

New Englander

Chess Club Update – October 2024

Chairman's Chatter

Many thanks must go to Ed for his efforts in launching our Junior Club. By the time you receive this newsletter, there will have been two sessions which have comfortably filled the room and provided lively entertainment for the participants. We have even received some money from the ECF Grassroots Support fund to cover the additional equipment. Well begun is half done!

Elsewhere, the team matches, club championship and Ladder competition are all under way. Captains are reporting a reticence to volunteer so please let them know your availability to maximise their choice. It is not about always fielding the strongest team, we want to ensure everyone in the club has opportunities and enjoys the coming season.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

Great Britain recently won the World Team Solving Championship. Here is one of the puzzles they had to overcome. White to play and mate in 2.



Position : 7b/8/b7/N7/4Q3/2k5/2P5/2K5

Last Month's solution (Kapralos/Moutecidis 1961)

1 Nc6 Bc4 2 Qe1#[1 ... Bd4 2 Qxd4#; 1 ... other 2 Qb4#]

Diary Dates

23-24th November County Individual at Christie Hall, Wansford. Click [here](#) for the entry form.

Website to Watch

"Witness the game in a never-seen-before avatar." If you understand this, you should watch the Global Chess League - six teams of six grandmasters in a double-round all-play-all tournament. The teams must comprise 1 icon, 2 male players, 2 female players and 1 rising talent and in any match, all players in one team play the same colour! Sponsored by Tech Mahindra, the event takes places from [3rd to 12th October](#) at Euston Rd, London and [tickets](#) are £15 per session with 3-4 team matches from 1:00-7:00pm. Please see <https://globalchessleague.com>.

Result Round-up

Club Rapidplay : 4th September 2024

Player	Round				Total
	1	2	3	4	
N Chedd	1	1	1	1	4
P Spencer	0	1	1	1	3
R Ilett	1	1	1	0	3
(Mike)/P Hanks	0	0	1	1	2
P Walker	0	1	0	1	2
A Neville	1	0	0	1	2
C Russell	1	1	0	0	2
E Knox	0	0	1	0	1
D Dhokia	1	0	0	0	1
J Peoples	0	0	0	0	0

New Members' Night tournament : 11th September 2024

Pos	Player	Score	Pos	Player	Score
1	R Taylor	4	5	S Walker	2
2	J Sutherland	3	6	P Spencer	2
3	C Russell	2	7	Joshua I	1
4	D Seaton	2	8	J Parker	0

Club Championship

White	Round 1		Black
P Spencer	1	0	S Walker
N Chedd	½	½	J Sutherland
P Walker (Rd 7)	1	0	P Hanks
P Walker	P	P	D Dhokia
P Hanks	P	P	J Peoples
B Stephens	P	P	A Neville

Group A	<i>P</i> <i>W</i>	<i>P</i> <i>S</i>	<i>P</i> <i>H</i>	<i>S</i> <i>W</i>	<i>C</i> <i>R</i>	<i>J</i> <i>P</i>	<i>D</i> <i>D</i>	<i>Pts</i>
P Walker	X		1					1
P Spencer		X		1				1
P Hanks	0		X					0
S Walker		0		X				0
C Russell					X			
J Peoples						X		
D Dhokia							X	

Group B	<i>J</i> <i>S</i>	<i>N</i> <i>C</i>	<i>R</i> <i>I</i>	<i>E</i> <i>K</i>	<i>B</i> <i>S</i>	<i>A</i> <i>N</i>	<i>Pts</i>
J Sutherland	X	½					½
N Chedd	½	X					½
R Ilett			X				
E Knox				X			
B Stephens					X		
A Neville						X	

Cambridgeshire League

St Ives A	1	New England A	4
A Williams	0	P Walker	1
D Okorafor	0	R Ilett	1
N Greenwood	0	P Hanks	1
D Rice	½	B Stephens	½
R Mann	½	N Chedd	½

St Ives B	1½	New England B	2½
A Williams	½	P Walker	½
N Greenwood	0	B Stephens	1
J Canamares	0	N Chedd	1
E Unbekandt	1	C Russell	0

Peterborough B	2½	New England B	1½
A Kaszuba	½	R Ilett	½
J Bell	1	Default	0
A Johns	0	C Russell	1
C Masseron	1	J Jennings	0

Team 4200

NE Cavaliers	1	Rookwood	2
J Jennings	0	L Levet	1
D Dhokia	0	D Dwyer	1
J Peoples	1	D Gamsby	0

New England Club Ladder

White	Black	
J Peoples	1	0 D Dhokia

<i>Position</i>	<i>Change</i>		<i>Player</i>	<i>Record @ 25/09/24</i>
	<i>Month</i>	<i>Overall</i>		
1	-	-	J Peoples	1
2	-	-	D Dhokia	0

New England Grand Prix

<i>Player</i>	<i>Champ</i>	<i>Ladder</i>	<i>League</i>		<i>Cup</i>	<i>Team 7000</i>	<i>Team 4200</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>TPR*</i>
			<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>					
P Walker	1		1	½				2½	2137
N Chedd	½		½	1				2	1759
J Peoples	1					1		2	1737
R Ilett			1	½				1½	2118
B Stephens			½	1				1½	2012
P Hanks	0		1					1	1879
P Spencer	1							1	1841
C Russell				1				1	1688
J Sutherland	½							½	1757
S Walker	0							0	1375
J Jennings				0		0	0	0	1122
D Dhokia	0					0	0	0	1009
A Neville									-
N Wedley									-
E Knox									-

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

This game was the very last of the 2023-24 season. So much so, that it could not be accommodated at our home venue and was played on a Thursday with the Peterborough club kindly offering to act as hosts.

Ed Knox (1746) v Peter Walker (1928)

New England Club Championship Rd 11; 09.05.2024

1 **d4** **Nf6**
2 **Nc3** **d6**
3 **Bf4**

The early development of this bishop is a characteristic of the London System. The standard move order would include 2 Nf3 and the queen's knight would appear on d2 to allow the centre to be solidified with c2-c3. The variation with 2 Nc3 has been popularised by Georgian grandmaster Jobava. It has the advantage of being fairly universal i.e. it can be played against most replies by Black.

4 ... **g6**
4 **e3** **Bg7**
5 **Be2** **0-0**
6 **h4**

This flank advance flies in the face of classical theory but such temerity is becoming mainstream after the success of the AI program AlphaZero. An extreme example of the concept would be 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 h4 (Fedoseev (2696) v Carlsen (2847), 2021).

I cannot say what impact the move had but it seems from the subsequent deployment of his knights to have shocked Peter into forgetting he was not playing Alekhine's Defence!

6	...	Nfd7
7	h5	e5
8	hxg6	hxg6

8 ... exf4!? 9 gxh7+ Kh8 and although the engine slightly favours Black, I thought there was reasonable compensation here.

9	dxe5	dxe5
10	Bh6	Nb6
11	Bxg7	Kxg7
12	Nf3	Qe7

The engine prefers to leave the queen swap as an option e.g. 12 ... Nc6 13 Qd2 with equality.

13	Nd5	
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The game is not going to be queenless so 13 e4 should be considered with 14 Qd2 (if 13 ... Rd8 14 Qc1) and unpleasantness on h6 to follow. As it is, the open h file now is of little significance.

13	...	Nxd5
14	Qxd5	Nc6
15	0-0-0	Be6
16	Qe4	Bxa2

I wasn't expecting Peter to opt for this line. Remember Spassky v Fischer, 1st Match Game Reykjavik 1972?

17	b3	
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Trapping the bishop felt like the natural choice, although the engine shows that winning the e5 pawn by 17 Bb5 Rfd8 18 Rxd8 Rxd8 19 Bxc6 bxc6 20 Qxe5+ was stronger.

17	...	Qa3+
18	Kd2	f5

One line is 18 ... Rh8 19 Rxh8 Rxh8 20 Kc3 but given the exposed position of my king, keeping the rooks on will give Black attacking opportunities. If, instead, extricating the bishop can start by 18 ... Qb2 19 Bc4 (to prevent 19 Bxb3) Rad8+ 20 Ke2 Rxd1 21 Rxd1 Bb1. Mixing this variation with the text move by 19 ... f4 runs into 20 Rh7+ Kxh7 (20 ... Kf6 21 Qh4 mating) 21 Ng5+ Kg7 22 Ne6+ Kg8 23 Qh4 (obviously a computer move where 24 Ng5+ is terrifying) 23 ... Na5 24 Ng5+ Nxc4 25 Qxc4+. I doubt any human, not least me, could assess this as a winning attack but Fritz is happy to evaluate it at +7 pawns.

19	Qc4	a5??
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Superficially, White is suffering. In fact, the computer gives White a pawn advantage, the opposite to the actual material balance. The text move gives the opponent new chances when 19 ... Rad8+ 20 Kc3 Rxd1 21 Rxd1 Re8 would be an alternative.

20	Ng5	
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White is now winning because the h file is at last repaying move 6! My combination of N, R and Q means my attack is looking stronger with threats of mate in 5 (by 21 Rh7+ Kf6 22 Qe6+ Kxg5 23 f4+ exf4 24 exf4+ Kxf4 25 Qe3#) and 21 Ne6+ which are difficult to deal with. As 20 ... Rh8 21 Qf7# is fatal, Black can only prevent incursions by detrimental exchanges.

20	...	Rfd8+
21	Bd3	Qb4+
22	Qxb4	Nxb4

22 ... axb4 23 Ne6+ or the trickier 23 Rh7+ Kf6 24 f4 exf4 25 exf4 Bxb3 26 cxb3.

23	Ne6+	Kf6
24	Nxd8	Rxd8
25	Kc1??	

Wrong choice! The only way to hang on to the advantage was 25 Kc3!? protecting the bishop. After 25 ... c6 26 Bc4 Rxd1 27 Rxd1 b5 28 Bg8 Kg7 29 Be6 Kf6 30 Bd7 Ke7 31 Kb2, as well as being an exchange up for a pawn, I would be picking up more material on the queenside.

25	...	Bxb3
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25 ... Nxd3+ 26 Rxd3 Rxd3 27 cxd3 Bxb3 28 Rh8 would have been even better for Black.

26	cxb3	
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I missed 26 Bxf5!? Rd5 27 Kb2 as a better continuation.

26	...	Nxd3+
27	Kc2	Nb4+
28	Kc3	Nd5+
29	Kc4	c6

Material is now equal, with Black having 2 pawns for the exchange.

30	Kc5	Ra8
31	Rh7	a4
32	bx a4	Rxa4
33	Rxb7	Ra2?

I have slowly acquired a small plus in the endgame and this is a further bonus. With 33 ... Ke6!?, the tempting 34 Kxc5 Rc4+ 35 Kb5 Rc2 36 Rf1 Rb2+ leads to repetitive checks on the a,b and c files – an interesting construction! I should have to resist and try to work something from 34 Rg7 Ra5+ 35 Kxc6 Ne7+ 36.Kb6 Ra2.

34 Kxc6

I have managed to regain the two pawns to be an exchange up, although I have now dropped under 5 minutes on the clock and I am under time pressure.

34 ... Nc3
35 Rd6+

35 Rc1 Ne4 36 f3 Ng5 is superior but Black would still have hopes of a fortress.

35 ... Kg5±
36 f4+

As a general principle, in endgames with unbalanced forces, the weaker party should exchange pawns and the stronger the pieces. Here the issue is forced by the vulnerability of my pawns. 36 Rg7 catches the eye but 36 ... Ra6+ 37 Kd7 Ra7+ or 37 Kc5 Ne4+ turn the tables.

36 ... exf4
37 exf4+ Kxf4
38 Rxc6 Ne4
39 Rb3 Ra6+
40 Rb6 Ra3?

Despite the general principle, there was no harm in 40 ... Rxb6+ 41 Kxb6 Ke3 42 Kb5 f4 43 Kc4 f3. I might even have declined the pawn swap and fallen for 44 g4 f2!

41 Rb4??

It felt natural to pin the knight but this loses a lot of my initiative. I need my forces on the kingside so 41 Kd5.

41 ... Rg3
42 Rxc6 Kxc6
43 Rb2 f4
44 Kd5 Nf2
45 Ke6 Kxc6
46 Kf5 f3
47 Rb3 ½-½

Playing on just the increment, I panicked and decided to just take off the pawn, when 47 Kf4 would have been better. It is probably still a theoretical draw with best play but there are still some traps e.g.

- 47 ... Kg1 48 Kxf3 is almost zugzwang
 - 48 ... Nh3 49 Rb5
 - 49 ... Kh2 50 Rh5
 - 49 ... Kh1 50 Kg3
 - 48 ... Nd3!
- 47 ... Kf1 48 Kxf3
 - 48 ... Nd3 49 Rb1+ Ne1+ 50 Ke3
 - 48 ... Nd1! 49 Rh2 Ke1 (49 ... Kg1 50 Rd2 Nc3 51 Rd4 and the knight can be driven away) 50 Rg2 Kf1.

Ed Knox

Eye Opener

One way to combat the London System is for Black to push c7-c5 and play Qd8-b6 to target the pawn on b2 that Bc1-f4 has left unguarded. However, I hope none of you will fall for the trap 1 d4 d5 2 Bf4 Nf6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 Qb6 5 Qc2 Bf5? 6 Qxf5 Qxb2 7 Qc8# (Vogel (2152) v Krivec (2301); Dresden, 2004).

Omid Malek (2268) v Paul Usselman (1781)
Calgary Open; 2023

1 d4 d5
2 Nc3 Bf5

Although Ed would never play so crudely, the Jobava variation with 3 Bf4 would always keep in hand the tactic Nc3-b5 threatening the fork on c7. Black has several ways to counter but there are also less obvious development paths that make the defence more difficult. Here, the early deployment of the bishop tempts a kingside advance to dislodge the knight on f6 and when it re-enters the game on e7, the bishop on f8 cannot contest the dark squares by e.g. 9 ... Bd6.

3 f3 Nf6
4 g4 Bg6
5 h4 h5

For the adventurous, Black can test White's resolve with 5 ... Qd6. After 6 h5 Qg3+ 7 Kd2, the evaluation by Fritz fluctuates wildly but Black must open the position with either 7 ... c5 or 7 ... e5. In neither case should White exchange pawns because 8 dxc5 d4 9 Nb5 Qf4+ is a perpetual check and 8 dxe5 d4 9 Nb5 Bb4+ yields plenty of attacking compensation.

6 g5 Ng8
7 Bf4 c6
8 e3 e6
9 Bd3 Ne7
10 Nge2 Nd7
11 e4 c5??
12 Nb5

Here it comes! Black's play has ensured that no piece can cover c7 (if 12 ... Rc8 13 Nd6#) but there is a check which gives the black king the chance to move. Sadly, 12 ... Qa4+ 13 c3 0-0-0 14 Nd6+ leads to a deadly discovered check and 13 ... Kd8 14 Bc7+. White even finds a stronger option...

12 ... Qa5+
13 b4 Qxb4+
14 Bd2 Qa4
15 Nec3 1-0

If 15 ... Qa5 16 Nd6+ Kd8 17 Nxb7+ or 15 ... Qb4

16 a3 Qb2 17 Rb1 or 16 Nxd5

- 16 ... Qb2 17 Rb1
- 16 ... Qa4 17 Nd6+ Kd8 18 Nxb7+ Kc8 (18 ... Ke8 19 Nc7#) 19 Nd6+ Kd8 20 Bb5 Qa3 21 Nc4 etc.

Your choice!