

MK Phoenix weekend 4 report 2017

There has been a news blackout of Division 3s round 8. It is unlikely that any of the first team will be miffed if we get out the report with a minimal look at round 8. Overall it was a performance that should be celebrated with some urgency, so here goes. Paul Habershon reports on the season defining match in round 7.

MK PHOENIX 1 - 4NCL Div 3 Rd 7 – Sat. 18th March 2017

This was the crucial day, the last round of the preliminaries, when we could save ourselves from relegation by beating Surbiton. After four results the match was not looking good. David on Board 1 had survived a difficult game to draw. Charles on 2 lost his way and eventually material to a fork. On 5 and 6 Paul and Richard could make only draws against lower rated opponents. Thus, we were 1.5-2.5 down when it was time to go to the pub for a 7.30 dinner. Adrian stayed behind to monitor the toiling Jeremy and Stewart on Boards 3 and 4. Needing two wins we were material up in both but securing the points looked doubtful, particularly in Jeremy's game where there were few pawns in a minor piece ending.

Here is Jeremy's position where White could fight on with 65 Nd1:

Fraser-Mitchell (MKP1)

X	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Y
8-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	(
7	+	-	p	-	+	-	v	-	'
6-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	&
5	p	k	+	-	+	-	+	-	%
4-	+	n	+	-	+	-	+	-	\$
3	v	K	P	-	+	-	+	-	#
2-	N	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	"
1	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	!
x	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	y

Singleton (Surbiton) to move

Instead there came 65 Na4? Nd2+ 66 Kc2 Kxa4 0-1.

On Board 3 Stewart had a clearer win for longer, but rook endings are rarely easy.

Cromblehome (Surbiton) to move

X A B C D E F G H Y
 8 - + - ~~K~~ - + - + (
 7 + - + P + - + - '
 6 - + - + - ~~k~~ - + &
 5 t - + - + - + - %
 4 - + - + - + - + \$
 3 p - + - + - + - #
 2 R + - + - + - + "
 1 + - + - + - + - !
 x a b c d e f g h y

Reuben (MKP1)

At this stage, though, Stewart has just found the essential 80 d6-d7! And the game concluded 80...Ra8+ 81 Kc7 Ra7+ 82 Kc8 Ra8+ 83 Kb7 Rd8 84 Kc7 1-0

Thus, Jeremy and Stewart made a triumphant entry into the pub and I enjoyed my meal much more.

See below for the match details and the final Pool A table.

Surbiton		2022	MK Phoenix 1		2088
321	w Josse, Mark	2179	½ - ½	Friedgood, David	f 2218
322	b Seymour, Timothy P	2079	1 - 0	Tippleston, Charles E	c 2108
323	w Singleton, Michael P F	2091	0 - 1	Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N	2077
324	b Crombleholme, Alan K	2034	0 - 1	Reuben, Stewart	c 2067
325	w Faulks, Nick	c 1993	½ - ½	Habershon, Paul F	2043
326	b Alcock, Graham P	1758	½ - ½	Freeman, Richard C P	2020

2½ - 3½

3 South pool A

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Wood Green MM 1		4½-1½	3½-2½	3½-2½	3½-2½	4-2	4-2	4½-1½	27½	14
2 Wessex	1½-4½		4-2	3-3	3½-2½	3-3	4½-1½	3-3	22½	9
3 Poisoned Pawns 1	2½-3½	2-4		3½-2½	2-4	3½-2½	5½-½	3½-2½	22½	8
4 MK Phoenix 1	2½-3½	3-3	2½-3½		3½-2½	3-3	3½-2½	3½-2½	21½	8
5 Brown Jack 1	2½-3½	2½-3½	4-2	2½-3½		3-3	4-2	4-2	22½	7
6 Rhyfelwyr Essyllwg	2-4	3-3	2½-3½	3-3	3-3		3-3	3-3	19½	5
7 Surbiton	2-4	1½-4½	½-5½	2½-3½	2-4	3-3		3½-2½	15	3
8 The Rookies	1½-4½	3-3	2½-3½	2½-3½	2-4	3-3	2½-3½		17	2

The bare details of Sunday's match are available:

MK Phoenix 1	2071	Fermented Sharks	2054
341 w Friedgood, David	f 2218 ½ - ½	Moloney, Nicholas R	2191
342 b Reuben, Stewart	c 2067 ½ - ½	Okhai, Shabir	2105
343 w Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N	2077 0 - 1	Agnew, Alan	2102
344 b Freeman, Richard C P	2020 0 - 1	George, Matthew P	2031
345 w Habershon, Paul F	2043 0 - 1	Millward, Kevin P	2028
346 b Elwin, Adrian G	2001 ½ - ½	Dydak, Mateusz	1867
	1½ - 4½		

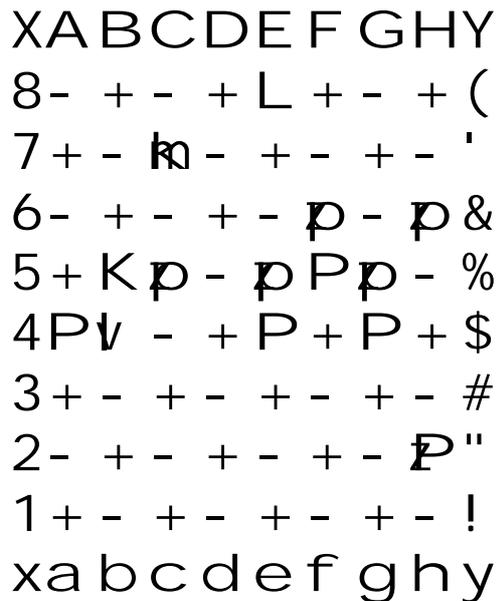
The second teams goal was to get into a position to have decent opponents for the final long weekend. With a page from the Tony Pulis playbook this objective was surpassed. Tight at the back and taking our chances at the other end we moved to 5th place with two wins and no game defeats. The idea of a promotion place remains a pipe dream. We have not played any of the top three teams, but have played the next three (apart from ourselves) so the draw which starts with us against the Chelsea of the division, is unlikely to be kind.

I (BV) was dropped for Saturday and can only interpret the electronic data.

MK Phoenix 2	1937	Oxford 3	1819
461 w Smith, Graham	2004 ½ - ½	Neatherway, A Philip	1860
462 b Elwin, Adrian G	2001 1 - 0	Foster, Timothy	1872
463 w Lambourne, Dan M	1985 1 - 0	Rowan, Daniel	1834
464 b Brown, Alan M	1964 ½ - ½	Cole, Graham	1850
465 w Matthews, Adrian M S	1863 ½ - ½	Gentry, Alan E	1744
466 b Whiteside, Robert	1807 1 - 0	Lim, Wei Xinq Sean	1757
	4½ - 1½		

Graham had a solid edge for most of the game, but ended up the usual result from a Ruy Lopez exchange variation. Adrian turned a speculative sacrifice into ferocious attack albeit silicon defendable. His opponent soon went wrong.

Dan retained an edge throughout, but ended up in a bishop of opposite colours endgame with level pawns. Dan only had one lever – the more distant passed pawn – which should have been insufficient. Nevertheless, Dan took the game into extra time and was rewarded with the equivalent of a goalkeeping error.



Lambourne v Rowan, Black to move.

This position is drawn, but it takes a bit of nerve by black. He cannot stop the next advance of the a pawn, but by offloading his c-pawn he can use his bishop to defend a7. Then he needs his K on d6 to stop the WK infiltrating into the k-side pawns. He found 47...Kb7, whereupon a5 is the cleanest kill. Dan decided on 48. Bf7 which also does the job by blockading on c4. The correct defensive procedure was something like 47....Bd2 48. Bf7 c4! and eventually parking the bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal.

Alan played a variation of the French Defence that I associate with Petrosian. The computer doesn't think much of it, but it requires real care to nurture a white advantage. Alan soon equalised despite having returned two pieces to their starting squares within 8 moves. He agreed a draw in a blocked position. Adrian got the worst of the opening and faced a difficult game defending an emerging k-side attack using a pair of bishops. His opponent chose to swap off one of the bishops and a draw was soon agreed. Rob tried a French Defence himself but was tricked into defending a Maroczy Bind. It was as though Rob had been playing the Sicilian all his life and white soon dropped the exchange with all Robs pieces then entering the white camp.

Sunday's match was much tougher on paper, but soon became a breeze.

	CSC Rhinos (2)	1890	MK Phoenix 2	1928
431 w	Head, Louise	2018	0 - 1 Smith, Graham	2004
432 b	Foley, John P	1946	0 - 1 Brown, Alan M	1964
433 w	Fowler, David	1898	½ - ½ Lambourne, Dan M	1985
434 b	Lees, Fraser A	1865	½ - ½ Valentine, Brian J	1945
435 w	Cooke, Charlie	1815	½ - ½ Matthews, Adrian M S	1863
436 b	Towers, Nigel S	1800	½ - ½ Whiteside, Robert	1807

2 - 4

Rob's opponent was a team-mate of Dan's in another life. In the pre-match team talk, Dan talked up his mate's ability. So Rob quickly agreed a draw. A little later it became clear that we were winning on the top three boards, when Adrian was offered a draw. My game was getting blocked, so I offered a draw. My opponent, who had valiantly played a scary game against three queens the previous day, was happy to agree peace.

After a quick analysis, I returned to find that Adrian had turned down the draw and Dan had agreed one! Adrian's draw offer was here:

```

XABCDEFGHIY
8- t - + - + k + (
7+ - + n p p v p '
6- + - p - + p + &
5+ - + P + - + - %
4- + - + P P - + $
3t - NR + - + - #
2P + - + N + P P "
1+ - + - + R + K!
x a b c d e f g h y

```

Cooke v Matthews, black to move and consider a draw offer

Black is winning as Adrian nearly proved. He continued 24...Rb2, correctly playing on. He was rewarded by the response 25. Rff3? (25. Rdf3 is a tougher nut to crack) and now 25...Bxc3! wins a piece by exploiting the weak back rank. Instead, Adrian played 25... Nc5 and 25. Rd1 defended the back rank. Adrian was still winning but later erred and only drew.

When I first looked over to Dan's position, I immediately noted that he was groveling. When I revisited his game I realised that he was a piece up and therefore chalked up the win. Fowler put up enough obstacles that Dan was persuaded to "take one for the team" and settle for a draw. It appears that he overlooked the winning idea.

X A B C D E F G H Y

8 r + - + - ♚ - + (

Fowler v Lambourne Black to move

7 + - + l + p + - '

6 p + k + p ♞ r + &

5 + p + n + - ♞ - %

4 - + p ♞ N + - + \$

3 + - ♞ - + - ♞ - #

2 ♞ ♞ - + - + - ♚ "

1 + - ♞ - + R + - !

x a b c d e f g h y

From here the final moves were 29...Qb8 30. Qh7 Qg8 31 Qh2 Qb8 32. Qh7 Qb8 33. Qh2 draw. The winning idea is 29...Rd8 with Be8 to follow, controlling d6, and Black can slowly push back.

Alan simply accumulated pawns.

Graham played a provocative opening and was soon rewarded.

X A B C D E F G H Y

8 r ♗ l ♚ - t k + (

Head v Smith, Black to move

7 ♞ ♞ ♞ n ♜ - ♞ ♞ '

6 - + - + p + - + &

5 + - + - ♞ ♞ + - %

4 - + N ♞ - + - + \$

3 ♞ - + L + - + Q #

2 - ♞ - + - ♞ ♞ ♞ "

1 ♞ - ♜ - ♞ - ♞ R !

x a b c d e f g h y

This is a dream position for Black after only 10 moves. Play continued 10...c5 and here White struck out with 11.g4?! Graham replied 11...cd4 met by 12.gf5. And now Graham went wrong with 12...Nc5?! which should have been met by 13.f6 with equal chances (12.ef5 was the right move). After 13.fe6 played, the game soon finished after 13...Nd3 14.Qd3 Qd5 (gaining tempo by hitting h1). A deserved slice of luck in an otherwise impressive win.