

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – July 2010

Chairman's Chatter

The summer newsletters are naturally missing the normal "Result Round-up" section due to the lack of competitive play. We can however congratulate Chris Ross and Chris Russell on winning their respective divisions of the Club Championship - reward for a long playing season.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

Position: 4NBq1/6P1/7k/5Q2/8/8/8/6K1

1 Nf6 Qxg7+ 2 Ng4# [1 ... Qxf8 2 gxf8B#; 1 ... Qc4 2 g8R#; 1 ... other 2 Ng4# e.g. 1 ... Qf7 2 Ng4 or g8N#]

Website to Watch

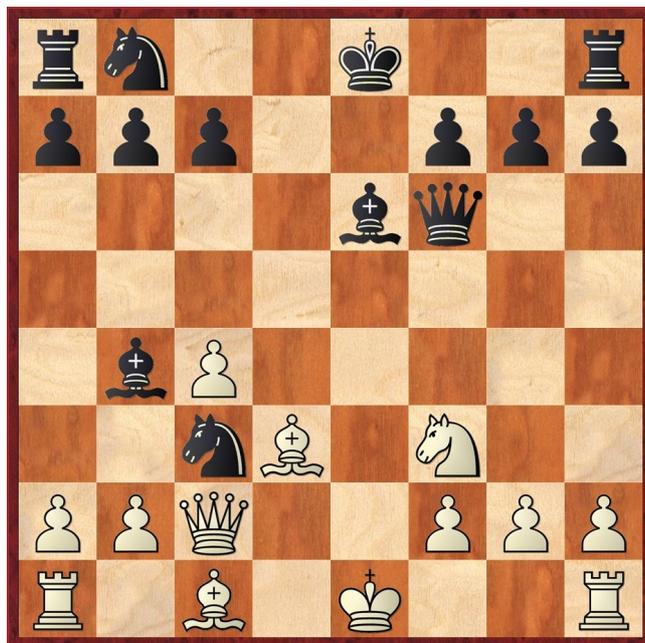
The major Dortmund tournament runs from 15th to 25th July and can be followed on www.sparkassen-chess-meeting.de/2010. At the end of the month, the British Championships run from 25th July to 7th August. www.britishchess2010.com/live_games.com will carry the live games.

Eye Opener

Nothing will make you rub your hands together with glee more than trapping your opponent's queen. It is even more satisfying if it happens in the opening. Just slam the door shut on her majesty and it's game over. Right?.. Then, I came across this strange game.

Velimirovic (2558) v Kalezic (2403)
Yugoslavian Championship, 2000

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 dxe6 Bxe6 5 d4 Bb4+ 6 Nc3 Ne4 7 Qc2 Qxd4 8 Nf3 Qf6 9 Bd3 Nxc3



Note that the black knight has no safe escape square and therefore, does not need to be recaptured immediately. Besides, there is the little matter of the safety of the black queen after Bg5.

10 0-0 Nc6 11 Bg5

Now, Black's highness cannot move without loss so it must be time to calculate the exchanges starting 11 ... Nd4. Can Black escape? Sadly, he has other ideas.

11 ... Qxf3 12 gxf3 Nd4

Surprisingly, it is the white queen that faces embarrassment. Either 13 Qc1 or Qd2 run into knight forks and leave White a piece adrift.

13 bxc3 Nxc2 14 Bxc2

Black will emerge with an extra pawn and excellent winning prospects due to a much superior pawn structure.

Match of the Month

Opening knowledge is vital in chess and being familiar with a certain amount of theory is a sure way to become stronger. Having played a textbook line, you either have to understand what it is trying to achieve or if you attempt a novelty, you must know its aims and find any ramifications that arise.

In this game, my opponent follows the first 9 moves of the Catalan Defence. He then deviates and his novelty, which ultimately proves to be flawed, comes

back to haunt him six moves later. So, in many ways, it's not just skill that wins me this game but also, a greater knowledge of the theory and an appreciation that White's novelty cannot be good.

Tony Slinger (2060) v Chris Ross (2205)
Woodhouse Cup, York, 05.12.2009

1 c4 e6 2 g3 d5 3 Bg2 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 dxc4 7 Qc2 a6 8 Qxc4 b5 9 Qc2 Bb7

All according to theory. This opening has been around for the past 80 years or so and White has tried many 10th moves here. It is remarkable that somebody can play this far and not know how to continue.

10 Rd1?



Could this be the losing move? It is not in the theory books and only gets a rare showing in the databases. Where it does appear, Black has a statistically huge plus. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about the possibilities for White here. Suffice it to say that alternative 10th moves are a4, Nbd2, Nc3, Bg5, Bd2 (most popular) and Bf4. In other words, White needs to complete the queenside development.

The king's rook is needed on f1 for the time being, as tactics could occur on f2 if White is not careful. Of course, the whole positional element of the opening is the backward nature of the c7 pawn. If Black achieves c7-c5, then he has achieved, at least, equality.

White's plan should be to hold down that advance. So, the current trend is to play 10 Bd2 with the idea of Ba5 and Black has to play obscure moves like 10 Ra7 with Bd5 or Ba8 and black rook swings across the 2nd rank. As I demonstrate neatly in this game, the rook's deployment on d1 doesn't actually hinder the c7-c5 thrust. The rook is only defended by the queen on c2, which is now a target for Black's minor pieces, since most of its retreat squares have been taken away.

So, currently, the d4 pawn is helping White, as a c7-c5 thrust would allow d4xc5 exploiting the queen on the half-open d file. Keep that in mind and note how that lovely element can be reversed.

10 ... Be4

The harassment of the white queen begins. But more importantly, Black puts pieces on the most important squares. Naturally, a central square, such as e4, has to be critical and I want the bishop outside the chain of minor pieces to improve its activity and effectiveness.

11 Qb3

The queen has to stay on the defence of the rook on d1. Other moves have been tried, all unsuccessfully.

11 ... Nc6

Simple development - pressure on the d pawn and the knight is heading for the vital c4 square. Oh yeah, the white queen will be hit again!

12 a3

The queen needs a flight square - a clear indication that things have gone desperately wrong for White.

12 ... Na5

13 Qc3

White attacks the knight on a5 and seems to have found an active plan. But no, remember the rook on d1 and how vulnerable it is. Now, it's time to exploit it!

13 ... c5!

Defending the knight on a5, achieving the desired c7-c5 thrust and neatly exploiting the pin on the d4 pawn. 10 Rd1? doesn't stop the move after all!

14 b3

Another flight square for the queen. Nd5 is going to be a problem for White and the knight on a5 will land into b3 if White retreats the queen to e1. Now, to continue with simple development and piece domination...

14 ... Rc8

Developing the rook on the half-open c file. The poor old white queen is going to be hit again!

15 Nbd2

Is White getting developed? We can't allow that.

15 ... cxd4

16 Qxd4

And White seems to have weathered the storm. But wait, that rook on d1. It can't be allowed to get away with not following theory, surely? No, no, let's ram the stake home and kill off this position!

16 ... Bc2!

Arg! That rook is hit again! The rook move on move 10 proves to be White's downfall six moves later. A beautiful illustration of exploiting the frailty of your opponent's opening knowledge. 16 ... Bxf3 17 Nxf3 Nxb3 18 Qxd8 Rfxd8 is equally good but I wanted to highlight the rook's misplacement on d1. The rest is uninteresting really. Technique is all that is needed.

17 Re1 Nxb3 18 Nxb3 Bxb3 19 Bb2 Qxd4 20 Nxd4 Bd5 21 e4 Bb7 22 Nb3 Rc2 23 Bxf6 Bxf6 24 e5 Bxg2 25 exf6 Bd5 26 fxf6 Rfc8 27 Nd4 Rd2 28 Red1 Rxd1+ 29 Rxd1 Kxg7 30 Nf5+ Kf6 31 Ne3 Bf3 32 Ra1 Ke5 33 Kf1 Kd4 34 Ke1 Kd3 35 h4 h5 36 Rb1 Rc3 37 Ra1 a5 0-1

Chris Ross