

February 2023



Chess is Booming (again)

**Including reports on the Cambridge International Open, the 4NCL Harrogate, upcoming English and British Championship events and the astonishing boom in online chess ...
plus all the usual features and more ...**

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EDITORIAL



In this month's edition we take a look at the new boom in chess world-wide including the extraordinary resurgence in English chess since the worst days of the pandemic.

Over the board chess is back with a vengeance – leagues and congresses are recovering strongly, English Chess Federation membership numbers are projected to soon reach their highest-ever levels, and rated game counts are already back on a par with pre-pandemic levels. This month's *ChessMoves* reflects the renaissance in congress chess with reports from Harrogate and Cambridge, and the English Chess Federation is doing its bit by organising various English and British Championship events – again, this month's *ChessMoves* gives details of these.

Online chess numbers are astonishing. Chess.com now have over 110 million members globally, with around 4½ million (and rising) active members in the UK alone. At one point Chess.com servers crashed as they tried to cope with an influx of 400,000 members on a single day! Reaching out to these players and persuading them of the attractions of over the board chess represents a big challenge, and a great opportunity, for all of us in the English chess community. This month's Online Chess section looks at the online chess growth phenomenon in more detail.

If you can, do please spread the word to players new to chess about the big programme of events in England over the spring and summer months and about the range of benefits that English Chess Federation supporters and members enjoy. Here's the calendar of upcoming events - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/> - and you can find a helpful summary of the reasons to join the English Chess Federation at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/why-join-the-ecf/>

Finally on a housekeeping point ... if you change your email address do please let us know about your new email address to ensure that you continue to receive *ChessMoves* each month. You can do this by contacting the ECF Office on office@englishchess.org.uk or via the Change of Details form at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/change-of-details/>

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Lichess English Chess Players Club	https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players

Photography by Brendan O'Gorman

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Cambridge International Open



The first Cambridge International Open took place from Wednesday 15th to Sunday 19th February at the historic University Arms Hotel in Cambridge. The event was organised by ECF Events Director Shohreh Bayat with generous support from the University Arms, and an experienced arbiters team consisting of IA Shohreh, IA Matthew Carr and FA Satish Gaekwad.



The University Arms Ballroom ready for round 1

The event was staged in the hotel ballroom and has proven itself to be one of the most sought-after events in England, with entries reaching capacity a full month before the event and with a waiting list of over 50 players looking for a place.

The tournament was played over nine rounds with 121 players from 19 different federations taking part, and players coming from as far away as the USA and Vietnam.

The majority of players were English, with 93 out of the 121 from the host nation. Leading the charge and top

seed for England was Michael Adams, the England number 1 for many years.

Games were streamed from live boards at the event and can be found at the links here:

Chess24 - <https://chess24.com/en/watch/live-tournaments/cambridge-international-open-2023/9/1/1>

Chess.com - <https://www.chess.com/events/2023-cambridge-international-open>

Lichess - <https://lichess.org/broadcast/cambridge-international-open/round-9/hWSz2ax0>

Chessbase - <https://live.chessbase.com/en/watch/The-Cambridge-Open-2023/>



WIM Natasha Regan (above) provided commentary on the event including round 6 on Friday with GM John Emms, Round 8 on Saturday and the final round 9 on Sunday morning with WIM Lan Yao.


You can follow the commentary replay on the ECF Twitch Commentary channel:

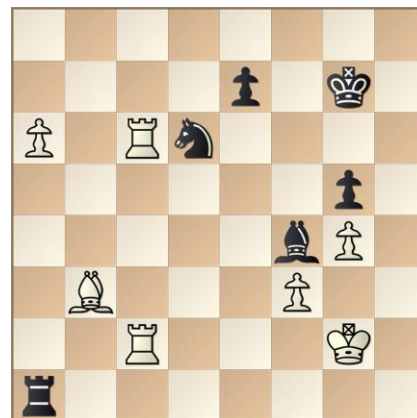
https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_commentary and also the

ECF's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/EnglishChessFederation>

Round 1 saw a big upset, with Michael Adams drawing against his namesake Henry Adams, rated almost 800 points below him. After that, however, Adams proceeded to win his next seven games against all opponents with a champion's performance to power his way through into first place. Adams completed the event with a draw in round 9 to finish top with 8 out of from 9.

<div>  <div> <div>+ Adams, Michael</div> <div> <div>GM</div> <div>2688</div> <div>2</div> </div> </div> <div>points</div> <div>8/9</div> </div>			
vs			
1	+ Adams, Henry	1738	● ½
2	+ Sefton, Adam	1529	○ 1
3	+ Palucha, Szymon	1980	● 1
4	+ Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	2211	○ 1
5	+ GM Gormally, Daniel W	2448	● 1
6	+ GM Fernandez, Daniel Howard	2481	○ 1
7	+ IM Roberson, Peter T	2426	● 1
8	+ Shafi, Declan	2201	○ 1
9	+ IM Golubovic, Boris	2349	● ½



1-0

Here is Mickey's critical 6th round win against early leader GM Daniel Fernandez after which Mickey took the lead for the first time. The opening was a Sicilian Najdorf with a sharp middlegame where Adams shows the power of the two bishops in an open position.

Adams, Michael (2688) - Fernandez, Daniel H (2481) [B90]

Cambridge International Open University Arms Hotel,
Cambridge (6.1), 17.02.2023
[\[https://lichess.org/@/broadcaster/\]](https://lichess.org/@/broadcaster/)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bd3 g6
7.f3 b5 8.Be3 Bb7 9.0-0 Bg7 10.a4 b4 11.Na2 a5 12.Bb5+
Nbd7 13.c3 bxc3 14.Nxc3 0-0 15.Nc6 Bxc6 16.Bxc6 Rb8
17.Qe2 Rb4 18.Rac1 Ne8 19.Rc2 Nc7 20.Na2 Rb8 21.Qd2
Ne6 22.b4 axb4 23.Nxb4 Ndc5 24.Bb5 Nb3 25.Qf2 Ned4
26.Rb2 Qc8 27.Nc6 Nxc6 28.Rxb3 Na5 29.Rbb1 Qe6
30.Rfc1 Rfc8 31.h3 Bc3 32.Kh1 d5 33.exd5 Qxd5 34.Rd1
Qe5 35.Rbc1 h5 36.Rd3 Bb4 37.Rcd1 Nc4



38.Bd4 Qe6 39.Ba7 Nd6 40.Bxb8 Bc5 41.Qe1 Rxb8
42.Qxe6 fxe6 43.Rc3 Bf2 44.g4 hxg4 45.hxg4 g5 46.Kg2
Bb6 47.Bd7 Ra8 48.Rc6 Be3 49.Bxe6+ Kg7 50.Bb3 Rb8
51.Rd3 Bf4 52.a5 Rb5 53.a6 Ra5 54.Rdc3 Ra1 55.Rc2

Final standings for the top 20 places are as below with Adams finishing in top place on 8 points, just clear of GM Fernandez in second place on 7½ and a group of four players including the reigning British Champion IM Harry Grieve on 7 points alongside GM Oleg Korneev, IM Boris Golubovic and FM Nghia Bao Dong. Harriett Hunt was the highest placed female player with 5½, followed by Julia Volovich on 5 and WCM Nina Pert also on 5.

Cambridge International – Final Standings

Rk.		Name	FED	Rtg	TB 1
1	GM	Adams, Michael	ENG	2757	8
2	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	ENG	2519	7½
3	GM	Korneev, Oleg	ESP	2589	7
4	IM	Grieve, Harry	ENG	2514	7
5	IM	Golubovic, Boris	CRO	2349	7
6	FM	Dong, Bao Nghia	VIE	2414	7
7	IM	Clarke, Brandon G I	ENG	2588	6½
8	GM	Dardha, Daniel	BEL	2612	6½
9		Itgelt, Khuyagtsogt	MGL	2158	6½
10	GM	Gormally, Daniel W	ENG	2493	6½
11	GM	Bosicic, Marin	CRO	2564	6
12		Payne, Matthew J	ENG	2182	6
13	FM	Czopor, Maciej	POL	2519	6

14		Ismail, Mohammed Aayan	ENG	2353	6
15	FM	Bazakutsa, Svyatoslav	UKR	2330	6
16	GM	Arkell, Keith C	ENG	2506	6
17	GM	Turner, Matthew J	SCO	2487	6
18		Shafi, Declan	SCO	2265	6
19	FM	Wall, Tim P	ENG	2305	6
20	IM	Roberson, Peter T	ENG	2510	5½
21	FM	Anand, Batsukh	MGL	2239	5½
22		Waller, Dan	ENG	2163	5½
23	IM	Hunt, Harriet V	ENG	2349	5½
24		Fava, Lorenzo	ITA	2172	5½
25		Saunders, Aron	ENG	2260	5,5



Second placed GM Danny Fernandez with Shohreh Bayat



Top placed female player IM Harriet Hunt



Cambridge International winner GM Michael Adams with Chief Arbiter and Organiser Shohreh Bayat



Second placed female player Julia Volovich

Games from the 4NCL Harrogate Congress

This month we feature two games from the recent 4NCL Harrogate tournament with annotations from GMs Keith Arkell and Nigel Davies.



The Old Swan, Harrogate

Game 1 - by GM Keith Arkell



There are some tournaments to which I particularly look forward to returning, and the 4NCL's congress at the excellent Swan Inn in Harrogate is an example. The event is smoothly run by a team of experienced arbiters and organisers, and for me there was also the matter of attempting to defend the 'title' (for want of a better word) which I won last year. To be frank, I was completely off form, and in round 1 I was lucky to grovel a draw from a position from which I could have resigned many moves

earlier. However, by the time the dust had settled, I finished in a share of 1st place.

Paul Townsend is an excellent player who is very hard to beat. Here is his best win from the weekend. Paul's share of 1st place was secured with a quick draw against GM Nigel Davies in the last round.

Paul Townsend v Tim Wall

Harrogate 2023, 22/1/2023

Benoni Defence

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5 4. Qc2 bxc4 5. Nc3 g6 6. e4 d6
7. Bxc4 Bg7 8. Nf3 Nfd7



This is more adventurous than the commoner 8...0-0 9 0-0 Ba6 or 9...Nbd7.

9. O-O O-O 10. b3 10 Bf4 is arguably more testing but there is nothing wrong with this move. Nb6 10...Ne5 would relieve the congestion in Black's camp, but Tim is deliberately playing dynamically. 11. Be2 a5 12. Bb2 Bd7 13. a4 Na6 14. Nb5



It is very difficult to decide whether or not to swap your 'bad' bishop for Black's potentially good knight with 14 Bxa6, but there is certainly an argument for the idea. Either way, Black is doing absolutely fine around here.

Nb4 15. Qd2 Bxb2 16. Qxb2 Bg4 17. Nfd4 Bxe2 18. Nxe2
Nd7 19. Rad1 Nf6 20. Nec3 Rc8 21. Qe2 Qb6



This feels wrong as it allows two strong ideas: either the immediate 22 e5 or the re-routing of the knight to c4 with tempo. Black needs to cover the d5 square to discourage a central breakthrough.

22. Na3 Rfe8 23. Nc4 Qa6 24. Nb5 Nd7



Black simply doesn't have time for this. It's hard to say whether there is a long-term solution to White's planned expansion on the kingside or in the centre, but sometimes you just have to hold your opponent up and hope to create opportunities later. Therefore it was imperative to again overprotect the d5 square.

25. f4 Nb6 26. f5



Breaking with f5 rather than e5 leaves the b4 knight stranded. Sometimes what can appear to be a nice outpost can in reality simply side-line that piece.

26.. Nd7 Suddenly the knight needs to rush back to protect its king. 27. Qf2 27 Qg4 immediately was more unpleasant to meet as it prevents a last-ditch attempt to defend with 27...f6!

27..Rf8 28. Qh4



Decisive, as there is no satisfactory way of guarding e7.

Rce8 If 28...f6 29 fxg6 hxg6 30 Qg4 Ne5 31 Nxe5 wins, while after 28...Nf6 29 Nbx6 is decisive. 29. Nc7 Qa7 30. Nxe8 Rxe8 31. fxg6 fxg6 32. Qg4



32 Rf7! would have broken through in style but the text is perfectly adequate for the job. **Nf8 33. Qf3**



1-0

Finally, I should give a shout out to 14-year-old Indy Southcott-Moyers, who held out against GM Peter Wells in the last round despite the latter's best efforts to join the leading group.

Game 2 - by GM Nigel Davies



GM Nigel Davies

Having been to the Harrogate 4NCL Congress as a chess parent, it made an interesting change to go there as a player. As usual with 4NCL Congresses, the event was superbly organised, and the playing conditions were great.

As far as the chess was concerned, I do seem to be getting rid of the years of caked-on rust, managing to finish equal first. This was my best game:

Davies, Nigel R (2422) - Burrows, Martin P (2183)

4NCL Congress Open The Old Swan, Harrogate (3.1), 21.01.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 I've tried the Torre Attack in a few games recently, also against 2...g6.

3...h6 4.Bh4 d6 5.Nbd2 g5 6.Bg3 Nh5 7.e4 Bg7 8.c3 0-0 9.Ng1!?



This appears to be a new move, though it has been tried against Black's other 8th moves; I wanted to force Black to capture on g3 so as to have the open h-file. A high level internet game varied at this point with 9.Bd3 Nd7 10.Nc4 Qe7 11.Nfd2 Nxc3 12.hxc3 c5 when both sides had chances in Dmitry Andreikin 2743 - Alexander Grischuk 2747, ICC Open Final 2016, ICC INT (3.6), 2016.

9...Nxc3 10.hxc3 c5 11.dxc5 dxc5?! This obvious move leaves Black struggling to get counterplay.

11...d5! was better, with complex play.

12.f4 12.e5 was probably even better, but I didn't consider this move.

12...b6 13.Qh5 gxf4



I felt that Black should delay or avoid this move because he loses defensive possibilities based on ...f7–f5 and ...g5–g4. Even so, it might have been playable in conjunction with 15...Qg6.

14.gxf4 Qf6 15.Nh3 Bb7 15...Qg6 was the best try, though Black's position still seems quite difficult after 16.Qh4 .

16.0–0–0 Rd8 17.Bc4



The pressure against e6 effectively rules out defensive possibilities based on ...Qg6. Meanwhile, White just wants to set his attack in motion with g2–g4 or e4–e5, and this prompted the following exchange sacrifice.

17...Rxd2 18.Rxd2 Bxe4 19.Re1 Simple and strong. Black confessed to having missed that 19...Bg6 is answered by 20.Qf3.

19...Bb7 20.f5! e5 21.Rd6! Qe7 21...Qxd6 allows mate in two via 22.Qxf7+ Kh7 23.Qg8#.

22.Rg6 Not bad, but an even faster way was via 22.f6 Bxf6 23.Qg6+ Bg7 24.Rxe5! etc.

22...Nd7 23.Qxh6 Qf8 24.Ng5 Nf6 25.Rh1



A picturesque finish, for those who like that kind of thing. Black is helpless against the threat of 26.Qh8#.

1–0

British Rapidplay Championship



We're pleased to be able to confirm that after a break of nearly four years the ECF is supporting the 4NCL in organising the 2023 edition of the British Rapidplay Championship on 15th-16th April 2023 at Mercure Bradford Bankfield Hotel. Both organisations are grateful to the British Isles Coordinating Committee (the coordinating body for the various British Isles federations and associations) for endorsing the event.

Eligibility

Please refer to the website for full eligibility information: <https://www.4ncl.co.uk/rp/2023/information.htm>

Playing Schedule

Round 1 - Saturday 12.30; Round 2 - Saturday 13.45
Round 3 - Saturday 15.00; Round 4 - Saturday 16.15
Round 5 - Saturday 17.30; Round 6 - Saturday 18.45
Round 7 - Sunday 10.00; Round 8 - Sunday 11.15
Round 9 - Sunday 12.30; Round 10 - Sunday 13.45
Round 11 - Sunday 15.00

Players may take zero point byes at any point.

Ratings

The higher of the ECF and FIDE rapidplay ratings from the April 2023 lists will be used. For players with neither an ECF nor FIDE rapidplay rating from the April 2023 list, the higher of the ECF and FIDE standardplay ratings from the April 2023 lists will be used. Players with ratings from a BICC federation other than the ECF should indicate on the online entry form if they wish those ratings to be used in preference to ECF ratings. For players with no BICC federation rating, the organiser will assign an estimated rating for the purpose of pairing, prize allocation and the calculation of other players' TPR in the event of a play-off for the Championship title.

The entry form is here:

<https://form.jotform.com/223443869862367>

English Seniors Championships 2023



The English Seniors Championships take place between Thursday 4th May and Monday 8th May 2023 at the Woodland Grange, Old Milverton Lane, Leamington Spa, CV32 6RN.

Eligibility

Over 50 – players must be aged 50 or over on 31st December 2023; Over 65 – players must be aged 65 or over on 31st December 2023. Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding 12 months. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration, it must be ENG.

Schedule

The congress will have a total of seven rounds over five days, with the playing schedule as follows for each of the championships:

Thursday Round 1 - 17.30 – 21.30

Friday Round 2 - 10.00 – 14.00; Round 3 - 16.00 – 20.00

Saturday Round 4 - 16.00 – 20.00
(timing to be confirmed)

Sunday Round 5 - 10.00 – 14.00; Round 6 - 16.00 – 20.00

Monday Round 7 - 11.00 – 15.00

Prizegiving following round 7.

Rating

Both sections will be FIDE-rated and ECF-rated.

Tournament rules

[2023-English-Seniors-Chess-Championship-Tournament-Rules-V1-0.pdf](#)

For more information please go to:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2023/>

English and English Women's Championships 2023



The English Championships and English Women's Championships take place between Friday 26th May and Bank Holiday Monday 29th May 2023 at the Holiday Inn Kenilworth-Warwick, 212 Abbey End, Kenilworth CV8 1ED.

Eligibility

Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding 12 months. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration, it must be ENG.

Schedule

Both of the finals – English Championship and English Women's Championship – will be played as a FIDE and ECF rated Swiss tournament, with a total of seven rounds over five days. The playing schedule will be as follows for both events:

Friday Round 1 - 10:00 to 14:00; Round 2 - 16:00 – 20.00

Saturday Round 3 - 10.00 – 14:00; Round 4 - 16:00 – 20:00

Sunday Round 5 - 10:00 – 14:00; Round 6 - 16:00 – 20:00

Monday Round 7 - 10:00 – 14:00

Monday 15.00 – play-offs if required.

Capacity

There will be a venue-based limit on player numbers across the two championships.

Qualification for the English Championships

Direct entries will be accepted from eligible players where:

- They have a FIDE title of GM, WGM, IM or WIM as at 1st March 2023; or
- They have a rating over 2000 ECF or FIDE in the respective March rating list and have registered for the event and been awarded a rating wildcard entry by the organisers.

The minimum rating of 2000 will be lowered to 1900 ECF or FIDE if there is still space available based on entries received up to 5th May.

There will be up to eight reserved places for general wild card entries from players who have not otherwise qualified, regardless of their rating.

Qualification for the English Women's Championships

Direct entries will be accepted from eligible players where:

- They have a FIDE title of GM, WGM, IM or WIM as at 1st March 2023; or
- They have a rating over 1800 ECF or FIDE in the respective March rating list and have been awarded a rating wildcard entry by the organisers

The minimum rating of 1800 will be lowered to 1600 ECF or FIDE if there is still space available based on entries received up to 5th May. There will be up to four reserved

places for general wild card entries from players who have not otherwise qualified regardless of their rating. An online qualifier event will be organised at the start of May to allow qualification via this route in the event that more than four wildcards requests have been received and agreed by the organisers.

Ratings

The higher of FIDE rating and ECF rating will be used in determining potential qualification. In the event that a player has neither an ECF nor a FIDE rating, the organisers will assign an estimate based on available data on a case-by-case basis.

For more information please go to:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-championships-2023/>

British Chess Championships 2023



We are pleased to announce that this year's British Chess Championships will be held at **The Venue, De Montfort University in Leicester**, with events running from 20th to 30th July 2023. The Venue at DMU is located at the edge of the De Montfort University Campus and is close to the centre of Leicester. This will be the 109th British Chess Championship in a series which has run almost unbroken since 1904.

The British Championship, British Junior Championships and British Senior Championships are restricted to citizens of the UK, British Overseas Territories, or the Republic of Ireland, or players who have been resident for the last 12 months in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man.

In addition, players wanting to take part in the main British championship will need to qualify based on their title, rating or other qualification criteria as set out in:

- a) the [British Championships Eligibility and Qualification Regulations](#);
- and
- b) the supporting [British Grand Prix Rules](#)

Main Playing Schedule

This year's Championships will be played over 11 days from 20th – 30th July. The summary schedule is as shown below:

BCC 2023	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	
	20/07/23	21/07/23	22/07/23	23/07/23	24/07/23	25/07/23	26/07/23	27/07/23	28/07/23	29/07/23	30/07/23	
	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	A P E	
Championship			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 PO	
Major Open			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Senior Championships (50+ and 65+)					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Junior Championships												
Under 16						1	2 3	4	5 6	7		
Under 14						1	2 3	4	5 6	7		
Under 12						1	2 3	4	5 6	7		
Under 10						1	2 3	4	5 6	7		
Under 8						1	2 3	4	5 6	7		
AM/ PM Rating limited British Tournaments					1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6		
Weekender (Atkins, Penrose, Soanes, Yates)			1 2 3	4 5								
Speed Events												
Rapidplay		1-7			1-7					1-7		
Blitz	1-9					1-9		Jun				

Time Controls
40/90 + G/30 + 30'
G/90 + 30'
G/15 + 10'
G/10 + 5'
G/3 + 2'

Key

(A = am; P = PM; E = evening. Numbers denote round numbers. PO = playoff if required)

Session Times

A = 09.15 start (except morning rapidplays which will start at 10.30)

P = 14.30 start

E = 19.00 start

History of the British Chess Championships



British and British Women's Champions from 1905 onwards

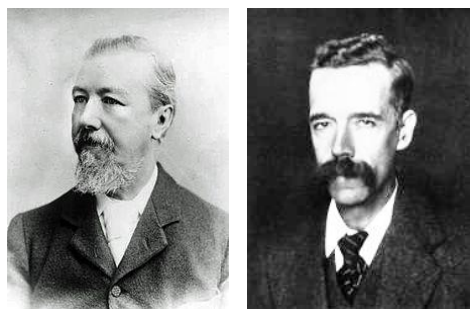
The British Chess Championships have run in an almost unbroken series since the first British in 1904, which was played in Hastings and won by William Ewart Napier as British Chess Champion and Kate Finn as British Women's Champion. Leicester player H E Atkins won the second event in 1905, and still holds the record for the most championship title wins – nine wins from eleven appearances between 1905 and 1925. WGM and IM Jovanka Houska holds the record for the most British Women's title wins, with a total of nine wins between 2008 and 2019.

You can find out more about the history of the British Chess Championships in the Wikipedia article here – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Chess_Championship – and please refer to the excellent Britbase for a comprehensive collection of BCC games going back to 1904 here – <https://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/>

Leicester player H E Atkins tied for first place in the inaugural event in London in 1904. He then lost in the play-off match and went on to win his first title out of an unmatched 11 championship wins in the 1905 British in Southport. Here is Atkins's game against the famous Joseph Henry Blackburne from Southport 1905.

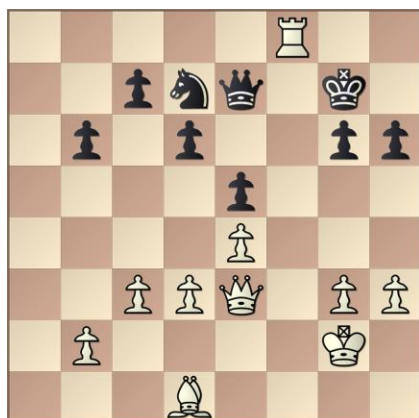
(12039) Blackburne, Joseph Henry - Atkins, Henry Ernest [C47]

BCF-ch 2nd Southport (2), 15.08.1905



J H Blackburne and H E Atkins – Source Wikimedia

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Be2 Bb4 5.Nd5 Ba5 6.Nxf6+ Qxf6 7.0-0 d6 8.d3 Bb6 9.Be3 0-0 10.Qd2 Qe7 11.a4 Bxe3 12.fxe3 f5 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.e4 Bd7 15.Rf2 Bg4 16.Raf1 Bxf3 17.Bxf3 Rf6 18.Bd1 Raf8 19.c3 h6 20.Bb3+ Kh7 21.Qe3 b6 22.g3 Nb8 23.a5 Nd7 24.Bd1 g6 25.axb6 axb6 26.Rxf6 Nxf6 27.Kg2 Kg7 28.h3 Nd7 29.Rxf8



½-½

ECF Online

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

Online chess is booming!

<https://www.chess.com/blog/CHESScom/chess-is-booming-and-our-servers-are-struggling>

On 16th December 2022 Chess.com hit a milestone of over 100 million registered members worldwide, a figure which includes 4½ million registered UK members. The last two months have seen an unprecedented doubling in levels of activity with seven million active chess.com members online on 31st December and ten million online at once on 20th January.



Chess.com new member joining rates reached an incredible 400 thousand members per day during February as they ramped up their server and database capacity to cope. The Chess.com app also reached

number one for downloads from the iPhone app store during January.

Lichess are also seeing record levels of activity with a near doubling of new account registrations in January:

<https://twitter.com/lichess/status/1621193965872488457?s=20&t=jje8INkT4YspwsuuYH6o9Q>

This chess boom follows on from the Queen's Gambit boom during the pandemic and seems to be the result of increasing levels of awareness of the game as chess becomes more embedded in popular culture. Some of the reasons behind this may be:

The increasing prevalence of chess streaming with huge volumes of chess content now broadcast on Twitch and YouTube;

The Ronaldo-Messi chess game post on Instagram and Twitter in November:

<https://twitter.com/Cristiano/status/1594026532934414336?s=20>;

General chess-related publicity, including publicity from high-profile events and of course the Niemann cheating scandal.

The new chess boom is driving increasing ECF membership levels and feeding through into increasing over the board activity, which is now on a par with pre-pandemic levels across England for the first time.

ECF Online Clubs

The ECF members clubs are open to all ECF members and supporters on Chess.com or Lichess and provide regular ECF online rated 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 on Chess.com with regular ECF tournaments and a chance to play for the ECF England team in the Live Chess World and European Leagues.

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

Chess.com Internationals



The England teams for the Live Chess World, European, and Mediterranean Leagues are drawn from players in the ECF Open club. Club members can register for events from an hour before each fixture and are allocated to boards depending on their Chess.com rating.

LCWL Season 11 – Season 11 of the increasingly popular World Chess League is now under way. We have been promoted to division 3, with our first match against team Australia on 19th February (10 am UK time and 9 pm in Sydney).

LCEL Season 7 – We finished top of our division in the European League and have been promoted to Division 1.



Our first 'Day 1' fixture will be against Team Denmark, to be played in February.

LCML – Season 3 - We also play in the Live Chess Mediterranean League which is organised as a team Swiss. We played the final round of season 2 with England v Serbia on Saturday 11th February.

We were heavily outrated in the match as Serbia are a recent LCEL Champion - but we managed some fine wins including against GM and IM opposition. Full results and games here:

<https://www.chess.com/club/matches/live/english-chess-federation/175072>

Here is a fine win by ECF club player Peter Chaplin against Serbian IM Zoran Novoselski:

IM Novoselski (2151) - PeterChaplin (2037) [C02]
Live Chess Chess.com, 11.02.2023

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.e5 b6 4.Qg4 Ne7 5.Bb5+ c6 6.Bd3 Ba6



Exchanging the bad French bishop.

7.Bxa6 Nxa6 8.c3 c5 9.Qe2 Nc7 10.Nf3 Qc8 11.a4 Qa6 12.a5 Qxe2+ 13.Kxe2 c4 14.b4 b5 15.h4 a6 16.h5 h6 17.g4 Nc6 18.Nbd2 Be7 19.Nf1 0-0-0 20.Ng3 Rdf8 21.Nh4 Bxh4 22.Rxh4 Ne7 23.f4 Kd7 24.Bd2



The position is roughly equal at this point, with the outcome dependent on how the kingside pawn breaks are handled.

24...f6 25.Rf1 fxe5 26.dxe5 d4 27.Ne4 d3+ 28.Kd1



The position is still about equal. Black's passed pawn is firmly blockaded by the bishop on d2.

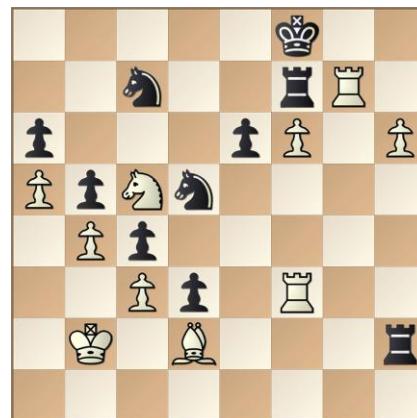
28...Ned5 29.Nc5+ Ke7 30.f5 Re8 31.Rh3 Kd8 32.f6 gxf6 33.exf6 Ref8 34.Rhf3 Rf7 35.Kc1 Rg8 36.Bxh6 Rxc6 37.Bd2 Rh4 38.h6 Ke8 39.Rg1 Kf8?



Nxf6 was necessary, giving up a piece for one of the dangerous kingside pawns.

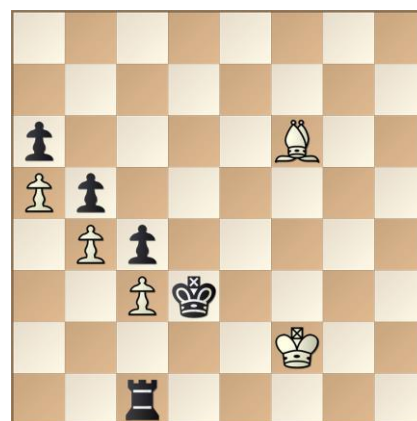
White should win now with Rg7 with the threat of Nd7+ and Ne5.

40.Rg7 Rh1+ 41.Kb2 Rh2



Played to divert attention from White's attack on the king. **42.Ne4?** White should just ignore the threat with Ka3 and proceed with the kingside attack, e.g. 42.Ka3 Re2 43.Nd7+ Rxd7 44.h7.

42...e5 43.Rf1 Ne8 44.Rg6 Nxf6 45.Rf2 Rxf2 46.Nxf2 e4 47.Nd1 Rh7 48.Ne3 Kf7 49.Rg2 Nxe3 50.Bxe3 Nd5 51.Bd4 Rxe6 52.Rg5 Rh2+ 53.Kc1 e3 54.Rxd5 Rh1+ 55.Kb2 d2 56.Bxe3 d1Q 57.Rxd1 Rxd1 58.Kc2 Rd3 59.Bc5 Ke6 60.Bb6 Kd5 61.Bc5 Rh3 62.Bd4 Ke4 63.Kd2 Rh2+ 64.Ke1 Kd3 65.Bf6 Rh1+ 66.Kf2 Rc1



And Black resigns as Rxc3 will decide.

1-0

Despite a win against a grandmaster on board 1 and Peter's two wins against IM Novoselski, we eventually lost by 7½ to 16½ although the match was a lot closer than the numbers suggest!

Final standings for LCML season 3 were as below following the round 5 games:

Pos.	Team	Matches played	Match points	Game points	Matches won	Games won
1	Team France	5	5	138½	5	125
2	Srbija Team	4	4	104	4	83
3	Team Italia Live	5	3	66±	3	56
4	English Chess Federation	3	3	32	3	26
5	Romania Chess Federation	4	2	54½	2	48
6	Macedonia Forever	4	2	27½	2	16
7	Team Bulgaria	4	2	26½	2	19
8	Team Belgium	4	2	19	2	19
9	Team Slovenija	3	2	5½	2	8
10	Team Algeria	4	1	17½	1	22
11	Team Turkiye	3	1	5½	1	9
12	Team Malta	2	1	5½	1	0
13	Greek Chess Federation	3	0	-2½	0	1
14	Team Croatia	0	0	-10	0	0

Note: Team Belgium and English Chess Federation skipped round 1.

Well played, team, and congratulations on a great result to finish fourth in the league even though we missed round 1!

Lichess Internationals / Team Battles

Lichess team battles also 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 includes the Bundesliga on Sundays and Thursdays where we move between Ligen 3 and 5, the Liga Ibera on Sundays, and the Champions League on Tuesdays.

ECF Online Grand Prix Series 2023

The Online Grand Prix series is up and running for 2023 with the full series of ten blitz and ten rapid events scheduled for the first and third Sundays of the month from January to October 2023, with the January blitz and rapid events completed. You can find further details and the 2023 entry form at the link here together with the leaderboards following the first two events:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-online-grand-prix-2023/>

Endgame Challenge 3 – Rook and Pawn



GM Keith Arkell and IM Lorin d'Costa

The ECF Endgame Challenge 3 took place on Monday 13th February with a rerun event on the evenings of Wednesday 22nd and Thursday 23rd February 2023.

Each challenge focussed on rook and pawn endings and followed the established format of a Zoom lecture by IM Lorin D'Costa with support from GM Keith Arkell. This covered theoretical positions and ideas with a number of thematic tournaments for attendees to test their endgame skills. Each lecture was followed by an endgame simul with Keith taking on all entrants and steering the games towards endgame positions.

Online Chess by Kevin Thurlow



Kevin Thurlow
(photograph by John Saunders)

This month we feature a perspective of online chess from ECF club member CM Kevin Thurlow, including a number of positions from regular club tournaments.

The outbreak of Covid created obvious difficulties for chess players, i.e. no league and tournament chess. Accordingly, I took on some extra correspondence chess (CC) games and started playing some online events. By 'online' I mean rapid and blitz events; CC is now played online as well. At first, these were just internal club online events, but then the ECF events looked attractive.

I quickly decided normal-length games were boring online and I found myself doing sudokus during the games or listening to music and playing rather too quickly. On the other hand, anything as fast as five minutes for all moves is too fast for me now. Bullet (one minute...) is just ridiculous. You even get bullet chess960 events. It takes me ten minutes to work out what the starting position is.

I did play some open Arena events: one recently had 3,000+ players, and you join the event and get paired fairly randomly with someone, play them, then when you finish you either go and do something else or join again and get a new opponent. I did notice that the top ten finishers were all rated less than 1000 and all had scored highly; one player had 41/41. Strangely, when I looked the next day, only about two of the top ten were still members, the others had been removed, presumably accused of cheating. On the other hand, I have played people from 105 different countries (if they told the truth on their profiles).

The ECF events feature mainly UK players and you can play the same opponent repeatedly. At the time of writing, I have played Nigel Towers 139 times! I now propose to present a detailed analysis of all 139 games – just kidding. The ECF events are much smaller, of course, but it is very rare for someone to cheat, and the chat is usually friendly.

There are obvious contrasts between CC and online chess:

Correspondence Chess

1) computers are legal at CC, and you can even make a tablebase claim of win or draw if you get down to seven pieces or fewer. You can still get banned for playing under an assumed name, or asking advice from an individual, although that is difficult to prove...

2) CC allows you several days a move, although some events are now much faster.

3) It is not wise to play exciting openings at CC. I played the Evans Gambit in one game and managed to regain the pawn 100 moves later to get a draw. People play the Ruy Lopez Berlin variation and the Sicilian Poisoned Pawn as fairly safe drawing lines.

4) CC can be a bit dull – in recent events, I scored +1=12-0, +0=12-1, and most excitingly, +3=10-1. Online blitz/rapid does not feature many draws.

Online Chess

Online, you must not use computers, the games are quick, but you can play fun openings. I even played the Halloween Gambit a couple of times (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6

3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nxe5), and some other lines which are not quite so obscure.

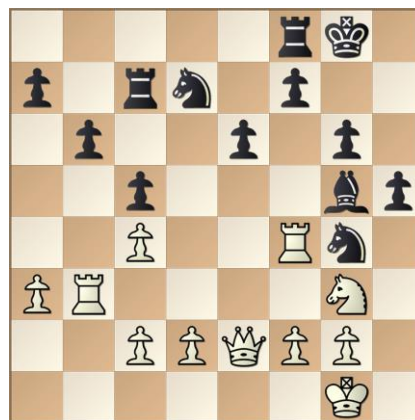
Many players adopt an exotic 'handle', which is a technical term meaning 'name'. I chose JohankJeldahl as he was a famous Danish chemist who worked for Carlsberg and devised the best method for the determining nitrogen (and hence protein) content of foods. This was one of the earliest techniques I learned at work, and the method followed me around for years. I was slightly surprised to find that the online handle 'Kjeldahl' was already taken.

I and others are very grateful for the ECF online events, which have kept a lot of us amused or even sane during and after Covid. There is something going on every day. Here are a few examples of the not-too-subtle rapid games you can have, taken from one weekend. Don't be too harsh regarding mistakes – these are quick games.

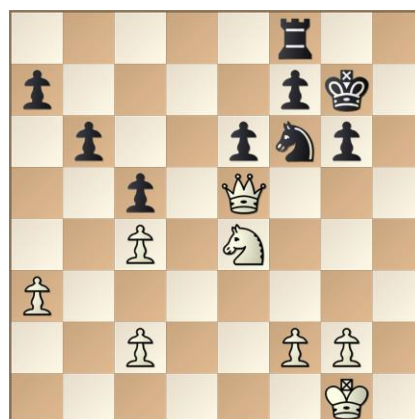
JohankJeldahl (2188) - Gyrkin (1908)

ECF Saturday Evening Rapid Arena lichess.org, 21.01.2023

Black has just played 22....Bg5 in the 30th game between us...



23.Rxg4 (23.Nxh5 is also possible) 23....hxg4 24.Qxg4 Bxd2 25.Ne4 Bh6 26.Rh3 Kg7 27.Rxh6 Kxh6 28.Qf4+ Kg7 29.Qxc7 Nf6 30.Qe5



1-0

Sacrificing two exchanges was pleasing.

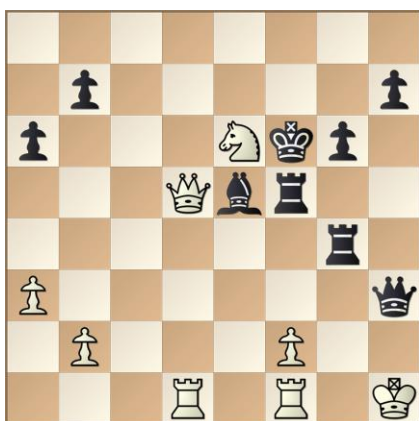
C3trappy (2036) - JohanKjeldahl (2171)

ECF Saturday Evening Rapid Arena lichess.org, 21.01.2023

After **17....Nef5** (I have only met this opponent five times, and we usually draw.)



18.Bxf5 Nxf5 19.Qd2 Qh4 20.Kh2 Rc4 21.Ne2 Nd4 22.Nxd4 Rxf4 23.Nxe6 Rxf3 24.Ng5 Bxe5+ 25.Kg2 Rf5 26.Qxd5+ Kg7 27.Ne6+ Kf6 28.Rad1 Rg4+ 29.Kh1 29.hxg4 Qh2# 29...Qxh3#



0-1

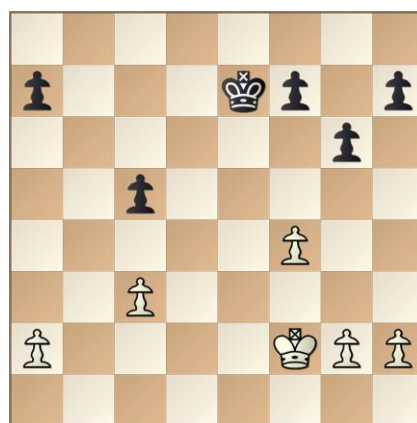
JohanKjeldahl (2162) - anixton (2157)

ECF Saturday Evening Rapid Arena lichess.org, 21.01.2023

After **18....Kg7** (We have met seven times and the wins have been fairly evenly spread.)



19.Qd4? (Noooo!!) 19....Rxe7! 20.Qxf6+ (luckily, I spotted this) 20....Kxf6 21.dxe7 Qd7 22.Rad1 Bxc3 23.Rxd7 Nxd7 24.bxc3 Nc5 25.Bxc5 bxc5 26.Re1 Re8 27.f4 Rxe7 28.Rxe7 Kxe7 29.Kf2



½-½

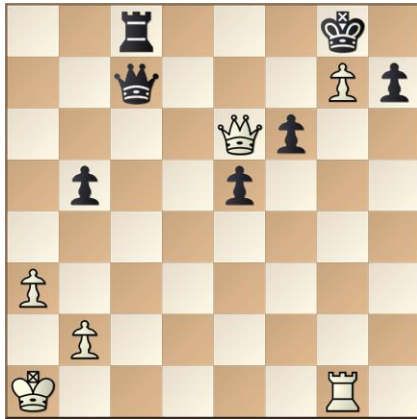
equinoxanderson (1594) - JohanKjeldahl (1941)

ECF Sunday Evening Rapid Chess.com (1), 22.01.2023

After **30....Qc7** (Our first meeting; my opponent fights back well.)



31.Rdg1 Rf7 32.Qd5 Kf8 33.h6 Qxc2+ 34.Ka1 g5 35.Qd6+ Kg8 (35....Ke8 draws) 36.Rxg5+ Kh8 37.Rg7 Qc7? 38.Qxa6 Rxg7 39.hxg7+ Kg8 40.Qe6+ (oops! 40....Qf7 41.Qxc8+)



1-0

Maybe not the best games, but some great entertainment for the players, and my view is that is the most important thing, especially in speed chess.

FEATURES

Modern Coaching Dilemmas or 'What to Tell the Kids?' by Peter Wells



There was an instructive and rather lovely moment during the recent Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee which initially prompted me to tweet, but which on reflection seems to me to raise questions which are worthy of a more considered response. In the midst of a not untypical Nimzo-Indian position, the ever-creative Richard Rapport chose to stake his claim to the central white squares by placing his bishop on the key square e4 and taking a series of steps to try and secure it there. I have never before included a game so early in one of these articles, but I think this really merits it.

Arjun Erigaisi - Richard Rapport

85th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee, 2023 Round 9

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 b6 5.Nge2 Ne4 6.Qc2 Bb7 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Nxc3 Nxc3 9.Qxc3 d6 10.b3 Qh4 11.Bb2 Be4



The first stage of the process: 10...Qh4 was the engine's top choice and could have passed relatively unnoticed since pinning the f-pawn makes good sense anyway and is easy enough to understand as a preparation for 11...Be4, reaching the diagram.

12.Qd2 g5!

This, however, was more difficult to ignore, particularly as Peter Svidler (commentating) initially appeared to deem it the product of a player who struggles to keep his natural flamboyance under control, responding with the impassioned plea 'Richie my man, what are you doing?'

Although the structure looks familiar enough after ...g5, it is one that usually arises as the result of Black chasing a pinning bishop from g5 back to g3, and, whatever space-gaining claims can be made, the pawn advances are a matter of perceived necessity, with the suspicion that giving White a target for the move h4 is likely to be a definite drawback. In fact, the move 12...g5! here is not only the engine's top choice once again, but, on closer examination, the only way really to justify the occupation of e4. Black's plan is to push the pawn to g4 and show that evicting the bishop is going to be no easy matter. A really elegant idea, which Peter Svidler came on reflection to admire and appreciate although I suspect that neither he, nor indeed Richard Rapport himself, could have imagined quite how smoothly the full point would be hauled in after securing this key minor piece. For the record, Rapport's immensely talented young Indian opponent responded with unrecognisable confusion and lost quickly after **13.h3 g4 14.0-0-0 Rg8 15.Qe2?! (Threatening f3 again, but after Black's simple reply this only reinforces the impression that White's forces are getting badly tangled up.) 15...Qh5 16.Rg1 Nd7 17.Qe1 (If 17 hxg4? then 17...Qh2 is embarrassing.) 17...gxh3 18.Be2 Qh6 19.gxh3 0-0-0 20.Rg4?! (This definitely doesn't help, but it is hard not to empathise with White's frustration at how easily all his intended 'freeing moves' can be thwarted.) 20...f5 21.Rxg8 Rxg8 22.h4 Rg2 23.h5 f4 24.f3?! Qxh5 25.Bf1? Rc2+ and 0-1**

So far, so good. More jarring still, though, was the engine's suggestion that the correct approach from the diagram would have been for White to play 12 Ke2!, evading the pin on the f-pawn and thereby guaranteeing the eviction of the bishop. This seemed wild enough, but we are getting accustomed to slightly outlandish suggestions from the engine and are often grateful for those which (however radical they appear) at least make some sense in human terms. The plot thickened when, in his post-game interview, Richard Rapport chastised

himself for overlooking this king move and indicated that if he had thought of it he would have been put off the entire venture!

This set me thinking about a more general problem. As chess coaches, how should we handle examples like this? For sure there is potentially a beautiful lesson to be learned here relating to 'minor piece security' – incidentally a topic upon which Jan Markos, one of my favourite chess authors, places a good deal of emphasis. I suspect that we are quite used to thinking a lot about outposts and stable squares for knights, but much less so for bishops, and a case like this can serve as a useful corrective.

Nonetheless, this still feels fraught with danger as a coaching example. What message can be taken from a case like this without the risk of giving rise to unintended consequences such as excessive weakening wing-pawn advances or reckless king moves? Of course, part of this might be covered by taking extra care to select examples appropriate to the strength of the student. Perhaps Erigaisi – Rapport should simply be filed in the 'advanced material' section and best left out of discussions with those who would be more prone to error when balancing the goal of 'evicting pieces' against considerations of 'king safety' for example. Indeed, I am more often coming to question my previous assumption that the majority of positions can be adapted for different levels so long as the explanation and narrative are sufficiently broken down into manageable chunks. For some time I was convinced that cogent and appropriately simplified verbal explanation could guide weaker students through relatively complex material and I believe I could point to some good learning outcomes to support this view. However, partly inspired by a wealth of examples such as this - in which it is extremely difficult to give correct weight to conflicting priorities, never mind to take away the right lesson to apply more generally - I am increasingly cautious of complex positions which may simply serve to confuse or mislead.

This ties in with an even more fundamental question, to which I have given a lot of thought lately as I have been working hard on refreshing and updating my coaching material. Am I right anyway to be constantly on the lookout for positions that serve to support some more generalisable principles or advice which as a coach I can more or less neatly set out in verbal form? This is a tough one since I am well aware of all the potential dangers and objections to this and yet can't help feeling that, without this goal, the whole process of coaching is somehow diminished.

I am confident that I was never a slave to general principles in chess. I was naturally drawn to exceptions and paradoxes, and deeply aware that such principles as we can expound tend frequently to clash with one another, placing constant demands on both judgement and calculation. Moreover, once we attempt to explain games primarily in terms of general principles, we can very easily cross the line from the kind of abstraction necessary to establish any of these in the first place, to a tendency to dismiss or ignore any awkward details that don't fit the narrative. Even such a firm advocate of verbal descriptions in chess as Comas Fabrego in his book *True Lies in Chess*, caustically refers to games analysed 'using grandiloquent aphorisms and few variations to prove what has been said, just in case what is stated doesn't fit what is happening on the board!'

Of course, it is actually not easy to find games in which not only is some general principle well illustrated, but the outcome does not also hinge on tactical details which are unlikely to be exactly replicated in further practice. The worst thing, I think, is to try to cover this up. For a critic of the use of general principles and what he sees as unhelpful and excessive verbalisation in chess coaching such as Willy Hendriks, this would just be further evidence that 'positions and moves are not examples demonstrating some more general principles, they are the actual lesson.' Yet still, for all that he might be right that finding strong moves and recognising patterns has little to do with verbalisation, I struggle to see how we can do without it at the point where we conclude our calculations with an assessment. Here, at the very least, I am convinced that the quest for coaching positions that contain a generalisable message must be on the mark.

Yet it is becoming more and more common for engine analysis to challenge our basic beliefs and complicate the message of so much that we thought that we knew well. Perhaps this experience is not so different from previous occasions when orthodoxies came under pressure from new ideas, just with engines now playing the role of the 'hypermoderns'? Possibly, but I didn't have myself down as a classicist and certainly not as a dogmatist! For example, many years ago I wrote a well-received article about doubled pawns for *ChessBase Magazine* which tried to separate out typical 'compensation' for the doubled pawns (open lines, etc) from positive qualities *intrinsic* to the pawns themselves (their control of squares and the ability of the front pawn to move forward without permanently ceding the squares behind). My feeling overall was that these guys got a bad press and I think some developments since - such as the rehabilitation of

4...Nf6 5 Nxf6 exf6 in the Main Line Caro-Kann – may tend to support this view. My supposedly broad-minded approach to the subject also made me very open to the message that it is generally the squares these pawns occupy or fail to cover which are the key weaknesses, rather than the pawns themselves and that consequently liquidating the pawn weaknesses will, not infrequently, be the best way to get at these squares. However, I tended to draw the line at doubled *isolated* pawns and none of this thinking fully prepared me for the engine's insights into the following position which I stumbled across a couple of weeks ago while preparing a session on hanging pawns.

Nikola Ostojic – Goran Todorovic

Vrnjacka Banja, 1999



In this position, White has managed to use the threat of a knight fork on c7 to force Black to recapture on f6 with a pawn, which feels like a major concession. He now sought to take control of the d4 square with the thematic enough 17 b4 break, which worked well after Black took the pawn since the white knight can then not only blockade the isolated d-pawn as theory recommends, but also aspire to supporting attacking chances via further blockading on the far more threatening f5 square. However, as Andrew Martin (our editor of *ChessMoves*) rightly pointed out at the time, Black could have improved by meeting 17 b4 with 17...a6 18 Nc3 d4!, when it turns out that Black's activity fully compensates for his weaknesses after 19 exd4 Nxd4 20 Nxd4 Qxd4 21 bxc5 Bxc5, and to be honest the slight weakness of the a3 pawn is probably as likely to play a practical role as the ugly, but not easily accessed, doubled isolated f-pawns.

More surprising, though, was that Andrew's plausible claim that 'there was a risk-free advantage to be had after the simple 17 Qc2' does not meet with engine approval either. Black has a choice of ways to show that his piece activity (and I suppose the loss of time involved in Nb5) compensates for his unpalatable structure. 17...Ne5 is

interesting, but perhaps 17...d4 is again the simplest, when 18 exd4 a6 19 Nc3 Nxd4 already leaves White in some trouble, whilst 18 Rfd1 Qb6 seems fine as does the intriguing 18 Qf5 Ne7!? 19 Qxf6 Bg7 20 Qf4 Ng6 21 Qg3 Be5!?, although I would defy any trainer to find a convincing narrative for the latter.

Again, on one level this can be woven into existing narratives. Black's main idea – enhancing the activity of his pieces by advancing the d-pawn when in possession of the hanging pawns – certainly featured in my session and, though the assessment may be surprising, the essential basis for it fits in with what computers are teaching us more generally: the bishop pair matters perhaps more than we thought, as do piece activity and piece coordination in particular, whereas pawn and square weaknesses may not be a big deal if the opponent's pieces are not also active enough to exploit them. In short, engines are making chess more dynamic. Yet here, too, I felt that I could make these points using examples that were less open to misinterpretation. I ended up shelving this one. If I could just about make sense of all this myself, I felt that 'telling the kids' could wait for another day!

Arkell's Endings

The Hierarchy of Pawns



What is a weak pawn? A pawn that is exposed to attack and also difficult to defend... – Samuel Reshevsky

The result of weak pawns is passive pieces.

Here is my last-round game from the 4NCL's 29th Congress in Harrogate. I had been off-form all weekend but was hoping to be at my best in the last round where a win would bring me into a share of 1st place. I will use my favourite annotating style, which is to faithfully reproduce my thoughts at the board. I've no doubt that avid readers wishing to check with an engine will find plenty of flaws in my analysis, and I certainly wouldn't wish to discourage them from doing this.

Martin Burrows (2183) - Keith Arkell (2509)

29th 4NCL Congress Harrogate (5), 22.01.2023

1.e4 d5 I had it in my head that Martin had been exceptionally well prepared for some of our earlier encounters, so I wanted to reduce the chances of falling into any more deep preparation.

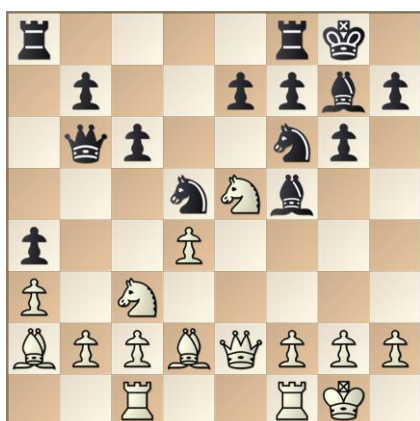
2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd8 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3



5...g6 Given that my general philosophy is to save energy by not preparing before games, it is imperative to negate any work my opponent may have done. In this regard the Centre Counter is ideal as Black has a number of options on each move. For example, at move 3 I have also played ...Qd6 and ...Qa5, and here I usually play 5...Bg4.

6.Bc4 Bg7 7.Ne5 0-0 8.Be3 Nbd7 9.Qe2 Nb6 10.Bb3 a5 Played not so much to gain space as to discourage my opponent from castling on the queenside. Not that I minded his doing so, but it was rather to thwart what appeared to have been his intentions over the last few moves.

11.a3 a4 12.Ba2 c6 13.0-0 Nbd5 14.Bd2 Bf5 15.Rac1 Qb6



By making straightforward moves I have even gained a slight initiative, so I think it's fair to say that the opening was a success.

16.Nxd5 Nxd5 Of course I would normally recapture with the pawn here as it strengthens my general structure: according to my 'hierarchy of pawns' an e-pawn is better than a d-pawn and a d-pawn is better than a c-pawn. However, I didn't see any way in which White could avoid following up with a second capture.

17.Bxd5 cxd5 18.Bc3



Not where he would like to put his bishop, but there is no choice. My next short sequence was designed to push back White's only active piece.

18...Bh6 19.Rcd1 Qa6



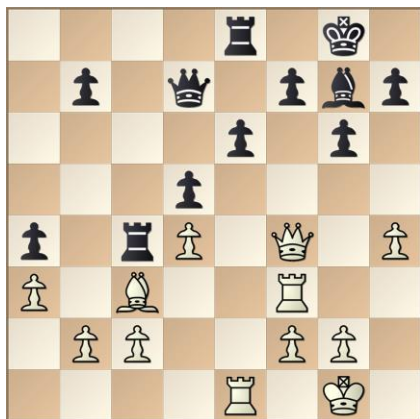
The point is that if the knight doesn't retreat White must either accept a lifeless endgame facing my two bishops or sacrifice his c-pawn.

20.Nd3 Rfe8 21.Rfe1 Bg7 22.h3 Rac8 23.Qe3



23...Bxd3 It may seem strange to surrender the bishop pair so casually, but in truth the light-squared Caro-Kann bishop (the structure is the same as in an Exchange Caro) is an awkward piece to maintain in the long run, with pawns of the same colour on d5 and g6.

24.Rxd3 e6 25.Qf4 Qb5 26.Rf3 Qd7 27.h4 Rc4



Threatening 28... e5. Given enough time I will double, or even triple, on the c-file and then play ... Bf8, menacing the a-pawn and eyeing up the ...b5,...b4 plan.

28.Qd2 h5 29.b3 To wait or not to wait, that is the question! With or without this break White will have to endure pawn weaknesses on the queenside, just as with more typical minority attack positions.

29...Rc6 30.Bb4 Rec8 31.c3 axb3 32.Qb2 Rc4 33.Qxb3 Qc7 34.g3 Bf8 Next on the agenda is to remove the bishops in order to further expose the targets.

35.Ree3 Ra8 36.Re1 Rc6 37.Rb1



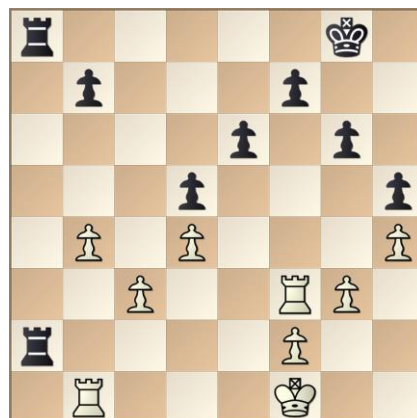
37...Bxb4 38.axb4 38 Qxb4 would be worse still, as after 38...Ra7 an assault on his a-pawn would signal the beginning of the end.

38...Rca6 39.Qd1 ...Ra3 would anyway have forced the queen back. It is very easy for White to drift into a passive position once a permanent pawn weakness such as that on c3 emerges.

39...Qc4 40.Qf1 I thought that this was too compliant. It would be better to retain some dynamism in the

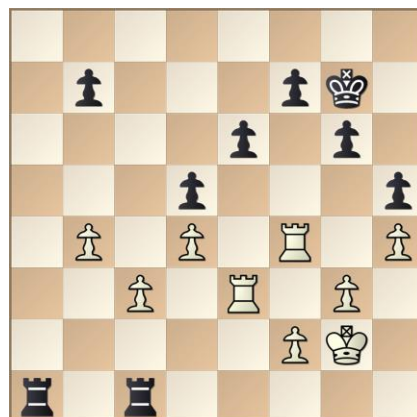
position by keeping the queens on. Either way Black is now clearly on top.

40...Qxf1+ 41.Kxf1 Ra2



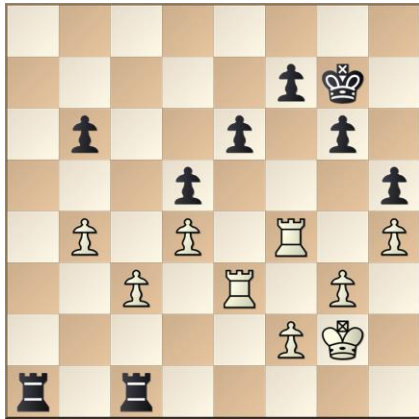
I have written quite a lot about these kinds of positions, and to convert them you need to combine pressure against c3, f2 and the white king. With White completely passive, you can then usually break the camel's back with a kingside pawn advance, leading to a mating attack.

42.Re1 Rc2 43.Kg2 Kg7 44.Ree3 Ra1 45.Rf4 Rcc1



46.Kh2 The position was close to Zugzwang. If 46 Rd3 then f6 will lead to the strangulation of either a rook or White's king. I would encourage you to check this for yourself. Trying to rock the boat with 46 g4 would also not help. A typical line might go 46 g4 Rg1+ 47 Kf3 Ra3 48 gxh5 gxh5 49 Ke2 Ra2+ 50 Kf3 Rc3, with ...Rgc1 to follow.

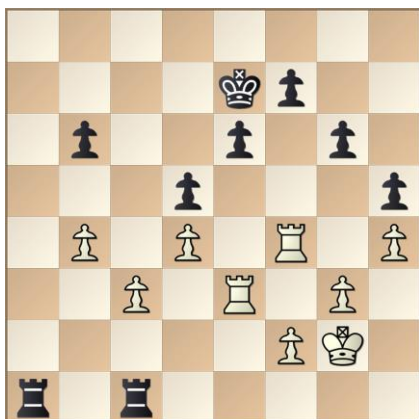
46...b6 47.Kg2



47...Ra7 There is no trivial way to push White over the edge. Why not? Because I need to play...f6, followed by...g5 and...g4 to put the king in a mating net (rooks on g1 and h1), but I can't play ...f6 without losing the e-pawn. And if I try to support the e-pawn with my king then ...Kf8 runs into Rxe6. Therefore, I need to support e6 with a rook to usher my king round to e7, then pop the rook back into the attack and finally finish off the game with ...f6 and g5, etc.

48.Kh2 Rc7 49.Rff3 Rc6 50.Kg2 Kf8 51.Kh2 Ke7 52.Kg2 Rc7 53.Kh2 Kd6 This move is a bit pointless, but it doesn't do any actual damage.

54.Rf4 Ra7 55.Kg2 Ke7 56.Kh2 Raa1 57.Kg2

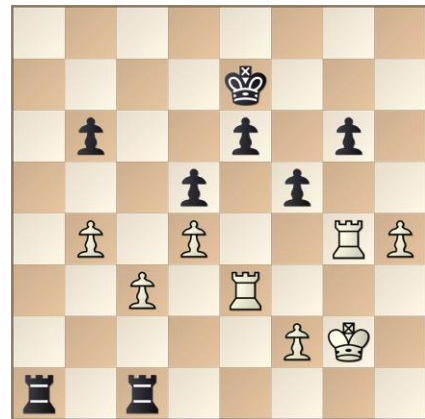


57...f6 At last the scene is set for the winning march of my g-pawn.

58.g4 Continuing to fiddle while Rome burns with 58 Kh2 would allow 58...g5 59 hxg5 fxg5 60 Rf3 f4 61 Rf4 Rh1+ 62 Kg2 Rag1 #, while 58 Kf3 fares little better after 58...Ra3.

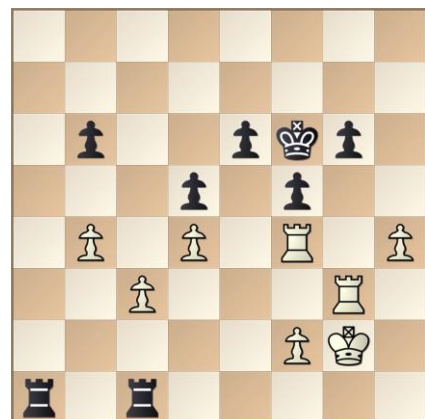
58...hxg4? I was immediately irritated that I hadn't finished off the game with 58...g5!, my favourite chess move.

59.Rxg4 f5



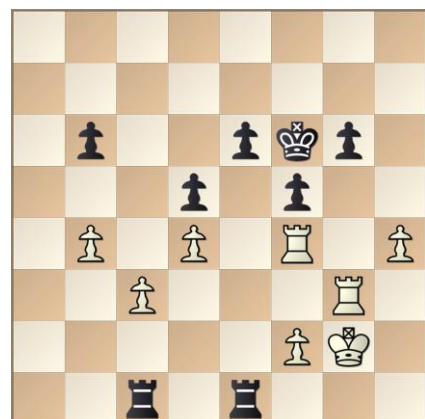
60.Rf4? Had he played 60 Rg5 I would have had to settle for 'only' winning his h-pawn with 60...Rg1+ 61 Kf3 Kf6 62 Rxg1 Rxg1 followed by ...Rg4. Now I am winning the more important c-pawn.

60...Kf6 61.Rg3



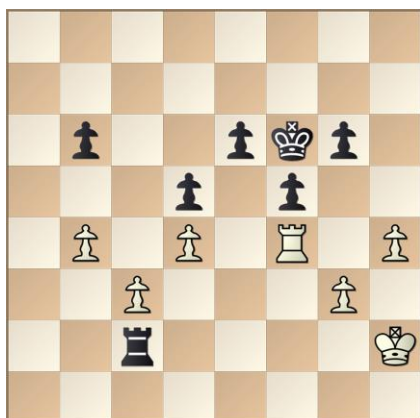
61...Rg1+ Rearranging the pieces. I need the a1 rook to be attacking the c-pawn while the other rook removes its defender.

62.Kf3 Rge1 63.Kg2 Rac1



64.Kh2 White can't hold onto his c-pawn as 64 Rff3 allows mate in 3 and 64 Rd3 drops the rook on f4 after 54...g5 65 hxg5+ Kxg5 66 Kg3 (66 Kf3 Re4!) Rh1 67 Re3 b5! Zugzwang! I have to confess to having a cheeky look at the engine to find this last pretty line, but anyway it's clear that by this stage there are many ways to skin the cat.

64...Rh1+ 65.Kg2 Rhg1+ 66.Kh2 Rxc3 67.fxg3 Rc2+



0-1

Great British Chess Players by Dr John Nunn



Isidor Gunsberg (1854-1930)



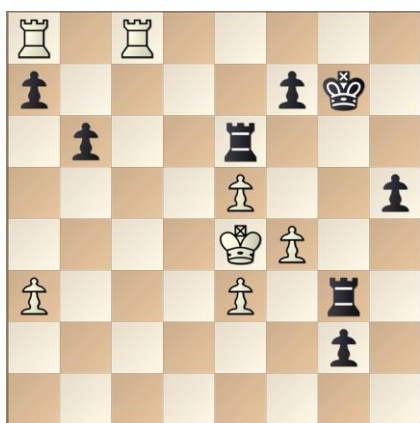
It is remarkable how some players achieve great success over the board but are largely forgotten by chess history. Such is the case with Isidor Gunsberg. He was born in Budapest in 1854 but moved to Britain permanently in 1876, ultimately becoming a British citizen in 1908. In his early chess years he operated the automaton Mephisto, but later became a regular chess professional. It took Gunsberg some time to develop his full strength, but by the mid-1880s he was clearly one of the world's top players, winning the strong Hamburg 1885 tournament ahead of Blackburne and Tarrasch. In subsequent years he defeated Bird and Blackburne in matches, but it was his third place at New York 1889, behind Chigorin and Weiss, which proved

crucial for his world championship chances. Gunsberg first played a match with Chigorin, which ended in a draw and from which the game given below is taken, and then faced Steinitz for the world title in New York during 1890-1. Steinitz ran out a narrow victor by six wins to four (with nine draws) and after that Gunsberg's over the board results started to decline.

With his best playing days behind him, Gunsberg turned to chess journalism and was a prolific writer of chess columns in addition to organising some top-level tournaments. One rather amusing episode occurred in 1916, when he sued the *Evening News* for libel when they said that his chess column in the *Daily Telegraph* contained 'blunders'. He won the suit after the High Court accepted a submission that, in chess matters, eight oversights did not make a 'blunder', an opinion which should be comforting to some chess journalists today.

Gunsberg had a direct playing style and played the openings without much subtlety, but he had a keen eye for tactics and was a resourceful defender. It's hard to say why he is largely forgotten today. There's nothing of any significance named after him and, unusually for a world championship contender, there's no book of his games. Perhaps the main factor is the lack of a single truly memorable game; indeed, I suspect that most players, if asked, would be unable to recall a single Gunsberg game.

While playing over his games I came across the following intriguing position.



Isidor Gunsberg - Simon Winawer
Nuremberg 1883
Black to play

White is threatening mate in three, but Black has a dangerous passed pawn on the verge of promotion. In the game Black lost very quickly, but at this point he had a surprising drawing possibility. To give you a chance to find it for yourself, I will postpone the answer to the end of the article.

I chose the following game mainly for its entertainment value.

Mikhail Chigorin - Isidor Gunsberg

Game 9, Havana Match 1890

Evans Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4

The Evans Gambit was a popular opening at the end of the 19th century, even appearing in world championship matches.

4...Bxb4 5.c3 Bc5

These days the more conservative 5...Be7 and 5...Ba5 are considered superior.

6.0-0

The move-order 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 is more accurate, as this avoids the line given in the following note.

6...d6 7.d4 exd4

More risky than 7...Bb6!, which offers to return the pawn for at least equality in the ending after 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Qxd8+ Nxd8 10.Nxe5 Nf6.

8.cxd4 Bb6 9.Nc3

9.d5 Na5 10.Bd3 is a more positional alternative which plays for long-term compensation based on better central control and the offside knight on a5.

9...Na5 10.Bg5

Going straight for the throat, but objectively 10.Bd3 gives White more chances of an advantage.

10...Ne7

10...f6 11.Bf4 Ne7 is also playable.



11.Bxf7+!?

As so often with very sharp opening lines, many continuations lead to a forced draw; for example, 11.Nd5 f6 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Nxf6+ Kf8 14.Ng5 Nxc4 15.Qh5 Kg7 16.Qf7+ Kh6 17.Qh5+ is perpetual check.

11...Kxf7 12.Nd5 Nac6

A rather risky attempt to play for a win. Black can force White to take a draw by 12...Re8 13.Bxe7 Rxe7 14.Ng5+ Kg8 15.Qh5 h6 16.Qg6 hxg5 17.Nf6+ Kf8 18.Nh7+ Kg8 19.Nf6+.

13.Bxe7 Nxe7 14.Ng5+

There's no especially good square for the king, since retreating to the back rank blocks in the rook.

14...Kg6?

Nevertheless, Black should have played 14...Kf8 since this loses by force. After 15.Qf3+ Nf5 16.Nh3 c6 17.Nxb6 axb6 18.exf5 Qf6 the exposed position of Black's king more or less balances the pawn he is about to win on f5.

15.Nf4+!

The further sacrifice of the g5-knight is essential to keep up the momentum of the attack.

15...Kf6

15...Kxg5 16.Qh5+ Kxf4 17.Rae1 leads to a quick mate, so this is forced.

16.e5+!

This is simplest, although 16.Qh5 also wins.

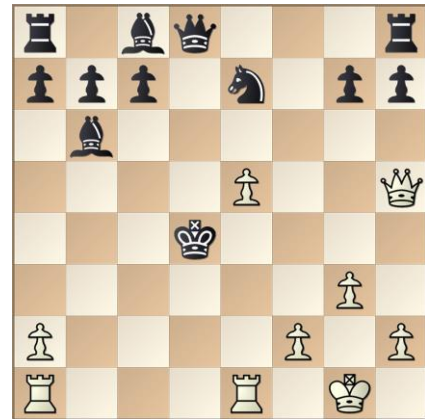
16...dxe5 17.dxe5+ Kxg5 18.Qh5+!

White offers a third piece to drive the king further up the board.

18...Kxf4 19.g3+ Ke4 20.Rfe1+

Now 20...Kd5 21.e6+! Kc4 22.Rac1+ Kb4 23.Rb1+ is hopeless so Gunsberg plays his king to d4.

20...Kd4



Surely one of the most remarkable positions to have arisen in a top-level match. Black is three pieces up but White has a forced mate in four ...

21.Qd1+?

... which Chigorin misses. The principle that it is better to cut off the king than to keep giving checks is perhaps more familiar today than in 1890, but even so it is surprising that Chigorin misses the relatively simple 21.Rac1! (threat Qd1#) 21...Kd5 22.Qf7+ Be6 23.Qf3+ Kd4 24.Qd1#. The move played does not throw away the win, but it does make it much more difficult.

21...Kc5 22.Qc2+?

But this does give away half a point, although by now the win was far from simple: 22.Rc1+! Kb5 23.Qb3+! Ka6 (or 23...Ka5 24.Qa3+ Kb5 25.Rb1+ Kc6 26.Qa4+ Kd5 27.Qb3+ Kd4 28.Rbd1+ Kc5 29.Rc1+ Kd4 30.Qd1#) 24.Rc5! (a tough move to see and the only one to win) 24...Bxc5 25.Qa4+ Kb6 26.Rb1+ Bb4 27.Rxb4+ Kc5 28.Qb5#.

22...Kd5

The king threatens to sneak away via e6.

23.Qb3+ Kc6

Now it hopes to escape via d7.

**24.Qa4+ Kd5 25.Qb3+ Kc6 26.Qa4+ Kd5 27.Qb3+ Kc6
28.Qa4+ Kd5 29.Qb3+ Kc6**

The rule for repetition was somewhat inconsistent in the 19th century and it is often hard to establish which rules were being used in any particular event.

30.Qa4+ Kd5



31.Rad1+?

Chigorin is not prepared to accept the perpetual and by stubbornly playing for a win he even ends up losing.

31...Ke6 32.Qg4+ Nf5!

Not 32...Kf7 33.e6+ Kf6 34.Qf4+ Nf5 35.Rxd8 Rxd8 36.Qe5+ Kg6 37.g4 and White retains some advantage.

33.Rxd8 Rxd8

The attack is dead and Black has too much material for the queen.

34.Kg2 Rd2 35.Qc4+ Rd5

The pin is only a minor inconvenience.

36.g4 Nd4 37.f4 g6

White cannot exploit the position of the enemy king and once Black develops his pieces it's all over.

38.Qc1 Kf7 39.f5 Nxf5

The simplest, returning some material to complete his development.

40.gxf5 Bxf5 41.Qg5 Kg8 42.Re2 Re8 43.Qf4 Rf8

44.Qc4 Be6 45.Qb3 Rxe5 0-1

It's time for the solution to the puzzle posed earlier. Here's the position again.



Black to play

51...Rxe3+? was played in the game, but after **52.Kf5!** Black had to give up a rook to avoid mate. The finish was **52...R6xe5+ 53.fxe5 Rf3+ 54.Ke4 Re3+ 55.Kf4 1-0** as Black is either mated or loses his other rook.

The remarkable drawing line from the diagram runs **51...f5+! 52.Kxf5** (52.Kd5 Rxe5+! 53.Kxe5 g1Q 54.Rxa7+ Kh6 55.Rh8+ Kg6 56.Rg8+ leads to perpetual check, but not 52...g1Q? 53.Kxe6! Rg6+ 54.Ke7 with decisive threats) **52...Rxe5+!** (52...g1Q? 53.Rxa7+ mates) **53.fxe5** (53.Kxe5 g1Q is a draw as before) **53...Rg5+!** (the third sacrifice in a row) **54.Ke6 Rg6+ 55.Kf5** (White must return to f5 to stop Black's king slipping out via h6 and g5) **55...Rg5+ 56.Kxg5** (the last try) **56...g1Q+ 57.Kxh5 Qg6+ 58.Kh4 Qe4+** and Black delivers perpetual check.

Books of the Month by Ben Graff



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

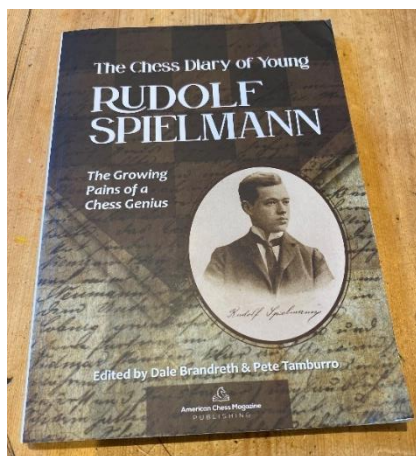
How is it possible for a 'classic' to be a book that has only recently been published? Perhaps when the work was written well over a hundred years ago. *The Chess Diary of Young*

Rudolf Spielmann, penned between 1900 and 1905, provides a fascinating insight into a bygone era, and the thoughts of a promising master starting to make his way in the chess world.

This month we also review *The Ink War – Romanticism versus Modernity in Chess*, by Willy Hendriks, which describes the battle between Steinitz and Zukertort, both over the board and in their respective chess columns. Hendriks brilliantly evokes a time of significant change in the chess world and the first great world title rivalry.

So, a first-hand account from over a century ago, and an excellent new historical work - two books that are both destined to add to our understanding and enjoyment of the game. The moment has arrived to step back in time...

***The Chess Diary of Young Rudolf Spielmann – The Growing Pains of a Chess Genius*, edited by Dale Brandreth & Pete Tamburro (American Chess Magazine Publishing)**



'In fact, Otto is a player who occasionally has his lucid moments.'

(Rudolf Spielmann reflects on one of his opponents, within the confines of his diary...)

Rudolf Spielmann lived between 1883 and 1942 and was amongst the strongest chess players in the world. One of the few to have an even score against José Capablanca (+2 – 2 = 8) his career was marked by considerable highs and lows and shaped by the backdrop of the difficult times in which he lived. A lifelong bachelor with a liking for beer, it seems within the panoply of chess players he does not rate as having been particularly eccentric, but his story and accomplishments are both of considerable interest.

At the chess board, Spielmann won roughly a third of the 120 major tournaments he competed in and was famed for his love of the King's Gambit and attacking play. Yet his results were uneven and declined considerably over time. A new generation of masters would ultimately usurp him, and he lost a particularly disastrous game to Botvinnik in the 1935 Moscow tournament in a mere twelve moves. His reputation was diminished by this and various other heavy defeats, many of which have been regularly reprinted, which perhaps means that the modern reader does not fully appreciate how good Spielmann once was.

Away from the board, Spielmann's life was blighted by the antisemitism that gripped Europe. He would flee from Austria following the Nazi invasion, taking refuge in Sweden. Yet his experiences still proved challenging. He encountered hostility in quarters of the Swedish Chess Association and the manuscript of the book he was working on (and counting on for funds) disappeared in mysterious circumstances. Securing onward passage to England or America proved to be an impossible task. Suffering from depression and nowhere near the player he once was, Spielmann would die in his apartment, but his legacy remains intact.

The Chess Diary of a Young Rudolph Spielmann shares the insights of a true chess player between the years of 1900 and 1905. The diary consists of sixty-nine games, Spielmann's associated analysis and his thoughts on those he played. Always illuminating and often quite funny, this makes for interesting reading. As Pete Tamburro notes: 'This was a chess genius wrestling not only with chess theory and chess players over the board. He had to put up with much nonsense and, most importantly, figure out who he was as a player. We get to watch a brilliant young man in the early stages of putting himself together.'

Most likely, Spielmann did not intend the diary for publication, but rather as a source of reference for a future book. The story of how *American Chess Magazine* came to print it is fascinating. This was a publication fifty years in the making, from the day Pete Tamburro first purchased the notebook to the moment the diary eventually went to print. With a host of travails from lost photocopies, the need to 'edit down,' Spielmann's over-long sentences, through to the role of Lothar Schmid (who ultimately purchased the original manuscript) this is an intriguing tale, nicely told within the book.

The function of the diary as confidant is of course well known, and undoubtedly Spielmann was more open within it than he was in public. Dr Albrecht Buschke writes, 'I knew Spielmann... and always remembered him as one of the most even-tempered, quiet and pleasant individuals... particularly as compared to the not infrequently unapproachable Alekhine, and to his over-nervous, but well-educated and (outside the playing room) very friendly Nimzowitsch... It just shows that even such a quiet person has to confide his anguish to someone who will understand him, or a diary.'

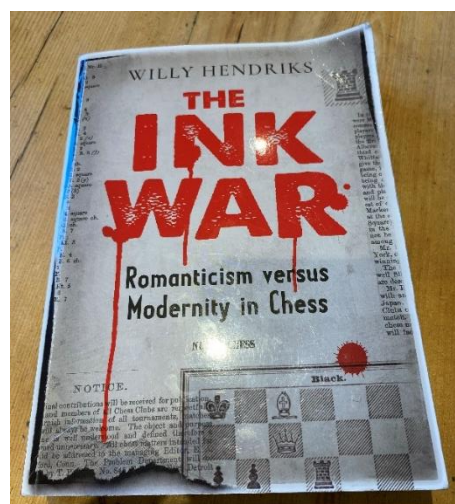
Spielmann can be brutal about his opponents on occasion. 'After this game, my impression of Schenkein was that he was a beginner. He faithfully followed the rule so usual with beginners: never resign from a game.' Also noting, 'Schenkein spent about five minutes of his time to perceive that he was mated.' He is not always generous: 'Herr Lange, still convinced that I do not have any idea of the endgame, tries from the beginning to lead into a good endgame, which he succeeds in doing with luck.'

He can also take defeat hard, often with less than promising future consequences. 'Thoroughly depressed by my first defeat vs Vidmar, I went to an inn in order to recover from my anger by a good midday meal. Soon I forgot, over three steins of Coburg beer, my tournament pains, and I went, or better tottered back to the tournament hall with the firm intention to spank mercilessly away any, even the strongest opponent, in the future. But I was in for a surprise. Instead of figuring out, after Schneider's third move, what would have been the best answer, I was on the best way to falling asleep.'

I'm sure we've all also known the feeling that Spielmann shared after losing to a player he viewed as inferior. 'What good was it... that I am so... many degrees stronger a player than Januschpolsky? In spite of a most heroic defence, I could not save the game, for in a lost position no Lord up high can invent anything.'

The games themselves do not contain much in the way of accompanying analysis, but Spielmann provides a degree of colour and context around each encounter. Perhaps the flaw in the diary is, as we have already noted, that it was probably never intended for publication. Given this, it does feel a little fleeting and somewhat incomplete. Yet, even so, it still gives us something: a window into the mind of a then-young professional, now many years departed, an insight into his life on the circuit and his frustrations at the chess board which doubtless mirror many of our own, and a chance to spend time with a kindred spirit, whose chess adventures live on.

***The Ink War – Romanticism versus Modernity in Chess,* by Willy Hendriks (New in Chess)**



'They are a brainy looking lot of men, however, apt to be rather careless as regards the niceties of dress, and their hair is generally ruffled from a habit of running their fingers through it common to most chess players.' (New-York Daily Tribune observation on spectators at the first-ever official world chess championship match, between Steinitz and Zukertort in 1886.)

In the late nineteenth century a chess revolution was under way. Coffee shop chess was still plentiful, but now serious tournaments were also taking place. This newly competitive era created great rivalries and intense debate, much of which played out in the chess columns and journals of the day such as *The Field*, *Chess Monthly*, *The Westminster Papers* and *The Gannett* -offerings almost as lively as anything to be found on today's social media.

The two men who would ultimately contest the first world title match, Steinitz and Zukertort, were in the thick of the action. The pair sparred, both at the board and through the pages of their respective publications, in a rivalry as

intense as any we have seen in the following century and a half.

The Ink War tells their story, from their first game in London 1872 through to their final clash in their 1886 title match - a sixteen-year period, at the end of which the foundations for the modern chess scene had truly been laid. All subsequent champions through to Magnus Carlsen can trace their lineage back to Wilhelm Steinitz.

Yet as this excellent book demonstrates, this was a period that transcended Steinitz and Zukertort's specific rivalry. The age of the 'Romantic' school (solely focused on attacking the king) was yielding to the 'Modern' with its focus on positional study. Professional players were on the rise, much to the consternation of many of their 'gentleman' predecessors. This was a world in which spending too much time on a move, or taking the game too seriously, was frowned upon in some quarters.

As late as the 1883 London tournament, Hendriks highlights that the sanction for analysing an adjourned game was expulsion from the tournament. 'Considering the penalty, analysing was regarded as one of the most unsporting things a chess player could do.' Ultimately such rules were scrapped as unenforceable, but they do show that deep study and analysis, things we now take for granted, were once viewed with suspicion – albeit it was precisely such an approach that Steinitz, Zukertort and other leading players of the day inevitably adopted.

For Steinitz '... publishing in the chess magazines was a convenient way to get involved in all kinds of conflicts.' Zukertort in contrast remarked that "...he always tried to avoid personal chess disputes,' but as Hendriks notes, 'That was, regardless of whether it was true, almost impossible to do at that time.' From brilliant (and sometimes not so brilliant) analysis, through to personal attacks, potential scandal, and theories on how to play the game, their columns live on.

Hendriks observes that Steinitz and Zukertort were both challenging personalities, albeit in very different ways. Steinitz '...was not an easy person, he always wanted to be right, he was self-confident, arrogant and not very tactful, and he often operated clumsily and made many enemies.'

His reviews of others' chess books caused controversy (in particular that of Wormald's *The Chess Openings*) which was seen as an unnecessary attack on a dying man, and one who was popular within the chess community. It seems Steinitz had a gift for always wanting the last word when some things might have been better left unsaid. 'He

was often arrogant and rude, making fun of others and glorifying himself. If he felt he was wronged, which was quite often, he would react violently. In the face of stupidity, he was merciless.'

Zukertort appears to have been much more amenable, but something of a fantasist. From his supposed noble origins, through to the eight languages he claimed to speak and his alleged accomplishments as a swordsman, dominos player and pistol shot, Hendriks highlights that most of the stories Zukertort told about himself have since been debunked. Fortunately, he was never pressed into action during a life-or-death emergency as, despite styling himself as Dr Zukertort, he was distinctly lacking the medical qualifications he claimed to have. There is even some conjecture as to whether the secret mistress and two daughters Zukertort frequently mentioned existed anywhere other than his imagination.

Undoubtedly, Zukertort often exaggerated for dramatic effect, something that was easier to do in the pre-internet era, but he could be caught out on occasion. Blackburne recalled being shown round Berlin by Zukertort and asking him what a particular building was. 'That is a munitions depot' replied Zukertort. 'But no, dear friend – said Blackburne in a sweet tone – that is the university where you studied.' Yet it seems that what Zukertort had, which Steinitz lacked, was a degree of charm. 'A bit vain and sometimes sarcastic, but also funny and entertaining, very erudite, always with an anecdote at hand. That they were not always true, especially when it came to himself, was something most people realised at the time, but they simply accepted it.'

At the start of their 1886 match Steinitz was forty-nine, Zukertort forty-three, but in 'somewhat shaky health.' Neither had played seriously in two and a half years and 'it was completely unclear what their current shape was.' While *Ink Wars* is to be commended for highlighting the subtlety around the battle between the Romantic and Modern schools of chess, I was left wondering whether it was really a meaningful factor in the Steinitz vs Zukertort world championship match of 1886.

Hendriks himself notes that in the Morphy era '... people in those days were already playing so strongly that the primitive distinction between attacking and positional chess began to lose its meaning.' Moreover, even Anderssen, who had been Zukertort's first coach and serious playing partner, 'in his last tournament.... won in a very modern Sicilian, proving once again that the image of him as the ultimate romantic is a caricature that does not do justice to this versatile and often very modern

player.' Yet even so, arguably, the truly modern age was still in the future. Steinitz's stubborn belief that the king was an attacking piece, capable of looking after itself from the early stages of the game, and his penchant for placing it on e2, have not aged well.

Steinitz won the first game of the title match brilliantly, with a knight sacrifice that 'world champions such as Mikhail Tal and Garry Kasparov would probably have been proud of...' but again this served to blur the characterisation of Steinitz and Zukertort belonging to different schools: 'For those who had thought this match would see a clash between Steinitz's scientific positional approach and Zukertort's romantic attacking spirit, this game immediately turned this caricature on its head.' It was clear that Steinitz's positional understanding surpassed Zukertort's, but they were fundamentally playing the same game.

It was not so much a different chess philosophy that saw Steinitz ultimately prevail, but rather his physical strength. Golombek noting that '...indeed it is arguable that in skill and ability Zukertort was the equal of Steinitz, but he was handicapped by being physically weaker. It is unfortunate, but nevertheless one of the hard facts of life among chess masters, that physical matters played an all-important role in something which ideally speaking, should concern and depend upon the mind only.'

Neither Steinitz nor Zukertort fared well after their title match. Zukertort's uncertain health gave out on him altogether a mere two years later, dying while still only forty-five. Steinitz would lose his title and a subsequent rematch with Lasker – a player whose understanding of the game was in turn more 'modern' than Steinitz's. Steinitz's mental health collapsed, and he died in poverty, in a New York lunatic asylum.

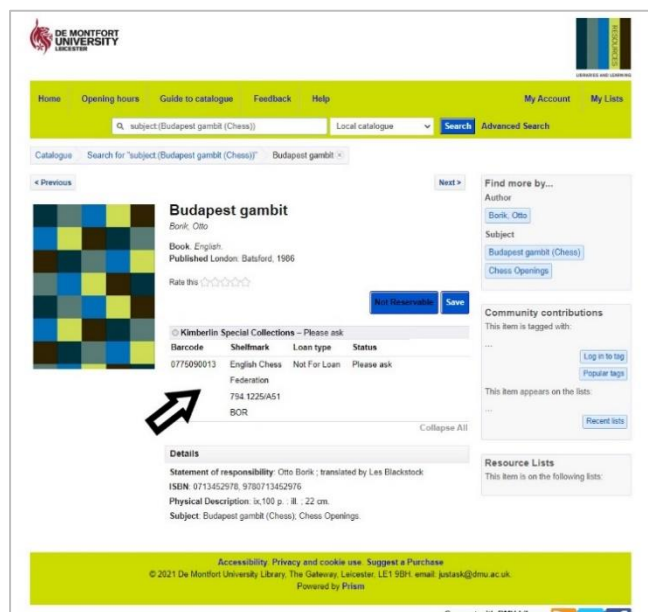
Two unhappy endings, but two amazing lives. Hendriks does a brilliant job of rendering this struggle on and off the board in true colour. This is an excellent book, as illuminating and engaging as it is readable. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to learn more about the beginnings of the modern game – and two great protagonists – who played out the very first official world title contest.

Cataloguing the ECF Library at DMU Special Collections

by Katharine Short

I am very pleased to report that work has begun on cataloguing the ECF Library. I asked librarian Owen Thomas to explain his approach to the project:

'My main concern about this collection was classification, as it is very large and all about one subject: chess. There is a risk we would have long runs of books all with the same class number and possibly the same suffix, which makes finding individual works difficult. However, the Dewey schedule for chess (794.1 – 794.18) is very developed and includes numbers for stages in the game (openings, middle and end), individual chessmen, collections of games, and variant forms of chess. The ECF used similar broad categories to organise their collection and this order has been retained by Special Collections and so the first books I'm dealing with are appropriately on game openings. Dewey is very helpful with these as there is an option to "Arrange by codes from the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings [ECO codes]". I found a website listing the codes and as they are three characters long I am using them to create double suffixes. So, *Budapest Gambit* by Otto Borik has the shelfmark **ECF 794.1225 A51 BOR**. Using the codes in the suffixes will co-locate books on the same named opening which will help both browsing and finding individual works.'



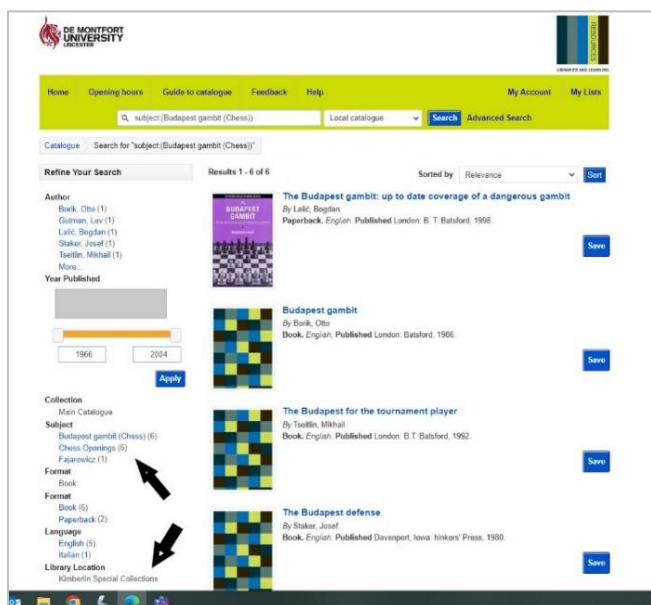
As the Library is so large (and has grown since coming to DMU) the cataloguing process will take some time! Interested readers can search the DMU Library catalogue here:

<https://prism.librarymanagementcloud.co.uk/dmu/>. You can see in the screenshot that it is possible to narrow down a search result to books that are held in 'Kimberlin Special Collections' only; and also that some chess-related subject tags have been added to aid your searching. As Owen says above, each book from the Library will also have 'English Chess Federation' in the shelf mark.

A reminder that archival material from the collection is being listed here:

<https://specialcollections.catalogue.dmu.ac.uk/records/S/012>

--- Katharine Short, DMU Special Collections Manager



To access the collection please contact archives@dmu.ac.uk to make an appointment. We are able to offer a limited reprographics service if you can provide exact references and the request is within our standard copying restrictions (10% of any book or journal can be copied for private research purposes only).



It's a Puzzlement!



Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://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 have 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

IM David Fitzsimons (2361) – IM Andrew J. Ledger (2306)
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG

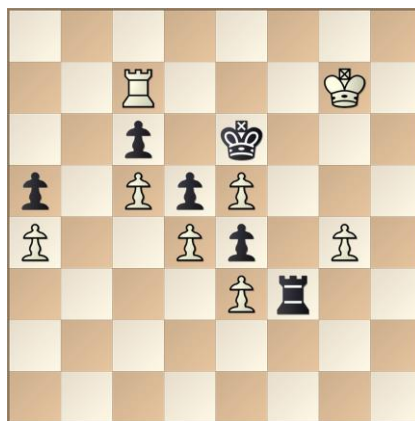


White to checkmate

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 2

Steven B. Booth (1956) – Sheng Liang Bernard Chan (1986)
29th 4NCL Congress 2023, Harrogate ENG

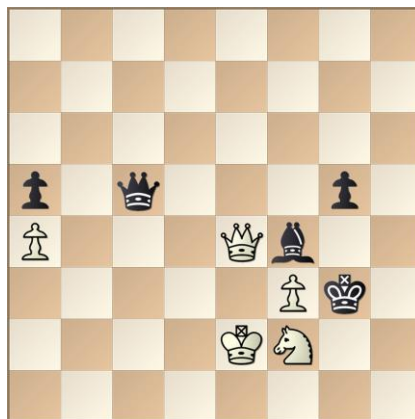


Black to draw

[Click here for solution](#)

Puzzle 3

Jack Erskine-Pereira (1809) – M. Surtees (2070)
29th 4NCL Congress 2023, Harrogate ENG



White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 4

FM Santiago Quinones Garcia (2248) – FM Lewis Martin (2135)

Titled Tues 3 Jan Early, Chess.com



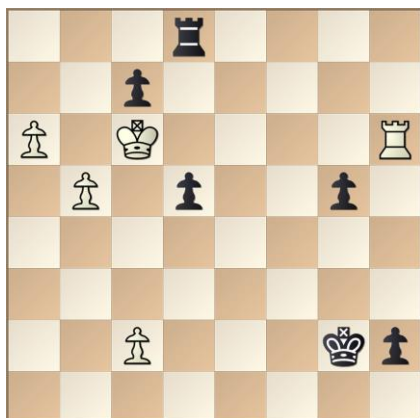
Black to checkmate

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 5

IM P. Large (2268) – Remy Rushbrooke (2062)

Hastings W/E Open 2023, Hastings ENG



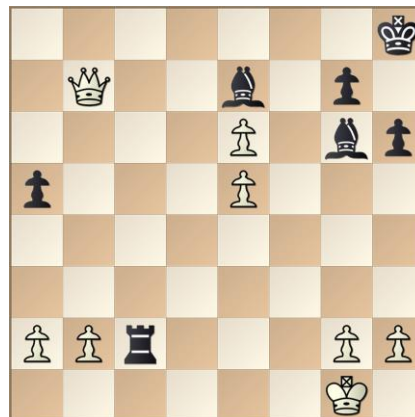
Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 6

John K. Holliday (1730) – Tim Hilton (1846)

29th 4NCL Congress 2023, Harrogate, ENG



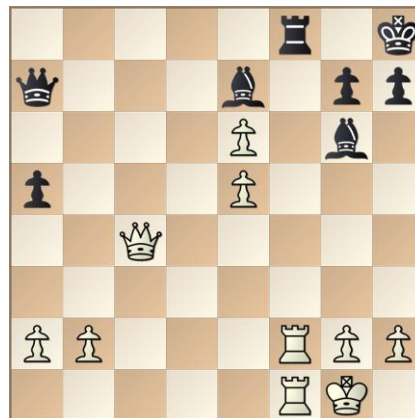
Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 7

John K. Holliday (1730) – Tim Hilton (1846)

29th 4NCL Congress 2023, Harrogate, ENG

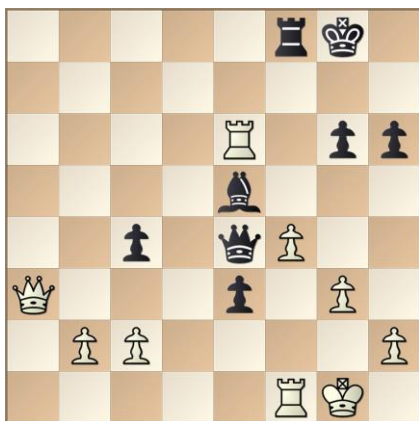


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 8

Jaimie Wilson (2100) – Thomas D. Moss (1574)
Hastings W/E Open 2023, Hastings ENG

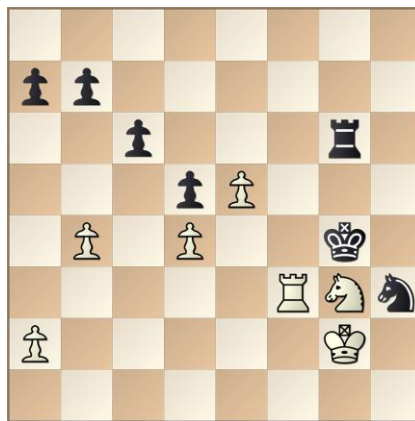


Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 10

Martin J. Faulkner (1788) – P Hutchinson (2135)
Hastings W/E Open 2023, Hastings, ENG

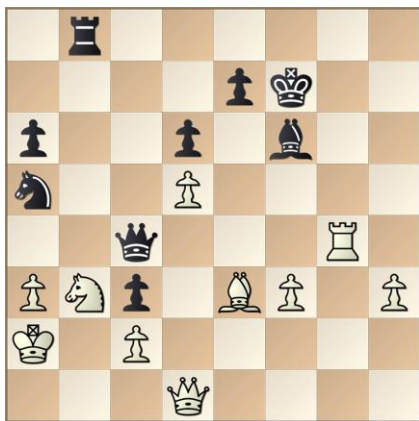


White to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 9

Steven A. Jones (2139) – GM Simon K. Williams (2467)
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG

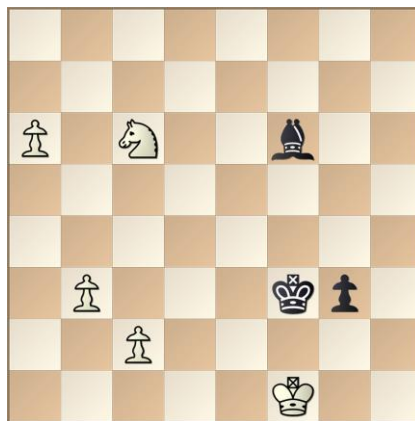


Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

Puzzle 11

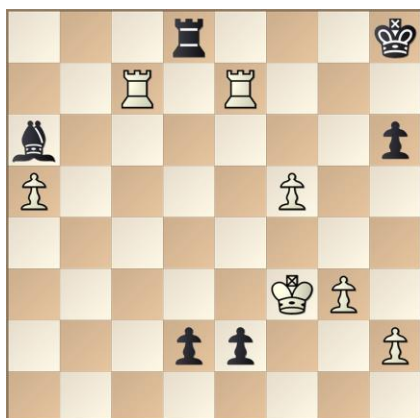
GM Vladimir Malakhov (2650) – GM Simon K. Williams (2465)
Airthings Masters Play-In, Chess.com



Black to win

[Click here for the solution](#)

GM Rajat Makkar (2300) – IM Conor E. Murphy (2425)
4NCL 2022-23. Daventry ENG



[Click here for the solution](#)

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



BLADE RUNNER

Tyrell: At this hour? What can I do for you, Sebastian?

Sebastian: Queen to bishop 6. Check.

Tyrell: Nonsense. Just a moment. Mmm. Queen to bishop 6. Ridiculous. Queen to bishop 6. Hmm ... Knight takes queen. What's on your mind, Sebastian? What are you thinking about?

This month we feature the famous chess scene in the original *Blade Runner* film directed by Ridley Scott and released in 1982. The film is set in a dystopian future world in 2019 - where synthetic humans known as replicants have been created by the Tyrell Corporation to work in colonies in space. The 'blade runner' featured in the title is a police officer (Rick Deckard, played by Harrison Ford) who is given the task of hunting down rogue replicants who have a habit of turning against their owners. Four replicants, led by Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer), have returned to Earth searching for their creator Tyrell to ask him to prolong their very short four-year life span. They try to reach Tyrell via one of his genetic engineers, J F Sebastian.



British Birds Chess Set - photograph courtesy of Hoyle's of Oxford

The chess game in *Blade Runner* is being played as a computer correspondence game between J F Sebastian and Tyrell, with each player at home. They use two separate sets – Sebastian's is the rather exotic 'British

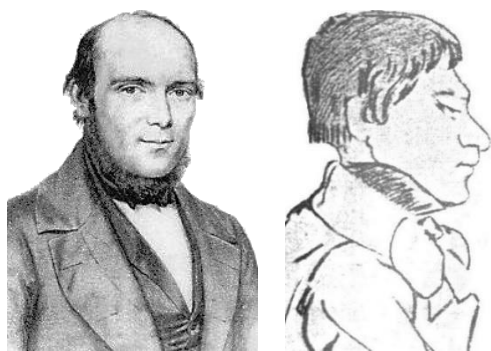
Birds' set, which was popular at the time and still in production – with Tyrell using a set with human figures as pieces.

Replicant Roy Batty is in the room with Sebastian and intervenes at the critical moment to suggest Qf6 to Sebastian, which leads to a forced checkmate, much to Tyrell's alarm.

The game appears to be following the final moves of the Immortal game played in 1851 between unofficial world champion Adolf Anderssen and Lionel Kieseritzky at the great tournament in London organised by Howard Staunton. The game opens with a King's Gambit where Anderssen gains a massive lead in development by harassing Kieseritzky's queen. Anderssen sacrifices most of his pieces including a final queen sacrifice on f6 to secure a spectacular victory.

Adolf Anderssen - Lionel Adalbert Bagration Felix Kieseritzky [C33]

Casual game London ENG, 21.06.1851



Adolf Anderssen (left) and Lionel Kieseritzky (right) - Wikimedia

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 The King's Bishop Gambit **Qh4+**



4.Kf1 b5 5.Bxb5 Nf6 6.Nf3 Qh6 7.d3 Nh5 8.Nh4 Qg5 9.Nf5 c6 10.g4 Nf6 11.Rg1 cxb5 12.h4 Qg6 13.h5 Qg5 14.Qf3 Ng8 15.Bxf4 Qf6 16.Nc3 Bc5 17.Nd5 Qxb2 18.Bd6 Bxg1



19.e5! Qxa1+

20.Ke2 Na6??

21.Nxg7+ Kd8



And now Anderssen played the immortal queen sacrifice on the empty square f6, which reappeared in the film more than 100 years later.

22.Qf6+! Nxf6 23.Be7# 1–0

Plot device and meaning within the film

Sebastian the genetic engineer and toy maker is cast as a grandmaster who has only occasionally beaten Tyrell, who we have to assume must therefore be a super GM.

Roy (leader of the replicants) is much stronger than Sebastian or Tyrell and sees the empty square sacrifice and two-move combination which Sebastian somehow misses.

Chess is being used as a plot device here, as Roy uses the ongoing game between Sebastian and Tyrell to gain access to Tyrell later in the film. The final combination also sets the scene for sacrificing pieces to gain access to the king which the film returns to in the wonderful final scenes.

At another level, the *Blade Runner* chess scene continues the 2001 theme of artificial intelligence outgrowing its

creator, with Roy seeing the winning combination which the human GMs (Sebastian and Tyrell) both miss.

Afterword

By 1982, when the film was released, computers were becoming more serious challengers to human chess players than in the late 60s, when *2001: A Space Odyssey* was showing. By 1988 the strongest chess-playing programme Deep Thought was able to beat an international master (D N Levy) for the first time. Deep Thought was then crushed by Gary Kasparov in their first encounter in 1989, with an upgraded version Deep Blue eventually turning the tables and winning 3½ – 2½ in the third Kasparov/Deep Blue encounter in May 1997.

The next breakthrough in chess-playing machines came in 2017 with AlphaZero, a neural net-based digital automaton, which taught itself to play based on the rules and millions of games against itself, and beat Stockfish 28-0 with 72 draws. Modern chess AI engines deploy deep learning algorithms and regularly have FIDE ratings above 3400 elo, far beyond the best human players.

So, the original *Blade Runner* (which was set in 2019) was right in foreseeing a chess-playing automaton able to see more than human players, with a light that burns 'twice as bright', as Tyrell describes Roy in the film.

The Unstoppable Force: The Story of Wijk aan Zee 1986 by David Agyemang

Includes quotes from Robert Byrne in his 18th February 1986 article for the New York Times, available on the website archive



At the start of 1986, English rising star Nigel Short (above) landed in the Netherlands for the Hoogovens Wijk aan Zee tournament. The event is traditionally the first major event of the calendar and has the potential to produce explosive attacking games as players look to start the

season by adding their names to the illustrious list of previous winners.

The tournament has a fascinating origin story. Starting in Beverwijk a year before World War One broke out, 'The Wimbledon of Chess' gradually expanded, becoming an international tournament in 1945 before moving from Beverwijk to Wijk aan Zee in 1968. This move coincided with the beginning of the Soviet stranglehold on the event. From 1964 to 1973, nine out of the ten winners came from the Soviet Union, a streak only broken by Lajos Portisch's victory in 1972. England had to wait until 1982 for its first winner of the competition through the heroic performances of John Nunn, who shared first place with Yuri Balashov.

In recent times English representation in the Masters section has been limited to only one since 2016, coming in the form of Michael Adams' 10th place finish. However, those old enough will remember a 21-year-old, spectacle-wearing talent by the name of Nigel Short. Born in 1965, Short rose to fame in the world of English chess after defeating Victor Korchnoi at the age of ten - he went on to become a grandmaster at 19 and win the British Championship in the same year.

'It was the trapper who was horribly trapped'

Our protagonist started off the event at a blistering pace, shooting to the top of the standings with 3½/4. One of these wins came against Swedish teenager Ferdinand Hellers.

Hoogovens Wijk aan Zee Round 2

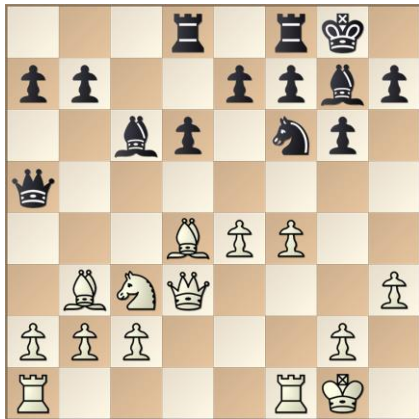
Short, Nigel D (2585) – Hellers, Ferdinand (2435), 1986

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Bc4 Bg7 7.h3!?



'Its objective is not a violent mating attack, but a solid, positional grip on the centre. Chances for kingside attack.'

7... O-O 8.O-O Nc6 9.Be3 Bd7 10.Bb3 Qa5 11.f4 Nxd4
12.Bxd4 Bc6 13.Qd3 Rad8



Short leaves the opening with a typical Sicilian Dragon position. His pieces are aimed towards Hellers' king whilst the Swede will try to fight back in the centre or on the queenside.

14.Rad1 b5 Heller lunges forward.

**15.a3 b4 16.axb4 Qxb4 17.e5 dxe5 18.fxe5 Nd5
19.Ne4?!**

An inaccuracy from Short. The computer claims that Black can now equalise with the obscure 19... Bh6!, activating the bishop on a more promising diagonal and taking an iron grip on the dark squares.

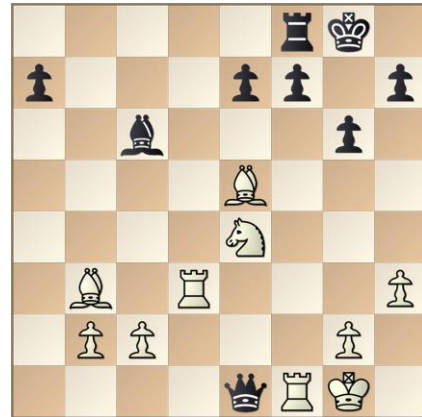
'It was at this juncture where Hellers tries his ill-fated trap with...'

19... Nf4?



20.Rxf4 Bxe5 21.Bxe5 Short sacrifices his queen, unfazed by his knight hanging on e4.

Rxd3 22.Rxd3 Qe1+ 23.Rf1



A move that must have been missed after 19... Nf4 was played. The point is that the white knight stands untouchable in the centre of the board. If Black carries on with his plan of 23... Qxe4 Short ends the game in a swift and decisive manner with 24.Bxf7! Rxf7 25. Rd8+ with an incoming mate on the f8 square.

23... Qa5 A humble retreat. Short has more than enough compensation for the queen, with the final push towards Black's king beginning imminently.

24.Bc3 Qb6+ 25.Bd4 Qa5 26.Nc3

'When Short consolidated his material advantage of rook, bishop and knight for queen and pawn with 26 N-B3, the game was as good as over.'

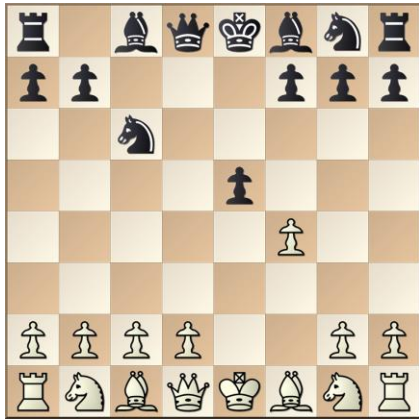
26 ...e5 27.Be3 Kg7 28.Rd6 Qc7 29.Rdf6 Be8 30.Ne4 1-0

'After 30 N-K4 there is nothing for Black to do against the looming 31 N-Q6 which both wins more material and starts a winning attack. Hellers gave up.'

Along with 30. Nd6 there is also a winning threat of Bc5 - missed by Byrne in his analysis.

The burst of form continued into his next match with Hans Ree, where he scored a dominant victory with Black in the Falkbeer Countergambit.

1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5 3. exd5 c6 4. dxc6 Nxc6



At the midpoint of the tournament, Short was leading with five points from a possible six. To put his dominance into perspective, only one player in the event achieved more than four wins - Short had hit this after six rounds. A remarkable showing for someone so young.

But, as is standard for top-level tournaments, his winning streak slowed down as he was forced to play more solidly and take less risk. He drew all four games between rounds 7 and 10, all by defending unpleasant but equal positions through the middlegame, but was looking to end the run in round 11 against Nick de Firmian.

Hoogovens Wijk aan Zee Round 11

de Firmian, Nick (2520) – Short, Nigel D (2585), 1986

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.g3 c5 5.Nf3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 b6



De Firmian entered this match on the back of three straight losses and without a win since the second round. His lack of form combined with Short's need for a win may be why the Englishman picked this combative approach in the Nimzo-Indian.

7.Bg2 Bb7 8.dxc5 bxc5 9.O-O Nc6 10.Be3 d6 11.Bf4 Ke7 12.Rb1 Rb8 13.Qa4 Qc7 14.Rfd1 Rhd8

Short once again finds himself defending a worse position in this tournament. On this occasion his opponent's

position looks far more appealing and, on immediate observation, arguably winning. White has managed to use his double isolated c-pawns to his advantage by using the open files around them to place long-distance pressure on Black's army.

15.Ng5?

A logical attempt to open the bishop's diagonal, but an attempt that the computer is highly sceptical of. Apparently 15. Ne1! is the way forward with the idea of heading to d3 in the future. The line 15.Ne1 Rbc8 16. Nd3 is suggested, creating the looming threat of Nxc5.

15... h6 16.Ne4 Nxe4 17.Bxe4 Na5 18.Bxb7 Rxb7 19.Rxb7 Nxb7 20.Qxa7 Rd7

De Firmian chooses to trade two minor pieces and a rook, relieving most of the pressure but winning the a7 pawn. Short's position still seems miserable; he is all but fully confined to the sixth rank and at the mercy of his point-hungry opponent.

21.Qa4 Nd8 22.Rd2?



Another strange decision from de Firmian. To be fair to him, the way forward is not clear in the slightest but 22.Rd2 seems to be another move without any clear reason behind it, a common feature of his games during the tournament.

22... Qc6

The rush to consolidate begins.

23.Qc2 f5 24.f3 Nf7 25.h4 g5! 26.hxg5 hxg5 27.Be3 Kf6

By now it's clear de Firmian has completely lost control of this game as Short snatches back the initiative with a decisive counterattack.

28.Rd1 Ra7 29.g4 f4 30.Bf2 Qa4 31.Qd3 Qxa2 32.e3?? fxe3?



It's safe to say both players may have been in time trouble at this point as 32... Ne5 33.Qxd6 fxe3 was overlooked. Black still remains in complete control, with the defence around the white king about to be completely destroyed.

33.Bxe3 Ne5 34.Qxd6 Nxf3+ 35.Kf1 Rf7 36.Qxc5 Kg6 37.Bf2 Nh2+ 38.Kg1 Nxf3 39.Bg3 Qe2 40.Re1 Qf3 41.Bh2 Nf2!

Weaving the final touches to the mating net.

42.Rxe6+ Kh5

0-1 White resigns

De Firmian resigns, with 43... Qh1# being unstoppable without a large loss of material.

Round 12 saw Short obliterate the notoriously solid Gennadi Sosonko in 37 moves with the white pieces, securing his victory with a full round to spare. Round 13 was a 30-move draw, ending his Wijk aan Zee campaign unbeaten and with a one-and-a-half-point gap over the three players tied for second place.

In conclusion, Short won this tournament with a mix of playing styles showing all the strengths that took him to the World Championship match and made him an iconic figure of world chess. The game against de Firmian may not earn the title of a 'swindle' but his ability to fight back from worse positions with timely and aggressive counterplay is something that we can all add to our games.

NEWS and VIEWS



Sponsoring Ukrainian Refugees

The English Chess Federation is trying to find hosts for Ukrainian GM Pavel Eljanov and family. Pavel is ranked world number 34 and would come to the UK with his partner, mother and two children aged 7 and 11. We need hosts for two, three, or all five of them. The ECF also needs to place the European Under-14 champion Sviatoslav Bazakutza and his mother Irina who are currently in the UK, but will need to move in May.

Host families make an initial six-month commitment and there is some financial support available from the government, which is £350/month.

To register your interest please email the ECF Office at office@englishchess.org.uk

Seniors Chess – A Note from Nigel Povah

As I've now taken over from Stewart Reuben as the manager of ECF Seniors Chess, I thought I would let you about some seniors chess events scheduled for this year.

Can I start by saying that anyone born in 1973 or earlier is now eligible to play seniors chess in the 50+ age group and anyone born in 1958 or earlier is eligible for the 65+ age group, so please do pass on these details to anyone you know who might have recently qualified and could be interested in participating in seniors chess events.

The ECF website is the usual point of reference, so I urge you all to occasionally check here for details on seniors events at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/> and for details and online entry to the English Seniors Championship at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2023/>, which is already attracting entrants.

At the moment we are still awaiting details about the dates and venues for the World Seniors Team Championships and the World Seniors Individual Championships for 2023 but the European equivalents are both scheduled as follows:

- **European Seniors Individual Chess Championship**
25 May – 6 June, Acqui Terme, Italy. See the

following link for further details:

<https://www.scaccomattissimo.com/ecu-senior-2023>

- **European Seniors Team Chess Championship**
11-21 July, Swidnica, Poland. The venue is a city in Silesia, south-west Poland. Further details can be found at http://www.chessmail.com/assets/pdfs/ESTCC_2023_Swidnica-invitation.pdf

Anyone interested in playing in the individual championship should make their own arrangements but anyone interested in playing in the team championship should contact me on NigelPovah52@gmail.com in the first instance to register their interest, as I will be co-ordinating the entry for the English delegation.

Keeping in Touch

Please remember to let us know if your email address changes. If the email address the ECF holds for you in your membership record is out of date, you will not receive *ChessMoves*, membership reminders, AGM messages etc.

British Chess Educational Trust (BCET) Awards 2023

The BCET is inviting nominations for the BCET Awards 2023 which are for schools (including colleges and other education establishments) and junior clubs in the United Kingdom. The awards to schools and junior chess clubs are for those which have shown outstanding achievements or enthusiasm in chess. Nominations should include a citation, giving details of the school's/club's achievements, activities, and actions taken to develop and improve the standards of the juniors in the school/club.

The awards are an engraved board, a set of wooden pieces and a digital clock. This is a valuable award, and it acts as encouragement and incentive to the schools or junior clubs. The ECF resources website – <https://www.ecfresource.co.uk/ecf-awards/#bcet> – lists the schools/clubs that have received the award in the past, with some citations. Please note that a school/club can apply again for an award if the last award was not recent and where a further award is justified.

Nominations for awards should be forwarded directly to John Wickham, 55 Shakespeare Way, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6SL Email: j.r.wickham@btinternet.com or via the respective UK national federation (England ECF, Scotland CS, Wales WCU and Northern Ireland UCU) by 31st May 2023.

ECF Rolling Membership for League and County Players

You can find more information covering useful examples and exceptions at

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/rolling-membership-examples-and-exceptions/>

ECF Level One Arbiter Course

The next course will run on Tuesday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm on 28th March, 4th April, 11th April, 18th April and 25 April. You can see further information and register at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-arbiter-course-registration/>

ECF Safeguarding Officer Appointments

The ECF wishes to thank Samantha Ali for her work as Safeguarding Officer (SO) and is also pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Sharratt and Jo Wildman to replace Samantha as joint SOs.

Speaking for the Board, Chair Stephen Woodhouse welcomed Jo and Paul, saying that 'safeguarding our vulnerable members, particularly but not exclusively children, is central to the work of the ECF. It is essential that as our membership grows, with a focus on young players, chess coaching and playing happens within a safe and supportive environment'.

As Chair of the thriving [Kent Junior Chess Association](#), Jo is ideally qualified to work with Paul in overseeing the ECF's safeguarding work, while Paul will bring to the position his years of experience as a teacher and headmaster, together with his safeguarding work at the ECF and with the [Worcestershire CA](#).

European Cities and Towns Chess Championships

On 29th January 2023 at the Mindsports Centre in Hammersmith three teams entered the European Cities and Towns Chess Championships organised by the European Chess Union – Hammersmith West London, London Juniors, and London Women. London Women came third out of thirteen teams taking part – congratulations to all the players taking part, including WIM Lan Yao, who won first place in the individual standings. For more information, please go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/european-cities-and-towns-chess-championships-result/>

Board Resolutions in Support of Shohreh Bayat

The ECF Board passed the following resolutions, proposed by Malcolm Pein, at their meeting on 3rd February.

Resolution 1

The ECF Board notes that ECF Director of Events IA Shohreh Bayat is one of the most experienced and qualified arbiters in world chess, who has officiated at World Championships and Olympiads.

Ms Bayat was asked to change her attire twice by FIDE officials during the World 960 Championships in Reykjavik last year, despite there being no complaint from the

JUNIOR MOVES

Junior Chess News from Alex Holowczak

The Christmas period saw high activity in English junior chess, with tournaments such as Hastings and the London Junior Championship played, but finishing after the cut-off for them to be included in the rating list published on 1st January, 2023. Added to other FIDE-rated tournaments such as the 4NCL, this meant there was an opportunity for large rating gains.

January's Top Performers

- Ruqayyah Rida gained 260 points after 6/6 at the London Christmas Congress in the Major section and 2½/3 in the 4NCL Congress Major section in Harrogate. Her FIDE rating rose to #4 in the world in her category.
- Mohammed Aayan Ismail gained 248 points after 5½/9 in the Hastings Masters and 5/5 in the Mill Hill Under 2400. His rating of 2211 qualifies for the Candidate Master title.
- Indy Southcott-Moyers gained 207 points after 5½/10 in the Hastings Masters, 3/4 in the 4NCL Congress Open in Harrogate, and 1/2 in the 4NCL. He is now the highest-rated English player in his category.
- Mae Catabay gained 123 points after 1½/2 in Ealing and 3½/5 in the London Christmas Major.
- Nina Pert gained 105 points after 4/6 in the London Christmas Open and 1/2 in the 4NCL. This takes her rating to 2009, which makes her the #7 in the world in her age/gender group, and also eligible for the Women's Candidate Master title.

Junior Players Ranked in the World Top 25						
Name	YoB	M/F	ECF Standard	ECF Rapid	FIDE Standard	World Rank
Karas, Eugenia	2008	F	1861	1886	1925	12
Pert, Nina	2008	F	2161	1958	2009	7
Arora, Tashika	2008	F	2031	1770	1838	22
Royal, Shreyas	2009	M	2509	2100	2454	3
Dicen, Elis	2010	F	1942	1948	1745	24
Rida, Ruqayyah	2012	F	1845	1823	1669	4
Verbytski, Oleg	2013	M	1801	1964	1791	15
Zhang, Yichen	2014	F	1438	1339	1428	9
Veselow, Zoe	2014	F	1674	1275	1410	10
Sivanandan, Bodhana	2015	F	1957	1956	1725	1
Jakhria, Kushal	2015	M	2055	1774	1730	3
Pang, Ethan	2015	M	1731	1653	1624	5
Hu, Junyan	2016	M	1269	1364	1256	11

organisers. Ms Bayat wore a shirt with the inscription 'Women Life Freedom' referencing the resistance campaign by Iranian women against the Iranian regime. The following day she wore an outfit in the colours of Ukraine. On both occasions Ms Bayat's attire conformed to Chapter 1 Article 7 in the Arbiters' Manual.

There is no dress code for arbiters in the FIDE Handbook.

Since the incident at Reykjavik Ms Bayat has apparently been excluded from officiating at FIDE events, specifically the 2022 World Rapid and Blitz and has been removed from the FIDE Arbiters' Commission.

The ECF requests FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich to reinstate Ms Bayat to the Arbiters Commission and to ensure she is treated fairly in the selection process for future events.

The ECF proposes that the Arbiters' Commission devises a dress code for arbiters to prevent this kind of incident in future.

Resolution 2

The ECF notes that article 4.3 of the FIDE statutes states: *'FIDE is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights.'*

That women in Iran are being systematically persecuted.

That five out of seven active Iranian WGMs have fled the country: WGM Atousa Pourkashian, WGM Mitra Hejazipour, WGM Ghazal Hakimifard, WGM Dorsa Derakhshani and most recently WGM Sarasadat Khademalsharieh:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/26/sport/iranian-chess-sara-khadem-spanish-prime-minister-spt-intl/index.html>

The UN has removed Iran from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The Iranian Sports Minister has been sanctioned by the EU: <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/13105/6> & <https://iranwire.com/en/politics/112947-eu-ministers-agree-on-new-package-of-iran-sanctions-over-brutal-protest-crackdown/>

The ECF Board supports Ms Bayat's decision to refuse to stand on the FIDE Women's Commission in view of the presence of WGM Shadi Paridar of Iran on the commission.

There is an unavoidable suspicion that FIDE is acting politically to protect Iran, an ally of Russia in its war against Ukraine. Supporting evidence is here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CeVtovaqxu7/?hl=en>

The English Chess Federation calls for the exclusion of WGM Shadi Paridar from the Women's Commission.

Littlewood's Choice



The 2022 Delancey UK Chess Challenge Terafinal at the end of last year saw 60 players competing in various age groups. The qualification for this is incredibly tough and so the standard of chess was extremely high.

The U10 section was keenly competed for and before the last round there were five players who could possibly win the title. However, when the smoke had cleared the victor was George Zhao with 8½/11, ½ point ahead of Rishi Vijaykumar.

Looking through George's games I am amazed at how mature his openings are. At his age, I was playing swashbuckling lines such as the King's Gambit and hoping to checkmate my opponent in a few moves, whereas George plays sophisticated lines such as the Catalan.

Consider the following game which starts quietly, but then the tactics emerge later.

G. Zhao – R. Rida

UK Chess Challenge Terafinal U10 Round 6

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.0-0 0-0 6.Nbd2 c5 7.c4 Nc6 8.dxc5 d4 9. Nb3 e5 10.Bg5 h6 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.Nfd2 Be6 13.Rc1



Black is a doubled pawn down but accurate play by White is needed to maintain an advantage. With this in mind, 13.Nd1! is better...intending to play Nd3 and possibly b4.

13...Re8?!

Much more to the point is 13...a5! when Black has chances of maintaining the balance.

14.Ne4 Be7 15.Qd2 Kg7 16.e3!



Essential to undermine Black's central bulwark.

16.....d3?

Sounder was 16...dxe3 17.Qxe3 with the possible continuation 17...Qc7 18.Rfd1 Rad8 19.Nd6 Bxd6 20.Bxc6 Bxc5 21.Nxc6 Rxd1+ 22. Rxd1 bxc6 which is only slightly better for White.

17.Rfd1 f5 18.Nd6! Bxd6 19.cxd6



Possible instead is 19.Bxc6 bxc6 20.cxd6 e4 21.c5 which is also good for White. Understandably George wants to retain his white-squared bishop so as to protect his king.

19....e4 20.Qc3+ Kh7 21.c5 g5?!

The aggressive 21...Ne5 is more testing, but White is still clearly better so long as he avoids 22.Qxe5 Bxb3.

22.f3! Bd5 23.fxe4 fxe4 24.Nd2



An interesting alternative is 24.Rxd3! exd3 25.Qxd3+ Kg7 26.Bxd5 when White dominates the board and is clearly winning.

24....g4?

The final mistake. A better try was 24...Qd7, but after 25.Rf1 Qe6 26.Rf6 Qe5 27.d7! Re6 28.Qxe5 Rxe5 29.Rd6 Kg7 30.Nc4 Bxc4 31.Rxc4 Rd8 32.Bxe4 White is well on his way to obtaining the full point.

25.Nxe4! Bxe4 26.Bxe4+ Rxe4 27.Qxd3 Qe8 28.Rc4 Ne5 29.Qxe4+ Kg8 30.d7! 1-0

A killing blow that will leave Black a rook down after 30...Nxd7 31.Qxe8+ Rxe8 32.Rxd7, so he throws in the towel.

A remarkably mature game by George, who is one of the many up-and-coming juniors who are certain to guarantee a healthy future for British chess.

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

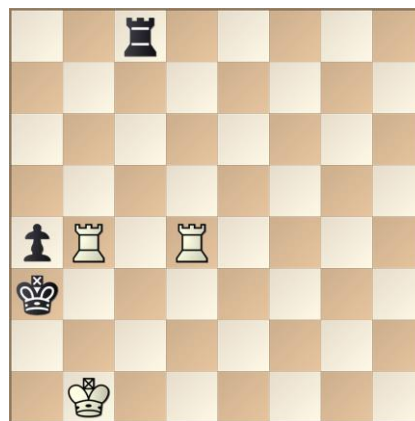
IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

When the battle is over and neither side has achieved victory then you may think there is a feeling of anti-climax. However, for every brilliant game that has been won there are just as many that have been drawn.

A draw can be achieved in several ways – the only one that I will not examine is by mutual consent.

Consider the following example:

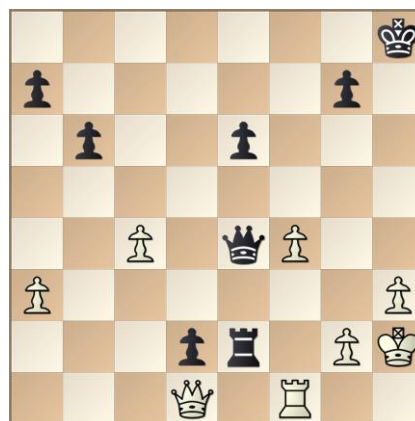


Post – Nimzovich

Barmen 1905

Black is a rook down and struggling. However the clever move **1...Rb8!** draws for him as after **2.Rxb8** it is stalemate.

Perpetual check is another way of achieving a draw. For example:

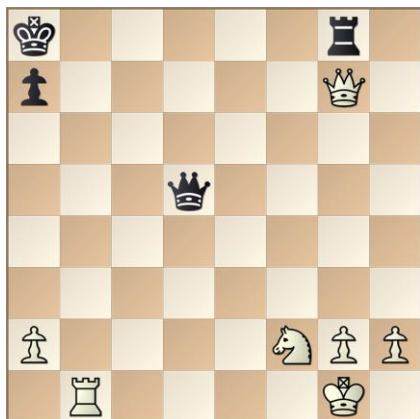


White looks to be in terrible trouble but the clever move **1.Rf2!** saves the day for him because after **1...Rxf2 2.Qh5+**

allows White to give perpetual check on h5 and e8 with his queen.

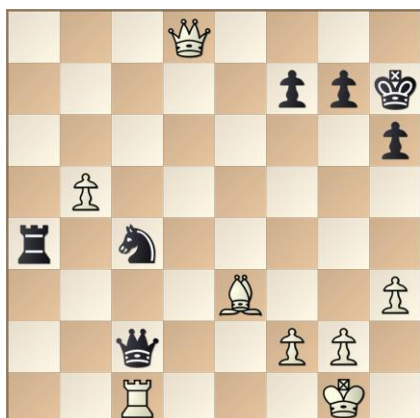
Another common way of achieving a draw is when the position is repeated three times. An important point to remember here is that the draw must be claimed with the following words: 'With my next move () I will bring about the same position for the third time'.

An example is the following:



If White moves his queen off the g-file then Black will mate by 1...Qxg2. Therefore White plays the clever move **1.Rb5!** This seems to turn the tables on Black as 1...Qxb5 fails to 2.Qxg8+ and if 1...Rxb5 then 2.Rxd5 wins. However Black replies with the brilliant **1...Re8!** This threatens 2...Re1 mate as well as 2...Qxb5. Therefore White must play **2.Rb1** and then Black replies **2...Rg8** and we are back at the original position. Since neither side can vary from this sequence the position will soon be repeated three times and the draw can be claimed.

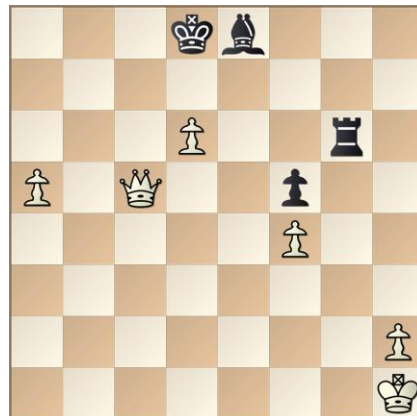
Here are now two examples for you to solve, with the answers at the end of the article:



Sax – Mariotti

Las Palmas 1978

Black is struggling a pawn down but how did he find a neat way to force a draw?



Fichtl – Blatny

Bratislava 1956

In a seemingly hopeless position how did Black find a way to escape with a draw?

Answers

Sax – Mariotti

1...Nxe3! 2.Rxc2 Ra1+ 3.Kh2 Nf1+ 4.Kg1 Ne3+ 5.Kh2 Nf1+ with perpetual check.

Fichtl – Blatny

1....Bc6+! 2.Qxc6 Rg1+ 3.Kxg1 stalemate.

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

The Grünfeld – A Mini Course in Three Parts positions by Danny Gormally



Pelletier, Yannick (2590) - Caruana, Fabiano (2711)
Biel Accentus Biel (7),
26.07.2011

In this article I want to present a mini-course on the Grünfeld Defence. This is an opening that has served me reasonably well during my career. I first encountered it down at Charlton Chess Club as one of the strongest players there was Gary Clark, who recommended it to me as he felt the tactical nature of the opening would suit my style. He was right. There was also a book by Adorjan (one of the trainers of Kasparov) which was quite inspiring. It was quite an old book made in the pre-engine era so some

of the ideas presented were quite creative and interesting. Let's talk about the pros and cons of this opening. First the pros: 1. Suits those who like to play active, tactical chess. 2. Black immediately tries to hit back in the centre to try and wrest the initiative from White, and often succeeds in doing so if White players are slumbersome. Then, the cons: 1. Heavily theoretical and there are a number of lines that are quite dangerous for Black, and all need to be learned. 2. Some of the main variations are quite drawish in character, so beating lower-rated players can often be an issue. Therefore, it would suit a player who is strong technically and who can get something out of nothing in drawish endgames. Hence why we have seen players like Carlsen and Anand essay the Grünfeld from time to time, as they are very good technically.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 some aspiring Grünfeld players are so eager to play the typical break that they play 2...d5 here, which is inaccurate. You have to wait for the white knight to go to c3 before executing this move. 3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.e4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Nf3 is considered advantageous for White.

3.Nc3 d5 This is the typical pawn break, and in any opening you have pawn breaks which characterise that particular system. In the Najdorf the ... d5 break is important, and also ... b5. In the French the ... c5 break is often essential to put pressure on the white centre.

3...Bg7 4.e4 and we have already missed our chance to play the Grünfeld and are in the King's Indian.

4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 In many ways the most natural move. White places the knight on the best square and reinforces the centre.

7...c5! Another essential break. Black needs to put the centre under pressure to justify this hyper-modern opening.

7...0-0 is considered slightly inaccurate. 8.Be2 c5 9.0-0 Nc6 10.Be3 cxd4 11.cxd4 Bg4 12.d5! and after 12...Ne5 (12...Bxa1 13.Qxa1 White is often happy to make this sacrifice. Black will be forced to move the knight and then Bh6 immediately gets back the exchange. 13...Na5 14.Bh6±) 13.Nxe5 Bxe2 14.Qxe2 Bxe5 15.Rad1± White has a better position in this structure as Black isn't putting enough pressure on the centre.

8.Rb1 The beginning of the super-sharp Rb1 variation which was heavily debated in the 1990s at the highest level and has continued to be a popular variation to this day. It's strange how much theory changes, because from

memory this line wasn't even mentioned in the Adorjan book.

8...0-0 9.Be2 Nc6



This is a reply that I've often found annoying when facing the Grünfeld from the white side. However, here is some decent back history. I won an important game on the white side of this opening variation, in the major section of the Charlton House weekend congress in the early 1990s (which seems like a lifetime ago now) when I was rated around 130 BCF and my opponent was quite a lot higher rated. I ended up winning the tournament, and as I recall this was at the beginning of my run and over the next few years I steadily improved to the point where I eventually got the international master title. I recall my dad sitting patiently by the side of the board while the game was going on, waiting for me to finish. I think nowadays he would do anything to avoid such a scenario, but back then I was more likeable.

10.d5 White should take up the challenge.

10...Ne5 10...Bxc3+ 11.Bd2 Bxd2+ 12.Qxd2 Na5 13.h4! is considered dangerous for Black by theory. 13...Bg4 14.h5 Bxf3 15.gxf3.



I wouldn't feel comfortable playing this position as Black as you already have to worry about your king a bit. The idea of playing h4 is quite a scary one for Black in the Grünfeld and many hackers will often play this way whether it's what the position requires or not - what you don't really do is walk into a variation where playing h4 is just GOOD.

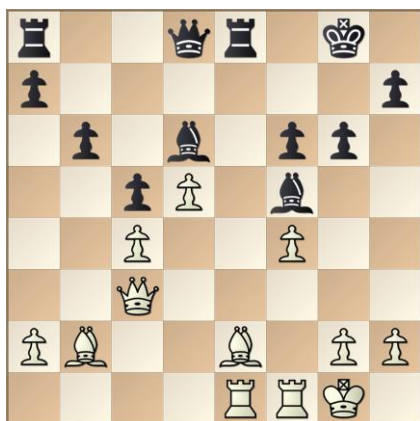
11.Nxe5 Bxe5 12.Qd2 e6 13.f4 Bc7 13...Bg7 14.c4 Bd4?



This was the continuation of that game played in a major congress many years ago. Not being particularly au fait with the theory, I remember thinking at the time this was very worrying as I couldn't castle. 15.Bb2 Qb6 16.Bd3!+- I eventually worked out at the board this way to navigate to an advantage, and my opponent couldn't justify playing this superficial stuff, so I later won.

14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5 Ba5 It looks strange to reroute the bishop like this but this is exactly what Black does and the main idea is to impede the plan c4 followed by Bb2 and Qc3, when White will aim for mate.

Just to show you what can happen if Black plays poorly: 15...b6? 16.c4 Re8 17.Bb2 Bf5 18.Rbd1 Bd6 19.Qc3 f6 20.Rde1.



Black is clearly busted here. The pawn on f6 is threatened and g4-g5 is coming if Black happens to defend it.

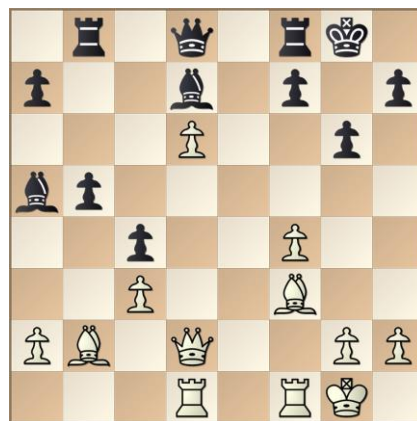
16.d6! White players love dominating with the d-pawn so you have to be careful. This was an old Russian strategy: use your d-pawn to tie up your opponent's pieces and eventually either promote or win material.

16.Rb3 White plays have also toyed with this move. Obviously, hackers will already be thinking about the possibility of playing c4 later (once the queen has moved from d2) and then somehow swinging the rook over to the kingside. 16...b6 Black will often play this move to reinforce the structure. Although, in our main line, Black quickly ends up playing ... b5. 17.Qb2 c4!?



Very Grünfeld-like - you should always be looking to sacrifice pawns for activity. 18.Bxc4 b5 19.Bxb5 (19.Rxb5? Ba6 20.Rxa5 Bxc4 hits both rooks and wins the game.) 19...Qxd5 is an engine-generated line and one with some compensation for Black due to the passive nature of the White position. The pawn on f4 also doesn't help White much here as it means his king is slightly more open.

16...Rb8 17.Bb2 b5 18.Rbd1 Bd7 19.Bf3 c4=



Despite the strong d-pawn, it seems to me that Black has emerged with a fine position from the opening. The White d-pawn is firmly blockaded and the white plan of freeing the bishop on b2 by playing c4 has been prevented as

well. Obviously, not everyone is as well prepared as Caruana is and his opening preparation is right up there. However, if you just study some of the ideas from particular games, as in this game where we have seen potential pawn sacs, prevention of White's ideas etc, then you soon build up a bank of knowledge that can help you navigate the opening.

20.Kh1 Bf5 21.Qd4 Bb6 22.Qd5 Be6 23.Qe5 Qd7 24.Ba3 Rfe8 25.Rfe1 Bf2 26.Rf1 Bb6 27.Rfe1 Bf2 28.Rf1 Bf5 29.Qf6 Be3 30.Bd5 Be4 31.Bxe4 Rxe4 32.f5 Rbe8 33.h3 Bh6 34.Bb4 Bg7 35.Qg5 h6 36.Qd2 gxf5 37.Qf2 f4 38.Qc5 Be5 39.Qd5 Re3 40.a4 bxa4 41.Qxc4 a5 42.Bxa5 Kh8 43.Rd3 Rxd3 44.Qxd3 Qxd6 45.Qxd6 Bxd6 46.Bb4 Bc7 47.Ra1 Ra8 48.Kg1 Kg7 49.Kf2 Kf6 50.Ke2 Ke5 51.Kd3 Kd5 52.Rd1 Be5 53.Kc2+ Kc4 54.Re1 f6 55.Re4+ Kb5 56.Kb2 Rg8 57.Re2 Rg3 58.Rf2 h5 59.Ka2 Re3 60.Kb2 Re1 61.Ka2 Kc4 62.Ka3 Ra1+ 63.Kb2 Rd1 64.Ka3 Re1 65.Ba5 Kd3 66.Kxa4 Re2

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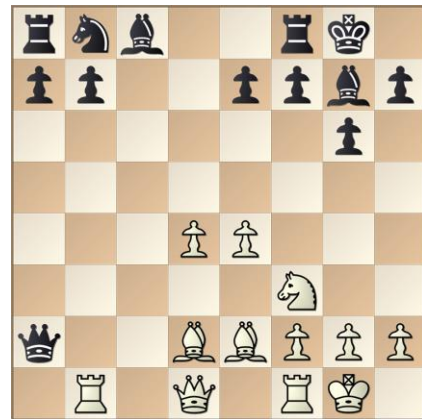
Nisipeanu, Liviu Dieter (2674) - Vachier Lagrave, Maxime (2798)

Dortmund 44th Dortmund (3), 12.07.2016

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.Rb1 0-0 9.Be2 cxd4 This is the most critical response. Black goes for the pawn grab.

10.cxd4 Qa5+ 11.Bd2 Theory considers 11.Qd2 fairly harmless for the obvious reason that the queens are coming off, and furthermore White doesn't really have much to bite on. Black has no real weaknesses here. 11...Qxd2+ 12.Bxd2 b6 13.0-0 Bb7! 14.d5 Ba6 I always have an inner groan whenever I see my opponent play this idea, as I love the idea of retaining the bishop pair and somehow using this to my advantage later. Instead, Black takes all the sting out of the game. 15.Bxa6 Nxa6 now we see why Black lured the pawn on earlier with ... Bb7, as now Black can use the square on c5 for the knight. 16.Be3 Rac8=.

11...Qxa2 12.0-0



Not just one of the main backgrounds of the Grünfeld but probably one of the main theoretical battlegrounds of chess full stop. White has sacrificed a pawn for activity and control over the centre. Set against this, Black has a passed a-pawn that can often prove dangerous. If you are on the white side of this variation then don't be surprised if your opponent just plays ... a5, ... a4, ... a3 if they get the chance.

12...Bg4 One of many possible replies and by far the most popular. Black wants to very quickly put pressure on the white centre and try to make the play as straightforward as possible. Black has other choices and these are more murky, whereas the line with ... Bg4 is more clearly defined.

12...a5 13.Bg5 a4 14.Bxe7 Re8 15.Bd6 Rxe4 16.Rc1



is fairly dangerous for Black. This position might seem fairly obscure to you but has been reached 26 times in practice. Bf5!?N strangely enough this has never been played before although it is one of the engine's top choices. 17.Bc4 Qb2 18.Bxf7+ (18.Rb1 Qc3 19.Rc1: sometimes White can dance with the rook like this and you are normally best advised to take the draw. 19...Qb2 20.Rb1=) 18...Kxf7 19.Ng5+ Kg8 20.Nxe4 Nc6 is possible and it's just a mess; I have toyed with 12...Bd7?!

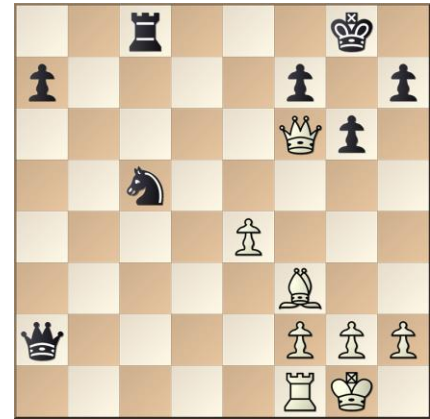


before which is quite a trappy line but objectively not a good one. This is often quite good for blitz as White can often respond in a less than precise way. The main concept is to play ... Ba4, annoying the queen on d1. 13.Rxb7 The problem is White can just take the pawn 13...Bc6 14.Rxe7 Qa3 15.Re5 (15.Bg5 is also good. 15...h6 16.Qc1! Qxc1 17.Bxc1 Nd7 18.e5!+- preventing ... Bf6, and White is firmly on top.) 15...Bxe5 16.Nxe5+-



White enjoys very obvious compensation as the dark squares around the black king are extremely weak. In fact, this is already probably losing for Black.

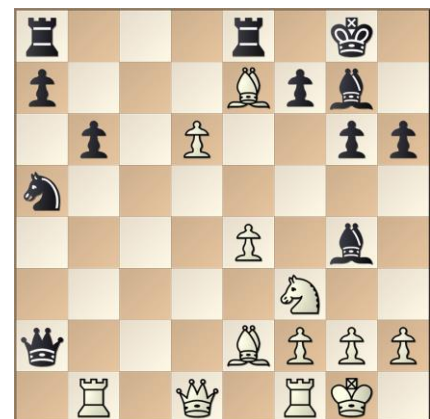
13.Bg5 Of course if you play an opening this way you should at least have some idea what to do if White plays the most obvious move here, which is 13.Rxb7. In that case, straightforward play is again the best. 13...Bxf3 14.Bxf3 Bxd4 15.Bb4 Rd8 16.Qc1 Na6 17.Bxe7 Rac8 18.Qf4 Nc5 19.Bxd8 Nxb7 20.Bf6 Bxf6 21.Qxf6 Nc5=.



This line feels very comfortable for Black as he still has the a-pawn.

13...h6 14.Be3 It looks strange to play Bg5 and then go back to e3, but White is banking on the extra move ... h6 proving useful for him at some stage.

14...Nc6 15.d5 Na5 16.Bc5 b6 17.Bxe7 Rfe8 18.d6

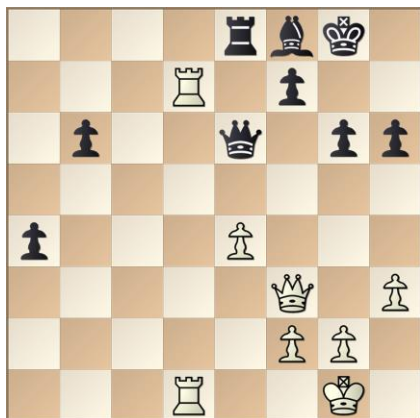


At first, you see this position as Black and you think 'I resign!' as the d-pawn is very powerful. However, Grünfeld player Vachier Lagrave knows what he is doing and follows the theory which recommends giving up the exchange on e7 to try to equalise the game.

18...Nc6 19.Bb5 Nxe7 20.h3 Bxf3 21.Qxf3 Qe6 22.Bxe8 Rxe8 23.dxe7 Qxe7 23...Rxe7! the engine seems to prefer this slightly. 24.Rfd1 Qxe4 25.Qxe4 Rxe4 26.Rd7 Bd4 27.Rxa7 Re2 28.Rf1 b5 29.Ra3 b4 30.Rb3 Bc3= Black is holding this comfortably.

24.Rfd1?! 24.Rfe1 Bd4 25.e5 Bc5 Black is clearly worse here according to the all-seeing engine.

24...Bf8 25.Rd4 Qe6 26.Rbd1 a5 27.Rd7 a4



This should be holdable for Black. The pawns provide enough counterplay.

28.Ra7 a3 29.Rdd7 Be7 30.Rdb7 h5 31.g3 h4 32.gxh4 a2
33.Kg2 Bc5 34.Qe2 Qxe4+ 35.Qxe4 Rxe4 36.Rxa2 Rxh4
37.Rd7 Rf4 38.Rd3 Kg7 39.Rf3 Rxf3 40.Kxf3 Kh6 41.Ra7 f5
42.Rc7 Kg5 43.Rh7 Kf6 44.Ke2 g5 45.Kf3 g4+ 46.hxg4
fxg4+ 47.Kg3 Ke5 48.Rh5+ Ke4 49.Rg5 Kd3 50.Rxg4 b5
51.Rg5 Kc4 52.Kf3 b4 53.Ke2 b3 54.Rg4+ Kc3 55.Rg3+ Kc2
56.Rg8 Bd4

½-½

Carlsen, Magnus (2882) - Nepomniachtchi, Ian (2774)
Sinquefeld Cup 7th Saint Louis (7), 24.08.2019

Now let's look at one of the off-beat lines that has proved quite popular lately. Because some of the more popular variations like the Rb1 line have been extensively worked out by those who defend the Grünfeld, white players often attack in a different direction.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3
Bg7 7.Qa4+



This is one of the variations that has become fashionable in recent times, and many of the best players have tried it. I'm still not really sure what the idea behind this early Qa4+ line is other than to cause some disruption in the black position. One of the obvious benefits is that this line

hasn't been widely studied and might well come as a surprise to your opponent. And it also prevents one of Black's ideas, which is sometimes to bring the queen over to a5 and create some pressure on the queenside.

7...Nd7 7...Bd7 8.Qa3 0-0 9.Nf3 Nc6 was what my computer tried in a recent training game and although playing ... Nc6 this early has the drawback that it blocks the move ... c5 which is one of Black's important pawn breaks, there are other ideas on the menu. Black wants to play ... e5 which is another thematic pawn break. You can then respond to d5 by simply moving the knight and as the centre is now locked you will then look to put pressure on the pawn on e4 by playing ... f5 (yet another pawn break in the Grünfeld). 10.Bd3 (10.h4:



bear in mind White will often have this option if Black doesn't put immediate pressure on the centre, which is perhaps why this way of playing with ... Nc6 hasn't proved particularly popular with Grünfeld players. 10...Bg4 11.Be3 b6 12.Nh2 Bd7 the position is still quite murky.) 10...b6 the engine is so calm. In anticipation of playing ...e5, it wants to give the knight a square on a5. 11.h3 e5! 12.Be3 (12.d5 Na5 and Black will aim for the typical rerouting ... Nb7-d6 where the knight is perfectly placed and will support the break ... f5. There is also the possibility of staking out space on the queenside with ... c6 or even ... c5.) 12...exd4 13.cxd4 Be6!



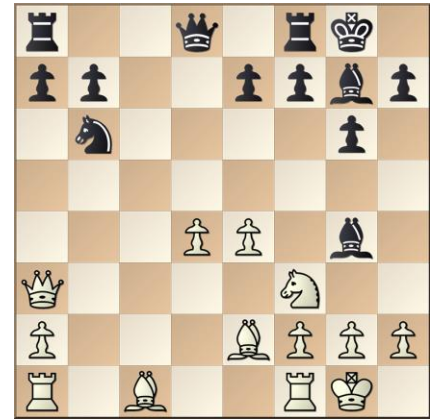
I felt uncomfortable here and decided to throw the towel in. I can't play d5 as a1 will be hanging so the engine is using tactics to justify an attack on the d-pawn. Qb2 just looks disgusting as I'd hate to place the queen on the same diagonal as the bishop on g7 and would rather resign the game. 14.Qb2 Qd6 could have been the continuation.

8.Nf3 c5 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 Nb6 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 Nc5! is another way to more or less equalise the game. Grünfeld players who love active piece moves and tactics in general should have no problem finding this move. 12.dxc5 Bxa1 13.e5 Qc7 14.Qf4 Bc3 15.Qe3 Qa5 16.Qh6 f6 17.Bc4+ e6 18.h4 Qxc5 19.h5 Qxc4 20.hxg6 Qc7 21.Ba3 Qg7 22.gxh7+ Kh8 23.Qxg7+ Kxg7 24.Rc1+=.



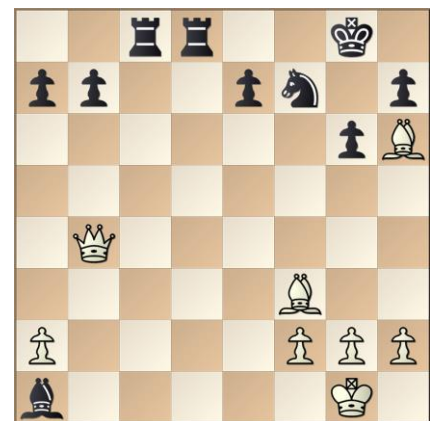
I'm not sure this line would be for me as Black. You must find a number of only moves in a row to reach an endgame that the engine says is still slightly better for White.

11.Qa3 cxd4 12.cxd4 Bg4!



Again we see the typical device that Black employs to put pressure on the white centre. Obviously, d5 is off the menu as a response as that will just hang the rook on a1.

13.Rd1 Bxf3 14.Bxf3 Bxd4 15.e5 Nc4 16.Qb4 Rc8 17.Bh6 Bxa1 18.Rxd8 Rfxd8 19.e6 Ne5 20.exf7+ Nxf7=



The smoke has cleared and, other than a slightly more exposed king, Black is fine.

21.Be3 Bd4 22.Qxe7 Re8 23.Qa3 b6 24.Bd5 Rc5 25.Bxf7+ Kxf7 26.Qxa7+ Re7 27.Qa6 b5 28.h3 Bxe3 29.fxe3 Rce5 30.Qb6 R7e6 31.Qb7+ Re7 32.Qb6 R7e6 33.Qb7+ Re7 34.Qb6

½-½

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Embarrassed Queens

Study composers enjoy humbling the mighty - especially the queen. This month, two such studies. Both were set for solving in recent Netchex online study-solving tournaments. New study-solving tournaments appear each month on the netchex.club site.

This study was composed by Vitaliy Halberstadt and published in *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* in 1932.



White to play and win

First, the general assessment: White would be winning on material if he could rescue his queen and stop Black promoting. Then look for unusual features in the position: here, the black king is boxed in, so mate is likely to be relevant, but for the same reason stalemate may well also be - especially when you notice that Black's g-pawn is blockaded.

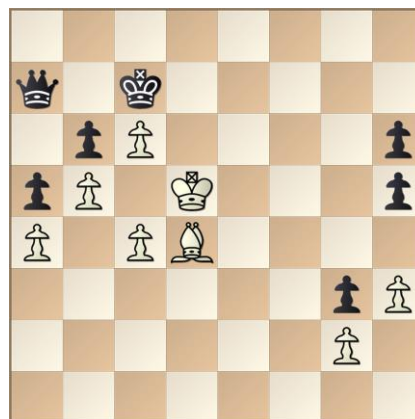
The first moves aren't hard to find - 1.c3+ Ka3 is obvious, then 2.Qa4+ is spectacular but there isn't anything else to do. So we get 1.c3+ Ka3 2.Qa4+ Kxa4 and now we want to move the king up to threaten 3.Bc2 mate. But which square - a2 or b2? It's not obvious, but you can be confident that you're right up to here, so just choose one and see what happens. 3.Kb2 e1N 4.Bf5 Qe8 5.Ka2 and Black seems to be dead, but then you spot 5...Nd3 6.Bxd3 Qe4 7.Bxe4 stalemate. ****, I should have chosen 3.Ka2. But how does that alter anything? Ah-ha! The knight

wouldn't be able to give check if you'd played a waiting move with the bishop on move five. 3.Ka2 e1N 4.Bf5 Qe8 5.Bg4. Okay, but Black could play 5...Nc2, then what do we do? Must be 6.Bd1. **** again - Black has 6.Bd1? Qe4 7.Kb2 Qxc4. Wait, we don't HAVE to play 6.Bd1, we could move the king back to b2 instead. Got it now; it goes 6.Kb2 Qd8 7.Bd1 - uh-oh, Black has 7...Qxb6+. No problem, we can go 8.Kxc2 Qxb3+ 9.Kc1 and Black will have to sac his queen. But hang on - is that pawn ending winning? OK, yes, 9...Qxd1+ 10.Kxd1 Kb3 11.d4 and the white pawns will eventually force through the c6 break.

Those are the ups and downs of solving, and what makes it such fun and so frustrating at the same time.

The full solution is: **1.c3+ Ka3 2.Qa4+ Kxa4 3.Ka2 e1N 4.Bf5 Qe8 5.Bg4 Nc2 6.Kb2 Qd8 7.Bd1 Qxb6+ 8.Kxc2 Qb3+ 9.Kc1 Qxd1+ 10.Kxd1 Kb3 11.d4** wins. Notice how the black queen, which seemed to have so much scope to range the board, is tied to defending the d7-pawn. Humbled by the bishop.

Your solving task now; it was composed by Szaja Kozlowski and was published in *Glos Poranny* in 1931.



White to play and win

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

How to Solve a Study – solution

(Kozlowski)

1.Bxb6+ Qxb6 2.c5 Qb8 3.b6+ Kc8 4.Ke4 h4 5.Kf5 h5 6.Ke4 and 6...Kd8 7.c7+ Qxc7 8.bxc7+ Kxc7 9.Kd5 wins. Black was threatening to save his queen from embarrassment by moving his king away to let Her Majesty loose. 1.c5? doesn't prevent that, so the bishop sacrifice is forced. Then the white king goes for a walk while the black royalty can only watch in immobile irritation.

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

Last time I wrote with relish about the newly-published FIDE Album (for the years 2016-18). Warming, however, to the theme that modern problems are not necessarily better than older ones, just different, I've been enjoying an article recently published in the magazine of the British Chess Problem Society, *The Problemist* (further details on the BCPS website at www.theproblemist.org/) celebrating the work of Guido Cristoffanini (1908-1980).

Consider this problem:



Guido Cristoffanini
2nd Prize, *Bristol Times & Mirror* 1932-1 (version)
Mate in 2

(The source of this problem is a reminder of the days when there was much greater currency in chess problems in local as well as national newspapers. In 1932 the great British mate-in-2 expert, Comins Mansfield, worked in Bristol and was the guiding hand behind his local paper's chess problem coverage. In papers these days there is a scarcity of puzzle positions from actual games and a virtually complete absence of composed positions. Will this ever change?!)

In the diagram, in order to achieve an effectual threat of mate next move White must release the pin of the black knight – 1.Bd1! threatens 2.Bg4. Now there ensues interesting play in which each of the black knights succumbs to new pins. Either black knight can defend by capturing the white knight that guards g4, but after 1...Ngxe5 we have 2.Qh7#, and after 1..Ndxe5 there is 2.Qb1#, in each case exploiting the pinning of the knight at e5. By making g5 a potential flight square either knight's capture of the f4 pawn also defends the threat, but also constitutes a self-pin, so that we have 1...Ngxf4 2.Nxd3# and 1.Ndxf4 2.Nexg6#. (Note also 1...Nf2

2.Nxg6#.)

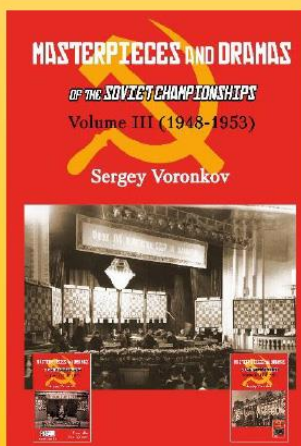
You may like to have a go at solving an earlier problem of Cristoffanini's –



Guido Cristoffanini
2nd Prize, *L'Italia Scacchistica* 1928-XI
Mate in 2

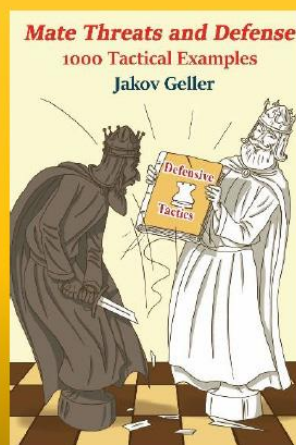
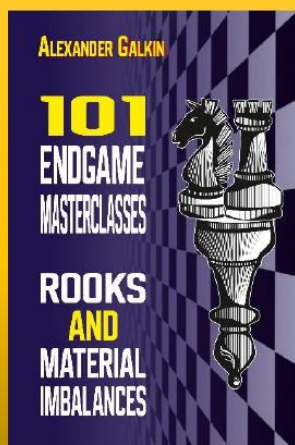
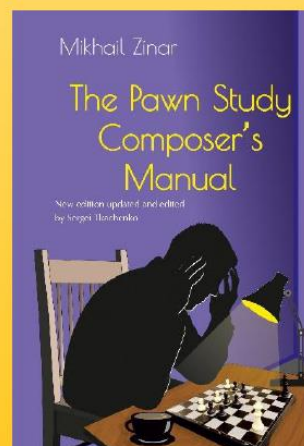
The composer's interest in pins is again apparent – not only Black's knight at e4 but also White's queen. A solver will expect that in the solution the queen will be freed, at least to participate in, and probably to deliver, mate(s). Before exploring possible key moves it is interesting to consider what would happen if it were Black to move and he made any of the three possible unpinning moves, 1...e6, 1...c4 and 1...Nc4. Each of these moves allows just one mating rejoinder (unlike 1...Nb3, which would permit multiple mates). This may help in appreciating the play that will arise after the key move. Happy solving! I'll give the solution next time. In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact me with any queries or observations.

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New books from Elk and Ruby

- Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships: Volume III (1948-1953) by *Sergey Voronkov*
- The Pawn Study Composer's Manual by *Mikhail Zinar*
- 101 Endgame Masterclasses: Rooks and Material Imbalances by *Alexander Galkin*
- Mate Threats and Defense - 1000 Tactical Examples by *Jakov Geller*



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EVENTS CALENDAR December 2022/January 2023

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

25 February 2023	37th Crowborough Chess Congress
25 February 2023	Chessable University of Warwick 5th Rapidplay
25-26 February 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress
25 February 2023	London Fischer Random Rapid
25-26 February 2023	Mill Hill Congress
25 February 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament
25 February 2023	Maidenhead Junior Tournament
26 February 2023	2023 BUCA Championship
26 February 2023	NYC Buckinghamshire Zonal 2023
26 February 2023	Leyland Rapidplay 2023
27 February 2023	Coulsdon Chess Junior Club ECC Qualifier Spring
28 February 2023	3rd 4NCL Online Spring Congress
1 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
2 March 2023	Junior 4NCL Online Season 7 Round 4
2 March 2023	Hendon FIDE Blitz
3-5 March 2023	4th Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress
4 March 2023	2023 Warwick Junior Open
4-5 March 2023	OTB Returns - Henley Open 1
4 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Spring 2023
4 March 2023	London FIDE Rapidplay
5 March 2023	7th Brentwood Junior Tournament
6 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Junior Club ECC Qualifier Spring
7 March 2023	4NCL Online Season 7 Round 4
8 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
10-12 March 2023	World Chess League.Live 2022-2023
10-12 March 2023	Castle Chess 21st Fareham Congress
11 March 2023	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay 2023 Open
11 March 2023	EPSCA Under 9 Zones
12 March 2023	33rd Birmingham Rapidplay
12 March 2023	UKCC West Scotland Megafinal (U11-18)
12 March 2023	East Kent Regional Final 2023 EJCOA National Youth Championships
13 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Junior Club ECC Qualifier Spring
14 March 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
14 March 2023	3rd 4NCL Online Spring Congress
15 March 2023	Beckenham FIDE
15 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
16 March 2023	Junior 4NCL Online Season 7 Round 5
16 March 2023	Hendon FIDE Rapid March 2023
17-19 March 2023	London Chess Conference
17 March 2023	2022/23 Birmingham & District Junior Chess League - Tournament 4 ECF Team Challenge
18-19 March 2023	4NCL Rounds 7 and 8
18 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Spring 2023

18 March 2023	Shropshire Junior Chess Congress
18 March 2023	EPSCA Under 11 Zones
19 March 2023	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess Open
21 March 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
21-30 March 2023	UK vs Ukraine Challenge Match
21 March 2023	4NCL Online Season 7 Round 5
22 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess
25-26 March 2023	4NCL Rounds 7 and 8
25-26 March 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress
25 March 2023	UKCC West Scotland Megafinal (U8s and U10s)
25 March 2023	Darnall & Handsworth (Sheffield) 5th FIDE Rated Rapidplay
25-26 March 2023	Mill Hill Congress
25 March 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament
5 March 2023	EPSCA Under 11 Girls' Final