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WEEKEND CHESS



February 17, 2001 – the County Match between Kent and Hertfordshire is in full swing. With no chance of qualification themselves Kent could only spoil the chances of others, which they duly did winning the match 9½ 6½.

- ◆ Reports and games from South Wales, Greater Manchester, South London, Dorset, Kidlington and Portsmouth.
- ◆ Interview with a weekend chess legend – GM Keith Arkell.
- ◆ Can you define the exact point at which a game is won? Tim Spanton may have the answer.

£2.50

1st Weekend Chess Magazine Rapidplay 27 January 2001

by Chris Rice

Why it is I have no idea, but it takes a lot to surprise me and the biggest shock for me on this very day was that it all went so well! This was thanks in no small part to the competitors involved who accepted all my decisions, gave me good advice and who all seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. Particular thanks go to Gordon Botley who helped me set up in the morning despite having to rush off to get a new dog, my girlfriend Joanne who did a sterling job on the refreshments despite me forgetting to bring the ham, cheese, sugar and spoons etc and Marc Bryant who helped me out no end with the pairings in the Open section which involved six byes and the toss of a coin!

So what happened? Well here are the results:

Open: 1 A J Stebbings 5/6 £100 2= P Georghiou, A Adelaja, M Osborne and N Donovan 4/6 £18.75 each with the U-180 prize going to Ian Snape.

Major U-170: 1 A Baron 6/6 £100, 2 P R Wood 4/6 £50 3= J F McKenna, S Pozzo 3½/6 £12.50 each with the U-145 grading prize going to Russell Goodfellow

Minor U-130: 1 D Bennett 5/6 £100, 2= P Ackley, M Jones 4½/6 £37.50 each with the U-115 grading prize going to Marc Bryant

Amateur U-100: 1= P Buswell, A Rahman 5/6 £75 each 3 D Everitt 4/6 £25 with the U-80 grading prize going to S Siebert.

We have a couple of reports from participants on this and we will start with Alexander Baron who with a magnificent 6/6 won the Major section by a mile. However, it was certainly not as easy as it looked as Alexander explains.....

Although a two point lead with six out of six sounds impressive I was more than a little lucky to win this tournament. I had to survive a heavy attack in Round 2 from Murray Chandler lookalike P.R. Wood, and in round 4 I had a near resignable ending (the exchange down) against Russell Goodfellow when he blundered away a piece with a minute on his clock and resigned on the spot.

In the last round (which I didn't need to win) I was in a hopeless mess against young Peter Poobalasingham, and only his inexperience saved me. Interestingly he lost on time, which is actually a good sign because it shows that he is well on the way to curing his greatest weakness, the impetuosity which we all show at that age, and which some of us never cure!

1st WCM Rapidplay (Major)

Round 1

27 January 2001

White:

Alexander Baron (138)

Black:

Dave Helsby (154)

Alekhine

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. Nc3

The Saemisch Attack, an off-beat variation and my pet line against the Alekhine. Even if Black knows how to play against it my experience is that even very strong players have difficulty equalising.

3 ... Nxc3

Curiously I played this same line against Helsby in our only previous meeting, the first round of a slowplay major at ISH in March 1998. Instead of 3...Nxc3 he continued 3...c6 leaving me to exchange; I did, and won a hard fought bishop ending in 70+ moves.

4. dxc3

4 bxc3 is playable but I prefer fluid piece play to a big, but fixed and possibly vulnerable centre.

4 ... d6

Theory recommends 4...d5! but d6 is a logical move.

5. Bc4 Bf5!? 6. Qf3 e6 7. Qxb7

Ignoring Marshall's advice!

7 ... Nd7 8. exd6 Bxd6 9. Bg5

Played to force Black to weaken his kingside. (I think 9 Bg5? is a mistake as now Black could play 9...Rb8! and after 10 Bxd8 Rxb7 he is picking up the b-pawn with advantage - ed)

9 ... f6 10. Be3 0-0

Probably 10...Rb8 followed by Rxb2 is stronger, smashing up White's queenside; it is hard to fault Black's play though; if White wants to consolidate he risks falling behind in development.

11. 0-0-0

Normally risky in such positions but the only move to hold the pawn.

11 ... Qe7 12. Ne2 Kh8

An unnecessary prophylactic but Black does well to avoid tactics.

13. Nd4 Nc5 14. Nxf5 exf5 15. Qf3 Na4

Here he begins to lose his way; he is obviously eyeing up Nxb2, but that leads nowhere.

16. Bb3 Nb6 17. Qxf5 a5 18. Bxb6

The alternative is 18 Qe6 which forces the exchange of queens on account of the threat of Bxb6, but I was looking for an attack with the added attraction of a two pawn cushion and opposite coloured bishops in case it didn't come off.

18 ... cxb6 19. Rhe1 Qc7 20. Qb5

Now Black must guard against Rd7 while his a pawn is going nowhere.

20 ... Bc5 21. g3 Rad8 22. Rxd8 Rxd8??

Although struggling, Black is still in the game after ...Qxd8.

23. Re8+ Bf8 24. Qd5! 1-0

The next report is from one of our regular writers, Nigel Donovan, who did very well to snatch a share of second place in the Open.....

Most of my games from the tournament were rather dull. The following crazy game was the exception. It was apparently good entertainment for the spectators but it really is a very poor game full of blunders. I hope my opponent will forgive me for including it, but my moves are just as bad as his.

1st WCM Rapidplay

27 January 2001

White:

Marcus Osborne (193)

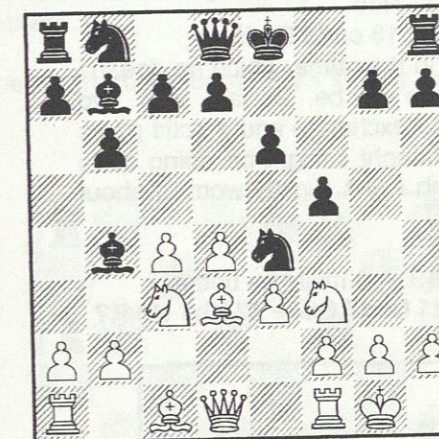
Black:

Nigel Donovan (178)

Nimzo Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 b6 5 Bd3 Bb7 6 Nf3 Ne4 7 0-0 f5

Black could grab the pawn on offer, but as usual in such positions it's not advisable. Instead I want to maintain my knight on e4, but White's next move makes this difficult.



8 d5!?

This is White's most aggressive move. He is prepared to sacrifice material to open the position. 8 Qc2 is safer 8...Bxc3 9 bxc3 0-0 10 Nd2 Qh4, but even this position has hidden dangers for the unwary, eg 11 g3?! Ng5! is unpleasant and 11 Ba3? actually loses to 11...Nxd2 12 Qxd2 Bxg2! Knights-Donovan, Southend 2000. Now 13 Kxg2 (13 Bxf8 Bf3) 13...Qg4+ 14 Kh1 Qf3+ 15 Kg1 Rf6 16 Rfd1 Qh3 17 Kh1 Rg6 wins.

8 ... Bxc3

8...Nxc3 9 bxc3 Bxc3 is risky and rarely played.

9 bxc3 Nc5!

Black had another chance to take material with 9...exd5?! 10 cxd5 Bxd5 11 c4 Bb7 12 Nd4 but then the position is opening up for White's two bishops. 9...Na6?! is also dubious after 10 Bxe4! fxe4 11 Nd2 exd5 12 Qh5+ g6 13 Qe5+ Kf7 14 cxd5.

10 Ba3 Nba6 11 Re1

11 Bc2 0-0 12 Nd4 Rf7 13 Nb3 Qe7 14 Re1 e5 15 f4 d6= Balashov-Emms, 2nd Bundesliga 1996 as given in NCO and Emms' Easy Guide to the Nimzo Indian.

11 ... Qf6 12 Qc2 0-0