



Chess *Moves*



English medals at the WSTCC
UK Open Blitz qualifiers
Endings all club players should know

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EDITORIAL



Greetings all!

Welcome to the October edition of *ChessMoves*! In this issue we celebrate more English team and individual medals at the World Senior Teams Chess Championships held in Struga in North Macedonia. We also report on proceedings at the ECF's 2023 Annual General Meeting, which saw elections for a number of ECF Board and other positions as well as significant changes to the ECF's membership scheme; we thank everyone who stood for election, and our congratulations and commiserations respectively to those who were and were not elected. There's also news of the eight UK Open Blitz Championships qualifying events that took place across the UK in September and October; roll on the Finals on 2nd December!

We also have our usual wide range of event reports, both domestic and international, as well as articles from our regular contributors - we're always delighted to receive your news, and so do please keep sending the reports in. Any eye-catching games with light notes are also more than welcome.

It remains for me to commend this edition of *ChessMoves* to you!

Enjoy!

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

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EVENTS

UK Open Blitz Championship Qualifiers 2023 by Nigel Towers



The eight UK Open Blitz Championship qualifiers have now been completed at various locations across the country. Qualifying events were played as 15-round Swiss tournaments at a 3|2 time control, with the top two Open category players and top two Women's category players qualifying from each event. This year's events have been the best attended to date, with results as shown below across the three qualifier weekends.

Weekend 1 (23rd September)

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



The event saw a record 183 entrants at the iconic Golders Green venue. Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821395.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=15&flag=30>

The event was organised by Adam Raof, with an arbiting team led by Jo Wildman and including Lance Lesley Smith, Rob Hammond, Keith Freshwater and Jake Hung.

The Open category qualifiers were GM Eldar Gasanov (12½) and GM Jon Speelman (12), who were also last year's qualifiers from the London event. GM William

Watson finished in third place, just missing the qualification places in a closely-fought qualifier.



London Open category winners: Gasanov vs Speelman



London Open category – Watson vs Speelman

The Women's qualifiers were WFM Mei-En Emmanuelle Hng (10½) and WGM Elmira Mirzoeva (10).



London Women's category winner: WFM Mei-En Emmanuelle Hng

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

The Midlands event also saw a record 64 entrants playing at the Quinborne Centre in West Birmingham. The event was run by IA Alex Holowczak and IA Matthew Carr.

Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821396.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=15&flag=30>



IA Matt Carr surveys the boards



Birmingham Open category qualifiers IM Ameet Ghasi and IM Jonah Willow



Birmingham Open and Women's qualifiers IM Ameet Ghasi and Kamila Hryshchenko

The Open category qualifiers were IM Ameet Ghasi (14) and IM Jonah Willow (12½).

The Women's qualifiers were Kamila Hryshchenko (9) and Shambavi Hariharan (8½).

Weekend 2 (30th September to 1st October)

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



Players at the Bolton Arena

The North West event also saw a record 50 entrants playing at the Bolton Arena, which is a new venue for the North West. The event was organised by Julian Clissold with arbiters Rod Middleton and Ian Lamb.

Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821398.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=15&flag=30>

The Open Category qualifiers were Jacob Connor Boswell (12) and Alan Beardsworth (11½).

The Women's qualifiers were Madara Orlovska (9) and Carmel Barwick (8½).

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

The Northern Ireland event was one of the smaller qualifiers with a total of 20 entries. Pairings and results are shown here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr821387.aspx?lan=1&art=1&fed=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30>

The Open Category qualifiers were Tom O'Gorman (18) and Araz Basim Mohammed Al-Saffar (18).

The Women's qualifier was Jade Sandrey (10).

As there was only one Women's qualifier from the Belfast event the second Women's qualification place was awarded to WFM Mei-Xian Eunice Hng, who took part in the London event and was the highest place non-qualifying female across all events.

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



The Welsh event took place at the Best Western Hotel in Bridgend, with a total of 33 entries.

The event was organised by Kevin Staveley with arbiters John Thornton and Harrison Marriot.

Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821391.aspx?lan=1&art=1&turdet=YES&flag=30>

The Open Category qualifiers were Bao Nghia Dong (14½) and Daniel Kozusek (14½).

The Women's qualifiers were Bodhana Sivanandan (8) and Emma Kong (5½).

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

The South West event took place at the Bristol Bridge Club, again with a record 71 entrants. The event was organised by local FA Igor Doklestic with a team of arbiters including Derick Walker, Vince Southcott and George Miller. The top two boards were played on live boards. Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821399.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=15&flag=30>

The Open Category qualifiers were IM Andrew Horton (11½) and IM Jose Camacho Collados (11½). The Women's qualifiers were Elmira Walker (6½) and Siyao Ou (6).



View across the Bridge Club playing area



IM James Sherwin (Fischer's 'My 60 Memorable Games' game 1: 'Too little, too late') and IM Chris Beaumont



IM Peter Large vs GM Peter Wells



Round 15 – Board 1 IM Jonathan Pein vs IM Andrew Horton, Board 2 Jose Comacho Collados vs IM Peter Large

Here is IM Jose Comacho Collados final round win against IM Peter Large to clinch second place behind first placed IM Andrew Horton on tie break.

Camacho Collados, Jose (2212) - Large, Peter G (2147)
 2023 UK Open Blitz Qualifier: South West Bristol Bridge Club, Grenville (15.2), 01.10.2023

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 b6 3.Bg2 Bb7 4.0-0 e6 5.d3 d5 6.Nbd2 Nbd7 7.e4 dxe4 8.Ng5 Nc5 9.b4 e3 10.fxe3 Bxg2 11.Kxg2 Ncd7 12.Qf3 Bxb4 13.Nde4 0-0 14.Bb2 Be7



15.Nxf7 Rxf7 16.Ng5 Nf8 17.e4 Ng6 18.Nxf7 Kxf7 19.e5 Qd5 20.exf6 Qxf3+ 21.Rxf3 gxf6 22.Bxf6 Bxf6 23.Raf1 Ke7 24.Rxf6 Rg8 25.Rf7+ Kd6 26.Rxh7 Ne5 27.d4 Nc4 28.Rff7 Ne3+ 29.Kf3 Nxc2 30.Rd7+ Kc6 31.Rxc7+ Kb5 32.Rxc2

1-0

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

The Scottish event took place at the Novotel Edinburgh Park, again with a record 71 entrants. The event was organised by IA David Clayton, with IA Andy Howell as Chief Arbiter. Pairings and results are shown here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr821393.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=15&flag=30>

The Open Category qualifiers were Keith Ruxton (12) and Freddie Waldhausen Gordon (11½).

The Women's qualifiers were GM Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant (9½) and Kanishka Bhatia (8½).

Weekend 3 (Sunday 8th October)

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

The North East ECF 2023 Blitz Qualifier was the final qualifier and attracted 38 entries this year, more than last year but still plenty of room for improvement. In the Open competition three tied for first on 12½/15, Sarakauskas Gediminas and Keith Arkell securing the all-important qualifying places on tie break over the unlucky but sporting Danny Gormally. Anuraj Sainbayar (5) and Irina Briggs (3) qualified for the women's final.

Gosforth Chess Club hosted the event, which was organised by Mick Riding with Lara Barnes as chief arbiter. Ed Dodds (Jesmond) (9) and David Henderson (Tynemouth) (8½) topped the 'local' competition whilst ten-year-old Ethan Ross scored a creditable 6/15.



General playing view



Irina Briggs and Anuurai Sainbayar, our Women qualifiers

UK Open Blitz Finals



Our two youngest competitors - Tashil Lankapura (only 8 years old) and the veteran Ethan Ross, 10



Pictures from last year's Finals at Woodland Grange

The Finals will be held on 2nd December at Woodland Grange in Leamington Spa and will comprise an Open and a Women's Championship, with each Championship played as a 16-round all-play-all tournament to decide the 2023 UK Open Blitz Champions.

IBCA World Individual Championship by Owen Phillips



Report One

This is a forerunner of the reports that will be winging their way to the ECF in coming weeks from the wonderful island of Rhodes, the ancient base of the Knights Templar! It is a great setting for the 2023 edition of the IBCA World Individual Chess Championship (for blind and visually impaired players), which from 8th to 18th October 2023 will be taking place in the 5* Rodos Palace Hotel. Fortunately this hotel, and indeed Rhodes town, was spared from the damage of the recent huge forest fires on the island!

The lone UK entrant (in the absence this year of the BCA Numero Uno Chris Ross) is BCA and Witney Chess Club Member Gary Hogan, who in his first year playing chess has achieved an ECF rating of 1820 (quite a marker!). He is coached and guided in Rhodes by English Regional Master and BCA Associate Life Member, Owen Phillips, who has also recently taken up the post of ECF Chess Accessibility Manager.

Gary is very excited and honoured to be representing the UK at this prestigious championship. His expectations cannot be overly high in what is his first foray into international chess, and without (as yet) having a FIDE rating he is ranked 80/80 in a strong field topped by thrice World Champion, GM Marcin Tazbir of Poland. The field also includes five IMs, three FM's and two CMs.

Gary has been training hard with Owen, and also wants to thank ECF CEO and Witney man Mike Truran for some practice and confidence-building tips, as well as BCA members Stan Lovell and Paul Benson for their practice games with him. Owen notes that he wants Gary to have a good time, and whatever his performance he expects they will both fit in some swimming and a few tours between rounds and game preparation!

IBCA, which is the world governing body for blind and visually impaired players, has grown since its inception in 1958 to now have almost 70 member federations, and this year's championship has some 80 participants from some 30 of those federations. Notably, Russian and Belarus players are not eligible to play due to the present hostilities in Ukraine. Other than World Individual Open and European Individual, World Ladies and World Junior events, IBCA also organises an Olympiad, and European, World Team, and Pan-American championships. It is well recognised by FIDE, and as such also separately sends teams to the FIDE Olympiads.

The current World Open Champion, who is seeded sixth in Rhodes, is IM Predrag Nikac of Montenegro. Past multiple World Champions have included IM Cabarkapa (of former Yugoslavia), IM Sergey Krylov of USSR and then of Russia, IM Alex Smirnov of Russia, IM Jounoussow of Kazakhstan, and IM Piotr Dukaczewski of Poland, who is only ranked 14th in this edition of the event!

The current and multiple World Women's Champion is WIM Liubov Zjiltzova-Lisenko of Poland, and the World Junior Champion is Adam Czajkowski of Poland. So Marcin Tazbir is aiming for a current treble for the Polish Chess Federation!

Members can get a good feel for the strength of play in such an event from reading the recent book 'Blind Faith' (Steel City Press) by Chris Ross, who was the 2015 IBCA Olympiad Silver medallist, and who for many years now has had an ECF rating well over 2200 or its equivalent. Gary is hoping to play alongside Chris and other top BCA players in forthcoming IBCA team events, but first wants to achieve a good first FIDE rating from participating in this elite event.

Your prayers and best wishes would be much appreciated. Keep tuned in for regular updates. Go GO GARY!

Report Two

For pictures from the event and a particularly useful post explaining the specialised board set-up that some players use, follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/chessingreece>

Sad to say, things have so far proved rather difficult. To start with, I was the only passenger from Gatwick to Rhodes whose luggage didn't appear! To cut a long and troublesome story short, the luggage was found in Gatwick. It was de-planed without explanation, and I received it some 30 hours later without an apology from the airline!

The hotel is great, though, as are the swimming pools, and the sea is only five minutes' walk away too! The temperature on arrival was already 30°C, so I was glad at least to have packed a few spare clothes in my hand luggage! A good tip for anyone travelling to international tournaments. But down to the nitty gritty - what of the chess?!

As is usual for round 1, the top play the upper middle and the lower middle play the bottom seeds, and as expected the top seeds dominated the round. That said, there were four upsets where players up to 500 points below their opponents either won or drew their games.



Our entrant Gary Hogan faced a tough opponent, arrayed in the smart Spanish tracksuit that their entrants all wear! Only five years ago his opponent was rated some 225 points higher than now and is well used to playing opponents of between 2000 and 2200.

Our preparation went well, but gradually David Zanoletty Garcia nursed a small edge into gaining a pawn and then another, and that proved plenty at this level. Still, the first-time players start at this level so it is difficult to play your best. So 0/1, but all to play for with eight games to go.

Round 2 saw Gary face a Moldovan player whose grade seemed a fair bit lower than Gary's, but who noticeably made few errors in those of his games available for viewing. In the end, any prep went out of the window as

Vasile Bogatu opened with d4 and f4! It soon appeared obvious that he was setting up a Stonewall structure. Sad to say, Gary went from a dead level position on move 14 to making a horrendous error, which within three moves had netted Vasile a whole rook!

Well, despite brave defending, such material loss proved too much, and within two hours' play Gary had unfortunately lost. I am now trying to get Gary to be positive – after all, it's his first foray into such high-level chess and, besides, another seven rounds remain!

When I left the playing hall the top seeds were having tough games, though, so this could yet prove to be a tight championship?! By the by, I was also appointed to chair the Appeals Committee! Hopefully we shan't have to do anything!

Bye for now from a very sunny Rhodes!
Owen Phillips

Owen submitted a report after round 3, which can be found at:
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/rhodes-report-three-from-owen-phillips/> .

His further reports can be found via these links:
Round 4: [here](#)
Rounds 6 and 7: [here](#)
Round 8: [here](#)

Final scores and thoughts:
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ibca-world-individual-chess-final-scores-and-thoughts-from-owen-phillips/>

Report on the European Club Cup and Club Cup for Women 2023 **by Lawrence Cooper**

This year's events took place in Durres, Albania. The format of both events was a seven-round team Swiss event. In the Open, teams were allowed six players and a squad of eight, while for the women it was four players and five in the squad. This was the first time that I had sent teams to both events in the same year, so it has been a busy couple of months.

Abigail Weersing. A draw for Emily Maton meant a very encouraging victory and a sign that the team fully belonged alongside such strong opposition.

Round 3 in the Open saw Wood Green and Sharks defeat lower-rated opposition, whilst Blackthorne and Tigers lost to higher-rated opponents. I think this was the first round where defaults started to appear, probably due to the 'light seasonal virus' which had over 100 reported cases, all in the same hotel!

She Plays to Win had another fine result, drawing 2-2 with higher-rated opponents thanks to wins from Abigail and Emily. Sadly, Zoe was struck down by the virus and had to miss her game. Wood Green recovered from their round 2 near miss with a comfortable match victory, although Akshaya did almost give her captain a heart attack when missing a tactic. Fortunately, by the time I'd removed my head from my hands the opponent had opted for another move and the game soon ended in our favour.

In round 3 Wood Green were in the top half of their score group, and wins from Matthew, Borna (now on 4/4!) and Conor helped them to a 4-2 win and six match points. Slough Sharks and Blackthorne also won to return to a 50% score, and Celtic Tigers drew to move to 3 points.

Wood Green Women came unstuck in round 4 against another higher-seeded team, again 2½-1½. This time the score was a fairer reflection: Akshaya was in trouble but recovered to draw, whilst Kata was again rather unlucky, another good game spoilt by one tactic. This was Akshaya's last day in Albania as she had only been able to take enough time off work for rounds 1-4. Ironically, her departure coincided with the virus gathering pace in the team hotel.

She Plays to Win did lose in round 4, but welcomed back Zoe to the team. Abigail continued her fine tournament to remain unbeaten with two wins and two draws. Having beaten the Israeli club Rishon Lezion's B team in round 4 Wood Green faced their much stronger A team the following day. The opposition cheekily rested Boris Gelfand, their top board, but were still strong enough to win boards 1 and 4 (Borna's first loss) and draw the other four games. Sharks and Blackthorne both lost to higher-rated sides, with Peter Roberson having to default his game (presumably another victim of the virus). Celtic Tigers won their match, though, to move to five match points.

Wood Green Women staged a great escape in round 5. Kata again played a good game but faltered when in sight of the finishing line, and then lost on time whilst trying to find a way to avoid perpetual check. Harriet's opponent, possibly influenced by board 4, offered a draw when close

to winning. This gave the team a glimmer of hope and Jovanka and Lan Yao cashed in, winning the top two boards and guiding the team to their third win of the event. Although She Plays to Win lost, there was a very welcome win for Zoe against a higher-rated opponent.

Wood Green won narrowly in round 6 thanks to 3/3 with White for Matthew, Borna and Viktor. Celtic Tigers lost, but both Sharks and Blackthorne won to move back ahead of the Tigers.

In theory, Wood Green Women received a favourable pairing in round 6 with a very realistic chance of a match win taking them to 8 points and maybe even an outside chance of a medal with a last-round win. Sadly, though, the virus struck hard, and Jovanka, Harriet and Kata were all unable to play. Having spoken to them, I know this was upsetting for them, and if there had been any way they felt they could make it to the board and play they would have done. Although I informed the Chief Arbiter five hours before the start time that we might not have a full team I regret not making a final decision sooner, as this may have caused the players unnecessary stress when already very ill. There was confusion over whether we could play with just one player, but in the end a compromise was reached with Lan Yao playing their board 3, who was most in need of a game for norm purposes. This was only agreed at the board, though, so both players had wasted morning preparation. From our team's perspective the subsequent win for Lan Yao was some consolation as it put her in a strong position for a board medal. She Plays to Win drew their match, thanks to a win from Kamila and draws from Zoe and Emily.

The virus struck again in round 7, and this time it was Borna who was unable to play. This was very unfortunate for him as he was on 5/6 and needed a draw for a third IM norm. It would have only been 25 games though, so he would have required another norm to complete the title. Losing their top scorer was a big blow, and the team eventually lost 4-2 to the higher rated Dutch Leiden team. Ravi seemed on his way to victory, but soon after a post on Facebook from a well-known English GM complimenting his play and predicting victory the advantage slipped, and the game ended in a draw. The final score was 4-2, as the Dutch also won on bottom board in a long ending. The team ended on eight match points, matching their 2018 total, albeit with only Jonah remaining from that line-up.

Sadly, the other three English teams were also defeated. Harry Grieve was the latest default victim. There was very good news for Ben Purton, though. Not content with settling for a CM title, he completed a fantastic tournament to score 5/7 (4½ in the last five rounds) and to qualify for the FM title. Ben has had a tough year, but I

hope that this (and I suspect Sharks beating Wood Green in the 4NCL) will have provided him with some welcome respite. Celebrations may not have been quite as raucous as normal for Sharks, though, as Ben was one of many suffering with the virus.

I was resigned to informing the arbiters that we wouldn't be able to field a team in the Women's event in the final round and hoping that would be enough for Lan Yao to win a board medal. The few hours' rest had clearly helped, though, and I sensed a real resolve to play the last round. This did indeed happen, and somehow the team found the strength to play games lasting four to five hours. Lan Yao was under pressure against GM Monika Socko, and I did worry about the board medal slipping away. However, she defended well and drew without much difficulty. Harriet's game was looking very good, and I started to dream of her also making a medal. Sadly, there was a point swing in the game, and she fell to defeat. Board 1 was far less clear, but unlike last year, when Jovi lost from a position of strength to GM Stefanova, this time she triumphed after being in some difficulty. Kata converted her advantage and we had finished on a very high note. Whilst being aware that Lan Yao was now very likely to get the silver medal on board 2 there was a very welcome bonus when the updated board listings showed that Jovanka had won the bronze medal on board 1!



Lan Yao receives her silver medal trophy – courtesy of Niki Riga

She Plays to Win finished with a very impressive $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$, winning the top three boards. It was great to see two English teams and nine of the top English female players in the competition, and the team can be very proud of their six match points, comprising two match wins and two match draws, and finishing three places above their initial seeding. Even better, Abigail Weersing qualified for her Women's FIDE Master title.

Apologies that I've had to resort to rather a lot of results journalism, but many of the matches weren't on live boards, and with a tight deadline to submit the report I haven't been able to try to assemble games - and the organisers have shown no sign so far of publishing them.

There were many positives to the tournament. The organisers were very efficient in transferring players from the airport, unlike 2022 in Austria where players spent many hours waiting to be picked up. The resort was very impressive. The number of entries in both events was amazing. However, over one hundred cases of what the locals called 'light seasonal virus' in the official hotel has barely been mentioned by anyone but the poor players. There is no sign of any apology from the ECU or the hotel to the players and captains, and all I have heard from them is how wonderful the tournament was. It remains to be seen if any federations will raise the issue, especially those who have people on the ECU Board. When teams are forced to stay in a specific hotel and pay for full board one would hope that they could eat there safely.

No report is complete without thanking all those who helped make participation possible. It is no exaggeration to say that without the support of the organisations listed below I wouldn't have been able to send a Women's team. Along with other organisers I am incredibly grateful for any contribution that these and similar organisations are able to provide.

The English Chess Federation Women's Director, Aga Milewska, has continued her fine work in her second year as director. The timing of the event, a month before the European Team, meant the players got a very useful warm-up event. This time she not only provided funds from her budget but even spent much of her time in Albania looking after the Wood Green female players who had fallen victim to the virus!

The Chess Trust was established in 2015, helped by a significant bequest from Richard Haddrell. It has the support of the English Chess Federation and aims to provide support to amateur chess in England both in terms of playing and teaching. They again gave generously to help the Wood Green Women's team. I hope they will view the two board medals favourably and continue to support women's chess.

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust helped towards Viktor Stoyanov's expenses for the tournament.

English Chess Federation International Director Malcolm Pein's directorate paid for the English team's entry fees. With the expected HM Government money, I hope that more of our many deserving norm seekers will get the

help they need to pursue their titles and, beyond that, to aim for 2600 and higher.

Tournament links:

Board prizes in women's section:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr775458.aspx?lan=1andart=81andturdet=YESandflag=30>

Open section final standings:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr774133.aspx?lan=1andart=0andturdet=YESandflag=30>

Women's section final standings:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr775458.aspx?lan=1andart=1andturdet=YESandflag=30>

Tournament website: <https://clubcup2023.com>

Below are some games from the tournament.

FM Derakhshani, Borna – GM Pranav, V

38th ECC Open 2023 Durres ALB (2.2), 02.10.2023

1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3 Bg4 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 e6 6.Be2 Bc5 7.0-0 Ne7 8.Rd1 Bd4 9.Bf1 0-0 10.Ne2 Bb6 11.d4 Nd7 12.Ng3 Rc8 13.c3 Ng6 14.Bd3 Bc7 15.Nh5 Qh4 16.Qg4 Qe7 17.Re1 Rce8 18.e5 f5 19.Qe2 c5 20.f4 Bb6 21.Be3 Rc8 22.a3 cxd4 23.cxd4 Nb8 24.Rad1 Nc6 25.Bb1 Qh4 26.Kh2 Rf7 27.Rf1 Nf8 28.g3 Qd8 29.g4 g6 30.Nf6+ Rxf6 31.exf6 Qxf6 32.Qf2 Na5 33.Ba2 Nd7 34.Rc1 Nc6 35.b4 Rf8 36.g5 Qg7 37.Rfd1 h6 38.b5 Ne7 39.h4 Nc8 40.Qe1 Nd6 41.a4 Ne4 42.Kg2 Qe7 43.Rd3 Qd8 44.Bd2 Kf7 45.a5 Bc7 46.a6 bxa6 47.bxa6 hxg5 48.hxg5 Rh8 49.Rh3 Bb6 50.Be3 Rxh3 51.Kxh3 Qe7 52.Ra1 Kg8 53.Bb1 Nd6 54.Bd3 Bd8 55.Kg2 Nb6 56.Bd2 Ne4 57.Bb4 Qc7 58.Qh4 Qg7 59.Rh1 Nc4 60.Bxe4 fxe4 61.Qh3 Kf7 62.Bc5 e3 63.Qh8 Qxh8 64.Rxh8 Nd2 65.Rxd8

1-0

GM Carlsen, Magnus – GM Haria, Ravi

38th ECC Open 2023 Durres ALB (2.2), 02.10.2023

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.Be2 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nge7 8.0-0 Nf5 9.Nc3 a6 10.Bg5 Be7 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.Qd2 0-0 13.Rae1 Qd8 14.Bd1 f6 15.Ba4 b5 16.Bc2 fxe5 17.dxe5 Kh8 18.Ne2 Nh4 19.Nxh4 Qxh4 20.f4 Rac8 21.Bb1 Qh6 22.Qe3 Qh4 23.Rc1 Qe7 24.Qh3 h6 25.g4 d4 26.a3 Kg8 27.g5 Nxe5 28.Rxc8 Bxc8 29.fxe5 Qxg5+ 30.Qg3 Rxf1+ 31.Kxf1 Qd2 32.Bg6

1-0

IM Houska, Jovanka - GM Stefanova, A.

27th ECC Women 2023 Durres ALB (7.1), 07.10.2023

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.e3 h6 7.Bh4 Be7 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.h3 0-0 10.Qc2 Re8 11.Nf3 Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Bxe4 dxe4 14.Nd2 f5 15.g4 Nf6 16.gxf5 Bxf5 17.0-0-0 c5 18.dxc5 Qxc5 19.Nb3 Qe5 20.Nd4 Be6 21.Nxe6 Rxe6 22.Rd4 Rc8 23.Rhd1 Kh7 24.Kb1 Qh2 25.Rb4 b6 26.Qa4 Qxf2 27.Qxa7 Qxe3 28.Rb3 Qf3 29.Rg1 Rg8 30.Qf7 Rd6 31.Nd5 e3 32.Nxe3 Qe4+ 33.Ka1 Rd7 34.Qc4 Re8 35.a3 Ree7 36.Qb5 Rb7 37.Nc4 Qf4 38.Rbg3 Ne4 39.Rg4 Qf6 40.Ne3 Re5 41.Qd3 Qd6 42.Qc2 Rbe7 43.Nc4 Qc6 44.Qg2 Rg5 45.Rxg5 hxg5 46.Nd2 Qg6 47.Nf3 Qf6 48.Qg4 g6 49.Re1 Ra7 50.Re3 Nc5 51.Nxg5+ Kh6 52.Qh4+ Kg7 53.Rf3 Rxa3+ 54.Rxa3 Qf1+ 55.Ka2

1-0

WIM Yao, Lan – WGM Eric, Jovana

27th ECC Women 2023 Durres ALB (3.6), 03.10.2023

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 Be7 8.Qf3 Qc7 9.0-0-0 Nbd7 10.g4 h6 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.h4 Nb6 13.g5 Bxd4 14.Rxd4 Qc5 15.Rd2 Bd7 16.Be2 Na4 17.Nxa4 Bxa4 18.g6 0-0 19.b3 Bc6 20.gxf7+ Rxf7 21.Bc4 Re8 22.Rhd1 b5 23.Be2 Ref8 24.Qg4 Bxe4 25.Qxe6 Qc3 26.Kb1 Qe3 27.f5 Kh8 28.Bd3 d5 29.Bxe4 dxe4 30.Rd8 Qf3 31.R1d5 Qh1+ 32.Kb2 Qxh4 33.Qxf7 Rxd8 34.f6 Rg8 35.fxg7+ Rxg7 36.Qf5 e3 37.Qf8+ Kh7 38.Rd8 Qg5 39.Qh8+ Kg6 40.Rd6+ Kh5 41.Qe8+ Kh4 42.Re6 e2 43.Re4+ Kg3 44.Re3+ Kh4 45.Qe6 Qf4 46.Re4

1-0

Witney Rapidplay 24th September 2023 by Carl Portman

I decided to venture forth and play some competitive over the board chess for only the third time this year. I did not wish to sacrifice an entire weekend, so a Rapidplay would be the perfect antidote to my stay at home, play online habit. Besides, it was good to get out and meet real people again and catch up on what they have been up to 'out there' in the big wide world.

Mike Truran is the brains behind this event, held at Cokethorpe School in Witney. The drive into the school grounds is always pleasant, with a tree-lined lane, adorned on the left-hand side with a giant wooden peacock. I am not sure why this bird is represented there, but it certainly makes an impression.

There were six rounds, and the time control in the Open section was 20 minutes + 10 seconds per move. There were also a Junior Major and a Junior Minor section.



The excellent Witney Rapidplay venue at Cokethorpe School

The venue is a splendid school hall with a very high ceiling, giving the place a spacious and airy feel. There was plenty of room to play. I was surprised that there were not more entries, to be honest, so please do support the next event here if you can. You will not be disappointed by the food on offer, hot and cold, the entry fee is only £10, and the car parking is spacious, so there's no reason not to play, really, is there?

Upon arrival I noted that the arbiter for the day, the ever-efficient and very likeable Matthew Carr, was on his own, so it was up to the players to behave and not give him too much trouble. There were a few things to attend to in the junior sections as expected, but overall I think Matthew enjoyed the day as much as the participants. He has a great rapport with chess players, and he looked very professional too in his ECF blazer.

From a personal chess perspective, I am being very honest here. I have not played much at all, and did absolutely no prep whatsoever, being too busy back at the ranch. This came home to roost, and I paid the price with possibly my worst competitive result ever - 2/6. OK, I lost two games on time, but I was worse in both, and I tried a couple of unconventional openings which my opponents were prepared for, but it does show that a 100-metre runner cannot just rock up from the pub and leave the starting blocks. You have to put some effort in before a tournament – at least get your openings sorted out.

I must say that I was very impressed with the youngsters whom I played. I tried a Grünfeld in one game and the young man knew it backwards! That never used to happen back in the day, and computers have certainly helped to significantly improve the overall standard of play of

amateurs everywhere – as many stronger players will attest.

Congratulations to the organisers, kitchen staff and participants. This is a friendly and enjoyable event that I highly recommend. Where else can you get a day's enjoyment for only a tenner?

The motto of Cokethorpe School is *Inopiam Ingenio Pensant* (They make up for their lack of resources by their natural wit) and there was plenty of wit from my mate Richard Beckett who saw me at the lower end of the board order, remarking so that everyone could hear 'You used to be good.' Thanks for that, Richard. I will be back to right this wrong!

All the prizewinners and photos from the event can be seen on the Witney Chess Club website here: <https://witneychess.co.uk/>

The Inaugural Derbyshire Chess Congress 23rd – 24th September by David Woodhouse



The playing area

This new event was held at Trent College Independent School in Long Eaton, which lies between Nottingham and Derby. It is very well situated with regard to transport links, as it is only about five minutes from the M1 and A52 junction (25) and is on a bus route, as well as being not too far from Long Eaton railway station. The aim was to provide a congress in Derbyshire, which as far as I knew had not happened since the demise of the Assembly Rooms in Derby in 2014.

The spacious playing area was situated in the school's large dining room, which has a very pleasant outlook over attractive playing fields and was well able to accommodate the 145 players who entered, since we had set a limit of 200. That also meant that there was plenty of car parking on site, so there was no difficulty in finding a space. As the weather was kind, many players took advantage of it in between rounds and enjoyed a pleasant

stroll around the grounds. A more energetic member even took part in the local park run beforehand!

Since this was the first congress I had ever organised it was a little daunting, but I was very ably assisted by John Shaw, who put together the very experienced arbiting team, and also by another Belper chess club colleague, Ben Lester, who dealt with the website, including the online form, and who also provided some pictures of the event. Another unknown was what to do about refreshments and how much to order. On that front things worked out as well as could be expected, since we had no idea what the take-up would be. I was ably assisted by my wife Gillian, John Shaw's wife Rosie, and by supporter Jenny and parent Mark who also mucked in and helped out, which proved really beneficial at the busier times in between rounds.

I was really pleased that, despite the prize money not being huge, we still had two titled players taking part in the Open. Mark Hebden from Syston was on good form, and the end of his second game was particularly attractive. This is reproduced here.

Hebden, Mark – Underwood, Jonathan
Derbyshire Chess Congress, Round 2

1.d4 f5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 e6 4.Bg2 d5 5.O-O Bd6 6.c4 O-O 7.Bf4 Bxf4 8.gxf4 b6 9.e3 Bb7 10.Ne5 Nbd7 11.Nc3 c6 12.Rc1 Nxe5 13.fxe5 Ne4 14.Ne2 Qe7 15.f3 Ng5 16.c5 b5 17.Qe1 a5 18.Kh1 b4 19.Rg1 Ba6 20.Nf4 Ra7 21.Qg3 Nf7 22.Bf1 Nd8 23.Bxa6 Rxa6 24.Nh5 Rf7 25.Nf6+ Kh8 26.Rg2 Qf8 27.Rcg1 Ra8 28.Nh5 Raa7 29.Qh4 Rad7 30.Rg3 Nb7 31.Nf4 Qd8 32.Ng6+ Kg8 33.Qxh7+ Kxh7 34.Rh3+ Kg8 35.Rh8# 1-0

My thanks go to another Belper colleague, Mike Alderson, as well as John Shaw, for providing me with this. Talking of Belper, one of our more recent members who has had some strong congress results over the last year or two is John Potter. He very kindly agreed to annotate one of his games from the congress and chose to go through the only game he lost, to Lewis Turner, which was in round one. Here it is.

Turner, Lewis – Potter, John
Derbyshire Chess Congress, Round 1

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.Be2 f6 7.O-O fxe5

In this French Advance 6. Be2 line, White can now decide whether to keep knights off with 8. Nxe5 Nxe5 9. dxe5. If Black is hell-bent on castling queenside, the c6-knight may need replacing as a defender with a later Ng8-e7-c6 manoeuvre. On the other hand, as in the game, with the

existing c6-knight blocking the (French) d7-bishop's guarding of b5, Black is probably going to have to waste a tempo playing a6, which in turn (also as in the game!) then becomes a potential hook for a b5-pawn push from White.

8.dxe5 Qc7 9.Re1 O-O-O 10.Na3!



I wasn't happy with this move, preferring that White should instead politely spend a tempo defending the e5-pawn, which the engine says that I should now simply take. I was seeing lines like 11.Nxe5 Qxe5 12. Bb5 Qc7 13. Bxd7+ Qxd7 14. Bf4, and really not fancying the look of it. Just out of interest, 10. Bf1 is the preferred move at master level.

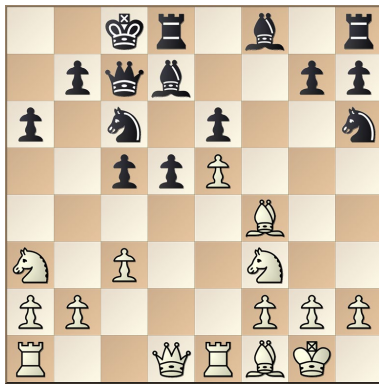
10...a6

We're still following the master-trodden path, 11. c4 being the chosen plan of attack in the one game on the masters' database. This c4 pawn break is very common in the knights-off version of this line. Instead, my opponent is intending a b4 pawn break.

11.Bf4 Nh6

In these positions I like to wait for White's dark-squared bishop to move before I play Nh6 so that, if White does decide to play Bxh6, he 'loses a move'. If White is intending to hack off the h6-knight and ruin Black's pawn structure, you might see a refusal to move the c1-bishop until Black has committed to Nh6 - one of those Mexican stand-offs we are all familiar with, where both players scrap to NOT play a move in the opening, in the hope of gaining a tempo.

12.Bf1?!



I didn't understand this and hence was pleased to see it. Having already declared that he is happy to sacrifice the e5-pawn for an easy flowing attack on my king, White wastes the tempo that I wanted him to waste earlier in order to defend it.

12...Be7 13.Nc2

White wants to play b4, but felt it he was not really ready to do so. 13. b4 cxb4 14. cxb4 Bxb4 15. Re3 Rdf8 is a possible continuation. It looks sharp to me! A different possible plan would have been to play 10. a4 before 11. Na3 so that the a1-rook defends a3, and dropping the knight back to c2 isn't necessary.

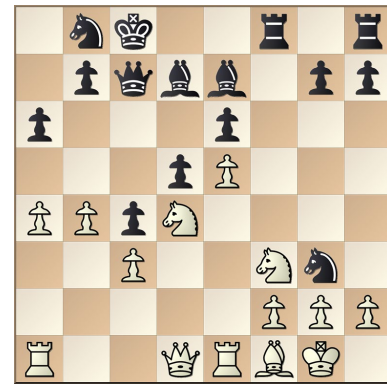
13...Rdf8 14.Bg3 Nf5 15.b4 c4?!

I played this move without really analysing properly what would happen if I didn't play it. My instinct was to close the centre, albeit at the expense of losing control over the important d4 square, and block the f1-bishop's defence of b5. What I did wasn't bad (the bad moves came later!) but 15... g5 was better – just get on with my attack. The immediate 16. b5 that I was worried about doesn't actually achieve that much. With fresh eyes and being able to actually see the position instead of visualising it, I much prefer Black's position after 16... axb5 17. Bxb5 h5, say. Or, if White delays the b5-pawn push, I'm still happy after 16. Ne3 Nxc3 17. hxg3 h5 18. b5 axb5 19. Bxb5 g4 20. Nh4 Bxh4 21. gxh4 Qxe5.

16.a4 Nb8

With this move, I kiss a permanent goodbye to any ideas of fighting for d4.

17.Ncd4 Nxc3



I reasoned here, correctly I still think, to take the bishop pair and hope it proves useful when the position opens up. Since White has a queue of knights ready to jump into d4, I want to dislodge the f3-knight out of the queue whilst the other knight is hogging d4. White was acutely aware of this and played very well to prevent it, relieving me of said bishop pair in the process.

18.hxg3 g5 19.b5 a5 20.b6 Qd8 21.Nb5 Bxb5 22.axb5 Qxb6 23.Nd4 Bc5

I'm happy enough with how this has gone. I'm a pawn up, my bishop is good and I've managed to close down the queenside for now. However, I now completely fail to understand this position and see White's main plan to disrupt my comfortable setup. If you ask virtually any chess player to take one look at Black's position and ask 'Where is it weak?', I would be very surprised if said chess player didn't identify the e6-pawn. If this pawn falls, my whole position will start falling apart. This then poses the question 'OK, how does White attack it?' Why, oh why, was I not asking myself this question in the ensuing moves?!

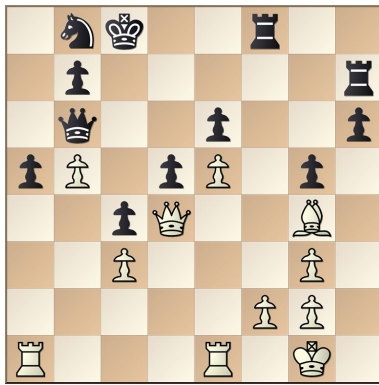
24.Qd2 h6?

I considered 24... g4, but it would have just been luck if I'd played it because I would have been doing so in order to not drop a pawn and to just generally throw pawns forward in the direction of Black's king, not because I had understood how important it was to stop White's bishop landing on g4.

25.Be2 Rh7?

I've now seen White's plan but I've failed to appreciate just how good it is, in particular the strength of the intermezzo Bxe6+ in many of my attempts to defend.

26.Bg4 Bxd4 27.Qxd4



I think there's a good lesson to be learnt here, by me especially but hopefully others too. I've now realised (too late, of course) that I can't simply swap queens and then defend the e-pawn, because White will take the e6-pawn with check before recapturing the queen and the endgame is almost resignable. So, I'm upset with myself, and I now let it get to me. In my head, I'm following the narrative of the game (played opening well, overlooked lots of ideas and moves, messed it up, got worse position) and I'm playing moves as if there is some kind of story that needs to evolve here – I think we all do this, even top players. Instead, I should be calmly approaching the current position objectively, finding candidate moves and analysing them – I should just be playing the reasonably good level of chess that I am capable of! 27... Nd7 is a perfectly good move here. It's the best move, in fact. It defends the queen that needs defending, and it defends the d5-pawn after 28. Qxb6 Nxb6 29. Bxe6+ Kc7, say. Yet I didn't even see it – how on earth not?! I believe that, if I had been detached from the emotion of following the narrative of the game I would have seen this blindfolded (if you'll forgive the oxymoron)!

27...Kc7? 28.Qxb6+ Kxb6 29.Bxe6 Rd8 30.Rad1 Re7 31.Bxd5 Kc5 32.Bf3 Rxd1 33.Bxd1 Kxb5 34.f4 Nc6?!

There are tougher defences than this: 34... a4, just push the pawn and try to stir up complications, or 34... Nd7 35. Bg4 Kc6 keeps things going a bit longer. However, I think we'd all rather take the white pieces! My opponent played it well and finished me off.

35.Bf3 Kc5 36.e6 b5 37.f5 Nd8 38.Re5+ Kb6 39.Bd5 1-0

Aside from my little pep talk to myself (or anyone else who is interested!) above about staying focused on properly analysing the position in front of you, detached from the emotional journey of the game, we can still say that one of the main reasons that I lost this game was that I didn't identify my opponent's plan, a plan that I was more than capable of seeing if I'd been asking myself the right questions. Even when I did see it, I didn't analyse variations, as a chess player should, to see just how good

that plan was. My opponent did analyse these variations properly. In our post-match analysis it became clear to me that he had analysed, a lot more than I had, some of the critical lines involving the intermezzo Bxe6+. So the better chess player won, which I suppose (begrudgingly!) is what you want to see happen, even when it's not you!

I did recover from this bad start to the tournament and managed to play some good chess in my other four games. However, despite my opponents all being extremely strong players, you've got to say that I was very lucky to avoid being paired against GM Mark Hebden – so a tactical loss from me there in round 1 ;-) J.P.

What pleased and surprised me was how many people were prepared to travel long distances, coming from such places as Colchester, Christchurch, Seaton, Cardiff, and even Glasgow. These included a good number of juniors, 28 in all, both boys and girls, which is a good sign for the future.

One of these, 11 year old Ruqayyah Rida from Essex Juniors, was rather unfortunate not to draw as White against Mark Hebden in the first round. Already graded 2049, she is certainly one to watch out for in the future. Here is their game.

Rida, Ruqayyah – Hebden, Mark
Derbyshire Congress, Round 1

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Be7 5.O-O O-O 6.Re1 d6 7.a3 Nd7 8.Ba2 Nb6 9.Nc3 Kh8 10.Nd5 Nxd5 11.exd5 Nd4 12.c3 Nxf3+ 13.Qxf3 f5 14.Bb1 Bd7 15.Qe2 Bg5 16.Bc2 Bxc1 17.Raxc1 Qg5 18.f3 Rf6 19.d4 Re8 20.Qf2 e4 21.Qg3 Qxg3 22.hxg3 exf3 23.Rxe8+ Bxe8 24.Re1 Bh5 25.gxf3 Kg8 26.Kg2 Kf8 27.c4 Bf7 28.Ba4 f4 29.g4 g5 30.Bd7 h5 31.gxh5 Bxh5 32.Rh1 Bg6 33.Rh8+ Ke7 34.Be6 Rf8 35.Rh6 Kf6 36.c5 a5 37.Rh1 Re8 38.Kf2 a4 39.Rc1 Rh8 40.cxd6 cxd6 41.Kg2 Rb8 42.Rc7 b5 43.Rc6 Rd8 44.Rb6 Bd3 45.Rb7 Bc4 46.Rf7+ Kg6 47.Rb7 Be2 48.Kf2 Bd3 49.Bd7 Rh8 50.Bxb5 Bxb5 51.Rxb5 Rh2+ 52.Kg1 Rd2 53.Rb4 Kh5 54.Kf1 Kh4 55.Rxa4 g4 56.fxg4 f3 57.Rb4 Kg3 58.Ke1 Rd3 59.Rc4 Kg2 60.Rc2+ Kg1 61.g5 Rxd4 62.b4 Rxd5 63.a4 Rxg5 64.Rc1 Rg2 65.b5 Rb2 0-1

Instead of 50. Bxb5, 50 Kg2 would have made it almost impossible for Black to make any progress.

In addition to the visitors who came from far and wide there was also good local support, and this was equally gratifying. The feedback I received after the event was overwhelmingly positive, and I am pleased that people agreed with me that the venue was really good. Comments included: *'The venue was sensational... Pretty much equal to Scarborough... Superb natural daylight... The location was easily accessible, ample parking... What*

a superb event... The playing venue was superb... Excellent congress... The event was really well run... Wonderfully organised... 10/10... Facilities all first class... Will definitely come back!... I hope to play again... One of the best venues I've been to'.

Although we hadn't made any promises about running the event again, many people are hoping that we will, and, having talked to all involved, I think that it is highly likely that the event will be an annual one, at least for the foreseeable future. However, the venue for next year's September date has already been booked by Age UK, so we are intending to hold it on the **23rd and 24th of November 2024**. We are hoping to revert to this September weekend in 2025.

A 'Friends of Derbyshire Chess' donor scheme was set up by Belper Club's Chairman, Simon Gilmore, and, whilst that provided a financial safety net which wasn't needed in the end, it is likely that money left in that fund will be used for future events in Derbyshire. Plans for these have yet to be finalised, although various ideas have been mooted.

My thanks go to everyone involved with the running of the congress. In addition to those already mentioned thanks are due to Adrian Elwin, Derrick Walker, and Hambel Willow, who made up the rest of the strong and experienced arbiting team along with John Shaw. I am also greatly indebted to Gareth Ellis for providing the equipment and even helping to set it up, and to Howard Wood who ran his Chess Essentials bookstore and who took care of the equipment at the end of the weekend.

The complete set of results can be found at <https://chess-results.com/tnr823027.aspx?lan=1> (this will take you to the Open, and you can find the other results from there.) GM Mark Hebden (Syston) was a clear winner in the Open with 5/5, Nottinghamshire player Dragoljub Sudar (Gambit) won the Major with 4½/5, Derbyshire player Matt Bubis (Belper) won the Intermediate with 4½/5, David Dunne (also from Gambit) was a point ahead of the field with 4½/5 in the Minor, and the Foundation section was won by Jonah Tomsett (West Nottingham), also with 4½/5.

Here are some pictures taken at the congress.



From the youngest ... Oscar Qin (7)



To the oldest.... Ray Sayer (still going strong at 92!)

Here are two more games to finish.

Hebden, Mark – Okhai, Shabir

Derbyshire Chess Congress, Round 3

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.c3 c5 4.Nf3 cxd4 5.cxd4 Qb6 6.Nc3 d5 7.Bxf6 gxf6 8.Qd2 Bd7 9.e3 Nc6 10.Bd3 Bd6 11.O-O h5 12.Rac1 Kf8 13.Na4 Qd8 14.Nc5 Bc8 15.e4 Ne7 16.e5 Bxc5 17.Rxc5 Nc6 18.Bb5 Bd7 19.Bxc6 Bxc6 20.Rfc1 f5 21.R1c3 a6 22.b3 Rc8 23.h4 Ke8 24.g3 Kd7 25.Rc2 Qe7 26.Qg5 Qf8 27.Qc1 Qg7 28.Ng5 Ke7 29.Rxc6 Rxc6 30.Rxc6 bxc6 31.Qa3+ Kd8 32.Qd6+ Kc8 33.Qxc6+ Kd8 34.Qa8+ Ke7 35.Qb7+ Kf8 36.Qb8+ Ke7 37.Qc7+ Ke8 1-0

FM Barnes, Mike – Potter, John

Derbyshire Chess Congress, Round 6

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 O-O 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 Nc6 7.Be3 Ng4 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 e5 11.dxe5 Ngxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.h4 Be6 14.hxg5 hxg5 15.Nd5 c6 16.Ne3 Qa5+ 17.Qd2 Qxd2+ 18.Kxd2 Rfd8 19.Rac1 Nd7 20.Kc2 Nf6 21.f3 d5 22.cxd5 cxd5 23.exd5 Nxd5 24.Nxd5 Rxd5 25.Rhd1 Rc8+ 26.Kb1 Bf5+ 0-1

See you next year!
David Woodhouse (Organiser)

WSTCC Reports by Nigel Povah



The 2023 World Senior Teams Chess Championships (WSTCC) have taken place in the beautiful location of Struga on Lake Ohrid in North Macedonia, and the setting couldn't be more idyllic, with fabulous views over the lake with a wonderful mountain range in the background.

Getting to Ohrid was a major challenge as there are no direct flights, and so the English delegation (comprising six teams of four to five players) travelled via Vienna, Belgrade, Skopje or Tirana, which meant there were a number of travel cancellations and delays, with Glenn Flear (in the England 50+ 1 squad) and Tony Kosten (in the England 65+ 1 squad) arriving a day later than intended.

Stewart Reuben had a particularly frustrating travel experience, as he explains: 'My trip to North Macedonia proved to be very difficult, as it was for some other people. I had intended to stay three nights in Albania before going on to Ohrid by car, thus bringing the number of countries I have visited up to 105. Unfortunately, the flight to Tirana in Albania was first much delayed and then cancelled. There were no seats on the plane for the next couple of nights, so I returned home from Luton and decided to give up on the whole trip.

'But I spoke to Nigel Povah, and he persuaded me to give it one more try. How pleased I am that he did so. I changed my route and stayed one night in Vienna, before travelling by air to Ohrid. Nigel had arranged a number of rooms at the hotel overlooking the lake. The first night the sky was beautifully clear. I don't think I have seen such a complete sight of so many stars since I was in Tahiti last century. Moreover, the view of Venus was so bright that at first I thought it must be a man-made satellite. That, together with meeting old friends – all younger than me (!) – has so far made this a very special occasion.'

The 50+ event had 22 teams, of which three were Women's teams to contest the Women's Championship. England 1 were second seeds behind a strong team from

the USA. England 2 were the eighth seeds, England 3 13th and England Women 14th.

The 65+ event had 26 teams, with England 1 being second seeds behind a strong Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK team, with England 2 20th seeds.

Pictures are by Mark Livshitz. A full photo gallery can be found here:

<https://seniorteam2023.fide.com/tournament/photogallery/>

You can find a press release from Nigel Povah here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/wstcc-reports-from-nigel-povah/>



Round 1 – 19th September

This round saw England 50+ 1 (Mickey Adams (above), John Emms, Keith Arkell and Nigel Davies) paired against England 50+ 3 (Russell Granat, Phil Crocker, Clive Frostick and Brian Hewson), and the result was quite predictable, although not the score, which was 3½-½ as Russell Granat managed an impressive draw with Mickey Adams and may have even stood fractionally better in the final position.

England 50+ 2 (Steve Dishman, Andy Lewis, Gary Clark and Tony Stebbings) beat Scotland 4-0, while England 50+ Women (Sue Lalic, Sheila Jackson, Ingrid Lauterbach and Petra Nunn) lost by the same score to a strong Italian team who were seeded third.

England 65+ 1 (John Nunn, Terry Chapman, Chris Baker and Nigel Povah) beat Austria 1 by 3-1, while England 2 lost by the same score to Germany (eighth seeds).

Round 2 – 20th September

England 50+ 1 beat Poland 3-1, thanks to wins from Mickey Adams and Glenn Flear (who had now arrived). England 50+ 2 lost 2½-1½ to the Italians, so, although disappointing, not too bad a result as they were heavily outrated. England 50+ 3 beat Uruguay by 2½-1½ thanks to wins from Phil Crocker and Brian Hewson. England 50+

Women beat Scotland by 3½-½, with Sheila Jackson demonstrating her ability to win K, B and N vs K.

England 65+ 1 beat Kosovo by 3-1 thanks to wins from John Nunn (below) and Tony Kosten, who had also arrived by now. England 2 beat 25th seeds Sweden Skane by 3-1, with wins from England's two oldest players in the delegation, Geoff James and Stewart Reuben, both of whom are in their eighties!

So after the second round England 50+ 1 and England 65+ 1 were both joint top of their sections, with tough matches in round 3 against Italy and Slovakia respectively. England Women were sharing the lead with China ShenZhen women, and had a tough round 3 match against ninth seeds Slovakia.



Round 3 – 21st September

A good day for England, as the England 50+ 1st team beat Italy by 2½-1½ thanks to a win from Mickey Adams.

England 50+ 2 continued to show their dominance over the other British teams with a 3-1 win over Wales, while England 50+ 3 lost by 3½-½ to Montenegro, with Russell Granat getting the solitary draw against another GM.

England 50+ Women had an excellent result against ninth seeds Slovakia with a 2-2 draw, thanks to a draw from Sue Lalic on top board against GM Martin Mrva and Petra Nunn drawing against an IM on board 4, while Ingrid Lauterbach scored an impressive victory on board 3 to offset Sheila Jackson's reversal on board 2.

England 65+ 1 beat Slovakia by 2½-1½, securing revenge for their defeat in the recent European Senior Team Championships, with Terry Chapman winning a very tense game on board 3 against IM Alois Lanc, who was their sole victor in that European match, so justice was served! England 65+ 2 lost 2½-1½ to Austria Steiermark, with Tim Spanton scoring a good win on board 3.

After three rounds, England 50+ 1 and England 65+ 1 were still both joint leaders of their sections. There were some enticing pairings in round 4, with the England 50+ 1st

team playing a solid Iceland team, while England 2 faced the USA and England 3 were paired against England Women. In the 65+ section England 1 were playing the top seeds Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK, and England 2 were paired against Italy.

Round 4 – 22nd September

After yesterday's success, today was much tougher. The England 50+ 1 team only managed a 2-2 draw with Iceland, thanks to another win from Mickey Adams to offset Glenn Flear's defeat.

England 50+ 2 faced the mighty USA team, and although they lost 3-1 both Andy Lewis and Tony Stebbings achieved creditable draws against strong GMs. Meanwhile the all-England clash between England 50+ 3 and England 50+ Women was a very tight contest, with England 50+ 3 emerging victors by 2½-1½ thanks to a solitary win by Clive Frostick against Ingrid Lauterbach.

England 65+ 1 also had a bad day, losing by 2½-1½ to top seeds Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK, with Chris Baker losing a tough game and Tony Kosten unfortunately overlooking a saving resource for his opponent in a clearly winning position. England 65+ 2 lost 3½-½ to fifth seeds Italy, with Geoff James getting a creditable draw against an IM, despite being outrated by over 200 points.

England 50+ 1 were still joint leaders and would face the USA in round 5 in what would clearly be a crunch match. England 65+ 1 were now joint third, but were still in with a chance as they had now played the first and third seeds and had a much easier game against tenth-seeded Belgium. There was another all-England clash, with England 50+ 2 paired against England 50+ 3 and England 50+ Women playing Canada, whilst England 65+ 2 were due to play Austria 1.

Round 5 – 23rd September

England 50+ 1 unfortunately lost by 2½-1½ to the USA in what was a tightly contested match, as John Emms failed to hold a tricky rook and pawn ending a pawn down.

England 50+ 2 beat England 50+ 3 by 3-1, with Steve Dishman and Tony Stebbings securing wins against Russell Granat and Helen Frostick respectively. England 50+ Women managed a 2-2 draw against Canada, with Natasha Regan winning an exciting game on board 4 to offset Sue Lalic's defeat on top board.

England 65+ 1 bounced back to beat Belgium by 3½-½, with John Nunn winning a particularly impressive game on top board, while Terry Chapman continued his good form to achieve a comfortable win and take his score to 3½/4. England 65+ 2 drew 2-2 with Austria 1, who very sportingly agreed to allow us to change our team after the

deadline for team list submissions, as Stewart Reuben unfortunately suffered a nasty fall and wasn't feeling able to play. Fortunately, Stewart wasn't too seriously hurt, although he was clearly somewhat shaken by the episode.

England 50+ 1 slipped to 4th equal, but having played most of the top teams had an easier run in after their tricky match in round 6 against North Macedonia. England 65+ 1 moved up to joint second and were due to play France in round 6.

Round 6 – 24th September

It was a day of England match draws in the 50+ section. England 50+ 1 could only manage a 2-2 draw against North Macedonia, with Mickey Adams once again winning on top board to cancel out Keith Arkell's loss. England 50+ 2 also drew 2-2 with 6th seeded Montenegro, thanks to a good win from Gary Clark after Andy Lewis, who wasn't feeling too well, suffered his first defeat. England 50+ 3 had a very creditable 2-2 draw with seventh-seeded Poland, thanks to an impressive win by Brian Hewson against an IM who outrated him by nearly 300 points! England 50+ Women drew 2-2 with Sweden, thanks to Natasha Regan winning her second game since her late arrival.

However, there were two wins for our 65+ teams. England 65+ 1 managed to beat France by 2½-1½ in a very tight match, thanks to Tony Kosten bamboozling his opponent in their mutual time trouble, and England 65+ 2 beat Austria 2 by the same score, thanks to a sole victory by Stewart Reuben who had clearly recovered from his nasty fall.

England 50+ 1 were still lying in joint fourth place, but were three match points behind the USA, so their best hope now was probably to secure silver. England 50+ Women were joint top of the Women's section with China, who were ahead of them by one game point, but as they had yet to play one another, there was still everything to play for. England 65+ 1 were now in sole second place behind Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK, who were two match points ahead. England were due to play third-placed Israel in round 7, so a victory would cement second place and keep the pressure on the top seeds. Monday 25th was a rest day, so the chess resumed on Tuesday 26th.

Round 7 – 26th September

England 50+ 1 managed to beat England 50+ 2 by 3-1, thanks to yet another win from Mickey Adams, this time joined by Glenn Flear. England 50+ 3 beat Scotland by 2½-1½ thanks to wins from Clive Frostick and Brian Hewson but unfortunately England 50+ Women lost 3½-½ to Uruguay.

England 65+ 1 managed to beat Israel by 3-1 with good wins from Tony Kosten and Terry Chapman, who is having a fantastic tournament. England 65+ 2 had a disappointing day and lost 4-0 to North Macedonia.

Italy had an impressive 3-1 victory over the USA and were now leading the 50+ section, whilst Iceland were also just ahead of the USA who were now in third place, which still left England 50+ 1 lying in fourth place, and they would do well to secure one of the top medals. England 50+ Women were now lying second behind China ShenZhen in the bid for the Women's title and they had to hope they could play them in one of the remaining two rounds in order to have a chance of overhauling them. England 65+ 1 had consolidated their second place behind Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK, who were still two match points ahead.

Round 8 – 27th September

England 50+ 1 beat Montenegro by 3-1, with Mickey Adams and John Emms winning on the top two boards. England 50+ 2 beat Slovakia by 2½-1½ with a notable win from Steve Dishman against GM Martin Mrva. England 50+ 3 lost by the same score to China ShenZhen. England 50+ Women beat North Macedonia 50+ Women by 3½-½. England 65+ 1 beat Finland by 3-1 with wins from Tony Kosten and Nigel Povah, and England 65+ 2 beat Sweden by 2½-1½ thanks to wins from John Quinn and Stewart Reuben to offset Tim Spanton's loss.

With Italy and Iceland drawing 2-2, the USA were back on top of the 50+ section by a mere half game point ahead of Italy. The final round pairings of Poland (seventh seeds) versus the USA and Italy versus Montenegro (sixth seeds) promised to provide a very intense finish. England 50+ 1 were one game point behind Iceland, so the fixtures of Iceland versus England 2 (eighth seeds) and England versus China ShenZhen (tenth seeds) should determine who got the bronze medal. If the two England teams did well, then England 1 could secure the bronze and England 50+ Women might be able to overhaul China ShenZhen to secure the gold medal if they could score heavily against Finland (21st seeds) and make up for their two-game points deficit.

England 65+ 1 were still in silver medal position and would require Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK to lose their final match against another Germany team, which based on ratings was highly unlikely. England 65+ 1 would be likely to secure the silver if they avoided losing by more than 3-1 to 12th-seeded Switzerland SG Riehen.

Round 9 – 28th September

England 50+ 1 beat China ShenZhen 50+ by 4-0, whilst England 50+ 2 lost to Iceland by 2½-1½, and these two results meant that England 50+ 1 secured the silver medal

behind the USA, who beat Poland 4-0 in the final round to overtake their rivals. England 50+ 3 lost 3½-½ to the all-GM team from North Macedonia, with Brian Hewson getting the solitary draw.

England 50+ Women beat Finland by 2½-1½, which saw them leapfrog China ShenZhen 50+ Women by just half a game point, to take gold and retain their Women's 50+ World title!

England 65+ 1 beat Switzerland SG Riehen by 4-0 to confirm their silver medal in the 65+ section behind Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK, who drew 2-2 with their German compatriots - but they very nearly lost this match as the German board 4 was comfortably ahead before he slipped up and allowed his opponent to secure the draw. Had Germany Lasker Schachstiftung GK lost this match by 2½-1½, England 65+ 1 would have won the gold by one game point, such were the small margins. England 65+ 2 beat Wales Silures by 2½-1½.

Final Results

World Seniors Open 50+

1. USA 15 match points 26 game points
2. England 1 14 match points 24½ game points
3. Iceland 14 match points 24 game points

Board Medals

Mickey Adams – Gold for board 1 – undefeated with a rating performance of 2761!

Glenn Flear – Bronze for board 3

Nigel Davies – Bronze for the reserve board 5

World Seniors Women 50+

1. England Women 9 match points 17½ game points
2. China ShenZhen Women 9 match points 17 game points
3. North Macedonia Women 1 match point 6½ game points

World Seniors Open 65+

1. Germany Lasker 17 match points 25½ game points
2. England 1 16 match points 26 game points
3. Slovakia 13 match points 21 game points

Board Medals

John Nunn – Bronze for board 1

Tony Kosten – Gold for board 2

Terry Chapman – Silver for board 3

Nigel Povah – Silver for the reserve board 5

England 50+ 1: Second Place, Second Seeds

1. Mickey Adams 8/9; 2. John Emms 5/8; 3. Glenn Flear 4½/7; 4. Keith Arkell 3/6; 5. Nigel Davies 4/6

England 50+ 2: Eighth Place, Second Seeds

1. Steve Dishman 4/9; 2. Andrew Lewis 4/9; 3. Gary Clark 6/9; 4. Tony Stebbings 5½/9

England 50+ 3: 18th Place, 13th Seeds

1. Russell Granat 2/7; 2. Philip Crocker 2½/8; 3. Clive Frostick 3½/8; 4. Brian Hewson 4½/8; 5. Helen Frostick 1/5

England 50+ Women: 13th Place, 14th Seeds

1. Sue Lalic 3½/8; 2. Sheila Jackson 2½/8; 3. Ingrid Lauterbach 4½/8; 4. Natasha Regan 4/5; 5. Petra Nunn 3/7

England 65+ 1: Second Place, Second Seeds

1. John Nunn 5½/8; 2. Tony Kosten 6½/8; 3. Terry Chapman 6½/8; 4. Chris Baker 3/6; 5. Nigel Povah 4½/6

England 65+ 2: 13th Place, Second Seeds

1. John Quinn 4/8; 2. Geoff James 3½/7; 3. Brian Valentine 1/7; 4. Tim Spanton 3/8; 5. Stewart Reuben 4/6

III Mindsports GM Super Swiss Open 2023 by Lance Leslie-Smith

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the Mindsports Grandmasters Open, the third edition of titled tournaments at the London Mindsports Centre, has been a success!

The tournament took place from the 13th - 17th September, and was advertised as a Super Swiss Open tournament. The idea was taken from the 1000GM Las Vegas Super Swiss - credit goes to the 1000GM organisation and the project manager IM Josiah Stearman. The Las Vegas tournament can be found [here](#).

The Mindsports GM Super Swiss achieved an average rating greater than 2400 after the first twenty registrations. An amazing feat! The final field of players included 32 total players with an average rating of 2305, including five GMs, nine IMs, one WGM, five FMs, and three CMs. The starting rank cross-table can be found below: [III Mindsports GM Super Swiss Open Starting Rank Cross Table](#)

| Starting rank | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|----------|----------|
| No. | | Name | FideID | FED Rtg |
| 1 | | GM Frode Olav Olsen Urkedal | 1506102 | NOR 2506 |
| 2 | | GM Alexander Kovchan | 14103052 | UKR 2480 |
| 3 | | IM Marcus R Harvey | 400092 | ENG 2480 |
| 4 | | GM Eldar Gasanov | 14104466 | UKR 2476 |
| 5 | | GM Boris Chatalbashev | 2900440 | DEN 2466 |
| 6 | | IM Benjamin Haldorsen | 1512633 | NOR 2460 |
| 7 | | IM Peter T Roberson | 412384 | ENG 2433 |
| 8 | | IM Matthew J Wadsworth | 415804 | ENG 2432 |
| 9 | | IM Filip Boe Olsen | 1440640 | DEN 2428 |
| 10 | | IM Jonah B Willow | 438804 | ENG 2410 |
| 11 | | GM Alexander Cherniaev | 4117301 | ENG 2390 |
| 12 | | IM James P Jackson | 416860 | ENG 2376 |
| 13 | | FM Maciej Czopor | 21805431 | POL 2358 |
| 14 | | IM Graeme N Buckley | 402265 | ENG 2349 |
| 15 | | FM Alex Browning | 12984019 | GER 2347 |
| 16 | | IM Vardaan Nagpal | 25089544 | IND 2322 |
| 17 | | FM Tom O'Gorman | 2508249 | IRL 2313 |
| 18 | | FM Frederick Waldhausen Gordon | 2409143 | SCO 2302 |
| 19 | | Steven A Jones | 419630 | ENG 2289 |
| 20 | | CM Ankush Khandelwal | 413470 | ENG 2277 |
| 21 | | FM Roland Bezuidenhout | 14304562 | RSA 2267 |
| 22 | | Viktor Stoyanov | 450308 | ENG 2262 |
| 23 | | WGM Andreea Navrotescu | 675946 | FRA 2228 |
| 24 | | AFM Elias Ruzhansky | 472824 | BEL 2216 |
| 25 | | CM Peter Finn | 432156 | ENG 2212 |
| 26 | | Aditya Verma | 426202 | ENG 2140 |
| 27 | | Lorenzo Fava | 2837434 | ITA 2121 |
| 28 | | CM Peter D Lalic | 416711 | ENG 2117 |
| 29 | | Oscar Pollack | 429414 | ENG 2110 |
| 30 | | Jude Shearsby | 462527 | ENG 2100 |
| 31 | | Frankie Badacsonyi | 460400 | ENG 2080 |
| 32 | | Supratit Banerjee | 2410079 | SCO 2017 |

| Final Ranking after 9 Rounds | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|--|--------------------------------|-----|------|-----|------|----|--------|
| Rk. | SNo | | Name | FED | Rtg | TB1 | TB2 | K | rtg+/- |
| 1 | 1 | | GM Frode Olav Olsen Urkedal | NOR | 2506 | 7 | 2626 | 10 | 13,2 |
| 2 | 8 | | IM Matthew J Wadsworth | ENG | 2432 | 6 | 2544 | 10 | 13,8 |
| 3 | 10 | | IM Jonah B Willow | ENG | 2410 | 6 | 2526 | 10 | 14,5 |
| 4 | 5 | | GM Boris Chatalbashev | DEN | 2466 | 6 | 2513 | 10 | 5,7 |
| 5 | 2 | | GM Alexander Kovchan | UKR | 2480 | 6 | 2509 | 10 | 3,7 |
| 6 | 4 | | GM Eldar Gasanov | UKR | 2476 | 5,5 | 2484 | 10 | 1,6 |
| 7 | 20 | | CM Ankush Khandelwal | ENG | 2277 | 5,5 | 2422 | 20 | 31,8 |
| 8 | 17 | | FM Tom O'Gorman | IRL | 2313 | 5,5 | 2380 | 10 | 8,8 |
| 9 | 9 | | IM Filip Boe Olsen | DEN | 2428 | 5,5 | 2374 | 10 | -5 |
| 10 | 22 | | Viktor Stoyanov | ENG | 2262 | 5 | 2442 | 20 | 42,2 |
| 11 | 6 | | IM Benjamin Haldorsen | NOR | 2460 | 5 | 2414 | 10 | -5,7 |
| 12 | 18 | | FM Frederick Waldhausen Gordon | SCO | 2302 | 5 | 2402 | 20 | 24,4 |
| 13 | 11 | | GM Alexander Cherniaev | ENG | 2390 | 5 | 2314 | 10 | -8,5 |
| 14 | 16 | | IM Vardaan Nagpal | IND | 2322 | 5 | 2305 | 10 | -1,9 |
| 15 | 15 | | FM Alex Browning | GER | 2347 | 4,5 | 2344 | 20 | -0,4 |
| 16 | 21 | | FM Roland Bezuidenhout | RSA | 2267 | 4,5 | 2293 | 20 | 6 |
| 17 | 24 | | AFM Elias Ruzhansky | BEL | 2216 | 4,5 | 2209 | 40 | -5,2 |
| 18 | 14 | | IM Graeme N Buckley | ENG | 2349 | 4 | 2295 | 10 | -5,4 |
| 19 | 27 | | Lorenzo Fava | ITA | 2121 | 4 | 2225 | 40 | 36,4 |
| 20 | 31 | | Frankie Badacsonyi | ENG | 2080 | 4 | 2148 | 40 | 30,8 |
| 21 | 13 | | FM Maciej Czopor | POL | 2358 | 3,5 | 2325 | 10 | -3,6 |
| 22 | 19 | | Steven A Jones | ENG | 2289 | 3,5 | 2194 | 20 | -23,4 |
| 23 | 26 | | Aditya Verma | ENG | 2140 | 3,5 | 2081 | 20 | -14,8 |
| 24 | 7 | | IM Peter T Roberson | ENG | 2433 | 3 | 2224 | 10 | -15,7 |
| 25 | 30 | | Jude Shearsby | ENG | 2100 | 3 | 2154 | 40 | 13,2 |
| 26 | 29 | | Oscar Pollack | ENG | 2110 | 3 | 2088 | 20 | -5,8 |
| 27 | 25 | | CM Peter Finn | ENG | 2212 | 3 | 2045 | 20 | -35 |
| 28 | 3 | | IM Marcus R Harvey | ENG | 2480 | 2,5 | 2273 | 10 | -16,7 |
| 29 | 23 | | WGM Andreea Navrotescu | FRA | 2228 | 2,5 | 2120 | 20 | -21,6 |
| 30 | 28 | | CM Peter D Lalic | ENG | 2117 | 2,5 | 2084 | 20 | -8,6 |
| 31 | 12 | | IM James P Jackson | ENG | 2376 | 2 | 2284 | 10 | -4,8 |
| 32 | 32 | | Supratit Banerjee | SCO | 2017 | 2 | 1874 | 40 | -40,8 |

Annotation:
Tie Break1: points (game-points)
Tie Break2: Performance (variable with parameter)

Heading into the eighth round there were six potential title norm opportunities on the line. Going into round 9 there were only two opportunities available. It just shows how difficult Swiss tournaments can be.

At the conclusion of the tournament, unfortunately no player title norms were achieved! This is the nature of playing in a Swiss Open tournament, where the pairings can sometimes be unpredictable.

Organising titled tournaments in the UK is quite a challenge, and having prizes is even more challenging. A big thanks to Chessable for supporting the tournament with pens, merchandise and £1,000 in vouchers. The prizes were distributed as follows:

Chessable Vouchers

1st £300 – GM Frode Urkedal 7/9

2nd = (£400/4 - £100 each) IM Matthew Wadsworth, IM Jonah Willow, GM Boris Chatalbashev, and GM Alex Kovchan 6/9

Best Junior £100 – FM Freddy Gordon 5/9

Norm Seekers (£200/2 - £100 each) CM Ankush Khaldelwal and Viktor Stoyanov

All the games / PGNs can be downloaded [here](#).

A special thanks to the tournament sponsors below. Without them this event would not have been possible!

[English Chess Federation](#)

[The Chess Trust](#)

[Chessable \(The Official Learning Partner\)](#)

Raymond Cannon – Donor

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Young Chelsea Bridge Club, which provided the venue for the tournament and Chief Arbiter Alan Atkinson for running the event effortlessly. The equipment was provided by the London Chess League (John Sargent and Andy Heard). Score sheets, pens, board numbers, fair play equipment and banners were provided by International Arbiter/Organiser Adam Raof.

The tournament was deemed to be one of the strongest open Swiss title norm events in recent times in the UK.

The mission is to keep organising title norm tournaments in the London area, and to continue providing title norm opportunities at the highest level for English chess.

Pictures from the tournament have been included below. All photos can be found on the Chess-Results.com website [here](#).



GM Frode Urkedal (tournament winner)

33rd NATO Chess Championships by Ben Woolf

In the first week of September this year the UK Armed Forces Chess Team competed in the 33rd NATO Chess Championships. The competition is open to serving members of the Armed Forces as well as civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Each NATO member country takes turns hosting the event and this year was Slovenia's opportunity. The organisers chose the beautiful sea-side town of Portorož.

The UK is the only country that has competed in every NATO competition, and the team this year were keen to put on a good show despite being heavily outrated by many of the other teams. The team members are selected based on the top six performers at the National Armed Forces Championships. In addition, a team captain and team official are also selected, as well as two 'life-time members' – retired members who have previously attended at least eight NATO championships.

The week started with an opening ceremony and music from the Slovenian military band, followed by official photos, before the first round got under way. The competition is a Swiss tournament, and the seeded first round meant some tough games for the UK contingent - in particular, life-time member Dave Tucker, who lost a tough fight against the eventual winner of the individual title, FM Robert Stein from Germany. There were some encouraging results for the team, though, with Armed Forces champion Dave Onley and MOD champion Dan Wells both winning their first games.



Playing hall



Round 1



The assembled players and spectators stand for the Slovenian national anthem at the opening ceremony

Day 2 saw two rounds, and again, despite some tough match-ups, the UK team held their own, with former Armed Forces champion Glen Parker winning both of his games and sitting on a healthy 2½/3 going into the fourth round. His demolition of a highly-rated German opponent in round 3 is annotated by Dave Tucker at the end of the article. Dave Onley also had a good result in his second-round game, holding a Danish FM to a draw. He has annotated his game below.

The third day involved only one round, with team official Jimmy Blair winning a good game against a player rated 250 points higher. In the afternoon the competitors had the opportunity to experience some more of Slovenia, with visits organised to a local vineyard and the spectacular Postojna caves. After 4 rounds the UK team stood in 9th place in the league table with 9½ points, 3½ points behind tournament leaders Greece.

Thursday involved two more tough rounds. Round 5 saw what can definitely be described as the come-back of the tournament, with life member and Royal Air Force veteran Danny O’Byrne somehow managing to win his game despite blundering a queen for a bishop in the early stages.

Friday was the final day of the tournament. Unfortunately, the team had a tough final round and the only person to improve his score by a full point was MOD player Frazer Graham with a clinical win against his experienced Danish opponent. In the afternoon competitors had the opportunity to take part in a blitz tournament. Top performer among the UK contingent in the blitz tournament was Glen Parker, whose very healthy score of 7½/11 resulted in a 12th place finish out of the 90 competitors, beating the tournament third seed Turkish IM Ege Koksal in the process.

Final standings in the main competition saw the UK finishing in a respectable 12th place out of the 21 teams, beating strong teams from both Belgium and the Netherlands. The UK Armed Forces Chess Association is

seeing a boom in membership as more people take up the game, and hopefully we can improve on our result at the competition next year, to be held on the Greek island of Rhodes. Honourable mention goes to Dan Wells as the highest-scoring member of the UK contingent.

The team currently receives no official funding or support from the military for representative chess but were fortunate this year to be supported by a generous donation from The Chess Trust, without which some of our members might not have been able to compete. Anyone currently or previously employed by any of the armed forces, or the Ministry of Defence, who is interested in joining the Armed Forces Chess Association should contact Ben Woolf at benwoolf@hotmail.co.uk.



The playing area – the team have all certainly played in locations with less of a view!

FM F Pedersen 2266 DEN - D Onley 2026 UK (Round 2)

I’ve shared many beers with Finn over the years, but never have we faced each other over the board. I am always pleased to play strong title players, particularly friends at the NATO Championships.

1.Nf3 f5 2.d3 Nc6 3.e4 e5 4.d4 exd4 5.exf5 Qf6



I was relatively content with the opening sequence of moves. I assume Finn was out the book too at this early stage. The aim going forward was to over-protect the d-

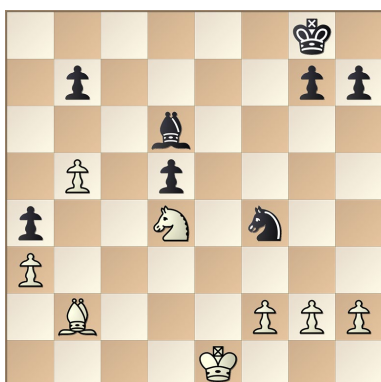
pawn, get the king safe and round up my opponents f-pawn.

**6.Bd3 Bb4+ 7.Nbd2 Nge7 8.0-0 d5 9.a3 Bd6 10.b4 Bxf5
11.Bxf5 Nxf5 12.Re1+ Nce7 13.Nb3 0-0 14.Nbxd4**



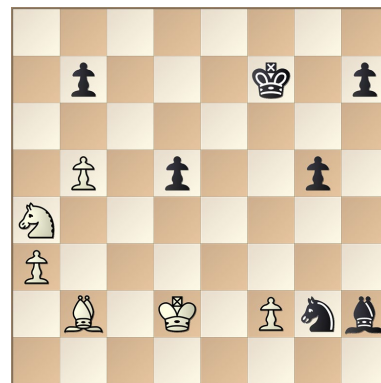
The dust has settled somewhat, and with the removal of White's light-squared bishop I slightly preferred my position. The bishop, pressure on the f-file and the d5-pawn controlling key squares meant that this was a nice position. However, I couldn't find any good plans apart from the natural simplification.

**14...Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Qxd4 16.Nxd4 Ng6 17.Ne6 Rfe8
18.Bb2 Re7 19.Kf1 a5 20.b5 a4 21.Rad1 c6 22.c4 Rae8
23.cxd5 cxd5 24.Nd4?? Rxe1+ 25.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 26.Kxe1
Nf4**



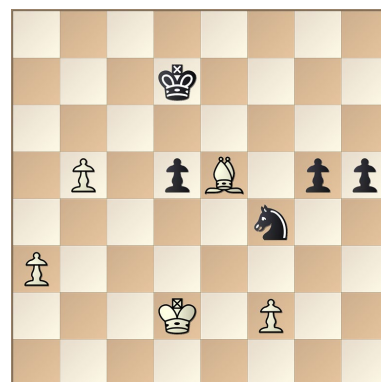
A complete oversight that blunders a pawn. White is in trouble now as his kingside will be left in tatters.

**27.Nf5 Bf8 28.Kd2 Nxc2 29.Nd4 Kf7 30.Ne2 Bd6 31.Nc3
Bxh2 32.Nxa4 g5??**



Wrong idea! I was playing to safeguard the g-pawn if my king moved forward, cement the f4 outpost for a piece (or pieces), retreating back to the action, and support the h-pawn advance. TOO SLOW!! I should have just pushed the h-pawn!

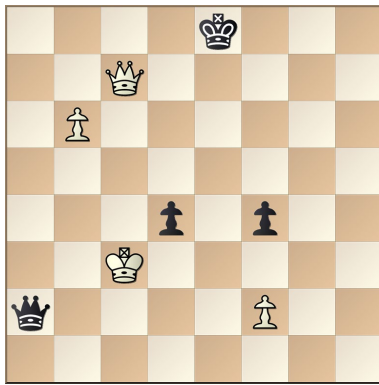
**33.Nc5 b6 34.Nd7 Bc7 35.Bd4 Nf4 36.Bxb6 Ke7 37.Bxc7
Kxd7 38.Be5 h5**



Finn has, as every better player does, taken advantage of a lack of decisiveness at a key time. He is now in the driving seat.

I finally get around to pushing the h-pawn. I promote first, but unfortunately there is no check. The fog of war had engulfed my brain. It was hurting and I needed a beer!

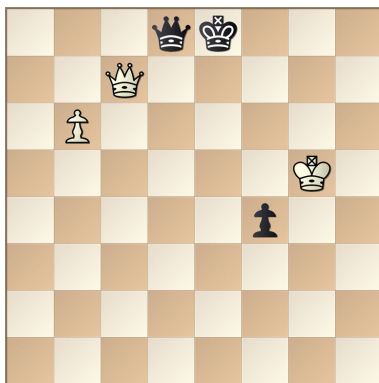
**39.a4 h4 40.a5 h3 41.a6 h2 42.a7 h1Q 43.a8Q Qe4
44.Qc6+ Ke7 45.Qf6+ Ke8 46.Qh8+ Ke7 47.Qg7+ Ke8
48.Qg8+ Kd7 49.Qf7+ Kd8 50.Qc7+ Ke8 51.Bxf4 gxf4
52.b6 Qd4+ 53.Kc1 Qa1+ 54.Kc2 Qa2+ 55.Kc3 d4+**



56.Kxd4??

White should leave the pawn alone and instead utilise it to block against checks when the king advances. Once the pawn is removed there is no escape from the checks with correct play. I still was not hopeful in holding this, though, assuming I would run out of checks and the b-pawn would decide the game.

56...Qxf2+ 57.Ke4 Qg2+ 58.Kf5 Qh3+ 59.Ke4 Qe3+ 60.Kd5 Qd3+ 61.Ke6 Qe4+ 62.Kf6 Qd4+ 63.Kg6 Qd3+ 64.Kg5 Qd8+!



Phew! A relief to have saved the game. This was a game that could have gone either way, and both of us agreed afterwards that it was a fair result.

65.Kxf4 Qxc7+ 66.bxc7 Kd7 67.c8Q+ Kxc8 ½-½

Round 3

Ulrich Bohn (Germany) 2161 - Glen Parker (UK) 1973

Opening catastrophe! It is a rare occurrence for a German player at NATO to lose as drastically as this. After move 10 it is all over bar the shouting. Glen Parker mops up easily.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 The Accelerated London System is quite popular these days. It is also known as the Jobava line because the Georgian GM plays it often.

2...c6 Unusual, but not bad. It allows the queen to come out early on b6.

3.e3 Qb6 This threatens Qxb2. It is possible for White to play in gambit style with 4.Nd2 if he is that way inclined.

4.b3 d6 5.Bd3 Nbd7 6.Nf3 Nh5 White has not played h3 so why not take this opportunity to win the minor exchange of bishop for knight?

7.Bg5?! This allows Black to develop rapidly. 7.Bg3 looks sensible.

7...h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Ng1?? An ugly retreat that is as bad as it looks. Perhaps White thought he might punish the rapid advance of the black pawns if the knight on h5 had to retreat, since it is under attack from the white queen. Herr Bohn must be fully aware of the German term *Zwischenzug* (intermediate move) but he just forgot about it here.

9...Qa5+!



This check is far superior to 9...gxh4 10. Qxh5, although the computer regards that as better for Black too. The point of this move is that the queen defends the black knight laterally, so a subsequent gxh4 will win a piece.

10.c3? Going meekly to his fate: White can avoid losing a piece with the rather desperate 10.b4, but after 10...Qxb4+ 11.Nd2 Ndf6 etc Black is much better.

10...gxh4 11.b4 Too late!

11...Qg5 12.Nf3 Qf6 Glen was probably wary of grabbing a poisoned pawn with 12...Qxg2, The computer thinks 12...Qxg2 13.Rg1 Qh3 etc is winning for Black.

13.Nbd2 d5 14.g4 Ng7 15.e4 e5 This prevents e5 by White, and starts to catch up on piece development for the black army.

16.Qe2 Bd6 17.cxd5 exd5 18.Rg1 Ne6! 19.dxe5 Bxe5 20.Bb5 With a crude threat to win the bishop on e5 because of the pin on the d7-knight.

20...Bxc3 This is crushing. White could have resigned here with good grace, but staggers on, although resistance is futile!

21.Rd1 Kd8! Glen looks to exploit the weakness of White's situation on the e-file.

22.Qd3 Re8 23.Kf1 What else?

23...Nf4 24.Qb1 a6 25.Bd3 b5 The bishop at c8 is looking to join the party.

26.g5 Qe6 27.Ne1 Qh3+ 28.Ng2 Nxd3 Not before time, White resigned. **0-1**



Newest addition to the team: Off Cdr William Bradley from the Royal Navy



Armed Forces Chess Association President Wg Cdr Glen Parker RAF



Yours Truly: Team Captain Flt Lt Ben Woolf RAF



Team Official Sgt Jimmy Blair

Psyon Chess Masters IM Norm Tournament 7th – 11th August 2023 by Satish Gaekwad



The first Psyon Chess Masters IM norm tournament was held at the London MindSports Centre near Hammersmith, and was fortunate to produce one IM norm for the 17 year old Aaravamudhan Balaji. The Chief Organiser (and Deputy Arbiter) Satish Gaekwad was lucky to be able to run the inaugural event with no outside sponsorship of any kind. Alan Atkinson was the Chief

Arbiter, and the tournament had four youngsters among the seven players as norm seekers.

The following players participated in the event:

Titled Players

1. GM Keith Arkell
2. IM Augustin Madan
3. IM Peter Large

Norm Seekers

4. FM Can Durak
5. FM Aaravamudhan Balaji
6. FM Jonathan Pein
7. FM Roland Bezuidenhout
8. CM Adam Bremner
9. Savas Marin Stoica
10. Saahil Bansal



The final standings can be found here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr781992.aspx?lan=1&art=4&turdet=NO&flag=30>

1st FM Balaji Aaravamudhan; 2nd FM Can Durak; 3rd FM Roland Bezuidenhout

Norm chances were possible for both FM Can Durak and FM Aaravamudhan Balaji at the end of the seventh round, but Can drew his eighth game, leaving him one point short at the end of the tournament with 6/9 .

The climactic game of the tournament was the final round (round 9) between FM Aaravamudhan Balaji and Savas Marin Stoica, which morphed spectacularly from a virtual draw to the much-needed win for FM Balaji, allowing him to clinch the winner's trophy and earn his first IM norm (with 7 out of 9). The game is given below.

FM Balaji, Aaravamudhan – Stoica, Savas Marin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.e3 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.Be2 0-0 8.b3 Qe7 9.Bb2 Re8 10.0-0 dxc4 11.Bxc4 h6 12.Ne4 Nxe4 13.Qxe4 e5 14.dxe5 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Rxe5 18.Rfd1 Bf5 19.Rd2 Kf8 20.Rad1 Ke8 21.h3 a5 22.Kh2 Re7 23.g4 Be6 24.Bxe6 Rxe6 25.Kg3 Re4 26.Kf3 Re6 27.h4 Rc8 28.Rd7 Re7 29.R7d6 Rec7 30.h5 Ke7 31.Ke4 Ra8 32.f4 a4 33.b4 a3 34.Kf5 c5 35.b5 c4 36.b6 Rc5+ 37.Ke4 Rb8 38.R6d2 Rc6 39.Rd7+ Ke8 40.R7d6 Rbc8 41.Rxc6 Rxc6 42.Rb1 Ke7 43.Kd4 Kf6 44.Kc3 g6 45.Rb5 Re6 46.Kxc4 Rxe3 47.Ra5 gxh5 48.gxh5 Re6 49.Kc5 Kf5 50.Rxa3 Kxf4 51.Ra7 Rc6+ 52.Kb5 Rc2 53.a4 Rb2+ 54.Ka5

1-0

FM Can had a good chance (as Black) in his round 2 game against FM Aaravamudhan, but probably some rushed moves turned the game round, leading to a victory for FM Aaravamudhan – this set the tone for the tournament for



The average players' rating was 224,2 and a score of 7 from nine rounds was required to secure the IM norm, which was quite steep considering the norm-seekers' ratings.



FM Aaravamudhan Balaji receiving the winner's trophy (along with a cash prize of £200)

the latter, who went from strength to strength without losing a single game.

FM Balaji, Aaravamudhan (2334) – FM Durak, Can (2343)

1.Nf3 d5 2.b3 Nf6 3.Bb2 e6 4.e3 Be7 5.d4 0–0 6.Bd3 b6 7.Nbd2 Bb7 8.0–0 c5 9.Ne5 Nbd7 10.Ndf3 Rc8 11.Qe2 Ne4 12.Nxd7 Qxd7 13.Ne5 Qc7 14.c4 Rfd8 15.Rac1 Bd6 16.Rfd1 dxc4 17.Rxc4 f6 18.Rcc1 Qe7 19.Nc4 Bb8 20.Bxe4 Bxe4 21.dxc5 Rxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Rxc5 23.Ba3 Qc7 24.Qh5 g6 25.Qh6 Bd5 26.Bxc5 Qxc5 27.Nd2 Qa5 28.Nf3 Bd6 29.h4 Bf8 30.Qg5 Qxa2 31.h5 Qxb3 32.Rf1 Bc4 33.Nd2

1–0

Of the other players, FM Roland Bezuidenhout had the steadiest run in the tournament, scoring 5½ points out of 9, also without losing a single game.

Some other interesting games of the tournament are given below.

GM Arkell, Keith C (2373) – IM Madan, Augustin (2292)

Round 9



1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.e4 Bg7 9.Be2 0–0 10.0–0 Re8 11.h3 a6 12.a4 Ne5 13.f4 Ned7 14.Bf3 Rb8 15.a5 b5 16.axb6 Nxb6 17.Ra2 c4 18.Ndb1 Nfd7 19.Be3 f5 20.Bd4 Bxd4+ 21.Qxd4 Qf6 22.Qxf6 Nxf6 23.Nd2 Bb7 24.Rd1 Rbc8 25.Ra5 Rcd8 26.Kf2 Rd7 27.g4 fxg4 28.hxg4 Rf7 29.g5 Nfd7 30.Kg3 Ref8 31.Ne2 Nc5 32.Rxc5 dxc5 33.d6 c3 34.bxc3 Rd8 35.e5 Bxf3 36.Kxf3 Ra7 37.Ne4 a5 38.e6 a4 39.Nf6+ Kf8 40.e7+ Rxe7 41.dxe7+ Kxe7 42.Rxd8 Kxd8 43.Nxh7 Nd5 44.Nf8 Ke7 45.Nxg6+ Ke6 46.Ne5 a3 47.Nd3 Kd6 48.Ndc1

1–0

FM Pein, Jonathan (2276) – IM Large, Peter G (2286)

Round 9



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nc6 4.Ngf3 Nf6 5.e5 Nd7 6.Nb3 Be7 7.Bb5 a5 8.a4 Na7 9.Be2 b6 10.h4 h6 11.Be3 c5 12.c3 Nc6 13.Rh3 Ba6 14.Kf1 Qc8 15.Nc1 cxd4 16.cxd4 Nb4 17.Ne1 Bxe2+ 18.Nxe2 Qa6 19.Kg1 Nb8 20.Nf4 N8c6 21.Rc1 Kd7 22.Ne2 Rhc8 23.Nc3 Nd8 24.h5 Nbc6 25.Qg4 Bf8 26.Nxd5 b5 27.Nd3 Nb4 28.Rxc8 Rxc8 29.axb5 Qxb5 30.N5xb4 axb4 31.Nc5+ Ke8 32.Rf3 Qe2 33.b3 Ra8 34.Ne4 Ra1+ 35.Kh2 Qa6 36.Bxh6 gxf6 37.Nf6+ Ke7 38.d5 Nb7 39.Qxb4+ Nd6 40.Ne4 Rh1+ 41.Kg3 Kd7 42.dxe6+ Kxe6 43.Nc5+ Kxe5 44.Qf4+ Kd5 45.Nxa6 Ne4+ 46.Kg4 Nd6 47.Rd3+ Ke6 48.Nc5+

1–0

FM Pein, Jonathan (2276) - Arkell, Keith C (2373)

Round 7

1.e4 b6 2.d4 Bb7 3.Bd3 e6 4.Nf3 c5 5.d5 exd5 6.exd5 Bxd5 7.Nc3 Bb7 8.Bf4 a6 9.0–0 d5 10.Re1+ Be7 11.Nh4 g6 12.Be5 f6 13.Bg3 Kf7 14.Qg4 f5 15.Bxf5 gxf5 16.Nxf5 Bg5 17.Qh5+ Kf6 18.Be5+ Ke6 19.Bc7+ Kd7 20.Bxd8 Bxd8 21.Qf7+

1–0

I would like to thank the Chief Arbiter Alan Atkinson, the three titled players GM Keith Arkell, IM Augustin Madan and IM Peter Large, all the seven norm-seekers, the hosts at the London Mindsports Centre, and finally the Hammersmith Chess Club for providing the chess boards and sets to help run a successful inaugural IM norm event.



The 2023 National Club Championships makes a welcome return after a gap of five years since the last event. The Championships will be played at the Canham Turner Conference Centre, Cottingham Road, Hull University over five rounds from Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd October. The event will be played between 19 clubs fielding teams of four across three sections:

- Open, with no rating restrictions (with five clubs entering an all play all team competition)
- Intermediate, restricted to teams whose average rating is not more than 2000 (with six clubs entering and also played as an all play all team competition)
- Minor, restricted to teams whose average grade is not more than 1700 (with eight clubs entering and played as a team Swiss tournament)

All games will be played on live boards with commentary from IM Natasha Regan and GM Peter Wells on the final round.

The time of each round will be as follows:

- Round 1 Friday 19.00 – 23.00;
- Round 2 Saturday 10.00 – 14.00;
- Round 3 Saturday 15.00 – 19.00;
- Round 4 Sunday 10.00 – 14.00;
- Round 5 Sunday 15.00 – 19.00

The time control is 90 minutes plus 30 second increments from move 1.

You can find further details including pairings and result together with live board and commentary links on the National Clubs home page at the link here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-national-club-championships-2023/>

FEATURES

Playing the French – Mark Rivlin Interviews GM Glenn Flear

GM Glenn Flear was part of the England 50+ first team that successfully defended their title as European 50+ Seniors Team Champions in July. A chess coach and author, Glenn has spent nearly 30 years living in Montpellier, France, with his wife Christine (née Leroy) and their two sons. The high point in his career came in

1986, when, as an IM, he pulled off one of the great tournament upsets in winning the prestigious London International Tournament which included some of the world's strongest players. Born and raised in Leicester, this incredible feat can be compared to Glenn's hometown football club winning the Premier League 30 years later. In September the ECF welcomed Glenn as part of the writing team in *Chess Moves* with his monthly column *Endgames All Club Players Should Know*.

Let's start with the magical year of 1986 when you won the London International Tournament that included chess A-listers Murray Chandler, Nigel Short, John Nunn, Zoltan Ribli, Lev Polugaevsky, Rafael Vaganian, Lajos Portisch, Boris Spassky, Jonathan Speelman, Bent Larsen, Jonathan Mestel and Jim Plaskett. Not a bad return for an IM, and you also married your fiancée Christine Leroy during the event. Tell us more about this spectacular fortnight.

Originally, they had invited Anatoly Karpov, but he couldn't make it, so they chose Josif Dorfman and he too had a problem. Then they approached Willie Watson who lived in the London area and was intending to work at the event anyway. Willie set it up for me by replying that he didn't mind playing if they didn't have anybody else, but that they should ask me first because I had a higher Elo rating. I accepted, so they were stuck with me! A few days before the event they tracked me down to the Lugano Open where David Anderton contacted me with the details.

My preparation for facing some of the world's elite was basically reading a chess book on the bus journey from my Streatham base into central London. This already paid dividends in Round One when I beat World Junior Champion Max Dlugy with Black in a Catalan, using an idea that I had gleaned from this last-minute prep. And when you start well, you just need to keep going. It was my first experience of playing with retransmitted moves direct from the chess board, as this technology was cutting edge at the time. I was so nervous about making a complete fool of myself with the chess world watching, that it seemed to induce me into becoming highly concentrated. I was also spurred on by my fiancée watching.

Anyway, it all clicked, and I won the tournament with my first GM norm (with two rounds to spare). And I got my GM title in 1987. I also had an important condition that I made in advance of the London tournament. I needed 22 March as a free day as I was getting married, and Jim Plaskett kindly agreed to switch our game to another date. And just to make the tournament extra special, we also moved from Streatham to Leicester during the event. It was indeed an eventful couple of weeks.

In those days there were adjournments, and games were sometimes completed on another day. This is indeed ancient history for some, and possibly a weird idea to younger folk. I claim to be unique in that I started a game (against Jonathan Speelman) as a bachelor and completed it after getting married. I don't think anybody else can match this and, with modern time limits, I doubt it can happen again.

You have been in France for nearly 30 years. What made you move there?

My wife Christine is French, and she has also had achievements in the chess world (WIM and five-time French Women's Champion). We lived until the mid-1990s in Oadby, Leicester, but once we had our first son it became clear that travelling to France was more complicated than before. Also, there weren't that many interesting chess events in the UK, whereas the chess scene was more dynamic in France, and that's where we were playing most of the time.

We chose the Montpellier area in the south of France where we had many chess friends. The lifestyle and weather suited us well. Speaking the language enabled me to fit it without any problems right from the start.

How does the French Federation differ from the ECF?

In France, each region has its particularities and its own set of tournaments, so there is plenty of choice. There are many more ELO-rated tournaments compared to the UK. They have a professionally run federation and their Adult and Junior Leagues are second to none. Having 'real' chess clubs where there are coaches who give regular courses to youngsters of all strengths is the **main** underlying secret behind the chess explosion in France. I already explained this system in detail 25 years ago, but until recently there haven't been any major strides in this direction in the UK (perhaps with the exception of the Accelerator Programme). If you compare the number of IMs and GMs that the French have generated over England since the 1990s, this proves they must be getting something right!

The number of 'serious' junior players in France will come across as extraordinary to many readers. Their journey involves 'county' and regional tournaments ahead of the French Junior Championships in the spring. This is an important event in the calendar where there are more than 1500 players present, that is after qualification(!), and around 100 coaches present, many of whom are professional and titled players. The UK Championships for juniors sadly has a lower status. A consequence is that, for

every promising UK junior, the French have around 10 in the same age-group.

Interestingly, England was far ahead of France in the 1980s, but rested on its laurels rather too long. My view is that it would be better if the Junior Championships were at a different time of the year from the adult national championships (Easter holidays, for example, as in France) as they can attract media attention, and I suspect that many localities are keen to organise such a prestigious event. A learning trip to the French Junior by an ECF official could well prove to be a good investment!

Having chess considered as a sport adds to the status and it helps with funding and partnerships. The fact that it's also recognised as of educational value means that there are some parts of France that have chess in schools, and I mean public, not private. I'm slightly out of touch with the UK chess scene, but the readers will perhaps have their own opinions on the subject!

One striking example is Corsica. For an Island with a population of around 300,000, it has 13 professional chess coaches, and every schoolchild comes into contact with chess at some point or another. They recently produced their first GM, Marc'Andria Maurizzi who is 16, has an ELO in the mid-2550s and has just won the World Junior!

In comparison with the UK, France is very bureaucratic – there are too many strikes, and I don't like the dog excrement in the streets! Certainly, Indian restaurants are better in Leicester than anywhere this side of the channel, but you can't have everything! My home is on the edge of one of the fastest-growing French cities, Montpellier, which boasts modern, high-tech and ecologically-friendly transformations all combined with the Mediterranean lifestyle. I really love the fruit and veg down here!

Tell us about your published chess books and your coaching in France.

There are some opening works and quite a few endgames. The latter gave me the most pleasure in writing and naturally lasted a lot longer in terms of relevance. In particular, I like *Practical Endgame Play – Beyond the Basics* where I examine pseudo-endgames with two pieces each: no-one else had done this to such a degree beforehand. Then there is my last work *Tacticmania* which was a family project with my wife and one of my sons involved and presents calculation exercises from Flear games.

One of the advantages of being an author is that some folk have heard of me and this gets you extra invites and pupils! I do quite a lot of coaching with about a 50-50 mix between French and British pupils. In France some of the

pupils' fees are paid in part by their club or regional Federation. In England, there is the aptly-named Accelerator Programme which helps a chosen few on their way and is bearing fruit already with players such as Shreyas Royal having been helped in this way. I was recently contacted to get involved and have worked the last few months with some of England's best prospects. I enjoy this, as I learn a lot from my pupils, as they keep me on my toes. In both countries, when it comes down to it, for those not quite making the cut, there is no substitute for being highly motivated and having a fair-sized budget.

Please show us a link to one of your favourite games and why it is special for you.

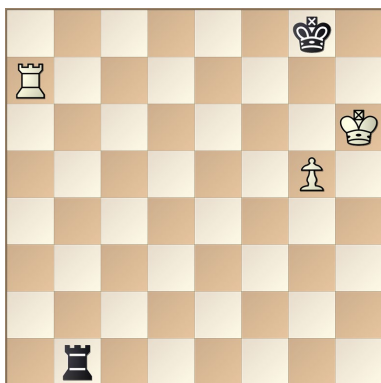
I have too many favourite games to confidently pick out just one, but I found the games of Botvinnik (analysed by himself) to be particularly instructive when I was young. In any case, it's still a good idea to familiarise oneself with the best games of the great masters.

Endgames All Club Players Should Know by Glenn Flear

Defending Rook Endgames

As rook endgames crop up quite frequently there is a fair chance that you will be facing an uphill battle in one of these from time to time! If one has a tendency to drift along with no idea what to do (be honest with yourself!) then the defensive task can be very tough indeed, so having some knowledge of what to avoid and what to head for is a good idea. So let's start with some basic drawing positions and techniques that are worth knowing. Later there will be a few exercises to enable you to test yourself on some of the main themes.

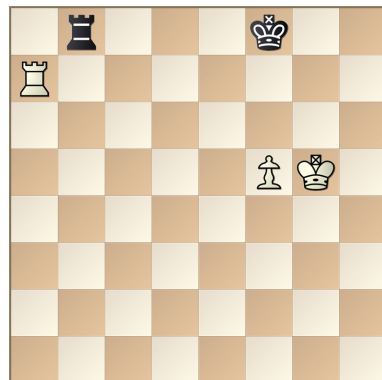
The easiest draw



Black to play doesn't have to do anything special, he just needs to defend the eighth rank with

1...Rb8 and despite White's far more active pieces he can't get anywhere. This holds true with a g-pawn, but not with more central pawns as you'll see below.

Sixth rank defence



With an f-pawn Black (to play) needs to be more cunning.

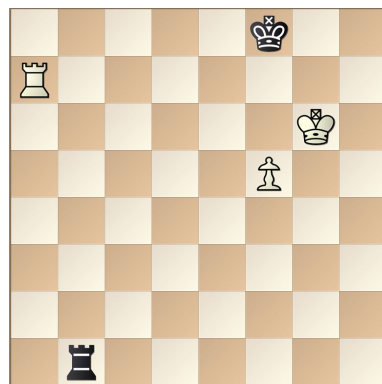
1...Rb6! Sometimes attributed to Philidor, it's worth calling this the 'sixth rank defence' as it's then easier to remember.

If Black just bides his time, then things rapidly go wrong: 1...Rc8? 2.Kg6 Rb8 3.f6 Rc8 4.Rh7 and White wins by using space on the right hand flank (in the previous example, this wasn't possible because the edge of the board rather got in the way!)... 4...Kg8 5.f7+ Kf8 6.Rh8+ and so on.

2.f6 Preparing a shield for his king, but Black has time to thwart White's plans.

2...Rb1! Again going passive to the back rank is bad.
3.Kg6 Rg1+ and, as the white king can't hide from the checks in a convenient way, it's drawn!

Rook behind - King on the short side



Again, Black's clock is ticking, and he has to make a choice. Settling for a passive retreat to the eighth rank or the seemingly more active sixth rank defence both fail. So, he

needs to go behind the passed pawn, which as you will see, makes the advance of the passed pawn a difficult task.

1...Rf1! I like this method of defence very much as it illustrates the general principle of going behind a passed pawn, which is often the right approach in rook endgames.

2.Kf6 Now one has to decide how to avoid the mate.

By the way, we've already seen that 2.f6 doesn't get very far in view of 2...Rg1+ etc.

2...Kg8! We call this the 'short side' as there is less room to the right of the f-pawn. The king heads to the short side leaving plenty of room on the 'long side' for the defensive rook.

For those who read my article last month they'll perhaps remember that 2...Ke8? loses to 3.Ra8+ Kd7 4.Rf8! after which White will soon be able to advance the pawn to f6 in peace and steer the game towards Lucena. Note that there isn't much room on the right-hand side of the board for Black's rook to put up any meaningful resistance.

3.Ra8+ Kh7 4.Rf8

4.Ke6 is met by 4...Kg7! when the king and rook combine (by eyeing f6) to stop the pawn advancing any further.

4...Ra1!

Now threatening annoying checks from the side. The black king being on h7 (rather than d7) means that it isn't 'getting in the way' of checks. So now if...

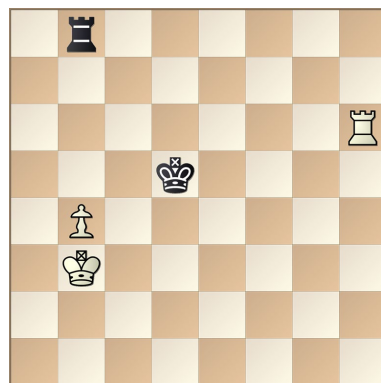
5.Re8

...preparing a shield, Black then switches back with....

(note that with the ranks clear of obstacles 5.Ke7 Ra7+ forces White to go back)

5...Rf1! ...again going behind the pawn. White can try a while longer but if you have understood all these themes, you'll save yourself many a half point. So go through this once again to make sure you haven't missed a key element.

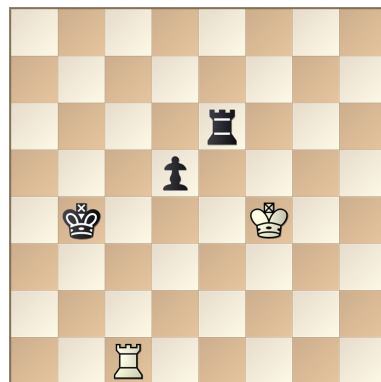
Anticipate and prevent



At first you may not be sure what to do in such a situation, but if you can ascertain what the opponent is threatening then you have a fair chance to find the right move. Here's an example of this process. Some people who I've asked to find the solution (for Black) find it easier if I ask them what White is threatening. They then work out that there is a possible winning plan starting with either Ka4 or Ra6. So a counter comes to mind that prevents both of these moves...

1...Ra8! and a draw is the logical result.

The checking distance



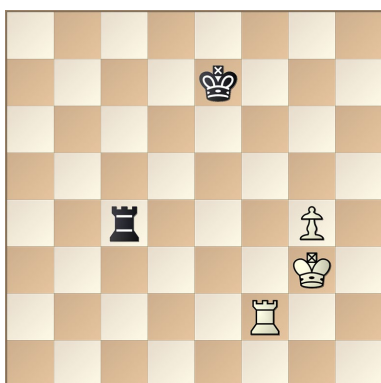
This is a term that is used when the defensive side has three or more files (or ranks) between the defending rook and the passed pawn. However, the rook needs to use this space carefully and not squander it. So

1.Rd1! It's a mistake to simply check the opposing king where it wants to go! 1.Rb1+? Kc3 2.Rc1+ Kd2 3.Rc8 d4 and Black is well on the way to victory using the Lucena technique (see the September Chess moves column).

1...Kc4 2.Rc1+ Kb3 3.Rd1 Kc4 4.Rc1+ Kd4 5.Rd1+ Kc5 6.Rc1+ Kd6 7.Rd1 Basically the plan was to force the opponent to seek cover and try again. The correct first move in this sequence perhaps indicates that the term 'checking distance' isn't necessarily as precise as the 'harassing distance'! The defending rook is not just giving

checks, but also threatening the pawn in order to stop the attacking side make any meaningful progress.

The checking distance again



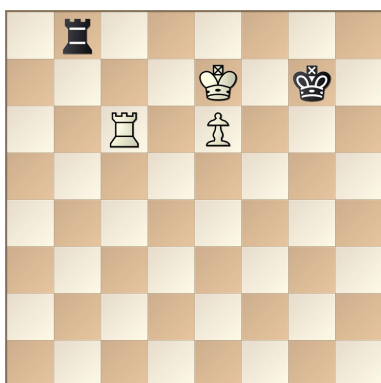
Here Black to play should get himself organized in the face of White's threat to make progress with Kh4.

1...Rc8! and of course, if

2.Kh4 then

2...Rh8+ disrupts any White advance.

The checking distance - is often crucial



Black is wise to seize the checking distance, but patrolling the eighth rank is also a good idea in many similar positions. So the first move isn't that tough to find

1...Ra8! ...being recommended. However, the question arises, how then to meet a White waiting move.

2.Rd6! ? In fact, calculation suggests that the black rook is not only on the ideal square it's actually on the only good square, so one needs to look elsewhere for a move. So it soon becomes apparent that 'temporizing' with the king with

2...Kg6! is the only acceptable move in this position. By the way, Carlsen once got this wrong, so don't be too disappointed if you haven't understood this advanced

position yet. The following variations will explain that Black is playing this 'neutral move' after eliminating all the alternatives.

2...Ra7+? (ceding the key eighth rank) 3.Ke8 Kf6 4.e7+ (with check!) 4...Kg7 5.Rd1 Ra8+ 6.Kd7 Ra7+ 7.Ke6 Ra6+ 8.Rd6 Ra8 9.Rd8 Ra6+ 10.Kd5 etc.; 2...Rb8? (ceding the checking distance) 3.Rd8 Rb7+ 4.Kd6 Rb6+ 5.Kd7 Rb7+ (5...Kf6 6.Rf8+ Ke5 7.e7) 6.Kc6 and the king gains a key tempo against the defending rook and the win is assured e.g. 6...Ra7 7.Rd7+

3.Rd8 After 3.Rd1 the fact that Black has the checking distance (three ranks spaced between the rook and the pawn) comes into play: 3...Ra7+ 4.Kd8 Ra8+ 5.Kd7 Ra7+ and White is not getting anywhere, and then if 6.Ke8 there is even 6...Kf6.

3...Ra7+ 4.Rd7 4.Ke8 Kf6 is a draw when White's rook is on d8, but careful, not if the rook were still on d6 (as there would then be e6-e7 - with check)!

4...Ra8 Not the only move but, if one isn't sure, the eighth rank is often a wise choice.

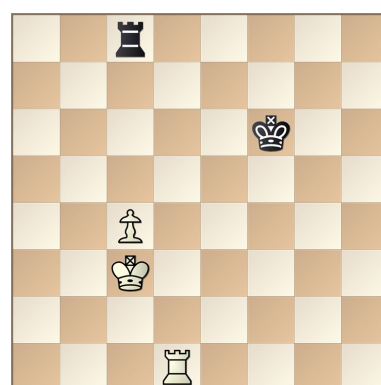
5.Kd6 Kf6 6.Rf7+ Kg6 7.Rf1 So White has managed to cut off Black's king, but here's where the checking distance crops up again...

7...Ra6+ 8.Kd7 Ra7+ 9.Kd8 Ra8+ 10.Kc7 Ra7+ and if White dares approach the rook with

11.Kb6 then

11...Re7 draws.

The 'proactive' king



The role of the defensive king isn't always just 'getting back in front of the pawn'. Sometimes it needs to help the rook out, even when it has the checking distance.

1...Ke6! Also possible is 1...Ke5!; However, the natural 'neutral' move 1...Ke7? loses because White can make

progress relatively unhindered: 2.Kb4 (threat c4–c5) 2...Rb8+ 3.Ka5 Rc8 4.Kb5 (threat c4–c5) 4...Rb8+ 5.Ka6 Rc8 Black's rook has done what it can, but after 6.Rd4! there is the problem that White is heading towards Lucena and Black is too late to stop this: 6...Ke6 7.Kb7 Rc5 (7...Ke5 8.Rd5+ Ke6 9.Kxc8; 7...Rh8 8.c5) 8.Kb6 Rc8 9.c5 and with Black's king cut-off and the pawn rolling it's already hopeless.

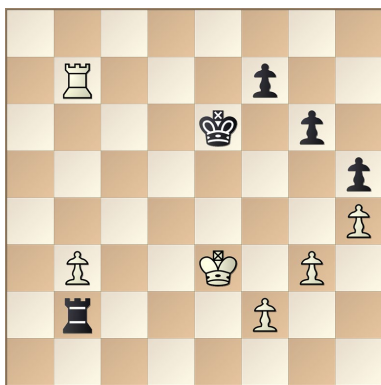
2.Kb4 Rb8+ 3.Ka5 Rc8 4.Kb5 Rb8+ 5.Ka6 Rc8 6.Rd4 Now the key move

6...Ke5! and White is unable to perform both tasks required of the rook simultaneously (defending the pawn whilst cutting off the opposing king).

7.Rh4 Kd6 8.Kb7 Rc7+ 9.Kb8 Rg7 with a draw in the offering.

Active or passive?

Vaganian – Hellers New York 1990



Here White has a plan of advancing the b-pawn part of the way and then transferring his king over to the queenside, thus freeing the rook and ultimately enabling the pawn to go all the way. In return, Black will grab a pawn or two on the kingside and aim to create a passed pawn and a race will follow.

1...Kf6 Here Black tries a 'wait for now' strategy which may be just about OK but loses time.

The most straightforward defence is to prepare counterplay with 1...f6! e.g. 2.Rb5 Kf7 3.Rb6 (3.b4 Ke6) 3...g5 and if a race does occur in due course, the black pawns are more threatening than in the actual game.

2.f3 Rg2 3.Kf4 Rb2 4.Rb6+ Kg7 5.b4 Rb3 6.Ke4 Rb1? It's better to leave the rook where it is, and wriggle with the king: 6...Kf8 7.Rb7 Kg7.

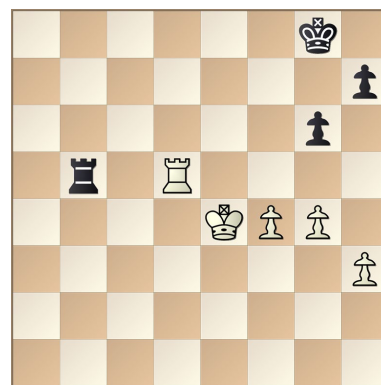
7.b5 f6 This turns out to be too late to be effective.

The rook is better on b3, but it might already be impossible to save the game: 7...Rb3! 8.f4! Rxf3 9.Rd6

Rb3 10.b6 (Black's majority will be difficult to get going) 10...Kf8 11.Kd5 Ke7 12.Rc6 Rb5+ 13.Kc4 Rb2 14.Kc5 f6 15.Rc7+ Ke6 16.Ra7 Kf5 17.Ra4 (slowing Black down) 17...Kg4 18.Rb4 Rc2+ 19.Kd6 Rc8 20.b7 Rb8 21.Kc7 and White seems to be winning.

8.Rb7+ Kh6 9.Rb8 Rb3 10.b6 Kg7 11.Kd5! Rxf3 12.Kc4 Rf1 13.Rb7+ Kh6 14.Rd7 Rb1 15.Kc5 Rc1+ 16.Kd6 Rd1+ 17.Kc7 Rc1+ 18.Kd8 Rb1 19.Rd6 and Black is far too slow to have any hope of salvation. In this common scenario, (extra pawn for one player, but an active defensive rook behind the passed pawn) at some point there is a need to get the king and kingside pawns going. The longer one waits the more delicate the task becomes.

A defensive set-up

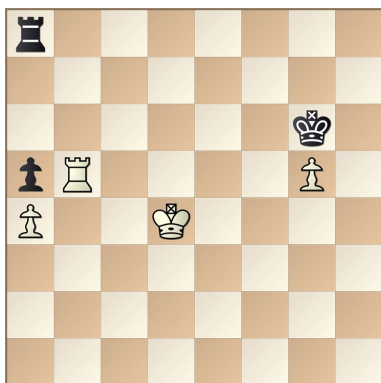


Here the decision revolves around finding the right sort of piece disposition to reduce the chances of White making any progress. Sometimes the fact that you 'know that it's drawn' can diminish your concentration and one can find oneself just making moves without thinking. Generally a recipe for disaster!

1...Rb7! Even without calculation, it's a good rule of thumb not to trade into an inferior 'King and pawn endgame' if one can avoid it. I've noticed that many juniors chop pieces on autopilot and only start 'thinking seriously' once it's too late! For the record, there are a couple of ways for White to win the simplified endgame: 1...Rxd5 2.Kxd5 Kf7 3.Ke5 (or 3.Kd6 Kf6 4.g5+ Kf5 5.Ke7 Kxf4 6.Kf6 Kg3 7.Kg7 Kh4 8.Kh6) 3...Ke7 4.h4 Kf7 5.g5 Ke7 6.h5 Kf7 7.hxg6+ hxg6 8.Kd6 etc.

2.Ke5 Kf7! and now, with the seventh rank well secured, the chances of White finding a way through are slim. Black can (from now on) temporize with his rook, perhaps giving an occasional check. If White moves his king too far from the kingside his pawns could come under attack.

Activate or not?



It's a good idea to ask oneself what happens if one just temporizes: if the opponent can evidently make serious progress, then it's a good idea to think about activating. In this case, Black to play can seek a more activate role for his rook and amazingly steer the game towards a draw even with it involving giving up his remaining pawn.

1...Rf8!! The only chance. A tough move to find if you don't realise that it's necessary to get 'a move on'.

Waiting isn't satisfactory: 1...Kh5 2.Kc4 Kg6 3.Rc5 Kh5 4.Kb5 Kg6 5.Kb6 and the a-pawn is doomed with no compensating features that present 'technical problems' for White.

2.Rxa5 Rf4+ White's king has difficulty in helping out on the queenside because there is no shelter on the other side of the pawn. A perennial problem with 'a' and 'h' pawns.

3.Kc3 Rf3+ 4.Kb4 Rf4+ 5.Kb5 Otherwise progress isn't evident.

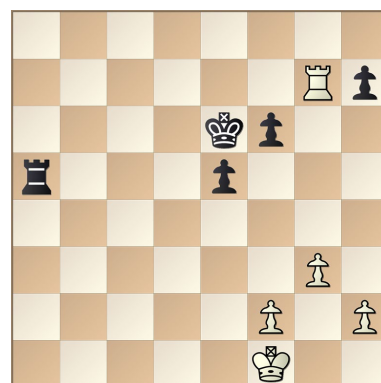
5...Kxg5 and Black has excellent drawing chances. Analysis suggest he can indeed hold by pushing the opposing king towards a less optimal square and then undertaking a remarkable walk with his own monarch:

6.Ra8 Rf5+! 7.Kc6 Rf6+! 8.Kd5 Rf5+! 9.Ke6 Rf6+! 10.Ke7 Rg6 11.a5 Kf5 12.a6 Ke5 13.Kd7 Kd5 14.Kc7 Kc5 and White isn't able to use his a-pawn, for example

15.Rc8 Rxa6 16.Kb7+ Kb5=

Active is usually best

Kashdan – Alekhine Folkstone Olympiad 1933



Here's a position that illustrates the common theme that going 'active', even if it involves a pawn sacrifice, is often a more effective defence than staying totally 'passive'.

1...h5 2.Rh7 e4 3.Ke2 f5! A fine move sacrificing the h-pawn in order to activate both his rook and king.

Just holding onto everything isn't very promising: 3...Re5 4.Ke3 Kd5 5.h4 Ke6 6.Ra7 Kd5 7.Kf4 Ke6 8.Ra6+ Ke7 9.Ra4 and Black loses a pawn under inferior circumstances.; 3...Rf5 4.Ke3 Rf3+ 5.Kxe4 Rxf2 6.Rxh5 Kf7 is a book draw, but such 2 vs. 1 scenarios can be unpleasant to defend especially with modern rather speedy time limits.

4.Rh6+ 4.Rxh5 Ra2+ 5.Kf1 Ra1+ 6.Kg2 Ra2 (threatening ...e4–e3) 7.Kf1 Ra1+ and Black's active rook ensures the draw.

4...Ke5 5.Rxh5 Ra2+ 6.Kf1 e3! After 6...Ra1+ 7.Kg2 Ra2 the threat of ...e3 can be met by 8.Rh8 with Re8+ in mind.

7.fxe3 Ke4 Two pawns down(!), but with so much activity it soon becomes evident that White can't win.

8.Kg1 8.h4 f4 9.exf4 Kf3 (White has all the pawns, but Black has all the fun!) 10.Ke1 Kxg3 11.f5 Kg4=

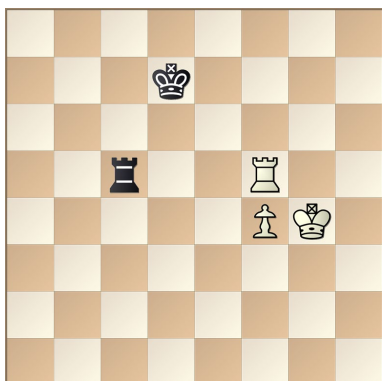
8...Re2 9.Rh4+ Ke5 9...Kxe3 10.Rf4 Re1+ 11.Kg2 Re2+ 12.Kh3 Rf2 also draws it seems.

10.Rh8 Kf6 11.Rf8+ Kg6 12.Re8 Kf7 13.Rc8 Rxe3 Another way (that illustrates the difference in activity of the two monarchs) is 13...Kf6 14.Rc3 Ke5 15.h4 Ke4 16.h5 Kf3 17.e4+ Kg4 18.exf5 and now either capture leads to a draw, the white king remaining out of the action.

14.Kf2 Ra3 15.h4 Kf6 16.Rc6+ Kf7 17.Rc2 Rb3 18.Re2 Kf6 19.Re3 Rb4 Black just places his rook where it limits any White king activity.

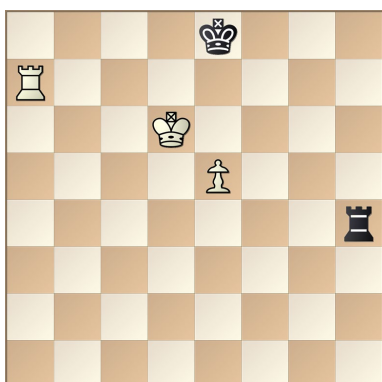
20.Kf3 Ra4 21.Rb3 Rc4 22.Rb6+ Kf7 23.Rd6 Ra4 ½-½

Exercise 1



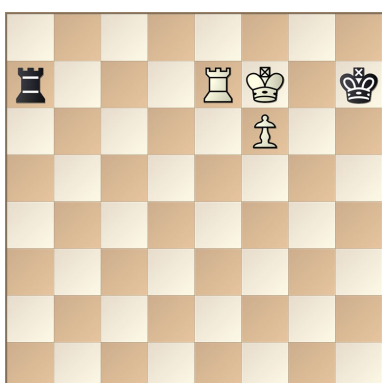
Black to play. What to do?

Exercise 2



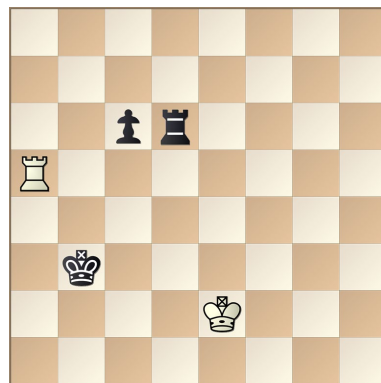
Black to play, can you draw this one?

Exercise 3



Black to play and save himself.

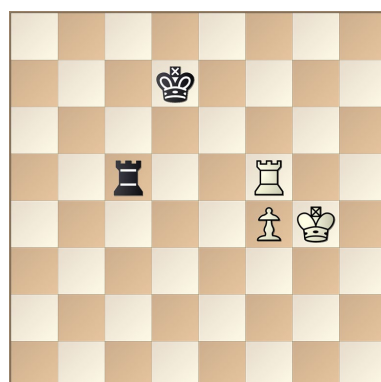
Exercise 4



White to play and find the way to draw.

Now it's time to check how you did!

Exercise 1 answer



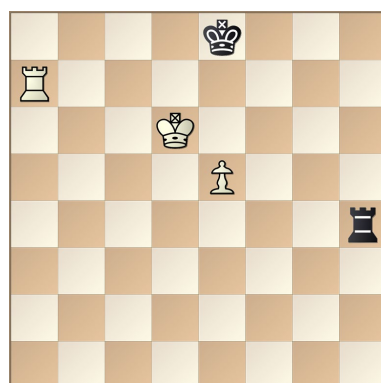
1...Rc8! The rook seizes the 'checking distance'.

1...Rc6 2.Re5! Rc8 3.Re4 Kd6 (3...Rg8+ 4.Kh5 Rf8 5.Kg5 Rg8+ 6.Kh6 Rf8 7.Kg7) 4.f5 Kd5 5.Re2.

2.Re5 Kd6 3.Kg5 3.Re4 Kd5! 4.Re7 Rg8+ 5.Kf5 Rf8+ 6.Kg5 Rg8+ 7.Kh5 Rf8.

3...Rg8+ 4.Kf5 Rf8+ 5.Ke4 Ra8

Exercise 2 answer

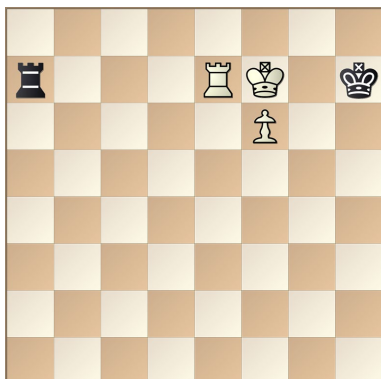


1...Re4! The rook posts itself behind the passed pawn.
 1...Rb4 2.Ra8+ Kf7 3.e6+ Kf6 4.Rf8+ Kg7 5.e7; 1...Rd4+ 2.Ke6 Kf8 3.Ra8+ Kg7 4.Ke7 Rb4 5.e6 Rb1 6.Ke8 Rb2 7.e7 Rb1 8.Kd7.

2.Ra8+ Kf7 and e5–e6+ isn't dangerous, as the square is adequately controlled by Black's pieces.

3.Ra7+ Ke8 4.Ke6 Kf8! 5.Ra8+ Kg7 6.Re8 Ra4! 7.Rd8 Re4

Exercise 3 answer

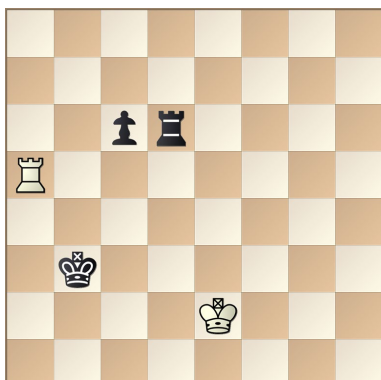


1...Ra8 The eighth rank is often a good choice when pinned onto the defensive.

2.Rb7 Kh6 Temporizing with the king.

3.Ke6 Kg6 4.Rg7+ Kh6 5.Rg1 Ra6+ Using the checking distance to frustrate the opponent.

Exercise 4 answer



1.Ke3!! The king finds a more useful role rather than observing from afar. The significance of this move will become clear soon enough.

1...Kb4 2.Ra1 c5 3.Rb1+ Ka3 4.Rc1 Rd5 4...Kb4 5.Rb1+ and the checking distance comes in handy.

5.Ke4! Black can't settle so doesn't have time to chase the white rook away with...Kb2 etc.

5...Rd4+ 6.Ke3 Kb4 7.Rb1+ Kc4 8.Rc1+ Kd5 9.Rh1=

Finally, Some Thoughts When Defending

As we've seen, activating the rook is perhaps the most important principle and is usually the right approach. The idea is that this will create problems, perhaps insurmountable ones, for the side who is trying to profit from an advantage.

The role of the king also needs thinking about. Should the king play the role of a blocker, or can it be used in a counter-attacking role?

It's worth formulating a general plan of action (even when worse), which should naturally take into account the opponent's likely winning attempts.

Great British Chess Players by John Nunn



Robert Wade (1921-2008)



Robert ('Bob') Wade was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, on 10th April 1921 and started his chess career by winning the New Zealand Championship in 1944 and 1945. New Zealand offered few opportunities to further his chess, so he travelled to Europe and competed in several events in the late 1940s. He won the New Zealand Championship a third time in 1948, but in 1950 he settled in England and that year also saw improved results, with 8/15 at the strong Venice tournament and a drawn match 5-5 with

Lothar Schmid, in which every game was decisive. That same year he gained the International Master title. Chess was Wade's full-time occupation, and he was one of the most active English players in the 1950s. He won the British Championship twice, in 1952 and 1970, and qualified (along with Golombek) for the Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1952, scoring 6/20. He also played for England six times in Chess Olympiads in a period stretching from 1954 to 1972, and once for New Zealand in 1970. Wikipedia slightly unkindly comments that 'Wade was generally no more than a middle-ranking player in strong international tournaments', but by the standards of British chess at the time his results were quite good.

Wade also qualified as an international arbiter, and later in life he turned to other areas of chess activity. He accumulated a massive and somewhat unruly chess library in his Blackheath home, which became a focal point for chess researchers. He was also instrumental in starting the Batsford chess list, which over decades became a world-famous source of English-language chess literature. I visited his home several times for research purposes, and although I had no idea how to find a particular item Bob seemed to have a personal indexing system in his head, and was able to locate everything without difficulty. It was all a bit ramshackle; on one occasion I asked why there was a metal tray and a pair of wooden tongs next to the photocopy machine, and he explained that this was to extract the paper when a jam caused it to burst into flames. His research ability was much prized, and Bobby Fischer was one of the players who made use of it in his preparation. He continued to play occasionally, and in 2006 scored 6/10 in the Queenstown Open, drawing with grandmasters Chandler and Hecht, a fine performance for someone in his mid-80s. He died in 2008 following a short illness, just a few weeks after his last serious game.

Wade adopted a wide range of openings, but playing over his games I got the impression that he rarely gained the advantage from the opening. His main strength lay in the middlegame, and he was always alert for a tactical opportunity, so that even in bad positions he could often come up with a surprising 'swindle'. The following excellent game against a strong grandmaster showed that he could also win (fairly) convincingly.

Robert Wade - Wolfgang Uhlmann

Skopje/Ohrid 1968

French Defence

1.e4 e6

The opening choice is no surprise, as Uhlmann championed the French Defence throughout his long career.

2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4

In this line White aims to support his central pawn-wedge by f4 and c3, leaving the onus on Black to obtain counterplay one way or another. The danger for White is that he falls behind in development, and this sometimes gives Black the chance to open the position with a sacrifice.

5...c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ndf3

The queen's knight goes to f3 and the king's knight to e2, offering maximum support to the d4- and e5-pawns. The downside is that it's hard for White to get the f1-bishop into play.

7...cxd4

A typical line is 7...Qb6 8.Ne2 Be7 9.g3 0-0 10.Bh3 cxd4 11.cxd4 f6!?, offering the e6-pawn to break up the white centre, with very sharp play in prospect.

8.cxd4 h5?!

This move looks too slow. White wasn't intending to play g4 soon, so ...h5 may very well not be necessary. Instead, 8...Qb6 9.Ne2 f6 is more direct. Then White must take care, since, for example, 10.g3 Bb4+ 11.Nc3 fxe5 12.fxe5 0-0 13.Bf4 is well met by 13...Ndx5! 14.Bxe5 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bxc3+ 16.bxc3 Qb2 17.Qc1 Qf2+ 18.Kd1 Qxf1+ 19.Rxf1 Rxf1+ with a roughly equal position. 8...Nb6 9.Bd3 Bd7 is another plan for Black, preparing play on the queenside rather similar to the game, but without loss of time.

9.a3 Nb6 10.Bd3

This position favours White since he has managed to develop this bishop before being forced to play Ne2.

10...Bd7 11.Ne2 a5

Black intends to play ...a4 and ... Na5-b3, but there is an obvious risk in leaving his king in the centre for so long.

12.0-0 a4 13.Qe1

A critical moment. Black must decide whether to continue on the queenside or take time out for the safety-first ...g6.

13...Na5?

Black decides that White doesn't yet have a major threat, but this is a mistake. He should have played 13...g6,

although then 14.Bd2 prevents ... Na5 and forces Black to find another way to make progress on the queenside.



14.f5!

This sacrificial breakthrough is totally correct, and gives White a large advantage. Black's exposed king and dark-squared weaknesses provide excellent compensation, made even more substantial by the offside black knights.

14...exf5

There's not much choice, since 14...Nb3 15.fxe6 Bxe6 16.Ng5! Nxa1 17.Nxe6 fxe6 18.Bb5+ Nd7 19.Qf2 Qe7 20.Bg5 wins for White.

15.e6!

This is the most straightforward, but White could also have played 15.Nf4! Be6 16.Ng5! Rh6 (or 16...Qxg5 17.Nxe6 Qe7 18.Nxf8 g6 19.Bb5+ Nc6 20.Bd2 Rxf8 21.Rc1 Qd7 22.Bg5 and Black is totally paralysed) 17.Nxf7! Bxf7 18.Bxf5, followed by e6, with a winning attack.

15...fxe6 16.Qg3

Although this retains a considerable advantage, 16.Nf4! Qf6 17.Ng5! would have been crushing. Then there are beautiful lines after 17...Qxg5 18.Nxe6 Qe7 19.Bg5 Qxe6 20.Bxf5! Qxe1 21.Bg6# and 17...e5 18.Nh7!! (stronger than 18.dxe5 Bc5+ 19.Kh1 Qxg5) 18...Rxh7 19.dxe5 Bc5+ 20.Kh1 Qe7 21.e6 Rh6 22.Bxf5, with overwhelming threats. These lines were quite hard to see so it's not surprising that Wade opts for a more mundane continuation.

16...Kf7

Relatively best. 16...Qf6 17.Bg5 and 16...Be7 17.Qxg7 Bf6 18.Qg6+ Ke7 19.Bg5 Bxg5 20.Qxg5+ Kf8 21.Qg6 are even worse.

17.Nf4?

This slip lets Black back in the game. White plays to win the exchange with Ng6, but he could have achieved more by 17.Bg5! Be7 (17...Qb8 18.Ne5+ Kg8 19.Nf4 Nc6 20.Neg6 Nxd4 21.Nxh8 Kxh8 22.Rae1 also wins the exchange, but in this line White retains a huge initiative) 18.h4 followed by Nf4 and Rae1, when the sheer weight of attacking forces will prove too much for Black's shaky defences.

17...Kg8 18.Ng6



18...Nb3?

Black misses his chance. 18...h4! 19.Nfxh4 Rxh4! 20.Nxh4 Be7 21.Bh6 Bf6 22.Rae1 Nb3 would have left White with at most a slight edge. Black already has one pawn for the exchange and the d4-pawn will fall soon, but most importantly White's attack has been greatly weakened. This line is a good example of how a timely return of material can break the force of an attack.

19.Nxh8

19.Bg5! Qe8 20.Nxf8 Qxf8 21.Qc7 was even better, but the move played also gives White a clear advantage.

19...Nxc1

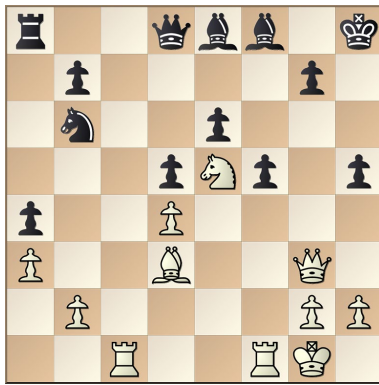
19...Nxa1 20.Ng6 Nb3 (20...Nc4 21.Bg5 wins the a1-knight) 21.Bg5 Qb8 22.Bf4 Qc8 23.Qg5 followed by Qh5 is hopeless.

20.Raxc1 Kxh8

Here Black also has two pawns for the exchange, but his bishop is languishing on f8, while White's pieces are very active.

21.Ne5 Be8

21...Qf6 22.Rc7 Be8 23.Rxb7 picks up a pawn while maintaining the pressure.



22.Rc7?

This tactical flourish is unnecessary and endangers the win. The simple 22.Ng6+ Bxg6 (22...Kg8 23.Nxf8 Kxf8 24.Rc7) 23.Qxg6 Qe8 24.Bxf5 exf5 25.Qxb6 wins without difficulty.

22...h4?

22...Nc4! was the only chance. Then 23.Ng6+ (the tricky 23.Rf7? is strongly met by 23...Kg8!) 23...Bxg6 24.Qxg6 Nd6! (24...Qxc7? 25.Rxf5 exf5 26.Bxf5 mates in a few moves) 25.Qxh5+ Kg8 26.Rc3 Be7, followed by ...Bf6, gives Black good drawing chances.

23.Qf4 g5

23...Nc4 24.Rf7! Kg8 no longer works due to 25.Rxf5! exf5 26.Qxf5 with a quick mate.



24.Ng6+!

Wade spots the refutation of Black's defensive plan.

24...Kg8

24...Bxg6 25.Qe5+ Kg8 26.Qxe6+ transposes.

25.Qe5

The weak e6-pawn proves Black's undoing.

25...Bxg6 26.Qxe6+ Kh8 27.Rxb7

27.Qe5+ Kg8 28.Bxf5 is even simpler.

27...Qe8 28.Rxb6

White's material advantage is decisive, especially as Black's king remains exposed.

28...Bg7 29.Qxg6 Qe3+ 30.Kh1 Qxd3 31.Qh5+ Kg8 32.Rd1 Qc2 33.Rb7 Rf8 34.Rxg7+ Kxg7 35.Qxg5+ Kh7 36.Rc1 Re8 37.h3

1-0

Book of the Month by Ben Graff



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

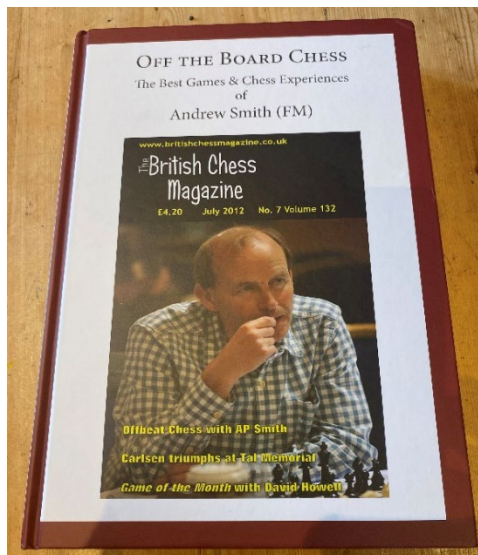
Off The Board Chess – The Best Games & Chess Experiences of Andrew Smith (FM)

'None of us will live forever, but our chess games can.'
Andrew Smith

They say that you should never judge a book by its cover, but *Off The Board Chess* might be an exception. I spied a copy while browsing the Chess & Bridge book stall at the British Championships in Leicester. A large hardback volume, beautifully produced with plenty of diagrams and 153 of Andrew's annotated games, this is a truly epic tome. It certainly seemed to me that *Off The Board Chess* represented excellent value at £19.95, and now, having read it, I am happy to confirm it is worthy of a place in any chess player's collection.

Andrew originally decided to write this book while on a round the world trip twenty years ago, and the majority

of the games featured are of twentieth century vintage. A 2300 player at his peak, Andrew's thoughts and reflections will be a very useful learning tool for the club player, and he tells some great stories along the way. Certainly, all of us will be able to empathise with Andrew's experiences and the perspectives gleaned in the course of his chess journey. At one point he remarks, 'I recall Keith Arkell saying to me... that he finds the pain of losing a game far outweighs any pleasure he gets from winning but then again, if he had lost as often as I have, he might be able to appreciate his "wins" more readily.'



Andrew is certainly generous in sharing his defeats with the reader, as all the best game collections do. It is hard not to sympathise with him reaching 8/8 in a tournament, only to suffer multiple inexplicable hallucinations in the final round which would cost him first place. To make things even worse, Andrew did what any committed player should do, and devoted serious study to this reversal. He worked out a line all the way through to 20. Ka3 and was astonished when his opponent played down it in his very next game. On the one hand, Andrew could take comfort from the quality of his analysis. On the other, his conclusion that his opponent might actually be better after this point proved to be the case, and he would eventually lose again. It seems that whatever level a player happens to be, and however hard they might work, chess can never truly be conquered!

When it comes to victories, I very much enjoyed Game 1, from The Sunday Times National Schools Team Championship in which Andrew beat Danny King. As Andrew puts it, 'For Danny it must have been a shock playing someone who had a rough idea of what he was doing!' Yet it is clear that none of us are in chess for the money. When Andrew won £62.50 in a 1974 event (admittedly a larger sum than it would be today) a 220-rated semi-professional told Andrew that it was more than he had ever managed to earn in a tournament.

Readers will doubtless find their own favourites amongst this treasure trove of games. Mine was actually neither a win nor a defeat, but Andrew's astonishing draw in game 125 against P Georghiou, which is not labelled 'An Incredible Position!' for nothing. I thought I had seen everything, but to witness all eight squares of the h-file occupied after White's 22nd move is something you would expect to happen only in a chess problem, rather than a match-up in the Lewisham Rapidplay. Game 140, 'Not a single wasted move!', is highly impressive in terms of demonstrating the clinical brutality Andrew is capable of bringing to the board. As he puts it, 'In this game, every black move has a direct purpose – there are no bull**** positional moves!' I also wanted to give a shout-out to game 123, 'Against the Odds,' in which Andrew beats Keith Arkell in a same-coloured bishop ending, a victory Andrew rightly savoured, and, while his overall record against Keith was less good, it really shows the very high standard Andrew was competing at.

Yet this is much more than a collection of very interesting games. Andrew brings real colour to chess life in the last quarter of the twentieth century. To read this is to enter a world of cosy bars and match venues, where the loser has been known to throw a chess piece or two. Wherever you happen to be, colourful characters abound. I'm sure many players who were on the circuit at this time will have fond memories of many of the people Andrew describes. Those of us who didn't know them personally will also doubtless feel a kinship.

To give but one example, Len Pickett, 'another of Lewisham Chess Club's great personalities', is described brilliantly by Andrew. 'He is an enigma – hugely intelligent but unprepared to work for someone else. It should also be said that I can't think of many people who would be prepared to work for him either!' Pickett was a superb opening analyst, perhaps let down by his play in the latter stages of the game, and Andrew also shares that he was the author of many books. Sadly, Pickett erred by failing to keep hold of master copies of his writing, which led Pickett to lament on occasion, 'Oh, it's all in the book,' but nobody could track the book down! Andrew's keen eye certainly shines through in this and every other portrait.

There is much more I could write, and Andrew's attempt to camp out in a gale with friends before the British is particularly hilarious. Yet I think it's best if readers get a copy of this book for themselves and enjoy it all properly - interesting games and compelling stories, and a chess journey we can share in that will also most likely encourage us to continue with our own. As Andrew observes, 'I never cease to be amazed when I hear that people give up playing and following the game. For me, I

enjoy it too much, even though a string of successive losses can be frustrating – even depressing!

Without question, *Off the Board Chess* is a real victory, and will add to any reader's enjoyment of the game.

It's a Puzzlement!

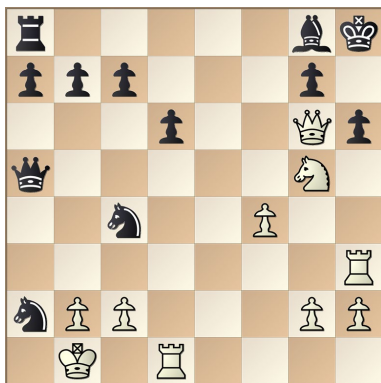


Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://www.chesspuzzle.net)

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!

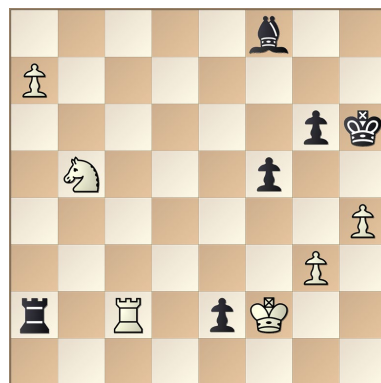
When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.

Puzzle 1 - FM Liu, Casper – GM Jones, Gawain
Titled Tue 1st Aug Early, Chess.com INT



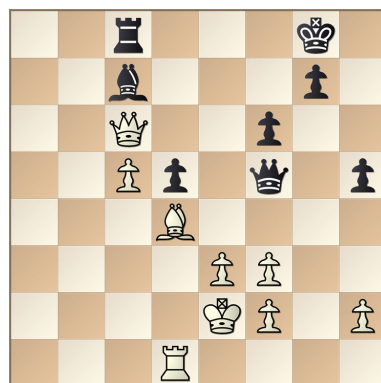
Black to checkmate - [Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2 - Hill, Jonathan S – GM Hebden, M
TCh-EUR Senior +50 2023 Swidnica POL



Black to win - [Puzzle Two](#)

Puzzle 3 - FM Ingunza Curro, Andres – IM Pert, Richard
Titled Tue 8th Aug Late, Chess.com INT



Black to win - [Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 4 - IM Fiorito, Joaquin – IM Roberson ,P
Titled Tue 26th Sep Early Chess.com INT



Black to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 5 - IM Buckley, G – GM Chatalbashev, B
Mindsports Super Swiss, London ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 6 - FM Putnam, Liam – IM Pert, Richard
Titled Tue 15th Aug Early, Chess.com INT



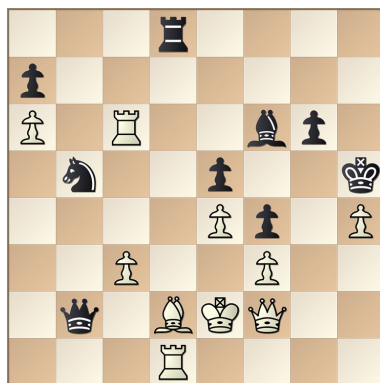
Black to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 7 - Chan, Sheng Liang Bernard – Varley, Joe
Hull 4NCL Congress 2023, Hull ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 8 - FM Derakhshani, Borna – IM Large, P
Northumbria IM Pool 2023, Newcastle upon Tyne ENG



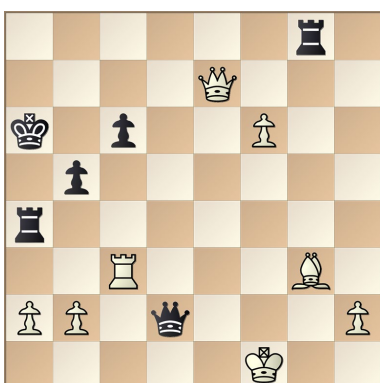
Black to win - [Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9 - IM Wadsworth, Matthew J – IM Haldorsen, Benjamin
Mindsports Super Swiss, London ENG



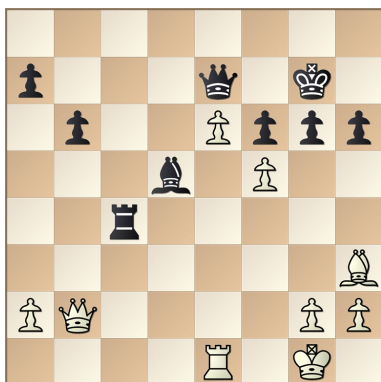
White to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10 - Venkatesan, Kavin – IM Dunnington A
Northumbria IM Pool 2023, Newcastle upon Tyne ENG



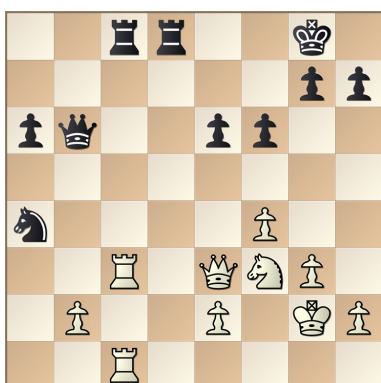
Black to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

Puzzle 11 - Southcott-Moyers, Indy – Arora, Divitt
Serbia Open 2023, Belgrade SRB



White to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12 - IM Vardaan, Nagpal - Fava, Lorenzo
MindSports Super Swiss, London ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

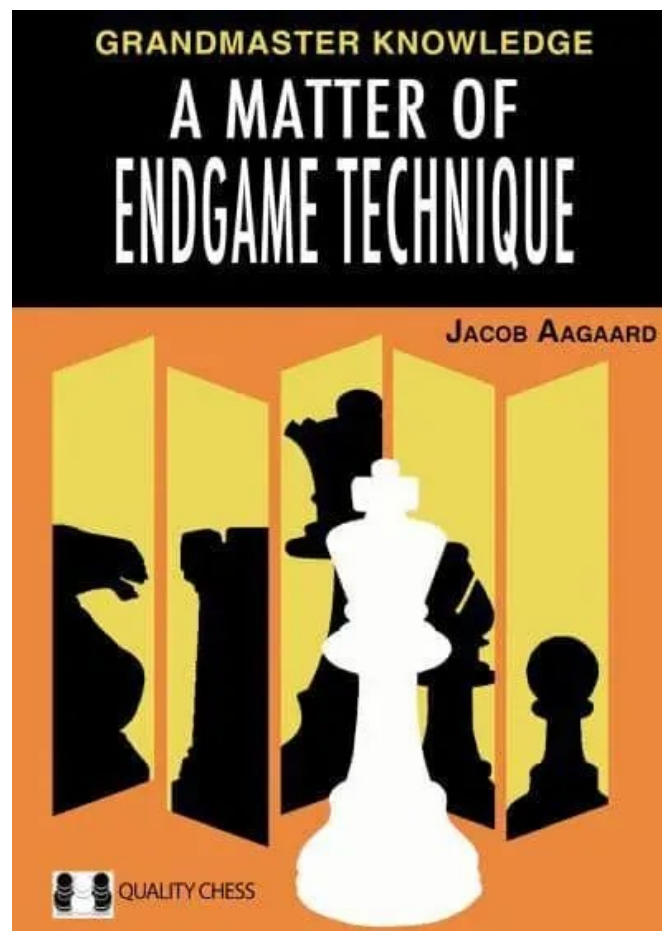
For all the puzzles on one page just visit
https://chesspuzzle.net/List/9216?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=octobernews

by clicking the link or via the QR code.



ECF Book of the Year 2023

The four books on this year's short list illustrated the wide range of current chess publishing which made the final choice difficult. The book chosen showed the amount of hard work that an author can put in to produce a volume that will richly reward the reader if they put in a similar effort.



A Matter of Endgame Technique
by Jacob Aagaard
Quality Chess pp 896 £39.99

The first thing that strikes the reader is the mammoth size of the book – 896 pages in all. Why so large? Let the author explain – ‘There is an unquestionable need and desire for books that can teach even grandmasters something... endgame topics covered in depth with unapologetic attention to detail’.

The quality of the book is in the explanations and analysis of the chosen endgames. The positions chosen are from contemporary play (Aagaard believes that he is short-changing the reader by repeating published classics). The result is an insight into current tournament play, with a focus on a player's practical problems at the board, with

the chess clock ticking away. Many of the examples included are long and complex, and the reader is drawn into the narrative, waiting to find out whether the superior side can win or resilient defence can hold out.

Aagaard writes fluently and well. As an experienced trainer he brings out the learning points clearly. Of course, Aagaard has used a powerful computer to help with the analysis, but he is very good at drawing out when a player should, or could not reasonably, have reached the same conclusions.

This book is not suitable for beginners, and a knowledge of basic endgame theory is assumed. However, it is valuable for an ambitious player who wants to learn how to play endgames against capable opponents in competitive games. It can also be used as a reference book for specific subjects, for example two bishops versus two knight endgames, or just enjoyed for the quality of the writing and analysis.

Aagaard writes, 'I am of the firm conviction that chess is a difficult game to play, but not too difficult to explain once you have analysed the games thoroughly'. In respect of endgames, Aagaard has fully achieved this aim.

Ray Edwards, Jovanka Houska and Sean Marsh, September 2023

NEWS and VIEWS

ECF Annual General Meeting Report – 14th October 2023

The Annual General Meeting of the ECF was held on 14th October. The meeting of the BCF was not held as there was no business to transact. The accounts and future of the BCF as an entity will be reported at the Finance Council meeting in April 2024.

As everyone will have heard by now, the meeting did not start well. The room for the meeting was fine, most adequate refreshments were in place, and the technology with a few tweaks seemed to work. Unfortunately, NatWest had only started to occupy the building in recent months. Their Health and Safety team were performing fire alarm tests about every 10 to 15 minutes, which were due to continue until late into the afternoon. I was not aware of this problem until I arrived. The sound was intolerable, but despite efforts to persuade the team to agree to a cessation there were no concessions.

The meeting was rescheduled to start at 14.45 at another venue, the Radisson Hotel. The dismayed but hopeful

group of Council Members, led by Chris Fegan like a Pied Piper, made its way to the Radisson hotel. My understanding is that Chris as a former local has a detailed knowledge of the luxury establishments of the fair City of Manchester.

Minutes of the Last Meeting and Reports

Minutes of the last meeting - accepted.

Board of Directors' Report - accepted.

Report of the Non-Executive Directors - accepted.

Strategy Statement and Business Plan – accepted, although not discussed as the Board had indicated this was subject to revision and the effect of the new government funding needed be assessed.

Report of the Governance Committee - accepted.

Report of the Finance Committee - accepted.

Comment

Although the above reports were accepted a number of issues were discussed in detail.

Under the Governance Committee's report there was a discussion on the possible appointment of two family members to posts of Finance Director and Non-Executive Director to the Board, and whether this might create conflicts of interest. Points about the appropriateness of this arrangement were made, and it will be seen whether these are taken into account by the Board.

Also under Governance, Chris Fegan raised the issue of how poorly he considered he had been treated in an appeal against a decision by the Complaints Committee. This will be dealt with outside the meeting.

Under the Finance Committee's report, the issue of effective working between the Board and the Finance Committee was discussed in some detail. In summary, I think both parties will work to improve the situation.

Elections – votes and results – those in bold were elected (after post-meeting review)

Chair of Council: David Eustace 232, Not this candidate 2
Director of Home Chess: Tim Wall 46, **Nigel Towers** 210, Not this candidate 4

Director of Membership: Rob Willmoth 222, Not this candidate 12

Non-Executive Director: Katarzyna Toma 100, **Sarah Longson** 125, Not this candidate 17

FIDE Delegate: Malcolm Pein 220, Not this candidate 4

Members of the Finance Committee: Ray Clark 224, Not this candidate 5

David Eustace 232, Not this candidate 1

Members of the Governance Committee:
Michael Farthing - 217, Not this candidate 5
David Eustace - 217, Not this candidate 4
Peter Hornsby – 217, Not this candidate 11

Membership Options (after post-meeting review)

There was much discussion on the three options presented to Council and much questioning of numbers, costs, and the effect of the proposed changes. The votes for each stage went as follows:

First Stage : Vote between Board Option 1 (38 votes) and Board Option 2 (215 votes)

Second Stage: Vote between Board Option 2 (211 votes) and NCCU proposal (54 votes)

Third Stage: Vote between Board Option 2 (136 votes) and No Change (122 votes)

The selected option for changes to the membership scheme is Board Option 2.

Fourth Stage: Vote to consolidate the Direct Members Representatives into a single (Gold) category (In favour 217, Against 22).

Papers on the various membership option proposals can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/about/ecf-council-and-board/>

Other Matters

Watson Associates were reappointed as auditors.

The ECF Awards were not discussed, but members may find the details on the ECF website and can contact Stephen Greep, Non-Executive Director, who chaired the Awards Committee.

Mike Truran, Chief Executive, had submitted a paper on Grassroots Developments with various ideas for possible action. The meeting did not have time to discuss this. If members have further ideas on how we could further develop chess activities, please contact Mike on ceo@englishchess.org.uk

Closure

The meeting finished at 18.29, just on time, and had completed all its business. One wag commented that it was one of the best Council meetings he had been attended.

ECF Awards 2023 by Stephen Greep

This year saw strong entries in several categories, and members of the Awards Committee had a particularly difficult job in agreeing the winners of some categories.

As Chairman of the Awards Committee, I would like to thank all the Committee members (Julie Denning, Sarah Longson, Natasha Regan, Jack Rudd, Nigel Towers and Peter Wells) for their hard work, and the Chess Trust for its generous sponsorship of the Awards scheme.

The 2023 ECF Award winners are:

President's Award for Services to Chess:

Bob Jones, Rupert Jones, Alex McFarlane, Peter Purland, Kevin Staveley

Contribution to Chess in the Community

Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club

Contribution to Junior Chess

Chris Lewis

Contribution to Women's Chess

Caroline Robson

Club of the Year

Leeds Junior Chess Club

Small Club of the Year

Ringwood Chess Club

Congress of the Year

University of Warwick

No awards were made in two categories (Contribution to Online Chess and Contribution to Accessible Chess.) You can read the full article together with citations here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECF-Awards-2023.pdf>

The South of England Junior Championships 7th – 8th October

This event was held at Yateley Manor school in Surrey, with Andrew Martin as tournament director.

You can see a full list of prize winners for this event here:

<https://www.southofenglandjunior.com>

Full scores are available on Chess-Results.com:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr827875.aspx?lan=1>

(The link is to the U9/U10 section. Other sections can be accessed from that page.)

She Plays to Win Team Perform Well in Albania by Lorin D'Costa



The SPTW team with the world number 1 player, Magnus Carlsen.
Photo courtesy Anne Weersing

The 2023 European Club Cup for Women took place in Durres, Albania on 1st – 8th October.

It was the first time a SPTW team had entered the competition, in which we participated with some of our top UK female talents aged 17-24.

This was an excellent experience for the team, which resulted in its finishing above their seeding and all four players gaining FIDE rating points. On top of this, Abigail scored the Woman FIDE Master (WFM) title during the tournament. Well done to Abigail and the team!

Final results:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr775458.aspx?lan=1&art=0&rd=7&turdet=YES&flag=30>

Gosforth Chess Club Junior Grand Prix 1

Our junior event runs on a six-month cycle. Every month we run a six- round, seven-minute Blitz and a player's top three scores count towards his/her final score, with their results used for tie-break purposes. Over 50 juniors took part in Grand Prix 1, with the winners being:

- Champion: Daniel Tong (centre)
- U14 Champion: Lev Drobiazko (right)
- U10 Champion: Viaan Nath (left)



Round 6 action - silence has descended!

European Team Chess Championship – Open Team Announcement



We are pleased to announce the England Open team for the forthcoming European Team Chess Championship is:

GM Nikita Vitiugov 2719
GM David Howell 2676
GM Michael Adams 2662
GM Luke McShane 2626
GM Ravi Haria 2522
Average rating of the team 2641

Captain of the team: GM William Watson.

The tournament will take place in Budva, Montenegro from 10th to 21st November 2023.

European Team Chess Championship – Women’s Team Announcement



We are pleased to announce that England Women’s team for the European Team Chess Championship is:

International Master Jovanka Houska 2340
International Master Harriet Hunt 2316
Woman International Master Lan Yao 2315
Woman Grandmaster Katarzyna Toma 2224
FIDE Master Akshaya Kalaiyalahan 2168

Average rating of the team 2272
Captain of the team: Grandmaster Stuart Conquest

The tournament will take place in Budva, Montenegro from 10th to 21st November 2023.

Malcolm Pein, International Director/Agnieszka Milewska, Women’s Director

FIDE Title Awards



Anusha Subramanian has been awarded the WCM title. Congratulations Anusha!

Clubs and Congress Insurance 2023/24



Clubs and other chess organisations can now renew their insurance through Green Insurance Group by using the renewal/application form link below. All applications and payments should be sent to Green Insurance Group. The form can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/clubs-congress-insurance-2023-24/>

What Has the ECF Office Ever Done for Us?

We thought readers might be interested in knowing something about what the team in the ECF Office does, so we’ve done an analysis of where their time goes. The numbers are reasonably high level, but we’re happy that they’re broadly accurate.

1. JustGo membership system: maintenance, dealing with new and renewing member matters: 22%
2. International rating support: 14%
3. Producing ChessMoves and the annual Yearbook: 13%
4. Website maintenance and development (e.g. events calendar, registered coaches scheme, club finder facility, news updates, community pages etc): 13%
5. Supporting ECF tournaments and congresses: 8%
6. Supporting international team trips: 7%
7. Game fee/junior event payments: 5%
8. Bookkeeping, payroll: 4%
9. Supporting Board and Council meetings: 3%
10. Other (e.g. general ad hoc enquiries, rating enquiries, registered coaches scheme, certificate of excellence, national title/master points support, press and media enquiries, IT support and maintenance): 11%

A few take-aways:

1. Pretty much all of the Office team’s time is spent on membership-related support.
2. 22% of the team’s time to support the JustGo membership system and handling membership matters effectively represents only around half a full time equivalent person for around 17,000 members, which we think compares pretty favourably with, for example, the United States Chess Federation’s four membership staff for around 90,000 members.
3. A number of Office services cost pretty much the same per member regardless of membership category: 1., 3., 4., 7., 8., 9. and 10. = 71%.
4. A number of Office activities are incurred in support of non-local league activities, supporting the thesis that members who play in both local leagues and congresses make somewhat more use of ECF services in some areas than members who only play in local leagues: 2., 5. and 6. = 29%.
5. The changes that were approved at the ECF’s Annual General Meeting on Saturday 14 October have simplified the membership scheme by combining the Silver and Gold membership categories (removing a barrier to participation in FIDE-rated events), while maintaining the Bronze membership category for those who only participate in club or league chess.

The simplified two-tier system means that those who play in congress as well as league chess, and so are likely to make more use of ECF services and office time, will continue to contribute rather more in membership fees to support the ECF's work compared with players who play only in local league chess - see points 3 and 4 above.

- None of the above analysis takes account of the work done by the ECF's wonderful army of volunteers without whom the ECF could not function. We pay tribute both to them and to our Office staff, who provide the critical services that support both our volunteers and our members.

3Cs Chess Club on the BBC

On the One Show on 13th October (BBC1 at 19.00hrs) there was a feature on the 3Cs Chess Club in Oldham: <https://www.3cschessclub.com/>. The show is available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001rbjq>

3rd Intercontinental Online Chess Championship for Prisoners

Congratulations to the England Women's team, who got through to the Final of this event with an amazing performance, losing only to Mongolia in the Final to take the world silver medal. <https://www.fide.com/news/2683>

A record-breaking 118 teams from 50 countries participated in the event, which is a part of the Chess for Freedom programme.

JUNIOR MOVES

Littlewood's Choice



The Glorney Cup has been running for a long time... indeed, I remember competing for England juniors well over 50 years ago! It is a team competition for juniors

from the UK and has also included the odd European country over the years.

Nowadays there is also a competition for girls under 18 which is run alongside the Glorney Cup and called the Gilbert Cup, named in honour of the English player, Jessie Gilbert, who tragically died so young.

In August this year, four teams competed in the Gilbert Cup: England A, Scotland, Wales and England B - the latter being included because Ireland could not raise a team. It was a hard-fought double-round tournament, but the experience of the England A team shone through as they conceded only one draw and one loss, scoring 16½/18.

Congratulations to the team of Emily Maton (5/6), Niamh Bridgeman (5½/6) and Michelle Chan (6/6) on winning the trophy. One of the most interesting games was the one that England lost, and I feature it below.

Emily Maton (England A) - Kanishka Bhatia (Scotland)

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bf4 0-0 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3 c6 8.Bd3 h6 9.h3 Re8 10.Qc2 Nbd7 11.g4 Nf8 12.0-0-0 Rather than engaging in a positional battle, Emily decides to castle queenside, hoping to launch a successful kingside attack. This can be very dangerous for Black, but the white king is also not so safe, and the tactics can easily rebound.

12...Ne6 13.g5?! This is a premature sortie, as White is not fully developed yet. A sensible move would be 13.Kb1, removing the king to safety and preparing to build up the attack more slowly.



13...Nh5? However, Black now makes a mistake and justifies White's previous move. Better was 13...Nxf4 14.exf4 hxg5 15.fxg5 Ne4! - although White is still slightly better after 16.g6!, maintaining the initiative.

14. gxh6 Nhxf4 15.Bh7+ Kf8 16.hxg7+ Nxg7 Not 16...Kxg7 17.Rhg1+ Kh8 18.Ne5 Rf8 19.Rg8+ Rxg8 20.Nxf7+ Kg7 21.Nxd8 and wins.

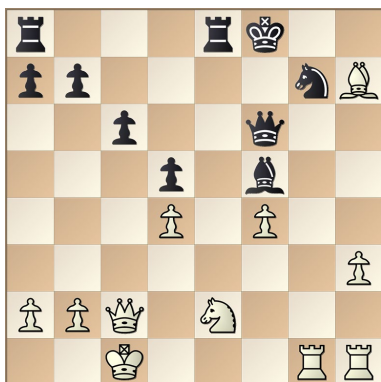
17. exf4 Bd6 18.Ne5?! Better is 18.Qd2, as it avoids Black's playing her queen to the active h4 square.

18...Qh4! 19.Ne2 Bxe5? Black is concerned about the active knight on e5, but this is a poor remedy as it eliminates one of Black's better pieces and improves White's pawn structure. Instead, 19...Ne6, attacking f4, leaves White only slightly better.



20. fxe5 Although this looks natural, in fact 20.dxe5! is even better as it restricts the black queen's movements. The game could continue 20...Ne6 21.Rhg1 Ke7 22.Kb1 Kd7 when White has an excellent position.

20....Qh6+ 21.f4 f5! 22.exf6 Qxf6 23.Rdg1?! White misses the best option here... the tactical shot 23.Ng3! maintains the initiative. This looks like a mistake because of 23...Qxf4+ 24.Kb1 Qxg3, but then follows 25.Rhg1 Qxh3 26.Rdf1+ Ke7 27.Rxg7+ Kd8 28.Qf2 with a winning attack. **23...Bf5!** Black no doubt heaved a big sigh of relief when she played this move, as it means she is able to develop her queenside pieces and hopefully defend against the attack.



24.Bxf5 Nxf5 25.Rh2?! This is rather slow. There are several decent options here, but the prophylactic 25.Kb1 seems sensible.

25...Kf7?! Better was 25...Re4, and Black can then generate some decent counterplay.

26.Rg5?! Re4! 27.Rhg2 Rae8 White's inaccuracy on move 26 has allowed Black to dominate the e-file. The position is now dynamically equal, but, despite being a pawn up, it is harder to play for White as her pawns are rather weak.

28.b3 R8e7 29.Qd3 Ke8 30.Rg6 Qh4 31.Kd2? A poor move which allows a winning combination. However, it is getting harder for White to withstand all the pressure on her centre, and it is not surprising that she falters.

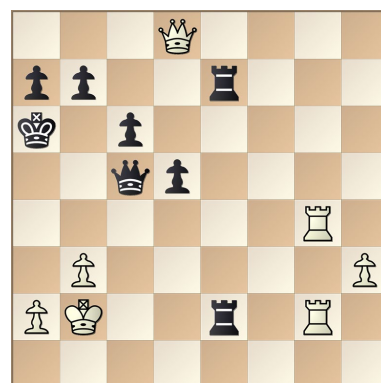


31...Nxd4! 31...Kd7 is also good, removing the king to safety before cashing in.

32.Nxd4 Qxf4+ 33.Kc2 Rxd4 34.Rg8+ Kd7 35.Qg6? The final error. The last chance was 35.Qg3, when Black has to win the ending.

35...Qf1 36.Qh5 Qd3+ 37.Kb2 Rde4 38.Qf5+ Kc7 39.Qc8+ Kb6 40.Qd8+ Ka6 The black king is now safe, but there is no escape for the white king.

41.R8g4 Qd4+ 42.Ka3 Qc5+ 43.Kb2 Re2+ and White resigned.



A fascinating game! Emily had the better of things to start with, but a few inaccurate moves allowed Kanishka to take over the initiative, and from then on she didn't let Emily off the hook.

Meanwhile if you have played any exciting games as a youngster that you would like a chance to have published in my column then please send them to me at plittl@hotmail.com.

FIDE World Junior Chess Championship

by Shreyas Royal



Shreyas Royal recently competed in the Under 20 section of the FIDE World Junior Chess Championships in Mexico, and has provided the following game from round 4 of the tournament.

Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux (2485) - Shreyas Royal (2407)

1.c4 I wasn't expecting c4; I'd spent the entire morning preparing against 1.e4 and some Anti-Sicilian lines he plays.

1...e5 Alas, we get the Sicilian but with colours reversed!

2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.e4 This has become a pretty topical line in recent years, ever since Carlsen started playing it in 2019 against other notable players. The idea is to stop d5 and some sort of Reverse Open Sicilian from happening. We have two options here: The sharp line and the solid line.

4...Bb4 I choose to go for the solid line.

4...Bc5 is the sharp and forcing line. 5.Nxe5 - White has to go for this (if White does something like 5.Be2 d6 6.0-0 7.d3 a5 he will land himself in huge trouble with the weakened dark squares, the consequence of playing 4.e4) 5...Nxe5 6.d4 Bb4 7.dxe5 Nxe4 8.Qf3 Nxc3 9.bxc3 Ba5. There are a lot of top-level games from this position, with theory still developing!

5.d3 d6 6.a3 White challenges my bishop and tries to resolve his weaknesses by trying to exchange off the bishop that could exploit them.

6...Bxc3+ This is not the most popular move, but is certainly playable. I shy away from the main line, in order not to possibly find myself in deep and dangerous preparation.

6...Bc5 The most popular move is 7.b4 Bb6 8.Na4, when White successfully eliminates the dark-squared bishop, but the position remains fairly balanced. 8...Bd4 9.Nxd4 Nxd4 10.Be2 0-0.

7.bxc3 0-0 8.g3



8...Rb8! There's a nuance behind this move.

8...Ne8 9.Nh4 Ne7 10.Bg2. If you compare this position with the game, you'll realise that the crucial f5-break is not available here due to the hanging b-pawn.

9.a4 Ne8! Preparing the f5-break, which would challenge his centre and help develop my bishop with tempi. In these positions Black should aim for a quick pawn break. If Black doesn't, White will expand in the centre/kingside and unleash the potential of his two bishops.

10.Nh4 Ne7 The fight for the f5-break continues!

11.g4!?



A novelty not included in my notes. This move has three ideas: stopping f5, playing Nf5, and creating some attack on the kingside. I had a think here before coming up with...

11.Bg2 Four games in this position, one of which was a nice game played by me! 11...f5 12.exf5 Nxf5 13.Nxf5 Bxf5 14.Be3 b6 15.a5 Nf6 16.0-0 Qd7 17.axb6 axb6 18.Ra7 Bh3 19.Qa4 Qf5 20.Bxh3 Qxh3 21.Qc6 Rbc8 22.Qg2 Qh5 23.Rfa1 Qf5 24.Rd1 e4 25.d4 Qe6 26.d5 Qg4 27.Re1 Nd7 28.Bd4 Rf3 29.h3 Qf5 30.Ra2 Nc5 31.Bxc5 bxc5 32.g4 Qf4 33.Rae2 Re8 34.Re3 Re5 35.Qh2 Qh6 36.Kf1 Qg6 37.Ke2 h5 38.Rg1 Qf7 39.Rg3 h4 40.Rgxf3 exf3+ 41.Kf1 Rxe3 42.fxe3 Qg6 43.Qa2 Qd3+ 44.Kf2 Qd1 45.g5 Kh7 46.e4 Kg6 47.e5 dxe5 48.Ke3 Qe1+ 49.Kxf3 Qg3+ 50.Ke4 Qf4+ 51.Kd3 e4+ 0-1 (51) Ozsac, S (2293)-Royal, S (2452) EICC 2023 2023.

11...g6! I stop his idea of Nf5, and also support a potential f5 in the future.

12.Qf3 f6 13.Qg3 Ng7 I've come to terms with the fact that it's a slow and strategic position where patience is of the utmost importance.

14.Be2 Bd7 I knew that my opponent is an aggressive and tactical player who strives in very forcing positions. This seemed like the perfect sort of position against him.

15.Be3 b6



My opponent has spent a surprising amount of time on the last few moves and is visibly struggling to find a straightforward plan.

16.d4?! I sense that he's starting to run out of patience and something's about to budge...

16.Ng2! would have made more sense, with the idea of h4. 16...f5! It's a bit hard to say whose king is weaker; I feel White has to be more careful after this (16...g5 17.h4 Ne6 and Black remains solid here too, but White clearly has the initiative) 17.gxf5 gxf5 18.f4 Ng6. The position is

unclear, but this was certainly a better try for something direct than what he did in the game.

16...Qe8



17.g5? An egregious move that goes against all principles in such a position. g5 releases the tension on the kingside, and allows my initiative to flourish when his king is weaker! I suppose he wanted to win the e5 pawn, but he's not even winning any material, and there are countless other repercussions!

17...f5! All of White's pieces look clumsy while, in stark contrast, my pieces are perfectly placed after f5.

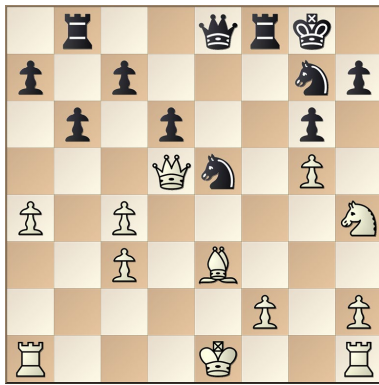
18.dxe5 fxe4 19.Bg4? This is the decisive mistake according to the engine. In fact, I believe 17.g5 is. 17. g5 is only not losing because of the queen sacrifice with 19. exd6 and 20.dxc7, which is pretty difficult to calculate.

After 19.exd6! he still has a way to redeem himself: 19...Nef5 20.Nxf5 (20.dxc7 Rc8 21.Nxf5 Nxf5) 20...Nxf5 21.dxc7! Rc8. I was vacillating between this and Nxc3 during the game. In hindsight, I would go Rc8 (after 21...Nxc3 22.cxb8Q Qxb8 23.hxc3 Qe5 24.Kd2 White has compensation, but I'd still prefer Black) 22.Qf4 Nd4 23.Qg3 Nxe2 24.Kxe2 Rf3 25.Qd6 Bg4. A rule of thumb in opposite-coloured bishop middlegames is to keep your king safe, and it's obvious whose king is safer here. After 26.Ke1 (26.Kf1 Rf7) 26...Rf7 27.Bd4 Rxc7 I win my pawns back while preserving the initiative.

19...Bxc4 The conversion is fairly straightforward from here.

20.Qxc4 Nc6! I cement my knight on the strong e5-square.

21.Qxe4 Nxe5 22.Qd5+

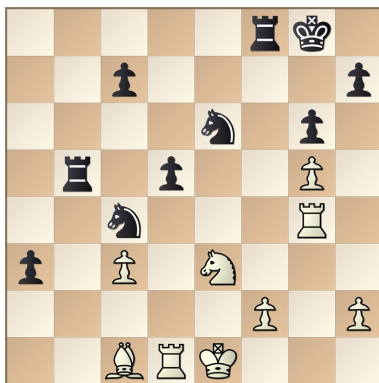


22...Qe6! White has too many weaknesses in the endgame.

23.Rd1 Nxc4 24.Qxe6+ Nxe6 25.Bc1 b5! Bringing my rook into the game.

26.axb5 Rxb5 27.Rg1 a5! I march my pawn down the board.

28.Rg4 d5 29.Ng2 a4 30.Ne3 a3



31.Bxa3 Promotion is imminent after 31.Nxc4 a2 32.Bb2 (32.Ba3 Rb1; 32.Be3 Rb1) 32...dxc4 33.Ba1 Rb1 34.Rxc4 Rd8.

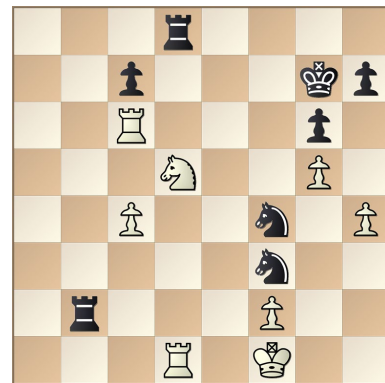
31...Nxa3 32.Nxd5



I've still got to be cautious, as my knight is almost trapped, and my king could get into trouble. Fortunately, I'd foreseen this and had it figured out.

32...Kg7! Prophylaxis, preventing Nf6.

33.Ra4 Nc2+ 34.Ke2 Rd8 35.c4 Ncd4+ 36.Kf1 Rb2 37.h4 Nf3 38.Ra6 Nf4 39.Rc6



39...Rb7! I didn't get carried away by Nd2, Nh3 or other fancy ideas. I also did not let the bias of the rook on the seventh rank go to my head and happily retreated, knowing that Rb7 is the best move, even though I no longer have my rook on the seventh rank.

40.Rc1 Nxd5 41.cxd5 Rxd5 42.Rxc7+ Black could still go wrong here!

42...Rd7! 42...Rxc7? is a drawn endgame! 43.Rxc7+ Kg8 44.Rc8+ Kf7 45.Rc7+ Kg8 46.Rc8+ Kf7 47.Rc7+ Ke6 48.Rxh7.

43.Rc8 Nxh4 44.Ra8 Rb5 A relatively clean game I can be proud of!

0-1

English Schools Chess Championships 2023/24

This is England's leading and most prestigious team competition for schools. Formerly The Sunday Times and then The Times Championship, and more recently run by the ECF (English Chess Federation), it has existed since 1957. The Championship is open to all schools in England. Teams are of six players, who should be pupils of the school they represent. While the strongest teams are always very strong, they are offered automatic qualification to the spring term regional stage. Most teams are not as strong and many are quite inexperienced, so do consider entering even if you have not done so before.

In the autumn term 2023 teams seek to qualify for the regional stage in spring term 2024. Strong teams can claim automatic qualification to the regional stage (if they played at the 2023 national finals or have six pupils with a total ECF rating of at least 9,600). Other teams seek to qualify for the regional stage by playing in local qualifying events and/or playing in internet (Lichess) competitions.

The regional stage in spring term 2024 will be a knock-out competition of schools in a region. Matches are played in schools, and the regional winners qualify for the National Final. A few places at the National Final will be available for those eliminated at the regional stage by playing in repechage events. Details of the National Final, to be played in late June 2024, will be circulated as soon as possible. Schools participating at the National Final will need to pay accommodation charges.

This year please complete one entry form for each team: <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/escs-entry-form-2023/>

The tournament rules can be found here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Rules-2023-24-V2.pdf>

IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

One of the classic sacrifices that happens occasionally is the bishop sacrifice on h7 (or h2). Very occasionally, though, we get the double bishop sacrifice on h2 (or h7) and g2 (or g7).

There have been several instances of this in chess history, but the classic one is this game.

Lasker - Bauer
Amsterdam 1889



White played **1.Bxh7+ Kxh7 2.Qxh5+ Kg8 3.Bxg7! Kxg7 4.Qg4+ Kh7 5.Rf3** threatening 6.Rh3 mate, and so Black is forced to give up his queen. **5...e5 6.Rh3+ Qh6 7.Rxh6+ Kxh6 8.Qd7 Bf6 9.Qxb7** and White went on to win with his material advantage.

Black can decline the sacrifice of the second bishop, and this must always be calculated. After **1.Bxh7+ Kxh7 2.Qxh5+ Kg8 3.Bxg7** then Black can continue with **3...f6**. This can sometimes be a successful defence but in this case after **4.Bh6** White has a winning attack in all cases. Note that **4.Bxf8** would be a poor move, as Black may then be able to defend.

I was recently looking at the game **A. Burn - J. Owen** (Liverpool 1884), which illustrated some of the nuances involved in the double bishop sacrifice.



Burn deliberately allowed this position because he thought the bishop sacrifice was unsound. The game continued **1...Bxh2+ 2.Kxh2 Qh4+ 3.Kg1 Bxg2 4.f3!** Not **4.Kxg2** because of **4...Qg5+ 5.Kh1 Rf6** and wins. The position now got very messy, but Burn eventually won after **4...Bxf1 5.Bxf1 Rf6 6.Bg2**. Note that after **4...Rf6** then **5.Qxg2 Rg6 6.Rc2** and White has rook and two bishops for queen and two pawns, giving him a slight advantage.

However, both players missed that instead of **3...Bxg2** Black could have played **3...Bf3!** Again, this bishop cannot be taken because of **4.gxf3 Qg5+ 5.Kh1 Rf6** etc. Meanwhile, if **4.Be2** then Black continues **4...Bxg2**. Now if **5.f3** then **5...Qg3 6.Rf2 Bh3+ 7.Kh1 Qxf2** wins. This now works, because the white queen's defence along the second rank is blocked by the bishop on e2.

Both of these sacrifices illustrate how important a knight on f3 or f6 is in defending the king - so be careful when you move it away!

Here are a couple of examples to solve, with the answers given at the end of the article:

Gormally's Coaching Corner

by Danny Gormally



Dizdarevic - Miles
Biel 1985

After 1...Bxh2+ 2.Kxh2 Qh4+ 3.Kg1 what is your third move?



P. E. Littlewood - J. E. Littlewood
British Championship 1979

Does the sacrifice 1.Bxh7+ win for White, or is it a draw?

Answers:

Dizdarevic - Miles

Black wins by 3...Bf3! Now after 4.Nd2 then 4...Bxg2 and Black wins, because if 5.f3 then 5...Qg3 6.Rf2 Bh3+ 7.Kh1 Qxf2, or if 5.Kxg2 then Black mates by 5...Qg4+ 6.Kh1 Rf6.

P. E. Littlewood - J. E. Littlewood

After 1.Bxh7+ Kxh7 2.Qh5+ Kg8 3.Bxg7 Kxg7 4.Qg4+ Kh7 5.Qh5+ a draw was agreed. Unfortunately if White plays to win by 5.Rxc8 Rxc8 6.Rf3 then Black has the defence 6...Rc1+ 7.Kf2 Rf1+ which wins for him.

Paul Littlewood Email: plittl@hotmail.com

Magnus in the World of the Soviets

Carlsen, Magnus (2839) - Sarana, Alexey (2682)
Open Chess.com (4), 04.10.2023



Recently I made a number of doom and gloom videos on my YouTube channel ('Hometown chess hero') where I discussed the reasons why I believed that English chess has declined. As I explained in these videos, in my view we have gone backwards as a chess nation for a number of reasons. I will expand on this here, if you can bear it.

Firstly, there has been a lack of investment from successive governments into chess and a lack of corporate investment and sponsorship into the game. Recently this has been rectified by the promise of £1,000,000 into the ECF by the British government. It will be interesting to see if this leads to improvement. Secondly, other countries have got a lot stronger. You look at India, China etc and they are clearly kicking on. They also have a talent pool of 1.4 billion people to pull from. The younger players also don't always have the assurance of a decent job to go into if the chess career doesn't work out, and in England we aren't encouraged and trained to be professional chess players as they are in other lands.

The counter-argument is that we have in fact not necessarily gone backwards, because by and large we have a similar group of players to the one we had ten years ago. It is just that other countries have got stronger, which has had the effect of making us look more ordinary and less relevant in the higher echelons of team competition. Also, our players are getting older and aren't being replaced like for like. The last young generation is the first one for many years in this country that has not yet produced a player of 2600+ strength. When things were going well, the fact that our best players were mostly self-driven and self-made individuals was applauded. But now that the talent pool has dried up, this lack of a collective effort has been exposed as a glaring weakness.

Even though Russia have got a bad press of late, they have done it differently, and their influence on chess culture cannot be ignored. There is a chess fight night channel on YouTube which broadcasts nightly tournaments from Moscow. It amazes me how these same players are there every night. It's the work ethic that impresses. This is something that we need to emulate if we are to enjoy further success in this country, that sense of collectivism and working and playing together. What worked for us in the past doesn't work anymore. We need to change our approach.

One player who read the Russian blueprint for success in chess and has even improved on it is Magnus Carlsen. He does endgame play and prophylactic and positional play as well as any Russian. Or as well as anybody. It was interesting to see him take on Alexey Sarana in the European Club Cup. Sarana is the current European Champion who now represents Serbia, but has a work ethic that is unmistakably Russian. He is known to be a big openings expert, and often has even the very best players in the world on the ropes with the excellence of his preparation.

30...Rh1+ Black uses the rook to chase the king away from the defence of the kingside pawns. Even though Sarana is a pawn down in an endgame to Magnus Carlsen, not normally known to be a good situation in chess, he is hardly in bad shape. The pawn on g3 is vulnerable to attack and the white bishop on a2 is misplaced. It would rather be on d3, attacking b5. White's task therefore is not easy. Magnus has to combine defence of the kingside pawns with the attempt to free up the bishop.

31.Kd2 Rh2+ 32.Kc1 32.Kd3 Rg2 33.Ne2 (33.Kd4 Rxd3 and White can't rampage into c5 with the king, as that would drop the knight on c3.) 33...Bxe4+! and White loses material and is struggling.

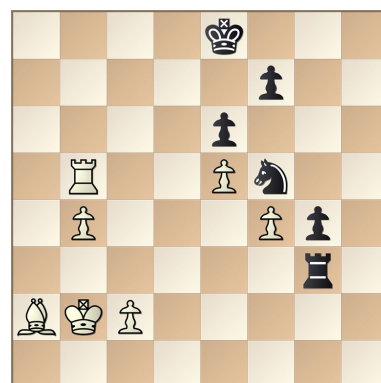
32...Rh3 33.Rd3 Rh1+ 34.Kb2 Re1 More or less forcing the pawn to move forward, which gives extra room for Black to manoeuvre.

35.e5 Ke8! The point of luring the pawn to e5 is revealed. Black is preparing ...Ne7-f5, which would pile more pressure on the g3 weakling.

36.Nd1 36.Nb1 Ne7 37.Nd2 Nf5, and I would be concerned as White that I could even lose the game. **38.c4 Rg1 39.cxb5 Bxb5 40.Bc4 Bxc4 41.Nxc4 Rxd3 42.Rxd3 Nxd3 43.Ne3 Ne2 44.Nxd4 Nxf4=**

36...Be4 This ending is fairly complex. It is easy to get bored and write the game off as a draw when it gets to the endgame phase; however, in this particular scenario the game is fairly double-edged as White is trying to convert the extra pawn and Black is fighting against this. **36...Ne7** was another variation that Black had to consider at the board. **37.Ne3 Bf3 38.c4 (38.Ra3 and Black can choose between ... Nc6 and ... Rg1, and both seem playable. 38...Nc6 and how to defend b4? if either player seems worse, it is White.) 38...Nc6 39.cxb5 Nxb4** with at worst, equality for Black; **36...Bf3!?** with similar ideas to ...Ne7 also seemed fine.

37.Rd2 37.Re3 Rxd1 38.Rxe4 Rg1 39.Re3 Ne7 40.Ra3 Nf5 41.Ra5 Rxd3 42.Rxb5



is an exciting 'race', but maybe not exciting from White's point of view, as the black g-pawn is clearly very fast. **42...Rf3 43.Rb8+ Kd7 44.Rf8 Ke7 45.Rg8 Rxf4 46.Ka3 g3 47.c4 Ne3 48.Rxd3 Nxc4+=**

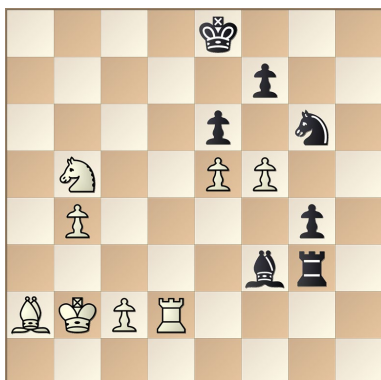
37...Rg1 38.Nc3 Bf3 38...Bc6! =

39.Nxb5 Rxd3? This natural move turns out to be an almost fatal response.

I had to consult the computer to find the most obdurate defence. It proposes **39...Ke7!** mainly because it avoids the tricks that Black fell foul of in the game. I wonder if Magnus would have found this had he been Black, as he is so fond of activating his king in the endgame and

learned this skill very early in his chess development. 40.Na7 Rxc3 41.b5 Rg2 42.Rd6! is the first line, and Black is still struggling to hold. Finding this when short of time and under pressure is almost impossible.

40.f5!



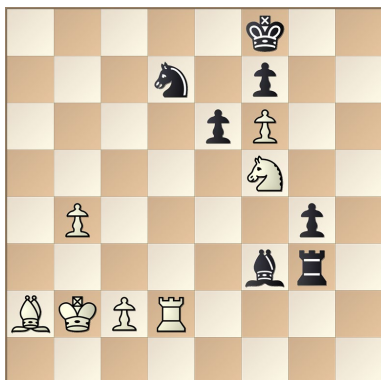
Even in positions with limited material, Magnus is able to stir up some tactics.

40...Nxe5 40...exf5 41.Nd6+ Kf8 42.Nxf5+—

41.f6 This is presumably what Sarana had missed. White is setting up mating ideas.

41...Nd7 42.Nd6+ Kf8 42...Kd8 was the only try to keep resisting, a hard idea to find, giving up f7 with check. 43.Nxf7+ Kc7 44.Ng5 Nxf6 45.Nxe6+ Kb6 46.Rd6+ Ka7 47.Nd4+—

43.Nf5!



43.Nf5 exf5 (43...Ke8 44.Nxg3+—) 44.Rxd7 Ke8 45.Re7+ Kd8 46.Rxf7, when Black will not be able to stop the f-pawn.

1–0

Pechac, Jergus (2596) - Sadhwani, Raunak (2641)
2023 European Chess Club Cup Chess.com (4), 04.10.2023



Carlsen's team-mates included Sadhwani, who must have been nervous playing alongside the legend, but has so far acquitted himself well. He escaped a dicey position in round 1 with a draw, and in round 4 faced Pechac.

38.Bc6? Tempting but bad, and it runs into an elegant tactical solution.

In a recent book for *Chess Informant* (which has yet to be released) I wrote a chapter called 'the impossible quiz', where I tested some skilful players with very difficult positions. This looks like a position that could serve well in any sequel, as it was tough to find 38.c5! Kf8 39.Qf2 with a winning position. Often converting decisive advantages is about keeping control of the position, slowly improving while not doing too much.; 38.Qd1!? is inventive, with the threat of Qb1 or Qb3 winning material; however, here Black can survive with 38...Qh4! 39.h3 Bxe5 40.fxe5 Kg7 41.Rxe8 f4=

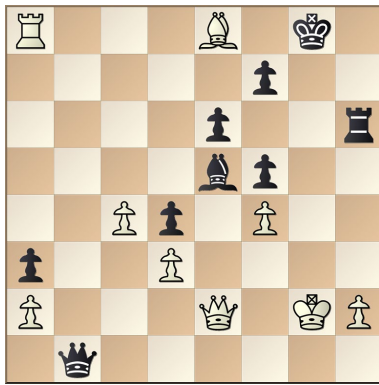
38...Qb6! 39.Bxe8? As so often in chess games where it starts to go wrong, one bad move follows another.

39.Bb5 Bxb5 40.cxb5 Qxb5 41.Qf2



was a better way to try and resist. But when you were pursuing a win just a moment ago, who would have the resolution to change tack instantly and start grovelling for a draw?

39...Qb1+ 40.Kg2 Bxe5



the curious point is revealed. White has no useful discovered check.

41.Bc6+ 41.fxe5 Rg6+ 42.Kh3 Qg1 (42...Qc1→) 43.Bxf7+ Kxf7 44.Ra7+ Ke8 45.Ra8+ Kd7 46.Rh8 Qe3+ →

41...Kh7 42.fxe5 Rg6+ 43.Kf2 Qg1+ 44.Kf3 Rh6 45.Qg2 Qe3#

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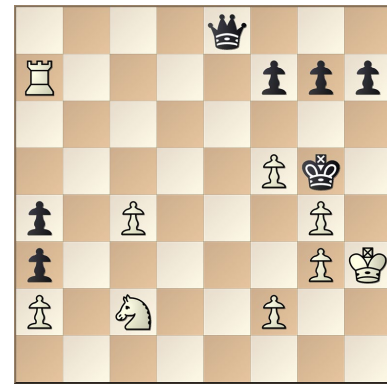
STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Stepladders

Study composers love geometric effects, and one of the most pleasing is the 'ladder'. A piece moves along a line but a single step at a time. To best imitate a stepladder, a piece on h8 needs to go to h7 then g7, g6, f6, f5, e5, and so on. That never happens in a game, but composers have found ways to force it to happen in studies. Here's an example by Kasparian, arguably the greatest study composer of all time. It was published in *British Chess Magazine* in 1937.



White to play and win

Initial assessment: roughly equal material, but Black's queen will run riot in such an open position if White doesn't have anything concrete. The black king is in serious danger. That pawn on c4 doesn't have an obvious function - maybe it's a support point for the knight going to d5?

1.Ra6 looks promising, but so too does 1.f4+. Maybe the knight goes to d5, so there's also 1.Ne3 or 1.Nb4. Hmm, let's try the direct method first - checking and then threatening mate - and if that doesn't work, we may have gained some ideas about how Black can wriggle out in the other lines. So 1.f4+ Kf6 - 1...Kh6 2.g5+ Kh5 3.g4 mate is simple - 2.Nb4. Ah, we only have one route to d5 in this line, as the knight no longer has support on e3; that suggests we might be right about 1.f4+ - if we start with a knight move it looks as if both would work and that can't be the case in a study. OK, it's between 1.Ra6 and 1.f4+. If 1.Ra6 then 1...g6 seems forced. Still we have the same issue about 2.Ne3/b4, but anyway let's try 2.Ne3. Doesn't that finish Black off? He needs to mobilise his queen... ah, to e4 which will prevent Ra8 and threatens ...Qh1. That looks serious for White. Let's pursue the 1.f4+ line further. 1.f4+ Kf6 2.Nb4 and Black only has 2...g6 or 2...g5; not a hard choice: 2...g6 3.Nd5+ Kg7 4.f6+ Kh8 5.Nc7 does the job painlessly. This is feeling right. 2...g5 3.Nd5+ Kg7 4.f6+ Kg6 5.f5+ Kh6 - yes, this is very promising - the black king is stuck. So, we are probably right so far, but what now?

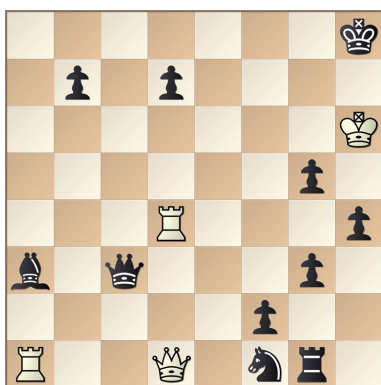
It looks as if White can pretty much do what he wants. There must be some tricky defensive idea - which in studies often means stalemate. Yes, Black is moveless apart from his king, so Black can maybe sac his queen for stalemate. Let's see if we can keep the queen confined, then, and try 6.Ne7 which forces Black to keep a defence of the g8 square. That also means that White doesn't care if Black captures his rook. Black can offer his queen on a8, but there's Rb7 blocking the long diagonal mate threat. Black can go to b8 and threaten his queen sac on g3. I see it now! White can meander his rook down the long diagonal in step movements, like a stepladder. Yes, this

must be the right solution. So we go 7.Rb7 8.Rc7 9.Rc6 10.Rd6 11.Rd5 12.Re5 13.Re4 14.Rf4 15.Rf3 while Black shuttles between b8 and a8. Good, but how do we finish Black off? Maybe we have some way to avoid the stalemate defence by giving him a free move? With that thought - solved! 16.Rxa3 Qa8 17.Rf3 a3 18.c5 Qb8 19.Rf4 Qa8 20.c6. So that c-pawn did have another function apart from supporting the knight.

Any tidying up to do? Any sidelines? It was almost all forced. Oh, yes, there was 14...gxf4, but I saw that as I worked through the ladder moves - 15.Kh4.

The full solution is **1.f4+ Kf6 2.Nb4 g5 3.Nd5+ Kg7 4.f6+ Kg6 5.f5+ Kh6 6.Ne7 Qa8 7.Rb7 Qb8 8.Rc7 Qa8 9.Rc6 Qb8 10.Rd6 Qa8 11.Rd5 Qb8 12.Re5 Qa8 13.Re4 Qb8 14.Rf4 Qa8 15.Rf3 Qb8 16.Rxa3 Qa8 17.Rf3 a3 18.c5 Qb8 19.Rf4 Qa8 20.c6** and wins.

That example by Kasparian was used in one of the monthly study-solving tourneys on the netchex website. (If you would like to have a go at one of these tourneys, visit netchex.club, where you can do the current month's study tourney or any of the previous ones.) As I do the test-solving for those tourneys, I spent some time looking at the study. By coincidence, in August I received a new composition from Paul Michelet, that shows the ladder theme in even more impressive form. Your task this month is to solve Paul's study. Ladders are one of Paul's favourite themes. This one is an enhanced version of one of his own compositions that appeared in this column in May 2022. The solution to the new version is 28 moves long, but don't be put off - ladder studies necessarily have long solutions, but once you know there's a ladder involved, most of the solution moves are obvious. In this study, the ladder is climbed twice. First, you need to spend seven moves getting ready to climb.

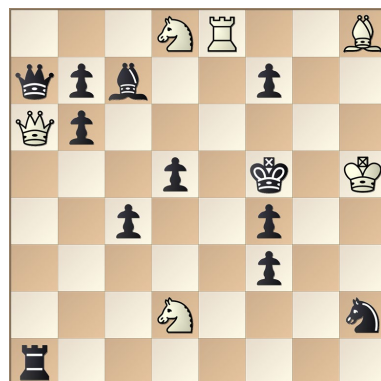


White to play and win

The solution is on page 63.

Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones

Firstly, here is the 2-mover which I left you to solve in the last issue:

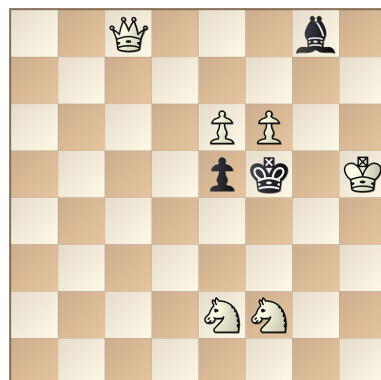


Herbert Ahues

1st Prize, Deutsche Schachzeitung 1979-80
Mate in 2

As I said last time, 'there are two excellent tries as well as the key move, with strong links between the play after each of these three moves'. One way or another the mate we want to threaten is 2.Nd4. The first attempt is 1.Nb3? This gives us 1...cxb3 2.Qd3, 1...b5 2.Qf6 and 1...Be5 2.Rxe5, but fails to 1...Rd1!. Next we try 1.Ne6?. Now there is 1...fxe6 2.Rf8 and 1...b5 2.Ng7, but we have no mating reply to 1...Be5!. So, eventually, the successful move, the key is 1.Nc6!, leading to 1...bxc6 2.Qc8, 1...b5 2.Ne7 and 1...Be5 2.Rxe5.

In a recent issue we looked at the problems that were set in the solving competition at the British Championships at Leicester. Another such event took place at the MindSports Olympiad in London on 25th August, won by James Heppell ahead of Martyn Hamer and Etan Ilfeld. The following problem was solved by only one competitor, and is a good example of the sort of problem you may be set if you ever enter a solving competition:



John Rice
1st Prize, Problem Observer 2007-08
Mate in 3

Nearly all the competitors tried to prove that 1.f7 was the key move, and certainly it is a close try, but the refutation is 1...e4, after which White cannot force mate on the third move. It's easy for me, sitting on the sidelines, to say so, but 1.f7, threatening the capture of Black's only officer and threatening promotion on move 2, looks a bit too strong to be the key move. In any good problem, the key is subtler than that. (Which is not to gainsay that it may be a valuable approach to start with these strong moves, so that you can see why they fail, and then try to find a way to disarm Black's defensive resource.) The key is the much nicer move 1.Qd7!, creating Zugzwang. You can see for yourself the third-move mates after Black's five replies and White's five continuations (in each case unique): 1...e4 2.Ng4; 1...Kxf6 2.Ng3; 1...Bxe6 2.Qh7+; 1...Bf7+ 2.exf7+; and 1...Bh7 2.e7+.

This was in fact a rather convenient problem to set in a solving tourney. As mentioned in the article on the tourney at Leicester, by convention every problem carries five points. For a 'mate in 2' problem it's simply five points if you give the correct key move and zero points if you don't. But for a 'mate in 3 (or more)' problem the five points are divided between all the full-length lines of play. So, if you were solving the problem above you would need to give each of the five black replies and the white second move after each and would gain one point for each. Of course, not many problems neatly divide into five like this, and problem-setters look for good solving problems rather than neatly fivefold ones, so solvers' scores often include an accumulation of decimal fractions!

A case in point was the following problem, also from the MindSports Olympiad tourney, in which after the key move Black has three moves, and so there are three lines of play between which the 5 points would be split. As it happened, solvers tended either to get the whole solution or none, so we didn't have too many decimalized scores. In fact, I was mildly surprised that solvers did better with this problem (which had been used at the British Solving Championships in 2000) than with the problem above by John Rice



Christopher Jones
The Problemist 2000
Mate in 3 Page

I'll leave this one with you. If you manage to solve it do consider pursuing more chess problems to solve. They're quite easy to find online – the netchex club, run by Brian Cook, is one good place to go. If you struggle with this problem then your chess-playing engine should show you the way, or you can wait until next issue's Problem Corner reveals all!

Don't hesitate to raise any points with me.

Christopher Jones cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

How to Solve a Study – solution

(Michelet)

1.Rxa3 Qxa3 2.Kg6 Qe7 3.Rxh4+ Kg8 4.Rh8+ Kxh8 5.Qa1+ Kg8 6.Qa8+ Qf8 7.Qa2+ Kh8 and now White is ready to climb the ladder for the first time **8.Qb2+ 9.Qb3+ 10.Qc3+ 11.Qc4+ 12.Qd4+ 13.Qxd7 Rh1 14.Qd5+ Kh8 15.Qxh1+ Nh2** and now the second time **16.Qa1+ 17.Qa2+ 18.Qb2+ 19.Qb3+ 20.Qc3+ 21.Qc4+ 22.Qd4+ 23.Qd5+ 24.Qe5+ 25.Qe6+ 26.Qh3+ Qh6+ 27.Qxh6+ Kg8 28.Qg7** mate.

Stairway to heaven? The ladders are of course the major attraction, but the introduction is striking too - packed with surprise moves.

The second time on the ladder, if White again plays Qd7, Black has a nasty counter: 23.Qd7? Qf6+ 24.Kxf6 f1Q+ 25.Kg6 and 25...Qa6+ or 25...Qb1+.

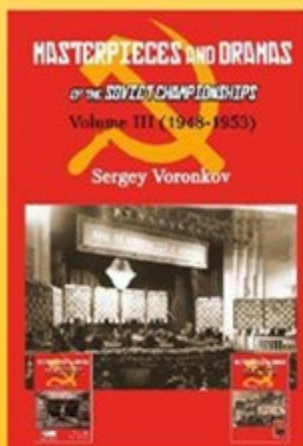
This study is beyond the ability of my computer to check; I hope it's sound, but if any reader finds a defect, please let me know.

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

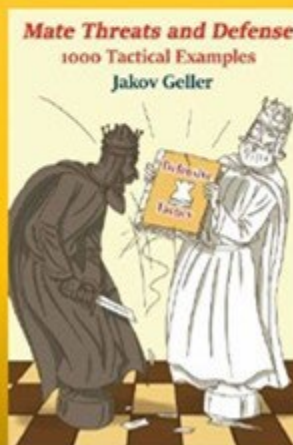
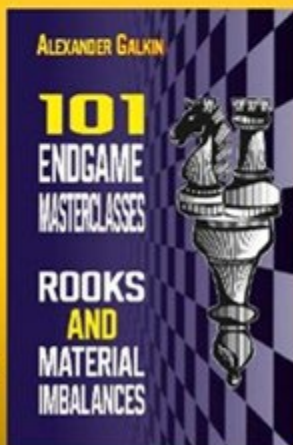
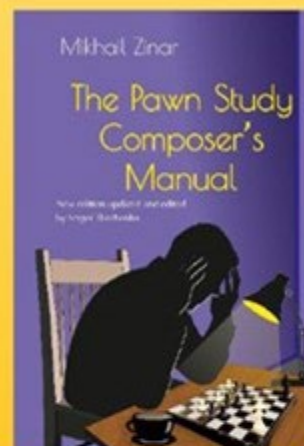
| Week Beginning 23 October | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 24-26 October 2023 | Uxbridge Half Term Chess Camp |
| 24 October 2023 | Muswell Hill FIDE Standard |
| 24 October 2023 | Coulsdon Junior Mini Tournament 23/24 |
| 24 October 2023 | 4NCL Online Season 8 |
| 25 October 2023 | Coulsdon Junior Mini Tournament 23/24 |
| 25 October 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess |
| 26 October 2023 | Coulsdon Junior Mini Tournament 23/24 |
| 27 October 2023 | Secondary School Chess Lichess Battle |
| 27-29 October 2023 | London Chess League FIDE Weekender |
| 27-29 October 2023 | 46th Scarborough Congress |
| 28 October 2023 | Scarborough Junior Rapidplay 2023 |
| 28-29 October 2023 | Southall FIDE Congress |
| 28 October 2023 | 2023/24 Newham Junior Grand Prix |
| Week Beginning 30 October | |
| 30 October-3 November 2023 | Nottinghamshire Centenary Chess Invitational |
| 31 October 2023 | 4th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress |
| 1 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess |
| 2 November 2023 | Hendon FIDE Blitz |
| 2-7 November 2023 | Junior 4NCL Online Season 8 |
| 3-5 November 2023 | Central London Chess Congress at Imperial College |
| 3 November 2023 | Hampshire Chess Congress 2023 |
| 4 November 2023 | Chelmsford Autumn Junior Chess Tournament |
| 4-5 November 2023 | 10th Witney Congress |
| 4 November 2023 | Norfolk and Norwich Closed Rapidplay |
| 4 November 2023 | Southall Junior LJCC Qualifier |
| 4 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess FIDE Rated Rapidplays |
| Week beginning 6 November | |
| 5 November 2023 | Ealing FIDE Rapidplay |
| 5 November 2023 | 10th Desert Penguins Junior Chess Championships - LJCC Qualifier |
| 7 November 2023 | Battersea Nimzowitsch Memorial Blitz |
| 7 November 2023 | 4NCL Online Season 8 |
| 7 November 2023 | Uxbridge Advanced Chess Lessons |
| 8 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess |
| 8 November 2023 | Beckenham FIDE Rated Club Championship |
| 10-11 November 2023 | Wimbledon FIDE Congress |
| 10 November 2023 | Secondary School Chess Lichess Battle |
| 10-12 November 2023 | 54th West Wales Congress |
| 10-12 November 2023 | 55th Torbay Chess Congress |
| 12 November 2023 | Hampshire Junior Open Chess Congress 2023 |
| 12 November 2023 | Kent Junior Chess Association - GP2 & LJCC Qualifier |
| 12 November 2023 | North London Grand Prix 2 |
| 12 November 2023 | Mitcham Rapidplay |
| 12 November 2023 | CSC Grand Prix 2023 |
| 12 November 2023 | Warfare 2023 Rapid Chess |
| Week Beginning 13 November | |
| 13 November 2023 | National Online School Chess League |
| 14 November 2023 | Muswell Hill FIDE Standard |
| 14 November 2023 | 4th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress |
| 15 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess |
| 16-29 November 2023 | Junior 4NCL Online Season 8 |
| 17 November 2023 | 6th Desert Penguins Friday Evening FIDE Rapidplay |
| 18-19 November 2023 | 4NCL Season 2023-2024 Weekend 1 Rounds 1 and 2 |
| 18 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Autumn Term 2023 |

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 18-19 November 2023 | Southall FIDE Congress |
| 18 November 2023 | Cornwall Rapidplay Tournament |
| 18 November 2023 | Oxford FIDE Rapidplay |
| 19 November 2023 | Bucks LJCC Qualifier North 2 |
| 19 November 2023 | Staffordshire Junior Chess Championships |
| 19 November 2023 | Kensington FIDE Rapid Chess - Open |
| Week Beginning 20 November | |
| 21 November 2023 | Muswell Hill FIDE Standard |
| 21 November 2023 | 4NCL Online Season 8 |
| 22 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess |
| 22 November 2023 | Beckenham FIDE Rated Club Championship |
| 24 November 2023 | 2023/2024 Birmingham & District Junior Chess League - Tournament 2 ECF Schools Qualifier |
| 24 November 2023 | Secondary School Chess Lichess Battle |
| 25-26 November 2023 | 2023 Birmingham Open |
| 25-26 November 2023 | Cambridgeshire County Individual Chess Championship |
| 25 November 2023 | Sussex Junior Eastbourne Rapidplay |
| 25-26 November 2023 | Coulsdon Chess Late Autumn Standard Play Congress |
| 25 November 2023 | 2023/24 Newham Junior Grand Prix |
| 25 November 2023 | Poplar Rapid Tournament |
| 26 November 2023 | 8th Lowestoft Rapidplay |
| 26 November 2023 | Yorkshire Open Rapidplay Chess |



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

