

New Englander

Chess Club Update – December 2024

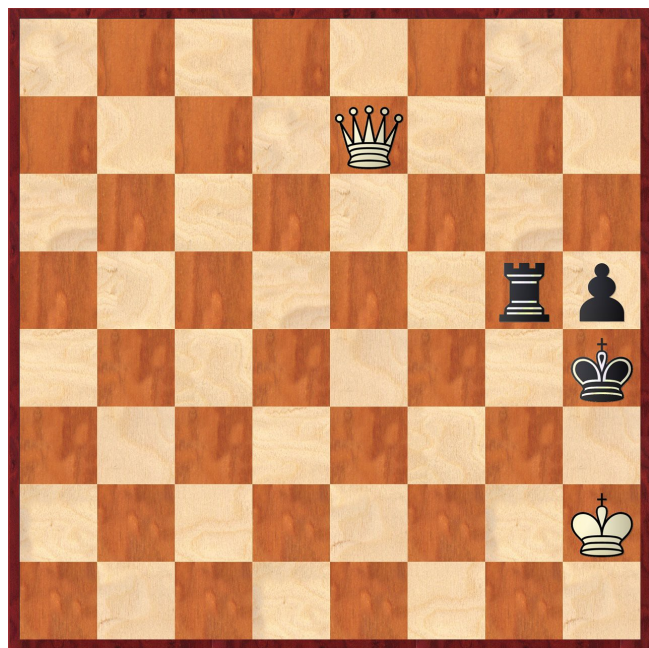
Chairman's Chatter

It is becoming a tough season! Some matches have been postponed by our opponents and when we do play, rival teams are much more competitive having acquired strong top boards. Despite recording no wins this month, the teams have kept the margins tight and only a little luck would have changed the outcomes. Let us hope we get something to celebrate this month!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

At a recent session of the Junior Club, the subject was finding checkmates. The position below was one of the challenges (White to play and mate in 2). Can you solve it as easily as the rising talents?



Position : 8/8/3Q3P/5N2/5Pk1/3P4/5K2/8

Last Month's solution (Kardos 1992)

1 Qf6 Kh5 2 Qg5# [1 ... Kh3 2 Qh4#; 1 ... Kxf4 2 Ne3#]

Diary Dates

11th December Christmas Special

Website to Watch

Although everything is overshadowed by the World Championship match in Singapore, there is another significant event much closer to home. The London Chess Classic takes place from 29th November to 6th December at the Emirates Stadium, home to Arsenal football club. Online games will appear on <https://www.londonchessclassic.com/watch-live>.

Result Round-up

Club Championship

White	Rounds 1,4&7		Black
B Stephens	P	P	A Neville
P Spencer	1	0	J Peoples
P Hanks	1	0	D Dhokia
R Ilett	1	0	J Sutherland
A Neville	0	1	E Knox
C Russell	0	1	J Peoples

Group A	P W	P S	P H	D D	S W	J P	C R	Pts
P Walker	X		1	1	1	1		4
P Spencer		X	0		1	1	1	3
P Hanks	0	1	X	1		1		3
D Dhokia	0		0	X	1		½	1½
S Walker	0	0		0	X		1	1
J Peoples	0	0	0			X	1	1
C Russell		0		½	0	0	X	½

Group B	B S	R I	N C	J S	E K	A N	Pts
B Stephens	X			1	1	P	2
R Ilett		X		1		1	2
N Chedd			X	½	1		1½
J Sutherland	0	0	½	X		1	1½
E Knox	0		0		X	1	1
A Neville	P	0		0	0	X	0

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	1½	St Neots A	3½
P Walker	0	A Mihalik	1
R Ilett	0	R Gompelman	1
P Hanks	½	J Vieira	½
P Spencer	0	P Barkas	1
N Chedd	1	C Emery	0

Godmanchester	2	New England B	2
D Hurricks	½	B Stephens	½
J Wright	½	N Chedd	½
R Coetsee	0	C Russell	1
M English	1	J Peoples	0

New England B	2	Ely	2
P Spencer	1	B Leadon	0
N Chedd	0	D Short	1
E Knox	1	S Ross	0
J Sutherland	0	D Finch	1

Fenland Trophy

NE Cavaliers	P	St Ives DM	P
Re-scheduled again - 4 th December 2024			
St Ives A	P	New England A	P
Being re-scheduled in 2025			

Team 7000

NE Cavaliers	2	Peterborough D	2
R Ilett	½	M Dunkley	½
P Spencer	½	J Bell	½
B Stephens	1	D Redden	0
J Peoples	0	J Blair	1

Team 4200

Bourne	2	NE Cavaliers	1
E Bailey	0	N Wedley	1
B Bennett	1	J Jennings	0
C Mackay	1	J Peoples	0

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
N Wedley	1	0	S Farrington
N Wedley	0	1	B Akinshipe
P Walker	0	1	B Stephens
C Russell	1	0	B Akinshipe
R Ilett	0	1	P Walker

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 27/11/24
	Month	Overall		
1	-	-	J Peoples	1
2	-	-	D Dhokia	0
3	-	-	P Spencer	1
4	-	-	A Neville	0
5	+5	+5	C Russell	1
6	-	-	S Farrington	0
7	-	-	B Akinshipe	1,0
8	-3	-3	N Wedley	1,0
9	-1	-1	B Stephens	1
10	-1	-1	P Walker	0,1
11	-	-	R Ilett	0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4200	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	4	1	1½	½	½			7½	1965
B Stephens	2	1	½	1½		1½		6½	1945
P Spencer	3	1		1	1	½		6½	1828
P Hanks	3		2		1			6	1947
N Chedd	1½		2½	1½				5½	1811
R Ilett	2		1	½	1	½		5	1804
C Russell	½	1		2		1		4½	1550
N Wedley	1						1	2	1709
E Knox	1			1		0		2	1614
J Peoples	1			0		0	1	2	1382
J Sutherland	1½			0				1½	1538
D Dhokia	1½						0	1½	1359
B Akinshipe	1							1	1528
S Walker	1							1	1440
J Jennings				0			½	½	1133
S Farrington		0						0	1025
A Neville	0	0						0	1337

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

Club chess is very enjoyable but to add another dimension, I participate in a number of weekend congresses. It can be hard work but meeting a range of strong opponents really tests your mettle. Scarborough is an event I attend regularly and this year, I was drawn against a player who reminded me of our encounter a year earlier...

The game was very un-Ilett like developing into a wild and tasty affair. It's surprising what desperation can force you to do!

R McLean (2167) v R Ilett

Scarborough Congress; 27.10.23

1 e4 Nc6

This Nimzovich Defence is rare and can go down a number of transposition routes. Black needs to be careful not to reach what are regarded as inferior lines of other openings. For instance, it would be easy for the game to become a Guimard variation of the French Defence (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nc6) where the black knight blocks the normal advance c7-c5 to put pressure on White's centre.

2 Nf3 d5
3 exd5 Qxd5

Instead, we reach a main line Scandinavian position. I was quite happy with this as I have been known to dabble (for instance, see the newsletter of December

2022). In this case, Black will aim for queenside castling to make use of the open d file and c7-c5 will not come into consideration. The knight on c6 therefore does not have a drawback and is nicely developed for the open combat about to break out.

4 **Nc3** **Qa5**
 5 **d4** **Bg4**
 6 **Bb5**

Although 7 d5 looks terrifying, it is an empty threat which Black can even tempt by 6 ... Nf6 7 d5 0-0-0 when the forward pawn has become hard to defend e.g. 8 Bc4 e6 or 8 ... Nxd5 9 Bxd5 e6.

6 ... **0-0-0**
 7 **Bxb6**

Even on d4, the white pawn is a liability e.g. 7 Be3 Nxd4 8 Bxd4 e5 (note the three pins!).

7 ... **bxc6**
 8 **h3** **Bh5**

8 ... Qh5! is better here. White faces 9 ... Bxf3 when 10 gxf3 is ugly but necessary i.e. to avoid the alternative 10 Qxf3 Qxf3 11 gxf3 Rxd4.

9 **Qd3**

White is clearly better.

9 ... **e6**
 10 **Ne5** **Ne7**
 11 **Qc4**

Simply 11 0-0 is very good here.

11 ... **c5**

No points for 12 dxc5 Rd1#!

12 **Be3** **Rd5?**

12 ... Qb4 is recommended by Fritz which flips between preferring 13 Qxc5 and 13 Qa6+. Both are likely to result in Black having a difficult but maybe tenable ending with a pawn deficit because with the latter continuation, 13 ... Kb8 14 dxc5 looks too dangerous and 13 ... Qb7 would again swap queens.

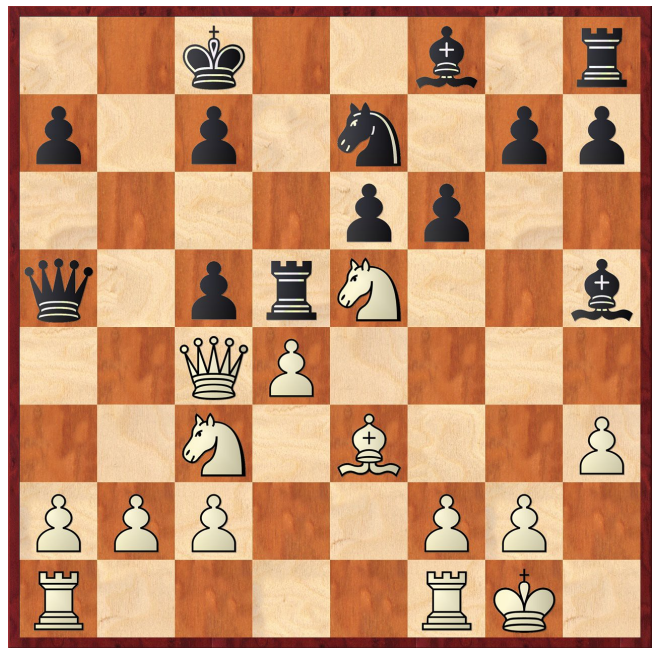
13 **0-0**

White is now winning but the situation is tricky. With the knight unpinned, my rook is attacked and the c5 pawn is tough to maintain.

13 ... **f6**

There are many options to confuse the issue but most are unfavourable to me. After 13 ... cxd4 14 Nxd5

- 14 ... dxe3 15 Nxe7+ (15 Nxe3 Qxe5)
 - 15 ... Kb8 16 Nd7+ Kb7 17 Qc6#
 - 15 ... Kb7 16 Qc6+ Kb8 17 Nd7#
 - 15 ... Kd8 16 Rad1+ Kxe7 17 Rd7+ Ke8 18 Qc6 Qxe5 19 Rxc7+
 - 15 ... Bxe7 16 Nc6 Qc5 17 Nxe7+ Qxe7 18 Qa6+ Kb8 (18 ... Kd8 19 Rfd1+ Bxd1 20 Rxd1+ Qd7 [20 ... Ke8 21 Qc8+] 21 Rxd7+ Kxd7 22 fxe3) 19 Qb5+ and 20 Qxh5
- 14 ... Nxd5/Qxd5/exd5 leave me with nothing for the exchange.



14 **Nxd5?**

White starts to go wrong. Correct is 14 dxc5 fxe5 15 b4! Qa3 16 Bc1 trapping Black's queen.

14 ... **exd5!**

This move really complicates matters but should not be worth more than a draw.

15 **Nc6** **Nxc6**
 16 **Qxd5**

White must have banked on this piece fork but Black still has counterplay.

16 ... **cxd4**
 17 **Qxc6** **dxe3**
 18 **Qa8+?**

A costly blunder. White can force a draw with

- 18 g4 e2 19 Rfd1 exd1=Q 20 Rxd1 Bd6 21 Rxd6 Kb8 (21 ... Bg6 22 Qa8#) 22 Rd5 Qe1+ 23 Kg2 Qe4+ with perpetual check and also
- 18 Rfd1 Bxd1 19 Rxd1 Bd6 20 Rxd6 Kb8 21 Rd5 Qe1+ 22 Kh2 exf2 23 Qb5+ Ka8 (23 ... Kc8 24 Qa6+ Kb8 25 Rb5+ with mate) 24 Qc6+ Kb8 again with perpetual check.

18 ... **Kd7**
 19 **Rfd1+** **Bxd1**
 20 **Rxd1+** **Bd6**

20 ... Ke6 looks risky and it is! 21 Qe4+ Qe5 22 Qc4+ Ke7 (22 ... Kf5 23 Qg4#) 23 Rd5 Qxb2 (23 ... Qe6 24 Qxc7+ Ke8 25 Rd8#) 24 Qxc7+ mating. I could survive after 20 ... Ke7 but despite the sacrifice, the text move leads straightforwardly to a forced win.

21 **Qxh8** **e2**
 22 **Qxg7+** **Kc6** **0-1**

If White wanted to fight on, I could finish with the flashy 23 Rf1 Bh2+. Sadly, in 2024, my opponent took his revenge.

Ray Ilett