

New Englander

Chess Club Update – February 2025

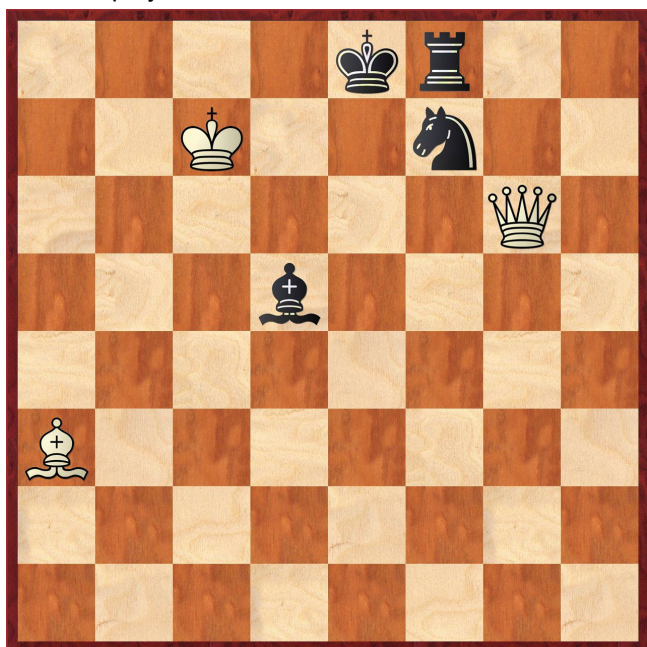
Chairman's Chatter

Recently, the club fulfilled three matches in four nights and acquitted itself very handsomely. You will note, sadly, an increased number of postponements this year and I encourage you to arrange games and clear the backlog in all competitions as soon as possible. Otherwise, the same fixture congestion will afflict us during the final weeks of the season. We may not be so fortunate in being able to field full squads next time.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Position : 2K5/Rn6/3k4/3B4/3P4/8/Q7/8

Last Month's solution (Lebedev 1932)

1 Qa5 Nxa5 2 Rd7# [1 ... Nc5 2 Qxc5#; 1 ... Ke7/Nd8 2 Qd8#]

Diary Dates

9th February Norfolk Rapidplay, Horstead

2nd March EACU Team Championship, Bury St Edmunds

For details, please visit <http://www.eacu.org.uk/> and follow "Fixtures and Events".

17th-21st April [Easter Congress, Southend](#) Adult Community College, SS1 2UN

26th-31st May [3rd Cambridge International Open](#) for players with a FIDE rating > 1600

Website to Watch

The top players are having a break in February but the World Senior Team Championship takes place from 17th to 26th in Prague. England enter as holders in the 65+ section and bronze medallists in the 50+ event. Viewing <https://www.wstcc2025.net/games> will let you cheer them on.

Result Round-up

Club Championship

White	Rounds 1&5-7		Black
B Stephens	P	P	A Neville
P Walker	1	0	C Russell
S Walker	0	1	P Hanks
N Chedd	P	P	R Ilett
J Sutherland	P	P	E Knox
P Hanks	1	0	C Russell
R Ilett	1	0	E Knox
N Chedd	½	½	B Stephens
P Spencer	0	1	P Walker
J Peoples	1	0	S Walker
P Spencer	1	0	D Dhokia
R Ilett	P	P	B Stephens
N Chedd	P	P	A Neville

Group A	P W	P H	P S	D D	J P	S W	C R	Pts
P Walker	X	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
P Hanks	0	X	1	1	1	1	1	5
P Spencer	0	0	X	1	1	1	1	4
D Dhokia	0	0	0	X	1	1	½	2½
J Peoples	0	0	0	0	X	1	1	2
S Walker	0	0	0	0	0	X	1	1
C Russell	0	0	0	½	0	0	X	½

Group B	R I	B S	N C	J S	E K	A N	Pts
R Ilett	X	P	P	1	1	1	3
B Stephens	P	X	½	1	1	P	2½
N Chedd	P	½	X	½	1	P	2
J Sutherland	0	0	½	X	P	1	1½
E Knox	0	0	0	P	X	1	1
A Neville	0	P	P	0	0	X	0

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	3½	Peterborough A	1½
P Walker	1	J Bell	0
P Hanks	½	C Masseron	½
R Ilett	1	S Caraway	0
B Stephens	½	G Hristov	½
P Spencer	½	D Redden	½

New England B	2½	St Ives B	1½
B Stephens	½	J Beck	½
N Chedd	1	R Mann	0
P Spencer	1	P Baddeley	0
C Russell	0	M Rippon	0

St Neots B	P	New England B	P
Re-scheduled to 28th April 2025			

Team 7000

St Ives WC	P	NE Patriots	P
Being re-scheduled, date to be confirmed			

Team 4200

Rookwood	1	NE Cavaliers	2
G Monger	0	N Wedley	1
M Peachey	0	J Jennings	1
L Levelt	1	J Peoples	0

Fenland Trophy

Ely	1½	NE Patriots	2½
O Lenton	1	R Ilett	0
S Ross	0	B Stephens	1
D Finch	½	E Knox	½
N Cartledge	0	C Russell	1

St Ives A	P	New England A	P
Re-scheduled to 4th February 2025			

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
L Townsend	0	1	J Peoples
D Dhokia	½	½	N Wedley
P Hanks	1	0	P Walker

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 29/01/25
	Month	Overall		
1	+1	-	J Peoples	1,1
2	-1	+3	N Wedley	1,0,1,1,½
3	+1	-1	D Dhokia	0,0,½
4	+1	+4	C Russell	1
5	-2	-2	P Spencer	1
6	-	-2	A Neville	0,0
7	-	+3	S Walker	1
8	-	-2	B Stephens	1
9	+2	+2	P Hanks	1
10	-	-1	R Ilett	0
11	-2	-4	P Walker	0,1,0
12	-	-	L Townsend	0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4200	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	6	1	3	½	1½			12	1986
P Hanks	5	1	3½		1			10½	1934
B Stephens	2½	1	2	2	1	2		10½	1871
P Spencer	4	1	½	2	1	½		9	1750
R Ilett	3		3	½	1	1		8½	1907
N Chedd	2		3½	2½				8	1853
C Russell	½	1		3	2	1		7½	1550
J Peoples	2	2		1		0	1	6	1356
N Wedley	1	3½					2	5½	1702
E Knox	1			1	½	1		3½	1622
J Sutherland	1½			0	½	1		3	1603
D Dhokia	2½	½					0	3	1411
S Walker	1	1						2	1443
J Jennings				0			1½	1½	1238
A Neville	0	0						0	1295
D Kubat							0	0	616
L Townsend		0						0	1192

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

This was my third meeting with the same opponent in reasonably short order. Although our scores were level, the balance of play and moral advantage favoured my opponent. I had had one lucky escape (see *New Englander* June 2023) and been rightly crushed earlier in the season.

P Hanks v D Rice

New England A v St Ives A; 18.12.2025

1	d4	Nf6
2	Nf3	d5
3	c4	e6
4	Nc3	Be7
5	cxd5	exd5

The previous game mentioned continued 5 Bf4 because for a long time, I had not considered playing the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined. One of the asymmetries in the position is that Black has supported the pawn on d5 with e7-e6 and thereby blocked in the light-squared bishop whereas White can easily develop the queen's bishop. I always felt White should not unburden his opponent so lightly by swapping the centre pawns.

Playing through Kasparov's games, however, showed me that he would mostly make the exchange without a second thought especially in his younger days and I wanted to emulate him (particularly his youth). I presume the justification comes from the longer term benefits in pawn structure. Now, if Black makes the natural break c7-c5, it will saddle him with an isolated queen's pawn.

6	Qc2	0-0
7	g3	

This may be a mistake typical of someone unfamiliar with the philosophy of the opening. Very few, if any, grandmaster games follow the pawn exchange with a kingside fianchetto. The point is White should leave the centre intact so that d5xc4 remains an option (even a gambit) in order to have an open long diagonal for the bishop and pressure on c6 or b7. Should I believe the elite or Fritz which rates my move marginally better than 7 a3, 7 e3 or development of the dark-squared bishop?

7	...	c6
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Black plays a logical counter but there are more aggressive tries e.g. 7 ... Nc6 which would have made me think about 8 ... Nb4 and 9 ... Bf5.

8	Bg2	Nbd7
9	0-0	Re8
10	Re1	

My plan was to open the position with e2-e4 and attempt to burst through with a kingside attack. To this end, the bishop on c1 is not badly placed as it can leap into action with a single move and on its original square, it will not be pestered by pawn advances as it would be on g5.

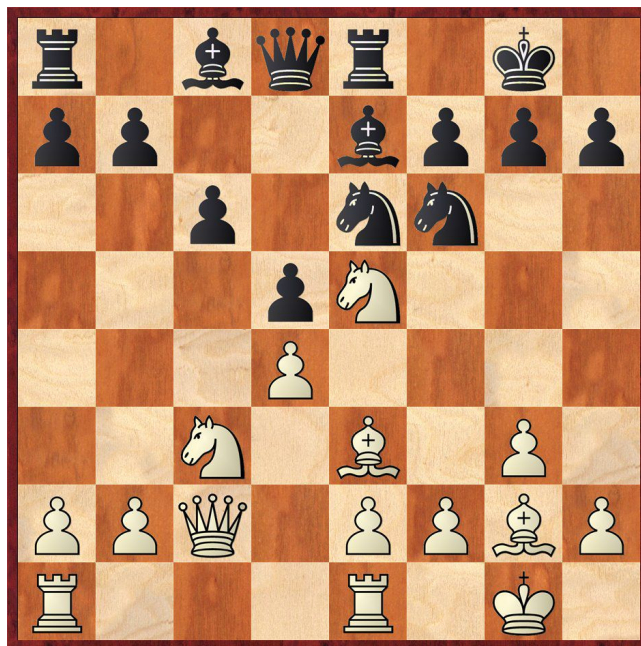
10	...	Nf8
11	Ne5	Ne6

With my outpost on e5, I am trying to profit from the absence of a black knight on c6 or d7. Meanwhile, my opponent threatens my d4 pawn when the backward status of my bishop causes me to be unwilling to play e2-e3. I could choose 12 Qd3 but then 12 ... Qb6 13 Be3 Qxb2 may be viable and 13 Rd1 wastes a tempo. Yes, my move stops my pawn thrust but f2-f3, Be3-f2

and e2-e4 might then be more powerful. This reverie took my eye off the ball.

12	Be3
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My opponent thought for about 10 minutes at this point. His move shocked me...



12	...	Nxd4
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By coincidence, I had played a knight sacrifice for a centre pawn in our previous game and he was returning the compliment with the fork 13 Bxd4 c5 14 Be3 d4. Material would be equal after 15 Rad1 Qa4 16 Bf4 dxc3 17 bxc3 when I would have superior development but a worse structure. Instead, I thought there was another way to wriggle.

13	Bxd4	c5
14	Nxf7	

At first, the alternatives did not look promising.

- 14 Bxc5 Bxc5
 - 15 Nd3 was forcing me backwards
 - 15 Nxd5 is a complex line with 15 ... Nxd5 16 Qxc5 Rxe5 17 f4
 - 17 ... Rf5 18 e4 (simpler than 18 Rad1 b6 19 Qc6 Bd7 20 Qd6)
 - 17 ... Rh5 18 Bf3 Nxf4 19 Bxh5 but all this was negated by 15 ... Bxf2+
- 14 Nxd5
 - 14 ... cxd4 15 Nc7
 - 14 ... Nxd5 15 Bxc5 Bxc5 16 Qxc5 Rxe5 transposes but without the possibility of Bc5xf2+.

As you can imagine, my analysis did not run this far or see the nuance in the move order. Stopping after Re8xe5, I did not feel confident whereas the text move seemed to offer more.

My opponent muttered "Yes!" under his breath and was obviously deflated by not considering this move during his long think at move 12.

14 ... cxd4

This was another shock! Simple queen moves allowed 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 Bxd5 so 14 ... Kxf7 looked forced but even then, 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 gives a choice of ways to enjoy an extra pawn and a terrific position after 16 Nxd5 or 16 Bxd5+.

15 Nxd8 dxc3
16 Qxc3 Rxd8
17 Rad1

I could go for exchanges 17 e4 but the game is effectively over and deserves no more than lightweight notes. However, you know my style. I have to find at least one costly blunder every game...

17 ... Be6
18 Qe5 Rd6
19 h3 Rad8
20 f4 Bf8
21 Rc1 Bf7
22 Rc7 Rb6
23 b3??

Just to encourage prolonging the resistance.

23 ... Bd6
24 Qc3 Bxc7
25 Qxc7 Re8
26 g4 Ne4
27 Kh2 Nd6
28 Qc3

I was beginning to worry that my queen might be trapped e.g. 28 f5 Rc6 29 Qd7 Kf8 but she is OK.

28 ... Rc6
29 Qd4 Ne4

By now, I was concerned about Black overwhelming the pawn on e2 and doubling rooks on the seventh rank.

30 Qxa7 Ra6
31 Qxb7 Rxa2
32 Qb4 h5
33 Bf3 Nd2
34 Bg2 h4
35 f5 Ne4
36 Bf3 Ng3
37 Qb5 d4
38 g5

It would be nice to say that with great foresight, all my pieces are suddenly on the right squares. I had been looking for a counterattack for the last few moves but its strength was just good fortune.

38 ... Re3
39 g6 Be8

Phew! I did calculate correctly 39 ... Bxg6 40 fxg6 Rxf3 41 Qd5+ Kh8 (41 ... Kf8 42 Qd8#) 42 Qd8+.

40 Qd5+ Kh8

Only at this point did I realise the end was nigh. If 40 ... Kf8 41 Qd6+ Re7 (41 ... Kg8 42 Bd5+ as in the game) 42 f6 gxf6 (42 ... Bxg6 43 Qxe7+) 43 Qxf6+ Bf7 44 Bd5 Ke8 45 gxf7+.

41 Qd6 Kg8

The checkmate on f8 leaves Black no real defence. 41 ... Bxg6 42 fxg6 Re8 43 Qd7

- 43 ... Rf8 44 Qe7 and 45 Qxh4+
- 43 ... Rg8 44 Qg4
- 43 ... Rb8 44 Rc1.

42 Bd5+ 1-0

Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

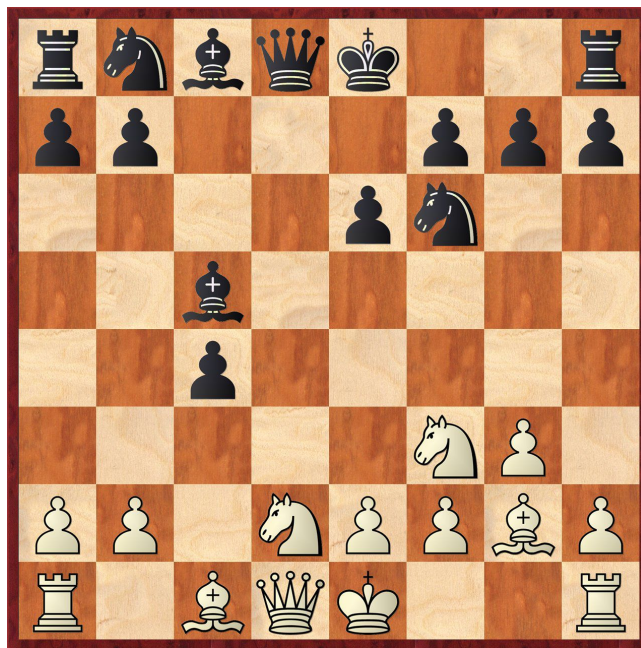
The *Opening of the Month* that was studied in the Masterclass sessions during January was the Modern Defence. On one occasion, we paid particular attention to sequences based around 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nd7 3 Nf3 g6 4 Bc4 Bg7 5 Bxf7+ when 5 ... Kxf7 6 Ng5+ leads to either 6 ... Ke8/Kf8 7 Ne6 or 6 ... Kf6 7 Qf3#.

It is amusing to see that the tactics are not the sole preserve of White and can occur from the Catalan Opening even when the white queen has an apparent escape route.

Veitch v Penrose

British Championship 1950

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	d5
4	g3	dxg4
5	Nbd2	c5
6	dxg5	Bxc5
7	Bg2	



7 ... Bxf2+
8 Kxf2 Ng4+

If 9 Kg1, 9 ... Qb6+ mates.

9 Ke1 Ne3 0-1

If 10 Qa4+, the queen is lost after 10 ... Bd7 11 Qa3/Qb4 Nc2+.