

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – August 2016

Chairman's Chatter

Several changes were passed at the AGM of the Cambridgeshire County Chess Association which will affect play next season.

- When digital clocks are available, a Fischer time limit of 70 minutes + 15 seconds per move will be employed.
- Mid-season grades will determine board order after publication (usually January)
- A player may now play 3 times on board 3 or above in Division One before becoming ineligible for Division Two
- The Fenland Cup will be contested as an open tournament but the Plate has become a separate knock-out for teams with a combined grade below 550.

Division One will probably remain as last year (i.e. 12 matches) but without Buckden (though hopefully replaced by St Neots B) and Peterborough C, Division Two will entail at most 8 matches. To compensate, the North Division of the Team 550 competition includes newcomers Chatteris and should have 6 teams.

If the competitions are finalised as expected, New England will have 40 matches excluding our Fenland Trophy involvement whereas in 2015, the total was 40 matches including two Fenland ties. It will be a struggle to squeeze the extra matches into the schedule but if we are prepared to support double headers, the burden can be minimised.

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

Masterclass tuition will continue throughout August but be aware that a pre-season friendly match may be arranged late in the month.

The club AGM will be held on 7th September at 7-30pm.

Website to Watch

The next big tournament on the circuit for elite grandmasters is the Sinquefeld Cup which takes place from 5th to 15th August. The clue to the venue is in the website name – saintlouischessclub.org.

Window on the Web

Nautilus is an American science magazine covering many subjects. In May this year, it concentrated on ageing and one of the articles was a discussion about the joys (or otherwise) of learning chess in later life. It can be read at the following website : <http://nautil.us/issue/36/aging/learning-chess-at-40>.

Written by a father who only knew the basic moves from childhood, the article describes his wish to learn chess when his 4 year-old daughter had expressed an interest in the game. Finding the wealth of available literature too daunting, he hired a coach to teach them both. They improved together and when playing his daughter, he would often blunder on purpose to keep up her interest, until she started to beat him. He soon came to the view that chess is a young person's game. (See also *Window on the Web* January 2014) While his brain was declining, his daughter's was expanding. What he found hard to take was that someone who could hardly tie her own shoelaces could beat him at chess.

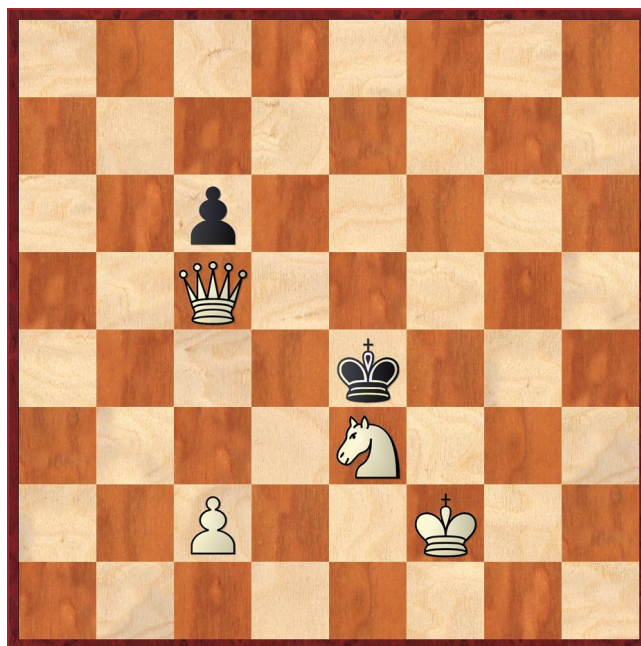
The article discusses how the process of learning chess is different in children and adults and can be compared to learning a language. Adults learn grammar and pronunciation first, using that knowledge to make sentences. Children just talk. Adults playing chess need a reason to play a move. Child beginners just play. The site has a section for readers to leave their comments.

Clearly someone learning chess in later life will never be world champion, but the effort is still worthwhile.

Ron Jones

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Fadeyev 1982)

Position : 8/8/3pp3/1p1k4/8/2R1K3/8/2Q5

1 Qa1 b4 2 Qa5#[1 ... e5 2 Qa2#; 1 ... Ke5 2 Rc5#]

Serious Study

Last month, we studied a game to discover some pointers to how I could improve my play. The evening after I typed up the annotations, we had a match against Peterborough and I had an opportunity to put my good intentions into practice. Let's see how well I had absorbed my own strictures, I hope you enjoy horror stories...

P Hanks v G Tandy

New England A v Peterborough B, 03.12.2015

Before the first move was played, a team mate informed me that my opponent was in a rich vein of form and the 100% record since the start of the season included a win over no less than league stalwart Paul Kemp. This put me on my guard and made me determined to make sure was watertight and not indulge in intuitive adventures.

1	d4	d5
2	c4	

The raison d'être of the Queen's Gambit is that White tries to deflect Black's centre pawn in order to build an impressive formation with e2-e4.

2	...	dx c4
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Black falls in with White's wishes. It is difficult to hold the pawn on c4 without making other concessions but Black knows White's centre can be challenged successfully.

3	Nc3	
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Sometimes, I think I make elementary errors in the opening to enhance the instructional value of my comments. If only...

I cannot find a recent grandmaster game with the text move because 3 Nf3 is the overwhelming choice "to prevent ...e5" according to author John Watson. In the Hanks v Spencer featured in the February 2012 issue of the newsletter, I had already given the superior 3 e4 an outing – a game in which I attempted the infamous double rook sacrifice.

3	...	e5
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Black seizes on my oversight and achieves several opening objectives at a stroke. Lines are opened for the bishops, White's centre is reduced and strategically, Black can look forward to an endgame with a 3 v 2 pawn majority on the queenside.

4	d5	
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This move gives Black easy targets on d5 and later e4 whereas 4 e3 exd4 5 exd4 Nf6 6 Bxc4 would have maintained an uneasy equality.

4	...	Nf6
5	e4	c6
6	Bg5	Bb4

If 6 Bg5 had been replaced by 6 Bc4, we should have reached Tartakover v Fuster, Budapest 1948 by transposition but with this move order, Black could exploit White's minor pieces by 6 ... b5 etc.

7	Bxf6	
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I wanted to play 7 Bxc4 but after 7 ... Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 Qa5, I have no time for 9 Bxf6 and 9 Qc2 Nxe4 fails to defend my pawns. I decided to switch the move order (thus enacting a point from the previous game!) but 7 Nf3 would lead to a simplifications after a more complex interlude 7 ... cxd5 8 Qa4+ Nc6 9 0-0-0 (9 exd5 Qxd5 10 Qxb4 Nxb4 11 Nxd5 Nfxd5 12 Bxc4 when if 12 ... Nc2 13 Kd2 Nxa1 14 Bxd5) 9 ... Bxc3 10 bxc3 Qa5.

7	...	Qxf6
8	Bxc4	Qg6
9	Qf3	cx d5

I had to look at 9 ... Bg4 10 Qe3 Bh5 when I could continue quietly with 11 g3 or put faith in my development advantage with 11 Nge2. I expected 9 ... 0-0 to threaten Bc8-g4 next move and in that case, I should probably have played 10 h3.

I was not displeased with the text move. Now, 10 ... Bg4 can be met by 11 Bxf7+.

10	Bxd5	Nc6
11	Nge2	

I have to defend against 11 ... Nd4.

11	...	Nd4
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Have these youngsters no respect?

12	Nxd4	
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On the basis of 12 Qd3 Qxg2 13 Rg1/f1 Nf3+, I thought I had no alternative but 13 0-0-0 has echoes of my earlier analysis of the g pawn sacrifice albeit in an inferior form.

12	...	ex d4
13	a3	

I so wanted to make 13 0-0-0 work! I felt I had been on the receiving end for much of the opening and longed to take over the initiative. My point was

- 13 ... dxc3 14 Bxf7+ Qxf7 15 Rd8+ Ke7 16 Rxb8 although the material situation was not that clear
- 13 ... Bg4 14 Qd3 when 14 ... dxc3 15 Qb5+ Bd7 16 Qxb4 or 14 ... Bxd1 15 Qb5+ Kd8 16 Qxb4 dxc3 17 Rxd1 seem favourable but with 14 ... 0-0, Black can leave me with too much en prise.

13	...	dx c3
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My greater fear was for 13 ... Ba5 14 b4 dxc3 15 bxa5 when my pawn structure is not pretty.

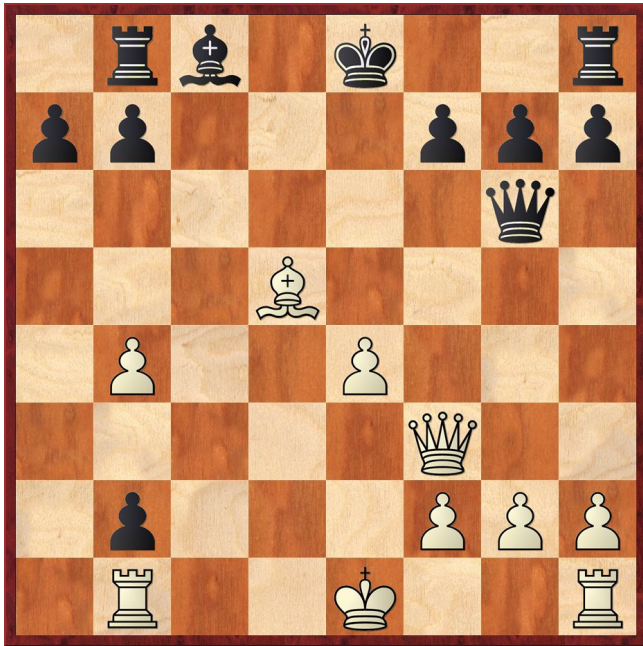
14	ax b4	cx b2
15	Rb1	

I was beginning to sense I had survived the worst of the opening and that Black's sharp approach might leave residual problems developing the queenside pieces.

15	...	Rb8
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This move, in place of the prudent 15 ... 0-0, struck me as wrong. Eventually, I dismissed my alternative and continued in lacklustre fashion which led to a solid draw. 16 0-0 0-0 17 Rxb2 Be6 18 Rd2 Rfd8 19 Rfd1

Bxd5 20 Rxd5 Rxd5 21 Rxd5 Qe6 22 Qd3 Re8 23 g3 h6 24 Rd7 Qxe4 25 Qxe4 Rxe4 26 Rxb7 ½-½



Mistake 1 : Even though I had a substantial lead on time, I did not invest it wisely at the critical juncture.

My inclination was for

16 Qf4

because 16 ... Ra8 loses Black a tempo and fails to resolve how Black will unravel the queenside in the light of the pressure on b7. However, I needed to be absolutely sure of my analysis of this position because it involves another double rook sacrifice!

Mistake 2: I was too superficial when my initial analysis did not support my intuition.

Option 1

16 ... Qxg2

My analysis ran 17 Qxb8 Qxa1+ 18 Kd2 Qxb1 19 Qxc8+ Ke7 20 Qxh8 Qc1+ and Black wins. White can obviously improve with 20 Qxb7+ when the black king can be hounded to death. The most stylish checkmate is 20 ... Kf6 21 Qxf7+ Ke5 22 f4+ Kd4 23 Qxa7#.

Mistake 3: I have not played this sort of speculative position recently and lost the ability to foresee the potential for checkmate just beyond my horizon.

Nevertheless, I could not defeat 17 ... 0-0 in this variation which would give Black many nasty options (e.g. 18 Rf1 Bh3) and the position would be easier for my opponent to play under time pressure. In fact, 18 Kd2 is the only move and leads to a draw but you need strong nerves to play like this.

Variation A

Mistake 4 : I forgot the principle of two weaknesses.

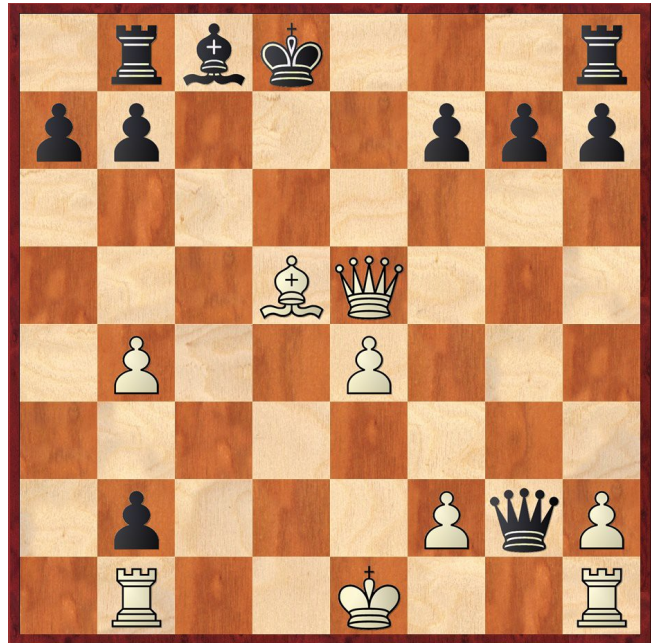
Black's position is made difficult by the loose piece on b8 and the exposed king position. I only had eyes for the capture and did not consider trying to make progress on the other front.

17 Qe5+

Earlier, when awaiting Black's ninth move, I had toyed with Qf3-g3 to attack Black's undefended pawn on e5 but as soon as the b8-g3 diagonal became clear, I became obsessed with using its full extent and forgot the intermediate squares.

17 ... Kd8

If 17 ... Kf8, I can forestall losing my rooks by 18 Qc7 threatening mate on d8 and f7 or better still, play 18 Qxb8 as above having prevented castling and nullified Black's antidote.



18 Bc6

This move would have been my ticket to immortality. I could possibly be forgiven for not envisaging this move but it is inexcusable not even to have had the chance to try. Both captures fail i.e. 18 ... bxc6 19 Rd1+ Bd7 20 Qxb8+ Ke7 21 Qd6+ and 18 ... Qxh1 19 Kd2 Qxb1 20 Qd6+.

The best continuation for Black is 18 ... Qxh1 19 Kd2 bxc6 20 Rxh1 which would still leave White with a tricky positional assessment.

Variation B

Mistake 5 : I failed to recognise an attacking pattern that would arise after a radical change of direction.

17 Kd2

The analysis of 17 Qe5+ is spectacular but probably impractically difficult and not totally decisive. Instead, going back to move 17, White could save the rooks and keep the threats intact.

17 ... 0-0

Defensive moves such as 17 ... Qg6 lead to material deficit and positions with few prospects whereas after the text move, 18 Qxb8 Qxf2+ escapes with a perpetual check.

18 Rhg1 Qh3
19 Rxg7+

This is a fairly standard sacrifice which works without great complexity i.e. 19 ... Kh8 20 Qf6 and 19 ... Kxg7 20 Rg1+ Bg4 21 Rxf4+.

Option 2

Mistake 6 : I failed to consider counterattacking possibilities.

16 ... Qf6

As a sting in the tail, it should be noted that Black may not be tempted by the massive material on offer after 16 ... Qxg2. White should swap queens here but having scented blood, I may have been led astray.

17 Qxb8 Qc3+
18 Ke2

White has to submit to perpetual check by 18 ... Qc2+ 19 Ke3 Qc3+ 20 Ke2 because other options are too dangerous e.g. 20 Kf4 g5+ 21 Kxg5 Rg8+ 22 Kh5 (22 Kf4 Rg4#) 22 ... Rxf4 and 23 ... Qh3#.

Option 3

Mistake 7 : I overlooked the obvious – transpositions!

16 ... 0-0

Black rids herself of one weakness because the tactics surrounding the rook captures can be kept on ice.

17 Qxg8 Qxg2

This move order merely leads me back to the position I found difficult in Option 1 when I should have needed to rely on those strong nerves. Of course, I could have responded with 17 0-0 and headed back to the game continuation but that would have been boring...

Eye Opener

When you play an opening, you need to know the tactical tricks that might ensnare you. Here is an example.

Fischer v Kovacevic Rovinj/Zagreb 1970

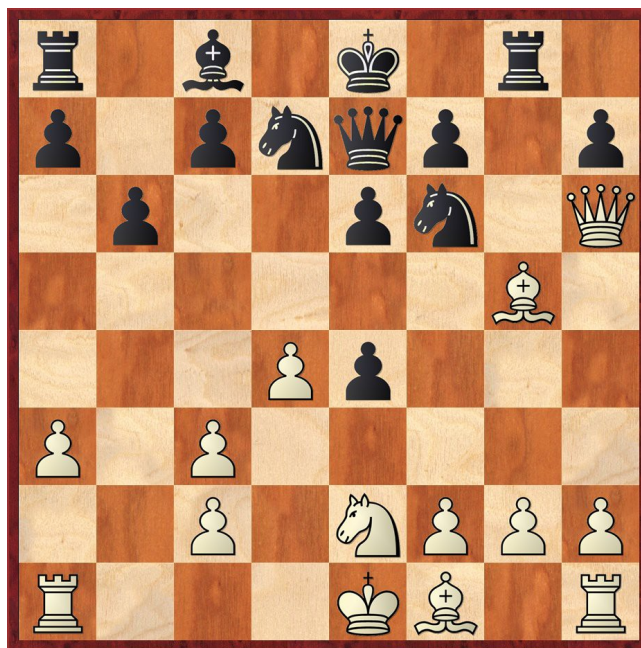
1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	a3	

This is an unusual continuation for the Winawer Variation of the French Defence. The main line is 4 e5 c5 5 a3 but White has a range of alternatives.

4	...	Bxc3+
5	bxc3	dxe4
6	Qg4	Nf6
7	Qxg7	Rg8
8	Qh6	Nbd7
9	Ne2	

Opening theorists later came to recommend 9 Nh3 when Ljubojevic caused Korchnoi great problems at Tilburg 1986 after 9 ... c5 10 Be2. One reason is that 10 ... Rxf4 fails to 11 Ng5 (threatening 12 Kf1) 11 ... Qa5 12 Kf1 Qxc3 13 Kxg2 Qxa1 14 Qg7.

9	...	b6
10	Bg5	Qe7



Now, the great American had to avoid playing casually with

11 Ng3 Ng4
12 Bxe7 Nxh6

when White's dark-squared bishop is lost because

13 Bh4 Rg4

or

13 Bb4 a5.

Instead, Bobby was alert and played

11 Qh4

but still went down to one of his heaviest defeats in the purple patch prior to him winning the World Championship. Black was able to repeat the trick with

11 ... Bb7
12 Ng3 h6

when 13 Qxh6 is still off limits for the same reason 13 ... Ng4 etc and 13 Bxh6 Rg4 14 Qh3 0-0-0 gives Black too much activity.