

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 4 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter! A shorter newsletter this week, the first catch-up night. Only 8 games were played: 5 of the 9 postponed games, with 3 games played in advance (usually because players knew they would be away). While that left us with not many games, there were still some exciting ones, and a few missed opportunities! You could say the games were no joke; and on this theme, what happened in the chess game between the 2 shoelaces? It ended in a tie... All right, blame JSP; so why don't I make up for it by reporting on those 8 games?

Division 3

John Nichas 0.5-0.5 Netra Bhatt: Another lost opportunity for John! After a quiet opening, he got the advantage with the two bishops by Move 10. As the bishops became more active and he pushed pawns in the centre, his lead grew to over +3! Then he won a pawn, and his advantage was crushing. But in his overeagerness to trade queens, he let it all slip in one move! It wound up in a drawish rook and opposite coloured bishop ending, and they agreed a draw on Move 32. See game below.

Nichas, John (1534) - Bhatt, Netra, 2023 St George CC Div 3 Round 1 (postponed), 28/03/2023

1.Nf3 Nc6 2.d4 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.e3 Nf6 6.Qc2 b6 7.Be2 Bd7 8.0-0 Ne7 9.a3 Bxc3 10.bxc3 0-0 11.a4 Re8 12.Ne5 Ng6 13.Nxg6 fxc6 14.Ba3 e5 15.cxd5 Bf5 16.Qb3 Nxd5 17.Bb5 Re6 18.c4 Ne7 19.Rfd1 Qc8 20.c5 Kh8 21.d5 Rf6 22.cxb6 Nxd5 23.Qxd5 c6 24.Qxe5 cxb5 25.Rac1 Qb7 26.Qe7 Qxe7 27.Bxe7 Rxb6 28.Rd8+ Rxd8 29.Bxd8 Rb7 30.axb5 Kg8 31.Kf1 Bd3+ 32.Ke1 Bxb5 ½-½

Division 6

Reno Sciberras 0-1 Mark Boan: This Round 8 game played in advance saw Mark register a solid victory, although he did perhaps take a bit longer to finish than was optimal! After another even opening which saw (unusually) four doubled d-pawns at one point, the players traded into an equal double rook and bishop ending. Then Reno walked into a discovered attack and lost the exchange to a bishop fork! From there Mark doubled rooks on the seventh rank, eventually winning a bishop as well. It was easy after that, although Mark did miss a mate or two; but he got there in the end.

Division 4

Elijah Udovitch 0-1 Huey Teng: A nice game by Huey, who was better for much of this game. Mind you, Elijah did miss one golden opportunity with 21.Rxf7; but soon after Huey equalised, then he won a pawn and got the advantage! The position stayed tricky for a long time, but eventually Huey won a piece via a pin; and he ended up checkmating Elijah on Move 51 (see game below).

Udovitch, Elijah (1277) - Teng, Huey, 2023 St George CC Div 4 Round 2 (postponed), 28/03/23

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.c5 Nc6 4.a3 Nf6 5.h3 Be7 6.Nc3 h6 7.Bf4 a6 8.Nf3 Ne4 9.e3 b6 10.cxb6 cxb6 11.Bd3 Ng5 12.0-0 0-0 13.Ne5 Nxe5 14.Bxe5 f6 15.Bh2 Bd6 16.f4 Nf7 17.Kh1 Bb7 18.e4 Re8 19.e5 fxe5 20.fxe5 Be7 21.Bc2 Ng5 22.h4 Ne4 23.Nxe4 dxe4 24.Qe2 Qxd4 25.b4 Rf8 26.Rad1 Rxf1+ 27.Rxf1 e3 28.Rd1 Qc3 29.Rd3 Qa1+ 30.Bg1 Qxe5 31.Rd7 Qf4 32.Bxe3 Qxh4+ 33.Kg1 Bd5 34.Bf2 Qg5 35.Be3 Qf6 36.Qd3 Qa1+ 37.Bb1 Kf8 38.Qf1+ Bf6 39.Qd3 Qb2 40.Bc2 Qa1+ 41.Bb1 Ba2 42.Qd6+ Kg8 43.Bxb6 Qxb1+ 44.Kf2 Qc2+ 45.Qd2 Bh4+ 46.g3 Qf5+ 47.Kg1 Rf8 48.Qe2 Bxg3 49.Bd4 e5 50.Qxa2+ Kh8 51.Rd5 Qf1# 0-1

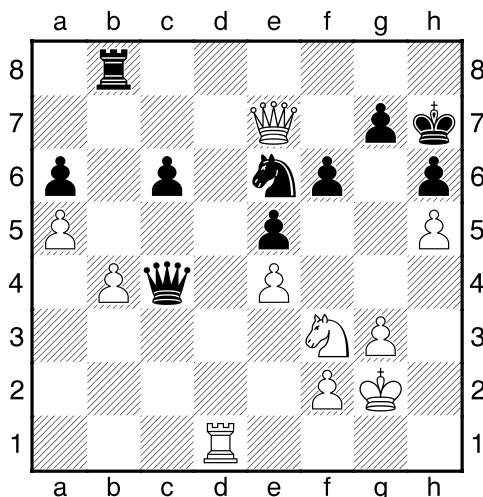
James Bullen 1-0 Anthony Lopes: Poor Anthony again found himself a victim of persistence in this postponed Round 2 game! After an even struggle for 28 moves, James sacrificed a piece unsoundly, then found himself a whole rook down due to a knight fork. But he battled on, and Anthony got worried about his king; so he sacrificed the rook back for what he thought was a winning attack! It was not... When Anthony traded queens, it was again a contest; and James ended up outplaying him in the ending to win via 2 passed rook pawns. A tough battle, and another tragedy for Anthony...

Division 5

Kindred Glee 0-1 Pertinent Sow: Oh no, the anagrams are back! I will leave you to figure out who these two are; answer next newsletter... In this Round 5 game played in advance, Kindred was worse almost from the start due to an unambitious opening, as Pertinent developed his pieces well and expanded on the queenside. Soon his knight found a hole on e4, his rook attacked two backward pawns via an open c-file and Kindred was saddled with a bad bishop. After the Black rooks doubled on the seventh rank, the end was nigh. Pertinent won a rook, and his position was so good that he could even afford to blunder it back by moving his rook en prise; he still won in 45 moves.

Division 1

Daniel Melamed 1-0 Mario Falchoni: This Round 4 game played in advance saw Daniel in a strong position out of the opening, with more space and an open d-file. He expanded on the queenside; and I thought Mario was in big trouble! But he has always been a fighter; and this game was no exception... He managed to trade off both pairs of bishops; his queen penetrated the enemy position, and he succeeded in equalising! Finally they reached the critical position below after White's 37.Rd1.



This position is actually dead level, an interesting sort of dynamic equality; but only after Black plays the forced 37...Nd4. After Mario's 37...Rxb4 instead, he is back in deep trouble; in fact he is losing! Play proceeded 38.Qe8 (giving Mario another chance to equalise with Nd4) Rb7 39.Rd6 (now winning) Rb1 40.Nd2, and Black resigned. Daniel actually said after the game that he did not think that Mario could take the b-pawn. He was right...

Division 2

Is Good 0-1 The President: What, the nicknames are back now too? Well, only for these 2 players; once again you'll have to figure out who they are, or wait till the next newsletter to find out... For the most part this Round 1 postponed game was even, with thrust, counterthrust and some simplification. Is Good did miss a Bxh6 sacrifice; but even this was only +1 for him. Then he let his bishop get trapped! He lost a piece; and The President made no mistake in finishing him off from there.

Albert Tjahja 0.5-0.5 Pieter Stoltz: This positional struggle favoured Pieter for much of the game, with two bishops against two knights in an open position. But he swapped one of the bishops for a knight, and any advantage he may have had was gone! He kept trying, but to no avail; they traded queens, and eventually drew a bishop vs knight endgame in 45 moves.

Two anagrams, two nicknames, one joke so far. I'm sure you can guess the end of this newsletter! Yes, one last classic JSP joke ... How did the fruit fix his bad chess position? He re-pear-ed it...