

Chess Aotearoa

November 2024 - January 2025

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CHES AOTEAROA MAGAZINE

End of an Era: Entering a New Century for Chess



Foreword

Happy New Year chess players!

It's a brand new era of chess, with FIDE having celebrated its 100th anniversary last year.

New Zealand itself welcomed many national champions in the past few months; fresh faces and veterans alike. Sarah Sun, pictured opposite, recently became the Women's Champion for 2024.

Read on to find tournament reports, puzzles, and much more!

Enjoy!
-Weiyang Yu



A New North Island Rapid Chess Champion

Keep reading to find an article and annotated games from the recent North Island Rapid Chess Championship, written by CM Bill Forster, the organiser of the event.

Published seasonally; February, May, August, November

Many thanks to Bill Forster, Caleb Wright, and Christoph Thurner for their article submissions. Please send any article submissions to chessmagnominations@gmail.com for consideration.

For any issues or queries regarding the puzzles, contact Felix Xie at felix2008xie@hotmail.com. Answers can be found at the back of this edition.

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Credit for photos from the Women's Championship, Merv Morrison Memorial, and the North Island Rapid Championships go to the NZ Chess Federation Facebook page, the NZ Chess News Facebook page, and the NZCF website, respectively.

On the cover

Congratulations to Sarah Sun, our new New Zealand Women's Chess Champion!

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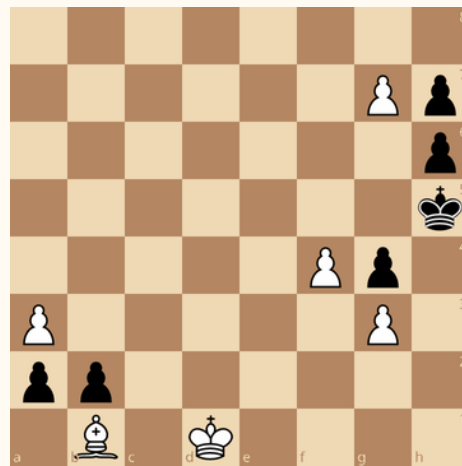
(1) White to move and win
Polgar, J. - Bareev, E.



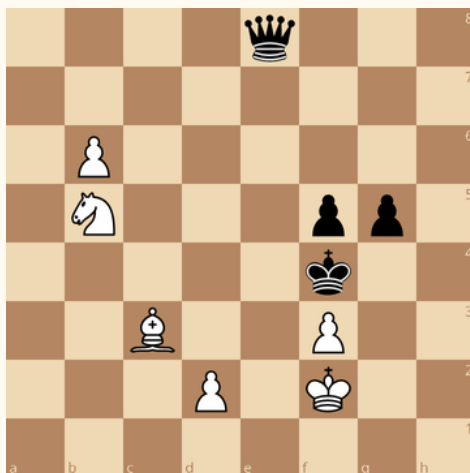
(2) White to move and win
Saleh, S. - Amin, B.



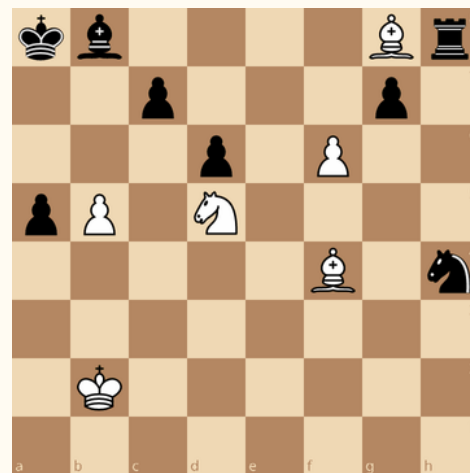
(3) White to move and win
Polgar, J. - Onischuk, V.



(4) White to move and win
Korolkov, V.



(5) White to move and win
Pasman, M.



(6) White to move and win
Rudenko, V.

Recent Tournaments

Leo Malcolm

NZ Women's Championship 2024

9th - 11th November 2024

Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church

90+30 6-round swiss

1st place (5/6): Wanyao Sarah Sun

2024 North Island Rapid Championship

16th November 2024

Wellington Bridge Club, Wellington

25+5 6-round swiss

1st place (6/6): IM Anthony Ker

Otago Summer Rapid

1st December 2024

Otago Chess Club, Dunedin

20+5 6-round swiss

1st place (5.5/6): Elliot Munro

NZ Championship 2025

2nd - 10th January 2025

Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre

90 + 30 + 30 minutes after move 40

9-round swiss

1st place (7.5/9): FM Felix Xie, GM Gabor Nagy

NZ Major Open 2025

2nd - 10th January 2025

Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre

90 + 30 with an additional 30 minutes after move 40

9-round swiss

1st place (7.5/9): Alexander Hanrui Pan, Ceferino Isaac

NZ Rapid Championship 2025

11th - 12th January 2025

Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre, Auckland

25+5 9-round swiss

1st place (8.5/9): GM Gabor Nagy

NZ Blitz Championship 2025

11th January 2025

Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre, Auckland

3+2 9-round swiss

1st place (8.5/9): GM Gabor Nagy

2025 Oceania Zonal Open Championship

24th - 29th January 2025

Huntingdale Golf Club, Victoria, Australia

90+30 9-round swiss

1st place (8/9): GM Temur Kuybokarov

Bob Wade Memorial Masters 2025

13th - 19th January 2025

Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre, Auckland

90+30 10 player round robins

1st place (6.5/9): GM Zong-Yuan Zhao, GM Gabor Nagy

2025 Oceania Zonal

Women's Championship

24th - 29th January 2025

Huntingdale Golf Club, Victoria, Australia

90+30 9-round swiss

1st place (8.5/9): WGM Julia Ryjanova

Upcoming Tournaments

Leo Malcolm

Auckland Waitangi Weekender 2025

6th - 9th February 2025

Auckland Chess Centre, Mt Eden

90+30 6-round swiss

NZCF and FIDE rated

19th Bay of Plenty Rapid 2025

22nd February 2025

Mount Bible Chapel, Arataki, Mt

Maunganui

25+5 6-round swisses (A, B)

NZCF and FIDE rated

2025 Latvian Rapid

15th March 2025

Te Tuhi, Pakuranga, Auckland

25+5 6-round swisses (A, B, C, D)

NZCF and FIDE rated

Hawke's Bay Rapid 2025

8th February 2025

Greenmeadows East Community Hall,

Napier

25+5 6-round swisses (A, B, Junior)

NZCF and FIDE rated

Otago Autumn Rapid

2nd March 2025

Otago Chess Club, Dunedin

20+5 6-round swiss

NZCF rated

Auckland Anzac Weekender 2025

25th - 27th April 2025

Auckland Chess Centre, Mt Eden

90+30 6-round swiss

NZCF and FIDE rated

On Monday the 9th of November 2024, 20 of the country's best female players entered the playing hall to compete for the title of New Zealand's Women's Champion and thus the role of New Zealand delegate for the upcoming Women's Oceania Zonal. A total of four titled players entered the tournament, including the defending champion, CM Isabelle Ning. As a result of a relatively small field, the Reserve division was combined with the Championship into a single Swiss tournament.

At 9:00 am, the first round took place. There were no upsets and all higher-rated players moved on with 1/1.

In the second round at 2:00 pm, WCM Luna Xu was able to hold Ning to a draw on board one. On boards two and three, the higher seeds WCM Nadia Braganza and Emily Gan both won, respectively. However, on boards four and six, the lower-rated players scored draws against their higher-rated opponents; the only upset win was on board ten.

The morning round of the next day was filled with unexpected results. Gan toppled Braganza on board one, and on board two, Joy Ulm lost to Sarah Sun. Annie Yue unexpectedly defeated Ning on board four, causing the tournament to open up significantly. Elena Moshakova, Adele Zhou, and W D

Srimathie I Dissanayake all achieved favourable results against higher-rated oppositions.

Going into the afternoon round, Gan and Sun were the only two players on full points. From their fourth-round confrontation, Sun emerged victorious with the black pieces, becoming the sole leader of the group. On boards three and four, Yue and Olivia Li were unable to score more than half points against Lauren Ng and Moshakova.

On the final day of play and in the penultimate round, Sun scored a necessary win against Braganza on board one to comfortably secure first place with a round to spare. On boards two and four, Gan was held to a draw by Xu, as was Yue by Li. However, on board three, Ulm was beaten by Ng.

In the sixth and final round, although it did not affect the final winner, Sun suffered a shocking defeat to Ng, who finished the tournament on an admirable 4.5/6 and second equal with Gan, who beat WCM Eva Lourenco. On five points, the clear champion was Sarah Sun, who raised the coveted trophy and acquired the prize money of \$750.

Merv Morrison Memorial

Jack McConnell

The 2024 Merv Morrison Memorial was played from the 26th to the 28th of October and, as usual, offered a large prize fund for both the under 1800 and Open sections. The Auckland Chess Centre was full and there was a strong field including two FMs, one WFM, three CMs and two WCMs. The top 16 seeds were above 1800 FIDE and therefore out of contention for the Merv Morrison Cup, for which competition was heated, with 18 players rated within 200 points off the cutoff and another 15 on their heels.

The first round saw the higher-rated players perform well, winning on 17 of the top 20 boards, and in the three exceptional cases only giving away a half point. In the second round, the field narrowed and results became more volatile. 13th seed Leo Baker upset 2nd seed FM Leonard McLaren, provoking a g4 push in the opening and making McLaren regret that advance later on with a pawn break and precise mating attack. On board five, 5th seed Yanbo Jin ran into preparation against the author and got a poor position, but the players made a draw with a repetition – one which offended the engine’s delicate sensibilities. Preeyansh Roul put himself into early contention for the Cup – he was the 24th seed, eligible for the trophy – and took down 11th seed Matthew Ashton.

In the third round, Roul would run into an even tougher pairing against Swiss player and 3rd seed Hassan Sadeghi, with the latter climbing to a 3/3 start. Joining him on a perfect score, all against difficult opponents, were FM Alphaeus Ang, CM Kendrick Zhang, and Leo Baker, who had scored another minor upset against the slightly higher-rated WFM Nadia Braganza. The contenders for the Merv Morrison Cup were, after this round, all crowded at two points from three.

In the fourth round, for the first time this tournament, a point was halved on the top board. Ang and Zhang faced one another in a convoluted game which eventually resulted in an exchange-up endgame for Zhang who, playing with White, was unable to find a way to crack the position of the defending FM, leading to an agreed draw. The other two players on a perfect score after round three faced each other on the second board, with Baker unable to produce a fourth consecutive victory over his higher-rated opponent. Sadeghi played clinically with hanging pawns in the middlegame of a Four Knights Scotch and with a win became the sole leader of the tournament. On the two boards further down Daqi Mao and CM Isabelle Ning, who had split a point in the third round, played Yanbo Jin and the author respectively, who had split a point in round two. As it turned out, Mao and Ning were stronger on the day and both won

their games to join Ang and Zhang on 3.5/4 points.

Roul advanced his campaign in the under 1800 section with an upset draw against CM Alex Huang, though this could have been a full-point victory without the blunder of perpetual check at the end of the game. Daniel Winsley, also under 1800, drew Edward Tanoi to keep pace, and Ziyu Huang passed both with a win over Rolando Paz to wind up on 3 points. Two of these players would experience unfortunately difficult pairings in the following round. Ziyu Huang's three points put her up against Baker, and the loss to Mao saw Jin paired against Roul. Both of these u1800 contenders would lose their games, which allowed Winsley to pull ahead of them with a win as 22nd seed over 21st seed Jenre Angelo Fabay, and Brogan Powlesland to catch the pack with a win which put him on 3/4 points.

On the top board in round five, the pairings dealt Zhang the task of catching Sadeghi, which he turned out to be good for. Sadeghi got a good position with the Richter-Veresov Attack but drifted in the middlegame, and Zhang was eventually able to turn the tables by obtaining absolute control over the f-file. Sadeghi made a final blunder which caused him to resign before his opponent played Qf2+ and sealed the point anyway. Ang and Mao

got in each other's way trying to scramble to the top, and had to split a point, although Ang was fortunate as he had been against Zhang to receive an agreed draw in what was objectively a lost position. Ning had no such trouble, rocketing herself into the lead on 4.5 points alongside Zhang with a win over Ziyi Huang, to set up a final-round game with the two leaders which would determine who or how many won the Open section.

With a draw on the top board, the winners in Baker-Ang or Mao-Sadeghi would be able to tie for first. Ang managed a win, while on the third board, pieces were exchanged and the resulting double rook endgame was agreed to be drawn. The chase came too late though, as Zhang-Ning was decisive. These players boldly waded into the theoretical bog of the Najdorf English Attack, but once the middlegame was reached Ning showed a better grasp of the position. White's queenside majority (after an exchange of pieces and the recapture exd5) was unable to get moving, and meanwhile, Ning advanced her entire kingside flank to gradually envelop the White king. Zhang made it to an endgame, where he was given only one chance to draw, which was missed. After this the resulting pawn-up rook endgame was perfectly converted by Ning, resulting in a pseudo-Lucena position which demanded resignation, and allowed her to win the

Merv Morrison Memorial

Jack McConnell

tournament.

In the under 1800 section, the number of players who could have secured or shared first – with the right luck – was large, and results fell in favour of Daniel Winsley, Brogan Powlesland, Timothy Ha, Martin Zhou, and Ryan Hwang. Winsley had done enough in earlier rounds to already have a hand on the trophy (and produce some excellent victory photos) despite a final-round loss, while the rest of the group worked diligently to stay in striking range and made necessary results in the final round, with Ha winning against Karl Holdo, Zhou beating Paz, Hwang winning against Elena Moshakova, and Powlesland making an impressive draw with 8th seed Braganza. A sixth player in Roul looked poised to join the winners, but in time pressure the author, who was out of contention but placed to play spoiler, swindled him out of a win.



Thank you to Bill Forster for submitting this article. If you too would like to submit an article, please email chessmagnominations@gmail.com.

The North Island Rapid Championship (incorporating the second annual Estonian Rapid) was held at the Wellington Bridge Club on Saturday, 16th November, 2024.

I will quickly remind readers why the relaunched Wellington Chess Club Open Rapid was named the Estonian Rapid in 2023. Basically, it's a little joke, paying tribute to Auckland's wonderful Latvian Rapid tournament. It's also a more memorable and distinctive name than the Wellington Chess Club Open Rapid.

This year, NZCF asked us to upscale the tournament so it could serve as the official North Island Rapid Championship. We had run the North Island Championship earlier in 2024, and it incorporated the Wellington Easter Open, something we do every time we host the North Island Championship. So it felt right to use the same kind of arrangement in the context of a rapid event.

The first Estonian Rapid was not FIDE rated to keep things simple, but of course the North Island Rapid

Championship needs to be FIDE rated, so NA Gordon Lyall was engaged as chief arbiter, a significant upgrade on last year when your humble correspondent muddled through as both organiser and arbiter. Gordon brought not only enhanced professionalism but a set of six DGT Live Boards, giving us a decent set of entertaining chess games to get our teeth into (more of that later).

A good field of 70 players assembled before the first of six rounds of 25+5 rapid action. The field included most of the great and the good from the Wellington club scene. FM Nic Croad was a notable absentee, leaving IMs Ker and Dive to lead the field in their traditional elder statesmen role. Challengers included a decent complement of the Wellington 'Young Guns', including Cohen Young, the defending Estonian Rapid champion. It is a North Island championship, and as such there was representation from around the provinces, and the South Island too. I am not sure if there was any Auckland representation though, which is a bit of a shame. The field did include a lot of unrated youngsters, but many of these players have featured in interschools action this year. In general, the ongoing chess boom means there are a lot of unheralded, skilled players about — people who might have honed their skill playing thousands of online games even if they haven't been seen before in traditional OTB tournaments. It pays not

to underestimate the unknown unknowns these days!

Without further ado, let's check out the results – who reigned supreme at the North Island Rapid?

- 1 IM Ker, Anthony F 2246 6.0 +B37 +W47 +B8 +B15 +W4 +W9
- 2 IM Dive, Russell J 2239 5.0 +W38 +B17 -W15 +B29 +W16 +B13
- 3 CM Young, Cohen 1960 5.0 +W39 +B6 -W9 +B33 +W17 +B23
- 4 Winter, Ryan 1927 5.0 +W46 +B29 +W16 +B20 -B1 +W15
- 5 Sethuramalingam, Kart. 1756 5.0 +W57 -B11 +W46 +B55 +W14 +B12
- 6 Winsley, Daniel 1735 5.0 +B66 -W3 +B49 +W43 +B26 +W24
- 7 Winsley, Nicholas 1936 4.5 +B40 +W28 +B31 -W9 +B24 =W8
- 8 van der Hoorn, Thomas 1870 4.5 +W50 +B33 -W1 +B39 +W20 =B7
- 9 Malcolm, Leo 1814 4.5 +B53 +W34 +B3 +B7 =W12 -B1
- 10 Benitez, Edgar 1808 4.5 +B62 =W25 -B27 +W47 +B28 +W26
- 11 WIM Timergazi, Layla 1983 4.0 +B48 +W5 -B24 +W45 -B15 +W37
- 12 CM Nicholls, Leighton 1910 4.0 +B41 +W30 +B32 =W24 =B9 -W5
- 13 Tanoi, T Edward 1872 4.0 +B49 -W31 +B25 +W32 +B27 -W2
- 14 Wilson, Dion A 1831 4.0 +B51 -W32 +B48 +W31 -B5 +W39
- 15 Keith, Matthew 1818 4.0 +W52 +B19 +B2 -W1 +W11 -B4
- 16 Chang, Luke 1803 4.0 +B56 +W21 -B4 +W36 -B2 +W41
- 17 Charles, Dion 1786 4.0 +B65 -W2 +B41 +W21 -B3 +W43
- 18 Ulm, Joy 1620 4.0 -B21 -W56 +W60 +B52 +W55 +B42
- 19 Abbott, Isaac 1450 4.0 +B70 -W15 -B21 +W62 +B51 +W27
- 20 Sigbeku, Anjola 0 4.0 +B61 +W27 +B26 -W4 -B8 +W31
- 21 Kang, Eushin 0 4.0 +W18 -B16 +W19 -B17 +W35 +B29
- 22 Lawrence, Hugo 0 4.0 -B34 +W53 +B37 -W27 +B36 +W45
- 23 Reedy, Brendan 0 4.0 +B36 -W37 +B34 +W28 +B25 -W3
- 24 Farrington, Lawrence 1809 3.5 +W54 +B35 +W11 =B12 -W7 -B6
- 25 Dhamodharam, Aadhav 1446 3.5 +W60 =B10 -W13 +B30 -W23 +B46
- 26 O'Brien, Jarrod 1891 3.0 +W63 +B45 -W20 +B38 -W6 -B10
- 27 Ashton, Matthew 1806 3.0 +W55 -B20 +W10 +B22 -W13 -B19
- 28 Malcolm, Aidan 1706 3.0 +W42 -B7 +W52 -B23 -W10 +B49
- 29 Qu, Lucas 1687 3.0 +B58 -W4 +B51 -W2 +B40 -W21
- 30 List, Robert 1664 3.0 +W67 -B12 -W55 -W25 +B65 +W51
- 31 Hurndell, Robert 1627 3.0 +W69 +B13 -W7 -B14 +W53 -B20
- 32 Yang, Edison J 1600 3.0 +W68 +B14 -W12 -B13 -W42 +B52

33 Barnes, Joshua 1551 3.0 +B43 -W8 +B59 -W3 -B41 +W53
34 Rajendran, Abhinand 1492 3.0 +W22 -B9 -W23 -B53 +W64 +B55
35 Khanolkar, Aarush 1427 3.0 +B44 -W24 -B43 +W56 -B21 +W59
36 Ravi, Vrajesh 1425 3.0 -W23 +B64 +W42 -B16 -W22 +B60
37 Grant, Elliot 0 3.0 -W1 +B23 -W22 +B54 +W60 -B11
38 Bohme, Alex 0 3.0 -B2 +W65 +B44 -W26 -B43 +W61
39 Riar, Amanjeet 0 3.0 -B3 +W66 +B47 -W8 +W44 -B14
40 Rose, Jim 0 3.0 -W7 -B42 +W57 +B58 -W29 +W47
41 He, Zachary 0 3.0 -W12 +B67 -W17 +B68 +W33 -B16
42 Deepesh Deeksham 0 3.0 -B28 +W40 -B36 +W48 +B32 -W18
43 Kovacev, Nicholas 0 3.0 -W33 +B50 +W35 -B6 +W38 -B17
44 Rajendran, Sreenand 0 3.0 -W35 +B54 -W38 +F63 -B39 +W48
45 Ashe, Michael 1653 2.5 +B59 -W26 +B56 -B11 =W46 -B22
46 Tan, Jin 0 2.5 -B4 +W58 -B5 +W59 =B45 -W25
47 Brockway, Andrew 1788 2.0 +W64 -B1 -W39 -B10 +W56 -B40
48 Kvindt, Maxim 0 2.0 -W11 +B57 -W14 -B42 +W58 -B44
49 Hao, John 0 2.0 -W13 +B69 -W6 -B60 +W68 -W28
50 Sethuramalingam, Nira. 0 2.0 -B8 -W43 -B58 =W66 +B67 =W62
51 Murray, Carrig 0 2.0 -W14 +B68 -W29 +B61 -W19 -B30
52 He, Jacob 0 2.0 -B15 +W70 -B28 -W18 +B57 -W32
53 Muthu, Vishwanath 0 2.0 -W9 -B22 +W67 +W34 -B31 -B33
54 Le, Long Minh 0 2.0 -B24 -W44 +B70 -W37 -B59 +W65
55 Coles, Catherine 0 2.0 -B27 +W61 +B30 -W5 -B18 -W34
56 Coles, Samuel 0 2.0 -W16 +B18 -W45 -B35 -B47 +W66
57 Chakkapalli, Sanishka 0 2.0 -B5 -W48 -B40 +F70 -W52 +B68
58 Devireddy, Benny 0 2.0 -W29 -B46 +W50 -W40 -B48 +B64
59 Fitton, Stanley 0 2.0 -W45 +B63 -W33 -B46 +W54 -B35
60 Panth, Kishore 0 2.0 -B25 +W62 -B18 +W49 -B37 -W36
61 Vithanalage, Sahayne 0 2.0 -W20 -B55 +W64 -W51 +B62 -B38
62 Han, Oliver 0 1.5 -W10 -B60 +W69 -B19 -W61 =B50
63 Singh, Yuvraj (W) 0 1.0 -B26 -W59 +B66 -F44
64 Dey, Kyle 0 1.0 -B47 -W36 -B61 +W67 -B34 -W58
65 Singh, Advait 0 1.0 -W17 -B38 -W68 +B69 -W30 -B54
66 Chin, Lucas 0 1.0 -W6 -B39 -W63 =B50 =W69 -B56
67 Dovah, Connor 0 1.0 -B30 -W41 -B53 -B64 -W50 +B69
68 Konduri, Rishi 0 1.0 -B32 -W51 +B65 -W41 -B49 -W57
69 Horsley, Harper 0 0.5 -B31 -W49 -B62 -W65 =B66 -W67
70 Mittal, Vansh (W) 0 0.0 -W19 -B52 -W54 -F57

Anthony Ker emerged on top! This has happened a few times before in chess tournaments in New Zealand I believe, somebody correct me if I'm wrong. The other leading players all seemed to take one serious blow, only Anthony emerging unscathed.

Perhaps most unlucky was Ryan Winter who presented Anthony with a precious gift in their individual encounter, overstepping the time control in a completely drawn king and pawn ending. This was Ryan's only setback, so with the benefit of hindsight this was the tournament decider.

Ryan was one of a clutch of players on five points due to a single setback. Russell Dive lost to a superb game from junior young gun Matthew Keith (don't worry – the most significant and interesting games are coming up later!). Cohen Young lost an interesting game to Leo "The Excitement Machine" Malcolm.

Karthik Sethuramalingam lost a game to Layla Timergazi, and managed to avoid the top players after that, canny tournament management.

Four players just missed out on podium action with 4.5 points. Special praise goes to Leo Malcolm who, as already mentioned, played some exciting chess including a classic Kings Indian kingside

attack (a rook down for a while) to beat Nicholas Winsley in possibly the game of the tournament. Leo's setbacks were one of Anthony's best wins, and an uncharacteristically dull draw with CM Leighton Nicholls.

Others on 4.5 were Edgar Benitez, Thomas van der Hoorn, and Nicholas Winsley (one of the quiet achievers of Wellington chess, and also an entertainer with a dynamic and interesting style). Thomas and Nicholas played out a titanic last-round draw that did neither of them any good (always a sad spectacle) after previously suffering one setback each – Nicholas to Leo Malcolm, as mentioned, and Thomas was the victim in another of Anthony's quality wins.

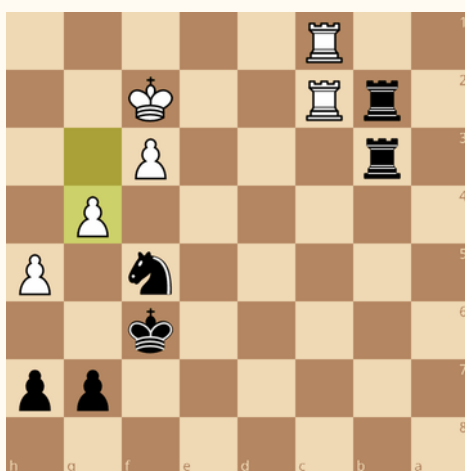
Alright, it's past time to look at some actual chess! Let's check out the highlights!

Kvindt, Maxim (0-1) WIM Timergazi, Layla

North Island Rapid Championships,
Round 1

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. Bb5 a6 6. Bxc6+ bxc6 7. O-O Nf6 8. Bf4 Bg4 9. Nbd2 e6 10. c3 Bd6 11. Bxd6 Qxd6 12. Qa4 Bxf3 13. Nxf3 O-O 14. h3 Ne4 15. Ne5 Rfc8 16. Rac1 c5 17. Qd7 Rc7 18. Qxd6 Nxd6 19. dxc5 Rxc5 20. Rfe1 Rac8 21. Nd3 Rb5 22. b4 Nb7 23. a4 Rb6 24. Rc2 f6 25. Nf4 Kf7 26. h4 Rc4 27. g3 d4

28. Rec1 Rbc6 29. Kf1 Nd6 30. f3 Nf5 31. Kf2 e5 32. b5 axb5 33. axb5 Rc8 34. Nd5 R8c5 35. Nb4 Rxb5 36. cxd4 Rccb4 37. dxe5 Rb2 38. exf6 Kxf6 39. h5 R5b3 40. g4 Timergazi-Kvindt saw a nice 'petit combination' to end Black's hopes of at least causing mischief.



40... Rxc2+ 41. Rxc2 Rxf3+ 42. Kxf3 Nd4+ 43. Kf4 Nxc2 44. g5+ Ke6 45. Ke4 Nb4 46. Kf4 Nd5+ 47. Ke4 g6 48. hxg6 hxg6 49. Kf3 Kf5 50. Kg3 Kxg5 0-1

CM Young, Cohen (1-0) Riar, Amanjeet

North Island Rapid Championships, Round 1

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nc6 7. f3 Nf6 8. Qd2 h5 9. Bc4 a6 10. Bb3 Qc7 11. Nd5 Nxd5 12. exd5 Na5 13. O-O-O Nxb3+ 14. axb3 Bd7 15. Rde1 O-O A brutal attacking finish from Cohen Young.



16. Bg5 f6 17. Rxe7 fxe5 18. Ne6 Qc8 19. Rxe7+ Kh8 20. Qxe5 Qxc2+ 21. Kxc2 Rac8+ 22. Kb1 1-0

Van der Hoorn, Thomas (1-0) IM Ker, Anthony

North Island Rapid Championships, Round 3

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 Nd7 11. O-O Nc5 12. Qc2 Anthony Ker continues to let all and sundry take potshots at his principled but possibly slightly dodgy Accelerated Dragon. This position has been reached before and praxis and the engine suggests it might be unwise to grab the pawn, but Anthony is an unapologetic pawn grabber and this game shows his skill in this department as he slowly but surely neutralises White's pressure and nurses his extra pawn to victory.



12... Bxc3 13. Qxc3 Nxe4 14. Qd4 f5
 15. Bh6 Rf7 16. Bf3 Nf6 17. Rad1 Qc7
 18. Rfe1 Bd7 19. Bg5 Bc6 20. Bxf6 Rxf6
 21. Bd5+ Bxd5 22. Qxd5+ Kg7 23. Re6
 Raf8 24. Rde1 Rxe6 25. Qxe6 Rf7 26. h4
 h5 27. b3 Qa5 28. Re2 Qc3 29. Qd5 b6
 30. Rd2 Qf6 31. Qd4 Qxd4 32. Rxd4 Rf8
 33. Rd5 Kf6 34. f4 Rc8 35. Kf2 Rc5
 36. Rd2 b5 37. cxb5 Rxb5 38. Ke3 Rb4
 39. Rc2 a5 40. g3 a4 41. Rb2 e5 42. fxe5+
 dxe5 43. Kd3 axb3 44. axb3 Rg4 45. b4
 Rxc3+ 46. Kc4 Ke6 47. b5 Kd7 48. Kd5
 e4 49. b6 Kc8 50. b7+ Kb8 51. Ke5 Rg4
 52. Kf6 e3 53. Re2 f4 54. Ke5 Kxb7
 55. Ke4 Rxc4 56. Rg2 Rg4 57. Kd4 0-1

IM Dive, Russell (0-1) Keith, Matthew

North Island Rapid Championships,
 Round 3

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.Bg2 Nc6 4.c4 d4 5.O-O
 e5 6.d3 Bd6 7.a3 h6 8.b4 Nf6 9.bxc5
 Bxc5 10.a4 O-O 11.Ba3 Bxa3 12.Nxa3 Bf5
 13.Nd2 Rc8 14.Qb3 b6 15.Rfc1 Nd7
 16.Qb5 Na5 17.Ne4 Bxe4 18.Bxe4 Nc5

19.Bf5 Nab3 20.Bxc8 Qxc8 21.Rab1 Nxc1
 22.Rxc1 Qg4 23.f3 Qg5 24.Rc2 f5 25.Qc6
 Qe3+ 26.Kg2 e4



Young talent emerging to challenge established masters is a reoccurring theme in Wellington and nationally. Here is a remarkable example as IM Russell Dive, playing his one of his favoured flank openings as White, completely loses the battle for the centre. Young Matthew Keith is not yet in Wellington College's top team - although not for long I suspect. Matthew wraps up the game confidently.

27.Qd5+ Kh7 28.Nb5 exd3 29.exd3 Nxd3
 30.Ra2 Ne1+ 31.Kh3 Qg5 32.Qxd4 Nxf3
 33.Qf4 Qh5+ 34.Kg2 Qxh2+ 35.Kxf3
 Qxa2 36.Nd6 Qxa4 37.Qe5 Qc6+ 38.Ke2
 Qd7 39.Kf2 a5 40.c5 bxc5 41.Qxc5 f4
 42.gxf4 Rxf4+ 43.Ke3 Rf6 44.Ne4 (D)

44...Re6! Good technique, giving back material to reach an elementary ending with no chance of any shenanigans from Russell.



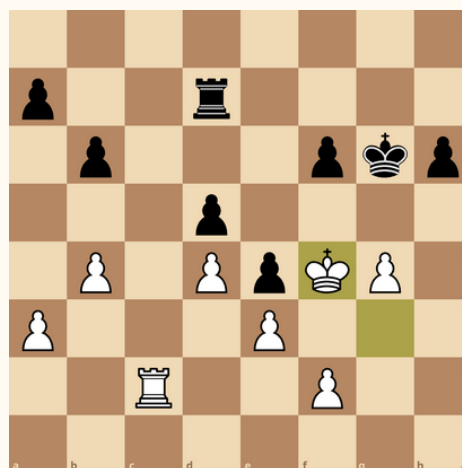
45.Qxa5 Qe7 46.Qf5+ g6 47.Qd5 Rxe4+
48.Qxe4 Qxe4+ 49.Kxe4 Kg7 50.Ke5 h5
51.Kd4 0-1

Farrington, Lawrence (1-0) WIM
Timergazi, Layla
North Island Rapid Championships,
Round 3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6
5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 Nbd7 7.cxd5 exd5
8.Be2 O-O 9.O-O Ne4 10.Bxe7 Qxe7
11.Rc1 Re8 12.Re1 Nf8 13.h3 Ng6 14.a3
Bf5 15.Bd3 Nh4 16.Qe2 h6 17.Bxe4
dxe4 18.Nxh4 Qxh4 19.Kh2 Rad8
20.b4 g5 21.Qf1 g4 22.Ne2 gxh3 23.g3
Qg4 24.Nf4 Qf3 25.Qe2 Qxe2 26.Rxe2
Kh7 27.Rec2 Re7 28.Rc5 Bg4
29.Nxh3 Bxh3 30.Kxh3 Rd6 31.Rf5
Kg6 32.Rcc5 f6 33.g4 b6 34.Rc2 Rh7
35.Kh4 Rd5 36.Rh5 Rd6 37.Rf5 Rhd7
38.Kg3 Rd5 39.Rxd5 cxd5 40.Kf4 (D)

Black's attempted kingside attack didn't really work out and White is

clearly much better here with control of the open file, a better king and fewer weaknesses.



Still, keen students of the Wellington chess scene would no doubt have expected Layla to fight back against Lawrence, who has a tendency to play rather passively.

40...Kf7? Trying to centralise, presumably, but yielding ground to White's king and missing the chance to seek counterplay with ...Rh7 and ...h5.

41.Kf5 Lawrence finds a previously unsuspected chess tiger within and converts his now huge positional plus in real style.

41...a5 42.Rc6 axb4 43.axb4 Kg7 44.Rxf6 Rc7 45.Rxb6 Rc2 46.Rb7+ Kf8 Lawrence's play reminds me of Capablanca-Tartakower, New York, 1924. I did not expect to ever write those words.

47.Ke5 Rxf2 48.Kxd5 Rg2 49.Kxe4 Rxc4+

50.Ke5 h5 51.Kf5 Rg3 52.e4 h4 53.Kf6 Ke8 54.Rh7 h3 55.Re7+ Kd8 56.Rh7 Rb3 57.d5 Rxb4 58.e5 Rf4+ 59.Kg5 Rd4 60.d6 h2 61.Rxh2 Kd7 62.Kf5 Rd1 63.Rh7+ Ke8 64.Ke6 Kf8 65.d7 Kg8 66.Re7 1-0

CM Young, Cohen (0-1) Malcolm, Leo

North Island Rapid Championships,
Round 3

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.f4 Bg7 5.Nf3 Nfd7 Goodness me. I used to play and study this position back in the day. Conventional wisdom from Botterill and Keene was that this position separated Pirc players into two camps, 5...O-O people were perhaps the more Pirc-y people and 5...c5 people were perhaps Dragon people at heart. But those were absolutely the only two moves here. Checking a database confirms that this hasn't really changed, but Leo Malcolm apparently likes to head into unknown territory.

6.Be3 c5 7.d5 Qa5 8.Bd2 a6 9.a4 O-O 10.Bd3 Nf6 Hmmm, so Leo is really a 5...c5 person who likes to grant White two free tempi in a position where time is of the essence. Can this possibly work out?

11.h3 e6 12.Bc4 Qc7 13.O-O exd5 14.exd5 Nh5 15.g4 Bd4+ 16.Kg2 Ng7 17.Qe2 Re8 18.Qd3 f5 19.g5 Nd7 20.Nxd4 cxd4

21.Qxd4 Nc5 22.Rfe1 Bd7 23.b4 Ne4 24.Nxe4 fxe4 25.Bc3 Bf5 26.Bb3 Re7 27.Re3 Rae8



Yes apparently it can, Black has held firm and White's advances on the kingside have created weaknesses mainly.

28.h4 Speaking of weaknesses, the light squares around White's king are now just too weak.

28...Bg4 29.Kh2 Bf3 30.Bb2 Qd7 31.Rg1 Rf8 32.Rxf3 Desperation, as they say.

32...exf3 33.c4 Re2+ 34.Kg3 Nf5+ 0-1

Keith, Matthew (0-1) IM Ker, Anthony

North Island Rapid Championships,
Round 4

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Be3 Nf6 6.Nc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 O-O 8.O-O Nxe4 The standard fork trick, Black is slightly better already.

9.Bxf7+ Rxf7 10.Nxe4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 e5 12.Be3 d5 13.Ng5 Rf5 14.c3 White decides to accept the slightly questionable material imbalance of rook and two pawns for two bishops (never is basic 9,5,3,3,1 chess arithmetic more questionable than with rook vs two bishops) in return for eliminating the proud Black central duo.

14...Rxc3 15.Bxc3 Qxc3 16.Qxd5+ Kh8 17.Rad1 Bg4 18.Qxb7 Rf8 19.Rd3 Be2 20.Rg3 Qd2 21.Ra1



21...Bd1! A very cool move, reminiscent of the immortal Be8 game, Reti-Bogolyubov, New York, 1924 (that tournament again).

22.h3 Qxf2+ 23.Kh2 Be2 24.Qe4 Rf5 25.Qe3 e4 26.Qxf2 Rxf2 27.Kg1 Rf8 28.Re3 Bd3 29.Rd1 Bc2 In this situation, two bishops and a pawn are overpowering two rooks.

30.Rde1 Bh6 31.Rxe4 Bxe4 32.Rxe4 Now Anthony makes converting a piece for two pawns look very easy.

32...Rd8 33.Re2 Rd2 34.Kf2 Rxe2+ 35.Kxe2 Kg7 36.Kd3 Kf6 37.Ke4 Ke6 38.c4 Bf8 39.g4 Bc5 40.h4 h5 41.gxh5 gxh5 42.a3 Be7 43.b4 Bxh4 44.c5 Be7 45.a4 Kd7 46.a5 Kc6 47.Ke5 h4 48.Kf4 a6 0-1

Farrington, Lawrence (0-1) Winsley, Nicholas

North Island Rapid Championships, Round 5

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 b6 5.Bg5 Bb7 6.e3 O-O 7.Be2 h6 8.Bh4 d5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.O-O Nbd7 11.h3 g5 12.Bg3 Bxc3 13.bxc3 Ne4 14.Qc2 Nxc3 15.fxc3 Qe7 16.Qd2 Rae8 17.Kf2 Nf6 18.Bd3 Ba6 19.Ne5 Bxd3 20.Qxd3 Ne4+ 21.Kg1 Kg7 22.Rf3 Qd6 23.Raf1 f6 24.Ng4 h5 25.Nf2 Nxc3 26.Re1 f5 27.Nh1 Ne4 28.Re1 Qe6 29.Ng3 Nxc3 30.Rxc3 Kh6 31.Rgf3 Qe4 32.Qxe4 Rxe4 33.Kf2 g4 34.hxg4 hxg4 35.Rf4 Kg6 36.g3 Rfe8 37.Re1



Order was restored to the universe with this game which is an echo of the Farrington-Timergazi game from round

three, but this time Black's slower but more purposeful attack brought an extra pawn, a useful space advantage, and ultimately a winning rook ending for Black. This ended a great run for Lawrence who still had a great tournament. Get well soon, Lawrence - currently in rehab after a nasty bike accident.

37...Rxf4+ 38.gxf4 Rh8 39.Rg1 Rh2+ 40.Rg2 Rxc2+ 41.Kxc2 Kf6 42.a4 Ke6 43.Kf2 Kd6 44.Ke2 Kc6 45.Kd3 Kb7 46.e4 dxe4+ 47.Ke3 c5 48.d5 c4 49.Kd2 Kc7 50.Ke3 Kd6 51.Kd4 g3 52.Ke3 Kxd5 53.Ke2 a6 54.Kf1 e3 55.Kg2 e2 56.Kf3

0-1

CM Young, Cohen (1-0) Charles, Dion

North Island Rapid Championships, Round 5

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.c4 Qc7 6.Nc3 Nf6 7.a3 Be7 8.Be2 b6 9.O-O Bb7 10.f3 O-O 11.Be3 Rd8 12.Rc1 Nc6



13.Nd5!? After smoking me with the same idea in a club Blitz tournament, Cohen explained to me that in hedgehogs you usually want your knight on d7 rather than c6, for this reason amongst others. Thanks Cohen, an easily digestible piece of chess wisdom.

13...exd5 14.cxd5 Qe5 15.Nf5 Bc5 16.Bxc5 bxc5 17.dxc6 Bxc6 18.b4 d6 19.Qc2 g6 20.Ng3 Nd7 21.Rfd1 Bb7 22.Bc4 cxb4 23.Qb3 Rf8 24.Qxb4 Nc5 25.Bd5 Rab8 26.Qc4 Bc8 27.Ne2 Bd7 28.Nd4 Kg7 29.g3 Rb2 30.f4 Qh5 31.h4 Qg4??



Whoops, Black has held things together well but this allows White to threaten two things at once, the essence of most chess tactics.

32.Qc3 Rfb8 33.Nf5+ 1-0

IM Ker, Anthony (1-0) Malcolm, Leo

North Island Rapid Championships, Round 6

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.Bc4 Nf6

5.e5 d5 6.Bb5 Ne4 7.Nxd4 Bc5 8.Be3 O-O
 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Bxc5 Nxc5 11.Bxc6 Rb8
 12.Qxd5 Qe7 13.O-O Rd8 14.Qf3 Rxb2
 15.Nc3 Amusingly this position was also
 reached a few weeks later in Ker-Young,
 Wellington Club Champs 2024.



15...Rxc2 Cohen played 15...Ne6 which,
 like 15...Rxc2, is okay if followed up very
 precisely. That game continued 16.Nd5
 Qc5 17.Rad1 (17.Rfd1 Rxc2 18.Ba4 Nd4
 was Cohen's preparation, when
 19.Rxd4?? is no good because after
 19...Qxd4 the a1 rook is en-prise) 17...Rxc2
 18.Ba4 Nd4?? 19.Rxd4 Only now did
 Cohen realise to his horror that since
 Anthony had played 17.Rad1 not 17.Rfd1
 there was no rook on a1 to be en-prise,
 and that consequently he was
 hopelessly lost. He essentially blitzed
 out a 90+30 FIDE rated loss. 19...Qxd4
 20.Bxc2 Rxd5 21.Bb3 Rd7 22.e6 and 1-0 in
 view of 22...Re7 23.Rd1.

16.Nd5 Qe6? Leo also just makes one
 mistake and is lost, apparently he needs
 to keep in touch with the rook on d8

with ...Qf8 or ...Qg5. This seems to bear out
 Gawain Jones' wisdom that this whole line
 is just much more practical for White
 (Anthony has been following Gawain's
 Coffeehouse Repertoire book). Anthony
 doesn't follow up with perfect precision,
 but keeps a sufficient grip with simple
 moves.

17.Rad1 Rf8 18.Rfe1 Na6 19.Ba4 Rxa2
 20.Bb3 Ra3 21.Re3 Qe8 22.Nf6+ gxf6
 23.Qg3+ Kh8 24.exf6 1-0

Reedy, Brendan (0-1) Young, Cohen
 North Island Rapid Championships,
 Round 6

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7
 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.O-O g6 8.h3 Bg7
 9.d4?



Black now unleashes a nice little trick to
 win a pawn.

9...cxd4 10.Nxd4 Nxe4! 11.Nxc6 Qxc6
 12.Nxe4 Qxe4 13.Qd5? Limply exchanging
 (big!) pieces is not the way to put up stiff

resistance.

13...Qxd5 14.cxd5 Rc8 15.Be3 a6 16.Rac1 Kd7 17.b3 e6 18.dxe6+ fxe6 Thus a passed pawn is born and Black now simply marches it to victory. Some talented people can make chess seem like a very simple game!

19.a4 e5 20.Bb6 d5 21.f3 Bh6 22.Rcd1 Ke6 23.Rd3 d4 24.Rfd1 Rc2 25.b4 Rhc8 26.Bc5 a5 27.Re1 Kd5 28.g3 Rc1 29.Rdd1 Rxd1 30.Rxd1 Be3+ 31.Kf1 axb4 32.Bxb4 Rc2 33.Be1 e4 34.fxe4+ Kxe4 35.Rb1 Rh2 36.Rxb7 Rh1+ 37.Ke2 d3+ 38.Kd1 d2 39.Re7+ Kf3 40.Rf7+ Kg2 0-1

Thanks to all competitors then and readers now. For the record, the tournament prize winners were as follows:

Open 1st Anthony Ker 6/6

Open 2nd= Russell Dive, Cohen Young, Ryan Winter 5/6

U1800 1st= Karthik Sethuramalingam, Daniel Winsley 5/6

U1800 3rd= Joy Ulm, Dion Charles, Isaac Abbott 4/6

Unrated 1st= Anjola Sigbeku, Brendan Reedy, Eushin Kang, Hugo Lawrence 4/6

Summit Rapid Champs

Karthik Sethuramalingam

The Summit Rapid Championship is one of the strongest rapid tournaments on the NZCF calendar. Held annually in November, this year's Open section featured some very strong players, including the future 2025 New Zealand Champion FM Felix Xie. In addition to the Open section, there were also U1800 and Junior sections. The amazing thing about Open tournaments of this calibre is that younger and less experienced players get to test their strength against top-tier players.

The first round in the Open section went as expected as the elite players on the top boards all came away with victories. The middle order was more exciting with upsets on boards seven and ten. On board seven, Hong Yuan beat 7th seed Mark Brimble with the black pieces, and on board ten, the young rising star Olivia Li beat 10th seed Oscar Cui. This tournament was extremely strong, so for the majority of the field, every game would be a tough fight. Even on the bottom boards, there were some big names. On boards twelve and fourteen, Sarah Sun and WCM Luna Xu were held to draws by Harrison Meng and Oliver Zhao.

Round two saw a similar storyline with the higher seeds taking most of the victories. The only upsets in this round were Martin Zhou's victory against Mark Brimble and Charles Zhang's win

against Jerome Tao.

The next round saw a matchup between Xie and New Zealand's prized prodigy Daqi Mao, ultimately ending in a victory for Xie. On board two, a matchup between two very strong players, Ziyi Huang and Saptorshi Gupta, ended in a draw. The last matchup between players on 2/2 was between Yanbo Jin and Justin Wang. Jin emerged victorious and joined Xie at the front with 3/3, but many were close behind.

The two leaders were paired in the next round and Xie emerged with another victory, moving him into clear first. However, Gupta defeated Sun to remain within striking distance of the leader. Meanwhile, Mao, Cui, and CM Isabelle Ning won their games and were not far behind with 3/4 along with Jin, Xu, and Huang.

With only two more rounds left and such a big clump of players on the same scores, every half-point would count. On board 1 of the penultimate round, Xie continued his dominant performance with yet another win, this time against the second seed, Gupta. Xie had confirmed himself at least a first equal finish, so the eyes fell upon the players on 3 points. All of these matchups were very strong and exciting. On board two, Jin took down Ning. A battle of youth between Xu and Mao took place on board three, resulting in a win for

Mao, and Huang defeated Cui to move himself into 2nd.

Heading into the last round, Xie was one point ahead of the rest of the field. He could only be caught by Huang, Jin, and Mao if he lost. A draw or a win would secure him the title and on his current trajectory, it was very unlikely that he would lose. On board two, Mao and Jin made a draw, knocking them both out of contention for first. It was now all up to Huang who had to beat Xie with the white pieces. However, there was little chance of stopping Xie who had won the last five games in a dominant fashion. Xie won the game and won the tournament with a perfect score. Mao, Jin, and Gupta shared 2nd place with 4.5/6 after a nice last-round victory by Gupta. Huang, Sun, Xu, and Justin Wang ended with a respectable 4 points.

In the U1800 section, Eden Xu dominated the field with an amazing score of 5.5, only dropping half a point against Andrew Phillips. Thevin Welikala, Patrick Jiang, and Tilden Wang finished 2nd equal with 5 points.

The Junior division was won by Kirby Shao with a perfect score. Haoteng Yu and Jayden Pan finished 2nd and 3rd on 5.5 and 5 points.

Casting our minds back to the distant past that is late October, 2024, we find ourselves at the second iteration of the New Zealand Fischer-Random Championship. The tournament was split into an A and a B grade, with over 50 players between them. Going into the first round, the favourites of the A grade were visiting IM Omer Reshef, reigning Fischer-Random champion FM Alphaeus Ang, as well as FM Alexei Kulashko and FM Felix Xie. The B grade had a number of players who could potentially take first place, though the top seed was Jenre Angelo Fabay. However, with Fischer-Random games being as unpredictable as they are, it was impossible to know what would happen.

The first round went largely as expected, with only two out of eleven A grade games being won by the lower seeded opponent. Jerome Tao beat FM Leonard McLaren, and neighbouring Max Dooley won the point against Yanbo Jin. The B grade had slightly more even games, though some notable upsets did occur, with Nicole Zhao beating second seed Dian Guan, and Caius Zhou overcoming an almost 900-point rating gap to beat Taylor Sussex.

Round two, however, saw considerably more interesting results. In the A grade, we saw the first draw of the tournament as CM Kendrick Zhang

took half a point off of Reshef. On the next board over, Arvin Mohammadi won with the white pieces against Ang, marking the latter's first loss across both Fischer-Random Championships. Kulashko, Xie, and Gupta Saptorshi won as seeded, rounding out the players on perfect points. In the B grade, top seed Fabay justified his position with another win, as did third and fourth seeds Kelvin Wang and William Jiang. They were joined by Marcus Gu, Zhao, Ting Liang, and Aidan Prince.

Round three saw those on 2/2 face off in the A grade, with Saptorshi playing Kulashko, and Xie playing Mohammadi. Kulashko and Xie managed to emerge victorious, sharing the lead between the two of them. Following closely behind on 2.5/3 was Reshef after winning as black against William Liu, as a draw between Zhang and Dooley meant neither shared third. Meanwhile, the number of people tied for first in the B grade went from seven to only two. Fabay ended the run of Prince and Gu went down to Wang, with all other contenders for the lead drawing their matches.

The fourth round was an important one, with the remaining leaders playing off for the lead going into the final rounds. However, with Kulashko and Xie drawing on board one, Reshef was able to beat Ang to draw level with the two on 3.5/4. McLaren beat Zhang and Mohammadi

beat Sarah Sun to stay within contention on 3/4. In the B grade, a critical game between leading Fabay and Wang went the way of Wang, becoming the first sole leader of the tournament on 4/4. Jiang was his closest competitor, beating Zhao to stay half a point behind, while a draw between Liang and Guan saw Liang join a collection of five players on 3/4.

In the A grade's round five, Xie went up against Reshef while McLaren faced off against Kulashko. A win by Reshef put him ahead on 4.5/5, and McLaren prevented Kulashko from joining him, pulling into second place on 4/5. Xie and Kulashko were then joined by Saptorshi and Zachary Yu, who beat Mohammadi and Nadia Braganza respectively to reach 3.5/5. Meanwhile, Wang retained both his lead and his perfect score in the B grade by beating Jiang, putting him a comfortable point ahead of Fabay, who beat Abhinav Choudhary, and Liang, who beat Prince.

The final round saw Reshef go up against McLaren in a match that would decide the winner of the tournament. McLaren was playing for the New Zealand Fischer-Random title, also contested for by Kulashko, Yu, Xie, and Saptorshi. With Yu and Saptorshi ending their tournaments with a loss, Kulashko and Xie passed McLaren to finish on 4.5/6. McLaren himself needed

a win or a draw to remain in the top three and win at least a share of the New Zealand title. However, Reshef continued his unbeaten streak to win the championship on 5.5/6, with Kulashko and Xie crowned joint New Zealand Fischer-Random champions. Joining the prizewinners was McLaren winning the Senior title, Zhang winning the Junior title, and Sun and WCM Luna Xu sharing the Women's title. Despite Wang being guaranteed at least a share of first place in the B grade, a win over Liang allowed him to secure the top spot. Fabay and Jiang also won their final games - against Zhao and Guan - to take second and third place respectively. A huge congratulations to all the prizewinners, and with two successful Fischer-Random Championships now complete, this tournament looks only set to grow in the years to come.

Thank you to Caleb Wright for submitting this article promoting his new book. If you too would like to submit an article, please email chessmagnominations@gmail.com.

Where could one get hold of an up-to-date, single-volume, move-table-based openings book? That was my question last decade as computer programs improved in leaps and bounds. No matter how hard or how frequently one searched for new ideas, the 15th Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings, produced in 2008, was the last remaining bastion of hope for a single-volume, move-table-based book. Chess players are often looking for new themes and exciting ideas, so something just had to be done.

Typically more studious players will look up human databases, but it can be tough to determine exactly what quality of material a player is actually wading through in an effort to come up with a good plan or two or more. Add to that varying assessments of the same position between, for example, Lichess and Chess.com, and a player can be left wondering what is really happening.

As various players will know, each chess game can be categorised into one of 500 referenced categories (from A00 to E99). This reference system makes it very easy to find those areas of an

opening that may need examining by a player; in particular, various themes.

TopChessOpenings		Web Search: Western BoP Chess							
C30									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	... Nc6	Nf3 f5	exf5 e4	Ne5 Nxe5	fxe5 Qe7	Qh5+ Kd8	d4 exd3	Qg5 Nf6	
2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4	... Nf6	Nc3 Bb4	Nf3 d6	Bc4 Nc6	Nd5 Bc5	d3 h6	c3 a6	Qe2 Bg4	
5	... d6	Nf3 Nc6	Bc4 h6	d4 exd4	Nxd4 Nxd4	Oxd4 Nf6	Nc3 Be7	b3 c6	
6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
7	...	...	Bb5 Bg4	h3 Bd7	d3 a6	Ba4 exf4	Bxf4 Nge7	0-0 b5	

So why not have the very finest themes and part-games literally at your fingertips – plenty of good ideas just ready to be looked at and arranged in good fashion?

To make such an up-to-date, single-volume book possible, I had to assemble top-quality games as played by machines – and enough of them had to be available. A game with an inspirational opponent spurred me further into this project.

This decade, I felt there was finally enough decent material available for such a project. I then had to experiment with the move-table format to pack as many variations as possible into each of the 500 categories, and allow them to be as long as possible. I was delighted at the outcome and quality of the actual material and lines that ended up in the book.

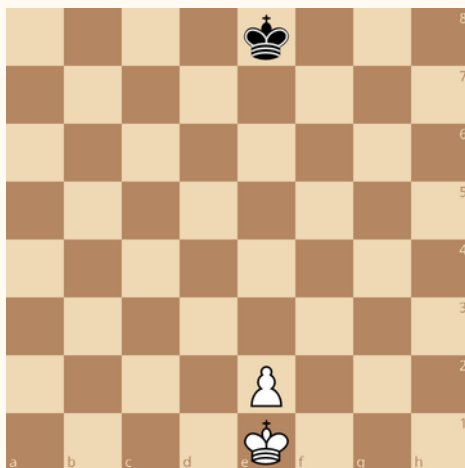
Top Chess Openings contains the very

top machine-played games in each of the 500 categories. Each game had to meet a strict set of criteria before possible inclusion.

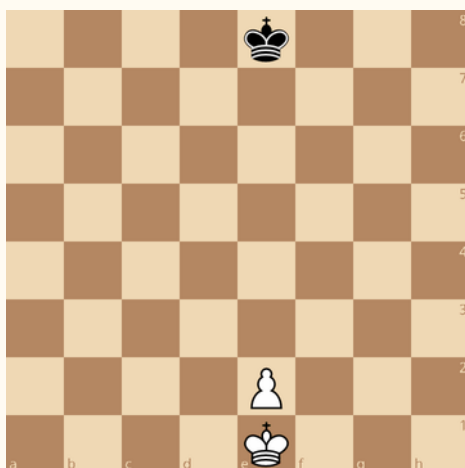
Each page (every single one of the 500 categories) offers the reader a wealth of variations and alternatives. There is plenty to choose from. If a player doesn't like the style of one sub-variation then, by looking around the same page, they can find alternatives.

Copies of Top Chess Openings are available for sale. A free downloadable sample is available on the Western Bay of Plenty regional chess website. Search "Western BoP Chess" and find the page labelled Top Chess Openings.

Thank you to Christoph Thurner for submitting this article. If you too would like to submit an article, please email chessmagnominations@gmail.com.

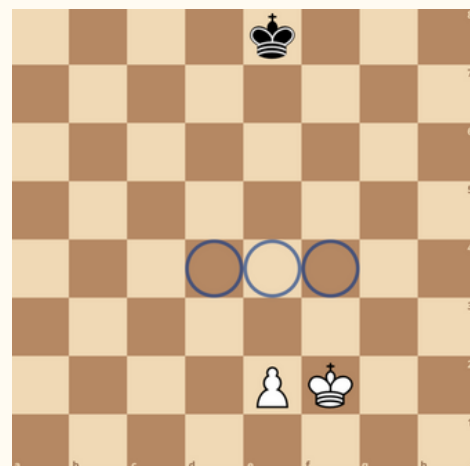


Now this is way too easy, isn't it? Well, in beginner training, just about everyone plays 1.e4 and is shocked when I belt out "draw"! Club/tournament players - should - know how to win this, but I have seen some of them unable to effectively explain this to students in a way which is easy to understand, so let's introduce key squares.

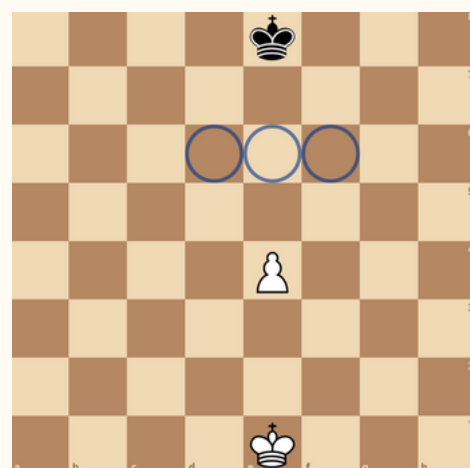


The key squares for a non-rook pawn, which is on its own side of the board (ranks 2 to 4 for White, 5 to 7 for Black) are 2 ranks ahead of the pawn on it's and the adjacent files. Why are these important? Well, if the king reaches one of these squares, without losing the pawn, White can promote the pawn, using the opposition we have seen in the last issue of Chess Aotearoa. In this position the white king can easily reach one of them.

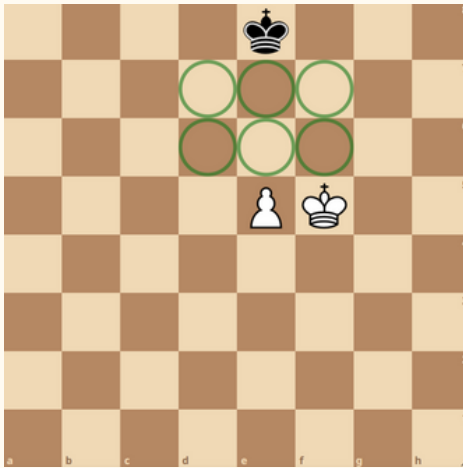
1. Kf2



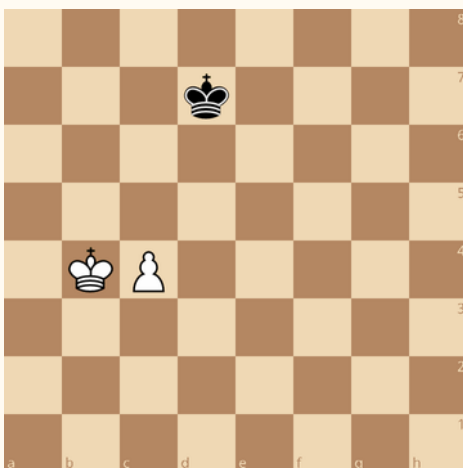
1... Kf7 2. Kf3 Kf6 3. Kf4 Ke6 4. Ke4 Kd6 5. Kf5 etc.



If the pawn is being advanced, the key squares move with it, so now they are on the 6th rank, which the white king can not reach. You can try that out for yourself!



As soon as a non-rook pawn crosses the centre line, the number of key squares doubles, as we can see in the diagram. In this particular position, it does not even matter if the king takes the opposition or not, as long as it goes on a key square. Now let's see a few examples:

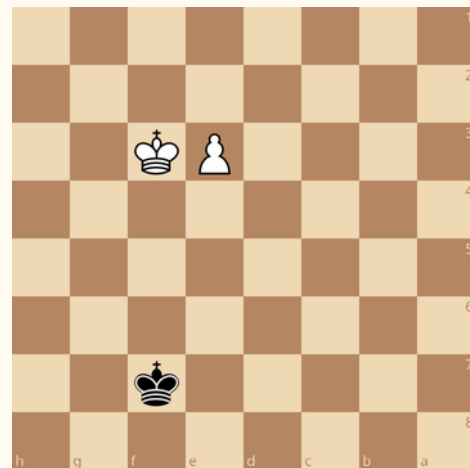


Where are the key squares in this position? The pawn is in its own half so they are two ranks ahead, therefore b6, c6 and d6. Our king needs to get to one of them:

1. Kb5 Diagonal opposition. (1. Kc5?? Kc7)

1... Kc7 2. Kc5 Direct opposition.

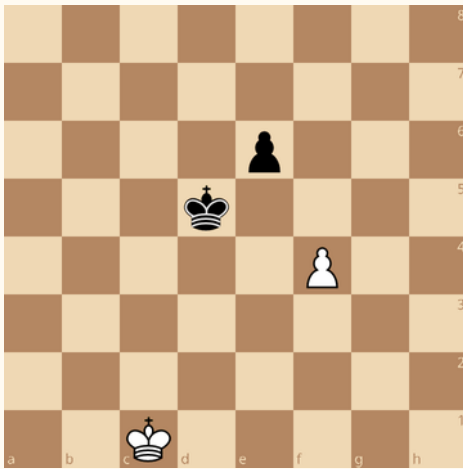
2... Kd7 3. Kb6 and the king has entered a key square.



This time it is Black's move. The key squares are d5, e5 and f5, so Black needs to prevent the white king from getting there. How?

1... Ke7! If you can't get the opposition, move to a square where the opponent can't get opposition!

2. Kf4 Kf6 3. Ke4 Ke6 and Black holds the opposition, never letting White reach a key square.

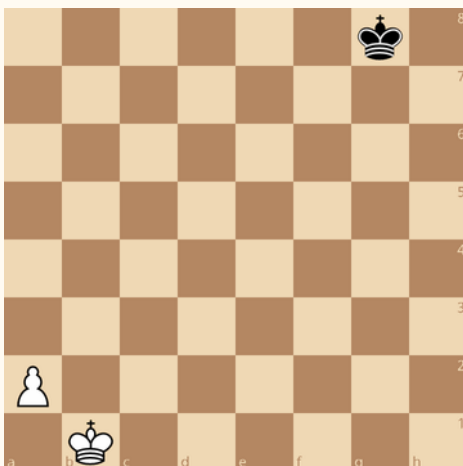


This one looks a bit trickier as White can not prevent Black from getting onto one of the pawns key square d4, e4 or f4. What to do?

1. f5 White sacrifices the pawn, but if Black captures 1... exf5 has moved the key squares in the process. (1... e5 2. f6 Ke6 3. f7 Kxf7 4. Kd2 Ke6 5. Ke3 Kd5 6. Kd3)

2. Kd1 Medium opposition!

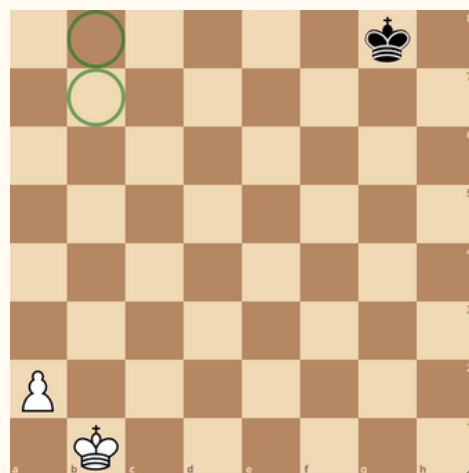
2... Ke4 3. Ke2 and Black can't reach a key square.



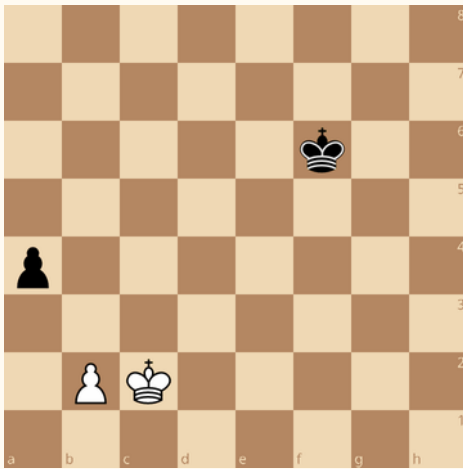
The key squares for a rook pawn are something completely different. Let's see what happens if we try to play as it was a non-rook pawn.

1. Kb2 Kf8 2. Kb3 Ke8 3. Kb4 reaching what would be a key square if the pawn would be on the g-file.

3... Kd8 4. Kb5 Kc8 5. Kb6 Kb8 6. a4 Ka8 7. a5 Kb8 8. Ka6 Ka8 9. Kb6 Kb8 10. a6 Ka8 11. a7 Stalemate!



The key squares of a rook pawn are always the same, the last two squares on the adjacent file. If the king can get there and the pawn can be safely pushed, promotion is inevitable. Keeping that in mind, let's solve the next position.



Now that looks easy. Just capture the black pawn then the white king is on a key square and wins.

1. Kc3?? a3! 2. b4

(2. bxa3 Now the key squares have changed and White can't get there in time, e.g. 2... Ke7 3. Kb4 Kd7 4. Kb5 Kc7 5. Ka6 Kb8)

(2. b3 does not make sense either, as the white king can not get to the black pawn in a meaningful way 2... Ke6 3. Kc2 Kd5 4. Kb1 Kc5 5. Ka2 Kb5 6. Kxa3 Ka5)

2... Ke5 3. Kb3 Kd5 4. Kxa3 Kc6 5. Ka4

So how does White get to a key square and win?

1. Kb1!! a3 Taking the pawn is out of question as we have seen in the previous example (1... Ke5 2. Ka2 Kd5 3. Ka3 Kc5 4. Kxa4 and the king is on a key square)

2. b3

(2. b4?? Ke6 3. Ka2 Kd6 4. Kxa3 Kc6 5. Ka4 Kb6 and the key squares were pushed too far away from the king.)

2... Ke5 3. Ka2 Kd5 4. Kxa3 Kc5 5. Ka4 Kc6 (5... Kb6 6. Kb4 Kc6 7. Ka5) 6. Ka5 and the king has reached a key square.

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

(1) 1. Qxe6+ Kh8 2. Rxc7 Kxc7 3. Qh6+ Kg8 4. g6 hxc6 5. Qxc6+ Kh8 6. Kh1 Rf4 7. Qxh5+ Kg8 8. Rg1+ Kf8 9. Qh8+ Kf7 10. Qg7+

(2) 1. Nb5 cxb5 2. cxb5 Qb6 3. Bxb6

(3) 1. Rxh7 Kxh7 2. Qh5+ Kg7 3. Bh6+!
(3. Qh6+ Kf6 4. Qg5+ Kg7 5. Qxe5+ Rf6
6. g4 Kg8 7. g5) 3... Kg8 (3... Kf6 4. Qg4)
4. Bxc6 Qc8 5. Bg5

(4) 1. Kc2 (1. Bxa2? b1=Q+ 2. Bxb1) 1... a1=Q
2. g8=B! (2. g8=Q? Qxb1+ 3. Kxb1) 2... Kg6
3. Bga2

(5) 1. Nc7! (1. Nd4? g4! 2. b7 g3+ 3. Kg2 Kg5
4. Ne6+ Qxe6 5. b8=Q Qe2+ 6. Kxc3 Qe1+
7. Kg2 Qe2+) 1... Qc6 2. Ne6+! Qxe6 3. b7
Qb3 (3... Qb6+ 4. d4) 4. b8=Q+! Qxb8 5. d4!

(6) 1. f7 Ng6 2. Ne7! (2. f8=Q? Nxf8)
2... Nf8 3. Ng6! Nxc6 4. f8=Q Nxf8 5. Bd5+
Ka7 (5... c6 6. Bxc6+ Ka7 7. Be3#) 6. Be3+
c5 7. bxc6+ Ka6 8. Bc4#