

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – September 2014

Chairman's Chatter

One idea for the new season is for Cambridgeshire to organise a Rapidplay League. If this goes ahead, it may mean between three and five extra match nights with double-header fixtures. Please give some thought about your commitment to such a development because the rules may have to be more strictly enforced and preclude match postponements.

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

The club AGM has been scheduled for 7-30pm on 3rd September.

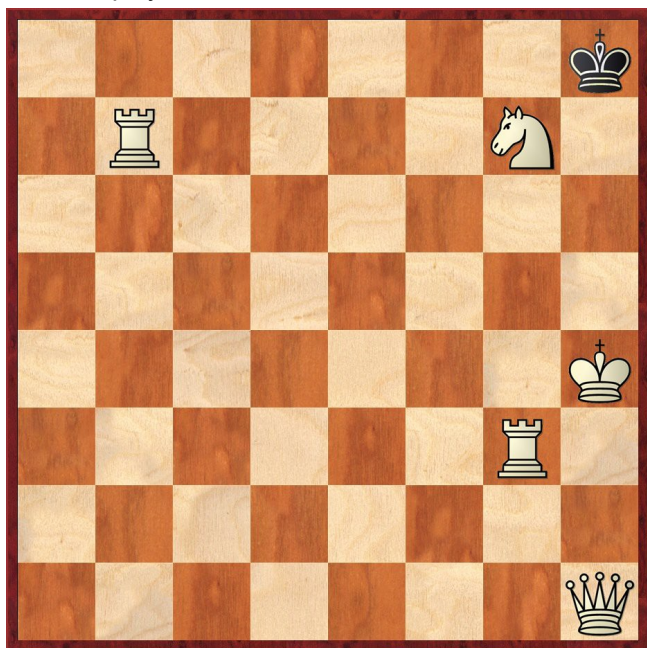
The Cambridgeshire Executive Committee meets on 9th September to draw up the competitions for the new season and the fixture list will be issued shortly thereafter. Please be prepared to play in league and Team 550 matches before the end of the month.

September 10th will be a last chance to grab some late points in the Summer Sprint Competition or if you have not been participating, you can start your campaign in the Club Ladder.

The Cambridgeshire Rapidplay will be held on 28th September in Whittlesford. Entry forms are available from www.cambschess.co.uk.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (A Kraemer 1926)

Position : 8/8/8/7K/8/2R3P1/3R2Pk/2Q5

1 Rc8 Kxg3 2 Qc7#

Website to Watch

Feeling lucky? Guess what you will find at the website www.europanchessclubcup2014.com. That's right, the event takes place in Bilbao from 14th to 20th September. It will feature well-known teams such as SOCAR from Azerbaijan, previous German champions SG Solingen and Russian teams from Moscow and St Petersburg that no doubt will include several grandmasters. England are represented (among others) by Grantham Sharks.

Window on the Web

In April 2013, I mentioned the *St Louis Chess Club and Scholastic Centre* in connection with the video lectures they produce, presented by Yasser Seirawan and others. I have re-visited their site because the club is the venue for the 2nd annual Siquefield Cup Tournament. This year it runs from 27 August to 7 September and it is billed as the strongest chess tournament in history, with 6 of the top 10 GMs in the world competing, whose average rating is 2802.

This is an opportunity to see top-class chess played by chess titans Carlsen, Aronian, Caruana (the world top 3), Nakamura (5th), Topalov (8th) and Vachier-Lagrave (9th). They will play each other twice and the top prize is \$100,000.

The schedule together with more information is here: <http://saintlouischessclub.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=62>. The 6 hour time difference between St Louis and the UK means that we will be able to view the games live in the evenings by following this link to the chess viewer: <http://uschesschamps.com/live>. All the games played are recorded in the viewer so that they can all be viewed after the tournament for as long as the viewer remains available. At the time of writing, after 2 rounds Carlsen is 4th and Topalov has yet to score.

As a bonus, last year the Club produced videos discussing some of the games played in the first Siquefield Cup Tournament, presented by some of their GMs and it is likely that they will do the same this year.

Their library of chess training videos is expanding all the time. There are lessons to suit all classes of player from "beginner" to "advanced", in masterclass-type format with a demo board and interaction with an audience. In my opinion, this is one of the best sources of free chess instruction available.

The videos can be accessed here: <http://saintlouischessclub.org/blog/video>.

Ron Jones

Result Round-up

Summer Sprint

White		Black	
P Hanks	1	0	D Lane
J Parker	1	0	I Garratt

Player	Grade	Game		Total	Game 3
		1	2		
P Hanks	149	189	158	347	-
S Caraway	158	189	149	338	-
P Turp	165	189	-	189	-
P Spencer	137	135	-	135	-
J Parker	85	122	0	122	-
N Wedley	104	122	-	122	-
D Lane	139	0	0	0	0
I Garratt	72	0	0	0	-

Serious Study

Kasparov revealed a simple trick which served him well in his childhood years. He divided the chessboard into left and right halves and totalled the strength of the forces both players had on each flank. The aim was to monitor the balance of the position and determine where there is potential for an initiative by superior forces.

This ad hoc indicator is useful in more ways than pure tactics. Rooks are relatively heavyweight pieces and together constitute around a third of the available firepower. Furthermore, their mobility along the back rank gives them the greatest latitude of arena in which to operate. Where they are deployed is therefore an important decision – it will determine the subsequent field of battle (foretold by the weighting they introduce into Kasparov's counting measure).

At club level, understanding openings might extend to ten moves either from precise knowledge or recognising similar themes. These will comprise a few pawn moves, developing the minor pieces and castling. Then comes the ticklish period from move 10 to 20. Your theory is exhausted but you have yet to reach the concrete analysis of the middlegame. This transitional phase requires intuitive play just at the time the rooks gain their freedom to contribute! Which factors should guide your thinking? Or put more directly, what do you hope to achieve with your rooks?

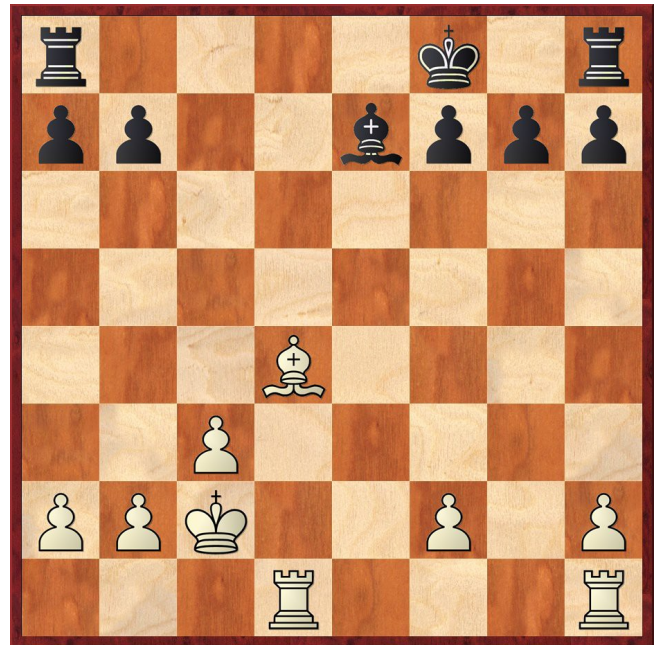
1 Attack against the enemy king

Chess literature contains many examples of mating attacks in which files ahead of the enemy king are violently opened and the threats from the rooks prove decisive. This may occur if the king remains in the centre or after pawn storms on the flank. In these cases, rook deployment is fairly natural and dictated by short-term tactics (see, for example, Polgar v Jones in **NEW ENGLANDER** January 2014).

2 Penetration of the enemy position

This is a more interesting case for our purposes because the objective is more subtle. "Rook on the 7th rank" has reached the status of a mantra especially in the endgame. From an advanced post, a rook restricts the enemy king, threatens pawns from their vulnerable side aspect and set up the ingredients of a winning position.

M Vachier-Lagrave (2719) v **A Moiseenko** (2699)
Biel 2013



White has a lead in development but needs to convert the advantage into something more tangible.

21 Rh1 **f6**

Otherwise **22 B**xg7+ **K**xg7 **23 R**xe7

22 Bxa7 **Rd8**

If **22 ... R**xa7, **23 Rd7** and Black can neither defend the bishop (permitting doubled rooks on the 7th rank) nor move it because **Rd7-d8+** will win the exchange.

22 ... Re8 **23 Rd7** (threatening **24 R**dxe7 **R**xe7 **25 B**c5) **23 ... B**a3 (**23 ... B**d8 **24 B**c5+) **25 B**e3 **B**e7 **26 B**b6 when **26 ... B**a3 cannot be repeated because **27 R**xe8+ **K**xe8 **28 R**d8+.

23 Bc5 winning a piece.

3 Support of your own pawns

Please note that the title wording has been carefully chosen to cover both the defence of your pawns when they are attacked and their protection as they march into enemy territory. The latter case is quite rare for two reasons. Firstly, to engage both rooks in supporting pawns you need to be a fan of big pawn centres and secondly, this is such a juggernaut that your opponent will dilute it with pawn exchanges before it can become effective.

The following game has not been chosen for its tactical surprises. Its main virtue is the consistency with which White develops the minor pieces and pawns with a single strategic aim and of course, the placement of the rooks.

V Akopian (2704) v L Pantsulaia (2556)
Dubai 2013

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 Nc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6

The Benoni Defence has fluctuated in popularity over the years. It was played by the attacking champions Tal and Kasparov but in those days, they frequently encountered White occupying the centre with an early e2-e4. Nowadays, that advance is regarded as inevitable and can be delayed so as not to give Black a lead in development. Instead, White targets the weakness on d6 to constrain Black's natural plan of Bf8-g7 and Nb8-d7.

6 Nf3 g6 7 Bf4 a6 8 Nd2 Nbd7 9 Qc2 Be7 10 a4 0-0

Here we are; ten moves into the opening and time to start thinking about the transition to the middlegame. Apart from Black's recent castling, the rooks have yet to move. Where should they go?



Black has had to play Bf8-e7 to protect d6 and taken steps against Nc3-b5. Now, he is faced also faced with Nd2-c4 so either b7-b5 will become necessary or Nd7-e5 to screen the backward pawn. The latter will be stronger after Rf8-e8 and Be7-f8-g7 which would improve the scope of both pieces. Rooks on the b and e files? What else?

White should know from the Four Pawn's Attack (with e2-e4 and f2-f4) that the thrust e4-e5 is an antidote to Black's activity on the long diagonal and the open e file. In fact, he would be creating a pair of hanging pawns but beyond the stage when they are vulnerable to blockade (see **NEW ENGLANDER** August 2014). Rooks on e1 and f1 to support the advance therefore look natural.

Black can cover the e5 square with no less than 5 defenders (d6, Bg7, Re8, Nd7 and Qc7) whereas White has to engage in lengthy manoeuvres to achieve more than 4 (f4, Bg3, Nc4 and Re1). This grip can often be weakened by White responding to d6xe5 with d5-d6. This is a strong argument for White placing the rooks on d1 and e1.

It comes down to a matter of timing. Can Black muster the defence of e5 or will White need the resource d5-d6? Given these positional considerations, the following moves hardly need explanation.

11 e4 Re8 12 Be2 Bf8 13 0-0 Ne5 14 Bxe5 Rxe5 15 Nc4 Re8 16 f4 Nd7

Black is some tempi short of fully defending e5 and undermining the attackers starting with b7-b5.

17 Rae1 Rb8 18 a5 Qc7 19 e5

White has won the race because 19 ... dxe5 20 d6 Bxd6 21 Nd5 Qc6 22 Bf3 when a discovered attack on the black queen forces it to abandon the bishop on d6.

19 ... b5 20 axb6 Nxb6 21 Ne4 Bf5 22 Nf6+ Kg7 23 Qc3 dxe5 24 fxe5 with a marvellous position.

To complete the study, I needed an example of thoughtless play and I did not have far to look.

P Hanks v S Foster

New England A v St Neots, 24.10.2012

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 0-0 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 b6 7 Nf3 Bb7 8 e3 Be4 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 d5

This time, we have ten fairly standard moves in a Nimzo-Indian and White decides to develop the rooks but does so rather aimlessly.

11 0-0 Be7 12 Rfd1 c6 13 Rac1 Nbd7



The job has been completed quickly but what is the rook doing on d1? The d file can only become open with the opponent's assistance (e.g. c6-c5, e6-e5 or d5xc4 followed by d4-d5). One answer is e3-e4 when Black might prefer d5xe4 to allowing e4-e5 with a subsequent kingside assault. If such were planned, surely the rook should be on e1 supporting the push and also ready to join the attack with Re1-e3-g/h3 instead of having the route blocked by the queen?

14 e4 dxe4 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Qxe4 Bxh4 17 Nxh4 Rc8 18 Rd3??

With 18 ... Qg5, Black could exploit the disconnected rooks when 19 Rce1 Nf6 wins the white knight.