



# **Chess***Moves*

September 2024



**The Menchik Memorial Challengers  
Tournament, the Manchester Congress in  
Bolton, the Second Lancaster Standard Play  
... and much more**



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## EDITORIAL



Greetings and welcome to the September 2024 edition of *ChessMoves*!

September saw the English Open and Women's teams taking part in the Olympiad in Budapest. Both teams performed creditably, with Michael Adams scoring an unbeaten 6/9 for the Open team and Jovanka Houska an outstanding 8/10 for the Women's team. GM Peter Wells will be writing a comprehensive report on proceedings for next month's *ChessMoves*.

In the meantime, highlights in this month's *ChessMoves* include event reports from all over the country, plus articles by our usual GM, IM and other contributors, and news and views across the whole spectrum of English chess. Juniors and improvers are well catered for too.

Don't forget that if you are looking for ways to connect with the ECF there is a comprehensive list of helpful links straight after this editorial.

All the games within are presented in PGN format here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/September-ChessMoves.pgn>

but note that you will need to use ChessBase or a PGN viewer to access the games.

Enjoy the magazine and have a great month!

IM Andrew Martin Email: [a.martin2007@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:a.martin2007@yahoo.co.uk)

## CONNECT WITH US

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YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/EnglishChessFederation">https://www.youtube.com/c/EnglishChessFederation</a>
Twitch Commentary	<a href="https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_commentary">https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_commentary</a>
Twitch Streaming	<a href="https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_streaming">https://www.twitch.tv/ecf_streaming</a>
Substack	<a href="https://englishchessfederation.substack.com/">https://englishchessfederation.substack.com/</a>
Chess.com ECF Members Club	<a href="https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation-members">https://www.chess.com/club/english-chess-federation-members</a>
Lichess English Chess Players Club	<a href="https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players">https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players</a>
Lichess English Juniors	<a href="https://lichess.org/team/england-juniors">https://lichess.org/team/england-juniors</a>
Chess.com English Juniors	<a href="https://www.chess.com/club/england-juniors">https://www.chess.com/club/england-juniors</a>

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## EVENTS

# Menchik Memorial Challengers Tournament 2024

by Lance Leslie-Smith











### Introduction

The Menchik Memorial Tournament is a ten-player individual round robin tournament which provides title norm opportunities. The tournament was the brainchild of the English Chess Federation Director of Women's Chess Agnieszka Milewska, who started the tournament in June 2022 as the 'Vera Menchik Memorial'. It started off with a very strong field consisting of some of the UK's best players, and has continued ever since, holding two more tournaments in April and August/September 2024. All the tournaments gave opportunities for the players to get WIM and WGM norms.

The Menchik Challengers Tournament, envisaged as a qualifying event to the 2025 tournament, has exceeded expectations. The scope of the Challengers Tournament was to provide chances to more players to play in high-level events, and to make it a high-rated tournament. If there were any chance to make title norms possible that would be a bonus. The tournament was planned to be an open Swiss for 30 to 40 participants, but as the feedback came through over time most of the interest came from more highly-rated players. As a result, the format was changed to an individual round robin.

It was a brave decision to change the tournament layout, as organising a closed event comes with financial demands, but the mission was to make it a strong event! My thoughts were to hold a WIM level tournament, but after the response from the first few players a WGM tournament looked like a realistic idea. A few weeks later the field was confirmed.

### Starting rank list of players

No.		Name	FideID	FED	Rtg
8		WGM Antolak, Julia	1159569	POL	2307
3		WGM Mirzoeva, Elmira	4127951	ENG	2282
2		WIM Lach, Aleksandra	1134299	POL	2278
4		WGM Navrotescu, Andreea	675946	FRA	2271
9		FM Van Foreest, Machteld	1051563	NED	2243
10		FM Jarocka, Liwia	21807558	POL	2217
6		WFM Hryshchenko, Kamila	14147491	ENG	2181
7		WFM Rida, Ruqayyah	343272375	ENG	2110
1		WFM Varney, Zoe	436135	ENG	2067
5		WCM Subramanian, Anusha	477710	ENG	2033

### Day 1

The first day of the tournament was an exciting display of high-level chess, with eight out of ten games having decisive results. The end of day 1 produced three leaders with a perfect 2/2 score: Andreea Navrotescu; Machteld Van Foreest; and Liwia Jarocka, with Anusha Subramanian flying the English flag with 1½/2 points. The norm requirements were 7/9 for a WGM norm and 5/9 for a WIM norm (5½/9 for Kamila Hryshchenko).

There was lots of fighting spirit from all the players, with the top seeds pushed all the way to the endgame. Navrotescu managed to convert some hard-fought games. Mirzoeva got some promising positions in her games but missed some moves at crucial points to seal the deal. It was tough luck for Varney, who fought gallantly, finding herself with winning advantages, but couldn't manage to convert under time pressure. We looked forward to more exciting chess over the rest of the tournament!



Images from day 1











### Day 2

The second day of the tournament kept everyone on the edge of their seats. Every game in round 3 produced decisive results, with Jarocka and Navrotescu keeping their perfect 3/3 scores. The surprise of the round was

Subramanian's victory over Antolak in an equal position in the endgame; Anusha took advantage of a mistake and managed to convert the position to take her score to 2½/3. Hryshchenko managed to win her game, finishing round 3 on 1½/3. Mirzoeva found a beautiful combination to seal the deal in her game against Varney. Title norm chances were looking very promising!

Round 4 continued with another set of decisive results across the field. Jarocka and Navrotescu retained their 100% records. Van Foreest managed to pull off a win against Subramanian, bringing her score to 3/4. Mirzoeva and Antolak won their games as well. The cross-table at this stage was as follows.

#### Rank after Round 4

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	4		WGM Navrotescu, Andreea	FRA	2271	4	0	4	4,5
2	10		FM Jarocka, Liwia	POL	2217	4	0	4	2,5
3	9		FM Van Foreest, Machteld	NED	2243	3	0	3	10
4	5		WCM Subramanian, Anusha	ENG	2033	2,5	0	2	6
5	3		WGM Mirzoeva, Elmira	ENG	2282	2,5	0	2	5,5
6	8		WGM Antolak, Julia	POL	2307	1,5	1	1	10,5
7	6		WFM Hryshchenko, Kamila	ENG	2181	1,5	0	1	8
8	2		WIM Lach, Aleksandra	POL	2278	1	0	1	9,5
9	7		WFM Rida, Ruqayyah	ENG	2110	0	0	0	12
10	1		WFM Varney, Zoe	ENG	2067	0	0	0	11,5



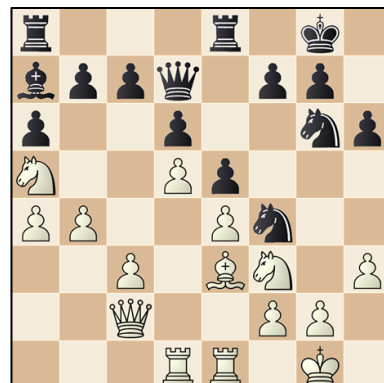
Images from day 2

#### Day 3

Continuing from the excitement of day 2, round 5 had four out of five decisive games with drama all around. Navrotescu maintained her perfect run with 5/5 points, breaking the 2300 rating barrier on live ratings. Jarocka's perfect run was undone by a wonderful piece of kingside attacking from Mirzoeva. Van Foreest kept up her dominant performance, scoring a big win over Hryshchenko with a beautiful attacking combination to seal the game with a checkmate. Another impressive sight was Antolak's game, which featured a brilliant queen sacrifice to force a mate in three. Unlucky for Ruqayyah, who had played so well. Varney managed to secure the only draw of the round against Subramanian to get on the scoreboard after having a commanding position for most of the game. Title norm chances were still looking very positive!

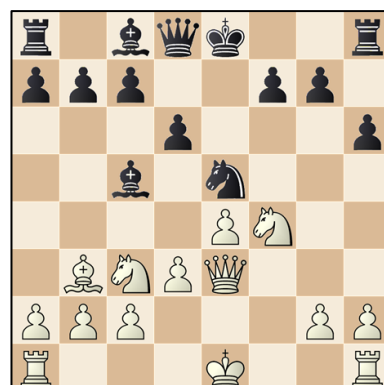
In round 6 Liwia and Julia played out a draw in a Symmetrical English, with another draw two boards away as Zoe found an extra pawn insufficient to win the rook ending against Kamila.

Machteld continued her strong performance by beating Ruqayyah, who was holding the position until she replied to 20. Na5 with 20...Qc8...

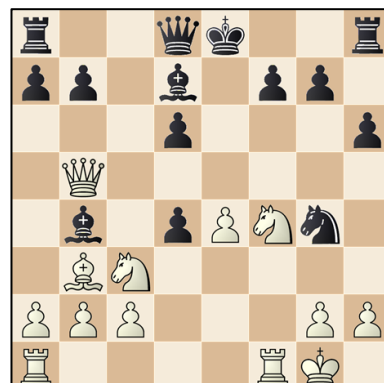


... missing 20. ... Nxh3+ 21. gxh3 Qxh3.

Aleksandra beat Anusha; in the diagram below Anusha played 11.Bc5.



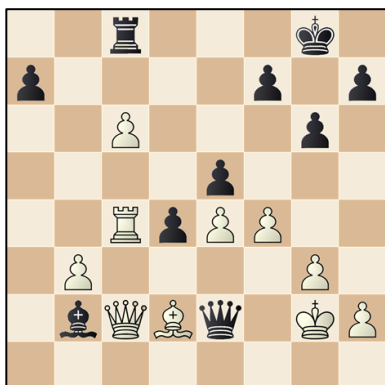
The game continued 11...e4 12. d4 Ng4 13. Qd2 Bb4 14. O-O c5 15. Qe2 cxd4 16. Qb5+ Bd7. Can you spot how Aleksandra mates in 6?



17. Bxf7+ Kxf7 18. Qd5+ Ke8 19. Qh5+ g6 20. Qxg6+ Kf8 21. Ne6+ Ke7 22. Nd5#.

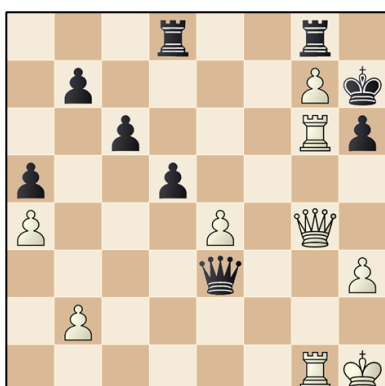


Under pressure, Elmira, who was holding the position, lost to Andreea after move 33. Qc2, forgetting that Andreea could step in with Qe2+, effectively winning the game with 34. Bc3 to follow.



#### Day 4

On day 4 we got to see Andreea continue her fine streak of wins as she beat Liwia, who unfortunately lost her chance of getting a WGM norm. Although Anusha's attack did not seem so convincing, she eventually broke through with a lovely mating net. Here is the position that occurred several moves before the eventual mate; White to move.



41. Rxh6+! will be mate after Kxh6 42. Qg6#. If Qxh6, White continues with 42. Qf5! Qg6 43. Qxg6#.

Ruqayyah, wanting to make up for missed chances in the morning, capitalised on an uncharacteristic mistake from Zoe and finished the game in 13 moves. There was another quick game between Machteld and Julia, leaving Machteld needing 1½/2 in her final two games.

The last game of the round went on for a staggering 127 moves, ending in a victory for Kamila. Unlucky for Aleksandra, who fought so hard. Kamila and Aleksandra finished with 20 minutes to go before the start of round 8.

Going into round 8, three of the five games started on time as Kamila and Aleksandra were entitled to a 30-

minute break. Their games started 15 minutes after the start of the round. Liwia, having lost to Andreea in round 7 and missed out on the WGM norm, took a quick draw with Machteld to get an early rest to prepare for round 9. Machteld, now with 6/8, needed to win in round 9 to secure the WGM norm. All other round 8 games produced decisive results, with Aleksandra bouncing back after her gruelling long game in round 7. Julia and Elmira secured convincing wins, and Andreea continued her magical unbeaten run with a perfect 8/8 score. There was lots of anticipation for the final round.

#### Day 5

As expected, the final round would turn out to be exciting! Julia and Aleksandra finished with a quick draw, while all the other players had something to prove. Machteld needed to win to secure a WGM norm, and Anusha needed to win to secure a WIM norm. Sadly, Anusha fell short against a well-prepared Liwia, who ended the tournament with a really strong 6/9 score. Anusha should still hold her head up high, as she surpassed the 2100 live elo threshold after her seventh round win, achieving the WFM title upon confirmation from FIDE. Congratulations Anusha!

Elmira showed her experience once again, managing to convert in the endgame against Ruqayyah. Andreea took advantage of an early mistake from Kamila, sacrificing her queen and slowly building pressure to convert her position. Words cannot describe her performance in this tournament: a perfect 9/9 score; a 2991 performance; a gain of a staggering 71 elo points. Just incredible!











Machteld had a tough position against Zoe, who had winning chances until time pressure induced an unfortunate blunder. Machteld took advantage and won the game soon after, securing a WGM norm. Well done!



*All the players and officials from left to right -  
Back row: Jake Hung, Elmira Mirzoeva, Andreea Navrotescu, Kamila Hryshchenko, Zoe Varney, Liwia Jarocka, Machteld Van Foreest, Lance Leslie-Smith, Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips.  
Front row: Anusha Subramanian, Ruqayyah Rida, Aleksandra Lach, Julia Antolak*

## Final Rankings

### Final Ranking after 9 Rounds

Rk.	SNo		Name	FED	Rtg	Pts.	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	4		WGM Navrotescu, Andreea	FRA	2271	9	0	9	36
2	9		FM Van Foreest, Machteld	NED	2243	7	0	6	38
3	10		FM Jarocka, Liwia	POL	2217	6	0	5	39
4	3		WGM Mirzoeva, Elmira	ENG	2282	5,5	0	5	39,5
5	8		WGM Antolak, Julia	POL	2307	5	0	3	40
6	5		WCM Subramanian, Anusha	ENG	2033	4	0	3	41
7	2		WIM Lach, Aleksandra	POL	2278	3,5	0	3	41,5
8	6		WFM Hryshchenko, Kamila	ENG	2181	3	0	2	42
9	7		WFM Rida, Ruqayyah	ENG	2110	1	1	1	44
10	1		WFM Varney, Zoe	ENG	2067	1	0	0	44

### Event Statistics

- Out of 45 games there were only 8 draws.  
36/80% of the games produced decisive results.  
Very rare for a closed tournament!
- One player achieved a WGM norm with a 7/9 score.
- One player achieved the WFM title by reaching a live elo of 2100 during the tournament.
- One player achieved a perfect 9/9 score, a truly remarkable achievement.

### The Team

I can't thank the team enough for all their support with putting this tournament together!

Jake Hung (Deputy Chief Arbiter and Co-Organiser);  
Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips (Deputy Chief Arbiter);  
Agnieszka Milewska (ECU Women's Commission Councillor and ECF Director of Women's Chess);  
Lawrence Cooper (Co-ordinator);  
Lorin D'Costa (Co-ordinator);  
Malcolm Pein (ECU Vice President and ECF Director of International Chess).

Congratulations to Jake and Emma-Jane for achieving International Arbiter norms!

### The Sponsors

Without their help this event would not have been a success!



[English Chess Federation](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/)

[ECU Commission for Women's Chess](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/women)

## Useful Links

Results and PGNs:

<https://chessresults.com/tnr955103.aspx?lan=1&art=2&turdet=YES&flag=30>

Photo gallery:

<https://chess-results.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16358>

Lichess live broadcast:

<https://lichess.org/broadcast/menchik-memorial-challengers-tournament-2024-wgm-norm/round-1/T04TfFQD#boards>

Chess.com live broadcast:

<https://www.chess.com/events/2024-menchik-memorial-challengers-tournament/games>

### Side events (Blitz Festival)

Alongside the WGM round robin tournament there was a blitz festival consisting of three tournaments. All the games were broadcast live, and are available to download in PGN format. Here are the results!

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Blitz (31<sup>st</sup> August)

This was a nine-round tournament with 22 players competing for £250 in prizes.

1<sup>st</sup> [£100] FM Tanmay Chopra (8/9)

2<sup>nd</sup> [£60] FM Maciej Czopor (7½/9)

3<sup>rd</sup> [£40] Manmay Chopra (6½/9)

4<sup>th</sup> [£20] IM Yichen Han (6/9)

Tied rating prize U1950 [£30/2 = £15 each] Dimitrios Zakarian & Mohammad Mozaffari (5/9)

The final ranking cross-table can be found here:

<https://chessresults.com/tnr980592.aspx?lan=1&art=4&fed=FRA&turdet=YES&flag=30>

PGNs are available to download here:

<https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=980592&art=3>

The photo gallery can be found here:

<https://chess-results.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16367>

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Blitz (1<sup>st</sup> September):

This was a nine-round tournament with 25 players competing for £250 in prizes.

1<sup>st</sup> [£100] FM Maciej Czopor (7½/9)

Tied 2<sup>nd</sup> [£60 + £40 = 100/2 = £50 each] IM Yichen Han and Livio Cancedda-Dupuis (7/9)

Tied 4<sup>th</sup> [£10 each] CM Stanley Badacsonyi and Zain Patel (6/9)

Shared rating prize [£30/2 = £15] Ilia Malinovskii and Vincent Sagues

The final ranking cross-table can be found here:

<https://chessresults.com/tnr980593.aspx?lan=1&art=4&fed=FRA&turdet=YES&flag=30>

PGNs are available to download here:

<https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=980593&art=3>

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Blitz (3<sup>rd</sup> September):

This was a 14-round tournament with 35 players competing for £250 in prizes. The format consisted of two games against each opponent, with each player playing against seven opponents.

1<sup>st</sup> [£100] FM Maciej Czipor

2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> [60 + 40 + 20 = 120/3 = £40 each] Livio

Cancedda-Dupuis, Manmay Chopra, and Oscar Pollack

Rating prize [£30] Kameron Grose

The final ranking cross-table can be found here:

<https://chessresults.com/tnr980594.aspx?lan=1&art=4&fed=FRA&turdet=YES&flag=30>

PGNs are available to download here:

<https://chess-results.com/PartieSuche.aspx?lan=1&id=50023&tnr=980594&art=3>

The photo gallery can be found here:

<https://chess-results.com/Fotos.aspx?lan=1&key1=16408>

*IA Lance Leslie-Smith*

*(Chief Arbiter and Organiser: Menchik Memorial Challengers Tournament and Blitz Festival)*

## Northumbria Masters comes to Darlington by Tim Wall

The 7<sup>th</sup> Northumbria Masters Congress (22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August) this year moved south to Darlington and to a superb new venue – the Victorian Central Hall in the town's Dolphin Leisure Centre.

A total of 148 players took part from 21 different countries, and participants included nine grandmasters and 11 international masters. The total prize fund and support for titled players amounted to over £10,000.

The event received generous sponsorship, including from the English Chess Federation's funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Chess Trust, the John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, the Friends of Chess, Durham County Chess Association, Northumberland Chess Association and the Northumbria Junior Chess Association.

The GM and IM invitational tournaments resulted in two international master norms for James Moreby (Newcastle and Queen Mary University London) and Ondrej Svanda (Czech Republic). The Masters Open attracted a strong entry, including six GMs.

The winners of the various tournaments were:

GM Invitational: Eldar Gasanov (Ukraine) 6½/9.

IM Invitational: James Moreby (Newcastle) 7/9.

Masters Open: Frode Urkedal (Norway), Jung Min Seo (Sweden), Oleg Korneev (Spain) 6½/9.

Challengers (U-2000 FIDE): Lewis Turner (Leics) 8/9.

Major (U-1700 FIDE): John Awesome (Newcastle), Alfie McMonagle (Newcastle University) 7½/9.

Thanks are due to Darlington Borough Council and the staff of the Dolphin Leisure Centre for being excellent hosts, and to our superb team of arbiters: IAs Alan Atkinson, Paul McKeown, and Lance Leslie-Smith.

I am pleased to announce that the 2025 Northumbria Masters will also take place at the same venue, the Dolphin Leisure Centre, Darlington, from Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> to Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August, and will feature an open-air Darlington Chess Festival on the town's Horse Market Square, directly outside the leisure centre.

More information will be available shortly here:

<https://northumbriamasters.com/>

Here is one of the most exciting games from the congress.

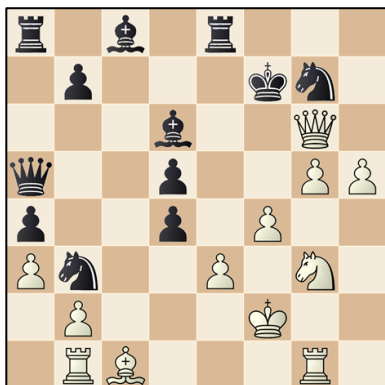
### Daniel Gormally - Eldar Gasanov

Northumbria Masters 2024

Bogo-Indian Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4+ 4 Nbd2 d5 5 Qa4+ Nc6 6 a3 Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 a5 9 Qc2 a4 10 g4 g6 11 Rg1 Re8 12 g5 Nh5 13 Nf1 Na5 14 c5? Nb3 15 Rb1 e5! 16 Nxe5 Bxc5 17 f4 Bd6 18 Ng3 Ng7 19 h4 c5 20 h5 cxd4 21 Nxf7 Qa5+ 22 Kf2 Kxf7 23 Bxg6+ hxg6 24 Qxg6+





24...Ke7! 25 h6 Nxc1 26 Qxg7+ Kd8 27 Qxd4 Bc5 28 Qxd5+ Bd7 29 Rd1 Bxe3+ 30 Kf3 Qxd5+ 31 Rxd5 Kc7 32 Rxd7+ Kxd7 33 Ne4 Nb3 34 Nf6+ Kd6 35 Nxe8+ Rxe8 36 Re1 Nd4+? 37 Kg4 Re4 38 h7 Rxf4+ 39 Kh3 Rf3+ 40 Kg4 Rf4+ 41 Kh3 Rf3+ 42 Kg4 Rf4+ ½-½

## Second Lancaster Congress – 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024 by Richard Walsh

We held our second standard play congress at Lancaster Royal Grammar School Assembly Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> August. It was a full house, with 110 entrants from all over the UK. We plan to hold our third one next August (the weekend after the British Championships as usual) and we have another rapidplay coming up on 18<sup>th</sup> January - details to confirmed soon.



We had to move from our previous venue at Cumbria University in Bowerham, Lancaster as they upped their venue charges by 40%, and we did have some teething problems at our new one, but after a rather frantic start the event went well and we had good feedback. Amazingly the University still allowed us to offer players their very cheap student accommodation which, as last

time, proved extremely popular. We had sponsorship from Lancaster City Council and Cumberland Building Society, and £2,150 was distributed in prizes. On Saturday evening we held an optional cash super blitz which attracted 16 players. The event was ECF-rated, and the top two sections were FIDE-rated for the first time. The results were:

### Open

1<sup>st</sup> equal:

- Jacob Connor Boswell
- Jonathan Arnott
- Rating prize U2100: Ewan Kershaw

### Major

1<sup>st</sup> equal

- Simon Layhe
- Maksym Kryshafor
- Bowie Carter
- Brendan O’Gorman
- Michael I Connor
- Seth Woozeer
- Rating prize U1800: Paul Doherty

### Intermediate

1<sup>st</sup> – Om Reddy Jayar

2<sup>nd</sup> equal

- Jeremy P Brockes
- Kevin Winter
- Arnold Peace
- Dave Patterson
- Jake Money
- Paul Salisbury
- Baris Akkay
- Rating prize U1620: David J Buckell

### Minor

1<sup>st</sup> – James Weldon

2<sup>nd</sup> – Jurijs Petuhovs

Rating prize U1200: Ved Sudeep Boganadham

There was also a shared best U16 prize.

Big thanks to Brendan O’Gorman for taking the photos of the event, which are posted here:

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

Thanks also to Sean Parker of Morecambe Chess Club who transcribed the Open and Major games which have been loaded onto Chess-results and Britbase - the first time we have done this. To highlight one game is always difficult, but the game between Tim Wall and Ewan Kershaw in the last round in the Open was very exciting. Tim played an unusual line, and Ewan held on well against a massive

attack. Ewan is also a former Lancaster player now at university. Here it is.

Wall, Tim P - Kershaw, Ewan

2nd Lancaster Standard Play Congress, 11.08.2024

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.b4 cxb4 4.d4 d5 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.c4 bxc3 7.Nxc3 Qa5 8.Rb1 Nf6 9.d5 Nxd5 10.Qxd5 Qxc3+ 11.Bd2 Qf6 12.Be2 e6 13.Qb3 Qd8 14.Bc3 f6 15.Bc4 Kf7 16.0-0 Bc5 17.Qc2 Ne7 18.Bd3 Bb6 19.Rfd1 Qc7 20.Rbc1 Bd7 21.Qe2 Bc6 22.Bc4 Nd5 23.Bxd5 exd5 24.Nd4 Rhe8 25.Qh5+ Kg8 26.Nf5 Qf4 27.Nd4 Rad8 28.Qh3 Ba4 29.g3 Qc7 30.Rf1 Qd7 31.Qh5 Re5 32.Qf3 Re4 33.Qd3 Bxd4 34.Bxd4 Bb5 35.Qc3 Bxf1 36.Kxf1 Qa4 37.Qc7 Rde8 38.Be3 d4 39.Bf4 Qa6+ 40.Kg2 Qxa2 41.Qxb7 Re2 42.Qf3 Rxf2+ 43.Qxf2 Re2 44.Rf1 Rxf2+ 45.Rxf2 Qd5+ 46.Kg1 d3 47.Bd2 a5

You can also find this game at the following link:

<https://chessresults.com/PartieSuche.aspx?art=36&id=5457641>

Richard Walsh. Secretary Lancaster Chess Club and President Lancashire Chess Association

## Hull – a Place Where Even the Lord Mayor Plays Chess!

by Keith Arkell

Mark Collinson - Jim Burnett

British 65+ Championship 2024, Hull

"I don't play chess, but I do play draughts", explained many a mayor during their British Championship opening speeches down the years. At Hull this year, however, the Lord Mayor not only played chess, but did so very capably. In this game Councillor Mark Collinson, Lord Mayor of Hull, played a splendid attacking game in the first round of the 65+ Championship to down a seasoned player often graded around 200 in old money.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c6 4.g3 Nf6 5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Nbd7



8.Nd2 Moves such as 8 b3 or 8 Qd3 are seen more often, but this is a perfectly acceptable method of supporting the e4-break.

8...b6 Perhaps a little too compliant, whereas 8...Qb6 or the more direct 8...b5! would have asked more questions of White.

9.e4 Bb7 10.e5 Ne8 11.cxd5 cxd5



12.f4 I might have begun mobilising my pieces on the kingside with 12 Nf3, but there is also something to be said for this direct pawn assault.

12...Nc7 13.Nf3 b5 14.Be3 Nb6 15.b3 b4 16.Ne2 a5 17.g4 Qd7



Understandably played to cover the f5-square.

**18.f5!?** But Mark ploughs on regardless! They say Caissa, the goddess of chess, favours the bold, and this attacking pawn sacrifice is not so easy to handle.

**18...exf5 19.gxf5**



**19...f6?** This is a far from ideal reaction to the sacrifice. Grabbing the pawn looks a bit scary, but Black should be fine after 19...Qxf5 20 Nh4 Qd7 21 Nf5 Ne6.

**20.e6 Qb5 21.Nf4 a4** Jim is probably not yet losing, but it's hard to find a long term solution to his uncomfortable king's position.

**22.Rb1 axb3 23.axb3 Nc8 24.Nh4 Nd6**



**25.Qg4**



Aiming at g7.

**25...Ne4?** The last chance was to bring all hands on deck with 25... Rfd8, in order to defend g7 with ...Bf8 and ...Ne8.

**26.Bxe4 dxe4 27.Nh5 Ne8 28.Bh6**



**1-0**

## Manchester Congress 2024 at the Bolton Arena 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024



The congress was very pleased to have the support of the University of Bolton and of the Bolton Arena, who provided financial support and excellent playing conditions.





Once again we welcomed the presence of GMs Keith Arkell and Bogdan Lalic, both of whom gave of their own time to help with local chess activities. Bogdan visited a local chess club to talk to young players. The congress also attracted two IMs and included participants from four chess nations.

The congress extended its use of live boards and access to live games via Lichess. The congress introduced several new and younger arbiters as part of its team. We also extended our use of female arbiters.

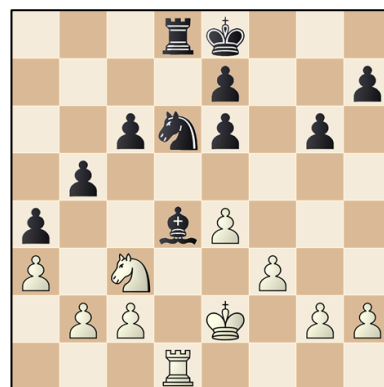
The congress introduced a female-only analysis room; this is to be reviewed in 2025.

The game between one of our most promising young players, Robert McLean (3Cs), and Bogdan Lalic can be found here:

<https://lichess.org/broadcast/manchester-congress-2024-fide-open--harry-lamb-memorial/round-4/i6t5nvya/WSyxT6sZ>

**GM Lalic, Bogdan 2336 - McLean, Robert 1972**

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 O-O 8. Bb3 a5 9. Nxc6 dxc6 10. Qxd8 Rxd8 11. f3 b5 12. a3 a4 13. Ba2 Ne8 14. Bc5 Kf8 15. Rd1 Be6 16. Bxe6 fxe6 17. Rxd8 Rxd8 18. Ke2 Nd6 19. Rd1 Ke8 20. Bd4 Bxd4 ½ - ½



## FEATURES

### Interview with James Gardner

by Mark Rivlin



James Gardner is a UK-based ECF 2103-rated chess player. For the past three years he has been building the 'Epic Chess' YouTube channel that has a healthy 87,000 subscribers watching 1,000+ videos, each one lasting around 10-15 minutes. One of the best online broadcasters, James has a unique style of combining seriously good analysis with humorous quips and images. He specifically analyses super-GM games, and despite the huge difference in ability between the superstars and club players his growing audience benefits from a clear and understandable journey in each game. He also provides a free instructive video series. His YouTube channel is here: <https://www.youtube.com/@epicchess2021>

**I started watching your videos around a year ago, and I became a fan. How do you combine the analysis that 2000-plus players and relative patzers like myself (1724) can easily follow and enjoy the narrative?**

I try to keep it simple, so when I first play through a game and I'm wondering, for example, 'Why didn't they take that free pawn?', these are the kinds of things I'll investigate and address in the video. I don't always know the *exact* answer (unless there is a clear tactical refutation), and certainly not to the same depth of understanding of the guys I'm analysing, but it generally works out fine. And to be honest, at this stage, I wouldn't be afraid to say to the audience, 'You know what, I'm not even sure why he didn't take that pawn!'. And indeed, sometimes the top player has simply blundered! So overall I try not to get too hung up on the analysis in order that the story of the game can also flow.

**I enjoy your quirky phrases 'Oarsmen in a Boat,' 'Lifted the King's Kimono', 'Clamp Vegas', 'Stock Haddock',**

**'Banana Hammock', 'The Clergyman', and my favourite 'The Bathtub'. How did you come up with these cute quips?**

I think like many others who write (though I don't write scripts on paper, I just write them in my head), many of the quips are borrowed from others. 'Going to Fork Town, population [insert player's name]', for example, is lifted directly from Danny Rensch, and then I developed that into Fork Vegas and so on. I first heard 'The Bathtub' used as a reference to a pawn structure from Peter Svidler; so, I get a lot from great chess commentators, and then of course I bring in my own life experiences too. I now actively seek out and mentally note expressions from my followers in the comments section as well!

**What is involved in preparing and presenting an analysis of one game and how long does it take?**

It can vary between two to four hours, but on average a video takes me about three hours. That doesn't necessarily include all the time I spend around it. As a chess fan and consumer, I'm also watching and thinking about chess content a lot. Once I've chosen a game, I then devise a title and thumbnail and begin the analysis, where I start scripting in my head. Then I reanalyse and hone the script, and usually after two run-throughs I'm ready to hit 'record'. I remember what I want to say by using visual cues, which is why I have lines and arrows all over the board. Once recorded, I edit, then add clips and images before publishing. So that's the video-making process, but including comments, emails and general planning and idea generation, I'd say I average about five hours a day on the channel.

**Why do you concentrate on super-GMs' games?**

I essentially give viewers what they want to see. Earlier in the journey I did more games of top 20 players, but unfortunately, viewers were not keen on that wider cohort, at least from what I've seen. So, while I would like to cover a wider array of players, including women and juniors, I find the interest is far lower. Each video is time consuming and takes a lot of sacrifice, given that I'm also trying to balance a day job and young family. I find it difficult to make that sacrifice, only to see the video underperform because I've picked a player that doesn't generate as much interest.

**Have you had feedback from players about your analysis?**

Hardly any feedback. One top player messaged me about a video and said they enjoyed it, so that was cool, and Hikaru Nakamura borrowed one of my titles recently, and

his editor gave me a shout-out in the description. Occasionally I get a few people in the comments section, along with chess and other prominent YouTubers. But nothing too much!

**Do you still play competitive chess, and if so, which club(s) do you represent?**

Yes, I play League chess for Bedford Chess Club, County Chess for Bedfordshire, and I participate in the Bedfordshire County Individual Championship. I've played in the odd weekender in the last few years, as well as a couple of 4NCL games, but unfortunately, I don't have enough time to play a lot. My FIDE rating is out of date at this point (somewhere around 1850). It would be nice to go for my NM title one day, mainly so I could play in 'Titled Tuesday!' But I don't work on my chess, other than the daily analysis.

**What is your preference, standardplay, rapidplay or blitz?**

Online, I'd say blitz, but over the board I prefer standardplay, largely because I'm often feeling too tired to perform at my best in blitz, and that frustrates me. I have a young family, and working two jobs has not helped my sleep, and we all know how important sleep is for chess. So, it's nice having that extra time to think at a slower time control.

**When you are preparing an analysis of a game, what kind of chess fan are you aiming at?**

I think somewhere between 1000 and 2000 online blitz rating is my target audience. I'm of course not pitching at strong players for analysis, though they may enjoy some casual recapping, and weak players may enjoy the show, but they could also struggle to learn because I move quickly and make jokes and asides that can make learning tricky. I have to say, I haven't given this question nearly as much thought as I should have done over the years!

**What are your interests outside chess?**

I still play rugby, which I love, and it forces me to stay in shape, stay mindful of what I eat, and get to the gym when I can. I recently took up junior rugby coaching, and my son has started playing now! I'm also really into finance and investing - I find it all fascinating.

**Who are your favourite chess commentators and analysers?**

I love Danya [GM Daniel Naroditsky], with his brilliant insight as well as amazing level of English and creative

puns. Also, I like Peter Svidler. I always find it incredible when former top 10 players just rattle through themes and strategy so effortlessly and we learn so much. I could name more I really like, but I'll stop there at my favourite two so as not to overdo it!

**How do you see Epic Chess developing in the next few years? What are your aims and ambitions?**

I feel like I've found my stride now; I enjoy making videos as much as the audience enjoys watching them (according to the views and comments). I don't think I'll change too much, and I will work to build upon this foundation. I'll try to improve the editing of thumbnails and scripts, along with working on the balance between analysis and a few jokes. If I can find time, then I'd like to do a few shorts as an alternative way to reach new viewers with chess humour. In general, I don't put pressure on myself; the main aim is to continue creating and enjoying the videos.

**Do you have worldwide subscribers, or are your followers mainly based in the UK?**

Yes, worldwide. About a third are US based, 10% in the UK, 6% in Canada, 5% in Germany and India, and then so on through other countries in smaller percentages.

**Do you get a lot of feedback after a video? And I imagine it is positive?**

Yeah, lots of comments these days, around 100 per video, and yes, overwhelmingly positive, as most people are enjoying the videos. Other feedback includes people saying that the style isn't quite right for them, which is of course completely understandable, as we all have our preferences!

**Which players have had the most influence on your chess?**

Garry Kasparov and Vishy Anand are the main influencers, because when I was developing my openings around 15-20 years ago I really looked at them and what they were playing. Unfortunately, I've not mixed things up much since then, and I need to work on my own game. More recently I've enjoyed some of the quirky opening lines that Magnus Carlsen plays, as well as Alireza Firouzja's games, and so these days I enjoy dabbling in some dubious lines online!



## Visit to HMP Bullingdon on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by Carl Portman



### The Prison

I represented the English Chess Federation at a very productive and enjoyable visit to HMP Bullingdon, which is both a prison and young offenders institute in Oxfordshire. It is a public sector prison operated by HM Prison and Probation Service (an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice). Opened in 1994, Bullingdon was constructed on an obsolete Ministry of Defence site - MoD Bicester. The prison opened with four residential units, named after villages in the local area.

It is a local and resettlement prison accepting Security Category B male prisoners. (New admissions from courts are generally sent to 'local' prisons and are considered as Category B prisoners until their initial security assessment.) The prison generally only holds prisoners on short sentences (under 12 months) and those on remand.

### My Visit

Once again, instead of giving a simultaneous exhibition I agreed with the prison team to simply sit with the players and discuss aspects of the game 'live' and answer questions. They want to start up a chess club and asked me to evaluate the playing strengths of the inmates. Playing 'friendly' games allowed me to observe this. Prisoners often ask me 'What sort of rating do you think I am?' There were around 20 participants, and they played together, asking plenty of questions as they went. Certainly, the big issue of the day was the *en passant* rule, but I think I did a reasonable job of explaining it and making everyone happy. Of greatest benefit was giving tips on the basic rules of the opening, while reminding the prisoners that chess is a game of exceptions, and that ultimately (as in life) you must find your own way at some point, once you are out of 'the book.'

They asked me to talk about how I found chess, what the game means to me and why I think it is great for prisons.

They also asked questions about my chess books and wanted to know how to study and which were the best chess books to read. I am clear that a significant proportion of prisoners cannot read or write, so it is not enough just to give people a magazine or book and tell them to get on with it. What I do is find 'Chess Tsars', who are key players – usually the strongest – who commit to teaching others to play the game. This usually happens out on the wings.

I donated some books and magazines, a chess set and board, and a signed copy of my own book 'Chess Behind Bars' to be kept in the library. Further, they had a copy of my document 'Chess in prisons and why it matters', which I discussed with senior prison staff after the prisoners had returned to their cells.

### Moving Forward

The discussion centred around what value was added to the day, and what is the prison's appetite for further and regular chess. We are going to monitor the situation, but to begin with they want to hold bi-weekly chess sessions. They have some equipment, but like many other prisons they could do with proper 'tournament' sets and boards, and I am going to ensure that they receive some.

I should say that every inmate was respectful and keen to play and learn, with no problems whatsoever. Whoever or wherever we are as chess players, we all know what joy the game affords us all, and this is evident in these sessions where people from all backgrounds, religions and cultures come together in the 'room of concentration' to enjoy the Royal Game.

It remains a wonder to see a 1,500-year-old game being so influential in a contemporary setting and uniting people so effectively.

My thanks for making the event happen at the prison go to the staff of HMP Bullingdon for making the day possible. Special thanks to Alex Pass, Josh Wainwright, Governor Paul Reeves, Security and Intelligence, Governor Lisa Charman, Head of Education, Skills and Work (visited the session), and Dorothy Coomber-Wood, Learning Skills and Employment Manager (from Johannesburg!).

# Great British Chess Players

by John Nunn



## Luke McShane (1984 -)

Luke McShane was born on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1984 and, like many of the players in this series, showed a great deal of early promise, one highlight being his victory in the World Under-10 Championship at the age of eight. His rating ascent was rapid, and he gained the grandmaster title at the age of 16, at the time the youngest British player ever to achieve this feat. In January 2004 he was the second-highest rated player under-21 in the world, behind Radjabov.



One might have expected Luke to rise to the world top, but he preferred to pursue a career outside chess, and this inevitably made it harder to progress as far as his contemporaries. In 2007 he gained a degree at Oxford University in mathematics and philosophy, and then went to work in the financial sector. Despite this, he has competed in many tournaments and has frequently played for the national team. Highlights include his joint second place with Anand at the 2010 London Chess Classic (behind Carlsen), joint first with Navara in the 2011 Wijk aan Zee B group, and gold medal on board 2 in the 2019 World Team Championships.

However, Luke's greatest successes have been in rapid and blitz events. In 2003 he won the British Blitz Championship and at the 2015 London Chess Classic he won the Super Rapidplay Open with a phenomenal 9½/10, a full point clear of second place. His silver medal at the 2017 European Blitz Championship was especially impressive.

In style, Luke's main strengths lie in his ability to create difficulties for his opponent and his stamina in long games. I was team captain at the 2018 Batumi Olympiad, which gave me a ringside seat for some interesting chess; for example, against Flores in round 7 he gave up his queen for two minor pieces as early as move 12. Objectively this was not correct, but Flores soon lost his way, and Luke scored a good win.

The following game won a special prize at the 2009 London Chess Classic. It's not in any sense a brilliancy, but well illustrates Luke's persistence in a long and complex game against one of the world's leading players.

### Hikaru Nakamura - Luke McShane

London Chess Classic 2009 King's Indian Defence

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Na6 8.Be3 Ng4 9.Bg5 Qe8 10.c5!?**

Typically sharp play from Nakamura. Rather than the standard 11.dxe5 or 11.h3, he tries to open the position and exploit the clumsy position of Black's queen. While dangerous, objectively the line does not give White much.

**10...exd4 11.Nd5** The point of White's previous move, immediately threatening 12.cxd6 cxd6 13.Be7.

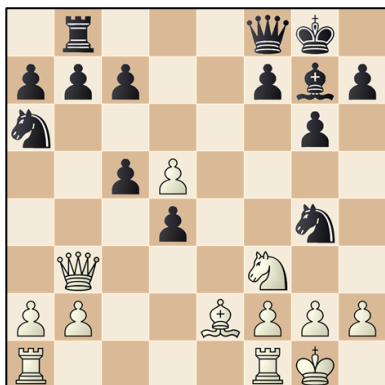
**11...Be6!?** 11...h6 12.Be7 c6 is also possible.

**12.Be7** White decides to grab the exchange. Quiet play by 12.cxd6 Bxd5 13.exd5 cxd6 14.Bxa6 bxa6 15.Nxd4 Qe5 is roughly equal.

**12...Bxd5 13.Bxf8 Qxf8 13...Kxf8!?** 14.exd5 Nxc5 is best met by 15.h3, and not 15.Nxd4? Ne3!.

**14.exd5 dxc5** For the moment material is roughly balanced, and the battle revolves around the vulnerable d5-pawn. If Black can win this without making too many concessions he will have the advantage.

**15.Qb3 Rb8**



**16.Rfe1** 16.Bxa6?! bxa6 17.Qc2 Qd6 activates Black's pieces, and dooms the d5-pawn.

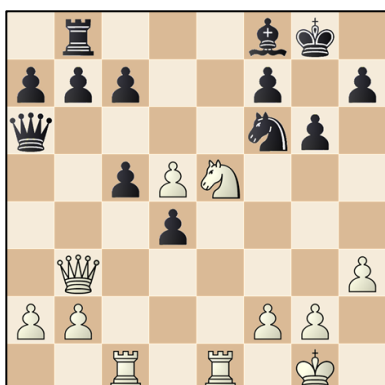
**16...Qd6 17.h3 Nf6** This threatens neither 18...Nxd5, due to 19.Bxa6, nor 18...Qxd5, owing to 19.Bc4 Qd7 20.Ne5; however, 18...Nb4 is a genuine threat.

**18.Bxa6?** White decides to eliminate the knight before it can move to b4, but now Black gains the advantage. 18.a3 Qb6 19.Qa2 was better, maintaining the balance.

**18...Qxa6 19.Rac1** 19.Ne5 Qd6 20.Nc6? loses material after 20...c4! 21.Qb5 a6.

**19...Bf8** 19...Qd6 20.Qa3 b6 21.Qxa7 Rd8 was also good.

**20.Ne5**



**20...Qb6?** A careless move. 20...Bd6! was better. After 21.Qf3 Bxe5 22.Rxe5 Qd6 23.Rce1 Rf8! White can only gain counterplay by the double-edged advance of his kingside pawns.

**21.Qf3?!** Missing 21.d6! Qxb3 22.dxc7! Rc8 23.axb3 Nd5 24.Nd3 b6 25.b4! Rxc7 26.Re5 Nf6 27.b3, and White is at least equal.

**21...Qd6** Intending to lay siege to the d5-pawn by 22...Kg7, or possibly 22...b5 and 23...Rb6, since once the f6-knight is defended Black will be able to play ...Qxd5.

**22.g4?!** Risky. Playing for a draw by 22.Nc4 Qd8 23.Ne5 was better.

**22...Bh6** Forced, but good.

**23.Rc2 Re8!** Black would like to play ...Rf8, defending f7, and then ...Nxd5, but the immediate 23...Rf8?! can be met by 24.Nd3 b6 25.b4!, with an unclear position.

**24.Rce2 Rf8** 24...Bg5!, preventing h4 and intending ...Qxd5, would have caused White major problems.

**25.Nc4?** 25.b3 was a better chance; for example, 25...Nxd5 26.Nc4 Qd8 27.Na5 Nc3 28.Nxb7 Nxe2+ 29.Rxe2 is not entirely clear.

**25...Qxd5?** 25...Qf4! 26.Qxf4 Bxf4 wins the d5-pawn without allowing any counterplay.

**26.Qxf6 Bg7** Not 26...Qxc4? 27.Re8, and White has dangerous threats.

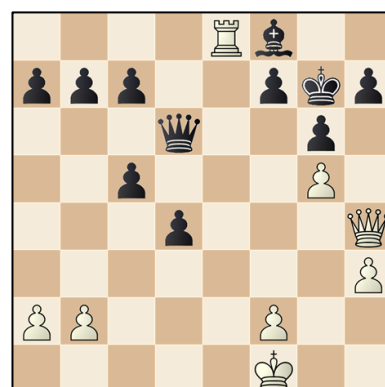
**27.Qh4?** The queen is passively placed here. 27.Qf4! Qxc4 28.Re7 gives White enough compensation for his material disadvantage; for example, after 28...Qxa2 29.Qxc7 Qxb2 30.Qxc5 d3 31.Qd5 White maintains equality.

**27...Qxc4 28.Re8 Qd5 29.Rxf8+ Bxf8 30.Re8 Kg7** Black's material plus should be decisive in the long run, so White must seek counterplay quickly before the d-pawn becomes too dangerous.

**31.g5** 31.Qd8 Qxd8 32.Rxd8 Bd6! 33.Ra8 c4 34.Kf1 b5 35.Rxa7 d3 is hopeless, as Black's king can head for d4.

**31...Qd6** Defending the bishop, and so nullifying the threat of Qh6+.

**32.Kf1**



**32...b5?!** Unnecessary preparation; after 32...c4! 33.Qe4 (33.Ke1 c3) 33...d3 34.Qe5+ f6! 35.gxf6+ Kf7 Black has a winning position, although this line is admittedly hard to see.

**33.Ke1 c4 34.Qe4 c5?** A poor move, shutting in the bishop and giving away all Black's advantage. 34...b4! was correct, to be followed by ...c3.



**35.h4! c3 35...b4 36.Qf3!** threatens Qf6+, and forces a repetition after 36...Be7 37.Qa8 Bf8 38.Qf3.

**36.bxc3 dxc3 37.Qe5+!** Thanks to Black's inactive bishop White can hold the ending.

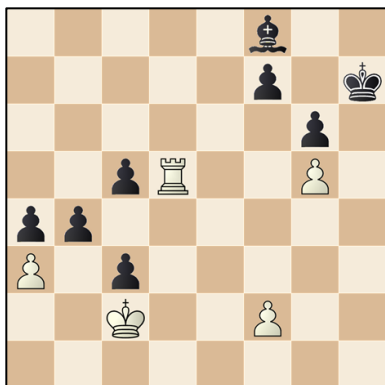
**37...Qxe5+ 38.Rxe5 a5 39.Kd1 a4 40.a3** This does not change the evaluation of the position, but it is not a very practical decision. If White just waits by 40.Kc2 b4 41.Rd5 Black cannot make progress. It's often difficult to play a waiting game for fear that the opponent will gradually improve his position, but in this case there's nothing Black can do.

**40...b4 41.Kc2** Bringing the pawns to a halt for the moment, but there's the obvious danger that Black will defend c3 with his bishop, and then the b-pawn can advance.

**41...h6 41...f5 42.Re8 Kf7 43.Ra8** is also safe for White. Black cannot afford to wait, because the Re8-a8 manoeuvre is likely to win the a4-pawn.

**42.Rd5** White can also draw by taking direct action: 42.Re8 hxg5 43.hxg5 Bd6 44.Ra8 b3+ 45.Kxc3 Be5+ 46.Kd2 c4 47.Rxa4 c3+ 48.Kc1 Bd6 49.Kb1 c2+ 50.Kb2 Be5+ 51.Kc1 Bd6, with a draw by repetition.

**42...hxg5 43.hxg5 Kh7!**



Intending ...Bg7, and forcing White to defend accurately.

**44.Rd7?** Now Black wins. The correct line was 44.axb4! cxb4 45.Rb5! (not 45.Ra5? b3+ 46.Kxc3 Bb4+! 47.Kxb4 b2, and the pawn can't be stopped) 45...Kg7 46.f3 holding the pawns up. If Black then moves his bishop from f8, White just attacks it with his rook along the b-file. This prevents Black from extracting his king from the top-right corner, and ensures that he cannot make progress.

**44...Bg7!** Giving up the f-pawn to get the pawns rolling.

**45.Rxf7 b3+ 46.Kb1 46.Kc1 Kg8 47.Ra7 Bd4 48.Rxa4 Kf7!** wins just as in the game.

**46...Kg8** Luke points out that the tempting 46...c4?? even loses after 47.Ra7 c2+ 48.Kc1 c3 49.Rxa4 Bf8 50.Rb4! Bxb4 51.axb4, and Black can resign.

**47.Ra7 Bd4! 48.Rxa4 Kf7** Black's king finally enters the game with decisive effect.

**49.Ra6 Be5!** Threatening ...c2+, and so forcing the rook off the sixth rank.

**50.Ra4 Ke6 51.Rh4 Kd5 52.a4 c4 53.Rh1** 53.a5 c2+ 54.Kc1 Bd6 also wins for Black.

**53...c2+ 54.Kc1 c3 55.Rh4** Or 55.Rh3 Bf4+ 56.Re3 Bxe3+ 57.fxe3 Ke4 58.a5 Kd3 59.a6 b2#.

**55...Bd6 0-1** It's mate in two more moves.

## Endgames All Club Players Should Know by Glenn Flear



### The Bishop Pair in Endgames

Some club players underestimate the importance of the bishop pair, especially in endgames. I think this is because they are not familiar with the techniques involved in converting their purported 'advantage'. So for many amongst us playing through a few illustrative examples may indeed be worthwhile (please read on!).

Two bishops, when in the right hands, can dominate other minor piece duos, but this process can take time. So despite it not being evident at first, the advantage is still there, just waiting to be nurtured!

There is a rule of thumb that I regularly tell my pupils: 'Two bishops are superior to bishop and knight, unless the knight has a sure-fire central outpost'. Of course this is just a guide, but worth bearing in mind in the examples that follow. There are, however, cases where the knight is well installed, but the bishops can nevertheless 'play around the steed' and create problems on the wings. So be careful not to jump to conclusions!

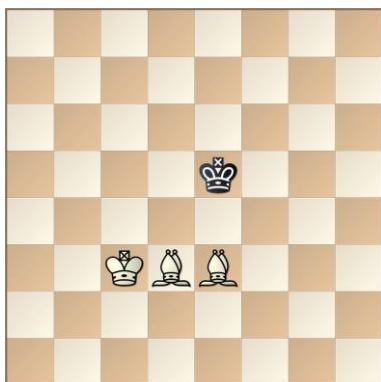
The relative activity of the kings is paramount, both for the stronger side's need to penetrate, and the defender's desire to keep the opponent at bay.

Bishops can influence play on both wings simultaneously, so stretching the defence is an important aspect here. Another factor is that the player with the bishop can often choose the right moment to simplify.

All the various qualities of the minor pieces (that I discussed in my two previous columns over the summer) can still be relevant, but an additional one is that passed pawns become an even greater advantage for the holder of the bishop pair, as there are no easy blockading squares.

Let's start with a technique that most players learn early in their chess adventure.

### Mating with Two Bishops



**1.Kc4** The bishops restrict the black king to some extent, but the king needs to be brought up to further reduce the opposing king's actions.

**1...Kd6 2.Bf4+ Ke6 3.Kc5 Kf7 4.Kd6 Kf6 5.Bh6** Sometimes a waiting move is required, especially when the opponent has no option but to retreat.

**5...Kf7 6.Bg5 Kf8 7.Ke6 Ke8 8.Bg6+ Kf8 9.Bh6+ Kg8** Once the defending king has been reduced to a zone comprising two squares, it's just a question of bringing the king over to complete the net.

**10.Kf6 Kh8 11.Bc2 Kg8 12.Kg6 Kh8 13.Bg7+ Kg8 14.Bb3#** A more borderline case is when the defender still has a knight.

Mating is a possibility, but in my experience, it's usually drawn in practice, especially when Black has enough freedom of action, as in the following example.

**Lagarde, M – Arkell, K**  
Hastings 2015



**76...Kd5 77.Kc3 Ke4 78.Ba6 Ng4 79.Bb7+ Ke5 80.Bc5 Nh6 81.Ba7 Nf5 82.Kd3 Nd6 83.Bc6 Nf5 84.Bb8+ Nd6 85.Bc7 Ke6 86.Kd4 Nf5+ 87.Kc5 Ng7 88.Bg2 Nf5 89.Bh3 Kf6 90.Kd5 Ng7!** The defender puts up most resistance when the knight is on this square (or the equivalent ones b7, b2, or g2, depending on the corner where the action is taking place). Tablebases indicate that it takes more than 50 moves for White to mate from here.

**91.Bd8+ Kg6 92.Ke5 Kf7 93.Ba5 Kg6 94.Bb4 Kf7 95.Bf1 Kg6 96.Bd3+ Kf7 97.Bc2 Nh5 98.Be1 Ng7 99.Bh4 Ne8 100.Be4 Ng7 101.Bd3 Nh5 102.Kf5 Ng7+ 103.Kg5 Ne6+ 104.Kg4 Ng7 105.Kg5 Ne6+ 106.Kh6 Nc7 107.Bg3 Ne6 108.Be5 Nc5 109.Bc4+ Ke7 110.Kg6 Kd7 111.Kf5 Kc6 112.Bb2 Nb7!** Arkell again chooses the strongest square.

**113.Be2 Kb6 114.Ke6 Kc7 115.Be5+ Kb6 116.Kd7 Nc5+ 117.Kc8 Kc6 118.Bf1** As any tablebase will confirm, White has not come any nearer to mating than from the diagram position. The theoretical long winning sequence, as shown by computers, just isn't a realistic option in the human realm.  $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$

Some club players love their knights, as forks so often turn the tables in their time scrambles! So, for those who need some persuading that two bishops really are such a dominant force, please study the following.

### 2Bs against B + N



Imagine that this quiet position has arisen. Remarkably, such a seemingly solid set-up can quickly go rotten for Black if he isn't careful; for example, the following sample lines seem plausible:

**1.Kf1 Bd5** Centralizing the knight with 1...Nd5 looks reasonable, but doesn't solve all the inherent problems: 2.Ke2 h6 3.Be4 Kf8 4.Kd3 Ke7 5.Kd4 Kd6 6.a4 f6 7.a5 Kc6 8.Bb4, and Black's kingside becomes vulnerable.

**2.f3 h6 3.Ke2 Kf8 4.Ke3 Nd7 5.Kd4 Bc6 6.Bb4+ Ke8 7.b3 h5 8.a4 g6 9.a5 Kd8 10.Bc4 Ke8 11.Bc5** Black is more or less already in Zugzwang!

**11...h4 12.h3 g5 13.Bd6 f6 14.Bd5 f5 15.Be6 f4 16.Bd5 Kd8 17.Bxc6 bxc6 18.Ke4** The king invades.

I suspect that one could be able to find a better way of defending (perhaps with the help of an engine!), but my point is that it isn't an easy task in a practical game.

Here's a case from one of my own games, where the bishops gradually took control.

**Flear, G – Müller, M**  
Dresden 2015



White's bishops enable him to probe away and limit the potential of Black's pieces.

**20.Be3 Rfd8 21.Bf3 Bc7 22.Kc2** Small improvements are a good idea when the opponent doesn't have any constructive play.

**22...Ne8 23.g4** Gaining space only makes sense if pushing pawns is not self-weakening, so it's best to wait until all one's pieces are comfortably placed before undertaking such advances.

**23...f6 24.h4 Kf7 25.b3 Rxd1 26.Rxd1 Rd8 27.Rxd8 Bxd8 28.b4 f5** Not wanting to stay totally passive, while hoping to get White to commit himself.

**29.g5 Nc7 30.Kd3 Ne6 31.a4 Ke7 32.a5 Kd7 33.Bd2 Bc7 34.Bc3 Bf4 35.Bd1!** Regrouping.

**35...Bd6 36.c5 Nf4+ 37.Kc4 Bf8 38.Be5!**



**38...Ng2?** Taking the bait!

A better chance was offered by the more prudent 38...Ne6, but analysis suggests that White should still be able to win: 39.Bb3 Be7 (39...Nc7 40.Bxc7 Kxc7 41.Kd4 and Black will lose at least a couple of pawns) 40.Kd3 Bd8 41.f4 Ke7 42.Bd6+! (this is better than the natural 42.Bxe6?! Kxe6 43.Bxg7 Bc7 44.Ke3, when White emerges a pawn to the good, but Black retains excellent drawing chances) 42...Kd7 43.Ke3 (and Black is in a sort of Zugzwang) 43...Be7 (43...Nc7 44.Bf7) 44.Be5 Bf8 (44...Bd8 45.Bxe6+! (now is the right moment!) 45...Kxe6 46.Bxg7 Bc7 47.Bf8 Bb8 48.Bd6 Bxd6 49.cxd6 Kxd6 50.Kd4+—, with a decisive opposition) 45.Bc4 Nd8 (45...Be7 46.Bxe6+ Kxe6 47.Bxg7) 46.Bg8! Ke7 (otherwise Bh7 will be annoying) 47.Bd6+ Ke8 48.Bh7! Bxd6 49.Bxg6+! Ke7 50.cxd6+ Kxd6 51.Bxf5+—.

**39.Kd4! Ke6?** The lesser evil is 39...Be7, but even then 40.Bxg7 Bd8 41.Be5 Nxh4 42.f4 Ng2 43.Bb3 is strong.

**40.Bb3+ Ke7 41.f4 Nxh4 42.Ke3 Ng2+ 43.Kf2** Picking off the knight.

**43...Nxf4 44.Bxf4 Ke8 45.Be6 Kd8 46.Ke3 Be7 47.Kd4 Bf8 48.Ke5 b6 49.axb6 a5 50.Kd4 Ke7 51.Bc4 axb4 52.b7 Kd7 53.b8=Q Be7 54.Bd6 Bxd6 55.Qxd6+ Kc8 56.Ba6# 1–0**

I've noticed that sometimes the side with the knight can be solid enough, but can run out of things to do, whereas the side with the bishop pair can keep making micro-improvements.





Here Black's fine outpost on d5 should enable him to keep out of trouble.

**25.Kf1 Nce7 26.g3 Nc6 27.a3 Nf6** Black should centralize and wait: 27...Kf8 28.Bd3 Ke8 29.Ke2 Nce7 would be rock-solid.

**28.Bd3 d5?!** Poor judgement. Later my opponent told me that he found it hard to formulate a plan.

28...Kf8 was still the right approach.

**29.Ke2 Ne4 30.Ke3 Nd6** Instead 30...Nxd2 31.Kxd2 would also leave Black with problems.

**31.Bc3 Kf8 32.g4 Bc8 33.Ne5!** Annoying to meet.

**33...Nxe5 34.dxe5 Nb5 35.Bd4 Ke8 36.a4 Nc7** In the case of 36...Nxd4 37.Kxd4 Kd7 38.Kc5 Kc7 39.g5 Bb7 40.a5 Bc8 41.b4 Bb7 42.b5 axb5 43.Bxb5 Black cannot save himself on both wings.

**37.Bb6 Kd7 38.Kd4 Na8 39.Kc5 Bb7 40.Ba5 g5 41.hxg5 g6 42.f4 d4 43.Kxd4 Bd5 44.Be4 Bxb3 45.Bxa8 Bxa4 46.Kc5 Bd1 47.Bc6+ Ke7 48.Kb6 1-0**

Zugzwang is a weapon that can be used even when the defending side seems to have his pieces on optimal squares.



**26...Rd4** Vachier-Lagrave happily steers the game towards a simplified pseudo-endgame where the bishop pair should offer him serious winning chances. He can then probe away on both wings, whereas his opponent is only able to wait and hope.

**27.Rxd4 Bxd4 28.Kf1 h5** Often the ideal pawn structure in the early phase of many an endgame.

**29.Bc4 Ke8 30.Nf4 Ke7 31.Ke2 Be8** Preparing the advance of his king, and also giving himself the option of a timely ...f6 followed by ...g5.

**32.f3 Be5 33.Ke3 a5 34.g4** Placing the pawns on light squares to avoid scrutiny from Black's dark-squared bishop.

**34...hxg4 35.fxg4 g5** The knight is pushed about, while at the same time MVL places his pawns on dark squares, away from the opposing bishop's grasp.

**36.Nd3 Bd6 37.Bd5 Bd7 38.Kf3 f6** Black has freed his forces from defensive tasks, and can now create further problems for his opponent.

**39.Nb2 a4 40.Nd3 a3** Getting closer to the promotion square!

**41.Nf2 Ba4 42.Ke2 Bb5+ 43.Kf3 Be5 44.Ne4 Ba4 45.Ke2 Bd7 46.Kf3** The white king is tied down, but how can Black profit from this fact?

**46...Bc8 47.Nc5 Bd4 48.Ne4 Bb6 49.Kg3 Ba5 50.Kf3 Bc7** White has so far angled to place his pieces on useful influential squares, but one of them must now move away.

**51.Bb3 Bb7 52.Ke3 Bb6+ 53.Kf3 Bd4 54.Bc4 Kf8!** An elegant switchback. The king heads for g6, thus preparing ...f5.

**55.Bb3 Kg7 56.Bc4 Kg6 57.Be6** After 57.Bb3 f5 58.gxf5+ Kxf5 59.g4+ Ke5 60.Bc2 Black has 60...Bd5 61.Bb1 Bb6, creating intolerable pressure.

**57...Bc6** Zugzwang! The bishop on e6 covers f5 as well as the a2–g8 diagonal, so really doesn't want to move, but what else?

**58.Bf5+ Kf7 59.Ke2 Bd5** The a2–pawn is clearly doomed.

**60.Kd3 Be5 61.Nc3 Bxc3** Time to simplify, but this does involve calculating quite deeply.

**62.Kxc3 Bxa2 63.Kb4 Bd5 64.Kxa3 Bxg2 65.Kb4 Bd5 66.Kc5 Be6 67.Kd4** If 67.Bxe6+ Kxe6 68.Kd4, simply 68...f5! 69.gxf5+ Kxf5 70.Ke3 Kg4 71.Kf2 Kh3 72.Kg1 Kg3 is a book win.

**67...Bxf5 68.gxf5 Kg7 69.Ke4 Kh6 0–1**

Did you note how Black took his time? Keeping the opponent quiet involved consolidating and reorganizing before being able to expand and activate. This process also goes on in the following segment.

White has an extra pawn as well as the bishop pair, but his structure is damaged. So, he first sets about getting his pieces harmonized before aiming to create any significant threats.

**Ivanchuk, V - Svidler, P**  
Moscow 2011



**45.Kg1 Nc2 46.Bd2 Bb6** Not 46...Bxg3, as after 47.Bxa5 Nxe3 48.Bb6 the passed a-pawn would offer a decisive plus.

**47.Kf2 d4** An active choice, but you might be wondering what would happen if Black just temporized?

In fact it seems that, once White's king enters the fray, he can even contemplate an opposite-bishop endgame: 47...Kg7 48.Ke2 Kf6 49.Kd3 Nb4+ 50.Bxb4! (always a key

moment) 50...axb4 51.e4! dxe4+ (or 51...d4 52.Kc4 Ke5 53.Kxb4 Kxe4 54.Be8 d3 55.Bxf7 d2 56.Bxg6+ Ke3 57.Bxh5+–) 52.Kxe4 g5 53.Kd5, with the intention of supporting the advance of the a-pawn.

**48.e4** More problematic would be 48.exd4 Nxd4 49.Be3 Bc5, as White's king would then be unable to cross to the queenside.

**48...d3+ 49.Kf1 Ne3+ 50.Ke1!** Freeing the king is more important than an inconsequential pawn.

This time, following 50.Bxe3? Bxe3 51.Bxd3 Bd2 the opposite-bishop endgame would be drawish, as White has no passed pawns in prospect.

**50...Nxb2+ 51.Kd1 h4 52.gxh4 Nxh4 53.b4!** Ivanchuk's play has been leading up to this point. He creates a passed pawn that, as it's so well supported by his bishops, will be tough to stop.

**53...axb4 54.Bxb4 Nf3 55.a5 Bd4 56.Be7** The d-pawn isn't going anywhere, whereas White's bishop heads for the b6–square to gain control of the a7–g1 diagonal.

**56...f5** Or, if 56...f6 57.Bd8 Kf7 58.Bb6 Ke6 59.Bxd4 Nxd4 then 60.Be8!, when 60...g5? allows 61.a6 etc.

**57.exf5 gxf5 58.Bd8 Kf7 59.Bb6 Ke6 60.Bxd4 Nxd4 61.Bxd3** The widely-spaced passed pawns overload the defences, for example 61.Bxd3 Nc6 62.a6 Kf6 63.Kd2 Kg5 64.Ke3 Na7 65.Bf1 f4+ 66.Ke4 Nc6 67.Bb5 Na7 68.Bd7+–. **1–0**

Being a pawn up or down is not always as important as other factors.

**Botvinnik, M - Bronstein, D**  
WCM Moscow 1951



Bronstein decides to grab a pawn, but giving up the bishop is a risky ploy.

**35...Bxc1** Solid is the more circumspect 35...Kf7.

**36.Kxc1 Nxb3+ 37.Kc2 Na5 38.Kc3 Kf7 39.e4** Black's 2 to 1 queenside majority is unusable, whereas White is pressing in the part of the board where the knights are noticeably absent.

**39...f5** A better chance would have been 39...Nc6 40.exd5 exd5 41.h4 Ke6 42.Bd3 Ne7.

**40.gxf5 gxf5 41.Bd3 Kg6 42.Bd6** Strongest is 42.Bb1! Nc6 43.exd5 exd5 44.Ba2, when the d5-pawn wouldn't be easy to defend.

**42...Nc6 43.Bb1 Kf6 44.Bg3 fxe4 45.fxe4 h6 45...Ne7!?** was a better choice.

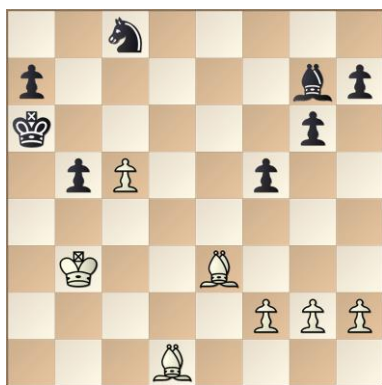
**46.Bf4 h5 47.exd5 exd5 48.h4 Nab8 49.Bg5+ Kf7 50.Bf5 Na7 51.Bf4 Nbc6 52.Bd3 Nc8** Now 52...Ne7! was essential.

**53.Be2 Kg6 54.Bd3+ Kf6 55.Be2 Kg6 56.Bf3 N6e7 57.Bg5 1-0**

This game brings home the fact that having an extra pawn, but facing the bishop pair, is not necessarily advantageous.

Here's another example of this theme.

**Alekhine, A - Buerger, V**  
London 1932



Black has a material advantage and no obvious problems, and yet the bishop pair enables White to keep the balance. In fact, the position is more difficult to handle for Black(!), who went on to lose.

**47...Kb7** The engine suggests 47...Ne7 48.Bf3 f4 49.Bxf4 Bd4, seeking activity.

**48.Bf3+ Kc7 49.Kb4 a6 50.Ka5 Be5 51.Kxa6 b4 51...Bxh2** doesn't look good following 52.g3.

**52.Bd1 Ne7 53.Bb3 Kc6 54.Ba4+ Kc7 55.Bb3 Kc6 56.f4 Bc3 57.Ba4+ Kc7 58.Kb5 Nd5 59.Bc1 Nf6 60.Bb3 Ne4 61.Bg8 Nf6 62.Be6 Ne4** Instead 62...Bd4! is apparently correct.

**63.Be3 h6 64.h3 Nf6 65.c6 Ne8 66.Bc5 Bd2 67.g3 Be1 68.Bf7 b3 69.Bxb3 Bxg3 70.Bb6+** There is a pretty win here: 70.Bf7 Kd8 71.Bxe8 Kxe8 72.Kb6 Bxf4 73.Kb7! g5 74.Ba7!, and then Bb8 will lead to White promoting first.

**70...Kd6 71.Bc5+ Kc7 72.Be3 g5 73.Bb6+ Kd6 74.Bc5+ Kc7 75.Bf7 Kd8 76.Bf8 gxf4 77.Bh5 f3** Better is 77...Nc7+.

**78.Bxf3 Bf4 79.Kb6 Bc7+ 80.Kc5 Bf4 81.Bh5 Nc7 82.Bf7 h5 83.Kb6 h4 84.Kb7 Nb5 85.Kb6 Nc7 86.Bc5 Ne8** Here 86...Kc8 resists much better.

**87.Bxe8 Kxe8 88.Bf2** Again 88.Kb7 is winning.

**88...Kf7 89.c7 Bxc7+ 90.Kxc7 Ke6 91.Bxh4 1-0**

The slightest weakness can become a problem if the defender doesn't look in all directions at once!

**Botvinnik, M - Eliskases, E**  
Leipzig Olympiad 1960



In this case, Black was particularly concerned about sorting out his queenside, but the problems ultimately arose on the other wing. Remember, bishops can readily switch flanks.

**39...Kd7 40.Rd3 Kc7** An alternative plan 40...Bc3 41.a3 Bb2 42.Bd1 Rb8 followed by ...Nb6 looks reasonable.

**41.Rd1 Kb7 42.Rc1 Rxc1 43.Bxc1 Nb6** The f7-pawn becomes the most significant problem, hence the improvement 43...Kc7!, heading back.

**44.Kd3 Nc8 45.Bd1! Ne7 46.Ke4** Once Black drops his f-pawn his position inevitably goes downhill.

**46...Bc3 47.a3 Nc8 48.Bh5 Nb6 49.Bxf7 a5 50.bxa5 Nc4 51.Bg6 Bd2 52.Bxd2 Nxd2+ 53.Kd3 Nc4 54.Bxh7 Ka6**



55.Bg6 Kxa5 56.h4 Ka4 57.Be8 Ne5+ 58.Ke4 Kxa3 59.Bxb5 Kb4 60.Be8 Kc5 61.h5 Ng4 62.Kf4 Nh6 63.g4 Kxd5 64.g5 fxg5+ 65.Kxg5 1-0

The final example shows the World Champion being able to break down a stubborn defence due to a king invasion, despite his opponent's fine-looking knight.

**Averbakh, Y - Botvinnik, M**

Moscow 1955



Black's king becomes very active, as there is no impediment to his penetrating on the central dark squares.

36...Ke6 37.Nf4+ Kf6 38.Kf1 g5 39.hxg5+ hxg5 40.Nd5+ Ke5 41.a4 Kd4 42.Be2 With his opponent being obliged to stay passive, Botvinnik manoeuvres around the knight before preparing a breakthrough.

42...Bc8 43.Kg2 Bd7 44.Kf1 Be8 45.Kg1 Bf7 46.Kg2 a5 47.Kf1 Once everything is in place, Black reveals his trump card...

47...f4! 48.gxf4 gxf4 49.Nxf4 No better is 49.Ke1 f3 50.Bd1 Kd3, and with White struggling to find a convenient move it becomes evident that the powerful king will invade anyway, via either c2 or c3.

49...Kc3 50.Bd1 Kd2 51.Bg4 Kc2 The white queenside can no longer be held together.

52.Be6 Or 52.f3 exf3 53.Bxf3 Kxb3 54.Bc6 Bxc4+ 55.Ke1 Kb4 56.Bd7 Bb3 etc.

52...Bxe6! 53.Nxe6 Be7 54.Nd4+ Kc3 55.Nf5 Bf8 56.Ng3 Kxb3 57.Ke2 Kxa4 The a-pawn can't be stopped.

58.Nxe4 Kb3 59.Kd3 a4 60.Nd2+ Kb2 61.c5 b5 62.c6 Bd6 63.Ne4 Bb8 64.Nc3 a3 65.f4 Bxf4 0-1

As an aide-memoire, here are some guidelines that might help the *stronger* side:

1. Don't rush exchanges, as there may be a better time later;
2. Don't rush pawn advances; ensure that there is adequate support first;
3. Keep improving your pieces and be patient before committing yourself;
4. Zugzwang will appear if the opponent is restricted.

Here are some further suggestions that might help the *weaker* side:

1. Find roles for all your pieces;
2. Decide early on whether your defensive plan will involve setting up a barricade, or instead revolve around seeking some counter-activity;
3. Just temporizing might be good enough if the opponent doesn't have a way through, but be aware of the possibility of Zugzwang;
4. Be careful about creating weaknesses in your own camp, so each pawn move needs to be thought through.

To finish off, here are a couple of exercises:

#### Exercise 1



How to continue with White?

## Exercise 2



How should White proceed after

a) 33...Kf7(?), or b) 33...Ke5(?).

### Exercise 1 solution

**Flear, G – Stankovic, S**

Pierrevert 2003



Simplification is simplest!

**40.Bxe6! fxe6 41.Bd4 Bd6**

Or 41...Bxd4 42.Kxd4 Kf7 43.Ke5 Ke7 44.f5 exf5 45.exf5 Kf7 46.Kd6+—

**42.f5 exf5 43.exf5 Bc7 44.Ke4 1–0**

The white king decisively invades.

### Exercise 2 solution

**Flear, G - Geenen, M**

Ostend 1987



a) 33...Kf7 34.Ba5 Bd6 35.Bxc7 Bxc7 36.Bxa6 Be5+ 37.Kc2 b4 38.Bxc4+, and White has won two pawns and would have excellent winning chances (he has two healthy majorities).

b) The game continued...

**33...Ke5 34.f4+ Ke4 35.Bb7+! Kxe3 36.Bxe7** White has won a piece and after...

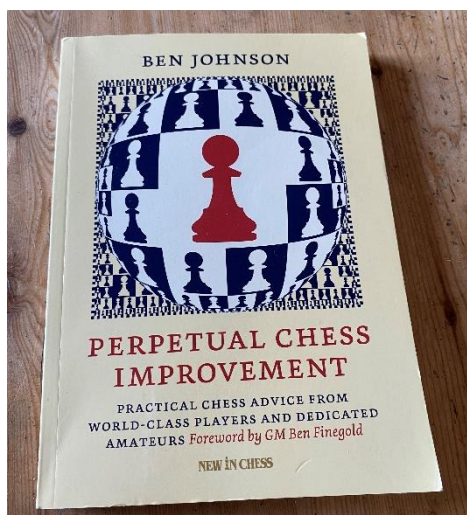
**36...Kxf4? 37.Bd6+ ... even a second one! 1–0**

## Books of the Month by Ben Graff



**The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof... in association with Forward Chess Perpetual Chess Improvement, Ben Johnson (New In Chess)**

*'When it comes to chess improvement, there is no such thing as a lone wolf.'*



Many of us are doubtless avid listeners to Ben Johnson's Perpetual Chess podcast, and I would encourage those who are not to immediately download it. Over the years Johnson has spoken with lots of people in the chess world, from the strongest of GMs through to new and improving amateurs. Johnson and his guests have a real knack for sharing empathetic insights in a way that enables players at all levels to both learn and to laugh. Inevitably the subject of chess improvement has been a major theme. As Johnson puts it, 'Chess can be a lonely pursuit at times, and listeners loved to hear the stories of their kindred spirits with helpful advice to share.'

*Perpetual Chess Improvement* seeks to bring the power of this wonderful podcast to the written page. Drawing on various of the interviews and a host of other excellent sources and personal reflections, Johnson looks anew at the subject of chess improvement, starting with a revelation that is not made often enough, namely 'I have observed that there is very little chess improvement advice on which nearly everyone agrees.'

We've all been there. Should we work on our openings? Endings? Tactics? Is the secret doing a hundred puzzles a day, or (as Johnson quotes) did Pillsbury have it right when he said, 'Before entering a tournament, I make it a point to take a good, long sleep, but that is my only form of preparation.' The great strength of this book is its ability to share a range of perspectives such that the reader can get a better feel as to what might be the best way forward for them.

Johnson identifies playing in tournaments, analysis, tactics, and being part of a chess community as four key foundational pillars. As he freely acknowledges, 'Hard work does not guarantee ratings gains in today's competitive chess climate.' As Johnson further puts it, 'The harsh truth is that for working adults who have been playing chess for years, improving your chess, or at least

significantly raising your rating, can be excruciatingly difficult.'

Yet for those of us who want to get better (which I am assuming is all of us) there is much comfort to take from these words. Recognising that the goal of chess improvement is not an easy one feels like an important first step, both toward hopefully making progress and more importantly fully enjoying our learning journey. If the words of Anand are anything to go by, we can also take solace from the fact that we are not alone in finding chess scary on occasion: 'And then you sit at the board, and you're in a state of... the word panic seems too weak, I would say more you are in a state of terror. Because almost every move scares the hell out of you, and you can't understand how it seemed so lifeless back home.'

There is a real sense from this book that chess is a practical game which it isn't sufficient merely to study. As Ben Johnson puts it, 'There is something ineffable about the effect that tournament chess has on one's brain.' Ultimately, Johnson notes that the 'level of seriousness [is] difficult to mimic at home' and 'hard lessons are rarely forgotten.' Keith Arkell provides the best example of this in relation to his endgame play, telling Johnson that his approach is not so much based on detailed study as it is on 'practical play, tried and true.' Similarly, GM Noel Studer is quoted as saying that he had only ever read one endgame book, and he did not finish it. That said, we must also acknowledge the elephant in the room, in that talent also plays a part here.

The section on endings also highlights the importance of finding the right tools for your circumstances. Silman and Dvoretsky's respective seminal endgame books are both discussed. As Johnson notes, often as a 'reflex' action stronger players will recommend Dvoretsky, but it's far from an easy read. I could not help but laugh at FM Peter Giannoto's observation that 'I only actually have Dvoretsky's *Endgame Manual* on my shelf to look cool when my friends come over. I've never actually read any of it.'

There are interesting passages on how to get the most from online chess, particularly for those who find getting to tournaments harder, and perceptive suggestions on managing the addiction to online blitz that most of us have to a greater or lesser degree. Ultimately 'Speed chess is a bit like weightlifting. It is good for you if done properly, but if done improperly, you might just injure yourself.' Greg Shahade suggests that for every blitz game we play, we should try and learn one additional move in the opening variation. There must be a lot in the observation that blitz games 'will often serve as microcosms for your overall games.' The retelling of the



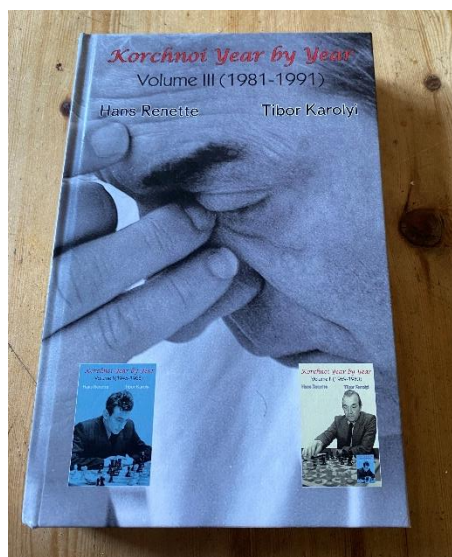
story of contender Alireza Firouzja playing an all-night blitz session in the middle of the 2022 Candidates' tournament, which was 'roundly criticised,' is nicely done. However, while we might question Firouzja's professionalism, I for one would certainly salute his love of the game!

In truth this is a book too rich in ideas for me to do much more than highlight a few elements of the narrative, and to encourage readers to get a copy. I can't resist sharing one more story though, namely Ben Finegold explaining to Johnson how he came to have the prime seat next to Kasparov and Karpov when they were analysing after playing at Tilburg in 1991. Seeing that there were two analysis rooms which the two Ks might go to, Finegold trashed the first: 'I threw all the pieces on the ground, and I closed the door.' Then he went to the second, where there were only two chess sets. He hid one and sat next to the other. 'Five minutes later Kasparov and Karpov walked in. They looked around, sat next to me to analyse, and about eight people followed them in.' Truly, a grandmaster's determination and ability to execute a plan ruthlessly is something that appears to extend well beyond the chess board!

As Johnson said, when it comes to chess improvement there is no such thing as a lone wolf. This book is the perfect companion for players on their journey to chess improvement.

### **Korchnoi Year by Year – Volume III (1981 – 1991) Hans Renette, Tibor Karolyi (Elk and Ruby)**

*'It turned out that there was just one passion, chess...'*



Readers may recall that we reviewed the first volume of this excellent series on Korchnoi in a previous column. Volume III is every bit as good as the two that precede it,

and does a brilliant job of bringing to life one of the greatest and most complicated players the game has ever seen - a man who is destined to be remembered as an enigma, both at and away from the chess board.

1981 was the year of Korchnoi's final title match against Karpov, but sadly, unlike the previous two encounters, this would turn out to be very one-sided affair. A despairing Michael Stean is quoted thus on Korchnoi's reversal in game 4: 'For the first time since I've been Viktor's second... I wanted to stand up and say, "Stop! Let me play the rest of the game!" I felt everything was going wrong... A series of mistakes, and I felt so totally helpless. It is so sad, so baffling, so depressing. It's as if someone had put something in his coffee. If Victor were a horse, he'd be dope-tested.'

Yet while for many great champions their final world championship defeat marks the beginning of a glide toward retirement, Korchnoi still had years of top-level chess ahead of him. Packed with 140 well-annotated games, lovely photographs and fascinating stories, Renette and Karolyi vividly tell the story of this intriguing decade in Korchnoi's life.

Korchnoi's desire to win remained undimmed. The authors highlight that when losing against Gerard Welling in 1982, Korchnoi's offer of a draw was turned down 'in a friendly tone... As a result, he was treated with a typical Korchnoi tirade, the grandmaster fulminating that Welling didn't understand anything about the game... and who did he think he was to refuse Korchnoi's offer.' The game concluded with Korchnoi 'chucking his pieces off the board' and stealing Welling's scoresheet. This did recall a memory I had of playing Korchnoi in a simul at the London Chess Classic (many years later), where the organisers told us before play started that were we by chance to win, on no account should we ask Korchnoi to sign anything!

None of this is ideal behaviour, and it would be foolish to pretend that Korchnoi was always an easy, or even a likeable person. Yet his sheer competitiveness, wherever the game, whatever the occasion, showed how much chess always mattered to him. We are far better off trying to understand the real Korchnoi, warts and all, as the authors undoubtedly do, rather than some sort of sanitised caricature of him.

Korchnoi's great nemesis Karpov stalks the pages of this book like a ghost. In early 1986 'they could still be seen ignoring each other in Vienna.' Yet at the Interpolis tournament later that year Karpov, Korchnoi, Ljubo and Miles played a quiet game of bridge together, where the foes conversed in English (but only on the game.) The

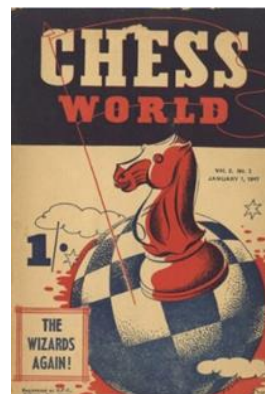
authors highlight a reporter announcing the fact in ‘hushed tones’ in the tournament bar. ‘Even Frans Peelan, who in a decade as a bartender has seen and heard it all, raised his eyebrows.’ Joint analysis sessions followed between the pair. Yet ultimately a further mellowing took time, and Korchnoi celebrated when Kasparov retained the World Championship title against Karpov in 1986, observing of his foe that Karpov was ‘a notorious thief, an absolute nothing as a chess player and a human being.’ So, it is fair to say that a degree of bitterness still lingered.

I saw intriguing parallels between Karpov and Korchnoi playing bridge and Kasparov recounting in *Child of Change* how he had also played cards against Karpov at the height of Kasparov’s and Karpov’s own struggles for chess supremacy. Perhaps if a particular human being is the one person who stands between you and achieving your life goals, true friendship is unlikely. Yet I would like to think that Korchnoi ultimately recognised the key part that he and Karpov played in each other’s life stories - just as ultimately Kasparov and Karpov also did, even if it appears that their rapprochement went further still than that between Korchnoi and Karpov. I have no doubt that Renette and Karolyi’s work will come to be seen as the definitive word on perhaps the greatest player to never become World Champion. Frankly, the only reason why you might not want to read this book right now is if you are yet to read volumes I and II and want to enjoy the full experience in chronological order. I very much hope that there will be a volume IV.

## From the Archives

‘When [Chess] Worlds Collide’: #ChessTuesday meets *Chess Moves*

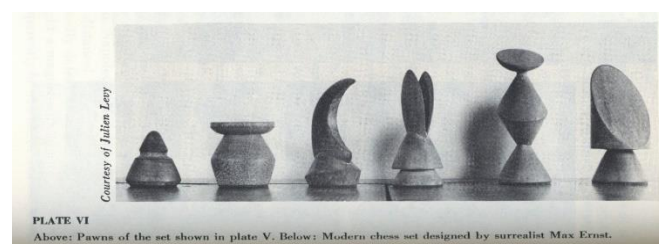
Each week Special Collections contributes to the social media hashtag #ChessTuesday, a day dedicated to sharing all chess-related things with those who avidly follow chess, or those just scrolling by. Eager to share the English Chess Federation’s archival collection and library as widely as possible, we aim to select items that are visually interesting and from all periods of chess history. For those who may not be familiar with the hashtag, or indeed signed up to social media platforms, here we share some previous posts so no one need miss out!



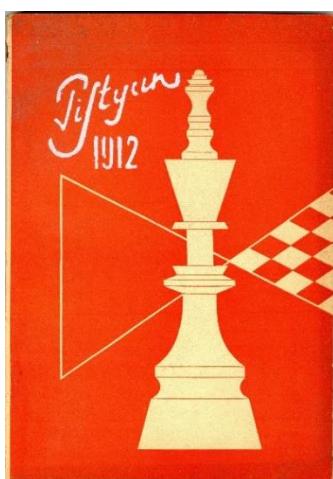
1. Cover of *Chess World* Magazine, 1947. The English Chess Federation Library includes a substantial run of this magazine ranging from 1946 to 1972. This cover was a hit with our #ChessTuesday followers as well as staff in the archive. The feel of the pulped paper with the striking design is reminiscent of 1940s sci-fi pulp fiction. Rather than Lovecraft’s *The Call of Cthulhu*, though, we have *Invasion of the Red Knight*. But I’m sure the content is very ‘slick’.



2. From one knight watch to another, we have the programme cover for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Chess Olympiad held in Buenos Aires in, 1978. As Olympics fever captured the world over the summer we shared some of the beautifully illustrated covers of the Chess Olympiad tournaments held over the years. With Hungary taking the title in 1978, the fact that this is one of our favourites has nothing at all to do with the fact that our manager has Hungarian heritage! But we do love how the Argentinian flag is incorporated into the design of the knight.



3. The English Chess Federation Library includes many wonderful glossy publications featuring images of unique chess sets, and the one above appears to be very interesting and tactile. Designed by surrealist Max Ernst (1891-1976), it garnered mixed responses from followers: it seems you either love or loathe it. Not being able to resist a philosophical question, one follower pondered, 'If they don't look like chess pieces are they just decorative pieces of wood?' I replied that 'if players agree on set pieces to satisfy a desperate urge to play chess, then they could be made from and look like anything. Saussure's arbitrariness of signifiers, maybe...?' What do you think?



4. And for our final #ChessTuesday highlight we have this striking programme cover for a chess tournament held in Piešťany, Slovakia, in 1912. With such a vibrant colour it practically jumped off the shelves and appealed to our audience. Akiba Rubinstein took the title while Rudolf Spielmann came a very close second.

While always trying to share knowledge as well as visually interesting pieces, we hope you have enjoyed these social media highlights taking in some of the range of materials held in the collection. For those intrigued, you can find our social media handles in the Special Collections blurb above. For those with no intention of even having a peep, we will share another social media spotlight soon.

## It's a Puzzlement!

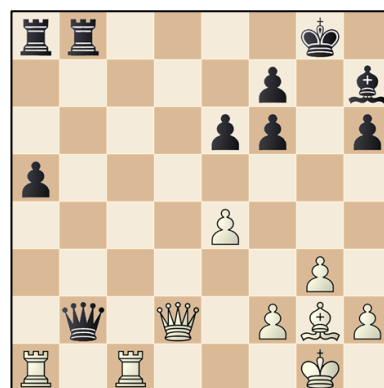


Welcome to our puzzles section! Here are this month's puzzles - all hand-picked by [ChessPuzzle.net](https://chesspuzzle.net)

We provide a link to the relevant ChessPuzzle.net page and a QR code, so you can try the puzzles interactively and get hints if needed - or even the solutions!

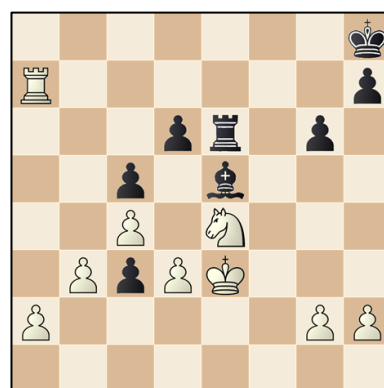
*When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.*

**Puzzle 1 - Taylor, Adam - Salmons, Calum**  
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



**White to win - [Puzzle One](#)**

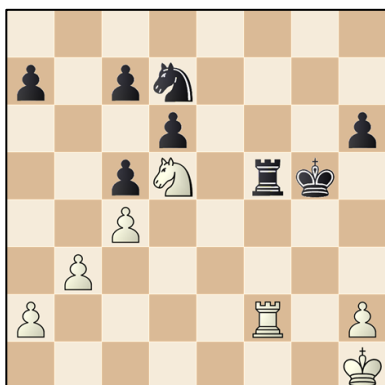
**Puzzle 2 - Wilks, Simon – WFM Karas, Eugenia**  
IV Mindsports Int Open, London ENG



**Black to win - [Puzzle Two](#)**

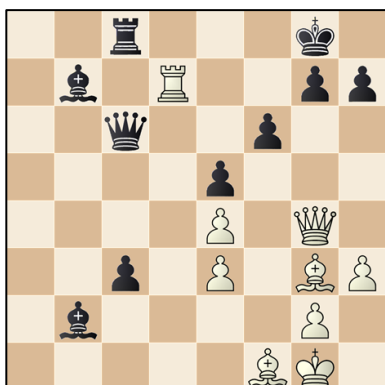


**Puzzle 3 - IM Harvey, Marcus R – WFM Bashylina, Luisa**  
 Titled Tue 23rd Jul Late, chess.com INT



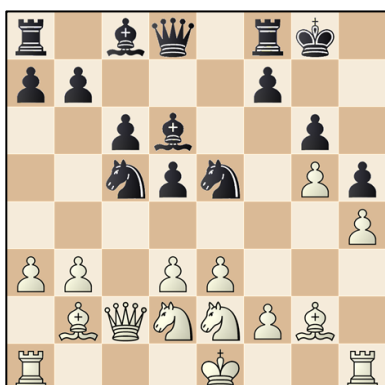
White to win - [Puzzle Three](#)

**Puzzle 4 - CM Hobson, Kenneth – FM Browning, Alex**  
 III Kingston Inv 2024, Kingston Upon Thames ENG



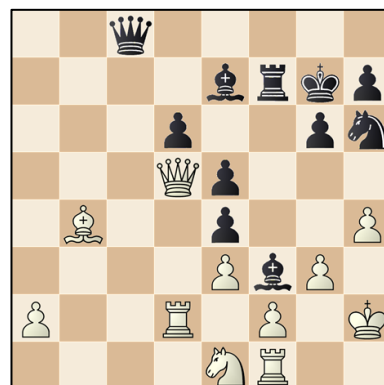
Black to win - [Puzzle Four](#)

**Puzzle 5 - IM Ghasi, A – FM Toktomushev, Teimur**  
 Titled Tue 23rd Jul Late, chess.com INT



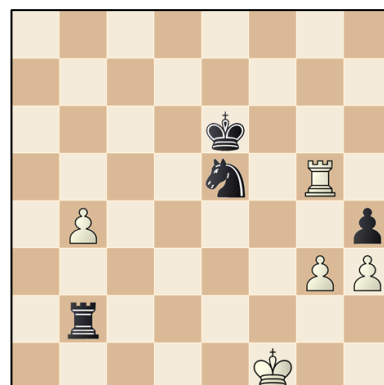
White to win - [Puzzle Five](#)

**Puzzle 6 - FM Kalaiyalahan, A – FM Kalavannan, K**  
 110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



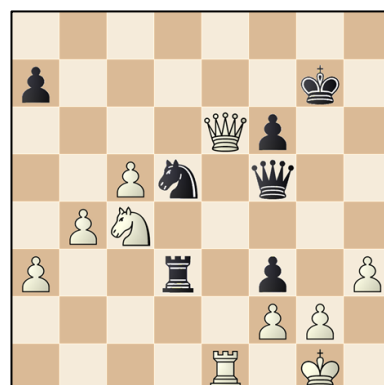
Black to win - [Puzzle Six](#)

**Puzzle 7 - GM Niemann, Hans – GM Vitiugov, Nikita**  
 Niemann Vitiugov Blitz, London ENG



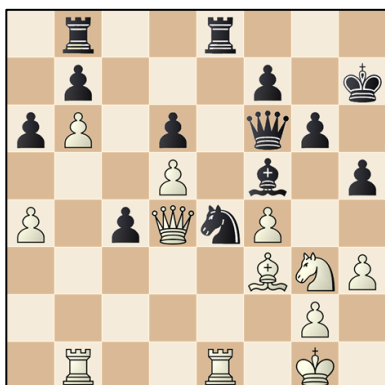
Black to win - [Puzzle Seven](#)

**Puzzle 8 - Wilson, Ewan – CM Hobson, Kenneth**  
 III Kingston Inv 2024, Kingston Upon Thames ENG



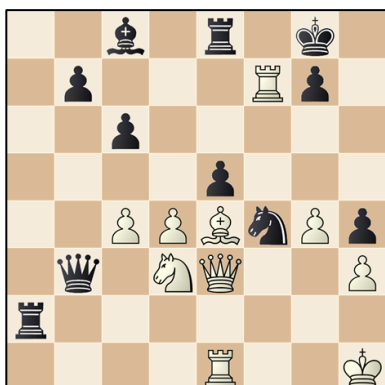
Black to win - [Puzzle Eight](#)

**Puzzle 9 - Merriman, James – IM Beaumont, Chris R**  
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



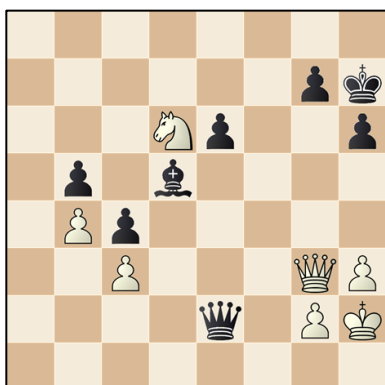
White to win - [Puzzle Nine](#)

**Puzzle 10 - IM Merry, Alan B - IM Ledger, Andrew J**  
110th ch-GBR 2024, Hull ENG



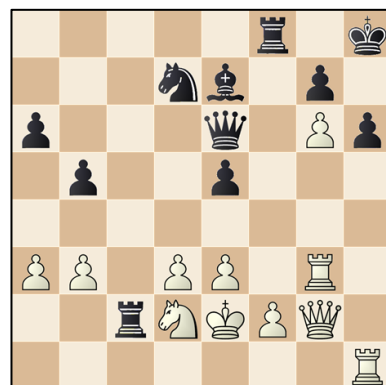
White to win - [Puzzle Ten](#)

**Puzzle 11**  
**WFM Sivanandan, Bodhana – WIM Pogorelskikh, Sofia**  
WSSC Speed Play-In 1 2024, chess.com INT



White to win - [Puzzle Eleven](#)

**Puzzle 12 - GM Vitiugov, Nikita – FM Hajiye, K**  
Titled Tue 23rd Jul Early, chess.com INT



White to win - [Puzzle Twelve](#)

## All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit  
[https://chesspuzzle.net/List/10339?utm\\_source=ecf&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=septembernews](https://chesspuzzle.net/List/10339?utm_source=ecf&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=septembernews)  
by clicking the link or via the QR code below.



## NEWS and VIEWS

### British Rapidplay Championship 2025 Announced



The British Rapidplay Championship 2025 is endorsed by the British Isles Coordinating Committee with support from the English Chess Federation and the Chess Trust. It will be held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025 at Holiday Inn Peterborough - West. More details can be found here:

<https://www.4ncl.co.uk/rp/2025/information.htm>

### Join the Action! Play in Online Chess Tournaments with the English Chess Federation

Are you an English junior who loves chess?

Take your skills to the next level by joining our online tournaments - challenge top players, sharpen your tactics, and experience the thrill of competitive chess - all from the comfort of your home.

Whether you're a rising star or just starting out, this is your chance to shine.

Don't miss out—join today and become part of the future of English chess!

**Register now for our Lichess England Juniors team and let the games begin!**

<https://lichess.org/team/england-juniors>

*Keith Gregory - ECF Junior Admin - KeithDFG on Lichess*

## New Clubs Round-Up

Having reached out to the newly registered chess clubs for this year, this is what some of them have to say about their club's experience, tips and tricks, what works and what doesn't, their learning points and successes they wish to share.

### Colchester Chess Club

We have gone from an attendance of around 5 or 6 people at the beginning of the year in smaller premises now to 25-30 people each Tuesday night with just over 80 people as members (including 11 different nationalities) in larger premises in Colchester. This growth has been driven by the hard work and vision of our founder and Chairman, Jay Rusecki, who was a good young player in Lithuania.

We have been able to only charge, currently, £1 per session, and we particularly welcome people with disabilities of any kind: we have seen a few young people with autism improve socially since attending and our Treasurer, Martin, is severely physically disabled, but is a fanatic over the board!

We have an active Facebook page as well as a quality website (developed at no cost by the parent of one of our juniors) and the Facebook page has been an important recruiter. Key to rapid growth was a collaboration with town Centre art gallery, the Eyesaw Gallery, where over two weekends we had 150 people come in to play or to see what we're all about, hugely ahead of our expectations. Ipswich Chess Club very kindly indulged us recently, bringing 9 of their top players to us for a friendly match and they duly took back 8.5 points out of nine. We returned the favour, managing to take 19 players to Ipswich with a marginally better result.

The atmosphere on a Tuesday night (open 4.30-9pm) is friendly, teas/coffees and cold drinks and biscuits are available, but some seriously competitive matches are combined with some analysis, some coaching for beginners and learners, puzzles and occasional videos. We have children playing from a (very good!) six-year-old, but we do ask parents to be present. We plan to join the local league next year and new players arrive every Tuesday. We can accommodate 24 players currently at any one time, but we must be thinking what to do if numbers keep increasing. We are very grateful to generous benefactor, David York, who has donated many excellent weighted sets and chess clocks, so we have standard equipment available. Perhaps the learning and development side is something we should develop more, but it's a tricky balance as people of course want to play.



Chris Lane (secretary, E2-E4 Colchester Chess Club)

### **MK Bishops Chess Club, Milton Keynes**

Tofan had been looking for a chess club for the past three years in Milton Keynes for his twelve year old son. Because of the struggle he'd faced to try and find a chess club in Milton Keynes he decided to open a club on his own, not only to help other parents/players, but also to help his son with some face-to-face games.

Initially the hurdle was to find a place where players could meet every week. Once a place was confirmed, he then worked on the funding part to run the club. To encourage more parents and players to the club he decided to provide most of the funding himself towards the running of the club.

It was easy to follow the registration instructions on the ECF website. Then Tofan could create a website, flyer and Facebook page to spread the word about the new chess club. As of now they have nine regular players, including three adults.

Tofan has also arranged a FIDE-rated rapidplay tournament in Milton Keynes which has helped more people become aware of their chess club. He is hoping more players will join the club and contribute to the running of day-to-day activities and finances to make the club viable in the longer run.

### **Cheshire Junior Knights: A New Junior Chess Club in Cheadle, Stockport**

How to join and more information can be found here:  
<https://form.jotform.com/232062092808352>



The club was set up in September 2023, runs every Monday afternoon from 5.30 pm to 7.00 pm, and is held at Cheadle Village Hall, a nice, spacious venue with kitchen facilities. Typical ages are 7-14. Students pay a monthly membership fee and receive coaching, chess

activities and rated tournament games. Our sessions are led by a head coach (WFM Sarah Longson), with an assistant managing practical tasks and ensuring everything runs smoothly (hopefully)!

#### **What works?**

- We've found it invaluable to involve parents where possible—whether it's helping with setting up, packing away, or even assisting with organizing the children.
- The venue's large screen and Wi-Fi access have enabled us to incorporate platforms like Lichess and ChessKid for interactive lessons. While screen work is great for teaching concepts, especially for older kids, we balance it with hands-on playing and puzzles to keep younger members engaged.
- We submit tournament games to be ECF-rated, which acts as a good motivator as students are excited to work towards achieving their own rating.
- Offering some online content is also useful and seen as extra value by parents. Examples include short video tips/lessons and club tournaments that can be hosted on, for example, Lichess.
- Printouts of chess puzzles have proven to be a great tool for reinforcing learning between games.

#### **Learning points:**

Our club primarily welcomes players who already know the rules, but we occasionally have beginners join too. We've learned that it's important to group them separately, as they require more attention than experienced players. Having smaller groups ensures that they get the help they need without slowing the pace for others.

## **Seniors' Events and Dates for 2024**



Details of what events will be taking place can be found here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Seniors/seniors-events-and-dates-for-2024/>

Please note that the qualification criterion for most seniors' events is that you must reach the age requirement within the calendar year of the event. For example, to play in a 50+ event you must be aged 50 by the end of that calendar year, and likewise for 65+ events.

## English Women's Online Blitz Championships 2024

The English Women's Online Blitz Championships 2024 were held on Chess.com and featured a thrilling group stage on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August, followed by the final on 31<sup>st</sup> August. After a series of competitive matches, **Elis Denele Dicen** emerged as the English Online Blitz Champion for 2024.

### Overview

The Championships consisted of a qualifying stage made up of two Swiss tournaments, leading to a knockout final a week later for the top eight players from each group stage event.

### Group Stage

The group stage of the English Women's Blitz Championships featured two Swiss-style tournaments on Chess.com with a 3|2 time control format. The games began at 3:00 pm and 11:00 am respectively. Participants had the flexibility to compete in one or both tournaments. A total of 33 players competed in the first qualifier, while 28 players entered the second.

### Qualifier A:

Winners



### Qualifier B:

Winners



The top eight players from each qualifier advanced to the knockout final. Below is the list of players who qualified:

1. Eugenia Karas
2. Srimathi Raajesh
3. Elis Denele Dicen
4. Madara Orlovska
5. Alexandra Hardwick
6. Gesneria Cepoi
7. Swati Singha
8. Agnieszka Milewska
9. Nina Pert
10. Florence Spirling
11. Alice Harmer
12. Diah Patel
13. Dinuli Rajaguru
14. Vash Ravi
15. Anastasiia Shukhman
16. Yvon Van Neerven

You can find the detailed results of each qualifier here:

<https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/english-womens-online-blitz-championship-2024--qualifier-a-5018903>

<https://www.chess.com/tournament/live/english-womens-online-blitz-championship-2024--qualifier-b-5018907>

### Finals

On 31<sup>st</sup> of August, the knockout finals with 16 players started. Each round consisted of two blitz games, with winners advancing to the next round (see the diagram further down the page). The final match was a best-of-four game series. If a match ended in a tie after two games (or four games in the final), a blitz tie-break game was played. If that game also ended in a draw, another tie-break game was played to determine the winner.

The final match between Elis Dicen and Eugenia Karas resulted in a draw of 2-2 after the four games. It was so intense that the first tie-break game also went into a draw, but Elis took the championship with winning the sixth game and thus clinched the title.

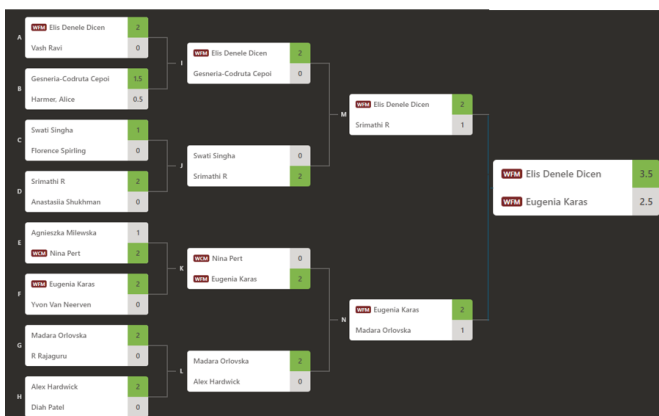
		1	2	3	4	5	6	Pts.
	WFM Elis Denele Dicen (2331)	½	½	0	1	½	1	3.5
	WFM Eugenia Karas (2098)	½	½	1	0	½	0	2.5



**Champion:** Elis Denele Dican (above, picture by Dennis Dican)

**Runner-Up:** Eugenia Karas

**Third Place (shared):** Srimathi Raajesh and Madara Orlovskaya



Here are some interesting moments from the games.



Black to play

Answer: 26...Qxb2!! (if 27.Qxb2?? Rd1+ 28.Re1 Rxe1#)



Black to play

Answer: 21...Rxe4!! 22. Qxe4 Nf2!+ 23.Rxf2 Qxe4



## ChessFest 24 Oop North by Mick Riding



On 31<sup>st</sup> August Gosforth Chess Club completed our summer outdoor programme with a trip to the third 'Bringing North Tyneside Together' event – by kind invitation of the local council. Music, stalls, free rides/entertainment for children and massively

multi-cultural - an honour to be asked and we'll do it again next year, providing they want us!



Prior to that we had run our own modest events at Exhibition Park (June), Gosforth Park (July) and Jesmond Dene (August). All park events were supported by club members, especially juniors and parents. The parks boasted cafes close

by, plenty to see and enjoy, and mercifully (for parents) a local ice cream van and open space for football to keep the kids happy.



A feature of our events this year has been our club gazebo, funded by our club, individual support, and the English Chess Federation's grassroots chess project. If your club does regular outdoor events, I would get one if I were you. It's

a great focal point, makes a statement, and brings people in. As a result, we've been invited to a couple more (school and local) events already next year.

Of our four events, two were blessed with rain. We were fortunate that a kind parent brought their own gazebo, so plenty of chess was played under additional cover. And for most of us rain didn't detract - after all, we are in England. Even better, after packing away in constant drizzle and knowing tomorrow means unpacking and airing, getting to your local for a beer, football and gossip is so much nicer, isn't it?

Next year we plan to replace borrowed tables from a local school and hand-me-down chairs with our own foldables.



White had a winning position but played 43. Be4??. Can you find out how Black can win the game?

43....c5! 44. Kg5 Nxh5!! 44. Kxh5 c4



Can you find out which move Nina Pert (playing White) made in this position?

Answer: 25.Rxg6+!! Kxg6 26.e5+! Qf5 27.e6!

We have purchased a storage unit which our host club, Gosforth Empire, has afforded us space for. Perhaps also a flagpole, and OK, it's not ChessFest, but remember, 'great oaks etc'.

Summing up – if you can, do this. It's fun.

Until next year then!

## ECF Grassroots Fund

The ECF grassroots initiative was launched on 16<sup>th</sup> July this year (on the ECF website and in the July edition of *ChessMoves*). The fund is intended to be a multi-year initiative to help promote and develop chess across England. Requests for funding are assessed against a prospectus, which also includes details of how to apply. Most of the funds (£90,000) have been split across ten English regions, with a regional coordinator appointed in each region to make recommendations. A smaller sum has been retained centrally to cover any schemes which are cross-regional.

The regions, and the regional coordinators, are:

- North West (Richard Walsh);
- North East (Mick Riding);
- Yorkshire and Humberside (Andrew Wainwright);
- West Midlands (Tim Lane);
- East Midlands (Paul Mottram);
- East of England (John Wickham);
- South East (Jo Wildman);
- Greater London (Chris Skulte);
- South West (Nikki Forster).

At the ECF the central team assessing grant applications to the ECF comprises:

- Stephen Greep, Non-Executive Director (Scheme Chairman);
- Mike Truran, Chief Executive;
- Nigel Towers, Director of Home Chess

The first round of applications closed on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Funding of over £10,000 has been agreed, supporting 19 schemes across the country. Amongst the projects to receive financial support are new and developing clubs and congresses (including women's and junior-specific events), training/coaching, publicity leaflets, website development support, safeguarding costs, as well as contributions to outdoor tables and even a gazebo for community events. A significant proportion of the successful bids involved purchases of new equipment, clocks, sets and boards.

Applications for support were received and agreed for the following chess clubs: Ashton Community, Basildon, Bath, Cramlington Community, Durham University, Gosforth, Meltham and Denby Dale, Morley Junior, New England (Peterborough), St John the Evangelist (Liverpool), South Bristol, Wigan, Willesden and Brent, and York. Additionally, awards were made to Chess for Life Ltd, Huddersfield Congress, Lido School of Chess, PLAY, and Richmond upon Thames College.

The fund part financed a gazebo for Gosforth Chess Club's outdoor community events – seen here in action on a typical Newcastle summer day ....



Future reports on the scheme will contain more details of specific projects once the impact of the grants can be assessed.

The ECF would like to thank Chess & Bridge and DGT for providing equipment to applicants

at discounted costs.

Potential applicants are referred to the prospectus for the grassroots scheme, which can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Grassroots-Prospectus.pdf>.

Applications may be made at any time, although the next assessment period ends on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

*Stephen Greep, Chair ECF Grassroots Committee*

## BCET Awards



The Chess Trust is pleased to announce that four awards have been made to the following:

North Cardiff Junior Chess Club

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/North-Cardiff.pdf>

Park End Primary School Middlesbrough  
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/BCET-nominations-CSC-1-Park-End-Primary-School.pdf>

St William of York Catholic Primary School Liverpool  
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/BCET-nominations-CSC-2-St-William-of-York-Primary-School.pdf>

Stepney Park Primary School London  
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/BCET-nominations-CSC-3-Stepney-Park-Primary-School.pdf>

Many congratulations to all the above schools on their awards!

## ECF Book of the Year Shortlist



The four books selected this year illustrate the richness of chess. Two show the intricate and amazing complexity of the game itself; the other two show that the human approach of the players is just as interesting.

**In Black and White**  
Paul van der Sterren

**Korchnoi Year by Year: Volume II (1969-1980)**  
Hans Renette and Tibor Karolyi

**Theoretical ROOK Endgames**  
GM Sam Shankland

**Zwischenzug!**  
Natasha Regan and Matt Ball

More details of the four books can be found here:

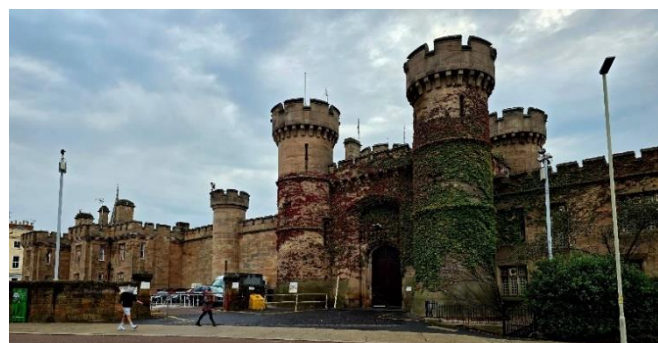
<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-book-of-the-year-shortlist-3/>

## Club and Congress Insurance 2024/2025



Clubs and other chess organisations can now renew their insurance through Green Insurance Group by using the renewal/application form link below. All applications and payments should be sent to Green Insurance Group (contact details in the form). The form can be found here: <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.englishchess.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2024%2F09%2FECF-CLUB-INSURANCE-RENEWAL-APPLICATION-2024.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

## Visit to HMP Leicester on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 by Carl Portman



I represented the ECF recently during a long-awaited visit to HMP Leicester. Let me give you some background to the prison.

I love the entrance to the prison, which reminds me as a chess player of two huge rooks standing looking over anyone daring to step forth into the prison itself. HM Prison Leicester opened in 1828 and was a striking castle-like structure designed by county surveyor William



Parsons. It didn't impress traveller and writer William Cobbett when he visited this 'very fine town' in the 1820s. He said of the new prison, '...As if proud of it, the grand portal has little turrets in the castle style. Instead of expressing shame at these indubitable proofs of the horrible increase of misery and crime, they really boast of these improvements. Jails and treadmills and dungeons have now become the most striking edifices in every county in the kingdom.'

### Public Hangings

Temporary scaffolds were erected outside the main gates of the county gaol for executions, attracting huge crowds. In 1832 James Cook was executed here for murder in front of a crowd of 30,000. He was the last man to have his dead body exhibited in a gibbet, which was hung at the junction of Saffron Lane and Aylestone Road.

### My Visit

Usually, I am asked to give a simultaneous exhibition, but on this occasion for both the morning and the afternoon sessions I simply sat with players and played games, coached and answered questions. As usually happens, there was confusion and mixed views about certain chess rules, from *en passant* and castling to (especially) the 50-move rule. I also set some puzzles for the men, and they worked collectively to try to solve them.

There were about 20 players during the sessions, two or three of whom were of club standard. Once games were finished, we discussed what was learned, with some of the topics including moving too quickly, attacking too early before the pieces were developed, and sacrificing pieces more in hope than calculation. All this hit home, and I also gave some tips about general opening rules, what to do in the middlegame, and the need to learn a few basic principles in the endgame.

I donated some books, magazines, a chess set and board, and a signed copy of my own book 'Chess Behind Bars' to be kept in the library. The men want to meet regularly for a club, but there is always one big issue with many prisons, namely the transitory nature of the inmates' stays. Unless locked up in category A prisons for many years, prisoners are going to be moving through the system quickly and people are released every week, so it is very hard to get a regular group of people; but the trick is always to do the best we can with what we've got.

They are very keen for me to return at some point, and I will be keeping an eye on their progress. My thanks for making yesterday happen at the prison go to Alistair Fruish and Louise Dowell.

## Ethan Pang, 9, Beats Three Grandmasters



Ethan Pang – photograph by Lennart Ootes

Ethan Pang recently had great success in the Vezérképző IM tournament in Budapest.

You can read more here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/article/2024/sep/06/chess-ethan-pang-nine-beats-three-grandmasters-but-misses-2300-rating>

## FIDE General Assembly News



Malcolm Pein, the ECF's FIDE delegate, comments on proceedings at the recent FIDE General Assembly: 'The votes at the FIDE General Assembly were a crushing defeat for Russia. Only 21 of FIDE's 201 members voted to lift sanctions. There is no doubt that many delegates feared consequences for the governing body's relationship with the IOC if FIDE policy diverged. Russian teams, flags and anthems will continue to be excluded, while individual Russian players are allowed to compete. The exodus of Russian chess talent will likely continue'.

The BBC reports as well:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0kjgxi40y1o>

## Doyen of Journalism Leonard Barden Honoured at FIDE 100 Awards Ceremony



Best Journalist: Leonard Barden | picture courtesy of the Guardian newspaper

Leonard Barden's journalism has played a crucial role in promoting chess in both national and international media. He holds the record for the longest-running column in media history, with his daily Evening Standard column running for an incredible 63 years, 7 months, and 18 days. Barden continues to be prolific, writing weekly for *The Guardian* and the *Financial Times*. Now 94, this titan of chess journalism may not have many more opportunities to be recognized as he truly deserves.

Many congratulations to Leonard Barden on his well-deserved FIDE award. Full details of the event can be found here:

<https://www.fide.com/news/3223>

## JUNIOR MOVES Littlewood's Choice



I have known Richard Pert for many years, and we have clashed several times over the chessboard. However, recently his children seem to be making the headlines, and I was delighted to see that Max had won the British U16 Championship and Nina had won the British U16 Girls Championship.

The critical game for Max came in round 5, when he met his main rival, Zain Patel.

### Max Pert - Zain Patel

British U16 Championship, Hull

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bf4 d5 4.e3 c5 5.Nbd2 Bd6 6.dxc5 Bxc5 7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0 Nc6 9.c4 Re8 10.Bg5** Better was 10.Rc1 Bf8 11.cxd5, as if 11...Nxd5 then 12.Nc4! Nxf4 13.exf4 leaves White standing well.

**10....h6 11.Bh4 Be7**



An alternative would be 11...Bd6 12.Rc1 Bd7, which leaves White with a marginal advantage.

**12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.Bxe7 Rxe7 14.Nc4 Nb6?! Black misses a chance to get active by 14...b5! 15.Nce5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Qd6 17.Nf3 b4, with at least equality.**

15.Nce5 Bd7 16.Qe2 Qc7?



This exposes the black queen on the c-file. Much better was 16...Rc8.

17.Rac1 Rc8 18.Be4 Nd5 19.Bxd5?! Instead, 19.Nxc6 Bxc6 20.Bxd5 exd5 21.Rc3 leaves White with a significant advantage. He has the better minor piece and the superior pawn structure.

19....exd5 20.Nxd7 Nd4??



An imaginative idea, but Zain has miscalculated. 20....Rxd7 would have left White only slightly better.

21. Nxd4 Qxc1 22.Qg4! Qc4 If 22...f5 then 23.Nxf5 Rxd7 24.Nxh6+ Kh7 25.Qxd7 Kxh6 26.Qh3+ leaves White two pawns to the good.

23.Nf6+ Kf8 24.Nxd5?!



Even better was 24.b3! when the black queen is forced on to a bad square, e.g. 24...Qc7 25.Nxd5 etc. The rest needs no commentary as Max finishes off efficiently.

24...Ree8 25.Nc3 Rc5 26.Ne4 Rce5 27.Nd6 Qxa2 28.Nxe8 Rxe8 29.b3 Qa6 30.h3 Qb6 31.Rc1 Qd8 32.Qf4 a5 33.Rc7 Qd5 34.Qf5 Qxf5 35.Nxf5 b5 36.Nd6 1-0 A solid game by Max, who took advantage of his opponent's mistakes to eke out the win.

He then went to score 5½/7, leaving him clear winner of the tournament. Meanwhile Nina scored 4/7 to secure the U16 Girls title.

I wish them both every success in the future!

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](mailto:plittl@hotmail.com). I cannot promise that they will appear, but I will give them every consideration.

## ECF Secondary School Chess News

Details of this year's ECF inter-school events can be found here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/>

You can find reports, photos and results from previous years by clicking on the ARCHIVE tab at the link above.

Below are details of the competitions we are running this year. Please do click on the links to find more information.

### English School Chess Championships 2024/25

There is no entry fee for the English School Championships! More details and the entry form can be found here:

<https://britchess.wufoo.com/forms/escc-entry-form-202425/>



All teams will play in an autumn qualifying event. A map of the host schools can be found here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?ll=52.728987587147685%2C-1.9341161860166078&z=7&mid=1nAqqcL5wzs3ATHe-7pb6c-DXiawfb5w>

... and a list of spaces remaining at these events can be found

here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/a6zxtquqgdukbv3v6rui/qualifiers.xlsx?rlkey=29h9gcubm2r9fbhexta1h9qrf&e=1&st=j95y5e8f&dl=0>

Don't worry if you can't find a suitable event to play at; do please enter and we'll make arrangements as appropriate.

### Team Chess Challenge 2024/25

The Team Chess Challenges have been developed as chess tournaments which all secondary schools from around the United Kingdom may like to enter. Teams are of four pupils, and most teams just play in one regional event.

For pupils in year 7 and above you can find further details here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/british-team-chess-challenge-2024-25/>

For years 7 and 8 please see:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/junior-team-chess-challenge-2024-25/>

This year we are also piloting a Primary TCC for pupils in year 6 and below:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/primary-team-chess-challenge-2024-25/>

In each case the winners of the regional event qualify to play in the national finals. We are still intending to arrange more regional events; if you think you could host one please let me know. To enter an event just email the local organiser.

### Secondary Schools Rapidplay

This will take place on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at Eton College. Teams are of six players, with two sections: Open and Major. So far 29 schools have entered 44 teams, but there is room for more. More details can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors/ssrs/>

### Online Inter-School Chess

The National Online School Chess League runs fortnightly on Mondays from 4.15 to 5.15 pm. Teams are of (up to) six players supervised in school. After each round of fixtures there is promotion and relegation between the leagues. More details are available here:

<https://lichess.org/team/noscl>

Fortnightly online 'battles' take place on Fridays from 6 to 7 pm here:

<https://lichess.org/team/secondary-school-chess>.

Pupils play at home, and schools can field as many players as they wish.

Please contact Neill below if you would like more details about either of these online events.

*Neill Cooper, ECF Manager of Secondary School Chess*

[manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.secondary@englishchess.org.uk)

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/>

## Girls Championships 2025



Entries are now open for the ECF National Schools Girls' Team Championships 2025, sponsored by St Catherine's School, Bramley.

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

*Mrs Alice Phillips, Headmistress, St Catherine's School, Bramley*

Further information for how to enter and event details can be found here:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/girls-championships-2025/>

## English Schools Finals 2024



This year's finals of the National School Chess Championships were held at the University of Nottingham on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The event took place in the spacious Studio 7 of the King Meadow Park Campus, which was originally built as a TV studio. The five-round Swiss tournament had 26 teams playing, of which 17 had played in last year's final, while most of the other schools had not played in a previous National School Final.

The top seeds, Wilson's School, had an average rating of 2160, with both King's College School (Wimbledon) and last year's champions, Hampton School, also having average ratings of over 2000. All three teams had already played each other twice earlier in the season, in the Briant Poulter League:

[https://lms.englishchess.org.uk/lms/league\\_comp/142996/table](https://lms.englishchess.org.uk/lms/league_comp/142996/table)

Further information and final rankings can be found here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/english-schools-finals-2024/>

## Junior Titles



Congratulations to Stanley Badacsonyi (above left) on achieving his FM title at the age of 14 years and 11 months. We also offer our congratulations to Elis Dican (above right) who, at 13 years and 9 months, is now a WFM.

Both Stanley and Elis are joined by the players below, all of whose titles were awarded this year.



Top to bottom, left to right - FM Sohum Lohia, WFM Zoe Varney, WFM Bodhana Sivanandan, WFM Ruqayyah Rida, WFM Kamila Hryshchenko

## European Under 8 Champion Junyan Hu



Junyan Hu won the European Under 8 Championship, which took place from 22<sup>nd</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. This adds to the gold medal that Samar Dayal won in the European Under 10 Rapidplay Championship a couple of weeks before as part of the same festival. Junyan has

been one of the top-rated players in Europe/the world in his age group for a while, but this was his first proper go at an international junior tournament.

Well done, Junyan!

<https://chessresults.com/tnr977141.aspx?lan=1&art=1&rd=9&flag=30>

## IMPROVERS

### Paul Littlewood on Tactics

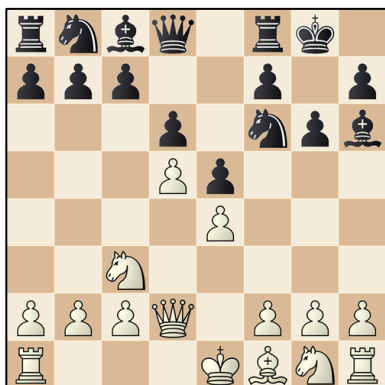
I have been looking back over some of my old games recently, and I am amazed at how often tactics feature - and not just in the middlegame either!

Consider the following game that I played twenty-odd years ago against a very talented GM.

**Paul Littlewood - William Watson**

Wood Green vs Barbican - London League 31/01/2001

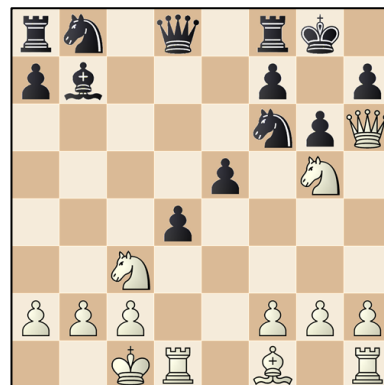
**1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be3 Bg7 5.Qd2 0-0 6.Bh6 e5 7.d5? Bxh6?**



We are seven moves into the opening, and both Willie and I miss a tactic: 7...Nxe4! 8.Nxe4 Qh4! 9.Bxg7 Qxe4+ would have won a pawn for Black, and left White struggling to prove he has any compensation.

**8.Qxh6 c6 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.0-0-0** Black must be careful, because it will only take a few moves for White to take advantage of his queen on h6 and launch an attack. In fact Willie underestimates the danger over the next few moves, and then finds himself in a critical position.

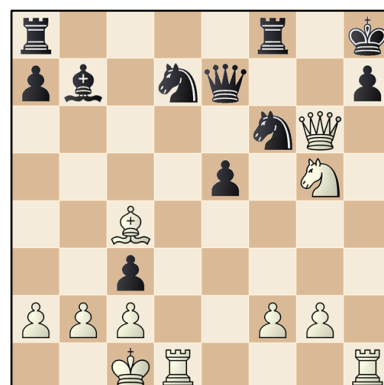
**10...d5 11. exd5 cxd5 12.Nf3 d4 13.Ng5 Bb7**



Black has classically countered the attack on the wing by a central offensive, but he is behind in development and so must be very careful.

**14.h4 Qe7 15.h5!** The onslaught begins as White sacrifices a piece for the initiative. Even if Black declines the offer and plays 15...Rc8 to prevent Bc4, there would then follow 16.hxg6 fxg6 17.Bd3!, so that if 17...dxc3 18.Bxg6 wins. Black's best defence is 17...Qg7, but then 18.Qh3 dxc3 19.Qe6+ Kf8 20.Qd6+ Qe7 21.Ne6+ Kf7 22.Bxg6+ hxg6 23.Ng5+ Kf8 24.Rh8+ is winning for White. There are other possibilities, but in all cases White has a vicious attack.

**16.hxg6 fxg6 17.Bc4+ Kh8 18.Qxg6 Nbd7**

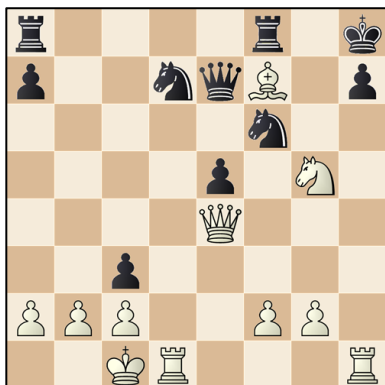


Finally Black develops his queen's knight, but it is too late!

**19.Bf7 Be4** Black was relying on this to save him but he had missed....

**20.Qxe4! 1-0**





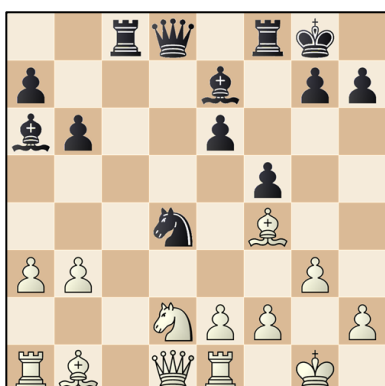
A sparkling tactic to finish, because if 20...Nxe4 then 21.Rxh7#. If 21....Rxf7 22.Nxf7+ Qxf7 23.Qxa8+, White is two exchanges up and easily winning.

A game where strategy didn't really come into it, as Black was overwhelmed by a tsunami of tactics!

Here are a couple of my own examples to solve which illustrate how tactics are so important. The answers can be found at the end of the article.

**L. J. Smart - P. E. Littlewood**

Charlton Open – round 2, 1983

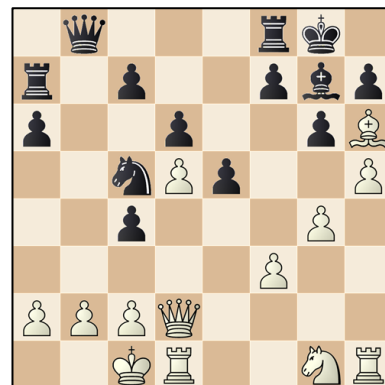


White thinks he has everything covered, but Black has a brilliant tactic which completely destroys White's position.

Black to play and win.

**J. Emms - P. E. Littlewood**

National Club Match 1986



White's attack looks dangerous but it is not his move.

Black to play and win.

**Answers:**

**L. J. Smart – P. E. Littlewood**

Black wins by 1...Bxe2 2.Rxe2 Rc1! gaining material, because if 3.Qxc1 Nxe2+ 4.Kg2 Nxc1 etc.

**J. Emms – P. E. Littlewood**

1...c3 puts a spanner in White's works, as 2.Qxc3 is not possible because of 2...Bxh6+. The game finished 2.bxc3 Na4 3.Qe3 Nb2 and White resigned, because if 4.Bxg7 4....Nc4 wins.

## Gormally's Coaching Corner



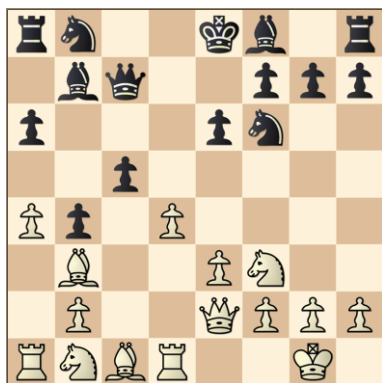
### How to Improve Your Calculation during a Tournament

Plenty of thought is given over to a chess player's preparation before a tournament, but what about how they can improve during a tournament itself? I recently took part in three chess tournaments: the Thinkers Publishing tournament in Bruges, a GM norm event during the Northumbria Masters, and the Torquay Riviera Congress (as well as commentating on the British Championships over the same time frame). It seemed to me that at some point during these three tournaments I



was really struggling, and in danger of falling below 2400 FIDE for the first time in over 25 years. This poor form, I believe, was mainly due to rustiness, leading to a lack of confidence in my intuition. The more I play, the more I tend to trust my intuition, and the whole process of playing becomes easier.

**Gormally, D. (2425) - Han, Y. (2417)**  
(4), 12.08.2024



**11.Nbd2** It was only when analysing the game afterwards with the engine that I discovered the dynamic possibility of playing 11.e4!? here. In fact, this pawn break is quite thematic for White in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. White is trying to take advantage of Black's lack of development. 11...Bxe4 (11...Nxe4 12.d5! also gives White good play; relatively best is 11...cxd4 12.e5 Nd5 13.Nbd2 with complex play) 12.d5!! would have really put the cat amongst the pigeons.

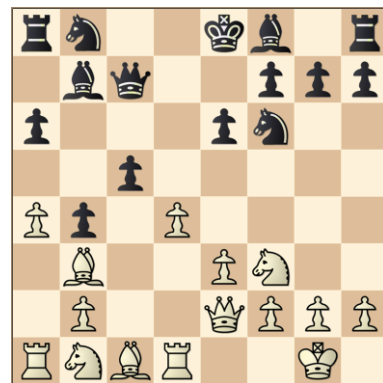
**11...Nbd7 12. Nf1** Once again I am being too passive, and not even looking for pawn breaks. 12.e4 cxd4 13.e5 Nd5 14.Ne4 would have led to interesting play.

**12...Bd6** Now Black is fine, and later the game ended peacefully in a draw.

**13.Bd2 a5 14.Rac1 0-0 15.Ng3 Qb6 16.Bc4 cxd4 17.Nxd4 Ne5 18.Bb5 Rac8 19.Be1 Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Rc8 21.Rxc8+ Bxc8 22.Nf1 Bb7 23.Nd2 Bc7 ½-½**

**Gormally, D. (2425) - Fernandez, D. (2519)**  
Bruges Thinkers Masters (6), 13.08.2024

OK, so in the process of trying to improve my play what I got from the Han game was that my brain wasn't thinking in a dynamic enough way. I was too tardy and defensive. Really, the analysis of that game with Yichen inspired me because of all the dynamic pawn breaks that I had missed, and I immediately fixed this in the game with Daniel Fernandez.



**12.d5!** It is Black's position that looks too defensive here, so I immediately take advantage of this with a dynamic pawn break.

**12...Nc5** 12...exd5 13.e6! is automatic. 13...fxe6 14.Bg6+ (the computer thinks that not even bothering to force the king to move, and instead going after the e-pawn with 14.Nd4!, was stronger; 14...0-0 15.Nxe6 Rf7 16.Bg6 Rf6 17.Nf4 when both Ncxd5, and Re1 are threats) 14...Kd8 could be automatically rejected by Black, but in fact it is not so clear. Two pawns are two pawns after all, even if the black king sits uncomfortably in the centre. 15.Re1 Nf8 16.Bh5 favours White, though.

**13.Bc4** White has a clear advantage, and the position is hard to play for Black in practice. After many adventures I went on to win. Incidentally, this is, I believe, the first time I have defeated a 2500+ player in a FIDE-rated classical game in many years. The power of dynamic pawn breaks!

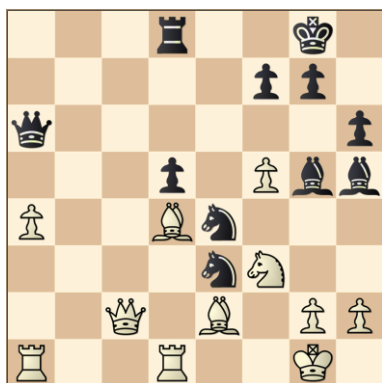
**13...exd5 14.Nxd5 Nc6 15.b4 Ne6 16.b5 Na5 17.Nxe7 Kxe7 18.Ba3+ Ke8 19.Be2 Nf4 20.e6 Qd8 21.Qc2 fxe6 22.Rfe1 Bd5 23.Rad1 a6 24.Bf1 axb5 25.Rxd5 Qxd5 26.Qxc7 Nc6 27.Qxg7 Rxa3 28.Qxh8+ Ke7 29.Qg7+ Ke8 30.Ne5 Nxe5 31.Rxe5 Qd4 32.Bxb5+ Kd8 33.Qf8+ Kc7 34.Qxa3 Qa1+ 35.Bf1 Qxe5 36.Qf3 Kd6 37.g3 Nd5 38.Qf8+ Kc6 39.Qxh6 b5 40.h4 b4 41.h5 Nc3 42.Qe3 Qf6 43.h6 Nxa2 44.Bc4 Kd6 45.Qd2+ 1-0**

**Pijpers, A. (2475) - Gormally, D. (2425)**

Bruges Thinkers Masters (7), 14.08.2024

The rustiness was to plague me through the first two events. Admittedly, you also have to give credit to the opposition - I was facing players who were very strong and very well-prepared, and in the most part considerably younger than me, with 20+ year age differences. Losing games to people young enough to be my children made me somewhat demoralised, I must admit. Was I too old? Too washed-out? One game that stuck out in my mind in the Bruges event was the game against Pijpers. In Bruges there were two days when we played two games, but

most of the days there was only one game a day. Pijpers used this day wisely to prepare for me by not only looking at my classical games, but also by looking at my online accounts. So be aware! As he suggested afterwards, I should probably close my online accounts to avoid this happening again. The course of this game demoralised me so much that I even resigned in a more or less equal position.



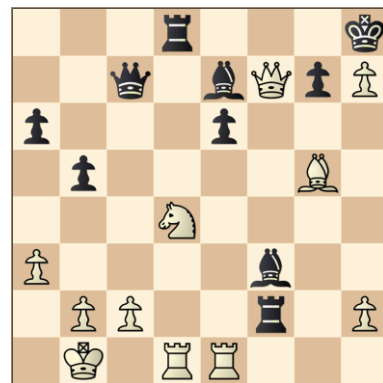
### 35.Qa2 Premature resignation by Black.

35.Qa2 Qa5! A move I had seen, but hadn't calculated well enough. 36.Nxg5 Nxd1: I think I just 'forgot' that Black has the potential resource ... Qe1 here, saving Black's bacon in a lot of lines. **1-0**

### Lohia, Sohum (2408) - Gormally, Daniel W (2425)

Round 4: Lohia, Sohum - Gormally, Daniel lichess.org (4.2), 2024

The game against Pijpers was a classic example of why my chess has gone downhill in recent years. Yes, I have got older, and therefore weaker. But it is also the case that my accuracy in calculation is lacking at times. When the game seems to reach its height I forget to calculate, and pure instinct takes over. My monkey brain is in command. Dr Steve Peters talks about this in his book *The Chimp Paradox*. At some point the pressure becomes too much, and your brain is telling you that the way to relieve this is to sabotage yourself. Such a process could be described as choking, and the trick is not to allow that to happen and to continue with your 'computer' brain, or intelligent mind, in control. Easier said than done. Another extreme example of where I got caught up in the emotion of the moment and started guessing happened in my game against Sohum Lohia in the Northumbria Masters.



**27...Rxd4??** A complete failure to look at my opponent's ideas. I had 25 minutes as well, enough time to dot the i's and cross the t's.

27...Bxd1 28.Qxf2 Bxg5 29.Nxe6 Qxc2+ 30.Qxc2 Bxc2+ 31.Kxc2 Rc8+ might have been played if I had been thinking sensibly, and is quite likely to fizzle out to a draw.

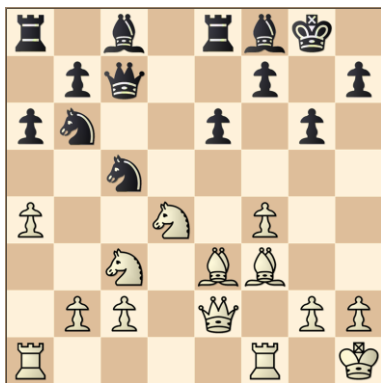
### 28.Qg8# 1-0

### Willow, Jonah B (2414) - Gormally, Daniel W (2425)

Round 6: Willow, Jonah B - Gormally, Daniel lichess.org (6.2), 2024

### Falsification

Obviously I have written about this falsification subject before, as it was mentioned in the book by Michael Adams and Philip Hurtado called *Think Like a Super-GM*. The idea is that you identify a candidate move, and then you try to falsify it. Is there anything wrong with the move? Falsification seemed to be one of the mechanisms that separate the super-GMs from the rest of us; they are more exhaustive in the checking phase. And while I can't imagine Michael Adams making a mistake like ... Rxd4?? as I did in the Sohum Lohia game, I could also put this mistake down to a deadly combination of nerves and fatigue. I didn't have any quick draws in the early part of the GM event, and as I tend to get tired in any case (maybe pre-diabetes, maybe something else) two games a day was just too much. I had some food before the Jonah Willow game, which like the Sohum Lohia game, was the second game played that day, and I almost fell asleep at the board. The opening was a borderline disaster, but once I had a coffee and Jonah hadn't punished my inept play in the most accurate way we reached the diagram position.



**18...Rd8** There is nothing tactically wrong with this move, so you could argue I have 'falsified' it correctly in that sense. But by rejecting my original choice, I haven't trusted my instincts well enough.

18...Bd7! was the move I originally wanted to play, but I rejected it for the wrong reasons. 19.a5 Nba4 20.Nd1, and I feared that the knight would be off-piste on a4, and likely to be gobbled up if White plays a timely b3. But as a chess player you cannot always opt for variations which are bomb-proof, and sometimes you must take a certain amount of risk. 20...e5! I had seen this far as well, but perhaps I needed to go further still. After 21.fxe5 Qxe5 22.c3 Bg7 the game remains reasonably complex.

**19.a5 Nd5** White is better, and Jonah played the endgame very well and went on to win.

**20.Nxd5 exd5 21.f5 Qe5 22.Qf2 Rd7 23.Rae1 Ne4 24.Bxe4 dxe4 25.Nb3 Qxf5 26.Qxf5 gxf5 27.Rxf5 Bg7 28.c3 Rd1 29.Rxd1 Bxf5 30.Nc5 Bf8 31.Nxb7 Rb8 32.Rd8 Rxd8 33.Nxd8 Bd7 34.Kg1 Be7 35.Nb7 Bc6 36.Nc5 Bxc5 37.Bxc5 f5 38.g3 Kf7 39.Kf2 Ke6 40.b3 Be8 41.Ke3 Bh5 42.Kd4 Bd1 43.b4 Be2 44.Bf8 Bf1 45.Kc5 Kd7 46.Bh6 Kc7 47.Kd5 Bh3 48.c4 Bf1 49.Kc5 Kb7 50.b5 Be2 51.b6 Bh5 52.Kd6 Be8 53.Be3 Bf7 54.c5 Be8 55.Ke6 1-0**

**Gormally, Daniel W (2425) - Murphy, Conor E (2460)**  
Round 7: Gormally, Daniel W - Murphy, C lichess.org (7.3), 2024

After the Willow game, although he played very well I felt a bit lost. I had minus two and wondered what I was doing. Was I just a punching bag for the younger players now? I knew I had to fix something. It was clear where the errors were taking place: (a) I wasn't checking the moves enough for tactical errors. Although I had fixed that somewhat for the Willow game, I needed to be consistent, and keep that proofing process going. (b) I wasn't trusting my instincts well enough. Essentially, some of the mistakes I had been making were acceptable in rapidplay and blitz, but less forgivable in classical chess. It occurred to me that I wasn't giving myself enough time

to make the connections in my brain about the position. I decided that in future I would look at the first candidate move that came into my head. If there was nothing wrong with that move, I would play it. In that case I would be combining the intuition that made me a reasonable speed chess player with the checking process that is more possible at classical chess. This immediate fix seemed to work, as since the Jonah Willow game I have scored 9/10 in my classical FIDE games.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Be3 Qf6 6.c3 Nge7 7.Bc4 d6 8.0-0 Qg6 9.Nxc6 Nxc6 10.Bxc5 dxc5 11.f4 0-0 12.Nd2 Re8 13.Qf3 Bg4**



**14.Qg3?** There are different levels to this falsification and checking process. While this move is not a tactical error it gives away White's advantage, because it allows Black to offer a queen exchange.

I rejected 14.Qe3 on the somewhat sketchy grounds that I didn't like the queen lined up against the rook on e8. 14...Rad8 15.Rf2 Qh5 16.Nf1. Black has issues here due to the lack of space on the kingside, and there are ideas of pushing Black back with h3 or Ng3.

**14...Rad8 15.Rf2 Be6!** This is why my earlier Qg3 was a serious error - this exchange of pieces is greatly in Black's favour.

**16.Qxg6 hxg6 17.Bb5 Bd7 18.Nb3 a6 19.Bf1 b6 20.a4 Rxe4 21.Bxa6 Bg4 22.Bb7 Re6 23.a5 Nxa5 24.Nxa5 bxa5 25.Rxa5 Be2 26.h3 Rb8 27.Bd5 Re7 28.b3 c6 29.Bxc6 Rxb3 30.Rxc5 Rb1+ 31.Kh2 Rc1 32.Bd5 Kh7 33.c4 f6 34.Rc8**



**34...Bd3** One way of approaching a position is to think, 'What does my opponent want to play? What would they do if it was their move?' In this particular situation I was very nervous, as Conor was in his typical time trouble and my position seemed to be extremely promising, maybe borderline winning. Rushing, I made a huge error.

**35.Ra2?** I failed to check for his defensive resources, only thinking about my own ideas. I had seen this idea of his playing ...g5 earlier, but then forgot about it. It's a great liberating move, because all of a sudden the black king now has space. Actually, as soon as he played it I felt I had blown my advantage, as the extra c-pawn wouldn't be enough to win the game. But, of course the machine is less emotional, and thinks that White still has a big edge.

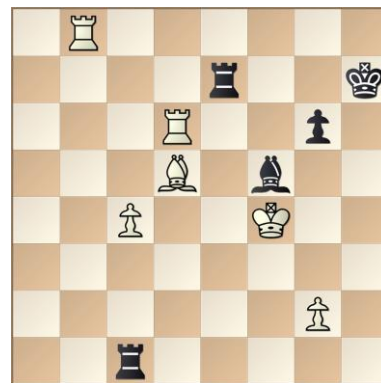
35.Rd2 Rc3 36.Rb2 g5 37.fxc5 fxc5 38.Rbb8 It is interesting that this variation is much better for White than the one where the black rook is still on c1. 38...g6 39.Rh8+ Kg7 40.Rbg8+ Kf6 41.Rf8+ Ke5 42.Rf3! explains why - the bishop is caught in a nasty pin. 35.Rf3 might have been a more human way to prevent his counterplay. Essentially, if I keep the black king in the 'box', then it is possible that White can win easily. 35...Bf5 36.Rf8, once again preventing ... g5, and now Ra3 is a fairly deadly threat.

**35...g5! 36.fxc5 fxc5 37.Ra6!?** 37.Raa8 g6 38.Rh8+ Kg7 39.Rag8+ Kf6 40.Rf8+ Ke5 41.Rf3 Bf5 42.Re3+ Kf6 43.Rf8+ Kg7 44.Rxe7+ Kxf8 45.Re3 was maybe a better way of going about it.

**37...g6!** It was amazing to me how well he was defending in time trouble. I was in shock, as it looked like I was going to blow the win.

**38.Rd6 Bf5 39.Rb8?! g4!** Exchanging material gets it closer to a draw.

**40.hxg4 Bxg4 41.Kg3 Bf5 42.Kf4**



**42...Be4!** Another idea I had overlooked.

**43.Rdd8 43.Bxe4 Rxc4=.**

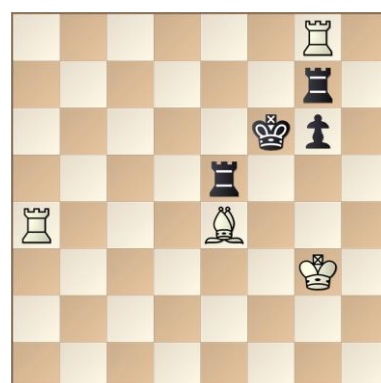
**43...Bxg2!** I had missed this too! Now I don't have any pawns left.

**44.Bxg2 Rxc4+ 45.Kg3 Rc3+** I think if he had played 45...Kh6 and escaped the net of the white rooks the game would definitely have ended in a draw. My only hope in this game was that he was in time trouble. You don't get any extra time after move 40, so we were both on increment.

**46.Bf3 Rf7 47.Rh8+ Kg7 48.Rbg8+ Kf6 49.Rh4 Rc5 49...Kg5! 50.Rg4+ Kh6 51.Rf4 Rxf4 52.Kxf4**, where at worst Black is getting rook and bishop vs rook, assuming I could even win the g-pawn. I doubt I would have made any effort to win this, as there was still a second game to come on the same day, so I had to weigh up the advantages of doing so.

**50.Rf4+ Rf5 51.Ra4** This position is incredibly difficult for Black to hold, especially in time trouble. White has mating ideas, and I realized that two rooks and bishop vs rooks was much tougher to hold from the defensive side, at least practically speaking, than rook and bishop vs rook.

**51...Re5 52.Be4!+- Rg7?**





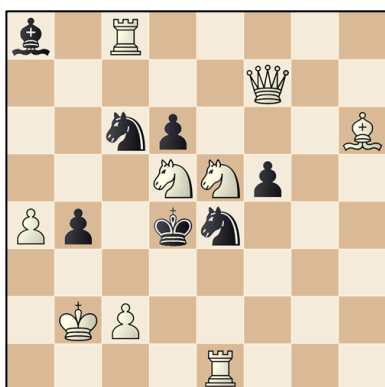
Allowing a tactical win. Now I just had to apply my new found patience and discipline, sit on my hands, and work it out. I quickly saw Ra6+ ... Kf7 and thought then Black exchanges rooks, right? So, you dismiss this line and look around for something else that gives practical chances. But the whole process of calculation is about looking that bit deeper. So...

53.Ra6+ Kf7 54.Bxg6+! 54.Bxg6+ Kxg8 55.Ra8+--;  
54.Bxg6+ Rxg6+ 55.Raxg6+- 1-0

## STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

### Monthly Conundrum by Christopher Jones

Here is the problem set for your 'homework' last time.

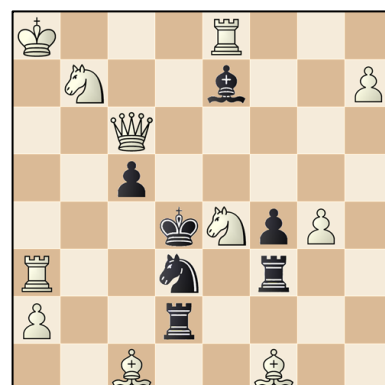


Eriks Lazdins  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Latvian Championship 1955  
Mate in 2

Lazily, I'm going to quote the solution and commentary from the article in the July 2024 issue of *The Problemist* from which it is taken: 'Pin mates are provided for the set bK flights: 1...Kxe5 2.Bg7, 1...Kc5 2.Be3 and 1...Nxe5 2.Be3. In view of these mates the key may come as a surprise, but guards must be provided for d5 and e6. 1.Nf4! (threat 2.Qd5), 1...a random move by the c6N 2.Nf3; 1...Nxe5 2.Ne2!; 1...Kxe5 2.Qg7!, 1...Kc5 2.Qa7!. (Note also 1...Nc3, Nf6 2.Qc4.)'

It has been an excellent summer for British chess problem solving, highlighted by the gold medals won by John Nunn, David Hodge and Jonathan Mestel in the World Solving Championships in Jurmala. More mundanely, two solving events took place at events attended by British players over the summer.

The first of these was a solving event at the British Championships in Hull, controlled by Nigel Dennis. Twelve problems had been selected by Michael McDowell, including the following delightful one, which, incidentally, has a degree of kinship with the Lazdins problem.



Touw Hian Bwee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Honourable Mention, *The Problemist* 1969  
Mate in 2

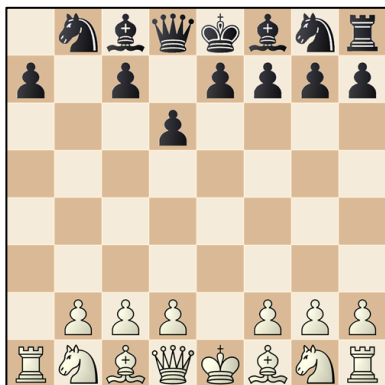
I'm not sure what the best approach to solving this problem is, but if you want to get an idea of what the composer has in mind it's worth observing that, like in the Lazdins problems, the black king in the diagram position has possible flights to unguarded squares, each of which has a mating response set. In this case there are three such flights – 1...Ke5 2.h8=B/Q#; 1...Ke3 2.Rxd3#; and 1...Kc4 2.Ra4#. Note that these are all pin mates: in each case the king has walked into a pin which prevents one of his officers from intercepting the mating line. So perhaps it's not a surprise that what the composer skilfully achieves is three *changed* pin mates. After the key, 1.Nf6! (threat 2.Qe4), 1...Ke5 fails instead to 2.Qd6, 1...Ke3 instead to 2.Qxc5 and 1...Kc4 instead to 2.Qc4. (There are some clever mechanisms at work – for instance, in the set play 1...Kc4 2.Qa4? allowed 2...Kd5, while after 1.Nf6 1...Kc4 2.Ra4? allows 2...Kc3.) Some byplay: 1...Re3, 1...Re2 and 1...Nf2 all fail to 2.Qd5.

Michael McDowell commented that the judge of the 1969 tourney in which this problem competed must have been a very severe judge to keep this problem out of the prize list!

The solving tourney at Hull was won by Brian Stephenson, ahead of Matthew Harborne and Syd Jacob.

The second summer solving tourney, in London just before the August Bank Holiday weekend, was at the MindSports Olympiad. Somewhat experimentally, the ten problems set for this event included two 'shortest proof games'. In each case, competitors were told that the diagram showed the position just after White's seventh

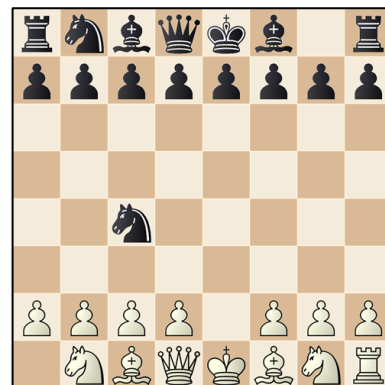
move. There is a unique sequence of moves to reach this point, which competitors must find. These two problems were the last of the ten set for solving, and I had a misgiving that solvers, perhaps tired and running short of time, might struggle with these, but not a bit of it – they were approached with relish, and had among the highest success rates. Here is the more difficult of the two.



Dieter Mueller  
*Rochade* 1985  
Proof game in 6½ moves

Although all the problems had been computer-tested, I was momentarily disconcerted when one contestant handed in the following 'solution': 1.e4 d6 2.Ba6 Bf5 3.Bxb7 Bxe4 4.Bxa8 Bd5 5.Bb7 Bxa2 6.Ba6 Be6 7.Bf1 Bc8. Could this be an unintended alternative solution that had somehow slipped through the net? Well, no, because this nice sequence takes 7, not the stipulated 6½, moves. In the harsh world of competitive solving you get no credit for finding what is an attractive and highly thematic 'try', even though the actual solution is along very similar lines: 1.a4 d6 2.a5 Bg4 3.a6 Bxe2 4.axb7 Bxd1 5.bxa8=Q Bg4 6.Qf3 Bc8 7.Qd1. Three of the eleven solvers did find the correct solution, and they were the three who filled the top three spots overall: James Heppell, Milan Petras (second), and Martyn Hamer (third).

I leave you with the other proof game, which was solved by six of the solvers, so hopefully you won't find it too daunting if you have a go at solving it.



Satoshi Hashimoto  
*Probleemblad* 1999  
Proof game in 6½ moves  
(i.e., this is the position after White's 7<sup>th</sup> move – what were the moves up to this point?)

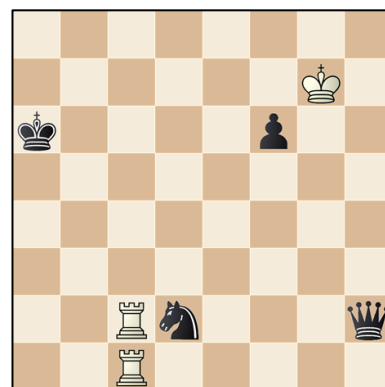
I'll give the solution next month. Don't hesitate to email me either about this problem or with any other queries at all to do with this column.

Christopher Jones Email: [cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk)

## How to Solve a Study by Ian Watson

### The Shepherd Rooks

We looked last month at how a pair of bishops can control an enemy king - they can 'shepherd' it. A pair of rooks can do that too, and indeed the rook pair can do more - they can force a king across the board and then mate it.



White to play and win

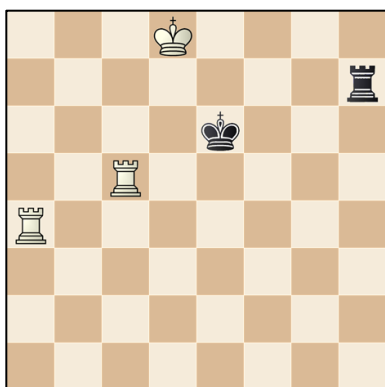
This is by P Babich and was an entry in the *Ural CPS* event in 1950.

The first moves are easy to find, because Black is going to have lots of checks when he gets the move, so it has to be a rook to the a-file, and it has to be the c2-rook, as 1.Ra1+

K~ 2.Rb2+ lets the black king escape. Therefore 1.Ra2+ K~ 2.Rb2+ and we will mate unless Black plays 1...Kb5, so it's 1...Kb5 2.Rb2+ Nb3 3.Rxb3+ Ka4 and now what? We need to threaten a mate, and we could play 4.Rb7 or 4.Rb8. If we play 4.Rb7, however, Black will check on g2, take the rook and then when we play Ra1+ he will move his king towards the queen and protect it from the skewer. So the only option is 4.Rb8, when Black plays 4...Qg3+ 5.Kf7 Qxb8 6.Ra1+ Kb5 7.Rb1+ and White wins. Pleasant, but a bit light on content for a study composed in 1950 - so you should ask yourself if there's more to it. Which should lead you to the alternative fifth move 5...Qe5: then we get 6.Ra1+ Qxa1 7.Ra8+ and wins - a near perfect echo of the 5...Qxb8 line.

The full solution is **1.Ra2+ Kb5 2.Rb2+ Nb3 3.Rxb3+ Ka4 4.Rb8 Qg3+ 5.Kf7 Qxb8 6.Ra1+ Kb5 7.Rb1+ and 5...Qe5 6.Ra1+ Qxa1 7.Ra8+.**

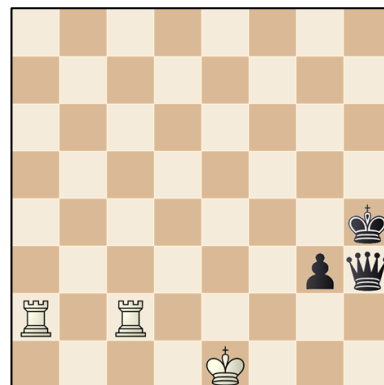
That idea of sacrificing one of the shepherding rooks is ancient. Here's a position from more than five centuries ago (!).



Black to play, White wins

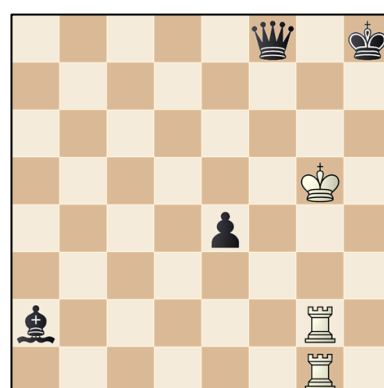
Black plays 1...Kd6, threatening mate and the rook, met by 2.Rh5 Rxh5 3.Ra6+ K~ 4.Ra5+ winning. That is in the *Civis Bononiae* manuscript of 1454.

Here are two studies for you to solve. The first is by M Platov, from *Shakhmaty* in 1927.



White to play and win

The second is by A Grin (also known as A Gulaev), and is from the *Drosha Tourney* of 1966.



White to play and win

The solution is given after the calendar page ...

Ian Watson Email: [ian@irwatson.uk](mailto: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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

30 Sept 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
1 Oct 2024	Beckenham FIDE Rated Club Championship - Bromley
1 Oct 2024	5th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
1 Oct 2024	Newcastle Blitz Grand Prix
2 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Autumn 2024 - Surrey
2 Oct 2024	First Wednesday Chess - Hertsmere
3 Oct 2024	Global Chess League 2024 – London
3 Oct 2024	Junior 4NCL Online Season 10
3 Oct 2024	Hendon FIDE Blitz – Camden
4 Oct 2024	Social Chess Party – LWCC/SPTW – Westminster
4 Oct 2024	2nd Sheffield Chess International – Sheffield
5 Oct 2024	Junior 4NCL – Peterborough
5 Oct 2024	South of England Junior Chess Congress 2024
5 Oct 2024	Norfolk County Chess Championships
5 Oct 2024	Hastings U1800 Weekend Chess Tournament
5 Oct 2024	Wells Autumn Rapidplay
5 Oct 2024	II Milton Keynes FIDE Rapid Tournament
5 Oct 2024	4th Cheam RapidPlay – Sutton
5 Oct 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 – Welsh Qualifier – Cardiff
5 Oct 2024	6th Swindon Rapidplay
5 Oct 2024	Maidenhead Junior Tournament October 2024
5 Oct 2024	Wimbledon Rapidplay
5 Oct 2024	London Women Chess Club
6 Oct 2024	2nd Potters Chess Play Rapidplay – Hertsmere
6 Oct 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 – Scottish Qualifier
6 Oct 2024	UK Open Blitz 2024 – North East Qualifier
6 Oct 2024	Potters Bar Rapid Play
6 Oct 2024	Berkshire Junior Open Chess Tournament
6 Oct 2024	Ealing Broadway FIDE Rapid 2024

## Week Beginning 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024

7 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
8 Oct 2024	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024 – Haringey
8 Oct 2024	4NCL Online Season 10
9 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Autumn 2024 - Surrey
9 Oct 2024	English Schools Championships Stowe Qualifier - Aylesbury Vale
9 Oct 2024	London Nine Elms FIDE Blitz 3+2
10 Oct 2024	English Schools Championships Altrincham Qualifier – Trafford
10 Oct 2024	English Schools Championships Dulwich College Qualifier – London
10 Oct 2024	Junior 4NCL Online Season 10
11 Oct 2024	Dundee Chess Congress 2024
12 Oct 2024	1st Sussex University Standard Play
12 Oct 2024	Global Chess League 2024 – Final - London
12 Oct 2024	Hampton Junior Chess Congress – Richmond
12 Oct 2024	Golders Green FIDE Rapid 2024 – Camdem
13 Oct 2024	39th Birmingham Rapidplay
13 Oct 2024	ECF Secondary School Rapidplay Chess Tournament 2024 – Windsor
13 Oct 2024	October FIDE BLITZ @ The Stag Plaza Suite – London
13 Oct 2024	48th Guernsey International Chess Festival – Open Tournament



13 Oct 2024	48th Guernsey International Chess Festival – Challengers Tournament
<b>Week Beginning 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>	
14 Oct 2024	WR Chess Masters Cup – Westminster
14 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
15 Oct 2024	5th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
15 Oct 2024	Muswell Hill FIDE Chess 2024 – Haringey
15 Oct 2024	English Schools Championships Southend Qualifier – Southend-On-Sea
16 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Autumn 2024 - Surrey
16 Oct 2024	English Schools Championships Wimbledon Qualifier – Merton
17 Oct 2024	Junior 4NCL Online Season 10
18 Oct 2024	BCA International Autumn Tournament
18 Oct 2024	2nd Chess 4U Weymouth Chess Congress – Weymouth & Portsmouth
19 Oct 2024	2024 Birmingham Junior Open
19 Oct 2024	41st Bury St Edmunds Chess Congress
19 Oct 2024	1st Barnstaple Rapid Play
19 Oct 2024	Stroud Rapid Play Autumn 2024
19 Oct 2024	2nd Chislehurst RapidPlay
19 Oct 2024	Southall FIDE Congress
20 Oct 2024	World Chess League – Chess.com
20 Oct 2024	Berkshire Chess Tournament LJCC qualifier
20 Oct 2024	LJCC Qualifier Chess Tournament – Elstree
<b>Week Beginning 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024</b>	
21 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
22 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess October Half Term IOC Course - Surrey
22 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Holiday Camp Autumn Half Term 2024 Mini Tournament – Surrey
22 Oct 2024	4NCL Online Season 10
23 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Holiday Camp Autumn Half Term 2024 Mini Tournament - Surrey
24 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Holiday Camp Autumn Half Term 2024 Mini Tournament
25 Oct 2024	Wimbledon FIDE Congress – Merton
25 Oct 2024	47th Scarborough Congress
25 Oct 2024	Torquay FIDE Congress
26 Oct 2024	London Women FIDE Rapid Tournaments
26 Oct 2024	2nd Scarborough Junior Rapidplay
26 Oct 2024	LWCC FIDE Rapid – Westminster
26 Oct 2024	2024/25 Newham Junior Grand Prix Second Round
26 Oct 2024	Poplar Rapid Tournament – Tower Hamlets
27 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Junior Grand Prix Autumn/Spring Term 2024/25
27 Oct 2024	Uxbridge LJCC Competition
27 Oct 2024	Thamesmead London Blitz OPEN 2024
27 Sept 2024	
<b>Week Commencing 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>	
28 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Senior Chess Club Dicky White - Surrey
29 Oct 2024	5th 4NCL Online Autumn Congress
29 Oct 2024	Uxbridge Chess Camp
30 Oct 2024	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess Club Autumn 2024
1 Nov 2024	Central London Chess Congress
1 Nov 2024	Hampshire Chess Congress 2024
2 Nov 2024	2024 National Youth Team Championships – Headington
2 Nov 2024	Wimbledon Junior Rapidplay
2 Nov 2024	Norfolk and Norwich Autumn Rapidplay
2 Nov 2024	11th Witney Congress – West Oxfordshire
2 Nov 2024	2nd Cambridge FIDE Congress
2 Nov 2024	Coulsdon Chess Rapidplay – Surrey

2 Nov 2024	Wimbledon Rapidplay – Merton
2 Nov 2024	London Women Chess Club
3 Nov 2024	Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club Rapid 2024
3 Nov 2024	Ealing Broadway FIDE Rapid 2024
3 Nov 2024	BBCA FIDE Rated Rapid Tournament – London

## How to Solve a Study - Solution

(Platov)

**1. Ra4+ Kg5 2.Rc5+ Kf6 3.Ra6+ Ke7 4.Rc7+ Kd8 5.Rh7 Qxh7 6.Ra8+ K~ 7.Ra7+, or 5...Qg2 6.Ra8+ Qxa8 7.Rh8+ winning.** The same echoes as in the Babich - Platov found the idea first.

(Grin)

**1.Rh1+ Kg8 2.Kh4+ Kh7 3.Kg3+ Kg8 4.Kh2+ Kh7 5.Kg1+ wins.** After 1.Rh1+, every move is a king move.

1.Rh2+? Kg8 2.Kh4+ Kh7 3.Kg3+ Kg8 4.Kh3+ Kh7 5.Kg2+ Qh6 6.Rgh1 Qxh2+. In the main line, 2.Kh5+? Qg7 3.Rhg1 Bf7+. Also in the main line, 4...Qg7 5.Rhg1.

The rooks aren't shepherding the king? Well, they kind of are - they don't move, but they achieve the same job.



### New books from Elk and Ruby

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