

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – July 2009

Chairman's Chatter

This is a relatively quiet time of year for the chess club but there is still plenty to do. You could be trying to improve your game by coming to the "Masterclasses" or following the live games available on the Internet (see the "Website to Watch" article). Of course, you may choose just to recharge your batteries by enjoying the summer weather. If so, I hope to see you again in September when the new season starts and meanwhile, happy holidays!

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at 7-30pm on September 2nd. We shall need to decide our team entries for the Executive Committee Meeting of the County Chess Association on 16th September.

The North v South match to start the County season will be on 23rd September at Warboys.

AGM Feedback

The Cambridgeshire Chess Association held its AGM on 3rd June at Warboys. The highlight was the affiliation of two new clubs. Godmanchester Comrades do not intend to compete in the league but its members would like to compete in the County Individual and the Jamboree. Royston, on the other hand, have several teams in the Hertfordshire leagues and will be seeking a new challenge next year in the Cambridgeshire first division.

There was much discussion of the new grading system which may add 20-30 points to previous rankings. This will impact the "500" competition (which was modified so the summed gradings can total 550) and the county teams. The format of the latter competition will be decided by the East Anglia Chess Union in July but the recommendation of the English Chess Federation is for the sections to be Open, U180, U160, U140, U120 and U100 though matches in every band will not necessarily take place. To make your interests known, please contact

County Individual Competitions

Marcus Misson Tel; 01480 354814

E-mail: mMisson@anglianwater.co.uk

and

County teams

Open : Ola Winfridsson Tel: 01223 520114

E-mail: ola.winfridsson@ntlworld.com

Under -160 : Patrick Ribbands Tel: 01223 842197

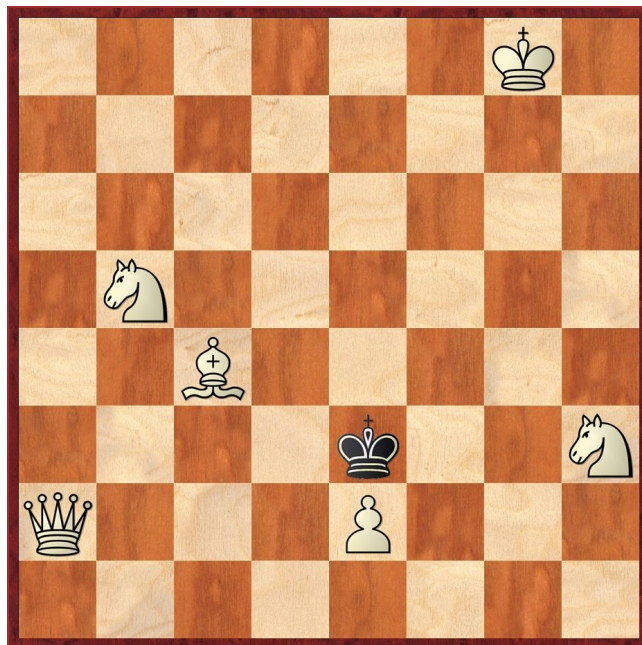
E-mail: ribbs@waitrose.com

Under-140 : Charles Richmond

E-mail: Charles.richmond@nec-philips.com

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

In Forsyth notation : **1Bb4/4n3/K5n1/8/2Q5/8/8/8**

1 Qf7 Kxc8 2 Qe8# [1 ... Nxc8 2 Bc7#; 1 ... Nc6 2 Qd7#; 1 ... Ne5 2 Qf8#]

Website to Watch

July should be a bumper month. Firstly, there is a strong tournament in Dortmund from 2nd to 12th. It is an all-play-all event between six players including Carlsen, Kramnik and Leko and can be followed on www.sparkassen-chess-meeting.de.

From 19th to 30th, there is another tournament at Biel and although you are encouraged to subscribe, live games are available at www.bielchessfestival.ch.

Also, do not miss the British Championships that run for a fortnight starting on 26th July and have a good website at www.britishchess09.com.

Eye Opener

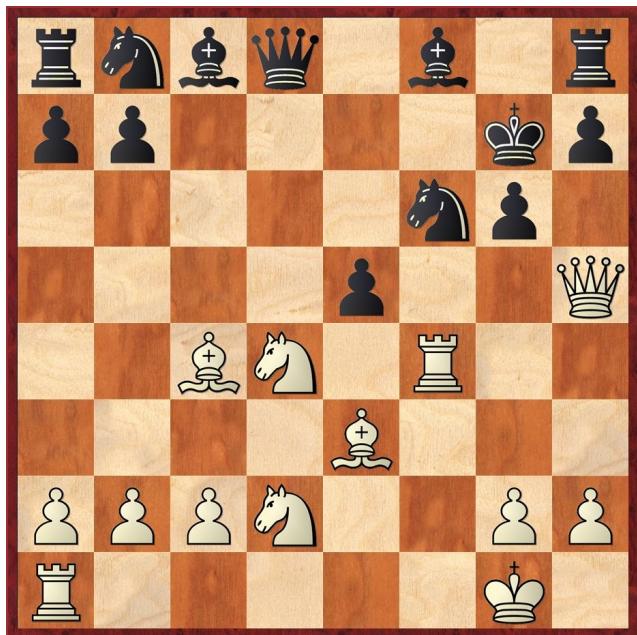
In a previous "Match of the Month", Chris Ross nominated Shirov and Svidler as grandmasters whose games he likes to follow. One of my favourites, sadly no longer with us, was the great Estonian Paul Keres. He never became world champion but he was a feared opponent in the decades following the Second World War.

Here, I am highlighting an offbeat gambit that I have given an occasional outing. White gives up a pawn for rapid development but Black gets a little too greedy.

Keres v Verbac

Correspondence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Be3 dxe4 4 Nd2 f5 5 f3 exf3 6 Ngxf3 Nf6 7 Bd3 c5 8 0-0 cxd4 9 Nxd4 f4 10 Rxf4 e5 11 Bb5+ Kf7 12 Qh5+ g6 13 Bc4+ Kg7



14 Qh6+ 1-0

Match of the Month

A Punnett (2102) v C Ross (2195)

Guildford-ADC 4 v Braille Chess Association,
Daventry 04.05.09

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 e6 5 Nf3 Nf6 6 Be2

Not as aggressive as 6 Bd3 but an acceptable, if somewhat unambitious, line.

I like playing against the c3 Sicilian. White sets out with pure tactics in mind and in many games, he gets a kingside attack or forces dangerous tactics through the centre. Often, if those tactics are snuffed out, the simple positional pressure against the isolated queen's pawn proves too much for White to hold in the endgame and he will try to avoid simplification. So, cool defensive play is the cornerstone of the wins I rack up against this particular opening.

6 ... cxd4 7 cxd4 Nc6 8 0-0 Be7 9 a3 0-0 10 b4

I had never seen this idea before in the c3 Sicilian. White wishes to gain space on the queenside, when he should be playing through the centre and on the kingside. Note that the weakness of the c3 square has become very evident and it will come back to haunt White in the latter stages of the game.

Unless White intends to push b4-b5 and drive away the knight (probably to a5/c4 etc.), the move has no purpose. Pushing b4-b5 will leave the a3 pawn weak though and that will have to advance later too. So, a lot of time is being wasted on the queenside.

10 ... b6

Black is not worried about the push b4-b5 for the reasons outlined above and a7-a6 isn't necessary - it

would only weaken the c5 square. Black has to be wary of Ne4 ideas followed by Nc5, which could be an annoying outpost. The move played makes more sense to get the queenside bishop bearing down on the d5 square, the blockading square to the Isolated Queen's Pawn. Classical chess.

11 Nc3 Qd6
12 Nb5 Qd8

OK. White has gained some tempi and driven the queen back home. It is not that advantageous because the knight on b5 is now a liability and the thrust d4-d5 has been prevented for some time. White must find a way to continue his forward momentum or he will simply be driven back and the initiative wrestled away from him. Black, in many ways, is poised in true counter-attacking style.

13 Ne5 Bb7

Cool development. Black isn't fazed by the tactics offered by White yet. Black could take on e5 and plonk a knight on d5 but then, the d4 square becomes available for the estranged knight on b5. However, Black had to check the complications very carefully here.

14 Bf3 Nd5

14 ... Rc8 isn't playable since 15 Bxc6 loses the a7 pawn and the position will soon collapse. No, that knight on b5 cannot be allowed any justification!

15 Re1

White wants to move the rook away from potential pins arising from Ba6. The move raise the spectre of tactics down the e file and the bishop on e7 could become loose.

What's the verdict after 15 Bxd5? 15 ... Qxd5! sacrificing the exchange is strong for Black. 16 Nc7 Qxd4 (I'll let you figure out the variations) but suffice it to say that the rook on a1 is en prise, Black has Ne2+ tactics leading to Nxc1 and White's forces are scattered over the board (knights on a8 or e7 or wherever). Black will get the bishop pair, have at least a pawn for the exchange and a queenside majority. In all, sufficient compensation for the exchange.

15 ... Bf6

Removing the bishop of the tactics mentioned above. Pressure is exerted on d4, the knight on b5 is in danger of being kicked away and the d4 pawn dropping off. The whole game now hinges on that poor old isolated queen's pawn. Where is the kingside attack that White should be going for?!

16 Bb2 a6

With the attack on d4 parried at the cost of putting the bishop on a horrible square (b2), Black forces White's hand.

17 Nc3

White had to bail out here with 17 Bxd5 and enter a worse ending after exd5 18 Nc3 Nxc3 19 Bxc3. where Both sides have isolated pawns but the d4 pawn will be more awkward to defend and Black has the major positional plus of the bishop pair.

17 ... Nxc3

18 Bxc3 Rc8

Black is just one move away from clinching a huge advantage in this game. Once the bishop on b7 has been defended with Rc7, the move Ne7 will solve Black's slight tactical problems and the knight landing on d5 must give him a massive edge, especially with White's poor bishop on c3 or b2.

19 Ng4

19 Rc1 to defend the bishop on c3 has to be preferred or 19 Bb2 to remove the bishop away from the line of fire and admit that he has to grovel in a worse ending.

The text move is a belated attempt at a kingside attack and to open up lines for attack. However, due to the poor positioning of his pieces, the attack and tactics are bound to fail.

19 ... Bg5

Provocative and played with the intention of luring White into a sense of insecurity. Black maintains his bishop pair and controls the c1 square, preventing a rook from protecting the loose bishop on c3.

Again, Black is that one move (Rc7) away from consolidating his position. White needs to act quickly. h2-h4 ideas never work and the knight on g4 is actually standing in White's way and not doing very much. So, White has to be aggressive.

20 d5?

Successfully lured! White believes that he is ridding himself of his weakened pawn and that his bishop pair will now spring into action on the kingside. Indeed, if Black captures on d5, White will recapture on d5 with the bishop and suddenly, Black is in major difficulties. All the white pieces are active, the position is open and the attack will soon crash through. However, tactics and the loose nature of that poor bishop on c3 play a massive part in White's downfall.

20 ... Ne7!

Cool! This is precisely move Black wanted to play in any case once the bishop on b7 was defended against the bishop on f3. Now the bishop on f3 is blocked and the move can be played without Rc7.

As it stands, White has a bishop on c3 attacked as well as his pawn on d5. Further tactics had to be calculated, and analysed in advance of entering this variation.

21 d6

What else?

21 dxe6 Qxd1 will lose a piece, probably on c3. Note that in all the tactics, the knight on g4, seemingly aggressively placed, is loose after Bxf3.

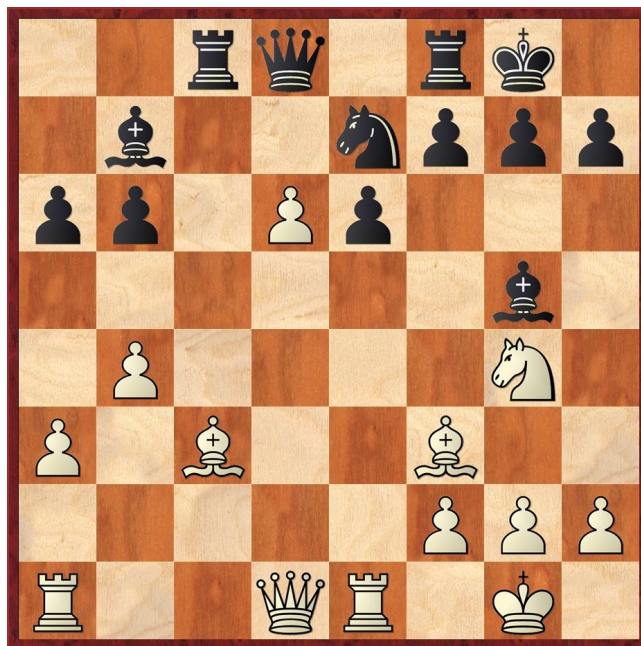
21 Qd4 Nf5 22 Qe5 h5 followed by Bf6 is another demonstration of the harmony between the black pieces.

See diagram.

21 ... Bxf3

Winning a clear pawn. 21 ... Rxc3 22 Bxb7 Nf5 23 Bxa6 Qxd6 24 Qxd6 Nxd6 25 Be2 is not as accurate

and gives White hope. Now, 22 Qxf3 Qxd6 would just be a clear win of the d pawn and allows Nd5 or other such consolidating moves. This may have been best, as it kept queens on the board and White could have some swindling possibilities.



22 dxe7 Bxd1

Accurate until the end! White still had some sneaky tactics up his sleeve. 22 ... Qxd1 23 exf8=Q+ Kxf8 24 Raxd1 Bxd1 and then the annoying 25 Bxg7+! regains the pawn. 25 ... Kxg7 26 Rxd1 and although clearly better for Black, the ending is not as easy to convert. The moral: Don't allow compensation, counterplay or dirty tactics such as Bxg7+!

23 exd8=Q Rfxd8

Note that with all these exchanges, White still has two pieces en prise, the bishop on c3 and that loose knight on g4.

24 Raxd1 Rxc3

And Black has won his piece back and is a clear pawn up with the better ending! Now, simply avoid back-rank mating threats and the game is over.

25 f4 Be7 26 Rxd8+ Bxd8 27 Rd1 Bc7 28 Ne5

White had just about given up the ghost. 28 g3 Rxa3 29 Rc1 h5 30 Nh6+ gxh6 31 Rxc7 h4 was a slower way to perish.

28 ... f6 29 Nd7

I can't explain this. I have no idea what White was thinking here, whether he thought the b6 pawn was loose... I don't know. 29 Nd3 Rxa3 30 Kf2 Kf7 is easy enough to convert with two pawns up and the bishop against the knight.

29 ... Bxf4 0-1

Playable as taking on b6 allows Be3+ forks. Two pawns down, a third dropping off and the knight being trapped on d7, White threw in the towel.

Chris Ross