

New Englander

Chess Club Update – April 2021

Chairman's Chatter

The anniversary of our last club evening has now passed but undaunted by the lockdown restrictions, we have remained active. Just look at the number of games played this last month! By the time you read this, we shall be beyond the second step of the exit strategy and that must give us all hope.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Lincoln 1988)

Position : 8/8/B3pp1B/2Q5/4k3/7K/8/8

1 Qd6 Kf5 2 Bd3# [1 ... Kf3 2.Qf4#; 1 ... e5 2 Qd3#; 1 ... f5 2 Bb7#]

Result Round-up

Iceni League

Final Standings				
	U1700		U1450	
1	Linton Pandas	5	Dons B	5
2	Wymondham A	4½	St Johns B	4
3	Warriors A	3½	Linton Zebras	4
4	Aylsham	3	Norwich Juniors	3
5	Woodbridge	2½	New England B	2
6	Stowmarket	2	Wymondham B	2
7	New England A	½	Broadland C	1

Wymondham A	8	NE U1700	2
"VadertjeDrees"	1½	P Walker	0½
"threshy"	0½	P Spencer	1½
"Neil_Hickman"	11	P Weinberger	00
"spookyrooky64"	11	M Tarabad	00
"WTJC"	11	S Walker	00

NE U1700	4	Stowmarket	4
P Walker	01	"Stephen Lewis 3"	10
R Ilett	11	"Endingquasar"	00
P Hanks	00	"GreenDhess"	11
S Walker	½½	"Tarvos31"	½½

Aylsham	6½	NE U1700	5½
"raddan87"	11	R Ilett	00
"matt1979"	00	P Spencer	11
"johnwickham"	11	E Knox	00
"plascornel"	11	P Weinberger	00
"Tubbs56"	00	M Tarabad	11
"NickP_123"	0½	S Walker	1½

NE U1450	6	Wymondham B	4
P Spencer	10	"ALazyMonkey99"	01
P Weinberger	11	"bodo56"	00
M Tarabad	10	"futurefern"	01
S Walker	0½	"MThresh"	1½
J Parker	½½	"DavidMc98"	½0

Linton Zebras	7	NE U1450	3
"vikram_bannerjee"	00	P Spencer	11
"Michos6"	11	J Jennings	00
"baddaz2021"	10	M Tarabad	01
"Shivumgardenshah"	11	J Parker	00
"BenBro_1324"	11	S Walker	00

NE U1450	6½	St Johns B	3½
P Walker	½½	"claytog"	½0
P Weinberger	00	"edwardtking"	11
M Tarabad	11	"jamestherookster"	00
S Walker	01	"canaryman37"	10
J Jennings	11	"benpayne043"	00

Online tournaments : Spring 2021

Player	January-March				Total	Tie break
	6 th Jan	20 th Jan	10 th Feb	31 st Mar		
P Walker	3	2	3½	3½	10	2
P Hanks	-	3	2	2½	7½	-
R Ilett	-	-	3½	3	6½	-
M Tarabad	1	0	1	2	4	0
S Walker	1	-	1½	1	3½	-
C Russell	1	-	-	2	3	-
P Spencer	-	1	-	1	2	-
J Jennings	-	-	-	1	1	-

Online Club Championship

Round 1			
J Sadler = Rd 2 (1)	P	P	P Turp
Round 2			
P Turp	P	P	E Knox (0)
R Taylor (½)	P	P	P Hanks (0)
Round 3			
P Walker(2)			P Spencer (2)
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)
P Turp (2P)			P Hanks (0+P)

Match of the Month

EUREKA!!.....

Last month, the *Match of the Month* article related how a challenge match was played between “a computer” and the workforce of the Perkins Engines Company. As the chess club had no such resource, the role of the computer fell to the club champion who effectively played out a correspondence game on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, it seemed that the score of the game was lost in the mists of time and all that remained of the episode were the moves from game on which the pre-arranged opening was modelled.

Not so! The full game has come to light by a strange route. The logistics of the match were undertaken by the club chairman Norman Wedley who also held similar responsibility in the Hunts and Peterborough County Chess Association. In the latter position, he oversaw the merger to form the Cambridgeshire County Chess Association and served many years before standing down in 2018. Apparently, on his retirement, he was presented with the Perkins Chess

Club Scrap Book and as for the Computer Challenge, “it’s the last item that I put in it before leaving Perkins so long ago!” he writes.

What new facts do the cuttings from the in-house *Echo* magazine reveal? Mostly, that the game had a lot to live up to. In its precursor played in the Sheffield University championship, White had 4 out of 5 whereas Black had scored a perfect 5 and only a win would give White a tie for the honours.

The sequel ran from 14th July 1988 until the following February and still has interest today. Firstly, a comparison of White’s moves with those from current software will allow us to see what a real computer thinks of the imposter. Possibly, the converse may be less embarrassing. Generally, it is found that decisions derived by a common majority among a population are superior to individual judgement. In this case, can we expect Black’s approach derived from many inputs to track optimum play more closely?

“A computer” v Perkins Engines

Peterborough 1988-9

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nbd7 6 Bg5 h6 7 Bh4 g6 8 f4 Bg7 9 Bc4 Qb6 10 Qe2

The game started here.

10 ... Qxb2 11 0-0 Qxc3 12 Nb5 Qa5 13 e5 0-0

This was the new move that varied from the known territory of the earlier game Hanks v Higgle, Sheffield 1977 which appeared in the March 2021 newsletter :-

13 ... dxe5 14 fxe5 0-0 15 exf6 Bxf6 16 Bxf6 exf6 (16 ... Nxf6 17 Qxe7) 17 Qe7 Ne5 18 Nc7 Rb8 19 Bb3 Nc6 20 Qxf6 Qxc7 21 Qxg6+ Kh8 22 Qxh6+ Kg8 23 Qg5+ Kh8 24 Rf6 Bf5 25 Qxf5 Ne5 26 Rh6+ 1-0. “Similar but oh, how different!” was the summary penned for the concluding magazine article.

14 exf6 Bxf6

14 ... Nxf6 15 Qxe7 d5 shows that Black has now developed sufficiently and need not fear White’s initiative. It may be a superior way to proceed but instead, Black is happy to consolidate with an extra pawn.

15 Bxf6

With the rook on a1 en prise, White has no option but to exchange pieces.

15 ... Nxf6

In the stem game (without the d and f pawns), 15 ... exf6 was the choice but holding the extra material came at the cost of retarded piece development and an ugly pawn structure. Here, there is an obstruction of f4 and so there is no white rook bearing down on f6 or f7.

16 Qxe7 Qb6+
17 Kh1 d5
18 Nc7 dxc4

How dare they! I did not expect a bunch of casual players to give up the exchange. After 18 ... Rb8 19 Bxd5,

- Swapping again with 19 ... Nxd5 could lead Black into danger e.g. 20 Nxd5

- 20 ... Qd4 21 Qd6
- 20 ... Qe6 is a better subvariation but 21 Qc5 with threats of 22 Qxa7 or 22 Qd4 and 23 Nf6+ gives White an edge after 21 ... Qa6 22 Ne7+ Kh7 (22 ... Kg7 23 Qe5+ and 24 Qxb8) 23 Nc6

- 19 ... Bd7 is roughly level and I would have been content to escape with my temporary sacrifice.

19	Nxa8	Qc6
20	Nc7	Bh3
21	Rf3	

Alternatives are no improvement e.g. 21 Rf2 Ne4 when protection of the g2 square is illusory 22 Re2 Bxg2+ 23 Rxc2 (23 Kxc2 Nc3+) 23 ... Nf2+ 24 Kg1 Nh3+ 25 Kh1 Nxf4.

21	...	Bg4
22	Rg3	

22 Ra3 is first choice on Fritz but it looks strange to a human. It tries to hide the rook from attack but 22 ... c3 cuts it off from the kingside. The a pawn is taboo 23 Rxa7 Bh3

- 24 Qe2 Qxc7 25 gxh3 Qb6 26 Ra3 (26 Ra4 Qc6+) 26 ... Qb2 with a humorous fork
- 24 Rg1 Ne4 25 Qh4 Bf5 and the knight cannot be moved or supported.

23 Rb3 may hold but options with 23 ... Bh3 are unpleasant.

22	...	Rc8
23	Nb5	Re8
24	Qb4	

The first move that qualifies as an error. White underestimates Black's kingside attack and take his queen away from the centre of the action. 24 Qd6 looks timid after the earlier boldness but White should discern that the tide is starting to flow against him and it is time to seek simplification. After 24 ... Ne4 25 Qxc6 Nxc3+ 26 hxg3 bxc6 27 Nxa7 c5 28 Nb5 (otherwise, the knight might be trapped by Bg4-d7) 28 ... Re2, the endgame will be very difficult for White.

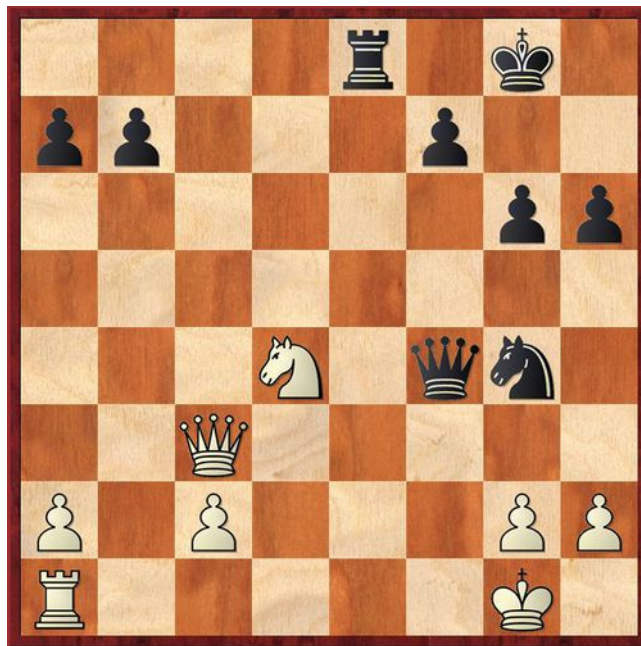
24	...	Ne4
25	Rxg4	

If 25 Nd4 Nxc3+ 26 hxg3 Qd5, ironically, Black now has the superior piece co-ordination. I could find no way to save the rook. 25 Ra3 Nf2+ 26 Kg1 Re2 brings a range of horrible threats to the white king. Perhaps, the most stylish is 27 Rg3 Nh3+ 28 Kh1 Qxc2+ 29 Rxc2 Bf3 when checkmate on g2 cannot be avoided.

25	...	Nf2+
26	Kg1	Nxc3
27	Nd4	Qe4

If White does not respond, the text moves threatens 28 ... Qe3+ with a standard Philidor mating pattern (29 Kh1 Nf2+ 30 Kg1 Nh3+ 31 Kh1 [31 Kf1 Qf2#] 30 ... Qg1+ 32 Rxc2 Nf2#). However, the more obscure move 27 ... Qd5 is slightly better because it leaves the e file open for a decisive penetration by 28 Qd2 Re2 29 Qxe2 Qxd4+.

28	Qd2	c3
29	Qxc3	Qxf4



It was around this point that I was instructed to bring the game to an end since Norman had handed in his resignation and would leave the Company within a few weeks/moves. White is unlikely to survive long but how do I make it look convincing and hopefully, pretty? Here is what I concocted...

30	Nf3	Re3
31	Qc8+	Kh7
32	Rf1	

White threatens 33 Ng5+ Qxg5 34 Rxf7#. This game is going to end one way or the other!

32	...	Rxf3!	0-1
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White resigned as mate is now forced. The threats are 33 ... Rxf1# and 31 ... Qxh2#. If 33 g3 Rxc3+ 34 hxg3 Qxc3+ and 35 ... Qh2# or 33 Rxf3 Qd4+ 34 Kh1 (34 Kf1 Qd1#; 34 Rf2 Qxf2+ etc) 34 ... Qd1+.

Despite losing, I was satisfied by this game. It contained plenty of activity of the sort enjoyed by a general audience and it finished with a flourish. The standard of play was high on the whole. Fritz's verdict identifies White's 24th move as the serious inaccuracy with the 25th being poor in an already difficult position. On the other hand, Black chose the optimum move or an equivalent on every turn except for the 14th and 27th moves when the other candidates were still strong. The exchange sacrifice was most impressive and the manoeuvre Rf8-c8-e8 was not the plan of light-hearted dabblers. Was I playing as a computer or against a computer?