

New Englander

Chess Club Update – May 2022

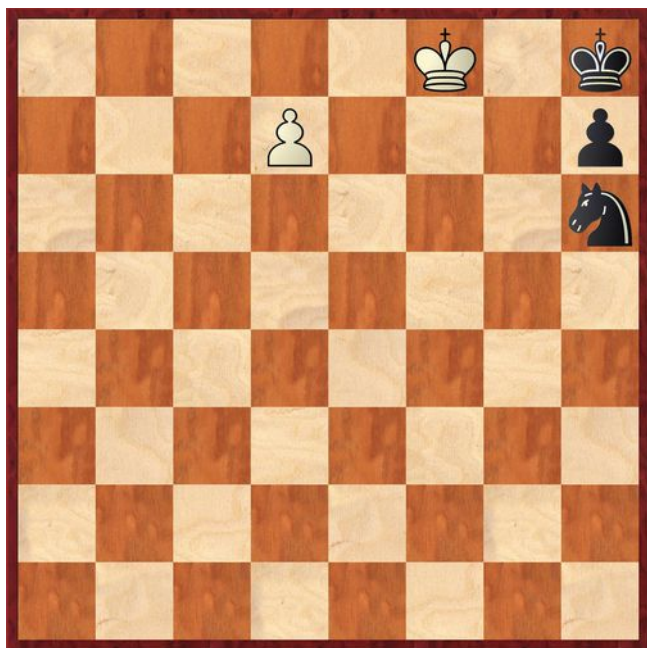
Chairman's Chatter

Roll up, roll up! We have almost reached the last chance to pre-order a copy of Chris Ross's chess autobiography. This may be a good opportunity to see your name in print or better still, hopefully, my name in print... Chris has raided his advertising budget and kindly offers us a preview in the *Match of the Month* section of this newsletter. I requested some juicy bits of gossip but no sooner had I done so than the publishing deadline went back to 23rd May. Have any of you taken out an injunction?

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution (Hernitz 1971)

Position : 4r2k/QR2p1p1/6K1/8/8/8/8/8

1 Qb8 Rxb8 2 Rxb8# [1 ... Rg8 2 Qh2#; 1 ... other 2 QxR#]

Website to Watch

"The Grand Chess Tour is Back!" It does not have the former wealth of elite classical chess tournaments but the first event would fit into that category. From May 5th to 14th in Bucharest, ten grandmasters will contest the Superbet Chess Classic Romania. Details appear on the website <https://grandchesstour.org/2022-grand-chess-tour> but it is not clear if it will carry live games.

The first round of the immensely strong Norway Chess tournament (<https://norwaychess.no/en/about/>) squeezes into the last day of May. More next month!

Diary Dates

- 10th May Online Problem Night. A Zoom link will be circulated
- 11th May Patriots v St Neots in Fenland 7000 knock-out final
- 16th May St Neots B v New England B re-arranged league match
- 25th May Club AGM at 7-30pm. First drink is on the Chairman!

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire League

Warboys A	2½	New England A	2½
J Beck	0	R Ilett	1
S Caraway	½	P Hanks	½
B Duff	½	P Spencer	½
N Greenwood	1	C Russell	0
P Baddeley	½	J Jennings	½

New England A	2	St Neots A	3
R Ilett	½	P Brown	½
P Spencer	½	A Chapman	½
E Knox	1	R Gompelman	0
R Jones	0	P Barkas	1
J Jennings	0	D Rice	1

Club Championship

Postponements			
C Russell (1)	Rd	3	R Jones (2)
R Jones (2+P)	Rd	4	R Ilett (3)
E Smith (1)	Rd	5	R Jones (2+2P)
J Jennings (2)	Rd	7	R Ilett (3½+P)
C Russell (2½+P)	½	½	P Spencer (4½)
R Jones (2+3P)	Rd	7	P Cooper (0)
E Smith (1+P)	Rd	7	E Knox (3)

Round 9			
R Jones (2+4P)	0	1	P Walker (7½)
E Smith (1+2P)	0	1	P Hanks (5)
J Jennings (2+P)	½	½	N Wedley (3)
C Russell (3+P)	0	1	E Knox (4+P)
P Cooper (0+P)	0	1	R Ilett (4½+2P)

Team 7000

NE Patriots	2	Spalding	2
R Ilett	½	M Dunkley	½
P Spencer	1	J Smith	0
R Jones	½	R Coats	½
C Russell	0	J Mosley-Hutchinson	1

New England Club Ladder

Please note that 5 games are required in the Ladder competition by the closing date of 1st May 2022.

White		Black	
J Jennings	1	0	N Wedley

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 27/04/22
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+8	P Walker	1,1
2	-	+6	P Hanks	½,1
3	+4	-	J Jennings	1,0,0,½,1,1
4	-	-3	E Smith	1,0,0,0
5	-2	+1	N Wedley	½,1,1,0,0
6	-1	-4	P Cooper	0,0,0,0
7	-1	-3	J Sadler	1
8	-	-1	R Ilett	½
9	-	-4	C Russell	1

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	7000 Team	Total	TPR*
P Walker	8½	2	5½	2½	3½	22	2107
P Spencer	7		9	2½	2½	21	1801
P Hanks	6	1½	4½	2		14	1829
E Knox	5		3½	2½	1½	12½	1671
R Ilett	5½	½	6		½	11½	1882
C Russell	3	1	4	½	2½	11	1554
J Jennings	2½	3½	1½	1	1	9½	1408
N Wedley	3½	2½	1½	½	½	8½	1419
R Jones	2		3½		2	7½	1668
E Smith	1	1	1			3	1080
J Sadler		1				1	1750
P Cooper	0	0				0	725

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

Chapter 41. A short sharp pain. A short game from the Coulsdon Easter Congress. The lesson from this game is that an opponent will not necessarily place a piece precariously in an opening, if he is aware that it cannot be snared easily. Attempts then to exploit such vulnerable pieces at the cost of pawn structure and strategic weaknesses are best avoided.

Black in this game is a young chap (19 years old), who is fast improving, already having an ELO of 2100. This result must have come as a bit of a shock, as he admitted after the game that the last time he played this variation as Black, he won quickly in 17 moves. Interestingly, he should have resigned after move 11 in this particular one!

Chris Ross v Matthew Payne

CCF Easter congress Rd 5, Coulsdon; 2014.04.19

1 d4 Nf6
2 Nf3 g6
3 Nc3

A fashionable way to avoid all King's Indian and Grunfeld main lines. Made popular within England by Grandmaster Mark Hebden, who has adopted it at the highest levels, scoring heavily with it, using it both as an aggressive weapon, and also as a positional grinding tool. As a means to avoid copious amounts of modern theory, it is an excellent choice of opening strategy.

3 ... d5

Taking on the opening at face value. If Black plays naturally with 3 ... Bg7 White has the option of 4 e4 entering into main-line Pirc Defence variations, something that a lot of King's Indian players are not willing to allow.

4 Bf4

Introducing the Barry attack accordingly. The e5 square has been weakened by Black's third move and White immediately clamps down on it. Swift development is his aim. If Black plays slowly, White can play Qd2, 0-0-0 and a rapid launch of the h pawn will lead to a very quick demise for Black.

4 ... Bg7
5 Qd2

This is the old move to the Barry Attack. Mainly so because of Black's response. Nowadays, players tend to play the more conservative 5 e3, allowing the d2 square to be freed up for the white king's knight.

5 ... Ne4

Challenging the white opening immediately. As stated, if Black castles, White can play Bh6 and launch a very decisive kingside attack. White's development is swift, effective and unhindered, whereas Black has work to do to bring his queenside pieces into play.

6 Nxe4

The slightly misplaced knight on c3 is exchanged favourably to compromise the black pawn structure. Black is of the belief that the pawn on e4 will prove to cramp White down.

6 ... dxe4
7 Ne5 b5!?

This is a very committal move indeed and goes all in for Black. His objective is to immediately hinder the white knight's flight from e5, as it is somewhat precariously perched. The c4 square is taken away as the natural retreat path for the knight and Black wishes to fianchetto both bishops, thereby protecting and boosting the e4 pawn. If Black can launch a queenside pawn-storm at the same time to discourage White from castling that side, then all to the good.

However, the major disadvantage of the move is that it leaves the black c pawn horribly backward and there are weaknesses right along the c file. Although seemingly unimportant at the moment, they are actually significant in the grand scheme of things. The move alone puts an ugly complexion on the black pawn structure and unless considerable material gain can be achieved, the long-term weaknesses will only give Black serious difficulties throughout the remainder of the game.

Black players in this position tend to play 7 ... Nd7 and after 8 Nxd7 Qxd7, an interesting game arises. White will ultimately wish to prove that the pawn on e4 is an actual weakness and will strive for an end-game, where the pawn will prove to be a target. White's 4-3 pawn majority on the queenside is easier to mobilise than Black's 5-4 on the kingside, especially so with doubled e pawns. White's pawn fluidity is easier to control than Black's pawn mass.

8 e3

The simplest way to continue. White introduces tactics to solve his knight's predicament. The basis of the strategy is the light-squares on the black queenside. The move 7 ... b5 has seriously weakened the light-squares, not only the b pawn itself, but the c6 square too. The knight on e5 now has the c6 square to use as a flight point. Although c4 has been cut-off – or has it?! – c6 is still a point of entry.

8 Qc3 is also an option, playing for tricks down the c file, but I was discouraged from this because of the tactics along the long a1-h8 diagonal.

8 ... c6

8 ... f6 trying to win the knight on e5 only allows 9 Bxb5+ and the knight can land on c6 unhindered.

Now Black has sealed off the c6 square, the white knight has to figure out another way to extricate itself. The natural squares of c4 and c6 have been taken away from it and the kingside is not looking any happier.

9 d5!

Carrying out the maxim of breaking down the pawn chain by attacking its base. If c6 topples, b5 will do likewise and on this occasion, with check, and a gain of tempo. More importantly though, c6 is re-established as a flight square for the white knight. The opening up of the a1-h8 diagonal is relatively unimportant, for the knight on e5 limits the Dragon bishop's effectiveness. If the knight is shifted with f7-

f6, that actually blocks up the diagonal and it is not detrimental to White. If Black then re-opens the diagonal with f6-f5, the knight can return, thereby blocking it up again. Not a complex conception, but an important one to realise that the white d pawn can be used more effectively to break open the black queenside pawn chain rather than stand fixedly on d4. Black's position is now on the verge of collapse.

9 ... Bb7

Black desperately attempts to find a tactical way to save his position. A valiant attempt, but it is all very difficult for him. The only way Black could continue was with 9 ... a6 when 10 a4 continues the breaking down of the pawn-chain, as can be seen in many variations of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. 10 ... Bb7 is neatly answered by the sly 11 Qb4! when e4 is attacked and tactics on b5 are abundant.

10 0-0-0

The aggressive way to continue the position. I had seen that 10 Nxc6 was perfectly playable, since 10 ... Nxc6 is cleverly answered by the zwischenzug 11 Bxb5! Although this wins a pawn, and gives White two clear passed pawns on the queenside, I was not entirely content with that, for Black would have open lines and potential counterplay along the a1-h8 diagonal.

White had to be careful here, as Black was hoping for a tactical way out of things. 10 Nxc6 Nxc6 11 dxc6 Qxd2+ 12 Kxd2 Bxc6 is not quite what White was looking for.



10 ... Qxd5?

An incredible blunder, but since Black has been struggling from the start of the game, it is possibly not all that surprising.

Black may have done best to play 10 ... a6 securing up the pawn chain, as White does not have the plan of a2-a4 and play along the a file anymore, having castled.

11 Qb4 again would be an annoying move for Black to meet, since e4 is attacked and the tactics on b5 are reintroduced. For example 11 ... cxd5 12 Bxb5+ axb5 13 Qxb5+ Nd7 14 Qxb7 Rxa2 15 Rxd5 Bxe5 16 Bxe5 and all of the black pieces are totally uncoordinated. The knight on d7 is doomed and White can calmly play b2-b3 to control the a1 square with his bishop.

The last very appropriate feature of the position is demonstrated after 10 ... cxd5 11 Bxb5+ Kf8 when 12 Ba4 is probably best retreating away from tactics and freeing up the b5 square. This begs the question of the knight on e5 though, as now it is still trapped, but having worked so well to secure the c6 square as a flight point, it is now the c4 square that becomes available.

12 ... f6 13 Nc4! is playable as the d pawn is pinned and White has plans of Na5 or Na3/Nb5 if Black himself plays a7-a5 to stop Na5.

All of this clearly demonstrates that Black is in a busted position and the blunder is easily explained.

11 Qa5

Winning the black queen, after which, Black should resign with dignity. Unsurprisingly, Black sat for over 25 minutes, huffing and puffing, clearly embarrassed to resign so quickly and then proceeded to play the remainder of his moves in a blur, hoping for a miracle of some kind.

After an unfortunate incident many years ago in the Sheffield league, where another distinguished gentleman had the discourtesy to play on after losing his queen in the opening, I have now learned to accept poor displays of respect and can now show suitable control to see the game out, holding back my contempt of such displays of disingenuous conduct.

11 ... Qxd1+

Of course, the black queen cannot move away from the d file, as this permits 12 Qd8#. Black gives up the queen for a rook, but since his other pieces are so uncoordinated, it is easy enough to wrap things up quickly. All of which is not helped by Black's poor pawn structure.

12 Kxd1 0-0

There is nothing better in the position. The white queen is going to penetrate onto c7 in any case. 12 ... Nd7 13 Qc7 Nxe5 14 Bxe5 Bxe5 15 Qxe5 0-0-0+ 16 Kc1 is the most solid, but the result is inevitable.

13 Qc7 Bc8
14 Kc1

Simple and strong. The king steps off a light square, preventing any discoveries and cheap tactics with Bg4+. Also, the king vacates the d file and protects the b2 pawn.

14 ... Na6
15 Qxe7

Taking the e pawn is the most effective, as the black queenside pawns cannot be saved in any case. They can be taken at leisure and there is no need to open up files on that side of the board quickly.

The black kingside is exposed that bit more, but critically, the white queen is given a fast avenue of retreat to protect the queenside., thereby avoiding all of the black pieces and shying away from potential tactics, which could ensnare her.

15 ... Be6
16 Be2

Although not the most effective, it is a move that can be played quickly and without danger. The game is effectively over, so complete accuracy is not necessary. There is no need to spend time or energy on finding the most accurate moves. 16 Nxc6 Rfc8 17 Bxb5 Nc7 is the tactical way to go.

16 ... Rfe8
17 Qa3

Withdrawing the queen from all the possible tactics and gaining time on the knight on a6, which does not have anywhere to go with any great danger. The white queen has prevented it from coming into b4 and from bothering the white king.

17 ... Nc7

Ironically, the best move for Black here was 17 ... Nb8 when White should play 18 Qd6.

18 Nxc6 Nd5
19 Bd6

Maintaining the dark-squared bishop and preventing Black from harassing the white queen by retreating with Bf8. The bishop stands strongly on d6.

19 ... Bf6
20 Bxb5 1-0

The actual playing process for visually impaired chess players is not complicated. There are adjustments made to playing conditions to enable the process. Equipment has to be adapted and moves announced. I'm fortunate in that I have the ability to play on a normal sized chess board. This uniqueness is due to the fact that in my early life, I had sight. So, I retain the ability to see what light, shape and importantly space is like. The ability to "visualise" is a technique that I have slowly cultivated. In simple terms, I am still able to see, but it is all in my internal eye. I see three-dimensionally within my own mind and I am able to transfer data then outwards and project into the physical world, enabling me to, for example, play on a normal chess board. I describe this singular ability, for I believe that this has aided in my chess development. By contemplating positionally and combining that with my ability to visualise, I have successfully fused them to strengthen my play. Hopefully, the reader can also develop this ability in increments and this is a secondary reason for my offer of this eclectic collection.

Chris Ross

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