

Chess

SHORT WINS...



HOU YIFAN-TASTIC ON THE ROCK!



- Levon Aronian edges Magnus Carlsen at *Wijk aan Zee*
- *Chess Psychology* with IM Angus Dunnington
- Test Your Chess 'General Ignorance'!

Chess

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Contents

Editorial

Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in chess. **3**

Readers' Letters (editor@chess.co.uk)

You have your say ... John Emms' book, Ritson Morry **7**

Problem Album

Colin Russ features problems composed by John Ling **7**

Tata Steel Wijk aan Zee

IM Yochanan Afek was at the ringside to report on the action and see Levon Aronian pip Magnus Carlsen at the post **8**

Tradewise Gibraltar Masters

Nigel Short won by a whisker but Women's World Champion Hou Yifan stole the show with an amazing performance **16**

Chess Tactics from Scratch

GM Jacob Aagaard showcases an exciting, reworked book on understanding chess tactics **25**

Moscow and Aeroflot Opens

Steve Giddins rounds up the best of the action at the two big swiss tournaments in Moscow **28**

4NCL, Rounds 3-6

IM Simon Ansell covers the British Team League matches from the last two weekends **30**

The Colour Complex Made Simple

White and black squares: not just a pretty pattern, says Peter Lalic **34**

Chess Psychology

IM and poker pro Angus Dunnington, making a welcome return to chess, looks at the basic concepts of chess thinking **36**

Studies

Brian Stephenson on the British Solving Championship **39**

Chess in the 1970s

John Saunders moves on a decade to the turbulent seventies and the ups and downs of Fischer and England's Olympiad team **40**

Don't Get The GI Blues!

'GI' stands for General Ignorance - and arch-inquisitor Steve Giddins is here to put you to the test! Be afraid, be very afraid... **44**

Find The Winning Moves

Three pages of tactical teasers from recent tournament games **45**

How Good is Your Chess?

GM Danny King presents an extra spicy Caro-Kann game **48**

'General Ignorance' Answers

The answers to Steve Giddins' diabolical quiz... **51**

Overseas News

A round-up of what's been happening abroad **52**

Home News

A round-up of what's been happening in the UK **54**

Books Under The Spotlight

Sean Marsh has a close look at Wojo's Weapons, Vol.2, focusing on the 1 ♘f3 repertoire of the late Aleksander Wojtkiewicz **56**

New Books In Brief

All the latest books, DVDs and software **57**

Solutions

All the answers to *Find The Winning Moves* **58**

Forthcoming Events

A round-up of the best events to play in and to watch online **58**

4NCL

IM Simon Ansell reports on the second and third British Team League weekends.



Photo: John Saunders

Wood Green deploying big name stars Mickey Adams (left) and David Howell at the 4NCL

ROUNDS THREE and four of this season's 4NCL (British Team League) took place on 14-15 January at the Barcelo Hotel, Hinckley Island.

It's hard to see past Wood Green Hillsmark or Guildford for the title and this season the two strongest squads were drawn together in Pool A so the potential title decider would take place early in the season. The teams warmed up for their round four encounter by crushing their unfortunate Saturday opponents by a combined total of 15½-½.

On paper the match looked to be fairly close with Guildford perhaps marginal favourites due to a slightly higher average rating. But Wood Green gave a fine example of team chess – winning with White and holding easily with Black – to run out comfortable 5½-2½ winners.

David Howell was in good form on board one with a convincing win over Nigel Short.

*Round 4 Wood Green - Guildford
D.Howell - N.Short
French Defence*

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 h6 I'm honestly not sure what to make of this move that Nigel used to beat an out of form Mickey Adams at the recent London Chess Classic. I suppose the idea is to wait for White to reveal his plans, then play appropriately. In this game Nigel plays

with ...♗f6 while avoiding the dangerous f4 Tarrasch lines that arise after 3...♗f6 4 e5 ♗d7 5 f4. But the text does create a slight weakness of the kingside light squares. **4 ♗gf3** How about 4 c3!?, responding in kind? **4...♗f6 5 e5 ♗d7 6 ♗d3 c5 7 c3 ♗c6 8 a3 a5 9 ♗f1 c4!?** An interesting decision. Releasing the tension in the centre gives Black an easy plan of ...b5-b4 but White will have all the fun on the kingside. It could be argued that having played 3...h6, this plan is positionally forced because the typical French idea of blowing up the centre with ...f6 is not viable here due to the weakness of the g6 square. 9...♞b6 is simply answered by 10 ♗c2 and it's hard for Black to increase the pressure on d4. **10 ♗c2 b5 11 ♗g3 ♗b6 12 ♗h5 ♗d7**



How can White increase the pressure on the kingside? **13 h4** My computer

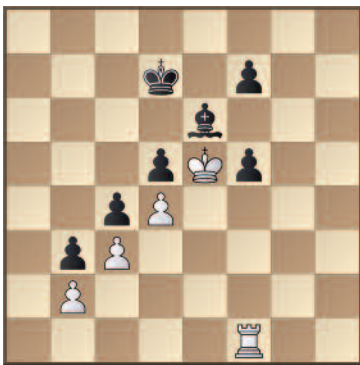
suggests the ridiculous-looking 13 ♗g1!, with the simple idea of bringing the queen to the g-file. However, David is human and brings the rook there instead. **13...♞e7 14 ♞h3 0-0-0 15 ♞g3** Forcing a further weakness. **15...g6 15...f6** or **15...f5** is answered by **16 ♗f4!** and that g6 square is weak again. **16 ♗f6 ♗g7 17 ♗h5 ♗f8 18 ♗f6 ♗g7 19 h5! g5 19...♗xf6 20 exf6 ♞xf6 21 hxg6** was probably the lesser evil, but it is easy to understand why Nigel didn't want to defend a prospectless position without his dark-squared bishop for the rest of the game. **20 ♗h7?! 20 ♗xg5!** was very strong immediately, but it's not long before David executes this move anyway. A sample variation is **20...hxg5 21 ♗xg5 ♗xf6 (21...♞f8 22 ♗h7!) 22 ♗xf6 ♞e8 23 ♞f3** when White dominates completely. **20...♞d8 21 ♞e2 b4** Perhaps Black should try **21...f6** here, but **22 exf6 ♗xf6 23 ♗xf6 ♞xf6** again involves giving up the dark-squared bishop. **22 axb4 axb4**



23 ♗fxg5! b3 24 ♗b1 hxg5 25 ♗xg5 ♞e8 26 ♗f6 26 ♗f6 was also possible, but **26...♗h6 27 ♗xh8 ♞xg3 28 f3 ♞xh8 29 g4 ♞g7** doesn't look entirely clear to me, even though the computer prefers White. Somehow the a1 rook and b1 bishop still have to be extracted. David's choice is more natural. **26...♗xf6 27 ♗xf6 ♞f8 28 ♞xg8 ♞xg8 29 g4** White has ample compensation for a piece. The f6 bishop is a monster and it's obvious the kingside pawns will cost black material. **29...♗e8 30 ♗h7 ♞h8 31 ♗b1 ♞g8 32 f4 ♗d7** Nigel rushes to eliminate the bishop. **33 g5** I would have been tempted to keep the best piece on the board with **33 ♗g5**, but Black is still tied up after the text. **33...♗xf6 34 exf6 ♞h8 35 ♗f2!** Not rushing. **35...♗b7 36 ♗g3 ♗d7 37 h6**



37...**xxh6?**! Nigel goes for counterplay but objectively I think he should just sit and wait here. It's not obvious how White wins and often in these situations something 'turns up'. Passive defence is not, however, in Nigel's nature. Re-routing the knight to d6 with 37...**da7** was probably better. **38 gxh6 xh6 39 wh2 xxf6 40 wh7** Probably not the most accurate, but it's move 40 and I assume David was in his habitual time-trouble. **40 h7!**, allowing the rook to finally participate in the game. **40...de7 41 wh5 dc6 42 h7! g7+ 43 cf3 ee8 44 h1 xf8 45 g5! c7 46 wf6** Now White has a bind again and Black can't avoid the exchange of queens to ease the pressure. **46...we7 47 xxe7+ dx7 48 f5!** Creating a weakness and opening lines for the rook. David had no doubt seen the finish already. **48...dx5?!** Black can resist longer with other moves, but they won't change the result. **49 xf5 exf5 50 cf4 dd7 51 ce5 ee6 52 ff1 d7**



53 xf5! 1-0. White is winning the king and pawn endgame. If Black doesn't take the rook, the winning plan is simple: re-route the rook to the a-file, check on a7, play **cf6** then sacrifice the rook for the bishop on e6 to enter a similar king and pawn endgame. So Nigel resigned. A fine game by David Howell.

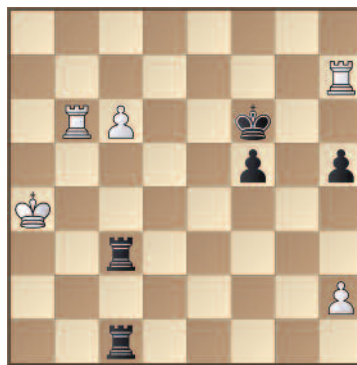
Jonathan Rowson and Nick Pert were the other two winners for Wood Green.

Elsewhere in Pool A, the matches not involving Wood Green or Guildford were all extremely close, with no team scoring better than a 5-3 victory over the weekend.

Of the six remaining sides fighting for the two remaining spots in the Championship Pool, Barbican 2 and e2e4.org.uk came off best. Both inflicted 4½-3½ defeats on your correspondent's team, Blackthorne Russia, for whom England's top female player, Harriet Hunt, made a welcome return to chess to replace her globetrotting brother Adam. e2e4 were perhaps lucky to beat Bristol by the same score on Saturday, as Chris Beaumont overstepped the time limit in a messy but good position against Ameet Ghasi.

Pool B looks to be much closer, with the teams fairly evenly matched. Cheddleton are perhaps favourites but they suffered a 4½-3½ defeat to Oxford in round three. Danny Gormally went down to David Zakarian in a nice game and on board four Matt Rose eventually converted an interesting double rook endgame against David Eggleston.

Round 3 Cheddleton - Oxford
D.Eggleston - M.Rose

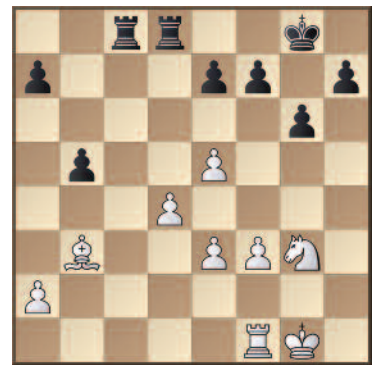


At first glance it's hard to know who's better here, but after Black's next it becomes clear that he has the advantage. Both white rooks are forced to awkward squares obstructed by the c6 pawn. White should be able to defend this position, because, well, all rook endgames are drawn. But double rook endgames are notoriously hard to play. **38...og6! 39 cc7 f4** Passed pawns must be pushed. **40 bb4? 40 cc8!** was necessary and quite possibly the only move. White must get a rook behind the f-pawn: **40...cc5 41 bb4 f3 42 ff4 xxc6 43 xxc6+ xxc6 44 xf3** and again we have the same endgame that White should probably hold. **40...f3** Now Black is winning. The f-pawn can't be stopped. **41 bb7** Unfortunately, **41 ff4**, which I assume was David's intention, fails to **41...cc4+ 42 xxc4 xxc4+ 43 cb3 cc1** and Black wins. **41...xvc6 41...f2** was simpler: the king hides on h4 after **42 gg7+ dh6 43 hh7+ og5. 42 gg7+ cf5 43 g3 g6c4+ 44 cb3 ff4!** Behind the pawn, as all good endgame manuals will tell you. **45 ff7+ ce4 46 ee7+ cd4 47 dd7+ ce3 48 cb2 hh1... (0-1)** The second pawn falls and the rest is simple. Black won on move 61.

Hebden, Hawkins and Arkell replied for Cheddleton but Oxford won both boards seven and eight to edge the match.

Despite this reverse, Cheddleton still topped Pool B after round four, but only on goal difference from Barbican I and White Rose who played out a close match on Sunday. Peter Wells looked to be outplaying Sam Collins with Black, but as so often the clock was his downfall and Peter even lost on time in a defensible position – but only after Sam himself had earlier missed a one-move win. On board one, Richard Palliser won an excellent game against the Scottish grandmaster Matthew Turner. (*Matthew recently switched his chess allegiance from England to Scotland - ed*)

Round 4 White Rose - Barbican I
R.Palliser - M.Turner

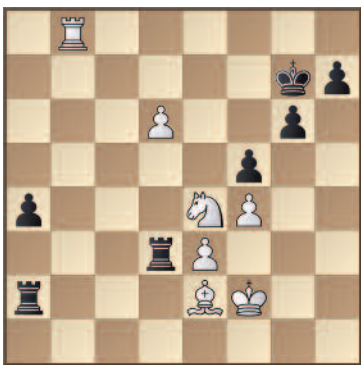


After various adventures in the Grünfeld, we arrive at this position, in which I won't pretend to know what's going on. My computer says it's roughly equal, which seems fair as both sides have their trumps. Approaching the time control, all three results are possible. **24...a5!** The only good move. Black must act quickly before White gets coordinated, for example, with **dg3-e4-c5. 25 bb1!** Another good move. The white bishop will shortly be forced back to d1, so Palliser makes sure his rook at least is in the game when this happens. **25...a4 26 dd1 cc3 27 cf2 27 xxb5?** loses a piece to **27...cc1. 27...aa3 28 bb2 cc8 29 de4 cc1 30 ee2 aa1**



31 d5! The d-pawn is going to be hard to

stop, but Black should still be OK. **31...♖1xa2?** 31...♖3xa2! was called for, when after 32 ♖xb5 Black has 32...♗h1! with sufficient counterplay. For example 33 ♘g3 (33 ♘c3 ♖h2+ 34 ♗e1 ♖h1+ 35 ♗f2 ♖h2+ is also a draw.) 33...♖h2+ 34 ♗e1 a3 35 ♖a5 h5! leading to a bizarre computer draw after 36 d6 h4 37 dxe7 hxg3 38 e8♖+ ♗g7 39 ♖a8 ♖hxe2+, etc. **32 ♖xb5 ♖d3?!** 32...♖b3 is a better defence when White should continue 33 ♖a5 ♖b8 34 ♖a7, still with good chances to win. **33 f4 ♗g7 34 d6?!** Strange though it may seem, this natural move is a mistake. 34 ♖b7 was winning immediately 34...♖xd5 35 ♖xe7, threatening e6. Now 35...♗f8 36 ♖a7, when White has too many threats - ♘c3, ♗f3 and ♗c4, or a knight move to hit the f7 pawn. **34...exd6 35 exd6 f5!** If the knight moves, the d-pawn falls. **36 ♖b7+ ♗f8 37 ♖b8+ ♗g7 38 ♖b7+ ♗f8 39 ♖b8+ ♗g7**



40 ♘c3!? I might have taken the draw here, having just made the time control and decided that was enough excitement for one game, but on move 40(!) Richard bravely goes for the win. A good practical decision as this is the sort of position where one needs to stop and have a long think! **40...♖c2?** And the decision pays off immediately! 40...♖xc3! 41 d7 ♖d2 42 d8♖ ♖xd8 43 ♖xd8 h5! should be fine for Black as it will be hard for White to do anything active while keeping an eye on both outside passed pawns. **41 ♘b5!** Once this knight gets to d4, it's all over. **41...♖d5 41...♖b2**, trying to stop the knight moving, can be answered by the calm 42 ♖a8. **42 ♘d4 ♖c1 43 ♖b7+ ♗f6 44 d7 ♗e7 44...a3 45 ♗f3** wins the exchange as 45...♖d6 may be answered by 46 ♖b6! **45 ♗b5 a3 46 ♖a7 ♖cc5 47 ♘c6+ ♖xc6 48 ♗xc6 (...1-0)** and Richard converted the extra piece on move 66.

Jutes of Kent also had good chances to make the Championship Pool. Simon Williams played a good thematic King's Indian to beat Karl Mah and help his team to a narrow victory.

WEEKEND THREE

Pool A saw Wood Green Hilsmark and Guildford continue in convincing fashion. Anglian Avengers picked up a good win

over e2e4, but should e2e4 qualify for the Championship Pool it will count for nothing, such are the quirks of the 4NCL system.

Blackthorne Russia are having a dreadful season and went down to their third consecutive 4½-3½ defeat, this time at the hands of The ADs, who won 4-0 on the top four boards. With the exception of Dave Ledger, who has 5½/6 for a 2667 rating performance, and to a much lesser extent your correspondent, the entire squad is out of form and we now find ourselves with a relegation battle on our hands.

Dave was the beneficiary of a huge slice of luck against Chris Ward who put his queen *en prise*. Let's hope Dave is able to take full advantage and make a norm of some kind; the only problem could be playing the requisite 50% titled opponents with Blackthorne Russia in the Relegation Pool.

With matches still to come between Cheddleton, Barbican and White Rose and two of the bottom three, Wood Green II and Guildford II, perfectly capable of strengthening their sides, there was still all to play for in Pool B going into the third weekend, played at De Vere Venues, Sunningdale on 11-12 February. Cheddleton, missing Danny Gormally, bounced back from their defeat by Oxford to record two wins and confirm their participation in the Championship Pool. On top board, Jonathan Hawkins moved to 5/6 and must have a decent chance of his third and final GM norm.

Round 5 Cheddleton - Cambridge Univ J.Hawkins - K.Mah



Karl has defended well for the whole game and has now fully equalised, but he blunders. **35...♖g7? 36 ♘xf4! ♖xf4? 36...♗g8!** keeps Black in the game. **37 ♖xf4 1-0**

Matt Rose of Oxford played a fine attacking game on the Sunday.

Round 6 Oxford I - Cambridge University M.Rose - G.Pinter

c3 Sicilian
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 d6 7 ♗c4 ♘c6 8 0-0



Our reporter IM Simon Ansell plays for Blackthorne Russia. He scored a draw against David Howell in round six and is unbeaten with 3/5 this season.

♗e7 9 a3 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♖b6 This seems like a funny square for the queen to me, as it is likely to get hit by a rook after the b-file opens. **11 ♘c3 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♗d7 13 ♗d3 f6?!** Creating weaknesses on e6 and the kingside. There was no need for drastic action just yet. Taking on e5 and dropping the queen back to c7 (where it probably should have gone in the first place) was still perfectly playable for Black. **14 exf6 ♗xf6 15 ♖b1 ♖c7 16 ♘g5** Gaining the two bishops. **16...♗xg5 17 ♗xg5 ♖f7 18 ♖e3 h6?** White is better here, but this creates further weaknesses. Matt takes full advantage.



19 ♖h5! Simply threatening ♖g6 with a devastating attack. **19...♗e8** What else? **20 ♖g6! hxg5 21 ♖h3** The threat is mate in two starting with ♖h8+. **21 ♖h7+ ♗f8 22 ♖xe6** was also very strong. **21...♗f8 22 ♖xe6 g6 23 ♗xg6 ♘d8 24 ♖h8+ ♗g7 25 ♖xe8 ♗xg6** Now we see a good old-fashioned king hunt! **26 ♖g8+ ♖g7 27 ♖e8+ ♖f7 27...♖f7 28 ♖e4+ ♗f6 (28...♖f5 29 ♖h6+ wins the queen) 29 ♖b5!** concludes matters. **28 ♖e4+ ♗g7 29 ♖h7+! ♗f6 30 ♖h6+ ♗e7 31 ♖xg5+ ♗d7 32 ♖g4+ ♗c6**



33 d5+! ♖xd5 34 ♖h5+ ♔c6 35 ♖a4+ 1-0
That's ten consecutive checks and the eleventh will be mate, so Black resigned.

Jutes of Kent also went down to Wood Green II and now must beat Cheddleton to have any chance of qualifying. Simon Williams continued on his winning ways, scoring 2/2, while "horizontally relaxed" (quote S. Williams) Portuguese GM Luis Galego recovered from an opening disaster against Neil McDonald.

Round 5 Wood Green II - Jutes of Kent
L.Galego - N.McDonald

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 Luis is not just relaxed off the chess board! That doesn't mean he's not very strong. **3...exd5 4 ♖f3 ♖c6 5 h3 ♖f6 6 c4?!** This looks too risky to me with White's retarded development. Neil responds energetically. **6...♗b4+!** Of course, developing with tempo. **7 ♖c3 ♖e4 8 ♖c2 ♖e7 9 ♗e3?!** My computer suggests **9 ♖d1!** and claims that White has a perfectly playable position. **9...♗f5! 10 ♖c1 ♖xc3 11 bxc3 ♗a3 12 ♖d2**



12...♗b4! Oops. How often do you see a grandmaster completely busted with White after 12 moves of the French Exchange? To his great credit, Luis wakes up from his horizontally relaxed state and starts setting Neil problems. **13 cxd5!** The exclamation mark is because this is clearly the best practical chance. **13...♖c2+ 14 ♖d1 ♖xa1 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3 16 ♖xd3 0-0-0 17 ♖e2 ♖xd5 18 ♖xa1 ♖hd8 19 ♖b1 f6 20 ♖xh7 f5 21 c4 ♖a5 22 d5 f4? 22...♖e4!** was very strong. **23 ♖f5+ ♖b8 24 ♖d4?** Looks natural and the kind of move to play when

Rk	Division 1, Pool A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Wood Green I	X	5½-2½	7-1	5½-2½	8-0	5-3		6-2	37	12
2	Guildford I	2½-5½	X		8-0	6½-1½	7½-½	6-2	5½-2½	36	10
3	Barbican II	1-7		X	3-5	5-3	5½-2½	5-3	4½-3½	24	8
4	e2e4.org.uk I	2½-5½	0-8	5-3	X		2½-5½	4½-3½	4½-3½	19	6
5	The ADs	0-8	1½-6½	3-5		X	5-3	4-4	4½-3½	18	5
6	Anglian Avengers I	3-5	½-7½	2½-5½	5½-2½	3-5	X	4-4		18½	3
7	Bristol I		2-6	3-5	3½-4½	4-4	4-4	X	3½-4½	20	2
8	Blackthorne Russia	2-6	2½-5½	3½-4½	3½-4½	3½-4½		4½-3½	X	19½	2

Rk	Division 1, Pool B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Cheddleton I	X	4½-3½	4½-3½	5-3		5½-1½	3½-4½	6-2	29	10
2	Barbican I	3½-4½	X	4½-3½	2-6	5-3	5½-2½		6½-1½	27	8
3	White Rose I	3½-4½	3½-4½	X	5-3	4½-3½	4½-3½	4½-3½		25½	8
4	Wood Green II	3-5	6-2	3-5	X	4½-3½		3½-4	5-3	25	6
5	Jutes of Kent		3-5	3½-4½	3½-4½	X	4½-3½	5-3	4½-3½	24	6
6	Cambridge Univ I	1½-5½	2½-5½	3½-4½		3½-4½	X	5-3	4½-3½	20½	4
7	Oxford I	4½-3½		3½-4½	4-3½	3-5	3-5	X	2½-5½	20½	4
8	Guildford II	2-6	1½-6½		3-5	3½-4½	3½-4½	5½-2½	X	19	2

your opponent is in time-trouble, but objectively **24 ♖xf4** was stronger, when White is probably OK. **24...♗b4 25 ♖xf4 ♖xa2+ 26 ♖f1 ♖f8 27 ♖g3 ♖e4? 27...♗d6!** wins as the bishop on e3 is hanging after the queen moves. **28 ♖c6+ (or 28 f4 ♖e4!) 28...♖a8 29 ♖xe7 ♗xg3 30 ♖g6 ♖f5** and Black is winning. **28 ♖xb4! ♖a1+ 29 ♖e2 ♖a2+ 30 ♖f1 ♖a1+ 31 ♖e2 ♖a2+ ½-½** and two no doubt relieved grandmasters headed for the bar.

In Division 2, Pool A is all but decided, with Pandora's Box Grantham, White Rose II and King's Head all confirming their places in the Promotion Pool. Poisoned Pawns will join them if they avoid defeat against Bradford.

AMCA Dragons still have a 100% record in Pool B but have an important round seven game against their Dragon namesakes, South Wales, as both teams have already qualified and hence the result will be carried forward to the Promotion Pool. Sambuca Sharks should qualify too, only having to avoid a heavy defeat in round seven. The final spot is up for grabs with any of four teams still in contention.

My thanks to the 4NCL organisers and game inputters for all their hard work – see you back at Hinckley Island in April.

Solutions to Problem Album (from page 7)

(1) J.F.Ling

1 ♖g2 ♖g6 2 ♖xf7#. Or **1...♖xh7 2 ♖xf6#.** Or **1...♗ any 2 ♖xf7#,** but **1...♗g6** or **♗f3+ 2 d♖(x)f3#.** Or **1...♖ any 2 ♖(x)c6#.** Or **1...c6 2 ♖b8#.** Not **1 ♖xg3? ♖g6!** and not **1 ♖e3? g2!** The position is possible: White "last moved" his g-pawn two squares forward and Black replied **fxg3 e.p.** giving twofold check.

(2) J.F.Ling

1 fxe6 e.p. ♖e7 2 fxe7#. Or **1...♖xf6+ 2 ♗xf6#.** Or **1...♖xe8 2 dxe8-♖, ♖#.** Or **1...♖xh6 2 e7#.** Or **1...fxe6+ 2 ♖xe6#.** Or **1...b5,6 2 ♖c6#.** As in the previous problem, Black's "last move" demonstrably involves an e.p. capture ("retrograde analysis"). Black's e-pawn cannot have "just come" from e6 nor his knight from e7 as White would have been in check with Black to move! For his part the black king would have moved out of an impossible double check.

(3) J.F.Ling

1 Kb8 ♗ any 2 ♖xd4#. Or **1...g♗ any 2 ♖a8#.** Or **1...♖ any 2 ♖(x)e1#** but **1...♖e3 2 ♖xd4#.** Or **1...d3 2 ♖a4#.** At the start the bishops are "half-pinned", as we say. Each then leaves the other immobilised, allowing the queen to mate as she does throughout the solution.

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Division 2a: 1 Pandora's Box Grantham 11(32½), 2 White Rose II 9(29), 3 Kings Head 8(24½), 4 Poisoned Pawns 7(22½), 5 Barbican Youth 5(22½), 6 Cambridge University II 4(22½), 7 Bradford DCA Knights I 3(18½), 8 FCA Solutions I 1(16½)

Division 2b: 1 AMCA Dragons 12(30), 2 South Wales Dragons 8(26½), 3 Sambuca Sharks 7(25), 4 Warwickshire Select I 5(24), 5 3Cs I 5(22½), 6 Brown Jack 4(22½), 7 Spirit of Atticus 4(21½), 8 Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg 3(20)

Division 3 North: 1 North East England 9(21), 2 Bradford DCA Knights II 7(23), 3 Cheddleton II 6(24), 4 Jorvik 6(24), 5 Holmes Chapel 2(28), 6 Manchester Manticores 0(30)

Division 3 South: 1 Wessex 10(24), 2 KJCA Kings 10(27½), 3 Hackney 10(22½), 4 AMCA Rhinos 10(22), 5 British Universities CA 9(21½), 6 Gloucestershire Gambits 8(22½), 7 e2e4.org.uk 2 8(18½), 8 Anglian Avengers II 8(21), 9 Leeds University Old Boys 8(22), 10 Sussex Smart Survivors 8(19), etc.