

# Chess Aotearoa

February - April 2024

Volume 2, Number 2

**CHES AOTEAROA MAGAZINE**

## Commonwealth Wins & NICC Picket Fence



### Foreword

Many events happened in the past three months, producing results such as Bob Smith becoming the Commonwealth Senior Champion and a stunning picket fence by Anthony Ker at the North Island Championship, which are all covered in this issue.

We are trying to include more variety when it comes to the type of articles we publish. In this issue, we welcomed submissions on creative knight tours, the personal experience of joining a new club, and interviews with strong players.

Enjoy! – Weiyang Yu



### Interviews with Commonwealth Champions

Read our exclusive interviews with newly-crowned Commonwealth Senior Champion and Runner-up, FM Bob Smith and CM Helen Milligan, on page 7 to learn about their experiences overseas and advice on playing in such events!

**Published seasonally; February, May, August, November**

Please send best game entries and articles submissions to [chessmagnominations@gmail.com](mailto:chessmagnominations@gmail.com).

For any issues or queries regarding the puzzles, please contact Felix Xie at [felix2008xie@hotmail.com](mailto:felix2008xie@hotmail.com).

### **Editorial**

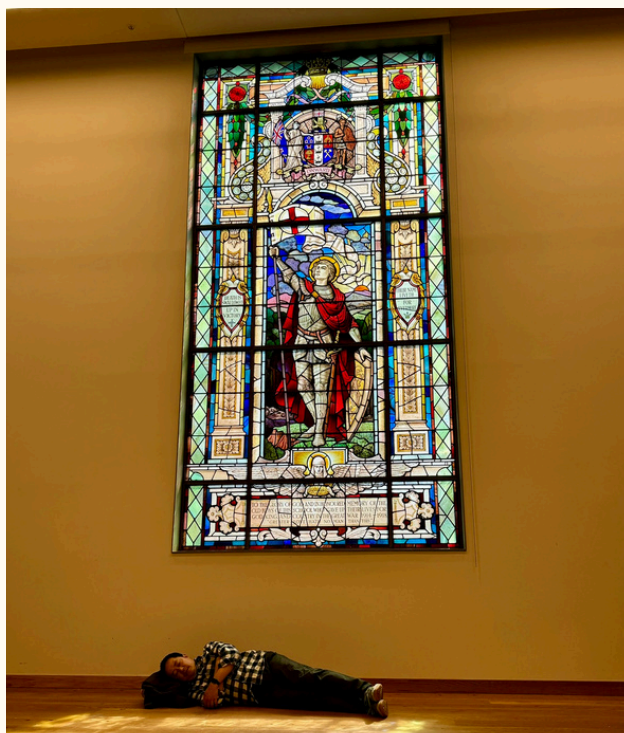
Founder: Weiyang Yu

Executive Team: Weiyang Yu, Charlotte Ray, Anya Thurner, Tyne Grant, and Michael Sole

Commonwealth photos were provided by Helen Milligan; NICC photos were provided by Timothy Ha and the NZCF Facebook page.

### **On the cover**

Congratulations to IM Anthony Ker for his picket fence result at the North Island Chess Championships!



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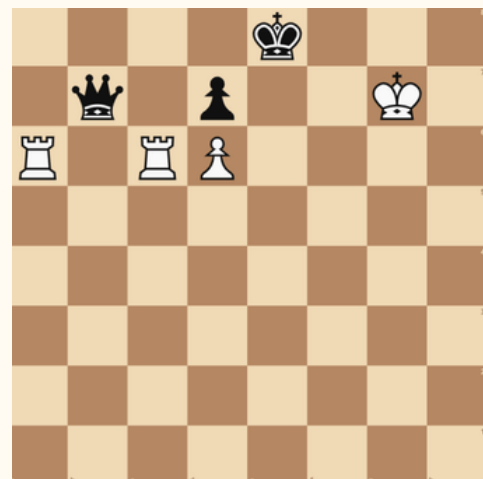
White to move and win  
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White to move and win  
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Black to move and win  
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White to move and win  
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White to move and win  
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White to move and win  
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## **Auckland Anniversary Weekender**

27th - 29th January 2024

Auckland Chess Centre, Auckland

90+30 6-round Swiss

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

## **Auckland Waitangi Weekender**

3rd - 6th February 2024

Auckland Chess Centre, Auckland

90+30 6-round Swiss

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

## **12th Hawke's Bay Rapid**

10th February 2024

Greenmeadows East Community Hall,  
Napier

25+5 6 round swiss

1st place (5/6): Briene Membrere, Kayden  
Loke

## **18th Bay of Plenty Rapid**

24th February 2024

Bible Chapel, Arataki, Mount Maunganui

25+5 6 round swiss

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

## **Latvian Rapid**

16th March 2024

Te Tuhi Centre of the Arts, Auckland

25+5 6 round swiss

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

## **North Island Championships**

29th March 2024 - 1st April 2024

Alan Gibbs Centre, Wellington College

90+30 8 round swiss

1st place (8/8): IM Anthony Ker



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# Upcoming Tournaments

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Leo Malcolm

## **Summit Rookie/Junior Rapid (May)**

5th May 2024

Alexandra Park, Epsom, Auckland

<1800, <1000

15+5 6 round swiss

NZCF-rated (<1800 also FIDE-rated)

## **Canterbury Junior Chess Series #4**

5th May 2024

Canterbury Chess Club, Christchurch

15+5 5 round swiss

NZCF-rated

## **Arie Nijman Memorial 2024**

17th - 19th May 2024

Crockfords Bridge Club, Christchurch

90+30 6-round Swiss

NZCF and FIDE-rated

## **Chess Power SuperChamps**

26th May 2024

Eden Rugby Football Club, Auckland

25+5 6-round Swiss

>1000, <1000, <700 grades

## **46th Trusts Open**

1st - 3rd June 2024

Te Pai Centre, Henderson, Auckland

90+30 6-round Swiss

A, B, C, and Junior grades

NZCF and FIDE-rated

## **Kapiti Rapid**

June 8th 2024

Te Raukura ki Kapiti, Paraparaumu

25+5 6 round swiss

Grades determined by the number of entries

NZCF and FIDE-rated

## **Otago Winter Rapid**

9th June 2024

Otago Chess Club, Dunedin

20+5 Bronstein 6 round swiss

NZCF-rated

## **Upper Hutt Rapid**

22nd June 2024

Hutt International Boys School, Trentham

25+5 6 round swiss

A and B grades

A grade NZCF-rated

## **Peter Stuart Memorial 2024**

28th - 30th June 2024

Venue TBC

90+30 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE-rated

## **2024 South Island Championship**

10th - 13th July 2024

Christchurch Multicultural Recreation and Community Centre

90+30 8 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE-rated

## **2024 South Island Rapid Championship**

14th July 2024

Christchurch Multicultural Recreation and Community Centre

25+5 6 round swiss

NZCF and FIDE-rated

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# Otago Autumn Rapid, In Brief

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Tyne Grant

Otago's Autumn Rapid brought in a field of twenty-one players, and the two prize grades made for many winners on the day. Quentin Johnson fought his way to a score of  $5\frac{1}{2}/6$ , not quite enough to build a picket fence, but the perfect amount to pull ahead of the rest of the competition to become the lone winner. Following closely behind, on an excellent  $5/6$ , were Olefsandr Nedyhalov and Oscar Lobb, the latter making for a very exciting final game - taking advantage of his opponent's blunder despite significant time pressure. Lobb's result was very impressive considering the strength of those he played. A notable mention was Rommel Ong, who narrowly missed out on a place due to Lobb's swindle, on  $4\frac{1}{2}/6$ .

In the U1500 grade, the final round began with Naoki Kozakai, Tyne Grant, and Conor Kerr all on three points (as well as Samson Kazakov and Aidan Dixon among others on two). Beating Kerr, and due to Kozakai's loss to North Shore's Juni Aguilar, Grant ended up winning the grade, followed by the almost-alliterative Kozakai, Kerr, Kazakov, and Dixon on  $3/6$ . Noah Wilson also joined this group, saying in an 'interview' that the rapid was "Noah Wilson's best tournament yet, and I beat Raymond". This was a great start to the seasonal rapid calendar, as well as Noah's chess career. The next seasonal event will be the Winter Rapid, on the 9th of June.

We interviewed Commonwealth Senior Champion and Runner-up FM Robert Smith and CM Helen Milligan on their experience in Malaysia earlier this year. This is what they had to say.

## **Bob**

**Could you provide a summary of how your tournament went and your overall experience?**

Ideally I would have arrived a bit earlier for the Commonwealth Chess Championships in Melaka. As it was I touched down in Kuala Lumpur the day before the tournament began and was undoubtedly affected by jet lag in the early rounds.

One thing I hadn't been prepared for was the "no-shorts" rule, which was not advertised in the tournament rules. After two rounds of comfort the arbiters suddenly clamped down, insisting that players wear long trousers and shoes. They also banned any bags from the playing room. The officious arbiter of my section was not amused when I pointed out some players still had bags by their boards and some women were wearing open-toed shoes. In conjunction with the Chief Arbiter he eventually agreed I could have a bag by my board, but then promptly reneged on this agreement. Whether this argy-bargy affected my chess I'm not sure.

I still managed to draw with a Grandmaster, but also butchered a couple of winning positions. The most notable comi-tragedy was against a teenage girl I called "the sleeper".

She would make a move and then appear to go to sleep, resting her head on the table. I once had to ask her to move her hair off the board. Remarkably, she always "woke up" in time for her move. Pressing for a win I sacrificed a piece for two pawns in the endgame. The sacrifice was sound and I was almost certainly winning. But I used up a lot of time and at a critical point there was a huge commotion involving an arbiter nearby. My concentration disturbed, I quickly made a move and immediately realised it was a blunder. I could still have drawn but had lost the thread and even managed to lose the game.

After this I was pessimistic about my tournament chances. However, I decided to fight on and just try to play some decent chess. I somehow pulled myself together and managed to do that, winning the last two games to surprisingly head off my main rivals for the Commonwealth Senior title.

I would say my play in the tournament was like a curate's egg: good in some parts and bad in others. Overall I mostly enjoyed the event, which proved that I can still play good chess from time to time.

**Do you have a standard routine or way to prepare for a tournament and did you do anything differently for this event?**

I didn't do any special preparation before this tournament, apart from looking at a few opening lines. Obviously during the event there was the usual preparation for each individual opponent - if I could find any of their games.

I played quite a few juniors and usually tried to steer away from hugely theoretical lines so that my greater experience would become more important. For instance I noticed that my final opponent was well-prepared in main-line Sicilians, so I varied early and achieved a positionally superior game almost immediately.

**Can you share some of your highlights from the trip? Can be chess-related or otherwise.**

I enjoyed looking round Melaka on a free day, which turned out to be a vibrant and colourful city.

**How did you find the tournament in comparison to tournaments within New Zealand?**

The prize-money (when it was finally paid out) was generous and the tournament was generally run well.

Thanks to the organisers for holding the event.

**Do you have any advice for players looking to play in their first overseas tournaments?**

A word of advice for anyone aiming to play in a tournament like this: do not believe your opponent's published rating. There are a whole lot of underrated juniors out there, so don't take them lightly. Grandmasters were being held to draws by supposed 1600 players!

**Helen**

**Could you provide a summary of how your tournament went and your overall experience?**

It would be an understatement to say I was delighted with my result. My chess was a bit dubious and I made serious and inexplicable errors, but I also benefited from an unusually large amount of luck, managing to save half points which I certainly did not deserve. I struggled against the young players, and I found the schedule tiring - I don't like two rounds a day! I could easily have finished with at least one point less than I did. My final game went up and down quite a bit but even if I had won it, I would still have been second to Bob, on tiebreak, and that would have been fair!

For many years, I have firmly believed that there is no reason for women to be worse at chess than men, and it gives



me great satisfaction to prove that by finishing with a medal or a prize in an Open event such as this. I can't claim to inspire anyone but I hope that people see what I do and think 'if she can do that then I can do better.' Also I love playing events like this and I am very fond of medals!

**Do you have a standard routine or way to prepare for a tournament and did you do anything differently for this event?**

I work as a chess coach, which means evenings and weekends since my students are all schoolkids. That makes it almost impossible for me to play ordinary weekenders any more. Almost all the events I manage to play are big and/or serious overseas events. So, I make sure that my databases (TWIC and Mega) are all up to date, and that I have a plan for internet access (whether I can use roaming, or whether I need to buy a SIM when I get there). In principle I should not be learning new opening lines at the tournament - I should just be checking over stuff I know - but in practice I do make sure I have the material I need to patch up holes!

There are some 'usual suspects' I might meet and I would have a line ready for them...as it turned out, I didn't need that prep for this event!

**Can you share some of your highlights from the trip? Can be chess-related or otherwise.**

There were many highlights! The trip on the free day was brilliant, and I was also lucky enough to be given a tour of the centre by car at night, before the start of the event, by Khairy Jansar, the President of the Melaka Chess Federation. I loved the Dinosaur Encounter at the Zoo. It was great to be able to stuff my face every day with mango and dragonfruit, while drinking teh tarik halia from the supermarket. Nasi lemak for every breakfast was good too!

Last time the Commonwealth was in Malaysia was 1992 and my good friend GM Colin McNab of Scotland was the champion. In the absence of any UK players this time, I was (in my own mind at least!) representing Scotland as well as New Zealand - so maybe Scotland got medals both times!

**How did you find the tournament in comparison to tournaments within New Zealand?**

There are almost zero tournaments in NZ of that calibre. Those that have taken place, such as the Queenstown Opens, suffer from having far fewer helpers and assistants than your typical SE Asian

events. In fact it is remarkable that events like Queenstown managed to run smoothly, and in these modern days of computer cheating, I think NZ would be really struggling to maintain the kind of supervision that is required to keep players and engines strictly separate! It is a sad fact of life that the Commonwealth required multiple assistants to operate metal detectors, impound bags, check in phones, and monitor the route to the toilets. The number of arbiters present in the hall to keep an eye on everything was also high. Added to that, the level of electronic sophistication was considerably above anything in NZ - with the possible exception of the ACC tournament venue when all the boards are wired up! I should probably apologise to the organisers for refusing to use the Clono tablets - particularly ironic as I ran the first event in NZ to make use of Clono!

**Do you have any advice for players looking to play in their first overseas tournaments?**

Obviously it's a very, very long time since I played my first overseas events (as a Scottish teenager). Things were different then! So I need to give you my advice to students rather than my personal experience. And my advice is IGNORE THE RATINGS! (That also applies to parents and family and coaches and friends and neighbours and

your pet cat etc etc). Even within NZ, the ratings are not consistent; they don't give you an accurate assessment of how you might expect to perform. Abroad, the ratings become absurd. Play the board and only the board. It's true that you can make some kind of assessment of the validity of a person's rating, depending on where they are from and how old they are, but if it's your first event then you have not got the experience required to make those judgements. Don't expect anyone to be a patzer OR a superstar. Don't take a draw if you think your position is better. Just play!

Over 300+ players from 11 different countries took part in the Commonwealth Chess Championships 2024, held in Melaka, Malaysia. Out of the 300+ players who participated, six of them were from New Zealand. Yet, even with a small delegation New Zealand's FM Bob Smith and CM Helen Milligan brought home a first and runner-up result in the senior section. This was a huge result for New Zealand on the world stage.

The tournament was split into an open section, which included the U20 and senior sections, and sections for different age groups. The New Zealand delegation included six players:

**FM Bob Smith** - Open Section (Senior)

**CM Helen Milligan** - Open Section (Senior)

**Alexandre de Maupeou d'Ableiges** - Open Section (U20)

**Weiyang Yu** - Open Section (U20)

**Zachary Yu** - U18 Open

**Karthik Sethuramalingam** - U16 Open

Held in the blazing heat of Melaka in Malaysia, the climate along with the gruelling tournament schedule, which included two days of morning and afternoon rounds, made for a very tough tournament. Many players commented that it was very tough to play two rounds a day especially since the competition was unforgiving.

The tournament commenced on the 20th of February at the Melaka International Trade Centre (MITC), but most of the players had arrived before to reduce the impact of jet lag and tiredness. However, for New Zealand players, who had to travel 11 hours to arrive in Malaysia, it undoubtedly was a huge obstacle. The players' meeting took place on the morning of the 20th and players were briefed on the details and given their ID's. The opening ceremony started at 2:30pm Malaysian time (GMT+8) and play soon followed at 3. In the first round, Bob was held to a draw by an underrated Singaporean player and Helen managed to secure New Zealand's first win against a player from the Maldives.

The second round was held at 9am the next day and the 21st of February presented the challenge of two rounds. In the morning Bob made another draw while Helen faced a tough loss against a 2500 GM. When asked about his experience at the tournament, Bob mentioned that the jet lag was strongly felt in the first few rounds as he had only landed in Malaysia the day before the first round. This tournament was also very strong and consisted of 12 GMs, 5 WGMs and 4 IMs! Tournaments like this are very rare around New Zealand, so playing in one is a huge opportunity.

The third round was a highlight for New Zealand as Bob drew 2521 rated GM Visakh N R. This was a huge result! Bob played a mainline Scotch and in the middlegame sacrificed a pawn to split up his opponent's pawn structure. After a complicated middlegame, the pieces eventually fell off the board and although Bob's opponent was pushing, he was eventually held to a draw in a rook endgame after 72 moves.

Helen scored a dominating win against a Malaysian player, with her opponent turning up and playing the Elephant Gambit. Calling the bluff, Helen accepted the gambit. The opening resulted in white giving back the pawn but gaining a critical lead in development. To compensate, Black was forced to double his pawns and create doubled isolated pawns. Black proceeded to make a couple more inaccurate moves leading to an even worse pawn structure. Blacks had doubled isolated pawns on the c and f files and isolated pawns on the an and h files. The next steps were just simple conversion and Helen ended the game in style by letting her opponent take her knight so that she could make a queen. Helen has kindly provided annotation for this exciting game below:

**CM Milligan, Helen (1-0) Tham, Tick Hong Jax**  
**Annotated by Helen Milligan**  
Commonwealth Chess Championship  
2023/24,

## Round 3

Black was one of the main contenders for a Seniors medal - as usual, ratings are not a good guide, and he has a big score against at least one other NZ Senior!  
**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d5** Elephant in the room!

**3. exd5 e4 4. Qe2 Nf6 5. d3 Qxd5 6. dxe4** I don't remember the theory - the Elephant is not something I encounter very often. It's more important to keep making sensible moves, so he doesn't get to use the crazier theoretical lines that he no doubt has at his fingertips.

**6... Qxe4 7. Nbd2** (7. Nc3 Bb4 8. Bd2 Qxe2+ 9. Bxe2 O-O)

**7... Qxe2+ 8. Bxe2**



**8... Bf5** He should start with the other bishop.

**8... Bc5 9. Nd4 Bd7 10. Bf3** Time to untangle the pieces. Black has given me some small targets by playing ...Bf5, and



now he really has to allow his pawns to be weakened.

**10...Nc6 11. Nxc6 Bxc6 12. Bxc6+ bxc6 13. O-O O-O-O 14. Nf3 Bd6** This is inviting me to damage some more pawn structure. Obviously I can't resist!

**15. Bg5 h6 16. Bxf6 gxf6** Now the annotations should say something like 'a matter of endgame technique' but as we all know, I am not going to demonstrate much of that!



**17. c3** A pointless move! I wanted to restrict the bishop and give my knight a safe route to f5, but there was a better way to do that. (17. g3 ticks the boxes.)

**17... Kb7 18. Rfe1 Rhe8 19. Rxe8 Rxe8** One pair of rooks removed, thus removing counterplay. The plan is to keep the other rook to attack weaknesses.

**20. Kf1 c5 21. g3 Kc6 22. Rd1 f5** Black's very sensible plan is to liquidate some

pawns.

**23. c4 f4 24. Rd5 fxe3 25. hxe3 f6 26. Rf5 Re6 27. b3 Kb6** Where is that going?

**28. Ne1 Kc6** OK he changed his mind!

**29. Nd3 a5 30. Rh5** The knight wants to get to d5 and the black bishop is annoying. So, time to attack with the rook.

**30... Bf8 31. Nf4 Re5**



**32. Kg2** (32. Rxe5 It's time to swap rooks. I could not analyse, feel intuitively, or otherwise randomly guess whether the pawn would be better on the f-file or the e-file so I moved the king! 32... fxe5 33. Nd5 Kd6 34. Ke2)

**32... Kd6** (32... Rxh5 33. Nxe5 f5 and White is unlikely to win this.)

**33. Kf3** I get another chance but having moved the king last time I decided to move it again! Here, though, I should

have been able to work out that g6 was a better place for the knight than h5. And that it takes time to get from h5 to g6! (33. Rxe5 fxe5 34. Ng6 Bg7 35. Kf3)

**33... Rxb5 34. Nxb5 Ke5 35. Ke3 Kf5 36. f3 Kg5 37. Nf4 Bd6 38. Nh3+ Kg6 39. g4** (39. f4 f5 is not appreciably better. I was into damage limitation mode now, realising I'd screwed up and might easily lose it.)

**39... f5 40. Nf4+ Kg5 41. Ne6+ Kf6** A very, very long time ago, while I was pondering some 'wishful thinking,' I noticed that the best place for the knight was b7. It was impossible to get to b7 of course. Until now!



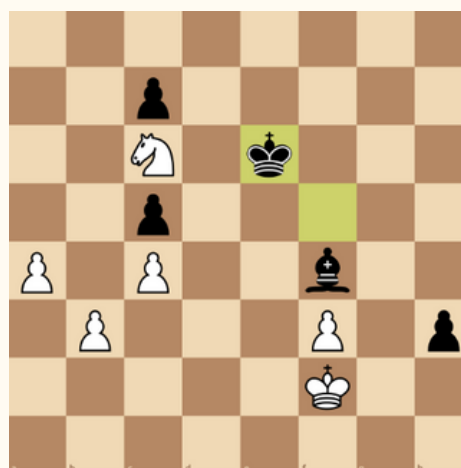
**42. Nd8 Kg5 43. gxf5 Kxf5 44. Nb7 h5 45. Nxa5 h4** Black needs to take care of the white a-pawn! You assume, quite naturally, that your bishop will be perfectly capable of dealing with it. Unfortunately this particular bishop is a bit restricted... (45... Ke6)

**46. Kf2** Meanwhile I am freaking out about the h-pawn, but I have time for a knight move first. (46. Nb7)

**46... h3** (46... Ke6)

**47. Nc6** Strictly speaking, not best, but I wanted to keep those pawns blocked.

**47... Bf4 48. a4 Ke6**

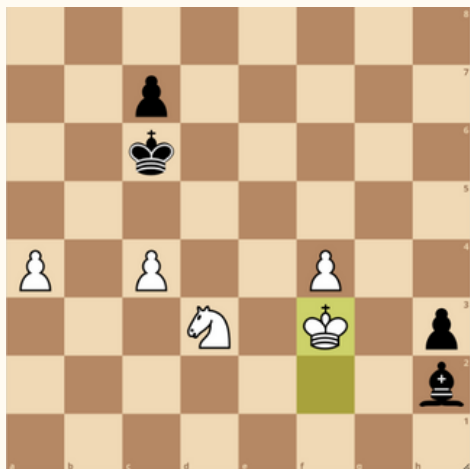


**49. b4** Down to poor analysis. I failed to see the critical move Ne7 in the line with the immediate a5. (49. a5 Kd7 50. Ne7 c6 51. Ng6 Bb8 52. a6 Kc7 53. Ne5)

**49... cxb4 50. Nxb4 Kd6** (50... c6 lets the bishop get back to defend. 51. Nxc6 Be3+ 52. Kg3 Kd6)

**51. Nd3 Bh2 52. f4 Kc6 53. Kf3** (D) Now it's a question of working out whether I will have any pawns left!

**53... Bxf4 54. Nxf4 h2 55. Kg2 Kb6 56. Nd5+ Kc5 57. a5 c6 58. a6 cxd5 59. a7 dxc4 60. a8=Q c3 61. Qa3+ Kd4 62. Qc1**



1-0

Alexandre gave a valiant effort playing a back-and-forth game against a 2062-rated Australian WFM. He played the Schliemann variation against her Ruy Lopez and his opening worked out perfectly. He got a crushing position, but his opponent was tricky and the position slipped out of his hands, ending in a tough loss. This was heartbreaking for Alex but an amazing game nonetheless, demonstrating his ability to use obscure openings to confuse his opponents. Perhaps Praggnanadhaa was inspired by Alex to play the Schliemann against Vidit in the Candidates!

The next day also consisted of two rounds. The 4th round held in the morning was suboptimal for New Zealand with Helen being paired against another GM and Bob facing an unlucky loss against a young WCM from Sri Lanka. Bob's opponent played a strange

opening: 1.d4 Nf6 2.e3 g6 3.Bd3 and proceeded to play f4 to form a stonewall-like structure. Bob played the combative King's Indian Defense and pieces were quickly traded, resulting in an equalish bishop and knight endgame. There was a lot of shuffling, but Bob's opponent finally made a mistake and allowed him to sacrifice his bishop for two pawns. The sacrifice was sound and Black was the one playing for a win. When asked about this game Bob shares that the sacrifice led to him using up a lot of his time and this along with some commotion in the playing hall, led to a lapse of concentration and Bob unfortunately blundered and lost the game.

The afternoon round was very unlucky for the New Zealand team as Helen was paired against Weiyang and Bob was paired against Alexandre. Weiyang held a calm draw against Helen and Bob beat Alexandre. Alexandre played another Schliemann against Bob and the resulting position was filled with chaos. After the opening battle the position, white was the only one playing for a win as Black's king was extremely vulnerable. Bob was able to put pressure on both sides of the board, stretching Black's defence and ruining Black's pawn structure. After some exchanges, Bob emerged a full rook up in an endgame and proceeded to convert.

The next day contained only one round, which was a relief for many players and resulted in two quiet draws for Helen and Bob before the rest day.

Round 7 brought some decisive results with Helen winning a very nice attacking game. The opening, which was an Italian, was back and forth but Helen's opponent, playing as black, decided to lash out with g5. This allowed Helen to get a nice knight outpost on f5, which Black had lost control over. Helen secured the advantage by sacrificing a piece on g5 for a checkmate. Her opponent sensibly did not accept the sacrifice and Helen was just a clean pawn up with Black's pawn structure in ruins. She proceeded to clean up and convert the advantage into a point.

Bob's game, on the other hand, did not go his way and he was on the side facing sacrifices. After a cutting-edge opening against the Sicilian, it felt like Bob, playing as White, was the one in control of the position but as the game progressed and pieces were exchanged, White's previously active pieces were now oddly positioned. White was slightly worse, but then Black played a killer sacrifice followed by a sequence of checks winning 3 pawns and a queen for 2 rooks. The resulting position was a rook, bishop and a couple of pawns against Black's passed pawns, escorted by the queen. White resigned in a few

more moves. This was an unlucky result for Bob as he had gotten a very active position out of the opening.

In the next round, however, Bob came to fight. Playing against a Malaysian youngster as black he faced an extremely aggressive opening. His opponent pushed his d-, c- and b-pawns to the fourth rank against Bob's King's Indian Defense. Out of the opening, White had a dominant space advantage in the queenside and was ready to roll his phalanx of pawns into the queenside. However, in doing so, he allowed Black to lock down the centre and shoot his h-pawn all the way to h3, forcing White to create weaknesses by pushing his pawn to g3. White had no access to the kingside and all his forces were directed towards the queenside, but White had nothing to attack on the queenside, so Black had no reason to acknowledge the attack. Black's forces were all pointed towards white's cluttered, weak kingside. In a desperate attempt to survive, White began opening up the position and trading pieces but failed to realise that Black could just bring in his queen and threaten checkmate. White was forced to give up a piece and trade queens and resigned in a few more moves. Helen made a pleasant draw with the black pieces, giving her a chance to fight in the last round as White.



**Muraley, Rittesh (0-1) FM Smith, Robert**

**Annotated by Leo Malcolm**

Commonwealth Chess Championship  
2023/24,  
Round 8

**1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. b4** An unusual third move which doesn't seem to do much except weaken the a1-h8 diagonal and limit the development possibilities of White's dark-squared bishop; it will almost certainly have to go to b2 now.

**3... Bg7 4. c4 d6 5. e3 O-O 6. Be2 Nbd7 7. O-O e5** One of the typical king's Indian pawn breaks, Black looks to take a piece of the centre and possibly force matters on the long diagonal.

**8. Bb2 e4**



**9. Nfd2 Re8 10. Nc3 Nf8** Black tucks away the knight for now, and prepares to counter Qc2 with Bf5.

**11. Qb3 h5** Black is solid on the queenside, as c5 can always be met with

d5 and a quick counterattack is facilitated by Black's well-populated kingside.

**12. Rac1 h4 13. Rfd1 h3** White underestimates the power of the seemingly tame h-pawn thrust, after 14. g4 the f3 square becomes a huge weakness.



**14. g3 N8h7** Black begins developing his remaining pieces and White's queenside play achieves too little too slowly.

**15. d5 Ng5 16. c5 Bg4** Forcing a key defender of f3 off the board.

**17. cxd6 cxd6** The logical recapture as 17... Qxd6 would run into 18. Nb5.

**18. Bxg4 Nxg4 19. Nb5 Qd7** A crushing double attack which threatens both Qxb5 and Qf5 with a game-ending attack: if 20. Nc3 Qf5 21. Rf1 Nf3+ 22. Kh1 Nxd2 for example.

**20. Bxg7 Qxb5 (D)** perhaps White

missed this and assumed Black would recapture on g7 first - now Kxg7 and Qe2 are both winning threats.



**21. Qc4 Qxc4 22. Rxc4** (22. Nxc4 Kxg7 Nxd6 would have at least given white something to play for.)

**22... Kxg7** Down a full piece, White doesn't play on much longer.

**23. Rc7 Rab8 24. Rd7 Red8 25. Re7 Kf8 26. Rc7 Rdc8 27. Rdc1 Rxc7 28. Rxc7 Nf6 29. Rc4 Re8 30. a3 Re5 31. Rc8+ Kg7 0-1**

In the last round, Helen had a very back-and-forth game which ultimately ended in a draw. Now it all depended on what happened on Bob's board to decide the standings of the senior section. Bob's opponent was well prepared in the Sicilian Defense and Bob had known this, so immediately on move 3 after 1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 e6, Bob as white played 3.f4! This was an attempt to take the Singaporean youngster out of theory

and into a deep dark forest where Bob's experience would prevail. Immediately, Black made an inaccuracy and allowed White to double Black's c-pawns without much compensation. Black tried to use the open b-file to get active, but White built up a brick wall with pawns on a4, b3 and c2. Like in Bob's previous game, his opponent had no access to the kingside. Further diminishing black's piece coordination, the knight for bishop trade which white had done early in opening proved to be effective; Black's light-squared bishop was useless as six out of white's eight pawns were on light squares. Bob used the threat of a kingside attack to force a response from Black and proceeded to trade down into a queen and bishop endgame. Black's pieces were tied down defending weak pawns and this allowed White's pieces to pose problems. Forced to defend against the threat of checkmate, Black had to give up a crucial pawn on the a-file, allowing White an outside passed pawn. In a desperate attempt to somehow force a repetition, Black decided to sacrifice a bishop. This sacrifice was not effective and black resigned soon after when faced with the inevitable threat of checkmate.

**FM Smith, Robert (1-0) Siddharth, Sai**

**Annotated by Leo Malcolm**

Commonwealth Chess Championship 2023/24,



pawn and White has plenty of time to optimally position his pieces.



**29. Ree1 Rab8 30. Qd3 Ra8 31. Rf3 Qc6 32. Qe4 Qc7 33. Kg1 f5** Black is impatient to advance matters and now the e file presents itself to White, with the pawn on e6 becoming a bit of a target.

**34. exf6 Bxf6 35. g3 Bg7 36. Rf2 Rad8 37. Qd3 Qb6 38. Rfe2 Kh8 39. h4 Rd6 40. Rh2 e5** Black makes the most of the opportunity to ditch the weak pawn, but lots of trades will follow and the opening of the position favours White.

**41. fxe5 Rxe5 42. Rhe2 Rde6 43. Rxe5 Rxe5 44. Rxe5 Bxe5 45. Qf3 Qd8 46. Bxa5** A nice tactic overloads the queen which needs to remain preventing the threat of Qf8#.

**46... Qe7 47. Bd2 Kg7 48. Kg2** With the passed a-pawn this is a straightforward win for White and Black cannot hold on for much longer.

**48... Bf6 49. a5 Qe6 50. Kf2 Qh3 51. a6 d3 52. c3 Bxh4 53. gxh4 Qh2+ 54. Ke3 Qe5+ 55. Kxd3 Qd6+ 56. Qd5 Qxa6 57. Qd7+ Kg8 58. Bh6 1-0**

The last two wins secured Bob the title of Commonwealth Senior Champion with a score of 5.5/9. He was closely followed by Helen, who finished second on 5/9 bringing home a first and runner-up result for New Zealand. Weiyang, Alexandre and Karthik finished on 4/9 and Zachary finished with a commendable score of 5.5/9.

All the players enjoyed the event and when asked about what advice they would give to young players participating in overseas events they both said that the biggest piece of advice when participating overseas is to completely ignore the ratings of opponents. Even in New Zealand ratings can be inaccurate as they depend on the frequency of how much someone plays but overseas their inaccuracy exponentially increases. A 1700 player in one area might not be a 1700 in another area. A great example of this is the difference between Lichess ratings and Chess.com ratings.

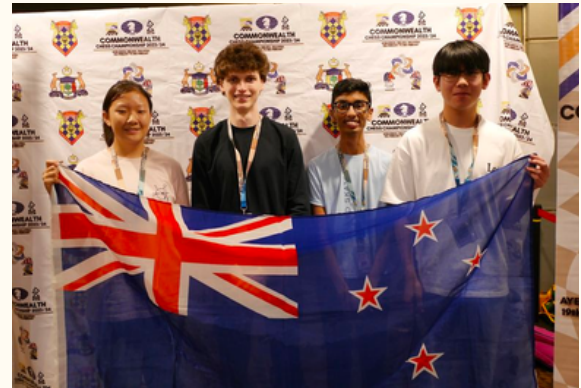
“Play the board and only the board. Don’t take a draw if you think your position is better.” Helen comments.

“There are a whole lot of under-rated



juniors out there, so don't take them lightly. Grandmasters were being held to draws by supposed 1600 players!" says Bob.

After the last round, there was also an 11-round blitz tournament, where Alexandre scored an exciting win over a WGM.



Murray Graham Chandler was born in Wellington and is New Zealand's first and only grandmaster. He achieved the IM title in 1977 by winning the first Asian Junior Chess Championship and the GM title in 1982. He won the New Zealand Chess Championship three times, the Commonwealth Championship twice and a number of major tournaments. He participated in ten Chess Olympiads – six for England and four for New Zealand. An astonishing curiosity is his lifetime score of two wins, no draws and no losses against Gary Kasparov. He is also known as a chess columnist, chess reporter, writer, editor, publisher and organiser of chess tournaments. He was awarded The New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in 2017 for services to chess. He was born on 4 April 1960 and let us celebrate his 64th birth anniversary with some interesting knight tours on an 8x8 (= 64) chessboard. The knight is a curious piece whose weird-looking move has attracted, enchanted, amused, bemused and confused chess and non-chess players alike, and has not changed since the conception of chess before the 6th century AD in India. The tour of the knight is a fascinating puzzle that is over a millennium old – the oldest record dates back to 840 AD. The incessant work of chess aficionados and mathematicians has created a vast literature spanning over several centuries in various languages. The task

is to move a knight over an empty board in such a way that it covers all the squares in successive jumps, without visiting any square twice. There are zillions of knight tours on 8x8 boards but the 'Figured Tour' of the knight is more fascinating. The name figured tour is appropriate for any numbered tour in which certain arithmetically-related numbers are arranged in a geometrical pattern. For example, Figure 1 is a 'figured tour' of a knight on an 8x8 board. Here all the consecutive square numbers  $1^2, 2^2, 3^2 \dots 8^2$ , that is, 1, 4, 9 ... 64 are along a row and the line segments alternate above and below this row.

|          |          |          |           |           |           |           |           |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 31       | 52       | 13       | 54        | 33        | 58        | 27        | 60        |
| 14       | 11       | 32       | 51        | 28        | 61        | 34        | 57        |
| 3        | 30       | 53       | 12        | 55        | 26        | 59        | 62        |
| 10       | 15       | 2        | 29        | 50        | 63        | 56        | 35        |
| <b>1</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>64</b> |
| 22       | 19       | 6        | 45        | 48        | 39        | 42        | 37        |
| 5        | 8        | 21       | 24        | 17        | 44        | 47        | 40        |
| 20       | 23       | 18       | 7         | 46        | 41        | 38        | 43        |

**Figure 1**

Figure 2 shows the square numbers in star formation, as Murray is indeed a star among chess players.

*Editor's note: the numbers on the chessboard are arranged in a way that allows a knight to travel to every square on the board. For example, in Figure 2, the knight would start on e8 (marked*



by the number one), then move to d6 (number two), e4 (three), and c3 (four). Awani has found knights tours such that the 1st, 4th, 9th, 16th, 36th, 49th, and 64th squares the knight lands on, form a certain pattern if you connect them with lines. For instance, in Figure 1 if you connect these squares with a line, the pattern drawn will be a straight line across the board.

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 17 | 42 | 51 | 38 | 1  | 58 | 53 | 56 |
| 50 | 39 | 16 | 43 | 52 | 55 | 36 | 59 |
| 21 | 18 | 41 | 2  | 37 | 10 | 57 | 54 |
| 40 | 49 | 20 | 15 | 44 | 35 | 60 | 9  |
| 19 | 22 | 45 | 34 | 3  | 8  | 11 | 28 |
| 48 | 33 | 4  | 7  | 14 | 27 | 64 | 61 |
| 23 | 6  | 31 | 46 | 25 | 62 | 29 | 12 |
| 32 | 47 | 24 | 5  | 30 | 13 | 26 | 63 |

Figure 2

Figure 3 to Figure 5 are monogram tours (the movement of the knight creates letters) with square numbers delineating the letters 'M', 'G' and 'C' respectively, the first letters in Murray's name.

Figure 6 and Figure 7 delineate '6' and '4' respectively, the digits in the number 64 - Murray's age. Figure 8 depicts a flower, the universal gesture of love and affection. We love, adore and admire you Murray and wish you a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 6  | 31 | 2  | 11 | 8  | 47 | 62 |
| 32 | 3  | 12 | 7  | 48 | 63 | 10 | 43 |
| 5  | 14 | 1  | 30 | 9  | 44 | 61 | 46 |
| 24 | 33 | 4  | 49 | 64 | 35 | 42 | 51 |
| 15 | 20 | 25 | 34 | 29 | 50 | 45 | 60 |
| 26 | 23 | 16 | 57 | 36 | 39 | 52 | 41 |
| 19 | 56 | 21 | 28 | 17 | 54 | 59 | 38 |
| 22 | 27 | 18 | 55 | 58 | 37 | 40 | 53 |

Figure 3

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 33 | 12 | 5  | 2  | 31 | 38 | 55 | 58 |
| 6  | 3  | 32 | 37 | 56 | 59 | 30 | 39 |
| 13 | 34 | 11 | 4  | 1  | 40 | 57 | 54 |
| 10 | 7  | 36 | 15 | 60 | 53 | 26 | 29 |
| 35 | 14 | 9  | 64 | 25 | 28 | 41 | 52 |
| 8  | 19 | 22 | 49 | 16 | 61 | 44 | 27 |
| 21 | 48 | 17 | 24 | 63 | 46 | 51 | 42 |
| 18 | 23 | 20 | 47 | 50 | 43 | 62 | 45 |

Figure 4

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 10 | 5  | 28 | 3  | 18 | 21 | 30 |
| 6  | 27 | 12 | 17 | 34 | 29 | 2  | 19 |
| 11 | 14 | 9  | 4  | 1  | 20 | 31 | 22 |
| 26 | 7  | 16 | 35 | 24 | 33 | 38 | 43 |
| 15 | 50 | 25 | 8  | 37 | 42 | 23 | 32 |
| 56 | 53 | 36 | 49 | 64 | 61 | 44 | 39 |
| 51 | 48 | 55 | 58 | 41 | 46 | 63 | 60 |
| 54 | 57 | 52 | 47 | 62 | 59 | 40 | 45 |

Figure 5

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 5  | 2  | 7  | 10 | 33 | 14 | 57 | 12 |
| 8  | 17 | 4  | 1  | 58 | 11 | 32 | 55 |
| 3  | 6  | 9  | 34 | 15 | 56 | 13 | 44 |
| 18 | 35 | 16 | 59 | 26 | 45 | 54 | 31 |
| 37 | 60 | 25 | 64 | 53 | 30 | 43 | 46 |
| 22 | 19 | 36 | 49 | 40 | 27 | 52 | 29 |
| 61 | 38 | 21 | 24 | 63 | 50 | 47 | 42 |
| 20 | 23 | 62 | 39 | 48 | 41 | 28 | 51 |

The article is dedicated to GM Murray Chandler and the author wishes to celebrate his 64th birthday. Amen!

Figure 6

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 2  | 11 | 6  | 15 | 42 | 47 | 44 |
| 10 | 7  | 14 | 1  | 48 | 45 | 58 | 41 |
| 3  | 12 | 9  | 16 | 5  | 60 | 43 | 46 |
| 8  | 25 | 4  | 49 | 64 | 57 | 40 | 59 |
| 23 | 50 | 63 | 36 | 17 | 54 | 61 | 56 |
| 26 | 35 | 24 | 53 | 62 | 31 | 18 | 39 |
| 51 | 22 | 33 | 28 | 37 | 20 | 55 | 30 |
| 34 | 27 | 52 | 21 | 32 | 29 | 38 | 19 |

Figure 7

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 2  | 7  | 50 | 43 | 48 | 57 | 52 |
| 8  | 5  | 14 | 1  | 56 | 51 | 42 | 47 |
| 3  | 12 | 9  | 6  | 49 | 44 | 53 | 58 |
| 10 | 31 | 4  | 15 | 64 | 55 | 46 | 41 |
| 27 | 16 | 11 | 32 | 45 | 36 | 59 | 54 |
| 30 | 19 | 28 | 37 | 24 | 63 | 40 | 35 |
| 17 | 26 | 21 | 62 | 33 | 38 | 23 | 60 |
| 20 | 29 | 18 | 25 | 22 | 61 | 34 | 39 |

Figure 8

After making the decision to move from Wellington to Auckland for a mix of work purposes and new experiences, I had a list of items on my priority list, including joining the impressively active chess scene. When a few hectic months had passed in the moving process I decided to play my first tournament in Auckland and first games in some months other than a few casual games in post-work visits to the conveniently located Auckland Central Chess Club (ACCC). I signed up for the long-running Latvian Rapid, one of New Zealand's strongest rapid tournaments, with the large prize fund attracting many strong entrants. Entering the playing hall made the difference in players from Wellington obvious as swarms of young kids and their supportive parents crowded the players' meeting. Starting as the 10th seed, I suffered a swift fall down the list as I succumbed to the dangers of the up-and-coming players of Auckland. The lack of recent games was telling as I continued to fall behind on the clock in the middlegames after gaining positive opening positions, later culminating in a mess of missed forks and pins. The general middlegame strength and tactical awareness of the Auckland players was noticeable with great resistance shown following the opening.

With the conclusion of the rapid and a sizable rating payment to the Auckland

chess scene, some more practice was clearly needed.

I played a few rounds of online leagues and blitz games, coupled with some puzzles and light opening rechecks. Feeling more ready I looked for the local chess clubs around the CBD where I was living, with many great clubs around including North Shore, Summit (host of the monthly Summit Rapids) in Epsom, and the well-known Auckland Chess Centre (ACC) in Mount Eden - not to be confused with ACCC in the CBD. ACC was my choice as it was closer to the CBD where I live and had a high level of competition with FIDE-rated club games, a welcome addition that is nearly exclusive to Auckland.

Auckland Chess Centre was about to host the Autumn Cup, an eight-round accelerated Swiss tournament with the common classical club time control of 75 minutes plus a 30-second increment. With the accelerated Swiss the pairings were going to be much tougher from the first round and resulted in more games against similarly rated players. With a scan of the Vega I saw the exciting player list that included local masters Alphaeus Ang, Alex Huang, and Alex Nagorski, all of whom I had yet to play.

On the first Monday, after a quick turnaround from finishing work and having dinner, I was on my way to the



first round at 7, unsure of what to expect from my new club. The club was located on a side street to the popular Dominion Road, with an unusual arrangement with the club consisting of rooms in a shared house and extensions dedicated to playing. Once I had arrived at the venue I saw a few familiar faces from previous tournaments and ex-club mates, having light-hearted discussions over the then-ongoing Candidates tournament, which helped put my mind at rest.

My pairing for the first round was already a tough pairing in the rising Justin Wang who was fresh off an impressive second-place finish at the North Island Championship in Wellington and was also the victor in our recent game at the Lativan Rapid. This time though, having the white pieces and being in classical, I was hopeful of a better result. After a few minutes of preparation I decided to try something a little bit new to me and play into a Nimzo with d4 instead of facing Justin's French with e4. Like in the rapid games, after I had achieved a strong opening position, Justin was able to fight back and took the game into an imbalanced endgame. The result was decided in the time trouble with some active play allowing my passer to win. Already near the last game to finish, we continued to the analysis where we were joined by Justin's coach Ewen who

also lived at the property. Finally leaving at 11, I made the trip back home following an enjoyable first night at ACC.

## **Sole, Michael D (1-0) Wang, Justin Zhide**

ACC Autumn Cup 2024,  
Round 1

**1. d4 e6 2. c4 Nf6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2** It was my first time allowing the Nimzo OTB but I thought it would be a good choice against Justin with the pressure coming directly from the opening.

**4... b6!?** An uncommon but playable sideline that has been played in the past by top players such as Ding Liren. At the time I was unaware of the soundness of the line and thought it would lead to a quick advantage with e4.

**5. e4 Bb7?** The easy move is too slow and doesn't do anything to challenge white's centre. White is clearly better with natural play in the centre and the results agree. (5... c5! The key move to make this line playable. Black forces a Benoni-type position with great complications in the closed positions that follow. 6. d5 Qe7 7. Ne2 exd5 8. exd5 O-O 9. Bd2 d6 10. O-O-O Ng4 11. Be1 Qg5+ 12. Qd2 Qxd2+ 13. Kxd2 With this being the position following the most popular master moves where Black has good practical play and results.)

**6. Bd3 Bxc3+ 7. bxc3 d6?! With the slower d6, Black does little to prevent White's dream setup. (7... c5 Again c5 was better to contest the centre. 8. Ne2 d6. 9. f4 Nc6 10. O-O Nd7 11. e5 Qe7 12. Ba3 O-O-O Creating a more complex position that should offer Black better chances.)**

**8. Bg5?** A missed chance, failing to continue the initiative with the much more active f4, threatening e5. My thinking was that allowing e5 would be fine in this position as I would have all my pieces out and could then contest the e5 pawn with Ne2 and f4 later. (8. f4! Piling on the pressure and threatening e5. Black has the castle queenside and suffer against the centre.) (8. Ne2 Nbd7 9. O-O Qe7 (9... e5?! 10. f4!) 10. f4 Would have also provided a good advantage.)

**8... e5 9. Ne2 Nbd7 10. O-O O-O 11. Rael** (11. f4 This is the move I wanted to play to continue my plan described before but I saw the following lines that put me off. 11... h6 12. Bh4 exf4 With taking back on f4 difficult to the threat of g5. 13. Nxf4 g5 However the engine approves the sacrifice and gives White the advantage after Bg3. 14. Bg3 gxf4 15. Rxf4 Kg7 16. Qd2 Nh7 17. Rg4+ Ng5 18. Rf1 With White building a strong attack.)

**11... h6 12. Bd2?! Less flexible than Bc1.** My idea was to play Qc1 and threaten ideas of Bxh6 which in combination with Ng3-Nf5 could prove dangerous,

especially if the f file can be opened. However on further investigation this prevents my Queen from getting into the game on the kingside through means like Qe2 or a later Qf2-Qg3 once f4 has been played.

**12... Re8 13. Ng3 Nf8 14. f4**



**14... Ng6 15. fxe5 dxe5 16. d5** (16. Nf5 This was also a strong option and leaves a bit more flexibility in the attack, continuing the described plan. 16... Bc8 17. Qc1 Bxf5 18. exf5 Nf8 19. Re3! Making use of the kingside space with a lovely rook lift that places Black under great pressure. This would have been a far stronger option practically I feel. 19... exd4 20. Rg3)

**16... Bc8 17. h3 Bd7 18. Rf2 Nh7 19. Ref1 f6** Now it is unclear where my attacking plan lies. During the game both Justin and I felt that White must be better but it has become far harder to prove it in this closed position.

**20. Qc1 Ng5 21. Kh2** A bit unnecessary

# Joining a New Club

Michael Sole

as Bxh3 wasn't really a threat but was unsure of a plan here.

**21... Rf8 22. Qd1** (22. c5! Using the space advantage to switch the play and make use of the centre pawns. 22... bxc5 23. Be3 Nf7 24. Bxc5 With a very pleasant position.)

**22... Qe8 23. Be2 Qc8 24. Bg4?**



A poor move that is far too committal. Again Black wasn't threatening anything on h3 due to Bxg5. My idea was to plant a strong knight on f5 that can help build an attack and renew the threats of Bxh6 but this is too tunnel-focused. The kingside pawn weaknesses created will now give Black his own targets and an outpost of his own on f4, ending my attack while having the weakened pawns as targets without the bishop pair to cover them. (24. Rf5? I was looking at this fun move for longer than I realistically should have. I saw the following line which sparked my interest but unfortunately all fails to the simple

Nxe4. 24... Bxf5? 25. Nxf5 Nxe4 26. Bh5 Nxd2 27. Qxd2 Where Black is busted due to the threat of Bxg6 and Ne7+ forking the King and Queen.)

**24... Bxg4 25. hxg4 Qa6** And now my light square weaknesses are getting exposed by Black's active pieces. I was starting to have doubts about my position here.

**26. Qb3 Rae8 27. Be3 Qc8 28. Bxg5** Played quickly as it felt like one of my only options.

**28... fxg5?!** Taking with the h pawn would have likely been better. Black shouldn't have to be concerned about his kingside safety as threats like Rh1 and Kg1 will take too much time. (28... Qxg4 During the game both Justin and I had looked into this move but thought that Bxf6 would give enough for White. However Justin during the analysis mentioned Nf4 which I had overlooked.

**29. Bxf6 Nf4!** With strong threats around my king. White is holding the balance with a few awkward queen moves but poses great problems to me. 30. Qb5 gxf6 31. Nf5 Qh5+ 32. Kg1 As one option for Black.)

**29. Nf5** After being allowed this move I was now quite happy with my position with the better knight and more active pieces. Black will have difficulties in

placing his own knight as both Ne7 and Nf4 will have issues. 29... Nf4 30. g3 30... Nd3? I had suspected that Justin had missed my threat when he quickly played Nf5 (30... g6 31. gxf4 gxf5 32. fxe5 Rxe5 33. exf5 Would have been better with a balanced game.)

**31. Ne7+ Rxe7 32. Rxf8+ Qxf8 33. Rxf8+ Kxf8** The tactic has allowed me to transform the position into a good endgame for me with a queen against a rook and a knight. However there are difficulties with my pawns being hard to advance and Black having no clear weaknesses. To win I will need the involvement of my king to help protect the pawns.

**34. Qa3 Nc5 35. Qxa7 Nxe4 36. Qb8+ Kf7 37. Qc8?** Played in a dubious mix of miscalculation and misevaluation. I had started to have doubts about being able to attack the pawns so was trying to force a draw using Qf5+ and Qc8+. However not only was this a poor decision, I had missed the simple Nd6! (37. Kg2 On reflection this would have been a clear way to an advantage as Black has difficulties advancing his own pawns. 37... Nxc3 Is not to be feared as... 38. d6! cxd6 39. Qxb6 Crashes the Black pawn structure and renews the latent threat of my passed a-pawn.)

**37... Nd6 38. Qa6 e4** At this point I was starting to panic and realise the trouble

that could await me if I didn't play actively enough. At this point with my time running low I had to commit to a plan.

**39. c5 bxc5 40. Qe2 Ke8 41. c4?!** Played quickly, mostly out of fear of Black playing c4 himself. However, that being said, it is hard to find an answer to the simple e3-Re4 plan. (41. Kg2 It was better to keep flexible and continue along the clearly needed plan of improving the king position. 41... c4 Is actually a mistake anyway as a4 proves to be enough of a distraction to weaken the hold on the pawns.)

**41... Kd7** (41... e3 42. Kg2 Re4 43. a4 Nxc4 44. Kf1 This is still holding according to Stockfish but looks deeply unpleasant.)

**42. Kg2 e3**



**43. Kf1 Re8?** A bit overreactive to my threat. Black should have continued to build pressure with the e-pawn with the brilliant... (43... h5! A move that both

Justin and I missed. The point is the secure f5 for the knight and create threats of Nd4 or Ng3. 44. Ke1 h4 45. gxh4 gxh4)

**44. a4 Kc8 45. a5 Kb7?** Now I have managed to achieve counterplay of my own and with this last move Justin allows me to get into his position.

**46. Qb2+ Ka8 47. Qxg7** Coming with the added threat of Qxc7. White is now in a winning position.

**47... Kb8 48. a6 Kc8?** Making things easier for me. Moves like Nxc4 or e2+ would have given me more to worry about.

**49. Qb2** Threatening a7 and Qb8+.

**49... Rf8+ 50. Ke1 Rf2 51. Qh8+ Kd7 52. Qg7+ Kc8 53. Qg8+ Kd7 54. a7** Black resigns. The end of a complex battle with both sides going astray at points and a great first experience in an opening experiment with good chances and interesting play. 1-0



The 2024 North Island Chess championship was between the 29th of March and the 1st of April at the Alan Gibbs Centre in Wellington College. It featured many players from different regions across New Zealand travelling to the capital for one of the most competitive chess events of the year.

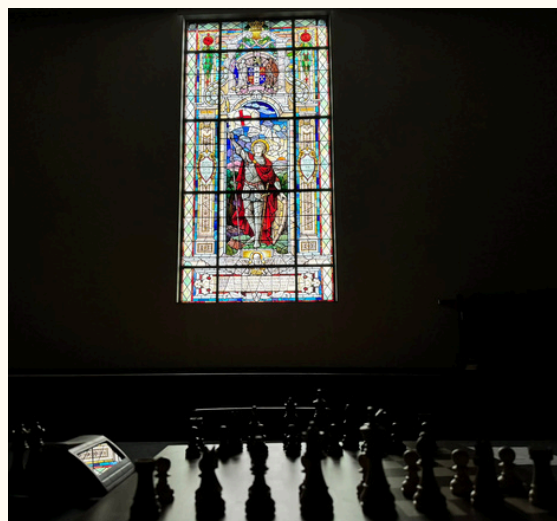
Two juniors who exceeded expectations were Luke Chang and Justin Wang. While Chang suffered a loss to IM Anthony Ker in the third round, he showed his resilience and bounced back in the later rounds of the tournament. After a fourth-round draw against Cazna Campbell, Chang went on to win three games in a row and ended off with a last-round draw against FM Nicolas Croad. His performance highlights the salience of a good mindset to a strong chess performance. Justin Wang only dropped one game to 5th seed Ryan Winter on his way to 6/8, having upset CM Edward Rains and Nick Cummings and drew with the higher-rated Cohen Young and CM Ollie Archer.

Another player worthy of mention is Kayden Loke. His defining moment arrived during the sixth round, where he craftily secured a victory against the formidable IM Russell Dive. Maintaining this momentum, he achieved a seventh-round win against Croad, having initiated the game with 1.a3. Many spectators were shocked by this move

but it eventually worked out in Loke's favour. After this win, he seemed to be unstoppable until he was paired against IM Anthony Ker. Ker ended up winning with a nasty zugzwang in the endgame.

This result secured Ker first place with a perfect score of 8/8, with wins over top ten seeds Archer, Croad, and Winter. Behind him, Loke, Chang, and Justin Wang all finished the tournament with an impressive 6/8 points and tied for 2nd place with Archer and Dive.

For some, the highlight of the tournament was less chess-focused. Wellington College's beautiful stained glass window was very much enjoyed by the players and spectators alike, becoming a hot topic of banter. Timothy Ha, captain of Auckland Chess Centre, skillfully captured many pictures of the said window, as displayed below. In the words of Chess Aotearoa founder Weiyang Yu, "I approve of the window".



**Loke, Kayden (1-0) FM Croad, Nicolas**

**Annotated by Michael Sole**

North Island Chess Championship 2024, Round 7

**1. a3!?** An amusing choice which has its own benefits and can steer the game into different directions where decisions about the inclusion of a3 impacts play. As this can be a helpful tempo in some Black variations, such as 1... e5 2. e4 (2. c4 Nf6 3. d3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. e3 Be7 is a tempo up Sicilian. While objectivity equal, White has scored well from these positions in both amateur and master games.) 2... Nf6 3. Nc3 Bc5 for example, and now White has the Black side of an Italian with the useful move a6 included for free.



**2. Nf3 c5 3. e3 Nc6** Nic continues with his usual White setup of d4-c4-Nc3. The move a3 is of little help here.

**4. Bb5** We have now entered a Nimzo Indian.

**4... Qc7 5. O-O e5!?** An interesting choice by Nic, mixing it up from his usual 5.a3 line he plays as White. This line is typically very forcing and direct and requires accurate play from Black (White here) so was potentially played with the assumption that Kayden wouldn't know the details with him not being a Nimzo player.

**6. d4 e4 7. Ne5 Bd6 8. c4 Nf6 9. cxd5 Nxd5 10. Nd2 Nf6?!** The first deviation from the standard Nimzo theory. Black retreats his knight instead of developing another piece with Bf5 and relieves some pressure. After Bf5 the theory continues in two major branches with Qh5 or Ndc4

**11. Qc2 Bxe5?** This capture is unnecessary and allows White to favourably trade the minor pieces and damage Black's pawn structure with Bxc6.

**12. dxe5 Qxe5 13. Bxc6+ bxc6 14. b3! (D)** Opening up White's minor piece to the long diagonal with the tactical justification of Bb2 and Ra1 if the Rook were to be taken. It's possible that Nic missed this option when evaluating Bxe5.

**14... O-O (14... Qxa1?? 15. Bb2 Qa2 16. Ra1) 15. Bb2 Qf5?!** The natural move and was played quickly by Nic. However this is not accurate as Black can't hold onto the material anyway so it would have



instead been better to play the more active Qg5! 15... Qg5! 16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. Qxc5 Bf5 where the open files provides Black some chances at counterplay.)

**16. Rfc1!** The correct rook. This is better than Racl due to keeping the options of Nf1 and Rab1 to defend b3 in case of Rb8, as well as preventing Ba6 coming with tempo as in the following line. (16. Racl Ba6! Gaining a tempo. 17. Rfd1 Rfd8 18. Bxf6 Bd3 As one possible line, with Black recovering his position.)

**16... Rd8 17. Bxf6 Qxf6 18. Nxe4 Qg6**

**19. Nxc5** Black is in serious trouble now and wasn't able to defend the pawns in the end. Black has to try and quickly push for counterplay but after the moves spent on moving the queen, this will come too late.

**19... Bf5 20. Qe2 Rd5 21. f3?!** Better was the brave e4 to further control the centre with e4 and f4. The slower f3 allows for Black to build up an attack.

(21. e4 Bh3 22. f4! Rd4 Immediately putting Black under pressure and disrupting the coordination. 23. f5 Bg4 24. fxg6 Bxe2 25. gxf7+ Kxf7 26. Ra2 Bh5 27. Kf2 Rad8)

**21... Qf6?!** A slow move that lets White (21... Bh3 22. Ne4 h5 23. b4 Rad8 24. Ra2 For example, was more active.)

**22. b4 Rad8 23. Rd1 Qc3 24. Rdc1 Qe5 25. Ra2 h5 26. e4 Qf4 27. Re1 Rd2 28. Rxd2 Rxd2 29. Qe3 Qxe3+ 30. Rxe3 Be6 31. Nxe6 fxe6 32. Rc3** We have now reached an easily winning Rook endgame with the pawn down many pawn islands for Black being too much to hold.



**32... Ra2 33. Rxc6 Rxa3 34. Rxe6 Rb3 35. Ra6 Rxb4 36. Rxa7 Rb2 37. h4 Kh7 38. Kh2 Kg6 39. Ra6+ Kf7 40. Kg3 Re2 41. Ra5 g6 42. Rg5 Kf6 43. Kf4 Ra2 44. g3 Ra3 45. Rb5 Rc3 46. Rb6+ Kf7 47. Rb7+ Ke6 48. g4 hxg4 49. fxg4 Rc5 50. Rb6+ Kf7 51. Rd6 Ra5 52. Rd5 Ra4 53. Ke5 Ra7 54. Kf4 Ra4 55. Rb5 Rc4 56. Rb7+ Kf8**

57. Ke5 Rc5+ 58. Kf6 Rc6+ 59. Kg5 Re6 60. e5 Rxe5+ 61. Kxg6 Transforming the position into the theoretically winning position. White has two main ways of winning this endgame. He can try and promote the pawns directly or more simply can push for a checkmate and force the trade of rooks.

61... Re6+ 62. Kh5 Kg8 63. g5 Ra6 64. g6 Ra4 65. Kg5 Ra5+ 66. Kh6 Ra8 67. h5 Rc8 68. Rg7+ Kh8 69. Rf7 Kg8 70. Rg7+ Kh8 71. Re7 Kg8 72. Kg5 Rf8 73. h6 Ra8 74. Rd7 Ra5+ 75. Kf6 Ra6+ 76. Kf5 Ra5+ 77. Ke6 Ra6+ 78. Rd6 Ra8 79. Ke7 With White now succeeding in the second approach. A well-played game by Kayden. 1-0

**IM Ker, Anthony F (1-0) CM Archer, Ollie**

**Annotated by Michael Sole**

North Island Chess Championship 2024, Round 4

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Ne5 (D) Anthony's offbeat line against the Caro Kann now gets another feature in the magazine.

5... Nc6 6. Bb5 Bd7 7. Nxd7 Qxd7 8. c3 e6 The first deviation from Anthony's game against Layla. This move sets up a slower game than a6, with the e5 option now less appealing having already spent a tempo on e6. That being said, Black still has a very healthy score in the master

database from here. (8... a6 9. Bd3 e5 10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. O-O Bd6 was seen in Anthony's game against Layla.)



9. O-O Bd6 10. Nd2 a6 11. Bd3 e5 Compared to the previous line above, it is clear that Black has an inferior version of the isolated queen's pawn (IQP). White has now castled and has Nd2 played, while Black only has Bd6 included. As such, opening up the position so directly has not proved successful in the two master games that followed this line. While not objectively losing, this move creates a very unpleasant defensive task that requires very accurate defense to hold. (11... Qc7 12. g3 O-O 13. a4 Rae8 with Black having a few different plans including the positional Ne4-f5 approach or depending on White's responses, a kingside attack with Ne7-h5 or Nd7-e5.)

12. dxe5 Nxe5 13. Nf3 Nxd3 14. Qxd3 White now has a clear target and Black has little activity to show for it.

**14... O-O 15. Be3 b5 16. Rad1 Rfd8 17. Bg5**

A strong move, not being afraid of moving the same piece again. White is targeting the defenders of the IQP to try and win the pawn.



**17...Be7 18. Rfe1** After very natural moves from both sides, White has a clear advantage and Black is barely holding onto the pawn.

**18...Qc7** (18... h6 19. Bh4 Rab8 20. Re5 Rb6 Is the Stockfish line. Accepting losing the pawn already with Bxf6 but in a more active version which is able to be held according to Stockfish. Not a pleasant option to pick as a player. 21. h3 g5 22. Bg3 Bd6 23. Qe3 Bxe5 24. Qxb6 Qd6 25. Qxd6 Bxd6 26. Bxd6 Rxd6 where White maintains the pressure.)

**19. Re5** Missing the chance to directly punish Qc7 with Nd4, threatening Nf5 with both attacking ideas and the idea of Ne3 to win d5 in a more favourable spot. Re5 is however logical and continues to build pressure on Black.

**19... h6 20. Bxf6** (20. Bh4 was another option to keep the tension but transforms the play into a riskier line. 20... d4 21. cxd4 Rxd4 22. Qxd4 Rd8 23. Qxd8+ Bxd8 where the advantage isn't as safe.)

**20... Bxf6 21. Rxd5 Rxd5 22. Qxd5 Rd8 23. Qb3 Rxd1+ 24. Qxd1** White has cleanly won the IQP but now must convert the small advantage on the queenside into a win. This is one of Anthony's specialties.

**24... Qc4** A strong defensive move. Black's Queen is well placed to prevent activity on the queenside now.

**25. a3 a5 26. g3 b4** A mistimed push. Black could have instead held the position with small improving moves such as g6-h5 etc and forced White to find a plan.

**27. cxb4 Bxb2** This fails tactically to the following check. (27... axb4 28. b3 Qe4 29. a4 would also be a winning line for White.)

**28. Qd8+ Kh7 29. Qxa5** (29. bxa5 was cleaner but both are winning.)

**29... Qc1+** (29... Qb3 This could have provided a bit more fight with a less forcing way through for White.)



30. Kg2 Bxa3 31. Qf5+ Kg8 32. b5 Qc7 33. Qd5 g6 34. Ne5 Displaying good technique to use all the pieces in the attack.

34... Kf8 35. b6 Ke8 Black resigns. A clean win from Anthony who punished Ollie's strategic mistake in the opening that created a practical nightmare of a defence. 1-0



The annual Hawke's Bay Rapid was held on the 10th of February at the Greenmeadows East Community Hall in Napier. A total of 38 players took part across three Grades (A, B and Junior).

## **A-Grade (Open):**

A total of 10 players participated in the A-Grade. Although the A-Grade numbers were small, there was no shortage of quality, as FM Stephen Lukey, 2024 Junior Champion Kayden Loke and 2024 Major Open Champion Dion Wilson all participated. Overall, there were five Hawke's Bay locals and five players who had travelled to the event. The top Hawke's Bay local would become the Hawke's Bay Champion.

In Round 1, the notable results were Lukey conceding a draw against Hawke's Bay local Chris Smith, while Chris Burns suffered a loss against Hawke's Bay local Matthew Ashton. The other games went as expected, with Fuatai Fuatai beating Ross McKerras, Briene Membrere beating William Duncan and Loke beating Wilson.

In Round 2, Loke and Wilson demonstrated that they are both underrated in rapid, and that their Congress results were no fluke by beating higher-rated opposition in Fuatai and Duncan, respectively. The other results went as expected, with Membrere beating Ashton, Lukey

beating Chris Burns and Chris Smith beating McKerras.

In Round 3, there were no notable upsets. Membrere took the sole lead of the tournament by beating Loke, which would prove to be an important result. Lukey beat Fuatai, Ashton beat Chris Smith, McKerras beat Wilson and Chris Burns beat Duncan. At the halfway stage, Membrere led on 3/3, Lukey was on 2.5/3 and Loke and Ashton were on 2/3.

In Round 4, Membrere dropped his first points of the tournament by drawing with Lukey. Loke beat Ashton, Wilson beat Chris Smith, Fuatai beat Chris Burns and McKerras and Duncan drew.

In Round 5, Loke was able to move into a share of the lead by beating Lukey, as Membrere was only able to draw against Fuatai. Ashton beat Loke, McKerras beat Chris Burns and Duncan beat Chris Smith.

Heading into Round 6, Membrere and Loke were both in the lead on 4/5. while Ashton (3/5), McKerras (2.5/5) and Wilson (2/5) could still become the Hawke's Bay Champion. Ashton caused the most notable result of the round by achieving a draw against Lukey. The other games went as expected, with Loke beating McKerras, Membrere beating Wilson, Fuatai beating Duncan and Chris Burns winning the battle of

the Chris's against Chris Smith.

Overall Membrere and Loke both finished in a share of first on 5/6, with the former's win over Loke in Round 3 giving Membrere the superior head-to-head record and hence the overall title. Lukey, Fuatai and Ashton all finished in a share of third on 3.5/6, with Lukey winning the prize money due to his superior tiebreak score. Ashton's effort was enough to be the highest-placed local player and win the title of Hawke's Bay Champion.

## **B and Junior Grades:**

The B and Junior Grades mostly consisted of Hawke's Bay locals, many of whom were playing in either their first or second NZCF tournament. Most of the players in the B-Grade were rated under 1500, with only Napier local Magnus Macfarlane and Wellington player Michael Ashe being rated over 1500. In total 15 players played in the B-Grade.

Asher Riley improved on his second place in last year's Hawke's Bay Rapid by winning the B-Grade this year with a perfect score of 6/6. Adam Harris came second with 4.5/6, only losing against Riley and drawing against Ashlee-Deanna McNabb (who came third). There was a five-way tie for third, with McNabb, Macfarlane, Ashe, Rayyan Hafiji and Ariel Patdu all scoring 3.5/6.

McNabb won the prize money due to her superior tiebreak score.

The Junior Grade consisted of 13 players, all of whom were rated under 1000. It finished in a three-way share of first with Ethan Evans winning on tiebreaks over Aarush Khanolkar (second) and Eunkyeol Han (third). All three players scored 5/6.

## Auckland Anniversary Weekend

The 2024 Auckland Anniversary Weekender featured a field of 51 players, with two FMs, Alphaeus Wei Ern Ang and Leonard McLaren, as the top seeds.

The first round started dramatically with two big draws on the top four boards, one between Jacob Barry and McLaren, and the other between Oliver Zhao and Markis Yao Zen Tew, who was the fourth seed. Both these games saw more than 500-point underdogs (prior to the March FIDE rating adjustment) hold their own, but there was also drama on the first board, when the almost 1000-point Uri Mayer put up massive resistance against the top seed Ang, though Ang eventually prevailed on the White side of the Nimzo.

In the second round Ang and Kayden Loke finished off their lower-rated opponents on the top two boards, both playing provocatively with the Modern and Pirc, while there was a slew of draws on boards 3 to 6.

In round 3 Tew and McLaren came back into the picture with wins on boards three and four respectively. Tew had to face the Polish (also known as the Sokolsky or the Orangutan), and

successfully employed an opening trick I first heard from Richard Christie, who, in conversation with the occasional 1.b4 user Atlas Kerr, said Black can “just play the London System” against the offbeat line. Loke, meanwhile, was held to a draw by Baraa Zara and his English Defence. A win for Ang put him in clear first with a large pack behind on 2.5 points.

Moving into the second half of the tournament, Round 4 saw Ang secure another win, while Tew and McLaren took clear second after Loke conceded another draw to Patrick Di Jiang. This set up two very consequential pairings in round 5, with Ang facing McLaren and Tew facing Loke, who had dropped back into a large pack on 3 points. Ang won without much trouble, but Loke-Tew was a longwinded affair which began as an unorthodox Alapin Variation. The game reached a dead equal knight endgame, where Loke inexplicably blundered a pawn, allowing Tew to achieve a winning queen and knight versus queen endgame. But the drama was not over there as, in trying to promote another pawn, Tew got his king into trouble, was forced to sacrifice his extra queen, lost his extra knight, and suddenly had to defend a queen and pawn endgame, where he eventually crumbled.

## FM Ang, Alphaeus (1-0) FM McLaren, Leonard

Auckland Anniversary Weekender  
2024,  
Round 5

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. g3 Bb7 5. Bg2 Be7 6. O-O O-O 7. Nc3** This is a very important tabiya in the Queen's Indian Defence which has been played in tens of thousands of games.

**7... Ne4** This is the main move, with the intention of exchanging a pair of minor pieces and in some cases supporting a light-squared strategy involving ...f5.

**8. Bd2** (8.Qc2 used to be White's preference, but the line Ang plays has become a trendy alternative in recent years. Though it seems unusual for White to offer Black the bishop-pair, it is sometimes difficult to develop the bishop more usefully in this structure.)

**8...f5** This has been Black's most popular continuation supporting the knight on e4 and trying to lay some claim to the central light squares.

**9. d5** Ang continues to follow the theoretical main line. This double-edged move hinders Black's control of the central light squares, but also breaks up the White centre somewhat, giving Black the c5-square as a future post for a knight.

**9...Bf6** Still following theory, McLaren intensifies pressure on the c3-square.

**10. Qc2!?** Ang deviates from the main line here. over 400 games have seen 10.Rc1, whereas 10.Qc2 has been played less than 50 times in my database. (10. Rc1 Na6 The knight targets weak dark squares on b4 and c5 11. a3 c5!?! This is a rare but interesting move, which seems to provide Black with some dynamic equality.)

**10... Nxc3?!** Probably the wrong capture for Black to make. As in the Dutch Variation of the Nimzo-Indian, Black does better to exchange the dark-squared bishop for White's c3-knight. This increases Black's relative influence over the central light squares d5 and e4, which the c3-knight was contesting. (10... Bxc3 11. Bxc3 exd5 12. cxd5 Bxd5 While it seems risky to accept White's pawn sacrifice, this is objectively correct and Black should be equal with careful consolidation, something which is supported by the very good score Black has achieved from this position.)

**11. Bxc3 Na6** A thematic method of developing the knight.

**12. Rfd1 Bxc3 13. Qxc3 exd5?!** Releasing the tension here frees up White's game considerably, and is a good example of the general rule that the side with less



space should be more hesitant about resolving central tension. Black obviously intends to try and surround the d-pawn, which for the time being White cannot support with another pawn, but generating pressure via the threat of ...exd5 would have been a more effective version of the same plan as now Black must contend with White's open c-file.



**14. cxd5 Qf6 15. Rac1!** It is now difficult for Black to move the sidelined knight without hanging the c-pawn.

**15...Rac8 16. Qa3 f4 17. b4** Each side makes a pawn lunge, but unfortunately for Black, White's threat is far more apparent.

**17...Qe7 18. d6!?** An interesting idea to shatter Black's pawn structure.

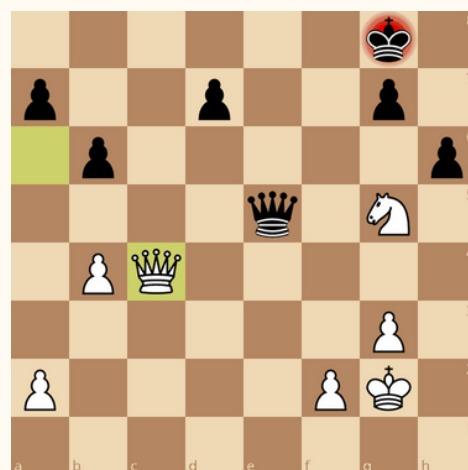
**18...cxd6 19. Rxc8 Rxc8?!** This is the natural recapture, but unfortunately fails in light of White's continuation.

**20. Ng5! d5** Black must close the a2-g8 diagonal, as Qb3+ would be quite decisive.

**21. Bxd5+** This forcing sequence wins material for White.

**21...Bxd5 22. Qxa6 Rc4 23. Rxd5 Qxe2 24. Kg2** Ang calmly steps away from the threats on the back rank.

**24...fxg3 25. hxg3 h6 26. Re5 Qxe5 27. Qxc4+**



McLaren resigned here, as mate will be forced in the next few moves.

1-0

## Loke, Kayden (1-0) Tew, Markis

Auckland Anniversary Weekender  
2024,  
Round 5

Loke-Tew was a long game, so I've chosen to highlight just the critical and interesting endgame section where the game was decided.



**42... Kf8 43. Ne5??** Loke's mistake seems to have been a basic continuity error, missing that after Tew captured the White h-pawn, his g-pawn would be safely defended. This move was played with about two minutes of thought. Significantly, at this stage in the game Loke still had an hour on his clock, while Tew was down to 30 minutes.

**43... Nxh4** Tew jumps at the opportunity, and Loke is suddenly on the back foot and lost.

**44. Kf2** Hoping to isolate and trap the knight on the edge of the board, or at least kick it away from the defence of g6.

**44...Nf5!** This is very accurate, correctly returning the pawn. If instead Black plays ...Kg7 then White gets enough counterplay with Nd7 to potentially hold the game.

**45. Nxc6+ Kg7 46. Ne5 Nd6** The Black knight re-routes itself toward White's vulnerable c-pawn, which cannot be defended by White because ...Ne4 prevents the king's access to d2.

**47. Nc6** Loke correctly tries to chase down Black's weaknesses.

**47...Ne4+ 48. Kf3 Nxc3 49. a3 Na2** Clearing a path for the c-pawn to promote. Tew has so far been extremely clinical.

**50. Ke3 h4** Black reminds White that there are two passed pawns to stop.

**51. Ne5 h3 52. Nf3 Nc3** Having immobilised the White knight Black has time to hunt down the a-pawn.

**53. Kf2 Nb1 54. Kg3 Nxa3 55. Ne1 a5!** Black allows White a passer of their own to create two monster pawns.

**56. bxa5 b4 57. Nc2** White is forced to sacrifice the knight in order to promote their a-pawn.

57...Nxc2 58. a6 b3 59. a7 b2 60. a8=Q b1=Q Both sides promote simultaneously but Black has another passed pawn and an extra knight. The major question is whether White can deliver a perpetual.

61. Qd8 Qe1+ 62. Kxh3 Qe3+ 63. Kg4 Qe2+ 64. Kg3 Qe1+ 65. Kh3 Qf1+ 66. Kg3 Qd3+ 67. Kh4 Qh7+ 68. Kg3 Qd3+ 69. Kh4 Qf5 Tew delivers a series of checks to gain some time on the clock while trying to find a clean win. At this point he is down to 15 minutes, while Loke has 50 remaining.

70. Qc7+ Kg6 71. Qb8 Qf7 72. Qe5 c3?! A small mistake which leaves the c-pawn and knight quite vulnerable, although Black should still be winning comfortably.

73. Kg3 Nb4 74. Qh8 c2 75. Qh6+ Kf5 76. Kf3 Qe7! This move is well found by Tew, and is the only way to avoid a perpetual with Qh3+ and Qh6+.

77. g6 cl=Q??



This promotion however is a blunder, after which White is able to hold a draw. The only move was 77...Nc6, which defends the Black queen, preventing the following tactic.

78. Qh5+ Kf6 79. Qg5+ Kg7 80. Qxe7+ White successfully wins the defending Black queen, and the newly created monarch is too far away to prevent a perpetual.

81... Kxg6 81. Qxe6+ Kh7 82. Qf7+ Kh6 83. Qf8+ Furthermore, Black's unfortunately placed knight drops to an unavoidable fork, meaning that Tew is suddenly on the defensive, though it should still be possible for Black to hold.

83...Kh5 84. Qf5+ Kh6 85. Qg5+ Kh7 86. Qe7+ Kh6 87. Qxb4 Qh1+ Tew begins the process of delivering perpetual.

88. Kg4 Qg2+ 89. Kf5 Qe4+ 90. Kf6 Qxf4+ 91. Ke6 Kg6?



Blundering the game, though Loke must find precise moves in order to take advantage. Tew has 5 minutes left on the clock after this move, whereas Loke still enjoys 45 minutes.

**92. Qc5!** Loke defends his pawn and provides a hiding place for his king on the queenside, trusting that Black's d-pawn will eventually drop anyway. (92. Kxd5? This is probably the move Tew expected, which leads to a simple draw for Black. Qf5+ 93. Kc4 Qf1+ 94. Kc5 Qf8+ 95. Kb5 Qe8+ 96. Kc4 Qe6+)

**92... Qf5+ 93. Kd6 Qf6+ 94. Kxd5 Qf3+ 95. Kd6 Qf6+ 96. Kc7 Qf7+ 97. Kb6 Kg7?!** This move seals things, making it much easier for White to win the game.

**98. Qc7** Tew resigned here, probably too frustrated by the turnaround in the game to try to swindle with 98...Kh8. 1-0

The final round of the tournament saw Ang face Baraa, one of the large pack of players now tied for second place a full point behind him. Ang won this game, making his tournament a perfect 6/6 performance. Loke, perhaps fortunate to have avoided a paring with Ang, secured second place with another Modern win on board 2, while Third was split three ways between Ryan Hwang, Leonard McLaren, Alan Gaynor, and Richard Jingjie Liu.

## Waitangi Weekender

One week after the Auckland's January weekender many of the same players would meet again for the February tournament held on Waitangi Weekend. The field was smaller, with 38 entrants, but the top two seeds Ang and McLaren remained the same. They were joined by WCM Nadia Braganza, who was the third seed and had not played on Auckland Anniversary Weekend. These top three seeds won in the first round, Ang in a Modern, McLaren in the Mieses Variation of the Scotch, and Braganza in a Deferred Alapin. The biggest upset occurred in board 5 between Max Yuehan Xia and Benjamin Guo, when Guo, the rating favourite by 300 points, blundered his e7 pawn and a royal fork on the Black side of an Accelerated Dragon early in the game.

The top three seeds won again in the second round in the Slav, an offbeat Queen's Indian, and the English respectively. Leo Ilias Angelo Baker also scored a second win with an amusing seven consecutive knight moves in a crowded OQA middlegame.

In the third round, the top four seeds met with Ang facing Baker and McLaren Braganza. Baker had already played White against Ang's Modern the week prior, so Ang mixed things up with the Norwegian Rat, a provocative if somewhat dubious line. Ang won an exchange for a pawn early in the game

**Coates, Alex (1-0) Xia, Max Yuehan**

Waitangi Weekender 2024,

Round 3

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3**

The typical Samisch Variation move, overprotecting the e-pawn and in many cases preparing a later kingside pawn storm with g2-g4. This line is one of White's most aggressive ways to handle the King's Indian.

**5... O-O 6. Be3 e5 ...e5** is the most common move in the position, but it may appear like an inaccuracy to those who aren't doctrinally committed to a King's Indian formation with a pawn on e5. The challenge for Black is that their move almost always indicates kingside attacking intentions, but White's setup is optimised to attack the kingside as well, which may mean castling queenside or remaining in the centre. In these cases, Black misses out on their usual trump card; being the kingside aggressor, and for this reason many top players prefer to transfer to the equally complex and interesting Samisch Variation of the Modern Benoni via 6...c5.

**7. d5 a5?!** A normal King's Indian move intending to secure the c5-square for the Black knight, though its usefulness on a square where it attacks the well-defended e-pawn is questionable, and it may be better for Black to try and

accelerate their kingside attack as much as possible with 7...Nh5!?

**8. Qd2** The natural attacking plan for White involves the creation of this battery, followed by a kingside pawn storm, and queenside castling if necessary.

**8...Na6 9. Nge2 Qe7?!** A confusing novelty. It is difficult to understand what caused Black to spend valuable time on this move.

**10. g4** White, I believe rightfully, goes right ahead with the kingside attack.

**10...Ne8?!** A regular King's Indian move, but out of place here as the ...f7-f5 break this usually prepares is self-destructive.

**11. O-O-O Nc5 12. Ng3 Bd7 13. h4** White has a beautifully coordinated position and an attack which plays itself, while Black searches for nonexistent counterplay.

**13... f5!?** Though the tactics can hardly favour Black from their passive position, trying to muddy the waters like this is probably the best course of action.

**14. gxf5 gxf5 15. Bg5 Bf6** This was a slightly soft continuation but White undoubtedly still has a major advantage.



16. Nh5 Bxg5 17. hxg5 Ng7?!



Things now turn sour for Black very quickly.

18. Nf6+ Rxf6 Just as a knight can never be allowed to stay on e6 in a King's Indian, the knight on f6 must be eliminated.

19. gxf6 Qxf6 20. Rh6 Qe7 21. Qh2 Ne8 22. Be2 f4 23. Rg1+ Kh8 24. Rh1 Kg8 25. Rxh7 Qf6 26. Rh8+ Kf7 27. Rh6



Black finds their queen entirely trapped, as ...Qg7 is met by Rh7, and is forced to resign. 1-0

Only two of the 19 games played in round four finished in draws, with the top four seeds putting on clinical performances in each of their games. Ang neutralised the Ragozin Queen's Gambit Declined tried by Coates, while McLaren quickly achieved the freeing d5 break in the Kalashnikov and had no problems winning the game with Black. Braganza's English repelled Patrick Di Jiang's Stonewall Dutch Defence, who lost too much ground after a failed kingside attack, and Baker took control of the game with a typical central fork trick from the Black side of the Four Knights.

With nobody else on a perfect score in round 5 Ang and McLaren met for a rematch of their game the week prior, although colours were reversed with McLaren White and Ang Black. McLaren got a good position out of the opening and nursed his advantage well, but made a small mistake which let Ang equalise through a sequence of trades which liquidated the central pawns and two pairs of minor pieces. After this neither player seemed interested in pressing, with the only imbalance in the position a knight versus bishop, and a draw was agreed on the fortieth move. Braganza unfortunately withdrew from the tournament, but Baker continued to perform well, taking down Jessie De Guzman with White in an offbeat 1.e3 line. Coates was not able to pull off the same Samisch attack which had worked



so well in round 3, as he quickly got into trouble on the queenside against Benjamin Guo and lost the game.

## FM McLaren, Leonard (0.5-0.5) FM Ang, Alphaeus

Waitangi Weekender 2024,  
Round 3

**1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7** Ang plays the sounder of his two Modern lines, favouring 2...Bg7 over his pet weapon 2...Nf6.

**3. Nf3 c6 4. c3** McLaren in turn selects a less ambitious but more stable line for White, keeping the d-pawn well reinforced.

**4... d5** With this move, the position is taken into something with the structural characteristics of an offbeat Caro-Kann, rather than the usual Modern structures where Black does not contest the centre and heads directly for a queenside flank attack.

**5. e5** The principled space-gaining move, although 5.Nbd2 is an equally viable way of continuing development.

**5... f6** Black immediately attacks the White pawn-chain. Choosing to do so with ...f6 is quite a notable strategy, with the more classical method being to "attack the base" by preparing ...c5. As we will see, Ang attempts to maximise pawn tension and produce a full

dissolution of the pawn centre by employing both methods in conjunction with one another but maybe should have started with ...f6 because his one developed piece is better posted to support this break and attack the e5-pawn.

**6. Bd3 Nh6 7. h3** McLaren chooses to discourage a ...Ng4 jump or ...Bg4, both of which could help Black intensify pressure on the e5-pawn.

**7...O-O 8. O-O Nf7 9. Re1** The attention of both sides is completely focused on the e5-square.

**9... Qb6?!** A novelty, though perhaps an unfortunate one, as it hands over a considerable advantage to White. Previously Black players had selected 9...fxe5, with a small resolution of tension. (9... fxe5 10. dxe5 Qb6 10...Qb6 is now an entirely playable novelty, with the queen creating some difficulty for the development of White's dark-squared bishop and the d- and c-pawns quite a powerful force for later in the game.)

**10. Qc2?!** McLaren misses a direct path to a tangible advantage with 10.exf6

**10... c5!?** Black is still playing quite risky chess, playing dynamically while lacking in space and development, but this move commendably puts incredible strain on

the White centre, which shortly bursts open.

**11. dxc5 Qxc5 12. c4 d4** Declining White the open file and adding an attacker to the e-pawn.

**13. exf6 exf6?!** Highly ambitious, trying to maintain a compact pawn structure on the kingside. However, this gives White a tactical resource which wouldn't have been available after 13...Bxf6

**14. b4!**



A move which creates a space-gaining 3 versus two majority on the queenside, which can become a menace in the endgame. Black cannot capture on b4 due to Ba3, skewering the queen and rook.

**14...Qb6 15. c5 Qd8 16. Bb2** The position looks dire for Black, and indeed is. Their d-pawn is blockaded and attacked, they lack space and are under-developed on

the queenside.

**16... Nc6 17. Qb3 Kh8 18. Nbd2 Nfe5 19. b5** The position now explodes into a tactical skirmish.

**19... Nxd3 20. Qxd3 Bf5 21. Qa3 Ne5 22. Bxd4** White wins the Black queen's pawn and stands even better.

**22... Qd7 23. Rad1** Aligning the rook with the queen. Black must be concerned about the weakness of their king and back rank, as well as their material deficit.

**23... Bc2 24. c6 bxc6 25. bxc6?**



Shockingly, this move loses the entirety of White's advantage. correct was 25.Rc1 (25. Rc1 Bf5 26. Bxe5 fxe5 27. bxc6 Qc7 28. Ne4 and White wins.)

**25... Nxc6 26. Rc1** Black is now able to make a series of exchanges which get them entirely out of trouble.

**26...Nxd4 27. Nxd4 Qxd4 28. Rxc2 Rfe8 29. Rf1 Bf8 30. Qa6 Qb6 31. Qc4** White's pieces are forced into passive or vulnerable locations in an attempt to avoid trades, while Black uses this to catch up in development with tempo.

**31...Bd6 32. Nf3 Re7 33. Qh4 Kg7 34. Rfc1 Rae8 35. Qc4 Re4 36. Qd3 Bf4 37. Rf1 R4e7 38. Rd1 a5 39. Qc4 Rc7 40. Qa4** After some shuffling about without progress being made, both sides agreed to a draw. 1/2-1/2

The winner of the tournament would be decided by the results of Ang-Guo and Baker-McLaren. Ultimately both top seeds were able to claim full points and shared first. Ang established a Maroczy Bind against Guo's King's Indian, and Guo was unable to generate any active play on the kingside or in the centre while Ang methodically advanced his b- and c-pawns up the board to victory on the queenside. McLaren played the Scheveningen Sicilian against Baker, who responded ambitiously with the Keres Attack. The game was incredibly sharp with the advantage changing hands multiple times, but it was ultimately decided by a blunder as Baker allowed a bishop check which uncovered an attack on his rook to win the exchange, and later the game. These two results left Ang and McLaren well ahead of the pack on 5.5/6 points, while third was shared ten ways between a field of players on 4/6.

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](http://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](http://www.aucklandchess.nz)

Canterbury Chess Club - [www.chess.org.nz](http://www.chess.org.nz)

Counties Chess Club - [pukekohechess.co.nz](http://pukekohechess.co.nz)

Hamilton Chess Club - [hamiltonchess.net](http://hamiltonchess.net)

Hawkes Bay Chess Club - [www.hawkesbaychess.org.nz](http://www.hawkesbaychess.org.nz)

Howick-Pakuranga Chess Club - [www.hpchessclub.org.nz](http://www.hpchessclub.org.nz)

Invercargill-Southland Chess Club - [ISCC.nz](http://ISCC.nz)

Manurewa Chess - [info@manurewachess.org](mailto:info@manurewachess.org)

Mount Maunganui RSA Chess Club - [www.westernbopchess.weebly.com](http://www.westernbopchess.weebly.com)

New Plymouth Chess Club - [chessclubnp@gmail.com](mailto:chessclubnp@gmail.com)

North Shore Chess Club - [www.northshorechess.org.nz](http://www.northshorechess.org.nz)

Otago Chess Club - [otagochess.org](http://otagochess.org)

Papatoetoe Chess Club - [papatoetochessclub.org.nz](http://papatoetochessclub.org.nz)

Summit Chess Club - [ywang@outlook.co.nz](mailto:ywang@outlook.co.nz)

Upper Hutt Chess Club - [arh4108@gmail.com](mailto:arh4108@gmail.com)

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

Wellington Chess Club - [www.nzchessmag.com/wellingtonchessclub](http://www.nzchessmag.com/wellingtonchessclub)

## Puzzles

1.) 1. Nc7 Qxc7 2. Rxb7 Qxb7 3. Qd8+ Kf7  
4. Bxe6+ Kxe6 5. Re1 Kf7 6. Qe8+ Kf6 7.  
Qe6# 1-0

2.) 1. Qxf6 gxf6 (any other move loses  
quickly) 2. Rg4! Bxg4 3. Bc4 Be6 4. Bxe6  
Qf7 5. Bxf7# 1-0

3.) 1... Bxh2+ 2. Kh1 (2. Kxh2 Nf3+) 2... Nf3  
3. gxf3 Bf4 4. Kg2 Qh6 5. Rh1 Qg5+ 6. Kf1  
(Kh3 Rb8!) 6... Ba6+ 0-1

4.) 1. Rab6 Qa8 2. Rc8+ (2. Rc2? Qa1+ 3.  
Rbb2 Qg1+ 4. Rg2 Qd4+ 5. Kh7 Qh4+ 6. Kg6  
Qe4+) 2... Qxc8 3. Rb3 Qa8 (3... Kd8 4.  
Rf3) 4. Re3+ Kd8 5. Kf8 1-0

5.) Rxf5 Nxf5+ 2. Kd7+ Ka8 3. Qb8+ Qxb8  
(3... Kxb8 4. c7+) 4. c7 Qf8 5. c8=Q+ Qxc8+  
6. Kxc8 Ne7+ 7. Kd7 Ng6 8. Ke8 c4 9. Kf7  
Nh8+ 10. Kxg7 c3 11. Kxh8 c2 12. Kg7  
c1=Q 13. h8=Q+ Qc8 14. Qxc8# 1-0

6.) Na6+ Kb7 2. Rc7+ Ka8 3. Rc8+ Qxc8 4.  
Bxd5+ Qb7 5. Bc6 Qxc6+ 6. Kxc6 b5 7.  
Kc7 b4 8. Kc8 b3 9. Nc7# 1-0