

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – August 2008

Chairman's Chatter

One year since the first issue of "NEW ENGLANDER" and soon, it will be the club's first anniversary. This should mean more than a reminder about renewing subscriptions so I have a question to ask.

This newsletter is designed so the first sheet could be used as an advertisement on a noticeboard within New England Club (and elsewhere?). It aims to give news of our activities to casual passers-by through

- a calendar of our imminent events,
- a summary of match and competition results
- the problem as the chessboard graphic

Subsequent pages are intended for regular players with an annotated game, forewarning of international events that may be available on-line and the "Eye-Opener" which is essentially a comic strip filling any blank space on a page. I propose leaving the front page unchanged but beyond that, we can make changes to increase interest.

Are there improvements you would like to see?

Here are some suggestions...

- features on opening analysis
- grandmaster brilliancy game
- occasional book reviews
- international chess news
- solution to previous problem

Please let me know your thoughts. I will take the number of responses to indicate how many of you read the newsletter!

There have been contributions throughout the year from many club members and I should like to thank them for their efforts. Obviously, I look forward to continued support as we enter our second year.

Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

I recently took advantage of an introductory offer for the *New in Chess* magazine for a trial period and I shall be reviewing it when I have seen a few more editions. Surely, though, there can be no material suitable for "Eye Opener" when reporting the recent games of top grandmasters? Think again! Here is a game from the elite MTEL tournament in Sofia.

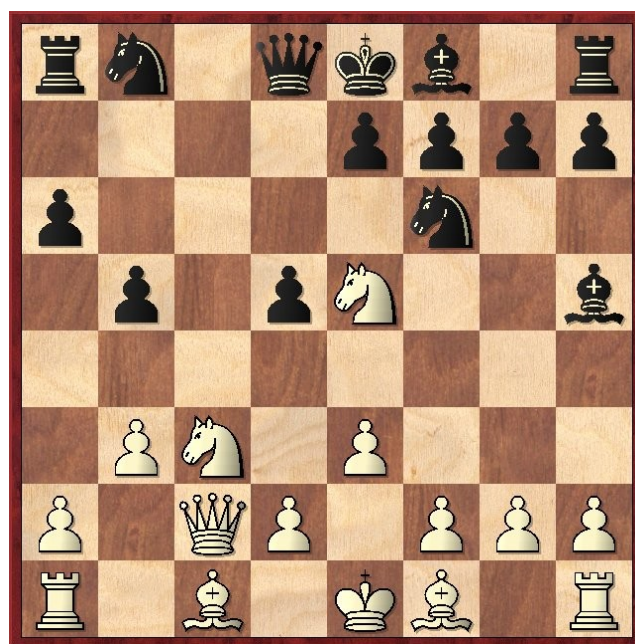
V Ivanchuk v Bu Xiangzhi

Sofia; 2008

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 d5 4 e3 a6 5 Qc2 b5 6 b3 Bg4 7 Ne5

This opening occurred in an earlier game with accompanying notes that warned Bh5 is unplayable. The Chinese player obviously had not seen the analysis and Ivanchuk is only too happy to show him.

7 ... Bh5? 8 cxb5 cxb5

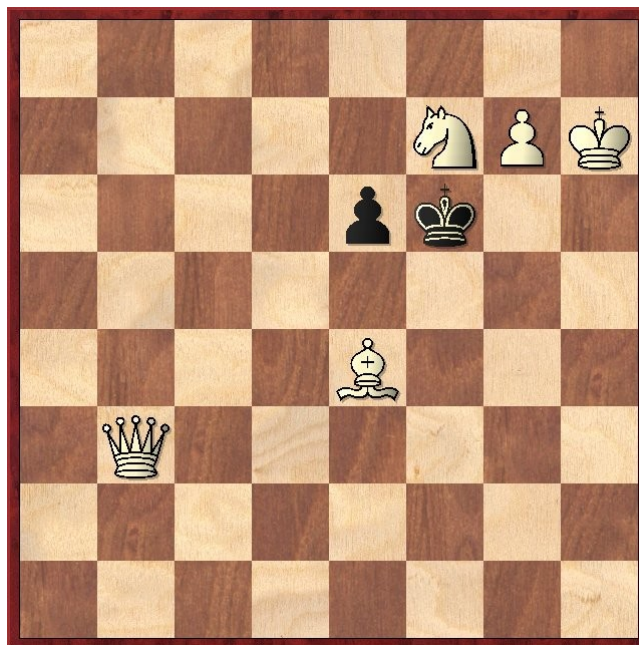


9 Bxb5+ axb5 10 Nxb5

and the magazine comments "White is totally winning. There are just too many threats".

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Diary Dates

The club Annual General Meeting will be held on 3rd September 2008 at 7-30p.m. Please look out for the circulation of the agenda.

Match of the Month

As a departure from the usual format, this month's game is not annotated by either player! Instead, I asked Chris Ross to review the following game that occurred in a late round of the club championship.

The objective is to learn how a stronger player would approach the strategic and positional aspects of the struggle. He had a free hand to unload some heavy calibre weaponry in the direction of both participants so keep your head down, Ron!

R Jones v P Hanks

New England Club Championship, 09.04.08

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	b6
4	e3	Bb7
5	g3?!	

Structurally, this isn't desirable. If White is intent on fianchettoing the king's bishop, he should do it immediately on move 4.

The white pawn structure is now compromised with both the e and g pawns on dark squares. If the king's bishop is heading for g2 to oppose the bishop on b7 (which it does quite often in many variations), the white e pawn is needed to thrust itself onto e4 and thereby deny Black the control of that square. With 5 e3?! White is mixing up his variations; a hybrid set-up if you like.

5	...	c5
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Black correctly aims to exploit the loose nature of the c4 pawn. As White intends to put the bishop on g2 instead of d3, the c4 pawn will now require support.

6	Bg2	cxd4
7	exd4	Qc7
8	b3	Bb4+
9	Bd2	Bxd2+

Black may well consider 9 ... Be7 as maintaining this piece could be best for him. The bishop on d2 is misplaced and will find it difficult to land on a good square. Naturally, one reason for the check on b4 is to deny White the chance of playing Bb2. Once achieved, Black can pose the question and ask White to find a natural square for the dark-squared bishop.

Also, Black is intending d7-d6 with a small flexible centre. To avoid the d6 pawn becoming weak, the bishop is best kept and allowed to sit on e7, where it would defend d6 and also add another defender to the black kingside in case White decides to go hacking.

10	Nbxd2	
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10 Qxd2 has to be best. The knight belongs on c3 where it attacks the d5 square and Nb5 ideas are in the offing. White is not afraid of Ne4 as Qc2 is perfectly good and the knight on e4 may become loose on the long diagonal.

10	...	O-O
11	O-O	Nc6
12	Rc1	

As it is uncertain whether the rook belongs on c1 yet, it is best to develop the white queen. 12 Qe2 has to be preferred as this leaves the option of placing the rook on d1 and e1 or even allow Rfd1, Nf1, Rd2 and Rad1. One of White's major plans here must be to thrust d4-d5 and since the black queen can easily hide on b8, the white rook doesn't really do an awful lot on c1.

12	...	d6
13	a3	a5
14	Re1	Rfd8
15	Nb1	

Correctly attempting to activate the knight and find it a good square. Bringing it to c3 is fine but that brings the question as to whether the rook belongs on c1 and whether a2-a3 was then necessary since the knight on c3 defends a2. A natural re-routing of the knight would be 15 Nf1 with Ne3 as a central controlling square.

Otherwise, 15 d5 Ne5 could be a try (15 ... exd5 16 cxd5 Nxd5 17 Nd4 would leave Black in a mess) when game would continue 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 Nxe5 dxe5 18 Bxb7 Qxb7. It is a difficult position to assess since are the black doubled e pawns a weakness or a strength...?

15	...	d5
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Black strives to open up the centre and targets the d4 pawn as a weakness.

Positionally, he could play 15 ... e5 since he actually wants his pawns on dark squares. White could blockade with 16 d5 Ne7 but Black will play Nd7 and go hacking on the kingside with f7-f5.

16	c5?	
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White should continue with his plan and get fully developed.

16 Nc3 Rac8 should be fine for White as he has the b5 square for the knight where it supports the d4 pawn if Black were to capture on c4. White would then get a sort of "hanging pawns" system - the c4 and d4 pawns could be strong, with a powerful d4-d5 thrust, or be a sheer weakness which will eventually fall.

16	...	Ne4
17	Ne5	

White should think about starting to grovel now with 17 cxb6 and hoping to be able to hold onto the weak b3 and d4 pawns.

With the text move, White hopes tactics will rid his game of all its positional weaknesses. If Black remains cool and calculated, however, his positional pluses and the superior placing of his pieces must eventually tell.

17	...	Nxe5
18	dxex5	bxex5?

Whoops! Black blunders badly. Can you spot what is wrong with his position?



18 ... h6 providing a flight square for the knight, avoiding the possibility of back-rank mating threats and putting another pawn on a dark square has to be preferred. The pawn on e5 is already a target and if White takes on b6 (say 18 ... h6 19 cxb6), recapture with the black queen puts it on a good square and the b3 pawn suddenly becomes a further weakness. The black d5 pawn has become passed and will prove to be strong in an ending.

19 Qg4?

19 f3 seems to win the stranded knight. 19 ... Ng5 20 h4 leaves the knight with nowhere to go. So, Black would do best to play on with 19 ... Qb6 20 fxe4 c4+ 21 Kh1 dxe4 22 Nd2 but Black cannot maintain any of the pawns. e4 will eventually fall and the c4 pawn can't go anywhere. White will round up that pawn eventually and capturing on b3 allows Qxb3 releasing all the pins down the d file. In this regard, Black has simply lost a piece and surely, the game.

White tries to create some activity but drops a pawn and effectively, the game. He (correctly) thinks he is positionally lost and indulges in an aggressive continuation with inadequate preparation. Instead, think of immediate tactics.

19 ... Qxe5
20 Rxc5

White is trying to be cute with all of the pins, but he's attempting to use flashy tactics to solve his problems. Although the tactics hold Black off, once the immediate threats have been solved, Black will simply end up a pawn ahead.

20 ... Nxc5 isn't playable due to the pin when 21 Rxe5 wins.

20 ... Qd4
21 Rc2 Rac8
22 Rd2

Again, flashy pins but they are more aesthetic than actually effective. 22 Rce2 must be preferred, since the black queen is now driven to a safer square and

the rook will simply have to move again. So, leaving the queen on d4 and maintaining the pin on e4 gains valuable breath. With the text move, White simply loses a tempo.

22 ... Qb6
23 Bxe4 dxe4
24 Qd1 Rxd2

Black is simply winning now. He should maintain all of his pawns with 24 ... f5 and it is practically resignable for White.

25 Qxd2 Rd8
26 Qc2 f5
27 Rd1

Exchanges don't help White. 27 Nd2 is the only move if he wishes to play on a few more moves.

27 ... Rc8
28 Qb2

Grimly defending the b3 pawn. 28 Qd2 Qxb3 29 Rf1 Qd3 mops up easily enough.

28 ... Bd5

Cleaner is 28 ... e3 29 Qe2 exf2+ 30 Qxf2 Qc6

29 b4

A last gasp move but it doesn't solve his problems.

29 ... e3 0-1

The final crushing plan. 29 ... e3 30 Qe2 axb4 31 axb4 exf2+ 32 Qxf2 Qxb4 cleans up the final white queenside pawn.

Chris Ross

Website to Watch

Eyes turn towards Turkey for tournaments in August. They are holding the World Junior (U-20) championship in Gazientep from 2nd to 16th August and the Youth (U-16) championship in Mersin from 16th to 25th August. I cannot find a dedicated website yet but there will be links from the national body www.tsf.org.tr.

Ironically from our point of view, the New England Masters will be held from 11th to 15th August in Pawtucket, Rhode Island and can be followed on www.newenglandmasters.com.