

Dear Dragons,

Welcome to Edition 12 of the Weekly St George Club Champs newsletter – the final one for this year! A buoyant newsletter it is, with 3 main points to celebrate: 1. Big Boards; 2. Black is OK! and 3. The Victors. On the first point, I am thrilled to report a St George Big Boards victory, and an away one to boot – it's been a long time between drinks... As for the second point, Black won 9 final round games to 7 (with 3 draws) played on the final Tuesday night of the Club Champs, with 3 more Black Big Boards victories published from the top 12 boards: a strong dominance by Black, proving Black really is OK! As for the last point, let me congratulate all the winners by making you work out anagrams of their names, dear reader... An easy task, as we fete A Rich Tenure in Division 6; Mafia Za Ilk in Division 5; Aba Nuts Zig in Division 4; Your Last Tart in Division 3; Chic Babe Mail in Division 2; and our new Club Champion, El Maiden Medal (appropriately named!) in Division 1. As usual, let's see how they got there in Round 9; some surprisingly short games, but some exciting ones too!

### **Big Boards v North Sydney – Away Leg**

I thought I would begin with a tale of St George heroics: the underdog Dragons, having been crushed in our last 4 matches with Norths (including two at home), came away with a magnificent 26.5 to 24.5 away victory over 51 boards at North Sydney on Tuesday 23 May! This comprised 27 current Club Champs players, together with 24 more Dragons returning from layoffs of varying lengths. We won by a score of 14 to 6 on the top 20 boards, with three Black wins published below: new member Fernando Pinget shocking Patrick Champion on Board 6; current Club Champs player Mario Falchoni beating Joshua Brown on Board 10; and former Club Champs player Andy Peykov defeating Van Vo on Board 12. Overall they outrated us on average by a margin of 1617 to 1555; yet undaunted by these numbers, a dozen Dragons beat their higher rated opponents, with three more achieving upset draws. A great effort by all the Dragons; onwards and upwards to regaining the Shield in November!

**Patrick Champion 0-1 Fernando Pinget:** See game below. Fernando looked to be in trouble early in a French, eventually losing a pawn. Yet it turned out taking the pawn on Move 14 was a mistake by Patrick, allowing Fernando to equalise; 14.Qh6 was correct. The way play went, Fernando had good compensation for his pawn minus. He severely weakened White's pawns, and the rook ending was just equal. But Patrick pushed too hard to win, his 32nd move in particular being a decisive error; after this, Fernando's connected passed pawns crashed through for a magnificent victory!

### **Champion, P (2066) - Pinget, F (2037), Big Boards First Leg Norths v Saints Board 6, 23/05/2023**

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ gxf6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Bf4 Bd6 8.Bg3 a6 9.Qd2 b6 10.0-0-0 Ne7 11.Bd3 Bb7 12.Qh6 Nd5 13.Qg7 Ke7 14.Bxh7 Qf8 15.Qxf8+ Rxf8 16.Be4 f5 17.Bxd6+ cxd6 18.Bxd5 Bxd5 19.Rd3 Rc8 20.Kd2 Be4 21.Rc3 Rxc3 22.bxc3 Bxf3 23.gxf3 Rh3 24.Ke3 Kd7 25.a4 e5 26.dxe5 dxe5 27.Rd1+ Ke6 28.Rb1 e4 29.Kd4 Rxf3 30.Rxb6+ Kd7 31.c4 Rxf2 32.Ke5 e3 33.Rb3 e2 34.Re3 f4 35.Re4 f3 36.Kf4 Rf1 0-1

**Joshua Brown 0-1 Mario Falchoni:** What can I say? Maybe frustrated by his Club Champs struggles, Mario was super-aggressive in this one; and it paid off! He sacrificed a pawn early but equalised quite easily, then went on the attack... Joshua's 14th move was a mistake, giving Mario the edge; and it was all over six moves later. A stunning miniature (see game below); well played Mario!

### **Brown, J (1950) - Falchoni, M (1961), Big Boards First Leg Norths v Saints Board 10, 23/05/2023**

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Bd3 Nd5 9.Nf3 Bd6 10.0-0 Nf4 11.Re1 0-0 12.Nc3 Bg4 13.h3 Bh5 14.Ne4 f5 15.Nxd6 Qxd6 16.b4 e4 17.bxa5 Nxh3+ 18.Kf1 Bxf3 19.Bc4+ Kh8 20.gxh3 Qh2 0-1

**Van Vo 0-1 Andy Peykov:** This one was even better, a rusty Andy engaging in hand to hand fighting and coming out on top! Van's error was on Move 20, not taking Black's dangerous e-pawn. Andy's resultant passed pawn proved decisive in a rook ending; see game over the page.

**Vo, Van (1882) - Peykov, Andy (1896), Big Boards First Leg Norths v Saints Board 12, 23/05/23**  
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 d5 7.exd5 Nxd5 8.Nbd2 Nb6 9.Bb5 Bg4 10.h3 Bh5 11.Ne4 Be7 12.g4 f5 13.gxh5 fxe4 14.Bxc6 bxc6 15.Nxe5 Bd6 16.Qg4 Qe8 17.f4 Bxe5 18.fxe5 Rxf1+ 19.Kxf1 Qxe5 20.Kg2 exd3 21.Bd2 Qd5+ 22.Qf3 Nc4 23.Bf4 Rf8 24.Qxd5+ cxd5 25.b3 Rxf4 26.bxc4 dxc4 27.h6 gxh6 28.Re1 Kf7 29.Kg3 Rf6 30.a4 Re6 0-1

### Division 3

**Ludwig Wolf 0-1 Netra Bhatt:** Netra rounded off a fantastic finish to his first ever Club Champs by winning this game to exceed 50% (he scored 5/9); but Ludwig really made him work! The advantage fluctuated in the opening, and they were equal by Move 10; but by Move 20, Netra had a small edge. Then Ludwig took a poisoned pawn and had to give up the exchange for a pawn. A neat tactic then saw Netra give back the exchange to simplify then win a piece via a pin. The finish after that was prosaic, as Netra won the ending a piece up in 42 moves: see game below.

**Wolf, Ludwig (1594) - Bhatt, Netra, 2023 St George CC Division 3 Round 9, 30/05/2023**  
1.e4 c5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.a3 Nf6 4.Nc3 g6 5.Nf3 d6 6.h3 Bg7 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 0-0 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.0-0 a5 11.Qf3 Bb7 12.Rd1 Qc7 13.Na4 Nd7 14.Bf4 Ne5 15.Bxe5 Bxe5 16.Qe3 Ba6 17.Ba2 Rab8 18.Rab1 Rb7 19.f4 Bg7 20.Nc3 Rfb8 21.Bb3 e6 22.Qd2 c5 23.Qxd6 Bd4+ 24.Rxd4 cxd4 25.Qxc7 Rxc7 26.Nd1 d3 27.Ne3 dxc2 28.Bxc2 Rxc2 29.Nxc2 Bd3 30.Rc1 Rc8 31.e5 f6 32.exf6 Kf7 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4 Rxc2 35.Rxc2 Bxc2 36.Kf2 Be4 37.g4 Kxf6 38.Ke3 Bc6 39.h4 h5 40.gxh5 gxh5 41.Kf2 Kf5 42.Kg3 Ke4 0-1

**Louis Jeff 1-0 Colin Goldsmith:** An equally good finish by Louis, who got to 5.5 and outright third place with victory in this 16 move miniature. After Louis got the edge in a Philidor's by transposition, Colin simply blundered a piece for a pawn on Move 11 with an errant discovery. When he was dropping a pawn five moves later, he decided to call it quits; White was already +5 by then...

**Sam Sharkawy 0F-1F John Nichas:** Not sure why Sam went AWOL in this one, but no complaints from John; he was happy to take the forfeit and get an early night.

**Stuart Taylor 1-0 John Parissis:** What was billed as a classic last round finish between the top two placegetters unfortunately proved to be an anticlimax! Half a point in front, John was actually smart to choose a sharp opening (sacrificing a pawn) rather than risk passivity playing for a draw. What was not so smart was miscalculating a line on Move 5 trying to take advantage of a pin! All John managed to do was lose a piece and trade queens. The result was he lost a 13 move miniature, resigning one move before mate; Stuart thus won the division on 7.5/9, while John was outright second on 7.

**Ghassan Beydoun 0-1 Darren Curtis:** See game below – a crazy game that went up and down like a fiddler's elbow! The advantage was already swinging in the opening, but it had settled to Ghassan's advantage by Move 17. His 18th was an error, however, allowing Darren to win the exchange and gain a significant edge. But then he gave it all back by dropping a piece on Move 26; Ghassan moved his king to the wrong square on Move 29, letting Darren right back into the game; and there were more mutual errors before Ghassan got a decisive advantage by Move 40. But he let Darren equalise due to his exposed king; and then he gave it all away by refusing to just allow Black a perpetual check on Move 45. The result was a victory by checkmate for Darren instead; what a crazy game!

**Beydoun, Ghassan (1548) - Curtis, Darren (1508), 2023 St George CC Div 3 Round 9, 30/05/2023**  
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bc4 e6 4.0-0 Nc6 5.c3 Nf6 6.Re1 Be7 7.a3 0-0 8.b4 cxb4 9.axb4 Bd7 10.Qb3 Qc7 11.d4 e5 12.Bb2 a6 13.Nbd2 Rac8 14.Ng5 Nd8 15.Ra5 h6 16.Ngf3 Nc6 17.Raa1 Bg4 18.b5 Na5 19.Rxa5 Qxa5 20.b6 exd4 21.Ra1 Qh5 22.Nxd4 Qg6 23.Re1 Nh5 24.Bd5 Nf4 25.g3 Rb8 26.Nf5 Bxf5 27.exf5 Qg5 28.Nf3 Nh3+ 29.Kg2 Nf4+ 30.Kf1 Qxf5 31.gxf4 Bf6 32.Re4 Qh3+ 33.Ke2 Qg2 34.f5 Be5 35.Rxe5 dxe5 36.Nxe5 Qxh2 37.Bxf7+ Kh7 38.Bg6+ Kh8 39.Nf7+ Rxf7 40.Qxf7 Qe5+ 41.Kd1 Rd8+ 42.Kc2 Qe2+ 43.Kb1 Qd1+ 44.Ka2 Qa4+ 45.Ba3 Rd2+ 46.Kb1 Qc2+ 47.Ka1 Rd1+ 0-1

## Division 4

**Elijah Udovitch 1-0 James McGrouther:** This game was played a week late, as James was ill (with Covid!) on the scheduled playing night. Much of the play was even for the first 26 moves, the players trading into an ending with two knights and a rook each. But then just when he was slightly better, James moved his knight en prise! An extra piece for free was too much to concede to Elijah. He fought on for 30 more moves, but to no avail; he resigned on move 57 with pawn against rook and knight.

**Tony Lopes 1F-0F Brian Connell:** Sadly for Brian, he was ill and unable to play his last round game.

**Sait Buzgan 1-0 Mario Parissis:** Maybe the shortest game in the club's history! I suspect Mario was more interested in his brother's misfortunes in Division 3... As a result, I'll let this 6-move miniature speak for itself! Play went 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 f6 4.Bc4 Ne7 5.dxe5 dxe5 6.Bf7+ 1-0. A known opening trap, Mario resigned when losing his queen; well done Sait on winning the event on 7/9!

**Euan Marquez Zarauz 0F-1F Huey Teng:** Another forfeit loss by Euan, no doubt due to work...

**Chris Brown 0.5-0.5 James Bullen:** Another quick game, over in just 12 moves! In a balanced opening position, both players were happy to agree to an early draw... I leave it to James to explain why: "I could see over Chris' shoulder the winning tactic Sait had played to win the event outright early in the round. So I knew then that I could not improve on my ladder position. Usually I like to play the games out for the experience; but feeling a bit tired and knowing I could only keep or lose second place, I played on for a bit then offered a draw, and Chris accepted". So James is at least equal second; Chris will join him if he can win his postponed game against Brian Connell (see below).

**Brian Connell 1-0 Chris Brown:** But sadly for Chris, this was not to be! They played this Round 8 game on the social/internal teams formation night a week after the scheduled final round; and Chris seemed to be doing fine in a quiet opening where queens came off. But then he just lost a pawn to an exchange followed by a knight fork! Further simplifications led to a knight vs bishop ending with Brian (who had the knight) still a pawn up. Like James McGrouther, Chris fought for 30 more moves to no avail; he resigned on Move 55 with a lone king against Brian's king, knight and pawn. This left James Bullen outright second on 6/9, while Chris had to be content with equal third on 5.

## Division 5

**Dimitrios Stathos 1-0 Ashton Li:** After an even opening, Black gave up the two bishops to double and isolate White's c-pawns. He was therefore a bit worse, but Ashton soon equalised; and then he went on the attack! The result was that he won two pawns, swapped knight for bishop, traded queens and should have been winning the resultant double rook and bishop ending quite easily. But there is something to be said for experience, and fighting chess; never give up... Dimitrios won back one pawn, and then Ashton blundered into a discovery which dropped the exchange and a pawn; with a passed e-pawn, Dimitrios had no trouble winning the ending from there.

**Zain Mokhtar 0F-1F Geoff Hyde:** With Zain having withdrawn from the event, this was a welcome night off for our intrepid and hard-working new webmaster!

**Ken Eldridge 1-0 Ali Murtazaev:** Played in advance; see Newsletter Number 11.

**Peter Swinton 0-1 Kevin Liu:** A tough finish for top seed Peter against the top two placegetters! Here Peter tried to play aggressively; but his pawn sacrifice left him a bit worse. Since he was a pawn down, he declined a queen swap on Move 25 and tried to attack. But it was Kevin who set up a mate threat on Move 31 – at which point Peter touched his queen and had to move it! Realising the queen could not stop the mate (so he had to sacrifice it or get checkmated), Peter resigned on the spot, leaving Kevin outright second on 7/9 (with Dimitrios third on 6).

**Aaron Hu 0-1 Faaiz Malik:** Having already wrapped up victory in the event, Faaiz was playing to be the only player this year to register a perfect score – and he succeeded! Still, Aaron made him work... A Giuoco Piano was even, and it took until Move 10 before Faaiz had any sort of advantage. At this point he got the two bishops and a slight edge, on which he gradually built. Then after walking into a removing the guard tactic losing a pawn, Aaron sacrificed the exchange! This material advantage was more than enough, Faaiz reaching his 9/9 score with a pin forcing resignation on Move 27.

## Division 6

**Mark Boan 1-0 William Liu:** See game below: an excellent win for Mark, getting him to a share of third place on 5.5/9 with Stephen Manwarring and relegating William to fifth on 5. Mark had an early edge in the opening; but William fought back to equality then a slight advantage himself. He won a pawn, then gave it right back again into a crazy complicated position with pieces en prise all over the place! When William took on g5 on Move 16, they were back to equal; but then Mark gave him a win on Move 18 with Nd4. By not playing this, he let Mark back into the game; and soon he was losing! A queen trade by Mark turned a win into a loss, but there was one more twist: William blundered his knight to end up the exchange for a pawn down. Discouraged, he resigned prematurely to end a crazy game; with more twists and turns than an Italian labyrinth, an enormously fun game to play over!

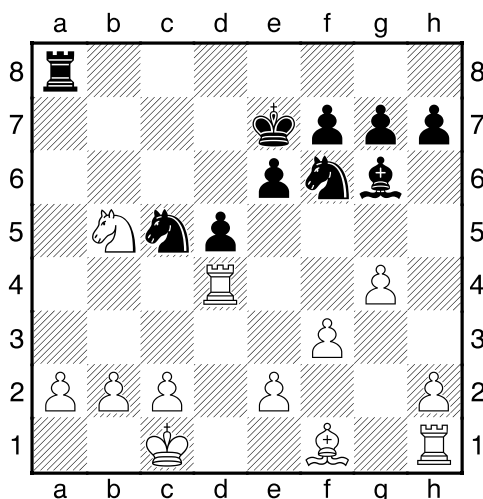
### Boan, Mark (857) - Liu, William (553), 2023 St George CC Division 6 Round 9, 30/05/2023

1.e4 c5 2.Bc4 d6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d3 g6 5.c3 Bg7 6.0-0 0-0 7.h3 Nc6 8.Ng5 Rb8 9.Bf4 b5 10.Bd5 Bd7 11.a3 c4 12.Nd2 cxd3 13.b4 e6 14.Ba2 Nh5 15.Bxd6 Bxc3 16.Rc1 Qxg5 17.Rxc3 Nf4 18.Qf3 Nxh3+ 19.Qxh3 Qxd2 20.Rcc1 Qxa2 21.Qxd3 Rfd8 22.Bxb8 Be8 23.Bd6 Ne5 24.Qc2 Qxc2 25.Rxc2 Rxd6 26.Rc8 Kf8 27.Rc5 a6 28.Rxe5 1-0

**Mary Hunt 0F-1F Ethan Currie:** Mary has overtime work meaning she has to pull out of chess for a while, giving Ethan a forfeit to leave him outright winner of the event on 8/9.

**Stephen Manwarring 1-0 Reno Sciberras:** This game was in fact played in advance, the win netting Stephen equal third place. Reno was worse out of the opening, but had equalised by Move 10. Then he should have lost a piece to a pawn fork; but it ended up being just a pawn instead. From there Stephen swapped queens and slowly consolidated. Then Reno blundered two more pawns and the exchange. The result was inevitable after that, Stephen finally winning with his last pawn on Move 61.

**Samuel Slingo 0-1 Lisa Brandenburg:** Showcasing his massive recent improvement, Samuel totally outplayed Lisa for the first 20 moves of this one! He won a couple of pawns early on via a queen fork, and queens were traded off to boot; then Lisa gave up the exchange, and Samuel was +4! Still Lisa battled on; and the critical position below was reached after Black's 20th move.



Here all Samuel has to do is protect his a-pawn, and he wins easily. Instead after 21.c4 Rxa2, Lisa has equality! White's king is in danger, and he has to be very careful. But unfortunately for Samuel, he was not... He played 22.b4, walking into mate in two (22...Nb3+ 23.Kd1 Ra1 mate) – an unfortunate finish to an otherwise great game by Samuel, but at least it gave Lisa outright second on 7/9!

**John Matson 1-0 Ethan Riegman:** Moving his knight to h6 on Move 3, Ethan got into early trouble; and he never really recovered! Soon he lost a pawn, then another 12 moves later. Queens were traded, and John consolidated well. Winning a third pawn, he found himself in a ending with rook and bishop against rook and knight – and three extra pawns... Then Black moved a rook en prise! John had no trouble winning the game from there, checkmating Ethan on Move 45.

## Division 2

**Srijan Badam 0-1 Andrew Li:** After a quiet opening, Black got a small edge when White moved his knight to the wrong square. Andrew was then able to break in the centre and get a passed d-pawn. But Srijan equalised – then moved his queen to the wrong square and walked into a tactic losing a key central pawn! From there Andrew consolidated into a rook ending a pawn up. Srijan fought on, but to no avail; he resigned when Andrew sacrificed his d-pawn into a winning king and pawn endgame.

**Celina Wu 0-1 Malachi O'Donoghue:** Played in advance; see Newsletter Number 11.

**John Karabatsos 0-1 Albert Tjahja:** This one cost John second place, leaving Celina outright second on 6.5/9 and relegating John to equal third on 6/9 with Albert and Brian Allison! See game below. A King's Gambit went well initially for John, who won the exchange and was better had he played the correct tenth move. Instead his queen got trapped, and John found himself on the worse end of his two rooks against Albert's queen and two pawns! Albert did not play with maximum accuracy from there; but his advantage was big enough. He advanced his kingside pawns and won a second pawn, then just kept attacking; and John resigned on Move 42 when he was losing a rook by force.

**Karabatsos, John (1554) - Tjahja, Albert (1704), 2023 St George CC Div 2 Round 9, 30/05/2023**  
1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d6 4.d4 g5 5.Bc4 Be6 6.d5 Bg4 7.Qd4 f6 8.Nxg5 fxg5 9.Qxh8 Nf6 10.0-0 Qe7 11.Bd2 Nbd7 12.Bb5 0-0-0 13.Bxd7+ Kxd7 14.h3 Bg7 15.Qxd8+ Kxd8 16.hxg4 Qxe4 17.Bc3 Qe3+ 18.Kh1 Qg3 19.Rf3 Qxg4 20.Nd2 Nh5 21.Bxg7 Nxg7 22.Ne4 Qf5 23.Re1 h5 24.c4 h4 25.Rff1 b6 26.a4 a5 27.Kh2 Qg6 28.Rf3 Nf5 29.Nf2 Ne3 30.Nd1 Ng4+ 31.Kh1 Qc2 32.b3 Ne5 33.Rf2 Qxb3 34.Nb2 Qg3 35.Rfe2 Kc8 36.Re4 h3 37.R4e2 g4 38.Rg1 hxg2+ 39.Rexg2 Qf3 40.Re1 g3 41.Kg1 Qg4 42.Rge2 f3 0-1

**Pieter Stoltz 0-1 Brian Allison:** Played in advance; see Newsletter Number 11.

**Michael Babic 1-0 Peter Bogdanoski:** This hard-fought victory gave Michael outright first in this division on 7.5/9. Peter was actually the one who emerged better off from the opening, with a superior pawn centre and more active pieces. But Michael gradually fought back, equalised, and then got the advantage when Peter gave him a passed d-pawn. He got a rook to the seventh rank – whereupon Peter walked into a tactic losing a piece! It was easy for Michael after that; Peter resigned 3 moves later.

## Division 1

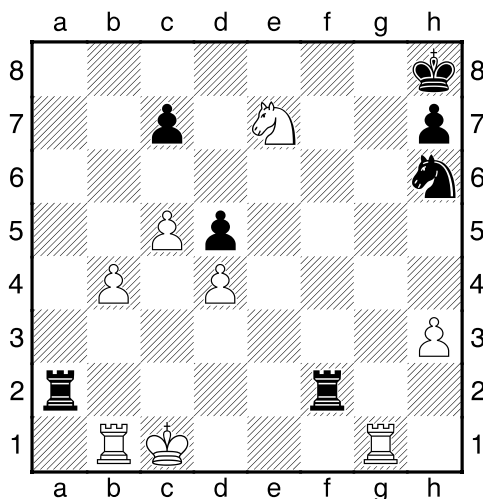
**Arthur Huynh 0-1 Jim Mavroidis:** An excellent upset win by Jim! Only his second loss of the event, this one relegated Arthur to outright third on 6.5/9... After a fairly even opening, Arthur unleashed a series of tactics that wound up with Jim having two pawns for the exchange. With best play on both sides, this was probably equal; but unfortunately for Arthur, what he played was not best! After an inaccurate pawn push losing at least a pawn, he ended up losing a piece instead. There was no coming back from there, as Jim spurned as too complicated an exchange sacrifice the engine said was winning. Instead Jim simply traded rooks; and Arthur resigned in a hopeless position four moves later.

**Robert Kovacs 0.5-0.5 Mario Falchoni:** Trying to be sharp in the opening didn't work out for Robert here, as Mario had a slight edge by Move 12. But he spurned a free pawn, and Robert equalised soon after. Then Mario walked into a tactic, dropping a pawn with a shattered kingside! This should have been winning for Robert. But the finish was anticlimactic – he took a perpetual check instead...

**Jose Escribano 1F-0F Richard Eccles:** A free point for Jose, as Richard was still away.

**John Stuart Plant 0.5-0.5 Stevo Acevski:** This one cost JSP a share of first place, leaving him outright second on 7.5/9. As usual, I leave the game description to John Stuart: "Stevo outplayed me for a lot of this game. Sometimes styles just clash; and for whatever reason, his has always troubled me, being the good player that he is. I was actually quite lucky to escape with a draw in this game. My flank attack was just enough to neutralise his vicious central attack, with emphasis on the phrase "just enough"! When both Stevo's rooks (as Black) doubled themselves on the seventh rank, I thought I was actually just dead lost. But the engine said it was always drawn at that point – if I didn't panic and found what I found... Anyway, I do want to say well done for a great game Stevo!"

If it makes JSP feel any better, here is the position three moves before the end. My engine says Stevo is winning with 36...Rfc2+. But he played 36...Rac2+ and took a perpetual check instead...



**Graham Saint 0-1 Daniel Melamed:** A convincing last round victory, making Daniel a very worthy new Club Champion on an undefeated 8/9! After equalising in a Sicilian, he was better by Move 10. He got a better pawn centre, and his pieces were more active than Graham's. So Graham tried a piece sacrifice, playing for activity and to get at the enemy king. But it failed miserably, as Daniel remained the more active one; he won a second piece, queened a pawn and went on to win in 30 moves.

It is only appropriate to conclude with some thoughts from this newsletter's second best contributor (behind me): JSP, of course! "Just want to say first and foremost congratulations to Daniel for a great event and being a worthy club champion. Easily the most consistent player in the top division, he will lift the trophy up really well. Well done... As for me, overall I was pleased with my tournament. I had three draws, no losses and came outright second, scoring the most points I ever have in the top division. I look forward to returning, hopefully even stronger next year. Thanks also to our illustrious club captain for running such a great event and writing such an excellent newsletter as always!"

Thus endeth an outstanding Club Champs! And of course, it is fitting to end with 6 more JSP jokes... You can never play chess near a tennis court – there's too much racquet! The good thing about chess snooker tournaments is they're never late: they always start on cue! A king's favourite kind of weather is reign! The chess player did not know where to move in the furniture store: he just had no Ikea! Pirates can always buy really cheap chess sets, because they buy them on sail! And finally: I didn't want to take the fish's queen for free in our game, because I thought there would be a catch!