

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – December 2009

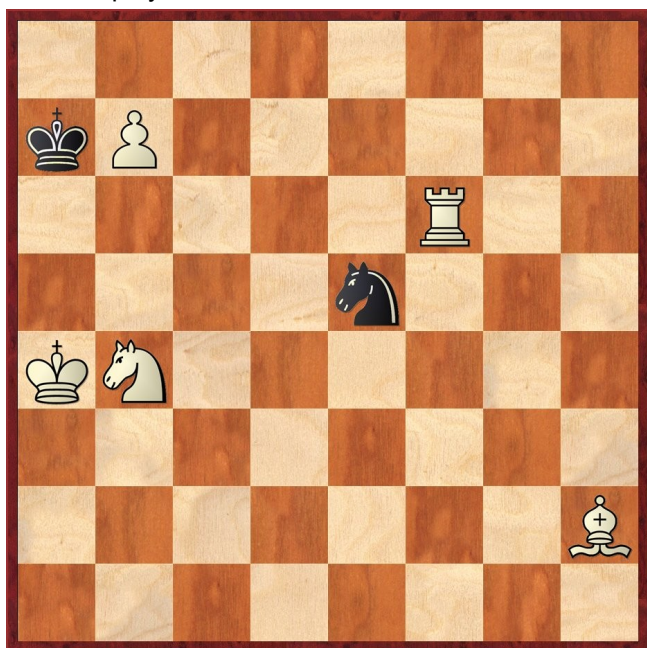
Chairman's Chatter

We really are trying to pack in as many chess games as possible. This issue reflects the number of matches that we have managed in just a single month and we still had one postponement! Thanks to everyone who has been organising, participating and keeping our profile high with the New England Club.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

Position: **N3K3/Pk6/1N6/1B6/8/8/8**

1 Nc8 Kxa8 [1 ... Kxc8 2 Ba6#] 2 Bc6#

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

New England A	1½	Peterborough	3½
C Ross	½	A Timoshenko	½
F Bowers	0	E Gibbon	1
P Hanks	0	R Ilett	1
M Dunkley	½	M Connolly	½
J Alster	½	G Ward	½
New England A	2	Royston	3
C Ross	½	P Kemp	½
F Bowers	0	N Hutchinson	1
P Hanks	0	K Clark	1
P Turp	1	C Schonberger	0
M Dunkley	½	B Judkin	½

Warboys B	4	New England B	0
B Duff	1	R Jones	0
P Clough	1	A Brookbanks	0
P Baddeley	1	M Tarabad	0
M Onyons	1	K Talnikar	0
New England B	3	Spalding	1
R Jones	½	J van Gemeren	½
D Lane	1	J M Smith	0
J Alster	½	R Coats	½
M Tarabad	1	J Pulford	0

Club Championship : at 18/11/09

Division One	CR	FB	PT	MD	RJ	PH	Total
C Ross	X	1 1	0	1			3 / 4
F Bowers	0 0	X			P	½ ½	1 / 4
P Turp	1		X		P P		1 / 1
M Dunkley	0		P	X		P	0 / 1
R Jones			P P		X	P	0 / 0
P Hanks		½ ½			P P	X	1 / 2

Division Two	D L	C R	S W	A B	N W	J A	H C	M T	K T	D S	Total
D Lane	X	0		1 1	P		1			0	3 / 5
C Russell	1	X	1	½			P				2½/3
S Walker		0	X	½				1 1			2½/4
A Brookbanks	0		½	X					1 1		2½/4
N Wedley	0	½			X P			P		P	½ / 2
J Alster		P			P X	1				P	1 / 1
H Currie			P			0 X	0		P		0 / 2
M Tarabad	0		0		P		1 X	1			2 / 4
K Talnikar			0 0				P	0 X			0 / 3
D Sivell	1			0	P P					X	1 / 2

Cambridgeshire "550" Competition

Octavia Hill	1	New England 1	3
C Collins	½	C Russell	½
C Donald	½	A Brookbanks	½
S Leather	0	M Tarabad	1
I Garrett	0	K Talnikar	1
New England 1	3	New England 2	1
P Hanks	½	P Turp	½
R Jones	½	D Lane	½
A Brookbanks	1	S Walker	0
M Tarabad	1	H Currie	0

Diary Dates

In December, we can all look forward to the Christmas Special on 16th before we close for two weeks over the festive season.

Website to Watch

They say it's the strongest tournament in London for 25 years. Better still, the London Chess Classic is intended to be the first in series of strong tournaments to popularise chess as part of a campaign to increase public participation in sporting activities leading up to the Olympics in 2012. The games can be followed on www.londonchessclassic.com from December 7th to 15th. Alternatively, you could invest £10 at Olympia Conference Centre, Kensington and see England's top four and an array of international talent (Kramnik, Carlsen, Ni Hua and Nakamura) in action.

Eye Opener

After last month's newsletter, I was asked to explain the Noah's Ark trap that appeared in the featured game. My chess books state that it is a concept rather than a specific move order. In the Ruy Lopez, it is a trick to deter White from playing an early d2-d4 because if a piece ends up on d4 after exchanges, Black can gain a tempo with c7-c5 and then trap the bishop on b3 with c5-c4. A common example might be **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a3 4 Ba4 b5 5 Bb3 d6 6 d4? exd4 7 Nxd4 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 c5**

It looks like White has a saving resource but it is illusory i.e. **9 Qd5 Be6 10 Qc6+ Bd7 11 Qd5 c4**.

Of course, the warning about a rapid advance of the d pawn depends on the specific circumstances. It is not always bad – you just need the technique of the player with the white pieces below :

J R Capablanca v L B Meyer, 1908


1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a3 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 d4 Nxe4 6 d5 Ne7 7 Nxe5 b5 8 Bb3 Bb7 9 d6 Nxd6 10 Qxd6 1-0

Match of the Month

I was listening to the radio recently and heard a programme called "Too Much Information". It was a fairly crude comedy but it set me thinking about chess. Many published games are now accompanied by a large volume of analysis that take too much time and effort to digest. As a result, I baulk at doing the hard work to follow the notes in sufficient detail and some of the subtleties of the game just wash over me.

I want to reverse this situation so I have set myself a challenge to get my brain working again. I will choose a game at random (subject to acceptable length and a decisive outcome), create my own annotations and compare them with those generated by Fritz and in the chess press (in this case, Informator 100/214).

Becoming overloaded with data is the curse of the computer age so I have attempted to fight back. I shall use a new feature to simplify the appearance of the document. The game notes are entirely my own work

but at the end of some paragraphs, you will find a "Note" symbol  which reveals the alternative commentaries when you right-click on the icon. Please let me know your views on this format as it could be used in future to hide remarks until you have evaluated the position without assistance.

H Nakamura (2658) v J Becerra Rivero (2544)
USA Championship, 2007

1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 c3


Nakamura is a rising star. At the time this game was played, he was considered something of a prodigy but he went through a phase of trying to take the chess world by storm with little success using offbeat openings. Whilst his injection of variety is laudable, Ponziani's Opening must have disappeared from grandmaster practice for a reason.

White aims for an early d2-d4 but does little to prevent Black from reacting similarly with d7-d5 because it is difficult to win tempi against the exposed king after e4xd5 and Qd8xd5.

3 ... f5

Black chooses a red-blooded response more typical of the nineteenth century. Not a real gambit because the pawn cannot be maintained after e4xf5 without major concessions.


4 d4 fxe4
5 Nxe5 Nf6

This natural developing move shows how careful you need to be in the opening phase. White's response finds a tactic to deter advancing the pawn on d7 when suddenly Black's queenside is cramped. I should have tried 5 ... d5 6 Bb5 Qf6 with  8-d6, Ng8-e7 and 0-0 to follow when appropriate.


6 Bb5 Bd6

I should never have looked at this move which blocks in the light-squared bishop (except for 7 Nxc6 dxc6). Black wants to shift the knight and following his fifth move, what else is there?

7 Nc4 Be7
8 Ba4

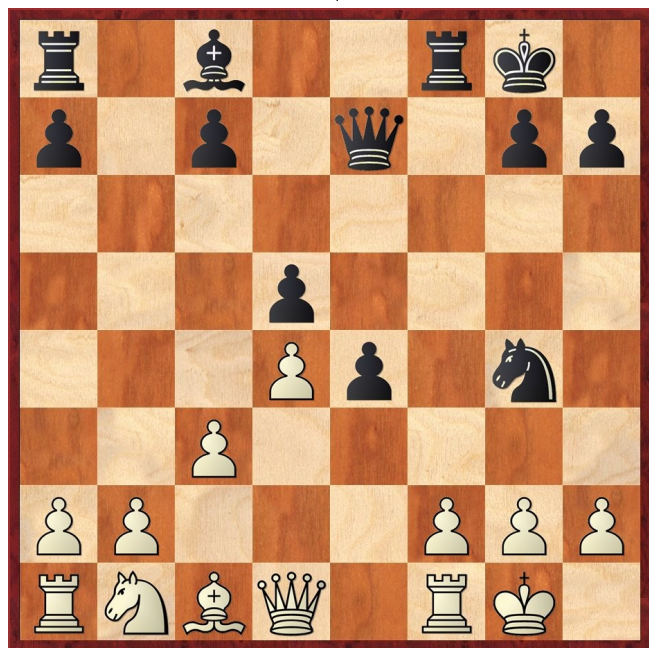
Necessary to preserve the light-squared bishop against a7-a6. I am not sure I should  have been alert to this or willing to lose a tempo.

8 ... d5
9 Ne5 0-0

Black gives up a pawn for a long-term initiative. This is a bold decision which I should have shrunk from – though I often do it unintentionally! I would probably have discarded the complications arising from 9 ... Qd6 10 Bf4 in favour of 9 ... Bd7. It gives up the bishop pair but facilitates castling on the queenside. 

10 Bxc6 bxc6
11 Nxc6 Qe8
12 Nxe7+ Qxe7
13 0-0 Ng4

The opening is almost over and time to make an assessment. Black has better development, more space and open lines. There are opposite-coloured bishops and White's forces have neglected their defensive duties. It all points to the correct strategy being an attack by Black.



The text move is the opening shot but superficially, it looks lightweight. The flimsy defence and some instructive motifs in attacking a castled king mean there is more venom in the position than evident at first sight.

The threat is 14 ... Qh4 15 h3 Nxf2 when a sacrifice on h3 will tear White open. If White defends with 14 ... Qd6 15 g3 with Bc8-a6 coming soon. Alternatively, 14 Be3 Qh4 15 h3 Nxe3 16 exf3 Bxh3 looks dangerous e.g. 17 gxh3 Qg3 18 Kh1 Qh3 19 Kg1 Qg3 20 Kh1 Rf1 21 Qf1 Rf8 winning.

14 h3 e3

A surprise (to me!) but it is not Black's only continuation. I expected 14 ... Qh4 since acceptance has too many pitfalls such as 15 hxg4 Bxg4 16 Qd2 [intending 17 Qg5] Rf5 17 f4 Re8 18 Qe3 Re6 with Rh6 and g5 to follow or 16 Qe1 Rf3 17 Nd2 Rh3. White would defend with 15 Qe2 it does not transpose into the note for move 14.

15 Bxe3
15 ... Nxe3

I thought that justifying the decision to decline the sacrifice would require some effort actually, it is so simple - 15 hxg4 e2 16 Qe1 Re8.

16 fxe3 Bxh3

This move is beyond me and I should have played 16 ... Qxe3. Immediately, I cannot see the follow-up to the text move and would play 17 gxh3 without much hesitation. After considerable reflection, I realised 17 ... Qe3 18 Kh2 Rxf1 19 Qxf1 Rf8 has nasty threats.

17 Rf3 Bg4
18 Rxf8+ Rxf8
19 Qe1

If 19 Qxg4, the response 19 ... Qxe3 20 Kh2 Rf4 looks terminal but 21 Qc8 gives some annoying checks. Can Black avoid this with 20 ... h5 21 Qh5 Rf6 with Rh6 to follow? Perhaps, so White would play 21 Qg3 when the game is set to continue.

19 ... Rf6
20 Nd2 Rg6
21 Qg3 Qe6
22 Qf4 Bh3
23 g3 h5

White has survived but Black has good compensation for the pawn. As White, I should get my last piece into play with 24 Re1.

24 e4 Rg4
25 Qxc7 h4
26 Kh2 hxg3+

It should be a case of exact calculation from here. Unfortunately, I set up the position incorrectly and left the white pawn on e3. The exposed white king quickly succumbed to Black's heavy pieces mainly due to the penetration Qxe3. When I corrected this, I realised the point to White's 24th move was to shield this weak point but it does not change the outcome.

27 Kxh3 Rxe4+
28 Kg2 Re2+
29 Kxg3 Qe3+
30 Kh4 Qh6+
31 Kg3 Qg5+
32 Kh3 Rxd2
33 Qc8+ Kh7 0-1

How did I do?

Obviously, my theoretical knowledge must improve if I am to compete at grandmaster level! Fritz did not offer any advice on the first 15 moves because it is all in its opening book. No doubt I should have used over half my time reaching that point.

The comparison between my annotations and those of a higher calibre shows that I do not consider enough options, I could improve my accuracy and find knock-out blows more readily.

But that is not really the point! Practical play demands that intuition replaces the bulk of the analysis detail. The most sensible question is "Does a later clinical assessment of a game overturn intuitive judgements made over the board?" In this case, Black's play was possibly slightly optimistic and White could have made more of a fight of it. The difficulty of the defence, however, justifies this outlook and should give quite a boost to making subjective decisions.

So are my failings generally due to my inferior playing strength or is my brain really going rusty?