

New Englander

Chess Club Update – November 2025

Chairman's Chatter

The clocks have changed and the dark evenings are here. How are you going to spend your extra hour? Playing chess, obviously. After a concentrated period of league matches, the club championship starts in November and it will be good to see the venue populated with most of membership coming together. In recent weeks, I believe the captains have struggled to raise teams and there have been few other games played on the sidelines (e.g. in the Ladder competition). I hope we can start to make Wednesday chess a regular event in your diary, expand the list of active players and increase the aggregate scores in the Grand Prix.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Galitzky 1903)

Position : 6R1/2pk4/8/8/4QK2/8/8/8

1 Ke5 c6/Ke7 2 Qh7# [1 ... c5 2 Qb7#]

Diary Dates

22nd-23rd November County Individual at Christie Hall, Wansford. Click for [Entry details](#)

Website to Watch

[World Cup!](#) The words always spell the excitement of the top knock-out event and this should be no exception from 1st to 26th November in Goa, India. The home squad is particularly young and strong but with

2700 as the rating mark for the 22nd seed, there is plenty of talent in the field.

Result Round-up

New England Club Ladder

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 29/10/25
	Month	Overall		
1	+2	+2	B Sivaraj	1
2	-1	-1	M Patrickson	1
3	-1	-1	P Spencer	0
4	-	-	C Russell	0

Cambridgeshire League

New England B	½	Godmanchester	3½
M Patrickson	0	D Hurricks	1
P Spencer	0	J Wright	1
B Sivaraj	0	G Silk	1
S Walker	½	M English	½

New England B	1½	St Neots 2	2½
P Hanks	0	M Cooper	1
P Spencer	0	P Barkas	1
B Sivaraj	1	C Emery	0
C Russell	½	R McMorran	½

New England C	P	Peterborough C	P
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Team7000

NE Patriots	1	Peterborough D	3
P Hanks	0	F Kaichinger	1
R Ilett	0	A Akintola	1
B Sivaraj	½	S Diaz Ward	½
J Peoples	½	J Blair	½

Fenland Cup

New England A	3	Peterborough A	1
P Walker	1	F Kaichinger	0
P Hanks	½	A Akintola	½
R Ilett	½	R Hammond	½
B Sivaraj	1	D Redden	0

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League			Cup	Team 7000	Total	TPR*
			A	B	C				
B Sivaraj		1		2½		1	½	5	1817
R Ilett			1½			½	0	2	1750
M Patrickson		1	½	0				1½	1606
P Walker			½			1		1½	1951
J Peoples					1	½		1½	1627
A Thobani					1			1	1751
B Stephens			0	1				1	1644
P Hanks			½	0		½	0	1	1616
J Sutherland					1			1	1759
P Spencer		0	½	½				1	1448
S Walker				½				½	1397
C Russell		0		½				½	1493

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

There often comes a point in your game, when you can see the possibility of a sacrificial attack that looks to have real potential. But unless you can see a definitive win in the position, at our level of chess most players will decline the risk and play safe, especially in team chess. However, at the end of last season, with a couple of postponed fixtures outstanding, we had the chance to win our league but only if we won all of our games in hand. So, when we faced St Neots at home we needed to get a win at all costs. Chess grandmasters seem to manage king hunts with ease, but it's never as easy as they make it seem. Once you sacrifice material you have to make it stick. So here is an example of my sorry efforts to emulate the elite!

Chris Russell v John Greiller

New England B v St Neots; 23.04.2025

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nc6
5	Nc3	

In this Sicilian Defence, White has an alternative here 5 c4 (the Maroczy Bind) trying to prevent Black eventually playing d6-d5. Then, for instance, 5 ... e5 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Nc3 Nf6 8 h3 Be6 9 Bd3 Nb4 10 Qa4+ Nc6 11 0-0 0-0 with advantage. It's not something I normally play and I couldn't remember all the variations.

5	...	a6
6	Be4?!	

An aggressive option in this line. Either 6 Be2 or 6 Be3 is better.

6	...	e6
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7	Be3	Nf6
8	a3?!	

Not the best option even though it was a favourite with Bronstein in analogous positions. The point is that the light-squared bishop is unlikely to engage in action on the d1-a4 diagonal from b3 so a safe retreat to a2 is created. There is no need to fear b7-b5-b4 just yet. Fritz prefers 8 0-0 and the game A Sokolov (2563) v M Leon Hoyos (2521), Metz 2010 continued 8 Bb3 Qc7 9 f4 with an attack similar to that beloved by Fischer.

8	...	Be7
9	f3?!	

Trying to hedge my bets and mixing systems – sigh. This move is normally the prelude to a pawn storm on the g and h files. Just watch how little of such a plan is realised!

9	...	Qc7
10	Bb3?!	

Yes, 10 Ba2 was rated slightly higher. An example of my intended plan of castling queenside is 10 g4 0-0 11 g5 Nh5 12 Qd2 Nxd4 13 Qxd4 b5 14 Bb3 Rb8 15 Ne2 a5 16 0-0-0 with equality.

10	...	0-0
11	Qd2	b5

11 ... Na5! gains the bishop pair by the threats 12 ... Nxb3 and 13 ... Nc4 forking queen and bishop. By playing it now, White is deprived of the option 12 Nxc6.

12	0-0
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Bailing out! It is slightly better to take the opportunity offered by Black's last move with 12 Nxc6 Qxc6 13 0-0 a5 14 Ne2 a4 15 Nd4 Qc7 16 Ba2 Ba6 17 c3 b4 18 cxb4 Bxf1 19 Rxf1 Rfc8 20 Nb5=.

12	...	Na5
13	Ba2	Nc4
14	Bxc4	Qxc4

I am getting into a stodgy position and I have wasted the tempo advantage of the white pieces.

15	b3?
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Poor but I was struggling to find a constructive plan.

15	...	Qc7
16	Nce2?	

with the intent of 17 Rfc1 and pushing the c pawn.

16	...	Bb7?!
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We both missed 16 ... e5! 17 Nf5 Bxf5 18 exf5 and with control of the centre, Black is definitely better.

17	Rfc1?
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This looked a plausible strategy to me at the time, but 17 c4 bxc4 18 bxc4 Rfc8 (18 ... Qxc4?? 19 Rfc1 Qa4 20 Rc7) 19 Rab1 or 19 Nb3 with the trap 19 ... Qxc4 20 Na5 Qc7 21 Rab1 Rab8 22 Rfc1 Qd7 23 Rxc8 Qxc8 24 Qb2 was better. Fritz prefers 17 a4 but all these moves indicate something has gone badly wrong. White should be attacking on the kingside.

17	...	Rac8?!
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Much better is the typical riposte by Black in the Sicilian 17 ... d5! 18 exd5 Nxd5 19 Bf2 Rfd8 20 c4 bxc4 21 bxc4 Nf6 when the centre has opened dangerously against me.

18 c4! bxc4
19 Rxc4

Fritz recommends 19 bxc4 but the isolated pawn looks awkward to defend.

19 ... Qd7?!

Fritz prefers 19 ... Qb8! 20 Rxc8 Rxc8.

20 Rc2?!

20 Rxc8, 20 Rcc1 and 20 Rc3 all lead to a level game – but not this loss of tempo!

20 ... Rxc2
21 Nxc2 Rc8
22 Ncd4?

22 ... e5! is now awkward to meet. Better was 22 b4 amongst other solid alternatives.

22 ... Bd8?

Fortunately, John helps me out.

23 b4! e5
24 Nf5?!

Very dubious. My first thought was 24 Nb3 which is safe but seemed too passive. It now looked like I needed a victory, if the team were to win.

24 ... d5

24 ... Bxe4 is a surprise but after 25 Nxd6 Rc2 (25 fxe4 Nxe4 26 Qd3 Qxf5 27 Rf1 Qg6 28 Qxa6) 26 Qd1 Bg6 27 Bc5, the game is still in the balance.

25 Neg3

25 Bc5 is slightly better when 25 ... dxe4 26 Qxd7 Nxd7 27 Nd6 Rc7 28 fxe4 leaves Black with a small edge according to the computer.

25 ... d4!
26 Bxd4??

I am now desperate to make something happen but this was a very bad gamble! The best chance to stay in the game was 26 Bg5!? g6 27 Nh6+ Kf8 28 h4 Ne8.

26 ... exd4
27 Qg5??

Starting to run short on time, I have not seen that Black has a very simple defence to this move.

27 ... Nh5??

Fortunately, neither has John. He took quite a while over this move, and perhaps over-thought his defence. Easily best was 27 ... Ne8! when I am just a piece down. Even 27 ... g6 was better than the text. I was gloomily thinking of resignation, but this is a reprieve!

28 Qg4?

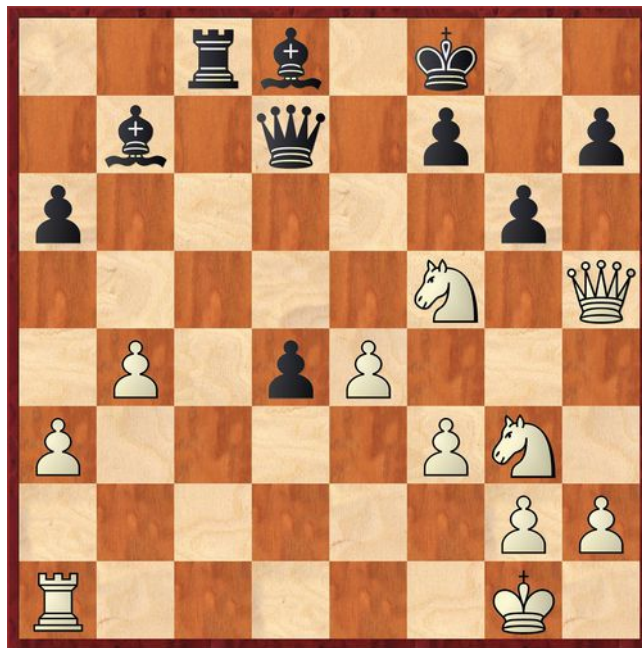
Trying to set up some threats. Fritz points out that objectively best is 28 Qxh5! g6 29 Qg4 when 29 ... Qc7 would be a simple only winning move.

28 ... Kf8??

Again, John takes his time, I assume worrying about discovered attacks, but here we both missed the best move, 28 ... Qc7! Finally, Fritz says that my dodgy attack is now ahead.

29 Qxh5! g6??

Three mistakes in a row – and now I really should have a won game. Best was 29 ... h6 30 Nxg7 Qc6! (Not 30 ... Kxg7?? 31 Nf5+ Kf6 and with the foresight of a chess engine 32 Rd1 wins but the human 32 e5+ and 32 Qxh6+ are also strong). So, it must be my turn to blunder. What should I play here?



30 Qh6+?! Qh6+?!

This was obviously tempting, as I have seen how I can bring my rook into the attack. Sadly, it falls short. Correct was 30 Qxh7!! Bf6 (best e.g. 30 ... gxf5 31 Nxf5 forces 31 ... Qxf5) 31 e5!! Bxe5 (31 ... gxf5 32 exf6 mates) 32 Re1!

- 32 ... gxf5?? 33 Rxe5 Rc1+ 34 Nf1 Qe6
- 32 ... Qd5 33 Qh6+ Ke8 34 Qg5 gxf5 35 Nxf5 Qe6 36 Ng7+
- 32 ... Qe6 (best) 33 Nh6 (threatening 34 Rxe5 Qxe5 35 Qxf7#)
 - 33 ... Bd5 34 Ng4 f6 35 Qxg6 d3 36 Nf5 d2 37 Qh6+ Ke8 38 Qxd2 Qxf5 39 Qxd5 with a sufficient material advantage
 - 33 ... Rc7 34 f4 f5 35 Qxc7 Qd5 36 Qf7+
 - 33 ... Qf6 34 Rxe5 Qg7 (forced) (34 ... Rc1+ 35 Nf1) 35 Qxg7+ Kxg7 36 Ng4 and the extra piece and pawn should decide the game.

30 ... Ke8
31 Ng7+!

31 Re1! also good. If 31 Qxh7 gxf5 32 Qg8+ Ke7 33 Nxf5+ Ke6 34 Qg4 is horrible to play for Black but after a long line of analysis, the computer does not jump in with a forced checkmate. The defence is easier said than done!

31 ... Ke7
32 N3f5+?!

Much better was 32 Rd1! Qc6 33 N7f5+ gxf5 34 Nxf5+ Ke8 35 Qg7! and the king hunt is still alive.

- 35 ... Qf6 36 Qxf6 Bxf6 37 Nd6+
- 35 ... Be7 36 Rxd4 with three pawns for the piece and Black is powerless against 37 Qg8+ Bf8 38 Nd6+ e.g. 36 ... Rd8 37 Qg8+ Bf8 38 Qxf8+.

32 ... gxf5
33 exf5??

Another blunder, though the opportunity to get the rook into the attack looked promising. Best is 33 Nxf5+ Ke8 34 Nd6+ Ke7 35 e5 and if all else fails, there are possible perpetual checks,

33 ... f6??

Simply 33 ... Qd5 or 33 ... Qc6 wins. Thankfully John is under time pressure too. Fritz says this position is level

34 Re1+ Kd6
35 Ne8+ Kc6
36 Re6+ Kd5??

36 ... Kb5! is the drawing line but it is hard to see.

37 Rd6+?

Here I missed another win with 37 Qd2!! Be7 (a tough single defence option to find) 38 Qa2+! Rc4 39 Qe2 Rc1+ 40 Kf2 Qxe8 41 Rxe7 Qc8 42 Rxb7! and the rook cannot be taken. However, only a grandmaster or a chess computer plays moves like this.

37 ... Qxd6
38 Nxd6 Kxd6
39 Qf4+ Kc6
40 Qxd4??

Missing the queen skewer, but I now have just seconds left on my clock. After 40 Qe4+ Kc7 41 Qxd4, Fritz says that with my three extra pawns for the piece, I have a small advantage, but it is now a moot point.

40 ... Bb6! 0-1

Oops! A fun game to play, but full of mistakes and very risky. The end reminds me of a line from a Clint Eastwood film; "A man's got to know his limitations."

Chris Russell

Eye Opener

Amonatov (2588) v Wojtaszek (2553)
Moscow 2005

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	Nc6
6	Bc4	e6
7	Be3	Be7
8	Qe2	

The game is following well-trodden theory in which White has scored well. One example that favours

Black went 8 ... Bd7 9 0-0-0 Rc8 10 f4 Na5 11 Bd5 e5 12 Nf3 Rxc3 (Karpman v Greenfeld, Israel 2002) with an attack after 13 bxc3 Qc7.

8 ... a6

By transposition, we have reached the position in the main game except White has replaced a2-a3 with Qd1-e2. Here, White does manage to castle on the queenside and advance the kingside pawns. How similar but oh, how different!

9	0-0-0	Qc7
10	Rhg1	0-0
11	g4	Nd7
12	g5	b5



13 Nd5

White can also try 13 Nxe6 which seems to give an advantage after 13 ... fxe6 14 Bxe6+ Kh8 15 Nd5 Qd8 16 g6. Black probably has to give up a piece for the pawn by 16 ... Nde5 17 Qh5 Nxg6 18 Rxg6 and then 18 ... Qe8 19 Bf5 is a variation to befuddle the mind.

13 ... Nxd4

13 ... exd5 14 Nxc6 dxc4 15 Nxe7+ Kh8 16 Bd4 is similar to the game.

14	Nxe7+	Kh8
15	Bxd4	Qxc4
16	Bxg7+	Kxg7
17	Qh5	Qxe4
18	Qh6+	Kh8
19	g6	1-0

19 ... fxg6 20 Nxg6+

- 20 ... Qxg6 21 Rxg6 and apart from the material deficit, it is mate in 6 after 21 ... fxg6 22 Rg1
- 20 ... Kg8 21 Ne5+ Qg6 22 Rxg6+ hxg6 23 Qxg6+ Kh8 24 Qh6+ Kg8 25 Rg1#.