



Chess *Moves*

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March 2023



Championship Season Preview

Kidlington Congress and Varsity Match reports, previews of the English and British Championships ... plus all the usual features and more ...

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EDITORIAL



Welcome to the March issue of *ChessMoves*, which in all respects is a bumper edition.

Our event reports and domestic news features reinforce how strongly post-pandemic chess is recovering. We have a host of articles and some excellent photography.

As usual, we have a comprehensive events calendar, which you may want to use to plan your future tournaments. We also look forward to the English and British Championships over the next few months.

Would you like one of your games annotated by a top player and published in *ChessMoves*? We will be offering this service to *ChessMoves* readers starting from next month. If you would like to see your game annotated by one of our panel then please email office@englishchess.org.uk with some of the background to the game and why it was a memorable one for you. The result should be entertaining and instructive.

Our flagship columns are back again, with superb contributions from GMs Keith Arkell, Dr John Nunn, Danny Gormally and IMs Paul Littlewood and Andrew Martin. We have puzzles to solve and studies to delight, courtesy of Ian Watson and Christopher Jones. Ben Graff continues with his choice of Books of the Month. David Agyemang revisits a couple of Tal games, Carl Portman asks 'What you can do for the ECF?' and GM Nigel Davies is interviewed.

So there's plenty to keep you occupied and entertained.

Have a great month!

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

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Photography by Brendan O'Gorman

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EVENTS

44th Kidlington Congress 4-5 February 2023

by Keith Freshwater



Kidlington is a long-established event in the English weekend tournament calendar, taking place on the first full weekend in February and catering for players of all abilities. It has four sections: Open, Major (Under 2000), Intermediate (Under 1800), and Minor (Under 1600), with a prize fund of over £2,200. Recent events have typically attracted about 180 entrants, not only locals, but from all over the country and sometimes beyond.

I joined the organising team after an initial meeting last June with Gerard O'Reilly, who, inheriting a strong and well-established team, had been the lead organiser since 2010 but now needed to step back from the lead role, though he has remained involved. I had played in a few tournaments but had never been involved in organising one before — so there was much to learn.

I discovered how many and various are the things to consider when setting up such an event, e.g.: overall cost and how this affects prizes and entrance fees; sourcing and transporting chess equipment, and arranging suitable and sufficient tables and chairs; lighting, heating, and noise levels in the playing area; ease of access for disabled players; toilets, parking, catering, local accommodation; liaison with the staff at the venue, especially the caretakers on duty during the tournament weekend; the

provision of an analysis and relaxation area away from the main playing hall. An obviously vital requirement is a sufficient number of competent arbiters and controllers for the weekend. But there are also many more behind-the-scenes arrangements relating to the tournament website and putting in place reliable software and other arrangements for registering and tracking online entries, an entry form and address for postal entries, as well as dedicated email addresses for the team members involved in these various activities, as well as maintaining the tournament's bank and PayPal accounts. Then there is the tournament website -

<https://kidlingtonchess.org.uk/> - to maintain, and the various pieces of documentation providing information for players about the tournament, terms and conditions of entry, and dealing with policies and procedures on DBS clearance for children and vulnerable adults present at the tournament. The list could go on ...

Because of the Covid pandemic, this was the first Kidlington tournament since 2020. Many changes affecting the tournament had taken place since then, mainly in the organising and controlling team, but also at our venue, Exeter Hall in Kidlington.

The team had lost its most experienced controllers, who had done great work as the backbone of the event for many years: Priscilla Morris had retired, and Tim Dickinson was also unavailable. Moreover, with the retirement of Andrew Butterworth we had lost our Chess Direct bookstall which had been a welcome feature of the tournament for very many years. Fortunately, Raj Panicker was happy to continue and extend his involvement, including taking responsibility for maintaining the website. Lucy Smith also wanted to continue helping with controlling (though sadly she had to drop out later), and Helen Hackett was happy once again to provide our excellent refreshments, this time joined by her husband Dave. Nevertheless, we still needed to renew our team of controllers and recruit further helpers so that no individual on the organising team would be overloaded. Fortunately, at the suggestion and with the help of Mike Truran, we were able to secure the services as Chief Arbiter of Matthew Carr, a very experienced International Arbiter. I took a course (given by Matthew) to gain an ECF qualification as an arbiter, and Jon D'Souza-Eva later volunteered to join the controlling team. In addition, Ian Bush and Nigel Moyse, although intending to play in the event themselves, offered to give us further help as needed.

Exeter Hall had been booked for this year as soon as last year's event was cancelled. It had been expected that the cost of hiring the venue, which had remained stable for many years, would be increased significantly; as things turned out, the increase was greater than expected, which made it necessary to increase entry fees. When preparations began in earnest late last summer, we found out that arrangements at the Hall had also changed significantly. Since our previous tournament, an award-winning local group, the Cherwell Collective, with a wide range of activities intended to reduce the community's carbon footprint and find other ways of empowering individuals locally to live environmentally sustainable lives - <https://www.cherwellcollective.com/about-us/> - had been making extensive use of Exeter Hall; we were briefly alarmed to discover they had been regularly running a café in Exeter Hall on Saturday mornings, though that alarm proved quite unnecessary because they unhesitatingly offered to forgo operating the café on the tournament weekend. Because of their use of the premises for storage, there were also changes to the configuration of space at Exeter Hall, but although the space available to players and visitors to the tournament was a little less than before, the changes also made the playing area quieter, so we feel that Exeter Hall remains a

very good venue, where the staff have been unfailingly helpful.

The fact that the software Kidlington had previously been using for taking online entries had massively increased in price necessitated another change. We decided to explore and ultimately to use the new tournament registration software designed and maintained by Malcolm Peacock (see his <http://congress.org.uk/> website) and promoted by the ECF on the web page here: <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/congress-online-entry-software/>. I am very grateful to Malcolm for his time and patience in dealing with our many enquiries. Raj's expertise was invaluable from our end in getting this running smoothly and linking it all up to the Kidlington Chess Tournament website.

For most of January, it had looked likely that we would have a full house, reaching the maximum of 190 entries we could accommodate but, unusually, the rate of entries fell away in the final fortnight, perhaps because of travel uncertainties relating to rail strikes on the day before the tournament weekend. With a day to go we had reached 180 but inevitably we had a small number of late withdrawals. So just before the start on Saturday morning, we had 174 players registered: 31 in the Open section; 34 in the Major (U2000); 44 in the Intermediate (U1800); and 65 in the Minor (U1600).

Fortunately, the weather was not a cause of last-minute withdrawals. Saturday morning was bright and sunny and actually quite warm, which led us to turn off the heating at midday. Helen and Dave Hackett were kept very busy, and the local pubs did a good trade as well. The chess went well, there were hardly any issues to deal with and encouraging comments were made.



Controllers at work – Keith, Raj and John

Matthew Carr took command on the day with Jon and myself helping to control the various sections, with further assistance from Raj. Gerard was able to attend on the Saturday afternoon and Carl Portman turned up for round 2 with his camera; these are his pictures you see here.

Competitors spanned a wide range of ages, from Miheli Gunarathne aged 8 to Michael Campling at 95, and of abilities, from the top-rated player IM Marcus Harvey to a few unrated players trying out an over the board chess tournament for the first time.

Two young lads who were also friends quickly established a strong showing in the Minor, Senith Gunarathne from Nottinghamshire Juniors and Krish Keshari from Reading. Ultimately they met in the final round on 4 points each. They agreed a draw and shared 1st place, but it was a good game and went into an even ending. The unrated Graham Fletcher from Wiltshire also finished on 4½ points beating another ungraded player, first-timer Gabriel Starburst, in round 5, dropping his only ½ point by virtue of taking a bye in round 3.

The Intermediate also saw a tie for first place, with four players all on 4 points: Brendan O'Gorman (DHSS), Mal Waddell (Banbury), Chris Carpenter (Herne Bay), and Gareth Stevens (Cumnor).

The Major was won by 12-year-old Kajus Mikalajunas (Leicestershire Juniors), on 5/5 – the only player to achieve this at the tournament.

Marcus Harvey was top seed in the Open and went on to win with 4½/5. In his game from the 4th round against Russell James (see below), he appeared superficially to come under some pressure on the kingside, but after a few accurate defensive moves by Marcus it was Black's position that collapsed. In the final round he played the rising force that is Yichen Han, the 15-year-old from Oxfordshire, and this game ended in a draw.

The prizes on offer at Kidlington include a team prize. This is just a bit of fun really and is for any group of four players from any section who want to give themselves a name. The prize is not large and is shared but was actually the one that generated the most enquiries and we had to start posting bulletins in later rounds.

A table of all the tournament's prize-winners can be found using this link:

https://www.kidlingtonchess.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/KCT2023_Prizewinners.pdf

Oxfordshire now has two weekend congresses during the season. In addition to Kidlington, there is the younger Witney Weekend Chess Congress, which [holds its 10th edition in November 2023](#). The title of Oxfordshire Individual Champion and the trophy go to the Oxfordshire player with the most points in the Open sections of both events combined. No surprise that this went to Yichen Han, of Magdalen College School, who had won the Open section at Witney last November as well as the Oxford Junior championship in January.

Cross-tables can be found on Chess-Results for the various sections below:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr724665.aspx?lan=1&art=4>
<https://chess-results.com/tnr724758.aspx?lan=1&art=4>
<https://chess-results.com/tnr724759.aspx?lan=1&art=4>
<https://chess-results.com/tnr725067.aspx?lan=1&art=4>

Here is the tournament winner's game from the 4th round in the Open section:

Marcus Harvey (2540) v Russell James (2129) A16
Kidlington 2023, Open section, Round 4, 06.02.2023



IM Marcus Harvey

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.e4 e5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Nxe5 0-0 6.d4 c5 7.dxc5 Re8 8.f4 Qa5 9.Bd3 Qxc5 10.Qe2 d6 11.Nf3 Nc6 12.Be3 Qa5 13.0-0 Black's opening experiment has not turned out well. He now tries to whip up an attack against White's king, but Marcus has everything under control.
13...Ng4 14.Bd2 Qh5 15.h3 Nd4 16.Nxd4 Bxd4+ 17.Kh1



17...Qh4? 17...Nf2+ is hopeless after 18.Rxf2 Bxf2 19.Qxf2 Bxh3 20.Kg1! Black probably has nothing better than 17...Nf6 but that simply allows White to exchange queens and remain a pawn up with the better position.

18.Be1! This simple response puts an end to any attack, and, after Marcus's next move, Black's position collapses.

18...Qh6 19.Nb5 Bb6 20.Nxd6 Bd7 21.e5 Ne3 22.Rf3 Bg4 23.Bf2 Bxf3 24.Qxf3 Nf5 25.Nxe8 Rxe8 26.Bxb6 Nh4 27.Qd5 axb6 28.g3 g5 29.fgx5 Qxg5 30.Rf1 Re6 31.gxh4 Qxh4 32.Bf5



1-0

... from Twitter



British Rapidplay Championship, endorsed by the British Isles Coordinating Committee and supported by @ecfchess takes place at the Mercure Bradford 15-16 April - details and entry at 4ncl.co.uk/rp/2023/inform...



9:38 am · 23 Mar 2023 · 109 Views

ECF Membership

We have kept the membership prices the same for 2022/23 the same, as shown below ---

Supporter – £10

Queen's Gambit Scheme Supporter – free

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Varsity Match

by Stephen Meyler



The 141st Varsity Match between Oxford and Cambridge was held at the Royal Automobile Club, Pall Mall on Saturday 4 March and resulted in a 4-4 draw. This result leaves Cambridge in the lead by 60-58 with 23 matches drawn.

The idea of a regular chess match between Oxford and Cambridge Universities was first suggested in 1853 by Howard Staunton.

In 1871 the Oxford University Chess Club challenged Cambridge to a match but, at that time, the Cambridge Club was only for dons, who refused the challenge from the undergraduates.

Not until 28 March 1873 did the first official over the board Varsity Match take place at the City of London Chess Club. Since then it has become the oldest continuous fixture in the chess calendar, interrupted only by the war years. The winning team is awarded, to hold

for a year, a handsome gold cup presented in 1953 by Miss Margaret Pugh.

A women's board was introduced in 1978 to determine the result in the event of a drawn match. However, since 1982 the matches have comprised eight boards with at least one woman player in each team, the board ranking being determined solely by playing strength.

To emphasise the undergraduate nature of the competition, all players must be resident bona fide students of the universities, with at least three members of each team studying for a first degree.

In the 20th century, it is remarkable how many British champions had played in the Varsity Match. In addition to those named below, Henry Atkins, William Winter, Alan Phillips and Hugh Alexander played for Cambridge and Leonard Barden and Peter Lee played for Oxford. A feature of recent years has been the increasingly international nature of the teams.

Looking at the history of the match, Cambridge retained the lead in the series until 1956 when Oxford won 4–3, with Henry Mutkin winning on board two for Oxford. Then Oxford went ahead until 1970 when Cambridge, inspired by the presence of Raymond Keene and Bill Hartston, began a remarkable run of 11 straight victories. In their wake came a procession of first-class Cambridge players including Welsh champions Howard Williams and John Cooper, GMs Michael Stean and Jonathan Mestel, and IMs Paul Littlewood and Shaun Taulbut. Although Oxford had its stars, GMs Jon Speelman, John Nunn and Peter Markland together with IMs Andrew Whiteley and George Botterill, Cambridge had greater strength in the lower boards.

However, in 1981 the tide turned and Oxford, with GMs William Watson, Jonathan Levitt, Colin

McNab, David Norwood, Peter Wells, James Howell, and Dharshan Kumaran and IMs David Goodman, David Cummings, Ken Regan, Geoff Lawton and Stuart Rachels achieved a run of eight consecutive victories and eventually regained the lead.

In 1995, Cambridge squared the series again and subsequently moved ahead, despite Oxford fielding GM Luke McShane on board one in 2004 and 2005. Going into today's match, Cambridge are in the lead by 60 to 58 with 22 draws.

In the 2019 match the Chinese grandmaster and four-times women's world chess champion Hou Yifan played for Oxford on board 1. She is a chess prodigy: the youngest female player ever to qualify for the title of grandmaster and the youngest ever to win the Women's World Chess Championship.

In 2022 Harry Grieve pipped Matthew Wadsworth, who both played in the 140th Cambridge Varsity Team, to become the current British Champion.

In 1973 the event was held for the first time at the clubhouse of the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, London for the centenary match. By invitation of the Royal Automobile Club Chess Circle Committee, the

match has been played each year at this ideal venue since 1978.

The match has a history of close encounters and this year was no different, with extremely tight games – the last one finishing after six hours of play in a win for Oxford, thus securing a drawn match - leaving Cambridge in the lead by 60-58 with 23 draws.

The brilliancy prize was awarded to Daniel Gallagher, Cambridge, for the following game (notes provided by GM Matthew Sadler who led the commentary team whilst being kibitzed by GMs Jon Speelman, Ray Keene and Michael Stean). Matthew had also provided a preview of the match and the respective opening repertoires.

Board 4 Gallagher, Daniel GH (2218) - French, Max (2226) [C11]

Oxford vs. Cambridge Varsity Match chess24.com (1), 04.03.2023

In my preview I'd predicted fireworks in this game and we weren't disappointed though, as a neutral, I would maybe have hoped for fireworks in both directions!

Once again, clever opening preparation was the key as Daniel surprised inveterate Caro-Kann player Max with the Fantasy variation (3.f3) which Daniel had never played before.



Max's last experience against this line was back in 2016 (!) so his preparation was likely to be a little hazy in his head! Max reacted with a very sensible line (3...e6) but with one big drawback: it allows a transposition into the Steinitz French, a very complicated and theory-rich main line which Daniel knew fairly well but Max did not. This proved too much to handle; Daniel attacked with purpose and power and finished the game off in fine style.



18.Bxg6 Bxd4 19.Bxf7+ Rxf7 20.Rh8+



A very neat shimmy that finishes Black off with continued checks.

20...Rf8 21.Qg6+ Ke7 22.Qg7+ Rf7 23.Qg5+



1-0

This game won Daniel the Brilliancy prize – well done!

The best game prize was adjudged to be the draw on board 2; again, Matthew's notes accompany the game.

Board 2 Petr, Jan (2282) - Powierski, Emil (2306) [D00]

Oxford vs. Cambridge Varsity Match chess24.com (1), 04.03.2023

This game was absolutely gripping all the way through and was a deserved winner of the best game prize! Jan

Petr, Cambridge, had scored two good wins in previous Varsity Matches and clearly has an excellent temperament for the tension of this event. I'd also been impressed with his opponent's games when preparing my preview of the match; Emil is a pretty complete player, well-prepared and with no obvious weaknesses. Jan also prepared a surprise; instead of his main choice 1.e4, he moved to 1.d4 and the Jobava London System (1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Bf4) which, as far as I can tell, he had never played before. I also didn't have any games of Emil against it! Jan set up an aggressive structure with queenside castling and an early kingside pawn storm.



The engines are not particularly wowed by White's set-up but it's quite unpleasant to face unprepared in a practical game, so the feeling in the commentary room was that Jan would be reasonably happy with the outcome of the opening, a murky position where both players were on their own. In fact, Emil played the early middlegame phase in excellent concrete fashion and built up an excellent position.



We thought in the commentary room that Black had excellent chances but we hadn't got as far as the engines' assessment that Black was virtually winning! White's problem is that his knight is doomed to remain offside to cover the pawn on f6 (which also gets in the way of White's kingside counterplay) while Black can start a

pawn storm on the queenside. However, the unusual nature of the position makes it hard to handle for both sides and Jan managed to exchange a pair of rooks (thus reducing the power of Black's play on the queenside) and invade along the h-file, and at this stage a quiet draw looked odds-on.



We felt in the commentary room that both sides were holding each other in balance and that there was nothing more to be done. However, the players had other ideas! I had the feeling that both players were simply playing full out for the win, went for their plans and rolled the dice to see who would come out on top! At first, Emil clearly got the upper hand and had multiple (difficult) opportunities to win of which this fine idea – pointed out by a gentleman in the audience – was the finest:

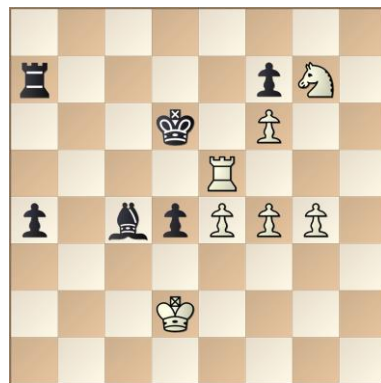
41. Rxc5



41...Bxc2+ wins! 42.Kxc2 Rxc4+ 43.Kb2 a4 and three passed pawns are way too much! White's extra knight is marooned on h5 and can't provide any help. 44.Rg8 b3 45.Ra8 Rc2+ 46.Kb1 d3 47.Rd8+ Kc5 48.Rxd3 Kb4 49.Ng3 a3.

In the commentary, we kept on talking about how bad the knight on h5 was but Jan confounded us all by bringing the knight into play via g7!

46. Nxc7



All of a sudden the game turned, and Jan was completely winning! In the commentary, Jon Speelman was motoring and found this delicious idea in one of the variations (not at all forced unfortunately!).



I was analysing 51.Nc3 with a likely draw after giving up the knight for the a-pawn but Jon pointed out 51.Nb6+ Kd6 52.Rc3:



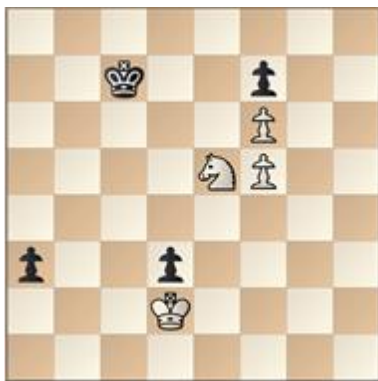
53.e5+ Ke6 54.Rc6 mate is the calamitous threat! Mate out of nowhere!

Jan lost his way and the slightly better of a draw seemed most likely until Jan began to think. In the commentary

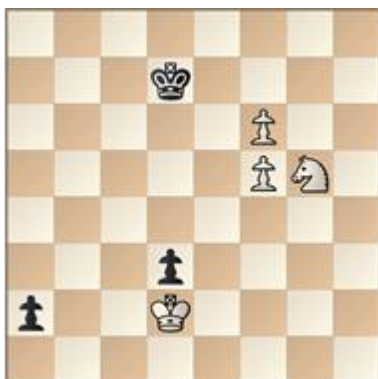
room, I had a horrible feeling of what was going to happen and indeed in this position...



...Jan played 56.f5 which should have allowed 56...Bxf5 57.gxf5 a3 when the pawns are unstoppable!



In the commentary, in the frantic minutes while Emil was thinking, we thought that White still had a draw with 58.Nxf7 a3 59.Ng5 when Black cannot stop White queening after 59...a2 60.f7. However, the calm engine points out the fun-killing 59...Kd7!

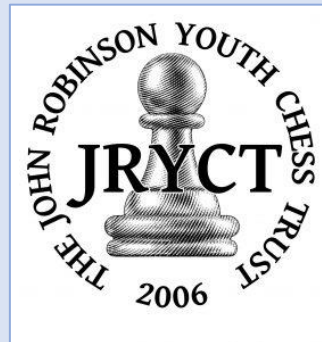


Emil missed this last chance however and the game ended in a well-deserved draw. Fantastic entertainment from start to finish and congratulations to both players for relentlessly striving for a win in every situation!

Live commentary was provided by Grandmaster Matthew Sadler and the match was broadcast live on the internet.

The Margaret Pugh trophy was presented to both captains by the guest of honour Daniel Johnson, renowned journalist, at the gala dinner that was enjoyed by students and members alike.

The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust



The John Robinson Youth Chess Trust, an Independent grant-making charitable trust, was founded in 2006. The charitable objectives of the Trust are 'to advance education by providing or assisting in the provision of facilities for the teaching development and supervision of the playing of chess amongst persons under the age of twenty one, resident in England or eligible to represent England at chess'. The Trust was created following the death of Mr. John Robinson on 1st February 2006. In his Will, dated 14th February 1996, he left substantial bequests to the British Chess Federation. Each year the Trust awards a total of approximately £22,000 in grants.

If you wish to enquire about the work of the Trust, please contact the Chairman by email — john.higgs@englishchess.org.uk

Warwick Win 20/20 Chess Championship

by Peter Hornsby



The 20/20 Chess Championships resumed in a lovely new venue for 2023 at Warwick University, and the hosts won all of their six matches to reclaim the title that they previously held in 2020, just before the pandemic suspended over the board events.

The tournament was already a success before a single match was played; £680 was raised for charity (Oxfam) through entry fees which will go towards supporting the victims of the recent tragic earthquake in Syria and Turkey, along with other crises in the world, of course including in Ukraine:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/2020chess>

16 teams participated from across the UK, comprising schools, clubs, and universities from across all demographics.

The deciding match took place in round 4, with Sons of Anarchy (Tiger Sharks, the reigning 4NCL Rapidplay champions) drawn against Warwick University, with both teams having convincingly won their opening three matches.

International Master Ameet Ghasi narrowly managed to prevail against FIDE Master Sam Chow on board 1 for Sons of Anarchy; however, Warwick's Oscar Pollock held on for a draw against FIDE Master James Moreby, and Warwick

were able to win on the bottom two boards to give them a thrilling 2½-1½ victory.

The championship was in their hands, and they did not let up or slip up, convincingly winning both of their remaining matches with a 4-0 scoreline to become champions.

As a result, Reading University leapfrogged Staffordshire Juniors, who themselves should be proud of a fine display, into 3rd place and a podium finish.

Final Ranking after 6 Rounds

Rk.	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-
1	15	Warwick University	6	6	0	0
2	10	Sons of Anarchy (Sharks)	6	5	0	1
3	6	Reading University A	6	4	0	2
4	12	Staffordshire Juniors	6	3	1	2
5	3	Lichfield and Burton Chess Club	6	3	1	2
6	9	Solihull Chess Club	6	3	1	2
7	2	Kynoch Chess Club	6	3	0	3
8	16	Watlington Wanderers	6	3	0	3
9	4	May The Fork Be With You	6	3	0	3
10	7	Reading University B	6	2	2	2
11	8	Reading University C	6	2	1	3
12	1	Coventry University	6	1	3	2
13	13	Stratford Upon Avon School A	6	1	3	2
14	5	Oxford Brookes	6	1	1	4
15	11	Stafford Chess Club	6	1	1	4
16	14	Stratford Upon Avon School B	6	0	0	6

Many, many thanks to all our sponsors who kindly provided prizes:

[Purling London](#): For donating the first-place board/trophy

[Chess.com](#): For donating Diamond memberships, awarded to players who scored 5/6 or more.

[SoulSanity](#): For providing online classes for all players who were part of the teams that finished in the top three places.

[Chess & Bridge](#): For providing the chess clocks, as well as providing vouchers which were used for various prizes, and for donating a *CHESS* magazine to each participant

We are also extremely grateful to Warwick University Chess Society, and their Presidents James Parkinson and Meghana Mohan, for hosting the event and allowing us to use their newly acquired chess sets.

Special thanks must go to Hok Yin Stephen Chiu for booking the venue and working alongside James Connors who very kindly helped with the pairings and publishing the results which you can view in full here:

[Chess-Results Server Chess-results.com - World Chess League 20/20 Chess Team Championships](http://Chess-Results_Server_Chess-results.com - World Chess League 20/20 Chess Team Championships)

tinyurl.com/wcl2023

Finally, we were delighted that the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Noel Butler, attended as our guest of honour to observe the final round and to award the prizes at the closing ceremony, which you can watch below.

<https://youtu.be/BPpkdeaBKyM>

We look forward to our next competition!

--- Peter Hornsby, Founder and Tournament Director of 20/20 Chess

European Individual Chess Championships



Photograph courtesy of the EICC

The European Individual Chess Championships took place from 2 to 14 March 2023 in Vrnjacka Banja, Serbia and attracted 250 players.

A contingent of 12 English players took part with some fine results in a top level field, with GM Danny Fernandez, IM Brandon Clarke and IM Jonah Willow all finishing with 7 points from 11 rounds and TPRs (tournament performance ratings) over 2500 FIDE.

Player	FIDE	TPR	Pts/11
GM Daniel Fernandez	2498	2552	7
IM Brandon Clarke	2475	2529	7
IM Jonah Willow	2459	2503	7
IM Shreyas Royal	2452	2432	6½
IM Matthew Wadsworth	2439	2370	5½

NM Alfie Onslow	2174	2210	5
Tristan A Cox	1975	2304	5
CM Ankush Khandelwal	2255	2073	4½

Detailed results for the English players can be found here:

<http://chess-results.com/tnr712575.aspx?lan=1&art=25&fedb=ENG&turdet=YES&flag=30>

The Chess Trust



The Chess Trust was established in 2015. It was initially supported by a significant bequest from the estate of Kent junior organiser Richard Haddrell, and this bequest formed the basis for building plans to support chess. Since 2015 additional funds have been received through donations and bequests, and in 2022 the Chess Trust received the assets of the Permanent Invested Fund from the British Chess Federation (the English Chess Federation's predecessor). The Trust has two objectives:

1. The advancement of amateur sport by promoting the study and practice of chess in all its forms, principally, but not exclusively, for the benefit of residents of England; and
2. The advancement of education by promoting the development of young people through the teaching and practice of chess.

The Chess Trust website is here - <https://www.chesstrust.org.uk/>

British Rapidplay Championship 2023



After a break of nearly four years the ECF is supporting the 4NCL in organising the 2023 edition of the British Rapidplay Championship on 15-16 April 2023 at Mercure Bradford Bankfield Hotel.



Eligibility

Please refer to the website for full eligibility information:
<https://www.4ncl.co.uk/rp/2023/information.htm>

The Rapidplay will have a single open section which will be played as an 11 round Swiss tournament at a 15|10 time control (15 minutes for each player with a 10 second increment per move from move 1).

The schedule is as below with six rounds on Saturday and the remaining five rounds on Sunday:

Round 1 - Saturday 12.30; Round 2 - Saturday 13.45
Round 3 - Saturday 15.00; Round 4 - Saturday 16.15
Round 5 - Saturday 17.30; Round 6 - Saturday 18.45
Round 7 - Sunday 10.00; Round 8 - Sunday 11.15
Round 9 - Sunday 12.30; Round 10 - Sunday 13.45
Round 11 - Sunday 15.00

Prizes and Awards

The prize fund of £3,000 will be distributed as follows:

Open: 1st £600; 2nd £400; 3rd £300; 4th £200; 5th £100

Women: 1st £300; 2nd £200; 3rd £100

Best performance: £200 x 4

The winner will be awarded the title of British Rapidplay Champion 2023 and an engraved glass trophy.

The highest-placed female player will be awarded the title of British Women's Rapidplay Champion 2023 and an engraved glass trophy.

Entries

The entry form is here:

<https://form.jotform.com/223443869862367>

Titled players already entered include GMs Daniel Gormally, Peter Wells and Keith Arkell, WGM Sheila Jackson, and IMs Ameet Ghasi and Lawrence Cooper.

English Seniors Championships 2023



The English Seniors Championships take place between Thursday 4 May and Monday 8 May 2023 at Woodland Grange, Old Milverton Lane, Leamington Spa CV32 6RN

Eligibility

Over 50 – players must be aged 50 or over on 31 December 2023; Over 65 – players must be aged 65 or over on 31 December 2023. Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding 12 months. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration, it must be ENG.

Schedule

The congress will have a total of seven rounds over five days, with the playing schedule as follows for each of the championships:

Thursday Round 1 - 17.30 – 21.30

Friday Round 2 - 10.00 – 14.00; **Round 3** - 16.00 – 20.00

Saturday Round 4 - 16.00 – 20.00

(timing to be confirmed)

Sunday Round 5 - 10.00 – 14.00; **Round 6** - 16.00 – 20.00

Monday Round 7 - 11.00 – 15.00

Prizegiving following round 7.

Rating

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

Tournament rules

[2023-English-Seniors-Chess-Championship-Tournament-Rules-V1-0.pdf](https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2023/)

For more information and entry form please go to:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-seniors-championships-2023/>

Current Entries



Defending Over 50 Champion GM Mark Hebden

With just under two months to go before the tournament commences, there is already a total of 48 entrants across the two championships. Top players in the over 50 section include defending champion GM Mark Hebden, together with GM Keith Arkell, GM Nigel Davies and IM Neil Bradbury. IM Chris Baker leads the pack in the over 65 section.

English and English Women's Championships 2023



The English Championships and English Women's Championships will place between Friday 26 May and Bank Holiday Monday 29 May 2023 at Holiday Inn Kenilworth-Warwick, 212 Abbey End, Kenilworth CV8 1ED.

Eligibility and Qualification

Players must be born in England or have lived in England for at least the preceding 12 months to be eligible for the Championships. In addition, if they have a FIDE registration, it must be ENG. Direct entries will be accepted from eligible GMs, WGMs, IMs or WIMs, or players with a rating over 2000 ECF or FIDE in the respective March rating list for the Open Championships or 1700 ECF or FIDE for the Women's Championships

There will be a venue-based limit on player numbers across the two Championships.

Schedule

Both of the finals – English Championship and English Women's Championship – will be played as a FIDE and ECF rated Swiss tournament, with a total of seven rounds over five days. The playing schedule will be as follows for both events:

Friday Round 1 - 10:00 to 14:00; **Round 2** - 16:00 – 20:00

Saturday Round 3 - 10.00 – 14:00; **Round 4** - 16:00 – 20:00

Sunday Round 5 - 10:00 – 14:00; **Round 6** - 16:00 – 20:00

Monday Round 7 - 10:00 – 14:00

Monday 15.00 – play-offs if required.

For more information and entry form please go to:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/english-championships-2023/>

Entries to date



Photo courtesy of Shohreh Bayat/Satish Gaekwad

England's number one player GM Michael Adams (above) is the highest-rated player in the Open tournament and WFM Sarah Longson is currently the highest-rated player in the Women's tournament.

Other GMs who have entered to date are Daniel Gormally and Mark Hebden in the Open tournament, alongside IMs Ameet Ghasi, Marcus Harvey and James Jackson, plus WIM Lan Yao.

British Chess Championships 2023

by Nigel Towers



The British Chess Championships is the largest and most prestigious event in the UK chess calendar. This year's British is organised by the ECF as in previous years and is being held at **The Venue, De Montfort University in Leicester**, with events running from 20 to 30 July 2023.

Championship Events and Playing Schedule

This year's playing schedule starts on 20 July, with an evening blitz to open the events, and continues for 11 days until Sunday 30 July with the final rounds of the Open and Seniors Championships and the Major Open.

The Championship events (i.e. the British Championship, Senior Championships and Junior Championships) are open to citizens of the British Isles and territories or players who have been resident for the last 12 months.



British Crown Trophy engraving



British Women's Trophy

The main British Championship follows the now traditional format of a nine round Swiss tournament running from Saturday 22 to Sunday 30 July, with a game a day and typically around 60 players or more competing. The winner of the event becomes the British Champion for 2023, with the British Women's title awarded to the highest-placed female player.

Eligible players wanting to take part in the main British Championships will need to qualify via one of the qualification routes including qualification by title (with British GMs and IMs qualifying automatically), top finishers from last year's Championship or Major Open, National or Union Champions, top finishers in title norm events in the British Isles, and/ or British Grand Prix winners based on results in FIDE-rated events in the last year. You can find the full list of qualification regulations on the British Chess Championships website.

The Major Open runs alongside the main British with the same nine round Swiss format with a game a day. As the name suggests this event is open to all players and is typically a larger event including international as well as British players.

As in previous years, the Senior Championships include Over 50 and Over 65 sections each with seven rounds running from 24 to 30 July. The Junior Championships include U8, U10, U12, U14 and U16 sections again with seven rounds running from

25 to 29 July. The senior and junior events are open to all British players who are eligible based on age – i.e. there are no additional qualifying requirements for these events, which are always well attended.

Supporting tournaments which run alongside the Championship include the Weekender tournament over the first weekend of the event – this year’s tournament now has four sections: the Atkins (Open), Penrose (U2000), Soanes (U1750) and Yates (U1500). The new Penrose section has been introduced to balance numbers across the Weekender events and is named in honour of Jonathan Penrose who won the championship a record ten times in the 1950s and 1960s. Other supporting tournaments include the traditional AM and PM tournaments with six rounds and a game a day during the final week. There will also be a number of rapidplay, blitz and junior blitz tournaments running throughout the tournament. You can find a full schedule of Championship and supporting events together with online entry forms on the British website here: <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

The main British Championship and top boards of selected other events will be played on DGT live boards and broadcast live. As in previous Championships the games on live boards will be broadcast on the internet via Chess24, Chess.com, Lichess and other platforms, and the ECF will be providing a local commentary team to cover the event from the commentary room on site, with the commentary also broadcast via Twitch and available on YouTube.

There will be a seating area for spectators to watch the games on the top boards, with the live board feeds also broadcast on TV screens behind the players following the usual format.

The British Festival 2023

In addition to the traditional schedule we are hoping to expand this year’s event to include a festival of chess-related and social events including:

Quiz night(s); Problem solving; Simul(s) (indoor and/ or outdoor depending on the weather); Alfresco / drop-in chess; Variant and team events, e.g. Chess960, Hand and Brain, Bughouse; Coaching events/master classes; Chess film night(s) at a local cinema; Visit(s) to the National Chess Library.

Leicester as a Venue for the British

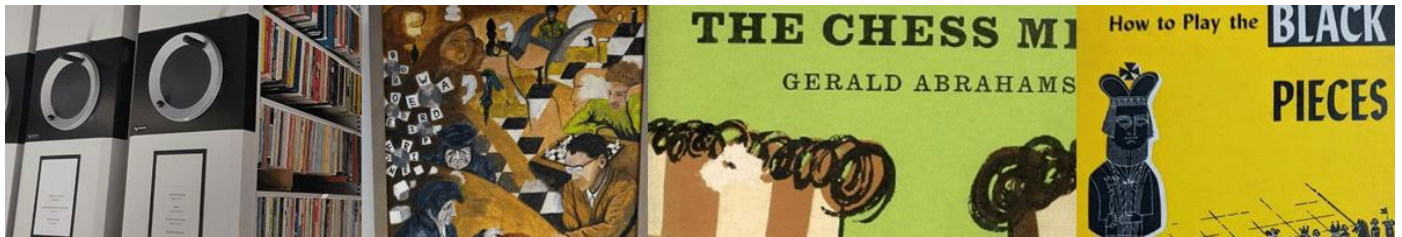
The Venue, De Montfort University





Halls 1 and 2 out of 3

This year's British is being held at the Venue, De Montfort University, a spacious and well-supported venue located at the edge of the award-winning De Montfort University Campus and close to the centre of Leicester.



The Campus is notable as the home for the National Chess Library of around 7,000 books and periodicals/ papers derived from a number of collections left to the BCF, including Harry Golombek's personal collection which forms an important part of the library. The library was housed in Hastings, then the ECF Offices in Battle, and was transferred to safe keeping within the Kimberlin Library at De Montfort University in Leicester in June 2021. As mentioned above, we are hoping to organise a visit to view the library during the course of the championships as part of the festival programme.

Leicester is a unique city in the East Midlands, rich in the arts, culture, sports and heritage, with plenty of visitor attractions and things to do including a visit to the King Richard III Visitor Centre, New Walk, Newarke Houses Museum, the Golden Mile, Curve Theatre, and various green spaces across the centre of town. You can find a longer list of the many attractions on the web page here: <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/leicester-info/>

British Championship History and the Route to Leicester



A selection of multi-title British and British Women's Champions

This year's Championship in Leicester will be the 109th British Chess Championship in a series which has run almost unbroken since 1904. The first championship in 1904 resulted in a tie between Leicester player H E Atkins (below left) and William Ewart Napier, with Napier winning the tie-break. Atkins won the event outright in 1905 and continued with a series of nine wins in 11 appearances from 1905 to 1925. The Women's Champion for the first two years was Kate Belinda Finn.

The British has been to Leicester on one previous occasion in 1960, when Jonathan Penrose (below right) became British Champion for the third time in his record-breaking run of 10 wins in total in the 1950s and 1960s. The British Women's Champion for 1960 was Rowena May Bruce, who won the championship six times.



Venues and recent champions for the last five years are shown below:

2017	Llandudno	GM Gawain Jones	WGM and IM Jovanka Houska
2018	Hull	GM Michael Adams	WGM and IM Jovanka Houska
2019	Torquay	GM Michael Adams	WGM and IM Jovanka Houska
2021	Hull	GM Nicholas Pert	WGM and IM Harriet Hunt
2022	Torquay	FM Harry Grieve	WIM Lan Yao

You can find further details about the 2023 British on the British Chess Championships website at the link below, including detailed schedule, regulations, online entry forms for the various events and a full list of entrants to date for all events: <https://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

Nigel Towers reports on this month's ECF online clubs and tournaments

ECF Online Clubs

The ECF members clubs are open to all ECF members and supporters on Chess.com or Lichess and provide regular ECF online rated tournaments most days of the week where you can get an ECF online rating, together with online internationals.

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

Lichess: <https://lichess.org/team/english-chess-players>

We also have an open club on Chess.com with regular ECF tournaments and a chance to play for the ECF England team in the Live Chess World and European Leagues.

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

Chess.com Internationals



We continue to field ECF Open Club teams in the Live Chess World, European, and Mediterranean Leagues, drawn from players in the ECF Open club. Club members can register for events from an hour before each fixture and are allocated to boards depending on their Chess.com rating.

LCWL Season 11 – We won both legs of our round 1 match against team Australia on 17 February with a convincing 20-8 win in the Blitz leg and 13½ – 10½ in the Rapid.

We then drew our round-2 match against Team India on 23rd February with a 17½ – 12½ win in the Blitz leg followed by a 9½ – 14½ loss in the Rapid. A draw was an outstanding result against Team India, who have one of the largest teams on chess.com with over 44,000 members.

LCEL Season 7 – We went on to lose our fixture of the new LCEL season against Team Denmark also on 17 February and with losses of 4½ – 13½ in the bullet, 10-12 in the blitz and 4½ – 11½ in the Rapid.

LCML – Season 3 - We lost our round 6 game against a very strong Team France on 11 March by 6½ to 23½.

Here is the board 1 game from our Live Chess World League match against Team Australia.

(12347) MaximoanusVI (2497) - epiceffects (2467) [B72]

ECF v Team Australia Blitz Leg Board 1 - Chess.com, 19.02.2023

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.Be3 0-0 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.Nb3 a5 10.a3 a4 11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bd7 13.0-0-0



13...Qa5 14.h4 Rfc8 15.f3 b5 16.g4 Rab8 17.h5 b4 18.Na2
 Be6 19.Nxb4 Bc4 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.Bxc4 Rxc4 22.Bc3 Rbc8
 23.Na2 Qc7 24.Qh2 Qc5 25.Rd3 Qg5+ 26.Kb1 e5 27.Rxd6
 Qe3 28.Rd3 Qb6 29.Ka1 Rb8 30.Bxe5 Rbc8 31.c3 Qb5
 32.Rd6



32...R4c6 33.Bxf6 Rxd6 34.Qh8+



1-0

Lichess Internationals / Team Battles

Lichess team battles also continue to be very popular with English Chess Players team members. These provide an opportunity to take part in some of the biggest Lichess events, with team members paired in Arena format against players from opposing teams. The weekly schedule includes the Bundesliga on Sundays and Thursdays where we move between Ligen 3 and 5, the

Liga Ibera on Sundays, and the Champions League on Tuesdays.

ECF Online Grand Prix Series 2023

The Online Grand Prix series is up and running for 2023 with the full series of ten blitz and ten rapid events scheduled for the first and third Sundays of the month from January to October 2023, with the January blitz and rapid events completed. You can find further details and the 2023 entry form at the link here together with the leaderboards following the first three events:

<https://www.englishchess.org.uk/ecf-online-grand-prix-2023/>

Chess and Bridge



Chess & Bridge offer all members 50% off CHESSE Magazine for the first year, and staggered discounts off online purchases according to your membership level – Supporters / QGS / Bronze members 5%; Silver / Gold / Platinum members 10%. Chess & Bridge supply chess books, chess sets, software and computers by mail order and also have a retail shop at 44 Baker Street, London W1U 7RT



The Chess and Bridge website is here - <https://chess.co.uk/>

FEATURES

Arkell's Endings A Momentary Lapse



After a bad opening, there is hope for the middlegame. After a bad middlegame, there is hope for the endgame. But once you are in the endgame, the moment of truth has arrived - Edmar Mednis

The Cambridge International Open was a superb addition to the English chess calendar, for which thanks go to Shohreh Bayat, the force behind the event, and to the English Chess Federation as a whole. Going into the penultimate round, I knew that a win would propel me to the top boards for the last game. Everything was going swimmingly until a senior moment meant that I had to win all over again.

Thomas Villiers (2295) – Keith Arkell (2506) B17
Cambridge International Open (8), 18.02.2023

1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Qe2



This wasn't the first time I had played Tom, so I was aware of his playful practice of pretending to put a piece on a

square only to slide it somewhere else. After he nudged his queen back from f3 to e2 I was in no mood to allow mate on move 6!

5...Ndf6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.c3 Nxe4 8.Qxe4 Nf6 9.Qf4 Bxf3 10.Qxf3 e6



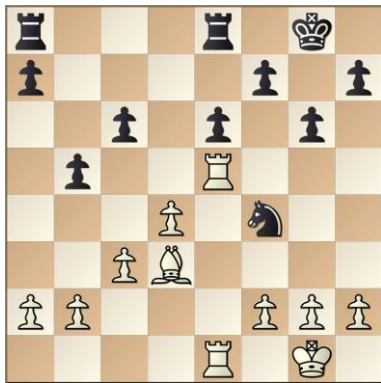
After a slightly unusual sequence we are back in a position I am all too familiar with - one which is not to everyone's taste in a must-win game. My first objective is to exchange the dark squared bishops and the queens. Only then will I be able to use my slightly more flexible pawn structure to good effect.

11.Bd3 Be7 12.0-0 0-0 13.Re1 Re8 14.Bf4 Nd5 15.Qh3 g6 16.Be5 Bd6 17.Qg3 Bxe5 18.Rxe5 Qf6 19.Rae1 Qf4 20.Qh3



20...b5 It is important to secure the Knight on d5, as from there it will hamper my opponent from using his rooks against my king. Furthermore, it may later be useful to undermine White's fragile pawn structure with ...b4!

21.R5e4 Qd2 22.R4e2 Qg5 23.Re5 Qf6 24.Qh6 Qf4 25.Qxf4 Nxf4



After a bit of cat and mouse I have succeeded in reducing the pieces down to those most favourable for Black. With my rooks and knight I can now set about undermining White's queenside structure with a view to creating pawn weaknesses.

26.Bc2 Nd5 27.a4 a6 I didn't want to play 27...b4 yet, as after 28 c4 Ne7 29 Rd1 it is hard to improve my position. The rook on e5 is too strong, with access to a5, and the queenside is too blocked for me to increase the pressure on d4 in any meaningful way.

28.a5 It is hard to say whether this is any better than staying put, but understandably Tom wants to fix my a-pawn as a possible target for his bishop.

28...Red8 29.Bb3



29...b4 At this early stage the endgame would almost certainly be a draw with best play, but in practice Black is now the one probing to create weaknesses. I could perhaps have first doubled my rooks on the d-file, but my move also contains some venom. For those of you who are new to such positions I should point out that Bxd5? is almost always a mistake as the recapture with the c-pawn followed by a quick ...b4 will leave White's queenside structure in a terrible mess.

30.c4 Ne7 31.Rd1 Rd6



I wasn't sure whether to provoke c5, and was therefore in two minds about starting with 31... Rd7. In the end I decided that I liked the idea of fixing all White's queenside pawns. However, give me this position again and I would probably simply double the rooks the other way. In any case Black has a slight pull.

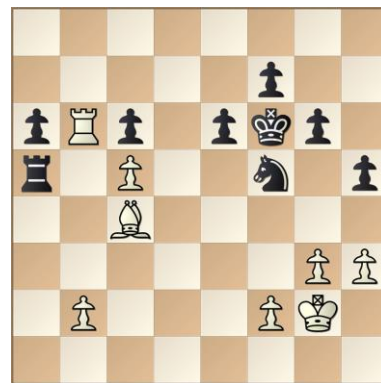
32.c5 Rdd8 33.Re3 Ra7 34.Bc4 Nf5 35.Red3 Rad7 36.Kf1 h5 37.g3 Kg7 38.h3 Kf6



39.Rb3 My opponent decides that he would be the first to run out of useful moves if we both continued to improve matters on the kingside, so he changes tack.

39...Rxd4 40.Rxd4 Rxd4 With little choice for either side we now switch to a position where I am trying to create targets on both flanks.

41.Rxb4 Rd1+ 42.Kg2 Ra1 43.Rb6 Rxa5



44.b4 This natural move is actually a very small error. After 44 Rxc6 h4 45 g4 Nd4 46 Rc8 g5 my winning chances would have been slim, and I would have regretted not playing 31...Rd7 earlier.

44...Ra4 Now we will end up by force in the kind of position which I like - one in which my opponent has weaknesses on both sides of the board.

45.Bxa6



Not waiting for ...Nd4 followed by ...a5.

45...h4! This intermezzo aims to break up White's kingside or gain access to f4 for my knight. It also contains a threat to capture on g3 followed by some rook checks.

46.g4 46 gxh4 does actually hang on with best defence, but it would not be much fun for White.

46...Ne7 Better than 46...Nd4 as it enables me to keep both sets of pieces on the board after 47 Bb7 Nd5. This is important for exerting pressure against the resulting weak c-pawn, f2, h3 and even the white monarch.

47.b5 cxb5 48.Bxb5 Ra3



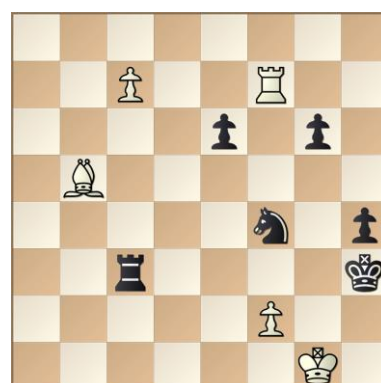
There is no longer a satisfactory defence to the threat of...Nd5 to f4. If 49 Bc6 Rc3, when I have a large positional advantage and an extra pawn.

49.Rb7 Nd5 50.Be8 Nf4+ 51.Kh2 Rxh3+ 52.Kg1 Rc3 53.Rxf7+ Kg5 54.c6 Kxg4 55.c7



Tragedy of tragedies - I now go and throw away all the good work of the previous three hours by blundering in a completely winning position. I had what can only be described as a 'senior moment', missing that 55...Kh3?? 56 Bb5 (56 Rxf4 Rc1 #, and 56 f3 Kg3 don't help) 56...Rc1+ 57 Bf1 Ne2+ 58 Kh1 Rxf1 # is not possible because 57 Bf1 is check! At first I thought it shouldn't matter as surely I am winning in any case, but the more I analysed the more I realised that I had pretty much thrown away the win.

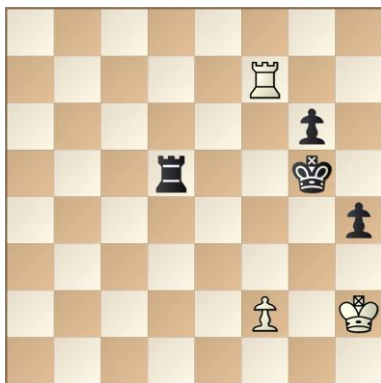
55...Kh3?? 56.Bb5



With the alarm bells now ringing at full volume I even wondered whether I might be completely lost, strange as that may sound. Take a look at the following lines, for example: 56...e5?? 57 Bd7+ and # in 2; or 56...Nd5?? 57 Rf3+. Meanwhile White threatens Bf1+ followed by Ba6 when again he wins. Finally I found a line where I can at least play on with a nominal extra pawn.

56...Rc1+ 57.Bf1+ Kg4 58.Kh2 Nd5 59.Bh3+ Kg5 60.c8Q Adding further to my frustration, as now I can't even keep the minor pieces on.

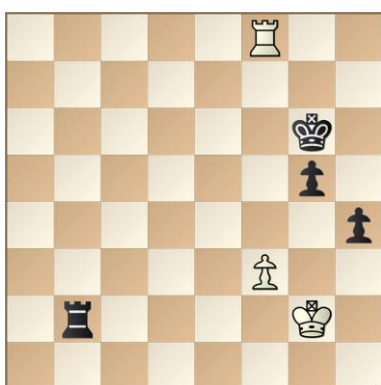
60...Rxc8 61.Bxe6 Rc5 62.Bxd5 Rxd5



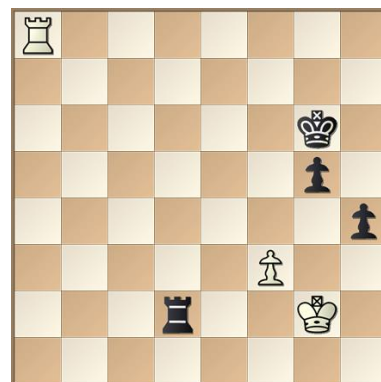
76.Kg1 Rb6 77.Kg2 Rf6 78.Ra8 Re6 79.Rf8 Rd6 80.Ra8 Rd2+

Of course this ending is a theoretical draw, but I would advise everyone to play such positions out. Led by the long-time world number one, most of the top players are prepared to have a go at grinding down all endings in which they have even the remotest chance of extracting the full point. And I, for one, have been doing this with more than my fair share of success for decades. I would almost say that a lack of interest in the endgame, and the patience to grind away, is a weakness in the English chess psyche. It didn't go unnoticed that the GM commentating on this game simply made some disparaging remark about boring my opponent to death before terminating the show, as it was the only game left. Most of the time this endgame would indeed end up as a draw, but my task was to create an environment where my FM strength opponent was most likely to go wrong, and in that I succeeded.

63.Ra7 Rd3 64.Ra4 Kh5 65.Ra5+ Kh6 66.Ra6 Rf3 67.Kg2 Rf4 68.Ra5 g5 69.Ra8 Kh5 70.f3 Rb4 71.Rh8+ Kg6 72.Rg8+ Kf6 73.Rf8+ Kg7 74.Rf5 Kg6 75.Rf8 Rb2+



An important psychological moment. At this stage both 76 Kh3 and 76 king to the back rank draw, so here was the moment to 'train' my opponent to respond to the check with King to the back rank later on, without having to think. The point is that this time he did have a think and decided that 76 Kh3 was a little bit awkward after 76... Rf2. At the end of a long, tiring game you don't want to have to think too much, especially with time running out.

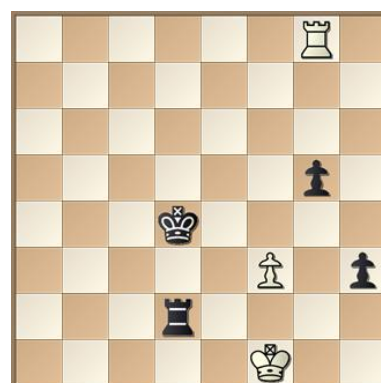


81.Kg1 And there we have it. He played Kg1 automatically because he remembered that the alternative was uncomfortable last time.

81...Kf5 82.Rf8+ Ke5 83.Kf1 White is still drawing but from a practical viewpoint this is another small error.

83...Kd4 84.Rg8 At last I have managed to create the environment I referred to earlier where there is a real chance my opponent might go wrong. This natural move is fine theoretically, BUT it means that he will have to defend accurately for the first time since we arrived at the R+2 v R+1 endgame.

84...h3

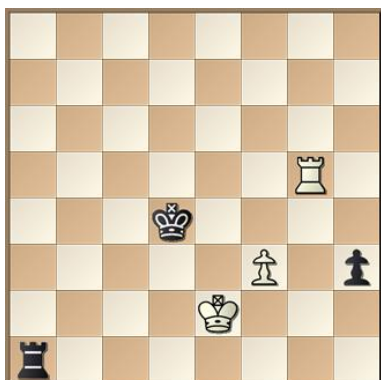


His position has gone downhill so much by this stage that only one of White's natural three moves holds the draw. Have a look at the diagram for 60 seconds and decide which move you would play out of 85 Kg1, 85 Rg5 and 85 Rh8...

85.Rxg5 Wrong choice! Also wrong would have been 85 Rh8 h2 86 Rh7 Ke3 87 Rh3 Rf2+ 88 Ke1 Rg2 with ...Rg1+ and h1=Q to follow. The only move to draw was 85 Kg1! Rg2+ 86 Kh1! (Not 86 Kf1 Ke3 87 Rh8 Rf2+ followed by 88...Rxf3) 86...Ke3 87 Re8+ utilising stalemate, e.g. 87...Kf4 88 Re4+! Kg3 89 Rg4+! Short of time, and

probably exhausted, there was a reasonable chance that Tom would falter here, in the midst of all these complications, and he did.

85...Rd1+ 86.Ke2 Ra1



Better than having to mess around with Q v R after 86..
.h2 87 Kxd1.

87.Rg4+ Kd5 88.Rg5+ Ke6 89.Ke3 If 89 Rh5 h2 90 Rxh2
Ra2+ wins his rook.

89...h2 90.Re5+ Kxe5 Tom Villiers had a little joke in mind
at the end by playing the illegal 91 Kd4 so that the kings
ended up on the correct squares for indicating a black win
on a live board.

1-0

Great British Chess Players by Dr John Nunn



Henry Ernest Atkins (1872-1955)



Atkins was one in a long line of gifted British amateur players who would doubtless have achieved far greater success had they devoted more time to the game. He was born in Leicester and studied mathematics at Peterhouse College, Cambridge. After leaving university, Atkins followed a lifelong career as a schoolmaster and so his chess appearances were rather infrequent, especially on the international stage. Perhaps his greatest individual tournament achievement was his third place at Hanover 1902, ahead of Chigorin and Marshall, but his main claim to fame rests on his astounding success in British Championships. He participated 11 times, winning on nine occasions, finishing second in his very first attempt in 1904 and ending in joint third in his final championship in 1937. This was all the more remarkable in that he did not participate between 1911 and 1924 when, for reasons which are not really clear, he played almost no chess. There is a book about him by R. N. Coles, *H.E. Atkins:*

Doyen of British Chess Champions, but otherwise this very talented player is largely forgotten today.

His main strength was in positional play, although he could be a fierce attacker when roused by provocative play. He preferred solid openings, playing the Queen's Gambit with both colours and meeting 1.e4 by 1...e5. His Wikipedia page gives wins against Tartakower and Marshall, so I have chosen a lesser-known game against one of the world's top players.

Henry Ernest Atkins – Akiba Rubinstein

London 1922

Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nc3

Atkins remained true to the Queen's Gambit throughout his career and used it to score several victories against strong opponents.

6...0-0 7.Bd3

Moving this bishop encourages Black to exchange on c4, because White then must move the bishop again, but he can only delay a bishop move for a limited time in any case.

7...dxc4 8.Bxc4 a6

8...c5 at once is also popular.

9.a4 c5 10.0-0 Qa5

In the 1920s, developing the queen to a5 in this type of position was not uncommon, but few contemporary masters would adopt this plan. While it clears the way for the rook to move to d8, the queen may be exposed to attack and it doesn't help to solve Black's main problem, which is to develop the c8-bishop. These days 10...cxd4 11.exd4 Nb6 and 10...b6 are the main lines.

11.Qe2

Objectively speaking, White should play 11.d5 exd5 12.Nxd5 Nxd5 13.Qxd5 Nf6 14.Qd3 with an edge because it's still not easy for Black to develop his queenside, but Atkins is heading for an IQP (isolated queen's pawn) position.

11...cxd4 12.exd4 Nb6 13.Bd3

Despite his generally positional style, Atkins often played the Queen's Gambit with an eye to reaching a position with an IQP.

13...Rd8 14.Rfd1 Bd7!



Rubinstein solves the problem of the queen's bishop in the most direct way, even though this move involves a pawn sacrifice.

15.Ne5

After 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Qe4 g6 17.Qxb7 Kg7 Black's two bishops and active pieces offer sufficient compensation for the pawn.

15...Be8

The bishop looks passive here, but it's not badly placed since it defends the sensitive f7-square. Moreover, Black can now complete his development by ...Rac8, with an equal position.

16.Qe3

White's strategy in IQP positions is often based on creating threats on the kingside, so Atkins switches his queen to a more aggressive position.

16...Nfd5

Moving a defensive piece away from the kingside appears risky, but it seems White has no way to exploit it.

17.Qg3

This is the calm choice, but such a modest move can't really challenge Black. The amazing tactical line 17.Qh3!? Bxg5 (17...g6 18.Bxe7 Nxe7 19.Ne4 favours White as f6 is weak) 18.b4! Qxb4 (18...Nxb4 19.Qxh7+ Kf8 20.Qh8+ Ke7 21.Qxg7 Bf6 22.Ng6+ Kd7 23.Qxf6 fxc6 24.Rab1 is more dangerous for Black) 19.Nxd5 Rxd5 20.Qxh7+ Kf8 21.Qh8+ Ke7 22.Qxg7 Qxd4 23.Qxg5+ Kd6 24.Bxa6 Qxe5 25.Qxe5+

Kxe5 26.Re1+ Kf6 27.Bxb7 Rxa4 28.Bxd5 Nxd5 leads to a drawn ending but was probably still White's best option.



17...Bxg5 18.Qxg5 Nxc3

The simple 18...h6 19.Qg3 Rac8 guarantees Black an edge, since White's slight attacking chances do not compensate for his pawn weaknesses. As so often happens in IQP positions, Black's problems are over if he can swap some minor pieces and complete his development.

19.bxc3 Nd5

Safety-first play, and it's understandable that Rubinstein did not like to risk 19...Qxc3 20.Qh4 g6 21.Ng4, especially as 21...Rxd4 22.Bf1! gives White worrying threats.

20.Qh4 Nf6?!

Black has managed to defend h7 without making any weakening pawn moves, but this ties the knight down. Next move Rubinstein decides to push his h-pawn in any case, so it would have been more flexible to play 20...h6 at once.

21.c4 h6 22.Qg3 Rac8 23.Bc2

White now has a slight advantage since his pawns are all defended, and it isn't obvious how Black can increase the pressure against them.

23...Bc6

To prevent 24.Qd3 due to 24...Be4, but White does not need to rush.



24.Qe3 b6

Slow play allows White to develop his initiative by Ra3 and Qf4, aiming to switch the rook to the kingside. It would have been better to force a decision from White by playing 24...Nd7, although 25.f4 retains an edge.

25.Ra3 Ba8 26.Qf4

Threatening Rg3, so Black decides to act.

26...b5

The critical phase of the game approaches.

27.Rh3 bxc4 28.Rxh6!



28...Rc5?!

Ingenious, but not the best. 28...gxh6? 29.Qxf6 is hopeless, but 28...Rxd4! 29.Bh7+ Kf8 30.Qxd4 gxh6 31.Nd7+ Nxd7 32.Qh8+ Ke7 33.Qxc8 Bd5 would have made it very hard for White to utilise his material advantage. Then Black's king is no longer in danger and the a4-pawn is weak.

29.Rh3?

It looks natural to prepare Qh4, but the unexpected 29.Rh5! was much stronger. This defuses Black's counterplay and intends to take aim at g7 via Rg5.

29...Rcd5?

Missing the chance to exploit White's weak back rank by 29...Be4! 30.Qh4 (30.Bxe4? Rxe5! favours Black) 30...Kf8 31.Qxe4! Nxe4 32.Rh8+ Ke7 33.Rxd8 Rxe5 34.dxe5 Qxe5, with equality.

30.Kf1

White rules out the mate by ...Qe1, but 30.Qh4! was even stronger since 30...Kf8 31.Qh8+ Ke7 32.Ng6+! fxe6 33.Qxg7+ Kd6 34.Qxf6 gives White a decisive advantage.

30...Qb6 31.Rg3?

31.Qh4! Kf8 32.Qh8+ Ke7 33.Ng6+! would again have been decisive.



31...Rxd4?

The last mistake. 31...Kf8 32.Rxg7 Kxg7 33.Qg5+ Kf8 34.Qxf6 Rxe5 35.Qxe5 leaves White a pawn up, but at least Black is still fighting.

32.Rxd4 Qxd4 33.Qxf6

There's no back-rank mate, so this ends the game.

33...Qa1+ 34.Ke2 Bf3+ 35.gxf3 1-0

Books of the Month from Ben Graff



The best new writing and the greatest classics under one roof

Do you have strong opinions on our game? Howard Burton certainly does, and his book *Chessays* makes for thought-provoking reading. This is a work that is guaranteed to make you reflect, even if you find yourself (as I did) not necessarily agreeing with all of Burton's perspectives.

For our classic, we go behind the scenes with Mikhail Tal through the eyes of his childhood friend and sometime coach Valentin Kirillov in *Team Tal*. I have long enjoyed this book, partly for the way in which it brings to life Tal as the mercurial champion, but more for the insights it sheds on Tal as a person.

These are two quite different offerings that are both very much worth a look.



Chessays by Howard Burton (Open Agenda Publishing)

'From the sleep-deprived blitz addict to the online cheater, single-mindedly determined to boost his rating at all costs. Fun seems to be in shorter and shorter supply these days, with chess players of all stripes diligently focussed on their ever-narrowing goals with increasing levels of professionalism. To the naked eye, it all looks very much like work.' - Howard Burton - *Chessays*

Howard Burton is a filmmaker who has produced a four-part documentary on our game in addition to *Chessays*, which he describes as '... an occasion for me to candidly express my personal views about a wide variety of chess-related issues, both past and present (but mostly present).'

In doing so, he casts an intriguing eye on a host of subjects, including the work of chess historians, the perennial debate as to whether chess is a game or a sport, and the value we should place on chess as a worthwhile activity. FIDE, the role of the world championship, women's chess, and other applications, or 'transfers' as Burton badges them, concerning personal growth, chess in prisons and artificial intelligence are all discussed.

Well written and absorbing, the various essays provoked differing reactions in me. I did not agree with all his thoughts, which is in no way to denigrate them. Indeed, the fact that I felt compelled to challenge in some areas felt like a sign that Burton was in the right space in terms of encouraging chess players to think, and to form opinions of their own.

To start with some positives... While the debate as to whether chess is a game or a sport is not new ground, Burton does a terrific job of charting the different perceptions of Paul Morphy and Bobby Fischer and demonstrating that it is 'Fischer rather than Morphy who

best represents the modern archetype of the American chess player.' Burton is also very strong on the power of chess as a resilience tool – 'If you can handle chess failure, you can handle any failure.'

I particularly liked the chapter on whether chess is a waste of time. Burton does an excellent job of looking at the literature from George Bernard Shaw's 'Chess is a foolish expedient for making idle people believe they are doing something very clever when they are only wasting their time', through to Goethe's more cheering observation that 'Chess is the touchstone of the intellect.' In concluding that the answer to this question is 'It depends...' Burton gives a nice framework to help any of us evaluate any choice we might make and highlights that we are all empowered to determine the value we place on the things we do.

I found the chapter on chess historians a little weaker. Burton's thesis is that there are a lot of dubious 'historians' out there, whose work cannot be compared to that of the legendary H.J.R. Murray. He rightly highlights '... But my problem with most chess historians is more a matter of definition; you really shouldn't be allowed to call yourself a historian if the only claims about the past that you're going to bother seriously investigating are those you don't happen to agree with.' It is hard to object to this premise, but I think Burton underestimates the number of high-quality historians at work today, and the vital (and objective) work many are doing to bring the past to life.

Burton's ideas on FIDE and the world chess championship were the most problematic for me, even though I agreed with some of his points. He does a great job of highlighting examples of ineptitude (and worse) that have plagued FIDE over the years. His observation to the effect that 'I'm beginning to suspect that chess players are somehow exceptionally disastrous to a statistically significant degree when it comes to appreciating matters of governance and social organization; and the better the chess player, on the whole, the more hopeless things are,' made me laugh out loud. Yet I just didn't agree with his idea that FIDE should not be involved in professional chess. In my view, if FIDE did not exist we would have to reinvent it in some form, and its past (and perhaps present) failings don't mean that the idea of a governing body is itself flawed.

The suggestion in *Chessays* that the '...World chess championships are a ridiculous anachronism that has well and truly outlived any possible value it may have possessed,' is one I would strongly argue against. Burton

is quick to defend Carlsen's decision not to defend his title – 'In the latter part of 2021 he spent several months of his life rigorously preparing for an 18-day match with Ian Nepomniachtchi, which he ended up winning convincingly. And now you're telling me that he's got to do it all over again, some 16 months or so later somewhere? Why should he? I wouldn't, if I were him.'

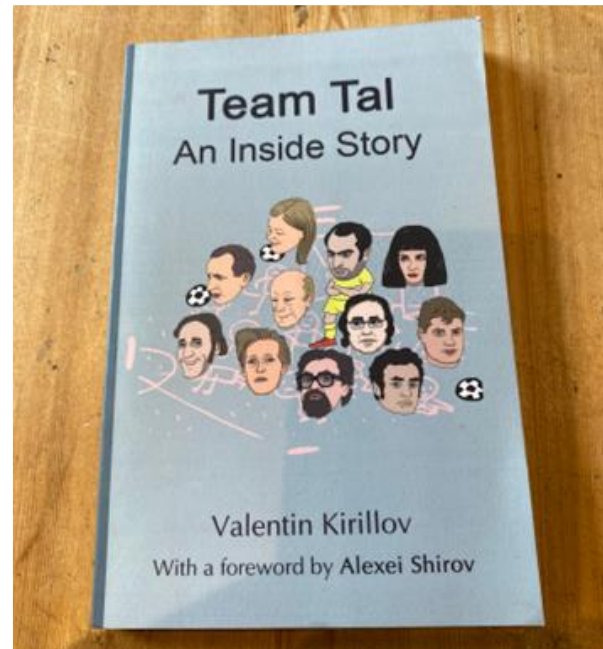
He goes on to suggest that a Grand Prix of chess events, akin to 'Grand Slams' might be a better way to go, but I profoundly feel that he is wrong. Ultimately chess as we know it has been shaped by the battles for the world championship. These are the contests and the rivalries that most live in the memory, the matches that best enable the rest of us to live vicariously through our heroes. Without such duals, the chess world would be a much poorer place – and most likely one in which claims to be the world champion continued to exist – just lacking the fair and essential framework to properly test them.

This is not to say that a well-defined Grand Prix might not be a worthy addition to the calendar. Equally, Burton is right to highlight that chess could be better at monetising the internet and has scope to further capitalise on the popularity of the game. It's just that linking any of this to not having a world championship is for me 100% not the right answer.

Burton's chapters on women's chess and the scope for the game to add value for all of us beyond the sixty-four squares are all well done. He cites the wonderful example of Tani Adewumi who won '...the 2019 New York State chess championship... while living with his refugee family in a Manhattan homeless shelter.' He presciently quotes Nicholas Kristoff who noted in the *New York Times* that 'Tani is a reminder that refugees enrich this nation – and that talent is universal, even if opportunity is not.'

Burton is quick to note in relation to chess in prisons that it provides prisoners '.... with a compelling, competitive modern sporting outlet that simultaneously develops their independent learning skills, strategic awareness, and sense of self-reliance.' While he is more cautious as to the benefits of chess in schools (for example seeing no direct correlation between playing and improving a child's maths prowess) there is no doubt that he sees chess as a force for good.

I would certainly recommend this book. Burton is an engaging writer. As is clear from this review, I didn't agree with all of it, but that's not the point. *Chessays* has the capacity to help all of us think. That is a very useful thing indeed.



***Team Tal – An Inside Story* by Valentin Kirillov (Elk and Ruby)**

'An unfinished cup of coffee, a pack of cigarettes, an overflowing ashtray, a record left on the turntable, books, newspapers, and magazines everywhere – on the table, chairs, windowsill. It's immediately evident that the guy who lives here is an impulsive, creative person, who hardly spends any time at home.' - Valentin Kirillov – *Team Tal*

Few chess players have captured the imagination quite like Mikhail Tal. His brilliant attacking play was in many ways a throw-back to a previous era. When he swept away the much more orthodox Botvinnik in 1960 to become the youngest ever (at that time) world champion, all things seemed possible. Yet a year later, Tal's reign was over. At just twenty-four, much brilliant chess lay ahead, but never again would he claim the world title.

Team Tal shares Tal's story from the perspective of his fellow Latvian, Valentin Kirillov. Kirillov knew Tal when both were youngsters and observed that it is 'strange when one of your buddies becomes famous.' Later he was Tal's coach from 1968 through to 1976, at which point the Soviet authorities made Kirillov the scapegoat following Tal's loss to Portisch in the Varese Interzonal play-off and fired him. A chess player through and through ('I got married on the very first day of the tournament, at Luna, a hip café') Kirillov proves to be the perfect guide. This isn't intended to be a conventional biography or comprehensive history of Tal, but it does provide many valuable insights as to what he was like.

Spassky is quoted as noting 'Misha was a delightful, good-natured guy off the board, who never showed any signs

of jealousy, which is quite remarkable in the chess community.’ Perhaps Tal also shared with Spassky a slight lack of ruthlessness when it came to world championship match arrangements. Just as Spassky was perhaps too accommodating of Fischer’s demands, Kirillov reflects that ‘Misha was sick, inadequately prepared, and a bit too compliant during the pre-match negotiations’ with Botvinnik regarding their rematch. For me, this shows that, much like Spassky, Tal put his desire to play ahead of cold calculation as to whether the circumstances were such that they were likely to prove advantageous to him.

Botvinnik has been quoted elsewhere as noting that Tal was always ill, and *Team Tal* highlights that Tal’s battles throughout his life were as much with his own health as they were with his opponents. ‘Various ailments plagued him, clipping his wings and bringing him down to earth, but he’d take flight again and again and flutter from city to city, from country to country, and from tournament to tournament – his style always spectacular, clever, and mesmerizing.’

Tal’s lifestyle did not help. Kirillov observes that ‘Tal was forbidden to smoke, drink, and eat spicy foods after his kidney operation in 1969. Yeah, right!’ It is clear that Tal loved life and sought to make the most of it both at and away from the board, which endeared him to so many. Yet while we tend to reflect on Tal’s fragility and the impact his health had on his results, there is also an argument that, all things considered, Tal was actually very resilient. ‘Tigran Petrosian joked grimly that Tal was the healthiest grandmaster around; if I had his health problems, I’d be in my grave my now.’

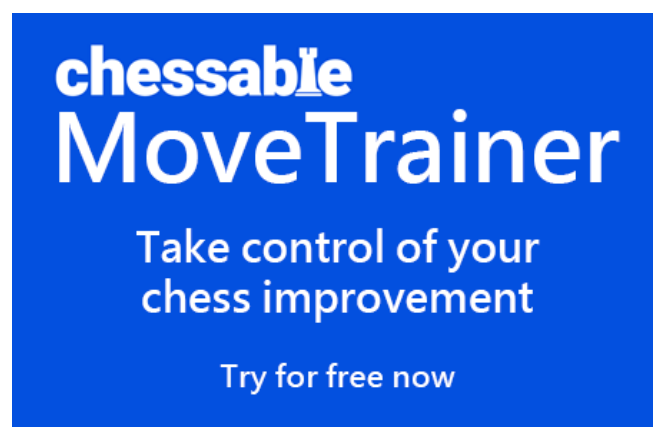
Always willing to help others, Tal was a ‘true team player,’ and the story Kirillov tells in relation to the 1954 Soviet youth championships is hilarious. When playing Russia, the Latvian Andrey Martinson adjourned in a position with an obvious advantage, ‘but we were struggling to find a clear win.’ The team went to bed, but Kirillov continued to analyse until ‘suddenly a hand landed on my shoulder.’ It was Tal, and between them ‘We polished my idea and found an intricate winning manoeuvre.’ The pair showed Martinson the winning plan and ‘Still drowsy, he reproduced the winning moves on his second try.’ Yet when the game resumed ‘Andrey mixed the move order up on move four, got bogged down in the resulting variations, and reached a dead-end.’ Still, you can but try!

While there is a tendency to see Tal’s style as something that might have belonged in the earlier, romantic era, much as I have done at the start of this piece, Kirillov skilfully highlights that the reality is more complex. Tal

believed that there was always more than one way to play a position, and far from there being a ‘correct’ approach ‘A player’s choice depended on his talent level, creative impulses, imagination, intuition and mood. He’d say “I just feel it and want to play that way.”’ Ultimately, as computers got stronger, ‘Tal couldn’t help but admit that the game of chess had changed.’ Yet computers have also shown that there are often many more resources available in a game than previously thought. It is very much the case that ‘Although chess engines have since refuted many of Tal’s most inventive moves, they have endorsed many more.’

Tal was a fierce competitor to the end. While in hospital in Moscow ‘His friends had managed to remove him from his bed and bring him to a blitz tournament, where he came in third, even winning a game off Garry Kasparov.’ Despite still being capable of playing at such a superlative level, he knew his time was close. On the way back to the hospital his friends told him he’d be out in no time, but he replied ‘No, I’m never getting out.’ So, it proved.

Tal died young, at 55. His reign as world champion, all those decades earlier, had been a mere year and five days, six days fewer than the next briefest world champion, Smyslov. While his time at the top had been brief, his legacy as a brilliant attacking player will always endure. Kirillov’s gift in *Team Tal* is to highlight that Tal the man is as worthy of celebration as Tal the chess player. There can be no higher accolade than this.



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It's a Puzzlement!



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

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

The puzzles are arranged in order of difficulty (easiest first). We would be interested in your views about the level of difficulty and whether we have graded them about right. When you click on the links below you need to play a move to see the hint and/or solution.

Puzzle 1

Nathan Weersing v Aadishesh Devalia

Cambridge International Open 2023, Cambridge ENG



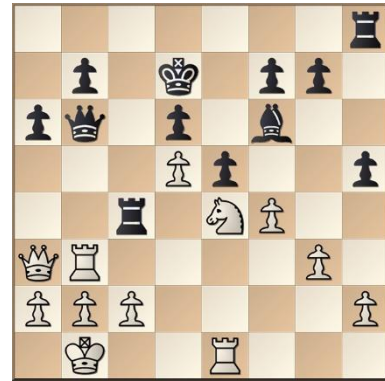
White to win

[Puzzle 1](#)

Puzzle 2

Olga Latypova v Nayan Keats Rastogi

Cambridge International Open 2023, Cambridge



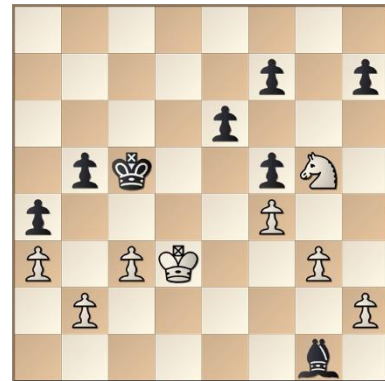
Black to win

[Puzzle 2](#)

Puzzle 3

IM Lawrence Trent v GM Aleksandr Rakhmanov

Titled Tue 17th Jan Early, chess.com INT

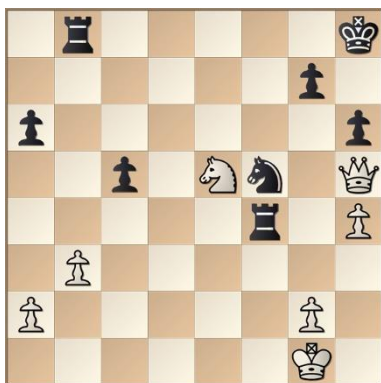


White to win

[Puzzle 3](#)

Puzzle 4

Alistair Hill v WGM Katarzyna Toma
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG

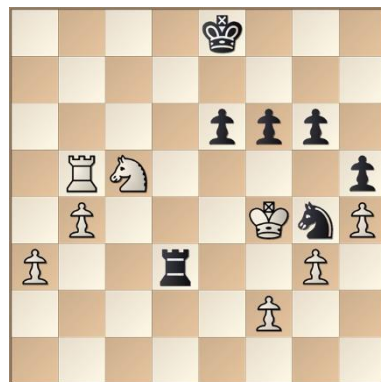


Black to win

[Puzzle 4](#)

Puzzle 6

FM Mark Liubarov v IM Lawrence Trent
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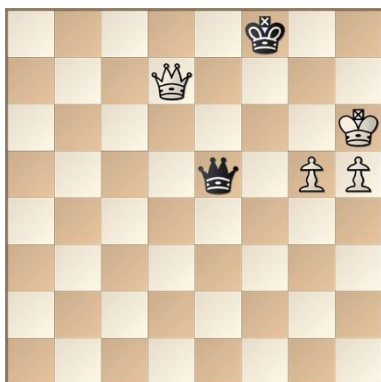


Black to win

[Puzzle 6](#)

Puzzle 5

IM Richard J D Palliser v Viktor Stoyanov
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



Black to draw

[Puzzle 5](#)

Puzzle 7

Daniel Gallagher v IM Andrew N Greet
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



Black to win

[Puzzle 7](#)

Puzzle 8

Madhav Kaushik v Ted Korolchuk

Cambridge International Open 2023, Cambridge ENG



White to win

[Puzzle 8](#)

Puzzle 10

IM Jovanka Houska v IM Ashot Nadanian

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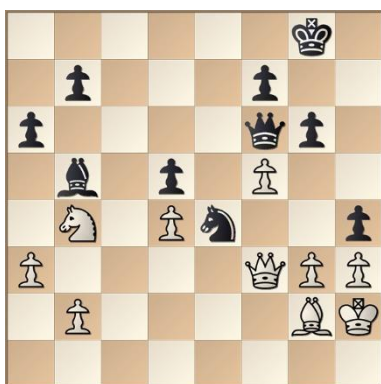
White to win

[Puzzle 10](#)

Puzzle 9

GM Frode Olav Olsen Urkedal v IM v Conor E Murphy

4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



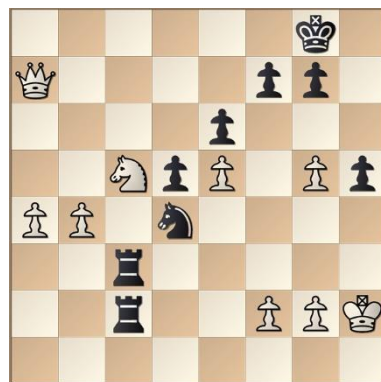
White to win

[Puzzle 9](#)

Puzzle 11

IM Timofey Iljin v IM Jovanka Houska

Titled Tue 17th Jan Early, chess.com INT



Black to win

[Puzzle 11](#)

Puzzle 12

IM Fedja Zulfic v FM Akshaya Kalaiyalahan
4NCL 2022-23, Daventry ENG



White to win

[Puzzle 12](#)

All in One

For all the puzzles on one page just visit

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by clicking the link or via the QR Code.



When the Magician Met the English by David Agyemang



Mikhail Tal – Source Wikimedia

Mikhail Tal is a player who has been immortalised in chess history for his violent attacking style, intimidating stares, stunning sacrifices and creativity that chess has never had the joy of seeing again. Unfortunately, along with the brilliance came a long relationship with smoking and drinking, potentially contributing to his early death at 55. 'The Magician of Riga' holds two of the longest unbeaten runs in chess history lasting 86 and 95 games respectively. During his second record-breaking streak Tal played in one of the world's most respected tournaments at the time, the Hastings International Congress.

The Hastings winners list boasts some of the greatest players of the 20th century, and although these days the very top GMs rarely make an appearance as they used to in the past, players from across the globe still visit the town on the south coast with the aim of winning the illustrious crown.

The field of the 1973/74 Hastings tournament contained some of the more established names in chess at the time such as Tal and Gligoric, as well as rising star Jan Timman. The English contingent at the tournament consisted of Raymond Keene, William Hartston, a teenage Tony Miles, and the victim of Tal's round 12 masterpiece, Michael Stean.



Michael Stean – Source Wikimedia

Tal, Mikhail (2705) – Stean, Michael F (2540), 1974
Hastings Christmas Chess Festival

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6
7.f4 Nbd7 8.Qf3 Qc7



Stean, an author and a leading practitioner of the Najdorf Sicilian, is faced with a set-up with 8.Qf3 regarded today as one of the most dangerous. Ideas such as pawn to e5 to open the scope of the queen and g4–g5 dislodging the f6 knight are all ideas he should be wary of.

9.0–0–0 b5



10.Bxb5!

A sacrificial opportunity too good for Tal to turn down.

10...axb5 11.Ndxb5 Qb8 12.e5



Stean's situation isn't as dire as it may seem, but the chances of avoiding the minefield of traps are little to none. For example, the lazy recapture of 12... dxe5 runs into 13.Qxa8!! with the knight arriving on c7. The move that Black seems to find the most success from is the crazy-looking 12... Ra5!! with the idea of winning two knights for the rook.

12...Bb7 13.Qe2 dxe5 14.Qc4 Bc5 15.Bxf6

Correctly judging that the knight on d7 is overloaded protecting both its f6 counterpart and c5 bishop.

15...gxf6



16.Rxd7!

Believe it or not, this line has been played in numerous games before and after 1974. The move 10.Bxb5 is the third choice behind more traditional developing options but is still a serious test for an unprepared player

16...Be3+ 17.Kb1 Kxd7 18.Rd1+ Bd4



An error that proves costly. The bishop only acts as a temporary plug and is no match for the barrage of pieces firing at the black king.

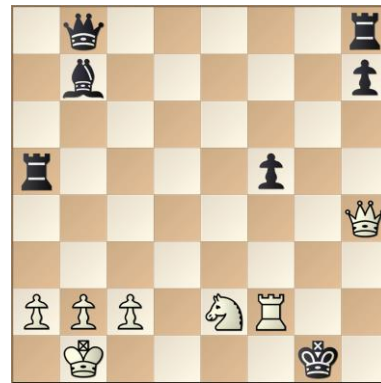
19.fxe5 fxe5 20.Nxd4 exd4 21.Qxd4+ The beginning of what would turn out to be one of the most iconic of king hunts.

21...Ke7 22.Qc5+ Kf6 23.Rf1+ Kg6 24.Qe7 f5 25.Qxe6+ Kg7 26.Qe7+ Kg6 27.h4



A timely pawn advance, threatening to lure the black king away from the safety of his pawns.

27...Ra5 28.h5+ Kxh5 29.Qf7+ Kh4 30.Qf6+ Kg3 31.Qg5+ Kh2 32.Qh4+ Kxg2 33.Rf2+ Kg1 34.Ne2#



A picturesque finish as the black queen sleeps idly whilst her king is marched up the board before meeting his untimely demise on g1.

1-0

Stein was one of the top English players at the time, participating on multiple occasions for the English Olympiad teams. Tal faced another English opponent at Hastings, 19-year-old Tony Miles. The Birmingham-born talent would go on to make a draw against Tal and proceed to win the World Youth Championship in the same year. They would go on to make three draws before the deadlock was broken by a Tal win in the 1979 Riga Interzonal, a Candidates Tournament qualifier. Their fifth encounter would be in 1981, about seven years after their first.

Porz International Tournament

Tal, Mikhail (2705) – Miles, Tony (2635), 1981

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7



In Tal's analysis of the game, he wrote that Miles is considered to be a 'Sicilian Specialist' and the Caro-Kann is 'encountered rarely enough in his practice.' However, it turns out that England's first over the board grandmaster used 1....c6 regularly in games against world-class opponents such as Spassky, Karpov and Anand, even using it to defeat Tal a few years after this game.

5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Ng3 e6 7.Bd3 Be7 8.Qe2 0-0 9.0-0 b6 10.c4 Bb7 11.Bf4 Re8 12.Rad1 c5 13.dxc5 bxc5



This seems to be the start of Miles' problems. Tal concluded that 13... Bxc5 was 'much stronger', an idea seconded by the computer. The immediate c5 break could have also been supported by the prophylactic 12...Qc8!, however, this seems like a move no human would willingly play.

14.Ne5 Qb6 15.Bxh7+ Finding the immediate breakthrough.

15...Nxh7 16.Rxd7 g6 17.b4 Bc8 18.bxc5 Qxc5 19.Ne4 Qb6 20.Qf3



Taking the rook would lead to 21.Be3! hitting the queen while threatening mate on the f7 square.

20...Qb2 21.Nxf7

Brilliance number two shreds open the defence around the black king. 21...Bxd7 is met with 22.Be5 which hits the queen and threatens the elegant Nh6#. Capturing the knight will lead to a swifter end as 22.Be5 would come with check, picking up the queen.

21...Qg7 22.Nh6+ Kh8 23.Rc7 Rf8 24.Rxe7



Once again we see a ruthless attacking display from Mikhail Tal who ends the game with yet another rook sacrifice, this time deflecting the queen off the a1-h8 diagonal for it to be occupied by White's dark-squared bishop.

1-0



Tony Miles – Source Wikimedia

Tal is without a doubt one of the all-time greats; however, Tony Miles seems to be less remembered. Miles won the race to become the first English over the board grandmaster in 1976 whilst defeating some of the greatest players of his generation. His most iconic game was his win over Karpov with 1...a6, he also scored wins against Smyslov and Spassky during the peak of his career.

He reached an all-time high of world number 9 whilst battling for British Number 1 with John Nunn and Nigel Short. Combined with two Olympiad silver medals in 1986 and 1988 it's a wonder why he is not as highly regarded in British chess.

Miles died tragically young in 2001 aged only 46. He would have celebrated his 68th birthday this year.

Interview with GM Nigel Davies

Questions by Mark Rivlin



GM Nigel Davies

Nigel Davies became a GM in 1993 and has enjoyed success as a chess author with 22 books published, and as a FIDE trainer through his tigerchess.com website. In 2022 he came back to the ECF after seven years with the Welsh Chess Union.

Few players in their early sixties have decided to get back into high-level tournaments after a few years' absence. What made you throw your hat into the ring and how is OTB chess going?

I've barely played for the last two decades: it's difficult to be playing lots of chess with parenthood, especially when I was a chess parent. My return was prompted largely by my son going to university. I was curious as to whether it was possible to make a successful comeback. Thus far the best that can be said is that it's a 'work in progress', but things are gradually improving!

Tell us about the recent January 4NCL Harrogate Congress in which you shared first place with five players in a strong Open field.

This was my best result in a standard time limit tournament since my return, and I also played a couple of decent games. People were surprised that I agreed to an early draw as White against Paul Townsend, but he's a tough opponent and I just wanted to finish first.

After seven years of being with the Welsh Chess Union, you rejoined the ECF last year. Why did you come back to the ECF?

I had hoped that the Welsh Chess Union would place more value on my presence, but I didn't hear from them

much. Meanwhile the ECF has gone through quite a renaissance since I left, with new events having been organised and opportunities for English players.

You are a prolific chess writer (22 books) and a Senior FIDE Trainer (tigerchess.com) with excellent reviews in both those fields. What are the key qualities that make a good chess coach?

I would say a love of the game, an understanding of the needs of those you're coaching, and good communication skills.

Which people have had the most positive influence on your chess career, playing, writing and coaching?

As far as playing is concerned, I'd say Bob Wade and Lev Psakhis were two major influences. I was also helped a lot by people whose books I've read, particularly Emanuel Lasker, Mikhail Botvinnik, Paul Keres, Richard Réti, Ray Keene and Mikhail Shereshevsky. Richard James influenced me a lot with coaching, especially when it came to teaching my son.

It's 30 years since you became a GM. How has the game changed over those years?

The effect of computers has been massive, not just with engines and databases but in how they've aided learning. In particular, the standard of opening play has risen massively, and this is something I've been struggling with.

In 2020 you got a first-class honours BSc degree in computing from Edge Hill University. Tell us about the academic paper you wrote 'Predicting Success in Competitive Chess' and whether you intend to take your computing degree further?

It was a study of FIDE rating data to see if having a high rating at particular ages was a predictor of future progress. Essentially it wasn't, largely due to the very high dropout rate of young players who are believed to be 'talented'. On the other hand, I did find statistical significance in players who reached the cusp of adolescence as strong and established players, with ratings around 2200.

Please show us an annotated version of one of your favourite games.

(2840) Kaminski, Marcin (2400) - Davies, Nigel R (2505)

[C86]

Liechtenstein Open Liechtenstein (7), 1993

This game was played in the year that I scored two GM norms and got the title. It was also a watershed from a stylistic point of view in that I was prepared to meet 1.e4 with 1...e5 rather than use my habitual Modern Defence.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Qe2 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.Rd1 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.dxe5 This is not dangerous for Black, as White will not be able to establish a piece on d5. On the other hand, Black may gain space with ...c5-c4.



12...dxe5 13.Nbd2 Rd8 14.Nf1 Rxd1 15.Bxd1 Bb7 16.Bc2 c4 17.Ng3 g6 18.Bg5 Nc6 19.Nd2 This meets with a strong reply.

White should play 19.a4, with approximate equality.



19...Nh5 20.Bxe7 Nf4 21.Qf3 Nxe7 22.Ne2 (White doesn't sense the danger to his position.)

(22.Ndf1 would have been better.)



22...Rd8 23.Qe3 And this loses because of Black's unexpected reply.

23.Nf1 was the best, though Black is better after 23...Nd3.



23...Nxg2! 24.Kxg2 Nf5 (It turns out that the queen cannot protect the knight on d2, so Black wins material.)



25.Qg5 h6 26.Qf6 Rxd2



0-1

You also play table tennis at club level. Is there a connection between bullet chess and table tennis, in that in both games you have to make decisive shots and moves with no time to think?

Well, I don't play bullet chess so I wouldn't know, but it does seem that there's quite a crossover between the two games. I should also point out that my table tennis is very weak, and I've now taken a break through sheer embarrassment and the time it consumes!

Tell us about some of your chess coaching achievements.

I worked with some young players who went on to achieve great things, a bit with Matthew Sadler and Darshan Kumaran and then more extensively with Ronen Har-Zvi. However, I'm more satisfied with my work with older club players, who usually make progress with me because of my structured teaching program. I should also mention my favourite student is my son Sam, who I taught from zero to his reaching over 2000 strength. He has taken a break from chess during the last couple of years, but I'm hopeful that he will return.

Do you play online rapidplay and/or blitz?

Not very much, and when I do it's under an anonymous account. Having said that, I use Lichess a lot because of its 'study' feature; it's essentially an online database and works beautifully.

How can 1700 players get better? (I'm asking on behalf of a friend).

Make sure you do regular endgame and tactics practice and play normal openings. If you want to learn positional play, then join tigerchess.com and take lessons with me!

Ask Not What the ECF Can Do for You - Ask What You Can Do for the ECF

by Carl Portman



Most of the people who stand around and watch the harvest haven't planted anything. That's how the saying goes, and it is quite true. It is easy to look on whilst others do the work.

As a result of a recent conversation, I have been thinking recently about the unsung heroes who make chess happen for us. A production is not just about the actors (in this case the chess players) but those who make it happen. The people who build the set, organise the sound and lighting, those who promote the event and give of their time to manage it when the curtain goes up.

I have been a member of the English Chess Federation since I was a teenager. It was of course called the British Chess Federation back in 1982. I have always been proud to be a member all through the many changes that the Federation has seen. Back then, I had a little membership card signed by David Jarrett, the then President, that I proudly kept in my wallet. I even used to show it to girlfriends to impress them. Only when I matured did I realise that this was in fact the reason why girlfriends were few and far between, but you had to admire my enthusiasm.

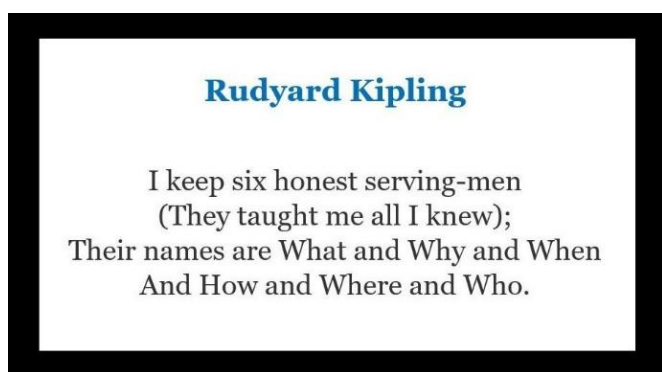
I feel exactly the same way about the ECF today. Do I think the organisation is perfect? Lord, no. Do I get on with all the characters? Certainly not! Do I agree with every policy? No. So what? No organisation is perfect. I don't even know what perfect would look like.

I don't know how much money the Federation has, nor how many members are on its books, and in truth I don't

care. Well, actually I do, but it does not consume my every waking moment. I know that the organisation is there to foster interest in chess and that's good enough for me. I also know, to the best of my knowledge, that the officers and other staff volunteer their time to make this happen.

What I am interested in is playing chess and the ECF facilitates this in many ways, both face to face and online. Of course, there are other fantastic people at the 4NCL and countless tournaments and events around the country that do likewise, and I take my hat off to every single one of them.

It is at times like this that I like to recall the sign that used to hang from my wall in my office. It was a quotation from Rudyard Kipling's *Just So* stories. Here it is:



I used this as a guide whenever I had tasks or problems, and it stood me in good stead. It helped me to ask the right questions and to find issues that I never thought were there.

Let Kipling guide me again when I begin to think about the English Chess Federation.

Why does it exist? Its mission is to promote the game of chess, in all its forms, as an attractive means of cultural and personal advancement to the widest possible public. Simple (or complex) as that!

What is the point of being a member? This is the big one! Well, why be a member of anything? For me it is a sense of belonging, of being part of a group of (by and large!) like-minded people. The trade union movement has always known that unity is strength, and this is no different for the ECF. There are many benefits. Someone joining the ECF at Silver or Gold level will pay up to £39. Immediately, they would qualify for a 50% discount on *CHESS* magazine for the first year. That's a £25 saving before you even start!

I used the JustGo Rewards scheme and made some welcome savings. You can enjoy discounts at Halfords, Argos, Currys, Ocado and many more, including cottages

for rent. You can save on cruises and much more. For me, the membership fee more than pays for itself if people take advantage of the offers, and that's before they have pushed a single pawn at the board.

On that subject, members can also join ECF online clubs on Chess.com and Lichess, play in online club events, and gain an official ECF online rating. Games played in ECF-rated over the board or online events are rated free of charge. Ratings are updated monthly to reflect your very latest results, whether you play over the board or online (or both).

Members get the ECF Yearbook free, and they are even eligible to become an ECF titled player via the ECF Master Points System. I myself am an English County Master. Incidentally some people 'sneer' at the master points system but it is a benchmark for a player, just like any title, and one I am actually quite proud of. I have on record that at least at one time I performed at and above 2000 level. Indeed, I might insist that 'ECM' is put next to my name at an official event!

Finally, there is also the magnificent monthly *ChessMoves* magazine to enjoy. This is one of my favourites and includes articles from leading grandmasters – well, you are reading this article in that very magazine, right? It is free to all members in electronic format, but they can pay for a rather nice printed format too.

I have to say, quite frankly, that I never hear ECF members encouraging other people to join. I never hear ECF members discussing these many benefits, either between themselves or to potential members.

Undoubtedly these discussions occur, but I am yet to witness them. How can the ECF attract more members if we don't sell it? I am not the ECF Marketing Manager, but I feel strongly that we can do more – much more. So try to recruit someone today, this week, this month.

How can people get involved? Well, I guess the answer to that is contact the ECF and say what it is you want to do. There is always room for people who want to promote chess. The ECF is there to help, no matter how big or small your idea might be, from chess in your local library to a grand simultaneous event in your town or city.

When are the key events for the ECF? A simple examination of the website will give details of meetings and events such as the British Chess Championships. Incidentally, I still have no idea why the English Chess Federation holds the British Chess Championships but

that's another story. It's in Leicester this year, incidentally, so do check it out.

Where does the ECF see itself in a few years' time? That's a fundamental question and one that I am not qualified to answer. I can say that as a normal (Gold) member I have been super impressed with the work the ECF has done with online chess in particular. I wonder what threats and opportunities the ECF sees ahead, and what plans it may have to tackle them.

Who are the main players in the Federation? Well of course one can check all of this on the website. People should not be afraid to contact a Director, or the President, or the CEO, or anyone! It is much better to clarify something with the ECF than speculate on other platforms (it happens!), so give them a chance to reply first.

This isn't a lecture. I am merely sharing my reflections about a Federation that I have been a member of and cared about, for most of my life. I don't seek approval and I know others may have a different view. That's life.

The final issue is that people cannot work forever. The old lions get replaced by younger, more energetic specimens. When I look at how many 'young' people organise chess or stand for positions in the ECF it is quite shocking. Again, just like any chess club, the baton has to get passed on at some point.

My view is that the ECF is doing a very good job in changing and difficult times, but it always needs more support both in terms of members and activists. Think about what you could do to promote the game, no matter how large or small and step forward.

After all, a different world cannot be built by indifferent people.

Hybrid Tournaments by ECF Director for Junior Chess and Education Alex Holowczak



During the Covid pandemic we all needed to get used to new ways of playing chess and turning over the board (OTB) competitions into online competitions.

Online competitions ended up with a fairly standard model. There would be an arbiter with a Zoom call open, and players would have their cameras and microphones on so that the arbiter could see them. This was far from perfect, in that sometimes the technology failed, and so players would carry on playing whilst not on Zoom, or people's computers couldn't handle Zoom, and so it needed some sensible arbiting to manage effectively. Notwithstanding these provisions, there were accusations of cheating from certain players about others online. At the time this was a significant change in mindshift, although in a world where the world champion makes public allegations on Twitter about potential cheating in OTB chess, and now such accusations are far more frequent in OTB; perhaps the online experience has led to increased concern – and, dare I suggest, paranoia? – that lots of players are up to something.

As the pandemic evolved, hybrid chess developed. This was a mix of online and OTB chess. The idea was that arbiters were at each venue, and there were several hubs where players played each other. People in favour of these tournaments said that it addressed the fair play issue, and it seemed to do that quite well, as entire World Championship qualifiers were conducted in a hybrid style – an achievement for which FIDE, and other continental and zonal organisations deserve praise for managing to make things happen that I don't think was fully received.

Nevertheless, the model didn't really catch on in England. We hosted hubs of European Chess Union and FIDE hybrid

tournaments, but because of the way the pandemic was handled here, there was no real opportunity to do hybrid on a wider scale domestically, with the reopening such that it was a lot easier to run either small OTB tournaments, or larger OTB tournaments again; with online tournaments without Zoom being pretty trivial to put on to satisfy the needs of chess players in England.

However, in the post-pandemic world, venues are increasingly expensive to source. As a consequence of this, the British Universities Chess Association was unable to find a venue to host its tournament, having hosted previous editions online. Given the fact that universities do have access to venues – albeit not large enough to host our tournament without needing to go the commercial route – we decided to try out a hybrid tournament. Universities would book a room in their university, which would normally cost them nothing, and their entry fee was used to fund the cost of sending an arbiter to their venue. This was the most challenging part, although that was largely due to our own late entry deadlines and not leaving enough time to recruit them.

There are three main platforms to choose from: Chess.com, Lichess and Tornelo. We had run our online tournaments on Chess.com, but at the time we were launching our tournament they had issues with the number of people playing there, and so we were nervous of using it. The advantage of Chess.com is that you can automatically start games. This is much harder on Lichess and relies on challenges, which we thought could be cumbersome. And so finally we settled on Tornelo. Tornelo does not have in-house fair play teams and relies on the arbiter, which it sees as a feature rather than a bug. Since we were running a hybrid tournament, we were not too concerned with that anyway.

To run the tournament, we needed to ask each captain to provide their players' details in the usual way, plus an email address that each player would use for the tournament. We then uploaded all of this into Tornelo, and the players could then use this account to play the games. There are a number of very useful help guides to send to teams and players to help them do that. To set the pairings we could have used the software; however, we were using a pairing system not yet coded in Tornelo, so we did that 'offline' in Swiss-Manager, and then used the 4NCL software to create a PGN file that we could import. All we had to make sure of was that the names of the players in our system matched that in Tornelo, although you could manually adjust this if there was a

Jonathan whose account name is John, or other similar trivialities.

During the height of the pandemic, the major issue with Tornelo was players getting into their account and getting to play on time. They used the wrong email address, or they got lost finding the tournament, or they forgot their password, and all sorts of other human errors. The hybrid model mitigated this. With online chess, everyone is hiding in their rooms with an arbiter talking on Zoom whom the player may or may not be able to hear. With hybrid, if one player in the venue couldn't work out how to do it, there were a raft of team-mates and an arbiter present to point them in the correct direction. Communication was significantly easier than with the online model. Unlike online chess, we did not require any of the players to join a Zoom call, the arbiters on site acted as our eyes and ears, and we used the free version of Slack to communicate between the central team doing pairings and results, and the arbiter at each venue.

When hybrid chess was developed, I didn't see the point of it. I thought it combined the worst of all worlds. You didn't take away the online chess issues of disconnection and cheating, plus you had the OTB issues of players not turning up, and so on. After my experience of this tournament I was happy to accept that I was completely wrong. We had one disconnection issue only, and there was no evidence of any cheating. It is hard to conclude that the tournament was anything other than a success from the perspective of playing it as a hybrid tournament. While it may not be completely feasible, it is a model that could easily be replicated in (e.g.) long-distance county matches. Rather than Lancashire v Kent somewhere in Birmingham, this may prove a cost-effective alternative to an OTB match. Our experience was only positive. It would certainly work better than the old telephone matches!

For FIDE-rated hybrid tournaments, the requirements are much higher in terms of arbiter provision, but for us with one arbiter and a maximum of 12 players at each site it worked really well.

From the ECF Library and Archive

A Set of Chess Postcards



(above, clockwise --- Collection; The Right Move Postcard; Dutch Congratulations Card; The Polgar Sisters; King Albrecht of Bavaria)

Within this modest Post Office folder is a delightful collection of chess-themed postcards. The collector seems to have been British Veterans Champion Joseph Maurice Soesan (1915-1999) as some of the cards are addressed to him.

Soesan has arranged the cards into broad themes. Some reproduce historical artworks showing chess being played through the ages. There are a few that show chess pieces, whether ancient, whimsical or even risqué! Other cards are from places connected to chess or show large outdoor chess boards. There are numerous cards of players, whether photographic portraits, caricatures or captured in a moment of thought during a game. Some of these are signed. One set of cards commemorates specific tournaments or events. Finally, some of the cards just show chess – whether a comic sketch, the game represented as part of the 'battle of the sexes', abstract artwork featuring chess pieces or a still life scene.

The collection can be viewed at DMU Special Collections; contact archives@dmu.ac.uk for information. Catalogue reference S/012/001/14.

NEWS and VIEWS

Ukrainian Refugees Help to Grow Hull's Chess Scene

BBC East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire featured a video covering how Ukrainian refugees are adding to Hull's already thriving chess scene. The BBC interviewed Hull and District Chess Association's Graham Chesters along with two of Hull's strongest Ukrainian players, with a Twitter extract at the link here:

<https://t.co/cWvH0m3sul>

'Ukrainian refugees are making Hull's chess scene bigger and better than ever. Chess gives them a language.'

London Chess Club Sees Boom in Members

A further BBC London report covers the Greenwich Peninsula Chess Club founded by Nick Templar and Andrew Pavord, which has grown quickly to over 500 members on Facebook in its first two years:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64877063>

New Manager of Online Women's Chess

The ECF would like to thank IM Lawrence Cooper for his hard work and valuable contributions during his tenure as Manager of Women's Online Chess. Now that Lawrence has stood down, we would also like to welcome Caroline Robson, who takes over from Lawrence. The email address for Caroline is:

manager.womensonline@englishchess.org.uk

3rd 4NCL Easter Congress

The 3rd 4NCL Easter Congress takes place over the Easter weekend of Friday 7 April – Monday 10 April 2023. The venue is the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel, Sedgemoor Way, Daventry NN11 0SG.

There will be three sections in the event, each with seven rounds: FIDE Rated Open; FIDE Rated U2000; FIDE Rated U1700

The prize fund is £4,200. You can find further details and an entry form at the link below:

https://www.4ncl.co.uk/fide/information_easter23.htm

European Seniors Team Chess Championships – 11 to 21 July

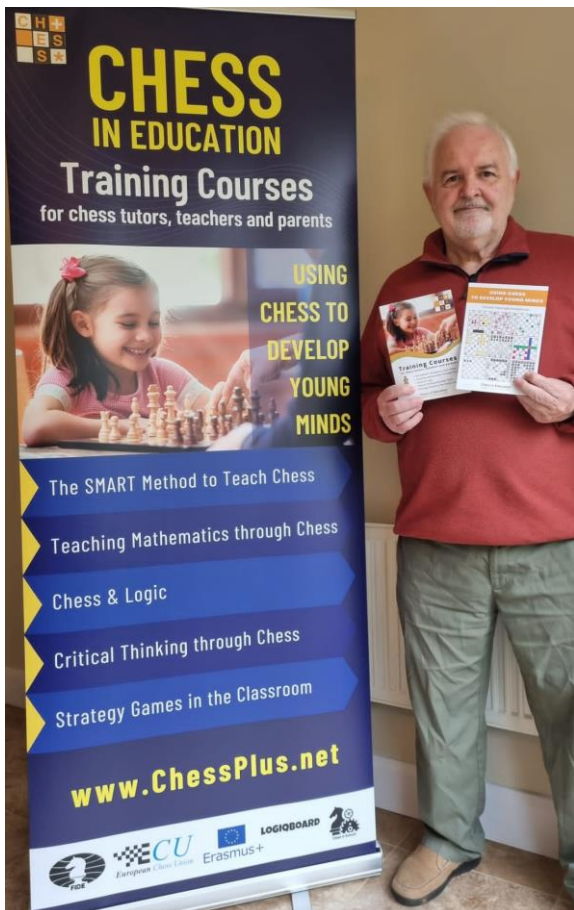
Thanks to funding from the ECF, the Chess Trust and Friends of Chess, the ECF is pleased to announce that it will be sending some strong teams to the upcoming European Senior Team Chess Championships (ESTCC) to be played in Swidnica in Poland from 11-21 July. We are hoping to be able to retain the 50+ Open title and will be bidding to secure the Women's 50+ title, as well as the 65+ Open title, where World 65+ Champion, John Nunn, will be leading the team.

The current delegation comprises around 25 players and there is still time for anyone else aged 50 this year or older to apply to join one of the teams should they wish to do so. Please send any expressions of interest to Nigel Povah at nigelpovah52@gmail.com as soon as possible, as we will be submitting our entry soon.

ECF Sponsors London Chess Conference



The English Chess Federation (ECF) is the governing chess organisation in England and is affiliated to FIDE (the Fédération Internationale des Échecs). Its mission is to promote the game of chess, in all its forms, as an attractive means of cultural and personal advancement to the widest possible public. In addition, the ECF exists to develop chess by creating the means to enable the highest forms of chess excellence to be achieved, and to expand the game as a social and sporting activity.



JUNIOR MOVES

Littlewood's Choice by Paul Littlewood



The U12 2022 Delancey UK Chess Challenge Terafinal was initially dominated by Livio Cancedda-Dupuis, but in Round 9 he lost to Avyukt Dasgupta. This meant that he had to beat the top seed Stanley Badacsonyi in the final round if he was going to win the title.

Here is their exciting last-round game:

L. Cancedda-Dupuis – S. Badacsonyi
UK Chess Challenge Terafinal Under 12

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.Nc3 Bd7 6.0-0 Nge7 7.d4?!



An interesting option here is 7.d3, which keeps the tension and leaves White with a slightly better position.

7.....b5 8.Bb3 Nxd4 9.Nxd4 exd4 10.Qf3!?

The ECF is delighted to be a Gold Sponsor of the London Chess Conference 2023, and applauds the conference team's success in bringing together so many people and organisations involved in the use of chess for educational purposes. Two of the ECF's priority objectives are to implement a Junior Development Pathway, to create a structured and formal progression plan for junior chess players which incorporates existing coaches, junior clubs, associations and programmes, and to develop and embed a National Curriculum as a basis for a clear learning and development pathway for junior chess players. We strongly believe that the problem-solving and social skills that junior chess players develop through initiatives such as these are vital to achieving success in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, so the theme of this year's conference – Chess and STEM – is particularly relevant to us.

We look forward to meeting with, sharing ideas with, and learning from the large array of experts attending the conference. <https://chessconference.org/>

Mike Truran, Chief Executive
English Chess Federation
ceo@englishchess.org.uk



Of course not 10.Qxd4 because of 10...c5 followed by c4 winning a piece. Meanwhile, if White wanted a draw he could play 10.Qh5 Ng6 (not 10...g6 because of 11.Qf3 Be6 12.Qf6) 11.Qd5 Be6 12.Qc6+ Bd7 13.Qd5 etc. but of course Livio is not interested in that outcome!

10...Be6 11.Bxe6

11.Ne2 c5 12.Bxe6 fxe6 13.Nf4 is another option which gives equal chances.

11....fxe6 12.Ne2 e5 13.Bg5 Qd7 14.c3 d3?



Black wants to keep lines closed, but this move hands the advantage back to White. The straightforward 14...dxc3 15.Nxc3 c6 16.a4 b4 17.Nd1 leaves White with compensation for the pawn but Black probably stands slightly better.

15.Qxd3 Ng6 16.f4 h6 17.f5! Ne7

If 17...hgx5 then 18.fgx6 Qe6 19.a4!, with a significant advantage to White.

18.Bh4 Ng8 19.f6?!

Imaginative, but simpler was 19.Ng3 Nf6 20.a4, which is better for White.

19.....Nxf6 20.Bxf6 gxf6 21.Ng3! Be7 22.Nh5?!

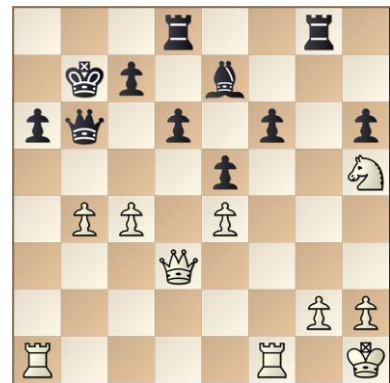


It is better to keep the knight on g3, as it may go to f5 in some variations.

22....0-0-0 23.a4 Kb7?!

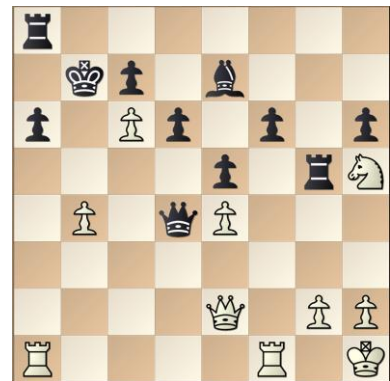
Stronger is 23...Rhf8, when the position is unclear.

24.axb5 Qxb5 25.c4 Qb6+ 26.Kh1 Rhg8 27.b4!



This aggressive move threatens to blast open the queenside and the position is now very hard for Black to defend.

27....Qd4 28.Qe2 Rg5 29.c5 Ra8 30.c6+



Even stronger was 30.Rad1! and after 30...Qc3 then 31.Nxf6 Bxf6 32.Rc1 Qb3 33. c6+ Ka7 34.Ra1 Kb6 35.b5! Be7 36.bxa6 with a winning attack.

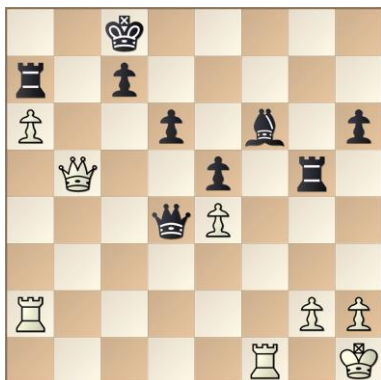
30....Kxc6 31.b5+ Kd7 32.bxa6 Ra7 33.Ra2

33.Rab1 was also strong.

33....Bd8 34.Nxf6+ Kc8?

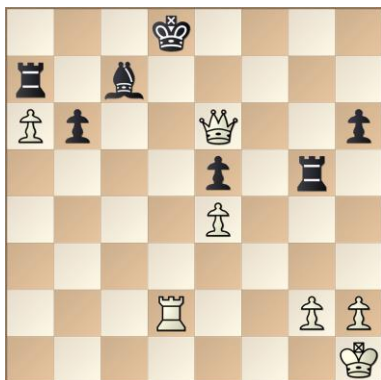
After 34...Bxf6 35.Rxf6 Rg8 36.Rxh6 White is winning, but still has some work to do.

35.Qb5! Bxf6



Losing quickly, but if 35...Rg7 then 36.Qe8 Re7 37.Qg8 is winning.

36.Qe8+ Bd8 37.Qe6+ Kb8 38.Rb1+ Qb6 39.Rxb6+ cxb6 40.Qxd6+ Kc8 41.Rc2+ Bc7 42.Qe6+ Kd8 43.Rd2+ 1-0



A hard-fought game with an excellent finish by Livio. I was very impressed by the energetic way he prosecuted the attack.

Clearly, he is an excellent prospect for the future and it will be interesting to see how he progresses over the next few years.

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

IMPROVERS

Paul Littlewood on Tactics

Over the last year I have explained various types of tactical motif. However, the reader is probably saying to himself 'that is all very well, but I hardly ever get any tactics in my own games'.

Well, I wanted to dispel this myth because there are always tactics lurking around every corner.

To illustrate this, I wanted to look at a few of my own positions over the next few months to show how often tactics appear.

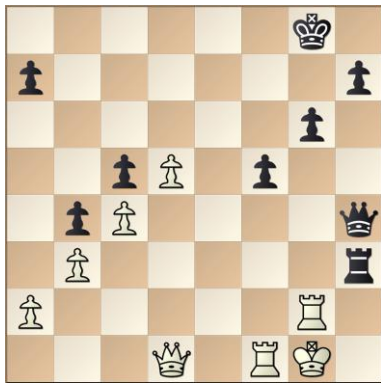
Consider the following:



P. Madden - P.E. Littlewood
4NCL Online 2022

It is Black to play, and I considered very carefully the sacrifice **1...Rexh3+ 2.gxh3 Rxh3+ 3.Kg1**, but what now?... as **3...Qg3+** is met by **4.Rg2**.

At this stage in a combination it is easy to give up, but I went into the position rather more deeply and realised that Black could then reply **4...Qh4!**, reaching the following position:



The immediate threat of 5...Rh1 mate needs to be parried by White, but there is no satisfactory counter. The game finished: **5.Rd2 Rh1+ 6.Kg2 Rh2+ 7.Kf3 Qg4+ 8.Ke3 Qe4 mate.**

A rather pretty finish, but only achieved by realising that the tactic 1...Rexh3+ worked.

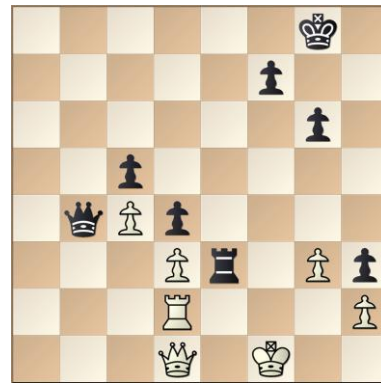
Here is another recent example:



P.E.Littlewood – R.Axel-Simon
World Senior 65+ Teams 2022

White stands better but Black might have hoped to survive. However the crushing tactical blow **1.N4f5!** left him without resource. He loses his queen after 1...exf5 2.Nxf5 because of the threat of mate on g7.

Here are two of my positions to solve yourself, with the answers at the end of the article:



A. Miles – P. E. Littlewood
Arc Masters 1984

A pawn up, Black is clearly winning, but how did I win a second pawn and encourage my opponent to resign?



L. Smart – P. E. Littlewood
Charlton 1983

How did I win White's queen with a pretty tactical sequence?

Answers:

A. Miles – P. E. Littlewood

Black wins more material by **1...Qb7** (threatening Qh1+) **2.Kg1 Rxd3!** and White resigned, because if 3.Rxd3 then 3...Qg2 mate.

L.Smart – P.E.Littlewood

The pretty move **1...Bxe2!** wins because after **2.Rxe2** comes **2...Rc1 3.Qxc1 Nxe2+** etc.

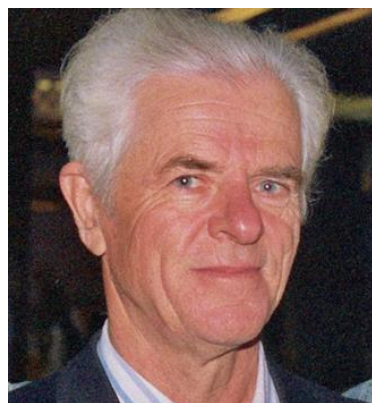
--- Paul Littlewood Email: plittl@hotmail.com

The French Katalymov by Andrew Martin

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Qd5!?



I'm currently writing a book on the French with 3...dxe4. Travelling in the lands of the Rubinstein and Fort Knox variations might not seem like the most exciting journey, but it has turned out to be a far more interesting pilgrimage than I imagined. Just as a taster, let me introduce you to the Katalymov Variation, which begins with 4...Qd5!?



Boris Katalymov, 1996
Wikimedia, Photographer Gerhard Hund.

So, who was Boris Katalymov? Here is what Wikipedia has to say about him: Boris Katalymov (13 June 1932 – 1 February 2013) was a Soviet and later Kazakhstani chess player. He was awarded the title of International Master by FIDE in 1996. Katalymov was multiple times champion of Kazakhstan. He took the silver medal in the 1995 World Senior Chess Championship, held in Bad Liebenzell, Germany. The Katalymov Variation of the Sicilian Defence is named after him (and possibly a variation of the French too!). Boris Nikolaevich spent his later years teaching chess to young children and teenagers at the 'School Palace' in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He was clearly a creative player, although he had mixed results with his idea in the French.

Kotkov, Yuri M - Katalymov, Boris N C10
URS-ch34 Semifinal Krasnodar, 1966

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Qd5!?



At first sight it looks as though Black is heading for a clearly inferior version of the Scandinavian, where he has blocked in his light-squared bishop unnecessarily. Yet the queen is mobile, trickily placed on d5 where she supports ...e6–e5, a freeing move that may come soon.

5.Bd3 Nf6 6.Qf3! White elects to challenge Black head-on and gives up a pawn.

Instead 6.Nxf6+ gxf6 gives Black a target on g2 to aim at, another benefit of the queen on d5. 7.Nf3 Rg8 8.c4 White can castle if he wishes. 8...Qh5 9.Bf4!? Rxf2!?



Katalymov is bold. 10.Bg3 Bd6 11.Nh4 The rook is trapped. Can Black rustle up compensation? 11...Qa5+ 12.Kf1 Rxf3 13.hxf3 Nc6 14.Nf3 (14.c5! looks pretty good and after that, I don't trust Black's position: 14...Bf8 15.a3! with b4 to come.) 14...b5 15.c5 Bf8 16.Rxf7 Bd7 17.a4 b4 18.Bb5 Rd8 19.Kg1 Ne7 20.Be2 (20.Nd2! was most precise, with 20...Bxb5 21.axb5 Qxb5 22.Ne4 Nd5 23.Rxa7 leading to a totally won game for White.) 20...Bc6 21.Qd3 Nf5.



It is extraordinary that Black wins from here, but at least over the last couple of moves he has stationed his bishop and knight on good squares. 22.g4 Nxd4?! 23.Nxd4 Qxc5 24.Nxc6?! (24.Rd1! e5 25.Nxc6 Rxd3 26.Bxd3 means that Black cannot capture on c6 thanks to Bb5!) 24...Rxd3 25.Bxd3 Qg5 26.Be2 Qg8 27.Rh3 f5 28.Kg2 fxg4 29.Rd3 Bd6 30.Rad1 Qg5 31.Nxa7 Qe5 The worm has turned, with Black threatening both ...Qxe2 and ...Qh2+ 32.Rxd6 cxd6 33.Bb5+ Kf8 34.Nc6 Qh5 35.Rxd6? (35.Rd3! would anchor the white pieces and then the game could continue in a more stable way) 35...Qh3+ 36.Kg1 g3 White is still off-balance. 37.Rd8+ Kg7 38.fxg3 Qxg3+ 39.Kf1 Qe3 40.Rd4? (40.Rd1) 40...Qc1+ 41.Ke2 Qxb2+ 42.Kd3 b3 43.Rb4 Qc2+ 44.Ke3 Before 44...b2 is played, White resigns 0–1 Filchenkov, K-Katalymov, B Tomsk 2002 A fortunate win for Black, but I guess you make your own luck. Katalymov randomised when he needed to.

6...Qxd4 7.Ne2 Qd8 8.Bg5 Be7



My own feeling is that the Black position should be defensible.

9.Bxf6 9.0–0–0 seems straightforward. Perhaps he did not want to allow 9...Nxe4 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Bxe4 c6 with simplification. The Fort Knox with an extra pawn!

9...Bxf6 10.0–0–0 Nd7 11.Nf4 Be5! 12.h4 Qe7 13.g3 a5 With no threats on the horizon, Katalymov feels he can make an aggressive move of his own. If allowed, Black will push this pawn all the way to a3.

14.a3 a4 15.Ng5 Nf6 16.Bb5+ Bd7 17.Nd3?? Possibly out of frustration, as a direct attack has not appeared, White errs.

He should settle for 17.Bxd7+ Nxd7 18.Nd3 and claim some compensation based on more active pieces and central control.

17...Bxb2+! 18.Nxb2 Bxb5 19.Qxb7 0–0 20.Qxb5 Qxa3



White certainly underestimated the power of the counter-attack. Although a piece up, it is virtually impossible to deal with the many Black threats.

21.Kd2 c6 21...Rab8 looks good: 22.Nc4 Qa2 23.Qc5 (23.Qc6 Rbd8+ 24.Ke3 Ng4+ 25.Kf3 (25.Kf4 Qxc2) 25...Qxc4) 23...h6! so that if the knight moves....Ne4+ is a killer. 24.Ra1 Rfd8+!

22.Nc4 Qxg3!? 22...Rad8+! 23.Ke2 Qa2 24.Qb4 Nd5 would have left White in very serious trouble.

23.Qc5? 23.fxg3 cxb5 24.Nd6 keeps White in the game.

23...Rfd8+ 24.Ke2 Qg4+ 24...Qc3!

25.f3 Qf4 26.Ne3 Rxd1 27.Rxd1 Qh2+ 28.Kf1 Qh1+ 29.Ke2 Qh2+ 30.Kf1 Nd5! 31.Nxd5 cxd5 32.Qf2 Qf4 33.Qd4 Qxd4 34.Rxd4 a3 35.Rd1 Ra4! 36.Ne4 36.Ra1

36...h6 37.Nf2 Rxh4 38.Ra1 Ra4 Possibly White lost on time, as it doesn't seem quite the right moment to resign. Nevertheless, I think you get a picture of the variation from this opening game. 4...Qd5 can lead to murky complications. I doubt it can be that good, but this has to be proven.

0–1

Shinkevich, Vitaly (2440) - Katalymov, Boris N (2424) C15

RUS-Cup06 Tomsk (8), 07.07.2001

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Qd5 5.Nc3 A natural enough move, but the knight has dropped out of the centre back to a less commanding post.

5.Bd3 Nf6 6.Nxf6+ gxf6 7.Nf3 Rg8 follows the preceding game, but now we will see how Paul Keres handles the position. For starters, he is not to be bluffed and castles. 8.0-0! Nc6 9.Re1 Qh5 (White knows full well that 9...Nxd4? is a mistake thanks to 10.Be4! Nxf3+ 11.Qxf3 and suddenly the black position has deteriorated. The best now may be 11...Qa5 12.Be3 Rb8 but then 13.Bd4



comes and White has a decisive lead in development.) 10.Be4 Bd6 11.g3 Black's attack is blocked simply enough. 11...f5 12.Bxc6+ bxc6 13.c4 The game is going to hinge on whether Black can get the dark-squared bishop going. If he cannot, then there are just too many weaknesses to repair. 13...c5?! (13...Ba6 might be met by 14.Qb3! f4 15.Ne5 fxe3 16.hxe3 Qh3 17.Bf4



This is rather unclear, but White still holds an advantage after 17...0-0-0 18.Qf3. I do think Black should have tried this though.) 14.dxc5 Bxc5 (14...Bb7 screams out to me to be played, but it turns out White doesn't need to panic and may continue 15.cxd6! Bxf3 (15...Qxf3 16.Qxf3 Bxf3 17.dxc7) 16.Qa4+ c6 (16...Kf8 17.dxc7 Qh3 18.Qa3+) 17.Qb3! Rd8 18.Bf4 when Black struggles to take his initiative further and must now face the fact that he is material behind with a lost game.) 15.Be3 Bb4 (15...Bb7 16.Qa4+! Kd8 17.Ne5! wins for White.) 16.Nd4! Qxd1 17.Rexd1 Bd7 18.Rac1 (18.c5! came into consideration.)

18...e5 19.Nb5 White has settled for a steady, small edge. Katalymov was obviously an aggressive tactician and so Keres has steered the game into a position where other skills come to the fore. 19...Bxb5 20.cxb5 Bd6 21.Rc6 Rg4 22.Bc5 (22.b3 Rb4 23.Rd5 f4 24.Bd2 does not help the Black cause.) 22...Ra4 23.Bxd6 cxd6 24.Rxd6 Rxa2 25.Rd5 Rxb2 26.Rxe5+ Kf8 27.Rxf5 Re8



Black's problem is that he can never win from here with any sort of reasonable play. A period of suffering is in the offing. 28.Rc7 Re7 29.Rxe7 Kxe7 30.Rh5 Kf8 31.Rxh7 Rxb5 32.Rh6 Ra5 33.Kg2 Kg7 34.Rc6 Ra2 35.g4 a5 36.Ra6 a4 37.h4 a3 38.h5 Ra1 39.Kf3 Ra2 40.Kg3 Kh7 (40...Ra1 41.Kf4 a2 42.h6+ Kh7 43.g5 sees White making decisive progress) 41.Ra7 Kg8 42.g5 Ra1 43.Kf4 Ra2 44.f3 Rh2 45.h6 a2 46.Kf5 Rb2 47.Ra8+ Kh7 48.f4 Rf2 49.Ra7 Kg8 50.Ke5 Rb2 51.Ra8+ Kh7 52.Kf6 Rf2 53.f5 1-0 Keres, P-Katalymov, B Moscow 1965

5...Bb4 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.Be3 Qd7 I prefer 7...Nf6 but that is a deeply personal thing. Develop first, think later.

8.a3 Be7 9.g3 Nf6 10.Bg2 b6 If Black is allowed to play ...Bb7 and ...0-0-0 he will reach a position of relative comfort.

11.d5!



therefore seems correct, disrupting the enemy's plans.

11...exd5 12.Nxd5 Bb7 12...Nxd5 13.Qxd5 Qxd5 14.Bxd5 Bb7 15.0-0-0 Na5 16.Bxb7 Nxb7 17.Nd4 leaves White with a nagging edge, with Nf5 and Nc6 available to increase the pressure.

13.Nxf6+ Bxf6 14.Qxd7+ Kxd7 15.0-0-0+ Kc8 16.Nf4 g6 17.Nd5 Bd8 18.Rhe1



One does not play 4...Qd5 to have to endure positions like these. Black has absolutely no winning chances at all, barring a blunder.

18...a5 19.b3 b5 20.h4 h6 21.Kb1 Kb8 22.Bc1 h5 23.Bf1 Na7 23...b4 24.Bb2 Rg8 25.a4 Bc8 26.Nf4 Bg4 27.Rd5 sees steady improvement by White.

24.Bf4 f6 There were no decent alternatives, for instance 24...Nc8 25.Bxb5.

25.Nb6 g5 26.hxg5 fxg5 27.Be5 Rg8 28.Nxa8 Bxa8 29.f4 g4 30.f5 Bf3 31.Be2 Nc6 32.Bxf3 gxf3 33.Bf4 h4 34.Rf1 hxg3 35.Rxf3 Bh4 36.f6 g2 37.Bh2 Rf8 38.f7 Be7 39.Rg1 Nd8 40.Rxg2 Interesting and obscure games can arise after 4...Qd5 and as an outright surprise weapon, I think the idea is still serviceable. You simply have to be willing to accept the risk.

1-0

Gormally's Coaching Corner by Danny Gormally



I have started to do more coaching. This has forced me to rein in social media posts along the lines of 'online coaching is the most soul-destroying thing ever' and 'coaching is pointless - you either have it or you don't.' In truth, I still prefer face-to-face coaching, but online coaching has its positives as well. You don't have to worry about travel costs, for starters, so it eats up far less of your day. Is coaching useful? I believe it is.

Although I didn't have any 'official' coaching when I was younger, I did get help from people at my local club who would give me opening and general advice on how to improve. As you become older it is natural to transition to becoming a coach or mentor yourself. Somehow, the playing side of the game for me now feels like trying to swim through quicksand. I'm losing points every tournament. So now I am helping those under-rated juniors who are making life tough for myself and my fellow fossils. There are a few issues that inexperienced and amateur players seem to struggle with that I can quickly identify, which I list below:

1. Moving a piece more than once in the opening.
2. Trying to do too much too soon - rather than improving their position or building their attack, they try to force the issue too quickly.
3. No analysis of their own games. I always urge students to get into the habit of analysing their own games and it is surprising how often this comes as a novel approach for amateur players.
4. Over-dependence on engines. This was also a trap that I fell into. If every time you analyse a game you turn on an engine, you are not using your brain. This last point is perhaps the most important one of all and so in my lessons now I emphasise the importance of doing your

own analysis. Let's look at a game where I recently helped one of my students, Zain Patel, to analyse one of his recent games.

Pang, F... - Patel, Z... B12

London Chess League, 25.02.2023

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 e6



I have looked at this line a lot with Zain of late as it is a very popular way for White to tackle the Caro-Kann. The advantage of this approach is that White is already relying on very speedy development and moves like Bd3 and Nf3 can be made automatically, and then the opposing king will be in the cross-hairs as well, as in most cases Black will look to castle kingside.

5.a3 Bxc5 6.b4 Bb6 7.Nf3 Ne7 8.Bb2 Ng6 9.g3 I said something to Zain during our Skype session about how if this was my game I would welcome this move if I was Black in this situation. That's because g3 slightly weakens the white kingside and the light-squared bishop belongs on d3 in this variation, not on g2. However, White is concerned about the possibility of ... Nf4 if he places the bishop on d3 immediately, so firstly he prevents this possibility.

9...Nc6 10.Nbd2 Bc7 11.Qe2 0-0 12.Bg2



12...f6? a fault in judgement and experience. Black weakens his position when there was really no need.

Often improvement is about identifying candidate moves, and seeing that you have options. After we had finished analysing the game I turned the engine on and it came up with the move 12...b5! which apparently didn't appear on Zain's radar at all, and certainly didn't feature on mine. This is a good move for a number of reasons:

1. It prevents any b5 prod by White which would destabilise the knight on c6.
2. By 'freezing' the pawn on b4, Black opens up the possibility of playing ... a5, attacking the white pawn chain on the queenside.
3. It prevents the idea of c4 by White, which is very thematic and frees the position for him. It is worth pointing out that, like a lot of engine ideas, this is also tactically justified as if White plays Qxb5 then this will hang the e-pawn. 13.0-0 (13.Qxb5 Ncxe5 is more than ok for Black, and ... a5 followed by ... Ba6 might soon become an active threat.) 13...a5 14.Rfd1 Bd7= when the game is balanced.



You may well say 'aren't you contradicting what you were saying earlier - that you shouldn't turn on the engine when analysing?' Well, yes, you'd be right. In my defence, we did analyse the game before we turned the engine on to check our own analysis. Zain, like a lot of juniors, has a keen interest in what computers have to say, so it is difficult to disregard the engine altogether. In an ideal world, I might argue that it could indeed be best not to turn on the engine at all; that the whole process of getting better and analysing your game is about the excitement and interest of going back and forth in your analysis until you find the right ideas. Increasingly, it would seem, this type of view is relegating me to the chess dinosaurs.

13.exf6 gxf6 14.0-0 14.c4! is the right idea, of course. 14...e5 (14...d4 15.b5 d3 16.Qe3 was a line that myself and Zain considered; however, Black seems to be in trouble here wherever he moves the knight. The pawn on d3 is just weak and likely to be picked off. 16...Nce5 17.Nxe5 Nxe5 18.0-0+-) 15.cxd5 Qxd5 16.0-0 and Black

is just in trouble, as the kingside is rickety and the queen is exposed to attacks on d5. (16.0-0-0? was suggested by Zain, but I thought this was a typical error that an inexperienced player would make. As White is doing well and will have an automatic attack without having to do anything special, there is no need to create counter-chances for the opponent by putting your king in the firing line as well. 16...Qa2 17.Ne4 Bg4 and Black will quickly look to bring a rook to the c-file and gain some attacking chances himself.)

14...Qe7 15.Rfe1 e5



16.Qb5? Zain's talented opponent is even younger than he is, and this also looks like the move of an inexperienced player. Qb5 is anti-positional and all it does is create a one-move threat which is easily met when the queen will just be misplaced. How can you get juniors to get out of these bad habits? I guess by showing them games where somebody built the attack, rather than going for one-move ideas. Part of the issue in my view, and why chess players often play with a lack of patience, is because of the coaching we received when we were younger. There is an obsession with teaching the four-move checkmate, which is all about bringing your queen out early in the game.

16.c4!, attacking the black centre and gaining space, was once again the right idea. 16...e4 17.Nd4 Be5 18.Qe3+-

16...Rd8 17.Rad1 a6 18.Qe2 Bg4 19.h3 Bh5 20.Qf1 In our analysis we considered the possibility of 20.g4 Nf4 21.Qe3 now Black has a choice - take on g2 or move the bishop. I suggested to Zain that it was better to move the bishop. 21...Nxg2 - simplicity above all! (21...Bg6? 22.Qxf4 exf4 23.Rxe7 Nxe7 24.Bxf6



looked like a very good turn of events for White. Later when we confirmed with the computer that White is indeed doing quite well here, Zain asked me how I was so sure that this was the case. I said that a lot of it comes down to experience. I've just seen similar situations where opponents have saced the exchange or I've saced the exchange and got plenty of play.) 22.Kxg2 Bg6

20...Nf8 21.Nb1 e4 22.Rd2 Black is better here. After further mistakes, Zain went on to win.

22...Bb6 23.Nh4 Ne5 24.Bxe5 Qxe5 25.Kh2 Rac8 26.a4 Bc7 27.f4 Qe7 28.c4 Qxb4 29.cxd5 Re8 30.Nf5 Bg6 31.Rd4 Qb6 32.Nh6+ Kg7 33.Red1 e3 34.Qe2 Bd6 35.f5 Kxh6 36.fxg6 Nxg6 37.Be4 Bxg3+ 38.Kh1 Bf2 39.d6 Re5 40.d7 Rd8 41.Bxg6 Qc6+ 42.Be4 Rxe4 43.Rd6 Qxa4 44.Nc3 Qc4 45.Qf3 Re6 46.R6d4 Qc6 47.Rh4+ Bxh4 48.Rd5 Bg5 49.h4 Qxc3 50.hxg5+ Kg7 51.gxf6+ Qxf6 52.Qg4+ Kh8 53.Rf5 Qh6+ 54.Kg2 Rg6

0-1

johnman1 (2138) - mrkim417 (2229) B14
Rated blitz game lichess.org, 01.03.2023

If you want to be featured in this column, then please contact me via email at danielgormally@msn.com and I will try to analyse your game for you and make you famous. A player who recently contacted me was Cameron Davis, who is a young player who is studying at university. Cameron seems to have quite a dynamic style judging by the game I watched him play on Lichess.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.Bd3 Bb4 9.Bd2 0-0 I asked Cameron when we analysed the game what he would have done in the line after 9...Qf6? 10.0-0 (... Qf6 is a shocker of course and White can win on the spot with 10.Bg5!) 10...Nxd4? Cameron hit on the right reply: 11.Nxd5! Nxf3+ 12.gxf3 exd5 13.Bxb4 This line is simple but is a good example of how you have to get the basics right as a coach. Emphasise the importance of concrete calculation, and how it is crucial to look for checks and captures first.

10.0-0 Nxc3? This was a mistake, and I was impressed to see that Cameron identified it as such. Understanding the flow of the game and when key mistakes happen, and when the important moments happen, is crucial to your progress as a player. Black strengthens the white centre and removes the one strategic asset that counter-balanced the potential white attack on the kingside: the isolated d-pawn.

11.bxc3 Be7 12.Bf4?! I was also impressed that Cameron saw this as sub-optimal.

12.Re1



was good and now I went into one of my long speeches that I often bore my students to death with, in explaining the 'theory of only moves'. I learned about this theory from a Garry Kasparov annotation in *New In Chess* once. The theory is that there are some moves in the position that you will inevitably play and some moves that you may or not play. It feels a bit like the advantage that players have when they are playing on the button in poker. The concept is that you should play only moves first and then see what happens. Re1 is a move that White will inevitably play so why not get it on the board as soon as possible? By contrast, it is not clear if White needs Bf4 or not. I also asked Cameron how to assess the position. He said White was clearly better, which was also correct. In fact, the game is already borderline winning for White. 12...b6 13.h4

12...Bf6 12...Bd6! was the reason why Cameron wasn't sure about Bf4. White still maintains the advantage after this, but exchanging the pieces for Black could relieve the pressure somewhat. 13.Bxd6 Qxd6 14.Re1 b6 15.Bxh7+ Kxh7 16.Ng5+ was a fantasy line I mentioned in analysis although it doesn't seem to be enough: 16...Kg6 17.Qg4 f5! 18.Qh4 Bd7 19.Qh7+ Kf6 20.Qh4 Kg6=

13.Re1 b6 14.Bc2 Bb7 15.Qd3 g6 16.Rad1 Na5 17.Ne5 Qd5? 17...Rc8.



And Black wouldn't have anything to complain about. There are reasonable sources of counterplay available to him over the next few moves, for example ... Bd5 followed by ... Nc4.

18.Qg3 Qxa2 19.Bb1 Qb3 Cameron correctly said this was winning for White as Black is devoid of defenders on the kingside (the bishop on f6 looks very lonely), while White is lining up the heavy forces in that sector.

20.h4 Nc4 21.Nd7 This simple move is good enough to win the game. However, Cameron was already very short of time and unfortunately went on to lose the game.

I suggested the line 21.Nxg6 although this runs into a strong response. 21...fxg6! (21...hxg6 was the first line I looked at - which probably drew me to Nxg6 in the first place. 22.h5 gives some attacking chances.) 22.h5



This was where we turned on the engine. Perhaps we should have left it off. In any case, I want the reader to think about this position, and find the best response for Black.

0-1



22...Qb5!



... is the beautiful resource that the computer finds, although as I suggested to Cameron: wouldn't it be a far more rewarding experience to find this in analysis yourself without the help of the engine? That's the problem with machines - they do it all for you.

STUDIES AND PROBLEMS

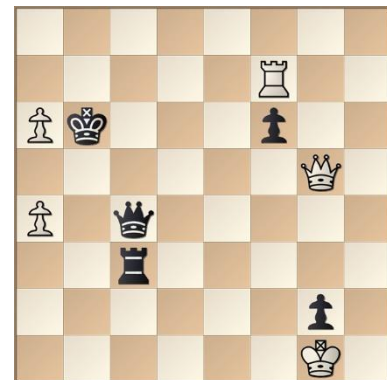
HOW TO SOLVE A STUDY

by Ian Watson

Crazy Kings

We all love a king hunt, especially when the king is wandering around the board in its attempts to escape, or when the attacker's king comes up, under fire, to help the attack. There was an exciting king walk game in the recent European Championship. I watched it on Danny King's excellent website Power Play Chess; the game was Yuffa - Kilic. (There's another, even madder, recent one on Danny's site: Szabo - Stepanencu.)

Such games are rare. Such endgame studies, however, are not. In studies the kings often dodge through danger, careering crazily across the board. For example, this study by Yehuda Hoch from the Mandil Memorial Tourney in 1980:



White to play and win

Clearly, White needs to find some forcing moves and must begin with checks. 1.Rxf6+ looks like the right way to arrange the white rook and queen. The idea is 1...Ka7 2.Qg7+; that will force 2...Qc7, to which White will reply 3.Rf7. Then Black's rook will start checking, but at least we have immobilised the black queen, so White's wandering king isn't at risk of being checkmated. Except...

there was another option on move 1: we could have thrown in the move 1.a5+. What for? We don't know, but if I had to solve this study in a competition, I would be very tempted to look at that line first. Why?

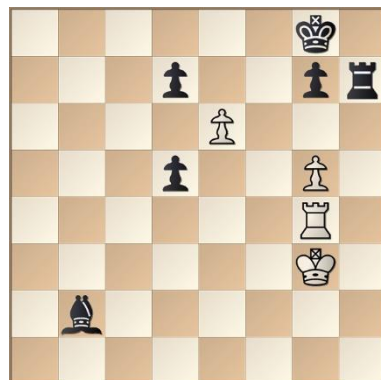
Because 1.Rxf6+ followed by 2.Qg7+ is prosaic; it's not the type of play that study composers like to have. 1.a5+ doesn't have any function one can see yet, but it doesn't concede anything much either, so let's see what happens.

We have **1.a5+ Kxa6 2.Rxf6+ Ka7 3.Qg7+ Qc7 4.Rf7** and now **4...Rc1+ 5.Kxg2 Rc2+** and the king has to go to f3 because h3 allows 6...Rh2+ and then 7...Rg2+. So **6.Kf3 Rc3+**. Okay, but what's our plan? We need to shelter the white king, which is going to have to be on h7. How to get there? Not immediately by 7.Kg4? because of 7...Rg3+ winning for Black. Take the slow route: **7.Ke4 Rc4+ 8.Kd5 Rc5+ 9.Ke6 Rc6+ 10.Kf5 Rc5+ 11.Kg6 Rc6+ 12.Kh7** Got there. Is Black dead yet? Of course not, there hasn't been enough content yet. So Black must have a trick, and with that thought you find **12...Ka8** with the point 13.Rxc7 Rxc7 14.Qxc7 stalemate. Nice, but it's not hard now to see that White can instead play **13.Qg8+ Qc8 14.Rf8**, echoing the idea from moves 3 and 4 - nice again! Black again checks and White again shelters his king: **14...Rc7+ 15.Kh8**. All done yet? This time there's been enough content, but it's wise to be suspicious around the end of a study - composers are particularly inclined to put traps in at the end. Indeed, you spot **15...Ka7** with the same idea as 12...Ka8. At this point, you might give up and go back to the first move, but always take another look first. Here, you'll find **16.Qg1+** and White wins. After steadily moving all the pieces up to the top of the board, it's easy to overlook such a descending move.

Solved. Well, yes, but. We need to find out what difference 1.a5+ made. It seems like all the play could have been the same without that move. So work through it: 1.Rxf6+ Ka7 2.Qg7+ Qc7 3.Rf7 Rc1+ 4.Kxg2 Rc2+ 5.Kf3 Rc3+ 6.Ke4 Rc4+ 7.Kd5 Rc5+ 8.Ke6 Rc6+ 9.Kf5 Rc5+ 10.Kg6 Rc6+ 11.Kh7 Ka8 12.Qg8+ Qc8 13.Rf8 wins. Now you have to go through both the 1.a5+ and the 1.Rxf6+ lines very carefully, because you know there must be something you've missed. Finally, you find 11...Kxa6 in the 1.Rxf6+ line; there's the same stalemate trap as we already found: 12.Rxc7 Rxc7 13.Qxc7 stalemate. (And White doesn't have 12.Qg1+...) With the pawn having moved to a5 on move 1, however, this position wouldn't be stalemate. Wowsers! Echo upon echo.

The complete solution is: **1.a5+ Kxa6 2.Rxf6+ Ka7 3.Qg7+ Qc7 4.Rf7** and now **4...Rc1+ 5.Kxg2 Rc2+ 6.Kf3 Rc3+ 7.Ke4 Rc4+ 8.Kd5 Rc5+ 9.Ke6 Rc6+ 10.Kf5 Rc5+ 11.Kg6 Rc6+ 12.Kh7 Ka8 13.Qg8+ Qc8 14.Rf8 Rc7+ 15.Kh8 Ka7 16.Qg1+** wins.

Now your turn: here's a study by Pogosyants, from *Shakhmaty v SSSR* in 1963. There isn't a long king march across the board, but both kings are actively roaming in the five-move solution.



White to play and draw

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How to Solve a Study – solution

(Pogosyants)

1.e7 Be5+ 2.Rf4 Bxf4+ 3.Kg4 Rh4+ 4.Kf5 Kf7 5.g6+ Ke8 stalemate.

4.Kxh4? Bxg5+ 5.Kxg5 Kf7.

PROBLEM CORNER

Christopher Jones with his monthly conundrum

Last time I left you with this problem to solve –



Guido Cristoffanini

2nd Prize, *L'Italia Scacchistica* 1928-XI

Mate in 2

As I said last time, 'not only Black's knight at e4 but also White's queen [is pinned]. A solver will expect that in the solution the queen will be freed, at least to participate in,

and probably to deliver, mate(s). Before exploring possible key moves it is interesting to consider what would happen if it were Black to move and he made any of the three possible unpinning moves, 1...e6, 1...c4 and 1...Nc4. Each of these moves allows just one mating rejoinder (unlike 1...Nb3, which would permit multiple mates). This may help in appreciating the play that will arise after the key move.'

As matters stand, 1...e6 would allow only one mate, 2.Qg5; 1...c4 would allow only 2.Qe5; and 1...Nc4 only 2.Qxe4. (It is nice to see why alternatives fail.) A good feature of the problem is that after the key move these mating responses are all dispensed with, and a new set of unique mating rejoinders is brought into play. After 1.Qb3! (threatening 2.fxg3) we have 1...e6 2.Qxg3 (only); 1...c4 2.Qe3 (only) and 1...Nc4 2.Qf3 (only). The byplay is 1...gxf2 2.g3 and 1...Nxb3 2.Rxe4.

In the last two issues I've referred to the pleasure afforded problem aficionados by the appearance of a new FIDE Album, and I'd like to give a couple of examples of this pleasure from the recently published 2016-18 Album.



Marco Guida
The Problemist, 2016
Mate in 2

You may like to have a go at solving it before reading on, although I should say that for me, a rather lazy reader, this problem gives an example of the sort of pleasure that can be given by just reading the solutions of modern mate-in-two problems, and working out how the solution and tries work out. For there are two thematic tries – ‘tries’ signifying that they are white moves that fail only to one defence, ‘thematic’ that they use the same ‘line-play’ (e.g. in this case, the pins on the lines c1-g5 and d5-g5, and the unveiling of the power of the white rook at b4 along the fourth rank), but in a way that needs tweaking in order to find a way to overcome every single possible defence. In most modern mate-in-two problems, there is a relationship between the phases of play (in this instance, three – the two tries and the actual solution), with logic

determining why what succeeds in one phase fails in another and so on. (There is usually some sense of paradox in this, adding to the pleasure.)

If you are having a go at solving it you may sense that to set the ball rolling we'll want to move the c4N. This may prompt moves by the d4B, after which the b4R will be a factor – not itself administering mate (the a4R is clearly a ‘technical piece’ added to prevent that unwanted possibility), but contributing to the mating picture.

And so it proves. The question then is: to what square to move the c4N?

I'll go through the solution, as given in the Album. The first try is 1.Ne5?. This threatens 2.Nhf3#, exploiting the pin on the d2N (but not 2.Qg4, as the f5P is no longer pinned). If Black defends with 1...f4 (unpinning the d2N) 2.Qg4 is possible, and now is checkmate. However, another unpinning of the d2N, 1...Be3!, is the successful defence.

The second try is 1.Ne3?. This time 2.Nf3 is *not* threatened, but 2.Qg4 *is*. Now there is a defence by the unpinned d2N, 1...Nf3, but the move threatened by the first try, 2.Nxf3, returns, this time as checkmate. However, in similar vein to the first try, a move of the d4B scotches this – the unpinning 1...Be5!.

The key move is 1.Nd6!, threatening 2.Ne4# (exploiting *both* pins). Now the defence 1...Be3 fails against one familiar move, 2.Qg4# (but not 2.Nf3?), and the other defence, 1...Be5, fails against 2.Nf3# (but not 2.Qg4?).

One other offering from the 2016-18 Album. In a previous *Chess Moves* I extolled the joys of selfmate-in-two problems, in which White plays in such a way as to force an unwilling Black to administer checkmate on Black's second move. As with mate-in-two problems, these characteristically have at least one try, and a paradoxical relationship between the phases of play. I've picked a comparatively simple example from the Album –



Valery Kopyl
1st Prize, Dresden tourney 2017
 Selfmate in 2

The solver's first task is to see how White can make a threat. There are two ideas that draw one's attention. At present, if White plays Rxb6+ then the enforced reply, ...Qxb6, is strong but is not mate because the capture of the b6N has removed the black guard on d5, so White has Kxd5. Similarly we have the idea of White playing Bxb5+ and the enforced reply ...Qxb5 being 'close, but no cigar': d4 is no longer guarded by Black, so there's

Kxd4. The logical thing to do therefore is to get Black guarding d5 or d4 so that the enforced replies to these checks are checkmate. So try 1.f4, threatening 2.Rxb6+ Qxb6#. Black can defend with 1...Re4, cutting his own line of guard on d5, but now the guard on d4 means that the other idea works – 2.Bxb5+ Qxb5#. However, 1...Rf3 cuts the h1-d5 line without guarding d4 and is the successful defence.

In parallel consider 1.e6!. Now the black guard on d4 means that 2.Bxb5+ Qxb5# is threatened. Black has a defence, 1...Re5, which works in a way analogous to 1...Re4 in the try, and so similarly lets in the other move sequence: 2.Rxb6+ Qxb6#. The problem is neatly rounded off by one amusing line of by-play: 1...Rxd3 2.Qa8+ Na7#. If (unlike lazy readers like myself) you worked all this out for yourself it will, I hope, have been an enjoyable experience. But even if you just read through the solution I think that the witty logic will have made a favourable impression.

If you have any queries don't hesitate to contact me.
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New books from Elk and Ruby

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

Available in the UK
 from Chess & Bridge
 and on Amazon

Elk and Ruby
www.elkandruby.com

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

21-30 March 2023	UK vs Ukraine Challenge Match - Adams v Volokitin- Chess and Bridge, London
25-26 March 2023	4NCL Rounds 7 and 8 (Div 3 East, Div 4) – Mercure Daventry Court Hotel, Daventry
25-26 March 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress - Ealing, London
25 March 2023	Darnall & Handsworth (Sheffield) 5th FIDE Rated Rapidplay - Stradbroke, Sheffield
25-26 March 2023	Mill Hill Congress - Mill Hill, London
25 March 2023	Poplar Rapid Tournament - Poplar, London
25 March 2023	EPSCA Under 11 Girls' Final - TBA
26 March 2023	SCCU Junior Jamboree 2023 - Coulsdon, Surrey
Week Beginning 27 March	
29 March 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess - London
29 March-2 April 2023	London Chess League Weekend Congress - London
29 March-2 April 2023	Bristol Open Spring Congress - Bristol
29 March-2 April 2023	Guildford FIDE Congress - Guildford
01-02 April 2023	Great Yarmouth Chess Congress - Great Yarmouth
01 April 2023	EJCOA Zonal South Yorkshire - Sheffield
01 April 2023	London FIDE Rapidplay - Ealing, London
02 April 2023	3rd Kentish FIDE Rapidplay - Sevenoaks, Kent
02 April 2023	Bourne End One-Day Chess Congress - Bourne End, Buckinghamshire
Week Beginning 3 April	
04 April 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid - Muswell, London
05 April 2023	Coulsdon Chess Daytime Chess - Coulsdon, Surrey
05 April 2023	10th Jurassic Blitz - Seaton
06-10 April 2023	Southend Masters 2023 - Southend-on-Sea, Essex
07-10 April 2023	3rd 4NCL Easter Congress - Mercure Daventry Court Hotel
07-08 April 2023	Coulsdon Chess Standardplay Congress Easter 2023 - Coulsdon, Surrey
07-10 April 2023	65th Southend Easter Congress Open - Southend-on-Sea, Essex
07-09 April 2023	Bolton Easter Congress - Bolton
Week Beginning 10 April	
10 April 2023	Coulsdon Chess Rapidplay - Coulsdon, Surrey
11-13 April 2023	Uxbridge Easter Holiday Chess Camp - Uxbridge, London
12 April 2023	46th Maidenhead Junior Congress - Maidenhead, Berkshire
13 April 2023	Hendon FIDE Blitz - Hendon, London
14 April 2023	UKCC Harrow Megafinal - Harrow, London
14-17 April 2023	Armed Forces Chess Championships 2023 - Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
14-16 April 2023	46th East Devon Chess Congress - Exeter
15-16 April 2023	46th Nottingham Congress - Nottingham
15 April 2023	Golders Green FIDE Rapidplay 2023 Open - Golders Green, London
15-16 April 2023	British Rapidplay Championship 2023 - Bradford, Yorkshire
16 April 2023	Hampshire Open Junior FIDE Blitz – Winchester, Hampshire
Week Beginning 17 April	
18 April 2023	Muswell Hill FIDE Rapid - Muswell, London
22 April 2023	ECF Counties Championships Preliminary Round - TBA
22-23 April 2023	39th St.Albans Chess Congress - St. Albans, Hertfordshire
22-23 April 2023	Ealing FIDE Congress - Ealing, London
22 April 2023	EPSCA Under 9 Final - TBA
23 April 2023	UKCC Uxbridge Megafinal 2023 - Uxbridge, London
23 April 2023	Mike Basman Memorial Rapidplay, LEH School, South West London