

New Englander

Chess Club Update – February 2021

Chairman's Chatter

As this newsletter went to press, I learned the sad news of Patrick Ribbands's sudden death. He was a regular opponent playing for Cambridge club and an officer of the County Association who went about his grading duties with quiet efficiency. Most recently, he was the organiser for the EACU club team championship and the Spring competition in which we had entered a U1600 team has been cancelled. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

The club still has a busy programme of online events in the ongoing Icen League which hopefully will keep you interested and active. As these matches are no longer tied to the availability of a venue, captains are free to re-arrange the evenings on which they are played and this disruption has and will continue to override our regular internal event on Wednesdays. I am proposing with fewer results that the normal monthly aggregation of scores runs throughout the Spring quarter. That should give you plenty of opportunity to compete!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Lebedev 1929)

Position : 8/7r/6p1/8/6Q1/6K1/4N1P1/7k

1 Qe4 Rh3+ 2 gxh3# [1 ... g5 2 Qxh7#; 1 ... R any7 2 Qh4#; 1 ... Rh other 2 Qb1#]

Result Round-up

Online Club Championship

Round 1			
J Sadler = Rd 2 (1)	P	P	P Turp
Round 2			
P Turp	P	P	E Knox (0)
R Taylor (½)	P	P	P Hanks (0)
Round 3			
P Walker(2)			P Spencer (2)
C Russell (½)	1	0	J Sadler (1+P)
E Knox (0+P)			R Taylor (½+P)
M Tarabad (0)			P Turp (2P)
Round 4			
P Hanks (0+P)			M Tarabad (0)
J Sadler (1+P)			P Walker(2)
P Spencer (2)			R Taylor (½+P)
C Russell (1½)			E Knox (0+P)
P Turp (2P)			P Hanks (0+P)
Deadline : 31 st March		Next draw : 1 st April	

Online tournaments : Spring 2020

Player	January-March			Total	Tie break
	6 th Jan	20 th Jan			
P Walker	3	2			
P Hanks	-	3			-
P Spencer	-	1			-
R Ilett	-	-			-
M Tarabad	1	0			
C Russell	1	-			
E Knox	-	-			-
P Weinberger	-	-			-
S Walker	1	-			

EACU Team Championship

New England A	2	Milton Keynes	2
R Taylor	1	N Alexander	0
P Spencer	1	G Ward	0
E Knox	0	D Wells	1
J Parker	0	C Solloway	1

Watford	3	New England B	1
D Piggott	0	P Hanks	1
C Sloan	1	C Russell	0
C Russell	1	M Tarabad	0
R Hammond	1	S Walker	0

Saxmundham	2	New England A	2
M Lightfoot	½	R Taylor	½
J Feavyour	½	P Turp	½
M Usher	0	P Spencer	1
P Collicott	1	J Parker	0

New England B	2½	Enfield	1½
P Hanks	½	D McNish	½
C Russell	1	C O'Caolaidhe	0
M Tarabad	0	G Kapur	1
J Sutherland	1d	Default	0d

Iceni League

Norwich Dons	4½	NE U1450	3½
"gambitapawn"	1½	P Hanks	0½
"stephenl64"	½0	P Spencer	½1
"grahamxjones"	01	P Weinberger	10
"buttercone"	½1	S Walker	½0

NE U1700	4½	Warriors B	7½
P Walker	0½	"PinkLion31"	1½
P Spencer	11	"Flacos69"	00
E Knox	00	"WTheDog"	11
P Weinberger	11	"Angus13"	00
M Tarabad	00	"Marco88UK"	11
S Walker	00	"aepaez"	11

Linton Pandas	6½	NE U1700	5½
"Blocksetter"	00	P Walker	11
"yoavpb"	00	P Spencer	11
"NinjaKai1"	11	J Sutherland	00
"Pole_or_Perch"	½½	P Hanks	½½
"Greenwoody"	11	M Tarabad	00
"chir0s"	½1	S Walker	½0

Match of the Month

While the pandemic has undoubtedly made online chess more accessible, am I alone in thinking that this has led to an annoying tendency to use increasingly short time limits to popularise the game, much like 20-20 games in cricket? My own view is that too much 'skittles' chess is bad for your thought

processes. So I was relieved that Paul kept our club championship at standard league speeds.

But it is hard to adapt your style to both types of game and pace yourself, especially if your opponent is moving quicker. If online chess becomes the norm, will slower games gradually disappear, due to the potential to cheat? Let's hope not. However, the following game is an example of what I mean.

Chris Russell v Jonathan Sadler

New England Club Championship Rd 3, 08.01.2021

1 e4 e5
 2 Nf3 Nc6
 3 d4 exd4
 4 Nxd4

The Scotch Opening was thought to be a chess dead end until Kasparov resurrected it for his famous match with Karpov in 1990. There is still plenty of mileage for those looking for an alternative to the theory-heavy Ruy Lopez. An interesting example is this most amazing recent queen sacrifice:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugHG0tF7tR0&t=768s>

4 ... Qf6

Jonathan chooses a slightly unusual move order, which does permit 5 Nb5 Bc5 6 Qf3 Qxf3 7 gxf3 Bb6 8 Be3 Kd8 with a small advantage to White according to Fritz. As Black, French grandmaster Fressinet (ELO 2708 at the time) faced 5 Nb3 Qg6 6 f3 Bd6 7 Nc3 Nge2 8 Be3 Bxh2 (Khatanbataar v Fressinet, Tromso 2014) repeating a trick Carlsen pulled at the earlier Dubai Rapidplay(!). I opted to play the main line.

5 Be3 Bb4+?!

Banged out quite quickly by Jonathan, this took me by surprise. The main line 5 ... Bc5 6 c3 Nge7 7 Bc4 is level, so 6 c3 will give effectively me a free tempo.

6 c3 Bc5!

According to Fritz, this is now the best option. If 6 ... Ba5, 7 g3 Nge7 8 Bg2 0-0 9 0-0 gives White a solid game.

7 b4??

Truly horrible! This is the sort of stupid thing I play instinctively in rapid games, just to push the bishop back and stop my clock ticking. But there is no such excuse in a standard rate game. I now said a choice rude word at the screen. However, in my defence, the best line is not easy to find. After a very long soak, Fritz eventually found 7 g3 Nge7 8 Bg2 0-0 9 0-0 d6 10 a4 a6 keeping White slightly better, presumably due to the natural plan of advancing the f pawn.

7 ... Nxb4?!

Inventive and aggressive but it should lose to best play. Fritz recommends 7 ... Nxd4 8 bxc5 Ne6 9 Bc4 Qg6 10 0-0 Qxe4 11 Nd2 Qf5 with a level game – Black has surplus material and a better pawn structure; I have superior development.

8 cxb4 Bxb4+
 9 Nd2 Bc3!?

The point of Jonathan's move 7, which I had not seen. With the double threats of capturing the rook and

knight, it looks like Black will recover the piece and I will just be two pawns down. What should I have played?



10 Rc1??

Not this! I am not sure how long I spent over this move, but I could and should have taken longer. I stared miserably at the chess board yet could not find the plainly obvious 10 Nb5!! keeping White a piece ahead.

- Now not 10 ... Bxa1 11 Nxc7+ Kd8 12 Nxa8 wins. Attempts to trap the cornered knight fail e.g. 12 ... Bd4 (if 12 ... Be5 simply 13 Bxa7) 13 Qa4 or Qc2.
- And if 10 ... Ba5, I can continue aggressively and harass the black queen with 11 Bd4 Qg5 12 Qc2 Nf6 13 Nxc7+ Bxc7 14 Qxc7 0-0 15 h4! Qh6 16 h5 d6 17 Be3 Ne8 18 Qc1 Qf6 19 h6 g6 20 Be2 Bd7 21 0-0 when my king reaches safety and even I should win with an extra bishop
- Relatively best is 10 ... Be5 11 f4! Bxf4 12 Bd4 Qh6 (not 12 ... Qc6?? 13.Bxg7) 13 e5 Kd8 14 Rc1 Ne7 (not 14 ... c6? 15 Nd6 with a dream position) 15 Nxc7 wins.

Just to rub salt into the wound, there was also 10 e5 Qxe5 11 N4f3 Bxd2+ 12 Nxd2 when White is better, though Black has three pawns for his knight.

10 ... Bxd4
11 Bxd4 Qxd4
12 Rxc7 Nf6!

and Jonathan has 2 pawns in exchange for my lead in development. I need to hold the e pawn so

13 Rc4!

Simplification with 13 Qc2 Qa1+ 14 Qc1 Qxc1+ 15 Rxc1 d6 is just losing.

13 ... Qe5!

Also 13 ... Qd6 is playable.

14 Be2 0-0
15 0-0 b6?!

This is not good, but Jonathan said after the game that it was done with the intent of Ba6, which did look a sensible deployment of the bishop at the time. Fritz recommends 15 ... d6! 16 Bd3 Re8 17 Nf3 Qe7 18 Rd4 Be6 when Black completes development with advantage. Also it thinks that 15 ... d5, Re8 and b5 are all better alternatives than the text. Now the computer scores the game as level.

16 Nf3 Qe7!

Best. If 16 ... Qe6 17 Nd4 Qe5 18 Nf3 is a draw.

17 e5 Nh5??

A critical mistake. I played 17 e5 to force the knight to retreat to e8, which gives Black a level game. For example, an aggressive tactical line could be 17 ... Ne8 18 Rd4 Nc7 19 Bc4 Ne6 20 Rd6 Nc5 21 h4! Bb7 22 Ng5 h6 23 Qh5 hxg5 24 Rh6 gxh6 25 Qg6+ with a draw by repetition.

18 g4!

The knight has no moves and is lost. But I fretted about exposing my king and the threat of Ba6 is annoying.

18 ... Ba6
19 gxh5?!

Accepting two pieces for the rook. If 19 Rd4?! Bxe2 20 Qxe2 Nf6! 21 Qd3 Ne8 22 Rxd7, I have the initiative but my pawns are all over the place!

19 ... Bxc4
20 Bxc4 Rac8

Fritz prefers 20 ... Kh8 relieving the pin on the f pawn.

21 Qd3 h6?!

A bad idea. 22 h6 is not an immediate threat so there is no need to prevent it. Again, best is 21 ... Kh8 22 Kh1 f6 23 Rg1 fxe5 24 Ng5 e4 25 Qd5 Rxc4 (to draw the sting from 26 Nf7+) 26 Qxc4 h6 27 Qxe4 Qxe4+ 28 Nxe4 with a difficult (but theoretically winnable!) endgame.

22 Bb3!

mobilising the queen.

22 ... Kh8

Curiously Fritz now prefers 22 ... Rfd8, though 23 Rd1 Rc5 24 Bc2 Rxc2 25 Qxc2 is still winning.

23 Re1!?

A mistake as it allows 23 ... Qb4! Best is 23 Rd1! and then if

- Black can logically defend the d pawn but 23 ... Rfd8 24 Qf5 g6 25 Qf4 (25 hxg6 fxg6 26 Qxg6?? allows 26 ... Rg8 pinning my queen! But after 26 Qh3, White still stands better) 25 ... Kg7 26 hxg6 fxg6 27 Qg4 Kh8 (28 Rd6 was threatened) 28 Kh1 d5 29 Bxd5 Rc5 30 Qe4 Kg7 31 Rg1 g5 32 Nh4 which is clearly winning

- or decide to give up material to exchange queens and my powerful bishop with 23 ... a5

24 Qf5 Rc3 25 Kg2 Rxb3 26 axb3 Qe6 27 Qxe6 dxe6 28 Rd6 Rb8 – only to reach a lost endgame.

23 ... g6?!

Jonathan helps me out. But if 23 ... Qb4 24 Qxd7 Qf4 25 Re3 Rcd8 (25 ... Rfd8 26 Qxf7 Rc1+ is objectively worse but has practical chances e.g. 27 Kg2?? Qg4#) 26 Qh3 protects everything against the marauding queen though I probably would not have found this over the board.

24 Qd4! f6??

This prevents the discovered check but gives me alternative lines of attack. Best for Black is 24 ... Kh7 but 25 Rd1 Rc5 26 Qxd7 Rc7 (26 ... Qxd7 and the endgame is hopeless) 27 Qg4 Rg8 28 Kh1 gxh5 29 Qxh5 Qf8 30 Qf5+ Kh8 31 Qf4 Rg6 32 Nh4 with a devastating material gain - if the rook on g6 moves 33 e6 will start a winning attack.

Now, how should I finish the game off?



25 Nh4!!

gives a battery of horrible knight checks. If 25 hxg6 Qg7 keeps the game going a little longer.

25 ... Kg7
26 exf6+ Rxf6

26 ... Qxf6 27 Re7+ Rf7 (27 ... Kh8 28 Nxc6#) 28 Rxf7+ changes nothing.

27 Rxe7+ 1-0

and with mate on the move Jonathan resigned.

Chris Russell

Blunder of the Month

Computers and humans have a common problem with analysis. At some depth, the variation has to terminate with an assessment and what happens next is always somewhat hazy. After a few more moves have been played, however, the horizon has moved on and this extra clarification gives scope for a mid-course

correction. Unfortunately, playing at speed can encourage you to plough on brazenly with the pre-planned continuation. Here is an example :-

D McNish v P Hanks
Enfield v New England B



My opponent has recently played a3xb4 and I could re-capture with approximate equality. I saw a chance to launch an attack with some potential pitfalls for White. I could see that an eventual Bc2xe4 would probably be a sufficient defensive resource but this would yield me the bishop pair

17 ... Bh4

Here is the risk. I am hoping 18 g3 looks too risky owing to potential sacrifices on g3. In fact, quite the opposite is the case after 18 g3 Nxc3 19 hxg3 Bxc3 (19 ... Qg5 20 Qg4) 20 Qh5 g6 21 Bxc6.

18 Rf1 Bf2+
19 Kh1 Qh4

So far in accordance with expectations - 20 ... Ng3# is threatened. If White sees this, the reply is forced.

20 Bxe4 Qxe4

I toyed with 20 ... Bg3 which is better because after 21 h3, it rules out any defence by Qd1-g4 which would leave either the rook on f1 en prise or that square unguarded after 21 Rxf8+ Rxf8. That, however, was not my original intention...

21 Qg4

Again, as expected at move 17. At that point, I thought I had nothing to fear from 22 Qxe6+ so I continued with my plan

21 ... Qd3??

Only here did I spot that 22 Nxd3 forces immediate resignation. White's reply came after tense minutes.

22 Rd1?? Qc2??

So relieved, paradoxically I now forgot the planned continuation that spurred me into my 21st move 22 ... Be1 23 h3 Rf1+ 24 Kh2 Qxd1 25 Qxd1 Bg3+.