

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – August 2014

Chairman's Chatter

What is appropriate at a grandmaster event may not work well in the more relaxed atmosphere of club chess. An example is FIDE's "zero tolerance" rule in which lateness should trigger a default. In Cambridgeshire, we choose to ignore the stricter measures and the Executive Committee Meeting in September may exercise leniency. Thanks to Ron, we have a summary of the recent changes to the Laws of Chess - they may be applied if we visit congresses.

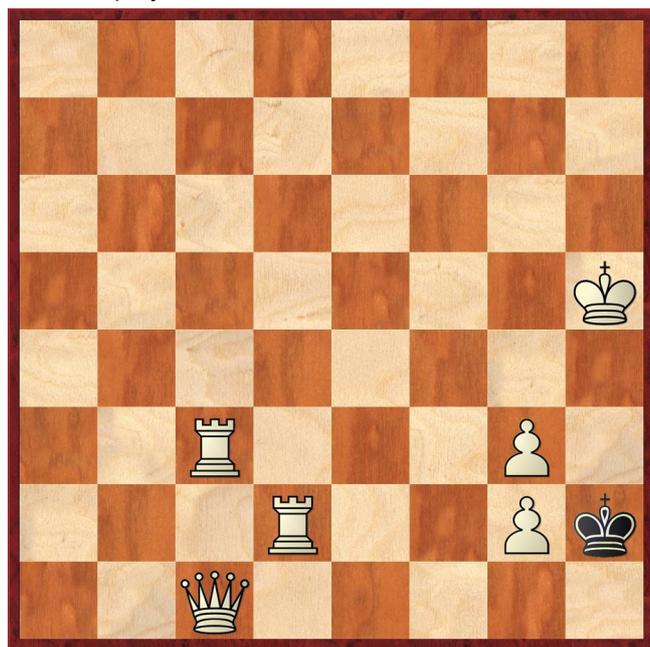
Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

The New England Chess Club AGM will be held in its traditional slot at the start of the new season. I hope to see you all there on 3rd September at 7-30pm.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (S Shedei)

Position : 1K5B/6RP/7Q/2p5/2B5/N7/3R2p1/kb4b1

1 Qh1 gxf1Q 2 Rxf1# [1 ... Bb1-any 2 Rb7#; 1 ... Bh2+ 2 Rg3#; 1 ... Bg1-other 2 Ra2#; 1 ... N any 2 Ra7#]

Website to Watch

From 1st to 14th August, the World Chess Olympiad takes place in Tromsø, Norway. <http://tromso2014.no> redirects you to the chess24.com domain. This checks your browser and denies access if it is out-of-date. News in the build-up can be found at www.chessdom.com/chess-olympiad-tromso-2014.

Website : www.newenglandchess.org.uk

Window on the Web

Rule 9 of the CCCA League Rules states that all games shall be played according to the current FIDE Laws of Chess. We need to be aware that FIDE have, from 1 July 2014, applied some changes to the Laws. The new Laws (and the previous ones) can be viewed following <http://www.fide.com/component/handbook/?id=32&view=category>.

Some of the changes are unlikely to impact our games much as they are tweaks or a general tidying-up. However, some of them are more important. I'll summarise the main changes without going as far as quoting the rule numbers.

Before 1 July if your mobile phone rang during a game, you lost the game. Now, during play, a player cannot have a mobile phone or any other electronic means of communication in the playing venue. He loses the game if he does. The arbiter has the power to have the player searched. (This must be a reaction to suspicions of or actual cheating in tournaments).

A new rule governing promotion states that the promoted pawn does not have to be actually placed on the eighth rank (but can be) - removing the pawn and putting the new piece on the promotion square can be done in any order. If an opponent's piece stands on the promotion square, it must be captured.

Previously three illegal moves would lose the game. Now you will lose after only two.

The draw by third time repetition of a position and the 50 move rule (a draw can be claimed if 50 consecutive moves are made without a pawn move or any capture) still apply but there's a new rule which states that if no draw claim is made after five consecutive alternate moves, or after 75 moves have been completed by each player without a pawn being moved or a capture, the arbiter will declare the game drawn. (In theory, in the 50 move rule without a claim the game could carry on indefinitely).

A player claiming a draw by repetition can stop the clocks. Now the arbiter will stop the clocks if the claimant forgets to.

If an opponent makes his move before the first player has pressed the clock, the first player's move is deemed to have been completed.

The arbiter's role has been expanded. Now, the arbiter shall ensure fair play; and take special measures in the interests of disabled players and those who need medical attention.

The definition of Rapidplay has been changed from "at least 15 minutes to less than 60 minutes" to "more than 10 minutes and less than 60 minutes".

There are some minor changes to some other rules including Rapidplay and Blitz.

Ron Jones

Result Round-up

Summer Sprint

White		Black	
S Caraway	1	0	D Lane
P Spencer	1	0	J Parker
N Wedley	1	0	I Garratt

Player	Grade	Game		Total	Game 3
		1	2		
S Caraway	158	189	149	338	-
P Turp	165	189	-	189	-
P Hanks	149	158	-	158	-
P Spencer	137	135	-	135	-
N Wedley	104	122	-	122	-
D Lane	139	0	0	0	-
I Garratt	72	0	-	0	-
J Parker	85	0	-	0	-

Serious Study

The focus of this summer's series of *Serious Study* articles is middlegame formations. In July, we moved swiftly from Horwitz bishops to adjacent knights and here, we shall look into the case of adjacent pawns. If you want to guess what is coming next month, it isn't adjacent queens or kings!

Consider a position in which

- White has pawns on c4 and d4
- there are no white pawns on the b and e files
- Black has open c and d files.

This definition may seem an unlikely combination of circumstances but the isolated pawn couple are known as "hanging pawns" and merit treatment as an important positional element in Nimzovich's book *My System*. Furthermore, as in famous works of fiction, the clues at the scene of the crime are baffling and lead to veritable detective mystery.

The evidence so far indicates the pawns bestow on White an impressive but not overwhelming space advantage. If they can reach the fifth rank abreast, they will start to squeeze Black intolerably – just contemplate the mobility of knights deprived of their third rank – and are on the threshold of creating an advanced passed pawn. This should be simple to effect as there are no enemy pawns ahead of them but this dynamic strength is also a potential liability. As soon as one pawn steps forward e.g. c4-c5, a hole opens in the united front which invites occupation by such a move as Nb6-d5. Worse, the blockade cannot be lifted by a pawn thrust on an adjacent file, the more

backward of the pawns is unsupported and becomes an obvious target with the prize being two pawns!

This scenario is a classic confrontation. Can the central attack roll forward and sweep all before it? Or will the defender halt the offensive and undermine it? Should the pawn front sit tight and await the best opportunity? The scene is set for a grand strategic battle with chances for both sides and the fight will probably turn on a single tempo. I skimmed eagerly through several copies of *Informator* for examples. How many did I find? None. Not as Black or White nor with the structure shifted en masse one file to the right. There was absolutely nothing.

My disappointment was mixed with curiosity. Why have hanging pawns disappeared from the game?

A cynic might say that long ago, a computer programmer gave hanging pawns a negative assessment and grandmasters have responded like Pavlov's dogs. I feel there is more to the mystery than mere mimicry and lay the blame at the door of opening theory. To achieve the desired result, White must play the commonplace c2-c4, d2-d4 and support the pawns reasonably with b3 and e3. Black clears his files with c7-c5, d7-d5 and initiates both pawn exchanges. This is a long list of pre-requisites and in practical play, it just ain't gonna happen...

A Nimzovich v S Tartakover

Copenhagen 1923

1 Nf3 d5 2 b3 c5 3 e3 Nc6 4 Bb2 Bg4 5 Be2 Qc7 6 d4 cxd4 7 exd4 e6 8 0-0 Bd6 9 h3 Bxf3 10 Bxf3 Nf6 11 c4 dxc4 12 bxc4

What my ignorance shows, of course, is how routine opening moves influence the structures that persist into the middlegame. In queen's pawn games, by playing exchange variations with c4xd5, White will eliminate the possibility of being saddled with hanging pawns on the c and d files and similarly, they become unlikely by following Black's d5xc4 with the recapture Bf1(d3)xc4. There are also good arguments against weakening the a5-e1 diagonal by b2-b3 which leaves a knight on c3 prone to awkward pins from Bf8-b4.

As a result of these factors, many opening systems are not conducive to producing hanging pawns. Occasionally, however, the players manage to thread their way through the maze.

V Kramnik (2790) v A Yusupov (2630)

Dortmund 1998

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 Bd3 Bb7 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 Qe2 c5 11 Bg3 Ne4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 Rad1 Nhg3 14 hxg3 a6 15 dxc5 bxc5

In this case, hanging pawns are the lesser evil compared with the vulnerability of the isolated pawn i.e. 15 ... Nxc5 16 Bc4, 15 ... Bxc4 16 Nxd5 Bxd5 17 Bh7+ Kxh7 17 Rxd5 Ra7 (18 ... Qc7 19 Qd3+) 18 Rad1 Re8 19 Qd3+.



16 Bb1

Kramnik's notes mention a more conventional approach 16 e4 d4 (16 ... dxe4 17 Bxe4 Bxe4 18 Ne5) 17 Nb1 followed by Nb1-d2-c4 with an enduring advantage based on the "blockade then destroy" principle. Strangely, the assessment is not supported by Fritz probably due to the long-term nature of the play.

16 ... Nb6
17 a4

Not 17 Nxd5 Bxd5 18 e4 Bc4. The multi-purpose text vacates a2 for the bishop to attack d5.

17 ... Bf6
18 Qc2 g6
19 a5

Now 19 ... Bxc3 20 Qxc3 Nc4 21 e4 Qxa5 22 Qc1 Kg7 23 exd5 gives White a good position because 22 ... dxe4 23 Qxh6 exf3 24 Bxg6 fxg6 25 Qxg6+ Kh8 26 Rd7 winning.

19 ... Nc4

Kramnik chose to liquidate the hanging pawns with 20 Nxd5 Nxb2 21 Nxf6+ Qxf6 22 Rd2 but he could have increased the pressure with 20 e4 when the variations 20 ... Bxc3 (20 ... d4 21 Na4; 20 ... Qxa5 21 Nxd5 Bxd5 22 Rxd5) 21 Qxc3 highlight the weakness of the pawns.

Perhaps, the most direct way to way to generate hanging pawns is simply to divert centre pawns that have become interlocked. Here is an example from the Steinitz variation of the French Defence.

B Spassky v T Petrosian

19th match game, World Championship, Moscow 1966
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Nf3 c5 6 dxc5 Nc6 7 Bf4 Bxc5 8 Bd3 f6

The motivation for allowing the hanging pawns comes from both the desire to remove White's centre and the lack of a natural alternative because 8 ... 0-0 encounters the elementary 9 Bxh7+ Kxh7 10 Ng5+

Kg6 (10 ... Kg8 11 Qh5; 10 ... Kh6 11 Nxf7+) 11 Qd3+ f5 (11 ... Kh5 12 Qh3+ Kg6 13 Qh7#) 12 Nxe6 Qh4 (12 ... Qe7 13 Qg3+ Kf7 14 Ng5+ Kg8 15 Nxd5 with a massive attack) 13 Nxf8+ Nxf8 14 g3.

9 exf6 Nxf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 Ne5 Bd7

11 ... Ne4 12 Bxe4 Rxf4 13 Nd3 breaks up the pawns e.g. 13 ... Bxf2+ 14 Nxf2 dxe4.

12 Nxc6 Bxc6

There now follows a manoeuvring game. White strives to restrain the pawns, Black to advance them.

13 Qe2 Qe7 14 Rae1 Rae8 15 Bg3 a6 16 a3 Qf7 17 b4 Bd4 18 Be5 Bxe5 19 Qxe5 Nd7 20 Qg3 e5 21 f3

This could be a position from which to study adjacent rooks! The pawns look dangerous for White but an additional factor is the lack of scope for the black bishop unless the pawns can advance. d5-d4 is available but that merely presents White with the blockade on e4.

21 ... Qf4 22 Qxf4 Rxf4 23 Rf2 g6 24 Rd2 Nb6 25 Rde2 Nd7 26 Nd1 b5 27 c3 Rf7



Spassky refused the offer of a draw at this point. He soon reveals the reason - Black cannot break through but White has a plan to exploit the pawns. The looseness of the pawns makes them an object of attack and their defence will restrict the mobility of the black pieces. White shows his lack of space is illusory and he can combine threats in the centre with penetration of the queenside.

28 Bc2 Kg7 29 Bb3 h5 30 Ne3 Nb6 31 Nc2 Nd7 32 Re3 h4 33 h3 Rf6 34 Nd4 Bb7 35 a4

White has developed a strong initiative.

35 ... Rd8 36 Ne2 bxa4 37 Bxa4 Nb6 38 Bb3 e4

Otherwise White wins a pawn by 38 ... Re8 39 Nd4 Nd7 40 Ba4 Rd8 41 Bxd7 or 38 ... Re6 39 Nd4

39 Nd4 Kh6 40 Rd1 Rc8 41 fxe4 dxe4 42 Ne6 Nc4

42 ... Bd5 is no good 43 Bxd5 Nxd5 44 Rxe4 when the black knight cannot be saved due to the threat Rxa4#

43 Bxc4 Rxc4 44 Nc5 Rf7 45 Ra1 Kg5 46 Ra5 Kf4
47 Kf2 Bd5

48 Ne6# was threatened.

48 Nb3 Ke5+

48 ... Bb7 49 Nd4 Rxd4 to prevent 50 Ne2#

49 Ke2 Rc6 50 Nd2

Have you spotted the intended 51 c4?

50 ... Ke6 51 Nxe4

The pawns have gone and the mopping up starts.

51 ... Bc4+ 52 Kd2 Rd7+ 53 Kc2 Kf7 54 Re5 Kg7 55
Nd2 Bb5 56 Nf3 Ba4+ 57 Kb2 Rd1 58 R5e4 Rf1 59
Re1 Rxe1 60 Rxe1 Rf6 61 Re4 g5 62 Nxc5 Rf2+ 63
Ka3 Bc6 64 Rxh4 Bxc2 65 Ne4 Re2 66 Nc5 Bf1 67
Rf4 Re1 68 h4 1-0

A long game but an interesting case study. Generally, hanging pawns are a liability which grandmasters will seek to avoid but there is a proviso that you need to know how to fight against them. At club level, this is questionable and the attacking value of the pawns may become important.

P Hanks v S Caraway

New England Club Championship (3), 05.02.2014



16 f5 Ne5

16 ... exf5 17 Nxf5 leaves White with several advantages - not least the prospect of three passed queenside pawns when Black's a and d pawns disappear.

17 Qb5 Bc6
18 Nxc6

I was led astray by gaining the bishop pair. 18 Qe2 is stronger and the stress on the e6 square can be unmasked by 18 ... Bd7 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 Nxe6 Bxe6 21 Bd4.

18 ... Nxc6

If 18 ... Rxc6, White can kill off the hanging pawns immediately 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 Nxd5 (20 Bd4 a6 21 Qe2

Ng6 22 Ba4 Rd6 23 Bc5 is a simpler option) 20 ... exd5 21 Bxd5+ Nxd5 22 Rxf8+ Qxf8 23 Qxd5+.

19 fxe6 fxe6

White has indeed forced Black into accepting hanging pawns but here White has insufficient central control. There is an imminent threat in d5-d4, e6-e5 cannot be prevented and the white minor pieces will probably have to flee.

20 Ne2

I had assumed that the pawns were vulnerable to combinations such as 20 Rxf6 Bxf6 21 Nxd5 exd5 22 Rxd5 when the discovered check costs Black his queen but the final position after 22 ... Qe8 23 Rd8+ Kh8 24 Rxe8 Rcxe8 26 Qxc6 Rxe3 is unclear. Moreover, I did not know how to proceed if Black declined the sacrifice with 21 ... Kh8.

20 ... Bd6
21 c4

Conceptually correct but tactically flawed. White's lack of central pawns leaves a piece hanging that would normally have protection.

21 ... Bxh2+

22 Kxh2 Ng4+ 23 Kg1 Qh4 hardly appeals!

22 ... Ne7

22 ... Ng4 and 22 ... Qe8 aiming for h5 are options.

23 Bxa7

Again, I fall for temptation. Regaining the material and removing the bishop from danger (Nf6-g4) seemed to kill two birds with one stone. Instead, 23 cxd5 Nxd5 24 g3 would exploit a vital part of the fight against the pawns - a pin down the centre files!

23 ... Qc7
24 Bb6

More thematically, 24 Bd4 continues the fight for the centre. The text lets Black occupy the e5 flashpoint.

24 ... Qe5
25 Rde1

I overlooked 25 cxd5 which protects the knight and is a better defence.

25 ... Qh5
26 Ng1

Forced but inadequate.

26 ... Bg3+

Fortunately for me, this obvious move nets the exchange for Black but there were greater riches on offer. 26 ... Bxg1+ 27 Kxg1 Ng4 when mate on h2 can only be avoided by ruinous loss of material e.g. 28 Rf3 28 ... Qh2+ 29 Kf1 Qh1+ 30 Ke2 Qxg2+ 31 Rf2 (31 Kd1 Rxf3) 31 ... Nxf2. Even the convoluted 28 Bc7 e5 (28 ... Rxc7 29 Rxf8+ Kxf8 30 Qb8+ Rc8 31 Qd6) 29 Bxe5 Rxf1+ 30 Kxf1 Rf8+ 31 Ke2 Qxe5+ offers no salvation.

After 27 Nh3 Bxe1 28 Rxe1, there are still tactical complications in the centre. In the time scramble, mistakes were made by both players and Black did not manage to realise his rightful advantage.