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Chess *Moves*

March 2022



GM Mikhail Golubev talks to us from Odesa

Plus our regular potpourri of top columnists, analysis, news and studies including GM Michael Adams, who spots a reverse ferret!

EDITORIAL



Note: This editorial reflects my own views and not necessarily those of the Federation. The ECF's statements on the situation in Ukraine are printed elsewhere in this issue.

Firstly, I want to record my deep gratitude to GM Mikhail Golubev, who agreed to be interviewed in Odesa earlier this month. His strength of character, his resolve and his humanity were striking. My thoughts are with all those like GM Golubev caught up in this war.

Russia and Ukraine are, of course, two of the strongest chess-playing countries in the world.

Many would say it is self-obsessed or myopic to look at the war through the lens of chess. However, I believe that particularly because of the place chess has in the culture of these countries it has an important place within the wider context of the conflict.

A comparison can be made with the love of cricket and rugby in apartheid South Africa. Many believe that boycotting sporting events provided the key to bringing down the apartheid regime. [According to Lord Hain](#), 'When the anti-apartheid struggle was only on the news pages it could be dismissed by white South Africans but when you stopped their rugby and cricket teams it hit them right in the gut. They were shunned by the rest of the world politically but their cricket and rugby teams were feted in sports stadia around the world. I was cricket-mad and a real Graeme Pollock fan – but I knew sport was the one arena where we could expose white South Africans.

For this reason, the [open letter to Putin](#) from the forty-four top Russian chess players was not just totally admirable but also very important - as has been the reaction of most of the world's chess community.

The English Chess Federation itself is organising a fundraiser in aid of the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. Details are inside this issue. Please do show your support.

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COVER STORY

Danny Rosenbaum interviews GM Mikhail Golubev



The interview with GM Mikhail Golubev took place on 7 March. That very day [The Guardian had published an article](#) reporting that “Monday morning saw a renewed rocket barrage against the city, while warships have been moving ominously between the coast outside Odesa and the annexed region of Crimea.”

And yet, here we were on Zoom. Mikhail in Odesa in war-torn Ukraine and myself in the contrasting calm of Bedford speaking on the best internet connection I had all day. Better than the one with the US, better even than the one with Birmingham. Thanks to the marvels of Zoom, our different worlds collided for an hour as Mikhail gave me an insight into his life in Odesa.

“My wife Luda and I decided to stay in Odesa. Approximately half of my relatives left and half decided to stay. At the moment we have only been attacked by air, but in theory we could be attacked from all sides. As well as the army we have recently formed a territorial defence which is made up of civilians who are ready to fight for the country.”

Mikhail is one of them.

In 2019, he had a stroke. It finished his chess playing career, and now it has stopped him from joining the army. Always one to struggle for what he believes in, having been a political activist for many years, Mikhail is keen to do what he can and so he helps the Odesa territorial defence. He has also been playing online chess and appearing on streams raising money and awareness.

He has appeared alongside other strong players on the [regular stream run by Baadur Jobava and his brother Beglar](#) raising money for Ukraine. He also took part in a fundraising event organised by GM Hikaru Nakamura on Chess.com.

“I respect Nakamura and what he is doing very much. I am very grateful to all the people who are helping the Ukraine. When Hikaru Nakamura had his stream, I entered both Titled Tuesdays tournaments. I wanted to support his efforts at least morally.”

That event raised over US \$130,000 for CARE's Ukraine Crisis Fund.

Famously Ukraine has [many strong chess players](#), both men and women. Some of their images have become iconic, for example, those of GM Oleksandr Sulypa and GM Georgy Timoshenko below.





Odesa itself counts twice European Women's Champion Natalia Zhukova amongst its residents. Zhukova, who was married to Russian GM Alexander Grischuk, is a member of Odesa's local parliament.

According to Mikhail: "There is a lot of unity among Ukrainians not only in the chess world. Even those on different sides have come together. We are in such great danger; we have to unite as much as possible.

"Even people who were not dreaming of Ukraine as a separate country – they got used to it, and Putin underestimated how much Ukrainians love their country. He doesn't understand younger people. Generally, he doesn't understand many things, but one of the things he doesn't understand is younger people."

He was pleased to see that forty-four top Russian chess players including GM Ian Nepomniachtchi, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk and GM Peter Svidler [published an open letter to Vladimir Putin](#) voicing firm opposition to the war in Ukraine and expressing solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

He was not surprised.

"Over the years not many GMs have supported Putin except Karjakin and Shipov. I have tweeted that Karjakin will never be forgiven by the chess community. Most Russian chess players are not mad like Putin. So, I was not surprised that so many players signed the letter. They are not mad, but this war is completely mad."

It is no wonder that in war strong passions come to the fore. There is a steely determination, a stoic resilience, but also an intense gratitude. One of those GM Golubev is grateful to is GM Mihail Marin, who helped some of his family flee Ukraine.

"In Bucharest, grandmaster Mihail Marin and his wife Maria Yugina helped my sister-in-law and her two children, including my niece Kamila who is one and a half years old.

In Budapest, GM Judit Polgar and GM Csaba Horvath helped another sister-in-law with her three daughters."



Mikhail says he is not looking too much at the global picture.

"I am more focussed on my family, Odesa and what I can do to help defend the city. In these times, people must find the ways in which they are most effective and that is what I am doing.

"We don't know how long we will have electricity or the internet in Odesa. It is totally unclear. We have hopes we will win this war but there are variations like in chess and we will see. We don't know what

will happen, but we know what we are doing and what we need to do. This is important.”

Before leaving the call, I asked Mikhail if there was anything he wished to add, he answered simply, “I want to send my best wishes to British chess players. I want to thank everyone for all their support.”

ECF Charity Marathon for Ukraine

The English Chess Federation is holding a 24-hour chess marathon in support of the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal via the British Red Cross. [Chess.com](https://www.britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-charity-marathon-for-ukraine/) will host the online marathon from 5.00 pm on Saturday 2nd April to 5.00pm on Sunday 3rd April.

Entry is free, but only donors and fundraisers living in the UK will be eligible for prizes. Players will need to be a member of the [ECF Open Club on Chess.com](https://www.britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-charity-marathon-for-ukraine/). Join now to be kept posted on further tournament details and prizes. We plan a commentary team including a number of GMs, and other titled and untitled players who will provide a live stream to support the event.

You can enter for the marathon here – <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-charity-marathon-for-ukraine/> – and all donations will be paid direct to the British Red Cross appeal as part of the wider Disasters and Emergency Committee response to the crisis. Everyone can either donate with their entry or via the Red Cross JustGiving page here – <https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-crisis-appeal>



The ECF Statements on Ukraine

Statement on 28 February 2022

The English Chess Federation (ECF) agrees with FIDE Council’s recently announced decision that the 44th Chess Olympiad, including the competition for players with disabilities, as well as the FIDE Congress, will not take place in Russia (<https://www.fide.com/news/1598>). The ECF wishes FIDE well in its attempts to find another organizer for the Olympiad.

The ECF would like to add that in its view FIDE should hold no further events in Russia until Russia has fully withdrawn from Ukrainian sovereign territory and ends hostilities against the Ukrainian people.

It will not send teams, players or officials to any chess events held in Russia until Russia has fully withdrawn from Ukrainian sovereign territory and ends hostilities against the Ukrainian people.

In its view FIDE should terminate all agreements with Russian sponsors with immediate effect.

Mike Truran, Chief Executive ECF | Malcolm Pein, FIDE Delegate and International Director ECF

Statement Update on 6 March 2-22

The ECF Board confirms that individual players and officials with a Russian or Belarusian FIDE registration will be excluded from all ECF-organised competitions until further notice. The ECF Board urges all organisers of events held in England to adopt the same approach. Please also see the European Chess Union’s statement following its meeting in extraordinary session on 3 March here – <https://www.europechess.org/ecu-suspends-the-russian-and-belarusian-chess-federations/>

Players registered to the Russian or Belarusian federations may play in all ECF-organised competitions if they change federation or change to the FIDE flag. FIDE have organised a fast-track procedure and applications can be made to FIDE via federations@fide.com. The ECF office will also be able to assist.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

DIRECTOR OF HOME CHESS REPORT

Nigel Towers writes ...

Return to Over the Board

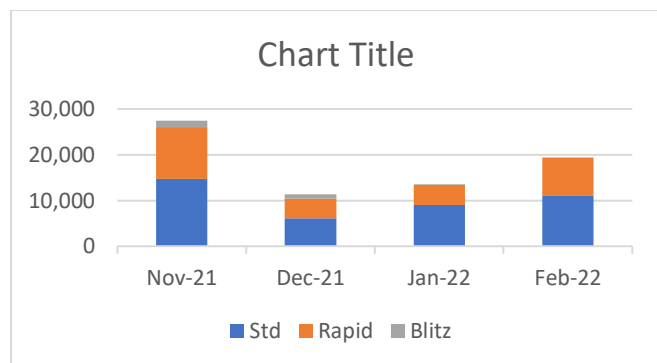
Returning in numbers

The return to over the board chess continues with increasing numbers of congresses during February and into March, including the 45th Blackpool Congress making a welcome return. There have also been increasing levels of club and league activity and a number of new clubs starting up, including more clubs at social venues.

Overall, we are back to around the same level of activity as last autumn and around half the pre-pandemic levels of activity.

We are hoping that the return will continue through the spring, with more congresses restarting as well as the ongoing programme of league and county events.

Number of rated half-games rated in the month
(pre-pandemic figures for the same month in 2019/2020 in brackets)



Number of rated half-games rated in the month
(pre-pandemic figures for the same month in 2019/2020 in brackets)

| | Rated OTB half-games | | |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | Std | Rapid | Blitz |
| Nov 21 | 14,726 (25,826) | 11,284 (20,266) | 1,434 (0) |
| Dec 21 | 6044 (18,048) | 4,336 (10,464) | 1,000 (0) |
| Jan 22 | 8982 (28,440) | 4,442 (12,404) | 136 (0) |
| Feb 22 | 10964 (25,798) | 8,458 (12,626) | 0 (0) |

Congress and Events Roundup

As above, there were increasing numbers of events during February into March including a number of one-day rapidplays together with weekend congresses in Doncaster and the 45th Blackpool congress.

This month also saw an international challenge between England and Sweden with GM David Howell playing GM Nils Grandelius and the historic Varsity Match played at the RAC Club in London. You can find reports on these elsewhere in this issue.

| Date | Event |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 February | 4NCL Weekend 3 – Rounds 5 to 6 |
| | YJCA Grand Prix Event 2, Hull |
| | Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay |
| 13 February | Hampshire Junior Trial / Selection Tournament, Winchester |
| 15 February | Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid |
| 19 February | 2022 Kenilworth Junior Open |
| 20 February | 31st Nottingham Rapidplay |
| 20 February | Leyland Rapidplay 2022, Ribble |
| 21 February | Cheney Rapidplays 11 |
| 23 February | 3rd EJCOA Invitational, The Chess Centre, Ilkley |
| 25 February | Doncaster Congress 2022 |
| 26 February | 35th Crowborough Congress, East Sussex |
| 26 February | Poplar Rapid Tournament |
| 27 February | Brentwood Junior Tournament |
| 27 February | Colindale Chess Tournament |
| 2 - 12 March | England vs Sweden Challenge Swedish Embassy London |
| 5 March | Swindon Rapidplay, Polish Community Centre, Swindon |
| 5 March | Maidenhead Junior Tournament |
| 11 -13 March | Blackpool Chess Conference, Imperial Hotel Blackpool |

| | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 12 March | Oxford v Cambridge Varsity Match, RAC Club, London |
| 13 March | EPSCA Under 9 Zones |
| 12 March | Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay, Golders Green |
| 13 March | 20/20 Over the Board |
| 13 March | West London Chess Academy West London Chess Academy |

7 FM Wall Tim ENG 2300 Forest Hall 4,0

The photos of the venue and of the winners are courtesy of Brendan O’Gorman. You can see more of Brendan’s excellent photography at <https://brendanogorman.smugmug.com/Chess/2022/Blackpool-2022/>



Steve Jones (top left), Andrew Ledger (top right) and Danny Gormally



Upcoming junior Indy Southcott-Moyers (pictured above) had a great tournament, including some fine wins against higher-rated opponents and titled players in the Open section. Indy’s dad Vince provides his perspectives on the event on the next page, including Indy’s Evans Gambit game against Colm Barry, with annotations from Vince and Indy.

The 45th Blackpool Congress



The 45th Blackpool congress took place from 11 to 13 March at the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. This was a five-round ECF and FIDE rated event with separate Open, Major, Intermediate, Minor and Standard sections, with a big turnout of over 280 entrants.

There was a tie for first place in the Open with seven players finishing on four points out of five.

| Rk. | | Name | FED | Rtg | Club/City | Pts. |
|-----|----|------------------|-----|------|-------------|------|
| 1 | | Jones Steven | Eng | 2344 | Basingstoke | 4,0 |
| 2 | | Ledger Andrew | ENG | 2438 | Sheffield | 4,0 |
| 3 | FM | Duncan Chris | Eng | 2252 | Watford | 4,0 |
| 4 | FM | Burnett Andrew | SCO | 2158 | Forest Hall | 4,0 |
| 5 | GM | Gormally Daniel | Eng | 2520 | Blackthorne | 4,0 |
| 6 | | Majumder Shrayan | ENG | 2128 | Hampshire | 4,0 |

Blackpool Congress

To watch or not ... a parent's dilemma!

Vince Southcott writes ...

It was our first experience of the Blackpool Congress and as with most congresses in my limited life as a non-playing chess parent, it was a roller-coaster of a weekend. Who needs Blackpool Pleasure Park!

Indy (my son), along with his coach, took a stance a while back during the first Covid lockdown to enter only the Open sections of tournaments because that's where you learn the most! I must admit that on looking at the profile of the Blackpool Open and seeing that there were a lot of highly-rated players, I did have the feeling this could be a tough weekend ahead.

After a four and a half hour journey and negotiating many queues on the M6, we pulled off the motorway to make the short journey into the heart of Blackpool. The Tower was a welcome sight as the Imperial Hotel was just up the road from there. And what a hotel, steeped in history, steeped in famous visitors and, I was to learn, steeped in a very much loved and nostalgic chess tournament.

Even as we entered there was a buzz of excitement; chess talk around clusters of people meeting up for the first time in a long time, the grandeur of the foyer with its large imposing ornate columns and a chess hall with a sea of boards ready for action!

I like the first round pairings as you can roughly work out the level of the opponent... and Indy's first opponent was definitely going to be in the 2200 plus area. This is what he wanted - the chance to play at a higher level. We are establishing a routine now of do(s) and don't(s) after competing in a number of congresses and with half an hour to the starting time the routine begins... don't talk about the opponent's rating or title... do have equipment, snack and water ready... don't talk about winning or losing... do talk about playing dynamically and playing the best move each time... do get some fresh air, and in Blackpool's case a good look at the sea (we love the sea!)... do get in the playing area and set up ten minutes before play... do sit and be focussed ready... for me it's time to find a place to wait!

I love the hustle and bustle of the playing area filling up, players checking and rechecking their board numbers, the nervous adjustment of pieces, the mass wave of people rushing in at the last minute, the chatter of greetings and good licks...

Then the silence and the wait! Luckily no choice but to wait, Indy's not on an electronic board! I settle down in the tea-room with potentially a long wait ahead. Thirty minutes in, I laugh at myself as I refresh chess-results.com to see if any of the matches have finished... no chance. I've come to realise - typically the higher the rating the longer the matches... so I settle back down trying to distract myself.

After a few hours the tea-room starts filling slowly and the strange language of the chess player begins to build; *if I had played h3,Nd4,Qe6 I would be winning*... and so the results start to appear filling up in the lower sections but still no Open results... that's typically good news in Indy's case as he's okay with long matches.

Four hours plus into the game and it starts to resemble a blitz game when anything can happen. Ten past ten and still no sign of Indy and his game along with a few others were the only ones left unfinished. This is where I get nervous! I tend to pack up my stuff, wait, then unpack my stuff do something crazy like another Wordle or yet another bad game of online blitz... and then repeat! Then I see him, walking into the room... I can still never tell what the result is... then he smiles and lets me know he won.

We briefly chat about the game then try to stop and talk about other things to lower the adrenaline. I take the chance to enter Indy's game into Chessbase; I'm a curious dad! A solid opening, complicated middle, a slight mistake from the opponent, developed pressure and converted well. (See game at end)

Up for breakfast early and a walk before the routine begins again, although Indy adds in some prep. It's a titled player but we don't mention it! And Indy's playing on an electronic board ... oh boy, **to watch or not!**

The hotel is becoming like home now. We know where everything is. Amongst the melee in the corridors and foyer, the animated discussion and ponderings of the analysis room and general air of excitement as players share who their next

opponent are, there is a lovely feeling: *it's great to be here*.

It's nearly 9.25am. Dad's bit of the routine is next... time to leave! Indy's set for another game. On my way out I find myself asking where I watch the live boards... Nooooo, don't do it... but I now have the answer. Finding my usual spot, the tea-room, I settle down but not quite so much as last night... a little nagging thought keeps popping up ... how's Indy doing... it can't hurt not this early on... I take the plunge and a quick look ... no disasters yet... phew ... right, that's it - no more.

The morning draws on and before I know it the hotel is preparing the room for afternoon tea... crikey, it's 1.30pm! Four hours in! I get a lovely email from a chess friend saying how well Indy's doing... oh gosh... I succumb and take another look ... it's blitz time minutes only on the clock... I hate endgames... I can never get my head around them... Indy's got less time ... I stop watching... I move out of the tea-room and prepare for the worst.

Another fifteen agonising minutes waiting in the foyer... Indy finally strides in, a bigger smile this time... my reality is shattered, I'm in shock... he won! An email pings in congratulating Indy, my chess friend had watched! I had to own up... I didn't. No, I couldn't!

After the excitement and the rush to eat lunch and do *the routine* with only 35 minutes until the next round, I looked at the game... tough ending for his opponent who missed a drawing move in the final moments of time pressure madness. Chess is such an incredible game, a crazy tightrope of a journey.

The journey got tougher; Indy played an FM next and a wrong pawn move at the start of the endgame allowed the opponent's king in and Indy eventually lost. With nearly 13 hours of chess within the last 24 hours, Saturday night was relax night and we crashed asleep really early!

Sunday was altogether different with a draw and a loss, but new things to learn. The big one was increasing Indy's tournament stamina; I guess it's like being match fit at football or rugby which is vastly different to being training fit. So more congresses and other tournaments are needed in the calendar. I did watch more moments of Indy's games. Not sure it's a good idea for my nerves!

I loved Blackpool Congress for many reasons, mostly for the great atmosphere it created and how it accommodated and provided so much excitement for all levels of chess players. Sunday was full of conversations around who would win the prizes as results appeared throughout the day. A big cheer and thank you for the organisers who made it a fabulous event... can't wait for next year!

Colm Barry (2205) - Indy Southcott-Moyers (2025)

Blackpool Congress (1), 11.03.2022

Giucio Piano Evans Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Be7 6.d4 Na5 7.Bd3 d6 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Nxe5 Nf6 10.0-0 0-0 11.Qc2 Bd6 12.Nf3 Nc6 13.Nbd2 Bg4 14.Rb1 Rb8 15.Re1 Re8 16.Bb5 Nd7 17.Nd4 Nce5 18.h3 Bh5 19.f4 Ng6 20.Bxd7 Qxd7 21.f5 c5 22.Nb5 Bg3 23.Re3 Nf4 24.Nc4



24...Rbd8?

Missed a nice tactic!

24...Ne2+! 25.Rxe2 Bxe2 26.Qxe2 Rxe4

25.Rxg3 Ne2+ 26.Kh2 Nxg3 27.Kxg3 Bd1 28.Qd2 Qxd2 29.Bxd2? Be2 30.Nbd6 Bxc4



31.Nxc4?

The opponent's mistake.

31.Nxe8 b6!

31...Rxe4 32.Rxb7? Rxc4 33.Rxa7 f6 34.Be1 Re4
35.Bf2 Rd3+ 36.Kh2 Rxc3 37.Rc7 h6 38.Rxc5
Rxc5 39.Bxc5 Re5 40.Bb6 Rxf5 41.a4 Rf4 42.a5
Ra4 43.Kg3 Kf7 44.Kf3 Ke6 45.g3 f5 46.h4 g5
47.h5 Ra3+ 48.Kf2 f4 49.gxf4 gxf4 50.Bc7 Kf5
51.Kg2 Kg4 52.Kf2 Ra2+ 53.Ke1 f3 54.Bb6 Kxh5
55.Be3 Re2+ 0-1

Blackpool Chessnuts

Chessnuts are a voluntary organisation looking to support the return to over the board chess (see also our News and Views section)

The Chessnuts team were on site at the event and have provided a video interview with congress organiser Bill O'Rourke - which can be found on their excellent YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/3hgFbP1> along with lots of other great chess-related content.



ECF Over the Board Championships

And after winter folweth grene May
- *Geoffrey Chaucer*

The 2022 programme of ECF events can be found at the calendar link here - [ECF Events](#)

We have a series of events in the spring and summer of 2022, including three English Championship events coming up during 'grene May', the British Championships in August and the return of the ECF Grand Prix which will run from July 2022 to June 2023.

English Seniors Championships – May 2022

The English Seniors is back with the first Seniors Championship since 2019 scheduled for 4–8 May at the Kenilworth Holiday Inn.



There will be separate sections for players aged 50+ and 65+ with IM Paul Littlewood and Kevin Bowmer (pictured above, left and right) defending their titles in the two sections. There will also be a trophy and title award for the top performing female player in each section.

Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding twelve months. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration, it must be ENG.

The congress will be ECF- and FIDE-rated with a total of seven rounds over five days. The playing schedule will be as follows:

Wednesday Round 1 - 17:00 – 21:00

Thursday Round 2 - 11:00 to 15:00

Friday Rounds 3 and 4 - 10:00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00

Saturday Rounds 5 and 6 - 10:00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00

Sunday Round 7 11:00 – 15:00.

The time control will be all moves in 90 minutes plus 30 second increment per move from move one.

Further details, entry form and entries to date are available at [English Seniors 2022](#)

English Championships and English Women's Championship



The English Championships and English Women's Standardplay Championships will take place between Thursday 19 and Sunday 22 May at the Kenilworth Holiday Inn. Winners of the events will be able to take up qualification spots for the British Championships in August. Further details on the web site at [English Championships 2022](https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/)

The two championships will be played as seven round Swiss tournaments with the schedule as follows -

Thursday Rounds 1 and 2 - 11:00 to 15:00 and 17.00 – 21.00

Friday Rounds 3 and 4 - 10.00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00

Saturday Rounds 5 and 6 10:00 – 14:00 and 16:00 – 20:00

Sunday Round 7 10:00 – 14:00. 15.00 – followed by play-offs, if required.

All moves in 90 minutes plus 30 second increment per move from move one.

The 108th British Championships - August 2022



The 108th British Championships are scheduled for Monday 8 August to Sunday 21 August in the Riviera International Centre in Torquay.

These are the next Championships in a long and almost unbroken series since the event started in 1904. The Championships are restricted to citizens of the UK, British Overseas Territories or the Republic of Ireland, or players who have been resident for the last 12 months in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man. In addition, players wanting to take part in the main British Championships will need to qualify as set out in the qualification document here - [Qualification Regulations 2022](#)

The British Junior and Senior Championships are open to all eligible players based on citizenship or residency as above and with no specific qualification requirements. All other events outside the British Championships, Junior Championships

and Senior Championships are open events with no specific eligibility or qualification requirements.

You can find further details about the Championships together with an entry form and detailed tournament regulations at <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

CLUBS CORNER

The New West London Chess Academy

Bucks Youth Chess has joined forces with three nearby clubs - St Albans, Uxbridge and Watford - to provide training for their top juniors.

The four organisations have sunk any local differences to form a regional hub to coach the most promising juniors. Thirty-five boys and girls spent more than four hours at the new West London Chess Academy in Uxbridge on Sunday 13 March listening to expert coaches on how to improve their chess.

'WLCA is intended as a regional hub, designed to form a bridge between club-level coaching on one hand and national-level, such as the ECF Academy, on the other' says Watford coach Roger Lancaster. Other coaches at the inaugural session were David Okike and Sentilnathan Yogit, with others lined up for the next sessions on 8 and 22 May.

The project is targeted, as a rule of thumb, at juniors whose ECF rating $> \{100 \times \text{age}\} > 1000$, although the various coaches have discretion in borderline cases where they reckon a junior is materially underrated.





ECF ONLINE

Nigel Towers, ECF Manager of Online Chess, writes ...

Online chess continues alongside the return to over the board chess. Online clubs are increasingly popular with current membership levels as follows:

Chess.com ECF Open club - 5,096

Chess.com ECF Members - 1,714

Lichess English Players - 1,467

We continue with four tournaments per week in the Lichess English Chess Players club and four per week in the Chess.com ECF Members Club. All of the club tournaments are ECF online rated with events submitted for rating on the 14th and 28th of each month.

ECF Chess.com International Leagues

The ECF online clubs also take part in the three major international leagues.

Chess.com Nations League







England is taking part in the premier division with a team from the ECF Members Club. Each match is played on a minimum of ten boards with two legs (blitz at 3|2 and rapid at 15|2) and two games per leg against the opposing board.

Following our opening fixture win against Greece at the start of February, we played rounds 2 to 4



during February and March including matches against the USA, Jamaica and Uruguay.

20 February England v USA – ‘Another Canada’

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Blitz Leg |  10 | 20  |
| Rapid Leg |  18 | 18  |




We lost overall by 0.5 – 1.5 based on a loss in the blitz leg followed by an 18-18 tie in the rapid leg against a very strong US team. The US team captain described the tie against England as ‘Another Canada’ following a similar upset in their World Chess League match against the Canadian team.

27 February England v Jamaica

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Blitz Leg |  6 | 18  |
| Rapid Leg |  5.5 | 8.5  |

This one was a tied match 1-1 with a loss in the blitz and a narrow win in the rapid based on default wins on the lower boards.

13 March England v Uruguay

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rd4 - Rapid |  13.5 | 12.5  |
| R4 Blitz |  4 | 16  |

Round 4 saw another tied match 1-1 with a heavy loss in the blitz followed by an amazing comeback win in the rapid by 13.5-12.5 against a strong Uruguay team. The rapid went down to the last two games with Ranko Davidov from London managing a fine win in a queen and pawn endgame against his opponent from Montevideo to make the score 13-12. @GeordieEd managed a draw in the last game against NM Alvaro Donatti to win the match 13.5-12.5.

Chess.com Live Chess World League Season 9



England are in **Division 3** of the LWCL with each round consisting of a blitz (5|2) and a rapid (10|2) Chess.com match with two games per board against the opposing team.

After losing our first fixture against Canada, we had fixtures against Chile and India.

England v Chile

We managed a clear win 2-0 against Team Chile in round 2 winning the rapid by 19-7 and the blitz 20.5 to 7.5.

England v India

This was followed by an equally convincing win against Team India in round 3 with an 18-6 win in the rapid and 28-4 in the blitz.

Chess.com Live Chess European League Season 5



Our other matches this month have been in the Live Chess European league where we are in Division 1 with matches played over three legs (bullet 2min+1sec, blitz 5min+2sec, and rapid 10min+2sec).

We won our opening matches against Team Italy and Team Azerbaijan.

LCEL matches are open to all members of the ECF Open club on Chess.com

– <https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation>

Lichess Internationals

We continue to field an England team in the very popular Lichess team battles including the Bundesliga, Liga Ibero, and Champions League.

Bundesliga

| Lichess Liga 5A Team Battle | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | LSV Turm Lippstadt 96 | Aklp 40 + 31 + 27 + 24 + 22 + 19 + 17 + 16 |
| 2 | Schachfreunde Schwerin | FM Sonics1962 32 + 25 + 24 + 21 + 21 + 20 + 16 + 12 |
| 3 | English Chess Players | GM Atomrod 37 + 22 + 22 + 21 + 20 + 18 + 14 + 14 |

The Liga team battles take place on Thursday and Sunday Evenings at 7-00 pm. The team battles include ten teams playing in Arena format for 100 minutes with the top three promoted and the bottom 3 relegated. This month has been another one where we have moved between divisions four and six of this highly competitive league. We managed a fine top three finish in the team battle on 13 March including a great performance by GM Keith Arkell finishing on 37 points.

You can follow WIM Natasha Regan's excellent commentary series on the events on our Twitch and YouTube commentary channels including guest appearances this month from GMs John Emms, Danny Gormally and Peter Wells.

[ECF Twitch commentary](#) | [ECF YouTube commentary](#)

Liga Ibero

This is a Spanish organised league with three divisions of around fourteen teams each on Sunday afternoons. The league is played at multiple time controls (but typically 3|3) and is highly competitive with the English Chess Players team playing in division 1 -

<https://lichess.org/team/liga-ibero>

Champions League

This is an international league with team battles at 5-30 pm on Tuesdays with around 20 teams and 15 leaders at 3|0 Blitz time control.

Other leagues, marathons, bullet events and Fischer Random

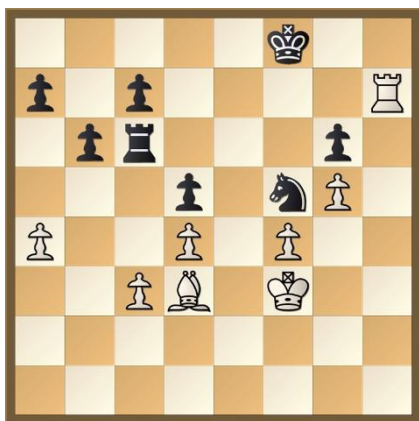
We also participate in the regular Mega A Team Battles every other week on Friday afternoons. The Mega Team Battles are the largest of the Lichess Team Battles, with up to 200 teams and 20 leaders per team participating in two hour Arena format team battles at blitz time controls.

We also took part in a number of the bullet leagues and the Fischer Random leagues.

ECF Endgame Challenge – Thematic Tournaments

We continue to run thematic tournaments as part of the challenge events or fortnightly tournaments on Saturday afternoons. Here is one of the starting positions from Capablanca v Tartakower, New York 1924 after Tartakower's 33rd move.

1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.c4 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.Nc3 0-0 6.e3 b6 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.0-0 Qe8 9.Qe2 Ne4 10.Bxe7 Nxc3 11.bxc3 Qxe7 12.a4 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Nc6 14.Rfb1 Rae8 15.Qh3 Rf6 16.f4 Na5 17.Qf3 d6 18.Re1 Qd7 19.e4 fxe4 20.Qxe4 g6 21.g3 Kf8 22.Kg2 Rf7 23.h4 d5 24.cxd5 exd5 25.Qxe8+ Qxe8 26.Rxe8+ Kxe8 27.h5 27...Rf6 28.hxg6 hxg6 29.Rh1 Kf8 30.Rh7 Rc6 31.g4 Nc4 32.g5 Ne3+ 33.Kf3 Nf5



What was Capablanca's move in this position and what was the follow-up? (Answer in next month's edition).

ECF Online Grand Prix – 2022



Series 2 of the Online Grand Prix continues with the February rapid and match blitz events. The winners were Chris Davison in both events with the Open section leader boards as follows after three out of ten Sunday blitz events and two out of ten Sunday rapids.

Rapid Event Two



Blitz Event Three



The series will run for ten months until October. We are following the same format with the blitz series running on the first Sunday of each month and the rapid on the third Sunday. A top six result counts towards the leader board with ECF trophies and signed books for the winners (i.e. highest aggregate scores on the leader board) at the end of October. You can find further details and an entry form at [2022-online-grand-prix-series](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series)

NEWS AND VIEWS

Olympiad

Chennai are to host the 2022 Olympiad. The FIDE Council approved the bid presented by the All India Chess Federation (AICF) to host the 2022 Chess Olympiad in Chennai, the capital of the Tamil Nadu state. The 44th Olympiad was supposed to take place in Moscow and Khanty-Mansiysk, but was moved following FIDE's reaction to the war in Ukraine.

Apology

In last month's issue we featured Kevin Bowmer but used the wrong photograph. Here is a photo of the real Kevin Bowmer (left) with ChessMoves columnist Paul Littlewood. You will already have seen photos of Kevin and Paul in the Around the Country section, but after last month's faux pas we also wanted to highlight our apology here.



BCET Awards

John Wickham writes ...

We are inviting nominations for the BCET Awards 2022. With over the board chess having resumed in 2021 after a break of nearly 18 months we will be interested to hear in the citation as to how successful the return to OTB chess has been for the school/club in addition to the usual details of the school's/club's achievements, activities, and actions taken to develop and improve the standards of the juniors of the school/club.

The award is an engraved board, a set of wooden pieces and a digital clock. This is a valuable award, and it acts as encouragement and incentive to the

schools or junior clubs. The ECF website – <https://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards/#bcet> – lists the schools/clubs that have received the award in the past, with some citations. Please note that a school/club can apply again for an award if the last award was not recent and where a further award is justified.

With funds provided by the generosity of the late Sir George Thomas (now administered by The Chess Trust) the British Chess Educational Trust annually makes awards to schools and junior chess clubs which have shown outstanding achievements or enthusiasm in chess. Commencing in 1982, inscribed chess boards have been substituted for shields. Recommendations for awards should be forwarded (directly or via the appropriate Union if in England, or via the national organisations for Scotland or Wales) to John Wickham, 55 Shakespeare Way, Taverham, Norwich NR8 6SL Email: j.r.wickham@btinternet.com by 31st May.

Publicity for Clubs

Chessnuts.com is a new initiative on the English chess scene. At the end of last year Nicky Murnin launched a YouTube channel dedicated to promoting chess clubs. Nicky is trying to encourage some of the people who have recently started or restarted playing chess during the pandemic to expand their horizon from just playing online to getting involved in club chess over the board as well. He has already filmed at a number of clubs. You can check out the Chessnuts channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ6VWGN35uKaZgl8QqvFfA>

Nicky would be interested in hearing from clubs, congresses and others who would like to have Chessnuts filming at their locations. Find out more and also support Chessnuts at <https://gofund.me/e154d6bd>

Physically Disabled

The 21st IPCA World Individual Chess Championship for the Physically Disabled 2022 will take place in Ashdod, Israel on 8-17 May. The official website is at <https://ipcachess.org>. Please note that only disabled chess players with a minimum 50% physical disability can participate in this tournament. Queries should be addressed to the main organisers at liga@chessfed.org.il. Closing date for registrations is 1 April.

Arbiters

After two years in post, IA Alan Atkinson is moving on from the ECF Manager of Arbiters role. We would like to thank Alan for his considerable contribution in supporting our arbiter community during his tenure. We are very pleased to announce that FA Ravi Sandhu has agreed to take on the role. More at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/new-ecf-manager-of-arbiters-2/>

International

Chess & Bridge Ltd secured sponsorship for a ten-game classical chess match between Swedish number one GM Nils Grandelius (2672) and England's GM David Howell (2648). The match was organised by ECF Director of International Chess Malcolm Pein, who also secured the Swedish embassy/residence as the venue. Play took place in the elegant library in the period building located on Portland Place in central London.

Howell ran out a narrow winner 5.5-4.5 after an exciting contest that started with three draws, full of fighting chess. In game four Howell ground out a win in 86 moves from a rook and pawn ending that should have been drawn and followed this with a heroic save after 114 moves in a queen and pawn endgame where the Swedish number one held an extra pawn.

After a rest day, Howell was unable to make anything of a small edge in a rook and pawn endgame whereupon Grandelius struck back with a 38-move crushing win to level the score. Howell replied in kind the next day.

The match went very much in favour of the player with the white pieces and in game nine Howell had another tough hold with Black after navigating tactical complications in a position where his opponent had a plethora of discovered checks, but no crushing blow. In game ten Howell closed out the match after returning a sacrificed pawn to reach a drawn endgame.

The contest was broadcast live by Chess24 with commentary by Askild Bryn, IM Lawrence Trent, GM Pontus Carlsson, IM Thomas Rendle, IM Callum Kilpatrick, GM Stuart Conquest and IM Malcolm Pein.

\$10,000 was raised for the Norwegian Refugee Council on the stream.



Women's Chess

Just a reminder that we have two WIM invitational women's norm tournaments in London, taking place between 7-11 April - firstly, the ECF Women's Norm Event 2022 and secondly, the first She Plays To Win International. More details here at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/she-plays-towin/>

Coming up

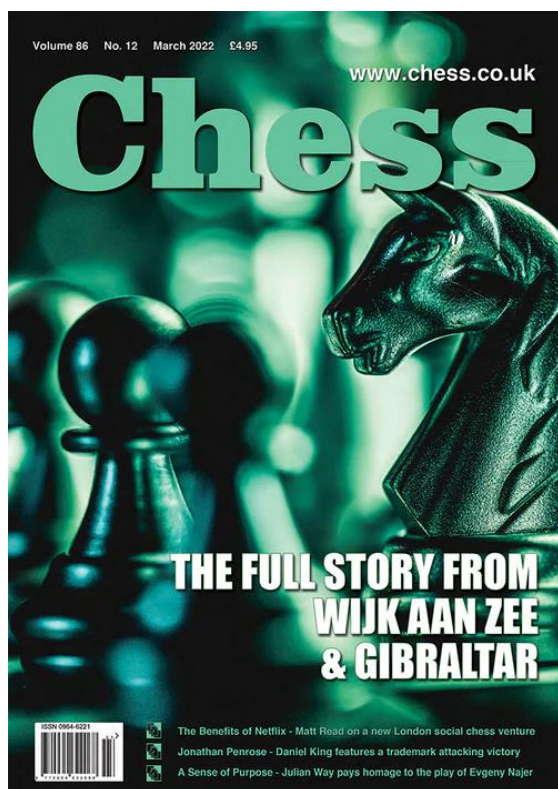
The second 4NCL Easter FIDE Rated Congress takes place 15 – 18 April at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel. There will be three sections: FIDE Rated Open, FIDE Rated U2000 and FIDE Rated U1700. More information and entry form via https://4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_easter22.htm

Meanwhile the 4NCL and Junior 4NCL have returned to over the board chess. You can find the results and tables on the 4NCL website at <https://www.4ncl.co.uk/>

Result

The third EJCOA Invitational IM Tournament was won by IM Jose Camacho-Collados. Congratulations are due to FM Jonah Willow and FM Shreyas Royal who took second place, both finishing on 5.5/9, just half a point behind the winner. Full standings at <http://chess-results.com/tnr587280.aspx?lan=1&art=1>

CHESS Magazine taster



Click here for this month's taster -

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0478/2876/2775/files/chess-magazine-march-2022-sample.pdf?v=1646069474>

Click here to purchase / subscribe -

<https://chess.co.uk/collections/chess-magazine-back-issues/products/chess-magazine-march-2022>

RIP Dave Robertson

ChessMoves is grateful to Phil Crocker and John Carleton for permission to reproduce the obituary below, first published on the [Chester Chess Club website](https://chesterchessclub.co.uk)

Dave sadly passed away yesterday after a short spell in hospital. He will be greatly missed by Chester members. Our thoughts are with his wife Laura and family.

Dave sadly passed away yesterday after a short spell in hospital. He will be greatly missed by Chester members. Our thoughts are with his wife Laura and family.

He joined our Chester club a decade or so ago as part of a mostly Liverpool-based team seeking new

challenges. Along with captain John Carleton, whom he had known since school days in Birmingham, he was part of a team which scored many league and cup successes. I was fortunate to share in some of the cup successes, but unlucky to have to face such a formidable opponent in our games when playing for competing Chester league teams.



Off the board he helped inspire some of our strongest ever junior players. He was also a great help in some of the club administration.

Thanks to John Carleton for sharing his recollections of Dave over the last six decades below and Steve Connor for the photo above.

I first met Dave in 1964 when the chess teams for two schools located in the Birmingham area, Bishop Vesey GS (my school) and King Edward's GS Camp Hill (Dave's school) played each other. A couple of the Camp Hill players came across as very confident (well, "cocky" was the way I thought of it). These two were strong players, and Dave was one of them. In 1965 I had brought about some improvement in my game and edged my way into the Warwickshire U18 team which won the national championships. Dave was an established player already playing higher up the team. After that I played higher than him for many different teams over the years until 8 February 2022, when Dave played what turned out to be his last game for Spirit of Atticus in the online 4NCL championship on board 3 just one board above me! It had been a running joke that Dave's

ambition was to play above me in a team despite over 50 years of trying. This was a justified board order, since Dave had kept his form and chess studies up to scratch better than I had. When the board order was announced, little did we know how short Dave's time for the mock celebration of this event would be.

We each arrived at Liverpool University in the Autumn of 1966 and in Freshers' Week we each approached the chess club display, in due course heading upstairs to inspect the well-appointed chess room. I remember that journey since Dave, as he explained, had to pause a couple of times as he had just undergone an operation on his back. This was a typically low-key explanation of his degenerative illness. Dave, in the many years I was to know him, was determined to enjoy life to the full and never had time to feel sorry for his legacy. I have no clear recollection of his playing chess over our university years, but Dave and I were called into action to save the Birmingham Easter Chess Congress, since the long-term organiser of junior chess in Birmingham, W. Ritson Morry, was about to up his roots and move to Jamaica. In the Christmas holidays we ensured that there was a venue booked and that notification would go to the schools as normal, and tried to raise some money to allow for decent prizes. Dave showed himself to be worldly-wise in our endeavours, far superior to me in the "getting money from people" category in particular. Although we did not get a big sponsor, he did inveigle a few donations which eliminated the possibility of a loss on the venture. The event went well, but harsh words were exchanged between us on one occasion, the only time I can recollect this over our many years of our friendship. The congress returned to its usual stewardship in the following year when Ritson made an early return from Jamaica.

Opposite --- As reported in the press



Thereafter, we returned to normal activities, with a resumption of university study, some chess for the University teams and plenty of relaxation for me. Dave on the other hand was throwing himself into political action to the extent that in his final year he was editor of the Students Union newspaper, was

standing as a candidate for election as President, and was half of the debating team that represented Liverpool University in the prestigious Observer Mace competition, which carried a first prize of a debating tour of the USA. Frank Milner, Dave's debating partner, shared their winning plan with me (thank you Frank): 1) to win; 2) to politicise the motion into a Marxist / left-wing one; 3) to follow this format in speaking; 4) Frank to deliver the scripted introduction to their contention. Dave would speak extempore to pick up and counter points made by other speakers. Dave was never known to make notes, relying instead on his phenomenal memory in recalling who had said what. Their strategy as "wild men" proved very successful up to a point.

What happened? Dave and Frank missed out narrowly on the trip to USA. There was a record turnout in the election for Guild President, the electorate having been whipped up by two boisterous campaigns. This was Dave's planned battleground, but the right-wing candidate was elected. The Guild Gazette had a good readership throughout Dave's stewardship and its content was greatly admired. I must admit I wondered whether the report about Aston Villa's comeback from 4-0 down to draw with Liverpool in 1960 was either topical in any way or going to win many friends, despite the absolutely amazing supporters of Aston Villa, but in general agreed with the main sentiments of the newspaper.

I shall continue by concentrating on the years from the early seventies onwards and Dave's great contribution to and involvement in chess.

I spent a year teacher training and then a year in London. When I returned to Liverpool in the autumn of 1971, I joined a local chess club and lived in a popular Westminster Road multi-roomed residence designed for students. On reflection, residence is way too grand a term for the environment. But Dave lived there too, as did Geoff Hall (now Sir Geoffrey Hall), who arrived having "graduated" from Bishop Vesey's. Dave was now really "into" chess again and was devouring chess material. The three of us realised that we could probably challenge for the first division title of the Liverpool League (once promoted from our likely starting point in division 2) including me and players currently not in clubs. Thus the three of us founded Kirkdale Chess Club playing at Kirkdale

Community Centre and started in the Liverpool league in September 1972. The cost of our match venue was covered by us organising a chess club for the local children on one night a week. Dave, Geoff and I did just that, always having at least two of the three of us present. The tricky part was that our session clashed with woodwork night, so we got an unusual mixture consisting predominantly of girls but also containing the occasional boy banned from woodwork, usually for being a danger.

The following year we changed our venue to Atticus bookshop and name to Atticus having won promotion. Thereafter, we duly won the first division. The club just grew and grew, attracting many players from Merseyside, and just five years after formation Atticus won the National Championships, an incredible achievement at the time. A northern club winning the title was unheard of and Dave had flagged it up at the quarter-final stage with a local pub which promised and delivered on its promise of much champagne should we succeed. Dave, as well as being one of the team who played every round, also kept the whole club up-to-date with frequent newsletters with reports on all of our teams, including some good games played by members.



National Clubs Champions: Dave and John in the middle sporting the latest 1977 styles

Growth continued for Atticus over the years as Dave and the rest of us got on with our lives as well as enjoying the noble game, albeit with a necessity of reduced preparation time. Dave's lecturing career at John Moore's University was busy. In addition, he was keen to take any opportunities to travel the country to dispense his wisdom and improve his reputation. That said, on many occasions he rushed back to Liverpool, frequently

using risky train connections to play for the team. Dave continued to pursue his political aims but, for the rest of his life, within the safety and, sometimes frustrations, of the Labour Party. Finally, Dave had married his sweetheart Laura and was devoted to her and their three children. (Note: the descriptions laid out here did not necessarily happen in the order written).

In January 2003, Liverpool was awarded the City of Culture 2008, and in the summer of 2004, Dave invited me for a chat in his garden. Professor Dave, as he now was, told me that he was seriously contemplating submitting a bid for chess in the upcoming celebrations, following discussion with the senior figures at John Moore's University. As his talk progressed, I wondered what the strength of the wine he was sipping was. In truth I knew that Dave once again was showing understanding of the real world, far beyond my ken, and would do what he could for chess.

The outcome after much planning, help locally, and with the passage of time, was a grant of well over half a million pounds, I believe, awarded by the City of Culture fund in response to Dave's bid. (Warning: I feel Dave turning in his grave, questioning, "I believe" and asking for my source). Sorry, my computer skills are not good enough! Please advise if you have a more definitive figure. It turned out Dave was organising not one event in 2008, but two leading up to two in 2008 itself, giving us:

2006: Open EU Individual Championship

2007: Britain v China (six rounds, six men and two women in each team, won by China 28-20. We would love to be able to get that close to them these days) This was played alongside an open Swiss event in St. Georges Hall.

2008: Open EU Individual Championship

2008: British/English Championships: all categories. This was the first and only time to date that the Championships had come to Liverpool during the history of the event (held annually: started 1904)

To dream of delivering all of this was fantastic; to actually do it was sensational. All the events had a proliferation of grandmasters and offered opportunities to local players to test their skills and increase their experience. Behind the scenes there was high stakes drama when Dave successfully

faced down an attempt to cut the budget by asking the funders to choose which of the EU or British Championships they would like to cancel. Bluff or not we may never know, but it worked and both tournaments went ahead fully funded.

All too typical of chess is what happened next; there was a falling out in Atticus Chess Club within two years of Dave's triumph on behalf of the city. A group of us left to join Chester where we were welcomed by friends and able to concentrate on playing chess. Dave represented the Chester and District Chess League on the English Chess Federation Council for a number of years, and provided an entertaining summary each year on the workings of the Federation. A few years ago, Chester decided to refurbish its equipment and Dave volunteered to negotiate the price. Once again, I and many others were staggered by Dave's skill in negotiating a deal; this time bringing a large discount.

At the time of our move to Chester, we were able to find another chess club which played under the name of, "The Spirit of Atticus" in the national league (4NCL) played at weekends. We started in the then new third division North and experienced success and growth in the number of teams and their strength over the years. The Saturday evening meal away from the venue proved a great success with Dave selecting the restaurant venues. His notion of choosing a venue based on the wine list alone proved to provide a potentially sticky start. We survived! And Dave became our Grubmeister using more traditional evaluations after our first outing.

Then, after some ten years of the 4NCL for us, the pandemic struck. There was large falling off of membership in the ECF, presumably partly because of the lack of opportunity for play over the board and partly because of the large proportion of members who were unwilling to risk exposure to the virus. The 4NCL restarted last November, with Spirit of Atticus drastically reduced in availability and just managing to get the six players needed for each round of the Northern League so far, with three rounds left to play. Dave and I had agreed to try to get him a game over the board for the next round. Bolton, with a 2pm start, was easily reachable, and I could bring him back to Liverpool after the evening meal. Dave was extremely keen on this idea; for once there was something more

important than chess: "It is the camaraderie that I'm looking forward to," he told me. Alas, this small wish never took place and it adds to my sense of loss.

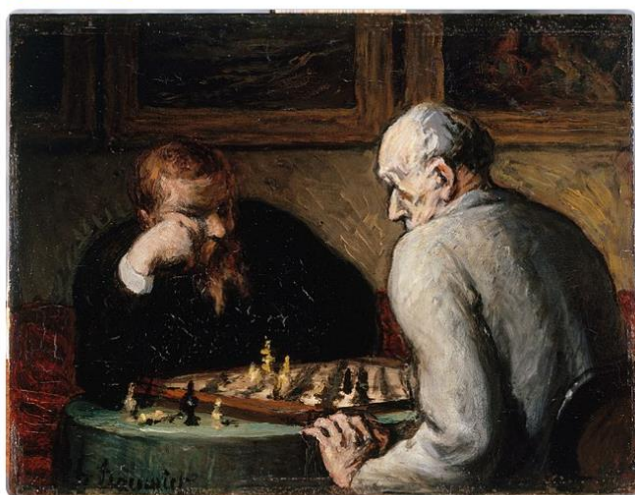
This was not a great time for a power struggle to start within the ECF but it almost came to be; Dave was one of those, respected by the great and good of English chess, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to stop any split in the organisation at what is a threatening time for the future of the game in Britain.

I have received many tributes relating to Dave's intelligence, wisdom, wit, strength of his play, thirst for knowledge, thoughtfulness, love of life, entertaining company, work on behalf of the chess community etc. My favourite, slightly off the wall contribution, came from Colm, who thought of Dave "as our (Chester's) Korchnoi" I can think of no better summary of my dear, sadly missed, friend but can add only that nobody said that they thought he was cocky and thus I was clearly mistaken in 1964.

TWEET OF THE MONTH



@ginger_gm Is Immortal. Found him in an old painting from 1863 titled "the chess Players" by Honore Daumier
🔥🔥🔥♟️😄



The European Chess Women's Gala

The ECF's Director of Women's Chess Agnieszka Milewska reports ...



Eva Repkova (left) with Agnieszka Milewska (right)

On 26 and 27 February I visited Monaco to represent England at the European Chess Women's Gala. The event was organised by the President of the Monaco Chess Federation Jean-Michel Rapaire, supported by the European Chess Union (ECU) and FIDE.

The gala was opened by Prince Albert of Monaco, followed by a simultaneous exhibition match with local school children against GM Pia Cramling and IM Almira Skripchenko.

The event was a superb opportunity to connect and learn from other chess players and organisers in women's chess, sharing perspectives, talking about challenges facing women's chess, and discussing different solutions. I came away with a lot of ideas for the ECF to look at.

The gala included interviews, talks and seminars with President of the ECU Zurab Azmaiparashvili, ECU Vice President and FIDE CEO Dana Reizniece-

Ozola, ECU Secretary General Theodoros Tsorbatzoglou, Chairperson of the FIDE Commission for Women's Chess Eva Repkova and Chairperson of the FIDE Commission for Planning and Development Sonja Johnson.

There was a rapidplay tournament on Sunday for schoolchildren, where they were able to meet and chat with their heroes from women's chess and ask for autographs! The event closed with a friendly blitz tournament for the attendees. The Gala was fun, engaging and educational.

Bob Wade Memorial Portrait at the National Chess Library

by Xavier White

Editor's note: On 11 March 2022, Xavier White made a post on the [English Chess Forum](#). Xavier has kindly agreed that we can publish his account and reproduce his wonderful painting. Xavier has also made some updates which appear in the piece below.



Robert walks through water (3,4) Gouache on canvas, 2010. (91cm X 35cm)

I am very pleased to announce the donation of my Robert Walks Through Water (3,4) memorial

portrait of Bob Wade OBE to the National Chess Library at De Montfort University where it will hang close to Bob's book collection, which has joined the chess library catalogue.

After the death of my neighbour and friend I wanted to do a memorial painting with the memories and images I have of Bob, passing by outside my home, in the café doing the crossword. Bob turned out to be an international chess master and he is pictured on both sides of the table as a young man playing chess and as I knew him doing the crossword. The player in the green jumper is Bobby Fischer, who after reading Bob's book on his Russian opponent's game won in a big match against him in the 1970s cold war period as I understand.

An old man used to pass my house early, at about 7 am most days, cap and flaps pulled down as he hobbled slowly along to the supermarket, returning later with maybe three or four bags laden with shopping. Sometimes we'd meet, smile and say hello as we passed. I can't remember how much we chatted, never knew where he lived.

Gambardella's Café, down the road, went upmarket and got a proper coffee machine and he started to break his journey with an espresso and The Times crossword. I have been going in Gambardella's for many years and so we got to become friends.

Bob would offer me a seat and coffee while he examined The Times crossword. Occasionally he would read out the clue to me. The title is a tribute to his love of crosswords. Over our morning chats I learnt that this very modest man had an OBE and got annoyed at me when I tried to inform others of it. He had travelled widely as a chess player, played chess with loads of big names, Che Guevara...

My friends Aron, Ben and I visited Bob for a game of chess at his Blackheath home, where he played all three of us at the same time - two wins and a draw to Bob. More recently, another friend, after seeing the memorial portrait online, was inspired to look through his old games notebooks and found his note "played in the presence of RG Wade!" in a book from 1978.

Bob died in 2008 and I painted this memorial of our friendship in the style of Marcel Duchamp's chess-themed paintings. Duchamp himself started as a painter and instigated 'conceptual art', then gave up

painting to play chess. Indeed Bob had seen him at a tournament but had never played him.

Thinking of you, my coffee and crossword friend,
Bob Wade.

The 140th Varsity Chess Match

John Saunders reports on the latest encounter in the long-standing fixture, with photos by John Upham

The 140th Varsity Chess Match between Oxford and Cambridge Universities took place at the RAC Clubhouse in Pall Mall, London, on Saturday 12 March 2022. This fixture has a strong claim to being the oldest regular chess fixture in the world, much in the same way as the Boat Race, which it was deliberately designed to imitate when it first came into being in 1873, with hope that it would do for chess what the Thames rowing race did (and still does) for that activity.

Consequently, the match is strong on tradition and ritual, though some are a little quaint. For example, the match was a seven-board affair until the so-called 'ladies' board' was added in 1978, and even then it didn't count towards the score except if the gentlemen's boards finished in a 3½-3½ draw. Having an odd number of boards was also... well... odd. It meant that the team winning the toss could opt for White on the odd boards and have an extra White. You would have thought that, in imitating its rowing equivalent, they might have opted for eight boards *ab initio*, named top board 'bow' and bottom board 'stroke' or vice versa. It was only when the 'ladies' board' became the eighth board that counted towards the score in the same way as the other seven (in 1982) that this anomaly was eliminated.

Turning away, somewhat reluctantly, from musing on the eccentricities of the 1870s, I feel I should say something about the 2022 edition. It was first time that two such matches had been played during the same academic year, with the 2021 match being pushed back to October because of the pandemic. This had the knock-on effect that the two teams were nearly identical from the one played five months previously. On that occasion one of the Cambridge high boards had to drop out through illness which had a major effect on their strength.

Lightning (or rather illness) struck twice for the unfortunate Cantabs in 2022 when another player had to drop out a day before the match, which meant that the player who had acted as substitute in October found himself drafted into the side once again. However, the return to the ranks of Cambridge's IM-titled top board Matthew Wadsworth meant that they were rating favourites this year.



The ECF's Mike Truran tosses the coin

Oxford won the toss and chose White on odds. Cambridge drew first blood when their board two Harry Grieve defeated the Oxford captain Filip Mihov by exploiting a positional advantage along the c-file in a queenless middlegame. Oxford struck back around the time control with wins on boards six and seven. Akshaya Kalaiyalahan built a steady positional edge against substitute Cambridge man Ognjen Stefanovic, who then got his rook caught in a trap. The Cambridge captain Declan Shafi allowed Dominic Miller to get a rook on the seventh, which was joined by a queen with deadly effect.

Five hours elapsed before a fourth result occurred, which was a great scalp for Tom O'Gorman against Matthew Wadsworth on top board, mirroring Ireland's defeat of England in the Six Nations rugby fixture which took place at the same time. O'Gorman signalled his aggressive intent with an early g4 thrust, which seems to be the fashionable opening move of the year, having been unfurled in similar positions at Wijk aan Zee and Gibraltar a month or two before. He sacrificed two pawns to gain entry for his queen into the enemy camp and was soon strongly in the ascendant having snagged the exchange and engineered a material plus. Wadsworth fought back hard but couldn't save the game.

That took Oxford's lead to 3-1 but they seemed to have a number of suspect positions on the remaining four boards. That is, if you believe the analysis engines, but they don't take account of human frailty and what cricketers call scoreboard

pressure. Jan Petr cut the deficit to 2-3 for Cambridge when he exploited an extra pawn which Max French had blundered away in the middle game. But thereafter Cambridge couldn't quite manage to exploit the chances that came their way. Vasiesiu-Kalavannan was a splendid cut and thrust game which might have gone either way at different times but eventually petered out to a draw. In contrast, Macko-Abbas soon reached a complete blockage across the board which never seemed likely to be anything other than a draw though engines thought otherwise. Macko assembled an Alekhine's gun along the b-file but Black was able to fashion a bullet-proof vest on b6 to neutralise it.



The calm before the storm – the board 3 players would go on to share the best game prize

That left board eight where Imogen Camp emerged from a complicated middlegame against Daniel Sutton with a pawn advantage. A few difficult winning chances (for White) and drawing chances (for Black) came and went as the game extended over a gruelling six hours before just the kings were left on the board and honour was satisfied.



Board 7 – Akshaya Kalaiyalahan would win against Ognjen Stefanovic

Of the twenty or so Varsity matches I have attended, this was one of the hardest fought and most exciting – credit to all the players for some spirited play. Congratulations to Oxford for holding

on to win and narrow the gap in the overall series to two; Oxford have 58 wins to Cambridge's 60. And commiserations to Cambridge who came close to getting a result.



The winning Oxford team

At the prizegiving dinner afterwards, Victor Vasiesiu and Koby Kalavannan shared the best game prize, while Tom O'Gorman received the brilliancy prize. Match officials were Matthew Carr and Shohreh Bayat, with Matthew Sadler providing commentary, ably assisted by fellow GMs Jon Speelman and Ray Keene when it came to choosing the winners of the special prizes. This year's special guest at the toss for colours was ECF Chief Executive Mike Truran, with other distinguished visitors including GM Michael Stean, 1965 British champion Peter Lee, Richard Eales and Les Blackstock, all of whom played in the match in the 1960s and 1970s. Later in the evening, after dinner, when many of the players and guests repaired to the chessboards in the lounge, GMs David Howell and Nils Grandelius arrived hotfoot from the match they had contested at the Swedish embassy, and they too indulged in some blitz and bughouse chess.

Last and very far from least, we must acknowledge the match hosts, the RAC and their team of organisers, including Stephen Meyler, Henry McWatters, Henry Mutkin and Rob Matthews, who have done so much to support this event over many years. The last 45 consecutive Varsity matches starting in 1978 have been hosted by the RAC, plus another four matches previous to that, making 49 in all, so, fingers crossed, next year will be the RAC's 50th Varsity match.

Editor's note

You can play through the games at <https://chess24.com/en/watch/live-tournaments/oxford-cambridge-varsity-match-2022>

FEATURES

GM MICHAEL ADAMS' GAME OF THE MONTH



Jon Speelman is not such an active player these days, but he remains a stalwart of the 4NCL.

This game played in the re-opening weekend, showcases his superb endgame technique, and the idiosyncratic king march is also typical of his style.

The advantages of the bishop against a knight is one theme here; however, the difference in king activity is the really important factor. White's monarch remains rooted to the spot, whilst Jon's king traverses the whole board, causing chaos on its travels and eventually causing the White position to collapse.

M. Walker – J. Speelman

4NCL 2021

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nf3 Bb4 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Bd2 Nc6 9.Bd3 Be7 Black has lost time with the bishop, but this sets up a potential opportunity to play Ndb4 and grab the d-pawn.



10.a3 White should have met the threat more dynamically. After 10.0-0 Ndb4?! 11.Be4 Nxd4?! 12.Bf4 gives great compensation. White could also have tried 10.Nxd5 Qxd5 11.0-0 as again it is not easy for Black to grab the money and run: 11...0-0 (11...Nxd4? 12.Qa4+ Nc6 13.Be4) 12.Re1 Nxd4?! 13.Nxd4 Qxd4 14.Bc3 with a lot of White's pieces aimed at the kingside.

10...Bf6 11.Be3 It was stronger to continue developing, as it is still risky to grab the pawn: 11.0-0 Bxd4? (11...Nxd4? 12.Nxd4 Bxd4 13.Qa4+) 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Qa4+ Nc6 14.Nxd5 is very tricky for Black 14...Qxd5 (14...exd5 15.Rfe1+ Be6 16.Bb4 prevents castling) 15.Be4 Qxd2 16.Rfd1 Qxb2 17.Bxc6+

11...e5 The calm 11...Nce7 might have been expected, Jon's move simplifies the position, but matters are still far from simple.

12.dxe5 12.Nxd5 Qxd5 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.0-0 0-0 is a little more comfortable for Black, as the pawn on b2 is loose.

12...Nxe3! Black's idea; he will gain the bishop pair and the better structure.

13.fxe3



13...Nxe5 13...Bxe5 14.Nxe5 Nxe5 15.Bb5+ Bd7 16.Qh5 is fine for White.

14.Bb5+ 14.Nxe5 Bxe5 15.Bb5+ Bd7 transposes to the game.

14...Bd7 15.Nxe5 Bxe5 15...Bxb5 16.Qb3! 0-0 17.Qxb5 a6 18.Qc5 b6 19.Qd5 Qxd5 20.Nxd5 Bxe5 21.Nxb6 Bxb2 22.Rb1 Bc3+ 23.Ke2 is roughly equal.



16.Qxd7+?! Too compliant. White should have played 16.Qd5! Bxc3+ (16...Qh4+ 17.g3 leads nowhere as 17...Bxg3+ 18.hxg3 leaves the rook on h1 defended by White's queen.) 17.bxc3 Bxb5 (17...a6? 18.0-0! is not in Black's interests.) 18.Qxb5+ Qd7 19.Qe5+ Qe7 20.Qb5+ and to avoid repetition Black must displace his king; 20...Kf8 21.0-0 and the shattered pawn structure is balanced by Black's problems to connect the rooks.

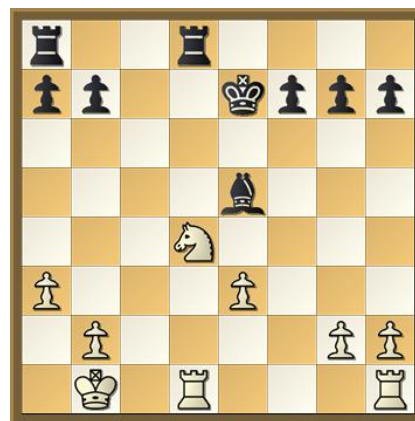
16...Qxd7 17.Bxd7+ Kxd7 Black's king is quite happy to stay in the centre, and the influential bishop and neater pawns are a significant advantage in the endgame.

18.0-0-0+ This seems obvious as the king covers b2 with gain of time, but 18.Rd1+ Ke6 19.Ne2 Rhc8 (19...Bxb2 20.Nf4+ is tricky) 20.Nf4+ was also possible.

18...Ke6 19.Nb5 Rhc8+ Jon is reluctant to allow a capture on a7, but 19...Rac8+ 20.Kb1 Rhd8 was equally playable as 21.Nxa7 Rxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Rc5 23.a4 Ra5 24.Nb5 Rxa4 keeps an advantage.

20.Kb1 Rd8 Stronger than 20...a6 21.Nd4+.

21.Nd4+ Ke7 It is more practical to keep the bishop on the board for a bit longer.



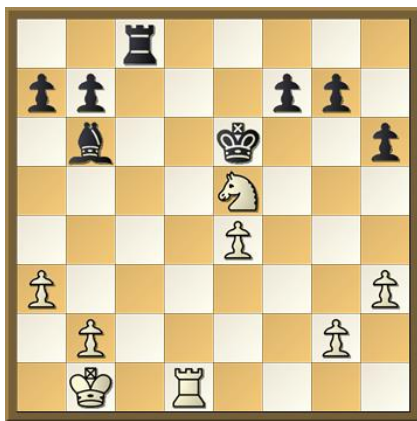
22.Nf3 22.Nf5+ Kf8 and g6 will evict the knight later.

22...Bc7 22...Bf6 23.e4 Ke6 was the alternative, but this uses the bishop to attack the weakness on e3 directly.

23.Rhe1 Bb6 24.e4 At some point it is essential for White to swap a pair of rooks to enable his king to join the action. Here 24.Rxd8 Rxd8 25.Kc2 was one way.

24...h6 25.h3 Rac8 26.Ne5? This knight jump is a step in the wrong direction; it is well anchored on f3 and controls important squares on the d-file. Now was a good moment for 26.Rxd8! Rxd8 27.Kc2; the opportunity won't arise again.

26...Rxd1+ 27.Rxd1 Ke6



28.Nd3 The reverse ferret 28.Nf3! Rc4 29.Re1 was tougher. White's knight never finds a stable post after this.

28...Rc4! 29.Re1 29.e5 Re4! leaves the pawns on e5 and g2 both vulnerable, 30.Kc2 Re2+ 31.Kc3 Be3. The check doesn't help; 29.Nf4+ Ke5 30.Nd5 Bd4 31.Re1 Bc5 32.Nc3 Bxa3! picks off a pawn.

29...g6 White is low on useful ideas so Jon throws in a waiting move. One big problem for White is that his king can't enter the game easily due to the dominant rook on c4, and it remains cut off for the rest of proceedings.

30.Re2 Neither 30.Nf4+ Ke5 31.Nd3+ Kd4 32.Nf4 Bc7, nor 30.b3 Rc3 work out well.

30...a5!

Continuing to gradually improve the position.

31.Nf4+ 31.Ne1 allows the Black king to enter 31...Ke5 32.Nd3+ (32.Nf3+ Kf4) 32...Kd4 33.Ne1 a4. 31.Ka2 a4 doesn't help, waiting with 31.Re1 a4 32.Re2 h5 33.Re1 was still best.

31...Ke5 32.Nd3+ Kd4 Black's king continues to advance.



33.Nf4 33.Ne1! was a bit tougher.

33...Bc7 34.Nd5 Be5! Black's bishop has found the perfect central post.

35.Ne3 Rc5 36.Nc2+ After 36.Ng4 h5 37.Nxe5 Kxe5 the passive position of the White monarch decides.

36...Kd3 37.Re3+ Kd2 Black's king has walked right into the heart of White's position. Checks are only a temporary inconvenience.



38.Rf3 f6 Not 38...Rxc2? 39.Rf2+.

39.Ne3 39.Rf2+ Kd3 40.Rf3+ Kxe4 grabs a pawn.

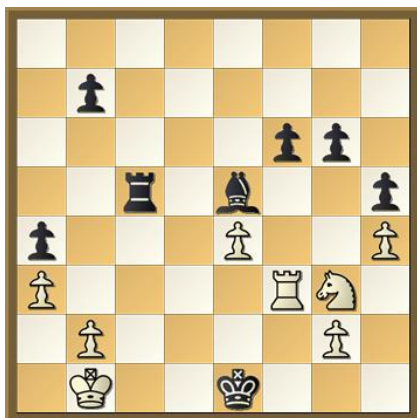
39...h5 It's natural to prevent any counterplay, but 39...a4 40.Ng4 Bd4 41.Nxf6 Rc1+ 42.Ka2 Rc2 is another way to do it.

40.Nf1+ Ke2 41.Ng3+ Ke1 The king settles on the back rank.



42.h4 42.Rf1+ Kd2 43.Rf2+ Ke3 44.Rf3+ Kd4 drives the king back, but doesn't help White.

42...a4! White is fast running out of options.



43.Rf1+ Kd2 44.Rf2+ Kd3 45.Rf3+ Kd4 46.Nh1 Something has to give: 46.Ka2 Rc2, 46.Nf1 Kxe4 47.Nd2+ Kd4.

46...Kxe4 47.Nf2+ Kd5 48.Nd3 Rc4



White resigned, The coming rook and pawn endgame is hopeless: 49.g3 (49.Nxe5 fxe5 50.g3 e4 51.Rf7 e3) 49...Ke4 50.Nxe5 fxe5 with White's king still sidelined the e-pawn can't be stopped. 51.Rf7 Kd3, and now 52.Rxb7 e4 53.Rd7+ Rd4 54.Rxd4+ Kxd4 55.Kc2 e3 56.Kd1

Kd3 57.Ke1 e2, or 52.Rd7+ Ke2 53.Rxb7 e4 54.b3 axb3 55.Rxb3 e3.

CELEBRATING HARD-FOUGHT DRAWS

GM Peter Wells welcomes back the Schachbundesliga and does a deep dive into Luke McShane's exciting draw against Vincent Keymer



The German chess league – the Schachbundesliga – bills itself as “the strongest league in the world” and this is no idle claim. Not only does it boast a dazzling array of talent in its top two divisions and its women's divisions, it also features astonishing strength in depth. Indeed, it is far from unusual to find teams in the many regional Oberligen which boast at least a couple of grandmasters in their ranks.

So the start of the 2022 season on the weekend of 5-6 March is news in itself, following as it does hard on the heels of a season which kicked off in 2019, but (courtesy of the Covid pandemic) was completed only towards the close of 2021. However, with a new crisis placing a very dark cloud indeed over Europe - even before we emerge from these previous tribulations - this first weekend also saw a touching gesture of solidarity with Ukraine. The hosts of their matches on this first weekend, SV Werder Bremen, faced with the unavailability of two of their stars - Alexander Areshchenko and Zahar Efimenko who were engaged in a struggle to leave their besieged country with their families - decided simply not to field players on these boards. In this usually most fiercely competitive of leagues, their two opponents

- OSG Baden-Baden the current Champions and Schachfreunde Deizisau - responded in the appropriate manner and the customary battles on boards 2 and 3 were replaced by the arresting image of sunflowers placed on the boards alongside the Ukrainian flag.



This does not mean that serenity was the order of the day on the neighbouring boards, and it is to the exciting struggle on board 1 of the match Werder Bremen against SF Deizisau that I would now like to turn. In addition to the poignant circumstances, there are two other grounds for putting my focus here.

The first is that I think there is something to be said for reminding readers every now and again that even drawn games with relatively few moves can be hard-fought, full of content, and rewarding to play through. I am accustomed to some level of antipathy towards draws played at a high level, and on occasion it is not hard to sympathise with this. Right now, though, there seems to be renewed conviction that in addition to the widespread use of the Sofia rules (a restriction on draw agreements before some given number of moves) the football-inspired system of 3 points for a win is a great way to persuade lethargic Grandmasters out of their indolence.

For sure, there have been some recent outings in which '3 points for a win' appears to have worked well, but I have concerns. One is that I tend actually to be quite impressed by the determination of many top players to unearth new avenues to reach complex positions even without any such

inducements, and I do believe that some of the concern comes from a failure to appreciate quite how difficult this can be. However, more fundamentally, I find it troubling that a 'perfect game of chess' – which we are virtually certain would end in a sharing of the spoils – should be under-rewarded in this way. Not just 'perfect' games either. It bothers me if fiercely contested games in which the defender succeeds in somehow matching the attacker's energy become undervalued too. At least, I am sceptical that win percentages are necessarily a reliable metric for assessing even the entertainment value - never mind the quality of play - that any given tournament produces.

The second reason is that a battle between our own Luke McShane and the exciting young German talent Vincent Keymer, who so impressed at the recent Airthings Masters, is an appealing prospect in itself. When Luke was kind enough to guide me through some of his thinking in the fireworks which ensued, the prospect became irresistible. Many thanks indeed to Luke for his insights which have inspired a good deal of what follows.

Luke McShane – Vincent Keymer

Bundesliga 2021–22, Bremen March 6th 2022

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.d4 cxd4 5.Qxd4 a6 6.Bxd7+ Bxd7 7.Nc3 e5

When I first looked at these positions, I felt that Black ought to be able to do without weakening d5 in this way, but I soon found that White obtains plenty of pressure against more 'Scheveningen-style' attempts to play with the black pawns on d6 and e6. In any case, the narrative here is somewhat paradoxical – White has given up his king's bishop in order to attempt to gain ascendancy on the very light squares where its influence will be missed - d5 in particular! To try to understand this, we might do worse than to focus on tempi. In fact, Bb5+ and Bxd7+ is rather an economical mode of development, whilst exchanging this knight also enables the relatively efficient Qxd4-d3, saving further time over Najdorf lines in which White has to play Nf3, then Nxd4, then knight back to f3 and then develop the queen. Development might not appear to be the paramount issue when White is unable to open the position rapidly, but it does afford White some time to place his pieces in a way which really threatens to smother all of his opponent's pawn breaks.

8.Qd3 Rc8 9.0-0 Qc7 10.Rd1



For the moment, Black is using pressure against c2 to keep the knight out of d5. There is, however, no need yet to restrain Black's 10...b5, since it is well met with 11 a4! b4 12 Nd5 Qxc2 13 Qxc2 Rxc2 14 Nxb4 Rc4 15 Nxa6 Rxa4 16 Be3 when Black really can fear the consequences of opening lines with his kingside pieces still at home.

10...Be6

Black's development requires care. It is worth mentioning that any unprepared ...Nf6 move will be well met by Bg5, which is why his set-up probably has to involve the slightly weakening ...h6 move securing both of the minor pieces which he wants to point at the d5 square.

11.a4 h6 12.Nd2

This manoeuvre may look a little ponderous, but I am inclined to think that if White secures his goal – knights on c3 and e3 eyeing up both of Black's natural pawn breaks ...d5 and ...f5, with his a4 pawn ruling out any b5 ideas – then he has achieved a Najdorf structure with unusual degrees of comfort even without undue theoretical exertion. It isn't hard to see the appeal. So Black's aggressive response – securing the f5 break even whilst his kingside remains undeveloped - looks absolutely critical and it is easy to understand why Vincent Keymer's attention was drawn to this in his preparation for the line.

12...g6!? 13.Nf1 f5 14.Ne3



14...Nf6!?

These are the moments where it is really invaluable for us to have some idea what was going on in the players' heads. Seeing White respond to this novelty with such vigour could easily lead to the conclusion that he 'had it all covered', but Luke assures me that at this point whilst they were still in Vincent's preparation, he himself was very much on his own. Indeed, he spent a full half hour here, realising that White's acceptance of the pawn offer rests pivotally upon a willingness to seize back the initiative by offering significantly more material. On examination with an engine, this novelty looks quite appealing. White no longer has an attractive option to handle the position quietly and needs to play with great energy to avoid slipping into a passive position.

To be honest though, the previously played 14...Ne7, sacrificing a different pawn, doesn't look so bad either. After 14...Ne7 15.Qxd6 Qxd6 16.Rxd6 Kf7 17.Rb6 Rb8 18.Ned5 Nc8 19.Rb3 White is successfully tying Black down to the defence of b7, but the rook on b3 looks otherwise rather awkward. Still, the most concrete continuation, in which Black sacrifices an exchange with 19...Nd6 (19...f4!? perhaps) 20.Be3 Nxe4 21.Ba7 Nxc3 22.bxc3 Bxd5 23.Bxb8 Bg7! 24.c4 Bc6 though visually pleasing, is probably not especially easy to handle with Black.

15.exf5 gxf5 16.Nxf5 d5!



Thematic – Black boasts a strong and mobile pawn centre as well as the bishop pair for his pawn and it is unsurprising that the engine confirms that ‘normal moves’ are not at all promising here. So Luke steps up...

17.Bf4!

I love this sacrifice. White pinpoints the key problem in Black’s set-up, namely that his pieces - though full of potential - are not yet fully mobilised and he strikes in a way which opens lines, whilst also serving to complete his own development. When I saw this, I was reminded that Luke had been kind enough to commend two of my piece sacrifices on f4 (one of them itself a Bc1-f4 development) in his review of *Chess Improvement: It’s all in the Mindset*, but I was even more delighted to hear that these were very much on his mind at this moment during the game. As I suggested, it would be easy to glance through this game and assume this to be ‘all preparation’, but even having indicated that it wasn’t, it is worth emphasising quite how much calculation and intuition needed to be deployed in order to go for this, especially with the opponent giving every indication of having analysed it before.

17...exf4 18.Nd4!

The only good way. 18 Re1 Kf7 19 Nd4 Re8 falls short as White misses the pressure on d5.

18...Bg8

The most sensible way to keep the bishop as the king will often need the f7 square. Luke mentioned that he had hoped for 18...Bg4, but Black’s helplessness after 19 Nxd5 Nxd5 20 Qg6+ Qf7 21 Qxg4 is a good example of how retaining this bishop is usually pivotal to a successful defence of the various vulnerable light squares. Having said this, Black seems curiously able to survive after 18...Kf7

19.Nxe6 Kxe6 20.Nxd5 Qxc2! 21.Qh3+ Kf7 22.Nxf6 Kxf6 23.Qh4+ Kg6 24.Qg4+ Kf6 25.Rd4 Rc5! but lines which require such well concealed ‘only moves’ are obviously fraught with practical danger.

19.Re1+



19...Be7?

A serious error and at first sight a bit hard to explain, since as well as being a position Keymer had no doubt analysed before, it feels intuitively likely that adding Nf5 into White’s pot of ideas might not end well. It does, though, prompt me to challenge a couple of potential misconceptions about players ‘wheeling out’ their preparation:

- 1) Commentators often fail to distinguish openings which have been covered as part of the player’s overall opening work from those covered for a particular game. Remembering everything you have checked over for a specific game may be manageable enough (at least for players in Keymer’s demographic, if not for those in mine). However, dredging up knowledge acquired months or even years before is extremely challenging even for those with the most awesome memories and in fact Black had in no way predicted that Luke would go down this line.
- 2) We often hear that top GMs look for lines which, whilst they may be drawn with best play, can seriously test their opponents’ ability to find good or even ‘only’ moves at the board. If this is a tempting strategy with White, it is doubly so with Black and it might even be possible to explain Keymer’s novelty here in those terms. However, in such a position, the task of finding tough moves can switch very abruptly. Once Luke

hit upon 17 Bf4! it was suddenly Black who was faced with the prospect of fending off a direct attack with very little leeway. Complex positions are tough *for both players* and unless the moves have been reliably memorised, it will often be the 'defender' who falters first, even if they have seen the position before.

- 3) One further thought. Misremembering preparation will sometimes prove more treacherous than having never encountered the position before. This is perhaps a case in point and Luke's impression was that 19...Be7? was probably the product of confusing lines - arguably an unlikely error to make if coming to the position afresh.

In fact, Black may even have had a choice of reasonable king moves here, but 19...Kd8 20.Re6 Qf7 21.Rae1 Bc5! 22.Nxd5 Nxd5 23.Qe4 Nf6 24.Qxf4 Nd7 demands quite a lot of the defender before White is obliged to bail out with 25.Qh4+ Kc7 26.Qg3+ Kd8 27.Qh4+ and perpetual check.

For this reason, I think Luke was right to give 19...Kf7 as the main line, after which Black should hold easily enough by 20.Re6 Rd8 21.Qf5!? (no need to clarify with 21.Rxf6+ Kxf6 22.Qf5+ Kg7 23.Qg4 yet - White can safely check Black's accuracy first) 21...Bg7 22.Rae1 Bh7! 23.Rxf6+ Bxf6 24.Qe6+ Kg7 25.Qg4+ Kf7 and again neither side can reject the perpetual.

20.Nf5 Bh7



21.Nxd5?

Assuming that Black is alert to the danger on his 23rd move, this leads to an early perpetual, throwing away a probably winning advantage, but nonetheless an eminently understandable decision in the circumstances. Especially when short of time

and calculating at some length, I think it is easy for the type of forcing sequences you are exploring in some variations to impact upon the moves which you consider in others. Specifically, I suspect that with the pin on the knight resulting in several plausible forcing variations, it is not easy to take a time out from choosing between these in order to consider moves which involve a slow build-up.

Since the pin against White's knight on f5 is not an absolute one, White has two tempting options to recoup his material by simplifying the position, both of which Luke considered at length:

After 21 Nxe7 Bxd3 22.Nexd5+ Kf7 23.Nxc7 Bc4! Black traps the knight, forcing the weakening 24.b3, when 22...Rxc7 25.bxc4 Rxc4 doesn't look especially appealing for White.

Luke was also unconvinced by 21.Rxe7+ Qxe7 22.Nxe7 Bxd3 23.Nxc8 Bxc2 and when visualising and trying to assess this position in time pressure it is easy to see how the d-pawn and the bishop might appear to have spelled counterplay. In fact, the engine reminds us that White can apply general principles to good effect and blockade the d-pawn with 24 Ne2! (for the record, 24 Rc1 Kf7 25 Nd6+ looks quite strong too, although considerably less instructive) with a pleasant pull once the d-pawn is controlled.

In fact, the best chances were offered by rejecting all of these captures in favour of applying more pressure with 21 Re6!. The trick here is to realise that any time Black exchanges the knight on f5 he will be merely inviting another powerful attacking piece to take its place, whilst he cannot both defend e7 and secure h7. The key line may be 21...Rf8 (21...Bxf5 22 Qxf5 Rf8 23 Rae1 Rf7 fails simply to 24 Rxf6) 22.Rae1 Rf7 which might secure the second rank but for the neat tactic 23.Rxf6! Rxf6 24.Ng7+ Kd8 25.Qxh7 and again, the capture of the bishop leaves Black's position falling apart on the white squares.

Luke admitted that he played 21 Nxd5 aware that the coming perpetual was one possible outcome, but harboured the illusion that he still had some attacking chances. It soon becomes clear that neither player can afford to deviate from the checks.

21...Nxd5 22.Qxd5 Bxf5 23.Qxf5 Rd8!

Necessary, since White is threatening a devastating capture on e7, when the queen is overworked and taking back with the king would leave it fatally exposed

24.Qg6+ Kf8 25.Qf5+ Ke8

25...Kg7 26.Qg4+ Bg5? 27.h4 only courts unnecessary danger for Black

26.Qg6+ Kf8 27.Qf5+ Ke8 ½-½

I hope the reader will share my excitement at this intense tussle. A reminder of how much can be going on both on the board and disguised in the notes when the point is shared and above all, a game well worthy of the unique occasion.

ARKELL'S ENDINGS

Moments of Truth in Harrogate



Once you are in the endgame, the moment of truth has arrived – *Edmar Mednis*

I have been requested by the powers that be to focus this month's article on the 4NCL tournament at Harrogate. It is always a delight to play and stay at the same venue, and the splendid Old Swan Hotel at Harrogate serves that purpose to a tee. With an attractive and comfortable lounge/bar area and with the town itself on the doorstep, what chess playing connoisseur could ask for more? Mike Truran and the 4NCL should be congratulated on filling a big gap left in English chess when Sean Hewitt wound down his excellent series of e2-e4 congresses, though of course these events have their own unique flavour.

Although weekends are all tough, this one was above average in strength, sporting two GMs, four IMs and a whole host of FMs and other strong

players. So, on to the chess. This being 'Arkell's Endings' it's just as well that I did actually play a couple of them! What I will therefore present to you is two run-of-the-mill endgame grinds - i.e. not specially selected but just the two I happened to play at this congress. After a scrappy first round victory I did most of the work on the Saturday, by which time I had taken the outright lead in this 48 player Open.

It then turned out that I had very little to do on the Sunday; I won by default in the morning when my opponent withdrew because his wife had caught covid, and I then had a handshake after six moves to clinch victory.

Andrew Burnett – Keith Arkell

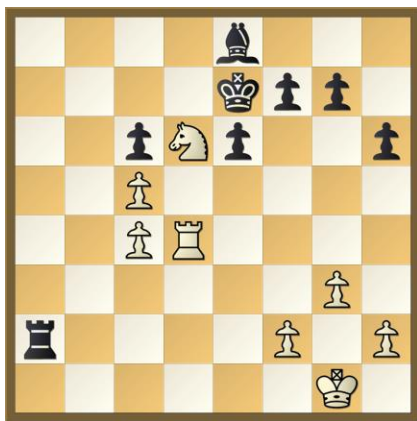
27th 4NCL Congress 22/1/2022 Round 2

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Nf3 c5 5. g3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 d6 7. Bg2 O-O 8. O-O Nc6 9. Bg5 h6 10. Bxf6 Qxf6 11. Nd2 Qe7 12. Bxc6 bxc6 13. dxc5 d5 14. Qa4 Qxc5 15. Nb3 Qd6 16. c5 Qc7 17. Qa5 Qe7 18. c4 Bd7 19. Rac1 Rfc8 20. Rfd1 Rab8 21. Qxa7 Ra8 22. Qb7 Qd8 23. Qb6 Qf6 24. Rd2 Ra4 25. e4 Rca8 26. Qc7 R4a7 27. Qd6 dxe4 28. Re1 Be8 29. Rxe4 Rd7 30. Qf4 Qxf4 31. Rxf4 Rxd2 32. Nxd2 Rxa2



I have gained the smallest of advantages because my c-pawn holds up my opponent's two, and meanwhile I have a flexible kingside majority which can inch forward later.

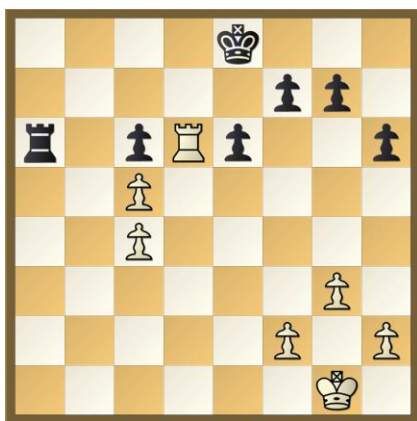
33. Rd4 Kf8 34. Ne4 Ke7 35. Nd6



This knight move is a bit of a nuisance as I am struggling to prevent a tenable rook endgame after Nxe8 followed by Rd6.

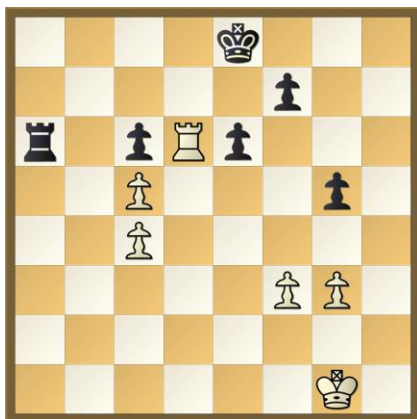
35.. Ra8 The problem is that 35...Bd7 allows 36 Nxf7.

36. Nxe8 Kxe8 37. Rd6 Ra6



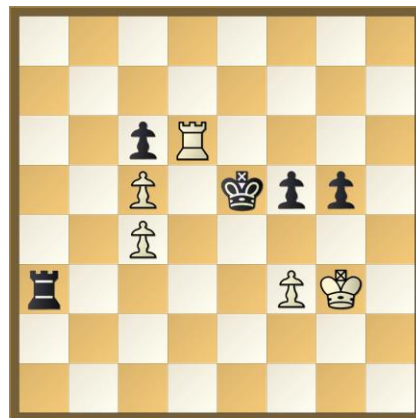
There is no question that this is a theoretical draw, but I have the practical advantage that I can advance my kingside, backed up by the king, and look for opportunities to bale with my rook and go after a pawn. At this stage that was the limit of my thinking. It is always better to be on the side which has the prospect of making progress.

38. h4 g5 39. hxg5 hxg5 40. f3



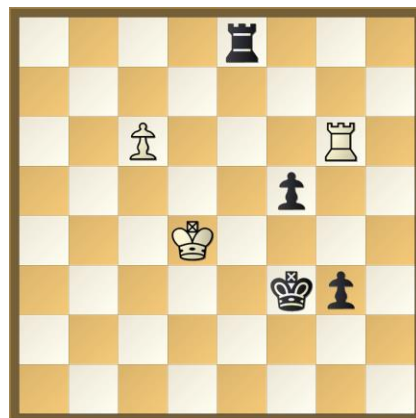
This cannot have been an easy decision for Andrew - to leave the pawn on f2 and allow the squeeze with ...g4 followed by a full-scale advance, or to expose the pawn slightly to restrict my progress. At this stage both options should be OK for White.

40. Ke7 41. g4 Kf6 42. Kf2 Ke5 43. Kg3 f6 44. Rd1 f5 45. gxf5 exf5 46. Rd6 Ra3



The threat of ...g4 forces a retreat. **47. Kf2 Rc3** It is better to pick off one of the c-pawns before I go after the one on f3. It is worth noting that had my rook been passively defending from c8 rather than the far more active a6 my winning chances would have been approximately zero.

48. Rxc6 Kf4 49. Rd6 Rc2+ 50. Ke1 Kxf3 51. c6 Rxc4 52. Kd2 Ke4 53. Re6+ Kd5 54. Rf6 Ke5 55. Rg6 g4 56. Kd3 Rc5 57. Rh6 g3 58. Rg6 Kf4 59. Ke2 Re5+ 60. Kd3 Kf3 61. Kd4 Re8



I have deliberately avoided highlighting White's fatal mistake as I want the reader to realise how difficult it can be to defend such an endgame.

I would encourage you to focus on the play between moves 43 and 47 and look for a better defence; somewhere in that sequence White went from merely standing worse to being lost.

0-1

Keith Arkell - Harriet Hunt

27th 4NCL Congress 22/1/2022 Round 3.1

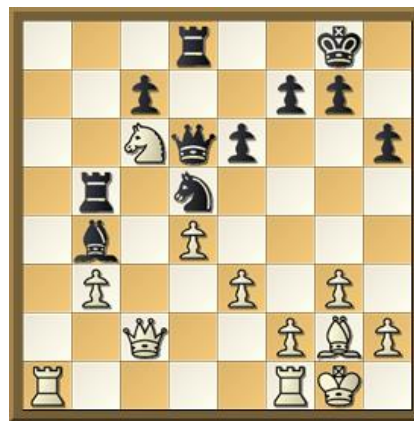
In round three I faced a very tough opponent in IM Harriet Hunt. I've known Harriet for more than a quarter of a century - we've even been on trips to the Derbyshire Dales and the Lake District together with a bunch of friends. I watched her develop from a very promising junior to a World Girls Champion close to GM strength. Perhaps she would have gone on to make GM had her research not seriously distracted her, but it's never too late...

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 b6 4. g3 Ba6 5. b3 b5 6. cxb5 Bxb5 7. Bg2 Bc6 8. O-O a5 9. Bg5 h6 10. Bxf6 Qxf6 11. Nc3 Bb4 12. Rc1 Na6 13. Qd3 Ba3 14. Rcd1 Nb4 15. Qb1 O-O 16. Ne5



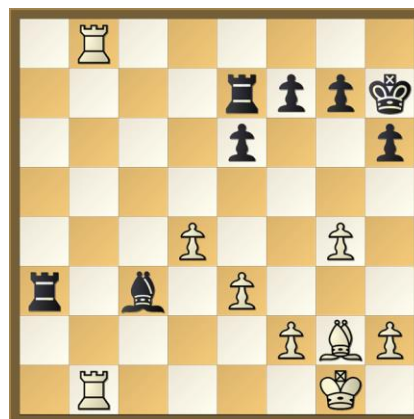
I have the advantage that I sometimes play this opening myself. Black makes a positional gain according to the 'Arkell Hierarchy of Pawns' by swapping the b-pawn for the more valuable White c-pawn. In return, White gains a lead in development, so Black must tread carefully. Probably Harriet should have eased her position with...Bxf3 last move.

16. ..Nd5 17. Ne4 Qe7 18. Nxc6 dxc6 19. Qc2 Nb4 20. Qc4 a4 21. Nc5 axb3 22. axb3 Nd5 23. Nd3 Rab8 24. Qxc6 Rfd8 25. Qc4 Nb6 26. Qc3 Nd5 27. Qc2 Rb6 28. Ne5 Nb4 29. Qc4 Qd6 30. e3 Nd5 31. Qc2 Rb5 32. Ra1 Bb4 33. Nc6



It really should be quite easy from here but somehow Black manages to emerge into a rooks and opposite bishop ending, which at least enables me to demonstrate a bit of technique.

33..Re8 34. Qc4 Rb6 35. Rfc1 Ba3 36. Rc2 Nb4 37. Nxb4 Rxb4 38. Qxc7 Rxb3 39. Qa7 Re7 40. Qa4 Qb4 41. Qxb4 Bxb4 42. Rc8+ Kh7 43. Rb8 Ra3 44. Rb1 Bc3 45. g4



Whether this is winning by force is impossible to know, but the situation is wretched for Black.

45.. g5 46. Be4+ Kg7 47. Kg2 Rea7 48. Rc8 Ba5 49. Rbb8 Bc7 50. Rg8+ Kf6 51. Rbc8



Essentially I have two targets - perhaps three if you count the king - namely h6 and f7. Hunt has but one target - my f2 pawn. With those thoughts in mind it wouldn't be a bad idea to get my rook to f3, from where it can both attack and defend. It is concepts like these which make analysis easier.

51. Ra2 52. Rh8 Rd2 53. Rxh6+ Ke7 54. Rh7 Kf6 55. Rh3 Bd6 56. Rd8 Bb4 57. Rdh8 Rda2 58. R8h7



The other rook will arrive on f3 after which Black's position will be without prospects.

1-0

JUNIOR MOVES

LITTLEWOOD'S CHOICE



Juniors are certainly doing well at chess around the world, suggesting that it is a young man's game ... although people like our own Keith Arkell are trying to challenge that!

In the recent Airthings Masters, the brilliant young Indian player Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa (affectionately known as Pragg) beat some very strong players although he is still only 16 years old!

His strongest victim was none other than the world champion himself.

Hopefully, Pragg's play in this game will inspire English juniors (and others) to keep fighting even when faced with the strongest opponents.

M. Carlsen vs R. Pragganandhaa

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5 5.e3 Nc6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.Bb5 cxd4 8.exd4 Normal for White is 8.Nxd4 trying to exploit the isolated pawn and this leads to complications as Black tries to exploit the absence of White's defensive pieces on the kingside to launch a successful attack.

8...Bd6 9.0-0 0-0 10.h3 h6 11.Re1 Bf5 12.Ne5 Rc8 13.Bf4 Re8 14.Rc1 An alternative is 14.Qd2 but the position is still equal after 14...Bxe5 15.dxe5 Ne4 16.Qxd5 Nxc3 17.Qxd8 Rxd8 18.bxc3 Ne7 and White will be unable to hang on to his extra pawn.

14...Qb6 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Na4 Qa6?!



Pragg misses 16...Qb5, maintaining pressure on the b2 pawn and leaving Black slightly better for choice.

17.Re3 Magnus however misses the critical move 17.Nc5! which gives White the better position after 17...Qxa2 18.Na4 as the black queen is in danger of being lost.

17...Ne4 18.f3? This is a mistake. The best move is 18.Nc5 which leaves White only slightly worse.

18...Ng5 19.Rec3 Qb7 20.Bh2 Ne6 21.Nxc6 Nf4? Stronger is 21...Bxh2+ 22.Kxh2 Nf4 23.Ne5 Rxc3 24.Rxc3 f6 25.Ng4 Re2 with a winning position.

22.Ne5 Bxe5?! Black can maintain a small advantage by 22...Rxc3 23.Rxc3 Ne6 as the two bishops and the poor position of some of White's pieces provide more than enough compensation for the pawn deficit. After the move chosen White is slightly better.

23.dxe5 Nd3 24.Rxc8 Rxc8 25.Rxc8+ Qxc8 26.Bg3 d4 27.b3 Qc6 28.Qd2 Kh7 29.Kh2 Bg6 30.Qa5



This is a dangerous move to play as White allows the black queen into the heart of his position. It appears as though Magnus was now trying to win...but he is treading in shark-infested waters!

30...Qc1 31.Qxa7 Qe3 32.Nc3? ...and here is the fatal mistake! The only good move is 32.Qa5 to bring the queen back to the defence of the white king. A possible continuation is then 32...Nc1 33.Qe1 Ne2 34. Qf2 Qd2 when Black's better placed pieces give him ample compensation for the two-pawn deficit.

32...Nf4!

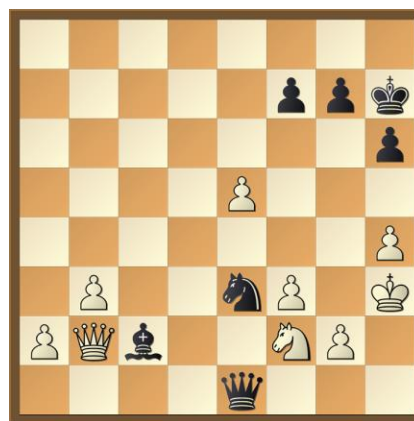


33.Nd1 Qd2 34.Nf2 If 34.Bxf4 Qxf4+ 35. Kg1 Qd2 36.Nf2 Qe1+ wins.

34...Ne2 35.h4 Qe1 36.Qd7 Nxc3 37.Qxd4 37.Kxc3 is met by 37...Qxe5+ 38.f4 Qe3+ winning or

38.Kg4 h5+ 39.Kh3 Bf5+ and the white queen is lost.

37...Nf1+ 38.Kh3 Ne3 39.Qb2 Bc2 0-1



Magnus resigned as he must lose a piece and the black attack will still be raging.

Not a perfect game, but you have to admire the way that Pragg kept on fighting. It is also a good illustration of how even the best players in the world can make mistakes when put under pressure.

Paul Littlewood Email: plittl@hotmail.com

IMPROVERS

TECHNIQUE

by IM Nigel Povah

This is the third in a series of articles (originally written in 1978/79 but recently updated with input from engines) which attempt to make the reader more aware of certain important factors which are often overlooked or not adequately understood by many chess players.

'Bishops of opposite colour - oh, they're always drawn!'

In this issue I hope to make you a little more guarded against such a dogmatic belief for at least then you will be spared some of the painful experiences that many unfortunate players including myself have suffered.

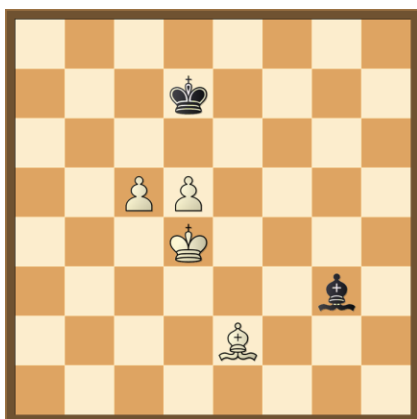
It is true that "bishops of opposite colour" endings do have a drawish tendency even when one side has an extra pawn and, in some cases, even two extra pawns.

Let us enumerate some basic themes.

- 1) Bishop and pawn versus bishop is almost certainly a draw
- 2) One extra pawn is frequently not enough to win but chances are increased if there is play on both wings (i.e. pawns on both wings)
- 3) Two extra pawns do not always guarantee a win but generally winning chances are increased the more files there are between the pawns. However, connected pawns are better than pawns only one file apart
- 4) Two connected pawns will generally only win if they are already on the fifth rank unless the inferior side's pieces are poorly placed

Firstly, let us look at a position where there is a 2-0 pawn majority:

Connected Pawns

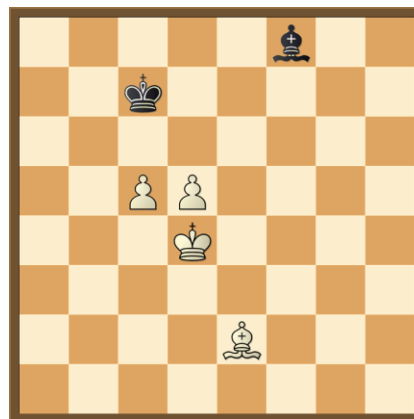


In the diagram above White has two connected pawns on the fifth rank. However, at the moment it seems they can make little progress. It is always undesirable to put your pawns on the same colour squares as your bishop as this cedes complete control of the other colour complex to your opponent. Therefore, 1.c6+ Kd6 gets White nowhere at all. The natural move 1.d6 (intending 2.Kd5) allows 1...Bxd6 with an instant draw so White must somehow activate his king so as to force the move d6 and he can achieve this objective as follows:

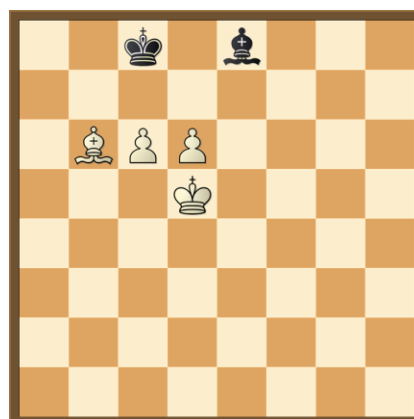
1.Bb5+ This is better than Bg4+ as it controls the white squares c6 and d7 which are the relevant white squares directly in front of the pawns.
1...Ke7 (if 1...Kc7 2.Ke4 followed by Kf5-e6 and d6 etc and note that 2...Bf2 allows 3.d6+ Kd8 4.Kd5 with a winning position) **2.Ba4** Preparing to march

the king through on the queenside **2...Bf4 3.Kc4 Bg3** Black's bishop must stay on the h2-b8 diagonal to prevent d6 **4.Kb5 Kd7 5.Kb6+ Ke7 6.Kc6 Bf4 7.Bb3 Bg3 6.d6+ Kd8 9.Kd5** When 10.c6 will see White with the winning position of two pawns on the sixth rank.

This win was possible because Black failed to set up the correct defensive stance; he should place his bishop in front of the pawns as shown in the diagram below.



In this position it is impossible for White to make any progress, since 1) d6 is always met by the bishop sacrifice...Bxd6; 2) the white king is tied down to the defence of the c-pawn; and 3) c6 gives up the black squares for ever. Therefore, Black simply "passes" with Be7-f8-e7 etc. From this we can deduce that if White's pawns were on the sixth rank, then Black would not have the pass move and an element of zugzwang creeps in. For instance, consider the position in the next diagram:

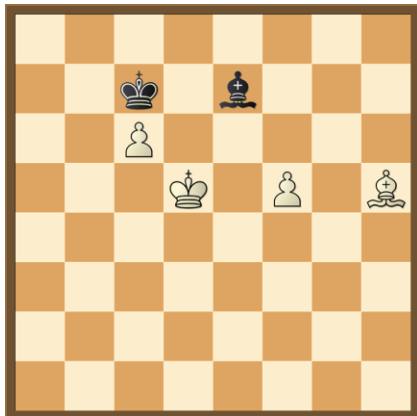


Here White simply plays **1.Kc5** and Black is in zugzwang since he must move one of his pieces thereby allowing 2.d7 followed by reincarnation on d8.

That about sums up connected pawns. Now we consider disconnected pawns.

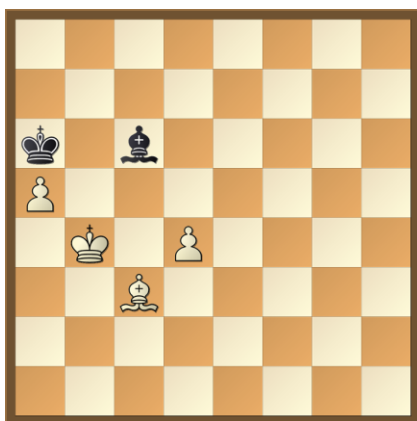
Split Pawns

Here the general rule is that the pawns need to be at least two files apart in order to win. The worst possible case is when only one file separates the pawns, for then neither can they support one another nor are they far enough apart to cause confusion in the defender's ranks. The reader is advised to check this for themselves. In the next diagram we consider the case where the pawns are separated by the two "statutory" files.



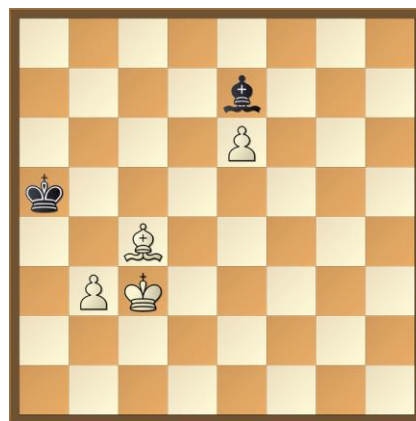
White wins quite easily by forcing the advance of the f-pawn until Black has to give up his bishop e.g. **1.Bf3** preparing **2.Ke6** and **3.f6** etc. **1...Bh4 2.Ke6 Kd8 3.f6 Bg5 4.f7 Bh6 5.Kf6 Bf8 6.Kg6 Ke7 7.Kh7 Kd8** (obviously not **7...Kxf7 8.c7**) **8.Kg8** when Black will have to sacrifice his bishop for the f-pawn allowing the c-pawn to decide matters.

It should be noted that this particular ending can be drawn if the superior side is unfortunate enough to have "a wrong coloured rook-pawn", For instance, consider the position below.



White cannot win as in the last example, because after **1.Kc5 Bf3 2.d5 Bxd5 3.Kxd5 Kb7 4.Kc5 Ka8** and we have the familiar drawn bishop and wrong rook-pawn position, since the black king can never be evicted from a8.

In the next issue I will analyse the diagram below and will continue with a couple of examples from my own games where the results were not quite as expected.



TACTICS

by IM Paul Littlewood

The double attack is the motif I am going to consider today. It is often a deadly weapon in chess, especially when a check is involved. For example, take the following position which arises after the moves:

1.e4 e5 2. Qh5 g6? 3.Qxe5+



White's queen is checking Black's king and also attacking Black's rook on h8 i.e. a double attack. Black is now completely lost because they must parry the check and will therefore lose their rook.

The knight is a particularly effective double attacker as a knight fork can be devastating.

Consider the following position:

P. E. Littlewood vs Kraidman

Robert Silk Masters 1978



My last knight move has forked the black queen and black rook. There is no escape because if 1...Rd6 then 2.Qe4+ wins. Therefore Black must lose a whole rook and will then be a piece down with a totally lost position.

A double attack is not always fatal as there are often ways to avoid the loss of material. For example, take the following position:



The black bishop is attacking both the white rook and white knight. However, White can escape by playing 1.Rb6 which guards the knight.

Here are two examples which involve double attacks to solve yourself. The solutions will follow at the end of the article.

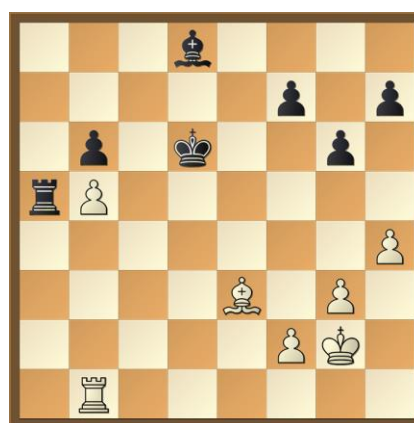
L. J. Smart vs P. E. Littlewood (Charlton 1983)

Black to play and win



Lyublinsky vs Kamyshev (USSR 1949)

White to play and win



Keep an eye out for double attacks as they are a powerful weapon!

Paul Littlewood

Solutions

L. J. Smart vs P. E. Littlewood

Black wins by 1...Rc1! 2.Qxc1 Nxe2+ and the white queen and king are forked.

Lyublinsky vs Kamyshev

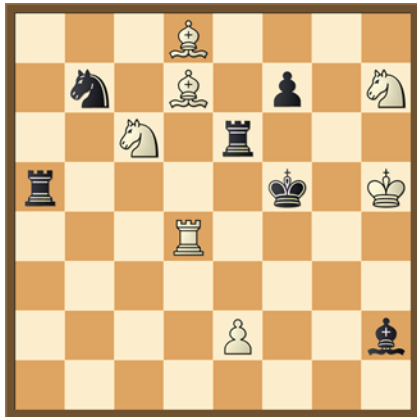
White wins by 1.Rd1+ Ke7 2.Rxd8 Kxd8 3.Bxb6+ with a double attack on the black rook and the black king.

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

In the last ChessMoves I left you this problem to solve -



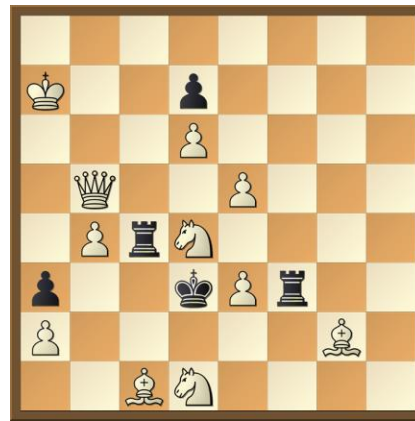
Mate in 4

Friedrich Chlubna

4th Honourable Mention, *Europa Rochade* 1984-85

The key move is 1.Bg5, threatening 2.e4#, and there are two nicely matching variations – 1...Nc5 2.Rd5+ Ke4 3.Nf6+ Rxf6 4.Rd4# and 1...Nd6 2.Ne7+ Ke5 3.Bf6+ Rxf6 4.Nc6#. In both cases, the black rook is decoyed away from e6 in order for the white bishop at d7 to guard f5 and we then have a ‘switchback’ mate.

The late, and much lamented, Friedrich Chlubna was also an expert in, and connoisseur of, historic chess problems. In addition, he was a publisher and his *Versunkene Schatzte*, a collection of problems from 1891 to 1913, is one of my favourite chess books. Here is another four-mover, taken from that book. As is the way with most of the problems from this era, the composer intends that the problem should be difficult to solve... but rewarding! In this case, an examination of the practical difficulties in forcing mate will lead you to do that which you often have to do when solving endgame studies: find good moves for Black. The solution is, I think, hard to see, and there is no indignity if you choose simply to read on and enjoy the cleverness of the solution...



Mate in 4

Henrik von Dueben

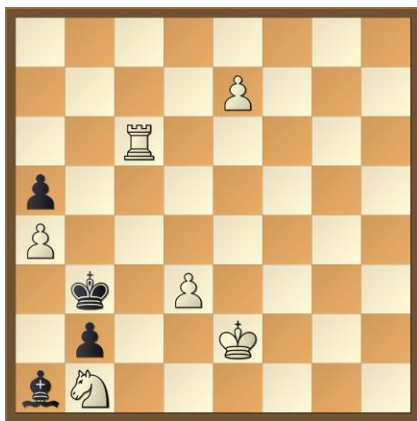
Vårt Land 1893

The f3 rook is Black's only defensive resource, but 1.Bxf3 would be stalemate. It turns out that in the key variation stalemate is a crucial consideration. Most of White's possible temporizing first moves loosen the pressure on Black in one way or another, so it's no surprise that White's first move has to be 1.Bh1 zugzwang. As soon as Black moves the f3 rook White is poised to play 2.Bd5, and it seems that this leads irresistibly to Qxc4 mate. However, Black has a resource that arises from his best move, 1...Rf8. The point of this move is that now if White goes ahead as planned with 2.Bd5, Black can stymie him with 2...Ra8+!, when capture of the desperado rook (whether by the white bishop or white king) is stalemate.

This is the point at which a leap of imagination is required, in order to find 2.Ba8!! – another waiting move, another zugzwang, this time of a much more subtle nature, the point being that now the threat of 2...Ra8+ is nullified; 2...Ra8 would capture the bishop, and after 3.Kxa8 Black would have the move 3...Ke4, after which 4.Nf2 is mate.

Black is left with inadequate alternatives. If he moves the rook elsewhere on the eighth rank, White has 3.Be4+ Kxe4 4.Nf2; while if he continues to guard f2 and moves the rook to a square on the f-file it goes back to being the case that 3.Bd5 is unanswerable. The one other possibility is 2...Rf4, which would delay mate if White played 3.Bd5 but instead White has 3.exf4 Kxd4 4.Qd5.

If you enjoyed that problem, you may also enjoy the one which I leave for you to solve –



Mate in 4

Alexander W. Galitski

Schachmatnoje obosrenie 1892

I'll only say that the key is not 1.e8=Q. It would be a very inferior problem if that were the key; but why does 1.e8=Q fail? I'll give the solution next time.

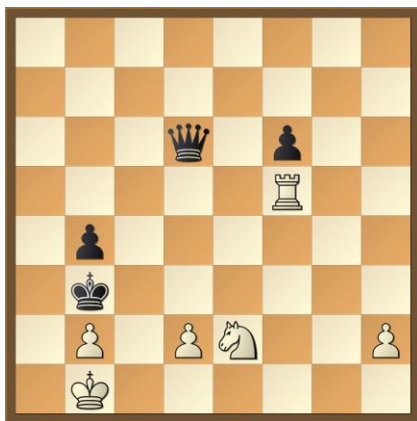
As ever, if you have any queries or comments don't hesitate to email me.

Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Chasing a Queen



White to play

Queens are monsters in over-the-board endgames. The board being largely empty, they can readily range everywhere. So, endgame study composers enjoy creating positions where the queen gets chased and conquered by the lesser pieces.

Here's such a study, by Richard Guy. It was published in the *British Chess Magazine* in 1943 – the magazine kept going through the Second World

War. I wonder whether the Ukrainian chess publishers will do so now. I hope they can. Richard Guy not only survived the war, but he also lived on until two years ago, dying in March 2020 at the splendid age of 103. He was a professor of mathematics and he continued working even beyond the age of 100. He was the endgame studies editor of *British Chess Magazine* from 1947 to 1951. I'm hoping that's what gave him his longevity because I hold that position now.

How to approach solving this study? When there's a queen on an open board in a study, there's a fair chance that the solution may involve checks. Composers prefer quiet moves, but in this type of position that's hard to achieve. So the method is the same as in an OTB position; look first at the forcing lines, particularly checking sequences.

First assess what's going on. Black's king is in a net and is almost trapped. Given the move, Black's queen will do damage. Checks are probably needed. The white rook is well placed where it is, but the knight isn't active, so the obvious check to try is Nc1+. Now 1...Kd4 gets mated after b3+, so we have 1.Nc1+ Kc4. Next, 2.d3+ gives the black king a route out of the net via d4 and e3, so 2.b3+ is likely to be right, and we get 2.b3+ Kd4. Now what? Well, you can expect that there will be knight forks, and with that thought you realise that rook sacrifices may set up the forks. Now you're almost there, as it occurs to you that Rd5+ will work when the king is on d3 and the knight can get to f4. The rest is just a matter of fiddling around with the choice of checking sequences.

The composer's full solution is **1.Nc1+ Kc4 2.b3+ Kd4 3.Ne2+ Ke4 4.Ng3+ Kd4 5.Rf4+ Ke5 6.Re4+ Kd5 7.Rd4+ Kxd4 8.Nf5+ Ke5 9.Nxd6 Kxd6 10.h4** and wins.

The sidelines are -

3...Kd3 4.Rd5+ Qxd5 5.Nf4+ Ke4 6.Nxd5 Kxd5 7.h4 4...Kd3 5.Rf3+ Kxd2 6.Ne4+ or 5...Kd4 6.Nf5+ 5...Kd5 6.Rd4+ Kxd4 7.Nf5+.

Except... what about if Black *voluntarily* surrenders his queen? When I submitted this column, our eagle-eyed editor spotted the move 4...Qxg3. I had looked at that when checking the study, and seen that 5.hxg3 Kxf5 6.Kc2 Kg4 7.d4 wins for White. I hadn't noticed that Black has the move 6...Ke4. Black doesn't go for material equality; instead he

keeps the white king boxed in. White can't make progress. So the study is unsound; Black can draw. At least, I think so, and so does my software when confronted with the position after 4...Qxg3 instead of the initial position.

Many old studies, from the pre-computer era, are unsound. Some modern composers like to find such studies and then find ways to correct them. It looks as if this one should be correctable, so perhaps a reader would like to do so?

Your solving task is a newly composed study by our regular contributor Paul Michelet. This one has passed both the human and computer testing. The solution isn't long, but there's a viciously tempting try. You have been warned!



White to play and draw

How to Solve a Study – solution

First, the tempting try:

It looks as if White can even win, and easily, by discovered check. 1.Rb1? fails, however, in spite of its mate threat. 1...Qa2 2.Bc2+ Qxb1 3.Bxb1 c4 wins for Black. The white king is tied down because it has to prevent the Black g-pawn marching to promotion. Also, the white bishop doesn't have time to capture the black d-pawn and defend against the black c-pawn, so Black can march his king across to support his c-pawn. (That's why Black has to play 3...c4; if he plays 3...Kf1? White does have the time, and wins by 4.Bd3+ Ke1 5.Bb5 etc.)

So, instead the solution is:

1.Bb3 c4 2.Bxc4 Qxc4 3.Rb1+ Qf1 4.Rc1 Qxc1 stalemate. From the diagram, it's not too hard to see as far as 3...Qf1, but it takes a leap of imagination to see 4.Rc1. Seasoned solvers *might* have noticed how boxed in the white king is, and suspected an eventual stalemate.

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Events Calendar

Mar 19 YJCA Grand Prix Event 3
Mar 19 Poplar Rapid Tournament
Mar 19 EPSCA Under 11 Zones
Mar 20 World 20/20 Chess Championships
Mar 20 30th Birmingham Rapidplay
Mar 22 4NCL Online League Season 5
Mar 23 Coulsdon Daytime Chess
Mar 25 2nd Ribble FIDE Congress
Mar 26 4NCL Weekend 4 Rounds 7-8
Mar 26 Merseyside Junior Rapidplay
Mar 26 Mill Hill FIDE Congress
Mar 26 EPSCA Under 11 Girls Final
Mar 27 Colindale Chess Tournament
Mar 29 Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
Mar 30 Coulsdon Daytime Chess
Mar 30 8th Jurassic Blitz Chess Tournament
Mar 31 Junior 4NCL Online League Season 5
Mar 31 Mind Sports Centre FIDE Blitz
Apr 2 3rd Bristol League Open Blitz Championship
Apr 3 World 20/20 Chess Championships
Apr 3 Hampshire Open Junior Blitz
Apr 5 4NCL Online League Season 5
Apr 6 Coulsdon Daytime Chess
Apr 7 ECF Women's Norm Event 2022
Apr 8 Harrow Megafinal
Apr 9 Junior 4NCL Weekend 3
Apr 9 The Great Yarmouth Chess Congress
Apr 9 Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
Apr 9 Caplin Hastings Online GM/IM Tournament
Apr 10 Bourne End One Day Congress
Apr 10 Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Spring
Apr 10 Burgh House FIDE Rapid
Apr 12 Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
Apr 13 Coulsdon Daytime Chess
Apr 14 2nd Southend FIDE Rapid
Apr 14 Junior 4NCL Online League Season 5
Apr 15 Coulsdon Chess Easter Congress
Apr 15 64th Southend Easter Congress
Apr 15 Bolton Easter 2022
Apr 15 2nd 4NCL Easter Congress
Apr 18 Coulsdon Chess Rapidplay
Apr 18 Cheney Rapidplays 12
Apr 19 4NCL Online League Season 5
Apr 21 Hendon FIDE Blitz
Apr 22 Central London Chess Congress
Apr 23 County Championship Final Stage – Preliminary Quarter Finals Qualifiers
Apr 23 1st Warwickshire Junior Team League
Apr 23 38th St.Albans Congress
Apr 23 3rd EJCOA Weekend Masterclass
Apr 23 45th Nottingham Congress
Apr 23 EPSCA Under 9 Final
Apr 24 Colindale Chess Tournament
Apr 29 2nd Cornwall Spring Congress
Apr 29 Sligo Spring Chess Tournament
Apr 30 4NCL Weekend 5 Rounds 9-11
Apr 30 Surrey Megafinal Under 9s
Apr 30 Poplar Rapid Tournament

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