

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 4 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter! There were more exciting games this week; but the results left us in the unprecedented situation of a player atop each of the top 3 divisions on a perfect 4/4 score!! After another comfortable victory, Arthur Huynh sits alone in the lead in Division 1, as do Nick Kordahi in Division 2 and Netra Bhatt in Division 3... A postponed game for Tibor left Ramu and Pieter sharing the lead on 3/4 in Division 4; while Division 5 saw Boris Paceskoski draw but maintain the lead on 3.5/4. Amazingly there were two players, Nihal Scammell and James Yossef, atop Division 6 on 4/4, as Nihal benefited from a forfeit win; and Evgeny Glukhikh still leads outright on 4/4 in Division 7. So, more fun times ahead; let's see how they all got there!

Division 4

Darren Curtis 0-1 John Nichas: In a battle between two players with just half a point between them, John was destined to get his first win! Darren erred early in a French, his pawn centre collapsing as he lost his e-pawn. Then he moved his bishop to a bad square! He could not avoid a pawn fork winning a piece. He resigned 4 moves later on Move 16; by then queens were off, and the ending was hopeless...

Abhishek Anand 0-1 Ramu Srinivasa: A much longer game, this 56 move struggle saw neither player gain any real advantage for the first 25 moves. They traded minor pieces, then manoeuvred for a while in a locked position. Ramu gained a slight edge when queens came off on Move 27; but the resultant rook ending was quite drawish. This was still true when the position became double edged, both players getting their rooks to the seventh rank. But Ramu handled it better, and his central pawn mass ended up decisive; they both queened, but Ramu won rook and game to claim the joint lead.

Hot Snail – Blonde Trivia: This game was postponed by Hot Snail.

Paul Jovanovski 1-0 John Parissis: A game which was probably decided as early as Move 9, when John blundered a piece to a removing the guard tactic! Of course he scrapped and fought; but things actually got worse when Paul won two pieces for a rook. With his 3 minor pieces for John's rook, Paul then happily simplified; and John resigned on Move 37 when Paul was queening his h-pawn by force.

Emmanuel Vardakis 0-1 Pieter Stoltz: Pieter equalised quite early on in a Centre Counter, then the players settled into a 70 move manoeuvring marathon! Dead equal when queens came off on Move 11, it stayed that way into an ending with rook and bishop each. But Pieter was both more patient and more active! He got the advantage with a protected passed d-pawn, then traded bishops into a winning rook ending. It took a while after that; but eventually he queened his d-pawn and won 12 moves later.

Division 7

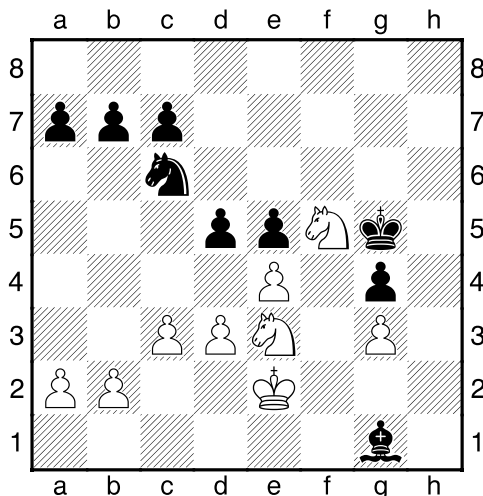
Mena Soliman 0-1 Samuel Slingo: Samuel is rapidly becoming a better and better chess player; and you certainly cannot afford to give him queen for piece odds! Yet that is exactly what Mena did, moving his queen on Move 2 then exposing it to the enemy c8 bishop by moving it to h3 on Move 5. The rest, as they say, is history: Samuel won more material and checkmated on Move 35.

Reno Sciberras 0-1 John Matson: This game was postponed by Reno.

Mark Boan 0-1 Evgeny Glukhikh: Mark struggled early against the tournament leader, dropping a pawn on Move 9. Things got worse after that, Evgeny getting active and targeting Mark's uncastled king. An incorrect recapture then lost his queen to a knight fork, so Mark resigned on the spot...

Dhyan Shenoy 0-1 Tom England: Another convincing win for Tom, whose French worked a treat! Dhyan had blundered a piece then a rook by Move 12, and it was pretty much all over. He did fight on for a few more moves; but he resigned on Move 25 when Tom's knight fork cost him another rook.

Dimitrios Gourlas 1-0 Matthew Waugh: The most competitive game of the night in this division, this 63 move marathon was always in Dimitrios' favour! He won a pawn early and traded queens, and seemed well on the road to victory when he won a second pawn. But then he blundered both pawns back, and Matthew was able to equalise, reaching the following key position after White's 27th move.



Chess is such an unforgiving game... Here Matthew erred with 27...d4 (instead of dxe4), burying his bishop! Freeing it on e3 cost him a pawn, leaving him in a lost king and pawn ending. But Dimitrios was too hasty, giving Matthew unnecessary counterplay... They both queened, reaching an ending of queen and knight pawn vs queen. This is drawn but very hard to defend. Dimitrios missed one forced queen swap win, then 10 moves later Matthew had had enough and resigned; with the one and only correct king move, he could still have forced Dimitrios to work very hard to win from there...

Division 2

Jim Mavroidis 0-1 Ertan John Huseyin: Here a Centre Counter saw Black win back his gambit pawn to equalise by Move 12. Then he got an edge against Jim's isolated e-pawn, gradually advancing his pawns. Jim was reduced to passive defence. Before long, his remaining rook and bishop were pinned to death! Then Ertan John advanced his king; soon Jim found himself in zugzwang and had to resign...

Jose Escribano 0-1 Nick Kordahi: A good game by Nick! Equal for the first 10 moves, he got the advantage when Jose failed to develop his queen bishop. Nick advanced pawns and drove White back. Then Jose's 16.g4 was a terrible blunder! He attacked a bishop he could never take, as Nick's reply 16...Nf4 meant 17.gxf5 allowed a queen infiltration forcing mate. So instead Jose dropped two pawns, then eventually the exchange; and he resigned when Nick forced a queen swap and a winning ending.

Fady Gerges 1-0 Sarwat Rewais: Fady's fantastic finishing finally overcame Rewais' remarkably resilient resistance in this one! Mind you, having been worse for much of the first 20 moves with his doubled isolated f-pawns, Sarwat fought back to not only equality but even a slight edge when Fady let him swap a bishop for his powerful knight. But then he dropped a pawn swapping bishops, so Fady was back on top! Sarwat sacrificed a piece for some pawns and counterplay, but it was not enough. In the end, Fady's pieces infiltrated to force mate. An exciting, topsy turvy game! See game below.

Gerges, Fady (1841) - Rewais, Sarwat (1867), St George Club Champs Div 2 Round 4, 01/04/2025

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.Bg5 Nbd7 8.e3 Qc7 9.Bd3 Nf8 10.Bxf6 gxf6 11.g3 Ng6 12.Bf5 Be6 13.0-0-0 Qd7 14.Bd3 Bg4 15.Be2 Bh3 16.Ne1 Bb4 17.Nd3 Be7 18.Bf1 Bf5 19.h4 h5 20.Qb3 0-0-0 21.Nc5 Bxc5 22.dxc5 Qe7 23.Qb4 Ne5 24.Rd4 Kb8 25.Qa5 Nd7 26.Na4 Rde8 27.Be2 Bg4 28.Bxg4 hxg4 29.Rxg4 Ne5 30.Rd4 f5 31.Rhd1 Ng4 32.Rf4 Qe6 33.Qd2 Nf6 34.Qc2 Ne4 35.b4 Qe5 36.Rd4 Nxc3 37.fxg3 Qxe3+ 38.Kb2 Qxg3 39.Nc3 a6 40.Qf2 Qh3 41.Rf3 Qh1 42.Rxf5 Re1 43.Rxf7 Rg1 44.Rd2 Rxh4 45.Qf6 Rh8 46.Qe7 1-0

Ted Power – George Morgan: This game was postponed by George.

Michael Babic 0-1 Vincent Qiang: A tough struggle! Equal early on, Michael's 20.g3 allowed Black to win a pawn by removing the guard. The spectre of this pawn hung over Mick for 25 more moves! He eventually lost his isolated a-pawn too. When queens were traded into a bishop vs knight ending, the end was nigh: Michael resigned when forced to give up his bishop for Black's queening a-pawn.

Division 6

Trilok Shenoy 1-0 James McQueen: James equalised easily against an advance Caro-Kann, then moved a knight twice in the opening to concede the edge. But what he did next was worse! Recapturing a gambited pawn walked straight into an interference tactic losing a piece. From there he fought as hard as he could, but it was too much to overcome. Trilok just simplified into a winning ending; and James was forced to resign on Move 40 when Trilok was winning a couple of pawns by force.

William Liu – Ralph Mitchell: This game was postponed by Ralph.

Peter Swinton 0-1 James Yossef: A bold Peter essayed an early pawn sacrifice, for which he most definitely had some compensation – until he spurned Nb5 in favour of moving his queen twice in the opening! Thereafter James consolidated very nicely, especially after Peter fell into a skewer dropping the exchange. A tactical melee resulted in a swap of queens into a winning endgame for James; Peter tried to keep fighting, but it all ended when he took a poisoned pawn and walked into mate in one!

Marshall Scott 0F-1F Nihal Scammell: Insufficient notice by Marshall – as well as Nihal's catch-up nights all being booked out – meant a forfeit win for Nihal in this one.

Aaron Hu 0-1 Ethan Currie: This one developed into a fascinating tactical melee in spite of its quiet opening! See game below. Ethan was better early, then Aaron equalised by Move 13; but his 14th was an error that handed the advantage back to Black! Ethan attacked the enemy king, then came up with a brilliant-looking piece sacrifice on Move 20. Interestingly, the engine says best for Aaron would have been to take the bishop: he only ends up the exchange down, with the two bishops as compensation. What he did instead was worse, despite still only being the exchange down; but his way saw his king too exposed despite the absence of queens, and he resigned 9 moves later when facing mate in one.

Hu, Aaron (1246) - Currie, Ethan (1064), St George Club Champs Division 6, Round 4 01/04/2025
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.0-0 Nf6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.d3 d6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Bg3 Bg4 10.h3 Bh5 11.h4 Nd4 12.hxg5 Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 hxg5 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.Bxd5 c6 16.Bb3 Qf6 17.Kg2 Qg6 18.Kh3 Kh7 19.Rg1 f5 20.Bh4 Bxf3 21.Rxg5 Bxd1 22.Rxg6 Bg4+ 23.Rxg4 fxg4+ 24.Kxg4 Rf4+ 25.Kg5 d5 26.exd5 Rg8+ 27.Kh5 Rf5+ 28.Bg5 Rfxg5+ 29.Kh4 Bxf2+ 0-1

Division 1

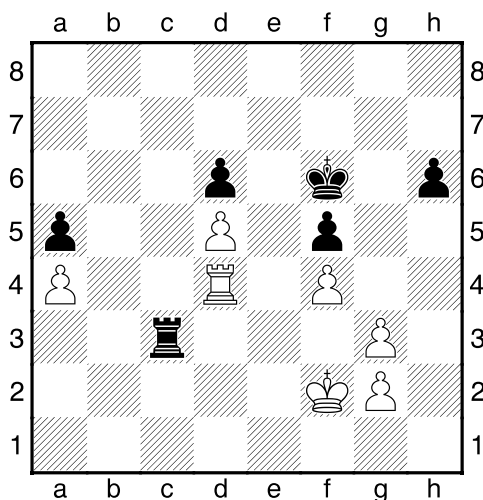
Daniel Melamed 1-0 Frank Tefanis: Frank's weakening 11...e5 gave Daniel a small edge, as he got a powerful knight on d5. Frank traded it for a bishop but was still struggling positionally; so he lashed out when his knight on g4 was attacked by 19.h3. He sacrificed two pieces for rook and pawn and traded queens – clearly he was in no mood to hang around! Unfortunately for him, Daniel's central pawn mass together with the two bishops gave him a decisive advantage. In particular, his passed c6 pawn proved to be a winner; and Frank resigned when forced to sacrifice a rook for this baby queen.

Mario Falchoni 0-1 Geoff Barker: Here Mario decided to cash in on an early opening edge by sacrificing a bishop on f7! But despite initially getting 2 pawns for the piece, it was never quite enough compensation... Geoff defended well, won back both his pawns and gradually repelled Mario's pieces. Mario kept searching for counterplay but never quite found it. Eventually his own king got into big trouble; and in the end he resigned on Move 37 when his king was close to being checkmated.

Jeremy Plunkett – John Stuart Plant: This game was postponed by JSP.

Arthur Huynh 1-0 Stevo Acevski: After an even opening, Arthur won a pawn via a discovered attack. But Stevo won it back, and they reached a level ending with two rooks and queen each. Then Stevo walked into a tactic losing a pawn to a back rank mating trick! Next move he threw away another pawn to a removing the guard tactic. Two pawns up, Arthur had no trouble winning the ending from there.

Ian Stalker 0-1 Vu Ky Anh Nguyen: Poor Ian is not having much luck in this event! Here he was level for much of the first 36 moves, despite being saddled with some pawn weaknesses. Eventually the two players reached the equal rook ending in the position below.



Here doubled pawns render Ian's extra pawn meaningless; so his 37.g4 returned it to try to unbalance the position and create some chances! Unfortunately for Ian, after 37...fxg4 38.g3 Kf5, he was already significantly worse. Play concluded 39.Rd1 Rc2+ 40.Ke3 (Kf1 or Kg1 were necessary, with drawing chances) 40...Rg2 41.Rh1 Rxc3+ 42.Kf2 Rh3 0-1; amazing how rapidly Ian's position fell apart...

Division 5

Michael Punzet 0-1 Sam Sharkawy: White had an edge by Move 10 here, against Black's weak pawns and somewhat exposed king. But Sam was able to castle queenside to safety... The advantage then fluctuated for a few moves, mostly slightly in Michael's favour as he won a pawn. But then Sam won it back, and they were level again... Then Sam won a pawn; then Michael won a pawn; then Sam was able to win two pawns! That was enough for the ever solid Sam to win the game, with help from Michael walking into mate in two at the end. A topsy turvy struggle; see game below.

Punzet, Michael (1627) – Sharkawy, Sam (1338), St George Club Champs Div 5, Rd 4, 01/04/2025
1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bf4 a6 4.e3 Bf5 5.f3 e6 6.g4 Bg6 7.h4 h6 8.Bd3 Nc6 9.Bxg6 fxg6 10.Qd3 Ne7 11.0-0-0 Qd7 12.g5 Nh5 13.Nge2 0-0-0 14.Nb1 Nf5 15.Nd2 Bd6 16.Be5 Qf7 17.e4 Bxe5 18.exf5 Bf4 19.fxg6 Qe8 20.Kb1 Rd6 21.gxh6 Bxh6 22.Nb3 Rf8 23.Rdf1 Rf5 24.Rhg1 Qf8 25.Nc5 Rb6 26.Qc3 Qf6 27.Ng3 Nxc3 28.Rxc3 Qxh4 29.Rgg1 Qf6 30.a4 Rf4 31.Nb3 Qe7 32.Qc5 Qxc5 33.Nxc5 Rxd4 34.Re1 Rdb4 35.b3 Rd6 36.Rh1 Kb8 37.Rxe6 Rbb6 38.Re7 Rbc6 39.Nd7+ Ka7 40.Nf8 Rf6 41.Rf7 Rxf7 42.gxf7 Rf6 43.Nd7 Rxf7 44.Ne5 Rf5 45.Re1 Bd2 46.Re2 Bc3 47.Ng6 Rxf3 48.Rg2 0-1

Chris Brown 1-0 Ralph Shaw: A most unfortunate ending to this one for Ralph! They were mostly equal for 15 moves, despite Chris being a pawn up; the pawn was doubled, and Ralph had enough compensation. Chris did miss a powerful discovery on Move 10, and Ralph a tactical winning chance on Move 14. But this recurred two moves later – and this time Ralph took it, winning a whole rook! A crying shame for him, then, when on Move 20 his phone went off. As arbiter, I had no choice but to award the win to Chris despite Ralph's winning position. A terrible way to lose a game of chess...

Huey Teng 1-0 Stephen Elliott: Stephen won a pawn early in a French, then looked like he was doing very well as queens came off. He continued to trade – then blundered the pawn back to a tactic based on a pin! Soon Huey was the one with the advantage, as he got his rook to the seventh rank. Gradually Black's rook, bishop and king were tied up, as Huey advanced his pawns boa constrictor style! Then Stephen allowed a decisive pin, resigning one move later when he was losing a piece by force.

Dimitrios Stathos 1-0 Maan Beydoun: No doubt this will be the shortest game in the event! Play went 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Bg4 4.dxe5 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 dxe5 6.Bc4 Nf6 7.Qb3 b6 8.Bxf7+ 1–0. Poor Maan decided to protect his b-pawn rather than his f-pawn, missing that he was walking into mate in two...

Ken Eldridge 0.5-0.5 Boris Paceskoski: Here Ken and the hitherto perfect Boris both demonstrated their resilience! In this 74 move marathon, Ken was worse early, then equalised. Queens came off, and pawns and pieces were gradually traded. Then White turned the tables and won two pawns! Just when Ken should have been winning, Boris won both pawns back into a winning knight endgame. But his technique did not hold up, and Ken was able to draw by liquidation of pawns – a battle royale!

Division 3

Netra Bhatt 1-0 Andres Perez: Another game which proves just how unforgiving chess can be! Poor Andres gave Netra, on a perfect score, his toughest battle yet, then lost to a one move blunder... Black traded queens and equalised in an exchange Caro, then proceeded to engage in a protracted positional struggle. They were equal for what seemed like forever, as Andres' knight on h5 blocked Netra's open h-file. But then he moved it away, missing Netra's reply that forced mate – a sad finish for Andres...

John Karabatsos 0-1 Christian Lagarez: Whether or not John is actually *trying* to play sharper, this is what seems to now be happening in his games! Christian was happy to indulge him, and things were fairly level for the first 13 moves. Then John lost his e4 pawn to a tactic based on a discovered attack with check. More tactics followed, and Christian had rook and three pawns for two bishops and was better. John kept fighting, but his king was too exposed. Christian infiltrated with queen and rook, and John resigned when inevitable mate was following. See game below.

Karabatsos, John (1597) - Lagarez, Christian (1612), St Geo Club Champs Div 3 Rd 4, 01/04/2025
1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.f4 e5 5.Nf3 exd4 6.Qxd4 c6 7.a3 Be7 8.Bc4 0–0 9.Ba2 Qc7 10.Qd1 Nc5 11.Qe2 Bg4 12.h3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Rfe8 14.Be3 Ncxe4 15.Nxe4 Nxe4 16.g3 Bf6 17.c3 Nxc3 18.bxc3 Bxc3+ 19.Kf2 Bxa1 20.Rxa1 Re7 21.f5 Rae8 22.Re1 d5 23.f6 Re6 24.fxg7 Qe5 25.Re2 Rf6 26.Bf4 Qd4+ 27.Kg2 Rxe2+ 28.Qxe2 Re6 29.Qc2 Re1 30.Qf2 Qe4+ 0–1

Malachi O'Donoghue 0.5-0.5 Graham Saint: A sharp opening saw Graham with a small edge by Move 10 after Mal moved his king to f2. But play was still fairly even after Mal artificially castled, until he decided to sacrifice a piece to try and attack! It was not really sound, and Graham initially refuted it and got to a winning position. But it was locked, so Mal kept fighting even when it got down to his rook and seven pawns against Graham's rook, bishop and five pawns. Eventually Graham decided there was no way to make progress; so he offered a draw, which Mal gratefully accepted.

Nikola Vujasin 1-0 Ghassan Beydoun: This crazy game started normally enough, with a symmetric opening followed by trading a few pieces. Ghassan had the early edge, eventually emerging a pawn up in a double rook and bishop ending. But then Nik sacrificed a piece for three pawns and doubled rooks on the seventh, and things went nuts! Black was still better until he erred on Move 40, and the White pawns got dangerous. In the end Ghassan gave the piece back and lost a rook ending; a tough game...

Dion Rejoices 0-1 Boy's Name Girl's Name (BNGN): A good game by BNGN; but Dion did not rejoice... Play was equal early, as the players pawn stormed against kings castled on opposite sides. Then Dion got the edge; but BNGN fought back! Dion's errant knight on f6 was soon lost, and BNGN had a winning advantage. The finish was neat; Dion resigned when facing inevitable mate...