



November 2021



The Best of British!

Harriet Hunt and Nick Pert win the OTB Championships in Hull

Peter Wells reviews the World Championship

Interview with ECF Silver Rep John Reyes

Sarah and Alex Longson on the Terafinals

Plans to make ChessMoves an international journal

Mark Jordan on playing league chess

Analysis and studies from Michael Adams, Keith Arkell, Ian Watson ... and more!



Welcome to the November edition of ChessMoves.

In this edition we feature a wonderful preview by GM Peter Wells of the forthcoming World Championship match between reigning champion Magnus Carlsen and challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi in Dubai. We also feature articles from GM Nick Pert and IM and WGM Harriet Hunt on their victories at the recent British Championships in Hull, and we are delighted to feature our new Clubs section. Our AGM took place in London on 16th October. We welcome Aga Milewska as the new ECF Director of Women's Chess and the December issue will feature an interview with her. We also welcome Shohreh Bayat as ECF Director of Events. The only contested role was that of Chair of the Governance Committee, with Robert Stern being re-elected.

I'm devoting part of the editorial this month to our own *ChessMoves*. With regular features from our English titled players, a monthly interview, book reviews and quality submissions from members who have responded well to our Creative Writing Initiative, we want the magazine to reach a wider audience of chess enthusiasts around the world. We are looking at various options, including a printed magazine option (if there is enough interest) and putting a digital copy of the magazine on a publishing platform to build an international following, and we would appreciate you taking time to fill in a questionnaire here - <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-chessmoves-questionnaire/>. Our aim is to make *ChessMoves* a magazine that emulates the popular *Chess Life*, the US Chess Federation magazine.

With over-the-board chess in England at around 30 percent of the pre-lockdown figures and increasing fast, chess players are responding well to a 'back to normal' atmosphere. In the three games I have played, it was great to be back and experiencing the live atmosphere, rather than being stuck to a screen. Never have cold halls been so missed.

--- Mark Rivlin



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NEWS and VIEWS

Director of Home Chess Report

Nigel Towers writes ...

ECF Online

Clubs and Weekly Events

ECF online club memberships continue to increase with over 4,800 in the Chess.com ECF Open Club, almost 1,600 in the ECF Members Club and around 1,350 in the Lichess English Chess Players club. We are continuing with 8 ECF online rated club tournaments per week on Chess.com and Lichess.

Club events are all ECF online rated along with registered online league and congress events. The online ratings are now calculated in the main ECF rating system and are shown alongside players' over the board ratings in the ECF rating database here -

https://www.ecfrating.org.uk/v2/new/list_players.php

The Grand Prix

The ECF Online Blitz and Rapid Grand Prix Series continues with the eighth Blitz and Rapid events on the first and third Sundays in October. The leaderboards after Round 8 are as below with the last rounds in November and everything still to play for in the various sections. We will be featuring a full report on the Online Grand Prix Season 1 in next month's edition.

Blitz Grand Prix full details -

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

Open Section Top 4 after 8 events	Points from highest scoring 6 events	Events
Harry Grieve	110	6
GM Keith Arkell	107	7
Peter Finn	101	7
Edward Jackson	51	7

Rapid Grand Prix full details -

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

Open Section Top 4 after 8 events	Points from highest scoring 6 events	Events
David Walker	113	7
GM Keith Arkell	104	7
Frederick Gordon	70	6
Mikhail Sedykh	47	7

International Series

The English Chess players team continues to play in the regular Mega Team Battles which run every fortnight on Friday afternoons, the Bundesliga / Quarantine league on Sunday and Thursday Evenings, the Torres de Loule on Sunday afternoons where we play in Division 1, and the mid-week Champions League on Tuesday Evenings. We are currently moving between divisions 3 and 4 of the main Bundesliga with GMs Keith Arkell and Matthew Sadler as our top scorers in the twice weekly events.

Marathons

The Lichess English Chess Players team continues to play in the Fischer Random 12 hour marathon series on Saturdays as well as the AT64 classical marathons on Fridays and Tuesdays.

Return to over-the-board

The return to play over the board gathers momentum with more than 20 congresses / events taking place around the country during October compared with 9 in September. October events included -

Date	Event
October 1	Castle Chess 17th 'A' Fareham Congress
October 2	Norfolk County Chess Championships
October 2	Coulsdon Chess October 2021 Rapidplay Oct 2 @ 10:00 am – 6:30 pm
October 2-3	British Juniors Championships 2021 @ Kents Hill Park Hotel, Milton Keynes
October 3	1st Shark Tank LJCC (Championship Qualifying event for the London Junior Championship finals held in December.)
October 4	10 British Senior Championships 2021 @ Kents Hill Park Hotel, Milton Keynes
October 9-10	UK Chess Challenge Terafinal @ Blenheim Palace Woodstock OX20 1PP
October 9	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
October 10	Cheney Rapidplays Event 10
October 14	British Championships 2021 – Women's Championship, Hull
October 16	Sussex Junior Worth Rapidplay (LJCC qualifier).
October 16	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix
October 16	Docklands Chess Poplar Rapid Tournament
October 17	29th Birmingham Rapidplay @ Quinborne Community Centre
October 18	Wilson's School FIDE Rapidplay @ Wilson's School
October 19	Battersea FIDE Blitz @ Battersea Labour Club
October 22	3rd Hull 4NCL International Congress, University of Hull, 2021
October 23	38th Bury St Edmunds Congress
October 25	Coulsdon Chess Events
October 25 - 29	1st EJCOA Forest Hall Invitational, Newcastle upon Tyne
October 29	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
October 29	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix
October 29	Scarborough Chess Congress

Elsewhere in the newsletter we feature games from the British Championship, UKCC Terafinal, and 3rd Hull Invitational.

Leagues are starting up again across the country with over 100 leagues and 80 clubs reporting results in LMS, where the takeup of new clubs and leagues continues.

The ECF's Manager of Rating Brian Valentine reports that October OTB activity is more than double September and we are now at 28% of pre-pandemic figures for Standard and 55% for rapid which are encouraging figures compared with a couple of months back.

It looks like there may be a move towards faster time controls for events which have restarted to date and there have also been many requests for rating of blitz events which we will be looking at adding to the lists once there are sufficient events for accurate ratings to be published.

English leagues and clubs support

We are continuing to provide support for clubs across England based on the feedback provided from the clubs survey. You can read more about these on the clubs community page here -

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>

Elsewhere in the newsletter we have a new **Clubs Corner** section with more details from the clubs survey and a report on some of the initiatives which clubs are progressing as we return to over the board chess in club and league events.

Over-the-board events 2021

As last month we are continuing with the ECF's programme of over the board events for 2021.

British Championships 2021 – 2nd October to 17th October

The Over the Board Championships ran for 2 weeks from 2nd to 17th October.

107th British Championships

The main championships were played over 9 rounds from 2nd to 10th October in Hull. The top 10 places were as below, with some pictures from the games.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	TB1
1	1	GM	Pert Nicholas	ENG	2548	Sandhurst	6,5
2	2	GM	Gormally Daniel	ENG	2480	Blackthorne Russia	6,0
	3	FM	Harvey Marcus R	ENG	2465	Witney / 4NCL Wood Green	6,0
	4	GM	Hebden Mark L	ENG	2455	Syston	6,0
	8	IM	Ledger Andrew J	ENG	2329	Sheffield	6,0
	9	FM	Olson Hamish	SCO	2273	Bon Accord	6,0
7	5	IM	McPhillips Joseph	ENG	2425	Bolton	5,5
	16		Finn Peter	ENG	1959	Wycombe And Hazlemere	5,5
9	6	GM	Arkell Keith C	ENG	2380	Cheddleton	5,0
10	13	WFM	Sucikova Svetlana	SVK	2175	White Rose	4,5
	14	WFM	Head Louise	ENG	2090	Crowthorne	4,5



GM Nick Pert plays Freddie Gordon



GM Danny Gormally vs IM Marcus Harvey



IM Joe McPhillips vs Peter Finn

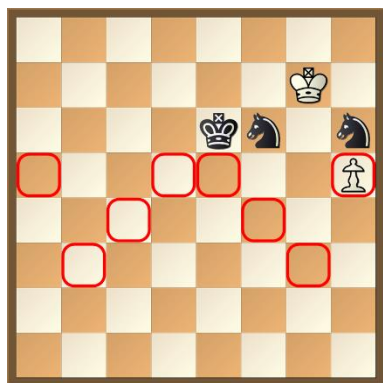
Nick Pert managed to win the event and is now the 107th British Champion, finishing on 6.5 points just ahead of Danny Gormally, Marcus Harvey, Mark Hebden, Andrew Ledger and Hamish Olson who all finished just behind on 6 points.

You can find an interview and report on the tournament which Nick did for Chessbase at the YouTube link below, including Nick's commentary on the games several of which ended up in rook and pawn endgames -

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/pert-s-path-to-winning-the-british-otb-championship-2021>

Elsewhere in the newsletter Nick also talks through his round 8 game against IM Joe McPhillips, and how he managed to stay ahead of the pack to win the event.

The championship also produced a study-like ending in the game between Louise Head and Hamish Olson. This game resulted in a very rare 2 knights v pawn endgame with the following position reached at move 70 with black to move. Looking through the moves with an engine the computer suddenly sees mate in 76 moves which tells you that something special is happening here.

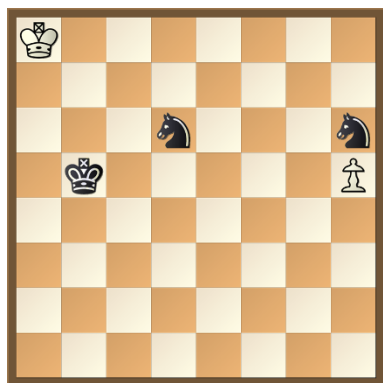


The players had reached a two knights v pawn endgame with the white pawn on the Troitsky line. The line was worked out by the great study composer and theoretician Alexy Troitsky as the furthest forward that the pawn may be for the side with the knights to force a win. In this case the pawn is on the line which means it's a theoretical win for black.

Alexy Alexeyevich Troitsky worked all this out in exhaustive detail in the 1920's with some painstaking study on the position many years before computer engines were available, eventually discovering the magic line and the rule for the knights to be able to deliver checkmate.

The winning technique is to use the king and one of the knights to force the king into the corner away from the pawn while the other knight maintains the pawn blockade. In practice the mate is complex to execute withing the 50 move rules and one of the most difficult of the minor piece endgame positions.

The game between Louise and Hamish continued for another 25 moves of manoeuvring after which the following position was reached.



It was now black to play mate in six. Hint – you need to get the first move right.

Women's Championship (14th – 17th October)

The top 10 places were as below, again with some pictures from the games.

Final Ranking after 7 Rounds

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	TB1
1	1	IM	Hunt Harriet	ENG	2414	None	5,5
2	3	WGM	Toma Katarzyna	ENG	2254	Wood Green	5,0
3	4		Kueh Audrey	ENG	2080		4,5
4	2	GM	Arakhamia-Grant Ketevan	SCO	2376	None	4,5
5	5	WCM	Varney Zoe	ENG	1937	None	4,5



IM Harriet Hunt vs Zoe Varney



GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant vs WGM Katarzyna Toma

The Women's Championship had a strong field of 11 players with the lead changing hands several times during the course of the event. IM Harriet became the British Women's Champion with 5.5 points after the 7th round, followed closely by WGM Kata Toma on 5 points, and Audrey Kueh, GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant and Zoe Varney all finishing on 5 points. Harriet provides her perspective on the event, including an annotation of her game against Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, elsewhere in the newsletter.

British Juniors – Milton Keynes

The British Juniors took place in Milton Keynes on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd October with winners and new champions as follows -

U18 (5 rounds U18/U16 combined competition)

5	Kuzhelev Timur	U18	RUS	Coulsdon	3,0
8	Mckay Jonathan	U18	SCO	Glasgow Montrose	2,5
10	Barry Jake	U18	ENG	None	2,0

U16 (5 rounds U18/U16 combined competition)

1	Ismail Mohammed Aayan	U16	ENG	None	5,0
2	Sieczkowski Adam	U16	ENG	Witney	4,0
3	Badacsonyi Frankie	U16	ENG	Muswell Hill	3,5

U14 (5 rounds)

1	Kolani Arjun	ENG	Crowborough	4,5
2	Madhavan Sanjith	SCO	Glasgow	4,0
3	Pert Nina P	ENG	Brentwood	3,5

U12 (5 rounds)

1	Hobson Kenneth	ENG	Cowley	4,5
2	Patel Zain	ENG	Kings College School	3,5
3	Li Ethan Bingxuan	ENG	None	3,5

U10 (7 rounds)

1	Murawski Jan	ENG	St Josephs School	6,5
2	Steiners Emils	LAT	Battersea	5,0
3	Hanache Kai	ENG	None	5,0

U8 (7 rounds)

1	Zhao George	ENG	Westminster Under School	6,0
2	Lishoy Gengis Paratazham Dildarav	ENG	Surrey Juniors	5,5
3	Jakhria Kushal	ENG	Charlton	5,0

Last month we looked at some of the critical positions in the U8's and U10's. This month we cover one of U16 Champion Mohammed Ayan Ismail's games in the combined U16/ U18 section where Ayan finished first with a perfect 6 out of 6.

(6870) Ismail,Mohammed Aayan (1719) - Badacsonyi,Frankie (1511) [A30]

2021 British Chess Championships U18 Milton Keynes (Kents Hill Par (4.1), 03.10.2021

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.e3 e6 3.c4 b6 4.b3 Bb7 5.Be2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Bb2

We have reached an English Opening Queen's Indian variation.

7...c5 8.Nc3

So far we are following Andersson v Tal from 1976 and Andersson v Miles.

8...d6 9.d4 Ne4 10.Nxe4 Bxe4 11.Nd2 Bb7



12.Bf3 Looking to exchange the queen's indian bishop.

12...Qc7 13.Rc1 Nd7 14.Qe2 Rac8 15.Rfd1 Rfd8 16.Nf1 Nf6 17.Ng3 The position is about equal with W aiming for a K side initiative.

17...Qb8 18.d5!



W is slightly better now because of the more active bishop.

18...e5 Probably the best move but black's bishop is now shut out.

18...exd5 19.Nf5 Rd7 20.Bg4 and black is struggling.

19.Nf5 Qc7 20.e4 g6 21.Nxe7+ Qxe7 22.Qe3 Rc7 23.Be2



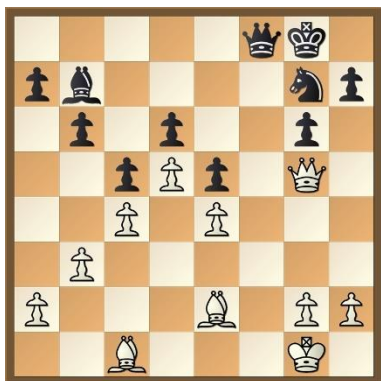
Aiming for f4 and a king side attack.

23...Ne8 24.f4 f6 24...exf4 25.Qxf4 And white has a big attack.

25.fxe5 fxe5 26.Rf1 Ng7 27.Rf2 Looking to double on the f file.

27...Rf8 28.Rcf1 Rcc8 29.Bc1 Rxf2 30.Rxf2 Rf8 31.Rxf8+ Qxf8 32.Qg5

W has the more active pieces and is looking to take advantage of the bishop pair.



32...Bc8 33.Qh4 With the idea of Bg5 and attacking on the dark squares.

33...Ne8 34.Bg5 Qf7



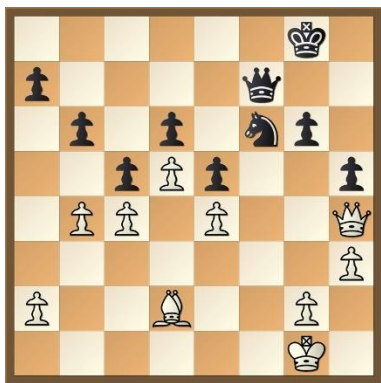
35.Bg4?! This allows black to equalize after the exchange with black able to hold the position. Better to keep the bishops on.

35.h3 Ng7 36.Bf3 Ne8 37.Kf2 Ng7

35...Bxg4 36.Qxg4 Nf6 37.Qh4 Kg7 38.Qh3 h5 39.Qh4 Qf8 40.h3 Qf7 41.Bd2 Kg8

It's difficult to make progress on the K side and white switches to the Q side.

42.b4

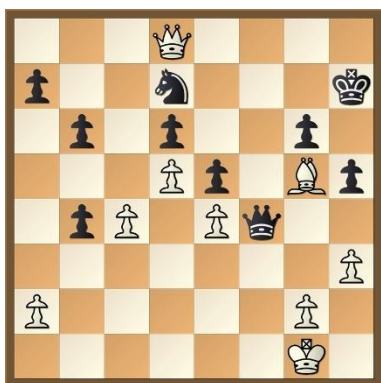


42.. Nd7? The critical mistake allowing W to make his way into black's position on the dark squares.

43.Qd8+ Kh7 44.Bg5?! 44.Qc7 Would have been winning for white with the various weak pawns.

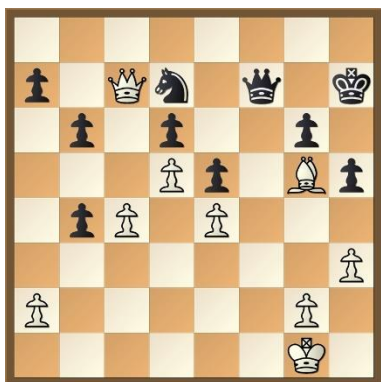
44...cxb4 45.Be7 Nc5 would have equalised with play for both sides.

45...Qf4 46.Bg5



Stopping the perpetual check and still playing for a win.

46...Qf7 47.Qc7



White is back in control with the dark square bishop stopping the queen from infiltrating on the f file and the White queen looking to pick up some of the weak pawns.

47...a5 48.Qxd6 White is now clearly better and probably winning.

48...a4 49.Qxb4 Another pawn drops.

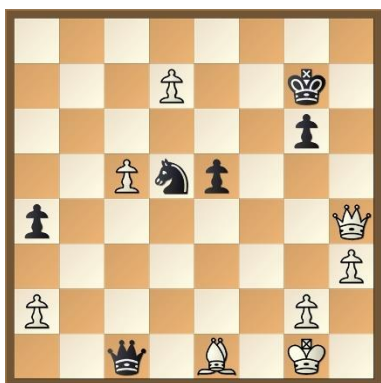
49...Nc5 50.Qxb6 Nxe4 51.Qe3 Qf5 52.Be7 Kg7 53.c5



53...Kf7 54.Bd8 Ke8 55.Ba5 h4 56.Be1 56.c6! Probably best pushing the pawn straight away.

56...Nf6 57.d6 Nd5 58.Qe2 Qf4 59.Qb5+ Kf7 60.Qb7+ Ke6 The rest is straight forward.

61.Qc8+ Kf7 62.Qd7+ Kf8 63.Qd8+ Kg7 64.Qxh4 Qc1 65.d7



And the pawn cant be stopped.

1-0

British Seniors – Milton Keynes

The British Seniors took place in Milton Keynes with Over 50 and Over 65 sections over 7 rounds from Monday 4th – Sunday 9th October. The Over 50's section was won by FM Mike Waddington on 6 out of 7 points, followed by Ian Robson and Don Mason on 5 points.

Over 50s - Final Ranking after 7 Rounds

Rk.	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	TB1
1	10	FM Waddington Mike P	ENG	2047	Dorchester	6,0
2	3	Robson Ian A	ENG	2189	Wotton Hall	5,0
	8	Mason Donald J	ENG	2062	Shirley & Wythall	5,0
4	4	CM Kett Timothy J	WLS	2156	4NCL West Is Best	4,5
	6	Crocker Philip J	ENG	2109	Chester	4,5

Over 65's – Final Ranking after 7 Rounds

Rk.	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	TB1
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1	15	De Coverly Roger D	ENG	1863	Bourne End	5,5
2	4	Myall Ivan J	ENG	2011	Chelmsford	5,0
3	7	Stimpson Philip	ENG	1949	Guildford	4,5
4	6	Habershon Paul F	ENG	1977	Bedford	4,5

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 here - 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 including the British based on the liveboard feeds, UK vs Kazakhstan Juniors on Chess.com, and the last round of the ECF online Blitz Grand Prix on the ECF's YouTube channel here - <https://www.youtube.com/c/EnglishChessFederation/videos>

Do try and catch up on some of the recent events which including recordings of the online internationals and team battles.

Clubs Corner

There is a network of now around 800 local chess clubs across England registered in the ECF's club finder here - <https://ecf.justgo.com/clubfinder.htm> - and you will almost certainly be able to find some clubs nearby, many with junior sections. Many clubs now have Twitter accounts which they use to publicise club events and keep in touch with existing and new members. These are now included in the club finder directory so you should be able to find a club and find their web site and social media addresses.



You can read more about clubs across England in our Clubs Community page - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-home-page/>

The five priority areas that we are looking at for clubs support are -

- Continuing to raise the profile of the game and the network of OTB clubs on a national basis to help attract support for new club members
- Providing support for clubs looking to establish a web site or social media presence
- Helping leagues and clubs to establish themselves on the ECF's LMS system
- Continuing to provide guidance and support on COVID safety

- Sharing best practice and helping clubs to work together on a regional or national basis to share ideas, initiatives and facilities.

The Clubs Community page now has a list of initiatives and ideas shared by local clubs which you can find here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/chess-club-initiatives/> - together with a feedback section for clubs to share information and ideas.

Here are some examples of club initiatives from around the country as clubs come out of the long period of lockdown.

Northwich Chess Club, Cheshire

<https://northwichchessclub.com/>



Three years ago Northwich were down to a core of 6 players and only one 500 team in WDCL. We nearly closed. We decided to try and build the club back. What actions did we take to save the club?

- We contacted former players to see if they were interested in returning (some did).
- We invested in new Boards and clocks to smarten up our appearance.
- We made joining free to new members for a year.
- We advertised on the Northwich facebook page (free)
- We tried to set up web site with some success (more needs to be done)
- We took a stand at a local village fete
- As membership grew we set up three teams each with their own captain.
- We maintained a sociable atmosphere on club nights when we didn't have a match
- During the pandemic we ran our Monday night chess club online.
- We collect £10 per member in subs and invest every pound back into club facilities, if we have no expenditure then we waive the subs.

The result is that we now have 14 members with several more promising to join when the pandemic is over. In the 2019/20 season we ran three teams. So, it can be done but does need effort from club members.

What more do we have planned?

- We are not happy with our existing venue as we keep getting pushed around from one room to another, so we plan to move if we can find a suitable alternative. We have considered pubs, a scout hut, a rugby club, a cricket club and council facilities. All of these present their challenges. We want better facilities to play social chess and league matches. Some venues we have looked

at want £50 per night. We haven't got that. I suspect all clubs have this issue. Pubs want the footfall so I suspect that will be the answer, so long as we can get an area that is sufficiently quiet for matches.

- We plan to have our website re-built. It's not just setting it up but also keeping it up to date.
 - We have agreed to support The Grange Junior School with their Chess Club. It currently has 30 members.
 - We have agreed to open a Junior Chess Club at Northwich Library on a Saturday morning. The library won't charge us as we are using a public area and they want the footfall. I'm hopeful that we will grow attendance there and it will spill over to some parents joining our Monday night club.
 - We will attach our club banner to the railings outside the library to advertise the club.
6. We will keep the online club under review as we have certainly attracted new members through this channel.
- We will work with Chess and Schools and Communities (CSC) to see if we can grow Junior Chess in Northwich

Aylsham Chess Club, Norfolk

Email: aylshamchessclub@gmail.com

We have used local media publicity to attract new players who have played chess during lockdowns and/or been motivated by The Queen's Gambit.

The EDP (Eastern Daily Press) has been very supportive to Aylsham Chess Club (ACC), Norfolk County Chess Association (NCCA) and chess in general over the last year or so. Below are links to four articles, which have generated significant interest in new and returning chess players, although very much skewed towards male players!

Checkmate! How a married Norwich couple met over the chessboard –

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/norwich-couple-heather-and-martin-walker-marry-8334978>

Delight as chess club resumes 'over the board' play –

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/aylsham-chess-club-resumes-play-8136344>



'Absolutely perfect' – Norfolk chess champ on The Queen's Gambit –

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/kathleen-hindle-chess-career-queens-gambit-6858002>

Chessington Chess Club, Surrey

Email: chessingtonchessclub@gmail.com Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CHESSingtonClub>

We think having free membership this year has been key in allowing us to welcome a much wider range of audience than we otherwise would have – particularly of players of all ability and background. We may be the only club in Surrey offering this. Furthermore, we have been proactively looking to get more women, children and young people interested in joining.

To date we have had more women join our team, and even more fantastic, at our recent blitz tournament last Wednesday, we had a great turn out with female winners, which adds emphasis that more should be done to allow women to participate and showcase their (perhaps unrealised) strengths in the game.



Chessington First Blitz prize winners

We recently launched our junior chess clubs on Mondays, and we have so far, with no advertising, had eight children join on our first day, three girls and five boys. I think the key here is to not just attract children but having the right dialogues with parents to make them understand the merits of chess and have appreciation for it. This can be quite tricky when they have been brought up to think chess is boring or not helpful. So for me, that's where a lot of focus should be as well. We charge £5.00 a session, but currently that is used to cover venue hiring costs, and whatever is left is to claw back the expenses on our equipment. We don't pay ourselves for the teaching or time.

In terms of inclusivity is where I think we have succeeded the most. Our club has opened the doors to all players from walks of life, from members who have been strong players all their lives, to inexperienced players willing to give it a go. We've even had members who have sought out our club as an outlet/haven to escape from their daily stresses in their busy lives – from doctors, musicians and college students to first-time parents. Elsewhere, we have members who are on the spectrum and have found our club a friendly environment to be themselves in.

Our success to date is down to three things, I think –

- 1) our unwavering efforts, enthusiasm and passion to help put chess on the map and grow our club. Every day we set out on working on an initiative to get closer to our goal
- 2) the guidance and support our peers at Epsom Chess club have provided us
- 3) Our chess teacher, IM Michael Basman, who is a fellow Chessington resident and has given us huge amount of support, showing us the ropes to make our club a success.

Stroud Chess Club

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/StroudChess/>

Now we've started meeting face-to-face again our weekly Lichess arenas are still going strong. We've got several new members turning up to our physical club nights having taken chess up at our Lichess arenas.

As regards the online chess coaching – we had a strong (around 2250-2300) player from Croatia/Serbia living in the area before lockdown. He'd given lessons to some of our juniors while he was here, and when he returned to Serbia he started up his own chess coaching businesss (ROYAL). As

well as some of our juniors, several of the older players took up his offer of coaching at a discount price, and some of us are continuing long term (I'm around 2200 over the board and feel I've benefited a lot over the last few months from working with him. One of our juniors has improved dramatically from around 1400 to around 2200 already and another has reached 1800-1900. Overall I think our approach of embracing the technology and trying to keep a wide range of skill levels interested has worked incredibly well for us.



Rating update

Brian Valentine writes ...

Over-the-board rated chess has picked up as Covid-19 restrictions have been relaxed. Standard play from September-October are running at 69 per cent of the overall 2021 total. The figure for rapid chess is 60 percent of the total games played in the year.

There is still a substantial shortfall with the statistics for 2019 with October 2021 figures for rated Standard and Rapidplay games at 28% and 55% of the 2019 figures for the same month respectively – but the level of activity is increasing quickly as you can see from the table below.

2021 result count compared with that in 2019		
%	Standard Play	Rapid Chess
September	11	22
October	28	55

The rating system is evolving to meet the needs of our members. The rating team is fixing the bugs that are emerging as the system copes with increased activity. There are two more substantial changes.

1. We have integrated the online ratings into the OTB system. This means that we now have five rating lists published at the start of each month.
2. But that's not all; we are expecting to launch a new OTB Blitz list. Blitz games here are those with a time limit at least 3 minutes and at most 10 minutes, with the usual allowance for increments. We are inviting submissions from OTB Blitz events held after November 1. We need enough data to get reliable ratings. Also we will check that there is enough overlap of players to ensure it is a national list, rather than several pockets of unrelated activity. When those tests are passed, we will rate all results received and publish an initial list.



Update on membership

Rob Willmoth writes ... the future for the ECF finances is beginning to stabilise. Below are some stats comparing our peak membership period before the pandemic as at 1st December 2019 compared with the current total as of November 2021. Given the new membership sign-up rate, is it likely that current membership may reach the old record level of members.

In addition to this we have the wonderful GoMembership package that provides fantastic discounts across retail, leisure and travel. This package allows the ECF to generate extra funds and also offers great benefits to members so please support this wonderful incentive.

The Azolve login to sign up is <https://ecf.justgo.com/>. Please use your normal ECF membership login to attach the GoMembership package

	1st Dec 19	6th Nov 21
1. Jnr Bronze	43	41
2. Jnr Silver (FREE)	772	743
3. Jnr Silver (paid)	1358	1357
4. Jnr Gold	716	565
5. Jnr Platinum	9	11
Jnr Total	2898	2717
6. Bronze	3656	2919
7. Silver	1761	1296
8. Gold	1920	1761
9. Platinum	79	102
X. Lifetime	33	34
Supporters	19	250
QGS	0	43
Adult Total	7468	6405
Total	10366	9122
Paying Total	9561	8302



ECF AGM

Mark Rivlin writes ... It was *Hawaii Five-0* as the ECF Battle of the Shirts between CEO Mike Truran and Chair of Council Michael Farthing paraded the catwalk at The Hellenic Centre in Marylebone, London [see picture below].

The election results were as follows ---

Mike Truran (Chief Executive), Dominic Lawson (President), Aga Milewska (Director of Women's Chess), Alex Holowczak (Director of Junior Chess & Education), Michael Farthing (Chair of Council), Robert Stern (Chair of Governance) and Malcolm Pein (FIDE Delegate) were elected/re-elected with large majorities; and Shohreh Bayat was elected as Director of Events with a unanimous vote.

There was a commitment to redouble efforts to engage with HM Government to secure recognition of and funding for chess. The other big point was the confirmation that the initiative to transfer the Permanent Investment Fund to the Chess Trust, originally agreed by the British Chess Federation Council in 2018 but put on hold following objections by a small number of Directors, will now go ahead as originally planned.



Girls' National Schools Chess Championship 2022

The semi- finals both take place on Sunday 16th January; North – Nottingham High School; South – St Catherine's School, Bramley. Entry fee £10.00 per team (as in previous years). We look forward to welcoming you to St Catherine's and Nottingham High School in January. At this point, both the U11 and U19 tournaments will be running normally, but with an important difference – in order to keep numbers down on-site , we respectfully ask that only one adult may accompany each team of three. No extras please! Online entry can be found here – <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/>
— Andrew Martin



The Classic returns!

Tim Wall, LCC Press Officer, writes ... Chess in Schools and Communities is happy to announce that the London Chess Classic will be going ahead this year, with a varied programme of events taking place from 3-12 December at the Cavendish Centre in central London. Due to Covid concerns, there will be smaller numbers of participants than usual, and events will be on a ticketed-only basis.

The centrepiece will be an England vs Rest of the World match, with Michael Adams, Luke McShane and Gawain Jones against a RoW team including Nikolai Vitiugov and Boris Gelfand.

At the other end of the chess-playing spectrum, there will be the traditional London Chess Classic events for invited groups of CSC schoolchildren from around the country, with up to 100 children attending on any particular day.

Then there will be a 10-player English Rapidplay Championship (11-12 December), featuring several Grandmasters, a 10-player English Women's Rapidplay Championship (4-5 December), and an all-star commentary team (Nigel Short, Matthew Sadler & Natasha Regan, Stuart Conquest, and Chris Ward) providing free live online coverage of all the events as well as on the Magnus v Nepo World Championship match.

There are also plans to include a blitz tournament and other events. Further details from Monday 14.11.21 at www.londonchessclassic.com



Well done David

GM David Howell excelled at the 2021 FIDE Grand Swiss, finishing joint third (ninth place) just one point behind tournament winner, Alireza Firouzja. More here - <http://chess-results.com/tnr587230.aspx?lan=1&art=4&fed=CHN&flag=30>



Book Review by Gary Lane

A thumbs-up for Gawain Jones's *1 e4 Coffeehouse Repertoire Volume 1* - <https://chess.business/blog/>



Tweet of the Month

Happy Hallowqueen!



MadLadN ❤️ @MadLadN · 16h

Some people give away candy. I give away chess sets on Halloween.

#chess #HappyHalloween2021 🍬



15

27

371



Insurance for clubs and congresses

More here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-congress-insurance-2021-22/>

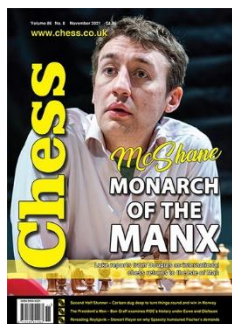


Obituary

Derek Harvey - <https://www.batterseachessclub.org.uk/goodbye-derek-club-member-dies-suddenly-aged-74/>



CHESS Magazine taster



Click here for this month's taster - <https://chess.co.uk/collections/new-chess-products/products/chess-magazine-november-2021>

Click here to purchase / subscribe - <https://chess.co.uk/collections/new-chess-products/products/chess-magazine-november-2021>



JUNIOR MOVES

UK Chess Challenge Terafinal at Blenheim Palace

Sarah and Alex Longson report ...

The Terafinal took place at the spectacular Blenheim Palace. Featuring 60 players split across five age groups (under 8, 10, 12, 14, 18) this was our strongest ever event and the strongest UK based junior event in years. The under 8s and 10s played in the Spencer-Churchill suite in their own private annexe.



The under 12s, 14s and 18s competed in the Marlborough Suite - overlooked by the Duke himself.



To even reach the Terafinal players had to come through three gruelling online stages hosted on Lichess.

- Megafinals (6 round Swiss 10+5)
- Gigafinals (7 round Swiss 10+5)
- Terafinal Preliminary (7 round Swiss 10+5 under Zoom arbiter conditions)

In addition there was a final qualification opportunity on 18th and 19th September over the board at the Challengers Event at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel.

Under 8s

The under 8s title was won by Advait Keerthi Kumar from Radlett Preparatory School. The tournament was extremely close and initially it looked as though the prodigious six year old Kushal Jakhria might run away with things storming to 5/5 on day 1 only to be pegged back on day 2. Advait finished on 8.5 / 11 - the same score as George Zhao but Advait took the title on direct encounter tiebreak.

Full results can be found here - <https://chess-results.com/tnr580600.aspx?lan=1>

Here is Advait's dramatic first round game versus Amelie Bryant which saw an early surprise in the Evans Gambit.

(6611) Keerthi Kumar, Advait (1589) - Bryant, Amelie (1113) [C51]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (1.1), 11.10.2021

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5

4.b4 Nxb4!? Relatively rare



5.Nxe5? this is a big mistake already!

5.c3 Nc6 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0

5...Qf6! 6.d4 Bxd4! 7.Bxf7+



7.Qxd4 Nxc2+-+ is the point

7...Kd8? this mistake lets white back into the game

7...Ke7 8.Nf3 Kxf7 wins 9.Nxd4 Qxd4!-+

8.Nf3! due to the threat of Bg5 black doesn't have time to take the rook in the corner and the black king is no longer attacking f7

8...Bxa1?? 9.Bg5+- Qxg5 10.Nxg5 Nf6

11.0-0 white is only nominally a little ahead in material - but the black pieces are in disarray

11...Rf8 12.Ne6+ Ke7 13.Nxf8 Kxf7 14.c3 Nc6

15.Nd2 Bxc3

16.Qb3+ This fork wins the bishop and clarifies white's decisive advantage

16...Kxf8 17.Qxc3 d6 18.f4 Bd7 19.e5 Nd5 20.Qf3 Be6 21.Qe4 Nc3 22.Qxh7 Ne2+

23.Kh1 Bf7 24.f5 Nxe5 25.f6 Re8 allowing mate in one, but the game was beyond saving anyway

26.Qxg7#

1-0

The girls title was won by Bodhana Sivanandan who has only just turned six and was playing in her second over the board tournament. This shows how much young players can achieve through hard work and online training.

Here is a great fighting game from round 2 versus the very capable George Chen.

(6675) Chen,George (1502) - Sivanandan,Bodhana (1272) [C55]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (2.2), 11.10.2021

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 h6?!



this looks too slow in such a sharp position and it is dangerous to take liberties with your development in this way

5...Nxe4 is the mainline 6.Re1 d5 7.Bxd5 Qxd5 8.Nc3 With complications that are not unfavourable for black if they know what they are doing!; 5...Bc5 Inviting the 'Max Lange Attack' is another possibility 6.e5 d5 7.exf6 dxc4 8.fxg7 with immense complications

6.e5 Nh7 7.Nxd4 Be7 8.Nf5 0-0 9.Qg4 Bg5?!

9...Ng5 10.f4 d5! was the best way according to the engine 11.exd6 Bxf5 12.Qxf5 Qxd6 13.fxg5 Qd4+ is the point

10.f4 h5 11.Qg3 d5! the best try

12.fxg5?!

12.Bd3 Bxf5 13.Bxf5 Be7 14.Nc3 keeps a big advantage for white

12...dxc4 Black has survived the worst of it

13.Nh6+!? gxh6 14.gxh6+ Bg4 15.h3 Qd4+ 16.Kh1 Qxe5 17.Bf4 Qf5

18.Nc3 both sides are playing great enterprising chess

18...Qg6 19.hxg4 Qxg4 20.Qxg4+ hxg4 An interesting endgame has arisen

21.Nd5 Rad8 22.Rad1 Rfe8 23.Bxc7 Rd7

24.Rf4? The first real mistake from white and it changes the direction of the game

24.Bf4 was more circumspect 24...Red8 25.Nc3

24...Nb4! A great move exploiting the pin on the d-file. Now white has to be careful

25.Rxg4+ natural - but the engine points out a hidden resource

25.Bd6! Rxd6 (25...Nxd5 26.Rxd5=) 26.Ne7+ Rxe7 27.Rxd6

25...Kh8 26.Rgd4 Nxd5 removing the defender. white is busted !

27.Ba5 Nhf6 28.Be1 Red8 29.Bh4 Kh7 30.Rxc4 Ne3 31.Rxd7 Rxd7 32.Rc3 Nfg4

33.Bg5 walking into mate in one but white was winning anyhow

33...Rd1#

0-1

Under 10s

Finally we have our first female age group champion - Elis Denele from Coventry Chess Academy. Elis came close in 2020 and made her intentions clear already in 2021 by winning the UKCC blitz event. Elis scored an undefeated 8 / 11 - <https://chess-results.com/tnr580601.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>

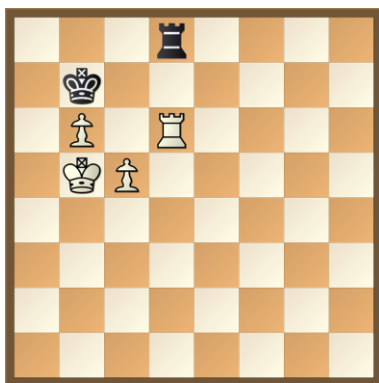
Elis's tournament got off to a 'rocky' (forgive the pun) start versus Rock Yu where she was on the verge of defeat but somehow lured her opponent into given stalemate.

(6740) Yu,Rock (1253) - Dencen,Elis Denele (1413) [D00]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (1.2), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.Nc3 d5 2.d4 e6 3.Bf4 c5 4.e3 cxd4 5.exd4 a6 6.Bd3 Nf6 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.a3 Bd6 9.Bg3 Qc7 10.Qd2 Bd7 11.b4 Bxg3 12.hxg3 b5 13.Rb1 Rc8 14.Rb3 h6 15.Qe3 Ne7 16.Ne5 Qb6 17.g4 Nc6 18.Nxc6 Qxc6 19.g5 Ng8 20.g4 Kd8 21.Qe5 f6 22.gxf6 gxf6 23.Qe3 Kc7 24.Ne2 Kb7 25.Nf4 Ne7 26.a4 Qd6 27.Nh5 f5 28.Nf6 fxg4 29.Nxg4 Nf5 30.Bxf5 exf5 31.Ne5 Rh7 32.axb5 axb5 33.Kd2 Re8 34.Qg3 Re7 35.Qf3 Rhg7 36.Nd3 Bc6 37.Qxf5 Rgf7 38.Qh3 Qf6 39.c3 Qg5+ 40.f4 Qf5 41.Qxh6 Qg4 42.Qh2 Qf3 43.Ra3 Qe3+ 44.Kc2 Qe2+ 45.Qxe2 Rxe2+ 46.Kb3 Re8 47.Nc5+ Kb8 48.Rh6 Bb7 49.Rb6 Re7 50.Rxb5 Rxf4 51.Nxb7 Rxb7 52.Rxd5 Rf3 53.Raa5 Rc7 54.Rdb5+ Kc8 55.Rc5 Kd7 56.Rxc7+ Kxc7 57.Ra2 Kb6 58.d5 Kc7 59.Rd2 Kd6 60.b5 Kc5 61.d6 Rf8 62.d7 Rd8 63.c4 Kb6 64.Kb4 Kc7 65.c5 Kb7 66.Rd6 Kc7 67.b6+ Kb7 68.Kb5 Rh8 69.d8Q Rxd8



70.Rxd8?? 1/2-1/2 Draw by stalemate.

Disaster! This lucky escape was the catalyst Elis needed to go on and win the title. To Rock's credit he also went on to have a good tournament

70.c6++-

1/2-1/2

Here is her round 3 victory against 2020 under 8 champion Emils Steiners.

(6748) Steiners,Emils (1335) - Dicen,Elis Denele (1413) [C10]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (3.3), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Bd3 c5 8.c3 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 b6 11.Ne5 Bb7 12.Bg5?! 12.dxc5 12...cxd4 13.cxd4



This looks a like a bad IQP position for white with a pair of minor pieces already exchanged 12

13...h6 14.Be3 Rc8 15.Qd2 Re8 16.Rac1 Rxc1 17.Rxc1 Bf8 18.f3 Nd5 19.Bb5 Re7

20.a3 Nxe3 21.Qxe3 Rc7? Black consistently looks to exchange pieces but this presents white with an unexpected chance that he did not seize

21...a6

22.Bc6? 22.Rxc7 Qxc7 23.Be8! f6 24.Bf7+ Kh7 25.Qd3+ f5 26.Bxe6 g6 27.Bf7+-

22...Qc8?! 22...Qd6! 23.Bxb7 Rxc1+ 24.Qxc1 Qxd4+ 25.Kf1 Qxe5

23.Qe4 23.Rc3 white had to put the rook on a safe square to break the pin

23...f6 removes the defender and wins **24.Nd7 24.Bxb7 Rxc1+ 25.Kf2 Qc2+-**

24...Rxc6 25.Rxc6 Qxc6 26.Nxf8 Qxe4 27.fxe4 Kxf8

0-1

Second place was also taken by a girl - this time Ruqayyah Rida. Ruqayyah pushed Elis very hard finishing only half a point behind on 7.5 / 11. She also had the dubious honour of taking part in the last game to finish in the entire UK Chess Challenge 2021 as she eventually ground out a victory versus Kai Hanache in round 11

(6749) Rida,Ruqayyah (1123) - Hanache,Kai (1224) [B18]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (11.2), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.h5 Bh7 8.Nf3 Nf6 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 e6



11.Be3 Bd2 and Bf4 are far more common

11...Nbd7 12.0-0-0 Qc7 13.Ne4 0-0-0 14.Kb1 Nxe4 15.Qxe4 Nf6 16.Qd3 Bd6 17.c4 Rhe8

18.Qc2 The players are proceeding in a very sensible manner

18...Bf4 19.b3 a6 19...Bxe3 20.fxe3 Ng4 looks like a nice way to try and exploit the change in the structure **21.Rhe1 f5**

20.Bxf4 Qd6 ***clearly the actual moves were 20...Qxf4 21.Rh4 Qf5. A live board error

21.Be5 Qxe5 22.Rh4 Qf5 23.Ne5 Qg5 24.g3 Re7 25.Qe2 Qf5+ 26.Kb2 Kc7 27.b4



White is beginning to squeeze black who is a bit short of space and moves

27...Nd7 naturally looking to exchange pieces but missing white's next

28.Rf4 Qh7 29.Nxf7 with a decisive advantage

29...Nb6? 30.Nxd8 Kxd8 31.Kb3 g5 32.hxg6 Qxg6 33.Qg4 Qh7 34.Qe2 Kd7 35.Rh4 Rf7 36.Re1 Kd8 37.Re4 Rf6 38.a4 Nd7 39.Kc3 Qf7 40.f4 Ke7 41.d5 Qg7 42.Kc2 Qg6 43.Kd2 Nf8 44.dxe6 Qxg3 45.Qe3 Qg7 46.Rg1 Qh7 47.Qd3 h5 48.Re5 Qh6 49.Qg3 Nxe6 50.Qg7+ Kd6



51.Qxh6 51.c5+ Nxc5 52.bxc5# would have finished things much quicker

51...Rxb6 52.Re4 white has made a bit of a mess of the conversion. the position is still winning but the game should have been over by now

52...Rf6 53.Ke3 h4 54.Rh1 Ng7 55.c5+ Kd7 56.Kf3 Ne6 57.Kg4 Rg6+ 58.Kf5 Rh6 59.Kg4 Rg6+ 60.Kh5 Rf6 61.Rxb4 a5 62.bxa5 Nxc5 63.Rc4 Ne6 64.Rg4 Rf5+ 65.Kh4 Rxa5 black is hanging in there admirably

66.Rb4 Kc7 67.Re4 Kd7 68.Re5 Rxa4 69.Rxe6! a nice simplifying tactic

69...Kxe6 70.f5+ Kxf5 71.Rxa4Ke5 72.Kg5 b5 73.Rb4 Kd5 74.Kf5 Kc5 75.Rb1 Kd4 76.Rd1+ Kc4 77.Ke4 c5 78.Rc1+ Kb4

79.Kd3 white shows good technique to win

79...c4+ 80.Kc2 Kc5 81.Rb1 b4 82.Rd1 Kb5 83.Kb2 Kc5 84.Rd8 Kc6 85.Rc8+ Kd5

86.Rb8 Kc5 87.Kc2 c3 88.Kb3 c2 89.Kxc2 Kc4 90.Rc8+ Kd4 91.Kb3 Kd3

92.Kxb4 Ke4 93.Rd8 Ke5 94.Kc5 Ke6 95.Rd5 Kf6 96.Kd6 Kf7 97.Re5 Kg6

98.Ke6 Kg7 99.Rf5 Kg6 100.Ke5 Kg7 101.Rf6 Kg8 102.Ke6 Kg7 103.Ke7 Kg8

104.Rf7 Kh8 105.Kf6 Kg8

106.Kg6 the last game to finish in this year's UK Chess Challenge!

1-0

Under 12s

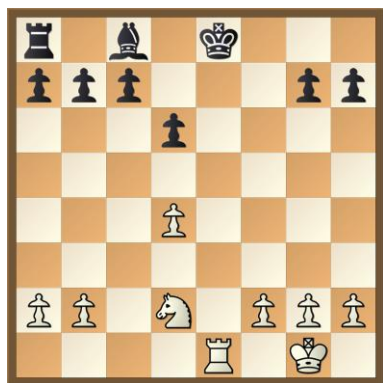
The under 12s section was dominated by Scottish whizz Frederick Gordon of Edinburgh Chess Academy. Frederick had travelled straight from Hull where he was doing battle in the British Chess Championships playing several Grandmasters and titled players. Showing no signs of fatigue Frederick raced to 5.5 / 6 on day 1 and finished the tournament with an undefeated 9 / 11 - <https://chess-results.com/tnr580602.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>

The technique and 'mini-traps' used in the following game versus Zain Patel caught the eye.

(6748) Gordon, Frederick (1415) – Patel, Zain (1300) [C54]

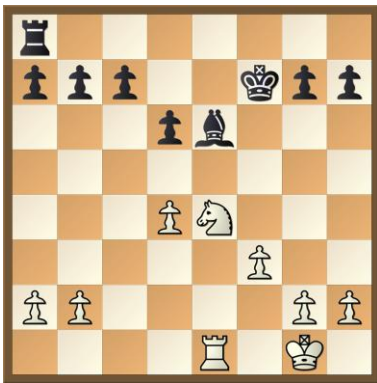
2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire 11.10.2021

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d4 exd4 6. cxd4 Bb4+ 7. Bd2 Nxe4 8. Bxb4 Nxb4 9. Bxf7+ Kxf7 10. Qb3+ Kf8 11. Qxb4+ Qe7 12. Qxe7+ Kxe7 13. O-O Re8 14. Re1 Kf8 15. Nfd2 Nxd2 16. Nxd2 d6 17. Rxe8+ Kxe8 18. Re1+



white has played the opening very quickly - black should be fine but still has to extinguish white's initiative, which admittedly now only has 2 pieces with which to do any damage

18. Kf7 19. f3 Be6 20. Ne4 quite a cunning trap

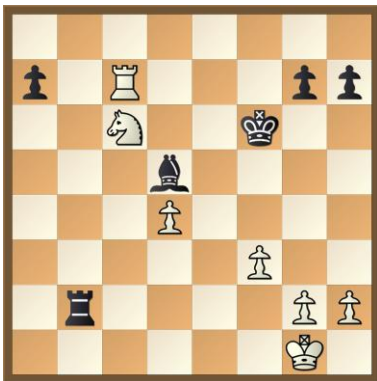


20..Bxa2 (20... h6 was stronger and black should equalise)

21. Rc1 c6 22. Nxd6+ Ke7 (22... Kf8 is better avoiding the check) 23. Nxb7 Rb8 24. Na5 Rxb2 25. Nxc6)

23. Nxb7 Rb8 24. Na5 Rxb2 25. Rxc6 (25. Nxc6+ white surprisingly refrains from the natural capture with check Kd6 26. Nxa7)

25... Bd5 26. Rc7+ Kf6 27. Nc6 another nice little tactical trap



Kg5 Black goes on the attack but it looks a little too optimistic and leaves the kingside pawns to their fate

(27... Rc2 28. Nb4 wins!)

(27... Rd2 28. Nxa7 Rxd4 with good chances to hold)

28. Ne7 (28. Rxg7+ Kf4 29. Nxa7 Rb1+ 30. Kf2 Rb2+ 31. Ke1 is the computer suggestion but it looks quite scary for white to be attacked with all 3 pieces like this and the white king on the back rank)

28... Ba2 (28... Bb7) 29. Rxa7 Kf4 30. h3 white avoids the checks Bc4 (30... Kg3 31. Nf5+ Kf4 32. Nxc7 Kg3 33. Nh5+ Kh4 34. Nf6 Kg3 35. Ne4+) 31. Rc7 Rb1+

32. Kh2 Bf1 33. Nd5+ Kg5 34. Rxg7+ Kh6 35. Rg4 the rest is easy Rb5 36. Ne3 Be2 37. d5 Bd3 38. h4 Rb6 39. Rg5 Rg6 40. Ng4+ Kg7 41. Ne5 Rxg5

42. hxc5 Bf5 43. g4 Bc8 44. d6 h6 45. gxh6+ Kxh6 46. d7 Bxd7 47. Nxd7 Kg5 48. Kg3 Kg6 49. f4 Kg7 50. g5 Kg8 51. f5 Kg7 52. Kg4 Kg8 53. g6 Kg7

54. Kg5 Kh8 55. f6 Kg8 56. f7+ Kg7 57. f8=Q#

1-0

The top girl prize was won by Olga Latypova who, like Frederick, had also travelled from playing in the British Championships where she had scored a very impressive 2169 performance. Here is her round 8 draw versus the champion

(6751) Gordon,Frederick (1415) - Latypova,Olga L (1311) [B40]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (8.5), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 Qxd5 5.d4 Nf6 6.Be3 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nc6 8.Nc3 Qd6
9.Bd3 Be7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 a6 12.Qe2 b5 13.Rfe1 Bb7 14.Rad1 Rac8 15.h3 Nd5
16.Ne4 Qb8 17.Bg5 h6 18.Bxe7 Ncxe7 19.g3 Ba8 20.Nc5 Qa7 21.Rc1 Rfd8



22.Red1

22.Nxe6! both players had evidently missed this shot 22...Rxc1 (22...fxe6? 23.Qxe6+ Kf8 (23...Kh8 24.Rxc8 Rxc8 25.Qxc8+ Nxc8 26.Re8#) 24.Ne5+-) 23.Rxc1 fxe6 24.Qxe6+ Kh8 25.Ne5 Rf8 26.Nf7+ Rxf7 27.Qxf7 with a difficult defensive task for black

22...Nb6 23.Be4 Bxe4 24.Qxe4 Nc4 Black has slightly the better of things - white's IQP and weakened kingside are causes for concern, but white manages to hold the balance

25.Qe2 Nf5 26.b4 Nfd6 27.Rd3 Nb7 28.Rcd1 Qb6 29.Ne5 Nxe5 30.Qxe5 Nd6

31.d5 Once the IQP is liquidated it is clear that white is OK

31...Nc4 32.Qc3 exd5 33.Rxd5 Rxd5 34.Rxd5 Qc6 35.Qd3 Re8 36.Rd8 Rxd8

37.Qxd8+ Kh7 38.Qd3+ Kg8 39.Qd8+ Kh7 40.Qd3+ Kg8 41.Qd8+ ½-½

Under 14s

Arjun Kolani scored 10 / 11 and yet incredibly this was enough only for 4th place with the winner, Rajat Makkar of Hampton School, also scoring 10 / 11 and winning the tournament on tiebreak due to defeating Arjun in their direct encounter - <https://chess-results.com/tnr580602.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>

Here is their ultimately decisive round 4 game.

(6752) Kolani,Arjun (1480) - Makkar,Rajat (1950) [C53]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (4.4), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

[This turned out to be the decisive game in the championship]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 d6 6.0-0 h6 7.Nbd2 a5 8.a4 0-0

9.h3 Be6 10.Re1 Bb6 11.Bb3 Re8 12.Nc4 Ba7 13.Be3 Bxe3 14.Nxe3



d5?! Often this break isn't the panacea it appears. Black doesn't quite look ready for this 3

14...Qd7 seems to be more sensible keeping some flexibility

15.exd5 Nxd5 16.Nxd5 Bxd5 17.d4! white retains some initiative



17...e4

17...Bxb3 18.Qxb3 exd4 19.Rxe8+ Qxe8 20.Qxb7

18.Nd2 f5 19.f3! e3 forced



20.Bxd5+?

20.f4! Not so obvious - but the point is that the e-pawn is now cut off it's friends and white will be able to win it 20...Kh8 21.Bxd5 Qxd5 22.Nf1 Re4 23.Rxe3 Rxf4 24.Qe2 Re4 25.Rxe4 fxe4 26.Ne3 Qg5 27.Rf1 the computer thinks this is just winning for white, +3 !

20...Qxd5 21.Qb3 Qxb3 22.Nxb3 b6 23.Nc1 f4 24.Nd3 g5



clearly if black can maintain the pawn on e3 it will be a major pain for white

25.g3 understandably white tries to break up the black structure

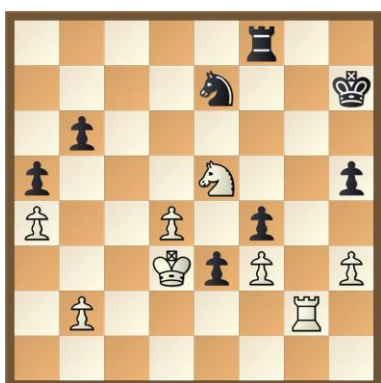
25...Rf8 26.gxf4 gxf4 27.Kf1 Rf5 28.Ke2 Kh7 29.Rg1 h5 preventing Rg4 10



30.Rg2

30.h4! Rg8? 31.Rxg8 Kxg8 32.Rg1+ Kf7 33.Rg5 Rxg5 34.hxg5 Kg6 35.Nxf4+ Kxg5 36.Kxe3

30...Rg8 31.Rag1 Rxg2+ 32.Rxg2 Ne7 33.Ne5 c5 34.Kd3 cxd4 35.cxd4 Rf8



Objectively it seems the position is balanced but things can go badly wrong for either side

36.Nd7 36.Ke4 Nf5 37.Nd3 Ng3+ 38.Ke5 36...Rf7

37.Nxb6 white snatches a pawn as black centralises his forces

37.Ne5 would ask the question whether black wishes to repeat or find something else

37...Nf5



38.d5? the decisive mistake!

38.Nd5 other moves were also possible 38...Nh4 39.Rg1 Nxf3 40.Rf1 e2 best 41.Kxe2 Nxd4+=

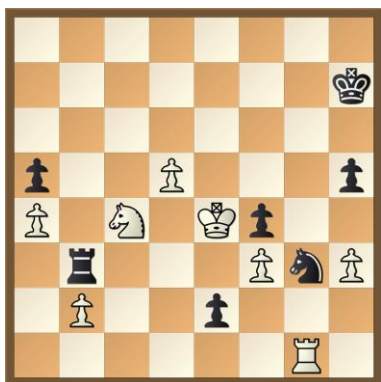
38...Rb7! 39.Nc4 Rb3+ 40.Ke4

40.Ke2 Nd4+ 41.Kf1 Rd3 42.Ke1 e2 43.Rxe2 Nxe2 44.Kxe2 Rxd5 should win

40...e2 41.Rg1

41.Rxe2 Ng3+ 42.Kxf4 Nxe2+ 43.Ke5 was the last practical try but it shouldn't be enough

41...Ng3+



0-1 White resigns. white resigned as ...Nf1 is coming next and black queens the pawn. In the end the e-pawn survived and decided the game

0-1

The girls champion was Nina Pert scoring 5.5 / 11 in a strong section including a win against the highly rated Savin Dias. Here is a crushing victory against the Sicilian Dragon.

(6753) Pert,Nina P (1558) - Patel,Krrish (1270) [B23]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (6.4), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Bd7 6.Be3 g6 7.Qd2 Bg7

8.f3 Nf6



After a rather odd move order we are back into a dragon

9.Be2 not the most common manoeuvre in the Yugoslav - but it works out very nicely in this game
9...0-0 10.h4 h5 A standard response to white's attacking intentions

11.0-0-0



11..a6 This is generally considered a bit slow to generate counterplay

11...Rc8; 11...Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Qa5 **12.Rdg1** Very direct ! **12...Rc8**

13.g4 Nxd4 14.Bxd4 e5 14...hxg4 15.h5 is already very strong

15.Be3



the position is very difficult for black - the problem really is that he has never got going with any queenside play and whites attack has reached scary proportions without any material investment. The computer suggests capturing on g4 now.

15...Be6

15...hxg4 and here white has lot of options (h5, Qxd6, Bg5) - lets briefly just follow one computer suggestion 16.fxg4 Qa5 17.h5 Rxc3 forced 18.Qxc3 Qxc3 19.bxc3 Nxe4 20.Bd3 Bc6 21.Rh2

16.Bg5! white wants to take on h5 and prevent black from capturing with the knight 2:59

16...b5 16...Rxc3 17.Qxc3 hxc4 is the computers top suggestion **18.fxg4?** (*18.h5? Nxe4!*) **18...Nxe4!**

17.gxh5

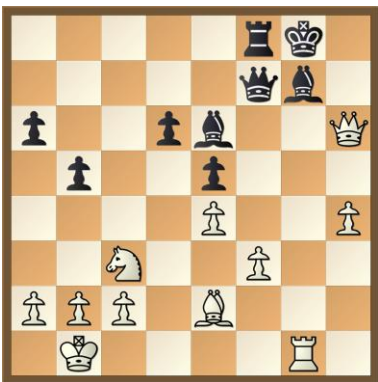


white is basically winning already

17...Qd7 18.Bxf6 Bxf6 19.hxc6 fxc6 20.Qh6 Bg7 21.Rxc6 Rf6 22.Rhg1 Rxc6 23.Qxc6 23.Rxc6

23...Qf7 24.Qg5 Rf8 24...Kh7 was actually quite a decent practical try gaining some stability

25.Kb1 Qf6 26.Qh5 Qf7 27.Qh6

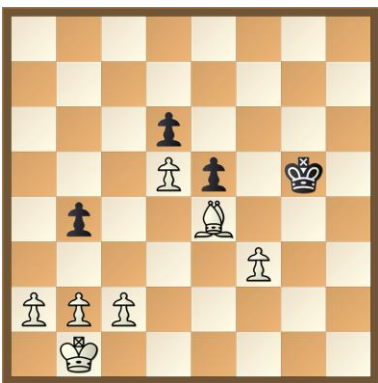


now black is basically helpless against whites plan of Rg6 Qg5 h5 h6

27...Qf6 28.Rg6 28.Rxc7+ Qxc7 29.Qxe6+ 28...Qf7 29.h5 Qd7

30.Qg5 Rf7 31.h6 b4 32.Nd5 Bxd5 33.exd5 Qe7 34.Rxc7+ Rxc7 35.Qxc7+ Qxc7

36.hxc7 Kxc7 37.Bxa6 Kf6 38.Bd3 Kg5 39.Be4



1-0

Under 18s

The under 18s was extremely strong this year with 2 FMs, a CM and several other 2200+ rated players taking part. You can find the full results for the section here - <https://chess-results.com/tnr580604.aspx?lan=1&art=1&flag=30>

If Aaravamudhan were to win he would catch Tanmay on 9 and win the event on direct encounter. But only needing a draw with the white pieces the in-form Tanmay would surely have enough? Here is what happened.

(6754) Chopra, Tanmay (1851) - Balaji, Aaravamudhan (1934) [C49]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (11.1), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bxc6

6.d3 is more common 6...Bxc3 before the knight can come to e2 (6...d6 7.Ne2) 7.bxc3 d6 8.Bg5 with complicated play

6...dxc6 7.Nxe5



Quite sensible in a game where a draw will suffice. However in another sense to play in such an excessively dry way can be very dangerous psychologically as you are telling yourself "I don't want to play, to take risks or to calculate anything much. I just want to take the draw and win the prize". It is easy to drift into an inferior position and in a state where you are not really geared up to be paying proper attention and so may defend weakly. In such tournament situations perhaps it is best to just play your normal game and see what happens 30

7...Re8 8.Nd3 Bxc3 9.dxc3 Nxe4 10.Bf4 Bf5 11.Qf3 Qf6 12.Rfe1 Nd6



13.Qg3

13.Bxd6 cxd6 14.g4 Be4 15.Qxf6 gxf6 16.Re3 was quite promising given the tournament situation

13...Ne4 14.Qf3 Re7 15.Re2 Rae8 16.Rae1 Qg6 17.h3 h5 [Aaravamudhan does a good job just trying to keep a modicum of tension]

18.Be3 18.Bc1 h4 19.Nf4 18...h4 19.Nf4 Ng5



19...Qh7 may be objectively stronger but black can hardly complain about the outcome of his move

20.Qh5??

20.Nxg6 Nxf3+ 21.gxf3 Bxg6 is unpleasant; 20.Qg4! was the best move, though not very obvious!
20...Bxg4 21.Nxg6 Bxe2 22.Nxe7+ Rxe7 23.Bxg5 Re6 24.Bxh4

20...Nxb3+! and just like that it is over. 21.Nxb5 leaves the queen undefended and if 21.Kf1 Nxf4 wins a whole piece 37

0-1

A shame for Tanmay but joy for Aaravamudhan who continues a successful year which started out with selection for the prestigious Chess Trust Accelerator Programme.

The girls' prize was won by Imogen Dicen (Elis's older sister) with 2 / 11. This was a very tough tournament for the girls who were heavily outgunned but all showed great fighting spirit continuing right to the end. Imogen defeated both of her female competitors in rounds 4 and 5 which was decisive in deciding the girls's title. Here is the victory against Abigail Weersing which culminating in an interesting endgame with knight versus bishop.

(6755) Dicen,Imogen (1561) - Weersing,Abigail R (1672) [C10]

2021 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (4.5), 11.10.2021

[<https://lichess.org/@/rowrulz>]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Bd3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Nf3 Be7

8.0-0 0-0 9.c3 b6 10.Bf4 Bb7 11.Qe2 Bd6 12.Bxd6 Qxd6 13.Rad1 c5 14.Rfe1 Rad8

15.Bb1 cxd4 16.Rxd4 Qc5 17.Red1 Rd5 18.Rxd5 Bxd5 19.h3 Rc8 20.Ne5



The opening has been very dry but black still has to neutralise a little bit of pressure as currently white has the d-file

20...Qe7 21.c4 Bb7 22.b3 Rd8 23.Rd2 Rxd2 24.Qxd2 Ne4 24...Ne8 was one way

25.Qe3



Qc5? a little careless

25...Nf6

26.Bxe4 Qxe3

27.Bxh7+ with this zwischenzug white wins a pawn and should win the game

27...Kxh7 28.fxe3 f6 29.Nf3 Kg6 30.Kf2 e5 31.Nd2 Kf5 32.a3 Bc6 33.g3 Bb7

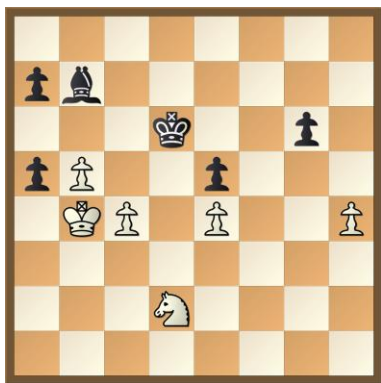
34.b4 Bc6 35.g4+ Ke6 36.e4 Kd6 37.Ke3 Ba4 38.h4 Bd7 39.g5 Ke6 40.gxf6 [Kxf6

41.Nf3 g6 42.Ng5 Ke7 43.Kd3 Kd6 44.Kc3 Be8 45.Kd3 Bd7 46.Nf3 Bc6 47.Nd2 Ke6

48.Nb3 Ba4 49.Kc3 Bc6 50.Nd2 Kd6 51.b5 Bb7 52.Kb4 Ba8 53.a4 Bb7

54.a5 bxa5+

54...Ba8 55.a6 Ke6 56.c5+-



55.Kxa5

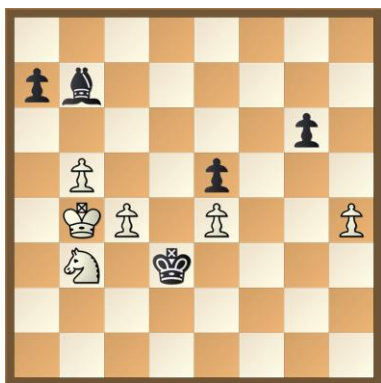
55.Ka4! is a funny zugzwang 55...Kc5 (55...Ba8 56.Kxa5 Kc5 57.Ka6 this wasn't possible with the bishop on b7; 55...Bc8 56.Nb3) 56.Nb3+ Kxc4 57.Nxa5+-

55...Kc5 56.Ka4

Kd4? natural but wrong

56...Bc8 57.Nf3 Kxc4 58.Nxe5+ Kd4 59.Nxg6 Bg4 60.e5 Kd5 61.h5+-; 56...Ba8! this is the most stubborn move but it looks as though white can still win 57.Nf3? (57.Kb3 Kd4 (57...Bb7 58.Nf3 Bxe4 59.Nxe5) 58.Kb4 Kd3 59.Nb3 Kxe4 now the bishop is on a8 there is no fork 60.c5 Kd5 61.Na5! (61.c6? Bxc6 62.bxc6 Kxc6 draws) 61...e4 62.c6 e3 63.Kc3 Kd6 64.Kd3 Kc7 65.Kxe3 Kb6 66.Kd4 a6 67.bxa6 and it is hopeless for black) 57...Bxe4 58.Nxe5 Kd4 59.Nc6+ Kxc4 60.Nxa7 should be a draw

57.Kb4 Kd3 58.Nb3

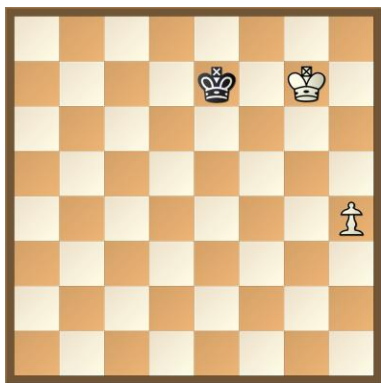


Bxe4 this leads by force to a winning pawn endgame for white 23

58...Bc8 At the time I thought this move held - however white is winning but they need to find 59.Na5 (59.Nc5+ Kd4 and white cannot improve the position) 59...Kxe4 60.Nc6+-

59.Nc5+ Kd4 60.Nxe4 Kxe4 61.c5 Kd5 62.c6 Kd6 63.Kc4 a6 64.bxa6 Kxc6

65.a7 Kb7 66.Kd5 Kxa7 67.Kxe5 Kb7 68.Ke6 Kc7 69.Kf7 Kd7 70.Kxg6 Ke7 71.Kg7



1-0 Black resigns. and white is just in time

1-0



Published author at Under 10!

Jan Murawski not only plays for England Under 10s, he is also a budding journalist. Here is his report for the European Youth Chess Championships ...



The European Youth Chess Championships took place from October 15th to the 22nd. There were U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, U18 and U20 sections. There was a Girls' section and an Open section for each age category. In total, 32 different federations took part. It was a Hybrid Tournament.

What is a hybrid tournament?

A hybrid event is a relatively new type of tournament. The idea was invented during the Covid-19 pandemic. Each player brought their own computer/laptop.

Arbiters were with the players in one room, making

sure that nothing takes an unwanted route. Participants were required to be on a zoom call, and they must have their video on and share screens. The arbiters had to make sure that there were additional cameras of the playing hall.

How many venues per country?

Each nationality could have up to 3 venues, but they could have more if they justified it and the ECU (European Chess Union) agreed.

Game format

90 minutes plus 30 seconds increment per move. No additional time at move 40. The games were played on Tornelo.com, a chess website.

Selection

To play you must have either been selected by your country or previously won a European Youth tournament.

Ratings

The ratings used for the tournament were FIDE ratings. This is quite unusual as the tournament was non-OTB. Normal online tournaments can't be FIDE-rated because the cheating rates wouldn't be monitored well enough.

Venue

The English players played from the Basingstoke Country Hotel, located in the South of England. It is quite a nice venue. It has a swimming pool and many rooms (about 400). There are multiple suites, a bar and a restaurant. There is also a pleasant garden courtyard and the hotel is surrounded by woodlands (good for walks between rounds).

Result

The English team did quite well, scoring 68.5 tournament points from the 13 players. This means that the average score per player was about 5.25. This is a good score. We nearly smelt the scent of victory in some sections.

Player Overviews

I will give a brief overview of each English player that took part.

Kushal Jakhria - Open U8

Points: 6.0

Kushal is a six-year-old who is a top English U8. He didn't want to draw - Kushal went for the win in every game, which his result showed. No draws! Kushal was on 4/7 but he won his last two games to set his final score on 6/9. In the end he was 13th.

George Zhao - Open U8

Points: 6.0

Winning the British U8 section 2 weeks before the tournament, George Zhao played in another strong field of U8's. After getting a point by default in round one, George pulled three consecutive wins in rounds 5, 6 and 7. He ended the tournament with 2 draws. In the end he was 15th!

Jan Murawski - Open U10

Points: 5.5

Jan also won a British Championship title - in the U10's. He wasn't doing great when he had 2.5/6, but he stormed three wins in the last 3 games, giving him 34th place. He was seeded about 80th at the start of the tournament, so he definitely improved his ranking.

Harry Zheng - Open U12

Points: 5.5

Being the only participant in the U12 Open, Harry played a good tournament and achieved 5.5 points, giving him a solid 28th place. His games were quite interesting, he played some strong opponents and got a good result!

Nishchal Thatte - Open U14

Points: 4.0

Nishchal was also by himself in a section - this time the U14 Open. His section was very hard, so Nishchal did well given the strength of his section. He won an excellent round 1 game, which involved an unexpected exchange sacrifice. Nishchal finished 62nd in the end.

CM Aaravamudhan Balaji - Open U16

Points: 6.5

Starting high in the rankings, Balaji was off on a shaky start. However, he reeled 4 wins in a row to set him on an excellent 5th place. He was actually tied 3rd, but tiebreak pushed him down to fifth. English juniors rarely do so well, so this is an outstanding performance!

Bodhana Sivanandan - Girls' U8

Points: 5.5

Bodhana is also six, like Kushal. She had a strong performance and ended with 2 wins setting her on

5.5. She also played in the British U8 Championships. She finished 13th, which is a great result if you're playing against older players!

Zoe Veselow - Girls' U8

Points: 6.5

Zoe currently holds the British U8 Girls' Championship title. She played excellently, with a superb start. Her performance got slightly weaker near the end because she got tougher opponents. Either way, Zoe was 5th (tied 4th, 5th on tiebreaks). Top 5 is great at international tournaments!

Alannah Ashton - Girls' U10

Points: 4.0

Alannah started the tournament with 2.5/3, which is a great start! She was then extremely unlucky to lose her 4th game. Losses often get your morale down. Alannah ended on 42nd place, which is a good final rank, if you ask me.

Ruqayyah Rida - Girls' U10

Points: 6.0

Ruqayyah played a great tournament, starting the tournament with an amazing 4.5/5! However, things only got trickier from there. Harder opponents, and I understand the pressure. She still withstood a few opponents after that, though. Ruqayyah ended the tournament on 8th place, giving Team England the 3rd Top 10.

AFM Olga Latypova - Girls' U14

Points: 4.0

Olga played a good tournament, in a very strong section. She also won the little blitz tournament held by the English Arbiters during the Championship. There was an unfortunate pairing in round 4 - an intra-team clash, Olga played Emily. She finished 42nd in the end.

Emily Maton - Girls' U14

Points: 4.0

Emily played many positional games during the tournament. They were very fascinating! She finished quite strong, which is always an important factor of your result. As I said, this was a tough section. Emily also beat a player with a FIDE rating of 1750, which is definitely something to be proud of. Emily finished 43rd.

Julia Volovich - Girls' U16

Points: 5.0

Julia was also alone in her section - she was the only England U16 Girl. Round 1 saw Julia draw to the overall winner, which is a great achievement. She carried on strongly throughout the tournament. Julia finished 19th which is a good rank - being in the top 20 is always something!

Overall England ended with a strong score - 2 people in the top 5, 1 more person in the top 10, and 3 more in the top 20.



From lockdown to winner's podium!

How 14-year-old Ted Filby has become a chess prodigy.

Our thanks to Jasmine Pinna-Chapman, the Media, Press & Publicity Officer at Hastings & St Leonards Chess Club, for sharing this with us. Picture courtesy of the Eastbourne Herald.



Ted Filby [left], new to the game of chess, has just won his section at the Scarborough Chess Congress, a prestigious annual event in English Chess. 14 year old Eastbourne school Gildredge House student Ted only started playing chess in January this year after watching Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit*.

The event, held in the seafront Scarborough Spa Centre from the 29th until the 31st of October 2021, entailed five rounds of matches played over the weekend, lasting up to 4 hours each making them a test of stamina as well as skill. As an unranked player Ted had to start at the bottom of the list in the intermediate section against 65 adult and far more experienced players from all over the country.

He was able to put in a lot of practice time during lockdown and has also benefited from personal coaching by Eastbourne Chess Club's Lithuanian-born WFM (Women's FIDE Master), now Eastbourne resident, Rasa Norinkeviciute and that the Hastings & St Leonard's Chess Club and Sussex Junior Chess have helped him advance from his initial interest.

Winning his first three matches earned him the promotion into the final day of moving up into the leading group of players. In the fourth round he faced the only other player with a 100% record, but still beat Leeds University PhD researcher Luke Gostelow. In the finale, after 90 minutes play, Ted knew that a drawn (half point) match would be enough for a podium finish so he happily accepted his opponent's offer. Following a nervous wait, news of other results eventually came through that confirmed Ted had taken first place, plus prize money of £400.

Ted said, 'As it was my first senior tournament I was just very pleased to win a couple of matches but then I realised I might be able to win a prize. In the last match I probably also had winning chances but it worked out well for me with the draw being enough.'

For this 'Post-The Queen's Gambit would-be King', after his great achievement of winning his first senior tournament, Ted's next aim is to get selected for the Sussex Junior Chess Team and to ascend the English Chess Federation (ECF) ranking list.



Junior Championship games

British Junior Championship games are here ---

Under 8: <http://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=581885&art=3>

Under 10: <http://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=581883&art=3>

Under 12: <http://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=581882&art=3>

Under 14: <http://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=581881&art=3>

Under 18: <http://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=581879&art=3>

The UK Chess Challenge Terafinal games are here ---

Under 8: <https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=580600&art=3>

Under 10: <https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=580601&art=3>

Under 12: <https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=580602&art=3>

Under 14: <https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=580603&art=3>

Under 18: <https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=580604&art=3>

FEATURES, WRITING, ANALYSIS, STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

GM Michael Adams' Game of the Month



After the British Championships, Hull has continued to play host to other chess events. One of them, a 10-player all play all, was a continuation of the welcome development of more competitions with norm opportunities in the UK.

Matthew Turner wins an interesting game here, the granite nature of his pawn chain after his opponent accepts an offered piece makes his position much easier to play, and his opponent's King can't find a safe home even in the endgame. Despite this loss, Maciej Czopor shared first place with Tamas Fodor on 6/9.

M.Czopor – M.Turner

Hull 4NCL International 2021

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.h3

White's AntiBerlin sideline has kept plenty of tension on the board.

7...Bb6 8.Ba4 Ne7 9.Nbd2 Ng6 Black could have given the bishop room with 9...c6, but there is nothing wrong with allowing White to exchange it.

10.Nc4 h6 11.Re1 Be6 12.Nxb6 axb6 White has pocketed a pair of bishops, but all Black's minor pieces are well placed, he has a solid structure, and the half open a-file is an irritation for White.



13.Bc2 Nh7 Preparing Ng5, Black want to use his knights on the dark squares on the kingside, as the Bishop on e6 eyes h3.

14.d4 Qf6 15.Be3 Ng5 16.Nxg5 White would have better chances with knights on the board, after 16.Nh2 Nf4 either 17.Kh1 planning to drive the knights back later, or 17.h4 Nh7 18.g3 contesting the dark squares were better. Here in an echo of the game the computer proposes 18...g5.

16...hxg5 17.d5 After quiet continuations like 17.Bd3 Nf4 18.Bf1 things are balanced, although White would be happy to have an extra defender covering the kingside.

17...Bd7 18.g3



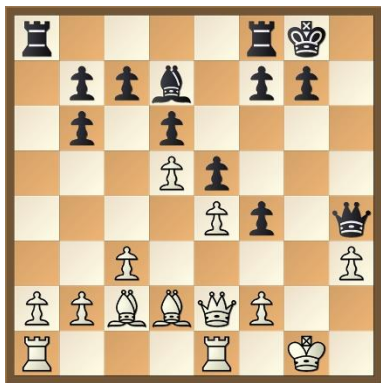
18...Nf4! 18...Bxh3? 19.Qh5 g4 20.Bd1 works out well for White, but this sacrifice begs to be played.

19.gxf4? 19.h4! was correct. Now 19...gxh4? 20.gxf4 exf4 21.Bd4 Qg5+ 22.Kh2 rebounds, with extra material, and Rg1 coming White will be on the attack. 19...Nh3+ 20.Kg2 gxh4 21.Rh1 also doesn't suit Black as White gets control of the h-line. Instead 19...Qg6! is a better option, 20.hxg5 Nh3+ 21.Kg2 Nxc5 22.Bxc5 (22.Rh1 Nxe4) 22...Qxg5 23.Rh1 g6 24.a3 Kg7 25.Qc1 Qxc1 26.Raxc1 leads to an equal position.

19...gxf4 20.Bd2 For the piece Matthew has picked up a pawn, and will collect another on h3 shortly. White's king is also going to be suffering long term exposure. Also, the dark squared pawn chain proves a powerful bridgehead in the White position, totally blunting the scope of the extra dark squared Bishop.



20...Qh4 21.Qe2 If 21.Qf3 Bxh3 22.Bd1 g6! preventing Qh5 and Kg7, and Rh8 will follow.



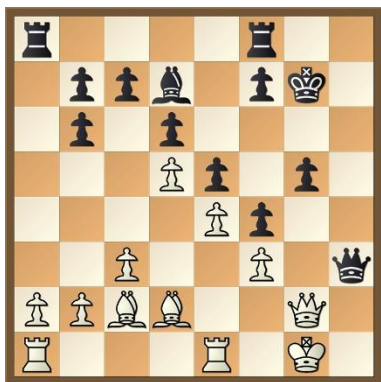
21...g5 Reviewing the game with computer assessments often gives a different impression to the experience at the board. With a multitude of complicated, diverging lines which are difficult to navigate accurately it is not easy to understand how much compensation Black has for the piece. Matthew probably underestimated how strong his position was here – natural, direct measures were winning. 21...Bxh3 22.f3 g6 (22...Qg3+ also works 23.Kh1 g6 24.Rg1 Qh4 25.Be1 Qh5 26.Rg2 Bxg2+ 27.Kxg2 Kg7 regains the material, and Black's major pieces will soon dominate the only open file.)

23.Qh2 (23.Qf2 Qg5+ 24.Kh2 Kg7) 23...Kg7 24.Re2 Rh8 25.Be1 Qf6 White's king is still nowhere near reaching safety, whilst Black plans Rh5 and Rh8 e.g 26.Kf2 Rh5 27.Rd2 Rh8. The forcing 25...Qg5+ 26.Rg2 Bxg2 27.Qxg2 Rh5 28.Qxg5 Rxd5+ 29.Kf1 Rh8 also works.

22.f3 Kg7 22...Bxh3 was still good 23.Qf2 Qh5 24.Qh2 Kg7 leaves White with a problem as 25.Kf2 Qh4+! 26.Ke2 Bf1+! wins the Queen.

23.Qf2! White needs to swap Queens.

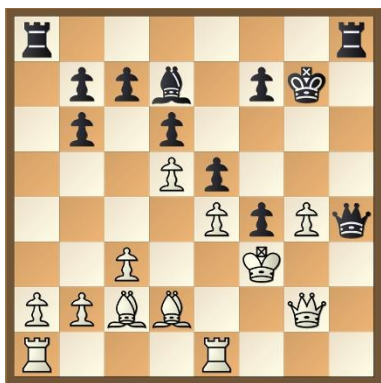
23...Qxh3 24.Qg2



24...Rh8 Black should have kept Queens on the board: 24...Qh4 25.Qf2 Qh5 26.Kf1 g4 27.Ke2 Bb5+ 28.Kd1 g3 29.Rg1 Rh8 - the pawn chain has grown even stronger and longer 30.Bb3 Kf6 31.Qg2 Qh2 and Black wins: 32.Bc2 (32.Kc2 Be2, 32.c4 Qxg2 33.Rxg2 Rh1+)

25.Kf2 White is getting organised, Rh1 is coming next. Not 25.Qxg5+? Kf8 26.Kf2 Rg8

25...g4 26.fxg4 Qh4+ 27.Kf3 The King covers g4, making a run to the queenside is tempting but not good: 27.Ke2 Bxg4+ (27...Qxg4+ 28.Kf2 is a decent outcome for White) 28.Kd3 f5 29.Rg1 (29.Bd1 Kf6 30.Bxg4 Qxg4 31.Qxg4 fxg4 and the passed pawns outweigh the bishop.) 29...Kf7 30.Kc4 Rag8 31.exf5? f3!

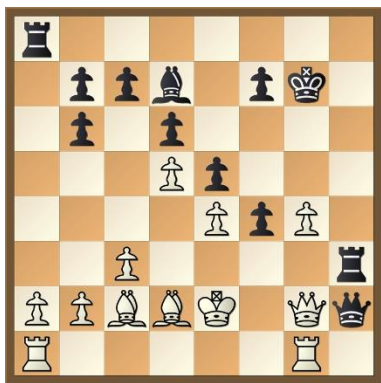


27...Qh3+ 28.Kf2 Qh4+ Black can certainly play for more with 28...Qxg2+ 29.Kxg2 Bxg4 30.Rh1 (30.Rg1 f5 31.exf5 Kf6) 30...Rxd1 31.Kxd1 (31.Rxd1 Rxa2 32.Bc1) 31...f5 32.exf5 Kf6, the advanced pawns more than balance the bishop, but repeating moves proves a canny practical decision.

29.Ke2 White should have continued repeating with 29.Kf3 Qh3+.

29...Qh2 29...Bxg4+ 30.Kd3 f5 was another good option 31.Bd1 (31.exf5 Kf6) 31...Kf6.

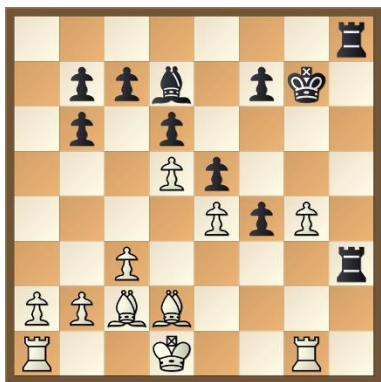
30.Rg1 Rh3! A strong practical move threatening f3+, White has only an incredibly narrow route to survival.



31.Kd1 31.Raf1? Qxg2+ 32.Rxg2 Bb5+ is crushing, or 31.Qxh2 Rxh2+ 32.Kd3 Rah8 33.Bb3 R8h3+ 34.Kc2 f3 leaves Black in control. 31.Kf2! hangs on, but finding the required sequence of only moves is scarcely possible 31...f3 32.Qxh2 Rxh2+ 33.Ke3 Rah8 34.Kd3! (34.Raf1? Re2+ 35.Kd3 Rhh2, 34.Bd3 R8h3 35.Bf1 f2+ 36.Bxh3 fxg1Q+ 37.Rxg1 Rxh3+ leads to a tough endgame for White) 34...R8h3 35.Be3 f2 36.Rgf1 Rf3 37.Kd2 Rhh3 38.Bxf2 Rh2 39.Ke2 Bxg4 40.Ke1 Bh3 41.Ke2 Bg4 42.Ke1 Bh3 with a draw.

31...Qxg2 32.Rxg2 Rah8 32...Rh1+! 33.Be1 Rah8 leaves the king marooned on the back rank 34.Kd2 (34.Bd3 f3 35.Rf2 R8h2 36.Rxh2 Rxh2) 34...R1h2.

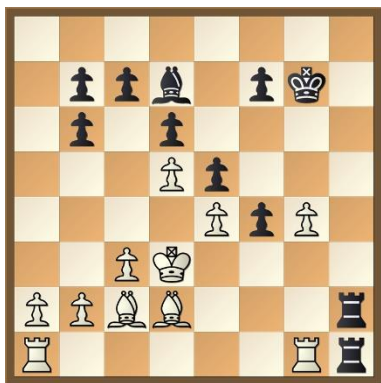
33.Rg1? 33.Be1 Rh2! 34.Rxh2 Rxh2 and the White king is stuck on the back rank. 33.Rc1! securing the rook avoids immediate disaster, but Black is still on top after 33...R8h4 34.Bb1 Bxg4+ 35.Kc2 f5.



33...Rh1! Now White's awkwardly placed pieces can't get out of the way of his own king.

34.Ke2 34.Rxh1 Rxh1+ 35.Be1 Bxg4+ 36.Kd2 Rh2+ 37.Kc1 f3, or 34.Re1 Bxg4+ 35.Kc1 Rxe1+ 36.Bxe1 Rh1 37.Kd2 Rh2+ 38.Kc1 f3 are hopeless.

34...R8h2+ 35.Kd3 35.Kf3 Rxg1 36.Rxg1 Rxd2 is straightforward.

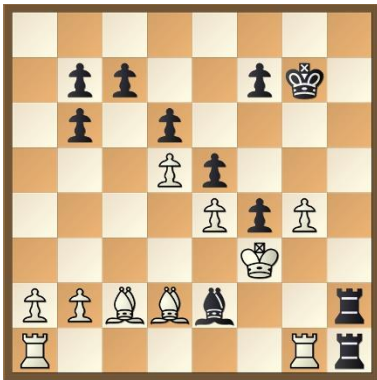


35...Bb5+! Stopping the King escaping.

36.c4 Rh3+ White's king still can't find peace as it is driven back to the kingside.

37.Ke2 Bxc4+ 38.Kf2 R3h2+ 39.Kf3 39.Rg2 Rxc2+ 40.Kxg2 Rxa1 is hopeless so Maciej sportingly allows a fitting finish.

39...Be2 mate.



GM Peter Wells writes ---

The FIDE World Championship and the prospects for Ian Nepomniachtchi

Starting on 26th November and lasting almost three weeks, the chess world can look forward to the enticing prospect of Magnus Carlsen - already generally regarded at the tender age of 31 as one of the great World Champions -- defending for the 4th time the title he first won in 2013. Dubai will be the venue for an event which remains the chess world's showpiece, almost necessarily becoming the occasion for unparalleled attention and intense speculation. In the present instance I think there are reasons for finding the upcoming prospect of the challenge from Magnus's childhood rival Ian Nepomniachtchi (definitely pronounced Jan rather than Ian!) not just fascinating but also hugely significant.

For chess is enjoying an extraordinary surge in popularity, even as some within the game publicly express concerns about the impact of ever deepening silicon-assisted opening preparation upon the continued viability of classical time controls. I have tended to be one of those who sees positives as well as negatives in the game's evolution. Still, there is no denying that the dearth of decisive classical games in the matches in which Magnus has faced other players from his generation - only two from the 2016 match against Sergey Karjakin and, and none at all three years ago against Fabiano Caruana - has raised some difficult questions. I will not be alone in desperately hoping this is not repeated. For however much we know that draws can be full of fascinating content, and however exciting the ensuing tie-breaks have been in the aforementioned encounters, a lengthy series of split points is never an easy sell. This matters, for the wider world is likely to be paying attention, perhaps on a scale not seen since 1972, or at least since the politically charged rivalry between Karpov and Kortchnoi, now almost 40 years ago.

For many observers, the hopes for breaking this pattern rest heavily with the combative, dynamic style of the challenger, whilst it is also possible to find pundits for whom these qualities - together with the often unsettling speed of Nepomniachtchi's play - render him an unusually dangerous opponent for Magnus. Furthermore, it is striking that Nepo - an abbreviation which makes obvious sense, even when writing without a strict character limit - is the first challenger since 2008 to approach the contest with a plus score against the champion in classical play. A record of + 4 = 6 -1

against Magnus sounds very impressive (and it is – few others can make a similar claim). However, I think the widespread view that the salience of this factor is limited by how long ago some of these games took place is correct. For, as I mentioned above, these two were childhood rivals and at the time of his first victory in 2002, Nepo candidly admits that this was “just another game for me – you know, some guy from Norway!” Although his opponent played well and, one year later when they met again it had already become very clear that Magnus was anything but ‘just some guy from Norway,’ the whole experience seems far removed from what is to come this month.

If anything, it seems to me that their most recent decisive classical game, Magnus’s extraordinary win from 2019 in Croatia superbly covered in an entertaining and instructive video from Daniel King - see 50-50 | Ian Nepomniachtchi vs Magnus Carlsen | GCT Zagreb 2019 -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3G5J80JE80> - might present rather more of a concern for Nepo. It also provides grist to the mill for anyone (myself included) who wants to caution against stereotyping the players’ respective styles. From a neutral standpoint this game was an intriguing example of the extent to which static and dynamic factors tend to be intertwined, but it was very much a case of Nepo focusing highly plausibly upon his positional assets, to be hit by a series of dynamic counterblows from Magnus which muddled the waters enough for him to lose his way. This doesn’t really fit the prevailing narrative! Yet, as I suggested in my column last month Magnus can look equally at home mixing it in sharp positions. His exceptional capacity for maintaining the pressure in positions which appear to be tending towards sterile equality may be his hallmark, but this is just one facet of his appreciation of the vulnerability of his opponents. He excels at piling on pressure of all kinds. For all this, Fabiano Caruana is almost certainly right to say that stylistically “differences between top players are going to be in the details”. If your weaknesses are too glaring in any particular area of the game, you probably will not find yourself amongst their number, an insight which could temper many an extravagant narrative on the likely course of the match.

If the past record of their head-to-head encounters should not be afforded too much weight – neither, I think, should the fact that the two of them have previously worked together. My impression of games between players in this potentially awkward situation is that their work often leaves a small number of openings which they have analysed together which - more out of prudence than any (even unspoken) agreement - the two players decide should not be the focus of their future contests. However, in this case their work dates from almost a decade ago and I don’t think that either this, or their apparently cordial personal relations, will have a substantial impact on the match.

There are two areas where I think that those supporting Nepo should place their hopes. The first is simply the tight margins involved in Magnus’s most recent World Championship victories. It is natural enough to be influenced by the aura which has grown up around Magnus. This derives not just from the longevity of his grip on the title, but also his impressive series of tournament victories and the often comfortable margin at the top of the rating list which has underpinned his status as the long-time No. 1 player in the world. The temptation arises from all this to look back on his last two World Championship matches with the feeling that the outcomes were somehow inevitable, whereas in fact they were both extremely close.

Yes, his experience of these matches now gives Magnus an added advantage. Despite years of tense tournament play, I can merely guess at the pressure which a player feels in these extreme pressure situations in which, game after game, a single win can have such a seismic impact, with so much at stake. Listening directly to those who have been grappled with this ‘stress’ gives a better idea of it and I would heartily recommend the Chess.com interview with Fabiano Caruana to try to get a handle on this - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjcTKOfi1dg>. For sure, the Candidates tournament is tough and the year-long Covid-induced pause between the beginning of the event and the end

presented unique challenges which Nepo navigated superbly. Nonetheless, I suspect that nothing quite prepares a player for the stresses of the match to come.

Having said that, similar arguments could also have been advanced in 2016 and 2018 and Magnus's two adversaries gave an excellent account of themselves. Having cautioned against assessments too infused with hindsight, we should of course avoid falling into an alternative version of the trap. The Caruana match may have featured 12 classical draws, but Fabiano was actually in a lost position with little time on the clock in the very first game. Had this game gone Magnus's way the story, as Caruana freely admits, might have been very different. Still, overall it is fair to say that Magnus has been notably less dominant in the classical phase of his World Championship matches than elsewhere.

By far the greatest reason for expecting a serious bid from the challenger this time, though, is Nepo's own impressive evolution as a player. There has never been much doubt about his abilities – I remember first noticing his strength right back in 2004 when I did some work with David Howell in preparation for David's appearance at the World Stars series of junior tournaments. As I recall, at that time I was deeply impressed by the mixture of obvious aggression and very secure positional foundations in Nepo's play and my feeling was that he was probably up there with Magnus at the pinnacle of what turns out to have been an astonishingly accomplished cohort. However, there is something of a consensus that for a long time his chess was not reaching the levels it could be. If his style evoked compliments such as 'dynamic', 'aggressive' or 'intuitive', it was also dogged by the flipside of some of these – 'careless' 'impulsive' and so on. There was even a sense – perhaps, retrospectively backed up by Nepo's own admission that it is really only some time in his early twenties that he has shifted his chess work up a gear – that he didn't quite have the seriousness to compete for the game's highest honours. There was even a quirkiness about parts of his opening repertoire which went beyond the customary 'searching for fresh pastures' and rather tended to support this view. If I were to call the Centre Game – 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 Qxd4 – 'semi-frivolous', the truth is that I probably only attach the 'semi' as a mark of respect to Nepo. To my mind, giving tempi for White's queen to settle on e3 just feels wrong and it seemed very strange that he employed this for more than a single 'shock' outing at this level.

At this point I can't resist reference to my own experience playing against the challenger (OK, maybe I didn't try very hard to resist!). I did lose our first encounter in 2009, but even here I got a very promising position with black – almost as soon as we had left the theory – before going astray. In both our remaining two encounters – in 2011 and 2013 – I had the feeling that the sheer speed of my opponent's moves played the decisive role. In the first, I had a large advantage which I turned into a lost position in time trouble, but Nepo then made the decision to sacrifice a piece at great speed, miscalculated and thereby quite unnecessarily jettisoned half a point. In our second draw two years later, a serious slip in the opening – again played at considerable speed – left me with a fantastic position from which he should have never recovered. At some stage I became nervous at the prospect of playing the remainder of the game on increment and permitted a repetition. So yes, I felt the pressure which Nepo's speed can exert upon an opponent, but also benefitted from moments of both impetuosity and carelessness. To be honest, it felt a bit like playing a Super-GM version of Jack Rudd.

What seems to have changed above all is that a more serious Nepo has largely eliminated these moments of recklessness. Interestingly, when asked recently whether he has done any psychological preparation for the match, he responded that if by this is meant "needing to have the correct attitude within yourself, then I've been preparing since childhood". Well maybe, but to the outside observer there has been a palpable change in recent years. We seem to be witnessing a harder-working, more self-controlled and self-disciplined Nepomniachtchi than ever before. I also liked the admirable restraint he employed when asked whether he had a message for Magnus. My qualification is "already a message to Magnus" he replied! It certainly was. So many players would have been profoundly

affected by playing the two halves of the Candidates tournament one year apart, but Nepo handled this consummately. He was dangerous as ever, but more solid, playing at a healthy tempo for sure, but calmer and more patient, as witnessed already in round 1 (right back in March 2020!) with his superb technical conversion against Anish Giri. Intriguingly, Nepo suggested in an excellent interview with the Russian Chess Federation's Eteri Kublashvili (see Ian Nepomniachtchi: "The strategy was not to lose" (fide.com)) that he benefitted greatly from commentating on the 2018 Candidates, watching players failing to deal adequately with the pressure and "going completely crazy".

Such composure is the quality he needs above all against Magnus. As Caruana says, the greatest danger for Nepo lies in reacting impatiently to any long string of draws by trying to force the issue. Aggression is good, but this is just the context where he will need his greater patience. I believe we shall also witness the fruits of his hard work and that of his team of seconds – ranging from contemporaries such as Ildar Khairullin of whose chess understanding he speaks so warmly – to, more recently Peter Leko whom Nepo simply describes as 'a legend' who has contributed greatly to his 'chess culture', which in the challenger's modest estimation had previously been somewhat deficient. The candidates saw a broader range of openings than we have seen from Nepo before and I anticipate more of the same in Dubai.

A prediction? Well, I saw on Twitter this week complaints that all too many 'pundits' were declaring Magnus the favourite, but asserting at the same time that a Nepo victory cannot be ruled out! In other words, they are covering all bases. I take the point, but this 'cop-out' seems almost unavoidable. I have concentrated on Nepomniachtchi here in part because I discussed Magnus last month, but also because I believe the challenger is much the lesser known of the two combatants. It is difficult to avoid the view that Magnus is the favourite, but I am inclined to believe that on average the danger posed by Nepo's challenge is probably being slightly underestimated. Just this weekend Nigel Short – also on Twitter – expressed a similar view, assessing Magnus's advantage at 60-40, which sounds about right to me. I am pleased that the length of the match has been extended – 14 classical games this time around – and optimistic that we will see some blood on both sides.

As befits the booming commentary 'industry' in chess at present, there are tremendous opportunities to watch the match with knowledgeable, erudite company this year. The English dominated Meltwater team featuring David Howell and Jovanka Houska remains one excellent option. I am also excited at the choice between Anish Giri and Judit Polgar – also on Chess 24, Fabiano Caruana on chess.com or – perhaps most exciting for a player of my generation – Vishy Anand on FIDE's own coverage. Do tune in - this promises to be a feast.



Arkell's Endings



The Bishop moves diagonally forwards or backwards, to the extent of the Board - Howard Staunton

Highlighting the freedom of movement a Bishop has over a Knight.

Perhaps I can blame Covid-19 for the bout of food poisoning I suffered during the middle rounds of the British over-the-board Championship. Had the disease not stolen my sense of smell 18 months earlier, I might have detected something suspicious about the quiche I picked up for a

rushed lunch.

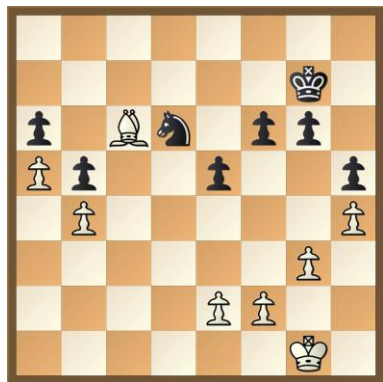
However, I was feeling very well for this Round 7 encounter with one of a growing number of Lockdown warriors – players who have improved substantially through study and online practice and

who are now hundreds of points under-rated. I will annotate this game in the style already familiar to readers of my book – ie limiting the comments to my thoughts at the board rather than using engine analysis.

Keith Arkell - Oliver Stubbs

Over-the-Board British Championship Hull (7), 08.10.2021

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 Nb6 6.d3 Bg7 7.Be3 Nc6 8.Qd2 Nd4 9.Rc1 c6 10.Bh6 Bxh6 11.Qxh6 Nf5 12.Qd2 0-0 13.Nf3 Re8 14.h4 h5 15.Ne4 Nd6 16.Nc5 e5 17.0-0 Bf5 18.Ng5 Qe7 19.b4 f6 20.Nge4 Bxe4 21.dxe4 Rad8 22.Qh6 Qg7 23.Qe3 Kh7 24.Rfd1 Qf7 25.a4 Nbc4 26.Qb3 b6 27.Nd3 a6 28.Rc3 Re7 29.Rdc1 b5 30.a5 Nb7 31.Bh3 Rc7 32.Nb2 Nbd6 33.Rd3 Nxb2 34.Qxb2 Nc4 35.Qc3 Qe7 36.Rcd1 Rd6 37.Rxd6 Nxd6 38.Qc5 Nxe4 39.Qxe7+ Rxe7 40.Rc1 Rc7 41.Bg2 Nd6 42.Rxc6 Rxc6 43.Bxc6 Kg7

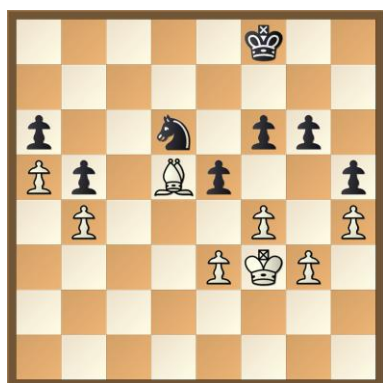


Following some very good chess from my opponent this was the best I was able to achieve after 43 moves – an endgame which offers some winning chances. My advantages consist in the Knight being tied to the defence of a6 and the possibility of my King breaking into Black's position. It is obviously a big plus that Oliver's a6, b5, g6 and h5 pawns are on the same colour as the Bishop.

44.f4 If I can persuade the e5 pawn to move, my King will have a direct route into Black's queenside through the g1 - a7 diagonal.

44...Kf7 45.Bd5+ Ke7 46.Kg2 Kd7 47.Kf3 Ke7 47...Kc7 won't free the Knight to move as there will then be nothing defending the g6 pawn, so Black must wait in the centre with his King.

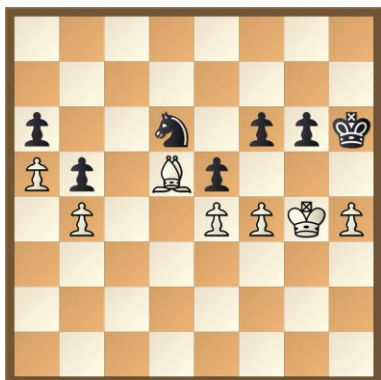
48.e3 Kf8



49.e4 For me move 49 is rather early to play e4, but it is necessary to make any progress. My idea is to play g4 followed by g5 in order to prize open the Black squares for my King's entry. The problem is that against the immediate 49 g4 Black can randomise the position with 49...e4+ 50 Kg3 hxg4 51 Kxg4 Nf5!

49...Kg7 50.g4 hxg4+ I was hoping for 50...Kf8 51 g5 Ke7 52 gxf6+ Kxf6 53 fxe5+ Kxe5 54 Ke3 when Black will have to give way decisively due to Zugzwang, a theme which will soon gain in importance.

51.Kxg4 Kh6



52.Ba8 I want to be able to play Kg5 after I take on e5, and this triangulation with the Bishop places my opponent in Zugzwang.

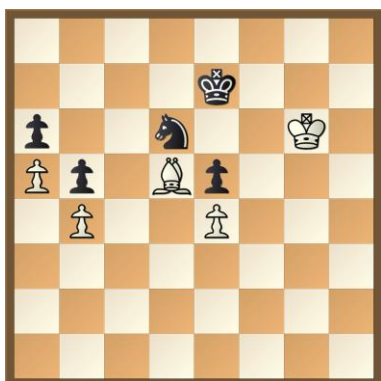
52...Kg7 53.Bc6 Kh6 54.Bd5 Kh7 Against 54...Kg7 I intended 55 fxe5 fxe5 56 Kg5 with another Zugzwang because 56...Nf7+ 57 Bxf7 Kxf7 58 h5 is a won K+P ending.

55.fxe5 fxe5 56.Kg5 Kg7 57.h5 gxh5 58.Kxh5 Kh7 [58..Kf6 also allows me to penetrate his position with 59 Kh6.

59.Kg5 Kg7 60.Ba8 Again we see the triangulation theme to bring about yet another Zugzwang!

60...Kf7 61.Bc6 Ke6 After 61...Ke7 62 Bd5 my King will gain access to f6 when the e pawn will soon fall.

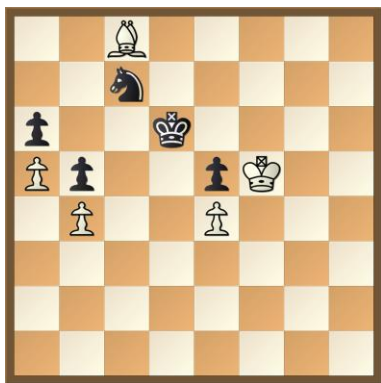
62.Kg6 Ke7 63.Bd5



The 4th Zugzwang of this endgame.

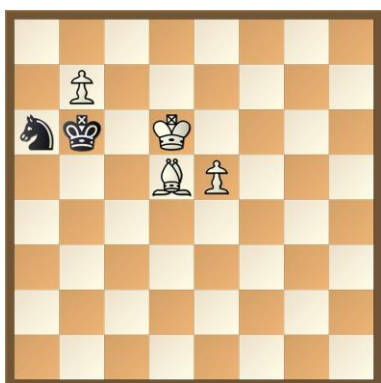
63...Ne8 64.Bb7 Nc7 An amusing idea which I was aware of during the game was that if Oliver tries to trap my Bishop with 64...Nd6 my a-pawn queens, viz: 65 Bxa6 Kd7 66 Bb7! Nxb7 67 a6.

65.Kf5 Kd6 66.Bc8



And after Zugzwang number 5 the Black pawns will start to drop off.

66...Ne8 67.Bxa6 Ng7+ 68.Kg6 Ne6 69.Bxb5 Nd4 70.Ba4 Ne6 71.Bb3 Nf4+ 72.Kf6 Nd3 73.b5 Kc5 74.b6 Nb4 75.b7 Na6 76.Kxe5 Kb4 77.Bd5 Kxa5 78.Kd6 Kb6 79.e5



1-0



The Interview

Mark Rivlin meets John Reyes

There may be treble ahead ...

John Reyes is an ECF Silver Members' Representative and a member of Urmston Chess Club in Manchester. Aside from working full-time for Natwest Private Banking and his chess activities, John is also a qualified darts marker.

First and foremost, as a darts marker, do you have a Hawaiian shirt as good as the ones displayed by Mike Truran and Michael Farthing at the recent English Chess Federation AGM?

Nope but I wonder if they have been getting fashion tips from shirt trendsetter and five-times world championship semi-finalist Wayne Mardle.

Darts and chess are an interesting combination. How did you get into both?

I started playing chess when I was 13 when Nigel Short was playing Garry Kasparov in the World Championship. I wanted to learn chess and went to my local club (Chorlton CC). John Horner was in charge of junior coaching and there were six of us, but I was the only one who continued to play into adulthood. With darts, I was around 19 years old and working behind a bar. The landlord played a decent game of darts and showed me how to play and I was smitten.

What is the difference between a darts marker and referee? Tell us about a typical marking shift.

A darts marker writes the scores after the referee calls the total. A typical marking session involves doing the calling and entering the score into a darts tablet called DartConnect. In the old days, we would do that part of the job on a wipe board. Now, the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) has become much more streamlined, and we are given the appropriate digital back-up.

As a darts fan, I have always believed that officials require the type of mathematical brain that was required to break the Enigma Code. Is this an urban myth?

Actually darts is a lot like chess, with patterns and combinations. Like chess players who champion certain openings, so darts players go for their check-outs (the process where they set up a juicy double to win the leg).

Tell us about the two clubs you are involved with, Urmston and Manchester Social.

Urmston struggled with getting online players over lockdown and subsequently losing our venue to Slimming World, but we are rebuilding. Former Urmston player Aiden Rawlinson came up with the concept of Manchester Social CC. His aim was to get people playing chess in a non-competitive environment. I support this initiative because there are many players who prefer this 'casual chess' approach to competitive graded games.

What are the duties of an ECF Representative?

I see the main aspect of a rep's brief as standing up for members' views, even if they differ from my own. I don't approve of reps going on social media to discuss the merits of candidates for election. I always do what I feel is right for the members I represent.

Which chess and darts players do you particularly like watching?

I like watching players from 3Cs Chess Club. Steven Rigby, John Walton, Phil Adams and others have produced some great local players including GM Steve Gordon, IM Jamie Horton, FM Adam Ashton and Alex Longson. In darts I am a fan of Raymond van Barneveld and John Part (aka Darth Maple).

Do any of the players on the darts circuit like to play chess for some pre-match R&R?

I heard that Peter Wright and Dimitri Van den Bergh were playing chess during the first lockdown when Dimitri had to stay in the UK, and my friend Danny Sullivan, a darts referee, told me he beat a now-famous chess player when he was a 10-year-old in a school event.

Show us one of your favourite chess games.

This is a recent game against Edward Jackson from 3Cs who played a line of the Caro-Kann that I should know better. I try to learn from my losses, but I have not won a league match for over four years, although I have drawn a lot of games.

John Reyes - Edward Jackson

3cs 1 vs Urmston 1 (my first Manchester League match after lockdown)

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Bd3 Bxd3 5. Qxd3 e6 6. Nf3 Qa5+ 7. Bd2 Qa6 8. Qb3 c5 9. c3 Nc6 10. Be3 cxd4 11. Bxd4 Nge7 12. Qd1 Nf5 13. Nbd2 Be7 14. Qe2 Qxe2+ 15. Kxe2 f6 16. exf6 gxf6 17. Nb3 e5 18. Bc5 b6 19. Bxe7 Kxe7 20. g4 Nd6 21. Rhd1 Ke6 22. Nbd2 h5 23. g5 e4 24. Nd4+ Nxd4+ 25. cxd4 fxg5 0-1

What is your most memorable incident on the darts circuit?

It was in Wigan in 2015 marking my first nine-darter (going from 501-0 in nine throws) by Simon Whitlock against Nathan Aspinall. I still have that board.

Problem Corner

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

In the last Chess Moves I left you with this problem to solve –



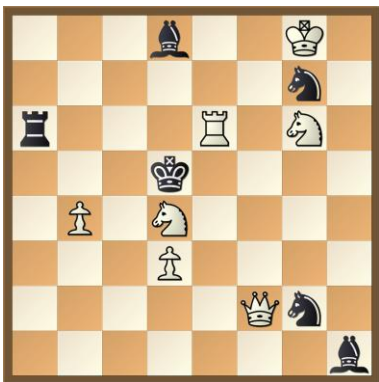
Mate in 2

Israel Schiffmann, *La Strategie* 1929

Version by David Shire, *The Problemist Supplement* 2021

There is a plausible try: 1.Ng3, threatening 2.Nf5. Now if 1...Kxg3 2.Rf3; or if 1...hgx4 2.Qxg4; or if 1...Rxxg3 2.Qe7; but 1...Rf3!, preparing a haven at g4 after the Knight has moved to f5, is a clever refutation. The key exemplifies the theme of 'Bristol clearances', touched on in the last issue – 1.Qb2! threatens 2.Qf6. Now if Black defends with 1...Bc3 he is interfering with the guard line of the a3R and so the f2R can follow the wQ along the 2nd rank: 2.Rd2 is mate. And if Black tries 1...c3, which for good measure is check, then 2.Re2 gives mate. Note also the nice 1...hxg4 2.Qh8.

The Problemist Supplement (for details go to www.theproblemist.org/) is a good source of interesting material, such as the following, from the September 2021 issue –



Mate in 2

Pavel I. Marakulin

1st Prize, *Kentish Mercury* 1898

This appears in an article on 'black correction' – for what this means, read on! But before doing so you may like to have a go at solving it. It has a nice key, a move that will be unexpected until you have explored the possibilities of this position (and perhaps even after you have explored them!).

Despite Black's quite strong force, it turns out that White does not have to create a threat, but can instead resort to 1.Nb5!. Black is in Zugzwang. His a6R is overloaded with defensive responsibilities: he must stay on the a-file to guard against 2.Qa2 and on the 6th rank to guard against 2.Rd6. But there are two 'corrections' by the black Rook (explaining the 'problemspeak' term 'black correction'): moves away from the a-file that do not lead to mate by 2.Qa2, but which create a new feature that allows a

different mate. Black can play 1...Rc6, but because he is blocking c6 White can now play 2.Re5; or he can play 1...Rxe6, another self-blocking move, that causes 2.Qc5 to be mate.

The key move has also imposed defensive responsibilities upon the d8B. If it moves along the d8-a4 diagonal we have 2.Nc7; and moves westwards lead to the same three mates we've already seen: 1...Ba5 2.Qa2; 1...Bb6 2.Rd6 and 1...Bc7 2.Nxc7. There is also a *correction* concerning the g7N – a random move permits 2.Qf5; 1...Nxe6 doesn't permit that mate but instead, by blocking the e6 square, permits 2.Qf3. You will see that moves by the g2N and the move 1...Kxe6 also lead to mate. Another nice point (which you may have noticed if you were solving the problem) is that there are *changed mates* – in the diagram position if Black his d8B to (for instance) a5 then White would have 2.Ne7; and if 1...Rd6 White would have 2.Re5. Both of these continuations are relinquished by the key move.

Here is another problem which is in the same 'ballpark' and was in the same Problemist Supplement article, for you to solve –



Mate in 2

Herman L. Jonsson

Wiener Hausfrauen-Zeitung 1887

Despite the esteemed publication in which this fine problem first appeared you don't have to be a housewife to enjoy it! Solution next time (unless, of course, you or your computer crack it before then).

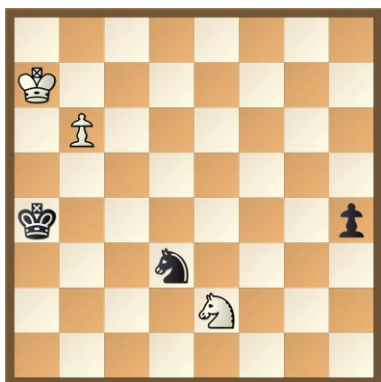
As ever, if you have any queries or comments don't hesitate to email me.

Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk



How to Solve a Study

Ian Watson writes ...



White to play and win

One of Britain's leading study composers, Paul Michelet, has sent me a new study that is based on one he published twenty years ago in the French magazine *diagrammes*. I'll show you how to solve his 2001 study; then your task is to solve his 2021 study.

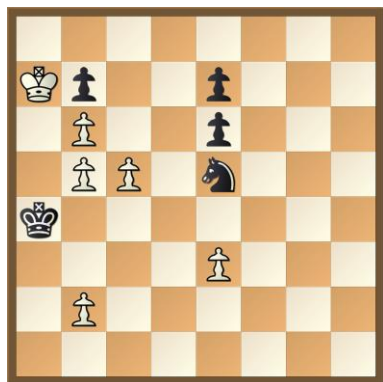
White clearly has to begin by pushing his pawn, and Black has to defend by threatening a fork. So 1.b7 Ne5 is easy money, but now what? First, consider Black's threats. If not prevented, Black will box in the White King by ...Nd7, so in a game you would play 2.Kb6 without much thought. This isn't a game, however, and so you'll need to also consider 2.Kb8, although it's ridiculous. Anyway, try 2.Kb6. Play goes 2...Nd7+ 3.Kc7 (to prevent 3...Nb8) Nc5 4.b8Q Na6+ and there's no win. Oh, well, try 2.Kb8 – it's absurd, but this is a composed study so who knows? If Black again goes 2...Nd7+ what do we do? Ah, we've got the c8 square this time – hey, maybe that's the composer's idea? 2...Nd7+ 3.Kc8 Nb6+ 4.Kd8 wins. What about 2...Kb5 instead? Another 'Ah': 3.Kc7 Nc6 4.Nd4+ wins.

Okay, so it probably has to be 2...Nc6+. White goes 3.Kc7 to attack the knight, and Black counters with 3...Nb4 with that same Na6 fork coming up. So have we got something wrong? Third 'Ah': 4.Kb6. Black has to go 4...Nd5+ and we get 5.Ka7. Yes! White can meet 5...Ne7 or 5...Nb4 with 6.Nd4.

You sit back and wonder if that is correct, and while doing so you realise that the White King has done a circular tour a7/b8/c7/b6/a7 returning to its starting square. Final 'Ah', this time of satisfaction. The solution goes: **1.b7 Ne5 2.Kb8 Nc6+ 3.Kc7 Nb4 4.Kb6 Nd5+ 5.Ka7 Ne7/b4 6.Nd4** wins.

Other composers had made partial such King tours, but Paul's 2001 study was the first to go full circle.

So now over to you. Here's Paul's new study -



White to play and win

The solution is given at the end of this issue ...

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk



British Women's Champion

IM/WGM Harriet Hunt reports ...

I've long had a love-hate relationship with being a non-professional chess player. When one plays a few bad games it's reassuring to retreat to the safety of a 'real-world' job, which doesn't require you to

stand or fall in nerve-shredding solo combat day after day. However, there's the concurrent sense of chess opportunities missed, or rather more simply, of missing chess. The invitation to the British Women's championship arrived at a point of hiatus in my career plans, so it was a good time to throw down the gauntlet and challenge myself to remember how to make a few decent moves. It was my first over-the-board event in over two-and-a-half years, after the birth of my third child in 2019 followed by the pandemic.

Lack of battle practice definitely showed itself in the guise of a tendency to overcomplicate positions, and a few important missed tactics. After losing a particularly painful long game to Katarzyna Toma in Round 3, I was less than overjoyed to be facing Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant immediately the next morning. The difficulties of pairing a 7-round Swiss with 11 players, taking into account some half-point-byes and withdrawals, meant that the order in which the top contenders faced one another was a little random. Ketevan had herself lost to Katarzyna Toma in the second round, so at this point the championship seemed to be Katarzyna's for the taking, but I was keen to stay in the hunt for second place.

Hunt, Harriet (2414) - Arakhamia-Grant, Ketevan (2376) [C78]

British Women's Championship Hull (4), 16.10.2021

1.e4 e5 A surprise. Ketevan has played the Sicilian pretty consistently throughout her career.

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Bc5



The Moeller Defence – a less common relative of the Archangel (5... b5 6. Bb3 c5).

6.c3 0-0 A rare line played several times by Onischuk. (6...Ba7 is more common in this position).

7.d3

7.d4 is of course the main move, when White typically accepts the challenge to sacrifice a piece for a kingside attack after e.g. 7...Ba7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 exd4 10.cxd4 d6 11.Bxc6 bxc6 12.Nbd2 g5 13.Nxg5 hxg5 14.Bxg5 Sutovsky - Bartel, Biel 2015. However, I had no idea of the current theory here, so I went for a less immediately combative option.

7...d6 8.h3 Ba7



9.Bxc6

9.Bg5 doesn't seem so good here after 9...h6 10.Bh4 g5 11.Nxg5 hxg5 12.Bxg5 Kg7 when White is slow to get other pieces to the kingside.; 9.Re1 is probably the best move objectively, when Black leaves the Lopez bishop high and dry with 9...Ne7 10.Nbd2 Ng6, e.g. Hansen SB – Acs, Bundesliga 2006, but it's easy for White to drift planlessly here on an off day. I had a deep fear this was going to be another off day, so I went for the text when at least I have a concrete idea.

9...bxc6 10.Na3 h6 11.Re1 Be6 12.Nc2 a5

12...c5!? comes into consideration here - temporarily shutting in the bishop is less important than deterring White's plan of d4 to activate the knight pair.

13.d4 exd4 14.Ncxd4 Bd7



Natural to preserve the bishop pair, but Keteven had underestimated the forcing lines that follow.

15.e5 Nd5 16.c4 Ne7 17.exd6

17.b3

17...cxd6 18.Bf4 Bc5 19.Nb3 Bb4 20.Re2 a4 21.a3



An unusual configuration leading to an exchange of minor pieces.

21...axb3 22.axb4 Rxa1 23.Qxa1



As Ketevan said after the game, 'Somehow I got a horrible position.' Black is suffering here with weak pawns on d6 and b3.

23...Be6 24.Qc1 Nf5 25.Qc3 d5 26.Rd2 Nd6?! 27.Bxd6 Qxd6 28.c5 Qf4 29.Rd4

29.Nd4 would be more straightforward.

29...Qf5 30.Qxb3 Rb8 31.Qc3?!

31.Rd1 d4 32.Qa3 would maintain a grip more easily.

31...Qb1+ 32.Kh2 Ra8 33.b5 cxb5



34.c6? 34.Rb4 is better

34...Rc8? 34...Ra1 would be a tougher defence, as 35.c7 Qh1+ 36.Kg3 Rc1 is far from clear

35.Rf4 Now White is winning.

35...Qa2 36.Nd4 Qa7 37.Qg3 Qc5 38.b4! Qe7 39.Qe3 Qd6 40.g3 Ra8 41.Qc3 Qb8 42.Qc5 Qc8 43.h4 Ra2 44.Nxb5 g5 45.Nd6 Qf8 46.Rf3 Bg4 47.c7 Bxf3 48.c8Q Ra1 49.Qxf8+ Kxf8 50.Qc8+ Kg7 51.Qc3+



Escaping the mating net by forking Black's loose pieces.

1-0

The tournament swung my way after Katarzyna Toma suffered an aberration while playing 'on increment' and lost on time in Round 5 to Zoe Varney, who made the strongest impression on the field among the up-and-coming players. I managed (just about!) to hang on to a half-point lead with two wins on the final day, with Katarzyna Toma half a point behind and a three-way tie (Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, Audrey Kueh, Zoe Varney) for third place. I think it would be fair to say that of the three top seeds, Katarzyna Toma played the best chess, Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant was the most consistent in dispatching lower-rated opposition, but I was the luckiest on the day!

The field of 11 players was undoubtedly far smaller than the organisers had hoped for, as was the Open championship itself the preceding week. However, given the extraordinary year, I feel we should be celebrating the return of an over-the-board Championships in whatever reduced form, rather than bemoaning players' absence. The Hull organisational team certainly did their utmost for the participants, with excellent playing conditions at the Canham Turner Conference Centre at the University of Hull.



It was also a pleasure to meet the Lord Mayor of Hull at the opening ceremony, and Graham Chesters (above), President of the Hull and District Chess Association, at the prizegiving.

British Champion

GM Nick Pert reports ...



(1) Pert,N (2548) - McPhillips,Joseph (2425) [D41]

British OTB Championship Hull ENG (8.3), 09.10.2021

Annotations by Nick Pert

The British Championships took place in Hull this year. The venue and playing conditions were first class, but due to the timing and late organisation of the event, numbers were lower than usual. The competition itself was extremely close with many players considering this to be a golden opportunity to become British Champion. Heading into round 8 the 5 players who were tied in joint 1st place on 5/7 had all at different stages been in reasonable positions to win the tournament. I downfloated to IM Joseph McPhillips with the White pieces.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5

Joseph plays many openings so it was hard to predict what he would play. As this game was played in the morning instead of the afternoon I knew his preparation time must have been limited. I had previously analysed ideas involving the mainline 6.e4 for my DVD series, but preferred 6.e3 as it is slightly less theoretical.

6.e3 cxd4 7.exd4 Nxc3 A rare move but it seems as though this is the latest fashion. 7...Bb4 and 7...Be7 have been played many more times and often lead to Isolated Queens Pawn positions.

8.bxc3 Qc7



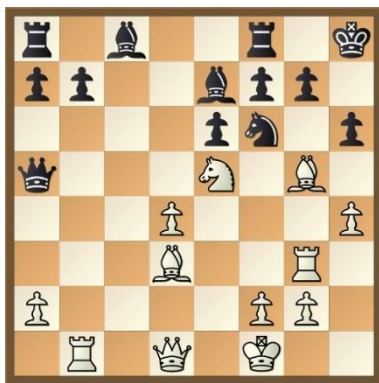
9.Rb1!?

I was more or less out of my preparation already. I knew that Bd2 was the main move, but recalled watching a crushing victory by World Champion Magnus Carlsen against Duda with this interesting Rook move. Given that it felt like a must win situation for me, I was happy to sacrifice a pawn for active play.

9.Bd2 is safer 9...Nd7 10.Bd3 Bd6 11.0-0 b6 12.Re1 Bb7 When Black can complete his development with roughly equal play.

9...Qxc3+!? A brave choice but not bad.

9...Nd7 10.Bd3 10 c4 is safer, saving the pawn. 10...Qxc3+ 11.Kf1 Be7?! Probably not the best move, but it is amazing how quickly things go wrong for Black. 12.h4! 0-0 13.Rh3 Nf6? Qc7 was necessary. 14.Ne5! Threatening Bxh7+ 14...Qa5 15.Rg3 Kh8?! 16.Bg5 h6



17.Bxh6! gxh6 18.Qf3 1-0 (18) Carlsen,M (2855)-Duda,J (2756) chess24.com INT 2021 (18.Qf3 Qc3 19.Qf4 Ng8 20.Nxf7+ Rxf7 21.Qxf7 Would have finished the game.)

10.Bd2 Qc7 11.Bd3



11. Qd8?

A bizarre move. Trailing in development Black simply must start getting his pieces out.

11...Nc6 12.0-0 Be7 was expected when White has a number of interesting options such as Qc2, Qe2, Rb1 or Re1. All offer full compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but Black's position is also playable.

12.0-0 Nc6 13.Be4!? Be7 Black wisely declines the 2nd pawn.

13...Nxd4? 14.Qa4+ Nc6 15.Bxc6+ bxc6 16.Ba5 Qd5 17.Rfd1 Qc5 18.Bb6+--

14.Ne5!



Keeping up the pressure.

14...Nxe5! 14...Nxd4? Again Black cannot take the 2nd pawn. 15.Bc3 Had been my intention. (15.Qh5 may be even stronger. 15...g6 16.Nxg6 fxg6 17.Bxg6+ hxg6 18.Qxh8+ Bf8 19.Bh6+-) 15...Bc5 (15...Nf5 16.Qa4+ Kf8 (16...Bd7 17.Nxd7 Qxd7 18.Qxd7+ Kxd7 19.Rxb7+-) 17.Bxb7+-) 16.Qa4+ Bd7 17.Qc4 Winning material.

15.dxe5 Qd4



15...0-0 16.Qc2 h6 17.Rfd1 Looked difficult for Black since the Queen has no squares on the queenside. 17...Qe8 (17...Bd7! Is most resilient. 18.Rxb7 Qe8 19.Qc3) 18.Rb3 Qa4? is not possible. 19.Bxh6! gxh6 20.Rg3+ wins the Queen.

16.Qc2! Discouraging castling. From now on the game is all about making it difficult for Black to castle.

16.Qe2 0-0 Is Black's idea.

16...Bd7 16...Qxe5 17.Bxb7 Bxb7 18.Rxb7 Would be decisive since Black still cannot castle due to the pressure on the Bishop on e7.

17.Bxb7 Rb8 17...Rd8 18.Ba5 Ba4 19.Bc6+ Bxc6 20.Qxc6+ Qd7 21.Qf3 Rc8 22.Rb7 Qa4 23.Bb4+- Black just simply cannot get his King safe without losing material.

18.Be3 Qxe5 18...Qa4 19.Qxa4 Bxa4 20.Bc6+ Wins for White.

19.Bxa7



19...0-0 Black finally castles but it costs him an exchange.

19...Rd8 I thought that this was his plan. 20.Bb6 Rb8 (20...Bd6 21.f4 and there is no check for Black.) 21.Bc7 Bd6 Threatening mate so I cannot capture the Rook. Simply trading the Bishops however is very strong for White. For example; 22.Bxd6 Qxd6 23.Rfd1 Qe5 24.Bc6 Bxc6 25.Rxb8+ Qxb8 26.Qxc6+ Ke7 27.Rd7+ Kf8 28.Qb7 Qe8 29.Qc7 Wins the Black Queen.

20.Bxb8 Rxb8 21.Rfd1 Bb5 21...Be8 22.Bf3 Is just a clean exchange for White and the Rooks are coming off too.

22.Re1!



Black decided to give up here.

22...Qc7 22...Qg5 23.h4! Qh5 24.Qc7 (24.Bf3 Qxh4 25.a4 Also wins a piece.) 24...Re8 25.Re5 and Black loses the b5 Bishop.

23.Qxc7 After this win I moved into joint first place with Andy Ledger who defeated Danny Gormally. In a tight last round I drew a fairly solid game against Marcus Harvey whilst Hamish Olson and Keith Arkell both did me a massive favour by beating Andy Ledger and drawing with Mark Hebden respectively to allow me to finish outright 1st on 6.5/9!

1-0



A great knight out ...

Mark Jordan ...

Damp, brown foliage left over from autumn clings to my legs, it's raining slightly with the promise of a more substantial downpour soon, and it's beginning to get very chilly as I look hopefully through the gathering gloom towards the corner around which my lift to the Kent League match should surely be appearing soon. I look at my watch and I'm anxious that at this rate we'll be late and be playing off a time penalty.

Two cars and a van turn the corner as I wait, before I finally see the one I've been waiting for, with two familiar faces glimpsing through the windshield. It pulls up next to me, I jump in the back seat just ahead of the promised downpour, and we're away.

Dave, with his long legs and body, occupies the front passenger seat next to the team captain, Ray, who also takes on driving duties. I'm sitting next to an old friend and chess rival Roger who grins at me, and I inquire as to who else is playing tonight.

"Martin's playing and I'm picking him up next", Ray tells me. "Michael's making his own way as he's got a case at the Old Bailey. He might be late." Michael is a barrister, this happens fairly frequently and, to be fair, he's not usually very late, but it is always a worry. For some reason, Crown Court proceedings are considered more of a priority than chess.

As we head off, the conversation turns to the team we'll be facing and predictions are made as to who'll be on each board and what openings and styles of play we may be expecting. Roger, an old campaigner, seems to know every player in the League, at least as an opponent, and is therefore our relatively reliable oracle as to what is to come. We pick up Martin, continue our conversation, optimism mixed with trepidation, and we arrive at the match venue with 10 minutes to spare. If we had arrived late then League rules stipulate that the opposing captain can start our clocks. And although many are quite flexible on the matter, expecting reciprocal understanding in return, we don't

want to risk a time penalty, particularly as if we prevail, we have an outside chance of winning the League. With nerves beginning to jangle, we can do without the additional hassle.

Team sheets are exchanged, I find as expected that I'm playing on Board 3, and we lose the toss, meaning our opponents will have White on the odd board numbers. Michael arrives just as we're settling down at our boards and he is directed to Board 5.

"Start your opponent's clock", announces the opposing captain, and the match begins. All becomes silent save the sound of breathing and the clack of chess pieces on the wooden boards reserved for matches.

Playing Black against an opponent who slightly outgrades me, I expect a challenging game, but I'm fortunate as he meets my Pirc Defence somewhat inaccurately and I achieve equality very easily. Given I'm the underdog here I'd be happy – depending on the situation in the match – to achieve a draw. But my opponent is clearly not on top form. Perhaps discouraged by his poor opening play, he uses too much time in the early stages and still manages to commit some inaccuracies if not outright mistakes. A couple of hours into the game and I have a clear advantage which I easily convert to a win. He resigns just before I move to promote my A-pawn. My moves, written on my scoresheet as per League rules, are very tidily written while I observe my opponent's score sheet displays a progressively more ragged scrawl as his fortunes worsen.

Meanwhile, things are not going well elsewhere. Michael, perhaps worried about the prospect of his client spending a substantial time in the clink, blunders in the opening, finishing early and disappearing with a wry smile and nod towards the team captain. A draw on Board 4 and a loss by the team captain on Board 6 leaves us 1.5-2.5 with two games to go on Boards 1 and 2. Board 1 looks like a dead draw and on Board 2 we are clearly much worse in the ending and it seems like only a matter of time before the opposition breaks through, and there's not much time left!

We are playing to a speed finish, meaning that all players have 1 hour 15 for their first 30 moves and then the clocks are set back by 15 minutes and all moves must be completed in the remaining time. There are 20 minutes before the end of the match and everyone is in time trouble. The tension is palpable.

Suddenly I hear a groan from our opponent on Board 2 and I rush over to see the cause. Moving almost instantly and with about three minutes left on the clock, he has somehow contrived to trap his Knight in enemy territory. He slumps in his chair and the cheery expressions on our opponents' faces disappear. He resigns shortly afterwards. Now we can at least draw the match, provided Dave on Board 1 doesn't screw up.

Both teams cluster around Board 1, adding to the pressure, and with both players having to move quickly, anything is possible.

Suddenly, Dave's hand flashes across the board! He's sacrificed his Bishop for a Pawn and now he has a passed Pawn that will certainly Queen as it can't be stopped. Dave's opponent continues to play. He's completely lost but there is a chance that he'll win on time, or perhaps he'll get stalemated.

Fortunately, that is not to be. Dave's opponent resigns a move before he's mated, we've pulled off a win that seemed impossible 20 minutes earlier, and we leave our disconsolate opponents to pack away the boards as we head to the pub for a very upbeat post-mortem.

So, drama, tension, near despair, and then, almost miraculously, victory! A typical evening of League chess.

Chess, it's a lifestyle

In this month's Creative Writing entry, Steve Westmoreland from Holmfirth & Huddersfield Chess Clubs reflects on chess and style ...

I received a strange request, via my son, to write something on chess and style for his High School. Founding Holmfirth Chess Club a few years back and running adult teams (including junior coaching) all round Yorkshire, he thought I would be the ideal person to do that.

The first stylish person that comes to mind is the glamorous actor Anya Taylor-Joy from *The Queen's Gambit*. Not that we encounter glamorous players like Beth Harmon on a cold and wet Monday night at Hebden Bridge Trades Club, where we huddle around radiators in the gloom between moves.

Perhaps the school meant someone like current World Champion Magnus Carlsen? He is well dressed and super fit. Most of the top chess players are fitness and healthy eating fanatics. Combine that with a sharp suit, there is definite style there. Sadly, at our grassroots clubs we turn up without suits and a brutal exercise regime. We are nowhere near as good too and lack the millions in prize money the top players win or earn from streaming.

Let's consider the approach various people have to chess and their individual style. Chess is one of the oldest games in the world, going back 1500 years. It was thought to have come from India as a training game for military leaders to learn how to use their troops. It became so popular it spread to Persia, then to the Muslim world into Europe via the Moor invasions. The Mongols took up the game and the Vikings (who loved board games) were keen players.

Consider the Viking Isle of Lewis chess men. One of the oldest intact sets dating back to the 12th Century and discovered in 1831 in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Note the berserker chewing his shield (which they used to do before charging into shield walls); that is a castle today. Chess pieces changed over time as the world changed. Rooks (castles) used to be chariots and bishops' war elephants.

Moving into the medieval and Middle Ages, chess was the Royal Game and incredibly popular with the Monarchy, Lords and Knights. It has caused huge passions as seen when King Canute ordered the execution of Earl Ulf, after he took back a move and Ulf overturned the board with rage. There was also the occasion when William the Conqueror broke a chess board over the Prince of France's head after losing a game.

In modern times, one of the most famous games occurred in Reykjavik between Bobby Fischer of the United States and Boris Spassky of the USSR. It was at the height of the Cold War between the two nuclear armed superpowers. Better than using Nukes!

Still with me? I really should answer the actual question now, which I believe is about playing style. There are many ways to play the great game, with innumerable ways of opening. I personally prefer a closed game, with lots of pieces on the board and a huge dust up in the flanks and centre of the board. As white I play the English Opening (1.C4) most of the time. Caro-Kann, French and Semi-Slav defences as black.

Other members of Holmfirth Chess favour open play, using space on the board to fling around pieces. They are much more exciting than myself, so when I get an advantage in a game, I get great enjoyment in grinding them into the dust.

You can be a closed positional player and still be aggressive. Judit Polgar of Hungary is considered the strongest female chess player of all time. Aggressive and enjoying complex matches, she became a Grandmaster at the age of 15 and 8th in the World by 2004.

Style and chess go hand in hand. I could talk endless about the romantic chess period in the 18th and 19th centuries, with fantastic attacking (and completely unsound) play. The King's Indian defence, which most computers hate but cannot disprove, is fantastic to watch. Also, the style of the great Garry Kasparov who inspired me to get into chess.

I can sense my son's and daughter's eyes rolling now. Today chess is very popular on streaming services such as Twitch. You can see streamers such as Ludwig, IamCristinini, Rubius, MrBeast and QTCinderella compete at PogChamps. Watch GM Hikaru Nakamura, the Botez sisters, International Master Levy and Anna Rudolf do battle.

Ignore all that though. Pick up a set and play this great game. Maybe we can see you at Holmfirth Chess Club one day. Ask for Mr Smith and I'll see you over the board.



How to Solve a Study – solution

1.c6 bxc6 2.b7 cxb5 3.Kb8 Nc6+ 4.Kc7 Nb4 5.Kb6 Nd5+ 6.Ka7 Nb4 7.b3+ Ka5 8.b8N with mate in three: 8...e5 9.e4 e6 10.Kb7 and 11.N(x)c6 mate.

So we have again the King touring right around its own pawn, but twenty years after we also have the delightful flourish of a Knight promotion with zugzwang forcing mate. A worthy successor.

1.Kxb7 Kxb5.

3.Kb6? Nd7+ 4.Kc7 Nc5 draws.

7...Kxb3 8.Kb6 Nd5+ 9.Kxb5 wins.



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