

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – May 2026

### Chairman's Chatter

It has been a tough season but the end is nigh. There are, however, games to be played and titles to be won, particularly in the club championship. Three playing sessions remain, all with a league match commitment, but please work round these to clear the postponements. It would be a shame for our efforts over many months to be decided by defaults.

Sadly, I have to report the passing of another player well known throughout the Club. Ron Jones died on 14<sup>th</sup> April from a heart attack. A founder member in 2007 (having also been with us in our previous incarnation with Perkins Engines Sports Association), he appears on the honours board as winner of division 2 of the Club Championship in 2010-11. He served as captain of the B team 2017-20 and Cavaliers in first of those years. He last played 2021-22.

#### R N Jones v P Hanks

New England Club Championship Rd 2; 18.01.2012



I played Ron many times from 1989 to 2000 when he represented Bourne and subsequently in our domestic club championship. Strangely, in the team event, I was nearly always White and in the latter, always as Black! We generally ended up in positions with bizarre material balances and I once resigned in a double rook and pawn ending which Fritz now tells me is a stone-cold draw. In the above position, I was confident of making something of the pressure down the f file but Ron had seen much further.

**20 Nxe7+ Nxe7**

Totally unaware of what of is coming, I fall for Ron's scheme.

**21 Ng5 Rxf2**

As 21 ... Rf6 runs into 22 Nxh7, the only free square for my rook is 21 ... Rg7 but 22 Nxe6 Qxe6

- 23 Bh6 immediately gives compensation after 23 ... Rxf2 24 Bxg7 Rxf2 25 Bh6 Rxf2
- 23 h4 gains a tempo by removing the g2 bishop from the firing line and 23 ... Kb8 24 Bh3 Qf7 25 Bh6.

**22 Bxf2 Rxf2**

Now, I expected 23 Bf3 Nxf3 gaining some pawns for the lost exchange but (again!) 24 Rhe1 Bxh3 25 Qe3 or 24 Rhg1 Nh5 25 Nxe6 when I cannot recapture. However, Ron continued to surprise me with ...

**23 Rhf1**

when my back rank weakness leaves me with a lacklustre position. After **23...Rxf1 24 Rxf1 b5 25 Rf8+ Kb7 26 Nxe6 Qxe6**

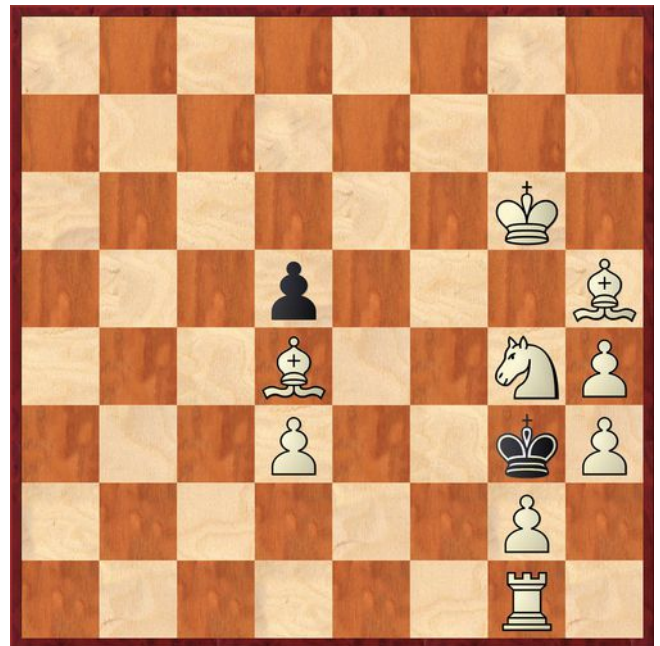
27 a4 would probably force 27 ... Qc4 28 Qxc4 bxc4 25 Rf7 with a winning endgame. Instead, I got some chances with

**27 Qf3 Nc6 28 Qf7 Qxf7 29 Rxf7 Nxf3 30 Rxf7 Ne2 31 Rg7 Nf4 32 Bf1 Nd4** and even **33 c4 Nde6 34 Rh7 bxc4 35 Bxc4 Ng5 36 Rh4 Ngxh3** when 36 ... Nf3 would probably win. An honourable draw was agreed ten moves later. Rest in peace.

*Paul Hanks*

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Shinkman 1875)

Position : 8/8/2kp1R2/2pN4/2P5/8/2P5/1K1Q4

**1 Qd4 cxd4 2 Rf7 d3/Kc5 3 Rc7#** [1 ... Kb7 2 Rf7+ Kc6 (2 ... Ka6 3 Qa1#; 2 ... Ka8/Kb8/Kc8 3 Qh8#) 3 Rc7#; 1 ... Kd7 2 Qg4+ Kc6/Ke8 (2 ... Kd8 3 Rf8#) 3 Qc8#]

## Diary Dates

- 13<sup>th</sup> May Club Rapidplay cancelled in favour of CCCA division 3 North v South play-off final
- 19<sup>th</sup> May CCCA Jamboree at St Ives
- 20<sup>th</sup> May Club AGM from 7:30pm after final Junior Club session
- 27<sup>th</sup> May Final session with postponed match Patriots v St Neots
- 14<sup>th</sup> July CCCA AGM at Ivy League Club, St Ives from 7:30pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> October [2026 English Championship](#) until 1<sup>st</sup> November at Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood

## Website to Watch

The next leg of the Grand Chess Tour in classical format takes place in Bucharest, Romania. It is advertised as running from 13<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May but the end dates may be ceremonial. The event is a round-robin tournament involving ten top grandmasters. The [official website](#) should carry redirection details to the St Louis Chess Club youtube and Twitch channels for viewing and commentary.

Many of the same players appear in Norway Chess but Carlsen is added to the mix. The tournament in Oslo runs from 25<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June and information appears on <https://norwaychess.no/en/> which includes a link for viewing on chess.com.

## Result Round-up

### Cambridgeshire League

New England A	0	St Ives A	5
P Walker	0	R Coleman	1
B Stephens	0	N Fleming	1
R Ilett	0	M Rippon	1
P Hanks	0	S Caraway	1
P Spencer	0	N Greenwood	1

St Ives A	4½	New England A	½
C Pickard	1	P Walker	0
N Fleming	1	R Ilett	0
S Caraway	½	B Stephens	½
M Rippon	1	P Spencer	0
N Greenwood	1	C Russell	0

Cambridge	4	New England A	1
T Robbins	1	P Walker	0
D Peresenchuk	½	R Ilett	½
C Hampton	1	B Stephens	0
J Skelton	1	P Hanks	0
J Slusar	½	J Sutherland	½

Peterborough B	0d	New England B	4d
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Rookwood A	3	New England B	1
J Sneesby	1	B Stephens	0
F Bowers	1	P Spencer	0
B Panter	1	J Sutherland	0
D Sneesby	0	C Russell	1

### North v South play-off

New England C		St Ives C	
Scheduled for 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026			

### Team7000

NE Patriots	P	St Neots	P
Scheduled for 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2026			

Peterborough D	P	NE Patriots	P
Scheduled for 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2026			

### New England Club Championship

White		Black	
J Sutherland	P	Rd 6	D Dhokia
A Neville	P	Rd 7	J Sutherland
E Knox	P	Rd 8	P Hanks
C Russell	P	Rd 8	S Walker
P Hanks	P	Rd 9	P Walker
S Walker	P	Rd 9	J Peoples
A Neville	1	0	C Russell

White		Black	
E Knox	0	1	R Ilett
J Peoples	½	½	A Neville
C Russell	1	0	J Sutherland
A Thobani	1	0	D Dhokia
R Ilett	1	0	P Walker
P Spencer	0	1	E Knox
J Sutherland	Rd	11	J Peoples
D Dhokia	Rd	11	C Russell
S Walker	Rd	11	A Thobani

**Group stage** (postponements)

<b>Group B</b>	JS	AN	DD	Pts
J Sutherland	X	P	P	3
A Neville	P	X	1	2
D Dhokia	P	0	X	½

**Final stage**

<b>Champions League</b>	RI	PW	PS	PH	EK	Pts
R Ilett	X	1	0	½	1	2½
P Walker	0	X	1	P	1	2
P Spencer	1	0	X	½	0	1½
P Hanks	½	P	½	X	P	1
E Knox	0	0	1	P	X	1

<b>Challengers</b>	AN	JP	JS	CR	DD	SW	AT	Pts
A Neville	X	½	P	1	1	1	1	4½
J Peoples	½	X		½	1	P	1	3
J Sutherland	P		X	0	P	1	1	2
C Russell	0	½	1	X		P	1	2½
D Dhokia	0	0	P		X	½	0	½
S Walker	0	P	0	P	½	X		½
A Thobani	0	0	0	0	1		X	1

**New England Club Ladder**

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 29/04/26
	Month	Overall		
1	+5	+9	J Sutherland	1
2	-1	+7	J Peoples	1
3	-1	+3	N Wedley	1,1,0
4	-1	+4	P Hanks	1
5	-1	-2	B Sivaraj	1,0
6	-1	-4	P Spencer	0,1
7	+2	-3	C Russell	0,0
8	-1	-7	M Patrickson	1
9	-1	-4	D Dhokia	0,0
10	+1	+2	A Rouf	0
11	-1	-	P Walker	1,½
12	+1	+1	B Stephens	½
13	-1	-6	S Walker	0

<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	
P Walker	½	½ B Stephens

**New England Grand Prix**

Player	Champ	Ladder	League			Cup	Team 7000	Total	TPR*
			A	B	C				
J Sutherland	4	1	½	1½	3½	0	2½	13	1615
P Hanks	5	1	2½	1		1	1	11½	1762
P Spencer	4½	1	3	1½		1	0	11	1612
B Sivaraj	4	1		2½		2	1½	11	1829
P Walker	5	1½	1½			1½	1	10½	1930
J Peoples	3	1			5		1½	10½	1648
R Ilett	6½		2	2		½	0	11	1777
C Russell	2½	0	0	3	1		0	6½	1534
A Thobani	1			½	3	1		5½	1386
E Knox	4						½	4½	1733
A Neville	4½							4½	1635
B Stephens	1	½	1½	1				4	1736
N Wedley		2						2	1617
M Patrickson		1	½	0				1½	1606
S Walker	½			½				1	1348
D Dhokia	½							½	1300
A Rouf		0						0	1574

\* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

**Match of the Month**

Nowadays, it is hardly possible to read the news without every sentence including the term "AI". There you are, we have had one already! A recent Masterclass session brought together a group of club members on Zoom to discuss a grandmaster game. Keeping the club abreast of these new-fangled trends, the meeting was recorded and summarised by its AI Companion. Let us see how well it copes with the jocular comments and gentle sarcasm between the participants...

**AI** : The group discussed changes to chess league structure and Chris mentioned plans to present various options at the upcoming AGM for voting on team arrangements and league formats. The conversation then shifted to a blindfold chess game between Lev Aronian and Peter Leko which Paul presented as an example from a Nice tournament.

**L Aronian v P Leko**

Nice blindfold; 2009

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nf3	b6
4	g3	Ba6
5	Qc2	Bb7
6	Bg2	c5
7	d5	

**Human** : White is playing a fashionable gambit in the Queen's Indian Defence and is prepared to give up a pawn for long-term pressure, especially down the opened d file.

7 ... exd5  
8 cxd5

**AI** : The group discussed chess moves and strategies, focusing on a specific position where White had captured a pawn. They debated various responses, including castling, knight moves to different squares (h4, e5, g5), and the effectiveness of pawn takes pawn. Ray and Chris particularly discussed the safety of castling and the potential for an attack on f7. The discussion concluded with uncertainty about the optimal move, with participants considering both Nh4 and knight to e5 as viable options.

**Human** : One option debated was 8 Nh4 but after 8 ... Nc6, White's capture 9 cxd5 can be met by 9 ... Nb4.

8 ... Nxd5  
9 0-0

**AI** : The group discussed chess strategies, focusing on moves involving knights and bishops. They analysed different options, including Nc3 and Ne5, with particular attention to maintaining pressure on the opponent's knight. Ray and Chris agreed that playing 9e5 looked attractive, as it allowed for quick attacks on the knight from multiple pieces. The discussion concluded with Ray considering the potential of the 9e5 move and acknowledging Paul's expertise in the game.

**Human** : We were obviously not speaking clearly enough, especially for the final remark! After 9 Ng5, White is angling for 10 Qf5 with a double attack on f7 and d5 but Fritz pointed out the resource 9 ... Ne3 which Ray had overlooked.

9 ... Be7  
10 Rd1

**AI** : The group discussed chess tactics and moves, focusing on the e5 position and its tactical possibilities. They analysed various moves and counter-moves, including the impact of different piece placements and the potential for tactical exchanges. The discussion highlighted the complexity of the position, with participants noting the pressure on certain pieces and the need for careful piece development. They concluded that while the position was complex, there were multiple viable options for both white and black pieces.

**Human** : The above commentary lacks detail. A promising line demonstrated was 10 Ne5 Qc7 (10 ... d6 11 Nxf7 Kxf7 12 Qf5+) 11 Qe4 0-0 12 Rd1 f5 13 Qc4 Qxe5 14 Nc3 which is assessed by the computer as roughly equal but would be far easier to play as White. This analysis was felt to justify the gambit.

10 ... Nc6  
11 Qa4

**AI** : The group discussed chess moves and strategies, focusing on various options for knight and bishop placements. They evaluated different moves including

Nc3, Bg5, and queen moves, with Chris suggesting Nc3 as his preferred choice. The discussion included tactical considerations around pawn captures and developing pieces for long-term strategy, with particular attention to avoiding pins and maintaining attack potential.

**Human** : 11 Rxd5 Nb4 hardly merits a mention. However, the five alternatives considered for White without moving the queen ran into either 11 ... Nb4 or 11... Nd4.

11 ... Nf6  
12 Nh4 g6  
13 Bh6 Bf8  
14 Bxf8 Kxf8  
15 Nc3 Kg7  
16 Rd6

**Human** : Initially, there was concern about 16 ... Ne8 ejecting the rook. 17 Rd2 then starts to double the rooks with tempo since Black has played a passive move whereas 16 Rd2 would give him more latitude.

16 ... Na5  
17 Qf4

**AI** : The group discussed chess moves and strategies, focusing on a specific game position. They analysed various moves including Nc3, Qf4, and rook placements on the d file. The discussion centred around creating pressure on the opponent's position and the trade-offs between developing pieces and maintaining control of key squares. The participants concluded that doubling rooks was a strong strategy in the current position.

**Human** : The group noted that the threat 18 Nf5+ gxf5 (18 ... Kg8 19 Bxb7 Nxb7 20 Rxf6 Qxf6 21 Nd5 Qe6 22 Qh6 gxf6 23 Nf6+) 19 Qg5+ Kf8 20 Rxf6 is so good for White that Black has to react.

17 ... Bxg2  
18 Kxg2 h6

**AI** : The group discussed chess moves and strategies, focusing on specific positions and potential plays. They analysed various options, including playing Qg4, Nf5, and taking g6, with Ray and Chris suggesting different approaches to potentially draw or force a perpetual check. Philip and Paul also contributed to the discussion, considering the implications of different moves and piece placements.

19 Ne4 Nxe4  
20 Qxe4 Re8

**AI** : The group discussed chess strategies, focusing on potential moves and sacrifices in a game involving a king, queen, rook, and knight. Ray and Chris explored different approaches, including sacrificing a knight or rook, while Philip and Andy suggested specific moves like Queen g4 and Queen g5. The discussion concluded with uncertainty about the winning potential of the proposed strategies, leading the group to agree they should further analyse the options.



21 Rg6+

**Human** : Ray championed the sacrifice feeling that Black's king would not be able to escape and if nothing better could be found, there would be perpetual check. He would have been quite happy with a draw against Peter Leko! 21 Qg4 was the other contender but 21 ... Qg5 22 Qxd7 Rad8 turned the tide.

21 ... fxg6  
22 Qxg6+ Kf8

**Human** : The Masterclasses aim to last around an hour and it was getting too late to examine 22 ... Kh8. Some lines transpose into the main game continuation but as an independent line, 23 Qxh6+ Kg8 24 Nf5 Re7 25 Qg5+ Kg8 (25 ... Ke8 26 Nd6#, 25 ... Rf7 26 Qh8#) 26 Nxe7+ is hopeless for Black.

23 Qxh6+

**AI** : The group discussed chess strategies, focusing on moves involving queens, knights, and pawns. They analysed various checkmate scenarios, including the effectiveness of playing Qh7 and potential responses from the opponent. Ray and Jim proposed specific sequences of moves, such as Queen h6 check and Nf5 check, to trap the king. The group concluded that Qh7 appeared to be a winning move, with additional considerations about blocking and escape squares.

**Human** : 23 Qh7 seemed promising but was rebutted by the continuation 23 ... Re6 24 Ng6+ Rxg6 25 Qxg6 Qg5. 23 Nf5 Qg5 also repelled the attack.

23 ... Ke7  
24 Nf5+ Kf7  
25 Nd6+ Ke7  
26 Rd1 Rf8  
27 Rd5

**AI** : The group discussed chess moves and strategies, focusing on various positions including Rook d1, Queen g7, and Rook d3. They analysed different defensive and offensive moves, with participants like Chris, Ray, Philip, and Andy providing

insights on potential checks and threats. The discussion centred around evaluating the effectiveness of specific moves and considering counter-moves, with particular attention to protecting key pieces and creating checks.

**Human** : The computer also shows some long, forced checkmate variations with other moves but the text is very direct (it threatens 28 Re5#) which is a great asset in blindfold chess.

27 ... Rf6  
28 Qh7+

**AI** : The group discussed a chess strategy involving queen and rook movements, with Ray and others analysing different check and capture sequences. They determined that after Queen g5 check, the rook would be pinned, forcing the king to move to f8, after which Rook g5 would deliver checkmate.

**Human** : There are several promising options. Some will also win, others fritter away the advantage.

- 28 Nf5+ Rxf5 (king moves allow mate e.g. 28 ... Ke6 29 Rd6+ Kxf5 30 Qh5+ Ke4 31 Qd5#) 29 Qd6+ Ke8 30 Rxf5 Qe7 31 Re5 winning
- 29 Qg7+ Ke6 30 Nf7 (with either 31 Nxd8 or 31 Re5# to follow) 30 ... Rxf2 31 Kh3 (31 Kxf2 Qf6+) Kxd5 32 Nxd8 Rxd8 33 Qg5+
- 28 Qg5 Qh8 and White's play has become difficult
- 29 Qe3+ Kf8 misses a key point (see below)

Again, White chooses more forcefully.

28 ... Kf8

**Human** : If 28 ... Ke6 29 Qe4#, an important variation.

29 Rg5 1-0

**AI** : The conversation then shifted to discussing whether this could be used as a chess gambit, though they didn't reach a definitive conclusion. At the end of the meeting, participants briefly discussed concerns about rising fuel prices.

*AI*

**Human** : The AI summary was frankly disappointing. It was vague, repetitive and in places, plainly wrong. It failed to document the moves of the stem game and was unable to follow any sideline. However, please note, ironically, that the analysis was formulated with computer assistance!