

New Englander

Chess Club Update – May 2024

Chairman's Chatter

The league season is reaching a strange and somewhat unsatisfactory climax. In the Team 7000 competition, the 4-0 scoreline when St Ives beat Spalding by default allowed them to leapfrog into the title position; St Neots were only able to field two boards in Division 1 and the A team were able to top that league without having to prove it over the board and Peterborough failed to appear in the Team 4000 event having forgotten the re-arranged fixture which had become a title decider for the North league.

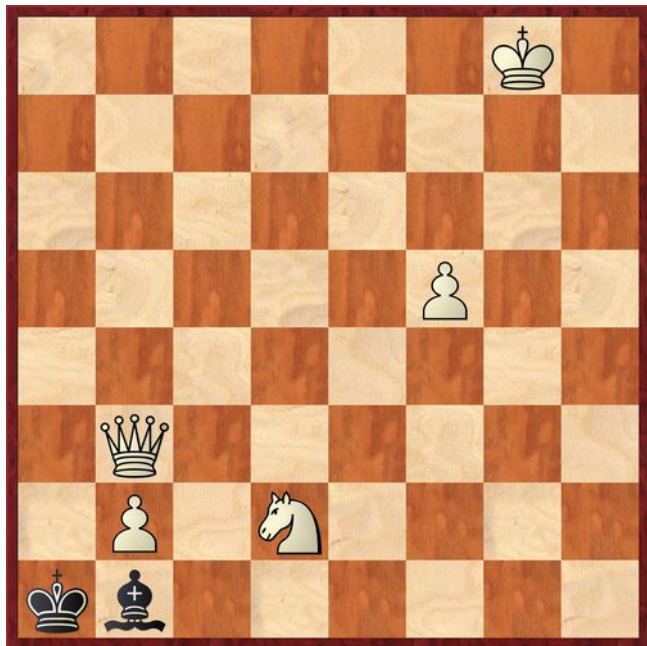
The parties directly involved received due reward or punishment but there is an element of unfairness for other teams who, as the innocent bystanders, see their efforts for the year nullified. There is scope for a rule change to the scoring system but doing so simply and equitably is a significant challenge. This will be one of the points of discussion at the forthcoming club Annual General Meeting.

Looking at the CCCA League tables in this newsletter, there will also be much to commemorate at the AGM and the chairperson will host the celebrations at the bar in the time-honoured fashion. See you then!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Usefulchess.com)

Position : 8/8/3B2p1/6K1/1PPkp3/2RnN2Q/8/nN6

1 Qh5 gxh5 2 Nf5# [1 ... Nc2/Nb3 2 Nc2#; 1 ... Nxb4 2 Qh8#; 1 ... Kxe3 /N other 2 Bc5#]

Website to Watch

We have to wait until the end of the month for the next elite event. From 27th May to 7th June, the Norway Chess Open and Women's tournaments will feature the respective world champions and other top players over 10 rounds. Please see <https://norwaychess.no/en> for details and chess.com for live coverage.

Diary Dates

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 8 th May | Last playing session at our venue |
| 15 th May | Club AGM from 7-30pm |
| 18 th June | AGM of the Cambridgeshire County Chess Association at Ivy Leaf Club, St Ives from 7-30pm |
| 4 th September | Start of next season (to be confirmed) |

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire League

New England A	2½	St Neots A	2½
P Walker	0	A Chapman	1
R Ilett	½	J Vieira	½
B Stephens	0	P Barkas	1
N Chedd	1	C Emery	0
P Spencer	1	J Greiller	0

Peterborough A	2	New England A	3
H Neumaier	½	R Ilett	½
A Kaszuba	½	P Walker	½
J Bell	0	P Hanks	1
S Caraway	½	B Stephens	½
D Walton	½	N Chedd	½

New England A	5	St Neots A	0
Ilett/Walker/Hanks	3d	Default	0d
B Stephens	1	J Vieira	0
P Spencer	1	P Barkas	0

St Ives A	3	New England A	2
N Greenwood	0	P Walker	1
R Coleman	½	R Ilett	½
J Beck	½	P Hanks	½
D Rice	1	B Stephens	0
R Mann	1	C Russell	0

Team 4000 competition

Spalding	2	NE Patriots	1
F Neal	1	J Jennings	0
L McKenna	1	I Goodwin	0
C Dunne	0	J Peoples	1
NE Patriots	3d	P'boro Knights	0d

Final Tables

Division One	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
New England A	9	5	2	2	25½	12
St Neots A	9	3	2	4	20½	8
Peterborough A	8	3	1	4	18	7
St Ives A	8	3	1	4	21	7

Division Two	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
Peterborough B	12	8	2	2	26½	18
Godmanchester	12	5	3	4	23	13
St Ives B	12	6	1	5	24½	13
New England B	12	4	4	4	26	12
St Neots B	12	5	1	6	24	11
Rookwood	12	2	4	6	21	8
Ely	12	3	3	6	21	8

Team 7000 (N)	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
St Ives WC	6	4	0	2	14½	8
Peterborough	6	3	1	2	13½	7
NE Patriots	6	3	0	3	13½	6
Spalding	6	1	1	4	6½	3

Team 4000 (N)	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
NE Patriots	6	4	1	1	13	9
Peterborough	6	2	1	3	8½	5
Rookwood	6	1	2	3	7½	4
Spalding	6	3	0	3	7	6

Club Championship

White	Postponed	Black
C Russell	1 0	J Jennings
N Chedd	P 8 May	E Knox
P Spencer	P 8 May	P Hanks
I Goodwin	½ ½	N Wedley

White	Round 11	Black
P Hanks	P 1 May	N Chedd
E Knox	P 9 May	P Walker
J Jennings	P P	I Goodwin
A Neville	1 0	S Reid
N Wedley	½ ½	C Russell

Champions League	R I	N C	P S	P H	P W	B S	E K	Pts
R Ilett	X	1	1	½	1	1	½	5
N Chedd	0	X	1	P	1	1	P	3
P Spencer	0	0	X	P	½	1	1	2½
P Hanks	½	P	P	X	0	1	1	2½
P Walker	0	0	½	1	X	0	P	1½
B Stephens	0	0	0	0	1	X	½	1½
E Knox	½	P	0	0	P	½	X	1

Challengers	A N	D D	N W	J J	S R	I G	C R	Pts
A Neville	X	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
D Dhokia	0	X	½	0	1	1	1	3½
N Wedley	0	½	X	½	1	½	½	3
J Jennings	1	1	½	X	0	P	0	2½
S Reid	0	0	0	1	X	0	1	2
I Goodwin	0	0	½	P	1	X	½	2
C Russell	0	0	½	1	0	½	X	2

New England Club Ladder

White	Black
B Stephens	0 1 P Walker

New England Club Ladder

Position	Change	Month	Overall	Player	Record @ 24/04/24
1	-	+7		R Ilett	0,1
2	-	-1		P Walker	1,1,1,1,1,0,1,1
3	+6	+9		D Dhokia	1,0,1
4	-1	+3		C Russell	1,1
5	-1	+1		A Neville	0,0,0,0
6	-1	-4		P Hanks	0
7	-1	-4		P Spencer	1
8	-1	+1		E Knox	1
9	-1	-5		I Goodwin	0,0,1
10	-	-5		J Jennings	1,0,0
11	+1	-		N Wedley	0,1
12	-1	-2		N Chedd	0
13	-	-		B Stephens	0,0
14	-	-		J Peoples	0

Please note that final results need to be reported before the Club AGM so that the tournament outcome can be reported.

Club Handicap : 10th April 2024

Player	Rating difference				Score				Total
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
I Goodwin	+24	-234	+139	+78	1	2	1	1	5
E Knox	+193	+234	+312	+358	1	½	1	½	3
C Russell	-193	+179	+66	+179	0	1	1	1	3
J Jennings	-61	-179	-139	-179	2	0	0	0	2
A Neville	-24	+54	-66	-358	0	½	0	2	2½
D Dhokia	+61	-54	-312	-78	0	1	0	0	1

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4000	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	5½	7	4	1½	1½	2		21½	1949
N Chedd	7	0	4½	6	0	1½		19	1856
B Stephens	4½	0	4½	5	½	2		16½	1743
P Spencer	6	1	3	2		2½		14½	1741
R Ilett	7	1	3½	½	1			12½	1915
C Russell	2	2		6	½	2		13	1488
E Knox	4	1	1		1	2½		9½	1789
P Hanks	5½	0	2	1	½			9	1900
N Wedley	4	2		1		1½		8½	1562
D Dhokia	3½	1		0		2½		7	1338
I Goodwin	2½	1		½		2		6	1392
J Sutherland	-			2½	0	1	1	4½	1588
J Jennings	2½	1		0		1		4½	1304
A Neville	5	0						5	1488
S Reid	3							3	1307
J Peoples	-	0				1	1	1	1150

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

Ed Knox (1752) v Paul Spencer (1735)

New England Club Championship Rd 9; 06.03.2024

1 d4 d5
2 Bf4 c5

White has chosen to play the London System which is quite fashionable at club level. It gives easy development in a solid position without many early tactics. Black's reply is the most combative and is reminiscent of the Tarrasch Defence to the Queen's Gambit (to which it might later have transposed).

3 e3 Nc6
4 Nf3 Nf6
5 Nbd2 Qb6

[PS] I thought I remembered from my theory that 5 ... Qb6 was best for Black (by Sam Shankland) but after

move 7, I was on my own and it definitely made for an interesting game.

6 dxc5 Qxb2
7 Rb1 Qa3

Fritz rates this virtually equal with 7 ... Qxa2 and 7 ... Qc3. The latter has appeared in several games played in grandmaster competitions and it has also been fertile ground for correspondence chess. One example continued 8 Bb5 e6 9 0-0 Be7 10 e4 0-0 11 e5 Nd7 12 Nb3 with the threat to the black queen 13 Bd2 characteristic of poisoned pawn variations (Firouzja v So, Internet 2021).

8 Bb5 g6
9 Ne5

9 c4 is an option here. The main point is 9 ... dxc4 10 Ndx4 Bg7 looks logical but 11 e4 and 12 Be3 again will scare Black's queen. After 9 ... a6, White has pressure with 10 Qa4. Did I say not too many tactics?

9 ... Qxc5
10 Nd3 Qc3



11 0-0

I was not sure I was ever likely to win the queen but gained a lot of time and a better position making threats and chasing it around. Here, 11 Be5 allows an easy escape via 11 ... Qa5 and although 11 Bc7 has the serious threat 12 Rb3, 11 ... Ne4/Nd7 frees the long diagonal route.

11 ... Bd7
12 Bc7

OK. Let's give it a try now...

12 ... Ng4?

Black has several alternatives :-

- 12 ... Qa3 is not one because 13 Rb3 Qxa2 14 Rb1 d5 15 Bc4 Qa4 16 Ra1
- 12 ... Ne4 was a defence previously but 13 Nxe4 (the reason for unpinning with 11 0-0) 13 ... dxe4 14 Rb3 Qf6 15 Ne5 has nasty

intentions on d7 and if 15 ... Qf5 16 g4 Qe6 17 Bc4 wins the queen on a very unexpected square!

- 12 ... b6 is a viable due to 13 Rb3 Qa5 but after 14 c4, White's position looks easier to play (14 ... dxc4 15 Nxc4 wins the queen, 14 ... Qxa2 15 cxd5 Nxd5 16 Qc1 etc.)
- 12 ... Nd4 is dreadful to calculate.
 - 13 exd4 Qxc7 merely initiates exchanges which help Black's defence
 - 13 Bxd7+ Nxd7 14 Rxb7 Qc6 15 Qb1 Ne2+ (otherwise e.g. 15 ... Ne6 White has the tempo for 16 Ne5) 16 Kh1 Bg7 with no clear advantage either way
 - 13 Be5 Bxb5 14 Rxb5 Nxb5 15 Bxc3 Nxc3. Does Black have enough assorted material?
- 12 ... Nb8 looks passive but may be best.

[PS] I saw move 12 Bc7. I thought I had 12 ... Ne4 but realised this was a mistake. Also, I miscalculated 12 ... Nd4 and so believed 12 ... Ng4 was my only move. But Ed did play better until about move 17 when it evened out a bit for me.

13 Rb3 Qf6



14 h3

This may be the critical position. White is developed and should rightly be looking to strike before Black consolidates. One idea is to displace or exchange the black knights and follow up with Bc7-e5. However, 14 Bxc6 bxc6 (14 ... Bxc6 15 Qxg4) 15 h3 is simply thwarted by 14 ... Qxc6. This train of thought might lead to trying to "remove the guard" with 14 Nc5 to exchange on d7 and then capture the knight on g4. At worst, it threatens 15 Nxd7 Kxd7 leaving Black's king stranded in the centre, 15 Nxb7 and 15 Nde4. How would Black react?

After 14 Nc5, a few sample variations show Black cannot simply move the bishop :

- 14 ... Be6 15 Nxb7
- 14 ... Bc8 15 Nde4 Qf5 (15 ... Qg7 16 Qxd5) 16 h3 Nf6 17 g4
- 14 ... Bf5 15 h3 Nge5 (15 ... Nh6 16 Nf3 and Bc7-e5 becomes real) 16 e4 Bxe4 17 Ndx4 dxe4 18 Bxe5.

If Black counters with 14 ... a6, 15 Be2 is a useful gain of tempo because 15 ... Nge4 is ruled out by 16 f4.

14 ... Nh6

The respite allows 14 ... a6!? to forestall White resuming the attack with 15 Nc5 as before.

15 c4 a6

15 ... Rc8 leaves Black's back rank weak after 16 cxd5 Rxc7 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 Ba6.

16 cxd5??

This gives Black some counterplay. 16 Ba4 attacks b7 and secures the point if you can visualise with computer-like precision viz. 16 ... dxc4 17 Nxc4 b5 18 Nc5 Bf5 19 Qd5 bxa4 20 Nd6+ exd6 21 Qxc6+ Ke7 22 Rb7 Qe6 23 Bxd6+ Kf6 mating.

16 ... axb5?
17 dxc6 Qxc6
18 Be5

18 Qa1!? f6 19 Rc1 is worth considering.

18 ... f6
19 Nb4 Qc8
20 Bb2 e5?

Black opens the position when preparing to castle with 20 ... Bg7 is probably the priority.

21 a3

I should have played 21 Nd5!? Qd8 22 Ne4 with numerous threats e.g. 22 ... Bg7 23 Rd3 exploiting the open d file.

21 ... Be6
22 Rc3 Qd7
23 Qc2 Bxb4
24 axb4 Ra2
25 Ne4 0-0
26 Rd1 Rxb2

The start of an oversight by both players! Instead, 26 ... Qe7 27 Rc7 Rxb2 28 Rxe7 Rxc2 29 Rxe6 Rc6 is equal.

27 Nxf6??

Unfortunately for me, I just completely missed that 27 Qc1 was an option and would have been good for me as I am still hitting the queen and rook.

[PS] I got a bit lucky with him missing 27 Qc1.

27 ... Rxf6
28 Rxd7 Rxc2
29 Rd8+ Rf8
30 Rxf8+ Kxf8
31 Rxc2

Under a bit of time pressure, I quickly captured the hanging rook by playing 31 Rxc3. Paul kindly pointed out that I can't take my own rook!

31	...	Bc4
32	Rd2	Ke7
33	f3	Nf5
34	Kf2	Ke6
35	Rd8	Ne7

I am not 100% sure the moves are correct past move 35, as I input that all afterwards from memory.

36	Rb8	Nc6
37	Rxb7	h5
38	Rg7	Kf6
39	Rd7	Nxb4
40	Rd6+	Kg7
41	g4	Nd3+
42	Kg3	

The immediate danger comes with the passed b pawn on the queenside. It would have been wiser to keep my king in touch with that flank with 42 Ke2. With an extra pawn and the mobile rook, the kingside can probably look after itself.

42	...	b4
43	gxh5	

I can chase the minor pieces by 43 Rc6 Bf7 44 Rd6 Nb2 but the extra time increments may just be bringing Black some relief.

43	...	gxh5
44	Rb6	b3
45	Rb7+	Kf6
46	Rb6+	Be6
47	f4	exf4+
48	exf4	Kf5
49	Rb5+	Ke4
50	Kh4	O-1

I may have missed a chance to sacrifice my rook for both pawns and make Paul mate me with bishop and knight - which would be a more interesting finish!

[PS] Luckily, Ed did not go for the sacrifice leaving me with a bishop and knight mate. I would of really struggled with that!. I have looked at it before but cannot remember it. That could of made for a long evening if I had played 50 moves trying to figure it out!

Ed Knox/[Paul Spencer]

Postscript : PowerFritz18 declares it to be checkmate in 13 moves after 50 ... Kxf4 51 Rxb3 Bxb3 52 Kxh5 namely 52 ... Kf5 53 Kh6 Kf6 54 Kh5 Bd1+ 55 Kh4 Kg6 56 Kg3 Kh5 57 h4 Bg4 58 Kh2 Kxh4 59 Kg2 Be2 60 Kh2 Nf4 61 Kg1 Kg3 62 Kh1 Bc4 63 Kg1 Nh3+ 64 Kh1 Bd5# being the longest continuation.

Eye Opener

Stanishevsky v Kornev
Correspondence, 1996

1	d4	d5
2	Nf3	Nf6
3	Bf4	c5
4	e3	Qb6

With Black bringing the queen out a move earlier than the main game, White has a different option of developing the queen's knight which gives rise to some tactical opportunities.

5 Nc3

This is the major point of difference with the main game where the knight is developed via d2 i.e. 5 Nbd2 Nc6 would transpose. Now 6 Nb5 carries the serious threat of forking on c7. Either 5 ... c4 or 5 ... a6 diffuse the situation but Black accepts the poisoned pawn and aims to defend later. Perhaps, this is Black's motivation behind leaving the queen's knight on the back rank.

5	...	Qxb2
6	Nb5	Na6

At first sight, this looks solid enough but White has a resource that should have been foreseen in correspondence chess.



7	Rb1	Qxa2
8	Ra1	Qb2
9	Rxa6	1-0

Black can play on honourably after 9 ... bxa6 10 Nc7+ Kd8 11 Nxa8 Qc3+ but at a disadvantage.

Fritz points out a superior, lengthier continuation namely 7 a3 with the threat 8 Rb1 Qa2 9 Qc1 and 10 Rb2 trapping the black queen. So, 7 ... Bf5 8 dxc5 when

- 8 ... Qxc2 9 Qxc2 Bxc2 10 c6 bxc6 11 Nbd4 and Black has loose pieces
- 8 ... Bxc2 9 Qc1 Qxc1 10 Rxc1 Nb8 11 Nc7+ Kd8 12 Rc3
 - 10 ... Bg6 11 c6 bxc6 12 Rxc6
 - 10 ... Bf5 11 Nbd4 Bg6 (11 ... Bc8 12 Bb5+) 12 c6 wins the knight on a6
 - 10 ... Ba4 11 c6 b6 12 Nc3 Nc5 (12 ... Bb3 13 Bxa6) 13 Nxa4 Nxa4 14 c7 etc.

In all cases, Black lacks development and is unable to resist the combined pressure of the double attack on c7 and the undermining of the defender on a6 by c5-c6 and the open c file. Easier to see in analysis than over the board!