

New Englander

Chess Club Update – January 2024

Chairman's Chatter

Since 2008, the club website has functioned quietly and efficiently under Phil's expert supervision. Sadly, after reaching the honours board with joint victory in the club championship last season, Phil has been missing from our recent events and we wish him a speedy recovery. He returns in spirit, however, with a *Match of the Month* article to explain his wicked ways.

Paul Hanks

Website to Watch

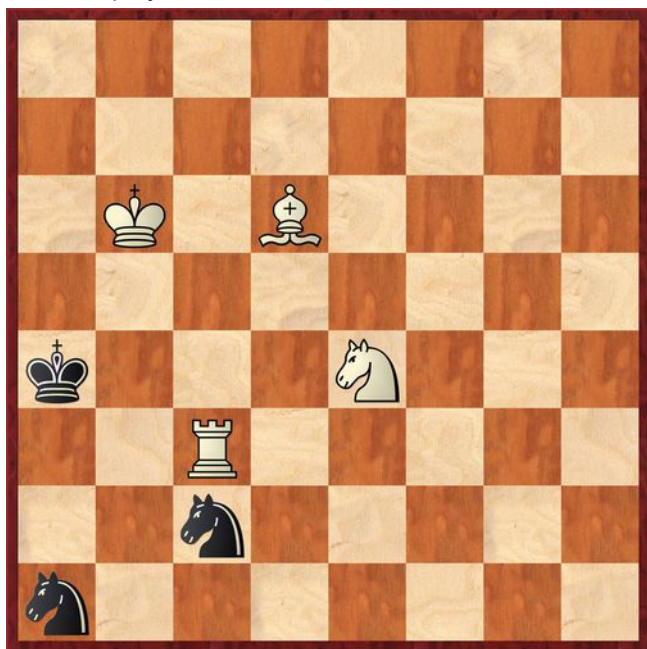
Thirteen rounds of classical chess is becoming a rarity but such a programme can still be found from 13th to 28th January at Wijk aan Zee. It will see the return of new World Champion Ding Liren and almost half the field will have been born this century. Please see the [Tata Steel Masters](#) for tournament details.

Diary Dates

3rd January Club Lightning
 14th January [Cambridge FIDE Rapidplay](#) from 10:30am at Whittlesford Memorial Hall
 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 (Lincoln 1992)

Position : 8/8/1K2BBp1/7N/4k3/Q7/8/8

1 Bg4 g5/gxh5 2 Qf3# [1 ... Kd5 2 Qd3#]

Solutions from the Xmas newsletter

1) 4k3/4n1p1/4P2p/4KP2/1p4P1/1N5P/8/8

1 Na5 Nc6+ and if 2 Nxc6 b3 and the pawn promotes

2) 6k1/pb4p1/4p1Qp/2p1Pr2/1P3P1P/P2r3N/2q3P1/5RKR

1 ... Rg5 2 Qe8+ Kh7 3 Nxc6 hxc6 4 hxc6+ Rh3 5 Rxh3#

Result Round-up

Fenland Trophy

Cambridge	2½	New England A	1½
S Palucha	1	P Walker	0
A Ibn Saifullah	0	R Ilett	1
P Fallon	½	P Hanks	½
T Robbins	1	B Stephens	0

Fenland Plate

St Neots	2½	NE Patriots	1½
J Vieira	0	P Walker	1
P Barkas	½	B Stephens	½
C Emery	1	N Chedd	0
M Cooper	1	J Sutherland	0

Cambridgeshire League

Ely	0	New England B	4
S Ross	0	B Stephens	1
D Finch	0	C Russell	1
F Ewbank	0	N Wedley	1
I Kim	0	J Sutherland	1

New England B	2	Rookwood	2
R Ilett	½	F Bowers	½
C Russell	½	L Levet	½
J Sutherland	1	G Pearl	0
D Dhokia	0	T O'Keefe	1

Team 7000 competition

Spalding	0	NE Patriots	4
S Prior	0	P Walker	1
C Featherstone	0	B Stephens	1
C Robinson	0	E Knox	1
L McKenna	0	J Sutherland	1

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
I Goodwin	1	0	A Neville
P Walker	1	0	N Wedley

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 20/12/23
	Month	Overall		
1	-	-	P Walker	1,1,1,1
2	-	-	P Hanks	0
3	-	-	P Spencer	1
4	-	+3	C Russell	1,1
5	-	+4	E Knox	1
6	-	-2	I Goodwin	0,0,1
7	-	-2	J Jennings	1,0
8	-	-2	A Neville	0,0,0
9	-	-1	R Ilett	0
10	-	-	N Chedd	0
11	-	-	N Wedley	1,0
12	-	-	D Dhokia	0

Christmas Special : 13th December 2023

Player	Round				Total
	1	2	3	4	
P Walker	5	5	5	5	20
E Knox	5	5	5	0	15
I Goodwin	5	0	5	5	15
N Chedd	0	5	5	5	15
P Spencer	0	5	5	5	15
R Ilett	5	5	5	0	15
C Russell	5	0	5	0	10
B Stephens	0	0	3	5	8
J Jennings	0	0	5	0	5
D Dhokia	0	0	3	0	3

Club Championship

White	Postponed	Black	
C Russell	0	1	P Spencer
J Jennings	0	1	E Knox
I Goodwin	0	1	N Chedd
D Dhokia	P	P	I Goodwin
C Russell	P	P	P Walker

White	Round 7	Black	
N Chedd	1	0	D Dhokia
E Knox	1	0	N Wedley

Player	N C	P S	B S	P W	I G	D D	S R	C R	Pts
N Chedd	X	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
P Spencer	0	X	1	½	½	1	1	1	5
B Stephens	0	0	X	1	1	1	0	1	4
P Walker	0	½	0	X	1	1	1	P	3½
I Goodwin	0	½	0	0	X	P	1	½	2
D Dhokia	0	0	0	0	P	X	1	1	2
S Reid	0	0	1	0	0	0	X	1	2
C Russell	0	0	0	P	½	0	0	X	½

Player	P H	E K	R I	J J	N W	A N	Pts
P Hanks	X	1	½	1	1	1	4½
E Knox	0	X	½	1	1	1	3½
R Ilett	½	½	X	1	0	1	3
J Jennings	0	0	0	X	½	1	1½
N Wedley	0	0	1	½	X	0	1½
A Neville	0	0	0	0	1	X	1

Champions League	N C	P S	B S	P W	P H	E K	R I	Pts
A N Chedd	X	1	1	1				3
B P Spencer	0	X	1	½				1½
C B Stephens	0	0	X	1				1
D P Walker	0	½	0	X				½
E P Hanks					X	1	½	1½
F E Knox					0	X	½	½
G R Ilett					½	½	X	1

Challengers	I G	D D	S R	C R	J J	N W	A N	Pts
A I Goodwin	X	P	1	½				1½
B D Dhokia	P	X	1	1				2
C S Reid	0	0	X	1				1
D C Russell	½	0	0	X				½
E J Jennings					X	½	1	1½
F N Wedley					½	X	0	½
G A Neville					0	1	X	1

Round 8 24th January

A bye	B v G	C v F	D v E
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Round 9 21st February

G v A	F v B	E v C	D bye
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Round 10 27th March

A v F	B v E	C bye	D v G
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Round 11 3rd April

E v A	B bye	G v C	F v D
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New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4000	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	3½	4	2	½	1½	1		12½	1999
N Chedd	7	0	2	2½	0	1		12½	1867
B Stephens	4		1½	2½	½	2		10½	1781
C Russell	½	2		3½	½	1½		8	1504
P Spencer	5	1	0	½		1		7½	1685
E Knox	3½	1			1	1½		7	1782
N Wedley	1½	1		1			1½	5	1588
R Ilett	3	0	1½	½				5	1772
P Hanks	4½	0	½					5	1918
I Goodwin	2	1		½			1	4½	1460
J Sutherland				2	0	1	1	4	1627
J Jennings	1½	1		0			1	3½	1475
D Dhokia	2	0		0			1½	3½	1326
S Reid	2							2	1322
A Neville	1	0						1	1331

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

According to Wikipedia, we have the Carthaginian scholar Tertullian to thank for the seven deadly sins. Chess was around in his era (c 200AD) but had he been a player, he would have had no difficulty compiling a list relevant to our cherished game :-

- 1 setting up the start position incorrectly
- 2 touching the wrong piece
- 3 forgetting to press your clock
- 4 playing moves in the wrong order
- 5 reaching an endgame
- 6 losing on time
- 7 expecting any post-mortem sympathy.

Whilst this is all ample food for thought as we enter a New Year with good intentions, the more classical vices fortunately have no place at the chessboard ... or so I thought.

P Turp v P Spencer

New England Club Championship Rd 4, 2023

During lockdown, I had started to look for something different to play as White feeling my Reti-type games were not getting me anywhere. I came across a couple of videos expounding the Botvinnik Variation of the English Opening and whilst I was never going to get anything other than a flavour of the opening, it seemed an interesting way to play. This was my first real OTB game after Covid using this opening and although I missed a number of things, it seemed to go well. Also, Paul in good form and I wanted something to try and slow him down a bit!!

1 c4 g6
 2 Nc3 Bg7
 3 g3 Nf6
 4 Bg2 d6

Systems based on the English/Reti Opening exist due to the latent pressure down the long light-squared diagonal. The build-up is slow and does not overtax the memory. Hmm... Does that sound like Sloth?

5 h3

Battle in the centre has not yet been joined and both sides have been developing independently. I thought that this is a useful move in this opening to make sure Black does not place a knight or bishop on g4.

Black has followed the King's Indian Defence. In that opening, White submits to Gluttony and would already have devoured the central space that has been offered by pushing d2-d4 and e2-e4. Black's light-squared bishop has difficulty finding a comfortable square and the text move does squeeze it further. The case for the move at this stage of my game is not so clear-cut because the bishop is not going anywhere from c8 while my threat Bxb7 remains on the board.

5 ... 0-0
 6 e4

With 6 d4, I could have transposed into a fianchetto variation of a more familiar queen's pawn opening whereas I chose to block my prized diagonal. The motivation for this structure comes from the desire to prevent Black constructing a pawn bulwark on d5 but that is far from being in the offing.

6 ... Nbd7
 7 Nge2 c6
 8 0-0

Like a needle stuck on a vinyl record, occupying the centre with a pawn on d4 is suggested by Fritz over the course of the next few moves. This has the disadvantage of allowing exchanges that prematurely resolve how the knight on d7 can leap forward.

8 ... e5
 9 d3

A common position seen in this opening. White gets ready for a kingside attack, central expansion or play on the queenside.

9 ... h6

This offers me a target. Fritz likes 9 ... a6, 9 ... h5 or 9 ... Re8 in this position.

10 Be3 Nh7

I felt this was perhaps a backward step and in fact, the knight never enters the game again. Better might have been 10 ... a6 11 b4 Re8 12 a4 a5 13 b5.

11 Qd2 g5

11 ... h5 would also save the pawn and leave the dark squares less vulnerable to pressure.

12 b4

I have connected my rooks but Black is at least three moves away from doing so. This suggests I have a significant lead in development and might think about

opening the position to exploit it. However, having expended a tempo on d2-d3, I would have to swallow my Pride to consider 12 d4. After 12 ... exd4 13 Nxd4 Ne5 14 b3 g4, Black's position is coming to life.

A human might succumb to Greed and play 12 f4 with a view to using the queen and bishop battery against h6 after 12 ... exf4 13 gxf4 gxf4. If 14 Bxf4 Ne5 15 Bxh6 Qh4, Black has some compensation as my pawn on h3 is weak. 14 Nxf4 is the computer's favourite. With Nf4-h5 coming, there is no need to hurry action against Black's h pawn.

12 ... Ndf6
13 Rad1 Be6

How to play this now? I got confused. I wanted to try and increase my white square control and then play Ne2-g3 followed by a break in the centre.

14 g4

I have reacted to the possibility of 14 ... Qd7 hitting h3 but another way would have been 14 f4 (14 ... Qd7?? 15 f5) as remarked earlier. After exchanges, it would also clear g3 for my knight and Black has lost the option of gaining activity through Qd8-h4. The computer continues 14 f4 b5 15 cxb5 gxf4 16 gxf4 when it thinks White is slightly better.

14 ... d5

I hadn't expected this move and thought/hoped I was a bit better now ...

15 cxd5 cxd5
16 d4

... and Fritz thinks I am but at the time, I was quite pleased with this and my next move.

The problem with annotating positional play is that most sensible moves are neither definitely right nor definitely wrong. I could initiate the sequence 16 exd5 Nxd5 17 Nxd5 Bxd5 18 d4 and my minor plus remains as just that. It all depends on what you think of the final position. Here, transposition to a simplified, open game would suit Black. I preferred to maintain cramping the black knights ... and, as it happens, having a passed pawn!

16 ... dxe4

In the light of the previous comment, the exchanges following 16 ... Nxe4 or 16 ... exd4 would release more tension.

17 d5 Bd7
18 Ng3 a5
19 b5 Rc8
20 a4

I was pleased to have arrived at what I thought was not a bad position for White. The d pawn looks good (although I know looks can be deceiving!!), I can get my pawn back and concentrate on the queenside.

20 ... Qc7

Fritz seems to think this is a mistake and White gets a clear advantage. I am not sure I thought that at the time but one thing that now starts to help me is Paul's clock. With my next few moves I just wanted to get some more development.

21 Rc1

The computer thinks it is time to strike.

- One line Fritz likes is 21 Rc1 b6 22 Ncxe4 Qb8 23 Nxf6+ Nxf6 24 Rc6 Bxc6 25 bxc6. White has a decisive advantage (2.85).
- 21 Ncxe4 Nxe4 22 Nxe4 Nf6 23 Nc5 b6 24 d6 Qa7 (24 ... Qd8 25 Nb7 Qe8 26 Bxb6) 25 Nxd7 Nxd7 26 Rc1 when the raking bishops, sidelined black queen and eventual penetration to c7 would be sufficient.

21 ... Qc4
22 Rc2

Now I continued with what I thought was a simple idea - double rooks - but instead Fritz wants me to aim a knight at b7 e.g. 22 b6 Qb4 23 Ncxe4 Rfd8 (23 ... Qxd2 24 Bxd2 Bxa4 25 Nc5) 24 Qxb4 axb4 25 Nd6 and be winning comfortably (3.03).

22 ... Rfd8
23 Bb6 Re8
24 Rfc1 Qb4
25 Rb1

After 25 d6, Black need not worry about the safety of his queen as there is always an escape route. Looking deeper, it looks virtually impossible for Black to defend the pawns on a5 immediately and b7 later when the e4 square has been cleared.

25 ... Qd6
26 Bxa5 Nxd5

The clock was starting to have an effect on things. This error awakens my bishop and unleashes its Wrath. Alternatives do not seem to stem the tide of

- removing the blockade of the d pawn and advancing it
- opening the diagonal by exchanges on e4

e.g. 26 ... b6 27 Bb4 Qb8 28 Ngxe4 Nxe4 29 Nxe4 Rxc2 30 Qxc2 Nf6 31 Nxf6+ Bxf6 32 d6 Rc8 33 Bc6.



Now, Black is losing a piece.

27	Ngxe4	Qe6
28	Nxd5	Rxc2
29	Qxc2	Rc8

29 ... Qxd5 30 Nf6+ Nxf6 31 Bxd5 yields only two minor pieces for the queen without fuss but the computer is more patient with the stronger continuation 30 Rd1 Qe6 31 Nc5 Rc8 32 Bc6 (certainly not on my radar) 32 ... Qg6 33 Qxg6 fxg6 34 Bd5+ Kh8 35 Nxd7 or 34 Nxd7 bxc6 35 b6.

30	Qd3	Ra8
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I hear you cry 31 Nc7 in this position when 31 ... Qe7 32 Nxa8 f5 33 Nb6 Be6 and White is clearly winning on material. Simple truth - I didn't see it. A piece up, I thought the effort was over although I'm sure I had an eye on Paul's clock as well!

31	Qd2	b6
32	Nxb6	1-0

Six down, one to go. I been forced to sit out this season and only able to follow the welter of games from afar in the newsletter. The NHS might spring into action this month and enable me to return to over the board play. Yep, Envy... definitely!

Phil Turp

Eye Opener

Anthony C Kosten (2522) v Craig Hanley (2367)
La Pobra de Lillet Rd 9; 10.08.2005

1	c4	Nf6
2	Nc3	g6
3	g3	Bg7
4	Bg2	0-0
5	e4	d6
6	Nge2	e5
7	0-0	c6
8	d3	

So far, these players have followed the game in the main article by transposition apart from the omission of 5 h3 and 6 ... Nbd7. The computer's evaluation of both positions is identical!

White is a grandmaster, Black an international master and at their level, move order nuances are important. Both players want to keep their options open and wait for commitment from their opponent before choosing their deployment. By delaying Nb8-d7, Black keeps White guessing where his light-squared bishop will venture and has disdained two opportunities to place it on g4. Soon, he will run out of useful waiting moves.

8	...	a6
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Black tries to open lines on the queenside. This is not without some danger because it weakens the pawns blocking the long h1-a8 diagonal, as we shall see.

9	h3	
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At last, White cuts out any g4 options but Black's bishop can still develop with tempo.

9	...	b5
10	Be3	Be6
11	b3	b4
12	Na4	Nfd7

The computer recommends 12 ... c5. Why?

Traditionally, Black plans f7-f5 to start an attack on that flank but also, the orthodox advice is only to start a pawn storm when the centre is controlled and stable. Black ignores this tenet and does so by hindering the activity of his own forces.

13	d4	f5
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Black seems to have everything covered...

14	d5	
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14	...	cx d5
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This is a complex situation with many continuations to analyse but not many favour Black. If Black retreats with 14 ... Bf7, 15 dxc6 Nxc6 16 Qxd6 and White has several discovered threats against Black's many weaknesses. Being a pawn down, Black does best to counter-attack with 16 ... f4 17 gxf4 exf4 18 Nxf4 Bxa1 19 Rxa1 Nde5. Fritz loves White's position to the tune of 3 pawns but it would be hard to make this call over the board.

Trying the same thing a move earlier 14 ... f4 15 gxf4 exf4 16 Nxf4 would mean looking at 16 ... Bxa1 17 dxe6, 16 ... Rxh4 dxe6, 16 ... Bxh3 17 Nxh3 Bxa1 18 Qxa1 and 16 ... Bf7 Ne6. Were they already in time trouble?

15	exf5	1-0
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Bravo! It takes time to understand Black's plight. The bishop on e6 and rook on a8 are undefended so that even 15 ... gxf5 16 Bxd5 cannot save them both and 15 ... Bf7 16 fxg6 hxg6 17 Bxd5 Ra7 18 Bxa7.