

New Englander

Chess Club Update – January 2022

Chairman's Chatter

Happy and Healthy New Year! This good wish is especially poignant at present. Erstwhile club stalwart Des Lane has required a spell in hospital and either in person or via family members, some of you have had a brush with Covid or other seasonal respiratory infections. I hope the fresh start to the calendar brings a rapid recovery and generally improving fortunes.

As this issue goes to press, first indications are that the rampant omicron variant does not produce severe symptoms in the fully vaccinated population. Until the data can re-assure us, however, we shall be making individual assessments about the risks of play over the board. To maximise our latitude for reactive postponements, keeping the club diary as clear as possible will reduce pressure to complete fixtures if you feel uncomfortable.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Hartong 1942/8)

Position 1 : 4k3/3pPp2/8/8/4R3/4K3/4Q3

1 Qh4 f6/f5 2 Qh5# [1 ... d6/d5 2 Qa4#]

Position 2 : 5k2/4pPp1/8/8/5R2/5K2/5Q2

1 Qa1 e6/e5 2 Qa3# [1 ... g6/g5 2 Qh8#]

Website to Watch

It has been announced that the Tata Steel Chess Tournament will go ahead as planned in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands from 14th to 30th January 2022

despite strict Covid control measures in the country. The parallel open competitions have been cancelled and this, hopefully, will allow the elite grandmasters such as Carlsen and Caruana to form a bubble and stay safe. <https://tatasteelchess.com/about/tournament/> gives the details.

Diary Dates

19th January Club Handicap competition

Result Round-up

Club Championship

Round 3			
C Russell (1)	P	P	R Jones (2)

Round 4			
P Spencer (2)	1	0	J Jennings (1)
P Cooper (0)	P	P	C Russell (1+P)
P Walker (3)	1	0	E Smith (1)
E Knox (1)	0	1	P Hanks (2)
R Jones (2+P)	P	P	R Ilett (3)

Round 5			
E Smith (1)	P	P	R Jones (2+2P)
C Russell (1+2P)	0	1	P Walker (4)
J Jennings (1)	0	1	E Knox (1)
R Ilett (3+P)	½	½	P Spencer (3)
P Hanks (3)	1	0	N Wedley (1)

Round 6			
P Walker (5)			R Ilett (3½+P)
P Spencer (3½)			R Jones (2+3P)
P Hanks (4)			C Russell (1+2P)
N Wedley (1)			E Smith (1)
P Cooper (0+P)			J Jennings (1)
E Knox (2)			N Wedley (1) – Rd 7

Cambridgeshire League

St Neots A	1	New England A	4
A Chapman	0	P Walker	1
R Gompelman	0	R Ilett	1
P Barkas	0	P Hanks	1
C Emery	0	P Spencer	1
D Rice	1	E Knox	0

Fenland Cup

Cambridge	2½	New England A	1½
S Palucha	½	P Walker	½
T Robbins	1	R Ilett	0
I Phillips	0	P Hanks	1
A Ibn Saifullah	1	P Spencer	0

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
N Wedley	1	0	E Smith

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 29/12/21
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+5	N Wedley	½,1,1
2	+1	+1	E Smith	1,0,0
3	-1	+1	J Sadler	1
4	-	-1	J Jennings	1,0,0,½,1
5	+1	-3	P Cooper	0,0,0
6	-1	-1	C Russell	1
7	-	-	R Ilett	½
8	-	-	P Hanks	½

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	7000 Team	Total	TPR*
P Walker	5		4	1½	2	12½	
P Spencer	3½		4	2	1	10½	
P Hanks	4	½	2½	2		9	
C Russell	1	1	3		1½	6½	
R Ilett	3½	½	3			7	
N Wedley	1	2½	1	½		5	
E Knox	2		1	1½	½	5	
J Jennings	1	2½		1		4½	
R Jones	2		1½		½	4	
E Smith	1	1				2	
J Sadler		1				1	
P Cooper	0	0				0	

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

R Gompleman v R Ilett

St Neots A v New England A, Board 2; 13.12.2021

Three weeks earlier, we hosted St Neots achieving a tidy victory. The away fixture, however, is always a tougher task and as expected they fielded a much stronger team. I was to face Raymon Gompelman, a player known for his liking of flank openings.

1 b4

I was not to be disappointed! This is officially known as the Sokolsky Opening after the author of a 1963 book on the system but has also been called the Polish and even Orangutan! Despite a dedicated website (click [here](#)), it is not popular at the highest level though Carlsen has given it a few outings without particular success in the current era of online rapidplay events.

1 ... d5

White has done nothing to prevent Black's pawns from occupying the centre, normally leading to rapid development. One choice was 1 ... e5 2 Bb2 Bxb4 3 Bxe5 Nf6 as espoused by Giri and Nakamura against Magnus. In these circumstances, trading a centre pawn for one on the wings can be surprisingly desirable. Nevertheless, I chose a different path.

2 Bb2 Nf6

If White is trying to nullify opening preparation, Black could return the favour with the playable 2 ... Qd6.

3 e3 Bf5

4 c4 e6

5 c5 Be7

At this point and for the next few moves, the computer recommends 5 ... a5 but after 6 a3, it resumes the game continuation with 6 ... Be7. I think the point is that Black has the option of 7 ... axb4 8 axb4 Rxa1 9 Bxa1 with subsequent development with tempo by Nb8-c6 and Qd8-a8. It also reduces any later expansion by White on the queenside.

6 Nf3 h6

7 Be2 0-0

8 0-0 Nbd7

9 d4

Blocking the long diagonal when 9 Nd4 was available.

9 ... c6

10 a4 Qc7

11 b5

White has gained space but it does not look too dangerous. Swapping pawns on c6 might create a weakness there and an entry point on b7 but without supporting pieces yet to take advantage. On the other hand, I can work towards opening lines in the centre.

11 ... Ne4

12 Nbd2 Bf6

13 Qb3 e5

14 Nxe4 dxe4

15 Nd2

Is it asking for trouble to denude the king's defences with so many pieces on the board? Fritz is happy with the text move but the Black side is easier to play. For a human, a safer strategy was to start exchanges with 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 dxe5 Bxe5 17 Bxe5 Qxe5. Black is nicely centralised but the position has been simplified.

15 ... exd4

16 exd4 Rae8

17 Nc4 Be6

18 Qc2 Bd5

19 Ne3

19 Nd6 looks more natural to shut off my queen from the kingside and the computer is undecided on its merits relative to the text move. Another less obvious idea is 19 a5 cxb5 20 Ne3 Be6 (20 ... Bc6 21 d5; 20 ... Qc6 21 Nxd5 Qxd5 22 Bxb5) 21 Bxb5 when the advancing pawns starting d4-d5 are very threatening.

19	...	Bg5
20	Nxd5	cxd5
21	Qb3	e3
22	f3	

Accepting the pawn gives me a tremendous attack e.g. 22 fxe3 Rxe3 23 Qc2 Bf4

- 24 g3 Bxg3 25 Bf3 (25 hxg3 Qxg3+ 26 Kh1 Qh4+ 27 Kg1 Rg3+ 28 Kf2 Rh3+ 29 Kg2 Qg3#) 25 ... Bf4 26 Bxd5 Rh3 but 27 Rxf4 Qxf4 28 Bxb7 is too messy to analyse this far ahead – and with little time!
- 24 h3 Rfe8 25 Bf3 Nf6 when Black is comfortably in control.

White's dark-squared bishop is missing from the defence. 22 Bc1 exf2+ 23 Rxf2 might be advisable.

22	...	Bf4
23	h3	

It would be harder to break through after 23 Qxd5 Bxh2+ 24 Kh1 Nf6 25 Qf5 Bg3.

23	...	Nf6
24	b6	axb6
25	cxb6	Qb8
26	Ba3	

White's last feint hope was 26 Bc3 Nh5 27 Be1.



26	...	Nh5
27	Rfe1	Bh2+
28	Kh1	Ng3+
29	Kxh2	Nf1+ 0-1

There is no stopping 30 Kg1 Qh2+ 31 Kxf1 Qh1#. My best game for some time!

Ray Ilett

Eye Opener

In living chess, actors dress in costumes of the various pieces to enact a famous game. This game, known as "Schlechter's Immortal", was chosen for the first such display at the 1954 festival in the Italian town of Marostica.

Bernhard Fleissig v Carl Schlechter
Vienna , 1893

1 b4 e6 2 Bb2 Nf6 3 a3 c5 4 b5 d5 5 d4

Fritz abhors opening the position when the opponent has more central control and prefers 5 Nf3 or 5 e3.

5 ... Qa5+ 6 Nc3 Ne4 7 Qd3

Second best to the standard tactic 7 e3 Nxc3 8 Qd2.

7 ... cxd4 8 Qxd4 Bc5 9 Qxg7 Bxf2+

9 ... Rf8 10 e3 Be7 threatens the deadly Bf6

10 Kd1 d4 11 Qxh8+ Ke7 12 Qxc8

This is where the computer evaluation suddenly tumbles after a few seconds thought. 12 Nh3 Nxc3+ 13 Bxc3 (13 Kc1 Be3#) 13 ... Qxc3 14 Nxf2 (to prevent Qe1#) 14 ... Qxa1+ 15 Kd2 is roughly level.

12	...	dxg3
13	Bc1	Nd7

Apparently losing! The correct (and winning) continuation was 13 ... Qxb5 14 Bg5+ Qxg5 15 Qxb7+ Nd7 16 Nf3 Qe3 with 17 ... Ng5 to follow.

14 Qxa8

14 Qxb7 Rd8 looks very scary but White can sell his queen for a lot of material by 15 Qxe4 Nf6+ 16 Qd3.

14	...	Qxb5
15	Bf4	



Now find the forced mate...

15	...	Qd5+
16	Kc1	Be3+
17	Bxe3	Nf2
18	Bxf2	Qd2+ 0-1

19 Kb1 Qd1+ 20 Ka2 Qxc2#.