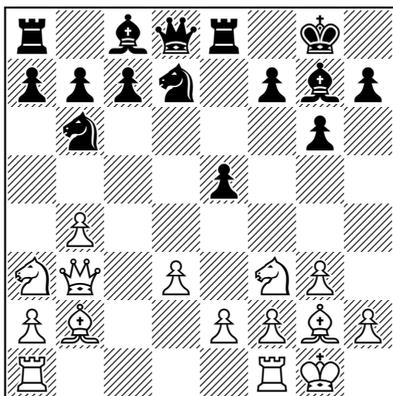


The 116th Scottish Championships

The City Chambers, Edinburgh

11th - 19th July

The 116th Scottish Championships held the strongest open event in the UK so far this year. Five Scottish GMs, two Indian GMs, two English GMs and a Slovakian GM made a formidable top ten seeds. 89 participants were to accustom themselves with the prestigious surroundings over the nine days. The tournament itself started just the way it was expected to; with Geoff Chandler trying to sell the complimentary sandwiches and snacks (which were very kindly donated by Edinburgh City council) to players and an Indian GM being first to finish, notching up a win within 15 moves. However some other GMs didn't have it all their own way with Arakhamia-Grant, Summerscale, Shaw and McNab all being held to draws. Meanwhile the eventual champion, FM Iain Gourlay started perfectly with a win over one of Scotland's top juniors:



Arbiter, Alex McFarlane ready to hit the town

○ FM Iain Gourlay (2349) [annotator]

● Daniel Rocks (2037)

In this position Black went astray with....

11...e4?!

Exchanging dark squared bishops is a positional concession since it weakens Black's kingside.

Black needs to solve the problem of his c8 bishop which means finding a square for the knight which is blocking its path, so I like 11...a5 trying to obtain the c5 square, after which Black is fine.

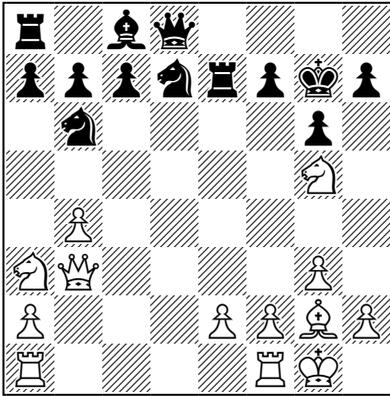
12. dxe4 ♖xe4?

12...♗xb2 13. ♙xb2 ♖xe4 leaves White with a pleasant position but

Black's move has a huge tactical flaw.

13. ♖xg7 ♔xg7 14. ♗g5 ♚e7

14...♗xg5 15. ♖xe4 is pretty hopeless for Black.



15. ♔xf7+!

White is clearly better after other moves but this is the most clear cut.

15...♗xf7 16. ♗e6+ ♔f6 17. ♗xd8 ♚e7 18. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 19. ♖xb7 ♗b8 20. ♖f3

Black is lost. My technique may not have been perfect from this point but I got there in the end!

20...♖a4 21. ♗ab1 ♖e5 22. ♔g2?

22. ♗fc1!

22...♗c3 23. ♗b2 c5 24. b5 a6?

24...♗xf3 25. ♔xf3 ♗eb7 26. ♗c1 ♗xb5 27. ♗xb5 ♗xb5 28. ♗xb5 ♗xb5 29. ♗c4 and White should win but blundering back a pawn was not the best way to go about it!

25. ♗c1 ♖a4 26. ♗bb1 ♖xf3 27. ♔xf3 ♗xb5 28. ♗xb5 ♗xb5 29. ♗xb5 ♗b7 30. ♗d6 ♗b2 31. ♗e4+ ♔e5 32. ♗xc5 ♗xa2 33. ♗xa4 ♗xa4 34. g4 ♔f6 35. ♔g3

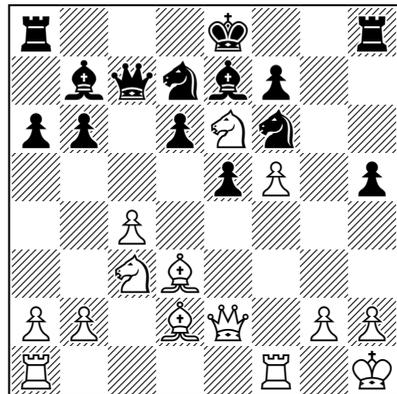
h5 36. ♗c6+ ♔f7 37. gxf5 gxf5 38. ♗h6 1-0

The accelerated pairings continued to give some fantastic games at the top end. Indeed round two saw all of the top 23 boards being decisive with GM Rowson, GM Prasad, GM Marikos, GM Motwani, GM Panchanathan, GM Hebden, FM Morrison and FM Kjartansson the only few remaining on a 100% score. Round three brought two of the best games of the championships on the top two boards. In the following game, Panchanathan sacrificing a knight followed by his queen (!) to overcome the Scotland number one, Jonathan Rowson.

○ GM Magesh Panchanathan (2493)

● GM Jonathan Rowson (2591)

1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 a6 5. ♖d3 ♖c5 6. ♗b3 ♖e7 7. O-O d6 8. c4 ♗f6 9. ♗c3 b6 10. f4 ♗bd7 11. ♔e2 ♖b7 12. ♔h1 ♗c7 13. ♖d2 h5 14. ♗d4 g6 15. f5 gxf5 16. exf5 e5 17. ♗e6!



17...fxe6 18. fxe6 ♗f8