

# New Englander

## Chess Club Update – April 2026

### Chairman's Chatter

Just as I thought the Club was having a rough time, the C team sneakily wins Cambridgeshire Division 3 (North) with a match to spare! Congratulations to the squad and in particular, captain John Peoples who led from the front with an impressive record of 5/6.

There has been an unprecedented number of match postponements and the club championship is also behind schedule. The date has been set for the Annual General Meeting as a deadline to end the season and I trust you will support the teams during the forthcoming busy period and comply with the pressure to re-arrange any outstanding games.

*Paul Hanks*

### Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 3. A slightly longer and trickier puzzle. Fritz struggles to solve it. Do you?



Last Month's solution (Courtenay 1870)

Position : 8/1PBP4/2kN4/5P2/3K4/8/8/8

1 d8B Kd7 2 b8N#

### Diary Dates

- 13<sup>th</sup> May Club Rapidplay
- 20<sup>th</sup> May Club AGM from 7:30pm after final Junior Club session (provisional)
- 14<sup>th</sup> July CCCA AGM at Ivy League Club, St Ives from 7:30pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> October [2026 English Championship](#) until 1<sup>st</sup> November at Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood

### Website to Watch

The Fide Candidates Tournament to select the next world championship challenger started on March 29<sup>th</sup> in Paphos, Cyprus and continues until 15<sup>th</sup> April with tie-breaks the following day if necessary. In the [Open section](#), Nakamura, Caruana and Giri now represent the Old Guard with Praggnanandhaa, Esipenko, Wei Yi and Sindarov as the new kids on the block. The [Women's event](#) features Tan Zhongyi, the only former champion, Zhu Jiner, Anna Muzychuk, Assaubayeva, Lagno, Rameshbabu, Deshmukh and Goryachkina. That is a lot of games to follow on the respective webpages though you can toggle between the two.

If that is not enough, Katowice in Poland hosts the European Individual Chess Championship from 6<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> April. Details available at <https://eicc2026.eu/#>.

### Result Round-up

#### Cambridgeshire League

Cambridge	P	New England A	P
<b>New England A</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>3</b>
P Walker	½	M Agoston	½
R Ilett	0	D Waller	1
P Hanks	½	T Robbins	½
P Spencer	1	D Peresenchuk	0
C Russell	0	C Hampton	1

Peterborough A	2	New England A	3
C Tandy	½	P Walker	½
F Kaichinger	1	R Ilett	0
F Fairhurst	0	B Stephens	1
D Walton	½	P Spencer	½
D Redden	0	P Hanks	1

St Neots B	2	New England B	2
P Barkas	0	P Hanks	1
C Emery	1	P Spencer	0
K Fapohunda	½	J Sutherland	½
R McMorran	½	C Russell	½

New England B	½	Ely	3½
P Hanks	0	O Lenton	1
P Spencer	0	S Ross	1
J Peoples	0	C Bolt	1
A Thobani	½	A Harman-Bishop	½

<b>New England C</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Peterborough C</b>	<b>1</b>
J Sutherland	1	B Rhodes	0
J Peoples	1	D Shehada	0
A Thobani	0	A Hammond	1

<b>Bourne</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>New England C</b>	<b>2</b>
M Bailey	1	J Sutherland	0
A Bhattacharyya	0	C Russell	1
H Redhead	0	J Peoples	1

#### Team7000

<b>Spalding</b>	<b>2½</b>	<b>NE Patriots</b>	<b>1½</b>
S Prior	1	R Ilett	0
A Marshall	½	J Sutherland	½
J Moseley-Hutchinson	1	C Russell	0
J Thorpe	0	J Peoples	1

<b>Peterborough D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>NE Patriots</b>	<b>P</b>
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#### Fenland Plate

<b>Rookwood E</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>NE Patriots</b>	<b>2</b>
F Bowers	½	P Walker	½
J Sneesby	½	P Hanks	½
B Panter	1	J Sutherland	0
D Sneesby	0	A Thobani	1

#### New England Club Championship

<b>White</b>		<b>Black</b>	
B Sivaraj	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 1</b>	J Sutherland
B Sivaraj	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 2</b>	P Spencer
J Sutherland	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 6</b>	D Dhokia
A Neville	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 7</b>	J Sutherland
P Walker	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 8</b>	P Spencer
E Knox	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 8</b>	P Hanks
C Russell	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 8</b>	S Walker

<b>White</b>		<b>Black</b>	
P Hanks	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 9</b>	P Walker
B Sivaraj	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 9</b>	E Knox
S Walker	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 9</b>	J Peoples
P Walker	1	0	P Spencer
A Neville	<b>P</b>	<b>Rd 9</b>	C Russell
J Sutherland	1	0	A Thobani

#### Group stage (postponements)

<b>Group B</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>JS</b>	<b>AN</b>	<b>DD</b>	<b>Pts</b>
P Spencer	X	<b>P</b>	0	1	1	4½
B Sivaraj	<b>P</b>	X	<b>P</b>	1	1	4
J Sutherland	1	<b>P</b>	X	<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	3
A Neville	0	0	<b>P</b>	X	1	2
D Dhokia	0	0	<b>P</b>	0	X	½

#### Final stage

<b>Champions League</b>	<b>PW</b>	<b>PH</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>RI</b>	<b>EK</b>	<b>Pts</b>
P Walker	X	<b>P</b>	1			1	2
P Hanks	<b>P</b>	X	½	½	½	<b>P</b>	1½
P Spencer	0	½	X	<b>P</b>	1		1½
B Sivaraj		½	<b>P</b>	X	½	<b>P</b>	1
R Ilett		½	0	½	X		1
E Knox	0	<b>P</b>		<b>P</b>		X	0

<b>Challengers</b>	<b>AN</b>	<b>JP</b>	<b>JS</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>DD</b>	<b>SW</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>Pts</b>
A Neville	X		<b>P</b>	<b>P</b>	1	1	1	3
J Peoples		X		½	1	<b>P</b>	1	2½
J Sutherland	<b>P</b>		X		<b>P</b>	1	1	2
C Russell	<b>P</b>	½		X			1	1½
D Dhokia	0	0	<b>P</b>		X	½		½
S Walker	0	<b>P</b>	0		½	X		½
A Thobani	0	0	0	0			X	0

#### New England Club Ladder

<b>Position</b>	<b>Change</b>		<b>Player</b>	<b>Record @ 25/03/26</b>
	<b>Month</b>	<b>Overall</b>		
1	-	+8	J Peoples	1
2	+3	+4	N Wedley	1,1,0
3	-1	+5	P Hanks	1
4	-1	-1	B Sivaraj	1,0
5	-1	-3	P Spencer	0,1
6	+1	+4	J Sutherland	1
7	-1	-6	M Patrickson	1
8	-	-3	D Dhokia	0,0
9	-	-5	C Russell	0,0
10	-	+1	P Walker	1
11	+1	+1	A Rouf	0
12	-1	-5	S Walker	0

## New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League			Cup	7000 Team	Total	TPR*
			A	B	C				
J Sutherland	4	1		1½	3½	0	2½	12½	1640
P Hanks	5	1	2½	1		1	1	11½	1796
P Spencer	4½	1	3	1½		1	0	11	1647
B Sivaraj	4	1		2½		2	1½	11	1829
P Walker	5	1	1½			1½	1	10	2018
J Peoples	2½	1			5		1½	10	1648
R Ilett	4½		1½	2		½	0	8½	1753
C Russell	1½	0	0	2	1		0	4½	1533
A Thobani	0			½	3	1		4½	1353
E Knox	3						½	3½	1703
A Neville	3							3	1592
B Stephens	1		1	1				3	1829
N Wedley		2						2	1526
M Patrickson		1	½	0				1½	1606
S Walker	½			½				1	1348
D Dhokia	½							½	1300
A Rouf		0						0	1574

\* Tournament Performance Rating is approximate

## Match of the Month

What did I think of the British Rapidplay Championship? Well ... an enjoyable disaster, actually. I think I had better explain.

The event was held over the weekend 14-15<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood and having parted with £35 of my ill-gotten gains, only the likes of Mickey Adams stood between me and a big cash prize. More realistically, it was good to play in the same room and in the same competition as the greats of the British game, albeit with a hundred boards in between.

They say fast time limits are a great leveller and they needed to be. In the first round, Rookwood's captain Francis Bowers who led New England to the county title in 2011 drew 2024 British champion Gawain Maroroa Jones. Francis quickly swapped into a stale endgame but there was still no escaping the 700+ rating point difference. As the top board, it attracted the attention of the photographer whose efforts have been posted [online](#).

It wasn't long before I faced almost as large a rating difference. When the game control is 15 minutes per player with a 10 second increment, the standard of play is understandably not the best (spoiler alert!) and most of the following moves were played with only

one second's thought as recorded by the electronic boards.

**Jon Manley (2030) v Andy Neville (1494)**  
Peterborough; 14.03.2026

1 e4 c5  
2 Nc3 Nc6  
3 Bb5 Nd4

When computers started to unravel the tactical maze of the Open variation of the Sicilian Defence (3 d4), this Rossolimo Attack became fashionable. It featured heavily in the 2012 World Championship match between Anand and Gelfand – one of the more boring recent top-level clashes. Black's move avoids the structural damage of 4 Bxf6, a strategy which Anand used to effect in the decisive play-off game.

4 Bc4 e6  
5 Nge2 Nf6  
6 0-0 d5

Analysis engines prefer the more aggressive 6 ... a6 aiming to embarrass/exchange the bishop on c4. My move opens the position and unleashes a few tactical tricks over the next few moves.

7 exd5 exd5  
8 Nxd5

I don't think I would care to play this temporary sacrifice at speed unless it was in known preparation. However, if Black responds feebly, the d has been lost and with an exposed king, his position will be poor.

8 ... Nxd5  
9 Nxd4 cxd4  
10 Qh5



OK. I have a piece in the bag but can I hold it? The fallback option is probably 10 ... Bd6 11 Qxd5 0-0 and fight on with a pawn minus.

How about 10 ... Ne7 11 Qxf7+ Kd7? Not appetising, I know but might it be a straw I can clutch? 12 Qe6+ looks a natural continuation but after 12 ... Kc7, I gain

the tempo that lets my pieces come to the defence of my king e.g. 13 Qe5+ Qd6. So 12 Re1 and then?

- 12 ... Qe8 13 Bb5+ doesn't work
- 12 ... a6 13 d3
  - 13 ... Qe8 allows 14 Qe6+ Kc7 15 Bf4+ Kb8 16 Qb6+ Kd7 17 Be6# (amongst others)
  - 13 ... b5 when White builds the attack slowly e.g. 14 Bd5 Ra7 15 Bf4 Bb7 16 Re5 Qa1 17 Rae1 and eventually, Black is overwhelmed in a position that would be a nightmare under time pressure
- 12 ... Kc6 is the computer's best try when there is no clear way for either side to proceed. Fritz gives its top variation as 13 b4 and an example of the many plausible continuations is 13 ... a5 14 b5+ Kb6 15 Bb2. It assesses White's position as superior by about half a pawn because there is the problem of 15 ... Ng6 16 Re8 which paralyses my development.

10	...	Be6
11	Re1	Nc7
12	Bxe6	Nxe6
13	Rxe6+	

Five moves after the sacrifice, White regains the piece. To be played at speed, this must be standard theory.

13	...	Be7
14	Re1	0-0
15	d3	Bb4

With no immediate pressure on this bishop, I could have brought up more of my forces with 15 ... Rc8.

16	Re4	Re8
17	Bg5?!	

White has the double attack 17 Qb5 which I can defend with 17... Rxe4 18 dxe4 Qe7 but 19 Bg5 f6 20 Bf4 Qxe4 21 Qxb4 Qxf4 22 Qxb7 maintains my deficit though I may have some hope in 22 ... Re8 23 Qxa7 Re2.

17	...	Qd5
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At this point, I thought to myself that my activity meant I was past the worst and that I was doing alright against my much stronger opponent. If he makes a pointless move, I can exploit the horizontal pin with 18 ... h6 for instance. White, of course, has some tactical options of his own e.g. 18 Qe2 Rxe4 19 Qxe4 Qxg5 20 Qxb7 but it's rapidplay, remember!

18	Qh4?!	
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At a glance, I did not see any point to this move and, from inertia, played my planned move...

18	...	Bd2??
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As my hand left the piece, I suddenly saw the point. Rapidplay doesn't leave much time for a silent prayer!

19	Bxd2	
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Ouch! Had I played 18 ... h6, White has 19 Be3 rather than the full retreat to c1. After 19 ... Rxe4 20 dxe4

Qc5 21 Bxd4 Qxd4 22 c3, further exchanges on c3 would equalise material and Fritz believes the game is swinging my way.

The remainder of the game only deserves one second per move!

19	...	Rxe4
20	Qxe4	Rd8
21	Re1	g6
22	c4	Qf5
23	Qxf5	gxf5
24	Re7	b5
25	cxb5	Rc8
26	Bh6	f6
27	h4	Rc2?
28	Rg7+	Kh8
29	Rf7	Kg8?!
30	Rf8#	

*Andy Neville*

### Eye Opener

**Judit Polgar v Pavlina Chilingirova**  
Thessaloniki Olympiad; 23.11.1988

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	g6

Perhaps the most popular variation. Magnus Carlsen has scored a number of wins with it and it became the main battleground of his 2018 title match against Caruana.

4	0-0	Bg7
5	c3	e5
6	d4	exd4
7	cxd4	Nxd4
8	Nxd4	cxd4
9	e5	Ne7
10	Bg5	

White could regain the gambit pawn immediately with 10 Qxd4 but the doubled pawn will eventually fall. It cannot be defended by 10 ... Bxe5 11 Bxe7 and 12 Re1 or 10 ... Qb6 when 11 Na3 leaves Black with a problem developing his pieces and subject to a massive attack e.g. 11 ... Nc6 12 Nc4 Qc5 13 Nd6+ Kf8 14 f4 with Qd1-b3 to follow soon. Why not give Black the chance to go astray?

10	...	0-0
11	Qxd4	Nc6
12	Qh4	Qb6
13	Nc3	Bxe5
14	Rae1	Bxc3

Swapping off the Dragon bishop often spells disaster as Judit is happy to demonstrate.

15	bxc3	Qxb5
16	Qh6	Qf5

The other defence against 17 Bf6 fails i.e. 16 ... f6 17 Bxf6 Rxf6 18 Re8+ and 19 Qf8#.

17	Qxf8+	1-0
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