

New Englander

Chess Club Update – July 2026

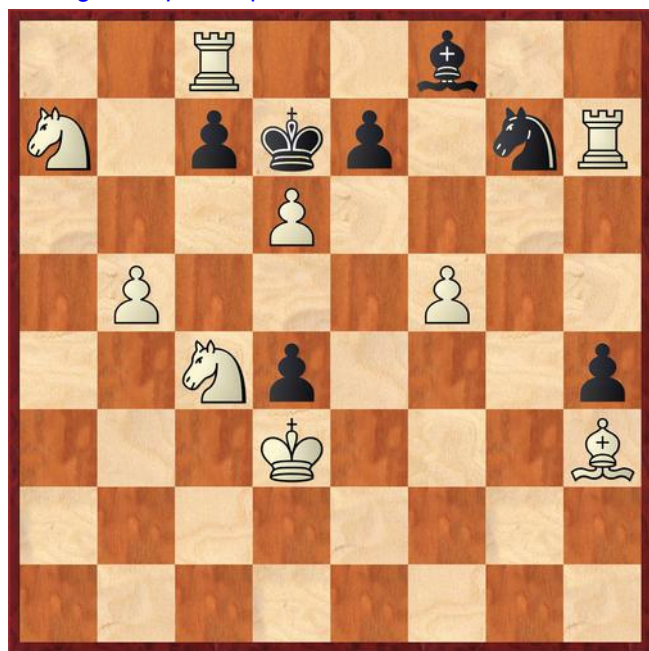
Chairman's Chatter

The season is over and for a few months, we have gone our separate ways. On departing, several players expressed the wish to study and come back fitter and stronger. Very laudable but I find many chess books have become lists of moves ending in a computer evaluation. What has happened to basic principles? In the featured game this month, an attempt is made to redress the balance by relating the overall flow of the game to the positional ideas of prominent theorists. Or am I just covering up a poor memory? See you in September!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2. This is the starter problem for the Winton British Chess Solving Championship 2026-27. More details about how the competition and how to enter can be found at <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/winton-british-chess-solving-championship-2026-2027/>.



Last Month's solution (Gorislavsky 1971)

Position : 1K1R4/1N2p3/1k6/1n6/4Q3/8/8/8

1 Qb4 Kc6 2 Qc5# [1 ... Ka6 2 Qa5#; 1 ... e6/e5 2 Rd6#]

Diary Dates

14th July CCCA AGM at Ivy League Club, St Ives from 7:30pm

24th October [2026 English Championship](#) until 1st November at Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood

Result Round-up

Problem Night : 9th June 2026

Pairing	Rd 1	Rd 2	Total
Ed & Jim	10	12	22
Phil & Dak	12	10	22
Ray & Chris	12	6	18

Website to Watch

Over the board chess is a mental challenge but if you want another, visit the website for the Biel Chess Festival <https://www.bielchessfestival.ch/Homepage.html>. The event runs from 11th to 26th July but it has so many sections that the details are very confusing.

Match of the Month

Winning the wooden spoon is not a pleasant prospect but one that faced the B team in its final fixture. I did not want that to happen after all the sterling work put in by Chris as captain throughout the season and therefore only one result was acceptable in the deciding last match.

P Hanks v F Bowers

New England B v Rookwood A; 06.05.2026

1 d4 Nf6
2 Bg5

This Trompowsky Attack (transposing into the Torre Attack) is not in my usual repertoire. I have played Francis many times and he usually chooses a King's Indian Defence (see New Englander, April 2011). My move deliberately sidesteps all the theory of that system which will be better known by my opponent.

2 ... c5

2 ... g6 invites 3 Bxf6 with ugly, doubled pawns and 2 ... e6 permits 3 e4 though Karpov continues 3 ... h6 to force 4 Bxf6 in order to preserve the pawn. The main reply is 2 ... Ne4.

3 c3 d5
4 Nf3 Nc6
5 e3 e6
6 Bd3 c4
7 Bc2 Be7
8 Nbd2 Nd7

"Surprising your opponent can be effective but there is a danger... the theory of a new opening is not the same as having a close familiarity with the resulting positions" (Nunn). My play so far has been fairly insipid – simple development without much pressure or potential to break open the position. Nevertheless, Black's move surprised me. I had expected 8 ... 0-0 or 8 ... Qb6. I assumed Black's voluntary congestion

would be temporary with 10 ... e5 intended to follow the exchange of bishops.

9 **Bxe7** **Qxe7**
10 **0-0** **f5**

Another lapse in my expectations but Fritz gives White a solid advantage after 10 ... e5. It would allow White to play the strategic 11 e4 when the undefended pawn on d5 combined with opening the e file cause Black some trouble such as :

- 11 ... exd4 12 exd5 dxc3 (12 ... Nce5 13 Nxe5 Nxe5 14 cxd4 and, if the knight moves, 15 Re1) 13 dxc6 cxd2 14 cxd7+
- 11 ... dxe4 12 Bxe4 Nb6 (12 ... exd4 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 Re1) 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 Nxe5
- 11 ... Nb6 12 exd5 Nxd5 13 Re1 f6 14 dxe5 fxe5 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 Nxc4.

Francis is alert to these possibilities and rightly prevents my central e3-e4 thrust. *"We note then, that the prevention of freeing pawn moves (as far as this appears necessary and feasible) is of great importance in position play"* (Nimzovitch). I have to open a second front on the queenside.

11 **b3** **b5**
12 **bxc4** **bxc4**
13 **a4**

I wanted to play 13 Ba4 Bb7 14 Rb1 but thought I needed to retreat after 14 ... Nb6. However, 15 Bxc6+ Bxc6 16 Ne5 gives me the tempo essential for bringing my queen into the action by 16 ... Ba4 17 Qh5+ g6 (17 ... Kf8 18 Ng6+) 18 Nxc6 Qf7 19 Nf4. My purpose instead was 14 a5 when either 15 Ba4 Bb7 16 a6 is unpleasant or Nd7-b6 is impossible.

13 ... **a5**

The position is becoming so blocked that my only chance is to revert to a plan with e3-e4 but that requires some convoluted manoeuvres. By the same token, Black senses the lull and is tempted into launching a kingside attack even though his queenside pieces will take a long time to reach the other flank. However, *"a pawn storm where both players have castled on the same side is only possible when the centre is securely locked"* (Kotov).

14 **Re1**

I thought about continuing 14 Rb1 but noticed 14 ... Qa3 when the c3 pawn is hard to defend. 15 Ng5 gives Black an equal headache about e6 e.g. 15 ... Nf6 16 Rb6 Nd8 17 Qa1 defending the pawn or 15 ... Nd8 16 Qf3 Qxc3 (otherwise 17 Nxc4) 17 Bxf5 exf5 18 Qxd5 Ra7 19 Nxc4 when both king and queen are in danger.

14 ... **0-0**
15 **Nf1** **g5**
16 **Ng3** **g4**

"An attack on the wing is best met by a counterattack in the centre." I felt my plan was correct on the basis of this general principle and was not particularly concerned by Black's advance. As e3-e4 is only possible with the support of a pawn on f3, my knight

was always going to make way. I did worry about 16 ... f4 but 17 exf4 gxf4 18 Nh5 and it is hard for Black to infiltrate on the kingside whereas his own king is becoming exposed e.g. 18 ... Qf7 19 Ng5.

17 **Nd2** **Nf6**
18 **f3** **h5**

18 ... gxf3 19 Qxf3 Ne4 keeps the position balanced when both sides have difficulty making progress.

Normally, I would have agonised over the complications of my next move and probably shied away from it. Fortunately, I knew Kasparov had once faced a similar psychological dilemma and, paraphrased, he reasoned *"Such a move cannot be wrong. If it is bad, the fault lies in the preceding moves."* Indeed, I only needed to check whether it was worse than wasting the previous five tempi.



19 **e4** **gxf3**

If 19 ... h4, 20 Nxf5 exf5 21 exd5 Qc7 22 dxc6 Qxc6 23 Nxc4 and the knight is untouchable due to 24 Bb3.

20 **exd5** **f2+**
21 **Kxf2** **Ng4+**

21 ... Nxd5 22 Nxc4 Nxc3 23 Qd2 Qh4 equalises so Fritz prefers 22 Qf3 h4 23 Nh5 Ba6 (holding c4) 24 Nf4 Nxf4 25 Qxf4 when White should round up the pawn on h4 with 25 Nf3.

22 **Kg1** **f4**

22 ... Qh4 has no threat ... yet.

23 **Nf5**

23 dxc6 fxc3 24 h3 is supposedly strongest but looks risky as 24 ... Ra7 prevents 25 hxg4 unless you can confidently analyse 25 ... Qh4 26 Nf3 Rxf3 27 Qxf3 hxg4 28 Qe4 Rf7 29 Qg6+ Kf8 30 Qxf7+ Kxf7 31 Be4 – the only viable option nine moves ahead!

White could also try 23 Nxh5 Qh4 24 Nf3 Qxh4 25 dxc6 with two extra pawns.

23 ... **Rxf5**

Another oversight by me but more excusable. I anticipated 23 ... Qf6 24 dxc6 exf5 25 Nxc4. If 25 ... Qxc6 26 Bb3 Kh8 27 h3 or 27 Ne5 and "a counterattack is never premature" (Tartakower). 25 ... Be6 26 d5 is the best Black can hope for but White holds the trumps with the mobile pawns.

24	Bxf5	Ne3
25	Qxh5	exf5
26	dxc6	

I can only assume Francis miscounted at some stage. White has a winning material advantage in a good position. The pawn on c6 will become key and should have been killed with 26 ... Ra6. "The passed pawn is a criminal who should be kept under lock and key. Mild measures, such as police surveillance are not sufficient" (Nimzovich).

26	...	Be6
27	Qg6+	Kf8
28	Nf3	

White has a choice of winning continuations e.g. 28 g3 or quiet moves removing the fork on c2. I thought I was going in for a quick *coup de grace*.

28	...	Re8
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28 ... Qf7 fends off the attack but leads to a hopeless endgame 29 Ne5 Qxg6 30 Nxg6+ Kf7 31 Nxf4 Nc2 32 Nxe6 Nxa1 33 d5 etc. where the black knight is an onlooker.

29	Ng5	Bg8
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Suddenly, it was not looking so rosy. Black appears to have defended until I remembered, "When there is no good forcing move, try to improve your worst piece."

30	Rab1	
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Now, the assault is overwhelming. I hoped my team mates would walk past at this point. We were leading 2-0 and the match points were now in the bag.

30	...	f3
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Black still collapses after 30 ... Qg7 31 Qd6+ Qe7 32 Qxf4 e.g. 32 ... Bd5 33 Rb7 Qd8 34 Nh7+ Kg8 35 Qg3+ Ng4 36 Rxe8+ Qxe8 37 Nf6+ Kf8 38 Qd6+.

31	gxf3	
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"Keep it simple, stupid!" 31 Rb7 is a faster checkmate but my team mates were still in the bar.

31	...	Qc7
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32	Rb7	
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32 Qf6+ Bf7 33 Rb7 is two moves quicker. Where are they?

32	...	Qxh2+
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"Where no good moves can be found, a bad one will always turn up" (Tarrasch).

33	Kxh2	Ng4+
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34	fxg4	Rxe1
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I am tempted to show this position to the Junior Club. How many mates in two are there?

35	Qf6+	
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OK. 35 Rf7+ Bxf7 (35 ... Ke8 36 Qxg8#) 36 Qxf7#; 35 Qg7+ Ke8 36 Qxg8#; 35 Nh7+ Bxh7 36 Qf7#; 35

Rb8+ Ke7 (35 ... Re8 36 Rxe8#) 36 Re8#; 35 Qxf5+ Ke8 36 Qc8#; 35 Qd6+ Re7 [35 ... Ke8 36 Qb8# (36 Rb8#)] 36 Qxe7#. Any more?

35	...	Ke8
36	Rb8#	

"I was really hoping ... I would be able to go out and hit a pub or two after the game" (Nakamura).

Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

Miladinovic (2604) v Y Gazzoli (2510)
Nancy 2008

1	d4	Nf6
2	Bg5	Ne4
3	Bf4	c5
4	f3	Qa5+
5	c3	Nf6
6	d5	Qb6
7	e4	Qxb2
8	Nd2	Qxc3
9	Bc7	

This cuts off the a5 escape route but it is hard to believe the black queen is in too much danger.

9	...	d6
10	Rb1	Qe3+
11	Ne2	Na6
12	Nc4	Qh6
13	Ba5	g5
14	Ng3	g4



15	Rxb7	
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An additional point is 16 Bd2 and 17 Qa4+ picking up the knight on a6 if it is left undefended.

15	...	Bxb7
16	Nf5	1-0

If 16 ... Qg5, 17 Ncxd6+ exd6 [17 ... Kd7 18 Bb5+] 18 Bb5+ Nd7 19 Bxd7+ Kxd7 20 Qa4+ mates.