

Round 2

Bradford DCA Knights B vs Rugeley

Round 2 of 4NCL Online sees Rugeley take on Bradford DCA Knights B. This team is a regular in the 4NCL Main competition and their team captain well known to Matt (nice chap, shared a few drinks together and contemplated the state of the universe on occasion). So 6:30pm comes around and we get this:

Bradford DCA Knights B			1792		Rugeley Rangers	1611
441	w	Johnson, Paul A <i>(ChristianLearner)</i>	1812	-	Whatmore, Steve <i>(SteveWhatmore)</i>	1825 c
442	b	Holliday, John K <i>(thinkingjuice)</i>	1798	-	Carr, Matthew <i>(mattcarr2600)</i>	1705 e
443	w	Adam, David W <i>(DavidWAdam)</i>	1758	-	Sullivan, Luke <i>(death2rooks93)</i>	1525 c
444	b	Bramson, Mike <i>(mlb205)</i>	1801	-	Wood, Ryan <i>(RyanWood01)</i>	1390 c
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Now on paper this looks to be a bit odd. But remember there is such a thing as the 80-point rule. This is that you can swap around playing order if there is less than 80 points difference. Now Bradford in my opinion have done a brilliant bit of captaincy. The ratings we see above are the FIDE ratings. When we look at the ECF grades we find the following.

Name	Grade	Grade Converted
Paul Johnson	157	1878
John Holliday	135	1713
David Adam	147	1803
Mike Bramson	171	1983

This looks like a break of more than 80 points to me but you get the choice of what you want to use throughout the season. We're using ECF, they chose FIDE. Perfectly fine so long as your consistent.

It is at this point I get asked the question. "Why are we in Division 4?"

At the time, my answer was that we put in such a good performance in the last season we deserve a place here. If I am honest that was sent with a little bit of lack of confidence. Let's see how everything turned out.

Ryan was the first to finish. They put one of their strongest against him, obviously Ryan's reputation preceded him. The game was a Dutch Opening. An unusual alternative to counter the queens pawn opening. Not easy to play from either side of the board. I know I've tried it. Both players developed their pieces quite nicely but both got out of book at move 7. Ryan seeing the grade difference decided to go all out on his opponent and attack. With nothing to lose, better to play attacking chess and put his opponent on the back foot rather than play defensive and the opponent crush him. Ryan attacked on the queenside while Mike was still getting his pieces in order.



Ryan launched his attack on the queenside by pushing c5, this opens a discovered attack on e6 with the queen, X-raying the king and double attacks the pawn at d6. Mike chose to move his king out of the queen's x-ray and Ryan captured on d6. The pawn on e6 isn't going anywhere and is still vulnerable so now Ryan is a pawn up and with the black squared bishop on d6. Mike now commits a second blunder according to my silicon friend. Should have moved the rook on F8 but he moved his knight to e4 to try and get some counter play in the centre with a knight so bye bye rook. Then after queen takes off comes the knight in the centre and Mike is now stuck with doubled pawns. Ryan calmly brings his knight back to d2 and prepares to improve his position.

Both players develop the rest of their pieces and Mike begins to put pressure on Ryan's kingside as Ryan develops his Rook and queen to the now open c-file.

Mike refused to go down without a fight and we find ourselves in this position:



This is an interesting idea. Move the knight and the rook gets taken but do nothing and black starts to build up on the kingside. If that knight ever gets to g4 it looks like it could become a menace. Ryan finds the key move that stops everything. He moves the knight to threaten the queen. Now if Bishop takes rook, knight takes queen. After the queen moves to g4, the c-rook comes over to threaten the bishop which beats a hasty retreat to h6 and now comes the final moves of the game. Mike moves his queen over to h4 preparing to come into g4 with the knight and go for mate. Ryan plays knight to g6, calls check and Mike resigned.

Ryan was shaking after that and my dogs thought I had gone insane, cheering like your favourite team had just scored a goal and won the cup. Noises they usually only hear out of my father. Very well-done Ryan.

Bradford DCA Knights B 0-1 Rugeley Rangers

Luke was the next game to finish, within a few seconds of Ryan if my computer informs me right. It was an English opening, this one coming out of book at move 6. Luke sacrificing a pawn in the centre for an attack on the opponents kingside and at first glance it looks quite interesting.



Luke is charging up the kingside with the kingside pawns, the bishop is right out of the way on h1 and there is pressure on David's queenside. Most of the pieces are out for Luke, all he has to do is move the knight and castle and that completes development.

See the thing is though that this position has its problems too. As David was about to show. He ignored the attack on the knight and instead made a threat of his own. Nd4 and after the exchanges are done, both players come out with the same number of pieces taken. So Luke retreated the queen to c8 to save it and keep the pressure in the queenside but the attacked knight now jumps into e5 putting three attackers on that c6 pawn and a double attack on f7 with the queen. How does Luke get out of this one?

Well he chooses to block the attack on f7 with the knight, placing it on d5 running interference. Knight on d take c6 and now comes the big blunder. Should have played e6 to stand a chance at holding but instead Luke plays Qc7 and the fun begins.



Bishop takes the knight on d5, triple attacking the pawn on f7. Luke takes the knight on e5 and the knight takes back. Realising there is no way to block the manoeuvre Luke plays Qa5 attacking the Rook on e1. The queen comes over one to block it and secures the position, with the threat of coming down to the c file. Luke moves it with the b pawn push but the attack is still coming. Bxf7, king must move and comes to f8. Knight comes in delivering a check on g6 and picks up the rook in the corner a move later. Luke in an attempt to salvage the position exchanging off what he can but once all that is over he is left in ending three pawns down.



With discretion the better part of valour, Luke resigned here. Nicely played David.

Bradford DCA Knights B 1-1 Rugeley Rangers

With the match level at 1-1 it was Steve that was the next to finish. An Indian game that went out of book at move 4! This game was moving into uncharted territory very quickly. I'll be honest when I got to this position I had no idea what was going on.



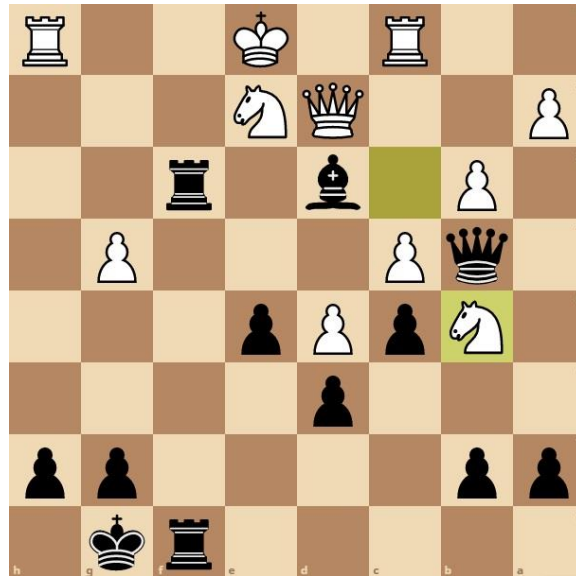
Steve's knights and queen on the rim, the centre locked up. Paul's bishop and queen attacking down a line that's closed, the black squared bishop out of action. What happens next?

Well Paul makes a move that looks good in opening theory but for some reason my silicon friend doesn't like it. He plays Ng-e2, developing a piece and getting ready for castling. Surely this should be fine... right?

Steve answers it with knight b4 threatening both queen and bishop. Queen retreats to her starting square and now comes the f5 push backed up with a bishop and rook and can now be played as the queen is off the attacking diagonal. A series of exchanges take place with pieces flying off the board and around it. Once all is said and done there Steve gets a slight advantage, pieces are in attacking positions and white has a doubled pawn to deal with. This has become a battle of the minor pieces. Will Steve's Bishops turn out to be better than White's knights?



We re-join the action at move 20. Paul is marching the pawns up the kingside to get an attack but here Steve played a brilliant idea. Here comes the sacrifice. Bishop takes the pawn on g5 threatening the queen. If the queen does nothing then Steve's bishop is in the game, a much bigger threat than it was earlier. Not one to be intimidated, Paul took it. In comes the rook from the back rank into f3 and a move later the rooks were doubled. An attack is coming and Steve found the breakthrough.



This one was that good that Paul resigned on this move. See if you can spot it. Answer at the end.

Well done Steve

Bradford DCA Knights B 1-2 Rugeley Rangers

Matt was the last game to finish (as usual). This was a Nimzo-Indian Defense: Sämisch Variation, Accelerated. What a mouthful. John attacked on the queenside and the queens came off very quickly leaving Matt was three pawn islands to keep an eye on. But with both players playing cautiously the advantage swung from player to player. At move 16 it was still anybody's game.

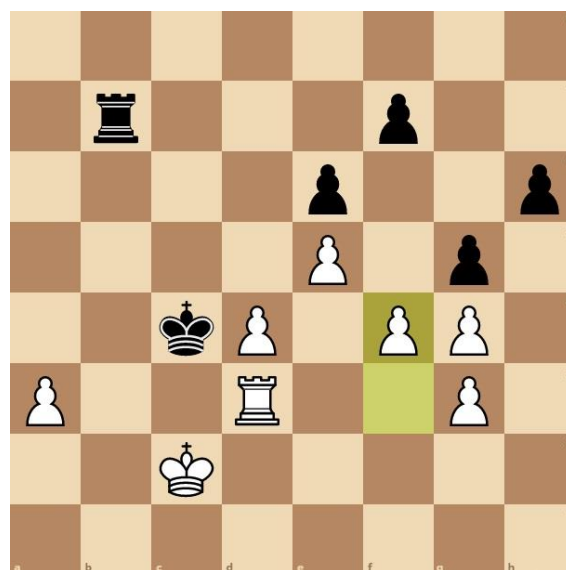


Matt had managed to manoeuvre his rooks to open files first but the fact he couldn't do anything with them was another problem. The knight on the rim was swapped for Matt's light squared bishop and he was planning to double up if he could. Trouble is when the knight hits the centre of the board and John's bishop starts moving the options get really limited. John got one of his rooks to the c-file and matt was expecting the rooks get traded off, the pawns are equal draw. Then something

interesting happened. Matt found a hole that looked just perfect to put a knight on them and with it there, could prove useful in giving John some problems.



Now John can't trade off both rooks and the knight putting pressure on the kingside and queenside. John put his rook on c3 hoping to hit the a3 pawn. But this runs right into e4 and a remove the defender tactic. If the rook takes the pawn now, Matt gets a knight and if the knight moves goodnight Rook. So, the rooks were traded off and Matt grabs hold of the open file and brings the rook down to c7, threatening to f7 and a7. This move also helps keep the rook out of the game. Matt secures the centre of the board. John has to do something to break the tension and find the way he did. The bishop and knight come off the board for the sacrifice of two pawns but John now has his rook active where Matt must use his to hold the three pawn islands together. Now it's a question of patience. Keep the position together, push carefully and eventually the two extra pawns should help. John had to play active and began to bring his king into the centre to put as much pressure as possible on Matt.



That's exactly what he did. All John has to do is hold this position and if Matt ever tries to push the pawn the rook can come over and gobble it up. Great care had to be used in this position but now

John made a slight error. The king retreated to d5 to try and break into the kingside pawns. Matt took his chance, abandoning the d pawn and threatened the rook with his own.

Idea being if the rooks were traded off then the a pawn runs and Johns attack on the kingside can be ignored.

So not wanting that to happen John moved his rook over to check Matt's king. Matt blocked it with his own rook and the rook goes back to its starting square. What's the point of that you may ask? Now Matt's king comes in to d3 and defends the pawn on d4 against the enemy king and now its game over. You see Matt couldn't checkmate the king with the Rook on b3 but he can with it on c3!

With no way to block the checkmate Matt delivered it.

Bradford DCA Knights B 1-3 Rugeley Rangers

So, to answer the question to my friend. That's why were in Division 4!

My thanks to the Bradford DCA Knights team for a fun evening. Good luck to you in the rest of the tournament and thank you Rugeley for a good night. See you in two weeks for the next one.

Steve – <https://lichess.org/Yvh5cX3D/black>

Matt – <https://lichess.org/40BMmvJ9/white>

Luke – <https://lichess.org/O0DP7mWb/black>

Ryan - <https://lichess.org/KjHSWOUD>

Group A

		rd 1	rd 2	P	W	D	L	MP	GP
1	MCS Oxford A	mcsa rgl1 4	gond 3½	2	2	0	0	4	7½
2	Wantage	wan1 cat3 3½	wig2 2	2	1	1	0	3	5½
3	Gondaga	gond wig2 4	mcsa ½	2	1	0	1	2	4½
4	Uxbridge Knights A	uxka bra2 3	cat3 1½	2	1	0	1	2	4½
5	Catford Cosmonauts 3	cat3 wan1 ½	uxka 2½	2	1	0	1	2	3
6	Rugeley Rangers	rgl1 mcsa 0	bra2 3	2	1	0	1	2	3
7	Wigston 2	wig2 gond 0	wan1 2	2	0	1	1	1	2
8	Bradford DCA Knights B	bra2 uxka 1	rgl1 1	2	0	0	2	0	2

Solution to the problem Rf1+, Rxf1 Rxf1+, Kxf1 Qxd2.