

New Englander

Chess Club Update – September 2020

Chairman's Chatter

We are living in an age of uncertainty ... but for how much longer? Despite this sad irony, we have to make the most of our circumstances and that means online chess. The club will be organising its familiar events – Ladder, Club Championship, team matches – for the coming darker evenings. Please give them your support in the virtual world.

Paul Hanks

AGM Summary

The Annual General Meeting was held online on Wednesday 26th August 2020 attended by seven members. Following reports of the past season, the decisions taken were :-

- Subscriptions for 2020-21 have been set at £30 regular membership/£25 for OAPs
- The Committee was re-elected but with Ed Knox becoming B team captain
- The club will aim to enter a team in the online Icen league for clubs in the region
- An online version of the club championship will be run with long format games. The fate of the suspended 2019-2020 competition will be reviewed when more is known about the resumption of over-the-board play
- The viability of online versions of the Problem Night, Handicap and Ladder competitions will be investigated and organised if there is sufficient interest. Due to some members experiencing difficulties with chess.com, players will be free to agree an alternative platform and lichess.com will be assessed
- The Cambridgeshire AGM is being held on 2nd September with the expectation that no league chess will commence before 1st January 2021. A club EGM will be called beforehand to determine policy for the coming season when the extent and format of the events are better known.

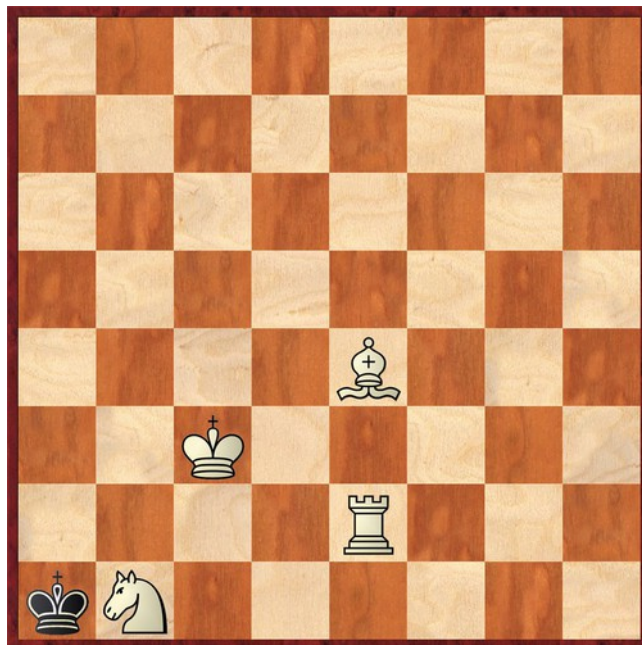
Website to Watch

Carlsen v Kasparov? Go to www.uschesschamps.com from 11th to 13th September and follow the link for the 2020 Champions Showdown. It is only Chess960 but a fun event in these unsettled times.

From 15th to 19th September, you can use the same website but follow a link to 2020 St Louis Rapid and Blitz. Now you are back to normal chess but with Carlsen, Nakamura and So and several other grandmasters rated over 2700. Watch out for Alireza Firouzja!

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Black to play and win



Last Month's solutions

Position : 7r/6Q1/8/5rNk/5p2/7K/8/8

1 Ne4 f3 2 Ng3# [1 ... Re5 2 Nf6#; 1 ... Rg5 2 Qxg5/Nf6#; 1 ... Rg8 2 Qh7#; 1 ... Rh6 2 Qg4#]

Position : r6r/6k1/2Rq4/1B1p1Q2/P3n3/4PpP1/5P2/6K1

Ter Sahakyan v Kravtsiv, Ahmedabad 2018 :

1 ... Rh1+ 2 Kxh1 Nxg3+ 3 fxg3 [3 Kg1/h2 Nxf5 4 Rxd6 Nxd6] **3 ... Rh8+ 4 Kg1 Qxg3+ 5 Kf1 Rh1#**

Result Round-up

Online tournaments : August 2020

Player	August			Total	Tie break
	5th*	12th	19th		
P Spencer	3	2	1½	5	1½
P Hanks	1	3	2	5	1
J Sadler	2½	2	1½	4½	1½
R Ilett	3	1½	1½	4½	1½
P Walker	-	1½	3	4½	-
C Russell	2½	1	1½	4	1
P Turp	2½	-	-	2½	-
M Tarabad	0	1	1	2	0
S Walker	1½	-	-	1½	-

* Chess960

New England World Cup

Group games			
S Walker	0	1	M Tarabad
P Weinberger	0	1	C Russell

Group A	PT	EK	MT	SW	Total	Tie break
P Turp	X	1	1	1	3	N/a
E Knox	0	X	1	1	2	N/a
M Tarabad	0	0	X	1	1	N/a
S Walker	0	0	0	X	0	N/a

Group B	PS	PH	CR	PW	Total	Tie break
P Spencer	X	1	½	1	2½	N/a
P Hanks	0	X	1	½	1½	1
C Russell	½	0	X	1	1½	0
P Weinberger	0	½	0	X	½	N/a

Semi-Finals			
P Turp	0	1	P Hanks
P Spencer	Sf	2	E Knox
M Tarabad	Sf	3	P Weinberger
C Russell	Sf	4	S Walker

Finals (toss for colours)			
Winner : Sf 1			Winner : Sf 2
Winner : Sf 3			Winner : Sf 4

Match of the Month

One aspect of chess that cannot be ignored is the clock. Getting your opponent out of his comfort zone and making him think is a good start to winning the game. If you can find something unexpected in a position, then you can slow him down. This is

Website : www.newenglandchess.org.uk

especially difficult in the opening where practically any move that can be made has already been tried – and studied. Still, at a club level, we are not that well prepared and every so often, you come across a move that you weren't expecting. Then all your well intentioned planning just goes out the window and you are thrown straight back to your own over-the-board resources - with, of course, the clock ticking...

I drew Phil in our club championship and knew that he liked the Pirc opening, so I prepared for a few lines. Phil clearly wanted to get away from the book early on. A better player than me might have found the correct response but I was too aware of the time running out - and could not see the wood for the trees (sigh).

C Russell v P Turp

New England Club Championship Rd 2, 11.03.2020

1 e4 d6
2 d4 Nf6
3 Nc3 Nbd7!?

A surprise! 3 ... g6 is rather more consistent. Black usually aims to fianchetto his king's bishop, trying to unlock its latent power while undermining White's centre.

This line blocks in the light-squared bishop for some time, so is technically inferior, but I suspect that Phil is trying to get me out of book theory. Black will clearly need to play e7-e5 soon to free up his game. So best seemed :-

4 f4 e5
5 Nf3 exd4

This is similar to the Austrian attack but without the fianchetto. I am already thinking of a kingside assault and accepted the early invitation to develop the queen.

6 Qxd4!

6 Nxd4 leads to a level game.

6 ... c6
7 Bd2 d5!?

Phil wants to dislodge my queen with Bf8-c5 but 6 ... Qb6 with the intention of swapping queens might have been a better choice. I can now see his strategy but wanted to start attacking his queen instead.

8 exd5!?

Not the best. Fritz recommends continuing development with 8 0-0-0! Bc5 9 Qd3 0-0 (best) 10 exd5 with an advantage, presumably due to the weakness of the pawn that reaches d5. Not 9 ... Ng4?? 10 exd5! Nf2 11 Re1+ Kf8 (Black cannot hold on to the material gain by 11 ... Be7 12 Qd5 Nxh1 13 Qxg7 Rf8 14 d6) 12 Qc4 Nxh1 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 Ng5 with a winning attack e.g. 14 ... Qf6 15 Ne4 Qf5 16 Nxc5 Nxc5 17 Re5.

Black is happy to gambit a centre pawn and hopes the mobility of his minor pieces will prove to be good compensation. As a result, many of the subsequent positions require a comparison of White's extra material and Black's dynamic potential. Several of the

following assessments involve computer evaluation and are certainly not easy over the board.

8 ... **Bc5**
9 **Qd3** **0-0?!**

This looks solid but Phil has missed that 9 ... Qe7+! 10 Be2 Nxd5 11 Nxd5 cxd5 12 0-0-0 (12 Qxd5 0-0 is the sort of position Black seeks with my king in the centre) 0-0 when the threat 13 ... Qxe2 provides a tactical defence of d5 and leads to only a small advantage to White.

10 **0-0-0** **Ng4??!**

I do not know whether Phil intended this as a shock tactic but it came as a surprise to me! It is a mistake, but certainly had me thinking. Knight and bishop combinations are common in the opening but I have always regarded this type of attack as a blunt instrument – if there is any justice it should not work! I can defend f2 easily enough, so I wondered what Phil has seen (tick, tock!)

Relatively best for Black here would be 10 ... Qc7 when White has 11 Ng5. Ironically, this is equally unobvious! The knight cannot be dislodged; after 11 ... h6, White could play 12 h4!? and if 12 ... hxg5?? 13 hxg5 wins easily. Instead, 12 ... Bd6! 13 dxc6 Nc5 14 Qd4 Bg4 gives White little with Black's superior co-ordination balancing the deficit of two pawns. Therefore 12 Nge4! cxd5 13 Nxd5 Nxd5 14 Qxd5 Be7 and being centralised, White is better.

Somewhat better alternatives to 11 ... h6 are :-

- 16. 11 ... Nb6 12 Nce4 Nxe4 13 Nxe4 cxd5 14 Nxc5 Qxc5 15 Bc3
- 17. 11 ... Bb4 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 a3 Bd6 14 Qf3 Rb8 15 Nce4 Be7 16 Bc4 Nd5 17 Qd3 Qb6.

Both give a clear advantage to White but with plenty of play. Anyway, I had expected the game to go down this kind of route. Now I have to rethink.

11 **Be1?!**

Only two sensible moves are available and I chose the wrong one! 11 Ne4 looks to be a natural reply but I worried that Phil had seen something that I had not. In particular, I was foolishly worrying that he might be able to get in f7-f5 dislodging the knight. However, after 11 Ne4! I am simply a full pawn to the good:

After 11 ... Bb6 12 dxc6 and 11 ... Qb6, Fritz gives some long, tactical variations often involving exchange sacrifices but leading to good positions for White. Much the best is 11 ... cxd5! 12 Qxd5 when

- 12 ... Ne3 13 Bxe3 Bxe3+ 14 Kb1 Bxf4 regains the pawn but Black is embarrassed by 15 Bb5. However, this diversion may become possible in later positions.
- 12 ... Bb6 13 Bb4 Ndf6 keeps White well ahead in development by simple exchanges - 14 Qxd8 Rxd8 15 Nxf6+ Nxf6 16 Rxd8+ Bxd8 17 Bc4. Black could go for complications with 13 ... Ne3!? 14 Qh5 Nxd1 15 Nfg5 h6 when
 - there is the sacrificial act of faith 16 Nxf7. Viewed from this point on the board, the

outcome is very much in doubt with both sides having to find tactical resources in a continuation such as 16 ... Nf6 17 Nxh6+ gxh6 18 Qg6+ Kh8 19 Bd3 Nxb2! 20 Kxb2 Bd4+ 21 Kc1 Be3+ 22 Nd2 Bf5 23 Bxf5 Qd4 24 Qxh6+ Kg8 25 Be6+ Rf7 26 Qg5+ Kh8 27 Qe5 Qxb4 28 Qxe3 Rc7 29 Re1.

- or the quieter 16 Bxf8 Qxf8 17 Bc4 forcing 17 ... g6 (17 ... hxg5 18 Nxg5 and threats to h7 and f7 decide the game) 18 Qxg6 Qg7 19 Bxf7 Kh8 (19 ... Kf8 20 Qd6#) with sufficient imbalance to cause time trouble!
- 12 ... Qc7 13 Qg5! Nf2 14 Nxf2 Bxf2 15 Bb4 Nc5 16 Bc4 Be6 17 Bxe6 fxe6 maintains the advantage.

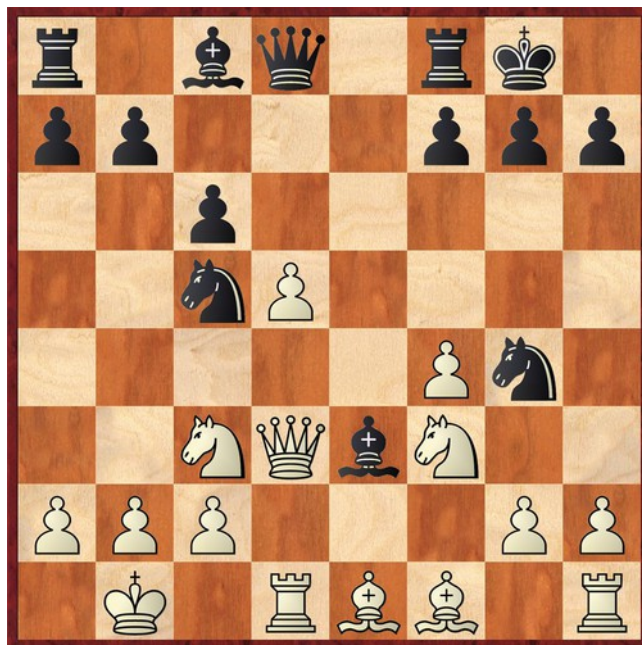
11 ... **Be3+?!**

Tempting but it leaves Black in an awkward position. Much better is 11 ... Ndf6! 12 dxc6 Qc7 13 Nd5 Nxd5 14 Qxd5 Qb6 15 Bc3 Ne3 16 Qg5 f6 17 Bc4+ Nxc4 18 Qd5+ Kh8 19 Qxc4 Qxc6 when White has only a small advantage.

12 **Kb1** **Nc5?!**

Either 12 ... Bb6 or 12 ... Re8 are better.

This looks to be a logical way of starting to free Black's congested back rank but now Phil has overcombined. His problem is that if 12 ... Bxf4?? 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 Qf5 wins a piece. (Note that the immediate 13 Qf5 fails to 13 ... g5 because 14 Qxg4 Nf6 but after the zwischenzug 13 dxc6, the knight on d7 is pinned!) The text move should also lose. How should I respond to the attack on my queen?



13 **Qc4?!**

Err... No. I suspect that most would take this option and it does keep White a pawn ahead. It is easy enough to see that 13 Bh4? Nxd3 14 Bxd8 Ndf2 loses for White but after the risky looking 13 Qe2!! White

actually has a forced win, as the black queen is in much more danger. Thereafter,

- if 13 ... Re8? 14 dxc6 Qc7 15 Nd5! and White wins e.g. 15 ... Qxc6 16 h3!! winning as the bishop on e3 is pinned against the threat of mate.

After 16 ... Bxf4?? White has the thunderbolt 17 Ne7+!!

- 17 ... Rxe7?? is mate in three starting 18 Rd8+
- 17 ... Kh8?? 18 Nxc6 losing his queen
- so at best Black can wriggle a bit with 17 ... Kf8 18 Nxc6 Rxe2 19 Bxe2 bxc6 20 Bb4 Be3 21 hxg4 when Black is a whole rook down and helpless to prevent the loss of more material.

Or 16 ... Be6 17 Nb4 Qb6 (17 ... Qc7? 18 f5! Bxa2+ 19 Nxa2) 18 hxg4 Bxf4 19 Qf2 wins.

- and if 13 ... Bxf4 14 dxc6 Qe8 15 Nd5 Bd6 16 Qxe8 Rxe8 17 Bb5 wins.

Amazing (but not surprising) that I did not see all of that!

13 ... Qc7

13 ... Qb6 is better.

14 d6 Qb6
15 Nd4?!

I wanted to prevent Be6 but I had much better alternatives.

- 15 h3! Nf6 16 g3 Be6 17 Qe2 Ncd7 18 Na4 Qb5 19 Qxb5 cxb5 20 Bxb5 winning
- 15 Na4!? Be6 16 Nxb6 axb6 17 Ne5 (17 Qb4 Bxa2+ with a perpetual check) Bxc4 18 Bxc4 Nf6 19 g3 b5 20 Bf1 Ncd7 21 Nxd7 Nxd7 22 Bh3 Rfd8 23 Bc3 also with a clear advantage.

15 ... Bxf4?

Fritz likes 15 ... Bf2! 16 Qe2 Bxe1.

16 Nf5 Bxf5
17 Qxf4 g6?!

Better is 17 ... Be6.

18 Be2?!

Wanting to relieve my crowded back rank but not the best. Both sides have very active pieces and there are variations at almost every turn. For instance, 18 h3! Ne6 (18 ... Nf6 19 g4 Be4 20 Qxf6 Bxh1 21 Nd5 cxd5 22 Bc3 mating) 19 Qd2 Nf6 (19 ... Ne3 20 Bf2 winning) 20 g4 Be4 21 Rh2.

18 ... Ne6
19 Qg3?! Nf6?!

Retreating the threatened knight looks logical, though Fritz recommends 19 ... Qe3!; 19 ... h5 or 19 ... Ne3 are also better choices.

20 Bf2?!

My turn to pick the fourth best option! It appears to gain a tempo but Fritz reckons that 20 Na4, h3 and Rf1 are all better. But in our defence, the clocks are starting to run down now. After 20 Rf1! Qc5 21 Bf2

Qa5 22 Qh4 Nd5 23 Nxd5 cxd5 24 Be1 Qd8 25 Rxd5 winning.

20 ... Qa5
21 Bd3?!

21 Rhf1 Rad8 22 Qh4! keeps the pressure on.

21 ... Rad8
22 Bxf5 Qxf5
23 Rhf1

This looks sensible but Fritz has spotted a free pawn - 23 Bxa7.

23 ... Nh5?!

Tempting but offering a queen exchange with 23 ... Qg4 is better.

24 Qe3 Qa5?

Another mistake. 24 ... Qg4! is still best.

25 g4! Nhg7
26 h4?!

26 d7 followed by 27 Bh4 was a better plan.

26 ... Rd7
27 Bg3

If 27 Ne4?! f5!

27 ... Nc5

27 ... Qb4! 28 Qe2 h5 is best.

28 h5?!

I am trying to open up Black's king but I missed a win here – how?



28 Qxc5!! Qxc5 29 Ne4! I have the obvious threat to the black queen but more importantly, she is unable to move to a dark square to prevent 30 Nf6+ winning a rook and clearing the path for my passed pawn.

- Fritz favours 29 ... Ne6 when I have to ignore 30 Nxc5 and play 30 Nf6+! with another fork to come e.g. 30 ... Kg7 31 Nxd7 Qb5 32 a4!! (pulls the queen away from f1 in the variation 32 Nxf8 Nxf8 33 d7

Nxd7) 32 Qa5 33 Nxf8 Nxf8 34 d7 Qd8 35 Be5+ Kg8 36 Bc7 is decisive.

- 29 ... Qe3 30 Nf6+ Kh8 31 Nxd7 Rd8 (the hapless rook cannot find a good square 31 ... Re8 32 Be5 etc.) 32 Ne5 Kg8 33 Nxf7 Rd7 34 Bf4 Qe6 35 Nh6+ Kf8 36 Rde1 and Black has no good moves.
- I suspect most of us would try 29 ... Qa5 30 Nf6+ Kh8 31 Nxd7 Re8 32 Ne5 Kg8 (32 ... Rxe5 33 Bxe5 Qxe5 34 d7) 33 Nxf7 and the d pawn will advance e.g. 33 ... Nf5 34 d7 Ra8 35 Be1 Qc7 36 d8Q+ Rxd8 37 Nxd8 Ne3 38 Ne6 Qe7 39 Bb4 Qe8 40 Rd7 Nxf1 41 Rg7+ Kh8 42 Bc3 and White mates.

28 ... **Re8!**

Best!

29 **Qf3** **Re6**
 30 **hxg6** **Rxg6**
 31 **Rfe1?!**

One plan from here is to remove the defence of f7 by 31 Bh4 and 32 Be7 viz. 31 Bh4! Qb4 32 Be7 f6 33 Qe2 (threatening 34 Qe6) 33 ... Qxg4 34 Rxf6 h6 35 Rxg6 Qxg6 36 b4 winning which I missed. I am running very short of time.

31 ... **Qd8!**
 32 **Qe3?**

Again, 32 Qf2 is much better.

32 ... **Nge6**
 33 **g5?** $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

Sadly, this does not defend the pawn as after 33 ... Qxg5 34 Qxg5 Nxe5 35 Re7 gets nowhere (sigh) So, with my advantage burnt out and both our clocks short on time, I offered a draw which Phil accepted.

Chris Russell

Eye Opener

Question : Who is the World Chess Champion at Blitz? Well, Magnus Carlsen, of course. He far outshines the opposition in all formats (except Chess960). But then, the short time control does make for freakish results...

L Paulo Supi (2572) v M Carlsen (2863)

Internet Blitz 2020

1 **e4** **d5**

The Scandinavian Defence is not unknown in Carlsen's repertoire. He used it to defeat Caruana in a classical game at the 2014 Tromso Olympiad. More recently, he used it successfully against both Anand and Nepomniachtchi at a blitz tournament in Kolkata. His opponent should therefore have come prepared with a few tricks up his sleeve.

2 **exd5** **Qxd5**
 3 **Nf3**

Most of Carlsen's elite opponents follow one of the main lines with 3 Nc3 to which Carlsen has replied either 3 ... Qd8 or 3 ... Qd6.

3 ... **Bg4**

4 **Be2** **Nc6**
 5 **Nc3** **Qd7**
 6 **h3** **Bxf3**
 7 **Bxf3** **0-0-0**
 8 **0-0** **Nd4**

A provocative divergence from 8 ... e5 with which Kramnik beat Morozevich (Moscow World Blitz 2009).

9 **a4** **Kb8**
 10 **Nb5** **Nxf3+**
 11 **Qxf3** **a6**
 12 **c4** **e5**

I may have protected f7 with 13 ... e5 but after 14 d4

- 14 ... exd4 15 Bf4 and the computer tells me White already has a winning attack e.g. 15 ... Bc5 16 b6 Bxb6 (16 ... Ne7 17 bxc7+ is best but hopeless) 17 Qa3
- 14 ... Qxd4 15 Be3 Qxc4 16 Ra7 with a strong initiative.

The knight, however, can and should be accepted. Provided you find 13 ... Qd3 after 12 ... axb5 13 axb5, Black will be better if 14 Qxf7 Nf6.

13 **d4** **exd4**

13 ... Ne7 is a better option according to Informator but my Fritz recommends; 13 ... Qc6 . Do they have better software?

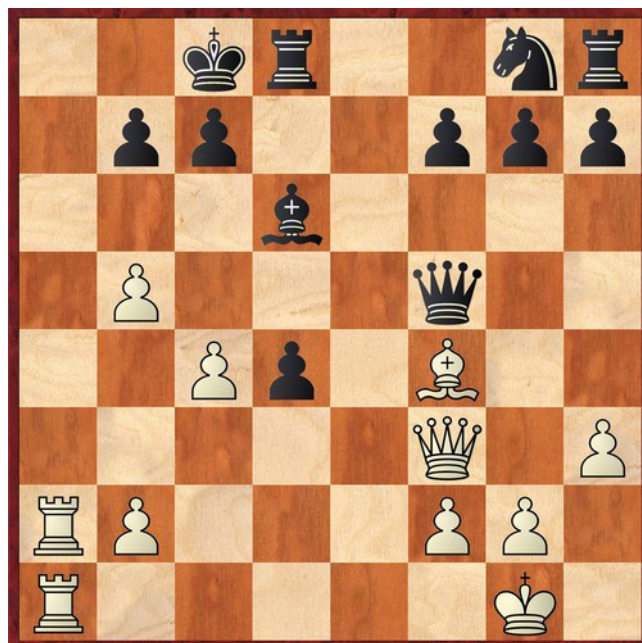
14 **Bf4** **axb5?**

14 ... Rc8 was necessary.

15 **axb5** **Bd6**
 16 **Ra2**

The more clinical computer finishes with 16 c5 Bxc5 (16 ... Bxf4 17 Qa3 mating) 17 b6 Rc8/Bd6 18 Ra7 Qc6 19 Rfa1. But it is not as pretty...

16 ... **Qf5**
 17 **Rfa1** **Kc8**



18 **Qc6** **1-0**