

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – March 2014

Chairman's Chatter

We pass the spring equinox this month. Although the premature mildness suggests winter has already passed, the change of season is still ahead. The pressure of league fixtures has not yet eased sufficiently to engage in the internal club events but it does mean we should be aiming for one final push.

Paul Hanks

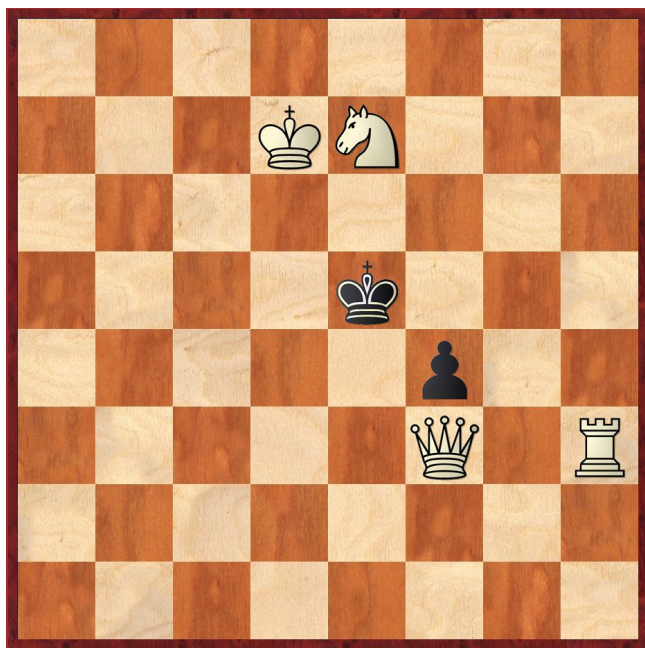
Diary Dates

The RAFA will hold its AGM at the Lancaster Club on 19th March and as usual, we shall lose the use of the venue on that evening.

Round 4 of the Club Championship is scheduled for 26th March. The draw for the following round occurs shortly afterwards so if there is any danger of having to postpone, please try instead to play ahead of time.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (S H East)

Position : 6K1/3pp3/4kp/2Q5/B7/8/8/8

1 Bc2 exf6 2 Bf5# [1 ... d6 2 Qf5#; 1 ... d5 2 Qxe7#]

Website to Watch

The World Championship qualifying cycle will be back in action with the Candidates Tournament taking place from 13th to 31st March in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia. Anand, Kramnik and Topalov are joined by 5 other elite grandmasters for the 14-round event. The official website <http://candidates2014.fide.com/> has just been

announced and although it nominally has section for live games, it looks to be still under development. It may be worth trying a general game viewer such as www.chessbomb.com.

Somewhat overshadowed is the European Individual Championship. Being held in Yerevan, Armenia from 3rd to 14th March, it boasts the participation of 100+ grandmasters headed in ELO ranking terms by Bacrot, Eljanov and Jakovenko. The tournament website is www.eicc2014.am and goes under the banner the Tigran Petrosian Memorial.

Window on the Web

www.chessity.com is a Netherlands-based chess tactics website. Several forms of training are offered across different strength levels. There are daily tactical exercises covering many themes such as exploiting a pin, defence, removing the guard, discovered attack and various types of forcing moves. Each theme has three sets of exercises, each set being more difficult than the last. The repetition of exercises grouped by theme is intended to imprint the various patterns on the brain, making it easier for users to recognise such patterns if they arise in their own games. The goal is to complete each set of puzzles by solving nine of them correctly. Future ones presented to you are tailored to suit your strength. Your progressive results are rated. The solutions to each set of puzzles are unlocked after completing the set and the rating of each puzzle is shown.

The site seeks to motivate members by adding a competitive element to solving the puzzles. Uniquely as far as I'm aware, four members solving the same set of exercises can compete against each other in real time, by playing challenges in which the winner will be the player who can solve nine puzzles in the shortest time. A player making three mistakes is eliminated. Each user's progress is tracked and the statistics will highlight strengths and weaknesses.

There is an area for blogs and forums, so that members can share their thoughts or have their questions answered. Users can invite each other to be friends and compete against each other.

It is a commercial site, but a free three-day membership is offered as a taster. Those wishing to pay will gain access to a visualisation training tool and master level exercises. Membership fees are quoted in Euros. A one-month membership costs € 5 (about £4.10 at the current exchange rate) and annual membership equates to about 8p per day. Lifetime membership is also offered. The free taster pass must be worth a try.

Ron Jones

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

Peterborough A	4½	New England A	½
A Timosenko	1	P Turp	0
C Tandy	½	M Dunkley	½
R Ilett	1	P Hanks	0
F Davies	1	D Lane	0
A Summers	1	P Spencer	0

New England B	2	Warboys C	2
D Lane	0	N Greenwood	1
P Spencer	1	P Clough	0
S Walker	0	P Wells	1
J Sadler	1	D Bentley	0

New England B	2	Spalding	2
D Lane	0	P Golimouski	1
P Spencer	1	T Nottingham	0
S Walker	0	J van Gemeren	1
J Sadler	1	R Coates	0

Team 550 Competition

New England 2	1½	New England 1	2½
P Turp	½	P Hanks	½
D Lane	0	P Spencer	1
N Wedley	1	S Walker	0
M Tarabad	0	J Parker	1

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
M Dunkley	½	½	S Caraway

Position	Change		Player	Record <small>26/02/14</small>
	Month	Overall		
1	+2	+5	I Garrett	1,0,1,0,1,0,0
2	-1	+12	P Spencer	1,1,1,1
3	-1	-1	S Caraway	1,1,½,1,½
4	-	-	N Wedley	½,½,1,0,1,1,0
5	-	+6	P Hanks	1,1,½
6	-	+4	M Tarabad	1,1,0,1,0
7	+1	-	S Walker	1
8	-1	-5	D Lane	½,0,1
9	-	-8	J Parker	0,½,0,0,0
10	-	-2	H Currie	0,0
11	+2	+1	S Wozniak	0,0
12	-1	-3	P O'Gorman	0
13	-1	-8	F Bowers	
14	+2	+2	M Dunkley	½
15	-1	-2	J Sadler	0,0
16	-1	-1	P Turp	

Club Championship

Round 3			
M Dunkley (2)	1	0	P Turp (2)
P Hanks (2)	1	0	S Caraway (2)
R Jones (1)	P	P	P Spencer (1)
D Lane (0)	0	1	S Walker (½)
C Russell (½)	1	0	I Garrett (1)
M Tarabad (1)	½	½	J Sadler (1)
N Wedley (0)	½	½	J Parker (0)
Match night : 5th February. Deadline : 28th February. Next draw : 1st March			

Round 4			
M Dunkley (3)			P Hanks (3)
S Caraway (2)			R Jones (1+P)
S Walker (1½)			P Turp (2)
J Sadler (1½)			C Russell (1½)
I Garrett (1)			M Tarabad (1½)
P Spencer (1+P)			N Wedley (½)
J Parker (½)			D Lane (0)
Match night : 26th March. Deadline : 31st March. Next draw : 1st April			

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	Team 550	Total
P Spencer	1	4	4½	0	2½	12
P Hanks	3	2½	1	½	3½	10½
S Caraway	2	4	1	0	1	8
N Wedley	½	4	-	-	3	7½
M Dunkley	3	½	2	0	2	7½
D Lane	0	1½	2	½	2	6
J Sadler	1½	0	3		1½	6
M Tarabad	1½	3	1	0	0	5½
I Garrett	1	3			1	5
R Jones	1		2	0	1½	4½
P Turp	2		1	½	½	4
S Walker	1½	1	1			3½
J Parker	½	½	0	0	2	3
C Russell	1½	-			0	1½
H Currie	-	0				0
B Sadler	-				0	0
S Wozniak	-	0				0
P O'Gorman	-	0				0

Match of the Month

Computers are invaluable aids when annotating chess games. They nearly always reveal stronger lines of play, show gaps in over-the-board analysis and find defensive resources for which we may or may not be thankful!

There is more to chess, however, than playing the best-regarded continuation. Playing the man rather than the board brings psychological factors into play and I had to include subjective elements in my approach to this game.

S Walker v P Hanks

New England Club Championship Rd 2, 08.01.14

1	e4	d6
2	d4	g6

This position was reached in Kasparov v Speelman, World Cup, Barcelona 1989 and prompted the champion to accuse his opponent of going through a period of "quirky set-ups".

3	Nc3	Bg7
4	Nf3	Nf6
5	Bc4	0-0

The Modern Defence - not a mainstream opening of mine but specifically chosen to avoid Steve's prowess in preparation (see **NEW ENGLANDER**, September 2013). I was successful in getting Steve out of his comfort zone because at the end of the game he admitted being unfamiliar with it and aimed for simple development.

6	h3	
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Despite the natural play, the position does not occur frequently at master level. Mostly, White varies by either deferring Ng1-f3 to allow f2-f4 or preferring the d3 or e2 squares for the exposed bishop on c4. Hort v Keene, Teeside 1972 followed the text but White continued more aggressively 6 Qe2 Bg4 7 e5 Ne8 8 Bg5 Nc6 9 0-0-0 Kh8 10 Rhe1.

6	...	c6
7	Be3	b5
8	Bd3	Nbd7
9	Qd2	Qc7
10	g4	

Fritz does not like this move and recommends 0-0. Indeed, I was quite happy because I could now see no really safe haven for the white king.

10	...	b4
11	Ne2	

I wondered about 11 Na4 but 11 ... Qa5 12 b3 c5 gives good prospects on the dark squares.

11	...	c5
12	g5	Nh5
13	c4	

13 dxc5 Nxc5 should gain the bishop pair and Fritz gives Black an advantage equivalent to a pawn - generously in my opinion. I also looked at 13 c3 but did not consider what was actually played. Obviously, the two are equivalent if I capture en passant but if I refrain, White has removed any tricks with c5-c4.

13	...	Bb7
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I did not think I was generating any objective advantage so I decided to profit from our difference in grading (though not current form). Steve was likely to be expecting hidden combinations and I decided to play moves which might encourage him to think along these lines. Firstly, I reminded him that e4 is lightly defended.

14	0-0-0	f5
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Now, the weakness of the long diagonal - the light-squared one that is. There could be a nasty pin of the knight on f3 in the offing.

15	d5	
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And there certainly is a weak long diagonal after this. 15 gxf6 was better and starts to turn defence into attack. I had concerns about 15 ... Nhxf6 16 Ng5 when with occupation of e6 threatened, it is my turn to worry. Fortunately, I found the rebuff 15 ... Rxf6 16 Ng5 h6 when the knight has no retreat.

15	...	fxe4
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Add the possibilities down an open file. Steve was starting to consume much of his time.

16	Bxe4	Qa5
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More pinprick threats keep up the impression of approaching menace. In fact, I missed a true tactical continuation 16 ... Rxf3 17 Bxf3 Ne5 18 Bxh5 Nxc4

- 19 Qc2 Bxb2+ 20 Kb1 Na3+
- 19 Qd3 Nxb2
- 19 Qe1 Bxb2+ 20 Kb1 gxh5 after which material is unbalanced but roughly equal. Black has passed pawns and denuded the enemy king.

17	Kb1	Ba6
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Same strategy but this dissipates any edge. 17 ... Nb6 18 Qd3 Qa6 19 b3 e6 or 18 Rc1 e6 was a better way of maintaining the siege mentality. I had not thought of exploiting the pin on d5.

18	Rc1	Nb6
19	b3	Rab8

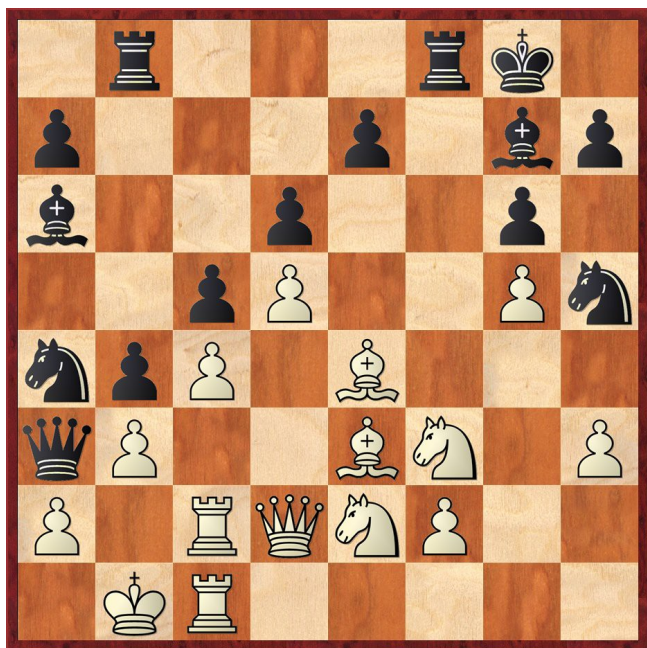
I expected this to be interchangeable with 19 ... Qa3

20	Rc2	
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White could exploit my move order with 20 a4 especially as I had highlighted this motif in a previous newsletter! Fortunately, 20 ... Bxc4 21 Rxc4 (21 bxc4 Nxa4 with a massive attack) 21 ... Nxc4 22 bxc4 Qa6 23 Rc1 b3 with great pressure and maybe a small material plus when another pawn falls. Despite their centralisation, the white minor pieces seem to be surprisingly helpless.

20	...	Qa3
21	Rhc1	Na4

I was not too hopeful about this sacrifice. Steve had less than 10 minutes at this stage and acceptance looked too brave under this pressure. The time factor alone was my motivation and besides, I had to keep up appearances.



But what if White declined?

For instance, if White left his set-up untouched with 22 h4 Nc3+. Surely, this square is too strongly protected? 23 Nxc3 bxc3

- 24 Rxc3 Bxc4 (I missed this deflection seeing only that 24 ... Bxc3? 25 Qxc3 repels the attack and soon White will be asking the questions down the diagonal) and White has to counter Bxb3
 - 25 Rxc4 Rxb3+ 26 Kc2 (26 axb3 Qxb3+) 26 ... Rb2+ 27 Kd1 Rxd2+
 - 25 Qb2 Qxb2+ 26 Kxb2 Nf4 still with 10 moves before the time control!
- 24 Qd3 Rxb3+ 25 axb3 (25 Ka1 Rb2) 25 ... Qxb3+ 26 Ka1 Bxc4 27 Qd1 Qa3+ 28 Kb1 Rb8+.

22 bxa4 b3
23 Rc3 bxa2+

For those with nerves of steel, Black's strongest is 23 ... Bxc4 and either 24 Rxc4 bxa2+ 25 Kc2 Qb3# or 24 axb3 Bxb3 25 Qb2 Ba2+ 26 Kc2 (26 Ka1 Qxb2#) 26 ... Rxb2+. I was briefly tempted but did not fully appreciate that the crucial battle was over control of b3 and Black merely had to land a queen there.

24 Ka1

This is the position I had foreseen before move 21 and thought I would be winning a queen for two minor pieces. At last, I saw that the bishop on e4 covered b1. Arggh!

24 ... Rb1+

I continued with my plan but building slowly with 24 ... Bxc4 is more effective torture. I find it difficult to give my opponent full latitude when there is a forcing variation. Here, though, White is almost immobilised. 25 Nfd4 (25 Ne1 Rb1+ 26 Rxb1 axb1Q+ 27 Kxb1 Rb8+ 28 Kc2 Qxa4+ 29 Kc1 Qa1+ 30 Kc2 Rb2#) 25 ... cxd4 26 Rxa3 dxe3+ 27 Qc3 exf2 when Black is

likely to recover his queen in several ways! It is obvious that this is computer analysis.

25 Bxb1 axb1Q+
26 Kxb1 Rb8+
27 Kc2 Rb2+
28 Kd1 Rxd2+
29 Bxd2

All I get is queen for rook and minor piece but White's pawns are vulnerable.

29 ... Bxc3
30 Rxc3 Qxa4+ 0-1

and White lost on time. Fritz gives Black a 6 pawn advantage in the final position.

Eye Opener

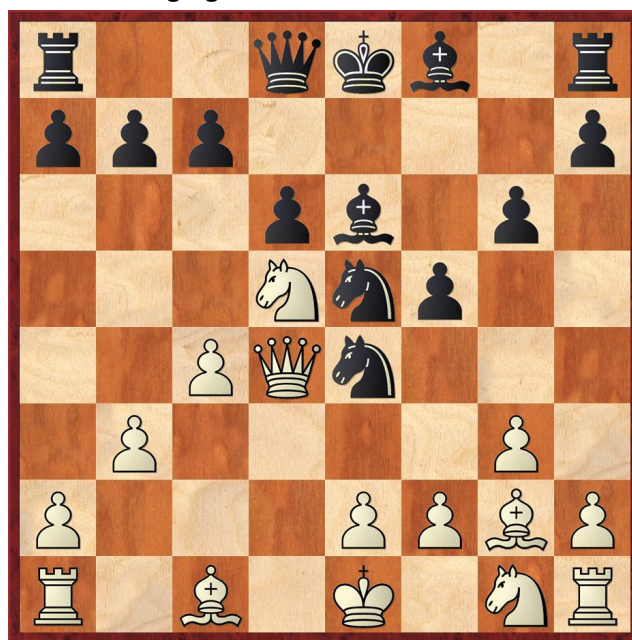
How good is your visualisation? I was reading about the game Hubner v Kasparov, Hamburg 1985 when the annotation branched off and I found it difficult to do the mental analysis. Can you foresee the position and then, do you agree with the commentator's assessment?

J Kristiansen v Reinert
Denmark 1985

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Nf6 5 g3 Nc6 6 Qd2 Be6 7 Nd5 Ne5 8 b3 Ne4

At this point, it was noted that the grandmaster game could have continued :

9 Qd4 f5! 10 Bg2 g6



Now stop and try to assess the following tactics from the diagram.

11 Bb2 c5 12 Qd1 Bxd5 13 Qxd5 Qa5+ 14 Kd1 Nd3 "and Black was winning".

I quickly saw 15 exd3 Qd2#; 15 Qxd3 Nxf2+; 15 Kc2 Nb4+ though 15 ... Qd2+ 16 Kb1 Qxb2#; 15 Bc1 Qe1+ 16 Kc2 Qc3+ 17 Kd1 Nxf2# or 17 Kb1 Qxc1# but the final piece in the jigsaw was 15 Nf3 Nxb2+ 16 Kc2 Qc3+ 17 Kb1 Na4 18 bxa4 Bg7.