

MK Phoenix

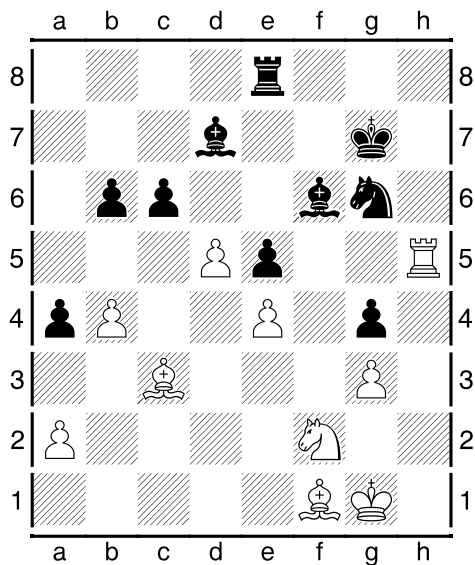
Weekend 1 -11th and12th November 2017

By Brian Valentine with first team material by Paul Habershon

Another season begins, but with late publishing of games scores. So, Paul and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a successful New Year and as some small gift provide this now festive edition, before everyone gears up for the next round. Adrian will be seeking availability for January imminently.

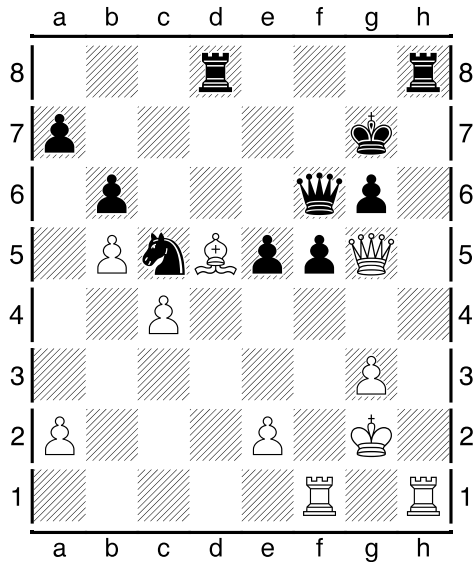
The week before the 4NCL two of us were playing in a Seniors congress in Exmouth. A couple of positions for warmup.

Alan Brown went unbeaten in the kiddie's event (over 50). This included taking out the top seed in round 4. See if you can work out what is going on.



Brown v Braun, white to play

In the last round I had a chance of a podium finish and perhaps equal first if I could beat the top seed in the over 65s. Here's the critical position. White to play.



Berry v Valentine, Black has just played Qd6-f6

What happened next.

Denouements at the end of the report.

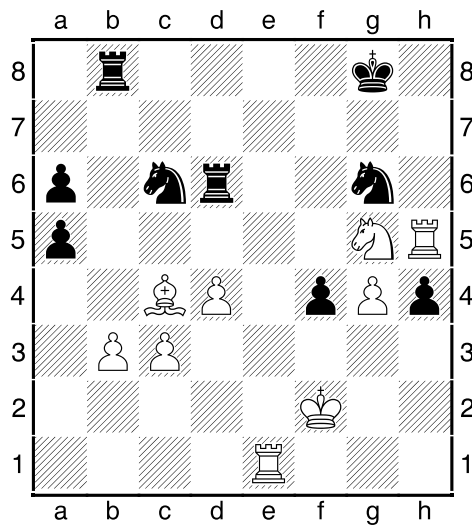
Saturday

Writing four weeks after the event I am hard put to remember how matches unfolded. Anyway, it was a pleasant surprise for the team to finish the weekend with a win and a draw after so many poor starts in previous years.

MK Phoenix 1	2031	Fermented Sharks	2044
361 w Tippleston, Charles E	c 2080 1 - 0	Mogilarov, Dimitar	2135
362 b Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N	2080 1 - 0	Okhai, Shabir	2075
363 w Smith, Graham	2026 ½ - ½	Agnew, Alan	2108
364 b Freeman, Richard C P	2009 ½ - ½	Niccoli, Tony	2030
365 w Habershon, Paul F	1999 0 - 1	George, Matthew P	2021
366 b Elwin, Adrian G	1996 1 - 0	Dydak, Mateusz	1898
	4 - 2		

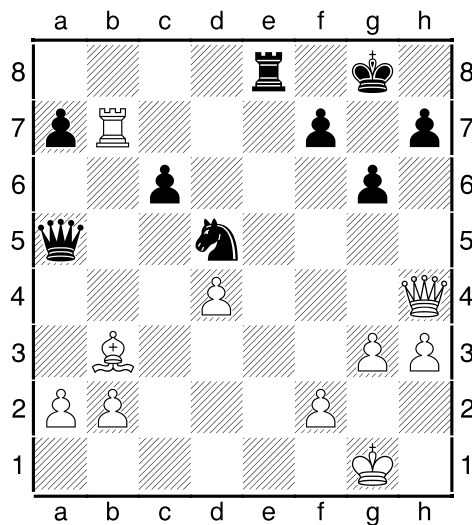
On Board 1 against Fermented Sharks Charles produced a fine win against the odds. After queens came off he weakened Black's Q-side pawns and developed a strong initiative in the ending. It seems that the final moves were not in the PGN so the last position available is here after 43 Ne6-g5+.

Tippleston - Mogilarov



On Board 2 Jeremy benefited from a blunder in the position below.

Okhai - Fraser-Mitchell

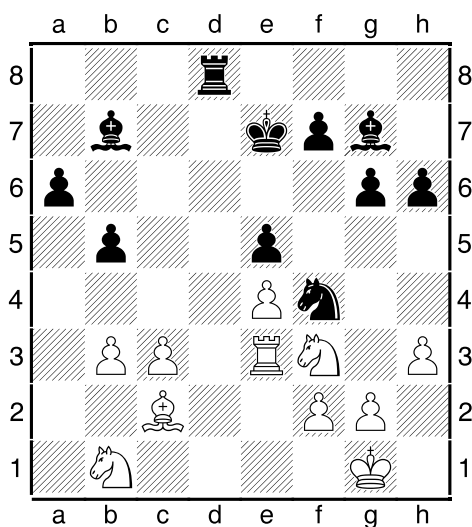


29 Bxd5?? and now White is not Okhai at all. ...Re1+ 30 Kh2 Qxd5 31 g4 Qf3 **0-1**

On Board 3 Graham (White) delayed castling and opened up the h file but his aggression eventually was neutralised by many exchanges and a draw was agreed.

On Board 4 Richard agreed a draw in this position after 23....Kf8-e7

Niccoli – Freeman

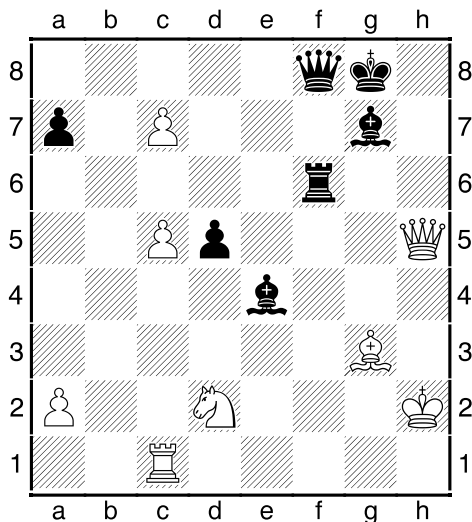


Fritz, perhaps optimistically, gives Black +1 and a bit here.

On Board 5 my opponent sacrificed the exchange somewhat speculatively, but it paid off when I failed to find the best continuation. This led to the scenario no one wants: playing the longest game in the match but always likely to lose, which I did after a rook and pawn ending where my swindles were always covered.

On Board 6 things got wild after Adrian let slip a big advantage. Position after 34...Qe7-f8

Dydak - Elwin



White now goes from +10 to -20 with 35 Qg4?? **0-1**

He was obviously worried about his queen getting pinned, but after 35 Nxe4! Rh6 36 Qxh6 Bxh6 37 Rb1 wins.

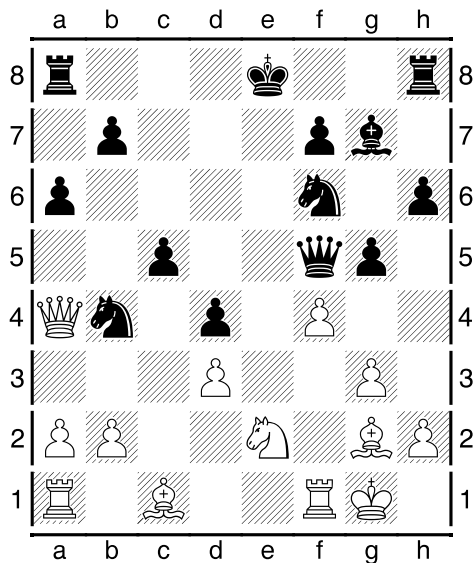
MK Phoenix 2	1873	West is Best 4	1688
461 w Lambourne, Dan M	1980 1 - 0	Smith, Steve	1821
462 b Valentine, Brian J	1937 ½ - ½	Di-Vetta, Andrew	1806
463 w Adebajo, Olufemi	1922 0 - 1	Hurley, Jake	* 1698 o
464 b Whiteside, Robert	1817 ½ - ½	Melsom, Jonathan T	1721
465 w Majer, Chris E	1874 1 - 0	Ray, Hiya	1625
466 b Shaw, John S	1709 0 - 1	Fowler, Caspian	1458

3 - 3

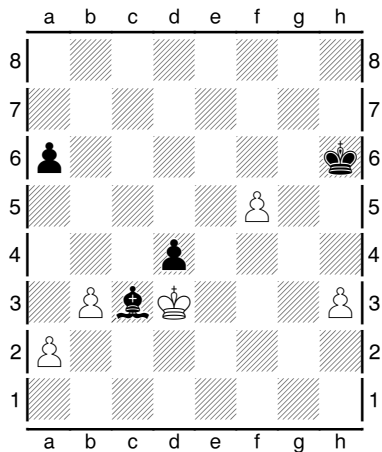
This is one that got away, but I'm not sure from which side! The caveat I have is that, as input, my game looks a disaster for both sides. My copy of the score shows that I managed to lose a pawn and then got a bit of counterplay, enough for a draw offer by me to be accepted. Dan ruthlessly outplayed Smith on board 1.

The remainder of the games were see-saw affairs where both sides each had clear winning positions. I shall draw a veil over the games of Messrs Whiteside, Majer and Shaw. All the trial and tribulations of those games can be exhibited by episodes in Femi's encounter.

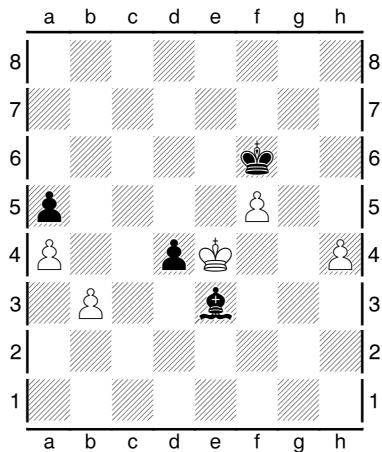
Adebayo – Hurley, Black to play



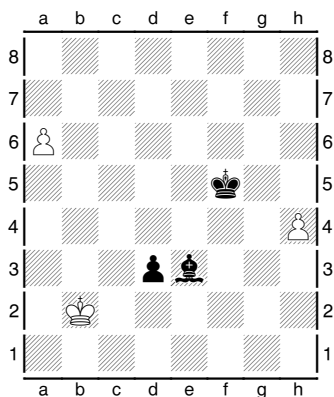
The white square deficit means black's only move to stay in the game is 16...Qd7, but he played 16...b5? Now after 17. Qb3 the Nb4 is trapped. However, Femi struck out with 17.Nxd4 which isn't losing, but a missed opportunity. In the ensuing melee Femi went material down and the fought back. After 40 moves each he reached the following position.



The position is apparently drawn with best play, but the defence hangs by a thread. 41.h4 is the only move. Femi played 41.a3 and after 41...Kg5 Black is clearly winning. The game moves on to:



Here Femi plays his last card: 47.b4 and the pawn race continues 47.axb4, 48. a5 b3 49. Kd3 and now Black wavers with 49...Kxf5 losing a valuable tempo. 50. h6 b2 51. Kc2. The lost tempo means that there is only one way to win by force with 51...Bc1. But Black queened his pawn 51...b1Q 52.Kxb1 d3 53.Kb2 and the position is now drawn, viz.



Nonetheless the final chapter unfolds: 53...Ke4 54. h5?? Kf3 and black converts by controlling d1 while keeping his pawn; after 54 Kc3 that can't happen and our man would get a hard earned draw.

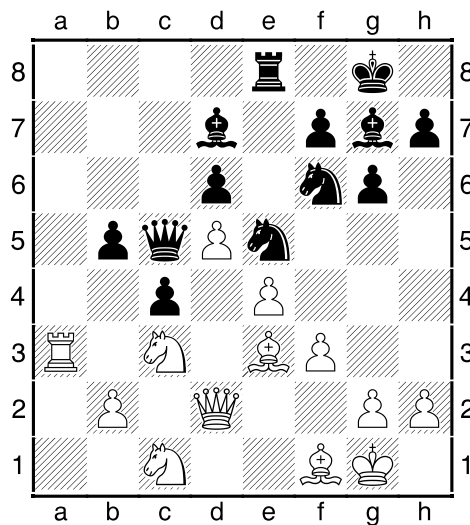
Sunday

The Rookies	2042	MK Phoenix 1	2031
371 w Josse, Mark	2152 1 - 0	Tippleston, Charles E	c 2080
372 b Byron, Alan M	2082 1 - 0	Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N	2080
373 w Piper, Stephen J	2075 0 - 1	Smith, Graham	2026
374 b Compton, Alistair	2078 ½ - ½	Freeman, Richard C P	2009
375 w Jaszkiwskyj, Peter	1936 ½ - ½	Habershon, Paul F	1999
376 b Gibson, Christopher A	1932 0 - 1	Elwin, Adrian G	1996
	3 - 3		

In Round 2 against The Rookies, Charles on Board 1 held his own into an endgame but allowed White an e5 break which led to a slow death – the last game to finish but we already had three points in the bag.

On Board 2 Jeremy's pieces manoeuvred awkwardly on the Q-side in a Saemisch K Indian.

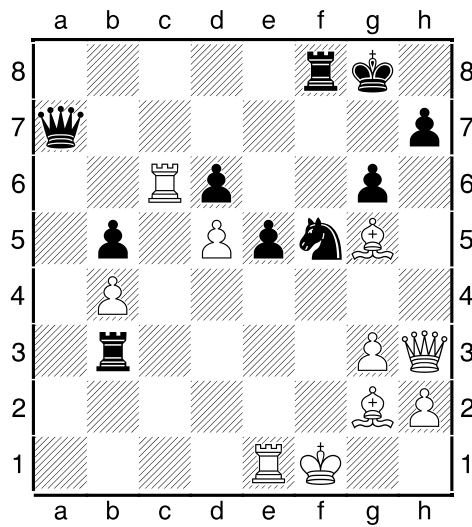
Fraser-Mitchell – Byron(to move)



Here Black found the neat pin 21...Bh6 and life for White was very awkward after 22 Nd1 b4 23 Ra1 c3...
0-1 after 29 moves.

Graham won nicely on Board 3 after White's Queen foray on the K-side got nowhere. He sacrificed a bishop on f2 to reach this double-check threat position after 34 Rb8-f8.

Piper – Smith (White to move)

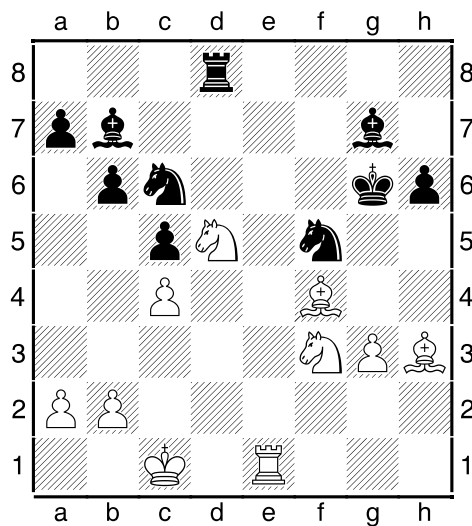


White has had it. 34.Be4 35 Nxg3+ 0-1 (35 Kg2 Qf2++)

On Board 4 Richard played another steady draw while on 5 I lost a pawn but managed enough activity in a major piece ending to win it back and agree a draw.

Finally, on Board 6 Adrian achieved the rare feat of 2/2 in a weekend when his pieces reached optimum positions here:

Elwin – Gibson
after 34...Kf7x(pawn)g6



35 Re6+ Kf7 (...Kh5 36 g4++) 36 Bxf5 1-0

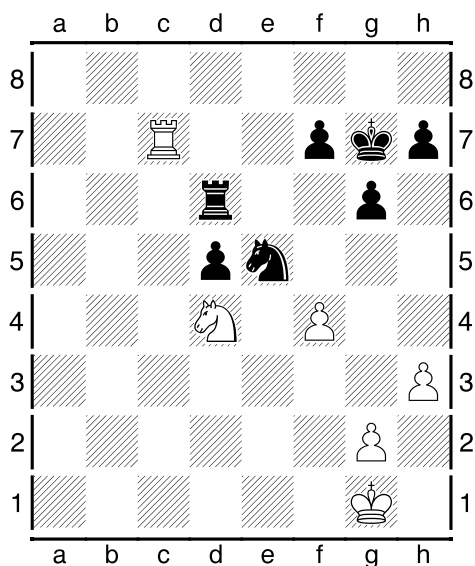
	The Pitstop	1739	MK Phoenix 2	1870
461 w	Ogunshola, Ben	2155	1 - 0 Lambourne, Dan M	1980
462 b	Froom, Oliver	1945	1 - 0 Valentine, Brian J	1937
463 w	Green, George D A	1862	e 0 - 1 Williamson, Kevin J	1903
464 b	Sloan, Hamish	1517	1 - 0 Whiteside, Robert	1817
465 w	Fernando, Manel	1499	1 - 0 Majer, Chris E	1874
466 b	Faizi, Tariq	1456	0 - 1 Shaw, John S	1709
			4 - 2	

The tactics were fairly clear here given Froom has an ECF grade of 183; defend on boards 1&2 to aim for one draw, with the remainder forming the attack aiming for 3/4. We failed on both counts!

Dan chose the correct strategy of developing rather than defend a pawn. However, the tactical elements of his decision were faulty. He lost the pawn for insufficient compensation and it looked desperate thereafter.

Something similar happened to me, but I had one chance to turn it round.

Valentine v Froom, black to move



Here he played 36... Rd7 and I meekly played 37. Rxd7 and never got close again. 37. Nb5!

Kevin was in trouble for some time, but turned it round in the run up to time control. He was lucky his opponent ignored a strong attacking line.

