The Irish Chess Journal
September 2007

Irish Champions 2007

Inside:
Irish Championships
Cork, Bunratty, Ennis
- all the tournaments
Leagues
Leinster League Strength
FIDE Ratings List
Upcoming Events
and more...

Reviewed
Irish Chess Journal

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Additional thanks to Ciaran Ruane for his help proof reading this issue. We might even have gotten the right month on the cover this time.

The editors would like express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to this issue, and apologise if we've forgotten anyone!

Disclaimer
The opinions expressed herein are strictly those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Irish Chess Union, its officers or members.

Symbols used in this magazine
+ Check
# Checkmate
!! Excellent Move
! Good move
?? Interesting move
?! Dubious move
? Bad move
?? Blunder
△ Better is
= Equal position
∞ Unclear position
± White is slightly better
† Black is slightly better
± White is better
† Black is better
+ White is winning
→ Black is winning
(N) Novelty
(D) Diagram

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All the upcoming events. Well, all the ones we're aware of anyway. If we forgot yours, it's your fault. Our email address is on this page. Make sure it doesn't happen again!
Editorial

Hello everyone. We haven't indulged ourselves with an editorial before now, preferring to focus on chess news rather than the blather you usually get in these things. However, after three years of producing the ICJ, the time has come for us to step down because of time constraints.

Relaunching the then defunct Irish Chess Journal was a project we felt well worth doing. At the time, it was becoming intolerably difficult to find out information about the Irish chess scene, with the demise of the old journal and John Hurley's Chess Ireland website. Since that time, matters have improved immensely. Mark Orr undertook the total redesign of the website, and has produced an elegant and immensely useful site, with tournament reports, news, ratings, an events calendar, club information, online membership payment, games and image databases and even daily reports from a couple of major events instantly available to ICU members. Coupled with the journal, there is now no shortage of information on events.

As such, we are eager to see the journal carried on, even to contribute to future issues, but someone else needs to step forward to take over the editing. We also note that the ICU hasn't filled the role of development officer, so if anyone's interested, please step forward.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

John Healy & Kevin Burke

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New ICU Free Online Magazine for Juniors

The Irish Chess Union is delighted to announce the publication of the first issue of its new online Chess Magazine for our rising stars, Junior Chess Corner [pdf, 4.5MB].

A free and informative guide to Junior chess in Ireland today, Junior Chess Corner profiles some of Ireland’s leading juniors ahead of Ireland’s hosting of the Glorney and Faber this July in DCU. The magazine is also designed to help chess players of all ages starting out, who would like to improve their own game, through game commentaries and articles which are accessible to chess players of all ages and strengths. Recognising the vital role that parents play in encouraging and facilitating their children to play chess, Junior Chess Corner contains a special section in which parents discuss their own experiences of Irish and International chess, and provide advice for parents whose children are starting out in chess.

In Ireland today, there are circa 10,000 children playing chess on a regular basis in primary and secondary schools and it is hoped that Junior Chess Corner will provide an outlet for kids to learn more about the sport of chess and improve their game.

Tom Clarke 1959-2007

Tom Clarke passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 3rd April after a long illness. Tom won numerous tournaments the length and breadth of Ireland over a period of over thirty years. He represented Ireland in the 1988 and 1992 Olympiads and the 1989 European Team Championship. A memorial service was held at St. Patrick's Parish Church, Drumbeg, Belfast on 19th May. An appreciation (http://www.ulsterchess.org/Archives/playerbio/tom-clarke/tom-clarke-1959-2007/view) by David Houston is available on the UCU website and a number of Tom's best games have been put up on the ICU site, including this one.

O'Cinneide,M - Clarke,T [A89] IRL-ch, Drogheda (2), 04.04.1999

Notes by Mel O'Cinneide

1.d4 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.d5 Ne5 9.Nxe5 dxe5 10.Qb3 h6 11.e5 Kh8 12.Rd1 g5 13.Bd2 f4 14.Be1 Bg4 15.Qe4 Qe8

Tom builds up an attacking position here, but White's position is perfectly solid.


This move, and the subsequent play, are in some way very typical of Tom's style. Nothing is threatened, and indeed the move may not be objectively good, but it ratchets up the tension in the position considerably. I spent my next 14 moves wondering how to exploit this cheeky bishop, before finally imploding:

26. Rxd6 Nxf6 27. Qc2 e4 28. Ne5 Re7 29. g4?!  
About here the pressure got to me...
29... Qe8 30. Bc3 Rxe5 31. Bxe5 Qxe5 32. Rxf6 Qxf6 33. f3 exf3 34. Bxf3
And here I dreamed briefly that Tom's bishop was trapped on f1. However
34... Bxe2
and it's all over
35. Bxe2 Qf2+ 36. Kh1 Qxe5 37. Kh2 Rf2+
Thanks for the many fascinating battles, Tom. Rest in Peace. 0-1

ICU Website Opens Up
Apart from a few exceptions, all parts of the website are publicly accessible from March 2007 until further notice. For ordinary ICU members, this means that logins will no longer be required to view ratings, articles and most other content. However, website editors and committee members with access to private data will continue to require logins (and PINs).

Current ICU members who have website accounts may, if they wish, continue to login to access the site. Apart from the display of the member's name in the top right corner, the extra features that logging-in makes available are:

When a member logs-in the site is aware of their identity and so can provide a link (under the Ratings category on the left) straight to the member's rating data. Without a login, this link will not appear, but members can still view their rating history (see below).

Edit Preferences is a link that appears under Members after logging-in and allows members to choose between the default dark style of the site or the alternative light style. The chosen preference is currently stored with login account details and in the absence of a login the site uses the default style.

Voting is only available to logged-in members.

The My Rating link is convenient but won't appear without a login. So how can a member still view their rating history without logging in? There are two ways to do this, both are links under the heading Ratings on the left.

1. Click List Ratings, which lists all the ratings in a given list (by default, the latest list). Scroll down the list for your name or search using the form provided at the top. When you find your name, click your rating and your whole rating history will be displayed.

2. Click List Members, which lists all players who have been an ICU member at some time since the website began operation (late 2004). Scroll down the list for your name or search using the form provided at the top. When you find it, click your name and your rating history will be displayed.

PINs, which are issued to members when they join each season, are still required for keeping a website login active or registering a new one. However, if a member doesn't care about the small number of extra features logging in now provides, they don't need to login and therefore don't need a PIN.

If a member does want to login they will need a PIN number, so they must be subscribed to the ICU. In future seasons, members are recommended to subscribe online to avoid any hassle. In practice it has proved a challenge for the membership officer to consistently acknowledge postal subscriptions with the correct ICU and PIN numbers. In contrast, online subscriptions mean less work for all concerned and are much more reliable and efficient.

You can express your opinion on website access policy in this poll. You'll have to login though, as voting is one of the few remaining features still requiring ICU membership.

Marcel Castricum Memorial Tournament
Three Irish players were among the 28 competitors at the Marcel Castricum memorial tournament held in the Netherlands recently. John Cassidy and Rory Quinn of Ennis chess club and Kieran O'Driscoll made the journey to Marcel's home town of Cuijk in Southern Holland. During his time in Ireland Marcel played for both Ennis and Cork chess clubs, as well as winning the North Munster and Connaught championships.

The tournament was held at Vianen chess club just a short distance from Marcel's final resting place in Cuijk. The pace of play was fast with just 20 minutes per player for all moves. Best of the Irish was Rory Quinn who finished in 6th place on 4½ points. Kieran and John both scored 2½ points and finished in 20th and 22nd place respectively.

All in all, the tournament was a very enjoyable one and a nice tribute to Marcel. It even garnered some press coverage in the local media. It is to be hoped that it will run again next year and that some more Irish players will travel to play in it. Special thanks must go to Marcel's parents Henk and Elly Castricum for the welcome afforded to all the Irish players.

Ennis chess club paid its own small tribute to Marcel by presenting the winner of the U1400 section in the Ennis tournament with a perpetual trophy, the Marcel Castricum Cup.

Gary Kasparov Interview
Former World Champion Gary Kasparov gave an interview to Ryan Tubridy last April in which he talks mainly about Russian politics and his book How Life Imitates Chess. To listen to the interview, click on the following link and scroll down to the show from the 4th of April.
http://www.rte.ie/radio1/podcast/podcast_tubridy.xml

British Women's Chess Association
Irish players are eligible to play in events run by the British Women’s Chess Association (BWCA). See http://www.bwchess.org.uk/BWCA/index.php for events.

The Irish Chess Journal

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Gonzaga Chess Classic

1st - 3rd February 2008

Entry Forms at
www.gonzagaclassic.ik
Entry Fee €50

Master (1900-upwards)
Entry Fee €60

Championship (1600-1900)
Entry Fee €65

Major (1200-1600)
Entry Fee €50

Challengers (1000-1200)
Entry Fee €30

Sections

Official ICN 6 Round Swiss Tournamnet

All proceeds go to charity
The Irish Championships

Text: John Healy and Mark Orr
Photos: Mark Orr

For a number of years, the Irish was in need of a good shakeup. A nine round closed Swiss, it required too much of a commitment from many top players to participate, leading to poorly attended tournaments. Generous sponsorship from Island Oil & Gas along with the vision of the organizers brought a dramatic change this year. The tournament was an open, and was also open to non-Irish players. Along with increased prize-money, this afforded the top players a chance at a title norm*. Last year's top seeds, FMs Daly, Short and Brady, were joined by foreign grandmasters Mark Hebdon, Stewart Conquest, Nick Pert and Eduardas Rozentalis, as well as strong domestic players such as Brian Kelly, Gavin Wall and Mark Orr in a field of around 50 (compared with last year's dozen or so). The Royal Dublin Hotel on O'Connell Street in Dublin was the venue, as it will be again next year, I believe.

IM Brian Kelly and defending champion FM Stephen Brady would emerge joint Irish champions, while GM Mark Hebdon won the tournament overall, but now we turn to a blow-by-blow account of the tournament (with thanks to Mark Orr, from whose online daily report some material has been shamelessly reproduced).

Round 1

As with any large open, round 1 saw some mismatches.

O'Connell,G - McCabe,D
IRL-ch Dublin (1), 30.06.2007


Gerry McCarthy and I both hung pieces very early on, and most games went with seeding. The only dramatic reversal was Gearóidín Ui Laighléis beating former Irish Champion Eamon Keogh.

* A norm is one of the requirements for the title of International Master (IM) or International Grandmaster (GM). It is essentially a certain level of performance in a strong enough tournament. Normally, you need three of these plus a high enough rating to earn a title, though one norm earned in an Olympiad is enough on its own.
43.Kf4 Bg7 44.Kg5 Kc5 45.Kf4 h6 46.e5!
Now the black pawn on d4 is doomed.
46...Kd5 47Nb6+ Kc6 48.Ke4 Kc5 49.Nc4 Bf8 50.Nd2
55.d5 Bb6 56.Nd4 exd5+ 57.Kxd5 Bd8 61.Kd5 h6 62.Nd6 Bg5 63.Nc4
Be7 64.Ne5 Bg5 65.Nc6 Bd8 66Nb8! Kd8
Of course, not 66...Kxb8 67.e7, but if Black tries to save
the a-pawn, e6-e7 cuts him off from defending e8.
67.Nxa6 Ke8 68Nb8 Be3 69.Nc6 Bc5 70.Nd4
Be7 71.Ne6 Bxe4 72.Nd4 Be7 73.Nd6
Bf6 74.Nf5 Bg5 75.Ne7 Bf6 76.Nc6 Bg5 77.Nxb4
Be7 78.Nc6 Bg5 79.Nc8 Bd2 80.Kd2
Better is 43.Rd8.
43...Re1 44.Nb3 Nd2+ 45.Kh2
Now it's mate in six. Instead, 45.Kf2 Rf1+ 46.Ke3 Nxb3
47.cxb3 Rxa1 would have left Black a clear piece up.
45...Nf1+
And White resigned in view of 46.Kh3 Re3+ 47.Nf3 Bxf3
48.Nd2 Bh1+ 49.Nf3 Rxf3+ 50.Kg4 f5# 0-1

Simon Jeffares drew with GM Stewart Conquest after a
rook endgame, and was involved in the last game of the
round to finish for the second day running!

Play was stopped Wimbledon-style due to rain twice in
round three, as the top table was moved to avoid drips from
a leaky roof! None of this disturbed top Irish seed, IM
Brian Kelly, as he demolished IM Mark Orr in a wild
game.

Gerry O’Connell beat English grandmaster Mark Hebden
after the latter made an error on move forty.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5
4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6
7.Bd3 Bg7 8.h3 0-0 9.Nf3 b5
10.Nxb5 Re8 11.Nc3 Nxe4
12.Nxe4 Bf5?!
12...f5 13.Bg5 Qd7 14.Nfd2
Ba6 15.Bxa6 Nxa6 16.0-0 fxe4
17.Nc4 Nb4
13.Ng5! h6
13...Bxe4? 14.Bxe4 h5 15.Ne6
fxe6 16.0-0
14.0-0 hxg5 15.Nxg5 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Nd7 17.f4?! Qe7
18.Bd2
18.f5 Qe2 19.Qxe2 Rxe2 20.fxg6 fxg6
18...Bxb2 19.Rae1 Qf6 20.Kh1 Qg5! 21.Qh5 Bd4 (D)

22.Re6! Nf6!
22...fxe6 23.Qxd7 exd5 (23...Bg7 24.dxe6) 24.Qh7+ Kf8
25.g4 Qf6 26.f5 Re7 27.Ne6+ Rxe6 28.Bh6+ Ke8 29.Qg8+
Ke7 30.Qxa8
23.Rxd6 Rab8 24.Qa6 Rb1?
24...Rb2 25.Qxa7 (25.Bc1 Rc2 26.g4 Ne4! 27.Qa3 Nf2+
25...Nh5! 26.Re1 Rb1
25.Kh2 Rxf1 26.Qxf1 Qc2 27.Bc1 (D)

27...Rb8?
27...Bf2 28.Nf3 (28.Rxf6 Re1) 28...Ne4 29.Rc6 Rb8

GM Mark Hebden must have been less than pleased with his form (or luck!) as Peter Cafolla took a draw of him. In truth, Cafolla had him beaten, but I assume he was short of time (and even if he wasn't, I can't blame him for taking the draw against such an illustrious opponent.)

Cafolla,P - Hebden,M
IRL-ch Dublin (3), 02.07.2007
Notes by John Healy


17...Rxf2?!
This attack looks promising. While it's awkward to get more pieces to support the queen, White's king is not going to find a haven any time soon.
I haven't explored all the options for Black in the past few moves, but there are no obvious errors. Here, Hebden might have liquidated with 24...Bxb2 25.Rb1 Rg8+ 26.Kh1 Nd3 27.Qe2 Bd4 28.Qxe3 Bxe3 29.h3 b6

Black can no longer ignore White's counterplay, e.g. 29...Qxa2? 30.Rxg7! Kxg7 31.Qf6 Qb2 32.Rg1+ Kh7 (32...Kh8?? 33.Qxh6#) 33.Qf7+ gives White the advantage, pawns be damned.
30.Qh5 Qg5 31.Rdf1 Na4 32.Rf4 Nc3 33.Rg4 Qe5 34.Rg6 Kh7 35.Rf6 Qxf6 36.Rxf6 Bxf6 37.Qf5+ Kg7 38.Bh5 Bg5 39.Qd7+ (D)

And here the players agreed a draw, though I think White can play for the win safely enough, e.g. 39...Kh8 40.Bf7 e3 (40...Rg7 41.Qe8+ Kh7 42.Be6) 41.Bxg8 Kxg8 42.h4 Bf6 43.Qe6+ Kg7 44.Qxe3 ½-½

With the grandmasters dropping points, the stage was set for an Irishman to carpe pignus. Brian Kelly stormed into sole lead with a delicate win in a R+P endgame against Stephen Jessel. There was no luck for the Irish against the 4 GMs who all won their games.

Jessel,S - Kelly,B
IRL-ch Dublin (4), 03.07.2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bd6 4.e5 Ne7 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 b6 7.Qg4 Ng6 8.h4 h5 9.Qg3 Ba6 10.Bxa6 Nxa6 11.Bg5 Qd7 12.a4 Nb8 13.Ne2 Nc6 14.0-0 Nce7 15.Qd3 Re8 16.a5 Nc6 17.axb6 cxb6 (D)
In round 5, Kelly quickly draw with GM Nick Pert. GM Stuart Conquest beat FM Phillip Short to share the lead on 4½ points. John Redmond again proved a thorn in a grandmaster's side (again using Bird's Opening!), holding Mark Hebden to a draw.

Simon Jeffares got top seed GM Rozentalis to a rook and knight endgame, but was tied down and quickly ran out of ideas. Rozentalis slowly crushed him.

In round 5, Kelly quickly draw with GM Nick Pert. GM Stuart Conquest beat FM Phillip Short to share the lead on 4½ points. John Redmond again proved a thorn in a grandmaster's side (again using Bird's Opening!), holding Mark Hebden to a draw.

15 year old Sam Osborne defeated FM Colm Daly in a marathon 91-move, seven hour game, in which Sam at one point announced checkmate, only to have Daly take his en prise rook. Sam went on to win the resulting QvR endgame.

Brian Kelly's win as Black over Stuart Conquest really made it look like his tournament to lose. Not only did he
retake the sole lead, a half point ahead of Pert and Rozentalis, but people started talking about the possibility of a GM norm.

Conquest,S - Kelly,B
IRL-ch Dublin (6), 05.07.2007


40.Bf3 Bxf3 41.Kxf3 Rxa3 42.Rb1 Bf8 43.Nd4 Kg7 44.Ke2 Rc3 45.Ra1 Bxb4 46.Rxa6 Be5 47.Ra4 Kf6 48.Kd2 Bxd4 49.Rxd4 Ra3 (D)

34...Kf8?
Black makes his first serious error. Necessary was 34...Re5. Now, White emerges a clear pawn up in a rook endgame after
Tying Black's rook to the fifth rank.
42...Rb5 43.g3 Kf5 44.f3 g5 45.Ra6 Re5+ 46.Kd4 Rh5 47.Kc4 Re5 48.a4 (D)

Mark Hebden won beautifully against Tony Fox in a study-like ending.

Hebden,M - Fox,A
IRL-ch Dublin (6), 05.07.2007.
Notes by John Healy

Queen's Gambit Declined, Tartakower variation. I've no database at the moment, and I don't know the opening well, but this all looks fairly normal.
I’ll just pause here to marvel at how Hebden’s tied Black in knots here. I suppose you could call this zugzwang, as with rook and king unable to move, Black must make a fatally weakening pawn move.

48...h4

48...g4 49.f4 Re3 50.Rxa5+ Kg6 51.Rg5+ Kh6 52.a5 is a comfortable win for White.

49.gxh4 gxh4 50.Kd4!

Oh, and by the way, Black has to lose his a-pawn to o.

50...Re1 51.Rxa5+ Kf4 52.Rh5 Kg3 53.a5 h3 54.b4 h2 55.b5  Ra1  56.b6  Rxa5  57.b7  Rxh5  58.b8Q+  Kf2 59.Qb2+ Kg3 60.Qb8+ Kf2 61.Qb2+ Kg3 62.Ke3 (D)

62...Rh7

62...h1Q 63.Qg7+ Kh2 64.Kf2 – Mark Orr
63.Qb8+ Kh3 64.Qc8+ Kg2 65.Qg8+ 1-0

Kelly’s round seven clash with Rozentalis was a draw, and Glienke held Pert. Conquest and Short both won to join Pert and Rozentalis a half point behind Kelly.
unexpectedly finished him off by cutting his bishop off from an advancing pawn.

![Diagram of chess game](image)

There was great drama in the last round. Brian Kelly, needing a draw for a GM norm, unfortunately could not stop the in-form Mark Hebden. With Pert and Rozentalis drawing, that meant Hebden and Pert shared first place and Brian was joint third and assured of at least a share of the title of Irish Champion, depending on the result of one other game - Philip Short versus Stephen Brady. This tense encounter was the last game to finish and involved more than one time scramble but eventually Stephen, who had the edge in a long bishop and pawn endgame, emerged victorious and thus shared the title with Brian.

**Hebden, M - Kelly, B**
IRL-ch Dublin (9), 08.07.2007


![Diagram of chess game](image)

When I saw the position after White’s 31st move, I thought that he surely had enough for the draw. Shows what I know (JH) - Hebden made those powerful rooks tell. 31...f6 32.Rc7 Be8 33.Re7 Bf7 34.Rce7 Rf8 35.Kc3 Rh6 36.Kd2 g5 37.fxg5 fxg5 38.Kc3 Rd6 39.Nc6 1-0

While it's a shame that Brian didn't make his GM norm on this occasion, it's great that he (and other Irish players) had the possibility to make norms as well as a shots against GM opposition (which several players made the most of). All this was made possible by the sponsor (thanks again!) and the adoption of an open format which we can all be grateful is planned to continue next year.

**Short, P - Brady, S**
IRL-ch Dublin (9), 08.07.2007


![Diagram of chess game](image)


![Diagram of chess game](image)

78...e4 79.Bc4 e3 80.Be2 Bd7 81.Bf3 Bb5 82.a4 Ba6 0-1

* For a dissenting voice, see Letters to the Editor.
Cork Congress

Michael Bradley

Over 160 players made the journey to Cork over the weekend of the 30th March to 1st April in the Metropole Hotel. For the masters section, we had the pleasure of welcoming three GM players, namely Stuart Conquest of England who lives in Spain, Alex Baburin of Russia living in Ireland and Harmen Jonkman, who does so much travelling we could suggest the airport is where he resides!! In addition, we had some players making the journey from Germany, France and England. Local hopes were on young FM Alex Lopez who plays for Douglas.

The format of the traditional three sections was altered slightly to accommodate the more ambitious players close to the threshold. Players over 1500 could play up to the majors (1200-1600). This was well received by all who took advantage of it and may become a regular feature for the congress. The Masters section had over 60 players as a result.

In the masters almost all results went with seed in round one. Cork player Paul O’Donovan had nice win over Michael Hansch, over 300 rating points above him. Round two produced two great results for Cork players David Path and Stephen Short. Both players drew with GMs Conquest and Jonkman, in slight time trouble David did have the opportunity to convert for a full point but would not do so. Missing 32.Bxc5! bxc5 33.Rb1 Rx e7 34.Rxb3+ Kc6, which White can probably hold.

Short, S - Jonkman, H [C67]
Cork Congress 2007 (2), 2007
Annotations by John Healy

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 (D)

This is the Berlin Defense, the profile of which was raised when Kramnik used it against Kasparov in their 2000 match.

9.Nbd2
9.Nc3 is nearly always played here, e.g. 9...Bd7 10.b3 h6 11.Bb2 Kc8 12.h3 was game one of that Kasparov-Kramnik match.
9...h6 10.b3 a5 11.Bb2 a4 12.c4?!
With the light squared bishop still on the board, this is committal.

32.Re1?
Missing 32.Bxc5! bxc5 33.Rb1 Rxe7 34.Rxb3+ Kc6, which White can probably hold.

32...Rxe7!
It looks like 32...Rxe7! 33.Rxe7 cxb4 is winning, as it may not be possible to stop Black’s queenside pawns. In order to prevent ...Bc2 and ...b3, White has to give up his c pawn. After the text, it’s very hard to win.

4.0-0 Nxe4 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 Nf5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 (D)
White has an important extra kingside pawn, and Black...
I almost never play the King's Indian, but in weekenders and quickplays I like to try out different stuff. In thisgame this dangerous strategy backfires! Here, for example, on the standard 6...e5 I was worried he might exchange Queens, but a habitual KI player would not be concerned about this.

6...Nd7 7.0-0 e5 8.Be3 Ng4 9.Bg5 f6 9...Qe8? 10.Nd5 wins. Black needs his knight coming to a6 to play with ...Qe8.

10.Bc1
I expected 10.Bh4 P.S. I just discovered I once had this as Black against a GM! It was versus I.Farago, and I'll give the next few moves: 10...Nh6 11.Qd2 (not the best square!) 11...Ne7 12.Rad1 c6 13.h3 (why?) 13...a5 14.Qc2 (!) 14...Qe7 and now the game became wild: 15.c5 dxc5 16.dxe5 b5 (best, according to the notes I made at the time: White intended Nc3-a4) 17.exf6 Bxf6 18.Bg3 and I eventually blundered a piece and lost, having at one point not heard a draw offer (!), in Farago-Conquest, Hastings Masters 1990.

10...Kh8
A rare move here (10...Nh6 is most popular), but not a bad one: there are for example two old games by strong E.German (at the time) GM Knaak.

11.h3 Nh6 12.Be3 Nf7
This didn't feel too bad for me, but of course White is better. 12...f5? 13.Bg5! causes problems.

13.Qe2!
Simple and strong: White prevents ...f5.

13...c6 14.Rfd1 Qe7 15.b4
Black is cramped and has few options. I decided to release the tension now, because I didn't like 15...Re8 16.d5, and then if 16...c5 17.Nb5! [P.S. Having just looked at some games in this line, the move 15...Bh6 suggests itself. I don't recall thinking of this at the board.]

15...exd4!? 16.Nxd4 Re8
One idea is ...Nd7-f8-e6.

White strikes before Black's bishop can reach d7, but this is also a fairly committal decision, and I wasn't displeased to see it..
17...Nd8!
Played in the ungainly style of Petrosian - a great hero of mine!
18.Bf4 Ne5 19.a4
I think I would have chosen Rab1 here or on the previous move.

19...Be6
At last the bishop gets out! I think I expected 20.Nxe6 here. Certainly Dave's move came as a surprise.

20.Na2? Bg8
Played in the spirit of: "that will teach him not to take my bishops." I was starting to feel optimistic.

21.Rac1 Rc8 22.Qd2 Nd7 23.a5 a6
An undesirable weakness, but a5-a6 was annoying.

24.Nb4 Ng5
I had this one ready: Black threatens ...c4 as well as ...Nxe4.

25.Bxg5 fxg5 (D)
Annotations by GM Alexander Baburin

Cork Chess Congress (4), 31.03.2007

Baburin,A (2545) - Lopez,A (2337) [E12] ½-½

The main line runs 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Qc2 As I don't usually play the Queen's Indian Defence, I knew little about this position. But I suspected that my young opponent knew even less!

6...Be7 (D)

This position resembles the Tartakower-Makagonov-Bondarevsky variation of the QGD [1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nf3 b6 7.Bh4 b5 – ed.]. However, there are small differences: 1) Black has not included ...h6; 2) Black has already committed his lightsquared bishop to b7. In case of cxd5 exd5 this bishop might be better off on e6; 3) White has spent time on a2-a3, which may or may not be a very useful move.

7.e3


Currently the most popular move here is 7.Qa4+ c6 (After 7...Qd7 8.Qxd7+ Nxd7 9.Nb5 Kd8 10.cxd5 Nxd5 11.e4 N5f6 12.Bf4 Ne8 13.Bd3 White's chances were better in the game van Wely-Karpov, Groningen 1995.) 8.Bxf6 Bxf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.g3 This is White's idea - he closed the

A lot more happened. It's a bit pointless to analyse this rook ending (we were both in time-trouble by now), since White had an easy win a few moves back. I was very fortunate not to lose this game. I didn't play too badly up to 27.Nf3, but I played too slowly. Dave played well and never stood worse: he kept the pressure up when it mattered. ½-½

GM Alex Baburin and FM Alex Lopez made very solid starts and indeed drew their meeting.

Baburin,A (2545) - Lopez,A (2337) [E12]
Cork Chess Congress (4), 31.03.2007
Annotations by GM Alexander Baburin
(www.chesstoday.net)

1.d4 b6 2.c4 Bb7 3.Nc3 Nf6 (D)
4.Nf3

This is not the most ambitious plan - White simply develops pieces, not avoiding transformation to the Queen's Indian Defence. The critical lines are 4.Qc2 and 4.d5

4...e6 5.a3

Now we have one of the main positions of the Petrosian Variation of the Queen's Indian Defence.

5...d5

Also possible, but less popular here is 5...Ne4

(30.Nb4 (obvious, but maybe 30.c5 is good) Red8 (obvious) and I'm okay. Then I thought, well, why not just go 28...Red8 first? Then if 29.Nxa6 (obvious) I have ...Qa7 (or perhaps ...e5). So then I just played the move. I hadn't much time, but those were pretty much my thought processes.

28...Red8?? 29.Bg4

Of course. No sooner had the rook left my hand then I saw Bg4 scrambling out at me.


lost in that case.

34.Nxa6 was also pretty depressing. It's hard to make objective choices when one's position is falling apart.

5...d5

This position resembles the Tartakower-Makagonov-Bondarevsky variation of the QGD [1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nf3 b6 7.Bh4 b5 – ed.]. However, there are small differences: 1) Black has not included ...h6; 2) Black has already committed his lightsquared bishop to b7. In case of cxd5 exd5 this bishop might be better off on e6; 3) White has spent time on a2-a3, which may or may not be a very useful move.

7.e3


Currently the most popular move here is 7.Qa4+ c6 (After 7...Qd7 8.Qxd7+ Nxd7 9Nb5 Kd8 10.cxd5 Nxd5 11.e4 N5f6 12.Bf4 Ne8 13.Bd3 White's chances were better in the game van Wely-Karpov, Groningen 1995.) 8.Bxf6 Bxf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.g3 This is White's idea - he closed the
b7-bishop. Of course, Black can later play ...c5, but that will commit him to hanging pawns - and Qa4 might be a useful extra tempo. One game continued: 10...0-0 11.Bg2 c5 12.0-0 Bc6 13.Qd1 Na6 14.Qd2 Re8 15.Rad1 Boensh-C.Hansen, Tilburg 1994.

7...Nbd7

More accurate was 7...0-0 but Black was afraid of Bxf6 Bxf6, cxd5, so he wanted to recapture on f6 with the knight.

8.cxd5!

Now it's time to take on d5.

8...Nxd5


This is the point of taking on move 8 - and the reason why 7...0-0 might be more accurate. Now Black has to spend time defending the c7-pawn.

11...Qd6

I had no clue whether this position was known to the theory, but I suspected that it occurred before. Here is one example: 11...c5 12.Bb5 (Perhaps more promising is 12.dxc5??) 12...0-0 13.Bxd7 Qxd7 14.dxc5 Qb7 15.Qc2 bxc5 16.0-0 Rfc8 17.Rfd1 Rab8 18.Rd2 h6 Boensh-Vladimirov, Cienfuegos 1986.

12.Qc2 c5 13.dxc5


13...Nxc5

After 13...Qxc5 White has 14.Qd2! which gives him serious initiative.

14.Bb5+

Also very promising is 14.b4 Nd7 (or 14...Ne4 15.Bd3) 15.e4 Bb7 16.Bb5 14...Ke7 15.b4 Ne4 (D)

16.Qc7+?

My decision was strongly influenced by the fact that, like many juniors, Alex Lopez does not like play endings - and that in our previous games I outplayed him exactly in simplified positions. Perhaps here I rushed too much and after the simple move 16.0-0 White could get more, for example: 16...a6 (or 16...Rhc8 17.Qxc8 Rxc8 18.Rxc8 a5 19.bxa5 bxa5 20.a4) 17.Bd3 Rhc8 18.Qb2 16...Kf6!

My Junior 8 is optimistic about Black's chances in the line 16...Qxc7 17.Rxc7+ Kf6 18.Ba6 but I was happy to take White here, though I was probably overestimating White's chances.

17.Ba6

White fights for the e-file and tries to keep the a8-rook locked up. Of course, the line 17.0-0 Qxc7 18.Rxc7 a5 would be fine for Black.

17...b5

Again, this is a 'human' decision. But it seems that Black could and should go for 17...Qxc7 18.Rxc7 Nd6 19.0-0 b5 20.Nd4 Rhb8 where he is fine.

18.0-0 (D)

Correct was 18.Qa5! where Black would have yet to find the best line: 18...Rbb8 19.Bxb5 Qb6! - Black has enough play for a pawn, thanks to his better development, for example: 20.Qxb6 axb6 21.Ra1 Ne3 22.Bd3 Rd8 18...Rhb8!

I completely missed this move in my calculations. I spent too much time analysing the line 18...Qxa6 19.Qf4+ Ke7
20. Rc7+ Kd8 21. Qxf7 Qd6 It was clear that White should be fine here, but I could not calculate this position to "the end". Perhaps that was not necessary anyway! I planned to play 22. Rc7+ e5 (Black loses after 22... Bc4 23. Nd4! Qxc7 24. Nxe6+ Bxe6 25. Qxc7+ Ke8 26. Qe5) 23. Qxg7 (in case of 23. Nxe5!! Bxg7 24. Nxe6+ Ke8 25. Nxd6+ Nxd6 26. Rxe5 a5 Black should be OK.) 23... Re8 (I also looked at 23... Rg8 24. Qxe5 Qxe5 25. Nxe5±) 24. Ng5 for example:

I also saw 18... Bc4 19. Qb7!+-

11. Rd2 Nb3 21. a6-bishop is more of a headache now than an asset. I only counted on 20... Qxa5 21. bxa5 b4

Another strong move - the a6-bishop is more of a headache now than an asset. I only counted on 20... Qxa5 21. bxa5 b4 where White is still better after 22. f3! for example:


19. Qa5 Qb6 20. Nd4 Nd6!

I spent a good while considering 23. f3 bxa3 (apparently, I missed 23... Bb7?) 24. e4 a2

A) and 25. Bd3 Rc8 (here I over-looked 25... Rb4! ) 26. Rxe8 Rxc8 27. exd5 Rc3 my feeling was that in both lines White would be playing with fire, so I called it a day.

B) 25. exd5 26. Nb1 Rb8

23... Rxb4 24. Rf1 ½-½

Here is the game annotated by Alex Lopez of his win over Harmen Jonkman GM.

Lopez,A (2287) - Jonkman,H (2426) [C54]
Cork Chess Congress (5), 01.04.2007
Annotations by FM Alex Lopez

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. 0-0 Nf6 5. d3

This whole line is pretty unambitious, but as I am not playing much these days, I didn't want to go into some of the sharper options available to white.

5... d6 6. c3 Bb6 7. Bg5?! (D)

Too early, Jonkman's next few moves capitalise on this mistake, and White can only strive from equality out of the opening from here on in.

7... h6 8. Bb4 g5!?

Seizing the initiative...

9. Bg3 Bg4 10. Nd2 Nh5 11. Re1

11. Kh1? was the better option probably 11... Qd7 12. h3 Be6 (12... Bxh3? 13. Qxh3+ 14. Nh2+- white has nothing to worry about here...) 13. Nh2 Nhxg3+ 14. fxg3± an interesting position, I would debate whether or not white has any edge here, but I don't think he stands worse, which is better than the way the game continued... 14... 0-0 15. Bxe6 fxe6

11... Nxe3 12. hxg3 h5 13. Nh2 h4 14. Ne3 hxg3?!

After this I think white's play is relatively straightforward 14... Bxe3! 15. Rxe3 h4 16. f3 Qf6 17. Qb3 0-0-0 18. Rf1 Be6 19. Bxe6+ fxe6 20. Nh2 Qd6 21. Ng4 d5± White will have a tough time in this position...


Up to here it's all pretty much forced, and 18... Qf6 is certainly the best move. Now white has a few options, and I think with accurate play on both sides, it's roughly equal.

19. Re3 Rh7 20. Qe2 Nd4? Getting a little too creative, missing white's strong (and forced) 22nd move.

21. cxd4 exd4 22. e5 dxe3+ 23. Qxe3 Qc7 24. Nd2

My opponent was already in some time trouble, and I guess I wanted to make sure time was a factor asap! Had I stopped to think a bit more though, Qe4 would have pretty much ended it! 24. Qe4! Rh8 25. Qxg4! the solid option, killing black's counterplay completely. (25. Qxb7 Rd8 26. exd6 Qxd6 27. Qe4+ Kf8 28. Ne5 Rh5 29. Re1 Qb6+ 30. Re3 Rd4 31. Nd7+ Rx7 32. Qe8+ Kg7 33. Qxd7 g3+ 34. Kf7 Qf6+/= this is obviously not all forced, but as a line it's a good illustration of the dangers of taking the b7 pawn.) 25... d5 26. Bb3 c6 27. Re1+-

24... dxe5 (D)

Here I thought I had a winning position, but Fritz thinks it's tougher than what it looks, and he probably has a point! still, I think white's two minor pieces give him a definite
27...Kf7 28.Bc4+ Kg7 29.Ng3 Qb4 30.Re2 Rf8 31.Nf5+ Kh8 32.Kg3 and White has a definite advantage...
28.Ne3 Rd8 29.Kg1 g3?!  
Unnecessary sacrifice
30.Qxg3 Rd4 31.Be4 Qg7 32.Qf3 Qh6 32...Qh8 33.Rxe5+ Kg8 34.Ne2 Rd8+ 35.Kf2 Qh4+ 36.Kxe2 Kg7 37.Kd2+-
33.Ne4  
At this stage Jonkmann had only about 3 minutes left on the clock, so all I needed to make sure of was not to blunder in the next few moves. 33.Qa8+ 34...Qe7 35.Ke4?!!  
Another weak move, with a far better alternative 34.Ng3! Re4 35.Nf5+ Rxf5 36.Qxf5+ may have been quicker.... 36...Kd7 37.Qe4 37.Qe8 38.Kf3 Qg6 38.Qxe4 39.Kf2 Qf7 40.Rxb5 Qxg6 41.Kf3 Qf7 42.Bc4 Rhf6 43.Bf1 and white will struggle to win this... 38.Nf3 Rh5? 39.d4 (D)  

Once the central pawns fall, it’s only a matter of technique. With about a minute on my opponent’s clock at this point, my task was far simpler.

39...c6 40.dxe5 fxe5 41.g4 Rhh8 42.Rxe5+ Kd6 43.Re6+ Ke5 44.Be2 44.Ne5+-
44...Rxe8 45.Rf6 Re4 46.g5 46.Ng5 Ree8 47.Ne6+
46...a5 47.g6 Kg4 48.Rxc6+ Kxc6 49.Ne5+ Kd6 50.Nxg4 Ke7  
and my opponent’s flag fell. still, its a simple enough win from here anyway.

1–0

Ennis player Rory Quinn was best of the untitled players with a very impressive 5/6 in the final shakeup. His loss came in round 3 to GM Conquest but went onto finish third overall.

In a time scramble, Alex Lopez secure his final point of the tournament to finish joint first with GM Baburin with 5.5/6 http://www.corkchess.com/Congress/2007/ResultsMasters.aspx

In the majors section, numbers were down on last year owing a number of players deciding to play up. With that said 38 players got ready to do battle. Recent winner of the Bunratty tournament Gabriel Murza was top seed with 1580 rating, the bulk of players were inside the 1300-1500 rating band.

However, seeding and ratings are not a ticket to a win and it was young John Courtney (1325) who was making the early running with Yoel Ferrer(1400). A number of close followers were involved who eventually were part of the final shake up. Having taken a traveling bye, even this scribe was involved at one point with an opportunity for joint 2nd after round 5.

In round 5 John won the crucial encounter with Yoel Ferrer and drew his remaining game to take the title.

Alas, during the tournament, the dreaded mobile phone cost a player a game. This despite our best announcements, notice and reminders….!! It is relatively new for all concerned but its still unfortunate to have to let someone know that its game over.

There were a large gathering on joint 2nd, including Cork players Donal O’ Hallahan, Alex Martinovic and Joe Moroney. I missed out with a spectacular horror show gaff in round 6, but top ten was not so bad for my first Cork majors….??!

All results listed here.

In the minors section, there were 60 players of all ages and indeed a few internationals to add to the mix. Didier Mukekwa, Thabani Balang (ex-Cork, now Limerick…and playing while his expectant partner was 36 weeks gone..such commitment !!!! ) and Amin Shamsudin played impressively and were the front runners. Local performers Daniel Cashin and Mark O’Hallahan did very well also.

A lot of the young players appreciated the refreshments we laid on, we accept no responsibility for any hyper kids coming in round 6, but top ten was not so bad for my first Cork majors….??!

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All results listed here.
Alex Baburin also generously sponsored some vouchers for his book stall for some of the prizes.

There was no stopping Didier who ran out an excellent 6/6 finish with Thabani and Amin sharing joint second. Six players shared 4-9th place.


As a final treat for all young players, GM Alex Baburin held a Q&A session. I know from looking at the faces of some of the parents that they had probably primed their kids to ask questions they actually want to know. It was well received and definitely something to consider for a repeat performance next year. (Fresh questions please !!)

On behalf of Tom Hickey & myself, we hope those who played enjoyed the weekend and look forward to making it happen all again for 2008.

All the best,
Michael Bradley
Co-Tournament Director
April 2007

Letters to the Editor

Defaults

Dear Sir,
In case I don't get to the A.G.M I'd like to make a formal complaint about the number of opponents of mine who haven't turned up for their games during the last 12 months. The offending players are all habitually bad time keepers and the games they defaulted against me are not the only ones they've been guilty of missing. May I suggest some remedies:

1. Any player who is known for defaulting should be made to pay a 50 euro bond upon entering a tournament, if he turns up on time for all his games he gets it back if not he forfeits.
2. A player who does not turn up should be deemed to have lost on time and rated accordingly because that is in fact what has happened, the player has failed to make the first time control of 1 move in 60 minutes.
3. A player should be suspended after 2 defaults in a season.
4. This business of allowing a player an hour's grace should be scrapped (it is not a fide rule), 30 minutes is ample time for anybody. I used to play golf and you didn't get even 5 minutes grace yet it was never a problem.

This is not the first time that I have complained on this issue yet nothing is ever done.

Regards,
Peter Cafolla

Irish Championships

Just a few comments on the Irish Championships. Firstly it was a great improvement on the 12 player competition we had last year, BUT, given that there was generous sponsorship, I thought that it could have been held in a better room with suitable lighting and space between boards, silent air conditioning or windows etc. Also, the cheap clocks used were the worst I've come across in over 30 years of competition.

My main gripe however is with the fact that the tournament was open to everyone, and this isn't motivated by the fact that I lost to a 1700 (I lost to an 1100 2 years ago) rated player. There are a number of reasons I believe that the tournament should be restricted to players over 1800 or 1900 rating.

(1) There is little satisfaction in playing or beating a low rated player and the gulf is so great that the patzer doesn't even learn anything.
(2) It devalues our national title to have players of little more than beginner standard in it
(3) it is practically impossible for anyone to get a norm if they must play low rated players
(4) We reached a situation where the joint champions didn't get to play each other, this wouldn't have happened in a smaller field
(5) Stephen Brady is a worthy Irish champion and probably only second to the great J J O'Hanlon in terms of Irish title success but on this occasion he achieved the title by playing a lot of lower rated players (myself included) whereas Brian Kelly had to play all the G.Ms. Stephen himself pointed this out to me, showing that he is not only a great champion but a great sportsman too.

I was told that the sponsors insisted on the competition being open. If this is indeed the case then I think it can only be because no one pointed out the downsides. I thank Island Oil and Gas for their great sponsorship and hope that they and the ICU will put everything right for next year when we could have the best Irish Championships ever.

Regards,
Peter Cafolla
Bunratty Congress

Kevin Burke

Windy country roads, cold mornings, great pubs, chess boards – the end of February can only mean the annual congregation in Bunratty. The 14th incarnation was arguably the strongest ever as, although numbers were down to a mere 262, the Masters section boasted a record 48 entries, up 33% on last year. 4GMs, 8IMs, an FM, a WIM, a WFM, the cream of the Irish chess scene and numerous overseas players were all vying for the €1,000 top prize and, of course, the crystal trophy.

We had interesting results from the off – Éamon Keogh defeating Yuri Rochev. Rochev recovered to almost pull off a perfect Swiss Submarine set of results, winning his next four games before losing to Nicholas Pert GM to cost him a tie of the title.

The three way tie for first place doesn’t indicate the tightness of the competition – going into the last round, Rochev was one of six players in the lead on 4/5, and they were all drawn against each other in the decider. John Fedorowicz GM lost to Joel Benjamin GM and surprise package Antoon van Lanen – who had beaten reigning champion Simon Williams IM and drawn with Pert – lost to Gawain Jones IM. Amidst this carnage, Alexander Baburin GM came up on the rails to claim sole ownership of fourth place with a final round win over Mark Orr IM.

The title was decided on a blitz tie break – Pert lost out on a tie break, and Jones and Benjamin fought it out on the big screen; Benjamin had the advantage of the white pieces and used it to the full, beating Jones to take the trophy (the cash, as usual, was split between the three players).

Elsewhere, there were others not in the hunt for money, but still having an excellent tournament. One such player was Liam Normoyle – seeded 47 of the 48, the 1849-rated Normoyle turned in a 2250 performance, finishing on 3½/6, the same score as Éaom Keogh, while 46th seed Jan Mueller ended on 3/6.

Down to the Challengers so, which was won by Paul Kiely, the only player to have played in every Bunratty tournament to date. Dropping only a half point to top seed Sam Osborne, he was a worthy winner and sealed victory with a last round win over Tom Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick, who was only four points over the bottom rating band, turned in one of the best performances in the competition to take a share of third on 4½/6, as did Vincent Bissett, eight points higher rated but who finished on the same score.

The Major competition was won, again on 5½/6, by a rather interesting character – Gabriel Mirza, who now lives in Limerick, formerly played football for Romanian side Otelul Galati, and was involved when they beat Juventus 1-0 in the First Round of the 1989/90 UEFA Cup. They did go on to lose the second leg 5-0 in the Stadio Delle Alpi, but it’s not an experience most of the rest of us chess players can match! Youl Ferrer, winner of the Leinster Championships two months previously, continued his good form to take third – he was on 4/4 before losing a crunch tie against Mirza.

The largest section, as usual, was the Minor section, although it was smaller than previous years. It’s a notoriously difficult section to predict, as unrated players can come from nowhere to make a challenge. It ended in a tie between Darlington Mabuzwe and Stephen Cunningham. The latter’s only dropped half point came in an agreed quick draw on Saturday evening – a rather precocious touch from a 12-year old! – while Mabuzwe went into the last round on 5/5, knowing a win over John McKenna would ensure overall success, but he had to settle for a draw and a big screen blitz play-off. Completely unfazed, Cunningham blitzed (if you’ll pardon the pun!) the decider and afterwards admitted that he knew he was winning because of the cheers coming from the next room. As he collected his trophy, he dropped it – fortunately, it remained intact, although it led Gerry Graham to quip “Of all the times to drop a piece”.

The prizegiving ceremony also saw Alexander Baburin presented with a special trophy by the ICU for his work in Irish chess.

One other major event during the weekend was the delay of Round 4, much to the bemusement of the foreign contingent, who couldn’t understand the fascination of the egg-chasing which was relayed live on the big screen in the bar area. But they were never going to persuade the organisers of a tournament just a few miles from the rugby heartland of Limerick to turn off Ireland’s historic thrashing of England in Croke Park just so they could play a chess game! It would never happen at any other tournament, some noted.

But then, there isn’t really another tournament like Bunratty.

De Jonge,H - Baburin GMA[D21]
Bunratty Masters (1), 23.02.2007


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Keogh, H - Rochev, Y [B23]
Bunratty Masters (1), 23.02.2007


Baburin, G.M - Wuts FM,F [A40]
Bunratty Masters (2), 24.02.2007
[Alexander Baburin (www.chesstoday.net)]
1.d4 b5 2.e4 Bb7 (D)

3.Bxb5
I was surprised after the game that this logical move is not as popular as 3.f3 or 3.Bd3. Of course, central pawns are important, but so is the lead in development which White is about to acquire. 3.f3 a6 4.Be3 e6 5.Nd2 Nf6 6.c3 Be7 7.Bd3 d6 8.a4 c6 9.Ne2 Nbd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Ng3 Re8 12.axb5 axb5 13.Rxa8 Qxa8 14.Qe2 Bf8 15.b4± Petrovian-Spasky, Moscow 1966.

3...Bxc3 4.Nf3 e6

5.0-0 c5?
This is almost suicidal - lagging behind in development, Black creates pawn tension in the centre. 6.Nc3 Bc6 The only move. The position after 6...Bb7 7.d5 does not look pretty for Black.

7.Bxc6
Of course, I looked at 7.d5 exd5 but was not sure how to make it work. It seems that after 8.Bf4! d4 9.Bxc6 dxc6 10.Ne4 White has fantastic compensation for a pawn.

7...dxc6 (D)

Here I spent a while trying to find the best move. White's position looks overwhelming, but he has no pawn breaks in the centre. In such situations the best policy is to engage the opponent in immediate action and try to get some permanent advantage instead of the temporary (lead in development) one. Black would be even worse off after 7...Nxc6? 8.d5

8.dxc5! Nd7?
I thought that Black had to play 8...Qxd1 9.Rxd1 Bxc5 10.Ne4 Be7 11.Nd6+ Bxd6 12.Rxd6 (D)

Here the dark squares in the black's camp are chronically weak, which is a permanent disadvantage.

9.b4! a5 10.b5 Nxc5 11.bxc6 Qb6 12.Rb1
Also good was 12.Ne5 12...Qxc6 13.Ne5 Qa6
More resilient was 13...Qc8 14.Qf3 Nf6 (D)

The Irish Chess Journal
15.Rb6! Qa7
15...Qc8 16.Rc6 Qb7 17.Be3+-
16.Qc6+
16.Qc6+ Nfd7 17.Nxd7 Nxd7 18.Rb7
1-0

Benjamin GM,J - Williams IM,S [A96]
Bunratty Masters (3), 24.02.2007

1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6
12.e4 f4 13.d5 cxd5 14.e5 dxe5 15.cxd5 fxg3 16.hxg3  Qf7
21.Ne5 Qc7 (D)

31.Bf4  Rf8  32.Nc5  Bc5  33.Nxd7  Bb4  34.Kg1  Qa5  35.Nb6
Qc7  36.Rf1  Be6  37.Kg2  Be7  38.Rf7  Qc7  39.Rf1  Qd6
40.Kg3  Bh4  41.Kg2  Qc7  42.Rf7  Bf2  43.Kg1  Qd6
44.Kg2  Bh4  45.Kg1  Qc7  46.Kg2  Be7  47.Kg1  Qc7
48.Kg2  Bh4  49.Kg1  Qc7  50.Kg2  Be7  51.Kg1  Qc7
52.Kg2  Bh4  53.Kg1  Qc7  54.Kg2  Be7  55.Kg1  Qc7
56.Kg2  Bh4  57.Kg1  Qc7  58.Kg2  Qf4
1-0

Fedorowicz GM,J - Benjamin GM,J [A09]
Bunratty Masters (6), 25.02.2007

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 e5 5.0-0 Nf6 6.d3 Nxd7
16.Nb3 Ba4 17.Qe1 Bxc3 18.Qxc3 Qd3 19.f4 Qxc3
20.bxc3 Ng6 (D)

Nxe3 31.Rxe3 Rd2+ 32.Re2 Rd6 33.Re3 b6 34.Rd3 Rxd3

35.Bxd3 Ra6 36.Rb1 h6 37.Rd3 f5 38.h5 Be6 39.Kd2 Kg6
40.Kc2 Bf7 41.Be2 Be6 42.Rd1 Ke7 43.Re1 Kf6 44.Bf1
Bf7 45.Rb1 Ke7 46.Kd2 Kd6 47.Be2 Be6 48.Kc2 Kc7
49.Bd3 Ra7 50.Re1 Kd6 51.Re5 Ra8 52.Kc1 Ra4 53.Bxf5
Bxf5 54.Rxf5 Rxc4 55.Kc2 Re4 56.Kb3 Re3 57.g4 b5
58.Kxa3 Rxc3+ ... 0-1 time

Normoyle,L - Redmond,J [C03]
Bunratty Masters (6), 25.02.2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6
1-0

http://members.aol.com/bunrattychess/
Test Your Tactics
Puzzles from the Irish Championships.

A) 

Egan, C - Normoyle, L
IRL-ch Dublin (2), 01.07.2007
White to play

B) 

McCarthy, G - Khonji, H
IRL-ch Dublin (3), 02.07.2007
White to play

C) 

Hogarty, P - Lynch, P
IRL-ch Dublin (4), 03.07.2007
White to play

D) 

Egan, C - McCarthy, G
IRL-ch Dublin (4), 03.07.2007
Black to play and win

E) 

Brady, S - Redmond, J
IRL-ch Dublin (8), 07.07.2007
White to play

F) 

O'Connell, G - Jeffares, S
IRL-ch Dublin (9), 08.07.2007
White to play

Solutions at the end of the next article!!
Marek Goban retains the Galway Winter League
Ronan Duke

The Galway Winter League 2006/07 started on November 16, 2006 and was played over 7 rounds with Marek Goban as defending champion.

24 players entered in this, the 5th running of the main ICU-rated competition in Connaught during the winter months. Defending champion Marek Goban had a fairly trouble-free journey towards retaining his title, only conceding one draw, to Mike O'Donnell in the final round. Zaidan Zulkipli was clear runner-up, a full point ahead of a group of 4 players on 4.5/7. Third prize went to Paul Ward by the tightest of tie-break margins from Mike O'Donnell. The grading prize went to Amin Shamsudin, also on 4.5/7.

The Galway Chess Club would like to thank John McKenna (from the Ballinasloe Club) for doing most of the organizing for this competition. We would also like to thank all those who came from Ballinasloe and Westport every 3 weeks to play in the tournament and gave much needed life to the competition.

Munster
Jim Olney

DOUGLAS have regained the Munster League Division One trophy they last won in 1997 and in so doing deprived runners-up Ennis of a fourth title in a row. Cork 'A' finished third, while Limerick were relegated after a tough battle with CCYMS.

Final scores: 1, Douglas 44/60; 2, Ennis 37.5; 3, Cork 'A' 32.5; 4, Cork 'B' 28; 5, Sarsfield 28; 6, CCYMS 20.5; 7, Limerick 19.5.

Douglas brought off a fine coup by acquiring the services of English import Simon Williams. The 27-year-old international master has attained five grandmaster norms and his rating is fast closing in on the requisite 2500 he needs for the GM title, having made IM at the age of 15 over a decade ago. Williams scored 7.5/8 on top board, while FM Alex Lopez, alternating between boards one and two, achieved a perfect 11/11, missing just the last match with the title already secured.

In his two battles with the Ennis club's grandmaster top board, Williams scored 1.5/2.

Williams,S - Jones,G [B22]
Munster League Division 1, 2007
1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.Bc4 e6 6.Qxd4

Leinster
Kevin Burke

The Leinster leagues concluded at the end of March with their usual high drama, with Rathmines A sealing the Armstrong title after holding off a fierce late charge from Kilkenny in Inchicore.

They went into the final day a point ahead of Gonzaga, and level with Kilkenny, who had recorded an 8-0 win over Drogheda in Round 10 to come right back into contention after a slow start. Gonzaga, however, could only manage a 4-4 draw against Trinity on the final day, which left just Kilkenny and Rathmines in title contention. Despite Alexander Baburin winning what all around assumed was a lost end-game – Queen, Bishop, Rook and four pawns against Queen, two Rooks and four pawns – Kilkenny’s 6-2 win against Dublin just wasn’t enough to sneak a second successive Armstrong as Rathmines beat Dún Laoghaire 6½-1½ to win the league by the narrowest of margins. An 8-0 win for Phibsboro on the last day – also against Drogheda – saw them sneak a tie for third.

It was a rather ignominious season for the Louth club, who recorded just 5 points from their last six games (one a walkover), including all the clubs who ended the season in the top five places. They will be hoping to regroup in the...
Heidenfeld next year, as will Bray/Greystones, relegated after a season in which they called on 20 players.

Their places in the Armstrong will be taken by Rathmines [they have since declined their place as they have two Armstrong teams already - ed.] and Phibsboro, which means the two Dublin clubs will have almost half the league teams between them – two Phibsboro teams and a remarkable three Rathmines teams. It has happened before with Elm Mount, but it will put a lot of strain on the club who will be looking to their fourth team – relegated to the Ennis – for subs, as you can’t sub for a team in the same division, or sub up to two different teams in the same division. With their first team presumably going to be calling the shots in their attempt to retain their league title, it looks like a long season ahead for Rathmines C next year.

For their part, Phibsboro only sealed promotion on a tie-break from Elm Mount, whom they beat 4½-3½ at the start of the season. They nearly threw away promotion on the last day when they lost 5-3 to Celbridge, but Elm Mount just couldn’t take advantage, winning 4½-2½ (one default) against Lucan. Kilkenny – who would have forced a three-way tie with a 6-2 win over Curragh on the last day – look to be a good bet for next season’s title, with a squad which includes the likes of Aravind Menon, Poormina Menon WFM and Shane Manning, along with, presumably, the newest young stars being brought through on the Kilkenny conveyor belt.

Another tight finish in the Ennis, where a single point separated Elm Mount A, Inchicore and Phibsboro in the end. A last-day shoot out between Elm Mount A and Inchicore saw the former win out in the latter’s home venue – a 3½-2½ win securing the title. With the top two playing each other, there was always the possibility of third placed Phibsboro sneaking promotion on the rails, but they could only manage a 4-2 win against relegated Finglas. At one stage, it appeared as if a whitewash was on the cards, but Finglas fought back, albeit in vain from their point of view. Benildus and Aer Lingus also had an outside shout of promotion on the final day – Benildus beating Aer Lingus winning 3½-2½ despite conceding one board due to a miscalculation on one player’s part in the changing of the clocks! It’s the second year in a row Benildus have missed out on promotion on the final day – Benildus beating Aer Lingus winning 3½-2½ despite conceding one board due to a miscalculation on one player’s part in the changing of the clocks! It’s the second year in a row Benildus have missed the ties of the tournament. Aer Lingus, meanwhile, concluded a remarkable season in which John Quigley drew his first nine games before winning one and losing one, while Jim Kenny drew nine and lost one of his ten games! At the bottom, Gonzaga’s total of 22 players was the highest used by any of the 66 league teams over the season.

To the O’Hanlon league next, and Kilkenny’s ever-growing influence on Leinster chess was felt here too, with a 5-1 win over Drogheda – who must really hate the Cats at this stage – putting the gloss on a 7½ point victory in the league, the second highest league winning margin this season. Two 3½-2½ wins against Phibsboro and Balbriggan were as bad as it got, with Anthony Baker, John Courtney and Michael Tierney all taking board prizes, with Robert White and Frank Harte just a half point off. Longford join them in getting promoted – an amazing third straight promotion for the club since joining the Bodley in 2004/05.

With only eleven teams in the division, there was only one relegation spot to avoid, and it went to an over-stretched Elm Mount side, who were also relegated from the BAs in rather emphatic fashion, with 2½ points in total and conceding 13 walkovers. Promotion was a clear three horse race, with Royal Lopez, Portmarnock and Classic Kings ten points ahead of the chasing pack. This one also went down to the final day, where Royal Lopez – average rating 1563 – beat Bray/Greystones – average rating 904 plus two ungraded players – 5-0, while Portmarnock beat Celbridge 4½ – (-½) (not a typo!), all of which rendered Classic Kings’ 3-2 final-day win over Jobstown irrelevant. With four 1500+ players, though, the Dunshaughlin team should be able to seal promotion next season. Board prizes went to 913-rated Eóin O’Dwyer from Portmarnock with 9½/11, Royal Lopez’s John Farren, who scored 9½/9, and Senan Bannon and Éamon Launders of Classic Kings, both with 8½.

The Bodley was a more informal affair, with no last-day meeting. Naomh Barrog continue to crush all in their path and sealed promotion with a 9½ point margin, dropping just ½ points in their opening four games, and only two more overall! Phibsboro looked like favourites to join them in the BA, and Portmarnock were in contention too, but heavy defeats to Naomh Barrog let Rathmines slip past them, earning promotion by a half point margin.

**More information:**

The current Leinster league tables are available from both of the following sites:

- [http://www.chessleague.net/](http://www.chessleague.net/) (Peter Scott)
- [http://www.leinsterchess.com](http://www.leinsterchess.com) (LCU official site)

More information on the Galway Winter League can be found on Galway Chess Club's homepage: [www.galwaychess.net](http://www.galwaychess.net)

**Solutions to the tactical puzzles**

B) 15.Nxd5 Be7 16.Rxc5 1-0
C) 20.Nxf5! 1-0
D) 28...Qxh2+! 0-1
The 2006/07 Leinster league seasons were rather unusual for me – due to a quirk whereby we had a bye in the last round of the O’Hanlon, I ended up getting a full season in Division Four before subbing up to our threadbare Division Three a lot earlier than I’d otherwise have been able to. In all, I played ten games for the O’Hanlon (scoring 7/10 on board 1) and five for the Ennis (scoring 4½/5 around boards 4 to 6). A decent performance, then, and one which helped my rating jump over 70 points – possibly enough to jump up a place in the club rankings and claim a spot on the Ennis for this year.

However, my form (and the strength of my opponents) on both teams made me think about whether I’d actually be better off staying on the O’Hanlon to play Board 1 again. There’s often some strong players on Board 1 in any division, particularly small regional clubs who have one or two very strong players but don’t have the strength in depth overall to reach the higher leagues. On the bottom board, meanwhile, you’re more likely to encounter subs from the lower teams, which defeats the whole point of moving up a division.

Yes, I reckoned – Board 1 in the O’Hanlon is surely better than Board 6 in the Ennis. But is it? And if so, is it better than Board 5? Just how do the boards overall compare?

A simple test was called for. Using the excellent www.ChessLeague.net, I was able to calculate the average strength of each board in each division in Leinster and make a very quick comparison. I only bothered doing this for the first series of matches – there isn’t likely to be a significant difference over the season as, by and large, the same players play on the same boards. Unrated players were ignored for the test, which leads to a bit of disorientation down around the Bodley, but other than that is again insignificant.

Much to my smug satisfaction, I was proved right – Board 1 in the O’Hanlon was on average a remarkable 172 points stronger than Board 6 in the Ennis. But is it? And if so, is it better than Board 5? Just how do the boards overall compare?

So think carefully about stepping up a team. It’s certainly good for the CV, but don’t go expecting it to provide a tougher challenge!

### Table: How the various boards measure up. Data compiled from the LCU chess league site.

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Ennis Open

Rory Quinn

The inaugural Ennis Open was held at the Auburn Lodge Hotel over the weekend of the 13th-15th April. 59 competitors played over two sections, an open (including the North Munster Championship) and an U1400 with a number of players rated under 1400 opting to play in the Open. The organizers had hoped for a slightly larger turnout but a plethora of recent tournaments combined with the good weather meant that numbers were a bit lower than expected. Nevertheless those who did turn up were rewarded with some fireworks both on and off the board.

Top seed in the Open section was the chess coach at Millfield School and former Channel 4 Countdown champion GM Matthew Turner, a full 200 points higher rated than second seed Karl McPhillips. Last year’s North Munster champion, Gawain Jones, was not in attendance, having bigger fish to fry at the European Championships in Dresden. In any case Gawain would have been ineligible to win the North Munster as he is now resident in Enniskillen.

In the end Matthew fully justified his seeding with a comfortable win on 5½ points. The only blot on his copybook was a draw with Rory Quinn in round 5 when on the black side of an Accelerated Dragon he seemed to stand better but, just as the clock started to become a factor, allowed a tactic which transposed into an opposite coloured bishop ending. In the previous round Matthew playing the white side of his favoured English opening dispatched Karl McPhillips and he has kindly annotated the game. In the last round Matthew beat Paul Kiely after breaking through on the queenside in an English. This meant that Rory Quinn needed to beat Karl McPhillips on board two to catch him. After a complicated game in which the advantage swung back and forth a number of times the players entered a time scramble when, with both flags hanging, Karl blundered a piece only for Rory to miss the best continuation and a drawn position with knight and g pawn against f and far advanced a pawn was reached. This left Matthew in clear first, Rory finished second and won the North Munster title though he was helped somewhat by the vagaries of the Swiss system, receiving consecutive whites in the last two rounds. Karl finished in third place.

The U1800 section was won by Nick Larter from Ennis who also won a trophy donated by Marcel Castricums parents, Henk and Elly. The U1500 grading prize was shared between promising Cork junior Hugh Doyle (who followed up with a win at the Irish U12 championships the following weekend) and Yoel Ferrer who benefited from Stefan Tomczak’s forfeit of both his Sunday games. Stefan (who maybe has watched “The Prestige” one too many times!?) did his very own disappearing act from a crowded Brandons nightclub in the early hours of Sunday morning and subsequently forfeited both games later that day.

The U1400 turned out to be an eventful tournament with a mobile phone related incident and some controversy before the start of the 4th round with two participants disagreeing on the result of their round 3 game, one claiming that the result was a draw and the other that his opponent had resigned. The language barrier was something of an issue here but everything was eventually resolved amicably although it did delay the start of round 4 somewhat.

Darlington Mabazwe from Zimbabwe but now living in Ennis followed up his success at Bunratty by sharing first place in the U1400 with Lucas Almeida. Darlington’s last round draw with Anne Coughlan allowed Lucas to catch him with a win over Pat Coleman but Darlington won the Marcel Castricum shield on tiebreak. Third place was shared between Anne Coughlan of Cork and John Bourke of Castlebar. This may have softened the blow a bit for John, one of whose tips for the Grand National the previous day had fallen early. U1000 grading prizes went to Lathish Nair and Kevin Fitzpatrick. The U800 section was won by fast improving junior Billy McKenna on 4 points. Geronimo Alcantara from Letterkenny also won a prize in this section. Junior prizes for best Ennis, Killimer and Ballinasloe player were won by Karl Fitzmaurice, Jack McKenna, and Claire Bannon respectively. The prize for best girl in the U1400 section was won by Aoife Keane.

Finally special mention must go to the player in the U1400 who learned on Sunday that he had become a father for the first time. Undaunted he stayed to finish both his games. He lost both, later admitting his mind wasn’t really on the games and that he found it difficult to concentrate. Now that’s what I call dedication to the game!

Thanks to our sponsors the Auburn Lodge Hotel, Shannonside Building Supplies and Power One. Without their assistance the event could not have gone ahead.

Turner, Matthew - McPhillips, Karl

Ennis Open, Ennis, R4, 15 Apr 2007

Notes by GM Matthew Turner

1.e4 Nc6 2.g3

Karl seems to always play Nc6 on move 1 and I had considered playing a Chigorin, which seems to give White a safe advantage, but I decided to stick to the old reliable English

2...e5 3.Bg2 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e3 d6 6.Nge2 h5

An attempt to mix it up. I don't want to respond with h4 because I will probably want to play f4 later and this will leave g4 horribly weak. I could just ignore 6...h5 and play 7. d4 h4 8. d5 N(c)e7 9. e4 when we have some strange King's Indian set up where I suspect white is doing quite well. However, I tried to keep flexibility with 7. h3

7.h3 Nh6 8.d3 0-0 9.Rb1 Be6 10.h4 Qd7 11.b5 Nbd8 12.Bd2

I like this move because it maintains my options. It means for example that if later I play f4 and Black captures I can take back with the Knight. I am not sure what Black should do now although it might be worth playing a6 to hold of any serious decisions for some time. An unusual idea is f6
so that later the knights can use both f5 and f7
12...f5 13.f4 e4 14.Qc2 c6
I had expected 14...exd3 15. Qxd3 Qf7 when 16. Nd5 e6 is horrible for White and 16 Bd5 looks a little suspicious. However 16. Rb4 seems to maintain the advantage.
15.0-0 d5 16.bxc6 Bxc6 17.Na4 Nb7
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I get really sick of main lines sometimes, and who doesn't? I can't help feeling that I should probably know them a bit better, but that takes more time than I have to give. Not so John Watson. He's not merely studied, but had a significant impact on the main lines in the French for over twenty years with three editions of his trend-setting Play the French. Everyman have recruited him to contribute to a fascinating new series, in which a number of sidelines for both colours of a major opening are examined.

In Dangerous Weapons: The French (the other books in the series are on the Sicilian and the Nimzo-indian, and have been well received), Watson seems to have taken to his task with glee, recommending fascinating, obscure lines he feels are actually pretty good. Some of these lines have undeservedly bad reputations, others are just obscure. Many of them have only a couple of high level games to their name. Nevertheless, some of them may be very popular in a few years – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 h6!?? Looks particularly appealing to me, and Watson has been quoted as claiming that this "just has to be good" against "the anti-positional 3.Nd2." I've already heard a club-level French specialist declare his love for 3.Nc3 Nc6, which, obscure as it is, has been experimented with by Morozovich and Topalov and is an important part of the repertoires of several lesser GMs, including GM Rosentalis, the top seed at this year's Irish Championships (though he preferred the Winawer against David Fitzsimons!).

A list of these lines is in order. The first six are recommendations for White, the remainder are for Black.

Chapter 1) 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.e5 h6 6.Be3
Chapter 2) 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 e5 Nfd7 Bxe7 Qxe7 Qh5
Chapter 3) 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.Qg4
Chapter 4) 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.exd5 exd5 5.Qf3
Chapter 7) 3.Nc3 Nc6
Chapter 8) 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 cxd4
Chapter 9) 3.Nc3 h6
Chapter 10) 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Bf8; and 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Ng8
Chapter 11) 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Nh6

Chapter 12) 3.Nd2 h6
Chapter 13) 3.Nd2 a6
Chapter 14) 3.Nd2 Nc6

Each chapter follows a set format. A page or so is spent on the history of the line and the basic ideas behind it. This is followed by an illustrative game. Finally, we have a theory section, which looks at the main lines in a little depth.

My reservations with this book are entirely superficial. The overall presentation has a slightly gimmicky look, emphasised by the little icons such as a pair of dice for a risky line, or a cannon for a 'dangerous weapon' – which seems to be anything from an attacking line to a strong thematic idea. The diagrams are a bit awkward, with a strange presentation where they are two abreast. This often leaves diagrams quite far from their reference in the text, which I found annoying. These minor issues really don't count for much – I wish the only complaint I ever had about books involved trivial formatting issues!

Dangerous Weapons: The French is an absolute must for players who use the French Defence, interesting for people looking for an offbeat but useful line against it as White, and worth a look for anyone interested in quirky lines where they can be creative.

The Immortal Game
David Shenk

Souvenir Press
Hardback: 313 pages
Price around €30
ISBN 978 0 285 63786 3
September 2006.

"How 32 carved pieces on a board illuminated our understanding of War, Art, Science and the Human Brain," the dust jacket of this book claims ambitiously. It's a history of the game interwoven with the moves of the 'Immortal Game', Anderssen v Kieseritzky, 1851, written by an amateur player who clearly has a passion for the subject. The book is aimed at a very broad market, with the rules of the game covered in an appendix, and no prior understanding assumed.

The history runs from the origins of the game in the middle east to the future of computer chess, discussing the social standing and influences of the game throughout. This part of the book is fairly well researched (there are a few minor errors here and there, though only the very well versed on the subject will spot them). The analysis can seem like the author is stretching at times, but overall adds well to a nice collection of anecdotes and an well-told narrative.

The Immortal Game is returned to about every other chapter, at a pace of about two moves per chapter. Because of the intended readership, the style of the notes is very unusual. Each move is explained in simple prose, in a superficial fashion. Interspersed among the notes is more
background to the game, as well as more general musings – the concept of the opening is explained at one point, along with the earliest references to it in Arabic texts. These notes, while interesting and well written, are frustrating for a more experienced player to read. There are several moves in the game which are known to be errors (you can’t lose that spectacularly and quickly without making some errors!) but this is entirely ignored. There is never any discussion of alternatives. The notes are a lovely introduction to the game for a novice, but for all the beauty of the game itself, it’s a bit annoying to regular players to have no real commentary on it.

Overall, *The Immortal Game* is well written and worth a read. It may however be best suited as a gift for a friend who doesn’t play much, or a long-suffering spouse who would like to know what the heck you see in the game. Unfortunately, an ill-advised section on the Freudian view of the game makes it impossible to recommend for kids, unless you’d like to work through the book with a child, skipping over that point.

**The c3 Sicilian**

*Sam Collins IM*

Gambit Publications

Paperback: 111 pages

RRP €20.35

ISBN-10: 1904600719


April 2007.

Sam’s latest book was out in April. I haven’t had a chance to read it yet myself, but I’m sticking it in here anyway as a new book by an Irish author is of interest to the public anyway. It covers the c3 Sicilian (1.e4 c5 2.c3), an opening with a solid reputation.

Gambit have an extract available ([http://www.gambitbooks.com/pdfs/719Samp.pdf](http://www.gambitbooks.com/pdfs/719Samp.pdf)).

I’ll quote just one review, but there are more available online, and I’ve found them to be uniformly positive.

“[Collins’] honesty is wonderfully refreshing, because most opening books are written with some bias, and while Collins may favor White’s chances slightly more than Black’s, he generally ‘calls ’em as he sees them.’ In addition, I found his game commentary to be very instructive, insightful and even enjoyable. There is a fair share of variations in the annotations to the main games, but there is far more prose, and you can actually read the book without using a chess board and still learn plenty in the process. The games are well-chosen and the text is well-written, so it is rather easy to recommend this book to a wide audience, whether you play the c3-Sicilian or not. Of course, those who play this opening as white or face it as black should buy this book without hesitation.” - Carsten Hansen, [www.chesscafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com)

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**ICU Ratings**

The latest list was published in January.

Members can view their rating on [www.icu.ie](http://www.icu.ie) where you can also view your rating history and sort the rating list by rating, club, etc. Please note that this list only contains players who are current members of the ICU.

The next rating list is expected to be out shortly.

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**FIDE Ratings**

This is the July 2007 FIDE list. The next update is due in October.

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Upcoming Tournaments

Galway Chess Congress 2007

Dates Sep 21-23, 2007
Location Salthill Hotel, Galway
Prize Fund €4000
Contact Ronan Duke, 091 471792

Irish Veteran Championship

The Irish Veterans' Championship, originally advertised for September 1-3, has been postponed to a date to be announced (probably October). Look out for details reappearing in the Calendar section of icu.ie in due course.

Contact Andrew Thomson, 041 9836110

Gonzaga Charity Classic

Dates Feb 1-3, 2008
Location Gonzaga College SJ, Sandford Road, Dublin 6
Prize Fund €2000
Contact Michael O Toole, Phone 0830077317, otoole.timmy@gmail.com

Tournaments for which we don't have any information:

- Kilkenny, Late November
- Limerick, October?
- Benildus Charity Blitz, early January

Watch out for these on www.icu.ie

Anyone for Chess 2007

One Day Fun Tournament

Date Sep 29, 2007
Location Kilmurray House Hotel, Castletroy, Limerick
Contact Shirley Bennett, shirleybennett@eircom.net, 061 378753

Primary Schools - Teams of 4
Format 5 round Swiss
Round Times Check in 10.00, event starts 10.30 & ends 16.30
Entry Fee 40.00 Euro per Team
Notes Lunch is available at a cost of 6.00 EURO per person (Sausages & Mash & Drink)

Secondary School - Individual
Format 5 round Swiss
Round Times Check in 10.00, event starts 10.30 & ends 16.30
Entry Fee 20.00 Euro per person
Notes Two sections (1st year to junior cert and 4th year to leaving cert)

Limerick Monthly Rapidplays

Dates Sep 9, 2007 to Apr 13, 2008
Location Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Castletroy, Limerick
Contact John Alfred, chessadare@yahoo.co.uk, 087 6794211

Primary Schools - Teams of 4
Format 5 round Swiss
Round Times Check in 10.00, event starts 10.30 & ends 16.30
Entry Fee 40.00 Euro per Team
Notes Lunch is available at a cost of 6.00 EURO per person (Sausages & Mash & Drink)

Secondary School - Individual
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