

Report on Divisions 3 and 4 Weekend 2 by Steve Burke

In the North there was a second weekend of seeded matches. The seeding seems to be working with the favourites winning their matches, while the balanced matches are closely fought. There were still a couple of upsets, as 3Cs 3 beat Castleford Roses and Shropshire 2 beat Bradford Knights B. But I think it will be heating up next time as (I think) the Swiss system proper kicks in!

Division 3 North

		rd 1	rd 2	rd 3	rd 4	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts	
1	Gonzaga	gon	soab 4½	ash1 4	brab 5½	cas 4½	4	4	0	0	18½	8
2	3Cs 2	3cs2	enn 4½	brab 4½	man2 4	ash2 5½	4	4	0	0	18½	8
3	Shropshire 1	shr1	man4 5	braa 5	wks2 3	man3 3	4	3	1	0	16	7
4	Bradford DCA Knights A	braa	ash2 4½	shr1 1	jor 5½	enn 4½	4	3	0	1	15½	6
5	Spirit of Atticus B	soab	gon 1½	shr2 3½	brac 4½	che2 4	4	3	0	1	13½	6
6	Cheddleton 2	che2	hol 4½	man2 3½	ash1 3½	soab 2	4	3	0	1	13½	6
7	Warwickshire Select 2	wks2	cas 4½	jor 2½	shr1 3	hol 3½	4	2	1	1	13½	5
8	Jorvik	jor	man3 3	wks2 3½	braa ½	man4 5½	4	2	1	1	12½	5
9	Ashfield-Breadsall 1	ash1	shr2 3½	gon 2	che2 2½	3cs3 6	4	2	0	2	14	4
10	Holmes Chapel	hol	che2 1½	3cs3 4½	shr2 4	wks2 2½	4	2	0	2	12½	4
11	Enniscorthy	enn	3cs2 1½	brac 4½	man4 3½	braa 1½	4	2	0	2	11	4

Unfortunately my own Sunday (and my teammate's) was spoiled by some poor soul who decided to end it all by jumping from the bridge over the M62, causing its closure and a massive traffic jam. As a result, we couldn't get to the venue in time. So eventually we had to turn back and had a four and half hour round trip (and used half a tank of petrol) for nothing.

To compound this, the rules say that our team also got penalised points for defaulting a board. (Luckily we had the father of one of our players on site that covered for one of us). I know that the rules are strict due to mass defaults in the past, but can't we find some wording that allows for such extreme and unexpected eventualities to be dealt with more equitably for the team suffering the problem?



Anyway, back to the chess...

In Division 3 South Barnet Knights continued to justify their favourites tag in Pool A with two more wins. Meanwhile Wessex slipped up on the Saturday, losing narrowly to Anglian Avengers. Nevertheless, it's beginning to look as if the top four now will go to the promotion group.

In Pool B, Saturday didn't go according to plan as MK Phoenix and Fermented Sharks both overturned to odds to win, and West is Best earned a draw too. This Pool is looking less clear with 6 teams likely to be fighting for the four spots.

3 South pool A

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Barnet Knights 1				3½-2½		4-2	4-2	5½--½	17	8
2 Wessex A			2½-3½		4-2	4½-1½	4½-½		15½	6
3 Anglian Avengers 2		3½-2½			3½-2½	2½-3½		5-1	14½	6
4 Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	2½-3½				3½-2½		4-2	3-3	13	5
5 Hackney		2-4	2½-3½	2½-3½		3½-2½			10½	2
6 Cambridge University 2	2-4	1½-4½	3½-2½		2½-3½				9½	2
7 Leeds University Old Boys	2-4	½-4½		2-4				4½-1½	9	2
8 The Full Ponty	-½-5½		1-5	3-3			1½-4½		5	1

3 South pool B

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Oxford 2				3-3	3½-2½		4½-1½	4½-1½	15½	7
2 MK Phoenix 1			3½-2½		4-2	3-3		4-2	14½	7
3 CSC 1		2½-3½		3-3		3½-2½		6-0	15	5
4 Brown Jack 1	3-3		3-3		2½-3½		4-2		12½	4
5 Fermented Sharks	2½-3½	2-4		3½-2½			4-2		12	4
6 The Rookies		3-3	2½-3½				2½-3½	3-3	11	2
7 Sussex Martlets 2	1½-4½			2-4	2-4	3½-2½			9	2
8 West is Best 3	1½-4½	2-4	0-6			3-3			6½	1

Everything seems to be going according to form in Division 4 South. But with the stronger teams fighting amongst themselves from now on, there should be plenty of tough competition in the seven rounds to come.

Division 4 South

		rd 1	rd 2	rd 3	rd 4	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
1 Oxford 3	oxf3	brj3 5½	ice2 4	pit 5	bkn3 4	4	4	0	0	18½	8
2 Iceni 1	ice1	cam3 6	tit 3½	wib4 4	csc3 4½	4	4	0	0	18	8
3 Crowthorne	cro	kkg2 4	brj2 3½	bkn2 4	cyj 5	4	4	0	0	16½	8
4 CSC 2	csc2	csc3 3½	bkn2 4	psp2 3½	mkp2 5	4	4	0	0	16	8
5 Wessex B	wesb	inv 5	sur 3½	kes 5	brj2 3	4	3	1	0	16½	7
6 All Anands on Deck	aad	ice3 4	psp2 4	tit 3	kkg2 4½	4	3	1	0	15½	7
7 Surbiton	sur	sxm3 4½	wesb 2½	wat 4½	inv 5	4	3	0	1	16½	6
8 Iceni 2	ice2	oxf3 2	brj3 5	bkn3 5	pit 4	4	3	0	1	16	6
9 Watford	wat	fis 3½	cam3 5½	sur 1½	oxf4 4	4	3	0	1	14½	6
10 Throw in the Tal	tit	oxf4 3½	ice1 2½	aad 3	sxm3 5	4	2	1	1	14	5
11 West is Best 4	wib4	mkp2 3	bkn3 5	ice1 1	ice3 5	4	2	1	1	14	5
12 Kent KJCA Kestrels	kes	brj2 3	inv 4½	wesb 1	brj3 4	4	2	1	1	12½	5

Star Game

[Download the below game in PGN](#)

**Orgler,Philipp (2162) - Trevelyan,John (2014) [A03]
4NCL 3 South pool A Reading, ENG (3.14), 13.01.2018
[Burke,Steven J & Komodo 11]**

1.d4 Nc6 An invitation to dance?

2.f4!? The engines think that there are "better" moves for white, but this will lead into some Stonewall position that I presume white likes. So he decides not to take up the offer of a "Two Knights Tango" after 2.d5 Ne5 3.e4 e6 4.f4 Ng6 5.dxe6 fxe6 6.Nf3

2...d5 3.Nf3 Bf5 4.e3 e6=



With colours reversed, and so an extra tempo, this setup is considered favourable. But now it is white to move, and the extra tempo swings things back towards him.

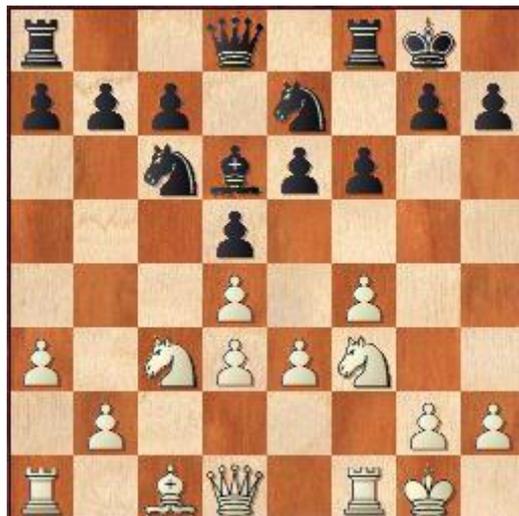
5.Bd3 Bxd3 6.cxd3 [6.Qxd3 is also fine, but capturing with the pawn takes control over e4.]

6...f6!?



Black, in turn, covers e5, but the slight weakening of the kingside could be an issue later.

7.0-0 Bd6 8.Nc3 Nge7 9.a3 0-0



10.Qb3 This could be a good moment to throw in 10.e4!?! threatening to trap the bishop, and taking control of more central squares. But perhaps black could try to blow up the centre with 10...e5 when there are many different variations, but probably white should be better.

10...Qd7 11.Kh1= Taking time out to make the king safer. White could take the pawn, but black gets good positional compensation after 11.Qxb7 Na5 12.Qb5 (or 12.Qa6 Nb3 13.Rb1 Rab8 14.Qa4 Qxa4 15.Nxa4 g5~/=) 12...Qxb5 13.Nxb5 Nb3 14.Rb1 Rab8 15.Nxd6 cxd6~/=

11...Kh8?



Black follows suit, but it looks as if this is a bit too slow.

12.e4! dxe4?! This relieves white of his only positional problem - the doubled d-pawns. But it's not easy to find good moves for black here, e.g. 12...Ng6 13.g3 (It's too early for 13.exd5?! exd5 14.Nxd5 Na5 15.Qc3 Qb5 16.Nb4 Nxf4=) 13...Rab8 14.Bd2 (With the f-pawn secured, it is also okay to play 14.exd5 exd5 15.Nxd5 Na5 16.Qc3 Qb5 17.Ne3+/=) 14...b5!? 15.exd5 exd5 16.Nxd5 Nge7+/= and black doesn't have enough for the pawn.

13.dxe4 e5!?



Rather than sit and wait for a fatal blow, black lashes out.

14.Ne2? Black's active shot is rewarded. Natural looks 14.dxe5 fxe5 15.f5 (Komodo actually gives 15.Qd1! as the best way, since black cannot play 15...exf4?? 16.e5+- and whatever else black does, white will usually play f5 with a big advantage.) 15...Nd4! 16.Qc4 c5 17.Be3+/=

14...exf4?! The wrong pawn! 14...Nxd4 15.Nfxd4 exd4 16.Nxd4 Nc6=

15.Bxf4 b6 16.Rad1



16...Bxf4?! Black looks to exchange pieces to free his position, but this brings the white knight into action.

16...Ng6 17.Bg3 Rfe8 18.Qc2 Rac8+/-

17.Nxf4 Rae8 18.Ne6+/- Tempting, but possibly the queen was better, 18.Qe6 Qc8 19.Rc1 Na5 20.Rfe1+/-

18...Rg8 19.d5



19...Na5? The knight shouldn't be allowed to live unchallenged on e6, so 19...Nd8 though it is still not pleasant, 20.Nh4!? (20.Nxd8 Rxd8 21.Nd4 Rge8 22.Ne6 Rc8+/-) 20...Nxe6 21.dxe6 Qc6 22.Rfe1 Rgf8 23.Qh3+/-

20.Qc3!+/- [20.Qc2! also sets up threats in h7, so 20...Nac6 21.e5! Nxd5 22.Nfg5 fxe5 23.Nxg5 g6 24.Rf7 Re7 25.e6 Qd6 26.Qf2+- and the threat of Nxd5 followed by Qf6+ is crushing.]

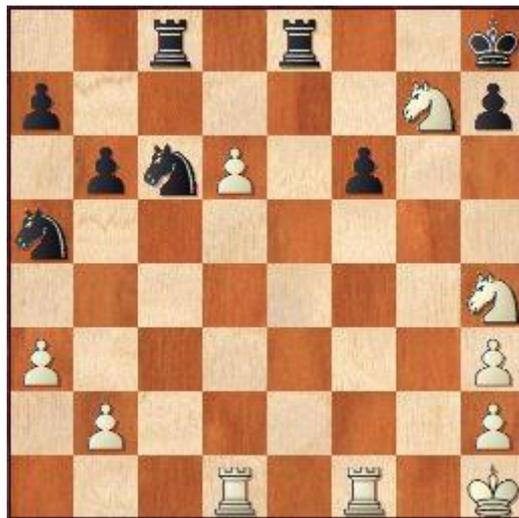
20...c6 21.Nh4 cxd5 22.exd5 Rc8 23.Qh3! Rge8 24.d6 Nec6+-



25.Nxg7!!+- White is cruising to victory with blow after blow!

White could maintain the bind with the "safe" 25.Ng6+ Kg8 26.Ngf4 Ne5 27.Qf5+/-

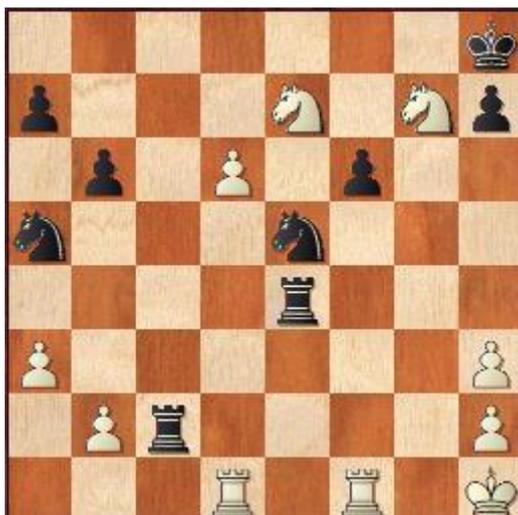
25...Qxh3 26.gxh3



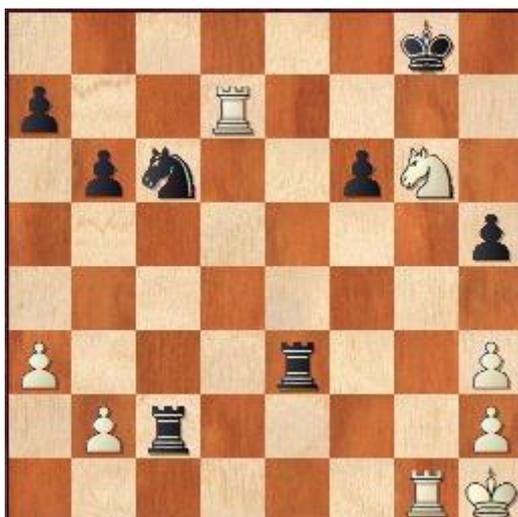
26...Re4+- No better is 26...Kxg7 27.d7 Ne5 28.Nf5+ Kf8 29.dxe8R+ Rxe8 30.Rd6 Kf7 31.Nd4+-

27.Nhf5 Ne5 28.Ne7?? Sadly for him, white finds virtually the only sensible move that doesn't win! One of the cleanest is 28.d7 Rd8 29.Ne8 Rxd7 30.Nxf6 Rxd1 31.Rxd1 Nac6 to cover d8, 32.Nxe4 winning.

28...Rc2!



29.Nh5? With pieces now spread across an open board, the tactics become almost unfathomable. Trusting Komodo, white has just one way to maintain some advantage, 29.Ngf5! Ree2 30.Ne3!! Rxe3 (The point is that after 30...Rxh2+ 31.Kg1 there is no check on g2.) 31.Rg1 h5 32.d7 Nxd7 33.Rxd7 Nc6 34.Ng6+ Kg8



All this is pretty much forced, and Komodo says white is significantly better, though I don't see a clear winning plan.

Komodo gives various lines, such as 35.b4 b5 36.a4 a6 37.axb5 axb5 38.h4 Re8 39.Rb7 Rb8 40.Nf4+ Kh8 41.Rc7 Nd4!+/- Importantly this threatens Nf3. (41...Nxb4? 42.Rf7 is winning, 42...Rb6?? (Best, but losing, is 42...Rg8 43.Ng6+ Rxg6 44.Rxg6 Nd5 45.Rg1+-) 43.Ng6+ Kg8 44.Ne5+ Kh8 45.Rf8+ Kh7 46.Nf7 and mate follows after black gives up what pieces he can to delay it.) 42.Ng6+ Kg8 43.Ne5+ Kh8 44.Nf7+ Kh7 45.Rd7 Ne2 46.Nd6+ Kh8 47.Ne4 Rb6+/-

29...Ree2 30.Rxf6 Rxh2+ 31.Kg1 Nd7 32.Rf3 Rcg2+ 33.Kf1 Nc4=



Over the last few moves it seems that the initiative has passed to black, and white has to find only moves to keep the balance.

34.Rg3?? White needed to play 34.Nf4! Nd2+ 35.Rxd2 Rxd2 36.Kg1! (36.Ke1?? Rxb2-+) 36...Nf6 37.Rg3 Rhf2 (Not now 37...Rxb2? 38.Nd3+/-) 38.Nd3 Rfe2 39.Kf1! Rh2 40.Kg1! Rhe2=

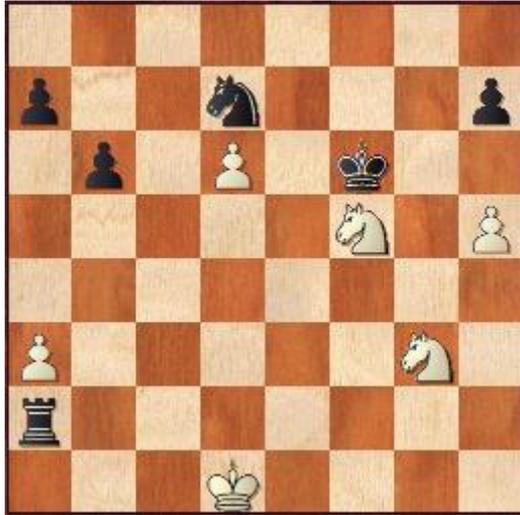
34...Rxg3 35.Nxg3 Ne3+



36.Ke1 Possibly in time trouble white had planned 36.Kg1 and missed 36...Rg2+ 37.Kh1 Rxg3 38.Kh2 Rg2+ 39.Kh1 Rxb2-+

36...Nxd1-+ Quite good enough, but there could have been a pretty finish with 36...Ne5 37.d7 Nf3#

37.Kxd1 Kg7 38.h4 Rxb2 39.h5 Ra2 40.Nef5+ Kf6-+



0-1