

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – April 2008

Chairman's Chatter

I have read a few articles recently on the theme "Use it or lose it". Frequently, this has been in connection with the closure of Post Offices but is more generally true. For instance, our low cost venue at the New England Club depends on us having a visible presence and contributing to the overall wellbeing of the Institute. I was rather heartened therefore to see 10 boards being contested at the club on 12th March. I trust you all enjoyed the evening and will continue to come and play regularly.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Website to Watch

Until 27th March, the major tournament is in Nice and can be viewed on www.amberchess2008.com. This is a mix of rapid and blindfold chess but involves many of the top players.

This leaves a gulf in heavyweight chess until 20th April when the FIDE Grand Prix starts in Baku. This is the first of a series of 6 tournaments to decide the next challenger for the world championship. A squad of 21 players will each compete in four of the all-play-all 13 round events. As the venues have only just been announced, I have been unable to find appropriate websites. As an alternative, the European Individual Chess Championship will be held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria from 20th April to 3rd May and can be followed on www.eicc2008.com

Result Round-up

New England A		Cambridge	
C Ross	1	H Richter	0
F Bowers	½	P Kemp	½
P Hanks	0	T Bramley	1
R Jones	1	C Davison	0
J Osborne	½	D Hatfield	½

New England A		Peterborough B	
C Ross	½	A Timoshenko	½
F Bowers	½	R Ilett	½
P Hanks	½	M Connolly	½
R Jones	½	G Ward	½
J Osborne	1	Default	0

St Neots B		New England B	
S Foster	0	J Osborne	1
M Barker	0	S Caraway	1
T Cleary	1	H Currie	0
M Friday	1	M Tarabad	0

Division 1	C R	F B	R J	J O	C C	P H	Total
Chris Ross	X		1			½	1½/2
Francis Bowers		X	½		1	½	2/3
Ron Jones	0	½	X				½/2
John Osborne				X		0	0/1
Chris Collins		0			X	½	½/2
Paul Hanks	½	½		1	½	X	2½/4

Division 2	N W	D L	H C	C R	M T	A B	S C	S W	Total
Norman Wedley	X		0	½	1	1	1	0	3½/6
Des Lane		X	0		1	½			1½/3
Harry Currie	1	1	X					0	2/3
Chris Russell	½			X	1		½	1	3/4
Mahmoud T'bad	0	0		0	X	1	0		1/5
Alan B'banks	0	½			0	X	0	1	1½/5
Sam Caraway	0			½	1	1	X	1	3½/5
Steve Walker	1		1	0		0	0	X	2/5

Match of the Month

Chris Ross provides this month's games. He was inspired by the recent passing of Bobby Fischer whom he remembers particularly for the "Game of the Century" - a compliment Hans Kmoch paid to Bobby's win against Donald Byrne at the age of 13. This game featured a spectacular queen sacrifice when the young Bobby demonstrated the superiority of an assortment of coordinated pieces.

D Byrne v R J Fischer New York 1956

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 d4 0-0 5 Bf4 d5 6 Qb3 dxc4 7 Qxc4 c6 8 e4 Nbd7 9 Rd1 Nb6 10 Qc5 Bg4 11 Bg5 Na4 12 Qa3 Nxc3 13 bxc3 Nxe4 14 Bxe7 Qb6 15 Bc4 Nxc3 16 Bc5 Rfe8+ 17 Kf1 Be6!! 18 Bxb6 Bxc4+ 19 Kg1 Ne2+ 20 Kf1 Nxd4+ 21 Kg1 Ne2+ 22 Kf1 Nc3+ 23 Kg1 axb6 24 Qb4 Ra4 25 Qxb6 Nxd1 26 h3 Rxa2 27 Kh2 Nxf2 28 Re1 Rxe1 29 Qd8+ Bf8 30 Nxe1 Bd5 31 Nf3 Ne4 32 Qb8 b5 33 h4 h5 34 Ne5 Kg7 35 Kg1 Bc5+ 36 Kf1 Ng3+ 37 Ke1 Bb4+ 38 Kd1 Bb3+ 39 Kc1 Ne2+ 40 Kb1 Nc3+ 41 Kc1 Rc2#

This made Chris start to think of the queen sacrifices during his own career and the following two games came to mind. They should quash the rumours that Chris is a boring player!

I recall my less known gem against Craig Hanley from the Scarborough congress from 1998. Craig was an up-and-coming junior then, en route for his International Master norms. On the other hand, I was also a promising youngster who's grade was coming on in leaps and bounds at that point. So, two juniors against each other.

As my skill for writing eulogies is not one of my strongest talents, I offer this game, in my own humble way, as a dedication to Fischer. I hope he isn't turning in his grave, cursing me endlessly for the indubitable inaccuracies made during this encounter!

C Hanley v C Ross

Round 3, Scarborough Congress 1998

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 g3 c6 4 d4 exd4 5 Qxd4 d5 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bg2

The opening has been rather odd. White played in an English manner but switched to d4. His intention is to pressurise the light squares and 7 cxd5 should be his strategy. Black would then take with the c6 pawn and aim for activity to compensate for his isolani.

7 ... dxc4 8 Qxc4 Be6 9 Qa4 Nbd7

The white queen is misplaced on a4 and will soon seek a better square. Meanwhile, Black completes his development before going on the offensive.

10 Nf3 Qb6 11 Qc2 O-O 12 O-O Rfe8 13 e4 Rad8 14 Rad1 h6 15 Be3 Qa5

The black queen is heading for the kingside and an attack! White has slightly weakened the light squares there but the black queenside pawns are vulnerable to a minority attack. Black must act aggressively to compensate for his slight positional inferiority.

16 h3

Qh5

Indicating my aggressive intentions but this move leads to a startling combination that needs deep calculation.

17 g4?!

Nxg4!?

18 hxg4

Bxg4

19 Rd3

White had calculated this far and thought this subtle move would save him. If Black were to take back naturally on f3, there is a discovered attack on the queen. 19 Nd4 Bxd1 20 Qxd1 gives Black excellent play against the kingside and pressure down the central files is particularly unpleasant.

19 ...

Bxf3!

Black had obviously seen White's resourceful 19th move and entered into the variation with this in mind.

20 Bxf3

Qxf3

21 Bb6

Taking on a7 or h6 allows the black queen to retreat with a clear pawn advantage and an attack.

21 ...

Qg4+

22 Rg3

White was expecting to win the exchange and the game. A slight surprise awaits White.



22 ...

Qxg3+!

giving up the queen for rook and piece and the attack against the exposed white king with active pieces.

23 fxf3

axb6

End of combination and a very interesting position. I assessed it as unbalanced but Black has material compensation and a strong initiative. It's not often Rossie-boy sacrifices his queen!. The dark squares and the limited scope of the white knight are of note. A lengthy variation to have calculated from move 16!

24 Qb3

Bc5+

25 Kh1

Ne5

The black pieces prepare for the onslaught.

26 Na4 Rd3
27 Qc2 Be3

It is more important to maintain the bishop than win the g3 pawn. Penetration of a black rook to the 7th rank with its support will prove fatal.

28 Rd1

It is difficult to propose a constructive plan for White. His rook does nothing on the open file - Black's powerful outpost on e5 controls any weak points including f7. White hopes that exchanges will offer his queen chances of running around the board and picking up stray pieces. The black forces maintain excellent coordination and the exchange of a pair of rooks makes his attack even more potent.

28 ... Red8
29 Rxd3 Rxd3

29 ... Nxd3 30 e5 Nf2+ 31 Kg2 is also possible but it denies the rook entrance into the white position.

30 Qe2 Bg5
31 Nxb6

An inconsequential pawn.

31 ... Rd2

A less decisive way is 31 ... Rxd3 32 Qf2 Rh3+ 33 Kg2 Rh2+ 34 Kxh2 Ng4+ 35 Kg1 Nxf2 36 Kxf2 Bd8 when Black will have to grind out the ending.

32 Qh5

I can't see a better move. 32 Qf1 Ng4 (with the threat Rd1 and Nf2+) 33 Qf3 Rh2+ 34 Kg1 Be3+ 35 Kf1 Rf2+ and Black wins easily with the extra piece.

32 ... Rxb2
33 Nc8

33 Na4 Rxa2 34 Nb6 achieves nothing.

33 ... g6
34 Qh3 h5

An outpost for the black knight on f3 cannot be maintained so one on g4 is created. White could resign happily here.

35 g4

is as good as a resignation. 35 Nd6 Ng4 36 Qg2 Rb1+ 37 Qg1 Rxd1 38 Kxd1 b5 is easy.

35 ... Nxd3 36 Qa3 Rh2+ 37 Kg1 Be3+ 38 Kf1 Rf2+ 39 Ke1 Bd2+ 0-1

Whilst pondering, I remembered my speculative queen sacrifice in the I.B.C.A. World Individual Championships in Brno in 1998. Again, I had the black pieces in a big tournament, gave away the lady for a rook and a piece and converted neatly. There are also neat touches on move 34 and 38 with follow-up bishop sacrifices.

C Holstak (Slovakia) v C Ross (England)
 Round 8, IBCA World Individual Championship
 Brno 1998

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be2 Nf6 7 O-O Nc6 8 Be3 b5 9 a3

Not necessary as Black isn't really threatening b5-b4 when the white knight would find its way to a4 and

b6. Black has suddenly gained a vital tempo in an otherwise boring Kan opening.

9 ... Bb7 10 f4 d6

I was happy enough to transpose into well-trodden Sicilian lines, something that I wouldn't be willing to do nowadays.

11 Bf3 Rc8 12 Kh1 Be7 13 Qe1 O-O 14 Qg3 Rfd8

Here's a provocative move if there is ever one! Black is unafraid of the oncoming attack and calmly moves his king's rook away. Centralisation on e8 would probably be a more prudent but I knew little of these positions in those days - over 10 years ago now!

15 f5 Nxd4
16 Bxd4 e5
17 Be3 Kh8

This odd move is too cautious. Bh6 is not a threat due to Ne8. I guess I wanted to be overly protective.

18 Qf2 Rd7
19 Rad1 Qc4

Now the play gets interesting. Black is threatening to stir up trouble on the queen-side and weaken the white pawns there. How should white respond?

20 Bg5 h6

Unnecessary. Black should push his b pawn as planned.

21 Bxf6 Bxf6
22 Rd3 b4
23 b3 Qxc3!

There she goes! Retreat would simply lose the pawn on b4. So, in for a penny, in for a pound.

24 Rxc3 bxc3

If we look at the position, Black has given up his queen for rook and bishop. The bishop pair will become useful after Black has achieved the desirable break d6-d5 to blast open the position.



Black has an annoying pawn on the 6th rank and this means c2 is a target point. Once c2 falls, White's life will become hell if Black can create another passed

pawn on e5. The break d6-d5 will achieve this by eliminating the e4 pawn but it requires support from the rook on c8. But how when that piece is defending the pawn on c3? The bishop on f6 must take over the role and also to support the passed e pawn home.

Amazingly, even at the beginning of my chess career, I recall thinking about the positional factors when I played the queen sacrifice. Now the plan goes like clockwork.

25	Rd1	Bg5
26	Qb6	Bd2
27	a4	Re8
28	b4	d5
29	exd5	e4
30	Be2	Bxd5

The a6 pawn is irrelevant. The white passed pawns are far too slow. Black needs the bishop to target the c2 pawn and to allow the passed black pawns to storm their way home.

31 Rb1

Black had 31 ... Bb3 ideas.

31	...	e3
32	b5	Be4
33	bx a6	Bxc2
34	Rb4	Bd1!

What a final self-sacrifice! The bishop gives itself up to allow the pawns to march their way home.

35	Bxd1	c2
36	Bxc2	e2
37	Re4	Rxe4
38	Bxe4	Be3!

Another bishop sacrifice! Sure, Black can promote, exchange queens on g1 and simply be a rook up but the a6 pawn supported by the bishop would be annoyingly difficult to round up. The text move is a neat illustration of White's weak back rank. 39 Qxe3 Rd1+ 40 Qg1 Rxc3+ 41 Kxc3 e1=Q# is the idea.

39	Qb8+	Kh7
40	f6+	g6
41	h3	e1=Q+
42	Kh2	Qf2

Yeah, OK. 42 ... Bg1+ mates in two but what the hell, I was having fun!

43 Bf3 Qg1+ 44 Kg3 Bf2+ 45 Kf4 Qh2+ 0-1

Diary Dates

The main thrust for April should be the completion of the Club Championship. The last scheduled round is 26th March but there is a free night on 9th April (and possibly 2nd or 16th depending on your team commitments) when it should be possible to clear any postponed games. Thereafter, we have a quickplay tournament on 23rd April and the end of season Jamboree at Warboys on 30th. The latter event will have 4 players per team so please let Francis know whether you will be available to take part.

Eye-Opener

Last month, I mentioned the Scotch Game/Gambit and gave some of the possible tactics that arise in the opening. While investigating them, I became impressed by the scope for surprising your opponent and realised that for anyone looking to sharpen their repertoire, it is worth considering. It is a little offbeat but is still likely to arise sufficiently often to repay study.

It does have the reputation for simplifying the game too quickly and not giving enough pressure to exploit by positional means. That said, a search of chess databases shows that Kasparov played it 20 times as White and scored 13 wins and 7 draws.

In the following example, Black again takes his eye off the d5 square and lets the white queen make a dramatic entrance there.

Astropovich v Golosov

Novosibirsk 1967

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7 6 Nf5 0-0 7 Bg5 Re8 8 Bc4 Nxe4 9 Bxf7+ Kxf7 10 Qd5+ Kf8

10 ... Kg6 11 Nh4+ Kh5 12 g4+ (12 Bxe7+ requires no calculation but computers like to find a conclusive line) 12 ... Kxg4 13 Rg1+ Kh3 (13 ... Ng3 14 Rxc3+ Kh5 15 Qf3#) 14 Qf5+ Kxh2 15 Nf3#

11 Nh6 1-0

11 ... gxh6 (11 ... Nxc5 12 Qg8#) 12 Bxh6#

Occasionally, it is Black who can catch his opponent napping.

R Meulders v Schuurmans

Mechelen 1978

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Bc5 5 Nb3 Bb6 6 a4 Qh4 7 Qe2 d6 8 Nc3 Bg4 9 Qd2 Nb4 10 Bc4



10 ... Be3 0-1

Did you see it coming?