

New Englander

Chess Club Update – June 2021

Chairman's Chatter

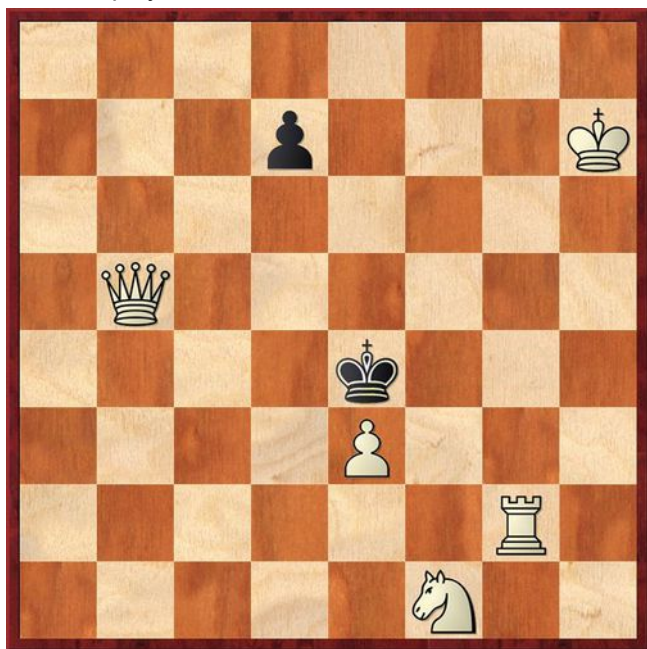
Chess players are used to coping with Indian variants but instead of fianchettoes, we are now dealing with the possibility of a third pandemic wave. This uncertainty is complicating our search for a replacement venue with many options closing to us either due to their unwillingness to make commitments, only operating at restricted hours until business is re-established or in many cases, ceasing to trade altogether.

Thanks to Chris's sterling work, we seem to have a potential solution. I suggest we meet to inspect the facilities during June prior to approving the re-location. Please look out for an email with further details. I look forward to meeting you then, restrictions permitting.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Tanic 1971)

Position : 7q/8/8/7B/1N1Q2R1/3N1R2/3p4/3k1K2

1 Rf5 overloads the black queen which can no longer cover both h5 and a1 e.g. **1 ... Qxd4 2 Rxd4#** [1 ... Qxh5/h6/h7 2 Qa1#; 1 ... Qe5 2 Re4#; 1 ... Qg7 2 Rxg7/g6/g5# etc]

Website to Watch

The Grand Tour Chess restarts from 3rd to 15th June with the Classic Chess tournament in Bucharest. It follows this later in the month with Rapid and Blitz events in Paris from 16th to 23rd. For details, please see <https://grandchesstour.org>.

Diary Dates

7th July New England Chess Club AGM
14th July County Association AGM

Please look out for email notification of times and online joining instructions.

Result Round-up

Iceni League

Norfolk Nomads	5	NE U1700	3
"Housing Crisis"	½1	R Ilett	½0
"silentassassin1980"	11	P Spencer	00
"combie"	10	P Hanks	01
"Castle-19"	0½	M Tarabad	1½

Suffolk Warriors	6	NE U1700	2
"SilasPeck"	11	R Ilett	00
"PotatoeTheCat"	½½	P Spencer	½½
"ortolan5"	11	P Hanks	00
"TicklyTim"	01	E Knox	10

Broadland C	8d	NE U1350	0d
NE U1350	3	Wymondham B	7
P Weinberger	01	"spookyrooky64"	10
M Tarabad	10	"bricktone"	01
J Jennings	10	"futurefen"	01
S Walker	00	"bodo56"	11
J Parker	00	"WTJC"	11

St Johns B	3	NE U1350	3
"claytog"	01	P Spencer	10
"Jamestherookster"	01	M Tarabad	10
"canaryman37"	½½	S Walker	½½

Online Club Championship

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

Round 4			
P Hanks = Rd 3 (0+P)			M Tarabad (0+P)
J Sadler (1+P)			P Walker(2+P)
P Spencer (2+P)			R Taylor (1½+P)
P Turp (½+2P)			P Hanks (0+2P)

Online tournaments : May/June 2021

Player	May	June				Total	Tie break
	26th	2nd	9th	16th	23rd		
P Walker	-						-
R Ilett	2½						
P Hanks	1						
R Taylor	2						
C Russell	2½						
M Tarabad	0						
J Jennings	1						
S Walker	-						-

Match of the Month

Ed Knox v Robert K Taylor

New England Championship; 21.04.2021

It seems more usual to show attacking games in which the defender is outmanoeuvred than survival games where the defence triumphs. This game redresses that balance, as I think it is a good example of the latter.

1	d4	e6
2	Bf4	c5
3	e3	Nf6
4	Nf3	

My move order would have allowed transposition into the French Defence by 2 e4. A more normal way to arrive at the London System precludes this option by 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bf4 c5 4 e3 as played in Grischuk v Karjakin, Berlin 2015. That game continued 4 ... Nc6 but the provocative 4 ... Qb6 has also been tried (David v Parligras, Romania 2015).

4	...	Be7
5	h3	

This slow move was presumably played to preserve the bishop on f4 against exchange by Nf6-h5.

5	...	Nc6
6	Nbd2	cxd4
7	Nxd4	a6

Active development by 7 ... 0-0 was possible but I return the compliment by continuing solidly. We are indulging in a little shadow boxing here. Having refrained from the c2-c4 push which occurs in most queen's pawn openings, White wishes instead to occupy the square with his light-squared bishop. By preparing b7-b5, I am aiming to contest his plan.

8	a4	
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The sparring continues ... little knowing how important it could become 18 moves later...

8	...	0-0
9	c3	Nd5
10	Bh2	

I wasn't too happy with how the opening had gone, but my next move does not improve Black's prospects.

10	...	f5
11	Bc4	Nc7

11 ... f4? is aggressive (e.g. 12 Bxd5 fxe3 etc) but White gets a simple advantage from 12 e4 Nb6 13 Be2 Nxd4 14 cxd4.

12	0-0	d5
13	Bb3	Bf6
14	Nxc6	bxc6
15	Nf3	a5
16	Ne5	Ba6
17	Re1	Bb7

"Good", I thought, "there's that slight weakness now on f2." Yet, being honest, Black's pieces are not well-positioned to do anything other than wait.

18	Nd3	
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It seems strange to retreat the most advanced piece but it is hard to find a way to breach Black's pawn barrier. One attempt by 18 c4 Na6 19 Rc1 Qe7 20 Qe2 with vague threats to c6, c7 and a6 allows to me to become active on the queenside with 20 ... Qb4 21 Bc2 Nc5.

18	...	Na6
19	Be5	Qe7

I was surprised that Ed now exchanged bishops (he has other options e.g. 19 ... Bc2, but Fritz rates them as equivalent.)

20	Bxf6	gxf6!?
21	Kh1	Kh8
22	Qh5	Rad8
23	Nf4	

I mustn't fall for one move threats, so ..

23	...	Rg8
24	Qh4	Nc5

Blocking my own pawn when 24 ... c5 was better e.g. 25 Bc2 c4 with a space advantage and potentially mobile pawns.

25	Bc2	Nd7
26	g4?	

Good positionally, but slightly double-edged, is 26 b4. Having shifted the focus of the play to the kingside, White can strike out on the other flank and create a passed pawn – a consequence of the queenside probing in the opening. 26 ... axb4 27 cxb4 Ne5 28 Bd3 d4 leads to an unclear position.

In the game, my king has only a few defenders but White has even greater problems mustering his forces. The text move attempts in desperation to open lines.

26	...	e5?
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Again, 26 ... c5! raising the spectre of a discovered check and if 27 Kh2 or 27 Kg1, my knight can be centralised with tempo by 27 ... Ne5 due to the fork on f3.

27 Bxf5?

There was a decent, playable alternative to giving up the knight giving chances to both sides. 27 Nh5! fxc4 28 Bf5 (best as White must realise Black can blockade after the natural 28 hxg4 e4 29 Rg1 Rg5 before taking over the initiative with 30 ... Rdg8) 28 ... Rg5 29 hxg4 e4 30 Nf4 Ne5! is unclear.

We were heading for mutual time shortage and the sacrifice gives Black problems to solve. Sadly for White, it doesn't work.

27	...	exf4
28	exf4	Qg7
29	Re6	Rdf8

The strongest riposte may be 29 ... Nf8! 30 Rxf6 Qe7. In return for the extra pawn, this either immobilises White or forces a queen swap because the obvious attack rebounds after 31 g5 d4 32 g6 c4+ 33 Kh2 Nxc6 when White is in dire trouble down the g file and due to the pin on f6 (34 Bxc6 Rxc6). Instead, 31 Kh2 Rg7 and the d pawn will be hard to cope with.

30 Rae1



White seems to have made impressive progress but it is only visual. For minimal material investment,

- he has doubled rooks on the open file (but penetration to the 7th rank is ineffective due to Rf8-f7)
- there is a weakness on f6 to target (but it is well defended and White cannot increase pressure there without the knight)
- checkmate is possible on h7 (but that is easy to protect horizontally)
- the kingside pawns have advanced (but the break g4-g5 has been covered).

30	...	Rf7
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31 Re8!

Ed has made the most of his active pieces, but after my next move it turns out that White cannot make further threats.

31	...	Nf8!
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There were a few simple bear traps to avoid such as 31 ... Rxe8 32 Rxe8+ Rf8 33 Bxd7 or 31 ... Rff8 32 Bxd7 Qxd7 33 R1e7.

32 g5?

Making no headway on the kingside, White is probably forced into switching to 32 b4 but my initial impression was he is lost after this, anyway. I expected that White, being a piece behind, could not proceed calmly with 32 b4 axb4 33 cxb4 Ng6 34 Bxc6! Qxc6 35 f5 Qg7 which seemed pretty grim.

I really, really gave this endgame some post-mortem 'treatment' and discovered that Black is hard pressed to actually win it! With the material advantage of minor piece for two pawns, Black's position deserves to be a technical win but although my structure is solid, it is also fairly static. White, on the other hand, should not hope for more than a draw and can use his activity to stifle Black's attempts to untangle.

We can assume there is no decisive tactical resource for either side – otherwise the software would be on to it like the proverbial rat up a drainpipe. Rather, every continuation leads to several variations which the computer's evaluation separates by only hundredths of a pawn. Unless a logical and consistent plan can be formulated to progressively accumulate these small differences, even a computer will struggle. Thinking long term then, after 32 b4 axb4 33 cxb4, we need some general principles to guide a tranquil, Petrosian-like approach in order for the extra piece to (slowly) tell :-

- In the passed a pawn, White has a trump card for the ending. If all the pieces are exchanged, I would prefer to be left with a bishop to restrain the queenside
- White's grip on the position stems in part from the mutual protection of his rooks. This can be eliminated by swapping at least one pair
- A policy of exchanging pieces normally helps the less mobile player.

A sample variation in which White is overly eager to avoid captures might be 33 ... Ng6 34 Qg3 Rxe8 35 Rxe8+ Rf8 36 Re1 d4 37 Kg1 Bc8 38 Bd3 f5 39 g5 Qc7 which is fine for me. So White is virtually forced into Bf5xc6 at some point leading to the aforementioned line 34 Bxc6 Qxc6 35 f5 Qg7. It looks as though I am succeeding with my strategy but 36 Qb3 Rxe8 37 Rxe8+ Rf8 runs into 38 Qb8 when my prospects have nose-dived e.g. 38 ... Rxe8 (38 ... Kg8 39 Rxf8 Qxf8 40 Qxb7) 39 Qxe8+ Qg8 40 Qe7 and the attack on b7 means the f pawn is lost.

I can create a luft for my king with 36 ... h6 but White retains the option of replacing the connected rooks with threats on the 8th rank i.e. 37 Qb8 Rxe8 38 Rxe8+ Kh7 39 Kh2. It might seem I can penetrate

dangerously with 39 ... Re7 40 Rd8 (40 Rxe7 Qxe7 is the endgame freedom of my dreams) Re1 but 42 Qd6 annoyingly brings my rook back into the fold 42 ... Re7.

I think it doubtful that White's survival from the initial position can be proved - just as the win for Black cannot be demonstrated either. I feel White would go downhill quite soon if he were too timid but if you can spot a methodical improvement for me in any of the above do let me know.

32	...	fxg5
33	fxg5	Rxf5
34	R1e7	Rf7
35	Rxf7	Qxf7
36	Qd4+	Rg7

Now, it is my turn to show which king really is exposed.

37	Re3	c5	
38	Qxc5	d4+	0-1

Robert Taylor

Eye Opener

Some good things have come out of our year of seclusion during the pandemic. My University friend Bob Taylor has been the prime mover in tracking down our teammates from that era and sparking renewed contact. One outcome has been the formation of an informal club on lichess.com under the banner of Sheffield League Old Boys or otherwise, SLOBs – how appropriate!

A roll call would include grandmasters Tony Miles (sadly deceased) and Tony Kosten, international master Peter Large and British Under-18 champion Jonathan Kinlay. In the game below, another former comrade-at-arms, FIDE master Richard Britton, has continued to play at the highest level in domestic competitions but in this case, one step in the wrong direction against GM opposition proves his undoing.

Keith Arkell (2416) v Richard L Britton (2221)
16th 4NCL Congress Coventry, 04.11.2017

1	d4	Nf6
2	Nf3	g6
3	c4	Bg7
4	Nc3	0-0
5	g3	d6
6	Bg2	

Israeli grandmaster Ilya Smirin has written a whole book featuring his games as Black with the King's Indian Defence Warfare! In very few does White venture a kingside fianchetto but having once reached this position, he comments "... Black can choose from three main different plans : 6 ... Nbd7 and (later) ... e7-e5, 6 ... c5 and 6 ... c6. I have played all of them ... but in the last few years I have switched almost exclusively to 6 ... Nc6."

6	...	Nbd7
7	0-0	e5
8	e4	

The game is still following a major theoretical variation and at this point, Black has tried 8 ... a6, 8 ... exd4 and 8 ... Re8.

8	...	c6
9	h3	Re8
10	Re1	exd4
11	Nxd4	a5
12	Be3	Nc5
13	Qc2	Qb6

The computer has been happy that the position has remained fairly level over the past few moves but this aggressive move seems to give the bishop on e3 an immediate impact on the game.

14	Nb3	
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White simply threatens 15 Nxc5 dxc5 16 Na4 winning a pawn.

14	...	Nfd7
15	Na4	

Where should the black queen go?



15	...	Qb4
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Trying to maintain cover for the c5 square ends in failure. Instead, Black could admit the loss of a pawn by 15 ... Qc7 15 Naxc5 Nxc5 16 Nxc5 dxc5 17 Bxc5 but then 17 ... Qe5 attacks c5 and b2.

16	Nbxc5	Nxc5
17	Bxc5	1-0

The black queen is running out of space and after the obligatory 17 ... dxc5, 18 a3 will close the trap. 18 ... Qxe1 hardly obtains adequate compensation.