

MK Phoenix Weekend Report 13-14th January 2018

Something pleasant to report and Paul gets the honour to do it. The firsts should reach the promotion pool with one more point but require more to make the final weekend interesting.

The seconds had more trouble and one situation requires the management to set out a new policy. As a team we have tried to steer clear of formal rules: we select the strongest possible first team, we play in rating order unless minor adjustments can balance up colours, we will encourage juniors to play and now one more. If you are going to arrive late, then let us know before the start of play (because of mobile phone rules restrictions). If you do not and arrive 30 minutes after the start, you may find we have made a substitution.

Adrian has already asked for availability for the February weekend, please let us know your plans if you have not already done so.

Round 3

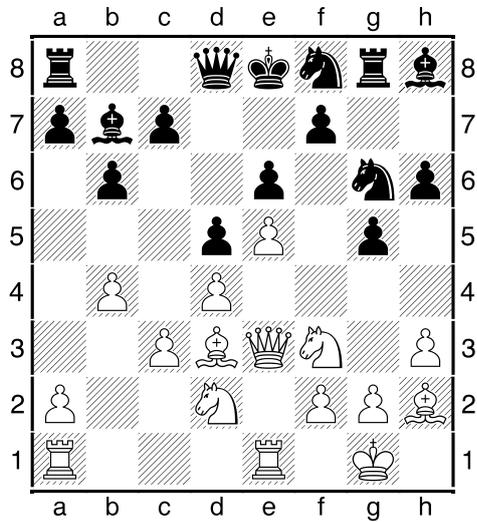
MK Phoenix 1		2036		CSC 1	2123
351 w Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N		2080	½ - ½	Thompson, Ian D	f 2188
352 b Tippleston, Charles E	c	2084	½ - ½	Frostick, Clive A	2163
353 w Smith, Graham		2040	½ - ½	Ferrand, Tom	2158
354 b Freeman, Richard C P		2012	½ - ½	Amato, Giampiero	2112
355 w Elwin, Adrian G		2012	½ - ½	Scrimgour, Alan	2074
356 b Habershon, Paul F		1988	1 - 0	Kalitsis, Nikolaos	2047
			3½ - 2½		

This was the start of a remarkably successful weekend for the MKP first team. Just look at those ratings, with three of our players facing a deficit of 100 points or more.

Jeremy achieved a creditable short draw against an FM, establishing a strong d4 knight to compensate for a slightly inferior pawn structure.

On Board 3 Graham's draw was also short, with no captures. At the end his opponent's weird opening play had left his pieces in such a tangle that Fritz assesses +2.34 to Graham, but there was much play left and Graham perhaps wisely took the half point.

Farrand (CSC)



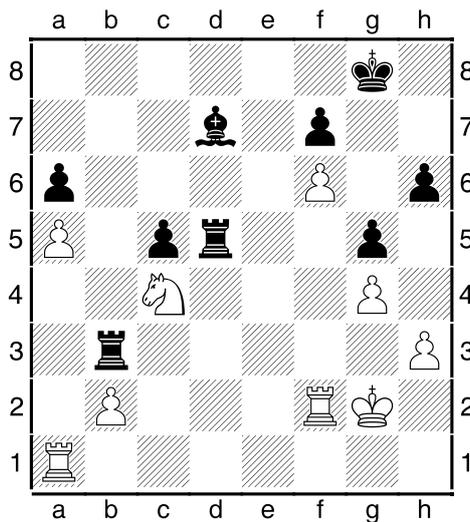
Smith (MK Phoenix)

Position agreed drawn after 15...Bg7-h8

Board 4: Adrian was under pressure with his opponent's major pieces tripled against the White e3 pawn. However, a draw was agreed when Black could see no further progress.

On Board 6 White repeated moves and I was hoping for a draw when I acquiesced in the repetition. When he then played something different his position deteriorated to this:

Habershon (MK Phoenix)



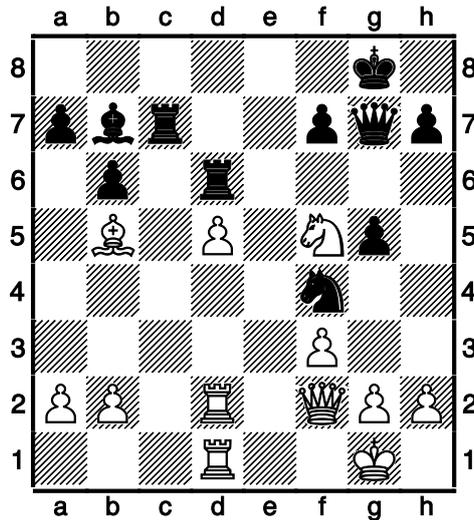
Kalitsis (CSC)

Now 38...Bc6 leaves White without a good move. 39 Kh2 Rdd3 40 **0-1 (time)**

Board 2 was quite even for most of the game and Charles held on well to reach a dead drawn B and P ending.

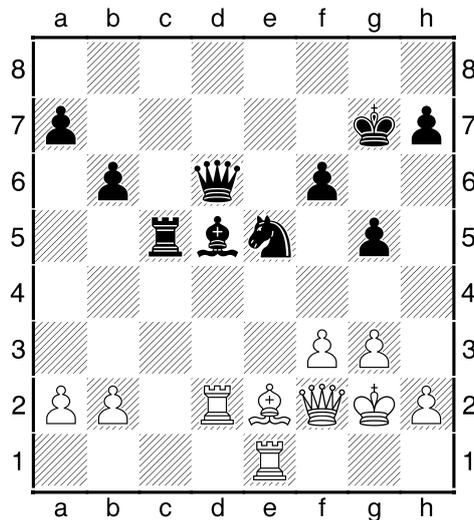
Finally, Board 3: things looked dire for Richard when he lost the exchange after 28 Ne3-f5

Freeman (MK Phoenix)



Amato (CSC)

White then later missed his big chances:



38 Red1? (b4!) g4 39 Kf1 (still b4!) gxf3 40 Bxf3 Nxf3 41 Qxf3 Bxf3 42 Rxd6 Bxd1 43 Rxd1 Rc2
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

A crucial escape from jail to win the match.

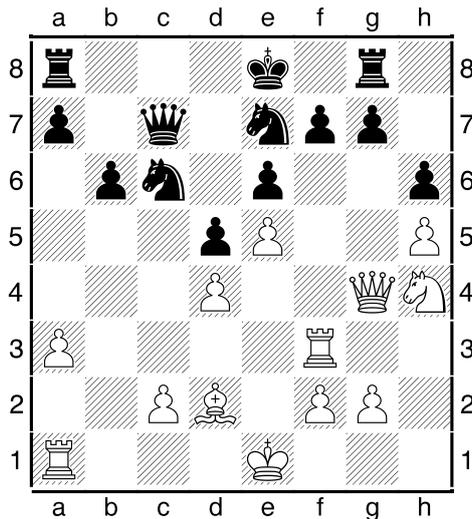
Round 4

	West is Best 3		1992		MK Phoenix 1		2016
361	w Stephens, John KF	2000	0 - 1		Fraser-Mitchell, Jeremy N	2080	
362	b Littlejohns, David P	1986	½ - ½		Freeman, Richard C P	2012	
363	w Evans, Craig	2007	½ - ½		Smith, Graham	2040	
364	b Homer, Stephen J	2022	0 - 1		Habershon, Paul F	1988	
365	w Hassall, Mark I	1938	½ - ½		Elwin, Adrian G	2012	
366	b Gregory, Andrew M	2002	½ - ½		Brown, Alan M	1968	
			2 - 4				

Here was a match we should just have won and duly did, thus completing a weekend without any individual losses.

On Board 1 Jeremy took his chance when White allowed this combination:

Fraser-Mitchell (MK Phoenix) to move



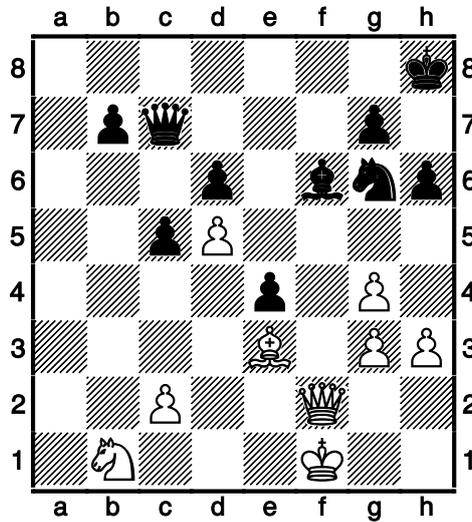
Stephens (West is Best)

16...Nxe5! 17 dxe5 Qxe5+ 18 Re3 Qxa1+. White struggled on to move 42 but, despite a bit of counterplay, could never recover from the loss of a rook. **0-1**

On Board 2 Richard won a pawn and his extra was a passed central one with just rooks and a bishop each left. However, his opponent's king was nearer the action and a draw was agreed when the pawn was lost.

Board 3: the high point of Graham's game was here, Black to move.

Smith (MK Phoenix)



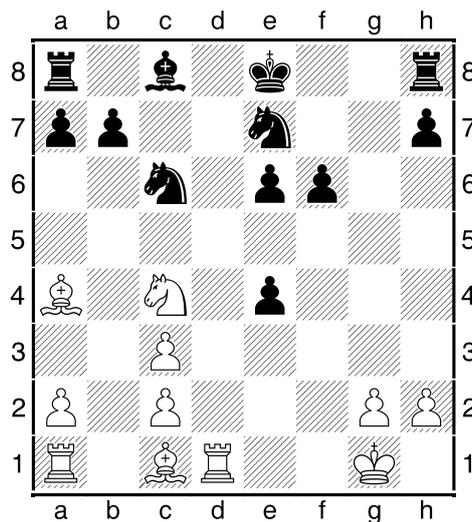
Evans (West is Best)

Black is a pawn up and the engine recommendation of 32...Ne7 33 c4 b5 is apparently more effective than Graham's Qe7, after which he eventually lost his e-pawn and reached a drawn bishop ending.

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (42)

On Board 4 Black neutralised my Grand Prix Attack but went badly wrong here:

Homer (West is Best) to move



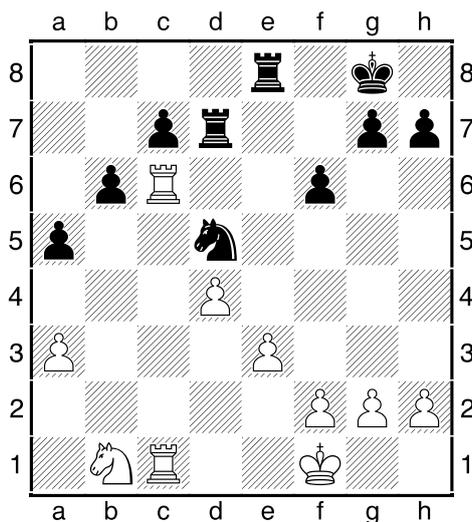
Habershon (MK Phoenix)

15... Nf5 is essential to prevent Nd6+, but Black played 15...f5? 16 Nd6+ Kf8 17 Bh6+ Kg8 and White is winning easily. **1-0 (34)**

Board 5: Adrian's short tactical skirmish featured him sacrificing his queen, but only to achieve a draw by perpetual check.

Board 6: Alan developed pressure against c7, but Black's pieces were well enough placed for counterplay. The final position is judged only slightly better for White.

Gregory (West is Best)



Brown (MK Phoenix)

Position after 24...Rd8-d7 ½-½

The current table makes pleasant viewing. It is noticeable, however, that, apart from the one 6-0, matches have been very tight.

3 South pool B

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GP	Pts
1 Oxford 2				3-3	3½-2½		4½-1½	4½-1½	15½	7
2 MK Phoenix 1			3½-2½		4-2	3-3		4-2	14½	7
3 CSC 1		2½-3½		3-3		3½-2½		6-0	15	5
4 Brown Jack 1	3-3		3-3		2½-3½		4-2		12½	4
5 Fermented Sharks	2½-3½	2-4		3½-2½			4-2		12	4
6 The Rookies		3-3	2½-3½				2½-3½	3-3	11	2
7 Sussex Martlets 2	1½-4½			2-4	2-4	3½-2½			9	2
8 West is Best 3	1½-4½	2-4	0-6			3-3			6½	1

**Paul Habershon
January 2018**

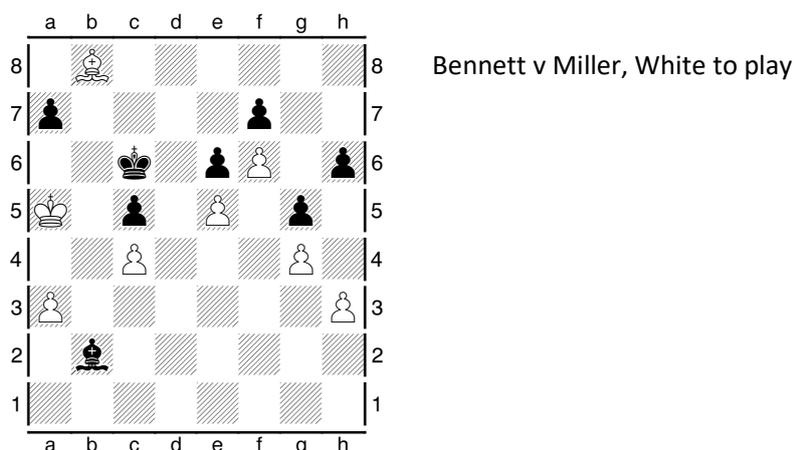
And now for something completely different.

Sussex Martlets 3				1687	MK Phoenix 2				1792
521	w	Bennet-Stevens, Lucy	1877	e	½ - ½	Brown, Alan M	1968		
522	b	Woods, Timothy J	1643		½ - ½	Valentine, Brian J	1920		
523	w	Finn, Daniel	1639		0 - 1	Matthews, Adrian M S	1839		
524	b	Hedger, Alec	1675	e	1 - d	Majer, Chris E	1859		
525	w	Vyse, Callum	1660	c	0 - 1	Whiteside, Robert	1778		
526	b	Bennett, Max	1630	c	½ - ½	Miller, Max C	1392		
					-1				
					2½ - 2½				

The critical point of the match occurred after exactly one hour, when we went 2-0 down by defaulting board 4. My recollection is that Rob won very soon afterwards, although he played a lot of moves. He was two pawns up after 20 moves and won comfortably. The only blemish being that he missed the publishable endings for something more mundane. My strategy was to unbalance the position, but I failed to fathom the tactics. Tim offered me a draw when he was a pawn up with a bind. Even with the match position, it had to be taken.

Adrian took considerable risks to give himself some chances. Both players played imperfectly around time control, but our man emerged a pawn up. He returned the pawn for considerable activity and thereafter outplayed his opponent.

Max was fortunate. His opponent missed several winning tactics, but Max didn't do anything silly and made life difficult for his higher rated opponent. So well did he hang in that Bennett pushed too hard and Max missed his one opportunity.



Here Max played 61. Ka4 and the ensuing blockade enforced a very valuable draw for us. However, one should never underestimate the benefits of an active king in the endgame. After 61. Ka6 Ba7 62. Kxa7,

white can either march across to the k-side pawns or manoeuvre the K to b6 and win the c5 pawn through zugzwang. There is still a bit of work to do, but white has a winning position.

This left Alan still playing a very closed French Defence position. He was a pawn up, but his opponent maintained enough activity to earn a draw. This was sufficient for a match point.

On Sunday the seconds were pre-paired as though they would win the Saturday match and we went down in flames against a better team.

MK Phoenix 2				1802	CSC 2				1952
461	w	Lambourne, Dan M	1978	0 - 1	Fegan, Chris			2038	
462	b	Valentine, Brian J	1920	0 - 1	Foley, John P			1957	
463	w	Matthews, Adrian M S	1839	0 - 1	Lawson, Maurice E			1948	
464	b	Williamson, Kevin J	1905	½ - ½	Stayt, James N			1950	
465	w	Whiteside, Robert	1778	½ - ½	Vachtfeidl, Petr			1919	
466	b	Miller, Max C	1392	0 - 1	Fowler, David			1904	
				1 - 5					

Dan was called up from the subs bench. I'm not sure whether he sacrificed a pawn for activity early on or just lost it. After the activity was dissipated he was ground down. I lost a pawn early on, was last to finish, but never had reasonable prospects of saving the game. Adrian got the worst of the position and then blundered a piece. Kevin played solidly against one of his pet defences and soon agreed a draw. Rob ignored winning a free pawn and never again had winning chances. Max made things difficult for his opponent and had chances of a draw quite late in the play. Nevertheless, his difficult king position allowed the floodgates to open and he quickly lost several pawns. It is sad to say that in six games there really is nothing interesting on which to shine a light.

Brian Valentine

January 2018