

Round 1 Rugeley Rangers vs MCS Oxford A

For our first match Rugeley were paired with the Magdalen College School Oxford. This is a junior team with what appear to be strong players. They certainly out grade us on every board.

	Rugeley Rangers	1611		MCS Oxford A	1837
421	w Whatmore, Steve (<i>SteveWhatmore</i>)	1825 c	-	Shepherd, Tom (<i>TomShepherd</i>)	2027 e
422	b Carr, Matthew (<i>mattcarr2600</i>)	1705 e	-	Selvaraj, Hari (<i>Selvaraj162</i>)	1930 c
423	w Sullivan, Luke (<i>death2rooks93</i>)	1525 c	-	Zhu, Hou Ning (<i>Liانشou</i>)	1802 e
424	b Wood, Ryan (<i>RyanWood01</i>)	1390 c	-	Khan, Samir (<i>samirMCS</i>)	1592 e

Given this is Rugeley we have faced worse odds but not right off the bat. Let's see how we get on. Good luck everyone.

Luke was the first to finish. The game started out with Luke's typical English and then rapidly changed into a queen's pawn game transposing into a Queens Indian accelerated (according to my silicon friend.) Both sides developed their pieces to natural squares, black held a defensive position while Luke took an aggressive stance and looked for a weak spot to strike. This game was a lovely idea of something I learned before I even got into chess. "You strategically position your pieces and then when the time is right you strike"

Luke developed in the centre taking control of it with the pawns on c4 – e4. Black struck at the centre with c5 and with a few pawn pushes by both sides the centre became locked.

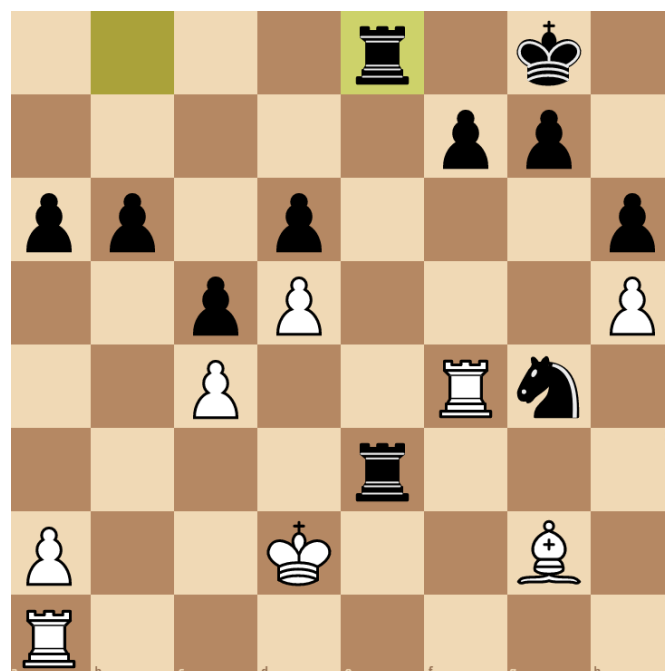


Computer says that white has the advantage here but how to make use of it?

Luke developed his queen to d2 and a move later retreated the bishop back to e2 just in front of the king. The idea was to go in with a kingside attack and keep options open which side to castle while black manoeuvred his pieces for a queenside push and to watch for the attack on the kingside attack by Luke. When Luke launched his attack the opponent was ready for it.



Luke was very aggressive getting the knight in but sadly missed that the bishop can take it back and after the re-capture the opponent can attack it with the queen and there's nothing that can be done to save the pawn. Black begins to build up the pressure and the pieces. Striking through the centre and Luke's pieces are out of coordination and cannot easily be put back into a formation. Black builds up the attack and slowly begins to rip the pawns apart. When black doubled the rooks up it looked like there was a chance for a fight back but that was not the case.



Here it looks like white can just take the knight but there is a nasty counter attack here. See if you can spot what it is. Answer at the end.

The counter attack was strong enough that it gave black a winning edge and checkmate was delivered a few moves after this. This was a brilliant game of hold, let the opponent start the attack, punch back at just the right moment then overwhelm. Nicely played

Rugeley Rangers 0 – 1 MCS Oxford A

Matt was the next game to finish (but only by a few seconds). This was a knight tango he decided to go with. His opponent seems to be consistent in using a queen's gambit formation so this may at least give him the edge in the opening against a player graded 20 points above him.

Both sides developed their pieces to what was thought good squares, then Matt felt that he didn't have a good square to develop anything else to but not wanting to be passive felt the time was right to strike forward. So, strike he did.



Still in book apparently. The alternative was b6 and get the bishop on the long diagonal. But Matt had an idea that the centre would become important and wanted his queen developed. So Ne4 was what was chosen. The black squared bishops got traded off and Matt got his queen out.

The knight on e4 was promptly removed and now there's doubled pawns to worry about. But with the push of f5 there that protects the pawn. Now to get more pieces moving.

There are two pieces not doing anything in the position the bishop on c8 and the rook on a8. Matt moved the bishop to d7 the idea being that if the knight moves it can get out that way and it connects the rooks. Then the opponent did something Matt was not expecting. He attacked the pawn using f3. Not one to turn down a cheap attack, Matt went for it.



The push at f3 left e3 a little weak. So, the white queen came to defend it and Matt kept on coming. F4 was played, after taking it back the rook came into the game and then both rooks were doubled along the f file with a pawn ready to run down to whites back rank if it was allowed.

To his credit white did everything to stop it, pulled his pieces back and targeted it with everything. It was then that Matt blundered, missing a knight fork on queen and rook. That took the steam out of the attack completely. Matt held on as long as possible but when one mistake gets made its usually followed by another. So, when you find yourself running into a position your pinning your queen and king together. It's time to resign.

Rugeley Rangers 0 – 2 MCS Oxford A

Steve was the next game to finish. This was another queens pawn game. A Queen's Gambit Declined: Semi-Tarrasch Defence. Steve exchanged the c and d pawns and began to build up his pieces in the centre. Black wound up with an isolated queens pawn which should prove useful to Steve if he can bring his forces to bear on it.

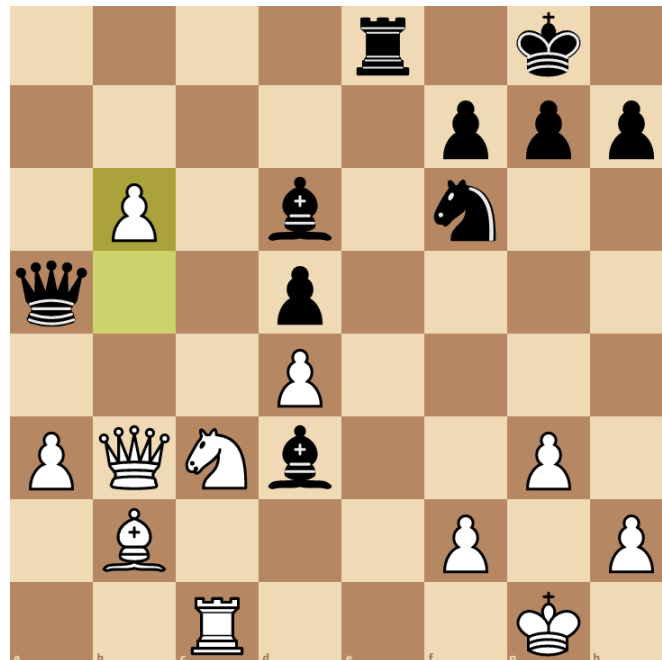


Here Steve launched a queenside push with the pawns, making the bishop retreat down to a7 and developing his own bishop to b2. The opponent had other ideas, once the bishop was there he took the knight on d4 forcing the pawn to recapture and now the bishop is blocked by its own pawn and with a push of b5 black locks out Steve's queenside push but only slightly. The rook now has the c file to make use of if it needs and that's where it came. Steve may be down but not out and decided to play actively (here's where we lose something).



According to the computer (my silicon friend) best move here is to play Re1 and prepare to contest the e file. Steve tried a sacrifice. He played Bxb5 the logic being if it's taken then knight comes in, threatens queen and as soon as the queen moves knight goes in to c7 and forks both rooks. Great idea but sadly it overlooks something rather important. The bishop doesn't need to be taken. So, black just backs the bishop off to b8 and Steve can't move the bishop because if he does its mate in 1! Brilliant little move.

Steve must stop the checkmate and sadly goodbye bishop and with the bishop and queen protecting the c7 square the play no longer works. So, Steve got the two black pawns on a and b, at least he had two pawns for the piece and could start pushing his queenside. If the pawns get far enough forward it should cause trouble for the opponent.



So the b pawn starts to run but here Steve is forced to retreat the defender when the bishop comes back to c4 and there is no way the queen can keep defending the pawn. With the queenside lost Steve moved over to attack through the centre. The rooks were traded off but Steve was always on the defensive now and a bishop down doesn't help. With mate in 4 coming Steve resigned.

Rugeley Rangers 0 – 3 MCS Oxford A

Ryan was our last game to finish. This one we had something quite tactical. We got the Evans gambit. This turned quite fierce very quickly, with Ryan developing his pieces and castling and starting to point everything down towards the enemy king.

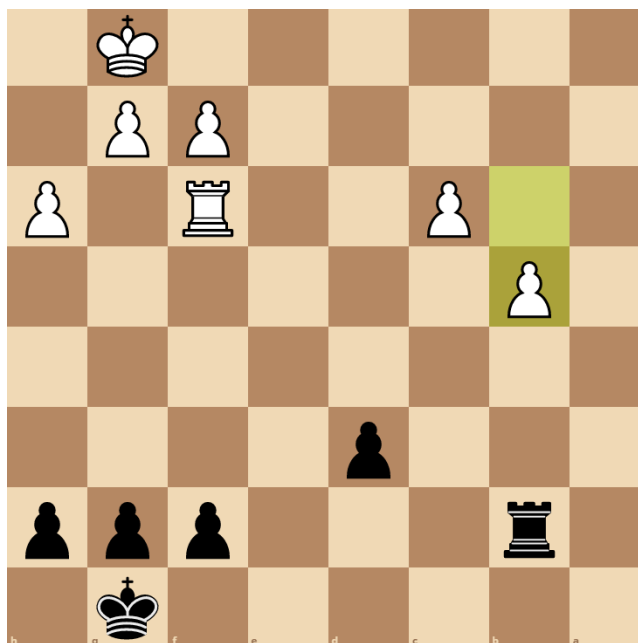


White played Qa4 here and Ryan had a nice idea of just taking the pawn on h3 with the bishop and if white plays gxh3 it's a mate in 5. See if you can spot it?

The game continued with Qc5 aiming for the f2 pawn but the bishop can defend and the queen has to move again. The white queen comes charging into blacks queenside and takes the c6 pawn. This lets Ryan harass it quite easily and develop his bishop on c8.

The queens and black squared bishops get traded off and we enter an endgame.

Ryan grabs control of the b file with his rooks and the pieces start flying, after the mass exchange it left white with the edge with a passed b pawn backed up by a pawn and supported by a rook.



Ryan has to get his king over to hold that b pawn at bay while his rook can hold the f and d pawn safely. Ryan started to advance the kingside pawns and the king made its way into the centre. Whites own king came in and started to pressurise the d pawn. If that king gets through it can force

the rook out of the way and push through the pawn. Thankfully Ryan held his own king in the centre to keep the white king back.

Through some excellent manoeuvring the rooks were swapped off and the white king came in on the behind its pawns and through on the a file. With no way to stop the pawn queening Ryan resigned.

What a fight.

Rugeley Rangers 0 – 4 MCS Oxford A

What a fight. My congratulations to MCS Oxford for some good games. Good luck with the rest of the tournament.

Rugeley may have finished near the top of Division 4 last time but that doesn't mean it's going to be an easy ride this time. We have our work cut out for us for the next 6 rounds. From my perspective what's the chess players equivalent of WD40?



Division 4

Group A

		rd 1	P	W	D	L	MP	SB	SOS	Pts
1	Gondaga	gond wig2 4	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
2	MCS Oxford A	mcsa rgl1 4	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
3	Uxbridge Knights A	uxka bra2 3	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
4	Wantage	wan1 cat3 3½	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2
5	Bradford DCA Knights B	bra2 uxka 1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
6	Catford Cosmonauts 3	cat3 wan1 ½	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
7	Rugeley Rangers	rgl1 mcsa 0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
8	Wigston 2	wig2 gond 0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0