

November 2022

Photograph by Brendan O’Gorman



Mike Basman (1946 – 2022)

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EDITORIAL



Dear ECF members

Greetings and welcome to the November edition of *ChessMoves*.

Sad news this month, as two stalwarts of English chess pass away. We hope that we provide fitting tributes to Mike Basman and Paul Buswell in this issue.

On a brighter note, Alex Longson reports on the Terafinal of the UK Chess Challenge, and Carl Portman presents more coverage of chess in prisons, where the game seems to be becoming ever more popular. This can only be seen in a very positive light.

England claimed team and individual gold medals in the European Seniors Over 50 Team Championships. Congratulations to Mark Hebden, Keith Arkell, John Emms, Glenn Flear and Chris Baker. A tremendous performance - Nigel Povah reports.

In addition, we have our usual star-studded list of regular contributors - a feast of chess awaits! You can also access a playable version of games from this month's edition at the link here - <https://englishchessonline.org.uk/november-chessmoves-playable-games/> or via this QR code ---



Enjoy the magazine!

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COVER STORY

Michael John Basman (1946 – 2022)



The ECF was very sad to learn of the passing on 26 October of International Master Michael Basman.

Michael was a renowned English chess player, author and organiser who was awarded the international master title in 1980.

As well as competing at the highest levels of English chess over many years, his achievements included popularising the Grob and the invention of the Basman Attack and St George Defence openings, the latter being used by GM Tony Miles to defeat GM Anatoly Karpov. He also founded and organised the UK Chess Challenge in 1996 and was a central figure in bringing chess to several generations of junior players.

In 2020 he was one of ten chess seniors who were the subject of a [tribute by FIDE](#) for their contributions to the game. He was described in the tribute as a guru of the English chess scene and a true iconoclast, both descriptions being well merited.

We send our condolences to Michael's family and to his many friends and colleagues on the passing of a much-respected figure who made such a huge contribution to English chess. He will be greatly missed.

Tribute by Sarah Longson

Mike was the founder of the UK Chess Challenge, and his efforts encouraged me and millions of other kids to enjoy the wonderful benefits of this game. I won the Girls edition in the first year of the event, which inspired me to compete regularly, and I ended up playing all over the world. I'll always be grateful for this introduction to the game, as I am for the support and advice he gave to Alex

and me when we took on the organisation of the competition.

I remember many entertaining discussions with Mike - not least about modernisation. Mike was initially quite sceptical about computers in chess and resisted the trend to produce pairings on Swiss Manager. 'But what if the laptop breaks?' At the 2018 Terafinal prize-giving he seemed to be won over: 'These computers are marvellous - can they present the prizes as well?' In the last few years Mike even took to streaming.

It certainly wasn't an aversion to modernisation that delayed Mike's adoption of computers. Mike was almost by definition a moderniser. Ignoring for a moment his contribution to opening theory, he introduced teaching chess via cassette tapes under the name Audio Chess. This can be seen as a precursor to the video instruction, DVD instruction and online instruction trend that followed and is so prevalent today. He brought many new ideas and innovations to life through the UK Chess Challenge - not to mention some much-needed humour.

Mike's wicked sense of humour could certainly be seen in his opening choices (1.g4 as White and 1...g5 as Black). Just a few days before his untimely death we were joking about how even the World champion Magnus Carlsen was finally adopting his openings in a recent Chess.com Titled Tuesday event. The two openings that Mike is perhaps best known for are the Grob (1.g4) and the St George (1...a6).

Speaking of the St George - the only time I actually played Mike was at a blitz event held in a pub in London. After 1.e4 and with a twinkle in his eye he essayed 1...a6 and beat me in about two minutes.

The energy, originality and joy that Mike brought to all his endeavours are a source of great inspiration. He believed that young minds should be encouraged to be rational, compassionate and creative, and that through chess and the UK Chess Challenge he could help develop these traits in the next generation. Mike was a fighter at the board and away from it - not afraid to stand up for his beliefs.

Mike leaves behind an incredible chess legacy and I know that many of his former students, friends and acquaintances will be deeply saddened by his passing. Our condolences go out to his family and nearest friends.

Opening Theory

Michael was justifiably renowned for his contribution to opening theory with a range of offbeat openings including

The Basman Attack - 1 e4 e5 2 Nh3.

The Creepy Crawly - 1 a3 and 2 h3 against anything.

The St George Defence 1 e4 a6 2 Any move ...b5.

He also authored many books including the classic *The Killer Grob* – long out of print, but worth seeking out a copy if you play the Grob or expect to face it.

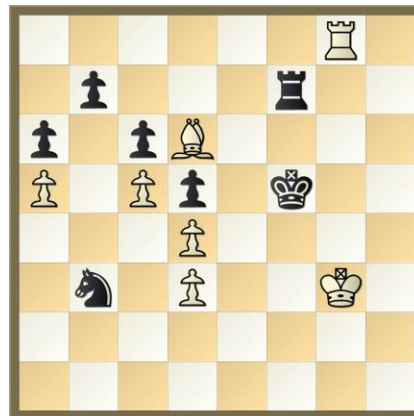
Michael was an active chess player up to 2022 and lived long enough to see Magnus Carlsen adopting 1 g4 and 1 ...g5 in some recent online games including Chess.com's Titled Tuesday which we feature elsewhere in the issue.

As well as a ground-breaking theoretician he was also a fine chess player, with the following games highlighted amongst the many tributes on social media following his passing.

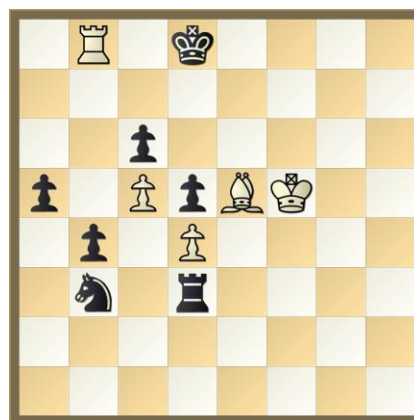
Basman was one of the top English players in the late 60s and 70s. Here is his game from the 1966/1967 Hastings Christmas Congress where he draws against the great Mikhail Botvinnik with some deep positional play against Botvinnik's English Four Knights Opening. Basman is close to winning the game with his passed queenside pawns, and Botvinnik is lucky to escape with a draw by perpetual check.

(10692) Mikhail Botvinnik - Michael John Basman [A29]
Hastings 1966/67 Hastings ENG (8), 05.01.1967

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.g3 Bb4 5.Bg2 0–0 6.0–0 Re8 7.d3 Bxc3 8.bxc3 e4 9.Nd4 exd3 10.exd3 Nxd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.Be3 Be6 13.Rc1 h6 14.h3 c6 15.Qd2 Qd7 16.Kh2 Kh7 17.Rfe1 Ng8 18.g4 Ne7 19.Bf4 Rad8 20.c5 g5 21.Be5 f5 22.gxf5 Bxf5 23.Re3 Ng6 24.Rce1 Re6 25.Bg3 Rde8 26.Bf1 Qg7 27.Rxe6 Bxe6 28.Be5 Qf7 29.Bg3 Qf5 30.Qd1 Rf8 31.Bg2 Rf7 32.Re3 Qf6 33.Qe1 Bd7 34.Qb4 g4 35.hxg4 Bxg4 36.Qb2 h5 37.Kg1 h4 38.Bd6 Qf5 39.Bf1 Bf3 40.Kh2 Bd1 41.f4 Nxf4 42.Qf2 Ng6 43.Qxf5 Rxf5 44.Kg1 Bg4 45.a4 Kh6 46.Re8 Rf7 47.a5 a6 48.Re3 Kg5 49.Re8 Kh5 50.Rg8 h3 51.Re8 Nh4 52.Rh8+ Kg5 53.Rg8+ Kf5 54.Kh2 Nf3+ 55.Kg3 Nd2 56.Bxh3 Bxh3 57.Kxh3 Nb3 58.Kg3



58...Nxa5 59.Kf3 Nb3 60.Ke3 Rh7 61.Rf8+ Ke6 62.Re8+ Kd7 63.Rb8 Rh3+ 64.Kf4 Na5 65.Kf5 b5 66.Rg8 Rf3+ 67.Ke5 Re3+ 68.Kf5 Rf3+ 69.Ke5 Re3+ 70.Kf5 b4 71.Rg7+ Kc8 72.Rc7+ Kd8 73.Ra7 Nb3 74.Be5 a5 75.Rb7 Rxd3 76.Rb8+



½–½

Basman later tied for first place on 8½ out of 11 in the 1973 British, losing out in the play-off against William Hartston.

Here is a fine example of Basman's playing style where he draws against GM Tony Miles, with both players' kingsides disappearing.

Anthony Miles - Michael John Basman [A04]

BCF-ch Eastbourne ENG (7), 13.08.1973

1.Nf3 c5 2.g3 f5 3.Bg2 g6 4.c4 Bg7 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.d3 Nh6



7.h4 Nf7 8.h5 e6 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.Rxh8+ Bxh8 11.Be3 Nd4
 12.Qd2 Bf6 13.Rb1 d6 14.b4 Kf8 15.bxc5 dxc5 16.Na4 Qc7
 17.Kf1 Kg7 18.Ng5 Rb8 19.Nxf7 Kxf7 20.Bg5 Bd7 21.Bxf6
 Kxf6 22.Nc3 g5 23.e3 Nc6 24.Nb5 Qd8 25.Ke2 Kg6 26.Nc3



½-½

And of course - here is one of Basman's most famous games against Ulf Andersson - which has become known as 'The Immortal Waiting Game' - with Basman's long wait eventually provoking his opponent to launch an attack.

The Immortal Waiting Game

(Annotations by Alex Longson).

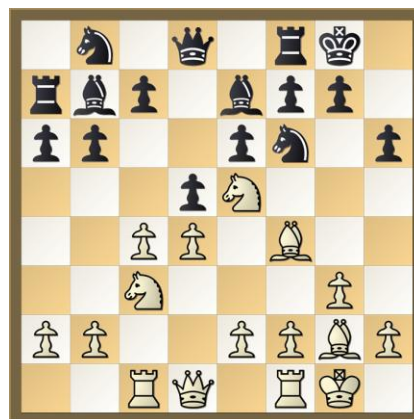
In the following game Mike adopted an astonishing approach of waiting passively for his esteemed opponent (the ultra-strong grandmaster Ulf Andersson) to build up an attack. From move 12 to move 23 Mike simply shuffles his pieces back and forth. On the brink of collapse he defends tenaciously and succeeds in drawing the sting out of White's attack. Then from move 30 he completely

outplays his world-class opponent with forceful classical play.

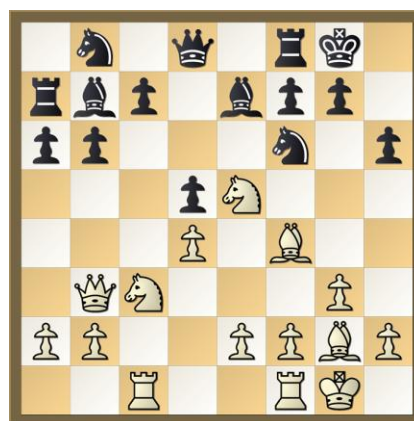
Ulf Andersson - Michael John Basman [E18]

Hastings 1974/75 Hastings ENG (11), 09.01.1975

1.Nf3 b6 2.g3 Bb7 3.Bg2 e6 4.0-0 d5 5.c4 Nf6 6.d4 Be7
 7.Nc3 0-0 8.Ne5 h6 9.Bf4 a6 10.Rc1 Ra7



11.cxd5 exd5 12.Qb3



The opening hasn't gone well for Black - and Mike now decides simply to hold station for more than 10 moves (!) and ask White how he intends to break through. This strategy isn't to be recommended in general, though in this game it works out well. Perhaps Mike was also using a bit of psychology - Ulf being well known for his skill in dry technical positions. Perhaps he was less at home being forced to play the aggressor.

12...Ba8 13.Rfd1 Kh7 14.h3 Kg8 15.Kh2 Kh7 16.g4 Kg8
 17.Bg3 Bb7 18.e3 Ba8 19.a3 Bb7 20.f4 Ba8 21.Rd2 Qd6
 22.f5 Qd8 23.Bf4 Bb7 24.Rg1 c6



Finally Black switches from his policy of doing nothing. White is clearly gearing up to play Bf3/h4/g5 and Mike wants to play ...Nh7 to hold up the storm. To prepare this he first protects the d5 pawn.

25.Bf3 Nh7 26.Rc1 Bd6 27.Na4 Bc7 28.Kg3 Nf6 29.h4 Nfd7 30.Nxd7?! This seems to ease Black's congestion issues a little.

Maybe 30.g5!?

30...Nxd7 31.Re2 Re8 Mike has defended fantastically and appears to now have a viable position. It is fascinating that once reaching a more standard position Mike's play is extremely strong and classical - he completely outplays Ulf in this next stage.

32.Kh3?! Allowing further exchanges and breaking up the white pawns.

32...Bxf4 33.exf4 Rxe2 34.Bxe2 Qe7 35.Bf3 b5 Mike wants to play ...bc8 to point at the king.

36.Nc5 Bc8 37.Qd3 h5! Black breaks up the white kingside cover.

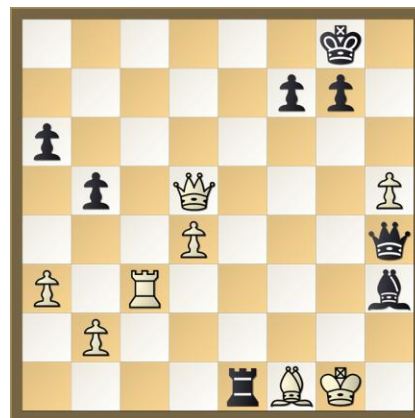
38.gxh5 Qf6 39.Kg3 Nxc5 40.Rxc5 Bxf5 41.Qc3 Bd7! Another good move, making way for the queen to come to h3.

42.Qd3 Ra8 Improve the position of all your pieces!

43.Rc1 Re8 44.Qc3 c5?! 45.Qxc5? 45.dxc5 d4 46.Qd2 Re3 was perhaps Mike's idea, but it appears that White can defend with 47.Re1.

45...Qf5 Now Black is crashing through.

46.Qxd5 Qh3+ 47.Kf2 Qh2+ 48.Bg2 Qxf4+ 49.Bf3 Bg4 50.Rc3 Qh2+ 51.Bg2 Qxh4+ 52.Kg1 Re1+ 53.Bf1 Bh3



0-1

Defeating Speelman with the Borg

Resistance is futile

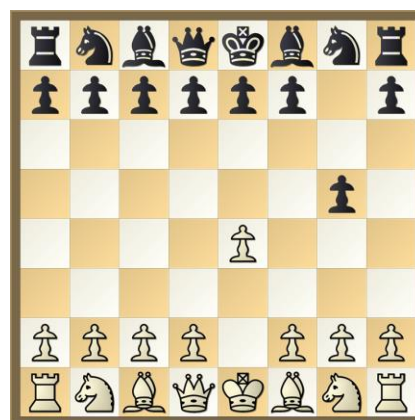
Annotated by Alex Longson

Mike brought attention to the move 1.g4 – the Grob opening - and even wrote a book about it (*The Killer Grob*). Whilst this move seems outrageous enough for most chess players, Mike often went even further by playing 1...g5 with Black – a move I believe he referred to as the Reverse Grob but which is sometimes referred to as the Borg. Despite this move giving White a decisive advantage according to modern engines, in the following game Mike managed to defeat grandmaster Jon Speelman in the 1980 British Championships.

Jonathan Speelman - Michael John Basman [B00]

BCF-ch Brighton ENG (9), 27.10.2022

1.e4 g5 +2.3 according to Stockfish!!



2.d4 h6 2...Bg7 Was Mike's preferred choice in 2021 when he regularly deployed this defence against the latest generation at the EJCOA Invitational.

Whilst he did suffer some gruesome defeats he did manage to hold the highly-promising FM Yichen Han to a draw

Han, Yichen - Basman, M., 1/2-1/2
 1st EJCOA Forest Hall Invitational 2021
<https://lichess.org/fileQPWTZ>

3.h4 gxh4 4.Rxh4 d5 5.exd5 e6 6.Rh5

6.Nf3 exd5 Looks clearly better for White due to Black's ruined kingside structure.

6...Nf6 7.dxe6 Bxe6 8.Nc3



True to Speelman's dynamic style, but it also feels that mixing it in this way also plays into Mike's hands somewhat.

8...Nxh5 9.Qxh5 White has adequate compensation for the exchange in the form of a pawn, slightly better structure and some initiative.

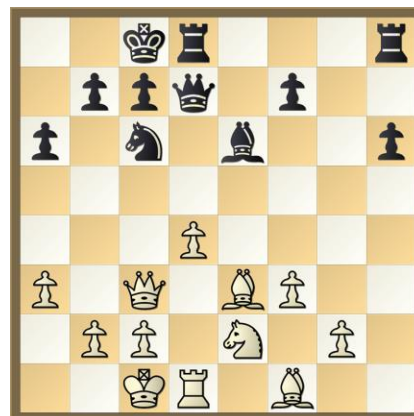
9...Bb4 9...Qxd4 10.Be3 would allow White more activity.

10.Nge2 Nc6 11.Be3 Qd7 12.a3 Bg4 13.Qb5 a6!



14.Qd3 14.Qxb7 Ra7 traps the queen.

14...Bxc3+ 15.Qxc3 0-0-0 16.f3 Be6 17.0-0-0



The dust has settled and the game seems fairly balanced.

17...Ne7 18.Nf4 Nd5 19.Nxd5 Bxd5 20.Qd2?! 20.Qb4 intending c4 was a more active idea.

20...Qc6



Taking control of the light squares and not allowing White to advance with c4.

21.Kb1 h5 22.Bg5 Rde8 23.Bf4 Bc4!



Black's bishop wasn't doing much on d5, so he aims to swap off White's f1 bishop which is defending potential entry points for the black rooks.

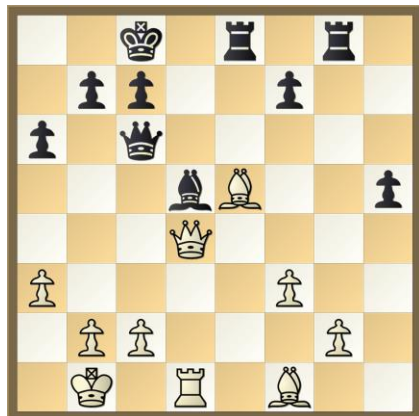
24.Be5 Rhg8 White has drifted and now Black is firmly on top with the rooks threatening to invade.

25.d5?! Perhaps based on a miscalculation?

25.b3 Bxf1 26.Rxf1 f6 27.Bf4 Qd5 and Black is clearly on top.

25...Bxd5 Perhaps Speelman missed that black could in fact capture the pawn?

26.Qd4



26.Qxd5 Rd8 27.Qxc6 Rxd1+ - this intermediate check wins the game.

26...Bb3?? Based on a trick which doesn't work!

26...Rd8 Is simple and strong: 26...Ba2+ 27.Kxa2 Rd8 was a correct version of the trick tried in the game.

27.Bd3?? A mutual blunder !

27.cxb3! Rd8 28.Rc1! and White wins!

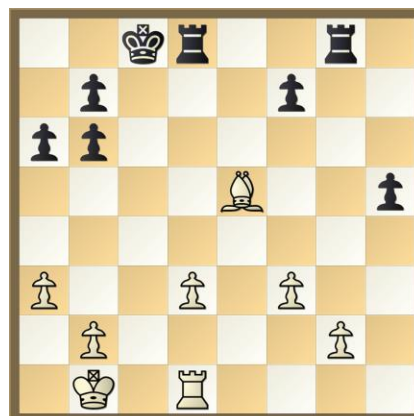
27...Rd8 28.Qe3 Bc4



Now Black is back on track.

29.Qa7 Bxd3 30.cxd3 Qb6 31.Qxb6 31.Qa8+ Kd7 and the queen is trapped.

31...cxb6

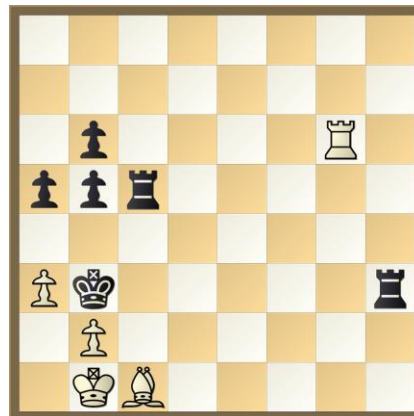


An exchange to the good and with active rooks, Black is winning this endgame.

32.g3 Kd7 33.Bf4 Kc6 34.Rc1+ Kb5 35.Rc7 Rxd3 36.Rxf7 Rxf3 37.Rf5+ Kc4 38.Rxh5 Kb3 39.Rh1 Rf2 40.Bc1 Rxc3 41.Rh7 b5 42.Rc7

White is restricted to complete passivity - 42.Rxb7 Rg1.

42...b6 43.Rc6 Rh3 44.Rg6 Rc2 45.Rg1 a5 46.Rg6 Rc5



0-1

The 27th Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge Terafinal

by FM Alexander Longson



This report is dedicated to Mike Basman – who loved chess more than anyone I know.

The 2022 Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge concluded with the Terafinal held at Blenheim Palace on 15 and 16 October. 60 players took part across five all-play-all age group sections (Under 8/10/12/14/18). All players had done remarkably well to make it to this stage – the Terafinal is exceptionally difficult to qualify for! The quality of chess on display was very high indeed.

We are extremely fortunate and grateful to be able to host the event at such a spectacular venue and the team at Blenheim Palace made us feel very welcome and helped ensure we were able to run everything as planned – including using the Long Library for the prizegiving (literally a red carpet prizegiving)!

Once again a huge thank you to our sponsors Delancey, without whom this event couldn't take place.

Before we come to the event report, we'd just like to express our thanks to our core team and the many helpers and organisers this year. In no particular order:

Dominic Hare, Pat Armstrong, Rahil Ahmad, Pauline Whitehead, Alex Holowczak, Nevil Chan, Ken Regan, Matthew Carr, Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips, Sean Marsh, John Hunt, Ray Sayers, Ed Jones, John Upham, Maha Chandar, Jamie Mitchell, Jennifer Wilson, Tim Wall, David Eggleston, Mark Hogarth, Zoe Varney, Julian Clissold, Ravi Kumar, Chris Strong, John Hipshon, Chris Lewis, Thomas Evans, Ritika Maladkar, Richard Buxton, Sathya Vaidyanathan, Andrew Smith, Shohreh Bayat, Jo

Wildman, Andy Howie, Nilanga Jayawarna, Alecos Ethelontis, Jagdeep Dhemrait, James Corrigan and Adam Robinson. There are many others, of course – apologies if I have missed people!!

But our biggest thanks go to Mike (Michael John Basman, 1946 – 2022) who sadly passed away a few days after the event. Chess in the United Kingdom, and particularly junior chess, owes a huge debt to Mike's efforts in establishing the UK Chess Challenge in 1996 and introducing tournament chess to millions of children over the past three decades. Mike was too ill to attend the Terafinal, but he was still keen to stay involved and appointed Mark Hogarth and Zoe Varney to select the best game awards.

Under 8s



The Under 8 section was jam-packed with the UK's strongest under 8 players and it is amazing to see so much talent at such a young age. Many of these players would be competitive in much older sections and it is clear that the future of UK chess is looking bright in the hands of these players.

In the end, the battle for first was dominated by the two Scottish contestants, Rithvik Deepak Ambattu and Supratit Banerjee. Going into the final 11th round Rithvik was ahead by one point, having scored an unbelievable 10/10. However, were Supratit to win he would catch Rithvik and even win on tiebreak (direct encounter). In a long and tense game Supratit emerged the winner and Rithvik had to settle for second place despite an amazing score of 10/11.

Scottish junior chess is developing very quickly and Supratit follows in Frederick Gordon's footsteps – Frederick winning the boys' Under 12 title in 2021.

Bodhana Sivanandan won the girls' prize by a clear three points, scoring 8/11. Bodhana, having won multiple

European and World titles already this year, was one of the favourites going into the event but couldn't quite keep up with the Scottish duo, losing to Rithvik in round 6.

1st – Supratit Banerjee (10/11)

2nd – Rithvik Deepak Ambattu (10/11)

3rd (and top girl) – Bodhana Sivanandan (8/11)

The best game prize for the Under 8s, as judged by Zoe Varney and Mark Hogarth, was awarded to the following game:

Deepak Ambattu, Rithvik (1523) - Han, Qixiang (1448)

Under 8 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal (round 5)

15 October 2022

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4 Nf6 5.Be3

A system recently favoured by one Magnus Carlsen. See Carlsen, M. - Duda, J., 1–0, Airthings Masters Prelim, 2022.

5...Bg7 6.f3 0–0 7.Qd2 d6 8.0–0–0 Nc6 9.Nge2

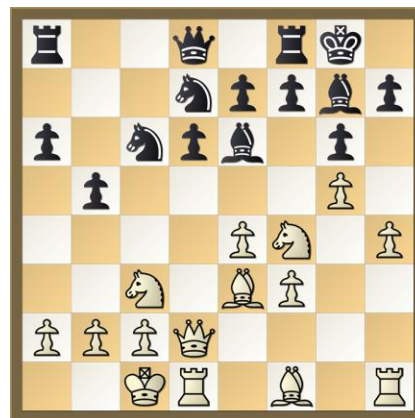


The position resembles a Yugoslav Dragon except that the white knight is on e2 instead of d4. This has the practical advantage of avoiding some very deep theory and in this specific position prevents Black from playing ...d5.

9...a6

9...Ne5!? was worthy of consideration.

10.g4 Be6?! 11.Nf4 b5 12.g5 Nd7 13.h4



13...Nde5?

13...Qa5! was much more challenging. 14.Nxe6 fxe6 and Black has good counterplay.

14.h5 Re8?

14...Nxf3 is punished by 15.Qg2 Nfe5 16.hxg6 hxg6 17.Qh2+-. 14...Qa5 was again necessary to try to get counterplay.

15.hxg6 Nxg6 16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.Bh3 Nf8



18.Qh2

Intending Bxe6.

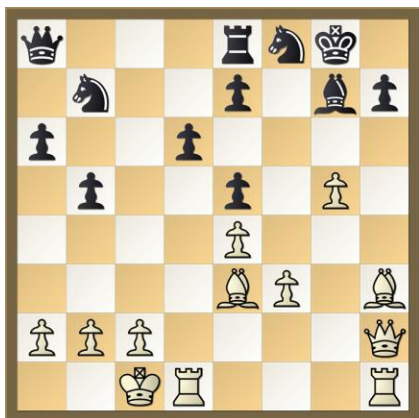
18...Qd7 19.Nd5! Nd8

19...Rab8 was more stubborn, but White's superiority is obvious.

20.Nb6 Qb7 21.Nxa8 Qxa8

White has won the exchange and retains a strong attack.

22.Bd4 e5 23.Be3 Nb7



Rithvik now conducts the remainder of the game with great energy.

24.Be6+! Nxe6

24...Kh8 25.g6+-.

25.Qxh7+ Kf8 26.Qf5+ Kg8 27.Qxe6+ Kf8 28.g6 Nd8
29.Qf5+ Kg8 30.Qh5 Kf8 31.Qh7 e6 32.Bh6 Bxh6+
33.Rxh6 Qb7 34.Qh8+ Ke7 35.Qg7+ Nf7 36.Qxf7+ Kd8
37.Qxb7 Re7 38.Rh8+ Re8 39.Rxd6#

1-0

A very smooth performance.

Under 10s



The Under 10s saw one of the closest finishes I have ever witnessed! Going into the last round there were five players separated by just half a point: George Zhao (7½), Rishi Vijaykumar (7½), Billy Fellowes (7½), Ruqayyah Rida (7) and Anh Nguyen (7). In the final round George defeated fellow leader Billy whilst Rishi could only manage a draw versus Anh, meaning George was the outright winner on 8½ /11. This is justice for 2021 where he finished on the same score as the winner but lost out on tie-break. George has dominated the -Under 10 tournaments this year, winning the Northern Gigafinal and the Challengers (9/9)!

Rishi Vijaykumar played impressive chess throughout and is another member of the strong Scottish contingent.

The girls' prize was won by the impressive Ruqayyah Rida who also finished third overall – having finished second in 2021. Ruqayyah is one of our top female talents and I'm sure we'll be hearing more about her in the years to come.

1st – George Zhao (8½/11)

2nd – Rishi Vijaykumar (8/11)

3rd (and top girl) – Ruqayyah Rida (8/11)

Under 12s



The event was led from start to finish by Livio Cancedda-Dupuis who had also won the Challengers event in September. Despite losing in round 9 to Avyukt Dasgupta, Livio managed to keep his calm and finish the tournament with two victories including versus top seed Stanley Badacsonyi in the final round.

The girls' prize was won by Dhriti Anand who had a fantastic tournament, defeating many of the top seeds including Stanley Badacsonyi, Theo Khoury and Avyukt Dasgupta. She did lose to her nearest rival Elis Dican, but still managed to finish the tournament a point clear for a deserved title. For Elis – the 2021 overall Under 10 champion – it just wasn't her tournament, but she is a fighter and will be back!

1st – Livio Cancedda-Dupuis (8½/11)

2nd – Theo Khoury (8/11)

3rd – Avyukt Dasgupta (8/11)

Top girl – Dhriti Anand (5½/11)

The following game was an impressive victory for our girls' champion Dhriti Anand over third place finisher Avyukt Dasgupta.

Anand,Dhriti - Dasgupta,Avyukt (1687)

Under 12 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal (round 3)
15 October 2022

1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.g3 c6 4.Bg2 Bd6 5.0-0 f5
The Dutch Stonewall.

6.b3 Qe7 7.Bb2 Nf6 8.c4 0-0



9.Nc3

9.Qc1 is a very common manoeuvre aiming to exchange dark-squared bishops and exploit Black's dark-square weaknesses.

9...Bd7 10.Rc1 Be8

Black carries out the standard Stonewall 'bad bishop' regrouping.

11.c5

Probably too early to lock the queenside - but it pays off!

11...Bc7 12.b4 a6 13.a4 Nfd7?!

It feels wrong to leave a knight stuck on b8. 13...Nbd7
14.b5 Ba5 looks acceptable for Black.

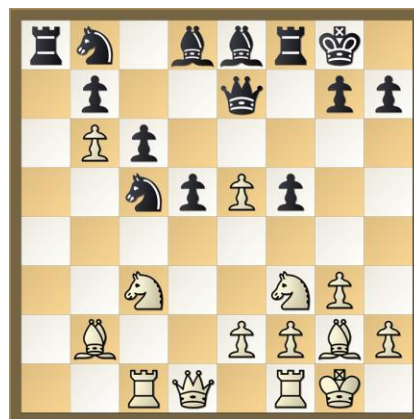
14.b5 axb5 15.axb5 e5?



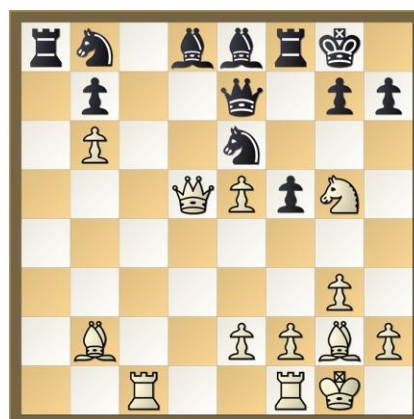
16.b6?!

16.bxc6! would win material, e.g. 16...bxc6 (16...Nxc6
17.Nxd5) 17.Nxe5 Nxe5 18.Nxd5 Qd8 19.Nxc7 Qxc7
20.dxe5+- and White is two pawns to the good with a
crushing position.

16...Bd8 17.dxe5 Nxc5



18.Nxd5! cxd5 19.Qxd5+ Ne6 20.Ng5



White has several pawns for the piece and the initiative.
Once the b7 pawn drops the b6 pawn will become very
dangerous.

20...Bf7 21.Nxe6

21.Nxf7 may be a bit more accurate: 21...Qxf7 22.Qxb7
Qxb7 23.Bxb7 Ra2? 24.Bd5 Rxb2 25.Bxe6+ Kh8 26.Rc8
Rxb6 27.Rd1 Be7 28.Rxf8+ Bxf8 29.Rd8+-.

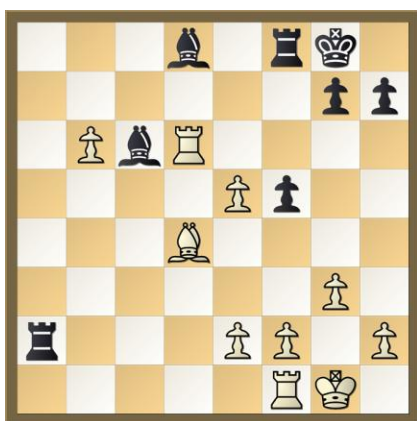
21...Bxe6 22.Qxb7 Qxb7 23.Bxb7 Ra2 24.Bd4 Nd7



25.Rc6?!

25.Bc8! Bxb6 26.Bxb6±.

25...Bd5 26.Rd6 Bxb7 27.Rxd7 Bc6 28.Rd6

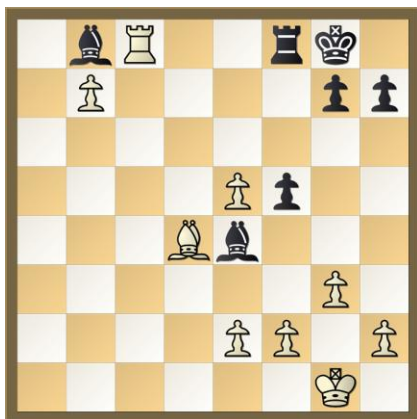


28...Bb5?

Black has defended really well but now falters - probably the only serious mistake of the game. 28...Rc2! 29.Rb1 and whilst the position remains complicated it seems chances are roughly balanced.

29.Rb1 Ba4 30.b7 Bc7 31.Ra6 Bc2 32.Rxa2 Bxb1 33.Ra8 Be4 34.Rc8 Bb8?

34...Bxb7! 35.Rxc7 Rf7 36.Rc2 and White is probably winning, but there is still a lot of work to do.



35.Bc5!

1-0

An excellent game by White.

Under 14s



The Under 14 section was a closely-fought race between good friends and rivals Kenneth Hobson (Accelerator Programme) and Dimitrios Zakarian. Kenneth is actually coached by Dimitrios's father David Zakarian, who as well as being a strong chess player (FIDE Master) is also an author and professor at Oxford. David of course remained neutral throughout and I was impressed by his stance of not following the live games too closely and letting the players get on with it.

Kenneth and Dimitrios played a long and hard-fought draw in round 10 in which both players had chances. This meant that both went into the final round on 8/10 – however, Dimitrios was ahead on tie-break (the infamous Sonneborn-Berger score). Both players won their final games, meaning that they shared the prize money, but Dimitrios took the title on tie-break. This is the second time Kenneth has finished overall second to Dimitrios – previously being defeated in the final of the Under 12 2020 edition. Kenneth was the first to congratulate Dimitrios and the respect and friendship between the players provide a great example.

Third place finisher Isaac Lam was leading the event for much of the way before defeat at the hands of Kenneth in round 9. Still, this was a great tournament for Isaac with many nice victories.

Olga Latypova won the girls' prize with 4½/11 to add to her 2021 Under 12 girls' title. Olga finished a full 3½ points ahead of her nearest rival for the title and showed a high standard throughout.

1st – Dimitrios Zakarian (9/11)

2nd – Kenneth Hobson (9/11)
 3rd – Isaac Lam (8/11)
 Top girl – Olga Latypova (4½/11)

The following game was the crucial round 10 clash between the two friends and leaders:

Zakarian, Dimitrios Levon (1911) - Hobson, Kenneth (2031)

Under 14 UK Chess Challenge Terafinal (round 10)
 16 October 2022

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 Bb7 5.Nc3 Ne4 6.Nxe4 Bxe4 7.g3

7.Nd2 is the main move here - with a famous Kasparov victory continuing 7...Bg6?! 8.g3 Nc6 9.e3 a6 10.b4 b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.Bb2 Na7 13.h4 h6 14.d5 exd5 15.Bg2 c6 16.0-0 f6 17.Re1 Be7 18.Qg4 Kf7 19.h5 Bh7 20.e4 dxe4 21.Bxe4 Bxe4 22.Nxe4 Nc8 23.Rad1 Ra7 24.Nxf6 gxf6 25.Qg6+ Kf8 26.Bc1 d5 27.Rd4 Nd6 28.Rg4 Nf7 29.Bxh6+ Ke8 30.Bg7 Kasparov, Garry - Andersson, Ulf, 1-0, Interpolis, 1981.

7...Be7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.d5 e5 11.Be3



White's set-up seems quite dubious, but he is rewarded on the next move as Black blunders a pawn.

11...Nd7?

11...f5 and Black is doing well.

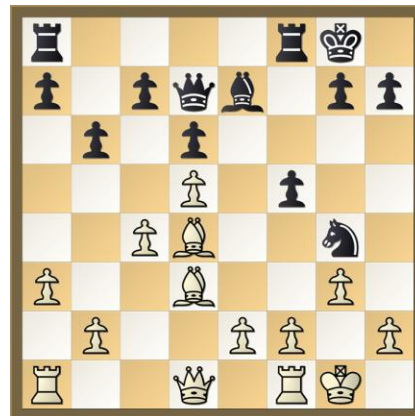
12.Nxe5! Nxe5

12...Bxg2 13.Nc6! A crucial intermezzo which wasn't possible with the black knight still on b8.

13.Bxe4 f5

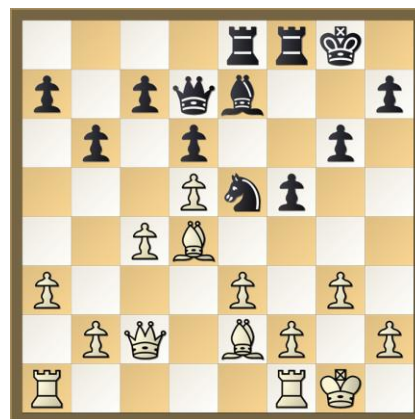
13...Nxc4 14.Bxh7+ Kxh7 15.Qd3+ Kg8 16.Qxc4+—.

14.Bd3 Ng4 15.Bd4 Qd7



White is a healthy pawn to the good with potential for active play in the centre. He does need to keep an eye on his king, but Black isn't very well coordinated to begin an attack yet.

16.Qc2 g6 17.e3 Rae8 18.Be2 Ne5



19.Qc3

19.f4! Here this seems to work very well: 19...Ng4 20.Bxg4 fxe4 21.e4 with a crushing advantage.

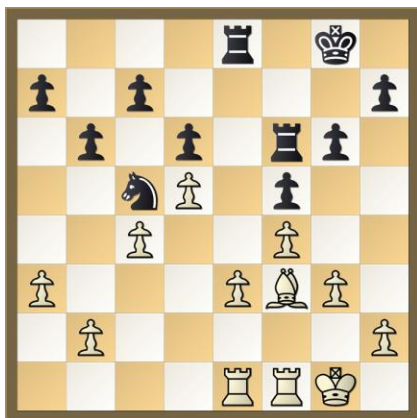
19...Qd8 20.Rae1 Bf6 21.f4?!

Now this move isn't as effective and even leads to some weakness in the white position. 21.b4 intending c5 was a good option.

21...Nd7 22.Bf3 Nc5

Black has stabilised somewhat - though of course White is still much better.

23.Bxf6 Qxf6 24.Qxf6 Rxf6



White has some technical difficulties to overcome to exploit the pawn advantage.

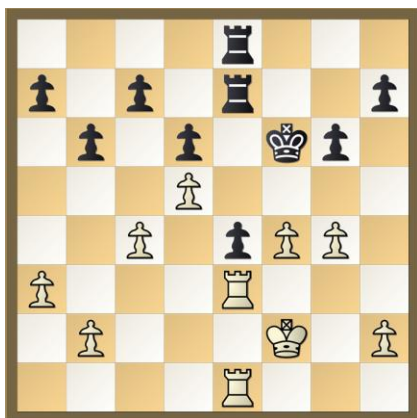
25.e4

A very committed decision to return the pawn. White clearly didn't want to allow Black to blockade with ...Ne4. White did have a good alternative here, though it was by no means obvious: 25.b4 Ne4 26.Bxe4 Rxe4 27.Kf2 (intending Rc1) 27...Rxc4 28.Rc1 Rxc1 29.Rxc1 Rf7 30.b5 with the idea Rc4 - Ra4.

25...Nxe4 26.Re3?!

26.Bxe4! fxe4 27.Kf2 and White is able to regain the pawn 27...Rf7 28.Ke3 Kg7 29.Kd4 Kf6 30.Rxe4 Rxe4+ 31.Kxe4 Re7+ 32.Kf3 with good winning chances.

26...Rf7 27.Bxe4 fxe4 28.Rfe1 Rfe7 29.g4 Kf7 30.Kf2 Kf6



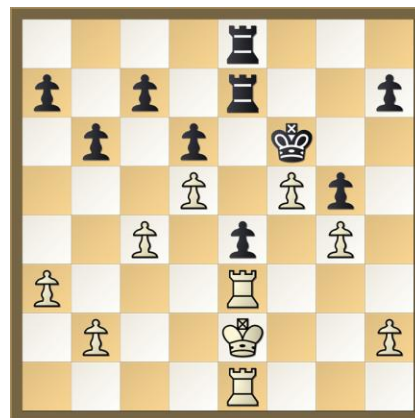
31.Ke2?!

31.Rh3 followed by Ke3 is interesting, with some advantage for White.

31...g5

31...h5! was perhaps more accurate.

32.f5?!



32...h5!

Now Black even takes over the initiative!

33.h3 hxg4

33...Ke5 would prevent White from taking the h-file as per the note to the next move.

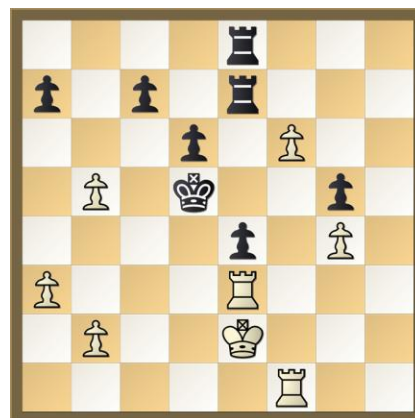
34.hxg4 Ke5 35.Rf1

35.Rh3.

35...b5

35...Rh7! I'm curious as to why neither player took the h-file here.

36.cxb5 Kxd5 37.f6

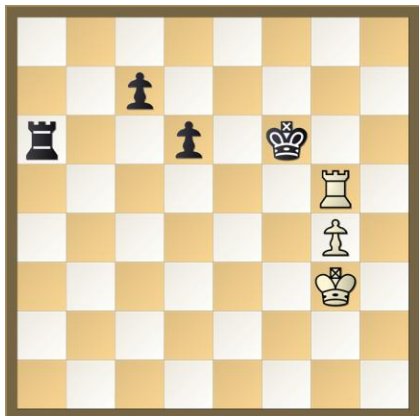


This double-rook endgame is very complex and I won't make a serious attempt to analyse in detail - the players were getting quite short of time at this point and the game has already been quite a roller-coaster.

37...Rf7 38.Rh3 Re5 39.Rh6 Kc5 40.Rg6 Kd5 41.Ke3 Ke6 42.a4 Rc5 43.b3 Rc3+ 44.Kxe4 Rxb3 45.Rf5 Rb4+ 46.Kf3 Rxa4 47.Kg3 a6 48.bxa6 Rxa6

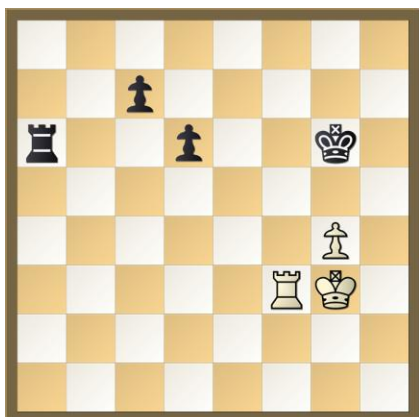
Black has emerged with two connected passed pawns which could become very dangerous for White.

49.Rgxg5 Rxf6 50.Rxf6+ Kxf6



Remarkably, we have seven-man tablebases now which tell us this position is winning for Black! When checking this using the tablebase, I became quite fascinated with the position and its intricacies. I'll point out the shifts in the evaluation for interest, but of course it isn't to criticise the players, who were low on time and no doubt exhausted.

51.Rf5+ Kg6 52.Rf3



52...c5?!

52...Rc6!! – the only winning move according to the tablebase. The idea can be seen by considering 52...Ra4 (which looks natural, cutting off the king) 53.Rc3! c5 54.Rd3! and this manoeuvre forces Black back into passivity with 54...Ra6 and White can hold here.

Black should be careful about how he advances the pawns, and in the meantime look to restrict White's activity and try and win the g-pawn.

53.Rc3?!

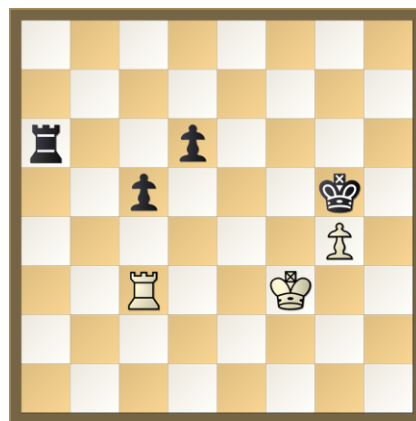
53.Rd3! Kf6 54.Kf4 Ke6 55.g5: White has enough counterplay to draw.

53...Kg5?!

53...Kf6! is the only winning move, and again it is subtle: 54.Kf4 Ra4+ 55.Kf3 Rd4→.

54.Kf3?!

54.Rd3! with the idea of Rd5+ and Kf4 generates sufficient activity for White.



54...Ra4! 55.Rd3 Rf4+! 56.Ke3 Rf6!

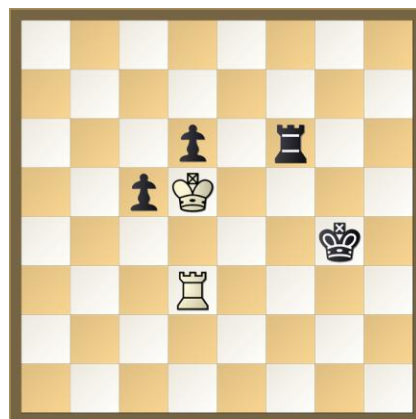
The last few moves from Black have been excellent, treading the narrow path towards the win.

57.Ke4

57.Rd1 Kxg4 58.Ke4 Kg3 59.Rd2 Rh6. My vague understanding of this position is that Black uses Zugzwang in order to get closer with his king; for example, 60.Rd1 (60.Ra2 Rh4+ 61.Kd5 Rd4+) 60...Kf2 and Black is breaking through.

57...Kxg4 58.Kd5

58.Rd1 Kg3! 59.Ke3 Re6+ and Black's king approaches.



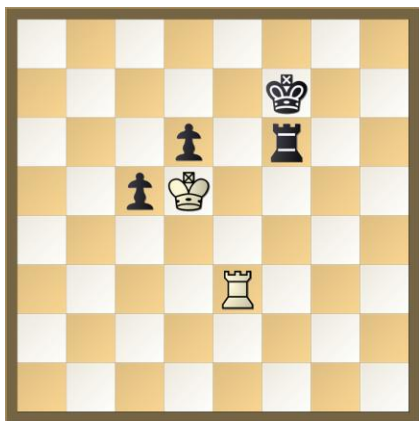
58...Kf5?

The win finally slips away for good.

58...Kf4 is winning, though he will have to give up the d6 pawn after 59.Ra3 Rf5+ 60.Kxd6 Ke4. Black is winning here as the white king is cut off along the rank.

58...Rf4 is also winning, exploiting a little tactic: 59.Kxd6 Rd4+ →.

59.Rf3+ Kg6 60.Rg3+ Kf7 61.Re3



Remarkably, White has landed in a fortress and Black cannot make progress

61...Kg6 62.Rg3+ Kf5 63.Re3 Kf4 64.Re1 Rh6 65.Re8 Kf3 66.Re7 Rf6 67.Re8 Kf4 68.Re7 c4 69.Kxc4 Rf5 70.Re6 Rc5+ 71.Kd4 Rc1 72.Rxd6 Rd1+ 73.Kc5 Rxd6 74.Kxd6

½-½

A great battle which I felt was worthy of two champions.

Under 18s



FM Yichen Han is the 2022 Under 18 Delancey UK Schools' Chess Champion after edging out fellow FIDE Master Rajat Makkar. Yichen was undefeated throughout, though he had a very close shave versus girls' winner Anum Sheikh in round 5. Yichen added to his 2017 (Under 11), 2018 (Under 10) and 2019 (Under 12) titles by winning the top title despite still being eligible for the Under 14s.

FM Rajat Makkar ran Yichen very close and led for most of the way. Rajat was leading on 7/7 going into round 8 where he managed to hold Yichen to a draw. However, things started to come unstuck with a defeat to Aron Saunders in round 9 and a draw with Frankie Badacsonyi in round 10 despite being an exchange up at one point. Rajat has an incredible record in the UKCC; 2018 (2nd –

Under 12), 2019 (2nd – Under 12), 2020 (1st – Under 14), 2021 (1st – Under 14) and I'm sure he'll be back next year to try and add the Under 18 title to his collection.

Anum Sheikh won the girls' prize, finishing a point ahead of Julia Volovich despite losing their individual game. Her result could and perhaps should have been even better after agreeing draws in virtually winning positions against Frankie Badacsonyi, Edward Jackson and Yichen Han. Anum is a sharp and exciting player and with a bit more confidence we believe she can challenge the boys for first place in future!

1st – Yichen Han (9½/11)

2nd – Rajat Makkar (9/11)

3rd – Frankie Badacsonyi (7½/11)

Top girl – Anum Sheikh (4/11)

FEATURES

Michael Adams' Game of the Month



Another game from the British Championship, and in contrast with last month's sharp encounter where events developed at breakneck speed, here the action unfurls slowly. John Emms, my captain on the gold medal-winning England 50+ team, continues to ask little questions throughout the game, despite the quiet

nature of the play. For a long time, his opponent Steven Jones maintains the balance, but in the run-up to the time control he is forced to make some positional concessions. John manoeuvres adroitly, maintaining control throughout with great precision, and converts cleanly without allowing a hint of counterplay.

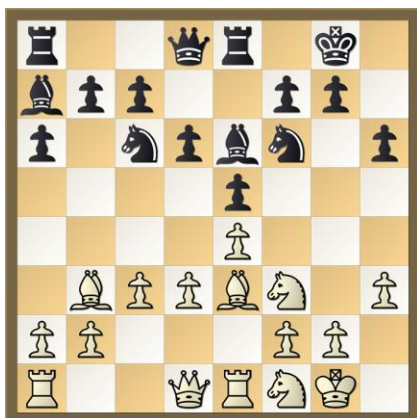
J. Emms – S. Jones

British Championship Torquay 2022

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 0–0 6.Nbd2 d6 7.0–0 a6 8.Bb3 White's bishop had become vulnerable to exchange via Na5 ideas. The more popular way to prevent this these days is 8.a4, but John's move has its points - the light-squared bishops will remain on the board for longer.

8...Ba7 9.h3 A sensible precaution: 9.Re1 Ng4! 10.Re2 Kh8 followed by f5 gives Black active play.

9...h6 10.Re1 Re8 11.Nf1 Be6 12.Be3 12.Bc2 d5 is OK for Black.

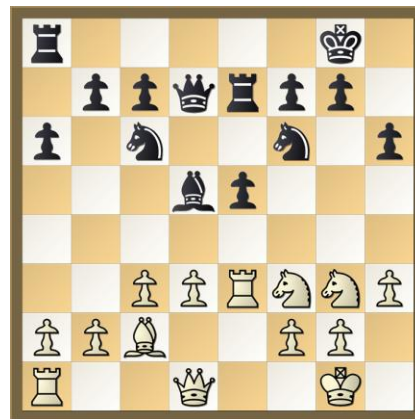


12...d5 A mass bishop exchange was also possible, but this thematic advance makes sense.

13.exd5 Bxd5 14.Bxa7 Rxa7 15.Bc2 15.Ba4 was another idea: if Black responds with 15...b5 the queenside is a little compromised.

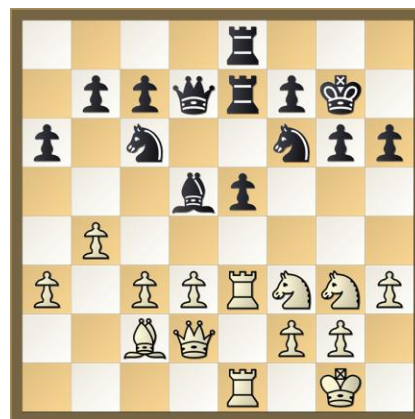
15...Ra8 There is plenty of time to redeploy the rook.

16.Ng3 Qd7 17.Re3 Re7



18.a3 White had some more active ideas here as well. 18.Nh4 g6 19.c4 Be6 20.Ba4 is interesting, or 18.b4 followed by a4.

18...g6 19.Qd2 Kg7 20.Rae1 Rae8 21.b4 21.Nh4!? is still a tricky idea, although Black's king position is solid. John's choice is very practical; taking more space increases queenside options, and there is no reason to hurry.



21...Qd6 Black faces an annoying problem: all his pieces are well placed, but it is hard to find a convenient move. The computer suggests the committal 21...Bxf3 22.Rxf3 Nh7 followed by f5, but this is not an easy decision to take at all.

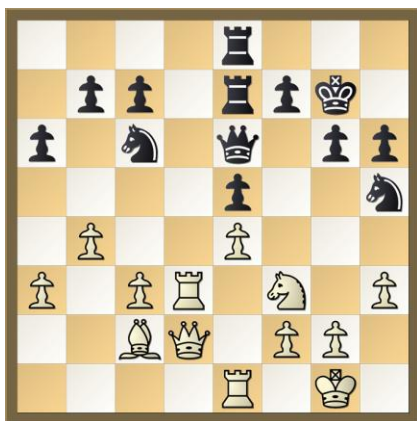
22.Ne4 Taking advantage of the queen nudge, but 22.Nh4 also opens up the possibilities for a kingside attack. 22...Qd7 (22...Be6! is better) 23.d4! exd4 24.Ngf5+ and all

White's pieces flood into the assault: 24...gxf5 25.Rg3+ Kh7 26.Bxf5+ Qxf5 27.Nxf5 Rxe1+ 28.Kh2 Ng8 29.Rg7+ Kh8 30.Rxg8+ Kxg8 31.Qxh6.

22...Bxe4 22...Nxe4 23.dxe4 Bc4 was also playable (23...Be6? 24.Rd3). Black should still be OK after ceding the bishop, but it gives the potential for long-term problems as the game proceeds.

23.dxe4 Qe6 It was stronger to swap queens. 23...Qxd2 24.Nxd2 Rd8 enables Black to be first to occupy the open file.

24.Rd3 Nh5 Throughout the game Black's knight on c6 has been passively placed, as White's pawns have prevented any active possibilities for that piece. Now 24...Nb8, heading to d7, is a good way to transfer it to a better circuit.

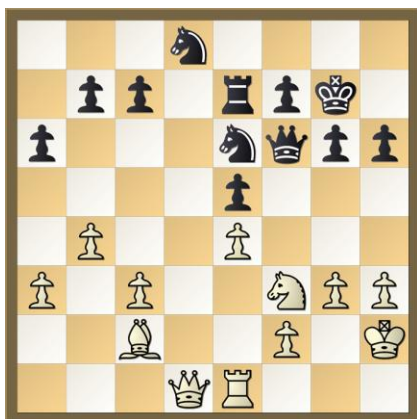


25.Qd1!

Making room for the rook to drop back.

25...Nf4 26.Rd2 Qf6 The knight on f4 looks good, but in time it will be driven back: 26...Qc8 27.h4 prepares g3. The sneaky 26...Na7 with ideas of Nb5 was trickier, creating aggravation on both flanks.

27.Kh2 Ne6 28.g3 Rd8 29.Rxd8 Ncxh6

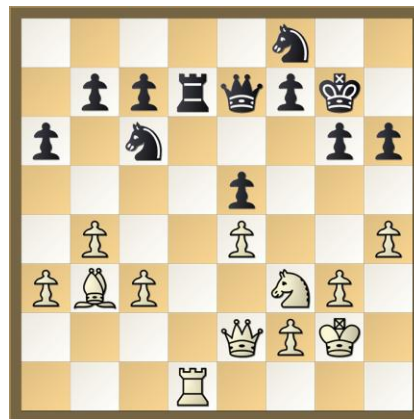


30.Kg2! A neat strengthening move, securing the loose pieces on the f-file.

30...Nc6 31.h4! Continuing to limit active ideas by preventing Ng5 possibilities.

31...Nf8 32.Bb3 Rd7 33.Qe2 Qd6 This doesn't help, but it is very hard for Black to reorganise his pieces.

34.Rd1 Qe7



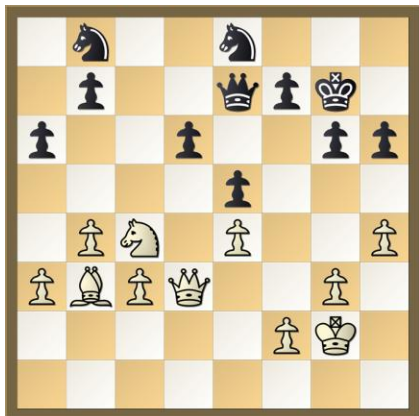
35.Rd5! 35.Bd5 Nd8 is less impressive. The rook cannot be captured on d5, but nor can it be easily dislodged.

35...Rd6 36.Qc4 Improving White's queen position seems extremely logical, but 36.Ba4! was to the point: 36...Nd7 (36...b5 37.Bb3 Nd7 38.c4, 36...f6 37.h5 g5 38.Rxd6 Qxd6 39.Bb3 and the bishop reigns supreme) 37.Bxc6! Rxc6 38.Rxd7! Qxd7 39.Nxe5 picks off a pawn.

36...Nd7 Black should have played 36...Rxd5 37.exd5 Na7! (37...Nb8 38.h5! probes the light squares. I was tempted by 38.Nxe5? here, but it doesn't work: 38...Qxe5 39.d6 Ne6) 38.Qe4 (38.h5 Nb5! heading to d6) 38...Nd7 39.c4 keeps the advantage.

37.Rxd6 cxd6 38.Nd2 Nf6 39.Qd3 The pawn on d6 doesn't seem like that big a weakness, especially as it can't be targeted by John's bishop, but Black's lack of counterplay makes it a pretty thankless defensive task.

39...Nb8 40.Nc4! Ne8



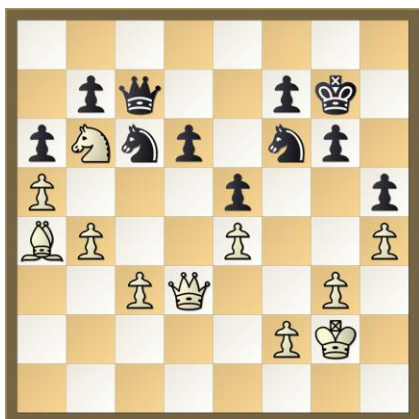
41.Qd5! A key move; preventing the planned Nd7 keeps the knights pinned to the back rank.

41...Qc7 42.a4 Nc6 The knight hardly wanted to return here, but now 42...Nd7 43.Na5! hits b7 and f7.

43.a5 h5 43...Ne7 would at least expel the queen for now.

44.Ba4 Kf8 44...Ne7 45.Qd3 Nc6 46.Nb6 transposes to the game.

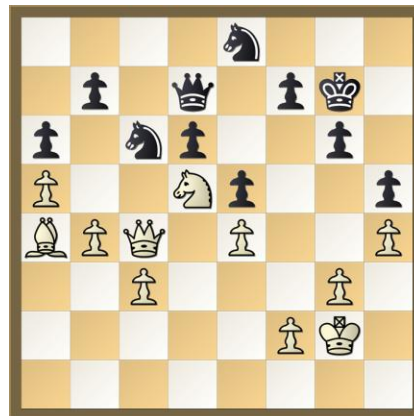
45.Qd3 Kg7 46.Nb6 Nf6



47.Qc4! Another strong move; Black's options continue to reduce.

47...Ne8 47...Qe7 48.Bxc6 bxc6 49.Qxc6 is hopeless.

48.Nd5 Qd7



49.b5! It's time for the breakthrough.

49...Nxa5 Significant material will be lost in any case: 49...axb5 50.Bxb5 Nxa5 (50...Nc7 51.Nxc7 Qxc7 52.a6 Qb6 53.Bxc6 bxc6 54.Qa4 Qa7 55.Qxc6) 51.Bxd7 Nxc4 52.Bxe8.

50.bxa6 Qd8 Or 50...Nxc4 51.Bxd7.

51.Qb5

Black resigned, due to 52...Kxf6 53.axb7, or 51...Nf6 52.Nxf6 bxa6 53.Ne8+! and the intermediate check leaves White a piece to the good.

Arkell's Endings

Success in solving the problem depends on choosing the right aspect, on attacking the fortress from its accessible side

- George Polya



GM Keith Arkell - GM Antonio Fernandes D75

European Senior Ch 2015 Eretria, 28.10.2022

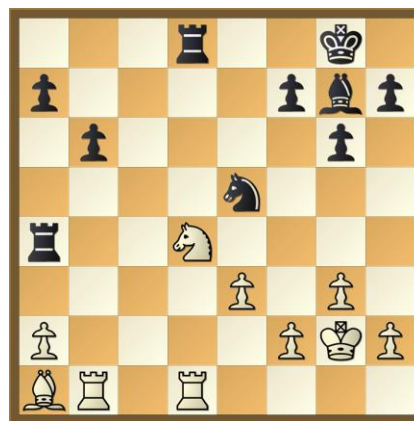
Magnus Carlsen once quipped "I don't believe in fortresses". Certainly, there are many positions in which the fortress hangs by a thread and can be probed until the cows come home.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.g3 c5 7.Bg2 Nxc3 8.bxc3 Nc6 9.e3 0-0 10.0-0 Be6 11.Nd2 cxd4 12.cxd4 Bd5 13.Bxd5 Qxd5 14.Qb3 Rfd8 15.Rb1 Qxb3 16.Nxb3 e5 17.dxe5 Nxe5 18.Bb2 Rac8 19.Kg2 Rc2 20.Nd4 Rc4 21.Ba1 b6 22.Rfd1



The position is unbalanced but about equal. I have my beloved extra pawn in the centre, but there is no chance yet of using the a-pawn to break up the queenside. Were Black less active I would typically be able to play a4-a5 to create a weakness. Instead, my grandmaster opponent understandably wants to put pressure on the a-pawn, but doing so leaves him vulnerable to a tactical idea.

22...Ra4



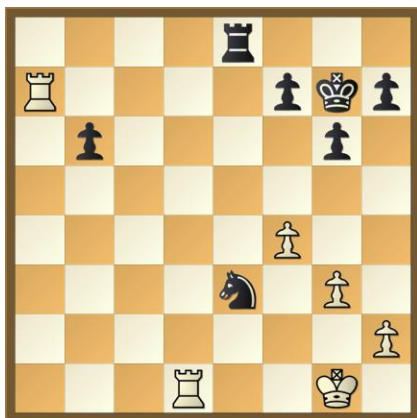
23.Nf5!? If you see an interesting idea which sets your opponent some practical problems without actually harming your own position it is often worth giving it a go as they may miss something. Black could have side-stepped this complication had he simply played 22...Rdc8.

23...Re8? And there you have it. 23 Nf5!? briefly disturbed my opponent's equilibrium and he immediately goes wrong. He should play 23...Rxd1 24 Rxd1 f6 which maintains equality but doesn't look particularly appealing. I now win the exchange by force, but there is still much work to do.

24.Nxg7 Kxg7 25.f4 Rxa2+ 26.Kg1

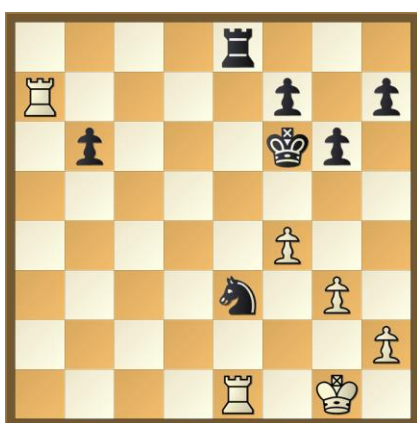


26...Rxa1 27.Rxa1 Ng4 28.Rxa7 Nxe3



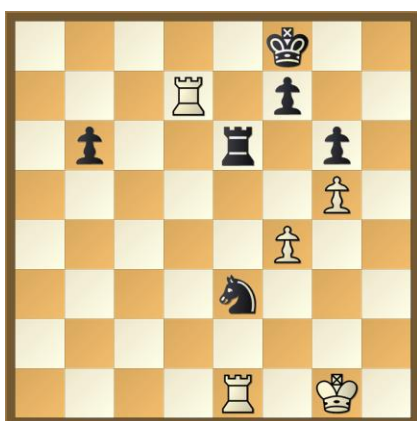
29.Re1 It is tantalisingly difficult to win the b-pawn after 29 Rdd7 Rf8. Try it yourself!

29...Kf6



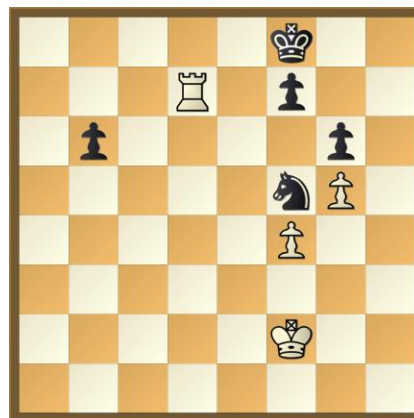
30.g4 On the other hand had I seen the sequence 30 Ra3 Nc4 31 Rxe8 Nxa3 32 Re4! I would have played it as Ra4 will soon lead to the capture of the pawn.

30...h6 31.h4 Re6 32.g5+ hxg5 33.hxg5+ Kg7 34.Rd7 Kf8



35.Rc1 35 Rd3 Nd5 is far from clear.

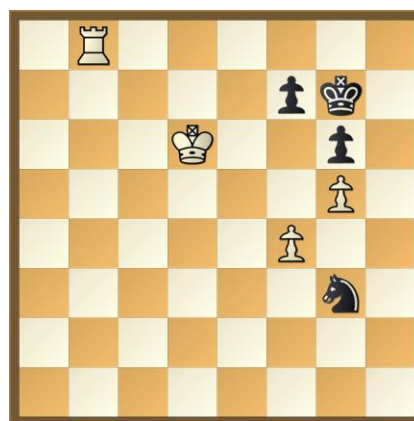
35...Nf5 36.Rc8+ Re8 37.Rcc7 Re7 38.Kf2 Rxd7 39.Rxd7



39...b5 If he tries to get clever with 39...f6, hoping to reach one of the drawn R+P v N+P positions, I have 40 gxf6 Nh6 41 Kf3 Ng8 42 Rg7.

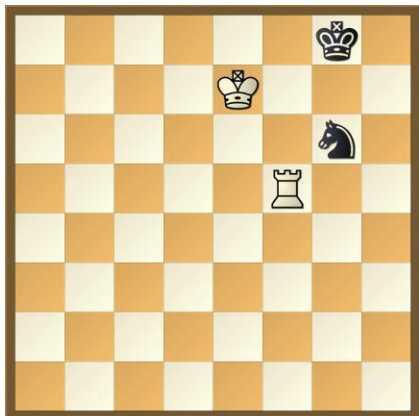
40.Kf3 Ke8 41.Ra7 Kf8 42.Ke4 Kg7 43.Ke5 Ne3 44.Rb7 Nc4+ 45.Kd4 Nd6 46.Rb6 Nf5+ 47.Ke5 Ng3 48.Rxb5 I hoped this would be decisive but I had no knowledge of the exact configuration, so I feared there might be some kind of fortress.

48...Nf5 49.Rb8 Ng3 50.Kd6



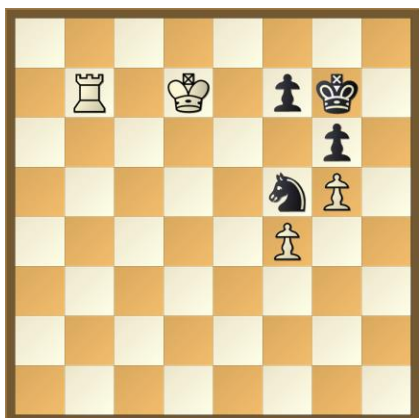
50...Nh5 Normally I like to base my annotations on what I analysed and thought about during the game, but just to demonstrate the difficulties of the position here is how the engine forces a win against 50...Ne2:

50...Ne2 51.Rb4 Ng3 52.Kd7 f5 53.Ke6 Ne4 54.Rd4 Kg8 55.Ke5 Kf8 56.Rd7 Nc5 57.Ra7 Ne4 58.Ke6 Kg8 59.Rf7 Ng3 60.Kf6 Nh5+ 61.Kxg6 Nxf4+ 62.Kf6 Nd5+ 63.Ke6 Nf4+ 64.Ke7 Nd5+ 65.Ke8 Ne3 66.g6 Nc4 67.Ke7 Ne5 68.Rxf5 Nxg6+.

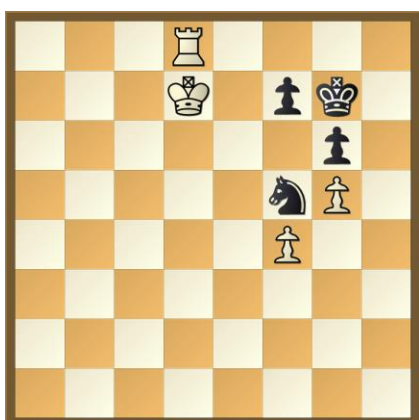


Leading to mate in 15 with just R v N on the board! 69.Kf6 Nf8 70.Rg5+ Kh7 71.Rg4 Nd7+ 72.Ke6 Nc5+ 73.Kf7 Kh6 74.Rd4 Nb3 75.Rd5 Na1 76.Kf6 Kh7 77.Rb5 Nc2 78.Rb7+ Kg8 79.Rg7+ Kh8 80.Kf7 Nd4 81.Rg5 Nf5 82.Rh5+ Nh6+ 83.Rxh6#

51.Rb4 Ng3 52.Ke7 Nf5+ 53.Ke8 Nd6+ 54.Kd7 Nf5 55.Rb7

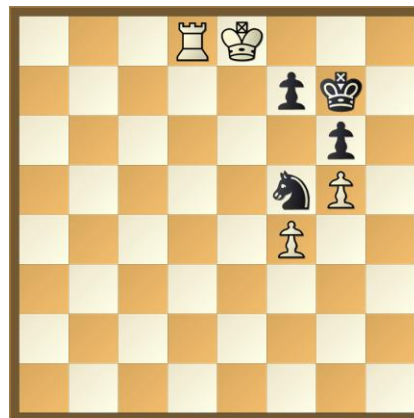


55...Kf8 56.Rb8+ Kg7 57.Rd8



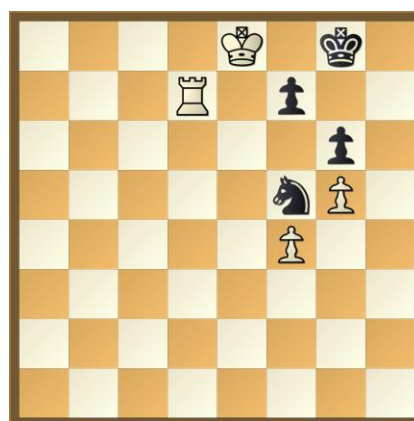
57...Kh7? This loses due to a neat Zugzwang, but amazingly there may be no way to win by force after 57...Ng3 58 Ke8 f5!. I'll leave any curious readers to find out for themselves whether there is any way of forcing the ideal K on e8 and R on d7 set-up without allowing the ...f5 resource.

58.Ke8 Kg7



59.Rd3! Zugzwang! The point is that I must take on f7 with check to avoid the fork ...Nd6+.

59...Kg8 60.Rd7



If 60...Ng7+ 61 Ke7 Nh5 62 Rd8+ Kg7 63 Rf8 Nxf4 Rxf7+ picks up the knight.

1-0

Preparing Openings – a Vital but Imposing Topic by Peter Wells



Alongside my legendary time-trouble, the most destructive manifestation of my perfectionism has undoubtedly been the commencement of substantial writing projects which I have not succeeded in seeing through to completion. It would be an exaggeration to call this a

habit, but it has happened more than once.

Most recently, this caused me to fail to deliver a book intended to discuss opening preparation (especially as it occurs at the higher levels). On that occasion, I managed at least to salvage something, since I was able to use a portion of this research to inform a longer than usual section on opening preparation in *Chess Improvement: It's All in the Mindset*. Indeed, I had formed a lot of strong beliefs about how to undertake effective opening work during the course of my research and the ease with which many of these seemed to accord with 'growth mindset' behaviour was one of the things which most convinced me of the power of the mindset approach. However, the whole experience has left me with some strong but unvoiced opinions and, fortunately, a reasonably undimmed enthusiasm for the topic.

Consequently, I am always interested to discover new books willing to tackle aspects of this vast subject. I have recently run into two of these. My main focus of interest has been the ambitiously-named *Prepare to Win: a Club Player's Guide to Winning at Chess before Move One*, the work of my very enthusiastic and diligent White Rose clubmate Jonathan Arnott. His publishing company - Steel City Press – has in a short time achieved an impressive rate of output and such notable titles as *Blind Faith* by Chris Ross and Jonathan's own *The Queen's Gambit Accepted* (written together with his student Rosie Irwin), very much - just to clarify - a reference to the impact of the Netflix series, rather than a deep venture into opening theory! However, I have also paid some attention to *How to Out-prepare your Opponent*, by the likeable Dutch international Master Jeroen Bosch, an expert in many

openings ranging from the mainstream to the quite outlandish.

Jonathan's book in particular is notable for avoiding some of the traps into which I had fallen by limiting the subject in two clear ways. He is very much focused on preparation for *specific opponents* and, where he does give advice on the business of 'general' opening preparation, it is usually explicitly linked to this primary narrative. Jonathan's work is also clearly targeted below the top level, with many of his arguments illustrated by his own experience (featuring, it must be said, some strikingly impressive opening preparation) and even the mention of a 'rough target audience' for the book of 1400-2000 - although Gawain Jones's preface hints straightaway at the fact that plenty of players stronger than this could also benefit from it.

My own experience attests to the wisdom of this. My work suffered from being too open-ended, virtually an invitation to infinite research within a topic which was not only immense but also fast-moving. My primary focus was on general opening preparation: the search for new ideas and the extent to which human thinking was able to supplement the engine in finding these; comparative openings and the potential cross-over provided by knowledge of positions with similar structures; how it might be useful to classify our openings not so much by such questionable definitions as 'positional v dynamic' but by practical issues such as the extent to which the respective sides' plans were strongly indicated by the structure. I also became suspicious of the extent to which our choices are confined by making unwarranted assumptions and therefore excited at the role which challenging some of these could play in opening new vistas for exploration. Even now I keep seeing extraordinary examples of the last of these - although admittedly it may sometimes be the engine doing the majority of the work in clearing the initial obstacles to original thought. How many would have predicted, for example, that Sir Stuart Milner-Barry's famous gambit in the Advance French would be revitalised by White's eschewing the recapture on d4 and instead seeking to accentuate Black's developmental log jam by a cheeky advance of the h-pawn? Yet I now see innumerable examples of the extraordinarily rich diagram position both on the database and even when casually spectating other games during play – mostly accompanied by some unanticipated shadow boxing which seems to reflect the belief that developing White's knight by capturing on c3 is somehow unacceptably dangerous for Black.



Still, another part of the problem I faced is implicit in this example. During the time I was writing, the world of opening preparation was changing at an unprecedented speed. Yes, I was overwhelmed by the quantity of fresh material, but also had to admit that whilst I continue to believe that this kind of opening preparation remains a potentially fascinating venture in cooperation between human thought and the engine, there was no denying that the relative input between these two was changing significantly. It was no longer just a matter of assessing the ‘human viability’ of the suggestions made by the engine, of tempering its suggestions based upon years of accumulated experience and wisdom. It was becoming clear that the engines - as Matthew Sadler has been especially quick to appreciate - have plenty to teach us too.

A striking example which impacted upon my own repertoire was the damage done to Black’s cause in the Sicilian Richter-Rauzer by eliminating the taboo on White’s exchanging knights on c6 ,with the consequent ‘opening of the b-file against his king’. This was first evident in the once popular line with 7...a6 and 8...h6 in which practical games from the diagram position, arising from a simple formula of exchanging knights and forcing ...d5, revealed that this structure holds far less promise for Black than previously thought and that White’s attacking chances are actually more promising than his opponent’s b-file-based aspirations.

Other equally effective examples have since been added, to the degree that our entire thinking about these variations has been transformed.

All of this served to reinforce the sad realisation that some of my ideas which had most attracted me to the project initially – the attempt to surprise opponents by deep exploration of options which were not the engines’ top choices, or the general drift away from heavy theoretical battles in favour of a quest for ‘playable positions’ in which we feel ‘comfortable’ (a tendency hugely promoted by World Champion Magnus Carlsen) – were already becoming utterly mainstream ideas. Indeed, the latter thought is central to Gawain’s message that kicks off Jonathan’s book. If I had been at all ahead of my time, I had certainly missed the moment!

Of course, preparation for specific opponents is a vital skill at the top level too and as I ventured further into Jonathan Arnett’s work, I was particularly intrigued by this question: **How different should the advice be for players in a rating band of, say, 1400-2000 from that which might be offered to titled players or even the elite?** This question is of vital importance for me as I frequently write about chess at the top level with at least an underlying assumption that the lessons to be drawn have some salience for all. On the whole, I have to say that I was mostly encouraged to find the differences in approach tend to be outweighed by, if not direct similarities, then at least methods which are clearly analogous.

One significant difference is that Jonathan appears very conscious that he is writing for an audience who may not be entirely sold on the importance of preparing for individual games at all. Whilst I can think of a few grandmaster colleagues who prefer to ensure that they are adequately rested rather than risking any over-exertion from pre-game preparation, and one or two who shun opening work entirely (you may even be able to guess one endgame specialist who is on my mind at this

point), the vast majority need no convincing. I am completely with Jonathan in his conviction not only as to the importance of this work, but in his claim that if players are finding that opening preparation isn't helping then this should be a cue for it to be improved rather than abandoned. Of course, the importance of preparation which doesn't get to see the light of day is a harder sell. Coaches tend to say that nothing is wasted, and it may be used on a future occasion, but this is at least likely to require substantial revision to return the ideas to the short-term memory. The best preparation can surely claim more intrinsic value. A serious, deep dive into any but the most randomly tactical positions should offer possibilities to increase understanding and have a value that goes beyond any single idea which has been learned or even unearthed. Of course, for time-constrained amateur players there are always understandable debates about where their limited attention is best directed and - perhaps conscious that many players have a natural tendency to overestimate the importance of the opening phase - this is not always where the venerable advice tells us to focus our attentions. However, for me this just renders it all the more imperative that opening preparation is undertaken in a way which supports other learning. Typical plans extending into the middlegame, sometimes even consideration of endgames likely to arise with a given structure, are examples of ways in which opening work can be better integrated with a player's overall improvement efforts. Trying to ensure that work is intelligently targeted and valuing it on this basis, rather than in terms of the sheer quantity undertaken, is usually a good way to ensure that time is available for at least some work on all the key aspects of the game.

Another frequently asked question - to which any reasonable answer should consider the likely constraints on an amateur player's time - relates to the desirability of maintaining a broad enough repertoire to avoid being predictable and perhaps occasionally even to really surprise the opponent. Again, there are good general grounds for advocating variety - learning a range of different structures is beneficial in itself and (as I suggested in *Chess Improvement*) I would even suggest there is much to be gained from not overly identifying with a given playing style and attempting to avoid all positions which do not fit comfortably with this. However, the speed with which new openings can now be 'learned' through intensive use of databases and an engine should not lead us to overlook the danger that this kind of process may well fall short of ensuring deep understanding. These procedures may be OK for an occasional outing, but for more regular use there will be

no substitute for investing time to gain a feeling for a position which is likely to come with more old-fashioned methods (for example, training games and, who knows, perhaps even some reading!). Jonathan falls into the category of a player who plays a limited range of openings, but a large number of variations *within* these, and he is probably right to believe that up until a certain level this is an adequate solution to avoiding predictability. I think it would be naïve to overstate the advantages of 'structural familiarity' which varying *within* a given opening will offer - even for an opening such as his favourite French Defence, there is a world of difference between the Exchange Variation, the Advance, the possible IQPs of the Tarrasch and so forth. However, until relatively recently, even some top players managed to survive on a limited diet of openings. My first encounter with Wolfgang Uhlmann - famous for having a very limited repertoire as Black during a career spanning several decades - saw me out-prepared as he essayed an interesting novelty in the King's Indian against my (perhaps too predictable!) Gligorić System.

Jonathan's sensitivity to this issue is just one of several cases where he is alert to the important observation that preparation works both ways. Clearly a player should find out as much as possible about their opponent. Jonathan offers a wealth of tips for seeking online information which may not be available in the basic databases, and it is worth mentioning that even if this point is somewhat less critical at the higher levels, at elite junior tournaments, for example, this skill is now a vital aspect of the coach's armoury, since even for quite strong players the database may reveal but a tiny fraction of the games they have actually played. However, it is also important *to be aware of what your opponent may discover about you*. This may seem obvious, but I think it is often underestimated, and sometimes easy just to get wrong. It is for example worth remembering that - whatever information is available out there - the opponent probably cannot see into your head. I have recently gone wrong on a couple of occasions by fearing that my opponents will target those areas of my repertoire which feel most vulnerable to me and neglect to realise that they may simply head for areas where (if well prepared) I am at the same time most predictable. Self-knowledge in general is a vital part of the art. Over and above the complexities I have just mentioned, it can simply be useful not just to know your strengths and weaknesses but be aware of your capacities *on a given day*. As I have confessed before, I have sometimes lost games by playing variations which were simply too complex for the levels of alertness or sharpness which I

felt before the game. The ability to avoid this scenario is, of course, another strong argument for having extra repertoire options available.

There is another area where Jonathan's analysis seems particularly strong and where, I would argue, his recommendations entirely resonate for higher level players as well. This is his discussion of the importance of the first 'non-theoretical move' viewed *subjectively*. As he points out, it really doesn't matter that much for practical purposes at the board whether or not this is actually a novelty. At elite levels (and sometimes below these too) this may now also extend beyond where the actual 'novelty' takes place, especially when both players are faithfully following the suggestions of the engines. What matters is how a player responds to the first moment in which his responses have not been prepared in advance. I am sure that Jonathan is right to emphasise the importance of this moment, when it is particularly worth considering any analogies with moves which have been analysed, and it is also right simply to slow down – although, as a player whose time-trouble can usually be traced back to just this part of the game (the first few moves out of known theory) and as someone who used to be the Bundesliga teammate of one of those Czechoslovak players (Jan Smejkal) whose reaction to novelty tended to be legendary levels of time consumption, I know this can be overdone!

I have mostly discussed Jonathan Arnott's book, but there is much to recommend in both his and Jeroen Bosch's. This is a vast subject, and they have both wisely said much without making the fatal error of trying to say everything. At least I hope that, still smarting from making just this error myself, I have here at least managed to add some helpful thoughts on this most practical of chess topics.

Books of the Month by Ben Graff



The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof ... in association with Forward Chess

This month we explore three very different books. *Prepare To Win* by Jonathan Arnott (also discussed by Peter Wells in the previous article – Editor) is an extremely useful guide for

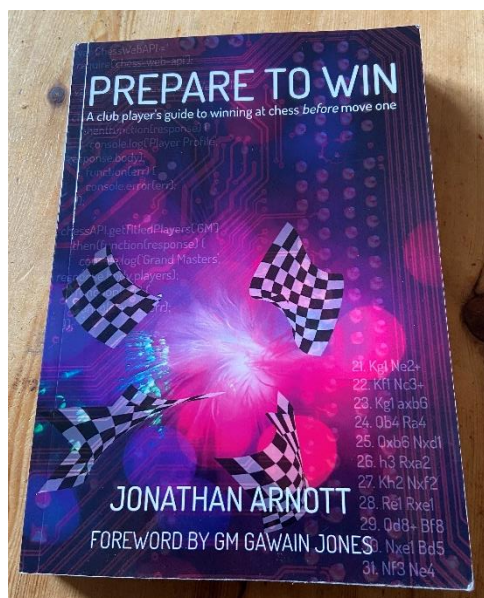
club players who want to learn how to prepare for their opponents. *The Match of All Time* by Gudmundur G.Thorarinsson takes us behind the scenes at Fischer vs Spassky, as the tiny Icelandic Chess Federation sought to manage both the erratic Bobby Fischer and the increasingly frustrated Soviet chess delegation. *The Delights of Chess* by Assiac contains a treasure trove of games, anecdotes and observations, with a love of chess shining through on every page.

For all their differences, each of these books conveys a similar level of enthusiasm and possibility as to what the sixty-four squares can offer, both to us as players and as keen followers of chess's history and stories. There is much to enjoy here.

It has also been an exciting month for me personally, as my new book ***Checkmate! Great Champions and Epic Matches from a Timeless Game*** has just been published by White Star. It was an intriguing project, and I am delighted that it is now available. Perhaps more on this in a future column...

Prepare To Win

by Jonathan Arnott
(Steel City Publishing)



In September I played in the Kenilworth ECF Blitz event. The tournament was terrific fun, complete with all the usual roller-coaster moments you get in super-fast chess. From hanging rooks through to falling flags, missed opportunities and lucky wins, I had an action-packed day. Yet in amongst the drama, one game has stayed with me. My opponent moved swiftly, even allowing for the time-limit. The noose tightened and I was soon lost. Afterwards, he told me 'Not to worry in terms of the rest of the congress', as the whole game had fallen within his home analysis. His rating was not even especially high.

This led me to reflect on my own chess preparation. Was what had happened some sort of fluke occurrence, or a product of my not doing enough work on my own game? If I wanted to do more, how should I go about this? Knowing where to start did not feel obvious. It seemed like fate when Jonathan Arnott handed me a copy of *Prepare To Win* - an excellent read, and one that has given me plenty to think about. As Grandmaster Gawain Jones notes: 'Armed with the recommendations in this book it will become even tougher for us titled players to out-prepare our opponents.'

Jonathan highlights that '...in the computer age every serious club player now has two choices: learn to prepare for your opponents or become a target for their preparation.' Yet while this might depress some, it also represents a massive opportunity for all of us who want to improve our results. As Jonathan neatly puts it, 'The aim is simply to reach a position in which you feel more

comfortable than your opponent.' Once there, good things are likely to follow.

Jonathan Arnott is a Candidate Master, with numerous GM and IM scalps to his name. He writes very well, and in a way that players of all strengths will be able to follow, drawing on his own games to illustrate key concepts and approaches. Part practitioner, part analyst, he illustrates a fresh approach that will surely be of help to many players.

From thinking about your set-ups through to thwarting your opponent's preparation and dealing with novelties when they appear on the board, there is much here to consider. Jonathan notes that 'At club level, and, honestly, it's something I see very regularly at 2000-2200 as well, players tend to respond badly to "the first move they haven't seen before". It's the number one area where I believe players should be able to improve their game.'

I would certainly concur with Jonathan's assessment. Like many chess players, I tend to make moves without always being able to explain my choices, particularly when an opponent has taken me out of my comfort zone. Jonathan's practical tips (illustrated by good examples) on looking to understand the reasoning behind a novelty, properly assessing whether it is strong, and how to identify both your candidate moves and the style of your response, provide a helpful and workable methodology. In setting out his own thought process, he has given all of us a framework that we can build around, and this is certainly something I am going to try and adopt in future.

Jonathan also sets out a 'toolbox' of resources that a player can use, ranging from ChessBase through to OpeningTree and Chessable, and highlights how to get the most out of all of them. As somebody who has spent thousands of hours on Lichess and Chess.com, I was intrigued to learn that these were also potentially powerful research tools that I was far from fully exploiting. If you can tear yourself away from endless games of blitz, there is much meaningful development work that can be done on these platforms.

Plenty of other useful tips abound, including in his chapter on 'the dog in the night-time', in which Jonathan highlights that it is 'worth searching through your own games [online] from time to time so that you can see what they see.' All the games Jonathan shares are illuminating and fun to play through in their own right. This is certainly a book to be enjoyed as well as one to learn from.

Ultimately the internet revolution has democratised chess. Long gone are the days when the young Bobby Fischer had to teach himself Russian so he could keep abreast of games in Soviet journals. In today's world we all have access to the same information as the professionals. Jonathan Arnott's gift is in showing us how to use it.

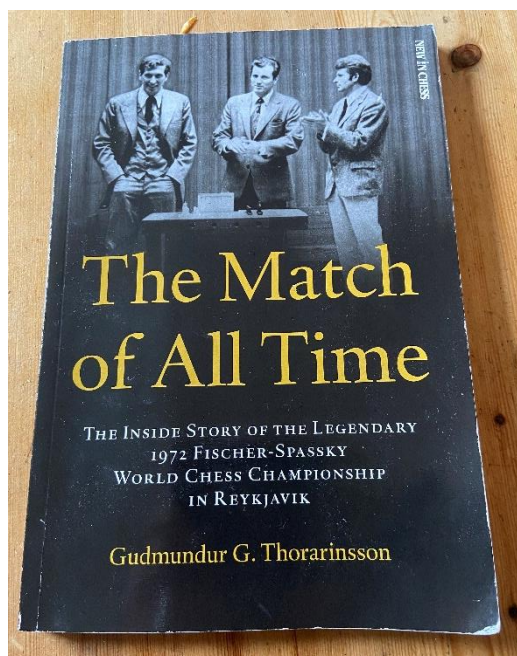
I can't wait to put some of what I have learnt from Jonathan into practice the next time I take part in an ECF event. It would certainly be a good feeling to tell somebody else not to worry, having beaten them thanks to superior preparation - a scenario that is certain to become more likely for all of us with the help of this book.

The Match of All Time

by Gudmundur G. Thorarinsson
(New In Chess)

'No one has more influence on Fischer than I – and I have no influence at all.'

--- Larry Evans – quoted in *The Match of All Time*



Fifty years on, Fischer vs Spassky remains the most famous encounter the chess world has ever witnessed. It is worth reflecting on why this might be. The historical context surely plays its part. The pair were far from ideal role models for their respective political regimes, but it fell to them to represent West and East against the backdrop of the Cold War. Fischer's sheer brilliance as a chess player must also be a factor, but it is not obvious as to why this of itself would have cut through with the wider public.

Perhaps Fischer the man rather than Fischer the chess player is ultimately what makes this battle stand out above all others. His sheer erraticism made his moves even more difficult to predict away from the board than they were on the chess table. It was far from certain whether he would even turn up in Reykjavik for the 1972 showdown with Spassky, let alone stay the course. Can you imagine what it must have been like to play a part in the organisation and management of the event, given the sheer unpredictability of its main protagonist? Gudmundur Thorarinsson did, and in *The Match of All Time* he shares his story.

Thorarinsson notes that there have already been 140 efforts on Fischer vs Spassky, but 'We still do not have a book written by someone who was working behind the scenes when the bombs were falling.' Thorarinsson knew that Iceland, given its remoteness, relative lack of resources and limited 1970s satellite communication systems, was an unlikely choice of venue, yet 'A weird and complex sequence of events would lead to the decision to stage the match in Iceland.' This is the tale of a tiny chess federation, led by Thorarinsson, a man who had never wanted to be its President, which somehow found itself playing host to a match that gripped a global audience.

Inevitably, much of the detail of Fischer vs Spassky is already well known. Fischer's endless protests over prize money, the noise of the cameras, the seating, lighting, chess board and pieces are all stories well-travelled - as are the events surrounding Fischer's blunder in game 1, no-show in game 2 and the subsequent course of the match. Yet Thorarinsson goes beyond these in places to exquisitely highlight the invidious position that the organisers found themselves in at various stages of the saga, not least the official opening ceremony - the main problem being that Fischer had yet to make an appearance in Iceland. Thorarinsson had to decide whether to open the contest without its star player, or to cancel it.

'As I arrived at the National Theatre the Foreign Minister's Chief of Protocol rushed towards me, clearly very upset: "What kind of person are you? We've got the President of Iceland, who has been kept waiting for 20 minutes, government ministers, the World Champion himself, foreign dignitaries, ambassadors, members of the press and many other guests. And you turn up late, in your working clothes. You are a total embarrassment to everyone!"'

One can only imagine how acute the stress of this moment must have felt, and it was only when he was 'one

metre from the stage' that Thorarinsson decided to open the match and to hope for the best. All the while the team also had to manage the Soviet delegation, who were considerably keener than Spassky to use Fischer's behaviour as a pretext to terminate the contest.

Sometimes a casual conversation with a stranger can have a significant impact on what follows. Thorarinsson recalls a lady in a bar advising him that the best way to work with the Soviets was to 'never say no' as that terminates the negotiations. 'You just always have to say: "Yes...I would really like to accept your proposal and I do agree on most of your points of view, but my circumstances are such that it is not entirely up to me."' - a tactic that appeared to work well at various moments when the future of the contest hung in the balance.

As history shows, the Soviet delegation did not walk away, although according to Thorarinsson Spassky later lamented his determination to play by saying 'What a fool I was.' Spassky particularly acknowledged that agreeing to participate in game 3 in a small room behind the main stage played into Fischer's hands. Not only did it allow Fischer to dictate terms and to regain his composure, but ironically the drone of the traffic from a nearby road far exceeded the supposed sound of the cameras in the main hall. Incredibly, it was noted that 'Fischer doesn't mind that kind of noise,' highlighting the essence of his unpredictability. Though the subsequent games were played in the main hall, Fischer held himself together through various twists and turns to claim the crown.

Thorarinsson shares some nice anecdotes. Fischer apparently once watched a game in Central Park and afterwards pointed out a 'clever move' that neither player had spotted. He was asked if he knew anything about chess and on telling them that he was Bobby Fischer, 'The chess player smiled and retorted "Yes, and I am Albert Einstein."' In relation to Spassky, Thorarinsson recalls that Boris's coach once warned the rising Soviet star that 'The girls will come after you. It is not going to be easy. Later Spassky admitted: "He was right."' Perhaps my favourite story comes later, when Boris Spassky was hospitalised during his 1977 Candidates match against Hort with appendicitis. He received a phone call from a concerned Bobby Fischer (a man who deeply distrusted doctors) urging him not to have the surgery. Fortunately, 'Spassky ignored his advice.'

The Match of All Time also contains lengthy chapters on the origins of chess, and biographies on former world champions. These are well written and interesting to read but felt to me to be at best tangential to the specific

subject of the book. Including the match games might have worked better. The final chapter on 'the aftermath' tracing the rest of Fischer's life seems more relevant, but all of this means that the section on the actual match only runs to about sixty pages, albeit with a further forty on the build-up and the preceding Candidates matches.

Thorarinsson notes that, 'Many of those I worked with have passed away, and it seems that I am one of the very few left who was a witness to all the almost unbelievable happenings that took place in connection with the match.' Few would disagree with his conclusion that 'There is a saying that history will repeat itself. That is not always true. The World Championship match between Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer will never be repeated, and no chess match ever will be anything like it.' Thorarinsson is to be thanked for his contribution to keeping the show on the road. *The Match of All Time* is a worthy addition to our understanding of this most famous of contests.

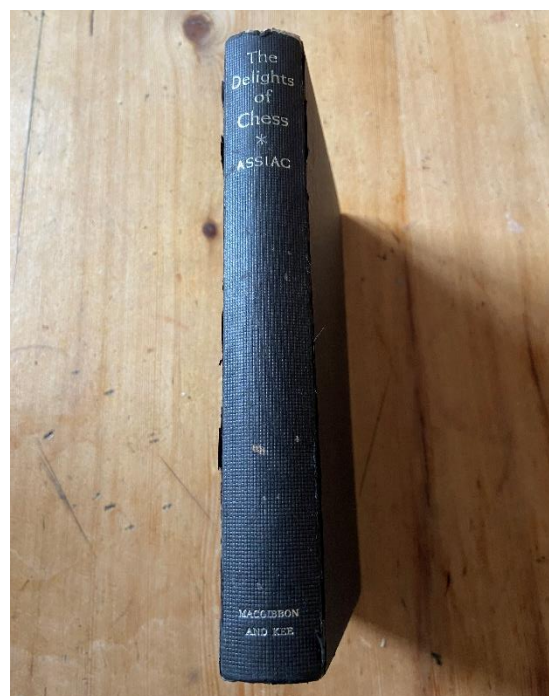
The Delights of Chess

by Assiac

(MacGibbon & Kee)

"My favourite game?", he asked. "But how can I tell you? Surely I haven't played it yet." And then, with a roguish smile, he added: "Maybe I'll play it tomorrow."

--- Mikhail Tal – In Conversation with Assiac



A few weeks ago, I found myself in London with a little time to spare and enjoyed a pleasant visit to Chess & Bridge on Baker Street. In amongst their excellent contemporary wares are several shelves of alluring

second-hand books. It was wonderful to browse, not knowing what I might find, before I happened on an intriguing hard-backed volume by a writer whose name was new to me but will be well-known to older readers.

The Delights of Chess contains fascinating portraits (often based on first-hand discussions) that Assiac had with a host of famous chess players, ranging from Sir George Thomas through to Max Euwe, Emanuel Lasker, Jose Capablanca, Paul Keres, Mikhail Tal, David Bronstein, Vasily Smyslov and Leonard Barden. In addition to their favourite games, a section on problems and compositions is shared as well as some further 'Odds and Ends'. It is brilliantly written, and now, just over sixty years on from its original publication, provides fresh light on a previous era.

I have since learnt that Assiac was the chess correspondent for the *New Statesman*, where his column ran for over 400 issues, in addition to his chess books. (The eagle-eyed may have spotted that Assiac is Caissa – the Goddess of chess – spelt backwards.) A passionate chess fan, writing about the game was nevertheless actually a sideline for this talented author, whose real name was Heinrich Fraenkel.

Born in Germany, Fraenkel emigrated to England around 1930 and was a vehement anti-Nazi who wrote extensively criticising the Nazi regime. He was also the author of seven 1930s Hollywood films, the most famous of which was the 1936 *Juggernaut*. In the decades that followed he published numerous significant biographies of members of the Third Reich. The chess world is fortunate that, in his lighter moments, Assiac wrote about our game with such joy and warmth.

He brings to life some intriguing happenings. It transpires that eccentricity in chess is nothing new, if some of these stories are anything to go by. The famous British chess player Sir George Thomas once met a 'great chess master' (sadly unnamed) at the railway station, such that they could drive together to a mutual friend's house for the weekend. He was somewhat perplexed when the luminary stepped from the train with no bag or suitcase. Sir George enquired as to why this was the case. "My luggage?" chuckled the master. "Why, I've got it right here." And, reaching into a capacious breast pocket, he produced a large comb.'

Nimzowitsch had a 'famous head crammed with a thousand variations of opening theory and endgame technique,' but sadly practical matters proved somewhat more challenging. Sir George told Assiac that he was surprised when Nimzowitsch asked him if they could walk

together to the tournament hall for the Carlsbad event in 1929, a journey that Nimzowitsch must have made 'some seventy or eighty times' in the preceding weeks. 'Alas, he had never been able to remember the way. He usually cottoned on to one of the other masters staying in the hotel.'

In similar absent-minded vein Rubenstein was often so 'deeply wrapped up in his thoughts', following a game, that he would eat in the dining room and would then walk in again for another meal, 'completely oblivious to the fact that he had finished one only a few minutes ago.'

Some great chess players were hardy souls. Assiac recalls Gligorić diving into an outdoor swimming pool before his game in a Bognor Regis event, even though 'the desolate surface of the water [was] briskly ruffled by icy gusts of wind blowing in from the beach.' On emerging from his dip, Assiac thought that 'some large towels and a hot-water bottle would be indicated,' but instead Gligorić 'took a brisk run around the pool and a deep breath of icy air.' The long-lived Jacques Mieses similarly enjoyed his exercise, telling Assiac that he regularly took an early morning swim in the Hyde Park Serpentine when well into his eighties.

There are also terrific stories about Lasker berating Assiac when Assiac referred to an amateur chess fan as being akin to a dominoes player. "What do you know of dominoes?", he asked. "How dare you sneer at a very subtle and far from easy game?" And forthwith he gave us a most lucid lecture on the finer points of dominoes when played at that masterly level.' One must also get a wry smile from the tale of Euwe being challenged to a game while on a train by a local club champion, who had not recognised him. Unsurprisingly, Euwe beat him, only for the poor man to lament on reaching his stop that 'It's unbelievable...Fancy me being beaten by a mere train acquaintance! Me who, back home, is called the Euwe of my club!'

Assiac captures the changing of the times. Botvinnik told him that 'Gone are the days... when a great master such as Capablanca could afford to sit down at the chess-board more or less casually, taking time off from his duties as a diplomat and his pleasures as a man of the world.' Apparently, Capablanca thought that his prowess was such that chess was essentially played out. But his optimism and place at the top of the chess world would ultimately be superseded by those who were capable of deep preparation. It is now clearer than ever that there will always be more to discover about our wonderful game.

In terms of youth, Assiac saw Fischer becoming a grandmaster at fifteen as ‘probably a unique event,’ but this is something that has now become commonplace. Regardless of where Fischer would take his talent in the years that followed, Assiac was right to highlight the singularity of his gifts. In a chapter written before Tal became the then youngest ever world champion, Assiac brilliantly captured Tal’s intensity at the board. ‘He would slump down, bent double in utter concentration, his nervous fingers burrowing in his unruly shock of dark hair. Then he would make his move with astonishing speed and get up again, pacing restlessly around like some nervous lion cub.’

With regard to the UK chess scene, Assiac reflected thus on Clarke, Penrose, Barden and Wade: ‘When seeking the common denominator for that young generation of British chess masters, one cannot but confirm that they appear to be uncommonly earnest and seriously-minded young men and that, even while they were still in or near their teens, their style (on the chess-board) was remarkable for its maturity rather than that reckless exuberance commonly attributed to Youth.’

Assiac was highly complimentary of Leonard Barden’s exceptional work as an author. ‘It goes without saying that Barden’s diligence as an analyst and theoretician is equally well reflected in his journalistic work.’ His column in *The Field* lives up to the tradition of the oldest chess column in England, and in the *Manchester Guardian* the game chosen and carefully annotated by Barden has usually some particular didactic value, so far as opening theory is concerned.’ All these decades later of course, Barden’s writing continues to be just as brilliant and well received, and Barden represents a link between eras: as appreciated by Assiac in the 1960s as much as he is by the rest of us today.

The Delights of Chess has truly been an unexpected and welcome discovery for me. It is wonderful to ‘find’ a ‘new’ author, even if he will already be familiar to many of our readers. I’m certainly very keen to now track down Assiac’s *New Statesman* columns. I would recommend this book to all.

Congratulations Bodhana! – Part Two



Bodhana has kindly selected two of her World Cadet games for publication in the October and November ChessMoves. Here is game 2 where Bodhana plays the Caro-Kann, with her opponent trying an unusual line in the Panov-Botvinnik. After some manoeuvring with the rooks and minor pieces Bodhana reaches a rook and pawn ending a pawn up which she proceeds to convert.

FIDE World Cadets Championships – Bodhana’s Choice (Game 2 of 2)

FIDE World Cadets Chess Championships 20, Girls 08:
Round 7 : Zhumambayeva, Aliya - Sivanandan, Bodhana
23.09.2022

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.c4 Bodhana plays the Caro-Kann defence with White, trying a Panov-Botvinnik attack with 5. c4.

5...Nf6 6.Bf4 6. Nc3 is more usual, followed by Bg5 to increase the pressure on d5.

6...Bg4 Pinning the knight.

7.c5 Bxf3 8.gxf3



Forced to avoid losing the d-pawn. Black is slightly better now due to the damaged kingside pawn structure.

8...a6 Played to stop Bb5 and slow down White's attack.

8...Nd7 may be best to support the freeing e5 which undermines the d- and c-pawns before White starts the standard queenside attack in the Panov.

9.Nc3 e6 10.Be2 Be7 11.Rg1 g6 12.Qa4 Qa5 13.Qxa5 Nxa5 14.Na4



Threatening Nb6 to displace the black rook or pick up the exchange.

14...Nd7 14...Bd8 This is the other way of discouraging Nb6.

15.0-0-0 Nc6 16.a3 f6 The position is about equal.

17.Bc7? Kf7 17...Rc8 18.Bb6 f5, preparing Bf6 to attack the pawn on d4 which is now difficult to defend.

18.Bb6 Bd8 19.Bxd8 Raxd8 20.f4 f5 21.h4 Nf6 22.Bf3 Na5 23.Be2 Ne4 Black has a slight edge, with the two knights very active.

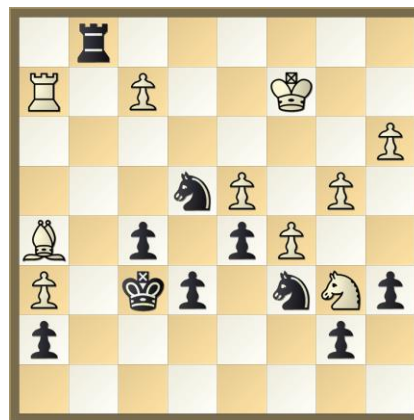
24.Rg2 Rb8 25.b4 Nc6 26.h5 Ne7 27.Rh1 Rbg8 28.Rgh2



28...g5 The best move to keep the position closed.

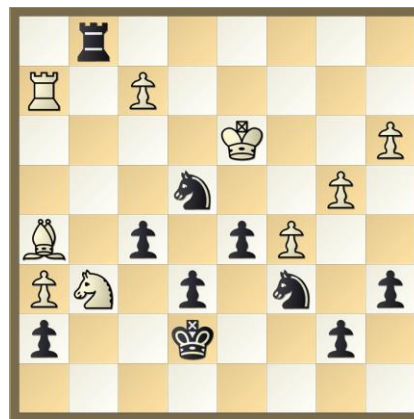
29.fxg5 Rxf5 30.h6 Black is now better as the rooks will become more active on the g-file and the two knights are better placed than White's minor pieces.

30...Rhg8 31.Bh5+ Kf6 32.Nb6 Rg1+ 33.Rxg1 Rxg1+ 34.Kc2 Nc6



The d-pawn will fall shortly and Black is winning.

35.Nd7+ Ke7 36.Ne5 Nxd4+ 37.Kd3 Nc6 38.Ng6+



38...Kf6 38...hxg6! wins on the spot. **39.h7 Ne5+ 40.Kc2 Nf7**, covering the queening square and emerging a piece up.

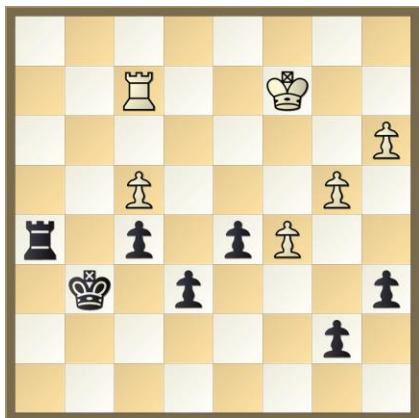
39.Nf8 Ne5+ 40.Kc2 Rg8? Protecting the queening square, but the position is now about equal with both sides having chances with the respective passed pawns after Nxh7.

40...Ke7 41.Nxh7 d4 42.Be2 Ra1 43.Kb3 d3 44.Bxd3 Nxd3.

41.Nxh7+ Ke7 42.f4 Nd7 43.Ng5 Nf8 44.Bf7? **44.Nf7 Rg3** looks better for Black.

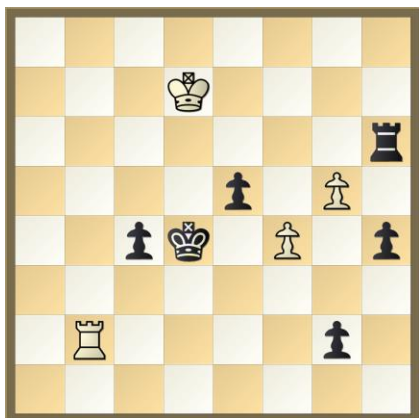
44...Rh8 45.Bh5 Rxf6 Black is winning again!

46.Rh3 Kf6 47.Nf7 Rh7 48.Ne5 Nf2 49.Rf3 Rxf5 50.Rxf2 Ng6 51.Nxg6 Kxg6



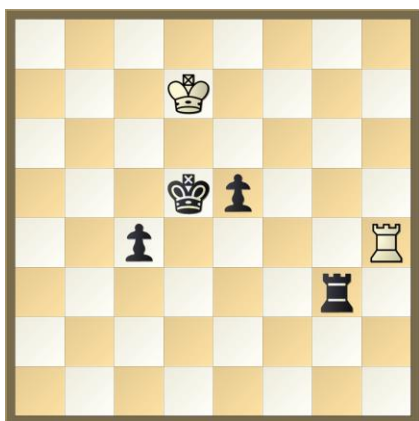
Reaching a rook ending where the passed d-pawn should be enough for a win, provided Black can activate her rook.

52.Rf3 Kf6 53.Kd3 Rh1! 54.Kd2 d4 55.Kd3 e5 56.fxe5+ Kxe5 57.Rg3 Ra1 Black's two passed pawns and active rook should be enough to decide.
58.Rg7 Rxa3+ 59.Ke2 a5



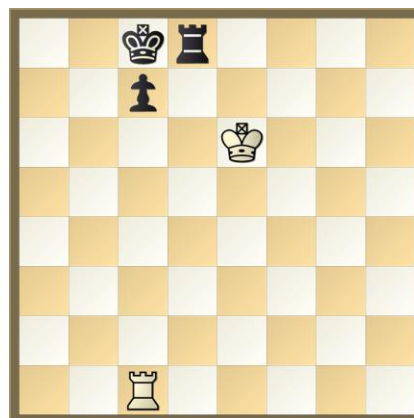
Aiming to break up the connected pawns.

60.b5 Rc3 61.Rxb7 Rxc5 62.b6 Rb5 63.Ra7 Rxb6 64.Rxa5+ Ke4



And the rest is straightforward.

65.Ra8 Rb2+ 66.Ke1 f4 67.Re8+ Kf3 68.Rd8 Re2+ 69.Kd1 Re4 70.Kd2 Kf2 71.Kd3 Re1 72.Rf8 f3 73.Kxd4 Kg2 74.Rg8+ Kf1 75.Rf8 f2 76.Kd3



Reaching a winning Lucena position.

76...Re6 77.Kd2 Rd6+ 78.Ke3

78.Kc3 Allows Black to build a bridge with Rd5. 78...Rd5 79.Rg8 Ke2 80.Re8+ Kf3 81.Rf8+ Ke3 82.Re8+ Kf4 83.Rf8+ Rf5

78...Ke1 79.Rxf2 Re6+ 80.Kf3 Rf6+ 81.Ke3 Rxf2

Great British Chess Players by Dr John Nunn



Joseph Henry Blackburne (1841 - 1924)

Joseph Henry Blackburne was born in Manchester in December 1841 but did not learn chess until he was 17 or 18. It's amazing that, without the early start typical of grandmasters, he nevertheless became one of the top players in the world. Within a few years he was already showing signs of great promise and was invited to take part in the London 1862 tournament. There he finished modestly but beat Steinitz in their individual game, a remarkable achievement considering he had only been playing chess for three years. His participation in this event cost him his job (according to some accounts this was in a hosiery warehouse) and as a result he became a professional player.

This was the start of a long career during much of which Blackburne was in the world top five. He not only participated in many tournaments but also gave regular simultaneous exhibitions and was especially proficient at blindfold chess. There's no doubt that his efforts over several decades contributed greatly to the development of British chess. Blackburne had many tournament successes; perhaps his greatest was at Berlin 1881, which he won by the colossal margin of three points. However, he had an unfortunate habit of finishing second in several top events, such as Nuremberg 1883 (half a point behind Winawer), Hamburg 1885 (half a point behind Gunsberg), Manchester 1890 (behind Tarrasch) and London 1892 (half a point behind Lasker). Blackburne also played several matches, but here his results were less convincing, good wins being interspersed with indifferent results. His tournament career lasted an exceptionally long time, and he was still able to compete at the highest level in the famous St Petersburg 1914 event, where he beat Nimzowitsch using 1.e3.

In style, Blackburne was much more of a universal player than his nickname of 'The Black Death' would suggest. Many 19th-century players had glaring weaknesses, but by the turn of the century it was impossible to succeed at the highest level without an all-round mastery of chess. Many of his games would pass scrutiny by today's

standards and he had the tenacity to win long endgames, which he played surprisingly well; for example, he ground down Zukertort with R+N vs R+2P at Paris 1878. Despite his many successes, Blackburne did not leave much of a chess legacy; there are no openings named after him, for example. He did, however, suggest the use of clocks to replace sandglasses for timing chess games, an advance we can all be thankful for.



Here is a fine endgame win against a top-class opponent.

Joseph Henry Blackburne - Carl Schlechter

Vienna, 1898

King's Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.f4

Blackburne played 2.Nf3 most of the time, but he occasionally experimented with other moves.

2...exf4 3.Bc4

The King's Bishop Gambit is not very popular today, but it has been played several times by Ivanchuk and Short.

3...d5 4.exd5

Considered inaccurate today, the usual line being 4.Bxd5 Nf6 5.Nc3 with a roughly level position.

4...Qh4+ 5.Kf1 Bd6

Best, as the superficially tempting 5...f3 is well met by 6.Bb5+ c6 7.Nxf3.

6.Nf3 Qh5 7.Nc3 Ne7

In MegaDatabase, White only won twice from this position and suffered 12 defeats, an indication that it isn't exactly a challenging line for Black. Material is equal, but the white king is awkwardly placed, and White has trouble activating his bishops.

8.d4 Bg4

This is too committal; instead, the flexible 8...Nd7 or 8...O-O should be preferred.

9.Ne4 Nxd5 10.Nxd6+ cxd6 11.Qe1+ Be6

11...Ne7 might still give Black an edge, since this rules out the check on b5. Then 12.Qe4 O-O! enables Black to complete his development.

12.Bb5+



12...Nd7?!

Now White gains an advantage. Instead, the piece sacrifice 12...Nc6 13.c4 O-O is interesting, although probably not quite correct after 14.cxd5 Bxd5 15.Be2 Rae8 16.Qf2. The best line may well be 12...Kd8! 13.c4 Nc7 14.Bxf4 Nxb5 15.Qa5+ b6 16.Qxb5 Qxb5 17.cxb5 Nd7, which looks odd but leads to equality.

13.c4 Ne3+ 14.Bxe3 fxe3 15.d5 Bg4 16.Qxe3+ Kd8

Both sides have lost the right to castle, but White's space advantage gives him an edge.

17.Re1 Kc7 18.Bxd7!

A good decision. White's bishop was not very effective due to his central pawns being stuck on light squares, so he swaps it off for the knight which could, after a piece exchange on f3, come to a good square on e5.

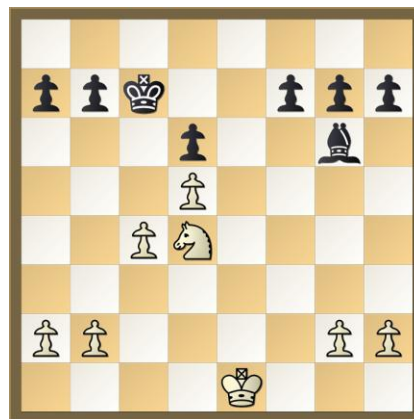
18...Bxd7 19.Kf2 Rhe8

When writing about historical games, there is often an issue with determining the moves played. Mega Database gives 19...Rae8, but this just loses a pawn after 20.Qxa7 Ra8 21.Qd4 Rxa2 22.Qxg7, so I wondered if 19...Rhe8 was played instead. I consulted chess historian Edward Winter, who reported that contemporary sources are split pretty much 50-50; for example, the tournament book also gives 19...Rae8, while the August 1898 *Deutsche Schachzeitung* gives 19...Rhe8. I have given ...Rhe8, because I can't see any reason why Black might have preferred the other move, but unless a new source turns up there will be an element of doubt.

20.Qf4 Qf5

Black heads for an ending with bishop vs knight in a relatively open position, and it's easy to see why he might have believed this to be a safe option, especially as some of White's pawns are fixed on light squares. However, this is an instructive exception to the general principle. While White's advantage is slight, it is Black who must take care.

21.Qxf5 Bxf5 22.Nd4 Bg6 23.Rxe8 Rxe8 24.Re1 Rxe1 25.Kxe1

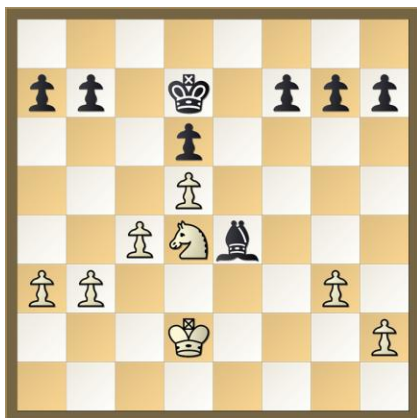


Blackburne's judgement in heading for further liquidation is fully justified. His space advantage and well-placed knight are significant assets and, although the position is far from closed, there isn't enough open space for the bishop to be truly effective.

25...Bd3

To begin with, Black doesn't appear to realise there is any danger and just waits. The simplest route to a draw lay in taking immediate action by 25...Bb1! and after 26.a3 (26.a4 a5 is similar) 26...Ba2 27.b3 a5 28.a4 Bb1 White's queenside pawns are blockaded and it will be very hard for him to make a passed pawn.

26.b3 Kd7 27.Kd2 Be4 28.g3 Bb1 29.a3 Be4



It is often said that the advantage of a pawn majority is that it can create a passed pawn. What is less often said is that the majority is usually at its most dangerous before the passed pawn is actually created, because the additional pawns control vital squares in the enemy camp. It follows that, to defend against a majority, it is often best to arrange the pawns so that exchanges are unavoidable when the majority advances (for example, this is a standard method of defending with R+3P vs R+4P with all the pawns on the same side). Here Black should have played 29...a5 so that any queenside pawn advance by White would lead to exchanges.

30.Ke3

Over the next few moves, neither player appreciates the importance of White's b4 since Black misses various chances to play ...a5, which White could prevent by getting b4 in first.

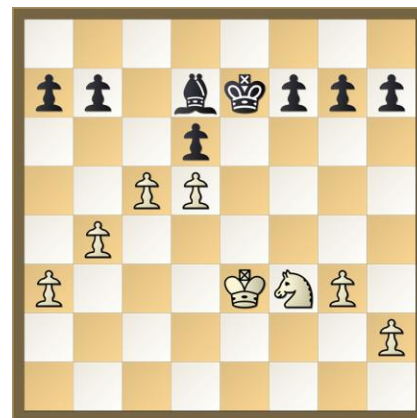
30...Bb1 31.Nf3 Ke7 32.b4!

White finally realises that this is the key move, and he now has a large advantage. Trying to hold White up by 32...b6 just loses a pawn after 33.Nd4 Kd7 34.Nc6 a6 35.Nb8+.

32...Bf5

It's remarkable how ineffective Black's theoretical advantages are. He has bishop vs knight and a kingside pawn majority, but the pawns never get going, while the bishop just moves backwards and forwards without really achieving anything.

33.c5 Bd7



Here White doesn't want to take on d6, as the resulting isolated d-pawn would be hard to advance, while Black doesn't want to play ...dxc5, since bxc5 would provide pawn support for the d-pawn.

34.Kd4 Be8 35.Nd2

The knight is heading for c4 or e4 to force Black to exchange on c5.

35...Bd7 36.Nc4 dxc5+ 37.bxc5

White has achieved a winning position by deceptively simple means. The immediate threat is 38.Na5 b6 39.cxb6 axb6 40.Nc4 b5 41.Nb6 followed by Kc5.

37...f6 38.Nb2?

Too slow. White should have simply executed the threat mentioned in the previous note. Blackburne wants to improve his position further by advancing the a-pawn, but this gives Black time to organise his defence.

38...Bf5?

Blowing his one defensive chance, which was to play the king to c7 and challenge White's queenside pawns. After 38...Kd8 39.a4 Kc7 40.a5 b6! it isn't easy to find a win; for example, 41.axb6+ axb6 42.c6 Bc8 leaves the passed pawns awkwardly blockaded, while 41.Nc4 bxc5+ 42.Kxc5 g5 at last starts to create some kingside counterplay for Black.

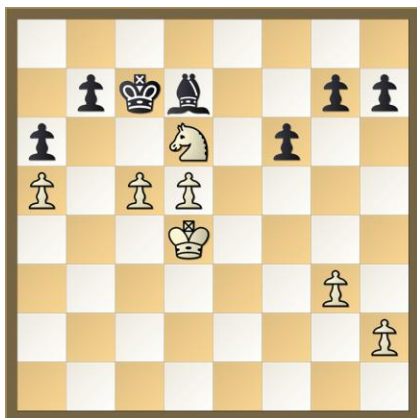
39.a4 Kd7 40.a5

White can now clamp down on the possible break by ...b6, and everything is back under control. The immediate threat is 41.a6, since in this position Black cannot blockade the resulting connected passed pawns.

40...a6

40...Kc7 41.Nc4 followed by Nd6 wins.

41.Nc4 Kc7 42.Nd6 Bd7



Black is almost paralysed and White now wins by advancing his kingside pawns in a kind of minority attack, with the aim of liquidating to a king and pawn ending.

43.Ke4 Ba4 44.g4 Bc2+ 45.Kd4 Bg6

Or 45...Bd1 46.h3 h5 47.gxh5 Bxh5 48.Ke4 Bg6+ 49.Kf4 Kb8 50.Kg4 Kc7 51.Nf5 Bf7 52.d6+ Kd7 53.Nxg7 and wins.

46.h3 Kb8 47.Nf5 Bxf5 48.gxf5

The king and pawn ending is hopeless for Black as the passed d-pawn is too strong.

48...Kc7 49.Ke4 Kd7 50.Kf4 Ke7 51.Kg4 Kd7 52.h4 Kc8

After 52...g6 53.fxg6 hxg6 54.h5 gxh5+ 55.Kxh5 Kd8 56.Kg6 Ke7 57.Kf5 Kf7 58.d6 Black loses his f-pawn and the game.

53.h5

Threatening h6, a curious echo of the threat to play a6 earlier.

53...h6 54.Kf4 Kc7 55.Ke4 1-0

55...Kd7 56.d6 Kc6 57.Kd4 Kd7 58.Kd5 followed by c6 is an easy win.

It's a Puzzlement!



Welcome to our puzzles section! Last month's puzzles once again proved very popular, so we are back with more - all hand-picked by ChessPuzzle.net

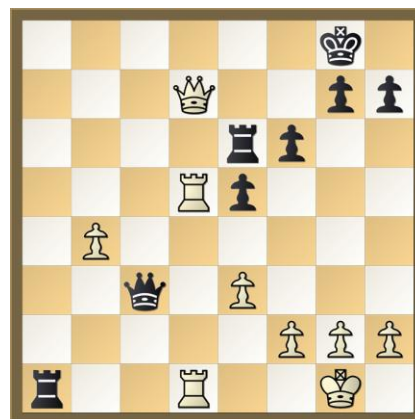
We provide a link to the relevant ChessPuzzle.net page and a QR code so you can try the puzzles interactively and get hints if needed or even the solutions!

The puzzles are arranged in order of difficulty (easiest first). We would be interested in your views about the level of difficulty and whether we graded them about right. When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.

Puzzle 1

John Thackray (1944) – Dariusz Rak (1765)

Hull 4NCL International Congress



Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 2

Kajus Mikalajunas (1746) - Ehsan Farahmandpour (1637)
Hull 4NCL International Congress

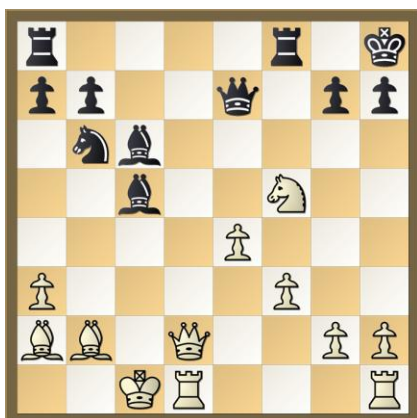


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 3

Ben S. Rich (1974) – Dariusz Rak (1765)
Hull 4NCL International Congress



Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 4

Adam Bedi – Indy Southcott-Moyers
Hull 4NCL International Congress

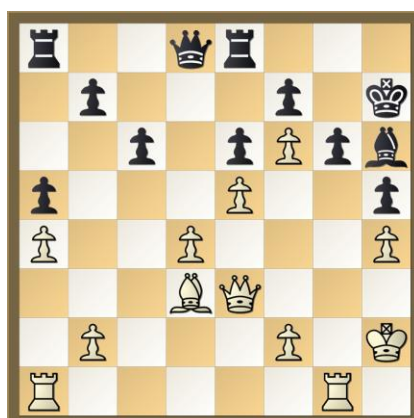


Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 5

Joseph Catto (1778) – Asanga Gunasekera (1510)
Hull 4NCL International Congress



White to checkmate

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 6

Bernard Pratten (1748) – Okwose Marc Obi (1938)
Hull 4NCL International Congress

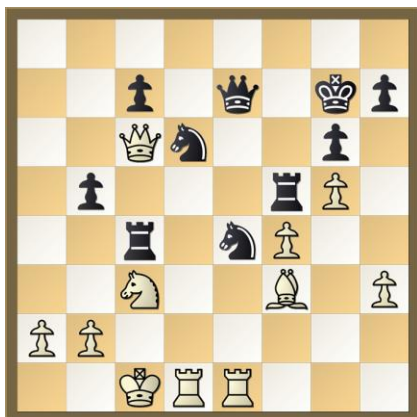


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 7

FM James Moreby (2346) – FM Henry Li (2306)
4NCL 2022-23



White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 8

IM Marcus R Harvey (2463) – Steven A Jones (2139)
4NCL 2022-23

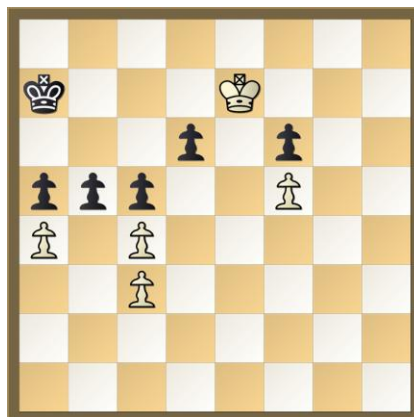


Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 9

Vivien Webster (1706) – Fernando Hidalgo (1765)
Hull 4NCL International Congress

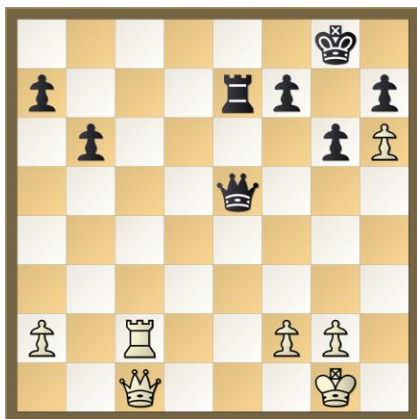


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 10

GM Daniel Alsina Leal (2520) – FM Samuel Chow (2332)
4NCL 2022-23

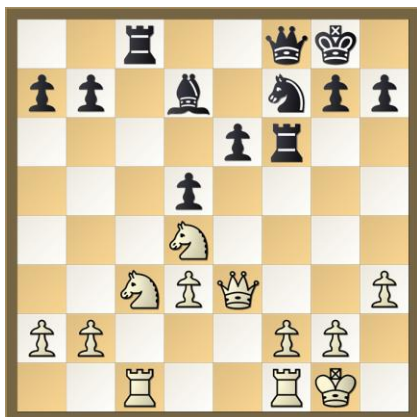


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 11

David Murray (2121) - IM Miklos Galyas (2450)
4NCL 2022-23

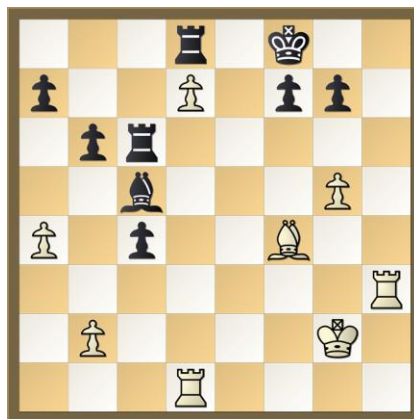


Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 12

GM Nicholas Pert (2540) – Andrew McClement (2226)
4NCL 2022-23



White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit [ChessMoves November Puzzles](#) by clicking the link or via the QR Code below



Tweets of the Month

We have chosen two tweets of the month for November.

Tweet number one - Frankie and Stanley Badacsonyi playing chess in Union Square Park, New York

<https://twitter.com/abadacsonyi/status/1586434710942941184?s=21>



allison badacsonyi
@ABadacsonyi

Frankie and Stanley beating the chess hustlers in Union Square Park New York @Delancey_UKCC @ecfchess @ECFJuniors2022 @ECFonlinechess



Union Square is now one of the main places in New York for outdoor chess alongside Washington Square Park -

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/15/crosswords/chess/want-to-play-some-chess.html>

Tweet number two - Chess in the Movies

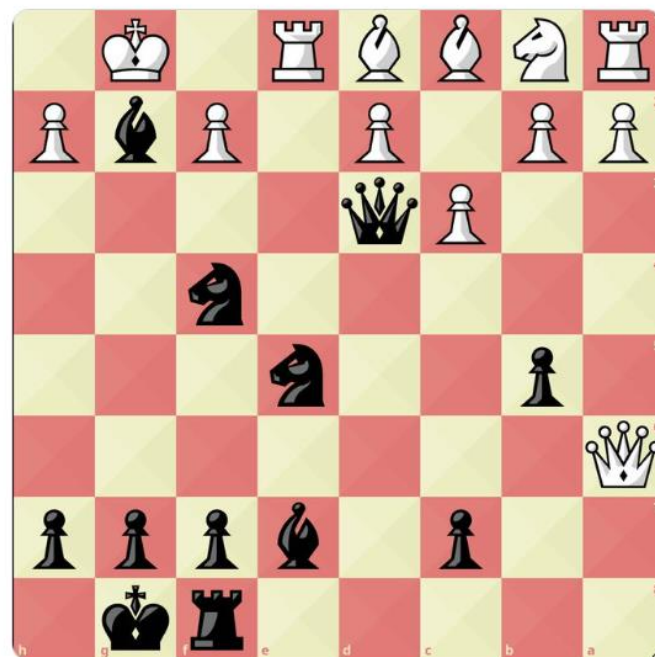
"I'm sorry Frank, I think you missed it"



Meltwater Champions Chess Tour
@ChampChessTour

In what famous sci-fi movie did this position occur?

And what did black play...?



1:06 PM · Oct 31, 2022 · Twitter Web App

14 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 263 Likes

Our second loosely related tweet is one of a series on famous chess games in the movies.

The tweet shows the position leading up to the final moves from the famous Frank Poole v Hal 9000 game from Stanley Kubrick's 2001 – A Space Odyssey.

Kubrick was a keen chess player and was known to have played for up to 12 hours at the tables in Washington Square park – not too far from Union Square in midtown New York. He was also supposed to have played a series of games against Arthur C Clarke on the film set – with Clarke remarking that if he had liked chess as much as Stanley the film would never have been made.

The game between Poole and Hal was one of two chess references in the film – the other being the appearance of a Dr Smyslov in a short scene earlier in the film.

In the film 2001 the astronauts on the space station spend some time playing against the Hal 9000 supercomputer which is much stronger than its human opposition but is programmed to lose 50% of the games to make things interesting and encourage crew morale.

The game depicted in the film is based on a game between Roesch and William Schlage in Hamburg, 1910.

Kubrick's reputed source for the game was Irving Chernev's 1000 Best Short Games of Chess.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzIQUDQO-ag>

Here is the original game which we can only assume was followed to reach the position in the film, which is played on a flat screen between Frank and the supercomputer Hal with board colours as shown in the tweet.

Frank Poole v Hal 9000

Somewhere between Earth and Jupiter, 2001 - after an original played almost 100 years earlier.

Roesch - Willi Schlage [C77]

Hamburg, GER, c 1910

Ruy Lopez, Morphy Defence

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.Qe2

Frank tries the Worral attack.

b5 6.Bb3 Be7 7.c3 0-0 8.0-0



d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxe5

The position resembles the very dangerous Marshall Gambit except that White has played Qe2 rather than Re1.

Nf4 11.Qe4 Nxe5

The position is about equal, with 12. d4 keeping the balance.

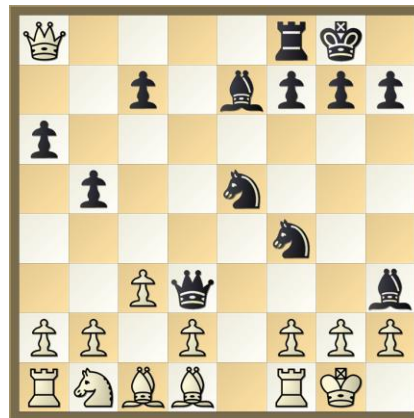
12.Qxa8??

The astronaut Frank Poole obligingly takes the rook after which White is lost.

12...Qd3! Blocking the d-pawn to maintain Black's huge lead in development and set up a mating attack.



13.Bd1 Bh3 Discovering an attack on the white queen – but Black has something else in mind.

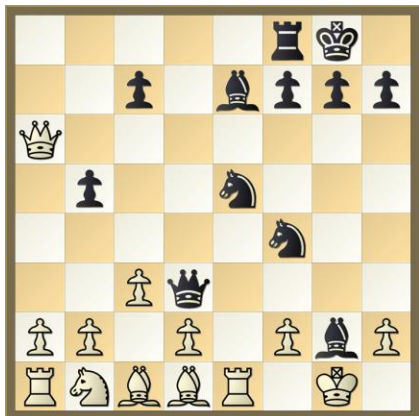


The position after 13...Bh3, and the ones that follow, were used in the film.

14.Qxa6??

Continuing to grab material Frank announces, 'Anyway, queen takes pawn', leaving the long diagonal to g2 unprotected.

14..Bxg2 15.Re1



The position after Hal's move 12 is reminiscent of Paulsen v Morphy, 1857. Morphy thought for ten minutes before making his next move. Can you see what he played and the follow-up he was calculating over 100 years before '2001 - A Space Odyssey' was released?

Answer in next month's *ChessMoves* along with a further edition of **Chess in the Movies**.

This is the last error, reaching the position in the tweet, but White was already lost.

At this point Hal has had enough and announces a forced mate – 'I'm sorry Frank, I think you missed it' ..'queen to bishop three, bishop takes queen, knight takes bishop, mate.'

Oddly Hal announces queen to bishop three rather than the correct bishop six in descriptive, but either way Qf3 is unstoppable.

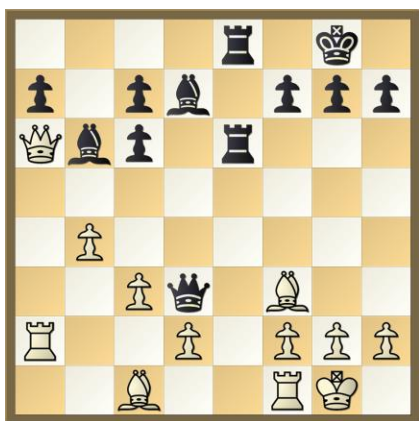
There has been a long debate since the film was first shown over where this was a simple error in the notation or somehow connected with Hal starting to go out of control as happens towards the end of the film, given computers don't make that type of mistake.

At this point Frank resigns and the players thank each other for the game.

This is probably the earliest depiction of AI chess playing in the 1967 film 30 years before the Deep Blue Kasparov match in 1997.

0-1

Postscript



Around the Country

CHESS IN PRISONS

Second Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners – a report by Carl Portman, ECF Manager of Chess in Prisons



The International Chess Federation (FIDE) ran the second Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners, held from 13-14 October 2022, on the International Day of Education in Prison. It was part of the Chess for Freedom programme and, following the International Championship first held in 2019 and the Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners 2021, the event aims to introduce chess as a tool for education and social inclusion in prisons of different countries.

The Championship, organised by FIDE and the Cook County (Chicago, IL, USA) Sheriff's Office and hosted by Chess.com, was open for teams of four players representing any correctional facility (jail or prison) without any specification by age and gender of prisoners. The tournament was played online and streamed live on FIDE's YouTube channel.

Day one was the group stage, divided into eight teams per group, with the top two qualifying for the Championship finals on day two. The time control was 10 mins + 5 seconds increment per move.

The ECF and the charity Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC) worked together on this project. Carl Portman and Nigel Towers managed England 1 (male) whilst Peter Sullivan was the manager of the England 2 (male), England Women and England Youth teams.

The wonderful headline news is that England won silver and bronze medals!

Peter Sullivan wrote 'Many congratulations to a joint Isis/Wandsworth team which represented England in the Youth Championship and won a silver medal. Emphatic wins against Niger and India in the group stages set up a semi-final with Ecuador and the team lost a close final to Serbia. This far exceeded any reasonable expectations for a team playing in its first Championship.'

'Congratulations also to Bronzefield, who won a Bronze medal for England in the Women's Championship. Decisive wins against the US and Ecuador gave the team a strong start. This result comes after a fine runners-up performance in the Novus British Prisons Chess Championship. The team overcame many setbacks, even the chess coach's car breaking down on the way to the match.'



One player watches as his colleague enjoys his game

'There was a fine performance too by Wandsworth playing as the England second team, who finished tenth out of 85 teams in the Open Championship, our strongest ever result. This team was not even confirmed to play until two weeks before the tournament but grabbed the chance with both hands. The team were drawn in a tough group including Zimbabwe, last year's beaten finalists, and looked out of it half-way through the group stages. However, they performed fantastically in the closing games to reach the final stage with the help of wins against the USA and Argentina.'

'We knew we had some talented players, but it has been a revelation to see just how much effort they put in. There has been a real sense of teamwork with officers, men and women, the education teams, volunteers and governors all getting behind the project. We have been genuinely surprised by the number of people who have gone out of their way to support us.'

'It was a real achievement to secure reliable internet access for all four teams to play matches against the likes of India, Zimbabwe, El Salvador and Serbia. Many thanks to the Novus Digital team for their pioneering work to make this happen and for all their support during the tournament.'



England 1 from HMP Hewell are in the zone

The England 1 team from HMP Hewell had a marvellous day. It was the first time that any of the players had done anything like this and they had a lot of learning to do in the weeks leading up to the tournament. They had all played chess in prison before this – but they all readily agreed that they could improve. There were no standout players (that is to say regular chess players) and Nigel and Carl gave as much coaching help as they could prior to the event. Every player was committed to the project and gave their all. They worked together to develop their game, and they improved as time went on. Getting used to playing online takes a bit of time, but they all threw themselves into the task and were soon up and at it. They did not qualify for day two – and to be fair, this was not surprising, but they did dig out draws against Germany and Bulgaria.

Speaking as ECF representatives, Nigel and I thoroughly enjoyed our visits to HMP Hewell and this group of men became ‘a second family’ to us. The prisoners were always respectful to each other, the staff, Nigel and me, and we could have asked no more of them. It was a genuine privilege to work with this group of prisoners, who showed that they have something to offer in life. **It is also worthwhile to note that this England team consisted of English, Albanian, Somali and Bulgarian players, so chess really has no barriers to playing, and is open to all regardless of skin colour, gender, background, origin or ability.**

We hope that chess is their friend for life and that the disciplines learned from the game, such as thinking before moving, being responsible for decisions, planning, and how to deal with success and failure magnanimously, are all things that will be transferred to real life.

This event shows what can be done when there is a collective will – in this case globally – to do something positive. It was a success in every way, and that is cause for celebration.

You can visit the ‘Chess for Freedom’ pages on the FIDE website here to learn more about chess in prisons - <https://chessforfreedom.fide.com/>

Further, if you visit the chessresults.com web site you can find the results - <https://chessresults.com/fed.aspx?lan=1&fed=FID>

... and the games are here - <https://www.chess.com/events/2022-intercontinental-online-chess-championship-for-prisoners>

It is true that England 1 were not the strongest team; however, I am going to give a game played by one of the men at HMP Hewell who had not played much chess at all in the build-up to the finals. He had suddenly ‘emerged’ as board one, late in the day, and managed to win three in a row. This was nice, and Grandmaster Simon Williams might approve of a certain h-pawn being utilised.

There are many mistakes, but it was fun to watch. I should note that I had to follow the event online (after all those months of preparation!) because I contracted Covid-19 and was therefore unable to attend in person. My thanks go to Nigel and the team at HMP Hewell, including Novus staff, for making it happen on the day.

Annotated game with notes by Carl Portman

England A – Serbia A [D00]

Intercontinental Online Chess Champions 2022

Our player was White, and I shall refer to him as ‘M’.

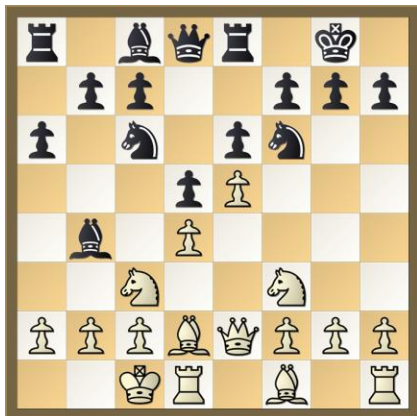
1.d4 d5 2.Nc3

This move is slightly unusual, but very playable.

2...Nf6 3.e3 e6 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bd2 Bb4 6.Qe2 0–0 7.0–0–0

With this move White makes a declaration. He is going to concentrate his forces on the kingside to get at the opposing king.

7...a6 8.e4 Re8 9.e5



A good move, taking space and removing a very important defender.

9...Nd7 10.Bg5 Ne7 11.Na4

Impressive. White takes care of his structure before going for the attack. Preparation is everything.

11.h4 Bxc3 12.bxc3 and White's king is exposed, so there's no need to rush.

11...b6 12.Qe3 g6?!

This move cannot be recommended. Why? Because it creates 'holes' around Black's king, and opens up squares for White to invade. Note how the king is alone, with his army over on the queenside.

13.Qf4

The queen inches closer, with venom in her heart.

13...Rf8

13...b5 14.a3 bxa4 15.axb4 c5 16.dxc5 is interesting.

14.h4!



Move of the day at HMP Hewell. 'M' uses Harry the h-pawn (as we call him in chess) to carve open the black position. Never again think of pawns as lowly - they can do great damage. Here, White makes no secret of his intent. Crash through, or as Jim Morrison would say: 'break on through to the other side.'

14...Qe8

Look how limited Black's moves are. Note how free White is to play several options. He is winning here, but can he drive his supremacy home? You bet he can.

15.h5!

Go baby! There was little that Black could do to stop this. The rook on h1 is supporting his pal and waiting also for his queen to join him.

15...Nb8

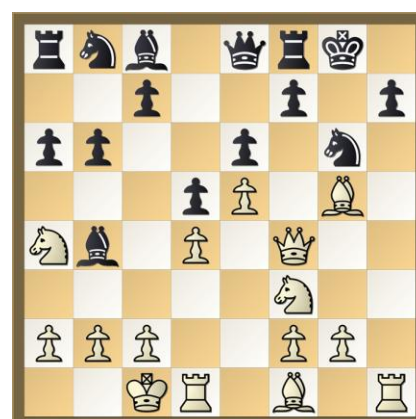
What a sad state of affairs for the black knight, returning to the stable whence he came.

16.hxg6?!

Whilst this is not technically the best move, White has opened up the h-file, ready to attack.

16.Bf6 was best. Why? White wants to play queen to h6 and mate on g7 - a big threat. Now for example 16...Nd7 17.Bd3 Nf5 18.Bxf5 Nxf6 19.exf6 exf5 20.Qh6 and it is game over.

16...Nxc6?



This is the final nail in the coffin. 16...fxg6 17.Bf6 was necessary.

17.Qh2!

Gosh! Well spotted. It is a fact that backward queen moves can be very hard to find in chess. I saw this possible

move 'live' on the internet and hoped that White would play it - he did. It is now checkmate in four moves against any defence.

17...h5 18.Qxh5

Note again how 'Harry the h-pawn' cleared the file for the attack and the rook and queen capitalised on it.

18...f6 19.Qh7# 1-0

The final position

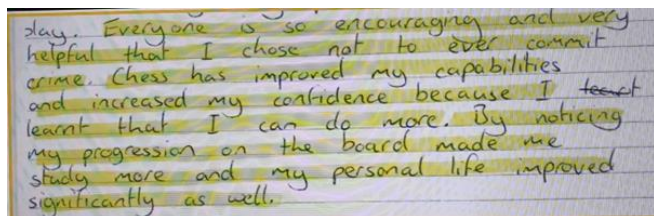


Brutal. In chess, any game that finishes in fewer than 20 moves is called a 'miniature' so this is a game to be very proud of for 'M.'

With thanks to

The Cook County Sheriff's Office, The ECF, CSC, FIDE, NOVUS, HMPPS, Chess.Com and all staff, organisers and participants.

One final reminder – why chess in prisons? This is only one piece of testimony from a prisoner ---



The Braille Chess Association 90th Anniversary Congress

Home Director Nigel Towers reports



A view of the playing area in Solihull

I had the privilege of attending the Braille Chess Association (BCA) 90th Anniversary Congress which took place over the weekend of 28-30 October at the Crown Plaza hotel in Solihull.

The Braille Chess Association was founded in 1932 to support blind and visually impaired chess players. The BCA grew from a Braille correspondence chess organisation to a community of chess players taking part in correspondence chess and over the board tournaments at home and abroad. Membership is open to blind and partially sighted people while sighted friends and family may join as associate members. The BCA has over two hundred members and runs a programme of events including over the board, email, VOIP (Skype and Zoom), and online Lichess tournaments for members throughout the year. As well as the programme of events the BCA provides ongoing support for members including recommendations for tactile sets, talking chess clocks, voice recorders, and accessible learning materials - <https://www.braillechess.org.uk/>

The BCA 90th Anniversary Congress was held at the excellent Crowne Plaza Hotel in the centre of Solihull and included entrants from England, Ireland and Sweden. The chess part of the weekend consisted of two five-round Swiss tournaments – an Open and a Challengers for those whose grade or estimated grade was 1450 or below. The rate of play was 90 minutes for

each player for all moves, with rounds starting at 20.00 on the Friday evening, 9.45 and 14.15 on the Saturday and 9.45 and 14.00 on the Sunday.

Blind and partially sighted players use peg boards or magnetic tactile sets to keep track of the position on the board and make their moves. Players speak their moves into a voice recorder for reference and for their opponents to make the opponent's move on their set.

I arrived at the venue during round 3 on Saturday afternoon and was able to watch some close-fought games in the Open and Challengers sections. The event was extremely well organised with a team of sighted arbiters on hand throughout.

At the end of round 3 I was very pleased to join Chairman Norman Wragg and Secretary Dr Guy Whitehouse together with the BCA organising team and players for the 90th Anniversary dinner. Dinner was followed by a musical soiree, with some fine musical talents on display.

The Open event was won by top seed Steve Burnell who finished with 4½ points, a full point ahead of the joint second players.



Steve Burnell (above) takes us through his round 4 game on Sunday morning in the Open Competition.

Steve Burnell – Bill Armstrong [E73]

BCA 90th Anniversary Congress Solihull, 30.10.2022

I never really like my own games, as I always see afterwards where I could have done better! However,

my round 4 game was interesting in itself as well as in the context of the tournament. Going into round 4 I was on 3/3, with my opponent Bill Armstrong on 2.5/3. Although the resulting draw probably suited us both, nevertheless neither of us played for this and it was only at the very end, when Bill was getting rather short of time and neither of us could see a way to win, that we agreed the draw.

1.d4 d6 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.Be2 0–0 6.Bg5 Nc6

Black has played the King's Indian with Nc6. So far we have been following theory.

7.h3

7. d5 would be the main line at this point, closing the centre.

7...a6 8.a4

8.Nf3 or d5 may be better. The position is about equal.

8...a5 9.Nf3 h6 10.Be3 Nb4 11.0–0 c6



12.Ne1 e5 13.d5



Closing the centre. It's difficult for either side to make progress on the queenside and attention therefore moves to the kingside.

13...Ne8 14.Qd2 Kh7 15.f4 f5 16.exf5

The correct pawn capture.

16...Bxf5 16. gxf5 may be better. 17.fxe5 dxe5



18.Rd1 Qc8 19.dxc6 Qxc6 20.Nd5 Nxd5 21.Qxd5 Be4 22.Qxc6 Rxf1+ 23.Kxf1 Bxc6 24.b3 Nf6 25.Nc2 Ne4 26.Bd3 Rf8+ 27.Kg1 Nc3 28.Rd2 e4 29.Bf1 Be5 30.Bd4 Bxd4+ 31.Rxd4

The position is about equal. Black offered a draw, which was accepted, leaving Steve with 3½ out of 4.

½-½

Steve went on to win his final round game and the Open championship for 2022 with 4½ out of 5.



Steve Burnell receives the Championship Trophy from BCA Chairman Norman Wragg OBE

Simon Highsmith won the Challengers section with 4½ points, again a full point ahead of the players in joint second place.



Simon Highsmith, Challengers Section Winner

The Chess Trust



The Chess Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) established under the auspices of the Charity Commission (Registered Charity Number 1160881).

The Chess Trust was established in 2015. It was initially supported by a significant bequest from the estate of Kent junior organiser Richard Haddrell, and this bequest formed the basis for building plans to support chess. Since 2015 additional funds have been received through donations and bequests and in 2022 the Chess Trust received the assets of the Permanent Invested Fund from the British Chess Federation (the English Chess

Federation's predecessor). The Trust intends to utilise any funds received to meet its objects in the immediate future and for the long term.

The Trust has two objectives:

1. The advancement of amateur sport by promoting the study and practice of chess in all its forms, principally, but not exclusively, for the benefit of residents of England; and
2. The advancement of education by promoting the development of young people through the teaching and practice of chess.

What does this mean in practice? It means that the Chess Trust can support a very wide range of activities for the advancement of the playing and teaching of chess. The only real limitation is that it cannot directly support professional players or pay their expenses.

Since 2018, the Chess Trust has established and supported the Accelerator Programme, a chess development scheme available to England's top junior chess talents on a selection-only basis. Places on the programme are strictly limited, and participants have had the benefit of regular contact with an allocated mentor, who has helped to establish a personal development plan and to develop good working practices. Training camps at physical locations with support from elite international players have been held, and assistance has been provided before and during various international events. Mentoring has been provided by GMs Peter Wells and John Emms and IM Adam Hunt.

During 2022 the Chess Trust has expanded its activities. It has provided financial support to enable organisers of norm tournaments to bridge some of the gap between expected income and budgeted costs and has given those organisers the comfort that the financial risk of putting on a norm tournament can be mitigated, at least in part.

The Chess Trust has also established a fund to enable Ukrainian refugees now living in England to continue to play chess. A total of £10,000 has been made available, and applications are still very much welcome via the application form on the shortly-to-be-redesigned website, [The Chess Trust](#). To date, 12 grants have been made to senior and junior, male and female players, and these grants have helped participation in events all over the country, from Northumbria to Hull to Torquay. Please encourage your Ukrainian clubmates to get in touch with us!

The Chess Trust has made all its grants for 2022, but applications are welcome for 2023. The Trustees usually meet at least twice a year to consider grant applications, and the next such meeting is in March. If you are considering applying for a grant, you may do so through the website. The Trustees can only make grants which are in accordance with our objects above, but these are quite broad, and we will consider just about anything! All we ask in return is that recipients of grants make it known that support has been provided by the Chess Trust, be that via entry forms, social media or even banners at the event, as was the case at the Hull 4NCL International Congress held last month. We also ask for a brief report on the use of the grant and the benefits obtained, which we may publish on our website.

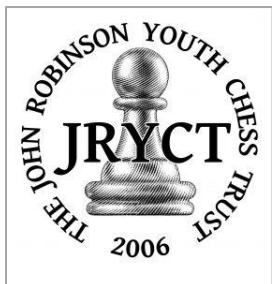
The Chess Trust was established with the help and support of the ECF, but importantly the Chess Trust is independent of the ECF, as it must be for Charity Commission purposes. The ECF CEO and Finance Director are ex officio Trustees, but others were selected and invited to become Trustees when the Chess Trust was established, being replaced by new Trustees when necessary. As well as the ECF Trustees (Mike Truran and Adam Ashton), the current Trustees are David Eustace, Sarah Longson, Stephen Greep, Malcolm Pein and Simon Brown. The Chair of Trustees since inception was Ray Edwards, who stepped down this year, and we owe him thanks for steering the Chess Trust through its early years and guiding it into its current position, where it can make a real difference to chess in England.

After Ray stepped down, the other Trustees asked me (Simon Brown) to become Chairman, and I was honoured to accept. As a fellow Kent chess player, I remember Richard Haddrell well from when I played in his junior tournaments in the 1970s, feeling slightly sheepish when on the receiving end of his (usually) benign reprimands for making too much noise with my contemporaries, including Daniel King, Clive Frostick and Ian Thompson amongst many others.

Of course, the Chess Trust is happy to accept donations and bequests now, and, as it is a charity, any such donations from a UK taxpayer will be eligible for the Gift Aid scheme which will benefit the Chess Trust and any higher rate taxpayer. But it is the Trustees' intention over the next few years to demonstrate that the funds available to us can be spent wisely and responsibly and can make a real difference to chess in the UK, so that the donors of the future will know that the Chess Trust will find the best use for their funds.

If you wish to enquire about the work of the Chess Trust, please contact the Secretary David Eustace by email at david.eustace01@btinternet.com

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust



The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, an independent grant-making charitable trust, was founded in 2006. The Trust was created following the death of Mr. John Robinson on 1 February 2006. Our charity registration number is

1116982. Applications for financial support by The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust are invited. They should be emailed to the Chairman (see email address below) and must meet the charitable objects of the Trust – *‘to advance education by providing or assisting in the provision of facilities for the teaching development and supervision of the playing of chess amongst persons under the age of twenty one, resident in England or eligible to represent England at chess’*. Each year the Trust awards a total of approximately £25,000 in grants. Recent grants include: support to the UK Chess Challenge (an ongoing bursary award scheme for Megafinal entries); Hastings Chess Congress (bursary awards for Masters entries); the Cambridge Girls Chess Initiative; the British Chess Championship (coaching for juniors and event subsidy); the 4NCL Hull International Congress; the Northumbria Chess Masters; the Braille Chess Association; and awards to individual junior players.

If you wish to enquire about the work of the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, please contact the Chairman by email at john.higgs@englishchess.org.uk

ECF Online

Nigel Towers reports on this month's ECF online club tournaments and internationals

ECF Online Clubs

Our members clubs are open to all ECF members and supporters on Chess.com or Lichess and provide regular tournaments most days of the week, where you can get an ECF online rating together with online internationals.

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

Lichess – <https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players>

We also have an open club, open to all Chess.com members with regular ECF tournaments and a chance to play for the ECF England team in Live Chess World and European League Internationals.

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

Regular ECF Rated Tournaments

The Chess.com Friday Evening Diamond - The most popular of the Chess.com ECF members club weekly events is the ECF Diamond Arena. This starts at 8 pm and is a 90-minute Arena tournament at a 10|0 blitz time control with a prize of a month's Chess.com Diamond membership upgrade each for top-placed player and top-placed under-1400 players.

Most of the ECF rated club tournaments are played at blitz or a fairly fast rapidplay time control (10|2 or 10|5). In response to player requests we are now running a mid-week slower rapidplay event starting at 7 pm on Wednesday with four rounds at a 15|5 time control.

You can find a list of all the upcoming tournaments on the ECF online events page here as well as the club home pages:

<https://englishchessonline.org.uk/upcoming-club-events/>

The Lichess Sunday Classical Swiss – As well as the weekly tournaments we run an increasingly popular four-round classical Swiss on alternate Sundays. This is a standardplay event at a 50|10 time control with rounds

at 10.30 am, 2 pm, 5 pm and 8 pm, and is a good opportunity to get an online rating at the standardplay time control.

Titled Tuesday and Titled Arenas



Chess.com run a weekly Titled Tuesday event with early and late 11-round Swiss Tournaments at 5 pm and 11 pm UK time.

<https://www.chess.com/article/view/titled-tuesday#format>

Titled Tuesday is open to players with FIDE titles from FM to GM or WGM, or a National Master (NM) title awarded by their Federation.

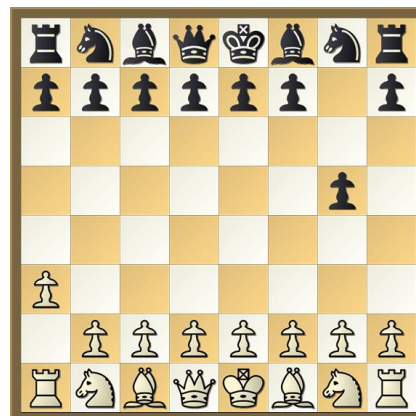
The ECF awards NM titles to those with a sustained ECF standardplay rating of 2200 or over for a period of at least 24 months in the National lists – further details on the Master points page here –

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/master-points-system/>

GM Hikaru Nakamura regularly plays in and wins the Titled Tuesday events, as he did on 11 October. Here is Hikaru's round 9 game from the 11 October tournament against GM Magnus Carlsen. Hikaru opens with the offbeat 1 a3 (Anderssen's Opening) with Magnus responding with 1...g5 (the reverse Grob). Both openings were popularised by Mike Basman. Hikaru picks up the offered g-pawn early in the game, finds a tactic to win a second pawn, and goes on to win the game on time. He finished the tournament with 9½ points from the 11 rounds, just clear of Carlsen and Duda on 9 points.

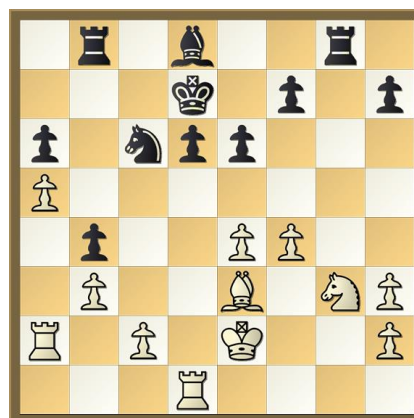
(10724) Hikaru (3228) - MagnusCarlsen (3261) [A00] -
Live Chess Chess.com, 11.10.2022

1.a3 g5



1 a3 (Anderssen's opening) is met in kind by 1...g5 (the reverse Grob).

2.e4 c5 3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4 Nf6 5.Bxg5 Nc6 6.Qd3 Qb6 7.Bc1 Ng4 8.Nh3 d6 9.Nc3 Nge5 10.Qb5 Qxb5 11.Bxb5 Bxh3 12.gxh3 a6 13.Be2 Nd4 14.Kd1 Nxe2 15.Nxe2 Rc8 16.b3 Rg8 17.Be3 b5 18.a4 b4 19.a5 e6 20.Ra2 Be7 21.Ng3 Kd7 22.Ke2 Bd8 23.Rd1 Rb8 24.f4 Nc6



25.Bc5 A little tactic winning a second pawn, after which White is definitely in control.

25...Bc7 26.Bxd6 Bxd6 27.e5 Kc7 28.exd6+ Kd7 29.Ne4 Rg2+ 30.Kf3 Rxh2 31.Nc5+ Ke8 32.Rg1

Hikaru won on time, but Black is already lost.

1-0

Chess.com Internationals



The England team for the Live Chess World League is drawn from players in the ECF Open club. This is the ECF's social chess club, open to all online players on Chess.com and comprising over 5,500 members on Chess.com. Club members can register for events from an hour before each fixture, and are allocated to boards depending on their Chess.com rating.

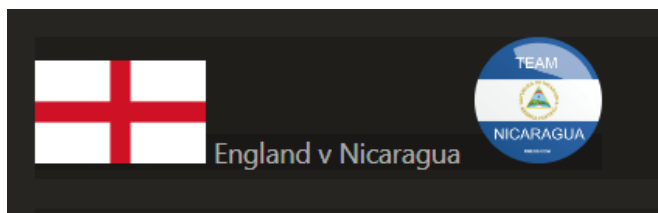
This month saw two matches in the Live Chess World League season 10 which runs as an 'all play all' with divisions of eight teams.

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

Matches are generally played on Sundays, with times varying depending on the time zone of the opponents. This month's matches were as below, with further details here -

<https://www.Chess.com/clubs/matches/live/english-chess-federation>

England v Nicaragua – 30/10/2022



We tied our match against Team Nicaragua, losing the blitz leg by 11½ to 14½ but making a comeback to win the rapid by 12½ to 11½.

England v Puerto Rico – 06/11/2022

Our second LWCL match this month was against Team Puerto Rico on the evening of Sunday 6 November. This was a very close match with a big turnout on both sides, with the England team winning both the blitz and rapid

legs by 14-12 and 11-9, and with the result in the balance until the final games in both cases.

Lichess Team Battles

Lichess team battles continue to be very popular with English Chess Players team members. These provide an opportunity to take part in some of the biggest Lichess events, with team members paired in Arena format against players from opposing teams. The weekly schedule is currently as follows:

The Mega A Blitz – Alternate Friday afternoons. The Mega A and B team battles are organised by Lichess for national and large club teams based on time zone. These are the largest team battles on the Lichess platform, with over 170 teams and 20 leaders per team.

The Bundesliga (Lichess Liga)



Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.00pm

The online Bundesliga started when the main over the board Bundesliga was suspended during lockdown and has continued without a break for the last two years, with regular team events on Thursday and Sunday. We continue in Liga 3 or 4 in one of the most competitive team battles on the platform with England teams generally including GM Keith Arkell.

The Torres de Loule / Liga Ibera



Sunday Afternoon 3.30pm

News and Views

European Seniors Team Chess Championship – a report by Nigel Povah



Six England teams comprising 26 players gathered for the European Seniors Team Chess Championship in Dresden, Germany. The six teams were as follows –

England 50+ 1 - 1. Mark Hebden 2. Keith Arkell 3. John Emms 4. Glenn Flear 5. Chris Baker

England 50+ 2 - 1. Steve Dishman 2. Andy Lewis 3. Clive Frostick 4. Bob Noyce 5. Natasha Regan

England 50+ 3 - 1. Phil Crocker 2. Peter Hassan 3. Brian Valentine 4. Ray Tarling

England 65+ 1 - 1. Peter Large 2. Andrew Martin 3. Nigel Povah 4. Richard Britton

England 65+ 2 - 1. Stephen Orton 2. Ian Reynolds 3. David Tucker 4. Roger Scowen

England 65+ 3 - 1. Steve Williams 2. Colin Costello 3. Tim Spanton 4. Bob Kane

Official website

— <https://www.schachfestival.de/aktuelles/24th-european-senior-team-championship-2022.html>

27 October – Round 1

The England 50+ 1 and 2 teams both had convincing victories, with the former winning 4-0 against Graz and the latter winning 3½-½ against SK Heidenau U50. England 50+ 3 lost ½-3½ against a strong Austria team.

England 65+ 1 beat a useful Sweden 2 team 3-1, in which all of the games were hard-fought. England 65+ 2 lost 3½-½ to Finland, with Ian Reynolds getting a commendable draw on board two against someone rated over 150 points above him. England 3 went down 3-1 against Austria 65, with Tim Spanton scoring a good win against someone nearly 200 points above him.

28 October – Round 2

A fantastic day for England as all six teams win! The England 50+ 1 team continued with their second 4-0

victory against Deutsche Bahn 1 and England 2 beat Belgium 2 by 2½-1½, whilst England 50+ 3 beat Lichtenstein by 3-1. So England 1 and 2 are both on maximum points after two rounds.

England 65+ 1 beat Kosovo by 2½-1½ and England 65+ 2 beat Dutch team Oranje by 3½-½, whilst England 3 registered the same score against higher-rated team USV TU Dresden.

So today England players scored an impressive 19 points from 24 games!

29 October Round 3

Back down to earth, with a dose of reality. The England 50+ 1 team managed a well-earned 2½-1½ victory over a decent Germany team, who were seeded fourth, thanks to Mark Hebden securing his third victory in a row on top board. England 2 lost ½-3½ to Slovakia, the third seeds, with Steve Dishman getting a creditable draw against GM Ftacnik and very nearly beating him. England 50+ 3 lost 1½-2½ to Germany Women 1, who were slightly higher rated.

England 65+ 1 had a 2-2 draw with Finland, with all four games being drawn in a very even match. England 65+ 2 lost to Iceland 65 by 2½-1½, whilst England 3 lost by the same score to SV Dresden-Striesen.

So only England's top teams in each section avoided defeat and both remain in contention.

30 October – Round 4

The England 50+ 1st team maintained their 100% record with another 2½-1½ victory over a strong Berlin 1 team, thanks to a win from John Emms. England 2 won by the same margin against Germany Women 1 and England 3 won by 3-1 against Schwarzwald 50, so a good day for the three England 50+ teams.

England 65+ 1 lost 1½-2½ against the third seeds Germany 3, in what was again a very close match. England 65+ 2 beat BSV Chemie Radebeul 65 by 3-1, whilst England 3 drew 2-2 with SK 2012 Danmark.

31 October – Round 5

The England 50+ 1st team made it five consecutive victories with an impressive 3-1 victory over a strong Slovakia team, thanks to wins from Keith Arkell and John Emms. England 2 drew 2-2 with German team Graal-

Muritz/Teterow and England 3 also drew 2-2 against an Austrian team from Graz.

England 65+ 1 beat Siebenlehner SV by 3-1, thanks to wins from Peter Large and Nigel Povah. England 65+ 2 lost to Kosovo by the score 3-1, whilst England 3 lost to Ireland by the same score.

1 November – Round 6



GM Mark Hebden in reflective mood

The England 50+ 1st team had a convincing $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ win against Austria to further consolidate their position as sole leaders with 12 match points and $19\frac{1}{2}$ game points. England 2 lost by the same score to Germany, while England 3 beat local team Grün-Weiss Dresden by 3-1, thanks to wins from Brian Valentine (his first in 50+ Seniors chess in 20 years!) and Ray Tarling, both of whom were well out-rated.

England 65+ 1 drew 2-2 with SC Eppingen, whilst England 65+ 2 lost to Koninklijke DD by $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$, as did England 3 to Deutsche Bahn 2. England 65+ 1 are lying in joint sixth place, three match points behind the leaders, but with three rounds still to play they still have a chance of getting into the medals if they can have a strong finish.

2 November – Round 7

The England 50+ 1st team had another convincing $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ win against Sweden North, as did England 2 who beat ESV Eberswalde by the same score. England 3 drew 2-2 with Graal-Muritz Teterow. So England 1 remain two match points ahead of the field, and they also have three extra

game points, so they are in a commanding position with 23 game points out of a possible 28.

England 65+ 1 lost $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ to Sweden and England 65+ 2 drew 2-2 against Schwarzwald 65, whilst England 3 had a resounding 4-0 victory over Randbauern.

Sadly, England 65+ 1 have now dropped to 11th and are unlikely to be able to compete for a medal on this occasion.

3 November - Round 8

England 50+ 1st team are European Senior Team Champions! The England 50+ 1st team only managed a 2-2 draw with Bielefeld, with all four games drawn. It was a tough match and England were struggling for a period but eventually pulled through. However, thanks to Slovakia beating Germany 1, England secured the European title with a round to spare.

England 2 won a tough match against Berlin 2 by $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ and England 2 will now face England 1 in tomorrow's final round! England 3 beat Ireland by $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$, so the three England teams will be playing on the top three boards tomorrow!

England 65+ 1 bounced back from the previous day's disappointment to register a comfortable 4-0 victory against Iceland. England 2 beat Germany Women by $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ and England 3 drew 2-2 with Schach(t)jungs Bannerwitz.

4 November - Round 9

The England 50+ 1st team celebrated their status as the new European champions with a 3-1 victory over England 2, thanks to wins by Keith Arkell and Glenn Flear respectively over Steve Dishman and Clive Frostick, with the other two games drawn. England 2 finished in eighth place in accordance with their seeding, with Steve Dishman as their standout performer, with $5\frac{1}{2}$ /8 on top board.

England 3 lost $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ to a strong Berlin 1 team, with Ray Tarling securing a most impressive draw against an IM, rated over 570 points above him! England 3 significantly over-performed, finishing in 12th place, well ahead of their seeding in 23rd place! Philip Crocker took the brunt of the pressure on top board, scoring a respectable $4\frac{1}{2}$ /9 while his three compatriots, Peter Hasson, Brian Valentine and Ray Tarling all excelled, adding 51, 26 and 48 rating points respectively!

England 65+ 1 could only draw 2-2 with Dutch team Koninklijke DD and finished in a disappointing eighth place compared with their fourth seeding. The team's standout performer was IM Peter Large on top board, scoring an impressive 6/9. England 2 drew 2-2 with SV Aufbau Bernburg and finished in 25th place, marginally ahead of their 27th seeding. Steve Orton on top board was their top performer scoring 5½/9. England 3 lost by 2½-1½ to Ireland 2 and finished in 37th place, just ahead of their 40th seeding. Tim Spanton was the star of the team on board 3, with a very impressive, undefeated 7/9!

So as previously stated, England 50+ 1 are the European Senior Over 50 Team Champions, so huge congratulations to them for successfully navigating their way through the tournament without losing a single game and finishing with 17 match points from a possible 18 and 28 game points from a possible 36.



4NCL Weekend One Results



The first weekend's results can be viewed at <https://www.4ncl.co.uk>

European Cities and Towns Chess Championships 11 December

The European Chess Union announces the first European Cities and Towns Chess Championship which will take place on Sunday 11 December 2022 in hybrid city venues. The event consists of four categories – Open, Women, Seniors, and Youth (Under 12). The first edition of the new European competition is supported by the FIDE Development Fund. Each city or town has the right to nominate one team of four players in each of four categories:

Open Tournament (any age); Women's Tournament (female participants); Seniors Tournament (players over 50 years of age, born in 1972 or earlier); Youth Tournament (players up to 12, born in 2010 or later). For more information and to register –

<https://www.europechess.org/european-cities-towns-chess-championship-2022/>

Chessable ECF Grand Prix



The Chessable ECF Grand Prix is now well under way. This is an individual Grand Prix competition based on players' results in ECF-rated open congresses or congress sections from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The **Grand Prix** is divided into seven sections -

1. Open Prix - open for those rated 2050 or above (OTB standardplay rating)
2. Major - 1900 – 2049
3. Intermediate - 1750 – 1899
4. Minor - 1600 – 1749
5. Improvers - Under 1600
6. Women's Prix - open to all female members (Silver and above)
7. Junior Prix - open to players under 18 on 31 August in the year in which the Grand Prix begins

Current published ratings are used based on the 1 July 2022 lists for allocation to categories – standardplay where available, otherwise rapidplay.

The first set of provisional leader boards has been published taking into account results in ten standardplay and 21 rapidplay events between 1 July and 15 October.

UK Open Blitz Finals



The Open and Women's finals for the UK Open Blitz will take place on 3 December at the Woodland Grange Hotel near Leamington Spa.

Each final will be a 16-player FIDE-rated round robin tournament with 15 rounds at a 3|2 time control with tie-breaks used if necessary to determine the champions.



The Woodland Grange, Leamington Spa

Qualifiers for the two finals are as follows -

Open Final

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----|------|
| GM Jon S Speelman | ENG | 2569 |
| GM Danny Gormally | ENG | 2554 |
| GM Mark L Hebden | ENG | 2457 |
| GM Eldar Gasanov | UKR | 2454 |
| IM Jose Camacho Collados | WLS | 2351 |
| IM Jonah B Willow | ENG | 2248 |
| Allan W Beardsworth | ENG | 2195 |
| FM Charles Storey | ENG | 2188 |
| CM Adam Bremner | SCO | 2155 |
| CM Jonathan Pein | ENG | 2140 |
| Yichen Han | NED | 2117 |
| Mandar Tahmankar | IND | 2104 |
| Koichi Nicholas | ENG | 2075 |
| Alfie Onslow | ENG | 2015 |
| Oliver Stubbs | ENG | 1971 |
| Jacob Connor Boswell | ENG | 1948 |

Women's Final

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|------|
| WGM Katarzyna Toma | ENG | 2210 |
| WGM Elmira Mirzoeva | FID | 2160 |
| Stefanie Duessler | GER | 2093 |
| Madara Orlowska | LAT | 2063 |
| WFM Meri Grigoryan | ENG | 1978 |
| Kamila Hryshchenko | ENG | 1938 |
| WIM Natasha Regan | ENG | 1951 |
| WFM Louise Head | ENG | 1849 |
| Anusha Submarian | ENG | 1740 |
| Anita Somton | ENG | 1690 |
| Bodhana Sivanandan | ENG | 1626 |
| Eugenia Karas | ENG | 1560 |
| Dicen Elis Denele | ENG | 1420 |
| Lindsay Pyun | ENG | 1399 |
| Louison Fuchs | FRA | 1394 |
| Leah Worbey | IRL | 1317 |

The ECF Annual General Meeting 15 October 2022

Council Chair Michael Farthing reports on the ECF's AGM

The AGM this year was a quiet and relatively gentle affair, with 15 attending in person and a further 23 by Zoom. The venue was in Birmingham at the 'Signing Tree', the home of the Birmingham Deaf Cultural Centre. We were received most hospitably and one of the advantages it offered was an 'Owl', a delightful model bird fitted with a camera which rotated to focus on whoever was talking and transmit the image to the Zoom participants, but disappointingly the microphone facilities did not come up to the same standard and Zoom folk had great difficulty in hearing clearly what was happening in the room.

Council meetings always begin with a minute's silence for those of our number who have recently died. This time we particularly remembered Alan Leadbetter, who represented several Staffordshire organisations at Council for many years and who had been a long-standing member of the Governance Committee. He had recently retired from these roles but was still hale, dying in a road accident just a few weeks ago.

The first job of an AGM is to receive a host of reports – from the Board on its doings and its future strategy; from the two standing committees, Governance and Finance, and on this occasion separate reports from Malcolm Pein as Director of International Chess and FIDE Representative. These reports were all received and approved with no dissent but did generate some interesting and insightful discussion on such matters as how over the board chess is recovering from Covid (some loss of players in some areas but very encouraging growth

elsewhere), progress and plans for junior events including concerns about the ease of applying for funding and the lack of FIDE tournaments where juniors can gain good experience. To my mind this was Council at its best – facing important issues but in an atmosphere of open discussion and respect.

There then followed the elections. The Chair stressed the need for ‘gentlemanly conduct’ but his fears were groundless; candidates kept admirably to the rules during their speeches and remained within time limits without any need for intervention. Questions from the floor were at times hard-hitting, but still conducted with proper respect.

Most posts up for election this time had only one candidate – but in the ECF that is not enough to secure victory, for there is always an extra ghost standing: ‘Not This Candidate’. There have been occasions when ‘Not This Candidate’ has won and the post has been left unfilled, but this year the ghost made a poor showing and all the unopposed candidates were easily returned: David Eustace, former Director of Finance, becomes the new Chair of Council (replacing me), and Malcolm Pein (International Director and FIDE Representative), Shohreh Bayat (Director of Events), Nick Faulks (Chairman of the Finance Committee) and Mike Gunn (Member of the Governance Committee) were all re-elected to their existing posts.

The contested elections were for the Non-Executive Chairman of the Board and here Stephen Woodhouse, who has served as a non-executive director for several years, was elected with 151 votes with Tim Wall receiving 71 votes and a different ghost (‘None of the Above’) harvesting 1 vote. More keenly fought was the post for a Non-Executive Director to replace Stephen Woodhouse. There were three candidates, with Stephen Greep elected with 126 votes ahead of Alan Atkinson (81) and Hok Yin Stephen Chiu (29). ‘None of the Above’ did not get a look in.

And so we arrived at apparently the only divisive issue: where and how should future Council Meetings occur? For many years meetings have alternated between London and Birmingham, but Manchester Chess Federation presented a motion that a northern city such as Manchester or Leeds should be added to the roster. Would there be an outbreak of war, with cries of dissent from the London stalwarts? Well, no. Firstly there was an amendment to bring first use of the new venue forward to next year, and then a hand vote on the motion itself, which generated a single hand against and the rest

in favour. A later discussion went on to consider whether future AGMs should be face-to-face or by Zoom or a hybrid combination. This too was conducted with dignity, but a straw poll gave the unhelpful result that opinion was pretty evenly divided.

Finally, the meeting resolved with no dissent that Ray Edwards, a long-time servant of chess and most recently retired Trustee of the Chess Trust be made an Honorary Life Member of the ECF. Congratulations Ray, and well-deserved!

Paul Buswell RIP



Paul with Stuart Conquest, Darren Lee, the late Neil Carr and Neil Fox – reprinted with the kind permission of John Upham

Born 14 March 1950, died 18 October 2022

Paul was born in Kingston on Thames.

He was a pupil at The Royal Grammar School, Guildford. He went to The University of East Anglia and, on finishing his degree, went to work as General Secretary of the British Chess Federation which was then based in Norwich. He was in office from 1975 to 1986. Recently he returned to work for the English Chess Federation on a part-time basis as a bookkeeper.

The BCF bought British Chess Magazine when the opportunity presented itself, after the untimely death of Freddie Reilly and moved their office to Hastings in 1982, where they shared the building in St Leonards with the magazine. Eventually the Federation was moved to Battle which is where it is situated now. Paul moved to Hastings while he was General Secretary and remained there the rest of his life.

He worked for the development of chess for nearly 50 years. He edited News Flash and the Year Book while Secretary and, of course, wrote an annual report for it. When Ray Keene formed the Commonwealth Chess

Association Paul became the secretary and helped that organisation take shape.

It was he who made the important first contact with Grieveson Grant and Co, the stockbrokers who sponsored the British Chess Championships for many years. He was of invaluable assistance for the Phillips & Drew/GLC Kings Tournaments from 1980 to 1984 and the Acorn Computer Matches (Smyslov v Ribli and Kasparov v Korchnoi) in 1983. He became Secretary of the Hastings International Chess Congress and helped it through some turbulent times, perhaps especially so when Ray Keene and I obtained the Foreign & Colonial sponsorship of that immensely important event for chess worldwide.

In the 1990s Paul became involved with the Hastings & St Leonards Chess Club, being at various times match captain, treasurer and chairman. It was Paul who masterminded the club becoming a limited company. This proved to be very valuable in the Covid years as they were able to apply for government grants.

Paul was an essential member of the group of people who created the English Chess Explosion that culminated in our coming second in 1984 in the Chess Olympiad, runners-up to the USSR. Of course the players and the captain, David Anderton, were the prime movers in that achievement. His contribution was making things work, seemingly seamlessly, mainly as secretary behind the scene.

In his report in the Year Book in 1982 he wrote 'The game of chess can perhaps describe itself as a millionaire in its resources of private effort at all levels. An independent organisation estimated that, at very modest rates of pay, it would cost over £2 million annually to cover the work done by volunteers.' Don't forget the amount of inflation there has been since then. But we should remember it was his efficiency that held everything together 40 years ago.

Paul was not a strong chess player. He was graded about 125 (1800). He was very modest, didn't like his photo taken and twice turned down the offer of the ECF President's Award for Services to Chess. Paul didn't want there to be any fuss about his funeral. If you want to honour him, a donation to St Michael's Hospice in Hastings would be appropriate.

RIP Paul, we will miss you, dear friend.

--- Stewart Reuben

JUNIOR MOVES

Littlewood's Choice



As reported in one of my previous columns, Shreyas Royal is one of our up-and-coming youngsters who is now achieving excellent results at a senior level and recently achieved his third IM norm at the Hull 4NCL International GM Norm Tournament.

Harry Grieve, the reigning British Champion, was also playing in this tournament, so I was interested to see what happened when they played each other in round 6.

Harry Grieve vs Shreyas Royal

Mindsports Masters (GM Norm) 2022

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0 Be7 7.e5 Ne4 8.Nxd4

Harry has played an old line of the Ruy Lopez which is not supposed to lead to any particular advantage for White. However Black must not take equality for granted and must be careful not to let White develop an attack on the kingside.

8...Nxd4?!

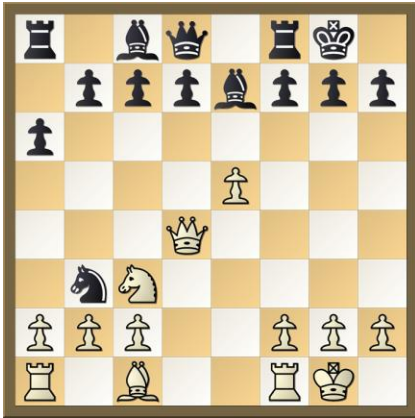


Shreyas does not want to allow Nf5, but in fact after 8...0-0 9.Nf5 d5 10.Nxe7+ Nxe7 11.c3 Nc5 12.Bc2 Bf5 the position is equal.

9.Qxd4 Nc5 10.Nc3 0-0

Not 10...Nxa4?! 11.Qxa4 0-0 12.Bf4 d5 13.exd6 cxd6 14.Rad1 with a better position for White.

11.Bb3 Nxb3



12.cxb3

Normally we recapture towards the centre, but capturing with the c-pawn is better so that it is not en prise in some variations.

**12....d6 13.Bf4 dxe5 14.Qxe5 Bd6 15.Qd4 Bxf4
16.Qxf4 Be6 17.Rad1 Qe7 18.Rfe1 c6**

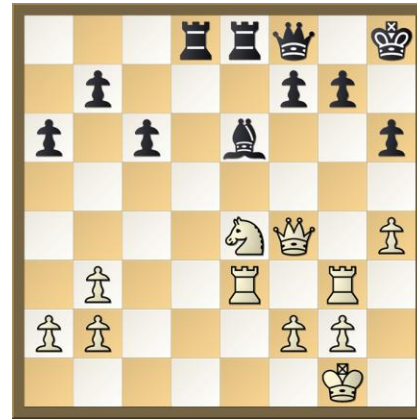


The position is now dynamically equal, but Black has to be careful as White has a slight lead in development.

**19.Rd3 Rfe8 20.Rg3 Kh8 21.h4 Rad8 22.Ree3 h6
23.Ne4**

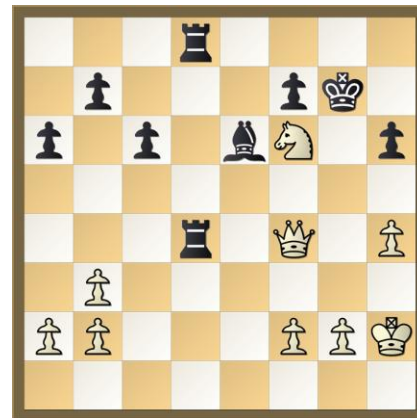
White's forces are all marshalled for a kingside attack, but Black's control of the d-file should give him enough counter-chances.

23....Qf8?



However, this is a mistake which allows White a winning combination... admittedly not easy to see. Black has two other defences: the solid 23...Rg8 or the active but scary 23...Qb4 24.Kh2 Bd5, when the sacrifice 25.Rxg7!? only leads to a draw after 25...Kxg7 26.Qf6+ Kh7 27.Qf5+ Kg7, as an attempt to win by 26.Rg3+ Kf8 27.Qxh6+ Ke7 28.Qg5+ Kd7 29.Nf6+ Kc7 30.Nxe8+ Rxe8 leaves Black with a winning position.

**24.Rxg7! Qxg7 25.Nf6 Rd1+ 26.Kh2 Red8 27.Rg3 R1d4
28.Rxg7 Kxg7**



29.Qe5 Even stronger is 29.Ne4! as after the move chosen Black can get away with 29...Rxh4+ 30.Kg3 Rh1 when White is still better, but the loss of the h-pawn has complicated matters.

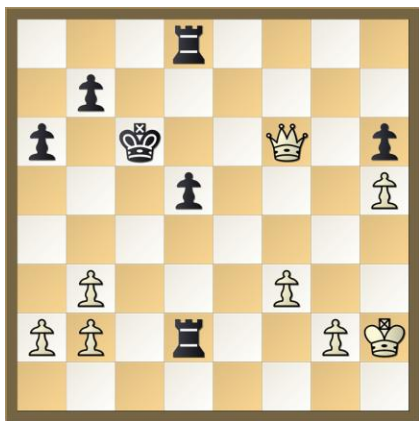
**29.....Kf8?! 30.Nh7+ Kg8 31.Nf6+ Kf8 32.h5 Rd2
33.Ne4 Re2 34.f3 Bd5 35.Qh8+ Ke7 36.Qf6+ Kd7
37.Nc3 Rd2 38.Nxd5?!**

Even stronger is 38.Qxh6! when 38...Rxb2 loses to 39.Qc1 Rf2 40.Kg1.

38.cxd5 39.Qxf7+ Kc6?

Better was 39...Kc8, but White is still clearly winning after 40.Qe6+ Rd7 41.Qxh6 Re2 42.Qc1+ Rc7 43.Qf4 Ree7 44.g4.

40. Qf6+ 1-0



Black's position is completely lost after 40...Kd7
41.Qg7+ Ke8 42.Qg6+ Ke7 43.Qxh6.

A brilliant combination by Harry, who went on to win the tournament and prove to us all that his British Championship triumph was not a one hit wonder!

Meanwhile 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.

--- Paul Littlewood

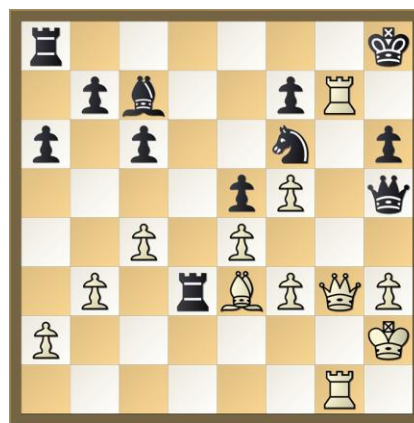
IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

If you're building a new house, it is obviously vital to clear and prepare the ground that's going to be built on before proceeding with the bricklaying etc.

A similar idea occurs in chess – a square or diagonal often needs to be cleared of your own or opponent's pieces before a winning combination can take place on that square or diagonal.

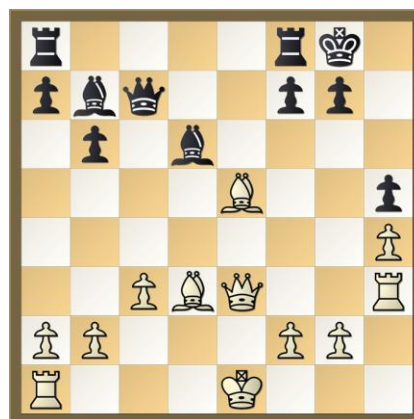
Consider the following position:



Lisitsyn – Zagoriansky
USSR 1936

In this position White regrets having a rook on g7 because otherwise he would be able to mate immediately by Qg7. Therefore he forcibly clears the square by **1.Rh7+!** and if 1....N or Kxh7 2.Qg7 mate. Note that accuracy is needed because the other attempt to clear the square by 1.Rg8+ would fail to 1...Rxg8.

Sometimes it is a diagonal rather than a square which needs to be cleared.



Janowski – Samisch

Marienbad 1925

White won by the brilliant move **1.Qh6!** which cleared the e5-h8 diagonal. The game finished **1...gxh6 2.Rg3 mate.**

As with most tactical themes, to defend against space clearance it's important to take preventative measures before the position arises. Remember, it's always vital to be vigilant, as combinations can spring up very quickly! Consider the following position -



Botvinnik – Stepanov

USSR 1931

White has just played 1.f5 and Black is clearly under pressure. He played **1...exf5?** which lost immediately to the space clearance combination **2.Bxf7+ Rxf7 3.Nc4,** winning the black queen.

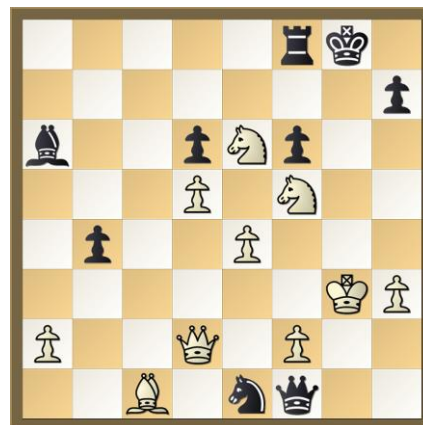
Here are two examples to solve yourself, with the answers at the end of the article:



Roneat – Reicher

West Germany 1950

How did White force mate?



Urusov – Kalinovski

St. Petersburg 1880

In this exciting position how did White force mate?

Answers

Roneat – Reicher

White won by 1.Qe6+! clearing the h6 square for his knight so after 1...B or Nxe6 2.Nh6 is mate.

Urusov – Kalinowski

White forcibly cleared the a1 – h8 diagonal by 1.Qg5+! and the game finished 1...fxg5 2.Nh6+ Kh8 3.Bb2+ Rf6 4.Bxf6 mate.

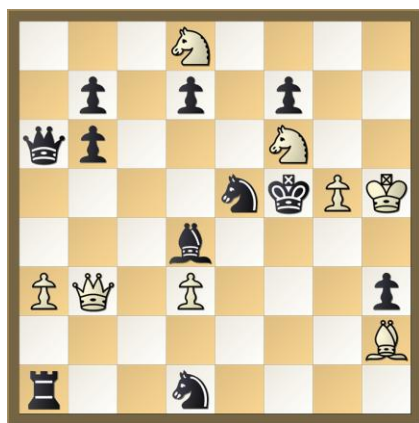
--- Paul Littlewood Email: plittl@hotmail.com

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

Before giving the solution to the problem with which I left you last time, you may like to have a look at this one (solution a little way further on down the page), a real conundrum and test of your imagination -

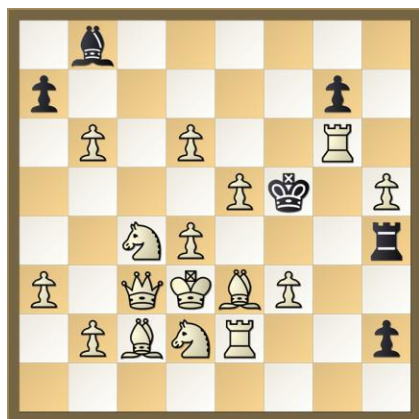


Mate in 3

Johannes Kohtz and Carl Kockelkorn
Lösungsturnier Berlin 1897

My little German tells me that the famous composers composed this one specifically for a solving tourney, so congratulations if you can make headway in solving it! If not, read on further down.

Meantime, here is the problem with which I left you last time -



Mate in 2

Gustav Jonsson - *Stella Polaris* 1970

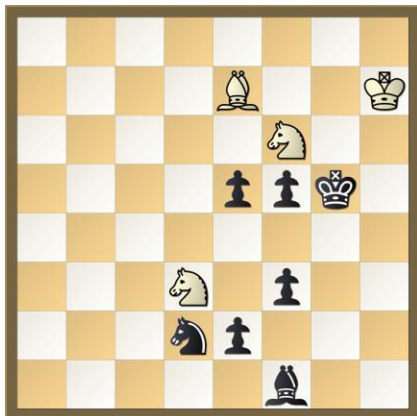
Last time I said: 'You have to contend with a very strong potential defence 1...Rxh5. So the task is to find a move that threatens mate and also unblocks one of the squares adjacent to the white king, so as to be able to meet 1...Rxh5 by a mating discovery move by the white king. As you might expect, there are a number of candidate white moves – your assignment is to find the only one that forces mate!'

In fact, all six units adjacent to the WK can threaten mate. Five are tries (i.e. they have unique refutations) and the sixth is the key – 1.Na5? (threat 2.Qc8) Rxh5 2.Kc4 but 1...Bc7!; 1.Qa5? (for 2.e6) Rxh5 2.Kc3 but 1...axb6!; 1.Nf1? (for 2.Ng3) 1...Rxh5 2.Kd2 but 1...h1=N!; 1.Bg5? (for 2.Ne3) 1...Rxh5 2.Ke3 but 1...Re4!; 1.d5? (for 2.Rg5) 1...Rxh5 2.Kd4 but 1...Rf4! – and, finally, the key move 1.Rg2! (for 2.R2g5) 1...Rxh5 2.Ke2.

Now – back to the 3-mover that was set for Berliners in 1897. Your eye may be drawn to the f6N. It has two moves that would each threaten two mates. 1.Ne8 threatens 2.Nd6 and 2.Ng7, but there is one black move that defeats both threats, 1...Nc4!. 1.Ng8 threatens 2.Ne7 and 2.Nh6, but the weakness this time is that neither of the threatened mates guards the potential flight square e4, so Black can capture the d3P – not 1...Nxd3?, when 2.Qd5+ leads to mate next move, but 1...Qxd3!.

Thinking logically and imaginatively, the successful 1897 Berliners would have come up with 1.Qc4!. This has an (admittedly rather brutal) threat of 2.Qxd4, after which mate next move would be unavoidable, so Black would very much like to capture it. But if he plays 1...Qxc4 then 2.Ne8 (previously refuted by ...Nc4, now an impossible move) *does* force mate next move, and if 1...Nxc4 then because ...Qxd3 is now an impossible move 2.Ng8 does the trick. This is the thematic play – that is to say, the play that the composers must have wanted to show. But there is accurate by-play too - moves of the e5N leading to 2.Qd5+ and 1...d6 leading to 2.Qc8+.

Finally, here is another 3-mover of similar vintage, which you may like to solve (or in desperation ask your computer to solve!) before the next issue:



Mate in 3
Zdenek Mach
Besedy lidu 1899

Solution next time. If you have any queries about this problem or anything else problem-related don't hesitate to contact me at the email address below.

--- Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

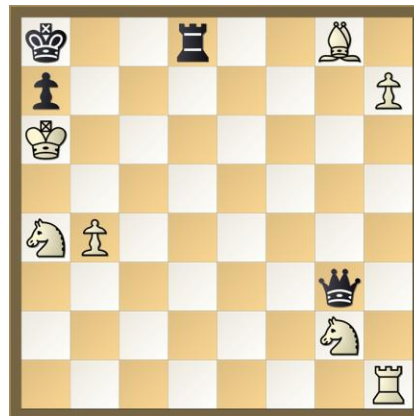
HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

World Team Championship

There is a team World Championship for chess composing, the WCCT. It is for national teams and the results of the latest WCCT, the 11th, have just been announced. The winners of the study competition were Ukraine. It's a separate event from the individual World Championship, whose endgame study winner I told you about in last month's column. The WCCT is for many types of chess problem, such as, for example, mates in two, and it includes an endgame study competition. We're going to look at a study which was the ninth highest scoring study in the competition. It's somewhat shorter and simpler than many of the entries, although that is not to say it's at all easy; modern studies are often lengthy and extremely complex. It's by Jan Sprenger and Martin Minski, of the German team.

The WCCT is a theme tourney; for the studies the compositions had to have a position where there were two alternative moves, one a try and the other the solution, and both moves had to involve an active sacrifice of a piece, specifically a 'pure' sacrifice (meaning it must not be a capture and the piece must be unprotected).



White to play and win

General assessments first: White's slightly ahead in material, and will be a lot ahead if his pawn queens; Black's threats are rook or queen to d6 check but not, at present, rook takes bishop because White would play h8Q; White has the option of Bd5+ now or later; Nb6+ is another option, to block the d6 check possibility, but at present that will open the a-file for a black queen check.

That last observation suggests that maybe the black queen can be deflected, so perhaps 1.Nf4 is the right move. On the other hand, 1.Bd5+ is a candidate, because Black can't capture it (else 2.h8Q+). Both of those are pure sacrifices and therefore meet the theme requirements, so maybe one is the solution and the other the thematic try. That way of solving will seem odd, not to say almost like cheating, but it's legitimate to use all the information you've been provided with; you don't have to treat the position like an over the board game.

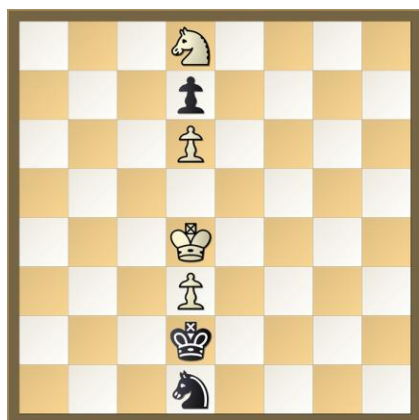
Let's look at 1.Nf4 first, because it's more elegant than 1.Bd5+, and (especially when we're on the first move of the solution), elegant means a better candidate. (That's another non-over the board way of solving, but it often works.) We get 1.Nf4 Qxf4 2.Nb6+ axb6 and now what? Both 3.Bd5+ and 3.Rd1 look reasonable, but 3.Rd1 is nicer, so let's go with that for now: 3.Rd1 Rxd1 4.h8Q Qb8 or 4...Qf8. Now there are 5.Bd5+ and 5.Qh1+ against either of those black moves; so try the more pleasing one first: 4...Qb8, and 5.Qh1+ is prettier than 5.Bd5+. So, 5.Qh1+ Rxh1 6.Bd5+ Qb7+ 7.Bxb7+ Kb8 8.Bxh1 wins. Nice, but we need to look at 4...Qf8 too. Now 5.Qh1+ doesn't work because of 5...Rxh1 6.Bd5+ Kb8, but 5.Bd5+ Rxd5 6.Qxf8+ does. Look at 4...Qb8 5.Bd5+ too: this time 5...Rxd5 defends. This must all be right: we've got an exciting, surprising line, which culminates in two black defences; one is met by Qh1+ with Bd5+ as a try and the other by Bd5+ with Qh1+ as a try, so 'reciprocal change' - that's got to be the composers' intention.

We still need to go through the earlier options, to make sure. 1.Bd5+ Kb8 2.h8Q Qd6+ 3.Kb5 a6+ 4.Ka5 Qxd5+ 5.Nc5 Rxh8 6.Rxh8+ Ka7 7.Rh7+ Ka8 8.Ne3 Qd8+. 3.Bd5+ Kb8 4.h8Q Rxh8 5.Rxh8+ Kc7. (There are a few other short sidelines, but nothing difficult.) In sum, the solution is:

1.Nf4 Qxf4 2.Nb6+ axb6 3.Rd1 Rxd1 4.h8Q and now either **4... Qb8 5.Qh1+ Rxh1 6.Bd5+ Qb7+ 7.Bxb7+ Kb8 8.Rxd1** or **4...Qf8 5.Bd5+ Rxd5 6.Qxf8+**; White wins. This was solvable by more standard solving techniques, but using the information that the study had to meet the theme requirements substantially speeded up the solving.

I was one of the judges for this WCCT, and I gave my highest mark to the next study, which is for you to solve. Most of the other judges prefer more difficult and complex studies, so this one wasn't in the top rankings. It comes down to how much importance one gives to economy of material and clarity of the play, and there is no consensus on this, so judges are free to make their own evaluations. The trend in studies is towards more middlegame-type positions and fewer true endgames, so perhaps we need to update the name of our art form!

This was composed by Arpad Ruzs of Romania. White has four legal knight moves at move one; two of them are sacrifices, so, knowing the tourney theme, you can infer that one of those two is the solution and the other is the thematic try. (As it happens, the other two knight moves are also tries, but not thematic ones.) You should also notice that the diagram piece position is symmetrical, but it can't have two solutions, so somewhere in the following play the asymmetry of the board must become relevant. That's another non-over the board technique, but one that doesn't often arise even in studies.



White to play and win

The solution to Ruzs's study is given below. Don't forget

to visit www.netchex.club, where the November online study-solving is now live.

Ian Watson - ian@irwatson.uk

How to Solve a Study – solution

(Ruzs)

1.Ne6 Nc3 2.Kc4 Na4 3.Nf8 Nb6+ 4.Kc5 Na4+ 5.Kb5 Kxd3 6.Nxd7 Kd4 7.Kc6 Nb2 8.Ne5 wins. That shows the theme sacrifice, on move 1, but why doesn't 1.Nc6 also work? 1.Nc6? Ne3 2.Ke4 Ng4 3.Nb8 Nf6+ 4.Ke5 Ng4+ 5.Kf5 Kxd3 6.Nxd7 Kd4 7.Ke6 Nf2 8.Nc5 would work, but in the middle of that Black has the alternative 3...Nh6 which defends. That couldn't happen in the solution line, because the board is one file too narrow on the other side. That's called the 'Asymmetry Theme' by chess problem composers.

There are also two other tries on move 1; neither is a thematic sacrifice, but they need to be analysed. 1.Nb7 Nc3 2.Nc5 Nb5+ and its reflection 1.Nf7 Ne3 2.Ne5 Nf5+. In the solution line, we also have to check on: (1.Ne6) Ne3 2.Nc5 Nf5+ 3.Ke5 Nh6 4.Kf6 wins; 2.Nc5? Nb5+; 2.Nf8? Nb5+ 3.Kc5 Nxd6; and finally 4...Nc8 5.d4 Kd3 6.d5 wins.

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EVENTS CALENDAR November/December 2022

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Fri 11 -13 Nov | 53rd West Wales Congress - Mercure Swansea |
| 12 Nov | Bexhill Rapid 2022 - Bexhill Town Hall |
| 12 -13 Nov | Oxted FIDE Standard Rating November Tournament - Oxted Library |
| 12 Nov | 20th Claires Court School PTA Chess Festival - Claires Court Junior Boys |
| 12 Nov | Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay Open - St Luke's Church |
| 13 Nov | Hampshire Junior Congress - Badger Farm Community Centre, Hampshire |
| 13 Nov | North London Grand Prix 3 - LJCC Qualifying event - Bishop Douglass School |
| 13 Nov | Nottinghamshire County Championships 2022 - Bramcote Memorial Hall |
| 13 Nov | II Mindsports Masters FIDE Rapidplay - London Mindsports Centre |
| 17 Nov | Junior 4NCL Online Season 6 Round 6 |
| Fri 18 Nov | 1st Hammersmith Friday Evening FIDE Rapidplay - John Betts Primary School |
| 18 - 20 Nov | Torbay Congress - Toorak Hotel |
| 19 - 20 Nov | 2022 Birmingham Open - Archbishop Ilsey Catholic School |
| 19- 20 Nov | 3rd Brentwood School FIDE Invitational - Brentwood School |
| 19 Nov | NSPCA Grand Prix - Nottingham High School 53-61 Forest Road East Nottingham |
| 19 Nov | Sussex Junior Eastbourne Rapidplay - St Catherine's College |
| 19 Nov | Chess Training Day - Welfare House |
| 19- 20 Nov | Ealing FIDE Congress - The Old Actonians Club |
| 19 Nov | GS London Junior Qualifier - Garden Suburb School |
| 19 - 20 Nov | Mill Hill Congress - Copthall School |
| 20 Nov | Woodbridge Junior Chess Open - Woodbridge School |
| 20 Nov | 4th Desert Penguins Junior Chess LJCC Qualifier - John Betts Primary School |
| 20 Nov | Woodbridge Junior Open - Woodbridge School |
| 20 Nov | ECF Schools Girls Semi Final North - Nottingham High School |
| 20 Nov | YJCA Grand Prix Event 1 - Fishergate Primary School |
| 20 Nov | 6th Hope Cup OTB Chess Championship - Lewisham Chess Club |
| 22 Nov | 4NCL Online Season 6 Round 6 |
| Fri 25 Nov | 2022/23 Birmingham & District JCL- Tournament 2 ECF Qualifier - Queen Mary's Grammar |
| 26 —27 Nov | Cambridgeshire County Individual - The Christie Hall |
| 26 Nov | Newham Junior Grand Prix - Gallions Primary School |
| 26 Nov | Poplar Rapid Tournament - Saint Nicholas Church Centre |
| 27 Nov | St Albans LJCC - Aboyne Lodge School |
| 27 Nov | 7th Annual Lowestoft Rapidplay - Parkhill Hotel |
| 27 Nov | Coulsdon Chess Autumn Junior Grand Prix - Coulsdon Surrey CR5 3BA |
| 27 Nov | Oxfordshire LJCC Qualifier – Brighthouse Building Cheney School Oxford OX3 7QH |
| 27 Nov | III Mindsports Masters FIDE Rapidplay - London Mindsports Centre |
| 1 Dec | Junior 4NCL Online Season 6 Round 7 |
| 1 Dec | Hendon FIDE Blitz - Cumberland Lawn Tennis Club |
| Sat 3 Dec | UK Open Blitz Finals – Woodland Grange Leamington Spa |
| 3 Dec | Twickenham U18 Chess Congress - Orleans Park School |
| 4 Dec | Staffordshire Junior Championships - Abbots Bromley Village Hall |
| 4 Dec | Bolton Rapidplay - Ukrainian Social Club |
| 4 Dec | North London Grand Prix 4 - LJCC Qualifying event - Bishop Douglass School |
| 4 Dec | Coventry & District Chess League Third Rapidplay - Massey Ferguson Social Club |
| 4 Dec | Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess Open - Kensington High St & Wrights Lane |
| 6 Dec | 4NCL Online Season 6 Round 7 |
| 7 Dec | Beckenham FIDE Congress -The Parklangley Club |

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|-----------------|--|
| Sat 10 – 11 Dec | Mill Hill Congress - Copthall School |
| 11 Dec | Coulsdon Chess Autumn Junior Grand Prix - Coulsdon |
| 11 Dec | Wey Valley Christmas - Therfield School |
| 13 Dec | 4NCL Online Season 6 Semi Finals |
| 15 Dec | Junior 4NCL Online Season 6 Semi Finals & Final |
| Fri 16 – 20 Dec | 5th EJCOA International - Forest Hall Social Club |
| 17-18 Dec | London Junior Chess Championships - University of Westminster |
| 17 Dec | 14th Northwick Park Five Round Congress - University of Westminster |
| 17 Dec | Harrow Under 8 and Under 12 - University of Westminster |
| 17 – 18 Dec | Ealing FIDE Congress - The Old Actonians Club |