

New Englander

Chess Club Update – October 2020

Chairman's Chatter

Judging from this newsletter, I think we now know the shape of the "new normal" and it only differs in two respects. Firstly, all the usual competitions appear but are using the prefix *Online* to signify the changed playing arena and secondly, it's already October!

We have at last the finalised results from the suspended Cambridgeshire team competitions and a target for resumption of over-the-board play (see the CCCA AGM summary below for details). Please consult future newsletters for updates on progress and discussion of the conditions that might be necessary.

In the interim, please continue to support the range of internet events that are ongoing and of course, keep studying the game so that your "new normal" includes a rejuvenated standard of play. The feature article in this month's issue may be a good place to start.

Paul Hanks

CCCA AGM Summary

The Cambridgeshire County Chess Association held its Annual General Meeting on 2nd September attended by 13 members. The following decisions were made :-

- All players were reminded and encouraged to renew their ECF membership (which is a condition of participating in New England events)
- Fees for entry into county team competitions were waived for the coming season. No Rapidplay was envisaged but organising the County Individual championship may be reconsidered for late Spring if conditions allow
- A poll of clubs detected at best a small appetite for players to resume over the board play in the immediate future
- Further play in the suspended 2019-20 competitions was ruled out. The Fenland Trophy was abandoned but titles for the CCCA leagues and divisions in the Team 550 competition will be awarded based on the points per game ratio standings when the competitions were interrupted
- No over-the-board play will be arranged until 1st January 2021 at the earliest. The ambition is for the 2020-21 season to comprise the normal events reduced to one match between teams rather than the usual balance of home and away fixtures
- If the schedule restarts with the Team 550 and Fenland Trophy in January and February

with league matches following from March, the early events will form a buffer and may yet be cancelled if player reluctance or the pandemic restrictions are continuing

- A sub-committee will be formed with representatives from all clubs to oversee all aspects of the resumption including
 - the circulation of risk assessments and operating rules within individual venues
 - sharing experience of good practice and guidelines for safe playing conditions
 - the format of the competitions (players/team and teams/division)
 - the proposed playing calendar
- No online competitions will be organised at a county level and clubs wishing to compete as a team are directed towards the Iceni League which should offer a sufficiently large pool of regional teams to offer opposition at the appropriate standard
- Clubs are encouraged to have some online participation to maintain player allegiance
- The incumbents of the main committee posts were re-elected with Paul McMahon becoming match captain for the Open county team. Volunteers will be sought from clubs for the positions of Tournament Secretary and Junior Organiser.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



For more problems, see the *Serious Study* article.

Last Month's solutions

Position : 8/8/8/4B3/2K5/4R3/kN6 (Kardos 1971)

1 Bd5 Kxb1 2 Re1#

Position : rr4k1/2n1pp1p/1n1p2p1/qP1P4/1R1QP3/2N2P2/4B1PP/5RK1

It is all about driving the white queen from protecting the rook on b4 by **1 ... e5 2 dxe6 Nxe6 3 Qxd6 Rd8 4 Qe7 Re8 5 Qd6 Rad8 0-1**

Result Round-up

Finalised Cambridgeshire Leagues

Division One	P	W	D	L	Pts	Games	Ratio
Cambridge	8	5	3	0	13	25½	1.63
Royston	7	3	3	1	9	19	1.29
Peterborough A	8	4	1	3	9	20½	1.13
St Neots	8	2	3	3	7	20	0.88
New England	7	1	3	3	5	15½	0.71
Warboys	8	1	1	6	3	14½	0.38

Division Two	P	W	D	L	Pts	Games	Ratio
Spalding	7	4	1	2	9	17	1.29
St Neots B	6	3	1	2	7	13	1.17
Peterborough B	8	4	1	3	9	16	1.13
New England B	7	2	3	2	7	15	1.00
Warboys C	8	2	2	4	6	13½	0.75
Warboys B	6	2	0	4	4	9½	0.67

Team 550 North	P	W	D	L	Games	Ratio
Spalding	5	4	0	1	12	2.40
NE Cavaliers	6	3	1	2	13½	2.25
NE Patriots	6	2	0	4	11½	1.92
Peterborough	6	3	0	3	11½	1.92
Warboys WC	7	2	1	4	11½	1.64

Team 550 South	P	W	D	L	Games	Ratio
Royston	6	6	0	0	18½	3.08
St Neots	6	4	0	2	13	2.17
Warboys DM	6	3	0	3	11½	1.92
Cambridge	6	2	0	4	10	1.67
Godmanchester	6	0	0	6	7	1.17

New England World Cup

Semi-Finals			
P Spencer	1	0	E Knox
M Tarabad	1d	-	P Weinberger
C Russell	1	0	S Walker

Finals			
P Hanks			P Spencer
C Russell	½0	½1	M Tarabad

Online tournaments : September 2020

Player	September					Total	Tie break
	2nd	9th	16th*	24th	30th		
R Ilett	3	2	4	-	2	11	-
P Walker	2	3	3	-	2	10	-
P Spencer	2	-	2	3	1	8	-
M Tarabad	1	1	1	2	1	5	1
E Knox	2	-	2	-	-	4	-
S Walker	-	1	2	0	-	3	-
C Russell	-	-	1	1	1	3	-
P Hanks	-	1	-	-	2	3	-
J Parker	1	-	1	-	-	2	-
J Sadler	1	-	-	-	-	1	-

* Chess960

Online Club Championship

Round 1			
P Hanks			P Walker
M Tarabad			P Spencer
C Russell			R Taylor
E Knox			J Sadler
J Sadler (Rd 2)			P Turp

Round 2			
P Turp			E Knox
P Walker			M Tarabad
P Spencer			C Russell
R Taylor			P Hanks

Deadline : 31st October Next draw : 1st November

Iceni League : Dates to be confirmed

Rd	H/A	Opponent	Rd	H/A	Opponent
1	A	Broadland A	5	A	Linton Tigers
2	H	Norfolk & Norwich	6	H	Bury St Edmunds
3	A	Norfolk Nomads	7	A	Woodbridge
4	H	Dons A	9	H	Suffolk Warriors A

Online Club Ladder

White		Black	
M Tarabad	0	1	J Sadler

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 01/09/20
	Month	Overall		
1			J Sadler	1
2			M Tarabad	0
3			E Knox	
4			P Walker	
5			P Spencer	
6			P Hanks	

Problem Night : 22nd September 2020

Team	Rd 1	Rd 2	Total
E Knox & M Tarabad	18	12	30
P Turp & S Wozniak	15	12	27
C Ross & C Russell	17	9	26

Website to Watch

As with our club chess, grandmaster tournaments have migrated online. Surprisingly, finding information is more difficult now than before lockdown. Websites are not being updated but I have tracked down an event that seems likely to go ahead in October. From 26th to 29th, the US Chess Championship will be an 11 round Rapidplay with elite players So, Dominguez and Nakamura. Viewing is slightly more complex - lichess.org is the nominated platform but commentary will be carried on Skype. For details, please see <https://uschesschamps.com/2020-us-championships/overview>.

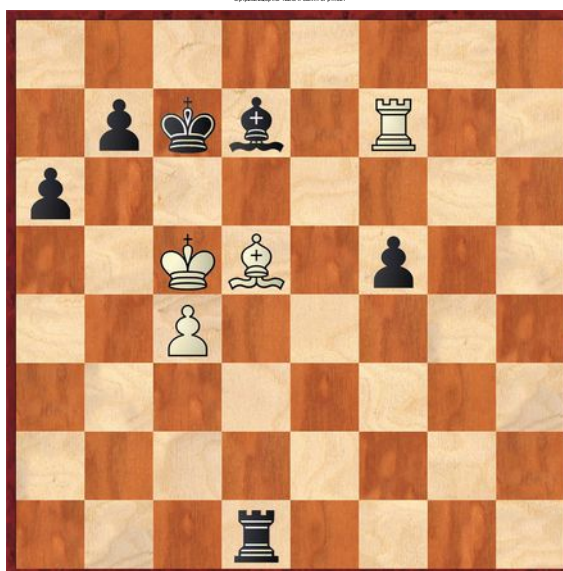
Serious Study

Over the past six months, the pandemic and consequent lockdown restrictions will have affected us in different ways. One of the early measures was the licence to go outdoors for one hour's physical exercise per day. To avoid questions on whether they practise what they preach, government ministers refrained from recommending what to do about our mental fitness. So how can we put new vitality into those atrophied chess muscles?

The main issues that arise from a period of playing inactivity must be a loss of tactical alertness and the difficulty of coping with time pressure. Maybe, a few exercises would help blow away the cobwebs. Please set your self a limit of 15 minutes to determine best play from the following positions. If you find satisfactory solutions in that time, congratulate yourself on a lockdown well spent!

The following positions are drawn from the book *1001 Chess Exercises for Club Players* by F Erwich.

Black to play



If ever you need a spur to return to form, a recent example from a game on Chess.com will suffice. The lamentable tactics show both players in dire need of a mental boot camp regime.

P Turp (1686) v P Hanks (1608)

New England World Cup semi-final, 24.08.2020

1	c4	e5
2	g3	f5

This game was played under a time control of 30 minutes/player with an increment of 20 seconds per move. Not as frantic as for many rapidplay events but it still favours an aggressive approach such as this Anglo-Dutch Defence.

Grandmasters do not play this way, presumably because Black will lag in development and be saddled with a weakened king's position. More often, they do not get the chance due to using the move order 2 ... c6 when 3 Nf3 forces Black down different avenues. Phil eventually rouses his king's knight but by then, my unsupported e pawn is not such a liability.

3	Bg2	Nf6
4	Nc3	c6

With 4 ... Nc6, I could have reached Saidy v Fischer, New York 1968 but there the resemblance ends!

5	d4	e4
6	h4	

Phil thought for over 2½ minutes here. Flank advances are very fashionable thanks to the pioneering games of the artificial intelligence engine AlphaZero but I do not understand the purpose in the current position.

6	...	d5
7	b3	Bb4

Luckily, not long before, I had played a very similar game as White! In their annotations, grandmasters often wax lyrical (or lazily drop dark hints) about understanding the nuances of various move orders. It generally goes over my head but here, it is actually important! In my game as White, I unknowingly did not commit to b2-b3 until Black had played d7-d6. The transposition in this game gives me the text move as an active option which I could not refuse.

8	Bd2	
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White expended over 5 minutes on moves 6 and 7; this move took 16 seconds ... but it made Black think for 2 minutes!

8	...	e3
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With my positive attitude, this opportunity was also too good to miss even though I could not be sure of adequate compensation for the pawn. My firm gaze on the text move meant my analysis of 8 ... dxc4 was scant at best. I wanted to avoid presenting the opportunity for 9 Nxe4 and went no further.

9	fxe3	Qc7
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White's position is thoroughly disrupted but when I sacrificed the pawn, I thought direct measures such as 10 Rh3 f4 11 exf4 Bxh3 12 Nhx3 would favour White whereas 10 ... Bxc3 instead recovers the material after 11 Bxc3 Ne4 and similarly 10 dxc4 11 bxc4 Bd6.

But what if White is determined to hold on to the material advantage whatever the suffering? 10 Kf2

looks and is too scary for White e.g. 10 ... Ng4+ 11 Kf3. I toyed with 11 ... Bd6 or the most aggressive 11 ... Nxe3 but both give away any advantage! 11 ... 0-0 is good for Black but the killer continuation I missed was 11 ... Bxc3 because the recapture 12 Bxc3 allows 12 ... Qe7. To avoid mate in one on e4, White must play 13 Qd3 and surprising Black does not need a queen to force checkmate – 13 ... Qe4+ 14 Qxe4 fxe4 15 Kf4 0-0+ 16 Kg5 h6+ 17 Kg6/h5 Bf5 18 Kh5/other Nf6#. Good intuition, Phil! You must habitually encounter stronger players than me.

10	Nf3	
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I had not considered this move. It shows Phil's subconscious swindling skills. White has a precarious position but he is intent on diverting my attention from his weaknesses. Previously, I was only looking at the knight check on g4 because the e4 square was covered by the fianchetto. The element of surprise with the text move has been combined with the e4 square being cunningly offered as a distraction. Incidentally, Phil has apparently shielded the pawn on e3 (from a queen on g3) which would become vulnerable after exchanging on c3.

The swindling technique of offering a cheap but erroneous way to win is a manoeuvre known as the Trojan Horse method ... and I fell for it!

10	...	Qxg3+
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So far, my rusty brain had been unable to follow the most forcing variation (options after Black's move 9) and had missed a plausible defence (White's move 10). Now it goes into overdrive.

I expected to win a piece and snatched at the simplest continuation – what an idiot!. I exhort Masterclass disciples to examine combinations in all move orders. So how come I never dreamt of 10 ... Bxc3 11 Bxc3 Ne4? Threats to c3 and g3 force 12 Qc1/2 Qxg3+ 13 Kd1 Qxg2. My version gives the bishop a retreat square.

11	Kf1	Bxc3
12	Bxc3	Ne4??

The swindle is complete. The e4 square is so tempting I have forgotten about g4 and e3. Of course, 12 ... Ng4 13 Be1 Nxe3+ 14 Kg1 Qxg2#.

13	Be1	Qg6
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I did go on to win but it is really pedestrian stuff from here onwards. Obviously deflated, I played without the verve of the opening and disdained from the obvious attack f5-f4 on several occasions. The moral of the story – practise, practise, PRACTISE!

14 Rc1 0-0 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 h5 Qh6 17 Bf2 Nc6 18 a3 Bd7 19 b4 Rae8 20 Qb3 Be6 21 Rd1 Kh8 22 Rd3 Rc8 23 Rh4 Ne7 24 Rd1 Bd7 25 Ne5 Be8 26 Bf3 Rc3 27 Ng6+ Nxg6 28 hxg6 Rxb3 29 Rxh6 gxh6 30 Bh4 hxg6 31 Kg2 g5 32 Bxe4 fxe4 33 Bg3 0-1

The are worries in some quarters that online chess is a hotbed of cheating by surreptitious use of computer assistance. From the above game, we have no such problems in our club!

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

A Team	Fen-land	Cambridgeshire League										Score	Appearances	Grading	
	Cambridge 11 th Dec	St Neots A 23 rd Sept	Peterborough A 17 th Oct	Royston 6 th Jan	Warboys A 27 th Nov	Cambridge 8 th Jan	St Neots 29 th Jan	Peterborough A 19 th Feb	Royston 11 th Mar	Warboys A 1 st Apr	Cambridge 22 nd Apr			Opponent Average	Performance
Jason Dilley	1	1	0	1d	1	1	½	1				5½+1d	8	181	209
Paul Hanks			½	0		0		0				½	4	170	133
Ray Ilett	½	½	½	½	1	0	1	½				4½	8	165	171
Paul Spencer	0	0		0	0	0	0	0				0	7	159	109
Ed Knox	0		0	1d	0	1	1					2+1d	6	154	143
Phil Turp								½				½	1	147	147
Chris Russell		½	0		½		0					1	4	139	114
Mahmoud Tarabad		1d										1d	1	-	-
Total	1½	3	1	2½	2½	2	2½	2				15½		-	-
Sum of opponents' grades	746	634	783	533	756	901	757	742				based on grades at start of the season – excludes defaulted games			
Sum of New England grades	625	627	762	463	748	781	748	799							
B Team											Score	Appearances	Grading		
	Peterborough B 19 th Sept	Spalding 9 th Oct	Warboys B 29 th Apr	Warboys C 20 th Nov	St Neots B 9 th Dec	Peterborough B 22 nd Jan	Spalding 11 th Feb	Warboys B 4 th Mar	Warboys C 25 th Mar	St Neots B 15 th Apr			Opponent Average	Performance	
Paul Hanks						0					0	1	181	131	
Ray Ilett	1			1							2	2	149	199	
Paul Spencer	½	0			0	½		1			2	5	143	133	
Phil Turp		½					½	½			1½	3	138	138	
Chris Russell					0	1					1	2	128	128	
Ed Knox		0		0	0	½	1	1			2½	6	120	112	
Ron Jones	1	½		½	1		½	1d			3½+1d	5	104	125	
Norman Wedley				½							½	1	102	102	
Mahmoud Tarabad								0			0	1	91	41	
Peter Weinberger	1										1	1	62	115	
Total	3½	1		2	1	2	2	3½			15		-	-	
Sum of opponents' grades	440	567		469	496	483	582	322			based on grades at start of the season – excludes defaulted games				
Sum of New England grades	529	519		507	503	494	533	402							

Team 550 Tournament

NE Patriots	Plate			Team 550								Score	Appearances	Grading	
	St Neots 20 th Nov	Royston 29 th Apr		NE Cavaliers 11 th Sept	Warboys N 23 rd Oct	Spalding 4 th Dec	NE Cavaliers 15 th Jan	Peterborough 5 th Feb	Warboys N 26 th Feb	Peterborough 19 th Mar	Spalding 7 th Apr			Opponent Average	Performance
Phil Turp					0							0	1	164	114
Paul Hanks	1				½			1	½			3	4	162	187
Paul Spencer	½			1		0	0	½	1			3	6	137	137
Peter Weinberger				0				1	1			2	3	111	127
Chris Russell	1			0	0	0		0				1	5	109	79
Mike Ingram	1			0		1	½					2½	4	97	109
Steve Walker						½	1		1			2½	3	89	127
Ed Smith							0					0	1	87	37
Steve Wozniak					1							1	1	82	132
Total	3½			1	1½	1½	1½	2½	3½			11½			
Sum of opponents' grades	454	-	-	474	524	475	416	501	487	-	-	based on grades at start of the season without 100 as fixed minimum			
Sum of Patriots grades	524	-	-	473	527	468	401	526	503	-	-				

NE Cavaliers	Plate	Team 550									Score	Appearances	Grading	
	Peterborough 11 th Dec	NE Patriots 11 th Sept	Warboys N 25 th Sept	Spalding 26 th Feb	Spalding ? th ???	NE Patriots 15 th Jan	Warboys N 5 th Feb	Peterborough 27 th Feb	Peterborough 8 th Apr	Opponent Average			Performance	
Phil Turp								½			½	1	166	166
Ray Ilett	½		½	1				½			2½	4	150	162
Paul Spencer								½	1		½	1	136	136
Ed Knox		1	0	0	0			½	1		2½	6	133	124
Jonathan Sadler			1								1	1	123	173
Ron Jones			1	½			1		1		3½	4	118	155
Mike Ingram								0			0	1	110	60
Mahmoud Tarabad			1	0				0			1	3	104	88
Norman Wedley								½			½	1	103	103
Des Lane					0						0	1	100	50
Jason Parker		0									0	1	91	41
Jamie Sutherland				1				1	1		3	3	49	100
Total	1½	3	1½	1½	-	2½	2	3	-		13½			
Sum of opponents' grades	336	473	524	475	-	416	487	502	-	based on grades at start of the season without 100 as fixed minimum				
Sum of Cavaliers grades	364	474	527	468	-	401	476	519	-					