

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – March 2012

Chairman's Chatter

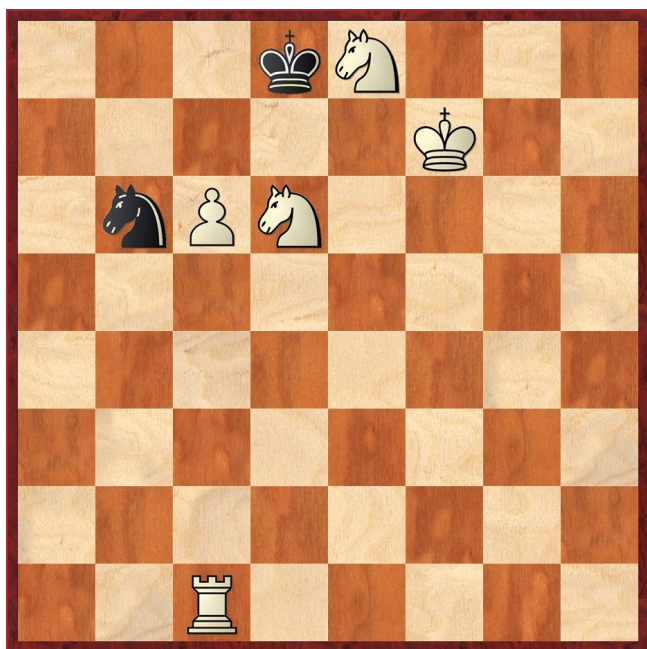
March is often the critical month of the season. If any game or match has to be postponed at this juncture, there is very little time left to make a re-arrangement and it will probably cause major disruption to the calendar. Please try to clear any postponements as the club championship, in particular, is about to get quite hectic!

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

There will be no club meeting on 21st March when the Lancaster Club uses the room to hold its AGM.

Puzzle Problem



Last Month's solution

Position : 8/4Q3/1p6/2p5/3p4/k7/8/K2B4

1 Qe1 b5 2 Qa5# [1 ... c4 2 Qe7#; 1 ... d3 2 Qc3#]

Website to Watch

The eleven rounds of the European Individual Chess Championship take place from 20th to 31st March in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Follow it on www.eicc2012.eu.

Window on the Web

<http://www.kenilworthchessclub.org/index.html> is the very informative website of the Kenilworth Chess Club in New Jersey, USA. There isn't the space to comment on all the contents of this site so I will pick out the items I think will be of most interest.

Although the site suffers from the common problem of not being regularly updated, so that most of the

material is at least a couple of years old, there is still much here to interest a club player. The "Articles" pages contain the most instructive content on the site. There are several annotated games from their 2005 club championship and from a couple of New Jersey KO tournaments to play through with essays, reviews and lectures to read. There are articles on several openings such as the Sicilian, Caro-Kann, Pirc/Modern, French, Queen's Gambit, Indian Defences and various QP systems. After those come articles and puzzles on endings and midgame strategy and tactics.

There is also an article entitled "To an Adult Chessplayer Who Wants to Improve" containing a suggested action plan to attain that goal. One tip is "don't buy more books, read the ones you have". I suspect many of us have more unread chess books than we'd want to admit.

The "Blogs" page has links to a long list of blogs (far too many to mention them all here) including *Chess Coroner* PGN archives of many annotated games, *Susan Polgar Chess Forum* and *The Chess Mind* by Dennis Monokroussos who is one of the lecturers on *Chesslecture.com*. A blog entitled *Confessions of a Chess Novice* is described as the best chess self-improvement blog.

If you visit this site, you should have a look at the links page which contains many links to other chess sites.

Ron Jones

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

New England A	1½	Warboys A	3½
F Bowers	1	M Misson	0
P Hanks	0	B Duff	1
P Turp	½	C Watkins	½
S Caraway	0	R Mann	1
M Dunkley	0	J Dunn	1

Royston	3	New England A	2
N Hutchinson	½	F Bowers	½
K Clark	1	P Hanks	0
P Kemp	½	P Turp	½
P Rice	1	M Dunkley	0
B Judkins	0	S Sitaram	1

New England A	4	Buckden A	1
C Ross	1	P Barkas	0
P Hanks	½	C Norton	½
P Turp	½	C Emery	½
S Caraway	1	C Hamilton	0
M Dunkley	1	Default	0

New England B	4	Buckden B	0
R Jones	1	A Young	0
S Sitaram	1	C Money	0
D Lane	1	A Ellul	0
P Spencer	1	B Taylor	0
New England B	2	St Neots	2
R Jones	½	S Foster	½
P Spencer	0	C Emery	1
D Lane	½	M Friday	½
S Walker	1	B Annison	0

Team 550 Competition

New England 2	1	Godmanchester	3
S Caraway	1	A Rankine	0
M Tarabad	0	J Wright	1
H Currie	0	J Bygrave	1
I Garrett	0	A Williams	1

New England 1	2	St Neots	2
S Sitaram	½	S Foster	½
P Spencer	½	C Emery	½
J Parker	0	M Friday	1
S Wozniak	1	Default	0

New England 2	1	New England 1	3
H Currie (sub)	0	P Hanks	1
D Lane	1	C Russell	0
S Walker	0	S Sitaram	1
I Garrett	0	J Parker	1

New England Grand Prix

<i>Player</i>	<i>Champ</i>	<i>Ladder</i>	<i>League</i>	<i>Cup</i>	<i>Team 550</i>	<i>Total</i>
F Bowers	1½	8	2½	2		14
P Spencer	1	5½	3	0	4	13½
P Hanks	1½	4	3	1	1	10½
D Lane	1½	2½	1½	0	4	9½
S Sitaram	1½	2	3½	0	2	9
N Wedley	1	8				9
C Ross	1	5	2			8
P Turp	1½	0	3½		2½	7½
R Jones	1½		3½	½	2	7½
S Caraway		2	2	2	1	7
J Parker	1	½		0	4	5½
M Tarabad	1	0	0		3	4
M Dunkley	1		2½	½		4
I Garrett	1	1		1		3
S Walker	0	2	1		0	3
C Russell	0				1½	1½
S Wozniak		1			0	1
H Currie	0	0				0
S Farrington	0	0				0

Club Championship

Round 2			
P Turp (1)	½	½	F Bowers (1)
M Tarabad (1)	P	P	M Dunkley (1)
Round 3			
M Dunkley (1+?)			S Sitaram (1½)
F Bowers (1½)			M Tarabad (1+?)
D Lane (1½)			R Jones (1½)
P Turp (1½)			C Ross (1½)
I Garrett (1)			P Spencer (1)
N Wedley (1)			J Parker (1)
S Walker (0)			H Currie (0)
S Farrington (0)			C Russell (0)
Match night : 14th March Deadline : 25th March. Next draw : 1st April			

New England Club Ladder

<i>White</i>		<i>Black</i>	
H Currie	0	M Tarabad	1
N Wedley	0	S Wozniak	1
F Bowers	1	S Farrington	0
P Spencer	0	C Ross	1
C Ross	1	P Hanks	0
F Bowers	½	S Caraway	½
N Wedley	1	M Tarabad	0
P Spencer	1	D Lane	0

<i>Pos</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Record</i> <small>29/02/12</small>
1	C Ross	1,1,1,1,1
2	P Hanks	1,1,1,1,0
3	F Bowers	½,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,½
4	S Caraway	½,0,1,½
5	P Spencer	½,½,1,½,1,0,1,0,0,1
6	S Wozniak	0,0,0,1
7	N Wedley	½,½,0,1,1,1,1,0,1,1,0,0,1
8	D Lane	½,1,1,0
9	M Tarabad	0,0,0,1,0
10	H Currie	0,0,0
11	R Jones	
12	S Walker	0,0,1,1
13	P Turp	0
14	I Garrett	1,0,0,0,0,0,0
15	S Sitaram	1,0,1
16	J Parker	0,½,0,0,0
17	S Farrington	0,0,0
18	M Dunkley	

Match of the Month

Here is an instructive game from the recent weekend of the 4NCL. Nevil Chan is a top guy who plays slightly offbeat lines in the openings. While preparing, I faced the intriguing question of how to exploit his rather unorthodox repertoire. Studying his games, I learned that he particularly liked developing his

knights before the pawn structure was determined. Somewhat like an Alekhine's or Two Knight Tango - a dance of the knights, as it were. One of the points of an irregular opening is to take the position into muddy waters and create opportunities for obscure tactics. How then, am I to refute such aspirations?

Some database research, extensive theory-checking, a deal of careful consideration and my decision was made. In reality, so surprised was my opponent on move 5 that he took nearly 5 minutes over his practically forced reply. After my 6th move, he thought for 53 minutes!!

Being nearly an hour down on the clock did make his defence later in the game rather difficult and when he eventually resigned, he had about 30 seconds to make the time control which, naturally, he would never have achieved.

Chris Ross (2237) v Nevil Chan (2117)
 Pandora's Box v Cambridge University 2
 4NCL Sunningdale 11.02.2012

1 e4 Nc6
2 Nf3 Nf6

A provocative move order. As in the spirit of the Alekhine Defence, Black wishes to lure White forward and hopes that he will overextend.

3 e5 Ng4

Black begins his tactical ploys. More thematic would be 3 ... Nd5 in the style of the Alekhine Defence with but Black is intent on extending White's pawn centre.

4 d4 d6

A very intriguing position. Black has a similar set-up to a main line in the Alekhine Defence but here, the black knight sits on g4 not d5. Instinct suggests that 5 h3 Nh6 is the correct approach. In previous rounds, Black's opponents even captured the knight on h6, yielding the bishop pair, the open g file and their attacking potential. The knight on h6 is not such a silly piece though. It can land on f5 and hit White's centre.

How to deal with the precarious knight on g4 which pressurises the spearhead to the white pawn chain? White has to be very precise in his handling of a tricky position. White cannot allow exchanges on e5 as a queen swap leaves the f2 square weak. Tactics abound in such openings and strong nerves are needed. Fortunately, there is one big advantage of such tournaments and leagues. Opening preparation will allow you to prosper. Study this position for some time and marshal your thoughts.

5 e6!

Sacrificing the focus of Black's play to neutralise all of those elements discussed above in the initial spiel about Black's aspirations in the opening.

First to the immediate tactics. The natural capture 5 ... Bxe6 loses a piece to 6 d5. If Black does not capture the pawn, exf7+ is going to displace the black king and create holes in Black's formation.

Now to the more subtle positional features. The pressure on the e5 spearhead has gone. The centre is

closed and there are no long-term tactics to be concerned about. The black knight on g4 no longer has much purpose on that loose square. But more importantly, the two black bishops are now hindered in their development. For the cost of a single pawn, Black's development procedure is considerably lengthened and finding natural, good squares for his pieces will not be easy to accomplish.

5 ... fxe6

Just about forced, but look at the bishop on c8 and even more apparent, is the blocked in bishop on f8. Now, the second phase of the pawn sacrifice has to be put into place. Black has, after all, a strong centre if nothing else, as well as a material advantage.

6 Bc4!

The plan is simple, rapid and fluid development with the intention of exerting pressure on the pawn on e6, as well as the light squares along the a2-g8 diagonal (as f7 is a target). In the database, there are examples of 5 h3 Nh6 6 Bxh6 gxh6 8 e6 fxe6 but this is not what I wanted to achieve, as the Dragon bishop can still be a pain on the long diagonal.

No. Slow, positional chess was my objective now. With the pawn sacrifice, I have taken away all the tactical complexities Black desired. He sat for over 50 minutes studying this position and explained afterwards that he considered this the refutation to his opening. I'm not sure about that, but it clearly demonstrates a very good system to play against it!

6 ... Nf6

In my preparation, I had to consider what to do against 6 ... e5 (which was my main concern). If Black could get himself out of trouble by opening the centre, he could easily equalise. Some research, some thought and computer analysis showed me that 6 ... e5 7 d5 was the best continuation. Black had no choice to go into 7 ... Nb8 8 Ng5 g6 when 9 Bb5+ Bd7 10 Qxg4! tactics are possible or White could play it slow and develop the queen's knight. In any case, the knight jumps into g5 with the e6 outpost to follow similar to ideas in the King's Indian Defence.

So, after some considerable thought, my opponent simply retreated, losing time but not wanting to leave the wayward knight loose. If Black played 6 ... g6, I was prepared to respond in a similar way to the actual game continuation.

7 Ng5

There was some rather ironic schadenfreude in playing this move, especially when the tactics created by this venture will prove productive for White, when Black's hadn't! I simply could not resist this approach, which meant being rather aggressive in the follow-up and turning the tables somewhat on Black. The passive 7 0-0 g6 didn't appeal to me as sufficient justification for the pawn sacrifice.

7 ... d5

The e6 pawn was attacked twice with no satisfactory way to defend it. Advancing the pawn to e5 allows nasty tactics on f7 and any knight hopping into d5

allows Qf3 ideas, exploiting the light squares even more. The fun you can have with 7 ... Nd5 8 Qf3 Nxd4 is amazing. I'll leave you to play through the variations on your own but many of them end up sacrificing the queen's rook and mating the black king on b6 or a6!

The pawn structure, however, has now been seriously compromised - the sole justification for the knight's jump to g5. The black e pawns are backward and the blocked-in nature of the black minor pieces is more evident. Many tempi will be wasted by both sides in their piece manoeuvring in this opening but the pawn formation being established will naturally be in White's favour despite the pawn deficit. After all, the pawn sacrificed is that lonely pawn on e6, which is giving Black more headaches than it is actually worth.

8 Bb5

The correct plan for White. The light squares in the centre and on the kingside no longer matter, as I intend to enter into a "good knight v bad bishop" structure now that the e5 outpost has been created. I must never allow Black to get in e6-e5 as that will give him some kind of release. It is essential then to attack the defender of the e5 outpost and maybe, give Black some more pawn weaknesses.

8 ... g6

The only way in which Black can develop his king's bishop. Otherwise, it will be simply stuck in all game.

9 h4!

Relentless. White must not sit on his heels. My targets are the light squares especially the g6 square/pawn and f7 - entry to the latter square can be achieved in some lines by this very aggressive move. Again, opening preparation and computer analysis showed me that this approach was the most consistent.

9 ... Bg7

which slightly surprised me but I guess it was automatic. My preparation had shown Black should not give White the opportunity to push onwards to h5 and h6 cramping Black even more. I expected 9 ... Qd6 10 h5 Rg8 11 hxg6 Rxc6 12 Na3 when things begin to collapse for Black on the kingside.

10 h5

Again, being consistent. A quick verification of the tactics and I ploughed on, having now used 13 minutes for my opening to date and my opponent ticking across to 75 minutes. At which point, I got up, wandered away, fetched a coffee and freshened myself up for the potential tactics that Black could now plunge us into. So, to date, excellent opening preparation, good clock management and I had set myself for every best opportunity to wrap up an important victory for the team.

10 ... h6?

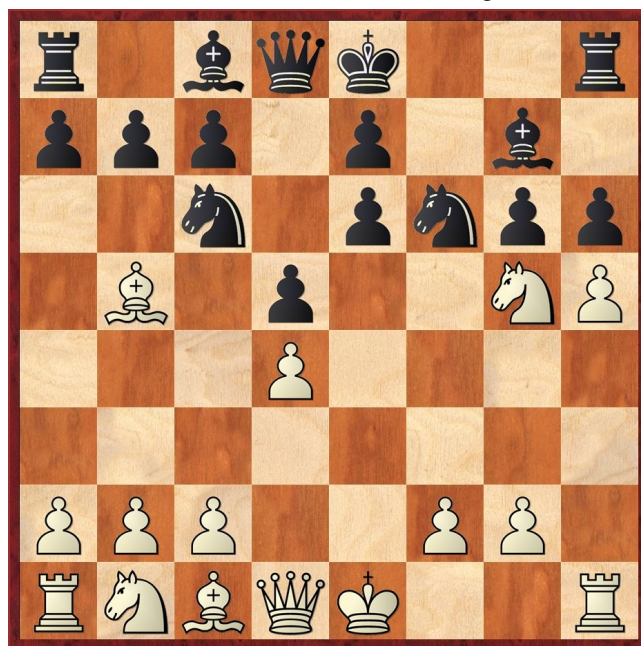
I may even go so far as to claim this as the losing move. Black has been under tremendous pressure throughout the opening and sending White's knight where it actually wants to go is not in Black's interest. Also, the target g6 square is fatally weakened and the light squares around Black's kingside collapse.

Black's time management has not helped him, but he should have preserved time to consider crucial positions as this. I will not enter into the deep variations but here is a flavour to what I had expected.

A 10 ... Nxd5 11 Rxd5 [the only practical and logical continuation] 11 ... gxh5 12 Qxh5+ Kd7 13 Nd2 [heading for b3 and c5] 13 ... Qe8 14 Qe2 Qg6 15 Nb3 Kd8 16 Bd3 Qf6 17 Qh5 Rf8 18 Be3 and White has all the play

B 10 ... Qd6 11 h6, 11 c3 or even 11 f4 is possible

C 10 ... gxh5 and White has 11 Nc3, Nd2 or Rh4 when the black pawn structure is pretty horrible. I was tempted by 11 Rxd5! and if 11 ... Qd6 12 c3 accurately consolidates the centre and avoids tricks involving Qb4+.



11 Nf3

I did consider 11 Qd3 but could not make my mind up. I will probably win something on h6 after I capture on g6 with check if Black snatches the knight on g5. If Kf8, I push with h5-h6 but did not feel overly confident in that line. Even if Black wandered his king to d7, I can win the bishop on g7 but felt that I was straying away from White's game plan. So, I decided to keep it simple and follow my positional plan. The knight heads for the outpost e5 to attack those light squares.

11 ... g5

Here the queen jump into d3 would be worth it if Black captured on h5. 11 ... Nxd5 12 Bxc6+ bxc6 13 Qd3 and Black's in trouble.

12 Ne5 0-0

Certainly brave of Black, who is making every attempt in this game to scramble out of harm's way. I applaud his bravery to give the pawn back on c6 to seek activity for his pieces. I would say this is the only point in the game where I became slightly unsure of my precise continuation.

I knew that I did not really want to go about snatching my pawn back on c6 and lose lots of tempi with my pieces retreating. Neither did I wish to develop my queen's bishop yet as the g5 pawn is a natural target. I intend to get in f2-f4 to break down the pawn chain. Naturally, if g5xf4, the bishop recapture controls the d6 square (the best development square for the black queen) and targets the h6 pawn. I was reluctant though to capture on c6 so fast, as I did not want Black to have the a6 square so quickly for his light-squared bishop. So, I found a sort of waiting move.

13 Ng6

13 Nxc6 bxc6 14 Bxc6 Rb8 gives Black activity and after 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 Ng6 Ne4 15 Nxf8 Qxf8, Black has chances to hold.

13 ... Ne4

Again, plucky play by Black, who is really striving to reach equality. However, the white pieces are so well placed that it is almost impossible for him to do so.

14 Be3

Keeping calm and developing. This defends my major weakness on d4 and stops tactics on f2. 14 Nxf8 Bxd4 15 Rf1 Qxf8 is not to White's best advantage.

14 ... Rf7
15 Bxc6 bxc6
16 Nd2 Nxd2

The advantage for White in Black's recent tactics is that he is able to complete his development. The remainder of the game is now about simple technique. Black will achieve bishops of opposite colour but with the major pieces on the board, an open black king, the rest plays itself without too much thought. Avoidance of silly tactics is now my only concern.

17 Qxd2 e5

Again, Black's tenacity is impressive. He offers the pawn back to develop his pieces. Although this will expose his king even more, he has become desperate enough to attempt drastic measures. Otherwise, he was simply going to be squished slowly and overrun on the kingside. I was expecting 17 ... c5 as a possible break for freedom.

18 Nxe5 Bxe5
19 dxe5 Bf5
20 0-0-0

and development is completed for White. My only stumbling block is how to force a breakthrough.

20 ... e6

Securing his bishop and opening up the 2nd rank. He was also worried about sacrifices on g5 with open lines towards his king. However, he may have been best to attempt some activity on the kingside with 20 ... Qc8 although he is a long way from creating anything solid on that side of the board.

21 f3

The only way to force a break. Black cannot be permitted to play g5-g4 blockading the position. So, when I break myself with f2-f4, I need to prevent him from pushing past. In that regard, I need to play g2-g4

before I break. Logical play and something Black can do nothing to prevent.

21 ... Kh8

Black had very little time left to complete the remaining 19 moves. He is, naturally, wary of the g file and sees that it's going to open up shortly. 21 ... Qf8 22 Qc3 [stopping c6-c5 and pressuring the a1-h8 diagonal vis à vis the black king on h8] Rb8 and I can even go pawn-grabbing on the kingside if I so wish.

22 g4 Bh7
23 f4 gxf4
24 Bxf4 Be4
25 Rhf1 Qg8

Amazingly, Black is contemplating snatching some pawns but how exposed this is going to leave his king!

26 Bxh6

My pawns don't matter. More important is the exposed black king. Snaffling this final black pawn means that the end is near for Black.

26 ... Bf3

Trying to blockade things and prevent the white pieces from penetrating. 26 ... Rxf1 27 Rxf1 Qxg4 was the only other alternative.

27 Rde1

Avoiding obvious tactics for Black in his desperate time trouble. I had no wish to give him easy moves such as captures. 27 Bg5 Kh7 28 Rde1 Bxg4 was the best line, but I was worried that he would give up the queen with 27 Bg5 Bxd1 28 Bf6+ Rxf6 29 Rxf6 Bxg4 30 Rh6+ Qh7. I get a rook and bishop for the queen but to win eventually, I will have to go pawn-grabbing on the kingside and run my a pawn home to convert. I saw no reason why I should drag it out.

27 ... Qxg4
28 Bg5

The check on f6 is going to be the final blow for Black. There is no defence now.

28 ... Rf5

Black can struggle a bit longer with 28 ... Rg8 29 Rg1 Qf5 30 Bf6+ Rxf6 31 exf6 Qxf6 32 Rxc8+ Kxc8 33 Rg1+ Kh7 but the outcome will be the same.

29 Rg1

Again, making the less obvious moves to predict. White defends the bishop on g5 and forces Black to make a capture he really does not want to make.

29 ... Qxh5

Further exposing the black king. Naturally, 30 ... Rxc8 is not good, as I can take the queen or simply go 31 Qxg5 as the queen is defended by the rook on g1.

30 Bf6+ Rxf6
31 exf6

and with no time on the clock, Black offered his hand. The conversion is simple enough and the black king will not survive on such an exposed board. 31 ... Rf8 32 Rxe6 is good enough to start for example.

Chris Ross