

## LOST WEEKEND - ONE MAN'S CONGRESS

by Neville Twitchell

Once upon a time I was a regular attendee at weekend congresses, but more recently I have found it difficult to summon up the energy. However I was persuaded to enter the Ilford Whitsun Congress, or Spring Bank Holiday Congress as it now is, at the Valentine's Park High School in Gants Hill. I entered the Major (under 160) and thought that at 156 I stood a reasonable chance, though I have thought that numerous times before and have been sadly disabused. In the first round having turned up late (as is my custom) I was paired with one of the other higher graded players who had also turned up late, instead of getting someone from the lower half of the draw. At least I had the white pieces.

**Round 1**  
**Ilford Major U-160**  
**White:**  
**Neville Twitchell**  
**(156)**  
**Black:**  
**Andrew Fleming**  
**(154)**  
**French Defence**  
**-Rubinstein Variation**

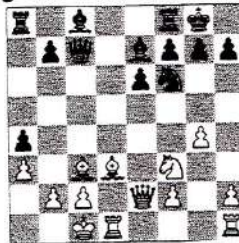
**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2**  
**dxe4**  
The Rubinstein variation  
- very solid  
**4 Nxe4 Nd7**

**4...Bd7** is the so-called Fort Knox variation  
**5 Nf3 Ngf6 6 Bg5 Be7**  
**7 Nxf6+ Nxf6 8 Bd3 0-0**  
**9 Qe2 c5 10 dxc5 Qa5+**  
**11 Bd2**

A fairly standard position has been reached, although 11 c3 would have been more normal, but I wanted to re-locate the bishop to a different and, I hoped, more effective diagonal.

**11 ... Qxc5 12 0-0-0 a5**  
Finishing development with 12...b6 and 13...Bb7 may have been more prudent.

**13 Bc3 a4 14 a3 Qc7 15 g4!?**



This seemed like an excellent punt since 15...Nxg4 would be very dodgy after, say, 16 Rhg1 Nf6 (16...f5 17 h3 Nf6 18 Rxc7+ Kxc7 19 Rg1+ Kh8 20 Ng5 and 21 Qh5) 17 Rxc7+ Kxc7 18 Rg1+ Kh8 19 Qe4 (*I think there is a slight flaw here. Doesn't 19...Qxc3 win immediately?* - ed)

**15 ... Nd5**  
The safest reply, trying to exchange pieces and threatening 16...Nf4.

**16 Be5 Qc5 17 g5 Bd7**  
**18 Qe4 g6 19 Qh4?!**

This seemed strong, but in fact Black can defend easily, whereas 19 h4 would have been crushing.

**19 ... f5! 20 Rhg1**

Beginning an awkward manoeuvre, but 20 gxf6 just releases the tension to Black's advantage.

**20 ... Bd6 21 Rg3 Rf7 22 Re1 b5 23 Bd4!? Qc7!**

**23...Bxc3 24 hxc3 Qc7**  
**25 Ne5 Rg7 26 Rh1**  
gives Black a desperately difficult game with time trouble looming (*true enough, but at least he would have been material up for his trouble!* - ed).

**24 Ne5 Bxe5 25 Bxe5**  
**Qa5 26 c3 Rc8 27 Kb1**  
**Qb6 28 Bd4 Qc7 29 Be5**  
**Qc5 30 Rh3 Nb6 31 Bd4**  
**Qd6 32 Qh6 Re7**

Not 32...Nc4?? 33 Qg6+ etc, so Black must yield the exchange.

**33 Bf6 Rce8 34 Bxe7**  
**Rxe7 35 Qh4 e5 36 Qb4**  
**Qd5??**

A time trouble blunder, though objectively Black is lost. He might as well go for it, since we were both in dire time trouble by this stage.

**37 Qxe7 Be6 38 Qxh7+**  
**Kf8 39 c4 bxc4 40 Qh8+**  
**Ke7 41 Qf6+ Kd6 42**  
**Qd8+ Nd7**

The time trouble control although I don't think either of us knew it because both of us had

ceased keeping a proper score.

#### 43 Bc2

**Black resigns 1-0.** In fact Black's flag fell and he may have thought he had lost on time, though his position is obviously completely lost.

Quite a good game, despite missing one or two things and the rather farcical ending. Round 2 in the afternoon was rather a bizarre game.

#### Round 2

##### Ilford Major U-160

**White:**

**Mustapha Rahman**

**(143)**

**Black:**

**Neville Twitchell**

**(156)**

**Alekhine's Defence**

**1 e4 Nf6 2 Nc3 d5 3 exd5 Nxd5 4 Ne4?!**

A very unusual move, which I have never seen anywhere.

**4 ... Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6 6 Nf3 c5 7 c3 Nc6 8 Nh4**

Far too time-consuming, though 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 Ndb4 or 8 Bc4 Nb6 9 Bb3 c4 10 Bc2 Bxc2 both leave Black with the advantage.

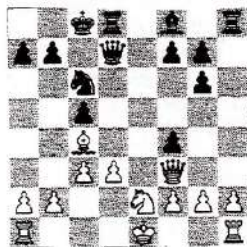
**8 ... e5 9 Nxg6 hxg6**

Now Black has a central bind.

**10 Bc4 Nf4 11 Qf3 Qd7 12 d3 0-0-0!?**

Offering a pawn for activity.

**13 Bxf4 exf4 14 Ne2**



Wisely declining the pawn. White offered a draw here. If 14 Qxf4

Re8+ 15 Kf1 Ne5 16 Rd1 Bd6 17 Qd2 Ng4 for example leaves White desperately cramped.

**14 ... g5**

14 ... Ne5 was tempting eg 15 Qxf4 Qxd3! 16 Qxe5 (16 Bxd3 (16 Bb3 is possible when White does not look too badly off - ed) 16 ... Nxd3+ 17 Kf1 Nxf4 18 Nxf4 Rd2 leaves Black well on top) 16... Qxc4 (?? as 16... Qd2+ 17 Kf1 Qd1+ 18 Rxd1 Rxd1 is mate! - ed) 17 0-0?? Bd6, but 17 b3 may enable White to hang on. I decided that Black was so good here I would play it positionally.

**15 Bb5 Bd6 16 Bxc6**

Exchanges off just about his only active piece but it is hard to find a good move here for White in view of the looming threats down the e-file and against the Kingside.

**16 ... bxc6 17 0-0-0**

(17 d4 is probably White's best here trying to make a hole for his queen - ed)

**17 ... f5**

Now White is forced into a series of retreats to avoid the loss of his queen (true but 17 ... g4 18 Qe4 Rhe8 wins a piece! - ed)

**18 Ng1 Rde8 19 Rf1 g4 20 Qd1**

White has now finished his undevelopment!

**20 ... Qe6 21 Qb3?**

Offering the exchange of his only potentially active piece.

**21 ... Qxb3 22 axb3 Rh6 23 Kd1 Rhe6 24 h3**

White tries to break out in the only way he can. I found a neat twist to finish the game off.

**24 ... f3! 25 gxf3 g3! 26 fxg3 Bxg3 27 Kd2 Re1 28 Rxe1 Rxe1 29 Ne2 Rxh1 30 Nxg3 Rh2+ 31 Kc1 g6 32 h4 Rg2 0-1**

Round 3 the next day was a very easy win for me although my opponent, Clare Summerscale (nee Lusher), wife of Aaron, didn't seem to do anything very wrong. Just brilliant play by me I suppose!

#### Round 3

##### Ilford Major U-160

**White:**

**Neville Twitchell**

**(156)**

**Black:**

**Clare Summerscale**

**(124)**

**Centre Counter Defence**

**1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Bc4 Bf5 7 Qe2 e6 8 Bd2 Qc7!?**

Unnecessary at this stage and a loss of tempo since if and when the queen retreats d8 is a better square.

**9 0-0-0 Be7**

9 ... Bb4 is more usual.

This may be too passive.

**10 Ne5 Nbd7 11 h3!**

Now White is ready to roll on the Kingside and it is hard to find a good plan for Black, eg 11... 0-0 12 g4 Bg6 13 h4 h5 14 Nxg6 fxg6 15 Qxe6+; or 11... 0-0-0 12 Nxf7; or 11... c5 12 Nb5 Qb6 13 Be3.

**11 ... Nxe5 12 dxe5 Nd5**

**13 g4 Bg6 14 f4 Nb6 15 Bb3 0-0-0?**

After this Black is completely lost, though given that castling short is not an option I am not sure what Black should do. Now there is just no defence to f5.

**16 Rhf1 f6 17 Bxe6+ Kb8 18 f5 Be8 19 exf6 gxf6 20 Bf4 Bd6 21 Rxd6 Rxd6 22 Ne4 Ka8 and resigns 1-0**



Three out of three, but from now on it was going to get hard.

#### Round 4

Ilford Major U-160

White:

Donny Muter

(157)

Black:

Neville Twitchell

(156)

Benko Gambit Declined

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5  
4 Nd2 bxc4 5 e4 d6 6  
Bxc4 g6 7 b3 Bg7 8 Bb2  
0-0 9 Ne2

Fedorowicz only gives 9  
Ngf3 here. The text may  
be an improvement.

9...Nbd7 10 Qc2 a5 11

0-0 Qb6 12 Nc3 Ba6 13

Na4 Qb7 14 Bxa6 Rxa6

14 ... Qxa6 may have

been better 15 Bc3 Nb6

16 Nb2 a4 (14...Rxa6 is

probably best as after

14...Qxa6 White can play

15 Nc4 with advantage -  
ed)

15 Nc4! Rfa8 16 f4 Ne8

17 Rad1 Bxb2 18 Qxb2

Nc7 19 Qf2!

Switching the focus of the  
attack.

19...Nb5 20 Qh4 f6 21

e5 Nd4?

Better is 21...dxe5 22

fxe5 Nxe5 23 Nc5??

(White should play 23

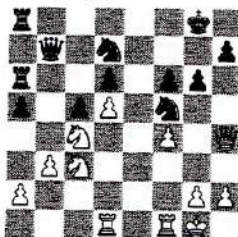
Nxe5 - ed) 23...Qa7 24

Qf2 Ng4.

22 exd6 exd6 23 Nc3

(? 23 Rfe1! - ed)

23 ... Nf5

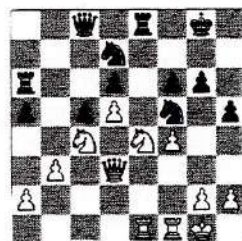


(Black misses an  
opportunity here with  
23...a4! eg 24 bxc4?

Qb4! or 24 Nxa4 Qxd5-  
ed)

24 Qh3 Re8 25 Rde1

Qc8 26 Ne4 h5 27 Qd3



(Actually the best move  
here is 27 Ncxd6 but the  
complications are  
considerable and its not  
the sort of move to punt  
in time trouble. A sample  
line is 27...Nxd6 28 Qxd7  
Nxe4 29 Qxc8 Rxc8 30  
Rxe4 - ed)

27 ... Kg7 28 Ng3 Nng3

29 Qxg3 f5 30 Rxe8

Qxe8 31 Re1 Qf7 32 Re6

Nf6 33 Qc3 Ra8 34 Nxd6

Qf8 35 Qe5 Rd8 36

Re7+ Kh6 37 Nf7+ Black

resigns 1-0.

A bad loss, but with 3 out  
of 4 I was still in the  
running and the next  
game was going to be  
critical.

#### Round 5

Ilford Major U-160

White:

Neville Twitchell

(156)

Black:

Alexander Baron

(149)

Sicilian Defence -

Dragon Variation

(Levenfish Attack)

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4

cx d4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3

g6 6 f4 Nbd7 7 Bc4 Qc7

8 Bb3 a6 9 0-0 Bg7 10

Kh1 Nc5 11 f5

11 e5 was tempting, but I

couldn't make it work

after 11...dxe5 12 fxe5

Qxe5 13 Bf4 Qh5 14

Qxh5 Nxh5 15 Bxf7+

Kxf7 16 Be5+ (this would

definitely be a mistake.

16 Bd6+ with equal

chances is best here -

ed) 16...Kg8 (16...Nf6

also wins easily - ed).

11 ...Nxb3 12 axb3 Bd7

13 Bg5 Bc6 14 Qd3!

Nd7 15 Nxc6 Qxc6

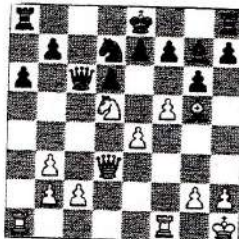
Obviously forced or else

he loses a pawn, but now

White builds up a strong

bind on the position.

16 Nd5



16 ... f6

A horrible move but

almost forced, as

16...Nf6 loses to 17 fxg6

hxg6 18 Nxf6+ Bxf6 19

Bxf6 exf6 20 Rxf6 or

19...e6 17 fxe6 fxe6 18

Nf6+ Nxf6 19 Bxf6 Bxf6

(? 19...0-0 looks playable

and maybe equal - ed) 20

Rxf6 Ke7 21 Raf1 Raf8

22 Qf3 with a big plus.

17 Be3 Rc8 18 c4 Ne5

19 Qe2 h5 20 Bd4 g5

Black tries to work up

some play on the

Kingside since there isn't

much else he can do.

21 Bg1 g4

Though White seems to

have a tremendous

position it isn't quite so

easy to find a way of

capitalising on it and

meanwhile Black plugs

away with his Kingside

pawn advance.

22 Nb4 Qc7 23 Nc2 Bh6

24 Nd4 Nc6 25 Ne6

Qd7 26 Ra4?!

A waste of time and

misplaces the rook.

26 ... Nd8 27 Nd4 Nc6

28 Nc2 Kf7 29 Qd3

Rhe8 30 Rd1 Bf4 31 g3?

After a lot of

manoeuvring White

finally manages to find

the one move that loses, or at any rate that endangers his position. 31 c5 is natural exploiting the pin down the d-file.

**31 ... Be5 32 Qd2Rh8 33 Ra2?**

The pawn just isn't worth defending and the rook is even more badly displaced on a2 than on a4.

**33 ... h4**

Suddenly White's position is critical and in severe time trouble White does well to survive to the time control at move 42 in reasonable shape.

**34 Kg2 hxg3 35 hxg3 Rh3 36 Bf2 Rch8 37 Rg1 e6 38 fxe6+ Qxe6 39 Qd5 Rh2+ 40 Kf1 Qxd5 41 exd5 Ne7 42 Ne3 f5**

The time control and White is still probably better, having defended well during the last phase of the game.

**43 c5?**

Rattled by the time scramble I moved too quickly, though there was another 15 minutes to complete the game. 43 b4! gives good winning chances eg 43...Bd4? 44 Nxg4! (a tad optimistic 43...R8h3 or 43...Kf6 and it is Black who has an advantage - ed)

**43 ... dxc5 44 Nc4 Rxf2+!**

I had missed this.

**45 Kxf2 Bd4+ 46 Kg2 Bxg1 47 Kxg1 Rd8 48 d6 Ng6!**

Not 48...Nc8? 49 d7 Ne7 50 Nb6.

**49 Ra1**

Finally gets back to the proper square.

**49 ... b5 50 Ne3 Rxd6 51 Nxf5 Rd2 52 Nh6+**

Going after the Queenside pawns immediately with 52 Rxa6 would have been preferable.

**52 ... Kg7 53 Nxg4 Rxb2**

**54 Rxa6 Rxb3 55 Ra7+**

**Kf8 56 Kf2 c4 57 Nh6 b4**

**58 Rf7+ Ke8 59 Rf6 Nf8**

and Black eventually won the ending due to his queenside majority. I had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

A bit of a blow and 3 out of 3 had become 3 out of 5. In the final round it was just a question of making sure I didn't suffer the indignity of losing my last three games after having won my first three.

#### Round 6

**Ilford Major U-160**

**White:**

**John Daugman**

**(150)**

**Black:**

**Neville Twitchell**

**(156)**

**Benko Gambit**

**Accepted**

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5**

**4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6**

Hooray! I've finally got

someone to take the

wretched pawns!

**5 ... g6 6 Nc3 Bxa6 7 e4**

**Bxf1 8 Kxf1 d6 9 g3 Bg7**

**10 Kg2 0-0 11 f4 Nbd7**

**12 Nf3 Qa5**

This may be a new move, although it is very natural.

12... Qb8 was played in

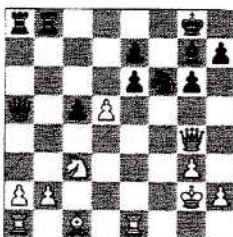
Hoi-Hodgson 1985.

**13 Re1 Rfb8 14 e5 dxe5**

**15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 fxe5**

**Nd7 17 e6 fxe6 18 Qg4**

**Nf6**



Somebody suggested 18...Bxc3 here, but I would have been too worried about the

weakness of the dark squares around my king to have played a move like that - eg 19 Qxe6+ Kh8 20 bxc3 Qxc3 21 Bf4 Rb2+ 22 Kh3 Rxa2 23 Rxa2 Rxa2 24 d6 (24 Qxd7 Qxe1 25 Qe8+ Kg7 and I think Black survives) 24...Ra8 (24...Qb2 is the only move in fact and Black should be able to draw - ed) 25 dxe7 Re8 26 Qxd7 Qxe1 27 Qxe8+ Kg7 28 Qf8#. (In this line 24 Qxe7 wins without any problems. Black instead of 18...Bxc3 or in fact the game move 18...Nf6 should have gritted his teeth and played 18...Nf8 although admittedly the defence is still difficult - ed)

**19 Qxe6+ Kh8 20 Rb1 c4 21 Bf4 Re8?**

A truly dire move, tying up a whole rook to defend the pawn from behind where it has absolutely no scope at all. Anything was preferable such as 21...Rb7.

**22 a4 Rad8**

Again taking a rook away from the usual 'Benko' files to one where it has much less influence.

**23 Rbd1 Qb4 24 Re2 Qc5**

Black is fast running out of ideas.

**25 Be5 Qb4 26 g4 h6 27 h4 Kh7 28 g5 Nh5 29 gxh6 Bxe5**

29...Bxh6 was probably better.

**30 Qxe5 Qb3**

30... Qd6 is much safer. The queen is misplaced on b3.

**31 Rf1 Nf6 32 Ne4 Qd3**

The pressure is excruciating and I am reduced to playing for a swindle.

**33 Ng5+! Kg8 34 Qe6+ Kh8 35 Qf7??**



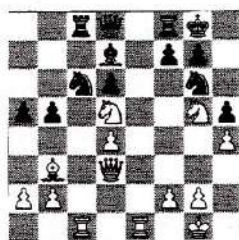
Which duly materialises.  
 35 ... Qxe2+ 36 Rf2  
 Qg4+ 37 Kf1 Qd1+ 38  
 Kg2 Qxd5+ 39 Kg1 Qxf7  
 40 Nxf7+ Kh7 41 Nxd8  
 Rxd8 42 Rc2 Rc8 43 b4  
 c3 44 b5 Nd5 45 a5 Rc5  
 White resigns 0-1

Phew! So I finished with 4/6, about par for the course, with a grading performance of 163, slightly above my actual grade of 156. Though I might have hoped to do better considering that I was one of the highest graded players in the section. On the one hand I was unlucky (or inept) to have lost in the fifth round, but very lucky to have won in the sixth. These two roughly cancelled each other out. In terms of results it was very much a congress of two halves in which I won the first three and very nearly lost the last three. I don't think the standard of my play was very different between the two halves of the tournament, although obviously the standard of opposition was slightly higher in the second half, though not significantly so. The venue at Valentines School was not bad as congress venues go, being reasonably spacious and the congress was smoothly run by John Sargeant.

## PROBLEMS

Answers on page 26

1. White to play and win



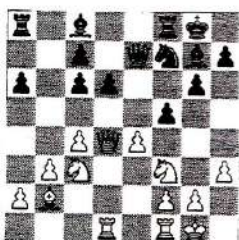
2. White to play and win



3. White to play and win



4. White to play and win



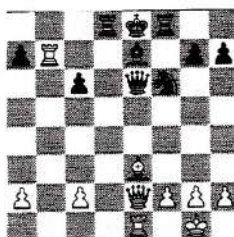
5. White to play and win



6. White to play and win



7. White to play and win



8. White to play and win

