

Round 1 4NCL online

Thanks to the coronavirus competitions have been suspended all over the country, but thankfully online chess has seen a surge and the 4NCL (the national league) decided to organise an online contest that lasts until June. For my sins, I got roped into helping organise it by 4NCL and I convinced my friends in the club to join in as a team.

Tonight (7th April) was round 1 and there was a little teething problem with lots of people trying to get onto the server meaning pairings were published to team captains directly.

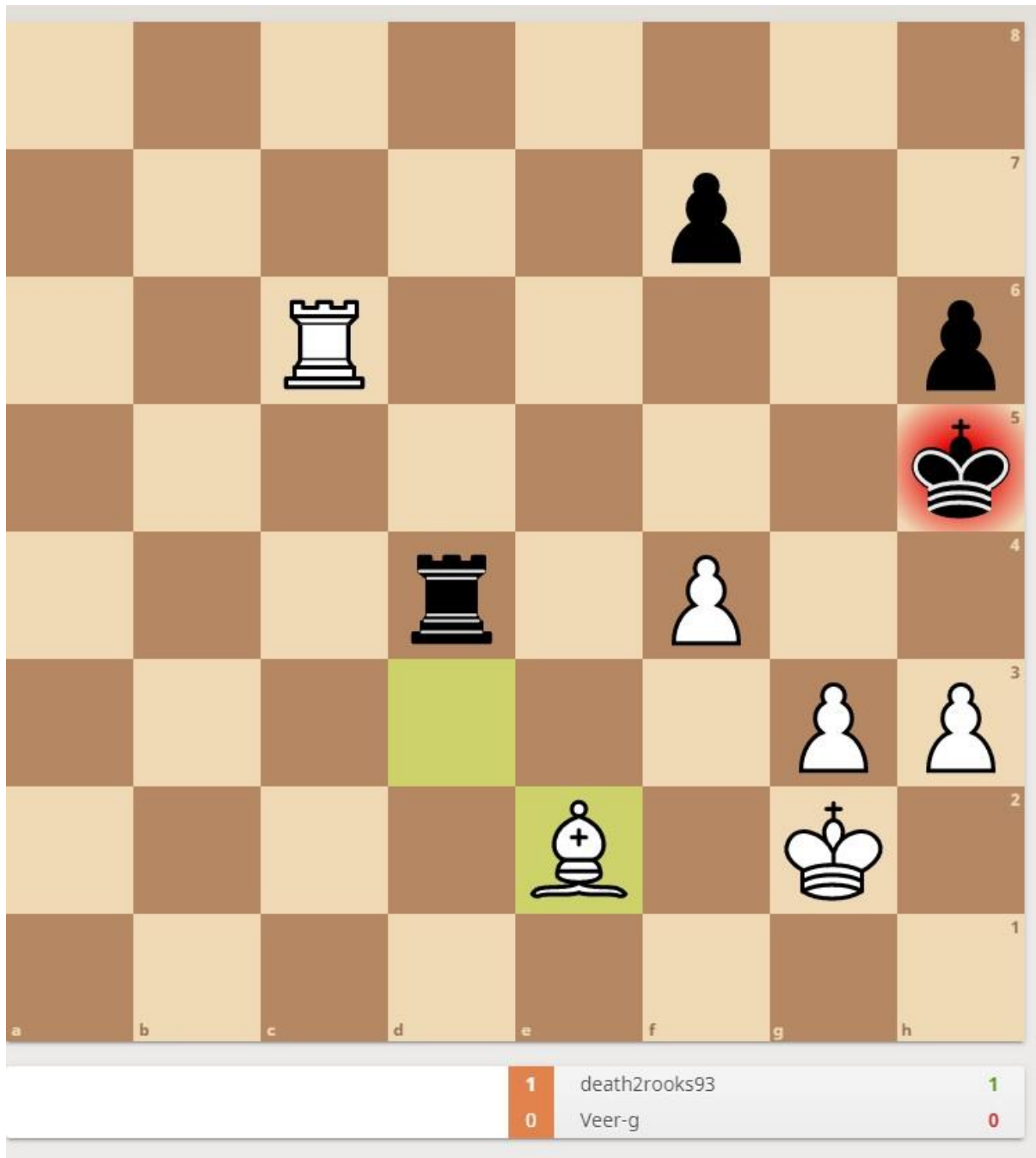
Rugeley were paired against Hatch End B in the first round and on paper things looked like it should go Rugeley's way.

		Rugeley	1604		Hatch End B	1376
651	w	Whatmore, Steve (SteveWhatmore)	1817 c	-	Parsons, Robert (WestLondonWarrior)	1720 c
652	b	Carr, Matthew (mattcarr2600)	1692	-	Barry, Brendan (Silverfox32)	1315 c
653	w	Sullivan, Luke (death2rooks93)	1585 c	-	Gill, Veer (Veer-G)	1285 u
654	b	Wood, Ryan (RyanWood01)	1322 c	-	Shah, Ashok (Ashok18)	1187 c
Top						
		Broken Herts 3	1333		Bude Surfers	1528
661	w	Brewis, Alan (Ospray)	1375 c	-	Lingard, Geoffrey W (jiggergeoff)	1765 c
		Gilmour, Ian			Constable, Christine F	

The games started around the 7:30pm mark and from my perspective they were all fun to keep track of while trying to deal with my victim (I mean opponent).

Luke was the first to finish, his English opening met with strong development of bishops and knights. Things looked even until a central exchange occurred and Luke forked his opponents queen and bishop, queen moves and bye bye bishop. Luke remained the bishop up throughout the entire game, his opponent attempted to get counter play and got a pawn all the way to the 7th rank, keeping what

I assume was a cool head Luke removed the pawn threat and delivered checkmate in the end with the bishop. Quite a beautiful checkmate if I do say so myself.



Rugeley 1-0 Hatch End B

Matthew was the next player to finish. The game started out as a French defence that his opponent played out of sequence, culminating in an attack on the black queen but a piece was left en prise and so Matt simply said thanks very much and removed the knight. The game ended when whites king was checkmated in the middle of the board. At the very least now Rugeley can't lose.

Rugeley 2-0 Hatch End B

Ryan was the next game to finish. Starting out as a 4 knights game and then into an Italian game position, Ryan began a pawn attack on the queenside leaving white a very cramped position. Trouble

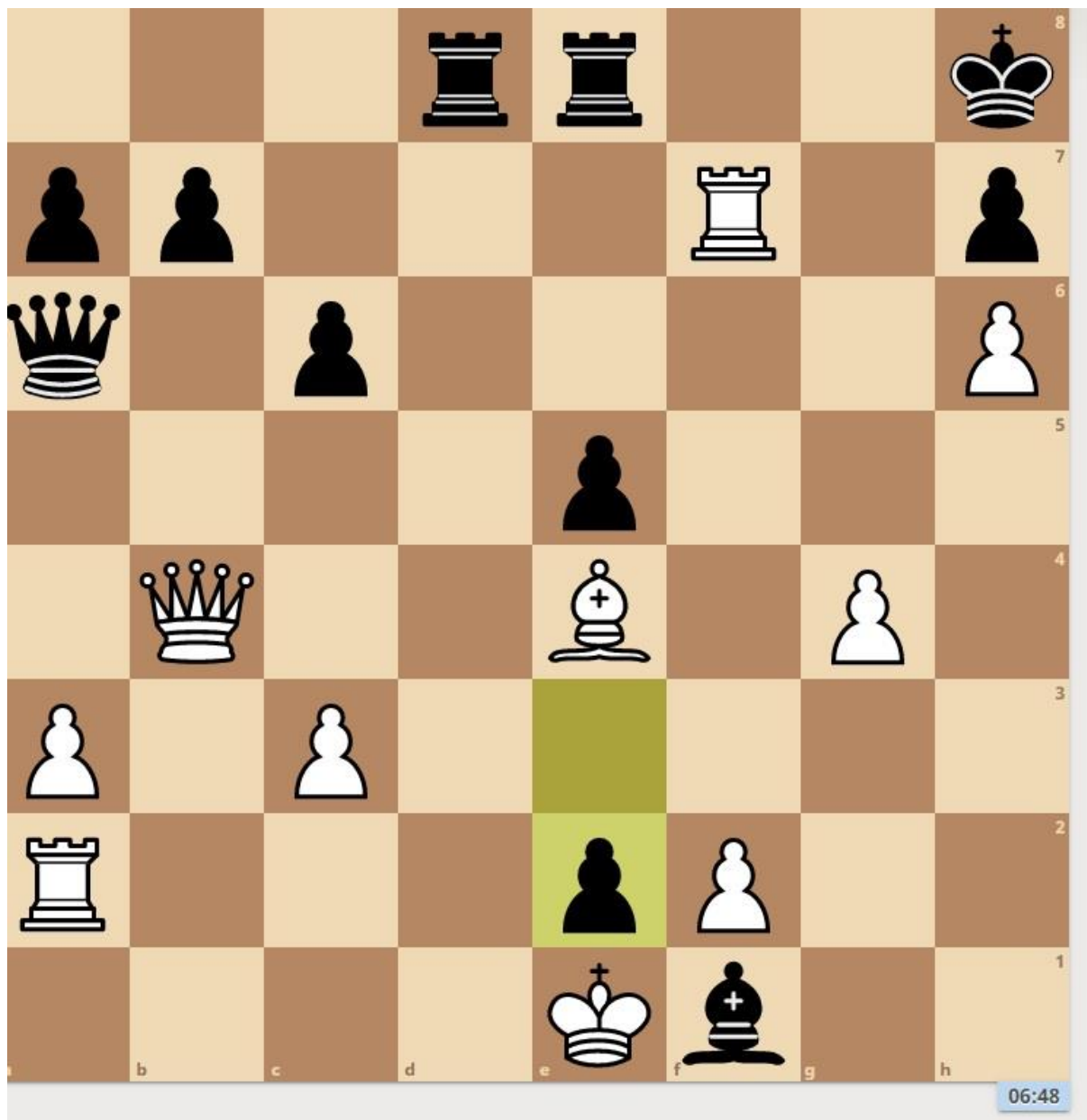
is white had a few attacking ideas of his own. Sacrificing three pawns white managed to get their queen into Ryan’s kingside, threatening his king and opening up files for white’s rooks. Keeping a cool head, Ryan pushed on harassing the rooks by pushing his passed e pawn. “Passed pawns must be pushed” as my old mentor used to say and that displaced the rooks that Ryan was able to skewer/pin both Rooks and another piece bites the dust to stop that threat. The game wound up Ryan being a rook up in ending trapping the enemy king on the back rank. Pawn gets pushed to the back rank, queens and Rugeley go 3-0 up. Well done Ryan, this did not look fun to play but you handled it excellently.



Which brings us to the final game of the evening. Steve had the hardest opponent of any of us. The game started as a queens gambit declined, both sides developing their pieces carefully and Steve electing for a kingside attack after black decided to castle on that side. Steve managed to open the enemy king but couldn’t take an annoying knight that wound its way into his position due to the fact

if he did black forks the king and picks up a rook in the corner of the board. Black prepared to launch an attack through the centre with his pawns but Steve managed to manoeuvre his rook around to trap the enemy king in the corner. Blacks attack comes marching through the centre putting Steve in a position where he's a move off being checkmated but there's a way out.

White to play, find the escape:



Solution below

Steve had the beautiful Rxh7+, forcing the king to g8, now the rook comes to g8 checking the king again forcing it back because its other square is being blocked by the queen. Perpetual check and draw agreed.

Final result

Rugeley 3½ - ½ Hatch End B

My congratulations to all the players who duelled tonight and I look forward to next week when we do this again to another team.

Division 5

	P	W	D	L	GP	Pts
Bishop Trojans	1	1	0	0	4	2
Nottingham University 2	1	1	0	0	4	2
Bristol University B	1	1	0	0	4	2
Wirral League Wanderers	1	1	0	0	4	2
CSC 5	1	1	0	0	4	2
Rugeley	1	1	0	0	3½	2
Kent KJCA Kestrels D	1	1	0	0	3½	2
Uxbridge Knights	1	1	0	0	3	2
Warwickshire Bears B	1	1	0	0	3	2
Chess Warriors	1	1	0	0	3	2
Young Dragons	1	1	0	0	3	2
Darnall & Handsworth	1	1	0	0	3	2
Bude Surfers	1	1	0	0	3	2
Bolton & Worsley	1	1	0	0	3	2
Manchester Juniors B	1	1	0	0	2½	2
Hertford	1	1	0	0	2½	2
Battersea Pawnbreakers	1	1	0	0	2	2
4 Gems	1	1	0	0	2	2
St Albans 3	1	0	1	0	2	1
Broken Herts 1	1	0	1	0	2	1
Maryport Assassins B	1	0	1	0	2	1
Wigston 2	1	0	1	0	2	1
St Albans 2	1	0	0	1	1½	0
Broken Herts 3	1	0	0	1	1	0
Watford Juniors B	1	0	0	1	1	0
Watford 3	1	0	0	1	1	0