

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 6 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter! After another round with several postponements, we've now reached the halfway mark of the event – and things are starting to get exciting... In an interesting spread of half White wins and half Black wins, White dominated the top 3 divisions, Black the bottom 3! There were also fewer short games than last week – the players have learnt a few lessons, maybe? In any case, it's hard to tell the leaders due to the postponed games, despite the 3 undefeated players in Division 1 (Arthur Huynh, Daniel Melamed and JSP); so perhaps I'll save that for after the catch-up newsletter! Instead, the anagrams from last week: Hot Snail is Ashton Li; Scarred Cliché is Richard Eccles; Python Sloane is Anthony Lopes; Luca Wine is Celina Wu; Argentine Ham is Ethan Riegman and Drastic Rerun is Darren Curtis. Nobody had a go, so I saved myself a small box of chocolates! Never mind; let's see how everyone went in Round 5...

### Division 5

**Ali Murtazaev 0-1 Ashton Li:** Moving too fast, Ali made life rather easy for Ashton in this all junior battle! Essaying the Evan's Gambit, he got nothing for his sacrificed pawn. Instead, Ashton attacked him before too long... A queen forking mate threat won Black a second pawn, then a knight fork won him the exchange. It was all over soon after that: a pin was winning Ashton a piece, so Ali resigned.

**Geoff Hyde – Kevin Liu:** This game was postponed by Kevin, who played the Doeberl Cup then remained in Canberra to compete in the Oceanic Youth Championships.

**Dimitrios Stathos 0-1 Faaiz Malik:** An even Petroff saw queens exchanged early, with Dimitrios doing fine till his overly passive tenth move. The resultant slight edge for Faaiz did not last too long, however, as his pieces were forced to retreat and White was doing well! But a couple of errant pawn pushes on moves 17 and 18 saw the advantage pass back to Black; and this time he did not let go... He won a pawn, with White's king on c3 and all his pieces on the back rank; then Faaiz got the two bishops, and his position was crushing! It finished with Dimitrios falling for a tempting knight fork that lost a piece to a pin instead. He finally resigned after leaving a rook en prise. See game below.

### **Stathos, Dimitrios (1218) - Malik, Faaiz (1217), 2023 St George CC Div 5 Round 5, 11/04/2023**

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 Qe7 4.d4 d6 5.Nf3 Qxe4+ 6.Qe2 Bf5 7.c4 Nc6 8.Nc3 Qxe2+ 9.Bxe2 Nb4 10.Bd1 Nd3+ 11.Ke2 Ng4 12.Rf1 Nb4 13.Kd2 h6 14.h3 Nf6 15.g4 Bh7 16.Ne1 0-0-0 17.f4 d5 18.a3 Nc6 19.cxd5 Nxd5 20.Nxd5 Rxd5 21.Kc3 Rxd4 22.Bf3 Rd6 23.Be3 Be7 24.Rc1 Bf6+ 25.Kb3 Nd4+ 26.Ka2 Nxf3 27.Nxf3 Rhd8 28.g5 Be7 29.Ne5 hxg5 30.Nxf7 Bg8 31.fxg5 Rf8 32.Bc5 Rxf7 33.Rxf7 Bxf7+ 34.Ka1 Re6 35.Bd4 Bxg5 36.Bxg7 Bxc1 0-1

**Zain Mokhtar – Aaron Hu:** This game was postponed by Zain.

**Ken Eldridge 0-1 Peter Swinton:** Played in advance: see Week 4 newsletter!

### Division 3

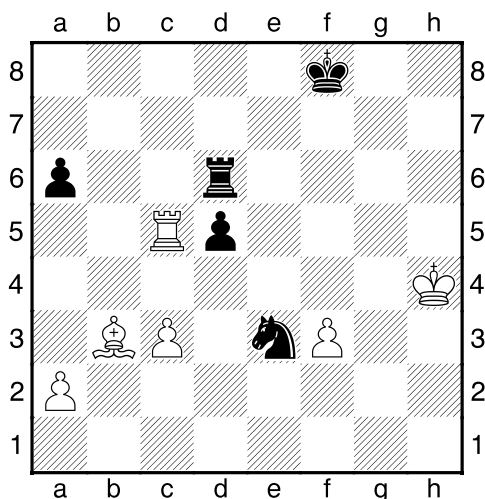
**John Parissis 1-0 Netra Bhatt:** White already had an advantage by Move 10 here; and it only grew bigger when he won a pawn to a queen fork on Move 12! Netra did well to keep fighting after queens came off; but the extra pawn slowly began to tell. They soon reached a rook ending, then a king and pawn ending; the latter was easily winning for White, John pocketing the full point in 40 moves.

**Colin Goldsmith 1-0 Darren Curtis:** A sad loss for Darren, who really wanted a drastic rerun after this one! Colin's 8th move blundered a piece to a Noah's Ark style trap; then he proceeded to play on as if nothing had happened... For some reason Darren declined to trade queens when he could have, and Colin built up a small attack. But it was nothing; and Darren was in the process of consolidating when disaster struck! He walked into mate in one on g7 in a winning position; a tragic end...

**Ludwig Wolf 0-1 John Nichas:** A strange game! An exchange French saw early equality that lasted all the way until Move 22. Then John declined to take a free pawn – but he won it two moves later anyway... From there he reached a winning knight vs bishop endgame, then declined to trade into the dead won king and pawn ending! Never mind, Ludwig gave him another chance 13 moves later; this time he took it, winning a pawn ending two pawns up with two connected passed pawns in 54 moves.

**Louis Jeff 1-0 Sam Sharkawy:** Nothing really happened here till Move 20, by which time Louis had the edge due to control of the open a-file. Four moves later, Sam blundered a piece to a removing the guard tactic! Louis had it easy after that; in 15 more moves, Sam resigned when mate was inevitable.

**Stuart Taylor 1-0 Ghassan Beydoun:** Ghassan really made the undefeated Stuart work for this one! Mind you, Stuart always looked in control, even in a toothless exchange French; but he somehow got the edge anyway... He won a pawn to a discovery, with queens coming off too; and he looked well on the way to winning even after giving back the pawn, as his powerful doubled rooks on the seventh rank still saw him on top. Soon he had an extra pawn again, and maybe could have won a second; but instead he gave Ghassan counterplay! Eventually they reached the relatively even position below.



Here 43...Rg6 may hold for Black, the threat of perpetual check hard to stop even if White does win the d5 pawn. With so few (isolated) pawns, such positions are often hard to win. Instead play went 43...Kf7 44.Kg5 Rf6 45.Rc7+ 1-0, as Black is losing his rook; a most unfortunate end for Ghassan!

## Division 1

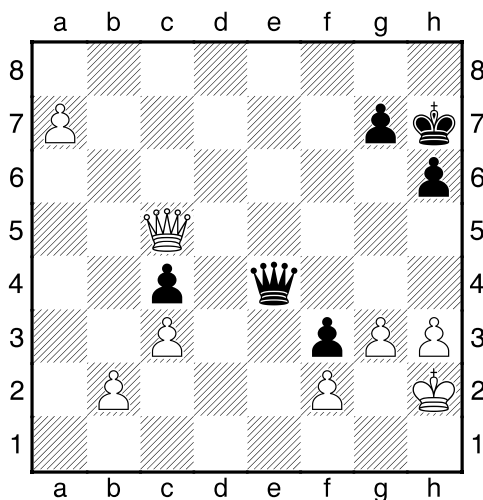
**Richard Eccles 1-0 Jim Mavroidis:** This cautionary tale was in fact our only miniature (20 moves or less) all night! See game below. Red Circle Cash was convinced that Vim Jar Idioms had totally misplayed the opening; but in fact despite being a lot worse by Move 10, he was still hanging on (just) until 14...Bc6 (here 14...Nc6 was correct). After playing Nc6 three moves too late, Jim's 18th move was then a disaster! Huge material loss was inevitable; instead mate followed two moves later.

### Eccles, Richard (1797) - Mavroidis, Jim (1819), 2023 St George CC Div 1 Round 5, 11/04/2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.e5 Qe7 6.cxd4 d6 7.Bb5 Bd7 8.0-0 Ne4 9.Nc3 Nxc3 10.bxc3 dxe5 11.d5 Nb8 12.Qb3 c6 13.Bc4 cxd5 14.Bxd5 Bc6 15.Bg5 Bxd5 16.Qxd5 Qd6 17.Qb5+ Nc6 18.Rad1 Qc5 19.Qxb7 Rb8 20.Qd7# 1-0

**Robert Kovacs 1-0 Graham Saint:** Robert's first victory was a topsy-turvy affair! Graham equalised with an Elephant Gambit, then was better by Move 10. Robert fought back, getting the edge when Graham's d3 rook was in danger of being trapped. He won a pawn, and took another; but the second one, poisoned, cost him a piece... Then Graham was winning – till he blundered the piece back three moves later! The resultant queen ending was won for Robert, but there was still one final twist...

See diagram below.



Queen endings are so hard! Here Robert wins easily with 46.Qf8, when 46...Qc2 fails to 47.Qxf3. Instead he played 46.Qc8 – and Graham resigned! He was still on the board after 46...Qc2, with the threat of perpetual check if he is allowed to capture on f2. Robert would have had to repeat the position with 47.Qc5, then eventually find Qf8. Not quite one for Ian Rogers' Oops I Resigned series, as it's still winning for White – but very interesting nonetheless...

**Mario Falchoni – Stevo Acevski:** This game was postponed by Mario, who was away interstate.

**Arthur Huynh – Daniel Melamed:** This game was postponed by Daniel, who was away overseas.

**Jose Escribano 0-1 John Stuart Plant:** A convincing win by the Cowboy Hat Tree – and as usual, I am indebted to him for his description of the game! “My game transposed once again into just a very solid defence for Black. That is, somewhat stodgy, but ultra hard for White to do anything against. And then perhaps seeing this, Jose's attempt to break out and start attacking – before he'd developed any of his queenside pieces – was far too early, as we analysed in the game afterwards. Once I opened lines quickly for my own fully developed troops, it wasn't long before my queen created all sorts of batteries with my bishops (as a pair) and my rook to crash through and get the win... nice game...”

## Division 6

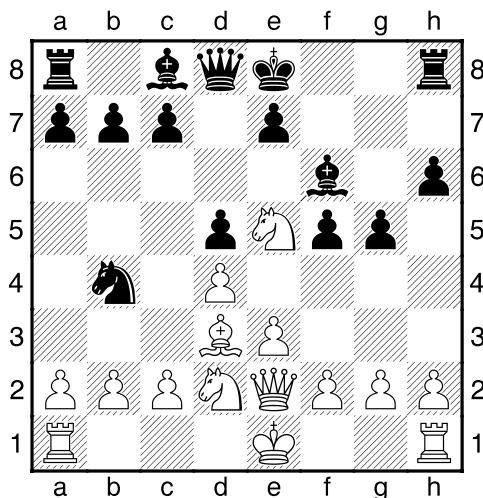
**William Liu – Ethan Riegman:** This game was postponed by William, who played the Doeberl Cup then remained in Canberra to compete in the Oceanic Youth Championships.

**Ethan Currie 0-1 Reno Sciberras:** An excellent game by Reno, pulling off a stunning upset win by beating the hitherto unbeaten Ethan! Equal from the opening, Reno was a tiny bit better after queens came off and he had a strong knight planted on c4. Then Ethan equalised with a nice pawn centre, and the game looked drawish for a while. Not content with a draw, though, Ethan pushed – and blundered a rook to a tactic based on a pin! After that, it was easy for Reno, who went on to win in 47 moves.

**John Matson 0-1 Lisa Brandenburg:** Lisa's French was a success here: she was better out of the opening, winning a key central pawn. She then kept it simple, swapping pieces at every opportunity! Winning two more pawns, she reached a won rook ending. She then gave back pawns unnecessarily! But she knew what she was doing: her b-pawn queened and won a rook, and she won in 55 moves.

**Mark Boan 0.5-0.5 Stephen Manwarring:** A hard fought battle! A quiet opening saw equality until Move 12, when White won a pawn and had the edge. But he put his knight on c6, allowing Black to trade and win the pawn back! Thereafter Stephen was a bit better, but not enough to win. They traded into a drawish queen and rook ending with six pawns each, finally agreeing to a draw on Move 30.

**Mary Hunt 0-1 Samuel Slings:** Samuel's first win at the club in a long time control – an excellent effort! Mary was better from the opening, missing a winning Qh5+ as early as Move 4. But then Samuel gradually equalised; and they reached the position below after White's tenth move.



After 10...Bxe5 11.Qh5+ Kd7, Mary erred with 12.Bxf5+, losing a piece after 12...e6 13.dxe5 exf5. She then tried to attack the Black king; but it escaped via c6! Soon she lost another piece; she won it back, but then dropped the exchange to a pin. A whole rook up, Samuel gave it back to trade queens! But it's OK, he won a few pawns via his rook on the seventh rank; then before too long he managed to trade rooks, going on to win the king and pawn ending several pawns ahead.

#### Division 4

**Huey Teng – James Bullen:** This game was postponed by James, who was unwell.

**Brian Connell 1-0 Mario Parissis:** See game below – a good game! After an even opening, Brian got the edge with a better pawn centre; but his 13th move initiated a tactical sequence which would have left the players equal had Mario moved his queen on Move 14. After 14...Ne2+ instead, he just ended up with weak pawns! Eventually Brian won one, then another via a queen fork. The end came when Black moved his rook to the wrong square, allowing a two-move checking sequence which culminated in another queen fork; this won the rook, forcing Mario's resignation.

#### Connell, Brian (1373) - Parissis, Mario (1357), 2023 St George CC Div 4 Round 5, 11/04/2023

1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 h6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Bf4 Nge7 8.e3 Ng6 9.Bg3 0-0 10.Bd3 dxc4 11.Bxc4 Nge7 12.0-0 Nf5 13.Ne5 Nxc3 14.Nxc6 Ne2+ 15.Bxe2 bxc6 16.Rb1 Bd7 17.Rb7 Bc8 18.Rb4 a5 19.Rc4 Qd6 20.Qa4 Bd7 21.Rc5 f5 22.Bf3 Ra6 23.Qc4 Rfa8 24.Rxf5 Qxa3 25.Rc5 Rb8 26.Bxc6 Rxc6 27.Rxc6 Bxc6 28.Qxe6+ Kh8 29.Qxc6 Qa2 30.Qxc7 Rb1 31.Qc8+ Kh7 32.Qf5+ Kg8 33.Rxb1 1-0

**Chris Brown 1-0 James McGrouther:** Chess is an unforgiving game, as James found out here to his infinite chagrin! Having fought back from an inferior opening, a tactical sequence saw him win two pawns; but Chris had the two bishops, so he had to be careful. He was not! His b5 pawn push was a big error, allowing a pawn trade then Be4 trapping his rook on a8. A rook down, there was no coming back despite his 3 connected passed pawns; Chris won them all, and James resigned on Move 31.

**Anthony Lopes 0-1 Elijah Udovitch:** It seems the way to beat Anthony in this event is to be very patient! Here Elijah traded three pairs of minor pieces, then Anthony blundered his b2 pawn. Queens were traded, and they wound up in a double rook ending. This was nontrivial for Elijah, as he had weak pawns of his own; and it really should have been drawn. But Anthony ran out of patience; he traded rooks when he shouldn't have, then resigned the dead lost pawn ending a pawn down.

**Euan Marquez Zarauz 0-1 Sait Buzgan:** A good positional game by Sait. After a superior opening, he won a pawn and doubled Euan's f-pawns. Then they traded queens, and Sait won both doubled pawns! After giving back two pawns, he wound up in a rook ending a pawn ahead. It took a while, but his passed h-pawn brought home the win; another classic example of patience rewarded!

## Division 2

**Malachi O'Donoghue 0.5-0.5 Andrew Li:** A solid game by both players! After equalising easily in the opening, Black was better due to his powerful e4 knight and Mal's backward c3 pawn. But it was not enough to win, as White traded to ease the pressure. Eventually queens and a pair of rooks came off on the open h-file. The resultant ending was very drawish; so they agreed a draw in 41 moves.

**Albert Tjahja 1-0 Peter Bogdanoski:** Very much an off night for Peter, who blundered a piece as early as Move 4! He played 4...Nxe4, falling into a standard Qa4+ queen fork winning the knight. As if that wasn't bad enough, it only went downhill from there... He lost a pawn, then another, then the exchange, then another pawn; and no amount of trying for counterplay did him any good. The final straw came when he left his bishop en prise on g6 to lose another piece; he resigned on Move 32.

**Srijan Badam – Brian Allison:** This game was postponed by Brian.

**John Karabatsos – Pieter Stoltz:** This game was postponed by Pieter due to Easter travel.

**Celina Wu 1-0 Michael Babic:** Nothing like saving the best until last! See game below. Having not lost a game so far, Michael was always going to make Celina work hard; and he equalised without too much trouble. They then settled into a tight manoeuvring battle, with play level for much of it until Michael won a pawn. Celina won it right back, however, and they reached an equal double rook ending. But there was still plenty of play; and Celina took advantage of Michael's weak pawns to win a pawn of her own! From there it was nontrivial, but eventually she won another pawn; and her two connected passed pawns brought home the win in 70 moves.

### **Wu, Celina (1649) - Babic, Michael (1732), 2023 St George CC Div 2 Round 5, 11/04/2023**

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4 Nc6 5.Bb5 Bd7 6.Bxc6 bxc6 7.c4 e5 8.Qd3 Rb8 9.Nc3 Nf6 10.0-0 Be7 11.b3 h6 12.Be3 Qc7 13.Rac1 Bg4 14.Nd2 0-0 15.f3 Be6 16.a3 Nh5 17.b4 Nf4 18.Bxf4 exf4 19.Nb3 Bf6 20.Kh1 Be5 21.Qe2 f6 22.Rfd1 Qf7 23.Na4 c5 24.b5 f5 25.Na5 fxe4 26.Qxe4 Bf5 27.Qe2 Rbe8 28.Qd2 Bd7 29.Nc3 Bd4 30.Nd5 Bxb5 31.cxb5 Qxd5 32.Nc6 Qb3 33.Nxd4 cxd4 34.Qxd4 Rf6 35.Qc4+ Qxc4 36.Rxc4 Re3 37.Ra4 Rfe6 38.h3 Rb3 39.Ra5 Re2 40.a4 Rbb2 41.Rg1 Re7 42.Ra6 Rd7 43.Rd1 d5 44.Rd4 g5 45.Rxh6 Kg7 46.Rc6 Kf7 47.Kh2 Rb1 48.Rc2 Ke6 49.g3 Ke5 50.Rcd2 fxg3+ 51.Kxg3 Rg1+ 52.Kf2 Rh1 53.Kg2 Rb1 54.h4 gxh4 55.Rxh4 d4 56.Re4+ Kf5 57.Rexd4 Rg7+ 58.Rg4 Rxg4+ 59.fxg4+ Kxg4 60.Rd7 Rb2+ 61.Kf1 Kf3 62.Ke1 Ke4 63.Kd1 Ra2 64.Rxa7 Kd5 65.a5 Kc5 66.b6 Rb2 67.b7 Kc6 68.a6 Kc7 69.Ra8 Rb6 70.Rc8+ 1-0

And now to finish, some of my usual fun: some more nicknames! To make it easier, the divisions are in reverse order; and the theme is opposites... Who are Carpet Daughter; What, Why, When; Cow M; Silver Jones; Tell The Truth; and Devil? The reward: my eternal admiration! Who needs chocolates?