example at 3 days per move, you would have a full 72 hours to make your move after which your clock resets for another 3 days. With Daily games, you can log out of the site and your game will still be there when you come back. You can check on your game throughout the day whenever you have time to make a move.

Since the early days of Chess.com, Team England have been successful in competing in daily (3 days per move) team match competitions. Team England are current World and European Champions for 2020 with a 100% record in both competitions. The team has continued that form into 2021 and remains unbeaten after 8 rounds this year.

ECF members are playing on some of the top boards for Team England. The top 5 ECF members as rated on chess.com are -

<https://www.chess.com/member/it-bites>

<https://www.chess.com/member/nutflush>

<https://www.chess.com/member/aardvarkcya>

<https://www.chess.com/member/westy77>

<https://www.chess.com/member/knightrider185>

Here are a couple of games by ECF members from the 2021 World League season so far ---

Team England v Team Holland (1st v 2nd, a 692 a side match which Team England have won)

Board 10 - <https://www.chess.com/game/daily/311910694>

RainPiper (2167) - it-bites (2204) [A22]

WL2021 R2: Team England vs Chess Team Ho Chess.com, 15.02.2021

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.e3 Be7 5.d4 exd4 6.Nxd4 0-0 7.Be2 d5 8.Nxd5 Nxd5 9.cxd5 Qxd5 10.Bf3 Qc4 11.b3 Qa6 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Be2 Qb6 14.Qc2 Bb4+ 15.Bd2 Rd8 16.Rd1 Ba6 17.Bxa6 Bxd2+ 18.Rxd2 Qxa6 19.f3 Qa5 20.Ke2 Qg5 21.Kf2 Rxd2+ 22.Qxd2 Rd8 23.Qc3 Rd6 24.h4 Qd8 25.Ke2 h6 26.Qc2 Rg6 27.Kf2 Qd6 28.Rh3 Qe5 29.Qd2 Rd6 30.Qc2 Qa1

[The game has been equal up to this point. W now makes a mistake.]

31.Rg3? [Blocks the K and allows B's next. Better was h5 making space for the King.]



31...Rd1 32.Rg4 Rf1+ 33.Kg3 Qe5+ 34.f4 Qxe3+ 35.Kh2 h5 [it-bites won by resignation]

0-1

Team England v Team Serbia (1st v 4th, a 224 a side match which Team England have won)

Board 4 - <https://www.chess.com/game/daily/302424664>

weary_willy (2097) - biljana_82 (2140) [B52]

WL2021 R1: Srbija Tim vs Team England, a Chess.com, 15.01.2021

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Nxd7 [Recapturing with the N with Black looking for a win.]



5.0-0 Ngf6 6.Qe2 e5 7.c3 [White will now play to break open the centre with d4 and take advantage of his lead in development.]

7...g6 8.d4 Qc7 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.Bg5 Bg7 11.Na3 a6 12.Rad1 b5 [Black starts taking space on the queen side.]

13.Nc2 Nb6 [The position is about equal.]

14.Nd2 c4 15.f4 0-0 16.f5 h6 17.Bh4 g5 18.Bg3 Qe7 19.h3 Na4 20.Rb1 [Black is slightly better with the R tied down to defending the b pawn from the marauding N.]

20...Rfe8 21.Qe3 Qc5 22.Bf2 Qxe3 23.Nxe3 Rad8 [B is now much better and should look to control the d file.]

24.Rfd1 Rd3 25.Kf1 Red8 [B is winning at this point but misses a discovery with their next move.]

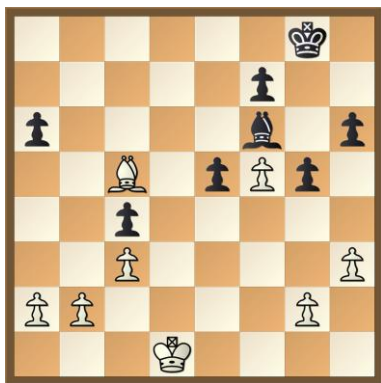
26.Ke2 Nc5? [



Somehow missing the discovered attack. Black has been better up to this point but W now picks up a pawn.]

27.Nexc4 Ncxe4 28.Nxe4 [A second discovered attack - opening the line of the R on d1 and preparing Nxf6 check. Suddenly W is better.]

28...Rxd1 29.Rxd1 Rxd1 30.Nxf6+ Bxf6 31.Kxd1 bxc4 32.Bc5 [



]

32...Bd8 33.Ke2 f6 34.Kf3 Kf7 35.Ke4 Ke8 36.Kd5 Kd7 37.a4 h5 38.g4 [W's extra pawn should be enough with the same coloured bishop ending and B's pieces tied to defending the f pawn.
weary_willy won by resignation]

1-0

If you would like to help Team England you can join the club here -
<https://www.chess.com/club/team-england>

ECF 2020 Daily Chess Championships

As well as the Team England matches the ECF has been running an ECF Daily Chess tournament which started in 2020 in the ECF members club.

Round 3 of the tournament continues. The original 99 entrants have been reduced to just 9 who are competing in 3 groups of 3 to decide which 3 players will play the in the final round for the title of 2020 Champion.

ECF 2021 Daily Championships

149 players entered the 3 tournament sections (Open, U1750, U1400 as per chess.com ratings). There are just 8 players left in contention for the U1400 section which is currently led by @benjaminlappin. The U1750 section still has 14 players left with @metal57guru and @southernchris in the joint lead. In the open there are 10 players remaining in the 2nd round matches. They are playing in 3 groups with the winners of each group going through to the third and final round.

Team England Live

When similar Live Chess leagues began on chess.com a few years ago, Team England Live was formed to focus on the growing community passion for national team Blitz and Rapid matches. This has been slower to show similar success but with a growing group membership, it is hoped that the obvious enthusiasm shown by daily chess players in England will bring the rewards to our Live League matches.

Currently sitting towards the top of Division 3 in World League and challenging for a move up, Team England play other national teams from all around the world, finishing 4th in the recently completed season. Organising live matches which cover many different time zones can be a challenge with the reward of competing with widely divergent cultures, all with Chess in the DNA.

European matches are slightly less of a timing issue but still with the prospect of matches against great chess nations. Many of the teams include titled players, for a real challenge, as well as serious match competition for players of all abilities.

The formats for the matches are Bullet 2|1, Blitz 5|2 and Rapid 10|2 with a Live960 cup thrown in for good measure. These matches usually take place on a weekend (afternoon or evening) with each season lasting about 15 weeks.

If you would like to help Team England Live in the quest for success, please join your national team - <https://www.chess.com/club/team-england-live>



Book Reviews

A veritable smorgasbord of reviews from Gary Lane this month, including *Winning* by Nigel Short; *The Exhilarating Elephant Gambit* by Jakob Aabling-Thomsen and Michael Agermose Jensen; *The Scandinavian for Club Players* by Thomas Willemze; *The London System in 12 Practical Lessons* by Oscar De Prado; and *Chess Board Options* by Larry Kaufman ... <https://chess.business/blog/>



Guildford celebrate

Guildford Chess Club are celebrating their 125th anniversary with a day of chess action on Saturday 11 September. More here - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/guildford-chess-club-125-year-celebration-simultaneous-exhibition-registration-159487552563>



Witney Online Congress

This takes place on Sunday 19 September with Open, Junior Major and Junior Minor sections. More here - http://www.witneychess.co.uk/witneyrapid21_information.htm – and the entry form here - <https://form.jotform.com/212421176513345>



Girls' National School Chess Championships

Update from IM Andrew Martin here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/girls-national-schools-chess-championship-2022/>



Forthcoming events

All the events we know of are on the ECF events calendar, and the calendar is sortable by category and by tag, both at the top of the calendar - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>
If you want to see just over the board events coming up click this rather long link - https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/action~agenda/request_format~html/cat_ids~354/ - or this link on the ECF website ...

Find events to play in with these quick links — [All Events](#) | [Over-The-Board Events](#) | [Online Events](#)

Tweet of the Month

Nigel Short plays a perfect cover drive ... brilliantly fielded by Peter Svidler



FEATURES, WRITING, ANALYSIS, STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

MICHAEL ADAMS' GAME of the MONTH

Michael Adams analyses the Keith Arkell - Mohammed Ismail game from the British Online Championship



The removal of a player after round 8 of the British Online Championship had considerable knock-on consequences, a lot of players missed the re-arranged last round, and the forced reallocation of those points was far from ideal. Whilst there was little else to be done in the circumstances, it would be good to see amongst other measures longer bans, and more collaboration between sites with co-ordination from FIDE.

In any case despite these upheavals Keith Arkell was a deserved winner, playing the most challenging, and practical chess throughout. In this last round game against Mohammed Ismail he overcomes the emotional rollercoaster of his previous result being reversed, and goes after the win which would clinch the title - a task he goes about in his own inimitable style.

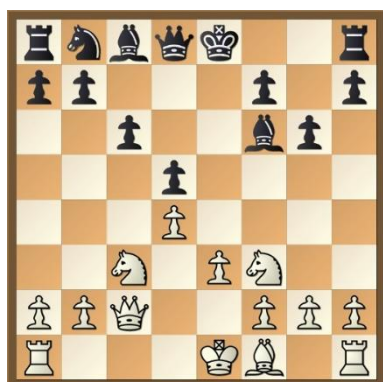
Keith would have been unaware during the game, in the later stages, that other results meant that a draw would have been sufficient at that stage.

K. Arkell – M. Ismail

British Online Championship 2021

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.Bg5 It seems slightly counter intuitive that in the days of modern preparation, Keith's continued loyalty to his usual opening repertoire continues to pay dividends, but his depth of knowledge often outweighs the lack of surprise value.

7...g6 8.Bxf6 Bxf6 9.e3



9...Be6 Keith has had many games with **9...Bf5 10.Bd3 Bxd3 11.Qxd3** including an important success in this tournament, but it seems more logical to me for Black to keep both bishops on the board.

10.Be2 Nd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.b4 a5 13.b5



After 13.a3 b5 intending Nb6-c4 is one option.

13...c5!



This advance challenges the centre, and thwarts the smooth mobilisation of the minority attack, looking to give the dark squared bishop more influence.

14.Rfd1 Rc8 15.Rac1



15...Qc7

A key moment as Black has to take a major strategic decision. Closing the queenside with 15...c4 is approved by the machine, although to the human eye it looks rather committal. Consolidating a passed pawn on c4 is welcome, although Black's fixed structure lacks dynamism, however there is useful piece play available, as he can continue with a combination of Be7-b4, Nb6, and Bf5 in the future.

16.e4 Nb6 17.e5 Be7 doesn't really help White, his pieces aren't ready to support kingside action, despite the pawn on e5. Keith might have preferred 16.g3 aiming to transfer the bishop to g2 as in the game, or 16.Nd2 followed by Bf3.

The flexible 15...Nb6 was a good alternative, when Qe7 could follow, a better square than the queen ends up on in the game.

16.Qb1 Qb8

The queen is tucked away out of trouble, but has little influence here.

17.g3 Rfd8 18.Bf1 Nb6 The computer still endorses 18...c4, but this is clearly a less favourable version than earlier.

19.dxc5 Keith decides to resolve the structure, instead of continuing with 19.Bg2.



19...Rxc5 20.Nd4



20...Rdc8? The opposite-coloured position that now arises is favourable for White, so Mohammed should have preferred 20...Bxd4 21.exd4 Rcc8 where the weak c4 square balances White slightly better bishop. The natural 21.Rxd4 isn't good as 21...Rdc8 22.Ne2 Rxc1 23.Nxc1 Qc7 takes control of the c-file. Maintaining the bishop pair with 20...Bg4!? was also a better idea, getting the bishop out of range of the knight, and hitting the rook on d1.

21.Nxe6! fxe6 If 21...Rxc3 22.Rxc3 Rxc3 23.Nf4 Rc5 24.Bg2, the IQP is becoming a serious problem.

22.Ne2! The knight on c3 hasn't had a big role so far, but now it is ready to actively jump to f4, and combine with Bh3 ideas to target e6. A future h4–h5 might also undermine Black's king cover.



22...Nc4?! A tempting leap, but this was a good moment to bring the queen back into the action, 22...Qd6! also covers the sensitive point on e6. 22...Rxc1 23.Rxc1 Kf7 reducing material, and only then deploying the king was another reasonable continuation.

23.Bh3 Re8 24.Nf4



24..Kf7 The king move is clearly not ideal, but 24...Qd6 also looks rather shaky. However the queen's return to the action gives Black some active ideas as well. 25.e4 Bg5! 26.Bxe6+! (26.Nxe6 Rxe6 27.Rxd5 Rxd5 28.Bxe6+ Qxe6 29.exd5 Qg4! is not very clear, or 28.exd5 Re2 29.Rxc4 Qb6 and Black is getting active) 26...Rxe6 27.Rxd5 Bxf4 28.Rxd6 Bxd6, here White's queen should be more valuable than the assorted pieces, but there is plenty of play left.

25.e4 Qd6 25...d4? is refuted by 26.Bxe6+! Rxe6 27.Nxe6 Kxe6 28.Rxc4 Rxc4 29.Qb3! Qc7 30.Rc1.

26.exd5 exd5 27.Bg2 Nb6 28.Rxc5 Qxc5



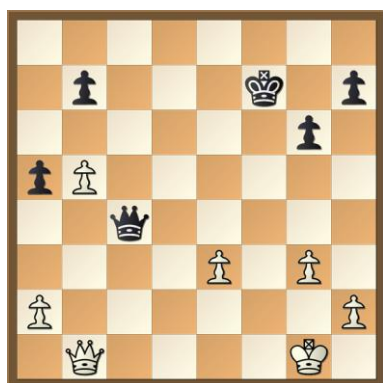
29.Bxd5+ The hard to see finesse 29.Qd3! activating White's queen before grabbing the pawn was best, one day it might profitably swing over to f3.

29...Nxd5 30.Rxd5 30.Nxd5 can now be met by 30...Re2!. This variation shows another point of 29.Qd3! - it's useful to have the e2 square covered.

30...Qc4 31.Rd7+ Forcing the exchange of rooks aids Black, as White's queen is passively placed. 31.Kg2 was good as 31...Qe4+ 32.Qxe4 Rxe4 33.Rd7+ Re7 34.Rxe7+ Bxe7 35.Kf3 brings the monarch to e4.

31...Re7 32.Rxe7+ Bxe7 33.Ng2 Not a welcome retreat to have to make, but Black's queen is dominating its counterpart, so Keith looks to challenge it. The machine points out the crafty 33.h4! with the idea that 33...Bxh4 34.Qd1 Be7 35.Qf3 creates real problems for Black, as the two White pieces combine perfectly to annoy Black's open king.

33...Bc5 34.Ne3 Bxe3 35.fxe3



The complexities of this endgame are enhanced by the fact that both players frequently have to calculate the possibility of a queen swap leading to King and Pawn endgames, where despite the extra passed e-pawn, results vary considerably.

35...Qe6 It's natural to prioritize your queen in a Queen + Pawn endgame, but now was a good moment to move the king towards the queenside; 35...Ke6! was correct. After 36.Kf2 (36.Qb3? Qxb3 37.axb3 Kd5 gives time to snap off the b5 pawn.) 36...Kd6, or 36...a4 are fine for Black.

In contrast 35...Qe2? loses although the details are still quite complicated: 36.Qf1+ Qxf1+ 37.Kxf1 Ke6 38.Ke2 Kd5 39.Kd3 a4 (39...Kc5 40.a4 Kb4 41.e4) 40.e4+ Kc5 41.b6 Kxb6 42.Kc4 Kc6 43.Kb4. 35...a4? also fails similarly to 36.Qf1+.

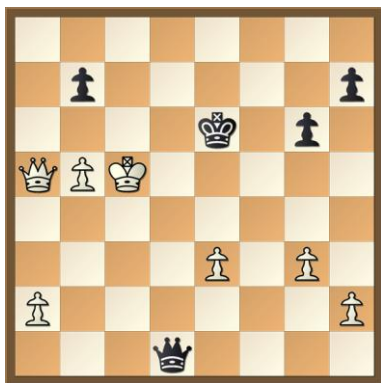
36.Kf2 White is still not in time for 36.Qb3 Qxb3 37.axb3 Ke6.

36...Qf6+ This is not very constructive, 36...Qd5 was possible as 37.Qb3 still doesn't work: 37...Qxb3 38.axb3 Ke6 39.e4 Kd6 40.Ke3 Kc5 41.Kf4! (41.e5? Kxb5 even wins for Black.) 41...Kxb5 42.Ke5 Kb4 43.Kd6 Kxb3 44.e5 a4 and there will soon be two new queens on the board in an equal endgame. 36...a4 37.Qc2 a3 also makes sense - White's queen is now totally tied to the pawn on a2.

37.Ke2 Qe6 38.Qc2 Qd5 39.Qc7+ It's still somewhat surprising to me that 39.Qb3 doesn't work, but 39...Qxb3 40.axb3 Ke6 41.e4 Kd6 remains ok for Black. 39.Qa4! hitting a5 and angling for Qf4+ was best, then checks like 39...Qg2+ 40.Kd3 Qf1+ 41.Kd4 only help White.

39...Ke6 40.Qc8+ Kf7 41.Qc7+ Ke6 42.Qxa5 Grabbing a second pawn, but now White's queen is out of play, and lots of checks are coming.

42...Qg2+ 43.Kd3 Qf1+ 44.Kd4 Qd1+ 45.Kc5 Objectively it was time to settle for a draw with 45.Kc4, but this last try pays dividends.



45...Qd6+ 45...Qd5+! actually leaves Black having more fun. After 46.Kb4 (46.Kb6?? Qd8+) 46...Qd2+ 47.Ka4 Qxa2+ 48.Kb4 Qd2+ 49.Ka4 Qc2+! is worth a try, rather than immediately giving perpetual. The precise 50.Ka3! holds, but the inaccuracy 50.Kb4? Qe4+ 51.Ka3 Qxe3+ allows Black to remove another pawn, whilst keeping the checks going, and leaves him pressing.

46.Kc4 Qd5+ 47.Kc3 Now White has escaped the checks, and is back in control.

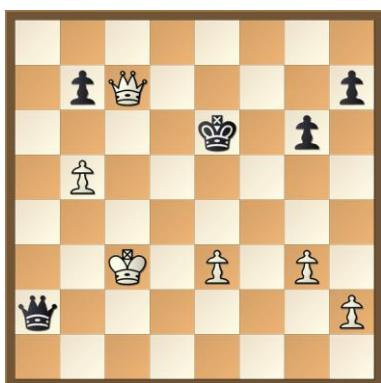
47...Qe5+ 48.Kc2 It's natural to avoid the pawn being captured with check, but 48.Kb3! Qxe3+ (48...Qd5+ 49.Kb2! Qe5+ 50.Qc3 Qxb5+ 51.Qb3+ wins.) 49.Qc3 co-ordinates handily with ideas of a4 or Qc8+.

48...Qe4+ The focus on checks is understandable, but the calm 48...Qxe3! saves the day, White can't improve the queen easily due to the loose pawn on b5: 49.Qd2 Qc5+, 49.Qd8 Qc5+, or 49.Qb4 Qe2+.

49.Kd2 Qg2+?! 49...Qd5+! keeps the checks going.

50.Kc3 Qd5 After 50...Qxh2 51.Qb6+ Kf5 52.Qxb7 Qxg3 53.Qd5+ Kg4 54.Qe4+ Kh3 55.b6 Qe1+ 56.Kb3 Qd1+ 57.Kb4 Qd2+ 58.Kc5 the b-pawn will eventually promote.

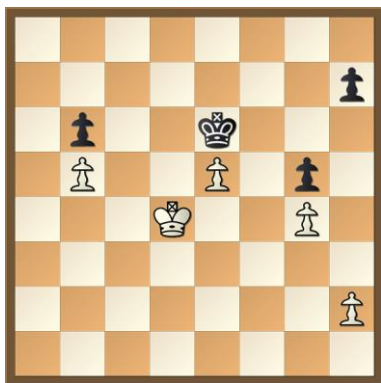
51.Qc7 Qxa2 51...Kf6 at least avoids an immediate queen swap.



52.Qc4+! This clarifies matters.

52...Qxc4+ 53.Kxc4 b6 53...Ke5 54.Kc5 is straightforward.

54.Kd4 Kd6 55.e4 Ke6 56.e5 g5 57.g4



Black resigned, his king will have to give ground.

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-60-september-2021-games-studies-and-problems/>



Keep the engine running?

Appreciating chess with an engine – reflections from the Northumbria Masters 2021

Peter Wells



I guess I should begin by explaining the rather strange title. After being involved in an event as enjoyable and significant as the Northumbria Masters, it seemed obvious that this should be the focus of my next article. However, the intense and demanding schedule of the tournament had afforded little time to look beyond my own section. I was aware of some great performances unfolding around me, but this was largely related to results rather than the details of games. For sure, there were plenty of observers speaking in glowing terms about the quality of the play, especially from the GM group. Still, I was keen to see for myself, but had limited time or energy to do so.

If checking over games at speed with the assistance of an engine were the preserve of authors seeking material, it probably wouldn't be worth writing about. However, I am confident that it is a much more widespread habit. We discussed engine use – with all its attendant opportunities and pitfalls – at some length in *Chess Improvement: It's all in the mindset*, with particular reference to studying our own games and preparing openings. Yet it is now the way that many of us consume much of our chess for enjoyment as well. In itself, I don't have a very strong view against this, but I have much to say about how to interpret what we find and about some of the conclusions which we definitely *shouldn't* take away from it.

Before discussing what I found when examining the GM group games in this way, a few words are due regarding the event itself. I want to echo all those who have praised the organisation, the value of holding an event of this status in the North East and the tremendous success which the event represented for title opportunities. Conor Murphy's triumph in scoring a GM norm before his IM title had even been ratified(!) and the young Slovenian Zala Uhr's great achievement in registering an IM norm and securing tournament victory as the lowest rated player in the IM group speak for themselves. Still, the focus on the English players in much of the coverage doesn't feel entirely misplaced, for this really did feel like a pivotal moment for the young generation of English players in their early to mid-twenties. Ravi Haria's final GM norm – hot on the heels of another in Stafford – obviously represents a breakthrough for this hard-working and very likeable young talent. Yet he was far from alone. Matthew Wadsworth – Ravi's last round opponent – was himself still playing for a GM norm in their tense, but high-quality encounter. Marcus Harvey again showed what a dangerous

practical player he is to win his last three games and miss a GM result by only half a point. And in the Masters section, Brandon Clarke's narrow victory ahead of a quartet of GMs (myself included) looked to me simply like the well-deserved consequence of playing the most convincing chess of anyone in the group.

So what did engine analysis reveal about the games in the GM section? Well, the first impression I had was that there were relatively few 'steady' positional grinds. Instead, there were many games featuring quite dramatic swings in fortune, lots of significant tactical moments and tense battles full of excitement, with doubt persisting until late in the contest as to which side would ultimately prevail. This sounds great for the spectators, but it is worth just asking whether this impression reflects something genuine about this event or whether – by spotting a range of concealed tactical possibilities which would once have gone unnoticed – the engine just gives the impression that chess generally is like that? A fair question, but even when that is factored in, this was definitely a tournament characterised by lots of sharp, fighting chess.

So what of missed tactics and large swings in fortune? Well, we should of course reserve the right to note tactical opportunities which really should have been seized upon. However, these can and must be distinguished from tactics which hang upon some detail at the end of ten or so scarcely foreseeable moves. The worst reaction of all from online chess spectators is the assumption that because their engine has spotted an obscure detail, the players' failure to do so is somehow unforgivable. More seasoned observers can distinguish what is reasonably within human capability and even then should factor in the reality – which I mentioned in relation to my own feeble efforts in Leamington Spa a month ago – that this is all so much harder at the board in the heat of the (often time-pressured) moment.

Where this kind of analysis can be very revealing and therefore potentially of great use as a training tool, is in enabling us to observe common features in the kind of tactics that we tend to miss. The following moment struck me as particularly instructive, since the quite comprehensible key move must have been missed by both players.

Peter Roberson – Matthew Turner

Northumbria Masters GM 2021 Round 2.



Peter Roberson had one of those frustrating tournaments which I know so well – building up a series of excellent positions several of which were then ruined in time trouble. From the diagram, he played **21 Rb1** and in fact gained more initiative than he really should have, before Black somehow escaped with a draw. Of course, we don't need the engine to alert us to the possibility of 21 Nd7, but interestingly whilst 21...Qxc3 evidently falls short after either 22 Rc2 or 22 Rc1, both players must have believed that 21...Qc4 – counter-attacking White's rook on e2 – was a sufficient resource. Capturing on e8 or f8 then only run into trouble, but I suspect the players would also have checked that White doesn't make any devastating inroads after 22 Raa2 Rxe2 23 Rxe2 Rd8. The key move, which both players presumably missed, is the deceptively simple 22 Re1! This takes advantage of the fact that the rook on f8 has no flight squares to continue supporting e8, so Black is obliged to concede

the e-file. The key point is that the queen on the e-file is a very different proposition. Threats of smothered mate abound after 22...Rxe1+ 23 Qxe1 Ra8 ((where else!)) 24 Qe6+ Kh8 25 Ne5. Black can defend against the initial catastrophe with 25...Qc8 26 Qxd5 Qc7, but 27 Re1! threatening to come to f7 and then d8 with the knight forces further weaknesses to Black's already heavily compromised position.

To an extent this just confirms something which we already know. Backward moves are harder to find – it somehow comes more naturally to consider supporting the rook on e2 than to look at retreating it. It probably doesn't help that the rook had hitherto needed to stay on e2 to defend the f2 pawn either. Beyond that, we are in the precarious game of ascribing psychological reasons for missed tactics – although one recent attempt I made to do this received a very positive reception from my friend and co-author Barry Hymer and bore fruit in a fascinating edition of his blog for Chessable – see <https://www.chessable.com/blog/why-move-trainer-dumb-stuff/>. So I will have a go! I wonder whether we subconsciously expect too much of tactics and are therefore too quick to dismiss their (possibly very substantial) positional side-benefits. Perhaps we learn of too many cases in which unjustifiably seeking tactics can compromise our positions that we can forget that – as here – a tactic which fails in its primary goal (winning the exchange) can still be worth pursuing for its secondary benefit (forcing the opponent to concede a file). This may or may not turn out to be a fruitful thought, but if analysing with an engine leads us to ask such questions it is hopefully at least a sign that it is not encouraging us to disengage our brains.

One other interesting case saw Peter on the winning side.

Peter Roberson – David Eggleston

Northumbria Masters GM Round 6



White's plan from the diagram is pleasingly simple – to attack g7 with Rdg1 and then to try and remove the defender of that square using his purposefully placed minor pieces – taking advantage of the fact that any attempt to defend g7 with the rook is liable to leave Black's king short of squares and run into a very attractive Qg6+ tactic. So play continued **24 Nf4! axb3 25 Rdg1**. Things look quite critical defensively for Black here and his only hope is to make something of his queenside play. In the game he lost quickly after **25...bxc2+? 26 Kc1 Bf6 (26...Rg8 27 Qg6+!) 27 Nd5** when he had to sacrifice his queen with **28...Qxd5 28 exd5 b3** and White finished off energetically **with 29 f4! Ra2 30 fxe5 dxe5 31 Rf1! Bd7 32 Rxf6 gxf6 33 Rg1 1-0**

This was a powerful finish, but the engine points out that sacrificing the queen without enabling the White king to shelter behind his opponent's pawns was considerably more testing. Black could have played **25...Bf6! 26 Nd5 Qxd5! 27 exd5 Bf5** when, for example, after **28 Rh2 Bxc2+ 29 Kc1 Rfc8** it is easy to see that his counter-chances are much more promising than in the game.

Again, this feels like a move which Black should have found, yet it is not hard to see where the confusion enters in. Yes, we know of numerous positions in which king's successfully use their opponents' pawns as a shield. Yet at the same time, in sharp positions with races between the

respective sides' attacks, when you can see the force of the attack which you are up against, there is a great impulse to land a blow first and Black is only a tempo or two away from making waves on the queenside, even after 25...bxc2+?. Again, the error is serious, but kind of reassuringly human.

A couple of closing thoughts. Much as I mentioned when analysing the game Sowray-Willow last month, hard-fought, sharp battles in which both players have ambitions will inevitably contain some mistakes. By contrast, whilst not all games in which the winner's play appears flawless will be overly one-sided, these are frequently the product of a lack of tension. The engine helps to magnify missed tactics, but fluctuating, imperfect games can still be great, creative and hugely entertaining battles and for me this GM group indeed produced lots of wonderful chess.

Precisely because these errors are 'reassuringly human' ones, the sources of them are probably best found in the analysis of typical human failings. Nonetheless, the engine used in the right way can be an invaluable diagnostic tool. In terms of how we apportion our chess study time, it is worth throwing in the realistic observation that without some knowledge of the opening phase players will struggle to reach these high-pressure moments. However, reflecting on a tournament so rich in tactical moments is a useful reminder whilst we are accustomed to the idea that tactics are likely to decide chess battles 'until a certain level', they honestly play an incredibly important role thereafter as well. Time spent practicing and honing tactical skills in a way which reflects the difficulty of practical play is likely to be time well spent for players at all levels.

To play these games through in your web browser, go to

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-60-september-2021-games-studies-and-problems/>
[photo of Peter courtesy of British Chess Magazine]



ARKELL'S ENDINGS



'Passivity is fatal to us. Our goal is to make the enemy passive'
- Mao Zedong

Polar Capital Jersey Open 2018.03.31

White "Keith Arkell" vs Black "Amardip Ahluwalia"

Result "1-0" | ECO "D02"

Half the battle is won if you can reduce your opponent to passivity. In this game my opponent's pieces were tied down to the defence of a weak pawn on c6, and therefore lacked the flexibility to deal with my threats on the other wing.

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. c4 e6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Nc3 c6 6. Bg5 Bf5 7. e3 Be7 8. Bxf6 Bxf6 9. Bd3 Bxd3 10. Qxd3 O-O 11. b4 a6 12. O-O Nd7 13. a4 Nb6



[This is Black's strongest setup. I have faced 13...b5 many times and demonstrated an edge after 14 a5 - Black's problem being that an unchallenged White Knight on c5 ties him to the defence of a6, whereas a Black Knight secured on c4 attacks nothing.]

14. b5



[It would be better not to rush with this, but instead start manoeuvring with moves such as Rab1, Rfc1 and g3, aiming for d3 with the f3 Knight. Objectively the position is about equal but is perhaps easier to play for White.]

..axb5

[14...cxb5! 15 axb5 a5! leaves Black with a comfortable position; the Knight plays an excellent role on b6.]

15. axb5 Nc4 16. Nd2 Nxd2 17. Qxd2 Qd6 18. bxc6 bxc6 19. Na4



[As long as I don't allow the freeing move ...c5 I will maintain a small but persistent advantage.]

Be7 20. Nc5 Qc7 21. Nd3



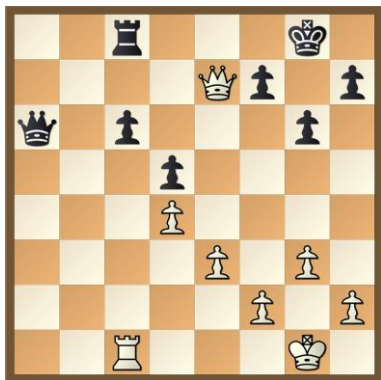
[This is a fine point - the exchange of minor pieces should be avoided as the Bishop interferes with a potentially active defence of the c pawn by Rooks along the 3rd rank.]

21.. Bd6 22. g3 Rfc8 23. Rac1 Qb6 24. Rc2 Ra3 25. Rfc1 Qa6 26. Nb4



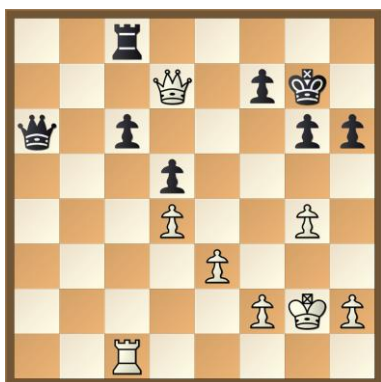
[This is different though: after the exchange Black will be unable to bring his Rooks to ideal squares such as d6 and e6.]

26..Bxb4 27. Qxb4 Ra1 28. Qe7 Rxc1+ 29. Rxc1 g6



[After this mistake he will be unable to challenge my dominant Queen and will remain with a totally passive position. 29...Qb6 intending ...Qc7 would have been a tougher nut to crack.]

30. Qd7 Kg7 31. Kg2 h6 32. g4

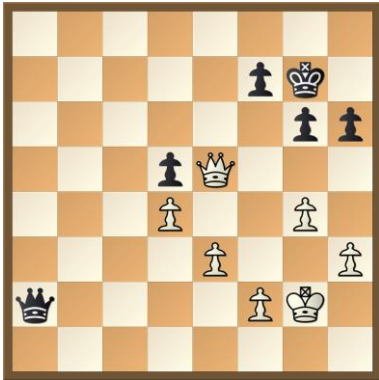


[With Black's pieces reduced to ...Qa8 - a6 and back again the next phase is simply to open up the Kingside and checkmate him.]

Kg8

[If he tries to hang on with 32..Qa8 33 h4 Qa6 34 h5 g5 35 Rb1 Kg8 36 Rb7 Rf8 37 Rc7 and his position falls apart.]

33. Ra1 Qxa1 34. Qxc8+ Kg7 35. Qxc6 Qd1 36. h3 Qb3 37. Qd6 Qc4 38. Qe5+ Kh7 39. Qe7 Kg7 40. Qd7 Qb3 41. Qc7 Qa2 42. Qe5+ Kh7

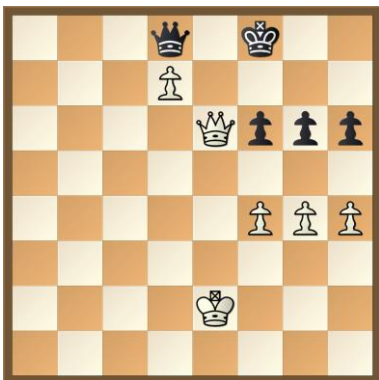


[To realise my extra material I will need to play e4 creating a passed d pawn. I just need to watch that my King doesn't run into an awkward series of checks at some point.]

43. e4 dxe4 44. Qxe4 Qa7 45. Qe5 Kg8 46. d5 Qd7 47. d6 Qc6+ 48. Kg3 Qc1 49. Qd4 Qg1+ 50. Kf3 Qh1+ 51. Ke2 Qa8 52. d7 Qd8 53. Qd6 Kg7 54. h4

[I want to play g5 next in order to threaten Qf6+]

f6 55. Qe6 Kf8 56. f4

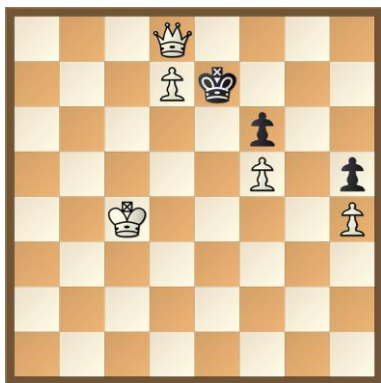


[There must be many ways to convert this, but I rather liked dealing with Black's threat of ...Qe7 by securing my Queen on e6.]

Qe7 57. f5 gxf5 58. gxf5 h5 59. Kd1

[All that remains is to bring my King up the board without allowing it to be harassed by checks.]

Qd8 60. Qd6+ Kf7 61. Kc2 Kg7 62. Kd3 Kf7 63. Kc4 Kg8 64. Qc6 Kf7 65. Qc8 Ke7 66. Qxd8+



[After 66...Kxd8 67 Kc5! guarantees White a winning opposition.]

1-0

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-60-september-2021-games-studies-and-problems/>



Littlewood's Choice

My father, who wrote this column for many years, was a great lover of swashbuckling attacks involving castling opposite sides. Two famous examples were his exciting loss to Botvinnik and his brilliant win against Tony Miles, both in the Sicilian Dragon. He would therefore have appreciated the following game between two young stars.

Arjun Kolani vs Yichen Han

World Youth Cup 2021

1.e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 h6 5.0-0 d6 6. c3 g5!?



This is a provocative idea which clearly suggests that Black has no intention of castling K-side! White reacts classically by advancing in the centre but this isn't the best. The simple developing move 8. Nbd2 is recommended when White has a slight advantage.

7. d4?! g4 8. dxe5?! (better is 8. Nfd2 sacrificing a pawn for the initiative) gxf3 9. exf6



...and already Black stands better. However the position is sharp and any error could easily swing things around.

9...fxg2 (even stronger is 9...Ne5!) **10. Re1 Qxf6 11.f4**



White is trying to complicate matters and leave the pawn on g2 as protection to his king. The simplest move for Black is now 11...Rg8 followed by 12...Bd7 and castling Q-Side.

11...Be6 12. Bb5



Amazingly this position has occurred before and that game continued 12. Bd5 Bxd5 exd5+ Ne7 14. Qg4 Qg6 15. Qh3 h5 16. f5 Qg4 17. Qxg4 hxg4 18. f6 and was eventually drawn – A.Nurmanova vs W.Guimaraes 2021.

Black now makes a mistake which leaves the position equal but gives White all the chances.

12...0-0-0? (12...Bd7 is best) **13. Bxc6 bxc6 14. Be3**



Suddenly Black's Q-side looks vulnerable and he is also threatened with 15. Bd4. However he finds a tactical way to cope with this threat and plays the best move:

14...d5!

Now if 15. Bd4? then 15...Qxf4 16. Bxh8 Bd6 17. Qh5 Rxh8 gives Black a winning attack. However White is having none of that and continues with his own attack.

15.Qa4 Qh4?

Black misses his last chance which was 15...dxe4, when with careful play he can hold the balance.

16. Nd2 dxe4 17. Nxe4 Bd5 18. Qa6+ Kd7 19. Rad1



Black is now in all kinds of trouble, with his King caught in the centre and under fire from all of White's pieces.

19...f5 20. Bf2 Qe7 21. Rxd5+! cxd5



22. Nf6+

This is sufficient to win but White misses the beautiful 22. Nc5+! when if 22...Qxc5 then 23. Qe6 mate or if 22...Ke8 then 23. Qg6 mate.

The rest of the game needs no further comment as White makes no mistake in converting his material advantage.

22... Qxf6 23. Qxf6 Bd6 24. Qxf5+ Kc6 25. c4 dxc4 26. Qe4+ Kd7 27. Qe6+ Kc6 28. Qxc4+ Kb7 29. Qb5+ Kc8 30. Bxa7 Rhf8 31. Be3 Rde8 32. Qa6+ Kd7 33. Qa4+ Kc8 34. Kxg2 Re6 35. Bf2 Rg6+ 36. Bg3 Rgg8 37. Qa8+ Kd7 38. Qe4 Kc8 39. Kh1 h5 40. Qe6+ Kb7 41. Re3 Ra8 42. Rb3+ Kc6 43. Rc3+ Kb7 44. Qd5+ Ka7 45. Qa5+ Kb7 46. Rb3+ Kc6 47. Qb5 mate.



The winner of this game, Arjun Kolani, is one of our up and coming stars, who won the British Online U14 Championships recently with the excellent score of 7/7. Clearly a name to watch out for!

--- Paul Littlewood

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-60-september-2021-games-studies-and-problems/>



Top Marcus

Marcus Harvey takes us through one of his recent games against FM Jonathan Blackburn. After some manoeuvring, white comes out of the opening with black's queen and knight misplaced. Black's slip on move 16 then gives white the bishop pair in an open position which Marcus puts to good effect.

FM Harvey, Marcus v FM Blackburn, Jonathan [E60]

[Annotations by Marcus Harvey]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.b3?! [



A very rare move. Often the best tactic when playing versus lower rated players is to give them lots of options, and avoid heavy theory.]

3...c5!?

[The most ambitious move here. 3...d5 or 3...c6 and 4... d5 is the most solid way to play.]

4.dxc5 Bg7 5.Bb2 0-0 [



]

6.Nf3 [An autopilot move, but surprisingly not the best.]

[6.a3! is strong, stopping black's plan of Na6 and taking on c5. 6...a5 or (6...Qc7 are logical, but black doesn't really want to play Qxc5 and allow b4 with tempo.)]

6...Na6 7.g3 Qa5+!? [



A tricky move setting a trap for White.]

8.Nbd2 [8.Qd2? Runs into 8...Nb4! where White is in big trouble, with Ne4 and Nc2+ the threats. 9.Nc3 looks like it stops both, but Black can play 9...Ne4! anyway. 10.Nxe4 Bxb2 11.Qxb2?? (11.Rb1 Bg7?) 11...Nd3+]

8...Qxc5? [A question mark may seem harsh, but the whole point of Na6 was to recapture on c5 with the Knight.]

9.Bd4! [The Bishop cannot be kicked with moves like Nc6, and this opens options up for bringing the Queen behind the Bishop on the a1–h8 diagonal.]

9...Qh5!? [Again most ambitious. Black is trying to stop white castling kingside.]

10.Bg2 [



]

10...d6 [10...d5 I thought during the game was best, but actually after 11.cxd5 Qxd5 12.0-0 White's pieces are better co-ordinated, which has more of an effect than the symmetrical pawn structure.]

11.h3! [

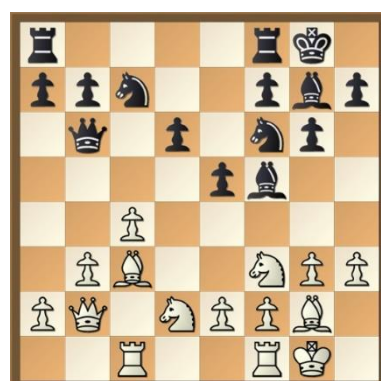


Posing some problems. Black cannot put any pieces on the 5th rank until the Queen is out of the way, or g4 will win the Knight on f6. It's hard to come up with a plan now for Black, which as humans we hate!]

11...Nc7 12.Qc1 Qa5 [An upsetting move to play psychologically, but it had to be played at some point.]

13.Bc3! [Gaining another tempo on the Queen, and stopping Ne6 or e5 coming with tempo for Black.]

13...Qb6 14.0-0± Bf5 15.Qb2 e5 16.Rac1 [



White is now firmly in control. The Queen would rather be on a square like e7, and the Knight on c7 is in the way.]

16...Be4? [The fatal mistake, but the position is already close to losing objectively.]

[16...Ne4 17.Nxe4 Bxe4 18.Nxe5! Bxg2 19.Nd7 and the tactics favour White 19...Qc6 20.Bxg7 Ne8! 21.Bxf8 Bxf1 (21...Bxh3 22.e4! Qxd7 (22...Bxf1 23.Rxf1 Qxd7 24.Bh6 Transposes.) 23.Bh6 Bxf1 24.Rxf1 ♚ Material is equal, but not activity and King safety.) 22.Nf6+! Nxf6 23.Rxf1 Rxf8 24.Qxf6+–]

17.c5! dxc5 18.Bxe5 Bxf3 19.Bxf3 [2 Bishops are so strong in open positions: this is no exception.]

19...Nce8 [19...Nfe8 was a better practical try, but after 20.Bxg7 Nxg7 21.Ne4 White will safely win both c5 and b7.]

20.Nc4 Qa6 21.Rfd1 Rc8 22.Nd6 [



The whole Queenside will be hoovered up.]

1-0

To play this game through in your web browser, go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/enewsletter-no-60-september-2021-games-studies-and-problems/>



Problem Corner

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

In the last Chess Moves I left you with this problem, from a recent online solving tourney –



Mate in 3
Don Smedley
The Problemist 2006

As I mentioned last time, this problem, typically for one used in a solving competition, has a very clearcut solution. Solvers can earn 5 points by finding the key move (and its threat) and the 4 black defences (and the replies to them that force mate on the 3rd move). The key is 1.Nc1!. You earn one point for giving this move together with its threat, 2.Nd3+. If Black fails to defend against it 2.Nd3+ will force him either to play 2...Bxd3, allowing 3.Rd5#, or 2...Rxd3, allowing 3.Bxf4#. One defence is 1...Bxc6 (because now 2.Nd3+ is met by 2...Rxd3 and if 3.Bxf4 then 3...Rxf4), but (rather paradoxically) 2.Bxf4+! (one point) forces mate next move (after 2...R3xf4 3.Nd3#; or 2...R4xf4 3.b8Q/B#). There's a similar logic in the variation 1...Rf2 2.Rd5+ (one point) and in 1...Ne3 2.Rd5+ (one point); and finally there's the less interesting line, (which, as I mentioned last time, had to be included to make the problem sound, and which in a solving competition would be the final point, a reward for the most thorough solvers): 1...Rd4 2.exd4+ (one point) (because after 2...Bxd4 3.b8=Q/B will be mate).

For light relief let's look at a 2-mover with quite a spectacular solution.



Mate in 2
C. G. Watney (after C. Promislo)
2nd Prize, *Good Companions*, 1922

The key is 1.Nxd6!, threatening 2.Qc8. This move transforms the position in numerous ways. It sets up two batteries (moves by the d6N and by the d5R would now discover attacks on the bK), but exposes the wK to checks on the 4th rank. Looking at these checks first, we see that if 1...Qd4+ or 1...Nc5+ or 1...Nd2+ the return of the wN to c4 does the trick: 2.Nc4#! Note that this *cross-check* does the trick because of another line-effect: the arrangement of the wR/bN/bQ/bK on the line from e3 to e6 meant that, as problemists would say, the bN and bQ were *half-pinned*, so that when one of them moves off the line the other is fully pinned and so cannot intercept the c6-e6 line at d6.

There are other checking responses open to Black; both captures of the d6N give check. After 1...Qxd6+, 2.Nc5 gives mate (the bQ is now pinned!); and after 1...Nxd6+ 2.Rd4 (blocking the line f4-b4 and relying on the fact that the bQ is pinned) gives mate from the Bb3. The bQ gets pinned on a different line after 1...Qxd5 2.Nf7 (a *double-pin* mate, as we utilize also the pin of the e4N). For completeness' sake we note the prosaic mates after moves of the a8N (2.N[x]c7) and after 1...exd6 (2.Qe8).

Here's a problem in a similar vein for you to solve for next time. In this one you want firstly to look at the *set play* – apparently strong moves by Black, and how they would be answered. I say that this problem is “in a similar vein” because you'll see that in this case Black already has a number of checking moves available, though White can exploit the geometric potentialities of the position to

answer these effectively. You do, however, have to find a move by White that will threaten mate and bring these possibilities to fruition.



Mate in 2

G.Heathcote

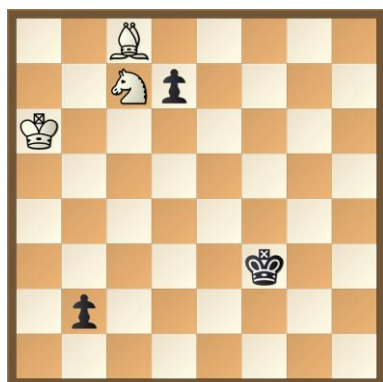
1st Prize, *Revue d'Echecs*, 1904

As ever, if you have any queries or comments don't hesitate to email me.

Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk



How to Solve a Study



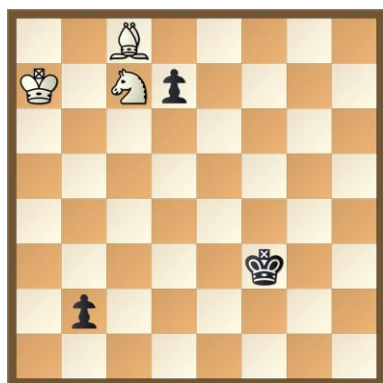
White to play and draw

Here's an unusual endgame study, unusual because it is two studies in one. The first diagram and the second have a very slight difference, just the apparently irrelevant change of putting the White king on either a6 or a7. I'll show you how to solve the first, but the second is for you to do. You can be sure that the solution to the second will be substantially different to the first, with the composer having cleverly used the trivial difference to make the solution to the first no longer work in the second and the solution to the second not work in the first.

You need a bit of endgame theory for these studies. The ending of KBN v. KQ is a win for the queen's team in almost all positions, but there are a couple of 'fortress' draws. The relevant one here is called the 'Karstedt draw' after Max Karstedt who found it early in the twentieth century. It has a knight on e4, a bishop on g2 and the king on g1 (or similar in any other quarter of the board), and the opponent can't approach with his king, so the defender can oscillate with his own king, or with his bishop into the corner.

If you're armed with that theoretical know-how, the first thing you try is to play 1.Bxd7? b1Q 2.Bc6+ Ke2 3.Nd5. Sadly, this fails to get to the fortress, because Black can disrupt its construction by, for example, 3...Qb8. It's not enough to know the key positions of theory, you also need to know how and when they work and don't work. So now what? Well, it's a composed study, so maybe we shouldn't have grabbed that pawn so greedily – composers don't just like sacrifices, they also like moves that refuse captures. So examine what happens after 1.Bb7+. Ah-hah! 1...Ke3 (say) 2.Be4 Kxe4 3.Nb5 d5 4.Na3 and the b-pawn is controlled. The White king can make it to the centre in time to deal with the d-pawn; if Black chose 1...Ke3 to try to keep the White king elbowed away, there's 4...d4 5.Nc4. Yes, job done: the solution is **1.Bb7+ Ke3 2.Be4 Kxe4 3.Nb5 d5 4.Na3**.

Readers of my endgame columns often send me their studies, for publication; this fine pair was sent by Paul Michelet, one of the UK's leading composers. They appeared in my column in Correspondence Chess in 2012. You are all welcome to send me your compositions.



White to play and draw

That's the position for solving. Try both to solve it, and to see why the method in the first position doesn't work in this one.

For an extra puzzle: I told you there are two types of fortress draw with bishop and knight against queen, and I've described one; the other one isn't relevant to these two studies but see if you can find it anyway.

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

See the end of the newsletter for the solution



Op-ed – Catching the Wave

Mark Jordan on turning the chess bug into competitive play ...

After a five-year hiatus from writing for the ECF eNewsletter, much has changed. At the time of my last article, the British Championships and other tournaments were fighting a growing inertia caused by a gradual but definite fall in the popularity of chess and an accompanying difficulty in attracting sponsors. Chess clubs' membership was decreasing and some had closed.

While there have been initiatives like the London Chess Classic, the trajectory was downwards. This was a far cry from the halcyon days of the 1970s and 80s inspired by Fischer-Spassky. Yet here we are in 2021, with a huge spike of people playing chess online and growing interest in broadcasts of important tournaments with unruly audiences of thousands delighting in following the triumphs and failures of Super GMs.

Now, with chess clubs and events slowly and cautiously opening up after the medical, social and economic calamity of Covid-19, people are beginning to check out and join local clubs. And it is for these new players – along with those returning to chess after a prolonged absence – that this column is written.

The two main forces behind this growth have been the sudden and enforced spare time caused by Covid-19 (online activity) and the coincidental broadcast of the Netflix miniseries *The Queen's Gambit* (orphaned girl becomes queen narrative) which may have set up a few false expectations. So what does chess really have to offer?

Unlike the Fischer boom when the chess enthusiast had a choice of over the board or correspondence games, and where opportunities for finding out more about the game were limited to printed books and magazines, there is now much more scope to suit tastes and lifestyles. You can play, solve positions, watch instructive videos and read a plethora of articles free of charge.

The traditionalists might still claim that for real improvement and mastery you should play over the board. But with all of this support and a raft of training opportunities available online, it is possible to start as a beginner and become a strong player without physically moving a piece. However, there are limitations to this strategy. Looking over a game you've played with teammates or stronger club members and engaging in animated debate may be enjoyable and instructive, but this is more difficult to recreate online. Over the board club matches and arbitrated tournaments provide tried and tested conditions which are more fair, and have a more accurate reflection of your current standard. And IMHO (to borrow an online acronym) they are more sociable and fun than playing online.

Players new to chess have a choice of around 600 chess clubs in most towns and cities in the UK (<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>) and the ECF calendar (<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>) is also useful. And if you are thinking about entering a tournament, even if you have been playing for a while online, I would suggest that going to the local chess club is a good first step to get a real feel for your current playing strength.

You're never too weak to enter an over the board tournament, but it's useful to know your current standard to decide which section you should enter. Many tournaments take place at the weekend, and most have sections for beginners, intermediates and an open section which may well boast an occasional GM. A few tournaments also have sections for beginners and you'll find tournaments for juniors, women and girls (<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/womens-chess-community-page/>) along with seniors (over 55s cohort).

To play competitive matches for your local club or to enter most tournaments you need to either pay a game fee or become a member of the English Chess Federation or other federations (Scottish Chess Federation, Welsh Chess Association). Since this membership also includes membership of FIDE (the game's world governing body), you can get a FIDE rating here or abroad. The fee is not excessive and it's well worth it if you fancy playing more than a game or two of competitive chess.

I'm often asked about how good a beginner can get. With application, you can become a decent club player. Whatever your level, there are Leagues and tournaments that can accommodate you. Enjoying the game is the most important criteria, so from the bus to the beach, from the League to the lounge, wherever you lay your hat can be your chess home.



Nurse with a finger on the chess pulse

Mark Rivlin interviews Rayelynn Posadas

A critical care nurse with a Masters degree, Rayelynn is a 1900-rated player who has won national titles in her native Philippines. Now living and working in North Carolina, USA, Rayelynn continues to play online for The Buffs in Stockton and White Rose in 4NCL. She secured second place in the Teeside International Women's Invitational 2019 and is active on social media promoting women's chess (<https://twitter.com/FemaleNurse27>).

Tell us about your background and how you got into chess



My first exposure in chess was at the age of three watching my brothers play. After defeating the school coach I played Board 1 but did not take chess any further. But I studied chess and that was when I realised I had a future in this game.

You spent four years working and playing chess in England. How was that experience?

When I moved to England in 2017, I started looking for opportunities to join a club. It was only in 2018 when I got an invitation from Sean Cassidy, a Chess in Schools teacher to join The Buffs. There I met Sean Marsh, one of the top CSC chess coaches/teachers who has always been supportive of my journey in chess.

Before the pandemic, I participated in the English Women's Championship and UK's Women Blitz for two consecutive years (2018 and 2019). In 2018, I played in Solihull – it was my first tournament after seven years of inactivity and my first FIDE-rated games. In 2019, IM Richard Palliser invited me to play with 4NCL White Rose. I wasn't sure I was ready to play in such an illustrious company but eventually I joined White Rose.

I also regularly participated in online tournaments organised by the Professional Chess Association of the Philippines where I joined my local team Negros Kingsmen.

What are your notable chess achievements?

I won two national championships in the Philippines; The Philippine Youth Chess Championship (Under 12s) in 2001, and the Philippines National Olympic Festival (Women's Open Category) in 2008. I also played and won medals in numerous regional and national level tournaments, too, in the Philippines. In March 2020, just before lockdown, I won the Project 30 KO organised by Sean Marsh in Stockton.

It's been a difficult 18 months for chess. How have you coped during the pandemic?

The pandemic did not hinder me from getting further training in chess, this time, with my childhood friend and coach, IM Joel Pimentel. I was also one of the organisers of the England Women Lichess team where we organised a match between Philippines and England.

What do you like most – standard play, rapidplay or blitz – and why?

I like standard play. I loved to play 180|0 when I was young and did not have any opening theory. When I started to study chess, my coach told me that whenever your opponent moves, just think of your response, making sure to develop the Knight and Bishop and castle. Playing in longer games

helped me to think about strategy. I used to spend too much time on openings, but now I focus more on opening theory. I play rapid and blitz to practice my repertoire. For variations, I play bullet.

Which people have had an influence on your chess career?

I am blessed to have family and friends who have supported me. My work colleagues have been very supportive in adjusting my work schedule to enable participation in longer tournaments.

The person who has most influenced me is Sean Marsh. After years of not playing, I had lost my appetite and confidence for chess but he always accentuates the positive aspects of my game.

Joining the England Women's Lichess team was a great confidence booster, particularly, through IM Jovanka Houska, IM Lawrence Cooper, and Jo Hutchinson. I can proudly say that I am part of a great team with great friends.

Outside of chess, tell us about your work and other interests.

I am a full-time ICU nurse. I earned a master's degree in nursing in the Philippines. I play various musical instruments (piano, guitar, bass guitar, drums and beatbox). I sing in a choir, compose songs, and have participated in musical theatre. I also make videos and help promote the England Women Lichess Team. I have also done promotional work for ECU and the FIDE Women's Commission too.

What is your most memorable game?

<http://chess-results.com/partieSuche.aspx?lan=1&art=4&tnr=467011&rd=4>

I beat WFM Kanwal Bhatia. This was the first time I played a standard play against a titled player over the board in England and I feel blessed and humbled to have this great experience.

***The Queen's Gambit* Netflix series resulted in people all over the world getting into chess. Why do you think it was so popular?**

The series embraced women's empowerment with a message about harnessing one's inner strength, abilities and talents to succeed.

What can the ECF do to attract more girls and women to play chess?

For me, ECF should strengthen its online chess programme. I was surprised to learn that there are many women around England who are very strong but don't have the resources and time to play in OTB leagues and tournaments. By reaching out to them online, more of them can be actively involved in chess. It would also be good to make an online community where we can develop stronger ties.

You are currently rated 1915 in standard play OTB. Now the Leagues and Tournaments are starting up again, what are your rating aims for the next two years?

I am praying and hoping to become a titled player in the next two to three years. It's not easy balancing chess with nursing commitments. But my colleagues in North Carolina are extremely accommodating and I will be back playing OTB tournament in October.

How would you advise players rated around 1500 to get to 1800-plus?

Improving at chess is so much easier now with computer analysis and immediate access to Super GMs' games. My two tips are work hard and find a good coach.

Who are your favourite chess commentators?

I have learned a lot watching the Champions Chess Tour analysis with GM David Howell, IM Jovanka Houska, and Kaja Snare. I also watch ECF streams, especially GM Matthew Sadler and WIM Natasha Regan.



Fischer, Spassky and Mr Nicholson

Paul Conway on his first steps in competitive chess

1972-3

That summer my family were driving round the south of France in our dormobile. We based ourselves on campsites, and during the day visited the famous caves with their prehistoric paintings – Lascaux, Carnac and Les Eyzies. They were absorbing, but what really held my attention that holiday was the Fischer-Spassky match in Reykjavik.

The day after each game my father Mike would drive us to the nearest town where we would buy the International *Herald Tribune* which carried reports of the match. Back at the campsite we would sit at the fold down table in the back of the van, set up the pieces and go through the game. Mike had been a correspondence player in the 1950s and had taught me to play four years earlier when I was eight.

We suffered the first two games, and it looked anticlimactic, as though Spassky would easily prevail. In the first game Fischer made the dubious Bxh2 move, and had to give up the Bishop shortly afterwards. We had an agonising wait after the adjournment for the next day's *Tribune* to confirm that he was not able to hold. The second game was defaulted by Fischer and the whole match seemed in question.

Then in game three Fischer made the astonishing move 11...Nh5. I still remember my father saying *OK, all that stuff I told you about developing your pieces, controlling the centre, looking after your pawn structure ... forget it, that's a genius move. It's about knowing when to break the rules.*



Spassky-Fischer (1972) game 3, position after 11 ... Nh5!?

The move was justified tactically and positionally, and Fischer notched up his first ever win against Spassky.

I joined the South Manchester Chess Club. Their base was a Nissen hut on Yew Tree Road, behind Platt Fields Park. In charge was J. R. Nicholson. He was about 170, but to me looked much older. Jim had studied chemistry at the University of Manchester. He asked me my full name and when he saw my initials, PBC, he said *mm PbC, lead carbide, highly unstable if it can exist at all.*

There were a number of juniors who played as the club's fourth team in the Manchester League, including the Ryba twins, Alex and Nick. Jim was excited when I introduced my school friend John

Raby to the club, and set about trying to find a junior with the surname Bray – he wanted to field a team in which the players' names were all anagrams, but this never came to pass.

The entrance to the club opened onto the main playing room where there were enough tables for twenty boards. The room was used for League and County games and for the club championship. At the back was the analysis room, trestle tables and boards always set up. This was for post mortems, skittles and blitz. Jim would sit in there with the juniors, and we went through games from an old Leonard Barden edition of *How Good is Your Chess*, we wrote down our answers and kept score. On one occasion I was fired up about the Benko Gambit which was just becoming fashionable then and Jim showed us the Blumenfeld – also involving an early b5 Pawn sacrifice, but leading to play in the centre rather than queenside.

In 1973, the Anglo-Dutch match was being held at Manchester Town Hall. Richard Furness, the organiser, contacted Jim to see if South Manchester had juniors willing to run the demonstration boards. On Board One Ray Keene was playing Max Euwe, and I looked after Jonathan Penrose and Jan Hein Donner on Board Two. William Hartston, Jan Timman and Michael Stean – this was a golden opportunity to see some of the legends of the game in action. On the first day I kept walking down to the lower boards where the Manchester schoolboy Jonathan Mestel was playing an exciting sacrificial attack against his opponent's Najdorf, eventually drawn.

The club met three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I was there at every opportunity until a bad school report indicated that I had been neglecting my studies. After that I only went on Fridays. There was some justice to this – using *Modern Chess Openings 11* I had learned a new repertoire with 1. d4. It had done wonders for my standing in the club's junior championship, and nothing for my schoolwork. My apprenticeship was just beginning.



Photo Essay - Timur the merrier

Mark Rivlin

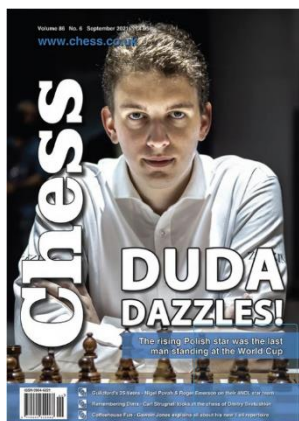
In May 2017 the word got out that GM Timur Gareyev (<https://blindfoldking.com/>) was in London and Hackney Chess Club invited him to do a simul. This was not one of his 48-game blindfold gigs on an exercise bike, rather an ad hoc evening in The Prince pub in Stoke Newington where 17 club members of all ages and levels could enjoy playing a GM. We invited Michele Monticello to shoot the session, which he did gratis. Michele runs an estate agency (michaelmorris.co.uk) in Finsbury Park and when he is not selling and letting properties, he is a seriously good photographer (michelemonticello.com). He likes these interesting assignments.

What I particularly like about this shoot is how Michele goes on and off the boards to capture the mood of Timur, players and spectators. The shoot encapsulates the soul of chess as club players, even those at 2000-plus hit the marathon wall at different stages before the inevitable while the GM barely breaks a sweat (although FM Bob Eames got half a point). I love Michele's comment in his intro:

There is something really creative in capturing a chess player deep in thought. It's the equivalent of getting the right shot of a footballer as he swivels to score a great goal ... only with chess, you have to try to get inside the mind of the player.

Here is a link to the shoot - <https://www.michelemonticello.com/timur-gareyev/>

Michele can be contacted via his website - <https://www.michelemonticello.com>



CHESS MAGAZINE

This month's taster is here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/chess-magazine-september-2021-sample.pdf>

To purchase and/or subscribe, go to <https://chess.co.uk/collections/chess-magazine/products/chess-magazine-september-2021>



How to Solve a Study – solution

1.Bxd7 b1Q 2.Bc6+ Ke2 3.Nd5. White will follow up with Bb7 and achieve the Karstedt fortress, because the White king is one square nearer the corner compared to the first position.

The solution to the first position becomes a 'try' in the second: 1.Bb7+? Ke3 2.Be4 Kxe4 3.Nb5 d5 4.Na3 fails only to the unexpected move 4...Kf4 which avoids squares where it could be checked and prepares to escort the d-pawn down the board. Notice also that the try in the first becomes the solution in the second.

The extra puzzle asked you find a different type of fortress structure in KBN v. KQ. In the Karstedt structure, the attacking king can roam most of the board, but can't enter the defender's corner. In the second type, the attacking king is blocked into a corner: White: Kd4, Ba3, Nc3 and Black: Ka1, Qf1. The play goes, for example, 1...Qa6 2.Bc1 and we have the same position, although reflected along the diagonal. With White to play, however, he loses because he cannot maintain the blockade.



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