

New Englander

Chess Club Update – November 2021

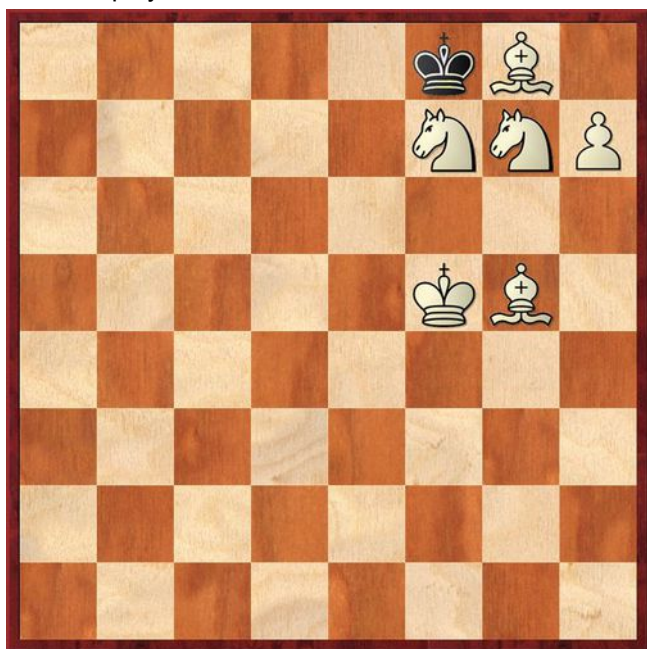
Chairman's Chatter

The season is starting to pick up speed. We have hosted matches in the league and cup competitions, played away and the championship and ladder events are in full swing. "So far, so good" you may think but sadly, independently of our sessions, one of our members has tested positive for Covid. His condition is improving and we wish him a speedy recovery. A timely reminder of the need for continued vigilance.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Hanks 2021)

Position : 2B4R/k2KN3/8/2N5/1P6/8/8/8

1 Ba6 Kb6 2 Nc8#

Website to Watch

<https://www.euroteamchess2021.eu/> is the official website for the 21st European Team Chess Championship. It runs in Slovenia from 11th to 22nd November and on average ELO rating, England are ranked 5th. Ingerrland! Ingerrland!...

For the big match, however, we have to wait until 26th November and game one of the World Championship match between Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi in Dubai. If it goes that far, a tie-break will be played on 15th December. Media rights have been acquired by the chess.com website and details can be found at <https://www.chess.com/article/view/world-chess-championship-2021>.

Diary Dates

10th November Club lightning tournament

27th/28th November Cambridgeshire Individual County Championship at Peterborough Bridge Club, Lincoln Road. Visit <http://www.cambschess.co.uk/CambsChampionships2021.pdf> for an entry form.

Result Round-up

Club Championship

Round 1			
E Knox	0	1	P Walker
Round 3			
P Hanks (0) – Rd 2	1	0	P Cooper (0)
C Russell (1)			R Jones (2)
E Knox (1)			R Ilett (2)
N Wedley (0)			P Walker (2)
J Jennings (1)			P Hanks (1)
E Smith (1)			P Spencer (1)
Match night : 3 rd November		Next draw : 1 st December	
Next round : 8 th December			

Cambridgeshire League

Warboys A	2½	New England A	2½
S Caraway	0	P Walker	1
J Beck	½	R Ilett	½
N Greenwood	1	P Hanks	0
P Baddeley	0	P Spencer	1
R Mann	1	E Knox	0

New England B	2½	Spalding	1½
P Spencer	0	M Dunkley	1
R Jones	½	P Szutkowski	½
N Wedley	1	R Coates	0
C Russell	1d	Default	0d

Fenland Trophy

New England A	4	Godmanchester	0
P Walker	1	J Wright	0
P Hanks	1	M English	0
P Spencer	1	A Rankine	0
E Knox	1	B Smith	0

Team 7000

NE Patriots	3½	Warboys WC	½
P Walker	1	B Duff	0
P Spencer	1	S Caraway	0
E Knox	½	P Baddeley	½
C Russell	1	J Beck	0

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
J Jennings	1	0	P Cooper
J Jennings	0	1	J Sadler
J Jennings	0	1	C Russell
N Wedley	½	½	J Jennings

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 27/10/21
	Month	Overall		
1	-	-	E Smith	1
2	+2	+2	J Sadler	1
3	-1	-1	P Cooper	0,0
4	+1	+1	C Russell	1
5	+1	+1	N Wedley	½
6	-3	-3	J Jennings	1,0,0,½

Competition rule summary

- Higher ranked placed player wins : no change
- Players draw : higher ranked drops one place, lower ranked advances one place
- Lower ranked player wins : Lower replaces higher, higher drops two places
- Inactive players drop 1 place/month after 3 months.

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	Team 7000	Total	TPR*
P Walker	2		1½	1	1	5½	2113
P Spencer	1		1½	1	1	4½	1693
C Russell	1	1	1		1	4	1644
R Jones	2		1½			3½	1953
E Knox	1		1	1	½	3½	1569
R Ilett	2		1			3	1840
P Hanks	1		1	1		3	1749
J Jennings	1	1				2	1333
E Smith	1	1				2	1102
J Sadler		1				1	1750
N Wedley	0		1			1	1477
P Cooper	0	0				0	724

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

If you love police dramas on the television, you will know the shady ne'er-do-well is often described as "of no fixed abode". After spearheading our league triumph in 2010-11, our honorary member Chris Ross has appeared in Northampton, London and Bedford. Now, when he pops up in Sheffield, we can draw our own conclusions...

Joking aside, his approach to chess is refreshingly different. There is less reliance in his notes on concrete variations and much more explanation of plans, positional weaknesses and structures. Chris offers commentary on a recent game of his which, after last month's article, comes a welcome return to good quality chess.

Chris Ross v Paul Cumbers Sheffield Division 1; 30.09.2021

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 Nd2 Be7

A quirky attempt to disrupt the usual move order of the Tarrasch Variation. However, if White chooses, it does not alter the outcome of the opening.

4 Ngf3 Nf6
5 e5 Nfd7
6 Bd3 c5
7 c3 Nc6
8 0-0 a5

The first main deviation from the theory. Although this move is often seen in the French Defence, 8 ... Qb6 is more frequent. Black obviously plays for space on the queenside and tries to secure the b4 square.

9 Re1

White requires a "waiting move" and so finds a useful deployment of an undeveloped piece. The e5 pawn is protected and the f1 square vacated in case the d2 knight wishes to swing to the kingside.

9 ... cxd4

Development by Black is not easy and this release of central tension seeks to alleviate the positional cramp.

10 cxd4 Qb6
11 Qa4

Defending the d4 pawn which is the base of White's central pawn structure and further restricting Black, due to the pin along the a4-e8 diagonal. Black needs to make a very critical decision which will underpin the whole game.

11 ... g5

Taking the fight to White. Positional considerations are mainly ruled out and tactics have become the aim of the game. Black is complicating the play in an attempt to justify for his position. With Black having made a this decision, White is also at a point where the choice of White's next move is key to keeping his set-up intact. In a lot of ways, White is also slightly cramped with his queenside development but his position is easier to unravel than Black's.

Interestingly, it will be the g5 pawn that finally crushes Black.

12 g4!

Long-term king safety is relatively unimportant in this game. Black has made pawn pushes on both sides of the board so he is not going to be castling any time soon. White just cannot be overrun on the kingside and takes preventative measures to hold up Black's pawn storm. Critically,

- the d4 pawn is safeguarded as the f3 knight is secured from being dislodged by g5-g4
- the g4 pawn, along with the f3 knight, cover all of the penetration squares along the h file
- also, Black's g5 pawn is left vulnerable to a discovered attack by the further development of the d2 knight.

12 ... h5
13 h3 hxg4
14 hxg4 f5

A very radical attempt to mix things up. More reserved would be 14 ... Nf8 with the idea of 15 ... Bd7 or even 15 ... Q/Bb4 with plans to ease his cramped position with exchanges. Tactics are abundant here and White has to wade his way through it all.

15 Nb3

Trying to keep things as simple as possible and defending the d4 pawn. Things could get very complicated now. Various squares and pawns are left vulnerable. This is the make or break point for Black. Does he stick or twist?

15 ... f4?

Black's losing strategy. Having gone in for complications, he had to go all in and hope that something can be salvaged from the mess. Although the text move restricts White's dark-squared bishop and shields the g5 pawn, Black's position is not secured or eased by the advance.

15 ... fxg4 has to be the most critical attempt.

- Although 16 Nh2 g3 17 Ng4 was certainly appealing,
- 16 Nxg5 is playable and 16 ... Rg8 17 Nh7 is the cunning way to save the knight. After 17 ... g3 18 f3, 18 ... Ndx5 does not work (with the d4 pawn pinned against the white king) because 19 Rxe5 when the c6 knight is equally pinned.

Lots of fun variations here to be worked out! Black had to jump in and hope for the best. With the quiet acceptance of passivity, Black's future demise is not unexpected.

16 Bd2

16 Bg6+ is not strictly necessary and may even drive the black king to a preferable square, maybe via f8 to g7. The light-squared bishop may be needed to come into b5 to protect the white queen. The pin on the a4-e8 diagonal is also maintained. If a check is not productive, then it is not necessary to take it.

16 ... Nf8

Black is very close to success in tackling his problems. 17 ... Bd7 is coming with difficulties for the white queen.

17 Kg2

An important part of White's strategy :-

- the white rooks are given access to the open h file.
- critically though, Rh8-h3 is prevented and with it, obscure but typical French tactics involving Rxf3 and Nxd4.
- the knight on f3 offered some valuable protection ruling out any resources based on Nxe5/Nxf3+
- the white king is also removed from the a7-g1 diagonal preventing tactics along there and allowing f2-f3 if ever necessary.

However, the main point of the move is to give White an extra move to improve his position, hoping that Black will offer him the chance to play his plan to free the white queen.

17 ... Bd7

Black has seemingly solved most of his difficulties. 18 ... Nc6xe5 is looming and the white queen seems to be in a rather precarious position. White needed a plan to repel the threats and the prophylactic king move has enabled him to lure Black into this scheme.



18 Nc5!

Wonderfully demonstrating White's domination of the position. By this pawn sacrifice, White categorically illustrates his command of the board. The black light-squared bishop is targeted and White waited for it to be deployed before making this pawn offer. This shows why 17 Kg2 was so important rather than 17 Nc5. 18 ... Nxd4 is no longer a tactical possibility as White can capture on d7 and 19 Nxd7 Nxf3 is no longer with check.

After 18 ... Nxe5 19 Nxd7 Nexd7 20 Ne5 and subsequently, Bd3-b5, the pin on d7 will yield at least an exchange. Black's camp will soon collapse - once the a8 rook is needed to defend the d7 knight, the a5 pawn will soon fall. Black has no option but to accept the pawn offer and hope to cling on.

18 ... **Bxc5**
19 **dxc5** **Qxc5**

Black has to accept the pawn to justify his position. However, he has now exchanged his dark-squared bishop, leaving those squares vulnerable and the g5 pawn is also in need of defence. The pawn sacrificed is more than justified. 19b... Qxb2 20 Reb1 Nb4 21 Bb5 is best since 21 Rxb2 Bxa4 22 Be2 Bc6 which is probably holdable for Black.

20 **Rac1**

Simple and strong. White completes development swiftly and occupies the only other open file.

There are some other fun variations, although Black seems to be scrambling out of his predicament.

20 Nxg5 Nb4 21 Qb3 Rh2+ (21 ... Nxd3 22 Qxd3 Bb5 23 Qa3 Qxa3 24 bxa3 is equal) 22 Kxh2 Qxf2+ 23 Kh1 Qh4+ (23 ... Qxd2 24 Bf1) 24 Kg1 Qg3+ 25 Kf1 Nxd3 (25 ... Qxd3+ 26 Qxd3 Nxd3 27 Re2) which shows that Black has annoying resources. White does best to keep it simple.

20 ... **Qe7**

Defending the g5-pawn. 20 ... Qb6 21 Qa3 would neatly exploit the dark squares. 21 ... Nxe5 is now a direct threat, so the white queen must move.

21 **Qb3** **Rb8**

A pretty miserable way to defend the b pawn. The black pieces are now all tied down and left vulnerable. The tactics must favour White.

22 **Rh1**

Claiming control of the other open file. The white rooks dominate all of the open files. Black cannot exchange, as this will allow a white rook to land on h5 and attack the vulnerable g5 pawn - a constant weakness for Black.

22 ... **Rg8**
23 **a3**

A quiet move that slams the nail further in. White can take his time and emphasise to the helplessness of the black pieces which cannot untangle and coordinate. White takes away the b4 square from Black, preventing the exchanging possibilities Nb4 or even Qb4.

23 ... **b5**

Allowing White to cash in on all of his gains.

- 23 ... Ng6 would be nice but the tactics favour White. 24 Bxg6+ Rxg6 25 Rxc6 (removing the defender) 25 ... Bxc6 26 Rh8+ and this picks up the b8 rook
- 23 ... Qd8 looks like a viable alternative defending the b8 rook and stopping potential Qb3-b6 penetration ideas for White, but a

retreat like this just seems even more daunting for the defending side.

24 **Bxb5**

Simple and strong.

24 ... **Kf7**

Trying to remove the king from the tactics along the a4-e8 diagonal, although it is no safer on f7 than e8.

24 ... Nxe5 25 Nxe5 Rxb5 (25 ... Bxb5 26 Qh3) 26 Rc8+ Bxc8 27 Qxb5+ Bd7 28 Qxa5 grabs the a5 pawn and leaves White with formidable queenside passed pawns.

25 **Qa4**

Winning material. Black cannot even take on e5 as White can capture with check. Black's position now collapses quickly.

25 ... **Rxb5**
26 **Qxb5** **Nd4**
27 **Qb7**

There are lots of ways to play the position. Essentially though, White needs to seek exchanges and if the queens come off, the conversion of the victory will be that much quicker.

27 ... **Nxf3**
28 **Kxf3** **Ng6**
29 **Kg2**

Keeping it as simple as possible. The white king runs back to find sanctuary. Taking on e5 for Black would surely lose material, say after 29 ... Nxe5 30 Rh7 Rg7 31 Rxg7+ Kxg7 32 Bc3 and once again, pins prove to be Black's undoing.

29 ... **f3+**

A pointless check, but Black's position is untenable in any case. 29 ... Nh4+ 30 Kf1 and Black has no good continuation.

30 **Kf1** **Kg7**

Black has no other good alternatives. 30 ... Rg7 31 Bxg5 Bc6 32 Qxc6 Qxg5 33 Qd7+ Qe7 is easy enough for White.

31 **Bxg5**

A just conclusion. The g5 pawn falls and overloads the black queen. A fitting demolition of the tactical 11 ... g5!

31 ... **Qxg5**
32 **Qxd7+** **Ne7**
33 **Rc7** **Re8**
34 **Qxe8** **1-0**

Chris Ross