

Round 3

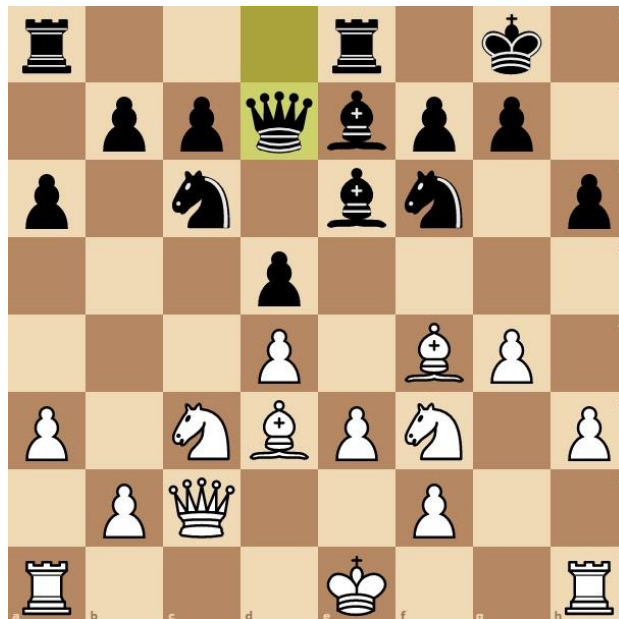
Rugeley Rangers vs Uxbridge Knights A

Tonight, we get paired with the strongest team in our section. I make this claim on the grounds their team average strength has been the highest in the division so far. So, when publication time came around we got this.

		Rugeley Rangers	1611		Uxbridge Knights A	1865
411	w	Whatmore, Steve (<i>SteveWhatmore</i>)	1825 c	-	Symonds, Richard H (<i>RickyX</i>)	1981
412	b	Carr, Matthew (<i>mattcarr2600</i>)	1705 e	-	Kamath, Raghu (<i>raghu-kamath</i>)	1885 e
413	w	Sullivan, Luke (<i>death2rooks93</i>)	1525 c	-	Hughes, Colin (<i>Konkers</i>)	1817 c
414	b	Wood, Ryan (<i>RyanWood01</i>)	1390 c	-	Colter, Nigel (<i>Loseatempo</i>)	1780 e
				- - -		

Slightly weaker team than usual. The team seems to have been juggled around a bit but still no easy challenge. Something to note tonight, during the first half an hour or so of our match the Chief Arbiter of the whole tournament was watching our games! He must how dubious our team is, given the rogues that make it up. Behave yourselves tonight everyone.

Luke first to finish. Luke opened with what according to my silicon friend was an English Opening: Anglo-Indian Defence, King's Knight Variation. First of all, what a mouthful, try saying that 5x faster. Secondly not a bad opening, develops most of the pieces, gives white a slight edge when you get out of the opening. Once out of the opening Luke went on the attack first.

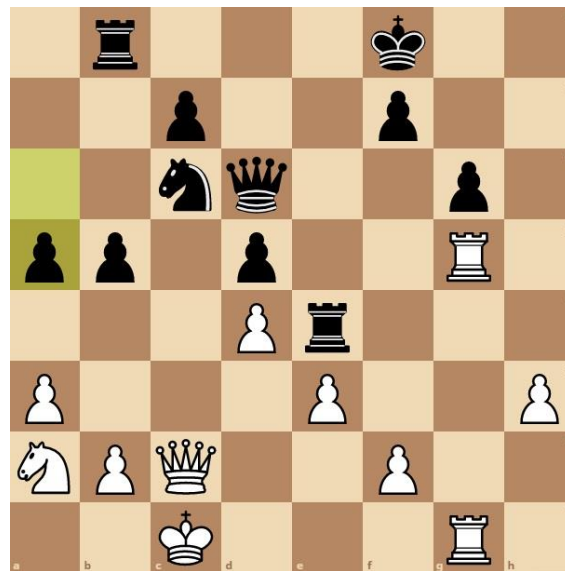


Colin having castled kingside and the pieces pointing in that direction, it makes good sense to thrust that g4 pawn forward and try to break open the kingside. My silicon friend says Luke certainly has the advantage at this point, but watch out for the later game, Luke's kingside and queenside are not comfortable for castling.

Luke continued in super aggressive fashion pushing the pawn to g5. The engine suggests bringing the rook behind the pawn first before pushing it. Which makes good sense, its preparing for the push and its bringing another piece into the attack. If the g pawn is taken from the board then the rook is pointing right at the enemy king.

Pushing g5 here means that the h pawn takes off the pawn and when the knight captures it weakens Luke's position. Once all the exchanges are done, its Colin that's in the better position.

The game continued with Colin pushing the pawns towards Luke's castled king on the queenside. Luke doubled the rooks on the g file but a simple pawn push holds off any advance. Then Luke gets given a chance.

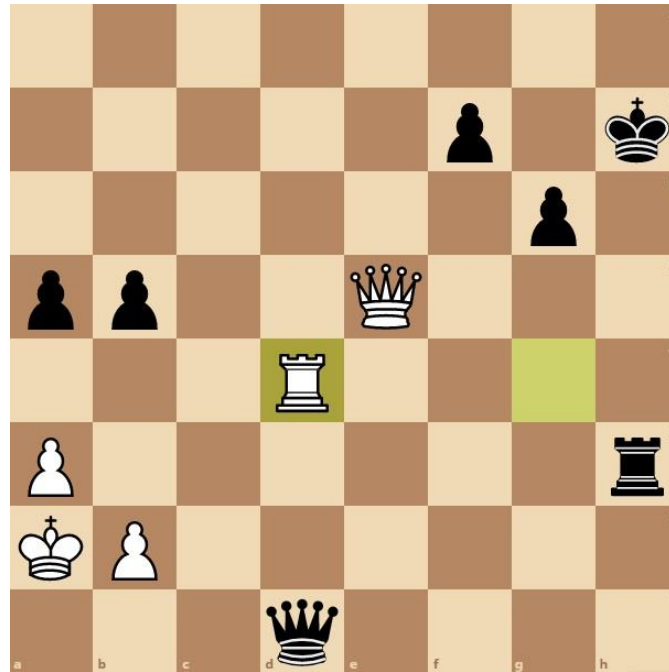


Here Luke can play Rxd5! This looks like it loses a rook but actually it's a very impressive sacrifice. If Qxd5 then the knight comes to c3 attacking both queen and rook and when the queen moves Luke picks up the Rook on e4 and is a pawn up in the endgame.

Trouble is that didn't happen.

Luke played Nc3 bringing it back into the game and attacking the pawn on b5 and the rook on e4. Rook moves to attack the weak h pawn and Luke grabs the centre. Colin brings in the queen to attack the rook on g1, but this is merely a ruse. The Rook is not the actual target. That lovely pawn chain on f2-d4 is. Its holding Luke's position together nicely and a queen is about to romp through the position.

That attack by Colin was just far too powerful and with one final miscalculation it was game over for Luke. Here is the final position. Black to play and win. Answer at the end.



Rugeley Rangers 0-1 Uxbridge Knights A

Steve – Was the second game to finish.

His comment on seeing the opening I don't believe I can get away with in a newsletter. Suffice to say, "Not another Dutch" was the general gist of it.

It was a classical Dutch, both sides developing their pieces, Steve on the queenside and Richard on the kingside. One thing I have learned from my minor study is that you must never allow black to get a pawn to the e4 square. If they can get a pawn there and hold it, that can cause a lot of problems for white later in the game. So, imagine my surprise seeing this:

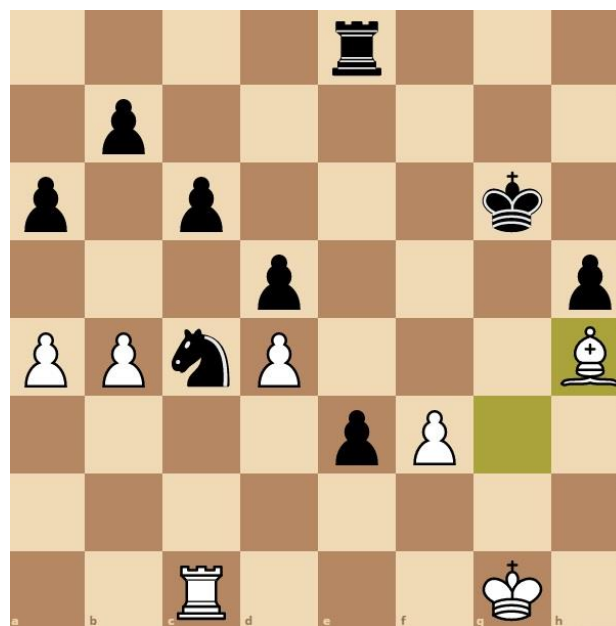


Another beautiful long pawn chain stretching right into Steve's position and well defended for that matter. The knight is forced to move, the bishop on g2 is locked out of the game, this is excellent for Richard (sorry Steve).

Steve moved the knight to the side of the board, Richard brings the bishop back to have two attackers on it, Steve then brought up the f pawn to put pressure on Richards position. This allows the trick with bishop takes knight, then queen takes and Steve's king is slightly weaker without the pawn in front of it. The bishop may be there but you want it attacking rather than being out of the game defending.

Steve continued by threatening pawns on the queenside with his queen but this was only a ruse to bring the queen over to the kingside and attempt to get behind those pawns in the chain to break them apart. Richard attempted the swap of queens, nearly getting a 3x repetition in the process but avoiding it. At some point a draw was offered but was declined.

Eventually Richard got his way, swapping off the queens and advancing up the board with the minor pieces and a rook. That pawn I mentioned earlier on e4, now it's going to get a chance to show why you never want it there. It's far too easy to advance. Especially with a Rook backing it up and the king coming forward.



Here the king is coming forward. The knight can't be touched, the rook is doing a good job and the bishop has nothing to aim at. Everything is on white squares. It must stay there to try guarding the queening square. The king came in, taking the pawn on f3 and then moved over to the queenside to start picking the rest of Steve's pawns apart. Once they're gone the rest of those pawns coming forward is essentially game over. Steve resigned a few moves after this. Hard fought game Steve.

Rugeley Rangers 0 – 2 Uxbridge Knights

Matt was the third game to finish, a few seconds after Steve. Matt having studied his opponent's games realised he doesn't have a good record against the French and plays a rather unusual opening setup for it. See what you think.

The opening is called the French Défense: La Bourdonnais Variation. In this line, instead of pushing d4 as the second move, white moves f4. An unusual line, not seen very often. I can appreciate unusual openings, play something your opponent hasn't prepared for and you have an early edge on them. So, Matthew knowing this played a few tricks of his own. Entering the middlegame it gave Matthew a slight edge but nothing more.

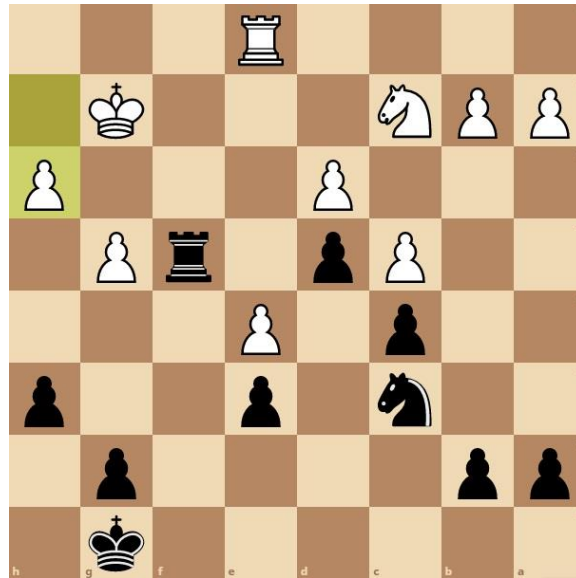
Everything was equal then Raghu castled and gave Matthew a small window of opportunity.



Only very slight but Matt played the right move. Pawn takes e5 and after the pawn takes back he blocked off a potential break in on g5 by pushing the pawn to h6 and giving his king a little breathing room.

Then the fun started. Raghu pushed the pawn in front of his king to kick the knight away. Only square for it was h4 and the knight on f3 promptly took it. This allowed Matt to have an idea of playing rook takes rook then capturing the knight. The idea being that if Matt simply took the knight first then if White plays rook takes, Matt's king is forced to take it back and then Raghu can bring his last remaining rook to the open file with check. Matt did not want to allow Raghu to have that extra tempo.

Mass exchanges occurred and through a little bit of cunning Matt was granted the open file for his own rook first and with the Rook and knight putting the pressure on it was time for the endgame.



Raghu and Matthew reached this position after move 26 and were in the endgame now. How would you continue?

Matt chose to begin a push on the queenside. There is the chance to get the pawns on d3 and c4 out of the way and push on to get a queen. That was his plan. The computer says Matt was looking on the wrong side of the board. Push g5 and lock down the position first, then bring the rook back in preparation for that pawn push.

But try it first he did. The pawns were thrust up the board and the d pawn got so very close to queening but in the end, it wasn't enough. All the pawns on the queenside were removed from the board and with no attack possible from either side when Matthew had the chance to claim 3x repetition, he took it.

Rugeley Rangers ½ - 2½ Uxbridge Knights A

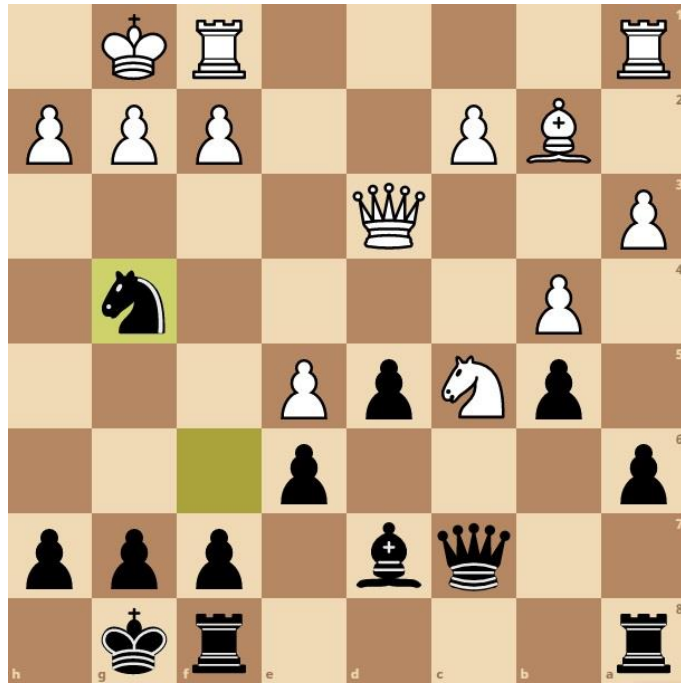
Ryan was the final game to finish in this match. It started off as a Colle opening and then developed into the Rubinstein Opening: Bogoljubov Defence.



Ryan adopted an opening setup I would typically expect to find in the French Defence. Given it worked for Matt tonight maybe Ryan will have a similar amount of luck with it.

Ryan took the d4 pawn with his own and began to push on the queenside with pawns. Nigel spotted this and proceeded to lock it down making it very difficult for Ryan to progress any further with his attack over there. He decided to reroute the knight from c6 over to g6 and put pressure on Nigel's kingside. Nigel in response brought his own knight into c5, a beautiful outpost where it could not be shifted without allowing Nigel a passed pawn (very deadly indeed those).

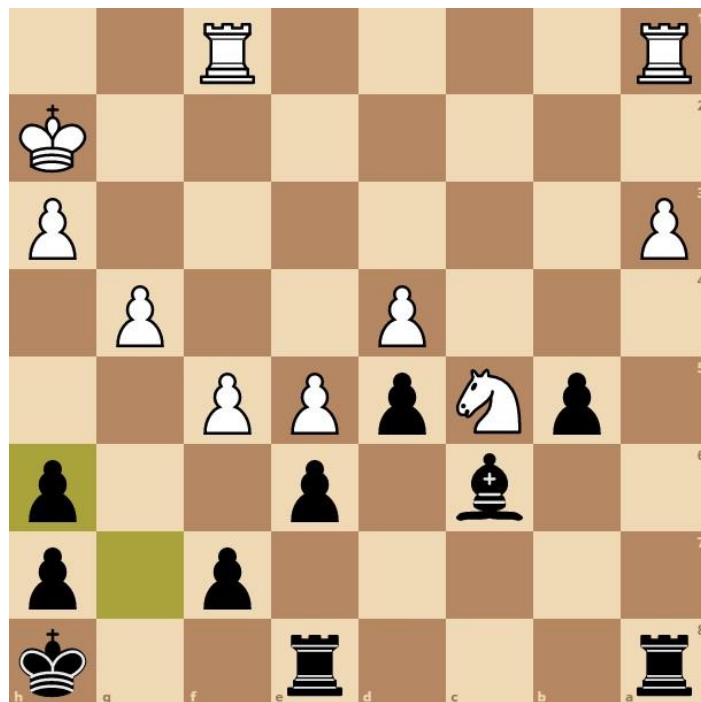
Exchanges occurred in the centre to try and give Ryan a bit more breathing room. Trouble is these exchanges gave Nigel a slight advantage.



Nice idea, knight is now threatening e5 and in theory if you can get the bishop to c6 and push a pawn then the bishop is also in the game.

Nigel pushed f4 to hold the pawn and Ryan pushed on the queenside. Ryan's knight was forced back to h6 by the g4 pawn and Ryan must find another way through. It can't be through the centre now.

The way never came for Ryan, after a few exchanges, even the queens coming off, Nigel's stranglehold on Ryan's position was still there. With a subtle shift of the bishop there was nowhere for that knight on the rim to go to and so double pawns were created in Ryan's position.



Now Nigel's king comes forward into the position and winds its way to h5 right in front of those two pawns with the centre ready to explode at any moment.

Ryan can't defend two things at once and when the centre went there was no way of stopping it. The pawns were too powerful and with a quick manoeuvre of the knight and rooks Ryan was checkmated on the back rank.

Rugeley Rangers ½ - 3½ Uxbridge Knights A

A tough game that, a tough game for all the Rugeley Rangers tonight. I did say we were facing the best and they did not disappoint. My thanks to Uxbridge for a pleasant evening, good luck with the rest of the event.

You can find all the games at the following links.

Steve - <https://lichess.org/otyrWbTG/white>

Matt - <https://lichess.org/gpbSgx3U/black>

Luke - <https://lichess.org/8k5EG0bd/white>

Ryan - <https://lichess.org/1fWY4i8Y/black>

Our standings are as follows:

Group A

		rd 1	rd 2	rd 3	P	W	D	L	MP	GP
1	Wantage	wan1 cat3 3½	wig2 2	mcsa 2½	3	2	1	0	5	8
2	MCS Oxford A	mcsa rgl1 4	gond 3½	wan1 1	3	2	0	1	4	8½
3	Uxbridge Knights A	uxka bra2 3	cat3 1½	rgl1 3½	3	2	0	1	4	8
4	Gondaga	gond wig2 4	mcsa 0	bra2 3½	3	2	0	1	4	7½
5	Catford Cosmonauts 3	cat3 wan1 ½	uxka 2½	wig2 3	3	2	0	1	4	6
6	Rugeley Rangers	rgl1 mcsa 0	bra2 3	uxka ½	3	1	0	2	2	3½
7	Wigston 2	wig2 gond 0	wan1 2	cat3 1	3	0	1	2	1	3
8	Bradford DCA Knights B	bra2 uxka 1	rgl1 1	gond ½	3	0	0	3	0	2½

Finally, the solution to the problem I set earlier is: 37... Qb3+, 38: Ka1 (also Kb1 but the result is the same), Rh1+ 39: Qe1, Rxe1 40: Rd1, Rxd1+