

Edinburgh Civil Service take the friendly approach to Over-the-Board Chess



“Will over the board league chess start again later this year?” asks **Crawford Macnab**. “I certainly hope so and the signs are looking more promising. At the Civil Service chess club in Edinburgh we decided at our AGM in September 2021 to restart our club nights and get members playing over the board chess again. Historically we play most of our chess in league competitions with our club championship being fitted in only when time allowed, often suffering as a result.”

With club nights being the only option this year we managed to run our most successful club championship ever with two eight player all play all qualifying sections with the section winners playing off for the championship.

This competition, a lightning and a chess ladder (remember them from school) have provided regular games for club members through the winter. Although not all existing members have returned to playing at the club we

have welcomed five new active players to the club. As well as inviting players from the Gorgie/Dalry club to join our club nights.

It is encouraging to see that more and more clubs in the Edinburgh area are starting to play over the board chess again, with a good number of friendly team matches between clubs now being arranged.

Our first such friendly match was played in early February when we hosted ten players from Edinburgh University.

Although the University were stronger on paper, all of the games were very hard fought and in the end we lost 3½ – 6½.

Civil Service				Edinburgh University			
1	█ Crawford T Macnab	1811	0 - 1	□ Andi Dicu		2130	
2	□ Charles Gunn-Russell	1797	1 - 0	█ Naman Singh			
3	█ Allan McDiarmid	1740	0 - 1	□ Eduard Pruja		1927	
4	□ Matt Rounds	1736	1 - 0	█ Martin Kopernicky		1742	
5	█ Eric P Smith	1621	0 - 1	□ Divyesh Selvaraj		1622	
6	□ Euan McDiarmid		½ - ½	█ Darima Donitova		1666	
7	█ Gerry Brown	1435	0 - 1	□ Nikitas Angeletos Chrysaitis		1608	
8	□ Douglas Heatlie	1418	0 - 1	█ Andrew Bergquist			
9	█ Richard Josey		½ - ½	□ Mateusz Olszamowski			
10	□ Sandy Powell	1108	½ - ½	█ Jan Goede			
3½ - 6½							

On board one I was surprised to find out afterwards that my stronger opponent had prepared a minor-piece ending with some draw-against me! This proved effective and I spent too much time mishan-



Komodo

Dragon 2

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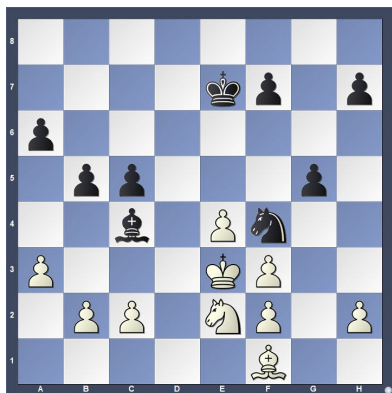


♣ Dicu, Andi (2130)

♣ Macnab, Crawford (1811)

Civil Service vs Edinburgh Uni.
2022

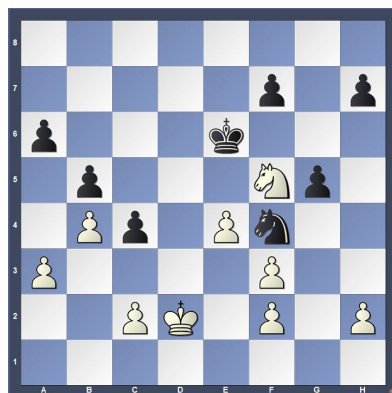
Position after 26... ♖c4



With the plan to swap off the same-coloured bishops and tie the white king down to defending his doubled pawns, whilst keeping my king centralised.

27. ♖g3 ♖xf1 28. ♖xf1 ♖g2+ 29. ♖d2 ♖h4 30. ♖e2 ♖g2 31. ♖e3 ♖f4+ 32. ♖d2 ♖e6 33. b4 c4 34. ♖f5

For some reason I convinced myself that the white knight would be too active, grabbing my queen side pawns, so I deviated from this plan and proceeded to lose.



34... ♖h3

Better was to keep the king in centre with 34... ♖e5 35. ♖e3 ♖g2+ 36. ♖e2 ♖f4+ 37. ♖d2 h5.

35. ♖e3 ♖e5 36. ♖h6 ♖e6
37. ♖f5 ♖e5 38. ♖e7 ♖d6
39. ♖d5 f5 40. ♖f6 f4+ 41. ♖d4
h6 42. e5+ ♖e6 43. ♖e4 ♖g1
44. ♖c5+ ♖e7 45. ♖e4 ♖e2
46. ♖xa6 ♖c3+ 47. ♖f5 ♖b1 48.
♖c7 ♖xa3 49. ♖d5+ ♖e8 50. c3
♖c2 51. e6

1-0

On board two, Charles Gunn-Russell had an interesting game against Naman Singh.

His opponent dropped a bishop but had some potential attacking chances down the g-file.

White had sufficient defensive resources and in the end it was the black king that became too exposed.

♣ **Gunn-Russell, Charles (1797)**

Singh, Naman
Civil Service vs Edinburgh Uni.
2022

Notes by Charles

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7
4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5
7.dxe5 dxe5 8.0-0 ♔e8 9.♙e3
This threatens ♙c5 so no time for ...
♘g4

9...♘a6 10.h3 To prevent ...♘g4
and keep the good bishop.

10...♙e6 11.b4

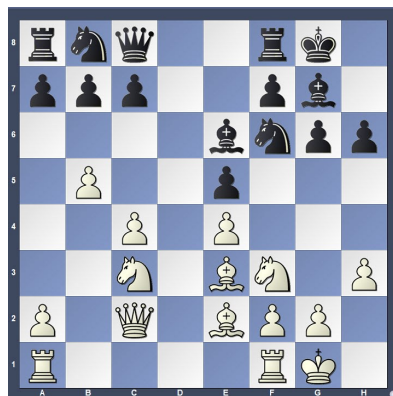


Threatening to kick the knight then play ♙c5 to win the exchange.

11...♔c8 If 11...♘xb4 I thought this was good: 12.♙c5 ♘c6 13.♙xf8 ♙xf8 but the engine prefers 12. ♔b1 or 12.♖b1.

12.b5 ♘b8 13.♔c2 Defending e4 to allow ♘d5 soon.

13...h6



14.♖ac1 Protecting the knight on c3 to threaten ♘xe5 with less risk. The engine thought that I could have played it already: 14.♘xe5 ♘xe4 15.♔xe4 f5 16.♔f4 g5 17.♔h2

14...♘h5 15.♘d5 ♔h8 16.♘d2 Threatening to take the knight and double Black's pawns.

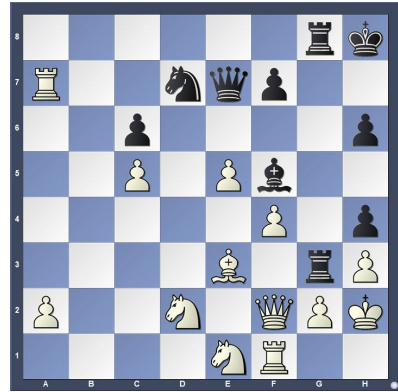
16...c6 17.♙xh5 gxh5 18.♘b4

Better was 18. ♖d1 ♜d8 19. ♖xh5 traded, Black's attack looks less promising.



18... ♖g8 this threatens ... ♗xh3 but the engine thought the immediate 18... ♗xh3 was better.

28... ♗f5 29. ♖xa3 ♖g7 30. bxc6 bxc6 31. ♖f2 ♖ag8 32. ♗e1 h4 33. ♖xa7 ♖g3



19. ♗h2 ♗f8 20. ♗d3 ♗d7 21. ♖d1 ♗f6 22. ♗xe5 ♖c7 23. f4 ♗d6 24. ♗d3 Retreating and threatening e5.

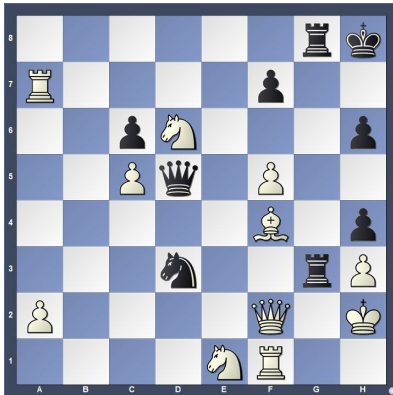
34. ♗c4 The last move before the time control ,but better was 34. ♗d4 ♗h7 (34... ♖e6 35. ♖xd7 ♗xh3 (35... ♖xd7 36. e6+ ♖xd4 37. ♖xd4+) 36. ♖g1)

24... ♗g4 I hadn't foreseen this, but didn't really want to take straight away.

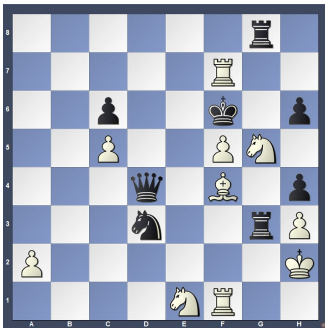
34... ♖e6 35. ♗d6 The knight reaches its dream square.

25. ♖e1 ♗a3 26. ♖c3 ♖e7 27. e5 ♗d7 28. c5 Trapping the dark-squared bishop. I could have got rid of the light-squared bishop instead, though, which was key in Black's attack: 28. hxg4 ♗c5 29. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 30. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 With pieces happily

35... ♗xh3 36. f5 Attacking the queen and blocking her from h3. 36... ♖d5 37. gxh3 ♗xe5 38. ♗f4 Attacking the knight that defends f7. 38... ♗d3

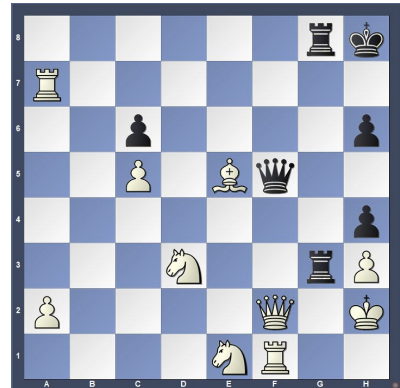


39. ♖xf7+ An interesting variation but hard to see under time pressure was 39. ♖d4+ ♗xd4 40. ♖xf7+ ♔g7 41. ♖g5+ ♔f8 (41... ♔h8 42. ♗h7#; 41... ♔f6 42. ♗f7# See diagram below) 42. ♖e6+ ♔e8 43. ♖xd4



39... ♔g7 40. ♖e5+ Better was 40. ♖g5+ ♔f8 (40... ♔h8 41. ♗h7#; 40... ♔f6 41. ♖d4+ ♗xd4 42. ♗f7#) 41. ♖e2 ♖e5 42. ♗xe5 ♗3xg5 43. ♗d6+

40... ♔h8 41. ♖5xd3 ♗xf5 42. ♗e5+ But simple is good when time is of the essence!



1-0

Despite losing the match it was great for club members to play against new opponents and hopefully with more clubs playing friendly matches and organising club nights again we will be in a good place to restart over-the-board league chess again in Autumn 2022!