

April 2023



The Chess Boom Continues

Reports from Reykjavik, the British Rapidplay Championship, three of this month's congresses, England vs Ukraine and Lords vs Commons, Peter Wells on 'Chess's Popularity vs Elitism', Arkell's Endings ... and all the usual features

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Cover photographs – Kamila Hryshchenko and Ameet Ghasi by Brendan O’Gorman; The Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle with Michael Adams by Andy Bailey / UK Parliament

EDITORIAL



Welcome to the April 2023 edition of Chess Moves

As I write all eyes are on the World Championship match, which is providing us with a feast of exciting chess. We are seeing a variety of openings in the match that have rarely if ever been seen at this level before.

It's no wonder, then, that the chess boom continues, and we reflect that with reports from Reykjavik, the British Rapidplay Championship, three recent congresses, England vs Ukraine and Lords vs Commons.

We have a special feature from GM Peter Wells, and all the usual columns and features top off the magazine.

Have a great month!

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EVENTS

British Rapidplay Championship



Photograph by Mariana Mosnegutu

Thank you to the players, arbiters, organisers and helpers for a great event, and many congratulations to **Ameet Ghasi** (British Rapidplay Champion) and **Kamila Hryshchenko** (British Women's Rapidplay Champion)!



Photo by Mariana Mosnegutu

Prize-winners:

<https://www.4ncl.co.uk/rp/2023/prizewinners.htm>

Results, cross-table etc:

<https://chess-results.com/Tnr752774.aspx>

Ghasi, Ameet K (2482) - Gormally, Daniel W (2468)

British Rapidplay Championship 2023, 15/4/2023

Ameet felt his standout game was against Danny Gormally, commenting that 'there some strange tactical points including a piece sacrifice from me that he had missed - this was however followed by a counter (temporary) queen sacrifice from Danny that I had not even slightly considered and probably made me doubt myself for the rest of the game.

'There were some swings in fortune (while I should have probably converted my middle-game advantage, towards the end I think the momentum was with him before I forced the perpetual).'

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.O-O O-O 5.d3 d6 6.e4 e5 7.Nbd2 Nbd7 8.a4 a5 9.Nc4 b6 10.Re1 Nc5 11.b3 Ba6 12.Ne3 c6 13.Bb2 Qc7 14.Qd2 Rfe8 15.Rad1 Rad8 16.Qc1 Ne6 17.Qa1 c5



18.Nxe5 dxe5 19.Bxe5 Qxe5 20.Qxe5 Nh5 21.Qd5 Rxd5 22.Nxd5 Rb8 23.e5 Kf8 24.f4 Bh6 25.c3 Kg7 26.Ne7 Re8 27.Nc6 Nxf4 28.gxf4 Nxf4 29.Be4 Rc8 30.Na7 Re8 31.Nc6 Rc8 32.Kf2 Bxd3 33.Bxd3 Rxc6 34.Bb5 Re6 35.Rd7 Kf8 36.Bc4 Re7 37.Rd6 Kg7 38.Kf3 Nh3 39.Kg3 Nf4 40.Rxb6 Nh5+ 41.Kf3 Bd2 42.Rd1 Bxc3 43.e6 fxe6 44.Rxe6 Rf7+ 45.Ke4 Nf6+ 46.Kd3 Bb4 47.Kc2 Ng4 48.Re2 Rf4 49.Rd7+ Kh6 50.Be6 Nf6 51.Rf7 Kg5 52.Rg2+ Kh4 53.Bc4 g5 54.Re2 h5 55.Re6 Ng4 56.Re2 Nf6 57.Re6 Ng4 58.Re2 Nf6 59.Re6 Ng4 60.Re2 Kh3



½-½

The 37th Reykjavik Open

by Matthew Wadsworth

The 37th Reykjavik Open took place from 29th March - 5th April and was won outright by Nils Grandelius of Sweden. Over 400 players took part in the tournament, 36 of whom were English. This makes it, as far as I can tell, the most popular international Open among English players. This year was my first time playing the tournament and I enjoyed it immensely. The location is fantastic, playing conditions are excellent and the competition is fierce, with 34 grandmasters playing this year.

This year, the organisers experimented with a new way of broadcasting games from the tournament. Alongside the usual live boards, four players, including English GM Simon Williams, had each of their games recorded and live-streamed on Twitch in real-time. This gave more of an in-depth view of games within an Open than a live board would usually provide, and the four boards drew significant audiences throughout the tournament. In the centre of this increased attention, Simon played a strong candidate for the game of 2023 so far, with one of the best attacking displays you will ever see.

Williams, Simon K (2461) - Rakhmangulova, Anastasiya (2266)

Reykjavik Open 2023 Reykjavik, 30.03.2023

1.d4 Simon's opponent in this game was the Ukrainian WGM Anastasiya Rakhmangulova.

1...d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 The Exchange Slav is not typically associated with attacking chess; however, Simon finds a way to immediately create an unbalanced position.

3...cxd5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3!? While not the strongest move, this immediately asks Black concrete questions, namely how to respond to e4 next move.

5...e6?! While a totally natural reaction, this rather justifies White's setup.

5...Qb6 is the best way to react, with the idea being 6.e4 dxe4 7.fxe4 e5! with Ng4 to come after dxe5. White's impressive pawn centre has come at the cost of development, which Black can exploit by opening up the position.

6.e4 dxe4 The threat of e5 and f4 effectively forces this capture, even if it gives White the whole centre.

6...Nc6 7.e5 Nd7 8.f4 gives White a fantastic French structure.

7.fxe4 Nc6?! Another natural move, but this allows White to fully secure his centre. It is likely that Black did not fully anticipate the danger she would face in only a couple of moves.

7...Bb4 It was necessary to immediately undermine the white centre. Black threatens Nxe4 and is ready to castle. 8.Bd3? Nxe4! is the tactical point; Black wins the piece back with interest after Bxc3+ and Qh4+.

8.Nf3 Bb4 9.Bd3



After nine moves, White has already got his dream set-up. He has full central control, active pieces, and Black already has serious headaches regarding where to put her king.

9...Ba5 9...0-0 already loses concretely to 10.e5 Nd5 11.Bxh7+! Kxh7 12.Ng5+ Kg8 13.Qh5 with a model Greek Gift sacrifice. Black must give up her queen to stop mate; 9...h6 was relatively best, preparing 0-0. Now 10.Bb1 is interesting, with the idea of e5 and Qd3 if Black ever castles.

10.e5 This is the logical way for White to continue his aggressive set-up. White forces the knight away from f6, a key defensive square, while also opening the b1–h7 diagonal for his bishop. This was also Simon's first major think of the game, which makes sense given that it commits White to the sacrifice of three(!) pawns.

10...Nd5 How should White react to the threat of Nxc3?

11.0–0! The best way to meet a threat is to ignore it! With one move White secures his own king, brings his rook to the f-file and threatens Ne4–d6. Black is essentially forced to accept the initial sacrifice and can take even more material if she so chooses.

11...Nxc3 Black can decline the sacrifice with 11...h6, but her position remains incredibly dangerous after 12.Ne4 Bc7 13.Qe1 with Qg3 to come next move.

12.bxc3 Bxc3 13.Rb1 The rook is forced to a better square, where it eyes the b7 pawn and makes it even harder for Black to complete her queenside development.

13...h6 Black decides against winning any further material and instead prepares castling. However, 13...Bxd4+ is critical and requires precise calculation by White. 14.Kh1 Bxe5 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.Bb5+ Bd7 17.Qe2 Nc6 18.Ba3



White is three pawns down and has no immediate threats. However, the black king is stuck in the centre and will never find safety, while White has an array of attacking ideas at his disposal. A possible continuation is 18...a6 19.Bc4 b5 20.Rxf7! Kxf7 21.Rf1+ and Black must give up her queen with 21...Qf6 22.Qh5+ Kg8 23.Rxf6 gxf6 24.Bb3. Black's king remains in deep trouble, and White can continue the attack with Bxf6.

14.Ba3 Here we see another benefit of the pawn sacrifice on move 11. Just as Black was ready to castle, the bishop reaches this diagonal and prevents it. Over the next few moves Black is one move away from consolidating, but due to Simon's dynamic play, she never gets that opportunity.

14...a5 A good practical try, planning Bb4 to block the a3–f8 diagonal.

15.Qa4 Simon doesn't panic and prevents Black from carrying out her plan. Bb4 is not possible due to the simultaneous pins on the pawn and knight.

15...Bd7 Once again, the position is critical. Black renews the threat of Bb4, as well as creating discovery ideas against the white queen.

16.Rxb7 Nxd4



Black maintains her material advantage and apparently gains a tempo against the white queen. How should White respond?

16...Bb4 loses to 17.Rxd7 Qxd7 18.Bxb4 Nxb4 19.Bb5.

17.Nxd4!! A fantastic concept, spectacular as well as being the logical culmination of White's play. In return for the queen, every one of White's pieces reaches a perfect attacking square and the black king is helpless.

17.Qc4 also won, but is far less flashy.

17...Bxa4 18.Nxe6! The key follow-up to 17.Nxd4. The knight cannot be taken due to 18.Bg6#, and both the queen and 18.Nxg7# are threatened. Assuming Black moves the queen, it must keep e7 defended, otherwise 18.Re7# comes.

18...Qh4 18...Qd7 is the engine's depressing suggestion: after 19.Rxd7 Kxd7 20.Nc5+ Kc6 21.Nxa4 Bd4+ 22.Kh1 White has two pieces for the rook and keeps a strong attack against the black king. White is also winning here, although it will require some technique: 18...fxe6 19.Bg6#; 18...Qxd3 19.Re7#; 18...Bd7 19.Nxg7#

19.Rxf7 Once again, multiple mating ideas are threatened, with R (either) e7+ the most urgent.

19...Bb4



19...Qe1+ Black can give a couple of spite checks, but they run out after 20.Bf1 Bd4+ 21.Kh1.

20.Rf8+! A final sacrifice, clearing the h5–e8 diagonal with tempo to allow Bg6+ next move. This caps off a perfect attacking game by Simon. While the final phase of the game will get all the plaudits, and rightly so, the build-up was just as impressive in my opinion. From the opening choice to the initial sacrifice on move 11, White set up the ideal attacking platform. It should also be noted that Black actually defended quite well and forced Simon to repeatedly find good moves. Unfortunately for her, the damage was done early on by reacting too passively to 5.f3.

20.Rf8+ Rxf8 21.Bg6+ Rf7 22.Bxf7#

1–0

I finished the tournament on 6½/9, just outside the prizes and top of the English contingent. I lost a disappointing game early in the tournament but recovered well and was reasonably satisfied with how I played. My best game of the tournament happened on the same day as Simon's brilliancy, and while it was not quite as flashy, it saw a lot of the same themes, namely attacking the opponent's uncastled king.

Krivenko, Dion - Wadsworth, Matthew J
Reykjavik Open 2023 Reykjavik, 30.03.2023

This game was played in round 3 and was the second game of that day. I had lost a frustrating game that morning, so I was looking to bounce back. My opponent is a promising Estonian junior.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Bxf6?! White mixes up his move orders.

5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 gxf6 reaches a well-known theoretical position.

5...gxf6! While it appears odd to voluntarily accept a pawn weakness like this, I am happy to do it to open lines and save time.

6.Nxe4 f5 6...Be7 would of course transpose to the previous variation, but I can afford to be more ambitious.

7.Nc3 a6 the idea here is twofold: I am preparing b5 and Bb7, while also preventing Bb5 in response to a quick Nc6, which will put the d4 pawn under serious pressure.

7...Bg7 is also possible and gives Black a good game. The dark-squared bishop clearly exerts more pressure on the white position on g7 compared to e7.

8.g3 White prevents my b5 idea but delays his development by a move. Such decisions happen all the time in the opening phase of games. I decided that the best way to punish this was to force the opening of the centre as quickly as possible.

8.Nf3 b5, and Black can follow up with Bg7, Bb7 and possibly c5, opening the position up for the bishops.

8...Bg7 9.Nge2 Nc6



White has no good way to defend the d4 pawn a third time, so must advance it.

10.d5 exd5 11.Nxd5 11.Qxd5 Be6 12.Qxd8+ Rxd8 was exactly the position I was aiming for. On first glance, White has the better pawn structure and looks to be in good shape. However, Black's lead in development is enough to cause White serious problems. For example, if 13.a3 to stop Nb4, 13...0–0–0 14.Bg2 Bc4! and White cannot castle due to Bxc3.

11...Be6 Developing with tempo.

12.Nef4 12.Bg2 was what I expected, and after 12...Qd6 13.0–0 0–0–0 Black has a pleasant position. White has managed to castle, but he still faces annoying pressure in the centre.

12...Bxd5 12...Bxb2 Grabbing this pawn was possible albeit risky; White can even sacrifice the exchange with 13.Bg2!? My judgement during the game was that rapid development was more important than pawn grabbing.

13.Nxd5 0-0 Similarly to Simon's game, my opponent would be doing very well if he had just one extra move to complete his development with Bg2 and 0-0. Luckily, he does not, and must further compromise his position.

14.c3 White prevents Nd4 and prepares to meet Re8+ with Be2. I spent some time looking for a knockout blow and found an idea that forces White to play very precisely to survive.

14.Bg2 Re8+ 15.Ne3 Bxb2 16.Rb1 Bc3+ was my main idea, after which White loses castling privileges.

14...Re8+ 15.Be2



15...Rxe2+! sacrificing an exchange to keep White's king exposed in the centre.

15...Bh6. As in Simon's game, the sacrifice was not strictly necessary, as Black is also doing well here. White cannot castle due to Rxe2, winning material.

16.Kxe2 Nd4+! An important follow-up, exchanging White's only well-placed piece.

17.cxd4 Qxd5



This is the critical position of the game. White is up on material; however, his king is horribly exposed. With Re8+ coming, White has only one move to stay in the game.

18.f3? Natural, but losing.

18.Rg1! The rook steps out of range of my queen and allows White to secure his king on f1 next move. White is still holding after 18...Bxd4 (18...Qb5+ 19.Kf3 Qd5+ 20.Ke2. I had seen this repetition when playing 15...Rxe2. Psychologically, it is much easier sacrificing material when you know you have at least a draw on the board.) 19.Kf1 c5 but his position feels very hard to play over the board, with the rook effectively trapped on g1. 18.Qd3 was the other defence I considered, but Black wins after 18...Re8+ 19.Kd2 Re4! and Black wins the queen after Rxd4 next move.

18...Qb5+ The double attack on e2 and b2 decides the game.

19.Kf2 19.Qd3 Re8+ 20.Kd2 Qxb2+ immediately wins material.

19...Qxb2+ 20.Ke3 20.Kf1 Bxd4, and I simultaneously threaten mate on f2 and the rook on a1.

20...Re8+ 21.Kf4 Bxd4? While still winning, this was a very poor move by me.

21...Qb6! and the white king is in a mating net, for example 22.g4 Qd6+ 23.Kg5 Qh6+ 24.Kxf5 Qf6#

22.Rb1 Be3+ 23.Kxf5 Qe5+ 23...Qg7 was an even prettier way to end the game, with mate next move after Re5, Qg6 or Qg5.

24.Kg4 Qe6+ It was essential to prevent the king from escaping to g2 via h3.

25.Kh4 Qh6+ 26.Kg4 f5+ 27.Kxf5 Qe6#



89th Bristol Congress

by Peter Marks



The Bristol Congress returned this year for the first time since 2020. This was the 89th edition and was the biggest yet, with over 150 players evenly distributed across the three sections: Open, Boniface (U1900), and Foundation (U1600).

The venue for the congress was the Great Hall at Bristol Grammar School, which must be one of the most special venues for chess in the country. This time we had extra rooms for relaxing, analysis, and chess discussions. The school is in a great location in central Bristol. It is accessible by public transport in addition to having on-site parking. The event was organised by Igor Dokleštic, who was supported by his excellent arbiter team of John Shaw, Vince Southcott, and Derrick Walker.

As with previous editions, the congress was well supported by the Bristol League as well as from across the UK and abroad. It was terrific to see so many promising young players and to catch up with returning weekend congress regulars, many of whom are old friends. The final round was played in brilliant spring sunshine, which enhanced the special feeling of the event.

For the first time, the congress had two live boards:
<https://view.livechesscloud.com/#3a873382-b45e-4a5f-b4c9-03e45cb37748>

All photos have generously been provided by Brendan O’Gorman:
<https://brendanogorman.smugmug.com/Chess/2023/Bristol-2023>

All three sections saw clear winners. In the Open, which featured two GMs, one IM and two FMs, IM Chris Beaumont demonstrated his enduring class by winning on 4½ points, holding off FM Roland Bezuidenhout and Ben Ogunshola who drew their last round match to finish on 4 points each. Kenneth Hobson also finished on 4 points

after a first-round bye. Chris’s victory comes 34 years after his first victory in 1989!



IM Chris Beaumont

The Open cross-table can be found on Chess-Results:
<https://chess-results.com/tnr740829.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30>

In the Boniface section there were nine players who were unbeaten throughout the congress. The winner, once again on 4½ points and half a point ahead of the rest, was Mark Jones. He had been one of three players going into the final round on 3½ points and secured the title with a win over the promising junior Mohit Kamal Karangad.

The Boniface cross-table can be found on Chess-Results:
<https://chess-results.com/tnr740845.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30>

The Foundation was very competitive, and as ever saw many wild games. Bristol’s Tom Weale won outright by beating Dalrymple Graeme in the last round to finish on 4½ points. As with the other two sections the winner finished half a point ahead of the field.

The Foundation cross-table can be found on Chess-Results:
<https://chess-results.com/tnr740850.aspx?lan=1&art=4&flag=30>

The prize fund totalled £2,340 with the winners of the three sections receiving £970, £770, £600 respectively.

There were of course several high-quality and exciting games. We have picked out the following games, two from the Open and one from the Foundation section:

IM Chris R Beaumont (2254) v Stephen J Meek (1965) E66 1-0

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.d4 Nc6 7.0-0 Bf5 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.e4 Bd7 11.Rb1 a6 12.Qc2 b5 13.b3 bxc4 13...Rb8 has been played many times in this position, including a game between Carlsen and Nakamura, but the results have not been encouraging for Black.

14.bxc4 Rb8 White has come out of the opening well, and it will be hard work for Black to get his pieces to coordinate usefully.

15.Bb2 Qc7 16.Ne2 Rb7 17.Bc3 Rfb8 18.Rxb7 Nxb7 19.Rb1 Nd8 20.h3 Rxb1+ 21.Qxb1 Qb7 22.Qc2 22.Qa1 is worth considering, envisaging a similar advance of the f- and g-pawn, and possibly transposing into the game.

22...Qc7 23.f4 Ne8 24.Nf3 Bxc3 25.Qxc3 e6 26.e5 Qb6 27.exd6 Releasing the tension eases Black's cramp partially, but White is still ahead and continues to press his advantage.

27...Qxd6 28.Ne5 h5 Black makes a fling at the kingside, but with the centre under control White will not be worried.

28...exd5 29.cxd5 Bb5 gives hope of activating the black pieces as White cannot play a4 and Black can get close to equality, e.g. 30.Qd2 f6 31.Nf3 Qe7 32.Nc3 Nd6.

29.Qe3 Nf6 from here Black starts to lose control as his pieces become uncoordinated.

29...exd5 is a better alternative, but even here 30.cxd5 Qe7! 31.Nc3 f6 32.d6! sees White keeping the upper hand.

30.Nc3 exd5 31.cxd5 Bb5 The loss of tempo is significant, though even if Black plays ...Qe7 and ...Nb7 White will enjoy a space advantage and more active pieces.

32.a4 Bd7 33.Nc4 White has a won game and makes no mistake in wrapping it up.

33...Qf8 34.Qe5 Ne8 35.Qb8 Nf6 36.Qb6 Qe7 37.Ne5 Bf5 38.Qxa6 Nd7 39.Qa7 f6 40.Nxd7 Bxd7 41.Ne4 Kg7 42.Nxc5 Qe1+ 43.Kh2 h4 44.Qxd7+ Nf7 45.gxh4 f5 46.Ne6+ Kf6 47.Ng5

1-0

GM Keith C Arkell (2392) v Tom Shepherd (1766) D35
½-½

1.c4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.cxd5 exd5 4.d4 c6 5.Nc3 Nf6 6.Bg5 Bf5 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3 Bxd3 9.Qxd3 This opening has not been

at all fearsome for Black, and a position of equality is established for the next ten moves.

9...Bd6 10.0-0 h6 11.Bh4 0-0 12.Rfe1 Re8 13.Qc2 Qb8 14.Bg3 Bxg3 15.hxg3 Qd6 16.b4 b5 17.a4 a6 18.Reb1 Nb6 19.a5 Closing the queenside removes a source of play for White, while Black has a lot of space on the other side of the board.

19...Nc4 This position is advantageous for Black as he has a decent outpost, and a kingside attack is in the air. For the moment he does not particularly try to pursue an active plan, and many players in their first game against a grandmaster would be happy to shut up shop and just keep the position under control. Another consideration is that if White is forced to try and play for a win from a backward position the game could easily rebound against the stronger player.

20.Ne2 Ne4 21.Nf4 g6 22.Nd3 Kg7 23.Re1 h5 24.Nfe5 Rec8 25.Ra2 Rab8 26.Qc1 Rh8 27.Nf3 Rhc8 28.Kf1 Re8 29.Kg1 Rec8 Clearly Black has not at this stage been ambitious to press his attack, so it is up to White to see if he can play for a win; however, by doing so he finds that Black's threats on the kingside are in fact very dangerous.

30.Qa1 Re8 31.Nc5 Ra8 32.Rc2 Re7 33.Ree2 Ree8 34.Ne1 Nxc5 34...Qf6 intending 35.Ned3 h4 is also possible, and Black has a great advantage.

35.bxc5 A dangerous continuation that gives Black every opportunity to play for a win.

35.dxc5+ Qf6 36.Qxf6+ Kxf6 37.Nf3 is balanced and objectively should lead to a draw, though it is possible to foresee the game going on for some time.

35...Qc7 36.Nd3 Re4 37.Re1 h4 Black's active pieces have the measure of the game and White must face the consequences. But obtaining a winning position is only one stage of the journey towards beating a grandmaster.

38.gxh4 Rxh4 39.g3 Rh6 40.Ne5 Qc8 41.Qd1 Nxe5 42.dxe5 Qf5 43.f4 Somehow Keith manages to stick his position together well enough to avoid getting mated, so Black has to transition into a winning ending.

43...Rah8 44.Rg2 Qe4 45.Kf2 Rh2 46.Reg1 Rvg2+ 47.Rvg2 b4 48.Qd4 b3 48...Qxd4 only gives a draw after 49.exd4 Rh1 50.Ke3; 48...Qb1 49.e6+ f6 50.e7 Kf7 gives a win, but naturally Black will choose the rook ending as White gets little chance of counterplay.

49.Qxe4 dxe4 50.Kg1 Rd8 51.Rb2 Rd3 52.Kf2 The win in this ending relies on a timely ...f6, which can be played here or during the next few moves.

52...Kf8 53.g4 Ke7 54.f5 gxf5 55.gxf5 Rc3 and Keith can breathe a sigh of relief; he has gotten away with another half point.

55...f6! is still the winning move here; all White's forward pawns are vulnerable, but more importantly after 56.e6 Rd5 the g-pawn goes with check.

56.Kg3 Rxc5 57.Rxb3 Rxe5 58.Kf4 Rxa5 59.Rb6 Rc5

½–½

Zoltan Kozma v Tom Weale D10

0-1

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 c6 4.a4 Bf5 5.e3 e6 6.Nf3 Bb4 7.Bd2 0-0 8.Be2 Nbd7 9.0-0 Bxc3 10.bxc3 Ne4 11.Be1 Qc7 12.cxd5 exd5 13.c4 Ndf6 14.Ne5 White has achieved a significant advantage so far. There is a window of opportunity to convert this into a winning position, but in the game he drifts and Black starts to get more opportunities.

14...Rad8 15.Rc1 15.f3 would have been a good response here or next move, and White would be likely to win.

15...h6 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Bc4 Ndf6 18.Bb4 Nd6 19.Bb3 Be4 20.f3 Bd5 21.e4 Bxb3 22.Qxb3 Qb6 23.Rfd1? Black was threatening to win a piece, and that is what happens. It would have been perfectly reasonable to play 23.Qc3, when White's central pawns continue to give an advantage.

23...a5 It soon becomes clear that Black will not have it too easy; two or three pawns are going to disappear from his account. From here the game becomes more complicated as Black tries to get the extra piece to work.

24.Nc4 Nxc4 25.Rxc4 axb4 26.Rxb4 Qa6 27.Rxb7 Ra8 28.Ra1 Ra7 29.Rb6 Qe2 30.Rxc6 Although White now has three pawns his future is not very clear, but in order to maintain an advantage Black must find a good way to make use of the knight.

30...Rfa8 31.Rc2 Qa6 32.e5 Nh5 The knight does better in the centre of the board: 32...Nd7 33.f4 Rb8 shows how it can have an influence on the queenside. The queen can then go to e6 and Black will take charge of the light squares. In the game, the knight participates in a kingside attack which is just a little harder to bring off as the major pieces have to relocate.

33.d5 Rb7 34.Qc3 White would have been better advised to claim the fourth rank with 34.Qc4 as this denies the knight any moves. The exchange of queens is not to be feared - passed pawns become more significant as other material reduces. 34...Qg6 would then be a good continuation for Black, with the advantage in a complex game.

34...Nf4 35.Qd2 Ng6 Eyeing up the e-pawn which is hard to defend, and also the h4 square.

36.Rc6 36.f4 Rab8 threatens to get to b1 and Black has plenty of threats.

36...Qa7+ 37.Kh1 Nxe5 One dangerous pawn disappears, but the d-pawn can still be a powerful force.

38.Rc3 Rab8 Creating an attack is the best use for an extra piece.

39.Rcc1 Rb2 40.Qc3 Qf2 The black pieces close in for the kill and just have to get there before the d-pawn queens.

41.Rg1 Ng6 f4 will be an excellent square for the knight.

42.d6 Rc2 The queen is forced off both the c-file and the long diagonal.

42...Nf4 immediately is also good.

43.Qa5 Nf4 44.Raf1 Nh3! A neat finish involving smothered mate.

45.d7 Qxg1+ 46.Rxg1 Nf2#

0-1

See PGN file with annotations by Jerry Humphreys for all games.

Next year is the 100th anniversary of the first Bristol Congress and Igor and his team are planning to make it an extra-special event. Follow the latest news on <https://www.bristolcongress.co.uk/>

East Devon Chess Congress Report



This year's East Devon Chess Congress took place at the Exeter Corn Exchange between 14th and 16th April. The event had three sections - Open, Major and Minor and took place over 5 rounds.



Junior Rami Talab scored a memorable third-round victory over IM Jack Rudd

Open

First place in the Open was shared by IM Jack Rudd, Dominic Mackle, and Paul O'Neill, who all finished on 4/5. Finishing narrowly behind on 3½/5 were Paul Hampton, Tim Paulden, Graham Bolt, Hugo Fowler, and Rami Talab.

Major

First place in the Major was shared by Luke Honey and Reece Whittington, who both scored 4½/5, while third place was shared by Frederick Coleman and Brendan O'Gorman, both on 4/5. Finishing narrowly behind on 3½/5 were Andrew Waters and Bill Ingham.

Minor

First place in the Minor was won outright by John Stainier who scored 4½/5, while second place was shared

by Solomon Hayes, Robin Morris-Weston, Mike Hollyman, and Florence Spriling, who all scored 4/5.

The full results can be seen at:

<https://eastdevonchesscongress.com/results-and-games/>

We are pleased to reproduce a report from Adam Curry who took part in the minor competition and provides his perspectives on the event.

Heartbreak and Good Attacks in Exeter by Adam Curry



A month or so ago, as I was scrolling casually on the ECF's tournament timetable, I couldn't believe my luck that there was an upcoming congress in my university city! And despite being back in Wiltshire for the month, I decided I'd make the journey back to Exeter to give it a go. It was my first over the board tournament since I competed in the UK Chess Challenge Megafinals back in 2014, so I was a little nervous and didn't quite know what to expect.

On the tournament's completion, I decided I would share my experience on my Chess.com blog, and (after a bit of editing!) I was encouraged to share it in print, too. The games below are all five rounds of my tournament, the highs and the lows ... and the draws. Lots of draws. The time format, for those interested, was 100 minutes for 40 moves, and then an additional 20 minutes at the 40-move mark.

Day 1

7 pm Friday - Round 1 - Dave Tomlin - Adam Curry [D00]
East Devon Chess Congress Exeter Corn Exchange, 14/04.

I was quite nervous going into my first game; I hadn't played a game in this time format ever, and there I was situated on board 2 of the Minor. My nerves were not improved when my opponent played 1. d4 (I'm a lifetime e4 player), and worsened still when he followed it up with Nc3 – taking me out of both my London prep and my Queen's Gambit prep.

Nonetheless, I left the opening feeling confident with a very strong position, even if I abandoned potential early winning chances for what I thought was a more measured, positional approach. Stockfish, as always, disagrees.

1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bf4 c5 4.Nb5 Qa5+ 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.e3 Bf5 7.a3 Qb6 8.Nb5 Rc8 9.Rb1 c4 10.Nc3 e6 11.Nf3 Nh5 12.Be5 f6 13.Bg3 Nxc3 14.hxc3 Bg4 15.Be2 Bd6 16.Rh4 Bf5 17.g4 Bg6 18.g5 0-0



19.Kd2? Black is now clearly better. **19...fxg5 20.Nxc3 Be7 21.Rg4 Bxc3 22.Rxc3**

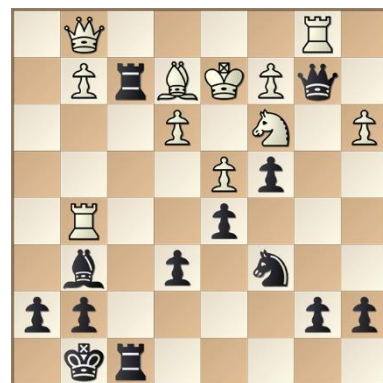


22...Rxf2 This move saw the proper launch of my attack, which my opponent mishandled almost immediately with the move 24. Re1.

23.Qg1 Rcf8 24.Re1?

This allowed my queen to infiltrate with 24...Qxb2. I was, just a few moves later, completely winning with (as it turns out) a forced mate sequence on the board.

Qxb2 25.Rb1? Black has mate in four from here.



25...Qxc2+ 26.Ke1 Rxe2+?

My nervousness, though, got the better of me, and, losing my focus, I determined that, rather than forcibly trading queens and entering an entirely winning endgame, I would carry on with my attack.

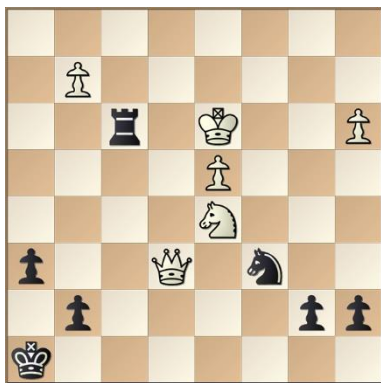
27.Nxe2 Qxb1+ 28.Kd2 Qd3+ 29.Ke1



29... Qxe3??

On move 29, however, I made a horrendous error; somewhere in the back of my mind, I had spent so long looking at the position after the potential 29...Qb1+ that I somehow missed that my opponent's queen guarded the pawn that I took instead. I blundered my queen in one move, and with it the game! I played on for a few moves, all concentration gone, and I resigned moments later. A disastrous result for the first round, and I was honestly beside myself with disappointment. I went home for the night, with my only consolation the knowledge that I had at least been winning...

30.Qxe3 Bd3 31.Qxe6+ Kh8 32.Re5 h6 33.Rxd5 c3 34.Nxc3 Bc4 35.Kd2 Bxd5 36.Nxd5 Rf2+ 37.Kd3 Rf3+?!



1-0

Day 2

10 am Saturday – Round 2 - Adam Curry - Tim Fox [B07]

East Devon Chess Congress Exeter Corn Exchange (2),
15.04.2023

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nd7



‘Ah! My first game with White! I get to dictate how we play!’ I thought to myself as I sat down at the board for the second round. ‘I’m going to use all my opening prep and have a great time! And—oh, he’s played d6... Not to worry, I guess we can enter a Pirc ... Wait, what on earth is Nd7??’

This was a position that I, in thousands of online games, had never reached before. And we were only on the second move! Already rattled by my loss the day before, I was disheartened to be out of my preparation this early. Nevertheless, I was sure that with moves like 8...g5 and 9...b5 my opponent was overextending, and I must be better. And I was! I was playing for a win in my second game, despite the strange opening. So I set about trying to convert the position.

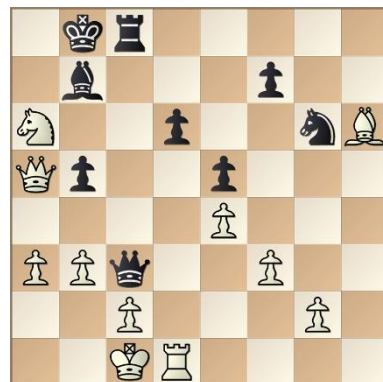
3.Nc3 e5 4.d5 c6 5.f3 Ngf6 6.Bg5 Be7 7.Qd2 h6 8.Be3 g5
9.Bc4 b5 10.Bb3 a5 11.a3 Qc7 12.Nge2 Rb8 13.Ng3 Nb6

14.dxc6 Qxc6 15.Qd3 Ba6 16.Qd2 Nc4 17.Bxc4 Qxc4
18.b3 Qc6 19.Nf5 Rh7 20.0-0-0 Rd8 21.h4



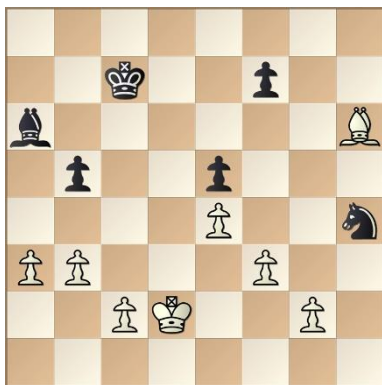
I absolutely loved the move 21.h4, and, just a few moves later, I was up a pawn. Then two pawns. And I had a monster attack on the way! I couldn’t possibly mess up a second game in a row.

21...gxh4 22.Rxh4 Ng8 23.Nxe7 Nxe7 24.Rxh6 Rxh6
25.Bxh6 Ng6 26.Nd5 Kd7 27.Nf6+ Kc7 28.Qxa5+ Kc8
29.Nd5 Bb7 30.Nb6+ Kb8 31.Nd5 Rc8 32.Nb4 Qc3
33.Na6+



The move 33.Na6+ speaks for itself. I’m not quite sure what I was thinking; it’d been a long game and I was getting tired. Perhaps I thought that I had won his queen although the rook defends? Or that I could simply trade the pieces (though that would have hung mate!). Whatever the case, I had once again blundered away an easy win. This time, though, I soldiered on, and we agreed to a draw a few moves later.

33...Bxa6 34.Qxc3 Rxc3 35.Rxd6 Kb7 36.Rd7+ Rc7
37.Rxc7+ Kxc7 38.Kd2 Nh4



½–½ (½ out of 2)

3 pm Saturday – Round 3 - Adam Curry - Hazel Welch [B23]

East Devon Chess Congress Exeter Corn Exchange (3), 15.04.2023

1.e4 The afternoon rolled around, and, though I was tired from the game in the morning, I had a much more positive attitude when I sat down at the board. My previous game had shown that I was capable of scoring points, and I was hungry for more!

1...c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.f4 Nc6 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.Nf3 g6 6.d3 Bg7 7.0–0 0–0 8.h3 a6 9.Qe1 Bd7



When my opponent played the Sicilian Defence, I knew immediately that this game was going to be an exciting one. I settled on the Grand Prix Attack as my weapon of choice (although we arrived in a slightly strange move order). And, after my opponent played (in my view) somewhat over-passively, I decided it was time to launch an all-or-nothing attack on the kingside.

10.Qh4 Rc8 11.g4 Na5 12.Bd5 Nxd5 13.Nxd5 Nc6 14.f5 Re8 15.c3 e6 16.Bg5 Qa5 17.Nf6+ Kf8 18.Qxh7 Re7



Through moves 11-13 the engine finds a nice defensive resource for Black (e6), which my opponent (and I!) had overlooked. Instead, my attack crashed through, and, on just move 16, there was M1 on the board!

19.Bh6 And, of course, I missed it. So concerned with Black's bishop on g7 guarding the h8 square, I completely overlooked a simple move. Nevertheless, my attack had led to a sizeable piece advantage. Learning my lesson from the first game, I immediately cashed in - trading off heavy pieces until we were in a completely winning endgame. The next time a forced mate sequence came around, I found it and secured my first win of the tournament.

19...Ree8 20.Qxg7+ Ke7 21.Nxe8 Bxe8 22.Qf8+ Kd7 23.fxe6+ fxe6 24.Qg7+ Ne7 25.Bg5 Qd8 26.Qxe7+ Qxe7 27.Bxe7 Kxe7 28.e5 d5 29.Rac1 Bb5 30.c4 dxc4 31.dxc4 Bc6 32.Ng5 Rd8 33.Rf7+ Ke8 34.Rcf1 Rd4 35.Rf8+ Kd7 36.R1f7#



1–0 (1½ out of 3)

Day 3

10 am Sunday - Round 4 - Stanley Rimmer - Adam Curry [B12]

East Devon Chess Congress Exeter Corn Exchange (4), 16.04.2023

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 When my opponent played 1.e4, I was excited to play a game in one of my favourite openings, the Caro-Kann. I felt more secure in myself after achieving a win the previous day and was now more used to the tournament setting. I had been prepping the Classical Variation the most beforehand; I had assumed that at an over the board tournament the Advance or Exchange would be less popular. And yet...

3.e5 c5



My opponent entered the Advance Variation. 'Not to worry,' I thought, 'I know this line, it's played all the time online!' The Botvinnik-Carls Defence leads to a very balanced position, which, playing as Black, I would be more than happy with.

4.Bb5+ 4.Bb5+ caught me off guard, and I forgot my limited extra prep for the position!

4...Nc6 5.dxc5 Bf5 ! I thought 5...Bf5 looked a very natural development, but it is actually a serious positional error according to the engine!

6.Nf3 e6 7.b4 Nge7 8.0-0 a6 9.Bxc6+ Nxc6 10.a3 Bg4 11.Re1 b5 12.h3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 a5 14.Nc3 axb4 15.Nxb5 Bxc5



I therefore spent most of the remainder of the middlegame trying to win back my pawn and thought on

move 15 that I had achieved equality. My opponent had other ideas.

16.Be3



...Bxe3?

I jumped at the opportunity to trade bishops and did so without thinking enough lines through; and, to my horror, I pressed the clock right as I noticed I'd blundered again! 17. Nd6+ threatened checkmate, and at the very least it would win a pawn!



17.Qxe3?

Thankfully, my opponent missed it too, taking back my bishop with the queen instead.

0-0 18.Qc5 Qd7 19.axb4 Rxa1 20.Rxa1 Nxe5 21.Ra7 Qc6



Convinced I was losing as the position became increasingly challenging to play, I instigated an exchange of queens on move 21. When I tell you that my opponent spent a full 15 minutes on his response, I don't think I'm exaggerating. He was apparently desperate to avoid this exchange, but, seeing nothing better, accepted the trade. (The engine, as it happens, finds the move 22.f4). Very shortly after, we agreed to a draw. Somewhat ironically, this was in the position where I had my best advantage over White in the entire game, as I could pressure the knight with my rook, and win a pawn for my trouble...

22.Qxc6 Nxc6 23.Ra4



½-½ (2 out of 4)

3 pm Sunday - Round 5 Adam Curry - Connor Wilkinson [B18]

East Devon Chess Congress Exeter Corn Exchange (5), 16.04.2023

1.e4 At an even 2/4, and annoyed that I had missed opportunities to win in the earlier rounds, I was going to give it my all in the final round of the congress. And, with 1.e4, we were off! Yet again, no-one seems to want to play 1. ...e5!

Instead, my opponent opted for a Caro-Kann. No problems there, let's have fun in the Caro.

1...c6

I considered playing the Fantasy, but figured that my opponent would be well-enough prepared against it. (Talked to him after the game, lovely guy, but wasn't prepared for the Fantasy at all! Might've been an idea...)

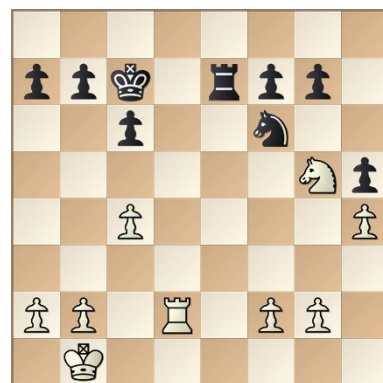
2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h5



Instead, we played a Classical to move six, where my opponent deviated from theory with the inaccurate 6...h5 (h6 in this position is the accepted move). I knew that this was wrong, but I couldn't remember what I'd prepped against it, and so carried on with the ordinary plans for the position as if he had continued the variation.

I had, I thought, a very comfortable position coming out of the opening. In post-game analysis, however, the resident IM at the tournament (Jack Rudd) correctly assessed that my knight on g5 was somewhat misplaced...

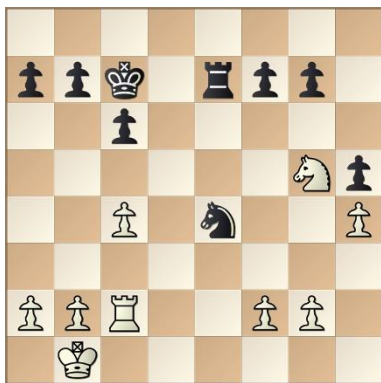
7.Bd3 Bxd3 8.Qxd3 e6 9.Nf3 Nf6 10.Bf4 Bd6 11.Ne5 Nd5 12.Bd2 Qc7 13.Nc4 Nf4 14.Nxd6+ Qxd6 15.Bxf4 Qxf4 16.Qe3 Qd6 17.0-0-0 Nd7 18.Ne4 Qc7 19.Ng5 Nf6 20.Rhe1 0-0-0 21.Qa3 Kb8 22.Kb1 Rhe8 23.c4 e5 24.Qg3 exd4 25.Qxc7+ Kxc7 26.Rxe8 Rxe8 27.Rxd4 Re7 28.Rd2



28...Ne4

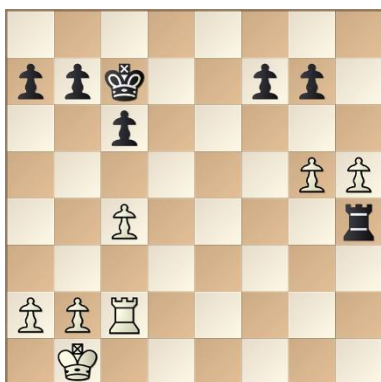
I was, unfortunately, failing to make the kind of progress required to secure that elusive win - and, in the absence of better moves, opted to trade queens and a set of rooks into what I considered an equal endgame. However, my opponent shocked me with 28. ...Ne4(!) with the nasty idea that if I opted to pin the knight to the rook and attempt to apply pressure with my pawn, my opponent had the exceptional Nc3+, winning my rook!

29.Rc2

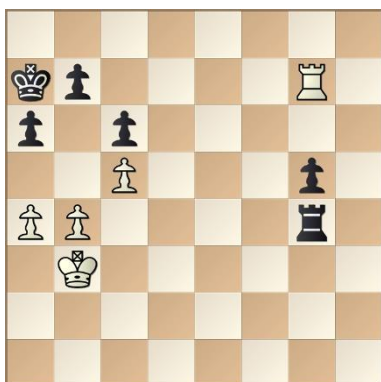


Instead, I played 29. Rc2 and accepted my doubled pawns. I missed my best chance at equalising (on move 36) as I was so committed to the (futile) defence of my misplaced c-pawn. Thankfully, my opponent also missed a forcing line whereby the rooks could be traded and his king could win the foot race to allow his g-pawn to promote.

29...Nxg5 30.hxg5 Re4 31.f3 Re5 32.f4 Re4 33.g3 h4 34.gxh4 Rxf4 35.h5 Rh4



36.g6 fxg6 37.hxg6 Rg4 38.Re2 Rxc6 39.Re7+ Kb6 40.b4 a6 41.c5+ Ka7 42.Kb2 Rg3 43.a4 g5 44.Rg7 Rg4 45.Kb3



Instead, on move 45, we agreed to a draw – as both of our kings were cut off from the action and our pawns neutralised each other.

½–½ (2½ out of 5)

Definitely an encouraging result! I'm overall very pleased with my performance, even if I am a little frustrated that I missed winning chances in some of my games. I'm excited to play again in a similar format in another tournament. I will definitely be participating in this event again next year.

Adam Curry, 16th April

English Seniors Championships 2023



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

The current title holders from last year's event are GM Mark Hebden as the Over 50 Champion, WIM Natasha Regan as Over 50 Women's Champion, Clifford Chandler as Over 65 Champion (on tie-break with Ian Snape and IM Paul Littlewood) and Dinah Norman. This year's Championship is now very well subscribed and looks like being the most competitive yet, with a strong field of titled players in both events.

You can find a full list of entrants to date at the link here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-2023-entrants/>

The top games from each section will be played on liveboards and broadcast on Chess.com, Lichess and Chess24 with commentary on the ECF's Twitch channel for the final rounds.

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.

For more information and entry form 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 will place between Friday 26th May and Bank Holiday Monday 29th May 2023 at Holiday Inn Kenilworth-Warwick, 212 Abbey End, Kenilworth CV8.

The Current title holders from last year's event are GM Mark Hebden as English Champion and WIM Lan Yao as English Women's Champion. As with the Seniors we again have an extremely strong field for this year's Championships, with GM Michael Adams as top seed in the Open English Championship and Kamila Hryschenko as top seed in the English Women's Championship.

You can find a full list of entrants to date at the links here:

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

The top games from each competition will be played on liveboards and broadcast on Chess.com, Lichess and Chess24 with commentary on the ECF's Twitch channel for the final rounds.

Eligibility and Qualification

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

accepted from eligible GMs, WGMs, IMs or WIMs, or players with a rating over 2000 ECF or FIDE in the respective March rating list for the Open Championships or 1700 ECF or FIDE for the Women's Championships

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.

For more information and entry form please go to:

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

British Chess Championships 2023 by Nigel Towers



The British Chess Championships are the largest and most prestigious event in the UK chess calendar. This year's British is organised by the ECF as in previous years and is being held at **The Venue, De Montfort University in Leicester**, with events running from 20th to 30th July 2023.

Championship Events and Playing Schedule

This year's playing schedule starts on 20th July, with an evening blitz to open the events, and continues for 11 days until Sunday 30th July with the final rounds of the Open and Seniors Championships and the Major Open.

The Championship events (i.e. the British Championship, Senior Championships and Junior Championships) are open to citizens of the British Isles and territories or players who have been resident for the last 12 months.

The main British Championship follows the now traditional format of a nine-round Swiss tournament running from Saturday 22nd to Sunday 30th July, with a game a day and typically around 60 players or more competing. The winner of the event becomes the British Champion for 2023, with the British Women's title awarded to the highest-placed female player.

Eligible players wanting to take part in the main British Championships will need to qualify via one of the qualification routes including qualification by title (with British GMs and IMs qualifying automatically), top finishers from last year's Championship or Major Open, National or Union Champions, top finishers in title norm events in the British Isles, and/or British Grand Prix winners based on results in FIDE-rated events in the last year. You can find the full list of qualification regulations on the British Chess Championships website.

The Major Open runs alongside the main British with the same nine-round Swiss format with a game a day. As the name suggests, this event is open to all players and is typically a larger event including international as well as British players.

As in previous years, the Senior Championships include Over 50 and Over 65 sections, each with seven rounds, running from 24th to 30th July. The Junior Championships include U8, U10, U12, U14, and U16 sections, again with seven rounds running from 25th to 29th July. The senior and junior events are open to all British players who are eligible based on age – i.e. there are no additional qualifying requirements for these events, which are always well attended.

Supporting tournaments which run alongside the Championship include the Weekender tournament over the first weekend of the event – this year's tournament now has four sections: the Atkins (Open), Penrose (U2000), Soanes (U1750) and Yates (U1500). The new Penrose section has been introduced to balance numbers across the Weekender events and is named in honour of Jonathan Penrose, who won the British Championship a record ten times in the 1950s and 1960s. Other supporting tournaments include the traditional AM and PM tournaments with six rounds and a game a day during the final week. There will also be a number of rapidplay, blitz and junior blitz tournaments running throughout the tournament. You can find a full schedule of Championship and supporting events together with online entry forms on the British website here:

<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

The main British Championship and the top boards of selected other events will be played on DGT live boards

and broadcast live. As in previous Championships the games on live boards will be broadcast on the internet via Chess24, Chess.com, Lichess and other platforms, and the ECF will be providing a local commentary team to cover the event from the commentary room on site, with the commentary also broadcast via Twitch and available on YouTube.

There will be a seating area for spectators to watch the games on the top boards, with the live board feeds also broadcast on TV screens behind the top players following the usual format.

This year we will also be running a chess festival with a programme of events across the 11 days of the British including:

- Outdoor/drop in chess and GM simul(s);
- Social chess evenings with chess team events;
- Chess film mini-season with a number of evening screenings of chess related films at a local cinema;
- Quiz night;
- Chess problem solving evening supported by the British Chess Problem Society;
- Organised visits to the National Chess Library at the Kimberlin Library Special Collections archive on the DMU Campus;
- Heritage walk organised in collaboration with DMU.

You can find further details of the festival programme which will run in parallel with the British tournaments on the web page here:

<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/british-chess-championships-2023-chess-festival/>

ECF Online

Nigel Towers reports on this month's ECF Online clubs and tournaments

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

We continue to field ECF Open Club teams in the Live Chess World, European, and Mediterranean Leagues, 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

We started the month off with a big win in our round 4 match against Team Iran on 23rd March by 10½ to 7½ in the blitz and 12 to 10 in the rapid, followed by a loss in our round 5 match against a very strong Team Azerbaijan on 1st April. We then won our round 6 match against Team Bolivia on 15th March. We are currently fourth in the Division 3 table on 5 points behind Brazil, Iran and Azerbaijan.

LCWL D3 Championship Pool	Played	Pts
1 Team Brazil Live	5	8
2 Team Iran+	5	7½
3 Team Azerbaijan	6	7
4 English Chess Federation	5	5

LCEL Season 7

We lost all three legs of our round 3 match against Team Slovakia on 29th March and our round 4 match against Team Azerbaijan on 13th April. This means we are at the foot of the Division 1 table with no points from two matches.

LCML Season 3

There were no LCML matches this month. We are currently fifth out of 14 teams in the Mediterranean League with four matches played to date.

LCEL Div 1 – Top teams		Matches played	Match points	Games won
1	Team France	6	6	160
2	Srbija Tim	5	5	108
3	Romania Chess Federation	5	3½	64
4	Team Bulgaria	6	3	46
5	ECF	4	3	34

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 Ligas 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 continues 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 first four blitz and rapid events now completed. You can find further details and the 2023 entry form at the link here together with the leaderboards following the first four events:

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

Blitz and Rapid category leaders after four and three events respectively are as follows:

Blitz			
Open	WFM Meri Grigoryan	51	Cavendish
Women	WFM Meri Grigoryan	75	Cavendish

Seniors	John Sharp	76	Hemel Hempstead
Juniors	Elis Dicen	58	Coventry Academy
U2000	Elis Dicen	68	Coventry Academy
U1700	Caleb Caleshu	58	Plymouth
U1400	Oli Smith	80	Oxfordshire
U1100	Stefan Petrov	68	Wimbledon

Rapid			
Open	Kyle Bennett	41	Basildon
Women	Caroline Robson	61	Blackthorne Russia
Seniors	Alan Greg	68	USA
Juniors	Louis Buckland	48	Sussex
U2000	Kyle Bennett	61	Basildon
U1700	Louis Buckland	62	Sussex
U1400	Zander Booth	62	Poole
U1100	Megh Bhide	43	Epsom

ECF Membership

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

Supporter – £10

Queen's Gambit Scheme Supporter – free

Bronze – £18.00 | Junior Bronze – £6.00

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

Gold – £39.00 | Junior Gold – £19.50

Platinum – £75.00

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

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

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

Chess and Bridge



Chess & Bridge offer all members 50% off CHESS Magazine for the first year, and staggered discounts off online purchases according to your membership level – Supporters / QGS / Bronze members 5%; Silver / Gold / Platinum members 10%. Chess & Bridge supply chess books, chess sets, software and computers by mail order and also have a retail shop at 44 Baker Street, London W1U 7RT



The Chess and Bridge website is here - <https://chess.co.uk/>

FEATURES

The Chess Boom and Chess Elitism by Peter Wells



The extent to which the current chess boom will translate into a significant and durable increase in participation in over the board (OTB) events probably remains an open question, but there is no denying the extent of the explosion of interest in chess online. The figures for membership now boasted by Chess.com continues to grow beyond 130 million, with a staggering 10 million users on one day in January 2022, obviously far exceeding anything most of us could have imagined for a potential chess audience even a decade ago, whilst the early success of Chessable has indicated that many people are also willing to pay more for quality content than had customarily been assumed. The role of the Covid lockdown and the popularity of Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit* are routinely cited as the main causes, whilst the scene was clearly set by the consummate ease with which chess translates to the internet, for broadcast and content creation certainly and – whilst not to everyone's taste – clearly for playing too.

In general this is incredibly positive and represents an immense opportunity for the chess world. At the same time, both the major influx of new people into the chess world and the heightened interest in chess within the mainstream media necessarily mean greater scrutiny of how we behave as a community. This brings with it an opportunity to see how the rest of the world views us. It also makes it more important that the chess world avoids responding to any criticisms in a way that magnifies our flaws or ignores the many positives we see in the chess community. One area in which we seem prone to do this

is in relation to chess and gender. Another, which I wish to consider here, is in responding to (not necessarily unrelated) charges that the chess world tends to be 'elitist'.

There is nothing new, of course, about chess being perceived as either elitist or unduly hierarchical. Bill Hartston used to like to say (and I maybe paraphrase a little) that if a group of chess players pass through a revolving door they will tend to emerge in rating order, whilst the obsession of too many players with their ratings can reasonably be assumed to have more than a little to do with perceptions of status. Which all doubtless has an impact. Danny Rensch, the CEO of Chess.com, made an eloquent contribution to the first of Howard Burton's four films *Through the Mirror of Chess* in which he discussed the need to combat the widely-held perception that chess players are some kind of born geniuses and that any substantial degree of mastery of the game can only ever be available to a few. It will come as no surprise to anyone who has read *Chess Improvement: It's all in the Mindset* that I would have little time for such a view, nor indeed for any account of the road to mastery which downplays the role of unadulterated hard work – with a preference that we acknowledge that the capacity for hard work is, in fact, a key component of any plausible definition of 'talent'. It is surely right for the chess community to try to rebut the strange notion that chess requires some kind of innate genius to which most can never aspire, although we might be careful about how we do this. The current fashion for instead lambasting the intelligence of top chess players – by suggesting in particular that chess is in some kind of a league of its own for the lack of transferable skills associated with it – is definitely unhelpful too. A world in which often highly educated chess players are told to 'stick to chess', whilst various celebrities with genuinely little knowledge beyond their domains enjoy a large audience hanging on their every pronouncement (I will leave the readers to grapple for possible examples), is clearly one which is not getting the balance right.

Yet criticisms of perceived elitism go much further and seem to have acquired several more dimensions than this, not least as we increasingly live in a society in which burgeoning economic inequality sits together (presumably very uncomfortably) with apparently unprecedented reverence for equality as a value. I found myself somewhere between amusement and bemusement earlier this week as I read a story on the BBC website of an enterprising young Bristol University student who had invented an app to detect the use of Chat GPT to cheat in exams – see 'Bristol University student creates app to stop cheats using essay bot - BBC News' here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-65200549>. All very fine of course, impressive work

and a reminder that the challenges facing the chess world in this regard are not so distant from those faced elsewhere. What really jarred was the young man's declared motivation. His concern seemed to be less an aversion to cheating itself than a concern that the expense of the latest GPT version (which enables the cheating) would limit access to it, thus privileging better-off students and further entrenching inequality. Of course, I can see what he means and I have some sympathy, but the thought of cheating being condemned not as an intrinsically bad thing, but primarily instrumentally – in terms of its likely impact on another value – struck me as something of a sign of the times.

What I see under construction in chess – and it is worth inserting a caveat here that much of my access to these debates comes via Twitter, with its concomitant tendency to polarise all disagreements into two intensely warring factions – is a broad narrative which deprecates many of the long-standing, supposedly elitist institutions of the chess world and instead promotes the newer, more inclusive institutions associated with the current boom. So we get an opposition between OTB and online chess, between 'classical' chess and the supposedly more entertaining and accessible rapid and blitz formats and (perhaps most perversely) a desire to pit the light-hearted, entertainment-focussed world of online streamers against the more serious approach of those who have worked very hard on their chess and seek to produce content suitable for others who aspire to do the same.

As usual with such criticisms of the status quo, there are some elements that raise genuinely interesting questions. I would defend OTB chess to the hilt – and whenever the result of a major online event comes to hang significantly upon a mouse-click I may feel that the job is partly being done for me 😊. Still, criticism of OTB chess, and specifically concerns that classical chess may be in its last throes at the highest levels, usually begin with castigation of a World Championship match format, which is indeed open to the charge of being somewhat dated. I have hitherto felt that these matches had enough of an aura and (critically) sufficient audience to retain their place as vital showpieces for the chess world. However, just as I could relate to Magnus Carlsen's professed desire to return to the fundamental business of the game free from the burden which preparation for another title match would have entailed, so I can share concerns that the focus on just two players, slogging it out for weeks exclusively at slow time controls and with an automatic rite of passage for the current champion, may not be a format set in stone for the 21st century. I can appreciate all of this, whilst still enjoying the irony that it is frequently those who rail against elitism – often with FIDE as their

primary target - who are amongst the first to claim that without the participation of the current champion, the whole thing is almost entirely meaningless anyway!

Yet by far the most interesting (and I think misguided) narrative to emerge from all this is the one which basically asserts that chess should be just about having fun and that almost anything which smacks of hard work, aspiration, or (God forbid) 'improvement', is necessarily suspect. This taps into concerns both ancient and modern. That 'play' should be just that and that any attempts to professionalise it or take it too seriously will detract from the enjoyment and purity of the pursuit are clearly arguments with a long pedigree, not least in the UK. As an extra tier of disapproval, I think specifically the nature of opening preparation, particularly deep preparation dominated by strong engines (in which there is now perceived to be limited wiggle-room for original play in many openings), is helping to give a particular type of hard work a bad name. Here too there are genuine issues to be addressed, although when a World Championship match features the opening moves 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 h3!? as occurred in the second game of Ding – Nepomniachtchi, it serves as a timely reminder that reliance on increasingly theory-heavy variations is only one of the directions in which top professionals are taking the game. Personally, I see no crisis and no pressing need for more significance to be afforded to Chess 360, for example, or for any fundamental reforms of the game, but I appreciate that there may be a debate to be had about the extent to which the opening phase dominates, particularly at classical time controls. What interests me in the context of the current discussion is that whereas I would see the enormous amounts of time which so many players have invested in opening research as an argument for caution with regard to any substantial reform of the rules, for those who argue that chess is 'played out' I sense that it is a positive encouragement. It is as if the idea of opening work is so pernicious that the interests of those who have indulged in it should not count for much. It needs to be scrubbed out so that we can return to some kind of battle in which just natural talent and understanding can prevail. I hardly need to emphasise that I do not believe that this is remotely a fair picture of how chess works.

Perhaps my greatest objection to all this lies in the idea that there is some kind of implicit contradiction between working hard at chess and enjoying it. For, quite honestly, over and above the fact that the demeanour of chess players at tournaments (myself included) makes it abundantly clear that winning is fun and losing is mostly not, I would argue that chess is simply more interesting and more fun the more we come to understand it. OK, I suspect there may be a very high level at which this

becomes a more complex relationship, but that really isn't a pressing concern for the majority of people. Moreover, there really are not so many short-cuts to that understanding.

What the popular purveyors of tricky, trappy gambits designed to bamboozle the opponent in entertaining ways don't tell their fans is that when these meet with some kind of rational response – often consisting of not much more than the avoidance of egregious greed – the outcome is very often not a bunch of explosive tactics in which one side or the other prevails, but rather the gambiteer being condemned to a long and gruelling defence. This may, in fact, be great for improving their chess, but will classify as fun for only the most masochistic. Worse still are the reactions I see to those absurd moments in which some top player decides to essay the Bongcloud. This seems to be widely regarded as fun, accessible, the ideal material for memes, and sometimes even as some kind of a challenge to stuffy conventional wisdom! It strikes me as anything but. It looks to me on occasions like an unattractive form of psychological warfare – an ultimate declaration of superiority, the aim of which is to do little more than humiliate the opponent – or on occasions just an 'in-joke'. Whenever I see comments along the lines of 'well, if Magnus and Hikaru have played it then there must be *some* point to it' I am reminded that there is nothing anti-elitist about such a joke.

Let's be honest. In most relatively affluent western nations, working hard on chess is unlikely to be motivated primarily by the game's glittering financial rewards. There may be considerations of status, rivalry or similar involved, but most of us who have worked hard on the game have done so primarily because we found it enjoyable and rewarding. From time to time, I read stories of the hardships, lengthy travel and difficult conditions which, for example, ambitious young Indian players put up with in pursuit of the dream of becoming a top chess player, a dream which for some of them may indeed involve financial motivation and opportunities which might be otherwise hard to come by. One thing which they really seem to understand is the tremendous importance of hard work in fulfilling these ambitions. Of course, this is the very opposite of elitism – this is how taking the game seriously and working accordingly can genuinely prove inclusive.

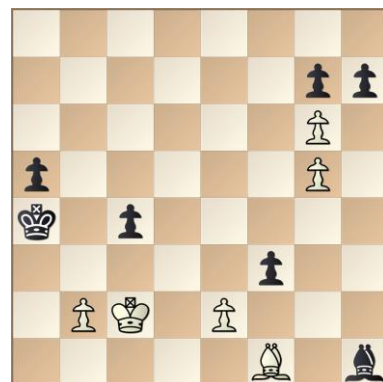
I was reminded of this recently when reading the fascinating new book *Improve Your Chess Calculation* from the celebrated Indian coach R. B. Ramesh. There are references dotted throughout the book to coaching regimes which even advocates of hard graft might find daunting, but the quality of the material and its organisation is testament to the work ethic of a coach

whose record nurturing several of India's finest young talents speaks for itself. It is also clear that Ramesh shares with me the conviction that there is no real tension between hard work and enjoyment of the game, and consequently he too places a high value on material which is both beautiful and instructive. I was especially drawn, as I increasingly am these days, to the chapter on endgame studies. Like me, Ramesh admits to having been sceptical during his playing days about the practical value of solving endgame studies, assuming that their main value lay in their artistry and beauty. However, he came to discover that most of the top players avidly devoured endgame studies, and as a coach has been a great advocate of their benefit as a learning tool.

To finish, two positions from this chapter which pack a fair pedagogic punch. Throughout the book, each position is helpfully graded according to the rating range for which Ramesh believes it would be appropriate. The first is from Leonid Kubbel and is graded at level 2 (1600-2000).

Kubbel

White to play



The solution begins with some clearly forcing moves (often a critical component of solving studies) **1.gxh7 fxe2 2.Bxe2** (2.h8Q exf1Q 3.Qe8+ Kb4 clearly offers no hope of victory) **2...Be4+ 3.Kc3 Bxh7**. So far, so forced, but now comes the key idea. The advance of White's king to c3 has helped to construct a potential mating net around Black's king. There is no forced mate, but the threats of mate will gain time to cause problems for the real target – the poorly placed bishop on h7. I love the fact that after **4.Bh5!** Black has a choice of fates for the bishop – it can be trapped or merely blocked in. It is lost after **4...Kb5 5.Be8+! Kc5 6.g6 Bg8 7.Bf7!**, but while it stays on the board after the alternative **4...g6 5.Bg4! Kb5 6.Be6 Kc5 7.Bxc4**, it has no value at all and White will penetrate with his king using zugzwang. There is an unusually positional element to this study, and it is all the more instructive for it.

The second position from the extraordinary Tigran Gorgiev is tougher (Level 3 – 2000-2400) and seems to me just the type that I would have once assumed to be about beauty first and utility later. It now seems obvious to me that so many vital skills are involved in solving this: choosing between plausible lines, gaining time by taking action on a second front, and spotting creative possibilities to interfere with the freedom of movement of the opponent's pieces.

Gorgiev, T 1929

White to play



White wins with the beautiful **1.Bc6!** (It is important to note that 1.Bxf7 Kxf7 2.Nh4 Ke6 3.g6 Bxg6+ 4.Nxg6 wins a piece, but Black has strong counterplay starting with 4...c5) **1...bxc6** (forced, since 1...Bxf3 2.Bxb7 Be2 3.a6 Bxa6 4.Bxa6 Ke7 5.Bc4! wins easily).

2.a6 Bg6+ 3.Kh8! Vitally important to win a key tempo. It is critical that the coming diversion cannot be ignored. **3...Bxe4 4.g6!** A beautiful clearance of the g5 square for the white knight. **4...fxg6 5.Ng5 Bd5 6.Ne6!+ Ke7 7.Nc5!!** The delightful final point. The knight blocks the diagonal to the queening square. **7...dxc5 8 a7** queening.

Arkell's Endings by Keith Arkell

Better Pieces Trump Better Pawn Structure!

The most important feature of the chess position is the activity of the pieces. This is absolutely fundamental in all phases of the game: opening, middlegame and especially endgame - Michael Stean



I've put a lot of weight on the merits of a good pawn structure in my writings on the endgame, but this month I'm going to show how piece coordination, initiative and the small matter of a dangerous passed pawn can all relegate such finely-drawn considerations to the sidelines.

GM Alexander Khalifman (2640) - IM Keith Arkell (2450)
London WFW (12), 1991

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.c4 Bb4+ 4.Nbd2 b6 5.a3 Bxd2+ 6.Bxd2 Bb7 7.Bf4 d6 8.e3



My opponent, world-ranked number 11 at the time and destined to be FIDE world champion a few years later, only needed to finish with two draws to win the

tournament. However, I declined his peace offer around here, as I was looking for a strong finish after languishing in last place for much of the event.

8...Nbd7 9.Be2 Qe7 10.h3 Ne4 11.Bh2 f5 12.Rc1 a5 13.b3 0-0 14.0-0 e5



15.c5! In principle this is a nice idea, highlighting the exposed nature of my pawn structure.

15...bxc5 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.Bb5 c6



My position is just about OK here. It feels unpleasant because of the exposed pawns, but if I can coordinate my pieces there is actually quite a lot of central energy.

18.Bc4+ Kh8 19.Qe2 Nd6 20.Rfd1 Nxc4 21.Qxc4 Ba6



22.Qh4?! This move is not great. Khalifman wants to remove the defender of my sensitive points at e5, c5 and d7, but he also loses some control over his own weaknesses. Better would have been 22 Qc2 with a small edge.

22...Qxh4 23.Nxh4 Ra7



24.Rd6 With the knight sitting a little uneasily on h4, Alexander could have considered withdrawing it at once. However, after 24.Nf3 I was ready with 24...Be2 25.Rd6 Bxf3 to remove the pressure from e5. I could then continue 26...Kg8 with a view to over-protecting the knight, which is doing such a good job covering e5 and c5, and eventually put pressure on b3. Essentially my position is fine, however White plays.

24...e4 Some calculation will now be required as ...g5 is in the air, trapping the knight.

25.Rcd1 Bd3 This is both forced and a good move. My illustrious opponent has to tread a little carefully now, as the weak b-pawn is all there is to prevent my obtaining a strong passed pawn.

26.Nf3?



It seems natural to bring this awkward piece back into the fray, but White had to take the sting out of my next sequence with either 26.a4 or 26.Rxc6. For example, after

26.Rxc6 a4 27.b4! cxb4 he can rescue the situation with 28.Bd6!

26...a4! 27.bxa4 Rf6! 28.Rxf6 gxf6!



My structure doesn't look too pretty with two pairs of doubled isolated pawns, but this is entirely conceptual, and has no relevance to the assessment. White will have a terrible job coordinating his pieces to deal with my passed pawn, whereas mine are in perfect harmony.

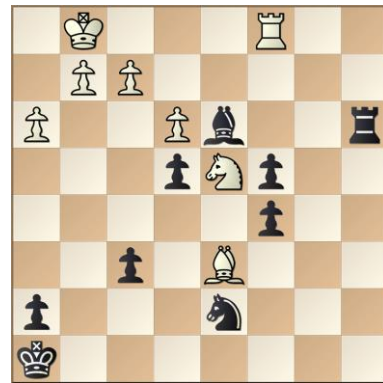
29.Nd2 Rxa4 30.Bd6 My opponent's rook and knight can play some kind of a blocking role, but his bishop is struggling to participate.

30...Rxa4 31.Rc1 Ra2 32.Nb3 c4 33.Nd4 c5



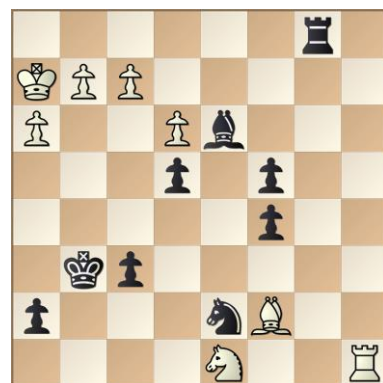
34.Nxf5? 34.Nb5 was the last chance to hold up my c-pawn. After 34...Ra5 35.Nc3 I can use my king and rook to keep his bishop out of the game and eventually my knight should decide matters by manoeuvring to d5 and lifting the blockade.

34...Ra3 35.Nd4



35...Rb3! Cutting off the knight's retreat to c3 via b5.

36.Ne6 Rb6 37.Ra1 Kg8 38.Ra8+ Kf7 39.Nd8+ Kg6 40.Bc7 Rb1+ 41.Kh2



41...c3 With White's pieces tumbling over each other to find squares my initially weak pawn now can't believe its luck!

42.f4 exf3



0-1

Closing out with a hat-trick of victories vs GMs Hector, Khalifman and Suba, I managed to haul myself off the foot of the cross-table just in time!

Great British Chess Players by Dr John Nunn



Sultan Khan (1903?-1966)



Sultan Khan's remarkable life story sounds like a work of fiction. Although much is known about his chess career, details of his life outside the game are scanty. Even his year of birth appears uncertain, with some sources giving 1903 and others 1905. Born into a Muslim family living in what is now Pakistan, he

first learned the Indian form of chess but was introduced to the international game by his patron, Sir Umar Hayat Khan. Sir Umar brought Sultan Khan to England in 1929, and within a few months he had won the British Championship. This was the start of a short but spectacular chess career, during which time he won the British Championship three times in four attempts and beat some of the world's top players, including Capablanca, Rubinstein and Tartakower. Perhaps his best tournament result was at Liège 1930 (second behind Tartakower, ahead of Nimzowitsch, Rubinstein and Marshall), but his match win against Tartakower (+4 –3 =5) in 1931 was probably his finest hour, since at that time Tartakower was at his peak. Sultan Khan also played successfully on top board for the British Chess Federation team in three Olympiads, but in 1933 Sir Umar returned to India and took Sultan Khan with him. On Sir Umar's death in 1944, Sultan Khan returned to rural life in his native area and little is known about his remaining years.

Sultan Khan had a distinctive style. His opening play was not very challenging and was designed more to lead to a playable middlegame position than to take the battle to the opponent. With White, he liked Colle or Stonewall set-ups, although he did also play 1.e4. With Black his repertoire was more conventional, involving 1.e4 e5 and either the Nimzo-Indian or the Queen's Gambit against 1.d4. Many of his wins against top players were the result of patient manoeuvring, and his skill in this area was remarkable. The flip side was that he frequently overlooked killing tactical shots. The game below shows both his strengths and his weaknesses.

Mir Sultan Khan - Akiba Rubinstein

Prague Olympiad 1931

Stonewall System

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 c5 3.e3 e6 4.Ne5

Sultan Khan either did not know or chose to ignore the principle of 'not moving the same piece twice in the opening'. Objectively, this early knight advance is premature, but the idea is to set up a Stonewall formation with f4 and c3, a structure Sultan Khan seemed quite happy with.

4...Nf6

4...Nc6 5.f4 (5.Bb5 Bd7 is also fine for Black) 5...Nge7 6.c3 Nxe5 7.fxe5 Nf5 looks like a more active response since the threat of ...Qh4+ forces White to lose time.

5.Nd2 Nbd7 6.f4 Bd6 7.c3

The position is equal, but at least White has the type of position he was looking for.

7...b6 8.Bd3 Bb7

Black hopes to plant a knight on e4, but White's next move prevents this.

9.Qf3



The idea is that a line such as 9...0-0 10.0-0 Rc8 11.g4 gives White significant attacking chances on the kingside. While objectively there's not too much to worry Black here, Rubinstein decides on radical measures to prevent White's kingside pawn advance.

9...h5

This is reminiscent of the way Black often plays ...h5 in the Sicilian to prevent White's g4.

10.Qg3 Kf8

A rather unnecessary concession. Black could have played 10...Qe7, keeping open the option of castling queenside, since 11.Qxg7 Rg8 12.Qh6 Rxc2 is very good for Black. Also 10...g5!? was worth thinking about, since 11.fxg5 Ng4 12.Bb5 Bxe5 13.dxe5 Qxg5 14.Nf3 h4 is certainly playable for Black.

11.0-0 h4 12.Qh3 Rc8?

This is just too slow, since if White is given the chance to play Ndf3-g5 then he will have an automatic attack against Black's poorly placed king. 12...Rh6! was much better, both preventing g4 and reinforcing e6 in case White plays f5; for example, 13.Ndf3 Ne4 14.f5 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Be7 followed by ...Bc8 favours Black.

13.Ndf3 Ne4 14.Bd2?

Sultan Khan's love of quiet manoeuvring sometimes led him to miss chances to strike while the iron was hot. Here 14.f5! Bxe5 15.fxe6! would have been very dangerous for Black.

14...Nxd2

Rubinstein fears losing the h-pawn after a later Be1, so he eliminates the bishop even though it means exchanging his active knight for White's bad bishop.

15.Nxd2 Nf6?

Once again Rubinstein doesn't seem to appreciate the danger. 15...Rh6 16.f5 Nxe5 17.dxe5 Bxe5 18.fxe6 Rc7 would have been a better defence.

16.Ndf3 Rc7 17.Ng5 Bc8



18.Rf3?

Again, White misses a tactical opportunity: 18.Ngxf7! Rxf7 19.Ng6+ Kg8 20.Nxh8 Kxh8 21.Qxh4+ Kg8 22.Bg6, with Rf3-h3 or g4-g5 to come, would have given White a near-decisive advantage.

18...Rh6 19.Raf1 Kg8 20.R3f2

An admission that things haven't gone to plan. The consistent continuation would be 20.f5, but then 20...Bxe5 21.dxe5 Ne4 22.Nxe4 dxe4 23.Bxe4 exf5 24.Bxf5 Ba6 25.Ra1 g6 26.Bc2 Bc8 27.g4 Qd5 favours Black, so White must backtrack.

20...Qf8 21.Qf3

The only other realistic plan for White is to play g4, and for that he needs to move his queen off the h-file.

21...cxd4?!

There was no need to relieve the tension like this. Opening the c-file is very risky when Black has one rook stranded on h6, so the quiet 21...a5 was better, gaining a bit of space.

22.cxd4 g6 23.g4

Sultan Khan continues with his plan, but 23.Rc2! was a simple route to a large advantage, since swapping rooks leaves Black unable to contest the c-file.

23...hxg3 24.hxg3 Nh7?

This should have lost straight away. Instead 24...Ne4! 25.Nxe4 (25.Bxe4 dxe4 26.Nxe4? Bb7 is good for Black) 25...dxe4 26.Bxe4 Ba6 27.Rd1 Qc8 gives Black fair compensation for the pawn. In this line the rook on h6 comes alive and White is potentially weak on the long light diagonal.

25.Ng4! Nxg5



26.Nxh6+?

Letting Black off far too lightly. This leads to a modest material advantage, but 26.fxg5! Rh8 27.Nf6+ Kg7 28.Rh2 Rxh2 29.Kxh2 followed by Rh1 and Kg2 would have led to a catastrophe on the h-file.

26...Qxh6 27.fxg5 Qxg5 28.Kg2 e5 29.Qf6

The correct choice, since otherwise Black would have a dangerous attack.

29...Qxf6 30.Rxf6 e4 31.Bb1

31.Bxe4 dxe4 32.Rxd6 is better, since although Black has some counterplay after 32...Rc2+ 33.Rf2 Bh3+ 34.Kg1 Rc1+ 35.Kh2 Bg4, the simple 36.Rdf6 Bf3 37.g4 Kg7 38.R6xf3 exf3 39.Kg3 will leave White a pawn up in a rook ending.

31...Be6 32.R6f2 Rc8

The manoeuvring phase of the game starts here. White has only a very slight material advantage, while Black's pieces are active and he is without weaknesses. To win a position with a small edge against an endgame master such as Rubinstein requires extraordinary technical skill. The main factor in White's favour is that there are two open files, both of which can potentially be used to penetrate with his rooks.

33.a3

To allow Ba2.

33...Kg7 34.Rc2 Rd8

Black must avoid exchanges. If the light-squared bishops and a pair of rooks were to disappear, White would be able to penetrate along one of the open files with his remaining rook.

35.Ba2 Kh6 36.Bb3!



Sultan Khan cannot achieve anything directly, since he can neither force piece exchanges nor penetrate with a rook. This move is the start of a subtle manoeuvre to transfer the bishop to h3. Although the e6-bishop is Black's 'bad' bishop, it has an important defensive role and if it is exchanged White can double rooks on the c-file and play Rc8.

36...Kg7 37.Rc6 Kf8 38.Bd1 Ke7 39.Rh1 Bd7 40.Rc1 Be6

Rubinstein decides to wait. It's possible that a plan such as ...a5, ...Rb8 and ...b5 would have offered better chances, but it wasn't easy to see that White can make progress.

41.Be2 Kf6 42.Rh7 Kg5 43.Kf2

Note that 43.Rch1, intending Rh8, is met by 43...Rc8 threatening ...Rc2.

43...Kf6 44.Bf1

The bishop has reached f1 and now Black must decide how to meet the threat of Bh3.

44...g5

Now 45.Bh3? fails to 45...Kg6.

45.Be2!

Suddenly White threatens to harass the f7-pawn by Bh5, Kg2 and Rf1, and this forces another concession from Black.

45...g4

Preventing Bh5, but at the cost of further blocking in the e6-bishop and creating a weak pawn on g4.

46.Kg2 Rg8 47.Ba6

White wants to play Rch1 and Rh8, but first he must prevent ...Rc8-c2.

47...Rb8 48.a4



Ruling out any idea of ...b5 and ...Rb6.

48...Ke7?

Rubinstein weakens under the pressure. He should have played 48...Rd8 to meet 49.Rch1 by 49...Bf8 (not 49...Rd7? 50.R1h6+ Ke7 51.Rxe6+! Kxe6 52.Bc8) 50.Rh8 Kg7 and White cannot achieve anything directly. Then he would have to manoeuvre further, possibly by directly attacking the g4-pawn with Rh4 and Be2. While White may not be winning against perfect defence, in practice it's very difficult to hold positions in which only passive play is possible.

49.Rch1 Rd8

49...Kf6 50.R1h6+ Ke7 51.Rh8 is no better. The unfortunate position of the king on e7 rules out the ...Bf8 defence.

50.Rh8 Rd7 51.Rc1

Now the rooks flood in and Black's days are numbered.

51...Bb4 52.Kf2 Kf6 53.Re8 Kg7 54.Rc6 Kf6 55.Rg8

There's no reasonable way to save the g4-pawn.

55...Rd6 56.Rxd6 Bxd6 57.Ra8 1-0

It's a Puzzlement!



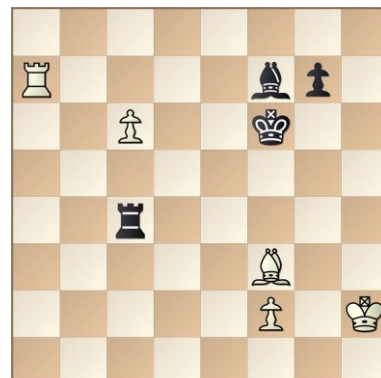
Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://chesspuzzle.net)

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 - Batsukh Anand – Abigail R Weersing

Cambridge International Open 2023, Cambridge ENG



White to win

[Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2 - GM Si1 Williams – WIM A. Rakhmangulova
Reykjavik Open 2023, Reykjavik, ISL



White to win

[Puzzle 2](#)

Puzzle 3 - FM Chukwunonso Oragwu – FM I. Gourlay
II Mindsports Masters IMB, London ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 4 - Dion Krivenko – Matthew J. Wadsworth
Reykjavik Open 2023, Reykjavik ISL



White to regain material

[Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 5 - Dion Krivenko – Matthew J. Wadsworth
Reykjavik Open 2023, Reykjavik ISL



Black to win

[Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 6 - A. Jaunooby – FM A. Burnett
46th Blackpool Conference , Blackpool ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 7 - IM Gavin Wall – GM Daniel Alsina Leal
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



White to win

[Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 8 - F. Waldhausen Gordon – A. Dewangan
Hastings Masters 2022/23, Hastings ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9 - GM D.H. Fernandez – IM D. Czerw
23rd ch-EUR Omdov 2023, Vrnjacka Banja SRB



White to win

[Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10 - CM P. Lalic – Alistair Hill
II Mindsports Masters IMB, London ENG



White to win

[Puzzle Ten](#)

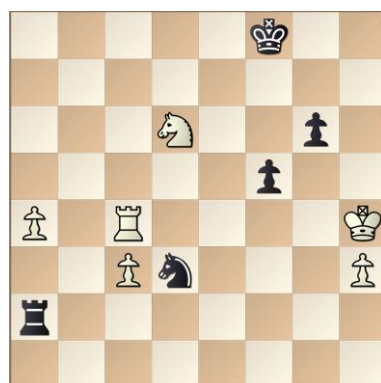
Puzzle 11 - Theo Gungl – Michael Adams
Bundesliga 2022/23, Baden-Baden GER



Black to win

[Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12 - WIM Fiona Steil-Antoni – WIM Julianna Terbe
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit

https://chesspuzzle.net/List/8130?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=aprilnews

by clicking the link or via the QR Code.



Books of the Month from Ben Graff



The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof

So many stories, to say nothing of so much brilliant chess, are generated in pursuit of the highest goal of them all – that of being world champion. This month, we look at two books which focus on the quest for the crown, albeit from very different perspectives.

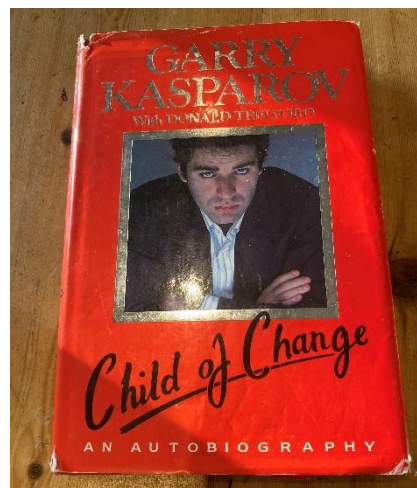
We start with our 'classic', Garry Kasparov's *Child of Change*, which tells the story of Kasparov's early years and first battles with Karpov, vividly bringing to life their epic 1984/5 marathon match. We explore some of the reservations around this work, and the reasons why I would still encourage everyone to read it.

For our contemporary offering, Dorian Rogozenco's *Eight Good Men* provides excellent analysis and context on the 2020-21 Candidates Tournament, an event that was paused for over a year at its midpoint due to Covid. Rogozenco paints a vivid picture of the proceedings, and the analysis of all the games is exceptional.

***Child of Change*, by Garry Kasparov with Donald Treford (1987 – Hutchinson Ltd)**

'When I was 4-0 and then 5-0 down and having to go out onto that stage every night, before hundreds of people and the television cameras and the press of the world – knowing that if I made one little mistake, just one, I was finished, perhaps for ever – you can imagine this wasn't so easy.'

Garry Kasparov – *Child of Change*



Child of Change charts Kasparov's journey from childhood through to his first three world title matches with Karpov, with their epic 48-game 1984/5 struggle at its heart. I first read this book as a teenager and loved it. Never before (or frankly since) had I come across a world champion sharing their story in such a distinctive and compelling way. From the very first page, when Petrosian's widow Rhona tells Kasparov after he has become world champion that she feels sorry for him 'because the happiest day of your life is already over,' this book gets you up close and personal in a way that very few others can.

Yet the critical reception *Child of Change* received was somewhat mixed. Hein Donner described it as 'the work of a madman'. Nigel Short's contemporary review was titled 'Grandmaster of Self-Delusion'. He alluded to an 'unashamed conceit that runs like a connecting thread throughout the book', styling the narrative thus: '*Child of Change* is in essence a 'Lord of the Rings, Part II', in which the young hero (Kasparov) fights the forces of darkness (Anatoly Karpov, the Soviet Chess Federation and FIDE, the World Chess Federation) and wins.' Even Kasparov himself in an interview with Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam said, 'I think that from a historical point of view the book was absolutely right, but the way it was presented was very bad... But the idea of the book I'm going to defend till the end.'

So why revisit *Child of Change* now? Mainly because, for all its flaws, it is still brilliant – perhaps like one of your favourite games of chess, which may have its errors and wrinkles, but still draws you back in for another look, because there really is something there. Kasparov's take on the chess politics of the 1980s may have been simplistic, but his underlying belief that FIDE and the Soviet authorities had a strong preference for Karpov being champion appears to have been well-founded. But even if Kasparov's thoughts on the machinations of FIDE

strike many as lacking in nuance, his perspective on what it is like to stare down the barrel of disaster is fascinating.

It is easy to do something you continually excel at, much harder to cling on when it feels like your powers have deserted you. When the twenty-one-year-old Kasparov took to the Moscow stage in 1984, he noted 'In a way I had beaten my earlier opponents too easily... I was like a boxer who has always won on first-round knockouts and then has to slog it out for fifteen rounds with his next opponent.' The start of the match proved to be a disaster for Kasparov, who lost four of the first nine games.

At which point both players took decisions which would be pivotal in shaping chess history. Kasparov resolved to dig in, to take no risks, and to play it long. Meanwhile Karpov, dreaming of the 6-0 victory which would have seen him bracketed with Fischer as the greatest of all time, determined to do likewise. As Kasparov noted, Karpov's decision was '... a very stupid strategic blunder, for by game 20 at the latest he would surely have won by, say, six games to two.'

A long sequence of draws would follow, with the audience at times resorting to jeers and slow handclapping, but when Karpov won game 27, for a 5-0 lead Kasparov was truly on the brink. Yet whether it was blind optimism, the sheer competitiveness of the man, or just the hallmark of the great champion he truly was, Kasparov was not done. He noted that 'Despite all the signs, we could not foresee the end of this match. No matter how hard we tried, we simply couldn't visualise how it would end. We couldn't see Karpov actually winning his sixth game and then watching us crawl back home to Baku.'

Many more draws would follow, before Karpov began to tire and Kasparov won games 32, 47 and 48 to make the score 5-3. At which point, following arguably the worst chess decision a governing body has ever made, the contest was abandoned. *Child of Change* points the finger of blame for this firmly at FIDE, and collusion between Karpov and FIDE President Campomanes. This now appears somewhat simplistic, as there were myriad factors at work which are beyond the scope of this review to fully explore here.

However, undoubtedly the book played a key part in Kasparov originally being viewed as having had the title stolen from him. In reality, it must have been more likely, given the closeness of their future contests, that Karpov would still have dragged himself over the line. We will never know. As the record shows, Kasparov would win the rematch to commence his fifteen years as world champion, and the pair would do battle in five title contests between 1984 and 1990.

Child of Change is laced with vignettes that still retain their freshness. From playing cards with Karpov ('There was nothing else to do, and no one else to do it with') through to late night phone calls with Botvinnik, it brings to life the chess world of the 1980s in a way that enshrines both the era and perhaps the last truly great rivalry the game has seen.

Like most books, at its heart, *Child of Change* is about a relationship. Not that between Kasparov and Karpov, but rather between Kasparov and his mother Clara, the woman who raised him single-handedly after the untimely death of his father. She was the person who was with him in his darkest moments. At the lowest point in the 1984/5 match, Kasparov writes, 'We used to talk late into the night. In the end we even shared the same bedroom in case I awoke in the night and wanted to talk things over, which I often did.' He said, 'I can talk to her like nobody else' and 'There can be no doubt that without my mother I could not have become world champion at the early age I did.' Undoubtedly behind every great champion there is someone who truly inspires them and has their back. *Child of Change* is a real tribute to Clara Kasparov.

Had Karpov won in 1984/5 by 6-0, or indeed any other score, the way in which we rate the pair today would be very different. In later years Kasparov could doubtless point to his superior talent. But here at the outset of their duel, it was his resilience and determination to never give in that saw him through. A terrific champion and, as *Child of Change* shows, one capable of telling a great story too.

***Eight Good Men*, by Dorian Rogozenco (Elk and Ruby)**

'I almost had a heart attack, because I realised that it's going to be my first ever win at the Candidates. And I never had such a heartbeat.'

Anish Giri, following his round 6 win against Kirill Alekseenko.



Normally, I look to Elk and Ruby to produce historical chess books of exceptional quality. However, this much more contemporary offering, exploring the 2020-21 Candidate's tournament, is a welcome addition to their range and well worth reading. Containing all 56 games, annotations by various analysts, plenty of diagrams and clear explanations, it is likely to prove to be the last word on what was the strangest of contests.

Played out in Covid's shadow, the event ultimately lasted 'more than a year, and became the longest over the board tournament in chess history.' From the outset it was clear that many players had their reservations. Rogozenco does a good job of capturing the 'tense' conditions in a contest like no other.

Grischuk remarked after the fifth round that 'The tournament should be stopped. I don't want to play. I don't want to be here.' Yet whatever the concerns, in the early games the players 'continued to do their jobs, trying to show the best they could on the chessboard under the circumstances.' However, after the seventh round new travel restrictions meant that there were fears the players would not make it home, and play was abandoned for 13 months.

At the enforced break, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Ian Nepomniachtchi led on 4½/7. Such were the conditions during this period that four of the participants did not play a single classical over the board game during the hiatus. Eventually, Nepomniachtchi would triumph with a round to spare. As we now know, he would prove to be no match for Carlsen in their subsequent title encounter, but that's another story.

Beyond the analysis, Rogozenco adds plenty of colour to the proceedings. Even the elite can get things wrong, and I particularly liked Giri's observation after letting slip a win against Neponiachtchi that 'I slept half the game, I don't know what I was thinking.' In similar vein he would also later lament after being surprised by a novelty in another game that 'There are ten ways to equalise against this line. I know all of them and this was not one of the ten ways.' Equally, for Wang Hao defeats in his final three games would prove too much and he announced his retirement from professional chess, a feeling we've most likely all shared after a few bad games.

However, if it is cheering to in some ways see our heroes as sharing our own human frailties, we should also acknowledge the ways in which they do not. As Rogozenco highlights, '... Top level endgames are often incomprehensible for chess amateurs, even when using a chess engine and knowing its precise evaluation.' These players truly were slugging it out at a level most of us can only ever dream about.

Yet where the annotators excel is in actively considering how to bridge the gulf of understanding between world class players and the rest of us. It is noted that 'The commentary covers opening strategy and novelties, middlegame battles, and instructive endgames, psychology and practical observations, together comprising a swathe of learning material valuable to players from club level to titled masters.' I felt this was a fair reflection of the content, which really is a high class offering, equally valuable as a learning tool or a work simply to be enjoyed.

Rogozenco notes that 'Without doubt, the chess games of the Candidates Tournament represent its biggest legacy, and the goal of this book is to analyse them thoroughly. He more than succeeds in this aim and provides plenty more on top. One to get.

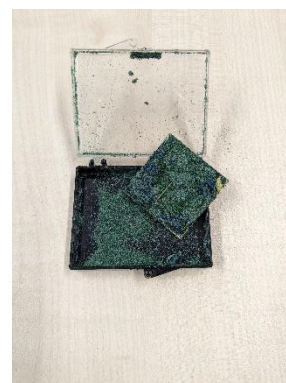
From the ECF Library and Archive - Collecting Artefacts



While Special Collections primarily cares for document and book collections, we are able to take a limited number of artefacts where it makes sense to keep them alongside the archives of their original owner. An excellent example of this is the objects formerly belonging to British Chess Champion Harry Golombek (1911-1995). These include competition ephemera such as pennants, medals and pin badges alongside more unusual items including this chess symbol rubber stamp set.



One of the medals clearly demonstrates why curatorial care of older items is needed. The medal or badge was backed with a green foam material which has significantly deteriorated. It will need removing and cleaning, and then repackaging in a more suitable box. Now that the items are in our care, we can take preventative measures to ensure they remain in good condition.



ECF Library cataloguing update

Owen has now entered over 200 books into the DMU library system, though there are many more to go. A reminder that you can search these here:

<https://prism.librarymanagementcloud.co.uk/dmu/>

Chess Engaging with the Media

by Peter Hornsby



Pictured: Sky News's segment about Kyiv Chess club playing Dundee City in the World Chess League.Live in the week after the Russian invasion

I was pleased to be invited to submit this article to share with you some of the successes, and failures, of my experiences with interacting with the media in promoting chess.

As we know, chess has historically struggled to gain traction in the UK media, but it is evident that the ground has shifted somewhat in our favour. There are a variety of reasons for this, which I won't go into detail about, but namely they are *The Queen's Gambit*, the boom of online chess as a result of the pandemic, and various controversies at the top level of chess.

On a local level, readers may be wanting to know what they can do to promote their club to attract new members or to give current players the recognition they deserve. I believe that it's worth contacting the media, as they are far more receptive to stories about chess.

Earlier this week, a new player came to my club, Newcastle-under-Lyme. He was local, and he said that he had read about the club in a local media outlet in Staffordshire and he was inspired to join:

<https://www.babababoon.co.uk/newcastle-under-lyme-chess-club-launch-online-world-tournament/>.

While national media is the most glamorous way to promote your club or your players etc, it is, of course, the hardest as there are so many competing stories. Local media outlets are easier to forge relationships with, and it can lead to continuous coverage.

For example, after Newcastle-under-Lyme's fantastic start in the World Chess League.Live in January, I contacted BBC Radio Stoke. I sensed an opportunity at the

time as Stoke City football club was not doing especially well, and Newcastle was proudly representing North Staffordshire near the top of the league, so I thought our success story would help to boost morale in the region. They replied offering me a slot at 7 am, the graveyard shift, on a Monday morning, which I of course accepted. The interview went very well, and hence they asked me back on the show on two separate occasions to talk about Newcastle chess club and chess in general. You can listen to these interviews and view other articles here: <https://www.worldchessleague.live/media-coverage>.

Things then went in a very different direction as they invited me to take part in their 'Music Mastermind' quiz where I thoroughly embarrassed myself, but it was all in good spirits. I have got to know the presenters and the producers very well, which means I am able to easily contact them when I have further chess news to share.

In summary, don't be shy, and if you don't ask you don't get! Sometimes there are disappointments; I have written articles that end up not being published, and I was once bumped off for a scheduled interview with Sky Sports after 'Project Restart' was announced. This is part and parcel of the process.

You may wonder where to begin; this is how I went about things:

1. Think of a chess success story that the media might like to promote, and put yourselves in their shoes and think about the angle they would like to put on it. Then write out the email you intend to send to them. Use a positive tone, and don't be too modest about it! Highlight why they should feature it; for example, I said 'Newcastle's success has helped put Staffordshire on the world stage for chess'.
2. Of course, before you contact them, make sure you have got the relevant people's permission. This is important for safeguarding reasons, such as when you are publishing photos in newspapers of juniors etc.
3. Simply research the contact details of all the local media outlets, large and small. If you are really busy, send an email to yourself addressing them as 'To whom it may concern' and bcc (blind carbon copy) all the journalists' email addresses. There is a risk, of course, if you do this that your email may end up in spam, but not always. Therefore, if you have time, it can be worth contacting them individually one by one.

4. If possible, have a copy of the article you would like them to publish ready before you contact them. This is because journalists are often on tight deadlines. It's imperative to supply what they ask for within a matter of hours if and when they reply to you. Even if they don't reply to you for a while, the same rules don't apply to you, so make sure you respond ASAP after they contact you.
5. If something is published/featured, great! If not, don't worry, try again next time. If you send out 100 emails and just one responds that's a success. When you do have a success, then use it to create the next one. For example, after the BBC Radio Stoke interview, I contacted other media outlets about Newcastle stating 'The club, as featured on BBC Radio Stoke' which made them more interested as it shows it to be a creditable and interesting story to run.

If anyone has any questions or needs advice, please feel free to contact me at pbhornsby@gmail.com. Good luck!

The London Chess Conference – Chess and STEM

by John Foley



John Foley, with permission of John Upham

There was a welcome resumption of this popular annual event, which was first run in 2013. We have had nine editions and by common consent each has been better than the previous one. The theme this year was Chess and STEM – how chess relates to the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. 120 people registered, with the majority coming from the UK, Europe and the USA. There have been several articles extolling the conference, which will give you an impression of the triumphal reception for the event.



Crowded room, with permission of John Yip

[ChessBase](#)

Back to the classroom - London Chess Conference.

[FIDE](#)

The London Chess Conference established how chess enhances 21st century skills, interest in STEM subjects and even pre-school education.

[ECU](#)

The amazing success of the London Chess Conference.

[Alexander Horváth](#)

Why the London Chess Conference was very important and what conclusions were reached.

What is the purpose of the conference?

The conference holds up a beacon for the use of chess in education. We bring together a group of people with a common interest in using chess to transform young people in terms of building their social confidence and helping them to think analytically. Most of those attending believe that chess also has academic benefits but readily acknowledge that the scientific evidence, although generally positive, is stronger on correlation than on causation. The gathering of experts illustrates the diverse pedagogy for chess in the classroom. Most attendees find it inspiring to learn how diverse are the methods used to engage children. Every attendee learnt something new and significant, whether from the formal presentations or from interacting with the others.

What was different this year?

We always push ourselves to break new boundaries. This does not always work but we learn each time – like learning from mistakes in chess. There were several innovations. The University of Roehampton was chosen because of its excellent conference facilities and being reasonably accessible from London and the main airports. This was the first time we livestreamed the proceedings. We offered the stream to the [FIDE YouTube](#) channel. This means that people could follow the presentations live and also can still watch the recordings. During Covid we ran

the ChessTech2020 conference as a Zoom-only event; this time we ran a hybrid – a physical and a digital presence. To facilitate this, we decided to run only one stream throughout, unlike in previous conferences when we have had up to four sessions running simultaneously. You might have thought that people wanted to have as much choice as possible, but the feedback was that people dislike missing talks. We resolved this by designing the programme to be of general interest to everyone, with side topics discussed in one of the meeting spaces.

We paid great attention to social interaction. About half the people had been previously, so there was a sense of community. One floor was devoted to the conference, whereas another floor was for catering, demonstrations and networking. The use of large circular tables meant that several people could have a serious ad hoc meeting. Although we provided board rooms, we found that, apart from formal international FIDE meetings, almost everybody preferred to meet around the large tables in the communal open space. It was as if everybody wanted to feel part of a common experience. The social interactions were magnified by organising a drinks reception on the Friday evening which was very well attended. This was an opportunity to play on the chessboards which were distributed around the venue. Dinner was held at the local pub, a traditional venue appreciated by overseas visitors. We held a pub chess quiz which required in-depth knowledge of chess history and personalities. On another evening, one of the attendees performed mathemagic tricks to a bemused audience. The practitioners' gathering had a party vibe.

Who should go?

The conference is targeted at people who have a professional interest in teaching chess. It is held at a weekend so that there is no clash with the school timetable. The great practitioners from around the world are there ready to share. From the UK, we had tutors from Chess in Schools and Communities, conference partners, as well as from some junior chess clubs.

Could more people attend?

Most chess tutors do not attend. The ticket price is not that high for professional development. So, what is holding them back? Maybe seasoned chess tutors have no incentive to develop their skills - they are earning a living and, from their perspective, there is nothing more to learn. If so, then chess teaching has not yet reached a professional level carrying an obligation to be constantly learning and improving. We cannot blame tutors when schools in the UK rarely require any form of certification regarding chess teaching skills. If the tutor can play chess,

and passes a safeguarding check, then the job is theirs. Chess is strangely cut off from the rest of the school curriculum, and fails to engage with school subjects where it could make an impact.

What is the difference between competitive chess and educational chess?

Educational chess is about getting all children to love chess, its culture and its intricacies. The aim is to reach all children. The pedagogic consensus is that you don't start with chess but with simpler, more comfortable games. Teachers should find the game accessible if they are to supervise children. There are plenty of other games that can be played on an 8x8 board, not least chess minigames. By contrast, competitive chess is about finding and nurturing talented kids; chess is treated as a sport rather than as an educational activity. Whilst commendable on its own terms, and bringing satisfaction to some children, there is a loss to the school and to the country by excluding most children at an early age. Instead of exploring the rich domain of chess activities, they quit in the belief that they are not clever enough, with incalculable consequences for their future intellectual development. From the perspective of the English Chess Federation, a sponsor of the conference, the motivation for supporting the educational approach to chess is numerical – the greater the number of children that start out in chess, the more likely that they will become competitive players. However, it is vital that the way chess is taught is appropriate for the age of the children and in line with best teaching practice. Otherwise, we prove the insight that the earlier you start teaching children, the earlier they give up.

Will you run the conference next year?

Given the success of the conference and the increasing focus on educational chess around the world, we have grounds for hoping that our supporters will continue to show faith in the London Chess Conference. We have become established as the leading chess in education conference in the world. Enlightened organisations with an eye on 21st century skills want to see chess in schools succeed. We are grateful to FIDE, ECU and CSC for their major support this year and to the ECF, ChessKid and Chessable and others for their sponsorship. We have a great team including Brigitta Peszleg, Leila Raivio, Kate Cooke, Alexis Harakis and Etienne Mensch who want to keep up the momentum.

- John Foley, Conference Director

NEWS and VIEWS

ECF Yearbook

Thanks to the efforts of a dedicated team of people within the English Chess Federation, the ECF Yearbook 2023 is now available in PDF form via this link:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Yearbook-Online-2023.pdf>.

The printed version will be mailed out to Platinum members of the ECF (and will be available while stocks last via the website) over the next fortnight or so. Prices to be confirmed.

Free Student Silver Membership

Student Silver membership is now available **FREE** for the first year to student players who have not previously been members of the English Chess Federation in any category. Student memberships are open to all student players aged between 18 and 25 on the date the membership is taken out.

ECF Membership Statistics

Click here - <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Membership-Analysis-Mar-2023-for-web.pdf> - for a PDF of the March 2023 Membership Analysis report for the English Chess Federation.

Membership Benefits and Partners

A reminder of the membership benefits that are currently available.

All members get:

1. Games played in ECF-rated over-the-board or online events rated free of charge (events included in this benefit are based on your membership level);
2. The ability to join ECF online clubs on Chess.com and Lichess, play in online club events, and gain an official ECF online rating – further details can be found at <https://englishchessonline.org.uk/>;
3. Ratings updated monthly to reflect your very latest results, whether you play over the board or online (or both);
4. *ChessMoves*, the ECF's 50+ page monthly magazine, with a link sent by email;
5. The annual ECF Yearbook, with a link sent by email (discounted price for printed version) – see the Yearbook archive at <https://www.ecfresource.co.uk/yearbook-archive/>;

6. A range of valuable membership partner benefits, including discounts on chess products from Chess & Bridge and discounts on retail, leisure, travel and eating out through our JustGo Rewards scheme (see below);

7. Eligibility to become an ECF titled player via the ECF Master Points System at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/master-points-system/>;

8. Eligibility to participate in the ECF Grand Prix (Silver ECF members and above): <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-chessable-grand-prix/>

Supporters get all the benefits above apart from 1., 7. and 8. above.

FIDE Development Fund 2023 Now Open

The FIDE Planning and Development Commission (PDC) has announced that the 2023 FIDE Development Fund cycle is now open for submissions of funding requests by national chess federations, continents, affiliated organizations, FIDE commissions and, starting this year, FIDE zones.

The submission period is open until 31st October 2023. Applicants may submit their funding requests or questions about the process to FIDE PDC at fedfunding@fide.com.

This year the cycle is starting a bit later than initially planned due to the evolution of the documents to be used. We wanted to make the process smoother and get better connected with applicants. All potential beneficiaries have to use the new documents for their applications.

Swiss-Manager Seminar

There will be a seminar on Swiss-Manager held via Zoom at 7.00pm - 9.00pm on Tuesday 2nd May. People who attended the Zoom seminar between 28th March and 25th April can attend this course free of charge, and will be invited. Other arbiters who wish to attend are welcome to register here:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-swissmanager-course/>

ECF Level 1 Arbiter Course

Course dates/schedule – Saturday 10th June and Sunday 11th June 2023, from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm each day.

Venue – Bridge & Patricxbourne CEP School, Conyngham Lane, Bridge, near Canterbury, Kent CT4 5JX.

Course fee – £40.

Ample free nearby car parking.

Please note – participants must be at least Bronze members of the ECF on the date of the examination (11th June).

Lecturers – Alan Atkinson and David Clayton.

In case of questions regarding the course, please contact Alan Atkinson at pheasantscroft@btinternet.com

Details: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-arbiter-course-registration/>

BCET Awards 2023

The BCET is inviting nominations for the BCET Awards 2023, which are for junior 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 of 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 awards 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, by email at j.r.wickham@btinternet.com or via the relevant UK national federation (English Chess Federation, Chess Scotland, Welsh Chess Union, Ulster Chess Union) by 31st May 2023.

Chess in the Commons

From www.parliament.uk

The first ever UK vs Ukraine Solidarity Chess Match held in Parliament between grandmasters from each nation resulted in a diplomatic draw.



Photograph by Andy Bailey/UK Parliament

Commons Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle made the ceremonial opening move – d2 to d4 – for Michael Adams, the UK's number one chess player - while His Excellency Vadym Prystaiko, Ukraine's Ambassador to the UK, replied with knight to f6 for Andrei Volokitin, three-time and reigning Ukrainian chess champion, in the eight-minute blitz game at Speaker's House.

At the same time, a series of 12 matches pitting MPs against peers resulted in a House of Commons triumph by a score of 8½ - 3½.



Photograph by Andy Bailey/UK Parliament

Transport Minister Jesse Norman, Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves, SNP's Chris Stephens, Conservatives John Baron and Tobias Ellwood played for the Commons - while scientist and Labour's Lord Robert Winston, Plaid Cymru's Lord Dafydd Wigley and Crossbencher Lord Bernard Hogan-Howe were among those who took part for the Lords.

The Speaker said he was 'honoured to host the first challenge match in Speaker's House between leading players of two close allies'. 'Parliament and the UK are giving support to Ukraine in every way we can, as it battles against this illegal invasion by Russia. Enabling important

cultural and sporting activities is another way of championing that', he said.

'Chess is also a wonderful game of strategy that crosses boundaries of language, age, sex, culture and disability – which makes it the perfect sport for grandmasters of two friendly nations, or even parliamentarians, to play.'

Sir Lindsay was advised on his opening move by the Speaker of Lithuania Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen – herself a grandmaster who won the European Individual Women Chess Championship in 2011.

The event was organised by the charity, Chess in Schools and Communities, and the English Chess Federation as part of their support for Ukrainian chess.

Crewe Chess Club vs Nairobi Chess Club

In the February 2022 edition of *ChessMoves* the above match was mentioned in the 'Letters to the Editor' section. I am pleased to report that Crewe has finally won at the third attempt on 12th March over 17 boards, three fewer than last year. The score was 21-13 with two rapidplay games between each player. You can read a match report at: <https://crewechessclub.co.uk/news>

Samar Dayal at the 20th Delhi International Chess Tournament



Samar Dayal participated in the recently concluded 20th Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament held from 23rd - 30th March. It was one of the key chess events hosted in India. This year's edition had over a thousand participants from 19 countries and included 50+ titled players.



Congratulations to Samar who won first place in his Under 10 category.

Middlesex Seniors vs Middlesex Juniors

In order to commemorate the King's Coronation, revive the junior squad, and just plainly celebrate chess in Middlesex, the MCCA has decided to hold a Middlesex Seniors vs Middlesex Juniors match on 6th May 2023 (event details below). 'Seniors vs Juniors' matches for other counties are not unusual but are certainly rare in the Middlesex annals!

MIDDLESEX JUNIORS v MIDDLESEX SENIORS
Played at St. Bride's Institute on Saturday 30th January 1960 at 2.30 p.m.

JUNIORS		SENIORS	
1. N.J. Argyris	$\frac{1}{2}$	E.G. Sergeant, White	$\frac{1}{2}$
2. M.S. Paterson	$\frac{1}{2}$	D.E. Rumens	$\frac{1}{2}$
3. A. Gobran	$\frac{1}{2}$	H. Israel	$\frac{1}{2}$
4. B.J. Doggett	0	D. Lloyd	1
5. S.P. Broide	$\frac{1}{2}$	T.A. Landry	$\frac{1}{2}$
6. A.K. Langford	$\frac{1}{2}$	A. Masitis	$\frac{1}{2}$
7. J.K. Bennett	0	D. Gilchrist	1
8. A.R. Turner	0	F.E. Tinworth	1
9. L.L. Hampson	0	S. Schots	1
10. R.C. Anderson	0	A. Sunnucks	1
11. P.J. Southon	$\frac{1}{2}$	T. Pruchnicki	$\frac{1}{2}$
12. A.B. Pepper	0	W. Dunstan	1
13. N.D. Tomkin	$\frac{1}{2}$	W.A. Pepper	$\frac{1}{2}$
14. A.K. Abel	1	N.R. Springall	0
15. D. Hopson	0	T. Marsden	1
16. S. Bloom	0	H. Rubin	1
17. J.B. Platt	$\frac{1}{2}$	S. Crunmer	$\frac{1}{2}$
18. R. Lancaster	$\frac{1}{2}$	R.L. Barnett	$\frac{1}{2}$
19. C. North	1	D. Beaso	0
20. J.H. Adams	$\frac{1}{2}$	N. Jacobs	$\frac{1}{2}$
	7		13

..... had white on the odd numbered boards.

RESULT:-

Many would consider the match on 30th January 1960 as the first such encounter, if only because Junior Organiser R.M. Sinclair wrote:

'This season saw the first match in what I hope will become a regular fixture, in which the Junior team took on the Senior team; a most enjoyable match which the seniors won by 13 to 7.' (BCF Yearbook 1960-61) Of

the juniors fielded that day Neil Tomkin (Board 13) continues to be associated with Middlesex, having been both a long-term member of Kings Head and on occasion representative of Middlesex's county teams. It is hoped that he will be willing to represent the seniors this time, thereby completing the circle!

MIDDLESEX COUNTY CHESS ASSOCIATION.
CHALLENGE MATCH PLAYED AT THE NATIONAL CHESS CENTRE ON
SATURDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 1955.

CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM	V	THE REST
1. J.A. Fuller.		1. M. Blaine.
2. H. Israel.		2. J. Stone.
3. J.M. Bee.		3. E.G. Sergeant.
4. R. Speirs.		4. S.H. Crockett.
5. D.J. Collins.		5. M. Jarvis.
6. J.E. Redon.		6. J. Gilchrist.
7. F.E. Tinworth.		7. C. Jahn.
8. M. Sobkowski.		8. A. Philpott.
9. A.F. Stammwitz.		9. W.S. Deeth.
SENIOR TEAM.		JUNIOR TEAM.
10. W.B. Wallis.		10. Hinden.
11. S. Leff.		11. Reuben.
12. R.G. Duce.		12. Snicker.
13. M.A. Axelrod.		13. Rose.
14. E. Reichle.		14. Stark.
15. R.L. Barnett.		15. Newton.
16. B.G. Locke.		16. Broomehead.
17. R. Faulds.		17. Tarlow.
18. W. Dunstan.		18. Macdonald.
19. L.W. Fox.		19. Robson.
20. A. Masitis.		20. Robinson.
21. F.C. Shorter.		21. Roper.
22. L. Peters.		22. Reid.
23. P.J. Holt.		23. Couchman.
24. W.M. Dixon.		24. Kumar.
25. A.G. Sealey.		25. Cruden.
26. D.J. Hughes.		26. Bennett.
27. J. Poole.		27. Abramsky.
28. E. Harman.		28. Elvin.
29. A.A. Moppett.		29. J.A. Andrews.
30. D.J. Wey.		30. D. Chater.
31. Dr. Shenfield.		31. Mrs. Hudson.
32. E. Falce.		32. Mrs. Start.

JOHN POOLE.
MATCH CAPTAIN.
Middlesex County Chess Association.
29.10.55.

What must be noted is that, on the senior side, Thomas Landry (Willesden Chess Club) was a strong junior in his day as he was a Middlesex representative in the Glorney Cup, a chess competition between the Four home nations. At some stage, he decided to pursue a draughts career! It would be good to know what happened to all who participated in that match, especially the juniors.

Apart from Thomas, there are some other notable names on the Senior side, such as Edward Sergeant, a long-time stalwart of Middlesex having first played for Middlesex in 1908 (21st November vs Surrey), David Rumens, and Harold Israel. It is to the credit of the juniors that this trio were all held to draws. Although eventually losing, the result shows the juniors could hold their own and justified why Middlesex was one of

the strongest junior counties in the 1950s and 1960s when the Southern Counties Chess Union and the then British Chess Federation turned their attention to junior chess in the 1950s.

Although Mr. Sinclair believed it was the first encounter of its kind in Middlesex, he was mistaken. Another match of this kind had taken place some five years earlier under the guise of Middlesex's Championship Team vs The Rest (22nd October 1955).

What will be noticed is that in keeping with the convention of the day only surnames were used for the junior team; thus it is difficult to know with certainty who all the juniors are. A little digging around found that: Hinden is J. Hinden; Reuben is none other than Stewart Reuben; Smoker – J.V. Smoker; Newton – D.A. Newton; Tarlow – M.J. Tarlow; Macdonald – A.T. Macdonald; Kumar – J. Kumar; Cruden – D.M. Cruden; Bennett – J.K.A Bennett; Abramsky – J.A. Abramsky.

Those named above all represented Middlesex in various junior competitions, with some going on to represent the adult teams. The initials of the other juniors are unknown so, of course, it's difficult to say who they are and what kind of Middlesex, let alone chess 'career' they had. It is also not known why Mrs. Hudson and regular Middlesex player Mrs. L. Start made up the junior numbers! A perusal of the senior team shows that very few went on to play in what was considered the inaugural seniors vs juniors match, namely R.L. Barnett and W. Dunstan. It is also surmised that if Bennett is indeed J.K.A Bennett, then he is the sole junior who went on to participate in the 1960 encounter.

Middx III*	9.3.91	Essex II*
1 C Forbes (W)	1 0	IM Pheby
2 C Wilman	0 1	AC Keehner
3 I Anguelova	0 1	DJ Millward
4 M Hepworth	$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	R Rodie
5 S Christopher	$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	JSA Wood
6 A Eyton	0 1	M Ashdown
7 S Needham	0 1	PL Williamson
8 J Fries	0 1	Daniel P Harvey
9 J Myers	0 1	SD Harvey
10 G Pelton	0 1	R Heppinstall
11 L McDonald	0 1	A van Rooy
12 A Panovka	0 1	M Rahaman
13 G Sullivan	0 1	CF Dorn
14 def	0 0	def
15 F Ainscow	0 1	LJ Crane
16 M Griffiths	0 1	A King
17 D Wells	0 1	AJ Parsons
18 Z Ryle	$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$	David Smith
19 D Butler	0 1	J Simmons
20 L Kelly	0 1	RT Hare
(Camden)	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ 16 $\frac{1}{2}$	

Middx III was an all-womens team!

Matches of these kinds were justified, as in the opening decade or so of junior county chess (1949-60) Middlesex's juniors were champions in the following competitions: SCCU Jamboree – 1949-50, 1950-51, 1951-52, 1952-53; 1953-54; 1954-55, 1955-56, 1957-58, 1958-59; BCF Jamboree – 1949-50, 1951-52, 1952-53, 1957-58, 1958-59; SCCU U18 (Open) – 1957-58, 1958-59; and SCCU U18 Metropolitan – 1958-59, 1959-60. It must be stated that these competitions would have been primarily 'boys' teams as girls team competitions were not introduced until the end of the 1960s; hence the London Boys Chess Congress was renamed London Junior Chess Congress to recognise that.

It is to be expected that the next junior team will include its fair share of girls. For those of an age, they may well remember the time when Middlesex's third team (currently U1850) under the late Bruce Birchall controversially fielded an all-female team which included several promising girls, e.g. Angela Eyton and Sabrina Needham to name but two, to take on Essex II in a combined SCCU Amboyna/Ebony match on 9th March 1991. Middlesex lost 2½ -16½ .

Bruce may have been right that girls were under-represented in chess and steps needed to be taken to address that, e.g. the gender rule in the 4NCL, Lorin D'Costa's 'She Plays to Win' initiative, and the ECF's creation of a Director for Women's Chess role. At the time his reasons for doing so were not fully explained and, needless to say, proved confusing. His decision to do so not only brought Middlesex into disrepute but could be seen as undermining the integrity of the competition as the team fielded was seen as a 'gimmick' in some quarters.

The juniors also participated in the now defunct Adult SCCU Jamboree, remarkably outperforming Middlesex's seniors in the 1962-63 event (final Positions: 1st Essex; 2nd Middlesex Juniors; 3rd Middlesex Seniors).

It is clear to see that Middlesex juniors in the early years had a level of success that has been difficult to replicate since. Yes, they have had their successes, most conspicuously from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s (SCCU U18 Open: 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1984-85, 1985-86, 1987-88, 1989-91, 1992-93, 1993-94 and U18 Girls Open: 1982-83, 1983-84, 1985-86, 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90) but have been unable to consistently assert their dominance over their neighbours, let alone further

afield; this is in part due to the difficulty of establishing a junior management team. Middlesex Juniors could only attain the levels of success they did because of the stability of this team. Consequently, despite the wishes of Sinclair, matches of this sort fell out of favour even though Middlesex have been able to produce talented juniors since. Luke McShane is one notable junior that comes to mind!

The upcoming Middlesex Seniors vs. Juniors match at a minimum will be the third incarnation and if the adage 'third time lucky!' is true, it would seem the juniors are due for a win! We wait with bated breath to see if this is the case!

Let's commemorate the King's Coronation in the best way chess players do by playing a match of note. Let's also hope that we can bring to fruition Sinclair's hope that matches of this kind will indeed be *a regular fixture*!

Go on the Middlesex!

Event details

Match – Middlesex Seniors vs. Middlesex Juniors

Date – 6th May 2023

Pre-match ceremony – 1:30pm

Match start time – 2.00pm

Venue – Chalkhill Community Centre, Chalkhill Road, Wembley HA9 9FX

Match format

1) SCCU County match rules apply

2) Senior side limited to 6xU2200, 7xU2050, 7xU1850, 10xU1650, 10xU1450

3) Junior side 40xU2200

Time Control – All moves in 120 minutes + 10 seconds per move from move 1

Refreshments available on the day: £3 per person.

Participants are encouraged to donate £5 to defray costs

If you wish to participate in this event, contact:

Junior Captain – Anthony Fulton

fulton790@aol.com

Senior Captain – Keith Jones

keithsearlejones@hotmail.com

Further details can be obtained from Match Organiser Anthony Fulton (contact as above).

JUNIOR MOVES

Junior Teams Chess Challenge



The final was held at Newcastle RGS on 25th March 2023 in glorious surroundings (see photo above). 14 teams took part, and the competition was fierce. Round 1 saw some close games and for a long time it looked as if King's College B team would upset their A team, but it ended up 4 – 0 to the A team. After round 2, four teams had won both matches, though as the tournament depended on game points every game counted. In round 3 King's College dropped their first points, while Wilson's defeated local rivals Hampton.

There was then a pause for lunch before the two leading teams (King's and Wilson's) faced each other. In the end White won every game leading to a drawn match. The match between Hampton and Brentwood was also drawn, allowing Nottingham High to come back into contention. Round 5 saw King's College, Wilson's and Brentwood all win 3½ - ½, and the final round saw Wilson's play Brentwood for what was second place as King's College were by now two game points ahead. All Wilson's needed was a draw, but Brentwood won 3 -1 to grab second place. King's College B team recovered from their first-round loss to rise to fourth place.

Thanks again to RGS Newcastle and David Eggleston for their wonderful hosting, Lara Barnes for running the tournament and arbiting in a cool and calm manner, even when the printer died, and to Phill Beckett for setting it all up.

Final ranking after six rounds:

1 Kings College Lower School A 20/24

2 Brentwood School 16½

- 3 Wilson's School 15½
- 4 Kings College Lower School B 15
- 5 Hampton School 14½
- 6 Sir Thomas Rich's School A 13½
- 7 Nottingham High School 11½
- 8 King Edward VI Five Ways 11½
- 9 Bristol GS 11
- 10 Royal Grammar School Newcastle 10½
- 11 Beaumont School 10
- 12 St Mary's Catholic School A 7½
- 13 Sir Thomas Rich's School B 6
- 14 Ponteland High School 3½

--- Neill Cooper

ECF Girls Schools Team Finals

The ECF Girls Schools team final took place over the weekend of 15th/16th April. It was well-contested and there was a great atmosphere.

Results:

U19

- 1st North London Collegiate A 17½/21
- 2nd St Paul's Girls A 14½
- 3rd Beaumont 12½
- 4th Nottingham High 12
- 5th NLC B 10
- 6th= James Allen's Girls School
- Denmark Road 8½
- (JAGS 6th on tie break)
- 8th St. Pauls B ½

U11

- 1st Bancroft's 15
- 2nd= City Junior
- Nottingham High 14
- (City Junior 2nd on tie break)
- 4th Putney High 13½
- 5th NLC 9
- 6th Haberdashers' Aske's 8
- 7th Sutton High 5½
- 8th Latchmere 5

Congratulations to all who took part and their supporters.

The generous sponsorship of St Catherine's School in Bramley looks set to continue!

--- Andrew Martin

Primary Schools Chess Tournament



58 children from ten schools in the area assembled on 25th March to compete in the tournament organised by The Harrogate & District Primary Schools Chess Association. The event was sponsored by and held at The Manhattan Club. Represented were Aspin Park Academy, Bilton Grange Primary School, Bishop Monkton C of E Primary School, Oatlands Community Junior School, Pannal Primary School, Richard Taylor C of E Primary School, Rossett Acre Primary School, St Peter's C of E Primary School, St Robert's Catholic Primary School and Saltergate Community Junior School.

Edmond Macmullen-Price from St Robert's was first in the Year 6 section followed by Zachary Maunder of St Peter's. There was a tie for 3rd place between Jasper Crawford of Bilton Grange and Marius Ruksenas of St Robert's. In the Year 5 section, Aidan Ferguson of St Robert's, a member of The Manhattan Junior Chess Club, finished first and there was a triple tie for second place between Ethan Baudach, also of St Robert's, Asher Knight of Oatlands and Albert Kempton of Richard Taylor. St Robert's also took the prize for 1st place in the Year 4 section with the success of James Smith. Second place was a tie between Joseph Hirst of Pannal and Henry Yallup of Oatlands. In the Year 3 and Under section Archer Kirby won for Rossett Acre with Charles Ferguson 2nd for St Robert's and The Manhattan. Third place was shared between Joshua Abbott of Pannal and The Manhattan, Esmer Baudach of St Robert's, Ellie Huband of Oatlands and Tak-Yui Lee of St Peter's.

Book prizes for the Best Boy Player went to Edmond Macmullen-Price and for the Best Girl Player to Samantha Lusted of Oatlands. The Manhattan for the Best Game went to George Wen of Pannal, with the Best Checkmate being awarded to Ethan Baudach. All the children were issued with a Certificate of Achievement. The prizes were presented by Georgia Taylor, a chess-loving semi-professional rugby league

player. Georgia plays as a winger for Super League team York Valkyrie. This is Georgia's fifth year with York following on from the most successful season in the club's history, which saw the team (then known as the York City Knights) finish first at the end of the regular season, contest the Grand Final and also reach the Challenge Cup Semi-Final. A teacher by profession, Georgia represented the Great Britain School Teachers side earlier in the week in a match against the Combined Armed Forces team.

During the break while the results were being collated and the awards determined, York Chess Club member and Chess in Schools and Communities representative Noel Stewart entertained the enthusiastic children and adults with a demonstration of one of Aron Nimzowitsch's most entertaining and instructive games, his 18-move win against Alapin at Carlsbad in 1911.

The photo from the event shows the children in full concentration.

--- Michael Stokes

Advait Keerthi Kumar at the British Rapidplay Championship

One promising young talent is the London under 10 champion, Advait Keerthi Kumar, who underlined his potential with a win against GM Keith Arkell in the British Rapidplay Championship. In the Under 10s, which he had won on tie-break with 6½/7 from another strong youngster, George Zhao, he enjoyed a stroke of luck against pre-tournament favourite Oleg Verbytski. After much manoeuvring by both players, Oleg here produced the spectacular 51...Rxb3.



Unfortunately for him, this doesn't quite work (51...Bc1 maintains approximate equality) and after 52.axb a2 53.Rd7+ (53.Ra6?? Ba3! and, while 53.Rd1 also wins, it is harder as the black king is better placed) 53...Kf8 54.Rd8+

Kg7? 55.Ra8 (Hoping for 55...Ba3 which now loses a tempo after 56.Rg8+ and 57.Rg1, but Black is not fooled) 55...a1=Q 56.Rxa1 Bxa1 57.c5 Bd4 58.c6 Bb6 59.c7 Bxc7 60.Ne8+ and 1-0.

Following his London success Advait (pictured below with BBC presenter Farzana Choudhry and Watford coach Roger Lancaster) was interviewed, in something of a rarity for nine-year-olds, on BBC Three Counties Radio where he helped publicise the game in the local area. It's worth noting that, at young ages, the BBC require parental consent for interviews to take place.



Photo by Keerthi Kumar Manavalen

It might have been unwise to rely on endgame technique against GM Keith Arkell's trademark Caro-Kann in the British Rapidplay, but Advait didn't leave it until late.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 cd 5.cd Nc6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.Be2 Bxf3 8.Bxf3 e6 9.Be3 Nge7 10.0-0 Nf5 11.Bg4 Nxe3 12.fe Be7 13.Nc3 0-0 14.a3 Bg5 15.Ra3 Bh6 16.Qe2 Qb6 17.0-0 Na5 18.Raf1 Rae8. After this move, where the engine much prefers ...Nc4, Keith's position becomes increasingly difficult.



19. Qf2 Re7 20. e4 (20 Bh5 was probably even stronger, e.g. 20...g6 21 Bxg6 hg 22 Qh4) **20...de 21. Nxe4 Nc4 22.**

b3 Nxa3 (Black is now totally lost) **23. Nd6 f5 24. ef gf 25. Rxf6 Qd8 26. Qg3 Rxf6 27. Rxf6 Kg7**



28. Bh5+ (The engine prefers Bxe6+ but this is good enough) **28...Kh8** (Of course, not 28...Kxf6 29 Qe5++) **29. Rxh6 Qf8 30. Qe5+ Qg7 31. Rf6 h6 32. Bg6 Kg8 33. Bf7+ Kh7 34. Nf5**

1-0

Littlewood's Choice



The Association of Junior Independent Schools (AJIS) is a network of leading private primary-level schools in the independent sector in northwest England. Members regularly meet to compete against one another in inter-scholastic sports, debate, quiz and other academic and artistic endeavours.



At the end of last year they ran U9, U10 and U11 Chess Championships which were organized by Julian Clissold.

Sanjoy Banerjee went along to the tournament with his friend Saul Marks and some juniors from Birkenhead. Saul's son Seth had some interesting games, and this was one of his wins:

S. Marks (Birkenhead School)– G. Conibere (King's Macclesfield)
U11 AJIS Championships

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bc4 Nc6 4.0-0 Bd6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.d3 a6 7.Bg5 b5 8.Bxf6 gxf6?



This is a mistake. Black has no need to weaken his kingside pawn structure. The right move is 8...Qxf6 and if 9.Nd5 then simply 9...Qh6 with equal chances.

9. Bd5 Bb7 10. Re1 Kg7?



Another poor move, as the white knight will now come to f5 with gain of tempo. A sensible option for Black is 10...Rb8, which will allow him to move his knight on c6 without losing the bishop on b7.

11.Qd2

Even stronger was 11.Nh4! immediately.

11...Qb8?



Black guards his white-squared bishop, but this is too slow and it takes away an important defensive piece from the kingside.

12.Nh4 f5??

The only chance was 12...Ne7, but after 13.Re3 Kh8 14.Rh3 Rg8 15.Qh6 Rg7 16.Bxb7 Qxb7 17.Qxf6 White is clearly winning.

13.Nxf5+ Kg6



Mate is now unavoidable but unfortunately White now misses 14.Qh6 mate! An important point to bear in mind here is former world champion Emmanuel Lasker's quote 'When you see a good move then look for a better one'. If White had spent a few more minutes examining the position, then I am sure he would have spotted the mate in one.

14.Nxd6? cxd6 15.Qe2 Nd4 16.Qg4+ Kf6 17.Qxd7

Fortunately, White's position is so good that the error on move 14 will not matter.

17....Bxd5 18.Nxd5+ Kg5 19.Rac1 Rd8?

Another error but of course, Black is totally lost anyway.



20.Qxf7 Ra7 21. Qf6+ Kg4 22.Re3 Rf8

Now 23.Rg3+ Kh5 24.Qg5 is mate, but the move chosen is also a trivial win.

23.Qh6 Rh8 24.h3# 1-0



A rather flawed game, but nevertheless a pretty finish by Seth.

Both players are only ten years old and so it is important to learn from the mistakes that were made.

The two main principles to take on board are:

1. Don't weaken your kingside unnecessarily.
2. Always check before making your move in case there is a better one.

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

It is not always easy to categorise certain tactics, but it is vital to keep an eye out for surprising moves that could easily win the game.

In fact, some games seem to be full of tactics from start to finish. Consider the following:

D. J. Findlay - P. E. Littlewood
Paignton 1974

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 0-0 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.0-0-0 d5 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.exd5 cxd5 12.Bb5 Qa5 13.Bc6 Rb8 14.Bf4



Now came the crushing **14...Rxb2!**

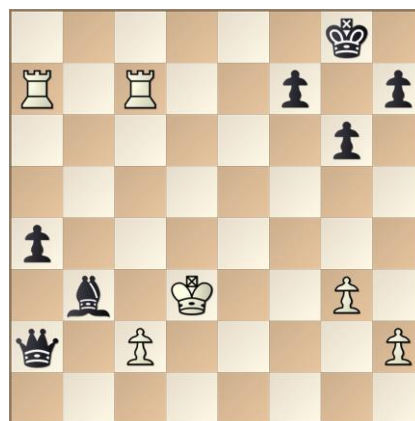
The game continued **15.Kxb2 Qb4+ 16.Kc1 Ne4! 17.fxe4 Bxc3 18.Qxc3 Qxc3 19.Bxd5 Ba6**. Black now has a material advantage, but the game still needs to be won.

20.Rhe1 Rd8 21.Re3 Qa1+ 22.Kd2



Black now produces another tactical blow: **22...Rxd5+!** and the game continued:

23.exd5 Qd4+ 24.Kc1 Qxf4 25.Rde1 Bc4 26.g3 Qd4 27.Rxe7 Bxd5 28.Rd7 Qa1+ 29.Kd2 Qxa2 30.Ree7 a5 31.Ra7 a4 32.Rec7 Bb3 33.Kd3



Now comes the final tactic which decides the game: **33...Bxc2+!**

The finish was then **34.Rxc2 Qd5+ 35.Ke3 Qe5+ 36.Kd3 Qf5+ 0-1**

White must lose one of his rooks, e.g. **37.Kc3 Qc5+** or **37.Kd2 Qf2+**

David said after the game that he felt like a punch-drunk boxer!

See if you can spot the winning tactic in the following two positions with the answers at the end of the article.



P. E. Littlewood – M. Coward
London League 1988
White to play



P. E. Littlewood – J. Brenninkmeijer

Lloyds Bank 1987

White to play

Answers

P. E. Littlewood – M. Coward

White wins by 1.Rxc6! 1-0 because after 1...Rxc6 2.Bxd5+ Ree6 3.Re1 White can swap off all the pieces with a won K+P ending.

P. E. Littlewood – J. Brenninkmeijer

White breaks through Black's defences by 1.Ng4! hxg4 2.Bh7+ Kh8 3.Nf7+ Kxh7 4.Qd3+ Kg8 5.Qg6+ 1-0.

--- *Paul Littlewood*

Gormally's Coaching Corner by Danny Gormally



Spectating Daventry

One way you can improve is to watch chess tournaments - you can do this for pleasure or do it to learn new information and ideas. Whether it helps you to improve is debatable, but it is fun. The tournament I chose to watch was the Daventry 4NCL Easter Congress. I played in this last year and the reason I didn't participate was that it clashed with the Masters Golf - I knew I'd be massively distracted and thinking about what was going on during my games. That might cause me to rush my moves. Silly reason of course.

When you looked at the event it had a typical make-up of an Open - lots of experienced players at the top end and a sprinkling of under-rated juniors. On Facebook one of the participants at Daventry, Keith Arkell, put up a status from Oleg Korneev. The general gist of this lengthy post was that FIDE need to change their rating system. According to Korneev, players at the top were protected by only playing with each other, whereas the likes of Korneev were exposed by playing against low-rated junior players who were criminally under-rated. Korneev quoted an example of a colleague of his who played against a 2700 player who was fairly inactive. The colleague won, and then said that the 2700 wouldn't even be over 2500 if he played all the time and in Open standard tournaments.

Fair points, although I think you have to accept that as you are getting older your rating will inevitably go down. It's interesting that Korneev was a solid 2640 player a few years ago and is now only rated in the 2400s. And he's still playing good chess. I also think with the junior players around now you are dealing with a different breed. They are at least as good if not better than we were when we were younger. They play countless blitz games online and because of this make very few tactical mistakes and are

very self-confident. If you are Black against them you are going to have a very tough task winning the game, if my recent experience is anything to go by.

Such was the task that Keith Arkell faced in the first round. For my viewing of this game, for the most part I left the engine off and tried to do my own analysis. A better way to improve!

Mikalajunas, Kajus (1806) - Arkell, Keith C (2392)
3rd 4NCL Easter Congress: 07.04.2023

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 Bg4 5.Be2 c6 6.h3 Bxf3 7.Bxf3 Qd8 8.0-0 e6 9.c4 Nbd7 10.Qb3 Qb6 11.Be3 Qxb3 12.axb3 Bd6 13.Nc3 a6 14.Rfd1 0-0



15.d5! White has reached a promising position from the opening and decides to act. The bishops need to breathe.

It would have been interesting to see how Keith would have tried to play for a win if White had played something cautious like 15.g3. Probably he would have shuffled around for a bit, and tried to use his immense experience to outplay his much younger opponent.

15...cxd5 This seemed more likely than taking the other way as Keith loves playing with an extra pawn on the kingside.

15...exd5 nevertheless seemed playable. 16.cxd5 c5 17.g4!

16.cxd5 e5 17.Bg5? The mistake of an inexperienced player in my opinion. I preach to my students about the importance of the bishop pair and White wilfully gives this advantage away.

Whether right or wrong, I would have played 17.g4!± quite quickly. I have no idea what the evaluation is here, but I would assume White is better. The idea is to play g5, push the knight back and grab e4 for our own knight. In my view, Black faces a tough defence. 17...Bc5 It's strategically advantageous to exchange dark-squared

bishops; the downside is that White can now push the d-pawn.

a) 17...Rfe8? 18.g5 e4 19.Bg2 and e4 drops and Black is done;

b) 17...Rac8 18.g5 Ne8 19.Ne4 f5 (19...Nc5 20.Bxc5 Bxc5 21.Rac1 b6 22.b4+-) 20.gxf6 gxf6 21.Rac1 This would be far from over, but the black position does not look great;

c) 17...Rfc8 18.g5 Ne8 19.Bg4 Rc7? 20.Nb5!+-



18.g5 Bxe3 19.fxe3 Ne8 20.d6 Rb8 21.Bg4+-

17...h6 18.Bxf6 Nxf6 19.g4 Rfc8 20.Ne4 White seems to want to exchange and make a draw, which is fair enough. A draw would gain White a lot of rating points.

20.Rac1 Rc5 21.Ne4 Nxe4 22.Bxe4 Rac8 23.Rxc5 Rxc5 24.Kf1 is similar to the game. 20.h4!? with the idea of playing g5 and still fighting for the initiative would have been more ambitious. Black can play ...g5 to prevent this, but this creates a hole on f5.

20...Nxe4 21.Bxe4 Rc5 22.Rac1 Rac8 23.Rxc5 Rxc5 24.Rd3 Kf8 Bringing the king into the centre is typical in the ending. White can try to exchange rooks but Black can now give up the c-file as the white rook can get to c8 and that's about it.

24...Rc2?! 25.Rc3 Rxb2 26.Rc8+ Bf8 27.d6 Rd2 28.Bxb7 Rxd6 29.Ra8: material is coming off and it is doubtful whether Black can win.

25.Rc3 Rb5 26.Kf1 26.h4 Ke7 27.g5 was possible. 27...hxg5 28.hxg5 g6: the pawn on g5 is a potential weakness, but whether Black can make use of that factor is questionable.

26...Rb4 27.f3 Ke7 28.Ke2 g6 Keith displays some patience. He quietly improves his position.

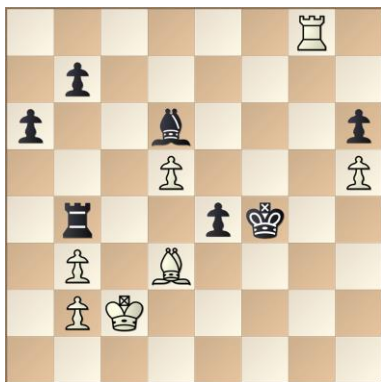
28...Kf6 29.Kd3 Kg5 30.Kc2 Kh4 31.Rc8 Kxh3 32.Rd8 Rb6 33.Rd7 is problematic for Black, as pawns are dropping. He could even lose.

29.Kd1 29.h4 Rb5. I'm not sure what to make of this position, but Black has one idea which is to play ... Kd8 to prevent Rc8, and then activate the bishop via c5. If it then reaches d4 he can start playing for a win.

29...Kf6 Black is teasing at the plan of ... Kg5–h4xh3, so understandably White reacts to this.

30.h4 30.Kc2 Kg5 31.Rc8 Kh4 (31...Kf4 like the game, and then try and play ... f5.. 32.Rd8 Rb6 33.Rd7 f5? 34.gxf5 gxf5 35.Rf7 winning a pawn and White will start pressing.) 32.Rd8 was similar to the line given earlier. White gives up a pawn to activate the rook.

30...Ke7 31.h5 gxh5 32.gxh5 Kf6! 33.Kc2 Kg5 34.Rc8 f5 35.Rg8+ Kf4 36.Bd3 e4 37.fxe4 fxe4



White is under the utmost pressure and now blunders.

38.Bf1? At this point I did check the engine, and the only way to survive was apparently 38.Bc4! b5 39.Rg6! which leads to equality, but this was very tough to find over the board.

38...Ke3 39.Rg6 Bf4 40.Re6 Rd4+— Black is now completely in control, and Keith proceeded to win some moves later.

0–1

Spectating with an engine

White, Stuart A (2051) - Hebden, Mark L (2430)
3rd 4NCL Easter Congress: 08.04.2023

You can also watch games with the engine running, although I'm not sure how much this helps you to improve. It means that you are not really using your brain, and are simply allowing the computer to show you all the hidden points of the game. I watched the following game

with an engine, probably because I was too lazy not to and the second round of the Masters was resuming in a couple of hours after a weather delay, and I did not want to be distracted from the excitement of watching Jon Rahm make birdies.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0–0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.g4 Nc5 9.f3 a5 10.Qd2 c6 11.Nge2 cxd5 12.cxd5 a4 13.Ng3 h5 14.gxh5 Nxh5 15.Nxh5 Qh4+ 16.Qf2 Qxh5 17.Bxc5 dxc5 18.0–0–0 Bd7 19.Bb5 Bxb5 20.Nxb5 a3 21.Nxa3 f5



22.Qg2! Something has gone wrong for Mark, as the engine gives this as the top move and says that Black is already lost! Could we have an upset on the cards? I think more fearful characters than Mark would offer a draw as Black here, try to get out of there, and then just try to win the afternoon game. But Mark is a stubborn character, and I doubt the possibility of trying to escape with a well-timed draw offer even crossed his mind.

22...c4 This is typical Mark, trying to mix it up. Obviously, if you take then he pins the knight and wins material. He also wants to play ...c3, opening White up on the queenside.

23.Kb1 23.Rhg1 Kh7 24.Kb1 c3 25.Nb5 cxb2 26.Nc7 was an engine variation similar to the game, and Black is cooked. The knight will come to e6 and inflict further pressure on Black's kingside.

23...c3 24.Nb5 White has embarked on the right path. It should be very easy to play the next few moves. Nc7 and then Ne6.

24...cxb2



25.Kxb2?? A terrible mistake according to the engine, throwing away all of the advantage. Suddenly Hebden has gone big favourite to win the game again (although arguably he always was). The pawn was doing a good job on b2 of shielding the white king from the attack. Obviously White must have feared ghosts.

25.Nc7 Ra4 26.d6 was just winning; 25.d6 was also very good. Just don't take the pawn and expose your king to checks.

25...fxe4! Correct - the rook needs access to the f-file; if it reaches f2 this spells trouble for White.

26.fxe4 Ra4 The engine prefers 26...Qh4! but of course you are mindful of unguarding g6. 27.Rd2 Ra4 and Black has already completely equalised, a major achievement from a few moves earlier.

27.Nc3 The computer is fearless and wants to play 27.Kb3! Rfa8 28.Rhg1 Rxa2 29.Qg4 with some chances of an edge. The knight on b5 is doing a good job of preventing the black rooks from reaching key squares, although it would take a strong nerve to play like this, marching your king up the board.

27...Rb4+ 28.Ka1 The computer thinks that 28.Kc2 is equally good, but most humans would prefer Stuart's choice. It is easier on the nerves to get your king out of the firing line.

28...Rc4?! Playing with fire. But as we've already discussed, Mark is a very combative player.

The engine says that 28...Qf3 29.Qxf3 Rxf3= was best. Although as the higher-rated player, you would be reluctant to go into such an endgame where the material is reduced, and White has a supported passed d-pawn.

29.Rd3! A dual-purpose rook, both defending c3 and also being able to be brought to g3 later to attack g6.

29...Rfc8?



Now Black is lost again, but as usual when you face such opposition it's a real practical test. White has only one way to win the game.

30.Qg3? Not finding the tactic, but this still looks tough for Heb to win. White is really putting up a brick wall.

30.d6! would have refuted the idea of taking on c3. 30...Rxc3? 31.d7+—

30...Rd4? It's kind of cruel when you annotate a game with an engine. This would look perfectly natural to me as well but the all-seeing engine thinks it is a mistake. It just makes all of us GMs look very weak in sharp and complex positions.

30...b5! 31.d6 b4 with a real mess was the engine's top line. 32.Nd5



and you might see this line over the board and realise that ... Rc1+ leads nowhere and give up on this variation. 32...Rxe4!! 33.Ne7+ Kh7 34.Nxc8 Re2 35.Kb1 e4 36.Rb3 Rd2 37.Qg4 Qe5 38.Qh4+ Kg8 39.Qd8+ Kh7 40.Qh4+=

31.Rb1! Bf6 32.Rf3? Over-elaborating is the chess player's curse.

White must have feared ghosts not to have played the simple 32.Rxb7 Bh4 33.Qf3+—

32...Bh4! Knocking the queen from g3 so that we can attack c3 again.

33.Qg4 Qxg4 34.hxg4 Rdc4 35.Rb3 Be7 Black wants to bring the bishop round to d4 via c5. This is a very human continuation, even if the engine says that is something of a mistake.

36.Kb2! Bb4 37.Rd3 b6 38.a3 38.d6 Kg7 39.d7 Rd8=

38...Bc5 39.d6 Kg7 40.d7 Rd8 41.Rd5 Bd4 42.Kc2 Rc7 Heb has fought back well in this game as he always does and is putting Stuart under pressure. White will lose the d-pawn but the engine says that the game is more or less equal as White can give this pawn and hold with the activity.

43.Kd3 Rcx d7 44.Rxd7+ Rxd7 45.Nd5?! The computer likes the cold-blooded 45.g5! not allowing the king to escape to h6.

45...Kh6! Heb scents blood.

46.Ke2 Kg5 47.Kf3 Rf7+ 48.Kg3 Rf1 49.Rf3 Rg1+ 50.Kh3 Stuart was now down to pretty much his increment for the rest of the game. He would do well to survive.

50...Re1 51.Nf6 Be3 52.Nh7+ Kh6 53.Nf6?! 53.Nf8! Bf4 54.Ne6 Rxe4 55.Kg2 would be a tough defence to find even if you weren't down to only a few seconds. 55...Kh7 56.Rxf4!=

53...Bf4! 54.Nd5 Rxe4 55.Kg2? 55.Rb3=

55...Kg5 56.Nxb6 Kxg4 57.Rb3 Re2+ 58.Kf1 Ra2 59.Nd5 g5+→



Very simple plan now for Black - just move the king and push the g-pawn and the onus is on White to come up with some kind of miracle.

60.Nc3 Ra1+ 61.Kg2 Kf5 62.Nb5 e4 63.Nd4+ Kg4 64.Ne6 Ra2+ 65.Kf1 e3 66.Nd4 Rf2+ 67.Ke1 Rd2 68.Ne2 Kf3

69.Ng1+ Ke4 70.Ne2 Bh2! 71.Rb4+ Kf3 72.Nd4+ Rxd4! An incredible fight from Stuart overall but Heb showed his class in the endgame and came through eventually.

0-1

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

The New World Champion

As I write this, the over-the-board World Championship has just started, and when this is published the new world champion should be nearly decided. In study composing, we already have a new world champion - the winner was decided in the autumn. At that time, in this column, I showed you some of his compositions; here are three more. He is, of course, Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen.

Nielsen is especially well-known for striking tactical effects in his studies, but the finest composers are masters of every kind of study. Our first Nielsen study displays such effects, but the second is a 'task' - it was composed to meet a specific challenge by the tourney judge - and the third is a simple bishop ending ('simple'... hmmm). We'll work through the first, then you can solve the second and third.



White to play and win

When you see cross-checks coming, it's wise to pause and consider: there may be some very devious tactics around. In this open position with major pieces, you obviously need to act immediately, but which are the candidate moves? 1.d8Q and 1.Qf1+ are what you'd examine in a game. Any others, because it's a study? I was tempted to move the white king, but I didn't get anywhere with that. So, I did look at 1.d8Q? Rc3+ 2.Kg4 Rc4+ 3.Kg5 Qe5+ and at 1.Qf1+? Rc4+ 2.Kg2 Qb7+ and neither of those seemed to be getting anywhere either. But it's a study that starts from a tactical position, and that makes an early big

surprise almost obligatory. So, I paused and considered. And examined the absurd. And found 1.Qe6+. 1.Qe6+ Rc6+ 2.Bd6. Surely that *really* is absurd? In a game, yes; in a study, best to check it out. 2...Rxd6 3.d8Q Qxd8 4.fxe7 Qc7 5.e8N is where I got to. White's pinning the rook, so there's no double check. That line must be right; ridiculous tactics and a knight underpromotion - composer's dream. Still have to finish solving it, though, so what clever ideas does Black have? White's had all the fireworks so far, and the best studies have tricks by both sides. Black's queen is a goner on c7, but maybe... ah-ha: 5...Qc3+ is a good way to throw it away, opening the a-file for his a-pawn. 5...Qc3+ 6.bxc3 Rxe6 7.Nc7+ Ka5 8.Nxe6 a3 9.Nd4 a2 10.Nc2 Ka4 11.Na1 Ka3 12.h5 Kb2 13.h6 Kxa1 14.h7 Kb1 15.h8Q a1Q 16.Qh1+ Kb2 17.Qxa1+ wins.

We do need to tidy up the alternatives. 2...exd6 3.Qe2+ works, for example after 3...Ka7 4.Qf2+ Ka6 5.f7 d5+ 6.Kh3 Qf8 7.d8Q Qxd8 9.f8Q. In the main line there are also 4...Rxe6 5.exd8Q and 4...Qb8 5.e8Q Rxe6+ Qxb8 winning. Later there is 10.Nb3+? Kb5 11.h5 Kc4 12.Na1 Kxc3 and 10.h5? Ka4 11.Nc2 Kb3 12.Na1+ Kxc3. Also in the main line, Black could have tried 10...Kb5 but 11.Kf3 Kc4 12.Ke2 Kxc3 13.Kd1 wins. Finally, in the main line there is 11.h5? Kb3 12.Na1 Kxc3.

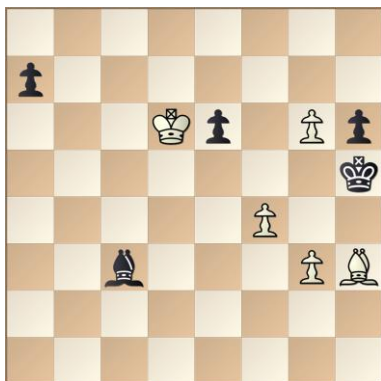
The full solution goes **1.Qe6+ Rd6+ 2.Bd6 Rxd6 3.d8Q Qxd8 4.fxe7 Qc7 5.e8N Qc3+ 6.bxc3 Rxe6 7.Nc7+ Ka5 8.Nxe6 a3 9.Nd4 a2 10.Nc2 Ka4 11.Na1 Ka3 12.h5 Kb2 13.h6 Kxa1 14.h7 Kb1 15.h8Q a1Q 16.Qh1+ Kb2 17.Qxa1+** wins. This study was in the magazine *Die Schwalbe* in 2021. It won their biannual informal tourney. The judge commented that the knight endgame didn't measure up to the tactical beginning, but still considered that the study deserved first prize. I see his point, although after such a hectic opening it's quite pleasant to have a lengthy relaxation.

Over to you. Two more Nielsen studies, both for you to solve. The first appeared in *ChessStar* in 2014. Its theme will be quickly obvious, but you still have to get the move sequence correct.



White to play and win

Our third Nielsen study took part in the Platov Memorial Tourney in 2021. You're going to have to use mating threats against the black king, so you need to keep him boxed in.



White to play and win

Ian Watson
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How to Solve a Study – solutions

(Nielsen - ChessStar 2014)

1.f8N+ Kf6 2.e8N+ Kf7 3.Nd6+ Ke7 4.c8N+ Kd8 5.Nf7+ Ke8 6.Ncd6+ Ke7 7.Ng6+ Kd7 8.b8N+ Kc7 9.a8N+ Kxb8 10.h8Q+ wins. The theme isn't only the five knight promotions, it's achieving that from a pawn endgame.

(Nielsen - Platov Memorial Tourney 2021)

1.g7 Bxg7 2.Kxe6 Kg6 3.Bf5+ Kh5 4.Kd5 a5 5.Ke4 a4 6.Kf3 a3 7.Kg2 Be5 8.Kh3 Bxf4 9.gxf4 a2 10.Be6 a1Q 11.Bf7 mate.

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

As in other recent Problem Corners, I'm extolling the merits of problems that were selected for inclusion in recent FIDE Albums. This time we have two series helpmates. A word of explanation first – 'helpmate' denotes a problem in which Black does all he can to help White in achieving the desired goal; 'series' means that one player plays an uninterrupted sequence of a specified number of moves to reach the position in which the desired objective can be accomplished. So, if you consider the two problems diagrammed, in the first one Black will play a sequence of three moves after which White can mate in one. There are three ways this can be done. (The play has to be *legal* so Black could not on his first move

the d2 rook, because that would give check and yet the next move was to be by Black.) And the second problem works in the same way, save that the sequences are of five moves.



Miodrag Mladenovic
2nd Place, Internet Tourney, Belgrade 2014
Series helpmate in 3 – 3 solutions



Igor Agapov and Lev Grolman
1st Place, 20th Russian Team Championship 2018
Series helpmate in 5 – 3 solutions

In the first of these problems, I pointed out that the d2 rook could not move on move 1 as that would give an illegal check. The same can be said of the f2 knight and the f3 bishop. These three pieces are lined up in batteries against the white king. As three is the number of solutions, this leads us to expect that each of these batteries is involved in one of the solutions, and that there will be a parallelism between what happens in relation to these three batteries in the three solutions. It helps, in the solving process, to know that Mladenovic is a renowned composer, and that this problem was judged 'Album-worthy'. So as there are three prominent possible mating moves, Rcd7, Red7 and Qd8, may not each of these figure in one solution?

And so it proves. For the first solution, play 1.Ba3. Now, with that battery dismantled, follow up with 2.Rd4. Why? Because the third move is to be 3.Bc5, which mustn't be a

check, since, with the square c5 no longer a potential flight square, White will play Rcd7#. Exactly the same logic motivates the two other sequences – 1.Rh6 2.Be4 3.Rxe6 Red7# and 1.Qg3 2.Ne4 3.Qe5 Qd8#.

In the second problem, there is again a black battery with which to contend. Moves off the fifth rank by the black king on move 1 would illegally give check. Yet the black knight will have to move, and so Black will have to put one of his pieces first on f5 to block the rank. And once the black knight has moved, we can expect that the black queen, no longer pinned by the white rook, will move in order to play a part in the forthcoming checkmate. What is especially pleasing is that it turns out that the black piece that went to f5 is going to have to make another move in the solution (in order to block a square to which the black king could otherwise flee), and that this determines the move order – the black queen must make its move first because (again) a move straight away by the f5 piece would illegally give check. So, we get three precisely matched sequences (congratulations if you found these for yourself!)

1.Bf5 2.Kd6 3.Qd7 4.Be4 5.Bc6 Be5#
 1.Nf5 2.Kc4 3.Qb4 4.Nd4 5.Nb3 Ne5#
 1.f5 2.Ke4 3.Qd3 4.f4 5.f3 Re5#.

Remarkably, each of the white pieces gives checkmate by moving to the same square. I think that the achievement of three lines as well matched as these, foregrounding in turn white bishop/white knight/white rook (but using the other two white officers in each case in a vital supporting role) and also in turn black bishop/black knight/black pawn, is fabulous, well-nigh perfect. (I guess that for complete perfection one might like *model* mates – each possible flight square either blocked or guarded by just one white piece – but that is inherently impossible in the first and third solutions, in which the white bishop/white rook is bound to be guarded by both the other white officers; note however that, importantly, in each of those cases both of the supporting officers fulfil unique roles in guarding particular potential flight squares.)

I think that many players enjoy series-movers like these for stretching the imagination (or just for fun!) – but are they too far removed from the play in an actual game to appeal to you? As ever, I'm very happy to receive responses, queries and observations at the email address below.

If you have any queries don't hesitate to contact me.
 Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk




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*









Elk and Ruby

www.elkandruby.com

Available in the UK
 from Chess & Bridge
 and on Amazon

EVENTS CALENDAR

The full events calendar is updated daily, and can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/>

27 April 2023	Junior 4 NCL Online Season 7 Semi Finals and Final
28 - 30 April 2023	3rd Cornwall Spring Congress - Falmouth
29 April – 1 May 2023	4NCL Rounds 9-11 - Milton Keynes
29 April – 1 May 2023	4NCL Rounds 9-11 - Warwick
29 April 2023	EJCOA Zonal Amershal Beacon - Amersham
29 April 2023	UKCC Surrey Megafinal (9 and below) - Leatherhead
29 April 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament - Poplar, London
29 April 2023	EPSCA Under 11 Final
29 April 2023	EJCOA Ealing Zonal RapidPlay - Ealing
30 April 2023	UKCC Middlesex Megafinal - London
30 April 2023	UKCC Surrey Megafinal (U10-18) - Leatherhead
Week Beginning 1 May	
2 May 2023	4NCL Online Season 7 Finals
4 - 8 May 2023	English Seniors Championships 2023 - Leamington Spa
6 May 2023	London FIDE Rapidplay - Acton
6 May 2023	Middlesex Seniors v Middlesex Juniors (U18) 2023 - Wembley
7 May 2023	UKCC Birmingham Megafinal 2023 - Birmingham
7 May 2023	3rd Northampton FIDE Rapidplay - Northampton
Week Beginning 8 May	
9 May 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid - London
12 - 14 May 2023	32nd Frome Chess Congress - Frome
12 - 14 May 2023	Durham County Chess Congress - Darlington
13 May 2023	ECF Counties Championship Quarter Finals - Newcastle
13 May 2023	UKCC Northumbria Megafinal - Newcastle
13 May 2023	UKCC Nottingham Megafinal - Nottingham
13 - 14 May 2023	My First Chess Tournament - London
13 May 2023	Maidenhead Junior Tournament May 2023 - Maidenhead
14 May 2023	UKCC 2023 North London Megafinal 1 - London
14 May 2023	UKCC Buckinghamshire Megafinal - Rickmansworth
14 May 2023	UKCC Herefordshire Megafinal - Hereford
Week Beginning 15 May	
20 May 2023	2023 Kenilworth Open - Kenilworth
20 May 2023	ECF Counties Championship Quarter Finals
20 May 2023	Worthing Junior Rapidplay - Worthing
20 May 2023	1st Orpington FIDE Rapidplay - Orpington
20 - 21 May 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress - London
20 May 2023	EJCOA National Youth Championship East Midlands Regional Final - Nottingham
21 May 2023	UKCC Essex Megafinal 2023 - Colchester
21 May 2023	Kensington FIDE Rapidplay Open - London
Week Beginning 22 May	
23 May 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid - London
26 - 29 May 2023	English Chess Championships and English Women's Chess Championships 2023 - Warwick