

New Englander

Chess Club Update – November 2023

Chairman's Chatter

Better late than never, so they say!

Paul Hanks

Website to Watch

There is still time to watch the European Team Chess Championship which takes place from 11th to 20th November in Budva, Montenegro. The website is <https://etcc23.me/> and it will be interesting to follow England's performance with Mickey Adams now on board 3! Hopefully, they will fare better than the cricket team...

Bringing the Grand Chess Tour to an end for this year, the Sinquefeld Cup runs from 21st to 30th November with play-offs on the following day if needed. St Louis Chess Club acts as hosts and will show the action on their online [Twitch](#) and [Youtube](#) channels.

Diary Dates

25-26th November At Christie Hall Wansford, [CCCA Individual Championship](#)

19-24th February [Cambridge International Open Chess Tournament](#) for players rated 1600+.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Lazdinsh 1958)

Position : 8/2K5/Q7/2p1p3/3k2B1/8/3B4/8

1 **Be2 c4/Kd5** 2 **Qc4#** [1 ... Ke4 2 Qd3#; 1 ... e4 2 Qd6#]

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	P	Peterborough A	P
New England B	2	St Ives B	2
B Stephens	1	S Caraway	0
P Spencer	0	P Baddeley	1
N Chedd	1	J Canamares	0
I Goodwin	0	P Wells	1

Fenland Plate

St Ives DM	2	NE Patriots	2
D Rice	½	P Walker	½
P Baddeley	0	E Knox	1
T Stanley	1	N Chedd	0
P Wells	½	C Russell	½

Team 7000 competition

NE Patriots	2½	Peterborough D	1½
B Stevens	½	D Redden	½
E Knox	0	M Zajackowski	1
N Chedd	1	C Masseron	0
C Russell	1	J Blair	0

Team 4000 competition

NE Cavaliers	3	Spalding	0
J Sutherland	1	J Moseley-Hutchinson	0
I Goodwin	1	L McKenna	0
D Dhokia	1	K Davis	0

Club Championship

White	Postponed		Black
P Walker	1	0	S Reid
J Jennings	0	1	R Ilett
White	Round 3		Black
P Walker	1	0	I Goodwin
D Dhokia	1	0	C Russell
S Reid	0	1	N Chedd
B Stephens	0	1	P Spencer
R Ilett	1	0	A Neville
N Wedley	0	1	P Hanks

White	Round 4		Black
C Russell	P	P	P Walker
I Goodwin	P	P	N Chedd
P Spencer	1	0	D Dhokia
B Stephens	0	1	S Reid
P Hanks	P	P	A Neville
J Jennings	P	P	E Knox
White	Pre-played		Black
A Neville	0	1	J Jennings
I Goodwin	½	½	C Russell
P Spencer	1	0	S Reid
P Walker	0	1	N Chedd

Player	P W	B S	P S	N C	S R	D D	I G	C R	Pts
P Walker	X	0		0	1	1	1	P	3
B Stephens	1	X	0		0	1		1	3
P Spencer		1	X	0	1	1	½		3½
N Chedd	1		1	X	1			P	4
S Reid	0	1	0	0	X		0		1
D Dhokia	0	0	0			X		1	1
I Goodwin	0		½	P	1		X	½	2
C Russell	P	0		0		0	½	X	½

Player	R I	J J	A N	N W	E K	P H	Pts
R Ilett	X	1	1	0			2
J Jennings	0	X	1				1
A Neville	0	0	X	1	0	P	1
N Wedley	1		0	X		0	1
E Knox			1		X	0	1
P Hanks			P	1	1	X	2

New England Club Ladder

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 08/11/23
	Month	Overall		
1	-	-	P Walker	1,1
2	-	-	P Hanks	0
3	-	-	P Spencer	1
4	-	-	I Goodwin	0
5	+2	+2	C Russell	1
6	-	-	A Neville	0
7	-2	-2	J Jennings	1,0
8	-	-	R Ilett	0

White			Black
P Hanks	0	1	P Walker
I Goodwin	0	1	P Spencer
J Jennings	1	0	A Neville
C Russell	1	0	J Jennings
P Walker	1	0	R Ilett

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4000	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
N Chedd	4		1	2½	0	1		8½	1890
P Walker	3	2	1		½			6½	1935
B Stephens	3		1	1		½		5½	1750
P Spencer	3½	1	0	½				5	1632
C Russell	½	1		1	½	1		4	1496
I Goodwin	2	0		½			1	3½	1454
D Dhokia	1						1	2	1442
E Knox	1				1	0		2	1660
J Jennings	1	1		0				2	1479
P Hanks	2	0						2	1870
R Ilett	2	0	0					2	1603
N Wedley	1						½	1½	1585
A Neville	1	0						1	1331
J Sutherland							1	1	1909
S Reid	1							1	1262

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

A Neville v N Wedley

New England Club Championship Rd 2; 20.09.2023

In clip from a sample chess video, the grandmaster-lecturer described the centre of the chess board as "the high ground" i.e. in terms of military tactics, a vantage point that allows you to see and fire your cannons in all directions. Similarly, occupying e4 and d4 with pawns would normally reward White with a significant edge in the opening or at worst, force players of the black pieces to know exactly what they are doing.

1 e4 c5

The rationale of the Sicilian Defence is to deflect or eliminate a white pawn that reaches d4 by exchanging it for a less important pawn (and incidentally, opening the c file). In the long run, the central pawn preponderance should then belong to Black.

2 c3

Alapin's variation is unusual but is founded on the concept that it neutralises Black's intentions by

enabling the c pawn to recapture on d4 and maintain the grip on the centre. Its percentage score given by the 365chess.com database (34.6% White win, 32.2% Black win) is not dissimilar to the main lines.

2 ... Nc6

The drawback of 2 c3 is that it prevents White's queen's knight from taking its most natural square and that can be exploited by the most popular continuation 2 ... d5 (the choice of Magnus Carlsen). The push 3 e5 is undesirable as it would transpose into a French Defence in which Black has the chance to develop the light-squared bishop outside the pawn chain with 3 ... Bf5. The exchange 3 exd5 Qxd5 no longer loses a tempo to Nb1-c3 and 4 d4 leads to a classic position with an isolated queen's pawn. Whether you prefer to attack or defend this weakness is a matter of style.

Another option is the provocative 2 ... Nf6 used by Hou Yifan to good effect. The text, however, is rare though the move order 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 c3 is sometimes seen.

3 d4 cxd4
4 cxd4 d6?!

By failing to react in the centre, Black has allowed 2 c3 to succeed in its purpose - to build a centre with pawns on d4 and e4. With this space advantage, White can develop freely (and probably more quickly) before deciding where to strike.

5 Nf3?! e6
6 Nc3 Be7
7 Bd3 a6
8 a3 Qc7
9 Be3 b5?!

At this stage in a chess game, it is unlikely any sensible move is demonstrably losing against best play but inaccuracies will accumulate small amounts of awkwardness. Here, the pawn push has weakened the c6 square but how can this be exploited?

Let's examine the situation in the centre where White, at a suitable time, will aim to push a pawn to open lines and displace the black pieces :-

e4-e5 is currently unlikely because Black is covering that square with three pieces (d6, Nc6, Qc7) compared with White's two (d4, Nf3). In the event of exchanges, it will be a black piece that is the last man standing.

The opposite is true for d4-d5. Black protects the d5 square only once (e6) but White assails it 2½ times (e4, Nc3 and a potential discovered attack from Qd1 with 50% probability). White will be able to choose whether a knight or pawn is the final occupant of d5. From here, White hits either Qc7 or Nc6 and on an open c file, this could be dangerous for Black. So 10 Rc1. Right?

10 b4??

White returns the favour! I have left c3 criminally unguarded.

10 ... Bb7

The tables would be turned by 10 ... Nxb4. White could surrender the pawn and the bishop pair with e.g. 11 Rc1 or meet the tactics head on with 11 axb4 Qxc3+. Interposing with 12 Qd2 or 12 Bd2 loses a piece but by defending e4, 12 Nd2 is more complex.



If 12 ... Qxd3, the subtle rejoinder 13 Qc1 traps the black queen and 14 Ra3 will swing the position White's way.

Apparently, the black queen remains vulnerable after 12 ... Qxb4 and despite the two pawn advantage, White has compensation e.g. 13 0-0 Bd7 14 Nb3 (threat 15 Bd2) 14 ... d5 15 e5 Qc3 16 Rc1 Qb4 17 Bd2 Qa3 18 Ra1 Qb2 19 Bb1 and 20 Ra2. This is obviously computer analysis and the variations are good fun for practice at closing the trap.

So Black needs to be equally cagey with 12 ... Bb7 which puts defence of d3 back in White's court. 13 Qc1 could transpose but 13 ... Qxc1 and most earlier alternatives leave Black with a comfortable queenside majority.

11 Rc1 Qd7
12 d5?! d5?!

12 Nxb5 lights the blue touch paper on the aforementioned pawn advance. After 12 ... axb5 13 Bxb5, 14 d5 will regain the piece since preventing d4-d5 by 13 ... d5 runs into 14 Ne5.

12 ... Ne5
13 Bd4? Nxd3+
14 Qxd3 e5
15 Bb6 Rc8
16 h3 Nf6
17 0-0 Nh5
18 Ne2 0-0
19 g4 Nf4?!
20 Nxf4! exf4
21 Rfe1?! Rfe1?!

White has lost a little headway by parting with the bishop pair but could re-apply pressure with 21 Qd2. The only way to defend the pawn on f4 is 21 ... g5 but

then, 22 Nd4 aims for the fine outpost on f5. Instead, White's kingside pawns become targets.

21	...	h5
22	Nh2	Bg5
23	f3	Bh4
24	Red1	Rxc1
25	Rxc1	Rc8
26	Qd2	g5?

Black causes himself problems here. The bishop is buried some distance away from the black king and leaves White free to occupy the long diagonal with 27 Rxc8+ Bxc8 29 Qc3 Qb7 30 Bd4 with looming threats against g7.

27	Rc3?!	f6?!
28	Kg2?	hxg4
29	Nxg4	Kg7
30	Qd4?!	

The wrong piece! 30 Bd4 is much more difficult to meet. The obvious continuation 30 ... Rf8 31 Qc2 Rf7 32 Bxf6 shows that f6 is impossible to defend. If 32 ... Rxf6, 33 Rc7 and 32 ... Kf8 33 e5 Bxd5 34 Rc8+ or 33 ... dxe5 34 Nxe5 shows why the centre pawns are so commanding.

30	...	Qf7
31	Qd2	Kg6
32	Qd3?	f5?!
33	Nh2?!	Be1
34	Rxc8	Bxc8
35	Qc2	Qd7
36	Kf1	Bg3
37	Kg2	Kh5
38	Bc7??	

My aimless recent play has not resulted in anything but Black has quietly built up a break-through against my king.

38	...	fxe4!
39	fxe4	Qxh3+
40	Kh1?	

40 Kg1 would be a better defence but I will still be struggling after 40 ... Bh4 41 Bb6 (preventing 41 ... f3 by 42 Nxf3 Qxf3 43 Qxc8) 41 ... Qg3+ 42 Qg2 (42 Kf1 Qe1+ 43 Kg2 Bh3+) 42 ... Qxg2 43 Kxg2 g4.

40	...	f3
41	e5	f2

Fortunately, chess problems highlight some obscure checkmate positions and in the game, I am the beneficiary. Had Black played 41 ... Bf5 42 Qd2 f2, I should have been on the receiving end of 43 ... f1=Q#, 43 ... Qxh2# or 43 ... Be4#.

42 Qh7#

This was my first point in the Club Championship and a rather fortuitous one. Looking back, I had several chances to make a more respectable showing. A common theme seems to be the failure to latch on to the positional weaknesses created by my opponent (c6 at move 10, f4 at move 21, f6 at move 30) and focussing my forces to exploit them.

Andy Neville/Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

Graham Lee (2290) v Colin S Crouch (2366)
4NCL Sunningdale; 17.09.2006

1	e4	c5
2	c3	d6

An interesting alternative approach for Black is to transpose into a 1 d4 opening when the pawn on c3 is less useful than the normal 2 c2-c4. The game veers towards the Austrian Attack in the Benoni Defence.

3	d4	Nf6
4	Bd3	g6
5	f4	Bg7
6	Nf3	0-0
7	0-0	cxd4
8	cxd4	Nc6
9	d5	Nb4

The computer prefers 9 ... Qb6+ when seemingly 10 Kh1 Nb4 11 Nc3 Ng4 is a simple transposition. The point is in this move order 10 Rf2 is not available due to 10 ... Ng4. Note also after 10 Kh1 Nb4, if White tries the preventative 11 h3 Nh5 is embarrassing with the f4 pawn en prise, a fork threatened on g3 and if 12 Re1 Qf2 brings 13 ... Bxh3 into play.

10	Nc3	
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Now, White had 10 h3 and if 10 ... Qb6+ 11 Rf2.

10	...	Qb6+
11	Kh1	Ng4
12	a3	



How good is your depth of calculation?

12	...	Nxd3
13	Qxd3	Nf2+
14	Rxf2	Qxf2
15	Na4	

The black queen is trapped ... or is it?

15	...	Bd7
16	Be3	Bb5
17	Qb3	Bxa4 0-1