



Chess *Moves*

May 2023



**The Championship Season Continues
English Seniors and British
Rapidplay Reports**

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EDITORIAL



Greetings and a warm welcome to the May edition of *ChessMoves*.

Keeping connected is important and so we lead with information that will be very helpful if you want to get in contact with the ECF. Although the list is comprehensive, it can always be added to and so if you feel you should be there, just get in touch.

It's a full magazine this month and we have a report on the English Seniors Championship and a round-up of recent congresses, as well as the usual columns from superb contributors. We also have our first article dedicated to ECF members' games annotated by top players. If you would like to see your game annotated by one of our panel then please email office@englishchess.org.uk with some of the background to the game and why it was a memorable one for you.

The ECF held a charity blitz marathon to support the British Red Cross fund for Ukraine. You can read about it on pages 23 and 24. A full list of UK chess congresses to come over the next month tops off this issue.

And finally ... in all the excitement of preparing this year's yearbook, a number of interesting articles from *ChessMoves*, that had originally been earmarked for inclusion, were inadvertently omitted. We've updated the yearbook accordingly and draw readers' attention in particular to the articles celebrating England's team and individual successes in 2022 on the world senior chess stage. The link to the updated yearbook is here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Yearbook-Online-2023.pdf>

Enjoy, and see you in June!

--- IM Andrew Martin Email: a.martin2007@yahoo.co.uk

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EVENTS

2023 English Seniors Championships



English Seniors Championships playing venue - Woodland Grange, Old Milverton Lane, Near Leamington Spa



View from the top boards at the start of round 7 in the Over 50s. Photograph by Chief Arbiter Adrian Elwin

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

Schedule

This year's Seniors Championships were played with 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 - 15.00 – 20.00

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

Monday Round 7 - 11.00 – 15.00

Time Control and Rating

The time control for the event was 90 minutes per player with 30 second increments from move 1. Both sections were FIDE-rated and ECF-rated. Further details can be found at the link here:

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

Championships Report

This was the eighth edition of the English Seniors Championships, with previous events and champions as follows:

- 2008 - Andrew Whiteley
- 2009 - Richard Beach
- 2010 - Oliver Jackson and Norman Hutchinson
- 2011 - Four-way tie between Oliver Jackson, Ken Norman, Michael Yeo and George Dickson.
- 2014 (e2e4 English Seniors) - Stephen Berry
- 2019 50+ - Paul Littlewood, 65+ Kevin Bowmer
- 2022 (Chessable English Seniors) - 50+ Mark Hebden, 65+ Cliff Chandler

2023 50+ Championship

This year's 50+ tournament was the strongest championship to date, with top seeds including GMs Keith Arkell, Mark Hebden, Nigel Davies and Peter Wells, and a total of 38 players taking part.

Mark Hebden took an early lead after rounds 1 and 2, but was overtaken by Keith Arkell who finished round 6 on 5 points just ahead of Mark, Nigel Davies and Andrew Lewis all on 4½ points. Mark won his final round game, with Keith, Nigel and Andrew all drawing, which meant that Keith Arkell and Mark Hebden finished as joint champions followed by 3rd equal Nigel Davies and Andrew Lewis.

None of the top four players lost any of their games apart from Nigel Davies, who lost a critical round 5 game against Keith Arkell.

The Women's title was won by WIM Natasha Regan who finished on 3½ points.

50+ Championship Results	Player	Score
1st = and Joint English 50+ Champions	GM Keith Arkell and GM Mark Hebden	5½ points
3rd =	GM Nigel Davies and Andrew Lewis	5 points
Women's 50+ Champion	WIM Natasha Regan	3½ points
U2000 Performance	Barry J Hymer	
U1800 Performance	Saket Singhal	

2023 65+ Championship

The 65+ tournament was also the strongest yet, with top seeds including IMs Paul Littlewood and Chris Baker and once again a total of 38 players taking part. Paul Littlewood took an early lead with wins in the first three rounds before drawing in a critical round 4 game against Chris Baker. Chris and Paul were joint leaders on 5 points after round 6, followed by Roger de Coverley and Kevin Bowmer on 4½ points. Chris then won his final round game against Roger, with Paul drawing with Ian Snape.

This meant that Chris Baker was outright winner with 6 out of 7, with five wins, two draws (against Norman Hutchinson and Paul Littlewood) and no losses. Paul Littlewood was second on 5½ and Kevin Bowmer and Paul Raynes finished third equal on 5 points.

The Women's title was won by Susan Selley who finished on 3 points.

1st and English 65+ Champion	IM Chris Baker	6 points
2nd	IM Paul Littlewood	5½ points
3rd =	Kevin Bowmer and Paul Raynes	5 points
Women's 65+ Champion	Susan Selley	3 points
U2000 Performance	Roger de Coverly	
U1800 Performance	Nigel Collins	

Prize Giving



English Women's Champions Susan Selley (65+) and Natasha Regan (50+)



ECF Home Director Nigel Towers with 65+ Champion IM Chris Baker



WIM Natasha Regan, IM Chris Baker, GM Keith Arkell and IM Paul Littlewood

Results

A full set of results and cross-tables can be found on Chess-Results.com here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr760158.aspx?lan=1&art=0&fed=ENG>

Commentary was provided on the last two rounds by FM Jonathan Blackburn and WIM Lan Yao. Recordings are available on YouTube at the links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpea7Alna1A>

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbb8_0kMg5o

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 4.0-0 0-0 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

Games from the English Seniors Championships by Keith Arkell (picture by Carl Portman)



Currently seniors chess is our most successful category on the international stage, and this was reflected in the strength of the 2023 English Senior Championships.

In the Over 65s there were two IMs battling it out at the top - namely the 1981 British Champion Paul Littlewood and a leading Midlands player from that period, Chris Baker. Last year both were members of World Championship winning teams - in Paul's case the Over 65s, while Chris was in the successful England 50+ team.

Meanwhile the English Senior (50+) Championship boasted more GMs than some full British Championships! And the top two seeds had both won individual gold and team gold medals in last year's World Championships.

The Woodland Grange Hotel in Leamington Spa nicely accommodated about 80 of us in its spacious and well-ventilated playing venue.

Onto the chess then, and the dogfight between Littlewood and Baker was resolved in the final round, when Chris

overcame Roger De Coverley while Paul was held to a draw by Ian Snape.

I was torn between annotating Chris's excellent use of the initiative against Paul Raynes - a friend of mine from the Midlands who has made a welcome return to chess recently - and a smooth positional game. I settled on the latter to reward Chris for playing an opening which is named after me in most sources!

Geoffrey Moore – IM Chris Baker

2023 English Senior (65+) Round 6

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. dxc5 Bg4 6. c3 e6 7. Be3 Nge7 8. Bb5 Qc7 9. Nbd2 a6 10. Qa4 Bxf3 11. Nxf3 Rc8 12. Bd3 Ng6 13. Bxg6 hxg6



It is often difficult to regain the Pawn in the Arkell-Khenkin line against the Advance Caro-Kann, but you can usually rely on some positional compensation. Here it can be a little awkward for White both to defend e5 and prevent counter-play either on the h-file or by pushing the g-pawn.

14. O-O Be7 15. Rfe1 Kf8 16. Bd4 Qd7 17. Qd1 g5



18. Nd2 I think it would be better to wait for Black to expose his g-pawn on g4 before making this retreat. Something sensible like 18. Qe2 should keep him on top.

18...f5 19. exf6 gxf6 20. f3 Kf7



By now compensation for the material is very real. The pawns are wonderfully flexible, and Chris can start to apply pressure on the kingside.

21. Bf2

Allowing the black knight to enter his position with some impact. 21 Nb3 would still have left the game in the balance.

21...Ne5 22. b4 Nd3 23. Re2 b6

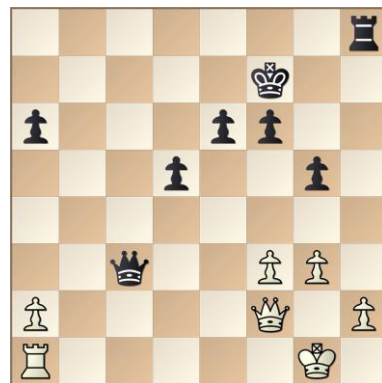


This breaks up White's position and leaves Black in command.

24. Nb3

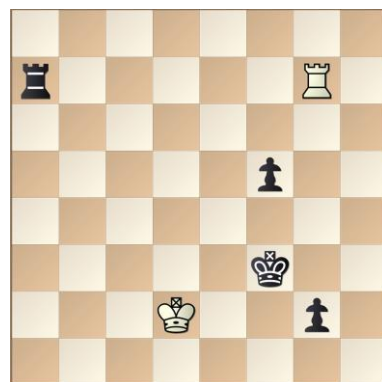
If 24 cxb6 25 Nxf2 26 Rxf2 Rxc3, when White has too many weaknesses to survive.

24...Nxf2 25. Rxf2 bxc5 26. Nxc5 Rxc5 27. bxc5 Bxc5 28. Qe2 Qc7 29. g3 Bxf2+ 30. Qxf2 Qxc3



There is still plenty of work to be done but Baker should be able to go on and convert this position.

31. Rb1 Rc8 32. Rb2 Qc5 33. Rb7+ Kg6 34. Qxc5 Rxc5 35. Rb6 Rc1+ 36. Kf2 Rc2+ 37. Ke3 Kf5 38. Rxa6 Rxh2 39. g4+ Ke5 40. Kd3 f5 41. gxf5 exf5 42. Ra5 Kf4 43. a4 Ra2 44. Kc3 Ra3+ 45. Kb4 Rxf3 46. Rxd5 Re3 47. a5 g4 48. a6 Re8 49. a7 Ra8 50. Rd7 g3 51. Kc3 g2 52. Rg7 Kf3 53. Kd2 Rxa7



Impeccable technique in the R+P ending. 0-1

On to the Over 50s now, and this important round 5 game against a solid GM who has been making a comeback over much of the last year enabled me to take the outright lead on 4½/5:

GM Keith Arkell – GM Nigel Davies

2023 English Senior (50+) Championship

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. d4 h6



Though theoretically only equal it is no secret that I love to play these positions in which I have an e-pawn for my opponent's c-pawn. Given how much it restricts White's options I'm surprised how little we see of 5...h6!?

6. Bf4 Bd6 7. Bxd6 Qxd6 8. e3 O-O 9. Be2 Bg4 10. Qb3 Nbd7 11. O-O Rab8 12. Rfe1 c6 13. Rac1 Rfe8 14. a3 Qe7 15. Qxb4



15...Qxb4

I can't really fault this move, and it is certainly the top engine choice, but I felt that Nigel was being a little too compliant in letting me steer the game towards a position I was bound to enjoy. If instead he just moves his queen to somewhere like e6 I'm not really sure what mine can achieve over on the queenside.

16. axb4 a6 17. Na4 Ne4 18. Nc5 Ndxc5 19. bxc5



So why would most GMs agree that White is a little better here? The only real difference is that I have an e-pawn in exchange for Black's a-pawn, but this is significant! It means White can call all the shots. I can spend a great deal of time deciding when and how to break with e4. Do I back the move with f3 first or do I simply bring the king to the centre and retake with pieces? According to 'Arkell's Hierarchy of Pawns' the e-pawn is four files stronger than the a-pawn! I would like to show you a model game which made a big impression on me as a 17 year old watching the World Championship match between Karpov and Korchnoi.

It matters not one iota that the engine considers Karpov to be equal for about 58 of the 71 moves. It was Korchnoi pulling all the strings and that can never be easy for the long term defender:

Korchnoi v Karpov
Baguio 1978

1. c4 e6 2. Nc3 d5 3. d4 Nf6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 O-O 7. Bd3 Nbd7 8. Nf3 Re8 9. Qc2 c6 10. O-O Nf8 11. Bxf6 Bxf6 12. b4 Bg4 13. Nd2 Rc8 14. Bf5 Bxf5 15. Qxf5 Qd7 16. Qxd7 Nxd7 17. a4 Be7 18. Rfb1 Nf6 19. a5 a6 20. Na4 Bf8 21. Nc5 Re7 22. Kf1 Ne8 23. Ke2 Nd6 24. Kd3 Rce8 25. Re1 g6 26. Re2 f6 27. Rae1 Bh6 28. Ndb3 Bf8 29. Nd2 Bh6 30. h3 Kf7 31. g4 Bf8 32. f3 Rd8 33. Ndb3 Nb5 34. Rf1 Bh6 35. f4 Bf8 36. Nd2 Nd6 37. Rfe1 h6 38. Rf1 Rb8 39. Ra1 Rbe8 40. Rae1 Rb8



41. e4 dxe4+ 42. Ndxex4 Nb5 43. Nc3 Rxe2 44. Rxe2 Bxc5 45. bxc5 Rd8 46. Nxb5 axb5 47. f5 gxf5 48. gxf5 Rg8 49. Kc3 Re8 50. Rd2 Re4 51. Kb4 Ke8 52. a6 bxa6 53. Ka5 Kd7 54. Kb6 b4 55. d5 cxd5 56. Rxd5+ Kc8 57. Rd3 a5 58. Rg3 b3 59. Kc6 Kb8 60. Rxb3+ Ka7 61. Rb7+ Ka6 62. Rb6+ Ka7 63. Kb5 a4 64. Rxf6 Rf4 65. Rxh6 a3 66. Ra6+ Kb8 67. Rxa3 Rxf5 68. Rg3 Rf6 69. Rg8+ Kc7 70. Rg7+ Kc8 71. Rh7 1-0

19...Re7 20. Ne5 Bxe2 21. Rxe2 Rd8 22. g4 Nf6 23. h3 Nd7 24. Nd3

The defence would be much easier without knights.

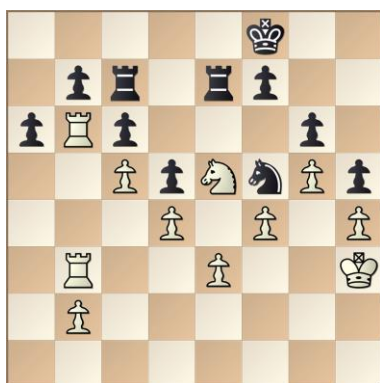
24...Nf8 25. Kg2 Ne6 26. Ree1 Rde8 27. h4 g6 28. Rh1 Kh7
29. g5 h5 30. Ne5 Nf8



31. f4?

Too rigid. I should keep all options open, but I was seduced by the idea that Nigel might be planning to exchange Knights when the recapture fxe5 must be close to winning by force. Had I kept the pawn on f2 I would have been more free to go after b7 with both rooks and the knight. That plan is far more difficult with an undefended pawn on e3.

31...Ne6 32. Rc3 Ng7 33. Rb3 Nf5 34. Kh3 Kg7 35. Ra1 Rc7
36. Ra4 Kf8 37. Rab4 Ree7 38. Rb6

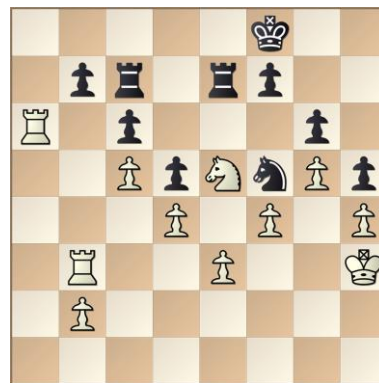


38...Ke8? I felt curiously sure that Nigel Davies was going to make this blunder, but had he moved his king back to the kingside I would have probed for hours, though probably without success. And all because 31 f4? was far too committal.

39. Rxa6

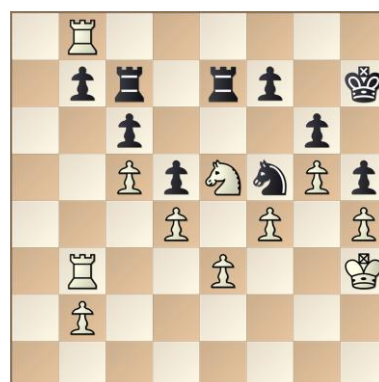
Winning on the spot.

39... Kf8



40. Ra7 Due to Zugzwang this is more accurate than 40 Ra8+ Re8.

40...Kg7 41. Ra8 Kh7 42. Rb8



1-0

In the final round, believing my tiebreak to be very good, I agreed a draw fairly early against FM Andrew Lewis after he had done a good preparation job and already had a very comfortable position.

In the end Nigel Davies drew and Mark Hebden won, with Mark and me finishing on 5½ points each. Due to some ambiguity over the tie-breaks, the ECF awarded us the 50+ title jointly.

To complete the article, congratulations to Susan Selley, 65+ Women's Champion, and to WIM Natasha Regan, who won the Women's 50+ title for the second year in a row.

Games from the English Seniors Championships

by Chris Baker



I was asked to annotate one of my games from the recent English Seniors Over 65s event, so I chose one of the games I didn't win! I felt this was a critical game as Black in round 4 against Paul Littlewood (I was hoping to play him in round 5 as White!). Before the event started, I

thought Paul was the firm favourite due to his strength and experience at a high level. As I was a half point behind him a win for me would mean that I would leapfrog him, a draw would be satisfactory, but a loss would open up a 1½ point gap.

I should mention there was also other strong opposition in Mark Page (who I last played 44 years before! and is my 4NCL team captain), Ian Snape (a member of the Over 65s team that won the World Championship the previous year), and Paul Raynes whose sharp and original play gave his opponents a headache on more than one occasion.

Paul E Littlewood - Chris W Baker B11
English Seniors 65+ Round 4 06.05.2023

1 e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Bg4 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3



5...e6 After the game Paul said Petrosian recommended 5...Nf6, as 6. e5 Nfd7 e6 leads to nothing for White.

6.d4 Qb6 7.exd5 cxd5 8.Bb5+ Nc6 9.0-0 Bd6!



I like this move, as I had anticipated White's response and my reply.

10.Qg4 Kf8



11.Bxc6 Nf6 Just a tempo-gaining move by putting the knight on its most natural square and so I can see where the queen goes to before deciding how to recapture on c6.

12.Qf3 bxc6 Paul thought, and no doubt he is correct, that 12...Qc6 is a viable alternative.

13.Bf4 Bxf4 14.Qxf4 Qb8!



A good move and necessary, as 14 ...Qxb2?? 15. Qd6+ wins outright.

15.Qd2 h5!? 15 ... Qxb2 is now possible, but White once again would gain quite an initiative and I didn't want to

have to find accurate defensive moves when I was already getting way behind on the clock.

16.Na4 Ne4 17.Qe3 g6 18.Rfe1 Kg7 19.c3 a5 Weakens the b6 square, but I can't allow White to play b4 getting a bind on c5.

20.b3 h4 Gaining space, discouraging g4 ideas and giving me the h5 square to use should I wish.

21.Rac1 Rh5 22.c4



22...Nd6?! I think this is wrong; maybe a rook lift to f5 was better.

23.cxd5 Rxd5! This is a better move than it might appear due to a surprising resource Black has later. 23...cxd5 gives White all the play.

24.Rxc6 Nf5 25.Qc3 Rxd4 Not the sort of move I would normally want to play as it self pins the rook, but in fact it's difficult for White to exploit this.

26.Rc4 Qd6 27.Nc5!



Strong, as it recentralises the knight and creates new problems for Black to face.

27...e5 I'm not sure about this move; it does unpin the rook but creates a potential weakness as well. 27...Kg8 was an alternative method.

28.Ne4 Rxc4 29.Qxc4 Qb4 I want White to exchange, as a2 becomes a target and the pawn on b4 restricts any chance for White to utilise his queenside majority.

30.Rc1 Paul's having none of it!

30...Nd4 31.Kf1 A good waiting move and bringing the king closer to the centre for the ensuing endgame, whilst also stopping a potential future check on e2.

31...Rd8 32.Qc5 Re8 33.Rc4! Annoyingly forcing me to exchange queens on his terms. I know from this point I was playing on increment, sometimes getting to just a few seconds, while at this stage Paul had over 12 minutes on his clock.

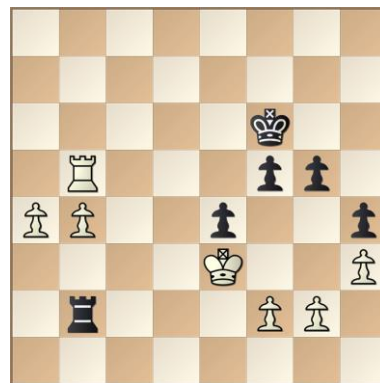
33...Qxc5 34.Rxc5 f5 35.Nc3 e4 I need activity, and while the connected passed pawns are strong White has to concede some ground.

36.Rxa5 Rc8



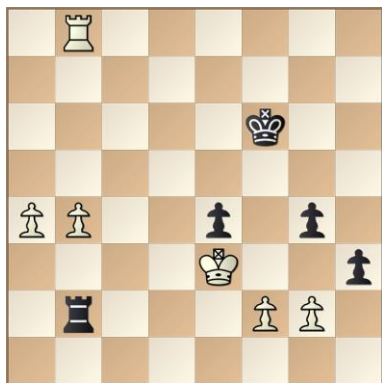
37.Ne2 37. Nd1 was possible but no better.

37...Nxe2 38.Kxe2 Rc2+ 39.Ke3 Kf6 40.b4 g5 41.a4 Rb2 42.Rb5



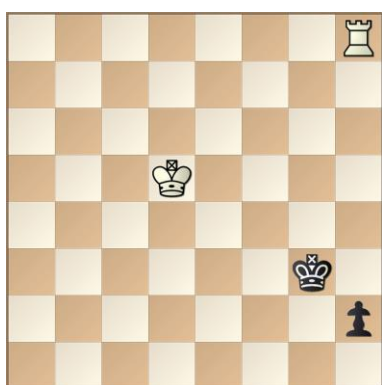
42...g4?! This could well be wrong and 42...Rb3+ could be better, but with little time I had to go with my gut.

43.hxg4 fxg4 44.Rb8 h3



I wanted to create my own passer, but remembered at the time also wanting to play 44...g3.

45.gxh3 gxh3 46.b5 Kf5 47.Rf8+ Kg4 48.Kxe4 Rb4+ 49.Kd5 Rxa4 50.Rh8 Rf4 51.b6 Rxf2 52.b7 Rb2 53.b8Q Rxb8 54.Rxb8 h2 55.Rh8 Kg3



½-½

2023 British Rapidplay Championship 15th-16th April by Keith Arkell



Let me begin by heartily congratulating the 4NCL, in this case supported by the ECF and endorsed by the British Isles Coordinating Committee, on their diverse selection of playing venues - all of which double up as hotels for the convenience of the participants.

The Mercure Bradford, Bankfield Hotel is a Gothic-style mansion in the heart of Brontë country, on the banks of the River Aire, with glorious countryside views in all directions.

With the usual assemblage of highly competent officials in charge we could all look forward to an enjoyable two days of rapid chess.

A few weeks earlier I had wrecked a long run of weekend tournament 1st places by defaulting round 1 when I boarded the wrong train and ended up at Reading instead of Bristol, but here it was my young opponents who ensured as early as round 2 that I was unlikely to come 1st.

After drawing in round 1 against Sebastian Mokhber-Garcia (born 2010) I got wiped out by Advait Keerthi Kumar (born 2013) in round 2!

To be fair to myself I had just returned from one of the toughest simul I have ever given where an enjoyable and invigorating display versus the best of the British armed forces took me all day to complete.

Throughout the Championship I continued to play against the country's youngest talents, drawing with Kajus Mikalajunas (born 2010), just about scraping through a tough encounter with the already celebrated rising star Bodhana Sivanandan (born 2015), and finishing with a draw against the already very strong Rajat Makhar (born 2008).

By comparison I had very little trouble against my adult opponents, just dropping a draw against the youngest of these - Luke Lau. So, a respectable 8/11 in the end, but no more than that.

The Championship was dominated by Ameet Ghasi, who racked up an impressive 10 points - 1½ clear of the field. Recently Ameet scored his first GM norm at the age of 35, and I hope he soon makes two more, as it would be absurd if someone so talented didn't get there in the end.



Ameet Ghasi, with permission of British Chess News/John Upham Photography

Now on to the games.

Ameet Ghasi - Peter Wells

2023 British Rapidplay Ch (10)

The vast majority of Ameet's nine wins were, quite frankly, annihilations, but the penultimate round saw a clash which, in the event of three-time Champion Peter Wells winning, would have left all to play for in the last round.

1.Nf3 c5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 g6 4.0-0 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.c4 e6 7.Nc3 Nge7 8.Bd2 0-0 9.a3 b6 10.Rb1 Bb7 11.b4 Qd7 12.e3 Rab8 13.Na4 e5 14.Nc3 f5 15.Qa4 h6 16.Nd5 Qe8 17.Qc2 Nxd5 18.cxd5 Ne7 19.bxc5 bxc5 20.e4 Qd7 21.Qc4 Ba8



There is nothing much wrong with this, but I would expect a King's Indian player to get things moving here with 21...g5!

22.Bc3 Kh7 23.Nd2 Rb7 24.Rxb7 Bxb7 25.Rb1 Qc8 26.Qa4 Ba6 27.Nc4 Bxc4 28.dxc4 fxe4



29.Qxa7? Often when a move doesn't look right it is with good reason. Here the straightforward 29 Bxe4 maintains White's positional edge.

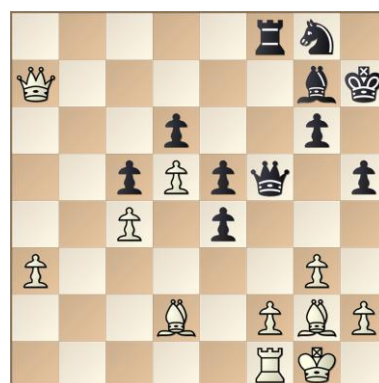
29...Qf5 30.Rf1



30...Ng8? This was Peter's chance to keep the game in the balance: 30...e3! to meet 31 Qxe7? (31 fxe3 Qd3 is fine) with 31...e2 when there is no good square for the rook. For example, 32 Ra1 Qxf2+ 33 Kh1 Rf3! 34 Ba5 Rd3, or 32 Rc1 Qxf2+ 33 Kh1 Qe3 or 32 Re1 Qxf2+ 33 Kh1 Qxe1+! 34 Bxe1 Rf1+ 35 Bxf1 exf1#.

31.Bd2 Ghasi now maintains a firm grip until the end.

31...h5



32.Qc7 e3 33.Bxe3 Qf6 34.a4 Rf7 35.Qb6 Bh6 36.a5 Ne7
37.Bxh6 Kxh6 38.a6 Nc8 39.Qb3 h4 40.Bh3 Na7 41.Be6
Re7 42.Rb1 Kg7 43.Qe3 g5 44.Rb7 Kf8 45.Qe4 Kg7
46.Kg2 hxg3 47.hxg3 Kh6 48.Qg4 Rxb7 49.axb7 Qd8
50.Qf5



1-0

Surprisingly this was Ameet Ghasi's first outright British Rapidplay title, though he has shared it a couple of times.

Meanwhile Kamila Hryshchenko took the Women's title with 7½/11.

This flawed but fighting encounter with GM Danny Gormally shows what Kamila is capable of:

Kamila Hryshchenko - Danny Gormally
2023 British Rapidplay Championship (7)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Be3 a6 5.Qd2 Nd7 6.h4 h6
7.0-0-0 b5 8.f3 c6 9.Kb1 Qc7 10.Nge2 Nb6 11.Ng3 b4
12.Nce2 Nc4 13.Qd3 Nxe3 14.Qxe3 Qa5 15.Nc1 Nf6
16.Be2 h5 17.f4 Ng4 18.Bxg4 Bxg4 19.Rd2 0-0 20.e5
Rac8 21.Ne4 c5 22.dxc5 dxe5 23.fxe5 Bxe5 24.Nf2 Bf6
25.Nxg4 hxg4 26.Nd3 Kg7 27.h5 Rh8 28.h6+ Kh7 29.Rf2
Rhd8 30.Rf4 Rxd3 31.Qxd3 Rxc5 32.Qb3 Rd5 33.Rxb4
Qd8 34.a3 e6 35.Rb7 Rd1+ 36.Rxd1 Qxd1+ 37.Ka2 Kxh6
38.Rxf7 Qd4 39.c3 Qe5 40.Qc4 g3 41.Rd7 a5 42.Rc7 Qf5
43.Rc5 Qf2 44.Qxe6 Qxc5 45.Qxf6 Qd5+ 46.Ka1 Qd1+
47.Ka2 Qd5+ 48.Ka1

½-½

4NCL Easter Congress 15th-18th April by Keith Arkell



By now we have got used to the smooth running of 4NCL events, and, with the familiar presence of Shohreh Bayat and Matthew Carr at the helm of its Easter Congress in the spacious playing hall of the Mercure Hotel in Daventry, I expected no less this time around.

As has become the norm in many events these days, the battle was mostly fought out between experienced GMs and ludicrously under-rated youngsters.

The FIDE ratings of most active players have taken quite a knock, as there are not only hordes of kids who can be as low as 1700 while already playing at 2200 level, but also active adult opponents whose ratings have typically gone down 150 or more points as a result of playing these juniors.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on this far from unimportant matter. I must give credit where it is due and point out that the ECF grades are at present far more accurate than those produced by FIDE. Time and again when colleagues see the FIDE rating of their next opponent, they look up the player's ECF rating to get a better idea of his or her playing level. They then see that the 1850-rated 14 year old is far more correctly rated at 2120 by the ECF! Until FIDE mends its rating list it is good to see that even the biggest international tournaments in the UK, such as Cambridge, are now seeded using the higher of the two ratings.

Why does the ECF rating system work better than that of FIDE? It's better to ask a statistician, but in my opinion here are three areas:

1) Ratings statistician Jeff Sonas said the best K-factor is 24. This is the number by which you multiply the difference between your expected score and your actual score to calculate your rating change.

FIDE protects the status quo at the top by limiting the K-factor to just 10 for anyone who has ever passed 2400,

whereas the ECF correctly does not allow anyone a K-factor of less than 20.

2) When you work hard to beat an under-rated junior who is, say, 600 points below you, FIDE can give you just 0.2 of a rating point after you have risked losing 9.8 (19.6 for some!), whereas the ECF will never give you less than 1.6 for such a win.

And 3) Nearly all games played in England are ECF-rated whereas many are not FIDE-rated, which causes the ratings of rapidly improving youngsters to lag. And, better still, the ECF have recently announced that we can now apply in advance to have our games played in other countries rated.

Ever since FIDE reduced the rating floor to 1000 in 2012, I have been screaming 'deflation!', while many were seduced by the false claims of inflation.

Anyway, on to the chess, and of the GMs only Mark Hebden made it to 3/3:

Round 3

Mark Hebden - Matthew Dignam

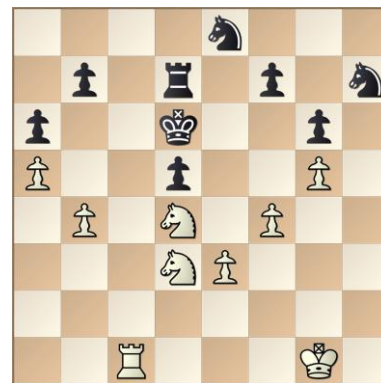
1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 Nf6 4. e3 c5 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Bb5+ Bd7 7. Bxd7+ Nbx7 8. dxc5 Bxc5 9. O-O O-O 10. Nc3 Nb6 11. b3 Qd7 12. Bb2 Rfe8 13. Ne2 Ne4 14. Bd4 Bxd4 15. Qxd4 Rac8 16. a4 Rc2 17. Qd3 Rec8 18. a5 Na8 19. Nf4 Nf6 20. Nd4 R2c3 21. Qf5 Qxf5 22. Nxf5 Kf8 23. Nd4 Nc7 24. Rfd1 g6 25. b4 a6 26. Rab1



26...Rd8

White has nurtured a small advantage for much of the game, but Matthew Dignam should hold onto the c-file and play something active such as 26...Ne4. Instead, he cedes some ground and his position begins to deteriorate.

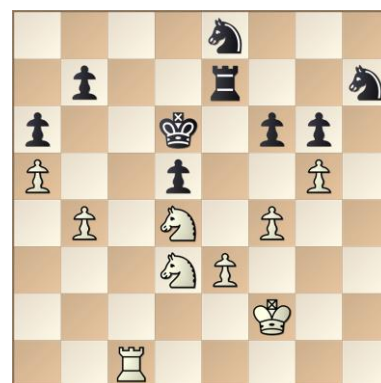
27. Rbc1 Rxc1 28. Rxc1 Rd7 29. f3 Ke7 30. Nd3 Nce8 31. g4 h6 32. h4 Kd6 33. g5 hxg5 34. hxg5 Nh7 35. f4



35...Re7

35...Rc7 was a more promising attempt to hold the game, whereas now White's space and initiative continue to grow.

36. Kf2 f6

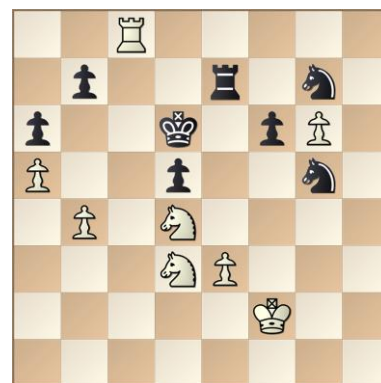


But now it's too late as 36...Rc7 37 Rh1 maintains the pressure.

37. f5

Strong as this move is, 37 b5! was even better. Here is a sample line: 37...axb5 38 a6! bxa6 39 Rc6+ Kc7 40 Nc5+ Kd8 41 Rxa6 and Black's position is in tatters.

37...Nxg5 38. fxg6 Ng7 39. Rc8



39...Ne4+

39...N5e6 would have forced Mark to work harder for the point, but now it looks like Black has no more chances.

40. Kg2 Ng5 41. Rd8+ Kc7 42. Rg8



42...b6

A blunder in a horrible position.

43. Nf4 Rd7 44. Rxc7 1-0

Although I only drew my game, I did achieve the rare feat of playing eight of my next ten moves with pawns on the g-file, and as a bonus it was from my own variation against the Advance Caro-Kann:

Round 3

Javier Valdepenas Octavio – Keith C. Arkell



11...hxc6 12. Nd2 g5 13. Qg3 g4 14. Nb3 Qh4 15. Qf4 g6 16. Qa4 g3 17. Qxh4 Rxh4 18. f4 g5 19. O-O gxh2+ 20. Kh1 gxf4



Mark took the outright lead in Round 4, but only after Okhai Shabir missed the chance to deliver a knockout blow.

Round 4

Okhai Shabir – Mark Hebden



27. Qa3

Instead, Shabir could have played 27 Nxc4!, winning easily.

12-year-old talent Jude Shearsby joined Mark Hebden on 4½/5 after this fine game, in which he broke through with a rook sacrifice:

Round 5

Aditya Verma – Jude Shearsby

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.h3 e5 7.Nde2 h5 8.Bg5 Be6 9.Bxf6 Qxf6 10.Nd5 Qd8 11.Nec3 Nd7 12.a4 g6 13.a5 Rc8 14.b3 Nf6 15.Ra4 Bxd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Qxd5 Rxc2 18.Bc4 Rc1+ 19.Ke2 Rc2+ 20.Ke1 Qf6 21.Be2 Bh6 22.Rc4 Rxc4 23.Bxc4 0-0 24.Ke2 Qg5 25.g3 Kh8 26.Qxd6 Rd8 27.Qc7 Rd2+ 28.Kf1



28...Rxf2+ 29.Kxf2 Qe3+ 30.Kg2 Qxe4+ 31.Kg1 Be3+ 32.Kf1 Qf3+

When the dust had settled, the three GMs had all drawn with each other, but Mark Hebden won his other five games whereas I had to settle for 2nd place after dropping the draw mentioned earlier. Nigel Davies was in a tie for 3rd with Okhai Shabir, Martin Burrows and Javier Valdepenas.

On this occasion we got the better of the juniors, but time is on their side! I can't think of any moment in the past when I would have been so relieved to beat three 12/13-year-olds, but Kajus Mikalajunas, Theo Khoury and Jude Shearsby are no ordinary youngsters!

46th Nottingham Congress by John Swain



The 46th Nottingham Congress took place on the weekend of 15th and 16th April at our usual venue, Nottingham High School. It was a five-round, ECF-rated, standard play Swiss, with five sections as follows:

Open – 1st prize £750 2nd £325 3rd £150 plus rating prizes £50: U2150 and U2050

Major (Under 1950) – 1st prize £150 2nd £100 3rd £50 plus rating prize £30: U1900

Intermediate (Under 1750) – 1st prize £150 2nd £100 3rd £50 plus rating prize £30: U1700

Minor (Under 1550) – 1st prize £150 2nd £100 3rd £50 plus rating prize £30: U1500

Improvers (Under 1350) – 1st prize £150 2nd £100 3rd £50 plus rating prize £30: U1150

Congratulations to GM Mark Hebden who collected £750 as winner of the Open, and to all the other prize-winners. Mark last won the event outright in 2012 (he was joint winner with two others in 2014).

Thanks are due to our generous sponsor Marcel Taylor, the Nottinghamshire Chess Foundation which underwrote the event in the case of a financial loss (which fortunately didn't happen), the 153 players who competed in five sections (an entry level similar to pre-pandemic times), the control team, and not least to the parents who staffed a hot drinks facility which raised over £281 for Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

A report, including the prize-winners and final scores of all the sections, plus links to the full results, can be seen here: <https://www.nottinghamshirechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Congress-Report-Results-2023.pdf>

UK Armed Forces Chess Championships 14th-17th April by Kevin Thurlow and Ben Woolf

The event took place at RAF Wittering. 83 players participated, nearly double last year's entry, and certainly the largest entry for many years, maybe the largest ever. The venue was full, so some potential entries had to be turned away. The entertainment started on 13th April when Keith Arkell took on 34 players simultaneously, and bravely offered opponents the choice of colour. He did get about a dozen Whites. After many hours, he finished with a score of +28=3-3, which was very impressive (and he improved his score against me to 18-0).



Keith Arkell Simul. Photo by Ben Woolf

The actual tournament is open to current and former members of the RAF, Army and Navy, as well as current and former employees of the Ministry of Defence. Apart from prizes for the Combined Services champion and the individual bodies, the top six eligible players are invited to form the team for the NATO championships, to be held in Portoroz, Slovenia, venue for the 1958 Interzonal:

[https://www.mark-weeks.com/chess/5860\\$ix.htm](https://www.mark-weeks.com/chess/5860$ix.htm)

As always, there was a varied mix of established players and those new to tournament chess, although many of those had played a lot online. There were many unrated players, who will be overheating ECF's rating computer when it calculates results! Everyone seemed to enjoy the tournament, and there was a good atmosphere. It was excellent to see so many newcomers and also players like John Treasurer, many time winner in the 80s, who happily drove for nine hours each way to participate, and also two players now aged in their 90s.



Paul Officer, RAF Championship winner, plays blitz. Photo by Ben Woolf

Results of UKAF Championship

Dave Onley 6/7 (Combined Services for the 8th time, and Army Champion yet again)

Dan Wells 6 (MOD Champion)

Paul Officer 5½ (RAF Champion on debut)

Frazer Graham 5½ (but no trophy, sadly...)

Kevin Thurlow 5½ (Veterans Champion)

William Bradley 4½ (Navy Champion)

Glen Parker won the blitz event 7/7, ahead of Dan Wells and Kevin Thurlow on 6. There were rating prizes also, and Carl Portman donated book prizes for the 'Game of the Round'.

Thanks go to Chris Lamming (Chief Arbiter) and his assistant Alex, who was stuck on the reserve list to play, so volunteered to help with the organisation, Jimmy Blair (our host) and the Station Commander, who gave an inspiring and brief opening speech. Glen Parker is President of the Association and Ben Woolf the Chairman, and he would be very pleased to hear from anyone eligible and interested in getting involved by email at benwoolf@hotmail.co.uk

<https://chess-results.com/tnr752431.aspx?lan=1&art=4>

3rd Cornwall Spring Congress

by Ian George



From 1904 to 2019 the Emigrant Cup, awarded to the county champion, and from 1921 the Falmouth Cup, a rating limited tournament, were closed events restricted to players from or resident in Cornwall. In 1996, the Penwith Cup, donated by Roger Grey, county president at the time,

was added for the winners of a 'Minor' competition. These events usually attracted about 30 players and were held in small village halls or school premises. In 2019 the decision was taken to seek a higher quality venue and make the congress open to all-comers.

Our organisers, Colin and Rebecca Gardiner, recommended the Falmouth Hotel as a suitable venue and it has proved to be ideally suited to our needs. The Terrace Room is spacious and well-lit. There is an outdoor area where in good weather the players can go to analyse after their game. Alternatively, they can repair to the bar. An added attraction is the magnificent view across Falmouth Bay from Rosemullion Head to Pendennis Point.

Unfortunately, we were prevented from holding the congress in 2020 and 2021 because all over the board chess was suspended on account of the Covid pandemic. In 2022 we returned to the Falmouth Hotel where the Emigrant Cup was won by no less a person than ECF Chief Executive Mike Truran.

The 2023 Congress

Final standings and prize list on the Cornwall Chess website: [http://www.cornwallchess.org.uk/html/archive-cong/cong\(s\)-2023.shtml](http://www.cornwallchess.org.uk/html/archive-cong/cong(s)-2023.shtml)

78 played in 2019 and 77 in 2022; the entry in 2023 was 64. The reduction in numbers was mainly due to the return of a number of South West congresses after the Covid break and widespread caution about discretionary spending in these inflationary times. Nevertheless, the event proved to be successful once again, with players being attracted from distant places such as Carlisle and the Scottish borders, Ireland and York.

The lion's share of the credit for the success of the event is due to three people. Once again organisers Colin and Rebecca Gardiner successfully negotiated the booking for the first weekend in May, designed and distributed the brochure and thoroughly publicised the event at the many congresses they attended beforehand. They were efficient and unobtrusive organisers throughout. ECF arbiter John Constable from Bude was the controller, and his vast experience and knowledge ensured that the chess aspect of the event ran smoothly at all times. A useful feature was the instantaneous live posting and update of the results and standings on chess-results.com.

Open (19 entries)

Tournament winner with 4/5 and the new Cornwall champion is Rami Talab (Truro) from Syria, who celebrated his tenth birthday during the congress. He becomes the youngest ever Cornwall champion, moving ahead of GM Michael Adams who won his first title in 1983 at the age of

11. We look forward to following Rami's progress from now on.



Cross-table and round-by-round results:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr758567.aspx?lan>

Major (22 entries)

This was a closely fought competition, ending in a seven-way tie on 3½ points between David Siddall (Carlisle), Bill Ingham (Teignmouth), Rob MacClatchey (Salisbury), Paul Jackson (Bournemouth), David Jenkins (Camborne), 2002 Penwith Cup winner Eldon Vallejo (London) and Oliver Twentyman (Truro). The last three are joint holders of the Falmouth Cup.

Cross-table and round-by-round results:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr758568.aspx?lan=1>



Falmouth Cup winners David Jenkins, Eldon Vallejo and Oliver Twentyman

Minor (23 entries)

Tom Merchant (North Bristol) won convincingly with 5/5. Chris Constable (Bude) and Colin Gardiner (Camborne) were joint winners of the Penwith Cup with 3/5.

Cross-table and round-by-round results:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr758569.aspx?lan=1>



Penwith Cup winners: Chris Constable and Colin Gardiner

English and English Women's Championships 2023



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

The current title holders are GM Mark Hebden as English Champion and WIM Lan Yao as English Women's Champion. The events are very well subscribed with 88 entries across the two Championships at the time of writing. As with the Senior Championships we again have an extremely strong field, with GM Michael Adams as top seed in the Open English Championship and Kamila Hryshenko 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/>
and
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-womens-2023-entrants/>

The top games from each competition will be played on live boards 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 - 11:00 to 15:00; **Round 2** - 16:30 – 20.30
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.

Where to follow the Championships

Tournament Details

Chess-results tournament details can be found at the links below for the two championships. Round 1 pairings will be available from first thing on Friday morning.

English Championships

<https://chess-results.com/tnr771194.aspx?lan=1>

English Women's Championships

<https://chess-results.com/tnr771195.aspx?lan=1>

Commentary

Games will be played on liveboards at the venue and broadcast on Chess.com, Chess24 and Lichess.org. Commentary will be provided on rounds 6 and 7 by FM Jonathan Blackburn and guest(s) on the ECF streaming channel on Twitch at https://twitch.tv/ecf_streaming

LiveChessCloud

Open – <https://view.livechesscloud.com/#250bd270-d04c-48a0-b401-b1e71cd7a4fd>

Women's – <https://view.livechesscloud.com/#c25035d0-9840-4fd6-b6b8-2dac139ff551>

For more information please go to

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

British Championships 2023



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 Championships 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/>

World Rapid Team Championship

This is a new major event organised by FIDE. You can create your own team from your club members, members of different federations or your favourite chess players.

The inaugural edition, a 12-round Swiss tournament played over three days under rapid time control, will take place in Düsseldorf from 25th August (arrival day) to 28th August 2023. The event, with a prize fund of €250,000, is open to clubs from all over the world.

Registration is open until 10th June 2023, 12 pm Swiss time.

Each team shall apply for participation by filling out the [registration form](#) on the event's [official website](#).

Regulations for FIDE World Rapid Team Championship can be found on the official website:

<https://worldrapidteams2023.fide.com/>

Registration form:

<https://worldrapidteams2023.fide.com/registration/>

ECF Marathon in Support of British Red Cross Ukraine Appeal

The English Chess Federation (ECF) held a 24-hour marathon tournament on Chess.com from 4.00pm Saturday 20th May to 4.00pm on Sunday 21st May to raise funds for the British Red Cross's Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

As in previous years the marathon proved hugely popular, with over 500 players taking part from the ECF Open Club on Chess.com. This year's event included many grandmasters and international masters, providing a rare opportunity for hundreds of players at all levels to play opponents of the highest standard, including British champions and titled players from England and overseas.

Results

GM Keith Arkell took an early lead during Saturday evening and continued to build his lead throughout the night, amassing an amazing total of 811 points with 211 wins out of 253 games played. Keith was followed throughout by IM Brandon Clarke who led the chasing pack with a score of 745 - impressive, but not enough to catch Keith.

You can find the results and details of all the games played at the link here:

<https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/arena/ecf-ukraine-appeal-marathon--2669997>

	Fed		Name	Rating	Score
1	ENG	GM	Keith Arkell	2482	811
2	ENG	IM	Brandon Clarke	2544	745
3	ENG		chessfiction	2305	693
4	UKR		Vladimir Tushinsky	2186	622
5	ENG	IM	Richard Pert	2517	524
6	WLS	FM	WelshTiger	2323	502
7	SGP		Singapourfeuj	2183	466
8	ENG		Mate Ther	2141	434
9	HKG		Luke Lau	2282	425
10	ENG		Liam Clery	1998	423

11	ENG		Max Pert	1928	417
12	ENG		Robert Starley	2051	407
13	ENG	IM	Matthew Wadsworth	2532	396
14	INT		Doge_Dandolo	1877	391
15	ENG		Ramin Guy	1931	382
16	ENG		Andrew Brett	2130	363
17	SGP	WFM	Anita Mui	2222	360
18	ENG		Liam Bellwood	1925	339
19	ENG		Viktor Stoyanov	2451	331
20	ENG		Indy Southcott-Moyers	2174	320

Prizes

Many thanks go to Chess.com, who have very generously agreed to match \$1,000 in donations.

Chessable have donated a number of vouchers: for the winners, for fighting chess, and for the best game.

Elk and Ruby have donated a variety of books that will be awarded to the top places for those with addresses in the UK. To maximise funds for the charity we stipulate this to reduce postage and packing costs.

Chess & Bridge have donated a number of vouchers for books in their store.

Donations and Fundraising

Donations were optional and made via the event registration form and/ or the Red Cross's Tiltify page: <https://tiltify.com/british-red-cross/ecf-chess-marathon-for-ukraine-2023>. Streamers were able to add their stream on the Tiltify page and raise funds themselves.

Marathon for Ukraine Twitch Stream

24 hour live coverage of the tournament was available at https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_streaming

The commentary team was led by FM Jonathan Blackburn and featured a variety of titled players and top broadcasters below:

Time	Host	Guest	Guest
16.00	FM Jon Blackburn	Ben Portheault (chess performance coach)	
17.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM Mickey Adams	WFM Shohreh Bayat
18.00	FM Jon Blackburn	WIM Lan Yao	IM Tom Rendle
19.00	FM Jon Blackburn	WIM Lan Yao	
20.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM Peter Heine Nielsen	
21.00	FM Jon Blackburn	Mr Dodgy	Emilia Castela (chess historian)
22.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM Danny Gormally	WFM Sarah Longson

23.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM Danny Gormally	Julio Calcina (MMA and streamer)
24.00	FM Jon Blackburn	IM Matthew Wadsworth	Julio Calcina (MMA and streamer)
1.00	FM Jon Blackburn	FM Nate Solon	
2.00	Ben Johnson (Perpetual Chess pod)	Neal Bruce (Chesspunks)	
3.00	Ben Johnson (Perpetual Chess pod)	IM Yuriy Krykun	
4.00	FM Jon Blackburn	FM Simon Bibby	
5.00	FM Jon Blackburn	FM Simon Bibby	
6.00	WIM Natasha Regan	Matt Ball	GM Jonathan Mestel
7.00	WIM Natasha Regan	GM Peter Wells	
8.00	WIM Natasha Regan	GM Matthew Sadler	
9.00	WIM Natasha Regan	FM Rhys Cummings	Matthew Lunn
10.00	FM Jon Blackburn	IM Richard Pert	
11.00	FM Jon Blackburn	Ben Purton (Sharks 4NCL captain)	Will Taylor
12.00	FM Jon Blackburn	FM Ioan Rees	Sam Walker
13.00	FM Jon Blackburn	Sean Marsh (CSC Chief Trainer, author)	Marsh's Angels
14.00	FM Jon Blackburn	IM Lawrence Trent	
15.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM John Emms	CM Jonathan Arnott
16.00	FM Jon Blackburn	GM John Emms	Miles Lee (NZ in NY Online captain)

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 ECF Members Club (2,057 members):

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

Lichess ECF English Chess Players Club (1,739 members):

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

We have an ECF 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. We also use the open club for our marathon fund raising events.

Chess.com ECF Open (6,379 members):

<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 played our rounds 7 and 8 matches in the LCWL against Brazil and Australia. Both matches ended up as draws with a win in the blitz and loss in the rapid against Brazil and a loss in the blitz and win in the rapid against Australia. We are currently 5th out of eight teams in the Division 3 table.

LCEL Season 7

We lost all three legs of our round 5 match against Team Bulgaria on 30th April and remain at the foot of the Division 1 table.

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 five and four events respectively are as follows:

Blitz			
Open	WFM Meri Grigoryan	51	Cavendish
Women	WFM Meri Grigoryan	75	Cavendish
Seniors	John Sharp	88	Hemel Hempstead
Juniors	Joseph Whelan	61	Coventry Academy
U2000	Elis Dicen	68	Coventry Academy
U1700	Caleb Caleshu	58	Plymouth
U1400	Oli Smith	105	Oxfordshire
U1100	Stefan Petrov	93	Wimbledon

Rapid			
Open	Kyle Bennett	49	Basildon
Women	Caroline Robson	76	Blackthorne Russia
Seniors	Alan Greg	93	USA
Juniors	Louis Buckland	62	Sussex
U2000	Kyle Bennett	79	Basildon
U1700	Louis Buckland	62	Sussex
U1400	Zander Booth	77	Poole
U1100	Shaivi Prasad	55	Epsom

FEATURES

The Nepo-Ding World Championship Match – a Retrospective by Peter Wells



On 30th April an extraordinarily brave decision with the black pieces in the final rapid game of the tiebreak carried 30-year-old Chinese star Ding Liren to the World Championship title. ‘Self-pinning for immortality’ tweeted Magnus Carlsen with his congratulations, helping to cement the iconic status of that pivotal 46...Rg6! moment. For those of us who remember the gruelling battles between Karpov and first Korchnoi and later Kasparov from the late 70s and 80s, the match – capped at 14 classical games and with a much tighter schedule – felt almost brief. Nonetheless, it was extraordinarily intense and nerve-wracking and the toll it took on both players was there for all to see. It would also - as was already clear when I wrote my defence of classical chess for the April issue of *ChessMoves* - be very highly placed in any league table of World Championship matches ranked on entertainment value. There was, quite simply, never a dull moment in an event which must also qualify as one of the greatest nightmares for anyone into the game of prediction. I suspect Erwin L’Ami’s comment on Ben Johnson’s *Perpetual Chess* podcast, that he had intended to do other things during the games but after a short time was ‘simply hooked and just watched the whole thing’, will resonate with many. About halfway through the match, I ascertained that amongst my Wednesday chess club at Abingdon School there was not just an overwhelming majority aware of the match, but around half who were following the games with some care. This was a wholly new level of interest in my experience. Backed once again by great commentary options from the world’s elite, the chess community was captivated.

Perhaps more than anything this was a match which demonstrated just how much a high-profile sporting event can do to transform utterly the narrative which surrounds it. To be honest, coverage in the run-up to the match seemed almost unrelentingly flat. There was criticism of the lack of information and build-up generated by FIDE until very shortly before the event, along with the suggestion that a lack of interest from public or sponsors had supposedly led to Astana, in Kazakhstan, being chosen as the venue almost by default.



Expectations seemed to be constrained by a general negativity around the format of World Championship matches as well as a failure of imagination as to what these players might produce. The picture built – for me at least at this stage - was of the defeated Nepomniachtchi of 2021, the player feeling obliged to curb his natural flair to navigate the early games of the match with Magnus, rather than the dynamic, speedy (albeit sometimes impetuous) player with a superb sense of the initiative that had taken him to successive victories in the Candidates. Similarly, whilst tribute was paid to Ding’s tremendous strength in calculation, the image was generated more of the master technician who enjoyed a staggering unbeaten run of 100 games during 2017-18, than of the creative, tactical virtuoso who, for example, produced one of the most sparkling sacrificial games of modern times against Bai Jinshi in 2017. In fact there are many facets to Ding’s play as Grigory Serper observed in a *Chess.com* blog back in May 2018 [here: https://www.chess.com/article/view/the-unpredictable-ding-liren](https://www.chess.com/article/view/the-unpredictable-ding-liren) comparing his style to Forrest Gump’s legendary box of chocolates. One thing was for sure – nothing prepared the chess world for what they were actually going to get.

In essence, the entire event seemed at that stage to be viewed through the prism of Magnus Carlsen’s decision not to defend his title. This was a match being defined by what it was not, rather than by what it was or could be. Even the extraordinary backstory of Ding’s route to the final – initially denied a place in the Candidates due to Covid restrictions, then able to replace Sergei Karjakin following the latter’s fall from grace (but only after the

hasty arrangement of 26 games to meet qualification criteria), the unlikely victory from a drawn ending against Hikaru Nakamura to finish second in the Candidates and then finally Magnus's momentous decision which rendered this second place of such great significance. All of this could have been the stuff of movies, but seemed rather to be deployed primarily to question whether Ding should be there at all. Yet all of this was soon to change...

The sheer excitement generated by the match that followed would, of course, have greatly exceeded the expectations even of a more balanced build-up. To say that we were treated to a World Championship with a rare six decisive classical games only scratches the surface of what was generated. The key point was not just that these wins were evenly distributed between the two of them, but that for an astonishing four-game run between games 4 and 7, the players simply knocked each other out in turn with neither seeming able to consolidate their gains of the previous day.

Remarkable in itself, it is worth reminding ourselves that this also represented a fantastic psychological comeback from Ding. After two games, there were real indications that he might just not be able to cope with the pressure and with it, the danger that the match might prove very one-sided.

There is nothing unusual in the claim that sport needs colourful and, ideally, relatable characters in order to generate maximum public interest. However, the speed with which Ding captured the public imagination and the personality traits with which he did this became a huge component of the story. So too was the tremendous influence of his second Richard Rapport - already a popular figure for his refreshing, creative and at times frankly eccentric approach to the game. Much of this had occurred within those first two games. The match began with a draw, despite Nepo's¹ mild opening surprise - the 'DERLD' (6 Bxc6 in the Closed Spanish) - generating some chances in the first game, yet Ding's reaction in the press conference still shocks me when I revisit it weeks later. From a professional point of view an outpouring of emotion in front of both his opponent and the world's press was unprecedented and seemingly deeply naïve in a contest in which psychological considerations clearly play such a pivotal role. He admitted to feeling depressed, unable to concentrate on the game - and recognised that there was 'something wrong with (his) mind'.

¹ It may seem odd to refer to the players by an abbreviation of their family name and their family name respectively, but this became such a commonplace way to describe the match - not least in the ubiquitous hashtag #Nepo-Ding -

Of course, we live in times which are increasingly sympathetic to sports stars discussing their emotional vulnerabilities. Yet this was a player clearly not tapping into a prevailing mood but simply grappling with the intolerable pressure he felt at the very start of an exceptionally demanding ordeal. The authenticity was overwhelming and the public responded. The Ding who emerged in successive press conferences - despite sometimes faltering English and a few awkward moments - exhibited unusual modesty, a tendency to deep and profound reflection and a shyness which juxtaposed appealingly with unexpected emotional openness. It seemed to me that he embodied virtues and values which are frequently espoused but far less often exhibited, and the world liked what it saw.

His daily post-game meetings with the (often extravagantly attired) Richard Rapport also assisted in injecting a further powerful human element, as the impression was created of a close and supportive relationship which both gave Ding the confidence to explore new pastures and probably assisted in bringing him back to a more balanced mental state as well. Intriguingly, Ding also hinted that thinking about the game 'in English' facilitated him thinking differently about it, for me, at least, a quite unanticipated consequence of Richard Rapport's involvement. Once again, Ding seemed to have gone against the conventional wisdom - this time by hiring a second far from the usual mode of the solid opening theoretician - and the gamble paid off. However, at least when it came to Richard's opening input, the experiment was not without blips and Game 2 was a shocker.

Ding Liren - Nepomniachtchi Ian

World Championship 2023 Astana Round 2 - 10.04.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.h3?!



that it clearly indicates no lack of respect or regard for these great players and I hope the readers will forgive me for keeping this space saving habit here.

My impression here was that Anish Giri was only on the borderline of humour when – upon discovering that this was not a transmission error - he suggested a Catalan player's *Fingerfehler*. Daniel Naroditsky certainly spoke for many of us with his words "I have so many questions going through my head". Of course, the real question is whether the slight concession which such a move represents in objective quality, can be offset by some combination of taking the opponent away from their preparation and confusing them regarding the best course of action. Perhaps I am biased by years of playing the Vienna Variation against more testing fourth moves, but it seems clear to me that 4...dxc4 must be a critical choice. Worse still, Nepo was able to steer the play into an essentially familiar position in which the 'missing tempo' Re1 really mattered, whereas h2-h3 represented, at least arguably, a simple weakening of White's kingside.

4...dxc4(!) 5.e3 c5 6.Bxc4 a6 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Nc3 b5 9.Bd3 Bb7 10.a4 b4 11.Ne4 Na5 12.Nxf6+ gxf6!

For an indication of Ding's state of mind at this point there can be no better evidence than his (again astonishingly frank) admission at the press conference that this took him by surprise. Not only is the idea logical and known to theory in analogous positions, you don't need to look too hard to see that with potential pressure down the g-file, White's extravagant fourth move could come back to haunt him.

13.e4 c4!

A key point as Vishy Anand points out. The move that should replace h3 here is Re1 which would enable the bishop to retreat to the infinitely more comfortable f1 square. On c2 it inhibits White's intended queenside aspirations and Black soon comes to dominate the whole board.

14.Bc2 Qc7 15.Bd2 Rg8 16.Rc1 0-0-0



17.Bd3 Kb8 18.Re1 f5 19.Bc2 Nc6 20.Bg5 Rxc5! 21.Nxc5 Nxd4 22.Qh5 f6 23.Nf3 Nxc2 24.Rxc2 Bxe4 25.Rd2 Bd6 26.Kh1 c3 27.bxc3 bxc3 28.Rd4 c2 29.Qh6 e5 0-1

Vishy's comments quoted here come from perhaps the finest analysis of the match I have seen so far – his interview with Sagar Shah for ChessBase India, which I cannot recommend highly enough - see Vishy Anand's brilliant insights on the Ding Liren vs Nepo World Championship Match 2023 – YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1m_9_zehPA

I particularly loved his description of factors which contributed to the fighting chess and large number of decisive games. He suggests a key role for three trends:

1) A willingness to 'play' equal positions. This doesn't sound very startling in itself, but I think what is strongly implied is an absence of the mindset which regards the almost obsessive search for some kind of advantage from ever-more detailed opening preparation as a prerequisite of realistically playing for a win. As Vishy suggests, if you play equal positions with serious intent – especially if they are equal positions of a kind which have not been analysed in minute detail – then at some point significant enough errors are likely to creep in.

2) Serious value was placed on surprising the opponent. This is particularly true of the games in which Ding had the White pieces. Indeed, I think it is at least arguable that Nepo was considerably the better prepared overall and that Ding struggled more than anticipated to neutralise his opponent's relatively mainstream opening choices (Game 5 being an obvious case in point), whereas his own highly eclectic choices with the white pieces were in part a function of the fact that some of these were clearly 'one use only' openings. Whether that means that he would have struggled in a longer match is unclear – I was almost as impressed that he still had 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d5 3 c3!? left in reserve for the play-offs as I was that Nepo seemed so incredibly well prepared for it, helping to produce the excellent first tie-break game that set the tone for that phase of the match. What is clear is that the many surprises succeeded in generating fresh, relatively unexplored terrain and with it a higher probability of decisive games.

3) The players' shared belief that they were 'at least not worse than the other player' led to a quite different dynamic than we have seen during Magnus's reign. This fascinated me – not least as I have tended to be cautious of narratives which place Magnus head and shoulders above his very able colleagues. For one thing, I tended to believe that since Magnus didn't prevail in the classical phase against either Caruana or Karjakin, his supposed dominance might be partly a matter of the 'winners

writing history'. I think what I underestimated was the extent to which these opponents proceeded with extreme caution *precisely because it was Magnus*, very much as Nepo himself had in 2021 until Game 6 broke the deadlock and initiated his unfortunate collapse in the final rounds. As Sam Shankland reiterated in his *Perpetual Chess* podcast, none of them were willing to take risks against Magnus and, indeed, there was a sense in which 'no one really wanted to play with him'. This, of course, also raises the possibility that we were not witnessing a reduction in dry technical chess because Magnus had largely been responsible for it, but rather because his rivals were somehow liberated by no longer having to reckon with his clinical accuracy.

This, of course, reminds us that the shadow of Magnus never really left the scene and forces me to address the second part of the dominant narrative during the match itself: the claim that - for all the tremendous excitement and unpredictability of the play - it was simply of considerably lower quality than recent World Championships. Indeed, there was even the cheeky suggestion, in one version of this argument, that the quality of the tie-break on the whole exceeded that of the match!

I feel, first, that this might be a good moment to recall quite how good the best of the chess was. Although it would be totally fair to say that Nepo enjoyed the lion's share of the chances in the classical phase, I would suggest that it was Ding who probably produced its most elegant achievement.

Ding Liren - Nepomniachtchi, Ian

World championship 2023 Astana Round 6 16.04.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Bf4 c5 4.e3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 cxd4 6.exd4 Bf5 7.c3 e6 8.Bb5 Bd6 9.Bxd6 Qxd6 10.0-0 0-0 11.Re1 h6 12.Ne5 Ne7

As I look at this opening I tend to reflect on where a busy team with lots of preparation to cover is likely to end their analysis of quiet 'settled' positions, perhaps not confident of complete equality, but at least in the belief that there will be no significant danger. The coming moves suggest that Black still needs to be quite accurate not to leave White with a slight but annoying pull. Black's next move reflects this dilemma. Evicting the bishop from b5 will assist Black in organising his forces over the coming couple of moves, but if White is able to fix the queenside pawns with a5 then the weaknesses, if not catastrophic, are definitely long-term.

13.a4 a6 14.Bf1 Nd7 15.Nxd7 Qxd7 16.a5



The prospect of White's control of c5, combined with my sense that the bishop on f5 enjoys a long diagonal but one with not much purpose, tends to reinforce Vishy's astute observation that 'Ian's understanding of this opening stopped a little bit early'.

16...Qc7 17.Qf3 Rfc8 18.Ra3 Bg6 19.Nb3 Nc6 20.Qg3 Qe7 21.h4!

A nice echo of the Nepo's very effective h4-h5 push in the previous game. Part of the attraction of this position for White is that he clearly has ambitions on both sides of the board.

21...Re8 22.Nc5 e5

The engine is not a fan, but a human - conscious that entirely passive defence with no prospect of a break-out is rarely a solution - can sympathise with Danil Dubov's remark that '22...e5 is either a very good move or White is just winning.' Of course, it is also worth checking 22...Nxa5, but this fails neatly to 23 h5! (clearing the way for Nxe6 to threaten g7) 23...Bxh5 24 Rxa5 b6 25 Nxe6! fxe6 26 Rxd5 with a decisive advantage.

23.Rb3!? Nxa5 24.Rxe5 Qf6 25.Ra3 Nc4 26.Bxc4 dxc4 27.h5?!

Actually an inaccuracy which gives Black the chance to battle with 27...Rxe5 28 dxe5 Qd8, when White would have to adjust with 29 Qf3 rather than 29 hxg6? Qd1+ 30 Kh2 Qh5+ and the attempt to block the checks would leave both the e5 pawn and the knight open to capture. Honestly, I am still not sure where this line falls on the spectrum between 'for engines only' through to 'a strong human ought to see this'.

27...Bc2 28.Nxb7 Qb6 29.Nd6 Rxe5 30.Qxe5 Qxb2 31.Ra5 Kh7 32.Rc5?! Qc1+?

Nepo misses his last chance. Whilst capturing on c3 on the previous move would have succumbed to 32 Ne8!, now it

was the best chance since after e.g. 32...Qxc3 33 Nxf7 Bd3 34 Rc7 Qc1+ 35 Kh2 Re8! Black can use the threat of the perpetual on f4 and c1 to at least give White some nervous moments. After the text Ding conducts his attack with clinical control, and Black gets no further chances.

33.Kh2 f6 34.Qg3 a5 35.Nxc4! a4 36.Ne3 Bb1 37.Rc7 Rg8 38.Nd5 Kh8 39.Ra7 a3 40.Ne7 Rf8



41.d5!!

This scores very highly on aesthetics although I must say that I was a bit surprised that it appeared that commentators (including Anish Giri and David Howell) needed to proceed quite far down the line to appreciate the mating net which Ding was weaving. Of course, it is also a great testament to Ding's confidence in his own calculation - even in such a stressful part of the match – that he was happy to allow Black's a-pawn to advance still further without fear of accidents.

41...a2 42.Qc7! Kh7 43.Ng6 Rg8 44.Qf7! and Black is helpless against the beautiful threat to capture the rook and mate with Ra8+-f8 (or h8). **1-0**

So, what of the claims that the decisive games and excitement were to some extent just a function of the lower quality of play? Well, I think it is fair to say that not just Ding, but Nepo too, suffered tremendously from the tension which such a match generates, and both made not only several significant mistakes, but also endured something akin to a meltdown at key moments. For Ding, this came in Round 7 when he jettisoned his excellent compensation for the exchange, running his clock down close to zero when trying to force the issue rather than holding the position, at least until the time control. For Nepo the nightmare occurred in Game 12 when in stages he threw away an advantage which, if converted, would have almost certainly clinched the match. However, I am again drawn to Vishy's empathetic comments. As he pointed out, the difference between playing familiar openings and the kind of very creative and unusual positions to which Ding's White openings gave rise

doesn't only lie in the fact that the players could not wheel out a large number of carefully prepared moves. It goes much deeper than that. Years of computer analysis of typical positions give players a very strong feeling for the structures even when they are thrown on their own. Give even a very strong player an atypical, unfamiliar position and the level will drop dramatically. I wouldn't claim that this accounts for all of the mistakes we saw, but a clear majority did occur in the less familiar structures generated by Ding's 'Rapport-inspired' creativity.

So, what of the future? I guess I will certainly not have been alone in being moved by Ding's reaction to his victory, in appreciating quite how deeply he had dug to overcome his psychological obstacles and that the match indeed 'reflected the deepest part of his soul.' I doubt too that I will have been alone in feeling a bit saddened that a player who for many years had been so exemplary in emphasising his desire for general chess improvement and eschewing talk of the ultimate title, reflected soon after his victory that - had he been defeated - he would have most likely quit chess. I hope this was just the tension of the match talking. He sounded, at the same time, like a man who understood very well the obligations which might go with the title, expressed a willingness to defend it against either Magnus or (more likely) the coming generation and I hope he will be undertaking this task with no diminished enthusiasm for the game. It is without doubt one key legacy of this match that he will begin his spell as champion as a far more popular figure than could have been imagined just six weeks ago.

As for Nepo, any chess player who appreciates the reality that jettisoned winning positions and missed opportunities are even harder to bear than simply being outplayed will greatly empathise with his predicament. He has had predecessors who have reflected far too much and too painfully over single missed opportunities at this level. Nepo clearly missed several. Still, there were those who thought that he would struggle to return after his match with Magnus and yet he managed to score tremendous results at faster time controls just weeks later with the astonishing achievement of bouncing back to win the Candidates also coming after only half a year or so later. It would be foolish to underestimate the scale of the task he faces, but he is certainly not a man I plan to make a habit of betting against.

Arkell's Endings by Keith Arkell

The Use of Long-Term Planning to Improve your Position in the Absence of Anything More Concrete



Keith Arkell - IM Janez Barle

World Senior 50+ Ch 2016 Marianske Lazne CZE

"There must be some insidious plan – some overall scheme" - Adam West, Batman

"It is not a move, even the best move, that you must seek, but a realizable plan." – Eugene Znosko-Borovsky

IM Janez Barle was a hard man to beat. He won the Slovenian Championship five times and had plenty of Olympiad experience. I first encountered Janez in the last round of the 2014 European Senior Championship, when a draw was sufficient to earn me the title. Six months later, however, a win in the last round of the World Senior Championship would not have left me on tenterhooks awaiting the results of other games which might affect the tie-break. On that occasion it was not to be, but in 2016 we again met in the World Senior Championship and a win would propel me to 4½/5.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Qa4+ Nc6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bxf6 Qxf6 9.e3 0-0 10.Be2 Be6 11.a3 Bxc3+ 12.bxc3



I like White's pawn structures from these Ragozin defence setups. I should be able to maintain a nice chain from the kingside across to the centre, while being able to probe down the b- and c-files. Of course, I realise that theoretically Black will be fine if they know the theory and understand the positions, but sometimes we rely on personal taste in our decision-making.

12...Qg6 13.0-0 a6 14.Rfb1 Rab8 15.Qd1 Rfd8 16.Rb2



16...f6?

I was pleased to see this move. There are all sorts of potential positions in which Barle would prefer to see the pawn back on f7; also, it loses a pawn!

17.Rab1 Na5 18.Bxa6 b6 19.Bd3

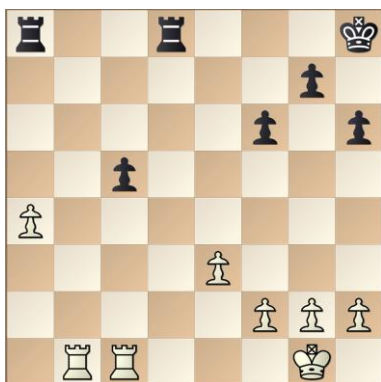
It's hard to imagine the extra a-pawn deciding matters in itself, but it ought to gain in significance when the position opens up.

19...Qf7 20.Nd2 Qe7 21.a4 Qd6 22.Qc2 Qc6 23.Rb4



I think I have three reasonable plans at my disposal: play for e4; play for a kingside attack with Nf3 to h4; or play for c4. I chose the last for no particular reason except that it fits my style.

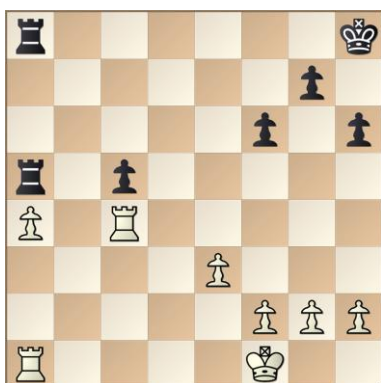
23...Ra8 24.c4 Kh8 25.Rc1 dxc4 26.Nxc4 Nxc4 27.Bxc4 Qd6 28.Rbb1 Bxc4 29.Qxc4 c5! 30.dxc5 Qxc5 31.Qxc5 bxc5



32.Rc4

I should be able to do better than 32 Rxc5 Rxa4 33 Rf5 Rb4! 34 Rf1 Rd2 35 h3 Raa2 36 g4 when as soon as I try to bring my f1 rook into the game he will challenge it with one of his rooks.

32...Ra5 33.Kf1 Rda8 34.Ra1



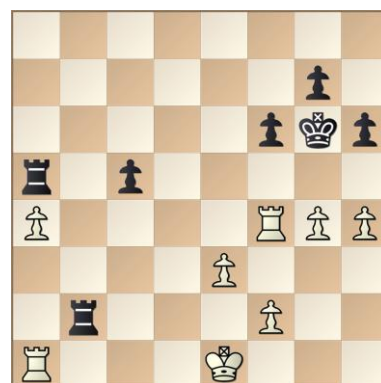
I believe I have very good winning chances here. Not so

much because my a-pawn is better than Black's c-pawn but because my c4 rook is the most active piece on the board, both defending a4 and probing the kingside. However, as it is unlikely that this position is a forced win, I had to content myself with forming a long-term plan. The best I could come up with was to weaken Black's kingside pawns, and ultimately expose the king itself - a far bigger issue with all four rooks on the board. To achieve this, I need to exchange off some kingside pawns. There is no rush!

34...Rb8 35.Ke1

It's very important to pay attention to details when going about long-term ideas, For example, 35 Ke1 is necessary to contain Black's b-pawn in case he plays ...Rb4.

35...Rb2 36.g4 Kh7 37.Rf4 Kg6 38.h4



38...h5

If he lets me play h5 myself there is always the risk of a mating attack by swinging both rooks to the 7th or 8th rank via the e and d-files.

39.gxh5+ Kxh5 40.Rc1

One thing leads to another; luring the king to h5 has presented me with a tactic to improve my rook - if now 40...Rb4 41 Rxc5!+

40...Kg6 41.Rcc4 Ra2 42.Kf1 Kf7 43.h5 Rb2 44.Kg2

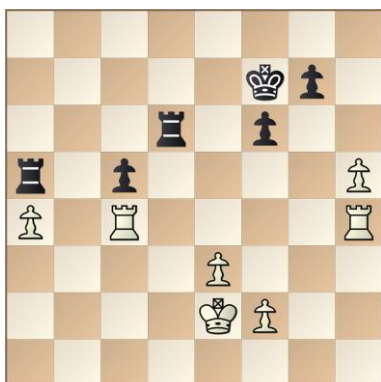


All my pieces and pawns are now very happy. My rooks are immovable, and the king is safe and even prepared to join in the attack in some scenarios. My pawns are all secure and I can use the h-pawn to expose the enemy king. It seemed unlikely that I was winning by force, but it was nice to know I had many ways to improve my position.

44...Rb8 45.Kf3 Rh8 46.Kg4 Rb8 47.Kf3 Rh8 48.Rh4 Rb8 49.Kg3

Patience is a virtue in such positions. I can gently probe from a distance while my opponent must continually remain vigilant. Taking action straightaway can often squander an important practical and psychological advantage.

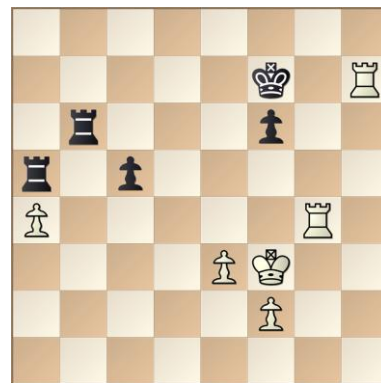
49...Rb2 50.Rhf4 Ra2 51.Kg4 Rb2 52.Kf3 Ra2 53.Rh4 Rb2 54.Rcf4 Rb8 55.Ke2 Rd8 56.Rc4 Rd6



57.h6

And here it is! I've been teeing up h6 for the last dozen or so moves and now my opponent will have to switch to calculating mode to have any chance of survival.

57...gxh6 58.Rxh6 Rda6 59.Rhh4 Rd6 60.Kf3 Re6 61.Kf4 Kg6 62.Kg4 Rea6 63.Kf3 Rb6 64.Rcg4+ Kf7 65.Rh7+

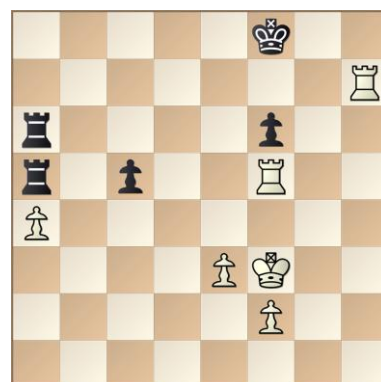


The black king suddenly feels very naked. Which way to go?

65...Kf8?

In principle the wrong decision! Explicable though, when you see how hard it is to analyse the alternatives. For example he has to decide whether he can hang on after 65...Ke6 66 Re4+ Kd6 67 Rf7 Kd5 68 Rf4 Ke6 69 Rf8, when there are many ways to lose. Here is one of them: 69...Rc6 70 Re8+ Kd5 71 Rd8+ Ke5 72 Re4+ Kf5 73 Re7! and the mating net begins to close in - 73. ..Rxa4 74 e4+ Kg6 75 Rg8+ Kh6 76 Kf4! Ra2 77 Rh8+ Kg6 78 Rhh7 f5 79 exf5+ Kf6 80 Rhf7#.

66.Rf4 Rba6 67.Rf5



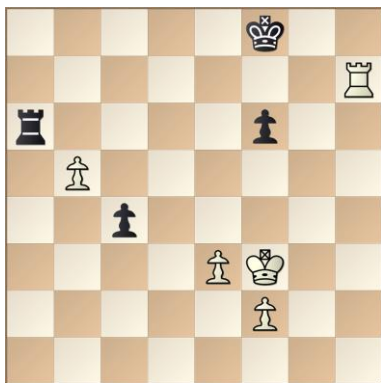
67...c4

I was ready for this, of course, as I was for 67...Rc6 68 Rd5 Kg8 (68...Ke8 69 Rb7, threatening Rh5, must be losing as he has to give me connected passed pawns with 69...f5 70 Rxf5) 69 Rb7 Rc8 70 Rd6 c4 71 Rxf6 c3 72 Rff7 c2 73 Rg7+ Kh8 74 Rh7+ Kg8 75 Rbg7+ Kf8 76 Rh8+.

68.Rb5! Rxb5

68...Ra8 69 Rbb7 must be winning.

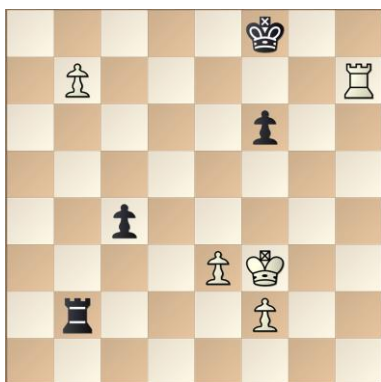
69.axb5



69...Ra2

Black's last try was 69...Rb6, but it's hard to imagine that I am not winning after 70 Rh5, e.g. 70... c3 71 Ke2 Rd6 72 e4 (late as usual!) 72...c2 73 Rc5 Re6 74 Kd3 with a theoretically won game.

70.b6 Rb2 71.b7



1-0

Great British Chess Players by Dr John Nunn



Sir George Thomas (1881-1972)



The vast majority of articles in this series deal with people whose main claim to fame is their chess ability, but Sir George Thomas provides an exception, although his chess achievements were not in any way second-rate. He won the British Championship twice, in 1923 and 1934, played in seven Olympiads from 1927 to 1939 (scoring +9 =6 in the first of these at London 1927), and in a long career scored individual wins against players such as Tarrasch, Capablanca, Euwe and Botvinnik.

Born in Istanbul on 14th June 1881, he inherited the title of Baronet, a British title dating back to the Middle Ages. He became the most successful player ever in the All-England Open Badminton Championships, gaining 21 titles including four consecutive victories in the men's singles from 1920 to 1923. His tennis was also of high standard, and he competed several times at Wimbledon. It's remarkable that someone should achieve so much success in two such diverse sports as chess and

badminton (if one grants chess that status), but he did have the advantage of not needing a job.

Sir George Thomas had a universal style, without showing much of a preference for any particular type of position. His best tournament result was at Hastings 1934/5, where he shared first place with Euwe and Flohr, ahead of Capablanca and Botvinnik. He played mainly 1.e4, with a fondness for the Closed Sicilian, but he occasionally ventured the Queen's Pawn, as in the game below. With Black he preferred to meet 1.d4 with the Classical Queen's Gambit, but against 1.e4 he was more flexible and played a wide range of king's pawn openings. Despite his successes in individual games, he rarely achieved a high position in top-level tournaments, and this seems to be partly because he achieved poor results against certain players. Many strong players have a nemesis, against whom they seem unable to play up to their usual standard; for example, for Tal it was Korchnoi. Sir George Thomas seemed to have several nemeses, including Max Euwe, against whom he managed only half a point from seven games with White.

In what seems a common refrain in these articles, Sir George Thomas is not well remembered today. There is no book of his games, and despite his numerous wins against leading players there is no single really memorable game one can point to. As an example of his pragmatic style, here is a win against one of the most successful tournament players of his day.

Sir George Thomas - Frank Marshall Liège 1930 Queen's Indian Defence

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.e3

These days 4.g3 and 4.a3 are the most popular lines, but this quiet developing move still has its adherents.

4...Bb7 5.Bd3 Nc6?!

This looks dubious, blocking the diagonal for the b7-bishop without really exerting any pressure against the d4-pawn, which is securely defended by the e-pawn. It also makes it hard for Black to challenge White in the centre, since ...c5 is now impossible and ...d5 is likely to lead to an inferior type of Queen's Gambit in which the c6-knight is badly placed. Instead, 4...d5, 4...c5 and 4...Be7 are better choices.

6.Nc3

While it's not really wrong, I don't see why White should play this so early. There's no advantage to doing so and it allows Black to at least solve the problem of developing

his King's bishop. Instead, 6.0-0 looks more flexible, while there's also a case for 6.a3.

6...Bb4 7.Bd2

White prefers not to allow doubled pawns, but 7.0-0 was equally good.

7...0-0 8.0-0 d5

Marshall decides to act in the centre despite the problems posed by the poorly placed knight on c6. Perhaps 8...Ne7 was better, attempting to fight for some control of e4.

9.Rc1 Qe7

Marshall tended to prefer simple developing moves to any elaborate strategy, so he moves the queen in order to develop the a8-rook. One defect of this move is that when White plays a3, Black will be forced to concede the two bishops, since after ...Bd6 White can play Nb5.

10.cxd5 exd5



Now we can see that the knight on c6 creates some difficulties for Black because the c7-pawn is in danger of becoming a backward pawn on a half-open file. Normally Black would have his knight on d7 and solve the problem of the c-pawn by either ...c6 or ...c5. There's no active square to which the c6-knight can move, so there's no natural solution to this problem.

11.Qc2 Rad8 12.a3 Bxc3

As mentioned earlier, 12...Bd6 can be met by the obvious 13.Nb5, but in this position it's even better to play 13.Rfe1, as Black then must waste time dealing with the strong threat of 14.e4.

13.Bxc3 Ne4

Black at least manages to get one knight to a decent

square, but without the support of his other pieces this doesn't amount to much.

14.b4

Threatening b5, followed by Bb4.

14...a6?!

This was Black's last chance to do something about the mounting pressure along the c-file. He should have played 14...Nb8 15.Bb2 c6 followed by ...Nd7, putting the knight where it really belongs, albeit with a considerable loss of time. It's psychologically difficult to play a move like ...Nb8, firstly because it looks ugly to retreat a knight to the first rank, and secondly because it's a clear admission that it was a mistake to put the knight on c6 in the first place.

Note that although 14...Nxc3 15.Qxc3 a6 prevents White keeping the two bishops, it comes at the cost of exchanging Black's best minor piece for White's not especially active dark-squared bishop. It also makes it harder to do anything about the build-up on the c-file.

15.Bb2

White decides to keep the bishop pair. Although he has a clear advantage, it's not easy to suggest a way to increase it. One possibility is to swap the active e4-knight by Nd2, but it's even better to improve his position quietly with Rfe1, since Black lacks active play.

15...Rd6



When positionally worse, Marshall had a habit of lashing out, and this game is no exception. He intends to play for a kingside attack with ...Rh6, perhaps followed by ...g5-g4. This strategy often led to success even against some first-rate players, since his tactical ability was world-class, but Sir George Thomas is up to the task of countering the kingside threats.

16.Ne5!

It looks a bit risky to remove the only minor piece defending the kingside, but White has calculated accurately. The threat of f3 forces Black to take immediate action.

16...Rh6?!

Consistent, but too ambitious, since attacking from a situation of positional inferiority is unlikely to succeed. The most obvious move is 16...f6, but then the sharp 17.f3 Ng5 18.f4! Ne4 (18...fxe5 19.dxe5 also gives White a large advantage) 19.Bxe4 dxe4 20.Qc4+ Kh8 21.d5 Nd8 22.Qxc7 Qxc7 23.Rxc7 Rxd5 24.Nc4 is very good for White.

The modest 16...Nxe5 17.dxe5 Rc6 18.Qe2 Rxc1 19.Rxc1 c5 is probably best, although with the position opening up the two bishops are likely to be an important factor.

17.f3 Nxe5

The immediate 17...Qh4 loses to 18.Ng4 Rg6 19.fxe4 Rxf4 20.exd5 Ne7 21.e4, so Black first swaps knights.

18.dxe5 Qh4 19.g3!



White coolly puts Black's queen and knight under attack and doesn't fear the sacrifice on g3.

19...Qg5

An admission of failure, but 19...Nxg3 20.hxg3 Qh1+ 21.Kf2 Rh2+ 22.Ke1 is safe for White and leads to a winning position after 22...Rxc2 23.Rxh1 Rxb2 24.Bxh7+ Kh8 25.Rxc7.

20.fxe4 Qxe3+ 21.Qf2

Avoiding any further complications, White heads for a clear win. Simply keeping the extra piece by 21.Rf2 dxe4 22.Bc4 is also effective.

21...Qxd3 22.Rxc7

White has overwhelming threats against b7 and f7.

22...Bc6 23.Qxf7+ 1-0

A neat finish, forcing mate in three more moves.

Move by Move by Tim Wall



Gartside, Carl - Kane, Bob
Scarborough Major, 30.10.2021

This month's Move by Move game is an exciting battle from the Scarborough Congress, which took place in October 2021, between Carl Gartside (Macclesfield) and Bob Kane (Edinburgh and West London). It is a great example of weekend tournament chess - mistakes are made, the play ebbs and flows, but you get a real sense of a battle royal. Not a one-sided game at all, and one that both players can be proud of (but, at the same time, learn from their inaccuracies). In my notes to this game, I'm not going to criticise every small mistake, and will be fairly sparing with my ? marks, as none of us are computers! But I will be generous with my ! marks, as I believe it's good to be encouraging when someone plays a strong, brave or even adventurous move.

1.d4

I am indebted to Bob Kane for his interesting notes to the game. He quite correctly identifies the key turning points in the game.

1...e6 2.c4 f5

A canny move order from Bob Kane. Playing 1...e6 invites a French Defence after 2 e4, while playing 2...f5 gets a Dutch Defence while avoiding tricky white sidelines such as 2 e4 (The Staunton Gambit), 2 Bg5 (an anti-Dutch Tromp) or 2 Nc3 (an anti-Dutch Jobava).

3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bf4

Carl Gartside is playing a hybrid between a Queen's Gambit setup and a London System. It's probably designed against Black's ...d5, going into a Stonewall.

4...Be7

4...Bb4 is perhaps a bit easier to play for Black, aiming to double the white c-pawns, Nimzo-Indian style, and then fianchetto the black queen's bishop. This has the advantage of controlling the key e4 square without shutting in the QB. 5.e3 Bxc3+! 6.bxc3 0-0 7.Bd3 b6 gives Black a straightforward plan: Bb7, d6, Ne4, Nbd7 etc, with the plan of building up to ...e5. Black is usually keeping the central pawns on dark squares, having swapped off the dark-square bishop.



5.e3 d5?!

A little bit dubious, for reasons that are not perhaps immediately obvious. A lot of fans of the Dutch Stonewall play the system regardless of which queen's pawn set-up White adopts, but this is probably a mistake. In the main line of the Dutch White plays g3 and fianchettoes his king's bishop on g2. Against this set-up, the pawn on d5 does a great job blunting the g2 bishop. But if White plays Bf4 (getting the QB outside the pawn chain) then plays e3 and Bd3, their KB has much better prospects, influencing play along the f1-a6 and b1-h7 diagonals. Black tends to struggle more against Bf4 and e3. Yet many Dutch players play the Stonewall anyway, because it's their favourite system, when a more flexible approach (sometimes playing ...b6 and ...Bb7, or ...d6 aiming for ...e5, countering the Bf4) would produce better results. However, despite all these factors, many club players do play the Stonewall in all situations, and often manage to 'get away with it'.

6.Nf3 0-0 7.Qc2 c6 8.h3 Na6

It's more natural to put the knight on d7 to cover the outpost on e5, but White has a nice edge anyway. Bob is trying to make something happen on the queenside, hoping that White castles there. 8...Nbd7 9.Rc1 Ne4

10.Bd3 Qa5 11.0-0 Nxc3 12.bxc3 b6 would keep White's edge to a minimum.

9.a3 Nc7 10.Bd3

Even though many players love the thrill of opposite side castling attacks, this was one occasion where same side castling made more sense. White might fear the typical 'Stonewall Attack,' but its bark is often worse than its bite.

10...Ne4

White is slightly better. A key fork in the road - will White play soundly and castle kingside, or roll the dice and castle queenside? It's understandable that White wants to attack with g4 on the kingside, but Black can open lines on the queenside when White's king goes there.

11.0-0-0



11.0-0 Nxc3 (11...g5: Carl may have been worried by the prospect of Black throwing kingside pawns up against White's king but needn't have been. If 12.Bh2 g4? all White has to do now is swap off the e4 knight, and Black's kingside attack is finished, and the position is a mess - 13.hxg4 fxg4 14.Bxe4 dxe4 15.Ne5 and White is mopping up.) 12.Qxc3 dxc4 13.Qxc4 Nd5 14.Be5 keeps a pleasant edge for White. Black's knight on d5 is a good piece, but it's the only one. And it can eventually be dislodged (after suitable preparation) with f3 and e4.

11...Nxc3 12.Qxc3 dxc4 13.Bxc7?!

13.Qxc4. Here Bob correctly feels that Carl should have kept the powerful f4 bishop. 13...Nd5 14.Be5! and White will open up the kingside with a quick g4.

13...Qxc7 14.Bxc4 Qd6

Bob is clearly worried about a potential pin down the c-file, but ...a5 and ...Rb8 is a quicker way to prepare ...b5. 14...a5 15.Kb1 Rb8 16.Ne5 b5! 17.Bb3 c5 looks like the best way to get Black's queenside counterplay going.

15.Kb1 a5 16.Ba2 b5 17.Ne5 Ra6 18.Rc1

18.Qc2! would allow White to play a4 if ...b4, keeping the files closed. With opposite side castling, when there is a 'hook' for a pawn break (e.g. the pawn on a3 here), the defending side should generally try to avoid files being opened.

18...Bb7

18...b4! Without the open a-file, Black just has a weak c6-pawn to defend. 19.axb4 axb4 was better for Black, to open the a-file.

19.Qc5

Strongly threatening Qxd6.

19...Qd8

A radical decision by Bob, giving up a pawn with check to keep the queens on the board and retain some slight counter-attacking chances.



20.Bxe6± Kh8 21.Qc3?

This is a difficult mistake to understand, putting the queen on a square that allows lines to be opened against the white king. But I think what Carl was reasoning was that he would win the exchange with Nf7+, and that was the most important factor in the position. In fact, 'winning the exchange' is a mistake more often than you would think, as quite often the minor piece (here a dominant knight on e5) is worth more - in the short term - than a rook on f8. So just thinking in 'point count' terms can lead to trouble...

21.Qc2!±

21...b4?!

Bob gets to open a file on the queenside, but there are other lines he could have opened up:

21...c5! is actually the star move (as well as being a very thematic pawn break of a backward pawn). What does it achieve? It discovers an attack on White's bishop on e6, but more crucially frees up the black bishop on b7. The advancing queenside pawns also cause White problems. So now after: 22.Nf7+ Rxf7 23.Bxf7 Be4+ (23...Bxg2 is also fine) 24.Ka1 c4! is a powerful push, with a devilish trick in mind. Black is threatening ...Bb4!, winning the queen, as if axb4 axb4 is check. 25.Qe1 Qf8 26.Bh5 Bxa3! and Black has full compensation for the exchange and strong play against the white king.

22.Qc4, aiming for a4.

22...bxa3 23.Nf7+?!

Here Bob correctly assesses that Carl should have retained his strong central knight. Winning the exchange allows Black strong counterplay: 23.Nd7+ /=

23...Rxf7!= 24.Bxf7 Rb6!

Black is up to no good, Bob says.

25.b3 Ba6

25...Qf8! is a tough move to find. It looks as though Black should be getting on with queenside attacking moves, but, by tying White down to defending the offside bishop on f7, Black gets enough counterplay: 26.Ka2 a4 27.Rb1 and now Black can force a draw by repetition, as the white queen cannot leave the defence of the Bf7. 27...Ba6! 28.Qe6 Bc8!=

26.Qc2 a4 27.Ka2?

It turns out this is the decisive mistake. If Carl had played Ka1, his king would have been safe, with no ...Rb2+ in case the b-file opens. Chess can be a cruel game!

If 27.Ka1 Qf8 28.Bc4 Bxc4 29.bxc4 Rb2 30.Qxa4 and White is winning.

27...Qf8!→

As we saw a couple of moves ago in the variations, this is an unlikely strong move. Here it's even stronger, as now White has no way to defend the b3 pawn and Black gets two monster pawns on the sixth rank.

28.Be6

If 28.Bc4 Bxc4! 29.Qxc4 (29.bxc4 Rb2+!) 29...axb3+ The twin monsters are back! Here Bob gives the winning

continuation: 30.Kb1 a2+ 31.Kb2 Ba3+ 32.Kc3 Bxc1 33.Rxc1 b2 34.Kd2 b1Q.

28...Qf6!

No rest for the reverend bishop! Like Cardinal Wolsey being harried by Henry VIII's henchmen in 'Wolf Hall', the bishop has no place to rest his head or to call home.

29.Qxf5 axb3+

There should be a special phrase for two pawns abreast like this. Perhaps: 'Twin pawns on the sixth are sick!'

30.Kb1

30.Ka1 also loses: 30...b2+ 31.Ka2 Qxf5 32.Bxf5 bxc1Q 33.Rxc1 g6

30...Bd3+! 31.Qxd3 Qxe6?!

Bob criticises this move, as there is an even stronger final blow:

31...Qxf2! wins on the spot.

32.Rc3?!



32.Rc4! would have held out longer.

32...a2+!

Now comes a brilliant finish by Bob Kane, worthy of a grandmaster!

33.Kb2



33...Ba3+!

Black mates.

34.Kxa3 b2!

Critically, if the White rook had been on c4, here White would have been able to capture the pawn on a2 with the king.

35.Rcc1 a1Q+ 36.Rxa1 Qe7+

36...bxa1Q+ 37.Rxa1 Qe7+ 38.Ka2 Qa7+ 39.Qa3 Qf7+ 40.d5 Qxd5+

37.Ka2 Qa7+ 38.Qa3 bxa1Q+ 39.Rxa1 Qf7+

A thrilling game, which showed that having the initiative is very often more important than a material advantage in amateur games.

0-1

It's a Puzzlement!



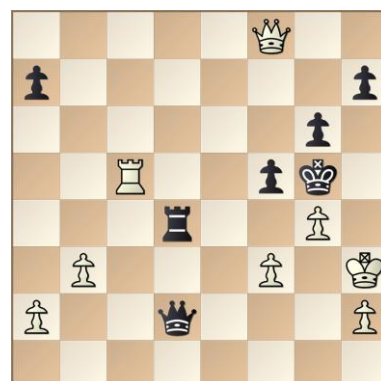
Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://chesspuzzle.net)

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!

When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.

Puzzle 1

WFM Liza Kisteneva – FM Bao Nghia Dong
British Rapidplay 2023, Bingley ENG



White to win

[Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2

IM Mahel Boyer – IM Nagdal Vardaan
Southend Masters 2023, Southend ENG



White to win

[Puzzle Two](#)

Puzzle 3

IM Andrew J. Ledger – WFM Maaïke Keetman
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 4

CM Thomas A. Quilter – Gopakumar Siddharth
British Rapidplay 2023, Bingley ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 5

Norman A. Hutchinson – Martin G. Walker
Cambridge Int'l Open 2023, Cambridge ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 6

IM Gavin Wall – IM John G. Cooper
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



White to win

[Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 7

Tom Eckersley-Waites – Liza Kisteneva
British Rapidplay 2023, Bingley ENG



White to win

[Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 8

N. Moyse – Chirag Guha
4NCL Easter Congress 2023, Daventry ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9

IM A. Ghasi – GM Leon Livaic

Southend Masters 2023, Southend ENG



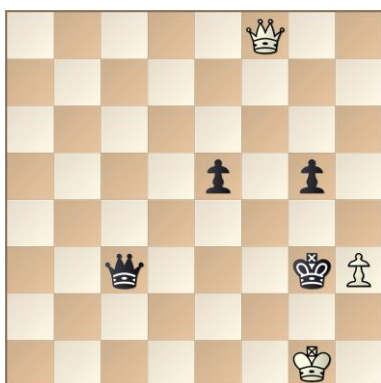
White to win

[Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10

Jim W.R. Nicholson – GM Keith C. Arkell

British Rapidplay 2023, Bingley ENG



White to draw

[Puzzle Ten](#)

Puzzle 11

Phil Cook – Mark A. Bastow

British Rapidplay 2023, Bingley ENG



White to checkmate

[Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12

Daniel GH Gallagher – GM Daniel Howard Fernandez

4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

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Books of the Month by Ben Graff



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

Summer is nearly upon us. The years seem to roll by with increasing speed, and reflecting on the past is always important. This month we explore Genna Sosonko's wonderful *Genna Remembers*, a superb offering from the foremost chronicler of twentieth century chess. There is no other writer who can share stories from this period, and the people who shaped it, quite as Sosonko can, and it has been a real pleasure to review this book.

***Genna Remembers* (Thinkers Publish)**

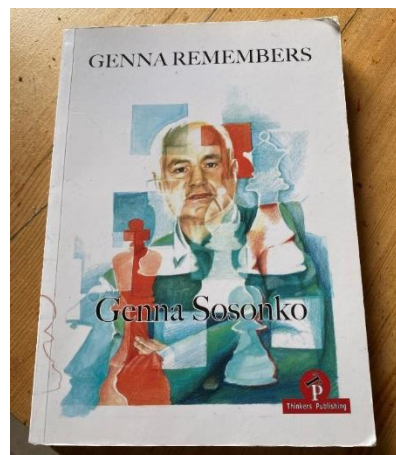
'The faster the twentieth century sprints away from us and the thicker the grass of forgetting grows ... that world of chess will be gone soon enough as well. It was an intriguing and colourful world, and I saw it as my duty not to let it disappear into that empty abyss.'

Genna Sosonko

If anyone can write a book that is capable of being instantly badged as a classic, it must be Genna Sosonko. *Genna Remembers* is fully worthy of that accolade. Sosonko's offerings have long breathed life into the Soviet school of chess, making real on the page a host of chess players whom otherwise we would increasingly only know today through their games. From Botvinnik and Bronstein, through to Petrosian, Tal, Smyslov and Korchnoi, Sosonko gives us an insider's account: both as to what these giants were really like as people, and the way in which their lives (just like his own) were shaped by growing up under the Soviet regime. There are also intriguing reflections on Spassky, Karpov, and Kasparov, and a host of chapters on less well-known players and happenings that also enrich this work.

Sosonko highlights the mass of contradictions and challenges inherent in Soviet chess. On the one hand,

players could earn a good living and received considerable State support. On the other, overseas travel was severely restricted and even the elite had little control as to which tournaments they were allowed to enter, if any. Equally, the dark arts often played a part in determining results over the board.



This is a book of both delightful vignettes and shocking revelations. Perhaps foremost amongst the latter is Sosonko's belief that Korchnoi deliberately threw his 1971 Candidates match with Petrosian, because the Soviet authorities felt that Petrosian stood the better chance of blocking Fischer's path to Spassky. In return for doing so, Sosonko suggests that Korchnoi was allowed to play in three overseas tournaments the following year - a reward that might not sound like much of a consolation to those of us who have grown up in the West, but we cannot easily comprehend what it might be like to live in a country where the basic freedom to travel does not exist. (Sosonko notes as an aside that Spassky often remarked that his decision to marry a French national was mainly so that he could take part in international tournaments.)

Sosonko noted Korchnoi's 'weak and absolutely uncharacteristic play', against Petrosian, and the limpness of his denial when Karpov made the same allegation in relation to the Petrosian match having been fixed, years later. (Korchnoi was a man generally known for his blunt and plain speaking, so his comparative reticence when challenged on this point did seem unusual.) Moreover, Sosonko suggests that uncharacteristically Korchnoi chose not to stay with Sosonko and his other seconds during the match - as he could not face them - knowing what he was going to do. As further evidence, Sosonko highlights that, having only been allowed to play in Western countries six times in the previous seventeen years, Korchnoi did indeed play in three prestigious Western tournaments in the following twelve months.

As Sosonko observes, 'The only thing which can be concluded with one hundred percent certainty is that

there were absolutely no moral nor any other sort of factors which would have stopped the people in power back then [from fixing the result]'. Had Korchnoi played at full strength against Petrosian it is entirely possible that he would have won, albeit it is harder to envisage him having stood much of a chance against Fischer, so it is unlikely that the course of chess history was radically changed by this still shocking turn of events. Or at least shocking to our own western, twenty-first century sensibilities – and that is the whole point. L. P. Hartley wrote in *The Go-Between* that 'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there,' and if nothing else Sosonko's work is a terrific reminder that some of the standards and norms we might take for granted are very different from those which shaped chess life within the Soviet Union - the foremost twentieth century chess power.

In terms of smaller happenings, Sosonko shares a delightful exchange between Capablanca and Botvinnik at the Nottingham Tournament in 1936, in which the pair were level going into the final round. Botvinnik's reaction further highlights the influence of the Soviet chess authorities, and the fact that its representatives always had to consider how their actions might be viewed by their paymasters. 'During a mutual stroll, when both of their opponents were thinking about their moves, the Cuban hugged Botvinnik and exclaimed: "You have a good position, and so do I. Let's both go for a draw and share the first-place prize." "Well, here I am thinking, oh you trickster," Botvinnik writes, "Winter [Botvinnik's opponent] is no Bogoljubov [Capablanca's opponent] ... 'As for me, I'm ready to accept your offer of course, but what will Moscow say? Capablanca only threw up his hands in response.'

Sosonko's thoughts and reflections on both Karpov and Kasparov are illuminating. He highlights Karpov's observation that 'Games come easy for me. Any [type of game]. A true competitor, having first learned the game, breaks it down to its tiniest elements during his first few attempts, thereby learning its inner mechanics, and, later when he starts to play for real, is able to extract the maximum out of the situation.' Sosonko notes that Karpov would often stay up late playing bridge, backgammon, belote or even pinball. In a 1970s tournament Karpov burned through considerable energy 'deep into the night' before finally extracting his revenge against a fellow grandmaster at the card table. His exasperated second asked Karpov why he had bothered, to which he replied 'Well, so he wouldn't get the impression that: today I beat Karpov at the card table, tomorrow I'll beat him in a tournament game'. The instincts of a true champion.

Similarly, Kasparov's intensity and will to win are also brought to life by Sosonko through the retelling of a story

shared with him by Razuvaev. When Kasparov was first selected by the Soviet team as a 17-year-old, Polugaevsky asked for his advice about a particular variation. 'Well, that's pretty much all Kasparov needed to get him going – he begins shooting off variations on full auto, and in such a way that poor Lyova can barely keep up.' Ultimately Polugaevsky 'just left in a cold sweat.' Few would disagree with Sosonko's observation that 'There wasn't a single individual who worked on chess with the same intensity as Kasparov did, and thus enriched the opening stage of the game with so many new ideas'. Sosonko's story about Kasparov (who wasn't playing) being asked to advise the Soviet players whether they should accept the draw offers their Dutch counterparts had simultaneously offered is a good one. 'The world champion appeared in the playing hall some ten minutes later. Having looked over the boards and wrinkling his nose with displeasure, he shook his head and seemingly gave the go-ahead.'

The truth is that a single review like this cannot begin to do justice to a book as good as *Genna Remembers*. It can but give a flavour, along with the promise that there is much else to enjoy within these pages that I have not even the space to touch on. Go out and buy and then devour this modern classic. When you have done so, I would encourage you to read the rest of Sosonko's work if you haven't already. There truly is no writer like him. It is his books that will ensure the grass permanently remains short, and that twentieth century chess will always be remembered with an intensity and colour that might not otherwise have been the case.

A final thought...

While looking back is always good, we all have plenty of scope to create new memories too. If you haven't got your entry in for this year's British, now is the time! It is always a highlight of the chess year. I'm playing in various events and will be there most days. Do come and say hi if you see me, and good luck in all your games.

NEWS and VIEWS

GM Norm Success

Harry Grieve, the 22-year-old British champion, and Peter Roberson, 34, both completed their second grandmaster norms (three are needed for the title plus a 2500 rating) in the 4NCL season, with unbeaten totals of 9/11 and 8/11. Both play for the Sharks team, whose captain has a pragmatic approach to helping his squad achieve their individual goals; at the final weekend Grieve and Roberson played all their three games with the white pieces as the board order was juggled for each match.

Sue Maroroa Jones 1991-2023

We were deeply saddened to hear about the tragic passing of WIM Sue Maroroa Jones on Thursday 11th May, shortly after giving birth to her second child Daniel. A fuller article can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/sue-maroroa-jones-1991-2023/>

Harry Lamb 1942-2023

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Harry Lamb. Please see the ECF website for his obituary and funeral details:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/harry-lamb-1942-2023/>

ECF Annual Awards

This year's annual awards are now open for applications. There are nine awards:

1. President's Award for Services to Chess
2. Contribution to Junior Chess
3. Contribution to Women's Chess
4. Contribution to Chess in the Community
5. Contribution to Accessible Chess
6. Online Chess Contribution of the year
7. Club of the Year
8. Small Club of the Year
9. Congress of the Year

This year the awards benefit from a £2,000 support package from the Chess Trust so each award (excepting the President's Award for Services to Chess) will not only come with a glass trophy but comes with a £250 'prize'. Details of all the assessment criteria as well as how to apply can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ECF-Awards-2023.pdf>

Applications are accepted until 7th July. There is also a link to the awards on the ECF website. The Awards Committee chairman, Stephen Greep, welcomes informal enquiries about the awards via email on sigreep@gmail.com.

ECF Yearbook 2023

In all the excitement of preparing this year's yearbook a number of interesting articles from *ChessMoves* that had originally been earmarked for inclusion were inadvertently omitted. We've updated the yearbook accordingly and draw readers' attention in particular to the articles celebrating England's team and individual successes in 2022 on the world senior chess stage. The link to the updated yearbook is here:

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

ECF Shop Page



Our new shop page allows you to purchase copies of the ECF Yearbook 2023, as well as a limited number of copies of the ECF Yearbook 2022. Click this link <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-shop/> to access the shop.

The 2023 Yearbook is £9.99 for ECF members and £14.99 for non-members, and features articles, reports and pictures (in full colour) from all aspects of the ECF year, including the Strategy and Business Plan, the British Chess Championships, round-ups from Home, Junior, Women's, Online and International and the best of the year's articles by Michael Adams, Keith Arkell, Peter Wells, John Nunn, Paul Littlewood, Mark Rivlin and Carl Portman, and much more besides. Buy now while stocks last!

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.

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 Level 1 Arbiter Course

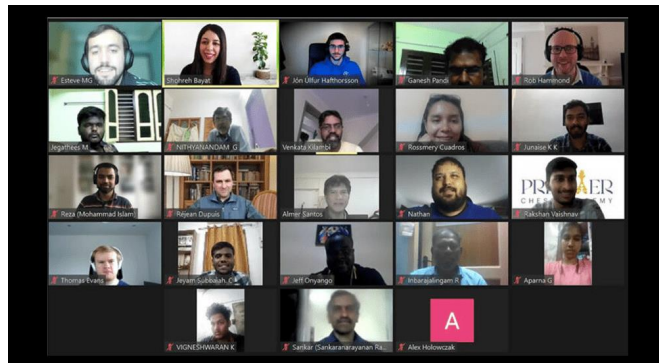
Course dates/schedule – Saturday 10th June and Sunday 11th June 2023, from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm each day.
Venue – Bridge & Patricxbourne CEP School, Conyngham Lane, Bridge, near Canterbury, Kent CT4 5JX.
Course fee – £40.

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 are 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/>

131st Internet Based FIDE Arbiters' Seminar



The 131st Internet Based FIDE Arbiters' Seminar (English Chess Federation) was held from 15th to 22nd April 2023. It was organised by the English Chess Federation under the auspices of FIDE. The lecturer was IA Shohreh Bayat (ENG), FIDE Lecturer, and the assistant lecturer was IA Alex Holowczak (ENG):

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/131st-internet-based-fide-arbiters-seminar/>

Chess Match on Saturday 6th May by Stewart Reuben

There was some other event involving Kings and Queens that day, but the all-important one was Middlesex Seniors v Middlesex Juniors at Wembley. I now live in Buckinghamshire, but that isn't far away.

I was invited because apparently I had played a similar event in 1955, for the juniors. I was a bit puzzled by what they meant by seniors. I am used nowadays to it being 50+. But it turned out it meant 20+. I did remember playing for Middlesex in 1955 for the county team for the first time, on board 64. We used to play 100 board matches against the other home counties in those days. It has been easy to remember the board number, for obvious reasons, for over 65 years.

They asked me to give a speech - but hadn't told me the match was being played in two separate rooms. One obvious point I made was that somebody should prepare themselves to make a speech in 50 years' time, and also that I last played for Middlesex in 1975, quitting because they still used adjudications. Today we played at the relatively civilised rate of all the moves in 2 hours plus 10 seconds per move from move 1.

UK Parliamentary Online Chess Club Lifts Off! by Peter Hornsby



After the very successful House of Lords vs House of Commons chess match which took place in Parliament in March I invited MPs, Lords, and Parliamentary staffers (past and present) to form a UK Parliamentary online chess team.

At the end of April on a Sunday evening the team played their first full friendly match against Newcastle-under-Lyme. It originally was supposed to have a rating cap of 1100. However, due to changing circumstances on the day Newcastle had an almost full-strength team, making it quite a baptism of fire for the UK Parliamentarians!

Chris Stephens MP (Glasgow South-West) and Adam Afriyie MP (Windsor) battled valiantly despite falling to defeats in their games, with the former playing Dylan Cooper, Staffordshire's under-18 junior champion. Mike Wood MP (Dudley South), however, managed to win both his matches to deservedly get the UK Parliamentary team on the scoresheet.

The following weekend the UK Parliamentary online chess team bounced back, beating Chess Heroes from South Africa 5-3. This time the team was mainly made up of Parliamentary staffers; however, Adam Afriyie MP took two vital wins to lead the team to victory. We look forward to future challenges. If you have a team/group of players who all have ratings less than 1100 and who would like to play them, please email peter.hornsby@parliament.uk.

JUNIOR MOVES

ECF Team Chess Challenge National Final 19th April 2023



16 schools descended on Imperial College, London Maths Department on Wednesday 19th April 2023 for this year's national final of the ECF Team Chess Challenge. Teams came from across the country with players travelling from Merseyside, Northumberland, Somerset and Bristol as well as others with much shorter journeys.

In the morning GM Professor Jonathan Mestel of Imperial College gave a masterclass on chess problem-solving, not only illustrating the pitfalls but also some of the important endings to know for normal chess play.

The chess tournament started after lunch with five rounds being played at a rate of play of ten minutes with a two second increment. With this rate of play the arbiter, Chris Howell, was kept busy with time scrambles!

The winner of the tournament is determined by game points, rather than match points, and so, with every game counting, all were important. It also leads to the leading teams meeting early in the tournament. So, it was in round 3 that the top two seeds fought a close match before Wilson's beat Sevenoaks 2½ to 1½.

Round 4 saw the reigning champions, Wilson's School, lose to last year's runners-up, Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Bristol. The final round therefore started with Wilson's, QEH and Tiffin School all equal on 11½ points, with North Liverpool Academy only half a point behind.

This was the first year that North Liverpool Academy had entered the tournament, but they defeated QEH by 3-1

to ensure a top two finish. However, Wilson's beat Tiffin by $3\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ and so they retained the championship.

Leading results

Position	Team	Played	Points
1	Wilson's School	5	14½
2	North Liverpool Academy	5	13½
3	QEH	5	12
4	Tiffin School	5	11½
5	Solihull School	5	11½
6	University College School	5	11½
7	Sevenoaks	5	11
8	Bristol GS	5	11
9	Taunton School	5	10½
10	St Albans School	5	10



Problem solvers in action

The problems faced were as follows:

Round 1

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/knv61tl8e2cw688/Round1Problems.pdf?dl=0>

Round 2

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ksharo23nb4w708/Round2Problems.pdf?dl=0>

Round 3

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/mv6qp6wlh08s9fv/Round3Problems.pdf?dl=0>

Round 4

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bwrncyv33f5jqo/Round4Problems.pdf?dl=0>

Round 5

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/fzsxzlbgl12sl6ll/Round5Problems.pdf?dl=0>

Report on Team Problem Solving Final at Imperial College



The winners

Six teams qualified for the final at Imperial College. There were two new teams: King Edward's, Camp Hill and Colyton Grammar, who found the going tough. All the teams scored well in the first round but an error by Wilson's deprived them of full marks. In the second round the two-movers proved a little more taxing but a strong performance by Skinners' put them into the lead which they never surrendered. As in normal years the self-mates and helpmates proved challenging, and Skinners' proved that they had mastery of these as well. It was obvious that the main battle was for second place, which was won by Wilson's with a strong performance in the last round.

World School Chess Championship 2023

14 English juniors competed in the World School Chess Championships in Rhodes, Greece from April 13th to 23rd 2023. The event was very well attended with delegations from 54 countries and 530 children taking part across 6 age ranges.

Congratulations to our top placing boy, Edward Jackson, who finished 10th in the very strong Under 17 age group and to our top placing girl, Eugenia Karas, who also

finished 10th in the keenly contested girls under 15 section.



The England team

The tournament was over 9 rounds with 1 game per day under time control of 90mins + 30 second increment, allowing plenty of time for opponent prep and recovery between rounds. The England team comprised: Boys: U17 Edward Jackson & Frankie Badacsonyi, U15 Stanley Badacsonyi, U13 Pengxiao Zhu & Joseph Morrison, U9 Krish Keshari & Junyi Zhang, U7 Junyan Hu. Girls: U15 Eugenia Karas, Lindsay Pyun & Abby Seward, U13 Ankita Belhur & Diah Patel, U7 Nuvee Konara. Overall England finished in the top half, and all our players contributed wins to the overall points total of 64.5/126. Throughout the tournament we played children from 32 different nations:



(Test your flag knowledge)

In round 5 Edward Jackson (black) found a nice 'hook' checkmate against Kiril Kostov:



Black to play, mate in 7

51... Ra1+ 52. Kf2 (is forced as Kh2 is met with immediate Rh1#) 52... f4 (An immediate Rf1+ allows white to escape via e3) 53. Rb7+ Kg6 (And white resigns, as checkmate is inevitable in a few moves, E.g.) 54. Rb6+ Kh5 55. Rh6+ Kxh6 56. Bf8+ Kg6 57. B4 Rf1# (The familiar 'Hook' mating pattern).

Outside of the tournament matches the England players relaxed in the evenings discussing games. Edward Jackson and the Badacsonyi brothers gave tips and coaching advice to our younger players and blitz game sessions occurred with players from many nations gathering to join in. The Fide motto "Gens una Sumus" (We are one family) was clear to see. Friendships were made and the worldwide enthusiasm for chess amongst the young generation was apparent.

Flags answers:

Aruba, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, England, Georgia, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Iceland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates & Uganda

Littlewood's Choice



Most of the great players of today were very talented as juniors. However, this was also true of the champions of the past.

One of the greatest World Champions was the legendary Jose Raul Capablanca. He had an invincible streak for eight years from 1916 until 1924 during which he played 63 games, winning 40 and drawing 23.

At the age of 13 he played a match against the Cuban Champion Juan Corzo, and beat him 6½-5½... a remarkable achievement!

Here is Game 8, which shows the brilliance of the young player.

J. Corzo – J.R. Capablanca
Match Game 8 – 1901

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 exf4 4.Nf3 g5 5.h4 g4 6.Ng5

This is the romantic Allgaier Gambit, which can be very dangerous. However, the young Capablanca defends very energetically. 6.Ng1 has been tried recently but it is all rather artificial.

6...h6 7.Nxf7 Kxf7 8.d4 d5 9.exd5 Qe7+ 10.Kf2 g3+ 11.Kg1



Not 11.Kf3? Nf6, threatening Bg4+ and leaving White with a dreadful position. However, there now follows a clever tactic which returns the piece for the initiative.

11....Nxd4! 12.Qxd4 Qc5 13.Ne2 Qb6!



A subtle finesse, opening the a-file for the black rook. White might have tried 14.b4!? to try to resist this but then 14...Bxb4 15.Be3 fxe3 16.Qxh8 Bf8 17.Qe5 Nf6, when Black has more than enough compensation for the loss of the exchange.

14.Qxb6 axb6 15.Nd4 Bc5 16.c3 Ra4

Winning a pawn with much the better game.

17.Be2 Bxd4+ 18.cxd4 Rxd4 19.b3?!



Slightly better was 19.Bh5+, but after 19...Kg7 20.b3 Nf6 21.Bb2 Rd2 retains the initiative.

19....Nf6 20.Bb2? This is now a mistake which shortens the battle. However, 20.Ba3 can be answered by 20...Re8 21.Bc4 Nxd5 22.Bb2 Rxc4! 23.bxc4 Nb4 24.Rf1 Nd3 25.Bc1 Re4 when Black is virtually a piece up because of the pitiful white rook on h1.

20...Rd2 21.Bh5+ Nxh5! 22.Bxh8 f3!

Also good was 22...Bf5, with Be4 to follow.

23.gxf3 Nf4 24.Be5 Rg2+ 25.Kf1 Rf2+ 26.Ke1 Nd3+ 0-1



After 27.Kd1 Nxe5 - Black is now ahead on material and is easily winning.

A brilliant game by the youngster, foreshadowing his future achievements.

I remember seeing this game in *Capablanca's Best Games* by Golombek and it made a deep impression on me. Whenever someone played the King's Gambit as White I always tried to defend energetically so as to not allow the initiative to be in my opponent's hands.

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

As we have seen in the past months, tactics are very important. It is imperative to keep a look-out for them at all stages, as if they are missed it can be fatal.

Consider the following game of mine:

P. E. Littlewood – W. Watson
London League 2001

1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be3 Bg7 5.Qd2 0-0 6.Bh6 e5 7.d5?

White makes a mistake in the opening as he misses the tactic 7...Nxe4! when if 8.Nxe4 then 8...Qh4 recovers the piece and so nets a pawn. The game might continue 9.Bxg7 Qxe4+ 10.Ne2 Kxg7 11.h4, when White has some compensation but Black is clearly better.

7....Bxh6? 8.Qxh6 c6 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.0-0-0 d5 11.exd5 cxd5 12.Nf3 d4

The position is now critical, but it becomes clear that Black has underestimated White's attack.

13.Ng5 Bb7 14.h4! Qe7 15.h5!

White doesn't worry about sacrificing material as he realizes that he will get a strong attack on the h-file.

15....dxc3?

This looks natural but in fact the last chance was 15...Rc8 to stop the white bishop reaching c4. However, White can still continue energetically with 16.hxg6 fxg6 17.Bd3! and now if 17...dxc3 18.Bxg6 is a killer. Therefore Black must try 17...Qg7 but after 18.Qh3 White still has a very strong attack because if 18...dxc3 then 19.Qe6+ Kf8 20.Qd6+ Qe7 21.Ne6+ Kf7 22.Bxg6+! hxg6 23.Ng5+ Kf8 24.Rh8+ winning. Black could also try 17...Qg7 18.Qh3 Qd7 but then 19.Qg3 dxc3 20.Nxh7! is winning for White. It is amazing how many tactics there are!

16. hxg6 fxg6 17.Bc4+ Kh8 18.Qxg6 Nbd7

Black finally completes his development but it is too late!

19.Bf7 Be4 20.Qxe4! 1-0

The final tactical blow, without which White would not be winning. After 20...Nxe4 then 21.Rxh7 mate or 20...Rxf7 21.Nxf7+ Qxf7 22.Qxa8+ and White ends up two exchanges ahead.

A real swashbuckling game which gave me great pleasure at the time!

Here are two more of my positions for you to solve, with the answers at the end of the article:



T. Cruze – P. E. Littlewood
Hitchin Premier 1988

How did I make a decisive material gain?



P. E. Littlewood – M. Adams
St Albans Open 1989

How did I win a piece?

Answers:

T. Cruze – P. E. Littlewood

Black wins by 1...Bxf2+ 2.Kxf2 Rxd2! 3.Rxd2 Nxe4+ with decisive material gain, e.g. if 4.Kf3, g4+ 5.Nxg4 Ng5+ wins.

In the game White played 4.Qxe4 Bxe4 5.bxa6, but this was insufficient and he resigned 11 moves later.

P. E. Littlewood – M. Adams

The crushing tactic is 1.Qxe7+! - then if 1..Rxe7 2.Nd8+ Ka6 3.Nxc6 wins. The game continued 3...Rf7 4.f3 and Black resigned.

Paul Littlewood (plittl@hotmail.com)

Gormally's Coaching Corner by Danny Gormally



Courage and fortitude in the Four Nations Chess League

Chow, Samuel (2332) - Gormally, Daniel W (2460)

4NCL Division 1 2022–2023, United Kingdom (9.25), 29.04.2023

Chess players go about the whole process of improvement in many different ways. They study books, or they look at openings with ChessBase. They play games online. They try to solve puzzles. Sometimes they'll use Puzzle Rush. However, what is rarely stated when discussing how to improve is the role that heart, or bravery, plays in defining the class of a chess player. Sadly, I have lost count of the number of occasions where I have taken quick draws when in sight of a tournament victory or a good result and, as a consequence, ended up sabotaging my chances. The worst thing you can feel as a competitor is regret. On the way down to the final weekend of the Four Nations League which took place in a conference centre in Milton Keynes I read a biography of the footballer Roy Keane. In it he explained how other players might have been technically better than he was, but he made up for that with his heart and willingness to put himself about and take on any challenge. Clearly, in my first game, I didn't really take this lesson on board...

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 a6



I thought the Slav was a good choice. Whenever I employ this opening I seem to emerge with good positions going into the middlegame. What scares me to death is if they play the Exchange Slav as White, because it is very difficult to conjure up anything there as Black and often you are just defending a worse position with little chance of victory.

5.Nf3 Bf5 6.Nh4 Bg6 7.Qb3 Ra7 8.Bd2 e6 9.Nxg6 hxg6 10.h3 Nbd7 11.0–0–0 dxc4 12.Bxc4 b5 13.Be2 c5 14.Kb1 c4 15.Qc2



15...Rc7? I spent some time here and still didn't come up with a very good solution.

There was an interesting idea of 15...Qb8?! but ultimately this isn't the best. 16.e4 b4 (16...e5 17.dxe5 Nxe5 18.f4 Nc6 19.Be3 seems very bad for Black, as White will quickly play e5 once the rook has moved from a7 and power forward in the centre; 16...Bb4 17.Bf3±); now the engine suggests 17.Na4! b3 18.Qxc4 (18.axb3 cxb3 19.Qd3 Bb4 with a bit of a messy position. 20.Qxb3? Bxd2 21.Qxb8+ Nxb8 22.Rxd2 Nxe4) 18...bxa2+ 19.Qxa2 Nxe4 20.Be3, when it is hard to find a good defence to the threat of d5. In all these variations Black has one obvious problem - the underdeveloped kingside. Best is some careful move like 15...Rb7 when Black doesn't stand too badly, although White can initiate sharp play with his pawns. 16.g4!? b4 17.Na4 c3 18.Bc1 ∞.

16.a3? While my opponent was thinking I became very concerned about the possibility of his playing directly with 16.e4!



... trying to take advantage of White's lead in development by blowing up the centre. I thought this could easily end very quickly for me if I react badly to this, as with the bishop still undeveloped on f8 my next few moves are crucial. 16...b4 17.Na4 c3 18.Bf4! As my opponent admitted in the post-mortem, he had missed this straightforward idea. 18...Rc8 19.Bxa6+—

16...b4 17.axb4 Bxb4 18.Bf3 0–0 19.Na2? This turns out to be a mistake as well, because White loses an important strategic advantage in the two bishops and also allows Black to take easy aim at b2.

19.Nb5? axb5 20.Bxb4 Nb6 21.Bxf8 Qxf8— was an exchange I was happy to lose as I felt with moves like ... b4 coming Black would gain an easy attack on the queenside and White's rooks look curiously useless here; something like 19.g4 and the position would remain relatively balanced, although I guess most players would prefer to take Black - that open b-file looks quite juicy!

19...Bxd2 20.Qxd2 Qb8 21.Qa5 Nd5! 22.Bxd5 exd5 23.Rd2 23.Qxd5 Nf6 (23...c3 24.Nxc3 Rxc3 25.Qxd7 Rb3 26.Rd2 Qb4 also seems winning for Black. 27.Rc2 Rb8 28.Rc8+ Kh7—) 24.Qa5 Ne4



... and the tactics are starting to flow. Both ... c3 and ... Nxf2 are threatened, and White can't meet both threats.

23...Nf6 24.Rc1 Re8 And I offered a draw. Pathetic!

24...Re8



As the computer confirms, White has severe problems. To be honest I offered a draw partly because I lack courage and partly because I was relieved that he hadn't played e4 earlier. I also underestimated how good my position was; in my mind it was rather unclear and he had a bit of a blockade. 25.Nb4 - at first Black's last move looks like a blunder, losing a pawn, but there are tactics. (Relatively best was 25.Nc3 Rb7 26.Re2 Rb3±) 25...Rb7 26.Nxd5 Ne4! when Black wins material.

½–½

Alsina Leal ,Daniel (2520) - Williams, Simon K (2467)
4NCL Division 1 2022–2023, United Kingdom (10.10), 30.04.2023



Two players who weren't showing any lack of bottle were Daniel Alsina from Spain and Simon Williams in their round 10 game. Perhaps inspired by the bloodlust shown in Ding vs Nepo, they were going at it like Thanos vs Captain Marvel.

27.Bxf5 I came over to see the game around here and didn't think Simon would last much longer. His kingside and centre already looked devastated, and White has two raking bishops. On the plus side for Simon, he is a piece up. That's about the only bright side...

27...Rg8 28.e6 f6 29.e7 Qf7 30.Bf4?! Up to this point Daniel has played very well, but now he starts to waver a little. Obviously White wants to meet ... Nxe7 with Bd6, but this gives Black a vague glimmer.

Stronger was 30.Bh4! because in that case if the white rook lands on e6 it will be attacking f6 as well, which just spells bad news for Black. In an overwhelming position like this one, these little details might not seem significant, but they all add up... 30...Nxe7 31.Bxc8 Nbxc8 32.Rc7 is already game over.

30...h4! Having heart is also about keeping going when the odds are stacked against you and searching for your chances, and Simon does a good job of it here. White now has to keep an eye on ... g3 or ... h3 ideas, which wouldn't have been an issue if he had played the bishop to h4.

31.Be6 Qg6



32.Bxc8? a really bad move, because that bishop was doing a great job of keeping the black position bottled up. Given he was short of time I rather understand why Daniel made this mistake. The human instinct is to cash in 'Just in case'. You have this little voice at the back of your head saying 'What happens if he ends up just being a piece up? Let's get something back while we still can.' Or perhaps he just didn't see any other move.

Of course, I can say that taking on c8 is bad because I have the computer to guide me. Here it proposes 32.Rc5 and says that Black is done for. There are ideas like a5, kicking away the knight from b6 when d5 will then collapse. 32...Rg7 33.Qe3



... that looks like a weird non-human idea as well, putting your queen on e3 just before Black takes on e7 with the rook. But the computer is brilliant at anything concrete: 33...Rxe7 34.Bd6+—

32...Nxc8 33.Re6 Kf7 34.Rexxc6 Bxc6 35.Rxc6 Nxe7 All of a sudden, White has to battle for a draw. Given the turn of events, it is not surprising that more mistakes were made.

36.Rc7 Qb1+ 37.Rc1 Qf5 38.Bd6 g3! 39.Bxe7 39.fxc3 hxc3 40.Qe1!

39...Qxf2+ 40.Qxf2 gxf2+ 41.Kxf2 Kxe7



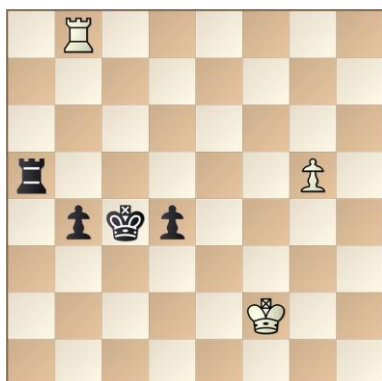
42.Rc7+? forcing the black king to e4 which, it turns out, is not a good idea at all.

42.Rc6 would have still given White excellent chances to hold the game, but of course that wasn't what he had in mind earlier when it looked like he was going to win in under 35 moves.

42...Ke6 43.Rc6+ Kf5 44.Rxa6 Rg3 45.Rd6 Ke4 46.Re6+ Kxd4 47.Rxf6 Rxb3 I came over to see the game again and Daniel looked very disgusted by what had occurred, as he is now dead lost. It is painful to lose any game of chess, even more so when you were completely winning... Competing at anything is a very emotional game! I think that was what Roy Keane was trying to get at in his autobiography - that you can have all the preparation and

technique you like, but at some moment other factors come into play that are more linked to our personality, and that can be the decisive factor.

48.Rf4+ Kc5 49.Rxh4 Ra3 50.Rh8 Rxa4 51.Rb8 Kc4 52.g4 d4 53.g5 Ra5!



Simon was always very good at rook and pawn endgames, as I discovered when I shared a flat with him in Anerley in South London back in the late 1990s. With this he keeps the white g-pawn under lock and key.

54.g6 Rg5 55.Rc8+ Kd3 56.Rc6 b3 57.Rb6 Kc2 58.Rc6+ Kd2 59.Rb6 d3 60.Kf3 Kc2 61.Kf4 Rg1 62.Rc6+ Kd1 63.Ke3 b2 64.Rb6 Rg3+ 65.Kf2 Rxc6 66.Rxb2 Re6 67.Rb1+ Kc2 68.Rb8 d2 69.Rc8+ Kd1 70.Rc5 Rf6+ 71.Kg2 Ke2 72.Re5+ Kd3 73.Rd5+ Ke3 74.Rd8 Rf4

0–1

Kasparov, Garry (2795) - Anand, Viswanathan (2725)
PCA-World-ch Kasparov-Anand, New York (10), 26.09.1995



The way the bishop was so dominant on e6 in the Alsina Leal-Williams game reminded me of a famous position from the 1995 world championship match between Kasparov and Anand.

18.Bxe6 this was a product of some very impressive opening preparation by Kasparov that ended up going

much deeper. Eventually he won on move 38. I heard a rather barmy rumour about this match that had taken place in the ill-fated Twin Towers in New York. Apparently, the story was that Anand was told to take a dive and he lost on purpose, and that the Kramnik-Kasparov match was fixed as well. I'm not sure where these stories came from (David Icke?) but I'm sure if Bobby Fischer had seen this game where White prepares a rook sacrifice and the analysis afterwards went past move 30 he would have laughed. He would have been SURE it was fixed. All conspiracy theories aside, if Alsina Leal had studied this game closely and the way the bishop on e6 prevented the Black king from escaping from the centre, more than compensating for the loss of a rook, he would have been far less reluctant to take on c8.

Gormally's Coaching Corner – The Puzzle

Gormally, Daniel W (2460) - Rudd, Jack (2324)

4NCL Division 1 2022–2023 Various, United kingdom, 02.05.2023

A number of people attending the final weekend complained about the venue; apparently the rooms were too far from the playing hall, etc. Although I can whinge with the best of 'em, it didn't really bother me. I quite liked the conference centre, perched up on a hill with a grand view of Milton Keynes. Besides, this was not really a priority for me; what was far more important was finally winning a game. Due to poor form and loss of confidence I had struggled in the 4NCL that season and had not won any games at all, despite having many promising positions. Obviously, it is not that easy as I was always playing on a high board and playing strong opposition. I had also had this issue with rust, which had plagued me in other 4NCL seasons as well. I was often going into weekends off a long break, having not played for several weeks before. That was not an issue this time as I had warmed up with a couple of rapidplays beforehand so had no excuse. I had that great chance against Sam Chow if I had played on but didn't. OK, forget about that one and try to beat Conor Murphy. Instead, I'm having to defend a worse endgame after messing up the opening and early middlegame a little. So, there is one last chance. I need to beat Jack Rudd in the very last round. Fortunately, Jack is not the sort of player who is going to try and frustrate you, and, as I learned later, he was probably even more demoralised than I was, having scored 0/8 in the league to that point.

12...Bb7



What's the best move here as White?

13.Nce4! this idea escaped me in the game. I was only focused on the other knight going to e4, but that gives Black the option of taking on c3 and relieving some of the pressure.

13.a4 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Nd5 15.Ne4 a6 16.Qc2



... was played in the game, which is also quite promising for White. Black lacks a completely safe refuge for his king, as if it goes to the queenside there is a potential open a-file to contend with, and his kingside also looks rather exposed. I went on to win a few moves later.

13...Qd7 14.a4 a5 14...Nxa4? 15.Rxa4 bxa4 16.Nxc4 and White will bury a knight on d6, when Black is in trouble.

15.Nc5±

1-0

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

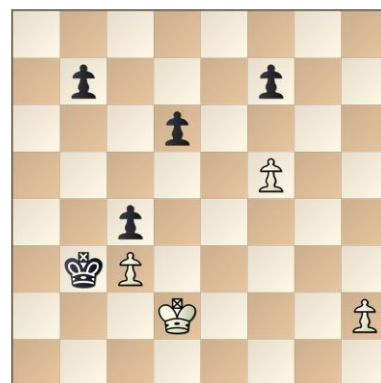
by Ian Watson

The Soul of Our Game

Philidor famously called pawns 'the soul of chess'; this month we'll look at three pawn endgame studies.

Strictly, Philidor wrote "les pions sont l'âme des échecs." but his chess manual was translated into multiple languages, including English, so the version we are familiar with is justifiable. Philidor was frequently in England, and indeed he lived here from 1792 until his death in 1795; he had fled France because he was on the French Revolution's banishment list. So, the best player in the world (as Philidor was for half a century) was, briefly, British.

Our first composition is by a doyen of the British endgame study, John Beasley. It was published in *Correspondence Chess* in 2002.



White to play and win

Solving a pawn study is not the same process as finding the right moves in an over the board pawn endgame. You know that, of course, but how to go about solving this one? It looks as if White is just going to push his h-pawn, but studies are works of art so it can't be that mundane.

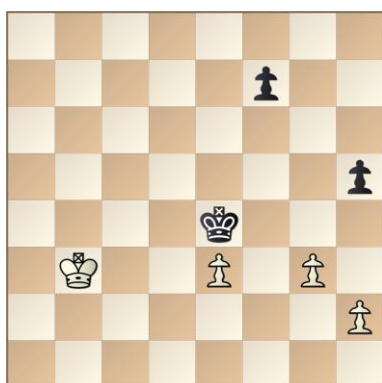
A good idea in both over the board and studies is to consider what threats Black has. Obviously, he will try to push his b- or d-pawn; that will force open the way for his c-pawn. However, if both players just keep pushing, then we'd get something like 1.h4 b5 2.h5 b4 3.h6 bxc3+ 4.Kc1

and White wins; so Black would need to play 3...Kb2. That gives you the clue as to what Black is threatening in the diagram: 1...Kb2. Now you know what White has to do on the first move: 1.Kc1. That's a study-type move, so you can be pretty confident that you're right. With that realisation, the rest is easier: 1...Kxc3 2.h4 Kd4 3.h5 Ke5 4.h6 Kf6 and this is now a structure that you may well be familiar with. White plays 5.K~2 d5 6.Kc3 b5 7.K~2 b4 8.K~2 d4 9.Kc1 and Black soon runs out of moves. Notice that White plays the retreating move Kc1 twice - an attractive touch.

For good order's sake, examine the other first move option - you might have got something wrong somewhere, so make sure you've understood the study fully. 1.h4? Kb2 2.h5 b5 3.h6 b4 4.h7 bxc3+ 5.Ke2 c2 6.h8Q+ f6 7.Qxf6+ c3 or 7.Qb8+ Kc3. Unless you spot the surprising 6...f6, you might think this line is the solution, but if you remember my artistry comment you should be suitably sceptical about such a line.

The unique part of the solution goes **1.Kc1 Kxc3 2.h4 Kd4 3.h5 Ke5 4.h6 Kf6** (thereafter there are minor duals). John composed this study after analysing an over-the-board game. Composers often take game positions and find ways to enhance them.

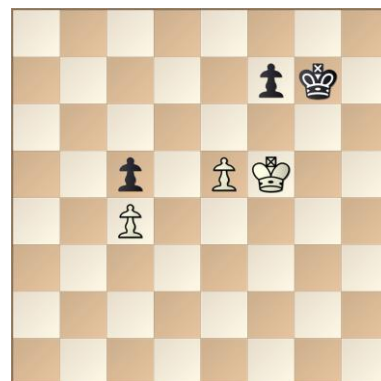
You have two solving tasks this month. The first is a new composition by Mike Read. Its solution is short and not difficult, so you could try to solve it from the diagram without setting it up on a board.



White to play and draw

Your second solving task is another John Beasley study, not as hard as his first one but you might need to set this one up on a board. I found both his studies in his book *51 Flights of Chess Fancy*; the second edition of this book was published last year. It contains many sorts of chess puzzle, but the first third of the book is all endgame studies; John describes the studies and how he went about composing them. A whimsical book and a fun read! It's available from www.chess.co.uk; the ISBN is 978-0-9555168-4-9. This study was first published in the French

magazine *diagrammes* in 1998, where John wrote the endgame studies column. The chess fraternity between Britain and France that started with Philidor continues two centuries on.



White to play and win

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

I recently had the good fortune to acquire a copy of Chess Informant's *Encyclopedia of Chess Problems: Themes and terms* by Milan Velimirovic and Kari Valtonen, a prodigious tome of which Ian Watson said, 'I didn't know any chess book that merited the term "Definitive"; now I do'. All manner of chess problem and study terminology is defined, but an incidental pleasure of the book is as a highly enjoyable 'coffee-table book' – one that you can pick up at any time to enjoy the problems or studies that are cited as examples of the various terms defined, all of them selected for their aesthetic qualities as well as the clarity of their exposition of the theme in question. Browsing the book in this spirit, I've come up, fairly randomly, with the following two tasty morsels:



Rafael Kofman

1st Honourable Mention, *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1980
Mate in 3

(This problem exemplifies the ‘Pawnee theme’, a title which to me connotes only the venue of the TV series *Parks and Recreation* – but it is at least the case that this theme title does prominently feature pawn moves...) White would like either to mate with the bishop, probably from e2, or to get a rook on to the back rank in order to administer mate. The two possible moves of the d-pawn immediately claim the solver’s attention, but 1.d3 and 1.d4 both fail against 1...Re7. So we look at Plan B – getting the rook to b1. This would entail a move of the b-pawn. The solver will know that if this is correct then there must be a reason why only one of the two possible moves of this pawn works. It seems likely that if only one works then it will be 1.b3; 1.b4 seems as though it offers more hostages to fortune, and indeed 1.b4? fails against 1...Rg4, when, in addition to the defensive resources we’ll see after 1.b3 Rg4 there is the additional 2...Rxb4, which will save the day for Black. So we start 1.b3, and it is indeed the black rook that is the only piece that can disrupt White’s plan to play 2.Rb2 and 3.Rb1.

First, we look at 1...Rg3 (eyeing 2...Rxb3). It turns out that in forfeiting the resource ...Rg7>e7 Black has rendered himself vulnerable to 2.Nf4 (threat 3.Be2). Playing to the e-file to defend now gives 2...Re3 3.dxe3#. And if 2...Rc3, which also defends against the threatened Be2 because at c3 the rook gives check, we have 3.dxc3#. Next, we look at 1...Rg4. At first this looks good because now Black guards f4 (so 2.Nf4? Rxf4). But there was another way in which White could threaten 3.Be2 – by moving the d2-pawn. Again, the solver knows that it must be the case that only one of the possible moves of that pawn works, and so it proves – 2.d3!, so that we have 2...Re4 3.dxe4# and 2...Rc4+ 3.dxc4#. And, to complete the triplet, we have 1...Rg5 2.d4!, with 2...Re5 3.dxe5# and 2...Rc5+ 3.dxc5#.

A most agreeable puzzle – I don’t think that anyone glancing at this diagram would anticipate that it contained

this task achievement of six mates by batteries fired by the d2-pawn.

A somewhat more complex problem also caught my eye:



Ado Kraemer

Deutsche Schachzeitung 1951 (v.)
Mate in 5

The rook at f2 defends against Rf4#, while the rook at g1 defends against g4#. White must manoeuvre in such a way as to cause an overloading of defensive resources. His leverage is the potential for threatening a third mating move e4, which however would fail at present against ...Kg4. An experienced solver will probably therefore be drawn quite quickly to the idea of 1.Rh4. This begins the process of pushing Black around, because we do now threaten 2.e4# (albeit not 2.g4, which now would allow 2...Ke4). So Black plays 1...Re1. For reasons that will become clear, White reverts to the g4# threat by playing 2.Rd4!. (Note that this is the only safe square apart from b4 from which White can make this threat.) Black has to go back – 2...Rg1. And now, in a way that is at first inscrutable, White goes ‘back to square one’ – 3.Rb4!. The only difference now is that it is Black to play, and it turns out that in this position he is in Zugzwang. The rooks cannot move off their respective files. On them, one possibility that can be eliminated is 3...Rf3, because when the rook is on that square we have 4.Rd5+, leading to 4...Ke4 5.Re5# and 4...Kg4 5.Rg5#. Only two possibilities remain. If Black tries 3...Rff1, then 4.Rh4 prevails, because the one useful black rook cannot defend both e4 and f4 – 4...Re1 5.Rf4#; and if 3...Rgg2, then we have 4.Rh4 Re2 5.Rf4#.

This fine problem comes under the less cryptic heading of ‘pendulum’. In a multitude of guises, such pendulum manoeuvres can be found in any number of long problems, both direct-mates (like this one) and selfmates. If you are tempted to enter a solving competition (e.g., by googling the recommended site *netchex.club*), it’s worth looking at any long direct-mate or selfmate to see whether Black’s defensive resources can be overloaded by

this kind of repetitive manoeuvre.

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

How to Solve a Study – Solutions

(Beasley)

1. Kf4 Kg6 2. Ke4 Kg5 3. e6 fxe6 4. Ke5 and wins.

Not a long solution, but not an easy one; to find it, you need to have understood that the position that arises after 2. Ke4 is reciprocal zugzwang - Black to play loses but White to play can only draw. So 1. Ke4? doesn't work; play would go 1... Kg6 2. Kd5 Kf5 3. Kxc5 Kxe5 and both sides will promote.

1. e6? looks as if it will work, but Black replies 1... Kf8 and 2. exf7 Kxf7 will lead to him eventually meeting Kxc5 with ... Kc7, drawing. If here White plays 2. Kf6 or 2. Ke5 we get 2... fxe6 3. Kxe6 Ke8 and Black will draw.

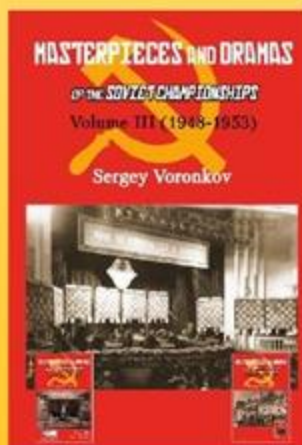
In the main line, there are also (1. Kf4) f6 2. Kf5 and 1... Kh6/7 2. e6. Also in the main line 2... f6/f5+ 3. exf6 and White will play 5. Kxc5, or if 2... Kg7 White will play 4. Kxc5.

(Read)

1. Kc4 Kxe3 2. Kd5 Kf3 3. Ke5 Kg2 4. g4 and draws.

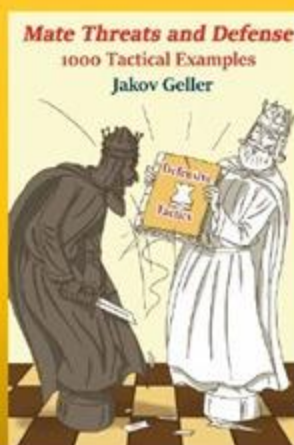
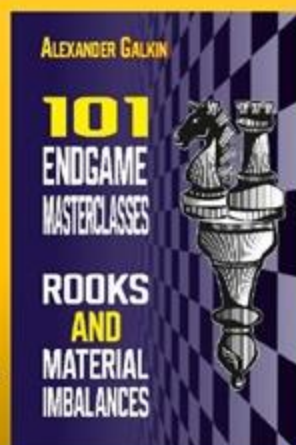
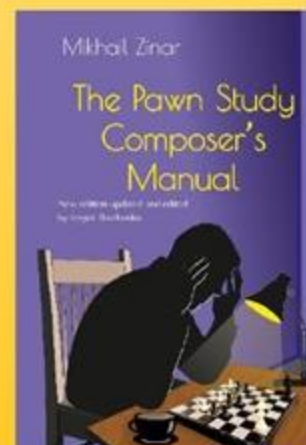
Play could continue 4... h4 5. g5 h3 6. Kf6 Kxh2 7. Kxf7 and both sides queen, or 4... hxg4 5. Kf4 Kh3 6. Kg5 f6+ 7. Kf5 Kxh2 8. Kxg4. If 1... Kf3, there is 2. Kd4 Kg2 3. Ke4 Kxh2 4. Kf4 draws.

It's not hard to spot the fine move 4. g4 when you get there; a tough task, however, to foresee it from the diagram position. Without 4. g4, Black can just gobble the h- and g-pawns and push his remaining passer. Mike created this study while he was analysing a game by Leinier Dominguez in which a related position arose.



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*



Available in the UK
from Chess & Bridge
and on Amazon


Elk and Ruby
www.elkandruby.com



BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thursday 20th July to Sunday 30th July @ The Venue, De Montfort University, Leicester

British Championship

Saturday 22nd to Sunday 30th July
9 round Swiss with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 9 starting at 10.00am on the final Sunday
Standardplay time control
Prizes/awards for the British Open and British Women's Championships

British Over 50 & Over 65 Championships

Monday 24th to Sunday 30th July
7 rounds over 7 days with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 7 at 10.00am on the final Sunday
Standardplay time control
Seniors 50+ - born 31/12/73 or earlier
Seniors 65+ - born 31/12/58 or earlier

Weekender Congress

Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd July
Four sections – Atkins/Open, Penrose/U2000, Soanes/U1750 and Yates/U1500
5 rounds over 3 days

Weekday Morning Congress

Monday 24th to Saturday 29th July
Three sections – Open, Under 1900, Under 1600
Six rounds over 6 days with one round per day starting at 9.15am

Rapidplay Events

Friday 21st, Monday 24th, Saturday 29th July
Three sections in each event – Open, Under 1750, Under 1450.
Each event will be a 7 round Swiss Rapidplay

Major Open

Saturday 22nd to Sunday 30th July
9 round Open Swiss Championship with rounds starting at 2.30pm each day, apart from round 9 starting at 10.00am on the final Sunday.
Standardplay time control

British Junior Championships

Under 16, Under 14, Under 12, Under 10, Under 8
Tuesday 25th to Saturday 29th July
7 rounds over 5 days with one round on Tuesday at 2.30pm, Thursday at 9.15am, and Saturday at 9.15am and two rounds on Wednesday and Friday at 9.15am and 2.30pm.
Standardplay time control

Weekday Afternoon Congress

Monday 24th to Saturday 29th July
Three sections – Under 2050, Under 1750, Under 1450
Six rounds over 6 days with 1 round per day starting at 2.30pm

Blitz Events

Friday 21st July, Monday 24th July, Thursday 27th July (Juniors only) , Saturday 29th July. 9 rounds Swiss tournament. Two sections in each event – Open, U1600

Commentary, Coaching and Bookstall

Spectator seating for top boards with GM commentary in a separate room at the venue. Junior Coaching available for the junior championship period. Bookstall by Chess and Bridge

Social Chess and Festival Programme

There will also be a full Social Chess and festival programme across the ten days at DMU including:
Outdoor/ drop-in chess and GM simuls, Chess Film Festival at the Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre, social and team chess evenings, problem solving competition with the BCPS, National Chess Library visits, quiz evening, Leicester Heritage tour organised by DMU

For further information visit www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

Week Beginning 22 May	
23 May 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid, London
24 May 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
26 - 29 May 2023	English Chess Championships and English Women's Chess Championships, Kenilworth
27 - 29 May 2023	Cotswold Chess Congress, Gloucester
27 May 2023	UKCC Manchester Megafinal (U10s and under), Cheadle Hulme
27 May 2023	Warrington Rapidplay, Warrington
27 May 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament, London
27 May 2023	Sheringham Junior Chess Tournament, Sheringham, Norfolk
27 May 2023	EJCOA Ealing Zonal Rapidplay, London
28 May 2023	UKCC Manchester Megafinal (U11-U18), Manchester
Week Beginning 29 May	
29 May 2023	3rd Norfolk Blitz Tournament, Horstead
31 May 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
1 June 2023	Hendon FIDE Blitz, London
2 - 4 June 2023	London Chess League Weekend Congress, London
2 - 4 June 2023	4th EACU FIDE-Rated Congress, Newmarket
2 - 4 June 2023	South Lakes Chess Congress, Barrow-in-Furness
3 June 2023	Leicestershire Junior Congress, Mountsorrel
3 June 2023	UKCC Oxford Megafinal, Oxford
3 June 2023	My First Chess Tournament Under 1000, London
3 June 2023	London FIDE Rapidplay, London
4 June 2023	UKCC 2023 North London Megafinal 2, North London
4 June 2023	2023 Dumfries Allegro, Dumfries
Week Beginning 5 June	
5 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Juniors Club Championship, Coulsdon, Surrey
5 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup, Coulsdon, Surrey
6 June 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid, London
6 June 2023	Sam Black Memorial Open Blitz, London
7 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
9 June 2023	5th Hammersmith Friday Evening FIDE Rapidplay, London
10 June 2023	ECF Counties Championships Semi Finals, TBA
10 June 2023	UKCC London Megafinal 2023, London
10 June 2023	UKCC Shropshire Megafinal 2023, Telford
11 June 2023	34th Birmingham Rapidplay, Birmingham
11 June 2023	Chalfont Junior Slowplay 1, Chalfont St Giles
11 June 2023	UKCC York Megafinal, York
Week Beginning 12 June	
12 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Juniors Club Championship, Coulsdon, Surrey
12 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Summer Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
14 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
16 - 18 June 2023	30th 4NCL FIDE Rated Congress, Daventry
17 - 18 June 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress, London
17 June 2023	UKCC Bristol Megafinal, Bristol
17 June 2023	UKCC Southend Last Chance Saloon Megafinal, Southend
17 June 2023	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay 2023 Open, London
17 June 2023	10th Martlesham Heath Chess Tournament 2023 Fundraiser, Martlesham Heath
17 - 18 June 2023	2nd Ilkley Chess Festival, Ilkley
18 June 2023	Ringwood Rapidplay 2023, Ringwood
18 June 2023	UKCC Cambridge Heartwear Megafinal, Cambridge
18 June 2023	UKCC East Kent Megafinal, Sandwich
18 June 2023	3rd Ribble FIDE Rapidplay, Leyland

Week Beginning 19 June	
20 June 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
21 June 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club, Coulsdon, Surrey
24 June 2023	UKCC Scottish Gigafinal
24 June 2023	2nd SCCU/London Club Championships
25 June 2023	2023 Solihull Junior Open
25 June 2023	The Chelmsford Summer Junior Chess Tournament
25 June 2023	2nd Cleethorpes Rapidplay, Cleethorpes
25 June 2023	UKCC Hampshire Megafinal 2023
25 June 2023	Chalfont Rapidplay 1