

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 5 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter! To begin with, 2 points to make about Round 4: 1. There were several postponements, with players either ill, working or away; and 2. There were many shorter games! Eight of 20 games were over in 27 moves or less, with only one of these being drawn. While this does make my life easier in terms of entering the games, it also means the players blundered a lot more this week; fatigue, perhaps? Four of the games were actually miniatures, over in under 20 moves; hopefully the losers of these games will be more careful for the rest of the event! Anyway, before I go on, I owe you nicknames and anagrams from last week's newsletter: Kindred Glee = Ken Eldridge; Pertinent Sow = Peter Swinton (no offense, Peter!); Is Good = Srijan Badam (Badam = Am Bad = Is Good); and finally The President = John Karabatsos (here JK = JFK). How did *you* fare with these? Hopefully better than the losers of the games below!

Division 4

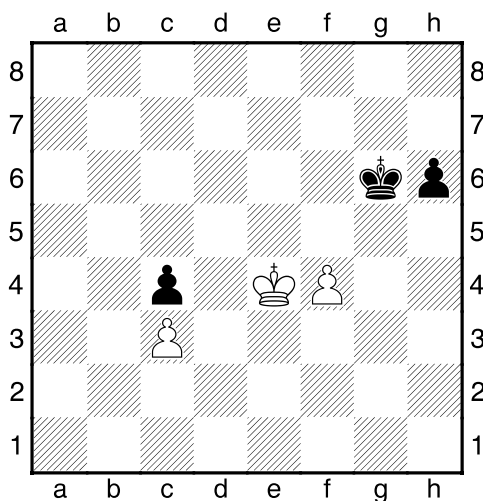
James Bullen 1-0 Euan Marquez Zarauz: Euan was just a bit worse after 15 moves of a normal Caro-Kann, with James having a better pawn centre and more centrally located pieces. But then on his 17th move, Euan moved his queen to the wrong square! Breaking a pin by force, James just won a piece; Euan resigned on move 19 for our first miniature of this week's newsletter (see game below).

Bullen, James - Marquez Zarauz, Euan (1357), 2023 St George CC Div 4 Round 4, 04/04/2023

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 g6 7.Nf3 Bg4 8.h3 Qe7+ 9.Be3 Bf5 10.Bd3 Bxd3 11.Qxd3 Bg7 12.0-0 0-0 13.Rfe1 Qc7 14.Re2 Na6 15.Rae1 Rad8 16.Qd2 Nc5 17.Bf4 Qb6 18.dxc5 Rxd2 19.cxb6 1-0

Sait Buzgan 1-0 Anthony Lopes: The miniature to top all miniatures! After 6 moves, Sait played the innocent looking 7.Bd3. Overlooking the fact that this bishop controlled two squares near his queen, Anthony played a developing move. Next move he resigned! Play went 1.e4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ Qxf6 6.d4 a6 7.Bd3 Bd6 8.Bg5 1-0. Poor Anthony! His queen was trapped...

Elijah Udovitch 0-1 Chris Brown: A longer game, one on which I could write a whole newsletter! Chris already had a small edge by move 5, and built on it slowly by centralising his pieces and breaking with e5. Elijah traded to ease the pressure but remained worse, with pressure on his two isolated pawns. Eventually he lost one, but got a central pawn back in return and hence equalised. Then Chris won a pawn; but his extra pawn was a backward b-pawn, which he eventually lost back in a queen ending. Finally the players swapped queens into the drawn king and pawn ending below.



Poor Elijah! If his king goes forwards to d5 or e5, or even sideways to d4, then he draws. But sadly for him, he went backwards to f3 instead, eventually losing due to the outside passed h-pawn...

James McGrouther – Brian Connell: This game was postponed by James due to illness.

Mario Parissis 1-0 Huey Teng: Only 24 moves for this one! Huey was actually better out of the opening, with a strong pawn centre and nicely developed pieces. But Mario equalised, then gradually got the advantage by expanding on the queenside. Huey dropped a key central pawn, then got his king in huge trouble on the a2 to g8 diagonal. The result (mate) was inevitable; see game below.

Parissis, Mario (1357) - Teng, Huey (Unrated), 2023 St George CC Div 4 Round 4, 04/04/2023
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 Nf6 4.d3 h6 5.Nbd2 d5 6.Be2 Bd6 7.c4 d4 8.a3 a6 9.b4 b6 10.Qa4 Bd7 11.Qc2 0–0 12.0–0 a5 13.b5 Ne7 14.a4 Nh7 15.Nb3 f5 16.c5 bxc5 17.Nxc5 fxe4 18.Nxe4 Bg4 19.Ba3 Nf5 20.Bxd6 Nxd6 21.Nxe5 Bxe2 22.Qxe2 Re8 23.Qa2+ Kh8 24.Ng6# 1–0

Division 3

Netra Bhatt – Stuart Taylor: This game was postponed by Netra due to illness.

Ghassan Beydoun 1-0 Louis Jeff: An 80 move marathon, the longest game of the night and last one to finish! Ghassan was ahead almost the entire game, eventually winning pawns due to pressure against Louis' uncastled king. At one stage, he was 4 pawns up in a knight endgame! But he was ultra careful – no sense taking any chances. So it took him forever to win; but he got there in the end...

Sam Sharkawy 1-0 Ludwig Wolf: It has been a tough tournament for poor Ludwig; and this game was no exception! After equalising in a Sicilian, he got the edge when Sam gave him the two bishops. His queenside pawns marched forward, and he was better until he blundered a pawn to a discovered attack. Even then, he got the pawn back, then won two pieces for a rook and another pawn. So he was winning, but then let his knight get trapped and was back to being equal! Finally he walked into a fatal pin, losing a bishop and eventually being mated for a very sad loss; see game below.

Sharkawy, Sam (1448) - Wolf, Ludwig (1594), 2023 St George CC Div 3 Round 4, 04/04/2023
1.e4 c5 2.Bc4 d6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.h3 e6 5.Qf3 Nbd7 6.Bb5 a6 7.Bxd7+ Bxd7 8.d3 b5 9.a3 a5 10.b3 Be7 11.Rb1 b4 12.Nd1 a4 13.Ra1 axb3 14.cxb3 bxa3 15.Bxa3 Qb6 16.Bxc5 Qb7 17.Rxa8+ Qxa8 18.Be3 Qa3 19.Ne2 Qxb3 20.Nec3 0–0 21.0–0 Rc8 22.Re1 Rxc3 23.Nxc3 Qxc3 24.Qe2 Bb5 25.Rd1 Nxe4 26.Kh2 Qf6 27.Qc2 Ng5 28.Rb1 Be8 29.f4 Nxh3 30.gxh3 Qf5 31.Rb8 g5 32.Rxe8+ Bf8 33.Qd2 gxf4 34.Bxf4 e5 35.Bh6 1–0

John Nichas 1-0 Colin Goldsmith: John wins one at last! Having drawn his first 3 games from good positions, he did not let Colin out this time... He had the edge from the opening due to a strong pawn centre, then won a key pawn and the exchange due to a scary pin. Colin tried to keep fighting; but it was too much. Eventually he lost a knight too; and he resigned on move 25 when a whole rook down.

Darren Curtis 0-1 John Parissis: At 53 moves, one of the longer games of the night. Having had a small opening advantage, Darren thought he had blundered on move 19. In fact with correct play, he was still +2; even the way he played it was level. But he was so concerned about his doubled isolated d-pawns that he ended up losing his h-pawn instead! Even then, the knight vs bishop ending was nontrivial; but when Darren gave up his bishop for two pawns, John went on to triumph in the end.

Division 2

Andrew Li – Celina Wu: This game was postponed, although I do not know by which player!

Michael Babic 0.5-0.5 John Karabatsos: A miniature draw! In Michael's own words, he stuffed up the opening, with John having a small edge by move 7. A pin got Michael in trouble, and he lost a pawn. But he did have some compensation; and knowing that Michael was higher rated., John was happy with a draw! So he offered one on move 18, which Michael gleefully accepted...

Pieter Stoltz – Srijan Badam: This game was postponed by Pieter due to having to work interstate.

Brian Allison 0-1 Albert Tjahja: A tragic loss for the hitherto undefeated Brian! Albert was far too aggressive with his bishops in the opening, giving Brian the two bishops and finding himself unable to castle due to the White bishop on a3. Some inaccuracies by Brian let Albert equalise, but then the position became a complicated mess – and Brian was just winning! He could have won material, then he missed a chance to force mate with Qh6; but he was too worried about his own king. So he lost two exchanges, and ironically his king got into trouble anyway: he resigned one move before mate...

Peter Bogdanoski 0-1 Mal O'Donoghue: Another complicated tussle of a 25 move brevity; but Mal was a bit lucky! See game below. The small advantage he got from the opening (a normal French) did not suggest what was to come... Mal sacrificed a piece for two pawns on move 15; and while this was initially good for him, the follow-up sacrifice was not so clear! A rook and knight up, Peter could have afforded to give up his knight on move 23 – a4 was correct – with an interesting sort of dynamic equality. Instead he blundered, then resigned 3 moves later due to forced mate; well played Mal!

Bogdanoski, Peter (1628) - O'Donoghue, Mal (1766), 2023 St Geo CC Div 2 Round 4, 04/04/2023
1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bd7 6.a3 f6 7.exf6 Nxf6 8.b4 c4 9.Bg5 Qc7 10.Nbd2 Bd6 11.g3 h6 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Nh4 0–0–0 14.Bg2 f5 15.f4 Bxf4 16.gxf4 Qxf4 17.Ng6 Qe3+ 18.Kf1 Rhg8 19.b5 Nxd4 20.Ne7+ Kb8 21.Nxg8 Rxc8 22.cxd4 c3 23.Nc4 Bxb5 24.Bf3 Bxc4+ 25.Be2 Qf3+ 0–1

Division 1

Jim Mavroidis – Jose Escribano: This game was postponed by Jim.

John Stuart Plant 1-0 Robert Kovacs: See game below – a tough battle! Robert is to be given great credit for making John Stuart fight for the win, despite being on the wrong end of a big rating gap. And as usual, I am indebted to The Cowboy Hat Tree for his description of the game below...

Plant, John Stuart (2147) - Kovacs, Robert (1801), 2023 St Geo CC Div 1 Round 4, 04/04/2023
1.b3 e5 2.Bb2 Nc6 3.e3 d5 4.Bb5 Bd6 5.Nf3 f6 6.d4 e4 7.Nfd2 Nge7 8.c4 Bb4 9.cxd5 Qxd5 10.Bc4 Qg5 11.Kf1 Bg4 12.Qc2 f5 13.d5 Na5 14.Be5 Bd6 15.Bb5+ Kf7 16.Bc3 b6 17.Bxa5 bxa5 18.Nc3 Rhf8 19.Bd7 Kg8 20.Be6+ Kh8 21.h4 Qf6 22.Rc1 c6 23.Ndxe4 Qe5 24.Nxd6 Qxd6 25.e4 cxd5 26.exd5 Ng6 27.f3 Nf4 28.Nb5 Qb6 29.Qc5 Nxe6 30.Qxb6 axb6 31.dxe6 Bh5 32.e7 Rf6 33.Nc7 Rc8 34.Rd1 1–0

“I actually thought that my game, especially the start, was a bit wild and woolly. I have had some experience with my king sitting on f1 in Larsen attacks, having played two or three tournament games like that this year; and while each of those games have worked out well for me, it just felt like I was being too aggressive. Playing d5 early to open up lines and creating key weakened queenside pawns for Black was good; but at the same time, I was not in my usual positional play grind zone for this one. I felt like I was worse at many points throughout the game. The silicon guru Komodo disagreed with me, saying that it was actually never too bad; either it was equal, or I was slightly better or he was slightly better. So all in all, it was actually a pretty balanced game early on, despite my mental protestations with myself throughout.

But then I finally got my positional groove back (you could say); and I was quite happy to install a strong bishop in the heart of his position on move 20 with Be6. A few moves later this paid off. I saw his potential removing the guard (of this bishop) idea, with Pc6 attacking my d5 pawn protector; but I had also seen that this did not quite work! This was due to my tactic getting in first: his f5 pawn was pinned to HIS bishop, allowing 23.Ndxe4 winning a pawn and attacking his queen. The rest was just ensuring my Formula 1 king (on f1) was as guarded as can be, and just trading down (being a clear pawn up). When queens came off and my extra pawn sat itself on e7, the end came quick. But it was a good game; and all credit to Robert for getting me out of my positional play comfort zone early”.

Graham Saint 1-0 Arthur Huynh: This game was postponed by Graham.

Daniel Melamed 1-0 Mario Falchoni: Played in advance last week; see Newsletter Number 4!

Stevo Acevski 0.5-0.5 Richard Eccles: A rather topsy-turvy game, Stevo taking up about half an hour overall – this actually means he took his time by his standards! Richard's Caro-Kann equalised easily early on, and they settled into a long manoeuvring game. Richard got the edge by move 27, then was dead winning when a mate threat won him a key pawn. But he worried about Stevo's passed c6 pawn, thereby missing a forced mate in six moves! Before too long they were level again, then Richard let slip another advantage; and in the end it finished in a draw by repetition on move 48.

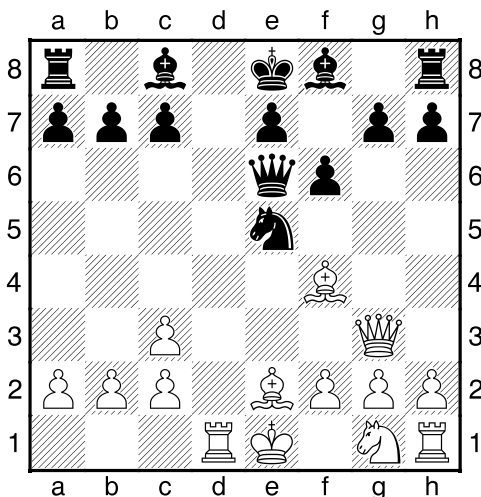
Division 5

Ashton Li – Ken Eldridge: This game was postponed by Ashton; but his father's email did not get through until the next day, as it was sent to the club email address rather than to myself or Ken.

Peter Swinton 1-0 Zain Mokhtar: A lengthy victory, but a convincing one by Peter! An opening advantage was eventually translated into an extra pawn, won by a discovery on moves 16 and 17. Then queens came off, and Peter just kept simplifying! Eventually he won a second pawn, then traded into a won king and pawn endgame by move 28. Amazingly, he took another 35 moves to win the game from there; but he finally delivered checkmate on move 63.

Aaron Hu – Dimitrios Stathos: This game was postponed by Dimitrios, who was ill.

Faaz Malik 1-0 Geoff Hyde: Yet another miniature, this one over in just 13 moves! Geoff's choice of opening (a Scandinavian) did not go too badly, with only a slight minus after White's 10th move despite Black moving a piece twice in the opening. But then Geoff erred badly in the position below.



You really cannot play a move like 10...g5 in a position like this! The engine says 10...Nc4 was OK; even 10...Bd7 followed by castling queenside leaves Black still in the game. Instead, after 10...g5, play ended with 11.Bxe5 Qxe5 12.Qxe5 fxe5 13.Bh5 mate – very much a cautionary tale!

Kevin Liu 1-0 Ali Murtazaev: Ali has already played some good games in this tournament, but unfortunately tends to ruin them with one or two hasty moves! In this one he neutralised Kevin's opening advantage and was actually a bit better by move 12. True to form, Kevin tried to lash out with a kingside pawn storm, which Ali correctly countered with play in the centre; and by move 20, Ali had a big advantage. But then he pushed his b-pawn too quickly instead of forcing queens off, allowing Kevin a rook sacrifice that could not be accepted because of mate! Soon Ali's king was the one in big trouble when he took a poisoned knight; and he ended up being checkmated on move 27.

Division 6

Ethan Riegman 1-0 Mark Boan: I must admit I've been impressed with the standard of many of the games in Division 6 (the "bottom" division) this year; and this was another case in point! Mark had the edge early, even perpetrating a cute bishop sacrifice based on a knight fork. But Ethan smartly refused, soon equalised and was winning when he trapped and won the enemy bishop, then another piece via a knight fork. But Mark did not give up! He attacked along the open h-file and made Ethan work, at one point even missing a mate when Ethan's king wandered too far forward. But sadly for Mark, he missed a queen fork and lost a rook instead; and the game was over a dozen moves later.

Stephen Manwarring – Mary Hunt: This game was postponed by Mary, who was still ill.

Samuel Slingo 0-1 John Matson: A good game by John, with some cruelty at the end! Better from very early on when he nearly trapped Samuel's queen, John won a piece on move 14, and a rook three moves later. Samuel fought back and won the exchange to a skewer; but queens were off, and he still found himself 2 pieces down in an ending. Still he fought on and won back one piece; but then he had only pawns left, and soon he lost all of those! John took ages to put him away, even underpromoting one pawn to a knight and another to a rook; but he eventually delivered checkmate on move 73.

Lisa Brandenburg 0-1 Ethan Currie: See game below; another high quality game! After a fairly even opening, Lisa got a small edge via an open b-file and a powerful pawn centre. But then she lost her advantage when she blundered her key e4 pawn; and soon it was Ethan, a pawn ahead, who was pushing forward. Lisa's pieces became passive, and Ethan's pawn centre became massive! Before too long Ethan won another pawn, and then Lisa was trapped in a fatal pin; it cost her a rook and a bishop, and Ethan cashed in on his material advantage to checkmate her on move 46.

Brandenburg, Lisa (Unrated) - Currie, Ethan (888), 2023 St Geo CC Div 6 Round 4, 04/04/2023
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Bd3 Re8 7.0-0 e5 8.Be3 Nbd7 9.Qe2 Ng4 10.Bg5 Ngf6 11.Rfd1 h6 12.Bd2 b6 13.b4 Bb7 14.d5 a5 15.bxa5 bxa5 16.Rab1 Qc8 17.Nb5 Nc5 18.Bc2 Qd7 19.Qe1 a4 20.Be3 Nfxe4 21.Bxe4 Nxe4 22.Nd2 Nxd2 23.Qxd2 g5 24.Re1 f5 25.Qc1 f4 26.Bd2 c6 27.Nxd6 Qxd6 28.Rxb7 cxd5 29.Rb2 e4 30.Bc3 d4 31.Rd2 e3 32.fxe3 fxe3 33.Rd3 Qc5 34.Bb2 Rac8 35.Qd1 Qxc4 36.Bxd4 Rcd8 37.Rdxe3 Bxd4 38.Kh1 Bxe3 39.Qf3 Qxa2 40.h3 Bf4 41.Rf1 Qe2 42.Qxe2 Rxe2 43.Rg1 Rdd2 44.h4 Be3 45.Rb1 Rxd2 46.Rf1 Rh2# 0-1

Reno Sciberras 0-1 William Liu: An error on move 8 saw Reno lose a knight to a pin here, with queens coming off the board as well! Young William then proceeded to simplify to make his extra piece count. It took him a while, but eventually he won pawns too; and Reno resigned when William was about to queen a pawn by force on move 53.

And now for my final trick this week: anagrams again! What are the following players' real names? The players are Hot Snail; Scarred Cliché; Python Sloane; Luca Wine; Argentine Ham; and Drastic Rerun. To make it easier, there is one player from each division again. But to make it harder, the order of the divisions has been mixed up! I'm offering a prize of a small box of chocolates to the first person who emails me with the correct answers to all of these. Go on, have a go!