

New Englander

Chess Club Update – April 2023

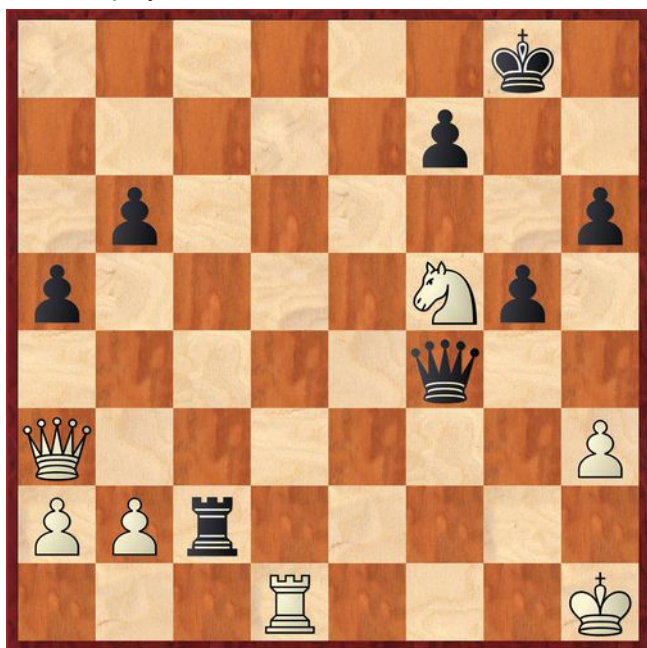
Chairman's Chatter

With our AGM at the beginning of May, we now have a clear view of the end of the season. Time to squeeze in those final games and maybe, a Rapidplay event to bring the curtain down.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (charlieroock on chess.com)

Position : 7k/6b1/5nK1/4R3/2B5/8/1B6/8

1 Re7 Bh6/Bf8 2 Rh7# [1 ... Nd5/Nh5/Ne8 2 Re8#; 1 ... N other 2 Bxg7#]

Website to Watch

The World Championship match that no-one wanted to see takes place from 9th to 30th April in Astana, Kazakhstan. The participants are Ian Nepomniachtchi and Ding Liren because the current title holder Magnus Carlsen has declined to defend his crown. With play starting at 11am, fourteen games (and a possible tie-break one hour earlier on the final date) will decide the winner and can be followed at <https://www.chess.com/events/2023-fide-world-chess-championship/games>.

Diary Dates

26th April New England A v St Neots A
 2nd May Team 7000 play-off match at St Ives
 3rd May End-of-season Rapidplay
 10th May Club Annual General Meeting

Result Round-up

Club Championship

White		Black	
P Turp	1	0	P Spencer
R Ilett	1	0	P Walker
R Ilett	½	½	P Turp
P Walker	½	½	E Knox
E Knox	1	0	C Russell
N Wedley	P	Rd 6	E Knox
E Smith	P	Rd 8	P Turp
P Spencer	P	Rd 9	P Hanks

Round 11

P Walker	0	1	P Spencer
N Wedley	P	P	E Smith
P Hanks	0	1	E Knox
C Russell	1	0	J Jennings
N Chedd	½	½	R Ilett

Player	RI	PT	PW	PS	EK	PH	NC	CR	NW	JJ	ES	Total
R Ilett	X	½	1	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	8
P Turp	½	X	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	1		7
P Walker	0	1	X	0	½	1	0	1	1	1	1	6½
P Spencer	½	0	1	X	1		1	½	0	1	1	6
E Knox	½	0	½	0	X	1	½	1		1	1	5½
P Hanks	0	½	0		0	X	1	1	1	1	1	5½
N Chedd	½	0	1	0	½	0	X	½	1	1	0	4½
C Russell	0	0	0	½	1	0	½	X	1	1	1	4
N Wedley	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	X	1		2
J Jennings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	1	1
E Smith	0			0	0	0	1	0	0	0	X	1

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	2½	St Neots A	2½
R Ilett	½	A Chapman	½
P Walker	0	R Gompelman	1
B Stephens	0	P Barkas	1
P Hanks	1	D Rice	0
P Spencer	1	C Emery	0

New England A	1½	Peterborough A	3½
R Ilett	0	A Nawalaniec	1
B Stephens	1	M Dunkley	0
P Hanks	0	D Redden	1
P Spencer	0	P Ripardo	1
P Turp	½	L Nawalaniec	½

New England B	2½	Warboys B	1½
B Stephens	½	P Baddeley	½
P Spencer	1	P Wells	0
N Chedd	1	K Walachnia	0
E Smith	0	J Beck	1

Peterborough B	1½	New England B	2½
D Redden	1	B Stephens	0
B Rooney	0	N Chedd	1
A Brookbanks	0	C Russell	1
J Cureton	½	J Jennings	½

Team 7000 competition

NE Patriots	1½	Peterborough	2½
B Stephens	½	M Zajackowski	½
E Knox	½	I Lavallin	½
N Chedd	½	J Conlon	½
G Barham-Smith	0	P Ripardo	1

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
I Goodwin	1	0	E Smith
J Jennings	0	1	R Lepley
A Neville	0	1	N Wedley
N Wedley	1	0	I Goodwin
G Barham-Smith	0	1	A Neville
G Barham-Smith	1	0	D Dhokia
I Goodwin	1	0	A Neville
N Wedley	½	½	E Smith
P Turp	0	1	B Stephens
C Russell	0	1	J Jennings
D Dhokia	0	1	A Neville
G Barham-Smith	1	0	N Wedley

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 29/03/23
	Month	Overall		
1	+4	+2	R Lepley	0,0,0,1
2	-	+2	B Stephens	½,1,0,1,1,½,1
3	-2	-2	J Jennings	1,0,1,0,1
4	-1	+2	P Walker	1,1,0,1,1,1
5	-1	+4	C Russell	1,0
6	+4	+2	I Goodwin	0,0,1,0,1
7	+6	+6	G B'ham-Smith	0,1,1
8	-1	-1	E Smith	0,0,½
9	-3	-7	N Wedley	0,1,1,0,0,1,1,½,0
10	-2	-	P Hanks	½
11	-	-	A Neville	0,0,1,0,1
12	-3	-7	R Ilett	½
13	-1	-1	D Dhokia	0,0
14	-	-	P Turp	0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	Team 7000	Total	TPR*
P Spencer	6		9	0	4½	19½	1801
P Walker	6½	5	3	1½	1	17	1949
R Ilett	8	½	5	1½		15	2021
P Hanks	5½	½	5	1	1½	13½	1884
N Chedd	4½		4½		4½	13½	1661
C Russell	4	1	6		1½	12½	1673
P Turp	7		2		½	9½	1803
E Knox	5½		½	1	2½	9½	1694
B Stephens		5	2		2	9	1898
J Jennings	1	3	½		2	6½	1314
N Wedley	2	4½		0		6½	1408
R Lepley		1	½		1	2½	1250
A Neville		2				2	1211
I Goodwin		2				2	1278
G Barham-Smith		2			0	2	1354
E Smith	1	½			0	1½	1090
D Dhokia		0				0	916

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Chairman's Challenge

White		Black	
A Ogundeko	1	0	I Goodwin
D Dhokia	0	1	A Ogundeko

Player	AN	IG	AO	DD	G BS	Total	Tie
A Neville	X	0		1	1	2	-
I Goodwin	1	X	0	1		2	-
A Agundeko		1	X	1		3	-
D Dhokia	0	0	0	X		0	w1114
G Barham-Smith	0				X	0	w1442

Match of the Month

There was a time in high society (so I'm told) when debutantes paraded their eligibility to the royal court. For a club newcomer, the equivalent rite of passage is to defend your honour in front of the king and queen of the chessboard. Let us see how well a recent arrival demonstrates his blue-blooded credentials against none other than the reigning club champion.

A Neville v P N Walker

New England Club Ladder, 22.02.2023

1 e4 Nf6

Alekhine's Defence is just about as provocative as you can get on the first move. Instead of the simple logic of piece development in, for instance, the Giuoco Piano, this immediate counterattack was introduced into master practice by the world champion-to-be against A Steiner in Budapest 1921 after an earlier outing during a consultation game. "Its correctness now seems perfectly established. One of its most searching proofs of its vitality lies in the fact that Dr Emmanuel Lasker ... successfully adopted it ... after having tried in vain to demolish it." (A Alekhine)

2 Nc3

This is the solid option which is probably the best choice if you are unfamiliar with the more critical continuations starting 2 e5 Nd5 3 d4 or 3 c4. In these lines, Black invites White's pawns to occupy the centre and then tries prove them to be an over-extended liability. Would Peter be so nasty as to lure our ingenuite into this morass? You bet!

2 ... d5

Black could transpose into the Vienna Game with 2 ... e5 but it is hardly in the spirit of the opening to return meekly to the paths spurned previously.

3 d3

The alternative 3 e5 Nfd7 4 d4 c5 5 Bb5 Nc6 6 Nf3 e6 was considered an advantageous variation of the French Defence in Alekhine's book of *Best Games 1908-1923* when published theory probably comprised a single line of analysis. The good old days!

Many years later, however, the Swedish grandmaster Jonny Hector has championed the sacrifice 3 e5 d4 4 exf6 dxc3 5 fxc3 cxd2+ 6 Bxd2 Bxc3 7 Qf3 (see Balashov v Timoshenko, Moscow 1989 for acceptance 7 ... Bxb2) and even 7 Nf3 has been tried.

3 ... d4
4 Nd5 Nxd5
5 exd5 Qxd5

Black has won a pawn and the computer's assessment is -1.25 i.e. the point for the material advantage is supplemented by some positional factors such as the active black queen.

6 Nf3 c5

Here the evaluation drops to -0.5 with 6 ... Nc6 or 6 ... e5 being favoured.

7 c4 Qd6

7 ... dxc3 8 bxc3 g6 leaves White with weakened pawns but Black is in the unaccustomed position of owning the pawn front. If you've got it, flaunt it!

8 Be2 e5
9 Ng5 f5
10 0-0 Be7
11 Bf3

Against 11 f4, Fritz recommends 11 ... Bxg5 12 fxg5 0-0 which surrenders the bishop pair. If Black prefers to avoid this with 11 ... Nc6, there are complications in store e.g. 12 fxe5 Nxe5 13 Bh5+ g6 14 Bf4 when 14 ... gxh5 (14 ... Bxg5!) 15 Bxe5 Qxe5 16 Qxh5+ Kd7 17 Nf7 justifies the necessity to exchange this knight.

11 ... Nc6

In view of the above, forcing the knight to retreat with 11 ... h6 12 Nh3 (12 Bh5+? g6) would be timely.

12 Bd5 Bxg5

The threats of 13 Nf7 and 13 Qh5+ g6 14 Qh6 and eventually Qh6-g7 mean it is too late for 12 ... h6.

13 Bxg5 Qg6

Black closes the h5-e8 diagonal. The development 13 ... Be6 is still risky after 14 Qh5+ when Black perhaps has to venture 14 ... Kd7 because the natural 14 ... g6 needs careful analysis. After 15 Qh6 Bxd5 16 cxd5 Qxd5 17 Qg7 Rf8 18 Qxb7, Black has the tricky resource 18 ... Qd7 19 Qxa8 Kf7. Instead, 15 Bxc6 bxc6 16 Qh4 still prevents Black from castling (16 ... 0-0 17 Be7).

14 f4 Be6



15 Qa4

By now, White has more than equalised. Black's king is caught in the crossfire and White has a number of promising continuations. Which you prefer may depend on which version of the software you choose to believe :-

- 15 Re1 h6 (15 ... 0-0 16 Bxc6 bxc6 17 Rxe5) 16 Bh4 Bxd5 (16 ... Rc8 17 Bxc6+ Rxc6 18 Rxe5) 17 cxd5
- 15 fxe5 Bxd5 (15 ... Nxe5 16 Qe2 Bxd5 17 Qxe5+ Be6 18 Rae1) 16 cxd5 Qxg5 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 Qb3.

In each case, roles are reversed and it is Black's pawn centre that is on the point of crumbling. The text move allows Black to castle.

15	...	0-0
16	Rae1	Bxd5
17	cxd5	Nb4
18	Rxe5	Nxd3
19	Re6	Qf7

With a software score of 1.2, this position is White's highwater mark. The upstart is in danger of winning!

20 Re7

Here 20 Qc4 is the way to go. Saving the knight by 20 ... Nb4 (20 ... Nxb2 21 Qb3) 21 Qxc5 again starts to drop the pawns. Hasn't White read the script for this opening?

20	...	Qxd5
21	Qb5	Nb4
22.	Rfe1	d3

Consolidation of Black's position with 22 ... Nc6 23 Rxb7 Rfe8 would allow slower but maybe deadlier exploitation of his passed pawn.

23	Rd7	d2
24	Rd1	Qe4
25.	R1xd2	

In the post-mortem, it was suggested that 25 R7xd2 would give White a large advantage by chasing the black queen and invading the seventh rank with tempo by 25 ... b6 26 Re2. Fortunately, Black has the defence 26 ... a6. Exchanging queens does indeed take away most of the force in White's activity.

25	...	Qe1+
26	Qf1	Qxf1+
27	Kxf1	Rf7

The endgame is slightly in Black's favour but 27 ... b6 was necessary.

28 a3

White misses an obscure tactic in 28 Be7 when the pawn on c4 cannot be defended e.g. 28 ... b6 29 Rd8+.

28	...	Nc6
29	b4	

This only helps Black simplify the queenside and emerge with a passed pawn. A draw will be the likely result after 29 Rxf7 Kxf7 30 Rd7+ Kg6 31 Rxb7.

29	...	cxb4
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30	axb4	Nxb4
31	Rxf7	Kxf7
32	Rd7+	Kg6

With a pawn deficit, White will struggle in this ending but there are some general guidelines to keep in mind. Assuming the b pawn will disappear soon,

- the bishop should be superior to the knight. Due to its long range, it can operate on both flanks whereas the knight would only be effective more locally. White should try to preserve the minor pieces, Black to exchange them
- Black already has his rook behind the passed pawn and therefore can defend it for the full length of its advance. White will have to block its path. Imagine the pawn on a3 with the white rook on a2
 - to dislodge the white rook from its light-coloured square, Black's knight has to attack it from a dark square (b4, c3 or c1) all of which can be covered by the bishop from d2
 - if penetration to c1 by the knight is unlikely, the bishop can also cover the b4 and c3 squares from e1 and from there, it will also support kingside pawns placed on f4, g3 and h4. Note that it will take 3-4 moves for the bishop to assume its best defensive position via e7 but only 2 via h4. Time is all important and should not be wasted
- Black will have to force a weakness by advancing his king but wherever it operates, the white king should be able to scurry across the board on a parallel course and create an impasse.

33 h4

Rather than 33 Rxb7 Nd5, the point of the text move becomes clear if Black saves the pawn on b7 e.g. 33 ... b6 34 h5+ Kxh5 35 Rxc7 h6 36 Rh7 with good drawing chances. With 33 ... a5, Black can put a spoke in the wheel of this variation because 36 ... Ra6 is then available. Given the above discussion, 33 Bh4 or 33 Be7 are better options.

33	...	h6
34	Be7	Nc6
35	Rxb7	

It seems that the tempo required to capture on b7 allows Black to swap off the bishop. Not quite so. If 35 Ba3, the pawn on b7 is not worth saving with 35 ... Rb8 (35 ... b6/b5 36 Rd6+) 36 Bb2.

35	...	Nxe7
36	Rxe7	a5
37	Re2	Ra7
38	Kf2	Kh5
39	g3	a4
40	Ra2	a3
41	Ke2	Kg4
42	Kf2	Kh5

Immediately 42 ... Kh3 runs into 43 Ra1 when 43 ... a2 44 Ra1+ Kg4 45 h5 leads to checkmate by Rh4! Black prevents this with 42 ... h5 and play would then continue 43 Kg2 Ra6 44 Kf2 Kh3 45 Kf3 Rg6 46 Rg2 Rb6 47 Ra2 Rb3+ 48 Kf2 Rb2+.

43	Kf3	Kg6
44	Ke3	Ra4
45	Kf2	Kf6
46	Ke3	Ke6
47	Kd3	

White can seize the distant opposition with 47 Ke2 to no avail. Black has sufficient reserve tempi 47 ... Kd5 48 Kd3 Ra6 49 h5 Ra4 50 Ra1 a2. White has to give way and allow the black king entry to one flank or the other.

47	...	Kd5	
48	Kc3	Ke4	
49	Kb3	Ra7	0-1

Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

The publishing business *New in Chess* has a franchise known as *Secrets of Opening Surprises* by Jeroen Bosch, an international master and FIDE senior trainer. Going under the acronym SOS, it provides a snapshot into opening variations that are often overlooked at grandmaster level but are reasonably sound and could be effective in club games. Here is a small sample of the analysis for Alekhine's Defence.

1	e4	Nf6
2	Nc3	d5

In articles from 2009 and 2017, White's move is described as "an excellent choice" and Black's as "a standard reply". In the latter work, however, there is a remark that recent repertoire books no longer advocate 2 ... d5 and recommend transposition into the Vienna Game with 2 ... e5 due to Hector's continuation mentioned in the *Match of the Month*. Black does have another alternative in 2 ... Nc6. Surprise, surprise!

Actually, the trick in this alternative continuation comes a little later. After 2 ... Nc6 3 d4, the case is made that 3 ... e5 4 dxe5 Nxe5 5 f4 and 3 ... e6 4 d5 exd5 5 exd5 Ne5 6 Qe2 Qe7 7 d6 are poor outcomes for Black so that 3 ... d5 should be tried. However, 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Nxd5 looks good until Black plays the counter-intuitive 5 ... Nbd8. As mentioned, Black is attempting to demonstrate the weakness of White's centre pawns and here, the d4 square is already under pressure.

3	e5	d4
4	exf6	dxg7
5	fxg7	cxg7+
6	Bxd2	Bxg7
7	Qf3	Bxb2

The pawn is not as poisoned as in some other openings but having been at pains to avoid

exchanging queens down the d file, White must expect attacking chances.

Black, of course, is not forced to take the pawn. 7 ... Qd6 is one option aiming for Qd6-f6 and again exchanging queens. Another is 7 ... Nc6.

8	Rd1	
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Black has to address the discovered attack 9 Bc3 as well as threats to f7 coming via 9 Bc4 and 10 Qb3. The most active responses mobilise the queen to evade trouble with a check e.g. 8 ... Qd4 9 Bc3 Bxc3+ 10 Qxc3 Qe6+.

8	...	Qd4
9	Ne2	Qg4

Black has a range of continuations for this and the subsequent move (9 ... Qf6, 9 ... Qc4, 10 ... Bg7, 10 ... Bf6 etc). Some are fine, some of dubious merit and the line selected is one of most catastrophic.

10	Qb3	Be5
11	Bc3	



11	...	Bxc3+
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11 ... Qe6 or 11 ... Qg7 are better. The text move at best drops the pawn on c7.

12	Qxc3	0-0
13	Rd3	winning

Black can save the queen by 13 ... Qg7 14 Rg3 Bg4 but the material lost will cost the game.