

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 7 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter! A few more games (24) actually played this week – but we are no closer to finding out the leaders until after I report on the two catch up nights in the next newsletter. So you will just have to wait with bated breath to find out more... I will tell you that several of the divisions are very close; the final three rounds are awaited with much anticipation. In the meantime, no doubt you are all also eagerly awaiting the solutions to last week's nicknames! Well, Carpet Daughter is John Matson (carpet, mat; daughter, son); What, Why, When is Aaron Hu (Who?); Cow M is James Bullen (bull, cow; en, em); Silver Jones is Colin Goldsmith (gold, silver; Alas Smith and Jones); Tell The Truth is Andrew Li (lie); and Devil is Graham Saint (self-explanatory given the theme of opposites). Congratulations to Cow M for earning my eternal admiration (the only one so far!). But how did he and others go in Round 6?

### Division 3

**Netra Bhatt 1-0 Ghassan Beydoun:** We begin with one of the more intriguing games of the night, a topsy-turvy affair that could have gone either way! See game below. The opening was even, but then fluctuating evaluations tended to favour Ghassan, whose edge was quite big by Move 20. He won a pawn, and seemed set for victory despite his opponent having the two bishops. But his 28th move was not the most accurate (28...f6 was better), letting his opponent back into the game! What then ensued was a classic demonstration of the power of the two bishops once Ghassan let Netra get two connected passed pawns. He had to push his own more advanced passed pawn faster with 38...c3, which was still equal; once he failed to do so, the passed pawns were unstoppable and killed him.

#### **Bhatt, Netra - Beydoun, Ghassan (1548), 2023 St George CC Division 3 Round 6, 18/04/2023**

1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5 3.g3 c5 4.dxc5 Bxc5 5.cxd5 Qb6 6.e3 Nf6 7.Nf3 Nxd5 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 Rd8 10.Qe2 Bd7 11.Rd1 Na6 12.a3 Ba4 13.Rd2 Bb3 14.Ng5 h6 15.Ne4 Rac8 16.Nbc3 Qa5 17.Nxc5 Nxc3 18.Rxd8+ Rxd8 19.bxc3 Rd1+ 20.Bf1 Nxc5 21.Bb2 Rxa1 22.Bxa1 Qxa3 23.Qb2 Qxb2 24.Bxb2 a6 25.f3 Na4 26.Ba1 b5 27.Kf2 Kf8 28.e4 Ke7 29.c4 bxc4 30.Bxg7 h5 31.g4 hxg4 32.fxg4 f6 33.e5 f5 34.Bf6+ Kf7 35.g5 Nc3 36.h4 a5 37.h5 Ne4+ 38.Ke3 a4 39.g6+ Kg8 40.h6 f4+ 41.Kxf4 Nxf6 42.exf6 e5+ 43.Kxe5 c3 44.h7+ Kh8 45.f7 Bxf7 46.gxf7 Kg7 47.h8Q+ Kxh8 48.f8Q+ 1-0

**Sam Sharkawy 0.5-0.5 Stuart Taylor:** There is no perfect score possible for Stuart anymore! Rock solid as ever, Sam made it very hard for Black to make any progress in this game. Since a Sicilian had led to a fairly balanced position, Stuart tried to expand by advancing his kingside pawns. But he could not break through, since all the heavy pieces were slowly traded on the open h-file. Eventually they reached a dead drawn pure opposite coloured bishop endgame; Black kept pressing but to no avail, and they ended up drawing in 62 moves.

**John Parissis – Colin Goldsmith:** This game was postponed by Colin, who was away.

**John Nichas 0 -1 Louis Jeff:** A good game by Louis – but not so good by John! Declining an early pawn sacrifice, John let Louis equalise, then popped a piece on Move 10... He could have recaptured a bishop, his rook on a1 untouchable due to a winning skewer. Louis blundered the piece back, but was still a healthy pawn up; John had the two bishops as compensation, but misused them! Then he walked into a fatal pin; and he resigned when losing the exchange into a dead lost ending.

**Darren Curtis 0-1 Ludwig Wolf:** Ludwig was thrilled to finally get on the scoreboard; but Darren was not so happy after misplaying an overwhelming position! His King's Gambit was a success, as he won the pawn back with beautiful piece play and a wide open Black king. Ludwig castled, but it did not really solve his problems, as his king wound up back in the centre anyway! Then Darren won a pawn but traded queens, and they reached an ending where Ludwig had a passed e-pawn and an advanced king as compensation for his pawn minus. Darren was still better, since he won a second pawn; but then tragedy struck, as he left a rook en prise and resigned on the spot.

## Division 5

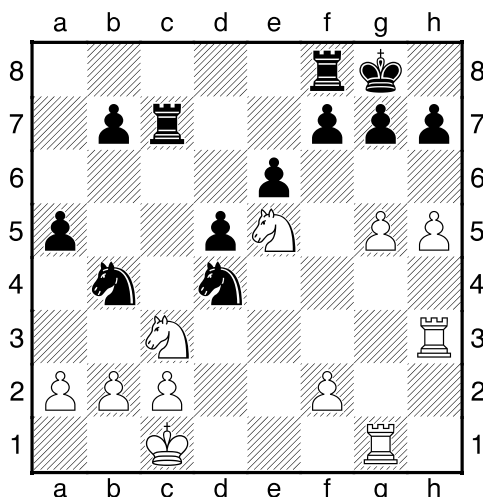
**Aaron Hu 1-0 Ken Eldridge:** A long and gruelling struggle, where Aaron was a bit lucky to win in the end! Some early trades in a Sicilian left Ken as the one with a slight edge, as he won a pawn; but his extra pawn was doubled and isolated, so it was not too serious for Aaron. A pair of rooks came off on the open f-file, and White won a pawn back. But they were still level in a rook and bishop (Aaron) vs rook and knight ending; and this persisted until as late as Move 50. Then sadly for Ken, he blundered his knight to a rook fork; this proved fatal, and he resigned one move before mate.

**Faaiz Malik 1F-0F Zain Mokhtar:** A family member testing positive to covid, Zain could not play; but unfortunately he gave insufficient notice, so this game had to be scored as a forfeit.

**Kevin Liu 1-0 Dimitrios Stathos:** Kevin always wants to attack; and unfortunately for Dimitrios, he let him! Black was solid in the opening, fairly equal till Move 20. But then he blundered a pawn to a pin; and his position fell apart! Not only did he lose 2 pawns, but his king was exposed. Eventually a skewer cost him his queen for a rook; his position was then hopeless, and he resigned on Move 33.

**Ashton Li – Peter Swinton:** This game was postponed by Ashton.

**Ali Murtazaev 0-1 Geoff Hyde:** A good game by Geoff! After his Caro-Kann equalised, he was better by Move 10. Initially he played slowly and let Ali swap queens. But then he built up an attack on the half open c-file! Ali blundered a pawn, and finally they reached the critical position below.



According to Geoff, his 23...Nxa2+ here was “the first-ever move of mine that the [chess.com](https://www.chess.com) review feature classified as brilliant”! It is pretty, as 24.Nxa2 Ne2+ is a decisive win of the exchange. But after 24.Kd2 instead, Geoff just won pawns; and he went on to win the ending prosaically.

## Division 6

**Ethan Riegman 0-1 Stephen Manwarring:** A super game by Stephen! Having gained an advantage by Move 12, Black went on the attack once the players castled on opposite sides. Ethan tried to counter in the centre, but just opened lines against his own king! He lost a key central pawn, then a piece via a removing the guard tactic – he could not recapture due to mate. Then a knight fork cost him a rook; and finally Stephen simplified and won the ending with his huge material advantage.

**Samuel Slingo 0-1 Mark Boan:** As usual, Samuel began well enough; indeed both players developed well until Move 8. Then White got into tactical difficulties! First a pin, of which Mark did not take advantage; then a discovered attack, which he did... The result: he won the enemy queen for a bishop. Samuel kept on fighting, but it was too hard; and Mark delivered checkmate on Move 32.

**Lisa Brandenburg 1-0 Mary Hunt:** A tragedy for Mary! She dropped a pawn early, but was still in the game while attacking the enemy king. Then Lisa undefended g2 and walked into mate in one; but Mary didn't see it! I suspect she was resigned to losing to Lisa, so was not looking for wins... Three moves later, Mary blundered; she resigned on Move 25, two moves before being mated herself.

**Reno Sciberras – John Matson:** As Reno had to postpone this game for health reasons, it will be played on the final catch-up night on May 16.

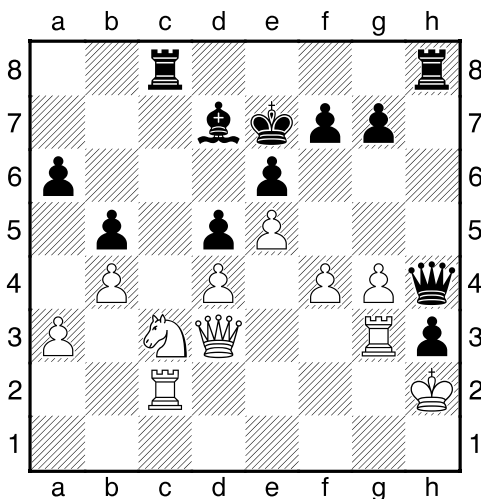
**William Liu 0-1 Ethan Currie:** Bouncing back well from last week's shock loss, Ethan played a far better game this week! The opening was even, but Ethan got the two bishops; and he was already much better when White put his queen on b7. Then instead of trading queens, William let his queen get trapped on e7! Trying to complicate, William saved the queen; but he had to lose a whole rook. Ethan had no trouble pocketing the full point thereafter, simplifying and mating on Move 48.

#### Division 4

**James Bullen 0-1 Sait Buzgan:** A marathon – that should have been over sooner! Slightly worse from the opening, Sait would truly have been struggling had James continued to attack with f5 on Move 16. After 16.Kh1 instead, Sait won a pawn; it was initially equal, but James kept trading! By Move 28, Sait had reached a won pawn ending; but he queened the wrong pawn... Both players queened, and Sait had to win a queen ending three pawns up; this he duly managed in 62 moves.

**Elijah Udovitch 1F-0F Euan Marquez Zarauz:** Unfortunately Euan got his nights mixed up and thought this was the second catch-up night; a no-show, he therefore forfeited this game.

**James McGrouther 0-1 Tony Lopes:** Another one that went longer than it should have! A French was even for the first 20 moves, despite Tony having two bishops for two knights; but then he won a pawn and attacked James' king. The critical position below was reached after Black's 27...Ke7.



Can White take the pawn on h3? No! James tried; but he was losing after 28.Rxh3 Qxg4 29.Qg3 Rxh3+ 30.Qxh3 Qxf4+ 31.Kg2 Qxd4. Three pawns ahead, Anthony made hard work of winning the ending; he gave two back, but finally forced his last pawn (a d-pawn) through to win in 51 moves.

**Mario Parissis 0.5-0.5 Chris Brown:** A fascinating struggle – see game next page. A quiet opening saw Chris better by Move 5, then getting the two bishops – this proved important! One of them won the exchange when it got the enemy rook trapped on a1; and it seemed Chris was well on the way to victory. But Mario always fights! Even with queens coming off and losing his a-pawn, the White knight got into the enemy position and made a nuisance of itself... Then he got two connected passed pawns. This gave sufficient counterplay; and they settled on a draw by repetition on Move 41.

**Parissis, Mario (1357) - Brown, Chris (1408), 2023 St George CC Div 4 Round 6, 18/04/2023**

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.h3 e6 4.Bg5 c5 5.c3 Nc6 6.Ne5 Be7 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bxf6 Bxf6 9.dxc5 a5 10.e3 Be7 11.b4 ab 12.cb Bf6 13.Nd2 Bxa1 14.Qxa1 0-0 15.Bd3 Ba6 16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.0-0 Qf6 18.Qxf6 gxf6 19.Ra1 Rfa8 20.Nb3 Rxa2 21.Rb1 e5 22.Na5 Rc8 23.Nb7 Rc2 24.Na5 Kf8 25.g4 h6 26.Kg2 Ke7 27.Kg3 Ke6 28.f4 f5 29.h4 fxg4 30.Kxg4 f5+ 31.Kh5 Rh2 32.Rg1 exf4 33.exf4 d4 34.Rg6+ Kd5 35.Rd6+ Ke4 36.Nxc6 d3 37.b5 Rc2 38.b6 Rb2 39.Nd8 Rb8 40.Nc6 Rb7 41.Na5 Rb8 ½-½

**Huey Teng 0.5-0.5 Brian Connell:** In a tough game, there was just one big opportunity missed by Brian! His Sicilian equalised, and play stayed largely level for the first 20 moves. Many pieces were swapped, and they wound up in a double rook and bishop ending. There Brian won a pawn, but he gave it back quickly; bishops were traded, and Brian's passed b2 pawn in the double rook ending should have been decisive! But he failed to play 35...Ra4 followed by 36...Ra1, and the advantage was gone in one move; Huey simplified, won the b-pawn, traded rooks and drew in 46 moves.

**Division 1**

**Jim Mavroidis 0-1 John Stuart Plant:** After this one, a new acronym: JSPCHTSK (John Stuart Plant Cowboy Hat Tree Swindle King)! Poor Jim was winning easily, and was very frustrated after letting this one slip. As usual, I hand over to JSPCHTSK for his description of his great escape!

"In this game I felt Jim outplayed me easily at the start and early middlegame. I was taken rather by surprise when an opposite side castling situation happened. And I was actually a lot worse when facing an open g-file on my castled kingside to boot. Trying to remain positive and dig up some quick counterplay against Jim's queenside castled position saw me overlook a very neat sequence played by Jim that meant I had to trade queens; and I was losing at least one clear pawn as well. I tried for tricks, but his move 25.Rxc4 instead of the move I was hoping for 25.Bxd6 (when I would have had playable compensation – with back rank threats and an active rook) meant Jim was just stifling me completely out of the contest. What was I to do when faced with a +3 position as Black?

The answer: rely on my "swindle king" powers of old! Swindle King (the nickname the writer of this newsletter once called me) saw me keep one pair of rooks on and activate my king closer to the centre. My main goal was being active in the ending. When Jim allowed my kingside pawns to mobilise, he had to play 41.h4 (when the zing of my counterattack would have been much less). When he did not, my attack just started growing! My active king, his trapped king and my active rook neutralised his pawn advantage, and meant it would have still been –3 in my favour in the end, had Jim not overlooked a difficult to defend against back rank mate. See game below; a good game, unfortunate for Jim but another Houdini like escape for the Swindle King!"

**Mavroidis, Jim (1819) - Plant, John Stuart (2147), 2023 St George CC Div 1 Round 6, 18/04/23**

1.e4 Nc6 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 e5 4.Bb5 Bd7 5.Bxc6 Bxc6 6.Nc3 Nf6 7.Qe2 exd4 8.Nxd4 Bd7 9.Be3 Be7 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.f3 a6 12.g4 c5 13.Nf5 Bxf5 14.gxf5 Qa5 15.Rhg1 Kh8 16.Kb1 b5 17.Bf4 b4 18.Nd5 Nxd5 19.Rxd5 Qb6 20.Qd2 c4 21.Qd4 Qxd4 22.Rxd4 Rfd8 23.Rgd1 g6 24.fxg6 fxg6 25.Rxc4 Rf8 26.e5 dxe5 27.Bxe5+ Kg8 28.f4 Kf7 29.Rd7 Rad8 30.Rxd8 Rxd8 31.Rd4 Ra8 32.Kc1 Ke6 33.Kd2 Rf8 34.Kd3 Rc8 35.Rc4 Rd8+ 36.Ke2 Kf5 37.Rc7 Re8 38.Kf3 g5 39.Rb7 g4+ 40.Kg3 h5 41.Rb6 h4+ 42.Kg2 Rd8 43.Rc6 Rd2+ 44.Kh1 Ke4 45.c3 h3 46.cxb4 Rd1# 0-1

**Daniel Melamed – Robert Kovacs:** This game was postponed by Robert.

**Graham Saint 1-0 Jose Escribano:** In a c3 Sicilian, the early advantage fluctuated somewhat, but then settled into a plus for Graham by Move 15. Jose's pawns were weaker, and Graham's pieces were a little bit more active. Jose equalised briefly when Graham gave him the two bishops; but then the White passed d-pawn became a major problem! It advanced to d6, and suddenly Graham was much better, almost winning... The end then came very quickly indeed: Jose blundered his queen (he overlooked the fact that its protector was pinned) and resigned on the spot.

**Stevo Acevski 0-1 Arthur Huynh:** With both players moving fast, Arthur sacrificed a pawn; he had compensation, so the evaluation was level. Black won his pawn back; Stevo could have simplified more, but did not! Arthur won a pawn and got his rook to the seventh rank. Then he won another pawn. Finally, he engineered a neat finish, mating the enemy king with rook, bishop and knight.

**Richard Eccles 1-0 Mario Falchoni:** See game below: a nice game by Richard! Mario was just too passive in a French, locking the centre and giving Richard superior activity. A White rook on g7 had Black tied in knots, despite him temporarily winning a pawn. Mario actually did well to hang on for as long as he did. But finally, it was too much; and he resigned when his queen was trapped on c6.

**Eccles, Richard (1797) - Falchoni, Mario (1961), 2023 St George CC Div 1 Round 6, 18/04/2023**  
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Qc7 7.Bd3 f5 8.Nf3 Bd7 9.0-0 c4 10.Be2 Ba4 11.Ng5 Qe7 12.Nh3 Nc6 13.Rb1 b5 14.g4 g6 15.Kh1 Kd7 16.Rg1 a6 17.gxf5 gxf5 18.Rg3 Rf8 19.Qg1 Qe8 20.Nf4 Nce7 21.Qg2 Qa8 22.Rg7 Qc6 23.Qg5 Bxc2 24.Rb2 Be4+ 25.f3 Bd3 26.Nh5 f4 27.Nf6+ Kc8 28.a4 h6 29.Qxf4 Bxe2 30.Rxe2 Nf5 31.ab ab 32.Ra7 Nge7 33.Rea2 Kd8 34.R2a6 1-0

## Division 2

**Pieter Stoltz 0-1 Celina Wu:** Pieter was doing fine here for quite a while, despite his overly solid play meaning Celina was easily able to equalise. But she had nothing until his f5 pawn push enabled her to activate her queen and knight. When he gave up the exchange for the d3 knight, he was still hanging on. But then he missed Celina's idea of mating him on h1! He resigned two moves later...

**Brian Allison 0.5-0.5 John Karabatsos:** John asked me to be scathing of him when reporting on this game, as he offered a draw in a -3 winning position... The early exchanges were even, and Brian was fine until he protected his d4 pawn the wrong way! He could not recapture due to a pin; so he was just a pawn down. He got it back; but then the active enemy pieces won two pawns! It was at this point that John, fearing complications, offered a draw; I'll refrain from calling him a wimp...

**Andrew Li 0-1 Michael Babic:** A tough one for Andrew; see game below. He got the better of a Gruenfeld, with Michael's pieces becoming passive and White expanding on the queenside. But then just when he was much better, he took a poisoned pawn on b5! The tactics favoured Michael, who was winning a piece. So a discouraged Andrew resigned, even though he was only -2...

**Li, Andrew (1609) - Babic, Michael (1732), 2023 St George CC Division 2 Round 6, 18/04/2023**  
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cd Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bc c5 7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Be2 Bg7 9.Nf3 0-0 10.0-0 Qa5 11.Bd2 Qc7 12.Rb1 Na6 13.Qc1 Qc8 14.Bh6 cxd4 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.cxd4 Nc7 17.Qb2 b5 18.Rfc1 Qb7 19.d5+ f6 20.Nd4 a6 21.a4 Rfc8 22.h3 h5 23.ab ab 24.Nxb5 Nxb5 25.Bxb5 Rxc1+ 0-1

**Pieter Bogdanoski 0-1 Srijan Badam:** A catastrophe for Peter! After an even opening, he simply blundered into a knight fork losing the exchange. Some moves later, he lost a bishop (trapped), then a knight. It was easy for Srijan from there! He scored his first win of the event in 37 moves...

**Malachi O'Donoghue 0.5-0.5 Albert Tjahja:** Mal was not happy with this game, as he let an early advantage slip through allowing too many trades! Soon all the minor pieces were exchanged, and he lost a pawn. He won it back through a tactical trick, but the resultant queen ending was drawn; they played on for several more moves, but they ended up splitting the point on Move 51.

And now for my final trick in Newsletter Number 7: some more jokes... "The good thing about chess snooker tournaments: they are never late, they always start on cue"! "What do you call it if Yogi makes a mistake in a chess game? A boo boo"! "Why is the Easter Bunny so good at chess? Because he is an eggspert"! "Where do knights go when they get sick? The horsepital"! "How did the fruit fix his bad chess position? He re-pear-ed it"! And finally: "What do you call the world's smartest chess clock? Clockwise"! Thank you, JSPCHTSK; I like them, anyway...