



# Chess *Moves*

January 2024



**GM Gupta wins Hastings! Full report inside, with previews of the British Rapidplay Championship, the 2nd Cambridge International and the English Championships**

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# EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of ChessMoves!

This month we preview a number of forthcoming ECF events: the British Rapidplay Championship (in partnership with the 4NCL); the 2nd Cambridge International Open; and the 2024 English Championships. Full details on how to enter and other information can be found inside. We also hope to be in a position to announce dates and venues for the British Chess Championships soon – more to follow!

We have an in-depth report on the annual Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress. GMs Stuart Conquest and Maxime Lagarde provide comprehensive commentary.

We also have our usual quota of top-quality articles from the likes of John Nunn ('Great British Chess Players'), Glenn Flear ('Endgames that All Club Players Should Know'), Danny Gormally ('Gormally's Coaching Corner') and Keith Arkell ('Arkell's Endings at Sitges').

We round things off with articles for juniors, domestic news, puzzles, articles on studies and problems, and a comprehensive congress calendar to help you plan the months ahead.

Once again, you can download a PGN of all the games in this edition here – <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January-Chessmoves.pgn>

You will need to use Chessbase or a PGN viewer to access the games. There are various free chess programs with PGN viewers available online for desktop access, and you can also download a PGN/chess viewer app to your iOS or Android-based phone. Please contact the office if you need any help.

There's plenty for everyone in this edition. Enjoy!

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## EVENTS

### Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress by Stuart Conquest and Maxime Lagarde

All pictures by Brendan O'Gorman and Prashila Narsing Chauhan

#### Day One



*John Ashworth prepares to make the first move*

The congress was jointly opened by Dominic Lawson, President of the English Chess Federation, and John Ashworth, CEO of Caplin Systems Ltd. Both welcomed the players, Dominic recalling the first time he came to the congress, when former world champion Tigran Petrosian was one of the participants. John Ashworth made the ceremonial first move on board 1 for last year's winner, Sarunas Sulskis. The Lithuanian, rated 2490, is 'only' seeded 11<sup>th</sup> but was allocated top board as defending champion.

Commentary on the top Masters games was provided by IM Richard Pert, who was accompanied by surprise guest GM Matthew Sadler, himself winner of the Hastings Premier in 1997/8. Interestingly, it was Richard's son, Max, only thirteen, who was paired with GM Sarunas Sulskis, a sharp game which the latter won. On the next table French GM Maxime Lagarde (2640), our top seed, had a tricky game with Michael Binks, from Wales, who celebrates his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday just after the tournament!

As well as the Masters tournament, the Con Power Christmas events also began today, split into three sections by rating. These six-round contests have their second round tomorrow morning. Round 2 of the Masters will begin at 2:15pm.

#### Day Two



*GM Maxime Lagarde*

The second round of the Masters brought us plenty of sharp chess, with just two draws from the top 24 boards – surely some kind of record?

On board 1 top seed Maxime Lagarde sacrificed first a pawn, then an exchange, a second rook, both bishops, and finally checkmated with his queen. His young opponent, Scotland's Freddy Gordon, gallantly played to the finish. On second board India's Abhijeet Gupta also offered a pawn in the opening, for which he soon gained overwhelming pressure. A similar narrative was played out on board 3, where Pengxiang Zhang essayed a thematic Grünfeld pawn sacrifice. Jack Rudd slipped up – and was duly punished. Brandon Jacobson also powered his way to 2/2 with an impressive display against Brazil's Hugo de Melo Lux.

Such bloodthirsty chess would have pleased Mikhail Tal, the first of whose two Hastings Premier victories came in 1963/4. Local player Chris Hann, participating in one of the Con Power morning events, recalls how as a boy he operated the demonstration boards that year, doing the same when Paul Keres won in 1964/5, and also in 1965/6, which saw Spassky and Uhlmann share first.

Last game to finish today was between Francis Rayner and Alexander Cherniaev, the latter winning a long endgame after some six hours' play. Alexander is the author of a book on Harry Nelson Pillsbury, victor of the celebrated tournament here in 1895. We only know the English version, but Alexander tells us the Russian version he wrote is much the better of the two.

Tomorrow morning at 9:30 we look forward to round 4 of the Con Power tournaments, with round 5 to follow at 2:15pm, which is also when round 3 of the Masters begins.



## Day Three



GM Alexander Cherniaev

After three rounds of the Masters we have four players with a perfect score: GMs Pengxiang Zhang, Pierre Laurent-Paoli, IM Shreyas Royal and FM Andre Nielsen. The Norwegian beat last year's winner, Sarunas Sulskis, whose speculative exchange sacrifice in an equal-looking ending did not work at all. The Frenchman, here for the first time, prevailed against Joe Gallagher, who has lost count of his previous Hastings appearances – they were that long ago! – while the Chinese player continues his impressive start to the event.

Shreyas Royal has two GM norms, the most recent being a few weeks ago at the London Chess Classic. The 14-year-old gradually gained the upper hand after Brandon Jacobson's positional pawn sacrifice, the hard-fought game lasting 63 moves.

English IMs Jonah Willow and Matthew Wadsworth secured draws on boards 1 and 2 against the two top seeds, Maxime Lagarde and Abhijeet Gupta. Maxime seemed to overlook a win at one point. Matthew looked to have a won ending but may have erred. Another long game was played by Laura Unuk, whose stubborn defence was rewarded with half a point against Martin Petrov. Following a sharp middlegame Alex Cherniaev gradually proved the advantage of two minor pieces over a rook, inflicting defeat on three-times Hastings winner Deep Sengupta.

In the evening we staged our first of two blitz events, and the 32-player field gathered at the White Rock Hotel on Hastings seafront. The FIDE-rated tournament was led from the front by top seed Maxime Lagarde, who over

nine rounds only dropped half a point, an impressive display. A gale raged outside, but inside the spirit was warm and festive.

We take the opportunity to wish everyone a happy New Year's Eve!

## Day Four



GM Danny Gormally (left) was punished by GM Eldar Gasanov for an early slip

The results at the top of the Masters took an unexpected turn, with boards 2 to 6 all drawn. However, not all were without incident. Meanwhile China's Pengxiang Zhang became sole leader with 4/4, an extra pawn proving enough to score the full point against Andre Nielsen.

For much of the first session it looked as though Shreyas Royal would also end the day on a 100% score. His opponent, French GM Pierre Laurent-Paoli, was very low on time, Shreyas finding the correct path through the complications to a won game – but in the run-up to the time control an unfortunate slip by Shreyas proved costly. A missed opportunity, but Shreyas continues to impress with his mature play.

Abhijeet Gupta might have won against Alex Cherniaev, the latter's defence of a long ending which he started a pawn down proving up to the mark. A much briefer affair was the game Gasanov vs Gormally, in which the Englishman was a rook down after just nine moves. We hope Danny recovers from this setback.

The Con Power tournaments finished this morning. Over four days six rounds were contested, in three sections according to rating. Congratulations to Andrew Brett (Under 2250), Anh Nguyen and Gerben Van Pel (Under 1950), and Luke Freeman (Under 1650), all champions.

Today was of course the last day of the year. We wish all our readers a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024!

## Day Five



*GM Pengxiang Zhang won his fifth straight game to reach 5/5. GM Keith Arkell (seen in background) lost in round 5 to eventual winner, GM Abhijeet Gupta*

The new year began with fireworks on board as five of the top six games saw decisive results. Pengxiang Zhang recorded his fifth straight victory, holding his nerve in a sharp middlegame against Pierre Laurent-Paoli. Keeping pace is Shreyas Royal, whose quiet opening was perhaps chosen to avoid preparation. Jonah Willow fell behind on the clock and on material too, as his isolated d-pawn could not be saved.

Maxime Lagarde won convincingly, as did Abhijeet Gupta. The genial Frenchman smoothly encircled Borna Derakhshani, dominating the dark squares to keep full control – a textbook lesson. The kingside assault, when it came, was lethal: Black could do nothing.

Keith Arkell saddled himself with a weak a-pawn, which Abhijeet Gupta was happy to pocket. From this point the Indian did not give the Englishman any chances. This clean win with the black pieces keeps the number 2 seed in full contention for one of the top places.

Sarunas Sulskis won a very interesting game against Laura Unuk, in which he sacrificed a pawn. The Slovenian definitely had her chances until the wily Lithuanian bamboozled her with a surprising rook move. We were delighted that both players joined Richard Pert in the commentary room, analysing the game for our physical but also (much larger) online audience.

In today's Daily Mail Dominic Lawson devotes part of his column to Hastings, focusing on Bodhana Sivanandan and Shreyas Royal. In her game Bodhana drifted into a lost position against Thomas Brown, who picked up an exchange. A few moves later, however, he gifted Bodhana an opportunity to launch a fierce counter-attack, after

which the outcome of the game would have been highly debatable. Instead, Bodhana captured a pawn with check, but after this natural-looking continuation there were no further chances.

The New Year tournaments began today. Two sections play in the morning, two in the afternoon, and yes – it's entirely possible to play both mornings and afternoons. We see a number of entrants to the New Year morning events who are also playing in the Masters. Nigel Dennis, who takes part in the New Year under-1800, tells us he first played in Hastings in 1962/3, and that since then he has played in every Congress. We believe this must be his sixtieth appearance! Can anyone match that?

## Day Six



*Last year's winner GM Sarunas Sulskis won his round 6 game with Black against Brazil's FM Hugo de Melo Lux*

The top board clash did not disappoint. Shreyas Royal put tournament leader Pengxiang Zhang under real pressure, undoubtedly generating winning chances. The bishop pair might have tipped the scales decisively in White's favour, but Zhang defended resolutely – but then just after the time control Shreyas appeared to overlook a tactical shot – could he have won a piece for two pawns? From here the game fizzled out to a draw.

On board 2 Eldar Gasanov looked to be on the verge of beating Maxime Lagarde, whose provocative and unorthodox Leningrad Dutch set-up was challenged by h4-h5. With a dubious position for a long time Maxime nevertheless hung on, his reward, finally, a precious half point. Meanwhile Abhijeet Gupta's choice of London System paid rich dividends, Freddy Gordon having no defence as White's forces crashed through.

The next three boards also produced three decisive results. The victors were Brandon Jacobson, Sarunas Sulskis, and Romain Edouard. Sulskis won a strange game, where he seemed to stand clearly worse. Brandon's point



came in a technical display, where he made an extra pawn count. Some of the moves chosen by Andre Nielsen in his game against Romain Edouard were frankly astonishing! In the commentary room Congress Chairman Stuart Conquest joined Richard Pert, and this game was one they especially enjoyed. White's brave play was, however, the instrument of his own downfall, as the French grandmaster coolly took over the initiative. White's king, exposed, was mercilessly hunted down along various open files and scary diagonals.

Many members of Hastings & St. Leonards Chess Club take part in the congress. An important role is that of the 'filler', someone prepared to step in as a replacement if the number of players for any particular tournament and round is uneven, so that everyone has the chance of a game. Patrick Donovan is a former club champion who has not played a competitive game of chess for, he thinks, at least ten years – until he agreed to play a game here, resulting in a cut-and-thrust draw. We hope he doesn't wait another ten years until his next game!

## Day Seven



*French GM Romain Edouard (left) and India's GM Deep Sengupta drew their game. Both are frequent visitors to Hastings*

The weather has improved! As the sun blazed unexpectedly dark clouds hung over Pengxiang's position, India's Abhijeet Gupta seemingly poised to grab the lead. With the bishop pair and a powerful passed d-pawn the forecast for Black was very healthy indeed – yet somehow the Chinese GM found resources, happily (for him) reaching the firm ground of equality. With this 'save' Pengxiang remains undefeated and is clearly a strong candidate for first place.

On 6/7 we also have Brandon Jacobson, who won a key game against top seed Maxime Lagarde. The Frenchman played creatively in the opening, and perhaps stood better, but then – having sacrificed several pawns – lost his way with sharp play when it was time to curb his natural ambition. Black had to find a precise defence, but having done so the outcome was more or less decided. This means that we have joint leaders, and they will face each other tomorrow.

The board 2 clash between Sarunas Sulskis and Shreyas Royal was a well-played game in which the adversaries trod a theoretical path (we suppose – although Shreyas was playing much faster), and no meaningful advantage seemed to accrue to either side. Accurate play led to a fair division of the point.

Romain Edouard pressed Deep Sengupta, but the Indian held. Eldar Gasanov also defended a slightly inferior position against Martin Petrov. The next three boards were all won by Black. Pierre Laurent-Paoli gradually gained the upper hand against Alexander Cherniaev; Borna Derakhshani stood well when Viktor Mikhalevski elected to trade two rooks for a queen – a decision which cost White the game; and Ameet Ghasi outfoxed Freddy Gordon, who after a scrappy middlegame blundered a few moves after the time control.

This evening we held our second blitz event, but under pairs rules: teams of two, the average rating not to exceed 2200. Five rounds were played. The winning duo, the Hip Young Gunslingers, won three matches and drew two. GMs Keith Arkell and Danny Gormally took part, as did IM Richard Pert (who partnered his son Max), but the Gunslingers, we can reveal, were young Scots Freddy Gordon and Supratit Banerjee.

## Day Eight



*IM Ameet K Ghasi vs IM Shreyas Royal*

A pleasing aspect of this year's Masters has been the low ratio of quick draws, not only among the top boards but across the whole event. Opponents have fought into the fifth and even sixth hour, young players being no exception. While it is probably true that shorter time controls are increasingly more common than the 'classical' control used at Hastings, many players in fact prefer tournaments where longer games occur more often. Spectators too – who perhaps cannot visit the venue until late in the session – have a better chance of finding more games in progress. Some of us grew up with adjournments, sealed moves, and games being resumed the following morning!

Our top board clash today between the two leaders, Brandon Jacobson and Pengxiang Zhang, lasted 98 moves; only then was the point shared. The American had been a pawn up at move 30, but with three pawns against two on the same side chances were high that a draw would be the final outcome. Even so, it may be that White missed a path to victory. The final drawn position, a rook ending where Black is two connected passed pawns down, is worth remembering.

On second board Abhijeet Gupta continues to impress. His victory over Sarunas Sulskis was deserved, and means Abhijeet now shares the lead on  $6\frac{1}{2}$  /8. With a persistent edge in the middle- and endgame the Indian kept up the pressure, capitalising in the run-up to move 40 with a passed a-pawn. Sulskis, understandably dejected, played on for a few moves with just a knight for the new queen.

Shreyas Royal might have reached  $6\frac{1}{2}$ /8 too, but his advantage, slight but on the verge of promising more, dissolved and the game frittered out to a draw. His opponent, Ameet Ghasi, gave up a pawn in the opening in search of unbalanced play. Shreyas, likely needing a win and a draw from his last two games for his third GM norm, will have to try and win tomorrow. Like him, Ameet also has two GM norms, and is just one result away from his title.

Another player with norm chances, but in the IM category, is Borna Derakhshani, who drew today with Romain Edouard. An ultimately emphatic victory was registered by Deep Sengupta over Joe Gallagher in the tangly, twilight jungle of a Najdorf Sicilian, where Black grabbed a centre pawn. We must not forget to mention Bai Xue, whose protracted battle against endgame virtuoso Keith Arkell lasted 107 moves, and which saw the young Chinese, unknown to us before this event, collect the point and move to 5/8.

Tonight's special event was a guest lecture by Hans Olav Lahlum on 'Chess Geniuses'. Hans Olav is a tournament organiser, television personality, and crime author – three of many strings to his bow. Those of us who came to the White Rock Hotel were dazzled with anecdotes of the world champions and much more besides, including Mr. Lahlum's thoughts on Magnus Carlsen and the transformation of chess in Norway.

## Day Nine



*GM Brandon Jacobson vs GM Abhijeet Gupta*

And so the ninth and final round of the Masters arrives, with three leaders at the start of play: Brandon Jacobson, Abhijeet Gupta, and Pengxiang Zhang, all on  $6\frac{1}{2}$ /8. Behind them follow Shreyas Royal, Deep Sengupta, and Eldar Gasanov on 6/8. The winner – or winners – must therefore come from these two groups, but the chasing players on  $5\frac{1}{2}$ /8 are also in the frame for a potential high placing and with it a good prize.

As for tame, quiet draws, we need not have worried. Of the top ten games, eight ended decisively, and the two in which honours were shared were hard-fought and, though very different in tone, equally absorbing. First to finish was the board 2 clash, where Deep Sengupta's French Defence looked about to spring a leak or two. His opponent, Pengxiang Zhang, had at least one golden chance to put the Indian under heavy pressure, perhaps even gaining an overwhelming advantage, but missed it, and the game spun forward in a new trajectory. The lines now levelled and in a curious manner the game ended in a repetition of checks, with neither side able to risk more. Thus Pengxiang's final tally was 7/9, four consecutive draws following his five initial wins. The outcome of the top board game would decide whether he would finish in a tie for first.

The board 3 pairing of Shreyas Royal against Eldar Gasanov guaranteed us an anxious but adrenaline-fuelled afternoon, for should Shreyas win he would secure his third and final GM norm, the title practically bestowed here and now (with just a few rating points needed to cross 2500). After a sedate opening phase the young man who has been in the news so much lately built up what appeared a comfortable plus. Down on time, Gasanov had little choice but to jettison the exchange – an offer which Shreyas could enjoy the luxury of not immediately accepting. The excitement was palpable: was Shreyas about to claim victory, with all its rewards? And yet within a few moves the situation altered, Black regained the lost



material, and the tension eased. Accurate defence from the Ukrainian proved a barrier on this occasion, and after passing the time control the players acquiesced in a draw. For Shreyas, then, a small setback. Still, we feel that nobody will contradict us when we say that his performance here was beyond reproach. Everything indicates that a stellar career lies ahead of this young man, soon to turn 15 and already with a legion of fans.

A remarkable game was that between Romain Edouard and Jonah Willow. We strongly recommend playing it through slowly and trying to fathom out what was going on! A rook down from move 7 until the end of the game (21 moves later), the Frenchman's firebrand display propelled him into the main prize list. Joining him on 6½/9 are compatriots Maxime Lagarde and Pierre Laurent-Paoli. The former overcame Daniel Fischer in a game in which Black seemed to slip up on move 40, Maxime investing an exchange to force through two connected passed pawns – the finish is another we think well worth a look! Pierre's odd-looking knight deployment on move 4 against last year's winner brought him success, Sarunas Sulskis's defensive skills insufficient in the long run.



*Bai Xue won top female prize*

IM norm candidate Borna Derakhshani sacrificed two pawns in a bid to complicate, but the flaws in Black's strategy were exposed by Martin Petrov. Ameet Ghasi also reached 6½/9, winning a long game against Matthew Wadsworth. We did see one norm achieved, for WIM, as China's Bai Xue concluded her excellent tournament with

a win over Tim Grutter from the Netherlands. On the adjacent board Laura Unuk drew with Mads Vestby-Ellingsen, meaning that Bai Xue scooped the top female award too. Another notable result was Freddy Gordon's victory over Danny Gormally.

But what of board 1? While the Slav Defence gave the game a solid foundation, it was soon apparent that both players were eager to fight, with Brandon Jacobson castling queenside, then launching his h-pawn when Abhijeet Gupta chose to castle on the opposite wing. With little to choose between the two sides, White took a risk, sacrificing a pawn in an effort to expose the black king. The result, however, was that the Indian assumed the initiative, returning the pawn to activate his pieces. In surprisingly swift fashion White's game was lost. Two pawns down, Brandon, who must have rued his aggressive actions earlier in the game, had little option but to resign. Abhijeet Gupta, seeded second in the initial rankings, and here in Hastings for the first time, played in a strong and convincing manner throughout, his score of six wins and three draws making him a deserving champion. We congratulate him!

Below is the winner of the best game award, with annotation by Maxime Lagarde.

#### **Frederick Gordon - Maxime Lagarde**

Caplin Hastings Masters 2023, 29.12.2023

An interesting game to analyse, to understand that activity matters much more than material, and to show the power of the two bishops!

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5**

An opening that I rarely play in classical games, but I felt it was the right choice for this game to avoid any preparation.

**4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 e6**

A side-line that became fashionable thanks to Dubov. 5...Bxa6 (or 5...g6) is the main line.

**6.Nc3**

My opponent was not scared at all, and played his moves quickly so far.

**6...exd5 7.Nxd5 Be7**

Basically my theoretical knowledge stopped here, but who cares? You don't need it when you play the Benko!

**8.Nf3 Nxd5 9.Qxd5 Rxa6 10.e3 Nc6!?**

I knew that giving the exchange to get the light squares was one idea in this line. I did not really know if it was enough in this exact position, though. (10...Rd6 11. Qb3 Rb6 12. Qc2 Nc6 is also possible, with compensation.)



### 11.Ne5!?

An interesting way to force trades.

The best way to continue is simply to ignore the offer with 11.Be2! Black cannot really get a strong initiative here.

After 11.Bxa6 Nb4 12.Qd1 (If 12.Qa8 Bxa6 13.Qxd8+ Bxd8 - White is definitely under pressure here - 14.Kd1 Nd3 15.Rg1 Nxf2+ 16.Ke1 Nd3+ - or 16...Ne4.) 12...Bxa6 13.Ne5 (to prevent ...Nd3+) Qa8! (An important move to spot; Black should not relinquish his initiative.) 14.Qxd7+ Kf8 15.f3 f6 with a really unclear position.

### 11...Nxe5 12.Bxa6 Bxa6 13.Qxe5 O-O

The critical position has arisen after a few forced moves. I definitely thought I had good compensation here, but to be honest I had no idea what the engine would give as an evaluation.



### 14.f3

A very logical move, but actually after this Black is better. 14.Qd5! was the right move, avoiding d7-d5. It's not easy to play, as White clearly wants to get his king to safety as

soon as possible. 14...Qb8 15.f3 Qb5 16.Qd2 d5 17.Kf2 - this is clearly a better version of the game, as the white queen is not in danger.

### 14...d5!

The only move to get an advantage. Black will create threats against both king and queen.

### 15.Kf2 Bd6 16.Qh5

16.Qxd5? Bg3+ wins the queen. 16.Qc3 Qh4+ 17.Kg1 (17.g3 Bxg3+) ...d4 is crushing.

### 16...g6

Harassing the queen.

### 17.Qh6

17.Qg4 h5 18.Qa4 Qf6 followed by ...Rb8 looks very good for Black. Or 17.Qh3 Re8!.



### 17...Re8!

Getting my last piece active.

### 18.g3?

My opponent wanted to avoid ...Qh4+ ideas and to consolidate squares around his king, but this move weakens the f3-pawn, which will be fatal later in the game. 18.Bd2 was necessary, and after ...Re5 19.g4! - preventing ...Rh5 - 19...Be7 20. h4 Qb6, and Black is better.

18.Rd1 looks logical, but there is a very strong tactical idea: 18...Re5 19.g4 - to avoid ...Rh5 - 19...Rh5! - anyway! - 20.gxh5 Qh4+ 21.Kg1 Qxh2#.

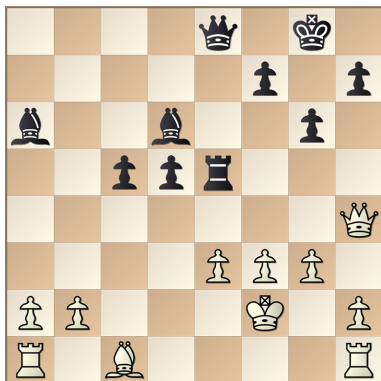
### 18...Re5 19.Qh4



19.Qh3 was the only move, but White's position starts to become indefensible after 19 ...d4 20.e4 (20.Rd1 Qf6!) 20...c4!.

### 19...Qe8!

A very strong multifunctional move. My queen increases the pressure on the e3-pawn, but also threatens to jump to b5, creating destructive threats on the white squares. White's position is now lost.



### 20.a4

Avoiding ...Qb5, but losing on the spot.

### 20...Rh5 21.Qf6 Rf5!

The key move to follow 20...Rh5.

### 22.Qh4

22.Qxd6 Qe4! (22...Rxf3+ only leads to a draw after 23.Kxf3 Qe4+ 24.Kf2 Qc2+ 25.Bd2 Qxd2+ 26.Kg1 Qxe3+ 27.Kg2 Qe2+ 28.Kg1 Qe3+) 23.Qxa6 (23. f4 Qc2+) ...Qxf3+ 24.Ke1 Qxh1+ 25.Kd2 Rf2+ 26.Kc3 Qd1! - or if 22.Qc3 then still ...Qe4.

### 22...Qe6

Threatening ...Be7, trapping the queen: the theme of the game.

### 23.a5

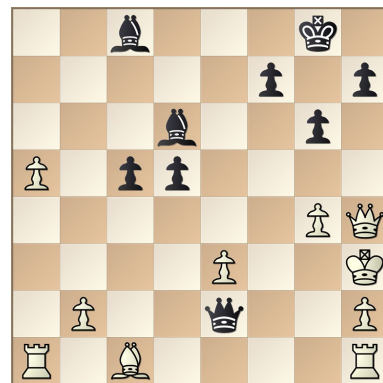
Freeing the a4-square, but Black is ready to strike. If 23.Bd2 Be7 24.Qh3 Rxf3+!.

### 23...Rxf3+! 24.Kxf3 Qf5+ 25.Kg2 Qc2+ 26.Kh3

26.Bd2 doesn't help after ...Qxd2+ 27.Kh3 Bc8+ 28.g4 Qxe3+ 29.Kg2 Qe2+ 30.Kg1 Bf4!.

### 26...Bc8+ 27.g4 Qe2!

The decisive move. White is completely tied up.



### 28.Qd8+

On 28.Rg1 I calculated the following variation: 28...Qf3+ 29.Rg3 Bxg3 30.Qxg3 Bxg4+ 31.Kh4 Qf6+ 32.Kxg4 Qf5+ 33.Kh4 Qh5#, but I just missed the simple 28...Qxh2 mating in one move!

### 28...Kg7 29.Qxc8 Qf3+ 30.Kh4

How to end the game is just a matter of taste.

### 30...Bg3+

If 30...Be7+ 31.g5 Bxg5+ 32.Kxg5 h6+ 33.Kh4 g5#.

### 31.hxg3 Qxh1+ 32.Kg5 Qh6 mate.

Probably one of my best 10 games ever against a young opponent who is going to be very strong in the future, for sure!

### 0-1

## Chess in the Winter Air! Calderdale vs Kirklees 6th January 2024 by Steve Westmoreland

Calderdale (Club)	3 - 4	Kirklees (Club)
Richard Porter (Halifax)	0-1	Steve Westmoreland (Holmfirth) C
Dave Patrick (Belgrave)	1-0	Colin Frank (Huddersfield)
Dave Colledge (Belgrave) C	0-1	Hamid Farham (Huddersfield / Meltham)
Steve Harrington (Belgrave)	1-0	Drew Batley (Holmfirth)
Andrew Perkiss (Piece Hall)	1-0	David Kilmartin (Holmfirth / Blue Club)
Bob Gaunt (Piece Hall)	0-1	Brendan Briggs (Meltham)
Behrouz Youssefbeygi (Piece Hall)	0-1	Tony Ryland (Holmfirth)

The challenge was set by Dave Colledge, the Calderdale league Secretary, publicly on the Huddersfield League WhatsApp 'Issuing a challenge and throwing down the gauntlet. *Calderdale v Kirklees.*' It was to occur outside 'irrespective of conditions'.

As the new President of the Huddersfield & District Chess Association (which is basically Kirklees), I accepted.



*Captains Dave Colledge (Calderdale Secretary) and Steve Westmoreland (HDCA President & YCA Deputy President)*

The location chosen was the Wine Barrel at the Halifax Piece Hall. Sadly, our first date fell through due to a sold-out event with Martin Kemp, so we flipped to Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January. While cold, there were outdoor heaters, and the Piece Hall was busy with shoppers, eaters and drinkers.

Chess at the Wine Barrel started in the summer with local Calderdale players, who successfully attracted new players (three of whom featured in the match) as a result. Due to popularity, it continued into the winter on a Thursday 6pm-9pm schedule. The outdoor heating remains a life saver.



*Hats, scarves, gloves, coats, snoods and thick socks on - play is underway under the heaters*

The hosts want us to continue playing outside, and have sets for patrons. Discussions are under way for teams from other Metropolitan areas to compete, as well as conversations with Guildford Chess Club on a summer North vs South event. The possibility of a Greater

Manchester event was also raised on the day, with two MCF players at the venue.

The match was played with good spirit and friendship, with players having known each other for a lot of years in competition in leagues and as team-mates for Yorkshire. The time control was 1 hour 20 minutes with 20-second increments. Only one game finished early, so it worked well.



*Almost three hours in with three games left in play. Finished players and spectators gather to watch the end*

Because of the cold, we had agreed that it was not a requirement to write moves down. To encourage money behind the bar matches were unrated. Personally, I enjoyed my cheeseburger, solitary beer and wine. The burger was badly needed, as I had rushed straight from my youngest son's rugby training and been dropped off by my wife, who was taking my other son to play hockey (luckily) in Halifax.



*Drew and Steve do battle once more*

I played Richard Porter, who is an absolutely lovely gentleman whom I have faced four times in the last few years, with honours even. The game was complicated and intense, requiring a high degree of accuracy between us, and leaving the spectators baffled. I am absolutely sure



that all the august readers here would have looked at our game and wondered what on earth we were doing.

I do recall looking up from the board at one point and realising it was dark.



*Who switched the lights off?*

First to finish was Brendan within 30 minutes. Happy with his victory, Brendan spent a few hours talking to shoppers and playing those who were interested. A lot of people stopped to watch and ask questions. Doing some nervous pacing waiting for Richard to move, I was able to pass on the details of Dewsbury Chess Club for a lady's grandson who lived in Morley. I also met Mick Norris of the MCF and his missus, who were passing through. All the players spoke to shoppers at various points.

As usual with chess, there were triumphs and disasters. Hamid managed to remove Dave's queen from the board, Drew fell to Steve, and Tony got the most amazing checkmate, cheerfully declaring that he had snatched victory out of the jaws of defeat.



*Tony's incredible checkmate*

In the end Kirklees won, which has some historical significance. Double-checking with Steve Mann from Yorkshire Chess News, we believe this is the first time Kirklees have put a team together against another district. Previously it has gone under the Huddersfield & District Chess Association tag.

We will do this again, and huge thanks to Dave and Calderdale for organising.

## British Rapidplay Championship 2024

We're pleased to be able to confirm that the ECF are once again supporting the 4NCL in organising the 2024 edition of the British Rapidplay Championship on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 at the Holiday Inn Peterborough – West, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough PE3 6SG.

Places are filling up fast, so if you're hoping to play we recommend you enter as soon as you can to secure your place.

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.4ncl.co.uk/rp/2024/information.htm>

and here's the entry form:

<https://form.jotform.com/233470870173355>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cambridge International Open



The English Chess Federation will be running the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cambridge International Open from 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at the historic University Arms Hotel next to Parker's Piece in Cambridge. The ECF would again like to thank the hotel for their continued support in hosting the event, which is becoming established as one of the top events in the English chess calendar.

As with last year's inaugural event, this will be a nine-round Swiss tournament, open to all English and foreign players with a valid FIDE ID and a FIDE rating of over 1600. Given the strength of the field, the event will provide an opportunity for participants to achieve international title norms. You can find further details of the event on the tournament web site at the link here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2nd-cambridge-international-open/>

Once again, the event has proved very popular with players. The Open is fully subscribed and capacity has been reached at the delightful host venue of the University Arms Hotel. Spectators are welcome and you can follow the games online through live boards via the webpage <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2nd-cambridge-international-open/> which will also be updated with details of live commentary for the event.



*GM Michael Adams pictured at last year's Cambridge International*

Top seed for this year's event is last year's winner GM Michael Adams, who will be looking to retain his top place.

This year sees a very strong field to challenge Michael, including a total of seven further GMs and 12 IMs. The top five seeds are GM Michael Adams, Italian GM Francesco Sonis, Dutch registered GMs Sipke Ernst and Sergei Tiviakov, and English GM Daniel Fernandez.



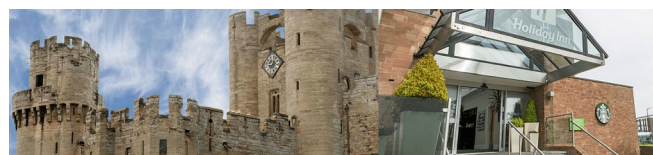
Both IM Shreyas Royal and WCM Bodhana Sivanandan will be playing, with Shreyas trying to achieve his final GM

norm in a top class field. The full list of entrants can be found [here](#).

The majority of games, including those on the top boards, will be played and broadcast on live boards.

We will be providing a daily round-up of the games from the first round on Monday to the final round on Saturday, and also full commentary for the last three rounds, which will be broadcast on Twitch and the ECF's YouTube channel.

## English Championships 2024



## English Seniors Championship



*2023 winners (from left to right) Over 65 – IM Chris Baker, Joint Over 50 – GM Keith Arkell and GM Mark Hebden*

The ECF is pleased to announce that the **English Seniors Championships** will take place between **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May and Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024** at the **Holiday Inn in Kenilworth, Warwickshire**.

### Eligibility

Over 50: players must be aged 50 or over on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

Over 65: players must be aged 65 or over on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

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

### Rating

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

### Schedule

The playing schedule will be as follows over the long bank holiday weekend.



Round 1 - Friday 24th May	16.00
Round 2 - Saturday 25th May	10.00
Round 3 - Saturday 25th May	16.00
Round 4 - Sunday 26th May	16.00
Round 5 - Monday 27th May	10.00
Round 6 - Monday 27th May	16.00
Round 7 - Tuesday 28th May	11.00

#### Website and entry form

For more information and entry form, please go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2024/>

## English and English Women's Championships



*Last years champions – GM Mickey Adams and WGM Kata Toma*

The ECF is also pleased to announce that the **English Championships and English Women's Championships** will take place between **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June and Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024** at the **Holiday Inn in Kenilworth, Warwickshire**.

#### Eligibility

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

#### Rating

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

#### Capacity

We will be implementing a venue-based limit on player numbers across the two championships, together with a rating floor.

#### Qualification for the English Championships

Direct entries will be accepted from eligible players subject to capacity limits where:

They have a rating over 1900 ECF as at February or later and have entered for the event before the capacity limit is reached (at which point entries will be closed)

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

#### Qualification for the English Women's Championships

Direct entries will be accepted from eligible players where:

They have a rating over 1700 ECF as at February or later and have entered for the event before the capacity limit is reached (at which point entries will be closed)

The minimum rating of 1700 may be lowered to 1600 ECF if there is still space available based on entries received up to 7<sup>th</sup> June.

There will be up to four reserved places for general wildcard entries from players who have not otherwise qualified regardless of their rating.

#### Schedule

The playing schedule will be as follows:

Round 1 - Thursday 20th June	10.00
Round 2 - Thursday 20th June	16.00
Round 3 - Friday 21st June	10.00
Round 4 - Friday 21st June	16.00
Round 5 - Saturday 22nd June	10.00
Round 6 - Saturday 22nd June	16.00
Round 7 - Sunday 23rd June	10.00

#### Website and entry form

For more information and entry form, please go to <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-championships-2024/>.

# FEATURES

## Great British Chess Players by John Nunn

### John Nunn (1955-)



This series is arranged in order of date of birth, and the current article features the first player who is still currently alive and therefore able to write it.

I was born on 25 April 1955, just two days after Tony Miles, and learnt to play chess at the age of four. Several successes in junior events followed, including victories in the London Under 12 Championship at the age of nine and in the British Under 14 Championship at the age of 12. In 1969 I passed A-levels in Pure and Applied Mathematics and a year later, at the age of 15, I proceeded to Oriel College, Oxford to read Mathematics. I gained a First at the age of 18 and went on to complete my doctorate at the age of 23.

My chess continued in parallel with the mathematics and I won the European Junior (Under 21) title in 1975 and in 1978 gained the grandmaster title. In 1980 I became British Champion and in 1981 left Oxford to pursue a career as a professional player. I won three gold medals in the 1984 Olympiad and in 1989 entered the world top ten. The years 1989-91 were my peak period, since I finished sixth in the World Cup, which included all the world's leading players, and won the prestigious Wijk aan Zee event outright in 1990 and 1991 to add to a shared victory in 1982.

As the century drew to a close I started to play in fewer events, although I did help my Bundesliga team Lübeck to victory three times between 2000 and 2003. At the same time I took up an interest in chess problem-solving, and won the World Championship in this discipline three times in 2004, 2007 and 2010. I also won the British Problem-Solving Championship ten times. In 2005 I more or less retired from over the board play, but in 2022

decided to return to active play in senior (65+) events. In that year I won the British 65+ Championship with a 100% score and the World 65+ individual Championship, and, playing on top board, helped the English team win the World 65+ Team Championship with a 2700+ rating performance. The momentum carried on into 2023, with wins in the European 65+ Championship and again in the World 65+ Individual Championship.

I have always been fond of books, and in 1997 helped found Gambit Publications with Murray Chandler and Graham Burgess. The company is still producing high-quality chess books over 25 years later, and has sold over two million copies. In summary, much of my life has been devoted to chess, mathematics and of course my family, although I have an interest in several other areas.

I have scored individual victories over many leading players, including world champions Tal, Petrosian, Karpov and Anand, so it's hard to choose a game. Here's one which is perhaps not so well known.

#### John Nunn - Mikhail Tal

Næstved Nimzowitsch Memorial 1985

Ruy Lopez, Open Variation

#### 1.e4 e5

Tal played a wide range of openings, and in other games against me adopted the Caro-Kann and Sicilian.

**2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Nxe4 6.d4 b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6 9.Nbd2 Nc5 10.c3 Bg4**

One of the three main lines at this point, the others being 10...d4 and 10...Be7.

#### 11.Bc2 Qd7 12.h3 Bh5 13.Nb3

This is a rather unusual move. 13.Re1 is by far the most common, while, if you believe the computer, the direct 13.b4! Ne6 14.a4 is strongest and gives White a definite advantage. For example, after 14...Rd8 15.axb5 axb5 16.Bd3 White can immediately attack the weak b5-pawn.

#### 13...Ne6 14.Re1 Be7 15.Bf5

This position is more often reached via the move order 10...Be7 11.Bc2 Bg4 12.Re1 Qd7 13.h3 Bh5 14.Nb3 Ne6 15.Bf5.





### 15...Bg6

Playing this without being forced to by g4 looks slightly odd. The simple 15...0-0 appears more flexible, waiting to see how White intends to continue.

### 16.Nfd4

This must be strongest, since now White can defend his bishop without weakening his kingside by pushing the g-pawn. Against Tal I always felt reluctant to push a pawn in front of my king, but looking back at our encounters I see that I did this rather often!

### 16...0-0 17.Bg4?!

There are several plausible possibilities here. After 17.Qg4 I suspect that Tal would have gone in for the tactical line 17...Ncxd4 18.Nxd4 Bc5!? based on the idea 19.Nxe6 Bxf2+ 20.Kh2 Bxe1 21.Be3 h5 22.Nxf8 Bxf5 23.Qxh5 Rxf8 24.Rxe1 with equality. White can improve by 19.Be3 Bxd4 20.Bxe6 fxe6 21.cxd4, with some advantage in view of the backward c-pawn, although the opposite-coloured bishops would make it hard to achieve anything.

17.Nxe6 fxe6 18.Bxg6 hxg6 is inferior, as Black's play along the f-file fully compensates for the weak pawns, so 17.Nxc6 Qxc6 (17...Bxf5? 18.Qxd5) 18.Bg4 is probably best, with a slight advantage for White.

### 17...Ncxd4

Black must act, as 18.f4 was a serious threat.

### 18.cxd4

18.Nxd4 c5 19.Nf5 d4 was also about equal.

### 18...a5!



The only good way to meet White's threat of advancing the f-pawn.

### 19.f4?!

19.Be3 a4 20.Nc5 was safer, with an equal position.

### 19...h5!

This sharp continuation is best. Black's kingside is slightly weakened, but he takes the initiative in the centre of the board.

### 20.Bxh5 Bxh5?!

It wasn't necessary to draw the white queen into an active position. 20...a4! 21.Nc5 Nxc5 22.dxc5 Bxc5+ 23.Kh2 Bf5 would have slightly favoured Black, as the passed d-pawn is a significant asset.

### 21.Qxh5 a4 22.Nc5 Nxc5 23.dxc5 Bxc5+ 24.Be3 Bxe3+

A risky decision, since this pulls another white piece, the e1-rook, into a position where it can join a kingside attack. 24...d4 25.Bf2 Qd5 was better, as 26.f5?! Rfe8 can only be good for Black.

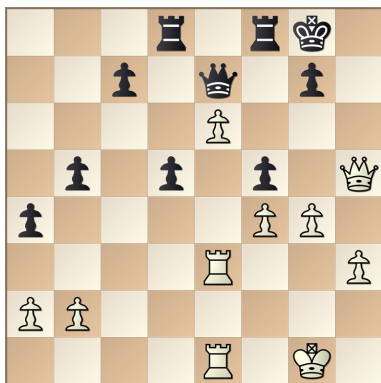
### 25.Rxe3 f5?!

Black starts to lose the thread. White's kingside play is more dangerous than it looks, and Black should have played 25...d4 26.Rg3 f6 to break up White's f4-e5 pawn-chain as soon as possible. The move ...f5 only appears to halt White's kingside pawns, but White can still use them aggressively.

### 26.e6 Qe7 27.Rae1 Rad8?

The losing move. 27...d4? 28.Re5 Rad8 is also bad, as 29.Qg5! gives White a promising ending, but 27...Rf6! would have restricted White to a slight advantage.

### 28.g4!



Tal had overlooked this idea. It turns out that White does not need a rook to mate Black, since the threat of g5-g6 is so strong that White can ignore any counter-play. At least I was able to overcome my reluctance to advance a pawn in front of my king!

**28...d4**

28...fxg4 29.hxg4 is no better, as now the rook can come to h3.

**29.g5 g6**

Forced, or else Black gets mated.

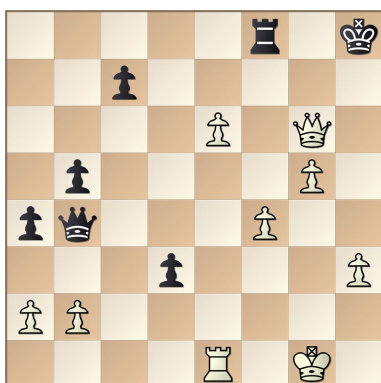
**30.Qxg6+ Kh8**

30...Qg7 31.Qxg7+ Kxg7 32.Re5 Rd6 33.h4 d3 34.h5 is also hopeless, since it's three passed pawns against one.

**31.Re5 d3 32.Rxf5**

The simplest. White just wins another pawn.

**32...Qb4 33.Rxf8+ Rxf8**



**34.Qe4**

The computer wants to force mate in 24 by 34.Re4, but I preferred to just stop the d-pawn.

**34...Qc5+**

34...Qxe4 35.Rxe4 d2 36.Rd4 Rxf4 37.Rxd2 Re4 38.Kf2 Rxe6 39.h4 c5 40.Kf3 is a simple technical win.

**35.Kh1 d2 36.Rd1 Qf2**

36...Qc1 37.Qd4+ and Qxd2 wins.

**37.e7 Re8 38.Qe5+ Kg8 39.Qe6+ 1-0**

It's mate in six more moves.

## Endgames All Club Players Should Know by Glenn Flear

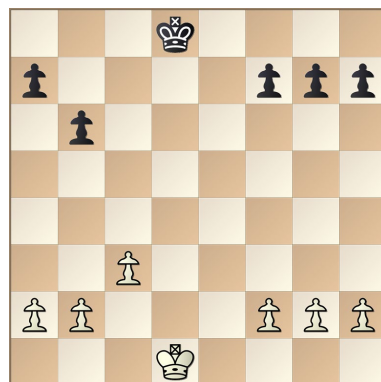


### Simplifying into a King and Pawn Endgame

At any level, an exchange of pieces is a sort of arrangement between the players, with the resulting simplification leading to a somewhat

different type of position. I've seen it argued that one side always benefits more than the other from any trade. I'm not sure this is necessarily true, but most of the time one of the protagonists is more enthusiastic than the opponent!

In endgames certain general rules apply, one of them being that the side with a material advantage should seek an exchange of pieces, whereas his opponent would do best to keep them on. Such guidelines are not written in stone, but do make sense if we consider the first example this time.

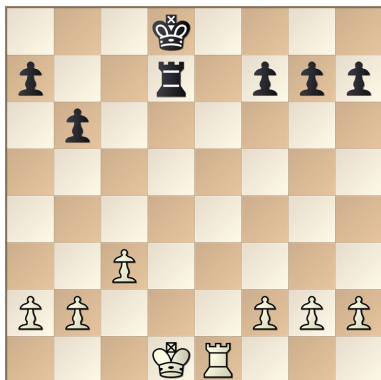


White has an extra pawn, and any reasonably experienced players would know that this is a straightforward win. A plausible continuation would be the following:



1.Kd2 Kd7 2.Kd3 Kd6 3.Kd4 b5 4.b3 h5 5.h4 g6 6.g3 a6  
7.c4 bxc4 8.bxc4 Kc6 9.Ke5 Kc5 10.Kf6 Kxc4 11.Kxf7 Kb4  
12.Kxg6 Ka3 13.f4 Kxa2 14.f5 a5 15.f6 a4 16.f7 a3 17.f8Q

Everything went like clockwork. If, however, we went back to the original position and gave both players a piece of some sort, the outcome could be rather different; for example, consider the following case.



White's extra pawn is a significant advantage, but in a practical game it's far from evident that he would be able to win.

1.Kc2 Kc7

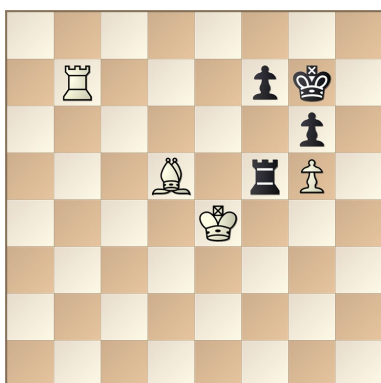
Naturally avoiding the exchange of rooks.

2.Re8 h5 3.h4 g6 4.g3 Kb7

From here Black can certainly put up a sturdy defence.

So if we compare these two examples, it stands to reason that the side with the material disadvantage should avoid pure king and pawn endgames.

Going further, a well-known saying goes something like 'Of all endgames, converting an advantage is generally easier in a pure King and Pawn endgame'. This is true in most cases, but always be on the look-out for any redeeming features that may offer the defender hope!



Here's a key position that I find quite significant. There

may be a big material advantage for White, but with Black battening down the hatches on the kingside it can be difficult to find a way through; but if you know the following nifty idea then this can help resolve many similar situations.

82.Rxf7+! Rxf7 83.Bxf7 Kxf7 84.Kd5!

The diagonal opposition.

84...Ke7 85.Ke5

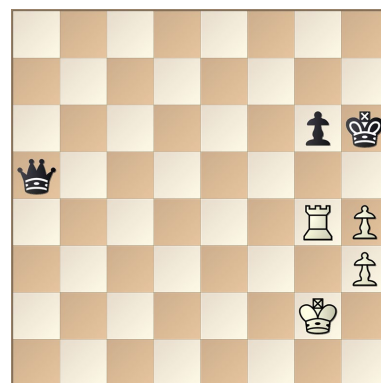
Obtaining the direct opposition, which leads to the win of Black's pawn.

85...Kf7 86.Kd6 Kg7 87.Ke7 Kg8 88.Kf6 Kh7 89.Kf7 Kh8  
90.Kxg6 Kg8 91.Kh6

Sometimes engineering simplification towards a pawn endgame is the only way to make progress.

Flear, G. – Lawton, G.

Bristol 1980



68.Kf2 Qd2+ 69.Kg3 Qe3+ 70.Kg2 Kh5 71.Kh2

If 71.Rg5+ Kxh4 72.Rxg6 Qe4+.

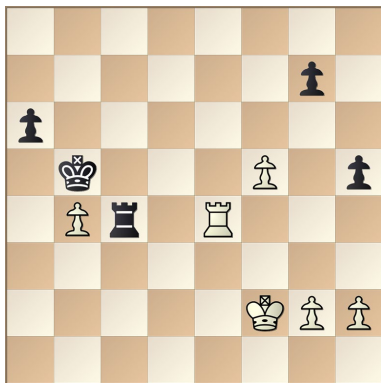
71...Qe2+ 72.Kg3 Qe3+ 73.Kg2 Qe1 74.Kf3 Qf1+ 75.Kg3  
Qd3+ 76.Kg2 Qe3 77.Kh2 Qf2+ 78.Kh1 Qe2 79.Kg1  
Qxg4+! 80.hxg4+ Kxg4 81.h5 Kxh5

My opponent stayed vigilant in what followed, but there were potential banana skins along the way that some players in 'superficial mode' might have slipped up on.

82.Kh1 Kh4 83.Kh2 Kg4 84.Kg2 g5 85.Kh2 Kf3 86.Kh3 g4+  
87.Kh2 Kf2 88.Kh1 Kg3! 89.Kg1 Kh3

0-1

**Plaskett, H. J. – Flear, G.**  
Hastings 1985



In this example Jim Plaskett correctly traded rooks, but because Black has some counter-play he needed to calculate a convincing follow-up in the form of a forcing continuation.

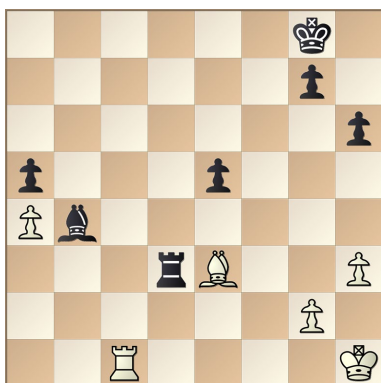
**38.Rxc4! Kxc4 39.h4! Kxb4 40.g4! a5 41.g5**

White will queen first with check.

**1–0**

In the next example, it was yours truly who had the advantage.

**Wolfgang, J. – Flear, G.**  
Antwerp 1993



White is hoping for an exchange of bishops, when the rook endgame would offer him some hope (especially if his rook were able to attack my pawns!). I replied by forcing a trade of rooks, as the bishop endgame suited me better:

**43.Bc5 Rc3 44.Rxc3 Bxc3 45.Kg1**

Now Black can opt for a pure king and pawn endgame.

**45...Bd4+!**

Not the only way to win, but the most straightforward, although some calculation is required.

**46.Bxd4 exd4 47.Kf2 Kf7! 48.Kf3 Ke6 49.Ke4**

White re-establishes material equality, but after:

**49...d3! 50.Kxd3 Kd5**

he finds himself in a fatal Zugzwang, and he resigned at this point.

If this looks premature to you, then bear in mind that Black can copy White's pawn moves on the kingside to ensure that the Zugzwang continues to operate, thus leading to Black penetrating with his king. So, for example:

**51.h4 h5 52.g3 g6 53.Kc3 Kc5 54.Kd3 Kb4**

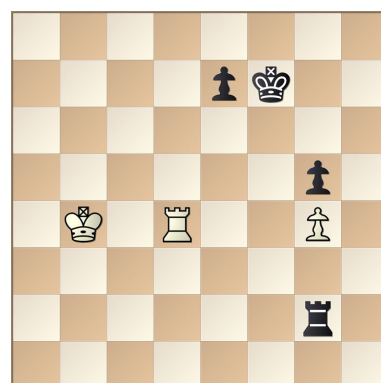
and so on.

**0–1**

When choosing 45...Bd4+ I naturally took into account my general knowledge and experience in similar positions, but even so there is no getting round the need to calculate carefully. We are often required to delve into such a position several moves ahead, but as the variations are often a series of 'only reasonable moves' this isn't as daunting as it might seem. It's worth practising the analysis of long forcing variations in endgames. You'll soon get better at it, and realise that in those cases where there are no real alternatives it's amazing how far one can see ahead!

In the next case my opponent had some leeway in his choice of plan, but opted for simplification to the king and pawn endgame.

**Flear, G. - Ni Hua**  
Calvi 2007



**46...Rf2 47.Kc5 Rf4 48.Kd5 Kf6!**

Also winning is 48...Rxd4+ 49.Kxd4 Ke6 50.Ke4 Kf6 51.Kd5 e6+ 52.Kd6 Kf7 53.Ke5 Ke7 and so on, but the text is



simpler.

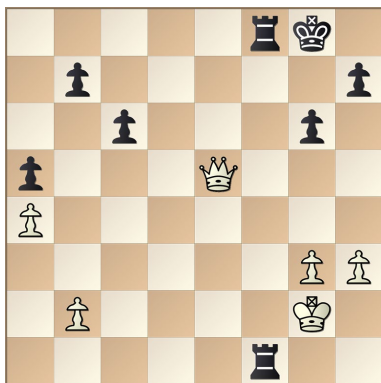
**49.Re4 Rxe4 50.Kxe4 Ke6 51.Kd4 Kd6 52.Ke4 e6**

**0–1**

Convincing indeed. However, from my own experience, I've noticed that many players forget that a pawn endgame advantage is often decisive and even a trivial win.

**Garcia Martinez, M. – Flear, G.**

London 2016



Sometimes, one has to be vigilant not to go into a bad king and pawn endgame.

**30.Qc5?**

A poor move, allowing Black to win easily. Instead, with the continuation 30.Qe6+ R1f7 31.h4 White would have excellent chances of keeping the balance, especially with Black's king being vulnerable to checks.

**30...R8f2+ 31.Qxf2 Rxf2+ 32.Kxf2 Kf7**

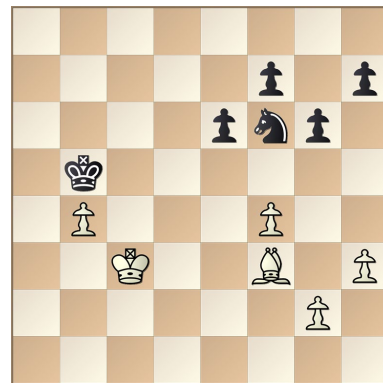
and White threw in the towel.

**0–1**

The next case is even more notable, as my opponent positively invited simplification.

**Flear, G. – Lafaurie, P.**

Béziers 2001



In the diagram position Black has every chance of saving the game. His majority is sound, and the b-pawn will be difficult to get going as he can blockade on b6. So I was surprised by the choice of my opponent.

**44...Nh5??**

Black should temporise, for example with 44...Ne8, when the onus is on White to seek play. If then 45.Be2+ Kb6 46.Kd4 f6 47.Bc4 Nc7 and it won't be easy to make headway.

**45.Bxh5**

Here for once there's not much calculation involved. It's a pawn endgame with an outside passed pawn, so I didn't hesitate for long.

**45...gxh5 46.h4**

Now Black will be obliged to give way with his king sooner or later.

**46...f6 47.Kb3 e5 48.fxe5 fxe5 49.Kc3 e4**

Not good, but what else?

49...Kb6 50.Kd3 Kb5 51.Ke4 is similar, and 49...h6 50.g3 doesn't change things very much.

**50.Kd4 Kxb4 51.Kxe4 Kc5 52.Kf5 Kd6 53.Kf6 Kd5 54.Kg7**

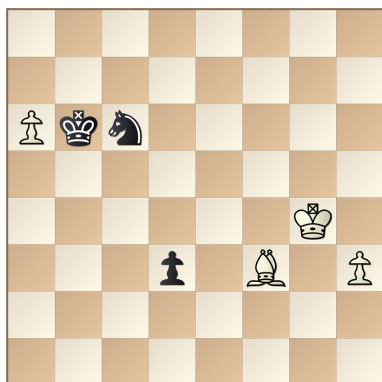
The lesson here is that, if not forced to, the defender should be very careful about allowing, or even naïvely embracing, a pure king and pawn endgame.

**1–0**

In the next example, with enough time on the clock, I could calculate that the king and pawn endgame was drawn.

**Solodovnichenko, Y. - Flear, G.**

Nimes 2008



Sometimes the pawn endgame can seem to be a good idea, but you have to be sure that you have calculated correctly until the end.

**65...Ne5+ 66.Kf4 Nxf3! 67.Kxf3 Kxa6 68.h4 Kb5 69.h5 Kc4 70.h6 Kb3!**

The point being that White doesn't promote with check. The alternative 70...Kc3? would have been unfortunate!

**71.Ke3**

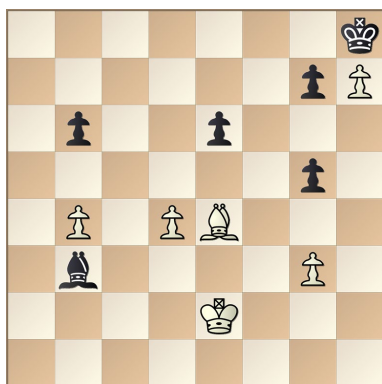
My opponent didn't wait for 71...Kc2, when both sides promote.

½-½

In the next example, however, I made a poor practical decision. I saw a possibility of releasing the tension by simplifying to a 'drawn' king and pawn endgame. The only problem was that it wasn't drawn at all!

**Conquest, S. – Flear, G.**

Sanxenxo 2003



In the struggle leading up to here, despite playing much of the game largely on increment, I had put up strong resistance in a difficult position. Indeed, my opponent

hadn't made any real progress over the previous ten moves or so. Therefore I should have continued thus to deny him any entry route into my position for his king, but instead I calculated that the pawn endgame was possible. Why change the approach? One might wonder! Well, we are humans, and sometimes our emotions take over.

**66...Bd5??**

Correct is 66...Ba4! and White has problems breaking into my fortress, as I can thwart any direct attempts to penetrate with his king.

**67.Kf3 g6 68.Bxd5 exd5 69.Kg4 Kxh7 70.Kxg5 Kg7**

For some reason, in my calculations on move 66 I was expecting 71.g4, after which Black holds with 71...b5.

**71.b5 Kf7 72.Kh6 Kf6 73.g4**

**1-0**

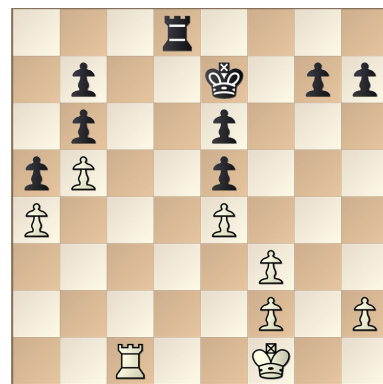
Ideally one should aim to calmly weigh up the choices and decide whether to keep pieces on or not. If time is short, and as a result it's not possible to calculate everything with any confidence, then trading into a pawn endgame comes down to something of a gamble.

One should always ask oneself: which option creates the most practical problems for an opponent?

The next example was even more annoying! Small, seemingly insignificant pawn moves are of great importance in simplified endgames. Of course, radical changes in the structure are, as well! Nevertheless, sometimes having a sort of tunnel vision in our thinking leads to us overlooking resources.

**Sihite, C. M. – Flear, G.**

Hastings Masters 2013



I had earlier frittered away a big advantage, but could still keep some winning chances with 26...g5! 27.Ke2 Rd4.

Instead I decided to head for a king and pawn endgame a pawn up. Often the right solution, but here my opponent had an idea up her sleeve that I hadn't anticipated.

**26...Kd7 27.Ke2 Rc8?**

I was in a fool's paradise.

**28.Rxc8 Kxc8 29.f4!**

Oh, I didn't expect that one!

Instead, 29.Ke3 g5 would have left Black in control, and it would have been sufficient to switch my king over to the kingside to home in on victory.

**29...exf4 30.e5!**

Somewhat shaken, I was in a sort of denial, not wanting to accept that I was 'only' going to draw this game, so continued desperately searching for a way to keep winning chances alive. However, I failed to appreciate the danger...

**30...g5??**

I should have settled for 30...Kd7 31.Kf3 Ke7 32.Kxf4 Kf7 with a draw, as neither side will be able to get anywhere after 33.Kg5.

**31.Kf3 h5 32.h4!**

Another pawn blow, but at least I saw this one in advance.

**32...gxh4 33.Kg2!**

A decisive retreating move which came as a shock! I had only considered 33.Kxf4 Kd7 34.Kf3 Ke8 35.Kg2 Kf7 36.Kh3 Kg7 37.Kxh4 Kg6, with some winning chances for Black.

**33...Kd7 34.Kh3 Ke7 35.Kxh4 Kf7 36.Kxh5 f3 37.Kh6**

Not a great way to start the New Year!

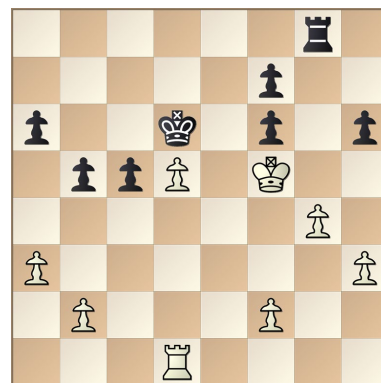
**1-0**

Quite humiliating, to be honest, but there are lessons to be learnt from this sorry tale: for example, keeping one's objectivity, plus focusing on what's going on on the board now, not a few moves ago. If the opponent surprises us with a move (it happens!), get one's emotions back under control before lashing out in response.

In the following example, it was my opponent who rather lost his way in time trouble.

**Flear, G. – Bellin, R.**

Leicester 1978



**32...Rg5+?**

A gamble that wasn't necessary.

With 32...h5!? 33.gxh5 Rg5+ 34.Kxf6 Rxh5 35.Kxf7 Rxh3 Black has every chance of drawing, as he can generate counterplay by creating a passed pawn on the queenside.

**33.Kxf6 Rxd5 34.Rxd5+ Kxd5 35.h4 c4 36.h5 a5 37.g5 b4 38.axb4 axb4 39.gxh6 c3 40.bxc3 bxc3 41.h7 c2 42.h8Q c1Q**

Robert Bellin had perhaps analysed this far, but unfortunately for him White can now force the trade of queens.

**43.Qd8+ Ke4 44.Qe7+ Kd5 45.Qd7+ Ke4 46.Qf5+ Kd4 47.Qe5+**

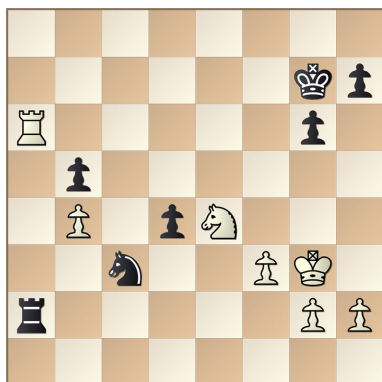
**47...Kd3 48.Qe3+-.**

**1-0**

Maybe the biggest error that juniors and club players make is that they speed up as the pieces come off. It's almost as though their mind is telling them that 'simplifying' a position means that chess suddenly becomes 'simple', so why continue to concentrate?



**Flear, G. - Rottenwohrer Saurez, J.**  
Cannes 2020



**40.Ra5!?**

Trying to give my opponent a difficult decision before the time control at move 40.

**40...Rxa5**

Also possible, and perhaps simpler, is 40...Rb2 41.Nxc3 dxc3 42.Rxb5 c2 43.Rc5 Rxb4 44.Rxc2 when a draw is almost inevitable, even though I would have annoyed him for some time, trying my luck!

**41.bxa5 Nxe4+ 42.fxe4**

Now he had at his disposal an additional half an hour on the clock, but he still played his next move quickly.

**42...d3??**

Flashed out with virtually no thought. He needed to play 42...b4! 43.a6 d3, which seems to be drawn, e.g. 44.a7 d2 45.a8Q d1Q 46.Qb7+ Kh6 47.Qxb4 Qd3+ and there are too many nuisance checks for White to make any progress whatsoever.

**43.Kf3**

Now White's king is in the square of *both* pawns.

**43...b4 44.Ke3**

**1-0**

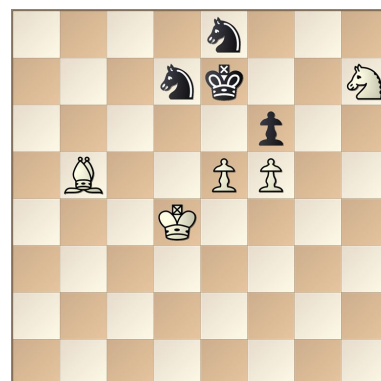
So, even if you think that you calculated everything out in advance, keep revising and checking your lines after each move is made!

It's also wise to be aware of your energy and concentration levels, which can wane after a series of difficult decisions or a time scramble. I suggest freshening up by washing one's face or taking a gulp or two of fresh

air, before coming back to the board with renewed vigour!

My opponent miscalculated in the following position, and I fortuitously saved the game.

**Anic, D – Flear, G**  
French League1999



**59.Bxd7**

Natural enough, but flawed!

Correct is 59.e6! Nd6 60.exd7 Nxf5+ (if 60...Nxb5+ 61.Kc5 Nc7 62.Nxf6 should win soon enough) 61.Kc5 Ng7 62.Nf8! and wins.

**59...Kxd7 60.Nxf6+ Nxf6 61.exf6**

Two extra pawns, but no win!

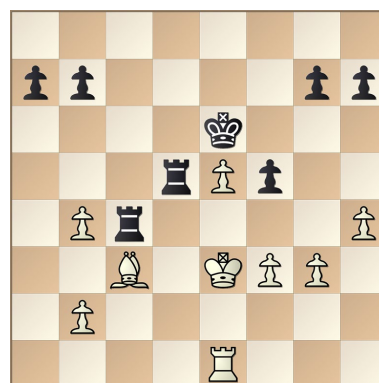
**61...Ke8 62.Kd5 Kf7 63.Ke5 Kf8 64.Ke6**

After 64...Ke8 65.f7+ Kf8 then any to f6 is stalemate!

**½-½**

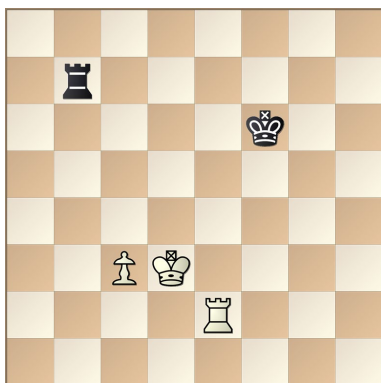
The moral here being that sometimes heading for the pawn endgame isn't the right decision! Be warned!

**Exercise 1**



Black to play. How should he continue?

## Exercise 2



White has an extra pawn, but it's a long way from the promotion square. Should he begin with 1.c4 or 1.Re3?

### Exercise 1 – answer



Simplification into a pawn endgame works a treat:

**1...Rxc3+! 2.bxc3 Rxe5+ 3.Kd2 Rxe1 4.Kxe1 Kd5 5.Kd2 Kc4**  
Black's advanced king is a useful asset, but on its own it's insufficient to win, but note the characteristics of the pawn structure.

**6.h5 b6 7.Kc2 g5 8.h6 f4 9.g4 a5**

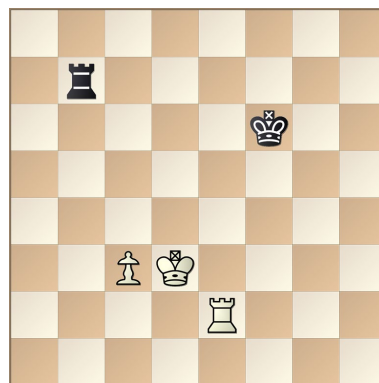
The queenside pawns enable Black to create an outside passed pawn.

**10.bxa5 bxa5 11.Kb2 a4 12.Ka3 Kxc3 13.Kxa4 Kd4 14.Kb4 Ke3**

(Lombardy, W – Fischer, R USA ch 1960–1)

0-1

## Exercise 2 – answer



A position from one of my student's games. His opponent went wrong here with **1.c4?**

... and my student joyfully played **1...Re7!**

An important resource in rook and pawn versus rook endgames. In this case, Black has no problems in the event of simplification to the pawn endgame.

### 2.Rxe7

In the actual game after 2.Rh2 Ke6 3.Kd4 Kd7, with the king no longer cut off, Black had no problems holding the draw.

**2...Kxe7 3.Kc3 Kd6 4.Kb4 Kc6**

... with an easy draw.

Correct is 1.Re3! defending the c-pawn, ready for a king walk, and most importantly 1...Re7 could then be well met by 2.Rxe7 Kxe7 3.Kc4 Kd6 4.Kb5 Kc7 5.Kc5 with, a book win, as White obtains the opposition with his king in front of the pawn.

For the record, if Black instead temporises with 1...Rc7, then White continues with 2.Kd4 Rd7+ 3.Kc5 Rc7+ 4.Kb5 Rb7+ 5.Kc6 Rb8 and only now is 6.c4! correct. After the further moves 6...Rc8+ 7.Kb5 Rb8+ 8.Ka6 Rc8 9.Re4! Kf5 10.Rh4 Ke6 11.Kb7 Rc5 12.Kb6 Rc8 13.c5 Kd7 14.Rd4+ Ke7 15.c6 he would be well on the way to a 'Lucena' (don't forget to look at your September 2023 *ChessMoves*!).

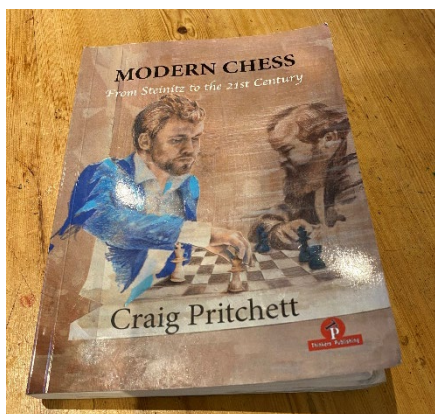
# Book of the Month

## by Ben Graff



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

**Modern Chess – From Steinitz to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** by Craig Pritchett (Thinkers Publish)



*'I... traced the evolution of chess thought and repeated its basic steps in my own development... convinced that any player with high ambition should follow such a path.'*  
Vassily Smyslov, *125 Selected Games* (1983) quoted in *Modern Chess*

Several months ago, I happened to be talking with Craig Pritchett on an unrelated project, and he mentioned his book to me. Having written my own book, *Checkmate! Great Champions and Epic Matches From a Timeless Game* on a similar theme, I am always very interested in how others seek to tell the story of chess.

It is clear from the outset that we are in the hands of a master. Fast-paced, informative, entertaining, and including many well-annotated games, this is a really good read. As Pritchett puts it, he has 'set out to explore, confirm and convey my own understanding of this grand sweep of chess history,' and has well and truly succeeded in his aims.

What I particularly like about this work is the way in which

Pritchett combines vivid and compelling player portraits with fascinating insights as to the way in which the game evolved in particular eras. Thus we move from 'the Romantics to the Early Modern Age,' with La Bourdonnais and McDonnell, through to 'Revolutionary Change' brought about by Steinitz. Then on to 'Hypermodern Ideas and the Maturing Mainstream,' 'Soviet Dynamics,' 'Professional Sport,' 'Gender Attack' and 'Artificial Intelligence'. All of which means that this is as much a biography of chess itself as it is of the players who feature, and it is all the better for that.

There are many fascinating vignettes. Paul Morphy reflected two years before his death that 'I have followed no calling, and have given no cause for a biography.' His chess may have brought much happiness to many, but clearly not to the American genius himself.

Elsewhere, throughout these pages further human frailties abound. Zukertort 'suffered a known tendency to wilt both physically and mentally under prolonged pressure,' which played a major part in his never becoming world champion. Tal, who was once the youngest ever title-holder, and who remains the youngest ex-world champion, increasingly suffered from '... persistent health problems, aggravated by an increasingly complicating set of dependencies on prescribed medicines, alcohol and tobacco...', which thwarted his attempts to regain the title that he had captured so dazzlingly from Botvinnik when just 23 years old. As for Fischer, Craig notes that during the Fischer-Spassky match 'the challenger's obviously troubled psyche [was] as patently vulnerable as it was frequently difficult,' which perfectly sums up the enigma of the brilliant American, for whom radiance at the board did not translate into a life fulfilled.

I particularly liked the analysis of Botvinnik. As Pritchett highlights, 'Botvinnik's talents were innate, but his steel also owed much to the state he grew up in.' This is a strong portrait of a player who not only epitomised the era of Soviet domination but also played such a big part in coaching his successors. As Kasparov observed, 'There is no price I can set on the value [Botvinnik] gave me.' Kasparov went on to highlight that Botvinnik 'never tried to impose his own style on his pupils [merely] to show the right direction [and] take the mystery out of chess... always trying to reduce problems... to a manageable scale.' Surely this can be taken as excellent advice to anyone who might be about to start work as a chess coach.

Every player in their different eras looked to work with what their predecessors had given them, and tried to add something else on top. Sometimes a desire for perfection does not help. Pritchett noted that Tarrasch had a 'curious



blind spot' in that '... he sometimes came uncomfortably close to insisting there must be a near absolute 'correctness' in chess, along with singularly "best" moves.' Yet while this did not work well against the more pragmatic Lasker, I could not help but wonder whether Tarrasch might have had a point. After all, if the rise of computers tells us anything, it is probably that there is something closer to actual truth in chess than we once thought.

The workaholic Alekhine is another example of the benefits of study. Pritchett notes that in 1925 Alekhine published *The Book Of The New York International Chess Tournament*. 'Alekhine later observed that its writing hugely benefitted his own game, not least because it afforded close study of the ways in which Capablanca and Lasker approached chess.' Whatever our level, there really is no substitute for working through and analysing games if we wish to improve.

Pritchett's chapter on women's chess is also excellent. I wholly endorse his conclusion, as I'm sure we all do, that 'there are no gender-based reasons to suggest that a woman can't become world number one, other than perhaps outdated societal constructs. Only glass ceilings exist.' Polgar's win over Anand at Dos Hermanas in 1999 is one of my favourite games in this book, and well worth playing through properly and enjoying.

When contemplating the fact that Polgar retired before she was 40, Pritchett makes a very interesting and more generic point. 'Such early retirements... may more mundanely reflect the unusual intensity of 21<sup>st</sup> century elite chess, in times when ever more players begin their effective professional careers in their very earliest teens.' I thought also of Kasparov, who quit in his early forties, and Carlsen (who while still playing has nevertheless retired as world champion). The truth is that in earlier eras we never knew how long players would compete for either, and it is hard not to think of Morphy and Fischer in this context. Certainly, we always need to appreciate our champions while we have them and to enjoy the games they are playing now, knowing that the future is always somewhat uncertain.

What is for sure is that *Modern Chess – From Steinitz to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* must be one of the best books going in this genre. Excellently written and hugely absorbing, this is a book that is both entertaining to read and one that any chess player is sure to learn a lot from. I have no doubt that it will stand the test of time as a superb chronicle of the story of our game.

## Arkell's Endings at Sitges

by Keith Arkell

Sitges is an expensive tournament, but, if you can afford it, I would recommend swapping the cold December English weather for the warmer alternative of the Spanish east coast. The playing rooms are almost directly above the beach at the Sunway Playa Golf & Spa Hotel.

329 players entered Group A, which was won by Indian grandmaster Abhimanyu Puranik with 8½ /10.

A late entry arrived from GM Leinier Dominguez, who wanted to push his rating a bit higher in order to qualify for the Candidates. In these deflationary times, however, there are easier ways to gain points than choosing a big Open in which most of the players are in their teens or early 20s and rapidly improving. When he reached 4/5, after drawing with opponents rated about 2300 and 2500, he decided not to risk a catastrophe and duly withdrew.

IM Jonah Willow was the top English scorer with 6/10, and though he slightly under-performed he did make a draw with 2611-rated GM Leon Mendonca. I noticed that, lower down, 12-year-old Billy Fellows managed to gain 66 rating points with his score of 3½, while 11-year-old Harry Bryant netted himself a handy 48 for his score of 3!

After a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes in June last year, I am still learning how to control blood sugar levels. Sometimes I seem full of energy, and other times, well, it is simply better not to play that day! This will improve over time, and indeed did so a week later at Hastings, but at Sitges I only played seven games, scoring 5½ points and netting 9.3 rating points. It was quite a shock to discover that I was the oldest player of the top 180 seeds, and more than 40 years older than a great many of them! The average age of my opponents was just 20.

I'd like to conclude this article with an 'Arkell's Endings', played in round 4. As usual, I will annotate based on my live thoughts during the game.

**Keith Arkell - Leon Fanninger**  
Sitges (4), 12.2023

**1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.d4 Nc6 7.0-0 e5 8.dxe5 Nxe5**



**9.b3** If I can get away with this move, I like it because according to my 'hierarchy of pawns' an e-pawn is slightly more valuable than a d-pawn.

**9...Nxf3+ 10.Bxf3 Ne4 11.Nxe4 Bxa1 12.Bg5 f6 13.Bh6 Be5 14.Bxf8 Qxf8 15.Qd2 Qg7 16.Bg2 f5 17.Ng5 Qe7**



**18.Rd1** To prevent my opponent from completing his development with ...c6 and moving the c8-bishop.

**18...Bf6 19.h4 Rb8 20.Nh3 Be6 21.Nf4 Bf7**



**22.Bd5** I thought this would set more problems than the simple 22.Nd5 Bxd5 23.Bxd5+ Kg7.

**22...b6**



**23.b4** I didn't want him to bolster his queenside for free with ...a5.

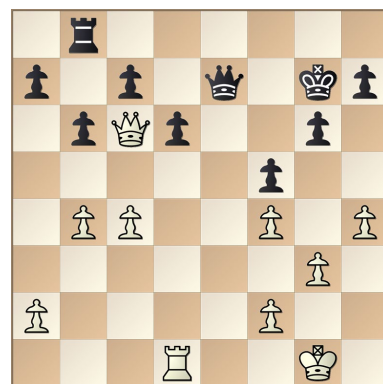
**23...Be5 24.e3 Bxf4 25.exf4**



On the surface this appears to render ineffective my kingside majority, but actually I think this pawn configuration can be very powerful. My king will be well protected, while sometimes the break h5 is in the air, or if Black plays ...h5 then g6 can be a liability.

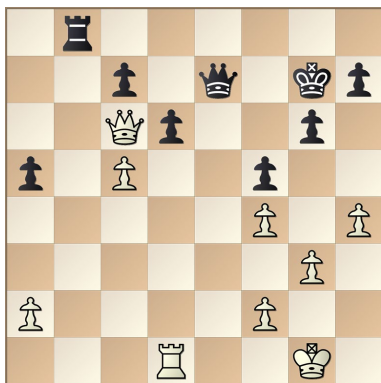
**25...Bxd5 26.Qxd5+** Improving my structure with 26 cxd5 looks correct, but then he can easily defend actively from the second rank.

**26...Kg7 27.Qc6**



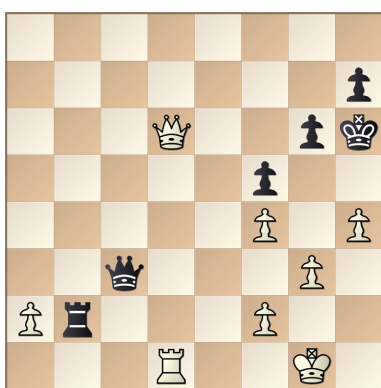
**27...a5** Probably he was worried about a Rd3-a3 plan, but now Fanninger's position is becoming critical.

**28.bxa5 bxa5 29.c5**



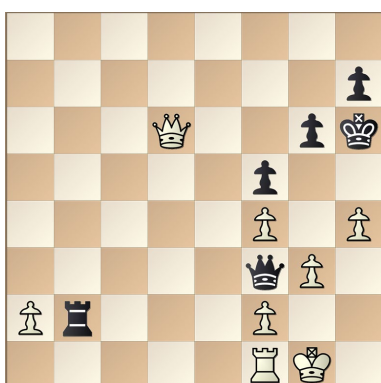
**29...Rb2** After 29...Rd8 (29...dxc5?? is of course impossible because of 30.Rd7), I intended 30.cxd6 Rxd6 31.Rxd6 followed by Qc3+, winning a pawn.

**30.cxd6 cxd6 31.Qc3+ Qf6 32.Qxa5 Kh6 33.Qd5 Qc3 34.Qxd6**



So I have won a pawn anyway, but it looks as if Black will gain enough activity to keep me at bay. However, I had some quite nice ideas up my sleeve...

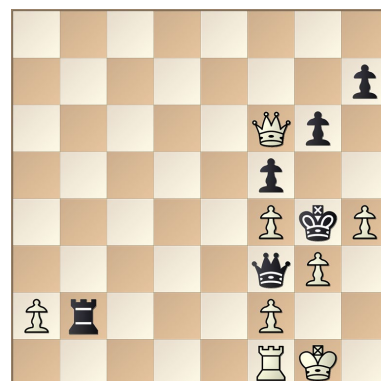
**34...Qf3 35.Rf1**



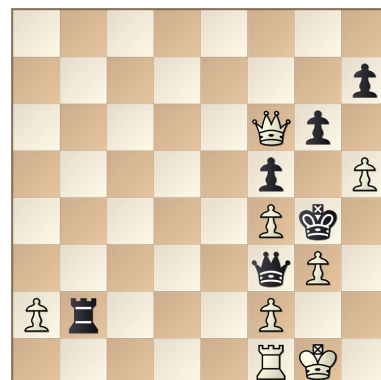
**35...Kh5?** A few people said after the game that I had nothing if Black played 35...Rxa2, but I pointed out my intended reply 36.h5!, highlighting the latent power behind the structure f2, f4, g3, h4. Here are some of my ideas: 36...Qxh5?? 37.Qf8 #, or 36...Kxh5 37.Qe7 Kh6 38.Qf8+ Kh5 39.Qf7, forking the rook and the h7-pawn, and ready to meet 39...Kg4 with 40.Qxh7 (Not 40.Qxa2??

41...Kh3, when I get mated by the Nigel Short king march (vs Timman). And if he plays a nothing move in reply to 36.h5 (let's say 36...Re2) then 37.Qd8 renders Black's position untenable. The move played meets with quite a simple refutation.

**36.Qf6 Kg4**

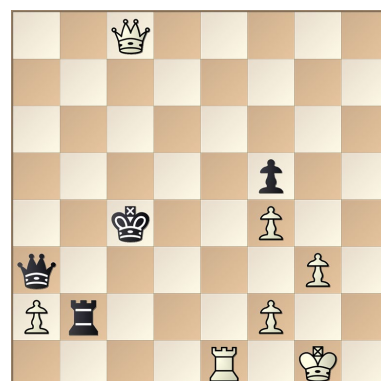


**37.h5!**



**37...Qa3** I expected 37...Qe2, to which I would have responded with 38.hxg6 hxg6 (Or the cheeky trap 38...Kf3!? 39.Qc6+, but not 39.gxh7?? Qxf1+ and mate next move!) 39.Qxg6+ Kf3 40.Qxf5, covering the b1-square.

**38.hxg6 hxg6 39.Qxg6+ Kf3 40.Qh5+ Ke4 41.Re1+ Kd4 42.Qh8+ Kc4 43.Qc8+**



**1-0**



## Rating Corner

by Brian Valentine, Manager ECF Rating

The ECF's rating system is one of a number of national chess rating systems developed by the larger chess playing nations to rate their players based on results in events predominately within their national area.

The ECF's rating system went live in 2020, and provides monthly lists with four-digit ratings calculated using the Elo formula based on players' results in rated leagues, congresses and other events. The current system replaced the old ECF grading system, which was first published in 1954 and was based on three-digit numbers calculated using the 'Clarke' formula, with lists produced initially yearly and then from 2012 twice yearly. The ECF rating system includes separate lists for over the board and online ratings at three different time controls, and provides ratings for 32,600 players, with historical ratings available for a further 126,700 players.

The current ECF rating system is one of the largest national rating systems in the world, and runs alongside the USCF's rating system for US events (which is also based on the elo formula) and the Australian Chess Federation system (which uses the Glicko formula).

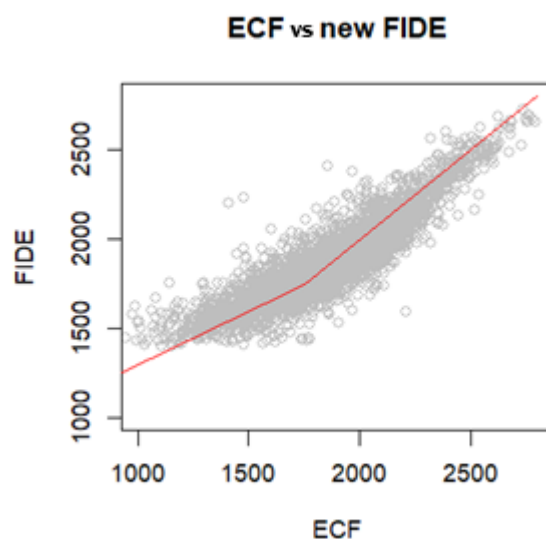
FIDE's system dates back to 1970, and is an international rating system developed for FIDE-rated events played across the world. The FIDE system uses the Elo formula, but includes the idea of a rating floor (currently at 1000 elo, and soon to be moved to 1400 elo), below which players are not included within the lists. As with other national systems, the ECF system is a rating system for 'recreational' players, covering the performance of chess players across large numbers of organised club, league, congress and tournament events played within the national area. This contrasts with the FIDE system, which is an international system targeted at players who take part in FIDE-rated events with more stringent rules regarding allowable time limits, conditions and qualification of arbiters for an event to be FIDE-rated. In many circumstances organisers need to convert an ECF rating to a FIDE rating or vice versa. The ECF will be moving to a new conversion, and will be recommending that conversion to other users.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 FIDE will be making changes to its rating methodology, increasing the rating floor from 1000 to 1400 and condensing all ratings between 1000 to 2000

into the new range. ECF ratings are not changing. Until this point the ECF ratings (and previously grades) followed a fairly clear linear relationship, although people have suggested slightly different fits. This is now not the case.

The revised conversion after the FIDE change will be  $FIDE = 0.6 \times ECF + 700$  up to 1750 ECF, with parity above that level.

The fit has been chosen to be minimally biased so it can be used in both directions, while being reasonably practical. It can be considered as one of many plausible interpretations.



The diagram above demonstrates the formula based on the latest data. The data is taken as at the 2023 year end, and plots all the players with an active FIDE rating (uprated for the 1<sup>st</sup> March change) and full ECF ratings.

From past experience the relationship can move around, and so the rating team will review the conversion from time to time.

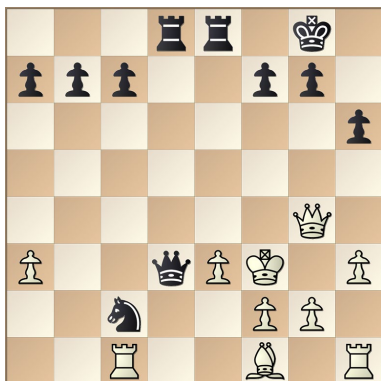
## It's a Puzzlement!



Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://chesspuzzle.net). We provide a link to the relevant ChessPuzzle.net page and a QR Code so you can try the puzzles interactively and get hints if needed or even the solutions!

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

**Puzzle 1 - GM Arkell, Keith – FM Kozusek, Daniel**  
UK Open Blitz Final, Leamington Spa, ENG



Black to checkmate - [Puzzle One](#)

**Puzzle 2 - Keely, Leo A – Blades, Kit**  
Hastings Masters 2023-24, Hastings, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Two](#)

**Puzzle 3 - IM Willow, Jonah B – FM Makkar, Rajat**  
ChessEngland.com GM A, London , ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Three](#)

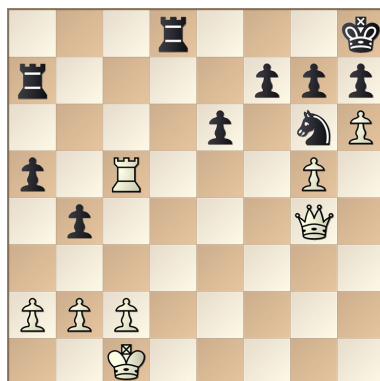
**Puzzle 4 - Ismail, Mohammed Aayan – WFM**  
**Norinkeviciute, Rasa**

Hastings Masters 2023-24, Hastings, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

**Puzzle 5 - GM Sengupta, Deep – GM Gallagher, Joseph G.**  
Hastings Masters 2023-24, Hastings, ENG



White to checkmate - [Puzzle Five](#)

**Puzzle 6 - Kovalskyi, Roman – WCM Sivanandan,**  
**Bodhana**

Hastings Masters 2023-24, Hastings, ENG



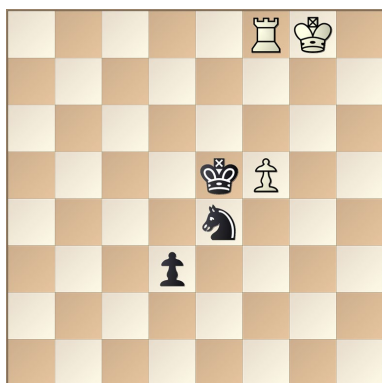
White to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

**Puzzle 7 - FM Makkar, Rajat – IM Wadsworth, Matthew J**  
 ChessEngland.com GM A, London, ENG



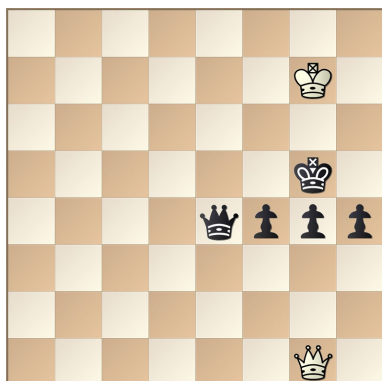
White to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

**Puzzle 8 - Salvador, Louie – FM Dishman, Stephen**  
 Titled Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Nov Early, chess.com, INT



Black to win - [Puzzle Eight](#)

**Puzzle 9 - FM Haydon, D. – CM Avila Rodriguez, Joshua**  
 Titled Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec Late, chess.com, INT



White to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

**Puzzle 10 - FM Thompson, Ian D – Han Qixiang**  
 Hastings Masters 2023-24, Hastings, ENG



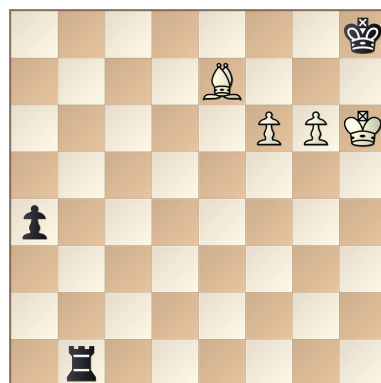
Black to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

**Puzzle 11 - Udhayasuriyan, Ashwini – WCM Sivanandan, Bodhana**  
 4NCL Div 2 2023-24, England



Black to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

**Puzzle 12 -Tabatabaei, M. – Vitiugove, Nikita**  
 13<sup>th</sup> London Classic 2023, London ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)



## All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit

[https://chesspuzzle.net/List/9552?utm\\_source=ecf&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=januarynews](https://chesspuzzle.net/List/9552?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=januarynews)

by clicking the link or via the QR code below.



## NEWS and VIEWS

### WGM Title Awarded to Lan Yao



Congratulations to Lan Yao, whose WGM title was confirmed by the 2023 3<sup>rd</sup> FIDE Council Meeting. Since applying for the title Lan Yao has gained her first IM norm as well as her fifth WGM norm.

### Bodhana Sivanandan's European Women's Blitz Success

Bodhana Sivanandan produced a fantastic performance at the European Women's Blitz Championship in Monaco. The article below is reproduced from *The Guardian* by kind permission of Leonard Barden.

'Bodhana Sivanandan, 8, England's girl prodigy, produced a stunningly impressive performance on Friday afternoon at the European Women's Blitz Championship in Monaco. She totalled 8½ points out of 13, finished 15<sup>th</sup> in a field of 105, won the prize for the best junior, and was the [top](#)

[English player](#). Blitz is three minutes per player for the entire game, plus a two seconds per move increment from move one.

Sivanandan [drew with Germany's No 1 woman](#) Elizabeth Pähtz, who is a grandmaster at Open level, won or drew against several other elite women, and [finished with a victory](#) against Bulgaria's Nurgyul Salimova, the 2023 Women's World Cup finalist, who has qualified for the Women's World Championship Candidates in Toronto.

Sivanandan told the Guardian: "I didn't play well at the start, but after a few rounds I managed to do better. It was very interesting for me to have the chance to meet so many well-known players. The playing hall and the arrangements by the Monaco organisers were great."

The Harrow primary school pupil was honoured with a personal invitation by the Monaco organisers after her [eye-catching success at Zagreb](#) last month, where she was the top-scoring female in the European Open Blitz. Sivanandan was also invited to the European Women's Rapid, which takes place this weekend, but is committed to matches for her club in Britain's 4NCL League, which has two weekend rounds in Warwick.

Her FIDE blitz rating is already 2107, and she will gain a further 75 points from Monaco to move close to the 2200 master level. England grandmasters who played her informally after last month's London Chess Classic assessed her strength as even higher.'

### Bank Account Closures

Many of you will have read recent press articles about banks allegedly freezing or closing charities' and community groups' bank accounts with little or no notice, apparently on the basis of not receiving the information they claim they need as part of their responsibility to help prevent financial crime and to meet their regulatory obligations. If you have examples of chess organisations (whether they be chess clubs, leagues, county associations, unions, or other chess-related bodies) having been affected by this we would like to hear from you. Please email us with details on: [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk).

### Seniors Events and Dates 2024

Here are the latest details and dates for the main seniors events in 2024. Please note that qualification for most seniors events states that you must reach the age requirement within the calendar year of the event, so to play in a 50+ event you must be aged 50 by the end of that calendar year, and likewise for the 65+ age group.

In date order, the main seniors events are as follows:

#### **European Senior Team Chess Championships (ESTCC)**

6<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Terme Catez, Slovenia. Please see the following link for the official invitation:

[https://www.europechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Regulations\\_ESTCC24\\_FIN.pdf](https://www.europechess.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Regulations_ESTCC24_FIN.pdf)

The registration deadline is 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024, so anyone interested in playing in one of the England teams should register their interest with Nigel Povah at [nigel.povah52@gmail.com](mailto:nigel.povah52@gmail.com).

Terme Catez is in south-east Slovenia, boasts the largest thermal bath complex and spa in the country, and offers a number of leisure facilities. It is 3 km from the town of Brezice and is close to the border with Croatia, so it is only 38 km from Zagreb, as opposed to 104 km from Ljubljana.

#### **English Seniors Chess Championships**

As noted earlier in ChessMoves, The English Seniors Chess Championships will take place between Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May and Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at the Holiday Inn, Kenilworth. You can find full details and entry form at the link here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2024/>

#### **World Senior Team Chess Championships (WSTCC)**

1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July, Krakow, Poland. No further details are available at this stage. However, the venue is likely to be the Galaxy Hotel, as for the senior event in Krakow just after Christmas.

#### **British Seniors Chess Championships**

No details are available at this stage, but these are usually held in late July/early August.

#### **European Senior Chess Championships (ESCC)**

18<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October, Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy. No further details are available at this stage. Lignano Sabbiadoro is a resort in north-east Italy, about 30km from Trieste, or 66km from Venice.

#### **World Senior Chess Championships (WSCC)**

No details are available at this stage, although they are likely to be held in late autumn 2024.

### **Leicester University Professor Saves Man's Life during Chess Match**

A professor saved a man's life after he suffered a cardiac arrest in the middle of a chess match in Leicester.

Richard Hanscombe, 77, collapsed during the match at Braunstone Civic Centre on 11 October, prompting the University of Leicester's Prof Simon Gay to begin CPR.

It was not until 35 minutes after he collapsed that medical staff could detect a heartbeat.

Mr Hanscombe's wife, Paulette, described him as a "miracle man". Prof Gay, a trained GP and head of the university's medical school, recognised the danger and began CPR.

Mr Hanscombe was then taken to Glenfield Hospital by ambulance, where he was hooked up to a ventilator. While there, his family were told his brain had little chance of survival and hospital staff began to remove his breathing apparatus. But Mr Hanscombe suddenly showed signs of life - kicking his legs out and trying to open his eyes. "One minute we were crying our eyes out, and the next we were jumping for joy," Mrs Hanscombe said.

Mr Hanscombe said: "I'm a glass half full sort of person and I just get on with things, so even though I'd felt a little unwell that evening, I decided to play chess anyway. "I'm pleased I did because if it hadn't happened where it did, Simon wouldn't have been there to help and I wouldn't be here today. "I owe Simon my life for what he did and I'm extremely grateful."

Mr Hanscombe, who spent nearly a month in hospital, has also overcome liver and lung cancer, as well as a life-threatening sepsis episode in recent years. "He's the man with nine lives, but we're not complaining," his wife added.

Prof Gay said he was "very pleased" to have been able to help. "This just goes to show how important having basic CPR skills can be," he said.

"I'm really looking forward to the next time Richard and I are both playing chess together - it will certainly have a bit more meaning to it."

*From BBC News at [bbc.co.uk/news](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news)*

### **ECF Awards Committee New Chair**

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Keith Gregory as the new Chair of the ECF Awards Committee. Keith is recently retired after a long career in IT/programme management/enterprise architecture. He has been playing chess for over 50 years and is currently providing ECF junior admin support to the ECF Director of Junior Chess and Education Alex Holowczak, running four ECF junior tournaments per week (on Lichess and Chess.com). In his earlier days he was five times

Hampshire champion (in his 20s/30s). He has captained 4NCL Wessex OTB teams for a number of years (two teams currently) and also run eight Wessex teams in the 4NCL Online League.

Keith takes over from Stephen Greep, who stepped down after the last round of awards.

## European Schools Chess Championship

The European School Chess Championship 2024 will be held from May 30th to June 8th 2024 in Limerick, Ireland. The event will be played in 6 age categories: U7, U9, U11, U13, U15 and U17, open and girls' sections separately. Full details can be found at the following link:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/european-schools-chess-championships-2024/>

## JUNIOR MOVES

### Littlewood's Choice



The recent London Chess Classic gave an opportunity for our promising junior Shreyas Royal to face some top-class grandmasters.

This can be a daunting task, but Shreyas proved to be no pushover, and in fact won the following nice game.

**S. Royal vs M. Amin Tabatabaei**

Round 3 3rd December 2023

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Bb4 6.Nf3 h6 7.Bxf6**

This is a solid line, and so a sensible choice against a strong player. The alternative 7.Bh4 can lead to a more double-edged battle.

**7.....Qxf6 8.Qb3 Qd6 9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.Qxc3 0-0 11.e3 Bf5 12.Rc1 c6**

The position is now equal, but it is of the type where the British grandmaster Keith Arkell has often managed to squeeze a win for White. He can employ the minority attack on the queenside, and Black does not have much counterplay.

**13.Ne5?!**

However, this allows a subtle resource for Black. He can continue 13...Be4! and after 14.f3 Bf5 15.Bd3 Bxd3 16.Nxd3 Re8 the weakness on e3 makes things awkward for White.



**13...Nd7?! 14.Bd3 Bxd3 15.Nxd3 Rfe8 16.0-0 Nf6 17.b4**

White is now back on track, and the minority attack begins.

**17...a6** Not bad, but personally I might prefer 17...Ng4!? 18.g3 h5, with decent counterplay.

**18. a4 Ne4 19. Qb2 Qe7 20.b5 cxb5?**



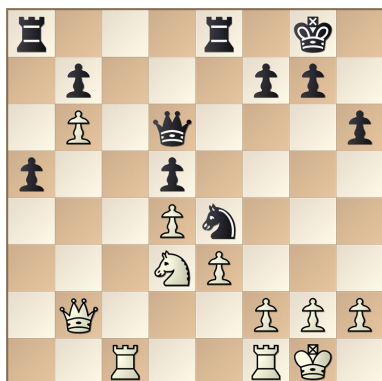
The first real mistake by Black. Much better is 20....axb5 21.axb5 Qa3! when a possible continuation is 22.Qxa3 Rxa3 23.Nc5 Nc3 24.Ra1 Rxa1 25.Rxa1 b6 26.Nd3 Nxb5 27.Nb4 Rc8 28.Ra6 c5 29.Nxd5 Rd8 30.Nxb6 cxd4 31.exd4 Rxd4, which is equal.

**21.axb5 a5 22.b6!**



Black has a passed pawn, but White's position is more active, so Black has to be careful.

**22...Qd6?**



A further mistake, after which White is clearly better and almost winning. Much better was 22...Rc8 23.Nf4 Rxc1 24.Rxc1 Nf6 25.h3 a4, when the passed pawn just gives Black enough counterplay against the white assault beginning with 26.Rc7.

**23.Rc7 Re7 24.Rfc1 Rae8 25.Nc5**

Even better was 25.Qb5!, when the desperate lunge 25...Qa3 fails to 26.Qxd5 Qxd3 27.Rxe7 Rxe7 28.Qd8+ Kh7 29.Qxe7 winning.

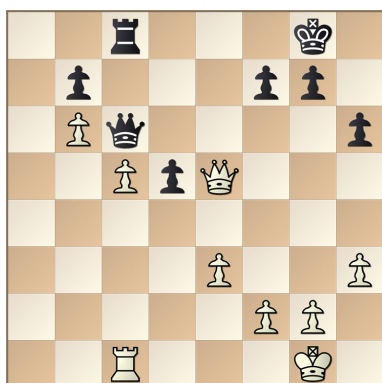
**25...Nxc5 26.dxc5 Qe6 27.Rxe7 Qxe7 28.Qb5**

White now wins a pawn, but still has to overcome some technical difficulties to gain the full point.

**28...Rb8**

If Black tries to hold on to the pawn with 28... Ra8, then 29.g3 a4 30.c6! bxc6 31.Rxc6, and White's passed b-pawn wins the game for him.

**29.Qxa5 Qd7 30.h3 Qc6 31.Qc3 Rc8 32.Qe5**



Also possible was 32.Ra1 Qxb6 33.cxb6 Rxc3 34.Ra7 with a winning ending.

**32... g6 33.h4 h5 34.Kh2 Re8 35.Qd6 Qxd6+?!**

Understandable, but 35...Re6 36.Qf4 Re4 37.Qg3 would have left White with the advantage but still some work to do.

**36. cxd6 Rd8 37.Rc7 Rxd6 38.Rxb7 Kg7 39.Kg3 Kf6 40.Kf3 d4 41.Ke2! dxe3 42.Kxe3 Ke6 43.f3 Kf6 44.g3 g5?!**

This hastens the end, and Shreyas now finishes off nicely.

**45. Rb8! gxh4 46.Rh8! Re6+ 47.Kf4 hxg3 48.b7 g2 49.b8=Q g1=Q 50.Qd8+ Re7 51.Rh6+ Qg6 52.Qd4+ Ke6 53.Qb6+ Kd5 1-0**

Black resigned after playing his move, because 54.Rxg6 fxg6 55.Qxg6 is easily winning.

A very mature game by Shreyas, who has every chance of becoming our next grandmaster.

Meanwhile, if you have played any exciting games as a youngster that you would like to have published in my column then please send them to me at [plittl@hotmail.com](mailto:plittl@hotmail.com). I cannot promise that they will appear, but I will give them every consideration.

## IM Norm and FM Title for Sohum Lohia in Rome



Sohum has provided the following annotated game from the Rome tournament, where he achieved his FM title and an IM norm.

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Ndb5 Bb4 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Nxc3 d5 9.Bd3 d4** I remembered this line was not meant to be too good but I didn't know how to follow up.

**10.Ne2 e5 11.0-0 h6 12.Ng3 12.f4!** was best (12...exf4 13.Bxf4.) I didn't consider this too seriously because I was worried he would get a blockade on e5: 13...0-0 (13...Nh5 14.Bd2 Ne5 15.Bb5+ Bd7 16.Rf5!) 14.h3 Re8 15.Ng3 Ne5 16.Qd2. My attacking potential is very strong here despite the knight on e5; 12.h3 g5. I was a bit worried about this, as it's similar to the Italian where you play h3 before Black castles. There this attack can be dangerous, but in this position it's not that great for Black.



**12...0-0 13.h3 Qe7** If 13...Be6 14.f4. I was planning this for Be6 because now it's tougher to arrange Re8-Ne5.

**14.Qf3** Going for the wrong plan. I thought once I got the light-squared bishop then I could open up with f4.

14.f4 exf4 15.Bxf4 Ne5. I thought this looked decent for Black, but Black's king is weak and most of my pieces are active, so I have a good advantage.

**14...Be6** He didn't really have any other moves.

**15.Nf5** I thought this was quite smart, because I made him waste a move with Be6-Bxf5.



**15...Bxf5 16.Qxf5** My queen is awkwardly placed here.

**16...g6 17.Qf3** I was feeling good about my position here, because f4 at the right time would be quite strong.

**17...Kg7 18.Bd2 a5 19.Rae1 19.Qg3.** I wanted to move my queen to get to f4, but none of the squares looked good: 19...Nh5 20.Qg4 Nf6 21.Qh4 g5 was annoying (22.Qg3 Nh5 23.Qg4 Nf4).

**19...Qe6 20.Qd1** I wanted f4, but I didn't consider Nh5 properly. 20.Qg3 Nh5 21.Qh2 g5 also looked fine for Black.

**20...Nh5** I didn't see a good way to stop Nf4, so I went back.



**21.Qf3** I thought he would just repeat, and then I could find something else.

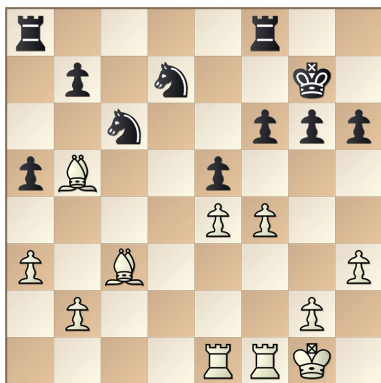
**21...Qf6 22.Qxf6+ Nxf6 23.f4 23.c3 Rfd8** didn't look too convincing.

**23...Nd7 24.Bb5 24.f5 g5 25.f6+ Nxf6 26.h4** – I was always looking at things, like this but it never seemed to work.

**24...f6 24...Rac8 25.c3** was my idea - 25...Nc5 26.fxe5 Nb3 27.Bf4.

**25.c3 dxc3 25...Nc5.** I thought he would do this, and I didn't see anything too good for me here - 26.cxd4 (26.Bxc6 bxc6 27.cxd4 Nb3) 26...Nb3 27.Be3 Nbx4=.

**26.Bxc3** Here I realised that I was doing well.



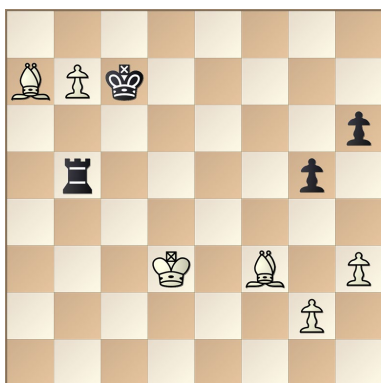
26...exf4 26...Rad8 27.Bxc6 bxc6 28.Rd1+-.

27.Rxf4 Nde5 28.Ref1 Na7 28...Rae8 29.Bxc6 bxc6 30.Bxa5 I thought this would happen, when I am a pawn up with no compensation for Black.

29.Rxf6 Rxf6 30.Bxe5 Raf8 31.Bd7 g5 31...R8f7 32.h4 Rxd7 33.Rxf6+-.

32.Bd4 b6 33.Rxf6 Rxf6 34.e5 Rg6 34...Rc6 I missed this resource, but it's still a fairly easy win for me: 35.e6+ Kf8 36.Bxc6 Nxc6 37.Bxb6 Ke7 38.b4 axb4 39.axb4 Kxe6 40.Bc5+-; 34...Rf4 35.Bxb6 Rc4 36.Bxa7 Rc7 37.e6 Rxa7 38.e7+-.

35.e6+ Kf8 36.Bxb6 Nc6 37.Bxc6 Rxe6 38.Bc5+ Kg7 39.Bd4+ Kf8 40.Bf3 Ke7 41.Bc3 Rb6 42.Kf2 Kd6 43.Ke3 Rb5 44.Kd3 Rb8 45.b4 axb4 46.axb4 Rc8 47.Bd4 Rc1 48.b5 Rb1 49.b6 Rb5 50.b7 Kc7 51.Ba7



1-0

## 2024 ECF English Girls' Team Semi-Final

### by Andrew Martin

Over 280 girls took part in the recent ECF National Schools southern semi-final, held at St Catherine's School in Bramley. This was a very well organised event and a tremendous success overall.

It was most impressive to see the sheer number of teams and the support the girls received from their parents, teachers and coaches.

Sincere thanks must go to St Catherine's, who are the current sole sponsors of the National Schools tournament.

Full results can be found here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr878134.aspx?lan=1>

and here:

[Chess-Results Server Chess-results.com - 2024 ECF English Schools Girls Championship Semi Final](https://chess-results.com/tnr878134.aspx?lan=1)

## ECF Secondary School Chess News January 2024

### by Neill Cooper

Details of all the ECF inter-school events can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/>.

### English School Chess Championships 2023/24

We have had a fantastic entry total this year of 341 teams from 210 schools. A total of 169 teams from 121 schools qualified from one of the 41 qualifying and three online repechage events, or as one of 27 automatic qualifiers.



*The Bristol qualifier in action*

This term sees the regional stage. The growth in the tournament means there are 24 regions this year; these are listed [here](#), while detailed match results will be posted on the ECF LMS [here](#). The winners of each knockout regional tournament will qualify for the national final, to be played on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at Nottingham University.



### Girls' Championships 2023/24

The ECF's National Girls' Chess Championships are for teams of three players. The southern final on 14<sup>th</sup> January is full, but there is due to be an online qualifier. More details and the entry form can be found [here](#).

### British Team Chess Challenge and Junior Team Chess Challenge 2023/24

The British Team Chess Challenge is for teams of four players, and every game counts towards your team's total score. You can find information about these at [U19](#) (British) and [U13](#) (Junior).

There is still time for more regional finals to be arranged - please do email me if you think you may be able to host one.

Teams that win regional finals and some runners-up qualify for the national final to be played on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at King Edward VI Grammar School Aston, West Midlands.

### Harrow School Blitz

This tournament will be on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January from 11am to 4pm. The rate of play will be 3 minutes + 2 seconds increment. For more information email James Hall on [jpbh@harrowschool.org.uk](mailto:jpbh@harrowschool.org.uk).

### Eton College Rapidplay

This tournament will be on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October, from 11am to 5pm. The rate of play will be 20 minutes + 5 seconds increment. Book the date now - further details will be circulated in due course.

### Ivan Gromov Online Schools Chess League

This is a fortnightly inter-school league played online on Thursday evenings. Match results can be found [here](#). For more information please contact - [J.Moston@etoncollege.org.uk](mailto:J.Moston@etoncollege.org.uk)

### Inter-school Lichess Battles

Fortnightly online 'battles' continue on Fridays from 6 to 7pm on [Lichess Secondary School Chess](#). Past events can be found [here](#). These are inclusive events, with schools fielding as many players as they wish. Please email me if your school would like to join these events.

### National Online School Chess League

The league runs fortnightly on Mondays from 4.15 to 5.15pm, with teams of six players being supervised in school. After each round of fixtures there is promotion and relegation between the leagues. More details are available at <https://lichess.org/team/noscl>. Again, please email me if your school would like to join these events.

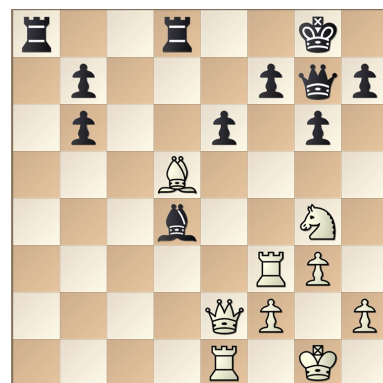
Neill Cooper

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## IMPROVERS

### Paul Littlewood on Tactics

In all my articles I have stressed how important it is to watch out for tactics. With that in mind, a friend of mine recently drew my attention to a game of my father's.



#### J. E. Littlewood vs B. Cafferty Hastings 1960/61

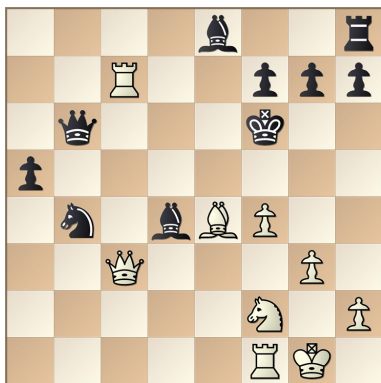
My dad had just taken Black's knight on d5, and Bernard had to choose whether to take back with his rook or pawn. Not wanting to disturb his kingside pawn structure, he chose the natural 1...Rxd5. However, this is the decisive mistake... after 1...exd5 Black is clearly better and should go on to win.

Instead, after **1...Rxd5** there followed a bolt from the blue: **2.Rxf7!**

Suddenly Black is in trouble because, if 2...Qxf7 then 3.Nh6+ wins material. The game therefore continued **2...Kxf7 3.Qxe6+ Kf8 4.Qxd5**, and Black is losing because his king is too exposed.

The game finished **4...h5 5.Nh6! Qxh6 6.Qxd4 Qg7 7.Qd6+ Kg8 8.Re7 Ra1+ 9.Kg2 Qh6 10.Qe6+** and Black resigned, because mate follows shortly.

This game was clearly played a long time ago, but tactics are still very important in the games played today. Just recently I saw a wonderful example from the European Women's Team Championship.



### N. Salimova vs O. Kiolbasa European Women's Team Championship 2023

Black probably thought she was over the worst here, as once the white queen moves she can play 1..g6 and get her king to safety. However, White produced the brilliant **1.Rd1!** The main point of this move is that if 1...Bxc3 then 2. Rd6+! Qxd6 3.Ng4+ Ke6 4.f5 mate.

The game actually finished **1...Nc2 2.Qxc2 Bxf2+ 3.Kg2 Bd4 4.Rc4** and Black resigned, because if 4...Bb2 then 5.Rb1 wins a piece, leaving White a rook up.

A fantastic game, which helped Bulgaria win their first ever European Women's Team Championship title.

Clearly, the message is to watch out for those tactics. Sometimes your opponent in fact plays an unsound combination, and you get confused and do not defend properly.

I remember a game from my youth where I reached the following position.



### R. Lambert vs P. E. Littlewood NCCU Junior Championship 1971

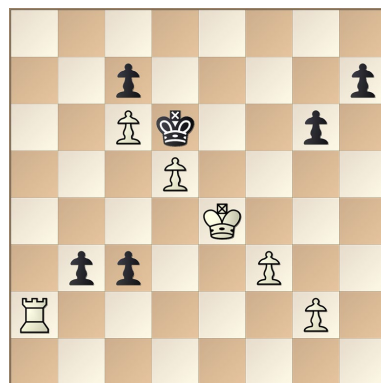
It is White to move, and he just needs to be careful, as Black's sacrifice to reach this position was unsound. Simplest is probably 1.Nc3, when White loses a pawn but consolidates his position, e.g. 1...Rxe3 2.Kf2 Re5 3.Rhe1 etc.

However, White got greedy and played **1.e4??**. bBut now followed **1...Qg5!** and suddenly White is lost.

The game finished **2.g4 Qf4 3.Qd2 Rf1+ 4.Kg2 Qf3+ 5.Kh1 Rxh1 mate**.

Stay vigilant at all times!

Here now are a couple of positions for you to solve, with the answers at the end of the article.



### Hartmann vs Radisch Correspondence 1987

White resigned in this position because he couldn't see a way of preventing the black pawns from queening. What clever idea did he miss?



### P.E. Littlewood vs P. Sheard British U18 1972

Black to move.

What is the only move which allows him to defend successfully?

Answers:

### Hartmann vs Radisch

White can in fact win by **1.Re2! b2 2.Kd4 b1=Q 3.Re6 mate**.

## P. E. Littlewood vs P. Sheard

The only move to hold the balance is 1...Qb6! preventing 2.Rg1+. The best line for White is then 2.Qg5+ Kh8 3.Rxd7 Rg8! 4.Qf6+ Rg7 5.Rd8+ Qxd8 6.Qxd8+ Rg8 7.Qf6+ Rg7 8.Ne5 h5 9. Nxf7+ Kg8 10.Ng5 when he stands slightly better.

However Black played 1...Kh8 but he had missed 2.Rxd7! and after 2...Rd8 3.Qf6+ he resigned. Had he instead played 2...Bxd7 then 3.Qf6+ Kg8 4.Ne7 mate, or 2...Qxd7 3.Qxf8 mate.

Paul Littlewood Email: [plittl@hotmail.com](mailto:plittl@hotmail.com)

## Gormally's Coaching Corner

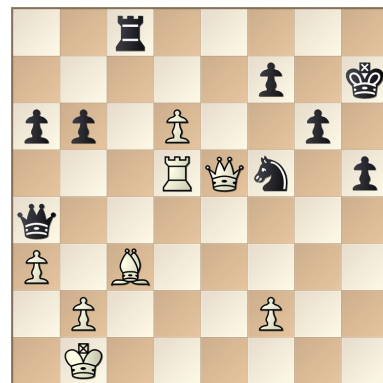
by Danny Gormally



### How to Become a Lucky Player Part 1

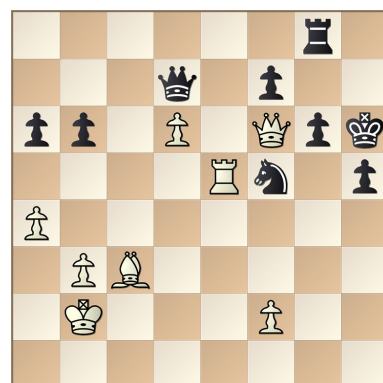
Parligras, Mircea-Emilian - Fernandez, Daniel Howard  
4NCL Division 1 2023–2024

What is luck in chess? Does it even exist? Some players are considered 'lucky'. One of these was Tal, for example. But he was not lucky - it only appeared so. My Sunday game at the Four Nations Chess League in Milton Keynes was curtailed early. Black against a 2280 German player, I messed up a position where I had a slight edge and promising chances of a win, and realised I had nothing better than to allow a repetition. Waiting for the train at the station I checked my phone to see the live boards and came across the game Parligras - Fernandez, when suddenly the following blunder appeared on the board:



**36.Rd5??** What is this? I thought. What happens if Black just plays ... Re8 now? The more I looked at the position, the more I couldn't see a move for White. And sure enough, the reply came.

I had been expecting White to play something like 36.Rd2 when White seems to be in control, despite being a pawn down. 36...Qd7 37.Qf6 Rg8 38.Rd5, and only now should White play this. (38.b3 was another option. The idea is to quietly improve the king, to avoid any counter-checks.) 38...Qb7 39.Re5 Qd7 40.Kc1 Kh6 41.b3 Kh7 42.Kb2 Kh6 43.a4+.



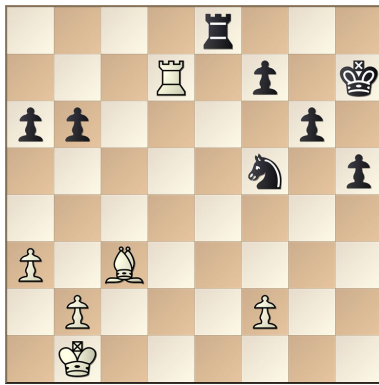
Black is move-bound, and according to the engine hopelessly lost. He cannot take on d6, as that will run into Rxf5, winning material.

**36...Re8! 37.d7:** a sad admission. You have to jettison the pride of your position to avoid losing the rook on d5.

If 37.Qf6 Qe4+.

**37...Rxe5 38.d8Q Re8 39.Qd7 Qxd7 40.Rxd7+**





The last few moves have not gone well for White, who has lost his monster d-pawn and been forced to exchange queens. Not surprisingly the in-form Fernandez makes short work of the winning process.

**40...Kg8 41.Bf6 h4 42.Kc2 Kh7!** it is worth giving one pawn back to activate the black king.

42...h3 43.Rd3! is what White was counting on.

**43.Rxf7+ Kh6 44.Bc3 Kg5 45.Kd3 Kf4 46.Rh7 Kf3 47.Bf6 Re1 48.Rh8 Rh1 49.Rg8 Rg1 50.Rh8 Rg4 51.Rb8 h3 52.Be5 Re4 53.Bh2 Rd4+ 54.Kc3 Kg2 55.Be5 Re4 56.Bc7 b5 57.b3 Re6 58.Kb4 Ne7**

**0-1**

**Bosiocic, Marin - Fernandez, Daniel Howard**  
Cambridge International Open (9), 19.02.2023



I must admit my first reaction when seeing this blunder from Parligras was 'Daniel is such a lucky player. I never get such gifts.' But once my initial jealousy had died down, it got me thinking. If luck exists in chess, then like most other forms of luck it will even itself out over time. So therefore if someone is seen to be a lucky player there are legitimate reasons for that, and this is something I will try to investigate in this article. It became very clear when looking at Daniel's games that he is someone who is willing to take risks. Sometimes these risks will pay off for him. I looked at 60 of his games from the past year and ran them through an engine. In 16 of these, he had what I would define as 'comebacks'; in other words, he was

able to win or draw games when he had a lost position. That's a fairly high number. His other statistics also stood out. He had a high number of wins: 32 games out of 60. He lost 12 games and had 16 draws. For most of these games he was facing fairly high-quality opposition. His run began somewhere around the Cambridge Open, where he was only rated about 2480 at the time. In a period when most players like me have been losing points due to rating deflation, Daniel has managed to swim against the tide, and after the Parligras game is presumably running around 2540.

**30.Re3?** Quite a serious error.

30.Rf3! would deny Black the chance he was given in the game. 30...Qc4 (30...Qd2 31.Qe5 exf6 32.Rxf6 0-0-0 33.Rf7 Nd7 34.Qxe6+-) 31.Qc7 Nd7 32.Rxe6 0-0 33.Qxd7+-.

**30...Qc4!** One of the qualities in being a 'lucky' player is being resilient. Here Daniel finds the only line to test the opponent.

30...Qd2 31.fxe7 Kxe7 32.Rxe6+- (32.Qd6+ Ke8 33.Rxf8+ leads to forced mate.)

**31.Qc7 Nd7 32.Rf4 32.Rxe6 0-0.**



Now we see the difference. White can't just take on d7 here, as f1 will drop. So often these small differences define whether we leave the chess board with a warm glowing feeling or if we leave it in utter disgust. Noticing all the details of a position is what separates the top players in the world from the rest of us. Their calculation is just that bit more clinical and efficient. Not that Mr Bosiocic is incapable of finding the difference between playing 30 Re3? and 30 Rf3! and my guess is he was in time trouble. 33.Qxd7 (33.fxe7 Rxf1 34.Qd8+ Kh7 35.Qxa8 Qf4+-) 33...Qxf1 34.Rxe7 Qf4+ 35.Kh1 Qxf6+-.

**32...d4 33.Ree4 Qd3 34.Qc6 Qg3+ 35.Kg1 c2** Daniel has continued to find the only moves, and now his opponent cracks.

**36.f7+?** 36.Rf1 0–0 37.Qxe6+ Rf7 38.fxe7 Nf6 39.Rxd4 Qc7!= would have been a real tightrope line.

**36...Kf8 37.Rf1 Rd8 38.Qxe6 Qg5 39.Ree1 d3 40.c6 Nc5 41.bxc5 Qxc5+ 42.Kh2 d2 43.Re5 c1Q**

0–1

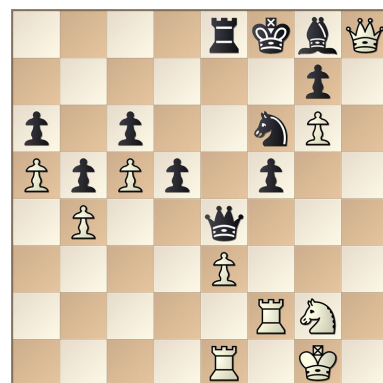
**Akbas, Umut Ata - Fernandez, Daniel Howard**  
SRB-chT 1st League CS Paracin (1.1), 30.09.2023



Missed wins will fall into several categories. In the Bosicic game, it was quite clear that the complexity of the position (possibly combined with time trouble) became too much for White to navigate. It seems to me though that the most likely way that someone will mess up a winning position is just being outplayed over a number of moves. The 'lucky' player will not mind or get perturbed if they encounter a bad position. They will simply believe that this is something that is part of the package, part of the life of being a professional chess player. Therefore they will endeavour to keep playing at the same level, whereas some of us will do the opposite. Our heads will drop and we'll either fail to put up enough resistance, or if we're playing someone lower-rated than us we'll look for a way to hit the escape button and offer a draw. This will take away the chance to rip the win out of their hands later on as we resign ourselves to losing rating points. The true 'lucky' player is a maximalist who eschews such an approach. There is also the missed win that falls into the category of a fleeting win, like in the next example.

**36.Rh7?** tempting but bad, as the white attack soon grinds to a halt, like the German advance to Moscow in 1941 becoming stuck in the winter mud.

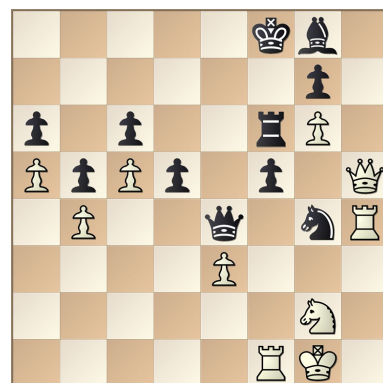
This was a tough one, but the engine indicates that 36.Rf2! is the right way, when White is eventually intending to smash through the stronghold on f5. 36...Re8 37.Ng2!.



This is the star regrouping: 37...Re5 (37...f4 38.Rxf4 Qxg6 39.Ref1+–) 38.Rf4 Qd3 39.Ref1+–.

**36...Ra7! 37.Rh4 Re7 38.Ng2!** Nonetheless White is not giving up on the win, and finds the correct regrouping.

**38...Ng4! 39.Rf1 Re6 40.Qh5 Rf6**



**41.Rxg4?** this is another phenomenon of the 'lucky' player. When faced with stubborn resistance, a player can often become frustrated and look for a way to bail out, rather than expend energy looking for a win that is becoming increasingly elusive. To use an analogy, it is rather like when a tennis player hits a volley into the net because they are unable to put away Djokovic's or Nadal's stubborn defending. They prefer the rally to be over even if it means losing it rather than having to endure psychological torture any longer.

41.Qg5 Qxb4 42.Rh8 Ne5 43.Nh4 was still much better for White, but to a human player this all looks a bit murky.

**41...Qxg4 42.Qxg4 fxf4 43.Rxf6+ gxf6 44.Kf2 Kg7 45.Nf4 Kh6 45...f5 46.Kg3 Kf6** would have forced White to find 47.Ne2! Kxg6 48.Nd4=.

**46.Kg3 Kg5 47.g7 Kh6 48.Ne2 Kxg7 49.Nd4! f5 50.Nxc6 Kf6 51.Kf4 Be6 52.Nd4 Bc8 53.c6 Ke7 54.Ke5 g3 55.Ne2 g2 56.Kxd5 Be6+ 57.Kc5 Kd8 58.Kb6 Kc8 59.Ng1 Bc4 60.Nh3 Bf1 61.Ng1 Bc4 62.Nh3 Bf1 63.Ng1**

½–½

## McClymont, Brodie - Fernandez, Daniel Howard

Doeberl Cup Canberra (9), 10.04.2023

In the next game the win is again rather on a precipice. White achieves a promising position out of the opening, but fails to make enough out of it and is eventually outplayed by Fernandez.

**1.e4 c6** This seems to be Dan's main defence to 1.e4, and he has had a lot of success with it.

**2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 Nd7 6.Nbd2 a5** This is an unusual choice, and speaks to Dan's creativity and willingness to go his own path. An interesting fact is that I found five games where Black played this move, and he won every single one of them.

6...Ne7 is much more normal. If 7.Nb3 Nc8 8.0-0 Be7 9.a4, with rather a strategic game in prospect, and one which is supposed to be slightly better for White.

**7.a4** I'm slightly surprised that White played a4 anyway, as one of the ideas of playing a4 is that you might later play a5 and cramp Black on the queenside. But Black has already played ... a5, so this is no longer an option. Quite possibly White wanted to take away the option of Black playing ... a4 and gaining further territory on this side of the board.

**7...f6** Having played ...a5 you would presumably be reluctant to then play 7...c5, the typical way of undermining the white centre in the advance Caro-Kann, as this is handing White the b5-square on a plate.

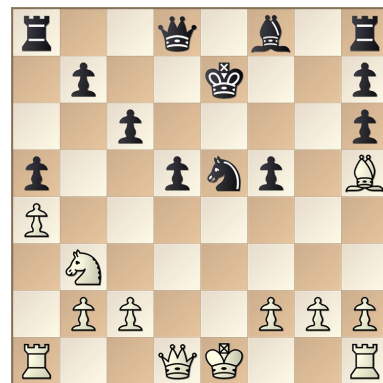
**8.Nb3 Nh6 8...Qc7 9.0-0 fxe5 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Nfd4.**

**9.Bxh6 gxh6 10.Nh4**



**10...fxe5?** it was better to play the careful 10...Bg6 11.Nxg6 hxg6 12.Qd3 Kf7, when Black is holding for now.

**11.Nxf5 exf5 12.Bh5+ Ke7 13.dxe5 Nxe5**



**14.0-0?** 14.Qe2! Kd6 15.0-0-0, and now there are many dangerous ideas for White to consider. One threat is simply to play c4 to get at the black king. 15...Bg7 16.c4 Qe7 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Kb1+-.

**14...Kd7 15.Nd4? Bc5 16.Nxf5? Qg5!** White has not handled the last few moves well, and all of a sudden Black is winning.

**17.Ng3 Raf8?** This is careless in turn by Daniel.

17...Kc7 18.Qc1 Raf8+-.

**18.Ne4!** White shows himself to be resourceful.

**18...Qe7 19.Nxc5+ Qxc5 20.Qe2 Rf5 21.Kh1 Qc4 22.Qxc4 dxc4 23.Be2 Rhf8 24.Kg1 Kd6 25.Ra3 Kc5 26.g3 h5 27.f4 Ng4 28.h3** If 28.Bf3 Rd8=.

**28...Nf6 29.Re3 h4**



**30.g4?** 30.Bg4! Rd5 31.Bf3=.

**30...Nd5!** 'lucky' players are seldom bad at using their knights...

**31.Re4 Rxf4 32.Rxc4+ Rxc4 33.Bxc4 Nf4**

**0-1**



If I had to define what makes a 'lucky' player, then I would list the following as some of the qualities needed:

1. The lucky player is resilient and hard to beat - they are tough to put away because they are so resourceful.

2. The lucky player has an equable temperament. If you look at Fernandez, he is more or less unflappable, and hardly shows what he is feeling in the game. Of course he gets nervous - everyone does - but it pays to keep on an even keel and not become too flustered whatever is happening on the board. This can also have the effect of throwing the opponent off - you think: 'Why is he/she not bothered here?' And that can make the opponent rash.

3. The lucky player is not afraid to take risks.

4. The lucky player is not overly dependent on theory. Some of the best swindlers in chess history are people like Tony Miles, who would often take creative risks in the opening, but weren't afraid to fall into a difficult position because they were confident in their ability to out-think their opponents in the middle game. So if a player can be lucky, is there such a thing as an unlucky player? I'm not sure if I fall into either category, but I was always keen on theory throughout my career, and in that case you need good technique to bring the point home. The following game is a good example of one where both players could count themselves both lucky and unlucky throughout the game.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Be7 7.Bg2 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Nc3 c6 11.Qc2 Nbd7 12.Rfe1 Rc8 13.Bh3 c5 14.Qb2 cxd4 15.Nxd4 Bc5 16.Na4 Re8 17.Bg5 Rc7 18.Nxc5 bxc5 19.Nf5 Rc6 20.b4 Rb6 21.a3 h6 22.Bf4 Nf8 23.Rac1? This was a good moment to step out of the pin with 23.Qc2 c4 24.Be3.

23...Ne6 24.Be5?!



24...Ng5? I don't have much recollection of this game or whether I considered 24...d4! and to be honest I probably

didn't give it much thought, even though it is very thematic. My calculation wasn't great then, and there were a lot of positions I just didn't understand very well despite already being rated around 2500. 25.f4 not an easy move to find, and with all due respect to Mark I doubt he would have played this, as it looks counter-intuitive to weaken your king this way. (25.Bxf6 Qxf6 26.e3 Ng5→) 25...Nd7.

25.Bg2 Bc8? 25...Qd7 26.Nxh6+ Kh7!.

26.Nh4 26.e4!? would have been fairly testing to meet. If 26...d4 27.Bxf6 Qxf6 28.h4=.

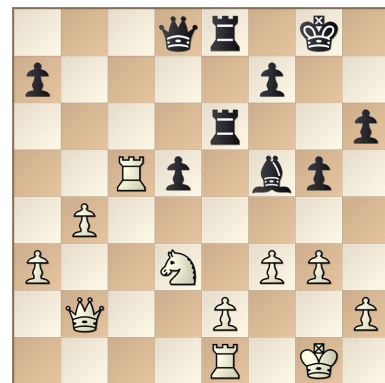
26...Nh3+? Just a bad miscalculation.

26...Nfe4=.

27.Bxh3 Bxh3 28.Rxc5 Ng4? 28...Ne4.

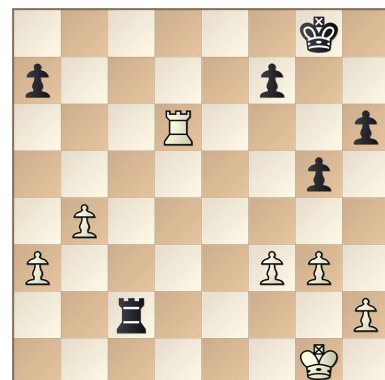
29.Nf3 29.Bd4 Rbe6 30.Ng2+→.

29...Nxe5 30.Nxe5 Rbe6 31.Nd3 g5 32.f3 Bf5



33.Qd4 It was better to retain the knight with 33.Nf2, when White should be able to convert the extra pawn comfortably.

33...Bxd3 34.Rxd5 Qc7 35.Qxd3 Re3 36.Qd4 Rxf3 37.exf3 Rxe1+ 38.Kf2 Re8 39.Qc5 39.Rd6 Qc2+ 40.Qd2 Rc8 41.Qxc2 Rxc2+ 42.Kg1.

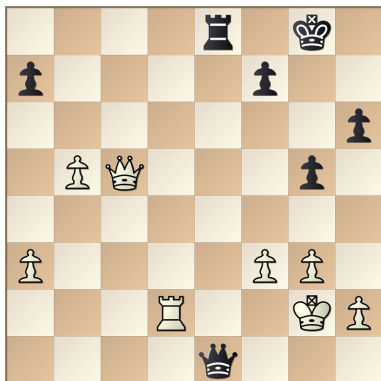


There is a famous saying in chess that 'all rook and pawn endings are drawn.' But this isn't one of them. If 42...Rc1+ 43.Kg2 Rc2+ 44.Kh3 h5 45.Ra6 Rc3 46.Ra5 f6 47.Rxa7+.

**39...Qb7 40.Rd2 Qa6!** In fairness to myself, I'm putting obstacles in Hebden's way and making the win difficult to convert.

**41.b5 Qe6?** 41...Qa5.

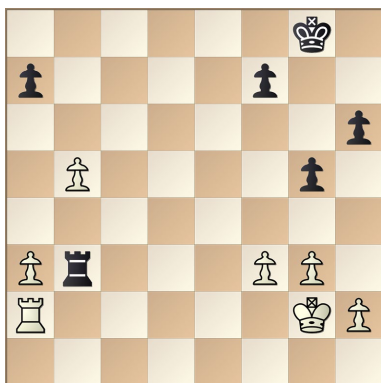
**42.Kg2 Qe1**



**43.Rf2?** Mark tries to play it safe by tidying up the king, but he must have underestimated my next.

43.Qc2!+- and then slowly creep forward with moves like a4 etc.

**43...Qe3! 44.Qxe3 Rxe3 45.Ra2 Rb3**



The ending is easily holding for Black now.

**46.a4 Rb4 47.Kf2 Kf8 48.g4 Ke7 49.Kg3 Kd6 50.h4 f6 51.h5 f5 52.gxf5 Ke5 53.Rc2 Rxa4 54.Rc5+ Kf6 55.Rc6+ Kxf5 56.Rxh6 Rb4 57.Rh8 Kf6 58.Rh6+ Kf5 59.Rh7 Rxb5 60.Rf7+ Ke6 61.Rxa7 Rb4 62.Ra8 Kf6 63.Ra6+ Kf5 64.Ra2 Rb6 65.Ra5+ Kf6 66.Ra8 Rb4 67.Ra7 Rh4 68.Rh7 Rh1 69.Rh6+ Kf5 70.Rh8 Kf6 71.Kg2 Rh4 72.Rh7 Rb4 73.Rh6+ Kf5 74.Rh8 g4 75.Rf8+ Kg5 76.f4+ Kxh5 77.Rh8+ Kg6 78.Kg3 Rb1 79.Kxg4 Rg1+ 80.Kf3 Rf1+ 81.Ke3 Kf6 82.Rf8+ Ke6 83.Ke2 Ra1 84.Kf3 Rf1+ 85.Kg2 Ra1 86.Kg3 Rg1+ 87.Kf2 Ra1 88.Kf3 Rf1+ 89.Kg2 Ra1 90.Kf3 Rf1+**

½-½

**Gormally, Daniel - Beshukov, Sergei**

Hastings 76th (4), 02.12.2000

I looked at 60 games from around the year 2000 where I was playing some of my best chess and my rating went over 2500 for the first time. I won 19 games, had 14 losses and had 27 draws. This confirms my own opinion of myself that continues to this day: if I have a weakness, it is that I can be too solid at times, and I don't beat enough lower-rated players to achieve an even higher rating. Taking more risks would doubtless increase my 'luck' quotient. I also had far fewer comeback games: only nine in total. Part of the reason I don't beat lower-rated players or just don't win enough games in general is due to shaky technique. I think I either lack knowledge when I get a winning position, or calculate too poorly to convert.

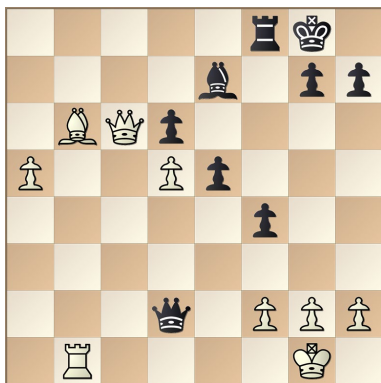
**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e5 5.Nb5 d6 6.N1c3 a6 7.Na3 b5 8.Nd5 Nge7 9.c4 Nd4 10.cxb5 Nxd5 11.exd5 Be7 12.Bc4 0-0 13.0-0 axb5 14.Nxb5 Ba6 15.Qd3 Bxb5 16.Bxb5 Nxb5 17.Qxb5 Qc7 18.Qc6 Qa5 19.Be3 Rab8? Black was already under some pressure and had to find 19...Rfc8 20.Qb7 Bf8**

**20.Rfb1 f5**

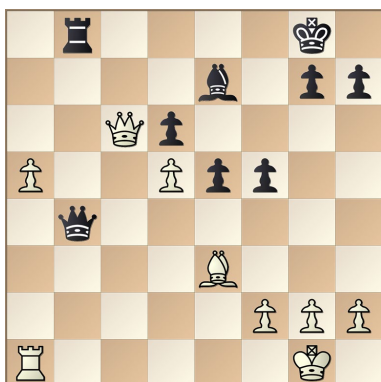


**21.f3?** A sign that I had no confidence in my ability to calculate my way to victory, and just wanted to coast there with safe moves instead. From memory I also felt uncomfortable here - I felt I should be doing very well, but had no idea of how to go about converting this into a win.

I should have at least tried to look at lines like 21.b4! Rxb4 22.a4 when White has given up a pawn to activate his position. The threat is Bb6. 22...Rfb8 (22...f4 23. Bb6 Rxb1+ 24.Rxb1 Qd2 25.a5).



I may have seen this in the game, and felt that it looked rather murky from afar. Black has ideas of prodding the rook with ... Qd3, or rolling the pawns forward with ... e5-e4 and creating tactical counter-play. However, when calculating sharp variations, we should be wary of generalising too much - we need to work out everything step by step, concretely. 25...Qd3 (25...e4 26. Qd7 e3 27.Qe6+ Rf7 28.fxe3+-) 26.Qb5!+-) 23.Rxb4 Qxb4 24.a5.



... and how can Black stop the pawn? 21.a4 Rb3 22.Qd7 would have also been enough to win.

**21...f4 22.Bf2 Qd2!** Now the threat is not only to take on b2, but also to activate the rooks by means of ...Rc8-c2. White has nothing, and the game soon peters out to a draw.

**23.b3 Rfc8 24.Rd1 Qe2 25.Re1 Qd2 26.Red1 Qe2 27.Re1 Qd2**

½-½

## STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

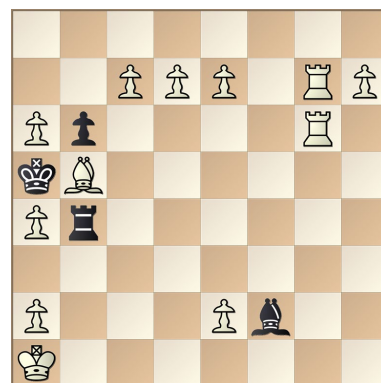
### How to Solve a Study

by Ian Watson

#### All Change!

AUW is short for Allumwandlung, the German word meaning 'all the promotions'. It's a theme in chess problems and in endgame studies, and it means a composition in which all four of the possible promotions occur - so promotions to queen, rook, bishop, and knight. In my December column one of the studies had this theme, so now we'll explore it further.

This study is by the great modern composer David Gurgendize, and was published in *Molodost Gruzii* in 1983.



White to play and win.

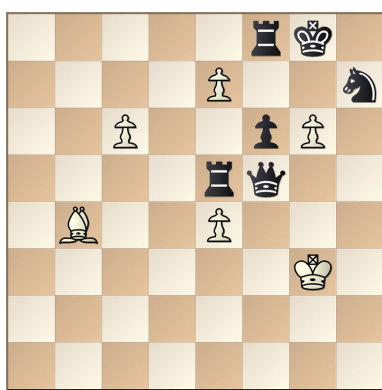
Even if you hadn't been told this was about all four promotions, you might well suspect that some of those pawns won't only promote - they will underpromote. Anyway, what's going on in the diagram position? Apart from the obvious mate threat to White, you should notice that the composer has boxed in the black king, which is a strong indicator that stalemates will occur. That happens immediately if you play 1.d8Q (or 1.d8R) because of 1...Bd4+ 2.Q/Rxd4 Rb1+, and likewise if you play 1.Rd6 or 1.Rg4. There's 1.a3, but White needs to win, not draw. There's only one other way for White to prevent the mate or perpetual check, so the early moves aren't hard; indeed, they are all forced: 1.e3 Bxe3 2.Rg2 Bd4+ 3.Rb2 Rxb2 4.Rg2 Rb4+ 5.Rb2 Rxb2 and now you notice that you've opened the long diagonal so can promote on h8. Before you reach for that queen, your scepticism should make you hold back... and of course there'd be another stalemate. So, it has to be 6.h8B, and if you weren't yet looking for an AUW you should be by now. With that



thought we get 6...Bxh8 7.d8Q Bg7, and of course 8.e8N Bc3 9.c8R and wins.

Surprisingly easy... *if* you know about the AUW theme. The full solution is **1.e3 Bxe3 2.Rg2 Bd4+ 3.Rb2 Rxb2 4.Rg2 Rb4+ 5.Rb2 Rxb2 6.h8B Bxh8 7.d8Q Bg7 8.e8N Bc3 9.c8R** and wins. Notice that the composer has arranged for the promotions to happen on consecutive moves, and has achieved that on the last four moves of the solution, making a very pleasing climax.

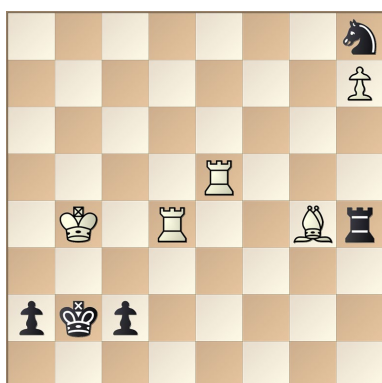
The AUW doesn't have to all happen in a single main line. It can be spread across different black defences, as you will see in the two studies that are for you to solve. The first was composed just to display the theme, rather than for elegance and artistry! It was composed by André Chéron and was based on a study by Harold Lommer. It was first published in *Le Temps* in 1933.



White to play and win.

This next one, by a composer who was also a very strong practical player, is much more elegant - since Chéron's time composers had found ways to not only display the theme but also achieve artistry.

**V Chekhover** *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1972



White to play and draw.

The solutions are given at the end of the magazine.

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## Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones

First, here is the solution to the problem with which I left you last time.

Repeating last month's preamble, as matters stand in the problem by the late Colin Sydenham diagrammed below, a move by the black knight at e6 allows 2.Qxd4#, but if, as seems possible, the key move has to be by the e5-knight then 2.Qxd4 would no longer be a mating response to a move by that knight. So you have to tread carefully in working out the unique route to a forced mate on move 2.



Colin Sydenham  
*The Problemist* 1975  
Mate in 2

As heavily hinted last time, White does indeed move his knight, in order to threaten 2.Re5#. If you think that any square should be OK and so play, say, 1.Ng6, then it at first appears that all is well: 1...e2 2.Qxe2#; 1...Nf3 2.Qd3#; 1...Nd3 2.Qh1#... but any move by the black e6-knight refutes. So we have to move the e5-knight to a square that provides for mates after moves by the e6-knight. 1.Nf3 is tempting, as a move by the e6-knight 'unguards' g5, allowing 2.Ng5#. But we've stymied the variation 1...Nd3 2.Qh1, so 1...Nd3 refutes. Similarly 1.Nd3? Nf3!. (I did say last time how much Colin loved correspondences between moves of like officers of White and of Black.) The key move is 1.Nd7!, meeting moves by the black knight by 2.Nc5# 2.Nc5+ Ke5, but by blocking the f4-square it activates 2.Nf6 as a mating move (2...Kf4??). Echoing *Richard Osman's House of Games*, well done if you got that at home!

2023 has been a rather sombre year for chess problem enthusiasts, with the deaths of a number of distinguished composers. One was Bedrich Formanek, a Slovakian

composer who was for a time President of the World Federation for Chess Composition. His compositions often had a humorous bent, and in writing a short piece on him for the magazine of the British Chess Problem Society, *The Problemist*, I was amused to come across the following example. I should say at the outset that it is rather different from most of the problems you will see in this column!



Bedrich Formanek  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Bratislava vs Budapest 1967  
Helpmate in 2 (b) Add wPg3

First, the ground rules of a helpmate – we are looking for a collaborative sequence of moves, starting with Black, ending up with Black mated: so a bwbw# sequence. And then, we're told, there's a different bwbw# solution if we add a white pawn at g3. It's rather unusual in a helpmate to see the black king in check in the diagram, but as it is Black to play this is acceptable.

Those of you that have read recent studies columns by Ian Watson will need no reminding of the chess composition rule that castling is assumed to be legal unless it can be proven to be illegal. So the positions of the white king and the white rook at h1 would immediately attract your attention as significant. Assuming that White can castle, it would appear that, contrary to Formanek's intention, there are two ways to reach mate from the diagram position – 1.Kxg4 0-0 2.Bg3 Bf5# and 1.Rh2 gxh5 2.Rd5 Bg2#. Can this be right? Well, no, because in the diagram you have to ask how the position arose; what was White's preceding move? This can only have been a move by the white rook to h1, so castling is now impossible, and only the solution starting 1.Rh2 works. Conversely, when we add a wP at g3, we negate the 1.Rh2 solution by blocking the g8-g2 line, but we provide that the preceding move could have been Ph2xg3+, meaning that we revert to the assumption that castling is permissible, and so the 1.Kxg4 solution is valid.

I think that it's very meritorious that the added white pawn that makes such a difference is short-lived – the move 2.Bg3 captures it. And the two lines of play,

featuring bishop mates that rely on a black rook being pinned by a white rook (different ones in the two solutions), satisfy the criteria for good, contrasted but harmonious helpmate solutions.

Another distinguished problemist who died in the closing months of 2023 was Bernd Ellinghoven (an enthusiast for lower case letters, as you'll infer!). For many years he printed *The Problemist*, and his friendship with British problemists was cemented by visits made by him and fellow German composers (including Hans Peter Rehm) to British meetings, often incorporating investigation of Scottish distilleries... This convivial connection is recalled by a Swedish friend, Kjell Widlert, in the January issue of *The Problemist*. Here is a problem composed by the three of them, which I leave for you (or your computer) to solve – I'll give the solution next time.



Hans Peter Rehm, Bernd Ellinghoven and Kjell Widlert  
Prize, Paris Theme Tourney 1985  
Mate in 3

(This is more difficult than the problems I usually leave for solving. If you want a hint, we need to improve the position of one of the white pieces in such a way as to threaten mate on move 3, and we can expect that the line-up of bBh1 and bRf3 against the white king, masked in the diagram position, will provide the sort of fireworks that composers like to display.)

Don't hesitate to email me with any queries at all to do with this column.

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## EVENTS CALENDAR

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

<b>Week Beginning 29 January 2024</b>	
31 January 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Spring 2024
1 February 2024	Hendon FIDE Blitz
2 February 2024	2023/24 Birmingham and District Junior Chess League - Tournament 3 Blitz
2 – 4 February 2024	Sligo Tournament 2024
3 – 4 February 2024	45th Kidlington Chess Congress
3 February 2024	Yorkshire Junior Grand Prix 23-24 Event 2
3 February 2024	Coulsdon Chess FIDE Rated Rapidplays
3 February 2024	Maidenhead Junior Tournament February 2024
4 February 2024	Sussex Horsham Junior Rapidplay
4 February 2024	33rd Nottingham Rapidplay
4 February 2024	Ealing Broadway FIDE Rapid 2024
4 February 2024	Elstree Children's Chess Tournament
<b>Week Beginning 5 February 2024</b>	
5 February 2024	50th Inter-County Team Battles, Lichess
7 February 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Spring 2024
7 February 2024	Beckenham FIDE Rated Club Championship
9 – 11 February 2024	Blackpool Chess Conference
10 – 11 February 2024	4NCL Season 2023-24 Weekend 3 Rounds 5 & 6
10 – 11 February 2024	Two Day Weekend Congress, Bristol
10 February 2024	Golders Green FIDE Rapid 2024
11 February 2024	EJCOA National Youth Championships East Kent Zonal 2024
<b>Week beginning 12 February 2024</b>	
13 February 2024	Golders Green FIDE Rapid 2024
16 – 18 February 2024	London Chess League FIDE Weekender
17 – 18 February 2024	2024 Coventry Open
17 February 2024	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Spring Term 2024
17 February 2024	Leicestershire EJCOA Zonal
17 February 2024	2023/24 Newham Junior Grand Prix
17 February 2024	Stroud Rapid Play February 2024
17 February 2024	2nd Aberystwyth Rapidplay 2024
18 February 2024	3rd Lancaster Rapidplay Congress
<b>Week Beginning 19 February 2024</b>	
19 – 24 February 2024	2nd Cambridge International Open
20 February 2024	Muswell Hill FIDE Standard 2024
21 February 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Spring 2024
23 – 25 February 2024	Doncaster Congress 2024
24 – 25 February 2024	2024 BUCA British Universities' Chess Championships
24 February 2024	39th Crowborough Chess Congress
24 February 2024	Poplar Rapid Tournament
24 – 25 February 2024	Southall FIDE Congress
25 February 2024	Hampshire EJCOA Junior Championships Qualifier 2024
25 February 2024	Leyland FIDE Rapidplay 2024



## How to Solve a Study – solutions

### How to Solve a Study – solutions

(Chéron)

**1.gxh7+** with these black defences:

**1...Qxh7 2.exf8Q** mate

**1...Kh8 2.exf8R+ Kxh7 3.exf5** wins

**1...Kg7 2.exf8B+ Kxh7 3.exf5** wins

**1...Kxh7 2.exf8N+ Kg8 3.exf5** wins

**1...Kf7 2.exf8Q+ Ke6 3.exf5+** wins.

Notice that the rook and bishop promotions allow the black king a flight square; a queen promotion instead would stalemate the black king and so allow the black rook to sacrifice itself.

(Chekhover)

**1.Re1 a1Q 2.Rxa1 Kxa1 3.Kb3 Rxg4 4.Rd2** with four black options:

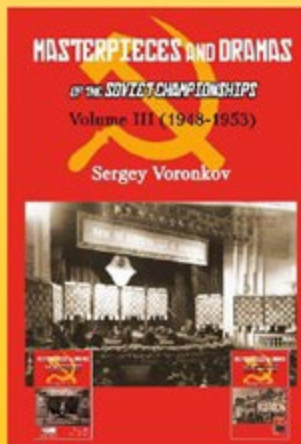
**4...c1Q 5.Ra2+ Kb1 6.Ra1+ Kxa1**

**4...c1R 5.Ra2+ Kb1 6.Rb2+ Ka1 7.Ra2+**

**4...c1B 5.Ra2+ Kb1 6.Rb2+ Bxb2**

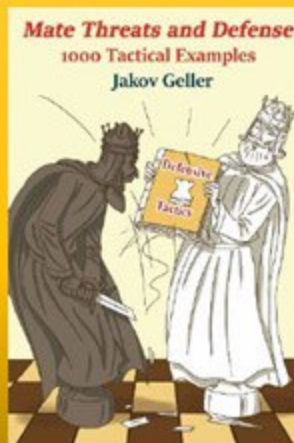
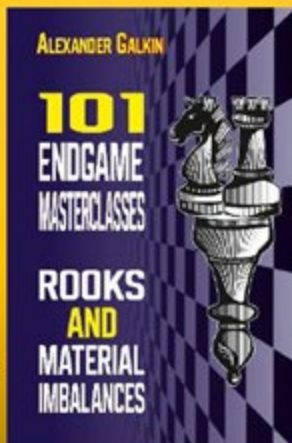
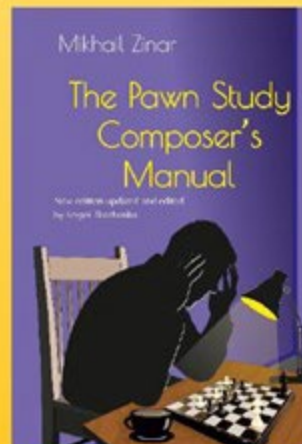
**4...c1N+ 5.Kc2 Rc4+ 6.Kd1 Rc8 7.Rc2**

(There's also **3...c1Q 4.Ra4+ Kb1 5.Bf5+.**) Chekhover succeeded in having a different mode of refutation for each black promotion. The Chéron/Lommer study was an early exploration of the theme; four decades later, composers had learnt how to show it more satisfyingly.



## 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

