

New Englander

Chess Club Update – June 2025

Chairman's Chatter

More congratulations! New England have won the Fenland Plate, the Team7000 knock-out tournament, after a tight match in the final against St Ives. This is a fitting reward for Ed's able captaincy and consistent high performance by the squad. Well done, again!

Paul Hanks

AGM Summary

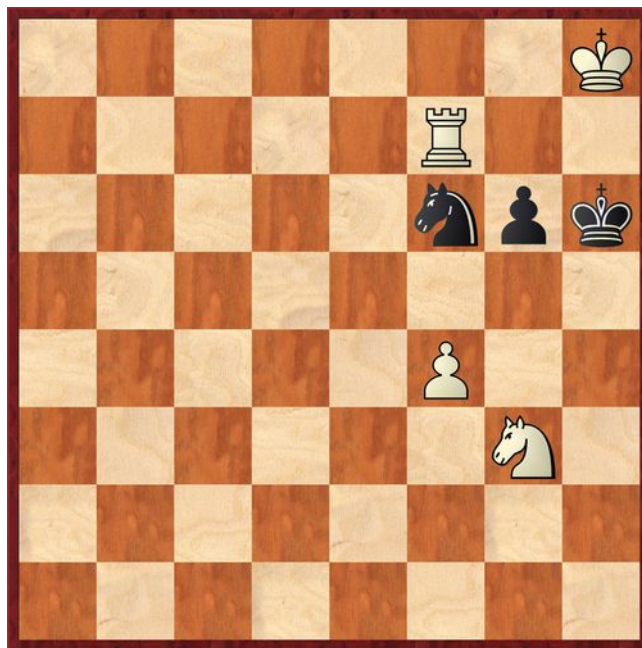
The club Annual General Meeting was held on May 21st 2025 with 9 members present and 2 members attending online. The main points of business were :-

- Treasurer's report : The club made a running loss of £141-33 over the season but with an imminent one-off reimbursement from CCCA of £290 covering room hire for the Junior Club, the balance sheet will have improved over the year. Subscriptions could therefore remain unchanged.
- Team captains reports : As reported herein, club teams competed in the Cambridgeshire leagues achieving two runners-up positions, winning the Team7000 (North) division but sadly not the play-off and triumphing in the Fenland Plate.
- Internal events : Neil Chedd took the season-opening Rapidplay and newcomer Abdul Rouf was a pleasant surprise in the Lightning tournament. The Club Championship format proved to be popular with Peter Walker emerging as the winner of the "Champion's League" division and Ed Knox in the "Challengers". The Ladder and Grand Prix titles also went to Peter to reward regular and successful play.
- Junior Club : Under Ed Knox's tutelage, the sessions attracted 15 participants over its 29 weeks of meetings. A tournament was held in April and its success will justify another, possibly in September. Although running below break-even, the Junior Club has been awarded CCCA sponsorship of up to £600 which will offset costs in the start-up years.
- Policy updates : Approval was given for the Club Constitution to be amended so that the Junior Organiser was added to the Committee with defined responsibilities. Furthermore, the proposed Safeguarding policy was adopted. Both will be displayed on the Club website. ECF safeguarding training was recommended when available.

- Competitions for 2025-26 : The club has insufficient players rated below 1400 to compete in the Team4200 league. If the county AGM agrees the formation of a Division 3 without the rating limit, New England would enter a team as the only change from the previous season.
- Elections : Ed Knox was elected to the newly-created post of Junior Organiser. He was thanked as retiring Team7000 captain and Jamie Sutherland welcomed as his replacement. If the Division 3 goes ahead, John Peoples kindly volunteered to act as captain and Jim Jennings wished well at his future club. Otherwise, incumbent committee members were re-elected.
- Summer play : Though small, there was some support for play in the venue bar either on a casual basis or as rated games if both players agree in the face of background disturbance.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (Elkholm 1930)

Position : 8/1R6/8/2k2N2/n4N2/8/8/1R2K3

1 Rb7 Kc5/Nc3/Nb6 2 Rc7# [1 ...Kc3 /Nb2/Nc5 Rc1#]

Diary Dates

8th July

Cambridgeshire County Chess
Association AGM at Ivy Leaf Club, St
Ives from 7-30pm

Website to Watch

If you fancy a share of €110,000, we should have entered the FIDE World Team Rapid Championship. With its companion Blitz competition, the events take place in London from June 11th to 15th. The [official website](#) is light on detail about visiting, spectating and even the venue!

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire League

Ely	2	New England B	2
M Tarlow	½	B Stephens	½
B MacAndrews	1	P Spencer	0
S Ross	0	M Patrickson	1
A Harman-Bishop	½	J Sutherland	½

Team 7000 - Play-off

NE Patriots	½	St Neots	3½
R Ilett	½	R Gompelman	½
N Chedd	0	M Cooper	1
E Knox	0	C Emery	1
J Peoples	0	S Freedman	1

Fenland Plate – Final

NE Patriots	2	St Ives	2
P Walker	1	N Greenwood	0
P Spencer	1	J Beck	0
E Knox	0	R Ling	1
C Russell	0	M Rippon	1

New England win on board count.

CCCA Leagues - Final Tables 2024-25

Division One	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
St Neots A	9	7	1	1	31	15
New England A	9	4	1	4	23	9
Peterborough A	9	4	0	5	23	8
St Ives A	9	1	2	6	13	4

Division Two	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
St Neots B	12	8	3	1	29½	19
New England B	12	5	5	2	27	15
Ely	12	5	4	3	27	14
Peterborough B	12	5	3	4	25½	13
Godmanchester	12	4	3	5	24½	11
St Ives B	12	4	1	7	21½	9
Rookwood	12	0	3	9	13	3

Team 7000 (N)	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
NE Patriots	6	3	1	2	14	7
St Ives WC	6	3	1	2	12½	7
Peterborough	6	2	1	3	11	5
Spalding	6	2	1	3	10½	5

Team 4000 (N)	P	W	D	L	Games	Pts
Bourne	8	7	0	1	19	14
Spalding	8	4	2	2	13½	10
March	8	4	0	4	12	8
NE Cavaliers	8	1	1	6	8	3
Rookwood	8	2	1	5	7½	5

New England Club Ladder – Final Table 2024-25

White	Black	
B Stephens	0	1 P Walker
M Patrickson	0	1 A Rouf
M Patrickson	1	0 A Thobani
N Wedley	½	½ J Peoples
B Stephens	½	½ R Ilett

Position	Change		Player	Record @ 21/05/25
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+6	P Walker	0,1,0,1,1,1,1,1,1
2	-	-	D Dhokia	0,0,½,1,0
3	+1	+2	N Wedley	1,0,1,1,½,0,½,½
4	-1	-3	J Peoples	1,1,0,½
5	-	+6	P Hanks	1,0
6	+1	+4	S Walker	1,½
7	-1	+1	C Russell	1
8	+3	+6	A Rouf	1,0,1
9	-1	+3	L Townsend	0
10	-1	-7	P Spencer	1
11	+1	-5	B Stephens	1,0,½
12	-2	-3	R Ilett	0,1,½
13	-	-9	A Neville	0,0,0,0
14	+1	+1	M Patrickson	0,1
15	-1	-2	E Knox	1
16	-	-	A Thobani	0

Club Championship

White	May		Black
A Neville	½	½	S Walker
L Townsend	0	1	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	C R	S W	L T	Pts
E Knox	X	1	1	1	1	½	1	5½
J Peoples	0	X	0	1	1	1	1	4
D Dhokia	0	1	X	0	½	1	0	2½
A Neville	0	0	1	X	0	½	1	2½
C Russell	0	0	½	1	X	0	1	2½
S Walker	½	0	0	½	1	X	-	2
L Townsend	0	0	1	0	0	-	X	1

New England Grand Prix – Final Table 2024-25

Player	Champ	Ladder	League		Cup	Team 7000	Team 4200	Total	TPR*
			A	B					
P Walker	7½	7	4	½	2½			21½	1966
B Stephens	4	1½	3½	4½	1½	2½		17½	1811
R Ilett	4½	1½	4	½	1½	4		17	1878
P Spencer	6½	1	½	5½	2	1		16½	1801
P Hanks	6½	1	5		1½			14	1869
E Knox	5½		1	3½	½	2½		13	1692
C Russell	2½	1	½	4½	2	1		12½	1583
N Chedd	4½		3½	3		1		12	1770
J Peoples	4	2½		1		0	4	11½	1452
N Wedley		4½					2½	7	1583
J Sutherland	1½			2	½	1		5	1624
D Dhokia	2½	1½				½	0	4½	1393
S Walker	2	1½		1				4½	1482
A Neville	2½	0						2½	1338
M Patrickson		1		1				2	1679
A Rouf		2						2	1773
J Jennings				0			1½	1½	1187
L Townsend	1	0						1	1245
A Thobani		0						0	925
A Katha							0	0	903

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Problem Night : Tuesday 27th May 2025

Pair	Rd 1 Max 16	Rd 2 Max 27	Total
Ed & Andy	11	23	34
Phil & Jim	13	12	25
Chris	8	15	23

Match of the Month

“Another year older and deeper in debt.” You probably know these words of Merle Travis from the song Sixteen Tons even if, like me, you do not follow Country and Western Music. Well, the season is over and it is time to take stock of our financial status ... or in the accountancy of the chess world, how have our ratings fared?

Every month, this newsletter carries a table showing the ongoing standings in the Grand Prix competition and the final column headed “TPR” (=Tournament Performance Rating) lists the rating accrued by the games included in this event. Because the ELO method is too complex for a spreadsheet, the figures are based on the archaic ECF system for the sake of simplicity but converted to the current four-digit format using a standard conversion formula.

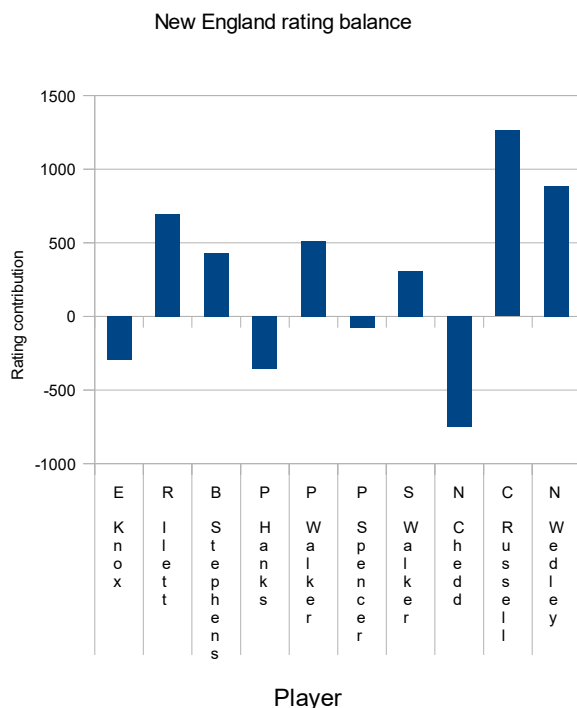
In the internal competitions, we swap points in what is effectively a zero-sum game – what someone gains, another loses. We can only change our collective balance sheet by winning or losing in games against rival clubs (our imports and exports, if you like) and in each game, we put 375 points on the line. As of 21st May when we held the AGM, we had played 163 games around the county and 81 within the club i.e. our GDP is 91500 points. In that time, our profit margin was in negative territory at -4176 points (4.6%) whereas according to the ONS, it is 2.7% for the UK economy.

In the privatisation flotations of yesteryear, an excessively charitable price on the initial public offering caused stock market volatility. By the same token, club newcomers being assigned generous starting point ratings by the system leads unrealistic figures for early playing strength and has been the subject of much correspondence between Chris and the ECF. This source of inaccuracy explains the bulk of our losses. So, if we restrict our review to players with an established rating, what is the true picture and who has been living beyond their means?

The seasonally-adjusted figures for the long-serving club players is a profit of 2604 points over the season or around 20 points per league game. That, I think indicates an overall success story but the accolade is patchy when viewed at an individual level (see below).

The good news is that the bulk of the club can look back on a satisfactory performance against other clubs in the past season and only two people gave the opposition any significant “encouragement”. Neil was one of these and his case exemplifies how fickle the figures are. When I started writing this article in mid-

April, he was comfortable on +154 but suffering two late losses cost him dear – victories would have put him well in credit on a par with Ray. As for the other miscreant, sorry! Where did I go wrong?



On the face of it, my record (P13 W4 D5 L4) does look like a balanced budget but on average, I had a 35 point advantage over my board 3 opponents and needed to achieve more than 50% to meet FTSE index expectations. Had I drawn a level ending against St Ives or steered clear of the blunder against Peterborough, I would have avoided this bear market. I need to delve a little deeper before I can complete this review of last season and submit my annual return to HMRC.

P Hanks v F Fairhurst

New England A v Peterborough A; 26.03.2025

1	d4	Nf6
2	c4	g6
3	Nc3	Bg7
4	e4	d6
5	f3	Nbd7
6	Be3	e5
7	Nge2	a6
8	Qd2	0-0
9	g4	exd4
10	Nxd4	c5
11	Nc2	Ne5
12	Be2	Be6
13	g5	

So far, it has been a typical Saemisch Variation of the King's Indian Defence though Black has several different approaches with c7-c5 or Nb8-c6 being popular alternatives in the early stages.

As an aside, the text position has been reached before when White, a 2245-rated player, continued 13 Na3 (Kaminik v Marquardt, Bad Weissee 1997). This

seems to placed the knight on a poor square but White went on to win. Playing through that game, however, pointed out several of my weaknesses. There, White was happy to exchange queens and decide the game with a late minor piece attack. My mindset in this opening is that White conducts a kingside pawn storm, make a breakthrough for a dramatic entry by the queen and checkmate, of course. My mistakes are :

- to have pre-conceived ideas about the structure of the game that may not be justified by the developing position and
- to have failed to play through enough classic games from the elite. I would have re-adjusted my thinking had I been aware of Kasparov v Loginov, Manila 1992, for instance.

13	...	Ne8
14	Nd5	b5
15	b3	Bh3

Black's last move surprised me. It stops me castling on the kingside and threatens 16 ... Bg2 winning the pawn on f3. I am being taught a lesson about a consequence of my hasty move 13 (which is probably bad strategically anyway). There are positions in the King's Indian in which Black can play h7-h5 to prevent opening the h file and White really needs to keep a pawn on g4 and block the defensive advance with h2-h4-h5 before Black can react. Now, I shall have trouble advancing that pawn at all!

16 Rg1

My move aims to eject the bishop with Rg1-g3 but Fritz advises 16 Kf2 to achieve the same all in good time with the other rook by Ra1-g1-g3. If 16 ... f5, White can try 17 Kg3 on the strength of 17 ... fxe4 18 f4 (not 18 Kxh3 Qd7+ 19 Kg3 exf3 is too strong with 20 ... Qg4+ and 21 ... Qg2+ to follow).

16	...	Nc7
17	Rd1	

I am trying to combine removing the rook from the dangerous long diagonal and deterring 17 ... Nxd5 when 18 Qxd5 will hit the pawn on d6. This is a vain hope and instead played 17 f4 when the discovered attack 17 ... Nf3+ is no good thanks to the knight on c2 covering a1. After 17 ... Nd7, 18 Nxc7 Qxc7 19 0-0-0 would follow my plan. Transposition by 18 0-0-0 looks promising but allows 18 ... Nxd5 19 Qxd5 Qa5 20 Qxd6 and Black has time for the sacrifice 20 ... Qxa2 21 Qxd7 Qb2+ 22 Kd2 Bc3+ 23 Kd3 Qxb3 with threats of 24 e5/Bf3 Qxc4#, 24 cxb5 c4# and 24 Qd5 Be1#.

17	...	Nxd5
18	cxd5	

Now, 18 Qxd5 is an oversight due to 18 ... Qa5+ and 19 ... Qxa2 when the knight is hanging.

18	...	b4
19	Kf2	f5
20	Rg3	



I confess to not analysing Fritz's suggested 20 Kg3 ... I thought I was making the capital gain of a pawn by forcing 20 ... f4. Black's reply showed it was not so easy. As in a previous comment, I need to be more careful with move order.

20 ... Qd7
21 Rxh3 f4

Black concedes the pawn advantage when 21 ... fxe4 would pose more problems.

- 22 Kg3 Nxf3 23 Qc1 Be5+ is a mating attack if White tries to hang on to the material 24 Kg2 Qg4+ 25 Rg3 Bxg3 26 hxg3 Nh4+ etc.
- 22 Kg2 exf3+ 23 Bxf3 Nxf3 24 Rxf3 Rxf3 25 Kxf3 Qh3+ 26 Ke2 Rf8 with massive threats
- 22 Rg3 exf3 23 Bc4 (23 Bxf3 transposes) 23 ... Ng4+ 24 Kg1 Bc3 25 Qd3 Be5 26 Rh3 Nxe3
- 22 Rh4 exf3 23 Bf1 Ng4+ 24 Kg1 is recommended as best due to 24 ... Rae8 (say) 25 Bh3. 24 ... Qf5 counters 25 Bh3 with 25 ... f2+
 - 26 Kg2 Qf3+ 27 Kf1 Nxh2#
 - 26 Kh1 Qe4+ 27 Bg2 f1Q+
 - 26 Bxf2 Qxf2+ 27 Qxf2 Rxf2 when Black has a superior endgame
- 25 Bf2 Nxf2 26 Qxf2 Rae8 holds on e.g. 27 Bd3 Qxg5+ 28 Kh1 Re2 29 Qg3 Qxg3 30 hxg3 Rg2 which must be easier for Black to play.

22 Kg2 fxe3
23 Qxe3 a5
24 f4 Nf7
25 Bg4??

What on earth is this? This single move drops the computer assessment from +1½ pawns to -9! It wrecks my rating potentially to the tune of 31 points and my contribution to the balance of payments would

otherwise jump healthily positive. Accidental touch move? No. Time trouble? Not really. Switching around intended moves? If only. I think I saw a promising variation and was seduced by foreseeing 25 ... Qb5 (say) 26 Be6 Kh8 27 Qg3 Nd8 28 Rxh7+. I must have assumed that squares behind my own pawns were protected.

A more serious continuation given by Fritz might be 25 Qg3 a4 26 Bg4 Qe7 27 Be6 axb3 28 axb3 Ra2 29 Rd2 Bc3 30 Rf2

- 30 ... Bd4 31 Qh4 h5 32 Nxd4 (not 32 gxh6ep Qxh4 - see comment to move 15) 32 ... Rxf2+ 33 Qxf2 cxd4 34 f5 gxf5 35 Rxh5 when White is winning
- 30 ... Kh8 31 Qh4 Nd8 32 Qh6 Qg7 (32 ... Nxe6 33 dxe6 Qg7 34 f5) 33 Qxg7+ Kxg7 34 f5. There is no definite conclusion but the side variations show that White's side is certainly less taxing to play.

My investment on the kingside eventually seems to be paying dividends.

25 ... Qxg4+ 0-1

Among other things, Rachel Reeves claims that chess is a significant past interest and here, I have cast myself in the role of Chancellor of the Exchequer. My fiscal rules for next year should encompass spending more on defence, streamlining the planning process and setting targets e.g. for grandmaster game analysis related to my opening repertoire. I shall sign the Executive Order immediately.

Paul Hanks

Eye Opener

D Miedema (2356) v P van der Werve (2143)
Netherlands Championship, Dieren; 21.07.2015

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 f3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nc3 0-0 6 Be3 e5 7 Nge2 exd4 8 Nxd4 Nc6 9 Be2 Nxd4 10 Bxd4 Nh5

A very aggressive but unsound continuation.

11 Bxg7 Qh4+
12 g3 Nxg3

Black has some nasty threats with the discovered check.

13 Bf6

The refutation. Neither the obvious 13 Bd3 Nxe4+ 14 Ke2 Qf2# nor the more subtle 13 Bf1 Nxe4+ 14 Ke2 Qf2+ 15 Kd3 Nc5# suffice. 13 Kd2 leads to exchanges and a small edge for White.

13 ... Qh3

13 ... Qxf6 14 hxg3 would leave White a piece ahead.

14 Nd5

14 hxg3 Qxh1+ and White will keep the powerfully-placed bishop but why not throw in a threat of checkmate?

14 ... h5
15 Nf4 1-0

Cambridgeshire County Chess Association

A Team	Fenland		Cambridgeshire League – Division 1									Score	Appearances	Grading	
	Peterborough 23 rd Oct	St Ives 4 th Feb	St Ives A 17 th Sept	Peterborough A 17 th Oct	St Neots A 20 th Nov	St Ives A 18 th Dec	Peterborough A 29 th Jan	St Neots A 10 th Mar/Feb	St Ives A 18 th Mar	Peterborough A 26 th Mar	St Ives A 30 th Apr			Opponent Average	Performance
Peter Walker	½	0	1	½	0	½	1	0	½	0	½	4½	11	1981	1907
Ray Ilett	1	½	1	0	0	1	1	½	½	0	1	6½	11	1860	1928
Paul Hanks	1	½	1	½	½	1	½	½	0	0	1	6½	11	1844	1912
Ben Stephens		½	½	0		1	½	0	1	½	0	4	9	1774	1733
Neil Chedd			½	1	1	1		0		0		3½	6	1721	1784
Paul Spencer	1				0		½					1½	3	1721	1721
Ed Knox											1	1	1	1707	2082
Chris Russell									½			½	1	1626	1626
Total	3½	1½	4	2	1½	4½	3½	1	2½	½	3½	28	53	1836	1856
Sum of opponents' grades	7159	7603	9275	9144	9353	9011	8602	9485	9182	9298	9216	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games * includes estimate			
Sum of New England grades	7459	7459	9216	9216	9216	9216	9225	9216	9011	9216	9200				

B Team	Cambridgeshire League – Division 2												Score	Appearances	Grading	
	St Ives B 10th Sept	Peterborough B 26th Sept	Godmanchester 11th Nov	Ely 27th Nov	Rookwood 12th Dec	St Neots B 28th Apr	St Ives B 22nd Jan	Peterborough B 5th Feb	Godmanchester 19th Mar	Rookwood 16th Apr	St Neots B 23rd Apr	Ely 19th May			Opponent Average	Performance
Peter Walker	½												½	1	1890	1890
Ray Ilett		½											½	1	1882	1882
Ben Stephens	1		½		0	½	½			1	½	½	4½	8	1727	1792
M Patrickson*												1	1	1	1711	2086
Jim Jennings		0											0	1	1669	1244
Paul Spencer				1	0	1	1	1	½	1	0	0	5½	9	1655	1743
Neil Chedd	1		½	0		0	1		½				3	6	1629	1629
Ed Knox				1				1	1		½		3½	4	1614	1897
Chris Russell	0	1	1		1		0	½	1		0		4½	8	1568	1619
Jamie Sutherland				0		½				1		½	2	4	1555	1555
John Peoples			0		1			0					1	3	1498	1373
Steve Walker										1			1	1	1385	1760
Total	2½	1½	2	2	2	2	2½	2½	3	4	1	2	27	47^{+1d}	1633	1693
Sum of opponents' grades	6943	5279	6191	6732	5955	6757	6860	6816	5910	5434	6757	7096	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games * includes estimate			
Sum of New England grades	6998	4835	6642	6864	6651	6889	6841	6626	6816	6582	6825	6632				

Team 7000	Fenland			Team 7000							Score	Appearances	Grading	
	St Ives DM 17 th Oct	Ely 17 th Oct	St Ives WC 14 th May	St Ives WC 2 nd Oct	Peterborough D 6 th Nov	Spalding 3 rd Dec	Peterborough D 20 th Feb	Spalding 12 th Mar	St Ives WC 1 st Apr	St Neots 7 th May			Opponent Average	Performance
Ray Ilett		0		0	½	½	1	1	½	½	4	8	1926	1926
Peter Walker	1		1								2	2	1907	2282
Paul Hanks	0								0		0	2	1899	1524
Paul Spencer			1		½			½			2	3	1730	1855
Ben Stephens		1		½	1	½	½				3½	5	1721	1871
Neil Chedd							1			0	1	2	1685	1685
Jim Jennings									0		0	1	1619	1244
John Peoples					0					0	0	2	1602	1227
Ed Knox		½	0	0		1		1	½	0	3	7	1594	1561
Jamie Sutherland	½					1					1½	2	1579	1766
Dak Dhokia								½			½	1	1531	1531
Chris Russell	1	1	0	1			1				4	5	1435	1682
Total	2½	2½	2	1½	2	3	3½	3	1	½	21½	40	1701	1735
Sum of opponents' grades	6630	6757	6929	6722	6914	6550	6971	6511	7107	6932	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games			
Sum of New England grades	6955	6949	6982	6949	6989	6997	6965	6853	6904	6955	* includes estimate			

Team 4200	Team 4000								Score	Appearances	Grading	
	Rookwood 18 th Sept	March 14 th Oct	Bourne 21 st Nov	Spalding 18 th Dec	Rookwood 30 th Jan	March 12 th Feb	Bourne 26 th Mar	Spalding 8 th Apr			Opponent Average	Performance
Norman Wedley			1		1			½	2½	3	1548	1798
Jim Jennings	0	0	0	0	1	0	0		1	7	1378	1163
Luke Townsend*								0	0	1	1295	920
Dak Dhokia	0					0			0	2	1286	911
Anish Katha*							0		0	1	1278	903
John Peoples	1	½	0	0	0	1	1	1	4½	8	1249	1302
Dominic Kabut*				0					0	1	991	616
Total	1	½	1	0	2	1	1	1½	8	23+1d	1322	1226
Sum of opponents' grades	3909	2728	4471	3711	3985	3821	4079	3709	based on September grades – excludes defaulted games * includes estimate			
Sum of New England grades	4416	2960	4463	4060	4463	4416	4060	4470				
Sum of NE local grades	4416	2593	4096	2693	4096	3943	2693	2903				