

New Englander

Chess Club Update – August 2023

Chairman's Chatter

By the time of the next newsletter, the coming season will be in gear and it is good idea to get ready. Your ECF subscription may need renewing; if you are a past member taking a sabbatical, perhaps you could declare your intentions and soon, there are local tournaments. Chance favours the prepared mind!

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

2nd September Rookwood Club Chess Tournament, March. okefetom43@gmail.com is the contact for details

24th September County Rapidplay at Whittlesford. Click [here](#) for the entry form or see <http://www.cambschess.co.uk/Rapidplay.php> for online entry

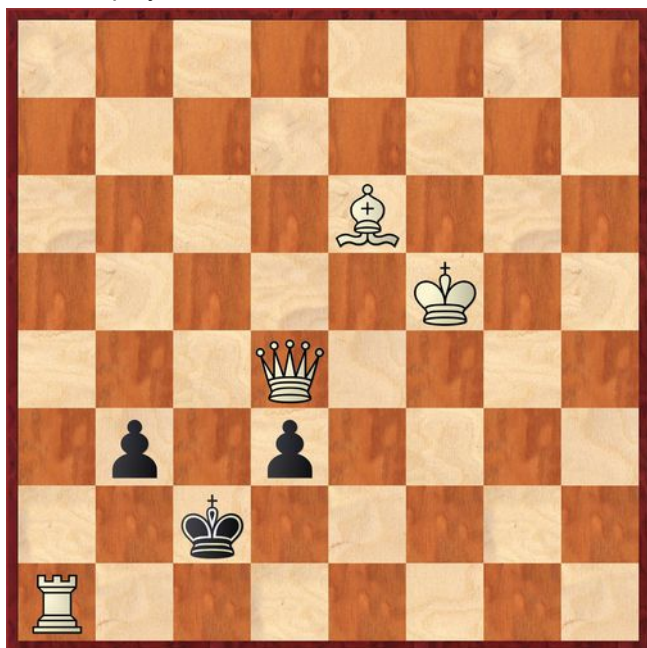
25-26th November At Christie Hall Wansford, CCCA Individual Championship. Click [here](#) for the entry form

Website to Watch

The FIDE World Cup is a big knock-out event featuring all the top players in both the Open and Women's sections. It takes place in Baku, Azerbaijan and the first game takes place on 30th July and the final on 23rd August. A link for viewing live games can be found at <https://worldcup2023.fide.com/>.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solutions

Position #1 : 8/7B/5Q2/6p1/6k1/8/5K2/8 w - - 0 1

Key move	1 Qh8
1 ... Kf5	2 Qd4#
1 ... Khx	2 Bf5

Position #2 : 7R/7p/5P1k/5KpP/8/8/8 w - - 0 1

Key move	1 hxg6ep
1 ... Kh5	2 Rxx7#

Position #3 : 8/Q7/3P4/3Pk3/5N2/4NK2/8/8 w - - 0 1

Key move	1 Ne6
1 ... Kxd6	2 Qc7#
1 ... Kf6	2 Qf7#

Position #4 : 8/8/2K5/2p5/2kp4/P1p5/2Q5/8 w - - 0 1

Key move	1 Qd1
1 ... d3	2 Qa4#
1 ... c2	2 Qxc2#

Position #5 : 8/8/2Q3n1/6B1/3kB3/8/5K2/8 w - - 0 1

Key move	1 Bf5
1 ... Ke5	2 Qc5#
1 ... Ne5	2 Be3#
1 ... N other	2 Bf6#

Match of the Month

Chess is one of those games where the number of different possible legal positions that you can make on a board at (say) one per second would exceed the life of our universe – or something like that. Okay, I have not worked it out so do not quote me, but I seem to remember reading it somewhere. Anyway, the point I wanted to make is that sometimes you can find yourself in a unique position where you are suddenly lost for seemingly no immediately obvious reason. It could be argued that this is due to the skill of your opponent (if they are strong enough!) but my contention is that this is not always entirely the case.

And naturally, the opposite can also happen. If you are honest, I am sure that you will have occasionally found yourself in a position that worked much better than you expected. It is a prospect I try and look for when deciding whether to carry on in a weak position. But this is not easy to see without a chess computer which, by analysing your game to a much greater depth, will often show you when a sudden jump in the strength of the position is likely to occur.

Here is an example of what I am talking about. This game is from more than 20 years ago but I remember

getting the upper hand very quickly. I would love to claim that I had everything worked out but I think I was almost as surprised as my opponent about just how quickly his queen got into difficulties.

Bernard Duff v Chris Russell

Wisbech v Perkins B, Div 2 H&PCCA; January 2000

1	c4	e5
2	g3	Nf6
3	Bg2	d5
4	cxd5	Nxd5
5	d3	Be6
6	Nf3	Nc6
7	0-0	Be7

Though I cannot guarantee that times have changed, I knew very little about the English Defence when I played this game except that, with the early fianchetto played by White, it could be treated rather like a Sicilian with the colours reversed. So that was the formation that I adopted and Bernard seemed happy to play it that way.

8 a3?!

Rather passive, according to Fritz. It prefers 8 Nc3 Nb6 9 Be3 f5 10 Nd2 Qd7 11 Rc1 0-0 but it still assesses the text as 'level'.

Radulski (2511) v T Georgescu (2356), Plovdiv 2008 is a published game which reached this position with colours reversed from a normal Dragon Sicilian. There, White proceeded with 8 g4. As the Bernard's text move is sufficiently inconsequential, I could perhaps have continued with 8 ... g5 to mirror this aggression or even 8 ... f5 that had appeared in an even earlier game as 8 f4.

8 ... a5

with the intent of stopping queenside expansion with b2-b4. I wanted to castle to the queenside myself. Still treating the game as a reversed Sicilian – which is probably not very sound!

9 Nbd2?!

Looks inconsistent to me. More logical is 9 Bd2 0-0 10 Nc3 Nxc3 11 Bxc3=.

9 ... Qd7?!

Fritz suggests that after 9 ... 0-0 10 Nc4 Bf6 will give Black a 'slight edge'.

10 Ne4 f6
11 d4 exd4?!

Missing 11 ... f5! 12 Neg5 (or 12 Nc5 Bxc5 13 dxc5) 12 ... e4! with a small edge.

12 Nxd4 0-0-0?!

Yup, still continuing with my dubious strategy. If 12 ... Nxd4 13 Qxd4 0-0=.

13 Nxe6

Tempting but 13 Nxc6 Qxc6 14 Bd2 a4 15 Rc1 Qb5 16 Qc2 was better.

13 ... Qxe6
14 Qa4??

A bad mistake. Bernard is eyeing an attack by opening up the a file. But this move puts his queen in

no man's land. From here my attack (almost!) plays itself. At least, that was my memory of this game - until I analysed it...

14 ... Nb6!

14 ... Kb8 would be level, but now the knights combine to cut down the queen's options.

15 Qc2!

Bernard looks uncomfortable but finds the better of only two playable moves, 15 Qb5 being the other.

15 ... Nd4!

16 Qd3

Bernard had a long think before playing this. Fritz prefers 16 Qb1! but after 16 ... Nb3 17 Ra2 Nc4 18 Qc2 Nd4 19 Qb1 Nxe2+ 20 Kh1 Nxc1, Black has a sound extra pawn.

So, how should I proceed? It appears that the discovered attack on White's queen should net me the exchange at least but is that Black's best strategy?



16 ... Nb3?

Yeah, I went for the obvious move, but it is a mistake. I wonder how many reading this spotted that White has the frustrating saving resource of 17 Bh3!! Qxh3 (17 ... f5 18 Bxf5) 18 Qxb3 h5! 19 f3 when Black is supposedly only slightly better. but with superior development and kingside threats, my position looks easier to play.

So, what should I have done? There are actually two good alternatives:

- 16 ... f5! prevents the resource with tempo but gives White tactics on the long light-squared diagonal with 17 Nc3 (forced) Nb3 and now
 - 18 Qf3 c6 (18 ... Nxa1 19 Qxb7+ Kd7 20 Nb5 Rc8 21 Bf4 Bd8 22 Rxa1 is plenty of compensation for the exchange) 19 Ra2 Nc4 20 Nd5 prevents the fork on d2 but after 20 ...

Nd4 Black has the initiative and is better

- 18 Nd5 Nxa1 19 Nxe7+ Kb8 20 Qf3 Qe4 though 19 Qxf5 Qxf5 20 Nxe7+ Kb8 21 Nxf5 has to be considered
- 16 ... h5!? 17 h4 Nb3 18 Bh3 Qxh3 19 Qxb3 g5 20 Be3 Nd5 with the sort of sharp position I enjoy.

However, both lines required long computer analysis to find, so it is hardly surprising that I did not find either across the board!

17 Qc3??

Thankfully Bernard misses the resource too!

17 ... Nxa1
18 Bf4 Nd5
19 Qxa5 Kb8?!

Second best. I was worried about my king being forced off the back rank but I can safely ignore the threat with 19 ... Nxf4! 20 gxf4 Nb3 21 Qa8+ Kd7 22 Rd1+ Ke8 23 Rxd8+ Bxd8 etc., though it will take time to extract the rook from the corner.

20 Rxa1 Nxf4
21 gxf4 Rd5?!

Calmly controlling the d file with 21 ... Rd7 22 Nc3 Rhd8 was a better strategy.

22 Qc3

White has the chance to play the flashy 22 Ng5 and after 22 ... Rxa5 23 Nxe6 Bd6, Black's pieces are temporarily scattered but will soon find targets. Keeping queens on the board probably gives White better practical prospects.

22 ... Rhd8
23 h3?

Weak but after 23 Qb3 Rd1+ 24 Qxd1 Rxd1+ 25 Rxd1 Qg4 26 Nc3 Qxf4 Black has a comfortable material advantage.

23 ... Rd4?!

23 ... Qb6! will start to exploit Black's superiority on the dark squares with the threat 24 ... f5 25 Ng3 Bf6.

24 Rc1 Rd1+

I have wasted a tempo. Instead, 24 ... c6! 25 Ng3 g6 ties White's knight into the defence of the king.

25 Rxd1 Rxd1+
26 Kh2 Bd6??

I am getting careless! 26 ... g5! opens up lines to the white king.

27 Nxd6?

27 e3 gives White a chance to fight on though an example continuation 27 ... g5 28 Qc2 Rd5 29 Nxd6 Rxd6 30 f5 f5 31 Bf3 Qg6 still leaves the white king exposed.

27 ... Qxd6
28 Qb3?

Another mistake. Depression setting in? Best is 28 Qf3!

28 ... Qxf4+

29 Qg3 Qxg3+
30 Kxg3 Rd2

with a theoretically winning endgame. Now, all I have to do is convert it....

31 b3 Rxe2

31 ... c6 preventing Bd5 was better.

32 Bd5 c6
33 Bg8 h6
34 a4

Putting pawns on white squares. Fritz prefers 34 Bc4

34 ... Kc7
35 h4 Kb6?!

Planning Ka5 and b5, but Fritz reckons Kc7-d6 is a better strategy either to aim for pressure against the isolated kingside pawns or to centralise the king ready, if allowed, to give up the rook for the bishop on c4.

36 h5 Ka5
37 f4 b5?

37 ... Kb4! is best, Fritz declares this will mate in 32 moves but most moves are winning now. I think Bernard was hoping for a classic Russell blunder!

38 axb5 cxb5
39 Kg4 Rg2+

At this point I can simply exchange my rook for White's b pawn and bishop but I now think I can force White's king to go the long way round to capture my g pawn.

40 Kf5 Kb4 41 Bd5 Rg3 42 Bf7 Kc3 43 Bd5 b4 44 Ke6 Kd4

At this point I decided I could capture either of the f or h pawns instead. Why? I don't know. Fritz says 44 Rd3 is mate in 22!

45 Bc4 Ke4 46 f5 Rg5 47 Be2 Kf4

I was worried by 47 Rxf4 48 Bd3+! but it turns out that Black queens first and wins anyway. Now the end is just simple technique – even for me!

48 Kf7 Kxf5 49 Bd3+ Ke5 50 Bg6 f5 51 Kxg7 Rg3 52 Kxh6 Rxb3 53 Kg7 Rh3 54 h6 b3 55 Bf7 b2 56 Ba2 Kd4 57 h7 f4 58 h8Q Rxh8 59 Kxh8 f3 0-1

When I dug this game out, I was looking for an example where I had quickly got into a much better position than I had expected. But it is probably best not to look too closely at past triumphs. I had remembered this as a game where I had outplayed a good opponent, only to find out that he had just blundered in a difficult position. It seems that the resources of the chess board are almost as infinite as the number of positions!

Chris Russell