

2007

The Irish Chess Union Presents

Junior Chess Corner

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Contents

Editorial	3
A Letter from Irish Champion FM Stephen Brady	4
How to Read Chess Notation	6
Beginning Chess: Scholar's Mate and Other Essentials	8
David Fitzsimons reports from Spain on his first victory against a GM	14
Ireland's Top Junior Siblings: Poornima and Aravind Menon	19
An Interview with Kilkenny's Ryan-Rhys Griffiths	31
Shannon's Stephen Hanley on his All-Time Favourite Game and Chess Book	35
Tactical Wizardry with GM Alexander Baburin	45
Introducing Gearóidín Úí Laighéis: The ICU Women's Officer	46
Meet the Parents: Practical Advice for Parent's Starting out in Irish chess	49
Irish Chess Families: a Profile of John and Robert White	54
Dublin's Nicky Benson Analyses a Near Brilliance from Bunratty	60
Profiling some chess coaches and organizers	65
Beginner's Corner: "Castling" and "En Passant" Explained Simply	69

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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.



The Generation Game:- Eight year old Billy McKenna (left) takes on 82 year old Joe Browne at the Ennis Open in April.

Editorial



Dear Chess Friends,



It is with great pleasure that the Irish Chess Union launches the first edition of *Junior Chess Corner*, a chess magazine for young Irish chess players. Currently Irish chess stands at a unique crossroads. Thanks in part to the highly successful Checkmate chess in schools program, and the dedication of many chess enthusiasts and organizers, the last ten years have seen an explosion of interest in Ireland in the world's oldest and most fascinating of sports. Currently we estimate that there are upwards of 8,000 children playing the game

on a regular basis in primary and secondary schools across the country. *Junior Chess Corner* hopes to provide an outlet for young Irish chess players to learn more about chess and also to follow the exploits of the top Irish boys and girls in their own age groups. This first issue, features a number of top Irish juniors, including David Fitzsimons (15) from Dublin, who recently became the youngest ever Irishman to beat a Grandmaster at an International tournament in Spain. Here you can also read about one of Ireland's most exciting young prospects, Poornima Menon (14) from Kilkenny, who last summer represented the Irish Senior Women's team at the Chess Olympiad in Turin. For those who have only taken up the game recently, see how Ryan Rhys Griffiths of Kilkenny, obtained an international chess rating after only two years of playing chess that placed him in the top twenty chess players of his age in the world. We hope that these and other stories will be inspirations to the many children who play chess across the country. As the summer approaches, many parents whose children have recently taken up the game may wonder what is involved in bringing your child to a chess tournament either at home or abroad, so we have asked a number of parents to give their views and provide advice to those who are new to Irish chess and you can read what they have to say in *Meet the Parents!*

Lastly, this summer marks two exciting International Chess Events, which will involve young Irish players. The first sees the return of the Irish Championships to the Royal Dublin Hotel, from 30TH June to the 8th of July, where Irish junior and senior players will be competing against a number of International grandmasters and hoping to score Grandmaster results.

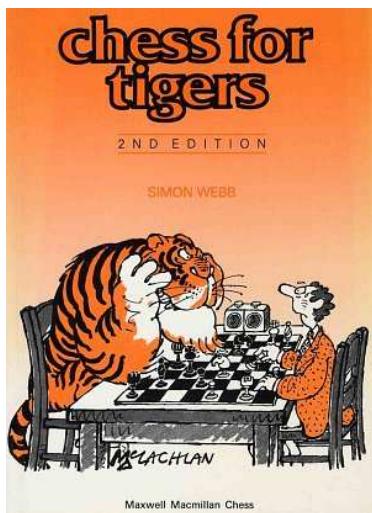
Another hugely important event this summer is Ireland's hosting of the *Glorney and Faber Cup* in DCU from 25-27th of July, which will involve teams of boys and girls (Under-19) from four different countries as well as a tri-nations event involving upwards of 120 international juniors. Subject to sponsorship, the ICU hopes to run a number of ancillary events for juniors during the *Glorney and Faber*, so come along and support Irish boys and girls this year and see them competing against the best juniors that England, Wales and Scotland have to offer. The ICU are undertaking the running and financing of the *Glorney and Faber Cup* themselves and if you know of any company that would like to be associated with this event and perhaps sponsor a simultaneous display for Kids or live commentary of games for spectators throughout the competition, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Mark Quinn IM, John Healy.

A Letter of Encouragement from Current Irish Senior Champion Stephen Brady.

*Stephen has won the Irish Championships an impressive five times, marking him out as one of the most successful Irish players of all time. Stephen has also represented Ireland at three Chess Olympiads in Novi Sad (1990), Manila (1992) and Yerevan (1996) and has 54 caps for Ireland. Here he reflects on his own chess career as a junior and how a specific chess book, Simon Webb's *Chess for Tigers*, inspired him to win his first Irish Championships and then to achieve his first draw with an English Grandmaster.*

One of the things which separates chess from other sports is the ability for kids to compete on equal terms with adults, as size and physical strength aren't important. I don't know if it is common for young chess players to feel that they are particularly gifted, but I know I did. I started playing competitive chess at the age of 12, fully confident that I would be playing on the Irish senior team within a couple of years. Alas, fate dictated that I wasn't to be one of our sport's prodigies. It took six years before I finally got to play representative chess, when at the age of 18, I was finally selected to play in the inter-provincials on the Leinster B team! It wasn't quite what I had imagined when I started out playing chess, but four years later, at last I made it on to the Irish senior team. It was a big breakthrough for me and the year after that, I became Irish Senior champion.



I'm sure a number of my junior contemporaries were wondering what had happened, when, after having beaten me for years, I finally began to turn the tables. It is a puzzle to which I don't really have an answer. It may have been that as a junior I was a little immature, or perhaps my confidence was somewhat fragile. It might simply have been that I was a late developer. Looking back now, I like to think that my sudden improvement was down to reading *Chess for Tigers* by Simon Webb. I'm not sure what age group *Chess for Tigers* is aimed at. The illustrations, and some of the themes in the book imply that its intended readership was very young. Weaker players are referred to as *rabbits*, strong players are *heffalumps*, and you, the reader, are a *tiger*! "Tiger" doesn't refer to your strength, but rather to your attitude. *Tigers* are fighters, and go into every chess game with one aim – to win! The book is choc full of useful tips and advice – too much to go into here. But when I was an up and coming player, there was one piece of advice which I found particularly useful. This was how to trap *heffalumps*, in other words how to beat players stronger than yourself. The key advice that the author Simon Webb offered was:

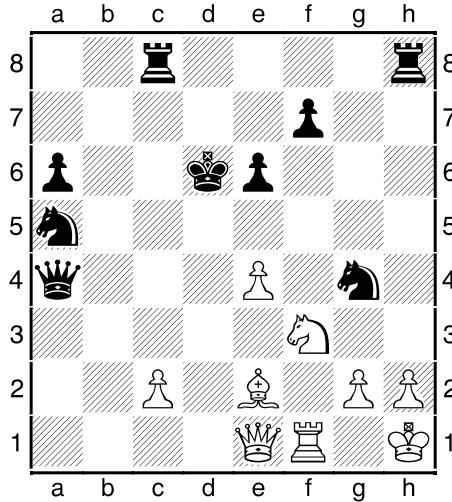
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1. *Play actively. Be aggressive, thus applying psychological pressure on your opponent.*
2. *Don't swap everything off, just for the sake of it.*
3. *Be brave. Its your opponent who should be nervous, not you. After all, you're expected to lose!*
4. *Randomize. The murkier the position, the more likely it is that your strong opponent will go wrong. Sure you might make a mistake yourself, but aren't you better off going down in flames than with a whimper.*

Shortly after reading this book, I played my first grandmaster, and applied the above techniques. It is a short game, which I'll give without comment, except to say that throughout the game, I wasn't sure if I was better or worse. More importantly though, neither did my opponent!

Brady,S (2460) - Plaskett,J [B60]
Lloyds Bank, 1989

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 Bd7 7.Be2 a6 8.0-0 e6 9.a4 Rc8 10.Kh1 Be7 11.f4 Qc7 12.Nf3 h6 13.Bh4 g5 14.fxg5 hxg5 15.Bxg5 Ng4 16.Bf4 Qb6 17.Qe1 Qxb2 18.Rb1 Qa3 19.Rxb7 Na5 20.Nb5 Qxa4 21.Rxd7 Kxd7 22.Nxd6 Bxd6 23.Bxd6 Kxd6
½-½



My opponent and I had consumed a lot of time reaching this complicated position, so I was happy to accept his draw offer. Playing actively and playing for murky complications had paid off. If I was to add any advice to that given in *Chess for Tigers*, it would be to play primarily for the enjoyment of the game, no matter what the result. Results aren't too important when you are young, and having moderate results in your youth need not have any affect on your future career. Just like me, you might also be a late developer!

Just in case anyone had difficulty following the moves to Stephen's game against GM Plaskett, don't worry. Now, we explain all about Chess Notation.

By writing down the moves of your games, you can play over your games afterwards and keep them. Next time you are playing in school or at home, why don't you try to record one of your own games and play through it afterwards. A lot of strong players would say that analysing your own games is the secret to becoming a strong player. And as you will see, once you know how to do it, it's easy, so give it a go, if you haven't done so before.

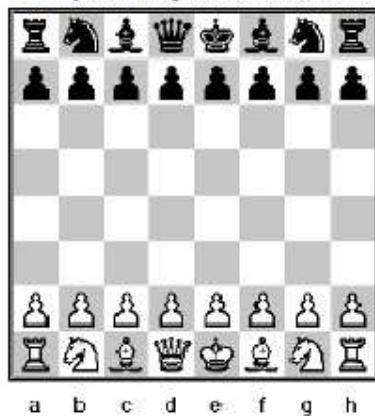
Chess Notation

All new players should learn to keep score using what is called "algebraic" notation. In the diagram above, you will notice that the board includes the numbers 1-8 along the left edge and the letters "a" - "h" along the bottom the board. We can use the combination of one letter and one number to describe each square on the board. The square in the bottom left hand corner is called "a1".

How To Read and Write Chess Moves

All new players should learn to keep score using what is called "algebraic" notation. In the diagram that follows, you will notice that the board includes the numbers 1 - 8 along the right edge and the letters "a" - "h" along the bottom of the board. We can use the combination of one letter and one number to describe each square on the chessboard.

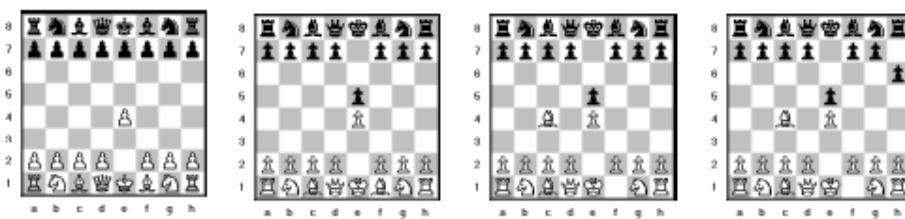
The important thing to remember is how to identify the pieces you are moving. You just need to use a single



- 8 For example, the white King begins the game on e1. The black Rooks begin the game on a8 and h8.
- 7 If I begin the game by pushing the pawn in front of the King two squares, we can describe the move as e2-e4, or simply e4.
- 6 Moving the Knight on g1 to f3 would be written g1-f3 or more simply Nf3.
- 5 An "x" is used to show that a capture has taken place. For example, Nx e4 means that the Knight moves and captures whatever was on e4.
- 4 You don't necessarily need to include "check" in your scoresheet, but you can easily do this with "ch" or just "+".
- 3 For mate many players use "#".
- 2
- 1

capital letter: K: King Q: Queen R: Rook B: Bishop N: Knight

Note that "P" is not used. Chess players have agreed that a move without a letter - such as e4 - is understood to be a pawn move.



1. e4

1...e5

2. Bc4

2...h6

3. Qh5

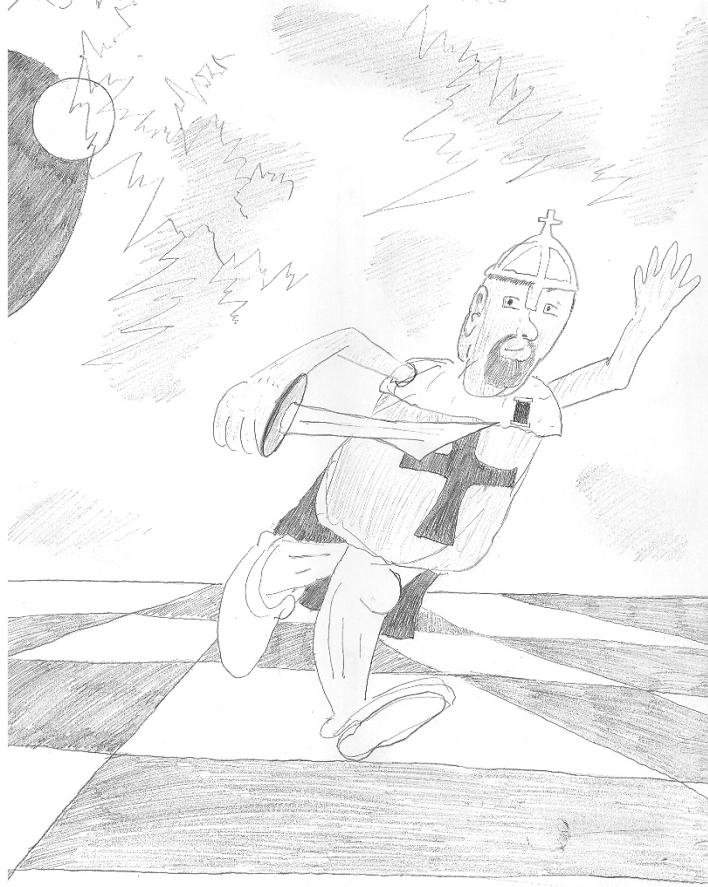
3...Nf6??

4. Qxf7#

Introducing Percy the Black Pawn

Remember:

It's a good idea to record your games so that you can learn from your mistakes when you look at them later.



Introducing Percy the Black Pawn!

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If you are just starting out in chess or are a little rusty, why not turn to pages 64-65 briefly to remind yourself of how to castle and the en passant rule.

Beginning Chess – Tips for Your First Chess Tournament

By Mark Quinn IM

One of the most important lessons that any chess player can learn, particularly when setting out to play in a tournament for the first time is how to learn to defend against *Scholar's mate*. I doubt there is a single chess player alive, who has not fallen into this trap. It is one of the most common sights on the chessboard at junior tournaments. The enthusiastic newcomer to the sport sits down against a more experienced opponent, full of hopes of crushing victories and creative brilliancies. White starts the game with his kings pawn, 1.e4, the most natural and popular move. Black replies in a similar fashion with 1...e5, also laying claim to the centre of the board. White whips his queen out to h5, and attacks black's king's pawn. Black spots this threat and defends the pawn by developing his knight to c6. White continues quietly developing his bishop to c4. There is more to this move than meets the eye on first sight however. This move is best (and most often accompanied) by a deceptively innocent expression or unassuming poker face. Black fails to sense the danger and moves quickly. He thinks to himself. The e5 pawn is defended. Now I can develop as usual. Why not bring my bishop out to c5. No better or more active square for my bishop! White dare not push my bishop back by moving his queen's pawn to d4, as it would be taken so I'll just keep on developing as normal...

Scholar's Mate

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4

White develops his bishop to the active c4 square and also eyes up the important f7 square beside the black king. Black will need to be careful over the next few moves not to get into trouble on the f7 square.

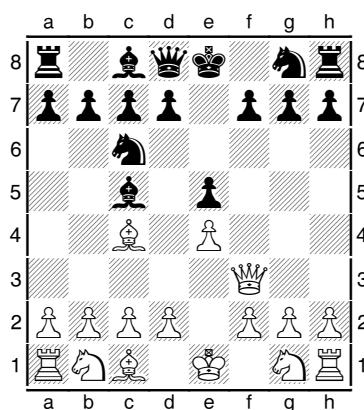
2...Nc6

While there is nothing wrong with this natural developing move, by playing Nf6 white would prevent white's next move from having any point, as the black knight would defend not only the h5 pawn from an attack by the white queen on h5, but also block the f7 pawn from an attack on the f-file.

3.Qf3

White brings his queen out and black must now ask himself why? What is the white queen doing there? What could she be attacking? Already there is a significant threat to the black monarch, but can black sense the danger.

3...Bc5 (D)



Black develops normally and does not pay attention to the white queen and bishop how they are both working together, to launch a decisive attack on f7. If black had played Nf6 or Q to either e7 or f6, disaster could have been averted. Always take the time to check carefully what your opponent might be up to.

4.Qxf7#

Black has missed the threat to the black king and cannot take the queen on f7 with the king, because that would be moving into check from the white squared bishop on c4. So, before the game has even begun, white has tricked black into losing in a few moves.

Perhaps the most important piece of advice to any chess player starting out is the following piece of advice. Always look carefully at your opponent's previous move. Don't respond automatically and simply play the first thing that comes into your mind. Always check to see, 1) what my opponent's last move is doing. 2) Is he or she attacking any of my pieces? 3) Is my king safe? In the game above black fails to pay attention to white's previous move and before he can blink, wham! Black is mated in double-quick time!

In the next game, much for the same set of reasons, black finds himself a whole rook down after only three moves! It is easy to see where black goes wrong. Quite simply, he does not pay close enough attention to white's previous move and check to see what it is white is threatening by 2...Qh5.

Avoiding early slips in the opening

1.e4

Former World Champion Bobby Fischer considered this the best opening move. White takes some space in the centre, liberates his white-squared king's bishop and provides cover for his knights to develop on f3 and c3 without being harassed by advancing black pawns.

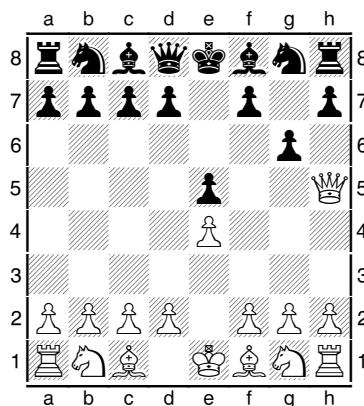
1...e5

Black decides to stake his claim to the centre too.

2.Qh5

Anyone who takes up the game invariably plays this move at some stage or has it played against them. White cannot resist the temptation to get his most powerful piece out into the game and attack the black pawn on e5. This can be a risky strategy however as you will see later, but black has to be careful and pay attention to what white is planning.

2...g6?? (D)



The most important thing any chess player can do before making a move is to look carefully at their opponent's previous move before responding. If you move too

quickly, even early in a game, you can get into a lot of trouble! Here, black fails to notice that the e5 pawn is under attack and loses not just a pawn but an entire rook!

3.Qxe5+ !

Oops, the black king is attacked by the queen and finds itself in check. While this check can be defended against easily, crucially the h-8 rook is also attacked by the queen on e5. When in check, there are only three things that you can do. 1) You can move the king, if there is a safe square it can move to. 2) You can see if it is possible to capture the piece responsible for the check, (the white queen in this instance). 3) The third and final option is to block with another piece. Here, black must choose between the knight, bishop or queen to block.

3...Qe7

Black takes the most aggressive option and tries to counterattack, but it is hard to make any impact with one piece on its own. That's why it is so important not to neglect development and to get your knights and bishops into the game as quickly as possible.

4.Qxh8 Qxe4+ 5.Ne2 Ne7

Before black can think about taking the c2 pawn with the queen or developing his other pieces to start an attack, he must look after the knight on g8 which is under attack from the white queen.

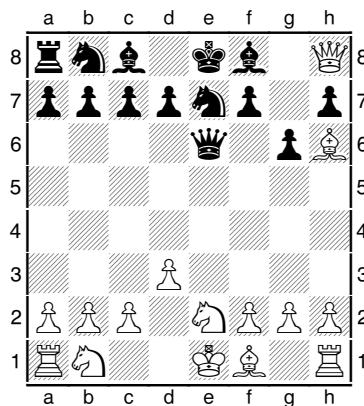
6.d3!

White attacks the black queen and at the same time creates a clever new threat, thanks to the fact that with 6.d3 his dark squared queen's bishop is able to develop.

6...Qe6?

Black misses his last chance to stay in the game, by Queen to b4 check and then Queen back to d6, so as to be able to protect the weak f8 bishop following white's next move.

7.Bh6! (D)



The black bishop on f8 is pinned and under attack from both the white bishop and queen and only the king can defend him. The black king is also very close to being mated and only has one way to escape. In only seven moves black has lost both a bishop and rook and is now in very big trouble.

7...d5 8.Qxf8+ Kd7 9.Nbc3 Nbc6 10.0-0-0-0

White castles queen side and his pieces are well coordinated to start a big attack on black's king, which is stuck in the centre and now that his knight on e2 is no longer pinned, white can begin the attack.

10...b6

Black has to develop his bishop and this is a handy way of also getting his black rook into the game, as the bishop on b7 will protect the Rook on a8.

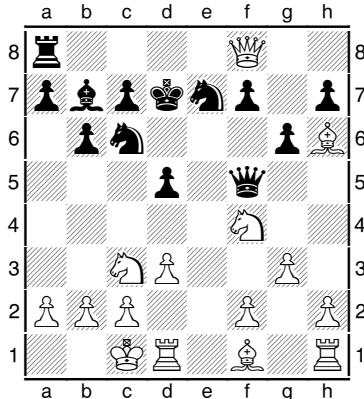
11.Nf4

attacking the d5 pawn twice. Black's queen is under attack and if he goes to d6 or f6, the f7 pawn will fall. But after going to f5, white has another nasty threat in store.

11...Qf5 12.g3!

Defending the knight again and setting up the threat of Bh3 pinning the black queen and king.

12...Bb7 (D)

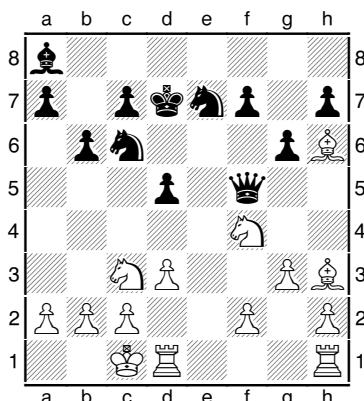


Black tries to develop anyway, but white has a clever way to win another 'exchange', that is a rook for a bishop.

13.Qxa8

White gives up his queen for the black rook, but he then immediately wins black's queen for a bishop, which will leave him a whole two rooks up going into the endgame.

13...Bxa8 14.Bh3! (D)



Black's queen is 'pinned' onto his king by the bishop – it can't move without exposing the king to check.

14...Qxh3 15.Nxh3 Nf5 16.Bf4

And after exchanging all the "minor" pieces (bishops and knights), white should have little difficulty in winning the game.

I have seen players fall into both of these traps on countless occasions, in my chess career. That's not to say that I was immune to these tricks when starting out myself, as I remember how shortly after learning the moves of the game and considering myself ready for combat, I walked into both traps in my first tournament. It wasn't long however, before I learnt how to defend against this tricky opening and began to use it myself with a degree of success. After a while though, I realised that it only worked against beginners and that when I tried it against

players who were wise to this subtle ruse, my queen often got into trouble. Soon, I began to understand why it is a mistake to bring one's queen out too early in the opening. She is by far the most important and most powerful piece on the chessboard, and as she is so valuable, she should be kept in reserve, until needed. In the final game below, black easily defends against White's threats. After 2.Qh5, he simply defends his king's pawn. Then when white brings his bishop to c4, black chases the white queen away by 2...g6, blocking the line of the white queen's attack. Here white loses what is known as a 'tempo', the extra move he had at the beginning of the game, as he is forced to move the queen twice, while black gets in a developing move, 3...g6 for free. White returns to f3 setting up the threat on f7 again, and black blocks by Qf6. White's threats have come to nothing and he has lost time bringing his queen forewords and backwards.

Avoiding Fool's mate

1.e4 e5 2.Qh5

White is back to his old tricks once again and looks like he is going to try and get another three-move checkmate. This time, black is wise to the threat however and will not fall for the double attack on f7.

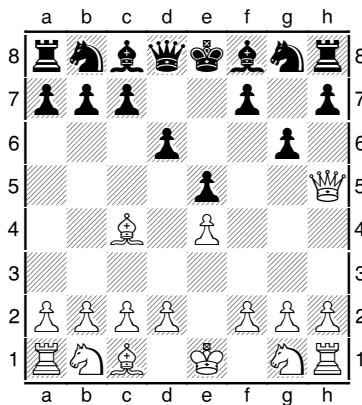
2...d6

Black defends his king's pawn in the most direct way possible, freeing up the bishop on c8 to come into the game. While the pawn on d6, blocks black's king's bishop from moving to the active c5 square, black will take advantage of the white queen's exposed bishop on h5 to find another place to develop his bishop.

3.Bc4

White develops with intent and sets up a mating threat.

3...g6 (D)



Black defends by attacking, blocking the threat to f7 by harassing the white queen, also creating a space on g7 for the black bishop to be developed.

4.Qf3

White hasn't given up on the idea of mating black, but all black has to do now is block the f-file, or simply defend f7 with the queen. White has wasted a few moves moving his queen forward and backwards and has lost his lead in development.

4...Qf6

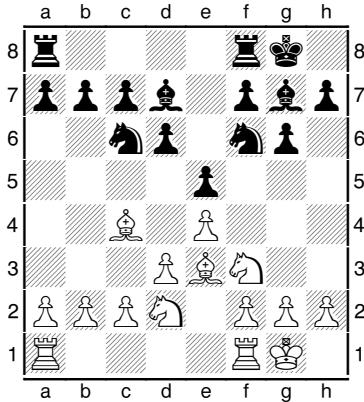
Black offers an exchange of queens and stops white's threat.

5.Qxf6 Nxf6 6.d3

White defends his pawn on e4 and now both sides develop and bring their pieces into play, after which the middlegame will ensue, with chances for both sides.

6...Bg7 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Be3 Bd7 10.Nbd2 (D)

Both sides have 'developed' their pieces to natural squares, and the middlegame is ready to begin. Notice how both kings are safe in the corner, and by castling, they've connected their rooks, and can bring all their pieces to play now.



There are of course other ways to defend against *Scholar's mate*, and an early assault by the white queen, but the simplest way is to always watch what your opponent is doing in the opening. Don't just move automatically. Take your time and be especially careful of the f7 square which only the king protects at the start of the game. And remember, if your opponent is attacking that square twice, then checkmate may be looming in the air, so....watch out!

Glorney and Faber Cup Competitions 2007.

Ireland is hosting the annual Glorney and Faber Cup Tournaments this year. Both tournaments are for players under 18 years of age.

Glorney Cup teams are comprised of five boys while the Faber Cup teams are comprised of 3 girls. The two competitions are amongst the oldest junior chess events as they have been in existence for over 50 years. The playing venue is "The Hub" in Dublin City University (DCU) and the tournaments take place from Tuesday July 24th – Thursday July 26th.

This year's tournaments have also been combined with the traditional "Tri-nations" competition between under 12 and under 14 teams from Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This year England will also be sending under 12 and under 14 teams to compete which will involve a very welcome expansion of the tournament.

Overall it is anticipated that up to 100 junior chess players will be competing in DCU next month where a considerable number of Ireland's most promising junior chess players will be testing their chess skills against our nearest neighbours.

Top Irish Juniors Under the Spotlight

DAVID FITZSIMONS – DUBLIN JUNIOR DEFEATS UKRAINIAN GRANDMASTER IN SPAIN



Deep in Contemplation, the Aftermath of an Historic Encounter

Grandmaster Ruslan Pogorelov from Ukraine contemplates what might have been, as he analyses his game with David Fitzsimons just after their recent encounter in Spain, which David won convincingly.

It was my first time to compete in this annual international event and I was looking forward to the experience of playing a strong nine-round event outside of Ireland, as, prior to this, I had only ever competed in the Irish Championship (on two occasions). In Spain I had the chance to play against an international field from 5 different countries: 2 Spaniards, 1 Ukrainian, 1 Dane, 1 Belgian and 4(!) Germans! Overall, I scored 5/9 which was a respectable score against an average rating of 2200 and four titled players figured amongst my opposition. I was pleased enough with my play in this event but there were certainly plenty of areas that I can improve on and I learned a lot. I would whole-heartedly recommend this event to any players wishing to play a strong off-season tournament abroad as the location (beside the coast and close to Barcelona and Port Adventura) make it ideal for a family holiday also, and the hotel itself, the Negresco Princess was of good quality and an excellent choice of venue.

At the beginning of the tournament I was 25th seed and therefore close to the middle of the draw as 67 players competed in the event. I was perhaps a little unlucky to get White in the first round because I was drawn against a lower rated player. I won

this game against the first of my two Spanish opponents, who were both rated around 1700 and in the second round I was rewarded with Black against a German grandmaster Kalinitchew! This was a close encounter and afterwards I realised that I had missed a draw against my grandmaster opponent. After a tough fight, I was eventually grounded down in an interesting Queen and Pawn versus Rook and Knight ending, where White's extra pawn was doubled and it took him a long time to break through. I intend to write a more comprehensive report for the next issue of the Irish Chess Journal and will include as many interesting games as I can. (**Editors note:** this magazine for senior players is now also free to download from the ICU website- so if you haven't already done so, why not have a look at the ICJ at www.icu.ie!)

In round three, I once again had white against a weaker player from Germany who was rated around 1850. This was a very nice game which I would consider to be my best of the event were it not for my victory over GM Pogorelov in round seven. Then in round four I was drawn against a Belgian Player rated around 2000. This was a hugely disappointing game, as at one stage I was considerably better and possibly even winning. After misplaying a promising position, I lost a pawn and then was faced with a choice between a lost or drawn pawn endgame. Somehow, in the thick of the battle, I managed to pick the losing

variation, despite knowing that this kind of ending was lost prior to the game! Some things in life are inexplicable... but in the thick of the action, as all chessplayers know only too well, the unexpected is always lurking around the corner!

In round five I got back to my winning ways against yet another German player, rated around 1850. This game actually transposed to my first round game, despite arising from a completely different opening! I doubt that this will happen again as I had a winning position by move eight! Next I beat a strong Spanish player rated around 2050 with Black and this set me up nicely for my first White game against a higher rated player in round seven.

I was drawn against GM Pogorelov from the Ukraine. I had been clearly better/ winning early on in my three White games prior to this, and this game proved to be no exception! My opponent thought for nearly an hour on his 18th move at which point he was clearly worse and things just went downhill for him from thereon in. I have annotated this game below.

This marked my first win against a titled player, and a convincing one at that, and this gave a great boost to my confidence...perhaps even too great a boost, as I was certainly overconfident at some stage in my next game against German (!) GM Levin in the following round. This sudden burst of confidence may well have been the cause of my embarrassingly rapid defeat at the hands of the German grandmaster, and resulted in a fatal move-order mix-up in the opening, which I did not think would



David being presented with a prize by Tony Gregory TD at the Leinster Championships December 2006.

make a difference at the time. I only used fifteen minutes for this game, which is still far too little even taking into consideration the 30 second increment per move! I thought I knew exactly what I was doing, whereas my opponent was far behind on the clock at an early stage. Of course he had a winning position soon afterwards...so I was reminded of the importance of using my time sensibly and not rushing things in the opening particularly when playing a stronger opponent.

In the final round, I played another titled player, an experienced IM from Denmark, Jakobbsen, and I was fortunate to have my fifth white of the tournament. Unfortunately, my 100% record was broken as, despite achieving a very promising position from the opening, I overlooked Black's one source of counter-play when more pieces had been swapped and this proved to be fatal. I finished 21st, ahead of my seeding and received a trophy for best result of a young player in the tournament.

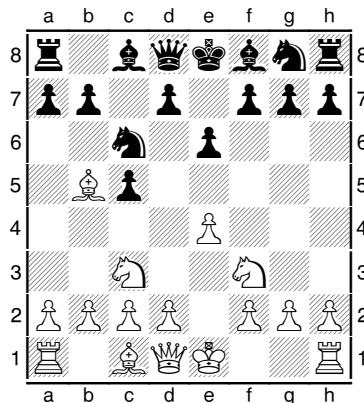
Overall, I really enjoyed this tournament and look forward to playing in it again in the future!

Fitzsimons, David (2133) – Pogorelov, Ruslan (2462)

Salou Open 2007, Round 7, 2007.05.09

Annotator: David Fitzsimons

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. Nc3 Nc6 4. Bb5 (D)



My opponent did not seem too pleased, when I whopped my bishop out to B5. In my preparation I noticed that he had a decent score against these alternative anti-Sicilian lines, but in the post-mortem following the game, he did come across as being too knowledgeable about this specific opening.

4... Nge7 5. O-O a6 (Here 5... Nd4 is also possible) 6. Bxc6 Nxc6 7. d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Be7

This is a risky but playable line for Black, if followed up correctly.

9. Nxc6 dxc6

Taking back with the b-pawn by 9... bxc6 is more popular and probably better. Play then can continue 10. e5 Qc7 11. Re1 d5 12. exd6 Bxd6 13. Qh5

10. Qg4 (D)

I believe this to be the most promising move although White also has a good score after both 10.Qxd8+ and 10. e5

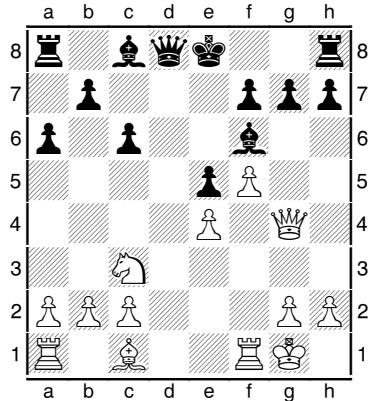
10... Bf6 11. f4

Attempting to shut out the bishop with e4-e5 and gaining useful kingside space.

11... e5

11... Bd4+ 12. Kh1 Qf6 is better)

12. f5 (D)



Now both Black's bishops are passive.

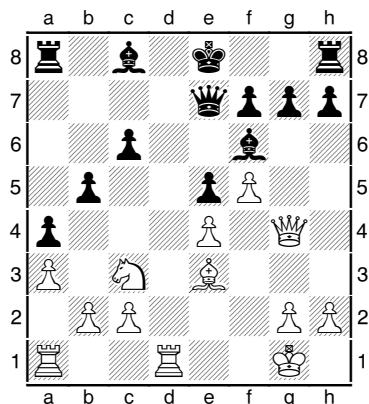
12... b5

Perhaps 12... Qb6+ 13. Kh1 Bd7 was a better try as it prevents White from moving his bishop to its most natural square on e3.

13. Be3 14. Qe7 14. a3

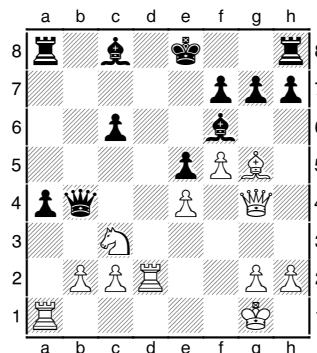
Intending b2-b4 with a bind on the queenside dark squares.

14... a5 15. Rfd1 a4 (D)



This seems a little over-ambitious considering black's lack of development. If Black plays the immediate 15...b4, White has the very strong response 16. Na4, intending Bc5. With 15...a4, black tries to deny the white knight access to a4 square but Black should probably try to get castled and develop all his pieces before undertaking such preventative measures.

16. Rd2 b4 17. axb4 Qxb4 18. Bg5 (D)

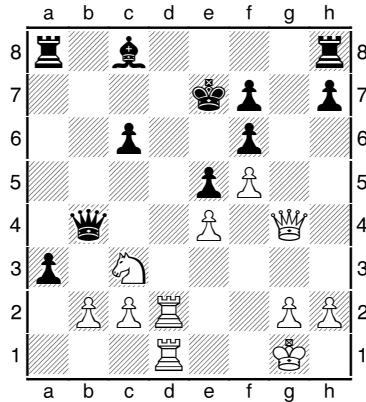


This is a very strong and logical move, exchanging the only defender of Black's kingside and swapping the bishop pair in the process. Black is in deep trouble already. My opponent thought for nearly an hour here and was perspiring heavily! The game is far from over though and Black's tenacity from hereon in is admirable.

18... Ke7

It is hard to see a better move for black here. Perhaps flicking in the move 18... h5 may be a slight improvement but White just continues with either 19. Qh4 or 19. Qg3 with a clear advantage in both cases.

19. Bxf6+ gxf6 20. Rad1 a3 (D)



Black plays a practical move, which may not be objectively best, but makes the game very complicated.

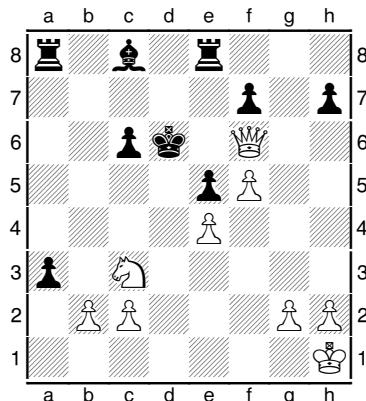
21. Qg7 Re8 22. Rd6

22. g4 was also very strong.

22... Qc5+ 23. Kh1 Qxd6

23... Bxf5 24. Qxf6+ Kf8 25.Rd7 with mate to follow

24. Rxd6 Kxd6 25. Qxf6+ (D)



25...Kc7 26. Qxf7+ Bd7 27. b4

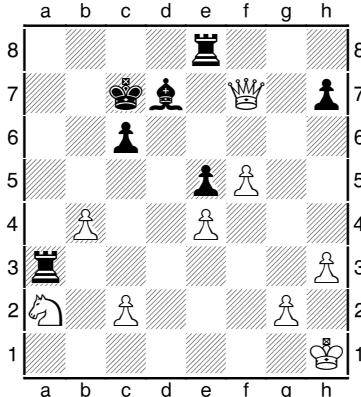
27. Qa2 was possibly even stronger although the text move doesn't spoil anything.

27... a2

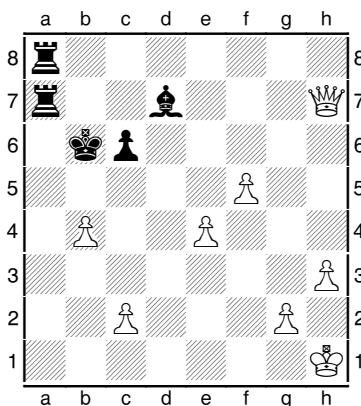
I did not think this was necessary but my opponent was under the impression that he had to play it. 27... Rf8 may have been a better chance.

28. Nxa2 Ra3 29. h3 (D)

29. b5 was also very strong, clearing the way for my knight to reach b4. But in the game I got several pawns for the piece and they were all connected passed pawns, so I thought this would be easier for me to play in my opponent's time-trouble.



29... Rea8 30. Qf6 Rxa2 31. Qxe5+ Kb6 32. Qg7 R2a7 33. Qxh7 (D)



This should be an easy win for White but Black fights on until the bitter end

33... Be6 34. Qh6 Ba2 35. f6 Be6 36. Qg5 Rd7 37. Qe5 Re8 38. Qc5+ Kb7 39. Kh2 Bf7 40. b5 Re6 41. bxc6+

41. e5 was more accurate

41... Rxc6 42. Qg5 Kc8 43. e5 Rxc2 44. Qg4 Rc6 45. Qe2 Rd5 46. g4 Kd7 47. Kg3 Rcc5 48. Kf4 Ke6

48... Rxe5 49. Qxe5 Rxe5 50. Kxe5 Ke8 51. h4 Bc4 52. g5 Bd3 53. h5 Kf7 54. g6+ Kf8 55. Ke6

49. Qa2 Ra5 50. Qc4 Kd7 51. Qe4 Ra6 52. g5 Ra1 and Black lost on time. White should win easily.

1-0

POORNIMA AND ARAVIND MENON

Followers of sports such as tennis and football, will no doubt have heard of the Williams sisters and the Neville brothers. Who would have guessed that in the idyllic medieval city of Kilkenny, Irish chess might have their own counterparts to Venus and Serena Williams, former Wimbledon Champions and Gary and Philip Neville, the Manchester United Superstars? But in the young chess stars, Poornima and Aravind Menon from Kilkenny, Irish chess may well have found its own pair of gifted siblings. Obviously, they are only starting out, but this brother and sister duo have been playing chess and progressing up the rankings steadily in the last couple of

years. Last year in Turin this young chess playing family came to the attention of the national media when Poornima was chosen to compete with the Irish Senior Women's team at the Chess Olympiad in Turin, Italy. Although she had to compete against the top female chess players from nations around the world, many of whom were considerably older and more experienced than her, Poornima acquitted herself phenomenally well. Her result was so impressive that she qualified for the prestigious and, much sought after, International title of Women's FIDE Master. She had already represented Ireland at youth level on numerous occasions in European and World Chess Championships, but Poornima is not the only rising star in her family. Her brother Aravind is one of the top juniors for his age in the country and is currently in contention to represent Ireland at this year's Glorney Cup, which will be held in July in DCU.



Perhaps one of the keys to the success of this sporting duo is the great support that they get from their father Jayadev Vallath and their mother Jaya Tharayil. Jayadev, an IT specialist, was recruited by the VHI in India and brought his family to Kilkenny in 2001. Their mother, Jaya Tharayil, a qualified lawyer in Kerala India, is currently studying in Dublin to gain the qualifications to practise as a solicitor in Ireland. Both Poornima and Aravind are coached by Darko Polimac, a Croatian who is an active coach in the Kilkenny area and has over 500 students. Interestingly, both mother and father took up the game themselves and now play at the same tournaments as their children, so it is very much a sport for all the family.

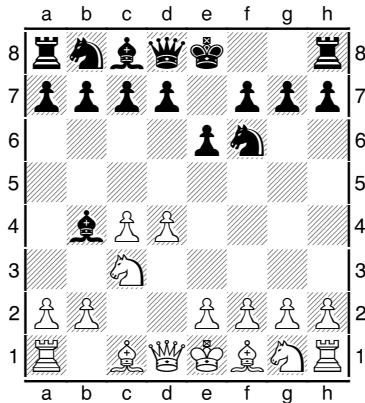
Here are two games in which Poornima and Aravind show why it is they are two of Ireland's leading lights in chess.

Menon, Poornima (1644) - Kennedy, Michael (1732) [E26] Heidenfeld Annotations by Mark Quinn

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4

White chooses a queens pawn set up in which she intends to build a large centre behind which to develop her pieces.

2...e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 (D)



Rather than contesting the centre with the natural and obvious 3...d5, by 3.... Bb4, black chooses a defence named after one of the greatest chess thinkers and strategists Aron Nimzovich. The idea is to prevent white from building her ideal centre, by pinning the knight and then attacking the white centre from the flanks.

4.e3

4.e4? Nxe4

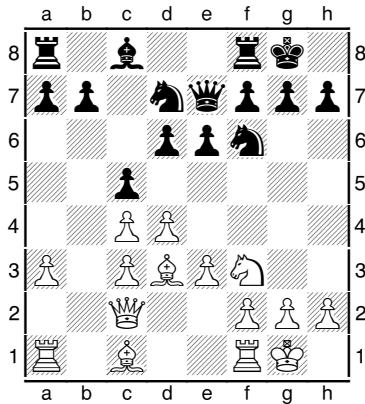
4...c5 5.a3

White invites black to exchange the annoying bishop, which will double her pawns but on the plus side, this exchange will strengthen her pawn on d4 which is under attack from the black pawn on c5. As will become evident later, this opening of the b-file will give white's rook on a1 the chance to come into play to good effect.

5...Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 d6 7.Nf3 Nbd7

7...Nc6 8.d5!? (8.Bd3 0-0 9.e4 e5 10.d5 Ne7) 8...Ne7 9.Bd3 exd5 10.cxd5 Nxd5 11.c4 Ne7 12.Bb2 with compensation.

8.Qc2 0-0 9.Bd3 Qe7 10.0-0 (D)

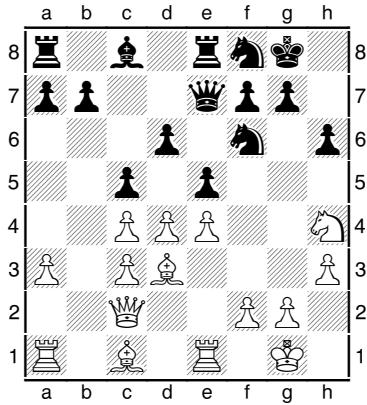


Both sides develop naturally and are about to try and grab hold of the centre. Neither side can afford to let the other take control however and this will lead to a blocked position typical of the Nimzo Indian.

10...e5! 11.e4 h6

11...cxd4 12.cxd4 exd4 13.Nxd4 Nc5 14.Re1 Qe5 15.Bb2 Ng4 16.Nf3! Qh5 17.Qc3 f6 18.Bc2 unclear

12.Re1 Re8 13.h3 Nf8 14.Nh4 (D)

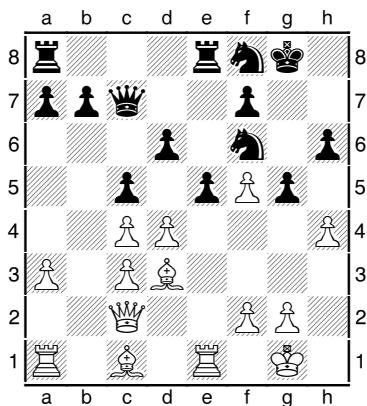


Trying to initiate play on the kingside, by targeting the weak f5 square. Here the drawback to h6 becomes apparent as black will be forced to exchange his light squared bishop for the knight. The white pawn on f5 will then severely restrict the mobility of the knight on f8. Bringing the knight to h4 is not without its drawbacks however as black can play an interesting combination which would lead to a number of exchanges, open up the centre and lead to a favourable endgame for black. Fortunately for white however, black chooses another more risky and aggressive continuation...

14...g5

14...Nxe4! 15.Rxe4 (15.Bxe4 Qxh4 and white has an advantage) 15...f5 A) 16.Re1 Qxh4 17.Bxf5 cxd4 18.cxd4 (18.Re4? Bxf5-+) 18...Qxd4; B) 16.Nxf5 16...Bxf5 17.Re3 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 e4!? 19.Qe2 Ng6 20.Rg3 Nh4

15.Nf5 Bxf5 16.exf5 Qc7 17.h4!



An excellent move, chipping away at the fragile pawns protecting the black king. The long range potential of White's dark squared bishop on c1 now becomes apparent, as the pawns on g5 and h6 look particularly vulnerable.

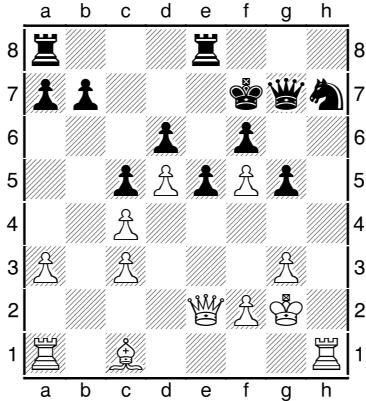
17...N8h7 18.d5

Closing the centre so as to prevent black from generating some counterplay on the queenside by exchanging on d4. White signals her intention to play on the kingside.

18...Nh5 19.Kh2 Nf4 20.hxg5 hxg5 21.g3 Nxd3 22.Qxd3

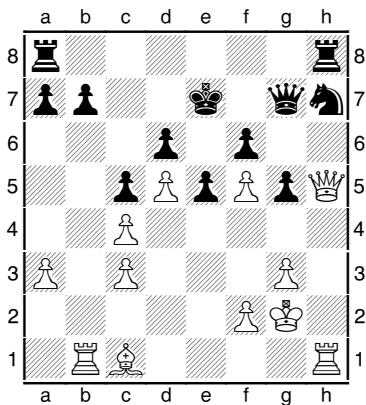
Black has managed to exchange white's light squared bishop, but now it is easy for white to use the h-file to make inroads into black's position with her rooks.

22...f6 23.Kg2 Qg7 24.Rh1 Kf7 25.Qe2 (D)



Black's position looks solid and the white bishop seems to have a dim future, but already white threatens Qh5 followed by Qg6, when black cannot exchange queens without endangering black's knight on h7.

25...Rh8 26.Qh5+ Ke7 27.Rb1! (D)

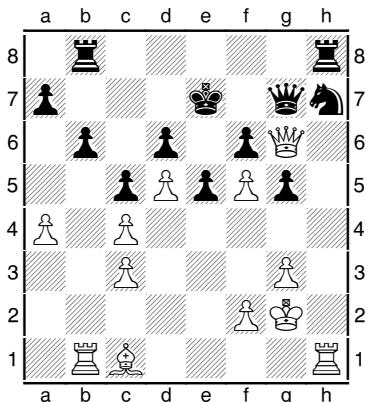


An excellent move. White takes her time and creates a second weakness on the queenside, before executing her initial plan. Now the white rook on a1 comes into the game and black struggles to keep afloat.

27...b6 28.a4!

Just as white had earlier battered the g5 pawn by h4 to open up the h-file, now the same plan comes into effect on the queenside. There is no better way to stretch an opponent when they are on the ropes than by creating a second weakness, as this often leads to a defence caving in.

28...Rab8 29.Qg6! (D)



Now the time is ripe for this manoeuvre, as there is no way to stop the rook on b1 from breaking through black's defences on the queenside.

29...Rbg8

29...Kf8 30.a5 Rb7 31.axb6

A) 31...axb6 32.Ra1 Ra7 (32...Rb8 33.Ra6 Kg8 34.Ra7 Qxg6 35.fxg6 Nf8 36.Rxh8+ Kxh8 37.g7+ Kg8 38.gxf8Q+ Kxf8 39.Rd7+-) 33.Qxg7+ Rxg7 34.Ra8+ Kf7 35.Rxh8

B) 31...Rxb6 32.Rxb6 axb6 33.Be3 Kg8 34.Rb1 Qxg6 35.fxg6 Nf8 36.Rxb6 Nxg6 37.Rxd6 Kf7 38.Rc6+-

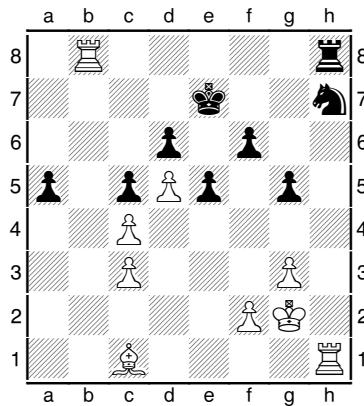
30.a5

Faced with the inevitable, black tries to eliminate the annoying white queen, but the awkward pin on the h-file will mean black's pieces are all tied up.

30...Qxg6 31.fxg6 Rxg6 32.axb6 a5

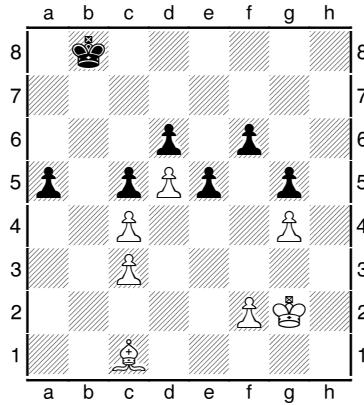
32...axb6 33.Rxb6 Kf8 34.Rxd6+- (34.Rb8+ Kg7 35.Rb7+ Kg8 36.g4 Rg7 37.Rb8+)

33.b7 Rgg8 34.b8Q Rxb8 35.Rxb8 (D)



Black resigns as he cannot stop the exchange of black rooks after he takes back on b8, after which white transposes to a winning endgame, which is however worth looking at, as it is a little trickier than it looks on first sight.

35...Rxb8 36.Rxh7+ Kd8 37.Rh8+ Kc7 38.Rxb8 Kxb8 39.g4! (D)



Fixing the pawns – this prevents Black from getting any counterplay on the kingside and means White's king can't be stopped from strolling into the Black position. .

39...Kc7 40.Kf3 Kd7 41.Ke4 Ke7 42.Kf5 Kf7 43.f3

Now white just has to wait until black runs out of spare moves and has give up the opposition, i.e. move to either e7 or g7 after which white's king will get behind the black pawns and black's defence falls.

43...a4 44.Bb2 a3 45.Bxa3 Ke7 46.Kg6 Kd7 47.Kxf6 **1-0**

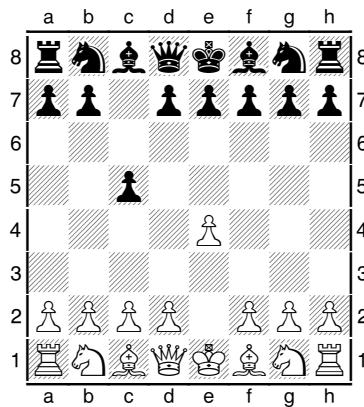


Killane, Jack (1729) - Menon, Aravind (1687) [B21]

Heidenfeld Cup

Annotations by Mark Quinn IM

1.e4 c5 (D)



In response to 1.e4 Aravind plays the Sicilian Defence, an aggressive counterattacking opening, where black usually lets white occupy the d4 square and then sets about attacking from the flank. The typical open Sicilian starting position arises after 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 when black now has several choices, d6, g6,e5, e6, each of which are popular variations and viable defences for black. In this game, white decides to play much more aggressively and avoids going into these complex positions.

2.d4

The Morra gambit, a dangerous attacking weapon where white sacrifices (or gambits) a pawn for a lead in development, opening lines for his rooks on the c and d files and activating squares for his knights and bishops.

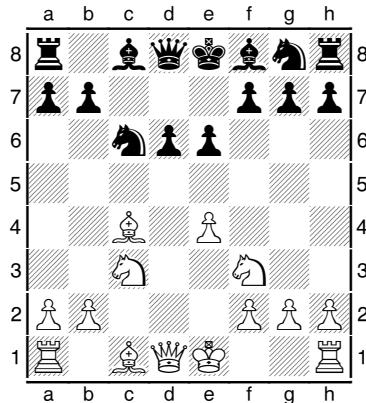
2...cxd4 3.c3

Black bravely takes the pawn and waits for the inevitable storm that will follow.

3...dxc3

3...d3 4.Bxd3 Nc6 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nf6 or 3...Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.cxd4 (the alternative 5.Qxd4 e6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Qe4 f5! 8.exf6 Nxf6 9.Qh4 d5 10.Bd3 is unclear) 5...d6 6.Nf3 Nc6

4.Nxc3 e6 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Bc4 d6 (D)



A wise move, as the last thing black wants is for white to somehow gain control of the d6 square and occupy it with either a knight or bishop in the future. White's game plan is very simple, to castle, play his bishop to f4 and then Rooks first to d1, then c1 to exert pressure on the cramped black position. Black needs to develop however and while d6 may look risky, it will discourage white from pushing e5 after black develops his knight to f6.

7.0-0 Be7 8.Qe2 Nf6 9.Rd1

White threatens to play the nasty e5, after which black would be in considerable trouble. Black gets there first however and stakes his claim for his control of the centre.

9...e5

9...0-0? 10.e5!, Ne8 11.Ne4 d5

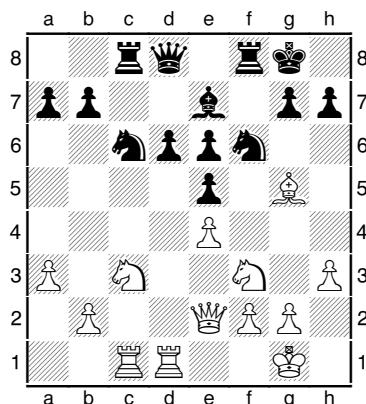
10.h3

To stop black pinning white's knight on f3, after which black would be threatening the annoying Nd4. 10.Bg5?! Bg4 11.h3? Nd4 12.Qd3 Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Bxh3

10...0-0 11.Bg5 Be6!

Offering the exchange of bishops, which doubles black's e pawns. Doubled pawns are usually to be avoided as they lack mobility and can become weak, but here they help to strengthen black's control on the centre, covering key d4 and d5 squares, which severely restricts white's ability to create play.

12.Bxe6 fxe6 13.Rac1 Rc8 14.a3 (D)



It is difficult to see how white can make progress. All his pieces are on their optimum squares, but black's position is very solid and has few weaknesses.

14...a6 15.b4 b5 16.Qe3 h6 17.Bh4 Kh8

A useful waiting move. Black waits to see if white can come up with a plan.

18.Rd3 Qc7 19.Ne2

19.Nd5 exd5 20.exd5 Qb7 21.dxc6 Rxc6 22.Rxc6 Qxc6

19...Qd7 20.Rcd1 Ne8

Offering an exchange of bishops to relieve the tension, while also protecting the d6 pawn. Black sets a clever trap, as he threatens to sacrifice the rook for the knight on f3 and then take the bishop on h4, after which he will have two pieces for the rook.

21.Bg3

White avoids the exchange and sets up his own counter-threat. Thanks to the pin on the d-file, White now threatens Ne5, winning the pawn back. Once the black queen sidesteps this simple trap, the white bishop on g3 is effectively out of the game.

21...Qa7!

Offering an exchange of queens after which the black rook would swing into action on the c-file. Note the big weakness on c4 that was created when white tried to attack on the queenside, by a3 and b4. Pawns don't move backwards and it is always worth keeping this in mind before advancing them.

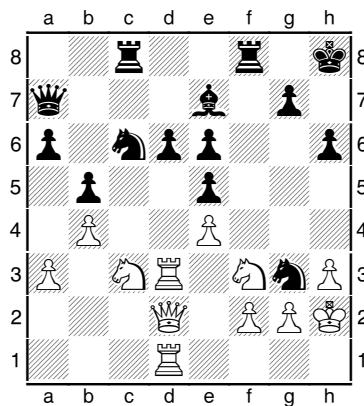
22.Qd2

White wisely avoids the exchange of queens and triple on the d-file, but now black finds a way to get at the white bishop and begin to probe white's defences.

22...Nf6 23.Nc3

White would have liked to play Bh4 here after which he could exchange his poor bishop, but he doesn't get the chance as the e4 pawn has to be protected first.

23...Nh5 24.Kh2 Nxg3 (D)



25.Kxg3?

Here fxg3 was the safer option, as by exposing his king, white quickly comes under a ferocious attack.

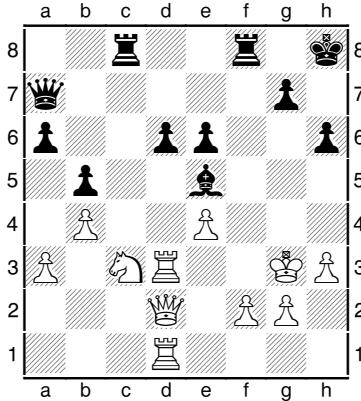
25...Nd4!

A very strong and far sighted move. Black offers white back the pawn he sacrificed on move 2, but white dare not take it, as after wards the black bishop would spring into action with devastating consequences.

26.Nxd4 exd4 27.Rxd4 Bf6!

Attacking the rook on d4 and the knight on c3

28.Rd3 (the only move to avoid losing material) Be5+!! (D)



Now Black's attack shifts direction and goes after the exposed king, who is forced into enemy territory, where it's not long before the wolves are at the door.

29.Kg4 h5+ 30.Kxh5 Qf7+ 31.Kg4 Qg6+ 32.Qg5 Rf4+ 33.Kg3 Qxg5+ 34.Kh2 Rxf2+ With a discovered check from the bishop on e5.

35.Rg3 Qxg3+ 36.Kg1 Qxg2#

26.Qe3 Qd7

White loses his patience and takes the pawn. Not only is black threatening to bring his queen over to the kingside to attack the white king, white cannot avoid the exchange of knights on f3. If white tries to avoid this by Nd2, e1 or g1, he runs into Bg5 after which he either loses his queen or gets mated.

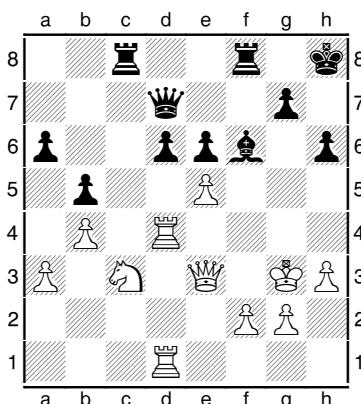
27.Nxd4

27.Ne1 Bg5+-; 27.Nd2 Bg5 28.Qe1 Bf4+ 29.Kg4 h5+ 30.Kxh5 Qf7+ 31.Kh4 Qf6+ 32.Kg4 Qg5#

27...exd4 28.Rxd4 Bf6!

Now that the e5 pawn is no more, the black bishop comes into his own and white's position begins to crumble. White has one last trick up his sleeve however, so black must keep his cool and not rush, lest he throw away his hard earned advantage.

29.e5! (D)



The last roll of the dice. If black play Bxe5 check, white will take with his queen and then have the chance of escaping to a double rook endgame with good drawing chances. Aravind finds a nice solution however...

29...Rxc3!

29...Bxe5+ 30.Qxe5 Rxc3+ 31.R1d3 (31.R4d3?? dx5 32.Rxc3 Qxd1+-) 31...dx5 32.Rxd7 Rxd3+ 33.Rxd3 which is unclear

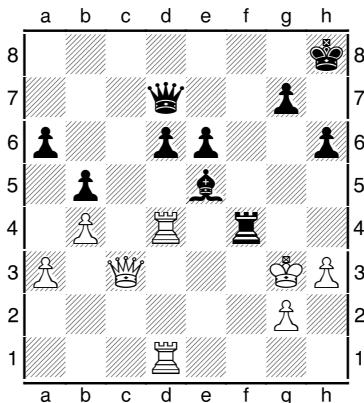
30.Qxc3 Bxe5+

Black can regain the rook he sacrificed at his leisure, but the embarrassed position of the white king means there is more to play for.

31.f4

31.Kg4 h5+ 32.Kxh5 Qf7+ 33.Kh4 Qf6+ 34.Kg4 Qg6+ 35.Kh4 Bf6# or else 31.Kh4 Qe7+ 32.Kg4 h5+-+

31...Rxf4!! (D)



Setting up a devastating discovered check, from which the black king cannot escape.

32.Rxd6

32.Kh2 Rf3++

32...Bxd6

0-1

The Adventures of Percy the Pawn: About the Artist.

Pianist, composer and singer/ songwriter Robert Murtagh is musical/comedian who co-founded and starred in the acclaimed *Fallen Angels Cabaret Show*, which played all over Ireland, winning Best Show in the Dublin Fringe Festival's Spiegel Tent, most recently performing for two weeks at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. He is a highly successful pianist/vocalist who plays all over Dublin. He is currently working on a new show, due to play in this year's Fringe Festival.

If you would like to see your drawings on a chess related theme feature in the next issue of Junior Chess Corner, why not enter our drawing competition, advertised on page 54.



In Percy's Quest to reach the Other Side of the Board He
Runs Foul of the White Bishop!

© Robert Murtagh 2007

RYAN-RHYS GRIFFITHS



Some time ago, I asked Ryan how he got started in chess. We play on the same team in the Armstrong Cup for Kilkenny, which is a first division team and I was amazed to discover that he had only taken up the game relatively recently. Since learning the game two and a half years ago, he had already come a long way and I was curious what drew him to chess in the first place.

Ryan: I took up chess nearly two and a half years ago when my mother packed me off to the chess club in Kilkenny. She ‘made me go’ because she was fed up with me ‘wasting my brain’ on my play station, game boy, and game cube consoles. I started to like chess after my first time at the club and soon it became my

favourite hobby. Afterwards, I had the opportunity to play in lots of events both in Ireland and Internationally. My trips abroad included the *British Championships* 2005, *Southend Open* 2006, *The First Saturday Tournament* in Budapest 2006, *The European Youth Championships* 2006 and *The Hastings Masters* 06/07.

Q. A lot of these are very big and prestigious events, with long histories such as the British Championships and Hastings, but tell me about your trip to Hungary to compete in the First Saturday event. This tournament starts on the First Saturday of every month and provides opportunities for players to achieve international ratings, and compete for International master and grandmaster norms (results).

Ryan: The First Saturday certainly was a very exciting tournament not least because of all the different nationalities competing. It was also held in an interesting historic building that was donated to the Hungarian Chess Federation by the former communist leadership. So there was a lot of history there. A range of interesting and funny events occurred while we were there, which included my mother falling face down into a pool of wet cement while on our way to one of the games and meeting the eccentric tournament organiser and his son. It was here also that I received my FIDE rating (my International Rating) and when I began to think of chess as a sport because it is normally more or at least as competitive as any physical sport.

Q. Is there any player whose style of play you particularly like, whose games you study in particular?

Ryan: There is no one player that I particularly admire, although I was particularly impressed by the game Kasparov-Topalov from Wijk aan zee a few years ago.

Q. It is interesting that you mention Gary Kasparov, the world’s most successful chess player, who recently retired from chess to pursue a political career, as I have noticed that like Kasparov, you are not afraid to attack your opponent.

Ryan: While I prefer to be an aggressive player but can also play positionally when required. That being said, my favourite chess book is '101 Attacking Ideas' which is a very entertaining book.

Q. You mentioned already that chess has replaced the play station and game boy to become your favourite hobby, but have you any idea, at this stage, how far you would like to go in chess?

Ryan: My ambition is to become a 'GM' at some point in my life, and in order to have that opportunity, I would like to see more FIDE rated tournaments being held in Ireland as this would mean I would not have to travel as much as I do now in order to compete at my level.

And I have no doubt that Ryan is one of the many juniors who will shortly be challenging for both International Master and Grandmaster Norms. Just who will be the first to become Ireland's first homegrown grandmaster title remains to be seen, but for the moment, here is one of Ryan's wins from the Hastings tournament last Christmas.

Griffiths, Ryan-Rhys (2104) - Mulligan, Stephen (2199) [C47]

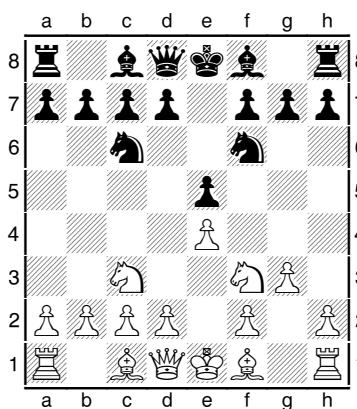
Hastings, 02.01.2007

Annotations by Ryan-Rhys Griffiths and Mark Quinn

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3

Ryan- My normal move order is 2.Nf3 but I had learned that my opponent played the Philidor defence against 2.Nf3 and I was not keen to play against it, so I chose a different move order to reach my desired opening, the four knights variation.

2...Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 (D)

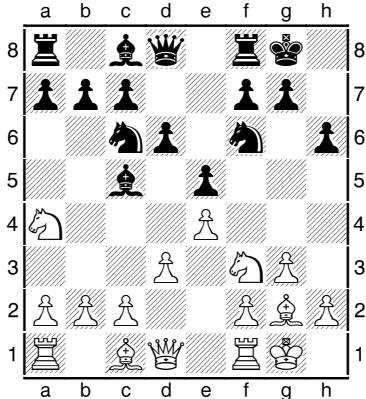


Ryan- This variation where white fianchettoes his white bishop rather than developing it to the more square c4- was popularised by the creative Russian grandmaster Igor Glek and is a little known but by no means bad opening.

4...Bc5 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.d3 h6?

This move is weak because it allows white to win a pair of bishops by exchanging white's queen's knight for black's dark squared bishop. Creating a space to hold on to the bishop by 7...a6 would have been better.

8.Na4! (D)



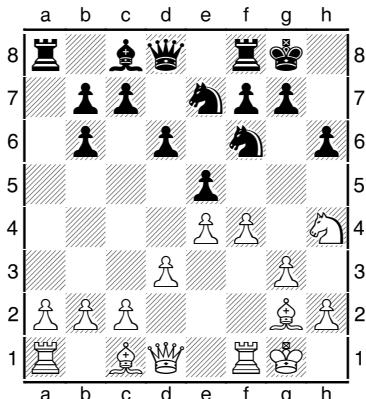
8...Bb6 9.Nxb6 axb6 10.Nh4

Mark Quinn (MQ)- Now with black's dark squared bishop removed, white can think about attacking on the kingside by playing f4 and f5, without having to lose a tempo by playing Kh1 to get out of the black bishop's pin on the a7-g1 diagonal.

10...Ne7

MQ- Black wisely brings his queen's knight to the defence of his king and discourages white from playing Nf5, which would attack the weak pawns on g7 and h6. Black would then be forced to exchange his other bishop on f5, after which the white bishop on g2 would spring into life.

11.f4 (D)



MQ- White gets his pawns rolling. The attack commences.

11...Ng6

Ryan- I was surprised by this move as I thought that after 12. Nxg6 fxg6, white would have a big edge due to his bishop's pair and black's structural weaknesses but by this exchange, white's activity is actually reduced, as I discovered into another of my games from the same tournament (Eames, Bob-Griffiths, Ryan; Hastings, 06/07).

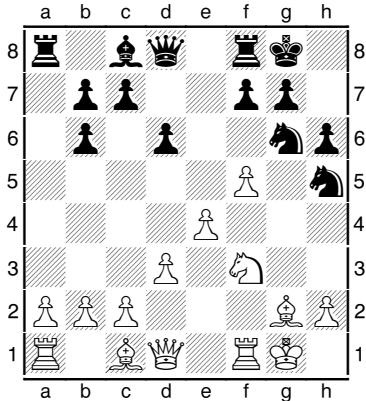
12.Nf3

MQ- this simple retreat avoiding the exchange of knights confronts black with a difficult choice. White plans to continue with f5 chasing the g6 knight away and then following with h3 and g4 to gradually build up an attack on the kingside. Taking on f4 however creates an entirely new set of problems, as white will eventually (by Rg1) be able to use the half open g-file to attack the weak h6 and g7 pawns.

12...exf4 13.gxf4 Nh5

MQ- Black tries to get active and counterattack, but white's position is very solid and black is too under-developed to create any real threats.

14.f5! (D)



MQ- rather than defend the f4 pawn, White pushes on, extending his grip on the kingside, blocking Black's remaining bishop out of the game.

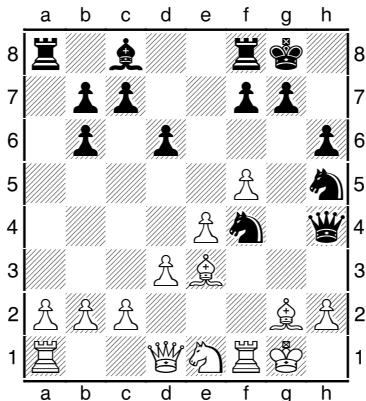
14...Ngf4 15.Ne1!

MQ- After the advance of the f5 pawn, both black's knights are surrounded by white pieces and dependent on each other for protection. Black's only chance is to exchange on g2, and retreat the other knight to f6, but white will have very good attacking chances.

15...Qh4

Ryan- Black is now getting somewhat aggressive and is close to overextending himself. 15...Nhg2 16.Nhg2 Nf6 17.Rf3 Kh8 18.Rh3! with good prospects of attack.

16.Be3 (D)



MQ- It may be that black does not sense the danger to his queen and knight, but already now it is hard to see how he can avoid losing material to save his knight on h5.

16...Bd7

MQ- 16...Nhg2 17.Nhg2 Qh3? 18.Rf3 Qg4 19.h3!+-

Probably best was 16...Nh3+! 17.Bxh3 Qxh3 18.Ng2 Nf6 19.Rf4! Qh5 20.Qxh5 Nxh5 21.Rh4 Nf6 22.a3, but even here, all of the attacking chances are with White. He can think about placing his a1 rook on g1 and his bishop on d4, pressurising Black's kingside.

17.Qf3 g5??

Ryan- Black has really done it this time and is now losing a piece.

18.Bf2! g4

MQ- The only chance to liberate the black queen, but white has a decisive trick up his sleeve.

19.Qxf4

after 19....Nxf4 20. Bxh4, black will be a whole piece down so he resigned.

1-0

STEPHEN HANLEY



Stephen Hanley has been playing chess since he was six years old, ever since, he was given a chess set as a present. Fascinated by the different and unusual shapes of the pieces, he wasn't long in finding out "what the cool pieces were for".

Here he describes how he got started in chess and what has led him to becoming one of the strongest players of his age in Irish chess today.

Stephen: I really took to the game when I found I couldn't easily beat my Dad. There was a challenge in that, which I couldn't find any substitute for. I still find the challenge of the game exhilarating now, (even though I'm well past beating my father!) so to me, the game represents a challenge, which still cannot be replaced by any amount of school work, or other sports. To my mind, chess is

the single greatest intellectual challenge anyone can try to master.

MQ- As you have represented Ireland on a number of occasions, how would you rate the importance of having a chess coach to help you prepare for your games?

I have been to several World Junior Chess Championships, and each of them were extremely interesting for different reasons. In 2003, the team had Johnny Joyce and Yuri Rochev as coaches, and they did a great job as far as I'm concerned. They both provided invaluable pre-game preparation, and enlightening analysis afterwards. We also had a huge amount of fun that year, which is always the case at these massive chess festivals. In 2004, we again had Johnny Joyce as coach, but this time he was accompanied by IM Robert Bellin, also a very highly regarded junior coach. Both, were again immensely helpful, and you could ask them absolutely anything regarding chess or otherwise!

MQ-Do you think chess is a sport and if so why?

Stephen: I do think chess is a sport, and should be treated as such. I see it as no less physically demanding than other 'sports', as games often go on past 3 hours. The effort, concentration, and complete focus needed is far beyond what any other 'sport'

could deliver. As well as this, although it is not always obvious, the chess super-powers of the world (Topalov, Kramnik, Anand etc.) are all extremely fit men. In fact, they do rigorous physical training for particularly long matches, or games which they feel will push them to the limit.

MQ-For this issue, you analysed two games from the Najdorf which is clearly one of your favourite openings. In one of the games, you focus on a game by the legendary Estonian grandmaster Paul Keres, but what is it about Keres that you particularly like?

Stephen: While I am a fan of a number of players, Keres really stands out, for me at least. His style ranged from being somewhat overly aggressive in his youth, to slightly calmer when he matured, and to finally producing ingenious displays of breathtaking ingenuity in the positional side of the game in his old age. Personally, I prefer to try and 'imitate' Keres's play as a mature man. In these later years, he played with considerable gusto, taking his opportunities well, but he was always equally willing to play long, positional games, in which his absolute focus would eventually win out. In my own games, I try to emulate this aspect of Keres's play, and would classify my own style of play as aggressive, but positional.

MQ- Do you have any particular goals in chess?

I have 2 main goals; the first is to be the best player I can be, and as the great Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "The journey of a million miles must begin with a single footprint", for me each game is a step, a step which can help me to accomplish everything I can, with my ability, combined with 100% effort. I do not care when it happens, as long as it happens, and in every game, that is what I work towards. My second goal is a continuous one; to play

What is an 'Opening'?

For those of you who are just beginning chess, you may be wondering what an opening is? Put simply the way a player chooses to play the first moves of a game, leads to specific positions, which often have names or are called after famous players who invented them.

For instance, the most popular first move is 1.e4. When black responds with 1...c5 as in the two games below, he chooses what is known as the Sicilian defence. He could also play 1...e6, and the game might continue 2.d4 d5 which leads to a position known as the French Defence. Later in this magazine, Nikki Benson chooses 1...d5, which is known as the Scandinavian defence etc. By playing 5...a6, in both games, black chooses what is known as the Najdorf variation of the Sicilian defence, which is named after the famous Argentinean Grandmaster Miguel Najdorf.

As you can see in the games below, Stephen has not only studied his own games, but also those involving well known players such as Keres. Any book of the best games of great players such as Gary Kasparov, Mihail Tal, Bobby Fischer or Jose Raul Capablanca will never go out of date, and is therefore a great investment. Why not check out your local library to see what books are in the collection, and see if you can find your own chess hero to inspire you?

better than I did last time out. Obviously this is difficult, but as I said previously, there is nothing quite like a challenge, and to be constantly improving is a great challenge to have.

MQ-Is there any book that you would particularly recommend chess players to read to improve their chess?

My favourite chess book is *The Art Of The Middle Game* by Paul Keres and Alexander Kotov. The translator, Harry Golombek, was also a very strong GM of the time Harry Golombek, and wrote the first chapter. It is not long before reader senses that this is not just any chess book they are reading, but one of immortality. It is extremely well written, and covers nigh-well everything which a player may come across in the middlegame. It sections things off beautifully, making for an easier read, with extremely interesting prefaces to each chapter.

I feel this book hugely improved my understanding of the game as a whole, and even though it is an old book, it is something of a classic and contains information that will never be outdated, as it goes through strategies and plans for every situation imaginable.

In addition to sending us one of the games he played when representing Ireland at a world junior event, Stephen also analysed and sent us his favourite game by Keres.

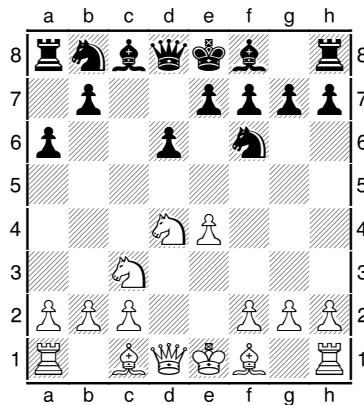
Keres,P - Sajtar,J [B94]

Amsterdam ol (Men) fin-A Amsterdam (10), 09.1954

Notes by Steven Hanley and Mark Quinn IM

This is my favourite game of all time. It shows us that even though some things in chess get outdated, bravery, skill, and creativity never go out of fashion.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 (D)



MQ- This move was originally championed by the Argentinian grandmaster Miguel Najdorf and would eventually become known as the Najdorf variation.

6.Bg5

The old main line which is not played so often nowadays, but is still a very dangerous attacking weapon. White develops his bishop to g5, threatening to take black's knight on f6, thereby doubling his pawns.

6...Nbd7

An acceptable line although more common now is e6.

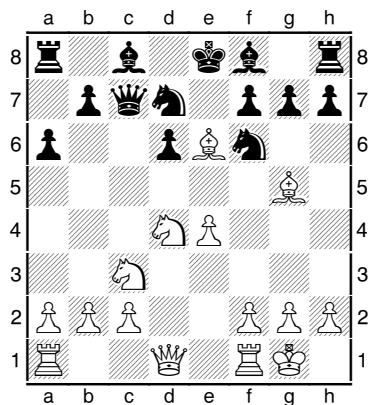
7.Bc4

MQ- White's pieces are all developed to natural squares, which will enable them to combine effectively in the middlegame. With Bc4, white eyes up the weak f7 square and his bishop exerts pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal.

7...e6 8.0-0 Qc7

MQ- Black attacks the bishop on c4, hoping to gain time by chasing it backwards, but he is still somewhat behind in development. Perhaps b5 is a better option as this will free the b7 square for the bishop. Here, the natural 8...Be7 would be a mistake, as it would make white's next move even stronger, as the g7 pawn would no longer be protected.

9.Bxe6! (D)

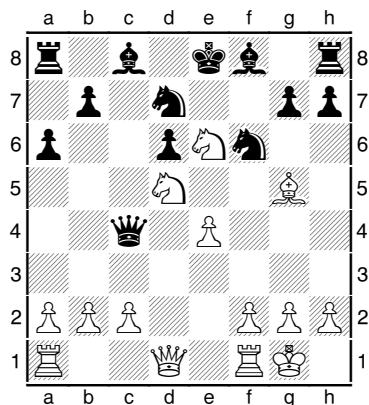


Even the all-knowing and all-seeing computers of today would probably shirk from such a bold move. Here Keres, trusts his intuition and while he probably couldn't see the eventual outcome, he may have suspected that the ensuing position would place his opponent under considerable pressure. White removes the pawn around the black king and also frees up the d5 square which his other knight will soon hop into. The white knight on e6 is a real thorn in the side of black's position.

9...fxe6 10.Nxe6 Qc4

The queen is under attack and has to find refuge somewhere. He could go to b8 but this doesn't look too promising after Nd5, NxN, and PxN, when the Queen would be very much out of the game.

11.Nd5!



MQ- A thematic and obvious move. White blocks the attack from the black queen to his knight on e6 and sets up the nasty threat of Nc7 check, forking the black king and rook on a8. If black swaps knights on d5, not only will the white pawn on d5

consolidate the white knight on e6, the opening of the e-file will set the stage for white's rooks to join the attack.

11...Kf7

By moving his king, black defends against the threatened knight fork on c7, but now gives up his right to castle. As noted already, if Black takes on d5, and White takes back with the pawn, after Re1, the K may well be forced to move anyway. White has achieved his goal to displace the black king and stop him from castling to safety. Now he must continue on and complete the attack which he has started.

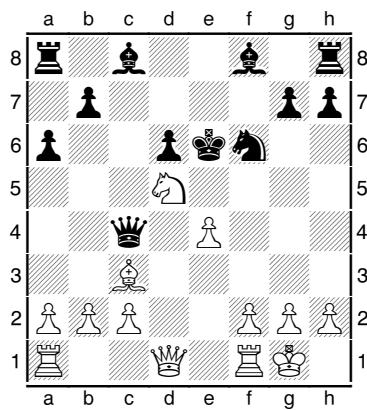
12.Bxf6 Kxe6??

A poor decision. The black king will be extremely exposed and effectively doomed in the centre of the board, as white's pieces are extremely active and well placed to continue the attack.

13.Bc3

Bd4 is also good

13...Nf6? (D)



Black makes another error of judgement, which white now capitalises on brilliantly. To release the pressure, black enables white to make a simple knight fork, winning and 'exchange', i.e. a bishop or knight for a rook. However, before he takes the rook, white chooses to weaken black's kingside pawn structure, making it harder for black to hide his king.

14.Bxf6 gxf6 15.Nb6

A simple fork winning the black rook on a8. If white's knight can escape scot-free from the corner, white should win easily.

15...Qc6 16.Nxa8 Be7

White, now with his material regained, with interest, shows some great technique in finishing off a won game. 16...b5 17.Qd5+ A) 17...Kd7 18.c4 Bb7 (18...bxc4 19.Rac1 Bb7 20.Qf7+ Be7 21.Rxc4! Qb5 22.Rc7+ Kd8 23.Qxe7#) 19.Qxc6+ Kxc6 20.cxb5+ axb5 21.Rac1+ Kd7 22.Rc7+ Ke6 23.Rxb7; B) 17...Qxd5 18.Nc7+! Kd7 19.Nxd5

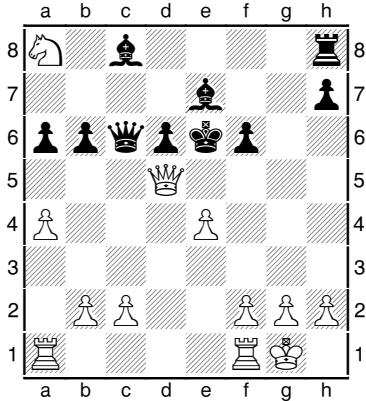
17.a4!

With the idea of a5 which will mean the white knight can escape to b6.

17...b6

It looks as if black is going to round up the white knight, but white has other ideas!

18.Qd5+! (D)



18...Kd7

18...Qxd5? 19.Nc7+ Ke5 20.Nxd5 Bd8 21.Rfe1 f5 22.f4+ Ke6 23.Rad1 Bb7 24.c4+
19.Ra3!

Another White piece is brought into the fray and any hopes black had to picking up the knight on a8 evaporate. Keres notes himself that: "In this type of position, all roads lead to Rome." **19...Bd8**

19...Bb7 20.Qxc6+ Kxc6 21.Rc3+ Kd7 22.Nxb6+ Ke6 23.f3+- **20.Nxb6+!**

Keres unleashes a neat tactical trick and at this point, Sajtar saw no point in continuing, and resigned due to the lines that follow. **20...Qxb6**

20...Bxb6 21.Qf7+ Kd8 22.Qxf6+ Kc7 23.Qxh8+- **21.Qf5+ Ke7**

21...Kc7 22.Rc3+ Kb7 23.Qxc8+ Ka7 24.Rd1± or 21...Ke8 22.Qxc8+- **22.Qxc8 1-0**

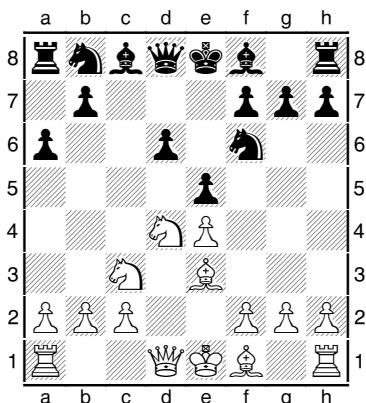
Karimov,S (1400) - Hanly,S (1246) [B90]

WYCC U10 (6), 28.10.2003

Annotations by Steven Hanley and Mark Quinn IM

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6

The Najdorf variation once again. Let's see how Stephen handles this exciting and aggressive opening. By 5....a6 black prevents white from being able to use the b5 square and stops Bb5 check which can be annoying. For the moment he does not let white know what he plans to do in the centre, whether he will chase the well placed knight on d4 or play more quietly with e6 and Be7 or g6 and Bg7. **6.Be3 e5!**



Black chases the knight from the centre. The only real drawback to this move is that it weakens the d5 square and that if white manages to get his knight into this square,

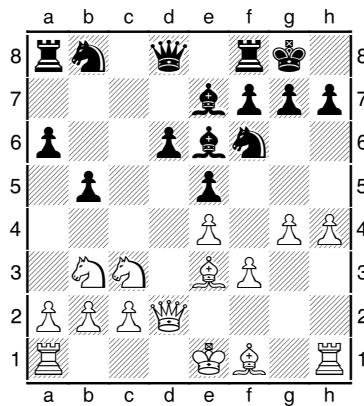
black cannot chase it away with a pawn. Remember how effective Keres's knights were in the last game on d5 and e6!

7.Nb3 Be6 8.f3 Be7 9.Qd2 0-0

While this is playable, more common and perhaps sounder are 9...b5 or Nb8-d7.

10.g4 b5 11.h4 (D)

Here, instead of 11. h4, my opponent could have taken advantage of my slack move order by g5!. This move would mean that my knight would have to go to d7, leaving no room for my b8 knight. White could also now think about popping his c3 knight



into d5, as were I to exchange it by Bxc6, after exd5, the white pawn would stop my b8 knight from developing to c6.

11...Qc7

Black will now try to make use of the half open c-file.

12.0-0-0

MQ-White castles queenside and now both sides will attack each other's king's by advancing their pawns. But who will be first...

12...Rc8

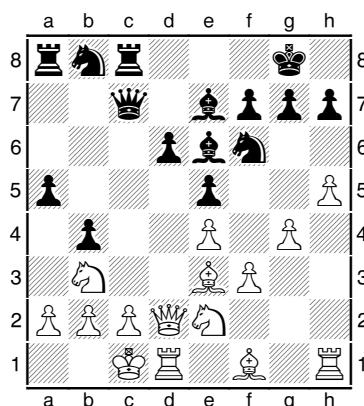
Building up pressure on the c-file. The rook and queen work nicely together to build up x-ray pressure on white's c2 square.

13.h5 b4

White's attack is taking a while to get going, and black's pieces are poised to swoop. The White Knight is forced back, giving me an extra tempo for my attack.

MQ-By advancing the black "a" and "b" pawns, one by one the defenders in front of white's king are forced to retreat

14.Ne2 a5! (D)



Black's attack gathers pace and now white must move his king to allow the white knight on b3 to find refuge on c1.

15.Kb1

This looks like another wasted move, as ideally white should at least be trying to get some counterplay on the other side of the board. Already however, Black is in the driving seat.

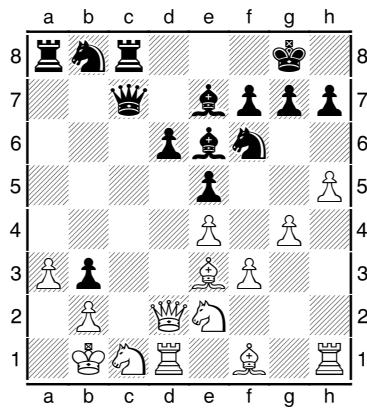
15...a4

Another tempo gained.

16.Nbc1 b3

No wasting of time here by Black, as I power on through the White defensive line. While this may look like it loses a pawn, in reality the pawn exchanges will strip away the defences around the white king. If you can do this with pawns, all the better, although in the last game, we saw how Keres achieved this by sacrificing his bishop for a few key pawns.

17.cxb3 axb3 18.a3?? (D)

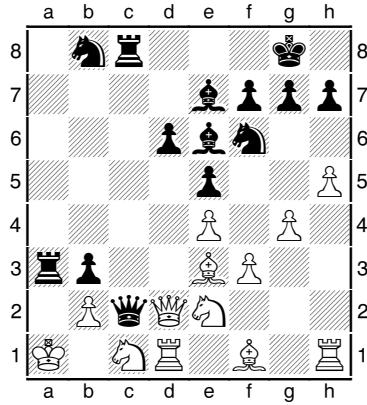


This is a huge blunder, letting me wreak havoc on the White position. MQ-The best defence is Ne2-c3 blocking the c-file and giving up the a2 pawn, but black still has great attacking chances. 18.Nc3 bxa2+ 19.Ka1

18...Qc2+!

The black queen launches a stinging attack against the white king. White cannot swap queens here as after Qxc2 check, bxc2, the black pawn would take the white rook on d1 and promote to become a queen!

19.Ka1 At first sight it looks as if the white position might hold. The position seems blocked and white seems to have weathered the storm, but an elegant coup de grace is in the offing... **19...Rxa3+!! (D)**



A beautiful combination that strips away the last defences around the black king. Now mate is imminent.

20.bxa3 b2#

Nothing is more satisfying than a mate that is not only the result of a good build up, but is also pleasing to the eye. **0-1**



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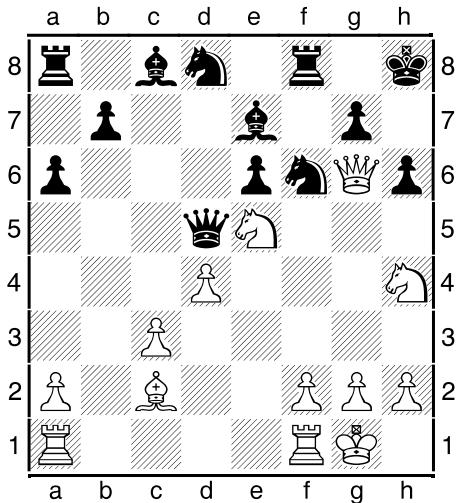
Castle Trouble: Percy has A Close Encounter with an Upwardly Mobile Rook.

© Robert Murtagh 2007

Tactical Wizardry

Stephen Hanley's game earlier finished with a fantastic combination leading to mate. A great way to learn about tactics is to test yourself every day by solving puzzles which appear in newspapers such as the Irish Times. We asked Ireland's top player, Grandmaster Alexander Baburin to send us two of his favourite tactical puzzles. See if you can solve them – set the positions up on a board, and try and puzzle them out using the clues we give you. The solutions to both puzzles appear on the next page.

A)



Maevskaya - Kirienko

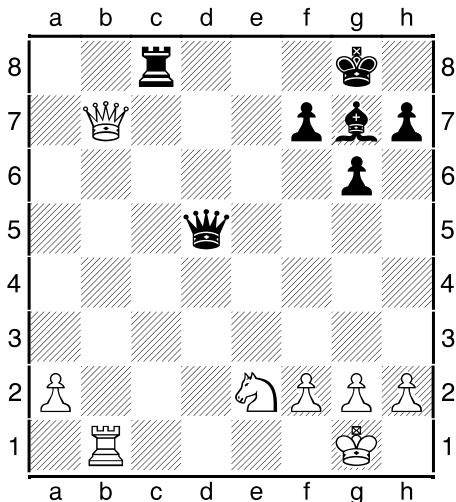
Kiev Kiev, 1974

White to play and mate in four moves!

Hint 1: Black's king is stuck in the corner with few squares to escape to, and the White knights are lurking with intent.

Hint 2: If you're stuck, try solving this position with white's queen removed.

B)



Korobov - Gureev

Moscow, 1978

Black to play and win!

Hint 1: White has an extra pawn, but can black take advantage of white's weak back rank (row 1)?

Hint 2: Are any of white's defenders overloaded – trying to do too much at once?

Hint 3: Sometimes you have to give a little to get a lot!!

Solutions on next page!

Introducing the Irish Chess Union Women's Officer: Gearóidín Uí Laighléis

A bhuachaillí agus a chailíní,

Is mise Gearóidín Uí Laighléis agus tá mé ag obair mar Oifigeach na mBan (Womens Officer) do Chumann Fichille na hÉireann.

I am delighted to talk you in this first issue of Junior Chess Corner.

Unlike yourselves I only started playing chess when I was an adult but just like you all, I love the game and spend as much time as I can playing games and trying to improve. I love spending time looking at tactics, but have to admit that that I don't spend enough time on my openings.



After I first learned how to play chess I fell madly in love with the game and neglected all other past times for a while.

One of the most exciting and wonderful things to happen to me in my life (outside of family and friends of course) is to have been chosen to play for Ireland in several Olympiads and European team competitions. My first International was in Kalmykia, a small province in Russia, and I remember being so excited and emotional the first day of the tournament that I could hardly remember my own name never mind my openings!!

However I did survive and ended up on 50%, 6½ out of 13 which was a fairly good result for the first outing.

I consider it a huge honour and privilege to play for Ireland and I am still extremely nervous and in awe at the beginning of each competition. To play for one's country is a wonderful achievement which is very difficult to beat.

I have been wonderfully blessed also with a lovely little girl and Aisling made her first appearance at the 2004 Olympiad at the tender age of 10 months (see picture on next page). Aisling now accompanies me to most of the tournaments and she is able to set the pieces up on the board but she isn't that interested in the game just yet!! We'll give her another couple of years, I think. It goes without saying of course that it would be impossible for me to play at all without the constant support of my wonderful husband Con.

My most memorable game I think is the one played in the 4 NCL in England against WIM Rita Zimmerman. I hadn't been chosen for the Olympiad team that year and was feeling a little miserable about it, as is perfectly normal, but then you just have to shake yourself and say "right! Ill be better next time!!" It was really good to go to England that month and draw against a very highly rated Woman International Master.

My most embarrassing game has to be one of the games which I played in Kalmykia. Brian Kelly was standing in as our captain that day and as you all know, Brian is one of our brightest stars and soon to become Grand Master. Brian by the

Tactical Wizardry Solutions

A) 1.Qh7+ Nxh7 2.Nhg6+ Kg8 3.Nxe7+ Kh8 4.N5g6# 1-0

B) 1...Rc1+ 2.Nxc1 [2.Rxc1 Qxb7] 2...Qd1# 0-1

way is also one of the loveliest people on this planet and I love him dearly. This particular day I was playing a much weaker player and had a very nice position. I was thrilled thinking that this was a wonderful way to impress Brian. I then managed to win another 3 pieces. That sounds “alright” I hear you say!!! But no, I actually had too many pieces on the board and they weren’t working together at all. It took me absolutely ages to win the game as my opponent had no intention of resigning and I think Brian was extremely confused as to how anyone could possibly play the way I did. Gentleman that he was, and is, however, he just said that I had a very good position!!!!

My second most embarrassing game was the one I played against Stephen Hanley in 2004. It was my first tournament since I had had Aisling (that’s my excuse and I’m sticking to it!!) and Stephen flew up the board at me and mated me in 11 moves. I am still convinced that Steven had 4 or 5 knights on the board but the 100 or so people who were in the room at the time assured me that he had only 2. It certainly seemed like he had a lot more. Stephen as you know is another of our rising stars and the last I saw of him he was playing in the Masters in Bunratty. Go n-éirí leat, Stephen!! Beidh tú ar fheabhas!

I absolutely love the tournaments in Ireland. All the players are very nice people and I now have a lovely bunch of “chess friends”. There is also a lovely atmosphere at the tournaments. I especially love the Blitz competitions at Kilkenny

and Bunratty when we all get a chance to play against grandmasters. I really enjoyed offering GM Mark Hebden a draw in the blitz in Kilkenny this year. He declined for some strange reason!!! Another gorgeous lad!

Talking of nice lads, it would be great if we had a lot more “laddettes” or “lassies” or girls or women and that’s one of the reasons I’m really interested in getting all the girls together. It is really



Here is a picture of Gearóidín with Aisling lining up with the Irish team, Debbie Quinn to her left, Suzanne Connolly to her right, as they prepare to play Iraq in Calvia, at the Olympiad 2004.

important for the Irish Chess Union to know what ideas you have for female chess in Ireland so please let me know what you think.

I really love my role as Women’s Officer as I feel that there is a wealth of talent out there and that it’s just a matter of getting it all together. I am asking all the girls out there to come up to me at the tournaments if you don’t already know me and say hello (or better still, Dia Duit!) as I’d love to meet you all. You’ll recognise me as I normally have Aisling in tow in between games!! Looking forward to seeing you all at the tournaments.

Tá súil agam go bhfeicfidh mé sibh roimh i bhfad. Slán go fóill.

Gearóidín



Percy Jousts with the White Knight and has to Watch his Step!

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Meet the Parents

Taking those first steps in the world of chess can be a daunting prospect, not just for kids but also for their parents. We decided to ask a number of parents to describe their own experiences of accompanying their children to chess tournaments, and also any advice that they would give to parents and kids starting out. We received an incredibly enthusiastic response from many parents, who also had some creative ideas as to how Irish Junior chess might be promoted and developed. Here we include a selection of comments, observations and advice from a cross-section of parents whose children are actively involved in chess in Dublin, Kilkenny, Galway and Shannon.

Fiona Cormican: Spotlighing Junior Chess In The Galway Region

My four children learned how to play chess from their father, who in turn learned it from a college friend who he shared accommodation with. They had the basics at about 4/5 years of age and played, not very seriously, at home between themselves and with Martin for a number of years. They caught the chess bug when Bernadette Colgan of Galway library service came to our local library in Oranmore on a temporary placement in summer 2001 and set up a chess tournament for the summer (as she has done in other areas of Galway) in which they all played and did o.k. Around the same time Ronan Duke gave a talk/demonstration in Galway city library, interest was further stimulated. They signed up for formal teaching sessions with Ronan, and became regular attendees at his Sunday junior competitions in Galway bridge centre. John Alfred started running summer camps in Galway in 2004, they enjoyed those and learned a lot. Also we were lucky to be able to avail of some coaching from Rashid Ziatdinov, now a GM, when he was in Galway for 6 months in 2004/05, thanks to Niall Murphy from Knocknacarra chess club.

At about the same time, I was on the parents' committee of our local national school (Clarinbridge) and it was mentioned in passing at one of the meetings that it would be a good thing to have some chess in the school. With the consent of the principal, Sean Holian, I asked Ronan (and later Ron Cummins) to come and do some teaching there. We entered teams from the school in the checkmate and more recently John Alfred's chess-z school competitions and the interest and enthusiasm among the kids is huge. I would say though that it needs a parent or teacher with serious commitment to keep it going in the national schools as there are so many competing activities. Also I felt initially that it was looked on as being a bit dubious/elitist, but not any more, although one or two parents have told me their kids are interested in chess but don't want their classmates to know as it's not a "cool" thing to be into!! A lot of the kids who started playing chess in the national school now go regularly to the Sunday rapidplays which are now run by John Alfred and a few have asked about the "next step" / the 3 day weekenders/ rating systems/ how do you get to play for Ireland?

My oldest, David, was picked to play for Galway on an inter-county event in June 2002 and the following year for the inter-provincials. He was the first to play in a 3 day tournament and won a grading prize in the Galway open (as it was then) in 2003. Nice encouragement. The following year my two oldest went to Bunratty. We spent most of the weekend in a state of bewilderment, knowing nothing about the

rating system. However we gradually got it together, got to know people at the tournaments, and now they go to as many of the weekenders as we can manage.

Also they play in Galway chess club winter league, and have got some great "ad hoc" coaching in there from playing strong players and analysing games etc. I should also mention N.U.I.G. chess society who have been very active this year organising simul's and lectures and very kindly invite interested juniors to attend.

In the last few years John (aged 10) has played for Ireland against Sussex, Sarah has played twice on the Faber girls team, and in the tri-nations, and Ruth also in the tri-nations, and in the E.U. championships last August. It was a big honour to be asked to play for the country and largely a positive and enjoyable experience. From a parents point of view, the expense and domestic hassle of having to be out of the country with 1/2 children for 10 days, leaving others at home, was considerable, but worth it, although, speaking for myself, it would be nearly impossible to do during term time. Also I think the chess union should try to send a coach/ mentor along to the high profile events, as much to help the kids deal with the tension and the inevitable bad days, as to coach.

I have not been able myself to master more than the bare minimum of chess, and can't really see why it becomes such a passion, I feel a bit of a fraud when taking carloads of kids around to school matches and worry that if a dispute about a game arises I won't be able to sort it but so far that hasn't arisen. Two good things about the weekenders are that I don't have to cook and I get to catch up on my reading during interminable chess games, now that I have gotten into my head that there is no point in me hovering over the table.

My kids have got a lot from being involved in chess, especially as an alternative to computer games and T.V. It's a wonderful activity and I feel it teaches them to cope with losing and blundering and to accept that they have to make mistakes themselves before moving on. It is also great to see them facing and learning from older or more mature players and to have the opportunity to compete against players from other countries. I don't think that any other activity would have given them these opportunities.

Rating System

The rating system, the concept of a tournament draw, grading prizes can seem complicated, so it is worth trying to explain it from a non-chess playing parents point of view

When you join the Irish Chess Union as a beginner you are ungraded. The first 20 rated games you play will go towards deciding your rating. This is calculated by the ratings officer approx. 3 times a year. You don't need to submit any results, it will be calculated automatically.

Ps. It is also quite possible that any player from 1 to 100 will walk away with 1st place, so don't underestimate a low rated or ungraded player or over estimate a higher rated player.

- James and Maura Osbourne

James and Maura Osbourne on the Benefits of Chess for Kids and their Parents.

When Sam Osborne, son of James and Maura, was placed 8th in the Irish Junior Championships U 12 held in St Benildus College it opened many doors for both Sam and his parents. Following his selection to represent Ireland at a triangular tournament in Scotland, which the Irish team won, the team were rewarded with a visit to Áras an Uachtarain to meet President Mary MacAleeese. Shortly after this, Sam met Frank Scott from St Benildus college and chess club and found in St Benildus the perfect atmosphere to enjoy chess socially while improving and attaining many titles for the school and club. Sam has since represented Ireland at The World Youth Chess Championships, Crete, the Glorney Team in Liverpool and the U18 Team event in Hungary. Here James and Maura share their thoughts on what kids and their parents can look forward to when attending tournaments and the short and long-term benefits of the sport of chess. They also provide a helpful explanation for that most puzzling and confusing of entities, the Chess Rating System!

Chess is unique in that it is one of the few sports in which parents, can participate with their children, on an equal footing as age is no barrier. We have also noticed that chess has a number of particular benefits for kids, and have made a list of the most important!

1. Playing chess helps build a child's confidence.
2. It also helps kids express their opinions and to relate to adults.
3. Kids learn about decision making and the importance of being able to make a choice, and then accept the outcome.
4. Playing chess emphasizes the importance of managing one's time, an essential life skill.
5. Chess helps build mental stamina and concentration.

Tournament Essentials

The best place to find out about tournaments is in the calendar section of the ICU website. Follow the details about registering for the event on line or by post.

The draw:

In each section participants are graded and seeded. They are then drawn against each other with the top seed as number 1, down to 100 (for this example presume there are 100 entries). Most tournaments will have 6 rounds, with each player playing 3 games as white and three as black, if possible. In round one player 1 will play player 51 and player 2 player 52 and so on. So a newcomers first match will most likely be their toughest if they are a low seed, this is the time when you explain how much they can learn from the experience. Make sure they analyse the game with their opponent afterwards. It's good to point out that you learn a lot more from a loss than a win, but don't presume they won't or can't win this game. When the game is over they must go to the draw on the wall and mark up either 1, $\frac{1}{2}$ or 0 against their name and that of their opponent.

A win is scored as 1 point, a draw as $\frac{1}{2}$ and a loss as 0. When all games are complete the next draw is made, in this case all players scoring 1 are drawn against each other, also anyone on $\frac{1}{2}$ will be drawn against someone on $\frac{1}{2}$ and so on, when possible. The same follows for rounds 3/4/5/6.

- James and Maura Osbourne

6. Now matter how strong a player you child becomes, players of all levels will see the results of their hard work and preparation being rewarded with progress and success. Winning a match or **tournament** is not the only benefit, sometimes just knowing that you played well or had an exciting games is enough to reward your effort.

7. Chess teaches children not just how to win graciously and also how to accept defeat.

8. Chess is one of those rare sports that brings together people from all different backgrounds, cultures and ages, thanks to a common interest.

When getting involved in chess, we were surprised to learn that not every chess tournament is the same, either in duration or format, as there are events from as little as 3 hours on a Sunday afternoon, to a one day rapid, to a 3 day weekender, right up to a full 9-day FIDE Internationally rated tournament. So, you or your child can participate at any level that suits you!

Some things that we have learnt as chess playing parents!

1. You learn more from a loss than from a win, if you go over your games afterwards with your opponent. This also helps to develop friendships. Aim to get a point or even half a point from the event, and then improve on this score at the next events. Try new openings and plans instead of just focusing on winning. Take your time and have fun!

2. Age has no bearing on an opponent's ability.

3. Don't be obsessed with ratings, they can cause you to be afraid to take risks and chances in case you lose a few points. If you gain or lose a large number in one event it will usually balance out over the next few tournaments, the ratings are calculated only a few times a year.

Tournament Prizes

There are prizes for 1st 2nd and 3rd , but there are also **grading prizes** awarded. If you imagine the draw for 100 participants is seeded and then divided into sections or bands

1-20	under 1200
21-40	under 1100
41-60	under 1000
61-80	under 900
81-100	ungraded

This is just an example, each event is different and depends on entries, the bands are usually decided at round 5 and marked on a board in the hall.

The participants with the highest scores are awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd irrespective of the band they are in, the remaining players are then eligible for a grading prize. Usually there is no grading prize in the top section, as they should be aiming for 1st, 2nd or 3rd, but in each of the other bands the top scoring player is awarded 1st place in that band.

So when you are participating in any event be it the juniors, majors, masters there is always a prize to aim for, so don't feel out of your depth or out of the running.

It may be the case that several players will end up on the same points, in this case there are various methods for determining the winner, but for us parents, explaining this to our children, it is best just to say "the computer calls it".

Another point to remember is that the prize giving is held very quickly after the last round ends, but often anyone who hasn't won a prize heads home. It would be great if participants stayed on to applaud and support the winners and the organisers. When your turn comes to be a prize winner, you would like people to be there to applaud you.

- James and Maura Osbourne

4. You can make wonderful friends through accompanying your kids to weekend events and longer events abroad. These are often people you might not meet in the normal course of life. We've been lucky in that we have made some very close friends, with whom we often travel together and share accommodation. On a cautionary note however, we would suggest that it is often not a good idea to try and turn one of these events into a family holiday. They are enjoyable but can also be hard work and stressful as you often need to be at hand to give moral support, especially to younger players. Regardless of the strength of your child, when they lose, as we all must sometimes, there is the inevitable disappointment and having put so much energy into a game they may need some time away from the crowd.

First Impressions and Ideas for the Future: Noreen and Paul Griffiths

The most important piece of advice for parents that we can give to parents is to enjoy the experience and not to be too disheartened if your child does not do too well in his/her first few tournaments. If possible try to encourage your kids to watch as many games as possible in order to learn from more experienced players. Our first impressions of Irish Chess were that they were run by a number of dedicated people who gave their time voluntarily to run these events. Our gratitude lies with these people without whom chess in Ireland would be a non-starter. It can really help your child's progress to accompany them to tournaments, if you have the opportunity, as your child will recognise that you support what they are doing by encouraging them to reach their goals. While you might think otherwise, chess tournaments can be remarkably sociable places, as parents share and exchange stories concerning their respective children's trials and tribulations. The chess world is remarkably diverse and you will meet a whole host of people from different social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The first question you will ask yourself is what on earth you will do, when your child is locked in battle on the chess board. There are in fact loads of options. You can watch the game, socialize, go for a walk, or even use leisure facilities which may be at hand, especially if the tournament is taking place at a hotel.

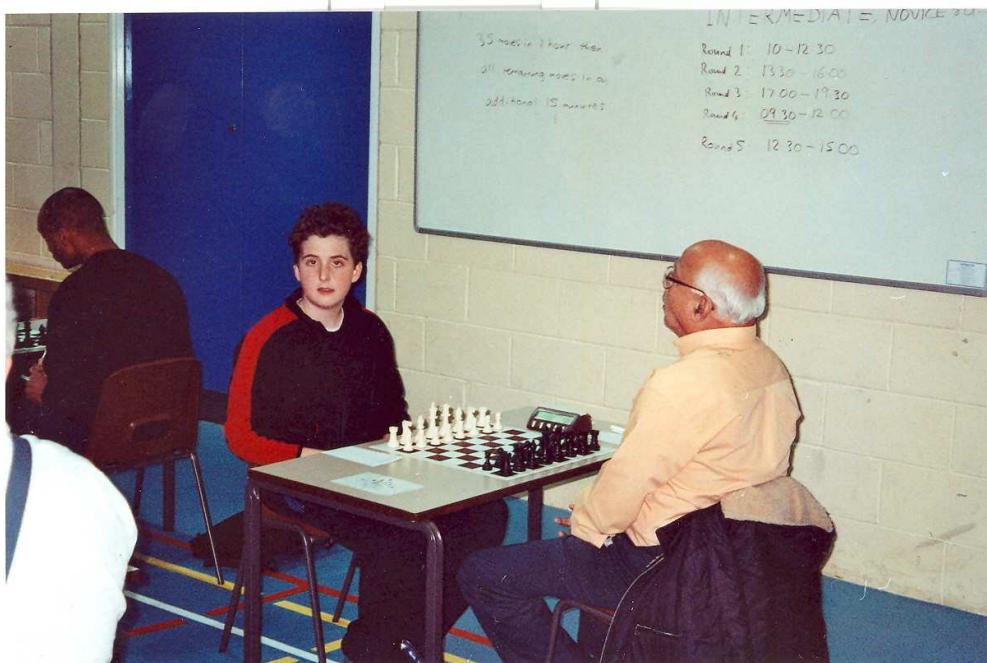
There is no question as to the huge contribution that Irish chess organizers make in organizing massive events often on a shoestring. The venues of Irish Tournaments might be said to lag somewhat behind their European counterparts due in main to lack of sponsorship in Ireland for the game and the relative cost of venues here vis-à-vis their European counterparts. Irish weekend tournaments are undeniably sociable and as many chess players are intent on taking full advantage of the weekend break, if possible it is always a good idea to get a bedroom away from the bar area, especially if your child has an important game the next day and needs a good night's sleep. As our own son got more interested in chess and improved, we had a chance to travel abroad. The British Championships in the Isle of Man were a pleasure to attend, e.g. lots of peripheral chess activity, good communications and a venue that conveyed a sense of importance to the tournament. It made all the players feel special and the odd chess celebrity turning up was also a nice touch.

Quite unexpectedly chess has become a very big part of our own lives and it would be great if something could be done to raise the status of chess in Ireland, perhaps by setting 5 years targets, so as to increase the number of players (especially juniors) and set in place definitive targets which might help achieve future IM's, GM's etc. At the moment, we feel chess in Ireland is less an international activity as

opposed to a national activity, which leaves it a little isolated from mainstream chess in Europe. Perhaps, in the future it might be possible to have an 'Irish Junior Team', comprising the highest rated players at any given time, in other words comprising a rolling stock of children. This team might represent Ireland abroad in various European and world events. This could be kick-started by entering an Irish junior team in the English *Four Nations Chess League* (4NCL), which takes place over four weekends each year and would provide valuable international experience and IM and GM Norm possibilities for Irish juniors. Ideally, the members of this 'Irish Junior Team' panel should receive specialist coaching all year round and these same coaches might also accompany the children when representing Ireland abroad. We could even have an Irish team kit, eight green jerseys for example, which might give them a sense of unity and cohesion. This would encompass everything kids like – team competition, national pride, international honours. Who knows, wearing a 'team strip' might help to further revolutionise the game (like darts and snooker did), and give chess an even greater appeal to juniors.

Chess Families

John and Robert White



Robert White from Kilkenny is only 11 years old, but already has an impressive current rating of 1640. His first big success came in 2004 when he became all Ireland Novices champion and the following year he became all-Ireland under-10 champion. Despite his young years, Robert has already played for Ireland on a number of occasions, in the World, European and European Union Under-10 championships in France, Austria and Montenegro respectively. After gaining this invaluable experience against the best players of his age across the world, last August in Swansea, he won the British Under-11 championships ahead of the top English, Scottish and Welsh juniors. Here is one of his best games from last year, in which he

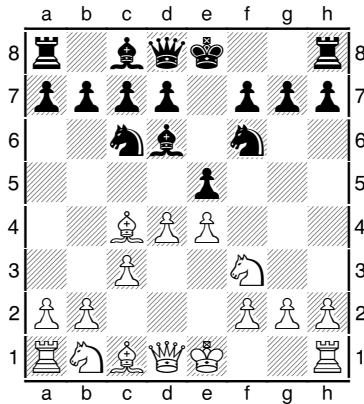
shows a great deal of tactical awareness, when a relatively quiet opening, becomes a highly exciting tactical battle in the middlegame.

Bajzar,T (1780) - White, Robert (1495) [C54]

29.04.2006

Annotations by Mark Quinn

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 Bd6 (D)

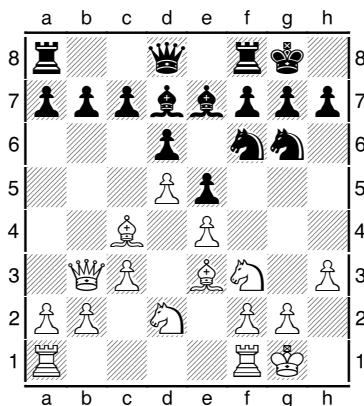


This is a little passive and black can consider taking the pawn with the following possible variation. 5...exd4 6.cxd4 Bb4+ 7.Nc3 d5! a typical counterattack in the centre, which is enabled by the awkward pin on White's knight on c3. 8.exd5 Nxd5 9.Bxd5 Qxd5 10.0-0 Bxc3 11.bxc3 0-0

6.d5

Now the game becomes a tense positional struggle, in which black has good chances. if white had swapped pawns and played a quick f4, he could have taken advantage of the awkward placing of black's dark squared bishop and knight. 6.dxe5 Nxe5 7.Nxe5 Bxe5 8.f4 Bd6 (8...Nxe4 9.Qh5! Nd6 10.Qxe5+ Kf8 11.Bd3+-) 9.e5 Ne4 10.Bxf7+ Kxf7 11.Qd5+ Ke8 12.Qxe4 Bc5 13.Be3 Bxe3 14.Qxe3±

6...Ne7 7.Qc2 Ng6 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3 Be7 10.Be3 d6 11.Nbd2 Bd7 12.Qb3 (D)



Black's position is very solid and white decides to try and play on the queenside to make use of his space advantage there

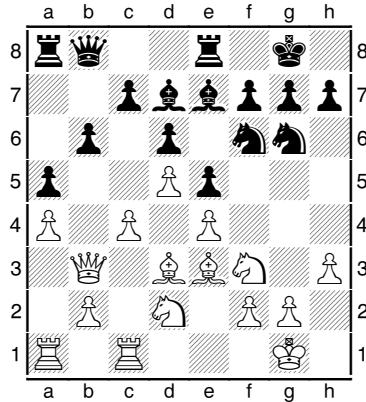
12...Qc8

Defending the b7 pawn, but also setting up the possibility of sacrificing the light-squared bishop on h3 to quickly bring the queen in to attack the white king.

13.Rfd1

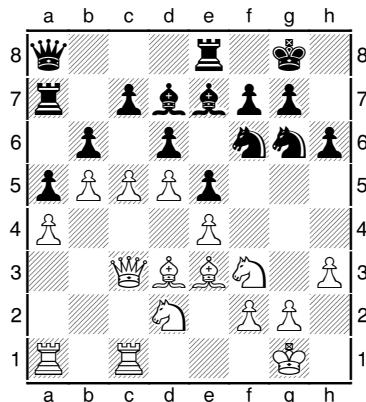
Now taking on h3 is risky and white can drop his bishop back from c4 to f1 to harass the black queen and then go to g2 to provide some cover for the white monarch.

13...a6 14.a4 Qb8 15.Bd3 Re8 16.c4 b6 17.Rdc1 a5! (D)

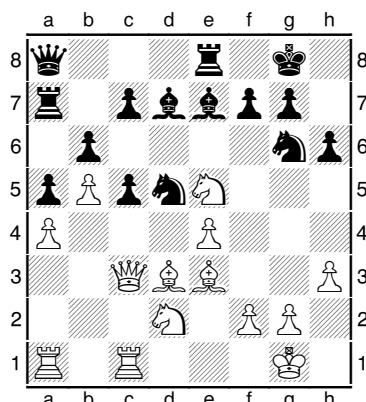


This is a very good positional move making it hard for white to push his queenside pawns and squeeze black. **18.Qc3 Ra7 19.b4 Qa8**

While black's rook on a7 may look a little out of place, in reality he is eyeing the weak a4 pawn. White can't afford to exchange on a5 as the rook would spring into life, so he is forced into closing the queenside. **20.b5 h6 21.c5 (D)**



Frustrated at his attempts to open up black's queenside, white makes what looks like a promising pawn sacrifice to allow his knight to come to the active c4 square and attack the weak pawn on a5. On first sight it looks as though black dare not take c5 with the d-pawn, as he would lose his kings pawn, but black has a spectacular surprise in store for white! **21...dxc5 22.Nxe5 Nxd5!! (D)**



Black now unleashes a brilliant combination which allows his rook on e8 to come into play and his bishop to get on to the a1-h8 diagonal with devastating consequences for white's position.

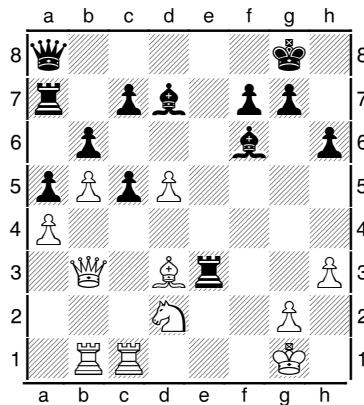
23.exd5 Bf6!

Now white is in big trouble as the black bishop is eyeing up the white queen and rook on a1. Here white's best chance is to avoid the pin by Rb1 followed by Qb3, but already a pawn down and with a weak d5 pawn and black's pieces poised to attack, black would be very much in control.

24.f4? Nxe5 25.fxe5 Rxe5

Taking with the bishop would also be good as after taking the rook on a1, the white bishop would be hanging on e3.

26.Qb3 Rxe3 27.Rab1? (D)



White misses his last chance with Ra3 as he now walks into another awkward pin, which loses his bishop on d3 Better was 27.Ra3 Bf5 28.Qc4 Bxd3 29.Rxd3 Rxd3 30.Qxd3 Bd4+ 31.Kh1 Qxd5! though Black remains on top

27...Bf5 28.Qa2 Rxd3 29.Rf1 Qxd5 30.Qxd5 Rxd5 31.Rbe1

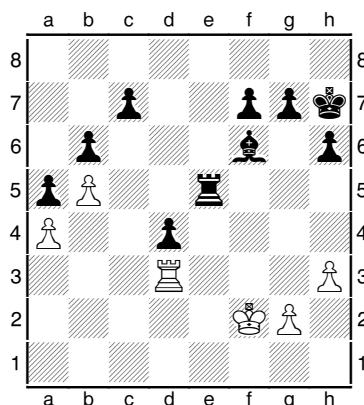
All black has to do is bring his a7 rook into the game and his material advantage should quickly tell.

31...Bc2 32.Re8+ Kh7 33.Ne4 Bxe4 34.Rxe4 Rd4 35.Rfe1 Ra8 36.Rxd4 cxd4

37.Rd1 Rd8 38.Rd3

White tries to stop the pawn but it is only a matter of time before the pawn advances.

38...Re8 39.Kf2 Re5 (D)



Setting up another trap.

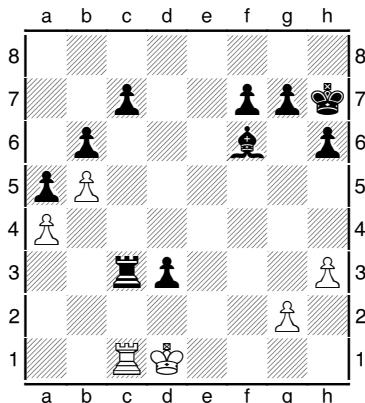
40.Kf3

40.Rxd4 Rf5+ 41.Ke3 Bxd4+ 42.Kxd4 Rf4+

40...Rc5 41.Ke2 Rc3 42.Rd1 Ra3 43.Rc1 d3+

The pawn advances with check and due to the threat of Bg5 check, white cannot go to d2

44.Kd1 Rc3 (D)



White resigns as after Bg5, white will have virtually no move as he constantly has to watch for Rc1 mate, so black can saunter in with his king and take the remaining king side pawns and advance to queen with mate 45.Rb1 [45.Ra1 Bg5 46.Rb1 Kg6 47.Ra1 Kf5 48.Ke1 d2+ 49.Kd1 Rc1+ 50.Rxc1 dxc1Q+] 45...Bg5 46.Ra1 Kg6 47.Rb1 Kf5 48.Ke1 d2+ 49.Kd1 Rc1+ 50.Rxc1 dxc1Q+

0-1

A very impressive victory from one of Ireland's brightest prospects. But Robert is not the only chess player in his family as his father John, who plays for the Kilkenny Armstrong team is also an extremely strong player who of late has begun to play internationally.

If you would like to see your own chess drawings appear in the next issue of Junior Chess Corner or perhaps even on the cover, email scanned copies of your art work to publicrelations@icu.ie

Alternatively send your drawings by post to: Mark Quinn, The Editor, Junior Chess Corner, 68 Clonkeen Drive, Dublin 18.

(Note: make sure to keep copies of your work before you send it, as it will not be possible to return submissions afterwards.)

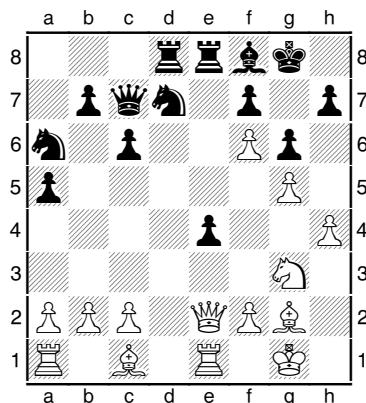
The best drawing will appear on the cover of the next issue and receive a 50 Euro Chess book token. Everyone whose work appears in the next issue will receive a prize of a book token worth 25 Euro! The Competition will be judged by a suitable panel of art experts drawn from the chess world!



Here John makes the first move with white against the Russian Grandmaster Alexander Chernaeiv at the recent Surrey Congress. As both players get ready for the ensuing battle, GM Chernaeiv seems to be sizing John up before he decides what opening to play. In the background to John's right you may notice a certain spectator. We are not sure, but could this be the famous actor Malcolm McDowell? Is he a chess fan? While we can't show you the game between John and Chernaeiv in this issue, here is John's hard fought win against Women's Grandmaster Jovanka Houska at the recent European Team Championships in Austria last September, where the Kilkenny senior team competed.

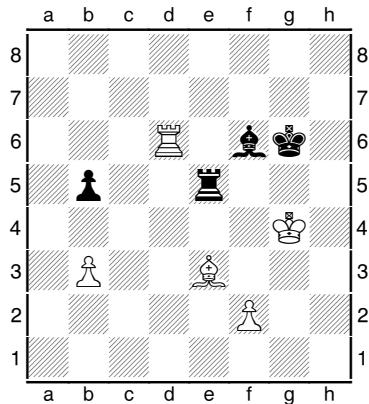
**White,J - Houska,J (2364) [B10]
22nd European Club Cup 2006 (1), 08.10.2006**

1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 e5 4.Ngf3 Bd6 5.g3 Nf6 6.Bg2 0-0 7.0-0 Re8 8.Re1 Bg4 9.h3 Bh5 10.Nf1 dxe4 11.dxe4 Qc7 12.g4 Bg6 13.Ng3 a5 14.Nh4 Na6 15.Nhf5 Bf8 16.g5 Rad8 17.Qe2 Nd7 18.h4 Bxf5 19.exf5 e4 20.f6 g6 (D)



21.h5 Ndc5 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.Qc4+ Kh8 24.Be3 b5 25.Qe2 Qe5 26.Rad1 Kg8 27.Qg4 Rd5 28.Qh4 Red8 29.Qg4 Re8 30.Rb1 h5 31.gxh6 Qxf6 32.Nxe4 Nxe4 33.Bxe4 Rde5 34.Bxg6 R8e7 35.Bd3+ Kf7 36.h7 Bg7 37.c4 Nb4 38.Rbd1 Nxd3 39.Rxd3 Qg6

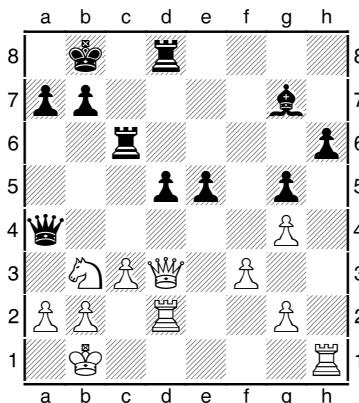
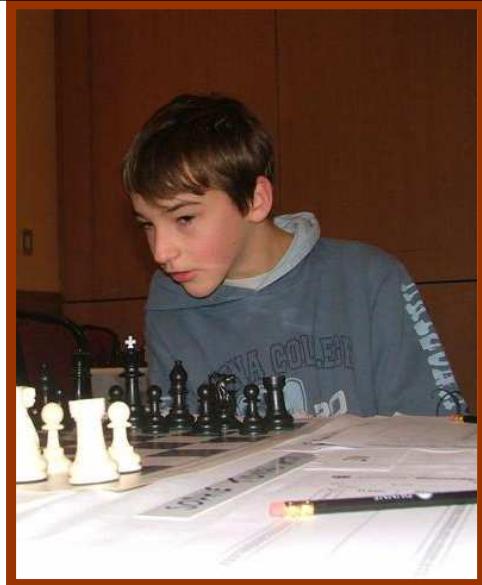
40.Qxg6+ Kxg6 41.cxb5 cxb5 42.Red1 Kxh7 43.Rd5 Kg6 44.Kg2 a4 45.b3 axb3
46.axb3 Bf6 47.Kf3 R7e6 48.Rxe5 Rxe5 49.Rd6 Rf5+ 50.Kg4 Re5 (D)



51.Rxf6+ Kxf6 52.Bd4 Ke6 53.Bxe5 Kxe5 54.f4+ Kf6 55.Kf3 Kf5 56.Ke3 b4 57.Kf3 Kf6 58.Ke4 Ke6 59.Kd4 1-0

Tactical Tales of Derring-do with Nicky and Oisín Benson

Anyone who has attended Irish Chess tournaments in the last couple of years will have noted the steady progression of Dubliner Oisin Benson, from junior to senior tournaments. What you may not know however, is that Oisin's mum Nicky who took up the game quite by chance two years ago, is also becoming a strong and creative player in her own right. Here below, see how Oisin gains the upper hand against an experienced Women's International master following some deft tactical magic in the middlegame!



Benson,O - Lauterbach,I [A41]
EU Ch Cork 2005 (1.52), 2005

32.Qh7! Rc7 33.Rxd5 Rcd7 34.Nc5 Qc6 35.Nxd7+ Rxd7 36.Qg8+ Kc7 37.Rhd1 Rxd5 38.Rxd5 Bf6 39.Qf7+

And white went on to earn a big scalp.
1-0, 62.

Our main game in this article features Oisín's mother, Nicky against John Courtney. John has been playing chess for three years, in CBS primary school, Kilkenny and his coach is Darko Polimac. He has captained the Leinster under 16 team recently and has played for Ireland in the under 12 EU youth chess championship in Austria last August.

Nicky played her first tournament at the Bray rapid play two years ago, as they needed one more player to prevent there being a bye in the tournament, so she obliged. A chance occurrence quickly became an unexpected passion as Nicky herself says: “*I scored just one point off a poor beginner, and blundered at least a piece in every round, but I was hooked, and started working my way through Oisín's junior chess books. I find chess provides fascination and frustration in almost equal measures, but the reward is in playing perhaps just a few moves or a combination within a game which work, or sometimes even win! My ambition is to play at least one game in which every move (by me) is a good move, but I still have a long way to go!*” Nicky may be doing herself a slight injustice here as the following game was almost a masterpiece, which any strong player would be proud of!



Cormican,J - Benson,N [B01]

Bunratty, 2007

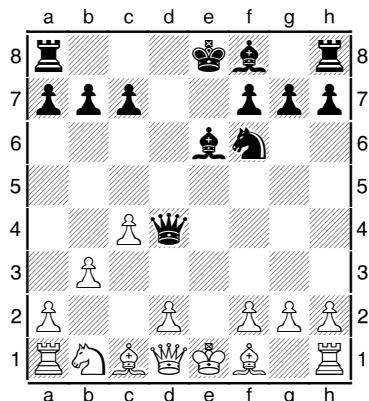
Annotations by Nicky Benson, Additional comments by Mark Quinn

This was played against a very promising Junior John Cormican who is doing very well on the Irish circuit. His siblings are also making their mark. The opening is a variation of the Scandinavian, (or Centre Counter as it is known in the US). I like to play this against e4 as it leads to exciting tactical games which I enjoy, even if, as in this case, I don't win!

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6

This is the Icelandic gambit, the pawn is given up for rapid development and open central files

4.dxe6 Bxe6 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.b3 Nd4 7.Nxd4 Qxd4 (D)



MQ- attacking the white rook on a1, before white can occupy the b2 square with his bishop. It is often a mistake to bring one's queen out too early in the opening but here

the timing is perfect, as she cannot be attacked on d4 and will be perfectly placed to launch a dangerous attack on the exposed white king.

8.Nc3 Ng4!

Black's threats are already extremely dangerous and the threat is Qf2 with mate.

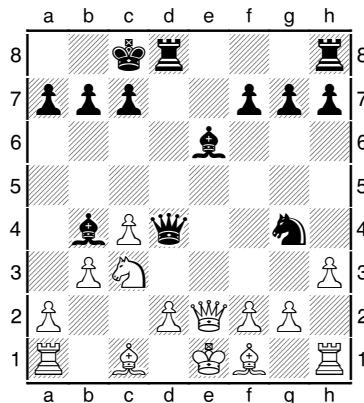
9.Qe2 0-0-0!

MQ-Black castles queenside, bringing her king to safety and bringing her rook into play. Soon all of black's pieces will be poised to attack.

10.h3

This looks natural but white cannot afford to let black get any further ahead in development: better was Bb2, after which white can castle queenside so as to get his king out of immediate danger. 10.Bb2

10...Bb4!



MQ- The black knight on g4 is immune to attack, as black would simply take on c3 after which white's position caves in. **11.Bb2**

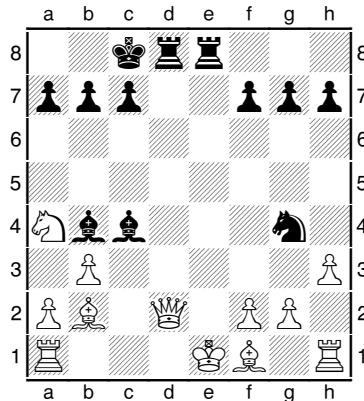
11.hxg4 Bxc3 12.Rb1 Bxg4 13.f3 Rhe8 14.fxg4 Bxd2+ 15.Bxd2 Qxd2+ 16.Kf2 Rxe2+ 17.Bxe2 Qxa2 **11...Rhe8**

Black has completed development with both rooks on open and semi-open files, and multiple threats **12.Na4?**

Under pressure, white lashes out and tries to dislodge the black queen on d4, but now black could finish the game in considerable style! **12...Qxd2+**

I missed this mating combination 12...Bxd2+ 13.Kd1 Nxf2+ 14.Kc2 Bf5+ 15.Qd3 Bxd3+ 16.Kxd2 Qe3+ 17.Kc3 a5 18.Nb6+ cxb6 19.Ba3 Ne4+ 20.Kb2 Qd2# but then I'm not Fritz! **13.Qxd2 Bxd2+**

13...Bxc4+ (D)



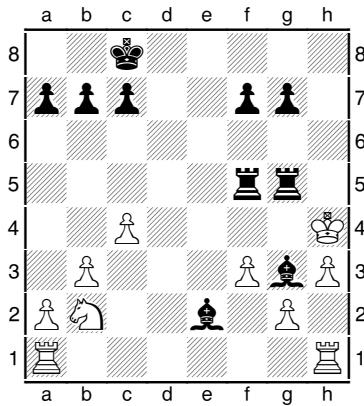
was much stronger: I should have looked at the check. Experienced coach Michael Crowe suggests that on every move you look for CCT: any Checks, Captures and Threats which may be available to you (or your opponent) 14.Be2 Rxe2+ 15.Kf1 Rxd2

14.Ke2 Bf5+ 15.Kf3 Ne5+ 16.Bxe5 Rxe5 17.Be2 Rde8 18.Bd1 Bd3

18...Be4+

19.Nb2 Rf5+ 20.Kg4 Rf4+

20...h5+ was much stronger, leading to mate as it tightens the mating net and reduces the king's escape squares 21.Kh4 Bg5+ 22.Kg3 Bf4+ 23.Kh4 (23.Kf3 Bh2#) 23...Rh8 24.Bxh5 Rhxh5+ 25.Kg4 Be2+ 26.f3 Rhg5+ 27.Kh4 Bg3# - a beautiful finish (D)



21.Kg3 Bf5

I was now in serious time trouble. My opponent had defended extremely well despite the mind boggling complications and after a series of inaccurate moves, saw my advantage evaporate.

22.Bg4 g6 23.Rad1 Rd4 24.c5 Bf4+ 25.Kh4 g5+ 26.Kh5 Red8?

A terrible blunder in time pressure.

27.Bxf5+ Kb8 28.Rxd4 Rxd4 29.Rd1

Here, I ran out of time, but my opponent is now a piece ahead and winning.

1-0



Percy reaches the other side of the board and becomes queen, disposing of the white king as (s)he does. "All the same, the chessboard is such a dull habitat, I sometimes forget why we fight so hard to defend it." So says the White King.

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Coaches' Profiles

John Alfred

Websites

www.chessz.com

www.chesszsales.com

Based in Munster, John has been an active coach in the Munster area for the past six years and is currently involved in organizing chess in over twenty schools, bringing chess to upwards of five hundred chess players a week. John is also current development officer of the ICU.

John is also involved in organizing immensely popular rapid play tournaments and if you visit his website he already has dates and venues organized for this and next season! If you would like to find out more about the chess school leagues that John organizes, upcoming junior rapidplays in the Munster area and beyond, or forthcoming summer chess camps that he will be running, check out his website at www.chessz.com

John also has a chess store which stocks chess sets, clocks, books, demo boards etc. and if you would like to know more about this service, see www.chesszsales.com

ALEXANDER BABURIN GM



Websites

<http://www.gmsquare.com/>

<http://www.chesstoday.net/>

A familiar and friendly face on the Irish chess scene, Alex has been Ireland's number one chess player for the last eleven years and is Ireland's first and only chess grandmaster. A top flight chess professional who plays regularly in the Europe and the US, this May Alex won the Liechtenstein Open against an extremely strong field. Apart from his playing activities, Alex is also one of the foremost chess coaches and organizers on the Irish chess scene. Currently in Dublin, there are about 430 children learning chess through his chess program in over twenty schools.

Alex also regularly organizes chess tournaments in which upwards of a hundred kids come to compete and many of his students also take part in the highly successful monthly tournaments for kids run by Michael Crowe, as well as the National Checkmate tournament, which usually runs from January to May.

Alex also has two highly successful chess websites. The first www.gmsquare.com hosts the personal websites of some of the world's top players including GMs Alexander Morozevich, Lev Psakhis, as well as his own website.

Also, visit www.chesstoday.net to find out more about the first ever daily chess newspaper on the web, founded and edited by Alex which reports on the latest chess events all around the world, with expert analysis of the top games every day and chess puzzles, articles and book reviews.

If you would like to find out more about Alex's coaching services, for schools or individuals and summer chess camps for kids, email him at ababurin@iol.ie or come along to the Blackrock Shopping centre on 30th June at 3pm where he will be giving a free chess simultaneous against all-comers, sponsored by Sumer Quinn!

DARKO POLIMAC



Websites

<http://www.chessschoolpolimac.com/>

Polimac's pupils are Junior Sport Kings



Since moving to Kilkenny some years ago, Darko Polimac has become the most prolific and successful chess coach in the midlands. An impressive array of young chess stars have benefited from Darko's coaching and include, Karl McPhillips, Kilkenny's strongest junior player to date and former all-Ireland Under-18 champion, Ryan Rhys Griffiths and Poornima Menon who are both profiled in this edition of *Junior Chess Corner*. If you would like to find out more about Darko's chess school, the successes of his former pupils and forthcoming events/tournaments and club nights etc. check out his website at www.chessschoolpolimac.com

MICHAEL CROWE



Former ICU Chairman and current member of the ICU Executive, Michael Crowe is one of the most well known chess coaches and organizers in Ireland today. After acting as captain to the Irish Men's Olympic team at the Novi Sad Olympiad in 1990, Michael retired from competitive chess to concentrate on his coaching and organizing activities. Founder and editor of the *Irish Chess Journal* for 13 years, he was also Chairman of the Irish Chess Union for 3 terms. Today Michael teaches some 300 hundred children chess in schools in the Greater Dublin Area and he runs a kids chess tournament on the first Sunday of every month, which usually involves the participation of 50 children.

Thus far, Michael has coached 9 Irish Junior champions and two Irish intermediate champions. Amongst his former students are Irish Junior Internationals Paul Dempsey and Karl McPhillips. An experienced International arbiter, who has run numerous Irish Championships and who was Tournament Director of the Dublin Zonal tournament in 1993, he is also co-founder of *Scholastic Chess* with Maurice Buckley which runs *National Checkmate* competition, a nationwide schools competition annually involving thousands of children each year.

If you would like to know more about Michael's monthly chess tournaments for Kids in Dublin, or summer chess camps which he runs with GM Baburin, or how to go about organizing a chess club or lessons in your school, email Michael Crowe for further details at:

academy@eircom.net

Websites

The following are chess websites which are very suitable for furthering one's knowledge of chess.

Within the site, there are very useful and instructive sections, e.g. Click on "Resources" – leading to Syllabus, Lessons or Quizzes.

<http://www.academicchess.org>
<http://www.chesskids.com/>
<http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/>

IRISH CHESS WEBSITES

<http://www.icu.ie>

The official website of the Irish Chess Union, this contains Irish chess news, photos, tournament reports, games, ratings, clubs, upcoming events and information about the organization.

<http://www.chessleague.net/lcu/>

This website covers the Leinster club leagues, which are run by the Leinster Chess Union. There is also a club league in Munster, and a big league for individuals in Galway.

OTHER IMPORTANT WEBSITES

<http://www.fide.com>

Official website of the World Chess Federation, this contains news, world rankings, upcoming international events and the official laws of chess.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2007

Bray Rapidplay, Esplanade Hotel, €1850, Sunday 17th June.
Irish Chess Championships and Weekenders, Royal Dublin Hotel, €6800, Jun 30 to Jul 8

July 2007

Glorney and Faber Cups, DCU, 24-26th July

August 2007

City of Dublin, €5000, An Óige Youth Hostel, Aug 31 to Sep 2

September 2007

Galway Congress, Salthill Hotel, €4,000, September 14-16

For more information and an up to date calendar, visit <http://www.icu.ie>

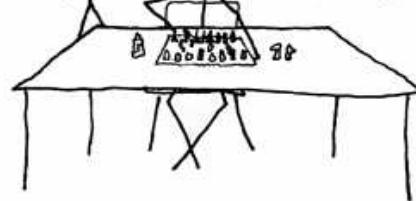
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

| GLUING DOWN CHESS PIECES.

WHY?

| BECAUSE THERE'S A PICTURE
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED.

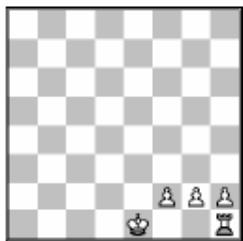
| - I'LL NEED YOUR COAT TO
SNEAK THIS ONTO THE RIDE.



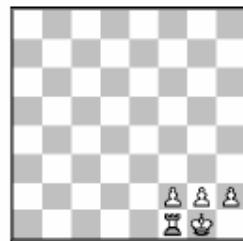
© Randall Munroe, <http://www.xkcd.com>

SPECIAL MOVES - CASTLING

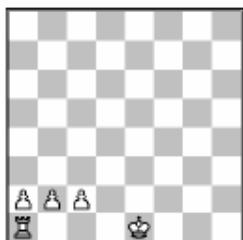
Once the battle commences the Kings need a safe home. The rules allow for a special move that safeguards the King. This is called castling. There are strict rules regarding when and how castling may take place. First we will illustrate the castling manoeuvre. When the Kings castle it is the only time in the chess game that two pieces may move at the same time. It is also the only time that the King can move more than one square at a time. It is also the only time a Rook may jump over another piece.



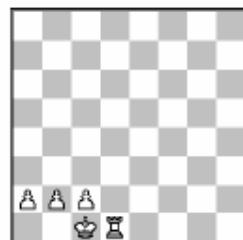
Before Castling Kingside



After Castling Kingside



Before Castling Queenside

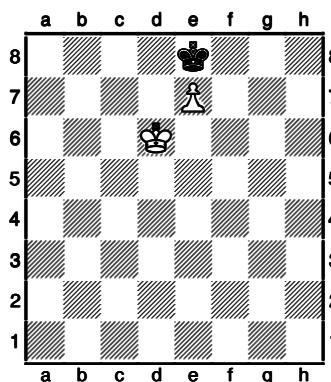


After Castling Queenside

Pawn Promotion

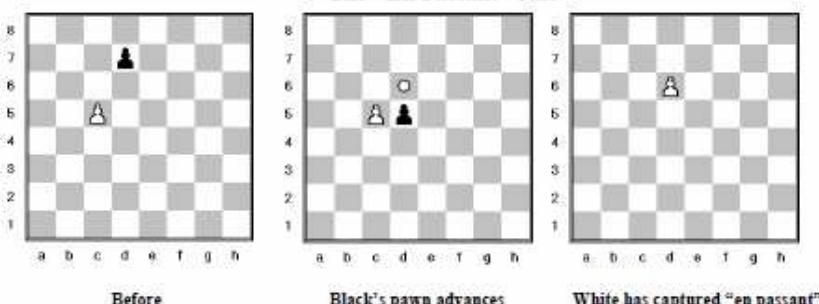
If you manage to get one of your pawns to the opposite end of the board, it gets promoted to another piece. You can choose to turn it into a queen (which is the popular choice!), a rook, a knight or a bishop.

Often, in endgames, most of the play revolves around one or both sides trying to get a pawn promoted. A lot of careful study and even computer studies have been put into figuring out how to win or draw in particular types of endgames. For instance, in the position below, with white to move, it's a draw, as he must play Ke6 to keep defending his pawn. However, if it's black's move, he must play ...Kf7, and then after white plays Kd7, black can't stop him from promoting his pawn to a queen or rook, after which, he'll soon win the game.



CAPTURING "En Passant" *Pronounced "On-Pass-on"*

The "En Passant" rule



En passant is a French term meaning "in passing". It is Black's move in the diagram above (left). He has the option of advancing the pawn one square or two, as the pawn has not yet moved. It is reasonable to assume that if Black moves the pawn two squares he will avoid capture. However, White may capture it anyway. The en passant rule allows White to capture the pawn as if it had only moved one square ahead. This means that whether Black's pawn moves one square or two, it can be captured by White on the very same square. It is a requirement of the rules that the "en passant" capture (if used) must be carried out right away. *It cannot be deferred*, or the right to play it is forfeited. The diagram on the right above shows the position as White carries out the "en passant" manoeuvre. White removes the Black pawn from d5 and places his own pawn on d6.

Making the en passant capture is *not* compulsory

Capturing "En Passant" Further Explanation

This is one of the trickiest moves to learn and the single move that causes consternation among beginners. A small bit of history helps to introduce and to understand the en passant (French for "in passing") capture. During the early days of chess, pawns could only move a single square at a time. Several changes were introduced in Europe to speed up the game. One of these changes permitted pawns to move two squares if they had not yet moved.

But this rule change introduced an unfortunate situation. A pawn could now move all the way down the board to become a queen without the opponent's pawn ever having a chance to capture it. When the Black pawn moves forward two squares in a single move, the White pawn on the neighbouring file wants to be able to capture the pawn before the black pawn can advance further. The en passant rule applies here.

For one move, AND ONE MOVE ONLY, the White pawn can respond by capturing the Black pawn as if it had only moved a single square.

Note that only pawns can capture "en passant," and only a pawn on an adjacent file can capture in this way.

Drawing the game

There are five ways to draw a game of chess:

- 1) **Both sides do not have enough material to checkmate.** For example, if both sides only have a king left, it's a draw.
- 2) **Fifty moves without a pawn move or a piece capture.** This is very rare, but happens sometimes in difficult endgames.
- 3) **Stalemate.** This means that the player whose move it is has no legal move, e.g. he only has a king left, and any move he makes puts him in check. This sometimes happens when a player is trying to checkmate and makes a mistake.
- 4) **Threefold repetition.** If the *exact* same position is repeated three times in a game, it's a draw. This stops players from just going in circles.
- 5) **Draw by agreement.** The two players agree to draw. This can happen if neither player likes his position, or if they think that the endgame is drawn, or if they're feeling lazy! This is the most common type of draw.