

# Andrew Greet: 4NCL Second Weekend

**R**ounds 3 and 4 of this season's 4NCL took place over the second weekend of November, at the newly refurbished Paragon Hotel in Birmingham. The Paragon hosted the top three divisions for the duration of the 2005/06 season, before a change of arrangements saw the league move to a variety of different venues in 2006/07. For the benefit of readers not in attendance this time but who have visited the Paragon prior to its refurbishment, I will just mention that most of the ground floor has been redecorated and the bar has been moved to what was previously the area used for luggage storage on the Sunday. It all looks much nicer, and it will be interesting to see if the Paragon may reclaim its status as the 4NCL's venue of choice.

Anyway, enough of the venue and on with the chess. As usual the latest weekend saw a lot of interesting games and keenly contested matches. A glance at the score table from last month's report will reveal that newly promoted Cambridge University had a tough first weekend, losing both matches. Things were not about to get any easier as they squared off against Guildford's mighty first team, although they were somewhat strengthened by the presence of the strong female player Iweta Rajlich (formerly Radziejewicz, but now married to 'Mr Rybka' aka Vasik Rajlich). Here is her top board clash with Mark Hebden.

**Iweta Rajlich** (2411) *White*  
**Mark Hebden** (2542) *Black*

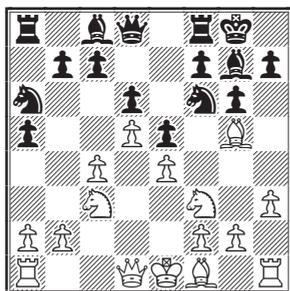
Round 3

Cambridge Univ. 1 – Guildford-ADC 1  
*King's Indian Defence*

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 ♟g7 4 e4 d6  
5 ♟f3 0-0 6 h3!?

This system has never quite enjoyed the status of a true 'main line', but it is certainly one of the most popular and respected anti-King's Indian variations. The main idea is to facilitate the g2-g4 advance at a suitable moment.

6 ... e5 7 d5 a5 8 ♟g5 ♞a6



9 ♟e2!?

With this interesting move, White hints that she may yet wish to castle short. 9 g4 is a perfectly good alternative, but the text has the advantage of *flexibility*. For the time being White avoids committing herself to a particular plan, and may choose to attack on either side of the board.

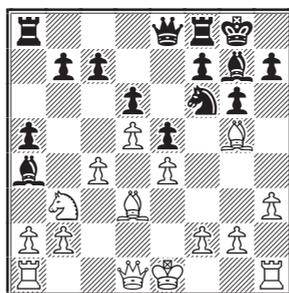
9 ... ♞c5 10 ♞d2 ♟d7 11 ♞b3!?

A rare move, but it makes quite good sense to exchange the relatively passive d2-knight for its more active counterpart on c5.

11 ... ♞a4!?

This is a novelty, but it seems quite logical. Hebden is willing to allow his active knight to be exchanged, but only on his own terms. He wishes to eliminate White's superior knight on c3 rather than its more passive colleague on b3. A high level encounter Miroschnichenko-Korobov, Poltava 2006 had seen 11 ... h6 12 ♞xc5 hxg5 13 ♞d3 c6 14 ♟g4 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♞xg4 16 hxg4 b5 leading to double edged play and an eventual Black victory, while a few other games have continued 11 ... b6 12 ♞xc5 bxc5.

12 ♞xa4 ♟xa4 13 ♟d3 ♞e8



This is a standard unpinning move, although the simple retreat 13 ... ♟d7 was also possible. Black's problem is that White could very well castle on either side. Therefore if, for example, he rushes to advance his a-pawn to a3 then White could just castle short and attack this weakness. Instead Hebden wishes to liberate his remaining knight in order to prepare the thematic freeing break ... f5.

14 g4!?

With ... ♞h5 on the agenda, Rajlich decides that this is the correct moment for the kingside advance.

14 ... ♞d7

Not only preparing ... f5, but also intending to bring the knight to an active post on e5. This explains White's next ...

15 ♟c2 f5!?

This looks like the most principled move, although its consequences are by no means clear. 15 ... c6!?

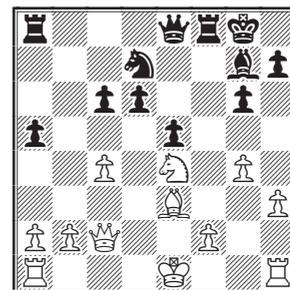
16 ♟e3!?

16 ... ♟xb3!?

17 ♞d2!

Offering a favourable exchange of bishops while sending the knight to its ideal home on e4.

17 ... ♟xc2 18 ♞xc2 c6 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 ♞xe4



20 ... ♞f6!?

The question here must be: why did Black refrain from the obvious 20 ... d5? It is true that White can (and must) win a pawn with 21 cxd5 cxd5 22 ♞b3 ♞e6 23 ♞d1!, but after 23 ... ♞f8 24 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 25 ♞xd5 ♞f6 26 ♞xf6+ ♟xf6 Black intends ... e4 when the pressure against the White queenside should provide very reasonable chances of saving the game. I would imagine that Hebden probably realised this but preferred an inferior yet more complex middlegame in which he could hope to outplay his adversary, rather than an ending in which he could only hope to draw. This is an understandable, yet – with the benefit of hindsight – somewhat dubious decision.

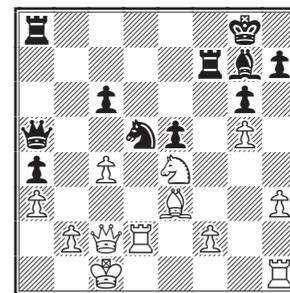
21 ♞xd6 ♞b8 22 0-0-0

White is more or less a pawn up for nothing here, although the middlegame is rather complicated and Rajlich deserves great credit for the way she handles the following phase of the game.

22 ... a4 23 ♞e4

If White can maintain a firm blockade of this square then the 'King's Indian bishop' will remain a spectator.

23 ... ♞f7 24 ♞d2 ♞b4 25 a3 ♞a5 26 g5 ♞d5!?



This is a good attempt to confuse the game, but Rajlich is having none of it.

27 ♖hd1

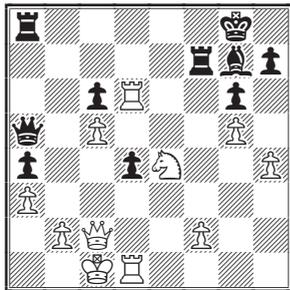
In the event of the greedy 27 cxd5? cxd5 the open c-file would cause White problems. True, she could still maintain some advantage by returning the piece with something like 28 ♖b1!? dxe4 (28 ... ♖c7!?) 29 ♖xe4, but Black might obtain some counterplay along the b-file and in any case his chances are certainly better than in the game. But 27 h4!? was a genuinely good alternative.

27 ... ♗f4 28 h4

Having centralised her forces, White continues to strengthen her position.

28 ... ♗e6 29 ♖d6 ♗d4 30 ♕xd4 exd4 31 c5!?

31 ♖xc6 is quite alright, but Rajlich prefers to concentrate on restricting the Black pieces; a wise policy, especially against such a resourceful defender as Hebden.



31 ... ♖a6!?

A mistake in a bad position. The queen is badly sidelined on a6. 31 ... ♖b5! would have been more stubborn, placing Her Majesty on a more active square from where she defends c6 but also menaces both b2 and c5. For example, after 32 h5 there might follow 32 ... ♖e7!? intending to meet 33 hxg6? with 33 ... ♖xe4!, although of course White has plenty of better ways to play.

32 h5!

The kingside assault will soon prove decisive.

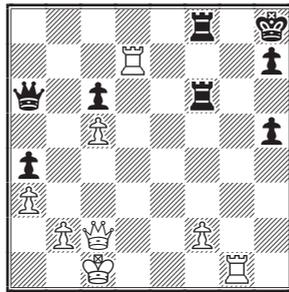
32 ... gxf6

32 ... ♖e7 achieves nothing here after 33 hxg6 (The exchange sacrifice 33 ♖1xd4!? ♕xd4 34 ♖xd4 should also prove decisive) 33 ... d3 (33 ... ♖xe4? is pointless when c5 is not en prise) 34 gxf6+ ♖h8 35 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 36 ♖1xd3 ♖xe4 37 g6 when the multiple advanced pawns greatly outweigh Black's extra bishop.

33 ♗f6+!

This is the point of White's last move. The opening of the g-file spells doom for the Black monarch.

33 ... ♕xf6 34 gxf6 ♖af8 35 ♖6xd4 ♖xf6 36 ♖g1+ ♖h8 37 ♖d7

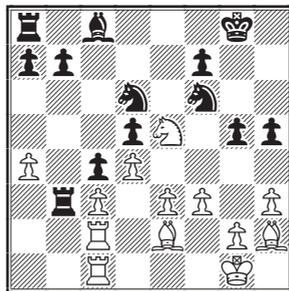


**Black resigned (1-0).** Mate on h7 is threatened, and 37 ... ♖8f7 is met by 38 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 39 ♖c3+. This was an excellent game from Rajlich, although it was predictably not enough to affect the result of the match.

Moving on, the following game features a nice finish in which the victor permits his opponent to promote a pawn, thus temporarily obtaining a whole extra queen!

**Simon Knott (2366) White**  
**David Smerdon (2466) Black**  
Round 3  
Barbican 1 – The ADs

We pick things up after move 21 of a Ragozin Queen's Gambit.



Black has made useful queenside progress. His rook is very active on b3, and he will shortly target the weak pawn on a4. The a8-rook is technically undeveloped, but will soon be perfectly placed to support the advance of his passed a-pawn. Nevertheless White's position deserves preference, mainly due to the latent potential of his pair of bishops – especially the one on h2 which has no opponent. White also has an extra central pawn which can and must be put to use. Finally, it should be mentioned that earlier in the game Black needlessly and seriously weakened his kingside with the move ... h6-h5 and we will see how this error will come back to haunt him.

22 e4! ♕e6

22 ... dxe4 23 ♗xc4 is good for White.

23 ♗d7!? ♕xd7 24 ♕xd6 ♕xa4 25 ♖a2

White's two bishops and mobile central pawns provide more than enough play for the pawn.

25 ... ♕c6 26 e5 ♗h7?

After this decentralising move Black may already have passed the point of no return. 26 ... ♗e8! may have been preferable, intending to meet 27 ♕e7 with 27 ... f6! 28 exf6 ♗f7 regaining the pawn with a relatively safe position. 27 ♕c5 is also possible, but then 27 ... a5 28 ♕d1?! should be of no concern to Black, who can respond with 28 ... ♗c7 29 ♕xb3 cxb3 30 ♖a3 a4 when his powerful pawns more than compensate for the exchange. Finally, 28 f4?! gxf4 29 ♕xh5 ♗c7 intending ... ♗b5 or ... ♗e6 looks pleasant for Black.

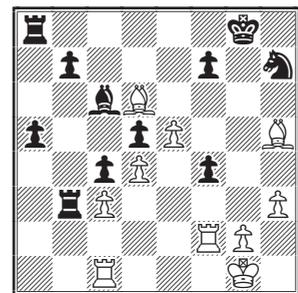
27 f4! gxf4 28 ♕xh5

The h-pawn drops, and the Black king loses a potentially valuable defender along the h-file.

28 ... a5

28 ... ♗g5!? was another possibility, although this also leads to problems after 29 ♖f2 ♗e6 30 ♕g4 a5 31 ♕xe6 fxe6 32 ♖xf4 intending ♖cf1 when Black's king is in serious danger.

29 ♖f2



29 ... a4

29 ... ♕d7 30 ♖xf4 ♕e6 31 ♖cf1 ♗g5 was an alternative, although White should still win if he finds 32 ♕e7! ♗e4 33 ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 34 ♖g4+! (34 ♖xf7 ♖xc3 gives Black more chances) 34 ... ♕g6!? (34 ... ♖h8 35 ♖xf7 soon leads to a mating net after a subsequent ♕f6+ followed by exf6) 35 ♖xg6+ ♖h7 36 ♖g4 ♖xc3 37 ♖f7+ ♖h6 (even worse is 37 ... ♖h8? 38 ♖f5) 38 ♕f8+ ♖xf8 39 ♖xf8 ♖h7 40 e6 winning easily.

30 ♖xf4 ♕e8 31 ♖g4+ ♖h8 32 ♖f1! a3?!

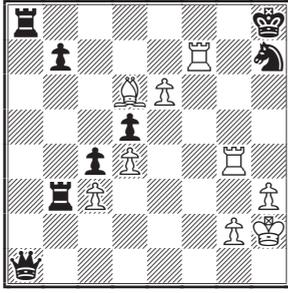
32 ... ♖b6! looks like the only chance to prolong the game, preventing any e6 ideas. 33 ♕xf7 ♕xf7 34 ♖xf7 ♖g8 35 ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 leads to an ending in which White's extra pawn should suffice for victory, although at this stage the result would not be a foregone conclusion.

33 ♕xf7 ♕xf7 34 ♖xf7!

With this small combination White temporarily permits his opponent a whole extra queen! This is the most spectacular way of securing the victory, although it should be mentioned that the alternative 34 e6! would have been an even more efficient way of doing so.

34 ... a2 35 e6! a1=♖+ 36 ♖h2

Black's extra queen is of little value and must shortly be sacrificed.



36 ... ♖e1

Unfortunately for Black this is the only way of avoiding an immediate mate.

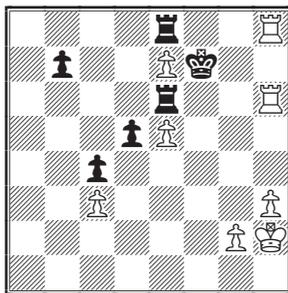
37 ♙e5+ ♜xe5+ 38 dxex5

Black still has an extra knight, but White's dominant rooks and passed e-pawns are more than enough to guarantee victory.

38 ... ♜e8 39 e7

The immediate 39 ♖h4? ♜xe6 40 ♖hxh7+ ♙g8 would allow Black to fight on. The knight is not running away, so White correctly secures his e-pawn first.

39 ... ♜b6 40 ♖h4 ♙g8 41 ♜fxh7 ♜e6 42 ♖h8+ ♙f7 43 ♖4h7+ ♙g6 44 ♖h6+ ♙f7



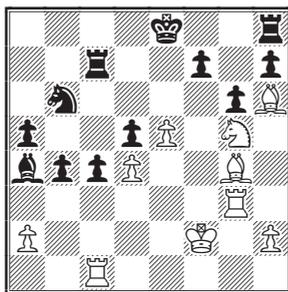
45 ♖f8+!

The quickest way to win. Black resigned, as he is losing a rook. 1-0

By strange coincidence Knott's game from the following day, versus your correspondent, bore a number of close similarities.

Andrew Greet (2441) White  
Simon Knott (2366) Black  
Round 4

Hilsmark Kingfisher 1 – Barbican 1



We join the game after 26 moves of a French Defence. Black sacrificed a piece early in the opening in order to

obtain two powerful extra queenside pawns. Later I sacrificed a further pawn in order to open some lines on the opposite flank. So for the time being material is equal.

The similarities between this and the previous game are obvious. Black is looking to promote a pawn on the queenside, while White must try to break through to the enemy king. In a few moves' time we will also see the familiar theme of White allowing an enemy pawn to promote.

27 ♖h3

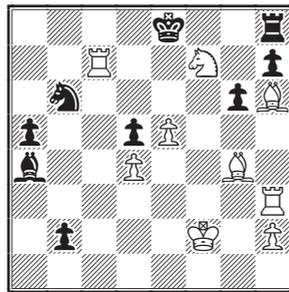
Intending ♙g7 followed by ♖xh7. The point is not so much to win a pawn as to put the rook on a dangerous location on the seventh rank. I can then follow with ♙f6 and e6 with very dangerous threats, as in the next note.

27 ... b3

27 ... ♙d7 allows 28 e6! (now that Black is unable to block with ... f5) 28 ... fxe6 (or 28 ... ♙xe6 29 ♖e1) 29 ♖e1! with dangerous threats. And in case of 27 ... ♙b5 (intending to push the a-pawn) there is 28 ♙g7 ♖g8 29 ♖xh7 a4 30 ♙f6 intending ♖e1 and/or e6 when Black's position disintegrates well before his intended pawn promotion.

28 axb3 cxb3 29 ♖xb3!?

This is sufficient to win the game, although it was also possible to echo Simon's queen 'sacrifice' (in the sense of allowing an enemy pawn to promote) with 29 ♖xc7!. I actually spent most of my remaining time checking this possibility, and correctly calculated that after 29 ... b2 30 ♖xf7



(analysis diagram)

30 ... b1=♖ 31 ♖d6+ ♙d8 32 ♖b7 leaves Black with no good defence against ♙g5 mate, as the king can easily escape any checks by hiding on h4.

Just when I was ready to play 29 ♖xc7!, with just over three minutes remaining to reach move 40, I suddenly noticed the possibility of 30 ... ♖f8 preventing ♖d6+, while the b-pawn remains unstoppable. In the cold light of day it becomes clear that White can still win quite easily here after 31 ♖f3 (31 ♙xf8 should also suffice), but given my time shortage I felt it more prudent to opt for the more prosaic continuation seen in the game, leading to a less

spectacular but still fairly clear win.

29 ... ♖xc1 30 ♖xb6

Black has a nominal material advantage of rook and two pawns versus two minor pieces, but in terms of quality of position there is no contest. Just compare the three White minor pieces to the Black rook on h8!

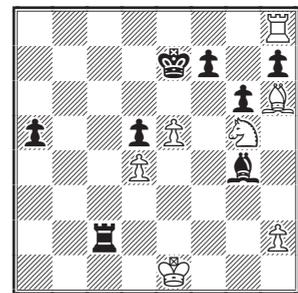
30 ... ♖c2+ 31 ♙e1

31 ♙g3 would allow Black to cover the back rank check with 31 ... ♖c3+ 32 ♙f4 ♖b3 33 ♖a6 ♖b8, although even here Black's position remains pretty hopeless due to the passivity of his pieces, especially the h8-rook.

31 ... ♙d7

31 ... ♖xh2 is even worse due to 32 ♖b8+ ♙e7 33 ♖b7+ ♙e8 34 ♙g7 ♖g8? 35 ♖b8+ ♙e7 36 ♙f6 mate.

32 ♖b8+ ♙e7 33 ♖xh8 ♙xg4

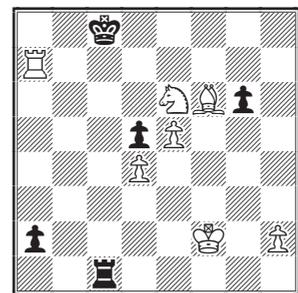


White's extra piece and great activity should ensure a straightforward win, provided he does not forget about the passed a-pawn. Fortunately for me, there is enough time to gobble the Black kingside before transferring the rook to a7.

34 ♖xh7 ♙e6 35 ♙g7! a4 36 ♙f6+ ♙d7 37 ♖xf7 a3

37 ... ♙xf7 38 ♖xf7+ ♙e6 39 ♖a7 is equally hopeless.

38 ♙g5+ ♙c8 39 ♖xe6 a2 40 ♖a7 ♖c1+ 41 ♙f2



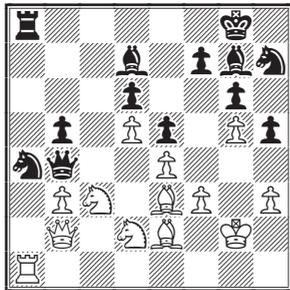
Now that the time control has been passed, there are no more dangers. The a-pawn will cost a rook, but White has bagged enough material to secure a trivially winning endgame.

41 ... a1=♖ 42 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 43 ♖f4 ♖a2+ 44 ♙g3 1-0

Staying on the subject of queen sacrifices, the following game contained a particularly brilliant moment.

**Stuart Conquest (2540) White**  
**Michael Hennigan (2380) Black**  
 Round 4  
 Guildford 1 – NorthWest Eagles

In this all-GM clash Black has just played 24 ... ♖a4. Before moving on, try to decide what you would play as White in this position.



It is hardly surprising that after the game Stuart described his move as one of the best of his career. "Two exclamation marks aren't enough!", he enthused. Indeed, the idea is truly extraordinary. It is interesting that, once you actually see the move, it is relatively easy to appreciate its strength as the variations are not at all complex. Of course the truly hard part is to spot the idea in the first place, without any prompting that this might be a good time to look for a brilliancy. 25 ♖xa4 ♗xa4 26 ♖c1 offers White an edge, but the game continuation is far superior.

25 ♖a2 ♖c8

The main point is that after 25 ... ♖xb2? 26 ♖xa8+ followed by 27 ♖a2 the Black queen will be trapped. Perhaps it may even have been worth considering the exchange sacrifice 25 ... ♖xc3!? 26 ♖xa8+ ♖f8. Black surely cannot have enough for an exchange, but the knight on c3 is slightly irritating and on balance this looks slightly preferable to the dismal position obtained by Black in the game.

26 ♖xa4!

The strongest continuation, leading to an endgame in which White's positional advantage will soon prove overwhelming.

26 ... bxa4 27 bxa4 ♗xb2 28 ♖xb2 ♖xa4 29 ♖c4 ♖f8 30 h4!

White does not have to rush. The text stabilises the kingside, and the d6-pawn remains a chronic weakness. Now there are even ideas like ♖a7-b8, which may explain Black's next.

30 ... ♖c7

Preventing the aforementioned bishop manoeuvre, but there are plenty of other ways to attack this pawn.

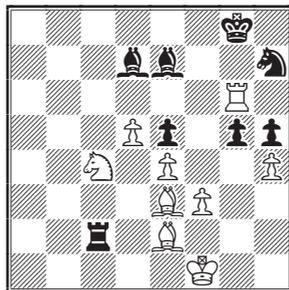
31 ♖b4 ♖d7

31 ... ♖e8 32 ♖b8 is hopeless, while 31 ... ♖c2 32 ♖b6 ♖d7? 33 ♖a3 wins the bishop after 33 ... ♖a4 34 ♖b4, or 33 ... ♖c7 34 ♖c6.

32 ♖b6

It is that simple; now d6 will fall, while White's positional trumps remain.

32 ... ♖e7 33 ♖xd6 ♖c2 34 ♖f1 f6?! This hastens Black's defeat, but the result was already inevitable.  
 35 ♖c4 fxg5 36 ♖xg6+



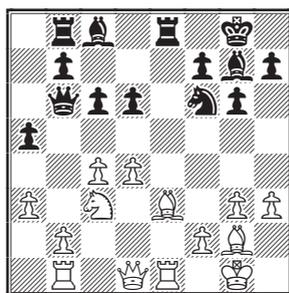
Black's position is completely hopeless, as 36 ... ♖f7? can be met by 37 ♖xe5+ defending the rook. The last few moves can pass without comment.

36 ... ♖f8 37 d6 ♖d8 38 ♖xe5 ♖h3+ 39 ♖e1 g4 40 ♖h6+ ♖e8 41 ♖b5+ Black resigned. 1-0

If there was an award for Britain's most improved player over the past year, it would be hard to think of anyone more deserving than Gawain Jones of Slough Sharks. During the last twelve months Gawain has not only obtained his GM title, but also propelled his rating well above the 2500 barrier. On a good day he is a match for almost anyone, as evidenced by a 25-move demolition of the world class GM Loek Van Wely at the Staunton Memorial a few months ago. All this goes to show how highly we must rate the play of another rising star, Lorin D'Costa, in the following game.

**Lorin D'Costa (2395) White**  
**Gawain Jones (2567) Black**  
 Round 4  
 Barbican 2 – Slough Sharks 1

We join the game after 19 moves of an English King's Indian. White has obtained a pleasant advantage in the early middlegame, which D'Costa increases with the help of some precise play.



20 d5! ♗a6

20 ... c5 21 b4! would be problematic.

21 ♖c1

21 dxc6 bxc6 22 ♗xd6 ♖f5 allows Black to activate his pieces, although White may be able to execute a powerful exchange sacrifice with

23 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 24 ♖xc6 ♖e6 (24 ... ♖xb1? 25 ♖xe8 is no good) 25 ♖b5 ♖xb1 26 ♖xb1 when the passed pawns should give White excellent chances. The text is just as good though.

21 ... cxd5 22 cxd5 b5 23 ♖f1!

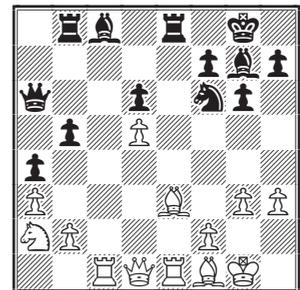
An excellent move, threatening a4. Black has no real choice but to play ...

23 ... a4

... but now after ...

24 ♖a2!

... the knight will find an ideal home on b4. On this square it is completely stable and will constantly threaten to occupy the glaring outpost on c6. At the same time it provides constant protection of the d5-pawn.



24 ... ♗b7 25 ♖b4 ♖d7 26 ♖g2

The bishop has done its work on f1, so now it returns to its natural home.

26 ... ♖bc8 27 ♖d4 ♖xe1+ 28 ♗xe1 ♖e8?!

This enables the White queen to take up a powerful position. 28 ... ♖xc1 29 ♗xc1 ♗c8 looks better, with some chances to grovel a draw.

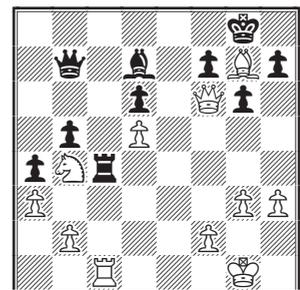
29 ♗c3!

Controlling both the c-file and the long diagonal.

29 ... ♖e4?!

Black's position was already rotten, but this miscalculation leads to a rapid defeat. 29 ... ♖c8? is also no good on account of 30 ♖c6! ♖xd5 31 ♖xd5 ♖xc6 (31 ... ♖xd4 32 ♖e7+ ♖f8 33 ♖xb7 wins) 32 ♖xg7 ♖xd5 33 ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 34 ♖xc8+ ♖xg7 35 ♖d8 with an easy technical win. Instead 29 ... ♖h5 was mandatory, although even here 30 ♖c6 looks pretty depressing for Black.

30 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 31 ♖xg7 ♖c4 32 ♗f6!



This is the point; White has no need to defend the rook, as the mating net is rather more important.

32 ... ♖xc1+ 33 ♖h2 ♖f1 34 ♖h6 ♖xf2+

Black could easily have resigned instead of playing this humiliating move, but instead he carries on until move 40. Perhaps Lorin was short of time? In any case the win is trivial and the remaining moves require no explanation.

35 ♖xf2 f5 36 ♖d4 ♙e8 37 ♖f6 ♖f7 38 ♖xd6 f4 39 ♖xf4 ♙e7 40 ♙e3 ♖d8 1-0

Last season was notable for the substantial weakening of the former and (and at that time reigning) Division 1 Champions, Wood Green. Still a far cry from the all-GM line-ups of previous years, on their latest outing they did benefit from the formidable presence of Sweden's Pia Cramling on top board. In the following game we can see Pia, one of the strongest female players of all time, in action.

**Pia Cramling (2531) White**  
**Karl Mah (2410) Black**  
 Round 4  
 Wood Green 1 – Cambridge University 1  
*Semi-Slav(?)*

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c4 c6!?

With this interesting move order Black opts for a kind of Semi-Slav, but delays the development of the knight to f6. This can enable some unique possibilities leading to positions quite unlike the most common variations of the Queen's Gambit.

4 ♖c2

A sensible and popular precautionary move, anticipating possible captures on c4. 4 ♘c3 could lead to the notoriously complex Noteboom variation, the main line of which runs 4 ... dxc4 5 a4 ♙b4 6 e3 b5 7 ♙d2 a5 8 axb5 ♙xc3 9 ♙xc3 cxb5 10 b3 ♙b7 11 bxc4 b4 12 ♙b2 ♘f6 with extremely double-edged play. 4 e3 is of course possible, but in that case White must forgo the opportunity of developing her bishop actively with ♙g5.

4 ... ♙d6

In my opinion the most principled challenge to White's fourth move may be 4 ... dxc4!? 5 ♖xc4 ♘f6, hoping to exploit the queen's slightly exposed position with a subsequent ... b5 followed by ... ♙b7 and later ... c5. But that is a whole different story ...

5 ♙g5!?

After the natural 5 ♘c3 Black could obtain an improved version of a Dutch with 5 ... f5! (5 ... dxc4 is also possible). In these 'Stonewall' positions White would normally position his queen's knight on d2 rather than c3, in order to follow with ♘f3-e5-d3 and ♘d2-f3, clamping down on the key e5-square.

5 ... f6

Black sometimes tries to avoid weakening the kingside with 5 ... ♘e7,

although White maintains a slight edge after 6 e3 0-0 7 ♘c3.

6 ♙h4 ♘e7 7 e3 ♘f5

It looks natural to target the bishop, although the course of the game must force us to question whether this is really such a good idea for Black at all.

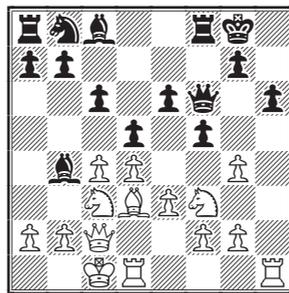
8 ♙g3 ♘g3 9 hxg3

Both sides have achieved something in the past few moves. Black has managed to exchange a knight for an enemy bishop – normally a good bargain – but the advance of the f-pawn has loosened his kingside. More importantly, White has obtained an open h-file which she puts to excellent use in the game.

9 ... f5 10 ♘c3 h6?

This needlessly weakens the kingside and does nothing to prevent White's intended g4. Also unsatisfactory are 10 ... 0-0?! 11 g4 (Khenkin-Markowski, Polanica Zdroj 1999) and 10 ... ♘d7?! (Oms Pallise – Segura Ariza, Barcelona 2005) 11 g4!. Best is probably 10 ... g6!? (Tsesarsky), preventing g4 for the moment while also bolstering the light squares in general, although I hasten to add that I would still much rather be White after 11 ♙d3.

11 g4! ♙b4 12 ♙d3 0-0 13 0-0-0 ♖f6



14 g5!

Cramling wastes no time in ripping open the h-file. White has a number of

promising ways to continue the attack, but the text is the most incisive.

14 ... hxg5 15 g4! ♙xc3

15 ... fxg4? 16 ♘e5 is crushing. I imagine Karl would have preferred to delay or omit this capture in favour of 15 ... ♘d7, but he probably saw the following tactical refutation based on the vulnerability of his central pawns. After 16 cxd5 cxd5 17 gxf5 Black cannot recapture on f5 due to the weakness of d5, and 17 ... ♙xc3 loses after 18 fxe6!.

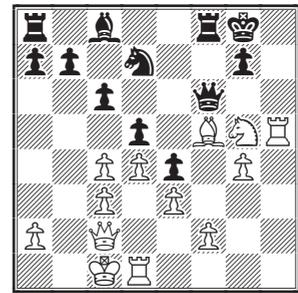
16 bxc3 ♘d7 17 ♖h5

With the simple but deadly threat of ♖dh1 and ♘xg5 followed by ♖h8 mate.

17 ... e5?!

Maybe 17 ... g6 would have lasted slightly longer, although 18 ♖xg5 ♘f7 19 gxf5 gxf5 20 ♖dg1 is still just horrible.

18 ♙xf5 e4 19 ♘xg5



Now White has an extra pawn, in addition to her overwhelming attack.

19 ... ♖e8 20 f4 g6 21 ♖h6 ♘f8 22 ♖h2

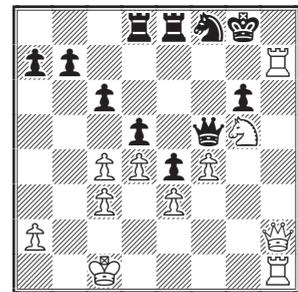
These moves require little comment; White's attack almost plays itself and there is little that Black can do to resist.

22 ... ♙xf5 23 gxf5 ♖xf5 24 ♖h1 ♖ad8 25 ♖h8+ ♘g7 26 ♖h7+

26 ♖h7+! mates slightly faster, although it hardly matters at this stage.

26 ... ♘g8

26 ... ♘xh7 27 ♖xh7+ ♘f8 28 ♖h8+ ♘e7 29 ♖h7+ ♘d6 30 c5 is mate.



Can you see the fastest route to victory?

27 ♖g7+! **Black resigned**, as 27 ... ♘xg7 28 ♖h8 is mate. 1-0

That concludes our round-up of the second weekend of the 2007/08 season. As always, full details can be found at [www.4ncl.co.uk](http://www.4ncl.co.uk).

#### 4NCL Division 1 Game Points after four rounds

(Match points in brackets)

1 Betsson.com	21½ (8)
2 Guildford-A&DC 1	22 (7)
3 Barbican 4NCL 1	21½ (7)
4 Guildford-A&DC 2	17 (6)
5 The ADs	18 (4)
6 Hilsmark K'fisher 1	17 (4)
7 Barbican 4NCL 2	14 (4)
8 Wood Green	16 (3)
9 Cambridge Univ. 1	13½ (3)
10 Richmond	13 (1)
11 North West Eagles 1	9 (1)
12 Slough Sharks 1	9½ (0)