

Chess Aotearoa

November - December 2023

Volume 1, Number 2

CHES AOTEAROA MAGAZINE

Happy New Year, Chess Players - Old & New!



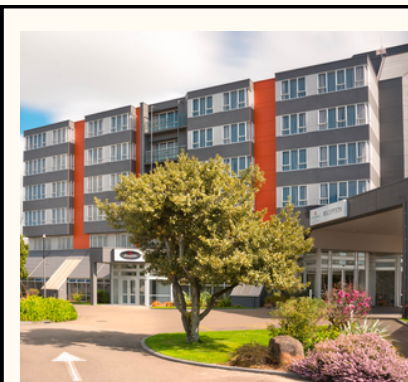
Foreword

December passed, and the pōhutukawa flowers by the side of the street are now fully blossomed.

2023 has been nothing short of extraordinary, the number of players registered with NZCF grew from 1207 in 2022, to 1674. We also saw promising young players representing New Zealand at various overseas competitions.

In this issue of the Chess Aotearoa Magazine, you will find articles on recent events, and much more.

Happy New Year and enjoy!
- Weiyang Yu



Coming Soon: Exclusive New Zealand Congress Issue

Look out for our exclusive Congress Issue to be released on February 1st! We will have articles by players covering the New Zealand Championship, Major Open, and Junior, Blitz and Rapid Championships.

Published seasonally; February, May, August, November

Please send best game entries and articles submissions to
chessmagnominations@gmail.com

Editorial

Lead Editor & Founder: Weiyang Yu
Designer & Editor: Charlotte Ray
Proofreader: Anya Thurner

Thank you to Michael Freeman for highlighting some errors in our last edition. There have been previous editions of the New Zealand Chess Magazine before 1973 (dating back to the late 1800s!), and Ortvin Sarapu has won the NZ Open Championship the most times with 20 wins!

On the cover

Congratulations to Luna Lu for her impressive performance at the recent Asian Youth Championship! See page 45 for details. Photo taken from the Asian Chess Federation website.

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Joining a chess club can be a great way to meet new people and learn new things, but a lot of people don't know how to go about joining one. Below is some information you might need to join your first chess club, taken and summarised from the NZCF Website (www.newzealandchess.co.nz/clubs) - more information on NZCF affiliated clubs and information regarding NZCF associated and other clubs can be found in the 'Chess Clubs' section of the NZCF website.

NZCF AFFILIATED CLUBS

Auckland Chess Centre - www.aucklandchess.nz

Canterbury Chess Club - www.chess.org.nz

Counties Chess Club - pukekohechess.co.nz

Hamilton Chess Club - hamiltonchess.net

Hawkes Bay Chess Club - www.hawkesbaychess.org.nz

Howick-Pakuranga Chess Club - www.hpchessclub.org.nz

Invercargill-Southland Chess Club - ISCC.nz

Manurewa Chess - info@manurewachess.org

Mount Maunganui RSA Chess Club - www.westernbopchess.weebly.com

New Plymouth Chess Club - chessclubnp@gmail.com

North Shore Chess Club - www.northshorechess.org.nz

Otago Chess Club - otagochess.org

Papatoetoe Chess Club - papatoetoechessclub.org.nz

Summit Chess Club - ywang@outlook.co.nz

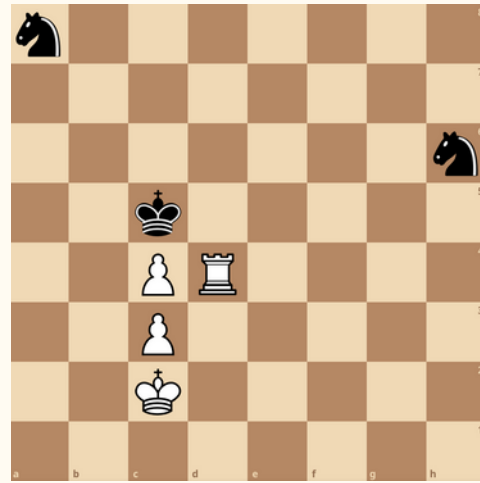
Upper Hutt Chess Club - arh4108@gmail.com

Waitakere Chess Club - <https://waitakerechess.co.nz>

Wellington Chess Club - www.nzchessmag.com/wellingtonchessclub



Black to move and win
Engine Game



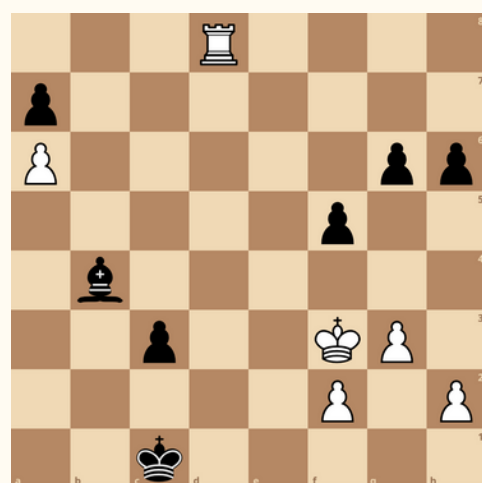
White to move and win
Source Unknown



Black to move and win
Van Wely, Loek - Acs, Peter



White to move and equalise
Szmetan - P.H. Nielsen



Should White play for the win?
Tal - Ljubojevic



Black to move and equalise
Source Unknown

For this edition, our judges (Ryan Winter, Michael Sole, and Ollie Archer) have voted on 3 winners for our 'Game of the Month' series: Luke Chang's win over Lawrence Farrington (October), Layla Timergazi's win against Anthony Ker (November), and Josh Langford's win over Cohen Young (December). For those of you confused by the fact that we have an October winner in both this and the last edition, we have decided to accept entries from October which were played after the deadline of October 20th, which worked out well seeing as we received a few entries from the popular Merv Morrison Memorial tournament which was played from the 21st-23rd! Thank you to Bill Forster for going through and sending in games played at the Wellington Chess Club, to Michael for once again analysing the games for us and, as always, a huge thank you to our judges. If you have any games you would like to nominate for our next edition of the magazine, please send them in to us by emailing the PGN to chessmagnominations@gmail.com by April 20th, the only criteria for games are that they must be played after the cut off date for the previous edition (so after the 20th of December) and need to be played OTB featuring at least one kiwi player.

October

Lawrence Farrington (0-1) Luke Chang

Wellington Club Championship

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Be7 4. Bg5 d5 5. cxd5 exd5 We have reached a classic line of the Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD) through an unusual move order. This is known as the Carlsbad pawn structure, with White having d and e pawns against Black's c and d pawns. White will look to either play in the centre with f3 and e4 or play for a minority attack with moves like Rb1 and b4, while Black will try to play on the kingside.

6. e3 O-O 7. Nf3 c6 8. Be2?!



Better was Bd3 or Qc2, preventing Black from easily developing his light squared bishop to f5.

8... Nbd7 9. Rcl Ne4 10. Bxe7 Qxe7 11. O-O Black has already achieved a comfortable position and can start to build pressure on the kingside with no

attacks on the queenside to worry about.

11... f5 12. Nd2 Ndf6 13. Na4 g5 14. Nc5 Kh8 15. Ncxe4? fxe4



After this trade, Black's attack will be hard to stop. White's pieces are still undeveloped while Black's attack is already in motion.

16. Kh1?! Bf5 17. Qe1 h5 18. g3? Creating a weakness for Black to use in the attack.

18... Bh3 19. Rg1 Ng4! Strong active play from Black.

20. Bxg4 hxg4 21. Qe2 Rf6 22. Rg2 Raf8 23. Rf1 Qh7 24. Rfg1 R8f7 25. Nb1 Qh6 26. Nc3 Qf8 A rare example of the Alekhine's gun formation. Black is putting maximum pressure on White.

27. Nd1 Rh6 28. Qd2 Rfh7 29. a3 Qf3 Mate is coming with all of Black's pieces working wonderfully together.

30. Qc2 Bxg2+



0-1 A crushing attack by Black to beautifully punish White's passive play.

November

IM Anthony Ker (0-1) WIM Layla Timergazi

Wellington Club Championship

1. e4 c6 2. Nf3 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Ne5!?



A reversed Carlsbad structure from the October game.

4... Nc6 5. Bb5

5... Bd7 6. Nxd7 Qxd7 7. d4 Nf6 8. c3 a6 9. Bd3 White has gained the bishop pair.

but has fallen behind in development. Black needs to play actively in order to make use of the dynamic advantage.

9... e5! A strong start. Black has scored excellently from here.

10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. O-O Bd6 White is struggling to find a plan here.

12. Re1?! (12. Bc2! O-O 13. Bg5 (13. Nd2 Rfe8 14. Nf3 is another option with a balanced game. White has the better longer term chances due to the bishop pair and the better pawn structure but must contend with Black's activity.) 13... Ne4 14. Bf4 This is the top Stockfish line with White looking to defend by bringing more pieces over to the kingside with ideas such as Bg5-Bf4-Bg3 and Nd2-Nf3. Bc2 was needed for this idea to work as otherwise Bf4 would have been met by Nxd3 winning a piece.)

12... O-O 13. Be3?! Placing the bishop in an exposed spot. Ng4 will be an annoying threat.

13... Rfe8 14. g3?



It's difficult to find plans for White here but g3 is simply too weakening (14. h3 was needed in order to prevent Ng4).

14...Nfg4! 15. Bf1 Nxe3 16. Rxe3 Bc5 Gaining tempo on the misplaced rook.

17.Re2 Ng4 Winning the f2 pawn since Rxe2 will remove the rook's defence

18.Nd2 Rxe2 19. Qxe2 Re8 20. Qf3 Nxf2 21. Nb3 Bb6 22. Nd4 Bxd4 23. cxd4 Ne4 Black's attack has won a useful pawn and Black still maintains the more active pieces. Black is winning with accurate play.

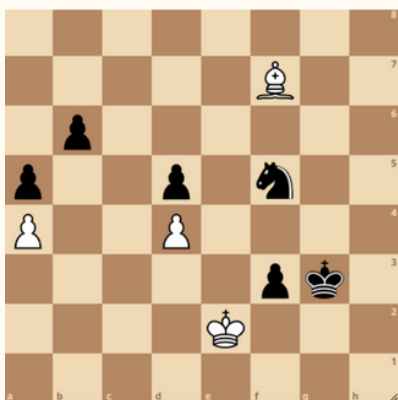
24. Bg2 Qa4 25. Qd3 Nf6 26. a3 Rc8 27. Rf1 Qc2 28. Qf5 Qxf5 29. Rxf5 Rc1+ 30. Rf1 Rc4 31. Rf4 Kf8 32. g4 Rc1+ 33. Kf2 Rc2+ 34. Kg1 h6 35. h4 Rxb2 36. g5 hxg5 37. hxg5 Ne4 38. Rf5 Ng3!



Tactically defending the d5 pawn with Ne2+ and Nf4 picking up a piece

39. Rf2 Rxf2 40. Kxf2 Ne4+ With Black being two pawns up, White can't put up any resistance.

41. Ke3 Ke7 42. Kf4 Kd6 43. a4 b6 44. Bf1 a5 45. Bb5 f6 46. gxf6 gxf6 47. Ke3 Ke6 48. Bc6 Nd6 49. Ke2 Nf5 50. Kd3 Ne7 51. Be8 Kf5 52. Ke3 Kg4 53. Bf7 f5 54. Be8 Kg3 55. Ke2 f4 56. Bh5 Nf5 57. Bf7 f3+



0-1 A very accurate game by Black, taking down White after White failed to find the correct plan to handle Black's activity in the opening.

December

Josh Langford (1-0) Cohen Young

Wellington Club Championship

1. e4 e6!? 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Qb6 6. Bd3 cxd4 7. O-O!?



A trendy line that has appeared in the last few years with the new engines approving. White offers a pawn for development, and leaves Black to find a plan with his limited space. Black is best leaving the pawn until Nd2 has been played.

7... Bd7 8. Re1 Nge7 9. h4 Continuing to cramp Black and threaten h5, preventing Ng6.

9... O-O-O?!



Black leaves the theory with an unusual move that is playable but dangerous. (9... h6 10. h5 Rc8 11. Nbd2 dxc3 12. bxc3 is a more thematic continuation.)

10. cxd4 (10. a4! Slightly stronger, exploits Black's early queenside castle with threats of a5 as well as further cramping Black's pieces, preventing defence ideas such as Qa4 for Black.)

10... Nxd4 11. Nxd4 Qxd4 A difficult position for both players. The game remains balanced but White likely has the easier game with enough natural moves to put Black under pressure.

12. Na3?! (12. Be3 Qa4 13. Qxa4 Bxa4 14. Bxa7 was best according to the engine, with a comfortable endgame for White.)

12... Qb6?! Letting White gain tempi for the attack. (12... Qxh4! This greedy move is best with the engine claiming that White doesn't have enough for the pawn 13. g3 Qa4 14. b3 Qb4 15. Nc2 Qc3 16. Qe2 Kb8 with best play. White is having difficulty attacking Black's king)

13. Be3 Qa5 14. Rc1+ Nc6 (14... Kb8 was needed to prevent Nb5.)

15. Nb5 Kb8 16. a3 Rc8 17. b4 Black is now under serious trouble with White's sacrifices ready to open up Black's king.

17... Qd8 18. Rxc6



18... Bxc6?? (18... Rxc6 19. Bxa7+ Ka8 with no Qa4 due to Ra6. White is still better here after Bd4 however.)

19. Bxa7+!



1-0 Qa4 can't be stopped. A quick win for White in this trendy and very dangerous line that French players should be wary of.

Chess Aotearoa

Find the best move

These puzzles are centred around a particular theme.

Don't worry if you can't find the move, these puzzles are very difficult!

Game 1:

Alex Nagorski – Nigel Metge

2023, Auckland Chess Centre Spring Cup
Black to play



Game 2:

Alan Ansell – Darryl Johansen

2010, Parramatta
White to play



Game 3:

Magnus Carlsen – Ernesto Inarkiev

2017, World Blitz Championship
Black to play



Game 4:

Wilson the Hustler – Maurice Ashley

2016, New York City
White to play



'Answers'

So hopefully you didn't spend too long trying to 'solve' these puzzles. I was inspired to write this article as a warning to be vigilant and watch for illegal moves after acting as club captain at ACC the night Game 1 was played. The illegal move was not noticed and the result was signed, so there was little to be done at the end of it all.

Game 1: Alex Nagorski – Nigel Metge

In the position shown, Nigel found the 'brilliant' **34... Rxf2!**, a nice desperado tactic at the slight expense of his king's safety. Missing the illegal move by responding with **35. Kxf2** turns the game from White having a nice initiative to being dead lost.

Game 2: Alan Ansell – Darryl Johansen

In this game, the young and upcoming Alan Ansell is playing experienced GM Darryl Johansen. The game hits a point where it is roughly equal, Alan is under time trouble and has to make a decision as to whether he goes for a draw with **31. Nxc6**, or... **31. Nh2!** An amazing move that looks to manoeuvre the knight to g5. Black played **31... Rb4**, with intentions of breaking through the queenside, without noticing that an attack on the king is imminent. **32. Nf3 Nh5 33. Ng5 Nf6 34. Ne6** and Johansen resigned as he is unable to stop all the mating threats (**34... Nh5** is easily dealt with by **35. Rf3**).

Game 3: Magnus Carlsen – Ernesto Inarkiev

This one is our least exciting illegal move, but has an interesting story. For context, this is in a blitz game, where the rules at the time meant playing an illegal move lost the game. After the awful **27... Ne3+**, Carlsen instinctively played the natural **28. Kd3**, instead of claiming a win by illegal move. Instead of following it up with the super-amazing, super-illegal **28... Rbd8+**, Inarkiev claimed victory from Carlsen's apparently illegal **28. Kd3** move. The initial arbiter awarded Inarkiev the win, but this was overturned by the chief arbiter, who gave Inarkiev the option of resuming the game from Carlsen's **28.Kd3** or giving Carlsen the win. Inarkiev refused to resume. Why refuse? **27...Ne3+** is such an awful move. After **28. Kd3**, Carlsen can just liquidate. **28... Kxb7 29. Bxe8+ Kc7 30. Rxb8 Kxb8 31. Kxe3**. Carlsen is up a bishop and a pawn and there is no play left in the position.

Game 4: Wilson the Hustler – Maurice Ashley

The only one of these positions where the illegal move was caught! Wilson tried the amazing **22. cxd4** taking both knights! Of course, Maurice Ashley was prepared for this hustler and reminded him that he only gets to take one of these knights, but had Wilson been successful, he would have turned a lost position into a winning position.

Summit & North Island Rapid

Championships 2023 Open

12th November 2023

Alexandra Park, Auckland

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): FM Alphaeus Wei Ern Ang

Summit & North Island Rapid

Championships 2023 Junior

12th November 2023

Alexandra Park, Auckland

25+5 7 round swiss

1st place (6.5/7): Vihaan Bala

Estonian Rapid

25th November 2023

Wellington Bridge Club, Wellington

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Cohen Young

Papatoetoe Rapid 2023 B Grade

2nd December 2023

Papatoetoe Hunters Corner Bowling Club

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Briene Membrere

Papatoetoe Rapid 2023 Junior

3rd December 2023

Papatoetoe Hunters Corner Bowling Club

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Yanbo Jin

2023 ACA Blitz Interclubs A Grade

9th December 2023

Auckland Chess Centre

3+2 team match round robin

1st place (74/96): Auckland Chess Centre A

Summit & North Island Rapid

Championships 2023 U1800

12th November 2023

Alexandra Park, Auckland

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (6/6): Xxavier Willoughby-Ansell

World Youth Championships 2023

12th-25th November 2023

Montesilvano, Italy

NZ represented by CM Kendrick Zhang, Sarah Sun, Alexandre de Maupeou d'Ableiges, and Yolanda Chang

Papatoetoe Rapid 2023 A Grade

2nd December 2023

Papatoetoe Hunters Corner Bowling Club

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): FM Alphaeus Wei Ern Ang

Papatoetoe Rapid 2023 C Grade

2nd December 2023

Papatoetoe Hunters Corner Bowling Club

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Patrick Di Jiang

Otago Summer Rapid Open

3rd December 2023

Otago Chess Club, Dunedin

20+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Alex Nedyhalov

2023 ACA Blitz Interclubs B Grade

9th December 2023

Auckland Chess Centre

3+2 team match round robin

1st place (66/96): Auckland Chess Centre B

131st NZ Chess Congress

2nd-12th January 2024

Copthorne Hotel, Palmerston North

NZ Championship, NZ Major Open, NZ Junior Championship, NZ Rapid Championship and NZ Blitz Championship

Latvian Rapid

16th March 2024

Te Tuhi Centre of the Arts, Auckland

25+5 6 round swiss

>1800, <1800, <1500 and <1200 grades

NZCF and FIDE rated

Auckland Anniversary Weekender

27th-29th January 2024

Auckland Chess Centre, Auckland

90+30 6 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE rated

Auckland Waitangi Weekender

3rd-6th February 2024

Auckland Chess Centre, Auckland

90+30 6 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE rated

18th Bay of Plenty Rapid

24th February 2024

Bible Chapel, Arataki, Mount Maunganui

25+5 6 round swiss

>1300 and <1300 grades

NZCF and FIDE rated

North Island Championships

29th March 2024 - 1st April 2024

Alan Gibbs Centre, Wellington College

90+30 8 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE rated

12th Hawke's Bay Rapid

10th February 2024

Greenmeadows East Community Hall,
Napier

25+5 6 round swiss

>1800, <1800 and Junior (U20, <1200) grades

NZCF and FIDE rated

Many players interested in visiting Wellington for the recent Estonian Rapid will have found themselves faced with a terrifying prospect: facing Bill Forster or Kayden Loke in the Czech Benoni.

For those not in the know, the Czech Benoni is a pet rapid and blitz weapon of Forster and Loke, who have a habit of springing the tricky line on unprepared opponents. As the two are members of Wellington Chess Club, there is a decent chance the ever-unforgiving Swiss pairings will have an opportunity to put you in an uncomfortable position, especially if you are a strong adherent to 1.d4.

Not so long ago, in the Wellington Chess Club Rapid Champs, I was in this spot. I played my then-usual 1.d4 and was somewhat surprised by Forster's 1...c5. I played 2.d5 and was further startled by 2...e5. But reader, this was not the end. After 3.c4 came a horrifying reply, without more than a moment's thought Forster grabbed his f-pawn and played 3...f5!

How can someone stand against such a disregard of opening principles? You could scoff at the ignorance of king safety and piece development this kind of opening play prescribes, but more than one person has fallen victim to the kind of confusing, chaotic games this

line produces, especially if they expected to win because they put their knights on f3 and c3 and then castled. In fact, those knights and that king will quickly become the targets of a pawn storm, while White searches in vain for a central breakthrough that doesn't exist. I feel a sense of responsibility to warn you about the sharks waiting for you in Wellington, and hope to prepare you by showing a few of their games in the Czech Benoni, and making some recommendations for how to deal with it.

Lavender, Ariel J - Loke, Kayden

Julian Mazur Memorial Wellington, 20.07.2023

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 To start, let's look at White's 3rd move options. White's main tries are 3.c4, which aims at establishing a large center most typical of Benoni structures, 3.Nc3, emphasizing development and preparing e4, and 3.e4, which is my major recommendation. This move has the benefit of making ...f5 slightly harder to achieve. Don't be mistaken, after 3.c4, 3...f5 is not a particularly good move, but this hasn't stopped Forster, in particular, from playing it and winning.

3.dxe6?! At first glance, this seems like a logical move, admonishing the black e-pawn for thinking it can sidle up to the 5th rank without paying its dues. For



what other purpose was en passant created? However, White gives up a hold in the center which they have spent three tempi establishing, and Black, meanwhile, is preparing to establish a powerful central phalanx that can get rolling quickly. In other openings, such as the Blumenfeld Gambit, Black is obliged to sacrifice a pawn for this kind of structure. Here they get it for free.

3...fxe6 4.c4 This move vainly tries to rein in Black's expansion.

4...d5 5.e4 Realizing the predicament they face, White offers an e-pawn to break down Black's pawn structure and secure a queen trade.

5...Nf6 Kingside development is now the primary objective so that Black can occupy the half-open f-file with a rook.

6.exd5 exd5 7.Bg5?! Missing an opportunity to limit Black's advantage with 7.cxd5. Black would be forced to

recapture with the queen to prevent an accident after 8.Qh5+, so White has a chance to get back into the game.

7...d4 Now the tables turn, and Black gets the Benoni-like structure. This seems extremely favorable for Black, given the e-file is open for both parties and White is missing an important d-pawn, as opposed to the usual structures in the Modern Benoni.

8.Nf3 Be7 9.Qe2? A somewhat confusing move. The apparent threat is 10.Bxf6, but after castling, which is the move Black wants to play anyway, this problem is dealt with, and the White queen is in the way of the light-squared bishop, with the black d-pawn hanging over her head like the sword of Damocles.

9...0-0 10.g3 White needs to find a way to develop the bishop, but this move makes the f-file extremely soft.

10...h6 11.Bf4 Bd6 12.Qd2 The awkward queen needs to step aside, not once, but twice.

12...Ne4 13.Qc1 Bxf4 14.gxf4 Qa5+ 15.Nbd2 Rxf4 16.Bg2 Bg4 Piling the pressure on White's awkward f-knight.

17.0-0 Bxf3 18.Nxf3 Qc7 19.Qc2 Nc6
20.Rae1 Nb4 21.Qb1 Nf6 22.a3 Nc6
23.Re6 Rf8 24.Rfe1 Ng4 25.h3?



This final mistake allows Loke to finish the game off brilliantly.

25...Nxf2! 26.Kxf2 Rxf3+! The only winning move for Black, but by far enough.

27.Bxf3 27.Kg1 is more resilient, but then what is White playing for?

27...Qh2+ 28.Kf1 Rxf3# 0-1

Ashe, Michael - Forster, Bill

Club Rapid Wellington Chess Club,
28.04.2022

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.c4 f5 Why this 3rd move? To quote Forster directly: "All the blitz and online recently has turned me into a madman. Basically, it's give mate or lose on time for me... so I've been playing pretty much only mad gambits." Essentially, Forster wants to checkmate you as soon as possible. If you survive until the endgame you have a chance, but in a rapid or blitz game, figuring out

how to get there is no easy task.

4.Nc3 Another option for White at this point, which I played in my game against Forster, is 4.e4.

4...Nf6 A plan common in the Czech Benoni which we'll see carried out by Loke in a following game is to delay the development of this knight to trade off Black's dark-squared bishop via ...Bf8-e7-g5. However, this slow positional approach doesn't necessarily mesh well with Forster's checkmate-or-bust attitude, so here the emphasis is on putting as much pressure on White's center as possible.

5.Bg5?! This is not White's most critical approach. 5.e4 is best.

(5.e4 d6 6.exf5 Bxf5 7.Nge2 g6 8.Ng3 Bg7 9.Bd3 Qd7 This would be a very interesting line of play. White has the advantage, but Black certainly has attacking potential. There is a massive battle for control of the e4-square, and Black would be happy to see a capture on f5 given ...gxf5 would see Black win that battle and establish a formidable pawn duo.)

5...d6 6.e4 Better late than never.

6...Be7 This sets up a little tactic that Ashe misses.

7.Bd3?!



7...Nxd5?! Missing the best way to punish White's mistake, Forster was better off playing the less flashy 7...Nxe4, but the correct 8th move for White after 7...Nxd5?! is difficult to spot.

(7...Nxe4! 8.Nxe4 Bxg5 9.Qh5+ g6 10.Qxg5 fxe4 11.Qxd8+ Kxd8 12.Bxe4 The position is roughly equal, but to me, it seems that Black has slightly the more favorable side. The half-open f-file seems more useful than the e-file, Black's bishop seems better than White's, and Black can try and contest the important e4-square with ...Nb8-d7-f6 and ...Bf5. Meanwhile, after the simple ...a6 (preventing White's knight from accessing b5) it is hard to see how White can attack Black's only weakness in the position, the d6-pawn.)

8.Bxe7?! Missing a strong attacking line for White.

(8.Nxd5! Bxg5 9.exf5 0-0 10.h4! Be7 11.g4 Suddenly White's kingside pawns are

extremely dangerous, having used Black's bishop to advance with tempo. In general, it seems that White needs some kind of fluid play, usually on the kingside, to make use of their lead in development and greater space. If Black is allowed to turtle and build up in this kind of pawn structure, then both the ...b5 and ...f5 breaks can eventually prove very effective at dissolving White's center.)

8...Nxe7 9.exf5 Bxf5 10.Bxf5 Nxf5 11.Ne4 0-0 12.Qd5+ Kh8 13.Qxb7 The b-pawn drops, but the opening of this file is dangerous for White as Black now has the lead in development and channels on both the queenside and kingside to make use of it while White's king is stuck in the center.

13...Qa5+?! 13...Nbd7 would be simpler.

14.Nc3 Na6 15.Nge2 Nb4 16.0-0 Nd3 17.Rab1 Rab8 18.Qe4 Nxb2!? Grabbing this pawn is correct, but only if Black can find the right follow-up to 19.Qc2.

19.Qc2



19...Nxc4? Dropping a knight.

(19...Nd4! 20.Nxd4 exd4 21.Nb5 Na4 22.Nxd6 Rxb1 23.Rxb1 Nc3 24.Nf7+! Kg8 25.Ng5 g6 26.Re1)

20.Qd3? Missing a simple two-move tactic after 20.Rxb8, which would have removed the defender of the f5-knight.

20...Rxb1 21.Rxb1 Nb6 22.Rb5 Qa3 23.Rb3 c4? Once again the evaluation swings in White's favor.

(23...Qa5! 24.Rb5 Qa6 25.Qb1 Nd4)

24.Qxf5!! A nice desperado, after which White is winning.

24...Qc1+ 25.Nxc1 Rxf5 White has an extra knight for two pawns, but with Black's centre so mobile there are still plenty of chances to swindle.

26.Ra3 Rf7 27.N1e2 d5 28.Nb5 d4 29.Rxa7 Rxa7 30.Nxa7



White is still winning, but allowing

the rook trade was dangerous business as White's knight on e2 now faces down three pawns on its own.

30...c3 31.Nc6! Nd5 32.f4?? White tries to get overly complicated at the last moment and blunders the game. After the routine Nxe5, the pawns would be blockaded and Black's counterplay would die.

32...c2?? Giving White another opportunity to save the game! The hallmarks of time trouble are all over this endgame, right until the bitter end.

33.fxe5?? 33.Nxe5 would have saved and won. (33.Nxe5 Nb4 34.Nc1!)

33...d3 34.Ncd4 c1Q+ 35.Nxc1 d2 And White has no way to stop the promotion to a queen.

0-1

Jackson, L Ross - Loke, Kayden

Julian Mazur 2023 Wellington Chess Club, 17.08.2023

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.c4 d6 4.e4 Be7 From the time-trouble chaos of that game, we now move to a quieter positional example. Here Loke employs the previously mentioned ...Be7-g5 plan to trade the dark-squared bishop off.

5.Bd3 Bg5 6.Nd2



Jackson opts to prevent the bishop exchange, but in doing so puts his knight on a square where its prospects are questionable.

6...Qf6!? An extraordinarily provocative move, with an unknown purpose.

7.Qa4+ Kf8 These king walks are unusual in most openings, but logical in locked-centre positions. It will be difficult for White to take advantage of Black's inability to castle without making some kind of double-edged break.

8.Ngf3 Ne7 9.Nxg5 Qxg5 10.g3 Bh3 The bishop slots in to frustrate White's attempts to castle.

11.Bf1 Qh5 12.Be2 Qg6 13.Bf1 Bxf1 14.Rxf1 After some jostling, Loke agrees to the trade of bishops. Now it seems unlikely that either side will castle.

14...Qh5 15.h4 Qg4 16.Qd1 Clearly fed up with Loke's mysterious queen shuffling

back and forth on the kingside, Jackson elects to trade it off. This leads the game into a very interesting endgame.

16...Qxd1+ 17.Kxd1 Nd7 18.b3



Another slow move, but White needs some way to activate the bishop. The way that Loke purposefully advances and makes use of Black's powerful flank pawns in this game is an excellent example of what can happen to White if they don't manage to create fluid play on either side of the board early on.

18...h5 Seizing some useful space and preventing g3-g4, which might hold up an eventual ...f5 push.

19.Nb1 f6 20.Nc3 The knight has had to spend a couple of tempi getting itself onto a useful square because of White's earlier decision to use it to block the bishop exchange.

20...a6 21.Be3 Kf7 22.Kd2 Rhb8 At this point, White's position is still solid and perhaps even better, but Black's

intentions are clear and the coming advance will need to be handled accurately.

23.f4?! A step in the wrong direction. 23.a4, trying to shut down one of Black's useful breaks, was White's best course of action.

23...b5! 24.fxe5?! This is a further mistake. White wants to open the f-file for kingside counterplay, but after 24...Nxe5 Black's f-pawn is a brick wall blocking any kind of attack, and the knight is beautifully posted in the centre of the board.

24...Nxe5



25.cxb5 axb5 Now Black has by far the better open file, as well as better pieces.

26.Bf4 N7g6! 27.Bxe5 Nxe5 The knight is replaced by a duplicate and Loke retains his static advantage.

28.Ne2 Looking to reach the outpost on e6 presumably, but this plan is far too

slow.

28...Ra3 29.Rfc1 Rba8 30.Rc2 Rxb3 Black wins a first pawn on the queenside, and from here on White's position disintegrates.

31.axb3 Rxa1 32.Nc3 Nf3+ 33.Kd3 And with ...Ne1+ about to pick up the exchange, Jackson threw in the towel.

0-1

Ning, Isabelle - Forster, Bill

NZ Rapid Champs Palmerston North, 12.01.2021

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.c4 d6 4.Nc3 f5 5.e4! Finally, I want to show a game that will give some hope that it is possible to prevail against the Czech Benoni, or at the very least, come out alive. 5.e4 is an excellent start, being proactive in the center.

5...Nf6 6.Bd3 g6 7.Bg5 Bg7



8.Nge2?! A small mistake, allowing 8...f4. It is probably time for White to release some tension in the center and begin trying to attack the kingside with 8.exf5.

(8.exf5 gxf5 9.Nge2 e4 10.Bc2 0-0 11.Nf4 White has a good blockade on the dark squares and attacking potential.)

8...0-0 9.0-0?! Once again, capturing on f5 was best. Now ...f4 is particularly strong, as Black has an accelerated King's Indian-style attack.

9...f4! 10.f3 h6 11.Bxf6 Tucking the bishop back to cover the dark squares was potentially more accurate, but it seems risky to give Black more tempi for the attack by doing so.

11...Qxf6 12.Nb5 The sides of the battle are well defined, White is looking for counterplay on the queenside, while Black goes straight for the king.

12...Na6 13.a3! Rf7 14.Qd2 g5 15.b4!? Ning recognizes that time is critical and strikes quickly.

15...g4 16.bxc5? This however is a similar mistake to the one made by Jackson in the previous game. White knows they need counterplay, so tries to open a file, but in doing so gives Black a good outpost for the knight and actually limits the long-term strength on their flank by exchanging their vanguard pawns.



16...Nxc5 17.fxcg4 Bxcg4 18.Ng3 Bf8 19.Nf5 A nice idea to try and hold up the Black attack, posting the knight where it will inhibit Black's coordination and potentially provoke an exchange.

19...Nxd3?! An unusual decision. Although Black does stand to win a pawn from this capture, the knight stood far better than White's light-squared bishop and now White has an opportunity to escape into the endgame.

20.Qxd3 Bxf5 21.exf5 Qxf5 22.Qe2?! White seems to have decent compensation after 22.Qxf5.

(22.Qxf5 Rxf5 23.Nc7 Rc8 24.Ne6 Rxc4 25.Ra1 Rxc1 26.Rxc1 f3 27.gxf3 Rxf3 28.Rc8 e4 29.Kg2 Rf5 30.Re8 Both sides can probably do better than this, but the simple idea of getting the knight to the e6-square and taking control of the c-file makes Black's task of conversion extremely difficult, even if the plan comes at the cost of a pawn more.)

22...e4?!



Black's e4–f4 duo menaces the White queen, but this move gives White a handy square.

23.Nc3? The wrong manoeuvre. White could have attained full compensation with 23.Nd4!

(23.Nd4! Qe5 24.Ne6 f3 25.gxf3 exf3 26.Qxe5 dxe5 27.Kf2 White has passed pawns to rival Black's and an outpost deep in Black's territory.)

23...Bg7! 24.Rac1 Bd4+ 25.Kh1 Re8 26.Nb5 Bc5 27.Rc3 a6 28.Rg3+ Kh7 29.Nc3 Bxa3 30.Rg4 Qe5 31.Nb1 Bc5 32.Nd2 Be3 33.g3 Bxd2 34.Qxd2 e3 35.Qd3+ Qe4+ 36.Qxe4+ Rxe4 37.Rgxf4

Black has maintained complete control of the position, and the rook endgame reached is certainly a win, but Ning still has a few tricks up her sleeve and manages to pull off an incredible swindle.

37...Rxf4 38.gxf4 e2 39.Re1 Rxf4?



A major error, giving up the pawn which immobilizes White's rook, tempted by the material Black wins as a result.

40.Rxe2 Rxc4 41.Re7+ Kg6 42.Rxb7 Rd4 43.Rb6 Rxd5 44.Rxa6 What emerges after these exchanges is a difficult but holdable endgame for the White side. "After some more blitz moves," Forster annotates, the game was a draw.

1/2–1/2

Hopefully, these games help some readers feel more confident when coming up against this unusual surprise weapon.

The Wellington Club Championship was played this year with two 10 player FIDE and NZCF rated round robins (an A and B grade), and an NZCF rated open swiss for the rest of the entries.

A grade

The 2023 Wellington club championship A grade had 6 returnees from the 2022 version, while Josh Langford, Cohen Young, and Nick Winsley all played in their first ever Wellington Club Championship A grade. Layla Timergazi returned for her first club championship since 2019 after having been away at university for the past three years. The field for the club championship A grade was the youngest it had been in recent history, with an average age of 28.7 years, and 7 of the 10 participants being under the age of 23.

WIM Layla Timergazi and IM Anthony Ker tied first equal in the A grade on a score of 6.0/9, so they are the shared Wellington Club Champions for 2023. Layla won in her head to head game with Anthony in round 8, her first win over Anthony in classical time format. Layla also picked up a win against Nicholas Winsley, Ryan Winter, Thomas van der Hoorn, and impressively, IM Russell Dive. She drew against top seed FM Nicolas Croad and Josh Langford, with her only two losses being to

youngsters Ollie Archer and Cohen Young. IM Anthony Ker won against Russell Dive, Cohen Young, Nicholas Winsley, Ollie Archer, and Josh Langford, drew against Ryan Winter and Thomas van der Hoorn, and suffered losses to Nicolas Croad and Layla Timergazi.

In third place trailing Layla and Anthony by only half a point was Ollie Archer, who was on 4.5/7 with two catch up games to go against Josh Langford and Layla Timergazi. Anthony had already finished all of his games and was on 6/9, while Layla was on 6/8 with her one catchup game against Ollie. Perhaps anticlimactically, Ollie lost the first catchup game to Josh Langford after being swindled in a winning endgame. This meant Layla required at least a draw in her game versus Ollie Archer to become the outright Wellington club champion, but Ollie won this game, keeping Layla on shared first. Anthony therefore retained his club champion title while Ollie finished on a score of 5.5/9, in clear third place.

IM Russell Dive will be disappointed he did not keep the momentum going after having won the first four games of the tournament. Instead, he only scored 4.5/9 after drawing against Ryan Winter followed by four losses in a row. Russell shared 4th-7th equal with FM Nicolas Croad, Ryan Winter, and Thomas van

der Hoorn. Cohen Young trailed this group by only half a point, scoring 4/9 and placing 8th, while Josh Langford trailed the group by only one point and placed 9th on 3.5/9. Nicholas Winsley scored 2/9, placing 10th. With this year's win, IM Anthony Ker has now been club champion for 4 years running.

Here are some games I recommend you check out on BillForster's lichess studies page:

Anthony Ker - Layla Timergazi (round 8),

Thomas van der Hoorn - Cohen Young (catchup round 2),

Anthony Ker - Russell Dive (catchup round 1),

Nicolas Croad - Josh Langford (round 8),

Ollie Archer - Josh Langford (catchup round 2).

B grade

As the field for the 2023 Wellington club champs B grade was finalised, Kayden Loke appeared to be the clear favourite, with the highest rating and being an aspiring junior. Kayden won round 1 and 2 and had a draw in round 3, but then he lost round 4 and 5 to Edward Tanoi and Ross Jackson respectively, before following this up by withdrawing from the tournament. This meant the tournament was blown wide open, and despite the large range of rating (299 points between the highest and lowest

rated player in the field compared to last year's 160 points), this year's tournament was far more tightly contested. Apart from Kayden, who withdrew and ended on 2.5 points, the lowest anyone scored in the B grade was Christopher Moses and Aidan Malcolm on 3.5 points, still a very respectable score.

On the other hand, the battle for first was incredibly tight, but Edward Tanoi came out on top with 6/9, a full 2 points less than 2022's B grade winner. Trailing behind on second equal were Edgar Benitez and Ross Jackson on 5.5/9. The former had great chances of winning the event in the catchup rounds, but suffered a loss to youngster Matthew Keith after playing an unsuccessful gambit in the opening. Matthew Keith got 4th on 5/9, also having had very good chances of getting at least first equal, with 3 catchup games and being on 4/6. He was also up two rooks for a knight against Edward Tanoi in the first catchup game, but was checkmated in the middle of the board. In the third catchup game, a win against Ross Jackson would get him tied first but he lost this game too. Tied 5th-7th were Ian Sellen, Philip Rossiter, and Karthik Sethuramalingam, who all scored 4.5/9.

Here are some games I recommend you check out on BillForster's lichess studies page:

Edward Tanoi - Matthew Keith
(catchup round 1),

Edgar Benitez - Christopher Moses
(round 8),

Edgar Benitez - Edward Tanoi (Round
6),

Matthew Keith - Aidan Malcolm (round
5),

Edward Tanoi - Karthik
Sethuramalingam (round 7).

Here are some games I recommend you
check out on Bill Forster's lichess
studies page:

Leo Sova - Alan Aldridge (round 9),

Bill Forster - Luke Chang (round 4),

Jin Tan - Liam Hunt (round 1).

lichess.org/study/by/BillForster for all
Wellington club champs games.

Swiss

The Wellington Chess Club
Championship Swiss is usually a less
competitive tournament than the A
and B grades, with players often
choosing not to play in the round robins
because of lack of availability or other
reasons. This means there are usually a
couple of players higher rated than the
rest, who are often fighting for first
place. However, this year, one lower
rated player showed up and dominated
the field. 1632 rated Luke Chang scored
an impressive 10/11, beating several
higher rated players, including 2016
rated Bill Forster and 2130 rated
Michael Sole. Luke Chang got 10 wins
and 1 singular loss to Arthur Pomeroy,
who was unbeaten in the tournament.
With 7 wins, 2 draws, and 2 half point
byes, and he placed second on 9/11. Bill
Forster placed third, scoring 8/11 with 6
wins, 2 draws, 2 half point byes, and one
loss to Luke Chang.

On the 25th of November, the Wellington Chess Club hosted a return of the Wellington Rapid, titled the "Estonian Rapid" from lead organiser Bill Forster's respect for the long-standing Latvian Rapid. Thanks to Bill's spearheading, a modest tournament was spontaneously created to fill the gap in events for the Wellington Region. The tournament was held at the Wellington Chess Club's clubrooms with the standard format of six rounds of 25+5 rapid.

The tournament was well attended with 46 players, most of whom were from the Wellington Club with a few making a trip such as top-seed FM Ben Hague and the returning Leighton Nicholls. While missing a few of the regular top players, the field still contained many dangerous up-and-coming players along with the usual veterans.

The tournament was won by relative newcomer Cohen Young who won with an excellent 5.5/6 with a dramatic win over IM Anthony Ker in the final round to clinch the title, a first open title for Cohen. See below for a round-by-round recap with game highlights from the recorded games.

Round one saw the expected results at the top with the exception of a tense game between the rising Cohen Young and Thi Dieu Mi Le, an overseas player

from Vietnam, with Cohen escaping with a draw after missed chances from Thi Dieu Mi.

Young, Cohen - Le, Thi Dieu Mi

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. f4 Bg7 5. Nf3 c6 6. Bd3 b5 7. O-O O-O Black has spent too many tempi on queenside pawn pushing and is now vulnerable to an attack from White's superior pieces.

8. e5! dxe5 9. fxe5 Nd5 10. Nxd5 Qxd5 11. a4 Bg4 12. Be3 Nd7 13. axb5 cxb5 14. Ra5 a6 15. c4 Bxf3 16. Rxf3 Qe6 17. cxb5 axb5 18. Rxb5 Cohen still has a strong position but must be precise as Black's pieces can become active quickly.



18... Rab8 19. Rxb8 Rxb8 20. Qc2 Nb6 21. h3 Qd7 22. Bc4 e6 23. b3 Nd5 24. Qf2 After some slow moves from White, Black has been able to regroup and now has well placed pieces that give a level game.



24... Nxe3 25. Qxe3 Rd8 26. Qf2 Qa7 27. Rd3 Bf8 28. Kh2 Bg7 29. Qf4 Qc7 30.h4?? The pressure against the d4 pawn builds and causes an error from Cohen, missing the Rxd4 tactic.

30... Rxd4! 31. Qf2 Qxe5+ 32. Kg1 Rxd3 33. Bxd3 Qa1+ 34. Qf1 Bd4+? Missing the opportunity for the win with Qd4+ and instead trading into an opposite coloured bishop endgame which fizzled out to a draw after White was allowed to trade the weak h pawn.



(34... Qd4+ 35. Kh1 (35. Qf2 Qxd3) 35... Qxh4+ 36. Kg1 Bd4+ 37. Qf2 Qxf2+ 38. Kh1 Qg1#) 35. Kh1 Qxf1+ 36. Bxf1 Bf2 37. h5 Kf8? (37... gxh5 was needed to keep the win alive. White is stuck for moves while

Black can start advancing the pawns with moves like f5, with and the king coming in for support.)

38. hxg6 hxg6 39. g4 Ke7 40. Kg2 Bc5 41. Kf3 f6 42. Bd3 g5 43. Ke4 Kd6 44. Bc4 1/2-1/2 The game is a draw.

Round two was routine with large rating gaps in the pairings still and no major upsets. For me, this round ended up being my tournament highlight with a pleasing finish to a difficult press in a locked Catalan against Hawke's Bay local Matthew Ashton.

Sole, Michael - Ashton, Matthew

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. g3 dxc4 5. Bg2 c6 6. Ne5 Nbd7?!

(6... Bb4+ is the mainline, preventing the capture on c4 7. Bd2 Be7 8. e3 b5)

7. Nxc4 Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Nc3 Nb6 10. Ne5 Nbd5 11. e4 Nxc3 12. bxc3 A promising position out of the opening with a Grünfeld-like pawn centre and Black having very minimal counterplay. However, Black's position is very solid with no weaknesses, so there is still a lot of work needed for White.

12... Nd7 13. Nd3 b6 14. a4 Bb7 15. a5 Ba6 16. Re1 Bxd3 17. Qxd3 b5 18. Ba3? This ended up making my tasks much harder with Black being able to blockade on the light squares after the exchange and

freeing up more space for Black's pieces. Better was to keep the pressure with moves like Qe2, e5, and h4.

(18. Qe2 An example continuation for White. Qc7 19. e5 Rfc8 20. h4)

18... Bxa3 19. Rxa3 a6 20. e5 Rc8 21. Be4 g6 22. Qf3 Nb8 23. h4 h5 24. Qe3 Kg7 25.Rd1

(25. c4! bxc4 26. Rc1)

25... Qe7 26. Ra2 Rfd8 27. Qf3 Rc7 28. Qe3 c5 29. d5 exd5 30. Bxd5 c4 31. Rad2 Rcd7 32. Kh2 Qa3 33. Qb6 Qxc3?? 34. Qf6+ Kf8



35. Be6 1-0

The third round was where we saw pre-tournament favourite FM Ben Hague fall to Chris Burns, while Thomas van der Hoorn again heavily pressed Anthony Ker in the Wellington line of choice against Anthony's Accelerated Dragon (10.Qd3). However, after Tom failed to take advantage of Anthony's misplaced king on h6, Anthony managed to escape with the win.

van der Hoorn, Thomas - Ker, Anthony F

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. c4 Nf6 6. Nc3 d6 7. Be2 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 O-O 10. Qd3! This is a strong line that has been placing Anthony under pressure since the 2022 Congress, with many of the Wellingtonian players picking this up since. White, with this move compared to Qd2, is still defending e4 which frees up White's pieces allowing for more aggressive ideas such as Nd5 or f4-f5.

10... Be6 11. O-O Nd7 12. b3 Nc5 Anthony's line of choice.

13. Qc2 Qa5 14. Bd2 Qb6 15. Rad1 Rfc8 16. Be3 Qd8 17. Bd4 Qf8 18. f4! Tom is following the thematic plans for White in this line and is building a strong attack while Black is struggling for a plan.

18... Bxd4+ 19. Rxd4 Qg7 20. Rdd1 f5 21. Bf3 Rab8 22. Qd2 fxe4 23. Nxe4 Nxe4 24. Bxe4 Rc5 25. Rfe1 Bg4 26. Bd5+ Kh8 27. Rc1 b5 28. b4 Rc7 29. h3 Bf5 30. cxb5 Rxc1 31. Rxc1 Rxb5 Black has sacrificed a pawn for counterplay but, is still facing a struggle with White's well placed pieces putting Black's king under serious pressure.

32. Rc7 a5 33. Ra7?

(33. bxa5 And the pawn can run.)

33... Qa1+ 34. Kh2 Rxb4 35. Ra8+ Kg7 36. Rg8+ Kh6 37. Qf2? Missing the winning blow, see below to test yourself on finding it.



(37. g4! Giving up the queen to Rb2+ in order to attack the king. 37... Rb2 38. g5+ Kh5 39. Qxb2! Giving up the queen with check in order to misplace the queen so that White can play Bf3. Incredibly difficult to find this in a rapid game. 39... Qxb2+ 40. Kg3 with Bf3 coming. White is winning.)

37... Qf6 38. g4 Bxg4 39. hxg4 Rxf4 40.Qg3 Kg5 41. Bg2 Rxc4 42. Qe3+ Qf4+ 43.Qxf4+ Rxf4 44. Rg7 e6 45. Rxh7 Ra4 46.Rd7 d5 47. Bxd5 exd5 48. Rxd5+ Kf4 49.Rd2 And Black eventually won 0-1

After round four, the field started to separate with the contenders for the title becoming apparent. With strong wins this round, Ryan Winter, Cohen Young, and Anthony Ker were emerging as the leading pack with Ryan and Anthony on perfect 4/4 scores while Cohen was following half a point behind

with his only hiccup being his first round draw.

Round five saw the top-of-the-table clashes with Ryan Winter taking on Anthony Ker and Cohen Young having White against me. Anthony beat Ryan to take sole lead of the tournament on 5/5, while Cohen won his game with a well-executed endgame squeeze against me in an exchange Berlin. In the game, Cohen managed to successfully neutralise my bishops while using his kingside majority to win the game.

Heading into the final round, Cohen and Anthony were the only remaining contenders with Anthony only needing a draw to secure the title, while Cohen, being half a point behind, could overtake Anthony with a win. Anthony had the White pieces and played his usual Nc3 Sicilian, featuring a theoretical Knight sacrifice for which Cohen was well prepared, quickly placing Anthony on the backfoot. Anthony succumbed to the pressure of Cohen's pawn advances and blundered his Knight for minimal compensation. Anthony, in his usual style, managed to create a strong attack but failed to find the continuation to maintain his dynamic advantage. In the end, Cohen's extra piece won the day and, with it, the tournament.

Ker, Anthony F - Young, Cohen

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nd4 4. Nf3 e6
5. O-O a6 6. Bd3 Nc6 7. Nd5!? An interesting theoretical sacrifice.



7... g5! Cohen, being well prepared for Anthony, played the most testing move. White now must be very accurate to not be quickly worse.

8. Ne3 h5 9. c3 g4 10. Ne1 d5 11. exd5
exd5 12. Bc2 Be6 13. f4 gxf3 14. Nxf3 d4
15. cxd4 cxd4 16. Bb3 With the knight
being doomed, Anthony tries to
generate an attack.

16... dxe3 17. Bxe6 fxe6 18. Qc2 Nge7 19.
dxe3 Nf5 20. e4 Nfd4 21. Qf2 Nxf3+ 22.
Qxf3 Bc5+ 23. Kh1 Ne5 24. Qb3 Qb6 25.
Qg3 Bd4 26. Be3! Bxe3 27. Qxe5 Bd4 28.
Qg5 Anthony has succeeded in
disorienting Black's pieces and is now
back in the game.

28... Qd8? 29. Qg6+ Kd7 30. Rf7+?
Allowing the king to run.



(30. Rac1! Preventing the king from
escaping. White is winning here with
Rf7+ being too strong to stop.)

30... Kc8 31. Qxe6+ Kb8 32. Rd7 Qb6 33.
Rd6 Qxb2 34. Rd1 Bc5 35. R6d5 Bb6 36.
a4 Ka7 With Black's king now safe, the
conversion is easy.



37. a5 Be3 38. R5d3 Rhg8 39. Qh3 Bc5
40. Rb3 Qc2 41. Rdb1 Rab8 42. R3b2
Qxe4 43. Qxh5 Bd4 44. Rb4 Qxg2# 0-1
Black wins.

Every year, the Merv Morrison Memorial was held on the Labour Weekend. This year was no exception. On the 21st of October, 48 players streamed into the Auckland Chess Centre, situated on Cromwell Street, with 2 more taking a first round bye.

Significant results in the first round include 2nd seed FM Leonard McLaren conceding a draw to 25th seed Aidan Zhang after surviving a lost position, and 5th seed Cohen Young losing against 29th seed Dion Wilson after an unfortunate blunder in a winning position.

Entering round two, 20 players were on 1/1. On the first ten boards, 9 out of 10 of the higher rated players won. However, 1905-rated 4th seed Philli Park-Tamati lost to his 1530-rated opponent Weiyang Yu on board 3, after the latter took control in the middlegame. McLaren came back to beat Abigail Rowe, moving up to a more respectable score of 1.5/2.

Park-Tamati, Philli - Yu, Weiyang

Annotations by Weiyang Yu

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bf4 d5 3. e3 c5 4. dxc5 e6 5. b4 Showing his intention of keeping the c5-pawn.

5... a5 Challenging the protector of the c5-pawn.

6. c3 Be7 7. Qb3 O-O 8. Be2 axb4 9. cxb4 Ne4 Improving the knight with several purposes - this makes developing White's b1-knight a harder task as Nc3 loses to threats on the long diagonal. It also threatens ...Bf6, winning the rook in the corner, forcing White to free the rook somehow.



10. Nd2 This was obvious, but White's king loses the ability to castle after the exchange of knights on d2. With a centre that can easily be opened, this was not ideal.

(10. Nc3 Bf6 11. Nxe4 Bxa1 The rest of White's pieces are now superior and his queenside majority provides counterplay, however, this is still a variation best avoided for White).

(10. a4 White could give his rook more space while also activating his queenside majority. Next, he can develop his b1-knight through a3, ensuring his king will be able to castle 10... Bh4 11. Nh3 Qf6 12. Ra2 e5 13. Bg3 Bxg3 14. fxc3 Bxc3 15. gxc3 Qf2+ 16. Kd1)

10... Nxd2

(10... Bf6 This first was optimal as Black can continue to delay White's development 11. Rd1 Bc3 12. Nf3 Bd7 threatening Ba4 13. b5 Qa5 14. Bd6 Rc8 15. a4 Nxc5 White's pieces are dominated. Next, when White castles, Black can take on a4, and White will have a hard time in the ensuing position because of how long it will take for him to manoeuvre his pieces into active positions.)

11. Kxd2 Bf6 12. Rc1 This allowed Black to expand her centre and attempt to open it, which would be bad news for White's vulnerable king.

(12. Nf3 Developing the knight and preventing e5. Without e5, Black's light-squared bishop would be trapped inside the pawn chain, meaning White's more active minor pieces and his queenside majority would compensate for the missing exchange 12... Bxa1 13. Rxa1 Nc6 14. b5 Na5 15. Qb4 f6 Black absolutely has to push e5 16. Bd6 Rf7 17. Ke1 e5 18. a4 Rd7 White's d6-bishop prevents Black's heavy pieces and her light-squared bishop from becoming active, while his pawn majority gives him substantial space on the queenside.)

12... e5 13. Bg3 d4 14. Ke1 White moves his king away from the d-file, which was being opened. However, developing his pieces should be his priority and this only slows his development.



(14. Nf3 dxe3+ 15. Ke1)

14... Nc6

(14... e4 Black should've played this to slow White's development by restricting his pieces 15. Bxb8 Rxb8 16. Bc4 d3 17. Kd2 Because three of his pieces are still not developed, White's king has to defend itself.)

15. e4 Preventing Black from playing e4.

15... Be6 16. Bc4 Bxc4 17. Qxc4 Bg5 This was the wrong plan to follow through on as White has weaknesses on the queenside that Black can target.

(17... Ra4 18. Rb1 Qa8)

18. Rb1 Kh8 The wrong plan again, Black should be looking for activity on the queenside and infiltrate from there.

(18... Ra3 19. Ne2 Qa8)

19. Nf3 f5 20. Qd5 This is wrong as exchanging queens would not help

White as Black would get a central pawn majority and if White doesn't exchange queens, the centre will be opened.

(20. b5 Na5 21. Qd5 fxe4 22. Qxd8 Bxd8 23. Nxe5 Black can't take on a2, and White's queenside majority is more advanced.)

20... fxe4 21. Qxd8 Bxd8 22. Nxe5 Rxa2



23. Nxc6 bxc6 24. Rf1 The rook is a liability on f1, it should go to e1 instead.

(24. Kd1 d3 25. Re1 Re8 26. Bf4 Rxf2 27. Be3 Rxc2 Black is still winning with her extra pawns, but White at least stopped the central passed pawns from promoting.)

24... Bf6 25. Kd1 Bg5 Manoeuvring to d2-c3, and then with the e3 push Black will be promoting a pawn and winning the game.

26. h4 Bd2 27. Rh1 Bc3 28. h5 e3 29. fxe3 dxe3 0-1



By round 3, which started on the morning of the 22nd, the higher-rated players were facing much tougher opposition, with a few of them conceding draws. FM Alphaeus Ang, Daqi Mao, and CM Kendrick Zhang all won to move to a perfect 3/3. McLaren won again, beating Patrick Jiang, and followed close behind, ready to pounce, at 2.5/3. Others on 2.5/3 include William Liu and Leo Baker, who drew each other, and Victor Coen, who beat Jessie De Guzman in a close game after successfully utilising his bishop pair in the endgame.

De Guzman, Jessie - Coen, Victor

Annotations by Anjola Sigbeku

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. d4 cxd4 6. Nxd4 a6 In the Sozin, Black tries to fight against White's space advantage with moves like b5 and d5 under the right conditions. White, on the other hand, tries to use his space advantage to orchestrate an attack on Black's king. This could be achieved with moves like f4 and eventually f5 which

breaks apart Black's pawn structure. In some lines, White is able to sacrifice a piece on the e6 square, leading to a dangerous attack.

7. a3 White anticipates b5 and prepares to potentially move his light-squared bishop to a2. He could have also played a4 stopping the b5 initiative but doing so might weaken the queenside considerably (in particular the b4 square).

7... Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Bb3 Qc7 10. Be3 b5 11. f3 Nc6 12. Nce2 While engines are not a fan of this move, it has some merit to it. White feels their knight on c3 is a bit misplaced as it has no other squares to move to so reinforcing d4 with the knight makes a bit of sense.

(12. Nxc6 Qxc6 13. Qd2 a5 14. Ne2 a4 15. Ba2 e5 16. Nc3 Be6 17. Rad1 Rfc8 18. Rf2 Rab8)

12... Bb7 13. Nxc6 Bxc6 14. Nd4 Bb7 15. c3 d5 Black makes progress and is able to play his thematic break, opening up lots of options for counterplay on the d-file and the diagonals.

16. exd5 Nxd5 17. Bf2 Bd6 18. g3 Black forces White to essentially turn his dark-squared bishop into a massive pawn with very little scope and squares. The knight on d4 looks pretty but it is of

very little use at this moment. The engine favours Black here. An alternative for White would have been to play h3, but that looks like a terrible option from a human perspective as all the dark squares around White's king are too weak.



18... Rad8 19. Qe2 Rfe8 20. Rad1 h5 Continuing to poke at White's weakened structure. h4 by either side greatly compromises White's already weakened kingside structure.

21. Bc2 g6 22. a4 White tries to get some counterplay on the queenside by opening up the a-file, but such a plan seems slightly too slow to work in this position.

22... b4 23. c4 Keeping the c-file semi-closed and delaying Black's attack.

23... Nf6 24. Be3 e5 25. Nb3 e4 White's problems start to multiply as he is subjected to this uncomfortable pin along the e-file (if he takes on e4).

Taking also opens up the b7-bishop's scope towards White's already weakened king. For this reason, it made sense to keep things relatively closed with f4.



26. f4 The immediate problem with the move f4 is that it temporarily solves one problem but creates an arguably bigger one as the f6-knight can now make a jump to g4. If allowed, the bishop on e3 will be taken and White will struggle along the a8-h1 and a7-g1 diagonals.

26... Ng4 27. Rd4 Bc6 Going for the very weak a4-pawn although there were better moves available to Black. It is important to note that White can never move the knight from b3 to cover a4 as Nxe3, Qxe3 and Bc5 will win Black significant material. For this reason, White decides to go Ra1, defending the a4-pawn. The engine however thinks this is not the right way to defend and suggests the move c5, attacking the d6-bishop and opening up the queen's scope of the diagonal.

28. Ra1 Bf8 29. h3 Nxe3 30. Qxe3 Qa7 31.Kf2 Bg7 The engines feel this move is a blunder as simply trading rooks on d4 would have been too strong. Nxd4 would not be possible due to Bc5, further increasing the pressure of the pin and Black should win a piece. Qxd4 seems to be the better of the two but it also allows e3+ after which the threat of promotion and the weak diagonals would have proven all too much for White to handle.



(31... Rxd4 32. Qxd4 e3+)

32. Rxe4 This is where things went from bad to worse for White as he failed to find the only move to keep his chances of a draw alive. Black, however, fails to find the stunning response Qd7. White would be forced to take on e8 and give up control of the e-file.

32... Qxe3+ 33. Rxe3 Rxe3 34. Kxe3 Bxb2 35. Ra2 White's pieces are very tangled with little to no activity. His rook at the moment has no scope. The only thing that White has done better than

Black is bringing his king to the centre, which at this point is very vulnerable to nasty checks and pins from White's active rook and healthy bishop pair.

35... Bc3 36. g4 Good move by White, trying to liquidate the pawns in an attempt to draw the game. Another interesting try would have been f5, trying to force some kingside weaknesses for Black.

36... Re8+ 37. Kf2 Be1+ 38. Kf1 Bg3 The nasty checks come and White is unable to save his f4-pawn while simultaneously defending the mate threat on e1. He brings his rook out of retirement to defend e1 at the cost of the pawn.



39. Ra1 hxg4 40. hxg4 Bxf4 41. Bd1 Be4 42. Nc5 a5 43. Ra2 Re5 44. Nd7 Bd3+ 45. Kf2 Bxc4 46. Nxe5 Bxa2 White drops another pawn and both rooks are traded. At this point, the endgame is relatively straightforward as the Black b-pawn is very far advanced.

47. Nd3 Bg5 48. Nc5 Be7 49. Nb3 Bxb3 50. Bxb3 Kg7 51. Kf3 f6 52. Ke4 Kh6 53. Kf4 Bd8 54. Bc2 Bc7+ 55. Kf3 Kg5 56. Bb3 f5 57. gxf5 gxf5 58. Bd1 Kf6 59. Ke3 Ke5 60. Kd3 As Sam Shankland and many other grandmasters said, you need two weaknesses to win an endgame. White has two weaknesses in his position. He has to track two passed pawns on different sides of the board with the Black king being far advanced.



60... Kf4 61. Kd4 Bb6+ 62. Kd3 Kg3 63. Bb3 f4 64. Ke2 f3+ 65. Kf1 Kf4 66. Ke1 Ke3 67. Bc4 Kd4 68. Bb5 Kc3 69. Kd1 Be3 70. Bc6 f2 71. Ke2 b3 72. Be4 b2 73. Bb1 Kb3 74. Bd3 Bd4 Handshakes (hopefully) as Black wins an instructive game showing the power of accumulating small advantages and using bishop pairs. 0-1

In round 4, Ang and Mao continued their perfect run to 4/4, with the former slowly crushing Kendrick Zhang from an inferior opening. This competition has a special twist in that the trophy goes to the U1800 winner rather than,

the overall 1st-place winner. By now, the competition for the U1800 was growing, with Baker and Coen leading the grade on 3.5/4 after beating McLaren and William Liu, respectively.

Zhang, Kendrick - Ang, Alphaeus

Annotations by Leo Malcolm

1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 c6 4. Be3 b5 This unusual advance gives Black potential to expand further on the queenside with b4 and a5.

5. Bd3 d5 6. e5 Nh6 A familiar square for Alphaeus' king's knight, after 7. f4 he will have a good handle on the f5 push from White.



7. f4 b4 Slightly premature, something like 7... Bf5 8. Nf3 Bxd3 9. Qxd3 and 9... e6 planting the pawns on light squares is more solid.

8. Na4 Qa5 9. Nc5 Na6 10. Nb3 Qb6 11. h3 Nicely preparing g4 and f5 where Black would be facing serious problems concerning king safety.

11... Nf5 with tempo, avoiding Black's h pawn and taking care of the g4 problem.

12. Bf2 h5 13. Nf3 Nc7 Relocating the knight to a better square and preparing a5.

14. Qd2 a5 15. O-O Ba6 16. Nc5 White lands his knight on a great square, but misses 16. Bxf5 Bxf1 17. Bxg6 Ba6 18. Bxf7+ Kxf7 19. f5 where White has a very strong attack.

16... Bxd3 17. Qxd3 e6 18. Nh4 Bf8 A nice reposition of the previously blunted bishop.

19. Nxf5 gxf5 Black recaptures with his g pawn to open the door for a g-file attack.



20. Nb3 a4 Black takes the initiative and begins a queenside pawn storm.

21. Nd2 a3 22. b3 Nb5 23. Nb1 to prevent 23... Nc3.

23... c5 24. c3 cxd4 25. c4 A clever resource to remove Black's strong

knight from b5.

25... dxc4 26. bxc4 Na7 27. Qxd4 Qxd4 28. Bxd4 Nc6 29. Be3 Bb6 is a better try, preventing Black's next plan.

29... O-O-O 30. Nd2 Rd3 31. Kf2 The king arrives but Black's pieces are well placed to quickly join the attack.

31... Nd4 Looking to play Nc2 with a fork.

32. Rac1 32. Bxd4 is no good after **32...Rxd4 33. Ke3 Bc5**.

32... Bc5 33. Nf3 Rd8 The final piece activates. A pair of exchanges on d4 wouldn't help White as the d file domination as well as threats on d2 and f4 would be crushing for Black.

34. Rcd1 Rxe3 A pretty temporary sacrifice to end the game - **35. Kxe3 Nb5+ 36. Ke2 Nc3+ 37. Ke1 Rxd1#**



35. Nxd4 Rxd4 36. Kxe3 0-1

Ang and Mao, the only two players left

on a perfect score, faced each other in the penultimate round, after a night of rest. On the morning of the 23rd, Ang ended up on top after winning Mao's queen, moving to an impressive 5/5. In the most crucial game towards deciding the U1800 winner, Coen beat Baker after overambitious play by the latter. As a result, Coen moved to 4.5/5, in prime position to not only take the U1800 prize but also place in the overall standing. Other interesting results include Sarah Sun's miniature upset win over Young despite losing a pawn early in the opening, and Wilson collecting his fourth upset win in this tournament after pouncing on Kendrick Zhang's mistake.

Liu, William - Chang, Yolanda

Annotations by Anjola Sigbeku

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Bd3 Nc6 5. c3 Qc7 6. h3 e6 7. Nf3 Bd6 8. O-O Nge7 9. Re1 Ng6 10. Qc2 White leaves theory first with this move and it makes a bit of sense. Black will temporarily be unable to move their knight from g6 as doing so would blunder the h7-pawn. Other than that, Qc2 just seems like a passing move. The engines recommend c4 which has been played in the masters' database. The drawback is that it seems like a waste of a tempo as White would have spent two tempi on the c-pawn instead of just pushing c4 in one go.

10... O-O 11. h4 f5 12. h5 Nf4 13. Bxf4 Bxf4 14. g3 Bd6 15. Kg2 White plans to move his rook to the h-file in hopes of some lines opening up.

15... Rf6 16. Rh1 Black fails to play e5 and misses the chance to open up the position and finally free their imprisoned c8-bishop.

16... Rh6 17. Nbd2 Bd7 18. Rae1 Be8 19. Ng5 Bf7 20. f4 Rc8 White has a strong bind on the position and it's very difficult for Black to breathe as they can never really play e5 under favourable circumstances. Black's weak e6-pawn makes getting any counterplay considerably difficult.



21. Qd1 Bxf4 In desperation, Black makes a speculative sacrifice to strip open the defences of the white king.

22. gxf4 Qxf4 23. Nxf7 Kxf7 24. Nf3 Qg4+ 25. Kf2 Rxh5 26. Rxh5 Qxh5 Taking on h5 was Black's final mistake. The position is simply lost after Ne5+ as White wins a queen and delivers an

uncomfortable check to Black's position.

27. Ne5+ 1-0



Entering the last round, Ang led the tournament with a perfect score, needing only a draw against Coen on 4.5/5 to win the tournament. Mao, Wilson, and Sun followed close behind on 4/5. Coen, Wilson, and Sun were all eligible for the U1800. Baker, despite losing to Coen in round 5, could still win the grade if all three aforementioned players lost in the last round and he himself won. That was precisely what happened, as Ang beat Coen, winning the tournament with a 6/6 result, Mao beat Wilson to finish on 5/6, Sun lost to McLaren as the latter managed to finish on a respectable 4.5/6 despite earlier stumbles, while Baker won on demand against David Zhu.

Baker, Leo - Zhu, David

Annotations by Leo Malcolm

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 O-O 5. Bd2 d5 6. a3 Bxc3 7. Bxc3 b6 8. Nf3 Ba6

9.cxd5 At first giving up short castling rights looks very suspicious, but following the trade of bishops, White is under no pressure and is well enough developed to take time to castle manually.

9... Bxf1 10. Kxf1 exd5 11. Rc1 Nbd7 12. g3 Ne4 13. Kg2 White's king finds some form of safety and both players continue developing and improving.



13... Ndf6 14. h3 Re8 15. Qc2 Rc8 Black reinforces the c5 break and looks to exert pressure down the c-file.

16. Rhd1 White's bishop has impersonated a pawn on c3 for most of the game, and now risks impeding the battle for the c-file. Rhd1 gives a clue to White's intended home for the bishop.

16... Nh5 An inaccuracy; perhaps the idea was to free Black's f-pawn, but with no real prospects of a sacrifice on g3 the h5 knight is misplaced. **16... Nd7** controlling the important c5 and e5 squares would be the better version of

the game's continuation.

17. Be1 A comfortable home for the bad bishop, covering all the e4 knight's squares in White's territory.

17... Qd6 18. Qc6 White takes the opportunity to land a piece on c6, heavily restricting Black's queenside play.

18... Re6 19. Qxd6 Rxd6 Recapturing with the knight was better, as after Ne5 Nf6 Ne5 the rook on e6 critically defends a fork on e7.

20. Ne5 c5 The break comes too late, as the forcing sequence leaves White well ahead.



21. f3 Ng5 22. dxc5 bxc5 23. b4 f6 24. Nc4 or **24. Rxc5! Rxc5 25. bxc5** and the knight on e5 still can't be captured.

24... Rdd8 25. Na5 f5 Necessary, as the bad placement of the h5 knight makes itself felt; g4 was a threat.

26. **bx**c5 **Ne**6 27. **Nb**7 **Rd**7 28. **c**6 **Rdc**7
29.**Nd**6 With the pair of enemy rooks tied down, White's knight is free to dance among the wreckage of Black's position, and with accurate play White soon secures the win.

29... **Rd**8 30. **Nxf**5 **g**6 31. **Nh**6+ **Kg**7 32.
Ng4 **Rdc**8 33. **Ne**5 **Kf**6 34. **Bc**3 **Kg**5 35.
h4+ 1-0



Those results meant that Mao finished 2nd behind Ang, McLaren came back to finish 3rd while Baker and Coen shared the U1800 title. The U1500 grade was won by Anderson Chen, Philip Mukkattu, and Ting Liang on 4/6. Wilson, despite a disappointing last-round loss, collected the U1400 price for his strong performance of 4/6. Lastly, the U1200 grade was won by Martin Zhou on 3/6.

The annual Summit Rapid Championship, this year also the North Island Rapid Championship, was held on the 12th of November, at the spacious Alexandra Park.

In round 1, results to note in the Open Division include 2nd seed FM Leonard McLaren being beaten by 18th seed Jessie De Guzman, 7th seed CM Bruce Wheeler drawing with 23rd seed Leo Baker, newly minted CM Isabelle Ning falling to 27th seed Brillion Lau, and 29th seed Tracy Tang beating 13th seed Philip Mukkattu. In the U1800 Division, 31 players won their first game with 46 more on one point in the Junior Division.

In round 2, FM Felix Xie was nearly beaten by Zachary Yu, but held his own and won in the end. He was joined by four more players on 2/2. Victims of upsets in round one, Ning and Mukkattu, both lost again, to Baker and Weiyang Yu, respectively, while Lau continued his, beating 9th seed Miles Lee. McLaren was able to recover from his loss, beating Ryan Hwang.

Lau won again in round 3, beating 2135-rated Nunilon III Fulo, and led the tournament with FM Alphaeus Ang and Xie. They were followed closely by Baker, Yanbo Jin, and Saptorshi Gupta on 2.5/3 and a cluster of players on 2/3. Ning saved herself from another upset by beating Abigail Rowe as Mukkattu

also made it onto the scoreboard with a draw.

Lau's run was ended in round 4, by Ang, who moves to 4/4, sharing the lead with only Xie, who beat Saptorshi Gupta. They were followed by Jin on 3.5/4 and three players on 3/4, including Zachary Yu, who scored an upset over Wheeler.

In round 5, the two leaders faced each other. Ang came out on top, leaving him as the sole leader on 5/5. By losing, Xie was overtaken by Jin, who beat Daqi Mao and moved to 4.5/5. Lau scored yet another upset, this time over Zachary Yu, and joined Xie on 4/5.

Going into the last round, Ang only needed a draw to secure 1st, and did so against Jin, who guaranteed himself at least shared 2nd. Xie came back from his loss to beat Lau, who nonetheless finished on an impressive 4/6, with a performance rating of 2073.

Ang was crowned the 2023 North Island Rapid Champion, with Jin and Xie sharing 2nd place. Xxavier Willoughby-Ansell won the title of the 2023 North Island Rapid U1800 Champion, while Briene Membrere and Eden Xu came 2nd equal. Lastly, the 2023 North Island Rapid Junior Champion was Vihaan Bala, with the podium rounded out by Alexander Pan, Alex Chen, and Noah Wang, who all shared 2nd.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Otago Summer Rapid was a popular tournament. 42 players entered, which is a lot for a seasonal rapid here, meaning a second room had to be employed to fit the remainder of the twenty-one boards. However, it seemed that the more truly was the merrier, as the day brought a lot of chess, and a lot of fun.

Round 1

To kick things off in the first round, Olefsandr Nedyhalov beat Roam Penwarden with the black pieces on board one, while Raymond Yang pulled off an impressive victory over Juni Aguilar despite being around 700 points lower rated. Quentin Johnson defeated Henry Smith on board three, and Alf Loretan commendably drew Invercargill's Richie Christie on board four. On board five, Alexander Sun beat Zihan Fu, meaning those playing the black colour won four out of the top five games.

Round 2

On board one, Nedyhalov got the win against Daniel Bell, whilst Johnson beat Prashil Prakash, who represented Fiji in the 2022 Olympiad. Alexander continued the trend of white winning with a win on board three over Gary McLean. This pattern was broken on boards four and five, however, with Emmanuel Santiago drawing with Paul

Gudoy, and Gregory Familton beating me as black.

Round 3

Nedyhalov continued his winning streak on board one as we approached the halfway mark of the tournament, defeating Radek Moravek, from Queenstown. Johnson avenged his South Island Rapid loss against Familton by beating him to advance to 3/3. This put him equal with Nedyhalov and Sun, who beat Phil Coleman on board three. Pratik Jadhav also maintained a perfect score, winning against Ross Black on board four while Christie remained close behind on 2.5/3 after beating Caleb MacDonald on board five.

Round 4

Round four began to separate the top players, seeing those with a perfect score battling on the top two boards. Nedyhalov and Johnson both emerged victorious, winning against Sun and Jadhav respectively. This meant that Christie was able to climb to third, beating Santiago as black. A number of players, such as Prakash, Moravek, and Bell, rose to three points - close behind the leaders.

Round 5

One of the most important games of the tournament went ahead in this penultimate round, with Nedyhalov going up against Johnson to decide who

would keep their perfect score. However, a possible picket fence ended up escaping both players, with the game ending up drawn. On board two, Christie had a chance to join the two at the top, but was defeated by Bell. Sun began to close the gap on board three, beating Oscar Lobb and advancing to 4/5 along with Yang, who won against Moravek on board five.

Round 6

Anything could happen in the final round. Both Nedyhalov and Johnson were on 4.5/5, with Sun, Yang, and Bell all on 4/5. If either Johnson or Nedyhalov won, they would win the tournament, sharing first place if they both beat their opponents. If both lost, however, then Sun, Yang, and potentially Bell would tie for first. On board two, Sun beat Johnson. On board three, Bell beat Prakash. However, Nedyhalov beat Yang, taking first place. The efforts of Sun and Bell earned them a shared second place, with Johnson and Christie sharing fourth. Yang's hard work also paid off, as he shared the U1500 prize with Scott Samuel and I. Scott Samuel also won the U1200 prize, with Samuel Mitchell taking second place in that category.

After the lifting of Covid restrictions, opportunities for international tournaments have slowly begun integrating themselves back into the lives of chess players around the globe, and New Zealand is no exception. Though we tend to be more geographically isolated than most countries who participate in competitive chess, there are still opportunities for Kiwi chess players to go overseas and experience the thrill of playing against a diverse range of chess players from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities. Such events include the 2022 Chess Olympiad held in India, the 2023 World Youth Championships held in Italy, the 2023 World Junior Championships held in Mexico, and the recent Asian Youth Chess Championships held in Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates. To represent us at the Asian Youth Championships, New Zealand sent three up-and-coming young chess players: Baraa Zara (U-16), Sayuni Vonara Rehansi (G-12), and Luna Lu (G-10).

Overall, Team New Zealand performed quite decently, averaging 5/9 in the Standard, 3.5/7 in the Rapid, and what rounds up to 5/9 in the Blitz, but it is Luna Lu's individual standings which separates New Zealand from the rest of the pack.

In the Blitz section, she finished in the

top 10 of the 50 or so competitors with a final score of 6/9, with the tournament itself being won by girls from India and Russia (playing under the FIDE flag). Notably, in the penultimate round, she managed a win against a Kazakh opponent rated more than 100 points higher than her!

In the Standard section, she ended up in second place on 7/9 points, with first place taken by a strong Russian player who would have scored a picket fence if not for her loss against Luna in the 8th round!

Finally, in the Rapid section, Luna finished on 6/7 and won first place, 9 places higher than her starting rank! Her performance included wins against multiple higher rated opponents and only one loss against the player who finished in second place.

A huge congratulations to Luna for her performance in this tournament, and we hope to continue seeing young Kiwi players making their mark in the international chess world!

The 2023 edition of Papatoetoe Rapid was held on the 2nd of December, and saw a total of 57 players enter one of the three grades.

In the first round, all of the higher-rated players in the A Grade won, except for 6th seed Etienne De Beer, who lost to 17th seed Nadia Braganza in a complex endgame. In the B Grade, all games were decisive, with 7 players on 1/1 going into round two. In the C Grade, 9th seed John McRae lost to 20th seed Rory Xu, who was one of the ten players now on 1/1.

In the second round, the biggest upset was 10th seed Yanbo Jin's win over 3rd seed FM Leonard McLaren. The former moved to 2/2, along with 4 other players, including Braganza, who scored another upset, this time over 12th seed Jack McConnell. In the B Grade, 3 players were leading on 2/2, with 4 more still perfect in the C Grade.

In round three, the 1st seed, FM Alphaeus Ang, conceded a draw to 5th seed CM John Stark. This result meant Ang was overtaken by 2nd seed IM Russell Dive, who, after beating Braganza, was also the last player on a perfect score as Jin lost to 9th seed Oscar Qin. Briene Membrere was the last player on a perfect score in the B Grade, moving to 3/3 after beating Buthsara Hettiarachchi. In the C Grade, there was also only one player left on

3/3, which was 4th seed Patrick Jiang, after he defeated Terence Carson.

Now seated at board one, Dive was able to ride the momentum to 4/4 by beating Qin. His closest pursuer was Ang, who beat 4th seed Mario Krstev to move to 3.5/4. The only other player on 2.5/3 going into round four was Stark, but he suffered a loss at the hand of 7th seed William Liu, who became one of the three players on 3/4. 16th seed Ryan Hwang, one of the aforementioned players, scored an upset over De Beer, while 21st seed Luna Xu also scored an upset over 8th seed Antonio Krstev. In the B Grade, Membrere maintained his perfect score, beating Jerome Tao. Two players, Hettiarachchi and Kelvin Wang, were trailing by half a point on 3.5/4. In the C Grade, Jiang also extended his winning streak, this time beating 5th seed Thomas Gothorp.

Dive and Ang faced off against each other in the penultimate round, with the latter ending up on top. With the win, Ang overtook Dive in the standing with 4.5/5. Jin and Liu, in the meantime, caught up to Dive by defeating Hwang and Braganza, respectively. In the B Grade, Membrere was held up to a draw by Kelvin Wang, allowing Hettiarachchi to narrow the distance between them to half a point with a win over Tejasvi Kichavadi. In the C Grade, the leader, Jiang, also drew, moving to 4.5/5. He was

trailed by two players on 4/5, Martin Zhou, who Jiang just drew, and Eunkyeol Han, who upset 1st seed Karl Holdo.

Going into the last round, Ang was in sole lead. Scoring a draw would guarantee him at least a share of first, while winning his last game would mean he place 1st outright. Ang ended up beating Liu, one of the players on 4/5, while Dive and Jin drew, meaning Ang won the event outright, leaving Dive and Jin with a share of 2nd place. Two players on 3.5/5, Mario Krstev and Qin, also won to join Dive and Jin in 2nd equal. In the B Grade, the leader, Membrere, also won his last game while his closest chaser, Hettiarachchi, lost to Tao. Those results meant that Membrere was the B Grade champion, with Hettiarachchi and Tao shared 2nd on 4/6 as Kelvin Wang, who was on 3.5/5, lost his last game. The results were similar in the C Grade, where Jiang won against Jayden Huang to finish in 1st place with 5.5/6. Zhou beat Han to finish 2nd with 5/6, while Oliver Zhao beat Anne Guo to round out the podium with 4.5/6.

Answers from left to right

1) **1... Qb3!! 2. Kb1** The best try for White (2. Qc3 Qxc3 3. bxc3 Nge7+- is a positional disaster.) (2. cxb3 There comes an extremely aesthetic mating pattern! 2...Nxd4+ 3. Rc2 (3. Kd2 Rc2#) (3. Qc3 Nxb3#) 3... Rxc2+ 4. Kb1 Rc1+! 5. Ka2 (5.Kxc1 Nxb3#) 5... Bb1+ 6. Ka1 Nxb3# beautiful!) **2... Ne5!!** The second brilliant move. Without this, the Qb3 move would've been futile. This knight jump attacks c2, and also prevents the defensive move Bd3 **3. Bb5+** The only way to keep resisting (3 dxe5 Rxc2 4. Rxc2 Bxc2+ 5. Kc1 Bxd1! 6. Qxd1 Qxe3+ This was the point - bishop is hanging) **3... Qxb5 4.dxe5 Ne7+-** Black is positionally crushing - White has holes in their position, everywhere.

2) **1. Rh4! Nf7** (1... Nf5 2. Rh5+-) (1... Ng8 2.Rh8+-) **2. Rh7! Nd6** (2... Ne5 3. Ra7 Nb6 4. Ra5+ Kd6 5. c5+ +-) (2... Ng5 3. Rh5+-) (2... Nd8 3. Rh8+-) **3. Ra7! Nb6! 4. Rc7#** A picturesque finish!

3) **1... Re6!! 2. Nxe6 Bf5+** (2... Bxe6+?? 3.Kg1 Qh2+ 4. Kf1 Bg3 5. Bxh7+! Kxh7 6.Ke2) **3. Kg1 Qh2+ 4. Kf1 Bg3! 5. fxg3 Bh3#** 0-1 Black wins

4) **1. Bg5!** (1. g4? Qxe2 2. Qg3 h5+-) (1. Nb2!? Qb7! 2. e4 Rc6 3. Nc4 Qa8!!-+) **1...Qb7!** (1... h6 2. Racl! Ra8 3. e4 hxg5 4. exd5 Qxd5+ 5. Qxd5 exd5 6. Rfel+ +-) (1...Rc6? 2. Racl!+-) **2. e4 Rc6 3. Nc5!! Rxc5** (3... Rxd6? 4. Nxb7 Rb6 5. exd5 Rxb7 6.Rfc1+-) **4. exd5 Qxd5+ 5. Qxd5 Rxd5**

6.Racl 0-0 7. Be7 Rb8 8. Rfd1 Draw

5) 1. Rb8? "Here, Ljubojevic thought for half an hour. This is understandable, since a draw would bring him only partial success, whereas the weakness of the a7-pawn gives grounds to hope for more. I don't deny that I was also nervous! 'OK, draw!' said Ljubojevic suddenly, and played Rb8 1/2-1/2. This shows his excellent tactical feel!" - Mikhail Tal (**1.Rd7!** should have been played (for a win), if Ljubojevic had spotted the uncanny refutation **1... c2** (1... Bc5 2. Rc7 Bd4 3. Rc4 Be5 4. Ke3 White brings the king over and is simply winning. 4... Kc2 5.Rc6 g5 6. f4 gxf4+ 7. gxf4) **2. Rxa7** White was winning. However, they noticed Black could play **2... Ba5! 3. Rb7! Kd2 4. Rd7+ Kc3 5. Rd6?** (5. a7!! was missed by both legends. This amazing move even allows Black to promote, but once again the beauty of geometry in chess is unveiled. 5... c1=Q 6. Kg2!! Black has no way to stop the promotion of the pawn.) **5... Kb3!** and Black wins due to a subtle mating net: 6. Rc6 Bc3 7. a7 c1=Q 8. a8=Q Qh1+! 9. Ke2 Qe1+! 10. Kf3 Qe4#) **1... Bc5 2.Rc7 Bd4 3.Rc4 Be5 4. Ke3** White brings the king over and is simply winning. **4...Kc2 5. Rc6 g5 6. f4 gxf4+ 7. gxf4 +-**

6) **1... Nc5!! 2. Rc2** (2. Qxc5? Bf8+-) (2.dxc5 Bxc3+-) (2. Be2?! Ne4 3. Rc2 Nxc3 4. Rxc3 Bf8 5. c5 (5. Qb2 Bb4+-) 5... f6=+) **2...Ne4 3.Na4** (3. Nxe4 dxe4 4. Nd2 f5 5. c5 f4 6.Nxe4 (6. exf4 Qxd4 7. Rc4 Qal+ 8. Rc1 Qd4) 6... O-O 7. Qc1 fxe3 8. Qxe3 (8. fxe3 e5)) **3... Bf8 4. Qb2 Bb4+**