

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – June 2020

### Chairman's Chatter

Although restrictions are starting to ease, the lockdown due to coronavirus is still having an impact on our lives. I hope you and those you care about have remained safe and well and will continue to do so. Whatever your circumstances, however, you may have had time to reflect and may have changed your outlook on a range of topics, maybe your opinion on consumerism and the environment, inequality or social communication.

More parochially, the hiatus in chess has also afforded the opportunity to take in the wider view. With no rush to make the next move, what can we do broadly to revamp the way we go about play? As a result, the *Match of the Month* has a different emphasis. Gone is the sporting significance and instead, win or lose, let us enjoy the mental challenge and stimulation while seeking the satisfaction of playing chess to the limit of our capability.

*Paul Hanks*

### Result Round-up

Online tournaments : May 2020

Player	May				Total	Tie break
	6th	13th	20th	27th		
R Ilett	3	3	2½	3	9	2½
P Spencer	-	3	1½	4	7½	-
P Hanks	1	2	-	3	6	-
E Knox	2	1½	2	1	5½	1
M Tarabad	1	1½	2	1	4½	1
S Walker	2	1½	0	-	3½	-
P Weinberger	-	3	-	0	3	-
C Russell	0	1	0	2	3	0
P Turp	-	2½	-	-	2½	-
J Parker	-	-	-	0	0	-

### Puzzle Problem

Last Month's solutions

Position : 8/8/8/4K3/2p1n3/3k4/1Q2R3/1b6

Lazard 1924 : **1 Rg2 c3/Ke3 2 Qe2#** [1 ... Nf2 2 Rg3#; 1 ... N other 2 Qxd2#; 1 ... B any 2 Qd4#]

Position : 2rkr3/4pQ1R/p1qpPp2/8/2p2P2/8/PPP3P1/2KR4

Paeren v Jaworski, Correspondence 1974-6

**1 Rxd6+ exd6** [1 ... Qxd6 2 Qxe8+ Kc7 (2 ... Kxe8?? 3 Rh8#) 3 Qxe7+ Qxe7 4 Rxe7+ with a won endgame; 1 ... Kc7 2 Rxc6+] **2 Qd7+ Qxd7 3 Rxd7#**

In last month's issue of **New Englander**, the featured game reached a position with all the squares on one file occupied by a piece of some sort. While browsing through an old magazine (*Chess*, November 1980), I came across the following position which looks to be a fitting sequel. White to play and mate in 2



Black to play and win



## Match of the Month

Pick up a pen. Now write down the hard-and-fast guidelines about chess strategy that you would impart to a novice player. Not easy is it? Tartakover once explained the problem with the witticism "Tactics is what you do when something is going on. Strategy is what you do when nothing is going on!"

All this is the prelude to a fairly boring game. The reason it lacks tactical resources and a maze of variations is that I had not learned an important lesson in strategy. Bloody-minded consistency!

### P Hanks v C Watkins

NE Patriots v Warboys; 23.10.2019

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	c5
3	Nf3	

The strategic landscape has almost been defined by this point. Black wanted to play a Benoni Defence but White prefers a Sicilian with the famous Maroczy Bind formation. White has, in fact, a simple plan :-

- position pawns on c4 and e4 to prevent Black drumming up counterplay in the centre with the break d7-d5
- develop pieces centrally on natural squares
- after castling, open files and diagonals for a kingside attack by advancing the f pawn.

Let us see how well this can be put into practice.

3	...	e6
4	Nc3	cxd4
5	Nxd4	a6
6	e4	d6

Recognise this? If you were to replace the pawn on c4 with a bishop, you would be staring at the main line of the Sozin variation of a Najdorf Sicilian. In many games with this generic opening, Black will claim space in the centre with e6-e5 and it is virtually impossible to prevent this. The advance does, however, come at a price. There is the lost tempo due to the pawn reaching e5 in two moves, d5 could be a weak square, there is a backward pawn on d6 and White can play Nd4-f5 when exchanging Bxf5 exf5 opens the light-squared diagonal f3-b7 for the unopposed white bishop. Black refrains and allows White to continue with his strategy.

7	Be2	Be7
8	O-O	Bd7
9	Be3	O-O
10	Qc2	Nc6
11	Rad1	Qc7

So far, everything is working to plan. Now for the final piece of the jigsaw...

12	f4	Rfd8
13	Nxc6	Bxc6

The last move was a slight diversion. The immediate 13 f5 could have been answered by 13 ... Nxd4 14 Bxd4 e5 but I hardly wanted to force Black onto the correct path. Back to the game plan.

14	f5	exf5
15	Rxf5	

Black's capture came as a surprise. It straddles him with an isolated pawn but my move was also not foreseen at move 14. I was intending 15 exf5 to conserve my own pawn structure but 15 ... d5 would solve Black's issues.

15	...	Bd7
16	Rf2	

16 Rg5 leaves the rook out on a limb but Black can no more than tickle it e.g. 16 ... h6 17 Rg3. A discovered attack by 16 ... Nxe4 holds no fears. It trivially loses material but as the computer points out, ignoring any gain is an even stronger deterrent - 17 Rxd4 Kxd4 18 Nd5 with a massive attack e.g. 18 ... Qa5 19 Qxe4 Bf6 20 Bd3 Rh8 21 Rf1 Bd8 22 Qf4 with unstoppable threats of Qxf7# and Qh6+.

16	...	Be6
17	b3	Nd7
18	Nd5	Bxd5
19	exd5	Ne5
20	Bd4	Bf6



Here we have the climax of White's strategy. Everything envisaged at move 3 has been achieved. All that remains is to apply the finishing touches to the attack. So why did I continue so timidly?

21	Qf5	Qe7
22	Kf1	

There was still a potential extra pawn and reasonable activity to be had with 22 Bd3

- 22 ... Ng6 23 Bxf6 Qxf6 24 Qxf6 gxf6 25 Rxf6 Kg7 26 Rdf1 Ne5
- 22 ... Nxd3 23 Bxf6 Qxf6 24 Qxf6 gxf6 25 Rxd3.

22	...	Re8
23	g3	Qd7
24	Qxd7	½ - ½

when a tame but by now, justifiable draw was agreed.

Returning to the position at move 21, the obvious try is to breach the pawn defences of the black king with 21 Rxf6 gxf6 22 Qf5. If this line does not work, it is not the moves that are wrong but the whole game strategy. To draw back at this stage is to waste 20 moves of effort. *It just must be played!*

Objectively, how does Black defend? In my analysis over the board, the central knight looked formidable and I could not see that it could be removed. There are two obvious defences of f6.

- 22 ... Kg7 23 Rd3
  - This move I could not find. It is vindicated by 23 ... Nxd3 24 Qxf6+ Kf8 25 Qh8+ Ke7 26 Bf6+ Kd7 27 Bg4#. The strength of Black's knight is its dominant central position but that implies its weakness is its immobility. You can see here what happens when it moves away.
  - It looks like h7 is the weak point but after 23 ... Rh8 24 Rg3+ Kf8 25 Qxf6 Rg8, White can even allow rooks to be exchanged because the attack is overwhelming with 26 c5 e.g. 26 ... Rxc3 27 hxg3 Rd8 28 Bxe5 dxe5 29 Qh8+ Ke7 30 d6+ Rxd6 31 Qxe5+
  - The most solid defence is 23 ... Rg8 24 Rh3 Qe7 25 Rxh7+ Kf8 when despite a nominal pawn deficit, Fritz prefers White's position by the equivalent of 2 pawns. The threat 26 Bh5 Rg7 27 Rh8+ Rg8 28 Qh7 fails to 28 ... Nf3 29 Kf2 Qe1+ with a perpetual check. Preparing an escape route with 26 g3 calmly puts the ball back in Black's court.
- 22 ... Qe7 23 Bd3
  - By refusing to swap minor pieces, Black is unlikely to survive 23 ... Ng6 24 Rf1 Re8 25 h4 or 23 ... Kf8 24 Qxh7 Ke8 25 Bf5.
  - There is little alternative to 23 ... Nxd3 24 Qxd3 (24 Rxd3? Qe1+) 24 ... Re8 25 Qg3+ Kf8 26 Rf1. Black is totally passive. White just needs confidence to avoid Qe7-e3+ by another quiet move 27 Kh1 before finding glory with 28 Bxf6.

It is a pity the good moves in this game appear in the notes rather than on the board. I still believe the assessment of the position at move 21 is difficult. The variations are complex but I should have been unable to bridge the gap between the strategic concept and accurate tactical vision with a little intuition.

Was it a half point dropped? Well, no. Carl was so happy to avoid humiliation that, facing each other again later in the season, he graciously returned the favour when in a similarly advantageous position. Relying on the largesse of your opponent, however, really is a high-risk strategy!

*Paul Hanks*

## Eye Opener

One advantage of near self-isolation is that it has given time to repair my neglected chess database. To profit from grandmaster guidance, I have tried to classify the many annotated elite games in my possession in the hope of gaining understanding from the expert analysis. Imagine my horror when reading of the following in an old copy of *New in Chess* magazine.

### A Beliavsky v N Short

Groningen 1997

1	<b>c4</b>	<b>b6</b>
2	<b>d4</b>	<b>e6</b>
3	<b>e4</b>	<b>Bb7</b>
4	<b>Bd3</b>	<b>f5</b>
5	<b>exf5</b>	<b>Bb4</b>
6	<b>Kf1</b>	<b>Nf6</b>

I do not pretend to know why grandmasters can pass over many offshoots from this sequence of moves without comment. Let us just take this as our starting point in which White played a surprising continuation.

7 **Be2**

which has the intention of trapping a bishop by

7	<b>...</b>	<b>0-0</b>
8	<b>c5</b>	<b>bx c5</b>
9	<b>a3</b>	<b>Ba5</b>
10	<b>dxc5</b>	<b>Nd5</b>

and Short lost after subsequent complications. In his published observations, Beliavsky claimed Black's play had been refuted outright. Now, the shocker...!

### I Jelen v A Beliavsky!

Ljubljana 2002

1-10	as above	
11	<b>Nf3</b>	<b>Qf6</b>

Short tried 11 ... Rf5 but here is a subsequent novelty credited to German grandmaster Bunzmann.

12	<b>fe6</b>	<b>Na6</b>
13	<b>Qc2</b>	<b>Rae8</b>
14	<b>ed7</b>	<b>Rxe2</b>
15	<b>Kxe2</b>	<b>Qe6+</b>
16	<b>Be3</b>	<b>Nf4+</b>
17	<b>Kd1</b>	

If 17 Kf1 Bxf3 18 gxf3 Qh3+. Black has two weaknesses to exploit – the exposed white queen and the king in the centre. Now, if the black queen can reach b3, it is all over.

17	<b>...</b>	<b>Be4</b>	
18	<b>Qa4</b>	<b>Nc5</b>	
19	<b>Qb5</b>	<b>Bd3</b>	<b>0-1</b>

Theoreticians got to work on this variation and opinion swings back and forth. This episode has undermined my faith in established wisdom. Dare I ever trust these guys again? Or should I merely set aside more time to keep up to date?