

Season 3 4NCL Online

Round 1

Warwickshire Bears B vs Rugeley Rangers

Here we go again. Rugeley have placed a team in the 4NCL online since its inception and we continue that trend heading into season 3. We started in the bottom division in season 1 and got promoted. Last season we faced some stiff opposition and finished mid table. Let's see how we fair in this one taking on the junior squad from Warwickshire, many of whom I know are coach by professionals.

So 6:30pm comes around and my colleagues at 4NCL gave us this.

		Warwickshire Bears B	1470		Rugeley Rangers	1624
491	w	Wong, Tristan (<i>Ranger440</i>)	1586	-	Whatmore, Steve (<i>SteveWhatmore</i>)	1810 c
492	b	Vaidyanathan, Adithya (<i>gengobandchess</i>)	1453 c	-	Carr, Matthew (<i>mattcarr2600</i>)	1688
493	w	Amir, Zain (<i>zain_amir</i>)	1425 c	-	Sullivan, Luke (<i>death2rooks93</i>)	1571 c
494	b	Miller, Kai (<i>KaiM2102</i>)	1416 c	-	Wood, Ryan (<i>RyanWood01</i>)	1428 c
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A junior squad and given we haven't played over the board chess in 9 months I have no idea how accurate these ratings are. Not to mention juniors can improve very quickly but we shall see what happens when battle commences. Good luck rangers.

Ryan was the first to finish and to say he finished in style is an understatement. The game was a Vienna opening, something I have not seen Ryan try before. Normally I have expected a D4 opening like the London System in the past. But out comes a Vienna and a Vienna Gambit at that.



The Vienna can be one of those more uncommon and trappy openings, black gets the opening right and white still gets a good game, get it wrong...

Here black made a mistake (according to my silicon friend). Kai played Nc6, logical at first glance. It defends the pawn and develops a piece. Trouble is this allows Ryan to take the pawn and after the knight re-captures in the centre, up comes d4 and Ryan now has a firm grasp on the centre and Kai has to ask where is the knight going? It went back to c6, and Ryan pushed on with e5 hitting the other knight. There is only one safe square it can go to and that's right back where it started, Ng8.

Ryan now chooses to develop the knight to f3 and Kai decided to try and go on the attack, throw a counterattack in to try and gain back some control by playing Bb4. Ryan ignored it and threw in Bc4 attacking the f7 square. Kai pushed h6 to stop an attack on the queenside, Ryan castles and Kai plays Ne7 to get the knight out. Trouble is this falls right into a new problem.

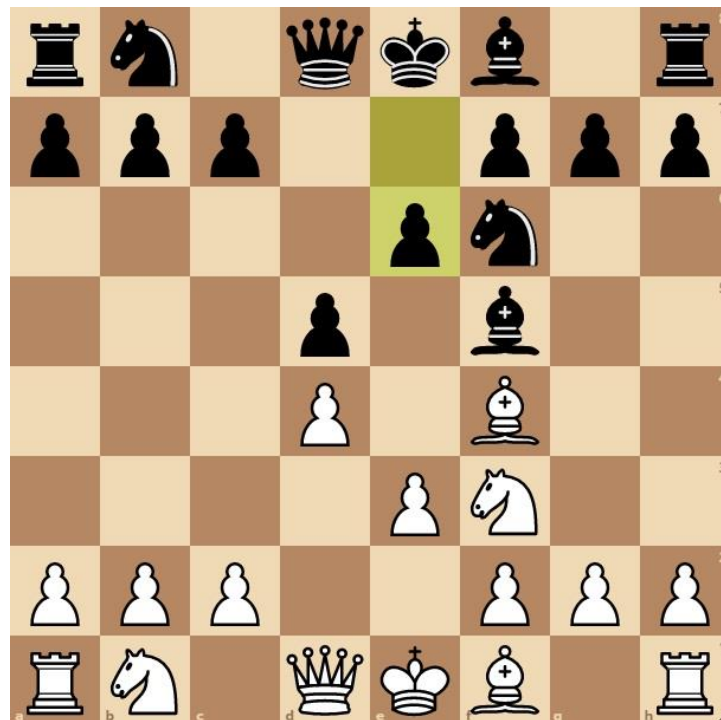


Ryan played Ng5 opening up an attack on the king. Kai accepted Ryan's knight and out comes the queen threatening checkmate. The game went on for just a few moves more before black resigned. Nicely handled Ryan.

Warwickshire Bears B 0 – 1 Rugeley Rangers

Matt was the next to finish.

Matt was a lot more cautious since the last time the league was on. Since the 4NCL Season 2 concluded he's been focusing on his chess administration skills more than playing. Well these tournaments aren't going to look after themselves. So, getting white he opted for a quiet opening. The London System. His opponent Adithya must have faced it before. The first 4 moves were almost identical by both players.



Matt then decided that enough is enough, you only get a draw if you keep mirroring so pulled out Bd3, to get some action in the position. So Adithya obliged and took it, letting Matt get his queen to the centre. Out then come the rest of the moves in the London System and Adithya focused on holding the centre and putting some pressure on the queenside. The thing is whenever you start attacking, watch out for those intermezzo's (the in-between moves).



Here Matt used it, Qa4 and the king can't block it with anything thanks to the infamous knight sitting on e5. Never let a London system player get their knight there.

So Adithya moved his king up to e7 and Matt recaptures the pawn on d4 with cxd4. That knight on e5 shouldn't move if you can help it, so Matt's thinking was capture towards the centre helps and there is the subtle threat of rooks coming to an open c file and the poisoned pawn just sitting on b2 begging for black to take it.

To his credit Adithya never did, it would have led to a horrible attack on the enemy king. Instead he decided to get his knight off the side of the board and tried to centralise it a little more, Nb4 so Matt followed through with his plan to place rooks on the c-file and get ready to hold the centre.

The knight in the centre had to be swapped off but the c-file was about to become Matt's so a distraction was needed. Adithya pushed g5 to pressurise the Bishop and deflect it away from some of the action



Matt took it and then after the pawn push to protect the king, brought the bishop back where it had come from. With an attack on the kingside neutralised the queen moved to b6 and now come the fireworks. Cxd4 was played and in response the knight came to b6 to threaten the queen. Big mistake.

Qb4+ and when the king moves to f7, c5 gives Matt the passed pawn and a double pin. One for Matt on the knight and a pin for Adithya, if matt moves the pawn the queen comes off. Now the blunder. Sadly, Aditya took the protection off the knight by pushing the a pawn and Matt picks up the knight for nothing. As the c pawn starts to run a checkmate opportunity opens up and Matt grabbed it with both hands.

Puzzle time.



White to play and Mate in 4.

Warwickshire Bears B 0 - 2 Rugeley Rangers.

Luke was the next game to finish.

The opening was something I would expect to see from Luke. An English opening but this time the opponent played it. My silicon friend tells me it's a A16 English Opening: Anglo-Indian Defense, Queen's Knight Variation. White fianchettoed the kingside bishop and developed mostly on the kingside. Black keeps things solid and well defended looking for opportunities.

It didn't take long for one. Luke saw a chance to get his knight on c6 to a good square. Advancing it into enemy territory and well backed up. When Zain tried to move it Luke pounced.



Not one to miss an attacking chance, Luke played g5 here. This makes life a little awkward if he needs to castle kingside but Zain has to capitalise on it first. Zain took the knight on c4 with his and then the pawn captures back the queen must move out of the way and the g pawn captures the bishop. This is a blunder for Zain but it does open up some bold chances. Luke brought his bishop to the centre and Zain pushes the e-pawn the menace the bishop on f5. It was around here Zain offered a draw. Luke ignores it and follows through with his plan Bxf4. Cute trick, Luke is already a bishop up so if Zain takes his bishop, Luke takes the rook hanging on C1.

Zain moves the rook out of the way, and Luke starts consolidating his pieces and begins to prepare a new attack. This time on the Kingside. The Bishops and queen come in and start pressuring the white kingside, testing the structure to see what is going to break.



The break comes from Bg6. That knight in the centre is stopping or at least holding up the checkmate on the king. It goes the defence goes but there is no way to hold it there, so Zain tried

Nd6+. Luke happily took it and with the queen coming into position, checkmate was on the board a few moves later.

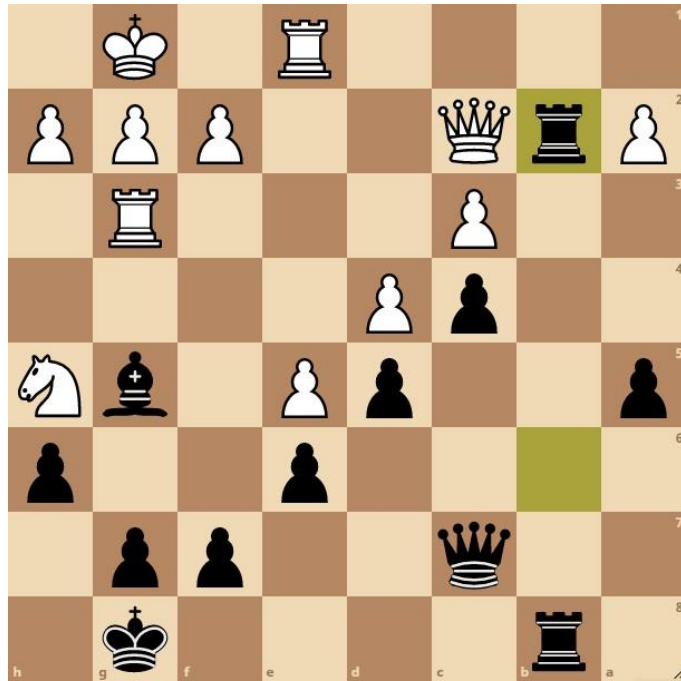
Warwickshire Bears B 0 - 3 Rugeley Rangers.

Steve was the final game to end.

Steve's opponent decided to play it safe like Matt had started and went with the standard London-System setup. Steve to counter this decided to push on the queenside and develop his kingside pieces taking control of the normally white occupied b1-h7 diagonal. With the standard attack line ruled out how would these two players proceed?



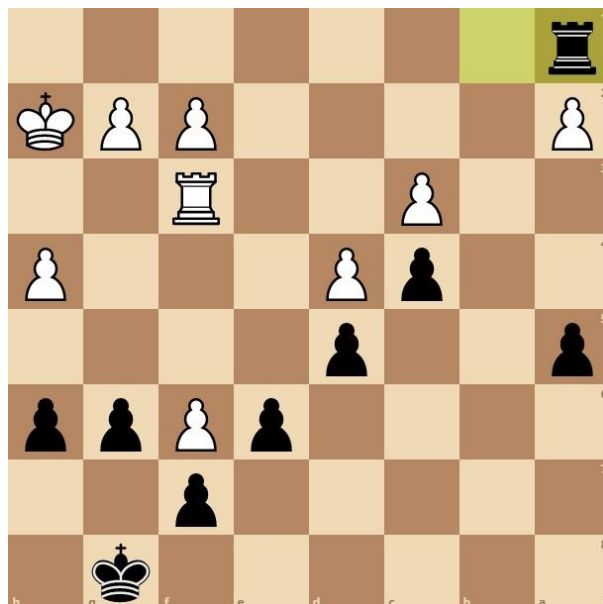
Steve played Nh5, to take off one of the attackers and open up the line for his dark squared bishop. Tristan in response began to re-route his light squared bishop and when the exchanges were complete Steve had the dark squares for his bishop and both of Tristan's, however Tristan got something out of this himself, control of the b1-h7 diagonal with his queen and a semi open e-file for his rooks to come to. While Tristan pulled his rooks into the centre, Steve continued his queenside pawn advance. As Tristan began piling up pressure against Steve's kingside, Steve had a plan of his own, making an open file on the queenside it looked like Steve's attack would come a little quicker.



The queen retreats and Steve neutralises the threat to the kingside. G6 forces the knight to move and it gets exchanged off on f6. So long as the pawns in front of Steve's king aren't disturbed he should hold. Trouble is how is Steve going to get in with his own attack?

Qf4 threatening the loose pawn on f6. When the rook moves to attack queen and x-ray defend the f6 pawn, Steve move his queen to d2 and Tristan swap queens. Leaving Steve with his chance and so threatens back rank mate.

Tristan avoids this little plan but with the exchange of rooks we enter the endgame and Steve has the advantage.



Tristan's Rook is locked on the queenside by his own pawns. Steve takes the a pawn and as Tristan starts to push the f pawn to build up a kingside attack, Steve brings his rook behind it and gets ready to push the a-pawn.

After a series of exchanges on the kingside Tristan manages to free up the rook to guard the a-pawns advance but it costs more pawns than he would like but the rook gets to the queening square with one move to spare. Trouble is the centre pawns are running and as Tristan tries to queen his g pawn Steve pulls a cheeky little manoeuvre and as the g pawn is coming down, bringing the rook back over from defending the pawn he checkmates Tristan.

Final score

Warwickshire Bears B 0 – 4 Rugeley Rangers.

Thanks to Warwickshire Bears, good luck for the rest of the tournament.

Group C

		rd 1	P	W	D	L	MP	GP	
1	Rugeley Rangers	rgl	warb 4	1	1	0	0	2	4
2	Manchester Manticores 2	man2	cro1 3	1	1	0	0	2	3
3	St Albans 2	sa2	hw3 2½	1	1	0	0	2	2½
4	4 Gems	4ge	wok 2	1	0	1	0	1	2
5	Woking Warriors	wok	4ge 2	1	0	1	0	1	2
6	Harrow 3	hw3	sa2 1½	1	0	0	1	0	1½
7	Crowthorne 1	cro1	man2 1	1	0	0	1	0	1
8	Warwickshire Bears B	warb	rgl 0	1	0	0	1	0	0

Weve reached the top of the pool, lets see if we can stay there?

Games can be found at the following links:

Steve: <https://lichess.org/tFfEWBGP/black>

Matt: <https://lichess.org/xjLWt7br>

Luke: <https://lichess.org/GvDc7fBK/black>

Ryan: <https://lichess.org/bXDWRWeE>