

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – December 2020

### Chairman's Chatter

The hardest task for the club chairman is to record the death of one of our members. Sadly, such is the case after the shock news of the passing of Steve Wozniak in November. When he excused himself from the online Masterclass sessions a few weeks earlier, we had an inkling that something was amiss but matters were obviously more serious than we suspected.

Steve entered the club records in season 2011-12 and was always one of the club's quieter members. This reserve possibly meant his progress went unnoticed and it is only in retrospect that we can see how the occasional half point in the early years developed into solid performances in the club championship and valuable contributions to the Patriots 550 team.

I recognised him as a dogged competitor as the following game fragment will show.

**S Wozniak v P Hanks**  
New England Club Ladder, 19.09.2012



As Black, with pressure against the pawn on e4 and the imminent advance d6-d5, I was confident about my prospects. Underestimating Steve, however, made me overlook a vulnerable alignment.

**16 Bb6 Rxb6 17 axb6 Qxb6**

But worse was to come...

**18 Qe2 Bb7 19 Ra2 Rd7 20 Bc4 a5 21 Rfa1 Bd8 22 Na4 Qd4 23 Rd1 Qxe4 24 Qxe4 Nxe4 25 f3 Nf6 26 Bd3 Kf8 27 Bf5**

I had been pinning my hopes on the counterplay afforded by my mobile pawns but if I moved my rook and allowed 28 Rxd6, my strategy would be in tatters.

**27 ... Ke7 28 Bxd7 Nxd7 29 Ra3 d5 30 Rad3 Ba6 31 R3d2 f5 32 b3 Ke6 33 c4 d4 34 Re1 Bh4 35 Ree2 c5 36 f4 e4 37 g4 h6**

By now, I was happy I was gaining the upper hand for the third time but Steve had other ideas.

**38 Nxc5+ Nxc5 39 Rxd4 Nxb3 40 gxf5+ Kxf5 41 Rdx4 Bf6 42 Kf2 Bd4+ 43 Kg3 Bxc4 44 Re1 a4**

Having been rocked by the counter-sacrifice, I seemed to have weathered the storm, established material equality and have the outside passed pawn with my pieces supporting its advance. Surely, a winning advantage but Steve will just not lie down and surrender.

**45 Re8 Nc5 46 R1e5+ Kf6 47 Rf8+ Bf7 48 Re1 a3 49 Rd8 Bb2 50 Rd6+ Ne6 51 Ra6 Kf5 52 Ra5+ Kg6 53 Ra6 Kf5 1/2-1/2**

I believe chess games reflect the personality of the players. Steve certainly displayed his toughness as a fighter but always in the spirit of friendly competition. He leaves a legacy as a kind friend in both personal and sporting terms which for his club mates, will remain as a fond memory. Rest in peace.

*Paul Hanks*

### Puzzle Problem

The British Chess Problem Society offers some training advice for solving mate-in-two problems (see [http://www.theproblemist.org/beginner.pl?type=b\\_m2](http://www.theproblemist.org/beginner.pl?type=b_m2)), Try this starter puzzle for beginners before viewing the website. White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

Position : 8/8/1K6/8/3kNR2/2N5/1B2B3/8 (Kunos 1937)

1 Bc4 Ke5 2 Ne2# [1 ... Ke3 2 Nd5#; 1 ... Kxc4 2 Nc5#]

## Result Round-up

Online tournaments : November/December 2020

Player	Nov		Dec			Total	Tie break
	4th	18th	2nd	9th	16th		
P Walker	3	2					
R Ilett	1½	2					
P Hanks	2	1					
P Spencer	-	3					-
S Walker	1	-					-
C Russell	1½	1					
M Tarabad	1	0					
P Weinberger	2	-					-

### New England World Cup

Final			
P Hanks	1	0	P Spencer

### Online Club Championship

Round 1			
P Hanks	0	1	P Walker
J Sadler = Rd 2 (1)	P	P	P Turp

Round 2			
P Turp	P	P	E Knox (0)
P Walker (1)	1	0	M Tarabad (0)
R Taylor (½)	P	P	P Hanks (0)

Round 3			
P Walker(2)			P Spencer (2)
C Russell (½)			J Sadler (1+P)
E Knox (0+P)			R Taylor (½+P)
M Tarabad (0)			P Turp (2P)

Round 4			
P Hanks (0+P)			M Tarabad (0)
J Sadler (1+P)			P Walker(2)
P Spencer (2)			R Taylor (½+P)
C Russell (½)			E Knox (0+P)
P Turp (2P)			P Hanks (0+P)
Deadline : 31 <sup>st</sup> January		Next draw : 1 <sup>st</sup> February	

### Iceni League

Bury St Edmunds	10	New England	4
"Thebigsqueeze"	11	P Walker	00
"tsunamijon"	01	R Ilett	10
"mancavemayhem"	11	P Spencer	00
"iblunder2"	01	E Knox	10
"Will853"	½1	P Weinberger	½0
"SuffolkPunch"	10	M Tarabad	01
"TheViper00"	1½	S Walker	0½

Woodbridge	6	New England	8
"HannibalSchlechter"	11	P Walker	00
"Zarquon0"	0½	R Ilett	1½
"tombotastic"	01	P Hanks	10
"LordGaffersMBE"	10	P Spencer	01
"dan968"	10	E Knox	01
"OrangeZ10"	½0	M Tarabad	½1
"TanFifthJudo"	00	S Walker	11

New England	1½	Suffolk Warriors	10½
R Ilett	00	"PinkLion31"	11
P Spencer	00	"SilasPeck"	11
E Knox	00	"WTheDog"	11
P Weinberger	½0	"Flasco69"	½1
M Tarabad	00	"BobWix01"	11
S Walker	½½	"Angus13"	½½

### Diary Dates

22<sup>nd</sup> December Club Xmas Special starting at 8pm via Zoom. Please expect it to last for 60-90 minutes for chat in a fun chess setting. Here are your instructions :-

- 1 Buy mince pies
- 2 Fill a glass
- 3 Click on the hyperlink circulated in the recent email.
- 4 Eat mince pies and drain glass responsibly. Repeat...

18<sup>th</sup> December - British Online Chess Championship on chess.com. A qualification week will precede finals week. Sections at various time controls will be staged for U1400, U1700, U2000, Open and Senior groupings. Fees are £15 for one competition or £25 for all events. For more information, see <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/britis-h-online-chess-championships/>

December-January EACU team championship. Games start 7-30pm with a time limit

of 45 minutes + 15 seconds/move.  
The schedule is :

Open Wednesday 16/12, 6 & 20/1  
U1800 Tuesday 15/12, 5 & 19/1  
U1600 Wednesdays 16/12, 6 & 20/1  
U1400 Tuesdays 15/12, 5 & 19/1

More details can be found at :

<https://www.ecforum.org.uk/viewtopic.php?t=11306&p=256584>

Please look out for emails organising our club participation (if any).

## Match of the Month

"Hey! That was fun!"

Unlike the hush of the real-life playing arena, the chat line of chess.com lets you vent your emotions immediately after the game. In this case, unusually, both players had the same reaction.

### P Hanks v P Spencer

Live Chess Chess.com, 28.10.2020

1 e4 c5  
2 f4 d6

An offbeat idea to counter the Grand Prix Attack against the Sicilian Defence is 2 ... e5 with typical tactics following in the case of 3 fxe5 Qh4+.

3 Nf3 Nc6  
4 Bc4 e6  
5 0-0 Nf6  
6 Re1

Both sides have played solid, developing moves; pieces have gone to the obvious squares and the move order is not too critical. Here, however, 6 Nc3 is rated significantly better, presumably the increased control of d5 will deter Black's expansion there.

6 ... Be7  
7 d4 d5

Given the opportunity, I decided to make what is normally an equalising move. I'm aware in the Sicilian d6-d5 is a move that theory wants you to try and play. So here I played it as soon as I could.

The thematic alternative is 7 ... Nxe4 when 8 Rxe4 d5 gives me an impressive centre but 8 d5 exd5 9 Qxd5 must be considered. Recapture can be deferred with 9 ... Be6 10 Qxe4 d5 when 11 Bxd5 Qxd5 12 Nc3 leaves me with a slight lead in development.

8 exd5 exd5  
9 Bb5 Qb6

b6 looked like a nice square for my queen, threatening the bishop and hoping the centre will open up. However, 9 ... 0-0 is recommended by post-mortem computer analysis. Does Fritz realise the game has a 15-minute time control which rewards the initiative over analytical purity?

10 Qe2

The position has suddenly sharpened. White threatens immediate checkmate with 11 Qxe7# whereas I am aiming to overwhelm the d4 square with

the latent threat of discovered check. A period of arm-wrestling in the centre will decide who gets their way.

10 ... Ne4

We are entering a phase of virtually forced moves. 10 ... Qc7 concedes both a tempo and my counterplay whereas 10 ... 0-0 loses a piece to 11 Bxc6 bxc6 12 Qxe7. Closing the file with 10 ... Be6 is only temporary if White continues 11 f5 cxd4 12 Kh1. The text move gets me a nice square for my knight which can also be defended again if need be.

11 Nc3 Be6

With two pieces pinned, how else do I protect d5?



12 Nxd5?

Strictly, White gives away any advantage with this move ...but that does not make it any more comfortable for me! I am sitting with my king stranded on an open e file with a queen and rook bearing down. 12 f5 would have been a good choice but the computer prefers 12 Bxc6+ due to the following variations :

- My position looks uncoordinated after 12 ... bxc6 13 Nxe4 dxe4 14 Qxe4 g6.
- If 12 ... Qxc6 13 Ne5,
  - I can swap queens with 13 ... Qa6 14 Qxa6 bxa6 but it is still a struggle against White's piece activity after 15 f5 Bxf5 16 Nxd5 Bd6 (16 ... 0-0 17 Nxe7+; 16 ... Rc8 17 Nxe7 Kxe7 18 g4 Bg6 19 Nxc6+) 17 Bf4
  - 13 ... Nxc3 14 bxc3 allows me a range of queen move but none is quite sufficient
    - 14 ... Qa6 15 Qxa6 bxa6 16 Nc6 Bf6 17 f5
    - 14 ... Qa4 15 Nxf7 0-0 16 Nh6+ gxh6 17 Qxe6+ Rf7 18 Re3

- 14 ... Qc7 15 f5 Bxf5 16 Bf4 Qd8 17 Qb5+ regaining the pawn on b7 with enormous pressure.

**12 ... Bxd5**

Again forced!

**13 c4 cxd4**  
**14 Qd3?**

After the superior 14 Qf1, I should still have problems to solve. I cannot save the extra piece but I am free to return it in a number of ways, perhaps getting my king safe with 14 ... 0-0-0 is best. And then 15 cxd5 d3+ (15 ... f5 still requires careful foresight 16 Qc4 d3+ 17 Be3 Bc5) 16 Be3 Qxb5 17 dxc6 Qd5 (not 17 ... Qxc6?? 18 Rac1 or 17 ... bxc6 18 Nd4 Qa6 19 Qf3 [19 Nxc6 Qxc6 20 Rac1 Bc5]).

**14 ... Nc5**  
**15 Qe2**

Draw by repetition?

**15 ... Ne6?**

My first real choice for six moves is substandard. Fritz is happy with either the anticipated 15 ... Be4 returning the piece after 16 b4 f5 17 bxc5 Bxc5 or 15 ... Be6 16 f5 d3 17 Qf2 Bxf5 but here, there are many complicating options for White to consider a) 18 Rxe7+ Kxe7 19 Be3 Ne4 b) 18 Re5 or c) 18 Be3 0-0 (18 ... 0-0-0). Not ideal as rapidplay for Black.

I think here I was too eager to attack by getting the knight out of the way for the discovered check. I should of been a lot calmer than I had been up until now – I have allowed White's pawn to become troublesome.

**16 cxd5 d3+**

Back to forced moves... Now I have to save a piece.

**17 Qf2 Qxb5**  
**18 dxe6**

What's the difference between the knights? Fritz favours 18 dxc6 because 18 ... Qxc6 may look automatic but I shall run into trouble if I continue to make the obvious replies to 19 f5 Nc5 (19 ... Nc7! 20 Bg5 Nd5) 20 Bg5 f6 21 Rac1 b6 (21 ... fxg5 22 Rxc5 Qb6 23 Re6 and White is swarming over Black) 22 Be3 Qd7 23 Rxc5 bxc5 24 Bxc5.

Instead 18 ... bxc6 19 Re5 Bc5 20 Be3 Bxe3 21 Qxe3 Qxb2 22 Rxe6+ fxe6 23 Qxe6+ leads to a perpetual check due to my exposed king.

**18 ... fxe6**  
**19 Rxe6 0-0-0**

19 ... 0-0 is safer. I didn't want White to get the upper hand and was keen to get on with my own attack rather than worry about my own king's safety. It is much easier to play with the initiative here and sooner or later, I will have to waste a move with Kb8.

**20 Rxe7**

20 Be3 Bf6 is a more balanced and sedate continuation. White was determined to maintain momentum as time became short.

**20 ... Nxe7**

**21 Qxa7 d2**

OK. 21 ... Rhe8 would bring my final piece into play with a clear plus but I also wanted the initiative in a time scramble.

**22 Bxd2 Rxd2**

Zwischenzugs like 22 .. Nc6 or 22 ... Qxb2 are not easy to find and assess in the heat of battle.

**23 Nxd2 Qxb2**  
**24 Nb3**

In retrospect, 24 Rb1 (which I had missed) was playable because 24 ... Qxd2 25 Qa8+ Kd7 (25 ... Kc7 26 Rxb7+ mates with a sample variation being 26 ... Kd6 27 Qa3+ Kc6 28 Qa6+ Kc5 29 c7+ Kd4 30 Qc4+ Ke3 31 Rxe7#) 26 Qxh8.

We were snatching at any legal move by now but I knew I had problems. I realised I can block against the checks 25 Rc1 or 25 Qc5 and if at any time White throws his knight forward, my queen defends the pawn on b7 so 24 ... g6 looked good enough.

**24 ... g6**  
**25 Qa8+ Kc7**

Only at this point did White see the point of my 24<sup>th</sup> move and suddenly realised the rook is protected!

**26 Qa5+ Kb8**

Now White realises 27 Qe5+ does not win the knight!

**27 Rc1 Nc6**  
**28 Qb6 Ka8**  
**29 Rxc6 1/2-1/2**

There was no time to see how the white rook could reach the seventh rank and then exploit it e.g. 29 Rd1. The correct way forward was 29 h3 Rd8 (29 ... Qxa2? 30 Ra1) 30 Re1 Qc3 31 Re4 Qg3 but it takes a computer to be confident about which side to prefer.

After two recent oversights, White decided neither side deserved to lose and went for a perpetual check. After 29 ... bxc6 30 Qxc6 Kb8, White can take it with 31 Qb6+ etc or play 31 Nc5 when it is too dangerous for me to do other than 31 ... Qc1+ with a perpetual check of my own!

I felt when playing the game that I started off well with a good centre but a vulnerable king. White then found some inventive moves to weather a bit of a storm and the game started slipping away from me, so a draw seemed like a fair result in a wild game.

Maybe not great chess ... but it was fun!

*Paul Spencer*