

## 4NCL Round 2

### Rugeley Rangers vs 4 Gems

Round 2 sees Rugeley Rangers take on a junior team called 4 Gems. This team has been playing in the online league since the online leagues inception and while we may outrate them in points, in this game anything in possible. Never underestimate your opponents. Rugeley may outrate them on paper but beware, we ourselves have beaten teams that are stronger than us. Ratings mean very little when the action starts.

	<b>Rugeley Rangers</b>	1624		<b>4 Gems</b>	1564
491	w Whatmore, Steve (SteveWhatmore)	1810	c -	Rizvi, Nasir (Nazriz)	2021
492	b Carr, Matthew (mattcarr2600)	1688	-	Whelan, Joseph (Josephwhelan)	1515
493	w Sullivan, Luke (death2rooks93)	1571	c -	Gogia, Abeer (Xpulzify)	1413
494	b Wood, Ryan (RyanWood01)	1428	c -	Rizvi, Zara (Uppityseam)	1307
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Let us see how 4 Gems take on my four diamonds from Rugeley.

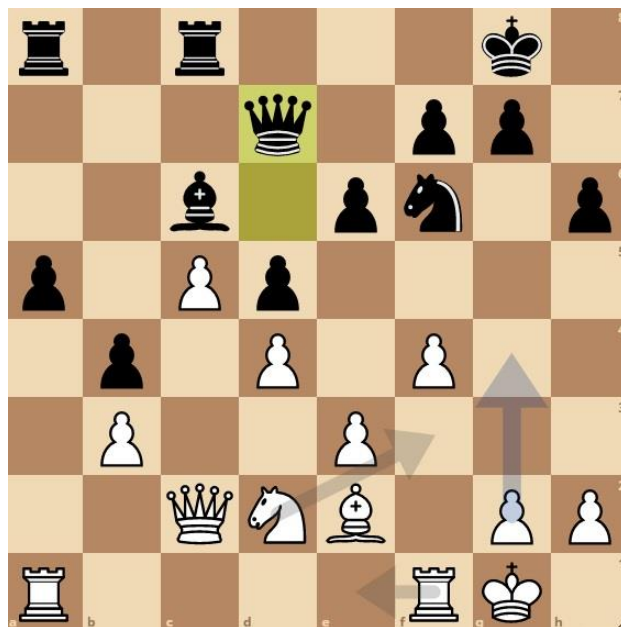
Luke finished first. Luke was up against Abeer Gogia, I remember arbiting him before lockdown, good junior player and was getting stronger and stronger every tournament I had seen him play in. Trouble is the same could be said of Luke.

According to my silicon friend, this game was A06 Zukertort Opening. The structure resembles a London system for white with Abeer deciding to adopt an aggressive stance on the queenside to counter Luke's threats coming through the centre.



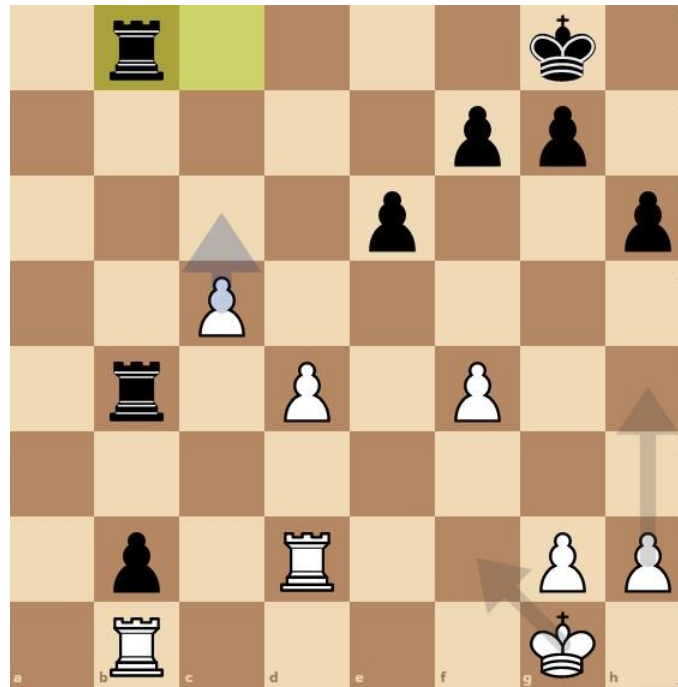
Here Luke went for the knight on c6 and Abeer took back with the bishop threatening Lukes. Not one to be intimidated by one of his pieces being attacked Luke ignored it and played Bxd6 threatening Abeer's queen. Abeer took the bishop threatening the queen and now Luke repositions the bishop to e2. With Luke in a slight retreat and a couple of his pieces still on their starting squares it is here that Abeer begins to launch his queenside attack.

As Luke is developing his pieces, Abeer's pawns are on the run. All the black pawns on the queenside are on the move and putting pressure on Luke but as the b and a pawns come mightily close to Lukes position Luke simply pushes past it and the queenside push is going as far as it can... for now.



Luke has a passed pawn but Abeer has that tight under control. Unless Luke can shift that bishop, its going nowhere. Now Luke switches to the kingside to find that chance. Rf3 played here with the idea of doubling up potentially. Thing is though Abeer seeing the switch does now move the bishop to b5, threatening to exchange his with Lukes. When Luke takes it the queen comes in to b5 and in response Luke doubles the rooks. The queenside attack is back on!!!

In response Luke tries that old saying. An attack on the wings must be countered by an attack in the centre. So, Luke pushes his backwards e pawn and takes a grip on the centre and uses the rooks on f1 and f3 to try and contain Abeer's push on the side of the board.



The pawn is defended by both rooks and attacked by two, when everything else is tied up its time for the king to spring into action. Luke's king starts making its way slowly to the queenside as does Abeer's. When the king gets closer than the checks start happening, forcing the king back or forcing a rook to block. With neither side making progress with their pawns and can't exchange the rooks off a draw was agreed.

A very enjoyable game Luke informs me and well played by both.

#### Rugeley Rangers ½ - ½ 4 Gems

Matt finished second. Matt as per usual had a look at his opponents' previous games as soon as he knew the pairings were out. Studying hard he found that the most common opening move was e4 and so started preparing the French. With a little confidence Matt went into the game and Joseph played D4. Were off to a good start then. Matt adopted what he calls the Knights Tango in response to Joseph's queen's gambit. My silicon friend calls it the Mexican Defence. Its sort of a Budapest opening with the knight on c6 backing up the pawn when it goes to e5.

Both players began developing their pieces to natural squares and the game looked very natural.



Here Joseph pushed his bishop to threaten the knight and Matt made his mistake here. Very quickly he pushed the h6 pawn to threaten the bishop and stop a potential future incursion by the knight there. Trouble is now the knight is pinned what is stopping the knight jumping into d5? Nothing. So, in it comes and Matt cannot take it, if he takes it with the knight, the bishop picks up the queen.

So, the queen retreats to its starting square and the knight is taken off by the bishop and Matt has the problem of doubled pawns and an exposed king. Joseph wastes no time in taking advantage of the situation and pushes his queen up to threaten the loose h6 pawn. Matt has no choice but to push his king up and do his best to hold.

So, when you're at a disadvantage like this best thing to do is swap off pieces, reduce the number of threats to your exposed king so Matt does just that, he removes the knight in the centre, it gets replaced by a queen but its still one last attacker to worry about and in the fight for the centre the knight on f3 exchanges itself allowing Matt to un-double his pawns. Matt has what he was after so far.

Now with the pawn out of the way the queen comes out and threatens the king. Joseph goes on the defensive briefly before Matt makes a new mistake. Instead of carrying on with his strategy of removing pieces he tries attacking. Not a good idea in this position.



Here f4 is a real threat and up it came. Matt took it but that now lets a Rook into the position. Worried about the potential threat of the rook pinning queen and king Matt moved his king into the corner, missing the check from the queen and moving the king again. Just a little tip - do not give your opponents a free tempo.

Now there is a little trick in the position, the rook takes Matt's pawn on f5, when the rooks are exchanged Matt cannot take Josephs pawn now sitting on f5 with the queen. This is because there is a horrible trap with bishop coming to d3 and Matt would have to wave goodbye to his queen. So, Matt goes for the pawn on g2 instead.

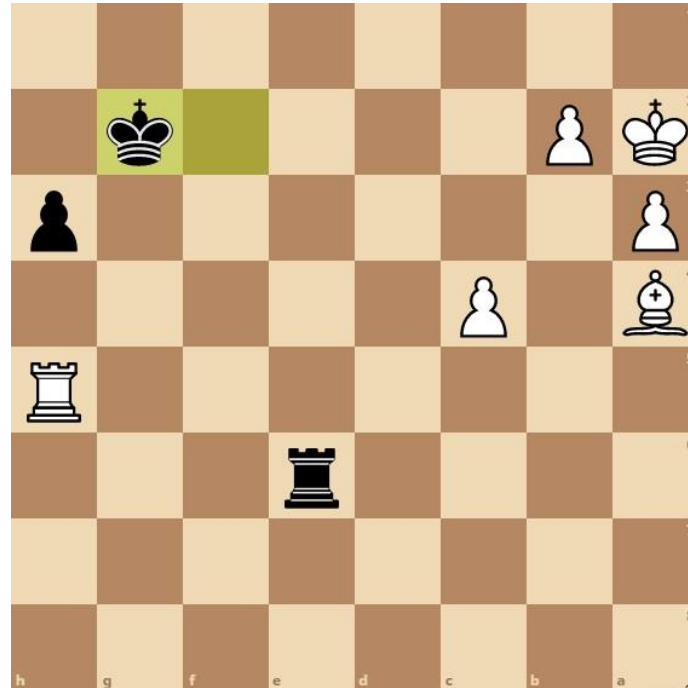
Now the attack starts coming, the bishop comes to d3 anyway, so the king has to move, and Joseph brings his queen in to f6 and puts pressure on Matt's position. Things are getting worse and worse for Matt and eventually makes the fatal error.



Here Matt should have just played Bxf6 but missed it and wanted to get his rook in the game, missing the bishop was under threat. So Rxd4 for nothing.

Now the strategy is simple enough. Its Joseph's turn to start exchanging off the pieces, with a whole Bishop up even if he can get to the endgame that way he should win against just pawns. Matt is back on the defensive and fighting for survival.

He kept going as hard as he could he had to give up the pawns but managed to get the h pawn passed and right the way down to h3. Then Joseph pulled a nice little trick.



Matt is fighting to get that pawn to h1 and queen, how did Joseph get Matt to resign in 1 move?

Rugeley Rangers ½ - 1½ 4 Gems

Steve was the third game to finish and he had the hardest opponent of our season 3 so far. This was not going to be easy.

Steve opened up with the queen's gambit and his opponent Nasir turned it into a King's Indian defence. Steve had control over the centre and Nasir was keeping his play quiet, preferring to control the action with his bishops and keep everything solid.



Here Nasir took Steve's d pawn and after recapturing pushed d6 and allowed his other bishop into the game. Steve castled completing his development much faster than Nasir, but Nasir's had ideas of his own, on his next move the bishop came and threatened Steve's knight.

Steve used the same trick Matt did earlier, h3 to kick the bishop. This time it works, the bishop moves and takes the knight giving Steve the long diagonal of his own. Nasir develops his knight to c6, now there are two attackers on the d4 square so Steve swaps his bishop for the knight and uses this chance to bring one of the rooks to e1.

Its time for a new plan and the attack is coming from the queenside. Nasir develops the rook to b8 and e8 and that lets the queen loose on the position.



Nasir is putting pressure on so Steve decides to lighten some of it playing cxd5, trouble is that is a slight error. Nasir recaptures and Steve brings his queen to f4 trying to add a little pressure of his own by threatening to win a pawn with Rxe7. Nasir sees an opportunity of his own and leaps at it. The rook comes to b4 attacking the pawn. Steve defends it with Rd1 and now comes the threat Nasir has seen... e5.

Steve retreats the queen and as Nasir pushes the pawn to threaten Steve's queen again, he moves it to block the pawns advance.

With the position almost equal Steve offers a draw and Nasir accepts it.

### Rugeley Rangers 1 - 2 4 Gems

Ryan in a switch from last week was the final game to finish. If he wins, we draw the match. What will happen? Let's find out.

It was another queen's gambit, this one though was a declined variation with Ryan getting his knight on f6 taken by a bishop but Ryan has his own there now, his opponent Zara does her best to make sure that Bishop is going nowhere so locks up the centre so give the bishop little room to manoeuvre.

As both sides developed their pieces the centre was locked but Ryan's other bishop was on the move, putting pressure on the kingside and with a semi open e-file, just the place you want to put a rook.



Both Semi-open files (a file where a pawn of only one colour blocks it from being open) are now occupied by rooks. Where is the attack coming from?

Ryan develops his knight to d7 trying to complete his development. Zara launches the attack. E4. Ryan fires back taking the pawn on d4. Zara can't take it back or loses the queen so she weakens the defence in front of the king but takes the problem of the bishop away, g4. Ryan ignores it and takes



the knight on c3, if Zara takes Ryan's bishop it weakens the king and makes it more likely for Ryan to launch an attack on it. He wants her to take it.

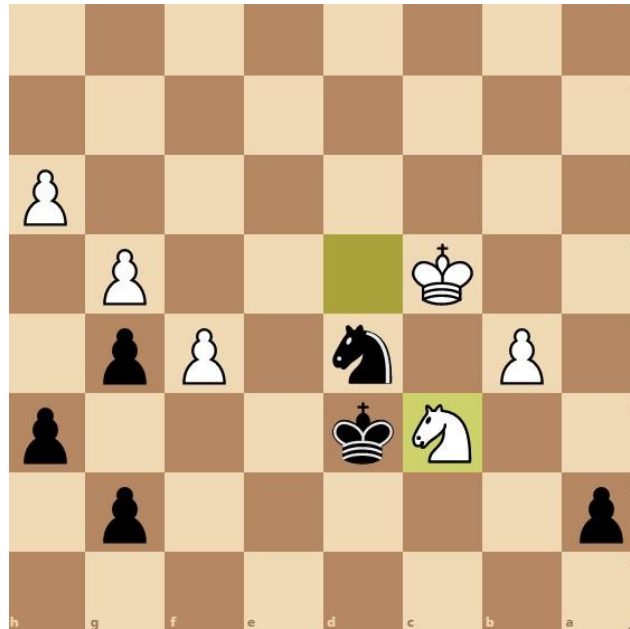
Zara picks up Ryan's bishop on c3 and Ryan still won't move the bishop, takes the pawn on e4 now one of its defender is gone. The rook takes back and after the exchanges Ryan makes a slight mistake.



Ryan moves the bishop, now he thinks its done its job, trouble is here it's a mistake. Zara takes it and after Ryan recaptures there is a problem with Rd3. Knights pinned and will be taken next move. Fortunately for Rugeley Qb3+ was played instead, equalising the position again.

Zara took the pawn on b7 with the queen trouble is its poisoned. Ryan brings his last Rook into the game and as Zara starts taking Ryan's queenside apart, he's doing the same to hers.

When the rooks get taken off were into an endgame where its 4 pawns and a knight vs 4 pawns and a knight. Rugeley's chances of winning and therefore drawing the match are dwindling.



Zara has managed to make her way into Ryan’s position and here Ryan made a miscalculation. He moved his knight to threaten the king but after it steps to the side Ryan still has a pawn ready to be taken so the knight has to go to the back rank and Ryan is in some trouble now. When a draw was offered, Ryan accepted it. So the final score is

Rugeley Rangers 1½ - 2½ 4 Gems

We lost by half a point. Well done to all players on that tough and hard-fought match, good luck to 4 Gems for the rest of the tournament.

The games and full analysis can be found at the following Links:

Steve – <https://lichess.org/9SKQGy13>

Matt – <https://lichess.org/bVzEiIFG/black>

Luke – <https://lichess.org/w7RMOZjd>

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

Puzzle answer - Rxh3 and if Matt captures it Bishop pins the rook.

### Group C

		rd 1	rd 2	P	W	D	L	MP	GP
1 Manchester Manticores 2	man2	<a href="#">cro1</a> 3	<a href="#">warb</a> 3½	2	2	0	0	4	6½
2 St Albans 2	sa2	<a href="#">hw3</a> 2½	<a href="#">wok</a> 4	2	2	0	0	4	6½
3 4 Gems	4ge	<a href="#">wok</a> 2	<a href="#">rgl</a> 2½	2	1	1	0	3	4½
4 Rugeley Rangers	rgl	<a href="#">warb</a> 4	<a href="#">4ge</a> 1½	2	1	0	1	2	5½
5 Crowthorne 1	cro1	<a href="#">man2</a> 1	<a href="#">hw3</a> 3½	2	1	0	1	2	4½
6 Woking Warriors	wok	<a href="#">4ge</a> 2	<a href="#">sa2</a> 0	2	0	1	1	1	2
7 Harrow 3	hw3	<a href="#">sa2</a> 1½	<a href="#">cro1</a> ½	2	0	0	2	0	2
8 Warwickshire Bears B	warb	<a href="#">rgl</a> 0	<a href="#">man2</a> ½	2	0	0	2	0	½

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