

New Englander

Chess Club Update – September 2023

Chairman's Chatter

The new season is upon us so it seems strange to be announcing a winner. The Cambridgeshire Grand Prix is almost a forgotten competition which is awarded to the player with the highest aggregate score in county events and the winner is Paul Spencer. Congratulations!

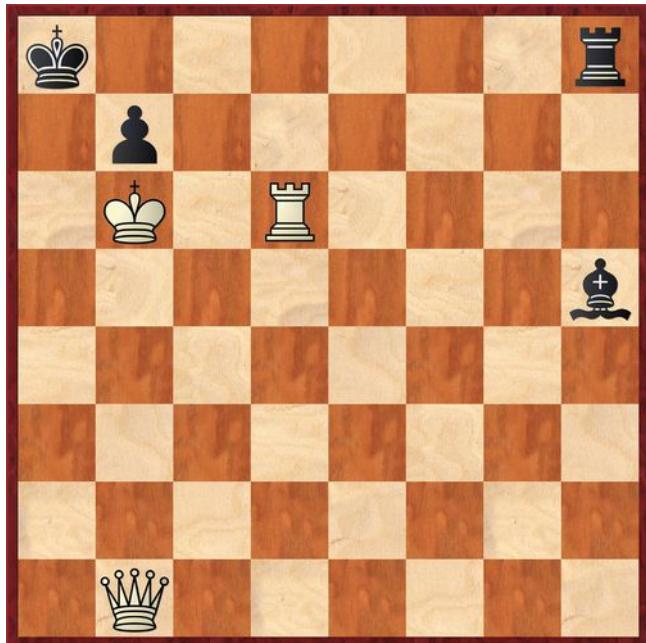
Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

- 2nd September Rookwood Club Chess Tournament, March. okeefetom43@gmail.com is the contact for details
- 24th September County Rapidplay at Whittlesford. Click [here](#) for the entry form or see <http://www.cambschess.co.uk/Rapidplay.php> for online entry
- 15th October Simultaneous display at Peterborough Chess Club by invitation to players rated below 1500
- 25-26th November At Christie Hall Wansford, CCCA Individual Championship. Click [here](#) for the entry form
- 19-24th February Cambridge International Open Chess Tournament for players rated 1600+. For details, see <https://www.englishchess.org.uk/2nd-cambridge-international-open/>.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Marandyuk 1972)

Position : 8/8/4B3/5K2/3Q4/1p1p4/2k5/R7

1 Bc4 d2 2 Bd3# [1 ... b2/Kd2 2 Qxd3#]

Website to Watch

If you enjoy Chess 960, it may sound like a local tournament for players from the USA but the Champions Showdown has a \$150k prize fund for a competition lasting from 8th to 10th September in St Louis. It has attracted the top home grandmasters including Nakamura, Caruana, So and Aronian and there is a guest spot for a veteran graded only 2552 – Gary Kasparov! For details, please see <https://www.uschesschamps.com/2023-champions-showdown-chess-9lx/overview>

Match of the Month

In my limited chess library, I have some volumes of games by Gary Kasparov. Several of the games stand out in terms of the stress of the competitive situation when Gary had to win 'to order'. At the Lucerne Olympiad in 1982, he needed to prove Soviet political superiority against the defector Korchnoi whereas his world crown was at stake against Karpov if he failed to win the last game of their title match in Seville 1987.

Of course, we never play under such pressure in club chess ... that is until the B team captain requests you to stand down from the A team so that you remain eligible to play a crucial game in the lower division. At the time, newcomers Ely were cruising through their matches apart from an unfortunate board default. On principle, it was decided that the league should not appear such a formality for them and a warm welcome was planned on top board. Let's just say expectations were high...

B Tarlow v P Hanks

Ely v New England B, 01.02.2023

The black pieces. Thanks!

1 e4 e6

I did not think this was really the stage to start experimenting and so I went for a mainline French Defence.

2 d4 d5
3 exd5 exd5

I must have moaned before about the Exchange Variation. Both sides get free play for their pieces and there is little hope of an advantage for either side. I just like Black to castle quickly and avoid any tricks down the open e file.

4 Bd3 Nf6
5 Nf3 Be7
6 0-0 0-0

7 Re1 Bg4
8 Nbd2

Nothing unexpected has happened so far but I thought that White's last move restricted his scope unnecessarily.

8 ... Nc6
9 c3 Qd7
10 Qc2 h6

Without trying too hard (Mr Russell's contention last month!), I have connected my rooks and completed my development. My last move is to prevent an attack building on h7 by Nf3-g5 and I did not want to exchange the light-squared bishop with 10 ... Bxf3.

11 Ne5 Nxe5
12 Rxe5

This move came as a shock. It may be visually appealing to advance another piece but I concentrated on 12 dxe5 which displaces my defensive knight. 12 ... Ne8 starts to show how cramped Black's position is becoming and if the knight heads for f4 via h5, that invites White to push the kingside pawns. In fact, the computer assesses this continuation as a whole pawn better for White.

12 ... Bd6
13 Bf5

An even bigger shock! This option had not entered my head and occasionally, the subconscious filter means the move is flawed. Can I work it out?



13 ... Bxf5
14 Rxf5 Rae8

There is little to choose between the text move and 14 ... Rfe8 – both threaten checkmate on e1. I followed the maxim of not moving the same piece twice and was starting to feel happy about the flow of the tide.

15 Nf3

To defend, White could play 15 Nf1 but then 15 ... Re1 almost causes paralysis in addition to the threat

to f1 by 16 ... Qb5. The game might proceed 15 Nf1 Re1 16 Qd3 Ne4 17 Rf3 c5 with a strong initiative e.g.

- 18 dxc5 Nxc5 19 Qc2 Qb5
- 18 Re3 Bxh2+ 19 Kxh2 (19 Kh1 Nxf2+) Nxf2 20 Qd2 Rxf1 etc.
- 18 a4 cxd4 19 Qxd4 (19 cxd4 Rc8) Re8 again with Bd6xh2+ to follow.

15 ... Re4

Here is the tactic. The isolated white rook has run out of squares. My worry was that there was almost material compensation for the exchange and White could also inflict structural damage.

16 Rxf6 gxf6

An automatic response. Why did I not linger and find 16 ... Qe7?

17 Bxh6 Rfe8

Reaching this point in my analysis at move 14, I judged e file control to be the most important factor.

18 Qc1 Qf5

Fritz highlights a range of favourable options with the obvious 18 ... Re2 at the head of the list. I thought the retreat could be blocked and my rook could suffer the same fate as its white counterpart. Besides, the threat should give me a tempo to open a kingside attack.

19 Be3 Qh5
20 Qd2 Kh7

I could not divine my opponent's purpose shuffling around the white queen. Perhaps, he expected me to keep the e file open by f6-f5-f4 and felt the need to keep his queen on the dark-squared diagonal. It would have been a viable alternative for me here because g2-g3 is not an adequate defence but my focus had shifted to penetrating down the g and h files. I just could not decide which one! After 20 ... Kg7, I sensed it was easier to shield h2 with h2-h3.

21 Qe2 Bxh2+
22 Kf1 Kh8

Nerves? I feared being surprised by the discovered attack Nf3-g5+ but 22 ... Bf4 snuffs it out.

23 g3

I was ready for 23 Nxh2 Qxh2 24 Ke1 f5. It is a matter of mopping up.

23 ... Bxg3

Black is torn between tempting alternatives such as 23 ... Qh3+ 24 Ke1 Bxg3 which deprives White of the square he now utilises.

24 Kg2

24 Ng1 would have prolonged the game but White is in a terrible position.

24 ... Rh4

This is pretty but 24 ... Bd6 is more final. 25 Rh1 is ineffective due to 25 ... Rg4+ 26 Kf1 Qxh1+ and 25 Rg1 Rf4 will win massively.

25 f4g3 Rh2+ 0-1

Paul Hanks