

New Englander

Chess Club Update – April 2025

Chairman's Chatter

"Le roi est mort! Vive le roi!" Sadly, our reign as county champions has come to an end after three years but congratulations to St Neots, our successors after an unbeaten season so far. Nevertheless, other competitions are still very much in the balance so please clear any postponements in the internal events and support the team captains in what is going to be a busy end to the season. It is fast approaching!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Merenyi 1924)

Position : 8/3Q4/3P4/Np6/k7/2K5/8/1N6

1 Qb7 Kxa5 2 Qa7# [1 ... b4+ 2 Qxb4#]

Diary Dates

19th-20th April [3rd Cambridge FIDE Congress](#) at Whittlesford with U2300, U1900 and U1500 sections

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

Website to Watch

The Grand Chess Tour circuit runs a rapid and blitz combined event from 24th April to 1st May in Warsaw, Poland. The field spans the generations from rising star Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu to old hands Veselin Topalov and Levon Aronian. The GCT [website](#) sadly does not currently feature the playing schedule

but with 9 rounds of rapidplay and 18 of blitz over 5 days, there should be plenty of action to watch.

Result Round-up

Club Championship

White	March		Black
N Chedd	P	Rd5	R Ilett
A Neville	1	0	L Townsend
L Townsend	0	1	E Knox
P Walker	0	1	N Chedd
P Hanks	0	1	B Stephens
D Dhokia	0	1	A Neville
S Walker	½	½	E Knox
R Ilett	0	1	P Hanks
L Townsend	P	Rd9	S Walker

Champions League	P W	B S	P H	N C	R I	P S	Pts
P Walker	X	½	1	0		1	2½
B Stephens	½	X	1	½	0		2
P Hanks	0	0	X		1	1	2
N Chedd	1	½		X	P	0	1½
R Ilett		1	0	P	X	½	1½
P Spencer	0		0	1	½	X	1½

Challengers	E K	J P	D D	A N	S W	C R	L T	Pts
E Knox	X		1	1	½		1	3½
J Peoples		X	0		1	1	1	3
D Dhokia	0	1	X	0	1	½		2½
A Neville	0		1	X		0	1	2
S Walker	½	0	0		X	1	P	1½
C Russell		0	½	1	0	X		1½
L Townsend	0	0		0	P		X	0

Cambridgeshire League

St Ives A	2½	New England A	2½
R Coleman	½	P Walker	½
D Okorafor	1	P Hanks	0
N Greenwood	½	R Ilett	½
R Mann	0	B Stephens	1
P Baddeley	½	C Russell	½

New England A	½	Peterborough A	4½
P Walker	0	F Kaichinger	1
P Hanks	0	F Fairhurst	1
R Ilett	0	H Neumaier	1
B Stephens	½	J Bell	½
N Chedd	0	S Caraway	1

New England B	3	Godmanchester	1
P Spencer	½	D Hurricks	½
N Chedd	½	A Rankine	½
E Knox	1	M English	0
C Russell	1	R Jackson	0

Ely	P	New England B	P
Re-scheduled to 19th May 2025			

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

Team 7000

NE Patriots	3	Spalding	1
R Ilett	1	D Thompson	0
P Spencer	½	C Robinson	½
E Knox	1	J Moseley-Hutchinson	0
D Dhokia	½	C Featherstone	½

St Ives WC	P	NE Patriots	P
Re-scheduled to 1st April 2025			

Team 4200

NE Cavaliers	1	March	2
J Jennings	0	T O'Keefe	1
D Dhokia	0	P Gideon	1
J Peoples	1	P Wright	0

NE Cavaliers	1	Bourne	2
J Jennings	0	A Bhattachayya	1
J Peoples	1	D Stanford	0
A Katha	0	H Redhead	1

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
S Walker	½	½	N Wedley
P Walker	1	0	J Peoples
P Walker	1	0	A Neville

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 26/03/25
	Month	Overall		
1	+9	+6	P Walker	0,1,0,1,1,1
2	-	-	D Dhokia	0,0,½,1
3	-2	-2	J Peoples	1,1,0
4	-1	+1	N Wedley	1,0,1,1,½,0,½
5	-1	+3	C Russell	1
6	-1	+5	P Hanks	1
7	+5	+5	L Townsend	0
8	-2	-5	P Spencer	1
9	-1	+1	S Walker	1,½
10	-3	-6	A Neville	0,0,0
11	-2	-5	B Stephens	1
12	-1	-3	R Ilett	0
13	-	-	E Knox	1

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4200	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	6½	4	3½	½	1½			16	1927
B Stephens	4	1	3½	2	1½	2½		14½	1857
R Ilett	4½		3	½	1½	3		13½	1895
P Hanks	6	1	4		1½			12½	1886
P Spencer	5½	1	½	3½	1	1		12½	1787
C Russell	1½	1	½	4½	2	1		11½	1606
N Chedd	3		3½	3		1		10½	1789
J Peoples	3	2		1		0	3	9	1434
E Knox	3½			3	½	2		9	1693
N Wedley		4					2	6	1605
D Dhokia	2½	1½				½	0	4½	1420
J Sutherland	1½			0	½	1		3	1603
S Walker	1½	1½						3	1455
J Jennings				0			1½	1½	1180
A Neville	2	0						2	1351
L Townsend	0	0						0	1197
A Katha							0	0	903

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

N Wedley v D Dhokia

New England Club Ladder, 05.02.2025

1	d4	d5
2	Bf4	g6
3	c3	

The London System is a fashionable, if slightly mechanical, method of piece deployment. White has deprived himself of the natural square for his queen's knight and has not staked a claim in the centre with c2-c4. Instead, he wishes to blunt any activity by Black on the long diagonal and prevent e7-e5 freeing Black's position.

3	...	Bg7
4	h3	Nd7
5	Nd2	

The hallmark of the opening is slow development but omitting 5 Nf3 does not chime with the containment initiated by 2 Bf4. Black rightly takes advantage.

5	...	e5
6	dxe5	Nxe5
7	Ngf3	f6

This pawn move costs a tempo, chokes the fianchetto and weakens the defence of the black king when 7 ... Nxf3+ 8 Nxf3 Nf6 would maintain easy equality – Black will castle, occupy the e file and have no vulnerable pawns.

8	Qb3	Ne7
9	Rd1	g5

Pity the poor black king. The centre is never a safe place to stay, the kingside is becoming ever more exposed and it looks difficult to clear the path for queenside castling. 9 ... 0-0 would have been more prudent.

10	Bg3	b6
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11	Qa4+
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Black trails in development and White would like to bring his last pieces into play. With 11 e4, White can exploit the lack of scope of Black's king and queen e.g. 11 ... dxe4 12 Nxe5 fxe5 13 Nxe4 Bd7 14 Bb5 c6 15 Nd6+ Kf8 16 Qf7#. After 11 ... c6 12 Nxe5 fxe5 13 Nf3, Black will struggle to hold his pawns and 11 ... Be6 12 Bxe5 fxe5 13 Nf3 h6 14 exd5 Bxd5 15 c4.

11	...	Bd7
12	Qb3	c5
13	Nxe5	

White has expended two tempi with his queen but his pieces can still pour forward with 13 Bxe5 fxe5 14 e4 when acceptance with 14 ... dxe4 is too dangerous because 15 Nxe4 Nf5 (to counter 16 Nd6+) 16 Bb5 or 16 g4. One attempt at defence might be 14 ... Bc6 15 exd5 Nxd5 16 Ne4 Qd7 17 Bb5 (17 c4 Ba4) 17 ... c4 (17 ... Bxb5 18 Rxd5 Qc6 19 Nd6+) 18 Bxc4 0-0-0 19 Bxd5 Bxd5 20 c4 so the prospects for Black are bleak.

13	...	fxe5
14	Nf3	

Transposition to variations noted previously is still possible by 14 e4.

14	...	c4
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Displacing the white knight with 14 ... e4 would relieve pressure because 15 Nxg5 h6 would leave it trapped.

15	Qc2	Nc6?
16	Rxd5	Qe7
17	Qd2	Bf6
18	e3	Rd8

18 ... 0-0-0 is supposed to be better but White still has a great position and extra pawns.

19	Bxc4	e4
20	Bd6	Qg7
21	Nh2	Be6
22	Ng4	

22 Bb5 Bxd5 23 Qxd5 would highlight why a king in the centre has limited life expectancy.

22	...	Bxd5
23	Nxf6+	

The exchange looks innocuous but this is the point where it all starts to go wrong for White. It brings the black queen to the third rank and that changes everything compared with the immediate 23 Qxd5. The threatened knight on c6 cannot be maintained in place (e.g. 23 ... Rc8 24 Bg5 or 24 Qe6+ Kd8 25 Nxf6) and moving it is hardly better (e.g. 23 ... Ne7 24 Qe6 when the black bishop feels the heat 24 ... Rf8 25 Bb5+). In desperation, Black has 23 ... Bxc3+ when 24 bxc3 Qxc3 generates counterplay but 24 Ke2 calmly keeps Black's minor pieces en prise.

23	...	Qxf6
24	Qxd5	Rxd6

The difference.

25	Qxe4+	Ne5
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Black offers some respite when he should not fear further exchanges with 25 ... Qe7.

26	Bb5+
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The game could swing again with 26 f4 gxf4 27 exf4 Qh4+ 28 g3 (28 Ke2 Kd8 is OK for Black) 28 ... Qxg3+ 29 Ke2 when a draw is probable.

26 ... Ke7
27 Qb7+

It is too late for 27 f4 gxf4 28 exf4 Qg6 29 Qxe5+ Re6.

27 ... Nd7
28 Qxa7 Qf5

A nice double attack on b5 and b1.

29 Bxd7 Qb1+
30 Ke2 Qxb2+

Not 30 ... Qxh1 31 Ba4+ and Black has to find an "only move" in order to draw!

- 31 ... Ke6 32 Bb3+ Rd5 (32 ... Kf5 33 Qf7+ Rf6 34 e4+ Kxe4 35 Qd5+ Kf4 36 g3#) 33 Qxb6+ Kd7 34 Qb7+ Ke8 35 Bxd5 winning
- 31 ... Kf8 32 Qb8+ Ke7 33 Qxh8 Qxg2 34 Qg7+ Ke6 35 Bb3+ Kf5 36 Qxh7+ Kf6 37 Qf7+ Ke5 38 Qe7+ Kf5 39 Bc2+ mating
- 31 ... Kf6 32 Bb3 Rf8 33 Qxh7 Qxg2 34 Qh6+ and the unguarded king allows a perpetual check.

31 Kf3 Rxd7 0-1

Eye Opener

A Miles (2562) v **A Minasian** (2478)
Ohrid 2001

1 d4 d5
2 Bf4

Tony was known for having a carefully guarded stash of opening preparation, particularly with some hidden tactics. This is a game in point in which Black tries to pinpoint a defect in the London System at the earliest opportunity – the unprotected pawn on b2.

3 ... c5
3 e3 Nc6
4 c3 Qb6
5 Qb3 c4
6 Qc2

It is interesting to ask what difference White's last two moves make compared with the direct 5 Qc2. Read on ...

6 Bf5

An interesting tactic which either gains a tempo or puts the onus on White to justify a sacrifice.

7 Qxf5 Qxb2
8 Qxd5 Qc1+

Black obviously has the option to play 8 ... Qxa1 but decides that is still possible after preventing White from castling. Note here that, had White chosen 5 Qc2, the c4 pawn would be on c5 and 7 ... Qxa1 could be followed by 8 Qb3 trapping the black queen. That threat, however, is still in the offing.

9 Ke2 Qb2+
10 Kf3

The computer's preference is for 10 Nd2 Qxa1 11 Qxc4 when Black has an escape route 11 ... Qb2 but

12 d5 Nd8 13 Qa4+ b5 14 Qa6 gives a viscous attack with 15 Kf3 and 16 Bxb5+ to come.

Would you be happy with the white pieces here?



10 ... Nf6

Now 10 ... Qxa1 allows 11 Bxc4

- 11 ... Qxb1 12 Qxf7+ Kd8 (12 ... Kd7 13 Be6+ Kd8 14 Qxf8#) 13 Ne2 Qg6 (13 ... Qxh1 14 Qxf8+ Kd7 15 Qxa8 and the black king is in greater danger)
- 12 ... e6 12 Qb5 0-0-0 13 Ne2 Nf6 14 Rc1 and the black queen looks very unhappy with the discovered attack to come.

11 Qxc4 Qxa1
12 Qb3 0-0-0

12 ... Na5 13 Bb5+ Kd8 14 Qc2 keeps the black queen caged.

13 Bb5 Na5
14 Qc2 a6

As before, 14 ... e6 15 Ne2 a6 16 Rc1 axb5 17 Na3. Black thrashes around but cannot avoid the inevitable.

15 Bd3 e5
16 Bxe5 Nd7
17 Bf4 Be7
18 Nh3 g5
19 Nxg5 1-0