

New Englander

Chess Club Update – August 2025

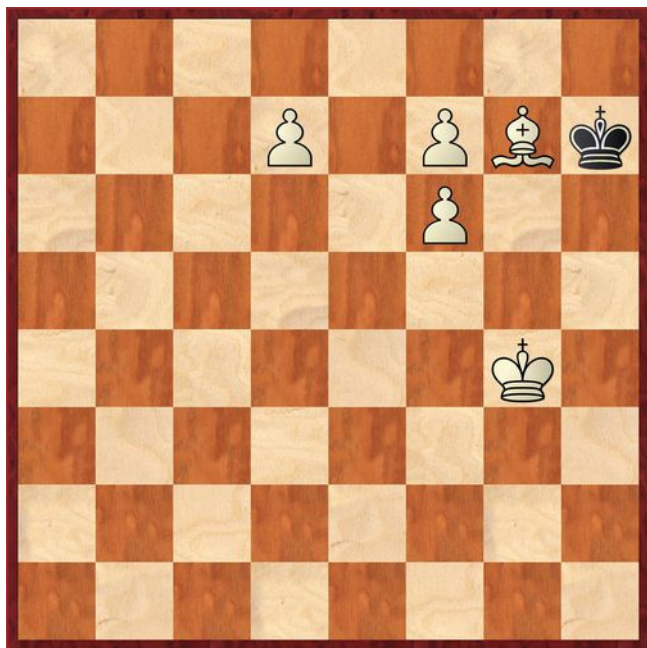
Chairman's Chatter

Next season is almost upon us! With the expansion of the number of competitions being offered by the Cambridgeshire County Chess Association, it is going to be a busy year ahead. A draft version of the fixtures shows that we need to be ready to play matches from 3rd September and the season will extend into May. When the final version is available (hopefully in the coming few days), I will circulate a listing of our league involvement and we will be able to see how the schedule impacts our internal events. Please be prepared to hit the ground running next month.

Paul Hanks

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution (source [The Problemist](#))

Position : Q6K/2rnp3/8/1pkP1N2/1pNR4/1Bq2p2/2R2B2/8

1 Qa6 e6/e5 2 Qd6# [1 ... Rc8+ 2 Qxc8#; 1 ... R other 2 Qc6#; 1 ... N any 2 Qb6#; 1 ... Qxd4+ 2 Ne5#; 1 ... Qxb3/Qd3/Qxc4 2 Rd3#; 1 ... Qxc2/Qd2 2 Rdd2#; 1 ... Qe3 2 Ncxe3#; 1 ... Qe1 2 Nd2#; 1 ... Qa1/Qb2 2 Nb2#]

Diary Dates

3rd September Start of 2025-26 season

28th September County Raidplay at Whittlesford Memorial Hall. Click for online [Entry details](#).

Website to Watch

Richmond Heights, Missouri is the place to be for chess in August. The main event is the [Singuefield Cup](#) from 18th to 28th which forms the finale to the Grand Chess Tour circuit. Headed by world champion Gukesh and Caruana, nine players from the top 20 are joined by a wildcard home boy to compete for \$350k. It follows [rapid and blitz tournaments](#) which start on 10th August with the same players in the field.

CCCA AGM summary

The meeting at St Ives was well attended and recorded growing chess activity in many corners of the county. The business transacted included :

- Cambridgeshire won the national Minor Counties competition for the second time in 3 years
- most committee incumbents were re-elected except for Colin Emery becoming the League Secretary
- Cambridge City are re-entering Division 1
- next year will see the launch of Division 3 potentially with 7-8 teams
- the Team4000 competition will have have an upper rating limit on players of 1550
- provisional rating will be vetted by a grading sub-committee on the basis of the justification provided by clubs.

Result Round-up

New England Club Ladder

| White | | Black | |
|--------------|---|-------|-----------|
| M Patrickson | 1 | 0 | P Spencer |

| Position | Change | | Player | Record @ 09/07/25 |
|----------|--------|---------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Month | Overall | | |
| 1 | - | - | M Patrickson | 1 |
| 2 | - | - | P Spencer | 0 |

New England Grand Prix

| Player | Champ | Ladder | League | | Cup | Team 7000 | Team 4200 | Total | TPR* |
|--------------|-------|--------|--------|---|-----|-----------|-----------|-------|------|
| | | | A | B | | | | | |
| M Patrickson | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | |
| P Spencer | | 0 | | | | | | 0 | |

* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

Match of the Month

This is a game of two halves – not in terms of time but the focus switching from one flank to the other. It also gave me a valuable lesson in fighting with bishops against knights.

P Hanks v R Gompelman

New England A v St Neots A, Bd 3; 07.04.2025

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | d4 | Nf6 |
| 2 | c4 | d6 |
| 3 | Nf3 | Bg4 |
| 4 | Nc3 | g6 |
| 5 | h3 | |

I find it hard to categorise this opening. Fritz suggest it is an Old Indian Defence but after 5 e4 Bg7, it would become a line in the Petrosian Variation of the King's Indian. The move order in the latter would normally be 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 Bg4 when the difference would be that White has the option 6 Be2 to avoid doubled pawns.

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 5 | ... | Bxf3 |
| 6 | gxf3 | Bg7 |
| 7 | e4 | Na6 |

I was expecting the more conventional 7 ... Nbd7. White's position resemble the Saemisch Variation but with a pawn on f2 instead of g2. I felt my version was superior because White's king's knight is often a problem since it lacks its natural square on f3 but here, that has already been solved! I also have an open file but as White's strategy revolves around a kingside pawn storm, h2-h4 can be met by h7-h5 and it will be difficult to prise open files without g2-g4.

| | | |
|----|-----|-------|
| 8 | Be3 | Nd7 |
| 9 | Be2 | c5 |
| 10 | d5 | Bxc3+ |

Again, either 10 ... 0-0 or 10 ... Qb6 would be normal. The move played came as a slight shock. The dark-squared bishop is a defensive kingpin and is rarely exchanged so lightly.

| | | |
|----|------|-----|
| 11 | bxc3 | Qa5 |
| 12 | Qc2 | |

I probably made this move automatically and was surprised that the computer considers 12 Rb1 as an alternative. However, 12 ... Qxc3+ 13 Bd2

- 13 ... Qf6 14 Rxb7 Nb6 15 Qc1 with pressure on the dark squares (16 Bc3, 16 Bg5 etc)
- 13 ... Qa3 14 Rxb7 Qxa2 15 Bc3 with more compensation according to Fritz than I would award.

| | | |
|----|-----|-------|
| 12 | ... | 0-0-0 |
| 13 | Rb1 | h6 |
| 14 | Rb5 | Qc7 |

The queen is trapped after 14 ... Qa3 15 Bc1.

| | | |
|----|-----|--|
| 15 | Kd2 | |
|----|-----|--|

15 0-0 is supposedly better but the white king looks exposed due to the broken kingside pawn structure. It turns out that he will be even more embarrassed on d2 but that is far from obvious at the moment.

| | | |
|----|------|------|
| 15 | ... | Ndb8 |
| 16 | Rhb1 | b6 |

Without this move e.g. 16 ... Nd7, White could give up the rooks by 17 Rxb7 Qxb7 18 Rxb7 Kxb7. This can be assessed as a small material gain for Black but the computer must have faith in White's attacking chances following 19 f4 Nc7 20 e5.

| | | |
|----|------|------|
| 17 | a4 | Qd7 |
| 18 | a5 | Nc7 |
| 19 | R5b2 | Na8 |
| 20 | axb6 | Nxb6 |
| 21 | Ra2 | Qb7 |
| 22 | f4 | |

White has been steadily probing the queenside to find an opening. Despite being cramped, the black knights are either blocking or supporting and making it difficult for White to funnel his forces down the a and b files.

| | | |
|----|------|-----|
| 22 | ... | f6 |
| 23 | Rba1 | a6 |
| 24 | Ra5 | Rd7 |



| | | |
|----|-----|--|
| 25 | Rb1 | |
|----|-----|--|

White has been thinking about a sacrifice on c5 but there is too much defensive cover for an immediate assault. White should undermine the square with 25 e5 :-

- 25 ... f5 26 e6 Rc7 27 Rg1 Rg8 28 Qxf5
- 25 ... fxe5 26 fxe5 dxe5 27 Rxc5+ (27 Qxg6) and the attack is breaking through e.g. 27 ... Rc7 28 Rb1 N8d7 29 Qxg6 Nxc5 30 Rxb6 Qa7 31 Bg4+ Nd7 32 Bxd7+ Kxd7 33 Rd6+.

The moral is that the longer range of the bishops means they can attack on both the queenside and kingside whereas the knights need time to switch flanks.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 25 | ... | Qa7 |
| 26 | Qb3 | |

26 e5 is still playable and much better. After Black's reply, White is suddenly confronted with the

consequences of earlier misplacing his king and has to avoid Nb6xc4+.

| | | |
|----|------|------|
| 26 | ... | Rb7 |
| 27 | Bg4+ | N8d7 |

Black has 27 ... f5 which could give him the tempo he needs using the trick 28 exf5 h5. White must find 29 Be2 Nxc4+ 30 Qxc4 Rxb1 31 Bxc5 when acceptance 31 ... dxc5 32 Rxc5+ Kd7 33 d6 is winning for White due to the check on e6. 31 ... Qc7 32 fxg6 is still a fight but White's pawns look dangerous.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 28 | Kc2 | Kc7 |
| 29 | Qa2 | Ra8 |
| 30 | h4 | Kd8 |
| 31 | h5 | |

At last, I have figured out that the queenside is a sideshow that distracts Black from the kingside. If I exchange pawns, the bishops will spring to life. 31 Rg1 would be another, stronger way to re-deploy the assault force.

| | | |
|----|-----|----|
| 31 | ... | g5 |
|----|-----|----|

My move allowed 31 ... gxh5 when 32 Bxh5 Nxc4 33 Qxc4 Rxb1 34 Kxb1 Qb6+ 35 Qb4 cxb4 36 Bxb6+ Nxb6 37 cxb4 probably leads to a drawn ending but the calm 32 Be2 can be played – the h pawns are weak and will fall later.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 32 | Be6 | Ke8 |
|----|-----|-----|

White is moving fairly aimlessly, just trying to occupy active squares whilst forgetting 32 ... Nxc4. The previous line is even worse for White i.e 33 Qxc4 Rxb1 34 Kxb1 because of the intermezzo 34 ... gxf4 35 Bxf4 Qb6+ and 36 Qb4 is no longer possible. Instead, 33 Rxa6 Qxa6 34 Qxa6 Rxa6 35 Rxb7 Ncb6 is another drawing variation.

| | | |
|----|-----|--|
| 33 | Ra1 | |
|----|-----|--|

Note that Black has removed his threat because 33 fxg5 Nxc4 is met by 34 gxh6 Nf8 35 Rg1 and 33 ... fxg5 34 f4 Nxc4 35 Bxd7+ Kd8 36 Bxc5 dxc5 37 Rxb7 Qxb7 38 Bc6.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 33 | ... | Nb8 |
| 34 | e5 | |

White is winning but 34 fxg5 fxg5 35 f4 g4 36 Rg1 would have been more forceful.

| | | |
|----|------|------|
| 34 | ... | N6d7 |
| 35 | exf6 | exf6 |
| 36 | fxg5 | fxg5 |
| 37 | f4 | gxf4 |
| 38 | Bxf4 | Nf6 |
| 39 | Re1 | |

There are number of ways to go. Fritz recommends 39 Bxd6 Ne4 40 Bf4 Rg7 41 Kd3.

| | | |
|----|------|------|
| 39 | ... | Re7 |
| 40 | Bxd6 | Nxh5 |
| 41 | Qa4+ | Kf8 |
| 42 | Rf1+ | Kg7 |
| 43 | Bxe7 | 1-0 |

White chose the simplest route. The clock is strong persuasion not to look for the direct method 43 Be5+ Kh7 when the killer is 44 Kc1.

Eye Opener

I Cheparinov (2621) v M Klinova (2391)
Metz 2005

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | d4 | d6 |
| 2 | Nf3 | Bg4 |
| 3 | c4 | Nf6 |
| 4 | Nc3 | |

The play has transposed into the main game but here, the black bishop does not wait to be asked.

| | | |
|---|------|------|
| 4 | ... | Bxf3 |
| 5 | exf3 | |

Previously, this recapture passed without comment. "Towards the centre" is the general rule which would also support e2-e4. White varies by aiming for rapid development and Black is complicit by continuing to be lax with vital tempi (as noted above).

| | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 5 | ... | e6 |
| 6 | g4 | Be7 |
| 7 | f4 | c6 |

White has created an unusual form of the Four Pawns Attack. Black's 4th and 5th moves, rather than the fianchetto normal in a King's Indian Defence, take away the e7 square and natural deployment of the queen's knight by 7 ... Nc6 leads to it being misplaced by 8 d5 exd5 9 cxd5 Nb8 (9 ... Na5 10 b4). The threat of g4-g5 means d7 has to be reserved for retreating the king's knight. The knight's immobility on b8 means that 8 Bg2 gains force.

| | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 8 | g5 | Nfd7 |
| 9 | d5 | 0-0 |
| 10 | Bd3 | |

Fritz prefers 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 Qg4 Nc5 12 b4 but White probably has the final coup in mind.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 10 | ... | Nc5 |
| 11 | Bc2 | a5 |



| | | |
|----|-------|------|
| 12 | dxe6 | fxe6 |
| 13 | Bxh7+ | 1-0 |