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Chess*Moves*



2023 British Championships, News of Government Funding, Reports from the Summer Congresses and European Senior Teams, ECF Policy Statements Plus All the Usual Features

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EDITORIAL



Greetings all!

As we go to press we've just received the fantastic news that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has announced a combined package of measures worth almost £1 million that will inspire the next generation of chess players, bring chess to a wider audience, and support the development of elite players. Plans will see investment in the English Chess Federation that will ensure players receive world-leading training and development opportunities and help make England a chess heavyweight, grants for schools in disadvantaged areas to get more primary school children playing chess, and 100 new chess tables installed in public spaces. Full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-investment-to-transform-future-of-english-chess-announced>. This announcement followed much hard work over the last year to raise the profile of chess as government level (some of which we cover in this issue) and, most importantly, tireless lobbying at the highest levels from ECF President Dominic Lawson, which enabled us to secure a meeting at 10 Downing Street and the enthusiastic support of the Prime Minister.

On a less happy note, the ECF is aware of historical and serious allegations which have recently been made public by a female chess player regarding highly inappropriate behaviour from several people within the game. The ECF takes all such allegations seriously and encourages anyone who has been harassed, threatened or suffered abuse at a chess tournament to contact the ECF in complete confidence. The ECF has also responded to FIDE's latest trans regulations, which we consider discriminatory and incompatible with English law. More details on both topics in this month's issue of *ChessMoves*.

With everything that's been going on it's great to see that the post-Covid recovery of grassroots chess in England continues strongly, and our Hold the Back Page feature at the end of the magazine tells you all you need to know about events this coming month. The ECF works hard to encourage and provide opportunities for girls and women, and I'd like to mention the National Girls Chess Championships, which is now open for entry. More details inside!

Finally, the ECF Board will be presenting a paper at this October's Annual General meeting of the English Chess Federation (ECF) setting out ways in which the present membership system could potentially be updated to provide a closer match between the membership fees that our members pay and the amount of chess that they play on the one hand, and the various services that they receive from the ECF on the other. Your feedback on the proposals is very important to us – please see 'News and Views' for more details.

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EVENTS

British Chess Championships 2023

Nigel Towers, Peter Wells, Steven Jones, Harry Grieve and Oleksandr Matlak



This year's British Chess Championships took place at **The Venue, De Montfort University** in **Leicester**, with events running from 20th to 30th July 2023: <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/> The schedule of tournaments and festival events was as below.

British Championship Saturday 22 nd to Sunday 30 th July	Major Open Saturday 22 nd to Sunday 30 th July	
British 50+ & 65+ Champs Monday 24 th to Sunday 30 th July	British Junior Champs Tuesday 25 th to Saturday 29 th July	
Weekender Congress Friday 21 st to Sunday 23 rd July	Weekday AM / PM Congresses Monday 24 th to Saturday 29 th July	
Rapidplay Events Friday 21 st July, Monday 24 th July, Saturday 29 th July	Blitz Events Thursday 20 th July, Tuesday 25 th July Thursday 27 th July (Junior Blitz)	
Commentary <u>GM commentary and broadcast</u> Saturday 22 nd to Sunday 30 th July	Coaching <u>Junior coaching at The Venue</u> Tuesday 25 th to Saturday 29 th July	Bookstall <u>Well-stocked bookstall from Chess & Bridge</u> Thursday 20 th to Sunday 30 th July

Festival Events	
Outdoor Drop-In Chess Friday 21 st and Friday 28 th July pm GM Simuls Saturday 22 nd July and Sunday 23 rd July	Chess Film Mini-Season Phoenix Cinema Saturday 22 nd , Wednesday 26 th and Saturday 29 th July evening
Social Chess and Team Events The Venue, Sunday 23 rd and Friday 28 th evening	Zwischenzug Lecture and Puzzles Wednesday 26 th July evening BCPS Problem Solving Evening Thursday 27 th July evening
National Chess Library Visits at the Kimberlin Library (Special Collections) Tuesday 25 th – Thursday 27 th July pm	Quiz Evening Leicester Heritage Tours And more...



First Rapidplay Open Section - Courtesy Chris Johnston, DMU

This year's British Championships made a welcome return to Leicester, which last hosted the Championships in 1960 with Jonathan Penrose taking the title as part of his record ten wins during the 1950s and 1960s.

Tournament Director Kevin Staveley was supported by Chief Arbiter Adrian Elwin and an outstanding team of supporting arbiters. The team arrived in Leicester during the course of Wednesday 19th July with a day to setup the three playing halls including 115 live boards and over 200 standard boards across the playing halls, ready for the first event on the evening of Thursday 20th July.

We were very well supported by Ben Vaughan, Paul Mottram, and Andy Morley from the Leicestershire and Rutland Association, who helped to organise local radio and TV coverage on BBC Radio Leicester and East Midlands Today and played a central role in the various festival events at The Venue and around the city.

We were expecting a big turnout given the central location and were really pleased to see record numbers with over 1,000 players taking part in the tournaments and more than 1,400 individual entries across the 11 days. We also had a well subscribed festival including two drop-in chess events on campus and in the centre of Leicester.

Main Championship



British Champions! Photo courtesy Tao Bhokanandh

The main Championship ran over nine rounds from Saturday 22nd July to Sunday 30th July with a game a day starting at 2.30 pm in the afternoon, aside from round 9 starting at 10 am on the final Sunday.

Mickey Adams won the event with 7½ points out of 9 followed by Steven Jones in 2nd place. Lan Yao retained her title as British Women's Champion with 5½ out of 9. Yichen Han won the U21 and U18 Championship, and Harry Grieve won the Alexander Best Game Prize.

Top places and prizes were as below:

BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPION	Michael Adams	7½/9
WOMEN'S CHAMPION	Lan Yao	5½/9
2nd	Steven A Jones	6½/9
3rd =	Daniel H Fernandez	6/9
3rd =	Harry Grieve	6/9
3rd =	Matthew J Wadsworth	6/9
3rd =	Yichen Han	6/9
2nd Women's	Trisha Kanyamarala	4½/9
U21 & U18 CHAMPION	Yichen Han	6/9
U21 2nd =	Jonah Willow	5½/9
U21 2nd =	Tarun Kanyamarala	5½/9
U21 2nd =	Borna Derakhshani	5½/9
U21 2nd =	Aaravamudhan Balaji	5½/9
U18 GIRLS CHAMPION	Trisha Kanyamarala	4½/9
Alexander Best Game	Harry Grieve	
Performance 2201-2350	Andrew J Ledger	
Performance 2051-2200	Thomas Villiers	
Performance U2051	Edward Jackson	

Championship Perspective

GM Peter Wells



Last year, as the 2022 British Championships were coming to a close, I took to Twitter to express my admiration for the new champion Harry Grieve's sensational performance, but at the same time admitted that my own awful result had given me a more distant view of the critical top board action than I had originally intended. However, at least I was there in Torquay, however well hidden. This time, I was disappointed not to be able to make my intended trip to de Montfort University in Leicester, and had to make do with following the event (albeit with unusual attentiveness) more remotely. So, when asked to pen my thoughts on the Championships, I initially hesitated - wondering whether I was really best placed to do that. On reflection, I decided that it would make for a slightly different style of report which was worthwhile trying. So I will have little to say concerning the conditions and the atmosphere. I read (courtesy of Danny Gormally who commentated on the entire event, ably accompanied by Adam Hunt) that the playing conditions were near perfect. Admittedly Danny then deployed his special ability to render the positive distinctly edgy with the follow up with 'if you can't play well here, you probably aren't very good at chess', and honestly, anything I would be inclined to add to that might be kinder, but rather anti-climactic.

What I do hope I can provide is a reasonably detached view of some of the notable moments and trends. As a writer it is customary to look for hooks – ways to frame the action according to themes which hold out hope of drawing in the reader. Yet it occurred to me that I was already doing something like this as a spectator. From the start I had several questions which served to determine the focus of my attention.

Firstly, whilst there were fewer GMs than usual, there was a good turnout from the upcoming generation of strong IMs – including Harry Grieve, the defending champion – and with the most consistently successful of all British players also in attendance, the obvious question had to be 'which of these guys can really threaten Michael Adams'?

With my 'Accelerator Selector' hat on, I also tend to be tuned in to the performances of our most promising juniors, and was delighted to see that a number of these

had made it into the Championship itself, with several others in the various Junior Championships, the Major Open and elsewhere. I was particularly pleased to see that some of our strongest young female players had broken into the Championship and, together with (amongst others) Katarzyna Toma and Ireland's young star Trisha Kanyamarala, it seemed as if the defending champion Lan Yao would have no easy task in defending her title.

Two other questions seem to be ever-present in chess these days. After years of hearing about 'rating inflation' the narrative – especially post-Covid – has switched the other way, as Swiss tournaments in particular represent something of a mine-field full of underrated but highly competent players and thus a catalyst to 'deflation'. I raise this not to explain my own rating loss – no single theory could account for that – but merely to point out that these are treacherous times for higher-rated players and the expectation is now to see numerous results go 'against rating'. Suffice to say that after two rounds there were only five players on full points - following a fascinating round which showcased the kind of toughness and determination which so many players bring to an event of this significance. Of course, no amount of belief in the chances of some of the 'outsiders' prepared me for the astonishing achievement of Steven Jones in eventually landing clear 2nd place, but this I shall return to later.

The other question which I find hard to escape when I watch any chess tournament these days is how the players will respond to the ongoing explosion in opening theory. In short, will we witness highly theoretical battles in which by delving ever deeper into critical positions, the engine will be a star of the show, or are we more likely to see creative effort devoted to the challenge of reaching relatively unexplored terrain, no matter how implausible some of these ideas may appear at first glance?

I guess this question is not entirely new. Previous generations (albeit competing in a much more naive era in terms of opening preparation) could also boast representatives of both of these schools. Players such as Matthew Sadler and Michael Adams were often on the cutting edge of much exciting opening work, constantly searching for new ideas in relatively mainstream settings. By contrast, there were some, such as Julian Hodgson and David Norwood, who preferred where possible to go their own way. It feels, though, like a sharper dichotomy in an era in which we know so much about the opening. I am always interested to see what players such as Jonah Willow and Harry Grieve will produce in theoretical terms, although I would also caution against them being stereotyped – playing as they do a fascinating mix of theoretically demanding openings alongside some tricky

sidelines. However, the standout for me in terms of this discussion must be Daniel Fernandez. Having watched him survive a series of very shaky openings to reach a very good result in the European Individual Championship, it looked as if the same was going to happen here. He appears to me to be part of that tradition that just wants to get the opening out of the way and 'get on with the game' and the extent to which he often thrives on this approach is a tribute to his tenacity in the later phases. As always with such players, it is a moot point whether, or by how much, their results would benefit from more mainstream opening work. In some cases I guess it might just be a recipe for demotivation. However, it did feel to me as if he eventually pushed his theory-aversion a bit too far here, and the story of how Steven Jones defeated him in the final round after obtaining a superb position from the opening is told elsewhere in this magazine - a victory which enabled Steven to overtake him for a runner-up spot for which Daniel had looked almost secure a couple of days before.

Time to discuss the winner! The British Championship was actually the third significant domestic event in 2023 in which Michael Adams has been the highest rated player by a significant margin, and - just as in the 1st Cambridge International in February and the English Championship in May - he ultimately prevailed and thus became British Champion for an extraordinary 8th time. In a sense I think this kind of consistency can create an illusion of inevitability, and thus present challenges when describing the scale of his achievement. Of course, in each individual event this year he started as the favourite, and yet to win all three of them so convincingly deserves the highest praise.

For sure he faced a few minor hiccups along the way - notably the much discussed first round in Cambridge and the less documented difficulties he faced with the black pieces against Jonah Willow in the final round of the English Championship back in May. Taking the full point from the first round here in Leicester was also far from straightforward, although anyone who understands the pairing systems at these events will appreciate quite how extraordinary it was that Michael achieved this victory against the player who would eventually finish as runner-up!

I also marvel at his longevity playing at such a high level. Of course, in his heyday Michael was one of the best players in the world - ranked as high as number 4 - and I was pleased to work with him over sufficient time to gain an insight into the kind of diligence and intensity of focus which helped to secure that success. Still, by no means all of the great players remain very strong into their fifties. Right now the legendary Vishy Anand has opened some

gap as the top over-50 player in the World, but Michael is right up there with Vasyl Ivanchuk and Alexei Shirov vying for the second place. When a player wins his first British Championship at the age of 17 (as Mickey did in 1989) it doesn't require extraordinary clairvoyance to predict that he will enjoy a notable career. Yet for him to be still winning the national championship so convincingly 34 years later undeniably adds an extra layer of accomplishment. I also liked the reminder he gave us that he can handle a range of varying positions with aplomb. When Barry Hymer interviewed Michael for *Chess Improvement: It's All in the Mindset*, it became clear that he wasn't too impressed by the focus which so many writers put on the claim that he enjoys some kind of 'sixth sense' for where the pieces should go. He was clear both that this was facility was acquired by a lot of hard work rather than something innate and that such claims often signal little more than his preference for positional solutions. Tactical players also have a 'feel' - just for quite different types of positions. Yet modern chess requires the best to deploy a range of skills. Whilst we were treated to a piece of vintage technique in the final round against Jonah Willow (covered elsewhere in this issue) I particularly liked the new Champion's crisp and dynamic use of the initiative in the following vital encounter.

Michael Adams – Daniel Fernandez

British Championship, Leicester 2023 Round 4



Adams v Fernandez – top boards

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd8

Opinions will always differ on whether very strong opponents are best tackled using main lines or off-beat openings. As already discussed, this choice is consistent with Daniel's general approach. Still, I think it is worth mentioning that Adams has been quite candid on occasions both about how difficult it is to generate an advantage with White against a well-prepared opponent

in main lines these days and how pleased he often is to see side-lines which cede some edge without much battle. Interestingly, his target in such comments often seems to have been the Pirc/Modern, but I would be surprised if broadly the same feelings were not evoked here too.

4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.h3 Bxf3 7.Qxf3 c6 8.Be3 e6 9.Bd3!?

My first thoughts here would be either the immediate 9 0-0-0, or prevention of ...Bb4 ideas with a3. However, White makes a good case for this flexible developing move, the first point of which is that 9...Bb4 will be met with short castling, when it is doubtful that Black will want to give up his second bishop too.

9...Nbd7 10.0-0-0 a5 11.g4 Nb6 12.Kb1 a4?!



I don't like this aggressive gesture too much. After White halts the a-pawn's further advance, Daniel would like to exchange knights on d5 and then cement the replacement knight there by means of ...b5, when the entire idea would look much more coherent. However, given that he doesn't have time for this, the further advance of the a-pawn looks inflexible and - since a safe destination for his own king is far from a given - liable to just create a weakness in the event that he ends up having to castle queenside.

13.a3 Be7 14.h4 Nbd5 15.Nxd5 Nxd5

Neither 15...Qxd5 16.Qe2 nor 15...cxd5 16.g5 Nd7 17.Rdg1, with a serious pawn storm, brewing are an improvement, but it is here that Adams denies Black the time to enjoy d5 as an outpost.



Adams v Fernandez – after 16 c4. Photo courtesy Brendan O'Gorman

16.c4! Nxe3 17.Qxe3

Personally, I think I would have tried to make 17 fxe3!? work here, both for the half-open f-file and the extra support afforded to the d4 pawn. However, I would be the first to admit that the venom in variations such as 17...Bxh4 18 d5! is easier to feel confident about when sitting at home with an engine alongside me.

17...Qb6 18.c5 Qc7 19.f4 b6?!



Daniel's loss of tempo with his queen made some sense if aimed at making a d5 break more difficult to execute, and perhaps even generate some counterplay against d4 in the presence of opposite-coloured bishops. However, I think it was incumbent on Black to seek some relative king safety, and given how advanced White's pawn storm is on the king-side and the shortage of minor pieces to defend h7 he must look to the queenside (the reason I didn't like 12...a4), precisely because the opposite coloured bishops are very likely to amplify White's attacking initiative in any position where Black's king is shaky. Of course, lines such as 19...0-0-0 20.g5 Kb8 21.Bc2 still leave him cramped

and about to shed a pawn, so it is already a matter of damage limitation.

It is instructive to watch how Michael now breaks through in the centre, secure in the knowledge that the light squares (d7 in particular) will be very hard to defend.

20.f5! exf5 21.d5! f4 22.Qe4 cxd5 23.Bb5+ Kf8 24.Rxd5 Rd8 25.Rhd1 Rxd5 26.Rxd5 g6

There are already many routes to victory, but as usual Adams picks one which is relatively simple, clear-cut and with very little danger of error complicating the picture.

27.c6 Bf6 28.g5! Qe7 29.Qxe7+ Bxe7 30.c7 Kg7 31.Rd7 1-0

It is a measure of Daniel's strength of character that he recovered from this defeat to be neck and neck with Michael going into round 8, and a testament to his uncompromising style that he did not draw a game in the entire event. I have already alluded to his opening disaster in the final round which finally took him back to a share of third place and propelled Steven Jones to a remarkable second place and a richly deserved IM norm. Steven is a hard worker with excellent theoretical knowledge and good understanding, and is someone whom I have long regarded as clearly 'under-rated'. Yet somehow he hasn't convincingly confirmed this impression until now. For me this is very inspiring - a player, already having hit 30, who has maintained motivation despite (I suspect) some frustration that he was underperforming a bit in terms of his potential. Of course, a success of this magnitude will often need one or two breaks - as occurred when David Eggleston failed to spot that an apparently 'innocent' development of his opponent's rook was also eyeing up some loose pieces on the d-file, resulting in a quick win for Steven. Yet overall this was a great performance, and from my perspective very much a good news story.

To return to Daniel's challenge for a moment, it is worth adding that this had already hit a bit of an obstacle in round 8 when the defending champion Harry Grieve produced his finest effort of the event (which he annotates elsewhere in the magazine). This recalled the quality which Harry produced so often last year, but overall his performance typified that of the group of hungry young IMs in this event: lots of good chess, but not quite the consistency required to really bother Adams. Returning to my reference about the importance of 'getting some breaks' in these kinds of events, it is also worth bearing in mind that while we tend to be proud of the dominant role played by skill in chess, Swiss tournaments also involve a degree of luck. Sometimes

this is just about which opponents we get to play. Sometimes it is about the day on which we get to play them. Here, as so often, I was left with the impression that one of the greatest elements of luck in British chess is which day you get to play Jack Rudd 😊. There are few players who exhibit such a range of performance from their best to their worst, and Harry was quite fortunate to survive the experience of a generally in-form Jack firing strong and dynamic moves at (as always) an incredible pace.

Jack Rudd – Harry Grieve

British Championship Leicester 2023 Round 2

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.g3 Nc6 7.Bg2 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 c4 10.b3 Qa5 11.Qc2 Bg4 12.e3 Bb4?!

Strangely, Jack's very direct approach has not been played very often. I rather like it. The engine prefers 12...Rac8 here, putting faith in the bishop pair and the passed c-pawn after 12 bxc4 dxc4. I think that is probably right, although playing against a 2-0 advantage in centre pawns will not be to everyone's taste. Still, the structural damage which Harry sustains after the move chosen seems to make for long-lasting discomfort.

13.Bxf6 Bxf3

Necessary, since 13...Bxc3? 14 Ng5 would be very dangerous.

14.Bxf3 Bxc3 15.Rac1 Bd2

Looking to meet 16 Rcd1 with 16...c3, when the powerful c-pawn would turn the tables. However, Jack now reveals that White will get excellent compensation for a piece.



16.bxc4! gxf6

Again, the engine is not impressed and prefers 16...Bxc1 17.cxd5 gxf6 18.dxc6 Ba3 19.cxb7 Rab8. Black is a whole rook for three pawns up here, and it is a measure of Jack's

idea that Black still seems to be on the hunt for equality. The best 'human' option might have been 16...dxc4!? although it must have been very easy to misassess the game continuation.

17.Rcd1 Bb4 18.Bxd5! Rac8 19.c5!

As usual, when looking at Jack's games, you need to appreciate the speed with which these moves were arriving on the board to fully empathise with Black's task. White has two pawns for the piece, as well as attacking chances arising both from the opposite-coloured bishops and the ugly structure around Black's king. Moreover, the text move reminds Black that in order to free up an easy retreat for his dark-squared bishop he will need to weaken his white squares even more.

19...b6 20.Qe4 Rfe8 21.Qg4+ Kf8 22.Qh5 Nd8



23.Qf5 Rc7 24.Qxf6 bxc5 25.dxc5?! Bc3 26.Qh6+ Bg7 27.Qxh7 Rxc5 28.Bb3

Black's coordination has improved discernibly over the last few moves, and the engine's view seems reasonable that reactivating the knight with 28...Nc6 - now that the f-pawn is shielded and the rook controls the most obvious squares to access f7 - would have been reasonable for Harry. However, he drifts a bit in the next few moves and Jack manages to conjure up a further round of danger.

28...Rh5 29.Qd3 Ne6 30.Qd6+ Kg8 31.Qd7 Kf8 32.Rc1 Qf5?

32...Bf6 was safer, both to free up g7 for the king and to ensure that after 33.Rc8 Rxc8 34.Qxc8+ this check could be blocked with 34...Nd8!

33.Rc8! Rxc8 34.Qxc8+ Ke7 35.Rd1 Kf6 36.h4 Qc5

37.Bxe6?!

This looks a bit impatient. It is easy to see how the knight can feel like the lynchpin of Black's defence, but White

should continue to focus on the light squares even if the breakthrough is not so simple. For example, after 37 Qb7 (threatening Rd7) 37...Qb6 38 Qf3+ Rf5 39 Qg4, with Rd7 and e4 in the air, Black would have faced enduringly unpleasant pressure.

37...fxe6 38.Qb7 Qb6 39.Qe4

39.Qd7!? still looks more threatening.

39...Re5 40.Qh7?!

White's initiative is not what it was, but there was still no reason to afford Black a clear and speedy route to a draw. Not for the first time I find myself conflicted by the thought of what Jack might achieve by slowing down at the right moments, while appreciating that I am not the obvious port of call for advice on time management. Needless to say, Harry doesn't hesitate to take his chance.

40...Rxe3! 41.fxe3 Qxe3+ 42.Kf1 Qf3+ 43.Ke1 Qe3+ 44.Kf1 Qf3+ 45.Ke1 Qe3+

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Moving onto the juniors, it would be useful to look beyond just the Championship itself for a moment.

Clearly here, much of the action takes place in the various junior sections from U16 down to U8. Perhaps the most noticeable trend in these was that the more well-established names did not have everything their own way and that (perhaps counter-intuitively) this tendency was more pronounced in the older age-groups, where it might be expected that the leading players would have had more time to establish their ascendancy. I suspect this may still have something to do with Covid and the fact that some young players seemed to use the opportunity for study that this presented very profitably, in a way which is slowly revealing itself in over the board play. From a selector's point of view this entails more work, of course, but in a very welcome manner. The more players capable of vying for the top positions, the better and the more positive the outlook in future.

There were also very notable junior performances in both the Major Open and the Championship itself.

Shlok Verma bursting to an early 5/5 in the Major Open was particularly striking, although he unfortunately lost momentum after this. Indeed the most notable success there was probably from FM Andrew Lewis who joined Brandon Clarke in winning the event, thereby (I hope he won't mind me saying) striking something of a blow for the more experienced campaigners. There were several

fine results in the Championship too, and a welcome sight to see so many juniors being given this opportunity. Jude Shearsby, Theo Khoury and Savas Marin Stoica amongst others all acquitted themselves well, and Edward Jackson deserves a special mention for amassing a fantastic 140 rating points – an incredible gain regardless of ‘K factors’.

Some of the performances which impressed me most provided further evidence of the increasing strength of our young female players. Again, I can’t hope to include everyone, but Anusha Subramanian’s performances in the Major Open and the Rapidplay were very encouraging.

Abigail Weersing and Julia Volovich also made great use of the opportunity to play in the Championship. Abigail had many complex struggles against much higher rated opposition in the later rounds in which she always had a fair share of the chances, and also scored this impressively thematic first round win against Max Turner.

Abigail Weersing – Max Turner

British Championship Leicester 2023, Round 1



22.Nd2!

This is absolutely the right plan from Abigail, and offers a clear advantage after Black’s rather passive early play. The plan of f3 and e4 to blunt a fianchettoed bishop on b7 is familiar enough (although I sometimes have the feeling that it is less well grasped than some other comparable strategic ideas). What is interesting here is that whereas the exchange of dark-squared bishops might be expected to offer Black some compensation, it soon becomes clear that his weak dark squares (d6 in particular) matter more than his opponent’s d4 square.

22...Qc6 23.f3 Qb7 24.e4! Bc6 25.Nc4 Rb4 26.Qa3 Qb8 27.Qb2!

There is no doubt about White’s advantage, but what I really liked here was the way Abigail refocussed her pieces towards the key central squares – first with this

queen move, but even more the realisation that her rooks would achieve more on the d-file than lined up against the weak c-pawn.

27...Rc8 28.Rd1 Rd8 29.Rcd2 f6? 30.Rd6 Bb5 31.a3 Bxc4 32.axb4 Bd5 33.bxc5 Qb4 34.Qd4 1–0

Julia Volovich had an extraordinary run almost off the starting blocks, registering four draws in a row against highly respected 2300+ opposition. I was particularly impressed by her understanding during the following game, in which Black’s compensation proved to be far more substantial than I initially realised.

David Eggleston – Julia Volovich, British Championship Leicester, 2023



15.Bc4?!

White should rather avoid exchanges and keep this bishop pointed at the king with 15 Bc2! when he would have kept chances of an initiative. However, I suspect that David (like me) was surprised at the value which Black is going to get for her pawn.

15...exd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Qxd5?!

I suspect that White rejected 17.Bxd5 on the basis of 17...Bf5, when Black looks very active. However, the engine then points out the fascinating exchange sac 18.Nd4 Bd3 19.Qf3 Bxf1 20.Rxf1, when White’s minor pieces come to life and Black should probably look to a further tactical blow 20...Nd3! in order to secure a full share of the play.

17...Be6! 18.Qxd8 Rfxd8 19.Bxe6 Nxe6

Around about here it fully dawned on me that Julia has entry squares on the d-file, a weak b5 pawn to attack, the safer back rank and a monster knight on e6, and that she is not the player trying to equalise here!

20.Bc3 Rd5 21.Rfd1 Rad8 22.Rxd5 Rxd5 23.Bb4 h6 24.h4 Nd4

Possibly a sign that Julia was content to share the point, but it feels a shame to exchange off this great piece. 24...Nf4 with the intention of mounting an attack on f2 was well worth considering.

25.Nxd4 Bxd4 26.Rc1 Rxe5 27.Rc8+ Kh7 28.Rc7? Rxb5 29.Rc4

Realising that 29 Rxf7 fails dramatically to 29...Rxb4 and the march of the a-pawn. Black clearly has winning chances, but since she shares some of my problems with clock management, I suspect that this played a role in Julia sadly limiting her ambitions here.

29...Bb6 30.g3 Rf5 31.Rc2 Rf3 ½–½

Finally, to Lan Yao, who - despite strong challenges from Katarzyna Toma amongst others, who registered an excellent win against Ukrainian GM Eldar Gasanov – retained her British Women's Championship title in some style. I know - both from having had the pleasure of commentating alongside her and observing her intensity of concentration at the board - that she is a formidable competitor and a huge asset to English women's chess, but I was still impressed to see her score 5½ against a very strong field and net an WGM norm into the bargain. I liked her swift punishment of the experienced player and well-loved coach Chris Beaumont, who many will probably not realise himself peaked at around 2460 in 1989.

Chris Beaumont – Lan Yao

British Championship Leicester 2023, Round 8



22.c3?

I feel as if White should be OK here, and perhaps 22 e5!? would be a better way to play to the strengths of his minor pieces. Still, the plan of building a pawn centre might have borne fruit were it not for the serious weakness on the a7-g1 diagonal.

22...Nc6 23.d4 cxd4 24.cxd4 b5! 25.axb5 axb5 26.Ne3 Qb6!

The key point. The d4-pawn immediately comes under fire, and any advance will meet dark square retribution.

27.Qd3?

This doesn't help at all, but 27.d5 Bc5 28.Rf3 exd5 29.exd5 Rxd5 would also be disastrous. The best way to damage limit would have been 27.Nc2!? e5 28.d5 Bc5 29.Kg2 Bxf2 30.Qxf2 Qxf2+ 31.Kxf2 Na5, when White's bishop pair and passed d-pawn offer some compensation for the exchange. However, this also looks some way from what Chris was aiming for when embarking on this plan.

27...Nxd4! 28.Bxd4 Rxd4 29.Qxd4 Bc5 30.Qb2 Bxe3 31.Kg2 Bxf2 32.Qxf2 Qc6

With an extra pawn and much the safer king.

33.Qe3 Bg6 34.Rd4 e5 35.Rd5 Qc2+ 36.Kf3 Bh5+ 37.Bg4 Qxh2 38.Bxh5 Qxh5+ 39.Kg2 Ra8 40.Qd2 Qe8 41.b4 h6 42.Rd7 Kh7 43.Qd5 Ra2+ 0–1

This finally concludes my thoughts on a fascinating and hard-fought British Championships – I just hope that my decision to offer 'impressions from afar' was a justified one.

Championship Perspective Steven Jones



Mike Truran congratulates Steven Jones on 2nd place

The 2023 British Chess Championships certainly isn't an event I will be forgetting about any time soon! Before we even get talking about any of the moves made, we have to talk about the set-up of the event. I think this was easily my favourite inner city British Chess Championships, having played at the event since 2008.

Leicester worked as a great backdrop, with a variety of eating and social options that more remote locations struggle to match, balanced against reasonably priced accommodation that make a player's life so much easier. De Montfort University itself, and the playing area it supplied, was everything you could hope for when you sit at the board and, as always, the tireless effort of the organisation committee, arbiting team and others meant that we as players had the perfect chance to play our best chess. I don't know when we will be next back in Leicester, but whenever we are I certainly intend to be amongst the participants.

I wouldn't be telling the whole truth though if I denied that having a rather special event on the board did not help gloss the mental picture. I generally don't have confidence issues with my chess and had some good warm-up events in early July, but I unquestionably exceeded my personal expectations for what could happen. Not to forget that just twelve months earlier I had suffered at the 2022 Championships with a score of $2\frac{1}{2}/9$ - enough to claim equal last place. The tournament can be brutal, and this year was no exception, with some tremendously talented players occupying lower boards and enduring that chastening feeling of being kicked whilst you are down.

Then there is the other end of the spectrum though - generating some forward momentum from a game or two and finding yourself rushing up the leader board. A spot of fortune against dangerous lower rated players in rounds two and three, a strong opponent missing an early tactic in round 6, and by the time I found myself in joint fifth position with two rounds to go you become aware that the conditions are in play to do something a little out of the ordinary.

My final two wins against an opponent who crushed me in 2021, and a grandmaster whose games I have had the pleasure of seeing at close quarters from a young age, were something personally special. Here is the latter of the two wins that sealed both my first IM norm and what turned out to be second place in the Championships. I hope that you enjoy playing through it as much as I enjoyed playing it.

Fernandez, Daniel - Jones, Steven

British Chess Championships Leicester (9), 30.07.2023



Round 9 – Fernandez v Jones (middle board). Photo courtesy Nigel Towers

1.e4 c5 2.b3

Move 2 might seem a little early to stop and annotate, but this was already quite the surprise! Daniel's range with the white pieces is astounding, with e4, d4, c4 and Nf3 all being in his repertoire, but this system was not on my radar for the game. I had only one game in my life from this position, from a British Championships in Torquay over ten years ago. I could remember the first few moves, and decided it was the best way to play.

2...Nc6 3.Bb2 Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.g3

I knew this wasn't the main move. Normally White plays 5.Nf3 and then plays either Bb5 or Bc4. I could remember Black's main ideas were to capture back on d6 soon with Bxd6, leaving the g-pawn en prise but with strong counter-threats on Rg8 and Nf4 if taken.

5...d6 6.exd6 Qxd6 7.Bg2 e5

No other development option appealed to me. I looked vaguely at a concept such as 7...Bf5 8.d3 e6 9.Nf3 Be7 10.Bxg7 Rg8 11.Bb2 Nf4 12.Bf1, but even then it isn't clearly good for Black, and White certainly doesn't have to play like this. With the black pawn on e6, natural play with Nf3/Ne2 and d4 looked good for White to me.

8.Na3 Be6

It's good to see the little tactical patterns in play early. An equally memorable, but far less pleasant, final round experience can be found in a line such as 8...f6?? 9.Nb5 Qd8 10.Bxd5.

9.Nc4 Qc7



I think this is the last position we have before things start taking a downturn for White, but even so I can be very happy with how things look. Let's take stock:

White has gone for a hypermodern strategy of allowing Black to occupy the centre to undermine it later. Nothing wrong with that, and the tempo for being White will help bring pressure quickly.

But compare things with let's say the Pirc or Modern. In those openings, there is a pawn on d6 and sometimes c6 too. These are in place to hold that centre back from pressing onwards too easily. The Grunfeld doesn't do this, but in that case the centre is exclusively occupied by opposing pawns rather than pieces.

The combination of having no central pawns for White on the third rank, plus the presence of the knights on c6 and d5 that can press forward, is tremendously dangerous. And White cannot play a move like d3 without weakening dark squares already loosened by b3. The position is sound, but White has to tread very carefully.

10.Qh5?!

10.Qe2 was my mainline, and 10...f6 11.f4 Ndb4 (11...Nd4!? and there will always be compensation once that dark squared bishop is missing: 12.Bxd4 cxd4 13.fxe5 0-0-0 12.d3 b5! (12...Nd4? 13.Bxd4 cxd4 14.fxe5 fxe5 15.Nf3) 13.a3 bxc4 14.dxc4 Nxc2+ 15.Qxc2 Bd6 16.Qe4 Rc8 17.Nf3 0-0 shows the kind of measures White must take to stay afloat.

10...g6 Arguably not best as the tactical positions are already supported by the engine, as seen by 10...Ndb4 11.0-0-0 Bxc4 12.bxc4 Nxa2+ 13.Kb1 Nab4, but if I can play this move then it is so desirable. White is giving me development tempi for nothing, and the positions assessed as better by the engine still seem unclear to me.

11.Qe2 Bg7 12.f4?



I felt that this move, trying to exploit the pins, was coming, and was not a believer. It is a classic case of a player not being fond of their position and so trying to find tactical operations to justify it, but the position simply cannot do what is being demanded of it. All that happens is a transformation of the position from unpleasant to losing.

12.Nf3 is clearly best but at a human level is hard to play, as it admits that Qh5 was a poor decision in a game with enormous stakes: 12...f6 13.0-0 0-0 14.d4 cxd4 15.Nxd4 Nxd4 16.Bxd4 Rfe8 and Black is for choice, but the game is very much live.

12...Ndb4! Not the only good move, but best and logical **13.0-0-0** (13.Bxc6+ Qxc6 14.Bxe5 Nxc2+ 15.Kf2) **13...Nd4 14.Bxd4 cxd4!**

14...exd4 This also turns out well, but is not as strong and far less obvious. One potential line is 15.Bxb7 d3 16.Qe4 Nxa2+ 17.Kb1 dxc2+ 18.Qxc2 Nb4 19.Qe4 Rd8.

15.a3 This is really a sign that White is in danger. The tactics are all flowing for Black, while it is White who needs to justify his exchange of the dark squared bishop, lack of a centre and sluggish development. These are lots of signals that Black should be looking to do critical damage.

15...d3!? Strong and more than good enough, but the alternative is well worth a look too.



15...Nxc2! was something I really wanted to make work, and I was quite disappointed afterwards when the engine said it was good. 16.Kxc2 b5 17.Bxa8 bxc4. There are multiple options here and they all looked like they won for me, apart from the obstinate 18.Kb1, which I just couldn't find the breakthrough against. It transpires that the direct 18...0-0! 19.Be4 Rb8 20.b4 Qa5 is enough, but I couldn't convince myself to part with an entire rook based on what was at the time speculation.

16.cxd3 Nc6 Black does not need an immediate tactical sequence; the white position is ruined and the king will never feel safe.

17.Nf3

17.Bxc6+ Qxc6 18.Nf3 b5.

17.Kb1 Nd4 18.Qe4 was I felt White's best chance of resistance at the time, but allowing the queen exchange is very nice: 18...Nxb3 19.Qxb7 Qxb7! 20.Nd6+ Ke7 21.Nxb7 Rab8.

17...b5 Everything is working out. **18.Nfxe5 Nxe5 19.Bxa8 bxc4 20.dxc4 0-0?!**



I confessed in my post-game interview afterwards that this move was affected by the nerves of the situation! A bit more composure and I really should find the simple 20...Nxc4 21.bxc4 0-0 but alas, I castled too quickly. Now White has a pawn mass to try to swindle with.

21.fxe5 Rxa8 22.d4 Rb8

White may have improved the computer evaluation from around -6 to -2½ but, as Danny Gormally pointed out in the commentary, the position is still a practical minefield for White to navigate. From the opponent's side of the board it is not important to see everything; it is clear I am playing for checkmate and the ideas of giving checks down the h7-b1 and h6-c1 diagonals are powerful.

23.d5

23.Qe3 was the line I was grappling with while my opponent was thinking. I was close to finding the refutation, but it isn't trivial and might be a decent practical try to shut down checks down on the c1-h6 diagonal while defending b3. Objectively though 23...Bxc4! 24.bxc4 Qxc4+ 25.Kd2 Rb2+ 26.Ke1 Bh6! 27.Qd3 is best. I had seen this far in my calculation and was still working on it. The winning move is 27...Qd5! when a sample line could be 28.Rg1 Rb3 29.Qc2 Re3+ 30.Kf1 Qf3+. Whether I would have found the 27th move over the board is a question we will never know!

23...Bf5

23...Rxb3! 24.dxe6 Qa5 is a winning attack, but from a practical level I am not even slightly upset to not have considered this. A key feature of the position is that I have tremendous latitude, as long as the pawns don't get out of control my bishops stay incredible, and the white king stays vulnerable. Just focus on not missing tactics and play natural good moves that keep the advantages stable; the win will come when the position is this good.

23...Bg4?? 24. Qxg4 Qe5, 25. Qd4! is exactly what not to do, and a good example of trying to force the win too quickly backfiring.

24.b4

24.d6 Rxb3! 25.dxc7 Bh6+ 26.Rd2 Rb1# was a cute detail I was aware of during the game.

24...Bxe5 25.g4? Re8!



With this little tactic I break any resistance White can muster. The e-pawn is gone, so both bishops are in full flow now and they cannot be contained. The nerves had now evaporated, and I got to just enjoy the final phase of the game - a good old-fashioned king hunt.

26.Qf1 Bxg4

26...Bf4+ 27.Kb2 Qe5+ 28.Ka2 Qc3.

27.c5 Bf4+ 28.Kb2 Re2+

There are lots of winning lines, but this felt natural to me, bringing all the pieces into play to catch the king.

29.Kb3 Qe5 30.Ka4 a6

30...Bf5 immediately is also good, but creating nets for the king again felt sensible. It goes back to that matter of latitude. I don't need to find only moves at all, there are lots of routes to where I want to go, so picking simple clean ones is pragmatic.

31.c6

31.Rg1 Bd7+ 32.c6 Bxc6+ 33.dxc6 Qb5+ 34.Kb3 Re3+ 35.Ka2 Qa4.
31.d6 Bd7+

31...Bf5 32.Ka5

32.Rc1 Bxc1 33.Qxc1, and either 33...Qxd5 or 33...Bc2+

32...Qc7+ 33.Kxa6 (33.Ka4 Bc2#)

33...Be3

33...Qb8! with the lovely mating pattern of bishops on c7 and c8 was the fastest way to do things, but I had seen this winning line and I wasn't going to muddy the waters by trying to find 'better wins'.

34.Kb5 Qb6+ 35.Kc4 Qa6+ 36.Kc3

36.Kb3 Bc2+ 37.Kb2 Bxd1+ was enough to find when playing 32...Qc7+

36...Qxa3+ 37.Kc4 Qa6+ 38.Kc3 Rc2+ 39.Kb3 Qa2#



Definitely a memorable final position to close the Championships and a nice touch from Daniel that he allowed me to mate on the board.

I think Daniel played some stellar chess over the week and just had one of those days in the last round; it happens to us all and he will be back playing excellent chess in the future. For me it was a crazy week and now the challenge is to prove that I can produce more games and tournaments like this one.

I hope that you enjoyed the analysis and the 2023 British Championships as a whole; it is going to be a fun twelve months of chess until the next one.

Championship Perspective Harry Grieve

The field for the British Championships this year was an exciting one - topped by seven-time champion Mickey Adams with a healthy rating advantage over the rest, but followed up by Nick Pert, an in-form Daniel Fernandez and Ukrainian GM Eldar Gasanov playing for the first time. I was seeded 5th this year, with Mark Hebden the remaining grandmaster 6th, with the usual dangerous English IMs including Matthew Wadsworth and Jonah Willow. Mickey had successfully justified his status as favourite at the Cambridge Open and English Championships already this year, but would anyone be able to challenge him over the longer nine-day format? The answer was 'no' in the end, as he kept hold of board 1 throughout the event, but not without some challenges along the way.

The first three rounds saw few major surprises, with Daniel Fernandez the only player reaching 3/3 and a group behind on 2½/3 including myself and Adams, who had been held to a well-played draw by Eldar Gasanov in round 3. The following board 1 clash saw Fernandez take too many risks with the 3...Qd8 Scandinavian as he was outplayed convincingly by Adams, whilst I ground out a long endgame against the talented young Irish IM Tarun Kanyamarala to join Adams as the only players on 3½/4. Experience told in my round 5 encounter against him though - despite having the white pieces, I made a couple of decisions I simply couldn't explain after the game, and eventually lost in the endgame.

The following two rounds saw Adams move to 6/7, only conceding one draw with Mark Hebden where he had chances for more, and impressively taking down the solid Nick Pert with White. I made two hard-fought draws to be adrift on 4½/7 with any title aspirations largely gone, but incredibly Adams was not in the sole lead - Fernandez had scored 3/3 against tough opposition since losing to Adams to join him on 6/7. Thus the next day's pairings saw big upfloats, with Dutch IM-elect Yichen Han playing Adams on board 1 and me having White against Fernandez on board 2. Mickey made a fairly quick draw against Yichen,

which surprised onlookers, but which he explained afterwards as being due to a lack of energy for two more long fights. This left my board 2 game against Fernandez as being crucial in potentially deciding the Championship.



Photo courtesy Tao Bhokanadh

Grieve, Harry (2459) - Fernandez, Daniel H (2518)
British Championships Round 8, 29.07.2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 The notoriously solid Petroff Defence is not one that has appeared in Fernandez' repertoire recently - I was maybe expecting a Berlin Defence, so did at least correctly predict that he would be looking for a quieter game against me.

3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Nd6!?



Not at all a common move, but the solid nature of the Petroff gives Black the chance to go his own way in the opening without drastically changing the evaluation. If followed up with ...Be7 and ...Bf5 then we will more or less reach normal territory.

7.0-0 Be7 8.Nc3!? Gaining a tempo on the d5 pawn whilst starting a typical rerouting of the knight to the kingside. The more normal route in similar Petroff lines would be Nd2-f1-g3 with Re1 included, but Black's unusual move order gives us this extra option.

8...c6 9.Ne2



9...0-0 9...Bf5 is the principled approach, trading the light-squared bishops before this is prevented altogether with Ng3: 10.Ng3 Bxd3 11.Qxd3 0-0 12.Bf4 Nd7 13.h4. This gives similar play to the game, with White getting an edge after gaining space on the kingside, but there will be far fewer attacking chances without the strong bishop on d3.

10.Ng3 Re8 11.Bf4 Nd7 12.h4



Combined with Bf4, a typical idea now that Black cannot capture on h4 due to the hanging knight on d6. Usually, however, the light-squared bishops are already traded, so here it is more double-edged due to potentially giving Black ...Bg4 ideas in the future.

12...Nf8 13.Qd2 Ng6 13...Nc4!? exploits my last two moves, forcing the capture on c4 now that the threat to the h4 pawn is real. 14.Bxc4 dxc4 15.h5 h6 16.Rae1 Be6 with unclear play - Black has weakened his structure, but solved the problem of his light-squared bishop by gaining a square on d5, while also taking the bishop pair. I wasn't sure how to assess this during the game, but didn't expect him to unbalance the position like this, which seems out of character with his game plan.

14.h5 Nxf4 15.Qxf4 h6 16.Rae1 Bf8



17.c3 I felt very happy with my position around here, with attacking chances due to the space advantage on the kingside, but it wasn't clear to me how to make progress on that side of the board. With the bishop pair as a long-term asset, Black would be very happy to trade queens - for example 17.Rxe8 Nxe8 18.Re1 Qf6 takes the e-file but helps Black to prepare the queen trade; 17.Ne5 Qg5 would also make Black feel more comfortable. I wasn't clear what Black's next move was if I avoided these options, so decided on a slow 'route one' plan of c3, Bb1 and Qd2-d3 to prepare a battery on the long diagonal.

17...a5 18.Bb1 Rxe1 19.Rxe1 Ne8



Dan prepares ...Nf6 to cover the h7 square, preventing any immediate mating ideas, but I can now play natural forward moves on the kingside without allowing too many trades.

20.Nf5 Nf6 21.Ne5 Bxf5 22.Qxf5 Qc8 23.Qd3 Bd6



24.Re3 White is clearly better with the extra kingside space, even in an endgame, but of course I want to use the Bb1-Qd3 battery to start an immediate attack.

24.f3! preparing Ng4 is the best way to challenge the knight on f6 - if 24...Kf8 (24...Qe6 25.Re3!+- is the simple move I had missed, solving the pin down the e-file, and Ng4 next will be crushing) 25.Ng4 Bg3 26.Re2 and apparently Black is forced to find 26...Ne4! to even stay in the game. Instead, my choice of Re3-f3 prepares an exchange sacrifice on f6, but Black is in time to counter this.

24...Kf8! 25.Rf3 Qc7



26.Rf5 26.Rxf6!? was tempting, but I found it very difficult to evaluate these lines during the game: 26...gxf6 27.Qh7! (27.Nf3 Bf4) 27...fxe5 28.Qxh6+ Ke8 29.Qh8+ Bf8 30.h6 when the strong h-pawn apparently gives White enough play for equality, but no more.

26...Re8 27.f4 c5! 28.Kh1



Necessary in order to recapture Qxd4 and keep the c-file closed - Black is getting serious counterplay on the queenside now and I have to go all-in on the idea of g4-g5 to try and create a mating attack.

28...b5 29.g4 cxd4 30.Qxd4 b4 31.g5



31...hxg5?! Played quickly by Dan, but it seemed from his body language that he possibly just missed the h6 idea coming next.

31...Bxe5! 32.Rxe5 Rxe5 33.fxe5 Nxe5 34.gxh6 gxh6 and White will have to work to make a draw with the attacking chances largely gone.

32.h6! gxf4? There are still drawing lines suggested by the engine, but nothing simple anymore. For example, 32...Bxe5 33.fxe5 gxh6 34.Rxf6 Qxe5 gives Black three pawns for the piece and a likely draw will follow after a queen trade. With both of us getting low on time, the complications after 32.h6 are nearly impossible to calculate accurately.

33.hxg7+



Here I had calculated until the end.

33...Kg8 Black is not helped by 33...Ke7 34.Ng6+ fxg6 35.Qxf6+–, nor 33...Kxg7 34.Rg5+ Kf8 35.Ng6+! fxg6 36.Qxf6+–

34.Qxf4 Re6 34...Rxe5 35.Rxe5 Bxe5 36.Qh6 is mate in one; 34...Bxe5 35.Qh6 Nh7 36.Rf6! was the nice idea similar to the game (36.Rxe5 also works in this case.)

35.Qh6 Nh7



There are other winning moves by now, but the one to force resignation is:

36.Rf6!

1-0

Results few would have predicted on the top boards, but there were more surprises to come in the last round! The final pairings were Adams (6½) - Willow (5½), Fernandez (6) - Jones (5½) and Han (5½) - Grieve (5½) at the top - with only Adams and Fernandez in with a realistic chance of the title. I made a quick draw with Yichen to secure a share of 3rd and retired to watch the action - which didn't take long to appear on board 2. Fernandez had the white pieces against Steven Jones, rated 2175, who had steadily climbed up the rankings after losing to Adams in round 1. Mickey would surely have been expecting to be forced to win to avoid a play-off given the rating gap on board 2.

but this idea was blown out the water by a very risky opening by Fernandez being met with convincing play by Jones, who was completely winning by move 15 with Black. He made no mistake in the conversion, pulling off a great upset and completing a run to 6½/9.

It says something about Mickey's relentlessness that despite now only needing a draw for the title, he kept grinding a slight edge against Jonah for 94 moves to finally win and take his eighth British title, a full point ahead of the field. Untitled Steven Jones took clear 2nd place and his first IM norm with a great 6½/9, with Yichen, Fernandez, Wadsworth and me sharing 3rd= on 6/9 followed by a big group on 5½. In this group was Lan Yao, who took her second consecutive British Women's Champion title whilst also completing the requirements for the WGM title with a last round draw against IM Richard Pert - a great achievement.

Overall, the playing conditions in Leicester were excellent, with the congress being efficiently organised by the brilliant organising and arbiting team. Entertaining commentary was provided throughout by GM Danny Gormally and IM Adam Hunt, which helps make the event what it is and keeps it accessible to those following online. Overall, despite not defending the title from last year, I was happy with my performance for 3rd= - I had a lot of long games decided in the fifth hour of play, but ultimately a dip in my level of play from rounds 5–7 cost me a shot at the title. Massive congratulations are due to Steven Jones for his amazing run to 2nd place and to the British Champions of 2023, GM Mickey Adams and WGM-elect Lan Yao. Wherever next year's event takes place, hopefully there will be just as many exciting moments!

British Senior Championships

The Senior Championships ran over seven days with a round a day from Monday 24th July to Sunday 31st July.

Over 65 Championship

There was a three-way tie for first place in the Over 65 section, with winners as below.



Over 65 Champions Alan Punnett (left), Sheila Jackson (centre) and David Fryer (right). Photo courtesy Tao Bhokhanadh

JOINT CHAMPIONS	Alan K Punnett	5½
	Sheila Jackson	5½
	David W Fryer	5½
WOMENS CHAMPION	Sheila Jackson	5½

Over 50 Championship

GM Keith Arkell was the outright winner of the Over 50 Championship on 6 out of 7.



Over 50 Champion GM Keith Arkell



3rd = FM Andrew Smith (left) with Chris Duncan and Mike Truran. Photos courtesy Tao Bhokhanadh

CHAMPION	Keith C Arkell	6
2 nd	Dave J Ledger	5½
3 rd =	Chris R Duncan	5
3 rd =	Robert S Eames	5
3 rd =	Andrew P Smith	5
WOMENS CHAMPION	Rosemary A Giulian	3½

British Junior Championships

The Junior Championships ran over seven rounds from Tuesday 25th to Saturday 30th July, with the awards presented on Saturday afternoon.



Junior Championship presentation ceremony. Photo courtesy Adrian Elwin

Winners of the various sections are shown below.

UNDER 16 CHAMPIONSHIP

JOINT CHAMPION	Rohan Pal	5
JOINT CHAMPION	Sanjith Madhavan	5
JOINT CHAMPION	Manmay Chopra	5
JOINT CHAMPION	Ronit Sachdeva	5
JOINT CHAMPION	Ruben Nangalia Evans	5
GIRLS CHAMPION	Olga L Latypova	3½
GIRLS CHAMPION	Michelle Ngo Yu Chan	3½

UNDER 14 CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPION	Livio Cancedda-Dupuis	6½
2 nd	Pengxiao Zhu	6
3 rd	Maksym Larchikov	5½
GIRLS CHAMPION	Naavya Parikh	5

UNDER 12 CHAMPIONSHIP

JOINT CHAMPION	Adithya Vaidyanathan	6
JOINT CHAMPION	Ramsey Dairi	6
3 rd =	Alfred Soulier	5½
3 rd =	Emils Steiners	5½
3 rd =	Sithun De Silva	5½

GIRLS CHAMPION	Shambavi Hariharan	4½
GIRLS CHAMPION	Alannah Ashton	4½

UNDER 10 CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPION	George Zhao	6
2 nd =	Maksym Kryshafor	5½
2 nd =	Yashwardhan Shankar	5½
GIRLS CHAMPION	Lam Vy Le Nguyen	5

UNDER 8 CHAMPIONSHIP

CHAMPION	Ayan Pradhan	7
2 nd	Furion Kapitanski	5½
3 rd =	Ayaansh Mulukutla	5
3 rd =	Anvikashri Prabhakaran	5
3 rd =	Thomas Ewart	5
3 rd =	Advik Saxena	5

Supporting Events

Winners of the supporting events/top sections were as follows:

Major Open

1= Brandon Clarke, A Lewis, A Verma, M Sedykh	7/9
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AM Open

1 Brandon Clarke	5½/6
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PM U2050

1 Sean Gordon	5/6
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Weekend Open – Atkins

1 Declan Shafi	5/6
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First Rapidplay Open (21/07)

1 Yichen Han	6½/7
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Second Rapidplay Open (24/07)

1 David Phillips	6/7
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Third Rapidplay Open (29/07)

1 Harriet Hunt	6/7
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20/07 Blitz Open

1= Bao Nghia Dong, Stanley Badacsonyi	7½/9
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25/07 Blitz Open

1 Brandon Clarke	8½/9
------------------	------

Junior Blitz Open

1= Samar Dayal, Stanley Badacsonyi	7½/9
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The British Chess Championships by Sasha Matlak and Matt Goatcher

Ukrainian player and Wells Chess Club member Oleksandr (Sasha) Matlak provides his perspective on this year's British below.

The City of Wells, the smallest in England, fielded a very competitive team for the British Chess Championships 2023. Wells Chess Club is a vibrant place and a steadily growing community. Its players regularly perform in both local and nationwide chess events. Teams from Wells have recently won the Somerset League's 2022/23 season, finishing second in two others.



Wells Chess Club on tour in Leicester: Solomon Hayes (left), Matthew Goatcher (right) and Sasha Matlak (centre)

Guys from Wells achieved some notable results in Leicester as well. Matt Goatcher (1699) played in the Penrose Open U2000 and delivered a performance of 1818, winning some good games. The best one was probably his win over a player rated 1900+ with Black in the 4th round. Also, Matt was close to beating his titled club-mate Oleksandr Matlak in the First Blitz Open.

Solomon Hayes (1613) had an amazing season, and was awarded with the Max French's Cup as the player who had contributed most to Wells Chess Club this year. Sol participated in five events in Leicester and shared 1st prize in the Soanes Open U1750 with a result of 4½/5.

Ukrainian player Oleksandr Matlak (2136) joined Wells Chess Club in April 2023 and has already managed to win the Denys Bonner Trophy in the Frome Chess Congress. In Leicester, Sasha gave a solid performance in the first Blitz Open (6/9, 4th-6th place), first Rapid Open (5/7, 4th-8th place) and finally shared 2nd prize in the Atkins Open with a score of 4/5.

Sasha annotates the game he considered the most exciting he played in Leicester, despite the loss.

FM Dong, Bao Nghia (VIE, 2351) - Matlak, Oleksandr (UKR, 2155)

British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester, First Rapid Open, 21.07.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bf4 g6 3. e3 Bg7 4. h3 d6 5. Nf3 O-O 6. Bc4



For the standard 6.Be2 I was going to use an idea of GM Alireza Firouzja: 6...Nfd7!? 7.0-0 e5 8.Bh2 Nc6 and then the aggressive f7-f5 and g6-g5.

6... c6 7. O-O b5 8. Be2 Bb7 9. Nbd2 Nbd7 10. c4 a6 11. a4 b4 12. Bh2 a5 13. e4 Qb6 14. e5 Ne8



Here I was afraid of 15.e6?! but actually it doesn't work, because after 15...fxe6 White can't attack the weakness on e6 immediately: 16.Ng5? Bxd4! counterattacking on f2.

15. Nb3 dxe5 16. c5 Qa7 17. Nxe5 Nxe5 18. dxe5 Nc7 19. Bc4 Ba6!

Ensuring an outpost on d5 for the knight; here I felt that Black was OK.

20. Qe2 Bxc4 21. Qxc4 Nd5 22. Nd4 Rac8

Here 23.Nxc6 didn't work: 23...Rxc6 24.Qxd5 Rxc5 is favourable for Black.

23. Rfd1 e6 24. Nf3 Qb8 25. Qe4 Rfd8 26. h4!



Well played. Black should be careful of attacking ideas like opening the h-file after h4-h5 and then Qh4 and Ng5.

26.... Bf8 27. Rac1 Qa7 28. Qc4 Rb8 29. Rd3 b3!

Now White has to agree to trade pawns, activating Black's bishop; otherwise after Rb8-b4 he would be simply lost.

30. Rxb3 Rxb3 31. Qxb3 Bxc5 32. Qc2?!



White should play 32.Bg3. Both players missed 32..Nb4! (33.Qxc5? Qxc5 34.Rxc5 Rd1+) 33.Qe2 Bxf2+! (34.Qxf2 Qxf2+ 35.Kxf2 Nd3+).

32....Bd4 33. Bg3 Nb4 34. Qe2 Rd5 35. h5 c5 36. Nxd4 Rxd4 37. Qb5



37....gxh5!

This looks unaesthetic, but is necessary to avoid mating nets after h5-h6. Also, it contains some counter-attacking ideas...

38. Rxc5 h4!

Now the bishop is trapped, and moreover will be lost with check.

39. Qe8+ Kg7 40. Rc8 Rd1+ 41. Kh2 hxg3+ 42. Kxg3 Nd5 43. Qf8+ Kg6 44. Qh8!?



White had an easy draw with a perpetual after 44.Qg8+ Kh6 45.Qf8+. Black can't decline: 44...Kf5 45.Qg4+ forking the rook.

Bao Nghia took a risky but reasonable decision to keep on pushing, given Black's time trouble and exposed king.
44....f6!

Connecting the queen to the defence via the seventh rank.

45. Ra8 Qc7 46. f4 fxe5 47. Rg8+ Kf5!?

47...Kh6 worked as well, but Black intuitively moves the king to safe harbour on the b1-a1-a2 squares.

48. Rg5+ Ke4 49. Rxe5+ Kd3 50. Qf8 Qc4 51. Rxe6



51....Ne3??

The decisive blunder. Sticking to the initial plan of 51...Kc2! 52.Re5 (for illustration) Kb1 53.Qf5+ Ka1 was favourable for me. White's checks are over, but Black's are just starting.

52. Qa3+!

Black missed the 'long move' with the skewer.

52....Kc2 53. Rxe3 Kb1 54. b4 Kc2 55. bxa5 Rd4 56. Rf3 Rd2 57. Qf8 Qe2 58. Qc5+ Kd1 59. Qf2 Qe6 60. Qg1+ Kc2 61. Qc5+ Kb1 62. Qb6+

An epic battle!

1-0

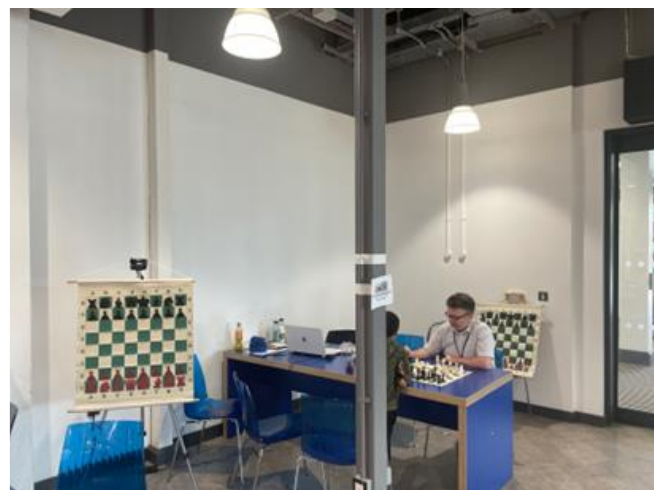
Commentary, Coaching, Events



Commentary room. Photo courtesy Brendan O'Gorman

The venue included seating for spectators and a separate commentary room, with IM Adam Hunt and GM Danny Gormally commenting on the Championship games. You can find recordings of Adam and Danny's commentary on the ECF's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@EnglishChessFederation/playlists>



Alan Agnew in the coaching room

Alan Agnew provided excellent group and individual coaching during the Junior Championships with support from FM Jonathan Blackburn and Michael Green.

There was also a full programme of festival events running alongside the tournaments, as summarised below.

Outdoor Drop-In Chess – There were two outdoor drop-in chess events open to all and hosted by FM Jonathan Blackburn.



The first drop-in chess welcome event was held at The Semi-Circle, New Walk in Leicester from 1pm to 6pm on Friday 21st July. New Walk is a Georgian walkway which ends at The Semi-Circle in Leicester city centre. The team set up a number of tables with Jonathan and a number of strong local players taking on all comers crossing the square.



Second drop-in event – view of the top boards from Mill Lane Square

The second Championship drop-in event was in Mill Lane within the DMU campus from 1pm to 6 pm on Friday 28th July.

The event was again hosted by Jonathan Blackburn with support for drop-in chess, together with broadcasting of games from round 7 of the Championship on the large screen television in the square.



Drop-in event 2 - view across the square in Mill Lane

Film Nights at the Local Phoenix



The Seventh Seal

The local Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre ran a Checkmate Chess mini-season, with three films during the Championships including *Pawn Sacrifice* (7.30pm on Saturday 22nd July), *Queen of Katwe* (7.30 pm on Wednesday 26th July), and *The Seventh Seal* (7.00 pm on Saturday 29th July).

<https://www.phoenix.org.uk/events/checkmate-chess-films/>

The Phoenix is a cinema, art gallery and café bar in the cultural quarter in Leicester city centre, about 20 minutes' walk through town from The Venue.

In addition to the screenings, a number of local players from the Wigston club were available in the café/bar area for some casual drop-in chess before the films on Wednesday 26th and Saturday 29th.

GM Simuls – There were two evening simuls with Grandmaster Keith Arkell taking on players on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd July.



Keith Arkell

Social/Team Chess Evenings at The Venue

There were two team event evenings including Hand and Brain and Bughouse tournaments on Sunday 23rd and Friday 28th July.

Lectures and Master Classes



WIM Natasha Regan and NI Matthew Ball hosted a lecture and puzzle solving contest on Wednesday 26th July as co-authors of the new Chessable course Zwischenzug!

This was followed by the first of two master classes by GM Daniel Gormally on Wednesday and Friday evening.

Problem Solving Event at The Venue organised by the British Chess Problem Society.

The problem solving event was held on Thursday 27th July, with prizes available for the top solvers.

British Chess Library Visits – The Special Collections team at the DMU Kimberlin Library hosted visitors to view the British Chess Library in the Archives room between Tuesday 25th and Thursday 27th July.



The British Chess library in the archives room.

Press Coverage

The Championships attracted a lot of interest from the local Midlands press, including a feature on Midlands Champion Jude Shearsby in the run-up to the event.

We were also in close contact with BBC Radio Leicester, who ran a number of interviews on the Ben Jackson afternoon show in the run-up to the Championships.

We were then pleased to host a BBC East Midlands TV Crew on Friday 21st September, who were able to film some of the first rapidplay tournament and the drop-in event in New Walk, together with interviews with Kevin Staveley, Frankie Badacsonyi, Ben Vaughan and others for a British Championship feature on East Midlands today.

Finally, during the main Championship week we were joined by BBC Radio Leicester Sport reporter Emily Herbert and colleague Kevin Ncube, who interviewed Kevin Staveley, Danny Gormally, Ali and Stanley Badacsonyi, and Stewart Reuben for a chess feature on Radio Leicester's game night on 25th July.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fzc0tr>

Thank you!

This proved to be an outstanding British Championships, with Leicester providing an excellent setting for the various Championship tournaments and supporting events over the eleven days. It was great to have Kevin Staveley back in action as tournament director, ably assisted by Adrian Elwin and a great team of arbiters.

We are of course very grateful to De Montfort University and The Venue staff who worked tirelessly to support the Championship, also the commentary team of Adam Hunt and Danny Gormally for providing excellent coverage of the Championship, and to FM Jonathan Blackburn, Ben Vaughan and colleagues from Leicester and Rutland Chess for their support in making the events so successful.

ECF UK Open Blitz Championships by Nigel Towers



The UK Open Blitz Championships for 2023 will follow the format used in previous years' events with qualifiers at the end of September/start of October and 16 player Open and Women's finals in December.

Qualifiers - There will be eight regional one-day qualifier events at locations across the country as follows.

England

London: Saturday 23rd September – St Luke's Church, Kidderpore Ave, Golders Green NW3 7SU

Midlands: Saturday 23rd September – Quinborne Community Centre, Quinborne, Birmingham B32 2TW

North West: 30th September – Bolton Arena, Arena Approach, Horwich, Bolton BL6 6LB TBC

South West: Sunday 1st October – Bristol Bridge Club, Grenville Hall, Oldfield Road, Hotwells, Bristol BS8 4QQ

North East: 8th October – Gosforth Empire Club & Institute, 32-34 Salters Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 1DX

Scotland

Edinburgh: Saturday 30th September – Novotel Edinburgh Park, 15 Lochside Avenue, Edinburgh EH12 9DJ

Wales

Bridgend: Saturday 30th September – Best Western Heronston Hotel, Ewenny Road, Bridgend CF35 5AW

Northern Ireland

Belfast: 30th September – NICS, Maynard Sinclair Pavilion, Stormont, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3T

All qualifier events will be one-day fifteen-round Swiss tournaments. The time limit for all rounds will be all moves in 3 minutes plus 2 seconds per move.

Finals - The finals for the UK Open Blitz Championships 2022 will be held at a Midlands venue (TBC) on 2nd December. The Championships will include an Open and a Women's final, each event having 16 players with 15 rounds of blitz games in an all play all format. The winners

will become UK Open and Women's Blitz Champions for 2023.

You can find further details and entry form at the links below:

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

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/uk-open-blitz-championships-2023/>

National Club Championships

After a break of a few years the English Chess Federation's National Club Championships (last held in online form in 2020) are reappearing this October. They are being held in the Kingsley Suite, Canham Turner Conference Centre, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. This is an excellent venue, used for the 2022 British Championships and Women's Championships. It is also the venue for the 4NCL Hull Congress.

The National Club Championships will be played over the weekend of Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd October as a five-round Swiss in three sections: Open, and two sections with average team ratings of up to 2000 and 1700 respectively, with £1,500 prize money in total and with trophies for section winners. Entries will cost just £60 per team – teams are of four players, but squads of six players will be allowed. The event is being organised by Stephen Greep, who may be contacted for further information on [sigreep@gmail.com](mailto:sigreeep@gmail.com). The Chief Arbiter is Alex McFarlane. The top 25/30 boards are expected to be live boards.

The event will go live for booking in mid-August on the ECF website.

4NCL News

Although the official deadline for entries has passed, there are still a few team places available for the 2023-2024 season. Interested captains/managers can find further information at:

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/data/2324/entry_guidelines.htm

Also, please note the forthcoming Hull 4NCL Congress on 8th-10th September (prize fund £5,250), which the 4NCL runs in partnership with Hull and East Riding Chess Association. Further details here:

https://4ncl.co.uk/fide/info_hull23.htm

European Senior Teams Chess Championship (ESTCC) by Tony Stebbings and Nigel Povah

The 2023 European Senior Team Chess Championships took place in July in Swidnica in the Silesia region of Poland, a small historic town boasting two cathedrals. The tournament was efficiently organised and took place in a nice hotel. One of the arbiting team was Shohreh Bayat of Iran, now resident in London.

The number of teams that entered was fewer than usual, 28 in total between the two sections 50+ (ten teams who played an all-play-all) and 65+ (18 teams playing a traditional Swiss). Despite the proximity to the German border there were only three teams from Germany, usually the hotbed of senior chess.

England entered seven teams: four in the 50+ including an all-female team, and three in the 65+. Between them the England teams won two team gold medals, one silver and one bronze, as well as many individual board medals. Detailed results can be found here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr791373.aspx?lan=1&art=0>



The England 50+ 1st team (Mark Hebden, John Emms, Keith Arkell, Glenn Flear and Chris Ward) successfully defended their title as European 50+ Seniors Team Champions and were brilliantly led by Mark Hebden, who scored a stunning 7½ points from 8 games and taking the individual gold medal for board 1. Team-mates John Emms, Glenn Flear and Chris Ward also took gold medals for their boards.



The England 50+ Women's team (Susan Lalic, Sheila Jackson, Ingrid Lauterbach, Petra Nunn and Natasha Regan) also took the team gold medal and became the European Women's 50+ Champions. Natasha Regan was their stand-out player, scoring 4/5 and securing the silver medal for her board.

The England 50+ 2nd team (Graeme Buckley, Steve Dishman, Richard Holmes, Phil Crocker and Bob Noyce) had an impressive tournament and took the team bronze medal, with Steve Dishman getting the individual silver medal for his board and his team-mates all securing the bronze medals for their boards.

The England 50+ 3rd team (Jonathan Hill, Haran Rasalingam, Paul Dupre and Mark Hogarth) finished eighth out of the ten teams in the event.

The England 65+ 1st team (John Nunn, Tony Kosten, Peter Large, Chris Baker and Tony Stebbings) took the team silver medal behind Slovakia 65+, who just pipped them to the title in what was a very close contest. World 65+ Champion John Nunn and Chris Baker both took individual gold medals for their boards, whilst their three team-mates took the silver medals.

The England 65+ 2nd team (Stephen Orton, John Quinn, Peter R. Wood, Stephen Williams and Stewart Reuben) finished eighth and the England 65+ 3rd team (Richard Freeman, David Tucker, Tim Spanton and Bob Kane) finished 14th out of the 18 teams in their event.

Interestingly, a 'lucky seat' in the venue restaurant was discovered by Graeme Buckley. Whoever occupied the seat went on to win their game in the following round!

A big thank you needs to go to the ECF, the Chess Trust and the Friends of Chess for their generous financial support towards this event, along with further support from Nigel Povah, Ian Reynolds and Natasha Regan amongst others. None of this would have been possible without their support.

6th Crewe Congress 2023 by Andrew Crosby



Chief Arbiter Matthew Carr, who was assisted by Colin Abell and Dave Price

The first Crewe Congress was held in October 2016 with just under 100 entrants. Its popularity grew, and the fourth event in September 2019 attracted 142 players. Post pandemic a crisis loomed, as the original hotel venue was no longer available for the fifth congress to be held at the usual time of year in October 2022. After an extensive search the local football league ground facilities were discovered, namely the Mornflake Stadium of Crewe Alexandra. A limited time window of three months was available, but despite this 116 entrants assembled at the new venue which arbiter Peter Purland described as 'one of the best I have come across'.

This year's event reinforced this view, and one of the original organisers Les Hall, who sadly passed away as the pandemic restrictions came to a close, would have been proud of its acquisition. Neville Layhe was also one of the founders, as he had previous congress experience at Rhyl. This time it was the responsibility of our chairman Dave Price and Nigel Gardner. Due to the amount of work involved, several other members were enlisted.

There was a record number of 164 entries covering the usual four sections: Open, Major, Inter and Minor. The entrants came from all over the UK including the Isle of Man. From overseas came two very talented eight year old twins from India and a gentleman from Lebanon.



Anay (left) and Amaya (right) Agarwal

The Open section attracted Lithuanian IM Gediminas Sarakas and two FMs: former British Women's Champion Akshaya Kalaiyalahan and local Jonathan Blackburn. In addition, two online titled Arena players entered for the first time: an AGM and an AIM.

In addition to the very spacious tournament hall pictured above, there was a very large refreshment lounge and a separate analysis room. This also contained the book and equipment stall provided by Howard Wood. Refreshments were provided by a large number of helpers, recruited and managed by Nigel and Lyndsay Gardner.

Regarding the over the board activity, the Under 1500 Minor section had the fewest number of entrants with 29. It was led initially by local Lee Podmore of Fenton, the only player with 3/3. Then came his crucial encounter with another local, Jamie Roberts of Crewe, a junior with little over the board experience. Lee was comfortably winning, but succumbed to a back row mate. The section was won by Steven Ashworth from Ely who stood alone on 4½ points. In joint second on 4 were Souheil Ghezzawi from Lebanon and Rob Steele from Liverpool.

The Under 1725 Inter, which had 51 entrants, had a very interesting start as so many games in the first round went in favour of the lower ranked players - 14 from 21 in fact (of course some people took a bye). It proved to be very competitive with a host of contenders. Peter Mellor of the Australia Chess Federation from Liverpool and the Welsh Chess Union's Stephen Williams from Cwmbran led after round 3 with maximum points. There were seven in the chasing pack half a point behind. Stephen reached 4/4 by beating Peter and in the final round secured the necessary draw with Jules Hawthorne from Crewe to win the section.

The Under 1950 Major had 45 entrants, and was a very close section. However, Martin Burns from Crewe, who came third in 2022, led throughout. After four rounds he had 4/4 and drew with Liam Medley from Battersea, who was on 3½, to win the section. Liam was equal second with Jonathan Fowler from Coventry Chess.



Martin Burns

The Open was popular, with a large field of 39 entrants that included many aspiring players wanting to test their abilities against stronger opposition. It also had very young players trying to improve their FIDE ratings, as there are limited opportunities for them to do this. For example, the Agarwal twins, Anay and Amaya, were over from India. Amaya has won the Indian National Championship at the Under 7 level. Typically of youngsters, they showed no fear, as ratings weren't an issue for them. IM Gediminas got off to a poor start with a draw against Peter Ackley of Chesterfield, who must have been highly delighted. After round 3 Steve Jones led with 3 points, with the three titled players in hot pursuit only half a point behind. Wins for IM Gediminas and FM Akshaya in round 4 put them in the joint lead on 3½ with Steven Jones, who drew with FM Jonathan Blackburn, who now had 3 points with Mike Surtees from Great Lever and Jude Shearsby from Kenilworth. Akshaya beat Mike in the final round, securing the section win, while Gediminas and Steven drew. Jonathan beat Jude to finish joint second with IM Gediminas and Steven.



Bart Fajfer

Here is the Open winner's game from round 2. Included are some comments from her opponent Bartosz (Bart):

FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan v Bartosz Fajfer

Opening: King's Indian Attack

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 Bf5 4.O-O e6 5.c4 c6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.d3 Bc5 8.Nc3 O-O 9.Qb3 b5 Black's move is OK, but in retrospect Bart thought that a modest Qc1 or Bb6 might have been better. They all have their merits. Incidentally the KIA opening was frequently used by Fischer as a multi-purpose strategy against the French, Caro-Kann and Sicilian Defences.

10.Qc2 Qb6 The white queen moves to c2 to support e4, but Black allows the pawn push, as in 11. e4 Bg6 12. Bf4 Re8. Better was 10. Na6 11. e4 Nb4 equalising.

11.e4 dxe4 12. Nxe4 Nxe4 13. dxe4 maintains White's advantage.

12.dxe4 Be6 Bart acknowledged this as a blunder, as Bg6 is necessary.



13.e5 Nd5 14.Ng5 g6 15.Nxe6 fxe6 16.Bh3 An improved move order is 16. Bh6 Rf7 17. Bh3.

16...Rf5 A further mistake. Bart didn't want to play 16...Re8, but it maintains the status quo: 17.Ne4 Nd7 18.Ng5 Nf8.

17.Bxf5 gxf5 18.Nxd5 cxd5 19.Bh6 Nd7 20.Rfe1 Bd4 21.Qd2 Nxe5 22.Qg5+ Ng6 23.Re2 Rc8 Black appears to have little hope, but Akshaya relaxes her grip.

24.h4 Kf7 25.h5 Ne7 26.Rae1 Rg8 27.Qf4 An uncharacteristic blunder subjecting the queen to attack. Qd2 was required.



27...Rg4 28.Qf3 e5 29.Rxe5 Bxe5 The game has reached its critical point, and White's best next move is a hard one to find in the heat of the battle.

30.Rxe5 Missing 30. Bf4, the tactical choice, which is met by 30...e5 31. Qb3 equalising.

30...Qxh6 31.Rxf5+ Ke6 32.Rf8 Qxh5 A catastrophic pawn grab! 32...Qg7 or Re4 would have maintained Black's superior position.



33.Qe2+ Kd7 34.Qxb5+ Nc6 35.Qb7+ Kd6 36.Rf6+ Ke5 37.Qxc6 Rc4 38.Qe6+ Kd4 39.Qe3# 1-0

South Shields Annual Blitz 2023 by Mick Riding

A belated report here on South Shield's annual blitz event. Held on 2nd July 2nd at the lovely 'Word' library venue, prize winners from a field of 46 were:

Main

1st= (7.5/9) Dave Mooney, Thomas Eggleston (£125 each)
3rd (7/9) James McKay (£50)

Grading Prizes (£30 each)

(U1750) Ciaran MacDonald - 6/9

(U1475) Daniel Tong – 5½/9

Age Prizes (£20 each)

Over 65 Mick Riding - 6/9

Under 20 Morgan French - 5/9

Profits, including an additional £40 raised from refreshments, were donated to Cancer UK. Many thanks for a very enjoyable day to Eddie Czestochowski, Brian Towers and Stanley Johnson. Looking forward to next year, lads 😊



Kent FIDE Congress 8th-9th July 2023 by Satish Gaekwad



Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club venue. Picture courtesy of Brendan O'Gorman

Tunbridge Wells Chess Congress has been part of the English chess calendar since 2017 as a very successful annual ECF-rated event. The last chess congress was held in 2019 (with 81 players), after which there was a vacuum for about three years plus caused by Covid. Over the years the Tunbridge Wells Chess Club (TWCC) team has been finding it hard to find a team of organisers and arbiters to help run the congress, and as a result in 2023 there were no original plans to hold it.

I was informed by someone in my network that I could help revive the congress if I were to bring in my own team as an organiser and run it as an event independently of the club. I then reached out to the Tunbridge Wells Chess Club president Robert Jacobs (also head of Savills at

Tunbridge Wells) and Jerry Anstead, who has been instrumental in helping run the congresses in the past. Armed with their consent and some sponsorship by Savills towards the prize fund, I went ahead and renamed the Tunbridge Wells Chess Congress as the Kent FIDE Congress (under the banner of Psyon Chess) and made it a FIDE-rated event (along with it being ECF-rated) for the first time in its history. This also potentially contributed to the event being subscribed above the announced capacity of 100 (118 players participated eventually) about two weeks ahead of the event – we had a waiting list of over 50 players, which was quite disappointing as an organiser. The congress details along with the final standings appear at <https://congress.org.uk/congress/259/home> and <https://chess-results.com/tnr779626.aspx?lan=1andart=79andturdet=YES>

The venue was the majestic playing hall of the Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club (TWBC) on the ground floor, along with a room on the first floor for the lower section. There was a nice analysis room and a lounge space, a reception area catering for non-players. Refreshments were served by the Gaekwad family.

Unlike previous years we had to restrict the top section of the event to being Under 2350 (48 players) because of the FIDE-mandated time-control requirements and the fact that we only had the weekend to run the event. The other two sections were Under 1950 (36 players) and Under 1650 (34 players).

The overall prize money was £1,175 across the sections. The first prize-winners in the Under 2350 section were Steven Jones, Callum Brewer, Aditya Verma and Saahil Bansal, with the rating prize going to Maxime Quillaud. The first prize in the Under 1950 went to Arran Airlie, second to Gavin Knott, and the rating prize to Tobias Taylor. In the Under 1650 category the first prize was jointly won by Andrejs Gorskovs and Luke Chapman, with the rating prize going to Samuel Merchant.



Zoe Veselow receiving a book prize from Robert Jacobs (TWCC President)



Kent Champion Aditya Verma receiving the trophy from Robert Thompson (KCCA Chairman) with Robert Jacobs in the background



WFM Rasa Norinkeviciute Donovan. Picture courtesy of Brendan O'Gorman



Analysis room: Callum Brewer and Steve Jones

Psyon Chess would like to thank all the players, the organising and arbiting team of Ashok Damodaran and John Bowley; the support received from Tyrone Jefferies, Robert Jacobs, Ollie Jacobs, Jerry Anstead, Hugh Tassell, Steve Bond, the Tunbridge Wells Bridge Club, Ashok Damodaran for offering top quality books as additional awards for the top-performing players; and last but not least to Savills (the sponsor) for helping make the inaugural Kent FIDE Congress a great success.

Some areas for improvement in future events:

Lichess wanted to broadcast the event on their platform but a lack of live boards prevented this – Psyon Chess has now procured live boards for the top boards to be broadcast.

We hope we can get the venue for 2½ days for future congresses to allow for the top section to be made into an Open FIDE-rated section, helping to rope in elite players for the tournament. Also, we aim to publish the maximum venue capacity of 126 players right at the outset to avoid any future disappointments. There is a potential to organise more chess congresses at this fine venue given the unmet demand for FIDE-rated events in Kent, and hopefully we shall have the support of the TWCC at its next AGM in September to fulfil this growing demand.

Below are two games from the tournament. The first is Arran Airlie's final game on his way to winning the U1950 section.

Arran Airlie - Louis-Buckland

Kent Congress Tunbridge Wells , 07.08.2023

1.e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 O-O 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5 10.O-O h4 11.h3 Nd7 12.Bd2 Nf8 13.Rae1 Qc7 14.c4 b6 15.c5



15...Bh2+ 16.Kh1 Be6 17.f4 Bg3 18.Nxg3 hxg3 19.f5 Bd5 20.Bf4 Qd7 21.Bxg3 Rxe1 22.Rxe1 Bxa2 23.b3 Qxd4 24.Bf2 Qf4 25.Qxa2 Rd8 26.Rd1 Nd7 27.Bb1 Kh7 28.Qe2 g5 29.fxg6+ Kg7 30.Bg1 Qg3 31.Qe7 1-0

The next game is one from Steven Jones, joint winner of the U2350.

Verma, Shlok - Jones, Steven

Kent Congress Tunbridge Wells (3), 07.08.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5 Ne4 5.Bh4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 Be6 8.Nf3 Bg7 9.Be2 Nd7 10.0-0 Nb6 11.a4 a5 12.Qc2

0-0 13.Rfb1 f5 13...Bd7!? 14.Nd2 Qe8 15.Nxc4 Bxa4 16.Qa2 (16.Qe4 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 e5) 16...Nxc4 17.Qxc4 Bc6

14.Ng5?! 14.Nd2

14...Bd5 15.f3? e5!



16.e4 exd4 17.exd5 d3 18.Bxd3 cxd3 19.Qxd3 h6 20.Ne6 Qxh4 21.Nxf8 21.Nxc7 Rac8 22.Ne6 Bxc3

21...Bxf8 22.g3 Qc4?! 22...Qf6

23.Qxc4 Nxc4 24.Rxb7 Bc5+ 25.Kh1 Bb6 26.Rb1 26.Re1 Kf7?? 27.Re6 Rd8 28.Rc6!

26...Kf8 27.Re1 Re8 28.Rxe8+ Kxe8 29.Rb8+ Ke7 30.Rg8 Kf7 31.Rh8 Ne3 32.d6 cxd6 33.Rb8 Nc4 34.Kg2 Bc5 35.Rb5 Ke6 36.Kf1 g5 37.Ke2 g4 38.f4 Kd5 39.Kd3 Ne3 40.Rxa5 Nf1 41.c4+ Kc6 42.Ke2 Nxh2 43.Ra8 Nf3 44.Rh8 Bb4 45.Rxh6 Kc5 46.Kf2 Kxc4 47.Rh8 Bc5+ 48.Kf1 Nd2+ 49.Kg2 Kb4 50.Ra8 Nc4 51.Kf1 d5 52.Ke2 d4 53.Kd3 Nb2+ 54.Kd2 Nxa4 55.Rb8+ Kc4 56.Rc8 Nc3

0-1

Report on the Wood Green Invitational 14th-18th July by Loz Cooper

The 2023 Invitational was the third in the series of all-play-all that I've organised since the pandemic. The first, in 2021, produced three title norms and two titles, with Marcus Harvey gaining his third International Master norm and title, Aga Milewska gaining her final FIDE Arbiter norm and title and Ravi Haria his second Grandmaster norm (the third followed in his very next tournament!) While 2022 wasn't able to emulate that, it was still enjoyable, so I decided to organise another one.

I was initially sad that so few of my 4NCL squad were able to play, but was happy with an interesting final line-up and to be able to give the opportunity to multiple new players to sample the delights of Stafford.

The three grandmasters were Eldar Gasanov, who had moved from Kharkiv to London in 2022, Matthew Turner, who had played in 2021, and Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, who played last year.

Alongside them were seven norm seekers; IMs Ameet Ghasi, Andre Sousa, Matthew Wadsworth and Jack Rudd and FMs Freddy Gordon and Ian Rees were all making their first appearance, and were joined by IM Jonah Willow, now the only player to have played in every one of the all-play-alls. Aside from the inevitable interest in the English players, I was also excited to meet Freddy (the very young and promising Scottish junior) and his dad, and to see how he would perform against tough and experienced titled opposition.

With several of the players being underrated, I felt that the GM norm of 7/9 would be extremely difficult. The IM norm score was 5½.

It soon became clear that despite the two games a day schedule players were going to go all out for wins. Although there were two draws in round 1, the second of them was the last game to finish. The surprise of the round was Jack's win as Black against Andre. Playing Jack in round 1 combined with the heavy rain must have been quite a culture shock for someone used to living in Portugal! Matthew Wadsworth beat Ian Rees, also with Black, while Matthew Turner defeated Freddy.

In round 2 Matthew Wadsworth made it 2/2, beating Matthew Turner. Norm-wise, the most significant game was probably Ameet's win against Andre, which effectively knocked the Portuguese player out of contention, but was a much-needed win for Ameet after a draw in round 1. There were three more black wins as Eldar and Jonah advanced to 1½ while Ian beat Ketevan in the last game to finish.

Day 2 saw mixed fortunes for the norm seekers. Ameet cashed in his double White to beat Jack and Ian and advance to 3½/4. In contrast, Matthew Wadsworth had a very frustrating day, losing a hard fought and complicated game against Jonah in the morning before losing from a promising position against Eldar in round 4. Jonah wasn't able to build on his morning victory and lost to Ketevan. After just four rounds the norm chances were already fading fast. Ameet was well placed on 3½/4, but after that Jack and Jonah were on 2½ needing 4½/5, Matthew Wadsworth needed 5/5 for GM norms, while Ian was on a very respectable 1½/4 but still needed 4/5 for an IM norm.

Day 3 had just one round, with the added bonus/unwelcome distraction of a blitz tournament to

mark the tournament organiser becoming even older. Ameet won a crucial game with Black against Matthew Turner to advance to 4½/5, while Matthew Wadsworth won to keep his norm chances alive. Draws for Jonah and Jack left them also needing 4/4. Ian kept his IM norm chances alive with a draw, while Eldar moved to 4½/5 and seemingly showing no ill effects of a break from FIDE classical chess of several years.

The blitz was a fun event, with eight of the ten all-play-all players being joined by the ageing organiser and a mixture of young and old happy to have the opportunity to beat a titled player or two. I was fairly happy with my 3/5 prior to the mid-tournament break, but after cutting and eating part of the cake generously provided I ran into an ambush of Jude Shearsby and Freddy Gordon and was banished to the bottom row for the final rounds of the tournament. The competitive nature of the event was shown by no one scoring more than 6½/9, with a three way tie for first between Andre, Matthew Wadsworth and Ameet.

Back to business in round 6, and more norms were killed off. Ameet had a tough game against Jonah which ended in a draw, keeping Ameet on track but ending Jonah's hopes. Matthew Wadsworth moved to 4/6, keeping his dream alive, but Ian's attack was defused by Matthew Turner, ending his IM norm chances.

Round 7 saw Ameet win a crucial game as Black against Eldar. This left him needing one point from his remaining two games and giving him a 1½ lead in the tournament. In an all-decisive round Matthew Wadsworth won his third game in a row against Ketevan, leaving him needing to win in both rounds 8 and 9 for a norm. A difficult task, but three wins in a row had given him hope. Elsewhere, Andre won his first game against Freddy, who was still fighting hard but finding it tough going.

The final day, and Ameet had a real scare against Freddy before the game ended in a draw. His final round opponent, Matthew Wadsworth, looked to have good chances of a win as Black against Andre, but eventually had to settle for a draw. This left Ameet requiring a draw against Matthew Wadsworth in round 9, which happened at great speed, giving him a well-deserved 7/9 and a second GM norm. Congratulations Ameet!

A point behind Ameet on 6/9 were two of the GMs, Matthew Turner and Eldar, who started very well but began to tire as the brutal schedule took its toll. Matthew Wadsworth fought hard throughout and but for 0/2 on day 2 could well have been fighting for a norm in the last round against Ameet.

Of the remaining players Jack will probably be the most pleased, scoring a very good 4½/9 with the usual thrills and spills and big time advantages one can expect from him. Freddy showed great fight to finish with two hard fought draws after a very tough first seven rounds. Andre fought back well to reach 4/9 after a nightmare start and missed opportunities early on. Although Ketevan lost her last three games she is a fearless fighter, and did have the consolation of a win against Jonah and a draw against Ameet. The schedule wasn't ideal for her, but it was great to have her in the tournament and she was quick to congratulate Ameet on his norm. Jonah started well, but the pressure of needing to try to win every game proved his downfall in round 4.

The full results can be viewed at

<https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=788482&art=3>

No report is complete without thanking all those who helped make the event possible. It is no exaggeration to say that without the support of the organisations listed below I wouldn't be able to organise annual tournaments. One might appear once every five or ten years, but along with other organisers we are incredibly grateful for any contribution that they are able to provide.

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust was created following the death of John Robinson in February 2006. Its funds are used to help players under the age of 21 resident in England or eligible to represent England. The trust's support for my tournaments has been invaluable, and I can't thank them enough. Website: <https://johnrobinsonchess.org>

The Chess Trust was established in 2015, helped by a significant bequest from Richard Haddrell. It aims to provide support to amateur chess in England both in terms of playing and teaching. The trust's support has played a big part in allowing my tournaments to continue. For more information please view <https://chesstrust.co.uk>

The Friends of Chess have less funding than those mentioned above, but have consistently helped support my tournaments. They also offer support to individual players. They have shown great support for my tournaments and teams. Their website: <https://friendsofchess.wordpress.com>

Matthew Carr was Chief Arbiter and live board operator and provided all the equipment. We were very happy with the Oddfellows Hall and its location in the town centre of

Stafford. Thank you also to the ten players for providing the organiser with a hassle-free tournament.

Below is a selection of games from the event.

Turner, Matthew J - Ghasi, Ameet K

Wood Green Invitational 2023, 16.07.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Qd2 Bg7 5.Bh6 0-0 6.Bxg7 Kxg7 7.0-0-0 c5 8.dxc5 Qa5 9.Nxd5 Qxa2 10.Qc3 Rd8 11.e4 Be6 12.Bc4 Qa1+ 13.Kd2 Qa4 14.Ne2 Nbd7 15.b3 Qc6 16.Kc1 Bxd5 17.Bxd5 Qa6 18.Nf4 Qa3+ 19.Kb1 Nxc5 20.e5 Nfe4 21.Bxe4 Nxe4 22.Qe3 Qb4 23.Rd3 Rac8 24.Kb2 Rxd3 25.Nxd3 Qc3+ 26.Ka3 Nd2 0-1

Ghasi, Ameet K - Willow, Jonah B

Wood Green Invitational 2023, 17.07.2023

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nd7 3.d4 Nb6 4.Nc3 Bf5 5.Nh4 Bg4 6.h3 Bh5 7.Ng2 e6 8.Nf4 Bg6 9.Bg2 Bb4 10.Nxg6 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 hxg6 12.e4 c6 13.Rb1 Qd7 14.h4 0-0-0 15.Bg5 Rf8 16.0-0 Nf6 17.f3 Ne8 18.Rb4 Nc4 19.a4 Ned6 20.Bf4 f5 21.Qe2 a5 22.Rb3 Kc7 23.Rfb1 Rb8 24.exd5 exd5 25.Bf1 b5 26.Ra1 Kb6 27.Qd1 Rb7 28.Qb1 Ra8 29.Qa2 Kc7 30.Re1 Rbb8 31.Rbb1 Kb6 32.Kf2 Re8 33.Rxe8 Rxe8 34.axb5 Nxb5 35.Bxc4 dxc4 36.Qxc4 Qd5 37.Qa4 Ka6 38.Rb3 Qe6 39.Be5 f4 40.gxf4 Qh3 41.Rb1 Qxh4+ 42.Ke3 g5 43.Qc4 Qxf4+ 44.Kf2 Qd2+ 45.Kg3 Qxc3 46.Qf7 Rxe5 47.dxe5 Qxe5+ 48.Kh3 Nd6 49.Qd7 Qd5 50.Rb3 g4+ 51.Qxg4 Qd1 52.Qg2 Nb5 53.Rd3 Qe1 54.Qg4 Qh1+ 55.Kg3 Qg1+ 56.Kh3 Qh1+ 57.Kg3 Qg1+ 58.Kh3 ½-½

Wadsworth, Matthew J - Turner, Matthew J

Wood Green Invitational 2023, 14.07.2023

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 c6 6.d4 d5 7.Nc3 Ne4 8.Qb3 dxc4 9.Qxc4 Bf5 10.Qb3 Qb6 11.Nh4 Nxc3 12.bxc3 Be6 13.Qa3 Nd7 14.Bg5 Bf6 15.Bxf6 exf6 16.e4 Bc4 17.Rfe1 Qc7 18.Nf3 Rfe8 19.Nd2 Ba6 20.c4 c5 21.d5 Qe5 22.Bh3 Nb6 23.Rac1 f5 24.Bf1 fxe4 25.Rxe4 Qg5 26.Rf4 Nd7 27.h4 Qe7 28.Ne4 f5 29.Ng5 Nf8 30.Bg2 Kg7 31.g4 h6 32.gxf5 gxf5 33.Rxf5 hxg5 34.Rxg5+ Kh7 35.Qd3+ Kh8 36.Qc3+ Kh7 37.Be4+ Qxe4 38.Qg7#

Willow, Jonah B - Wadsworth, Matthew J

Wood Green Invitational 2023, 15.07.2023

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.exd5 exd5 5.Ngf3 Nc6 6.Bb5 Qe7+ 7.Be2 Nf6 8.0-0 Qc7 9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.Nb3 Bd6 11.Bg5 Be6 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Nbd4 a6 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.c4 Rg8 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.g3 f5 18.Re1 Kf8 19.Qd2 f4 20.Kf1 Qd7 21.Ng1 Rg6 22.Qc3 Kg8 23.Bf3 fxg3 24.hxg3 Qf5 25.Bxd5 Qxd5 26.Rad1 Qb5+ 27.Re2 Re6 28.Qd3 Rxe2 29.Nxe2 Be5 30.b3 Qxd3 31.Rxd3 a5 32.Re3 Bb2 33.Re4 Rd8 34.Nf4 c5 35.Rc4 Ba3 36.Ke2 Bb4 37.Nd3 Kg7 38.Ke3 Rd5 39.Rg4+ Kf6 40.Rh4 Kg7 41.Rg4+ Kf6 42.Rg8 Rd7

43.Rc8 Rd5 44.Rc6+ Kg7 45.Rc7 Kf6 46.f4 Rh5 47.Ne5 Ke6
 48.Nxf7 Rh2 49.Ng5+ Kd5 50.Rd7+ Kc6 51.Rxh7 Rxa2
 52.Nf3 Rb2 53.Ne5+ Kb5 54.f5 Rxb3+ 55.Ke4 c4 56.f6 c3
 57.Rc7 Rb2 58.f7 Rf2 59.Nf3 Re2+ 60.Kd3 Rf2 61.Ke3 Rf1
 62.Rxc3 a4 63.Rc8 Be7 64.f8Q Bxf8 65.Rxf8 Ra1 66.Nd4+
 Kc4 67.Rc8+ Kd5 68.Nc2 Rg1 69.Kf2 Rb1 70.Ne3+ Ke6
 71.Ra8 Ra1 72.Kf3 Ra3 73.Ke4 Ra1 74.Ra6+ Kf7 75.g4 a3
 76.Nc2 Rg1 77.Kf4 Rf1+ 78.Kg5 Rc1 79.Nxa3 Ra1 80.Ra7+
 1-0

Rudd, Jack - Arakhamia-Grant, Ketevan E
 Wood Green Invitational, 18.07.2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6
 7.Qd2 a6 8.Bh6 e5 9.Bxg7 Kxg7 10.Nge2 b5 11.c5 exd4
 12.Qxd4 dxc5 13.Qxc5 Nbd7 14.Qd6 Re8 15.Nf4 Qa5
 16.Be2 Bb7 17.0-0 Rad8 18.Qd4 b4 19.Nd1 Ne5 20.Qe3
 c5 21.b3 Rd4 22.Nb2 Qc7 23.Rac1 Qd6 24.Nc4 Nxc4
 25.Bxc4 Bxe4 26.fxe4 Rxe4 27.Nh5+ Kh8 28.Qh6 Qxh2+
 29.Kxh2 Ng4+ 30.Kg1 Nxh6 31.Nf6 Re5 32.Rce1 Rxe1
 33.Rxe1 Nf5 34.Ne4 Kg7 35.Nxc5 a5 36.Kf2 h5 37.Re4
 Rd2+ 38.Re2 Rd4 39.Ke1 Rg4 40.Rd2 Ne3 41.Bf1 h4
 42.Kf2 Nf5 43.Rd7 Rf4+ 44.Kg1 Kf8 45.Bc4 Ne3 46.Be2 g5
 47.Rd3 Nf5 48.Rd5 Ng3 49.Bc4 g4 50.Rd2 Rf5 51.Nd7+
 Ke7 52.Nb6 Re5 53.Rd7+ Ke8 54.Bxf7+ Kf8 55.Bc4 Re1+
 56.Kf2 Ra1 57.Rf7+ Ke8 58.Nc8 Rxa2+ 59.Ke3 Rc2
 60.Nd6+ Kd8 61.Kd4 h3 62.gxh3 gxh3 63.Be6 Rc7
 64.Nb7+ Rxb7 65.Rxb7 h2 66.Bd5 1-0

Chess in the Parks 23 – Gosforth Chess Club Event 2 of 3 by Mick Riding

Park dates booked a year in advance. Should be safe weather-wise, surely? It was last year, but 2023 has been less kind. So what do you do? Simple, go ahead anyway 😊. Frankly what choice have you got? Cancel at the last minute and people will turn up regardless. So we did go ahead anyway. Around 20 members turned up (bless them), and some members of the public did too, having seen the shop window posters on our High St and (I suspect) not expecting to find us. Chi Onwurah, MP for Newcastle Central, found time to visit – her third to a club event, so next time she needs to pay her subs!

Do it again? Of course! We attracted two new junior members and one adult, so a no brainer. And pics...



And one from our June event in Exhibition Park - a drier day 😊.



FEATURES

Great British Chess Players

by John Nunn



Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander (1909-1974)



Hugh Alexander was born in Cork, Ireland, but his family moved to Birmingham in 1920 after the death of Alexander's father. He attended King Edward's School and went on to study mathematics at Cambridge. During the Second World War he worked with Alan Turing at Bletchley Park on decoding German ciphers, especially the Enigma machine. After the war he joined GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters, the body which provides intelligence to the British government and its armed forces), and for 25 years was head of its cryptanalysis division. Alexander received many honours for his work, but this article is mainly about his chess career, so anyone interested in this aspect of his life should follow up the many sources available. In the movie *The Imitation Game*, which dramatized Alan Turing's work at Bletchley Park, the role of Alexander was played by Matthew Goode.

Alexander was very active in Cambridge chess, and played for them four times in the annual Varsity Match (1929-1932). He represented England in six Olympiads stretching from 1933 to 1958 and won the British Championship twice, in 1938 and 1956. His chess career

was unusually long, but was limited by two factors. The first was that he had a demanding full-time career and the second was that for security reasons he was not permitted to travel to any Soviet-bloc country. His best individual tournament results were second place at Hastings 1937-8, level with Keres and ahead of Fine and Flohr, first at Hastings 1946-7, a point ahead of Tartakower, and joint first at Hastings 1953-4, where he defeated Bronstein and Tolush, both with Black.

Alexander had a direct style and was most comfortable in attack, although the other parts of his game were by no means weak. His opening repertoire was based on playing main lines: with White he almost always played 1.e4, adopting the Ruy Lopez and the Open Sicilian, and with Black he generally met 1.e4 by 1...e5 and 1.d4 by the Nimzo-Indian or King's Indian. FIDE awarded him the International Master title in 1950. As his over the board career wound down, Alexander turned to correspondence chess and was also successful in this area, gaining the International Master for Correspondence Chess title in 1970. It's hard to evaluate Alexander's strength because during the years when he was at his peak he simply didn't play very much. He was certainly capable of inflicting defeats on almost anybody, but in many events he didn't do as well as one might expect; for example, his two British Championship wins came from 13 attempts. Nevertheless, he could be regarded as the strongest British player from just before the Second World War until the mid-1950s.

Alexander is the first player in this series of Great British Players I met personally, at the Norwich Junior International tournament of 1972. As a slight coincidence, from my garden I can see the satellite dishes of GCHQ Bude, which gathers data for their main base in Cheltenham, where Alexander lived.

Here's an interesting puzzle from an early Alexander game.



Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander – E. T. Marshall
Cambridge University v Lud-Eagle match, 1928
White to play

White clearly has a strong attack and if he could get a rook to the g-file then it would all be over. Can you find an effective way to do this? The answer is given later.

Next, we have a good attacking game against a strong grandmaster.

Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander – Svetozar Gligoric

Staunton Memorial, Birmingham 1951

Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Nb3

The classical move here is 9.f4 and, although that is still played today, more recent theory has focussed on 9.h4, 9.f3 and the move played in the game, which only started to become popular in the early 1950s.

9...a5?!

Today this move is regarded as doubtful, with the main lines being 9...Qb6 and 9...a6.

10.a4 Qb6

10...d5 is well met by 11.Bb5! and after 11...dxe4 12.Qxd8 Bxd8 13.Rhe1 Na7, as in Tal-Korchnoi, Montpellier Candidates 1985, White can continue 14.Nxe4! Nxe4 15.Bxd8 Nxf2 16.Rd6 with excellent compensation for the pawn.



11.Qe3

This looks slightly odd, since White normally plays for a kingside attack in this line and without queens the attack appears less potent. However, contrary to first impressions this is quite a good move. The advance of the a-pawns has helped White more than Black since the b5-square is ripe for permanent occupation, while a knight landing on b4 can eventually be driven away by c3.

11...Qb4?!

This looks active, but the queen is short of squares here and Black needs to worry about f3 followed by Bb5 and Na2. 11...Qxe3+ 12.Bxe3 Bd7 is objectively better, but after 13.Bb5 White has a safe advantage.

12.f3

Meeting the threat of ...Ng4 and leaving Black with few constructive moves.

12...h6

12...d5 13.Bb5! Rd8 14.Na2 Qd6 15.Bxc6 followed by e5 wins a piece.

13.h4!

The position suits Alexander's direct attacking style and he plays with great energy throughout the game.

13...d5

Otherwise White continues to improve his position by Kb1 or Bb5.

14.exd5?

This gives White an advantage, but 14.Bb5! is even better, with Na2 followed by Bxc6 to come, as in the note to Black's 12th move.

14...Nxd5

14...hgx5 15.dxc6 Qf4 16.Qxf4 gxf4 17.c7 Bd7 18.Bb5 is also very good for White.

15.Rxd5 hxg5

15...exd5 16.Nxd5 Bxg5 17.hxg5 Qd6 18.gxh6 g6 (18...Qxd5 19.hxg7 wins at once) 19.Nb6 Rb8 20.Bb5 gives White a strong attack without any material sacrifice.

16.Rxg5



The rook switches to an aggressive position, but without the dark-squared bishop White's attack has lost some momentum.

16...Bxg5?

Opening the h-file is extremely risky and Black soon has cause to regret this. After 16...Rd8! White is a pawn up, but has far fewer attacking prospects.

17.hxg5 Rd8 18.Ne4

Threatening 19.Nf6+.

18...e5 19.Bd3?!

The natural move, but 19.g6! fxg6 20.Nbc5 is stronger, since there is no real defence against the threat of c3 followed by Bc4+.

19...Bf5 20.Nf6+! gxf6 21.gxf6 Qf4

Forced to prevent mate by Rh8+ followed by Qh6+.

22.Qxf4 exf4 23.Bxf5

The upshot of the complications is that White has two pawns for the exchange, but more importantly he retains dangerous threats against the enemy king.

23...Rd6 24.Bh7+ Kf8 25.Be4 Kg8 26.Bh7+ Kf8 27.Nc5!

After gaining some time on the clock Alexander moves in for the kill.

27...Re8

There was no real way to prevent White's threat, which he now executes. The alternative 27...Rxf6 28.Nd7+ Ke7 29.Nxf6 Kxf6 30.Rh4 Ke5 31.Rh5+ Kd6 32.Be4 is also an easy win.



28.Nd7+!

A neat tactical point which wins the exchange.

28...Rxd7 29.Bf5

The threat of mate forces Black to surrender a whole rook.

29...Re1+ 30.Rxe1 Rd6 31.Re4 Nd4

31...Rxf6 32.Rxf4 followed by g4 also leaves White two pawns up.

32.Bc8 b6 33.Ba6 Ne6 34.Bc4 Nc5 35.Rxf4 Nd7 36.g4 Rxf6 37.Rxf6 Nxf6 38.Kd2 Nd7 39.Ke3 Ne5 40.Be2 Ke7 41.Ke4 1-0

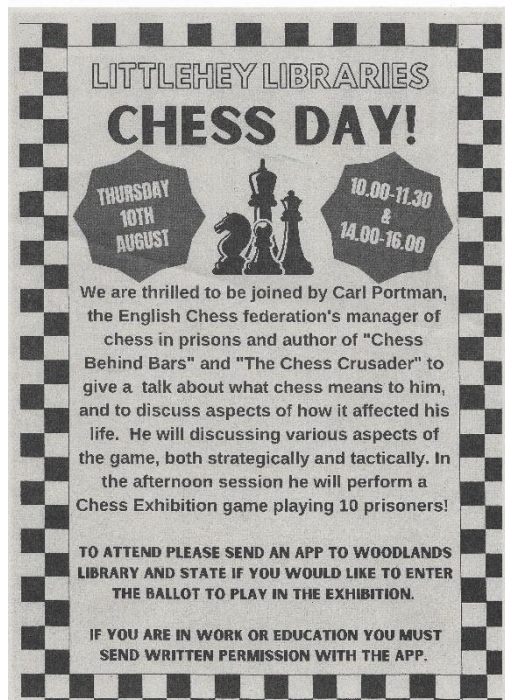
Returning to the Alexander-E. T. Marshall position given earlier (which arose after 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Bc5 3.Bc4 d6 4.d3 Nc6 5.f4 Nf6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.f5 Na5 8.Bg5 c6 9.a3 b5 10.Ba2 Qb6 11.Qe2 Nb7 12.Nh4 a5 13.Bxf6 gxf6 14.Rf1 Be3 15.Qh5 Bf4 16.Nd1 Nd8 17.g3 Be3 18.Ke2 Bc5 19.Qh6 d5 20.Nc3 d4), the game continued rather inaccurately: **21.Rf4? exf4 22.Na4** (22.gxf4 dxc3 covers g1 and although 23.Rf1 is still dangerous, Black may be able to defend by 23...Ne6! 24.bxc3 Bg1!) **22...f3+ 23.Nxf3 Qa7!?** (23...bxa4 24.Ng5 Bxf5! leads to a draw, so this is a brave winning attempt) **24.Nxc5 Bxf5?** (24...Qxc5 is equal) **25.g4? Bg6 26.Nxd4? Qxc5** (now Black should be winning) **27.Nf5 Bxf5 28.gxf5 Ne6? 29.c3? Qe7 30.fxe6 fxe6 31.Rg1+ Kh8 32.Bxe6 Rae8 33.Bf5 Rg8 ½-½.** (Source for the complete score of this game was Edward Winter's *Chess Notes* site).

However, White could have won by inverting his first two moves: 21.Na4! bxa4 22.Rf4! exf4 23.gxf4 Ne6 24.Rg1+ Ng5 25.fxg5, with mate in a few more moves. To complete the picture, White has other ways to win which don't involve getting a rook to the g-file; for example, 21.Qxf6 dxc3 22.Ng6! hxg6 23.Qxg6+ Kh8 24.Qh6+ Kg8 25.f6 Ne6 26.Bxe6 and mate next move.

Visit to HMP Littlehey

by Carl Portman

I joked recently that I had been 'on tour' for some ten years now, visiting prisons up and down the country. Well, that tour continued as I played a 'gig' at HMP Littlehey on 10th August. It was a long-awaited event that arrived with bright sunshine on a warm day, thankfully. It made the early drive over quite pleasurable.



The agreement was to give a talk about how chess has influenced my life, and also to give a sample game for interactive coaching purposes in the morning, have lunch, and then in the afternoon play ten of their best players in a simultaneous exhibition.

I knew from the morning session that there were some serious and devoted chess fans, and that my afternoon session was going to be one of the toughest yet, but as ever I was up for the challenge. The morning session went very well with an attendance of over 40 prisoners, all keen to have opinions on the game I was going through (which was one of my own) with lessons to be learned about development and activity versus material and also opening choices, responding to unusual moves and some endgame themes.

There were many questions, and once more the burning issues of the day for prisoners included seeking clarification on the fifty-move rule, en passant (a real biggie), when to castle, and which was the best opening to play. I helped to resolve all of the issues and I was told that this has now prevented several potential fights from

ensuing from now on. That's good news indeed.

The simul was as tough as I had expected. All of the games were sharp, and I opened with 1.d4, 1.e4, 1.c4 or 1.b3 on all boards. I was staggered at the number of spectators filling up the room - no pressure then. There was plenty of banter as I went around, which is welcome, and I was doing rather well until I arrived at board 3 to find that I had lost my queen, pinned as it was to the king, by a bishop. I have never done this before in a simul and I was struggling to think how I let it happen whilst going around the other boards. I was determined to make a fight of it and prove that anything can happen, and that the hardest game to win is in fact a won game.

I have to say I worked desperately hard and found a really pretty combination to win my opponent's queen, involving discovered check with an attack on his queen. We then struggled on to a draw, but at least I did not lose. He took it with good grace and shook my hand with a winning smile.

I also drew on another board with a very complicated, closed position where neither side benefitted from advancing, so we reluctantly repeated. I really wanted to play on, as did my opponent, but I could not rush it and there were after all eight other tough games on the go. I resolved to win them all and with a very big effort I did, mostly through having superior endgame knowledge although they ran me close, and it was a draining but exhilarating experience. Thus, I won 8, drew 2 and lost 0.

The inmates play regularly and are well versed in openings, and as usual I had to be patient and try to win in the endgame. This was a group who could enter the Intercontinental Online Prison Chess Championships, for sure. It is a shame that the prison is so far from me, or I would visit more often.

As ever the prisoners applied themselves creditably, engaging courteously with me, one another and the staff. I must say that I was delighted to see the inmates sharing ideas and thoughts, and their collective love of the game shone throughout the day. The walls and bars were no barrier to the freedom of expression they all displayed on their sixty-four squared battlefields. That is the power of chess.

This could not have happened first of all without the support of the English Chess Federation, and Nigel Towers in particular, who is a pleasure to work with. Then Anna McConnell was the chief organiser from HMP Littlehey, and her enthusiasm for the event, allied with her organisational capabilities, meant that the day went smoothly - one of the most impressive I have experienced.

Anna used to be a ballerina, and I could see that she incorporated a disciplined approach with her organisational agenda, but with a real zest for life and spontaneous disposition which the prisoners clearly benefitted from. Thanks also to Cristiana and Jayne at the library for supporting Anna. The governor and staff were kind to invite me in, and support chess in future.

This is a purposeful activity – just what the government and the Inspector of Prisons is looking for, so long may it continue.

On behalf of the ECF I donated some chess equipment and magazines and a copy of my book *Chess Behind Bars* to the library. In all then, it was a most successful visit.

Carl Portman

ECF Manager of Prisons Chess Author:

Chess Behind Bars

Chess Crusader – Confessions of an amateur chess player

ECF-FIDE Rating Conversion by Brian Valentine

The ECF ratings operate in a different environment to FIDE ratings. However, there is a substantial overlap. This means that there are situations where a comparison of the ratings is required.

The comparison most people come across is in setting rating limits for events. The most popular method is to use either a FIDE rating or an ECF rating for section limits or board orders. Typically, the highest rating available is used. The ECF has been reviewing this approach and was due to recommend a change. However, on 22nd July FIDE announced a consultation on major changes in their system, with a target implementation date of early 2024.

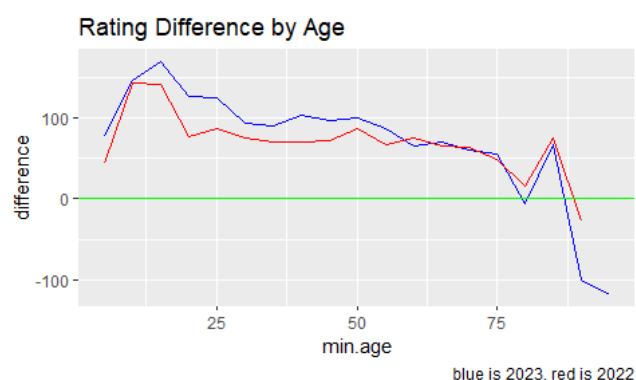
This note sets out the current position as I see it.

But first the comparison is also required for the Games Played Abroad (GPA) service, where a FIDE rating can be used in the ECF rating calculation. Effective for events starting on or after 1st September 2023 GPA will use the formula $ECF = FIDE + 100$ for ECF rating.

Returning to the data, the simple comparison as at 1st July is that if we look at the subset of players with active ratings in both lists, the FIDE mean is 1792 and the ECF mean comes out as 1897. The difference is 105 points. However, this could be considered simplistic for several reasons.

The relationship has been unstable, and the FIDE report highlights reasons to do with the FIDE method. This is not necessarily an endorsement of the ECF method, since it only has three years of history and Covid restrictions have added noise to any analysis. The rating relationship has been like two tectonic plates moving around. The averages for July 2022 were FIDE 1936 and ECF 2022, a difference of 86. A year later the difference is 105 (FIDE 1792, ECF 1897). The main reason for this is the massive turnover in players from the 2022 to the 2023 list. There were 2240 players having an active rating in both lists in 2022 and 2336 a year later, but the latter included 1,023 players new to the list, with 897 players from the earlier list missing. This turnover may be due to a Covid effect, but its size puts a red flag in front of any firm conclusions.

Using the population average for a specific age range will be questionable. While the difference at a population level average is 105, the difference is much higher at young ages and then declines with increasing age, reaching parity at about age 70.



The graph above averages by grouping in five-year bands. The 5-9 band and those above 70 are based on small samples. The average difference for ages 10-24 is almost 150.

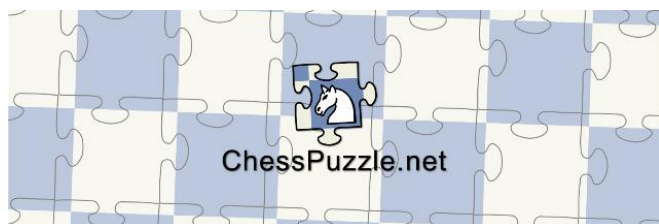
What we know is that if the FIDE proposals go through the average differential will be eliminated. FIDE is proposing a one-off compression of ratings, lifting those at a rating of 1000 to 1400, with no changes above 2000. There is no reason to change ECF ratings, so any conversion will be complicated and will probably involve using the highest available of a FIDE conversion and ECF. My recommendation based on current FIDE ratings would have been a level adjustment, with alternatives for age range events.

Organisers are free to run their events as they think best. Given the delay between settling rating limits for events and when they take place, and the likely imminent FIDE change, there is a strong case for retaining status quo, but I am available to discuss alternatives:

manager.rating@englishchess.org.uk.

When FIDE have settled on what they plan I will set out a revised recommendation.

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

IM James P. Jackson - FM John Merriman

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG

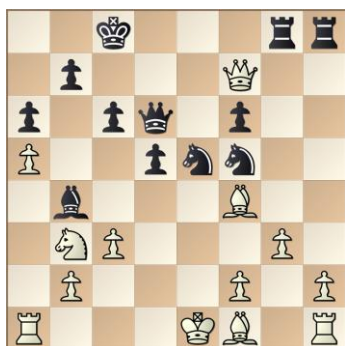


White to win - [Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2

Matthew P. Dignam – Peter Koiza

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG

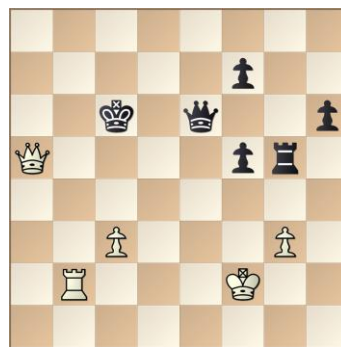


White to defend - [Puzzle Two](#)

Puzzle 3

IM G. Buckley – FM Roland Bezuidenhout

II Kingston Invitational 2023, Kingston-upon-Thames

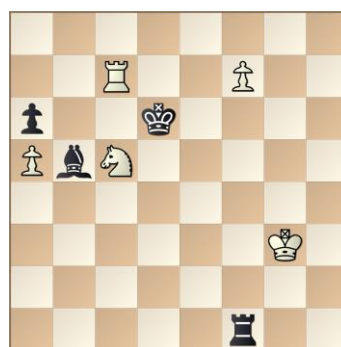


Black to defend - [Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 4

IM Conor E. Murphy – CM David H. Maycock Bates

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 5

Balazs-Virgil Szekely – FM Adam G. Ashton

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 6

CM Thomas Villiers – Toby Cox

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG

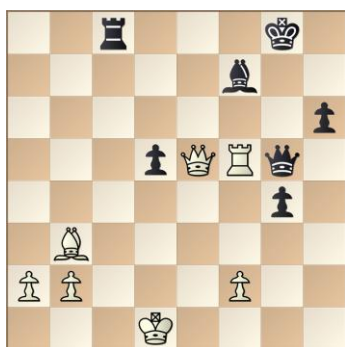


White to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 7

Nina P. Pert – Jude Shearsby

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG

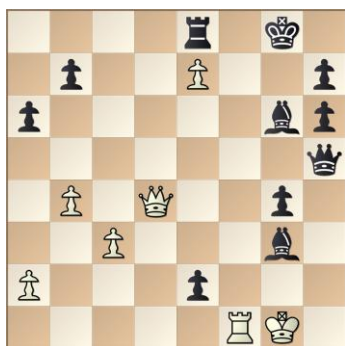


Black to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 8

Edward Jackson – FM John Merriman

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9

WFM Audrey Kueh – Toby Cox

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10

Mohammed Aayan Ismail – Theo Khoury

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

Puzzle 11

CM David H. Maycock Bates – IM G. Buckley

II Kingston Invitational 2023, Kingston-upon-Thames



Black to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12

FM Bao Nghia Dong – GM Michael Adams

109th British Chess Championships 2023, Leicester ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit

https://chesspuzzle.net/List/8917?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=augustnews

by clicking the link or via the QR code.



Two English Teams Reach the World Chess League.Live Play-Offs!

Standings

Q Search

Fed	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	MP
1	Chess Club Politika B	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	½	8½
2	Chess Club Politika A	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	0	1	8½
3	Z-House A	1	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	8
4	Petts Wood & Orpington A	1	1	1	1	1	1	½	0	½	1	8
5	Durham Alumni	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
6	Dundee City A	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	8
7	Philippines Finest Chess Club	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	7
8	San Miguel Chess Association	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	7
9	Aberdeen Alumni	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	7
10	Team Chile	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	7



World Chess League.Live volunteers (left)

Congratulations to Petts Wood & Orpington A and Durham University Alumni, who qualified for the 2023 World Chess League.Live play-offs! Both teams needed to reach 8 points to go through in the final round of the league season, and Petts Wood & Orpington A convincingly defeated, and hence knocked out, Oxford University A 6½-1½ thanks to two wins from FM John Merriman backed up by a win and a draw from teenage rising star Aditya Verma.

Durham Alumni meanwhile faced a very tricky TJ Valašská Bystřice outfit from the Czech Republic, and quickly found themselves 2-0 down against their opponents, who outrated them on all six boards. However, they fought back in stunning style to take a 6-5 lead, and Classics Lecturer and Tutor George Gaz held his nerve on board 1 to clinch a second draw against FM Josef Obšivač, sealing a thrilling 6½-5½ win for Durham Alumni and qualification in the process.

The play-offs take place on the weekend of 19th August, and we wish the two English teams the very best of luck. Chess Club Politika and Z House are the overwhelming favourites, as they have several grandmasters in their ranks including GM Suat Atalik, GM Miloje Ratkovic, and GM Aleksa Strikovic. There are no easy games in chess anymore, however, and upsets do happen!

In the meantime, registration is open for the 2023-2024 season of the World Chess League.Live. It's free to play and has significant cash prizes, courtesy of the sponsors Chess.com and Chess & Bridge. For more details visit www.worldchessleague.live, and you can email the tournament director to enter or to ask any questions at director@worldchessleague.live

Peter Hornsby, Founder and Tournament Director



Jonathan Penrose: A Ten-Time Champion – Part 1/3

by David Agyemang

Very few people have had such dominance over British chess as the Colchester-born phenomenon by the name of Jonathon Penrose. Born into a family of intellectuals, Penrose was destined to master whatever he put his mind to. His father was a legendary mathematician, and his brother Roger Penrose is one of Britain's greatest. Despite his legendary status in chess, Jonathon taught Psychology at Middlesex University and gained a PhD in his spare time.

1958

The year 1958 was the beginning of the Penrose era. The 25 year-old went into the final round of the British Championships half a point behind leading player Leonard Barden. Penrose won his final round game and, with Barden only managing a draw, forced a play-off tiebreak for the British title. Barden was four years older, but had a lot more experience compared with his opponent. Barden finished 4th at Hastings earlier in the year and was the joint British Champion in 1954.

Before we start, I would like to give credit to journalist John Saunders and his website www.saunds.co.uk, where I found all these games in an easily viewable format.

Jonathan Penrose - Leonard William Barden

1958 British Championship Play-Off

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Be2 e5 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. O-O Be7 9. f4 O-O 10. Kh1 Nd7



We leave the opening with a position unrecognisable to most 21st century Sicilian players. The line with 7. Nxc6 has been played by many titled players, but is far from popular at the top level, with many opting for either Nb3

or Nf3. 10...Nd7 has only been featured in one other game according to the Lichess database; this occurred in 1977.

11. Bc4 Nb6 12. Bb3 Be6 13. f5 Bxb3 14. axb3 d5 15. Qg4 Kh8 16. Rf3 d4 17. Ne2 Barden would have been in trouble had Penrose found 17. Rh3!! sacrificing the knight on c3 for a winning attack against the black king. 17... Nd7



18. Rh3 g6 19. fxg6 fxg6 20. Qxg6 Chaos ensues.

20...Rf1+ 21. Ng1 Qg8 22. Qxc6 Nf6 23. Rg3 Qc8 24. Qb5 Re1

Can you find the winning breakthrough for White?



25. Bh6!! Adding another piece to the attack against the black king. The queen will also swing around to join the final phase of the game.

25...Rxa1 26. Qxe5 Bd8? White now has a forced checkmate.

27. Bg7+ Kg8 28. Bxf6+ Kf7 29. Rg7+ Kf8 30. Qd6+ Ke8 31. Re7+ 1-0

Beautiful violence.

1959

Fast forward one year and we find ourselves in York, with Penrose with the White pieces in the 10th round game against Milner-Barry and half a point behind the leading two players. He proceeded to effortlessly navigate the complications of the closed position and convert his advantage in 31 moves. Fellow tournament leaders Golombek, a three-time champion, and Haygarth both drew their games, leaving a three-way tie for first place heading into round 11.

Penrose played the fewest moves in the final round. His King's Indian Defence game seemed to be reaching a climax before a draw was agreed between the players with the position still full of life. Golombek faced Barden, the only player to defeat Penrose in the tournament, but managed to escape with a draw after a torturous game with the black pieces. That left Haygarth needing only a draw to take the tournament to a three-way play-off and a win to clinch his first title. His opponent, John Littlewood, held the initiative until some incorrect trades allowed Haygarth to build a dominant centre. The position traded down into a queen endgame where Littlewood took the cooperative option of taking a draw. Haygarth, Golombek and Penrose shared the British title in York but would have to wait three months to fight for the full crown in a three-way play-off.

Fast forward to November in London's RAC Club for the double-round play-off between Penrose, Golombek and Haygarth. After defeating Golombek in 57 moves in round 1, Penrose faced Haygarth in round 2.

Michael John Haygarth - Jonathan Penrose 1959 British Championship Play-Off

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 O-O 6. Be3 e5 7. d5 c6 8. Qd2 cxd5 9. cxd5 Nbd7 10. Nge2 a6 11. Nc1 Nc5



Haygarth opts for the peculiar looking 11. Nc1 but has the idea of propelling his queenside attack with b4 and Nb3.

12.b4 Ncd7 13. Nb3 Nh5 14. Na5 f5

Both sides carry on with their plans.

15. Bc4 Ndf6 16. O-O f4 17. Bf2 g5 18. Rfc1 g4 19. Kf1



As is common with KID positions, the black attack is rolling down the board whilst White seems stuck in a limbo of defence and attack. 19.Kf1 is far from a mistake, but quite a clear recognition of the strength of the black attack.

19...g3 20. Bg1 Ng4

Steaming forwards.

21.h3 Ne3+ 22. Bxe3 fxe3 23. Qxe3 Qh4 24. Ke1 Nf4 25. Rc2 Bxh3!!



With the White king taking exile, the objective has changed from checkmate to promoting the pawn on g3. Had White taken the bishop, Penrose would have followed up with either Bh6 or Nxh3, creating too many threats for Haygarth to handle.

26. Qg1 Nxe2+ 27. Rxe2 Rxf3 28. Rc1 Bxe2 29. Qxe2 Rf2 0-1

Haygarth would face Golombek in the next game of the play-off but could only manage a draw. By defeating Golombek Penrose would retain his title with two rounds to play, and he did just that as Golombek in a g3 system against Penrose's King's Indian had his position slowly prised apart by the defending champion. Black would be

victorious and, for the first time since 1936 the men's title would be successfully defended.

1960

Winning the British Championship more than twice in a row is a feat that only three men have ever accomplished; most recently it was Jonathan Rowson who successfully defended his title between 2004 and 2006. In 1960 the only man to win the title more than twice in a row was Henry Ernest Atkins, who won the title seven times in a row between 1905-1911.

The field in 1960 was described as a 'strong entry of seasoned experts and ambitious young players', but unfortunately the archives only contain 40 of the 198 games which took place. One of these games is between Penrose with the white pieces against Fazekas. Born in Hungary, Fazekas was a late bloomer when it came to competitive chess, with his most notable triumph being in the 1957 British Championship which he won at the age of 59. He emigrated to Britain after the Second World War and lived with 13 other people in a house in Camden. He worked as a GP, but would also play for Britain in correspondence chess.

Jonathan Penrose – Stefan Fazekas

1960 British Chess Championship Round 1

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nf6 5. Bg5 Be7 6. Bxf6 Bxf6 7. Nf3 b6 8. Bd3 O-O 9. Qe2 Bb7 10. O-O-O Nd7



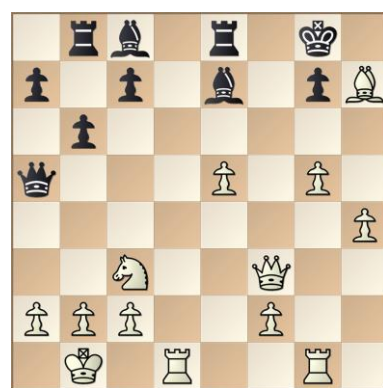
This is the position where we leave the opening, and White seems to be the much happier of the two. With both kings castled on opposite sides of the board, the f6 bishop may prove to be incapable of slowing the white attack.

11. h4 Re8 12. g4 Be7 13. g5 Nf8 14. Rhg1 Qd5 15. Kb1 Kh8 16. Ne5 Ng6 17. Nc3 Qa5 18. Nxf7+ Kg8 19. Qxe6



Numerous errors from Fazekas have allowed Penrose to charge into the position almost unopposed.

19...Kf8 20. Ne5 Nxe5 21. dxe5 Bc8 22. Qc6 Rb8 23. Qf3+ Kg8 24. Bxh7+



White now has a forced checkmate. If the bishop is taken 25.g6+ will extract the black king from his castle.

24...Kh8 25. Bg6 Be6 26. Bxe8 Bb4 27. Nd5 Bd2 28. Bf7 Bxf7 29. Qxf7 1-0

Penrose would go through the rest of the 1960 tournament undefeated, meaning that he had not suffered a defeat in 19 rounds of British Championship action, a run stretching back to the fourth game of 1959.

The British Chess Championships: View from the Archive

De Montfort University was delighted to host the British Chess Championships in July. Over in the archive we were happy to welcome many players who made it across campus from The Venue to browse the National Chess Library. Here are a few who agreed to share with us what they were reading:



Ian Revitt reading the British Chess Magazine



Nick London consulting The Complete Chess Addict



Tim Harding examining the bulletins of the Moscow Central Chess Club

Several people took the opportunity of being nearby to deposit new materials for the collection! From David Sedgwick came a collection of DGT chess clocks. David also brought in two shields on behalf of the Insurance Chess Club. Stewart Reuben brought in two brand new trophies, fresh from the European Senior Team Chess Championship of 2023. Finally, Shiela Jackson donated a winner's plaque from the FIDE World Senior Team Chess Championship. Thank you to all donors for your contributions to the collection.



Trophies from Stewart Reuben

NEWS and VIEWS

Major Investment in English Chess Announced

As we go to press we've just received the fantastic news that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has announced a combined package of measures worth almost £1 million to inspire the next generation of chess players, bring chess to a wider audience, and support the development of elite players. Plans will see investment in the English Chess Federation that will ensure players receive world-leading training and development opportunities and help make England a chess heavyweight, grants for schools in disadvantaged areas to get more primary school children playing chess, and 100 new chess tables installed in public spaces. Full details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-investment-to-transform-future-of-english-chess-announced>.

For the last year I've been working on trying to raise the profile of chess within Parliament, the objective being to try and gain some form of recognition from HM Government as a tangible benefit from the recent chess boom.

I started with the organisation of the UK versus Ukraine solidarity match between Mickey Adams and Andrei Volokitin which was formally opened by the Speaker of the House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle on 22nd March. Sir Lindsay kindly agreed to host the ceremony at Speakers House in the presence of the Ukrainian Ambassador and it was very well attended by parliamentarians.

The Speaker kindly allowed me to have the room for the afternoon and, with the assistance of Rachel Reeves MP, I promoted a Lords vs Commons match to all members and there was an excellent response. Later that afternoon, after the UK vs UKR opening ceremony, we staged the match between the Lords and Commons which was also very well attended. The Commons won; the results are below:

Board	House of Lords	Result	House of Commons
1	Lord Winston	0-1	Jesse Norman MP
2	Lord Wigley	1-0	Maria Eagle MP
3	Lord Hogan Howe	0-1	Rachel Reeves MP
4	Lord Lipsey	0-1	Giles Watling MP



DGT clocks from David Sedgwick



Insurance Chess Club shield

5	Lord Trevithin	0.5 – 0.5	Peter Hornsby
6	Daniela Stuhlmann	0-1	Gabriel Millard-Clothier
7	Adam Bull	1-0	Guy Opperman MP
8	Erik Schurkus	0-1	John Baron MP
9	Chris Waterman	0-1	Chris Stephens MP
10	Tommy Pia		James Grundy MP
11	Chris Clarke	0-1	Mike Wood MP
12	Matt Korris	1-0	Tobias Ellwood MP
13	Jeremy McCabe	1-0	Adam Afriyie MP



Giles Watling MP at ChessFest

With the assistance of Chris Fegan Chess in Schools and Communities COO, I moved to reform the All-Party-Parliamentary Group on Chess. The officers elected at the first meeting were: Lord Dafydd Wigley, Giles Watling MP John Baron MP and Stephen Metcalfe MP. Please encourage your MP to join! I was also able to organise a question to be asked in the House of Lords to a DCMS minister regarding what funding there was for chess. Of course, the answer was 'none', but it was good to have it on the record.

Finally, and very much not least, as we go to press we can announce that this increased visibility and, most importantly, tireless lobbying at the highest levels from ECF President Dominic Lawson, has paid off handsomely with the recent announcement from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport of a combined package of measures worth almost £1 million will inspire the next generation of chess players, bringing chess to a wider audience, whilst supporting the development of elite players. Plans will see investment in the English Chess Federation that will ensure players receive world-leading training and development opportunities and help make England a chess heavyweight, grants for schools in disadvantaged areas to get more primary school children playing chess, and 100 new chess tables installed in public spaces.

Full details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-investment-to-transform-future-of-english-chess-announced>

Membership Options

The ECF Board will be presenting a paper at this October's Annual General meeting of the English Chess Federation (ECF) setting out ways in which the present membership system could potentially be updated to provide a closer match between the membership fees that our members pay and the amount of chess that they play on the one hand, and the various services that they receive from the ECF on the other.

You can find the paper here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Membership-Options-Council-Paper.pdf>

This paper builds on the 'Thoughts on Membership Options' paper that was presented at last April's Council meeting; you can find that paper here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/C38.14-Thoughts-on-Membership-Options.pdf>.

Before the Annual General Meeting we would very much like to get our members' opinions on the two options to be presented - namely: (a) which of the two options our members prefer; and (b) whether the option they prefer should replace the present membership arrangements.

You can find the feedback form here:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/membership-options-for-presentation-to-the-agm/>

The feedback we receive will be collated, published, and used as input to discussions at the Annual General Meeting. So your opinion is very important to us in terms of reaching the right decision, and we do hope that you will find time to read the paper and provide feedback on this important topic.

Please complete the feedback form by Sunday 3rd September if you can (although we will accept feedback forms until Sunday 17th September).

Recent Allegations Made Online

The ECF is aware of historical and serious allegations which have recently been made public by a female chess player regarding highly inappropriate behaviour from several people within the game.

The ECF takes all such allegations seriously and encourages anyone who has been harassed, threatened, or suffered abuse at a chess tournament to contact the ECF in complete confidence so that action may be taken

where possible, and if requested, for the matters to be taken to the relevant authorities where appropriate. In the first instance, contact should be made with the ECF Director of Women's Chess – director.womenschess@englishchess.org.uk – or the ECF Safeguarding Officers – safeguarding.officer@englishchess.org.uk

Response to FIDE's New Trans Regulations

The English Chess Federation's (ECF) position is clear. We do not exclude trans women and this position will not change, despite FIDE's new policy. Trans women have worked on behalf of the ECF and played in ECF events, as have trans women in various other chess federations. The ECF notes that similar positions have been adopted by the German Chess Federation (DSB), the French Chess Federation (FFE) and the United States Chess Federation (USCF).

The new FIDE rules are incompatible with English law, particularly with regard to the release of personal data. We cannot see the point of the two-year suspension of the right to participate in women-only competitions, which we view as discriminatory.

The ECF restates its commitment to being an inclusive organisation that is welcoming to all

2nd Cambridge International Open – 19th-24th February 2024

The English Chess Federation is organising the 2nd Cambridge International Open Chess Tournament from Monday 19th February – Saturday 24th February 2024 in Cambridge. This will be a nine-round Swiss tournament. The event will provide an opportunity for participants to achieve international title norms. The event is supported by the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge.

Further information is available at:
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2nd-cambridge-international-open/>

IM Norm News

Aaravamudhan Balaji achieved a score of 7/9 at the inaugural Psyon Chess Masters IM Invitational tournament. This score earned him his first IM norm. Congratulations!

More GM Norm Success for Ameet Ghasi

Congratulations are also due for Ameet Ghasi who achieved a second GM norm during the Wood Green Invitational – you can see more details in the article on page 33.

Withdrawal of ECF Queen's Gambit Scheme Supporter Memberships

After a recent Board meeting it was decided that the Queen's Gambit Scheme membership, which allowed first-time female members access to ECF online members clubs and events on Chess.com and Lichess, together with free online rating of all ECF rated online events, will be withdrawn from the membership system from 1st September 2023.

Incorrect Membership Expiry Email

The ECF office recently completed an exercise within the membership system designed to prevent members with two active memberships from being reminded to renew twice, once for each membership. However, an unfortunate and erroneous side-effect of this was that some members may have received a short email, reproduced below, telling them their membership has expired, when this is clearly not so. If you have received this email please ignore it; if you have any worries as a result then please contact the Office for reassurance: membership@englishchess.org.uk. We thank you for your understanding in this matter.

*'Dear XXX,
This is to confirm that your membership of English Chess Federation has now expired. If you would like to renew your membership please visit English Chess Federation membership system.
If you have any questions regarding this, then please contact a member of the English Chess Federation admin team at membership@englishchess.org.uk
Thank you'*

Members' Representatives for 2023/24

The ECF Members' Representatives for 2023/24 will be:

Life Members – Stewart Reuben; Gerard Walsh
Platinum Members – Adrian Elwin; David Eustace
Gold Members – Tim Wall; Mike Waddington
Silver Members – John Reyes; Gavin Cartwright
Bronze Members – Tina Teotia; Gareth Ellis

ECF Level 1 Arbiter Courses

Course dates/schedule: five Thursday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm: 7th September; 14th September; 21st September; 28th September; 5th October.

Course fee: £40.

Please note: participants must be at least Bronze members of the ECF on the date of the examination (5th October).

Course Lecturer: Matthew Carr; Assistant Lecturer: Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips.

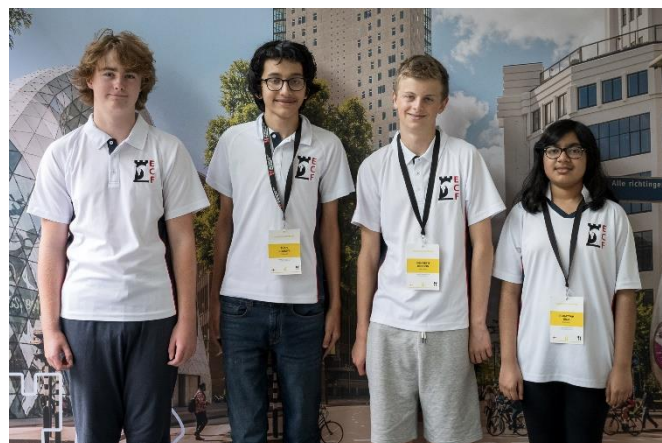
The course will be delivered via Zoom.

You can enter at:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-level-1-arbiter-course-septemberoctober-2023/>

JUNIOR MOVES

FIDE World Youth U16 Olympiad by Richard Hobson



Indy Southcott-Moyers, Theo Khoury, Kenneth Hobson, Ruqayyah Rida. Photograph by Frans Peeters

‘This is the smartest square kilometre in the whole of Europe, and this week it is getting smarter.’ With these words the deputy mayor of Eindhoven opened the FIDE World Youth U16 Olympiad, and from a certain angle he seemed to be looking towards our quartet of Kenneth Hobson, Theo Khoury, Indy Southcott-Moyers and Ruqayyah Rida when the words left his mouth.

The High Tech Campus was a fitting venue for such a prestigious tournament: a very Dutch science park with plenty of greenery, nature walks, a lake, and even pens of sheep and cattle among the offices and cutting-edge facilities. We took nine points from a possible 18 to finish 29th of 63 teams from 47 countries: given our starting position of 30th, a respectable one under par.

Perhaps the highlight was the final game against Australia, the day after our Lionesses had beaten their Matildas in the semi-final of the women’s football World Cup and a few weeks on from the memorable Test series. At 2-1 up we could even conjure thoughts of ceremonially burning a king, wrapping the ashes in a paper napkin, and offering them for display to the Chess & Bridge shop on Baker Street.

Ruqayyah didn’t quite manage to deny her opponent victory in a tense finale to our week, but in the spirit of the famous rivalry we were soon mixing post-match in games of Bughouse with the opposition. This proved of great interest to the Australian television crew following their prodigy Yifei Hu (held comfortably to a draw by Indy, our leading player) for a documentary.

By this stage, teams had stamped their character on Eindhoven. The South Africans were a particularly happy bunch, though by a third rendering of 'The Wheels on the Bus' on a journey back to our hotel Kenneth did ask whether this was an event for the under-16s or under-sixes. It was hard not to laugh when one of the South Africans screamed after the final verse: 'That's why we lost 8-0'.

We mixed serious game and prep time with a recognition of the need to unwind. These were long days of (usually) morning and afternoon games, and the location of our hotel some four kilometres from the Campus meant more shuttles than a Lancashire mill: hotel to venue, venue to lunch, lunch to venue, venue to dinner, and finally dinner back to the hotel.

Elbows were even sharper than minds when it came to the rush for a place on the lunchtime buses, and on Wednesday morning our coach turned up 45 minutes late for pick-up, Theo's celebratory cries and dance turned heads on Vestdijk when it finally arrived. But our theory that opponents Kazakhstan 5 (yes, 5) would be the team to suffer, sweating at the venue, proved over-optimistic.

Statistically we peaked too soon. Immediately, in fact, crushing Malta 4-0 on the Sunday afternoon. Armenia, supposed masters of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ scoreline, then rather mocked our over-analysis of which players would try to grind out draws and who would attack from the off. A $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ result suggested they wanted to win on all four boards. Defeat of Montenegro and a loss to India went as expected, before wins against Canada's third and second teams sandwiched the Kazakhstani setback.

When Israel beat us we were back on half marks. Only against Canada was there any semblance of an issue. Down to her last second, Ruqayyah's opponent seemed to throw a pawn at a square before placing it on a square only after desperately hitting the clock. Asked why she didn't take this up with the arbiter, Ruqayyah gave a typical chuckle and said: 'Because I was winning.' She was, and she did.

To little surprise, China emerged as winners. If we were not familiar with their national anthem at the start of the closing ceremony it became embedded in our minds with four plays in 15 minutes, three of their players leading the scores for their boards. And though a way from such heights, we could reflect ourselves on a wonderful experience. We came home with much to learn but pride intact.

The Glorney Gilbert International by Vic Pelling

I would like to thank the organisers for staging a superb tournament in a beautiful location. The operations and management teams went out of their way to accommodate our delegation, we felt at home, and were honoured to be part of this prestigious event.

The initial analysis of the sections showed that the competition would be highly skilled and all games would be tough; any draws or wins would have to be earned through exceptional play. We were well aware that ratings in this tournament are not necessarily a true reflection of the opponent's strength.

Our Glorney team got a great start, winning their first match against the Irish team, but we finished the day in second place as the Scottish team won every game in their match against the Welsh team. We got another win in round 2 but once again the Scottish team didn't lose a game, it was clear that round 3 was going to be a pivotal match. Our players gave everything they had in round 3 but the Scottish team were too strong on the day; we did however win a game so their unbeaten run was ended. Round 4 was once again against the Irish, but this time with opposite colours; the result turned out to be the same score as the first encounter, so we recorded another great win. A winning $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ result in round 5 still left us with an outside chance of the Glorney Cup; the runner-up spot was secured, but we needed to win four out of the last five games! We tried hard and gave Scotland their hardest test of the tournament, but with only one win and a draw from the first three games winning the cup was beyond us. Well played Scotland!



We had two teams representing England in the Gilbert Cup, as Ireland were unable to field a team. Our teams faced each other in round 1 with a win for our A team, but the B team made them work for their victory. The A team secured another victory in round 2; the B team played well, but were outplayed by an under-rated Welsh team. Another outstanding victory in round 3 put our A team firmly at the top of the leader board. The B team did incredibly well and recorded draws on each of the boards. Well done, and hopefully with better results to come. In round 4 our two teams once again played each other; the results were the same as in round 1, but once again there were no easy wins. In round 5 the A team recorded another match win, but the glory in this round went to the B team with two wins and a draw. In the final match the B team once again obtained match points with two draws, and the A team secured another match win against the resilient Welsh team.



Our Stokes team had a rating advantage over all of our opponents and the team looked really strong. This proved to be the case as Scotland, Ireland and Wales were all soundly beaten; from the 18 games that had been played so far only 1½ points had been dropped. Another strong performance in round 4 meant that they would be crowned champions, no matter how the remaining games finished. This was our second match where all of our players won their games! There was another resounding victory in round 5, with four players still on a perfect 5 out of 5. The only question for the next round was if any of the four players could get a perfect 6 out of 6. The simple answer was – yes, all of them. Just 2½ points were dropped during the whole tournament, and there were three perfect rounds.

As head of delegation for the England team I would like to thank the organisers for their hospitality, in particular Sherry and David, I know the event location changed at relatively short notice, and they did a remarkable job making sure everything ran smoothly. The undoubted stars of the tournament for me were the players; each and every one played to the best of their ability and beyond. They were all so proud to wear the England shirt, they played with pride and smiles on their faces, and they were a credit to their parents and the England team. Last but not least, I would also like to thank the parents for all of their support; it has been a joy to meet so many nice people and I look forward to meeting up again in the not-too-distant future.

Results:

Glorney Cup – Runners-up
 Gilbert Cup – Winners
 Robinson Cup – Winners
 Stokes Cup – Winners



On paper we had a strong Robinson team that had strength in depth. This proved to be the case with wins against Wales, Ireland and Scotland in the first three games. The match against the Scots was a titanic battle, with five of the games producing draws; our board 6 got the vital win to secure the victory. Another great win against Wales in round 4 sent us into the final day at the head of the table. A 3-3 draw in round 5 meant that we headed into the final round just needing a draw to secure the Robinson cup. The first three games to finish were England victories, so the Robinson Trophy was on its way to England. It ended up quite close, as Scotland rallied to win their last three games.

ECF National Girls' Chess Championships 2023/24

It is a delight once again to sponsor and host the ECF's National Girls' Chess Championships, a unique and collegiate event. From its inception in 2014 this tournament has exceeded all expectations each year, and is the most dynamic national chess competition for young female players. We look forward to welcoming schools from all over the country, and warmly invite new participant schools to help celebrate this exceptional assembly of like-minded girls.

– Mrs Alice Phillips, Headmistress, St Catherine's, Bramley

Girls' Semi-Finals

NORTH: Nottingham High School, Sunday 19th November 2023: www.nottinghamhigh.co.uk – Organiser Edward Jones

SOUTH: St Catherine's School, Bramley, Sunday 14th January 2024: www.stcatherines.info – Organiser IM Andrew Martin

ONLINE: TBA February 2024

Both over the board events will start at 10am and finish at approximately 5pm.

Teams of three in U11 and U19 categories.

All teams will play five rounds against other competing teams.

The Swiss pairing system will be used.

Players will have 20 minutes plus a 10 second increment per move.

For the first time we are trialling an online semi-final in February for new teams and those who have not qualified by the over the board route. Details will be released as soon as we have them. Six teams will qualify for the final from the southern semi-final, two from the northern semi-final and two from the online semi-final, enlarging the final to 10 teams.

The finals will be held over the weekend of 6th/7th April 2024 at St Catherine's School. Overnight accommodation can be booked. The number of points scored will decide qualification rather than individual match results.

Schedule (OTB)

9.30am – Welcome; 10am-11am – Round 1; 11.15am-12.15pm – Round 2; 12.30pm-1.30pm – Round 3; 1.30pm-2.30pm – Lunch; 2.30pm-3.30pm – Round 4; 3.45pm-4.45pm – Round 5; 5pm Awards

Enquiries may be made to the Girls' Tournament Director Andrew Martin - email: a.martin2007@yahoo.co.uk

Download a flyer with these details here: [Girls-NSCC-202324](https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/u19-girls-national-schools-championships-2324/)

U19 entry form:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/u19-girls-national-schools-championships-2324/>

U11 entry form:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/u11-girls-national-schools-championships-2324/>

South of England Junior Chess Congress – 7th and 8th October 2023

Registration for the above event is now open. Full information and the entry form can be found at <https://www.southofenglandjunior.com/>

Littlewood's Choice



My father came from a large family, and four of the brothers enjoyed playing chess, with Norman and John eventually representing England at the international level.

Therefore I was very interested to note that the brothers Frankie and Stanley Badacsonyi were competing in the World Blitz and Rapid Championships in Batumi, Georgia a couple of months ago.



Both boys had their ups and downs in the competitions, but this was a decent game played by Frankie in the Rapid section:

George Marwan Vayanos vs Frankie Badacsonyi

World U18 Rapid 06/06/2023

Round 2

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6

Black has made a solid opening choice which I saw recommended by Larsen many years ago. White now decides on an aggressive action involving queenside castling, but this can be a two-edged sword, as the game shows.

7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5?!



In fact, my attention was drawn to this when their mum, Allison, posted information on Twitter about their progress, and I am grateful to her for the information which allowed me to write this article.

This is an interesting choice which I have never seen played before. The solid alternative is 9...g6 10.h4 f5 11.h5 Be6 with equal chances, although this does of course allow White to open the h-file for his rook.

10.Be3 Nd7 11.0-0-0 Nf8 12.Kb1 Be6 13.h3 b5 14.Be4 Rc8?!



Better is 14...Qd7, and then if 15.g4 Black can take the pawn, as after 15....hxg4 16.hxg4 Bxg4 17.Bh7+ Nxh7 18.Qxh7+ Kf8 his king is quite safe, whereas White's position is crumbling. For example, the game could



continue 19.Qh8+ Ke7 20.Qxg7 Bxe2 21.Rde1 Qf5+ 22.Ka1 Rg8 23.Qh6 Bf3 with a winning position for Black, as the discovered check is not dangerous.

15.g4 h4 16.Rdg1?!

Instead 16.d5 cxd5 17.Bxd5 Qe7 is slightly better for White.

16....Bc4 17.Bf3 g5?!

17...Ne6 18.Re1 Qa5 19.b3 Bd5 20.Bxd5 cxd5 was slightly better for Black. Now 18.Rd1 would lead to equality.

18. b3?! Bd5 19.Qf5 Be6

19...Qd7 was also quite good, but Frankie fancies his attacking chances!

20.Qd3 a5 21.Be4?



The last chance to defend successfully was 21.d5! cxd5 22.Qxb5 Rb8 23.Qa4 Ng6 24.Rd1 Ne7 25.Rhe1 Be5 when the position is dynamically equal. Note here how play in the centre is used to counter an attack on the wing.

21....a4! 22.Bf5 axb3 23.axb3?

Better was 23.Bxe6 Nxe6 24.axb3, but Black still has a strong attack after 24...Qa5 25.Qc2 Ra8 etc.

23....Bxb3!

An excellent exchange sacrifice which leaves White helpless in a few more moves.

24.Bxc8 Qxc8 25.Qf5?

A better defence was 25.Kb2, but after 25....Bd5 26.Ra1 Nd7! (the white-squared bishop is much stronger than the rook) 27.Rhe1 Nb6 28.Ng1 Nc4+ 29.Kc1 Be4 30.Qe2 Ba3+ 31.Rxa3 Nxa3 Black is easily winning.

25...Qa6 26.Kc1 Qa2 0-1



Mate will follow shortly.

Under rapidplay time control conditions this was an extremely well-played game by Frankie. He made no silly errors, and exploited his opponent's mistakes to the full.

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

I am going to dedicate this article to those tactics that seem to come out of nowhere... usually as a complete shock to the opponent. They are difficult to categorise, but are so important to keep an eye out for.

Consider the following position:

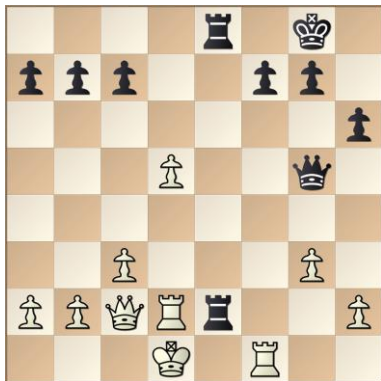


P.E. Littlewood vs G. J. Willetts

Correspondence 1976

My opponent thought he was beating off the attack, but I played **1.Qxf5!** and Black resigned because he saw that if **1...exf5** then **2.Ng6** with mate to follow on h8.

These 'bolts from the blue' occur more often than you might think. In the next position White thought he was safe, but he missed a devastating tactic:



D. Rumens vs P. E. Littlewood

MaxElo 1976

The brilliant move **1...Qf6!** left White without resource. If **2.Rxf6** then **2...Re1** mate, so the game continued **2.Rg1 Qf2 3.Rxe2 Qxg1+ 4.Kd2 Rxe2+ 5.Kxe2 Qxh2+ 6.Kd1 Qh1+** and White resigned, as he is completely lost.

There are lots more examples from my own games, and the only way to defend against them is to keep a constant watch out for surprising tactics. For example, consider the following position:



J. Kinlay vs P. E. Littlewood

London Invitation 1973

Black is losing here, but White has a lot of tactics to consider. The best move is **1.Bxf7+ Kh8 2.Bxe8**, when **2...Bh6** fails to **3.Ne4**. However, believing that just about any sensible move would win White played **1.Rf1**, but this was an enormous blunder because I then played **1...Qxf1+**, and after **2.Bxf1 Re1+ 3.Nd1 Bh6 4.Be3 Rxd1+**

White resigned. In fact, if you look closely you will realise that I also missed a win with **1...Qxd2+!**

The important message here is that there are tactics in chess in virtually every position, so keep a sharp look-out for them!

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



P. E. Littlewood vs B. S. Thipsay

British Championship 2002

How did White finish off his opponent?



P. E. Littlewood vs W. Watson

London League 2001

Black thought he had found a clever defence, but how did White surprise him and win?

Answers:

P.E. Littlewood vs B.S. Thipsay

White won by **1.Rxh6!** and Black resigned, as if **1...gxh6** then **2.Re3 Kg8 3.Rg3+ Kf8 4.Qh8+ Ke7 5.Re3** mate.

P.E. Littlewood vs W. Watson

White won by **1.Qxe4!** and Black resigned, because if **1...Nxe4** then **2.Rxh7** mate, or if **1...Rxf7** then **2.Nxf7+ Qxf7 3.Qxa8+** with a winning material advantage.

Gormally's Coaching Corner by Danny Gormally



Fresh off a successful tournament in Ghent in Belgium, I made my way to the British Chess Championships in Leicester. As the tournament was due to begin on the Saturday, I decided to go straight from the Eurostar terminal in St Pancras to Leicester when I came back on the Thursday. This was convenient as from St Pancras you could get a direct train, which cut easily and quickly through the English countryside. On the train ominous announcements were made about strikes and how the service was due to stop early that day due to industrial action. I thought that perhaps these train staff should try playing chess for a living and then they'd really complain about wages.

It was easy to reflect on the costs of living and how expensive it had become to play chess tournaments in this day and age. The tournament in Belgium which had just finished was more or less covered by the organisers and there was some prize money, but even then, I had failed to make much of a profit once you had factored in the endless coffees and takeaway meals. It was a relief to be going to the British to do some commentary work, which I reasoned was much less stressful than participating as a player. This essentially meant around ten days of what I thought was more or less a holiday, just being paid to kick back and talk about chess.

I was in for a rude awakening, but this had nothing to do with the chess itself. On arrival I took a taxi to my bed and breakfast accommodation, which was located in the west end of the city. This was also fairly close to De Montfort University, which was where the Championships were taking place. Convenient, I thought. When I got to the hotel there was nobody around. A young couple turned up, and I mentioned to them that the place looked like a tip. 'It's not so bad' the girl said. 'Just don't drink the tea.' They seemed happy enough with such conditions. To me the place looked like a throwback to the 1970s, but this

would have been an insult to the 1970s. Wallpaper was peeling off, and the entire hotel looked very old and dreary.

Fortunately, the ECF had sympathy with my situation, and quickly helped me to book into the local Ibis hotel which was situated near the train station. The relief I felt when I checked into this new hotel was beyond words. Later I learned that another player had exactly the same experience of booking into the hotel from hell only to flee in terror to the Ibis once learning the extent of the depravity. Unlike myself, he ruthlessly took pictures of this establishment and demanded a full refund. How companies like Booking.com can still have a partnership with such cowboy operations is beyond me.

In the British Championships itself it was clear that Michael Adams was the clear favourite going in, but I doubt he was thinking about that much. Part of the reason why he has had such success is that he is not the type to get beyond himself. This was displayed amply in round 2, when he was kind enough to come up to the commentary room and talk through some of his thought processes.

Dong, Bao Nghia (2327) - Adams, Michael (2666)

British Chess Championships 2023: Champ The Venue, De Montfort Univer (2.1), 23.07.2023



23...Rd8! Adams was reluctant to play 23...g4 because after the reply 24.Bd3 Qh5 25.Bxf4 gxf3 26.Ke1 he felt that White could easily gain chances, at least in a practical sense. I felt quite strongly at the time (and still do) that this ability to not switch off in what looks like a completely winning position is one of the factors that separates players like Adams from mere mortals. I would probably think in this kind of position that any move will win, but it was instructive to me how Adams was still calculating concrete variations here and not simply relying on intuition. I can't speak for my fellow 2400/2500 types, but perhaps this is a clue as to why we have been unable to win a British Chess Championships title when Adams has

been in attendance. We can't seem to calculate as well, or at least not as consistently.

24.Bd3 24.Ke2 Nxe5! justifies Black's last choice: 25.dxe5 Qxe5+—+

24...Qh3+ 25.Ke2 Now he felt that White's position had lost some flexibility, so it is time to break through.

25...g4! 26.fxg4 Qxg4+ 27.Kd2 Nxe5 28.Kc2 Nxd3 29.Rxd3 c5 30.Ba3 Qe2+ 31.Rd2 Qe4+ 32.Kb3 cxd4 33.cxd4 Qd5+

0–1

Fernandez, Daniel H (2518) - Hebden, Mark L (2436)

British Chess Championships 2023: Champ The Venue, De Montfort Univer (7.2), 29.07.2023

Still, if Adams was typically impressive, the player who was able to put him under the most pressure was Daniel Fernandez. Over the last few months Daniel has played quite a lot of chess, and I made the observation during the commentary that this gave him an edge over players like Nicholas Pert, who hadn't played much over the last few months. In round seven Daniel faced Mark Hebden, who was born and bred in Leicester and has remained in the city his entire life. Unfortunately for Mark this was not to be a fairy tale ending with him breaking through and winning the British chess Championships for the first time in his home city, but as usual he battled all the way to the finish.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0–0 5.d4 d6 6.Nc3 c5 7.dxc5!



A good psychological choice. Daniel made the observation afterwards that he made this decision partly because he felt that Mark was less comfortable in situations where there are fewer pawns in the centre, and that this reduced some of the dynamics that Mark might feel most comfortable in. Then I foolishly asked Daniel where he felt my own weaknesses lay. He said that he might say that in positions where I had –1 I might not put

up as much resistance as others. That would fit in with a game that we recently played in Ghent, where I quickly collapsed when the position started to go wrong.

7...dxc5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Be3 When commentating live on this game, both my fellow commentator Adam Hunt and I felt that Daniel was very comfortable in this endgame. Indeed, it has been one of the features of Daniel's recent great results, that he is very keen to aim for endgames where he can hope to grind his opponents down.

9...Nc6 9...Na6 - but this isn't Mark's style, to limply defend. **10.Ne5 Rb8 11.h3** to prevent ...Ng4 follows, when White can still claim some kind of advantage.

10.Bxc5 Be6 11.Nd2 Rd7? The engine doesn't like this. Indeed, in such a dynamic situation where Black has sacrificed a pawn, doubling rooks in this way seems a little ponderous.

11...Nd7! would seem more to the point, and indeed this has been played before. **12.Ba3** (12.Be3 is apparently best. Whether to go to e3 or a3 isn't completely obvious. 12...Nde5 13.Rc1 Nxc4 14.Nxc4 Bxc4 and it would seem that here Black is OK as well.) 12...Bxc3 13.bxc3 Nde5 and the computer already says that Black has solved all of the problems: 14.0–0–0 Kf8.

12.h3?! While the commentary was taking place Adam would diligently try to find the best move, whereas in my case laziness would often set in. Stuck on what to do, I would consult the engine to see what it was saying. Here I pointed out during the broadcast that the top engine suggestion was the somewhat counter-intuitive capture **12.Bxc6!**



Daniel quickly grasped the idea, namely that if Black took back on c6 White would just try and control the game with something like f3, 0–0–0 etc. **12...Rc7** (12...bxc6 13.0–0–0 Ng4 14.Na4+–) **13.Bxb7 Rxb7** (Daniel wanted to make this move work, which if nothing else shows his creative spirit. **13...Rb8 14.Bd4 Rxb7 15.b3+–**) **14.Ba3 Nd7 15.Rc1**

and White is already winning. ...Nb6 will be easily met by the stabilising move b3.

12...Rc8! Now Black is back in the game.

13.Be3



13...a6? I think some of these mistakes can be explained by sheer fatigue, as Mark seemed rather lifeless in this particular game. It should be pointed out that both he and Keith Arkell were playing in the British Championships after coming straight from Poland where they were competing in the European Senior Team Championships (bit of a mouthful). Keith made the wise decision to play in the Senior Championships at Leicester, but in Mark's case I felt his hand was rather forced. He couldn't forgo the chance to play in the British Chess Championships in his home city.

13...Nd4?! 14.Rc1 Bxc4? 15.Nd1! ends in dismay; 13...Na5 was more sensible though. To some extent it doesn't matter if a7 drops as Black will quickly become active. Still, it is easy to say that with an engine running in the background, but not so easy to be sure about this over the board. 14.Bxa7 b6 (14...Nxc4 15.Nxc4 Rxc4 16.0-0 Ne8 is also acceptable to Black, who has strong pressure in return for the pawn.) 15.Bxb6 Rxd2! is a fascinating line.

14.Rc1 Ne5? 15.Na4! Obvious, but extremely powerful. Black will never regain the pawn due to tactical reasons, and his position quickly collapses.

15...Rdc7 A sad admission.

15...Nxc4 16.Nxc4 Rxc4 17.Rxc4 Bxc4 18.Nb6 Rc7 19.Bf4 Rc5 20.b4! is a nice touch. Perhaps Mark missed this in his calculations earlier.

16.Nb6 Rd8 17.0-0 Ne8 18.Rfd1 The position is easily winning for Daniel, and he is typically clinical.

18...Nc6 19.Bf4 19.b3 Bb2 20.Rb1 Bd4 21.Nf1 was also sufficient.

19...Bxb2 20.Bxc7 Nxc7 21.Rb1 Ba3 22.Ne4 Rxd1+ 23.Rxd1 Na5 24.Rd3 Bb2 25.Nc5 Bxc4 26.Rd7 Nb5 27.Nxb7

1-0

Jones, Steven A (2175) - Eggleston, David J (2358)

British Chess Championships 2023: Champ The Venue, De Montfort Univer (6.9), 27.07.2023

There were good and bad things about the British at Leicester. There were plenty of places to eat, although remarkably, in a city known for it, I never had an Indian meal. There was a problem with homelessness around the town centre. And plenty of people would glare at you in an aggressive way as you walked past - and that was just the chess players. The highlight for me was the playing conditions, which were superb. The playing hall was very modern and clean, and the internet was excellent. The only weakness was the lack of hot food in the cafe, and there was supposed to be some kind of food court in one of the buildings nearby, but when I finally found it it seemed to be closed. That isn't ideal for a tournament hosting several hundred chess players. On the other hand, as I have already observed, you didn't have to go far to find good food options, as there were plenty of cafes and shops around. One player who will have fond memories of the event was Steven Jones. I felt that he didn't get enough credit for what a remarkable performance this was. In the commentary room after his final round game which confirmed his IM norm and outright second place, he talked about spreadsheets and having top-level skills, but with certain aspects which have been holding him back that he was able to fix during the event. All very American, but it was a plain old British blunder that threw him into the mix...

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Nbd7 6.Nf3 h6 7.Bxf6 Nxf6 8.Nxf6+ Qxf6 9.Bb5+ c6 10.Bd3 Bd6 11.c3 Bd7 12.Qe2 c5 13.Be4 cxd4 14.Nxd4 Rb8 15.Rd1



15...0-0?? not appreciating the danger. Much was made of the fact that Michael Adams has not lost a classical

game in the British chess championship for many years. Part of this has been his ability to 'falsify', a technique that I explained on a number of occasions in the commentary room, to the extent where I was boring to tears poor Adam and anyone who happened to be spectating. To falsify a variation is to see what is wrong with it. In the book recently published by Philip Hurtado and Adams, it was explained how not much time was spent identifying candidate moves, and in fact more time was spent on finding out what could be wrong with the move. In my observations since reading this book, I have noticed that not many players even of master level seem to use this technique very much. There are too many blunders that can only be explained by a lack of observation and attention.

Anatoly Karpov, who loved to play with his king in the centre, might well have opted for the engine's top choice, which was 15...Ke7! 16.0-0 Rhd8 when Black is ready to retreat the king to f8 and will be in rosy shape in the long-term with the bishop pair: 15...Qe5 16.Nf3 Qc5 17.Qd3 Ke7 was also more than acceptable for Black.

16.Nf3! so simple - now the bishops are lined up like skittles, ready to be smashed down by the bowling ball of the white rook. David thrashed around, but essentially the game is already over.

16...e5 16...Qe7 17.Qd2+- (17.Qd3? f5 isn't as clear.)

17.Qd2 Bf5 18.Bxf5 Qxf5 19.Qxd6 Qe4+ 20.Kf1 Qc4+ 21.Kg1 Qxa2 22.Qa3 Rfd8 23.Rxd8+ Rxd8 24.h3 Qxa3 25.bxa3 Rd3 26.Kh2 Rxc3 27.Rd1 e4 28.Rd8+ Kh7 29.Nd2 f5 30.Rd7 Rxa3 31.Rxb7 Ra2 32.Rd7 Kg6 33.g4 Kf6 34.gxf5 Ke5 35.Kg2 a5 36.Nc4+ Kxf5 37.Rd5+ Kf4 38.Rxa5 Rxa5 39.Nxa5 e3 40.fxe3+ Kxe3 41.Kg3 g5 42.Nc4+ Kd4 43.Nd6 h5 44.Nf7 g4 45.h4 Ke4 46.Nd6+ Ke5 47.Ne8 Kf5 48.Ng7+ Kg6 49.Ne6 Kh7 50.Nf4 Kh6 51.Kg2

1-0

Harry Grieve - Daniel H Fernandez

Round 8: Harry Grieve - Daniel H Fernandez lichess.org, 29.07.2023

<https://lichess.org/@/broadcaster>

After round 6 I ran into Daniel Fernandez and suggested that he was a 9-2 shot at that stage, given that he was tied for the lead with Michael Adams. I rated Adams at around 1.48, which would be around 1-2 in bookmaker parlance. For most of the tournament Daniel looked so cool and a real threat. But as I can testify to, the pressure of trying to win your national championship can be immense. The last two games didn't reflect how well Daniel played throughout the event, and I'm sure he'll come back

stronger. Before round 8 I was on the bus, and who did I spot on the road walking along Narborough Road but Harry Grieve, who was smiling and looking confident. I mentioned this in the commentary, and predicted that Harry could potentially create an upset win, even if the reigning British champion winning a game could hardly rate as a huge upset.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 already the choice of the Petroff suggests to me that Daniel was thinking more about the result than perhaps he should have been. Partly that would have been thinking about the opponent again, knowing that Harry is full of sharp theory in open Sicilians.

3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Nd6



An unusual choice that I had not seen before. The advantage of playing the Petroff is that you get your pieces out and should get into the middlegame. I made the observation during the commentary that I have never lost when playing the Petroff; admittedly I have not played it very often. But my weakness is often losing a chess game early on due to poor preparation and an inability to calculate sharp variations; this is unlikely to happen in this particular opening. Presumably Daniel was thinking the same.

6...Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.Re1 Re8 is a more common continuation.

7.0-0 Be7 8.Nc3 c6 9.Ne2 0-0 10.Ng3 Re8 11.Bf4 Nd7 12.h4 Nf8 13.Qd2 Ng6 13...Nc4!?, aiming at the White queen and if White takes on c4 he gains the bishop pair, should have been considered.

14.h5 Nxf4 15.Qxf4 White has reached a very promising position for such an important game. Sure, the computer says it is about equal, but the white position looks more threatening.

15...h6 16.Rae1 Bf8 17.c3 a5 18.Bb1 Rxe1 19.Rxe1 Ne8 20.Nf5 Nf6 21.Ne5 Bxf5 22.Qxf5 Qc8 23.Qd3 23.g4 Qxf5 24.Bxf5 Bd6 25.f4 was proposed by the computer, and

this indeed does look promising. However, I'm sure with Harry his blood was up, and he wanted to avoid exchanging queens if possible.

23...Bd6 24.Re3!? A novel attempt to use the rook in the attack. The threat if Rf3xf6, which is coolly countered by Black's next move.

24...Kf8! 25.Rf3 Qc7 26.Rf5 Re8 27.f4



White has effectively burned all his bridges. If the attack doesn't work...

27...c5 28.Kh1! b5 28...cxd4! I think I would have thrown this in automatically. 29.Qxd4 (29.cxd4? Qc1+ 30.Kh2 Qe1!→



when there is now a winning threat of taking on e5 and playing ... Ng4, and White is struggling to come up with an answer. (30...Bxe5? 31.fxe5 Ng4+ 32.Kg3 and Black doesn't have more than a draw.) 29...Bc5 30.Qd1 Bd6 - given the tournament situation, repeating wouldn't have been a bad idea. (30...Qb6? 31.Rxf6!; 30...d4 31.cxd4 Rd8 32.Nf3 Bxd4 33.Nxd4 Qb6 was also possible.) The computer believes that Black can play for a win and proposes 30...Re7!



when Black is covering all entry points by White and is preparing the slow ... Ba7 followed by ... Qb6, with an attack. 28...Ne4 29.Kh2 is not so clear.

29.g4 cxd4 30.Qxd4 b4 30...Bxe5 31.fxe5 Nh7 32.Qxd5 Ng5 33.Qxb5 Rb8 was probably a bit shaky, giving two pawns away. But the white king is fairly open, and Black has stunted the attack. 34.Qe2 Qb7+! when b2 will be picked off.

31.g5! hxg5 31...bxc3? 32.gxf6 Bxe5 33.Rxe5 and Black doesn't have time for any tricks involving ... c2.; 31...Bxe5 32.Rxe5 Rxe5 33.fxe5 Nd7 was the safe approach, when Black is at least equal.

32.h6!



32...gxf4?? this could only have been a failure of nerve.

32...bxc3 33.bxc3 Bxe5 was a clever defence. 34.fxe5 gxh6 35.Rxf6 (35.exf6 Re1+ 36.Kg2 Rxb1 and the white king is too open.) 35...Qxe5= and it turns out that Black has enough material for the piece.

33.hxg7+ Kg8 34.Qxf4! this must have been underestimated by Daniel earlier. Now Black is in grave trouble, and the concluding attack reminded me of some of Kasparov's games in the 1980s and 90s; as a consequence, I felt this game deserved to win the best game prize.

34...Re6 34...Bxe5 35.Qh6 Nh7 36.Rf6!



Evoking memories of Fischer-Benko, as was pointed out by Adam in the commentary: 34...Rxe5 35.Rxe5 Bxe5 36.Qh6+—

35.Qh6 Nh7 36.Rf6!

1–0

Andrew J Ledger (2299) - Nicholas Pert (2536)

British Chess Championships 2023: Champ The Venue, De Montfort Univer (9.4), 30.07.2023



I felt in part that Steven Jones' second place was due to some more established players under-achieving, like Nick Pert who seemed to struggle for form throughout. Nick does more coaching than playing these days, and the danger is in those situations that you need a while to warm up. I've also noticed that as you get older rust seems to be even more of an issue that it was before.

29.Nc5? While doing the commentary newly-minted Seniors Champion Keith Arkell walked in, and he suggested this move. It's a typically tricky suggestion by Keith, although the engine doesn't like it.

29...Rd8? I was shocked when Nick played this, a clear indication that he was out of form.

I had already pointed out 29...Ba2! and felt that it was fairly obvious. Black is clearly intending to play ... b3–b2 and White is struggling for a good response. 30.Ra1 (30.Bd1 Ra3+; 30.Nd3 Bc4+) 30...b3 31.Nd3 Nc4+

30.Rd1 Nd5 30...Ba2 31.Nxb7 now is much less convincing.

31.Bf3? 31.Nxb7 Rb8 32.Nc5 Nc3 33.Re1!

31...b6? 31...Nc3!



32.Rd2 Bd5 was very strong.

32.Nxe6 fxe6 33.Rb1 Rc8 34.Bxd5 exd5 35.Rxb4 White is easily holding this rook ending.

35...Rc1+ 36.Kh2 Rc4 37.Rb2 Rxd4 38.f3 h5 39.Re2! Kf7 40.Re5 With the king cut off it is difficult for Black to achieve anything.

40...Rd1 41.f4 d4 42.g4! hxc4 43.Kg3 d3 44.Kxg4 Rg1 45.Rd5 Rxc4+ 46.Kf3 Rb2 47.Rxd3 Rxb5 48.Rd6 Rb1 49.Kg4 b5 50.Rb6 b4 51.Kg5 b3 52.Rb7+ Ke6 53.Rb6+ Kd5 54.Kxg6 Rg1+ 55.Kf7 Kc4 56.f5 Kc3 57.f6 b2 58.Ke7 Re1+ 59.Kd7 b1Q 60.Rxb1 Rxb1 61.f7 Rf1 62.Ke7 Rxf7+ 63.Kxf7

½–½

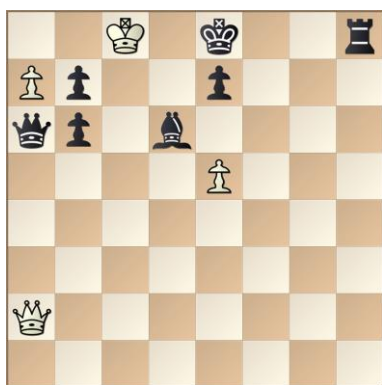
STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Castling Creations

Here are some more studies involving the castling rule. You remember the endgame studies rule about castling? It's always legal unless you can prove from the diagram that it isn't. Study composers have made use of this rule to create some unusual effects, one of which is well displayed by our first study this month. It's by the great Soviet composer Vladimir Korolkov and took part in the *Erevan Tourney* of 1947.



White to play and draw

How to approach this one? Well, White has a few candidate first moves, notably 1.Qxa6 and 1.a8Q. 1.Qe6 is another, but Black can play, for example, 1...Qxa7 because after 2.Qg6+ Kf8 3.Qf5+ Kg7+ is a cross-check by Black. The trouble with 1.Qxa6 bxa6 2.a8Q and 1.a8Q Qxa8+ 2.Qxa8 is that both will fail if Black castles. That reply 2...0-0+ is a very strong response, so now you have to ask yourself: is it possible that it isn't legal?

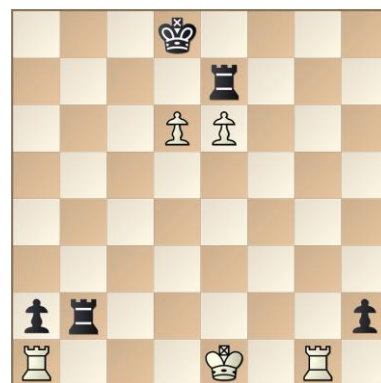
You now switch from solving to retro-analysis. Black's king and rook are on their home squares, and there's no obvious reason why one of them would have had to move. Here it helps to have solved a few retro-analysis problems, because you will start to think about how the white king got to where it is. If it got there via e8 then the black king has had to move. It can't have got there via a6 because that square has always been guarded by the b7 pawn, and it can't have gone via b6, because that square was guarded by the b6 pawn which must have come from

either a7 or c7. It can't have got there via c6 or d6 because both of those have always been guarded. Finally, it can have got there via e6 and d7, but only if the Black king wasn't guarding d7. We have proved that the Black king must have moved, so Black cannot castle.

Retro-analytic sleuthing done, but we still have to solve the study. How does it make a difference if Black has to play ...Kf7 instead of ...0-0? It must be relevant, because the composer has gone to great lengths to make 0-0 illegal. Now you need to forget about the retro-analysing, and go back to normal solving mode. If you hadn't been distracted by the castling issue, you might well have been thinking that the white king is boxed in and that White only has a queen and pawn, so stalemate is on the cards. With that thought, the study is all but solved. The queen can be sacrificed, and the pawn can go to e6 with check - provided Black's king is on f7 not g8. If you start with 1.Qxa6 you dismantle the stalemate net; ergo - 1.a8Q it has to be. The full solution goes **1.a8Q Qxa8+ 2.Qxa8 Kf7+ 3.Kd7 Rxa8 4.e6+ K~** stalemate. This type of study is called a 'Cantcastler'.

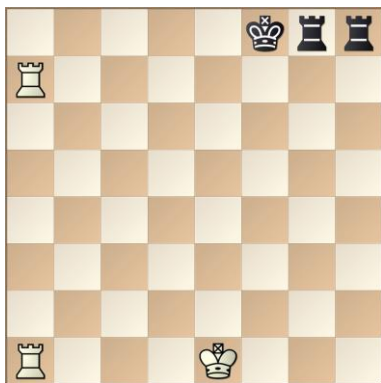
For you to solve, here are two more studies that involve castling. (You don't need to do any retro-analysis on these!)

This was composed by Viktor Zheltyukov, and published in 64 in 2014:



White to play and win

This next one was a joint composition by Georgi Popov and Zdravko Kadrev, published in *Shakhmatnaya Misl* in 1990:



White to play and win
The solution is given on Page 70

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

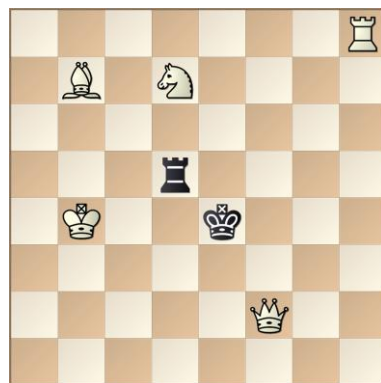
British Chess Championships Solving Tourney 2023

One evening during the British Championships in Leicester, a number of intrepid players (those not too exhausted by their games in the tournament) turned out to aim to solve twelve chess problems set by the British Chess Problem Society. You may like to look at these twelve problems, either to enjoy them and get a flavour of the sort of problems that will await you if you take part in a future solving tourney, or to cover up the solutions and see how you would have got on solving in the tourney. (As there was a hiccup in providing solution sheets to those taking part in the tourney, some of them, to whom many apologies, may be seeing these solutions for the first time.)

The tourney started off with six 2-move problems. If you are new to competitive solving, it may be as well to take time to ensure you have the correct solution to these, as they tend to be the least difficult problems, and yet often have plausible 'tries' that you need to avoid. If you had solved these six problems correctly you would have had a very high placing in this tourney!

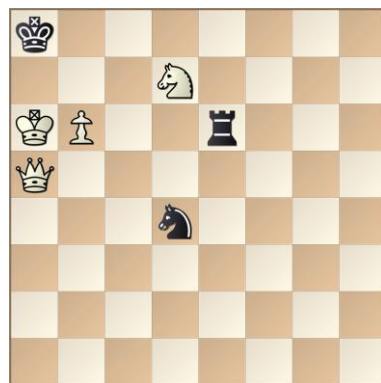
Each of the twelve problems is worth five points. For the 2-movers, the five points is simply for giving the key move – the unique move that forces mate next move.

1



Frank Healey
Family Herald 1858
Mate in 2
1.Rd8

2



Geoffrey Mott-Smith
New York Sun 1932
Mate in 2
1.Qe5

3



William Shinkman
Orillia Packet 1885
Mate in 2
1.Rf1

4



John O'Keefe and William Smith

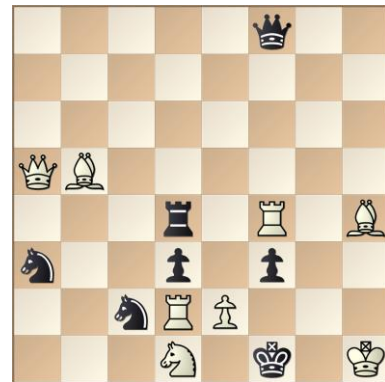
4th Prize, *Brisbane Courier* 1917

Mate in 2

1.Rg3

(This was a trickier one. You get no bonus points for extra narrative, but the key creates Zugzwang, e.g., 1...Qc5 2.Nb2, or 1...Q anywhere else 2.Na3 or 2.Ne3.)

6



Franz Pachl

3rd Prize, *Schach-Echo* 1979

Mate in 2

1.e4

(Here you had to avoid the tries 1.exf3? Qb4!, 1.exd3? Rb4! and 1.e3? Nb4!.)

5



Walter Jacobs

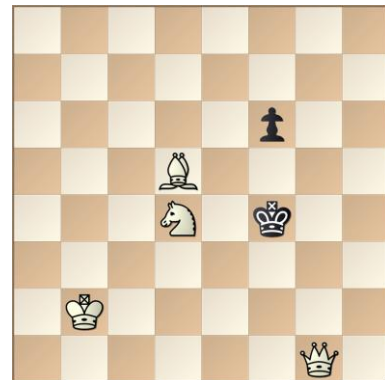
1st Prize, *American Chess Bulletin* 1944

Mate in 2

1.Bg1

(Again, no bonus points, but to get the hang of this problem you would have to find that in response to the threat of 2.Bh2 there are no fewer than four defences that are met by different moves of the e5R along the fifth rank, together with the variation 1...Qb3 [unpinning that white rook] 2.Re4 [double check and mate]. Sometimes in solving against the clock, of course, you don't see all the variations, and any solver who just felt instinctively that 1.Bg1 was a likely way to threaten mate would have received the full five points!)

7



Otto Wurzburg

Lasker's Chess Magazine 1905

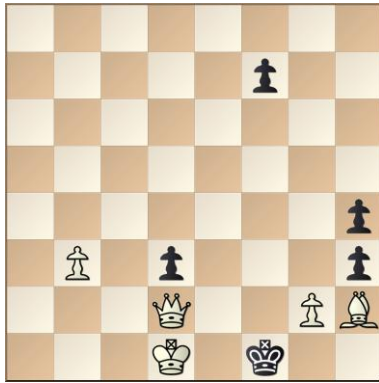
Mate in 3

For mate in more than 2 it's not enough to give the keymove. In fact, the keymove here – **1.Bh1** – on its own would not score any points unless you went further and gave the further moves given in bold below:

1...f5 2.Nf3 Ke4 3.Qd4 (2½ points) and

1...Ke5 2.Qg3+ Kxd4 3.Qc3 (2½ points)

8



Martin Hoffmann
Die Schwalbe 1973

Mate in 3

1.Qa2 (threat **2.Qa8** and **3.Qf3**) (2½ points)
1...hxd2 2.Qa7 and **3.Qg1** (2½ points)

9

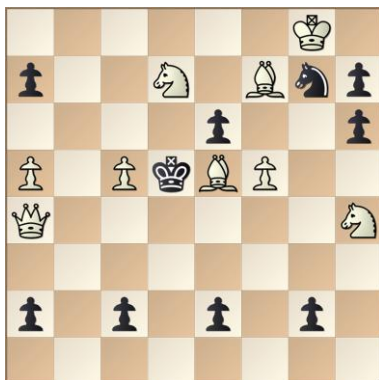


Hans Hofman
2nd Prize, 3rd *Wehrmacht-Heimat* 1943

Mate in 3

1.Nxe3 (threat **2.Re1** and **3.Rf1**) (1 point)
1...Bc3 2.Nc2 and **3.Nd4** or **Ne1** (1 point)
1...Bd4 2.Ng4 and **3.Rf2** or **Ne5** (1 point)
1...Be5 2.Rxe5 and **3.Rf5** (1 point)
1...Bf6 2.Nf5 and **3.Nh4** or **Nd4** (1 point)

10



Jan Hartong and Meindert Niemeijer

1st Prize, *Sahovski vjesnik* 1950

Mate in 3

1.a6 (threat **2.Qb3+** **Kc6 3.Qb7** or **2...Ke4 3.Qf3**) (1 point)
1...a1=N 2.Bd6 (threat **3.Nf6**; if **2...Ne8** or **2...Nh5 3.Bxe6**) (1 point)
1...c1=N 2.Nxg2 and **3.Ne3** or **3.Nf4** (1 point)
1...e1=N 2.Bxg7 and **3.Bxe6** (1 point)
1...g1N 2.Kxg7 and **3.Bxe6** (1 point)

No points at all if you fell for a try: **1.Bd6?** **1...a1=Q!**; **1.Nxg2?** **1...c1=Q!**; **1.Bxg7?** **1...e1=Q!**; **1.Kxg7?** **1...g1=Q+!**.

The last two problems were *helpmates*. In these, Black and White collaborate to reach, in the specified number of moves, a position in which Black is mated. Generally, Black plays first, and by convention the moves of Black and White are therefore shown in an order that is the reverse of that in game play, as you'll see below.

11



Michael McDowell
The Problemist 2009

Helpmate in 2 – two solutions

1.Ne7 Rg6 2.Re4 Qg5 (2½ points)
1.Nd4 Re6 2.Bg5 Qe4 (2½ points)

12



Chris Feather

2nd Prize, *British Chess Magazine* 1979

Helpmate in 2 – two solutions

1.Rxg6 Rc2 2.Rb6 Rc5 (2½ points)

1.Bxf2 Be8 2.Bb6 Bc6 (2½ points)

If you have any queries or observations about any of these problems, or if you are interested in finding out more about opportunities for entering solving competitions (there are plenty online, for instance the netchex club), don't hesitate to contact me.

Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

How to Solve a Study – solutions

(Zheltyukov)

1.Rg8+ Re8 2.Rxe8+ Kxe8 3.d7+ Kd8 4.e7+ Kxe7 5.d8Q+ Kxd8 6.0-0-0+ and wins. If White instead takes the black rook on move 1, he can't extract his king and rooks from

the bind they are in.

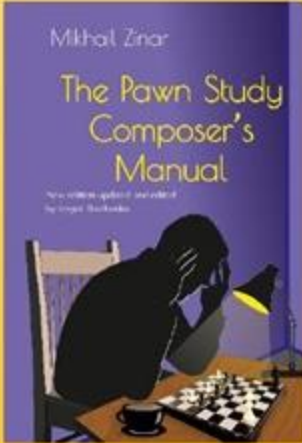
(Popov & Kadrev)

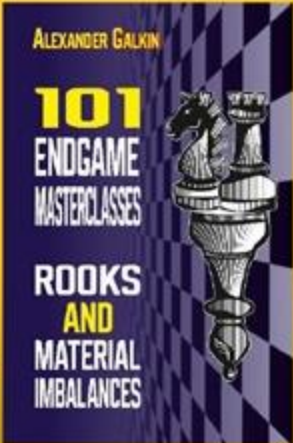
1.0-0-0 Ke8 2.Kb1 Rf8 3.Ka1 Rhg8 4.Rb1 and wins. This time, it is Black's king and rooks that are tied to their back rank. On move one, White, in effect, does very long castling, transferring his king to a1 and the rook to b1

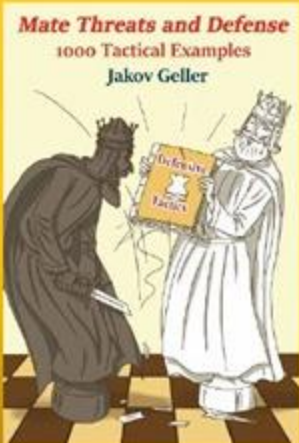


New books from Elk and Ruby


- 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

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

Week Beginning 28 August	
29 August 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
29 August 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Standard
31 August 2023	London Chess League Summer Congress
1 – 2 September 2023	Wimbledon FIDE Congress
2 September 2023	Coulson Chess Rapidplay
2 September 2023	Darnall & Handsworth (Sheffield) 6th FIDE Rated Rapidplay
2 September 2023	2023 Warwickshire Blitz Championship
3 September 2023	2023 Warwickshire Rapidplay Championship
3 September 2023	Ealing FIDE Rapidplay
3 September 2023	South East London LJCC Qualifier
3 – 8 September 2023	The Riviera Congress
Week Beginning 5 September	
5 September 2023	4th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
5 September 2023	Uxbridge Advanced Chess Lessons
8 – 10 September 2023	Newport Chess Congress
8 – 10 September 2023	Hull 4NCL Congress 2023
9 – 10 September 2023	UKCC Challengers 2023
9 September 2023	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay 2023 Open
Week Beginning 12 September	
12 September 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
12 September 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Standard
12 September 2023	4NCL Online Season 8
16 September 2023	38th Crowborough Chess Congress
16 September 2023	Sussex Junior Crowborough Rapidplay
16 September 2023	1st Jurassic Rapidplay
16 September 2023	Warrington Chess 960/Fischer Random Rapidplay
16 September 2023	Warrington Junior Rapidplay
16 September 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament
16 September 2023	Maidenhead Junior Tournament September 2023
17 September 2023	Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess Open
Week Beginning 19 September	
19 September 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid
19 September 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Standard
19 September 2023	4th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
20 September 2023	Beckenham FIDE Rated Club Championship
21 – 26 September 2023	Junior 4NCL Online Season 8
22 – 24 September 2023	2nd Cornwall Autumn Congress in Penzance
22 – 24 September 2023	54th Rhyl Chess Congress
22 September 2023	Fortune Fridays Grand Opening Online Chess Tournament
23 – 24 September 2023	Hastings U1850 Weekend Tournament 2023
23 – 24 September 2023	Derbyshire Chess Congress 2023
23 – 24 September 2023	Southall FIDE Congress
23 September 2023	Streatham Library Rapidplay 2023
23 September 2023	UK Open Blitz 2023 London Qualifier
23 September 2023	UK Open Blitz 2023 Midlands Qualifier
24 September 2023	Bucks LJCC Qualifier North 1
24 September 2023	Cambridgeshire Rapidplay
24 September 2023	Witney Rapidplay 2023