

New Englander

Chess Club Update – May 2025

Chairman's Chatter

Congratulations to Peter Walker who becomes this season's Club Champion. It was a very tight race and going into the last round, it was almost possible for anyone to either win or take the wooden spoon! A final convincing win pushed Peter over the winning line.

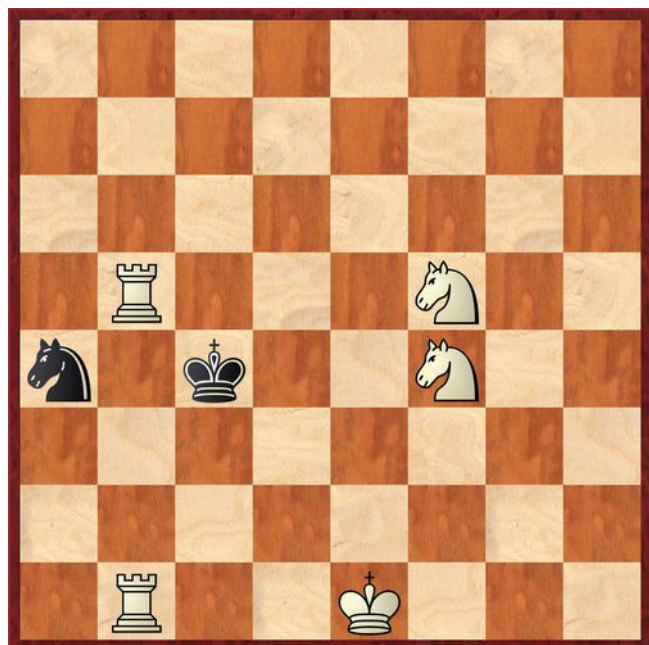
The Challenger's division became a two-horse race and by good fortune, the rivals met in the last round. Congratulations to Ed who emerged victorious and also to John for making a strong showing on debut.

The county competitions are coming to an end ... or, for our Team7000 squad, a crescendo. The first two weeks of May see them contesting the Fenland Plate final and the play-off between the North and South Cambridgeshire divisions. Good luck!

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Junker/Speckman 1964)

Position : 8/8/2Q3n1/6B1/3kB3/8/5K2/8

1 Bf5 Ke5 2 Qc5# [1 ... Nf4 2 Bf6#; 1 ... Ne5 2 Be3#]

Diary Dates

21st May Club AGM at 7-30pm
 26th-31st May [3rd Cambridge International Open](#) for players with a FIDE rating > 1600
 8th July Cambridgeshire County Chess Association AGM at Ivy Leaf Club, St Ives

Website to Watch

Forsaking its blitz/rapidplay format, the Grand Chess Tour showcases classical chess from 5th to 17th May in [Bucharest, Romania](#). World champion Gukesh is up against 9 other strong grandmasters such as Caruana, So and Abdusattorov in a round robin event.

A week later, [Norway Chess](#) returns to Stavanger (26th May to 6th June). Headed by Carlsen, the field has the world number 8 as its weakest player!

Result Round-up

Club Championship

White	April		Black
N Chedd	1	0	R Ilett
L Townsend	P	Rd9	S Walker
P Walker	1	0	R Ilett
P Hanks	½	½	N Chedd
P Spencer	1	0	B Stephens
J Peoples	1	0	A Neville
C Russell	0	1	E Knox
D Dhokia	0	1	L Townsend
A Neville	P	P	S Walker
E Knox	1	0	J Peoples
L Townsend	P	P	C Russell

Champions League	P W	N C	P H	P S	B S	R I	Pts
P Walker	X	0	1	1	½	1	3½
N Chedd	1	X	½	0	½	1	3
P Hanks	0	½	X	1	0	1	2½
P Spencer	0	1	0	X	1	½	2½
B Stephens	½	½	1	0	X	0	2
R Ilett	0	0	0	½	1	X	1½

Challengers	E K	J P	D D	A N	S W	C R	L T	Pts
E Knox	X	1	1	1	½	1	1	5½
J Peoples	0	X	0	1	1	1	1	4
D Dhokia	0	1	X	0	1	½	0	2½
A Neville	0	0	1	X	P	0	1	2
S Walker	½	0	0	P	X	1	P	1½
C Russell	0	0	½	1	0	X	P	1½
L Townsend	0	0	1	0	P	P	X	1

Cambridgeshire League

St Neots A	1½	New England A	3½
P Brown	0	R Ilett	1
A Chapman	½	P Walker	½
R Gompelman	0	P Hanks	1
P Barkas	1	B Stephens	0
C Emery	0	E Knox	1

New England B	4	Rookwood	0
B Stephens	1	L Levet	0
P Spencer	1	M Teague	0
J Sutherland	1	G Monger	0
S Walker	1	D Gamsby	0

New England B	1	St Neots B	3
B Stephens	½	P Barkas	½
P Spencer	0	C Emery	1
E Knox	½	R McMorran	½
C Russell	0	J Greiller	1

St Neots B	2	New England B	2
P Barkas	½	B Stephens	½
C Emery	0	P Spencer	1
R McMorran	1	N Chedd	0
J Greiller	½	J Sutherland	½

Ely	P	New England B	P
Re-scheduled to 19th May 2025			

Team 7000

St Ives WC	3	NE Patriots	1
R Coleman	1	P Hanks	0
N Greenwood	½	R Ilett	½
M Rippon	½	E Knox	½
R Ling	1	J Jennings	0

Team 4200

Spalding	1½	NE Cavaliers	1½
M Walters	½	N Wedley	½
J Ward	0	J Peoples	1
C Dunne	1	L Townsend	0

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
P Walker	1	0	P Hanks
A Neville	0	1	A Rouf
P Walker	1	0	D Dhokia
R Ilett	1	0	A Rouf

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 30/04/25
	Month	Overall		
1	+9	+6	P Walker	0,1,0,1,1,1,1,1
2	-	-	D Dhokia	0,0,½,1,0
3	+2	+2	J Peoples	1,1,0
4	-1	+1	N Wedley	1,0,1,1,½,0,½
5	-	+6	P Hanks	1,0
6	-2	+2	C Russell	1
7	+1	+3	S Walker	1,½
8	+4	+4	L Townsend	0
9	-3	-6	P Spencer	1
10	+1	-1	R Ilett	0,1
11	+3	+3	A Rouf	1,0
12	-3	-6	B Stephens	1
13	-6	-9	A Neville	0,0,0,0
14	-1	-1	E Knox	1

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4200	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	7½	6	4	½	1½			19½	1952
B Stephens	4	1	3½	4	1½	2½		16½	1817
R Ilett	4½	1	4	½	1½	3½		16	1884
P Spencer	6½	1	½	5½	1	1		15½	1798
P Hanks	6½	1	5		1½			14	1869
E Knox	5½		1	3½	½	2½		13	1733
N Chedd	4½		3½	3		1		12	1792
C Russell	1½	1	½	4½	2	1		11½	1588
J Peoples	4	2		1		0	4	11	1456
N Wedley		4				2½	6½	1584	
D Dhokia	2½	1½				½	0	4½	1393
J Sutherland	1½			1½	½	1		4½	1615
S Walker	1½	1½		1				4	1485
A Neville	2	0						2	1327
J Jennings				0		1½	1½	1187	
L Townsend	1	0						1	1256
A Rouf		1						1	1672
A Katha						0	0	903	

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

	Player	AR	PS	BS	PW	RI	AN	DD	AK	Total
1	A Rouf	X	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	6½
2	P Spencer	0	X	1	½	1	1	1	1	5½
3	B Stephens	0	0	X	1	1	1	1	1	5
4	P Walker	½	½	0	X	0	1	1	1	4
5	R Ilett	0	0	0	1	X	0	1	1	3
6	A Neville	0	0	0	0	1	X	0	1	2
	D Dhokia	0	0	0	0	0	1	X	1	2
8	A Katha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0

Match of the Month

Since Covid, the teams in the top Cambridgeshire division have been fairly evenly matched. With a little luck (and thanks to some excellent team consistency), New England has been able to shade the tight encounters and come out as champions in the three seasons ending in 2022 to 2024.

This season, however, the standard has risen noticeably and St Neots have obviously been the strongest team with a record of P8 W7 D1 before the final match. We had to visit and pass the baton to our worthy successors.

Ray Ilett v Peter Brown

New England A v St Neots A Bd 1; 07.04.2025

1	d4	g6
2	c4	Bg7
3	Nc3	d6
4	Nf3	e5

Without Ng8-f6, Black's opening must be classified as a Modern Defence. This was popularised by Mike Basman and his taste for the eccentric is demonstrated by Black's subsequent disregard for piece development.

The position at move four can be found in many database games, including clashes between the big beasts of the chess jungle but very few choose the text continuation, typically preferring 5 e4 Nc6 (Polugaevsky v Petrosian, USSR Championship, Moscow 1983).

5	d5	a5
6	e4	Na6
7	a3	Nc5
8	Be3	b6?!

8 ... Nf6! gives counterplay against the e4 pawn. This explains why Fritz favoured 8 Bg5 over my move.

9 b4!

I can start my queenside initiative. If Black exchanges 9 ... axb4 10 axb4 Rxa1 11 Qxa1 Nd7, my queen can start to invade Black's territory with 12 Qa7 Ngf6 13 Bd3 followed by Nc3-b5.

9	...	Nd7
10	Bd3	h6

Black's plan for kingside expansion is too slow. He is falling dangerously behind in development when again 10 ... Ngf6 is simple and thematic.

11	0-0	Ne7
12	Qc2	0-0
13	c5	

The object is to weaken Black's pawns, but better moves are 13 Qd2 or 13 Nb5. These are computer recommendations which promise a small long-term edge but the text move is more active and definitely a human preference.

13	...	bxc5
14	bxc5	f5

Both sides seem fixated on their expected sphere of activity, White on the queenside and Black on the kingside. However, 14 ... Nxc5 was better when 15 Bxc5 cxb5 16 Na4 is about equal. It looks as though White will quickly regain the material and have the isolated pawn on c7 to attack. If Black tries to resolve the weakness immediately with 16 ... c6, Fritz wants me to continue with the sacrifice 17 d6 Qxd6 18 Nxc5 but the compensation is far from clear.

15	cxld6	cxld6
16	Na4	

16 Rab1! is best. There is no need to worry about 16 ... fxe4 17 Nxe4 Nxd5 due to 18 Bc4. Generally, Black has a cramped position and I am trying to target the b6 square with my knight to shift the rook on a8, leaving the a5 pawn vulnerable. Black will need to keep a knight on d7 and this restricts his mobility even further.

16	...	Ba6
17	Bxa6	Rxa6
18	Rab1	Nf6

It's starting to look as if Black's slow build-up might pay off. I have made progress on the queenside and can now gain a tempo...

19	Qc4	Ra8
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... but 19 ... Qc8 would have been more combative. A queen swap or retreat might leave my centre pawns exposed and so I should have to find (and calculate!) 20 Nc5 dxc5 21 d6+ Ned5 22 exd5 when it is Black's pawns that could fall e.g. 22 ... Rxd6 23 Nxe5 (23 Bxc5? Rxd5) Nxd5 24 Nxc6 (24 Bxc5? Bxe5)

- 24 ... Rf7 25 Bf4 Rd8 (25 ... Nxf4 25 Ne7+) 26 Rb8 with a strong initiative
- 24 ... Rxg6 25 Qxd5+ and 26 B/Qxc5.

20 Nb6

Having used the tactic in the previous analysis, I have the option of 20 Nxe5 dxe5 21 d6+

- 21 ... Kh8 22 dxe7 Qxe7. White wants to play 23 Bc5 but it needs preparation due to 23 ... Qf7. So, 23 exf5 gxf5 24 Nb6 Rae8 25 Bc5.
- 21 ... Rf7 22 dxe7 Qxe7 23 exf5 gxf5 24 Rfc1. Provided Black avoids 24 ... Qxa3?? 25 Bc5, he is still in the fight even though Fritz praises White's position.

20 ... Rb8

20 ... Nxe4 21 Nxa8 Qxa8 and with the tempi gained by Rf8-c8 and the pressure on d5, Black is gaining considerable activity for the slight material deficit.



21 Nxe5!

The winning move! The difference from the foregoing follows from acceptance of the sacrifice 21 ... dxe5 22 d6+ Rf7 (22 ... Kh8 transposes into the note above) 23 dxe7 Qxe7 24 Nd5 with a discovered attack down the b file. You have a feeling that this is totally winning and the computer confirms it with the forced variation 24 ... Qd8 25 Rxb8 Qxb8 26 Ne7+ Kf8 27 Nxg6+ Kg8 (27 ... Ke8 28 Qe6+ mating) 28 Ne7+ Kf8 29 Nxf5 Kg8 30 Bxh6 etc.

21 ... Nxe4
22 Nc6 Qe8

22 ... Nxc6 yields a dangerous passed pawn.

23 Nxb8 Qxb8
24 Nd7 1-0

Surprisingly, Fritz is critical of my last move – it still retains a significant advantage - because 24 ... Qc8 reduces White's plus. It prefers 24 f3 Nf6 25 Rfe1. If Black escapes from the potential discovered attack to the only square 25 ... Nc8, only then 26 Nd7.

And so, the team finished on a high note with a 3½-1½ victory over the champions and secured the runners-up spot. Thanks to all who played during the season but nevertheless, we shall have to up our game next year!

Ray Ilett

Eye Opener

I Kurnosov (2577) v M Dzhumayev (2527)
Tashkent 2008

1 e4 d6
2 d4 Nf6
3 Nc3 g6
4 Bg5 Nbd7

5 Qd2 a6
6 0-0-0 b5

In line with hypermodern chess, Black has allowed White to occupy the centre and tries to undermine it on the flanks. White simply replies with classical development.

7 e5 b4
8 exf6 bxc3
9 Qxc3 e6

Not many of us would choose this move. Why not 9 ... Nxf6? Then, 10 Bxf6 exf6 11 Re1+ Be7 12 Qf3 Be6 13 d5 is to White's advantage but 10 ... Bh6+ 11 Kb1 exf6 12 Re1+ Kf8 and Kf8-g7 will at least keep Black in the game.

10 Re1 Nb6

After 10 ... Bb7 (say), White threatened 11 Rxe6+ fxe6 12 f7+ but Fritz recommends 11 Qb3 Nb6 12 Rxe6+ Kd7 (12 ... fxe6 13 Qxe6+ Be7 14 f7+ Kf8 15 Bh6#) 13 Re1 with a bigger plus.

11 d5 Na4

If 11 ... Nxd5 12 Qc6+ Bd7 13 Qxd5 and 11 ... e5 12 f4 is horrible.

12 Qc6+ Bd7

Obviously, 12 ... Qd7 13 Qxa8



13 Rxe6+ fxe6
14 dxe6 Bg7

14 ... Bxc6 15 f7# is a unique checkmate!

15 exd7+ 1-0

Resignation is not before time.

- 15 ... Qxd7 16 f7+ wins the queen with checkmate shortly afterwards e.g. 16 ... Kxf7 17 Qxd7+ Kg8 18 Bc4+
- 15 ... Kf7 16 Bc4+ Kf8 17 Qd5
- 15 ... Kf8 16 fxg7+ Ugh!