

New Englander

Chess Club Update – February 2024

Chairman's Chatter

In most years, the leaderboard of our Grand Prix competition is a list of familiar names – the usual suspects, you may say. However, an interloper has gatecrashed the party this year and presumably qualifies as an unusual suspect. In this newsletter, Neil reveals the secret of his success.

Paul Hanks

Website to Watch

February's grandmaster tournament makes you wait until 27th before the [Prague Chess Festival](#) starts. It continues until March 7th with nine rounds involving the four most promising teenagers Keymer, Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Abdusattorov among others.

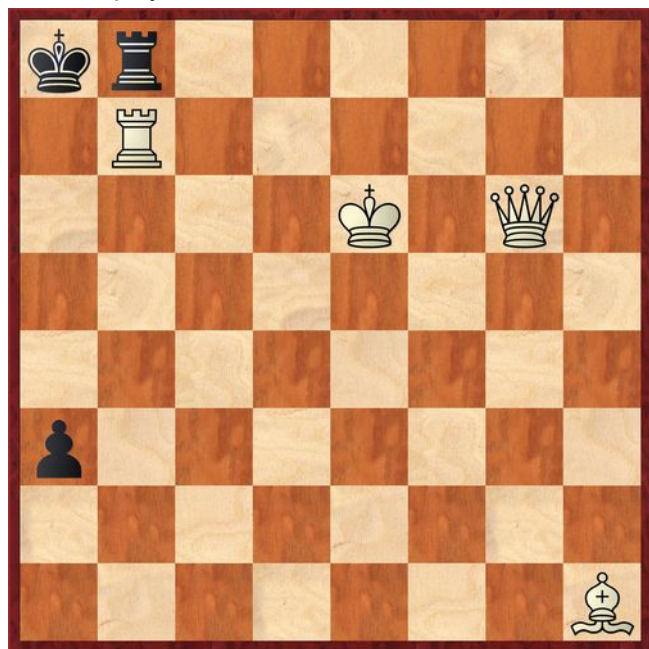
Diary Dates

19-24th February [Cambridge International Open Chess Tournament](#) for players rated 1600+.

2-3rd March [British Rapidplay Championship](#) at the Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough with a prize fund of £3000. Click [here](#) for the entry form.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Mott-Smith 1937)

Position : 8/8/1K1B4/8/k3N3/2R5/2n5/n7

1 Rd3 Nb3 2 Nc3# [1 ... Nb4 2 Nc5#; 1 ... Na3/Ne1/Ne3/ Nd4 2 Rxa3#]

Result Round-up

Club Lightning : 3rd January 2024

Player	Opponent											Total	
	PW	PS	RI	NC	PH	IG	EK	BS	DD	CR	AN		JJ
P Walker	X	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
P Spencer	1	X	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
R Ilett	0	0	X	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8½
N Chedd	0	0	1	X	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	8½
P Hanks	0	1	½	0	X	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	7½
I Goodwin	0	1	0	½	0	X	1	0	1	1	1	1	6½
E Knox	0	0	0	0	1	0	X	1	1	0	1	1	5
B Stephens	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	X	½	1	1	1	4½
D Dhokia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	X	1	1	1	3½
C Russell	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	X	0	1	2
A Neville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	X	1	2
J Jennings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0

Club Championship

White	Postponed	Black	
D Dhokia	1	0	I Goodwin
C Russell	0	1	P Walker

Player	NC	PS	PW	BS	DD	IG	SR	CR	Pts
N Chedd	X	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
P Spencer	0	X	½	1	1	½	1	1	5
P Walker	0	½	X	0	1	1	1	1	4½
B Stephens	0	0	1	X	1	1	0	1	4
D Dhokia	0	0	0	0	X	1	1	1	3
I Goodwin	0	½	0	0	0	X	1	½	2
S Reid	0	0	0	1	0	0	X	1	2
C Russell	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	X	½

White	Round 8	Black	
P Spencer	0	1	R Ilett
B Stephens	½	½	E Knox
P Walker	1	0	P Hanks
D Dhokia	0	1	A Neville
S Reid	0	1	N Wedley
C Russell	P	P	J Jennings

Champions League	N C	R I	P S	B S	P W	P H	E K	Pts
N Chedd	X		1	1	1			3
R Ilett		X	1			½	½	2
P Spencer	0	0	X	1	½			1½
B Stephens	0		0	X	1		½	1½
P Walker	0		½	0	X	1		1½
P Hanks		½			0	X	1	1½
E Knox		½	½		0	X		1

Challengers	D D	A N	N W	J J	I G	S R	C R	Pts
D Dhokia	X	0			1	1	1	3
A Neville	1	X	1	0				2
N Wedley		0	X	½		1		1½
J Jennings		1	½	X				1½
I Goodwin	0				X	1	½	1½
S Reid	0		0		0	X	1	1
C Russell	0				½	0	X	½

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	3	Peterborough	2
P Walker	½	C Tandy	½
R Ilett	1	A Kaszuba	0
P Hanks	½	S Caraway	½
B Stephens	1	M Zajackowski	0
P Spencer	0	D Redden	1

New England A	P	St Neots A	P
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New England B	2½	Godmanchester	1½
B Stephens	0	D Hurricks	1
P Spencer	1	J Wright	0
N Chedd	1	M English	0
J Sutherland	½	R Coetsee	½

St Neots B	2½	New England B	1½
J Vieira	0	B Stephens	1
C Emery	½	N Chedd	½
M Cooper	1	C Russell	0
M Hellewell	1	J Jennings	0

Team 7000 competition

Peterborough D	2½	NE Patriots	1½
G Hristov	1	B Stephens	0
S Caraway	1	E Knox	0
D Redden	0	P Spencer	1
F Fairhurst	½	C Russell	½

Team 4000 competition

NE Patriots	P	P'boro Knights	P
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New England Club Ladder

White	Black		
P Walker	1	0	A Neville

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 24/01/24
	Month	Overall		
1	-	-	P Walker	1,1,1,1,1
2	+2	+5	C Russell	1,1
3	-1	-1	P Hanks	0
4	-1	-1	P Spencer	1
5	-	+4	E Knox	1
6	-	-2	I Goodwin	0,0,1
7	+1	-1	A Neville	0,0,0,0
8	-1	-3	J Jennings	1,0
9	-	-1	R Ilett	0
10	-	-	N Chedd	0
11	-	-	N Wedley	0
12	-	-	D Dhokia	1,0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4000	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	5½	5	2½	½	1½	1		16	2016
N Chedd	7	0	2	4	0	1		14	1855
B Stephens	4½		2½	3½	½	2		13	1792
P Spencer	5	1	0	1½		2		9½	1697
C Russell	½	2		3½	½	2		8½	1482
R Ilett	4	0	1½	½	1			7	1845
E Knox	4	1			1	1½		7½	1761
N Wedley	2½	1		1			1½	6	1582
P Hanks	4½	0	½		½			5½	1874
I Goodwin	2	1		½			1	4½	1425
J Sutherland				2½	0	1	1	4½	1588
J Jennings	1½	1		0			1	3½	1435
D Dhokia	2	0		0			1½	3½	1266
S Reid	2							2	1157
A Neville	2	0						2	1383

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

Has anyone noticed that, on a QWERTY keyboard, my surname is only a small typing mistake away from our pastime? Maybe, chess with a similar error ratio should be called a game of chedd! Here is the first example of my delusion of grandeur...

R Mann v N Chedd

St Ives A v New England A, Board 5; 29.11.2023

1 e4 c6

This Caro Kann Defence can hardly be at fault, however. It has been the workhorse of many world champions from Botvinnik, through Karpov to Anand. It is regarded as solid for Black and by creating a strong pawn on d5, it has similar aims to the French Defence (1 ... e6) without the disadvantage of restricting the light-squared bishop.

2 c4

This is slightly unusual. Most games continue 2 d4 d5 whereupon White has various strategies. The Advance Variation 3 e5 has a parallel in the French Defence but here Black would sacrifice a tempo to undermine the base of the pawn chain with c6-c5. Another popular choice is 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 to destroy Black's ambitions in the centre immediately and this line has many features of my game.

2 ... d5
3 cxd5 cxd5
4 exd5 Qxd5

Post-mortem research showed that most master games follow with 4 ... Nf6 so as to recapture without exposing the queen prematurely. Often, White simply returns the material with 5 Nc3 but trying to hang on to the pawn must be more critical and deserving attention.

- 5 Bb5+ Bd7 6 Bc4 but then you can have fun with 6 ... b5 7 Bb3 a5
 - 8 a4 bxa4 9 Bxa4 Nxd5
 - 8 Qf3 a4 9 Bd1 (9 Bc2 Qc8 10 Nc3 b4) b4 10 h3 Bb5 and the d pawn becomes indefensible
 - 8 Nc3 a4 9 Bc2 b4 10 Nxa4 Qa5 11 b3 Qxd5 12 Nf3 (12 Nb6 Qe6+) Bb5 with compensation due to White's uncastled king
- 5 Qa4+ is more likely from strong players
 - 5 ... Bd7 looks more natural but is relatively rare. White might get too greedy with 6 Qb3 Na6 7 Qxb7 Nc5 8 Qb4 e6 with a massive lead in development
 - 5 ... Nbd7 6 Bc4 g6 7 Nc3 Bg7 8 Nf3 0-0 9 d3 (otherwise 9 0-0 Nb6 10 Qb3 Nxc4 11 Qxc4 b6 etc.) Nb6 10 Qb3 Qd6 and at long last, Black can focus too much firepower on the d5 weakness.

The verdict of the theory (if you know it!) is that Black achieves equality but it looks a daunting task to find the compensation at club level.

5 Nc3 Qa5

This is the last "book" move of the accelerated Panov Attack.

6 d4 Nf6

A little test for you. Fritz now claims that this position has arisen by transposition from Alapin's Variation of the Sicilian Defence (1 e4 c5 2 c3). But how?

7 Nf3 Bg4

Better would be 7 ... e6 preparing the dark-squared bishop for development. My move looks sound but after 8 h3, I cannot play 8 ... Bxf3 because 9 Qxf3 Nc6 10 Bg5 puts c6 under pressure and the retreat 8 ... Bh5 weakens the a4-e8 diagonal so that 9 Bb5+ Nbd7 10 g4 Bg6 11 Qb3 has many tactical opportunities for White e.g. 11 ... 0-0-0 12 Bf4 threatening 13 Qc4+.

8 Be2 e6
9 0-0 a6
10 Bd2

10 d5 is a sharp chance to expose my king but you would probably need the prowess of a computer to conduct the attack (or defence!) competently. Fortunately, my opponent has a more positional style and we enter instead a manoeuvring stage.

10 ... Qc7
11 Rc1 Nc6
12 Be3 Be7
13 Re1 0-0
14 h3 Bh5
15 a3 Rfd8
16 b4 Qd7
17 Ne5 Nxe5
18 dxe5 Qxd1?

A blunder which loses a bishop; I should of course play 18 ... Bxe2.

19 Bxd1

A good tactic.

19 ... Rxd1

An attempt to confuse the issue slightly.

20 Nxd1

This inaccuracy allows Black to stay in the game. However, either rook capture is still good for White e.g. 20 Rxd1 Bxd1 21 exf6 Bxf6 22 Nxd1.

20 ... Nd5
21 g4 Bg6
22 f4

Is a mistake. White probably needs to

- remove the powerful black knight
- keep his position closed until he can coordinate his rooks
- reduce the power of the bishop pair.

22 ... h5

22 ... a5 23 bxa5 Bxa3 claws back another pawn.

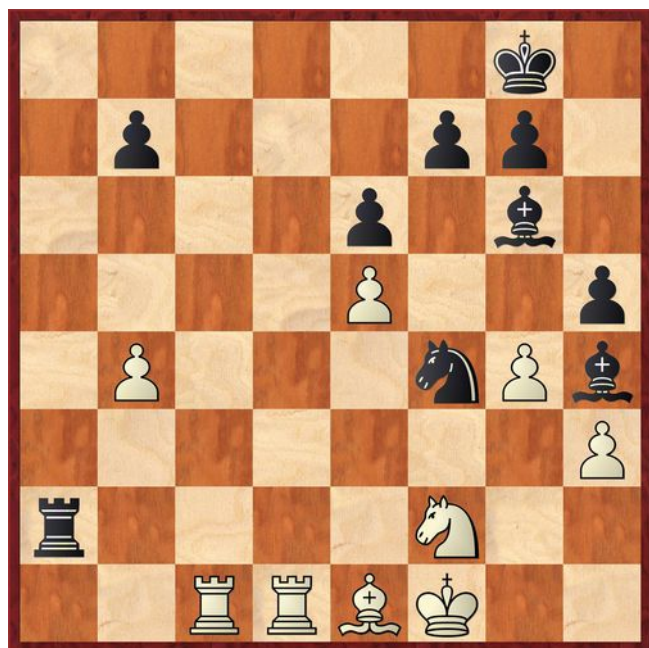
23 Nf2

A further error when he could have played 23 Nc3 challenging the black knight.

23	...	a5
24	Bd2	axb4
25	axb4	Ra2
26	Red1	Bh4
27	Be1	

Black has made a series of natural attacking moves and although White is still equal, the flow of the game has moved in Black's favour. White blunders but he had only a limited choice. The computer recommends 27 Rc4 but I think most humans would aim for simplification with 27 Ra1.

27	...	Nxf4
28	Kf1	Nd5



Missing 28 ... Bxf2

- 29 Bxf2 Bd3+ 30 Ke1 Ng2#; 30 Kg1 Nxf3+; 30 Rxd3 Rxf2+ 31 Kxf2 Nxd3+
- 29 Rc8+ Kh7 30 Bxf2 Bd3+ 31 Rxd3 Ra1+ 32 Rd1 Rxd1 with a winning endgame.

29	Rc8+	Kh7
30	Rb8	

A final blunder.

30	...	Ne3+	0-1
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Certainly over time, I have realised the loss of the exchange is not game ending and it is always good to continue the fight.

Neil Chedd

Eye Opener

Ognjen Cvitan (2458) v Falko Meyer (2209)
European Rapid, Zagreb; 14.12.2023

1	c4	c6
2	e4	d5
3	exd5	cxd5
4	cxd5	Nf6

Here is the alternative approach mentioned in the commentary to the main game.

5	Nc3	Nxd5
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6	Nf3	Nc6
7	Bb5	Nxc3

So far, the computer sees nothing amiss with an assessment of equality. However, the principal defender of the kingside has disappeared and that might motivate the alternative suggestion of 7 ... g6 to solidify that flank.

8	bxc3	e6
9	0-0	Bd7
10	d4	Be7
11	Re1	0-0
12	Bd3	Rc8
13	Qe2	

Apart from the withdrawal of the light-squared bishop to aim at h7, White has used the tempi to develop naturally. Black has also reacted sensibly and could continue to deploy his forces with, for instance, 13 ... Qa5 but his choice seems to lack purpose.

13	...	Re8
14	Rb1	Na5
15	Bd2	Qc7

White has deflected a black knight away from the centre and occupation of e5 is coming. Black needs to contest the square with 15 ... Bf6.

16	Ne5	Bf6
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A move too late!



17	Bxh7+	Kxh7
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The justifying analysis is rather long. If 17 ... Kf8 (17 ... Kh8 18 Qh5 Bc6 19 Nxf7+) 18 Bf4 Bxe5 19 Bxe5 Qc6 20 Qg4 f6 21 Re3 with a devastating attack e.g. 21 ... Re7 (21 ... fxe5 22 Be4 Qc4 23 Rf3+ Ke7 (23 ... Kg8 24 Qg6) 24 Qg5+ Kd6 25 Qxe5+ Ke7 26 Qxg7+ Kd8 27 Qg5+ Kc7 28 Qxa5+) 22 Bxf6 Rf7 23 Bxf7 (or 23 Bg5) 23 ... Rxd7 24 Rf7+.

18	Qh5+	1-0
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18 ... Kg8 19 Qxf7+ Kh7 20 Re3 Bh4 21 Nxd7 and the combined threats of Re3-h3, Nd7-f6 or even Rb1-b5 will be decisive.