

Volume 77 No.2 May 2012 £4.50 UK \$9.95 Canada

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# Chess

## GOING PLACES

Gawain Jones to play FIDE World Cup and London Chess Classic



ISSN 0964-6221



Interviews with: Fabiano Caruana and Andrey Filatov



How to Cure Your Time Trouble



Controversy at the European Championships

# Chess

Chess Magazine is published monthly.  
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## Subscription Rates:

### United Kingdom

1 year (12 issues) £49.95  
2 year (24 issues) £89.95  
3 year (36 issues) £125.00

### Europe

1 year (12 issues) £60.00  
2 year (24 issues) £112.50  
3 year (36 issues) £165.00

### USA & Canada

1 year (12 issues) \$90  
2 year (24 issues) \$170  
3 year (36 issues) \$250

### Rest of World (Airmail)

1 year (12 issues) £72  
2 year (24 issues) £130  
3 year (36 issues) £180

### Distributed by:

Post Scriptum (UK only)  
Unit G, OYO Business Park, Hindmans Way,  
Dagenham, RM9 6LN  
Tel: 020 8526 7779

### LMPI (North America)

8155 Larrey Street, Montreal (Quebec),  
H1J 2L5, Canada  
Tel: 514 355-5610

### Printed by:

The Magazine Printing Company (Enfield)  
Te: 020 8805 5000

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor. Contributions to the magazine will be published at the Editor's discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

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Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:  
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT  
Tel: 020 7388 2404 Fax: 020 7388 2407  
info@chess.co.uk – www.chess.co.uk

### FRONT COVER:

Photo: Barry Martin  
Cover Design: Matt Read

US & Canadian Readers – You can contact us via our American branch – Chess4Less based in West Palm Beach, FL. Call us toll-free on 1-877 89CHESS (24377). You can even order Subscriber Special Offers online via [www.chess4less.com](http://www.chess4less.com)

Printed in the UK by  
The Magazine Printing Company  
using only paper from FSC/PEFC suppliers  
[www.magprint.co.uk](http://www.magprint.co.uk)

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# 4NCL Penultimate Weekend

## IM Simon Ansell on Rounds 7 & 8 at Hinckley Island

THE FOURTH WEEKEND of the 2011/12 4NCL season took place on the weekend of 31 March - 1 April at Barcelo Hotel, Hinckley Island. After Saturday's round seven matches, Divisions One and Two were to split into Championship and Relegation Sections.

This weekend seemed to produce a higher than normal quantity of blunders and miniatures. I can't think of a good reason why – something in the spring air, or the pressure mounting as promotion and relegation chances become clearer?

### ROUND 7: POOL A

In Division One Pool A, the only outstanding issue was which one of The ADs or e2e4.org.uk were to join Wood Green, Guildford and Barbican II in the Championship Section. The two teams met with The ADs having to win to qualify. The match was fairly close but e2e4 always looked in control. Wins for Callum Kilpatrick, Alexander Longson and Alexei Slavin were enough to win 4½-3½. Slavin beat former British Champion Jonathan Mestel with Black on top board.



Alexei Slavin (e2e4.org.uk) downed former British Champion Jonathan Mestel in the crunch match in Pool A.

Round 4 The ADs - e2e4.org.uk  
J.Mestel - A.Slavin



The position is roughly level – White has the two bishops, but no obvious pawn breaks, while Black has an extra centre pawn and an excellent bishop on e5. Slavin makes an interesting decision and goes for a kingside attack. **20...g5!?** **21 b6** Fixing the b7 pawn, a potential weakness on a light square in an endgame. Other normal moves, such as **21 ♖bc1** were possible. **21...g4** **22 ♖e2** Defending the f3 pawn. **22...♗h8** **23 ♗h1?** Careless and perhaps losing his sense of danger. **23 ♖f1!**, threatening f4 and forcing Black to clarify the situation on the g-file was much better. **23...♗h4!** **24 f4 g3** **24...♗xe4** was also good, with the idea **25 ♖c2 ♗xf4 26 ♗xf4 g3!** winning back the piece. **25 h3** Black has won a safe pawn. **25...♗xf4 26 ♖f1** It was probably better to seek salvation in the opposite bishop position after **26 ♗xc5**, though it won't be much fun for White, especially with his bad king. **26...♗xe3 27 ♖xe3 ♖xe4 28 ♖d2?** **28 ♖c3+** offered some saving chances, for example **28...♖e5 29 ♖xe5+ dxe5 30 ♖be1 e4 31 ♖xf7** when Black is still better but has a lot of work to do. **28...♖g6** Now Black is simply two pawns up and Slavin converted easily on move 40... **0-1**

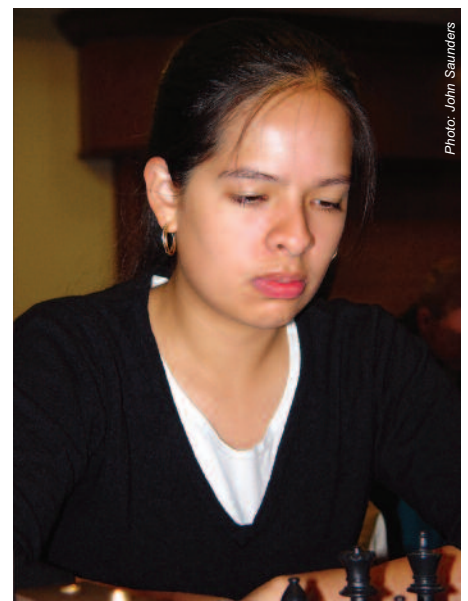
Elsewhere in Pool A, Wood Green marched on with an easy victory over Bristol, although James Cobb ground down another former British Champion in Jonathan Rowson to score Bristol's only point. Barbican II are performing excellently this season and held the

strong Guildford side to a draw. Kanwal Bhatia was attacking the higher-rated Susan Lalic's king on bottom board and was eventually successful, but the result could so easily have been different.

Round 7 Guildford I - Barbican II  
S.Lalic - K.Bhatia



Black earlier sacrificed her a-pawn to create chances on the queenside. Objectively, White should be able to successfully defend, but it's always more fun to be attacking, especially in time trouble as I assume both players were, given the course of the game. **27...b4!** Of course. Now White has a decision to make. **28 cxb4?!** **28 b3!** was the best



Kanwal Bhatia: fortune favours the attacker

move, leading to a draw after the tactical line 28...♖a3+ 29 ♖a1 bxc3! 30 bxa4 ♗xd5! 31 exd5 (31 ♗xd5 ♕c2+ 32 ♖b1 ♕a3+ is also a similar repetition) 31...♗xe1 32 ♗xe1 ♕c2+ 33 ♖b1 ♕a3+ with a repetition. A pattern worth remembering. **28...♗xb4** Now Black has serious play against the white king. **29 b3** 29 ♗e2, defending the second rank and not creating a weakness, probably offered better chances of a successful defence. **29...♕a3+ 30 ♖b2 ♕b5** Threatening ...♗a3+. White is unable to hold everything together, as e4 is also hanging. 30...c4 was also very dangerous. **31 ♗d2 ♗bxe4 32 ♗xe4 ♗xe4** Black should flick in 32...♗a3+ here, to prevent the possibility of 33. a4! **33 ♗d3?** 33 a4! would have given the white king some breathing space. White is fine after 33...♗d4 34 ♗xd4 ♕xd4, as the passed a-pawn compensates for the weak king and kingside pawns. **33...♗a3+** Now it should be curtains, as the black rook is able to join the attack. **34 ♖b1 ♗e1 35 ♗c2**



**35...♕d4??** A blunder! A queen move, threatening ...♕a3+, such as 35...♗a8 would have won on the spot. 36 ♗d2 (36 ♗d3 ♗xd5!) 36...♗d1! exploiting the unfortunate geometry of White's major pieces. **36 ♗d3??** Now 36 ♗xd4! suddenly wins for White! **36...♗xc1 mate**

Blackthorne Russia picked up some much needed points against Anglian Avengers, winning 5½-2½. The score doesn't tell the whole story, as around the time control your correspondent, hanging on in a difficult position against talented youngster Alan Merry, had a quick scan of the boards and assessed Blackthorne to be completely lost or close to losing in four other games. I was unable to hold an interesting endgame, but the rest of my team completed a remarkable turnaround.

### ROUND 7: POOL B

Pool B was much closer, with only Cheddleton certain to reach the Championship Section. They faced a dangerous Jutes of Kent side needing to win, strengthened by four Icelandic vikings. Icelanders, known for their uncompromising style, strike me as a good choice in a must-

win situation! The invaders proceeded to run riot, scoring 3½/4 to complete a surprisingly easy win for Jutes.

With Jutes winning, Wood Green II had to match their result and faced Cambridge University. On paper, Wood Green II were favourites, but Eddie Dearing, David Moskovic and Dan Bisby all won for Cambridge to edge a tight match 4½-3½.

Wood Green II losing meant that White Rose were certain to qualify – lucky for them as they lost a close match against Guildford II. As Guildford II will play in the Relegation Section, this will have no bearing on the end of season tables, as results from rounds 1-7 are not carried forward against teams in different sections. Likewise, Barbican I's convincing victory over Oxford counts for nothing.

### ROUND 8: CHAMPIONSHIP SECTION

Saturday's results, in particular Guildford I dropping a point, mean that Wood Green I should be heavy favourites to win the league. Matters may not be completely straightforward, though, as all of the teams in the Championship Section are capable of springing a surprise. Indeed, White Rose ran them very close on the Sunday, with only Wood Green's huge rating advantage on bottom board, where Bogdan Lalic beat Lateefah Messam-Sparks, making the difference. Paul Townsend won for White Rose on board seven, though there appeared to be another double blunder in what I assume was mutual time trouble.

Round 8 Wood Green I - White Rose  
K.Arakhamia-Grant - P.Townsend



Black's extra pawn should tell in the long-term, but the game ends in surprising fashion. **35...♗dc8?!** 35...♗f7, so that the queen can help in what should be a simple defence of the black king, was better. Now the white queen is allowed to become dangerously active. **36 ♗d6!** Suddenly Black is tied up and the a6 pawn is also *en prise*. It's surprisingly hard to find a good move for Black here.

**36...♗xg2??** 36...♗e8! defending the back rank, was the only move. White can win back the pawn with 37 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 38 ♗xa6, when the game should finish in a draw. Maybe Black can still claim a slight advantage due to the weak white king. 36...♗f7 now loses to 37 ♗xb7+! ♕xb7 38 ♗b1+ ♕a7 39 ♗b6+ ♕a8 40 ♗xa6+ ♗a7 41 ♗xc8 mate. If Black passes, say with 36...h5, White wins with 37 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 38 ♗c1 ♗f7 39 ♗d8+ picking up a rook. **37 ♗xa6??** Maybe Keji intending to take on c7 first, but 37 ♗xc7! ♗xc7 38 ♗c1 just wins on the spot. **37...♗xc1 0-1**

Jutes of Kent may have been guilty of over-celebrating on the Saturday night, as they were comprehensively thrashed by Guildford. Your correspondent, having made a quick draw, was surprised to meet Simon Williams in the bar at this early hour and assumed a similar result. With Simon, though, you soon learn that anything is possible.

Round 8 Guildford I - Jutes of Kent  
Yang-Fan Zhou - S.Williams  
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♕xd4 d6  
5 ♕c3 a6 6 g4 b5 7 ♗g2 ♗b7 8 0-0



**8...g5!????!?!** I can't find this move in my database. **9 a4 b4 10 ♕a2 h6!?** Ridiculously calm, daring White to take a pawn when Simon was no doubt relying on his follow-up. Unfortunately, it fails spectacularly in a couple of different ways! **11 ♕xb4 d5** This is the cunning plan, but Black is so far behind in development it can't possibly work.





Photo: John Saunders

*GM Simon Williams points to the source of some of the most creative ideas in chess!*

**12 exd5** 12  $\text{d}\times\text{d}5!$  was even stronger, with a huge attack – 12...exd5 13 exd5 when the open e-file and knight coming to f5 mean that the black king won't last long. A sample line is 13... $\text{d}\times\text{d}5$  (or 13... $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$  14  $\text{d}\times\text{f}5$   $\text{d}\times\text{f}6$  15  $\text{c}\times\text{d}4$  when Black is completely tied up) 14  $\text{e}\times\text{e}1+$   $\text{e}\times\text{e}7$  (or 14... $\text{d}\times\text{e}7$  15  $\text{d}\times\text{f}5$  with too much pressure) 15  $\text{d}\times\text{f}5$   $\text{e}\times\text{g}2$  16  $\text{e}\times\text{e}7+$ !  $\text{d}\times\text{e}7$  17  $\text{d}\times\text{g}7+$  winning the queen. **12... $\text{e}\times\text{b}4$  13  $\text{d}\times\text{c}6!$**  Creating a huge pawn on c6 and monstrous light-squared bishop, which are more than enough compensation for a piece. Even someone as resourceful as Simon is unable to cope. **13... $\text{e}\times\text{c}6$  14  $\text{d}\times\text{c}6$   $\text{c}\times\text{d}1$  15  $\text{e}\times\text{d}1$   $\text{e}\times\text{a}7?$**  The final mistake. Better was 15... $\text{d}\times\text{e}7$ , when after 16 c7  $\text{d}\times\text{b}c6$  17 c3  $\text{e}\times\text{a}5$  18  $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$   $\text{e}\times\text{c}7$  19  $\text{e}\times\text{c}6+$  (19  $\text{e}\times\text{c}6$  0-0-0! with sudden surprising counterplay.) 19... $\text{d}\times\text{c}6$  20  $\text{e}\times\text{c}6$   $\text{c}\times\text{d}7$  White should win with the extra pawn, but still has plenty of work to do. **16  $\text{e}\times\text{e}3!$**  Obvious and very strong. **16... $\text{e}\times\text{c}7$  17  $\text{e}\times\text{b}6$   $\text{e}\times\text{c}8$  18 c7  $\text{d}\times\text{d}7$  19  $\text{e}\times\text{c}6$   $\text{d}\times\text{g}6$**



**20  $\text{e}\times\text{d}7!$   $\text{d}\times\text{d}7$  21  $\text{e}\times\text{d}1$   $\text{c}\times\text{e}7$  22  $\text{e}\times\text{d}7+$   $\text{c}\times\text{f}6$  23  $\text{e}\times\text{b}7$  1-0**

Cheddleton are now Wood Green's nearest challengers, and they routinely demolished e2e4.org.uk 6½-1½. The final

match saw Barbican II's excellent season continue as they held their first team to a draw. The result was even more surprising as Matthew Turner quickly put Barbican I ahead, making short work of Ryan-Rhys Griffiths on top board.

**Round 8 Barbican II - Barbican I**  
**R-R.Griffiths - M.Turner**  
*Queen's Gambit Declined*

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3  $\text{d}\times\text{c}3$   $\text{e}\times\text{e}7$  4  $\text{c}\times\text{d}5$   $\text{e}\times\text{d}5$  5  $\text{e}\times\text{f}4$  c6 6  $\text{c}\times\text{c}2$  g6 7 e3  $\text{e}\times\text{f}5$  8  $\text{c}\times\text{d}2$   $\text{d}\times\text{f}6$  9 f3  $\text{d}\times\text{b}d7$  10 g4  $\text{e}\times\text{e}6$**



**11  $\text{d}\times\text{h}3?$ !** I'm not an expert on the Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation, but it seems to me that 11 h4 and h5, should be the natural follow-up to White's 10th.

**11...h5!** Very uncompromising and attempting to immediately refute White's play. **12  $\text{d}\times\text{g}5$   $\text{d}\times\text{f}8$  13  $\text{e}\times\text{e}2?$**  White needed to do something about the hanging g-pawn, but ceding the e4 square is not the way. 13  $\text{d}\times\text{e}6$   $\text{d}\times\text{e}6$  14 g5  $\text{d}\times\text{d}7$  15 h4  $\text{d}\times\text{f}4$  16  $\text{e}\times\text{f}4$  would have led to a position where Black must be better due to pawn structure, but immediate disaster has been averted. **13...hxg4 14  $\text{d}\times\text{e}6$   $\text{d}\times\text{e}6$  15  $\text{f}\times\text{g}4$**



**15... $\text{e}\times\text{b}4!$**  It suddenly becomes clear that White has serious problems. The end is swift. **16 0-0  $\text{d}\times\text{e}4$  17  $\text{c}\times\text{c}2$   $\text{d}\times\text{f}4$  18  $\text{e}\times\text{f}4$   $\text{e}\times\text{c}3$  19  $\text{b}\times\text{c}3$   $\text{e}\times\text{h}2!$  0-1** Clinical by Matthew Turner.

**ROUND 8: RELEGATION SECTION**

Cambridge University should be safe from relegation – they top the table on a maximum 8/8 after an easy win against Anglian Avengers. The early Sunday

morning games always seem to include a number of entertaining miniatures and this match was no exception.

**Round 8 Cambridge Uni - Anglian Av's**  
**E.Dearing - P.Talsma**  
*Dutch Defence*

**1 d4 f5 2 g3  $\text{d}\times\text{f}6$  3 c4 g6 4  $\text{d}\times\text{f}3$   $\text{e}\times\text{g}7$  5 b4 d6 6  $\text{e}\times\text{b}2$**  So far so good.



**6...e5?!** I have no idea if this is theory, but I feel sure it must be premature. I usually prefer to get castled and have everything defended before attempting such action in the centre.

**7  $\text{d}\times\text{e}5$   $\text{d}\times\text{f}d7$  7... $\text{d}\times\text{g}4$**  is similar to the game. **8  $\text{e}\times\text{g}2$   $\text{d}\times\text{c}6$  9 0-0  $\text{d}\times\text{d}\times\text{e}5$  10  $\text{d}\times\text{e}5$**



**10... $\text{d}\times\text{e}5??$**  Either of the other two recaptures was better. At least, they don't lose immediately. **11  $\text{f}4!$  1-0**, because of 11... $\text{d}\times\text{f}3+$  12  $\text{e}\times\text{f}3$   $\text{e}\times\text{b}2$  13  $\text{c}\times\text{e}2+$ . Presumably Black missed White's 13th in this line.

Anglian Avengers now appear destined for relegation, needing to win their remaining three matches to have any chance at all of avoiding the drop. One bright point for them, though, is the form of Alan Merry, who won again. He is clearly hugely underrated and improving fast – one to watch. The other teams all have work to do at the final weekend. Oxford and The ADs played out a 4-4 draw, as did Blackthorne Russia and Guildford 2. In the remaining match, Wood Green II beat Bristol convincingly. Jack Rudd's games never disappoint – this time we have another typical Sunday morning game.

Round 8 Wood Green II - Bristol  
**C.Hanley - J.Rudd**  
 English v K.I.D.

1 c4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♗c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7  
 5 a3 a5 6 e4 d6 7 ♗ge2 h5 8 h3 f5 9 d3  
 h4 10 ♗d5 hxg3 11 fxg3 ♙e6 12 ♙e3



Jack has successfully mixed things up with h5-h4 against Craig's solid English opening and has a perfectly playable unbalanced position, but his next is too ambitious. 12...♗d4?! Wanting to kick the strong d5 knight with ...c6, but it concedes the f4 square to a white knight. With the weakness of the g6 pawn, this cannot be a good thing. 12...a4!?, taking space on the queenside, was interesting. 13 ♙xd4! exd4 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♖b3!



15...c6?? Now Black is trouble and should attempt to grovel with 15...♗e7 16 ♗ef4 That f4 square... 16...♙c8 looks horrible, but my computer only gives White a slight advantage here. 16 ♖xb7! 1-0 The g7 bishop is hanging, which is what I assume Jack missed.

**DIVISION TWO**

AMCA Dragons lead the Promotion Section on a maximum 8/8 and are almost certain to be playing in Division One next season. The other three promotion spots are up for grabs, with only Poisoned Pawns not having a realistic chance.

The unfortunate Brown Jack are bottom of the Relegation Section with no points after carrying forward three defeats against their relegation rivals. The five

points they scored against teams now in the Promotion Section count for nothing – a major flaw in the current system, in my opinion.

My apologies to all those whose quick losses and blunders I have included. I once lasted only 12 moves against Gary Quillan in a 4NCL Sunday morning game

– I know the feeling!

The final matches will be played back at Hinckley Island on the Bank Holiday weekend 5-7 May. With the top squads traditionally bringing in their star names for the crucial end of season matches, there promises to be much interesting chess. See you there!

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	6-2	5-3	7-1	44	14
2	Guildford I	2½-5½	X	4-4	8-0	6½-1½	5½-2½	7½-½	6-2	40	11
3	Barbican II	1-7	4-4	X	3-5	5-3	4½-3½	5½-2½	5-3	28	9
4	e2e4.org.uk I	2½-5½	0-8	5-3	X	4½-3½	4½-3½	2½-5½	4½-3½	23½	8
5	The ADs	0-8	1½-6½	3-5	3½-4½	X	4½-3½	5-3	4-4	21½	5
6	Blackthorne Russia	2-6	2½-5½	3½-4½	3½-4½	3½-4½	X	5½-2½	4½-3½	25	4
7	Anglian Avengers I	3-5	½-7½	2½-5½	5½-2½	3-5	2½-5½	X	4-4	21	3
8	Bristol I	1-7	2-6	3-5	3½-4½	4-4	3½-4½	4-4	X	21	2

Rk	Division 1, Pool B	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Barbican II	X	3½-4½	5-3	4½-3½	2-6	5½-2½	6½-1½	5½-2½	32½	10
2	Cheddleton I	4½-3½	X	2½-5½	4½-3½	5-3	6½-1½	6-2	3½-4½	32½	10
3	Jutes of Kent	3-5	5½-2½	X	3½-4½	3½-4½	4½-3½	4½-3½	5-3	29½	8
4	White Rose I	3½-4½	3½-4½	4½-3½	X	5-3	4½-3½	3½-4½	4½-3½	29	8
5	Wood Green II	6-2	3-5	4½-3½	3-5	X	3½-4½	5-3	3½-4	28½	6
6	Cambridge Univ I	2½-5½	1½-6½	3½-4½	3½-4½	4½-3½	X	4½-3½	5-3	25	6
7	Guildford II	1½-6½	2-6	3½-4½	4½-3½	3-5	3½-4½	X	5½-2½	23½	4
8	Oxford I	2½-5½	4½-3½	3-5	3½-4½	4-3½	3-5	2½-5½	X	23	4

Rk	Div 1, Champion'p	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Wood Green I	X		5½-2½		4½-3½		7-1	5½-2½	22½	8
2	Cheddleton I		X		4½-3½	4½-3½	2½-5½		6½-1½	18	6
3	Guildford I	2½-5½		X			6-2	4-4	8-0	20½	5
4	Barbican I		3½-4½		X	4½-3½	5-3	4-4		17	5
5	White Rose I	3½-4½	3½-4½		3½-4½	X	4½-3½			15	2
6	Jutes of Kent		5½-2½	2-6	3-5	3½-4½	X			14	2
7	Barbican II	1-7		4-4	4-4			X	3-5	12	2
8	e2e4.org.uk I	2½-5½	1½-6½	0-8				5-3	X	9	2

Rk	Div 1, Demotion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1	Cambridge Univ I	X			4½-3½	4½-3½	5-3		5½-2½	19½	8
2	The ADs		X	4½-3½			4-4	4-4	5-3	17½	6
3	Blackthorne Russia		3½-4½	X		4-4		4½-3½	5½-2½	17½	5
4	Wood Green II	3½-4½			X	5-3	3½-4	5½-2½		17½	4
5	Guildford II	3½-4½		4-4	3-5	X	5½-2½			16	3
6	Oxford I	3-5	4-4		4-3½	2½-5½	X			13½	3
7	Bristol I		4-4	3½-4½	2½-5½			X	4-4	14	2
8	Anglian Avengers I	2½-5½	3-5	2½-5½				4-4	X	12	1



Two round eight victors, Matthew Turner (far left) and Craig Hanley (blue shirt) met in the 4NCL in February. In the foreground GM Jonathan Parker plays Lawrence Trent (wearing a muffler).