

# Rugeley vs St Albans 2

Round 4 sees Rugeley Rangers take on the might of St Albans 2. As team captain I usually take a look back at the opponents' previous rounds to try and spot any patterns or consistency as to who were likely to face once the pairings come out and well done to St Albans, I could not spot a definite pattern to how they were putting their players or what boards they would be on. All I knew for certain was they had 8 players to choose from and I had no idea which ones were going to be coming at us tonight.

So 6:30pm comes round and the pairings come out:

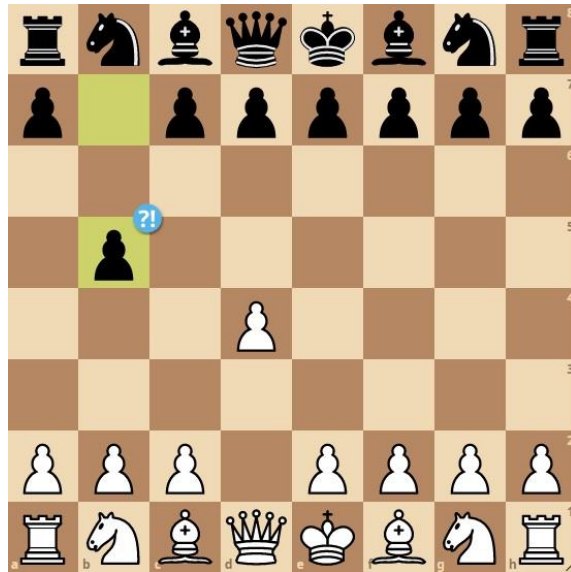
	<b>Rugeley Rangers</b>	1624		<b>St Albans 2</b>	1394
491	w Whatmore, Steve ( <i>SteveWhatmore</i> )	1810 c	-	Pines, Chris ( <i>notabishop</i> )	1536 c
492	b Carr, Matthew ( <i>mattcarr2600</i> )	1688	-	Wicks, Ben ( <i>Benwick</i> )	1450 c
493	w Sullivan, Luke ( <i>death2rooks93</i> )	1571 c	-	Feldman, Keith ( <i>KeithFeldman</i> )	1351 c
494	b Wood, Ryan ( <i>RyanWood01</i> )	1428 c	-	Harris, Stuart ( <i>StuartH130</i> )	1240 u
			- - -		

I think this is the first time in this season we have out rated out opponents on every board rather than it being the other way around in previous events. Thing is in this game a rating advantage can mean little once the pieces start flying. Will it be Rugeley or St Albans that will emerge victorious tonight? Let's find out.

Steve was the first to start and first to finish.

This game is a first for me. Ive seen many weird and wonderful openings thanks to my fellow members at Rugeley chess club but never have I seen the Orangutang played in serious chess. But it came out to play tonight.

The Orangutang or Polish gambit is where White pushes a pawn into the centre of the board and Black starts claims on the wing, tempting white to take a free pawn in exchange for development with tempo.



So interesting the computer even agrees!

Steve had never played versus b5 after d4 before! But this does not mean he didn't come up with a cunning plan. He decided to take control of the centre, making sure that was secure using the natural development of his pieces, Chris attacked that same centre by developing his knights and his white squared bishop to the long diagonal. Steve's central control involved pawns on d4, e4 and f3, blocking out that bishop and making it hard for the kingside knight to find a good square. Then that advanced pawn Chris had pushed right at the start began coming ever closer to Steve's position.

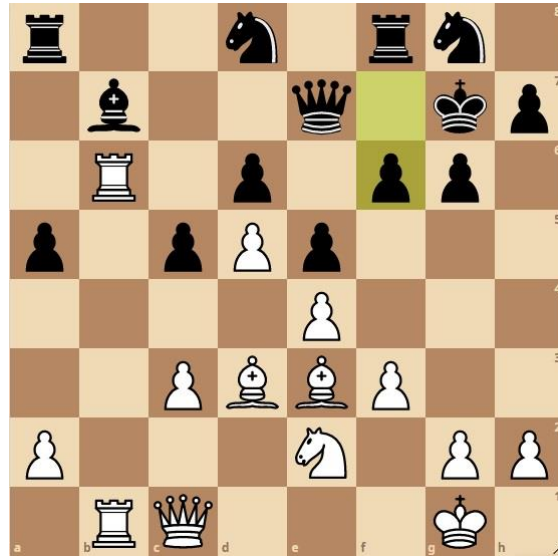


So far Steve has ignored that b pawn and he does it again here, c4 was played trying to tighten Steve's hold on the centre. But finally, in comes that special move, en passant. B4xc4 e.p. It was not able to sacrifice itself for tempo, but it finally does come off the board.

Steve captures back with the b pawn opening the b-line and one thing that rooks love is an open file. Both sides castled kingside, brought their rooks to the open file and prepared for the middlegame. Chris put pressure on it by pushing his e-pawn to challenge Steve in the centre. In keeping with this game, Steve ignored it and pushed past it with d5 further limiting the scope of the bishop and

forcing the knight on c6 to move, with no good places to go forward, it went to the back rank. Then in comes Steve's dark squared bishop and attacks a weak pawn on the queenside. This is where the rook comes off that b-file and defends it. Now Steve makes his move bringing a knight into the centre and exchanging it off for a bishop. While Steve is doing this Chris is working on the queenside and improving ready for a push there, but Steve has an idea.

Whats better than a rook on an open file? TWO rooks on an open file and Steve had that covered and now they were about to break into Chris's position.



Chris must get control of that b-file before Steve can start bringing anymore firepower into the position. The bishop on b7 retreated to c8 and Steve moved the a pawn up. As the bishop moved to d7, in comes Steve's and then the exchanges happen. In comes the other rook and a move later Steve's queen and two rooks are on the b file ready to cause trouble. In that same sense, Chris's rooks and queen are all on the 7<sup>th</sup> trying to stop anything.

Thing is though, while the rooks and queen are in position. Whats Steve's bishop doing? Coming in to d2 and threatening the weak queenside pawn. So, Chris brings a knight over to cover what's about to happen. The rook takes a pawn off and after that's taken, Steve now has a Bishop, rook and queen glaring down Chris's queenside, with a pawn ready to run as soon as the bishop gets out of the way.

Chris was determined to help it move with the use of his remaining Rook. That was the trap.



Steve plays Rxc8, Chris takes the bishop in reply. What does Steve play here that makes Chris resign immediately? Answer at the end.

A very crazy game

Rugeley Rangers 1 – 0 St Albans 2

Luke was the second to finish. This was according to the computer. A27 English Opening: King's English Variation, Three Knights System. Strangely enough it says three knight's system but by move 6 all 4 of them are out causing trouble. Perhaps rename the opening??

Both players developed their pieces, castled kingside and as Luke was sorting out his pieces ready to attack, Keith decided he was going to go for it. Within a few moves everything was pointing down at Luke's king. As more things were coming at Luke, Keith made an error.



This kills the attack. Luke captures the knight and after Bishop recaptures up comes e3, forcing Keith's bishop to retreat and Luke's position holds. Luke moves the knight to g5 attacking the

trapped bishop so Keith seeing a weak f2 pawn and a chance to hit the knight plays Qf5. Luke picks up the bishop and defends against the mate in 1.

Keith began to pull his pieces back to re-organise and Luke strengthened the centre. Pawns held the centre on c4, d3, e4, f3 and all backed up by a queen and bishop. This leaves the dark squares a little weaker, or does it?

Luke offered the exchange of dark squared bishops which was accepted and when the queen threatened the rook that captured the bishop, Luke doubled them on the e-file.

While rooks love open files, trouble is the e-file was closed. How was he going to make them active?  
By pushing the f-pawn forward 2 and challenging the locked centre.



In response to this Keith pushed the pawn to f5 really building tension in the centre. Luke took it and Keith returned the favour with the rook. Luke decides to increase the pressure in the centre as much as possible now, so he moved the queen to triple on the e-file.

Luke's attack looked strong but with the rooks guarding the centre it wasn't easy to see a way through there, but with the rooks, queen and knight focusing on the kingside and centre, what's guarding the queenside?

That's where Luke's queen went for, picking up a free pawn.

When Luke got the pawn up, he brought his queen back to the centre to support the rooks and cause even more trouble, as only Luke can.



Keith played c5 here to put pressure on Luke's centre, now that bishop that's been watching that long diagonal all game springs to life, moving to d5 and pinning the rook to the king. The knight moved back to f6 and Luke took the rook. After the queen recaptures Luke captures the e-pawn.

Keith in response moves his knight to h5 and Luke moves his queen to d5, pinning queen and king and threatening to exchange. A piece down and the pawns dropping off the board, Keith resigned.

A very attacking game and fun to watch.

#### Rugeley Rangers 2 – 0 St Albans 2

It is at this point Matt offers a draw.

Matts was the next game to end. It was C05 French Defence: Tarrasch Variation, Closed Variation. Matt has been playing this for years and knows how deadly this can be from both sides. Trouble is having not had the chance to play it for a while so when the following position cropped up Matt made a slight error.



Here there are at least three choices, Matt made the error of taking it with the Bishop. It looks good hitting the pawn with three pieces but should have taken it with the knight, its more accurate in this position and the natural square, also allowing the pawn to be protected by the bishop.

In this case the bishop on f6 does not help as Ben retreats the bishop to b1, protecting the pawn with the queen and setting up a nasty attack on the kingside if Matt ever castles.

Some pressure must be taken off so Matt played Qb4 offering a question to Ben and choosing to hold the position offered the swap of queens which Matt accepted. Now that there is no evil checkmate up the corner available Matt castles.

Trouble is while the queen cannot come in, the knight certainly can come to g5 threatening the h7 pawn and e6. Nice aggressive move there putting pressure on Matt. Should have moved the knight earlier Matt!

Matt swaps off the bishop for the knight something he didn't want to do in the French defence, the dark squared bishop is supposed to be blacks best piece.

With that exchange Matt pushed in the centre with the e-pawn with the idea that if Ben takes it, then it gives Matt a passed d pawn and lets the bishop on c8 out without trouble once the knight moves.

Ben took it and Matt captured back with the knight. Then came a new chance when Ben castled.



Here castling was a slight error. Matt can play Bxh3 here and when the pawn captures back in comes the knight to f3 with a check and picks up the bishop. Problem for Rugeley Matt missed it.

Concentrating so much on that passed pawn he pushed h6. Get the bishop off that diagonal so a rook can go to d8 eventually. So, when the bishop went to h4, up comes g5 and the bishop moves to g3 and its off that diagonal.

Next problem Matt wanted to get that bishop on b1 off the board so the good square for the bishop could be taken without too much trouble. Not to mention when playing the white side of the French

defence the light squared bishop is whites' best piece. So, in the knight came to c4, after b3 Matt forked rook and bishop. The rook moved and off came the bishop.

Matt had gotten exactly what he wanted, he got rid of the bishop but now the rooks were connected and worse it's an opposite-coloured bishop ending. But the bishop was out on a strong diagonal and a rook was behind the pawn. If that thing can get moving it could cause trouble for Ben.

Ben saw it though and moved his knight to block the pawn and threaten the bishop. Matt decided to take it off the board and Ben's rook captured back.

Matt brought the rook on f8 to e8 trying to get the open file. Ben doubled the rooks, but the bishop comes back to defend the double attacked pawn.



Opposite coloured bishop endings like this are supposed to be drawn but when we reached this position Luke's game ended. With the score standing at Rugeley 2-0 up, Matt offered a draw in the and Ben accepted. My silicon friend says that Ben has a slight advantage here, but can you find a win or a plan from here? This reporter certainly cannot find one. If you find an answer, please let me know.

Rugeley Rangers 2½ - ½ St Albans 2

Ryan was the final game to finish.

It was a D04 Queen's Pawn Game: Colle System, Anti-Colle. A somewhat passive opening you might say but certainly white has chances with it. Ryan adopted a position similar to the London System developing knights and bishops to the centre of the board and staking claim with the d pawn.

Stuart developed his kingside and bishops exchanging those for both of Ryan's bishops. Once that was done, he pushed in the centre trying to take control there and messing up Ryan's pawn structure. When the dust settled, we had the following position:





Here Ryan played Qd5 giving the queen more scope to run to either side of the board if needed. Stuart attacked it by thrusting c4 gaining more space in the centre. Ryan attacked the rook with his queen placing it on g5 and Stuart defended it with g3.

Now what does Ryan do here?



If you handed me this position, I will confess I would have no idea what to do here. My silicon friend suggests Qa5, but I have no idea why. Perhaps someone stronger than me can help?

Ryan played the move that I settled on Rad8, bringing another piece into the game and if you can get more pieces on that d pawn perhaps get it off the board.

The knight was developed to c3 and as Ryan added that pressure to the d pawn with c5, the white knight jumped into e4 hitting queen and the c5 pawn. Ryan took it and when the Rook captured back Ryan began to double the rooks.

Stuart threatened the queen with Re5, but Ryan pulls it back to d8, triple attacking the pawn. Stuart captures the now undefended c pawn and Ryan takes the d pawn threatening Stuart's queen. When it moves to f3, Ryan hits the undefended rook with his.

Ra5 was played and Ryan moves his queen back to defend the weakened pawns. One piece stops two different attackers. Nice.

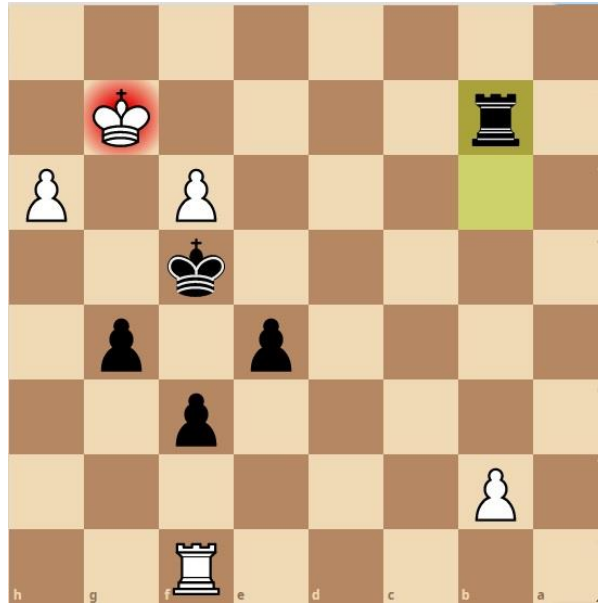
Stuart then plays Rd1, offering an exchange of Rooks which Ryan accepts because once the queen captures back Ryan wins the d file by bring his last rook there. So once the queen moves, now Ryan can do something about those queenside pawns of his with b6 threatening the rook. After it retreats, Ryan brings his queen to a more advanced square and Stuart offers an exchange of queens.



Here my silicon friend says to check the king and start attacking. Ryan seeing his chance to bust Stuarts kingside accepts the queen trade. With the push of a5 to try to secure the position, Stuart pushes c5. With the taking of pawns Stuart's rook is back in the game.

Ryan charges down and threatens the a pawn, Stuart takes the c pawn and now that b pawn has the open file, and it begins to run with the white rook moving in front of it to guard it from attack.

Ryan begins improving his kingside as the b-pawn creeps ever closer to the queening square. Thankfully for Ryan with the rook sitting on the queening square it must get out of the way first. So long as Stuart does not have a check available when the rook moves it should be fine for Ryan. Trouble is what did Stuart attack when the rook moved?



The f pawn holding Ryan's position together. So, Ryan used this check to try and push Stuart's king back and then took the pawn off.

Ryan moved forward with his king and removed the h pawn as the g pawn came off the board. With no way to make progress by either side Ryan and Stuart called it a draw a few moves later.

A hard-fought game there by both sides. Final score was:

Rugeley Rangers 3- 1 St Albans 2

My thanks to St Albans for some tough games and good luck to you in the rest of the tournament.

Answer to the problem: Qb6 threatening Rook and knight.

### Group C

		rd 1	rd 2	rd 3	rd 4	P	W	D	L	MP	GP	
1	Crowthorne 1	cro1	<a href="#">man2</a> 1	<a href="#">hw3</a> 3½	<a href="#">wok</a> 4	<a href="#">4ge</a> 4	4	3	0	1	<b>6</b>	12½
2	Manchester Manticores 2	man2	<a href="#">cro1</a> 3	<a href="#">warb</a> 3½	<a href="#">rgl</a> 1½	<a href="#">hw3</a> 3½	4	3	0	1	<b>6</b>	11½
3	Rugeley Rangers	rgl	<a href="#">warb</a> 4	<a href="#">4ge</a> 1½	<a href="#">man2</a> 2½	<a href="#">sa2</a> 3	4	3	0	1	<b>6</b>	11
4	4 Gems	4ge	<a href="#">wok</a> 2	<a href="#">rgl</a> 2½	<a href="#">sa2</a> 3½	<a href="#">cro1</a> 0	4	2	1	1	<b>5</b>	8
5	St Albans 2	sa2	<a href="#">hw3</a> 2½	<a href="#">wok</a> 4	<a href="#">4ge</a> ½	<a href="#">rgl</a> 1	4	2	0	2	<b>4</b>	8
6	Warwickshire Bears B	warb	<a href="#">rgl</a> 0	<a href="#">man2</a> ½	<a href="#">hw3</a> 2½	<a href="#">wok</a> 2	4	1	1	2	<b>3</b>	5
7	Woking Warriors	wok	<a href="#">4ge</a> 2	<a href="#">sa2</a> 0	<a href="#">cro1</a> -½	<a href="#">warb</a> 2	4	0	2	2	<b>2</b>	3½
8	Harrow 3	hw3	<a href="#">sa2</a> 1½	<a href="#">cro1</a> ½	<a href="#">warb</a> 1½	<a href="#">man2</a> ½	4	0	0	4	<b>0</b>	4

Steve - <https://lichess.org/Ga4bOqrm>

Matt - <https://lichess.org/8bZCuQml/black>

Luke - <https://lichess.org/hUcCIYtn>

Ryan - <https://lichess.org/P3q8QmtK/black>