



Chess*Moves*

May 2024



English Gold Medals Galore at the European Senior Team Chess Championships plus Results from the English Seniors Championships!

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EDITORIAL



Welcome to the May edition of *ChessMoves*!

Great news from Slovenia, where England's seniors dominated the European Senior Team Chess Championships, winning three team golds in the Open 50+ and 65+ as well as the Women's Over 50 European Senior Team Championship. England's 50+ 1st team won the gold medals for the third year running. England's 65+ 1st team won their Championship for the first time, ensuring that England took three of the four titles and are triple European Senior Chess Team Champions. This success mirrors the achievement in 2022, when England were triple World Senior Team Chess Champions. Our thanks to the Department of Culture Media and Sport for supporting our leading players. Keith Arkell's and Nigel Povah's detailed report inside!

With only two months to go, entries are building nicely for the British Championships, with Michael Adams, Gawain Jones and a host of other top English talent already confirmed as entries in what bids fair to be one of the strongest Championships in recent memory. If you're hoping to play in one of the events you can find all the information you need here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/entry-form-now-open-for-2024-british-chess-championships/>.

By the time you receive this edition of *ChessMoves* the British Seniors Championships will be over – many congratulations to new champions GM Peter Wells (50+ Senior Open Champion), WIM Natasha Regan (50+ Senior Women's Champion), IM Paul Littlewood (65+ Senior Open Champion) and WGM Sheila Jackson (65+ Senior Women's Champion) More next month! The English Championship series continues with the English Championship and the English Women's Championship on 20th-23rd June – full details here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-championships-2024/>.

Finally, do please support the ECF Charity Marathon for Ukraine 2024 on 1st-2nd June if you can. More here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-charity-marathon-for-ukraine-2024/>.

All the games within are presented in PGN format here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/May-ChessMoves.pgn> but note that you will need to use ChessBase or a PGN viewer to access the games.

Enjoy!

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EVENTS

British Chess Championships by Nigel Towers



The 2024 British Chess Championships will be held in Hull at the City Hall and the nearby DoubleTree by Hilton, with events running from Thursday 25th July to Sunday 4th August 2024 across the two city centre venues. Follow this link: <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/> to see the full schedule, including the entry form and details of all the events.

We will be providing a full preview of this year's British in the next edition of *ChessMoves*.

In the meantime, readers should note that Ben Graff has produced an excellent article for the June edition of *Chess* magazine reflecting on British Chess Championships locations over the years.

English Championship Series 2024 by Nigel Towers



This year's English Championship series takes place in May and June 2024 at the Holiday Inn in Kenilworth.

The series kicked off with the English Seniors Championships which took place over seven rounds between Friday 24th May and Tuesday 28th May 2024 with a total of seventy-two entrants. The English Seniors included separate championship tournaments for 50+ and 65+ players with no fewer than three GMs, five IMs, two WGMs and one WIM participating. We give the more detailed results in the following article.

You can visit this page:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-championships-2024/> for more details of the event including entrants, pairings, results and games which were broadcast from live boards at the event on Chess.com and Lichess.org. We'll be reporting on the Seniors Championships in more detail in next month's *ChessMoves*.



Last year's winners and current English Champions – GM Michael Adams and WGM Katarzyna Toma

The next in the English Championship series will be the English Championship and English Women's Championship which will run concurrently between Thursday 20th June and Sunday 23rd June. We already have the makings of a stellar entry list, with GMs Michael Adams, Gawain Jones and Daniel Fernandez signed up for the English Championship and IM Harriet Hunt and WGM Katarzyna Toma registered for the English Women's Championship.

English Seniors Championships 2024

Congratulations to the new 2024 English Senior Champions!



65+ IM Paul Littlewood (5½ points)

Women's 65+ WGM Sheila Jackson (4 points)

50+ GM Peter Wells (6 points)

Women's 50+ WIM Natasha Regan (3½ points)

Full results here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr944443.aspx>

The top six in the 50+ were as follows:

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	Pts.	
1	3	GM	Wells, Peter K	ENG	2382	Witney	6	50+ Champion, trophy and £500 prize
2=	1	GM	Hebden, Mark L	ENG	2438	Syston	5½	2=, medal and £175 prize
2=	5	FM	Dishman, Stephen	ENG	2294	Wycombe & Hazlemere	5½	2=, medal and £175 prize
4=	4	IM	Ledger, Andrew J	ENG	2374	Woodseats	4½	
4=	14		Brett, Andrew R	ENG	2114	4ncl Barbican	4½	
4=	2	GM	Davies, Nigel R	ENG	2431	Tiger Chess	4½	

Rating prizes were as follows:

50+ Under 2000 prize: £100 shared three ways between Eric Gardiner (Hull), Clive Walley (Bath) and Barry Hymer (Lancaster), all on 3 points.

50+ Under 1800 prize: £100 Neil Homer (4NCL Pitstop) on 2½ points.

The top nine in the 65+ were as follows:

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	Pts.	
1	2	IM	Littlewood, Paul E	ENG	2317	Wood Green	5½	65+ Champion, trophy and £500 prize
2	1	IM	Large, Peter G	ENG	2394	Epsom	5	2=, medal and £120 prize
3	3	FM	Chapman, Terry Pd	ENG	2290	Cavendish	5	2=, medal and £120 prize
4	6		Snappe, Ian L	ENG	2200	Beckenham & Bromley	5	2=, medal and £120 prize
5	11		Burnett, Jim	ENG	2095	Mansfield	4½	
6	15		Hutchinson, Paul A	ENG	2038	Scarborough	4½	
7	14		Wager, John D	ENG	2040	Maidenhead	4½	
8	5		Chandler, Cliff R	ENG	2224	Maidstone	4½	
9	22		Hutchinson, Norman A	ENG	1954	Cambridge City	4½	

Rating prizes were as follows:

65+ Under 2000 prize: £100 won by Norman Hutchinson (Cambridge City) on 4½ points.

65+ Under 1800 prize: £100 won by Robert Wall (East Grinstead) on 3½ points.

Well played and thanks to all of the 72 players who took part in this year's Senior Championships!

European Senior Team Chess Championship 2024 by Nigel Povah and Keith Arkell



The European Senior Team Championship (ESTCC) was held from 6th to 16th May in the beautiful Spa resort of Terme Catez, not far from the Croatian border. England had seven teams comprising 33 players playing in the event, and they lined up as follows:

50+ 1 1. John Emms 2. Glenn Flear 3. Keith Arkell 4. Nigel Davies 5. Stuart Conquest

50+ 2 1. Malcolm Pein 2. Steve Dishman 3. Chris Beaumont 4. Chris Duncan 5. Phil Crocker

50+ 3 1. Clive Frostick 2. Bob Noyce 3. Oliver Jackson 4. John Guilfoyle

50+ Women 1. Sheila Jackson 2. Natasha Regan 3. Petra Nunn 4. Helen Frostick 5. Susan Chadwick

65+ 1 1. John Nunn 2. Tony Kosten 3. Peter Large 4. Chris Baker 5. Nigel Povah

65+ 2 1. John Quinn 2. Kevin Bowmer 3. Peter N. Lee 4. Geoff James

65+ 3 1. Mick Stokes 2. Ian Reynolds 3. Dave Tucker 4. Stewart Reuben 5. Bob Kane

The tournament was very well organised and the hotel and playing venue were both excellent, with everyone being highly complimentary about the accommodation and playing conditions. The only issue to trouble us was the frequent problems with internet connectivity, which did make life difficult for many players with their preparation. Two rules imposed by the arbiters also caused some frustration. The first irritating rule was the 15 minute default time, which was extremely short and which resulted in several defaults. Previously a 30 minute default time had been in operation, and many of us thought this would have been a much better policy. The second irritating rule was that players had to leave the playing hall after their game had finished and no spectators were allowed, so the only way to watch the games was online (only the top games) and this just wasn't the same, particularly given the internet problems. Clearly the anti-cheating rules adopted today often detract from the opportunity to truly enjoy these events, and one hopes that the authorities will recognise this and try to achieve a sensible balance between creating a relaxed and enjoyable playing environment while preventing/discouraging any attempts at cheating.

This was the third time England had sent a professional 50+ team to the ESTCC, but the first time we weren't the top seeds. Italy and Iceland were just two of many strong

countries present who stood between us and notching up a hat-trick of first places.

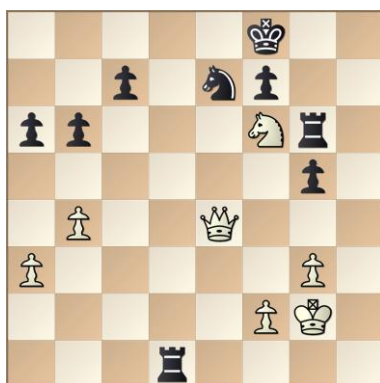
With our all-GM squad headed by astute captain John Emms and joined for the first time by the ebullient Stuart Conquest, returning to chess after a nine year absence, the signs were good, and especially so as it became clear that Stuart had lost very little of his playing strength. Completing the team were long time member Glenn Flear and Nigel Davies, who first joined us for the World Senior Team Championships last year.

On to the chess then, and after a slightly flattering 3½-½ start against Scotland we were turned over by 4th seeds Montenegro. This guaranteed that our position would be precarious until the end. However, in such a strong event there was a good chance that none of the teams would have it all their own way, so we felt that our fate was still in our own hands.

Most of my games were typically long endgame grinds, but here I finished quite neatly as we eased past Denmark.

Arkell, Keith C - Jaksland, Tim

European Senior Team Chess Championship Catez, Slovenia (3), 09.05.2024

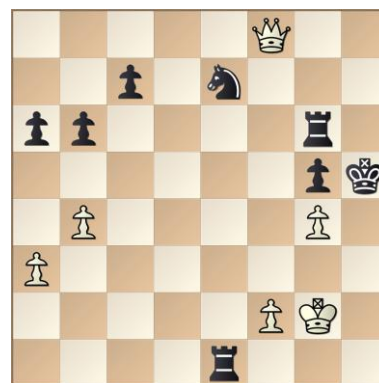


41.Qa8+ Kg7 42.Nh5+ Kh7 43.Qf3 Re1 44.Qxf7+ Kh6



45.Qf8+! Kxh5 45...Kh7 46.Nf6+ Rxf6 47.Qxf6+—.

46.g4+



46...Kh4 46...Kxg4 47.Qf3+ Kh4 48.Qh3#.

47.Qf3! 1–0

In round 4 Nigel scored a crucial win after nurturing the tiniest of advantages for most of the game. For many moves it looked as if the best he could achieve was R+N vs R, but suddenly he pounced with an endgame mating attack - my favourite device!

Kindt, Manfred - Davies, Nigel R

European Senior Team Chess Championship Catez, Slovenia (4), 10.05.2024



47...Ne3 48.Rb7 Rh2 49.Rb6+ Kc7 50.Rb7+ Kc8 when there is no effective defence to ...d2 mate. 0–1

The match against Slovakia was fairly straightforward, leading to the showdown with top seeds Italy.

It's a rarity for an opponent of mine to go wrong in the opening, but GM Lexy Ortega did so by dropping a pawn, and by move 19 I was in a straightforward rook endgame. There was still plenty of work to do though as my teammates had positions of varying difficulty, but they all defended successfully, and we won a very important match.

No less significant was the 7th round match against Iceland, who fielded GM Hjartarson, conqueror of Korchnoi in the Candidates many moons ago, and GM Petursson on board 2. I needed to take a time-out, to the surprise of the Icelandic captain, given that I was on 4½/5 at the time. Watching from my hotel room, I felt no anxiety whatsoever as Glenn took too many pawns off Petursson to allow him any way back, whilst Stuart pushed his central pawns up the board majestically.

Jonsson, Bjorgvin - Conquest, Stuart C

European Senior Team Chess Championship Catez, Slovenia (7), 13.05.2024



26...d4 27.c3 d3 28.Rd1 Rg6 29.Rh2 Ke6 30.Re1 Rhg8 31.Be3 Rg2 32.Rxg2 Rxg2 33.Rg1 d2+ 0-1

With two rounds to go we had leapfrogged over everyone and were 2 points clear of the field. Against Hungary, however, John, who had played seven tough games in a row on board 1, found himself in a holdable but awkward rook and opposite bishops position a pawn down, and his position slowly deteriorated.

Suddenly we were in a three-way tie for 1st place with Hungary and Italy, and who should we face in the final round but ... England 2! The tiebreak favoured us strongly, so we were confident that any kind of win should get us over the line.

Glenn drew solidly with FM Steve Dishman, after which Stuart broke through against Phil Crocker's king. Nigel then offered FM Chris Duncan a draw from a position of strength, and I was about to repeat moves after pottering around a bit with a safe endgame edge against IM Chris Beaumont when he fell into a trap. The gold medal was ours, ahead of Hungary and Italy, but only on tiebreak as they both won their matches. Importantly, however, we had achieved the hat-trick we had coveted from the start!

We have a policy of ignoring individual medals and focusing on the team gold medal, but it became clear that Stuart had easily won individual gold on the reserve board for his score of 6½/8 and a 2484 performance. My 6/7

delivered a very satisfying 2540 performance, which put me well ahead of the other board 3 players. Nigel collared silver for board 4, and Glenn bronze for board 2.

On a personal note, I'm just happy to be back playing my normal grinding style after some health issues set me back last year. In fact my wins from rounds 1, 2 and 9 alone took me 217 moves! I would like to thank my teammates, and the delegation as a whole, for creating an excellent vibe in which my chess was able to flourish.

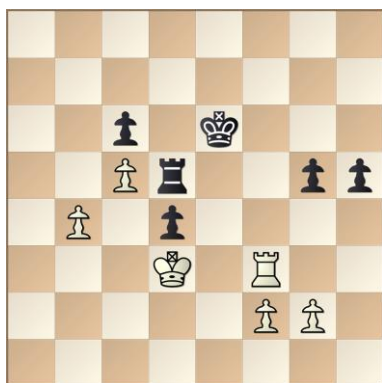
Thanks also to our team captain John Emms for his shrewd, well thought out decisions, and to Nigel Povah for all the time and effort he puts into organising the event for all the various teams. On many levels we couldn't achieve any of this without him. Also, a big thanks to Malcolm Pein for his efforts in directing government funding our way.

The England 50+ Women's team were the only women entrants at the 50+ level, so they found themselves in the Open event just as they have before, but as they were missing some of their regulars they had a rather challenging tournament. However, they achieved two draws, one of which was an impressive last round draw against Austria 1 who heavily outrated them on every board, with Natasha Regan scoring an impressive win, and this was a nice way for them to finish after winning the Women's 50+ title!

In the 65+ event England 1 got off to the best possible start with a comfortable 4-0 win over Germany Women. The 65+ 2nd team had a convincing 3½-½ victory over Sweden 3, and the 65+ 3rd team lost a close match by 2½-1½ to Germany-SC Kreuzberg.

In round 2 the 65+ 1st team beat Germany-SC Kreuzberg by 3-1, with wins from John Nunn and Chris Baker. The 65+ 2nd team lost 3½-½ to France, who fielded four IMs, with Peter Lee obtaining the solitary draw. It is interesting to note that this was Peter's Seniors debut, and his first appearance for England after a gap of over 50 years, as he last represented England at the 1970 Olympiad! The 65+ 3rd team lost 3-1 to Switzerland-SG Riehen.

Round 3 saw the 65+ 1st team beating Germany by 2½-1½ thanks to wins from Tony Kosten and Nigel Povah, with the latter winning this interesting rook and pawn ending.



39...Ke5?? after this blunder Black is now lost. I knew I stood better here, but didn't immediately realise that with accurate play Black's position is quite hopeless, but fortunately I found most of the correct moves.

39...Rd8! defending his back rank and preventing my rook from penetrating was correct, when the position is level: **40.g3** (40.Kc4?? g4! sees Black getting on top: **41.Rd3 h4!** **42.Rd1 d3!** when the pawn is immune, as king and pawn endings will favour Black due to his outside passed h-pawn) **40...Rb8** **41.Kc4 Rd8** **42.Kd3 Rb8=**.

40.Rf8!+- Stockfish gives this +3.5.

40.Rf7 is in fact slightly more accurate, as the rook needs to go to h7 later, although I hadn't foreseen that requirement at this stage.

40...Rd7 Black seeks activity for his rook as well.

40...Ke6 **41.Re8+!** **Kd7** **42.Re4 g4** **43.g3!** (not allowing ...h4) **43...Kc7** **44.Rxd4 Rf5** **45.Rf4! Rxf4** **46.gxf4 h4** **47.Ke2 Kd7** **48.f5 Ke7** **49.Kf1 h3** **50.Kg1 Kf6** **51.b5! cxb5** **52.c6 Ke7** **53.f6+** wins.

41.Re8+ Kf5 **42.Re4** Not the best, but still winning. **42.Rc8!** is more direct.

42...Ra7 **42...Rh7** **43.f3!** **h4** **44.Kxd4!** **Rd7+** **45.Kc3 Ra7** **46.Rd4 Ra3+** **47.Kb2 Re3** **48.Rd6 Re2+** **49.Kb3 Rxd6** **50.Rxc6 Rg3** **51.Kc4 Rxf3** **52.Rh6+-**, which is similar to the game.

43.Rxd4 Now intending **Rd6**.

43...Ra2 **44.Rd6!** This was the key decision as I chose to enter a pawn race, but one where my two pawns will be on the fifth rank versus his two on the fourth rank, which I thought must be winning.

Trying to hold the pawns with **44.Ke3??** would have been a serious mistake, as the position is now level, e.g. **44...Rb2** **45.Rd6** (45.Rc4 Ke6 46.Rd4 Ke5=) **45...Rxb4** **46.Rxc6 Rb3+** **47.Ke2 Rb2+** **48.Kd3 Rxf2** **49.Rc8** (49.Rd6 Ke5 50.Rd8 Rf7=) **49...Ke6=**.

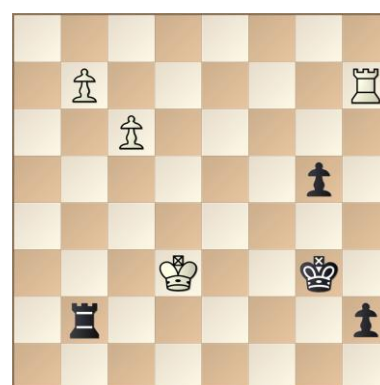
44...Rxf2 **45.Rxc6 Rxd2** **46.b5** **46.Rh6!** is more precise, forcing him to defend or advance his h-pawn.

46...h4 **46...Rb2** is best met by **47.Rb6!** **h4** **48.c6 Ke6** **49.c7+ Kd7** **50.Rc6 Kc8** **51.b6 h3** **52.Rh6 Rb3+** **53.Kd4 Rb4+** **54.Kc5+-**.

47.Rh6! Rb2 **48.b6 Kg4** **48...Ke5** **49.Kc4+-**.

49.Rh7! Another key move to ensure White can keep pushing his pawns.

49...h3 **50.b7 h2** **51.c6 Kg3**



I had to ensure that **51...Rb3+** **52.Kc4 Rh3** wouldn't work, thanks to **53.Rxb3** **54.b8Q h1Q** **55.Qh8+ Kg2** **56.Qxh1+ Kxh1** **57.c7 g4** **58.c8Q g3** **59.Qh3+-**.

52.Rh5! **52...Rh8** or **52...Rh6** are equally effective, but not **52.c7?** which is unnecessarily tricky: **52...Rxb7!** and now not **53.c8Q??** (but instead **53.Rh3+!** **Kg2** (53...Kxh3 54.c8Q+ Kg2 55.Qxb7+ Kg1 56.Qb6+ Kg2 57.Qc6+ Kg1 58.Qc5+ Kg2 59.Qxg5+ Kh1 60.Qd2 Kg1 61.Ke3! winning, thanks to the proximity of the white king) **54.Rxh2+ Kxh2** **55.c8Q Rb3+** **56.Ke4 Rg3** when the position is won, but it will require some hard work) **53...Rxb7=**, when White needs to take a perpetual.

52...Rb3+ **52...Kg4** **53.Rxh2+-**; **52...g4** **53.c7+-**.

53.Kc4 With **c7** to follow, when White wins. **1-0**

The 65+ 2nd team beat France – Normandie by 2½-1½, with Kevin Bowmer securing the solitary win, whilst the 65+ 3rd team drew 2-2 with Austria 2.

In round 4 the 65+ 1st team won a crucial match by the tightest margin of 2½-1½ against the reigning champions, Slovakia. This was an interesting encounter, as it involved the same eight players as the corresponding fixture last year, with the players having the same colours. Peter Large was the hero of the day, winning on board 3 to achieve the reverse of his result last year and get sweet revenge! This victory saw the 65+ 1st team becoming the sole leaders with eight match points, pursued by top seeds Slovenia with seven match points. England 65+ 2 drew 2-2 with Sweden 1, and the 65+ 3rd team beat Finland 4 by 3-1.

Round 5 saw another huge clash, with the 65+ 1st team managing to beat Slovenia by 2½-1½. John Nunn had a comfortable draw with Black against GM Alexander Beliavsky, and Tony Kosten got the advantage against GM Adrian Mikalchishin but was unable to convert this, despite being on top for much of the game, and this put pressure on the two Slovenian lower boards. Peter Large, who stood slightly better, eventually offered a draw when he could see that Chris Baker was going to win his game on board 4 after some lovely tactics by Chris – see the game below.

Baker, Chris W - Mazi, Leon

European Senior Team Chess Championship Catez, Slovenia (5), 11.05.2024



19.Nc6!? A very clever, creative, and unobvious move, setting up some interesting tactics.

19...Bxc6 20.Bxf6 Nxf6!? Black probably rejected 20...gxf6!, either fearing that he would get mated after 21.Bxh7+! Kxh7 22.Qh5+ Kg7 23.Qg4+ Kh7 24.Qh4+ Kg7 25.Qg3+ (or he was having to allow a perpetual, which didn't suit the match situation: 25.Qg4+=) 25...Kh7 26.Rd4.



But Black now has the saving resource of 26...Nf4! 27.Rxf4, and now 27...Rb5!!=, when after 28.Rc1! (28.Rh4+? Rh5+), 28...Rg5 29.Qh3+ Rh5 30.Rh4 Bf3!! 31.Rcc4 (31.gxf3?? Qg5+), 31...Qg5 32.Rxh5+ Bxh5 33.g4 Rg8 34.Kf1 a5! White regains the piece with equality.

21.Qxc6 Rb6 21...Ra8 22.Rac1 Rfb8 23.Be2+.

22.Qc7! Nd5 22...Rb5 23.Rdc1 Rd5 24.Qxa5 Rxa5 25.Rc6 Ra8 26.Bc4 Kf8 27.Rd1+.

23.Qe5! Black's pieces are awkwardly placed, and short of time he blunders a pawn.

23...Qc5? 23...f6 was best, although it is clearly weakening: 24.Qd4 Nc3 25.Rd2.

24.Rac1+ Qe7 24...Qd6 25.Qxd6 Rxd6 26.Bc4 Rfd8 27.Bxd5 exd5 28.Rd4 a5 29.Rc5+.

25.Bxh7+! Kxh7 26.Rxd5+ Rd8 27.Rxd8 Qxd8 28.h3 White is a solid pawn ahead and he also has the better structure and safer king.

28...Rd6 29.Qe4+ f5 30.Qxb4 Rd3 31.Qc4 Qd6 32.b4 e5 33.b5 axb5 34.axb5 e4 35.g3 35.Qf7+.

35...Rd2 36.Rb1 g6 37.Kg2 f4 38.gxf4 38.Qf7+ Kh8 39.Qxf4+.

38...Qa3 39.Qf7+ Kh6 40.f5 Rd6 41.Qf8+ 1-0

This result ensured England strengthened their position as sole leaders, two match points ahead of Slovakia. The 65+ 2nd team lost 3-1 to Germany, and the 65+ 3rd team lost by the same score to France–Normandie.

In round 6 the 65+ 1st team had a 2-2 draw with 4th seeds France after Tony Kosten slipped up and lost, cancelling out John Nunn's win on top board. However, as Slovenia 1 drew with Slovakia 1, England 1 retained its two match-point lead. The 65+ 2nd team beat Switzerland-SG Riehen

by 2½-1½ thanks to a win from Peter Lee on board 3, and the 65+ 3rd team beat Scotland 2 by the same score, thanks to a win from Stewart Reuben on board 3.

The 65+ 1st team bounced back with a 2½-1½ win against Finland 1 thanks to an impressive win from Peter Large against GM Heikki Westerinen on board 3, and this meant they retained their lead with 13/14 match points. Meanwhile the 65+ 2nd team beat Austria 1 by 3-1, with wins from John Quinn and Kevin Bowmer on the top two boards. The 65+ 3rd team beat Germany Women by 2½-1½ with wins from Mick Stokes and Stewart Reuben, who was having a wonderful tournament with 4½/5.

In this game GM Heikki Westerinen chooses to play the Fort Knox variation of the Exchange French, which is meant to create a solid defensive set-up for Black, but which Peter skilfully demolishes style.

Large, Peter G - Westerinen, Heikki M.J.

European Senior Team Chess Championship Catez, Slovenia (7), 13.05.2024

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bd7 5.Nf3 Bc6 The Fort Knox variation.

6.Bd3 Nd7 7.0-0 Ngf6 8.Neg5!? Avoiding exchanges, and setting up threats of Nxe6 or Nxf7.

8.Ng3 is by far the most popular move, again avoiding exchanges: 8...Be7 9.Re1 0-0 10.c3.

8...Bxf3? This exchange is not as good here, as it accelerates White's development.

8...Bd6! is most popular and best: 9.Re1 (9.Qe2) 9...h6 10.Nh3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 c6 12.Nf4 Qa5 (12...0-0=) 13.c3 0-0-0=.

9.Qxf3 c6 10.Re1 Be7?!



Stockfish favours 10...Bd6 11.Qh3 Nf8 12.Bd2+- Qd7 13.c4 0-0-0 14.Rad1 Ng6 15.Nxe6 fxe6 16.Rxe6 Kb8

17.Bf5 Qc7 18.g3 Ka8 19.c5 Be7 20.Rde1 Nd5 21.Qg4 Bf6 22.b4 Nge7 23.Bc2 Qd7 24.Qe4 Nc7 25.Rd6 Qc8 26.Rxf6 gxf6 27.Qxe7 Rxd4 28.Bc3 Rc4 29.Qxf6 Rf8 30.Qg7 Nd5 31.Bb3 Qf5 32.Bf6 Qxf6 33.Qxf6 Nxf6 34.Bxc4 a6 35.Re7 Ng4 36.f4 h6 37.h3 Nf6 38.Rf7 Rxf7 39.Bxf7 Kb8 40.g4 Nh7 41.Bg6 Nf8 42.Bf5 Kc7 43.g5 hxg5 44.fxg5 1-0 Briones, D (1924)-Ivanescu, M (2040) Edmonton-ch 2019 (1.1).

11.Qh3 Strong, but not best according to the engines, but Peter's choice was definitely the natural choice, with pressure building on the light squares.

The engines favour the novelty 11.Rxe6! fxe6 12.Nxe6 Qb6 13.Qg3!, a powerful follow-up with twin threats of Nc7+ and Qxg7, as well as a hidden threat 13...g5 (13...Rc8?!, preventing Nc7+ but allowing the lovely 14.Qg6+! hxg6 15.Bxg6#, 13...Rf8 14.Bd2!+- is indicative of why Rxe6 isn't the obvious human choice) 14.Bxg5 Rg8 15.Nc7+ Kd8 16.Nxa8 Qa5 17.h4 h6 18.b4 Qxb4 19.Qc7+ Ke8 20.Bxf6+-.

11...Nf8 Best, and played in 20 previous games.

12.c3 Nd5?! Allowing White's forcing reply.

12...Qc7 was relatively best: 13.Bd2 Bd6 14.b4 (14.g3!+-, ruling out ...Bf4) 14...0-0-0 (14...Bf4!) 15.c4 Ng6 16.g3+- Rhe8 17.Bc3 Kb8 18.Nf3 e5 19.Bxg6 exd4 20.Bxd4 hxg6 21.c5 Bf8 22.Be5 Rxe5 23.Nxe5 1-0 Topalov, V (2460)-Lozano Arribas, C Oviedo rapid45 1992 (2).

13.Qh5 Bxg5 13...g6 14.Qh6 Rg8 15.Bd2+-.

14.Bxg5 Qd7 14...Qd6 15.Rad1 Nd7 (15...Ng6 16.Bxg6 fxg6 17.Qh3 Kf7 18.Rd3 Nf6 19.Bf4 Qe7 20.Be5 Rae8 21.Rf3+-) 16.c4 N5f6 17.Qh4 h6 ½-½ Popovic, D (2480)-Nadj Hedjesi, B (2378) Srajber Memorial 09th Subotica 2005 (3) 18.Bf4 Qe7 19.Qh3 Nb6 20.b3 Rd8 21.Bc2+-, with significant pressure.

15.Rad1 Peter sensibly brings his last piece into play and prepares the central break with d5, which may or may not be supported by c4.

15...Nf6 15...Ne7 ½-½ Fischer, M (2035)-Gergen, H (1955) Regionalliga SW 9596 Bayern 1995 was played in the previous game to reach this position back in 1996, when the engines give 16.c4! Nfg6 17.d5! 0-0 18.dxe6 Qc7 19.exf7+ Rxf7 20.Bxe7 Rxe7 21.Bxg6 hxg6 22.Qxg6+-.

16.Qh4 Qe7



Black would do better to give up a pawn with 16...0-0-0! 17.Bxf6 gxf6 18.Qxf6 Ng6 19.g3+–, although White is still clearly better.

17.d5! A very nice pawn sac to open the position.

17...cxd5 17...Rd8 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.Qa4 Qc7 20.Be4 Rc8 21.Bf4! Qb6 22.Rd6 Nxe4 23.Qxe4 Qb7 24.Qd4 Rg8 25.h4+– with overwhelming pressure.

18.Bb5+ N8d7 18...Kd8 19.Rxd5+ exd5 20.Rxe7 Kxe7 21.Qb4+ Ke6 22.Bd3 Ng6 23.g4!+–.

19.c4! Peter continues to prise open Black's position.

19...a6?! This just forces a quicker conclusion.

19...0-0-0 20.cxd5 e5 21.Qc4+ Kb8 22.d6 Qe6 23.Qc7+ Ka8 24.Be3 Rc8 25.Qa5 b6 26.Qa4, with a monstrous attack.

20.Bxd7+ Kxd7 20...Qxd7 21.Bxf6 gxf6 22.Qxf6 Rg8 23.cxd5 Qe7 24.Qc3+–.

21.cxd5 e5 22.Qh3+! Kd8 23.d6 Qe6 24.Qc3 Westerinen resigned as he cannot meet the twin threats of Qc7+ and Rxe5, as 24...Rc8 is answered by 25.Qa5+ and then Rxe5 with a crushing attack. **1-0**

Round 8 saw the 65+ 1st team beat Hungary 1 by 2½-1½ thanks to a nice win from Tony Kosten, and this meant they retained their two match-point lead over second-placed Slovakia with 15/16 match points. England 65+ 2 lost to Finland 1 by 2½-1½, whilst the 65+ 3rd team lost 3-1 to Austria 1.

In round 9 the 65+ 1st team beat Croatia–Sesvete Agroproteinka +65 by 3-1, thus securing their first ever European Seniors 65+ title. John Nunn won a stunning game on board 1 (annotated below by John), and Peter Large won a very nice game on board 3. The 65+ 2nd team lost to Switzerland 1 by 3½-½ and the 65+ 3rd team beat Finland 2 by 3-1.

Nunn, John D M - Antunac, Goran

European Senior Team Chess Championship Terme Catez, Slovenia (9.1), 15.05.2024

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 Black adopts the Kan variation of the Sicilian, which aims to develop queenside play as quickly as possible. The downside is that Black sometimes has to leave his king in the centre longer than is really comfortable.

5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Bd3 Nf6 The most popular move. 6...Nc6 7.Nxc6 dxc6 8.0-0 e5 is a major alternative, with 9.f4 perhaps the critical response.

7.Qe2 7.0-0 is by far the most common move, but I preferred to leave open the option of queenside castling.

7...d6 8.g4 Not often played, but clearly a dangerous reply. White intends to continue much as in the Keres Attack, hoping that his extra moves Bd3 and Qe2 will count for more than Black's ...a6 and ...Qc7.

8...Nfd7 Apparently a new move. There are obviously several alternatives such as 8...Nc6, 8...h6 or 8...b5, but it isn't easy to say which is best.

9.Bd2!? I think this is an interesting idea. The bishop would normally go to e3, but on d2 it keeps the e-file clear for possible later sacrifices by Nd5 or Nf5.

9...Be7 One example is 9...b5 10.0-0-0 b4 11.Nd5! exd5 12.exd5+ Be7 13.Rhe1 Ne5 14.Bf5 followed by f4 with some advantage for White.

10.0-0-0 Ne5?! The source of Black's later difficulties. Black aims to eliminate the d3-bishop, but the loss of time makes this plan very risky since he is already behind in development. 10...Nc6 is safer.

11.f4 Nxd3+ 12.Qxd3 Bd7



12...Nc6 runs into the slightly different sacrifice 13.Nf5! exf5 14.gxf5! (14.exf5 Qd8 15.Nd5 0-0 is less effective

here) 14...0-0 15.Rhg1 f6 16.Rg4 Kh8 17.Qh3, with more than enough for the piece.

13.Nf5! This correct sacrifice is more energetic than 13.h4, although that is also good for White.

13...exf5 14.Nd5 Qd8 15.exf5 Bc6?! After this White has a more or less forced win. The critical line runs:

15...0-0 16.g5 f6 (or 16...Bc6 17.f6 Bxd5 18.fxe7 Qxe7 19.Qxd5 Nc6 20.f5, with a very strong attack for no material sacrifice) 17.h4 - this may look slow, but Black's congested position makes it hard to organise a defence against a steady build-up by White; it's interesting that White's compensation for the piece lies in positional factors rather than any immediate threats: 17...Nc6 (17...Bc6 18.h5 Bxd5 19.Qxd5+ Kh8 20.h6 g6 21.Bc3 Nc6 22.Rhe1 gives White a decisive attack) 18.Bc3 b5 (18...fxg5 19.f6! wins for White after 19...Bxf6 (19...gxf6 20.hxg5 Rf7 21.gxf6; or 19...g4 20.fxe7 Nxe7 21.Nxe7+ Qxe7 22.Rhe1 Qd8 23.Qc4+ Rf7 24.Rxd6) 20.hxg5) 19.Rde1 - attacking e7 immobilises the c6-knight - 19...b4 20.Bd4 Rc8 (20...Re8 21.gxf6 Bxf6 22.Rxe8+ Bxe8 23.Bxf6 gxf6 24.Rg1+ Kf8 25.Qg3 is decisive) 21.Rh2! with colossal pressure. The immediate threat is 22.Bb6 Qe8 23.Rhe2 regaining the piece, while in most lines White even has the luxury of first improving his position with, for example, b3.

16.Nxe7 Bxh1



16...Kxe7 17.Ba5! Qd7 18.Rhe1+ Kf8 19.f6 gxf6 20.Qc3 followed by Qxf6 wins for White.

17.f6! The key move in the attack, securing the important f5-outpost for the knight. No other move gives White any advantage; for example 17.Re1? Qxe7 18.Rxe7+ Kxe7 19.Bb4 Rd8 20.Ba5 Rc8 21.Bb4 is at best a draw, while after 17.Rxh1? Kxe7 White does not have enough for the rook.

17...gxf6 Forced, or else fxg7.

18.Nf5 Nc6 Giving up the h1-bishop leaves White with massive compensation for the exchange, but trying to hold on to all the material by 18...Bc6 loses to 19.Ba5! Qd7 (19...Qxa5 20.Qxd6 is immediate mate) 20.Qd4 followed by Qxf6, with an overwhelming attack.

19.Rxh1 Qd7 Black decides to surrender his extra exchange, but he is left a pawn down in an inferior position. However, the alternatives 19...0-0 20.Bc3 Re8 21.Nh6+ Kg7 22.g5, or 19...Kd7 20.Bb4! Kc8 21.Bxd6 are also hopeless.

20.Bc3 20.Nxd6+ Kf8 21.Bc3 was even stronger, but the line played is good enough.

20...0-0 21.Bxf6 Rhe8 22.Rd1 d5 23.Bxd8 Rxd8 24.a3 Black is not only a pawn behind, but he has three isolated pawns and the white knight remains in a dominant position.

24...d4 25.Re1 Kc7 26.Kb1 Re8 Giving up a second pawn, but otherwise White can steadily improve his position by h4-h5.

27.Rxe8 Qxe8 28.Nxd4 Nxd4 29.Qxd4 Qe1+ 30.Ka2 Qe6+ 31.b3 Qxg4 32.Qc4+ Kb8 33.Qxf7 The queen ending poses no problems, since the white king is safe from perpetual check.

33...h5 34.Qf8+ Ka7 35.Qc5+ Ka8 36.f5 Qf4 37.h3 h4 38.Kb2 Qf3 39.Qc3 Qxf5 40.Qh8+ Ka7 41.Qd4+ Ka8 42.Qxh4 Qe5+ 43.Kb1 a5 44.a4 Ka7 45.Qc4

1-0

Final Standings

50+

1st England 1; 2nd Hungary; 3rd Italy. All on 14/18 match points, but England had the much better tiebreak. England 50+ 2 came 14th (seeded 8th) with 8/18 match points. England 50+ 3 came 16th (seeded 13th) with 8/18 match points. England Women; Winners of the 50+ Women's title.

Board medals:

- Glenn Flear – Bronze with 4½/8
- Keith Arkell – Gold with 6/7, and an impressive TPR of 2540.
- Nigel Davies – Silver with 4/6
- Stuart Conquest – Gold with 6½/8

Notable mentions for Phil Crocker, who scored 5/8 on board 5 for England 2 and just missed out on the bronze

board medal, and Clive Frostick, who scored a respectable 4/8 on top board for England 3 with a TPR of 2273 and gained 27 rating points.

65+

1st England 1 17/18 match points; 2nd Slovakia 15/18; 3rd Slovenia 14/18.

England 65+ 2nd came 15th (seeded 13th) with 9/18 match points.

England 65+ 3rd came 18th (seeded 26th) with 9/18 match points

Board medals:

- John Nunn – Silver with 6/8
- Peter Large – Silver with 5½/8
- Chris Baker – Gold with 4½/6
- Nigel Povah – Silver with 4/6

Notable mentions for Kevin Bowmer, who scored 5½/9 on board 2 for England 2 and gained 27 rating points, and Stewart Reuben, who despite being one of the oldest players in the tournament scored a very impressive 6/7 on board 4 for England 3, gaining 41 rating points!

Thanks to the ECF (courtesy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and the Chess Trust for their financial support, along with generous donations from a number of the players to help make this all possible. It would not have happened without their support!

Wood Green Regain 4NCL Title

by Jonathan Rogers

The 4NCL concluded its 2023/24 season over the bank holiday weekend of 4th–6th May. As expected, it was highly competitive. In fact, even on the final day eleven of the twelve matches across divisions 1 and 2 had some impact on the championship, or on relegation or promotion places. The Chief Arbiter, Thomas Evans, started the round with the now usual warning that players were only allowed to ask their captain about their current match score. He was quickly asked to clarify that they could ask about the scores in *other* matches too.

In the end Wood Green emerged as division 1 champions, tied on match points with Manx Liberty and the Sharks, but ahead of them both on game points. It could not have been closer. Had Manx made half a game point more, or Wood Green half a game point less, over the whole season, then Manx would have retained their title. It was Wood Green's first win since the 2011/12 season, and of today's team, only Michael Adams (playing this final weekend for Wood Green) and Jon Speelman were

playing for them back in 2012 – although in many ways the consistent showing of the Sharks, never previously very close to being title contenders, was the story of the season.

The relegated teams were Oxford, Celtic Tigers and White Rose 2. Oxford started the weekend having lost all eight matches, but two wins in rounds 9e and 10 put them back in the frame, only to find Wood Green Youth to be too strong in the final round. By the time of the last round Barnet Knights were also in jeopardy, but managed a final round win against the already safe Alba in order to survive.

In division 2 Barbican held on to the lead it had going into the weekend, albeit that it was withering away alarmingly towards the end due to a 2-6 loss in round 10 against Sharks 2. This big result enabled the Sharks' second team to secure promotion as well behind CSC/Kingston in second place. The latter were the stand-out team that made three wins in the final weekend, and they achieved the unusual feat of earning promotion in successive seasons. Audible Checks were the team who missed out, losing suddenly to lower placed teams in the final two rounds.

It happens that *four* teams get relegated from division 2 – an unusual arrangement which is designed to permit two promoted teams from each of the split third divisions. Going into the last round seven of the twelve teams were in danger of relegation! Three of these teams which lost in the last round inevitably went down (Sussex Martlets, Gonzaga and Cambridge 2). But for a long time it was unclear which of Anglian Avengers or ShachAttack would join them. The Avengers had heroically gone one step further than Oxford had done in the first division by winning all three matches in the last weekend. But they had to watch ShachAttack hold on to draw with Barbican in the sixth hour, which enabled the former to draw the match, to draw level with Anglian Avengers on match points, and then overtake them by half a game point. Half a game point here! Half a game point there! It can be as exhausting as it is entertaining but, in many respects, this was one of the classic 4NCL seasons. Congratulations as ever to captains, the 4NCL Board and its team of arbiters – and to all those people who play six-hour games in search of an extra half point.

The final cross-tables for the season can be found below:

<https://www.4nclresults.co.uk/2023-24/media/4ncl/xtab-div1.html>

<https://www.4nclresults.co.uk/2023-24/media/4ncl/xtab-div2.html>

<https://www.4ncresults.co.uk/2023-24/media/4ncl/xtab-div3b.html>

<https://www.4ncresults.co.uk/2023-24/media/4ncl/xtab-div3k.html> |

<https://www.4ncresults.co.uk/2023-24/media/4ncl/prog-div4.html>

More details, and games, next time!

Bristol Centenary and West of England Championship 26th-28th April 2024 by Petar Doklestic



The Bristol Chess Congress returned for its 90th edition this year, with 2024 marking 100 years since the first ever Bristol Championship was held. In addition, this year's edition encompassed the West of England Championship as well. This was the biggest edition yet, with 174 players distributed across the three sections: 63 in the Open, 50 in the Boniface (U1900), and 61 in the Foundation (U1600).



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

As with previous editions, the congress was well supported by the Bristol League, as well as by players from across the UK and abroad. It was terrific to see so many promising young players and to catch up with returning congress regulars, many of whom are old friends. Though it was a very cold weekend for the end of April (even for the UK!), we were lucky to have the final round on Sunday during brilliant spring sunshine, which enhanced the special feeling of the event.

For the first time the congress had four live boards, two of which were generously supplied by Dave Lightfoot. Broadcasted games are saved here:

<https://view.livechesscloud.com/#b4dc0faf-1819-4cb3-816e-9bea8f83be17>

We are grateful to have had Brendan O'Gorman taking photos, which can be seen here:

<https://brendanogorman.smugmug.com/Chess/2024/Bristol-Centenary-Chess-Congress-2024>

The Open section was the strongest so far, with nine titled players: two GMs, three IMs, one FM, one WFM, and two CMs.

The winners of the Open section were Jacob Boswell and Oleksandr Matlak with 4½ points each.

Oleksandr Matlak (Wells Chess Club) is the 2023/24 West of England Champion.



Oleksandr Matlak

IM Chris Beaumont (Bristol and Clifton Chess Club) again demonstrated his enduring class by scoring 4 points and thereby winning the Bristol and District Championship for the second year running.

The Open cross-table can be found on Chess-Results.com here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr906182.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=5>

The Boniface Section (U1900) was very competitive, and five players finished on four points, of whom four had unbeaten records. The top Bristol and District player was Mauro Farina (Bath Chess Club), who finished on 3½ points.



Mauro Farina

The Boniface cross-table can be found on Chess-Results.com here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr906209.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=5&fed=ENG>

Only the Minor (U1600) section had a clear winner, with Advay Misra (Bristol & Clifton Chess Club) achieving five remarkable wins. He won against Nigel W Morris in the last round, and finished half a point ahead of the field. Second place with 4½ points was shared by Rayyan and Milan, also from Bristol and Clifton Chess Club.



Advay Misra

The Foundation cross-table can be found on Chess-Results.com here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr906217.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=5&fed=ENG>

The prize fund totalled an amazing £2,355. Follow the latest news on <https://www.bristolcongress.co.uk/>

Visiting British Champion Wins Wightlink Isle of Wight Chess Congress

by David Lightfoot



The first ever Wightlink Isle of Wight Chess Congress, held from 19th to 21st April, proved to be a resounding success and sold out of all entry spaces. Hosted at The Ryde Castle Hotel, the congress drew in a total of 72 participants, with 41 traveling from the mainland. This strong turnout signals the Island's promising ability to accommodate even larger chess events in the future. Plans are already in motion for a tournament in 2025, aiming to welcome up to 300 players and a nine round Open section.



Players during the blitz tournament on Saturday evening

This year's Open section featured some exceptional play, with ten titled players, a grandmaster and two British champions. You can view all the games [here on Chess.com](#)

International master Harry Grieve clinched first place after securing a draw in the final round with grandmaster Keith Arkell. Harry gave an exceptional performance and

finished on 4½ out of 5 to Keith's 4 out of 5 after Keith took a round 3 bye.



From left, Tournament Director David Lightfoot, IOW Chess Club, Charles Charalambous, Harry Grieve

Keith finished in 2nd place, and he also won the blitz tournament on Saturday evening. Overall, Keith played five standard play games, seven blitz games and 12 simul games, with the final round draw being the only game he didn't win.



Grandmaster Keith Arkell

Chichester player Vinuda Gunathilake came 3rd on tie-break with 3½ out of 5, also winning the best under 16 prize for the section, sponsored by Isle of Wight College. Overall the juniors gave an excellent performance in the Open, and it was incredible to see them hold their own in such a strong field.

One junior in particular, Jan Murawski, played some exceptional chess over the weekend, but it didn't translate to the final scoreboard. The 13 year old Oxford junior narrowly missed out on a draw with British Champion Harry Grieve in round 2, succumbing to Harry's

superior game management in the endgame. He also had a strong winning chance against women's international master Natasha Regan in the final round, but ultimately lost that game after a brilliant rook sacrifice from Natasha. Jan did however come 2nd in the Saturday night blitz tournament, with his only loss going to grandmaster and blitz winner Keith Arkell.

Natasha's win secured the best women's player prize, sponsored by Wightlink Ferries. Overall, nine women took part, which is a good number and hopefully one we can increase in coming years, and especially so with local players.

Two local players gave strong performances in the Open. FIDE master Neil Dickenson returned to tournament chess after over a decade, and scored an impressive 3½ out of 5, missing out on 3rd place on tie-break. A newcomer to tournaments, islander Joel Lloyd scored 2½ from 5, with an impressive win with the black pieces and a draw against the very strong junior player Shambavi Hariharan. Born an islander, but away at university and representing Southampton University chess, David Collyer also gave a good performance in his first FIDE Open, securing points against much higher rated players.

All the games in the Open were broadcast live on Chess.com and Lichess, with support from our equipment sponsor DGT. You find the games here: [Isle of Wight Open 2024 - All the Information - Chess.com](#)

The Championship section was won by local player Clive Bowley, who also won the Island Echo's best Isle of Wight player prize. In 2nd place was visiting player Arnob Dutta, and on tie-break another local, Michael Gidley came 3rd. Michael also won the best over 65 Isle of Wight player award.

The U1400 rated Challenger section was won by visiting junior player Gregory Kornilovich. On the top board, Gregory saw off strong attacks in the final round from talented local player John Oglander, who was until then undefeated and on 3½ from 4, having taken a half-point bye in round 4. John slipped down to 4th position with the loss and missed out on a top three finish. Another local, Om Gohel, clinched 2nd place with 4 out of 5 and some impressive wins. Newcomer and islander Alexander Short came 3rd on tie-break, also on 4 points from 5.

Tournament director David Lightfoot said:

'Overall the feedback from players has been great. With the support of Wightlink we were able to plan a top level congress at short notice, and we cannot thank them enough for their backing. Our equipment partners, DGT,

generously supported the event with live boards and additional clocks and boards, which allowed the event to be broadcast live and gave players a professional experience. The Island Echo sponsored the best Isle of Wight player award, which added an extra element of competition for locals not playing in the top section. Isle of Wight College supported under 16 prizes in each section, which was a huge draw for junior players.

'I could not be more proud of Isle of Wight chess; with the support of local players we were able to deliver a top tier event, and we can't wait to expand this next year. We could not have wished for a better chief arbiter in Shohreh Bayat, who delivered an incredible event with her team. Thank you to all players and staff, and I look forward to announcing the 2025 Isle of Wight chess tournament soon'.

FEATURES

Great British Chess Players by John Nunn



Nigel Short (1960-)

Nigel David Short was born 1st June 1965 in Leigh, Lancashire, and learnt to play chess at the age of five. His progress was rapid, and he soon established himself as an exceptional talent. In

1977, he became the youngest ever participant in the British Championship and in the event itself he won convincingly against ten-time British Champion Jonathan Penrose. Just two years later he tied for first place in the British Championship with Robert Bellin and myself, although Bellin took the title on tie-break.

He became the youngest international master in chess history (up to that point) by scoring 8/15 in the Hastings Premier in 1979/80, and later completed a remarkable double in 1984 when, aged 19, he became the youngest grandmaster in the world. His ascent to the world elite was similarly rapid, and in 1988 he was ranked third in the world. His tournament victories are too numerous to mention in any detail; suffice to say that he won the British Championship and Commonwealth Championship three times each. He was also a successful member of the England Olympiad team, taking part in every Olympiad from 1984 to 2016. In match play he has also had many

successes, starting in 1985 when there was a match between Nigel, who was at the time British Champion, and Lev Alburt, the reigning US Champion. The Americans rather thought it would be one-sided and so it was, although not in the way they intended, since Nigel won with six wins and two draws.



GM Nigel Short

Przemysław Jahr / Wikimedia Commons

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_Free_Documentation_Licence

However, Nigel is perhaps best known for his performance in the 1990-93 World Championship cycle. Narrowly qualifying from the 1990 Manila Interzonal, he went on to win in a play-off against Jon Speelman in the first round. These narrow successes didn't give much cause for optimism, but he went on to defeat Gelfand, Karpov and Timman to earn the right to challenge Kasparov for the world title. Unfortunately a dispute over the choice of match venue led to increasing acrimony, and ultimately Kasparov and Short formed a breakaway organisation, the PCA (Professional Chess Association), playing a match deemed illegitimate by FIDE. Kasparov won the match decisively by six wins to one (with 13 draws), and the PCA, although organising a few further events, collapsed and FIDE once again took control of the World Championship. After this Short started to play in fewer major events, and currently is not very active as a player.

Away from the board, in 1999 Nigel was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his services to chess. He has also been active in commentating, coaching and chess journalism, and has held various posts within FIDE, which apparently forgave the earlier dispute. He has proved a controversial figure for his provocative views on several subjects, for example the status of female chess players. Not a natural diplomat, Nigel tends to express his views in outspoken fashion, and at times appears to enjoy the effects of his polemic.

Nigel's chess style is universal and he can play all types of position well, but he appears more comfortable in attacking positions, and has scored spectacular wins against many leading grandmasters. He has made major contributions to several openings, especially as White in the 3.e5 Caro-Kann and the English Attack in the Sicilian. One of his Caro-Kann wins is given below.

Nigel Short - Ljubomir Ljubojević

Amsterdam Euwe Memorial 1991

Caro-Kann Defence

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

Over the years Ljubo had suffered quite badly against Nigel in the Sicilian, so he switched to the supposedly solid Caro, but without improving his luck.

3...Bf5 4.Nf3

At one time White players tended to adopt aggressive systems such as 4.g4 or 4.Nc3 e6 5.g4, but Nigel's contribution was to turn this more positional approach into a dangerous weapon.

4...e6 5.Be2 c5 6.0-0

These days 6.Be3 is the favoured continuation.

6...Ne7!?

Black plans to play this knight to c6 and the other one to d7, thereby allowing the f8-bishop to be developed. Currently 6...Nc6 7.c3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nge7 9.Nc3 Nc8 is more popular, although this probably also fails to equalise.

7.c3

After this Black's plan works out reasonably well. 7.c4 and 7.dxc5 are more critical tests.

7...Nec6 8.Be3 Nd7 9.a3

Aiming to force Black's hand on the queenside with b4.

9...c4

This plan is reminiscent of the 3.e5 French. Black blocks the centre and aims for queenside play based on the weak b3-square, but releasing the pressure against d4 gives White a free hand on the kingside. 9...Be7 10.b4 cxd4 11.cxd4 Nb6 looks better as Black's minor pieces all have active prospects.

10.Nbd2 b5



11.Ne1!

The best move, clearing the way for a kingside pawn advance.

11...h5

11...Nb6 12.g4 Bg6 13.f4 is very unpleasant for Black, so Ljubo correctly aims to obstruct White's kingside play.

12.g3

Not 12.Bxh5? Qh4, but after 12.g3 the h5-pawn is genuinely attacked.

12...Bh3?

This leads to the exchange of Black's light-squared bishop, but although it's theoretically Black's 'bad' bishop it's his most active minor piece and shouldn't have been surrendered so easily. 12...g6 13.Ng2 Be7 was better, asking how White intends to make progress on the kingside.

13.Ng2 g6

There's not much choice, since 13...h4 14.Bg4 is very good for White.

14.Re1 Bxg2

The natural consequence of Black's 12th move. 14...Nb6 15.Nf4 Bf5 16.h3 loses time, and White has a better position than after 12...g6.

15.Kxg2 Rb8

Black's problem is that his queenside play is a strike to nowhere, since even after he plays ...a5 and ...b4 he doesn't have any significant threats, while White's kingside play, although slow to materialise, is likely to be far more dangerous.

16.h3 a5 17.Nf3 Be7



18.Qd2

An instructive moment. White does not rush into g4, since Black can continue ...Nb6 and ...Kd7, evacuating his king to the relative safety of the queenside. Instead, Nigel aims to play his knight to g5, pinning the king down to the defence of f7, and only then continue with g4.

18...Nb6 19.Ng5 Kf8

Black despairs of moving his king to d7, and hopes that it will survive on g7. The alternative is 19...Rf8 20.g4 hxg4 21.hxg4 Kd7, but after 22.Rh1 and Rh7 Black also stands very badly.

20.g4 hxg4?

Opening the h-file is asking for trouble, but even after the best defence 20...h4 Black remains in difficulties.

21.hxg4 Kg7 22.Rh1 Qd7

Black is already in a desperate situation. White's advanced pawn on e5 cuts Black's position in half, and prevents him feeding any pieces across to the kingside defence.

23.Bf4

Planning Qe3 to allow a queen switch to the h-file. However, White could have won more quickly by 23.Nh7!! Rxh7 24.Rxh7+ Kxh7 25.Rh1+ Kg8 26.Bg5 (threat 27.Bxe7 followed by Qh6, or simply 27.Bf6) 26...Bxg5 27.Qxg5 and Black is helpless. Nigel uses the same idea, but with a bit of extra preparation. This missed win is the only flaw in an otherwise excellent game.

23...Rbf8 24.Qe3 Qd8



The extra time has allowed Black to reinforce his defence, and he plans to swap all the rooks on the h-file, so now White is compelled to strike.

25.Nh7!!

This is still decisive, but it requires an accurate follow-up.

25...Rxxh7 26.Rxxh7+ Kxxh7 27.Rh1+ Kg8 28.Qh3 Bh4

So far all forced, but now 29.Qxh4 Qxh4 30.Rxh4 b4 offers White nothing, while 29.g5 Kg7 30. Qxh4 Rh8 is even a bit better for Black.

29.Bh6! g5

Forced, since 29...Re8 30.f4! followed by Bg5 is decisive.

30.f4!

Undermining the h4-bishop is White's absolute priority. Indeed, everything else favours Black.

30...gxf4



31.Bd1!

A superbly calm move. Not 31.Bxf8? Kxf8 32.Qxh4? Qxh4 33.Rxh4 Na4 and White has no advantage. 31.g5 is less strong than the move played, since Black can erect a temporary defence by 31...Ne7 32.Qxh4 Ng6, although

even here White has a large advantage. The move played intends 32.g5 Ne7 33.Bc2 and Black can resign, as White is ready to eliminate the defensive knight on g6.

31...Nd7 32.Bc2!

Another accurate move. The obvious 32.g5? Ndxex5 33.dxe5 d4 34.Qxh4 dxc3 surprisingly gives Black genuine counterplay based on the exposed position of White's king.

32...Ndxex5

There's no real defence to the threat of g5, so Ljubo makes a desperate bid for activity.

33.dxe5 Nxe5 34.Bxf8

There's no mate, but Black has surrendered too much material to save his king.

34...f3+ 35.Kf1 Qg5 36.Qxh4 Qc1+ 37.Qe1 Qxe1+ 38.Kxe1 Kxf8

White's material advantage is decisive, especially as Black's pawns are too far back to pose any real danger.

39.g5 Kg7 40.Kf2 f5 41.Re1 Nd3+ 42.Bxd3 cxd3 43.Kxf3 1-0

Endgames All Club Players Should Know by Glenn Flear

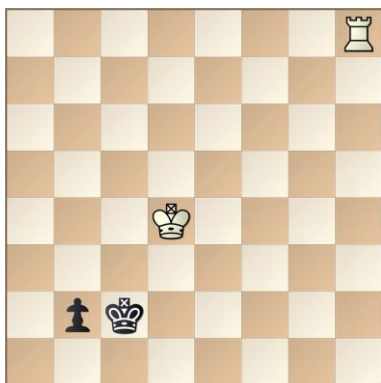


Rook vs Knight

A rook is generally the superior piece, but there are cases where the humble knight can hold its own.

Perhaps the most striking case featuring rook vs knight (that club players would do well to know) is what happens in the case of an underpromotion.

Rook versus advanced b-pawn

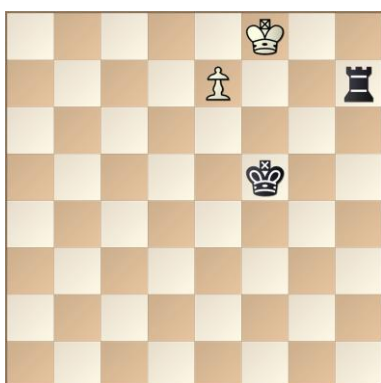


1.Rh2+ Kc1 2.Kc3 b1=N+ Necessary, of course!

3.Kd3 Na3 4.Ra2 Nb1! The knight needs to stay near its monarch. From then on, despite often being reduced to one playable option, Black can hold this position with careful play. This is equally the case when the pawn underpromotes on most other files. There is the exception that if the transformation to a knight occurs on the a- or 'h-file it's then dead lost, as the defender lacks sufficient space.

However, even when 'the book' gives such positions as drawn, it's not clear that humans will be able to find all the right moves, especially with modern time limits. In the following high-level game a top player was unable to defend.

Topalov, V - Ding Liren
Shamkir 2019



79...Kf6 80.e8=N+ As I wrote earlier, this should be a draw, but the defender comes under sustained pressure.

80...Kg6 81.Nd6 Rd7 82.Ne8 Rf7+ 83.Kg8 Ra7 84.Kf8 Rd7 85.Kg8 Rf7 86.Nd6 Rd7 87.Ne8 Kf5 88.Kf8 Kg5 89.Kg8 Kg6 90.Kf8 Rf7+ 91.Kg8 Rf1 92.Ng7 92.Nc7 is simpler - see move 96.

92...Kf6 93.Nh5+ Kg5 94.Ng7 Kg6 95.Ne8 Rf3 96.Ng7? It feels natural to keep the king and knight connected, but here the pieces get in each other's way!

Here the knight really has to go to c7: **96.Nc7 Rc3 97.Ne8 Rc8 98.Kf8** and everything remains shipshape for the defence.

96...Kf6 97.Nh5+ Ke6? Missing the best line: **97...Kf5! 98.Ng7+ Ke5 99.Ne8 Ke6 100.Ng7+ Ke7 101.Nh5 Rf5 102.Ng7 Rg5—.**

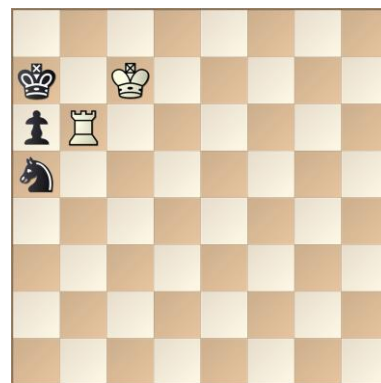
98.Kh7? This error proves to be fatal this time: **98.Kg7!** should hold.

98...Kf5 99.Ng7+ Kf6 100.Nh5+ Kg5 101.Ng7 Rh3+ 102.Kg8 Kf6! 103.Ne8+ Ke6 Or perhaps **103...Ke7.**

104.Ng7+ Ke7 105.Nf5+ Kf6 106.Nd6 Rh5 107.Nf7 Rd5 108.Nh6 Rd8+ 109.Kh7 Rd7+ 110.Kg8 Topalov resigned before waiting for the decisive **110...Kg6. 0–1**

The edge of the board can be a deadly factor for the defender, even in a seemingly more favourable situation.

R vs N + P



White to move has a straightforward win, as Black is immediately placed in Zugzwang.

1.Rb4! Ka8 2.Ra4 etc.

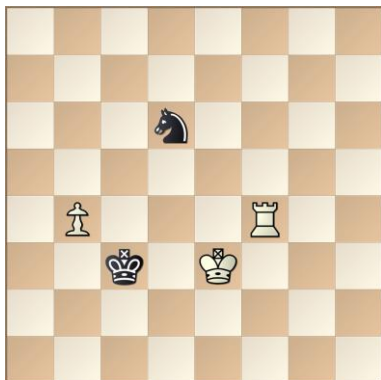
With Black to play in the previous diagram, he gets into difficulties because he doesn't have the a6-square for his king. So the presence of the extra pawn surprisingly helps White!

1...Nc4 2.Rb7+ Ka8 Getting stuck in the corner is not generally good news! (if the pawn weren't on the board, then **2...Ka6** would be the 'drawing' move).

3.Rb4 Ne3 4.Re4 Nd5+ 5.Kc6 Nc3 6.Re3 Nb5 7.Kb6 Nd6 8.Re6 Nc4+ 9.Kc5 Nd2 10.Re2 Nb3+ 11.Kb6 and mates.

The following example is worth highlighting in that one shouldn't take the result for granted even when the material advantage seems substantial.

R + P vs N



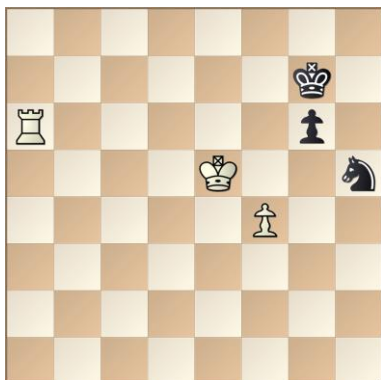
So as you'll see here, rook and pawn versus knight isn't always a win; it greatly depends on the efficiency of the pieces. This is a case where Black's pieces are sufficiently well placed for him to round up the pawn.

1...Nb5 2.Kf3 Kb3 3.Kg4 Ka4 4.Kf5 Na3 5.Ke5 Kb5 6.Kd5 Nc2 and the pawn is about to be eliminated. White's king couldn't help out in time.

R + P vs N + P

In those cases where both sides have one pawn and play is on a limited front the defender can sometimes hold out. Adjacent pawns can offer good drawing chances, as there can arise opportunities for a pawn exchange. However, if Black's pieces are close to the edge of the board there can be winning chances based on destabilizing the knight or a direct attack on the king. Here White could use a combination of threats to get his way.

Taimanov, M – Bronstein, D
Leningrad 1946



1.Ra7+ Kf8 2.Rd7 The premature 2.f5? was tried in the game, but this only leads to a draw. Analysis by Averbakh

demonstrates that a win is possible, starting with the text move.

2...Kg8 After 2...Ke8 3.Rh7 Kf8 the decisive thrust 4.f5 exploits Black's not-so-stable knight.

3.Ke6! The pawn is sacrificed to create strong threats.

3...Nxf4+ If 3...Kf8 4.Rf7+ Kg8 (4...Ke8 5.Rf6! Kd8 6.Kf7 wins, as the capture on f6 doesn't help the defender) 5.Ke7 Kh8 6.Kf8 Ng3 7.Rg7 (Black's king is asphyxiated) 7...Nh5 8.Rxg6.

4.Kf6 Nh5+ Or 4...Kh8 5.Rd4 g5 6.Rd7 g4 7.Rd4 (back again!) 7...Ng2 8.Rxg4 Ne3 9.Re4 Nd5+ 10.Kf7.

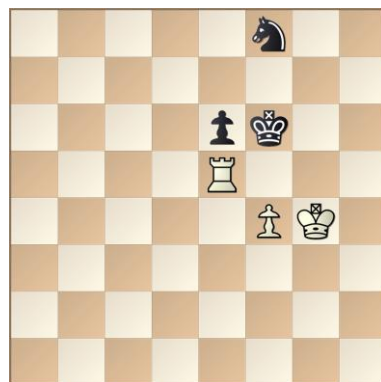
5.Kxg6 Nf4+ 6.Kg5 Ne6+ 7.Kf6 Nf4 If 7...Nf8 then 8.Rd8.

8.Rd4 Ne2 9.Rg4+ Kf8 10.Rc4 Kg8 11.Kg6 Kf8 12.Kg5 Ng3 13.Kg4 Ne2 14.Kf3 Ng1+ 15.Kg2 Ne2 16.Kf2 Finally the knight is trapped.

This illustrates a potential problem (as in many such situations) for the knight once it is separated from its king.

Here's another borderline case.

Alekhine, A – Fox, M
Bradley Beach 1929



This is a particularly noteworthy example, as in old textbooks it was considered to be a win, but Kasparov found the way to draw.

1.Rh5 Kg6! 2.Ra5 Nd7 3.Kf3 Kf6 4.Ra7 Nf8 5.Kg4 Kg6! The idea is to stop the white king penetrating via the right-hand side.

The game continued with the inferior 5...Ng6?, after which Alekhine was able to eke out a win: 6.Rh7 Nf8 7.Rh6+ Ke7 8.Kg5 (Black now gets squeezed) 8...Nd7 9.Rh7+ Kd6 10.Rh1 Ke7 (or 10...Nb6 11.Rh6 Nd5 12.f5 Nc7 13.f6) 11.Kg6 Nb6 12.Re1 Kd7 13.Kf7 Nd5 14.Re4 Nc7

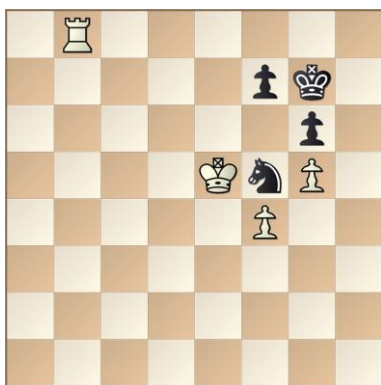
15.Rd4+ Kc8 16.Rc4 and Black resigned, as Rxc7 followed by Kxe6 is coming.

6.Ra8 Nh7 7.Rg8+ Kf7 8.Rh8 Kg6 9.Kf3 Nf6 10.Ra8 Kf5 11.Ra5+ Nd5 12.Rb5 Kf6 Black intends ...Ne7, and the fortress should then hold!

R vs N with Multiple Pawns

With more pawns it can be difficult to hold out indefinitely when there are soft spots that can be targeted.

Fridstein, G – Klamann, K
Riga 1954



Here the technique is noteworthy with the weaknesses on f7 and f6 being homed in on by White to make his advantage tell.

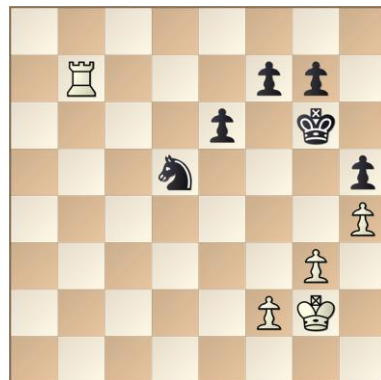
1...Ng3 2.Kd6 Nf5+ Or 2...Nh5 3.Rb4 Kf8 4.Kd7.

3.Kd7 Kh7 4.Ke8 Kg8 5.Rd8 Kg7 6.Rd7 Kg8 7.Rc7 Careful! 7.Rxf7?? allows 7...Nd6+.

7...Ng7+ 8.Ke7 Nf5+ 9.Kf6 Nd6 10.Rc6 Ne4+ 11.Ke7 Kg7 12.Rf6! A surprise! White wins in view of 12...Nxf6 13.gxf6+ Kg8 14.Ke8+-.

If the defender has an ideal structure, I reckon that he can hold out with knight and four pawns against rook and three on the same side. I base my view on the following personal example.

Todorovic, M – Flear, G
Paris 1983



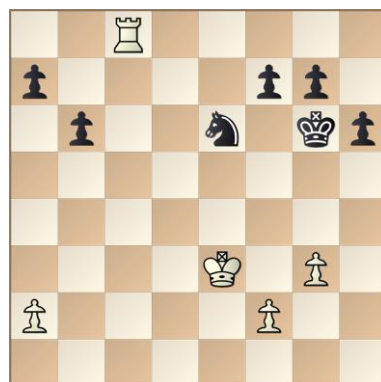
The extra pawn ensures that the knight has a fine outpost on d5.

41...Nf6 42.Kf3 Ng4 43.Ke2 Nh6 44.Rb5 Ng4 45.f3 Nf6 46.Kd3 Nd5 47.Rb7 Kf6 48.Ke4 Nc3+ 49.Kd3 Nd5 50.Rb1 Ne7 51.Rh1 Ke5 52.Re1+ Kf6 53.Ke3 Nd5+ 54.Kf2 Ne7 55.g4 hxg4 56.fxg4 g6 57.Kf3 Kg7 58.Rg1 Nd5 59.Ke4 Kh7 60.Ke5 Kg7 61.h5 gxh5 62.gxh5+ Kh6 63.Rh1 Ne3 64.Kf6 Nd5+ 65.Kxf7 Nf4 66.Rh4 Nxf5 67.Rg4 e5 68.Rg6+ Kh7 69.Rg5 Kh6 70.Rxe5 Nf4 71.Ra5 Nh5 72.Rb5 Or 72.Rf5 Ng3=.

72...Nf4 ½-½

If play is on both wings the knight tends to struggle, and even having an extra pawn or two is typically insufficient compensation.

Flear, G – Wall, T
Hastings 2019



This sort of situation is pretty grim for the defender, as the knight can't stretch its presence to both wings at one. Already Black is faced with the loss of one of his queenside pawns.

36...Nc5 37.Rc7 Kf6 38.Rxa7 Ke6 39.Kd4 h5 40.Kc4 Nd7 41.Kb5 Kd6 Now it's time to create a few additional threats (far, far away!) on the kingside.

42.Ra8 g6 43.Rh8 Kd5 44.Rh7 44...Ke6 45.Kc6 Ke7 46.Rh8, and Black has run out of sensible moves. Something just has to give! **1-0**

If the defending knight and king are rather restricted then Zugzwang can play a role.

Pert, R – Flear, G
4NCL 2010



42...Ra4 43.Kh3 Kf6 44.Kg4 Ra2! 45.Nxh4 Rd2 46.Nf3 The desperate counterattack starting with 46.Kh5 is too slow: 46...Rxd4 47.g4 Rc4 48.g5+ Kf7+.

46...Rxd4 47.g4 Rc4 48.g5+ Kf7+. Now Black is able to make progress using a triangulation.

50...Kf5 51.Nh4+ Kg5 52.Nf3+ Kf6! Zugzwang!

53.Kf2 Kf5 54.c6 Hoping for some relief from the pressure.

After 54.Kg3 Re3 55.Kf2 Ke4 the attacking king invades.

54...Re8 55.Ne5 Ke4 56.c7 Rc8 57.Nf7 Rxc7 58.Nd6+ Kd3 Watch out, there's a fork about!

59.Kf3 Rd7 60.Nf5 Rf7 If 61.Kf4 Rxf5+ 62.Kxf5 Kxd4 it's all over. **0-1**

The following sequence is quite instructive.

Szabo, L – Trifunovic, P
Saltsjöbaden 1948



I particularly recommend studying the technique in this example where Black's room for manoeuvre is restricted, as a result of which White creates additional threats. Firstly the knight needs to be pushed back.

44...Nc3 45.Rc6 Nd5 The attacker's king needs to be brought up (while carefully watching out for forks!).

46.Ke2 h6 47.Kf3 Nf6 48.Kf4 Nd7 49.Rc7 Nf6 50.Ke5 Nh7 Now the knight is denied access to the influential f6-square.

51.Rc6 Kf8 With the opponent passive, it's time to create additional threats by pushing the pawns.

52.f4 Kg7 53.Rd6 Nf8 54.g4 Nh7 No better is 54...f6+ 55.Kd5 Kf7 56.Ra6 Nd7 57.Ra7.

55.h4 Nf8 56.f5 gxf5 Alternatives are no better:

56...f6+ 57.Kd5 g5 58.h5 Kf7 59.Ra6 Kg7 60.Ra7+ Kg8 61.Kd6;
56...Nh7 57.f6+ Kg8 58.Rd8+ Nf8 59.Kd6.

57.gxf5 h5 58.Rd1 Now Black has two weak pawns.

58...Nh7 59.Rg1+ Kh8 60.Kd6 1-0

There are cases where the knight can outgun a rook, but this generally involves a dangerous passed pawn or a timely fork, or both!

Botvinnik, M – Levenfish, G
Moscow 1937



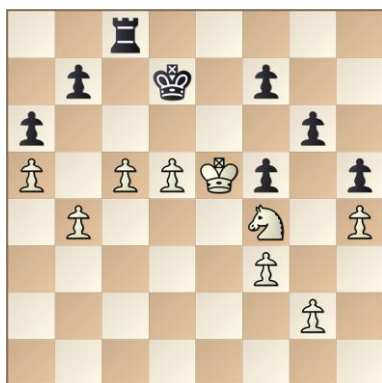
The tactics dictate the result. Here White's king proves to be unfortunately placed.

1...c3 2.Rf8+ Kg7 3.Rc8 c2! 4.Rxc2 Ne1+ With a decisive fork. **0-1**

It would have been a different story if the white king were on g3!

In the following example the side with the knight has a more long-term positional advantage.

Bronstein, D - Olafsson, F
Portoroz 1958



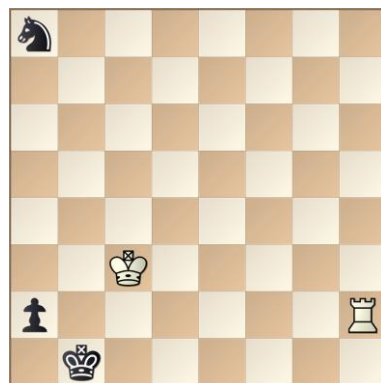
White's more active king and excellent pawns enable him to win. The rook lacks action and isn't able to cope.

1...Re8+ No better is **1...Ke7 2.d6+ Ke8 3.Nd5 Rd8 4.Nb6 Kf8 5.Kd5 Ke8 6.c6 bxc6+ 7.Kxc6 Kf8 8.Kc7 Ke8 9.d7+**.

2.Kf6 Re3 3.Kxf7 Rb3 4.Nxg6 Rxb4 5.Ne5+ Kc8 If **5...Kd8** then **6.d6 Rb2 7.Ke6 Rd2 8.g3** and Black is helpless. White can then play **Kxf5** etc. while the opponent can only wait.

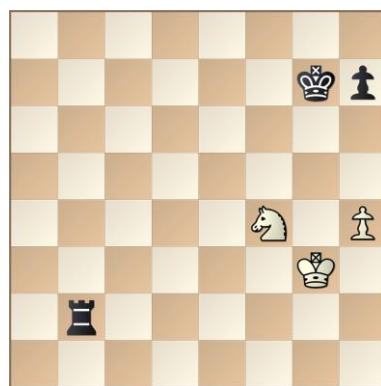
6.d6 Rb2 7.Ke8 Rd2 8.Ng6 Kb8 9.g3 Rd1 10.Ne7 1-0

Exercise 1



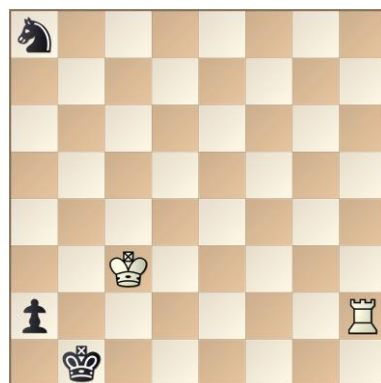
Black to play can draw. How?

Exercise 2



Black to play was able to win in Tarrasch-Réti, Kissingen 1928. Can you work out a convincing plan?

Exercise 1 - answer



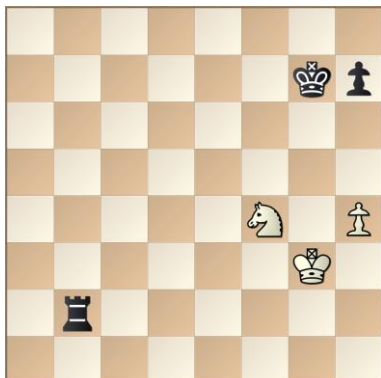
1...a1=Q+ Promoting to a queen with check (rather than a knight without check!) is correct, but only because the knight on a8 can be saved:

After **1...a1=N 2.Rb2+ Kc1 3.Ra2** the rook hits both knights and soon wins both of them e.g. **3...Kb1 4.Rxa8 Nc2 5.Re8!** (controlling e3 and e1) **5...Na3 6.Kb3** etc.

2.Kb3 Kc1! 3.Rh1+ Kd2 4.Rxa1 Nc7 5.Ra5 Kd3 6.Kb4 Kd4

Finally, the knight can link up with his king, leading to a draw (Amelung 1897).

Exercise 2 - answer



Réti had no problems in invading and winning the pawn.

1...Kf6 2.Nh3 Rb3+ 3.Kg2 Kf5 4.Nf2 Kf4 5.Nh3+ Kg4 6.Nf2+ Kxh4 After which the win wasn't difficult.

An Enduring Challenge for Coaches and Writers – Revisiting Willy Hendriks' *Move First, Think Later: Sense and Nonsense in Improving Your Chess* by Peter Wells



I have been rereading Willy Hendriks' controversial and delightfully named *Move First, Think Later*. On the rare occasions that I devote this column to discussing a book, it is not usually one which is more than ten years old and by

an author who has a couple of more recent titles to his name, but this book has a special place. Not exactly in my affections – although it is mostly well written, tremendously funny, and with a provocative title which is just a mild foretaste of the mischief to come. What I see this book as doing is challenging – or more precisely savaging - the very foundations of what I do. As someone

who not only teaches and writes about chess but believes that an ability to explain verbally the concepts that underlie our moves and our thinking is a major (possibly *the* major) contribution that I can make to the progress of my pupils and readers, part of the challenge is not to take this book too personally. Too many books, of course, arrive with the bloated claim that 'the world will never be quite the same again' somewhere in the blurb. With admirable restraint, this one does not, but if Hendriks' thesis had been widely accepted, the worlds of chess coaching and writing would indeed have been transformed, or at least under great pressure to defend their existing forms. As it is, I don't believe this has happened, but for me personally it feels as if the book is a constant presence, acting as a somewhat more benign version of Orwell's Big Brother - keeping watch to ensure that I do not too blatantly slip into any of the dubious practices exposed by its more convincing passages.

Hendriks covers a lot of ground, and does indeed seek to slay several sacred cows. Nonetheless, not everything he says is radical, and even when it is I am struck by the number of topics on which I feel considerable sympathy with the strong views he expresses. Here is just a small sample:

- Pattern Recognition: There is nothing very controversial about the emphasis which Hendricks places upon pattern recognition. Ever since Adriaan De Groot's celebrated research, it has been evident that an accumulated knowledge of patterns is a significant part of what the chess-player typically brings to the table. One fundamental skill lies in selecting or being drawn to the pattern most appropriate to the moment, and in taking care that it can be applied without any significant quirks producing unanticipated hiccups. I have built up quite a database of positions in which familiar patterns do not quite work due to specific tactical niceties. These don't necessarily come with very clear advice - except perhaps to be aware of the dangers of assuming that because something resembles such a familiar pattern it will necessarily be water-tight. Possibly gratuitously – and with apologies to Ameet - I feel like giving an example of one of these at this stage.



White spotted the enticing theme of the ‘family fork’ which appears to ensue from the thematic **25.Rxe6(?) fxe6 26.Nxe6**, but the weakness of the f4-square actually enables the vicious counter-strike **26...Nf4!**, with the elegant point that not only does any knight capture succumb to 27...Ne2+, but also after **28.Qxc5 Nxe6** the queen on c7 is defended and Black emerges material ahead. Believe me, patterns need careful retrieval - there are a lot of these accidents out there!

- The role of the subconscious in decision-making: Anyone who has read, for example, the late Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking Fast and Slow* will be very familiar with the claim that our decision-making is not quite as consciously rational as we might like to claim. It seems very reasonable to assume that this is the case in chess too. I tend to sympathise with Hendriks in his belief that consequently - when some coaches and writers attempt to attribute our decisions at the board to over-stylised principles and elaborate theorising - this is liable to distort much that is going on. However, since I am certain that the typical chess player’s subconscious is filled with just the kind of patterns discussed above (after all, some of us are subjected to the torture of dreaming about chess from time to time 😊), and that the stronger the player the more of these patterns they are likely to have bubbling under the surface, it seems strange to me to characterise this as a battle between rational thinking and the kind of subconscious input that is inherently likely to subvert that goal.

- There are too many fads in the coaching world, and too many ‘expert coaches’ offering short cuts to success in chess as in other areas of life: No comment needed – some common ground for sure here!

- Many chess ‘proverbs’ (and some other pieces of advice too) at best fail to capture the complexities of the game, and at worst can be flat-out contradictory. I feel Hendriks picks on some easy targets here, but the essential point is

sound. For example, the juxtaposition of ‘Timid moves are the reckless ones’ and ‘When winning, don’t take risks’ is easy enough to ridicule. He suggests that any maxims of this type which are likely to attain general validity will feature so many caveats and qualifications as to end up with something disturbingly resembling the form ‘Always do X, except when X is a bad idea’. He may have a point, but as we shall see, this view is part of his more general assault on verbal rules of all kinds and here (as I hope to show later) I part company with him quite decisively.

- Critical Positions: Those who advise players to apportion their clock time to ensure that they devote more of it to ‘critical positions’ come under fire from Hendriks for their unwarranted use of hindsight. In his view, the knowledge of when these critical moments arise is only available in retrospect, and hence largely useless as a guide during practical play. Yet can this really be true? I would, for example, encourage players to be extra vigilant when considering exchanges of pieces, sacrifices, king placement, a substantial shift in the direction of play and so forth. These indicators will not be foolproof, but far more effective than failing to take any measures at all designed to prioritise time allocation or exhibit extra care.

- Planning: Hendriks acknowledges that there is now a fair consensus around the idea that ‘whole-game planning’ is largely a myth. The reality is better described as a series of ‘mini-plans’, and his quote from John Nunn characterising a player’s approach in a typical game as ‘a balance between forwarding their own plan and interfering with that of the opponent’ seems very apt. Hendriks is also rightly critical of analyses of games in which ‘with hindsight everything seems to fit the plan’, and I find it entirely legitimate to work to dispel these myths. In my experience, one of the strongest impulses for players to seek coaching is the belief that there exist clearly determined plans flowing from most openings, and that a coach should necessarily be able to provide the same kind of assuredness moving into the middlegame which the cushion of opening theory provides during the early moves. In fact, while true for some openings, the route in other positions is far less clear - a fact which Hendriks would probably observe does no harm to the richness and enduring appeal of the game either. Again, though, Hendriks goes further, and when he claims that ‘the big advantage of a one-move plan... is that bit’s completion is guaranteed by definition’, we can as usual appreciate his humour whilst suspecting that his scepticism is a little overdone.

I could go on here, but it is the central thesis of the book – one which pretty much provides contexts for all these subsidiary concerns as well – which presents the major challenge (and to my mind problems too). For Hendriks

the real enemy is the language which we use to try to describe and to guide our decision-making in chess. Indeed, he pretty much objects to *the fact that we use language at all* which, he claims, habitually falls well short of capturing the true complexity of a chess game. As usual he pulls no punches:

‘The form in which we write down our moves on the scoresheet is sufficient “language” to learn chess and...no further words are needed.’

Hendriks is adept at predicting objections to his thesis. In some cases this prompts further serious argument, but he probably rightly felt that the seemingly unanswerable objection to an author who condemns language while delivering a book with an unusually high ratio of words to chess positions is best met with disarmingly self-deprecating humour: ‘Just a collection of puzzles could have been a wonderful outcome, had the author not been so fond of hearing himself talk.’

Whilst he criticises the over-use of language in general – regarding it not just as redundant, but frequently misleading too – special opprobrium is reserved for attempts to impose general rules on cases, and for the insistence that an enunciation of these rules is some kind of prerequisite for serious analysis. There is no such desirable order, he asserts. For Hendriks, any useful rules and patterns effectively have moves implicit in them, and it is the moves themselves which are of value. These will frequently be found first in reality (by coaches and trainers too!), and the rules will often be little more than an attempt to rationalise them.

So chess coaches are guilty of swamping examples with too much language, but also of trying to draw further rules and advice from these examples in turn. Emphatically again, ‘Positions are not examples illustrating more general principles – they constitute the actual learning’. In other words, to quote a contemporary figure, himself no stranger to controversy – Hans Niemann – ‘the chess speaks for itself’.

Yuri Balashov - Jaime Sunye Neto

Wijk aan Zee 1982



Whatever criticisms I have coming of this view, I was initially quite beguiled by this example. Hendriks imagines here a conversation between trainer and pupil in which the former insists on a systematic breakdown of all the weak spots in Black’s position and the pieces which respectively either defend them or are poised to exploit them, whilst the poor pupil just wants to invade with **22.Rc6!**, the move which is – to the experienced eye – just crying out to be played (and which indeed brought about resignation in the game). This all has an unfortunate ring of truth about it, and while I think Hendriks is as guilty as any coach or writer for selecting a position which fits a narrative which many positions would not support, he also deserves credit for finding one which gives his case such power.

My own experience accords with this to some degree. I tend to find that there is one ‘magic’ word – *assessment* – which when requested often brings out the worst robotic and formalistic descriptions from students. I am not quite sure why that is, but it seems to be taken as an invitation to examine each element in turn in minute detail, rather than homing in on the pivotal features of a position. It is reasonable to assume that just the type of ‘pedantic’ coaching which Hendriks castigates is a likely culprit.

I like to think I have moved beyond that sort of thing. After all, I am rereading *Move First, Think Later*, and while I am by no means a disciple, I acknowledged at the start that it has had a tangible impact on me – and not just from nagging away in the background, but also changing some of the emphasis of my work. For example, I am a little less ready to generalise without good reason. If you want to know the specific reason? Well, I found myself deeply drawn to the marvellously laconic opening to Chapter 11, and have been ever since somewhat keener to disassociate myself from this awesome stereotype...

‘What’s the difference between a chess player and a chess trainer?’



‘Player: “1...Ba6 is a strong move”.

Trainer: “In this type of position 1...Ba6 is a strong move”.’

This feels to me like the written equivalent of what Hendriks expects strong moves to do for us. It knocks us over the head with beautiful clarity, and genuinely no further words are needed - while I doubt there is a single honest chess coach who doesn't feel some hint of guilt upon reading this... and yet...

I must confess here that one of the immediate prompts to write this piece was a moment from my own coaching experience just a couple of weeks ago which makes me wince every time I think of it. In a classroom setting with quite a mixed ability class, I got it into my head that maximum instruction would be derived from the following position by using it to illustrate a very particular thinking procedure.

Viesturs Meijers – Christian Hess
Bad Zwischenahn 2012



Nothing wrong with this in principle. While I have moved to some degree from the impulse to generalise lessons on all occasions, I am far away from Hendriks' 'trial and error' approach, and believe that an emphasis on practical help towards decision-making is one very significant role for coaching. Moreover, I stand by the concept that a two-stage thinking process might work well here. Faced with the threat of mate on d1, I think White is likely to be

drawn towards a sacrifice on g5, and upon discovering that 38.Rxg5+ hxg5 39.Rxg5+ fails, the right prompt – entirely appropriate at least for the less able students – would be to ask, 'What stands between White and the goal of mate here?' The answer, of course, is the f3-square, and the move implied by this thought experiment is **38.f3+!**, which really does enable mate after either 38...gxf3 39.Rxg5+! etc or (elegantly enough) after 38...Kh5 39.Nf4#.

So far, so unobjectionable, but there is really no excuse for what happened next. Fixated by the elegance of this approach, I asked the question 'What move comes into your heads first here?', and - somewhat thrown by one of the more able students responding 'I want to play f3+' - I found myself replying just in the mode of one of the book's worst caricatures: 'Ah – you're giving me the solution. I wanted to hear what move led you to that' at which point the boy grimaced slightly and I heard the buzzing of 'Hendriks Alarms' going completely nuts in my head. I am reminded of a passage early in the book, in which Hendriks discusses how strong players can make inexplicable blunders and I couldn't avoid the feeling that I had just done the coaching equivalent of this.

Having discussed the book's not inconsiderable impact on me, I want to end with a couple of criticisms which may go some way to explaining the limits of that impact.

Firstly, I would suggest that while Hendriks' picture of how decisions are made works quite well for the purpose of solving problems and studies, it is too much of a snapshot to really reflect how things happen in a game. I strongly approve of the way he presents positions for solution in the book. As far as possible he does this with neither preamble nor clues as to the topic at hand – an approach I recommended in *Chess Improvement: It's All in the Mindset* as the best shot at enabling the solving of tactical exercises to resemble real game conditions. Of course, this is imperfect – some kind of alert is inevitable in the very setting of a tactical exercise - but there is a further problem. In real games there are positional themes which will tend to be present *over the course of several moves*. So even if we allow Hendriks' belief that we may be initially drawn to moves and patterns all in a bundle, once the positional patterns are established in our thinking we will presumably first be drawn back to these in subsequent positions whenever they remain relevant.



Let us revisit the superficially attractive Balashov – Sunye Neto example with this thought in mind. We might have enjoyed our criticism of the dogmatic coach who is determined to break things down rather than allowing his pupil the force of the move he feels inclined to play. But we can be totally sure that for Balashov such elements as the weak f5-square, the knight that aspires to invade it, and the bishop that defends against this were uppermost in his mind. Not just because he was a good pupil of the Soviet school, but because, joining the game a few moves earlier we should understand the move 17.Ncd5! as a conscious attempt to give priority to the f5-square through the otherwise questionable decision to allow the hole on d5 to be plugged by a white pawn. He would have seen these prior to spotting the move **22.Rc6!**, not because he was in any way slow tactically, but because he would have seen them long before Sunye Neto was even drawn to the fateful 21...b5?.

Secondly, whatever one's view of general principles of the Steinitzian type, there seems to me to be a quite separate raft of **practical** verbal guidelines which have enormous value and scarcely any downside. So long as advice is not a directive to necessarily play a particular move, but rather guidance of the 'where to start searching, and what to look for first' type, I really don't see how 'trial and error' can ever compete. All the blunder checking procedures should be there (loose pieces, queens on the same file as opposing rooks, looking at all checks and captures and so on), but also concepts which over time seem ever more appealing to me. One of these it to look first at *what your opponent's last move has changed in the position* – not just as a caution to be on the look-out for their threats, but also as a prompt to what this move may have weakened. This can be a great way to spot fresh opportunities. Even now I am learning new examples. Most recently, I read in Vladimir Popov's *Chess Lessons* that moments in which a player attacks something tend to be a particular source of error. I am not sure this had really occurred to me before (maybe it is well known, but it has passed me by!). It kind of makes sense – perhaps the assumption that the opponent will need to deal with the attack lowers the vigilance against counterblows and

Zwischenzüge – in something like the same way that I suggested earlier may occur with familiar patterns. Anyhow I feel inclined to check this out, and now that this article is finally coming to an end, maybe I will find the time to 😊.

As for generalisations, I think I do increasingly allow for the possibility that the example may be the 'lesson in itself' as Hendricks insists, and I have certainly become more sensitive to cases where specific factors in a position are the real source of success, and in which attempts to generalise would consequently be quite unconvincing. However, part of my reaction to this has simply been to redouble my efforts to find cases in which the generalisable elements within an example really do prevail. Not easy, but ultimately worthwhile. To say that the student expects to garner more from an example than just one more building brick in a collection of patterns might sound a bit like responding to demand rather than to reality. However, there is no doubt in my mind that the image of numerous patterns stored in the mind without recourse to language to categorise, sort, explicate or prioritise them sounds absurdly Spartan.

Language has other roles too. I will leave the final words with John Watson, a great chess thinker whom Hendriks seems to regard as a natural ally, but whose scepticism towards the efficacy of 'rules' seems to me to be based on a realistic view of their limitations and potential conflicts, but to never verge towards a rejection of language as a vital and enriching supplement to moves. He reminds us – in his review of Hendriks' work – that 'Teaching is a broader endeavour than telling the truth. The way in which a book has the most influence on a student's improvement is by keeping them excited about chess and inspiring them to study and learn more.'

[John Watson Book Review #103 - Challenging Conventional Wisdom | The Week in Chess](#)

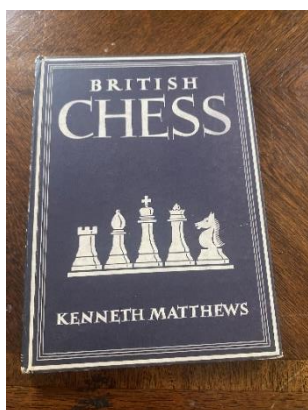
Amen to that.

Books of the Month

by Ben Graff



British Chess – Kenneth Matthews (Collins)



'At the Nottingham Tournament of 1936, Bogoljubow of Germany, disgusted at his lack of form, was overheard to remark: "I am playing like an Englishman!"'

Browsing the internet for old chess books is increasingly becoming a vice of mine. You never know quite what you might find, and very often until your order drops through the door you are unsure as to exactly what it is you have purchased. So it was with *British Chess*.

This slim hardback volume only cost me a few pounds. It was first published in the 1940s, and I couldn't help but wonder about where this particular copy might have travelled in the eighty or so years since. The pages smelt a little dusty, and at a mere fifty pages it was hardly a long read. Yet it had a charm that will stay with me.

This book was part of *The British People in Pictures* series, and there are four colour pictures and twenty-four in black and white within. Some of these images I had seen before, others not. Critchlow's 1946 oil painting, which shows two juniors engrossed in a game of chess, is a striking opening portrait. There are several woodcuttings from William Caxton's *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*

(1483 reprint), and looking at these I felt a real affinity with our predecessors. Thomas Rowlandson's eighteenth-century ink drawing of two chess players in action with a crowd huddled around the board beautifully illustrates both the engrossing nature and the inherent mystery at the heart of chess. Similarly, Stanley Anderson's 1932 line drawing 'Scene at a London Eating-House', is another brilliant work, showing three players whose attention over time has clearly drifted from their food and conversation to the chess board in front of them.

I have no doubt that readers will enjoy looking at these and the other pictures, and they might well give you some ideas if you are looking to track down a chess poster or two. Yet *British Chess* is much more than a picture book. It also tells the story of chess from its origins through to the 1940s, complete with compelling portraits on many of the players and various games, including from the La Bourdonnais vs McDonnell match and Zukertort's 1883 destruction of Blackburne.

Zukertort is described as 'Vain, delicate in health, something of a dandy, he could squeeze out of himself that dram of extra brilliance that eluded the Englishman.' His effort against Blackburne was a 'game of extreme beauty,' heralded by onlookers as one of the greatest ever played. It is well worth looking up if you aren't familiar with it.

I had always seen Blackburne as having had something of a charmed life, and to some extent that was true. Nicknamed 'The Black Death', he had many interests, lived into his eighties and was still a strong enough player to share first place in the British Championships at the age of 72. Yet he too had his disappointments, losing both his matches against Steinitz and (despite two earlier tournament victories) failing to win a single game in his match against Lasker. As Matthews put it, Blackburne '... was one of the few Englishmen who got his whole living out of the game without breakdowns, bankruptcies or unbearable poverty. He just lacked that final gloss of genius...'.

There are many other compelling vignettes. To give but one, Howard Staunton's downing of the leading French player Saint-Amant is nicely covered. Apparently, 'Though the months of play were November and December, Staunton took a cold bath every morning before presenting himself at the chess board.' This seemed to do the trick, as he won 11-6. While not entirely satisfied with the quality of his play, Matthews observes that the victory which placed Staunton 'upon the very pinnacle of the chess world' also went to his head.

‘He was not content to be the first chess-player of the world; he wanted to be law-giver, perhaps even dictator, of chess... He had inherited... a patrician sense of superiority combined with a patrician quickness to offence... . He always behaved as if, having won a championship match, he had won it for life. His rivals were exasperated; and he himself could not face defeat. Upon the first symptoms of fallibility, he wrapped his reputation round him and retired to watch the rest of the play from the wings.’

Matthews noted that British chess had been in the doldrums (as per Bogoljubow’s observation at the beginning of this review) but had seen something of a revival in the 1930s. However, Matthews felt that ‘Chess has no “crowd appeal” for the British... It may be that the national character is not contemplative enough for chess’, fearing that ‘A nation.. that spends so much of its leisure chasing or racing animals might be temperamentally unfit for such a bloodless or abstract sport.’

Matthews also worried for the future of the game more generally. ‘Chess will survive; but the suggestion is heard from time to time that the game has been played out in its present form, and that sweeping innovations are due to be made, as at the close of the fifteenth century. This is because the openings in particular have been so intensively studied that games played by experts follow the same course for the first ten or fifteen moves and create the same feeling of impatience as the fifteenth century must have felt at the over-slow development of pieces.’

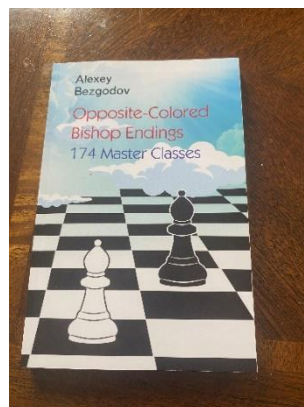
We should guard against viewing these observations with the privileged benefit of hindsight that our twenty-first century vantage point affords us. It is easy to mock, but better to celebrate where we are today. So many brilliant British chess players have come, gone, and continue to ply their trade since this book was written. If anything it feels like chess is continually opening up more possibilities and ways of playing with the passing of the years, counter-intuitive as this may seem. These are doubtless developments that Kenneth Matthews himself would have celebrated, just as we should celebrate his book.

This is truly both a snapshot on a bygone world, and a history that still lives on.

Opposite-Colored Bishop Endings: 174 Master Classes – Alexey Bezgodov (Elk and Ruby)

I still remember playing in a weekend tournament many years ago when a row erupted on the board next to mine. ‘It’s a draw, it’s a draw’, shouted one of the participants,

his agitation plain to see. ‘Just look at the bishops’, he exclaimed, with a sweep of his hand.



‘If you think it’s a draw, it should be easy for you prove it’, his opponent said before proceeding to win the game. As she noted afterwards, it is all too easy to overestimate the drawing potential of opposite-coloured bishops. Alexey Bezgodov’s excellent book sets out brilliantly the subtleties inherent in this trickiest of endgames, highlighting that even in those positions which are drawn with best play this is often far from trivial.

Bezgodov notes that ‘Due to a number of factors, one of the bishops may turn out to be stronger than its opposite number. This can lead to a successful attack, material gains, or obtaining some other advantages that contribute to winning the game.’

Across five chapters, Bezgodov explores ‘pure’ opposite-coloured bishop endings, those that involve rooks, queens and knights, with the final section looking at ‘attack’ in such positions. 174 positions cover a host of famous players, including Botvinnik, Karpov, Kasparov and Carlsen, and the book is great at combining theoretical insights with compelling practical examples of the very finest players grappling with this toughest of challenges.

This is the sort of work that would make for engaging reading on a bus or a train. There are plenty of very clear diagrams, and the textual explanations are always lucid and compelling. All of which provides the aspiring player with a very accessible way to hone their endgame technique, or to just have a bit of fun by exploring some interesting positions.

As Bezgodov notes, ‘If this book helps someone to play a little better, to gain points or a title, or just to brighten up their leisure hours, it will mean that I didn’t write this book in vain.’ He most certainly did not, and this is a very good read.

The Rise of West Yorkshire Junior Chess

by Steve Westmoreland

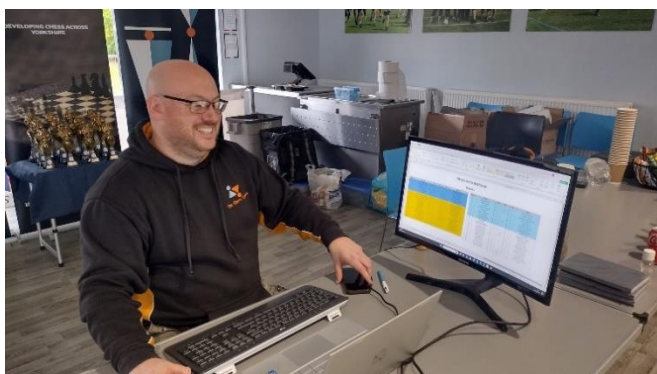


Round 2 at St Bede's and St Joseph's Catholic College

It is fair to say that chess has exploded in recent years, enjoying huge popularity especially with the young. Many have ascribed this to people taking it up during the pandemic, accessibility of online platforms such as Chess.com and Lichess, the Queen's Gambit series and online streaming.

Adult teams are getting younger as well. It is very noticeable that many of the juniors fielded in the Yorkshire U1450 three years ago are now hitting the U1850s and U2050s. Meanwhile, at grassroots level chess is back in many schools.

The West Yorkshire Schools Champion was introduced and run by Andrew Wainwright (the YCA President). It featured teams of four from 32 schools and was won by the Grammar School at Leeds (GSAL), with the final round on Friday 26th April. There were some other incredibly strong teams present, including Heckmondwike Grammar and Ermysted's Grammar.



Andy running his third tournament in three days at the Ilkley Grammar School Rapidplay. Always smiling!

'We set the tournament up to build on the groundswell of demand for competitive chess opportunities for schools across West Yorkshire. It builds on several years

of continued work focusing on grassroots development of chess in the county.' - Andrew Wainwright

Please note I have listed a lot of grammar schools here, and traditionally you would think that chess would be played at these types of schools. Finishing 9th out of 32, however, was Holmfirth High School. The school club was established by teacher Mark Smith in 2021. Originally anticipating low numbers and friendly games, Mark was shocked to find 80 students appearing for the first session, and soon a thriving club developed.

'The chess club has flourished at Holmfirth High, and I am thrilled at its success. We are very fortunate to benefit from the support and expertise of the local chess club and the enthusiasm of both pupils and staff. The numbers involved are staggering, and just show the popularity of chess among the younger generation. Long may it continue.' - Ben Stichman, Headteacher

Holmfirth High soon offered to host Yorkshire Junior Chess Association events, and joined the National Schools competition.



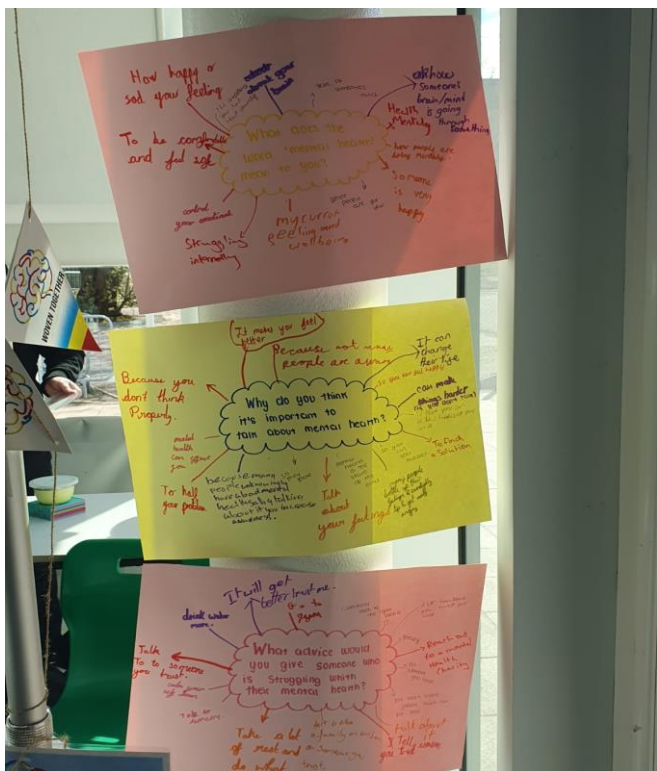
Jacob, Harley, Rogan and Solomon fly the flag for Holmfirth High

Junior chess continued into the weekend, with 80 juniors playing at Ilkley Grammar School in the 7th Rapidplay. Originally established in 2021, these tournaments have been a great success and have consistently sold out.



Head down and sleeves rolled up, Ethan focuses on the board

It was a remarkable weekend for West Yorkshire chess, with both events catering for 208 players of all abilities and backgrounds. Chess is back, and is not going away any



time soon. Volunteers at all levels are making this happen, and long may it continue.

Woven Together



Olivia and Tom talk to parents and children at the IGS Junior Rapidplay

Young Enterprise works with both business and education to support young people in gaining life and business skills. Four students from Huddersfield New College have used this to not only develop a new business but provide wider community support on a subject they are passionate about. This includes within the world of chess.

'I have joined this young enterprise because I want to help make that difference in helping someone's mental health; I want them to know it's OK to talk.' - Charlie Crampton

Can we talk about mental health? It feels very awkward writing these words.

One in four people are said to experience a mental health problem each year. Over someone's lifetime one in five have suicidal thoughts, with one in 14 self-harming and one in 15 attempting suicide. I know people in the wider chess world who suffer, and sadly some who are no longer with us.

There is help though, and there can be simple solutions through reaching out and just talking. Going back to an earlier sentence 'It feels very awkward writing these words' - it shouldn't.

'I joined young enterprise because I believe that it's not OK to struggle with mental health, and it should be talked about and not pushed aside.' - Ella Battye

Woven Together is an initiative put together by four students at New College Huddersfield as a part of Young Enterprise. The team comprises Olivia Westmoreland, Thomas Waddington, Charlie Crampton and Ella Battye.

'I joined Young Enterprise as I wanted to make a difference in my local community, so people wouldn't feel like their problems and issues were something to hide away from those around them' - Thomas Waddington

Their mission is to make mental health a more comfortable and accepting subject to talk about. They're visiting chess events in West Yorkshire to promote these aims and provide bespoke clothing.

'I do this to try and prompt that initial first conversation about wellbeing in the household and friend circle. I enjoy speaking to different people, trying to encourage understanding in both younger and older people, and showing that no problem is too small to speak about.' - Olivia Westmoreland



Their first chess event was at the Ilkley Grammar School Junior Rapidplay on 28th April. Olivia, Tom and Ellis spoke to adults and children, providing sweets, stickers and

learning exercises. Juniors and adults answered questions and gave opinions.

'It was interesting to see the different views and advice people wrote down around mental health. Everyone helps their mental health differently; no person deals with life the same. Therefore we hope encouraging people to share their experiences, advice and views will have made a positive impact on someone's life, however small or big.' - Olivia Westmoreland

The team will be back for the Ilkley Congress and Yorkshire Blitz. Please come and say hello and check in on a friend. Start that initial conversation!

#TakeATshirtStartTalking

To support this small business please follow their Instagram account:

@woventogetherclothingbrand

From the Archives

'It cannot be much a friendship that cannot stand up to the loss of a game of chess' *The Phillips and Drew Kings Chess Tournament Bulletin*.

A series of well-known biennial chess tournaments sponsored by the stockbroker firm Phillips and Drew and Greater London Council (GLC) were held in London between 1980 and 1986, a period often touted as a chess renaissance for the city. And in Special Collections we are fortunate to hold the *Bulletins* for the first three (1980, 1982, and 1984. The 1986 tournament was only sponsored by GLC, and so it is unclear if a *Bulletin* was produced). A fairly simple publication with few illustrations and photographic images, the *Bulletins* were produced with a clear focus on the tournaments and their aim of bringing together the strongest chess players from around the world.



Bulletin cover, 1984

All fascinating in their own right, from the inaugural tournament in 1980 in which the predicted winner Anatoly Karpov took the title, to the unexpected win by Leicester-born player Glenn Flear in 1986, the 1984 tournament is particularly significant: this was the first ever all grandmaster tournament to be held in the UK. While Stewart Reuben, author of the *Bulletin* preface, rejoices in the prowess of the tournament, he does lament how the competing strength of the competition cannot rival that of the international tournament held in Nottingham in 1936. He also goes on to say how he thinks 'There will never be a tournament that will be able to compete with such greatness'. I will leave it to the reader to decide if s/he thinks this to be still true today. 40 years ago this month, the event took place from 26th April to 11th May and was held at County Hall, where business and ceremony were set aside to allow the tournament to take centre stage, even permitting some game commentating by journalist Bill Hartston in the Council Chamber. A category 14 event consisting of 14 players, the *Bulletin* lists all competitors along with their rating and predicted score:

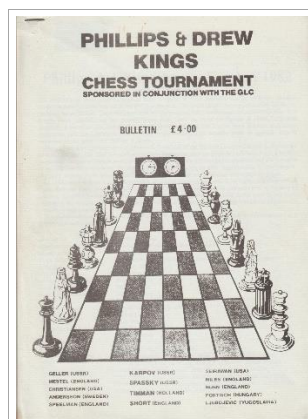
KINGS			KNIGHTS		
	rating	predicted score		rating	predicted score
Karpov	2700	8½	Johansen	2475	10½
Korchnoi	2635	7½	Littlewood	2435	10
Andersson	2630	7½	Lawton	2395	9
Vaganian	2630	7½	McNab	2375	8½
Miles	2615	7	Hartoch	2355	8
Polugayevsky	2615	7	McKay	2355	8
Ribli	2610	7	Cox	2350	8
Timman	2610	7	Condie	2340	8
Num	2600	6½	Britton	2310	7
Torre	2565	6	Wicker	2310	7
Mestel	2540	5½	Crouch	2300	7
Seirawan	2525	5	Arkell	2295	6.75
Chandler	2515	5	Large	2295	6.75
Speelman	2495	4½	Nicholson	2260	6
			Fischdick	2215	5
			Jackson	2185	4½
average rating	2592		average rating	2328	
category	14		category	4	
			TM norm	10/15	
			IWGM norm	7/15	

For every point that a 2400+ player achieves above his expected score, his rating goes up 10 points. For players below 2400 it goes up 15 points. The rating drops correspondingly for a poor performance.

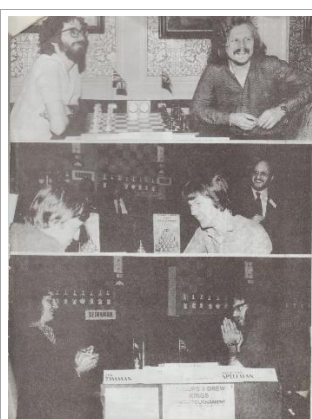
As you can see, the points range for the Phillips & Drew/GLC Kings is quite narrow. This usually leads to a fiercely competitive tournament. It is much wider for the Knights because of the presence of two women players. What often happens in all-play-all tournaments is that, by about the half-way mark, it is apparent that one or two players are out of form. Then everybody concentrates on trying to beat them. They end up as tournament bunnies. There is the real danger that this will happen to Gisela and Sheila but they are both hardened tournament players.

Competitors list and rankings, Bulletin, 1984, page 2

Reuben explains in relation to the list that the rating system devised by Professor Elo and adopted by FIDE (World Chess Federation) in 1970 can be used to make



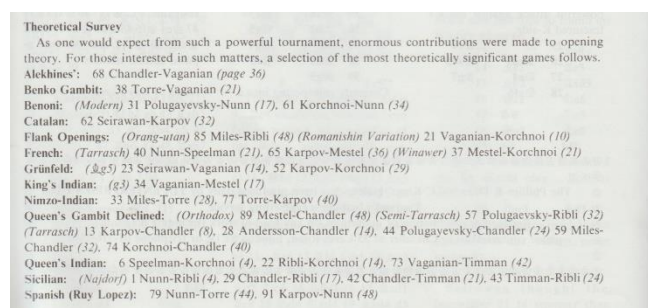
Bulletin cover, 1982



Players at the event, Bulletin, 1982, page 31

'quite accurate predictions about the outcome of a tournament.' He goes on to say that he asked Grandmaster Dr John Nunn whether it was possible to determine the percentage probability of each player winning the tournament, and his humorous analysis of his reply is worth quoting as well as perhaps telling us all we need to know about the unpredictable outcomes of matches on the day: 'His answer "No..., er, no... no." In those few seconds he had considered three possible approaches and rejected them all'.

The *Bulletins* are divided into 'rounds' where the significance of each, with key moments in the games, is summarised by the editor, Grandmaster, Ray Keene. Diagrams and annotations are also included, along with the occasional personality profile featuring biographies on chess stars, from Harry Golombek to Sophia Gorman. And for those interested in analysing the contemporaneous trends in chess openings can turn to the section 'Theoretical Survey'. For the 1984 *Bulletin*, this comprised a selection of the most theoretically important games (see below).



'Theoretical Survey', *Bulletin*, 1984, page 47

As predicted, Karpov took the title, but it was Lev Polugaevsky who won the brilliancy prize and was awarded a chess clock worth £50.00! Sadly, time was called on the tournament when Phillips and Drew withdrew sponsorship and GLC was abolished in 1986. But the *Bulletins* still serve as a wonderful reminder of the events and may even prod the memories of some of our readers.

The ECF Certificate of Excellence by Andrew Martin



The ECF will soon be adding a new Diamond level to the Certificate of Excellence. In case you were unaware of this project, you can find more information here:

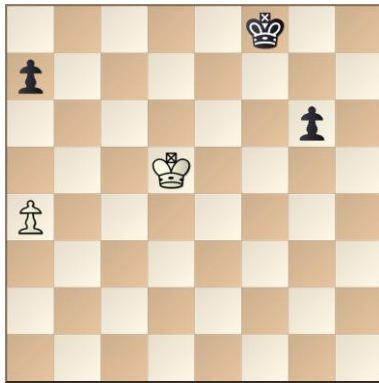
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/certificate-of-excellence/>

It is intended that the Diamond level will be an enjoyable and challenging test of your all-round chess ability. Each test comprises 15 questions, randomly selected from eight different categories. Let me list the different sections:

- 1) Simple positions - Simple positions with reduced material on the board are quite tough, because complete accuracy is usually needed to find the answer. Some analysis will be required.
- 2) Opening traps - There are plenty of these! Once again, you will be expected to show your analysis in the answer.
- 3) Studies - This will be a tough section, but not impossible. The answers often require one to think in a different way. Solving studies will enhance your ability to cope with unorthodox solutions over the board.
- 4) Chess general knowledge - How good is your all-round knowledge of chess history and chess players?
- 5) Middlegame tactics - All the positions will come from actual games, along the lines of 'White to play and win' etc.
- 6) Assessing a position (multi-choice) - You will be given a position and asked to choose the best way forward from a few selections. Your job is to find the right answer!
- 7) Endgames - If a common type of endgame appears on the board, do you know the most accurate way to win it?
- 8) Attacking the king - When the opportunity presents itself, are you ready to attack the king?

The pass mark is 10 out of 15 correct answers. 13 out of 15 or above secures a distinction. Expect the challenge to take up two or three hours of your time. It goes without saying that you should not use any kind of assistance to help you in answering the questions. No Google, no engines. In the end, you would only be cheating yourself. Entrants will receive feedback on each paper submitted and it will be possible to take the exam more than once. Let's have a look at a specimen paper which you might like to try. I've shortened it a bit to ten questions to avoid taking up too much space.

Q1 SIMPLE POSITION



White to play and draw.

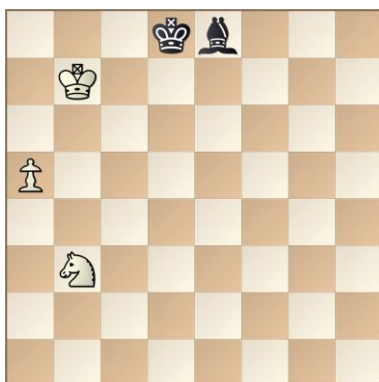
Q2 OPENING TRAPS

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0-0 8.Bb3 Na5 9.e5 Ne8



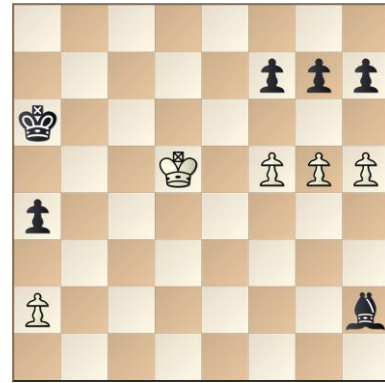
Black is hoping to capture on b3 and hit back against the pawn on e5. What should happen next?

Q3 STUDIES



White to play and win against best defence.

Q4 STUDIES



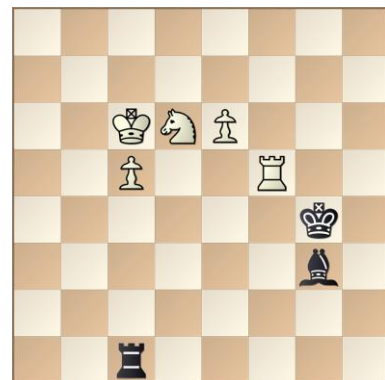
The scene is set for a standard breakthrough win with 1 g6. Or is it? White to play. What should the result be?

Q5 CHESS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Which chess player has a nickname of the 'Kentucky Lion'? Is it:

- a) Ben Finegold;
- b) Jackson Showalter;
- c) Arnold Denker;
- d) Arthur Dake.

Q6 MIDDLEGAME TACTICS



This is a position from Karpov-J Polgar Budapest 1998. Black played...

1...Bxd6

What should the result be after 1....Bxd6 and why?

Q7 ASSESSING A POSITION

Mamedyarov-Carlsen Qatar 2015 began...

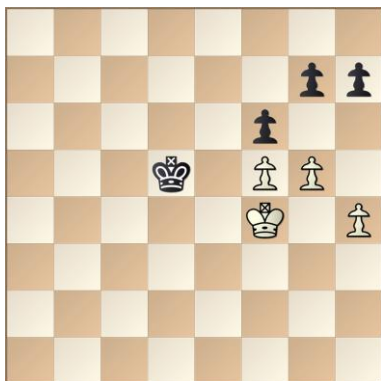
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.e3 0-0 8.Rc1 dxc4 9.Bxc4 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.Ne4 Qe7 12.exd4 Rd8 13.Qe2 Nc6 14.Rfd1 Ba5 15.Ng3 Bb6 16.Qe4 Bd7 17.h4 Be8 18.a3



A complex middlegame has arisen. What is the most accurate statement about this position?

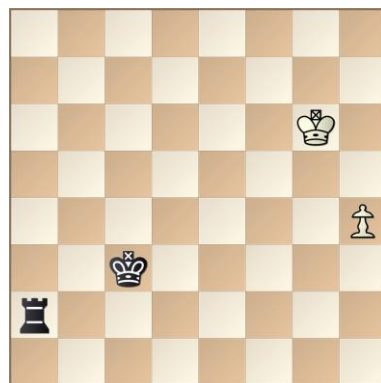
- a) Black has a positional advantage in view of White's isolated queen pawn.
- b) Black is much better.
- c) The position is complex and balanced. White's strongly placed queen and attacking chances compensate for the IQP.
- d) White is better. Black has no way to increase the pressure on the d4-pawn, and meanwhile White can build a kingside attack.

Q8 ENDGAMES



White to play. What should the result be?

Q9 ENDGAMES



Hamdouchi-Topalov Cap d'Agde 1994

Black to play and win.

Q10 ATTACKING THE KING



A nice easy one to finish. White to play and win.

You can find the answers at the end of the newsletter.

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 - Mason, D. – Jaunooby, A.
Bolton Easter 2024, Bolton, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2 - FM Hollan, Martin – GM Janik, Igor
Southend Masters 2024, Southend, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Two](#)

Puzzle 3 - FM Wall, Tim – FM Chow, S.
Sheffield Masters 2024, Sheffield, ENG



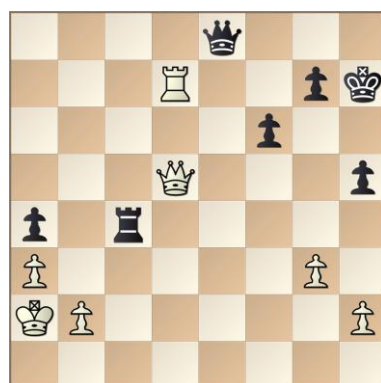
White to win - [Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 4 - Nkwonta, Kelechukwu – Ridge, Michael
Bolton Easter 2024, Bolton, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 5 - GM Adams, Michael – FM Hampel, Felix
Bundesliga 2023-24, Dresden, GER



White to win - [Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 6 - Murawski, Jan – IM Grieve, Harry
Isle of Wight Open 2024, Ryde, ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 7 - CM Gurner, Jem – Turner, Lewis A.
Sheffield Int. Open 2024, Sheffield, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 8 - Kobryn, Peter J. – GM Davies, N.
Bolton Easter 2024, Bolton, ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9 - Larchikov, M. – GM Hebden, M.
4NCL Easter Congress 2024, Peterborough, ENG



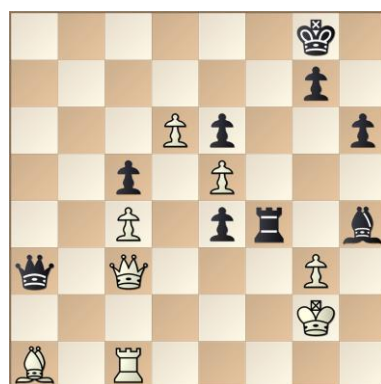
Black to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10 - Ridge, Michael – Owen, D.
Bolton Easter 2024, Bolton, ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

Puzzle 11 - Keshari, Rohit – Graeme, Matthew
British Rapidplay 2024, Peterborough, INT



Black to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12 - Amato, G. – Baer, Bruce L.
4NCL Easter Congress 2024, Peterborough, ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit
https://chesspuzzle.net/List/9871?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=maynews
by clicking the link or via the QR code below ...



NEWS and VIEWS

ECF Charity Marathon for Ukraine 2024

The English Chess Federation will once again be holding a 24 hour chess marathon in support of the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

[Chess.com](https://chess.com) will host the online marathon from 5.00pm on Saturday 1st June to 5.00pm on Sunday 2nd June UK time (BST). You can register for the online marathon here: <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-charity-marathon-for-ukraine-2024/>.

Registration is free, but only donors and fundraisers of £5.00 or more will be eligible for prizes. Place prizes will

be awarded either over the internet (for licences and e-prizes) or dispatched anywhere in the UK (for physical/book prizes). Players will need to be a member of the ECF Open Club on Chess.com:

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

Join now for free to be kept posted about further tournament details and prizes. The marathon will be scheduled as a 24 hour Chess.com Arena tournament running from Saturday to Sunday, with players able to join and rejoin as they wish for the duration of the event.

Everyone can donate when they register (see above), or via the Red Cross Tiltify page here: <https://tiltify.com/british-red-cross/english-chess-federation-marathon-2024>. As well as accepting donations, the Tiltify page will allow you to fundraise via a personal event page as you take part in the tournament should you wish to provide additional support. All donations and funds raised will be paid direct to the British Red Cross appeal to support their life-saving response to the crisis.

Live Streaming

WIM Natasha Regan will host the first of four commentary streams across the 24 hours, with a detailed schedule of additional hosts and guest to be provided shortly. We will have live coverage of the tournament here: https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_streaming

Prizes

Prizes will be awarded to the highest placed players in the marathon based on points accumulated across the 24 hours. Players are eligible for a place prize if they have donated £5.00 or more in advance. Places will be as shown on the [Chess.com](https://chess.com) tournament page for eligible players at the end of the tournament. As well as the main place prizes there will be a separate prize for the highest placed junior ECF member/supporter and the highest placed female ECF member/supporter.

We would like to thank our growing list of prize donors for their generous support, including:



Chess.com – <https://www.chess.com> – who are hosting the event and matching up to \$1000 of donations.

chessable

Chessable – <https://www.chessable.com/> – who are providing Chessable Pro memberships and course vouchers as place prizes.



Elk and Ruby

Elk and Ruby – <https://www.elkandruby.com> – who are supplying various book prizes.



Chess and Bridge – <https://chess.co.uk/> – who are providing e-gift voucher prizes for merchandise from the Chess and Bridge store.

ECF and BCF Finance Council Meetings 27th April 2024

The Finance Council Meetings of the ECF and BCF were held on 27th April.

In this report I have provided information on the items relating to the two charitable trusts as there are no written reports. More extensive information on other items may be found on the English Chess Federation's website under About Us > Documents > Council Meetings.

BCF Finance Council

Two guests kindly joined to report on the activities of the two charitable trusts which support chess alongside the ECF.

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust

John Higgs, Chair of the Trust, advised that the Trust had now developed a new website which he encouraged members to visit.

He updated the meeting on the impact of the support provided to the following players as examples:

Support to Jonah Willow for entry fees, travel and accommodation which assisted his gaining the IM title;

Three years of support to junior players Bodhana Sivanandan and Kushal Jakhria;

Support for Shreyas Royal in the Under 20 World Junior;

Support for the following:

British Universities Chess Association;

Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress;

Mike Basman Memorial tournament;

She Plays To Win team at the 27th Women's Chess Club Championship in Albania;

British Chess Championships 2023 for general costs and junior coaching.

Several ideas were voiced for further support: pro-active identification of promising junior players and re-establishing the ECF's junior bursary scheme among others.

The Chess Trust

Simon Brown, Chair of the Trust, provided an overview of the Trust's structure, membership and objectives.

The principal support provided in the past year covered the following main items amongst others:

- The Accelerator Programme for promising junior players. There is an independent selection committee choosing some 10 -12 players each year who receive mentoring and coaching from five top players, support for attending events, preparation for events and post-mortem analysis;
- GM, IM, senior and women's events;
- Southend Masters;
- Northumbria Masters;
- Deaf Chess Association;
- Sheffield Chess Centre;
- UK Armed Forces Chess Team at the NATO Championships;
- Junior Ukrainian players (25) and support for a school chess club with lots of Ukrainian children.
- Simon emphasised that the Trust wanted to 'make a difference' with the projects it chose to support, with planned expenditure of £80k to £90k per annum. The Trustees worked closely with the ECF, the JRYCT and CSC to improve alignment.

Minutes of the BCF Finance Council Meeting April 2023

The minutes of the last meeting in April 2023 were agreed, with no matters arising.

Structure of the BCF

A proposal to alter the constitution of the BCF was presented and passed nem con. The change simplifies the constitution and brings it up to date to reflect the fact that the main purposes and funds of the BCF have been transferred to the ECF and the Chess Trust.

The final accounts of the BCF and Chess Centre Ltd will be presented to the ECF AGM in October 2024.

ECF Finance Council

Minutes of the last meeting in October 2023 were agreed nem con, and no matters were raised.

The ECF's Financial Accounts for the Year Ended 31st August 2023 and Finance Director's report

The Finance Director presented the accounts for the previous year and his report. The accounts had been signed off by the auditors, with no points raised. Although the Federation had made a loss of £26k in the year cash balances and cash flow were in a healthy state. The Board

planned to maintain a balanced budget in future years together with a minimum reserve position of £50k. The Board was planning to continue adequate funding for its core activities, with the DCMS grant not intended to replace funding for those activities. The DCMS grant was for £500k; £200k to be spent by March 2024 and £300k by March 2025. The proposed £2 increase to membership fees and the amalgamation of the Gold/Silver categories were to ensure adequate funds for the ECF's normal activities for 2024-25. The DCMS grant was intended for specific international and elite chess. The accounts and the Finance Director's report were agreed nem con.

Constitutional Changes

There were some constitutional changes relating to rolling membership arrangements, abolition of organisation membership fees, a proposal enabling clubs to become members of the ECF Council, and amendments to procedural bye-laws. All these were agreed.

Membership Fees

There was considerable debate over the Board's proposed membership fee changes. In particular, concern was raised over the absence of a junior Bronze rate in the new structure of membership fees.

In the end all the Board's proposed changes to fees were agreed except for one amendment. A spirited reaction to the absence of a junior Bronze category supported an amendment to provide a junior Bronze category to be maintained at a rate of 'free for the first year and £6 per annum thereafter'. The non-members game fee (junior) would also remain at £6 instead of the proposed £12. Please see this link for the detailed 2024-2025 membership/pay to play/game fee arrangements.

Budget for 2024-25

After the membership fee proposal had been agreed the meeting considered it appropriate to pass the budget that had been submitted. Agreed nem con.

Information Items

Nigel Towers and Malcolm Pein provided two excellent reports on grassroots chess initiatives and DCMS funding respectively. Both items may be found in the agenda papers for the meeting on the ECF website – they make cheerful reading.

Closure

The meeting finished at 17.30.

David Eustace, Chair of Council

Proofreader Needed for ChessMoves

We are looking for somebody to do the final proofreading of *ChessMoves*, the ECF's newsletter, each month.

Our current process is that individual articles are proofread in detail as they are received, then put together in a draft version of the final edition. The whole issue is then proofread one last time by a 'fresh pair of eyes' to check for any errors that have been overlooked before final format and publication.

Are you the 'fresh pair of eyes' we are looking for? Please contact the ECF office at office@englishchess.org.uk if you would be willing to take on this task, or if you would like further information. As a token of our appreciation we will send the proofreader a free printed copy of *ChessMoves* each month.

England Arbiters

We're delighted to announce that recently two of our arbiters passed their final norms and exams for the International Arbiter (IA) title.

FA Satish Gaekwad and FA Agnieszka Milewska will now become IAs. Agnieszka Milewska (our ECF Women's Director) is now the third English female IA (together with IA Lara Barnes and IA Shohreh Bayat).

Agnieszka Milewska said: 'Big thanks go to IA Alex McFarlane for his help and support along this long arbiter journey; his knowledge is unbelievable, and he is always happy to help. The exam was tough, but that's made me all the prouder that I was able to pass it!'



Agnieszka Milewska

ECF Level One Arbiter Course

Course dates/schedule: five Tuesday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm - 4th June; 11th June; 18th June; 25th June; 2nd July.

Course fee: £40.

Please note that participants must be at least Bronze members of the ECF on the date of the examination (2nd July).

As the course has proved very popular and attracted more than the expected number of participants, it has been decided to run two courses at the same time. Where two or more participants from the same household have registered, they will be assigned to the same course.

Course 1: Course Lecturer – Alex Holowczak; Assistant Lecturer – Chris Howell.

Course 2: Course Lecturer – Matt Carr; Assistant Lecturer – Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips.

The courses will be delivered via Zoom.

Please use this link to sign up: [ECF Level 1 Arbiter Course June/July 2024 \(wufoo.com\)](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/chess-in-primary-education-professional-growth/)

England Success in the World Chess League!



A record four English teams have qualified for the quarter-finals of the World Chess League!

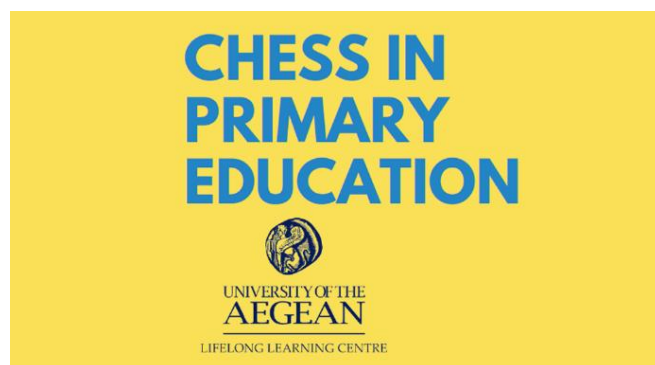
Warwick University Alumni, starring FM Sam Chow and FM Victor

Stoyanov, prevailed in a thrilling early morning encounter against Team New Zealand, pipping the Kiwis 3½-2½. They will play against Birmingham University in the quarter-finals, who made it through with a convincing 6-2 win over their Midland rivals North Staffs Knights.

The Warwick University students team were the next to join them, confidently dispatching Durham University 6-0, and the round concluded with Cambridge University defeating Chongqing Mistyland Yangtze River from China 6½-1½.

We wish all the English teams the very best of luck in the quarter-finals, and you can follow their progress here: <https://www.worldchessleague.live/WCL2024>

Chess In Primary Education



<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/chess-in-primary-education-professional-growth/>

With the initiative and efforts of the European Chess Union (ECU), the European Parliament published a declaration on 15th March 2012 on the introduction of the programme 'Chess in School' for the educational systems of the European Union. Prior to this, several European countries had introduced chess as a curriculum option for primary schools. Following the declaration, the EU educational programme Erasmus funded several projects in the field of chess and education with the active participation of the European Chess Union and its Educational Commission members. [Click here for full details](#)

JUNIOR MOVES

Littlewood's Choice



I have been very impressed recently by the results of Stanley Badacsonyi. For example, at the very strong Menorca Open he scored a respectable 4/9 and managed to draw against the strong GM Maxime Lagarde.

This was the position against Maxime where Stanley found a nice combination:

M. Lagarde - S. Badacsonyi



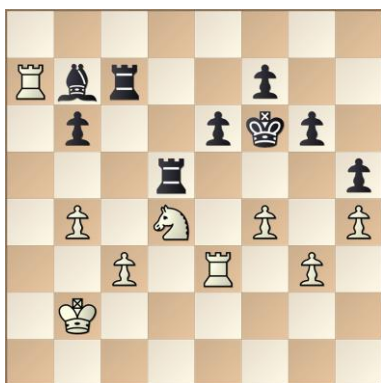
Black played **17...Nxc4!**. This required precise calculation, as after **18.Nxc4 Bxc3** White can play **19.Nb6**, but then **19...Bb5 20.Qc2 Bxf1 21.Nxc8 Bxg2 22.Kxg2 Qxc8 23.bxc3** leaves Black a clear pawn up with a winning position. So the game continued **19.Bb6 Qe8 20.bxc3 Bb5 21. Qe3 Rxc4 22.Rfe1 Qc8 23.Rac1 Nc5 24.e5 Bc6 25.exd6 exd6 26.Bf1**, when Black is clearly better but there is still a lot of play in the position. Consequently when Maxime offered a draw Stanley accepted.

His most recent success though was coming 1st equal in the St. Albans Congress. In the game against Yichen Han in round 3 he displayed a maturity in the endgame well beyond his years.

Here is the position after White's 38th move.

Y. Han-s S. Badacsonyi

St. Albans Congress 2024 Round 3



The position is equal, but just watch how Stanley outplays his talented and more highly rated opponent.

38....e5 39.fxe5+ Rxe5 40.Rd3 Rd7 41.c4 Re8 42.Kc3 Re1 43.Kd2?! The first slight error from Yichen. Better was **43.Ne2**, exchanging the black rook on d7. After **43....Rxd3+ 44.Kxd3 Bf3 45.Nf4 Rg1 46.Ke3 Bg4 47.Kf2 Rb1** the position is about equal.

43...Rb1 44.Nc2? And now a more serious mistake. Better was **44.c5 Rxb4 45.c6 Bxc6 46.Nxc6 Rxd3+ 47.Kxd3 Rg4 48.Nd4 Rxd3+ 49.Ke2 Rg2+ 50.Ke3 Rg4 51.Nf3 b5 52.Rb7 b4**. To be fair to Yichen he was probably still trying to win, and of course this line leaves him with no chances at all. However, in avoiding it his position becomes worse.

44....Rd1+ 45.Kxd1 Rxd3+ 46.Ke2 Be4 47.Ne3 Rb3 48.b5 Rb2+ 49.Ke1 Ke5! The black king now becomes very active, and White must be very careful.

50.Rxf7 Kd4 Perhaps even better was **50...Bd3**.

51.Nf1 Bd3 52.Nd2 Ra2 53.c5? White has done well to ward off the worst, and after **53.Rf4+ Kc3 54.Ne4+ Kb4 55.Nd2 Ra1+ 56.Kf2 Kc3 57.Nf3 Ra2+ 58.Kg1 Bxc4 59.Rf6** he has every chance of securing a draw. However, now he is completely lost, and Stanley finishes off efficiently.

53....Kxc5 54.Nf3 Rg2 55.Rf6 Re2+ 56.Kd1 Rf2 57.Rc6+ Kxb5 58.Nd4+ Kb4 59.Ke1 Rg2 60.Ne6 b5 61.Nf4 Rxd3 62.Nd5+ Ka4 63.Kf2 Rg4 64.Ke3 Bc4 65.Nc3+ Kb4 66.Nb1 Rxd3 67.Rxd3 Rh3+ 68.Kd2 Bd3 69.Rg1 Bxb1 70.Rxb1+ Kc4 71.Rc1+ Kd4 72.Rc8 Rh2+ 73.Kc1 b4 74.Kb1 h4 75.Rc7 h3 76.Rh7 Kc3 77.Ka1 Rh1+ 78.Ka2 b3+ 79.Ka3 Ra1# 0-1

A great performance by Stanley, and I will be interested to see how he progresses over the next few years.

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

Team Chess Challenge by Neill Cooper

Team Chess Challenge was started in 2013 as a competition for secondary schools. Its structure was based on the successful Team Maths Challenge run by the UK Maths Trust: teams of four players at regional finals from which the winners qualify for the national final. Subsequently the Junior Team Chess Challenge was started for those in year 8 and below.

This year in the British Team Chess Challenge (BTCC) there were 12 regional finals with a total of over 160 teams comprising over 650 players. From these 12 regional finals a total of 18 teams qualified for the national final. Regional qualifiers varied in size from 36 teams down to four teams. At the larger events more than one team qualified for the national final. The largest regional event

was at Bristol Grammar School where 36 teams took part (photo below).



The Junior Team Chess Challenge (JTCC) had 14 regional finals with a total of over 120 teams and 500 players. Also in this competition a total of 18 teams qualified for the national final. Further information about the regional finals can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/junior-team-chess-challenge-2023-24/> for the JTCC;

and here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/british-team-chess-challenge-2024/> for the BTCC.

For the first time the two national finals were held simultaneously at the same location, on Saturday 20th April 2024 at King Edward VI School Aston in Birmingham. Teams came from across the country, with players travelling from Kent, Lancashire, Northumberland and Devon, as well as others with shorter journeys.

The chess tournament started after a lunch (kindly provide by K. E. Aston) with five rounds played at a rate of play of 10 minutes with a two second increment. With this rate of play the arbiters, Chris Howell, Venkata Kilambi and John Bowley were kept busy with time scrambles and illegal moves! The winner of the tournament is determined by game points rather than match points, so with every game counting the result of every board was important.



In the BTCC final the top two seeds meet in round 2 and fought a close match before the reigning champions, Wilson's School, beat King Edwards School (Birmingham) 2½–1½. The competition continued to be close until round 4 when Wilson's School beat Dulwich College 4–0, while the remaining top matches were much closer. Entering the final round Wilson's only needed a single point to win the tournament, but they completed a fifth straight win over Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Bristol).

King Edward's School beat Highgate School to come second. Full results can be found at <https://chess-results.com/tnr922350.aspx>



British Team Chess Challenge Champions 2024 – Wilson's School

In the JTCC round 1 saw many one-sided fixtures, but matches quickly became more evenly balanced. The two top seeds, Wilson's School and King's College Junior School (KCJS) Wimbledon, were also the only two schools to have previously won this tournament. They met in round 4 when they were both on 10½/12. A very close match ensued, with three of the four games being drawn, Wilson's winning the one decisive game. In round 5 Wilson's consolidated their hold on the trophy by winning 4–0, leaving KCJS as runners-up. Full results can be found here: <https://chess-results.com/tnr924249.aspx>



Junior Team Chess Challenge Champions 2024 – Wilson's School

So, for the first time the same school (Wilson's) won both the British Team Chess Challenge and the Junior Team Chess Challenge.

Plans are already underway for next year's tournament, including the introduction of a Primary Team Chess

Challenge for those in year 6 and below. For more information please contact me at manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk

European Youth Chess Championship



The ECF is accepting registrations for the European Youth Chess Championship in Prague (Czech Republic) which runs from 21st August to 1st September 2024. The entry form for this event is here:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/european-youth-chess-championships-2024/> – closing date 10th June.

ECF Secondary School Chess News May 2024

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

English School Chess Championships

26 school teams have qualified for the National Final to be played on Thursday 27th and Friday 28th June 2024, at Nottingham University. See [here](#) for details – the games will be broadcast live if you want to watch them.



There are some important changes for the 2024/25 English School Chess Championships, in particular:

1. No automatic qualification – all teams must qualify through a qualification or similar event;
2. The score needed to qualify at a qualifying event is

reduced from 'more than 50%' to '50% or more'.

Because of these changes we expect to need more qualification events in autumn 2024. Please contact me if your school would consider hosting such an event and I can send you more information about it. Entry will open later this term.

British Team Chess Challenge and Junior Team Chess Challenge

Team Chess Challenge for teams of four players, with every game counting towards your team's total score. Teams winning their regional finals and a number of runners-up qualify for the National Finals.

Wilson's School performed a remarkable double in winning both the British Team Chess Challenge (BTCC) and the Junior Team Chess Challenge (JTCC) at King Edward VI Grammar School Aston, West Midlands on Saturday 20th April 2024. You can read about the finals on their website pages: [BTCC](#) and [JTCC](#).

Next year there will be third such event: the Primary Team Chess Challenge (PTCC) for year 6 and below. If you would like to find out more about hosting a regional final for any of the Team Chess Challenges please let me know.

Harrow School Blitz



This blitz tournament took place on Sunday 21st January with a rate of play of three minutes + two seconds increment. 12 rounds were played, and the individual winner was Shivam Agrawal of Wilson's School who scored 10½ out of 12, just ahead of Liam Clery-Luta (St Paul's School) on 10 points. St Paul's won the team competition (the sum of the best six scores of players representing their schools) with 50½ points, ahead of Wilson's on 48½. More details can be found [here](#). It is hoped to repeat the event at Harrow School next academic year.

Eton College Rapidplay

This tournament will be on Sunday 13th October, from 11am to 5pm. The rate of play will be 20 min + five

seconds increment. Entry is now open for this popular event. Please see details on the separate flyer.

Inter-school Lichess Battles

Fortnightly online 'Battles' continue on Fridays from 6pm to 7pm on [lichess Secondary School Chess](https://lichess.org/team/secondary-school-chess). Past events can be seen [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 4.15pm to 5.15pm. Teams are of six players, 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.

Further details on all these events can be obtained by emailing Neill Cooper at manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk

ECF Secondary School Rapidplay Chess Tournament Sunday 13th October 2024 at Eton College, Berks



Venue: Eton College, Windsor SL4 6DW

Time: Registration from 10am, play start 11am, finish about 5pm.

Event Format: Five round Swiss rapid play tournament. Digital chess clocks: all moves in 20 minutes + five seconds/move. All games will be ECF rated.

Teams: Teams will consist of six players in school years 7 to 13. Schools can enter one or two teams.

Sections: This year there will be two sections: Open and Major (team average rating under 1400). Teams will be allocated their section based on the September 2024 ECF rating list.

Reserves: Teams can bring a maximum of one reserve, who can play instead of a team player in any round. There will not be the provision of games for reserves.

Cost: £40.00 per team, reduced to £30.00 if paid by credit/debit card when completing the entry form. You are recommended to delay completing the entry form until you can pay the entry fee at the same time. This will save the ECF time and effort as well as saving £10.00 on the entry fee.

Player details: By entering this tournament schools agree to provide the names and dates of birth of all their team players. Also, schools should inform the ECF if they have any players whose photographs cannot be used by the ECF in promoting chess.

Chess equipment: It is appreciated when those schools who have suitable chess equipment - sets (with kings over three inches high), boards and digital clocks (that can do increments) - bring them to this event. See details on the entry form.

Entry form: <https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/ecf-eton-college-rapidplay-2024-entry-form/>

If you need more information please email Neill Cooper at manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk

Harrogate and District Primary Schools Chess Association's Annual Individual Chess Tournament



Fifty one children from fifteen local schools assembled on 16th March at The Manhattan Club for the Harrogate and District Primary Schools Chess Association's annual individual chess tournament, played as a Swiss in four age sections of five rounds. The Manhattan Club were sponsoring the event, which was also supported by The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust.



Ben Pilgrim and Samuel Middlemass receive their trophy from Andrew Jones MP (with Michael Stokes in the background).

There was a triple tie for 1st place in the year 6 section with Kaiden Nelson of Saltergate Junior School and Ben Pilgrim and Samuel Middlemass, both of Spofforth Primary School, all having four wins and one loss.

Blake Lewis of Grewelthorpe Primary School and a member of the Manhattan Junior Chess Club won the year 5 section, with 2nd place going to Henry Yallup from Oatlands Community Junior School. There was four-way tie for 3rd place between Joseph Hirst of Pannal Primary School, Samantha Lusted of Oatlands and The Manhattan Club, James Smith of St Robert's Catholic Primary School, and Benjamin Ji of Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate.

In the year 4 section Harry Whoriskey from Moorside Primary School and The Manhattan finished in 1st place, followed by Nathaniel Richardson of Richard Taylor C of E Primary School and Adam Manzoor of Brackenfield School, who tied for 2nd place.

Archer Kirby from Rossett Acre Primary School retained the year 3 and under title that he won in 2023, with Jack Thurley and Amber Clothier both of Richard Taylor tying for 2nd place.

Book prizes were awarded to Kaiden Nelson for best boy player, Georgia May Wilson of Saltergate for best girl, Ben Pilgrim for best game, and Blake Lewis for best checkmate.



The Richard Taylor School team with Peter Rawcliffe who runs the club.

Richard Taylor School took the trophy for the best performing school, with the runners-up trophy going to Spofforth School.

Schools not already mentioned who were also represented at the tournament were Ashville College, St Peter's Harrogate, St Peter's Brafferton, and Bishop Monkton C of E Primary School. All children who took part were issued with certificates of participation.

Noel Stewart of York Chess Club entertained children and parents with a selection of chess problems on the demonstration board while the results and prize winners were being confirmed. The Association was pleased to welcome Mr Andrew Jones, the MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough who very kindly attended to present the prizes.

IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

As I have often stressed, it is very important to keep a look-out for tactics at all stages of the game.

Consider the following position which is just out of the opening.



P. V. Byway - P. E. Littlewood
St. Albans Open 2024

My opponent had clearly decided he wanted no more than a draw, and with that in mind he decided to swap queens by playing 1.Qd6. However, this is a tactical error because his rook is trapped after 1...Qxd6 2.Rxd6 Nd4 3.Nxd4 exd4. Black now threatens 4...Be5 winning the exchange, and there is no sensible way to prevent this.

It is also important to bear in mind that White must now choose a decent square for the attacked knight. There are

three options, and two of them make things worse! For example, if 4.Ne2? then 4..d3 wins, because after 5.Bxg7 the Zwischenzug 5....dxe2 wins material.

In fact 4.Nb1 is best, when White loses just the exchange for a pawn and can hope to prolong the battle.

In the game White chose to play 4.Na4 instead, but now Black can play 4....b5 and White is in danger of losing a piece. The game continued 5.Bh3 Ne5 6.Bxc8 Raxc8 7.f4 (7.Bxd4 loses to 7...Nf3+) Nd3 8.Bxd4 Bf8 9. Nc5 Bxd6 10.Nxd3 Rxe4 11.Be5 Bxe5 12.Nxe5 bxc4 13.Nxc4 Re2 and White resigned. His position is hopeless, as he is the exchange down for no compensation.

Consider another position which has arisen after the opening moves.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nd4



White sees a chance to renew his threat on f7 by the sharp **6.d6** However, this is a tactical error because Black plays **6...Qxd6**, and now after **7.Nxf7** there follows **7...Qc6!** **8.Nxh8 Qxg2** (even better than 8...Qxc4) **9. Rf1 Qe4+** **10.Be2 Nf3#**

Amazing, as the game has only just started!

Here now are a couple of examples that arise from openings for you to solve, with the solutions being given at the end of the article.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7

Why does the move 5.Nxd5 not win material?



1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nd4 4.Nxe5 Qg5

Why does 5.Nxf7 not win for White?



Answers:

After 5.Nxd5 there follows 5...Nxd5! 6.Bxd8 Bb4+ 7.Qd2 Bxd2+ 8.Kxd2 Kxd8, and Black has won a piece.

After 5.Nxf7 then 5...Qxg2 6.Rf1 Qxe4+ 7.Be2 Nf3#.

Watch out for those tactics!

Gormally's Coaching Corner by Danny Gormally



Reflections on the Candidates

I appeared on the Long Island chess podcast, run by Neal Bellon, in the lead up to the Candidates. During the broadcast I

suggested that the pre-tournament favourite Fabiano

Caruana was poor value at 2/1 with the bookies, when I regarded his compatriot Hikaru Nakamura as a more likely winner. However, I also added the caveat that Hikaru's Achilles heel was likely to be his preparation, or lack of it. It was clear that deep into the game he was more than a match for most of these players, as his level of natural ability lent him that protection; however, it didn't protect him from being completely outprepared by Vidit, for example. And one thing bugged me after I did that podcast. Why didn't I tip Gukesh? I had felt that after Wijk aan Zee he was the most exciting player I had seen for some time. I should have gone with my gut as it turned out. In the final round Hikaru had one last chance to qualify outright, which is what a win over Gukesh would have brought him. But once again he ran into excellent preparation.

Nakamura, H – Gukesh, D

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto, Canada (14), 21.04.2024

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 I have no idea if the QGA is a regular part of Gukesh's opening repertoire, or if he just prepared it for this game. In any case it seems to work well, as he soon gets a fine position.

3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.Bxc4 Be7 5...c5 is perhaps a more traditional move-order. Given the time he was spending on his moves, I already sensed that Hikaru was out of book.

6.Nc3 c5 7.a3 This seems like an odd move to play, but White often plays a later Qd3–Ba2–b1 once Black castles kingside.

It would have been compelling to see Hikaru try 7.dxc5, mostly because offering a queen trade in a must-win game is such an obstinate decision to take. 7...Qxd1+ 8.Kxd1 Bxc5 9.Ke2 a6 presumably offers White nothing more than equality.

7...0–0 8.0–0 a6 9.Qe2 b5 10.Ba2 cxd4 11.exd4?! This is more dubious from the practical point of view than anything else.

As Hikaru mentioned afterwards in the press conference, it was foolish not to have avoided playing 11.Rd1! fairly quickly, as this would have avoided the prospectless continuation that he was faced with in the game itself. Hikaru's sometime nemesis Kramnik suggested during his own commentary during this round that this opening isn't very strategic and is in fact very concrete. Either White gets some chances to create something, or Black will neutralise everything and get a result very easily. 11...Bb7 12.Nxd4, and now there is a threat of taking on e6. If 12...Qb6 (12...Qc7 13.e4 (13.Bxe6? fxe6 14.Nxe6 Qc6–+) 13...Nbd7 14.Bg5, and I'm not sure how to assess this

position, but it seems more promising for White than what happened in the game. 13.e4 Nbd7 14.Be3 and White again renews the intent to take on e6 with the knight. If 14...Bc5 15.b4 Bxd4 16.Bxd4.

11...b4!



Played quickly by Gukesh, when before he had been pondering rather tediously over his moves. This suggested to me that he was trying to disguise the depth of his preparation. In Toronto they were using a time control where you had plenty of time for the first 40 moves but had no increment. This lent itself to some weighty thinks, some of which had the effect of looking ridiculous, as the choice would seem obvious. But this longer time control could have been of benefit to the player in that it allowed more time for the player to orientate themselves to the position, thus avoiding the game-crushing blunders that are more common at faster time controls.

12.Ne4 12.axb4 Nc6! also offers White little, in fact in some cases less than little. Once Black recaptures on b4 with the knight he will establish full control over d5, and with the better prospects long-term due to the superior pawn structure.

12...bxa3 13.bxa3 in the press conference Hikaru suggested that, given the situation, it might have been a good idea to go for something murky like 13.Nxf6+ Bxf6 14.Bb1 axb2 15.Qe4 g6 16.Bxb2 Ra7, when objectively speaking White's adventures will not lead anywhere, but in a practical game anything is possible. In the game itself, Black's problems were never difficult to solve.

13...Bb7 14.Nc3 Nd5 15.Bd2 Nxc3 16.Bxc3



16...Nd7 It was also possible to play 16...Bd5, which is just the kind of solid response that you don't want to see when you desperately need to win. As is well-known, exchanges don't favour the player with the isolated pawn, as this will reduce the attacking chances that the opponent will have.

17.Bb1 Understandably, Hikaru relocates the bishop, as it was doing nothing on a2. if I were annotating this game by myself I would say that Black is clearly better already, but the engine isn't that impressed and just gives Black a tiny edge.

17...Rc8 18.Bd2 Nf6 19.Bd3 Bxf3 20.Qxf3 Qxd4 21.Rfd1 Qa4 22.Qb7 Bc5 23.Be1 23.Qxa6? Qh4 was already very bad for White, but for players of this level this was relatively easy to judge.

23...a5



24.Qb5 Perhaps the last interesting moment in this game has been reached.

24...Qxb5 A sensible decision, as it would require a monumental lapse of concentration to lose this ending.

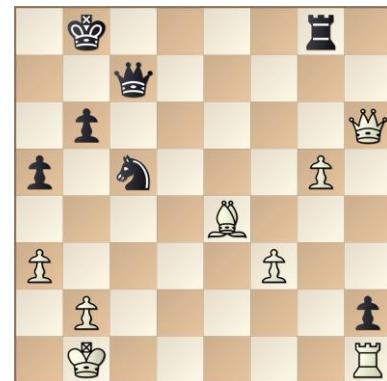
Kramnik in his broadcast suggested that Gukesh should have gone for 24...Qf4, keeping more tension in the position; however, going into the game Gukesh would surely have settled for a draw, and he admitted that afterwards he didn't see anything that clear for Black in

the variation 25.g3 Qe5. These players see a lot, so if they can't find anything then I probably won't be able to either!

25.Bxb5 Bb6 26.Rac1 Nd5 27.Kf1 Rfd8 28.a4 Kf8 29.g3 Ke7 30.Ke2 f5 31.Rc4 Rxc4 32.Bxc4 Nb4 33.Rb1 Bc5 34.Rc1 Nc6 35.Bc3 g5 36.Bb5 Ba3 37.Rc2 Nd4+ 38.Bxd4 Rxd4 39.Rc7+ Kf6 40.Rxh7 Bb4 41.Bd3 e5 The sneaky 41...Bf8!, intending to either dominate the rook or grab the pawn on a4, might have given Black some slight hopes of winning this endgame and eliminating any thoughts of a play-off altogether. If 42.Ra7 Rxa4 43.Ra6 Ra2+ 44.Kf1 Bc5 45.Rxe6+!=.

42.f3 e4 43.fxe4 fxe4 44.Bb5 Be7 45.h4 gxh4 46.gxh4 Rb4 47.Rh5 Kg7 48.Bd7 Rd4 49.Be8 Bd8 50.Rf5 Bxh4 51.Rxa5 Kf6 52.Ra8 Bg5 53.Bh5 Rd2+ 54.Kf1 Ra2 55.a5 Ra1+ 56.Kg2 Ra2+ 57.Kf1 Ra1+ 58.Ke2 Ra2+ 59.Kd1 Rd2+ 60.Ke1 Rd5 61.Ke2 Bd2 62.a6 Rxh5 63.a7 Ra5 64.Rf8+ Ke5 65.a8Q Rxa8 66.Rxa8 e3 67.Ra4 Kd5 68.Kd3 Kc5 69.Re4 Kd5 70.Rxe3 Bxe3 71.Kxe3 ½–½

Caruana, F - Nepomniachtchi, I FIDE Candidates 2024
Toronto, Canada (14), 21.04.2024



It is clear after the Candidates that the potential of Dommaraju Gukesh is considerable. While it still doesn't seem completely clear who will eventually emerge as the strongest from the generation that also includes his countryman and friend Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, as well as others like Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Vincent Keymer, the name just became a little bit clearer. When someone suggested afterwards that no one outside India or China will provide a finalist for the next 20–30 years that felt like an exaggeration. But it is also true that they hold all the aces. I felt that at least part of Gukesh's success could have been attributed to all the attention that Pragg received after his wonderful World Cup run. We all saw that video where Pragg was mobbed on arrival at Chennai airport, and it is possible that Gukesh used this as fuel for his fire, that he wanted some of that. Pragg is a friend, but also a rival. If India have delivered so quickly with their super-talents it is not difficult to work out why,

because it is a massive advantage to have a group of young players who train together, who travel together, and who socialise with each other. It is like a racing stable (Willie Mullins, Aidan O'Brien etc?!) where you have a large group of talented racehorses who race against each other at home - they'll bring each other on. When Praggs shows a spurt of improvement, Gukesh, Erigaisi and others are forced to catch up. And vice versa. That's why I would be very surprised if Praggs didn't take down at least one super-tournament over the next 12 months, as he'll also use his friend's success to fuel his fire. He'll be looking at Gukesh and thinking, if he can do it, so can I. When you compare English chess with India it's a sobering reality that they are now surging ahead. For every promising junior player we can put up, they have at least ten of the same calibre, mainly because they have an enormous population pool to draw upon. So they are ahead, and will stay ahead for the conceivable future. The older generation of Fabiano Caruana, Hikaru and Ian Nepomniachtchi I think in a higher sense are going to struggle to even qualify for a World Championship match in future, let alone win one. The history books may suggest they were good, but at the highest level they ultimately failed. The reason they are going to struggle in the future is because the younger generation are only going to get even stronger with experience. It is not like they will become unbeatable, but just that the days of players like Korchnoi qualifying to play a World Championship in his late 40s and early 50s will increasingly seem like a distant memory that belonged to a very different era (which it is). I feel like Gukesh's success will just become part of a growing trend, where the players who contest a World Championship match will become younger and younger. Already the even younger generation of Faustino Oro and Bodhana Sivanandan are at least as promising as the older one. It is not difficult to imagine a 14 year old playing for the world title in the future. By the time you turn 21, you will be considered washed up and ready for a career in streaming and commentary work. Despite all this future doom and gloom, Fabiano went agonisingly close to getting into the play-off. Of all the improvements in the coverage, I would mention the board cameras which perhaps had been there before, but if they had I hadn't noticed them. They gave a very good birds-eye view of the action, and you had the sense that you were actually there, in the presence of the players. One of the things I noticed about Caruana was how closely he resembles our own Michael Adams with the speed he executes the moves and writes them down. This all seemed to happen with one swift motion.

39.Bh7? A mistake that will surely haunt Caruana for some time, or will it? That feels like a cliché that commentators like me are good at throwing out. In reality

Caruana is a very level-headed individual, if his excellent YouTube podcast is anything to go by. He'll process this and move on.

In a calmer moment and with more time, Caruana would surely have played 39.Bc2!, after which Black is completely devoid of counterplay and can only delay his moment of resignation. If 39...Ka7 40.g6+—.

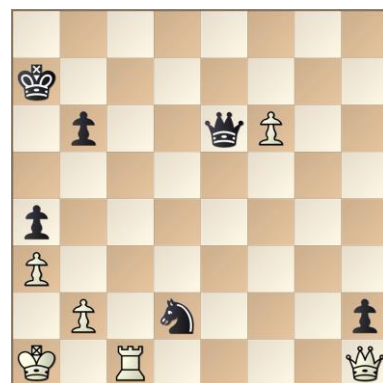
39...Rxc5! Missed by Fabi!

40.Qxg5 Qxh7+ 41.Ka1? Played quickly, an understandable human reaction to what had gone before. Fabi is clearly shaken by his mistake on the 39th move, when the game should have ended at that point. Indeed, the whole game demonstrates very human reactions and emotions. It is easy to forget when these guys play perfect chess and play with engine-like accuracy that they are human like we are. Like the internet meme from 'Wolf of Wall Street' would say, 'One of us! One of us!'

41.Ka2 Qf7+ 42.Ka1 Nb3+ 43.Kb1 Qxf3 44.Qe5+ Ka7 45.Qxh2, when Black will not be able to hold, as White will always gain attacking chances or be able to exchange queens.

41...Qc2 42.Qg8+ Ka7 43.Ka2 a4! 44.f4 Nb3? 14 games in a fairly short space of time, as well as the competitive situation, can only explain why the players were making mistakes that were not of their normal level. 44...Ka6! 45.Qa8+ Kb5 46.Qd5 Ka6=.

45.Qg7+ Ka6 46.Qc3 Qg2 47.Qc4+ Kb7 48.Re1 Nc5 49.Qf1! Qd5+ 50.Kb1 Qf5+ 51.Ka1 Qc2 52.f5 Nd3 53.Rb1 Nc5 54.f6 Nb3+ 55.Ka2 Nd2 56.Qh1+ Ka7 57.Rc1 Qb3+ 58.Ka1 Qe6



59.Rc7+?? It turns out that this check only aids Black. 59.Rd1 Nb3+ 60.Kb1 Qg4 61.f7+—.

59...Ka6 60.f7 Nb3+ 61.Kb1 Qf5+?? 61...Nd2+ 62.Kc2 Qf5+ was an obscure perpetual. 63.Kxd2 Qf2+ 64.Kd3

Qg3+ 65.Kc2 (65.Ke2 Qg4+ 66.Kf2 Qf4+ 67.Kg2 Qg4+ 68.Kxh2 Qh5+ 69.Kg2 Qd5+ 70.Kg1 Qd1+=) 65...Qxc7+=.

62.Ka2 Nc5 63.Qa8+ Kb5



64.Qc6+?? 64.Qe8+ Ka6 65.Qe2+ Nd3 66.Qxh2+.

64...Ka6 65.Qa8+ Kb5 66.Qc6+ Ka6 67.Re7 Qf1! 68.Qa8+ Kb5 69.Qe8+ Ka6 70.Qa8+ Kb5 71.Qe8+ Ka6 72.Re4 The only chance to keep the game going at all.

72...Nxe4 73.Qxa4+ Kb7 74.Qxe4+ Ka7 75.Qa4+ Kb7 76.Qd7+ Ka6 77.Qc8+ Ka7 78.f8Q Qxf8 79.Qxf8 h1Q 80.a4 Kramnik suggested that in these queen and pawn endings it is very important to centralise the queen (a very sage piece of advice), and that White should have begun with 80.Qe7+ Ka6 81.Qe6, which I'm sure is true, but by this point Fabi was probably too demoralized to care.

80...Qd5+ 81.Ka3 Qd3+ 82.b3 Qd4 83.Qf7+ Kb8 84.Qe8+ Ka7 85.Qe7+ Kb8 86.Qe1 Qd6+ 87.Qb4 Qf6 88.Qd2 Qe7+ 89.b4 Qe6 90.Qd3 Ka7 91.Qc3 Kb8 92.Qb3 Qf6 93.Qe3 Qd6 94.Kb3 Qd5+ 95.Kb2 Qd6 96.Qe8+ Ka7 97.Qf7+ Kb8 98.Kc3 Qe5+ 99.Kd3 Qd6+ 100.Kc4 Qc6+ 101.Kb3 Qd6 102.Qf3 Qd4 103.Qe2 Qd5+ 104.Ka3 Qd6 105.Qb5 Qd4 106.Kb3 Ka7 107.Qe2 Qd5+ 108.Ka3 Qd4 109.Kb3

½-½

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

How to Solve a Study by Ian Watson

Moving Two Pieces at Once

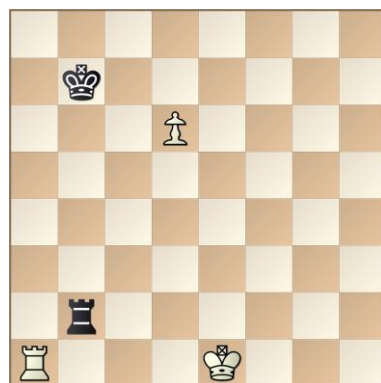
There's only move in chess where a player can move two of his own pieces at once - castling. When we castle we don't often make use of that oddness to enable us to

attack two pieces at once, but it can happen. Here's a position from the Ruy Lopez. Black played 10...Rxb2? - why does that deserve a question mark?



In the game Feuer - O'Kelly, Liege 1934, after Black played 10...Rxb2, the game went 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Qxd8+ Kxd8 13.0-0+, and because he was losing a rook O'Kelly resigned. It's easy to overlook that idea - it occurs in other openings too, and a lot of strong players have fallen into it. O'Kelly was one of the stronger players of his time - indeed, he later became world champion at correspondence chess. He clearly didn't see the idea even after 11.dxe5 because he could have played 11...fxe5, although after 12.Nxe5 (using the same idea) his position would have been bad.

Study composers use such ideas too. Here's a study by Selesniev, from *Tidskrift för Schack* in 1921.



White to play and win

Black can castle, because in studies castling is legal unless you can prove from the position that it isn't. You know that, and you spot that the composer has chosen to place the king and the queen's rook on their starting squares, so castling is almost certainly part of the solution. Enthused by your insight, you try 1.0-0-0, attacking the black rook and supporting the d-pawn's promotion run. Damn... Black has 1...Ra2, threatening 2...Ra1+, and meeting 2.Kb1 with 2...Ra8. Okay, then, delay castling one move, 1.d7 Kc7 and now 2.0-0-0 and wins... no,

double damn, 2...Rb8 defends. For such a short, spartan, study, it's surprisingly difficult, but once you get past your over-enthusiasm you can see that the answer is 2.d8Q+ with the double move to follow. The solution is **1.d7 Kc7 2.d8Q+ Kxd8 3.0-0-0+** and wins.

Now it's your turn to solve. This is a new composition by our frequent contributor Paul Michelet. Of course he has disguised the idea, but you now know what to look for.



White to play and win

The solutions are given at the end of the newsletter.

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones

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



Mate in 4

It's by A. Samile, and appeared in *Problem* (Zagreb), 1973.

Black is well cooped up, having only one legal move, but the worrisome aspect of this is that stalemate will come to his rescue if we adopt the simple plan of moving the f1-knight (which doesn't seem to be doing much at f1) in three moves to f6. How do we exploit Black's lack of

moves? By giving him one which will be fatal. We start with 1.Bd4!. There are two lines of play. In the more prosaic one Black takes the king flight he's now been offered – 1...Kh6 2.Ne3 Kh5 3.Nxf5 (Zugzwang) h6 4.Ng7. In the other, Black plays for stalemate: 1...h6, and we now have 2.Bf2!, forcing 2...gxf2, and then the *coup de grace* 3.g3!; Black's only move is 3...hgx3, after which 4.Nxg3 is mate. There are no grounds for self-reproach if in trying to solve this you failed to visualize the possibility of playing 3.g3, with its most unusual Zugzwang.

The European Chess Solving Championships took place in Hagen, Germany, from 19th to 21st April. The British team of David Hodge, Jonathan Mestel, Audrey Kueh and Kamila Hryshchenko, having fallen behind on the first of the two days of the main Championship, made up ground on the second day to finish a very respectable fifth. For Audrey Kueh, competing in her first such event, a very good performance earned her a WFM norm. I feel sure that it will be onwards and upwards from here on!

Let me share with you three of the problems with which the contestants were confronted. The first one, a mate in two, you may like to have a go at solving before reading on to the text under the diagram, because it exemplifies an important quality in such problems – good tries. 'Tries' in this context has the specific sense of an attempt by White that fails only to one unique saving resource on the part of Black. Sometimes, in order to make a thematic point, a composer allows there to be a try that satisfies the definition but doesn't fully deserve the title because it's so obvious a move and/or its refutation is crude (often a capture of one of White's pieces). But in solving competitions (as well as among many theorists) the virtues of good, plausible tries are extolled. In the case of the first problem we'll be looking at, no fewer than 25 of the 69 (all very strong) solvers fell for one of the tries! So kudos if you can do better.



Yitzhak Nero and Evgeni Bourd

Variantim, 2013

Mate in 2

There are a number of ways to threaten a number of different mates. In her article on the event for the magazine of the British Chess Problem Society, *The Problemist*, Audrey Kueh recalls opting for 1.Rxd5, which very much has the look of a key move (1...Kxd5 2.b4#), but which fails against 1...Ne5!. Audrey suffered a blind spot, thinking that 1...Ne5 had the drawback of withdrawing Black's guard on f4 and thus allowed 2.Nf4'#, overlooking that Black would then have 2...Kf5! Other plausible tries are 1.g7? Bc3!, 1.b4? Rd6!, and 1.Bxf6? Bb4!. The key is 1.f4!, threatening 2.f5, and now the defences 1...Nxf4/...d4/...f5 fail to 2.Nxf4/b4/g7.

Three mates in two have to be solved in twenty minutes by competitors. By comparison, the schedule for longer problems seems more leisurely, but this is misleading, as there is so much more work involved in finding not only the main idea(s) of a longer problem but also in teasing out all the resourceful black defences. Consider this problem from the event.



Alexander Sygurov

1st Prize, *Shahmatnoe Obozrenie* 2007

Mate in 3

I've mentioned before that because scores out of five are traditionally awarded in solving events it is a bonus for organizers if the solution of a problem falls neatly into five parts, each scoring one point. This happens to be just such a neat problem. Solvers get one point for finding the key move 1.Bf4! and the fact that its threat is 2.Nf3+ (which will be followed by 3.Be5#). There are four defences, all skilfully realized by the composer. All of them have a none-too-obvious defect. If 1...d6, Black is no longer guarding c6, so we just need to vacate that square: 2.Qxc5+ dxc5 3.Nc6#. This pleasingly echoes the motif of the threatened 2.Nf3+, which also is a sacrificial check serving only to vacate a square for the mating move. This problem won a first prize from a judge who would have

been examining its aesthetic credentials, and so is a good illustration of the way in which the criteria of the solver and of the aesthete can coalesce.

The solver's third point is gained for spotting that 1...Bd6 has a very arcane flaw: 2.Bxf7!, threatening 3.Qd5+, can no longer be met by 2...d5??. (Problemists use '??' to signify that a move is impossible, not that it is dreadful blunder!) After 2.Bxf7, 2...dxc6 would lead to 3.Nxc6. The fourth point arises from the observation that as matters stand, if White plays gxh3 to threaten Be3# Black defends with ...Bg5. So when Black tries the defence 1...f6, he runs into 2.gxh3! (2...Bg5??). And finally, we can see that as matters stand, if White plays Rg5 (another square - vacating move, threatening Nf5#), Black plays ...f5, so as to guard f5 from f8. So when Black plays 1...Bf6 he runs into 2.Rg5 (not 2.Rh5? Rxh5) and again we can put '??' against 2...f5.

If you saw most or all of that before I spelt it out do please let me know, as you should be competing in solving events! You can find all the problems set in Hagen by going onto the W FCC website and into the 'solving portal' there. I leave you with another of the two-movers, a further problem replete with plausible tries. You may like to have a go at solving it and then checking with your computer that you haven't fallen for one of the tries (or, if you're more patient, waiting till I give the solution in the next issue!).



Mate in 2

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

Christopher Jones Email: cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Winton British Chess Solving Championship 2024-2025



round will be invited to the final in February 2025. The exact date and location will be advised. The prize money in the final is likely to be around £2,500. The winner of the final will win the right to represent Great Britain at the World Chess Solving Championships in 2025.

*Nigel Dennis, Controller
Winton British Chess Solving Championship*

Organised by the British Chess Problem Society



Entry to this competition, sponsored by Winton, is by solving the starter problem below. White, playing up the board, is to play and force mate in two moves against any defence by Black. There is no entry fee, and the competition is open to British residents only. Competitors need only send White's first move, known as the key move.

WBCSC Starter 2024-2025

Black (10 Men)



White (8 Men)

White to Play and Mate in Two Moves

Entries can be made in one of two ways:

By post to Nigel Dennis, Boundary House, 230 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1QY;

By email to winton@theproblemist.org

All entries must be postmarked or emailed no later than 31st July 2024, and must give the entrant's name and home address. Juniors under the age of 18 on 31st August 2023 must give their date of birth.

All entrants should mention where they first saw the starter problem. Receipt of the solution to the starter will only be acknowledged after the closing date, when all competitors will receive the answer, and those who get it right will also receive the postal round, which will contain eight more difficult and varied problems. In due course the best competitors and the best juniors from the postal

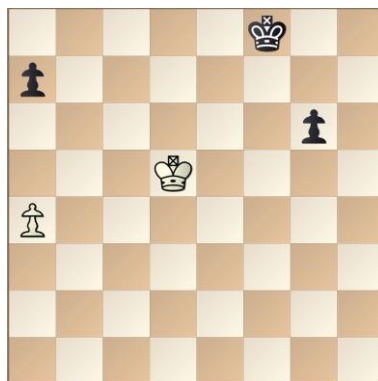
EVENTS CALENDAR

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

Week Beginning 3 June 2024	
June 4	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024
June 4	22nd Sam Black Memorial Open Blitz, Wanstead
June 5	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Summer 2024
June 5	First Wednesday Chess, Potters Bar
June 8	ECF Counties Championships 2024 Semi-Finals,
June 8	Wimbledon Junior Rapidplay
June 8	UKCC Bristol Megafinal 2024
June 8	Open-Air Giant Chess Event with Shreyas Royal, Snodland
June 9	38th Birmingham Rapidplay
June 9	UKCC Cambridge Megafinal 2024
June 9	UKCC Somerset Megafinal 2024
June 9	UKCC York Megafinal 2024
June 9	West London Academy Competition & Lessons
June 9	Thamesmead London Blitz OPEN
Week Beginning 10 June 2024	
June 10	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup 2024
June 12	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Summer 2024
June 13	Hendon FIDE Blitz
June 15	Basmania Chess Festival
June 15	Golders Green FIDE Rapid 2024
June 15	Maidenhead Junior Tournament June 2024
June 15	Basmania Rapidplay
June 15-16	UKCC 1st Online Megafinal Weekend 2024
June 16	Wightlink Ryde Rapid, Isle of Wight
June 16	2nd Cambridge FIDE RapidPlay
Week Beginning 17 June 2024	
June 17	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup 2024
June 18	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024
June 19	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Summer 2024
June 20-23	English Chess Championships and English Women's Chess Championships 2024, Kenilworth
June 22	3rd Ilkley Chess Festival
June 22	SCCU/London Club Championships 2024
June 22-23	Southall FIDE Congress
June 22-24	UKCC Scottish Gigafinal 2024, Broughton
June 22-29	Braille Chess Association's British Championships, Harrogate
June 23	UKCC Hampshire Megafinal 2024
June 23	2024 Solihull Junior Open
Week Beginning 24 June 2024	
June 24	Coulsdon Chess Summer Cup 2024
June 26	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Summer 2024
June 28-29	Wimbledon FIDE Congress
June 28-30	7th Crewe Chess Congress
June 29-30	UKCC 2nd Online Megafinal Weekend 2024
June 29-30	Greenwich Chess Extravaganza
June 29-30	Hastings U1900 Weekend Tournament
June 29	2nd Portishead Junior Rapidplay
June 29	Poplar Rapid Tournament
June 29	Milton Keynes FIDE Rapid Tournament
June 29	2nd Cheam FIDE RapidPlay
June 30	Chelmsford Summer Junior Chess Tournament
June 30	UKCC North London Last Chance Saloon Megafinal 2024

Diamond Test answers

Q1 ANSWER



White to play and draw.

1.Ke6! But not 1.a5? Ke7 2.a6 Kd7.

1...Kg7 2.a5 Kh6 3.Kd5!! Keeping both black pawns in sight.

3...g5 3...Kh5 4.Kc6 g5 5.Kb7 g4 6.Kxa7 g3 7.Kb7 g2 8.a6 g1Q 9.a7 is drawn.

4.Ke4! 4.a6 does not work: 4...g4 5.Ke4 Kg5 6.Ke3 Kh4 7.Kf2 Kh3 8.Kg1 Kg3.

4...Kh5 5.Kf3 Kh4 6.Kg2 Kg4 7.a6 Reciprocal Zugzwang and a draw.

Q2 ANSWER

The game begins...

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0-0 8.Bb3 Na5 8...Qa5.

9.e5 Ne8? Black should try 9...Nxb3 10.exf6 Nxa1 11.fxg7 Nxc2+ 12.Nxc2 Kxg7, but it will not be much fun.

10.Bxf7+! A crusher.

10...Kxf7 10...Rxf7 11.Ne6.

11.Ne6!



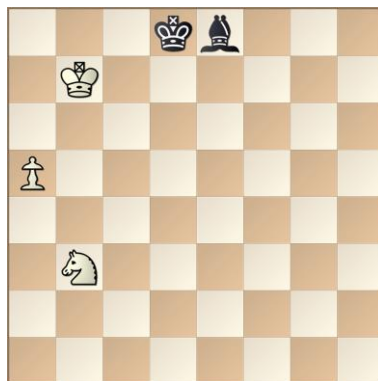
As played in Fischer-Reshevsky US Championship 1959 (and on numerous other occasions). Devastating.

11...Kxe6 Leads to mate.

12.Qd5+ Kf5 13.g4+ Kxg4 14.Rg1+ Kh4 14...Kh5 15.Qg2.

15.Bg5+ Kh5 16.Qd1+ Rf3 17.Qxf3#

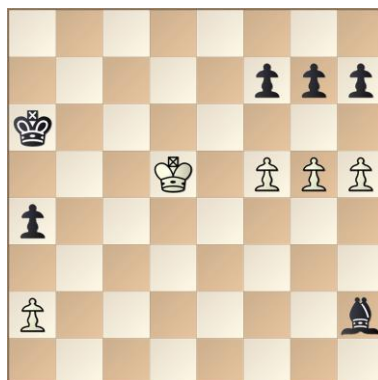
Q3 ANSWER



1.a6 Bh5 1...Bf7 2.Na5; 1...Bg6 2.Nc5.

2.Nd4 Kd7 3.Kb8 Bf7 4.Nc6 Bd5 5.Na5 Nb7 will ensure the pawn promotes.

Q4 ANSWER



It's a win for Black after...

1.g6 hxg6 2.f6 Be5! 3.Kxe5 gxf6+ 4.Kxf6 gxh5

Q5 ANSWER

Which chess player has a nickname of the ' Kentucky Lion'? Is it a) Ben Finegold; b) Jackson Showalter; c) Arnold Denker; d) Arthur Dake.

The answer is Jackson Showalter.

Q6 ANSWER



This is a position from Karpov-J Polgar Budapest 1998. Black played...

1...Bxd6 Amazingly, the game was drawn after **2.Rd5**. But **2.Rf1!!** wins for White!.

Q7 ANSWER

Mamedyarov-Carlsen Qatar 2015 began...

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.e3 0-0 8.Rc1 dxc4 9.Bxc4 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.Ne4 Qe7 12.exd4 Rd8 13.Qe2 Nc6 14.Rfd1 Ba5 15.Ng3 Bb6 16.Qe4 Bd7 17.h4 Be8 18.a3



A complex middlegame has arisen.

What is the most accurate statement about this position?

- a) Black has a positional advantage in view of White's isolated queen pawn.
- b) Black is much better.
- c) The position is complex and balanced. White's strongly placed queen and attacking chances compensate for the IQP.
- d) White is better. Black has no way to increase the pressure on the d4-pawn, and meanwhile White can build a kingside attack.

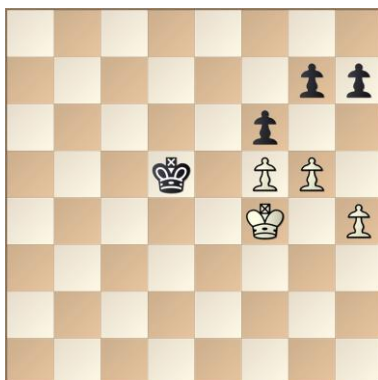
18...Rd6! The correct answer is a). It is indeed true that White has kingside chances, but Carlsen masterfully demonstrates that it is the vulnerability of the IQP that is the most important feature.

19.Qg4 Rad8 20.d5 White cannot rid himself of the weak pawn this way.

20...Qf8! 21.Qe4 Ne7 The pawn is lost.

22.Bd3 f5 23.Qe5 Nxd5 24.Bxf5 exf5 25.Nxf5 Rc6! 0–1

Q8 ANSWER



Chigorin-Tarrasch Ostend 1905

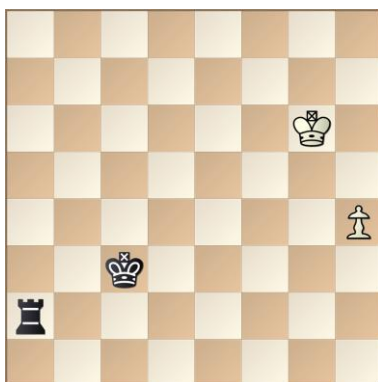
It's a draw, although White has to exercise some imagination.

1.Kg4! None of the alternatives work. 1.g6? h5; 1.h5 h6!; 1.gxf6 gxf6 2.Kg4 Ke5 3.Kh5 (3.Kh3 Kf4! 0–1 was the game.) 3...Kxf5 4.Kh6 Kg4 5.Kxh7 Kh5!.

1...Ke4 2.g6! h6 2...hxd6 3.fxd6 f5+ 4.Kg3 leads to a draw. 4...Ke3 5.Kg2 f4 6.Kf1 Ke4 7.h5 Kf5 8.h6 Kxg6 9.hxg7 Kxg7 10.Kf2 Kg6 11.Kg2 Kg5 12.Kf3 Kf5 13.Kf2.

3.Kh5 Kxf5 Keep an eye open for stalemate ideas!

Q9 ANSWER



Hamdouchi-Topalov Cap d'Agde 1994

Black to play and win.

1...Rg2+! 1...Kd4? Obvious but wrong, was played in the game, and led to a draw: 2.h5 Ke5 3.h6 Ke6 4.Kg7! (4.h7?? Rg2+ 5.Kh6 Kf7 6.h8N+ Kf6 7.Kh7 Rg1!) 4...Rg2+ 5.Kf8 Rf2+ 6.Kg7 Rg2+.

2.Kf5 Rh2! Wins a tempo by comparison.

3.Kg5 Kd4 4.h5 Ke5 5.Kg6 Ke6 6.h6 Rg2+ 7.Kh7 Kf7 8.Kh8 Ra2 9.Kh7 Ra6 10.Kh8 Rxh6# If you got that one you have excellent technique!

Q10 ANSWER



A nice easy one to finish. White to play and win.

27.Re8+ Kh7 28.Qg8+ Kh6 29.Bf4+ Rg5 30.Qh8+ Bh7 31.Re6+ g6 32.Bxg5+ Kxg5 33.Qe5+ Kh6 34.Qe3+ Kg7 35.Re7+ A.
Martin - J. Murey Issy les Moulineaux 1984

I hope you enjoyed this test and that you will take a look at the Certificate of Excellence in its entirety, originally designed by Matthew and Peter Turner and now set to expand.

How to Solve a Study solution

(Michelet)

1.Nd1 b2 2.Nxb2 Rxb2 3.Nb6+ Kxc7 4.Bxd6+ Kxd6 5.Nxc4+ dxc4 6.0-0-0+ wins. Paul's study finishes with the thematic flourish of the 'two-moves-in-one'. The resulting rook vs pawns ending is a win, although only by one tempo, as the databases demonstrate.

3.Bxd6? Rb1+ 4.Ke2 Rxa1 5.Nb6+ Kxd6 6.c8Q Re1+, or, in that line, 5.Be5 Rb1 6.f6 d4 7.Bxd4 Rb5.

In the main line, 3...Rxb6 4.Rxa2 is eventually a win for White.

Also in the main line, 4...Kxb6 5.Be5, attacking b2 and guarding the a1-rook, is again an eventual white win. Similarly 4...Kc6 5.Be5.

BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

Thursday 25th July to Sunday 4th August 2024
Hull City Hall and Doubletree Hotel, Hull



British Championship

Saturday 27th July to Sunday 4th August
9 round standardplay Swiss open to qualifiers

Major Open

Saturday 27th July to Sunday 4th August
9 round standardplay Swiss open to all

British Seniors Champs (50+,65+)

Monday 29th July to Sunday 4th August
7 round standardplay Swiss

Weekender Congress

Friday 26th to Sunday 28th July
Four sections: Atkins, Penrose, Soanes, Yates,
5 rounds

British Junior Blitz/Rapid Champs

U16, U14, U12, U10, U8: Blitz – Thursday 25th July,
Rapid – Friday 26th to Saturday 27th July

British Junior Championships

U16, U14, U12, U10, U8: Sunday 28th July to
Saturday 3rd August - 7 round standardplay

Weekday Morning Congress

Monday 29th July to Saturday 3rd August
Open, U1900, U1600 sections, 6 rounds

Weekday Afternoon Congress

Monday 29th July to Saturday 3rd August
U2050, U1750, U1450 sections, 6 rounds

Rapidplay Events

Saturday 3rd August
Three sections: Open, U2000, U1500, 7 rounds

Blitz Events

Tuesday 30th July and Thursday 1st August
Two sections: Open, U1600

Commentary, Coaching and Bookstall

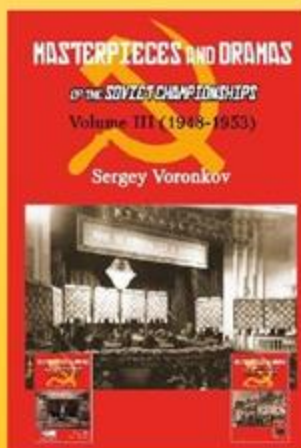
Spectator seating for top boards with GM commentary in a separate room at the venue. Junior coaching available for the Junior Championship period. Bookstall by Chess & Bridge.

Social Chess and Festival Programme

There will also be a full social chess and festival programme across the 10 days including:
Outdoor/drop-in chess, GM simuls, social and team chess evenings, problem solving, Ukrainian culture and chess evening, quiz evening, Hull heritage walks and more.

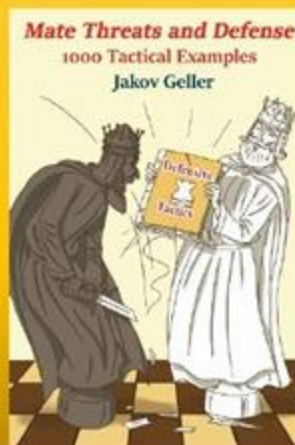
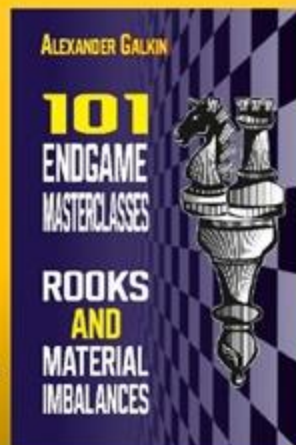


www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk



New books from Elk and Ruby

- Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships: Volume III (1948-1953) by *Sergey Voronkov*
- The Pawn Study Composer's Manual by *Mikhail Zinar*
- 101 Endgame Masterclasses: Rooks and Material Imbalances by *Alexander Galkin*
- Mate Threats and Defense - 1000 Tactical Examples by *Jakov Geller*



Available in the UK
from Chess & Bridge
and on Amazon



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www.elkandruby.com