



Chess *Moves*

August 2024



Results, reports, perspectives and games from the British Chess Championships 2024, reports and games from the Wood Green Invitational and the Mindsports International Chess Festival, and much much more ...

CONTENTS

Events

British Chess Championships 2024	4
British Chess Championships: Prize-Winners	5
Perspective by Peter Wells	6
Perspective by Matthew Wadsworth	12
Perspective by Shreyas Royal	17
British Chess Championships Alexander Best Game Award	19
Key Moments from the Women's Championship by Lan Yao	19
Under 18 Girl's Champion's Favourite Game	23
A Commentator's Reflections on the British Chess Championships by Danny Gormally	24
Hull: The City where Even the Lord Mayor Plays Chess	26
British Chess Championships 2024 Social Programme	28
Report on Wood Green Invitational 12th – 16th July 2024 by Lawrence Cooper	31
IV Mindsports International Chess Festival 2024 by Lance Leslie-Smith	35

Features

Endgames All Club Players Should Know by Glenn Flear	40
From the Archives	47
It's a Puzzlement!	49
Empowering Minds: A New Chess Club for Women and Juniors in London by Zoya Boozorginia	52

News and Views

Great Britain Wins the World Team Chess Solving Championships	55
England Teams for the Chess Olympiad	55
World Chess League Update By Peter Hornsby	55
Gosforth Chess in the Park By Mick Riding	56
ECF Awards 2024 by Keith Gregory	57
Hastings 2024/2025 Dates Announced	57
Hull 4NCL Congress	57
UK Open Blitz Championships 2024	58
ECF AGM – Calls for Motions and Nominations	58

Junior Moves

Littlewood's Choice	58
Shreyas Royal Achieves Third GM Norm at the British Chess Championships	59
Brilliant English Under 9s!	60
Glorney Cup 2024 by Sathya Vaidyanathan	60
National Schools Chess Championships – English Schools Final 2024	62
European Youth Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2024 by Zara Mehta and Hatle Mehta	62

Improvers

Paul Littlewood on Tactics	64
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Studies and Problems

Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones	65
How to Solve a Study by Ian Watson	66
How to Solve a Study solution	69

Calendar

68

EDITORIAL



Greetings and welcome to the August 2024 edition of *ChessMoves*.

This month we feature a comprehensive reporting package on this year's British Championships, which were a resounding success. I commend to you in particular Peter Wells' thoughtful article and the excellent selection of annotated games!

It's great to see an increasing number of tournament opportunities for our norm-seeking and ambitious players, and we follow the British with reports on the Wood Green International and the Mindsports International events, both of which were very successful.

Many congratulations to Great Britain, who are the winners of the World Problem Solving championships; John Nunn, Jonathan Mestel and David Hodge made up the winning team. As Paul Littlewood puts it: brilliant!

We report on a new initiative in London, the formation of a new chess club for women and young players. This is well worth checking out, as the atmosphere is bound to be welcoming and warm.

The usual columnists will keep you entertained, and there's a lot of junior news this month to round off what can only be described as a bumper edition.

All the games within are presented in PGN format here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/August-ChessMoves.pgn>, but note that you will need to use ChessBase or a PGN viewer to access the games.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

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EVENTS

British Chess Championships 2024

This year's British Chess Championships were held at Hull City Hall and the DoubleTree by Hilton in Hull City Centre, with events running from Thursday 25th July to Sunday 4th August 2024 across the two city centre venues.

2024 British Chess Champions



ECF CEO Mike Truran with GM Gawain Jones, and Hull Councillor Rob Pritchard with GM David Howell

Congratulations to the 2024 British Chess Champion GM Gawain Jones, who became the latest Champion following an exciting play-off against second placed GM David Howell!

Gawain and David agreed a draw in their round 9 game with both players finishing on 7 points, half a point clear of the following pack, which resulted in a play-off for the title. The play-off was all square after two rapidplay games, with Gawain finally winning the blitz games by 1½–½ to take the 2024 Championship.

Congratulations also go to joint British Women's Champions WGM Lan Yao and WIM Trisha Kanyamarala.



WGM Lan Yao, and WGM Lan Yao and WIM Trisha Kanyamarala

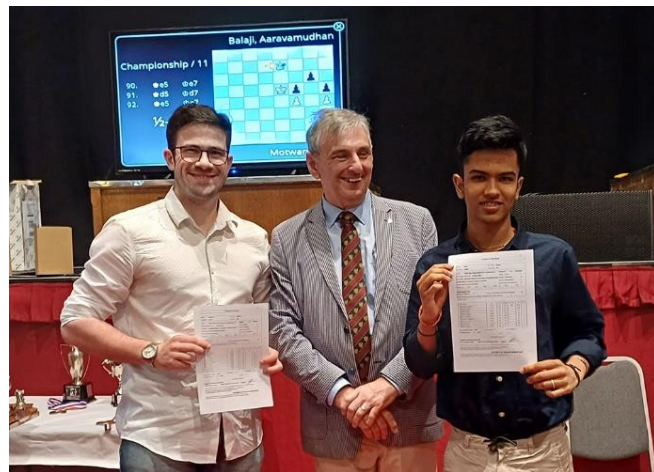
Congratulations also go to highest placed juniors in the main British Championship as follows:

Highest placed U21 – FM Maciej Czopor

Joint Highest placed U18 – IMs Shreyas Royal, Svyatoslav Bazakutsa, Artem Lutsko, and Yichen Han

Highest placed U18 girl – WFM Bodhana Sivanandan

We are pleased to confirm that two GM norms were achieved at the event: one for IM Shreyas Royal (below right) who is now set to become England's youngest ever GM, and one for IM Matthew Wadsworth (below left), his second GM norm.



The Senior Championship titles were won by GM Keith Arkell, who becomes the 50+ British Champion, and FM Andrew Smith, who becomes the 65+ British Champion. Junior British Champions are shown below.

	U16	U14
Standardplay	Max Pert	Rock Yu
Rapidplay	Stanley Badacsonyi	Pengxiao Zhu
Blitz	Stanley Badacsonyi/Jack Liu	Pengxiao Zhu
U12	U10	U8
George Zhao	Junyi Zhang	Junyan Hu
George Zhao/Rami Talab	Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham	Tara Tamilselvan
George Zhao	Junyi Zhang/Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham	Advik Saxena/Tara Tamilselvan

You can find the list of prize-winners for all of the British events here:

<https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/prizewinners-2024/>

The ECF would like to thank our sponsors: Hull and East Riding Chess Association, Hull City Council, Hull Culture and Leisure, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire, the Chess Trust, and the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust. Our thanks go also to our arbiters, officials, commentators, and all of the players who took part in the events... and of course parents who accompanied their juniors. We would also like to thank the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for their support in making this one of the strongest British Chess Championships in the last twenty years.

British Chess Championships: Prize-Winners

With thanks to CHESS magazine for compiling and sharing the list of prize-winners.

Aside from the Championship itself there were many impressive performances during the British Chess Championships in Hull (25th July – 4th August), both at Hull City Hall and the DoubleTree by Hilton. Teenager Lorenzo Fava completely dominated the Major Open, racking up a huge score to gain a mighty 96 rating points, while Keith Arkell fully justified his position as top seed in the Over 50 Championship. We should note too, that FM Andrew Smith did well to recover from a penultimate round defeat to Craig Prichett on his Over 65 debut, bouncing back to decimate Terry Chapman's kingside and take the title. Finally, the junior prize-winners undoubtedly contain several names for the future, perhaps including Junyi Zhang, who won the U10 Championship with 100% and is now rated over 2000.

Major Open: 1 Lorenzo Fava (Cambridge) 8½/9, 2-9 Gwilym Price (Godalming), Mate Ther (Harrogate), Balahari Bharat Kumar (Coulsdon), Jack Liu (Street), Bernard Chan (South Birmingham), Robin Angst (Switzerland), Audrey Kueh (Guildford), George Zhao (Barnet) 6½.

Over 65 Championship: 1 Andrew Smith (Bourne End) 6/7, 2 Craig Pritchett (Dunbar) 5½, 3-7 Geoffrey James (Brighton), Paul Hutchinson (Scarborough), Stephen Dilleigh (Bristol), David Kilgour (Durham), Michael Binks (Bridgend) 5;

Women's Champion: Sheila Jackson (Liverpool) 4.

Over 50 Championship: 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 6½/7, 2 Steve Dishman (Luxembourg) 6, 3 David Okike (Uxbridge) 5;

Women's Champion: Natasha Regan (Epsom) 4.

Under 16 Championship: 1 Max Pert (Billericay) 5½/7, 2-3 Zain Patel (Hammersmith), Balahari Bharat Kumar (Coulsdon) 5; **Girls' Champion:** Nina Pert (Billericay) 4.

Under 14 Championship: 1 Rock Yu (Little Heath) 6½/7, 2 Kameron Grose 5½, 3-4 Hao Ran Leung (both Barnet), Pengxiao Zhu (Exeter) 5; **Girls' Champion:** Naavya Parikh (Harrow) 4½.

Under 12 Championship: 1 George Zhao (Barnet) 6/7, 2 Rezin Catabay (Colchester) 5½, 3-6 Lion Lebedev (Barnet), Rami Taleb (Carrick), Yashwardhan Shankar (Beckenham), Advait Keerthi Kumar (Watford) 5; **Girls' Champion:** Avyanna Singh (Crowborough) 3.

Under 10 Championship: 1 Junyi Zhang (Kent) 7/7, 2 Ayan Pradhan 5½, 3-4 Lam Vy Le Nguyen (also Girls' Champion), Aarav Katukuri (all Petts Wood & Orpington) 5.

Under 8 Championship: 1-2 Junyan Hu (Kent), Artem Dodukh (Hull) 6/7, 3 Furion Kapitanski (Petts Wood) 5; **Girls' Champions:** Liubava Maksak (Ealing), Nuvée Konara (Colchester) 4.

Under 16 Rapidplay: 1 Stanley Badacsonyi (Muswell Hill) 8½/9, 2-3 Kenneth Hobson (Cowley), Max Pert 7; **Girls' Champion:** Nina Pert (both Billericay) 6.

Under 16 Blitz: 1-2 Stanley Badacsonyi (Muswell Hill), Jack Liu (Street) 8/9, 3 Kenneth Hobson (Cowley) 7; **Girls' Champion:** Nina Pert (Billericay) 5.

Under 14 Rapidplay: 1 Pengxiao Zhu (Exeter) 8½/9, 2-4 Rock Yu (Little Heath), Livio Cancedda-Dupuis (Caterham), Zain Patel (Hammersmith) 7; **Girls' Champion:** Mae Catabay (Colchester) 5.

Under 14 Blitz: 1 Pengxiao Zhu (Exeter) 8/9, 2 Livio Cancedda-Dupuis (Caterham) 7½, 3 Rock Yu (Little Heath) 7; **Girls' Champion:** Mae Catabay (Colchester) 5.

Under 12 Rapidplay: 1-4 George Zhao (Barnet), Zack Norris (Gloucester), Brandon Fang (Hong Kong), Rami Talab (Carrick) 7/9; **Girls' Champions:** Yvon Van Neerven (Leicester), Avyanna Singh (Crowborough), Parisa Patel (Hammersmith) 4.

Under 12 Blitz: 1 George Zhao (Barnet) 8/9, 2-3 Srivathsan Sasikumar, Rami Talab (Carrick) 7, **Girls' Champions:** Yvon Van Neerven (Leicester), Avyanna Singh (Crowborough) 4. **Under-10 Rapidplay:** 1 Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham (Coulsdon) 8/9, 2 Junyi Zhang (Kent) 7½, 3 Lam Vy Le Nguyen (Petts Wood, also Girls' Champion) 7.

Under 10 Blitz: 1-2 Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham (Coulsdon), Junyi Zhang (Kent) 8/9, 3 Maksym Kryshchuk (York) 7; **Girls' Champion:** Lam Vy Le Nguyen (Petts Wood) 5½.

Under 8 Rapidplay: 1 Tara Tamilselvan (Leicester, also Girls' Champion) 8½/9, 2 Junyan Hu (Kent) 7, 3 Furion Kapitanski (Petts Wood) 6½.

Under 8 Blitz: 1-2 Tara Tamilselvan (Leicester, also Girls' Champion), Advik Saxena (south-west London) 7/9, 3-5 Amandeep Singh (Leeds), Junyan Hu (Kent), Oscar Qin (Colchester) 6.

AM Open: 1 Ifan Rathbone-Jones (Mold) 5/6, 2-3 Louis Cheng (Edinburgh), Sai Vaddhiredy (Ashton-under-Lyne) 4½.

AM Under 1900: 1 Christopher Willoughby (Brentwood) 5/6, 2-4 Reece Whittington (Exeter), Sydney Jacob (Lewisham), Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon) 4½.

AM Under 1600: 1 Sean Smith (Hull) 5½/6, 2-3 Rob Coles (Wiltshire), James Weldon (Castleford) 4½.

PM Under-2050: 1 Advait Keerthi Kumar (Watford) 5½/6, 2 Timothy Davis (Farnham) 5, 3-4 David Coates (Lincoln), Sean Gordon (Watford) 4½.

PM Under-1750: 1 Yuk Hei Lee (Richmond) 6/6, 2 Bryony Eccleston (Bolton), William Purle (Crowthorne) 4½.

PM Under-1450: 1 Avyanna Singh (Crowborough) 5½, 2 Yihua Ding (Kent) 5, 3 Samidh Saxena (Liverpool) 4½.

Weekend Atkins Open: 1 Connor Clarke (Oxford University) 4½/5, 2-3 Vivash Samarakoon (Norwich), Timothy Foster (Guildford) 4.

Weekend Penrose: 1 Alex Royle (Louth) 4½, 2-6 William Bradley (Wymondham), Niall Clarke (Oxford University), Carl Gartside (Macclesfield), Amrik Singh (Warley Quinborne), Luke Maher (Wallasey) 4.

Weekend Soanes: 1-2 Nicholas White (Wycombe), Michael Allen (Newcastle University) 4½, 3-7 David Agyemang (Bolton), Alexis Malibiran (Bristol), Alikhan Menseitov (Chandler's Ford), Muhammed Mehmood (Dudley), John Grasham (Boston Spa) 4.

Weekend Yates: 1 Rene Butler (Market Harborough) 4½, 2-4 Lee Simmonds (east London), James Weldon (Castleford), Philip Clare (Stockport) 4.

Perspective by Peter Wells

The British Championship has always held a special place in my affections. In part, I suspect that having been runner-up on a number of occasions, but never having managed to secure victory, has afforded ample time to reflect on the prestigious nature of a title which has frustratingly eluded my grasp. However, I also greatly

value relatively lengthy tournaments, and while the Championship has been reduced from 11 to nine rounds since 2017, it thankfully retains the civilised pace of 'one game a day', and offers much more to get your teeth into than many of the events currently available to me. I doubt this view is unusual – I expect many players feel affection towards the event for similar reasons. At the same time, when contemplating this article it occurred to me that our familiarity with the format of the event may lead us to forget quite how special and frankly unusual it is. For the 'British' (as it tends to be known) is at once a national Championship upon which attention rightly tends to focus, but also part of a much wider festival. This year - with the innovation of rapidplay and blitz events for each of the junior age groups from U16 down to U8 in the days preceding their respective standardplay sections - there were approximately 35 events in the entire festival for seniors, juniors, and players of all levels, all running alongside one of the strongest Championship sections of recent years. I hesitate to possibly misuse the word 'unique', but I can pretty safely say that this is not how national Championships work in the majority of countries!

This has somewhat divided opinion over the years. I have heard complaints that it would be easier to arrange a stronger and more representative Championship at other times of the year, or in a more central venue. There have been concerns that holding the junior events alongside a Championship which attracts a number of the very top young players might risk devaluing the junior titles – and the absorption of the U21 and U18 titles into the Championship indeed felt like an appropriate response to this. It has sometimes been suggested that the rotating seaside venues suit families, but are less convenient for the struggling professional players. This has encouraged occasional experimentation with additional elite-oriented events, of which the new series of English Championship events has been a very welcome addition to the circuit. Nonetheless, when all is said and done, I think the British Chess Championships formula has a great deal to commend it, and the 2024 edition has been exemplary in showcasing these strengths.

I think back to my own first British Championship in 1976, playing in the U11 section - my participation brought forward no doubt by the happy circumstance of the event taking place in my home town of Portsmouth. I remember being very keen to go and watch the top players, but being somewhat reticent about doing so. When I plucked up courage near the end I was absolutely enthralled. I was very aware of the larger-than-life figure of Tony Miles, who was on the verge of becoming our first grandmaster, but totally stunned to see the 19 year old Jonathan Mestel – whom I was also aware of through

my early incarnation as a Sicilian Dragon player - running away with the event far ahead of Miles. I loved the atmosphere in that room – the tension, the gravitas - and wanted a part of it. Five years later I was able to play in my first 'Championship'.

I mention this because I wonder whether the experience can have the same impact in this era of instant information and access to many of the top players via videos and other online content? I recognise that the junior events are now played at a different time of day, and I also acknowledge that I have been to tournaments – Olympiads included – where, somewhat absurdly, it was harder to get a good grasp of what was going on as a live spectator than it would have been to return to the hotel room and watch online! Yet for all that, there are moments in the tournament when the intensity of thought, the gestures of the players, the tension of the moment can really shine through and add something which any later reconstruction of the game would struggle to capture. Moreover, there were a lot of juniors brave enough to combine playing in their age-groups in the morning with participation in the Major Open in the afternoon who were entirely able to soak up the atmosphere. I hope that for some of them – whether watching their favourite grandmaster in action, or perhaps marvelling at the nine and ten year olds who were already taking their well-deserved places in the Championship – the experience added a little of the motivation which I felt all that unfeasibly long time ago.

The line-up for this year's Championship was something of a triumph for the organisers, another example of the tangible benefits to be seen from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport funding, and which created considerable anticipation amongst chess fans. Not only were there 11 GMs and three WGMs playing, but the Championship included a terrific turn-out from our elite stars. Four of the five players due to do battle for England in the Olympiad in Budapest next month - David Howell, Michael Adams, Gawain Jones and Luke McShane - were competing in Hull. No fewer than 20 IMs participated, amongst them a number who might realistically be expected to be in the hunt for GM norms. There was also a very strong turn-out from our juniors - from IM norm prospects such as Aaravamudhan Balaji to very young talents such as Ethan Pang, Supratit Banerjee and Oleg Verbytski. In addition, the rising generation of young female players who have made so much progress in the last couple of years were out in force- Bodhana Sivanandan most prominently, but also Ruqayyah Rida, Elis Dicen and Anusha Subramanian - which greatly enhanced the competition for the Women's Championship, and created an intriguing battle with the

more established names, headed by defending Champion Ian Yao.

I am always fascinated by the prospect of a clash between the most established players and the rising generation. The England team has been a pretty stable entity for many years now - it is, after all, not easy to break in when a player such as Michael Adams performs the remarkable feat of retaining so much of his strength and vitality well into his fifties. While Ravi Hari has made a valuable contribution on a few occasions now, no one from the younger generation has yet broken into the team convincingly in the way that both David Howell and Gawain Jones did more than 15 years ago. There is now, though, a very real prospect that they might, which adds a certain frisson to these encounters.

In fact there were notable successes for each of these groups I have identified in the course of an incredibly competitive championship in which no player was ever able to secure a sole lead. Ultimately it was the aforementioned well-established stars – Gawain Jones and David Howell – who emerged as the joint winners on 7/9. Somehow – one outcome of the constant 'changing of the guard' at the top of the event - they contrived to meet only in the last round, with the consequence that they had to embark on a series of tie-break games just hours after a gruelling classical encounter taken all the way down to bare kings. The tie-breaks were incredibly tense, and David, who won the first rapidplay game in style before standing better in the second, could not have been closer to taking his fourth British Championship title. In the end, though, it was Gawain who prevailed, obtaining the perfect position to grind without risk (ironically much in the spirit of his opponent's recent book) in the second blitz game.

Gawain Jones – David Howell

British Championship (Play-off) Second Blitz Game

1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 Nc6 6.d4 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Ndb4 8.Nxc6 Qxd1+ 9.Kxd1 Nxc6 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.Be3 e5 12.Kd2 a5 13.Rc1 Bb4+ 14.Nc3 a4 15.a3 Ba5 16.Bc5 Rb8? I would normally hold back from featuring blitz games when there are plenty of classical and rapid encounters to choose from. However, this game did ultimately determine the destination of the title, and I find it both instructive and intriguing in terms of the how the deeply unbalanced opening might feed into thoughts on blitz strategy.



I think my assumption would be that any position in which the opponent can boast piece activity – whether in exchange for small material gain as in typical gambits, or for positional weaknesses as here – could be regarded as quite risky in blitz. However, there is a counter-argument that keeping the momentum of those kind of ‘temporary advantages’, such as development can be tricky, and that the levels of ingenuity required for this can be tough to produce at blitz speed. If the initiative dries up, then defending the long-term weaknesses will be no fun at all. In short, I can see how both players could have persuaded themselves that this fascinating opening would suit their purposes. Unfortunately for David, the natural enough 16...Rb8? enables White to show that the bishop has come to c5 not so much to irritate Black as to promote simplification. He should have preferred 16...Be6! 17. Bb4 Bb6! 18. Ne4 Bd5, with everything still to play for. In the game continuation the absence of the bishop pair ensures that White’s king sits much more securely, and Black’s task becomes very unpleasant very fast.

17.Bb4! Bxb4 18.axb4 Rxb4 19.Nxa4 0–0 20.Kc3 Rb5 21.b4 Rd5 22.Nc5 It is already clear that Black has to cope with a static weakness and the inferior minor piece – a miserable prospect at any time control.

22...Rfd8 23.Ra8 Kf8 24.Rca1 Bh3 I heard one commentator trying to explain what the bishop was seeking to achieve on h3. The real key, however, lies in the simple question ‘where else?’

25.f3 h5 26.Ne4 Bf5 27.Nc5 Bh3 28.Nd3 Rxa8 29.Rxa8+ Ke7 30.e4 Rb5 31.Ra7+ Ke8 32.Rc7 Bg2 33 Ne1! and Black is already unable to retain all his pawns. Black battled on for another 36 moves, but it always looked as if Gawain’s technique would suffice **1–0** (68).

Many congratulations to Gawain, always a popular winner, who has bounced back from his enforced break with a legendary result in the final weekend of the 4NCL, followed by tournament victories at both the English and now the British Championships. An astonishing

achievement produced under challenging circumstances, and above all a tribute to both his mental strength and his incredible appetite for the game.

Yet the young contenders also fared extremely well, with both Matthew Wadsworth (who offers a fascinating round-by-round perspective on his fortunes alongside his magnificent game with Shreyas elsewhere on these pages) and Shreyas Royal securing GM norms on 6½ and 6 points respectively. For Shreyas this norm also secured the title, which meant that at 15 years and eight months he has beaten David Howell’s long-standing record and become the youngest ever English GM. His journey towards this title has received a lot of attention - not least as he has been fortunate to be afforded some incredible opportunities to compete with top opposition over the last 12 months – and his final achievement of the goal broke through into mainstream media coverage from the BBC, Sky News and others. Perhaps most impressively, he made this norm with a plus score against the England team players whom I mentioned earlier – defeating David Howell and drawing with the other three. He was, in fact, in serious trouble against Michael Adams in the final round, but on the other hand gave Gawain, the eventual Champion, something of a let-off with a premature draw agreement in round 5 following a very sharp attacking struggle. There is no doubt at all that Shreyas’ experience against top-class opposition has contributed enormously to his ability to navigate such encounters. Where I have felt he looked potentially more vulnerable (as I believe many of us are these days) is when required to score heavily against opposition of similar or lower rating. He was, for example, in a lot of trouble against one of the quirky yet interesting side-lines from Mark Hebden’s ever-dangerous King’s Indian repertoire in round 3.

Shreyas Royal – Mark Hebden British Championship 2024 Round 3

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0–0 6.Be3 a5!? 7.Nf3 Na6 8.Nd2?! This looks like a bit of over-finessing. In trying to prevent ...Nh5 (after e.g. 8.Nf3 e5 9.d5), White ends up allowing a more problematic ...Bh6 trick. The question is – if Black avoids clarifying the centre too early and thus justifying an early g4, how does White make sense of his early h3? I am guessing that in choosing this line, Mark’s thoughts too ran something along these lines. 8...Nd7 9.Be2 e5 10.d5 f5 11.f3 Bh6! 12.Bf2 Ndc5 13.h4 Bd7 14.g3 b6 15.0–0 Qe7 16.Kg2 Rf7 17.Nb3 Na4! 18.Nb5 fxe4 19.fxe4 Raf8 20.Rb1



So far White has been forced to try and stave off Black's initiative, but Hebden strikes with perfect timing, and his breakthrough combination should leave him very well placed.

20...Rxf2+! 21.Rxf2 Bh3+ 22.Kxh3 Rxf2 23.Qe1 Qf6 24.a3 Kh8 25.Nc1 N4c5 26.Nc3 Bxc1 27.Qxc1 Nxe4 28.Nxe4 Qf5+ 29.Bg4 Qxe4 30.Qg1 Rd2?? Chess can be almost unbearably cruel sometimes. Mark has done very little wrong so far and a judicious retreat of the rook would leave him with a significant advantage. Instead, he leaves the f-file open, and White's first threat for a long while proves (with Be6 to throw into the mix) to be utterly unstoppable.

31.Qf1! 1-0

I mention this not to diminish Shreyas's achievement, which was immense and well-deserved. Yet, whenever I look deeply into a tournament it is difficult to avoid being distracted by the 'might-have-beens' – and in this tournament in particular, where there were far more 'topsy-turvy' struggles than smooth-flowing victories, it was difficult to avoid the feeling that many things could have turned out very differently. Of course, part of this is just about chess as a scrap, and the players who hang in there – the natural street-fighters - often prevail. The ability to navigate reversals, to bounce back *within games as well as between them*, are among the most vital skills. So too is simple courage, and this Shreyas showed plenty of in his pivotal victory over David Howell just one round later. Shreyas covers this game in depth himself in his article later in the magazine.

Another player who greatly impressed (not for the first time!), and played a very significant role in the unfolding drama, was Ameet Ghasi. Part of the leading group from rounds 5-7, he had dealt a hefty blow to my hopes in round 4, and then inflicted the following rather aesthetic defeat on Stuart Conquest a day later. Stuart himself - having played virtually no chess for nearly a decade due to his organisational commitments – notably cobbled together a decidedly idiosyncratic set of openings and a

phenomenal will to win to put in a superb performance and avoid any damage at all to his shiny 2500+ rating.

Ameet Ghasi – Stuart Conquest British Championship 2024 Round 5

1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 h6!? I am tempted to say that since this is the fifth most popular move in the position it probably qualifies as one of Stuart's more mainstream openings with the black pieces in the tournament 😊. The fact is, of course, that he did incredibly well to find a number of solutions which (in the main) led to playable positions with a minimum of theoretical fuss. While on the subject, I would suggest that one of the hallmarks of this year's Championship was the relative paucity of heavily theoretical games. The players who were succeeding here were largely eschewing highly theoretical struggles, and looking more to set unusual problems - probably not unrelated to the production of the many fluctuating struggles to which I alluded earlier, but also perhaps an interesting sign of the times.

4.Nf3!? Looks provocative and far from the main line, but this in fact seems to be the engine's top choice.

4...e4 5.Nd4 Nc6 6.Nc2! Not 6. Nxc6 dxc6!, which would only assist with Black's development.

6...Bc5?! 7.Nc3 Qe7 8.Ne3!? The engine likes this, and Ameet subsequently makes great use of the f-file. I have never found these exchanges on e3 (or e6 with colours reversed) very easy to evaluate, but there is a flow to this game which is quite persuasive.

8...Bxe3 9.fxe3 b6 10.0-0 Bb7



11.Rf4! It's difficult not to like this. Both of these players are original, unorthodox thinkers, and I kind of feel that this is exactly what a game between the two of them should look like. Stuart is now persuaded to defend the e-pawn, but I feel the need to mention the possibility of 11...0-0-0, when White should almost certainly prefer the complex 12. Nd5! to an immediate capture on e4, since

12. Nxe4?! Nxe4 13. Rxe4 Ne5 would offer just the kind of light-square compensation which I suspect Stuart would have found very appealing.

11...Nd8 12.Qf1! Ne6 13.Rf5 Congratulations to anyone who saw the queen land on f1 and thought 'exchange sacrifice'. It will be not only be a major theme but, intriguingly, is already the engine's top choice. I can believe that 13.Rxf6!? Qxf6 14.Qxf6 gxf6 15. Bxe4 Bxe4 16. Nxe4 is good compensation, although White's unusual structure does mess a little with my intuition. However, the idea that 15.b3 instead (if 15...f5 16.Bb2 0-0 17. Rf1) is also full value, despite the lack of any extra pawns for White, is less easy to grasp. At the same time, I think it is worth trying to examine the minor pieces on both sides and try to make sense of this.

13...Ng5 14.b3 d6 15.Bb2 0-0



16.Rxf6! Now Ameet does go for the sacrifice, and it is even stronger than before with – essentially – the extra ingredient being the impact on the safety of Black's king.

16...Qxf6 17.Qxf6 gxf6 18.Rf1 Rae8 19.Nb5 a6 20.Nxc7 Rc8 21.Nd5 Bxd5 22.cxd5 Rc2 23.Bc3! There are few more important considerations when sacrificing the exchange than considering the activity of the opponent's 'extra' rook. While the a2-pawn will drop, this move ensures that the invader will not cause additional damage.

23...Nh7 24.Bxe4 Rxa2 25.Rf4?! This is actually quite a serious slip, although simplifying after sacrificing tends to be one of the more difficult judgements to make. The odd thing is that since a check on g4 can be met with ...Kh8, there is a limit to what this scary congregation of white pieces around the black king can achieve. For this reason, Black should sit tight on the kingside, make a useful 25...a5! move on the other flank, and ask what White has got! For the same reason, it was more efficient to play simply 25.Bxh7+! Kxh7 26.Rxf6, at a moment when Black cannot defend both d6 and f7, and which should be good for a clear advantage.

25...Ng5? Returning the favour. The f6-pawn was pivotal to Black's survival and now – with h8 no longer a viable flight square – he succumbs to the attack in short order.

26.Bf5! Ra3 27.Bxf6 Rxb3 28.h4 1-0

Ameet had reason to be optimistic about a norm as well, until his defeat at the hands of David Howell in round 8 – the game which was awarded the Alexander Best Game prize - put paid to these hopes. Still, Ameet has clearly been GM strength for a long while and - perhaps unusually when discussing an IM already in their mid-thirties - I am very confident, given that he already has the necessary rating, that he will attain the title in the near future.

A word is due on the Women's Championship, in which Lan Yao, the defending Champion, was never overtaken at any point despite facing incredibly strong opposition. She will tell her story better than I can (you can find her report with games elsewhere in this issue), but to achieve +1 against a field which included three GMs and five IMs suggests a very welcome return to form. Indeed, just a few days ago she confirmed this impression by achieving her second IM norm at the Spilimbergo Master tournament in Italy. In fact, having won the British Women's title outright in the previous two years, she had to share the honours with Ireland's Trisha Kanyamarala this time. She was one of three players who managed to join Lan Yao on 4 points going into the last round, in which an excellent win against Kamila Hryshchenko secured her a share of the title. It should be remembered that I last wrote about Trisha in the context of her extraordinary performance in tying for first in the British Rapidplay in March. I think it is safe to say that she is rather enjoying her trips to England this year.

Bodhana is also contributing to this issue of *ChessMoves*, so again I will let her tell her story. However, I think it is worth mentioning that if 11 points feels like a relatively modest rating gain, these days it represents a tournament performance of over 2200, including draws with two GMs. It really is difficult to overstate what a fantastic achievement this represents for a nine year-old – we are kind of running out of superlatives.

In fact, all of the girls I mentioned at the start gained rating points: Anusha Subramanian achieved an impressive 1½/2 against two IMs, Elis Dicen beat FM John Richardson in the first round and went on to make draws with the author of these lines as well as with WGM Katarzyna Toma, and while Ruqayyah Rida's results were less headline-grabbing than in Cambridge, she held IM Stephen Mannion with the black pieces, and overall

made a result not far short of 2100. We truly live in a very exciting era for female junior chess in the UK.

I am acutely aware that having extolled the virtues of the British Chess Championships as a wider festival as well as a national Championship, the excitement and intensity of the latter has led me to focus my attentions there. To finish, I would like to just mention a few things that caught my eye. There were several sections featuring outstanding scores. Having seen him in action in Cambridge, I saw Lorenzo Fava as a strong favourite for the Major Open. However, converting that into the amazing score of 8½/9 is an astonishing achievement, through which he added almost another 100 points to his rating.

Keith Arkell was also a strong favourite for the Senior Over 50 title but again his 6½/7 – conceding a draw only to Stephen Dishman, a player who somehow gives every impression of becoming stronger with the advancing years - was impressive. Andrew Smith lost the penultimate game in the Over 65 event, but nonetheless managed 6/7 – an especially fine result for the 13th seed(!), although – without meaning to flatter him – my greatest surprise here was to discover that he was eligible for the section.

The Junior Rapidplay events also seemed to produce some extraordinarily dominant results: 8½/9 for Stanley Badacsonyi in the U16 section and for Pengxiao Zhu in the U14 section, and 8/9 for Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham in the U10 section.

I was also very pleased to see a resounding 8½/9 for Tara Tamilselvan in the U8 Rapidplay section. The part of me which wants girls winning Open events to be normalised to the extent that it is not singled out for a special mention has reservations about discussing this, but despite all the demonstrable progress it feels like we are not quite there yet. It is great to see that this renaissance isn't just restricted to the group which competed so valiantly in the Championship and which I discussed above. I have no idea to what extent Tara is inspired by the example of Bodhana or the others, but she looks like a young player who surely knows how to exploit an endgame advantage!

Tara Tamilselvan – Furion Kapitanski

British Under 8 Rapid 2024: Round 6



of the passed pawns. Not bad for an U8 player in a rapidplay game!

43...Rxe7 44.Bxd6 Rb7 45.Bc7 Kf7 46.c5 Ke7 47.c6 and it is all over, at least as a competitive exercise!

Finally, a word about the venue. It is noteworthy when the British Chess Championships return to a location which it visited just six years ago, but this was a popular decision with almost everyone I spoke with. Hull seems to me to be a city which comes in for a fair bit of criticism, and frankly this is not likely to end any time soon after the events which affected the British Chess Championships on Saturday 4th August. Nonetheless, just about everybody I discussed the city with had many positive things to say about it – the Marina and the Old Town in particular. It boasts some excellent restaurants and pubs, and provides for the most part a very friendly welcome. While the City Hall can become a bit hot on occasions, both venues had much to commend them, and an active and enthusiastic local organisation such as the Hull and East Riding Chess Association brings a lot to the table too. All in all, this felt like a very successful British, and thanks are due to the organisers at all levels.

Perspective by Matthew Wadsworth

The 2024 British Chess Championships were recently held in Hull, with the main Championship taking place from 27th July to 4th August. Congratulations to Gawain Jones for becoming British Champion for the third time after a tense play-off with David Howell, and also to Lan Yao and Trisha Kanyamarala for becoming joint British Women's Champions.

This year marked the strongest edition of the British Chess Championships for several years (probably since 2018, which was coincidentally also held in Hull). Of the 86 participants 60 had titles, including 11 GMs and 20 IMs. At the top of the section David Howell, Michael Adams, Gawain Jones and Luke McShane (80% of the English Olympiad team for next month in Budapest) were all playing in the Championship together for the first time since 2018. It is a huge credit to the ECF that the Championship was so strong this year, no doubt reflecting the financial support that is now received from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

I started the tournament as the 11th seed, with my main goal being a GM norm from the event. The strength of the tournament this year made this a realistic target, though it would rely hugely on me playing very well and getting my fair share of luck in the key moments!

I started off the tournament with Black against Maksym Larchikov, a strong Ukrainian junior who currently resides in Hull. After a comfortable opening I had got into quite an uncomfortable position by move 20, and breathed a sigh of relief when a blunder allowed me to win a pawn, followed by the game in a matter of moves. All of the top 12 seeds were victorious in round 1, with the notable exception of defending champion Michael Adams, who was held to a draw with White by Thomas Villiers.

Round 2 was altogether tougher for the top seeds: Howell, Jones and McShane all won, but were made to work for it, and there were several draws and upsets on boards 4-17. I was glad to come out of the round unscathed, with a win against Malcolm Pein in the main line of the Benko Gambit. Malcolm, the ECF Director of International Chess and External Relations, was instrumental in securing the DCMS funding, and everyone involved in English chess owes him immense gratitude.

Eleven players reached 2/2, and in round 3 there were several very tough pairings. I had Black on board 3 against Luke McShane, whom I had never played before in standardplay chess, but who had always crushed me in shorter time controls. After his usual 1.e4, Luke played the endgame variation against my Caro-Kann (1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.d3), which allows a queen exchange as early as move 4. I was a little uncomfortable out of the opening, but we quickly reached a tense, unbalanced, if objectively equal endgame with both pairs of rooks and knights still on the board. On move 27 I went for a piece sacrifice that plunged the board into chaos, and Luke got very short on time trying to work everything out. In the ensuing time trouble he made a couple of small mistakes that gave me a winning endgame by move 40, which I converted in slightly nervy fashion.

My reward for the round 3 win was to receive a second Black in a row against Gawain in round 4. I tried a slightly offbeat line (1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 b6!?), but never really equalised, finding myself in a very unpleasant position by move 20. I then managed to create some complications leading up to the time control, but unfortunately made the decisive blunder on move 32, after which Gawain converted fairly easily. I was obviously disappointed with the loss, but was glad to have put Gawain under some pressure, and was still very happy with my overall tournament situation.

After round 4, only Gawain and Shreyas Royal remained on 100%, Shreyas, having impressively beaten David with Black in round 3. Three players were on 3½/4, and I received an upfloat to one of them in round 5 – Svyatoslav Bazakutsa, another highly talented Ukrainian junior currently living in the UK as a result of the Russian

invasion. I had managed to prepare quite deeply for Bazakutsa's King's Indian Defence, and got a very nice position without needing to spend much time on the clock. After an interesting exchange sacrifice we reached an endgame where I had rook and two bishops against two rooks and a knight, but crucially also had connected passed pawns on the b- and c-files. The pawns were eventually enough for the win, and I moved to 4/5 with Howell and Adams, who also won. The leaders drew, with Shreyas accepting a draw in a much superior position, and IM Ameet Ghasi joined them by winning on board 2 against Stuart Conquest. After five rounds, therefore, three of the top six positions were filled by IMs, and all of us had promising chances for the GM norm.

In round 6 the pairings were Jones-Ghasi on board 1, me against Shreyas on board 2, and Howell-Adams on board 3. Boards 1 and 3 ended up as hard-fought draws, while my game was heading in that direction before a slight inaccuracy by Shreyas.

Wadsworth, Matthew J (2456) - Royal, Shreyas (2487)
British Championship 2024 Hull (6), 01.08.2024

Going into this game I was on 4/5, half a point behind the leading group of Shreyas, Gawain Jones and Ameet Ghasi. While I was conscious of the tournament situation and ideally wanted to join the leaders for the next round, maximising my norm chances was definitely my priority. I'm sure Shreyas, whose position for the norm was even stronger than mine at this point, was thinking along the same lines.

1.Nf3 I was deciding between 1.d4, 1.c4 and 1.Nf3 on move 1, eventually deciding on keeping maximum flexibility with the Reti. Shreyas' openings are a particular strong point, and I fully expected him to be well prepared and surprise me early on.

1...Nf6 In our previous 1.Nf3 games, Shreyas had always played 1...d5, so we were already in slightly unexpected territory.

2.g3 c5 Shreyas had basically never reached this position before, so I was already pretty close to being out of prep! Such is life when you play flank openings, but luckily I had looked at these positions fairly recently and knew some important ideas.

3.Bg2 Nc6 4.c4 d5 This is by no means forced by Black, but is clearly the most direct and challenging way for him to play.

4...g6 is probably the most popular move, leading to the main line of the symmetrical English after 5.Nc3 Bg7.

5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Nc3 Nxc3 An interesting decision by Shreyas, which also gave me a glimpse as to his approach to this game. 6...Nxc3 is not the most played move here, but has a very solid reputation. 6...Nc7, heading for a reversed Maroczy Bind, and 6...g6 are the more ambitious options; at this point, I was fairly confident that Shreyas wanted to limit his risk as well - understandable, when he was in such a good position for his third GM norm, and for the overall tournament.

7.bxc3 e5 8.0-0 Be7 9.d3 0-0



After some natural moves from both sides we reach an interesting situation. Black has a little more space, but White probably has the long-term positional trumps - the extra central pawn, semi-open b-file and strong light-squared bishop are all nice assets to have.

10.Nd2 I was still in known territory, and was familiar with this idea. The knight wants to head to c4 (creating the idea of Bxc6 and Nxe5) and then potentially to e3 and d5, exploiting the central outpost.

10...Be6 11.Nc4! An improvement over a recent Titled Tuesday game of mine against the Russian GM David Paravyan, where I played 11.Rb1 and eventually lost. It turns out that the immediate Nc4 is not prevented by Be6.

11...Qc7 11...Bxc4 12.dxc4 looks tempting to mess up my pawn structure, but Black will experience a lot of difficulty on the light squares here, for example after I install my bishop on d5.

12.Ne3 12.Bxc6 looks like it messes up the Black structure, but I'm sure Shreyas intended the pawn sacrifice 12...Qxc6! 13.Nxe5 Qc7 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn. 12.Rb1 was also a reasonable idea, looking to ratchet up the queenside pressure with moves like Qa4.

12...Qd7 13.c4 Bh3 Both sides are continuing with their ideas more or less uninterrupted - I have established a nice outpost on d5 for my knight, while Black has forced

the exchange of my strong light-squared bishop, which will potentially leave my kingside a bit exposed.

14.Bxh3!? A little provocative. It would have been safer to let Black take on g2, but I was hoping that Black's queen would be misplaced on h3. I therefore had to be sure that any attack Shreyas could launch would not be successful.

14.Bb2 Bxg2 15.Kxg2 f5 16.Nd5 - something like this was a reasonable alternative, with the engine confirming a small edge to White.

14...Qxh3 15.Nd5 Bd6 16.e3



This felt like an important move to play - Nd4 is prevented, and any speculative attack by Black can be met with Qf3-g2.

16...Rfe8 I was a little surprised by this.

16...Rae8 felt like the more natural rook, and Black should get some decent attacking chances with f5-f4 in the coming moves. Shreyas no doubt considered this, but probably didn't like the double-edged nature of the resulting positions.

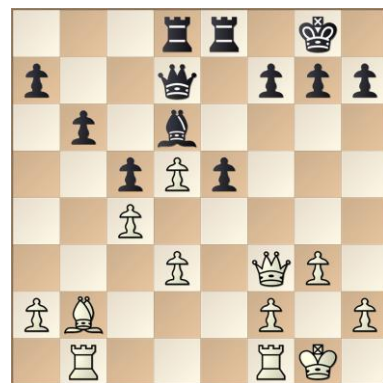
17.Rb1 b6 18.Bb2 18.e4, which I did play a couple of moves later, is quite strong now. A key idea is that f7-f5 is a lot less threatening when there is no rook on f8.

18...Rad8 Black can get a marginally better version of the game by playing 18...Nb4 now, but it does not change the character of the position too much.

19.Qf3 Nb4 Shreyas wisely looks to exchange off my strong knight, but in doing so allows a nice structural transformation for me.

20.e4 Nxd5 21.exd5 Now I was feeling pretty happy - I could look to put pressure on the e-file, or lever open the queenside with a4-a5 at some point. However, I had underestimated Black's plan here.

21...Qd7!



Black wants a quick b6-b5 to undermine my passed d5-pawn, and I can't really stop it.

22.Rfe1 22.Bc3 only seems to delay the inevitable after 22...Rb8.

22...b5 23.cxb5 f6 23...Qxb5 immediately is possible. 24.Bxe5? looks tempting, but Black gets quite a big advantage after the sequence 24...Qa5 25.Qh5 h6!, a very strong 'quiet' move, which puts White in serious difficulties on the e-file.

24.a4 My extra pawn is very temporary, as Black will easily round up the d5-pawn. However, I still thought I had reason to be optimistic, due to my queenside majority and the weak c5-pawn.

24...Bc7 25.Ba3 Qxd5 26.Qe4 A small finesse, keeping the tension between the two queens.

26...Bb6 27.Rec1 Qxd3

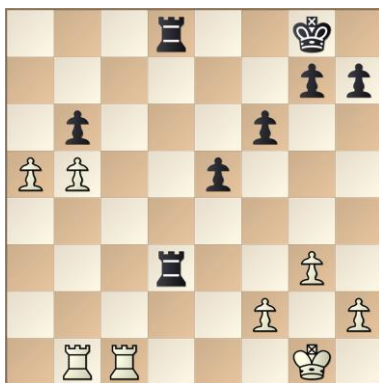


Shreyas offered a draw here, which I had somewhat expected. If played correctly the rook ending we will soon reach is drawn, but Black is the one under marginally more pressure. I could see no harm in playing a few more moves, and quickly got rewarded.

28.Qxd3 Rxd3 29.Bxc5 Red8? Basically the only serious mistake of the entire game, and it turns out to be decisive.

I was expecting 29...Rc8, which makes a degree of sense - if Black can exchange a pair of rooks the danger posed by either a queenside passed pawn or a seventh rank infiltration is significantly lower. 30.Bxb6 Rxc1+ 31.Rxc1 axb6 32.Rc6 Rd4 33.Rxb6 Rxa4 is a fairly easy draw for black, as his rook will actively restrain my passed pawn from behind. 29...Bxc5 also holds, but Black has to be a little more careful. 30.Rxc5 Ra3 31.Rc7 Rxa4 32.Rd1 was my idea, sacrificing a pawn to take control of the seventh rank in a similar way to the game. 32...Kh8! 33.Rdd7 Rg8 34.Rxa7 Rb4 is totally equal according to the engine, but it feels like Black is under a lot more pressure here compared with 29...Rc8.

30.Bxb6 axb6 31.a5!



However Black plays I will end up with a strong queenside passed pawn, which will force Black into totally passive defence.

31...bxa5 31...Kf7 32.a6: I didn't calculate much past here in truth - the strength of the a6-pawn, combined with the weakness of b6, puts Black in an awful situation. Had we got here, the following line was plausible: 32...Ra3 33.Rc6 Rd2 (33...Rb8 34.Rc7+ Kg6 35.Rb7! is a nice idea to win the b6-pawn) 34.Rxb6 Raa2 35.Rb7+ Kg6 36.Rf1 e4 37.a7 e3 and Black looks to be on the verge of serious counterplay, but I can defuse the situation with 38.Kg2 Rxf2+ 39.Rxf2 Rxf2+ 40.Kg1 Ra2 41.b6. White will promote on the queenside, while the e-pawn will be stopped with Re7 if needed.

32.b6 The threat of b7 and Rc8 forces Black to drop both rooks back to the eighth rank.

32...Rb8 32...Rf8 33.b7 Rdd8 is an alternative set-up, but White wins in similar fashion. 34.Rc7 a4 35.Rb4 a3 36.Ra4 h5 37.Rxa3: as soon as the a pawn is won Black's situation is hopeless. I would start with Kg2 to cut out any checks, then bring the second rook to the second rank, likely

forcing Black to put his rooks on b8 and g8. Then bringing my king over to the queenside should be enough to force the win.

33.b7 Rdd8 34.Rc7 It is the twin problems of the b7-pawn and the seventh rank that is such a problem for Black here.

34...Rf8 Definitely the best defensive try. Black is hoping for Rf7 to exchange a pair of rooks and limit my control of the seventh rank.

35.Rbc1 a4 The key point of Rbc1 is that 35...Rf7 loses: 36.Rc8+ Rf8 37.Rxb8 Rxb8 38.Rc8++.

36.Rd7 36.R1c4! would have been a much more straightforward win for White. I did consider this at the time, but missed the key idea 36...a3 37.Ra4 Rf7 (37...h6 38.Rxa3 and White should win eventually) 38.Ra8! Rxc7 39.Rxb8+ Kf7 40.Rf8+ Kxf8 41.b8Q++.

36...a3 37.Rcc7 Rf7!



Another really nice defensive try by Shreyas. I had seen the idea, but had clearly underestimated its strength when committing to 36.Rd7.

37...Rfe8 38.Rxg7+ Kh8 39.Rxh7+ Kg8 40.Rh4! is easiest - the rook will swing over to a4 and pick up Black's passed pawn. 40...e4 only delays this idea by one move after 41.Rh5 and 42.Ra5.

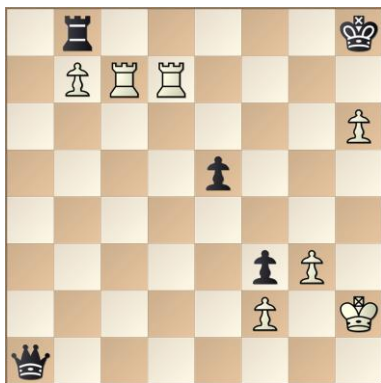
38.Rc8+ Rf8 39.Rcc7 Rf7 The repetition got us to move 39, and I had about ten minutes to work out if 40.Rxf7 worked.

40.Rxf7 Luckily for me the decision was reasonably straightforward, even if the following calculation was not! I don't really have any alternatives to Rxf7, and I have multiple ways to bail out with a perpetual check if I cannot find a win after the time control.

40...a2 41.Rxg7+ Kf8

Shreyas played this almost instantly, which really surprised me.

41...Kh8 is a much better defensive try, as it denies me the winning idea I used in the game. 42.Rxh7+ Kg8 43.Rhg7+ Kh8 (if 43...Kf8 44.Rgd7 a1Q+ 45.Kg2 Qa6 46.h4 and White wins in very similar fashion) 44.Rgd7 allows promotion with check, as in the game. 44...a1Q+ 45.Kg2 - Rc8+ must be stopped, so Black's move is forced. 45...Qa6 46.h4! The key idea - it turns out White just has time for h4-h5-h6, then Rh7+, Rcg7+ and Rh8# before Black is able to organise counterplay. For example, 46...f5 47.h5 f4 48.h6 f3+ 49.Kg1! Qa1+ 50.Kh2



and Black is powerless to stop both Rh7+ and Rc8+.

42.Rcf7+



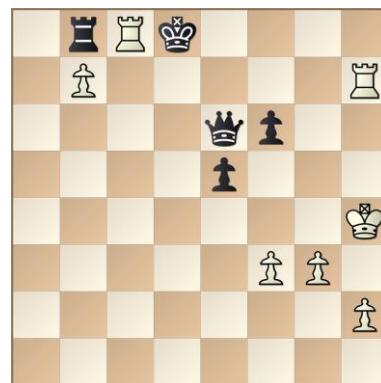
Other moves do win, but I liked the elegance of this idea. Black's king is forced to e8, where it will be too far away from the h-file at a critical juncture.

42...Ke8 43.Rxh7 a1Q+ 44.Kg2 My plan is Rc7 to threaten both Rc8 and Rh8, and it seems that Black cannot prevent it.

44...Qa2 45.Rc7 Qd5+ I had to be sure that Black does not get a perpetual check, but I think there are a couple of ways to escape.

46.f3 Qa2+ 47.Kh3 Qe6+ 48.Kh4 48.g4 also works.

48...Kd8 49.Rc8+!



A nice tactic to finish.

49...Rxc8 50.Rh8+ Kc7 51.bxc8Q+ Qxc8 52.Rxc8+ Kxc8 leads to an easily winning pawn endgame. **1-0**

With that win I bolstered my norm chances and joined Gawain and Ameet on 5/6. Round 7 saw me play Ameet with Black and hold a slightly nervy draw, while Mickey had the better of a draw with Gawain on board 2. Howell and Bazakutsa both won on 4½/6 to join the leading group, which numbered five with two rounds to go. In round 8 both Gawain and David won impressive games with White against Bazakutsa and Ghasi respectively to take the joint lead (David's win against Ameet was a deserved winner of the Alexander Best Game prize). Meanwhile I just held on for a draw with White against Mickey, who had the better of an opposite-coloured bishop endgame but couldn't quite convert it.

This produced an intriguing situation with one round to go – David and Gawain were both on 6½ and would play each other in the last round, while I was the sole person on 6 and had Black against Richard Palliser to finish. If the top board was a draw, a win would allow me to catch up with the leaders and force a three-way play-off for the title. The complicating factor for me was the GM norm – I only needed to draw against Richard to secure the norm, which had been my target from the start of the tournament. That is what I decided to prioritise, and I offered Richard a draw after 16 moves of a sharp line in the Classical Slav, which he sportingly accepted. This allowed me to spectate at a dramatic last round in the Championship.

On the top board Gawain and David played a sharp, topical line of the Exchange Grunfeld, but the evaluation never strayed far from equality and the game was drawn on move 60, with nothing but the two kings remaining on the board. On board 3 Shreyas (who had made two solid draws after our game) needed a draw with Black against Adams to reach his third norm and break the record for the youngest ever English GM. Mickey built up a big

advantage through the middlegame and was surely winning at points, but Shreyas kept the position complicated and found a way back into the game. A draw was agreed on move 41 of an equal ending, Shreyas thereby setting a record that will be tough to break (although, with the younger generation of English players coming through, certainly not impossible!).

In terms of the final results, Gawain and David were tied on 7/9; I finished equal third, half a point back, alongside Luke McShane and Maciej Czipor, who quietly had an excellent tournament and would have surely made an IM norm if not for unlucky pairings. Shreyas finished on 6/9 as part of a ten-way tie for sixth, as did Ameet, who would have had a shot at his third GM norm and GM-elect status if not for a desperately unlucky final-round pairing. There was also a third IM norm for Aaravamudhan Balaji on 5½/9, who played impressively all tournament, and will surely gain the title in the next month or two.

After the prize-giving all that was left was the small matter of the play-off between Gawain and David for first place. This consisted of a two-game match at a 20 minute + 10 seconds rapidplay time control; if drawn, they would continue to play two-game matches at shorter and shorter formats until there was a decisive result. The first rapidplay match was drawn, with the two players trading wins with White. David will rue this phase of the play-off, as he won the first game reasonably comfortably, and was better in the second before Gawain capitalised on a blunder. After a short break the play-off continued with a 5'+3" time control. The first blitz game followed the first rapidplay game until move 16, but Gawain improved and was able to hold with black. In the second game David decided to deviate early, and Gawain quickly took the game into a level ending before gradually outplaying David, winning a pawn on move 34 and the game on move 68.

Overall, this edition of the British will be highly memorable for plenty of reasons, and I once again want to thank the ECF and the organisational team for their work before and during the event, especially given the incredibly difficult non-chess events during the final weekend.

Perspective by Shreyas Royal

Howell, David W L (2675) - Royal, Shreyas (2487)
2024 British Chess Championship (4.1), 30.07.2024

This was a huge win for me in round 4 of the British Chess Championships. David had a very long unbeaten streak, during which not even Magnus could defeat him! This streak just so happened to be broken in this particular

game. I was particularly pleased given that David had the white pieces and accordingly was even tougher to defeat.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 Even though David plays everything, this still came as a surprise!

5...exd4 6.e5 d5 7.Bb5 Ne4 8.cxd4 Bb6 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Be3 Bg4 11.h3 Bh5 12.Qc2 Bg6 13.Qb3 Ne7 14.0-0 c6 15.Bd3 Nf5 16.Qc2 Nxe3 17.fxe3 Ng3 18.Bxg6 hxg6 19.Rf2 This is still part of theory.

19...Re8 I'd mixed up my notes and played a slightly imprecise move; however, it is a very logical one as I need to weaken White's pawn structure eventually, and f6 and c5 are the only pawn breaks.

Previously when Mickey Adams had this position, the game continued: 19...f5 20.Ne2 Ne4 21.Rff1 g5 22.Nd2 Qd7 23.a4 Ba5 24.Nc3 Rae8 25.Ndxe4 fxe4 26.Qe2 Qe6 27.Qh5 Bd8 28.a5 Rxf1+ 29.Rxf1 Bxa5 30.Qxg5 Bxc3 31.bxc3 a5 32.Ra1 Ra8 ½-½ Aronian, L (2758)-Adams, M (2694) EU-chT 22nd Batumi 2019 (7.1).

20.a4!? David calls my bluff, realising that I'm not threatening anything just yet. He improves his position, and sets up some possible deflection tactics with 21.a5 Bxa5 22.Rxa5 Qxa5 23.Ng5.

20...Rc8 Preparing the other pawn break in the position!

21.Qb3 Another patient move.

21.a5? It doesn't quite work here due to 21...Bxa5 22.Rxa5 Qxa5 23.Ng5 Qa1+ 24.Nd1 Ne4!.

21...f6! Not seeing any other way to improve my position, I decide to go for it. If 21...Nf5 22.Ne2!

22.Qc2! Artificial, but that's just how chess is nowadays! You've got to scrap principles in some positions and just calculate. Notice how the queen has gone from d1-c2-b3-c2-b3 and now back again to c2!

22...Nf5! 22...fxe5? 23.Qxg6 and Black is busted! 22...f5?! Is strategically dangerous, as after 23.h4 Black lacks counterplay. If 23...c5, then 24.Qb3! cxd4 25.Nxd5.

23.g4! I'd seen all of this, and had a reserve option in mind in case he did go for it.

47.Qd7+ Kf6 48.Qd8+ It's quite easy to assume that White has some perpetual here, but I'd calculated far enough to realise that there isn't any need to see ghosts!

48...Kf5 49.Qg5+ Ke6 50.Qg4+ Kd6 I saw this sequence of moves starting from 43...Qc1+, and had correctly evaluated this to be winning.

51.Qg6+ Kc5 52.Qe8 Qb4+ 53.Ka2 Kc4 My king can now aid my pawns.

54.Qc6+ Kd4 55.Qd7 Qc4+ 56.b3 Qc2+ 57.Ka3 Qc5+ 58.Ka2 Kd3 59.Qxg7 e3 60.Qg1 Kd2 61.Qg5 e2 My e-pawn does prove to be overwhelming.

62.f5+ Qe3 63.Qg2 Kc1 64.f6 Qd2+ 65.Ka3 Qb2+ A tremendous victory with the black pieces. I think that this game does a good job in showing how important it is to be practical in chess, and that it's not only about finding the best moves but perhaps also about finding the most uncomfortable ones for your opponent! I beat the UK's former youngest GM on the way to become the youngest British GM in this tournament! It was a special tournament that I'll certainly cherish. **0-1**

British Chess Championships Alexander Best Game Award

With thanks to CHESS magazine for compiling and sharing the Best Game Award article.

This award was given to the round 8 game between David Howell and Ameet Ghasi. The endgame, together with the annotations, is reproduced below with thanks to CHESS magazine.

David W L Howell - Ameet K Ghasi [E68]
British Chess Championship, 03.08.2024



We join play at the time control. White has combined calculation with a positional masterclass, his passed a-pawn costing Black a piece, but Ghasi has defended

typically tenaciously and the endgame is far from easy for White to win.

41.Bc5 Beginning to cause a fair degree of discomfort for the black king.

41...Ne2+ 42.Kf2 Nf4 43.Bf8+ Kh7 44.Kg3 Ne2+ 45.Kh2 Nf4 46.Bf7

White's bishops combine well, but how to attack the black pawns?

46...Nd3 47.Bd6 Not the only good move, but now White can improve his pieces' positions, while Black doesn't have 47...Nf4? because of 48.h4!.

47...Kh6 48.Be8 Kg7 49.Kg3 Kf6 50.Bc7 Ke7 If 50...Nc5!? 51.Bd8+ Kg7 52.Be7 (and not 52.Bxg5?? Ne4+ 53.Kf4 Nxd5 54.Kxg5, leaving White with the wrong coloured rook's pawn) 52...Ne4+ 53.Kg2 followed by Bc6 or 53...g4 54.h4 would have seen White making definite progress.

51.Bg6 Kf6 Trying to hold the pawns where they are, in view of 51...f4? 52.Kf3 Nc5 53.Bf5 Kf6 54.Kg4! f3 55.Bg3, when White wins.

52.Bh7 A sneaky and very strong resource, threatening to check on d8.

52...Nf4 52...f4+ 53.Kg4! Nf2+ 54.Kf3 wins for White, as the knight and then the pawns will be rounded up after 54...Nxd3 55.Bb6.

53.Bd8+ Kg7 54.Bxf5 1-0

Key Moments from the Women's Championship by Lan Yao

The British Women's Championship Title was won jointly by WGM Lan Yao and WIM Trisha Kanyamarala on 5 points out of 9, followed closely by third-placed WGM Elmira Mirzoeva on 4½ out of 9.

WGM Lan Yao has annotated her round 5 game against GM Paul Motwani.



This game is long and tedious, so I am only going to start from this position, where everything changes all of a sudden. White is a pawn up and has managed to manoeuvre the king from the kingside to the queenside. White's rooks, queen, and bishop are all in perfect places, while my pieces are very passive and I have been moving pieces repeatedly with no plans. Both of us were in time trouble at this point, so I thought that no matter how bad the position I had, anything could happen.

54.Rc8 My opponent finally decided to make some progress. He had the right idea with this move, but he could have played more precisely - 54.Bb6! prevents me from playing Rdd8 to defend the back rank. If 54...Kg8 55.Rc8 Rxc8 56.Rxc8+ Kh7 and now my queen gets stuck on f6, because White can push f6 if I move my queen. 57.Bc5 Rd8 58.Bxd6 Rxd6 59.Rc7 picks up another pawn and White is winning.

54...Rdd8 55.Rxd8 Rxd8 My position actually gets more comfortable after trading the rooks, as I gain more space and everything is well defended.

56.Bb6 Re8 57.Bc7 Qe7? 57...Kg8 would be safe.



58.Bxd6 White hardly has any winning chances after this move. 58.f6! is a brilliant move, but easy to miss,

especially under time trouble. After 58...Qxf6 (58...gxf6 59.Qe3 Kg7 60.Qg1+ Kh8 61.Qb6) 59.Rf3 Qe7 60.Bxd6 Qxd6 61.Rxf7 White manages to break through.

58...Qxd6 59.Rc5 Rd8 60.Qc4 Qd7 60...Qf6 is also a good move to achieve equality. I thought about this move, but I was worried about 61.Rc8. I did not want to trade the rook, because I thought that my rook could be useful and I did not like the look of the queen and pawn endgame. I already began to think about winning now, as my opponent was in much worse time trouble than me and I have a strong e5-pawn, while my opponent's king is in more danger. 61...Rxc8 62.Qxc8+ Kh7 63.Qc4 Qxf5 64.d6 e4 should be a draw in theory, but I felt that White had better chances.

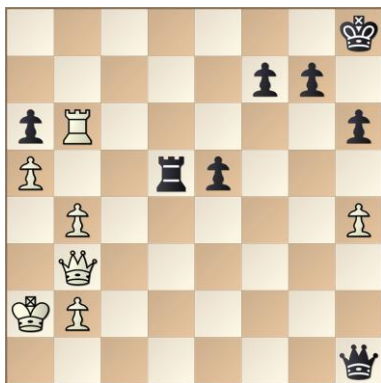


61.Rc7 61.f6! White should still try this move to create winning chances. If 61...Qf5 (61...gxf6 looks natural but would be terrible for Black, as White has 62.Rc7 Qf5 (after 62...Qxd5 63.Qxd5 Rxd5 64.Rxf7 the endgame should be winning for White) 63.d6 and White is winning now.) 62.fxg7+ Kxg7 White can hardly make progress with attacking the king, and the position should be equal.

61...Qxf5 62.Rxb7 Qxh5 I was relieved when I saw that I could go for the Qd1 check after this move, and I should at least have a perpetual. I also thought of 62...e4, which seems to be very natural, but White has 63.Re7 and my very important e-pawn will go. I cannot play 63...Qxd5? as after 64.Qxd5 Rxd5 65.Rxe4 White's pawns on the queenside are much faster, and White is winning.

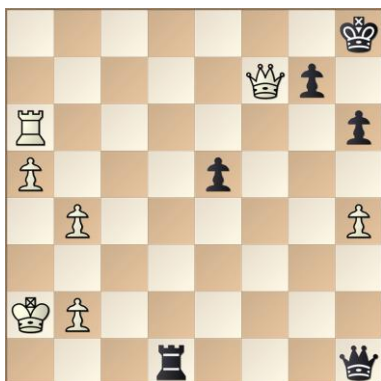
63.Rb6 Qd1+ 64.Ka2 Rxd5 I decided to take a risk. 64...Qa4+ 65.Kb1 Qd1+ would be a safe perpetual.

65.Qb3 Qh1 This is an excellent square for the queen, for now I not only have Rd1 but I can also support the e5-pawn pushing forward.



66.Rxa6 This move looks quite risky, as White is wasting a move taking the pawn while Black is preparing to quickly attack White's king, but the position is still equal. 66.Rb8+ is also good: 66...Kh7 67.Qc2+ e4 (67...g6? 68.Qc8 and White is winning) 68.Re8 Rd3 (68...f5 looks natural, but it fails to 69.Qc8 Qxh4 70.Rh8+ Kg6 71.Qc6+) 69.Qc5 Qf3 70.b5. The engine shows that the position is completely equal, but it is still very complicated, and both sides have chances.

66...Rd1 67.Qxf7??



My opponent was in serious time trouble at this point, and missed my tactic. White needs to be very careful in order to draw. 67.Qc2? prepares 68.Qc8+ Kh7 69.Qf5+, but Black has 67...Qd5+ 68.Qb3 Ra1+ and Black is winning. 67.Ra8+ is an interesting move. After 67...Kh7 (67...Qxa8 68.Qxd1 should be equal) 68.Qc2+ e4 (68...g6 69.Rc8 Ra1+ 70.Kb3 Qxh4 and the engine says that the position is equal, but White needs to be very careful to draw) 69.Rh8+! Kg6! (69...Kxh8 70.Qc8+ Kh7 71.Qf5+ perpetual) 70.Rc8 f5 Black is clearly better. 67.Qc3 is a good way to achieve equality: 67...Qd5+ (67...Ra1+ 68.Kb3 Qd1+ 69.Qc2 Qd5+ 70.Qc4) 68.b3 Rd2+ 69.Ka3 and the king is safe. 67.Qc4 is another way to draw: 67...Ra1+ 68.Kb3 Qd1+ 69.Qc2 Qd5+ 70.Qc4.

67...Ra1+ 68.Kb3 Qd1+! The only move to win.

69.Kc4 Qe2+



White's rook is gone.

70.Kc5 Qxa6 71.Qe8+ 71.Qf8+ would not help either: 71...Kh7 72.Qf5+ Qg6 is the easiest way to win.

71...Kh7 72.h5 Rc1+ 73.Kd5 Qc4+ 74.Kd6 Qc7+ 75.Kd5 Rd1+ 76.Ke4 Qc4+ 0-1

Yao, Lan (2325) - Bradbury, Neil H (2153) [B15]
BCF-ch Hull (9), 04.08.2024

In contrast to the last game this game is short and sharp. I knew that I had to win this game to secure the Women's Championship, so I prepared something different and aimed at winning quickly.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5 10.Be3



The main move here is to castle short, but I planned to castle long this time and make the position as sharp as possible.

10...h4?! The idea is wrong. Since I am not going to castle short, the pawn on h4 does no harm to my king, but rather it weakens Black's king and makes my attack easier. It is better to play 10...Nd7, developing pieces as normal.

11.0-0-0 Qa5 12.Kb1 Be6 13.c4 b5? Black should still play 13...Nd7.



14.d5! A common trick in this system.

14...cxd5 15.cxd5 Bd7 If 15...Bxd5? 16.Bh7+.

16.Bh7+ Kf8 17.Rd4? According to the engine this move completely throws away my advantage. But in reality it may not be as bad as the engine shows, because it is quite hard to find the right series of moves to achieve equality. The best move here is 17.Nd4, as after 17...Na6 (if 17...g6 18.Bh6+ Ke7 19.Bxg6 fxd6 20.Qxg6 White has a deadly attack) 18.Bf5 Nb4 19.Qb3 White has the centre and a decisive advantage.



17...h3? Saves the pawn but delays development. There is a good line with which Black can achieve equality: 17...Na6 18.Rxh4 Nb4 19.Qb3 g6! There is no Bxg6 sac now, and the bishop is trapped. If 20.Bh6+ Ke7 21.Bd2



21...Qxa2+! 22.Qxa2 Bf5+ 23.Ka1 Nc2+ 24.Kb1 Nb4+ with a perpetual.

18.Bf5! Ignoring the pawn, as I am not afraid of Black taking the g2-pawn, because I can win the pawn back easily and it only helps me open the g-file. Bringing the bishop back also prevents the bishop from being trapped, and prevents Black's b8 knight from moving.

18...hxg2 19.Rg1 19.Rc1 is more accurate, as it prevents Qc7 bringing the queen into the defence.

19...Rc8 19...Qc7 20.Qd3 Qc8! is the only way for Black to save the position. 21.Ng3 (after 21.Bxd7 Nxd7 22.Rxg2 Ne5 the knight is activated and Black is fine) 21...Bxg3 22.Bxd7 Nxd7 23.hxg3 g6 and now Black's knight finally manages to get out and Black's king is safe. White is slightly better, but it is playable for Black.

20.Qd3 Bxh2 21.Rxg2 Qe1+ 22.Nc1



Everything is well defended. Black's queen and h2-bishop are awkward, and Black has not finished his development.

22...Qh1 23.Be4 23.Rh4! is a more brilliant move. After 23...Qxg2 24.Qa3+ Kg8 (24...Ke8 25.Rh8#) 25.Bh7+ Kh8 26.Be4+ White wins the queen. I saw this move, but I thought 23.Be4 would be safer, and enough to win.

23...f5 Black could try 23...Na6 24.Rxg7 Nc5, but after 25.Bxh1 Nxd3 26.Rh7 Nxc1 (26...Bf5 27.Rxh2 Nxc1+ 28.Be4) 27.Rxh2 Ne2 28.Rd1, the knight is trapped.



24.Qa3+ Black resigns because of 24...Kg8 25.Rxg7+, and after 24...Ke8 25.Rxg7! threatens both taking the queen and Rg8#. **1-0**

Under 18 Girl's Champion's Favourite Game

Paul Littlewood has kindly annotated the game below which U18 Girl's Champion Bodhana Sivanandan chose as her favourite from the tournament against GM Nigel Davies.

Nigel Davies - Bodhana Sivanandan
British Championship Hull Round 5

1.c4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Bf4 Nc6 6.e3 a6



The Slav Exchange variation can be a bit dull because of the symmetrical nature of the position, but Bodhana decides to vary matters by not playing the usual Bf5. However, it is still hard for either side to generate any meaningful advantage, as the position can become rather blocked.

7.Bd3 Bg4 8.Nge2 e6 9.0-0 Bd6 10.Bxd6 Qxd6 11.f3 Bh5 12.Nf4 Bg6 13.Nxg6 hxg6 All the exchanges have not really helped White to gain any advantage, and the position is equal.

14.f4 Qe7 15.Rc1 Nd7 16.g3 f5?!



This move is probably OK, but I do not like it, as it fixes the kingside pawn structure and means that it leaves White a free hand to expand on the queenside. It also weakens the e6-pawn, and this could easily become a factor in the endgame. Consequently I would prefer the simple 16...0-0 17.Na4 Rac8 18.Rf2 Nb4, when Black is at least equal.

17.h4 Rc8 18.Kg2 Nf6 19.Qd2 Kf7 20.Rfd1 Rc7?! Rather passive, allowing White to improve the position of his knight on c3 without putting any obstacle in the way. Better was 20...Qb4.

21.Na4 Nh5 22.Rh1



Guarding against the threat of 22...Nxg3 23 Kxg3 Qxh4+.

22...Rhc8 23.Nb6 Rh8 24.a3 Qd6 25.Qc3 Qd8 26.Na4 White now has a tiny advantage, but it is not easy for Black to defend as she has virtually no active plans to undertake.

26...Qe7 27.Nc5 Nb8 28.Qd2 Rhc8 29.b4 Qd8 30.a4 Nd7 31.a5 An interesting alternative was 31.Nxb7 Rxb7 32.Rxc8 Qxc8 33.Bxa6 Nb6 34.Bxb7 Qxb7 35.b5! Nxa4 36.Qa5 Nb6 37.Ra1. However, after 37...Nf6 38.Qa7 Qxa7 39.Rxa7+ Nfd7 40.Kf3 Ke7 the position is equal.

31....Ndf6 32.Rc2 More to the point was 32.Rb1 Ng4 33.Rhc1 Nh6 34.b5 axb5 35.Rxb5 Qe7 36.Rb6, when White has a strong initiative. Further analysis, however, shows that Black may be able to hold on by playing

36...Nd7 37.Rxb7 Nxc5 38.Rxc7 Rxc7 39.dxc5 Rxc5 40.Be2 Qc7 41.Rxc5 Qxc5 42.Bxg4 fxg4, when Black has good drawing chances in the queen ending.

32....Ne8 33.b5 33.Nxb7 was possible as before, and it leads to a small advantage for White after 33...Rxb7 34.Rxc8 Qxc8 35.Bxa6 Nd6 36.Ra1 Nc4 37.Bxb7 Qxb7 38.Qc3.

33.....axb5 34.Bxb5 Nd6 35.Bd3 Nf6 36.Rhc1 Nfe4 37.Qb4 Qe7 38.Kh3 Nxc5 39.Rxc5 Ne8 Simpler was 39...Nc4 40.Bxc4 Rxc5 41.dxc5 Rxc5 42.Rb1 dxc4 43.Qxb7 c3, and Black is OK.

40.Qb6 Qd8?



I suspect at this stage time trouble was playing a part, as both sides made errors. Instead, 40...Rxc5 41.Rxc5 Nd6 is equal.

41.Bb5? Instead, 41.Rxc7+ Rxc7 42.Bb5 was winning. The line could continue 42...Ke7 43.Rc5! Rxc5 44.dxc5 Qxb6 45.cxb6 Nd6 46.Bc6!, or 44...Qc8 45.c6 bxc6 46.Bxc6 Nc7 47.Bb7 Qd7 48.a6, in both cases leading to a clearly won position for White.

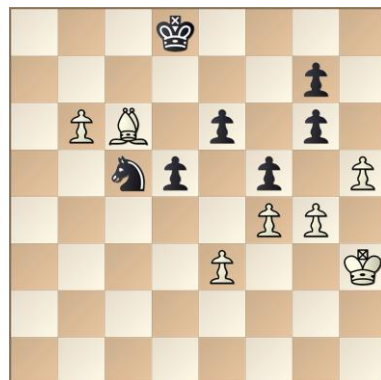
41...Rxc5 42.dxc5 Qxb6 43.axb6 Ke7 44.g4 Nf6 45.Ba6?! Nd7?



Nigel makes one last attempt to win, and Bodhana fails to find the correct way response for Black. In fact after

45....fxg4+ 46.Kg2 (46.Kg3? Ne4+ 47.Kxg4 Rxc5 48.Rxc5 Nxc5 49.Bb5 Ne4 is a lot better for Black), then 46....bxa6 47.b7 (or 47.c6 Nd7! which Bodhana may have missed) Rb8 48.c6 Ne8 49.c7 Nxc7 50.Rxc7+ Kf6 51.Kg3 a5 52.Kxg4 a4 53.Kf3 a3 54.Rc3 a2 55.Ra3 Rxb7 56.Rxa2 Rb3 is slightly better for Black.

46.Bxb7 Rxc5 47.Rxc5 Nxc5 48.Bc6 Kd8 49.h5?



Nigel misses 49.gxf5! gxf5 50.h5 Kc8 51.Kh4 Ne4 52.b7+ Kb8 53.Bd7 Nc5 54.Bc8 Nxb7 55.Bxe6, winning. Similarly, if 49....exf5 then 50.h5! gxh5 51.Kh4 g6 52.Bxd5 Ne4 53.Be6! is winning, because Black is in Zugzwang and so must allow the white king to g5.

49....fxg4+ 50.Kxg4 gxh5+ 51.Kxh5 Nb3 52.b7 Kc7 53.Bd7 d4! 54.exd4 Nxd4 55.Kg6 Ne2 ½-½

A really tough battle! Bodhana was under the cosh for most of the game, but she kept on fighting and was eventually rewarded with a draw.

A Commentator's Reflections on the British Chess Championships by Danny Gormally

The British Chess Championships took place in Hull this year, and were caught up in a political storm not of its own making.

The main venue for the Championships was in Hull's city hall, but there was an second venue at the DoubleTree Hilton, which was close to the train station and which hosted some of the side events.

The DoubleTree was very close to some of the disorder that took place in Hull on the second Saturday of the Championships. Some of the families involved in the Championships were so concerned about some of these impending protests that they met with police officers to discuss safety concerns before the protests even took place. Given the carnage that took place, it would seem these concerns are justified. One of the chess parents

even witnessed several fires that were burning as well as riot police on the way back to her hotel. Not a good look.

A depressing interlude indeed, but before that... I arrived at Hull after a longer than expected journey. On the Thursday before the Championships began I got to York station expecting to get a 15.44 train, hopefully getting into Hull around about 17.00. But that one was cancelled, as was the one afterwards. Only after a panicked walk at around 16.40 did I discover that all trains going to Hull were cancelled and had been replaced by a bus service. Thus it was that the journey took much longer than expected; I only arrived at Hull at around 19.00, but the coach wound around the wondrous Yorkshire landscape in a way which provoked the imagination that only journeys by road can, so no harm was done. It made me realise that I should travel by road more often. A handful of coach journeys will be booked in the future, and the National Express website will become a mainstay.

My eventual destination was a hotel based on Hebdon Road, near the area of Mount Pleasant, which also housed an enormous Asda supermarket, as well as being close to a calorific McDonald's restaurant. The relative calm of the area calmed and soothed my mind. In truth I like being away from the centre, away from hordes of people.

David Howell and Gawain Jones

In the end David Howell and Gawain Jones dominated the tournament, even though a number of players along the way showed resistance, not least Shreyas Royal, who defeated David in their individual encounter and in doing so became the youngest chess grandmaster in British chess history. Shreyas has fantastic, untapped potential and in my opinion can break through to the elite in chess. There is no doubt in my mind that he will reach 2700+, possibly gaining several British titles along the way. He will also become a regular fixture on the England team, and it is only a matter of time before he claims board 1 as his own.

As for David and Gawain, they also showed that they retain a very high level of potential, and it was only a narrow tiebreak that separated them. David has a great deal of technical ability. I felt for Ameet in the penultimate round in a game where he barely made a mistake; such was the deadly level of accuracy that David demonstrated that the endgame almost felt like a forced win. That was why it was agreed that he should win the best game prize for that encounter, despite strong opposition, for example Matthew Wadsworth for several of his games (not least his win against Luke McShane), and Balaji Aaravamudhan for a brilliant tactical win against Jonah Willow.

As for Gawain, he has clearly been through a lot over the last couple of years, so it felt like sweet justice that he won both the English Championship and British Championship titles in the same year. Before the tournament I rated him slightly below the other top three that competed in the British Championship (Howell, Adams, McShane) but now the smoke has cleared I would rate him as an equal to David and put those two slightly above the others. Gawain is more of an all-round player than I realized.

But that analysis is based on recency bias. In a very strong era Adams has won a remarkable eight British Chess Championship titles, and will surely be looking for more in the future. You can over-analyse when someone has a relatively poor tournament, but Mickey has set such a high standard that even a tiny drop-off can often surprise. In my view it was probably more to do with having such a great 2023 that may have sated him a little than any overall decline. He will surely come again and try to break (or at least match) Penrose's record of ten British Chess Championship titles.

In my view the most impressive thing about Adams is not even his ability as a player, impressive though it is, but rather his innate modesty and consideration for others. He has done a lot over the last few years to help English chess. Some of the others from his generation who have maybe not handled themselves quite so well, for example being overly vocal on Twitter about cheaters could learn from his example.

As for Luke McShane, only his lack of playing is holding him back from breaking through and claiming the British title that he surely deserves. It should also be pointed out that if he had played every year since 2002 (when he lost in the last round to Praggnanandhaa's future trainer R B Ramesh) Luke would have had several British titles by now - although there remains that doubt about whether he enjoys playing that much, and until he plays a bit more there will still be that question about whether the desire is there. No one doubts his talent, for he surely remains the most naturally gifted player we have ever seen in this country. But is the hunger still there?

Commentary

While I still could have perhaps made a competitive dent in this year's British Chess Championships, I chose to do the commentary instead with Adam Hunt.

Watching the commentary back today, I felt a bit embarrassed by how I seemed to dominate the discussion at times and talked over Adam. As for Adam, I sensed that he was much more enthused when we were talking about chess than when I mentioned some random film or

another. Although interacting with the chat on Twitch is often useful, in hindsight I probably overdid it a little. And one of the skills of commentary is realizing that it can be just as powerful not to talk as to constantly fill the airtime. I think if I did something similar again, I would try and rein it back a little bit.

The advantages of doing the commentary over playing is that you enjoy the event that bit more. Gone is the constant worrying over your chess game. In effect it is a paid holiday - you are paid to talk about chess. And playing people like David and Mickey is not easy - in fact I find it quite intimidating.

As for improving the commentary, I feel one of the things that could help is to have more of the players come into the commentary room itself. Perhaps it could be part of the conditions that you have to make at least one appearance in the commentary room. I'm sure for the people watching at home they would like to hear from some of the players and their thoughts during the game. Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and so on could all be used to ramp up the engagement even more. Although I feel overall the commentary went well, but it could be improved even more. I could admit that as a shy person I didn't really go into the main hall much to nab any of the players - to my shame I left most of this to Adam.

Hull Itself

I like Hull and the tournament, and the town had a feel and ambience that is typical of Yorkshire in the summer: earthy and loud. Sometimes you felt intimidated, and that was even leaving apart the protestors who appeared later. But no place or town is perfect, and all have their trouble-makers.

Will the British appear in Hull again? What the protestors forget is that they are harming the very towns that they are making their protests in. Many families, some of whom are of Asian background will be reluctant to go back to Hull in the future. That harms the town and makes it less desirable as a tourist location. The great tragedy is that the majority of those taking part in these violent protests weren't from Hull themselves, but rather outsiders just looking to cause trouble. They don't care about Hull.

Future British Chess Championship winners

Who will win the British in the future? I like to believe I am one, but I am getting older and will be 49 at the next renewal. As I continually pointed out during the commentary, in the modern era only Stuart Conquest has broken through and won the Championship over the age of 40 for the first time. Adams has won several British

Chess Championships at 40+, but he long since joined the winner's enclosure, so there's no fear factor for him.

As you grow older, the more scar tissue accrues and the harder it becomes to break through for the first time. Does that mean that the younger generation of Shreyas Royal, Bodhana Sivanandan, Supratit Banerjee, Stanley Badasconyi, Ethan Pang and others will inevitably take over?

Possibly, but it should also be said that David Howell and Gawain Jones are in their prime and will surely want to add to their tally in the future. It isn't easy to get to or even compete at 2600+ level, and there is a reason why whenever players of 2600+ level have played in the British Championships only those players have won it. The cream always rises to the top. A nine-round Swiss event may seem random, but how random can it be when the favourites always win?

In my view the next English player to reach 2600+ will be Shreyas, and I think he'll do it in the next three years, or maybe even sooner than we think. He recently had training with Garry Kasparov, maybe brokered by Malcom Pein, who is good friends with Garry.

Shreyas will soon be followed by Bodhana and others, and the future remains bright for British chess after a period in the doldrums. Since the golden generation of Adams, Howell, Jones and McShane emerged we have not produced any 2600+ players, but it seems we have fixed some of the issues that brought about that situation, and taken it more seriously from the coaching angle. You see countries like India forging ahead, and they are more about working together and using that togetherness to produce great players. We have shaken off that lone wolf philosophy that served us well in the past, but belonged to an earlier era.

In general, the British Championships seem a much slicker and professional event than when I first played it in over 25 years ago. During one of the evening events Natasha Regan and Matt Ball ran a masterclass, and I was impressed by how smooth they made it look. By comparison, my own masterclass was run with a demonstration board, but I have to say the organisers of the event do a lot for the professional players there who are trying to make an impression on the event and to get by. For them, they have my thanks.

Hull: The City where Even the Lord Mayor Plays Chess

Played in Hull, the Glorney Gilbert International (23rd-25th July) and The British Chess Championships (25th July-4th

August) gave one local chess player the opportunity to shine in more than one way. Mark Collinson, a member of the East Hull and Hull chess clubs, has an even more important place in local society. He is the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull and Admiral of the Humber.

The Lord Mayor formally opened the Glorney Gilbert International in full ceremonial attire.



Three days later he presented the prizes – seen here with the winners of the Gilbert (left to right: Anum Sheikh, Emily Maton, Michelle Chan) - and stayed on to play some of the players, while still in full regalia.



The Lord Mayor being presented by the Lord Mayor's Beadle



He then turned from Lord Mayor into a 'mere' chess player at the British Championships, pausing only to be present formally as Lord Mayor at the Ukrainian evening, held as a part of the British Championships' social programme. Taking part in the Over 65 event, he scored a very respectable 4/7 with a tournament performance rating of 2126.



The Lord Mayor playing the first move for White on board 1 - England A (Rahal Babu) vs England B Tiany Lui

At the end of the British Championships the Lord Mayor threw a full formal civic reception for all the local players who had volunteered to help at the Championships. After a tour of the Lord Mayor's apartment the Lady Mayoress showed everyone her parlour (including the chair Queen Elizabeth had sat in...), followed by a tour of the Council Chamber and then a rather regal meal - a fitting tribute for all the time and effort that local players had put into the event.



Where next for the Lord Mayor? He has already registered to play in the Open at this year's Hull 4NCL Congress, being played in the Canham Turner Conference Centre, University of Hull, an excellent venue which held the British Chess Championships and English Women's Championships in 2021, the National Club Championships in 2023, and the Glorney Gilbert International in 2024.

British Chess Championships 2024 Social Programme

There was a full programme of Festival events running alongside the Championships. Our thanks to Stephen Greet and the Hull and East Riding Chess Association for the organisation of these excellent events.

Social Chess - Sunday 28th July to Friday 2nd August



Twelve boards were placed surrounding the Queen Victoria statue immediately outside the City Hall, together with a giant chess set. In addition, two local cafés had agreed to allow four of their outside tables to be used for chess playing. FM Jonathan Blackburn joined the events during the afternoons, taking on all comers and offering some coaching tips to players who joined in.

Simuls



There were two open simuls on Friday 26th July and Monday 29th July with Danny Gormally (top) and Keith Arkell (above) respectively. Keith also ran a junior simul on Friday 2nd August.

Masterclasses

There were separate masterclasses with Danny Gormally and WGM Natasha Regan, who was joined by Matthew Ball.

Danny spoke about how to analyse a chess position – the difference between professional and amateur players - and how to exploit your opponent's mistakes.



WIM Natasha Regan and NI Matt Ball explored the brilliant chess tactics of Dommaraju Gukesh from his early years up to becoming the youngest ever challenger for the World Championship. This talk was perfect for chess enthusiasts of all ages eager to sharpen their tactical skills through fun puzzles with the chance to win fantastic prizes as well.

An Evening to Discuss Women's Chess – Past, Present and Future



Led by WGM Katarzyna Toma, this was a relaxed evening to discuss women's chess. The evening was sponsored by the Chess Trust and included a free buffet.

Chess Variants – Chess for Fun



Led by Ben Vaughan at the City Hall, these were events where players could have some fun and play some of the interesting and enjoyable chess variants. The first involved playing Hand and Brain chess. Here players joined up with a friend/clubmate and decided who would be the Brain (stating clearly the name of one of the six pieces – king, queen, rook, bishop, knight or pawn - that should be moved) and the Hand (moving the piece that they think is being referred to). No conferring was allowed, aside from the piece name!

In the second, Bughouse chess was played. Once again, players were invited to join up with a friend or clubmate and play one of the more chaotic and fun variants, where captured pieces could be used on your team-mate's board!

History Walks



The history walks were fascinating tours with local historian Mike Rymer and experienced guide Mike Covell through some of the city's most historic sites and architecturally important public houses, ending at the historic Sailmakers Arms in Hull's Old Town.

Chess Problem-Solving

The problem-solving evening was organised by the British Chess Problem Society, with timed problem-solving over two hours. Certificates were given to the best solvers, with a year's subscription to *The Problemist* for the winners.

Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid ... a Ghost Walk through the Streets of Hull

This was an organised evening ghost walk through the scariest parts of Hull with experienced guide Mike Covell of Amazing Hull Tours.



An Evening of Ukrainian Culture and Chess



This event was held at the Welcome Centre and sponsored by the Chess Trust. The Welcome Centre supports asylum seekers and refugees to build and lead fulfilling lives that are connected to local services, integrated with local communities, and actively contributing to society in the Hull and East Riding area.

There was an opportunity to play Ukrainian GM Eldar Gasanov in a rolling simultaneous of up to 20 boards. There were also plenty of Ukrainian food specialities, some folk-singing, and the opportunity to chat with members of the local Ukrainian community, including local players who have settled in Hull from Ukraine.



Children's Pizza-Making

This was a chance for juniors to make and eat their own pizza down at Ask Italian restaurant.



Championships Quiz Night



Finally, quizmaster Kevin Staveley ran the traditional general knowledge team quiz night, with teams of up to four taking part.

Report on Wood Green Invitational 12th - 16th July 2024

by Lawrence Cooper

2024 was the fourth in the series of all-play-all that I've organised since the pandemic. 2021 produced three title norms and two titles, with Marcus Harvey gaining his third international master norm and title, Aga Milewska gaining her final FIDE arbiter norm and title, and Ravi Haria his second grandmaster norm (the third followed in his very next tournament!) In 2022 David Fitzsimons missed a GM norm by half a point, and in 2023 Ameet Ghasi made his second GM norm.

Following the Wood Green team winning the 4NCL in 2023-24 I was very pleased to see seven of my 4NCL squad taking part.



The three grandmasters were Sipke Ernst (returning to Staffordshire after a gap of 24 years, when he played in the tournament I co-organised with David Anderton in 2000), Daniel H Fernandez who had previously played in 2022, and Matthew Turner, who had played in 2021 and 2023 and had been a big part of the successful winning 4NCL team in 2023-24.

Alongside them were seven norm seekers: IMs Matthew Wadsworth, Jonah Willow, James Jackson and David Fitzsimons, FMs Borna Derakhshani and David Haydon (all Wood Green 4NCL players), and Freddy Gordon (also an FM). Aside from the inevitable interest in the English players I was pleased to see Freddy (the very young and promising Scottish junior) and his dad return after a difficult debut in 2023.

With several of the players being under-rated, I felt that the GM norm of 7/9 would be extremely difficult. The IM

norm score was 5 for David Haydon and 5½ for Borna and Freddy.

Round 1 on 2024/07/12 at 1000

Bo.	Rtg	Name	Result	Name	Rtg	PGN
1	2255 FM	Haydon, David L	0 - 1 IM	Jackson, James P	2357	PGN
2	2354 FM	Waldhausen, n Gordon, Frederick	0 - 1 GM	Ernst, Sipke	2512	PGN
3	2416 IM	Willow, Jonah B	½ - ½ GM	Turner, Matthew J	2459	PGN
4	2525 GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	½ - ½ IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	2456	PGN
5	2351 FM	Derakhshan, i, Borna	½ - ½ IM	Fitzsimons, David	2320	PGN

It soon became clear that despite the two games a day schedule, players were going to go all out for wins. Although there were three draws in round 1, all were hard fought. Sipke took advantage of a mistake by Freddy which allowed his attack to crash through. James took advantage of hesitant play by David Haydon to also win with Black.

Round 2

1	2357 IM	Jackson, James P	1 - 0 IM	Fitzsimons, David	2320	PGN
2	2456 IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	1 - 0 FM	Derakhshani, Borna	2351	PGN
3	2459 GM	Turner, Matthew J	½ - ½ GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	2525	PGN
4	2512 GM	Ernst, Sipke	0 - 1 IM	Willow, Jonah B	2416	PGN
5	2255 FM	Haydon, David L	1 - 0 FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	2354	PGN

In round 2 there were four decisive games, including three wins for White. James Jackson moved to 2/2 by beating David Fitzsimons in a position that looked very close to equal, but James was able to win a pawn which he then converted. Jonah won a tactical mess after comfortably equalising and then going on the attack. Matthew W had a convincing win against Borna, while David Haydon recovered from a passive opening to take advantage of Freddy's over-aggressive play.

Round 3									
1	2354	FM	Waldhausen Gordon, Frederick	1 - 0	IM	Jackson, James P	2357	PGN	
2	2416	IM	Willow, Jonah B	0 - 1	FM	Haydon, David L	2255	PGN	
3	2525	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	½ - ½	GM	Ernst, Sipke	2512	PGN	
4	2351	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	½ - ½	GM	Turner, Matthew J	2459	PGN	
5	2320	IM	Fitzsimons, David	½ - ½	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	2456	PGN	

Round 4									
1	2357	IM	Jackson, James P	½ - ½	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	2456	PGN	
2	2459	GM	Turner, Matthew J	½ - ½	IM	Fitzsimons, David	2320	PGN	
3	2512	GM	Ernst, Sipke	½ - ½	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	2351	PGN	
4	2255	FM	Haydon, David L	½ - ½	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	2525	PGN	
5	2354	FM	Waldhausen Gordon, Frederick	0 - 1	IM	Willow, Jonah B	2416	PGN	

Day 2 didn't go too well for the norm seekers. Matthew Wadsworth was unable to create winning chances with his double Black against David Fitzsimons and James; Jonah suffered a shock but deserved loss to David Haydon, but at least recovered to beat Freddy in the afternoon. James Jackson's promising 2/2 start was severely dented by a loss to Freddy, although he recovered well to draw a tough fight against Matthew Wadsworth.



Round 5									
1	2416	IM	Willow, Jonah B	0 - 1	IM	Jackson, James P	2357	PGN	
2	2525	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	1 - 0	FM	Waldhausen Gordon, Frederick	2354	PGN	
3	2351	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	½ - ½	FM	Haydon, David L	2255	PGN	
4	2320	IM	Fitzsimons, David	0 - 1	GM	Ernst, Sipke	2512	PGN	
5	2456	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	1 - 0	GM	Turner, Matthew J	2459	PGN	

Day 3 had just one round, with the bonus/unwelcome distraction of a blitz to mark the tournament organiser becoming even older. Matthew Wadsworth was grateful to be back playing White, and beat Matthew Turner for the second successive year to keep his norm chances alive. Jonah slipped to defeat against James Jackson, ending his norm hopes but keeping James' alive. Daniel and Sipke both moved to +1 by defeating Freddy and David Fitzsimons.



The blitz was a fun event, with seven of the ten all-play-all players being joined by the ageing organiser, and a mixture of young and old happy to have the opportunity to beat a titled player or two. Borna Derakhshani won with 7/9, defeating Freddy Gordon in the final round. Second place went to Ameet Ghazi with 6½, while third was shared between Freddy, Jonah, Matthew W and Finlay Bowcott-Terry on 6.

Round 6									
1	2357	IM	Jackson, James P	1 - 0	GM	Turner, Matthew J	2459	PGN	
2	2512	GM	Ernst, Sipke	½ - ½	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	2456	PGN	
3	2255	FM	Haydon, David L	½ - ½	IM	Fitzsimons, David	2320	PGN	
4	2354	FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	½ - ½	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	2351	PGN	
5	2416	IM	Willow, Jonah B	½ - ½	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	2525	PGN	

Round 7									
1	2525	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	½ - ½	IM	Jackson, James P	2357	PGN	
2	2351	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	½ - ½	IM	Willow, Jonah B	2416	PGN	
3	2320	IM	Fitzsimons, David	0 - 1	FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	2354	PGN	
4	2456	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	1 - 0	FM	Haydon, David L	2255	PGN	
5	2459	GM	Turner, Matthew J	½ - ½	GM	Ernst, Sipke	2512	PGN	

There were only three decisive games on day 4 (possibly a hangover from the Euro 2024 football final the night before?). James Jackson beat Matthew Turner, and then drew with Daniel Fernandez, leaving him needing 2/2 for a GM norm on the final day. Matthew Wadsworth was unable to convert a promising position against Sipke, but then ground down David Haydon in round 7, meaning he also needed 2/2 for a GM norm, while David was left with a difficult 1½/2 against 2 GMs for an IM norm. Freddy won the other decisive game when David Fitzsimons turned down a draw but found the endgame to be very difficult to play.

Round 8									
1	2357	IM	Jackson, James P	0 - 1	GM	Ernst, Sipke	2512	PGN	
2	2255	FM	Haydon, David L	½ - ½	GM	Turner, Matthew J	2459	PGN	
3	2354	FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	½ - ½	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	2456	PGN	
4	2416	IM	Willow, Jonah B	½ - ½	IM	Fitzsimons, David	2320	PGN	
5	2525	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	1 - 0	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	2351	PGN	

Round 9									
1	2351	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	½ - ½	IM	Jackson, James P	2357	PGN	
2	2320	IM	Fitzsimons, David	½ - ½	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	2525	PGN	
3	2456	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	½ - ½	IM	Willow, Jonah B	2416	PGN	
4	2459	GM	Turner, Matthew J	½ - ½	FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	2354	PGN	
5	2512	GM	Ernst, Sipke	1 - 0	FM	Haydon, David L	2255	PGN	

The final day was an anti-climax norm-wise. James blundered against Sipke, albeit in a position where he didn't have winning chances, while Matthew W took risks against Freddy but was fortunate to escape with a draw. David H had a solid draw against Matthew T, meaning he would need to beat Sipke in the last round with Black.

Not surprisingly, a few round 9 games finished quickly as the tough schedule took its toll on players. Four draws, three very quick, left David H struggling against Sipke. He needed to win, but Sipke played impressively and finished the tournament as joint winner with Matthew Wadsworth on 6/9.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds

Rk		Name	FED	Rtg	Club/City	TB1	K	Rtg+/-
1	IM	Wadsworth, Matthew J	ENG	2456	Maidenhead	6	10	7.6
	GM	Ernst, Sipke	NED	2512	Netherlands	6	10	0.4
3	GM	Fernandez, Daniel H	ENG	2525	4ncl Wood Green	5½	10	-6.3
	IM	Jackson, James P	ENG	2357	Banbury	5½	10	15.9
5	IM	Willow, Jonah B	ENG	2416	4ncl Wood Green	4½	10	-2
6	FM	Haydon, David L	ENG	2255	Brentwood	4	20	27.6
7	FM	Waldhausen, Gordon, Frederick	SCO	2354	Glasgow *	3	20	-7.6
	FM	Derakhshani, Borna	ENG	2351	Wood Green	3½	10	-3.4
	GM	Turner, Matthew J	SCO	2459	4ncl Barbican	3½	10	-17.8
10	IM	Fitzsimons, David	IRL	2320	4ncl Wood Green	3	10	-4.4

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

The Chess Trust was established in 2015, helped by a significant bequest from Richard Haddrell. It has the

support of the English Chess Federation and aims to provide support to amateur chess in England both in terms of both playing and teaching. Their support has played a big part in allowing my tournaments to continue. For more information please see: <https://chesstrust.co.uk>

The English Chess Federation has benefited from support from DCMS in 2024, and Malcolm Pein, the ECF International Director, was able to offer sufficient financial support to ensure this was the first of the four all-play-all's I've organised where I was not required to contribute to the cost of running the event.

Matthew Carr was chief arbiter and live board operator, and provided all the equipment. We were very happy with the Oddfellows Hall and its location in the town centre of Stafford. Thank you also to the ten players for providing the organiser with a hassle-free tournament. I should also mention that there was one norm, as deputy arbiter Jake Hung made an international arbiter norm.

To view more information on the tournament, feel free to explore these links:

All-play-all:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr967484.aspx?lan=1andart=1andflag=30>

Games:

<https://lichess.org/broadcast/wood-green-invitational-2024/round-9/RgBhj9ty#leaderboard>

Blitz:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr971551.aspx?lan=1andart=1andflag=30>

Ernst, Sipke (2512) - Willow, Jonah B (2416)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (2.4), 12.07.2024

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.e3 Nf6 5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.b3 0-0 8.Be2 b6 9.0-0 Bb7 10.Bb2 Rc8 11.Rac1 c5 12.cxd5 cxd4 13.Nxd4 Nxd5 14.Qb1 Nxe3 15.fxe3 Qh4 16.Nf3 Bxf3 17.Rxf3 Qxh2+ 18.Kf1 Qh1+ 19.Kf2 Qh4+ 20.Kf1 Bg3 21.Rxg3 Qxg3 22.Rd1 Rfd8 23.Ne4 Qh2 24.Nf2 Nf6 25.Bxf6 gxf6 26.Rxd8+ Rxd8 27.Qc2 Qe5 28.Ng4 Qa1+ 29.Kf2 Kg7 30.Qc7 Rd5 31.e4 Qd4+ 32.Kf3 Rc5 33.Qg3 Rg5 34.Qf4 h5 35.Ne3 Qc3 36.Kf2 Qd2 37.a4 Qd4 38.g3 a5 39.Kf3 Qc3 40.Bc4 Qe1 41.Ng2 Qd1+ 42.Kf2 Qc2+ 43.Kf3 Rg4 44.Qe3 f5 45.Qd4+ Kg8 46.Qd8+ Kg7 47.Qd4+ Kh7 48.Bd3 Qd1+ 49.Kf2 Qd2+ 50.Kf3 Rxe4 51.Qd7 Kg7 52.Qd8 Qd1+ 0-1

Wadsworth, Matthew J (2456) - Turner, Matthew J (2459)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (5.5), 14.07.2024

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.h3 c5 7.e3 Nc6 8.Nge2 e5 9.dxc5 dxc5 10.Qxd8 Rxd8 11.Bxc6 bxc6

12.e4 a5 13.Be3 a4 14.Rd1 Rd4 15.b3 axb3 16.axb3 Be6 17.Nc1 Nd7 18.Ke2 f5 19.f3 Rb8 20.g4 Nf6 21.gxf5 gxf5 22.Rdg1 fxe4 23.Nxe4 Nxe4 24.Bxd4 cxd4 25.fxe4 Kf7 26.Rg3 Bf6 27.Nd3 Rxb3 28.Nxe5+ Bxe5 29.Rxb3 Bxc4+ 30.Rd3 Ke6 31.Rc1 Bb5 32.Rc5 Kd6 33.Rxb5 cxb5 34.Rf3 h5 35.Kd3 h4 36.Rf7 b4 37.Kc4 d3 38.Kxd3 b3 39.Rh7 b2 40.Rh6+ Kc5 41.Kc2 Bg3 42.Ra6 Be5 43.Rh6 Bg3 44.e5 Bxe5 45.Rxh4 Kd5 46.Rh6 Ke4 47.h4 Kf5 48.h5 Kg5 49.Ra6

1-0

Jackson, James P (2357) - Turner, Matthew J (2459)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (6.1), 15.07.2024

1.c4 e6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.e4 Bb4 6.Bxc4 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.Nxd4 0-0 9.e5 Nfd7 10.Bf4 Nb6 11.Bd3 Na6 12.Rc1 g6 13.Bxa6 Bxc3 14.bxc3 bxa6 15.c4 Bb7 16.c5 Nd5 17.Bh6 Re8 18.c6 Bc8 19.Qd2 Qc7 20.Nf3 Rb8 21.Bg5 Rb5 22.a4 Rb3 23.Rfe1 Qb6 24.Bf6 Rb2 25.Rc2 Rxc2 26.Qxc2 a5 27.Rb1 Nb4 28.Qc1 Nd3 29.Qc2 Nb4 30.Qd2 Qc5 31.Qh6 Qf8 32.Qxf8+ Kxf8 33.c7 Bd7 34.Rd1 Nd5 35.Bd8 Bc8 36.Ng5 Nc3 37.Rd3 Nxa4 38.Nxh7+ Kg7 39.Bf6+ Kxh7 40.Rh3+ Kg8 41.Rh8# 1-0

Willow, Jonah B (2416) - Jackson, James P (2357)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (5.1), 14.07.2024

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.h4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Nc6 6.Nge2 0-0 7.f3 e5 8.d5 Nd4 9.Be3 c5 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.Nxd4 exd4 12.Bxd4 Rb8 13.Qc2 Qa5 14.0-0-0 Be6 15.Qa4 Qc7 16.Ne2 d5 17.exd5 cxd5 18.c5 a5 19.Qa3 Rb4 20.g4 h5 21.g5 Ne8 22.Kb1 Bxd4 23.Nxd4 Qxc5 24.Nc2 Nc7 25.Bd3 d4 26.Rc1 Qb6 27.Ka1 Rb8 28.b3 Nb5 29.Qb2 Nc3 30.Nxd4 Rxd4 31.Rxc3 a4 32.Bc2 Qa5 33.Re3 axb3 34.Rxe6 fxe6 35.Bxb3 Qe5 36.Bxe6+ Kh7 37.Bb3 Qg7 38.Kb1 Rb7 39.Qc2 Re7 40.Qb2 Red7 41.Bc2 Rb7 42.Bb3 Rf4 43.Qe2 Re7 44.Qd3 Rd4 45.Qc2 Qe5 46.Qc8 Re8 47.Qb7+ Qe7 48.Qc6 Rd6 49.Qc4 Rd2 50.Bc2 Qg7 51.Qb4 Rdd8 52.Qc4 Re7 53.f4 Rb7+ 54.Bb3 Rd2 55.Qc1 Qd4 56.Qa3 Qe4+ 57.Kc1 Rbd7 58.Rf1 Qd4 0-1

Willow, Jonah B (2416) - Haydon, David L (2255)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (3.2), 13.07.2024

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 c6 6.Ne5 Nbd7 7.Nc4 Qc7 8.a4 Nb6 9.Ne5 e6 10.a5 Nbd5 11.Nxd5 exd5 12.Bd3 Bd6 13.0-0 0-0 14.Re1 Re8 15.Bf4 Bg4 16.Qb1 Bh5 17.c4 c5 18.Bg5 dxc4 19.Nxc4 Bxh2+ 20.Kf1 Rxe1+ 21.Qxe1 Re8 22.Qb1 cxd4 23.Bxf6 gxf6 24.Bxh7+ Kg7 25.Bd3 Qf4 26.Qc2 Bg3 27.Kg1 Re2 28.Bxe2 Qxf2+ 29.Kh1 Bxe2 30.Nd2 Bf4 31.Nf3 d3 0-1

Waldhausen Gordon, Frederick (2354) - Ernst, Sipke (2512)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (1.2), 12.07.2024

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.Qb3 Nc6 7.Qxb7 Bd7 8.Qb3 Rb8 9.Qd1 e5 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Be2 Bd6 12.Nf3 0-0 13.0-0 Ne4 14.Nxe5 Bxe5 15.Qxd5 Nxc3 16.bxc3 Qc7 17.Ba3 Bc6 18.Qc5 Bxh2+ 19.Kh1 Rfe8 20.f4 Bg3 21.Rad1 Qb7 22.Bf3 Bxf3 23.Rxf3 Rbd8 24.Rc1 Rd5 25.Qb4 Rh5+ 26.Kg1 Bh2+ 27.Kf2 Rb5 28.Qa4 Qd7 29.Rc2 Bg1+ 30.Ke2 Rd8 31.Rc1 Rb2+ 32.Bxb2 Qxa4 33.Rxg1 Qc2+ 34.Kf1 Rd1# 0-1

Fernandez, Daniel H (2525) - Waldhausen Gordon, Frederick (2354)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (5.2), 14.07.2024

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.d3 Nc6 4.a3 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5 6.Nf3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 Nb6 9.Ba2 Bg4 10.h3 Bh5 11.Nc3 Bd6 12.Ne4 Kh8 13.Ng3 Bg6 14.b4 Nd4 15.Nxd4 exd4 16.Qf3 a5 17.bxa5 Rxa5 18.Qxb7 Qa8 19.Qxa8 Rfxa8 20.Bb3 Bb4 21.Re2 h6 22.Bb2 Bc3 23.Bxc3 dxc3 24.f4 f5 25.Re7 R8a7 26.h4 h5 27.Ne2 Nd5 28.Bxd5 Rxd5 29.a4 Rc5 30.Kf2 Kg8 31.Ke3 Kf8 32.Re5 Rca5 33.Rxa5 Rxa5 34.Kd4 c5+ 35.Kxc3 Bf7 36.Nc1 Be8 37.Nb3 Rxa4 38.Rxa4 Bxa4 39.Nxc5 Bc6 40.Kd4 Ke7 41.Ke5 g6 42.g3 Bf3 43.d4 Bd1 44.c3 Be2 45.d5 Bf3 46.d6+ Kd8 47.c4 Be2 48.Ne6+ Kd7 49.c5 Bb5 50.Nd4 Ba4 51.Kd5 Kc8 52.c6 Bxc6+ 53.Kxc6 Kd8 54.Ne6+ Ke8 55.d7+ Kf7 56.d8N+ Ke7 57.Kc7 Ke8 58.Kd6 g5 59.hxg5 h4 60.g6 hxg3 61.g7 g2 62.g8N g1N 63.Nf6# 1-0

Wadsworth, Matthew J (2456) - Derakhshani, Borna (2351)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (2.2), 12.07.2024

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Bg2 g6 7.Nc3 Bg7 8.Nf3 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Bf4 h6 11.Qc1 g5 12.Be3 Bf5 13.h4 g4 14.Nd2 a6 15.a4 Kh7 16.Nc4 Nh5 17.Bf4 Bf8 18.a5 Qc7 19.e4 Bg6 20.e5 dxe5 21.Be3 Nd7 22.d6 Bxd6 23.Nd5 Qb8 24.Ndb6 Nxb6 25.Nxb6 e4 26.Nxa8 Qxa8 27.Rd1 Qb8 28.Ra3 Qc7 29.Rc3 Rc8 30.b4 c4 31.Rd4 Qe7 32.Rcxc4 Rxc4 33.Qxc4 f5 34.b5 Bf7 35.Qe2 Bc5 36.Rd1 Bxe3 37.Qxe3 axb5 38.Qd4 Be8 39.Qd6 Qf7 40.Rc1 Bc6 41.a6 e3 42.fxe3 Qa2 43.Bxc6 bxc6 44.Rxc6 Qb1+ 45.Kf2 Qb2+ 46.Ke1 Qa1+ 47.Kd2 Qa2+ 48.Kd3 Qb1+ 49.Kd2 Qa2+ 50.Rc2 Qa5+ 51.Ke2 Ng7 52.h5 1-0

Ernst, Sipke (2512) - Wadsworth, Matthew J (2456)

Wood Green Invitational 2024 Stafford (6.2), 15.07.2024

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 b6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.0-0 Bb7 9.Qc2 a6 10.a3 Bd6 11.b4 Nbd7 12.Bb2 b5 13.Nd2 Re8 14.Rae1 h6 15.f3 Nh5 16.f4 Nhf6 17.Nf3 Nb6 18.Ne5 Ne4 19.Nxe4 dxe4 20.Be2 f6 21.Nc6 Qd7 22.Na5 Bd5 23.f5 c6 24.g3 Qc7 25.Kg2 Rac8 26.Rf2 Bf7 27.Bc1 Nd5 28.Bd2 h5 29.Kh1 g5 30.fxg6 Bxg6 31.Bf1 Qd7 32.Bg2 Kg7 33.Nb3 h4 34.g4 h3 35.Bf1 Qxg4 36.Be2

Qh4 37.Ref1 f5 38.Nc5 f4 39.exf4 Bf5 40.Rg1+ Kf6 41.Rff1 Qh7 42.Be1 e3 43.Qb2 Rg8 44.Rg3 Kf7 45.Bf3 Bxc5 46.dxc5 Be4 47.f5 Bxf3+ 48.Rfxf3 Rxg3 49.Rxg3 Rg8 50.Qe5 Rxg3 51.Qe6+ Kf8 52.Bxg3 Qf7 53.Qh6+ Qg7 54.Qxh3 e2 55.Qh4 Qa1+ 56.Be1 Nf4 57.h3 Nd3 58.Qh6+ Kf7 59.Qg6+ Kf8 60.Qh6+ ½-½

IV Mindsports International Chess Festival 2024 by Lance Leslie-Smith

The Mindsports International Chess Festival was a great success. This was the fourth edition of the event which was run by Jake Hung and Lance Leslie-Smith.

The event took place from 18th - 23rd July at the London Mindsports Centre in Hammersmith. The festival superseded expectations after the third edition in September 2023, with many events taking place. These included an International Open (title norm opportunities), a weekend congress with U2000 and U1700 tournaments, a FIDE rapidplay, a Chess960 rapidplay, and two blitz tournaments. The festival had a total of 232 registrations!

The International Open consisted of 65 players from 14 different federations, including several titled players: seven GMs, four IMs, two WGMs, ten FMs, one WFM, seven CMs, one WCM, and one NM. The average rating of the field was 2159, a promising number for an event of this calibre. To allow the best possible chances to play for GM norms, the pairings were accelerated for the first five rounds using the Baku system. The starting rank cross table can be found below:

[IV Mindsports International Open 2024 Starting Rank or https://chess-results.com/tnr925193.aspx?lan=1&art=0&turdet=YES&lag=30](https://chess-results.com/tnr925193.aspx?lan=1&art=0&turdet=YES&lag=30)

Participants

International Open: 65
FIDE Congress (U2000 and U1700): 35
FIDE Rapidplay: 29
Chess960 Rapidplay: 15
1st FIDE Blitz: 39
2nd FIDE Blitz: 49

Total: 232

The festival had its first edition in September 2022, and has run regularly since, managing four editions in the span of two years. What started off as a bunch of high level all play all tournaments has grown into large Swiss

tournaments. Furthermore, the International Open qualified as a 'super Swiss', which is an Open where the top 40 players collectively have an average FIDE elo of more than 2000, satisfying the new mandatory title norm in WIM / WGM / IM / GM title applications. Additionally, one of the norms in a WGM and GM application needs at least three single round days. The so-called 'perfect Swiss' is an Open satisfying the 40-player requirement as well as three single round days. The best example is a nine-round event over six days (consisting of three single and three

double round days). This is exactly what the International Open achieved!

I was convinced going into the tournament that all title norms were possible, but without accelerating the pairings GM norms would sadly be out of the question, as the field needed a few more 2400+ players to create better chances. The tournament produced two title norms: a WIM norm for WCM Jia Ru Sim (MAS) and an IM norm for FM Alex Golding (ENG). This was the first ENG player title norm I have had at all the events I have organised since the Southend Masters in 2023. All the norms since then have been achieved by foreign players. Congratulations to both players! Alex had his chance to fight for a GM norm with a score of 7/9, but narrowly missed out. It was nearly three norms, as FM Maciej Czopor narrowly missed having to win on demand in the final round against GM Igor Janik. Honourable mentions go to WGM Andreea Navrotescu for putting up an amazing performance and nearly securing an IM norm, as well as Sooraj M R and Daniel Johnson for performing well above their levels and achieving the rating prizes.

A key moment came in the final round, where ten players were tied for first place with 5½/8 and the top seven boards were in contention for the £2,000 prize fund. Bloodshed was certain!

Starting rank					
No.		Name	FideID	FED	Rtg
1		Teclaf, Paweł	1185934	POL	2559
2		Urkedal, Frode Olav Olsen	1506102	NOR	2551
3		Fernandez, Daniel Howard	5801605	ENG	2525
4		Janik, Igor	1159259	POL	2511
5		Lemos, Damian	113581	ARG	2479
6		Kovchan, Alexander	14103052	UKR	2455
7		Czopor, Maciej	21805431	POL	2361
8		Cherniaev, Alexander	4117301	ENG	2359
9		Antolak, Julia	1159569	POL	2333
10		Fitzsimons, David	2501961	IRL	2320
11		Balaji, Aaravamudhan	436224	ENG	2316
12		Buckley, Graeme N	402265	ENG	2311
13		Large, Peter G	400866	ENG	2311
14		Golding, Alex	427241	ENG	2296
15		Kalavannan, Koby	425753	ENG	2265
16		Lim, Zhuo Ren	5702488	MAS	2251
17		Merriman, John	402362	ENG	2251
18		Navrotescu, Andreea	675946	FRA	2246
19		Rudd, Jack	405736	ENG	2243
20		Villiers, Thomas	427209	ENG	2229
21		Sowray, Peter J	400971	ENG	2194
22		Badacsonyi, Stanley	486973	ENG	2178
23		Karas, Eugenia	463485	ENG	2173
24		Li, Harry	430145	ENG	2166
25		Banerjee, Supratit	2410079	ENG	2161
26		Josse, Mark	414476	ENG	2150
27		Eames, Robert S	408743	ENG	2148
28		Rocco, Federico	431362	ENG	2146
29		Shearsby, Jude	462527	ENG	2130
30		Oragwu, Chukwunonso	8501254	NGR	2129
31		Johnson, Daniel	1721283	SWE	2126
32		Brozel, Sacha	429317	ENG	2124
33		Kolani, Arjun	446700	ENG	2124
34		Murawski, Jan	21009287	ENG	2121
35		Willmoth, Robert F	402540	ENG	2115
36		Khoury, Theo	480703	ENG	2113
37		Britton, Richard L	401692	ENG	2112
38		Dignam, Matthew	2501422	IRL	2104
39		Verma, Shlok	441228	ENG	2102
40		Hill, Alistair	432407	ENG	2101
41		Liu, Tianyi (Jack)	8627894	ENG	2098
42		Brackmann, Hendrik	12905135	GER	2086
43		Govindasamy, Nashlen	14301318	RSA	2081
44		Sim, Jia Ru	5716110	MAS	2077
45		Pal, Rohan	462489	ENG	2077
46		Verbytski, Oleg	495506	ENG	2076
47		Payne, Matthew J	417084	ENG	2067
48		Fellowes, Billy	483540	ENG	2063
49		Ogunshola, Ben	8500231	NGR	2043
50		Cancedda-Dupuis, Livio	499447	ENG	2041
51		Wilks, Simon	427357	ENG	2027
52		Dupuis, Denis K	452980	ENG	2013
53		O'Gorman, Alice	2508214	IRL	2003
54		Ethelontis, Alexandros N	405469	ENG	2001
55		Adams, Henry	464562	ENG	2000
56		Sooraj, M R	35014730	IND	1999
57		Bharat Kumar, Balahari	496464	ENG	1989
58		Kovalskyi, Roman	14184214	UKR	1989
59		Deepak Ambattu, Rithvik	2410060	SCO	1978
60		Bird, Joel	429252	ENG	1975
61		Merriman, James	452270	ENG	1974
62		Patel, Zain	469246	ENG	1958
63		Zhang, Junyi	494437	ENG	1957
64		Dias, Savin	442399	ENG	1954
65		Pandit, Kabir	498564	ENG	1950

Round 9 on 2024/07/23 at 11:00									
Bo. No.		Name	Rtg	Pts.	Result	Pts.	Name	Rtg	No.
1	1	GM Teclaf, Paweł	2559	5½	1 - 0	5½	IM Large, Peter G	2311	13
2	14	FM Golding, Alex	2296	5½	0 - 1	5½	GM Urkedal, Frode Olav Olsen	2551	2
3	18	WGM Navrotescu, Andreea	2246	5½	0 - 1	5½	GM Fernandez, Daniel Howard	2525	3
4	7	FM Czopor, Maciej	2361	5½	0 - 1	5½	GM Janik, Igor	2511	4
5	6	GM Kovchan, Alexander	2455	5½	½ - ½	5½	GM Lim, Zhuo Ren	2251	16
6	44	WCM Sim, Jia Ru	2077	5	0 - 1	5	FM Kalavannan, Koby	2265	15
7	31	Johnson, Daniel	2126	5	½ - ½	4½	GM Cherniaev, Alexander	2359	8

Four players tied for first after the conclusion of the final round, each taking home £450: GMs Frode Urkedal, Daniel Fernandez, Pawel Teclaf and Igor Janik.

Final Ranking after 9 Rounds									
Rk.	S.No		Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1		
1	2		GM Urkedal, Frode Olav Olsen	NOR	2551	6,5	2584		
2	3		GM Fernandez, Daniel Howard	ENG	2525	6,5	2529		
3	4		GM Janik, Igor	POL	2511	6,5	2519		
4	1		GM Teclaf, Paweł	POL	2559	6,5	2470		
5	6		GM Kovchan, Alexander	UKR	2455	6	2473		
6	16		FM Lim, Zhuo Ren	MAS	2251	6	2368		
7	15		FM Kalavannan, Koby	ENG	2265	6	2258		
8	14		FM Golding, Alex	ENG	2296	5,5	2456		
9	5		GM Lemos, Damian	ARG	2479	5,5	2381		
	7		FM Czopor, Maciej	POL	2361	5,5	2381		
11	18		WGM Navrotescu, Andreea	FRA	2246	5,5	2355		
12	13		IM Large, Peter G	ENG	2311	5,5	2340		
	31		Johnson, Daniel	SWE	2126	5,5	2340		
14	11		FM Balaji, Aaravamudhan	ENG	2316	5,5	2313		
15	56		AIM Sooraj, M R	IND	1999	5,5	2242		



View of the top seven boards in round 9

Final ranking crosstable:

<https://chessresults.com/tnr925193.aspx?lan=1&art=4&turdet=YES&flag=30>

All the games / PGNs can be viewed and downloaded here:

<https://chessresults.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=925193&art=3>.

A PGN file containing all the games can also be downloaded on the Chess-Results website page next to the 'Download Files' line.

RESULTS

FIDE Congress

Under 2000:

1st: Tim Rogers [£150] 4½/5

Tied 2nd: Jacob Liu and Jonathan Rubeck [£85 each] 4/5

Under 1700:

1st: Mykhaylo Matvieiev [£150] 4/5

Tied 2nd: Stephen Pride, Sanket Markan and Keshav Singla [£57 each] 3½/5

FIDE Rapidplay

Open:

1st: GM Igor Janik [£100] 4 ½ /5

Tied 2nd GM Pawel Teclaf and CM Stanley Badacsonyi [£40 each] 4/5

Under 1700:

1st: Isaac Bergman [£100] 5/5

2nd: Maximo Pollack [£80] 3/5

Chess960 Rapidplay

1st: GM Igor Janik [£150] 4½/5

2nd: GM Pawel Teclaf [£100] 4/5

3rd: IM Yichen Han [£75] 3½/5

1st FIDE Blitz (21st July)

1st: IM Yichen Han [£100] 8½/10

Tied 2nd: GM Pawel Teclaf and GM Igor Janik [£50 each] 8/10

4th: FM Miguel Senlle Caride [£20] 7½/10

Rating Prize: Vishnu Kirupakaran [£30] 5½/10

2nd FIDE Blitz (23rd July)

1st: GM Eldar Gasanov [£100] 11/14

2nd: Livio Cancedda-Dupuis [£60] 10½/14

Tied 3rd: Daniel Johnson, FM Miguel Senlle Caride and Connor Clarke [£20 each] 10/14

Tied Rating Prize: Branko Bijeljic and Savin Dias [£15 each]

PGN Database

A) FIDE Rapidplay Open

<https://chessresults.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=926133&art=3>

B) Chess960

<https://chessresults.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=926135&art=3>

C) 2nd FIDE Blitz

<https://chessresults.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=926137&art=3>

PGN files containing all the games can also be downloaded on the Chess-Results website page next to the 'Download Files' line for each tournament above.

Photo Galleries

A) International Open

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16139>

B) FIDE Congress

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16137>

C) FIDE Rapidplay

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16136>

D) Chess960

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16146>

E) 1st FIDE Blitz

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16145>

F) 2nd FIDE Blitz

<https://chessresults.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16152>

Special thanks to the tournament sponsors and partners. Without them, this event would not have been possible!

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The sponsorship allowed the tournament to go ahead by covering the running costs and player expenses.



I would also like to express my gratitude to: the Young Chelsea Bridge Club (Eva, Magik and the rest of the committee) which provided the venue for the tournament and managed the bar to provide refreshments to the players and spectators; Paul McKeown for providing all the DGT chess equipment and live boards; the London Chess League for providing the rest of the equipment as well as analysis sets; and

International Arbiter/Organiser Adam Raoof for helping to publicise the event.

Lastly, the person who did all the accounts and effectively acted as the Chief Arbiter and Co-organiser for the festival and operated the live boards - Jake Hung. I give my utmost gratitude to all your hard work and thank you for being there for me and acting as the foundation of the festival. Congratulations on achieving an international arbiter title norm!

Where to Go from Here?

This festival was extremely successful, and it has fuelled my ambition to run more high-level tournaments. I have been constantly trying to increase the capacity of the events I organise. My next goal is to achieve an open tournament with more than 100 participants, and ideally 150+ to really aim for a big festival. I also have my eye on organising more high-level all play alls, especially tournaments with a field average rating of 2500+ to 2600+. Moreover, I have managed to organise my first ever women's tournament, which will be a WGM round robin from 30th August to 3rd September, with some blitz tournaments as side events. The games will be broadcast live. You can find all the information here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr955103.aspx?lan=1>



Playing hall A (1)



Playing hall A (2)



Playing hall B (1)



FIDE Congress playing hall



Playing hall A (3)

Lance Leslie-Smith
(FIDE International Arbiter and Tournament Organiser)

Here are some of the games from the Festival.

Golding, Alex (2296) - Lemos, Damian (2479)
IV Mindsports International Open 2024 - Super Swiss
(London Mindsports Centre, 21 Dalling Rd, London W6
0JD), 18.07.2024

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.c4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 O-O 6.Be2 Qe8
7.O-O e5 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Be3 Na6 10.Nd2 Qe7 11.Nd5 Qd8
12.Qb3 Nd7 13.Qa3 Re8 14.b4 c6 15.Nc3 Nc7 16.c5 Ne6
17.Nc4 Nd4 18.Bd3 Nf6 19.Rad1 Qe7 20.Nd6 Rd8 21.Ne2
Ne8 22.Nxd4 exd4 23.Nxc8 Raxc8 24.Bd2 a6 25.Rfe1 Nc7
26.Qb3 Nb5 27.e5 Kh8 28.f4 f5 29.a4 Nc3 30.Bxc3 dxc3
31.Qxc3 a5 32.Bc4 g5 33.Rd6 gxf4 34.bxa5 Re8 35.Qd3 f3
36.g3 Bxe5 37.Be6 Bxd6 38.cxd6 Rcd8 39.dxe7 Rxd3
40.Bf7 Rd2 41.Kf1 f2 42.Re6 1-0

Golding, Alex (2296) - Cherniaev, Alexander (2359)
IV Mindsports International Open 2024 - Super Swiss
(London Mindsports Centre, 21 Dalling Rd, London W6
0JD), 22.07.2024

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Ndb5
d6 7.Bf4 e5 8.Bg5 a6 9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Na3 b5 11.Nd5 f5
12.g3 fxe4 13.Bg2 Be6 14.Bxe4 Rc8 15.c3 Bg7 16.Qd3 Ne7
17.Nxe7 Qxe7 18.O-O O-O 19.Bxh7+ Kh8 20.Bf5 d5
21.Bxe6 fxe6 22.Nc2 e4 23.Qe2 Rf3 24.a4 Be5 25.axb5
axb5 26.Nd4 Bxd4 27.cxd4 b4 28.Qd2 Qf6 29.Rac1 Rf8
30.Rce1 Qf5 31.Re3 Qh3 32.Qxb4 Kg8 33.Qe7 R3f7
34.Qd6 Rf3 35.Qe5 R8f7 36.Ra3 Rxa3 37.bxa3 Rh7
38.Qb8+ Kf7 39.Qf4+ Kg8 40.Rc1 Qxh2+ 41.Kf1 Rg7
42.Ke1 Qh5 43.Rc8+ Kh7 44.Kd2 Rf7 45.Rc7 Rxc7
46.Qxc7+ Kg8 47.Qf4 Qe8 48.Qf6 Qc6 49.g4 Qc4
50.Qxe6+ Kg7 51.Qe5+ Kf7 52.Qf4+ Kg6 53.Qe3 Qa2+
54.Ke1 Qa1+ 55.Ke2 Qb1 56.f4 Qc2+ 57.Ke1 Qb1+ 58.Kf2
Qh1 59.Kg3 Qd1 60.f5+ Kf7 61.Kf4 Qf1+ 62.Kg5 Qa6
63.Kh4 Qd6 64.Kh3 Qa6 65.Kg2 Qb5 66.g5 Qb2+ 67.Kg3
Qb8+ 68.Kg4 Qh2 69.Qg3 Qe2+ 70.Kh4 e3 71.g6+ 1-0

Sim, Jia Ru (2077) - Fitzsimons, David (2320)
IV Mindsports International Open 2024 - Super Swiss
(London Mindsports Centre, 21 Dalling Rd, London W6
0JD), 22.07.2024

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 a6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 Qxd5 5.d4 Nf6 6.Be2 e6
7.Be3 cxd4 8.Qxd4 Nc6 9.Qb6 Ng4 10.c4 Qd6 11.Nd4
Nxd4 12.Bxd4 e5 13.Bc5 Qf6 14.O-O Qxb6 15.Bxb6 Nf6
16.Nc3 Be6 17.Rfd1 Nd7 18.Be3 O-O-O 19.Ne4 h6 20.c5
f5 21.Nd6+ Kc7 22.Rac1 Nb8 23.b4 f4 24.b5 axb5
25.Nxb5+ Kc8 26.Na7+ Kc7 27.Bd2 Nc6 28.Nxc6 Kxc6
29.Bf3+ Bd5 30.Ba5 Rd7 31.Rxd5 Rxd5 32.Bb6 g5 33.Rd1
Bxc5 34.Bxc5 Rhd8 35.Rxd5 Rxd5 36.Bf8 h5 37.h3 g4
38.hxg4 hxg4 39.Be4 b6 40.f3 g3 41.a4 1-0

FEATURES

Endgames All Club Players Should Know

by Glenn Flear



When the Knight Is Stronger Than the Bishop

In July's column I discussed those cases where the bishop can be the much stronger piece. However, in the real world the specifics of the pawn structure and piece dispositions can radically change the outlook.

So, it's worth bearing in mind that in the asymmetrical struggle between knight and bishop there are a number of situations where the side with the knight has chances for an advantage. Here are some typical scenarios where the knight can dominate proceedings:

1. The bishop is restricted by its own pawns.
2. The bishop is unable to activate, for example because it is having an important defensive task or the opponent's pawns restrict its movements.
3. The side with the knight has the more active king.
4. The bishop lacks targets, whereas the knight can hop about and create threats.
5. Play on a limited front often suits the knight better.
6. The advance of a passed pawn can be supported (or restrained!) by a knight on *both* colour complexes.
7. Pressure can lead to Zugzwang, but as the knight (unlike a bishop) can't lose a tempo, it's the king that has to do the cunning manoeuvring.
8. Finally, in tense encounters club players can get nervous about knights (and not just in time trouble!) because of their ability to come up with annoying checks!

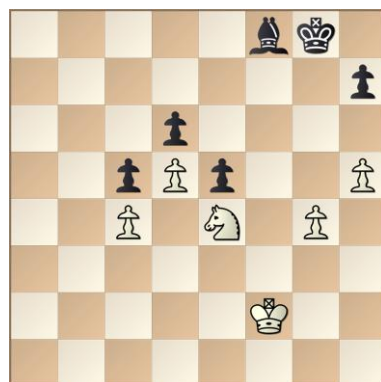
I've illustrated these points with a series of practical examples below, where the superiority of one minor piece over the other often comes down to a fine detail. At times the tables can be turned if one loses control!

Rather than get too rigid in one's judgement in one's own games, it's always a good idea to look at the *potential* of the minor pieces and kings in the play that will follow.

I came across this position in Averbakh's endgame series many years ago, and it has since influenced my thinking. With Black tied down and unable to protect the f5-square, White's king is soon able to penetrate.

Averbakh, Y – Panov, V

Moscow 1950



1.g5 Kg7 2.Kf3 Kf7 3.Kg4 Be7 4.Kf5 Bf8 5.Nf6 h6 6.gxh6 Bxh6 7.Ne4 Bf8 8.h6 A deflection. Now Black struggles to cover both the centre and the kingside.

8...Bxh6 Or **8...Be7 9.h7 Kg7 10.Ke6 Bf8 11.h8=Q+ Kxh8 12.Kf7**, and the d6-pawn is doomed.

9.Nxd6+ Ke7 10.Ne4 Be3 11.d6+ Kd7 12.Kxe5 Black is faced with an unenviable choice: either the c5-pawn will be lost, or the d-pawn will be escorted the whole way towards the promotion square. **1-0**

Curiously, after **12...Kc6 13.Ke6** (with d6-d7 coming) Black's bishop is so dominated it can't get back to cover d8.

The importance of a knight outpost on e4 is paramount in many a middlegame or pseudo-endgame. In the following example Black's d6-square is not really under attack by the knights, but Black has nevertheless great difficulty in undoing the bind.

Flear, G – Sowray, P
Hastings 2015



18...Nd7 19.Ke2 Bf8 20.Rh3 Nc5 21.Nxc5 dxc5 22.Kf3 Bd6 23.Ke4 Rg8 24.Rg3 Rg5 25.Rxg5 fxg5 26.Rd1 Rf8 27.Rd3 g4 28.Rg3 Rg8 29.f3 gxf3 30.Rxg8 30.gxf3! is more convincing.

30...f2 31.Ng3 Kxg8 32.Ke3 Kf7 Even the king and pawn endgame is winning: **32...Be7 33.Kxf2 Bh4 34.Kf3 Bxg3 35.Kxg3 Kf7 36.Kf3 Ke7 37.Ke4 Kf6 38.a3+–.**

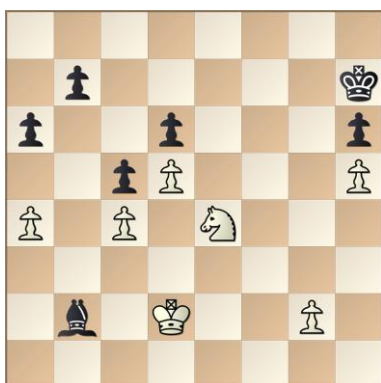
33.Kxf2 Bf8 34.Kf3 Ke7 35.Ne4 Kd7 36.Kg4 Just like in Averbakh - Panov above, White's king intends to invade via the f5–square.

36...c6 37.dxc6+ Kxc6 38.Kf5 Kd7 39.Kf6 Dominating the bishop is more to the point than grabbing the loose pawn.

39...a6 40.b3 b5 41.g4 Further resistance would not be much use: **41...Kc6 (41...Ke8 42.Kxe5 Kf7 43.Kd5) 42.Kf7 Bd6 43.Kg7. 1–0**

Even on a more open board the e4-outpost can be the bane of the King's Indian bishop's existence!

Flear, G – Youssoufov, M
Saint-Affrique 2014



Black's bishop is about to be tied down to the weakness

on d6. As you will see, White's king will again be able to exploit the light-square complex to advance to f5 and beyond, whereupon his majority proves to be much easier to use.

33...Be5 34.Ke2 Kg7 35.Kf3 Kf7 36.Kg4 Ke7 37.Kf5 b6 38.Kg6 Bf4 39.g4 Be3 40.g5 I could have gone for **40.Ng3 Kd7 41.Nf5 Bf4 42.Nxh6**, but at the time I wasn't so sure about **42...b5**. Still, it seems that White wins easily following **43.cxb5 axb5 44.axb5 Bxh6 45.g5!!+–.**

40...hgx5 41.Nxg5 Bd4 Instead **41...b5 42.cxb5 axb5 43.axb5 c4** requires a prophylactic manoeuvre: **44.Nf3 c3 45.Ne1** and now, with c2 safely blockaded, the widely-spaced passed pawns will overcome the defences: **45...Kf8 46.Kf6 Ke8 47.Nc2 Bf4 48.Kf5 Be5 49.h6+–.**

42.Kf5 Bf6 43.Ne6 Be5 44.h6 Kf7 45.Nc7 a5 46.Nb5 Ke7 47.Kg6 Kf8 48.Na7 Bh8 49.Nc8 b5 Not serious, but it still needed calculating. Always be on the look-out for desperate attempts to complicate!

50.axb5 a4 51.b6 a3 52.b7 a2 53.b8=Q a1=N 54.Nb6+ 1–0

It can at times be the opponent's pawns that seriously restrict the bishop's movements.

Sharif, M – Flear, G
French League 1994



The pawn structure is such that Black's bishop is locked into a cage on the kingside.

26...Rg2+ 27.Nf2 Rg1 28.Ra3 Kb8 29.Kf3 Rf1? Instead, **29...Rb1 30.Rd3 Rxb2 31.Rd7 Rxa2** would have at least put up a fight.

30.Rd3 Kc8 31.Rd1 Now it's as if Black is a piece down!

31...Rxd1 32.Nxd1 Kd7 33.Nc3 Kc6 34.b4 Bg7 35.Ke4 Bh6 36.a4 Bg7 37.g4 Bh6 38.g5 Bg7 39.Kd4 h5 40.Kc4 Bf8 41.Nb5 Kd7 42.Nd4 Bg7 43.Kb5 Bf8 44.Nb3 Hopeless is

44...Bg7 45.a5 bxa5 46.Nc5+ Kc8 47.bxa5, after which White's knight will gorge on Black's kingside. **1-0**

The pawn count can be secondary to having chances to penetrate.

Howell, J – Flear, G
Leicester 1993



Black is a pawn down, but has the better king.

25...Ke6 26.Bf8 g6 27.Kf2 Kd5 28.Kf3 Kc4 29.g4!? Kb3 30.gxf5 gxf5 31.Kg3 Kxb2 32.Bg7 Nd8 33.Bf6 Ne6! The poor 33...Nf7? would be refuted by 34.c4+! Kb3 35.c5 Kxb4 36.c6 Ka5 37.Bd8+! Ka4 38.Be7, as the knight is not able to stop the pawn.

34.c4+ Kb3 35.cxb5 Now 35.c5 fails to 35...Kxb4 36.c6 Kc5+.

35...axb5 36.Be7 Kc4 37.Bd6 Kd5 38.Be7 Ke4 39.Bd6 Ke3 40.Bc5+ Kd3 41.Be7 Nd4 42.Kh4 Nf3+ 43.Kg3 Ke4 44.Bd6 Nd2 The engine claims a decisive advantage, but I was unable to find the way with time running short.

Here is a plausible way to make progress: 44...Ne1 45.Kf2 Nd3+ 46.Kg3 Kd5 47.Bf8 Kc4 48.Kh4 (48.Bd6 Nxb4 49.Kh4 Nd3 50.Kg5 Kd5 51.Bf8 Ke4+) 48...Nxf4 49.Bd6 Nd3+.

45.Kh4 Kf3? 45...Nf3+ and then trying again would have been better.

46.Bb8 Ne4 47.Kh5 Kg2 48.Kh6 Kxh2 49.Kxh7 Kg3 50.Kg6 Kg4 51.Kf7 Nf2 52.Ke6 Nd3 53.Kd5? Missing his chance.

He needed to find 53.Bd6 Nxf4+ 54.Kd7 Nd3 55.Kc6=.

53...Nxb4+ 54.Ke6 Nc6 55.Bd6 b4 56.Kd5 b3 57.Ba3 Kxf4! 58.Kxc6 Ke4 59.Kb5 f4 60.Kc4 f3 0-1

There can be a struggle for king activation, both in the endgame and the play leading up to it.

Wojtkiewicz, A – Flear, G
Neuchatel 1998



40...g5! The idea is to obtain access to e5 for the king.

41.fxg5 fxg5 42.hxg5 hxg5 43.Ke1 Ke5 44.Bf3 Rc2 45.Kd1 Rc3?! On a human level trading rooks seems the most natural. However, I should really have induced further concessions first.

So something like 45...Rh2, with continuing pressure, was a better idea. Here are some ensuing possibilities: 46.Ke1 Nf6 47.Kd1 Ra2 48.Ke1 Ra1+ 49.Ke2 (or 49.Kd2 Ne4+ 50.Bxe4 Kxe4 51.Rd7 Rxa3 52.Rxb7 Rxb3 53.Rb6 Rg2+ 54.Kc3 Rg1 55.Rxa6 g4 and Black's king is ideal for influencing play in the rook endgame - 56.Kb2 Kd5 57.Ra5+ Kc4 58.Rc5+ Kxb4 59.Rxc6 Rg2+) 49...g4 50.Bg2 Ra2+ 51.Kf1 Nd5 52.Kg1 Rb2 No rush, and better than 52...Re2 53.Bf1 Re3 54.Kf2 Rxd3 55.Bxd3 53.Kf1 (53.Bf1 Ke4!) 53...Rc2 54.Kg1 Rc3 55.Bf1 Ke4 56.Rxc3 Nxc3 57.Kf2 Kd4 and the knight and king combine to dominate White's forces, for example after 58.Bg2 Ne4+.

46.Kd2 Rxd3+ 47.Kxd3 Nf6 48.a4!? Not bad in itself, but I think that White should be seeking to control key squares with his pieces: 48.Ke3 Ng8 49.Kd3 Ne7 50.Kc4 Kd6 51.Be4 when it's hard to create threats with the knight.

48...Nd5 49.Kc4? The astonishing 49.a5!! is the engine choice, as after 49...Nxb4+ 50.Kc4 Nc2 51.Kc5 White's king is so good it fully compensates for the two pawn deficit.

49...Nb6+ 50.Kb3 Kd4! Now Black's king dominates proceedings.

51.Bg4 Nc4 52.Bc8 Nd6 The queenside pawns are vulnerable, but the knight does a sterling job of protecting the assets whilst enabling progress with the majority.

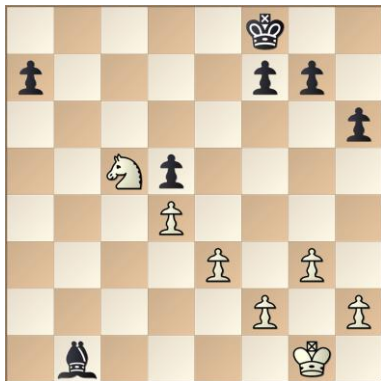
53.Bd7 c5 54.a5 After 54.bxc5 Kxc5 55.a5 Nc4 56.Ka4 Black has the neat shot 56...b5+!

54...c4+ 55.Kc2 c3 56.Be6 Nb5 57.g4 Na3+ 58.Kc1 Nc4

59.Bc8 Nd6 60.Be6 Kd3 61.Bd5 c2 0–1

In the following case my opponent didn't find the way to keep my king out of his camp.

Flear, G - Rada Equiza, M
Basque League 2007



White has less pawn islands and there are no targets for the bishop, so one could argue (due to the pawn fixed on d5) that Black has a 'bad' bishop. Even so, all these factors would be insufficient if there is no king penetration.

30.Kf1 Ke7 31.Ke2 Ba2? Improving the king first seems correct: 31...Kd6 32.Kd2 Kc6 33.Kc3 a5 with a fortress that would be difficult to breach.

32.Kd2 Bc4 33.Kc3 Be2 34.Kb4 With the king having made it to b4, it will only be a question of time before it advances further.

34...g5 35.Na4 Ke6 Or 35...Kd6 36.Nc3 Bf1 37.Nb5+ Bxb5 38.Kxb5 g4 (or 38...Kc7 39.g4!, and Black loses one of his queenside pawns) 39.Ka6+.

36.Nc3 Bf3 37.Kc5 a6 38.Kb6 Kd6 39.Kxa6 Kc6 40.Ka5 Bg2 There are no threats from the enemy, so White can gradually manoeuvre closer to the d-pawn.

41.Na2 Bf1 42.Nb4+ Kd6 43.Kb6 f5 44.f4 Bc4 45.Nc2 gxf4 46.exf4 Bd3 47.Na3 Be4 48.Nb5+ Ke6 49.Kc6 Ke7 50.Nc7 Bh1 51.Kc5 Bg2 52.Nxd5+ Ke6 53.Ne3 Be4 54.d5+ Kd7 55.Kd4 Kd6 56.Nc4+ 1–0

In the following example I'm somewhat ashamed that I made such a pig's ear of the endgame. Still, I included it to illustrate a principle: one should pressurize the opponent's weaknesses rather than exchange them off!

Miles, J – Flear, G
Leicester 1987



45...Rc6! 46.Rxc6 Nxc6 47.Bb6 Kf5 48.Kf2 Ke4 49.h4 If White just waits, then Black could eventually make inroads: 49.Kg3 Ne5 50.Bc7 Nc4 51.Bd8 Kf5 52.Kf3 Ne5+ 53.Ke3 Ke6 54.Bc7 Kd7 etc.

49...h5 50.Bc7 Ne7 51.g3 Nc6 52.Bb6 Ne5 53.Bd8 Kf5 54.Bc7 Kg4 55.Kg2 At the time I evidently didn't know the technique to convert the advantage, and I have since seen other players go astray in similar positions. In fact the correct plan is to weaken the h4–pawn: 55...Nd3! 56.Bb6 f5 57.Bd4 (or 57.Bd8 f4 58.gxf4 Nxf4+ 59.Kf1 Ng6) 57...g6 58.Be3 f4! 59.gxf4 Nxf4+ 60.Kf2 Nd5+.

55...Nc4 56.Bb6 Nd6 57.Bc7 Ne4 58.Bb8 g5?! Trading White's potential weakness on h4 isn't a great idea.

59.hxg5 fxg5 60.Bc7 Nd2 61.Bb8 Nf3 It's still possible to win: 61...Nc4 62.Bc7 Kf5 63.Kf3 g4+! (fixing the weakness on g3 rather than exchanging it!) 64.Ke2 Ke4 65.Bd8 Nd6 66.Bc7 Nf5 67.Kf2 Kd3 68.Bd8 Nd6 69.Bc7 Ne4+ 70.Kg2 Ke2 71.Be5 Nd2 72.Bb8 Nc4 73.Bc7 Ne3+ 74.Kg1 Kf3 75.Bb8 Nf5 76.Kh2 Kf2 77.Ba7+ (or 77.Bc7 Ne3) 77...Ne3 78.Bd4 Kf3, and the g-pawn is about to drop.

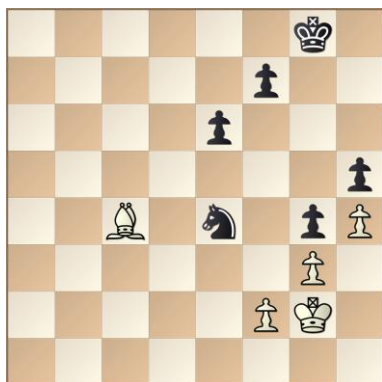
62.Bc7 h4? A shocking choice!

63.gxh4 Nxh4+ 64.Kf2 ½–½

When we do have an endgame that goes wrong, the key to future success is to learn from the experience!

My opponent's fine technique in the following example demonstrated to me how effective a knight can be when all the action is on one wing.

Flear, G - Le Roux, J-P
French league 2015



I thought that I might have drawing chances, as Black has some pawns fixed on light squares, but the knight is an excellent piece when all the play is on a limited front, and as such my opponent was easily able to see off my attempts at counterplay.

38...Nd2 39.Bb5 Kf8 40.Ba4 Ke7 41.Bb5 f5 42.Ba4 e5 43.Bc2 If 43.Bc6!? even 43...Ne4 is possible.

43...Ke6 44.Bd3 Nf3 45.Bc4+ Ke7 46.Bd5 Nd4 47.Bb7 Kf6 48.Bd5 f4 49.Be4 f3+ 50.Kf1 Nb5 51.Bc6 Nd6 52.Ke1 e4 53.Kd2 Ke5 54.Bd7 Kd4 55.Be6 e3+! 56.fxe3+ Ke5 Black intends ...Ne4+. **0-1**

The next loss was avoidable, but (in time trouble) I failed to keep an eye on the knight's actions.

Matulovic, M – Flear, G
Belgrade 1985



50.dxc5 Nxc5 51.Bxc5 Bxc5 52.Ne5+ Kg7 53.Kf3 Bd6 54.Nd7 Ba3? What is the bishop doing over here?

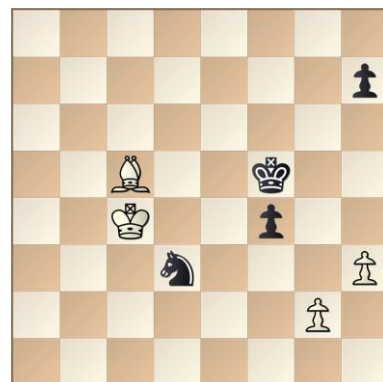
Correct is 54...Be7! 55.Kg4 Bd6 56.Nf6 Be5 57.Nd7 Bd6, and the black king can block any pawn advances, for example 58.h6+ Kg6 etc.

55.h6+ Kg6 56.Ne5+ Kh7 If 56...Kxg5 then 57.h7+–.

57.Kg4 Now the white king can make it to h5, and the struggle is over.

57...Bd6 58.Nf7 Ba3 59.Kh5 Bb2 60.g6+ Kg8 61.h7+ Kf8 62.h8=Q+ Bxh8 63.Nxh8 d4 64.Kh6 d3 65.g7+ 1-0

Flear, G – Relange, E
Montpellier 1996



At first sight it may not look too bad, but White's king is cut off from the action and the g2–pawn soon falls.

53...Ke4 54.Bg1 Ne1 55.Kc3 Nxg2 56.Kd2 Kf3 57.Bc5 Nh4 58.Ke1 Kg2 0-1

Here's another example of the ineffectiveness of the bishop (compared with the knight) when play is focused on a small area of the board.

Flear, G – Fontaine, R
St-Affrique 1999



The 5 vs 4 scenario seems to be a straightforward win whichever endgame Black chooses. One key factor is that White's king is so handily placed.

35...Nxb4 36.Nxb4 g4 37.Nd3 Ke7 38.f3 gxh3 39.gxh3 h4 40.Ne5 Kf6 41.f4 Be7 42.Nf3 Kf7 43.d5 The f5–pawn is loosened.

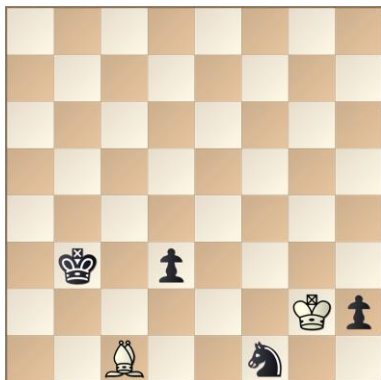
43...exd5+ 44.Kxd5 Kg6 Or 44...Bf6 45.Nd4 Kg6 46.Ke6.

45.Ke6 1–0

Black seems to be on the verge of victory in the next example, but it turns out that the only convincing way to win is to manoeuvre with Zugzwang in mind.

Jagodzinska, J – Olarasu, G

Baile Herculane 1984



Black needs to engineer a Zugzwang to thwart White's defences.

1...Kc4! This is better than 1...Kc2 2.Bh6 Kd1, as played in the game, as White would then have been able to resist with 3.Bf8!, switching diagonals.

2.Bh6 Kd5 3.Bg5 Ke5! With the knight being unable to lose a tempo, the king has to do the wriggling.

4.Bh6 Kf5! 5.Kh1 Or 5.Bc1 Ke4 6.Bh6 Ne3+, and the d-pawn will be able to advance.

5...Ke4 Threatening Ne3.

6.Bc1 Kf3 Zugzwang! The point is that with the king on h1 Black obtains access to this key square.

7.Bh6 Ne3 And Black wins.

The most famous of all examples of king manoeuvring (to prepare Zugzwang) is the following remarkable play by Nimzowitsch.

Henneberger, W – Nimzowitsch, A

Winterthur 1931



Although angling for a good knight vs bad bishop scenario looks natural enough, the result is by no means a foregone conclusion.

43...Bxc3 44.bxc3 Kc6 45.Ke2 Nf6 46.Ke3 Ne4 47.Ke2 Kd5 48.Ke3 Kd6! Mysterious it may seem, but Nimzowitsch is triangulating!

Another try, 48...Nd6, isn't so convincing after 49.Bd2 Nb5 50.Be1 Na3 51.Bd2 Nc2+ 52.Ke2 Ke4 53.Bc1.

49.Ke2 Kc6 50.Ke3 Kd5 So now White has the move.

51.Ke2 Nd6 52.Ke3 Nb5 53.Bd2 Na3 54.Bc1 White loses quickly after 54.Be1 Nc2+ 55.Kd2 Nxe1 56.Kxe1 Ke4 57.Ke2 a3!, and the reserve tempo enables Black to create a decisive Zugzwang.

54...Nb1 55.Bb2 a3 56.Ba1 Kd6! Time for another tempo-ceding manoeuvre.

57.Ke2 Kc6 58.Kd1! Instead, 58.Ke3 goes down to 58...Kd5 59.Kf2 Nd2 60.Kg2 Nb3!.

58...Kd5 59.Kc2 Ke4 The knight is sacrificed for penetration which wins... but only just!

60.Kxb1 Kf3 61.Bb2 axb2 62.a4 Kxg3 63.a5 Kh2 64.a6 g3 65.a7 g2 66.a8=Q g1=Q+ 67.Kxb2 Qg2+ The second race will be decisive.

68.Qxg2+ Kxg2 69.Ka3 Kf3 70.Kb4 Kxf4 71.Kxc4 Ke3 72.d5 exd5+ 73.Kxd5 f4 74.c4 f3 75.c5 f2 76.c6 f1=Q 0–1

In the following example my opponent had to decide between passive or active defence.



40.a5 At the time I felt that I had excellent winning chances as there are weaknesses on a6 and e6, but the truth only became clear later.

40...Bc4 41.Ke5 Kd7 Or perhaps 41...h6, placing the pawn on a dark square.

42.Nc5+ Kc6!? An active defence.

Sometimes it's hard to bring oneself to stay totally passive, but 42...Ke7! 43.h4 Bf1 44.g3 Bc4 is a tough nut to crack. White has several trump cards, but Black has sufficient reserve tempi with his pawns, so should avoid getting into Zugzwang.

43.Nxe6 Kb5 44.Nxg7 Kxa5 45.f4 Kb5? An error. However, it only becomes clear why after indulging in a deep calculation.

Instead 45...Kb6! is a good idea, when the race seems to be about equal. On b6 the king would sidestep a time-gaining check in some variations, which isn't the case on b5. So 46.f5 a5 47.Ne6 a4 48.f6 a3 49.f7 a2(=), and here Nd4 isn't check!

For humans 45...Kb4 doesn't feel natural, as a pawn promoting on f8 would be with check, but concrete analysis shows that it is nevertheless playable: 46.f5 a5 47.Ne6 (47.f6 Bf7) 47...Bd3 48.f6 Bg6 49.Nf4 Bf7 50.Kd4 Kb3! (but not 50...a4 51.Nd3+ (check!) 51...Kb3 52.Nc5+ (another check!) 52...Kb4 53.Nxa4+-) 51.Nd3 Kc2!, and by heading for the kingside Black saves the day.

46.f5 a5 47.Ne6! a4 Worse is 47...Bd3 48.f6 Bg6 49.Kd4 Kb4 50.Nc5 a4 51.Nxa4 Kxa4 52.Kd5+-.

48.f6 Bxe6 Following the plausible continuation 48...a3 49.f7 a2 50.f8=Q a1=Q+ the resource 51.Nd4+ comes with check, and then 51...Kb6 52.Qb4+ etc. Now the problem with the choice of the b5-square (see 45...Kb5?) becomes

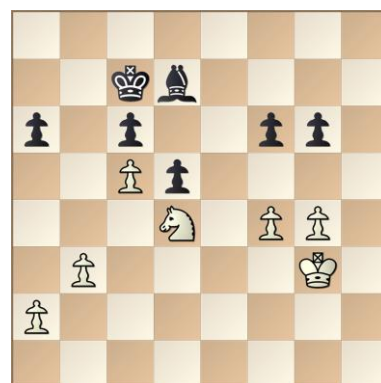
clear.

49.Kxe6 a3 50.f7 a2 51.f8=Q a1=Q 52.Qf5+ Kb6 53.Qf2+ Kb7 54.Qf7+ Kb6 55.Qf2+ Kb7 56.Qf3+ Kb6 57.Qe3+ Kc6 58.Qe4+ Kb6 59.h4 Everything is defended and counterplay is ruled out, whilst the h7-pawn is vulnerable.

59...h5 60.Qe3+ Kc6 61.Qf3+ Kb6 62.Qxh5 Qe1+ 63.Kf7 Qf1+ 64.Qf3 Qc4+ 65.Kg7 Qc7+ 66.Qf7 Qh2 67.Qg6+ Ka5 68.g3 Qb2+ 69.Qf6 Qb7+ 70.Kg6 Qg2 71.g4 Qa2 72.g5 Qg8+ 73.Kh6 Kb4 74.h5 Qe8 75.g6 Qe3+ 76.Kh7 Qh3 77.Qd4+ Kb3 78.Qd5+ 1-0

So my opponent could have saved the game in two ways: passive defence required calculating that there were sufficient pawn tempi in reserve, whereas in the race he needed to find a square that avoided a decisive check (see the note to move 48) down the line.

Exercise 1



White to play. How should he develop his advantage?

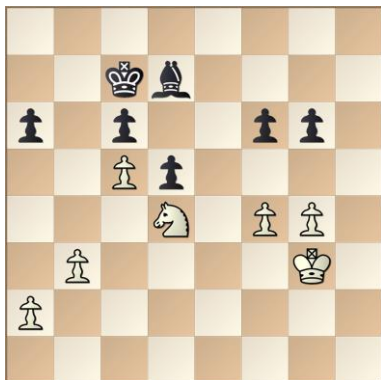
Exercise 2



White to play. Can you demonstrate a convincing way to win?

Exercise 1 answer

From the game **Averbakh, Y – Lilienthal, A** Moscow 1949.



White fixed the g-pawn on g6 and gave his opponent a difficult decision to make with **40.g5!** Then neither option is palatable.

40...fxg5 After 40...f5 White can take his time to turn the screw (as Black is so helpless): 41.Kf3 Kd8 42.Ke3 Ke7 43.Nf3 Be8 44.Ne5 Ke6 45.Kd4 Ke7 46.Nd3 Ke6 47.Nb4 a5 48.Nd3 Bd7 49.a4 Be8 50.b4 axb4 51.Nxb4, and the passed pawn will decide.

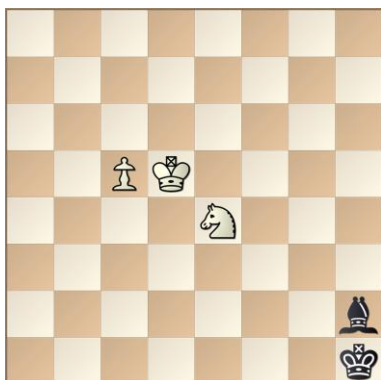
41.fxg5 Bc8 42.Kf4 Black resigned at the adjournment, but Averbakh's notes show how the game could have continued.

42...a5 43.Ke5 Bg4 Or 43...Ba6 44.Kf6 Bd3 45.Ke7 Be4 46.Ne6+ Kc8 47.Kd6 etc.

44.Kf6 Bh5 45.Ke7 Bg4 46.a3 Bd1 47.Ne6+ Kb7 48.Kd6 Bxb3 49.Nd8+ Kc8 50.Nxc6 a4 51.Ne7+ 1-0

Exercise 2

A study by **Kosek**.



The pawn needs to be advanced fairly quickly, but preferably when the opposing bishop is chasing ghosts!

1.Nd6! After 1.c6 Bc7 it will be more difficult to oust the defending bishop from both diagonals.

1...Bg1 2.c6 Bb6 3.Ke6! Rather than 3.Nc4 Bc7 4.Ke6 Kg2 5.Kd7 Bb8, when the advance of the pawn is frustrated.

3...Bc7 Or if 3...Kg2 then 4.Kd7 Kf3 5.Nc4, and the bishop is pushed off the a5–d8 diagonal.

4.Kd7 Bb8 Or again 4...Ba5 5.Nc4.

5.Nb5 Kg2 6.Nc7 This limits the bishop's scope.

6...Kf3 7.Kc8 Ba7 8.Nb5 Bb6 9.Nd6! Sloppy would be 9.Kd7?, as then 9...Ke4 10.Nd6+ Kd5 enables Black to stop the N-c4 idea.

9...Be3 If 9...Kf4 then 10.Nc4. Otherwise, 9...Kg4 goes down to 10.Kd7 Kg5 11.Nc4.

10.Kd7 Bb6 11.Nc4 and wins.

This sort of puzzle can be considered as a training exercise to see how the knight plus king duo can outsmart a bishop on an open board.

From the Archives

Fourth Women's Olympiad

'Development of the Olympic idea and chess sport' *Women's 4th Chess Olympiad Programme*, 1969.

CONTENT WARNING: This feature refers to the Holocaust and Nazi concentration camps as well as including an image of a former camp at Lublin.

Now the Summer Olympic Games held in Paris this year have ended with not a single chess piece pushed, I was nudged into pondering the Chess Olympiad and the many chess tournament programmes in the collection sporting the term. With an eye-catching chess board design in orange and white with 'Olympiada Szachowa' strikingly printed across the cover, here we take a closer look at the fourth Women's Chess Olympiad held in Lublin, Poland, in 1969.



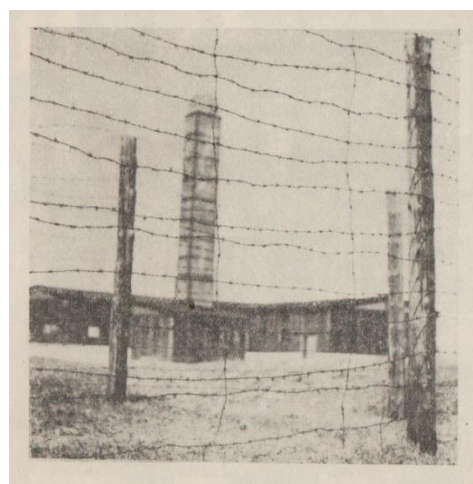
Cover of the fourth Women's Chess Olympiad - text reads: Olimpiada Szachowa (Chess Olympiad)

With a Women's Olympiad only introduced in 1957 and not held regularly until 1972 (after which it has taken place every two years), the tournament's beginnings contrast with the origins of the Men's Chess Olympiad (more commonly referred to as just Chess Olympiad). Interestingly, exactly 100 years ago a failed attempt was made for chess to be included in the Olympic Games taking place that year (also held in Paris). Nonetheless the first unofficial Chess Olympiad was held, and ran concurrently with the Games. On the final day, 20th July, when Czechia (then known as Czechoslovakia) were crowned winners of the Olympiad, 15 delegates from all over the world signed the proclamation act of the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (International Chess Federation), now commonly known as FIDE, and elected their first president, Alexander Rueb of the Netherlands. With the first official Olympiad held the following year in Hungary in 1926, the tournament has typically been held every two years since 1950. Although the Women's Olympiad had finally got off the mark, by 1969 it was still only on its fourth tournament. With so few events, the brochure could easily accommodate the results of each of the Olympiads, as seen below.

ZESTAWIENIE UZYSKANYCH WYNIKÓW PRZEZ REPREZENTACJE PAŃSTWOWE NA OLIMPIADACH SZACHOWYCH KOBIEC		THE LIST OF RESULTS GAINED BY THE NATIONAL TEAMS AT THE CHESS WOMEN'S OLYMPIADS			
		1957 Emmen	1963 Split	1966 Oberhausen	1969 Lublin
ZSRR	USSR	1	1	1	
Rumunia	Romania	2	4	2	
NRD	GDR	3	3	3	
Jugosławia	Yugoslavia	6	2	4	
Holandia	Holland	9	7	5	
CSRS	CSSR	11	—	6	
Węgry	Hungary	4	6	7	
Bulgaria	Bulgaria	5	5	8	
Anglia	England	3	—	9	
USA	USA	10	9	10	
Polonia	Poland	12	8	11	
NRF	F. R. Ger- many	8	11	12	
Dania	Denmark	13	13		
Austria	Austria	17	12	14	
Mongolia	Mongolia	—	10	—	
Belgia	Belgium	—	13	—	
Monako	Monaco	—	14	—	
Szkocja	Scotland	15	15	—	
Irlandia	Ireland	14	—	—	
Francja	France	16	—	—	
Finlandia	Finland	18	—	—	
Norwegia	Norway	19	—	—	
Luksemburg	Luxembourg	21	—	—	

Page 16: results of the previous three Women's Chess Olympiads, held in 1957, 1963, and 1966

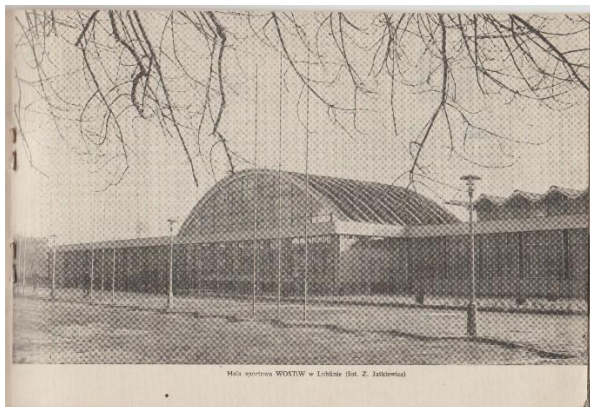
The brochure (helpfully printed in English and Polish) sets out a timetable of drawing lots, elimination rounds and final groups, with the tantalizing promise of an official opening ceremony and 'artistic show'. Sadly the brochure does not elaborate on what this might have entailed. Cordially welcoming players to Lublin, and exuding pride in their role as hosts and their own master chess players past and present, including Regina Gerlecka, the organisers do not shy away from narrating the country's violent past. Delving deeper into the brochure one finds reference to numerous medieval invasions, the razing of cities, and a shocking local legend where one of Poland's 16th century nobles is said to have maimed an African princess when he defeated her at chess, despite already having won his freedom from her father, so that she would never play again (an unnerving tale to mention at a Women's Chess Olympiad, one would surely agree). More prominent, and rightly so, are the more recent acts of genocide witnessed and experienced in Poland during World War II. Regarding this, an image of Majdanek concentration camp, which is now the site of a Holocaust Memorial Museum, is included, along with a history of the atrocities committed there while under Nazi control.



Majdanek Holocaust Museum on the outskirts of Lublin

As such, the brochure undoubtedly provides evidence of how the history of chess and chess events is contextualised on the world stage, regardless of whether we want to view contemporary international sporting events in such a way or not.

To return to the Olympiad, the tournament took place at a local sports hall, with Poland's team comprising Krystyna Hołuj-Radzikowska, Mirosława Litmanowicz, and Anna Jurchyńska.



Venue for the fourth Women's Chess Olympiad, the sports hall in Lublin

The team placed eighth at the end of the tournament. Having been produced before the Olympiad took place, the results in the brochure do not show that the USSR did in fact take the title again in 1969 and would continue to do so until 1976, when Israel made it to victory, with England and Spain taking second and third place respectively.

To conclude with one final image from the brochure, we have this advertisement for motorbikes.



Motorbike advertisement on the inside back cover

Neatly capitalising on the desires of all competitors, and perhaps humanity's hopes for the future; even if history may teach us otherwise, we are promised 'You won't lose...'.

It's a Puzzlement!



Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by 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!

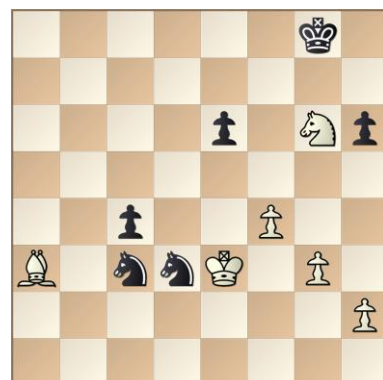
When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.

Puzzle 1 - Hill, Alistair – CM Banerjee, Supratit
IV Mindsports Int. Open, London ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle One](#)

Puzzle 2 - IM Bradbury, Neil H – Evans, Ruben
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Two](#)

Puzzle 3 - GM Lemos, D – WCM Sim, Jia Ru
IV Mindsports Int. Open, London ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Three](#)

Puzzle 6 - IM Wadsworth, M J – GM Matlakov, M
chess.com Speed Play-ion, chess.com INT



White to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

Puzzle 4 - Atako, C – Lim, M
English Open 2024, Kenilworth, ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

Puzzle 7 - CM Southcott-Moyers, I – WCM Smith, L
19th South Wales Int, Bridgend WLS



White to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

Puzzle 5 - IM Perske, T – CM Southcott-Moyers, I
Titled Tue 16 July Early, chess.com INT



Black to win - [Puzzle Five](#)

Puzzle 8 - Menadue, J – IM Rudd, J
19th South Wales Int, Bridgend WLS



Black to checkmate - [Puzzle Eight](#)

Puzzle 9 - FM Golding, Alex – Ward, Cian
19th South Wales Int, Bridgend WLS



White to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

Puzzle 10 - WCM Subramanian, A – IM Beaumont, C R
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

Puzzle 11 - Pal, Rohan – Shafi, Declan
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



White to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

Puzzle 12
FM Lim, Z – WCM Sim, Jia Ru
IV Mindsports Int Open, London ENG



Black to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit
https://chesspuzzle.net/List/10264?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=augustnews
by clicking the link or via the QR code below.



Empowering Minds: A New Chess Club for Women and Juniors in London

by Zoya Boozorginia



LWCC opening launch – 29th June 2024

Front row: Atieh Sadat, Agnieszka Milewska (ECF Women's Director), Zulin Shao, Zoe Varney (WFM), Hoda Mir

Middle row: Khedidja Karmody, Tendesco Francis, Mariam Ghadiali, Karina Kowalczyk, Emma Hng (WFM), Eunice Hng (WFM), Lipika Jadwani, Zoya Boozorginia

Back row: John Illington (Newham Library), Anastasija Royce, Elizabeth Ivanov, Robyn Johnson - photographer, media recorder: Alice Degrassi

In the bustling heart of London, a new initiative has taken root— one that seeks to cultivate not just the love of chess, but also the empowerment of women and juniors through this timeless game. Our newly established chess club is more than just a place to play; it's a community where strategy, creativity, and camaraderie unite to inspire the next generation of chess enthusiasts.

The Vision Behind the Club

The idea of forming this club stemmed from a simple observation: while chess is universally enjoyed, women and young players are often under-represented in traditional chess environments. Recognising the need for a space that specifically caters to these groups, I established a club that would foster its members' skills and confidence in an inclusive and supportive atmosphere.



Emma and Eunice Hug (WFM) (left) Robyn Johnson (right)

Our club aims to break down barriers and make chess accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or experience level. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned player looking to sharpen your skills, our doors are open.

Creating a Welcoming Environment

One of our core principles is creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. We believe that 'Chess is for All', and our club is here to make sure that 'women, especially, can enjoy the game without feeling intimidated by the opposite gender'. It should be an enjoyable experience; to that end, we've structured our sessions to cater to a wide range of abilities. Our club meetings are divided into two segments: one focused on training and skill development, and the other dedicated to friendly, informal games.

Our coaching team, comprising experienced players and educators, is exceptionally skilled in working with juniors. They use engaging, age-appropriate methods to teach the fundamentals of chess, ensuring that young players develop a strong foundation while having fun. The club provides a unique space for our women members to engage with peers who share a passion for chess, away from the often-intimidating environments of larger, mixed-gender clubs.



Anastasija Royce (Hammersmith Chess Club)

‘We’re not just teaching chess—we’re creating a community where women can feel empowered, and juniors can grow confidently.’

Beyond the Chessboard



Elizabeth Ivanov, Karina Kowalczyk, Zulin Shao

While the game is central to our activities, the club is committed to fostering personal growth and community spirit. We regularly host events such as guest lectures from top female chess players, strategy workshops, and tournaments designed to build skill, confidence, and

interactions with other clubs. These events not only provide valuable learning opportunities but also encourage social interaction and the formation of friendships that extend beyond the chessboard.



Karina Kowalczyk, Mariam Ghadiali, Elizabeth Ivanov, Zulin Shao

Moreover, our club actively participates in the London Chess League and 4NCL national competitions, allowing our members to challenge themselves in a competitive setting. These experiences are invaluable, particularly for juniors, as they learn to handle victory and defeat gracefully.

Looking to the Future

The response to our club has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are excited about the future. As we continue to grow, we plan to expand our activities, including outreach programmes to local schools and community centres.

‘We aim to introduce more young people and women to chess, highlighting its benefits for cognitive development, problem-solving skills, and confidence-building.’



Zoya Boozorginia – group studies (Queen’s Gambit variation)

We are also exploring partnerships with other chess organisations in London to create a club network that supports diversity and inclusion in chess. By working together, we can make a stronger, more vibrant chess community that reflects the diversity of our city.



Rapid tournament (ECF-rated) with Maidenhead Chess Club – 3rd August 2024

*Front left to right: William Castaneda (MCC), Stephen Welch (Battersea CC), Zoya Boozorginia, Geetha Prodhom, Maria-Alexandra Ciocan, Livia Capparelli, Mariam Ghadiali
Back left to right: Simon Foster (MCC), Daniel Juden (MCC), Stephen James (MCC)*

Join Us

If you’re a woman or junior living in London with an interest in chess, we invite you to join our club. Whether you want to learn the basics, compete in tournaments, or enjoy a game with friends, you’ll find a welcoming community here. Together we can enjoy the richness of chess, while breaking down barriers and making the game accessible to all.

For more information, please visit our website or drop by during one of our sessions. We look forward to welcoming you to our chess family!



Left to right: Clementina Aguerre, Zoya Boozorginia, Alessandra Ortiz Hernandez – 10th August 2024

Zoya Boozorginia
Chairperson of London Women Chess Club
Tel: 07951161101
Web: www.londonwomenschess.org.uk
#londonwomenschessclub

NEWS and VIEWS

Great Britain Wins the World Team Chess Solving Championships

GB are World Champions!



Not at the Olympics, but at chess-solving. The British team has won the 2024 World Chess Solving Championship (WCSC). John Nunn, David Hodge, and Jonathan Mestel, the British team members, won the gold medal ahead of Poland. It was a cliff-hanger: going into the final round Great Britain lead by a slim four points, but the Polish team caught up and finished on the same score. The tie-break (total time taken) was in Great Britain's favour, so they became the new World Champions.

The WCSC took place in Jurmala, Latvia, at the end of July. This was the first British win in the WCSC since 2007; since then the Poles have dominated this annual event, winning 13 times, making them heavy favourites to grab gold.

There's an individual World Championship too, and it was won by Kacper Piorun from Poland, with John Nunn taking the silver medal. Recently John has had an extraordinary run of successes, winning multiple world and European senior titles in over the board chess, and indeed he also took the senior title in the WCSC. The team WCSC,

however, is for all ages, so many of the competitors are much younger. Both John Nunn and Jonathan Mestel are former individual World Chess Solving Champions, and both are seniors - GB's win proves that youth is not essential.

The full results can be found here:

<https://wccc2024.wfcc.ch/47-wcsc-final-results/>

and click on 'Teams'.

In chess-solving events competitors try to solve chess problems, for example White to play and force mate in three moves, against the clock. You can find all the problems from the WCSC, and their solutions, on the same site:

<https://wccc2024.wfcc.ch/47-wcsc-final-results/>

and click on 'Problems' or 'Solutions'.

For more information email Ian Watson:

ian@irwatson.uk

England Teams for the Chess Olympiad



The England teams for the Chess Olympiad at Budapest in September have been selected. Board orders will be determined by the Selection Committee later.

Open

Michael Adams; David Howell; Gawain Jones; Luke McShane; Nikita Vitiugov

Women

Jovanka Houska; Harriet Hunt; Bodhana Sivanandan; Katarzyna Toma; Lan Yao

World Chess League Update by Peter Hornsby

Brilliant Birmingham University Battle to Final Four in World Chess League!



A record four English teams qualified for the 2024 World Chess League finals weekend which took place in July, making it through from almost 100 teams from around the world.

Birmingham University managed to win their quarter-final against Warwick University, before understandably, yet valiantly, falling short in the semi-finals against Chess Club Dragons who had several international and titled players from Serbia.

Their performance in reaching the final four was the best performance by an English university team in the competition's history, and their joint captains Philip Press and Luke Honey deserve great credit for organising their team and society so well over the past year.

We wish all the English teams the very best of luck for next season, and if you would like to sign up you can email the tournament director: director@worldchessleague.live and view further details here: <https://www.worldchessleague.live/details>

Gosforth Chess in the Park by Mick Riding

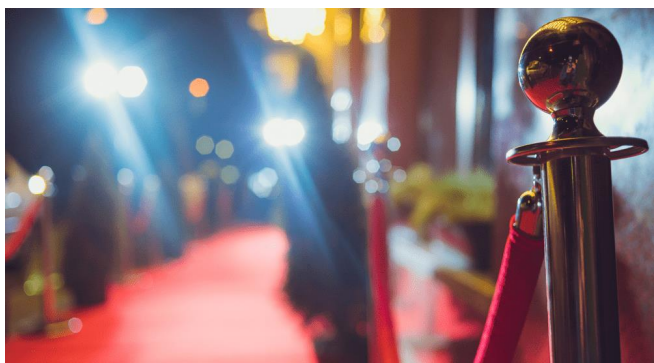
Well, this was the second of our outdoor events this summer, and we've not seen a drop of rain since. On the day, however, things were a bit different. Still, our new club gazebo, depicting the Northumberland flag and the ECF (part-sponsors - thank you!), county and club logos, stood up to the test. People who visited were cheerful, the bonding was good and there was plenty of chess played. The next one will be on 17th August in Jesmond Dene. Thanks to Phil and Kerry for transporting tables and chairs, and Ian and Kerry for providing extra cover so the guys could enjoy some games.

Pictures below - including one from our recent junior event – with three winners receiving their now engraved medals.



ECF Awards 2024

by Keith Gregory



This year saw many strong entries, and the Awards Committee took on a tough task in reviewing and voting on them all. I was delighted to find that clear winners emerged across all the categories, and that I did not have to use my casting vote.

President's Award for Services to Chess – John F Wheeler; Malcolm Pein

Contribution to Junior Chess – Paul Lam

Contribution to Women's Chess – The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls Chess Academy:

<http://www.ellenwilkinson.ealing.sch.uk/3680/ews-chess-academy>

Contribution to Chess in the Community – Jonathan Arnott

Contribution to Accessible Chess – Voldi Gailans

Online Chess Contribution of the Year – James Connors

Club of the Year – 3Cs Chess Club:

<https://www.3cschessclub.com/>

Small Club of the Year – Radcliffe and Bingham Chess Club:

<https://radcliffeandbinghamchessclub.org.uk/>

No award was made for the Congress of the Year category.

The following information covers the citations submitted for the successful 2024 ECF award winners. Other than standardising fonts (where possible) and some light editing, these remain essentially as submitted. Each nomination also had supporting evidence from a third party and many citations were supplemented by further supporting documentation, including photos, media news

articles and video clips. For simplicity these have not been reproduced here: [Complete document including citations](#)

Each winner will soon receive a glass trophy, £250 to support their club or organisation (with the exception of the President's Awards) courtesy of the Chess Trust and be entitled to make use of the appropriate ECF award winner's logo.

As Chair of the Awards Committee, I would like to formally thank the committee members – Julie Denning, Sarah Longson, Natasha Regan, Jack Rudd, Nigel Towers and Peter Wells – for their hard work in reviewing a high number of nominations (55 in total)

The ECF also thanks the Chess Trust yet again for its generous sponsorship of the ECF Awards scheme.

Hastings 2024/2025 Dates Announced



The 98th Hastings International Chess Congress will take place from Saturday 28th December 2024 to Sunday 5th January 2025 – incorporating the 40th Hastings Weekend Congress.

Further details will be announced on the link below:

<https://hastingschess.com/further-details-to-follow/>

Hull 4NCL Congress



The Hull 4NCL Congress In partnership with Hull & East Riding Chess Association and incorporating the 61st Hull Congress will take place from Friday 6th – Sunday 8th September 2024.

All the information you need can be found here:
https://4ncl.co.uk/fide/info_hull24.htm

UK Open Blitz Championships 2024



Last year' London qualifier in Golders Green – Speelman vs Gasanov

The UK Blitz Championships 2024 will follow the format used in previous years' events, with eight regional one-day qualifier events over three weekends from 21st September to 6th October. Qualifier events will be held at locations across the UK: London, Bristol, Birmingham, Bolton, Newcastle upon Tyne, Belfast, South Wales (Cardiff or Bridgend), and Edinburgh.

Each qualifier will be a fifteen-round Swiss tournament at a 3|2 time control, with the first round starting at 11.00 pm and the final round at 5.30 pm.

Players will be allocated to categories of 16 players (or part thereof) based on their initial seeding, with a category prize awarded to the highest-scoring player in each category.

The top two qualifiers and top two female qualifiers from each event will go forward to the UK Open Blitz finals at the end of November/start of December, which will be two 16 player all-play-all competitions to determine the UK Open Blitz Champion and Women's Champion respectively. You can find further details and the online entry form for all qualifier events at the link here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/uk-open-blitz-championships-2024/>

ECF AGM – Calls for Motions and Nominations

The 2024 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Saturday 26th October 2024 in London, with access also by Zoom (starting time 1.30 pm). In addition to the prescribed business (including the election of Directors, the Chairman of the Council, the FIDE Delegate and members of Standing Committees, which is the subject of a separate post), motions to appear on the agenda must either be proposed by the Board or be proposed by 'the requisitionists'. The deadline for motions by requisitionists to be received is Thursday 19th September: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-agm-call-for-motions-3/>

Nominations are invited for the positions set out in the link below, which will be the subject of elections to be held at the Annual General Meeting. Posts due for election are listed, together with current holders' intentions regarding standing again: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-agm-call-for-nominations-2/>

JUNIOR MOVES Littlewood's Choice



I was looking at the results of the Southern Gigafinal Under 18 section and noticed that there had been a three-way tie for first place, with Henry Adams, Denis Dupuis and Raman Vashisht-Pigem all scoring 6/7, Henry winning on tie-break. I then remembered that Henry had drawn against Michael Adams in the first round of the Cambridge International Open in 2023, so I looked into his record further. Here are two examples of his successes.

Firstly, this is the position that he reached against Michael.



It is Michael to move, and he should have played 1...Nf6 2.Qh3 Nh7 3.Nxh7 Qxh7 4.Qh5 Qg8, when the position is only slightly better for White. However, he played 1...Bf4 2.Bxf4 Rxf4, and then offered a draw. Henry was of course delighted to draw with one of the strongest grandmasters that England has ever produced, and so accepted.

In fact, though, 1...Bf4 is a mistake because after 2.Bxf4 Rxf4 3.f3! White has a very powerful attack that wins at least a pawn. The main point is that after 3...exf3 there follows 4.Re8 Rf8 5.Nf7+ Kh7 6.Nxh6! gxf6 7.Re7+, winning. 4...Nf8 doesn't help, because after the simple 5.Nxf3 Black's position is dreadful and he will soon succumb to all the threats, e.g. 5...Rf6 6.Ne5 Kh7 7.Rf1 Rxf1+ 8.Nxf1, and there is no sensible defence to 9.Qf5+.

If Black does not take on f3 he will lose a pawn and still have an awful position.

An interesting point to bear in mind here is that if a strong player offers you a draw it will often be because he is worried about his position, so you should think very carefully before accepting it!

Another excellent result for Henry last year was the following, where he reached this position.



There had been lots of manoeuvring in this game, but White's last move 1.Nc3 was a mistake, and now Henry seized his chance by playing **1.....Nb4!**. The white pawns on d3 and a6 are now potential weaknesses, and the last chance to survive for White was 2.e4, but after 2...fxe4 3.Nxe4 Rcd8 Black stands slightly better. The game continued **2.Bb7? Rcd8 3.Nb5 Bxc4 4.Nxa7 Bxa6! 5.Nc6 Nxc6 6.Bxa6 Ra7 7.Bc3 Rda8 8.Ra2 b5 9.Be1 e4**, and suddenly White is completely lost. Henry went on to win in another 34 moves, his opponent later in the game stubbornly refusing to resign two pieces down!

So, the \$64,000 question is whether we will see more of Henry at the chessboard, or will he settle into a more 'normal life', like so many of the talented players who have gone before him?

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

I cannot promise that they will appear, but I will give them every consideration.

Shreyas Royal Achieves Third GM Norm at the British Chess Championships

Shreyas was interviewed about his achievement on BBC Breakfast on 7th August 2024. The full interview can be viewed and read using the links below:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crkmm0jr5gno>

Skip to 50:25 for Shreyas:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0021sq1/breakfast-07082024>

Brilliant English Under 9s!

The July 2024 FIDE ratings have three of the six highest-rated under 9 players as English.

CM Ethan Pang is top U9 junior at 2266, with Bodhana Sivanandan in second place on 2185 and Kushal Jakhria in sixth place on 2020.

Glorney Cup 2024 by Sathya Vaidyanathan



England had a very successful clean-up in all categories; the full results can be found in the link below:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/glorney-cup-2024-2/>



Playing hall

The 2024 Glorney Cup took place in the Canham Turner Conference Centre, Hull University. Games were played over three days, with five rounds of chess. As usual there were four sections: Glorney (U18), Gilbert (U18 girls), Robinson (U14) and Stokes (U12). 120 children took part.

Players selected:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/glorney-cup-teams-announcement/>

Live boards:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/glorney-cup-2024-2/>

Pairings:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr973480.aspx?lan=1&flag=30&turdet=NO>

This year's event saw an updated format which included an 'international' team in the event, comprising juniors who reside in the UK or Ireland whose FIDE registrations were not Wales/England/Scotland/Ireland. An England B Team was added to each section this year, in which younger players in each age category played - for example, England B in the Glorney Cup was exclusively U16s while the A team was U18s.

The tournament started with a brief speech and a ceremonial opening move by the Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull, Mark Collinson, who is also a respectable chess player, of the game between Rahul Babu (England A) and Jack Liu (England B) in the Glorney Cup.

Stokes (U12)

The England A team went into the event as favourites, with a sizeable rating advantage over the other teams. This was quickly challenged in the first round by a young England B team, who held them to a comfortable 3-3 draw. The A team swiftly bounced back with a 5-1 victory against the international team in round 2. The second day saw another set of victories: a 5-1 win over second seeds Ireland, and a crushing 5½-½ result against Scotland. This left the A team with a great advantage over the international team before the last round, and they executed a stonking 6-0 clean sweep against Wales to win the event convincingly. The team collectively only dropped 5½ points out of 30. Adithya Vaidyanathan (board 2) and Ramsey Dairi (board 4) both scored 5/5.

The B team (all of them under 10s!) finished day 1 strongly with a draw against England A and a win over the Welsh. Day 2 saw a valiant fight against the strong international team, the match ending agonisingly closely with the B team scoring 2½ to the international team's 3½. They then faced the Irish in another tough battle which ended in a close 3½-2½ win. The final round saw a clash with the Scottish, both teams looking to land a third-place finish. The match was again extremely close, with both sides having chances; ultimately the Scots prevailed with a 3½-2½ win. As under 10s the team came a very commendable fifth, with many close results. Aarav Katukuri (board 3) was the team's top scorer with 4/5.

Robinson (U14)

The England A team again were favourites to win with their rating superiority and strong depth in the lower

boards, but were closely chased by the B team. The first-round pairing between both proved to be decisive, having many close encounters. Two wins on the bottom two boards helped the A team deliver a 3½-2½ victory against their closest rivals. The second round against the international team saw a deserved 4-2 win, with three wins on the bottom boards again cementing victory. Day 2 saw more ferocious chess with a convincing 5-1 victory against Ireland. This was followed by a grinding victory against Scotland, where there were five(!) draws; but a win on board 2 saw the team only needing a draw in the final round to win. In usual fashion, the team fought for the win, and delivered with another convincing 5-1 win to end the event with a perfect score of 10/10 to take the trophy. Aditya Mittal (board 5) and Daniel Meredith (board 6) were top scorers in the team with 4½/5.

Round 1 for the B Team (U13s) saw a narrow defeat to the A team, but they quickly recovered, ending the day with a clean 4-2 victory against Wales. Day 2 saw more success, first cruising to a win over the international team 4½-1½ and then beating the Irish by the same scoreline. The final day saw a fight with the Scots for second place, with England prevailing with a swift 4-2 win to reach a respectable second place. Rock Yu (board 1), Yiwen Ding (board 2) and Senith Gunarathne (board 5) all scored 4/5.



England Team photo

Gilbert (U18 Girls)

Our A team was the strongest on paper and did not disappoint, achieving convincing victories over the other sides. The first round against England B ended in a 2-1 win for the A Team, their closest scoreline! This was followed by a 2½-½ win against the international team. Day 2 was even more crushing, with a 3-0 win against Ireland and a 2½-½ against Scotland to confirm their victory a round early, the only England team to do so. The final day saw another 3-0 win over Wales. The team only dropped two! points out of 15, and all the players in the team were

undefeated. Anum Sheikh (board 2) and Michelle Ngo Yu Chan (board 3) both scored 4½/5, while Emily Maton (board 1) scored 4/5.

The B team (U14s) played valiantly; In round 2 they made their mark by beating Wales 3-0, and continued in form on day 2 by beating the international team 3-0 as well. Round 4 saw a 1½-1½ draw against a tricky Irish squad. This left the final round a battle for second place between the Scots and England B, with England B needing a win to come second. Unfortunately, the Scottish team held tight, holding the England B team to a 1½-1½ draw, putting the B team third. Julie Oh (board 3) scored 4/5 and was the top scorer.

Glorney (U18)

This section saw the most tension, as Scotland were the reigning champions for 2023 with their record-breaking victory after 58 years. Nonetheless England A started as favourites, followed by the international team. England A started with a solid 3½-1½ win against England B and followed this up with another cracking 3½-1½ victory against their main rivals, the international team. Day 2 saw the same splendid form, with a 4-1 win over Ireland in round 3 followed by a 3½-1½ win over the previous champions, Scotland. This left the team only needing a draw to bring the cup home, but as usual the team put on a show and had a fine 4½-½ result over Wales to win the Glorney Cup with a perfect score of 10/10. Rahul Babu (board 1) scored 4½/5 and was the top scorer.

The B team (U16s) had an unlucky first day, suffering a 4-1 defeat to Wales after losing to England A. The team, however, came in fresh for Day 2 and were holding well against the international team until endgames turned bad under pressure. The team lost 4-2, but went into the last two rounds with their heads held high. The team faced Ireland on the last day; after three draws on the top boards the bottom two boards won to deliver a hard-fought 3½-1½ victory. The final round saw the team play Scotland; with two wins a win was secured and, with the 3½-1½ score, fourth place in the event.

Glorney			
England A	1 st	England B	4 th
Gilbert			
England A	1 st	England B	3 rd
Robinson			
England A	1 st	England B	2 nd
Stokes			
England A	1 st	England B	5 th

A big thank you to Stephen Greep and Alex Holowczak for organising this year's event, as well as to the arbiters Lara Barnes, Richard Buxton and David Clayton for the smooth

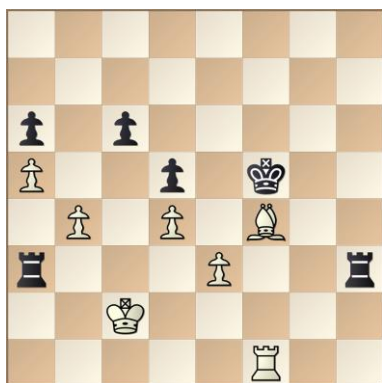
running of the event. Finally, a huge vote of thanks from all the England team for the help of our heads of delegation, Vic Pelling and Michael Catabay.

The tournament had a wide selection of fascinating positions: below are three positions which I have selected.

White to play

Glorney Cup Round 1

Aryan Munshi (SCO) – Maksym Larchikov (UKR)



After **1.b5!** White will create a passed pawn. If 1...axb5?? or 1...cxb5?? 2.Bd6+! wins.

White to play

Robinson Cup Round 2

Nicholas Kowalski Rubiales (ESP) – Zac Welling (ENG)



1.g6+! Kg8

2.Qxf4!! Qxf4

3.Re8+ Qf8

4.Rxf8+ Kxf8

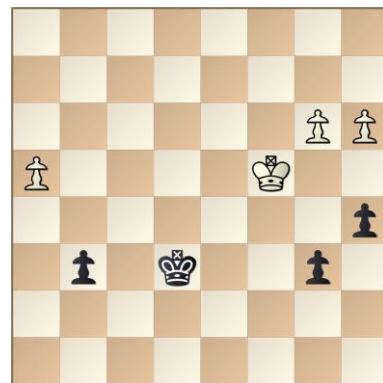
5.Nxf3

If Kh8 then after Qxf4 white will be up a rook, because Re8 will be a back-rank mate.

Black to play and draw

Stokes Cup Round 2

Rami Talab (SYR) – George Zhao (ENG)



1...Kf5! (1...Kd6 loses to 2.Kb5 Kc7 3.Ka6 Kc6 4.b4! axb4 5.axb4 Kc7 6.b5)

2.Kb5 Kg4

3.Kxb6 Kxh4

4.Kxa5 g5

5.b4 g4

6.b5 g3

7.b6 g2

8.b7 g1=Q

9.b8=Q (this is now a theoretically drawn Q vs Q+P ending)

National Schools Chess Championships – English Schools Final 2024

This year's finals of the National School Chess Championships were held at the University of Nottingham on Thursday 27th and Friday 28th June. You can see a report at the link below:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/english-schools-finals-2024/>

European Youth Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2024

by Zara Mehta and Hatle Mehta

On 17th August 11 England juniors participated in the European Youth Chess Rapid and Blitz Championship in the beautiful city of Prague. The Championship was structured into four separate sections: Individual Rapid, Problem Solving, Team Rapid, and Team Blitz.

Team Rapid

The Team Rapid was a seven-round tournament across one afternoon, with England entering four teams. Unfortunately, no team managed to place; however, there were some strong individual performances.

Well done as well to Zoe Veselow (U10 Girls), Thomas Ewart (U10), Kai Hanache (U12), Rock Yu (U14), and Pengxiao Zhu (U14) for all scoring 50% or more points.

Well done to Zoe Veselow (5 points in the U14 Girls), Emily Maton (5 points in the U18 Girls), Thomas Ewart (4 points in the U10 Open), Rock Yu (5 points in the U14 Open), Samar Dayal (5 points in the U14 Open), Kai Hanache (4 points in the U14 Open) and Pengxiao Zhu (3½ points in the U14 Open)

Individual Rapid – Samar Dayal Brings Home the Gold

The first event was the Individual Rapid, spread over two days and nine rounds. With fierce competition across Europe in all categories, massive congratulations to Samar Dayal for winning the U10 title and being crowned European U10 Open Rapidplay Champion with an outstanding 8½ points out of 9 in a field of 91 competitors.



Individual Blitz

The final two days saw a nine-round blitz (3 mins + 2) tournament, which involved playing each opponent once as White and once as Black.

In this fast-paced tournament, heading into the last round Kai Hanache (U12) and Zoe Veselow (U10 Girls) were both in contention for a place in the top three. However, with

a couple of results in other games going against them they narrowly missed out on finishing in the top three positions.

Zoe finished fifth with 11½ points out of 18. Kai finished fourth with 13½ points out of 18, losing out on third place on tie-break. Well done to Zara Mehta (U10 Girls) Thomas Ewart (U10), Samar Dayal (U10) Rock Yu (U14), Pengxiao Zhu (U14) and Emily Maton (U18 Girls), who all scored 50% or more points.

We'd like to thank the English Chess Federation and the Junior Selection Committee for supporting this prestigious tournament. Additionally, we'd like to thank the European Chess Union for hosting such a wonderful event. Well done to all the players and parents for making this a wonderful experience for everyone.

Squad:

U10 Girls (Zara Mehta, Zoe Veselow and Julia Bednaya)
U10 Open (Samar Dayal and Thomas Ewart)
U12 Open (Kai Hanache)
U14 Girls (Sophie Mehta)
U14 Open (Rock Yu and Pengxiao Zhu)
U16 Girls (Sohana Sengupta)
U18 Girls (Emily Maton)

Results link:

<https://www.eycc2024.eu/results-pairings/rapid-blitz-open/>

By Zara Mehta (aged ten) and Hatle Mehta

IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

As I have often stressed... tactics are a vital part of the game and are not just executed by the great masters.

Consider this game I played when I was just 17 years old.

Colin Crouch - Paul Littlewood
Middlesex vs Lancs BCF U18 Final 14/04/1973

1.Nf3 g6 2.e3 Bg7 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bd3 d6 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 Nbd7 7.Qc2 e5 8.Nc3 Re8 9.b3 c6 10.Ba3 Qc7?! White has played a fairly innocuous opening line, and the simple 10...exd4 11.exd4 (or 11.Nxd4 Nc5 12.Be2 a5) Nf8 equalises for Black.

11.Rad1 exd4 12.Nxd4 Nc5 13.Be2 a6?! Black already stands slightly worse after his inaccurate tenth move, but the natural 13...a5 leaves White with only a minimal advantage.

14.b4?! A natural move, but the simple 14.h3 Bd7 15.Bb2 leaves White in charge.

14....Ne6 15.Nb3 Bd7?! 15...b5 gives equal chances.

16.Qd2 b6?! Better was 16...d5, when after 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Nxd5 Nxd5 19.Qxd5 Bc6 20.Qd6 Qxd6 21.Rxd6 Bf8 22.Rd2 Bb5 Black has decent chances of neutralising White's extra pawn. I had a much more aggressive idea in mind, but with careful play White can retain the advantage.

17.Bf3? White should take the offered material, because after 17.Qxd6 Rxd6 18.Rxd6 a5 19.bxa5 Bf8 20.c5! Bxd6 21.cxd6 bxa5 he stands slightly better as he has more than adequate compensation for the loss of the exchange.

17....Ng5! 18.Qxd6 Nxf3+ 19.gxf3 Qc8 20.Ne2? White's weakened kingside gives Black adequate compensation for the pawn sacrificed. It is now White who has to be careful... and he makes a critical mistake. Best was 20.Ne4 Be6 21.Nxf6+ Bxf6 22.Qf4 Bf5 23.e4 Be5 24.Qh4 Be6, which is about equal.

20...Bh3 21.Rfe1 Giving up the exchange doesn't help, as after 21.Nbd4 Bxf1 22.Rxf1 Nd7 23.Qxc6 Ne5 24.Qxc8 Raxc8 25.c5 Nc4 Black is clearly winning. However, there now follows a body-blow to White.

21.....Ne4! Colin had missed this tactic and is now in serious trouble, because if 22.fxe4 then Be5 23.Qd3 Qg4+ 24.Ng3 Qf3 leads to mate or loss of White's queen.

22.Qd3 Ng5 23.e4 Bg2! Another fine tactic, as the bishop cannot be taken because of 24.Kxg2 Qh3+ 25.Kh1 Nxf3 winning.

24.Nbd4 There are other options, but all of them leave White struggling... for example, 24.Bc1 Qh3 25.Bxg5 Bxf3 26.Nf4 Qg4+ 27.Kf1 Bxd1 28.Qxd1 Qxg5+ winning. I now finished off efficiently.

24....Bxd4 25.Nxd4 Nh3+ 26.Kxg2 Nf4+ 27.Kh1 Nxd3 28.Rxd3 Qh3 29.Red1 Rad8 30.Bc1 c5 31.f4 Qh5 32.Nf3 Qxf3+! 0-1 A final tactic which causes White to resign, as if 31.Rxf3 then 33...Rxd1+ 34.Kg2 Rxc1 wins.

As you can see from move 17 onwards, it was a flurry of tactics that finished White off!

Here now are two tactical finishes for you to solve, with the solutions given at the end of the article.

P. E. Littlewood - J. E. Littlewood

Lancs Open 15/04/1974

Black to play and win



V. Anand - J. Lautier - Biel 1997

White to play and win.



Answers:

P. E. Littlewood - J. E. Littlewood

My father didn't move his attacked queen, but instead played 1...Rb8! Now if 2.Nxa5 then Bb2#. I tried 2.Rxd7; however, then followed 2...Bc1+ 3.Nxa5 Bb2#.

V. Anand - J. Lautier

The brilliant 1.Bg6! left Black with no defence, as if 1...Qxd1 then 2.Rxe6+ Kf8 23.Bxh6+ Kg8 24.Bxf7#. The game finished 21....Ne7 22.Qxd4 Rxd4 23.Rd3! Rd8 24.Rxd8+ Kxd8 25.Bd3 1-0 because after 25...Bh1 26.Bb2 Re8 27.Bf6 Black will soon be in Zugzwang and have to surrender at least a piece.

Paul Littlewood Email: plittl@hotmail.com

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones

First of all, an apology for an error in my text in the July 2024 Conundrum. Thanks to Danny Rosenbaum for pointing out that in the first problem diagrammed, by Stavros Iatridis, the response to 1...Rxh4? would not be 2.Re3, which I wrongly described as 'mate' – instead 2.Qxb2, threatening mates at e5 and b4, is the move that does the trick. I hope I didn't cause too many furrowed brows by my carelessness.

Here is the problem set for your 'homework' last time, featuring three plausible candidate moves, each of which could be met by either of two possible e.p. captures. I asked: does one of these three candidate moves work?



Matti Myllyniemi
Problem, 1968
Mate in 2

The answer, unsurprisingly, is 'yes'. Not 1.b4? (threatening 2.Rc5), when 1...axb3 e.p. fails to 2.Qa5, and 1...cxb3 e.p. to 2.c4, but 1...Qxf2 refutes; nor 1.f4? (threatening 2.Ne7) when 1...exf3 e.p. fails to 2.e4, and 1...gxf3 e.p. to 2.Be6, but 2.Nxf4 refutes – however, 1.d4!, threatening both 2.Rc5 and 2.Ne7, does work. Now we have the continuations 1...cxd3 e.p. 2.Qa2 and 1...exd3 e.p. 2.Bxg2. One would usually begrudge the fact that it's the move threatening both mates that works, and the moves carrying only one threat that fail, but the task achievement of this problem (and the fact that the six e.p. captures lead to six different mating moves) do, I believe, outweigh that criticism.

That problem, like many that have featured in this column over the months, was gleaned from the pages of *The Problemist*, the journal of the British Chess Problem Society. You can access back issues of this journal via the BCPS website: www.theproblemist.org/; all issues, other than those of the last twelve months, can be read by clicking on 'Magazines' there. This month, though, I'd like to give you a sneak preview of some of the problems featured in an article in the July 2024 issue on 2-movers from Latvia (historically a very strong nation for chess composition and host this summer to the main annual international gathering of chess problemists).

The first example, from 1939, is an excellent example of the traditional 2-mover, and you may enjoy having a go at solving it before reading on.



August Stals
6th Honourable Mention, *De Maasbode* 1939
Mate in 2

If the rook moves from e3 Black will have a check available: ...Bc5. Nevertheless (or perhaps because of this if you factor in composers' enjoyment of surprises) the key move is indeed by that rook: 1.Rb3! (threatening 2.Rb4#). After this, play runs as follows: 1...Kxb3 2.Rd3; 1...Bc5+ 2.Rd6; 1...c5 2.Rd7; 1...Rd4 2.Rf5; 1...Bd4 2.Rg5; 1...axb3 2.d3; and 1...Nxd2 2.Rc3. It was always likely that there would be a lot of play from the Rd5/Bg8 battery, not

on move 1 (a checking key would be unlikely) but on move 2, nicely differentiated after various defences.

The next example, from 1950, is equally pleasant to solve, and in addition shows a strategic feature that was already becoming popular and that has been much pursued by composers over the years.



Visvaldis Veders
2nd Place, 1st Latvian Championship 1950
Mate in 2

It's good to note that mating responses have been set for two capturing moves by Black that spring to the eye – if it were Black to play we'd have 1...Rxc3 2.Rf4 and 1...Nxc3 2.Be3. These responses, however, will need a rethink after a disruptive key move, 1.Nd3! (threat 2.Nb5#), which, as reported in the *Problemist* article, 'opens a line to c3 for the wQ, closes a line to c3 for the wR, removes one guard of d3 and places additional guards on c5 and e5' – the sort of transformative key move cherished by composers. Now the response to 1...Rxc3 becomes 2.Qd8, to 1...Nxc3 becomes 2.Qxa7, and we have 1...Rxd3 2.Rf4 and 1...Nxd3 2.Be3. The interesting strategic effect to which I alluded earlier is that those mating moves, Rf4 and Be3, cropped up in the set play, when they were the responses to captures of the other white knight at c3. So we not only have the pleasing effect of new mates provided for 'old defences' but also of 'old mates provided for new defences'. Such transferred mating moves (thematically named after a pioneering composer, Rukhlis) are an abiding interest of composers.

I'll leave you with another early Latvian classic. Solution next time, unless, of course, either you or your computer crack it earlier!



Eriks Lazdins
2nd Place, 4th Latvian Championship 1955
Mate in 2

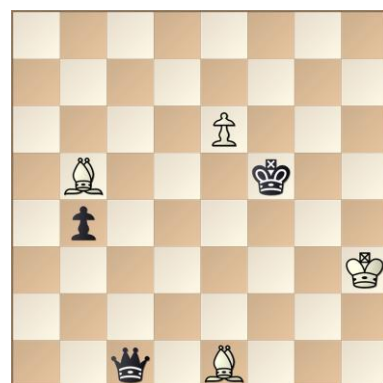
Don't hesitate to email me with any queries at all to do with this column.

Christopher Jones Email: cjaiones1@yahoo.co.uk

How to Solve a Study by Ian Watson

The Shepherd Bishops

You'll have read that Great Britain are the new world chess solving champions, winning the title in Jurmala, Latvia, at the end of July. At Jurmala, just before the World Championship itself there was a warm-up solving tourney. One of the compositions that the competitors had to solve in the warm-up event was this study.



White to play and draw

A piece of theoretical knowledge is helpful: the pawnless ending of queen vs two bishops is a general win for the queen. It can take over seventy moves, but in composed positions the fifty-move rule doesn't apply, so in this study it won't be enough for White to eliminate the black b-pawn.

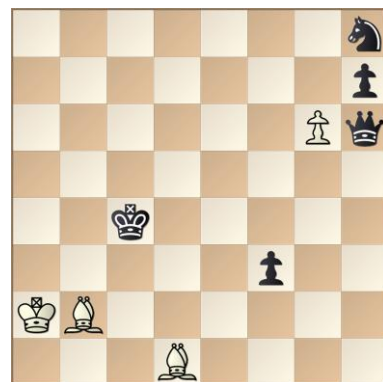
There are only two candidates for the first move: 1.Bd7 and 1.e7. My first inclination was 1.Bd7 because it seems subtler, more study-like, but it can be refuted easily, for example by 1...Qxe1 2.e7+ Kf4 threatening mate on g3. So, 1.e7 it has to be. Now 1...Qxe1 2.e8Q Qxe8 3.Bxe8 and the bishop can stop the b-pawn, so Black has to be cleverer and gain a tempo. So we get 1...Qe3+ 2.Bg3 and what prevents 2...Qxe7 winning? The simple, but not easy to foresee, 3.Bd3+ Ke6 4.Bc4+ Kd7 5.Bb5+ Kc8 6.Ba6+ drawing, because if Black's king plays to any of the squares g5/f6/d8 White responds with Bh4. OK, but instead of 2...Qxe7 Black can play 2...b3. Now 3.e8Q Qxe8 4.Bxe8 b2 will get to the pawnless queen vs two bishops, so White too has to be cleverer. He can play the Zwischenzug 3.Bd7+. If Black replies 3...Kf6 we get 4.e8Q Qxe8 5.Bxe8 b2 6.Be5+ Kxe5 7.Bg6. Yes, but there's 3...Kg5 instead? No problem: 4.e8Q Qxe8 5.Bf4+ Kf6, and we transpose into the immediate ...Kf6 variation. Notice that this study is about how two bishops can cooperate to prevent the enemy king escaping from a diagonal. There's barely any tidying up to do, and almost no sidelines: just 1...Qh6+ 2.Bh4, and Black has to play 2...Qe3+ anyway. A nice easy warm-up solve for the competitors...

Or so you'd think.... but only four solvers out of the 90 in the event scored full points on this study. Almost everyone chose the correct first move, but almost nobody chose the correct third move. How come? I don't know for certain, but I suppose that they opted for 3.e8Q Qxe8 4.Bxe8 b2 5.Bd7+, after which the databases tell me that Black is winning, but that it takes 133 moves to mate. Pawnless endgame theory tells us that there is one (and only one) fortress position with two bishops against a queen, and in this study White isn't far from achieving that position, so perhaps many of the competitors thought that getting to that fortress was the point of this study. Thus they overlooked the relatively simple drawing method of the composer's solution because they had fixated on a different idea. Maybe. The full solution is **1.e7 Qe3+ 2.Bg3 b3 3.Bd7+ Kg5 4.e8Q Qxe8 5.Bf4+ Kf6 6.Bxe8 b2 7.Be5+ Kxe5 8.Bg6**, and draws.

That study was composed by S Nosek and its first publication was in the *Tata Steel-75* study-composing tourney in 2013. The theme it's based on has been used by several other study composers. I don't think it has a name, but perhaps 'The Shepherding Bishops' is suitable?

Your solving task is another shepherding study by G Zakhodyakin, from *Shakhmaty v SSSR* in 1952. I have some reservations about the soundness of this study, but I'm not sure, so perhaps a reader would like to explore it in detail? The composer's solution shows the shepherding theme in fine style, but there's a sideline

which may enable Black to disrupt the shepherding mechanism.



White to play and draw

The solution is given after the calendar page ...

Ian Watson Email: ian@irwatson.uk

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

Week Beginning 31 August 2024

31 August 2024	Darnall & Handsworth (Sheffield) 8th FIDE Rated Rapidplay
31 August 2024	3rd Cheam Rapidplay - Cheam Parochial Hall
31 August 2024	2nd Riviera Chess Congress - TLH Carlton Hotel
31 August 2024	Menchik Memorial Blitz Festival 2024 - London Mindsports Centre
1 Sept 2024	1st Yorkshire FIDE Congress (U2400)
1 Sept 2024	South East London LJCC Centenary Year Qualifier
1 Sept 2024	Junior Chess Tournament with Lessons by the WLCA - Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall
1 Sept 2024	Ealing Broadway FIDE Rapid 2024
1 Sept 2024	Menchik Memorial Blitz Festival 2024 - London Mindsports Centre
2 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
3 Sept 2024	London Chess League 2024 Summer Congress
3 Sept 2024	Newcastle Blitz Grand Prix
3 Sept 2024	5th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
3 Sept 2024	Menchik Memorial Blitz Festival 2024 - London
4 Sept 2024	First Wednesday Chess – Potters Bar
4 Sept 2024	Wiltshire 5 Minute Championship 2024
4 Sept 2024	2024 Wiltshire Five Minute Quickplay Tournament
4 Sept 2024	Hull 4NCL Congress 2024

Week Beginning 7 September 2024

7 Sept 2024	Hampshire Rapidplay 2024
7 Sept 2024	3rd Oxford FIDE Rapidplay
7 Sept 2024	Golders Green FIDE Rapid 2024 - London
7 Sept 2024	UKCC Online Gigafinal 2024
7 Sept 2024	2024 Warwickshire Blitz Championship
7 Sept 2024	London Women Chess Club
8 Sept 2024	2024 Warwickshire Rapid Championship
8 Sept 2024	Barnet Knights 52nd London Junior Qualifier
8 Sept 2024	Swinton Chess Academy Quickplay
9 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White
10 Sept 2024	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024
10 Sept 2024	London Chess League 2024 Summer Congress
10 Sept 2024	4NCL Online Season 10
12 Sept 2024	Hendon FIDE Blitz – Cumberland

Week Beginning 14 September 2024

14 Sept 2024	Wimbledon Junior Rapidplay
14 Sept 2024	Wimbledon Rapidplay
14 Sept 2024	Maidenhead Junior Tournament September 2024
15 Sept 2024	Uxbridge FIDE Rapid Tournament
16 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White
17 Sept 2024	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024
17 Sept 2024	5th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
18 Sept 2024	Finchley Road FIDE Blitz 5+1
19 Sept 2024	Dorking Chess Club Pre-Season Blitz Tournament
20 Sept 2024	Wimbledon FIDE Congress
20 Sept 2024	3rd Cornwall Autumn Congress in Penzance

Week Beginning 21 September 2024

21 Sept 2024	HJCA FIDE Congress - Farm Road Winchester Hampshire
21 Sept 2024	9th Snodland Rapidplay

21 Sept 2024	Poplar Rapid Tournament – Langley Hall
21 Sept 2024	2nd Stoke Gifford Rapidplay
21 Sept 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 - London Qualifier
21 Sept 2024	UKCC Challengers 2024 – Northamptonshire
22 Sept 2024	LJCC Qualifying Event - Amersham
22 Sept 2024	She Plays to Win – Hampshire
22 Sept 2024	Lincoln Rapidplay 2024
22 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Autumn/Spring Term 2024/25
22 Sept 2024	Thamesmead London Blitz OPEN 2024
23 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White
24 Sept 2024	4NCL Online Season 10
24 Sept 2024	London Chess League FIDE Blitz Evening
26 Sept 2024	Junior 4NCL Online Season 10
27 Sept 2024	Leicester H E Atkins Memorial Congress
27 Sept 2024	2024/25 Birmingham & District Junior Chess League Event 1
27 Sept 2024	Northumberland Weekend Chess Congress 2024
Week Commencing 28 September 2024	
28 Sept 2024	Southall Junior Rapidplay
28 Sept 2024	2024 Camberley Keith Richardson Rapid Play
28 Sept 2024	8th Peter & Peggy Clarke Memorial Rapidplay – Devon
28 Sept 2024	40th Crowborough Chess Congress
28 Sept 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 - Midlands Qualifier
28 Sept 2024	Southall FIDE Congress
29 Sept 2024	Witney Rapidplay 2024
29 Sept 2024	19th Cambridgeshire Rapidplay
29 Sept 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 – North West Qualifier
29 Sept 2024	3rd Warrington Junior Rapidplay
29 Sept 2024	Elstree Children's Tournament

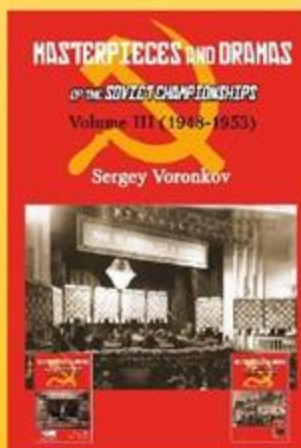
How to Solve a Study solution

(Zakhodyakin)

1.g7 Qa6+ 2.Ba3 Qa8 3.Bxf3 Qg8 4.gxh8Q Qxh8 5.Be2+ Kd5 6.Bf3+ Ke6 7.Bg4+ Kf7 8.Bh5+ Kg8 9.Bb2 and draws. The bishops shepherd, or perhaps corral, the king into the corner.

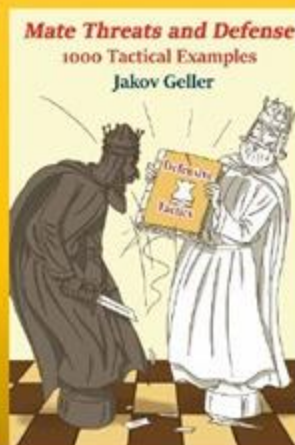
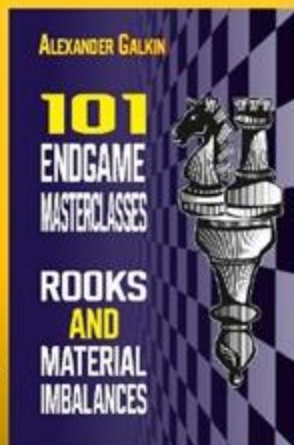
If 3.Bb3+? Kb5 4.g8Q Qxg8 5.Bxg8 f2.

If 2...Qc8 3.Bf8 Qa8+ 4.Kb2 draws, or at least that's what the books I found this in say. My computer, however, has a different assessment. It thinks that Black wins after 4...Qb8+, eventually taking the g-pawn with the queen and following up with ...f2, when the shepherding method no longer works. It looks reasonably convincing. So perhaps the study is bust? Over to you to decide.



New books from Elk and Ruby

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



Available in the UK
from Chess & Bridge
and on Amazon



Elk and Ruby
www.elkandruby.com