

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – Christmas 2017

### Chessmas Chatter

Even with climate change, December evenings are still depressingly dark and need to be alleviated by the warmth and sparkle of the Christmas festivities. Time to enjoy the company of friends and family, indulge in hearty food, quaff a glass of good cheer and luxuriate with some well-deserved relaxation. Maybe, rest those tired eyes for a few moments..... ZZZZ ....

You may at sometime have been told to “sleep on it” in the hope of finding new inspiration on the following morning. This, I thought, had happened recently in the club championship but on reflection, I must have dozed off during the game.

#### P Hanks v P Turp

New England Club Championship Rd 1, 05.09.2018

1      **d4**                      **Nf6**

I should have known to stay alert. A few years ago, as White, I lost horribly to Phil in 15 moves. He was, however, returning from a sabbatical and it would be interesting to see how he emerged from hibernation.

2      **Nf3**                      **e6**  
3      **c4**                        **b6**

The Queen's Indian Defence. At least, it won't be another nightmare in the Two Knights Tango.

4      **a3**

The Petrosian system was typical of the Armenian world champion's positional style but its passivity rather makes me yawn. A favourite with Kasparov, however, it cuts out Black's counterplay based on Bf8-b4 and I was so hoping to play like Garry. Dream on!

4      ...                        **Bb7**  
5      **Nc3**                      **Be7**

Many grandmaster games continue 5 ... d5 6 cxd5 Nxd5 because continuations with e2-e4 at some point do not cause night terrors.

6      **Qc2**                      **d5**  
7      **e3**                        **Nbd7**  
8      **cxd5**                      **exd5**  
9      **Bd3**                      **0-0**  
10     **0-0**

We could both have enjoyed a more restful evening with a draw at this point. Fritz's evaluation is 0.00!

10     ...                        **Re8**  
11     **Ne5**                      **c5**

Black avoids 11 ... Nxe5 12 dxe5 Nd7 13 Bxh7+ Kh1 14 f4 g6 15 Bxg6 fvg6 16 Qxg6 with enough threats to give Black many a sleepless night. In fact, the direct approach receives a cold shower e.g. 16 ... Nf8 17 Qh5+ Nh7 18 Rf3 Rg8 19 Rh3 Rg7 20 f5 d4!

- 21 e4 dxc3 22 Bh6 Qd4+ 23 Kh1 Qxe5

- 21 f6 (21 exd4 Qxd4+ 22 Be3 Qxe5) Bxf6 22 exf6 Rxd2+ 23 Kh1 Rg5+ (23 Kf1 Qxf6+).

All this is in the mind's eye of the computer. Instead, Fritz prefers the quieter 18 Rd1 but subsequent variations are pretty aimless.

12      **b3**

My intention had been 12 f4 to consolidate the outpost. As can be seen from the previous comment, my stream of consciousness had centred on the b1-h7 diagonal and I did not want 12 ... c4 13 Be2.

12      ...                      **Rc8**

There is a transposition subtlety at this point. If 12 ... cxd4 13 exd4 Rc8 14 Nxd7 Qxd7 15 Bf5, we reach a possible position in the game but here, Black has the resource 15 ... Rxc3.

13      **Nxd7**                      **Nxd7**

13 ... Qxd7 14 Bf5 would be similar to the previous comment but without the rude awakening for White. Nevertheless, the alarm bells were ringing. Winning the exchange was more ethereal than I imagined.

- 14 ... Qc6 was my greatest fear due to the pin down the c file but 15 Bxc8 Rxc8 16 Bb2 cxd4 17 exd4 Ne4 18 Rac1 Bxa3 19 Bxa3 Qxc3 20 Qxc3 Nxc3 21 Rfe1 h6 (otherwise 22 Rxc3 with a back rank mate) 22 Bb2 and White has successfully simplified to an ending
- 14 ... Qc7 may be better despite 15 Nb5 Qb8 16 Bxc8 Rxc8. White remains uncoordinated.

14      **Bxh7+**                      **Kh8**  
15      **Bf5**

I was hallucinating about attacking options starting 15 f4. The critical variation is 15 ... g6 16 Bxg6 fvg6 17 Qxg6 when plausible continuations become mind-bending. For instance, after 17 ... Nf6 18 Rf3, Black can defend only by finding the bogging 18 ... Qd7 (18 ... Nh7? 19 Rh3 Bh4 20 Qh5) 19 Rh3+ Qxh3 20 gxh3 Rg8. Sadly, there are simpler solutions in this line such as 17 ... Rc6 but Black need not be disturbed by the sacrifice until 15 ... cxd4 16 exd4 Bf6 17 Rd1 g6.

15      ...                      **Rc6**

If 15 ... g6, I would have chosen 16 Bh3.

16      **Bb2**                      **cxd4**  
17      **exd4**                      **Rh6**  
18      **g3**

This move is a sure sign that I am losing touch with reality, not realising which way Phil's mind is drifting. I was obsessed by the prospect of the attack coming on the b8-h2 diagonal - I was trying it in reverse! Had understood the threat would come down the h file, I could have waited, played h2-h3 at the appropriate

moment and dared Black to sacrifice a rook there e.g. 18 Rfe1 g6 19 Bd3 Kg7 20 Nb5 Reh8 21 h3.

<b>18</b>	...	<b>g6</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Bd3</b>	<b>Kg7</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>f4</b>	

I also considered 20 Bc1 but wanted to rouse my queen's rook and could see little difference between the text and 20 f3 though the latter covers e4 and g4.

<b>20</b>	...	<b>Reh8</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Rf2</b>	

The exchange 21 Rae1 Rxh2 22 Qxh2 Rxh2 23 Kxh2 normally favours the rooks but it is not clear whether Black can exploit White's exposed king.

<b>21</b>	...	<b>Nf6</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Qe2</b>	

22 Qd1 keeps e2 available for the bishop. It weakens e4 but Black cannot take immediate advantage by 22 ... Ne4 23 Nxe4 dxe4 24 d5+ Kg8 25 Bxe4 when White dominates (25 ... Bc5 26 Bd4 Bxd5 27 Bxc5).

<b>22</b>	...	<b>Bc8</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>f5</b>	<b>g5</b>

This shock stirred me from my reverie. I thought Black had only two similar moves 23 ... gxf5 and 23 ... Bxf5 when exchanging is bad for White. 24 Bxf5 Bxf5 25 Rxf5 Rxh2 26 Qxh2 (26 Rf2 R2h3 27 Qf3 Bd6 28 Ne2 Qe7 with Ne4 to follow) 26 ... Rxh2 27 Kxh2 Ng4+ and my king will soon be exhausted. So, 23 ... Bxf5 24 Bxf5 gxf5 25 Raf1 would keep the black knight safely tucked up (25 ... Ng4 26 Rxf5 Nxh2 27 Rxf7+).

<b>24</b>	<b>Re1</b>	
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I played automatically – sleepwalking when the f file was probably the best place for the rook. Alternatively, I had 24 Bc1 Rh5 but who in their right mind would see 25 h4 based on turning the tables by 25 ... gxh4 26 g4 R5h7 27 g5 Ne4 28 Nxe4 dxe4 29 f6+?

<b>24</b>	...	<b>Bd6</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Qd2</b>	

I had to defend with 25 Rg2 as originally planned.



<b>25</b>	...	<b>Ng4</b>
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Think the unthinkable! 25 ... Bxg3

- 26 hxg3 Rh1+ 27 Kg2 R8h2+ 28 Kf3 g4+ and if 29 Ke2 Rxf2+ 30 Kxf2 Rh2+ wins the queen and choosing a dark square (29 Ke3/f4) allows the black queen to join the king hunt
- 26 Qxg5+ Rg6 which I had dismissed but 27 fxg6 Bxf2+ 28 Kf1 (28 Kxf2 Ng4+ winning the white queen) 28 ... Rxh2/Bh3+. How can the kingside simultaneously sustain two such violent attacks?

<b>26</b>	<b>f6+</b>	<b>Kf8</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Qxg5</b>	<b>Rg8</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Qd2</b>	<b>Rxf6</b>

Again, 28 ... Bxg3 29 hxg3 Rgh8 30 Rfe2 (30 Rg2 Rh1#) 30 ... Rh1+ 31 Kg2 R8h2+ 32 Kf3 Qxf6+ 33 Qf4 Rxe2 34 Bxe2 (34 Rxe2 Rf1+) 34 ... Rxe1.

<b>29</b>	<b>Rxf6</b>	<b>Nxf6</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Qh6+</b>	<b>Rg7</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>Bc1</b>	<b>Ng4</b>

I felt this was virtually forced. Black has 31 ... Ng8 but after 32 Qe3, White has the extra material and facing fewer threats, can lie back in comfort. Other moves allow White to administer shock treatment e.g. 31 ... Be6 32 Bg5 Be7 33 Qh8+ Rg8 (33 ... Ng8 34 Bh6 Bf6 35 Bh7 is surely the stuff of fantasy) 34 Bh6+ Ke8 35 Bb5+ when 35 ... Qd7 is necessary because a) 35 ... Nd7 36 Qxg8+ b) 35 ... Bd7 36 Qxf6 or better still 36 Nxd5 and it is goodnight Phil.

<b>32</b>	<b>Qh8+</b>	<b>Rg8</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>Bh6+</b>	<b>Nxh6</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>Qxh6+</b>	<b>Rg7</b>

When playing my 31<sup>st</sup> move, I thought I was embarking on a winning sequence. I had analysed 35 Nxd5 Bxg3 36 Nf6 when 37 Re8+ is nasty but 37 Qh8+ Rg8 38 Qxg8# was "unstoppable". Only now did I rub my eyes and see Black can defend (and win!) with 36 ... Qxd4+ or 36 ... Bf4+ or 36 ... Bxe1+ ...

<b>35</b>	<b>Qh8+</b>	<b>1/2-1/2</b>
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The next morning, I was dragging myself out of bed and without sight of the board, I was struck by the thought that 35 Bb5 was an immediate win. I had not considered moving the bishop away from its normal kingside viewpoint and felt that this revelation proved the old adage. Unfortunately, I had forgotten that Black still had a pair of bishops that can interpose on either e6 or e7.

More to the point would have been 35 Rf1 when 35 ... Bxa3 36 Qh8+ Rg8 37 Qh5 Be6 38 Qh6+ Ke8 (38 ... Rg7 39 Qxe6) 39 Nb5 would leave Black's king more vulnerable. I would never looked at moving my rook away from the open file but situations change and adapting more flexibly is possibly something I should wake up to.

After all the effort, the outcome was peaceful with goodwill to all mankind. Merry Combinations and a Happy New Year!

Paul Hanks