

New Englander

Chess Club Update – April 2024

Chairman's Chatter

Phil Turp has passed on the sad news of the death of founder member Des Lane. He joined the Perkins fold, our predecessor club, on the demise of Bourne Chess Club and would have featured from New England's very beginnings but for a previous bout of illness. He nevertheless contributed two games to newsletter issue 005 in December 2007 and his last game was recorded in April 2020, played just before the Covid lockdowns. Our honours board records him winning Division 2 of the club championship and once sharing victory in the Rapidplay event. He can now continue his epic verbal sparring with Harry Currie in another dimension! Phil will announce details of funeral arrangements on the website in due course. Rest in peace, Des.

We are entering the home straight for the current season. The teams in Division 2 and the Team 7000 competitions have completed their fixtures but the A team is barely half way through its commitments!

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

10th April Club Handicap tournament. Please note that this event clashes with a Posh home fixture.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Havel 1900)

Position : 8/8/8/8/1B6/8/2k5/K2b2RQ

1 Rg4 B any 2 Qb1# [1 ... Kd3 2 Qe4#; 1 ... Kb3 2 Qxd1#; 1 ... Kc1 2 Rc4#]

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire League

St Ives A	3½	New England A	1½
N Greenwood	1	P Walker	0
R Coleman	1	R Ilett	0
J Beck	½	B Stephens	½
P Baddeley	0	P Spencer	1
J Canamares	1	C Russell	0

New England A	P	St Neots A	P
Re-scheduled for 3 rd April			

Rookwood	2	New England B	2
F Bowers	1	B Stephens	0
L Levet	0	P Hanks	1
G Pearl	0	C Russell	1
T O'Keefe	1	J Jennings	0

New England B	3½	St Neots B	½
B Stephens	1	C Emery	0
N Chedd	1	J Greiller	0
P Spencer	½	R McMorran	½
C Russell	1	M Hellewell	0

Team 7000 competition

NE Patriots	1½	Spalding	2½
P Walker	0	S Prior	1
P Spencer	½	A Marshall	½
E Knox	1	C Featherstone	0
D Dhokia	0	J Moseley-Hutchinson	1

Team 4000 competition

Peterborough	1	NE Cavaliers	2
F Fairhurst	1	J Jennings	0
L Menerigamage	0	I Goodwin	1
S Fairhurst	0	D Dhokia	1

Spalding	P	NE Cavaliers	P
Re-scheduled for 16 th April			

NE Patriots	P	P'boro Knights	P
Re-scheduled for 24 th April			

Club Championship

White	Postponed		Black
C Russell	P	P	J Jennings
E Knox	0	1	P Spencer
J Jennings	0	1	S Reid

White	Round 10		Black
N Chedd	P	P	E Knox
P Spencer	P	P	P Hanks
P Walker	0	1	R Ilett
I Goodwin	P	P	N Wedley
D Dhokia	0	1	J Jennings
C Russell	0	1	A Neville

White	Round 11		Black
R Ilett	1	0	B Stephens

Champions League	R	N	P	P	P	B	E	Pts
	I	C	S	H	W	S	K	
R Ilett	X	1	1	½	1	1	½	5
N Chedd	0	X	1	P	1	1	P	3
P Spencer	0	0	X	P	½	1	1	2½
P Hanks	½	P	P	X	0	1	1	2½
P Walker	0	0	½	1	X	0	P	1½
B Stephens	0	0	0	0	1	X	½	1½
E Knox	½	P	0	0	P	½	X	1

Challengers	A	D	J	S	N	I	C	Pts
	N	D	J	R	W	G	R	
A Neville	X	1	0		1	1	1	4
D Dhokia	0	X	0	1	½	1	1	3½
J Jennings	1	1	X	0	½	P	P	2½
S Reid		0	1	X	0	0	1	2
N Wedley	0	½	½	1	X			2
I Goodwin	0	0	P	1		X	½	1½
C Russell	0	0	P	0		½	X	½

New England Club Ladder

White	Black		
P Walker	1	0	B Stephens
J Jennings	0	1	D Dhokia
J Peoples	0	1	N Wedley

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 27/03/24
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+7	R Ilett	0,1
2	-	-1	P Walker	1,1,1,1,1,0,1
3	-	+4	C Russell	1,1
4	+5	+2	A Neville	0,0,0,0
5	-	-3	P Hanks	0
6	-	-3	P Spencer	1
7	-	+2	E Knox	1
8	-4	-4	I Goodwin	0,0,1
9	+3	+3	D Dhokia	1,0,1
10	-	-5	J Jennings	1,0,0
11	-	-1	N Chedd	0
12	-4	-1	N Wedley	0,1
13	-	-	B Stephens	0
14	-	-	J Peoples	0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4000	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	5½	6	2½	1½	1½	2		19	1948
N Chedd	7	0	3	6	0	1½		17½	1853
B Stephens	4½	0	3	5	½	2		15	1750
P Spencer	6	1	1	2		2½		12½	1708
R Ilett	7	1	2	½	1			11½	1918
C Russell	½	2		6	½	2		11	1481
E Knox	4	1	1		1	2½		9½	1789
P Hanks	5½	0	½	1	½			7½	1876
N Wedley	3	2		1			1½	7½	1559
D Dhokia	3½	1		0		2½		7	1193
I Goodwin	2	1		½			2	5½	1355
J Sutherland				2½	0	1	1	4½	1588
J Jennings	2½	1		0			1	4½	1313
A Neville	4	0						4	1478
S Reid	3							3	1338
J Peoples		0						0	925

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

Not many of us engage with the weekend congress circuit. It gives an opportunity to meet different opposition from the regular opponents in the Cambridgeshire leagues and by entering the open

sections of an event, you can pit your skills against the strongest players. Here is an example of what you might expect.

J Walker (1954) v R Ilett
Hull Congress; 10.09.2023

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	b6

By delaying the clash of centre pawns, the Queen's Indian Defence retains great flexibility for Black. In consequence, however, its first goal must be to prevent White taking complete control with the advance e2-e4 and my knight and bishop are deployed to aim at this square.

4	g3	Bb7
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White's fianchetto leaves the pawn on c4 without easy defence and 4 ... Ba6 would pose an immediate question. This line is recommended by Fischer and his advice has been followed by such heavyweights as Karpov, Kasparov and Anand.

5	Bg2	Be7
6	O-O	O-O
7	Nc3	

So far, all standard stuff but this is a major point of divergence. A popular continuation at master level is 7 Re1 when Black can make a commitment with a centre pawn but the surprising 7 ... Na6 has often appeared keeping the diagonal open.

More critical is the quasi-gambit 7 d5 which was played in the watershed demonstration of the power of artificial intelligence AlphaZero v Stockfish, 2017. After 7 ... exd5 8 Nh4 c6 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Nf5 Nc7 11 e4, a more recent version of Fritz gives White a small plus i.e. sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn to let White build slow pressure. AlphaZero went on to score three victories in the match – based largely on creating kingside weaknesses with Qd1-g4.

Watch out for the pesky d pawn...

7	...	d5
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7 ... Ne4 is a radical attempt to prevent White's push. Black is probably best to give up ideas of making the outpost permanent after 8 Qc2 with 8 ... Nxc3. If 8 ... f5, 9 Ne5

- 9 ... d6? 10 Nxe4 dxe5 (10 ... fxe4 11 Bxe4) 11 Nf6+
- 9 ... Nd6 10 Bxb7 Nxb7 looks an odd placement of the black knights and White can add insult to injury with 11 e4
- 9 ... d5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 Bf4 when the Black's knight can be readily displaced whereas its counterpart can only be exchanged thereby conceding a passed pawn.

8	Ne5	Nbd7
9	cxd5	Nxe5

9 ... Nxd5 is best. The text allows White a little trick.

These central pawn exchanges have become more complicated when more pieces have been developed.

9 ... exd5 is even worse because 10 Qa4 threatens to swap pieces on d7 and divert my king's knight from the defence of d5 e.g.

- 10 ... c5 11 Nxd7 Qxd7 (11 ... Nxd7 12 Nxd5) 12 Qxd7 Nxd7 13 Bxd5
- and 10 ... Nxe5 11 dxe5 pretty much achieves the same thing viz.
 - 11 ... Nd7 12 Nxd5
 - 11 ... Ne4 12 Nxe4 dxe4 13 Bxe4
 - 11 ... Ne8 12 Nxd5 Bxd5 13 Rd1 c6 14 e4 Nc7 15 exd5 cxd5 16 Be3. The computer assesses this position as 2 pawns better for White which seems a generous reward for the bishop pair and a target on d5.



10	dxe5
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I was pleased White missed the stronger 10 d6! when 10 ... Nc6 (10 ... Bxd6? 11 Bxb7; 10 ... Bxg2? 11 dxe7) 11 dxe7 Qxc7 12 e4 is more difficult for Black. White has fulfilled the basic strategy and a plausible continuation is 12 ... Rad8 13 e5 Nd5 14 Nxd5 exd5 15 Be3 f6. It seems I will be using my slightly superior development to undermine White's centre but 16 Qh5 breathes life into tactics with Be3-g5 (e.g. 16 ... fxe5 17 Bg5 or 16 ... Qf7 17 Qxf7+ Rxf7 18 exf6 gxf6 [18 ... Rxf6 19 Bg5] with shattered pawns) and Black also has to address 17 exf6 and 18 Bxd5+.

10	...	Nxd5
11	Ne4	

White could try to exploit the pin on the light-squared diagonal with 11 Qc2 and the prospect of Rf1-d1 and e2-e4. It looks more dangerous than calm analysis reveals. Dodging the bullet with 11 ... Nxc3 leads to problems after 12 Bxb7 Rb8 13 Bc6 Nd5 14 a3 when the knight is still looking for an escape square. Of course, Black sidesteps this with 11 ... Nb4 but at first glance, 11 Qb3 avoids this attack and might be an improvement. Unfortunately for White, Black has the resource 11 ... Nxc6 12 Bxb7 Ne2+.

11	...	c5
12	Nd6	Qb8
13	Nxb7	Qxb7
14	f4	Rad8
15	Qc2	Qc7
16	a3	c4

Over the past few moves, the position has been hovering around equality but I have quietly acquired a queenside majority – and an obvious plan.

17	e4	Bc5+
18	Kh1	Ne3
19	Bxe3	Bxe3
20	Rad1	b5
21	Rd6	

White has prevented my rook from penetrating to d2 but this move is hard to fathom. It loses a pawn. Maybe my opponent considered the doubled e pawns as worthless and felt it more important to exchange rooks and control the open file.

21	...	Rxd6
22	exd6	Qxd6
23	Rd1	Qc7
24	b3	Qc5

The text is good enough but 24 ... c3 is better. If my pawn reaches a dark square, it becomes invulnerable to my opponent's bishop e.g. 25 Rd3 Bd2.

25	bxc4	bxc4
26	Qc3	Rc8
27	Bf1	h6

My bishop prevents 28 Rc1 but it does mean my pieces have become rather static. This gives White the idea of bringing his last unit into play which also avoids some of the problems with an exposed king. After 27 ... g5 which is now is best,

- 28 fxf5 Qxg5 29 Bxc4 Qg4 30 Rf1 Qxe4+
- 28 f5
 - 28 ... exf5 29 Bxc4 fxe4 (29 ... Qxc4 30 Rd8+) 30 Rd7 with a counterattack
 - 28 ... e5 29 Rd5 Qb6 30 Kg2 (30 Rxe5 Bd4; 30 Bxc4 Qb1+ 31 Kg2 Qxe4+. Other 29th moves for White simply allow Be3-d4 and the advance of the c pawn.

28	Kg2	g5
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Black finds 28 ... g5! Better late than never!

29	Kf3	
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The last chance to fight on was 29 fxf5 because the previous variation 28 ... Qxg5 29 Bxc4 Qg4 no longer comes with the threat Qg4-f3+. It looks like White might just be trapping the bishop but things are under control and Black goes on to pick up the win.

29	...	gxf4
30	gxf4	Qh5+
31	Kxe3	Qxd1
32	Kf2	Qg4
33	Qd4	c3
34	Ba6	c2

0-1
Ray Ilett

Eye Opener

Stuart Conquest (2275) v Asmah
World Junior Championship, Copenhagen; 1982

1	Nf3	Nf6
2	g3	b6
3	d4	e6
4	c4	d5
5	Bg2	Be7
6	0-0	0-0
7	cxd5	exd5
8	Ne5	Bb7
9	Nc3	Re8

With 9 ... Nbd7, Black could transpose into the main game with the alternative capture on d5 criticised in a comment. There, the refutation was Qd1-a4 but in the current position, Black leaves the d file open and there would be no exchanges threatened on d7.

10	Qb3	Nbd7
11	Rd1	

There is no free pawn after 11 Nxd5 Nxd5 12 Bxd5 Bxd5 13 Qxd5 Nxe5 14 Qxd8 (14 Qxe5 Bf6) 14 ... Bxd8 15 dxe5 Rxe5.

11	...	c6
12	e4	

White's queen puts pressure on d5 and by an X-ray, also f7. Black reacts by shutting the b3-f7 diagonal...

12	...	Nf8
13	Be3	Ne6

... but runs into problems along the g2-b7 light squares.



14	Nxc6	Bxc6
15	exd5	Nxd4

White wins material after 15 ... Nxd5 16 Nxd5 Bxd5 17 Bxd5 Rc8 18 Bxe6 but it may still be preferable.

16	Rxd4	Bb7
17	d6	1-0