



The Chessable English Championships Special

Extensive report with annotations by
Lan Yao, Keith Arkell, Adam Ashton and Shreyas Royal

Plus ... Mark Rivlin interviews English Women's Champion Lan Yao; Part Two of Peter Wells's insightful essay on Yuri Averbakh 1922-2022; Michael Adams and Paul Littlewood analyse games by English junior Zoe Veselow; Littlewood's Choice, Arkell's Endings, Ben Graff, Christopher Jones, Ian Watson ... and a whole lot more!



The Chessable British Chess Championships

When: 8 to 21 August

Where: The Riviera International Centre in Torquay

There's something for everyone: the Championship, Major Open, 50 Plus, 65 Plus and Junior Championships, Weekday Congresses, and Rapidplay, Junior Rapidplay and Blitz tournaments. We will also have commentary from the Championship, live boards, coaching and other activities. Torquay and the wider locality also have a wide range of activities to cater for all interests.

All the details and entry form at <https://bit.ly/britishchamps>

Events and prizes include -

[Chessable British Championship](#) (13 - 21 August)

1st £5,000; 2nd £2,500; 3rd £1,500; 4th £1,000; 5th £1,000; 6th £750

Top placed female players - 1st £1,000; 2nd £500; **top placed Under 21** - 1st £500; 2nd £250

Championship rating prizes - 2201-2350 £300; 2051-2200 £300; 2050 and under £200

[Chessable Major Open](#) 13-21 August - 1st £750; 2nd £400; 3rd £250

[Chessable 50+ and 65+ Champs](#) 8-14 and 15-21 August - 1st £400; 2nd £200; 3rd £100

[Chessable Junior Champs](#) U16/14/12/10/8 - 8-12 August – each event 1st £240; 2nd £120; 3rd £60

[Chessable Weekenders Atkins, Soanes, Yates](#) - 12-14 August - each section 1st £200; 2nd £100; 3rd £50

[Chessable Week 1 and Week 2 Weekday Congresses](#) - 8-12 and 14-20 August – each section 1st £240; 2nd £160; 3rd £80; 4th £50

... and a whole lot more! The full prize list for all events is at <https://bit.ly/britishprizes>

Title Sponsorship

We would like to thank our title sponsors Chessable for their generous support for the Championships as a primary learning partner of the ECF.



[Study Chess Openings](#)

Also supporting this great event are The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust and the Chess Trust.



EDITORIAL



This month, we feature a special section devoted to the **Chessable English Championships**.

Many congratulations to the winners GM Mark Hebden and WIM Lan Yao.

Mark picks up not just a £2,000 first prize but also the English Championship title. Leonard Barden has put his win in a record-breaking context in his FT column at <https://www.ft.com/content/ea5beb4a-34bf-45ba-a5b7-855398a25f04>

The **World Senior Teams Chess Championships 2022** had just started as we went to press and it was good to see that the very strong English line-up included our first team of Emms, Adams, Arkell, Short and the newly crowned English champion Hebden as the highest average rating team in the 50+ category.

After a cover story last month praising the success of our juniors, it's nice to see the English seniors prominent in this issue.

Following on from the recent women's norm events it is a delight to see the **Caplin Menchik Memorial** happening.

The ECF are very grateful to Chessable and Caplin for their sponsorship. Their generosity is vital in helping English chess to thrive.

On that note, don't forget that the **Chessable British Chess Championships** start soon. Join the fun now at <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

What's more, the Grand Prix Returns! It starts in July following a three year break for the pandemic. This year's **Chessable ECF Grand Prix** will be based on results from all ECF rated open congresses during the period July 2022 to June 2023 with prizes awarded for best performance by ECF members across a range of different player categories. More details in our Grand Prix article at <https://bit.ly/ecfgrandprix>

Finally, a couple of ECF matters.

Given the popularity of **ChessMoves** we are planning to offer a **print version** as an option for ECF members. Please take a second (the form is very short!) to let us know if you would be interested by completing the form at <https://bit.ly/cmovesprint>

Don't miss out! The deadline for nominations for the **ECF Awards** is fast approaching (8 July). For details of all the categories and how to apply, please visit <https://bit.ly/ecfawards2022>

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CONTENTS

COVER STORY

[The Chessable English Chess Championships Special](#) – Nigel Towers, with analysis by Keith Arkell, Adam Ashton, Shreyas Royal and Lan Yao 6

[Mark Rivlin Interviews WIM Lan Yao](#) 19

FEATURES

[Game of the Month - Michael Adams](#) 23

[Reflections on Yuri Averbakh Part 2 - Peter Wells](#) 26

[Arkell's Endings - Keith Arkell](#) 28

[Book Reviews of the Month - Ben Graff](#) 32

AROUND THE COUNTRY

[The Chessable ECF Grand Prix](#) 36

[Frome Chess Congress Returns! - Chris Lamming](#) 36

[Yorkshire Chess – Steve Westmoreland](#) 38

[The English Counties Championships - Nigel Towers and Mark Murrell](#) 40

[Maksym's Progress – Paul Townsend](#) 42

[ChessFest is Back](#) 42

[The Caplin Menchik Memorial](#) 43

[ECF Online - Nigel Towers and Peter Hornsby](#) 44

[News and Views](#) 46

[The Winton British Chess Solving Championship 2022-23](#) 48

[Gems from the Library – Gerry Walsh](#) 48

[Tweet of the Month](#) 49

JUNIOR MOVES

[Littlewood's Choice - Paul Littlewood](#) 50

[Junior Chess Coaching in England – Rob Willmoth](#) 50

[West London Chess Academy - Roger Lancaster](#) 51

IMPROVERS

[Tactics - Paul Littlewood](#) 52

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

[Problem Corner - Christopher Jones](#) 53

[How to Solve a Study - Ian Watson](#) 54

HOLD THE BACK PAGE

[Calendar](#) 57

COVER STORY – THE CHESSABLE ENGLISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 19-22 May

Nigel Towers, ECF Director of Home Chess, reports on the Chessable English and English Women's Championships

chessable



The Chessable series of events continued with the Chessable English and English Women's Championships in May following on from the English Seniors earlier in the month in Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

The Championships saw top level players from across England competing for the titles of English and English Women's Champion.

The event was controlled by the highly able arbiting team of Chief Arbiter IA Adrian Elwin and National Arbiters Jo Wildman and Richard Buxton. We were also joined by our sponsor Chessable's Events and Brand Manager Irina Lomperi who provided great support and help with the event as ever.

The **English Open Championships** were the first English Championships since Duncan Lawrie sponsored the first and previously only English Chess Championship competition in December 1991 in Hammersmith.

The event was ECF and FIDE rated with a total of seven rounds over the five days.

Full results and standings can be found at <https://chess-results.com/tnr638674.aspx>



GMs Arkell and Hebden meet at the board again!

GM Mark Hebden led the event throughout with 5.5 out of 6 going into the final round where he was once again drawn against long-time opponent GM Keith Arkell. The players agreed a draw which meant that Mark finished on 6 out of 7 to take the English Championship for 2022.

Final standings are shown in the table below.

English Championship		
1st English Champion	GM Mark Hebden	6
2nd	IM James Jackson	5.5
3rd	IM Peter Roberson	5
4th=	GM Keith Arkell	4.5
4th=	IM Marcus Harvey	4.5
4th=	FM Adam Ashton	4.5
4th=	Oskar Hackner	4.5
U18	FM Shreyas Royal	4



ECF Home Director Nigel Towers presents the English trophy to winner GM Mark Hebden

The **English Women's Championship** was the next in the series of highly successful events from the first event in 2016 to the previous championships in 2019 in Hull which was won by WGM Katarzyna Toma and Louise Head.

Full results from 2019 can be found at <https://chess-results.com/tnr638675.aspx>
Alaa Gamal put in a great performance to lead the field with five out of six points going into the final round. Elis Dicen won her final round game against Alaa Gamal, and WIM Lan Yao won her game against Sarah Sengenberger, and so Lan Yao took the lead for the first time in the event to win the English Women's Championship for 2022.



ECF Women's Chess Director Aga Milewska presenting the English Women's trophy to WIM Lan Yao

English Women's Championship		
1st English Women's Champion	WIM Lan Yao	6
2nd	Alaa Gamal	5.5
3rd=	Nina Pert	4.5
3rd=	Mae Catabay	4.5
U18 (excluding those placed above)	Elis Dicen	4

ECF Membership

We have kept the membership prices the same for 2022/23, as below ---

Supporter - £10

Queen's Gambit Scheme Supporter - free

Bronze - £18.00 | Junior Bronze - £6.00

Silver - £27.00 | Junior Silver - £6.00
(free for brand-new members in the first year)

Gold - £39.00 | Junior Gold - £19.50

Platinum - £75.00

To find out more about the range of benefits and to join online ---

Rates - <https://bit.ly/ecfmember>

Benefits - <https://bit.ly/ecfbenefits>

CHAMPIONSHIP COLLECTION

A collection of annotated games from the English Championships with annotations by GM Keith Arkell, FM Adam Ashton, FM Shreyas Royal and WIM Lan Yao

Chessable English Championship Round 4 - Hebden v Derakhshani

GM Keith Arkell provides his thoughts on the championships including an annotated round 4 game between **GM Mark Hebden** and **FM Borna Derakhshani**

Entrenched GMs such as Mark Hebden and myself are facing a particularly fearsome bombardment



from all sides as a wave of young talent rises up through the ranks.

GM Mark Hebden (left) and GM Keith Arkell (right)

Freddie Gordon announced his arrival with some fine games at the 2021 British Online Championship, Shreyas Royal, still only 13, has rapidly progressed to IM strength, and Ravi Haria took off in the last few years to complete his GM title. Furthermore, our youngsters have done extremely well abroad recently, and when you add to that all the twenty-somethings on their way up, British chess is looking quite healthy these days.

Anyway, on to the Championship. Two weeks earlier Mark Hebden and I had locked horns at the Holiday Inn Kenilworth for the English Senior Championship, and with the town centre situated conveniently close we were delighted to return. The two players who impressed me most were Jacob

Boswell and again Shreyas, both scoring well against strong opposition. Jacob is already past twenty years old but is one of many who have played extensively online during lockdown (I've played him myself over 150 times!) and will soon be rated far higher than his current 2075.

After escaping from a completely lost position against Jacob in round one, Mark Hebden went on an impressive five game winning streak before we were paired together on top board in the last round, for the umpteenth time. One solid draw later and Mark emerged as the new English Champion to add to his Senior title. Not bad when you think that he is now in his 65th year on planet Earth! Congratulations also to IM James Jackson who finished second and Peter Roberson who finished third. As for me, my May results (13.5/17) suggest that I'm back to full strength after what was almost certainly a very protracted long Covid episode. I'm thinking quickly and clearly again, and even my sense of smell is returning after an absence of two years!

Here is Mark's round 4 game against another relatively young player on the up.

GM Mark Hebden – FM Borna Derakhshani -
Chessable English Championship 2022, 20.05.2022



Photo of Borna Derakhshani – John Upham Photography

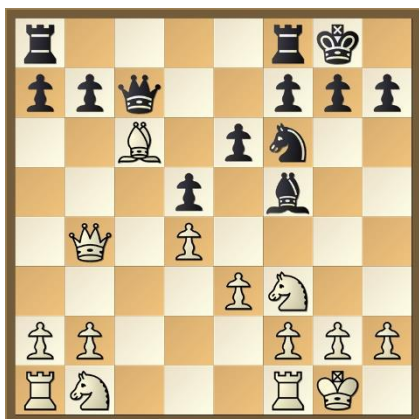
**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.cxd5 cxd5
6.Qb3 Qc7 7.Bd2 e6 8.Bb5+ Nc6 9.0-0 Bd6**



10.Bb4

Hebden has been using this system against the Slav for donkey's years, including twice against me in a six-game match we played in 1996. He is looking for a very small edge based on control of the black squares and sometimes pressure against a backward pawn on c6. In this game he demonstrates how the f5 bishop can end up as a bystander.

10...0-0 11.Bxc6 Bxb4 12.Qxb4



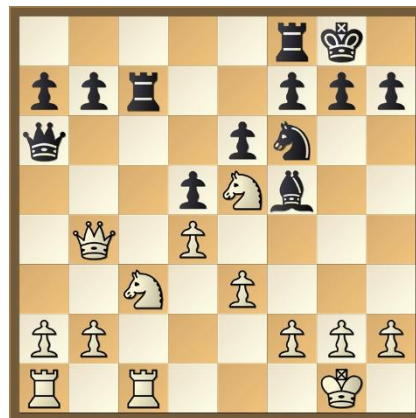
12...Qxc6 I would probably choose 12...bxc6 here, with some counterplay on the b-file, but both recaptures are fine for Black.

13.Ne5 Qa6 14.Nc3



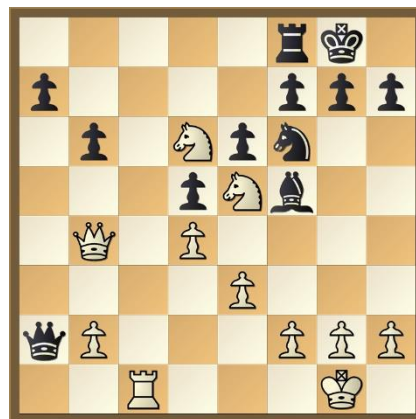
14...Rac8 My hand would want to play 14...Rfc8 here, as all the play is likely to be on that side of the board. **14...Ng4** to remove White's most active piece is also fine.

15.Rfc1 Rc7?!



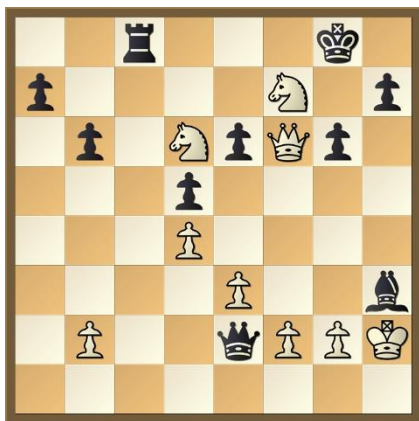
This doesn't look right, and Mark exploits it with a nice pawn sacrifice for an initiative which persists for the rest of the game. **15...Ng4** is still okay for Black, although Hebden will probably claim a small edge as he has the better minor piece.

16.Nb5! Rxc1+ 17.Rxc1 Qxa2 18.Nd6 b6



19.Nc8 I can see why this move was tempting as Ne7+ followed by N7g6+ is a big threat, but the simple 19 Ndx7 was probably stronger still.

19...g6 This looks ugly and indeed loses by force. Derakhshani could have prolonged the struggle with 19...h6! exploiting White's weak back rank after 20 Ne7+ Kh7 21 Nxf5 Rc8! When your position is on the ropes you have to keep a lookout for such resources! After 20 h3 Qa5 just about keeps Black in the game, but now Mark finishes matters with panache: **20.h3 Kg7 21.Kh2 Qa6 22.Qe7 Qe2 23.Nd6 Bxh3 24.Rc8 Rxc8 25.Qxf7+ Kh8 26.Qxf6+ Kg8 27.Nef7**



1-0

Chessable English Championship Round 7 - Willow v Ashton

FM Adam Ashton had a good tournament, finishing 4= on 4.5 out of 7. Here Adam provides commentary on his game against Jonah Willow

Willow, Jonah (2401) - Ashton, A. (2366) [A13]
Chessable English Championship 2022, 20.05.2022

Black against Jonah is an extremely tough pairing these days. However, having endured a slightly frustrating tournament where I felt I was playing well but not taking full advantage, it was also a chance to finish on a high note.

1.Nf3 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.b3 c5



Jonah had presumably seen my previous, less than convincing, response to this line. 4...Be7 5.Bb2 0-0 6.Nc3 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Nxd5 Qxd5 (8...exd5) 9.Bc4 Qd8 10.Qc2 Nc6 11.h4 f5 12.Ng5 Nb4 13.Qd1 Qe8? 14.a3 b5 15.Be2 Nd5 16.a4 (16.Bxb5!) 16...bxa4 17.Rxa4 h6 18.Nf3 Bd7 19.Ra5 Nb4 20.Bc4 Qd8 21.Ra1 Qb6 22.0-0 Bb5 23.Qe2 a6 24.d4 Rac8 25.Bxb5 axb5? (25...Qxb5!) 26.Ne5 Rfd8?? (26...Qb7 27.Ng6 Rfe8 White is much better but the game continues.) 27.Qh5 Bf6 28.Qf7+ Kh7 29.Nd7 Rxd7

30.Qxd7 Rd8 31.Qf7 cxd4 32.Ra7 e5 33.exd4 exd4 34.Re1 Rf8 35.Qxf8 Qxa7 36.Qxb4 1-0 (36) Virtanen, A (2262) - Ashton, A (2359) ECC 2018.

5.Bb2 Nc6 6.cxd5

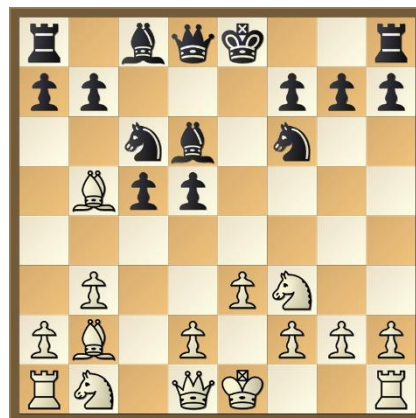


6...exd5! Note that the dark-squared bishop can come straight to d6. The position would be considerably less dynamic with the bishop on e7, which is why I now prefer the 4...c5 move order.

6...Nxd5 is of course playable but White has some interesting attacking schemes with a later Qc2, h4 as in the above game. My play there could no doubt be improved but, in any case, I consider the game continuation to be a fairly favourable IQP position.

7.Bb5 After the obvious 7.d4? cxd4 8.Nxd4 Bb4+ is slightly awkward, a downside to the early fianchetto. 9.Bc3 a5=; 7.Be2 d4!

7...Bd6



8.0-0 After 8.d4 cxd4 9.Nxd4 I was intending to stay active with 9...0-0! which gives an unbalanced but roughly level position. (9...Bd7 is OK but gives White the kind of edge they are looking for in these positions.)

8...0-0 9.d4 cxd4



10.Bxc6?! Very ambitious. White wants to play against the hanging pawns, but Black's activity should not be under-estimated.

I expected 10.Nxd4 Bc7, which I imagine is reasonably balanced..

10...bxc6 11.Qxd4 If allowed time to play Nc3, Rc1/d1 etc White will pressure the hanging pawns and be better. Black should therefore play actively.

11...c5 12.Qd3 Re8 13.Nc3 Bg4



13...Bb7!?

14.Rfd1

A brave decision, but obviously risky.

After the more normal 14.Nd2 I think I had planned 14...Bc7?! (14...Bh5!?!; 14...Rc8!?) but here 15.Nb5 is not so clear.

14...Bxf3 15.gxf3 d4!

Not sure if Jonah had missed or just under-estimated this move but I think it more or less refutes White's play.

16.Nb5 Bb8



This rather commits to all-out attack and even introduces some back rank tricks for White in some lines, but the bishop is a strong attacking piece, so it is justified.

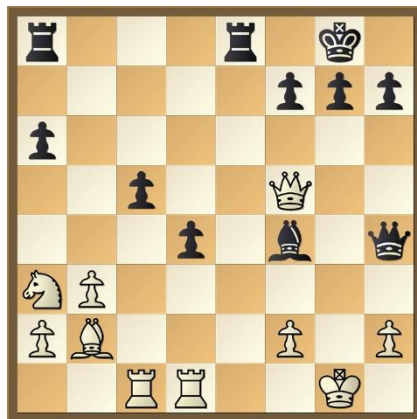
16...Nd5!? was a calmer alternative; exd4 will always allow a knight to f4 so White's position is difficult to play.

17.Rac1 a6 18.Na3 Nd5 With the queen arriving on h4 Black's attack takes on serious proportions.

19.f4 19.Rxc5 Qg5+ 20.Kf1 Nxe3+-+

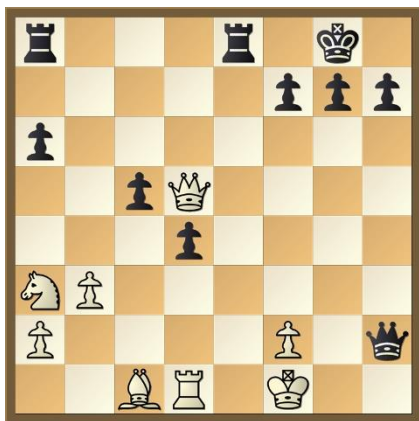
19...Qh4 20.Qf5 Nxf4 20...dxe3! also wins.

21.exf4 Bxf4



22.Qd5! My opponent does well to keep the game alive here and for the next few moves. The frustration of not being able to find a killing blow also led me to use up all my time...

22...Qxh2+ 23.Kf1 Bxc1 24.Bxc1

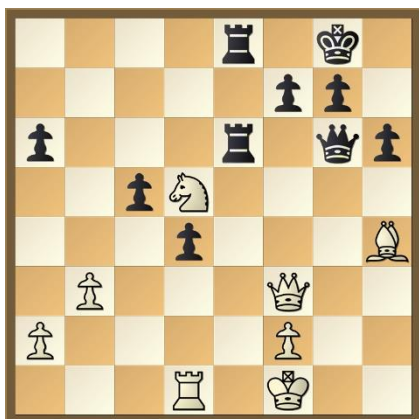


24...Rad8 24...Qh3+! would have done it as after 25.Qg2 there is no good answer to 25...Qh5.

25.Qf3 Qe5 25...Re6

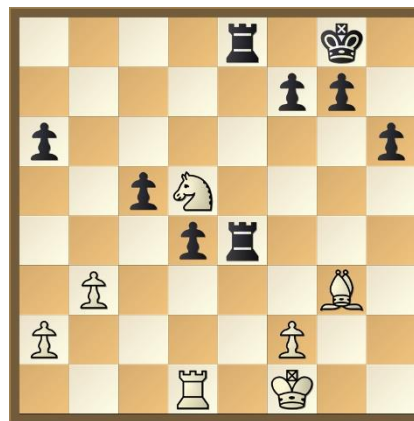
26.Nc4 White has regained some co-ordination and now the task is not quite so simple, though Black should be winning. Unfortunately, I drift quite badly in the time scramble whilst my opponent resists very well.

26...Qe6 27.Bd2 Qg6 28.Ba5 Rc8 29.Nb6 Rc6 30.Nd5 h6 31.Bd8 Rce6 32.Bh4



32...Qe4? 32...Re4 33.Bg3 Qc6-- surprisingly cuts off the knight.

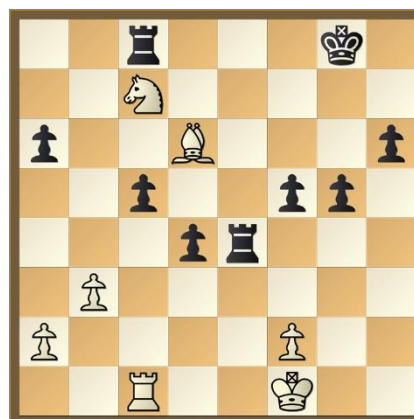
33.Qxe4 Rxe4 34.Bg3



34...f5? The computer evaluation suddenly plummets to 0.00 though both of us were in severe time trouble at this point.

35.Nc7 35.f3! and the rook surprisingly doesn't have a good square. 35...Re2 36.Nc7

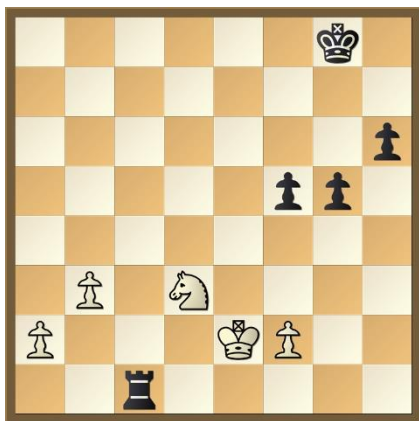
35...Rc8 36.Bd6 g5 37.Rc1



37.f3! is again awkward!

37...d3! To my great relief the pawn deflects White's counterplay and now Black is winning again without too much trouble.

38.Rd1 Rd4 39.Be5 Rd7 40.Nxa6 c4 41.Nb4 c3 42.Rxd3 c2 43.Bb2 c1Q+ 44.Bxc1 Rxc1+ 45.Ke2 Rxd3 46.Nxd3



Somehow getting over the line against strong opponents is never quite as simple as it should be.

0-1

Chessable English Championships Round 4 – Wells v Royal

FM Shreyas Royal put in a strong performance to finish as the top-placed under 18 player on 4 out of 7 amongst top-level competition in the English Championships. Here Shreyas takes us through his round 4 game against GM Peter Wells.

Shreyas plays a sharp line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted, looking for a dynamic position. Peter picks up a pawn and the bishop pair but gives up the d5 square for Shreyas's knight. Peter misses a tactic in time trouble which allows Shreyas to simplify into a slightly better position for Black leading to a rook and opposite-coloured bishop endgame with Shreyas a pawn up.

FM Shreyas Royal writes ...
Wells, Peter (2374) - Royal, Shreyas (2385)
[D24]

Chessable English Championship 2022, 20.05.2022



FM Shreyas Royal

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 dxc4 4...Be7 5.Bf4 - he was expecting this line, I suppose, since he shied away from his experienced Catalan to play this instead.

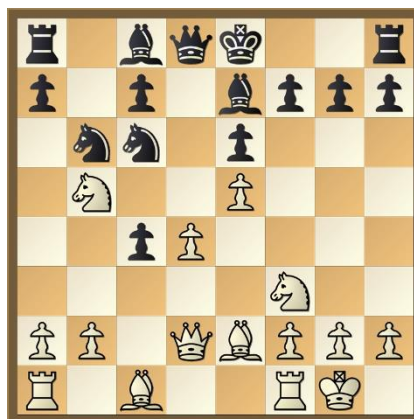
5.e4 b5!?



A very sharp and trendy line nowadays. I was not able to remember the theory very well, but at least I had avoided preparation and had got into a dynamic position.

6.e5 Nd5 7.Nxb5 Nb6 The idea for Black is to get very good control over the weak light squares with moves like Nc6-b4 Bb7 Qd7-Rd8 and also to attack his d4 pawn if possible, but since my best defensive piece (my knight) is on the other side of the board White has promising attacking prospects on the kingside.

8.Be2 Nc6 9.0-0 Be7 10.Qd2!?



The most popular move with the clever idea of Qf4 before the bishop can get to e4, restricting the queen and making it almost impossible to castle on the kingside for Black.

10...Ba6 I had a long think here formulating a plan, mainly trying to castle queenside.

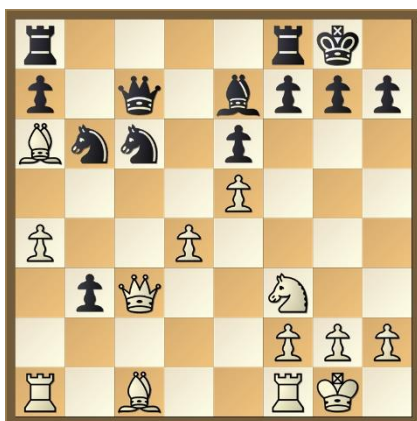
10...0-0 Nepomniatchi has played some good games in this line, and I also suspect it's the best line to deal with this: 11.Qf4 Rb8 12.Qg3 Kh8 13.Rd1 Nb4 14.Nc3 Bb7 15.Rb1 N4d5 16.Bd2 Nxc3 17.Bxc3 Bd5 18.b3 Be4 19.Ra1 Nd5 20.Be1 c3 21.Bd3 Bxd3 22.Rxd3 Ba3 23.Bxc3 Nxc3 24.Rxc3 Bb2 25.Rac1 c5 26.Rxc5 Bxc1 27.Rxc1 Qa5 28.h4 Qxa2 29.Qf4 Qxb3 30.Ng5 h6 31.Ne4 Rbc8 32.Re1 Qb4 33.Rd1 Rcd8 34.Qe3 a5 35.g4 a4 36.g5 h5 37.Nf6 g6 38.Kh2 Qb3 39.Rd3 Qc2 40.Rc3 Qf5 41.Ra3 Ra8 42.d5 exd5 43.Qd4 Qe6 44.f4 Rfc8 45.f5 Qxf5 46.Nxd5 Qe6 0-1 (46) Goganov,A (2594)-Nepomniachtchi,I (2784) Moscow 2020.

11.a4 Qd7 12.b3!?



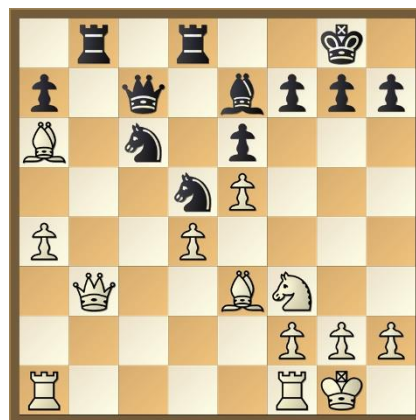
With the idea of winning a pawn relatively quickly (however, I have decent compensation) and you can argue the advantage of the two bishops, but I suspect it was not that useful especially when I managed to establish a monster knight on d5 later in the game, with no opposing knight to contest it with!

12...cxb3 13.Nxc7+ Qxc7 14.Bxa6 0-0 15.Qc3



15...Rfd8?! 15...Nd5! 16.Qxb3 Rab8 17.Qc4 Qb6= was the best way to continue. I had a similar alternative but not as effective.

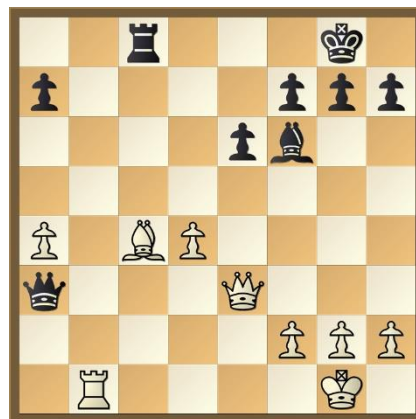
16.Be3 Nd5 17.Qxb3 Rab8



18.Qc2? White was already down to around fifteen minutes and missed a tactic which gives me a pretty risk-free better position, and now he regrets having the two bishops.

18.Qc4 Qb6 19.Bb5 is not as good as a version with the bishop on c1, with White having less time to coordinate his pieces.

18...Nxe5! 19.Qe4 Nxf3+ 20.Qxf3 Bf6 21.Rfc1 Qb6 22.Bf1 Qd6 23.Rab1 Qa3 24.Rxb8 Rxb8 25.Bc4 Rc8 26.Rb1 Nxe3 27.Qxe3



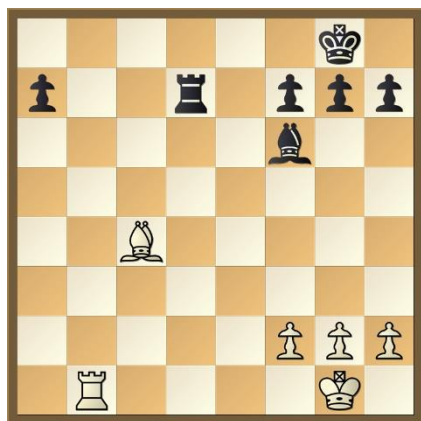
Qxa4 27...Qd6 is a very accurate engine move! The idea is that the e6 pawn is better than the a4 pawn since it has centre potential, and also it protects my king in the sense that f7 is not a huge tactical weakness.

28.Bxe6 White blitzed this out within one minute, mainly relying on instinct. I had of course also seen this, but really did not trust it because I thought there were so many forcing moves! Luckily for him, none of them seem to work for me.

28...Rd8! 28...Bxd4?! was one of my considerations, but after ... 29.Bxf7+ Kxf7 30.Rb7+ I am forced to play Kf6 or Kg6, with nothing more than a perpetual.

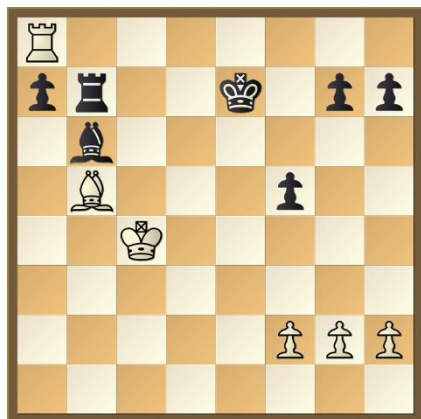
28...Qc2 29.Re1! Rc3 was the main resource I was banking on, but now I lose the game! 30.Bxf7+! is what I missed initially, with mate coming; 28...Re8 29.Bb3!

29.Bb3 Qxd4 30.Qf3 Qd3 31.Qxd3 Rxd3 32.Bc4 Rd7



Now of course this endgame is drawn with best play, but it's definitely not easy with under a minute on White's clock.

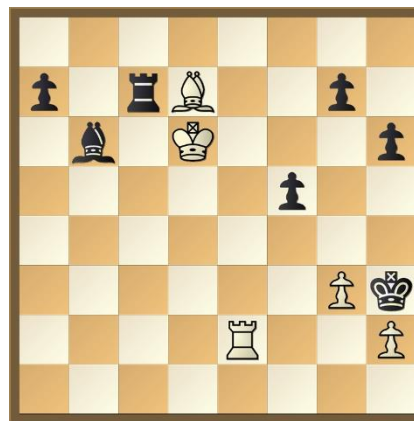
33.Rb8+ Bd8 34.Kf1 Kf8 35.Ke2 Ke7 36.Bb5 Rc7 37.Kd3 f5! 38.Ra8 Rb7 39.Kc4 Bb6



40.Bc6? This loses a pawn: 40.f3 was a better try.

40...Rc7 41.Kd5 Bxf2-- 42.Rh8 h6 43.Re8+ Kf6 44.Re6+ Kg5 45.g3 Kg4 46.Kd6 Bb6 47.Bd7 I had blitzed out everything until now, since he was low on time, but now I sensed a critical moment...

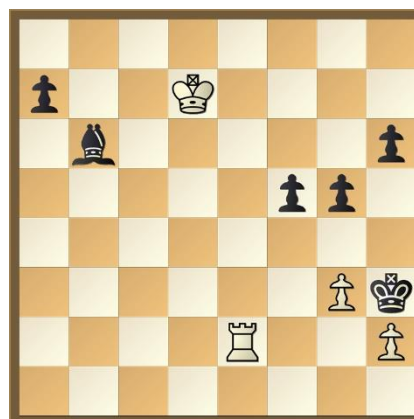
47...Kh3 48.Re2



Rxd7+!? I feel this deserves an exclamation mark; however, White draws with another engine line! But practically, he had no chance anyway with just one minute left, and I suspect even with fifteen.

48...Rc5-- would need some more technique.

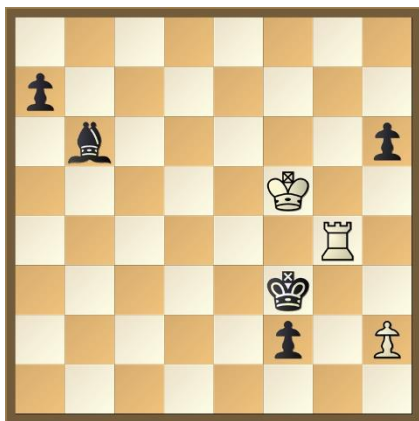
49.Kxd7 g5



50.Ke6? And White is lost.

50.Kc6!= with the idea of Re6! 50...Bg1 (50...f4 51.gxf4 gxf4 52.Re6 f3 53.Rxh6+ Kg2 54.Rf6 f2 55.h4 Bd4 56.Rf8 f1Q 57.Rxf1 Kxf1 58.h5 Ke2 59.h6 Kd3 60.Kb5 and he is in time for a draw) 51.Kd5 Bxh2 52.Ke5 Bxg3+ 53.Kxf5 g4 would be my best try, but once again it's a draw with best play.

50...f4 51.gxf4 gxf4 52.Re4 f3 53.Rf4 f2 54.Kf5 Kg2 55.Rg4+ Kf3



0-1

Chessable English Championship Round 4

English Women's Champion WIM Lan Yao walks us through her round 4 game against Nina Pert

Pert, Nina (1620) - Yao, Lan (2276) [B47]

Chessable English Women's Championship
20.05.2022

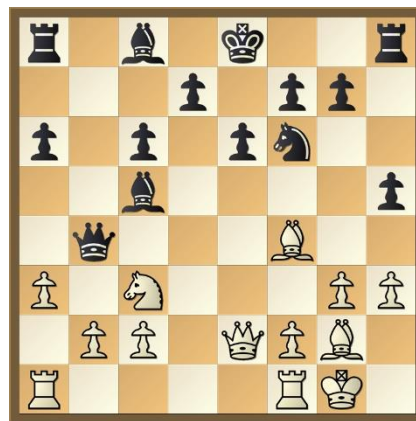
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Qc7
6.g3 a6 7.Bg2 Nf6 8.0-0 h5 9.h3 Bc5 10.Nxc6 bxc6
11.e5



White sacrifices a pawn to gain a tempo to develop pieces, but the position is closed, and it is hard for White to attack immediately. The theory is 11.Na4 Ba7 12.Bf4 e5 13.Bg5 d6.

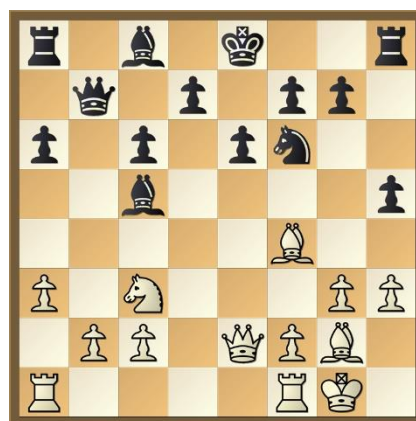
11...Qxe5 The queen looks in danger in the centre, but it can move to d4-b4-b7 to a safe place.

12.Bf4 Qd4 13.Qe2 Qb4 14.a3



14...Qxb2? Black should not risk taking the pawn because it will make White's pieces more active. 15.Na4 Qd4 16.c4 Be7 17.Rab1 Qa7 (17...0-0 18.Nb6 Ra7 19.Qc2! (19.Be3? Qe5=) 19...h4 20.Rfd1 Qc5 21.Be3 Qe5 22.Nxc8+-) 18.Nb6 +-

14...Qb7



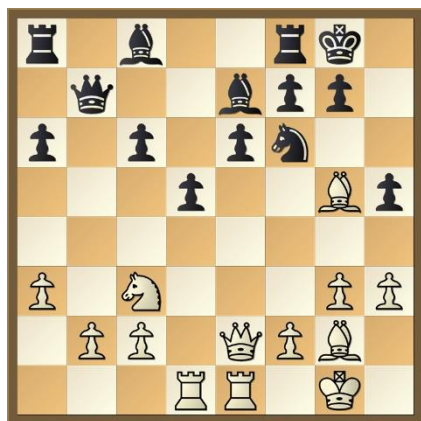
15.Rad1 The rook on d1 is almost useless. Instead it is better to play 15.b4 Be7 16.Na4 h4 (16...d5 17.Nc5 Qa7 18.c4) 17.c4 hxg3 18.fgx3 d5 19.Be5 when White is taking control of the queenside and it is hard for Black to develop pieces.

15...d5 16.Bg5



Attacking the f6 knight, but White will lose control of the h2-b8 diagonal. It will allow me to play Qc7 or Rb8 to make my pieces more active in the future. Still, White should try to attack on the queenside. 16.Na4 Be7 17.Qe3, preparing Nb6.

16...Be7 17.Rfe1 0-0



Black will win another pawn by playing 17...Qxb2 18.Rd3 (18.Na4 Qb5-+) 18...Qb6-+. But I was thinking that it was important to castle and develop my pieces first rather than taking the pawn.

18.b3 Qc7 Leaves the b7 square to the c8 bishop. 19.Bf4 Bd6 20.Bg5 Nh7 21.Qxh5 Nxg5 22.Qxg5 Bxa3-+

19.Qe3 Nh7



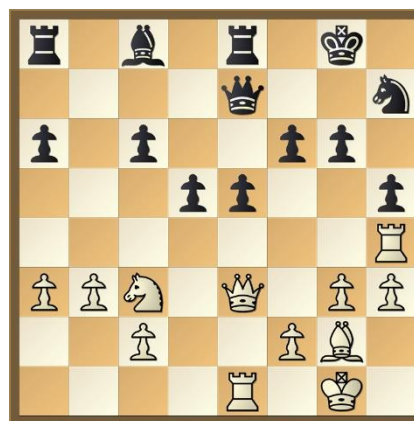
Trying to trade the powerful bishop and occupy the centre by pushing f6 and e5 in the future.

20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.Rd4 Re8 22.Rh4 g6



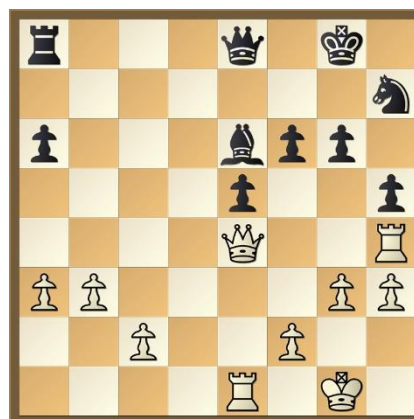
Leaves the f6 square to the f7 pawn rather than the knight. After 22...Nf6 23.Qe5 Black is still clearly better, but the e5 queen will become powerful and it is difficult for me to develop the rest of the pieces.

23.Qe5 f6 24.Qe3 e5



Now Black has a really powerful centre.

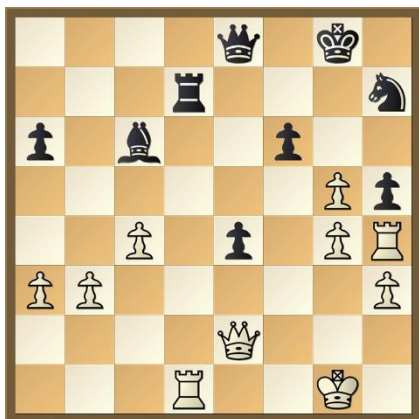
25.Nxd5 cxd5 26.Bxd5+ Be6 27.Bxa8 Rxa8 28.Qe4 Qe8



Material is almost equal, but White's rook on h4 is awkward, and Black is going to play Rd8-Bd5-Ng5. Black's knight and bishop will be too powerful for White to defend against.

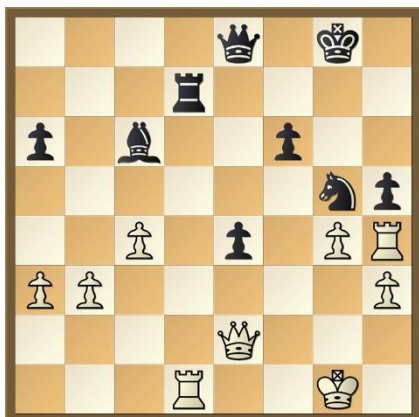
29.Qg2 Rd8 30.f4 Preventing Ng5.

30...Bd5 31.Qe2 e4 32.Rd1 Rd7 33.c4 Bc6 34.g4 g5 35.fxg5



35.Rxh5 gxf4 Still preparing Ng5, and the f4 and e4 pawns are too powerful.

35...Nxg5



Bringing the h7 knight out. Another good move is **34...Rxd1+ 35.Qxd1 e3** threatening Qe4.

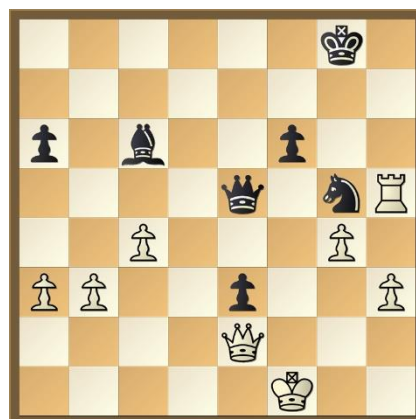
36.Rxh5 Qe5 37.Rxd7 Bxd7



38.Qe3 Nf3+ 39.Kf1 Qh2 40.Qf2 (40.Qc3 Qg1+ 41.Ke2 Nd4+ 42.Kd2 Qf2+ 43.Kc1 (43.Kd1 e3)

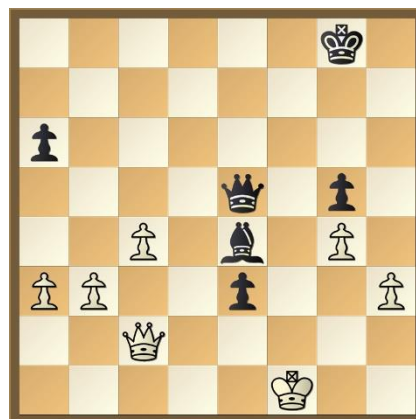
43...Ne2+) 40...Qh1+ 41.Ke2 Qc1 and White cannot prevent Ng1; 38.Qd1 Bc6 39.Qd8+ Kf7 and White no longer has any checks, while Black has multiple threats such as Nf3 and e3.

38.Kg2 e3 39.Kf1 Bc6

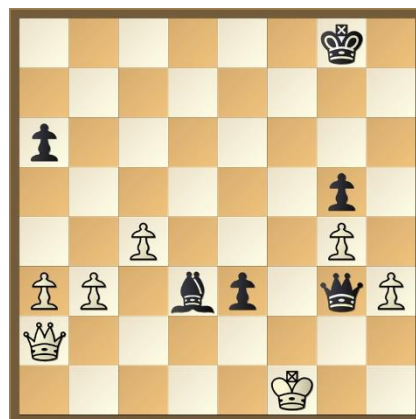


Threatening Qa1.

40.Rxg5+ fxg5 41.Qc2 Be4



42.Qa2 Qf4+ 43.Kg1 Qg3+ 44.Kf1 Bd3+



0-1

INTERVIEW WITH WIM LAN YAO by MARK RIVLIN



WIM Yan Lao recently won the 2022 Chessable English Women's Championship with an excellent 6/7. This was preceded by her victory at the English Women's Rapidplay at the London Chess Classic in December 2021. Combining chess with her studies at University College London (UCL), she is also a FIDE trainer and writes and broadcasts about the history of chess.

Tell us about your tournament victories.

I was excited when I won the English Women's Rapidplay. At that time I was really busy with my university studies and did not have much time for chess. Also, a lot of strong players such as Harriet Hunt participated in the tournament. At the Rapidplay, I focused on each of my own games without concern for other players' results and rankings. I took the lead on the first day and did not sleep well. On the second day I tried to play solidly, drawing the other three games, and still managed to win the tournament. At the Chessable English Women's Championship I lost in the second round but I adjusted my mental state and won the rest of the games.

Your quirky YouTube videos on the history of chess are fascinating; I particularly like the one on smoking during matches at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-Qpdzlh0Ew>

How do you come up with the topics you are covering?

Initially, I established a programme called *Mustachess* with Peter Kokol, in which I wrote about chess history on the WeChat channel in Chinese and English. Topics included chess-related fields such as chess psychology, culture and education. We also post these articles on mustachess.com. I do thorough research about chess history before writing these articles, including the origin and development of chess, personal stories and some controversial issues around world champions. These articles gradually became popular among Chinese chess lovers.

I then went on to make videos about these topics, presenting chess history in a more vivid style. I carefully selected clothes and hairstyles, adjusted the lighting, and sometimes used different accents and tones according to different topics to make my narrative more intriguing and at the same time instructive to the audience.

You have peaked at 2342 FIDE and your current rating is 2276. What are your chess ambitions for the next few years?

I hope to achieve the WGM title. Also, I hope to achieve more good results in big events such as the Olympiad and the European team and individual championships.

You are about to graduate from UCL. What are your future career plans outside of chess?

I will graduate from UCL with a Bachelor's degree this summer and will continue to take a Master's degree at UCL. I studied History for my Bachelor's degree and will major in History Education for the Master's. I have years of experience teaching History and other humanities subjects, so I am thinking about teaching History or other relevant subjects in secondary schools.

You are now playing under the England flag. Why did you decide to play for England, rather than your native China? And how was the transition from the Chinese Chess Association to the ECF?

I am studying in London, and I hope to work in England after graduation. Transferring to England will give me more chances to play in local tournaments. More importantly, the Chinese Chess Association values chess players who give up school and completely focus on chess. They do not support those who want to keep a balance between chess and academia. When I was 14, I won the Chinese National Youth Championship, ahead of a professional chess player who had completely given up school. One famous national team trainer told me that he was willing to offer me training. He said that it was impossible to play chess well while studying, and refused to teach me unless I gave up school.

During those years most coaches were not willing to work with me, and I hardly played in national tournaments while other professional players weaker than me were invited. In England it is different. Many strong players here attend top universities, and make great contributions in other fields besides chess.

I really like the chess culture and atmosphere in England. I have studied the history of chess in England and appreciate the educational ideas of Chess in Schools and Communities. Having played in several tournaments here, I have found that English chess players are friendly and willing to help each other.

My transition was really successful as the ECF was happy for me to represent England. The Chinese Chess Association had called me and said that I

should think carefully before making the decision, but they respected and enabled my decision.

How different is the approach to chess between China and England?

In China there is a clear distinction between those who want to become professional chess players and those who play as a hobby. Sometimes parents get anxious when seeing other children improving quickly, and hope that their children can spend more time on chess and improve faster. For professional chess players China has efficient training for quick improvement. These players often play one to three classical games a day, and trainers will immediately review their games. Before important events they receive closed training for months. A lot of Chinese chess players improve quickly, but the problem is that it can be too stressful, and chess becomes the only thing in their lives.

Staying in provincial or national teams and playing chess tournaments are their main source of income. Provincial or national teams provide them with monthly salaries, and will give them extra bonuses if they play well in significant tournaments. Also, some Chinese universities have the policy of admitting strong chess players. In England I do coaching, and see many players take chess as a lifelong hobby. Those who are more talented study more, and spend more time on training and playing tournaments. I feel that compared to China they feel less anxious, and enjoy the process of playing chess more. Also, they do not give up school to become professional chess players. In addition, unlike in China, English players usually do not play chess for a living or for the purpose of getting into good universities. But a potential negative side of this aspect is that some players may lose the motivation for playing chess and give up chess for other pursuits that have better financial returns.

Which players and coaches have had the most influence on your chess career?

Actually, quite a lot of players have had great influences on me, varying from world champions to English chess celebrities. I really admire those who play chess at a high level and also succeed in other areas. They show how chess can positively influence other aspects of life.

I have had a lot of coaches, but currently none of them have been able to stay with me for a long time. I am still waiting for a coach who can inspire my chess career.

What ideas do you have to improve women's chess in the UK?

I think many young female chess players in the UK are talented, but the main problem is that they lack motivation. Some of them give up chess when they attend secondary school because they lack support for playing in national or international tournaments, and unlike in the US and China, chess cannot help them to get into good universities. I think there should be more WIM and WGM norm events along with tournament bonuses for girls.

In addition, it would be great if good universities could have policies of admitting strong chess players, even if they may have slightly lower grades in exams. For stronger female players who regularly play for the national team, I think a good way to improve their level is to train with strong male players.

Please show us an analysed game that you particularly enjoyed.

The whole game is too long, so I will just show the most exciting part of it.

Smith, Olivia - Yao, Lan
ECF Women's Norm Event
Round 1



20...Rc8 21.a4 Rc6

Protecting the d6 pawn and planning to play b5 on the next move. Also good is 21...g5, preventing f4.

22.f4 Ng4 23.Red3 b5!?

Here I chose to take a risk and try to make my rooks more active.

24.axb5 axb5 25.R1d2

25.Nxb5 Rb8 26.Nxd6 (26.Rc3 Rxc3 27.Nxc3 Rxb2 28.Rd2 Ne3; 26.Rxd6 Rxc2 27.f5 Bb3 28.Rd7+ Kf6) 26...Rxc2 27.b3 g6 (27...Rxb3 28.Rxb3 Bxb3 29.Nf5+ Kf6 30.Rd6+ Be6=);

The best move is 25.Bf3! preparing f5. 25...Nf6 (25...Nh2 26.Be2 exf4 27.gxf4 b4 28.Nd5+ Bxd5 29.Rxd5 Rxc2 30.R5d2 b3 (30...Rxd2 31.Rxd2 Rh4 32.Kg2 Rxf4 (32...Ng4 33.Kg3+-) 33.Kxh2 Rxe4 34.Bf3=) 31.Rxc2 bxc2 32.Rc1 Rh4 33.Rxc2 Ng4=) 26.R3d2 b4 27.Nb5

25...Ra6

Also good is 25...b4 26.Nd5+ Bxd5 27.exd5 Ra6 28.Bf3 Nf6 29.fxe5 dxe5 30.d6+ Ke6

26.Nd5+?

26.Bf3! b4 27.Nd1 (27.Nd5+ Bxd5 28.exd5 Nf6 29.fxe5 dxe5 30.d6+ Kd7) 27...Nf6

26...Bxd5 27.Rxd5 Rha8 28.Bf3 Ra1+ 29.Bd1 R8a6

This move gives White chances to achieve an equal position. The best move is 29...Ne3! 30.Rxd6 Nc4 31.Rd7+ Ke8! 32.R2d3 (32.R2d5 Nb6-+) 32...Nxb2 33.R3d5 Rc8 34.Kg2 Rxd1 35.Rxd1 Nxd1 36.Rxd1 Rxc2+-+

30.R5d3

30.Rxb5! Ne3 31.Kf2 the knight is captured. 31...Nxd1+ 32.Ke2 Nxb2 33.Rxb2=

30...Nf6 31.Re2 Rb1 32.b3 Raa1 33.Re1 Nxe4-+

New to Chess?

Looking for resources for yourself or to advise on other on how to start out in chess and improve?

Well, one great launch pad is the **ECF's New To Chess page!**

Free booklets, videos and streams, find a club, find a trainer, guide to online learning resources, books and a whole lot more.

It's all at <https://bit.ly/newtochess>

FEATURES

MICHAEL ADAMS' GAME OF THE MONTH



Looking at the games from the European Schools Championships, I was most struck by the high standard of play overall in the younger age groups.

This one is a good example. After a fluctuating struggle, a complicated endgame arises in which the key is maintaining activity, and by generally following this principle Zoe Veselow comes out on top.

When you have few pieces remaining, if they are deployed purely in defensive actions your opponent will have a free hand to improve their position.

Z.Veselow – B.Chiokadze

Girls U9 European School Championship 2022

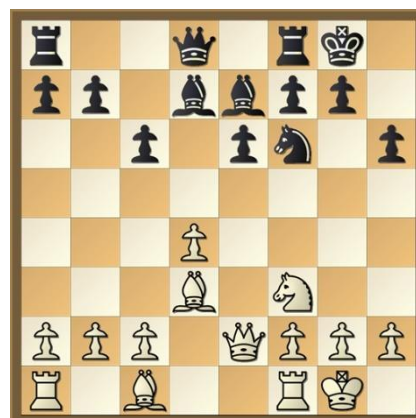
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Ng5 Nxf6 One trap here is 5...h6 6.Ne6!, when the knight can't be captured due to mate.

6.Bd3 e6 6...h6 7.Ne6! still works out.

7.N1f3 Be7 After 7...h6 8.Nxe6! remains very dangerous, stranding Black's king in the centre 8...fxe6 (8...Qe7 9.0-0 fxe6 10.Bg6+ was the famous Deep Blue - Kasparov game that didn't end well for humanity.) 9.Bg6+. Instead, 7...Bd6 is the best move according to theory, placing the bishop more actively.

8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe2 h6 10.Ne4 Nxe4 11.Qxe4 Nf6 12.Qe2 The more aggressive 12.Qh4! was stronger; the queen is menacing on h4, and could drop back to g3 if required. 12...b6? 13.Bxh6 gxh6 14.Qxh6 already leaves White with a winning attack, with ideas of Ng5 or Rae1-e5.

12...Bd7 12...c5 was possible immediately.

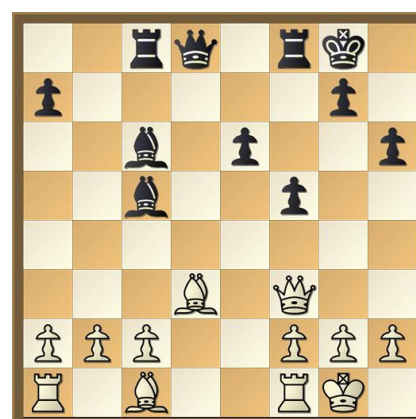


13.Nd2 Zoe plans to swap the knight on f6 and set up a queen and bishop battery, but this is a bit too clumsy. White would be better to continue developing, deciding how to utilise the extra space later - I would prefer 13.Bf4.

13...c5 14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.Ne4 Nxe4 16.Qxe4 f5 17.Qxb7 I was tempted by 17.Qe5 Qe7 18.Bf4, but 18...g5 19.Bd2 Bd6 drives White backwards.

17...Rc8 18.Qf3 It's natural to retreat the queen, but 18.Be3 was possible due to some tactical points: 18...Bc6 (18...Bxe3 19.fxe3 Bc6 20.Qxa7 Qg5) 19.Qb3 threatens to take on e6 with check. Grabbing the hot pawn on b7 requires White to show great accuracy.

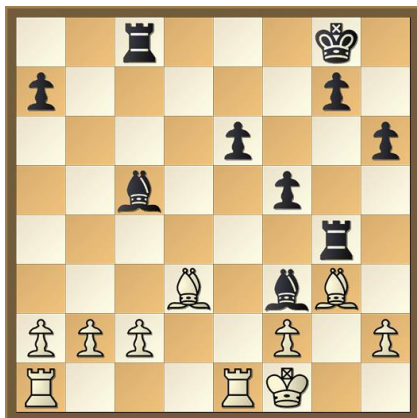
18...Bc6



19.Qe2 19.Qg3 was necessary, but 19...Rf6 is also rather dangerous; 20.Bf4?! Qe8 sets up Rg6.

19...Qd5! 20.Qf3 Qxf3 21.gxf3 Bxf3 An important psychological moment. White's pleasant opening is only a memory, as Black has regained the pawn with a great attacking position. Zoe now starts defending resiliently, making it as difficult as possible for her opponent.

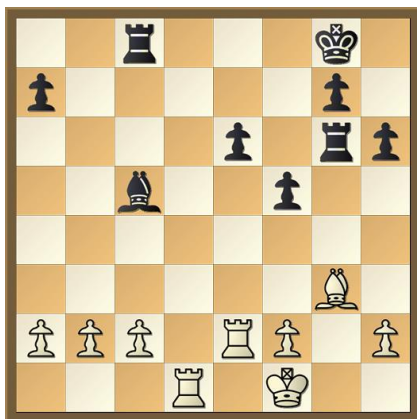
22.Bf4 Rf6 23.Rfe1 Rg6+ 24.Bg3 Rg4 25.Kf1
 Unfortunately, 25.h3 is impossible due to 25...Rxc3+ exploiting the pin, and 25.Rxe6 f4 wins, so the king edges away from the danger zone.



25...Bd5 Barbare falters, retreating when Black needed to go forward. 25...f4! 26.h3 Rxc3 (26...fxg3 27.hxg4 Bxf2 is also strong) 27.fxg3 fxg3 28.Re2 Rf8! 29.Rd2 g2+ 30.Rxc2 Bd5+ and Black emerges a rook ahead.

26.Rad1 Bf3 26...f4 was still better. 27.h3 fxg3 28.hxg4 Bxf2 is in Black's favour.

27.Be2! Bxe2+ 28.Rxe2 Rg6 Now Black has lost time and momentum, as the bishop swap has secured White's king.



29.Rd3! A strong move planning Rc3 which threatens b4, winning the bishop.

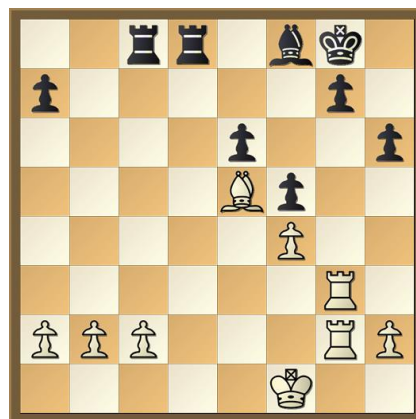
29...Rf6 30.Be5! Much better than 30.Rc3 f4.

30...Rf7 31.Rc3 Rff8 32.f4 Keeping a clamp on the position, with ideas of Rg2.

32...Rfd8 32...Bb6 33.Rg2! leaves Black unable to defend g7.

33.Rg2 Bf8 34.Rcg3

After 34.Rxc8 Rxc8 White's queenside pawns are more mobile, but this active move is hard to resist.



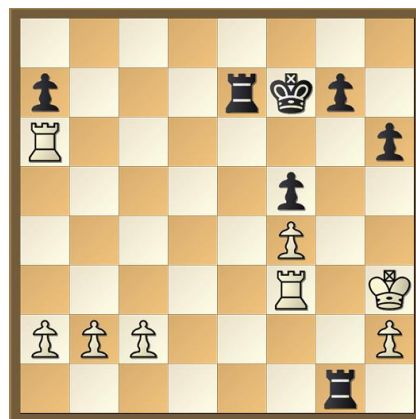
34...Rd7 Black has been given a chance to relieve the relentless pressure with 34...Rd1+! 35.Ke2 Rcd8, as 36.Bxc7? doesn't work: 36...R1d2+ 37.Kf3 Rxc7.

35.Rg6 Re7 35...Rc6! was tougher.

36.Bd6 Rd7 37.Bxf8 Kxf8 38.Rxe6 Rcd8 38...Rc4! 39.Rf2 Ra4 40.a3 Rdd4 equalises. Activity remains key in this endgame.

39.Rf2 Rd1+ 40.Kg2 Kf7 41.Ra6 R8d7 42.Kg3 Rg1+ 43.Kh3 I would have preferred 43.Kf3; it doesn't feel right to leave the king on the edge of the board.

43...Re7 44.Rf3

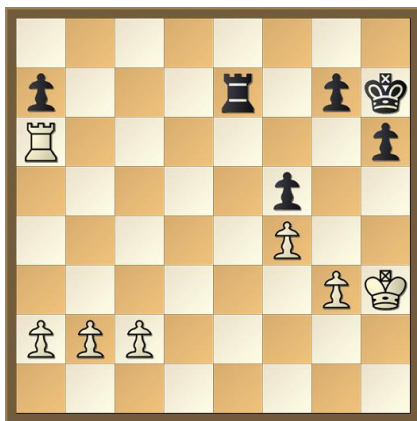


44...Kg8 This retreat is too passive. 44...g5!? was well worth a try, after 45.fxg5 hxg5 46.Rxf5+? (46.Rg3!?) 46...Ke8 Black is even winning with twin threats of Re3+ and Rh7+, showing the dangers of the king's being stuck on the rim. 44...Rc1 was also all right, keeping White busy by attacking c2.

45.Rg3 Rxc3+ Too compliant. After this swap White will have the more active rook, and it is striking how

easy the conversion is after this. 45...Rf1! 46.Rxh6 Rxf4 is much more challenging.

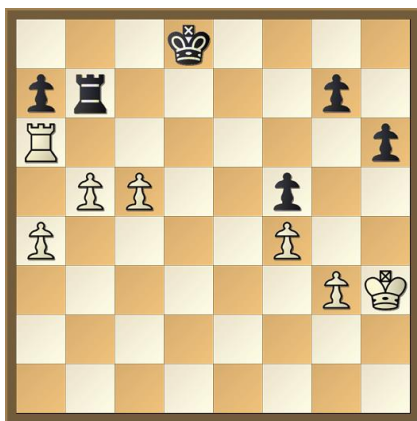
46.hxg3 Kh7



47.c4! Kg8 47...g5! was the last chance to create practical chances.

48.c5 Kf8 49.b4! Ke8 50.b5 White's pawns have swarmed forward, and the position has transformed.

50...Rb7 51.a4 Kd8



52.Rg6! The rook clears a path for White to play b6, but also tacks onto the pawn on g7 which immediately pays dividends.

52...Ke7 52...Ke8 53.c6 Rc7 54.a5 Kf7 55.b6 decides.

53.Rxg7+ Black resigned: the rook is lost.

PETER WELLS on YURI AVERBAKH 1922-2022

The second of a two-part essay in which Peter Wells reflects on the extraordinary life and work of the chess world's first centenarian grandmaster ...



Setting the dates of this period of Averbakh's 'professional play' is not too hard. Prior to this he had been working as an engineer, but was gradually realising that playing chess seriously alongside his career was detracting from his performance in both. He accepted his employer's generous offer to release him for two years with the option to return to work if chess didn't work out and, in his own words, with his early successes "the question of my return to work at the institute died a death."

Equally interesting was his decision to 'quit' professional play in 1962. In fact he played several international events thereafter, travelling far and wide with considerable success. Still, the moment when he began his journalistic and administrative activities represented a clear break and his reasons are quite revealing. One was simply that he seemed to take the oft-observed and regrettable fact that the pain of losing at chess mostly exceeds the joy of winning to a more logical conclusion than most of us do! Another was that, after winning the Soviet Championship, he struggled to find a significant goal which he regarded as attainable. The World Championship was the obvious one, but he made the assessment that success in this would be very unlikely – not least because he viewed his friend Tigran Petrosian as a much more likely candidate.

Most importantly, though, he believed that he didn't have the necessary competitive qualities for this task. According to his very plausible typology, there are six kinds of chess players. It is from the first four groups: **Killers** - those who just want to crush the opponent from the start; **Fighters**; **Sportsmen** - those who view chess much as they would any other sport but can also detach themselves from it – Capablanca finds his place here; **Games players** – those who are passionate for any kind of game - that all of the World Champions have emerged from. There are two further categories: the **Artists** (Averbakh admits that there is a fair element of this

in Mikhail Tal, but believes him to have been fundamentally a fighter) and lastly the **Explorers or Researchers**.

I was surprised by some of Averbakh's assessment of his colleagues – for me Kortchnoi would be one of the archetypal fighters, although he is placed clearly in the 'killer' category.



Kortchnoi – killer or fighter?

Photo by Hans Peters / Anefo, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons

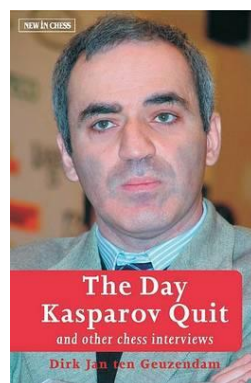
Still, his assessment of himself seems spot on. Averbakh was fundamentally a researcher more than a practical player. Although an accomplished sportsman in his youth (by all accounts he might, in a different era, have been a formidable force in the unlikely sport of chess boxing), his passion for chess was really only sparked at the age of 13 by a lecture which introduced him to the wonderful endgame studies of Nikolay Grigoriev. Of this experience he wrote "The impression of chess as an art connected me forever with the game. I wanted to get into chess, to understand its laws, its secrets." It seems fair to say that this is what he subsequently did and I can't help feeling that for this endeavour, the business of competitive playing could have felt of almost marginal significance.

There is one more thought which it is difficult to avoid when considering Averbakh's lengthy and rewarding life. How incredibly fine can be the margins between success and fulfilment on the one hand and catastrophe and tragedy on the other. The story of how narrowly the young Yuri avoided military service first in 1939 and then again in 1941 when Germany (apparently to Stalin's immense surprise) defied the terms of their non-aggression pact and attacked the Soviet Union rightly forms part of most accounts of his life. In the first instance, Yuri escaped by virtue of his mother's having returned to work in 1929 (as a response to the renewed privations of that year) and consequently signed

Yuri up for school one year early. As a result, he had already obtained a place at the Bauman State Technical University at the age of 17 and was thus exempt from the initial call-up. However (and more remarkably), when the military situation became more urgent, he again avoided being sent to the defence of Moscow and the horrific slaughter that it entailed, owing to the size of his feet and the absence of available footwear appropriate to the battlefield. When I think of the cohort of children born into the 1920s Soviet Union, it feels as if there were numerous pitfalls and difficulties to come, at least in their first 30 years or so. In fact, the reality was even more stark. Of the boys born in Moscow in 1922, a staggering percentage simply perished in 1941 defending the city.

There are clearly various conclusions which could have been drawn from this story. What is clear is that Averbakh himself concluded that a large part of our destinies is essentially beyond our control – affected neither by the effort we put in nor by any of our moral qualities. In other words, he frequently and consistently came to use the term 'fatalist' to describe his world view.

However understandable as a reaction to the strange story just outlined, this seems to me to be a very odd mindset for a successful chess player to have. Most chess players, in my experience, hold dear the belief that there will be a strong relationship between the amount of hard work that they put into the game and the rewards they obtain from it. Particularly at the board, players may either revel in or dread the responsibility that comes with feeling that their fortunes are entirely in their own hands, but few doubt that they are. Yet Averbakh has made some striking statements in support of his view, perhaps none more so than his remark in an interview with Dirk Jan Van Geuzendam: "I have seen a lot of people who were fighting to improve their destiny and none of them succeeded". Moreover, it seems almost with a degree of ironic glee that (in the same interview) he claims of the various Soviet World Champions that "all of them were thinking how they could get as



much money as possible from their title and then they discovered that Spassky, by losing a match, got more money than all of them together. Such is life." This interview from 1997 – to be found in Van Geuzendam's excellent book *The Day Kasparov Quit* – is, incidentally, full of fascinating

insights and very much worth checking out.

If this belief system seems less than ideal in relation to chess, it does feel like a reasonable way to approach involvement in the Soviet political system. I was sceptical when I read Averbakh's description of himself as 'politically naïve'. My feeling was that such people didn't last very long at the helm of a system not noted for its gentleness towards those who fall out of favour. However, I have come to believe that he was genuinely not very interested in political machinations and was apparently motivated by the various things he wanted to achieve in chess and for chess, rather than by power itself. For this purpose, a fatalistic attitude could save the wasted effort in trying to modify the system – he simply accepted it, with all its imperfections and tried to be as effective as possible within its limitations.

It is perhaps difficult to convey to the younger generation quite what it meant to be a leading chess player in the post-war Soviet system. The privileges, yes and also the pressures and sometimes compromises which had to be made, but perhaps above all the prestige and the sense that what you were doing really mattered. I remember many years ago reading the political philosopher Robert Nozick's celebrated 1998 essay which tried to explain why intellectuals tend to be politically left-leaning. I encountered this at a time when its thesis – that intellectuals tend to have been afforded high value in school and become accustomed to a status which they are then disappointed does not transfer to the world of work and the wider capitalist society – was likely to irritate me more than a little. Nonetheless, I recall that despite a lack of sympathy for Nozick's free-market economics more broadly, I had to concede that he had a point. I think it might be helpful to view Soviet society, whatever elements of a broader leftist agenda it may have failed lamentably to deliver, as having delivered this to its chess elite.

Elite chess players were shielded from the needs of the market (the system was a lot less kind to those in the next tier – virtually no 'open' events and very thin on 'second chances') and gave them incomparable opportunities to contribute to the game in various ways. Where else could a group of players have devoted so many years to the intricacies of endgame theory and generated such a body of pure knowledge without suffering economic hardship as a result? So it became natural to ask the representatives of this generation whether they were nostalgic for its passing. At this point Averbakh

retreated into his preferred stance: "No, that's the fatalist again. Why should I? There's no use."

Of course, for all his fatalism, Averbakh made some very significant decisions which greatly altered the course of his life – most obviously the decision to play professionally and then to diversify his chess activities in 1962. His more recent activities – focused on trying to introduce older players to chess as a means of retaining an active mind and staving off dementia – are also testament to his realisation that people certainly can influence their fates in a positive direction. His own immersion in chess history over the last 20 years and the interview he gave on his 90th birthday, revealing the extent of his erudition on the subject of the origins of the game, themselves speak volumes for the incredibly positive impact which ongoing intellectual curiosity can have at a very advanced age.

In practice, I would see him operating less fatalistically, more in keeping with the famous 'serenity prayer'. Averbakh was concerned with the things he could change, perhaps more attuned than most of us to the things which he could not and certainly displaying the wisdom to distinguish the two.

All this helps to explain how he adapted himself to the needs of the Soviet system, but I was still keen to get a sense of what he was really like, in his political attitudes, his approach to people, perhaps even his private attitude to the system. This is harder to get a grasp of, but I think we can find enough evidence to build a picture of a man who scarcely fits the stereotype of the Soviet apparatchik. For one thing, he has been surprisingly outspoken about Mikhail Botvinnik. He described himself as having been born into a world of 'Botvinnik worship'. However, he came to the conclusion that conversations with the 'Patriarch' were something of a 'monologue'. Botvinnik had interesting ideas but ignored criticisms and offered up a system of working which – in Averbakh's estimation – was 'not for everyone'. In his working methods Averbakh devoted time to finding his own way and was adamant that trying to fit the 'Botvinnik mould' had harmed a number of leading players.

This nod towards a more 'pluralist' approach can be seen in many of his pronouncements. Some years ago he regretted the lack of 'genuine debate' in the Russian media and I can hardly bear to think of how he might have reacted to developments in recent months in this regard if he had still been able to keep abreast of affairs. On the other hand, he did not really approve of Garry Kasparov's move from chess to



Mikhail Botvinnik by Nationaal Archief,
Den Haag, Rijksfotoarchief:
Fotocollectie Algemeen Nederlands
Fotopersbureau (ANEFO)

political activism, but in general he made no secret of the fact that his sympathies lay more with Kasparov than with Karpov, and my impression is that what he regretted was the loss of Garry's continued impact on chess rather than the activities which replaced it.

Averbakh also showed a lightness of touch in his writing and an

irreverence towards the system which he represented which I find hugely refreshing. I love his reference to the occasion on which Bobby Fischer's mother had asked for Bobby to participate in the World Youth and Student Festival: "The wheels of our bureaucracy turned slowly, and while the matter was being considered, the festival ended." (From the wonderful book *Fischer against the Russians*, of which he was one of the co-authors).

Above all, I have the impression that Averbakh was what might these days be called a 'people person'. He claimed that he always remembered anecdotes effortlessly, by virtue of a powerful 'emotional memory'. He remembered events on the basis that they evoked strong emotions and humour was clearly one element which he appreciated. He loved conversation and company – to a degree perhaps surprising in a researcher – and became an ideal ambassador for his country around the world too. If chess provided some of the best opportunities to travel for citizens of the Soviet Union, Averbakh was in a league of his own in taking advantage of these, showing an enthusiasm even for venturing beyond Europe, which not all of his colleagues shared.

I hope I have persuaded the reader that this was worth the effort. I began with the urge to pay tribute to one of the last survivors of an extraordinary era. I emerged completely fascinated and in awe at the incredibly rich life of a man who at once represented his times without somehow typifying their failings.

ARKELL'S ENDINGS KNIGHTS and ROOKS



GM Tiger Hillarp Persson (2555) - GM Keith Arkell
PokerStars IoM Masters
2014 (3), 06.10.2014

Rook and Knight v Rook and Knight.

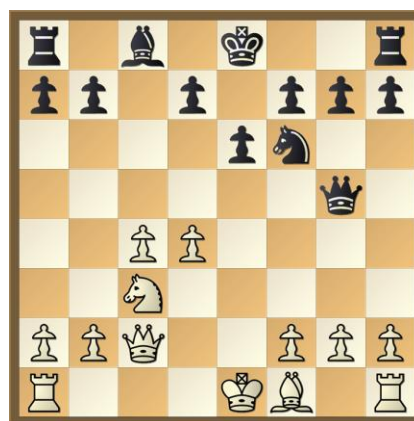
I played the following game a few months before I turned 54. I was at the height of my powers and

beginning a run of four (superfluous) consecutive GM norms over a nine-month period (at the IOM, World Senior, Hastings and Vienna).

In my article on the recent English Championship, I sang the praises of the vast amount of young talent rising up through the ranks, but I'd like to dedicate this month's column to those senior players who still remain ambitious.

If you are lucky enough to be in good health and are motivated to make progress, there is nothing to stop you from doing so!

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5 5.dxc5 Nc6 6.Nf3 Bxc5 7.Bg5 Nd4 8.Nxd4 Bxd4 9.e3 Qa5 10.exd4 Qxg5



11.g3 The most common move here is 11 Qd2, but I'm happy to play a queenless middlegame with only a slight disadvantage.

11...Qa5 12.a3 Qc7 13.Qd3 d6 14.Bg2 Bd7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Nd1



Tiger is a creative player who likes to think 'out of the box'. Here he visualises a harmonious position in which his rooks support a queenside expansion, backed up by a knight on e3.

16...a5 17.b3 Rab8



With the positional threat of ...b5 I took the bull by the horns and persuaded him to think twice about the knight redeployment.

18.Nc3 Rfc8 19.Rac1 Qb6 20.Rb1 Qa6 21.a4



If I can achieve the break ...b5 I will create weaknesses in my opponent's queenside pawn structure.

21...d5 22.Nb5 Bc6 23.Rbc1 dxc4



Whether I make this exchange or not the position is about equal, but I wanted to loosen up White's pawns and leave three of them a little exposed.

24.bxc4 Bxg2 25.Kxg2 Rd8 26.Rfe1 Qc6+ 27.Qf3 Rd7 28.h3 h6 29.Rc3 Qxf3+ 30.Kxf3



And so, the queens do indeed disappear, but on move 30 instead of move 11. I would slightly prefer to play Black here because my knight can jump around attacking c4, a4 or d4, but if my opponent plays precisely I may feel a little uncomfortable as I have less space.

30...Rc8 31.Re5 Rdd8 32.Re1 Kf8 33.Ke3 Ke7 34.Kd3 Nd7 35.Kc2 Nb8



Eyeing d4 and b4.

36.Kb3 Kf8 37.f4 Nc6 38.Rd1 Rd7 39.d5

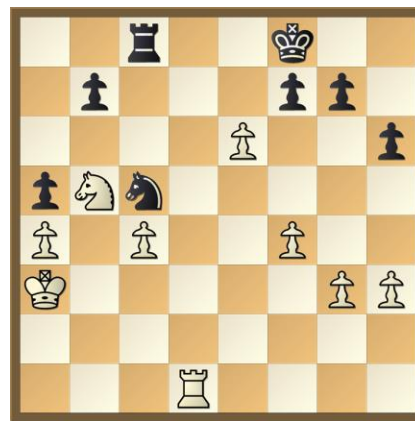


I didn't expect Tiger to sit there passively waiting to see what I would do next. After, for example, 39 Rcd3 Rcd8 40 Kc3 b6 I might chip away at his position with ...g5 at some moment. For the time being the game is about equal whether or not Hillarp Persson plays 39 d5.

39...Nb8 40.Rcc1

A little passive. Something vigorous like 40 g4 or 40 Re3 was called for to maintain the balance.

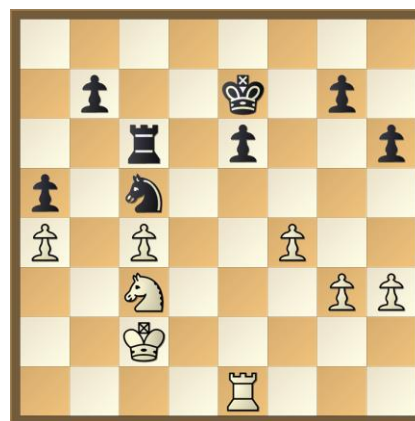
40...Na6 41.dxe6 Nc5+ 42.Ka3 Rxd1 43.Rxd1



43...fxe6!

This is a very instructive moment. The pawn has much more influence on e6 than on f7. It keeps White's rook out of d5 and provides a nice shelter for my king on e7. It also has the potential to become a strong passed pawn, depending on how my opponent reacts to a later ...g5. That the pawn is technically isolated matters not one iota as it requires no extra effort from Black to keep it secure.

44.Nc3 Ke7 45.Kb2 Rc6 46.Kc2 Rb6 47.Re1 Rc6



Those familiar with my playing style will already know that I like to potter around patiently once I have a grip on the position. By using repetitions you just might extract an error from your opponent, while otherwise you've lost nothing. Had he gone back with 48 Rd1 I intended 48... Rd6, as the knight ending would be very unpleasant for White; his a-pawn needs constant protection, and the break...e5 looms large.

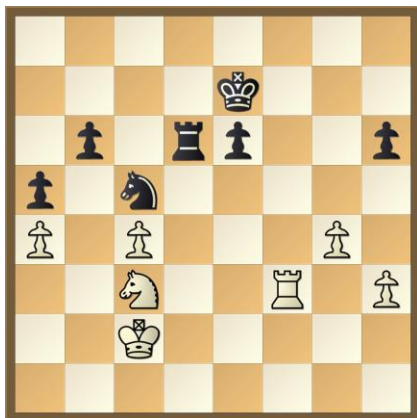
48.Re5 b6 49.Nd5+ Kd6 50.Nc3 Nd7 51.Re4 Ke7 52.g4



52...g5 Here it is at last - my favourite chess move!

53.Rd4 53 f5 was an improvement but there is no doubt that I am on top after 53...Nc5 54 Re3 Kf7 55 fxe6+ Rxe6.

53...gxf4 54.Rxf4 Ne5 55.Kb3 Nd3 56.Rf3 Nc5+ 57.Kc2 Rd6



58.Rf4 To prevent ...Rd4, but White can't cover all the entry points.

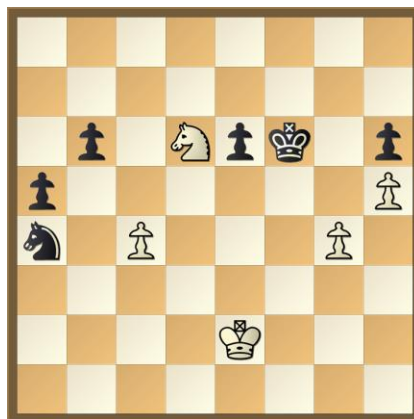
58...Rd3 59.h4 Rh3 60.h5 Rh2+ 61.Kd1 Rg2



Over many moves I have slowly improved my position and now White is completely stuck - perhaps even in zugzwang.

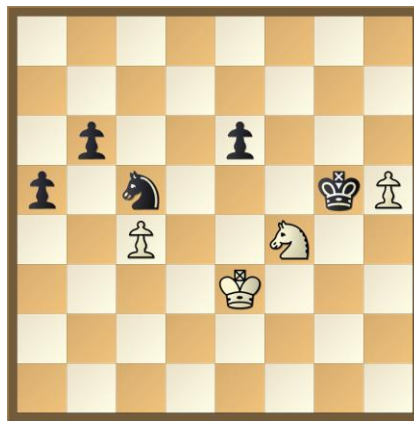
62.Rd4 Kf6 63.Rd6 Rg3 64.Nb5 Or 64 Kc2 Rxc3+.

64...Rd3+ 65.Ke2 Rxd6 66.Nxd6 Nxa4



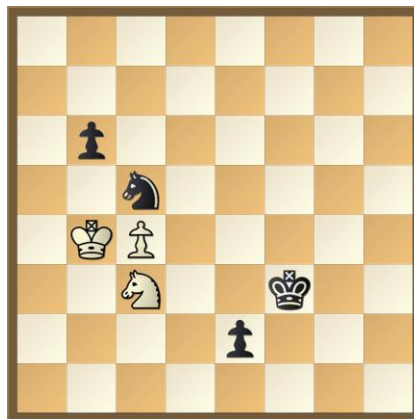
Although I am now winning, there is still the need to work out long lines, a common feature of knight endings.

67.Ne4+ Kg7 68.g5 hgx5 69.Nxg5 Nc5 70.Nh3 Kh6 71.Nf4 Kg5 72.Ke3



72...a4 As White has only one sensible move each time it was fairly straightforward to calculate the finish.

73.Ne2 a3 74.Nc3 e5 75.Kd2 Kxh5 76.Kc2 Kg4 77.Kb1 Kf3 78.Ka2 e4 79.Kxa3 e3 80.Kb4 e2



After 81 Nxe2 Kxe2 82 Kb5 Nd7 83 Kc6 Kd3 84 Kb5 Kc3 it's all over.

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BOOK REVIEWS of the MONTH in association with FORWARD CHESS by BEN GRAFF

Time for a good book! The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof ... ChessMoves Review of the Month in association with Forward Chess



Have you ever taken a close look at your chess book collection? If it is anything like mine, you probably have more volumes on openings than anything else. So many times I am seduced by an offering that promises to answer all my problems. Titles of the “*How to smash 1.e4 with one simple move*,” variety continually reel me in before ultimately disappointing.

Which leaves the question - if books like this don't always improve our play, what will? Is there any hope for most of us, or are we destined always to hack away in vain? Perhaps the way to get better lies not so much in memorising lots of fancy new opening lines, but rather in considering how we *think* as chess players. Are our assumptions generally correct? What do we do well? Where could we do better? How would a stronger player approach the sorts of dilemmas we all grapple with over the board?

This month we look at four books which go to the heart of these questions. *Think Like a Super-GM*, *Mastering Chess Logic* and *The Essence of Chess Strategy* are terrific new contributions, all of which give the reader an opportunity to explore both their current approach to analysis and how this might be fine-tuned. In addition, we look at the greatest classic in this field and one of my all-time favourites, *Think Like a Grandmaster*.

I can't guarantee that these books will turn any of us into a GM, but they all have the potential to take our play forward. They also have the benefit of being

extremely enjoyable and lucid reads and are well worth your time.

Contemporary Book of the Month

Think like a Super GM

by Michael Adams & Philip Hurtado
(Quality Chess)



I remember playing in the same rapid tournament as Michael Adams when we were both teenagers. It might have been a Cheltenham and Gloucester event, although after all these years I can't be sure. I do recall that we were wearing similar-style leather jackets, but our shared fashion sense in no way translated into comparable skill at the

board. While I trailed in somewhere in the middle of the field, Michael aced the contest en route to a brilliant career which would take him to number four in the world and seven British title victories. Even back then, all the participants knew that he was destined for bigger things, and so it proved.

Think Like a Super-GM is an innovative attempt by Adams and Hurtado to explore how chess players of different standards analyse, coupled with expert guidance from Adams as to the lessons which can be drawn. As both authors note, this is a book which is difficult to categorise, and they are to be commended for their originality. In essence, Adams and Hurtado try to get to the core of what goes through a chess player's mind when they look at the board in front of them, with a view to helping all of us improve our approach.

The pair are a superb combination: Adams the elite player who has seen everything and beaten everyone; and Hurtado the keen club enthusiast who has forged a successful career as a process improvement specialist. Between them they are as well-equipped as any to try and help the rest of us understand why we make the choices that we do at the board, and to consider ways in which on occasion we might make better ones.

It must be the case that we probably all, to a greater or lesser extent, have an uneven technique, and this is something Adams notes. “I am frequently surprised – both by the, to me, difficult concepts that [weaker players] understand, and by other areas

where their understanding seems surprisingly lacking from my point of view.” The encouraging point being that we all have something to work with, to build on, and this is where Think Like a Super-GM comes in.

The book consists of forty puzzles, which the reader is invited to solve. These were predominantly selected by Hurtado himself, which Adams rightly identifies as another strength. “There are lots of books where GMs give their views on what they think other players need to know, but these may not always ask the questions people want answered.” The other positions come from Michael Adams’s own games, where he is of course perfectly placed to provide a unique insight.

Philip Hurtado, notebook in hand, asked a host of players of different standards to also work through the problems and explain their solutions. In essence the book is an experiment that “...would uncover how a top grandmaster makes decisions. I could then compare it to the way I think about my own moves, and learn from the differences.”

The solvers ranged from Grandmasters Keith Arkell, Eduardo Iturrizaga and Renier Vazquez, through to IMs Harriet Hunt and Juan Reyes, Louise Head and numerous club players including Nathanael Paul, John Green and Penny Wood. I was delighted to see that many of the club participants came from Solihull Chess Club, a fine bastion of chess in the Midlands.

Michael Adams provides his own solutions, and we explore some of the differences in approach and what they might mean. Further puzzles are shared, and Hurtado undertakes statistical assessments of the players’ choices. He also utilises a range of ‘eye-tracker’ experiments which are intriguing, highlighting as they do that a grandmaster seems to instinctively know where on the board they should be looking with a greater degree of regularity than the rest of us.

I learnt a lot, not just from Michael Adams’s analysis, but also from reading the thoughts of other players at different levels. There were places where I felt in sync with my fellow solvers and others where I now recognise that there are certain positions I need to do more work on. I would imagine this would be the same experience for most. Just playing through the puzzles was of itself a very pleasant way to spend a few hours.

Adams draws some interesting conclusions when he reflects on the players’ attempts to solve the problems. While stronger players of course calculate

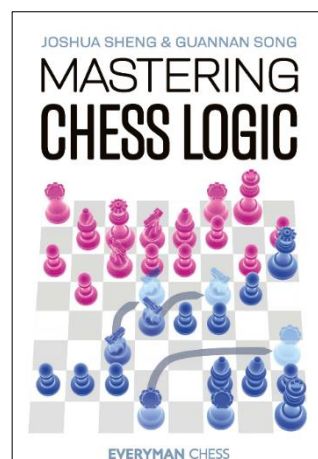
more accurately, they also seem to have a better sense of when to calculate. In endgames there is a particular need to be concrete, and some of the solvers (much as I would) on occasion resorted to comments along the lines of “...sort of wait and see what Black does,” when we need to be harder-headed. Avoiding leaping in, taking our time, being patient when the situation demands it, are all points that Adams brings to life by looking at how the players approached the specific positions.

There are no magic fixes; it all comes down to “working harder at the board”. Yet what Think Like a Super-GM will do is to help the reader understand how all too often we come to conclusions that are rushed or not fully thought through when in fact we all have the potential to do better. This is an inspiring and helpful guide that may or may not take us all the way to Super-GM, but is likely to give a lot of pleasure, and the genuine possibility of improving our play.

Other exciting new offerings

Mastering Chess Logic

by Joshua Sheng & Guannan Song
(Everyman Chess)



The authors quote Sun Tzu, who noted in The Art of War that “Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat”. Much like Adams and Hurtado, Sheng and Song are intrigued as to how chess players think, asking the question “What exactly makes the greats such as Carlsen, Fischer, or Kasparov so different from people like your humble authors?”

Their conclusion is that the answer must lie within a player’s thought process. They set out to explore “...how does one evaluate some moves to be better than others? How does one improve their feel for the game?”

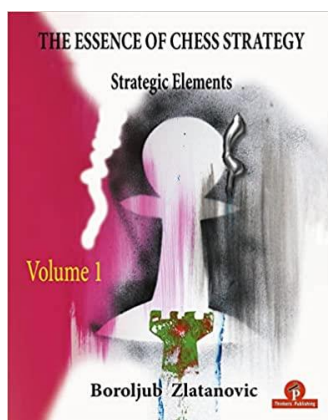
Divided into sections which explore 'Building Blocks', 'Knowing What You Have', 'Mise en Place' ('Preparing all your ingredients before you start cooking'), 'The Big Game', 'Beginning and End' and a stack of engaging problems to work through, this is a very accessible guide for anyone who wants to

improve their approach to analysis. I particularly liked the selection of positions and found them to be both engaging and challenging.

Plenty of games are lucidly analysed and the authors step through a host of key concepts, including material, piece activity, piece improvement, pawn structure, space, safety, and managing the initiative. Sheng and Song build nicely on previous contributions in these areas from the likes of Silman and Aagaard and this is a very interesting and worthwhile guide.

The authors set out to put the reader "...in a better place...regarding your practical play and ability to approach decisions logically". They ask at the end, "Perhaps you even enjoyed the ride!?" This reviewer certainly did.

The Essence of Chess Strategy – Strategic Elements (Volume 1) by **Boroljub Zlatanovic** (Thinkers Publishing)



Weighing in at 528 large pages, this is a hefty offering from IM Zlatanovic and one that is likely to pay dividends for any reader. Interestingly, Zlatanovic takes as his starting premise the same Sun Tzu quote as utilised in *Mastering Chess Logic* regarding strategy and tactics. His own

approach is predicated on the Soviet school of chess, and he notes that "The focus should be on understanding strategical concepts, principles and underlying logic."

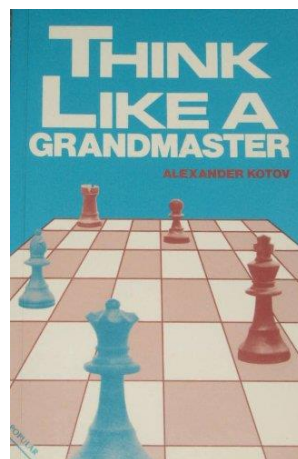
In this first volume, nine key concepts are explored, each with the aid of numerous well-illustrated games and positions. These include the centre, the position of the king, bishop versus knight, good and bad pieces, and how to use files.

Zlatanovic makes his points well. The games explored range from efforts by world champions Alekhine and Tal through to more modern encounters. All are fascinating. I personally would have liked him to include a summary of key points at the beginning or end of each chapter, but, even so, he is a natural teacher who really brings to life the positions he explores. A second volume on pawn

structures is also planned, and that is also likely to be one to look out for.

Classic Book of the Month

Think Like a Grandmaster by **Alexander Kotov** (B. T. Batsford 1971)



When *Think Like a Grandmaster* was published in the West in 1971 it caused a sensation. Here was a book unlike any other that had appeared before. Within three months the first edition had sold out. Leonard Barden went so far as to write in *The Guardian* that *Think Like a Grandmaster* "...bids strongly to be the most

instructional book of all".

Perhaps Alexander Kotov's reputation is less than impeccable. Seen as very close to the Soviet regime and frequently suspected of being a KGB agent, he was often given opportunities to travel abroad that were denied to arguably more gifted players. Some of his other writing, such as *The Soviet School of Chess*, carried propaganda warnings when published on this side of the Iron Curtain.

Yet Kotov was undoubtedly a talented competitor. Pipped by Botvinnik to the 1939 Soviet title, he would share first with David Bronstein in 1948. The 1952 Saltsjöbaden Interzonal was his crowning glory and saw him win with 16.5/20, three points clear of Tigran Petrosian and Mark Taimanov. Moreover, even somebody as politically skilful as Kotov did not always manage to successfully navigate the political machinations of his times. For example, his stint as the Head of Taimanov's delegation during Fischer's 6-0 drubbing was not a happy one.

Whatever Kotov's flaws, *Think Like a Grandmaster* resonated for two reasons. While this month's contemporary reviews demonstrate that books which explore how chess players think through practical problems at the board are now mainstream, in Kotov's era this was fresh ground. He wryly noted that Botvinnik was trying to create a computer that would play as well as a human, so he would try and help a human to "analyse with the accuracy of the machine," and this had huge appeal.

Secondly, Kotov both laced his account with a strong understanding of the travails faced by weaker players and brought to life the actual experiences of the flesh-and-blood grandmasters of his era with considerable skill.

Kotov described a situation where a player was exploring whether to play R-Q1 or N-KN5. (More modern versions are in algebraic, but I really enjoy the descriptive notation in my edition, so will use it here.) After going backwards and forwards haphazardly between the two options...

“At this point you glance at the clock. ‘My goodness! Already 30 minutes gone on thinking whether to move the rook or the knight. If it goes on like this you’ll really be in time trouble. And then suddenly you are struck by the happy idea – why move rook or knight? What about B-QN1? And without any more ado, without any analysis at all, you move the bishop. Just like that with hardly any consideration at all. My words were interrupted by applause. The audience laughed, so accurate was my picture of their trials and tribulations.”

His description of a group of grandmasters watching a game in the Soviet Championship, which was taking place in the Central Club for railway employees in Moscow, is delightful. A book is run as the GMs try in vain to guess the next move, until eventually Bronstein guesses correctly. “Well then, there’s a nice state of affairs, the reader must be thinking. Even in such a logical game as chess, top-flight experts were unable to say what the next move would be of a master playing in the Soviet Championship.”

The point being that styles and approaches vary, but inevitably a player needs something to underpin their choices. Kotov bases his methodology on identifying candidate moves and creating a “Tree of Analysis”. “The trunk of this tree is the main move we are considering. The opponents’ replies form the four main branches... These branches are divided into smaller branches and so the list goes on.”

Kotov urges discipline; each branch of the tree should be studied “...once and once only”. He goes on to explore blunders and managing good positions, before addressing some of the points Michael Adams also addresses in terms of knowing when to analyse. In Kotov’s view positional judgement is more likely to be the way to go in closed positions.

From open lines and diagonals, through to pawn structures, endgames, and practical tips on avoiding time trouble, Kotov sets out to demonstrate how all

players could bring greater clarity of thought to their efforts, while acknowledging (consolingly) that no matter how good we are, we are all human. “Yet at the same time there is not a single grandmaster, not to mention master or player below that class, who has not made the grossest of blunders in his time. He overlooked an elementary mate in a couple of moves, gave away his queen or rook or what have you.”

What makes *Think Like a Grandmaster* so appealing for me is the juxtaposition of a rigorous methodology with a very honest look at the challenges all players face, whatever their strength. It is a very personal book and one that not only covered new ground in terms of its subject matter but also gave fresh insight as to how we might view those who reach the top of the game. Undoubtedly such players are better than us, but this does not necessarily mean that they find chess any easier.

There is a band named Rise Against, who wrote a song called “Kotov Syndrome”. This celebrated the passage I quoted earlier in the review, in which Kotov described a player spending a lot of time before making a move that they had not properly analysed - something that happens to us all. However, with the help of *Think Like a Grandmaster* and all the books we have covered this month we should have the tools to make such a disastrous state of affairs a much rarer occurrence.

Ben Graff is a writer and chess journalist. He is a regular contributor to Chess, The Chess Circuit and Authors Publish. He is the author of The Greenbecker Gambit and Find Another Place. He is not a grandmaster but did draw with one once.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

THE CHESSABLE ECF GRAND PRIX JULY 2022–JUNE 2023



This year sees a very welcome return for the ECF Grand Prix, which is sponsored by Chessable alongside the British and English Championships.

The Chessable ECF Grand Prix will run as an individual competition with ECF members scoring 'Grand Prix points' based on their result in rated open congresses between July 2022 and June 2023.

As with the British Championships, the Chessable ECF Grand Prix has a long history, going back to 1974 when the first ECF Grand Prix competition was established by Stewart Reuben and Leonard Barden.

The Grand Prix is a year-long individual competition based on performance across ECF rated congresses by ECF members. Grand Prix points are scored based on results in each event played in, with separate prizes for Open, Women's, Junior and rating limited categories.

The Grand Prix is divided into seven sections, with players accumulating points in any category they qualify for and the result published on a set of leader boards which are updated throughout the year:

1. **Open Prix** - open to all members (Silver & above) rated 2050 or above (over the board standard play rating);
2. **Major** 1900-2049;
3. **Intermediate** 1750-1899;
4. **Minor** 1600-1749;
5. **Improvers** U1600;
6. **Women's Prix** - open to all female members (Silver and above);
7. **Junior Prix** - open to all members (Silver and above) aged under 18 on 31 August of the year in which the Grand Prix begins.

Prizes will be awarded for the winner in each category based on points accumulated during the course of the year. You can find further details on the Grand Prix at <https://bit.ly/ecfgrandprix>

FROME CHESS CONGRESS RETURNS (Reader Warning – there is no chess in this chess report ... by Chris Lamming)

There is something very satisfying about the aesthetic of a pristine, new, unstarted chess congress all set up and ready for the first round. The rows of the tournament hall are resplendent in the simplicity of the repeated pattern of boards, pieces and clocks. Score sheets and results cards and table numbers – it's kind of like a vision of a laid table, where the diners feast instead on the problems of the mind.



Next year, I'm bringing a laser, to line them up even more perfectly

It is at that point, at the moment when the doors open and the players start gathering, expectantly searching for the ever-elusive pairings sheets, that a feeling comes over the organisers that is so special – no more sorting to be done, it is time for the chess.

After the two-year hiatus, caused (as if anyone needed reminding) by the unseen yet terrible coronavirus, Frome Chess Congress made its eventual return in May this year after months of work and planning by the team.



Andy Butterworth running the bookstall at Frome for the last time – enjoy retirement, Andy, you will be hugely missed

The tournament is now at number 31 – this really being the first time it has run without its founder and legendary organiser, Gerry Jepps. Gerry had run the congress for more than 30 years and together with Gerry Udell they have created perhaps one of the most popular events in the southwest – a legacy that the new team have worked hard to continue – team *Gerrys* has given us very big boots to fill.

The congress is now a collaboration between the two most active local clubs – Frome and Trowbridge, which has enabled a lot of cross-over as we share ideas for the future of both the congress and league chess in the area more generally. The event has encouraged new players and club members to get involved and get training – in arbiting, in pairing software, in marketing, or in other important practices such as safeguarding. In some ways, this report pays homage to the hundreds of people across the country who devote so much time to planning and delivering the tournaments we all love.



Guy Inman and his team, getting ready for the Curry-Rush

A chance encounter at a local brewery (aren't all good plans hatched over beer?) saw a connection made with Guy Inman of Fresh Kitchen, a local chap normally selling excellent fare from a van. So the food returned and the players did not go hungry, and the curry was, as it always is, a popular, if maybe, unwise choice of sustenance for a group of nervous chess enthusiasts just before their round 3 battles...

The lead-up to the congress was filled with discussions and debate – often lengthy back and forth emails over much whatifery. The monthly rating system, for example, has brought about new decisions to make for all organisers – once upon a time, you had one or maybe two grades a year. Now it seems you have hundreds to choose from! Recent international affairs, catering problems, Covid risks and all kinds of other points are pored over, discussed and policy formed. Beer is almost always involved – lubricating as it does the chess organiser mind.



Chris Purry and Kevin Paine running the Intermediate and Minor Sections like clockwork

If you haven't played at Frome, one of the bigger draws is the catering. There are, it seems, a lot of people who play there simply to get the novelty of a good cooked meal! After we lost the Frome Majorette Troupe (who used to volunteer and raise money for their marching team), the congress organising team was distraught about the imperilled catering offer. Apart from anyone else, it is absolutely *crucial* that the section controllers are well fed, lest they get even more grumpy about the noise. Shhhhhhhhhh!!



Are the pairings up yet, Kevin? (Kevin Thurlow running the Open)

We needn't have worried too much, or perhaps we worried just the right amount, for the entry numbers simply blew away any doubt any of us had about the return of over the board chess. I played in Fareham and Doncaster in the weeks before Frome and was delighted to see such high numbers there too. Waiting lists, it seems, are now a normal thing for a chess tournament. At Frome we were soon 15 deep in the queue, with players waiting eagerly for the last-minute withdrawals.



The packed hall: we had to put boards on the balcony – a wonderful sight!

So, an almost record-breaking 199 players took part, and the tournament ran without hitch and with a satisfied and well-fed bunch of the nicest chess players. Over time it is great to get to know the familiar faces that return each year and support us – it is one of the pleasures of organising and arbiting to be able to watch their excellent games.

But it is also just great to see once again so many gathering together, new and old, shaking hands and sitting down for a proper, over the board battle. Long may it continue – see you in 2023.

My deepest thanks to all of the team of the Frome Chess Congress: Kevin Paine, Mark Leonard, David Marshall, Bernadette Ross, Chris Purry, Gerry Udell, Gerry Jepps, Kevin Thurlow.

Editor's note – just in case you wanted to find out about the chess you can access the results and prize winners via ---

http://someretchess.org/frome_congress/FromeHome.html

YORKSHIRE CHESS

Steve Westmoreland reports on the camaraderie amongst a blend of juniors and seniors

Defeat was in the air as the packed car pulled away from Syston. The car was not silent though; that would have been impossible with a 12-year-old boy (Jacob) in it. Also Sean, who was claiming he could have won his game in the remaining two minutes left on the clock after burning up all his time and still in the middle game. Dan and I were chortling. Friendship and camaraderie are among the reasons why I do county chess and volunteered to captain the Yorkshire U1450s and stand in for the Open team on the day.

The U1450s were young, with seven at 18 years or under. It would have been eight, but Awen (aged 12) pulled out due to a stomach bug and I was fortunate to get the veteran Dan Czerniuch in the squad. Many of us turned up wearing smart Yorkshire County Chess polo shirts; something which I arranged believing it would help team spirit and pride in playing for our county.



Okay, this was not on the day, but a good picture of Jacob in the Yorkshire shirt winning a trophy

Pride is important and something that I have noticed this season, especially when standing in as captain of the U1650s (very busy season!). My home club of Holmfirth has had a number of post-pandemic new players. They want to play and help coach kids.

One of our local players, Drew, debuted in the U1650s at Bury against Lancashire. His nephews were calling him and giving advice. His wife and kids were proud and so was he. The chance to represent Yorkshire was a huge source of pride. The new post-lockdown players and juniors needed no encouragement to come and play. It was and is fantastic to see.

It also made it an easy decision to promote juniors and new players, especially with the pandemic putting off many experienced players. At Holmfirth we had deliberately pushed the most talented kids (around 12 years old) into the adult teams. Quick games were turning into long games, with gradings coming in at 1300-1400.

Awen and Jacob were picked. York contacted me via Dave Smith and Peter Cloudsdale, with Max Wrigley and Bertie Leatham joining the team. Angelica Rowe joined us from Alwoodley. Sean Keddie (Holmfirth) and Amelia Fretwell (Huddersfield) came in as very strong 18-year-olds. Hull and Beverley added Luke and McKenzie, with Aditya (Alwoodley) playing before exam prep interrupted the games.

Around these juniors we had experienced adults, with the irrepressible Steve Collins, Brendan Briggs, Gaz Taylor, Dan Czerniuch and Danny Dhunna. Two of the dads acted as reserves, with Olaf winning his one game for the county against Lancashire. If the dads play chess, you have reserves on the day!



All the juniors walked away smiling. Max at the age of 8 and Jacob aged 12 played for around four hours, making their opponents sweat. Sean for the third county match in a row burned all his time away without hitting middle game and still took away points.

Will I pick juniors again? Absolutely, and I have written to all coaches and clubs to request they play their juniors in standard play. We will be back next season, and stronger. As for myself, I am re-joining the 1850s as a player. See you over the board.

It is great to have the county season back.

Steve Westmoreland, Yorkshire U1450s Captain and Holmfirth Chess Club



The U1450s beat Lancashire and progressed to face Essex at Syston in the quarter-finals. It was a packed room alongside the Open team who beat Middlesex 13-3. I was hovering nervously along with the excellent Malcolm Crane as the results came in. Alas, we lost 4-8 but there was a lot to take away.

THE ENGLISH COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP 2021/22

ECF Home Director Nigel Towers and
Counties Controller Mark Murrell report ...

The final stages of the 2021/ 2022 Counties Championships continue, with defending champions Yorkshire looking to protect their 2019 title in the Open competition. This month saw the quarter- and semi-finals, with two teams getting through to the finals in each section. The semi-finals were played on 12 June. The finals will be held on 2 July at four different venues across the country.

Open

Quarter- Final (14 May)	Semi-Final (11 and 12 June)	Final (2nd July) Darlington
	Kent	Northumberland
	Northumberland	
	Greater Manchester	
Yorkshire	Yorkshire	Yorkshire
Middlesex		

Yorkshire played Greater Manchester on Saturday 11 June, with pre-match favourites Yorkshire winning convincingly by 12-4. Full details and the match card can be found in LMS at <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97270>

Also on 11 June, Northumberland beat Kent by 7-5, decided by the final game, with details in LMS at <https://ecflms.org.uk/lms/node/97269>

The final of the Open Championships will be an all-Northern Counties match between Northumberland and Yorkshire at a venue near Darlington on 2 July.

Minor Counties

Prelim (7 Apr)	Quarter-Final (14 May)	Semi-Final	Final (2nd July) Reading
	*	Warwicks	Norfolk
	*		
	*	Norfolk	
	*		
	*	Devon	Devon
	*		
	Worcs	Cambs	
	Cambs		

Norfolk beat Warwickshire in the first semi-final, with Devon beating Cambridgeshire in the second.

The Minor Counties final will be between Devon and Norfolk, and will take place at a venue along the M3 corridor on 2 July.

U2050

Quarter-Final (14 May)	Semi-Final	Final (2 July) Wanstead
*	Notts	Essex
*		
Essex	Essex	
Yorkshire		
*	Lancs	Surrey
*		
*	Surrey	
*		

Having dispatched Yorkshire in the only quarter-final, Essex won their semi-final against Nottinghamshire by default. Surrey then beat Lancashire by 9-7 in their semi-final on 12 June.

The final will be between Essex and Surrey in northeast London on 2nd July.

The finals will be held on 2 July at four different venues across the country.

More details on the Championships and their history at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/counties-championship-2022/>

U1850

Prelim (7 Apr)	Quarter-Final (14 May)	Semi-Final	Final (2nd July) Syston
	Essex	Essex	Yorkshire
	Hampshire		
	Norfolk	Yorks	
	Yorkshire		
	Lancashire	Devon	Middx
	Devon		
	Greater Manchester	Middx	
Middx	Middlesex		
Suffolk			

Yorkshire beat Essex in the first semi-final by 10.5-5.5 and Middlesex coming from behind against Suffolk in the only quarter final, went on to beat Devon in the second by 8.5-5.5.



The semi included a sharp Sicilian Najdorf battle between fast-improving juniors Maksym Chrystafor (playing for Yorkshire) and Alexandr Pereslavlsev (playing for Essex). There had already been press interest in the exploits of newly arrived Maksym, a Ukrainian chess-sponsored refugee making his first county chess appearance though a collaboration of the skippers. Both players were fresh from congress action, Maksym winning the Durham Congress Minor whilst Alexandr chose tough opposition in the Southend Congress Open. You can read more about Maksym elsewhere in this issue.

The final will be between Yorkshire and Middlesex near Leicester on 2 July.

U1650

Quarter Final (14 May)	Semi Final	Final (2 July)
	Lancs	Surrey
*	Surrey	
*		
Warwicks	Warwicks	Warwicks
Essex		
*	Yorks	
*		

Surrey beat Lancashire in the first semi-final by 9-7 and Warwickshire beat Yorkshire by 10.5 – 5.5.

The final will be between Surrey and Warwickshire in northeast London on 2 July.

U1450

Quarter Final (14 May)	Semi Final	Final (2 July)
Yorks	Essex	Essex
Essex		
Notts	Notts	
Notts Juniors		
Surrey	Surrey	Surrey
Leicestershire		
Kent	Kent	
Lancs		

Essex beat Notts by 10-2 and Surrey beat Kent by 8.5-3.5. The final will be between Essex and Surrey alongside the U2050 final between the same two counties.

MAKSYM'S PROGRESS

Paul Townsend reports on Maksym Kryshafor's latest chess exploits

Since his spectacular debut at the Durham congress, as reported in last month's ChessMoves and also in media such as Metro at

<https://metro.co.uk/2022/05/11/ukrainian-boy-wonder-wins-chess-prize-two-days-after-arrival-in-uk-16625960/> Maksym has played in various further competitions against opponents of all age groups.

Just a few days after playing an opponent aged 81 in the York Chess Club summer tournament he was up against the under 8s in the UKCC York Megafinal.

The summer tournament games are going well, despite a tendency for Maksym to doze off at the board if it's a longer game – these are evening matches and he's still adjusting to the -2 hours' time difference between the UK and Ukraine!

Maksym continues to do well, although he certainly hasn't had it all his own way, especially in junior events. He scored 5/6 at the Ilkley Chess Centre Junior Rapidplay, losing out on tie break to Shriaansh Ganti of Leeds juniors, who won their individual game. He also scored 5/6 in the York Megafinal, finishing second to local star Max Duemmer Wrigley, who won all his games and looked a real prospect.

Maksym has also appeared for Yorkshire in the County Championship under 1850 semi-final against Essex, although not before a slight panic a few days before the match when his provisional ECF rating was published as 1974, which would have rendered him ineligible to take part. This has since been corrected to a (still extraordinary) 1781.

Once again, he encountered a strong junior opponent, 10-year-old Alexandr Pereslavl'tsev of Upminster, who showed a mature understanding of a positional Open Sicilian variation and won a good game (as reported elsewhere in this issue).

One senses our Ukrainian friends have been slightly surprised at the strength of the English players. Maksym is hoping to take part in the European Junior Blitz/Rapidplay Championships in July and it has not gone unnoticed that the top rated player entered in his age group is George Chen of England. There's clearly a lot of talent coming through in English junior chess, which bodes well for the future of our game.

I'm delighted to report that Maksym has just beaten GM Natalia Zhukova, the two-time European Women's Champion, in an online rapidplay game in a competition organised by the Ukrainian Chess Federation.

A NOTE on UKRAINE

The ECF is working with the Ukrainian Chess Federation to help Ukrainian refugees who wish to come to the UK. Any ECF members who are applying to host Ukrainian refugees under the UK government's Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (also called the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme) can be put in touch with refugee families through these contacts.

To register your interest, please email office@englishchess.org.uk giving your full name, address, ECF membership number and telephone contacts.

Also, we are keen for clubs and tournament organisers to offer free membership and entry fees to Ukrainian refugees and specify this on their websites and entry forms.

CHESSFEST IS BACK!



The ECF is delighted to report that *Chess in Schools and Communities* will be holding another ChessFest this summer on Sunday 17 July in Trafalgar Square, London.

ChessFest is a fun-filled day, open to all, and completely free! The event runs from 11am to 6pm and involves literally hundreds of chess boards for casual play, a human chess match where the pieces are played by actors, multiple simultaneous displays from some of the best players in the UK (Gawain Jones, Matthew Sadler and Stuart Conquest, to name but three!), and lectures to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1972 World Chess Championship and the 25th anniversary of Kasparov vs. Deep Blue.

Whatever age, whatever chess ability, this is an event great for all. To catch a flavour of what to expect of the day, you can see a video of last year's event at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kB62-e_tOB4

ChessFest is not just in London, but in Liverpool too, with a fellow event happening at Liverpool ONE's Chevasse Park. Which event will hold the best

chess? There will be a livestreamed match between the two sites to decide that very question!

For more information on both events please visit <https://www.chess-fest.com/>

APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Chess in Schools and Communities are looking for volunteers to assist at ChessFest. Tasks include setting up in the square and packing up, setting up chess sets, supervising play on the giant chess sets, matching members of the public to play, and even playing a few games against members of the public! Volunteers must be aged over 18.

We can offer travel expenses within the M25, lunch and refreshments, as well as a staff ChessFest t-shirt. If you would like to find out more, please contact Chess in Schools and Communities either via email at info@chessinschools.co.uk or by calling 020 7935 3445 (office hours only).



CAPLIN MENCHIK MEMORIAL

Vera Menchik (1906-44) was the first women's world chess champion, as well as the longest reigning champion, gaining the title aged 21 and defending it multiple times until her untimely death.

Although born in Russia, Vera lived in England from the age of 15 and became the strongest female player of the era whilst living in Hastings and London. Vera has never been properly recognised or remembered in this country.

With the cooperation of the Czech Chess Federation and the Czech Embassy, the ECF's Director of Women's Chess Agnieszka Milewska and Director of International Chess Malcolm Pein are staging a high-level women's norm tournament that will end on the 78th anniversary of Menchik's death, caused by a German V1 rocket which landed near her home in Clapham.

It is also our intention to create a memorial to Vera in Streatham Cemetery, near to where she was cremated, to ensure a lasting memorial to the first

Vera Menchik - A Synopsis

Women's World Chess Champion.

Vera Frantsevna Menchik (1906 – 44) was the first Women's World Chess Champion.

In 1915 Vera was taught chess by her father. The family moved to England in 1921, when Vera was 15. In that year she won the British Girls' Championship.

In 1923 she began participating in men's international tournaments.

In 1926 Vera won the British Girls' Open Championship.

In 1927 she won the London Ladies championship with a perfect 5-0 score.

FIDE established the first world championship for women in July 1927, which Vera won at the age of 21 in London winning ten games and drawing just one.

Vera defended her title six times in every championship held during her lifetime: Hamburg

1930, Prague 1931, Folkestone 1933, Warsaw 1935, Stockholm 1937 and Buenos Aires 1939.



The tournament is taking place thanks to the generous support of the sponsors Caplin Systems, who also support the Hastings Congress. The tournament has also received financial support from the English Chess Federation, The Chess Trust, and the Friends of Chess.

Tournament Information

Tournament - The Vera Menchik Memorial

Dates - Saturday 18 to Sunday 26 June 2022

Venue - MindSports Centre, Dalling Road, London W6 0JD

Format - 10-player all-play-all, one game per day, WIM & WGM norm opportunities

Arbiter - IA Shohreh Bayat

Invited Players - WGM Katarzyna Toma (ENG), IM Harriet Hunt (ENG), WIM Lan Yao (ENG), Anna Marie Koubova (CZE), Kamila Hrischenko (UKR), WCM Zoe Varney (ENG), IM Joanna Dworakowska (POL), GM Ketī Arakhamia-Grant (SCO), WIM Lara Schulze (GER), WIM Teja Vidic (SLO)

The ceremonial first move which opens the tournament will be made by Martin Hošek from the Czech Embassy and John Ashworth, the Chief Executive of Caplin Systems.

For further information please contact Agnieszka Milewska, ECF Director of Women's Chess, at director.womenschess@englishchess.org.uk

ECF ONLINE

Nigel Towers reports on ECF online club tournaments and internationals

The number of online chess clubs and competitive events continues to grow alongside the return to over the board chess. Current membership levels are as follows –

Chess.com ECF Open club - 5,497

Chess.com ECF Members - 1,761

Lichess English Players - 1,517

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

Lichess Internationals and Events

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

Bundesliga

The Liga team battles take place on Thursday and Sunday evenings and we continue to move between divisions 3 and 5.

Liga Ibero

This is a Spanish-organised league with three divisions of around 14 teams each on Sunday afternoons. The league is played at multiple time controls and is highly competitive, with the English Chess Players team playing in divisions 1 and 2.

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

Champions League

This is an international league with team battles with around twenty teams and fifteen leaders at a 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 twenty leaders per team participating in two-hour arena format team battles at a blitz time control.

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

ECF Online Grand Prix – 2022

The ECF Online Grand Prix will run for 10 months from January until October 2022. We are following the same format as the 2021 series with the blitz events 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. the 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-blitz-leaderboards/)

The 2022 series continued with May rapid and June blitz events. The winners were @Rocktroll for the rapid and Mike Harris again for the blitz.

Rapid Event Five (Sunday May 15)

Rapid Event 4 was won by @elisdenele followed by @Pawn2c4 followed by Andrew McGettigan.



Chris Davison maintains his lead overall after four rapid events followed by Tristan Cox and Paul Kemp.

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-rapid-leaderboards/>

Blitz Event Six (5 June)

Event 6 was won by Mike Harris followed by @stanbad1 and @elisdenele.



Chris Davison also leads based on points to date in the blitz events, followed by Michael Harris and John Sharp

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2022-online-grand-prix-series-blitz-leaderboards/>

ECF Marathon for Ukraine – some tactics along the way

The English Chess Federation's 24-hour charity marathon for Ukraine took place over the weekend of 2-4 April and was won by GM Keith Arkell.

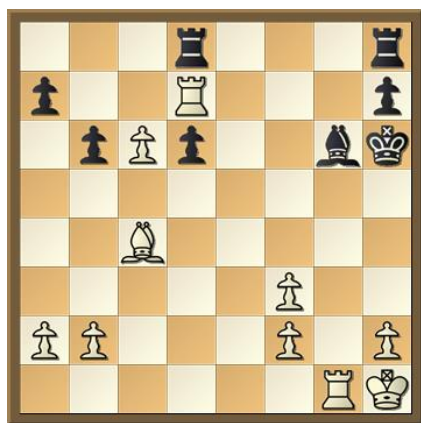
There were some interesting tactics amongst the 6,300 games played over the 24 hours and we have presented a selection below. Solutions will appear in the July issue of ChessMoves.



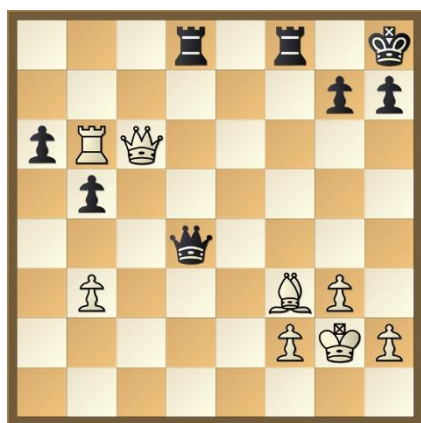
Anato1iy22 (2043) – GM Mikhail Golubev (2427) – Black to play. Checkmate in 8 moves.



Checkmatealot (2261) - chess4ever64 (2103) – Black to play. It's the same theme as the previous puzzle and once again checkmate in 8 moves – this time all forced.



AlexRoyle10 (2013) - m00nmaker (1724) -
White to play and win.



RichardABates (2327) v Exlsambard (1905) -
Black to play and win.

World Chess League.Live Durham Alumni and SchachAttack Fly the Flag

Fed	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	MP
1	Z-House	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1/2	1	*	7 1/2
2	SchachAttack	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1/2	*	7 1/2
3	Better Chess Community (Eskaki)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1/2	0	1	*	7 1/2
4	Durham Alumni	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	*	7 1/2
5	Harvard	1	1	1	1	1	1	1/2	1	0	*	7 1/2
6	Chess Club Politika B	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1/2	1	*	7 1/2
7	Chess Club Politika A	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	*	7
8	Unbeatable Lions	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	*	7
9	Lucky Players	1	0	1	1	1	1/2	1	1	1/2	*	7
10	ChessKidsNation	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	*	7

Update (as at 1 June) by Peter Hornsby

140 teams entered the *World Chess League.Live* when the season started last September, and two English teams remain in contention to qualify for the play-offs as we reach the final round of the league season.

Durham Alumni are playing Harvard University and SchachAttack face Z-House in round 10 and both

teams need a positive result to go through. We wish them the best of luck!

If your team/club would like to join next season, you can email the founder and tournament director Peter Hornsby

Email: director@worldchessleague.live

NEWS and VIEWS

Joining the ECF

Do you know someone who might want to join the ECF? Well, please let them know that now is a great time to join! Any new members joining as Silver members or higher will have their membership automatically extended to expire on 31 August 2023. So for somebody joining now that means 14 months' worth of membership for the price of 12.

What's more, there is good news for existing and future members alike; at April's ECF Finance Council meeting Council agreed the ECF Board's recommendation that membership rates should be held at their current levels.

We are also introducing rolling membership, so that members joining at any time during the membership year will have a full twelve months' worth of benefits rather than just until the end of the following August.

Benefits include a subscription to *ChessMoves*, 50% off CHESS Magazine for the first year, discounts off online purchases at Chess & Bridge, and the chance to opt in for a small sum to JustGo Rewards, which offers discounts from over 270 big name online and high street retailers. More details at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-membership-partners-and-benefits/>

For more details go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-memberships-2022-23/> or to dive straight into the membership page for rates and how to join go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-membership-rates-and-joining-details/>

Please spread the word to others you think might be interested!

Rating Update

Brian Valentine, Manager ECF Rating, writes ...

We have made a small tweak to the rating algorithm. Where a player has not played for 36 months their rating will expire. Until the May list, players had 6 years before that rating expired,

based on old rules with a covid related extension. On resumption returning players would resume as a new player.

For the June list onwards those returning will resume with a draw against an opponent with their last full rating if higher than the new player assumption.

The exception is with those ratings with a category H. Such ratings will expire on 31 December if no results are received for the period before then. For those interested, we have revamped the Top Players section of the website taking into account feedback received.

British Chess Championships

The Chessable British Chess Championships will be held at the Riviera International Centre in Torquay from 8-21 August 2022. This will be the 108th British Chess Championship in a series which has run almost unbroken since 1904, with Torquay having previously hosted the Championships on six occasions, most recently in 2019. You can find all the details and entry form at <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

2022 Olympiad

The English teams have been announced for the 2022 Olympiad –

Women's team – WGM/IM Jovanka Houska, WGM Katarzyna Toma, FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan, WIM Lan Yao and WCM Zoe Varney, supported by Captain IM Lorin D'Costa and ECF Women's Director Agnieszka Milewska

Open team – GM Michael Adams, GM Luke McShane, GM Gawain Jones, GM David Howell, GM Ravi Haria, supported by Captain IM Malcolm Pein. Good luck to all the players!

Read more at the Olympiad website <https://chessolympiad.fide.com/>

European Senior Team Chess Championship

The forthcoming European Senior Team Chess Championship is being held in Dresden from 26 October until 4 November.

Details of the event, along with other seniors events of interest to English players can be found on the ECF website at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/european-senior-teams-championships-2022/>

If anyone wishes to play in one of the England teams they should confirm their interest with Stewart Reuben and Nigel Povah – contact details on the webpage link above.

Publications

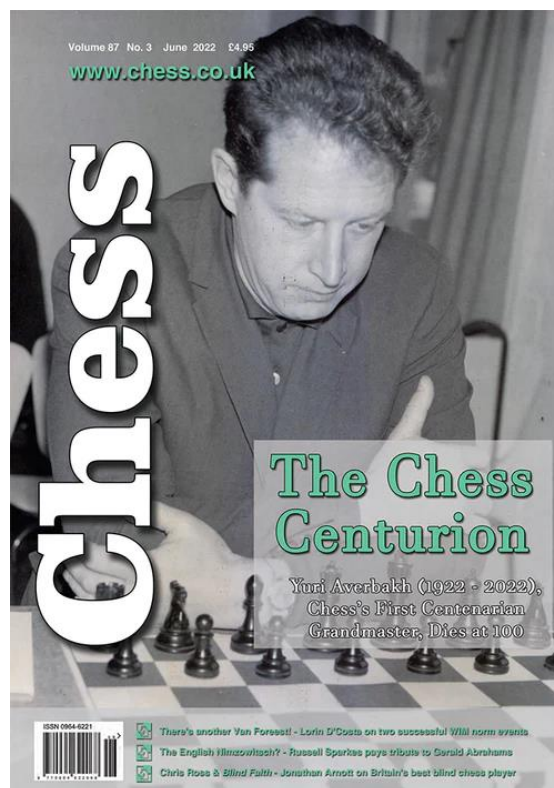
Readers of *ChessMoves* will be interested to know of Cowley Chess Club's 'The Chequered Board' magazine -

https://drive.google.com/file/d/17Y5_Vuy4fqU5fdkHljor76tKLot44zaA/view?usp=sharing

Cowley is a club in Oxford for players of all ages, with a strong ethos where stronger players are encouraged to help with informal coaching. Founded in 1953, it also has a long history of supporting junior chess. More at <https://sites.google.com/site/cowleychessclub/>

Do you have a club magazine that you would like us to feature? If so, please email the Editor danny.rosenbaum@englishchess.org.uk

Chess Magazine taster



Click here for this month's taster - <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0478/2876/2775/files/chess-magazine-june-2022-sample.pdf?v=1651590824>

Click here to purchase / subscribe - <https://chess.co.uk/collections/chess-magazine/products/chess-magazine-june-2022>

THE WINTON BRITISH CHESS SOLVING CHAMPIONSHIP 2022-23

Organised by the British Chess
Problem Society

The starter problem is below. White, playing up the board, is to play and force mate in two moves against any black defence.

There is no entry fee, and the competition is open to British residents only. Competitors need only send White's first move, known as the key move. Entries can be made in one of two ways ---

- By post to Nigel Dennis, Boundary House, 230 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1QY
- By email to winton@theproblemist.org

All entries must be postmarked or emailed no later than 31 July 2022 and must give the entrant's name and home address.

To find out more about the BCPS and to follow the course of the competition see ---

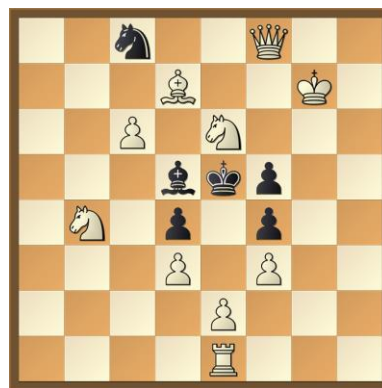
<http://www.theproblemist.org/wbcsc/wbcsc.pl?type=home>

Juniors under the age of 18 on 31 August 2021 must give their date of birth.

Please mention *ChessMoves* when sending in your entry. Receipt of the solution to the starter will only be acknowledged after the closing date, when all competitors will receive the answer, and those who get it right will also receive the postal round, which will contain eight more difficult and varied problems. In due course the best competitors and the best juniors from the postal round will be invited to the final in February 2023. The exact date and location will be advised. There will be prize money in the final for the most successful solvers and the ultimate winner of the final will win the right to represent Great Britain at the World Chess Solving Championships 2023.

WBCSC Starter 2022-23

Black (6 men)



White (10 men)

White to play and mate in two moves

GEMS FROM THE LIBRARY – HARRY GOLOMBEK'S DOOR

by Gerry Walsh



I first met Harry Golombek in the early 1970s when he helped me to set up my 1972 grandmaster tournament on Teesside. We then followed up with the 1973 World Junior Championship.

I was attending lots of British Chess Federation (BCF) meetings in London, invariably travelling by car from Teesside, and on occasions I would give Harry a lift home to Chalfont St Giles. I recall very well admiring the leaded light in his front door which rattled as the door was closed. Harry was burgled when he was out of the country; luckily nothing was taken because his neighbours disturbed the offenders, who made off. The police advised

Harry to carry out some security improvements, which meant secure windows and doors.

The contractor was able to insert the leaded glass panel into the new door, and it was a first-class job. When Harry died in 1995, I remember talking to David Anderton, who was handling Harry's will, about removing the panel from the door before selling the house. Unfortunately, we were advised that this was not possible, so the house was sold.

It was quite some time later that the owner of the house drove down to the BCF Office in St. Leonards and handed over the glass panel, saying that he was not a chess player and thought that we should have it.

So there it remained with Harry's library, and was included with the memorabilia on display when the library moved to the University Centre Hastings. When the Centre closed, the entire library was put into storage, where it remained for a number of years. It was then brought to Battle, where the books were displayed upstairs above the office.

For a long time, though, the glass panel could not be found. I thought it was in the safe, but the key had been lost. I was delighted to learn much later that the key was found, and the glass was indeed inside the safe.

We Want to Hear from You

Congress reports, club news, feedback, suggestions, articles, reports, annotated games are all very welcome.

Please email them to the editor, Danny Rosenbaum, at ---
danny.rosenbaum@englishchess.org.uk

TWEET of the MONTH



JUNIOR MOVES

LITTLEWOOD'S CHOICE



The English youngsters did very well in the recent European Schools Championships held in Rhodes.

There were several excellent results, with the stand-out performances being –

Open U7 Winner – Kushal

Jakhria

Girls U7 Winner – Bodhana Sivanandan

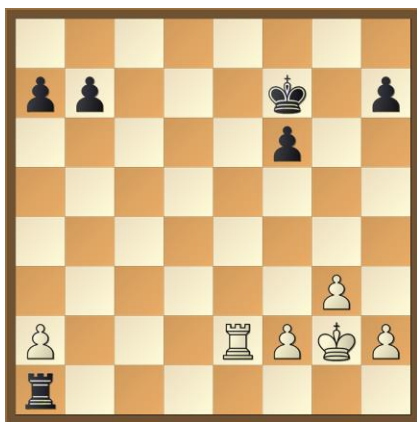
Girls U9 Winner – Zoe Veselow

Today, I want to focus on Zoe. She was undefeated with the magnificent score of 8.5/9 and is a tremendous prospect for the future!

Looking through her tournament games I was impressed by how often Zoe completely outplayed her opponents, winning material early on and then competently finishing them off.

However, it was also clear that she was prepared to fight when the position was equal. Just like Carlsen and our own Keith Arkell, she would put the maximum pressure on her opponent, and this would usually reap a handsome reward.

Consider the following position after Black's 28th move ---



Zoe is White against Elif Deniz, and clearly the position should be drawn. However, watch what happens ---

29.Kf3 a6 30.Ke4 Ke6 31.Kf4+ Kf7 32.Rc2

White's king is more active than its counterpart, but Black should be able to hold so long as she keeps things tight. The best move is probably 32...Kg6, when Black can restrain White's king and also play h5 later to control White's kingside pawns. If White then plays 33.g4 then 33...Rb1 activates the black rook and maintains the balance.

However, Black makes a fatal mistake.....**32...b5?** which gives White a substantial advantage.

33.Kf5 Re1 34.f4! Re6 35.Rc7+ Re7 36.Rc6 The computer tells me that White is winning the ending after 36.Rxe7+, but I can understand why Zoe was reluctant to play that when the move chosen is easily winning!

36....Ra7 37.Rxf6+ Ke7 38.g4 ... and having netted a pawn Zoe went on to win the ending comfortably.

Congratulations to all those who represented England in the European Schools Championships. If you have played any exciting games as a youngster that you would like to have published in my column then please send them to me at plittl@hotmail.com. I cannot promise that they will appear, but I will give them every consideration.

JUNIOR CHESS COACHING IN ENGLAND

The English Junior Coaches and Organisers Association's founder Rob Willmoth outlines his views on junior chess and the role of E.J.C.O.A.

Going back to just before the pandemic, around the time when the coaches' list was scrapped, I presented a document to the ECF Board about how we could improve junior chess. It became abundantly clear that the largest professional body in the chess world was under-represented in England at ECF level.

I have been a full-time professional coach since I left Barclays Capital in 2010. I have seen many good things and some less good things in respect of coaching. The more that I looked at the coaching developments in other countries it became very clear we were lagging behind. Although there have been a number of excellent junior chess initiatives over the last few years, for example Chess in Schools

and Communities, the ECF Academy and the Junior Development Pathway, there has been no formal structure of training for chess coaches in the UK since I started coaching. It was for this reason that I set up E.J.C.O.A. (<https://ejcoa.co.uk/>), a not-for-profit organisation. The mission statement of the group is to improve coaching standards, which would have knock-on effects on the people that are being coached, and to provide a means of communication between coaches.

We have achieved the following in a relatively short period of time -

- The group has a communication channel by email with 387 coaches;
- There is also a WhatsApp group that is used regularly for coaching-related matters;
- We have run a FIDE trainers' seminar with 65 coaches in attendance, achieving a 100% pass rate and a range of FIDE training titles
- We have managed to help with the ECFA Accredited Coaches Scheme, which is by far the best coaches scheme developed by the ECF;
- We have run a ECU ChessPlus course attended by over 30 coaches;
- We have run a number of norm tournaments.

Our latest venture is the National Youth Championships - <https://ejcoa.co.uk/national-youth-championships/>. This is the first year of the event, with the final in Nottingham High School on 8 to 10 July including a training element by qualified FIDE senior trainers.

To qualify for the final, you can either win a zonal, be over the minimum rating threshold, or apply for a wildcard entry.

If you would like to enter a zonal or have a high rating and want to enter the final, you can do so at <https://ejcoa.co.uk/online-payments/nyc-regional-final>.

As chess players you are all aware of children with a high ECF rating and a very low FIDE rating. I recently played Ken Hobson, rated FIDE 1420 and ECF 2144 - a massive disparity. Clearly Ken's actual strength is much closer to the ECF rating. There are countless examples out there. This presents a problem for the most promising juniors - with a low FIDE rating they will not get invited to norm events and can only play in nine-round Swiss events, which are few and far between (and even so there are issues around getting the right opponents).

The purpose of the National Youth Championship is to give children the opportunity to play FIDE rated

games against other children and get them moving up the FIDE ratings ladder much earlier, as well as providing coaching opportunities for our juniors. As a result, the final is FIDE rated. In future years we will be looking into how we can get the zonal events FIDE rated as well. So, when a promising junior starts playing in adult events their FIDE rating will already be higher, putting the most promising juniors on a faster trajectory for future norms and titles. This is not an easy process and there are numerous hurdles to overcome. However, E.J.C.O.A believe this is a step in the right direction.

WEST LONDON CHESS ACADEMY

Watford coach Roger Lancaster on the WLCA approach to coaching



The West London Chess Academy results from co-operation between the Buckinghamshire Juniors Association and the junior clubs at Gerrards Cross, Maidenhead, St Albans, Uxbridge and Watford which, although most run their own coaching programmes, decided that there were all-around benefits in combining coaching resources for their stronger juniors. The aim is to assist the better juniors in the area to improve their chess, ideally up to CM level, in a competitive but friendly environment.

In some ways, this is expected to parallel ECF thinking - although the ECF proposals, following recent consultation on its Junior Development Pathway, have yet to see the light of day - in recognising the need for a bridge between coaching at club and national level.

The WLCA approach is to invite some three dozen juniors from participant clubs for each coaching session, with the rule of thumb being that the invited

juniors are expected to have ECF ratings >100 x age with a minimum rating of 1000, although there's some flexibility where a coach reckons one of his or her charges is seriously underrated.

In each session, currently on Sunday afternoons, the participants are divided - more or less according to ratings - into three groups. The three selected coaches for that session will then take each group in rotation through his or her chosen subject.

The formula for coaches is less prescriptive than envisaged in the ECF proposals, the main WLCA criterion simply being whether a coach has something tangible to offer. For example, a teenage FM may be able to connect with juniors in a way that a much older GM might not. There have been three sessions so far, all in Uxbridge, with a fourth scheduled for 10 July. Each presentation takes around an hour and there's a break for a rapidplay game midway through the afternoon - so in total these sessions last a little over four hours.

The consensus among the participating organisations is that there should ideally be a dozen or so juniors in each group - so around 36 in all. Six participating clubs therefore seems more or less a maximum, given that the chosen format means restricting each club, on average, to six attendees per session.

The exact WLCA approach won't suit everywhere but it should not be beyond human ingenuity for something similar to be arranged in other parts of the country. Urban areas, where travel is not a major factor, look to be most promising as long as rival clubs are prepared to co-operate with one another.

IMPROVERS

PAUL LITTLEWOOD on TACTICS

We all suffer from overload in our daily lives, with not enough time and resources to do all the things we need to do. The same fate can often befall a chess piece...it can have too much to do at the same time. Consider the following example -

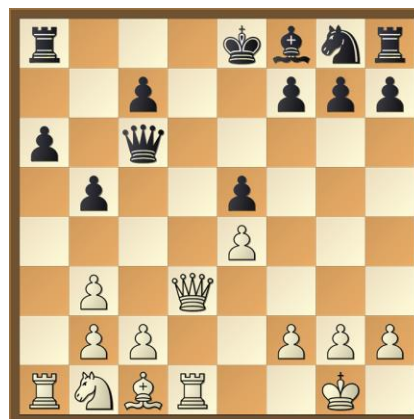


P.E. Littlewood vs J.E. Littlewood Liverpool 1983

The black queen is overloaded because it has to guard the bishop on c5 and prevent a devastating check on d7 by the white queen.

White exploited this by the simple combination **1.Rxc5!** and Black resigned because mate follows after 1....Qxc5 2.Qd7+ Kg8 3.Bxe6+ Rxe6 4.Qxe6+ Kg7 5.Qf6+ Kg8 6.Qxg6+ Kf8 7.Bxh6 mate.

Here is another, slightly more complicated example -



There are two overloaded pieces in the black camp, the black rook on a8 and the black queen on c6. The rook prevents Qd8 mate and the queen prevents Qd7 mate. Therefore neither can protect the a6 pawn and White wins by **1.Rxa6!**

Defending against overloading requires you to be vigilant and to try not to allow your pieces to have too much to do.

The alarm bells should begin ringing when one of your own pieces becomes too important to your defences. If at this point you fail to take some safeguarding action, you will soon find your position ruined by an overloading tactic.

Here are some examples to solve yourself. The solutions will appear at the end of the article.



Oponcensky vs Alekhine, Paris 1925 (Possible variation)

Black to play. How can he exploit the overloaded nature of White's queen?



I. Thomas vs P.E. Littlewood, London 1983

Black to play

(a) Which white piece is overloaded?

(b) How can Black exploit this?

Answers

Oponcensky vs Alekhine

Black wins by 1...Qxf3+! 2.Qxf3 Rxe1 mate

I. Thomas vs P.E. Littlewood

(a) The white knight on d2 is overloaded because it has to guard the other knight on f3 and also prevent Nxb3 winning material.

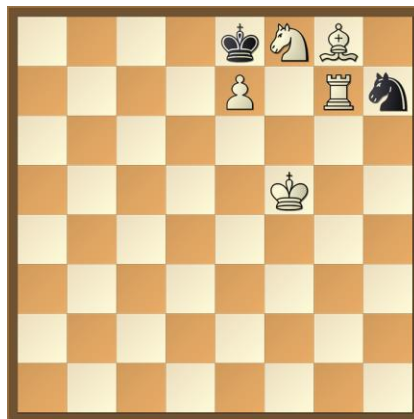
(b) So Black wins by 1....Rxf3! 2.Nxf3 Nxb3 3.Ra4 Nxc1 and White resigned a few moves later.

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

In the last *ChessMoves* I left you this problem to solve –



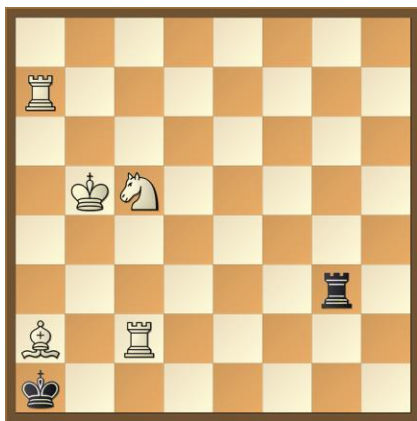
Mate in 3

Johannes Kohtz and Carl Kockelkorn

Deutsches Wochenschach 1912

We need to activate the bishop, and to do so in a way that prepares us to administer mate wherever the black knight then goes. 'The only move that works is the elegant 1.Bd5!. Now Black's most challenging defence is 1...Nxf8, and White meets this with 2.Bf3! The point is that now a random move by the black knight allows 3.Bc6, but 2...Nd7, eliminating that possibility, self-blocks and so allows 3.Bh5. And we also have 2...Kd7 3.exf8=Q#.

There are plenty of interesting 3-movers with overstretched solitary black defenders. Administering the *coup de grace* within the allotted span of three moves can be tricky, especially considering that stalemate possibilities abound. Consider this fine example -



Mate in 3

Karl Fabel

Die Schwalbe 1934

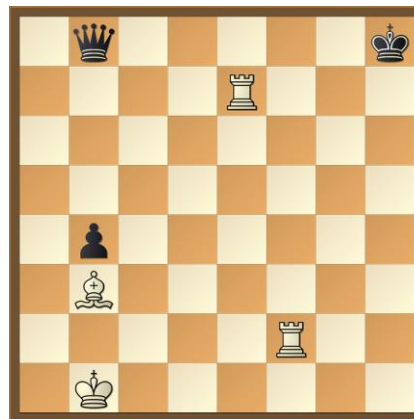
First, we decide to disregard the eye-catching arrangement on the a-file. Inspection reveals that moves by the a2 bishop don't lead to mate on the third move. The point of the problem lies in completely different possibilities for the a7 rook. (The fact that the composer managed to find a way to start the rook from a misleadingly useful-looking square is one of the features that endears the problem to me.)

So, what else can we do with the a7 rook? Consider 1.Rh7. This threatens not only 2.Rh1+ but also 2.Rhh2, which, intending 3.Rc1#, would overload the black rook – 2...Rc3 3.Rh1#; or 2...Rg1 3.Nb3#. However, Black can forestall both White's threats by playing 1...Rh3!, because then 2.Rxh3 is stalemate. Similarly we have 1.Rf7? Rf3! and 1.Re7? Re3!. A clever attempt is 1.Rg7!?, after which it's White's rook that can't be captured (1...Rxg7 2.Nb3#) and moves along the third rank fail (e.g. 1...Rf3 2.Rg1+ Rf1 3.Rxf1#). And it looks as though this should be the key move, because surely we have won the 'focal duel' (a concept that crops up often in problems with singleton black defenders, and which you should bear in mind if you have a go at solving the final problem in this Problem Corner – here, it means that it seems that the black rook, on g3, is on the only square that horizontally defends against Nb3 and vertically defends against Rg1, and so in making any move will make the fatal mistake of losing that 'focus'). In fact however there is a clever defence, 1...Rg5!, because this does defend against Nb3, by pinning the knight, and, of course, stalemate will again come to Black's rescue – 2.Rxg5=.

So the key move has to be 1.Rd7!, when the response 1...Rd3(!) leads to 2.Rd4!!, preventing 2...Rd5, and leaving the black rook now irremediably overloaded.

In playing through the solution I found myself thinking "but in that case why not, say, 1.Re7 Re3 2.Re4, analogously?" – and of course the answer is that on this file Black can 'buy a move' by playing 2...Rd3, taking White beyond move 3: 3.Re1+ Rd1, and it's on move 4 that White mates.

Bearing in mind such considerations, you may like to consider the following problem. Black's defender in this one is the mighty queen, but even queens can be overloaded.



Mate in 3

Otto Wurzburg

1st Prize, Sam Loyd Memorial Tourney 1942

I'll give the solution next time (unless you, or your computer, have solved it before then!)

Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Online Study Solving

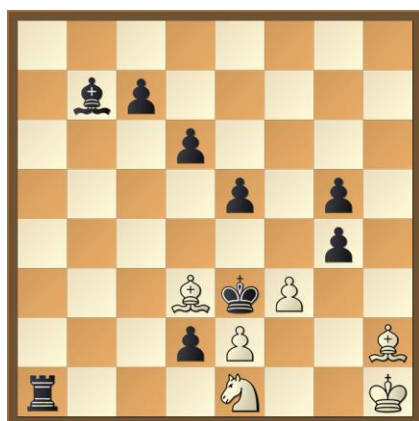
You can now do study solving online. The netchex.club website has set up the first online study-solving tournaments. In this month's column, I'll tell you how they work, so you can then test your online solving skills.

The netchex.club site has been running chess problem solving tournaments for a couple of years, and those do include some studies as well as problems, but now the site also has dedicated study-solving tournaments. The first two are now live. There is a Category 1 and a Category 2 tournament; the latter is somewhat easier. Both have four studies for solving and both are against the clock – you have 90 minutes to solve the four studies. You can set up the positions on a board and move the pieces to help you, and, unless you're Magnus, you should do so.

Before starting the tournaments, you should get familiar with how the netchex software works. For example, you need to click on the piece you want to move and then click on its destination square. That will make the move happen on the board and make your chosen move appear in the solution box. I suggest you have a go at a couple of the Daily Challenges on the home page, and then also try one of the studies in the Open-Style Practice Tournaments, say the study in the Student/Cat.2. When you do a study tournament, you enter your solutions to all the four studies, then go the score page to see how you've done.

There are five points available for each study, and the software awards you the points according to how much of the composer's solution you find. There are no points available for sidelines, so you need to identify the composer's intention, which means look for the most artistic, elegant, line. If you find a line that ends in a pretty mate or a surprising stalemate, it's quite likely to be right. In studies, the white moves are usually unique, meaning that only one white move works at each move, so if there are two definitely-valid options you have probably gone wrong (be careful – one of those might, in spite of appearances, not work!). Another helpful clue is that, in composed studies, all the pieces have a role – there are no irrelevant pieces – so if there's a piece that looks as if it doesn't take part you can try to work out why it's there. It doesn't always help, not least because it might be there only to prevent a second solution, but usually it will have a significant role.

Here's a study from a recent problem-solving tournament, showing how the scoring system works. It was composed by H. Ginniger, published in Revista de Romana de Sah in 1929, and was used in the Finnish Chess Solving Championship in February this year.

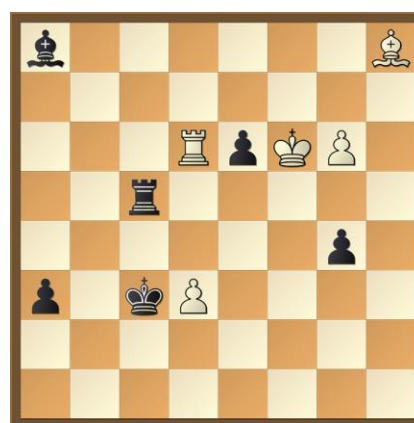


White to play and draw

The solution is obviously going to have to be quite forcing as Black's threats are very serious, so 1.Bg1+ looks like the only candidate. That earns you one point. After 1...Kf4, the black king is threatening to escape from its box, so 2.Bh2+ looks a good way to keep it restrained. Plus, 2.Bh2+ is a 'switchback', which study composers love! So, 2...g3 and now you have to continue 3.e3+ (getting another point), 3...Kxe3 4.Bg1+ (another switchback) Kf4 and hopefully now you understand what White is going to do – he's aiming at self-stalemate (which maybe you guessed at the start?). So 5.Ng2+ (your third point) Kxf3 and you probably see what is going to happen, and why those black pawns on c7 and d6 are there. 6.Be2+ (point number four in the bag) Ke4 7.Bd3+ Kd5 8.Bc4+ Kc6 9.Bb5+ (fifth and final point awarded) and 9...Kxb5 stalemate.

The solution is thus **1.Bg1+** (1 point) **Kf4** **2.Bh2+ g3** **3.e3+** (+1 point = 2) **Kxe3** **4.Bg1+ Kf4** **5.Ng2+** (+1 = 3) **Kxf3** **6.Be2+** (+1 = 4) **Ke4** **7.Bd3+ Kd5** **8.Bc4+ Kc6** **9.Bb5+** (+1 = 5) Kxb5 stalemate. The moves in **bold** are what you have to play on the board to get your five points.

Here's another study used in the Finnish Chess Solving Championship, this one composed specially for the event and published this year in Tehtäväniekka. It's by one of the top composers of recent years, Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen. It's tougher than the first one, but doable, so have a go. With the solution, I'll show you the points allocation, as I did for the first one.



White to play and win

Do try the tournaments, and please then e-mail me your comments and suggestions for improvements - ian@irwatson.uk

One improvement is already planned; at present, the solutions page only gives the correct solution. Soon there will also be notes to each solution, explaining why other moves don't work. Of course, you can set

your software going to find out why those alternatives fail, although a lot of software isn't perfect at solving studies. If you don't have a suitable silicon beast, but you do have a smartphone, there's a user-friendly app that works fairly well - Analyze This (it's quite good for analysing over-the-board games too.)

My thanks to Brian Cook who runs the site (www.netchex.club) and whose impressive programming skills have enabled these tournaments to be set up. If there are any errors in their solutions, however, you can blame me, because I'm the test solver for the tournaments!

The solution is given below ...

Ian Watson - ian@irwatson.uk

How to Solve a Study – solution

(Nielsen)

1.Rd8 (1 point) **Bd5 2.g7** (+1 point = 2) **a2 3.g8Q**
a1Q 4.Kg5+ (+1 = 3) **e5 5.Bxe5+ Kd2 6.d4** (+1 = 4)
Bxg8+ 7.dxc5+ (+1 = 5) any 8.Bxa1 wins.
6.d4 is a splendid move – well done if you found it!

Event Calendar

For details on all the events listed below visit <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>

June 18-26	1st Caplin Menchik Memorial
June 18	UKCC Online Megafinal U10s - Event 1
June 18	UKCC Northumbria Megafinal
June 18	UKCC Northumbria Megafinal
June 18	Lancaster Chess Congress
June 18	Meri's Charity Simultaneous Chess Exhibition
June 18	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
June 18	Maidenhead Junior Tournament
June 19	UKCC Online Megafinal U11-U18s Event 1
June 19	2nd Norfolk Blitz
June 19	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess
June 20	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
June 21	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
June 22	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
June 25	UKCC Shropshire Megafinal
June 25	UKCC St Albans Megafinal
June 25	Poplar Rapid Tournament
June 25	EJCOA National Youth Championships - London Zonal
June 26	2022 Solihull Junior Open
June 26	Chelmsford Summer Junior Tournament
June 26	12th West London Junior Chess Championships
June 26	Hampshire Megafinal
June 27	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
June 29	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
July 2-3	County Championships Final Stages – Final
July 2	UKCC Online Megafinal U11-U18s Event 2
July 2	Simultaneous by British Champion Nick Pert
July 2	Warrington Junior Chess Championships
July 2	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay
July 3	World 20/20 Chess Championships
July 3	UKCC Online Megafinal U10s - Event 2
July 3	Cleethorpes Rapidplay
July 3	Wey Valley Summer Event
July 3	South Shields FIDE Rated Blitz
July 4	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
July 6	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
July 8-10	EJCOA National Youth Championships
July 8-10	28th 4NCL Congress
July 9	UKCC Northern Gigafinal U10s
July 10	UKCC Northern Gigafinal U11-18s
July 10	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess
July 10	West London Chess Academy
July 11	Cook for Good Charity FIDE Rapid
July 11	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
July 12	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
July 13	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
July 14-19	Wood Green Invitational
July 16	Greater London Chess Club Summer Rapidplay
July 16	Maidenhead Junior Tournament
July 17	ChessFest
July 18	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
July 19	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
July 20	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
July 23-24	UKCC Southern Gigafinal - U10
July 23	Poplar Rapid Tournament
July 24-28	CSIT Rapid & Blitz Chess Championships for Workers and Amateurs
July 24	UKCC Southern Gigafinal - U11/U18
July 25	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup
July 31	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess

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