



4NCL Report

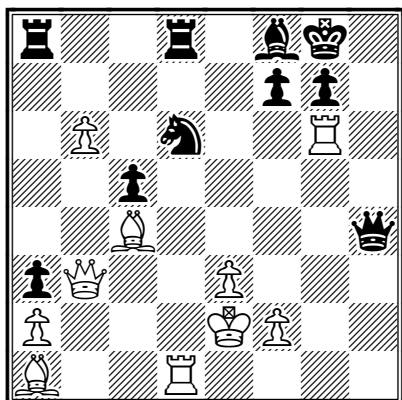
**Stephen Berry** reports on the recent 4NCL weekend.

**ALMOST SAFE**

**K**ings Head continued the good work at the latest 4NCL weekend. It is true that we faced two of the weaker teams of Division Two, but on our form over the last year or so this was no guarantee of success. Whatever the opposition, points still have to be scored and matches won.

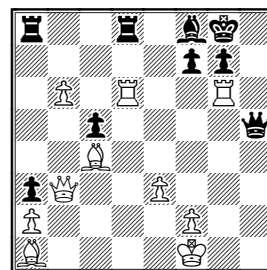
On Saturday, we were to play Beeson Gregory III. We feared they would be strong if their first team turned out the big guns and pushed everyone down the board order. In the event we outgraded them, but just failed to cash in. The first three boards and the bottom board were all draws of varying interest. I was under pressure for twenty five moves against Bernard Cafferty and glad to draw, whilst Selena managed the same against a higher-rated opponent. Rick McM's game against Anderton was as wild as wild can be. From the following position the game ended (with Rick as White):

**34.♖dxd6**



This should be the decisive blow. f7 is now unprotected

**34...♖h5+ 35.♗e1 ♖h1+ 36.♗e2 ♖h5+ 37.♗f1**



Back on track

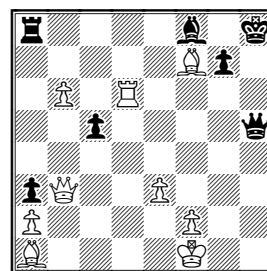
**37...♞xd6**

If now **37...♖h1+ 38.♞g1 ♖h3+ 39.♗e1**; or **37...♖h3+ 38.♗g1** the White king escapes the checks

**38.♙xf7+ ♗h8**

**38...♗h7 39.♞xg7+** wins the black queen

**39.♞xd6**

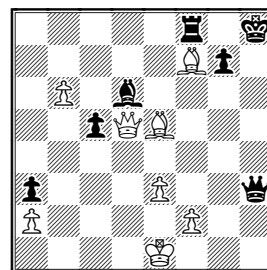


Just before the time control comes the fatal slip **39.♙xg7+ ♙xg7 40.♞xd6** wins. The lack of cover for the black king and the passed b-pawn would be too much for Black. Now it's not so easy

**39...♖h3+ 40.♗e1 ♙xd6 41.♖d5 ♞f8**

Resourceful

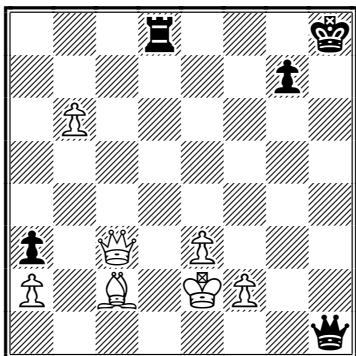
**42.♙e5**



(Here I think was Rick's last chance

to win. 42.♙c3 guards the bishop from the ...Qh1+ threat thereby freeing the white queen and preparing b7. That ought to be enough to win.

42...♙xe5 43.♚xe5 ♚h1+ 44.♚e2 ♜d8 45.♙b3 c4 46.♙c2 c3 47.♚xc3



Discretion is the better part of valour. Rick permits the draw which was only to be avoided by the risky 47 Bd3

47...♚h5+ 48.♚e1

After 48 ... Qh1+ White cannot avoid the perpetual check. 1/2-1/2

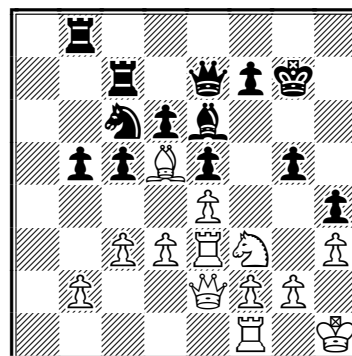
David Okike played "a critical line against the Sveshnikov Sicilian" (his words), won his opponent's queen, but left his pieces undeveloped allowing massive counterplay which swept away his position. Colin's game was the mystery of the round. Playing a standard line in his trusty Winawer French, he won a pawn and seemed – to the innocent observer – to have a solid position. Five minutes later Colin (and his opponent) had disappeared, the pieces were in their start position and the rumour was that the Kings Head captain had lost. Pressed about this later Colin confessed to serially blundering but more than that was not to be ascertained without the use of thumbscrews (not available at the time). Mercifully, the team's bacon was saved by the two heroes of the weekend, Felix and Andy. Other than negotiating his habitual time trouble, Andy faced few difficulties in dismissing tabloid reporter Tim Spanton's rather unsensational opening. Felix's 3 Nd2 Tarrasch against the French is turning into a fearsome weapon indeed and he

squeezed the life out of poor David Gunter's position in leisurely fashion.

At the end Gunter could have played on to receive further instruction, but decided the positional master class had sufficed for that day. So, only 4-4, but it could have been worse.

On Sunday we faced Witney and Swindon who last year came within an ace of promotion into Division One.

This year they seem to be heading towards Division Three and Kings Head propelled them further on their way. Again the first three boards were draws with Rick T disappearing to the bar after ten minutes or so. Two steady draws with the black pieces for him. In my game, although not playing the most accurate moves, I reached the following position after White's 27th move with what I took to be a slight advantage on the board and a considerable advantage on the clock.



27..♘d4

My opponent Timothy Headlong rushed in with this move which completely bamboozled me.

28.♚d1

8.cxd4 exd4 29.♙xg5 was pointed out to me after the game by my opponent (29.♙xd4 cxd4 30.♞f3 ♙xd5) A) 29...♚xg5 30.f4 ♚h6 (30...♚e7 31.f5!) 31.♞ef3; B) 29...dxe3 30.♙xe6+ fxe6 31.♚g4+ ♚h8 32.♙xe6

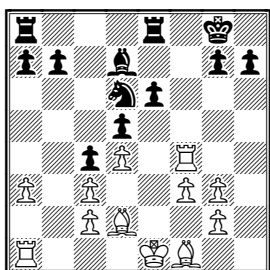
28...♙xf3 29.♚xf3 ♚f6

with a draw offer which I foolishly refused 30.♚d1 b4 31.c4 ♞a7 32.♞f3 ♚h6 33.♞e3 ♚f6 with my opponent agreeing to repetition of moves due to

## King Head Chess Club 4NCL Report

shortage of time. Now he controls the QR file and is better. But as my opponent pointed out afterwards 34.♖f3 ♖h6 35.♞e3 ½-½

Meanwhile, something had gone very wrong with Selenia's position and she duly lost. David Okike seemed to have the worst position I have seen for quite some time, and mentally I wrote that one off too. But elsewhere, the news was better. Again both Felix and Andy won rather easily, Felix refuting a loose Centre Counter and Andy showing that the Grand Prix Attack can be used to win in the ending. Colin banished his Saturday blues in the following position.



After White's last move 17 f3? Colin calmly speared a rook with

**17 ... g5! 18 Rf6**

there is no escape. 18 Rg4 h6 and ...e5 is just as bad

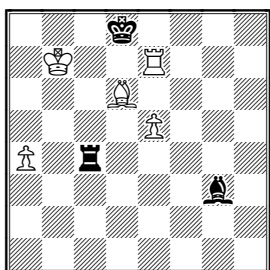
**18 ... Nf7 19 f4**

Relatively better is 19 Rxf7 Kxf7 20 Bxg5 but after 20 ... e5 Black holds the trumps

**19 ... g4 20 Be2 h5**

White preferred to give up a piece to save the rook with 21 Bxg4 hg 22 Rg6+ Kh7 23 Rxg4 Nh6 but Black duly converted his material advantage.

So KHCC had already clinched the match when Okike after a desperate rearguard action reached the following position.



His opponent had already missed

several easy wins but would still be home and dry after 64 a5. Instead he played 64 Rg7?? and David transposed into a drawn Rook and bishop with 64 ... Bxe5! 65 Bxe5 Rxa4 66 Kc6 Ra6+ 67 Kd5 Kc8! 68 Bd6 Ra1 and White agreed a draw after a few more moves.

Final Result 5-3 to Kings Head. The team now have 7 points, the number which sufficed to keep us in Division Two last season. One or two points from the last weekend should see us definitely secure.