

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – November 2007

Chairman's Chatter

At last! The "**NEW ENGLANDER**" can start to report what we enjoy doing most – playing chess. The "Match of the Month" feature shows how the club scored its first points in anger with a fighting draw in Cambridge. Let's hope we can build on this promising start.

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

The club championship preliminary round 2 will be held on **24 October**.

Round 2 draw :-

Club Championship Preliminary Round 2			
F Bowers		A Brookbanks	
P Hanks		C Collins	
C Ross		H Currie	
M Ingram		N Wedley	
C Russell		M Tarabad	
J Osbourn		S Walker	
R Jones		Bye	

Please confirm arrangements with your opponent.

There are reserve nights for the Club Championship on November 14th, 21st and 28th so that anyone with a postponement can finish the game if they are not involved in the matches on those nights. The aim is to formulate two league divisions for which the playing schedule can be announced in the December issue of "**NEW ENGLANDER**". Watch this space!

Result Round-up

Cambridge City	2½	New England A	2½
P Kemp	0	C Ross	1
T Bramley	½	F Bowers	½
S Pride	0	P Hanks	1
R Newman	1	P Turp	0
D Hatfield	1	M Ashkettle	0

Buckden B	2	New England B	2
C Hamilton	0	J Osbourn	1
C Money	0	C Russell	1
A Young	1	M Ingram	0
B Taylor	1	M Tarabad	0

St Neots	1½	New England A	3½
B Coop	1	C Ross	0
R Gompelman	½	F Bowers	½
C Emery	0	P Hanks	1
J Dunn	0	P Turp	1
M Pope	0	A Brookbanks	1

Club Championship Preliminary Round 1			
F Bowers	1	N Wedley	0
P Hanks	1	M Tarabad	0
M Ingram (default)	0	C Ross	1
C Collins	1	A Brookbanks	0
C Russell	½	J Osbourn	½
R Jones	P	S Walker	P
H Currie		Bye	

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Match of the Month

The games featured this month share an opening that is very popular at the moment – the Semi-Slav variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined. Chris Ross annotates his fine win over Paul Kemp and includes some instructive comments about how the opening should be played. It is quite strange how relevant they are in altogether different circumstances in the second game.

C Ross v P R Kemp

This is my first game in the Cambridgeshire County Chess Association league. For the past 10 months, I have gone out with the intention of playing more aggressively with white. My opponent offered me that opportunity by playing a passive line and allowing me to exploit a weakened kingside by some nice tactical thrusts.

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 c6 4 e3 e6 5 Bd3 Be7

More ambitious is 5 ... Bd6 with Nbd7 and with the hope of getting in a quick e6-e5.

6 0-0 0-0 7 Nc3

My usual move here is 7 Nbd2 to avoid this main Meran continuation. With the bishop on e7, Black can't really avoid a quick e3-e4 and the knight can serve equally well on d2 as it does on c3. On c3, it is vulnerable to attacks by Black's b pawn, which could be annoying. This is the main reason why White delays the development of the queen's knight as long as possible.

7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4 b5 9 Bd3 b4?!

I don't like this move although theory accepts it as possible. In my view, the b4 thrust should be delayed until White has provoked it with a2-a4, thereby taking away the a4 square. White now has this option rather than retreating the knight to e2 (where it isn't as active) or venturing to e4 when exchanges will ease Black's cramped position.

10 Na4

The correct square for the white knight. It exerts tremendous pressure on the c5 square and if Black is to achieve any equality in the position, he must be able to play c6-c5. So, holding this up is positionally justified and the knight does not stand offside.

10 ... Nbd7

11 e4 Bb7

12 Qe2

Placing the queen on the more active square, protecting the e4 pawn against possible tactics with c6-c5. The queen also stands in readiness for the kingside attack and avoids any exchanges down the d file. White's development is smooth and well coordinated whereas Black is striving to get his pieces in harmony and to force c6-c5 to release the pressure of a cramped position.

12 ... Rc8

Black ought to thrust with c5 while he can. After exchanges on this square, a future Bg5 is going to make the pin on the f6 knight very awkward and the

subsequent Be7 by Black will not give the black queen many squares to hide on, as the central files will soon be controlled by the white rooks coming swiftly to c1 and d1. White will have the space advantage with his pawn on e4 and the possibility of launching the attack with e4-e5 at the correct moment.

13 Bg5 c5

OK, the scene is set. Black has got in his desired c6-c5 and White must act quickly and aggressively to avoid black from obtaining equality.

14 e5 Nd5

14 ... c4 15 Bxc4 Bxf3 16 gxf3 (16 Qxf3 Rxc4 17 exf6 Bxf6) is good for White.

15 Qe4 g6

A critical weakness has now been created. The dark squares around the black kingside have been compromised.

16 Qh4

Starting to apply the pressure on those dark squares. The queen has successfully transferred to the kingside to aid the attack and applies pressure the bishop on e7, preventing the black queen from being developed. 16 Bxe7 Qxe7 17 Nxc5 Nxc5 18 dxc5 is another way of playing to release the pressure prematurely.

16 ... cxd4

After the game, Black thought he had equality here but I am extremely worried about the looseness of the dark squares. Obviously, I have had to sac a pawn on d4 temporarily as recapture leaves the e5 pawn, which is a thorn in Black's position, en prise.



Let's assess the position as an overall structure. White has a promising kingside attack where the dark squares are a tremendous source of pressure. The white pieces are building up on the king-side and the white queen and knight are looming dangerously whereas Black has few defenders because the e5 spear-head cuts off his minor pieces.

Now consider the positional side of it. Black has an open file but can do nothing with it. There is no entry point on c2 and the b2 pawn prevents any use of the c3 square. The knight on a4 helps in the control of the c5 square which could be a useful defensive square for the black rook and the pawn on b4 blocks in the black pieces and doesn't actually help in any constructive way. The bishop on b7 is useful but is shut in by his only well-placed piece, the knight on d5, which actually doesn't have anywhere to go. In fact, it must remain there, presently due to the looseness of the bishop on e7 but also to help in defending the weakened kingside. White is assured of getting the dark-squared bishops off giving him excellent endgame prospects. In any endgame, the black kingside pawns would be weak as they stand on the same colour as his own bishop and the white pawns, e5 etc. cannot be easily attacked. White has a space advantage and Black has weak extended pawns on the queenside.

17 Rfe1

Developing, protecting e5 and allowing a future rook airlift. Although not winning, I think this position is tremendous for White and I was becoming more and more confident about my winning prospects.

I was struggling to find a decent plan for Black here but obviously that was not my problem. I was clear in the way I wanted to play this as White which, all in all, is a good psychological standpoint and one that fills you up with confidence and assurance. When put in that way, things rarely if ever go wrong for you.

17 ... Re8

Wanting to develop. The bishop on e7 must be defended if Black is to move his queen or the knight on d5. Naturally, taking on g5 makes the h7 a massive target square and he doesn't really want to push his h pawn and create another fatal weakness. However, now the rook has vacated f8, the black knight can drop into there and defend h7 and I don't want to allow Nxc5 with an unnecessary and perhaps potentially difficult pin. So, the time for ridding myself of black's dark-squared defender has now come.

18 Bxe7 Qxe7

19 Qxd4

Queen exchanges do not interest me yet as I still have ambitious plans for a kingside attack. Regaining the pawn and using the queen to exploit the dark squares is my intention now. Black still stands under the cosh as he has not broken out to achieve any kind of equality.

19 ... Nc5

Wanting to force exchanges to ease his load. This in itself would be OK but all he achieves here is to remove a useful kingside defender and rid me of my only poor piece. So, another plan should have been sought. 19... Bc6 20 Bc2 Red8 is what I was expecting.

20 Nxc5 Qxc5

Black still wants to exchange queens. Gaining complete control of the c file with 20 ... Rxc5 has to

be preferred as the black queen prevents the white counterpart from reestablishing attacking possibilities on the kingside.

21 Qh4 Kg7

22 Ng5 Rh8

If Black is forced into desperate defensive measures such as this, things cannot be very rosy for him.

23 Rad1

Controlled aggression. White completes development and places the rook on a useful file, with future Rxd5 sacs in the offing leaving the f6 square fatally weak. The other advantage is that after a white knight lands on e4, there is no annoying Qd4 pin.

23 ... Qe7

24 Qg3

Unpinning and opening up the way for the launching of the h pawn.

24 ... h5?

This cannot be recommended at all. It is weak tactically and positionally. If anything, 24 ... h6 keeps some control of a dark square and prevents White from ramming his h pawn down Black's throat, but nevertheless the correct plan has to be 24 ... Nb6 opening up lines and having ideas of Nc4. White would have to decide whether he gives himself the e4 square forever for his knight with 25 Be4 but the attack will still continue.

25 h4

Simple and positionally sound. The knight can now never be shifted from g5 and the back rank has been cleared. 25 Ne4 h4 26 Qg4 h3 could not be allowed.

25 ... Rc7?

Probably Black's losing move. Black is in serious trouble in any case but this rook compounds his awkwardness. The rook is placed to defend along the 2nd rank and to allow the doubling up on the c file, which he can't penetrate down in any case. However, the rook proves to be a tactical liability on c7 as it is not well defended by his counterpart. 25 ... Nb6 has to be his best and only try.

26 Ne4 Rd8

26 ... Rhc8 as originally planned allows Ne4-d6 with gain of tempo. The position is now critical for Black and the text move allows a neat finish.

27 Nf6!

exploits the rook on c7 tactically and blocking the defence of the dark squares and the way to g5, allowing the white queen full penetration into the black camp.

27 ... Kh8

What else? Perhaps there is no saving move. If 27 ... Nxf6?? 28 exf6+ Qxf6 29 Qxc7. h5 is threatened also with check and if 27 ... Kf8 28 Qg5 will soon mate in any case.

28 Qg5

Playing it slightly slowly. Naturally, 28 Bxc6 wins at least a pawn but I had seen a clearer path to victory.

28 ... Nxf6

Again, what else? 28 ... Qf8 allows 29 Nxh5 with Nf4 to follow and it all collapses for him.

29 exf6 Qf8



30 Bxg6!

Giving Black absolutely no rest at all. Naturally, the positional elements, when so strong, just allow the tactical bits to sort themselves out. I was pleased with my finish here. I threaten 31 Qxh5+ and Qh7 mate so Black must try to defend along the 2nd rank, with that rook on c7.... which, don't forget, is loose!

30 ... fxg6
31 Rxd8 Qxd8
32 f7!

The point to the combination. White threatens the black queen and 33 Qh6 mate so this has to be defended against either by the control of h6 or the queen exchange. Naturally if 32... Qxg5 33 f8=Q+ wins a whole queen as that all important h4 pawn defends the queen on g5. Black's move is forced, naturally.

32 ... Qf8
33 Qe5+ Kh7
34 Qxc7 1-0

Whoops, that loose rook has dropped off! White is now a clear exchange up, has a huge pass pawn to his name and it is simple technique to win from here. Black had seen that I had demonstrated enough to take the point home.

P Hanks v S Pride

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7

Black's develops his bishop before Nf6 – a finesse to delay White's natural Bg5. I decided to see if I could take advantage of Black's reduced control of the e4 square with a central pawn advance.

4 Nf3 c6 5 e4 Nf6 6 e5 Ne4 7 Bd3 Nxc3

Although Black chose the opening plan, he has already taken us out of the book; 5 ... dxe4 is the

only standard option. The exchange on c3 suited me as it seems to give the structure I was looking for.

8 bxc3 0-0 9 Qc2 h6 10 0-0 Nd7 11 Re1 b6

Chris Ross will accuse me of "hacking" in this game but I had a simple object in mind. Fortify the e file to deter counterplay with f6 or a defensive f5 because it weakens the e6 pawn, use the pawn barrier to keep the Black pieces out of play on the queenside and penetrate on the white squares on the kingside. Black should aim for c5 but due to his slow development, I can now deny him the chance!

12 cxd5 cxd5 13 Re3 Bb7 14 Bd2 Rc8 15 Rae1 Kh8



I spent a long time considering 16 h4 Bxh4 17 Nxh4 Qxh4 18 Rh3 Qe7 19 Bxh6 gxh6 20 Qd2. It takes confidence to make a quiet move at this range and hope there is no defensive resource. I was more concerned, however, about Black ignoring the offer and accepting the pawn later on better terms.

16 h3 Rc7
17 Nh2 Bg5
18 Rg3 Bxd2

Black would do better to chase the white rook with 18... Bh4. He was under the misapprehension that the exchange of bishops would dampen the initiative.

19 Qxd2 Rg8
20 Bb1

Now 20 Ng4 was very tempting with the threat of 21 Nxh6 but defending from the front by 20 ... Qh4 holds the position. I decided to give my queen space on the b1-h7 diagonal and prepare for a final confrontation on g6.

20 ... Qf8
21 h4 h5
22 Rg5

Fritz points out the cheeky 22 Rg6 fxc6 23 Qg5 Qf7 (or 23 ... Nf6) 24 Bxg6. Black can give up his queen here or by 23 ... Qf5 when White has a significant material advantage but no further attack.

22 ... g6
23 g4 hxg4
24 Nxg4 Bc8

The toughest defence is 24 ... Rg7 when a possible continuation would be 25 h5 gxh5 26 Rxh5+ Kg8 27 Kh2 Rxg4 28 Bh7+ Kg7 29 Bf5 Rg6 30 Rg1.

25 h5 f5
26 exf6

I played this because you only get one chance to take en passant and it seemed vital to keep the white diagonal open. Unfortunately, 26 hxg6 is stronger e.g. 26 ... fxg4 (26 ... Kg7 27 Rxf5 when the threat of 28 Qh6# wins the black queen) 27 Rh5+ Kg7 28 Rh7#

26 ... Nxf6
27 hxg6 Rgg7
28 Qf4

Despite Black having queen, two rooks and a knight protecting his king, Black is hopelessly tied up.

28 ... Nd7

The only saving move is 28 ... Nh7 but White does not need to hurry. Eventually, Black will have to give up a massive amount of material e.g. 29 Qxf8+ Nxf8 30 Rh5+ Nh7 (30 ... Kg8? 31 Nf6#) 31 Re3 Kg8 32 Rf3. The text move leaves Rc7 en prise and also allows mate in 4.

29 Qh2+ Kg8
30 Nh6+ 1-0