

# Scottish Chess

Issue 297

December 2021



**Freddy Gordon: A spectacular European Team Championship debut!**

**PLUS: Northumbria Masters – Team Alba in 4NCL Action – Book Corner – Celtic Nations – Results roundup and more!**



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## Scottish Chess Magazine

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Cover photo: Freddy Gordon pictured on his adult international debut at the European Team Championship (photo courtesy of ETCC)

## Welcome! December 2021

It's that time of the year again chess friends—the Christmas and holiday season hopefully no less festive given the ongoing difficult circumstances everyone is facing.

Live chess has thankfully put in an appearance or two over the last few months, which allows us to bring you some excellent content involving Scottish players, even if actual events on home soil have been relatively absent.

This bumper issue includes our Euro championship team reporting back from Slovenia, our 4NCL regulars battling cold and Covid-19 in Milton Keynes, and our top juniors facing their Celtic brethren and sistren online.

Chess Scotland and all involved with the SC mag wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year when it arrives!



Andrew Burnett *Editor*

## Contents



The biennial **European Team Championships** has been a traditionally tough tournament for Scotland, given the absence of relatively weak teams. How would our team fare this time around? Read all about it in our report starting on page 5, with games annotated by the players.



It was back to live chess for Team Alba after a year and a half of online 4NCL. A new venue but a side full of familiar faces saw them attempt to navigate tricky round 1 and 2 match-ups in what is basically the British chess league. Annotated games and photos tell the tale.

Plus... Hamish Olson at the Northumbria Masters Open – Scotland's juniors take on their Celtic Nations counterparts – Our resident expert checks out the latest book releases – Games galore!

Tadej Sakelšek  
Marko Tratar

# DEFENSIVE TOOLS

*A tournament  
player's manual*





When I first saw the regulations for the European Team Championships in the summer of 2021, I had little interest in playing, writes new CS International Director, [FM Alan Tate](#).

And I did not intend to, but somehow I wanted to make sure that we sent a team. So, I organised everything and went through a rather painstaking process to get (Chess Scotland's largest-ever) funding from FIDE.

However, due to some withdrawals [including your editor, unfortunately] I ended up in the position where I had to play (and I'm glad it worked out like this!) to make up the numbers. The selections were a lot messier than I would have liked, but considering that I had zero experience selecting or International Directoring, combined with the fact that no one had played OTB for a couple

of years and that we had a rapidly improving junior that had only played online, I think I did alright? During this whole process of around 5 weeks, I somehow fell into the International Director role, which I must admit has really helped to give me a new focus and direction in both my own and others' chess.

Getting there was obviously a bit trickier than normal. Packing, and even just getting to the airport was extremely weird with all the uncertainty surrounding vaccine passports etc. Then there was a 2 hour wait at the Slovenian border (we flew to Zagreb) before finally arriving at the resort in Terme Catez.

As usual of course, the next day when you wake up after travelling everything is fine (edit by other self: that's a complete lie - normally you feel really drained and have to go to the supermarket and then make breakfast?), and going downstairs to find prepared breakfast was very much welcomed at this moment (no trips to the supermarket needed as per my usual tournaments).

And there were the swimming pools. Terme Catez is a large resort

aimed at families during warmer months, so this would make it an attractive proposition for the tournament organisers and complex to use during off-season. It was a lovely place to play chess. There were so many different-coloured leaves of trees that I had never seen before, and there were leaves all over the ground. The air was very fresh and didn't feel cold at all, probably due to me being Scottish and the lack of wind there. The skies were often very clear at night and you could see the stars during evening walks.

The tournament hall was spacious and bright, and every day the metal detector would beep at Freddy's zip and they would search him and he would pull out a plastic bag or something similar. Freddy by the way was (probably) the youngest ever competitor at the European Team Championships, and (possibly) the (joint?) highest-ever scorer for Scotland (I really don't feel like researching this so if you do, then write in and let us know!).





He was a real natural competitor and provided the team with some much-needed enthusiasm, as well as giving us some points and the odd video interview. Graham also had a



decent tournament, scoring a good win against a GM in round 1 (see annotated game below).

The rest of us had tournaments to forget results-wise. Personally, though, I had a great time - the added responsibility of being captain really helped me to look at the

bigger picture of team performance and also to try to help other players if they wanted it. And when you are captain, you need to stay upbeat for everyone else, so there was no feeling sorry for myself after a difficult start. I enjoyed every moment and it was a privilege to captain the Scotland squad.

Round 1 on 2021/11/12 at 15.00								
Bo.	18	 Denmark	Rtg	-	37	 Scotland	Rtg	3 : 1
18.1	GM	 Andersen, Mads	2575	-	FM	 Tate, Alan	2342	1 - 0
18.2	GM	 Thybo, Jesper Sondergaard	2604	-	CM	 Bremner, Adam	2204	1 - 0
18.3	GM	 Rasmussen, Allan Stig	2577	-	IM	 Muir, Andrew J	2254	1 - 0
18.4	GM	 Hansen, Sune Berg	2543	-	FM	 Morrison, Graham	2251	0 - 1

 Morrison, Graham (FM 2251)

 Hansen, Sune Berg (GM 2543)

2021 ETCC (1)

My first game for 2 years (since the European Team Championship in 2019) was against the formidable GM Sune Berg Hansen.

Prep against him was quite a challenge since he seemed to play everything! So, I limited myself to playing through a lot of his games from the past 2-3 years.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 a6!?

Aha. Carlsen has played this which is why it has become quite popular in the last few years

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.♙g5 ♙e6! 7.e3



7. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 8. ♜b3 ♜a7! 9. ♘xd5 ♜d8 10. e4 c6 11. ♜b6 cxd5! 12. ♜xa7 ♖b4+ 13. ♚d1 dxe4 14. ♜xb7 0-0! (14...exf3 15. ♜xb4 0-1 (31) Srihari,L (2302)-Gholami,A (2541) New Delhi 2020)



7... ♘bd7 8. ♖d3 ♖d6 9. 0-0 c6 10. ♖f4! Putting the question to Black's dark-square bishop.



12.h3 Stopping ... ♖g4 and "threatening" ♘g5 getting Black's bishop.

Two recent games by Sune Berg Hansen had gone (and I played them over in my prep): 12. ♜c2 h6 13. ♜ac1 0-0 14. ♘a4 (14.a3 ♜fe8 15. ♜fe1 ♜e7 16. ♘a4 ♘e4= (16... ♜ae8? 17. b4± (17. ♘c5? ♘xc5= 18. ♜xc5 ♜b8 19. b4 ♘d7 20. ♜c2 ♜d6 ½-½ (69) Teplyi,I (2412)-Hansen,S (2580) Denmark 2017) 14... ♜fe8 15. b4 (15. ♘c5?! ♘xc5= 16. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 17. ♜xc5 a5 18. ♘e5 ♜a7 19. ♜fc1 ♜ea8 20. f3 ♘e8 0-1 (40) Johansson,L (2476)-Hansen,S (2528) Lund 2021) 15...a5 16. b5±

10... ♜c7 10... ♖xf4?! is the wrong idea: 11.exf4 threatens to win the bishop by f5 11...g6 (11... ♖g4 12. ♜e1+ ♜e7 13. ♘e5±; 11... ♘b6 12. f5 ♖c8 13. ♜e1+±) 12. ♜c2 ♘h5 13. f5±; 10... ♖e7?! leaves White's f4-bishop in charge after 11.h3± saving the bishop from ... ♘h5.

11. ♖xd6 ♜xd6

See diagram next column

12...h6 12...0-0!? seems slightly preferable (as played by Carlsen) since the "threat" of 13. ♘g5 doesn't seem to lead to much:

13...h6 14.♗xe6 ♖xe6=

13.♖c2 0-0 13...g5?! 14.b4± ♖g8  
15.a4± (15.e4? dxe4= 1-0 (33)  
Kazhgaleyev,M (2577)-Kostenko,P  
(2435) Almaty 2018) ; 13...0-0-0?  
14.b4!+

I had a clear memory (from Sune Berg's 2 games above) that White needed to have his pawn on b4 before playing Na4-c5 so that he could recapture with the b-pawn. So:



14.b4?!N 14.♖fc1± ♖fe8 15.♗a4  
♗e4 16.♙xe4 dxe4 17.♗d2 ♙d5  
18.♗c5 ♗xc5 19.♖xc5 ♖g6  
20.♗f1 f5 1-0 (69) Sjugirov,S  
(2675)-Cardoso Cardoso,J (2414)  
Chess.com INT 2020; 14.♖ac1±  
a5 15.♗a4 ♖fc8 16.a3 b6 17.♗c3  
♖ab8 18.♖fd1 c5 19.♙b5 ♗f8 20.  
♙a6 ♖d8 1-0 (60) Sjugirov,S  
(2661)-Kovalenko,I (2643)

Chess.com INT 2021; 14.♗a4±  
♖fe8 15.♗c5 ♗xc5 16.dxc5 ♖c7  
17.♗d4 a5 18.♖fd1 ♗d7 19.♖ac1  
♗f8 20.♖e1 ♖ad8 1-0 (64) Tabat-  
abaei,M (2635)-Li,D (2543) Sitges  
2019

14...♖fe8?! Unfortunately, 14.b4 is  
not a splendid novelty because of  
14...b5!= 15.♖fb1 ♗b6 16.a4  
♗c4=; 14...♖xb4?! 15.♖ab1 ♖a5  
16.♖xb7 c5 17.♖a4!? ♖xc3  
(17...♖xa4 18.♗xa4±) 18.♖b3  
♗b6 19.♖a3 ♗c4 20.♙xc4 ♖xc4  
21.♖c1 ♖b5 22.♖xb5 axb5  
23.♖b2 c4 24.♗e5±

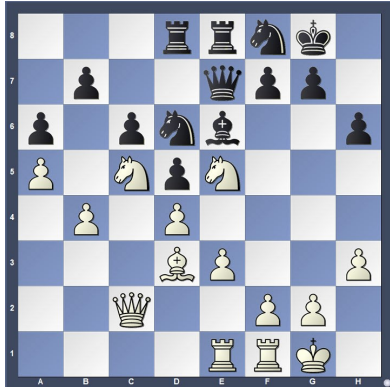
15.♖ab1?! 15.♖fc1±; 15.♗a4?!  
a5=; 15.♖fb1?! b5 16.a4 ♗b6=

15...♗b6?N Still the idea of  
15...b5!= is correct. For example:  
16.a4 ♗b6 17.♗d2=

16.a4± ♗fd7 17.a5 ♗c8 18.♗a4  
♖e7 19.♗c5 Exactly as I had  
wanted!

19...♗f8 20.♗e5 ♗d6 21.♖be1  
Getting ready for f4 and g4 and a  
big push on the kingside.

21...♖ad8!? Hmm, putting the  
rook on a vulnerable square,  
tempting White into tactics.



Ok, White is now a bishop down but he has 2 clear targets:

1. The black king is forever weak with White wreaking havoc if he gets his rook(s) or queen in (with h4/g5 or e4).

2. The e6-square is weak and the rooks are vulnerable to Ne6 & fxe6 if Black's queen goes on a wander.

22.f4 Not getting side-tracked by the tactics. White could consider 22.♙xa6?! bxa6± 23.♘xc6 ♖f6 24.♘xd8 ♖xd8 25.♘xa6 ♙f5 26.♙a2 (26.♗b3?! ♜e6= 27.♗xd5 ♜g6 28.♘c5 ♙xh3 29.g3) 26...♙d3 27.♘c5±

22...♙c8 23.g4 f6 24.♘g6 24.♘f3! was also strong.

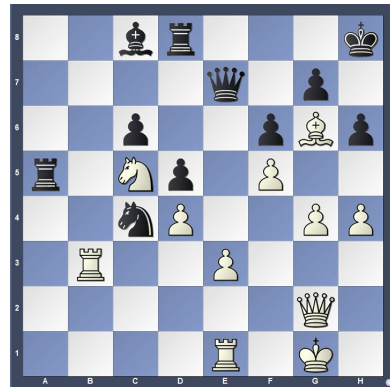
24...♘g6 25.♙xg6 ♜f8 26.f5!?

This was my idea.

26...♖c7 27.♔g2 b6 28.axb6 ♗xb6 29.♗a4 ♖c7 30.♗a2 ♔h8 31.h4 ♖e7 32.♖c2 ♖c7 33.♗f2?! 33.♗f2+- is the right idea, followed by ♗f4 or ♗g3 reminding Black of g5 threats.

33...a5!± Getting rid of a weakness.

34.♗a4 axb4 35.♗xb4 ♖e7 36.♗b1 ♙d7 37.♗b2 ♜a8 38.♗b3 ♙c8 39.♖c2 ♜a5 40.♔g1 ♙d8 41.♖g2 ♘c4





42. ♖d3?! Too timid. True, Black the pawn on c6) and ♖e5 maybe threatened ...♞xc5, but White should have allowed it.

42. ♗g3!± supports g5 and ♞b8.

42... ♗a7± 43. ♗g3 ♖d6 44. ♖c5

♞a2 45. ♞eb1 ♖b5? Stops ♞b8, but the knight and queen are now very far away on the queenside and neglect the king.

45... ♖c4± (threatening ...♖d2) keeps thing under control

46. g5!+- fxg5 47. hxg5 with the deadly threat of ♗f4.

47... ♗e7



48. ♗f4? Oops.

The nice move 48. ♖d3!+- wins straightaway. The twin threats of ♖b4 (hitting the rook on a2 and

Proof: 48... ♖d6

a) 48... ♞a6 49. ♖e5 ♞f8 (49... ♖d6 50. ♞b8 ♞f8 (50... ♗xg5 51. ♗xg5 hxg5 52. ♞c1+-) 51. f6 gxf6 52. gxf6 ♞xf6 (52... ♗xf6 53. ♖d3 ♞g8 54. ♖g6+-) 53. ♖f7+ ♞xf7 54. ♖xf7+-);

b) 48... ♞f8 49. ♖e5 ♗xg5 (49... ♖d6 50. ♞b8 ♖xf5 (50... ♖e4 51. f6 gxf6 52. gxf6 ♖xf6 (52... ♗xf6 53. ♖xc4 ♗f2+ 54. ♗xf2 ♞axf2 55. ♖g6+ +-) 53. ♖f7+ ♞xf7 54. ♞xc8+ +-) 51. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 52. ♗f4 ♖xb1 53. ♞xf8+ ♖h7 54. g6+ ♖xg6 55. ♞h8+ ♖xh8 56. ♖xg6+ +-) 50. ♗xg5 hxg5 51. ♖xc6 ♖d6 52. ♞b8+-;

49. ♖b4 ♞f8

a) 49... ♖e4 50. f6+-;

b) 49... ♞a6 50. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 51. ♞b8 ♖c8 52. ♞1b6 ♖e4 (52... ♖b7 53. f6 gxf6 54. gxf6 ♗xf6 55. ♗e5 ♗xe5 56. ♞xd8+-; 52... ♗d7 53. gxf6 gxf6 54. ♗h4 ♖g7 55. ♞b2 ♖e4 56. ♞h2 ♞h8 57. ♞xc8! ♞xc8

58. ♖xh6+ ♔f6 59. ♕e8+ +-) 53.f6 wins the rook, or forces Black to open the f-file.

50.gxh6 gxh6 51. ♖e5+ +- 50... ♕xe6 51.fxe6 ♖f6 52. ♕f7+ ♔f8 52... ♔h7 53. ♖h5+ ♖h6

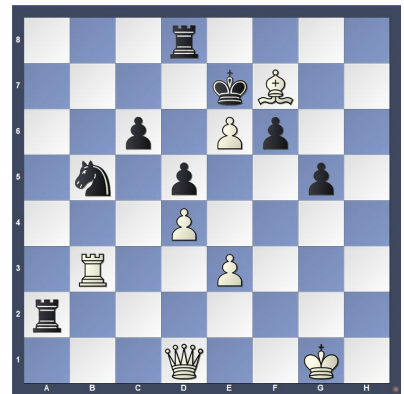
48...hxg5? Looks suicidal. Remember point 1 above. 54.e7+-

53. ♖f1 ♔e7 giving up the queen He really needs to get queens off and hope for the best. Luckily, he can cleverly defend with his rook: of our moves!

48... ♖xg5+!± 49. ♖xg5 hxg5 50. ♔e6 (50. ♖c1 ♖g8 51. ♔d3 ♔d6 52.e4 (threat Nb4) 52...g4! 53. ♔e5 ♔g8 55.e7 ♖e8!? 56. ♖xb5! cxb5 (53. ♔b4 ♖d2 54. ♔xc6 dxe4 57. ♖f8+ ♖xf8 58.exf8 ♖+ ♔xf8 55. ♔e7 ♖f8 56. ♖c5 (threat f6) 59. ♖c8+ ♔e7 60. ♖c7+ ♔e6 56... ♖d8! is also complicated but equal) 53... ♖f8 is complicated but equal) 50... ♖d6! 51. ♔xg5 ♖f6! 52. ♖f1± ♕d7 53.e4 dxe4 54. ♔xe4 ♖f8 54. ♖xf6 55. ♖d1!?

54. ♖xf6 55. ♖d1!?

49. ♖g4!+- ♔g8 49... ♖f6 50. ♖h5+ ♔g8 51. ♖f1 ♔f8 (51... ♔xd4 52.exd4 ♖xd4+ 53. ♔h1 ♖xc5 54. ♖h7+ ♔f8 55. ♖h8+ ♔e7 56. ♖e1+-) 52. ♔e6+ ♔e7 53. ♔xd8 ♔xd8 54. ♖h8+ ♔c7 55. ♖xb5 cxb5 56. ♖c1+-



50. ♔e6! Remember point 2 above. Solid - I was just focused on not blundering!

This now either traps the king, 55... ♖da8 56. ♖c1 ♔d6 57. ♖b2

♖a1 58.♖b1 ♖1a7 59.♙c5 f5  
 60.♙xc6 ♖c8 61.♙xd5 ♖c2  
 62.e4! ♖aa2 63.exf5 ♖c4 64.f6+  
 ♔xf6 65.♖f1+

1-0

Round 2 on 2021/11/13 at 15.00						
Bo.	29	 Montenegro	Rtg - 37	 Scotland	Rtg	3½: ½
19.1	GM	<input type="checkbox"/> Djukic, Nikola	2519 - FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tate, Alan	2342	1 - 0
19.2	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Draskovic, Luka	2469 - CM	<input type="checkbox"/> Bremner, Adam	2204	1 - 0
19.3	GM	<input type="checkbox"/> Blagojevic, Dragisa	2467 - FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morrison, Graham	2251	1 - 0
19.4	GM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nikcevic, Nebojsa	2385 -	<input type="checkbox"/> Gordon, Frederick	1739	½ - ½

**Alan Tate writes:** Balance is important in life and chess. Before this tournament, the last FIDE rated game I had played was the same event 2 years previously in Batumi. There were a few online tournaments such as the Online Olympiad which were a lot of fun but didn't have the same level of tension as OTB chess. The last OTB tournament of any kind I had played was Blackpool which happened basically at the beginning of lockdown in 2020.

When lockdown happened my life changed significantly. Like many others in new relationships at this time, my partner and I decided to

move in together earlier than usual. Chess had been my only focus for so long (in a very lazy way, I might add) and having a new meaning in life provided a massive relief from the stress and loneliness of studying and travelling abroad alone. Nature all of a sudden seemed far more appealing than before. I practically stopped drinking.

I took up hobbies such as running, cooking, cycling and hillwalking. A former insomniac, my sleep improved immensely and I can say now that I have had zero all-nighters in the last 1.5 years. I quit my ridiculous online blitz addiction (yes, it really can be an addiction)

tion). Optimism replaced pessimism and I now felt a sense of purpose. I know what you are thinking: This isn't a very good advert for chess! Well, I will just say that balance in life is so important. Chess is a wonderful game but it needs to be balanced with other things, preferably physical activities. And having people who support you and encourage you is ultra-important.

ment was simply far too early for the new me, although without it I never would have started training, so it was necessary.

I don't care about the rating - I could get this back just by playing at my previous mediocre level, but I intend to give it a real shot this time. Chess is so much more enjoyable when you play well.

Playing the Euro Teams would mean some serious work. I would need to refresh all those opening lines for a start (I didn't get close, by the way). I began training calculation and positional exercises. Much more rewarding than online blitz games. It's hard to beat the feeling of being in the zone when training, actually. However, there was only a month to train and my main issue - decision-making - was not really addressed (procrastinated until next time?!).

The following round 2 encounter is such a rich game that involved non-stop calculation so I am offering it as a training exercise. It is already set up so that the critical moments need solving, however if you are using Chessbase you can click Replay Training and try to think at each move.

♣ Djukic, Nikola (2519)

♣ Tate, Alan (2342)

2021 ETCC (2)

At the tournament I played quite well at points but my time management was horrendous and I had too many pointless long thinks. Additionally, my nerves were not at all used to playing on increment - something that a frequent tournament player is used to. This tournament

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♙c5 5.♙g5 An unusual line that their captain Ivan Sokolov (whose seminar I had attended recently as part of the FIDE Trainer course) had shown to my opponent.





9.d4N 9.0-0 ♔g4 10.h3 ♕h5 11. ♖a4 ♘d7 12.c3 ♗f6 13.d4 ♕xf3 14.♗xf3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 0-1 (41) Bartel,M (2653)-Goganov,A (2600) Gjakova 2016

9...exd4 9...♕b4 10.0-0 ♕xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xe4 12.dxe5 ♘xg3 13.hxg3 0-0 is playable and maybe best but I was simply too scared to evaluate this position.

I thought for 45 minutes here which is just not needed. There are many decent ways for Black to play.

10.♘xd4 ♕d7 11.♕xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 h5 Hoping for ...h4.

5...h6 6.♕h4 ♗e7 0.56/21 6...♘e7= -0.08/24 7.♘xe5 (7.♕xf6 gxf6 8.d4 exd4 9.0-0 This is too weird to play without prep.) 7...♕d4

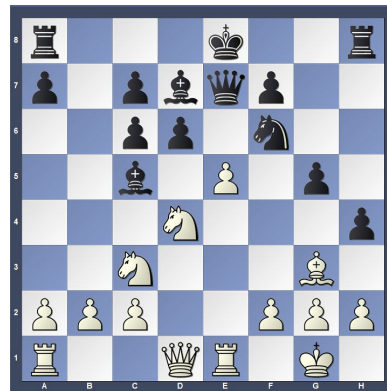
13.e5! Threatens to win with Re1.

13...h4 13...dxe5 14.♕xe5

14.♞e1

7.♘c3± g5 8.♕g3 White is slightly better.

8...d6



I had missed this but the calculation training I had been doing using Jacob's books was still fairly



fresh in my mind so I just kept calculating and searching for moves.  
 What's the move? -0.10/24

Double Attack

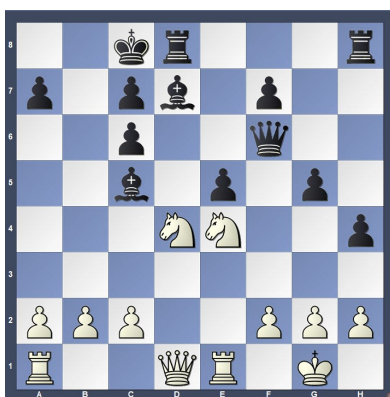
14...0-0-0!= 15.exf6 ♖xf6 15.♖e2+ (15.♖e1+ ♜f8) 15...♜d8 (15...♜f8 16.♘e4 ♖xd4 19.♘xd7 ♖xd7= ♖xd4 17.♖ad1+-) 16.♘e4 ♖xd4 17.♖ad1 ♖b4 18.a3 ♖b6 19.b4 ♙xb4 20.♙e5 ♖e8 21.♙f6+ ♜c8 This is a total computer generated mess.

17...♖e7 17...♖f4 Would have been a more practical option but I didn't even consider it 18.♘xc5 ♖xd4 19.♘xd7 ♖xd7= 18.♘xc5 ♖xc5 19.♘b3 ♖b6 20.♖xe5 ♙e6 20...g4! 21.♘c5 (21.♖e2 g3) 21...f6!

14...0-0-0!= 15.exf6 ♖xf6



16.♙e5 dxе5 17.♘e4



21.♖e2



21...♖d5 0.55/28

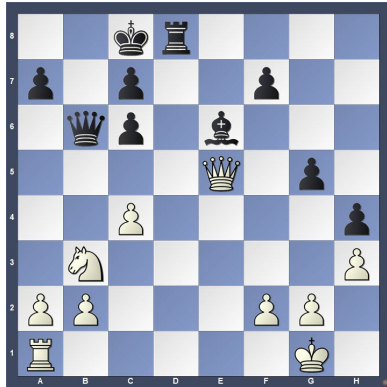
21...g4!= 0.00/29 22.♘c5 g3∞

22.c4± ♖xe5 23.♖xe5

Double Attack

23...♖d8

See diagram next column



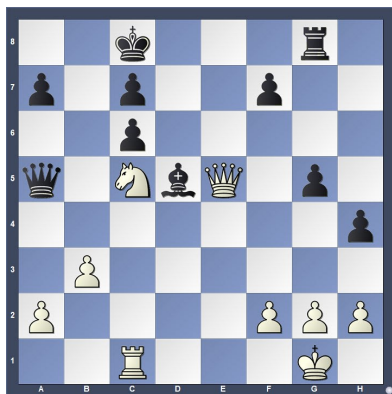
24.  $\text{d}c5$   $\text{xc}4=$  25.  $b3$   $\text{d}d5$   
 26.  $\text{we}8+$   $\text{d}d8$  27.  $\text{we}7$   $\text{d}d5$   
 0.94/25 (27... $\text{d}d5!=0.00/29$ )

28.  $\text{c}c1!\pm$  White has strong compensation.

28... $\text{g}g8?$  2.89/25 (28... $\text{w}b4\pm$   
 1.07/28 29.  $\text{wx}g5$   $\text{w}d4$ )

29.  $\text{we}5?$  0.96/28 (29.  $h3+-$  and  
 White stays clearly on top. 2.89/25)

29... $\text{w}a5$



30.  $\text{wf}5+$  -0.13/27 (30.  $b4!\pm$   
 0.76/25  $\text{wa}3$  31.  $\text{ce}1$ )

30... $\text{de}6$  0.75/24 (30... $\text{cb}8=-$   
 0.13/27)

31.  $\text{we}4$  0.00/31 (31.  $\text{wc}2!\pm$   
 0.75/24)

31... $\text{d}d5$  32.  $\text{wg}4+\rightarrow$  White is up  
 to no good.

32... $\text{cb}8$  33.  $\text{we}2$  (33.  $h3=0.00/37$   
 0.94/25 (27... $\text{d}d5!=0.00/29$ )

33... $\text{d}d8$  0.46/22 (Black should  
 try 33... $g4!-0.83/26$ )

34.  $\text{we}7$  0.00/28 (34.  $h3!\pm 0.46/22$ )

34... $\text{g}g8=$  35.  $a4$   $h3??$  8.62/22  
 (35... $\text{ca}8=0.00/34$ ; 35... $\text{wd}2$  36.  
 $\text{ca}6+$   $\text{cb}7$  37.  $\text{wxc}7+$   $\text{ca}8$  38.  $\text{ef}1$   
 $h3\neq$ )

36.  $b4$





and Black resigned in view of the knight fork on either a6 or d7, picking up the black queen.

1-0

Freddy Gordon's adult debut for Scotland came in round 2 and he faced the experienced Montenegrin GM, Nebojsa Nikcevic. I [your editor] have given some light notes to the game.

♣ Gordon, Frederick (1739)

♣ Nikcevic, Nebojsa (2385) B06

2021 ETCC (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♙xd5 5.d4 ♘g7 6.♘a3 cxd4 7.♘b5 ♘a6 8.♘bxd4 ♘f6



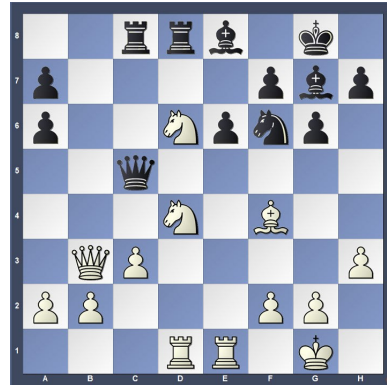
9.♙b5+ Freddy follows the natural move and the engine's preference (Stockfish 14) although Nakamura had recently played the alternative 9.♙e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♜d8 11.♞e1 ♘c5 12.♙f1 ♘e6 13.♞e2 ♘h5 14.♙e3 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 e5 16.♘b5 ♞e4 17.♘c7 ♙d7 18.♘xa8 ♞xa8 19.♞ad1 ♙c6 20.♞d2 ♞f5 21.f3 ♘f6 22.♙h6 ♙h8 23.♙d3 e4 24.♙xe4 ♙xe4 25.♞d8+ 1-0 (25)

9...♙d7 10.♙xa6 bxa6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞e1



12...e6?! A slightly passive choice from the GM. Better was 12...♞fe8 when 13.♘e5 ♞ac8 14.h3 a5 makes more sense of his forces.

13.h3 ♖ac8N Predecessor:  
 13...♗b7 14.c4 ♜ac8 15.♗b3 ♗b6  
 16.♙f4 ♘h5 17.♙h2 ♙xd4  
 18.♘xd4 ♗xd4 19.♞ad1 ♗xc4  
 20.♗xc4 ♞xc4 21.♞xd7 ♘f6  
 22.♞xa7 ♞c6 23.g4 ♘d5 24.♞e4 f5  
 25.gxf5 gxf5 26.♞h4 ♞f7 27.♞a8+  
 ♞f8 28.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 29.♙e5 ♙g8  
 30.♞a4 ♙f7 31.♙g2 ♙g6 32.♙g3  
 1/2-1/2 (32) Thompson,B (2308) -  
 Carr,T (2347) ICCF email 2016



14.♙f4 ♗b7 15.♗b3 ♗b6  
 16.♘e5 ♞fd8



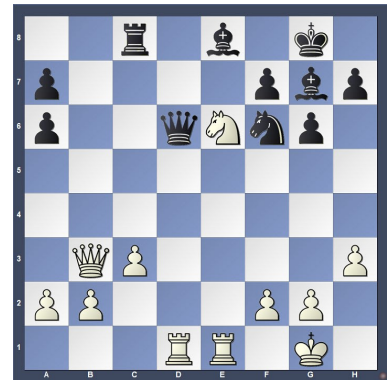
17.♞ad1 Simple chess, although  
 17.♘c4 ♗xb3 18.axb3 would per-  
 haps have developed the rook a lit-  
 tle more effectively.

17...♙e8 18.♘c4 ♗c5 19.♘d6!?

See diagram next column

While watching this game live I was shocked not just at the audacity of young Freddy playing this against his GM opponent but at the confidence it shows in his own ability. I imagine Nikcevic was feeling just a bit uncomfortable around here.

19...♞xd6 20.♙xd6 ♗xd6  
 21.♘xe6

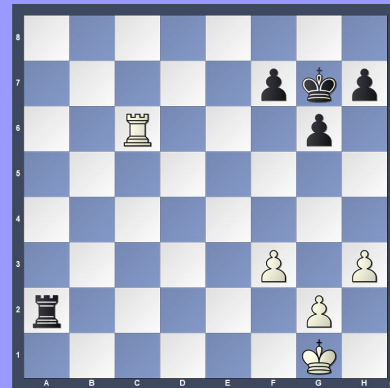
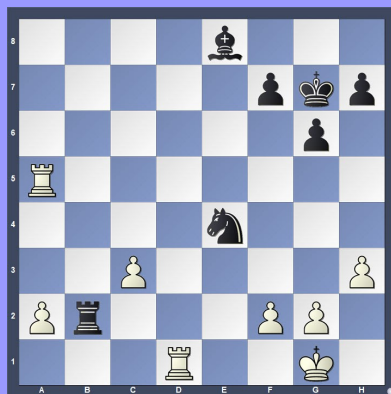


This the point behind Freddy's pre-  
 vious play; he gets an extra pawn  
 and activates his rooks quickly.

21...♖b8 22.♘xg7 ♔xg7 23.♞e7 27.♞e1 ♔c6 28.f3 ♘xc3 29.♞c5  
 a5 24.♙xb8 ♞xb8 25.♞xa7 ♘e2+ 30.♞xe2 ♞xe2 31.♞xc6  
 ♞xa2

25.♞d2 doesn't really offer White anything.

25...♞xb2 26.♞xa5 ♘e4



½-½

White now has to be careful that he doesn't fall into a worse position. An amazing debut by one of the biggest talents Scotland has had for a long time. Freddy confidently steers the game into a dead drawn position.

Round 3 on 2021/11/14 at 15.00								
Bo.	37	Scotland	Rtg	-	36	Kosovo	Rtg	1 : 3
19.1	FM	♖ Tate, Alan	2342	-	IM	♜ Saraci, Nderim	2486	0 - 1
19.2	IM	♜ Muir, Andrew J	2254	-	FM	♖ Uruci, Endrit	2322	½ - ½
19.3	FM	♖ Morrison, Graham	2251	-	FM	♜ Fejzullahu, Afrim	2250	½ - ½
19.4		♜ Gordon, Frederick	1739	-		♖ Saraci, Korab	2149	0 - 1



The clash with Kosovo is always a close-fought battle but unfortunately this time we came off second best. Solid draws for Andy Muir and Graham Morrison in the middle of the batting order weren't enough to prevent a 3-1 loss and meant we would most likely have the bye in round 4, and so it proved.

Round 5 on 2021/11/16 at 15.00						
Bo.	37	 Scotland	Rtg -	38	 Ireland	Rtg 2 : 2
19.1	CM	<input type="checkbox"/> Bremner, Adam	2204 -	FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kanyamarala, Tarun	2321 0 - 1
19.2	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muir, Andrew J	2254 -	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Jessel, Stephen	2297 ½ - ½
19.3	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Morrison, Graham	2251 -		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nemeth, Zalan	2163 ½ - ½
19.4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gordon, Frederick	1739 -	WIM	<input type="checkbox"/> Kanyamarala, Trisha	2089 1 - 0

The tussle of the three Celtic nations was always likely to decide who got the wooden spoon, and a result against Ireland would stand us in good stead.

Adam narrowly missed out on holding the draw in his board one debut against the talented Kanyamarala, while Freddy struck

again with a fine win against Tarun's sister, Trisha, on board 4. Graham missed a good chance to be much better in his draw on board 3, whereas Andy had to defend until move 91 to complete the 2-2 match draw. Not a bad result, but one that on another day could easily have gone our way.

Round 6 on 2021/11/18 at 15.00						
Bo.	39	 Wales	Rtg -	37	 Scotland	Rtg 2 : 2
19.1	FM	<input type="checkbox"/> Toczek, Grzegorz	2296 -	FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tate, Alan	2342 1 - 0
19.2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pleasants, Allan J	2001 -	CM	<input type="checkbox"/> Bremner, Adam	2204 ½ - ½
19.3		<input type="checkbox"/> Garcia, Jason	2028 -	IM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Muir, Andrew J	2254 ½ - ½
19.4		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Davis, Lee	1972 -		<input type="checkbox"/> Gordon, Frederick	1739 0 - 1

Next up was the crucial match against Wales, and once again it was young Freddy to the fore, putting a full point on the scoreboard with the following excellent win, with notes by Freddy.

 Gordon, Freddy (1753)

Davis, Lee (1958) B11

ETCC 2021 (6)

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♗g4  
 4.h3 ♗xf3 5.♖xf3 e6 6.♗e2 ♘d7  
 7.d4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘gf6 9.0-0  
 ♘xe4 10.♖xe4 ♘f6 11.♖d3



11...Qc7 This was point where we left my theory. I am used to 11...Qd6 which I think is more active.

12.c3 I wanted my pawns on dark squares because he can't attack the light squares easily.

12...0-0 13.Qf4 I am trying to limit Black's options.

13...Qd6 14.Qg5 h6 15.Qh4 I'm now happy that c3 has made some space for my white-squared bishop.

15...Qc7 He goes back again, and I think in the time taken my position has improved.

16.f4

The engine gives this as only = but I think it looks a bit scarier.

16...Qd5 17.Qg3 Qd6 18.c4 I'm trying to gain some space.

18...Qf6 19.Qh4 Qc7 A lot of moving of that bishop!

20.f5 Qd7



See diagram next column

I was happy to see this.



This brings out his queen, but it is going to be exposed!

29. ♖d2 ♔h7 30. ♖f5 when 30... ♗d6 is met by 31. ♖h5!

21. fxe6 ♕xe6 22. ♖ae1 ♖d7 23. ♗g4 This position was extremely good for me because his rooks are not active.

23... ♖d8 24. ♗d1 I'm getting my bishop ready to get behind my queen.



24... ♗d5 25. ♗c2 g6 26. ♖e6

29. ♖e3













I was very happy to find this move! He can't take because it's mate in 2.

The knight and pawn are vulnerable, and there's no way to defend them both.

26... ♖e8 27. ♖xe7 Now I've got all my pieces in the attack, working together nicely, particularly the bishops.


1-0

27... ♗xe7 28. ♗f6 ♖d7 There is a variation if 28... ♗c8 instead:

Round 7 on 2021/11/19 at 15.00							
Bo.	37	 Scotland	Rtg -	33	 North Macedonia	Rtg	1½:2½
18.1	FM	 Tate, Alan	2342	-	IM	 Pancevski, Filip	2490 ½ - ½
18.2	CM	 Bremner, Adam	2204	-	IM	 Nikolovski, Nikola	2401 ½ - ½
18.3	FM	 Morrison, Graham	2251	-	IM	 Lazov, Toni	2393 ½ - ½
18.4		 Gordon, Frederick	1739	-		 Mihov, Filip	2255 0 - 1

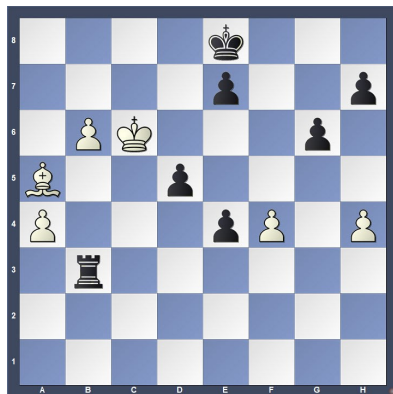
This scoreline could so easily have been for us rather than against us, although the entire match consisted of topsy-turvey games that were impossible to predict from the side-lines.

Freddy was under pressure the entire game, but was suddenly handed a golden opportunity in the following position...

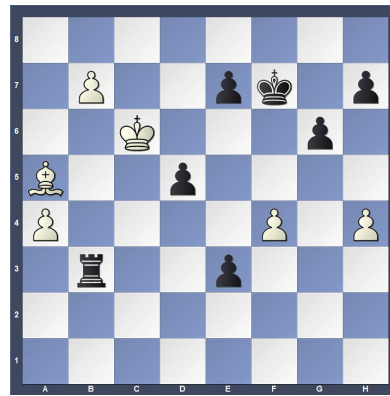
 Mihov, Filip (2255)

 Gordon, Frederick (1739)

ETCC 2021 (7)



Freddy's move 51...d4 fails to spot the flaw in White's plan. Instead, after 51...e3! 52.b7 ♖f7



Black is winning because White no longer queens with check in the line 53.♙b6 ♖xb6+ 54.♙xb6 e2 55.b8♙ e1♙.

The game finished 52.b7 d3 53.♙d2 ♖d8 54.♙a5+ ♖e8 55.♙d2 ♖d8 56.a5 ♖b2 57.a6 ♖c2+ 58.♙b6 ♖b2+ 59.♙c6 ♖c2+ 60.♙b6 ♖b2+ 61.♙a7 e3 62.♙xe3 ♖c7 63.♙d2

1-0

A tough tournament finished with a couple of hard losses, as seen below, but the players fought well against very strong opposition.

Unlike the Olympiad, the European Team Championship doesn't offer any weak teams against whom you can hope to recover, and the

final result of 38th position out of 39 teams, when seeded 37th, was by no means a disaster.

For Freddy, and by extension Scotland, it was a success and perhaps there will be more junior involvement in our adult international teams going forward.

Round 8 on 2021/11/20 at 15.00								
Bo.		Scotland	Rtg	-	32	Albania	Rtg	½ : 3½
18.1	FM	☐ Tate, Alan	2342	-	IM	■ Mehmeti, Dritan	2391	½ - ½
18.2	CM	■ Bremner, Adam	2204	-	IM	☐ Pasko, Llambi	2417	0 - 1
18.3	IM	☐ Muir, Andrew J	2254	-	IM	■ Ashiku, Franc	2419	0 - 1
18.4	FM	■ Morrison, Graham	2251	-	IM	☐ Seitaj, Ilir	2351	0 - 1

Round 9 on 2021/11/21 at 15.00								
Bo.		Finland	Rtg	-	37	Scotland	Rtg	3 : 1
18.1	IM	☐ Agopov, Mikael	2430	-	FM	■ Tate, Alan	2342	1 - 0
18.2	IM	■ Nyysti, Sampsa	2325	-	CM	☐ Bremner, Adam	2204	1 - 0
18.3	FM	☐ Ronka, Erik	2321	-	IM	■ Muir, Andrew J	2254	1 - 0
18.4	FM	■ Kokkila, Tero	2283	-		☐ Gordon, Frederick	1739	0 - 1



JOEL BENJAMIN & HAROLD SCOTT

**WINNING**  
**THE**  
**World**  
**Open**

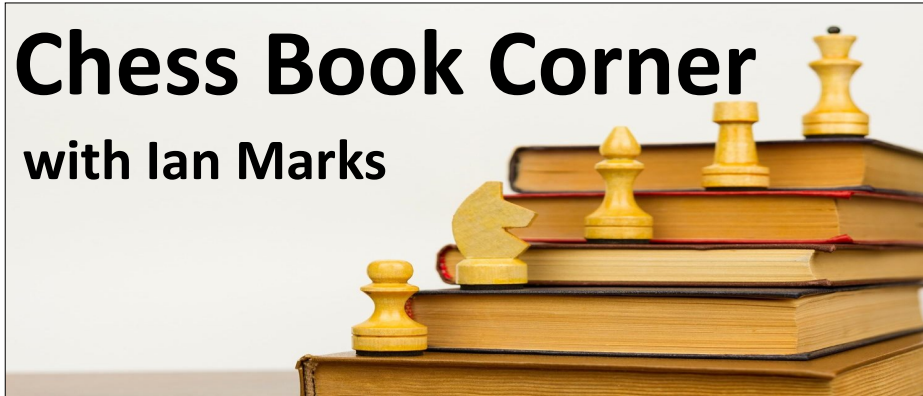


NEW IN CHESS

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS AT AMERICA'S  
MOST PRESTIGIOUS OPEN CHESS TOURNAMENT

# Chess Book Corner

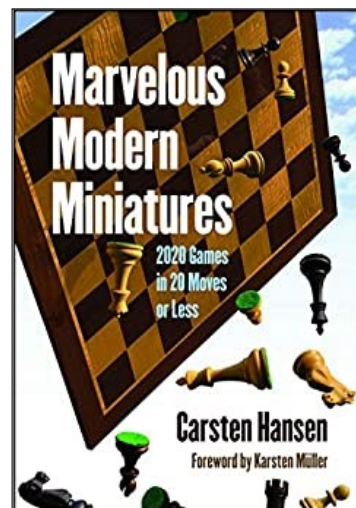
with Ian Marks



This issue our resident bibliophile [Ian C. Marks](#) samples two books interesting enough to make it into your festive stockings, the first perhaps requiring some heftier hosiery than usual, while the latter's contents might be perfect for the 12 Days of Christmas!

**MARVELOUS MODERN MINIATURES** by Carsten Hansen, Russell Enterprises Inc., 520 pp., publ. 2020.

The sub-title of this hefty tome tells you what to expect: *2020 Games in 20 Moves or Less* (sic). I loved this kind of book when I was a kid –





the games were always great fun without being noticed, so can we and helped plant ideas in your head all.

– although in those days they usually featured a more modest hundred miniatures. The idea is not to show you how to bash the other guy flat before s/he's got warmed up, but to illustrate typical tactical motifs and shots, and how to be prepared for them when the opportunity arises.

The flip side of the coin is to illustrate that positions often contain overlooked defensive resources. The guiding premise is that a game begins on move one, something which players seem to forget.

The players featured are all >2100 – so disabuse yourself of the notion that it's full of patzer stuff – and go all the way up to top GMs and world champions. Amongst the losers we find some of the most tactically-savvy players of recent times. If they can play the sort of game that makes them want to sneak out

The material is divvied up by opening: flank openings, lesser QP openings, lesser e4 openings, tons of Sicilians, French, 1 e4 e5 sidelines, Ruy Lopez, QG, Nimzo, KID etc., so there is something for everyone.

The index is players' names. It might have been an idea to provide an index of the most common tactical themes, or maybe that would have been too big an undertaking!? It would certainly have been helpful.

How to approach the book is a matter of taste. I'd be inclined to go by theme (which would involve a lot of hunting), others might prefer to look at their favourite lines. You could use it as a manual of attacking ideas or as a tactical exercise book – the diagrams are of the

White/Black to play and win variety. It's up to you. I doubt if many readers would tackle it in linear fashion. It would take months.

In many ways this is still the sort of fun book I enjoyed as a junior, but one with a serious purpose. It would be daunting for beginners, but more experienced players looking for material to keep their tactical eye sharp and be ready for banana skins would not be short of material. Nor would coaches! The games are all recent, from the last thirtyish years or so, so no hackneyed stuff.

**THE LONDON SYSTEM IN 12 PRACTICAL LESSONS** by Oscar de Prado, New in Chess, 272 pp., publ. 2021.

Several years ago I heard an IM – who shall remain nameless –

taking an unwittingly humorous pop at the London System. “This is very bad!”, she frothed, referring to the position after 1 d4 Nf6 2 Bf4.

“Now there will be no advantage!”

One of her peers who played 2 Bf4 against me explained that she did so *because* it gave good chances of an advantage! Presumably Carlsen and other open-minded GMs who have investigated the opening and incorporated it into their practice agree with the latter lady.

In many ways this is the sort of book that doesn't need a review; it really is one of those what-it-says-on-the-cover works. The author published a previous work on the subject in 2016, but stresses that it is not merely an update, but a new book covering specific themes, plans and ideas. ‘The aim is to help the amateur player to understand the London System and play it correctly and easily.’

# THE LONDON SYSTEM IN 12 PRACTICAL LESSONS

Strategic Concepts,  
Typical Plans and  
Tactical Themes

OSCAR DE PRADO



NEW  IN CHESS

The **twelve lessons of the title** into which he divides his material give a good idea of what to expect:

**Lesson 1** General ideas and move-orders

**Lesson 2** The attack on the b2-pawn

**Lesson 3** The early exchange of the f4-bishop

**Lesson 4** An interesting scheme with f2-f4

**Lesson 5** Typical Attacks in the London System

**Lesson 6** Ideas with a quick h2-h4

**Lesson 7** Play on the queenside

**Lesson 8** Good knight v bad bishop

**Lesson 9** Typical queen manoeuvres in the London System

**Lesson 10** Typical London System endgames

**Lesson 11** Latest theoretical developments in the London System

**Lesson 12** Exercises: tactics, theory and strategy

While the focus is on White's side, it is anything but a 'winning with'-type offering. The coverage is objective; if Black has good options, or if White could have done better, the author says so.

The material is presented via forty-five games, often with GMs on both sides, annotated in great detail, but with plenty of clear, explanatory prose and diagrams at key moments to light the way. (And it's always nice to see games from Scottish events!) Not surprisingly, the bulk of the games and references are from the last few years, although Rubinstein-Treybal, Breslau 1912, proves that there's nothing new under the sun.

The most referenced players are Kamsky and Carlsen, and much can be learnt from their games. The former has been playing the London all his life, while the current world

champion's more freestyle approach shows that there is still much waiting to be discovered. The Russian GM Boris Grachev's contribution also deserves close attention. The

styles of these three players show just how widely the London can be interpreted and handled. The range of unresearched positions and the variety of play which can arise make you wonder why Chess 960 is needed to escape opening theory!

The book has a labour-of-love feel about it; the author's writing has a lightness of touch which conveys his passion and enthusiasm to the reader.

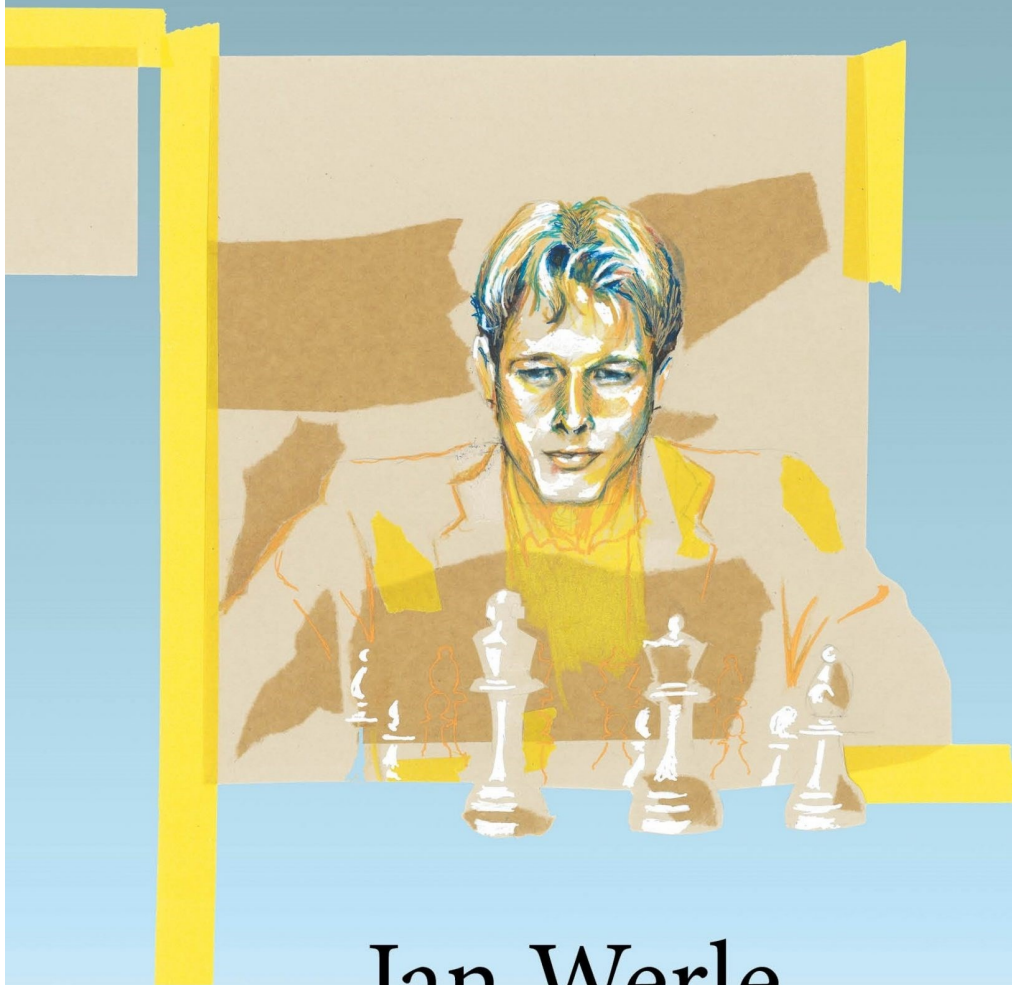
Overall it is a very readable and worthy addition to the literature on the London System, and one which devotees of the opening will no doubt add to their libraries. I hope our IM friend above picks up a copy.





# UNBEATABLE!

The Art of Defense



Jan Werle



# NORTHUMBRIA MASTERS 2021

Our report on the [Northumbria Masters Congress](#) was held over from last issue as [FM Hamish Olson's](#) fantastic showing at the British Championships took precedence (see Scottish Chess magazine, October 2021, for details).

Hamish's performance at the Tim Wall-organised event in Gateshead at the end of August, however, was also excellent – 6<sup>th</sup> place in a strong field and a TPR of 2355. Hamish has kindly annotated four of his games from the tournament, and as usual players of all strengths can enjoy and learn from his notes.

♖ Olson, Hamish (FM 2246)

♜ Gormally, Danny (GM 2479)

Northumbria Masters 2021 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♙g7  
4.♙g2 0–0 5.0–0 d6 6.b3 c6 This  
was me on my own now

See diagram next column

7.♙b2 ♖a5 8.♙d2 Against GMs I more than usual - in my opinion  
that's endgames. This move and my  
try to stick to my strengths even next have actually been played by



many strong players. I thought the resulting endgame would prove mildly favourable for White as he has a small space advantage (d4 vs d6).

8...♖h5 9.♗g5 ♗xg5 10.♘g5  
 Danny demonstrates that the knight is slightly awkward here and that Black is fine.

10...♘a6!? 10...a5 11.c4 a4 was more what I was expecting as the a-pawn push is very standard these days in many positions.

11.♘d2 11.c4 Angling to put the knight on c3 is a bit more active - knight is dim on the rim on d2.

11...c5 12.c4 ♖b8 Not necessarily played with the intent of playing ...b5 but I felt the need to prevent it anyway.

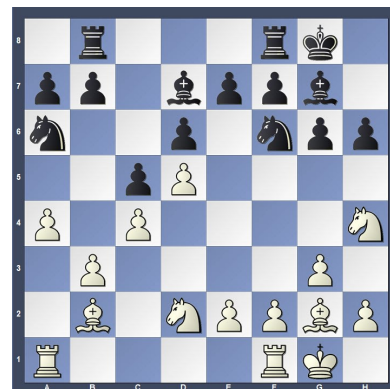


13.a4 This is a waste of time.

13.♘gf3 is more flexible and ...b5 is no threat 13...b5? 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 (14...bxc4 15.cxd6) 15.cxb5 ♖xb5 16.♘d4 The rook has no squares that don't get hit by a knight again.

13...h6 I think this is just pushing my knight to a moderately better square but it doesn't spoil anything. Danny does mention in one of his books that he forces things too much.

14.♘gf3 ♗f5 15.♘h4 ♗d7 16.d5



I was (wrongly) quite optimistic here. If I can get a few moves in for free I do get a great position but that can be said about most positions.

16.♔c3 This computer suggestion was on my radar in later positions but not before pushing d5.

18...g4 19.♘e1 I handle this next phase of the game pretty well - I've always been a decent groveller!

16...g5 17.♘hf3 ♕f5



19...♘b4 20.♔c3



18.h4 This would be the bog-standard move to play if the queens were still on the board. Indeed when I asked Danny after the game in our post-mortem without a board at the board his reaction was "Well what else are you going to play?" It's not a terrible move but it is another decline in my position. I've slowly moved away from equality in little 0.1–0.2 increments and now my position is a distinctly uncomfortable –0.6.

18.♔c3 Again this is what the computer wants to do but it's a bit depressing not knowing what white can aim for whilst Black has got clear plans on all sides of the board

I think Black is too impatient here, he should just slowly build up somehow and hope to play ...e6 or ...b5 under favourable circumstances.

20...♘d7 20...h5; 20...♔h7 is the computers rather sophisticated suggestion; 20...♔g6; 20...♖fe8

21.♔xg7 ♔xg7 22.e4?! I hadn't reckoned with 20...♘d7 and didn't react to the changing circumstances optimally. Danny is quite a fast player and I did not want to fall behind on the clock.

22.♔e4! =

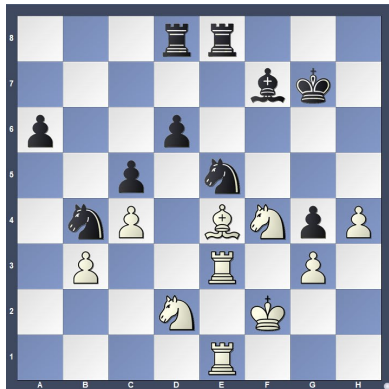
22...♔g6 23.♖c1 ♘e5 24.♖c3! not the only way to play but this is quite a nice manoeuvre

24...a6 25.a5 f5 This just helps white.

26.exf5 ♕xf5 27.♕e4 Finally!

27...e6 28.dxe6 ♕xe6 29.♘g2 My position really starts to uncoil now.

29...b5 30.axb6 ♖xb6 31.♘f4 ♕f7 32.f3 h5 33.fxg4 hxg4 34.♖e3 ♖e8 35.♖fe1 ♖bb8 36.♔f2 ♖bd8 ½-½



I did consider playing on, and there was an element of chickening out - if I was playing a player lower rated than me I wouldn't think twice about it. I don't really see an obvious way to progress. Hopefully in future I will be a bit more coura-

geous, although I don't think the winning chances are that great - the computer gives +0.2. If I am to get my first win against a GM in classical I need to make decisions without any fear. On the whole this was a decent game though, with no major inaccuracies and good time management.

♣ Olson, Hamish (FM 2246)

♣ Boswell, Jacob (FM 2012)

Northumbria Masters 2021 (7)

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.♕g2 ♕g7 4.0-0 ♘f6 4...e5 is more trendy these days

5.d4 0-0 6.c4 c6 7.♖b3 A trendy line for White.



7...a5



A bit unusual although I'd seen it before. There are alternatives: 7...♖b6; 7...dxc4. 13...♙xc2 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♞d2

8.cxd5 8.♘c3 a4 I knew this was one of the ideas and whilst it's a normal game, I didn't want to get involved.

8...cxd5 After my opponent spent 16 minutes 22s on this move I decided he was a time trouble addict and that I would try and pressure him on the clock.

9.♘c3 ♘e4N A very concrete approach that cost him 14minutes 42seconds (if the live boards are to be trusted - certainly it was about that). Black can play 9...♘c6.

10.♙f4 ♘c6 Another 10 mins burned.

11.♞fd1 ♘xc3 12.♞xc3 I am still sticking to a minute per move.

12...♙g4 11 minutes.

13.♘e5 I thought for a few minutes here as I was a bit nervous about the impending ...♞c8, but not too long in keeping with the strategy. 13.♞e3 was the other candidate.



15...♙b5 I thought this was very clever at the time and was quite nervous as it provokes a4 which is a bit ugly.

15...♙g4 16.♞xc6 e6 is the computers choice. I would be a bit nervous about getting my bishop trapped but 17.h3 ♞c8 18.♞d6 ♙f5 19.g4 ♙e4 20.f3 doesn't trap the bishop: 20...♞xd6 21.♙xd6 ♙h6

Somehow the tactics just about work for Black although his edge is small. I don't think I would go for this as Black as the risk/reward ratio is not favourable.

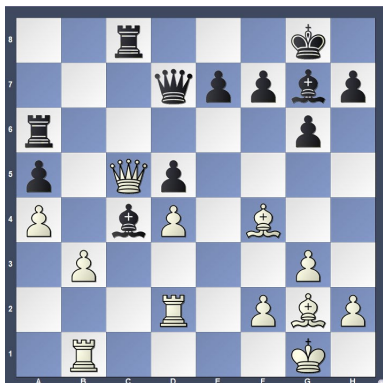
16.a4 ♙a6 17.♞xc6 ♙c4 The point of Black's ...♙b5 move - very clever!

18. ♖b1 This is the only move to be comfortable - everything else is quite a bit worse

18... ♖a6 Perhaps a bit artificial. The computer suggests 18... e6 as the way to maintain the equilibrium (more-or-less): 19. b3 The point of ♖b1. 19... ♙a6 20. ♖c1 I'm managing to fight for the c-file now

19. ♙c5 ♙d7 this is his idea but there is a big flaw

20. b3 ♖c8

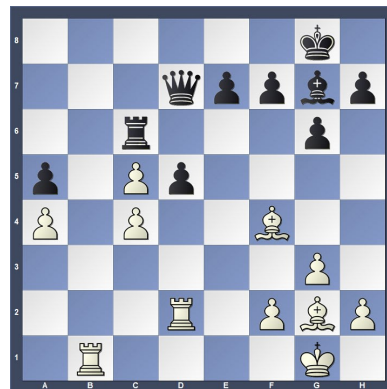


21. bxc4 Quite pretty but really this is a no-brainer that he would never have allowed with more time on the clock. 90min+30s is an unforgiving time control. It's easy to be lulled into thinking deeply due to the increment but my advice is to avoid time trouble like the plague.

21. ♙a3?! ♖b6 I hadn't looked into this line at all as I saw the queen sac straight away, but it is very good for Black.

21... ♖xc5 22. dxc5 White is not even down much material and the c-pawn is a monster. Also note the cause of the weakened back rank - Black's awkward ... ♖a6 move.

22... ♖c6

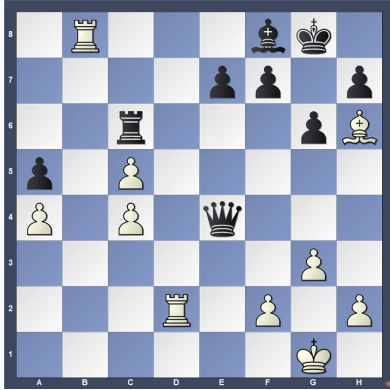


I sank into the tank now to crunch the variations - no need to pressure him on the clock now that I'm winning.

23. ♙xd5 Not the only way to do it but it's a very forcing line so I tried hard to make it work - if the forcing line works your opponent has no escape.

23... ♙f5 24. ♙e4 ♙xc4 25. ♖b8+

♔f8 26.♕h6



26...♖b1+ the only try but it is hopeless.

27.♖xb1 ♕xh6 28.♖c2 ♖xc5 29.♖b5

1-0

♣ Petrov, Marian (GM 2457)

♣ Olson, Hamish (FM 2246)

Northumbria Masters 2021 (8)

Perhaps in reaction to the previous game, I played this game much too fast. My opponent was moving very slowly but against a GM I think it would have been wise for me to not try and pressure him on the clock too much.

1.e4 e5 2.♖c3 ♖f6 3.g3 ♕c5 4.♕g2 ♖c6 5.♖ge2 ♖d4



I'd played this once before in a rapid game against Jonathan Pein which went very well (he was certainly off form). Great quote from Jesus De La Villa. "Against main lines play main lines. Against sidelines play sidelines. Against bad lines play the refutation" This may be a paraphrase as I don't have his good book on the Open Sicilian any more but it is a logical approach that I was following in this game.

6.♖a4 New move for me, and I think he thought it up at the board judging by the time he spent on it.

6...♖xe2 7.♖xe2 ♕e7 8.d4!?N d6 8...exd4 9.e5 No thank you!

9.d5 ♕d7 9...♕g4 is a move I would perhaps have thought of if I'd not been playing too fast.

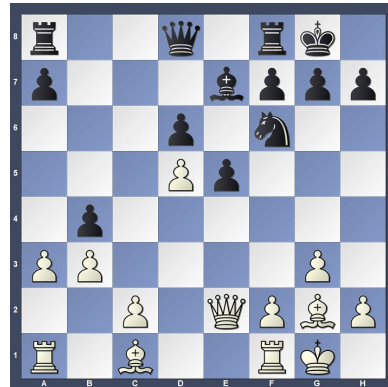
10.b3 c6 10...♙xa4 11.bxa4 c6 ate at the end of it, but I didn't  
 Wasn't sure how to parse this one look.  
 but I don't trust Black's position  
 without his good bishop, and I 13.0-0 b4 14.♘d5 this was the  
 thought 10...c6 was great for me so move I dismissed on general  
 didn't delve deeper. grounds.

11.dxc6 ♗xc6 I did not under- 14...♙xd5 15.exd5 0-0 16.a3 The  
 stand this Najdorf structure one bit point of White's play and already  
 unfortunately. Even worse, I Black's position might be beyond  
 thought I did, so played quite con- saving.  
 fidently.

12.♘c3 b5



I thought this was a good Najdorf. I  
 was misled by memories from  
 playing the Sveshnikov. In the  
 Sveshnikov, if White has to take on  
 d5 with a pawn rather than a piece  
 he's usually not trying for an ad-  
 vantage. This is not a Sveshnikov  
 (or a Najdorf...). I should have cal-  
 culated the following sequence. It is  
 an easy line to calculate and evalu-



16...a5 17.♙d2 ♖b6 18.axb4  
 axb4 19.♞xa8 ♞xa8 20.♞c4 ♞b8  
 20...♞a2 is the computer's very de-  
 pressing suggestion: 21.♙xb4 h5  
 The evaluation is around +1.2.

21.♞a1 ♞c5 At least I have defend-  
 ed stoically so far.

22.♞a4 A very good decision by my  
 opponent that I completely missed  
 and didn't understand until far too  
 late.

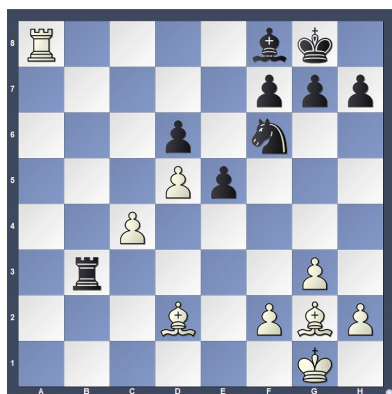
22. ♖xc5 dxc5 is obviously very good for White too, but I had some hopes of blockading and/or rounding up d5

22... ♖xc4 23. bxc4 His suggestion after the game was for me to sacrifice b4 here and hope for a fortress

23... b3 I didn't look deeply into the resulting position at all, only seeing the outpost on c5 for the knight and thinking I was fine.

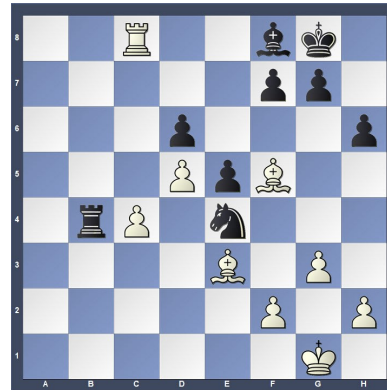
23... g6±

24. cxb3 ♖xb3 25. ♖a8+ ♔f8



It was only now that it dawned on me that I was worse, and in fact I am completely busted.

26. ♔h3 ♘e4 27. ♔e3 ♖b4 28. ♖c8 h6 29. ♔f5 The end. 1-0



A very well played game by my Grandmaster opponent but I let myself down a bit with a shallow approach. This was my only loss and ended any chances of a high placing, but I bounced back pretty well in the last round at least.

♖ Olson, Hamish (FM 2246)

♜ Sowray, Peter (FM 2196)

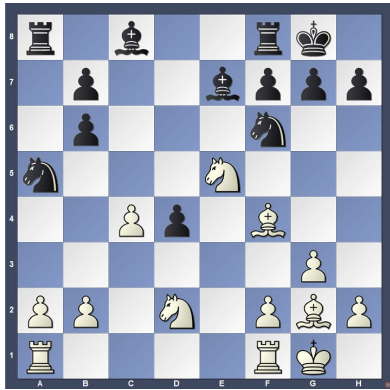
Northumbria Masters 2021 (9)

1. ♘f3 d5 2. g3 e6 3. ♔g2 ♘f6 4. 0-0 c5 5. d4 Far from White's only option here but quite a decent one.

5... cxd4 6. ♘xd4 e5 7. ♘f3 ♘c6 8. c4 d4 9. e3 ♔e7 10. exd4 exd4 11. ♔f4 ♖b6 A bit of an odd move-order but it just transposes to the normal one.

12. ♖e5 0-0 This is all main line.

13. ♙b3 ♘a5 14. ♙xb6 axb6  
15. ♘d2



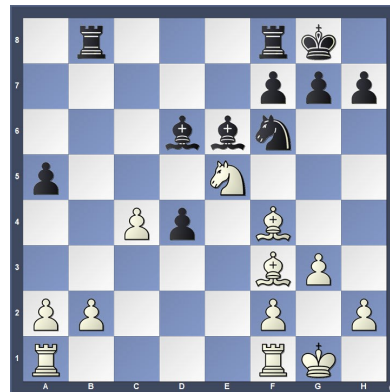
15... ♗c6?! I doubt Black will have been expecting this whole line on move 5 so he's done not bad to recall 10 moves of the main line but now he goes astray.

15... ♘h5 31 games have gone down this route in my database, including the likes of Carlsen, Aro-nian and Ivanchuk. White has to give up the bishop pair but has very easy development - not a bad choice for White for the 9th round of a 5-day event.

16. ♘b3 This is the problem - Black's queenside is on the brink now

16... ♗c5? A bad square for the bishop. Instead 16... ♗xc4 17. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 18. ♘xd4 and although this is rather depressing for Black, it must be holdable. I think Black was expecting to still have a normal position but he miscalculated.

17. ♘xa5 bxa5 18. ♗xb7 ♖ab8 19. ♗f3 ♗d6 19... ♖xb2 20. ♘d3 is why the bishop shouldn't be on c5.



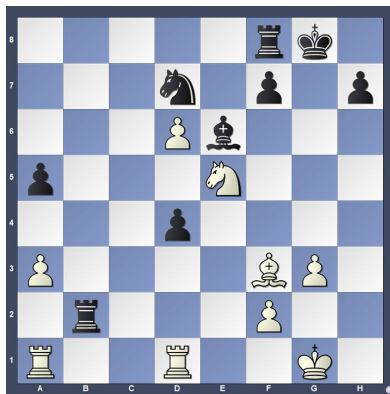
20.c5 before this event I had gone through a lot of John Shaw's Puzzle book and it paid off in spades in several games. For us mere mortals most games are still decided by tactics.

20...g5 21.cxd6?! 21. ♘d7 Not a difficult move to spot - the problem I think was I didn't look. This would have saved me several hours.



21...gxf4 22.♖fd1 fxg3 23.hxg3 ♜xb2 24.a3?! 24.a4 is the computer's suggestion and is a bit more forthright. The a5-pawn is more vulnerable than the a4 one.

24...♗d7



25.♗c6 This was a practical approach and is the computer's first choice.

25.♗xd7 ♘xd7 26.♞xd4 I didn't know if this was enough to be objectively winning so I looked for more with 25.Nc6. There is no point in risking my advantage which must be winning with going for an endgame like this which is probably winning but not definitely.

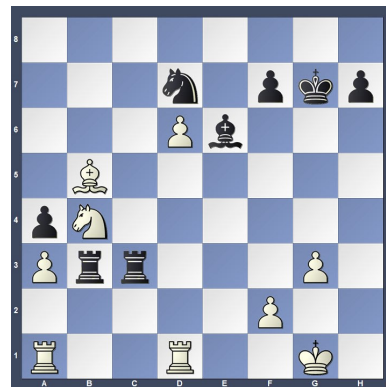
That was my thought process although looking back, this would be quite a simple position to play for

25...♔g7 26.♞xd4 ♜c8 27.♞dd1? Drifting. 27.a4 was better.

27...a4 28.♗b4? "Mistakes come in pairs" is something I've heard before although I can't remember where.

28...♞c3 29.♘c6 ♞bb3? 29...♗e5! Tactics! 30.♘xa4? ♞xg3+ ♠ Is the point

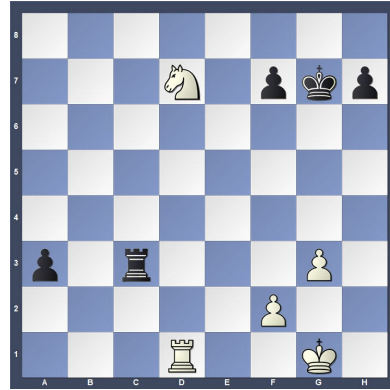
30.♘b5! I thought for 12 minutes and came up with definitely my best move of the tournament.



Instead 30.♘xa4 ♞xa3 31.♞xa3 ♞xa3 32.♘c6 Again I simply didn't know if this was 100% winning or not, so I looked for more.

30...♖xa3 allowing me to demonstrate my main point

30...♔f6 31.♙xd7 when I saw that Black didn't really have anything useful to do other than take a3 due to this nice tactic, I went for ♙b5 as this was enough to make my decision. I could always go back to ♙xa4 if Black managed to find a neutral move.



On 30...♔f8 I didn't know what I was going to do but it didn't concern me enough to prevent me playing ♙b5. I could always go back to ♙xa4 with Black's king on a worse square but thought there was likely to be something better. The computer tells me 31.♘d5 is the way.

31.♖xa3 ♖xa3 32.♙xd7 ♙xd7 33. ♘a6 This only works because Black has an a-pawn, and was my idea behind 30.♙b5

33...♖c3 34.♘b8 ♙e6 35.d7 ♙xd7 36.♘xd7 a3

See diagram next column

37.♔g2? slack. "Passed pawns must be pushed" - the pawn on a2 is far more nettlesome than on a3.

37.♖a1 I think this would have been fairly easy to win; 37.♗d6?? ♖c1+ 38.♔g2 a2 was my motivation behind 37.♔g2

37...a2 38.♖a1 ♖a3 Now the rook is behind the passed pawn as well.

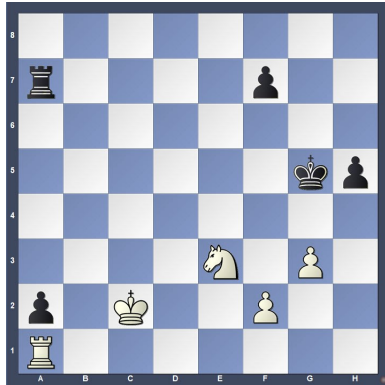
39.♔f1 39.♘b6 ♔f6 40.♘d5+ ♔g5 41.♘b4 ♖b3 42.♘xa2? ♖a3 I had no idea if there might be some sneaky way to win this but also had no interest in finding out the hard way! (There isn't.)

39...♔g6 40.♔e2 ♔f5 41.♘b6 ♔g4 42.♘c4 ♖a7 42...♖a8

43.♘e3+ ♔g5 44.♔d2 h5 45.♔c2

See diagram next column

45...h4?

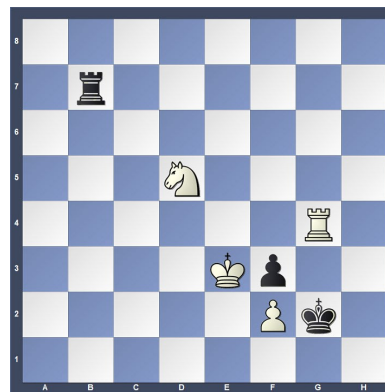
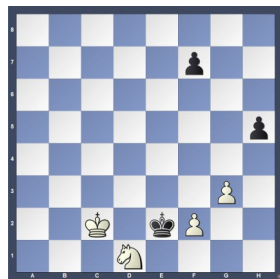


46.gxh4+ ♔xh4 47.♔b2? 47.♔b3 ♔g5 48.♖c2 ♕f4 49.♖a3 ♕f3 50.♞xa2.

47...f5 A relief. He had been in time trouble more or less continuously since the opening and finally starts cracking. 47...♔g5 48.♞xa2 The same mistaken logic from me (48.♖c2 ♕f4 49.♖a3 compare with ♔b3 - the rook can't defend the pawn 49...♕f3 50.♞xa2) 48...♞xa2+ 49.♔xa2 ♕f4 50.♔b2 ♕f3 51.♖d1 ♕e2= (51...f5? 52.♕c3 ♕e2 53.♕d4+).

I was very concerned about 45...♕f6 and had no idea about the evaluation of 46.♔b2 ♕e5 47.♞xa2 ♞xa2+ 48.♔xa2 ♕e4= 49.♔b3 ♕f3 50.♖d1 (50.♖f5 I hadn't seen this idea during the game 50...♕xf2 51.♕c4 ♕f3 52.♕d5 ♕g4 53.♕e4 h4 (53...♔g5 54.♖e3 f5+ 55.♕f3 h4=) 54.gxh4 f6=) 50...♕e2 51.♕c2

48.♞xa2 ♞b7+ 49.♕c3 f4 50.♞a4 ♞f7 51.♕d3 ♕h3 52.♖d5 ♕g2 53.♕e2 f3+ 54.♕e3 ♞b7 55.♞g4+



It wasn't obvious to me calculating in advance at the end of round 9 that this is a draw - I would have found out the hard way if we had got here.

1-0

My opponent was very gracious after a long hard game where he nearly escaped, and complimented me on my ♖a6 idea.



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# Celtic Nations 2021

The 4-nation Celtic Nations Junior Invitational took place on Saturday the 11th of December on Lichess, writes International Junior Director [Ruairidh McKay](#).

The under-16 tournament was a 6-round 6-board all-play-all twice between Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Jersey. Well done to the Scotland Under-16 team who won the tournament by 8.5 points from Ireland in 2nd place. A special mention also to those Scots who volunteered to fill gaps in other squads and whose performances were notable as well.



The link to details on the tournament are here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr597658.aspx?lan=1>

The **under-14 tournament** was a similar format to the under-16 but with 10 boards instead of 6. Well done to the Scotland under-14 team who won the tournament by 11 points from Wales in 2nd place.

The link to details on the tournament are here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr597659.aspx?lan=1>

The **under-12 tournament** this year was a 5-round, 6-board tournament (all-play-all once) with 6 teams: Ireland, Wales, Jersey, and 3 Scotland teams. We had an under-12 open team, an under-10 open team and an under-12 girls team. Our under-12 open team won the tournament by a whisker from our under-10 open team.

A special mention to our under-12 girls team who performed really well in the context of grading. Hopefully, there will be other opportunities to select these teams in the future.

The link to details on the tournament are here:

<https://chess-results.com/tnr597666.aspx?lan=1>

Many thanks to our colleagues in our sister federations Ireland, Wales and Jersey for making this happen again this year and also to arbiter John McNicoll for stepping in seamlessly after last year's arbiter was called up to the small matter of the World Chess Championship.

[A report on this incredible and well-earned opportunity for Andy Howie will feature in the February edition of Scottish Chess magazine. Ed.]



Daniel Kitaev has annotated his round 6 win against Wales...

♠ Wu, Yuxan (1919)

♣ Kitaev, Daniel (2037) D10

Celtic Nations 2021  
SCO v WLS u14

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♕f5



I am playing in a London system way, but with Black.

4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♖b3 An aggressive move targeting the d5- and b7-pawns, common in these positions.

5...e6 Favouring the d-pawn as after ♖xb7 ♘d7 everything is ok.

6.♘f3 6.e4 dxe4 7.♖xb7

6...♗d6 I played this move to de-

velop but it wasn't the best one as 6...♖b6 7.♖xb6 axb6 is just an equal position.



7.♘b5 The engine says 7.♖xb7 is better but this move is more aggressive. The last 3 moves were blunders!

7...b6 8.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 I have successfully defended all the threats from ♖b3 and now can properly develop.

9.e3 ♘e7 10.♗d2 0-0 11.♗d3 ♗xd3 I decided to trade pieces as the bishop on d3 was good and I didn't want to waste a move going back because I needed to develop my knights.

12.♖xd3 ♘bc6 13.0-0 h6 14.a3 f6 Preventing ♘e5 from happening at any point and planning ...e5.

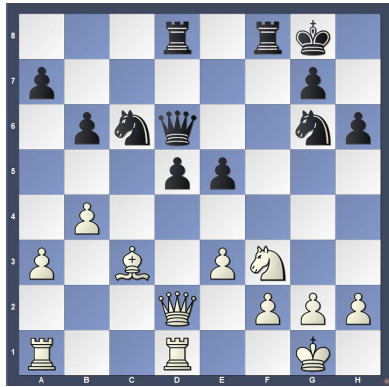
15. ♔c3 e5 I am threatening ...e4.

16. dxe5 fxe5 Now I have a nice centre and an open f-file.

17. ♖d2 ♘g6 It will take me 2 moves to get to h4 (now only one) leaving my opponent less time to defend when I attack.

18. ♖fd1 ♖ad8 I cant do anything without defending the d5-pawn as Qxd5+ would force me to trade queens, leaving me with fewer pieces to make a more complicated attack.

19. b4



19... ♖xf3! 20. gxf3 ♘h4

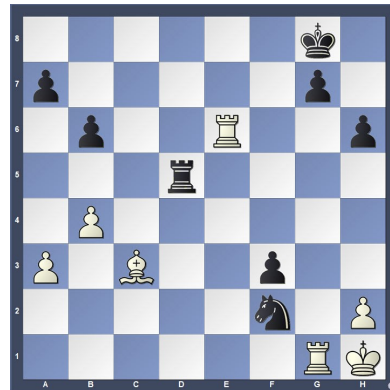
Threatening Nxf3+ winning the queen so White has to defend. Also ...♖g6+ and infiltrating is on the cards.

21. ♔h1 21. ♔f1 is slightly better but it is still -4.

21... ♘xf3 If the queen moves to any location except from in my knight's path I will play ...e4 threatening ...Qxh2# so my opponent has to sac their queen.

22. ♖e2 e4 23. ♖xf3 exf3 24. ♖g1 ♖d7 25. ♖ad1 ♘e5 26. e4 ♖e6 27. exd5 ♖xd5 28. ♖de1 ♘g4

29. ♖gf1 Defending f2. If 29. ♖xe6 ♘xf2# is a beautiful mate but sadly it didn't end this way.



29... ♖d6 ...♖xh2# is a threat that can only be stopped by ♖e5 or ♔e5 giving more material in an already materially-losing position, so White resigned.

0-1



**Komodo Dragon 2  
&  
Fritz Powerbook 2022**



# Four Nations Chess League

## 2021/22

After a couple of seasons of online 4NCL, players were delighted to be back in live action, Team Alba among them. The opening weekend for Alba saw them in the combined Division 1 and 2 pool – from which teams will be looking to progress to new, slimmed-down divisions next year.

The venue – a conference centre in Milton Keynes of all places – won't go down in history as the best choice ever made, but once you got used to the cold rooms, overpriced meals, (lack of) Covid regulations and cramped playing hall, at least we had some OTB chess to play!

First up was a match against Cambridge University, and unfortunately we had to give them a head start as Hamish Olson was unable to travel due to a nasty storm hitting the UK's east coast.

That one point default proved critical as you can see below.

		Cambridge University 1	2250	Alba		2107		
221	w	Murphy, Conor E	f	2421	1 - 0	Gourlay, Iain	f	2321
222	b	Bisby, Daniel L	f	2314	0 - 1	Berry, Neil	f	2255
223	w	Hill, Alistair		2237	0 - 1	Shafi, Declan		2166
224	b	McClement, Andrew		2219	1 - 0	Burnett, Andrew	f	2183
225	w	Gallagher, Daniel GH		2205	1 - 0	White, Stuart A		2037
226	b	Aldritt, Nigel R E	*	2190	½ - ½	Roy, Ali	w	1878
227	w	Robertson, J Stuart		2168	½ - ½	Cooke, Suzie G.	wf	1915
228	b	Tanmay Chopra	j	2232	1 - d	default		u
					5 - 3			

The team performance was far from disastrous though, and Declan, Suzy, and captain Neil, have all annotated their fine games...

♣ Hill, Alistair (2237)

♣ Shafi, Declan (2166) E60

4NCL 2021/22

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7  
4.e3 0-0 5.♙e2 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5  
7.e4 ♘b6



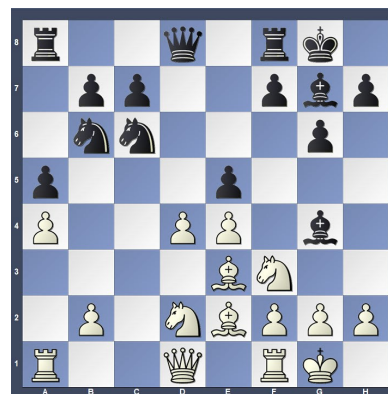
8.a4 8.0-0 is the main move, there are lines where White wants to provoke ...a5 but in this case White is likely to play ♘bd2 so it seems pointless.

8...a5 9.♙e3 9.0-0 ♙g4 10.♘bd2 ♘c6 11.d5 ♘b4 This line wouldn't

be possible without a4; White's d-pawn feels a bit shaky.

9...♙g4 10.♘bd2 ♘c6 11.0-0 11.d5 Now seems very dodgy with the weak b2 pawn, so he lets me get ...e5 in

11...e5



11...f5 is also always worth thinking about in this sort of position, I wasn't thrilled about ♙b3+ but it doesn't seem that scary since the f3 knight then becomes pinned.

12.dxe5 12.d5 Is the challenging move - since I've gone ...e5, the move ♙xb6 gives White a passed pawn, but I have 12...♘d4 13.h3 (13.♙xd4 exd4 14.♘xd4 ♙xe2 15.♘xe2 ♙xb2) 13...♙xf3 14.♘xf3 ♘xf3+ 15.♙xf3 ♘c4 With ...♘d6 and ...f5 I'm not unhappy at all, but this does feel like White is try-

ing for an advantage with the bishop pair.

12...♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♙xe2  
14.♚xe2 ♙xe5 15.♘f3 ♙g7  
16.♞fd1 ♚e7 17.♙xb6 cxb6



I liked this position - I have the bishop with pawns on both sides, and the doubled pawn situation feels sortable with ...b5 at some point. To pretend to have some advantage White probably needs to suppress my bishop.

18.♞d5 18.e5 ♞fe8 19.♞d5 transposes to the game, but cuts out the ...♚e6 option.

18...♞fe8 18...♚e6 is another option, trying to stop e5 from happening at all. 19.♞ad1 (19.♘g5 ♚e7 20.h4 ♞ad8 21.♞ad1 ♞xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞e8 The bishop has successfully avoided getting blocked so

I'd mildly prefer Black here, but it's not much). 19...♞ac8 20.e5 ♞c5 Very similar to the game but I have more flexibility with the f8-rook.

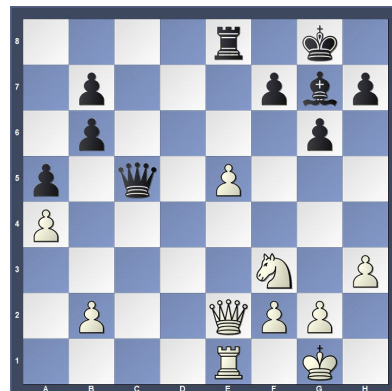
19.e5 ♞ac8 19...f6 Needs to be considered: 20.♚c4 ♙h8 21.♞e1 ♞ac8 22.♚d4 fxe5 23.♘xe5 My king feels a little unsafe.

20.♞ad1 ♞c5 21.h3 Giving luft is fine, but I have a reasonably clear plan of ...♚c7 which White could prepare for.

21.♚e4 ♚c7 22.♞d7 ♚c6 23.♚f4 ♞f8 White would definitely have the initiative now.

21...♚c7 22.♞xc5 ♚xc5 22...bxc5 is also fine, but the game keeps more imbalances with an active queen.

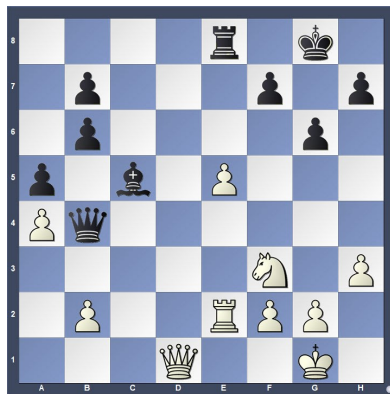
23.♞e1





He offered a draw at this point. I am not better, of course, but the trend has been towards me I think. this but 28.e6 f6 29.e7+ scared me. 28...fxe6 29.♖xe6 ♕f7 calmly defends the king though, and Black is just a pawn up.

23...♕b4 24.♖d1 ♔f8 25.♞e2 ♙c5



It is slightly risky to leave the dark squares more open, but this does probe White by focusing on a different area of the board than the e5-pawn.

26.♖d5 26.b3 would make more sense since ♖d5 defends b3: 26...♖c3 27.♖d5 ♖c1+ 28.♔h2 ♙g7 29.♖xb7 ♖d1.

26...♖xa4 Giving up a pawn for compensation - I could have stopped it quite easily but missed the chance.

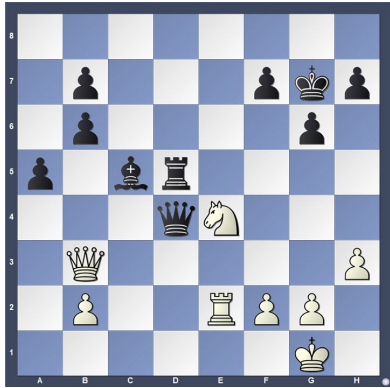
27.♗g5 ♞e7 27...♖f4 I considered

28.♗e4 This just doesn't work, I think he missed ...♖d4.

28.e6 works better here because I can't take it: 28...f6 29.♗e4 ♖d4 This forces the trade of queens and Black is probably fine, although the e6-pawn probably compensates for the extra pawn. 30.♗c3 ♔g7 31.♖xd4 ♙xd4 32.♗d5 ♞e8 33.g3 ♙e5 34.f4 ♙d6 35.♔f2 I can distract White's rook with my pawns to get the e6-pawn back.

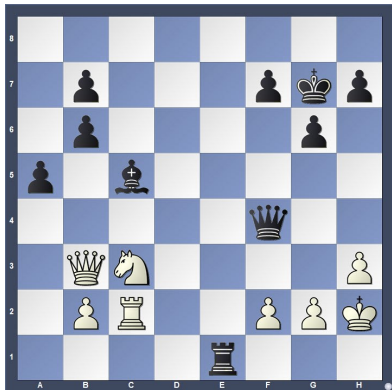
28...♖d4 29.♗f6+ ♔g7 30.♖f3 ♞xe5 31.♗e4 ♞f5 32.♖b3 ♞d5 33.♗c3

See diagram next column



A mistake in mutual time trouble. Instead, after 33.♖d2 White wins the exchange but I'm probably close to winning in the endgame. 33...♗xe4 34.♖xd5 ♖e1+ 35.♔h2 ♕xf2 36.♗c3+ ♗xc3 37.bxc3.

33...♖e5 34.♖c2 ♖e1+ 35.♔h2 ♗f4+ 0-1



An interesting game. 26.♗d5 was an odd move to play after offering a draw, and I just about emerged in front through the complications.

♣ Berry, Neil (FM2255)

♣ Bisby, Daniel (FM 2314) E94

4NCL Div1 2021/22

My first over the board game since March 2020. A very welcome return, and great to see my team mates again!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♕g7 4.e4 0-0 5.♘f3 d6 6.♗e2 e5 7.♗e3



7...♘a6 7...♘c6?! before White has castled is a mistake: 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♘d2! and White maintains flexibility about his king position. Moves like c5 and ♘c4 will be effective however this question is answered. 7...♘g4 and 7...exd4 are the main lines.

8.0-0 ♘g4 9.♗g5 ♗e8 10.dxe5 dxe5



11. ♖b1 Much less common than problems remain. After 16. ♖d5 the main alternatives, but I do like both 16... ♖f6!, and 16... ♖d7! followed by ...c6, are less clear) White's position.

11.h3 h6 12. ♖d2 ♖f6 13. ♖e3 is 16... ♖xd8 17. ♖d5 the main continuation here.

11...h6 12. ♖c1 ♖c5 13.b4 ♖e6 14.b5 White's play comes very fast.

14... ♖d8 14... ♖e7 15. ♖d5 ♖d6 16. ♖b3 ♖c5 17. ♖a3 ♖f6 18. ♖e1! +- and White is turning the screw; 14...f5 15. ♖a3 ♖f7 16. ♖e1! and Black's position begins to creak.

15. ♖a3 ♖e8

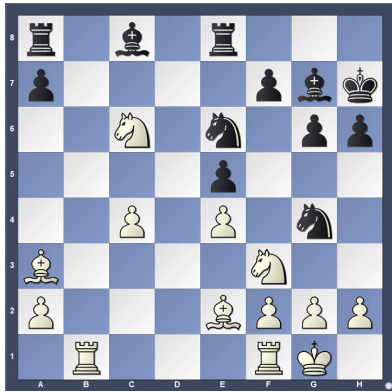
See diagram next column

16. ♖xd8! After a big think. It took a while to understand that the exchange of queens removes a key black defender and his coordination

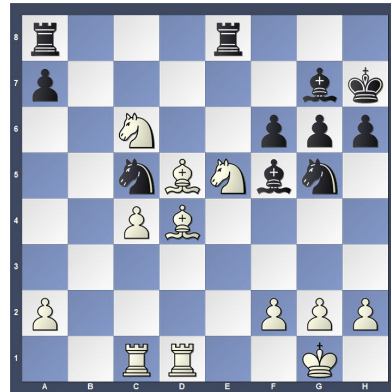
17...c6!? my opponent chooses to jettison a pawn to try and free his position. Instead, 17... ♖f4 18. ♖fe1 ♖xd5 19.cxd5±; 17...a6 18.b6 c6 19. ♖c7 ♖xc7 20.bxc7 ♖d7 21. ♖fd1 ♖xc7 22. ♖d6 ♖d7 23.c5! ♖d8 24. ♖c4 with the strong threat of h3!



18. bxc6 bxc6 19. ♖e7+ ♔h7 20. ♗xc6 ♜e8 27. ♔d4 f6 and Black is OK) 25... ♔e6 26. ♜d4±



25. ♔d5! ♔f5 26. ♜bc1 f6 27. ♔d4



21. ♜f1?! Not a bad move, but things get more complicated than they needed to be.

21. c5! with the idea of 21... ♗f4 22. ♔b5 (or 22. ♔c4 was simplest).

21... ♗f6 22. ♗fxe5 ♗xe4 23. ♔b2 ♗6c5 23... f6 24. ♗d3 ♔d7 25. ♗cb4 ♔a4 26. ♜e1 ♜ac8 27. ♗d5 ♜xc4 28. f3 and the engine loves White, but it is still complicated.

24. ♔f3 24. f3 ♗g5 25. h4 also makes sense. I wanted to get my ♔ to d5, and remove it from the line of fire on the e-file.

24... ♗g5?! 24... ♔f5! was the best practical chance 25. g4! (25. ♜bc1 as in the game 25... ♜ac8! 26. g4 ♔e6

27... ♜xe5 27... ♗ce6 28. ♗d3! and due to the x-ray from the ♔d5 to the Black ♜ on a8, the tactics all work for White. 28... ♔xd3 (28... ♜ac8 29. ♔e3 and White is in control) 29. ♜xd3 ♗f4 30. ♜d2 ♗e2+ 31. ♜xe2 ♜xe2 32. h4! ♗e6 33. ♔e3 ♗c7 34. ♗d4+—

28. ♔xc5 e4 29. ♔d4 ♔xd4 30. ♗xd4 ♜ab8 31. h4! Winning.

31... e3 31... ♗e6 runs into 32. ♗xe6 ♔xe6 33. ♔xe4+—

32. hxg5 exf2+ 33. ♗xf2 ♜b2+ 34. ♗g1 1–0 A nice win, though not

enough for the team in this particular match. Sunday was more successful though!

♣ Robertson, S (2169)

♣ Cooke, Suzy G (1915) D30

4NCL 2021/22

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5  
exd5 5.g3 ♘c6 6.♙g2 ♘f6 7.0-0  
♙e7 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♚c2 ♙b6  
10.♘c3 0-0 11.♘a4 ♙c7 12.♙e3  
♚e8 13.♚d3



13...h6 I didn't want a ♘g5 if my bishop ends up on e6, but maybe I should be playing ...♚e7 and developing more quickly.

14.h3 ♙d6 Thinking about the b4-square, especially if the knight returns to c3.

15.a3 ♚e7

See diagram next column



16.g4 My opponent said he felt that he needed to protect against ... ♙xg3, but the computer wanted to place pressure on d5. 16.♘c3=

16...♘e5 trying to capitalise on the weakness caused by g4, and if White doesn't take, the c4-square looks good.

17.♘xe5 ♚xe5 18.♚fd1

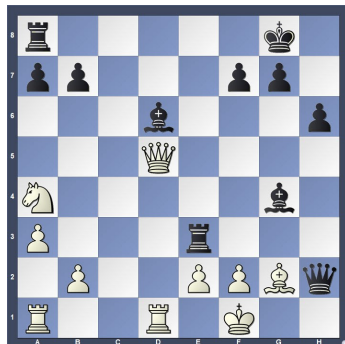


I spent a long time considering the sack on g4, unfortunately I couldn't see it through as far as ... $\text{E}3$ .

18... $\text{E}d7$  18... $\text{W}h2+$  19. $\text{K}f1$



19... $\text{N}xg4$  20. $h xg4$   $\text{E}xg4$  21. $\text{W}xd5$   $\text{E}x3!$



22. $f x e3$   $\text{E}g3$  23. $b3$   $\text{E}h3$  24. $\text{E}xh3$   $\text{W}f2\#$ ;

18... $h5$  is another idea worth considering, where White can't take due to 19. $g x h5$   $\text{W}h2+$  20. $\text{K}f1$   $\text{E}xh3$  threatening ... $\text{W}h1\#$ .

19. $\text{N}c3$   $\text{E}c6$  20. $\text{E}d4$   $\text{W}h2+$  21. $\text{K}f1$   $\text{N}e4$  22. $b4$  This allows me to target the e2 square. Instead, 22... $\text{E}a1=$

22... $\text{N}x c3$  23. $\text{W}x c3$   $\text{E}b5$  24... $\text{E}a2$



24... $\text{E}x c2+$  Here I went for the pawn when I should have continued the build-up of pressure around the king with ... $\text{E}a c8$ . For example: 24... $\text{E}a c8$  25. $\text{W}f3$   $\text{E}e4$  26. $\text{E}x a7$   $\text{E}c e8$  27. $\text{E}e1$   $d4$  28. $a4$   $\text{E}c6$ .

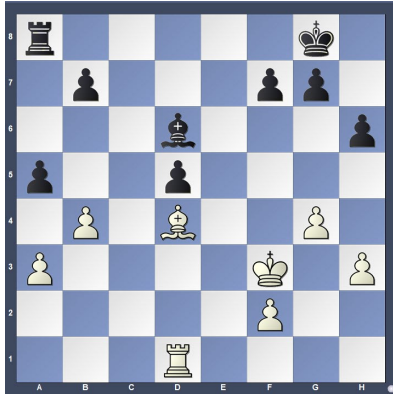
25... $\text{E}x c2$   $\text{E}x e2$  26. $\text{K}x e2$   $\text{W}x g2$  27. $\text{W}f3$  A great move that ends the advantage for Black.

27... $\text{W}x f3+$  28. $\text{K}x f3$   $a5=$

See diagram next column

I offered a draw, a bit nervous with the time remaining on my clock





before 40 moves (used up considering the sac I never did!) that I wouldn't be able to keep the pawn with White's active king and my isolated queen's pawn.

The computer agreed and called this a dead draw.

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$



Two good draws against strong opposition made it a successful weekend for Suzy Cooke (nee Blackburn) pictured above on the Sunday playing a well-known name from Scottish chess 'history', Andrew Gilfillan.

Alba			2107	Kings Head			2149	
211	w	Gourlay, Iain	f	2321	½ - ½	Vardaan Nagpal	i	2384
212	b	Berry, Neil	f	2255	½ - ½	Kenworthy, Gary	f	2261
213	w	Shafi, Declan		2166	1 - 0	Okike, David	c	2177
214	b	Burnett, Andrew	f	2183	1 - 0	Lewis, Alex		2144
215	w	White, Stuart A		2037	1 - 0	Mackenzie, Colin		2040
216	b	Roy, Ali	w	1878	½ - ½	Thatte, Nishchal	j	2032 e
217	w	Cooke, Suzie G.	wf	1915	½ - ½	Gilfillan, Andrew		2009
218	b	default	u		d - d	default	u	
					5 - 2			

Sunday saw us bounce back with a convincing victory over King's Head. They had defaulted even more boards than us the previous day, but had filled a couple of gaps overnight, so missing Hamish was cancelled out with a nominal double default on board 8.

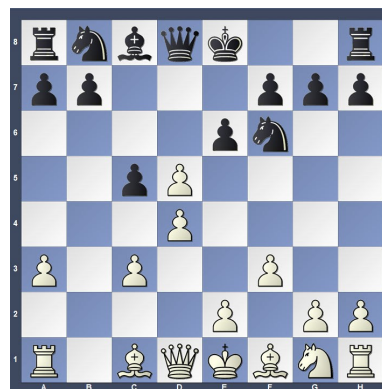
Your editor bagged a win to cancel out his previous day's defeat to another Scot, Andrew McClement, while Stuart White played an incredible game, which I had hoped to share as 'Game of the Year'. I'll try to chase it up for the February issue, but in the meantime here is Declan's emphatic victory...

♖ Shafi, Declan (2166)

♜ Okike, David (2177) E25

4NCL 2021/22

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4  
4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5  
7.cxd5



7...exd5 7...♘xd5 is the main move here, and my opponent had previously played a strange move later in this line which I would have been happy to see: 8.dxc5 f5 9.♘h3

♔c7 (9...♙a5 Is the main move - very importantly it pins the c-pawn!) 10.c4 ♘f6 11.♚d6 He had the position at move 10 previously and for some reason no-one played ♚d6.

8.e3 0-0 9.♙d3 b6 10.♘e2 ♙a6 11.0-0 ♜e8 12.♘g3 ♙xd3 13.♚xd3 ♘c6 14.♙b2 c4 15.♚d2 h5 16.♞ae1



This is all theory, ...h4 is the main move, trying to prevent White from going e4.

16...♘e7 17.e4 h4 18.♘h1 ♘g6

See diagram next column



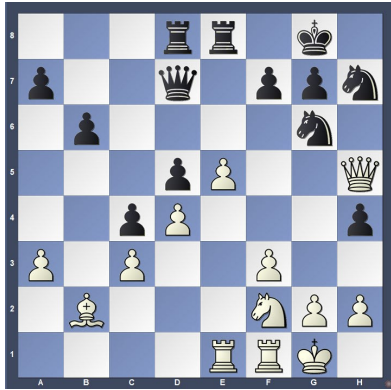
19.♘f2 19.e5 It is probably the most sensible to just go e5 as soon as I can instead of messing about. The attack is pretty scary: 19...♘h7 20.f4 f5 21.♚d1 The queen is coming to h5.

19...♚d7 20.♚g5 20.e5 Is still sensible to do now

20...♞ad8 20...♘h7 I thought this move wasn't possible, but Qxd5 doesn't get anywhere 21.♚xd5 ♚xd5 22.exd5 ♘f6 23.d6 ♞ad8

21.e5 Now I get an even better version of the e5 I was after before with the queen on h5, though it was not deserved!

21...♘h7 22.♚h5



22...♙b5 It seems slightly dubious to send the queen on a walk while the black king looks so weak...

23.♚c1 ♜b3 24.♞d1 ♛c2 The big idea seems to be that the black queen defends g6 so black can play ...f6, but this is very unstable

25.♙c3 ♜a4 25...f6 This must be played or the last 3 moves were wasted: 26.f4 (26.♜f2 ♙b1 27.♜b2 ♙d3 28.♞f2 ♙xc3 So I can't force the queen away) 26...fxe5 27.dxe5



The attack still looks pretty strong but at least Black is challenging my pawn storm. 27...♜f8 28.g4 hxg3 29.hxg3 ♙f5 30.♙xf5 ♜xf5 31.♚d4 Black has too many weaknesses and inactive knights to have much fun in this ending, but it is still better than the game.

26.f4 Now these pawns go pretty fast, and black just doesn't have time to eat my queenside pawns.

26...♙xa3 27.f5 ♞gf8 28.♜f4 g6 29.♜g4 ♙a2 30.♙h6 Moving the f-pawn last in order to keep the knight on f8 locked up

30...♙c2 31.f6 ♞e6



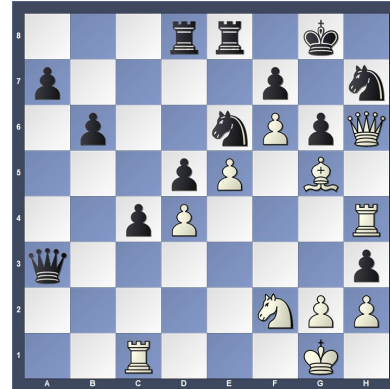
32.♙g5 32.♜xh4 g5 White is definitely winning here, but at least it is not mate. ♙g5 seems to cut all this out.

32...h3 One last attempt.

33.♘f2 ♔xc3 34.♖c1 ♔a3  
35.♖h4

1-0

There is no way to stop mate.



Five of the team Alba squad made it to the traditional Saturday evening meal, from left: Declan Shafi, captain Neil Berry, your editor Andrew Burnett, Iain Gourlay, and Ali Roy.

Unfortunately, a few days later both Neil and Iain fell ill with Covid-19, believed to have been caught at the 4NCL weekend, though both seem to have recovered as I write this.

Whether the next weekend, slated for mid-January, will go ahead or not is still up in the air given that the recent London Chess Classic 'superspreader' event produced at least 20 Covid cases, with former world title challenger, Nigel Short, hospitalized with the virus.



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The home of Chess in Scotland

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The [online rating system](#) has regular updates and allows members to check their rating progress, check links to event crosstables and view several years of previous data.

[FIDE ratings](#) are updated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month and give players information on their latest world ranking.

The [Chess Scotland 100 Club](#) is a lottery that anyone (over 16) is welcome to join. Half the cash collected every month is returned as prizes, the rest goes into general fund raising for the association.

The [Chessbase Grand Prix Leaderboards](#) and rules can be viewed here while the [Giant-killing](#) lists are here. (The virus pandemic has impacted on updates here and we hope to return to more normal times as soon as possible).

...and finally, **Alan McGowan's** excellent history archive can be found [here](#).

For more information about CS please feel free to **contact** the relevant officers listed [here](#).