



**SKITTLES ROOM**

*From the Archives*

Hosted by Mark Donlan



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**From the Archives...**

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**The 1999 British Championships, Part Two**

by Gary Lane

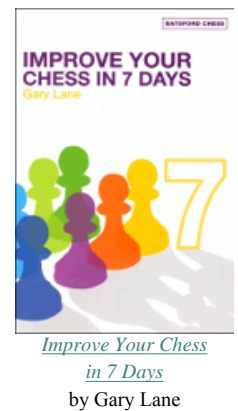
Julian Hodgson, who now has an enormous trophy for his mantelpiece and a £10,000 cheque in his pocket, has won the British Championship in fine style. This is the third time he has won the title and for a while some believed he might even equal his record-breaking performance of 1992, when he triumphed with a score of 10/11. However, the large prize fund this year produced a somewhat stronger field of fifteen GMs and twenty-seven IMs, which meant a succession of tough opponents for Hodgson, who drew his last two games.

Peter Wells and the Bangladeshi IM Ziaur Rahman agreed a quick draw to share 2nd place, a full point behind the winner. A number of players shared fourth place, reflecting a competitive spirit that was evident throughout the tournament. One of these included GM Nigel Davies, who tried to sympathise with me after I had struggled past 7 GMs only to miss out on a prize by losing in the last round to the talented Indian player Kunte. He pointed out that he had reached the magic figure of 7½ by inadvertently using the notorious 'Swiss Gambit'. Translated this usually means you lose to someone in one of the earlier rounds and then, like a submarine, emerge near the end. In his case he had a score of 1½/4 - having lost to thirteen-year-old Simon Buckley - and contemplated withdrawing due to his wretched play. It was only then that he embarked on a strategy of a 'deep, deep submarine' before finally resurfacing in the final round to play his first titled player, with victory for the amiable Davies.

The strength of the tournament can be measured by the fact that a number of leading players such as Emms, Hebden and Ward, finished outside the prizes. For instance, the Swiss GM Joe Gallagher (who holds dual citizenship) finished on 5½/11 - a disappointing result compared to his normal high standards.

I have good news to report concerning the cricket team consisting of chess players who annually take on a local team (and traditionally lose). This year they kept their honour intact, admittedly because torrential rain meant the game could not go ahead as planned. Our intrepid band of eleven players doesn't play chess for no reason, so they thought ahead and embarked on a 200 kilometre journey to Manchester to watch England play cricket against New Zealand. It was rained off.

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Hodgson was greeted with loud cheers at the nearby pub after he had won the tournament. An onlooker exclaimed that it was a marvellous tribute from his fellow players, a fitting reward for his energetic play and excellent etiquette away from the board. I didn't have the heart to tell him the real reason behind the sudden surge in spirits was solely because Julian had offered to buy a drink for everyone.

If anyone fancies attending the chess festival next year, the championship is open to British players and representatives from Commonwealth countries (depending on rating). There is also the Major Open, which anyone can play in. The next Smith and Williamson British Chess Championships will be played from 30th July-13th August 2000 at the prestigious Millfield School, Street, Somerset in the West of England.

Final results:

- **First (9/11)**
- J. Hodgson 9/11 British Champion
- **Second - Third (8)**
- P. Wells
- Z. Rahman
- **Fourth - Telfth 7½**
- B. Lalic
- K. Sasikiran
- M. Turner
- A. Kunte
- S. Conquest
- A. Kosten
- A. Webster
- N. Davies
- J. Rowson
- **Thirteenth - Sixteenth (7)**
- D. Gormally
- A. Baburin
- N. Pert
- A. Summercale
- **Seventeenth - Twenty-ninth (6½ includes)**
- H. Hunt
- J. Emms
- C. Ward
- J. Cobb
- G. Lane
- M. Hebden
- A. Dunnington
- P. Thipsay

**Z. Rahman (2461) - M. Turner (2478)**

British Championship  
Sicilian Marozcy Bind [B38]

**1 c4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 e4** The game has now transposed to an Accelerated Dragon which is Turner's pet system. **5...Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Nc3 0-0 8 Be2 b6** The double fianchetto line is largely regarded as a surprise variation as there are various positional tricks to catch White out. Bellon, Rogers and Pigusov have employed it, so it has to be taken seriously. **9 0-0** In the game J. Speelman-M. Cebalo, Taxco Z 1985, White tried 9 Qc2 in order to bring the queen's rook to the centre. Black put up stiff resistance: 9 Bb7 10 Rd1 Nxd4 11 Bxd4 d6 12 h4 Qd7 13 Nd5 Rac8 14 Rh3 Rfe8 15 h5 b5 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 b3 bxc4 18 bxc4 Bxd5 19 exd5 e5 20 dxe6 Rxe6 21 Kf1 ½-½.  
**9...Bb7**



[FEN "r2q1rk1/pb1pppbp/1pn2np1/8/2PNP3/2N1B3/PP2BPPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 10"]

**10 f4** White has a large choice of moves in this position and Rahman chooses a reliable sideline. 10 f3 and 10 Nxc6 are considered the main lines. It is worth pointing out how easy it is for White to go wrong. 10 Qd2 looks like a natural way to improve White's position but it is also the reason why Black has chalked up a number of victories in this opening. The idea for White is that after 10...Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Black cannot win a pawn because 11...Nxe4? fails to 12 Nxe4 Bxe4 13 Bxg7 Kxg7 14 Qd4+ which picks up a piece. The slight snag is that Black can throw in 11...e5! which ruins White's calculations by allowing Black to obtain the bishop pair and good chances. For example, 12 Bxe5 Nxe4 13 Nxe4 Bxe5 14 Ng3 Bc6 (14 Qf6!?) 15 f4 Bg7 16 Rad1 a5 17 Bf3 Qf6 18 b3 Rfe8 19 Bd5 Bh6 20 a4 Re7 21 Qf2 Bxd5 22 Rxd5 Rae8 23 Rd3 Re6 24 Qd2 Qh4 25 Rxd7 Re3 26 Qd5 Qf6 27 Rd6 Qc3 28 Rxb6 Re1 29 Qf3 Qd4+ 30 Qf2 Bg7 31 Rb5 Qxf2+ 32 Kxf2 Bd4+ 33 Kf3 R8e3+ 34 Kg4 h5 + 35 Kg5 Rxc3+! 36 hxg3 Kg7 37 f5 Be3+ 0-1, S. Robovic-I. Rogers, Biel 1992. Black can also smile whenever 10 Rc1 appears on the board because after 10...Nxd4 11 Bxd4 the sneaky 11...Bh6 wins material. Y. Yakovich- A. Antunes, Bayamo 1990, is a good example of how to convert the extra material into victory: 12 f4 Nxe4 13 Nxe4 Bxe4 14 Bf3 Bxf3 15 Qxf3 Qc7 16 b3 Qc6 17 Qh3 Bg7 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 f5 f6 20 Rce1 Rae8 21 Rf4 e6 22 fxe6 dxe6 23 Kh1 Rd8 24 Rff1 Rd6 25 Rd1 Rfd8 26 Qc3 e5 27 Rxd6 Qxd6 28 h3 Qd4 0-1. **10...Nxd4** Turner decides to immediately release the tension in the centre. 10...d6 is also reasonable, although the adventurous could consider 10...e5!? when the game might continue 11 Ndb5 exf4 12 Bxf4 Ne8 13 Qd2 Ne5 and Black has managed to create a double-edged position. **11 Bxd4 d6 12 Bf3 Rc8 13 b3 Nd7 14 Bxg7 Kxg7 15 Qd4+**

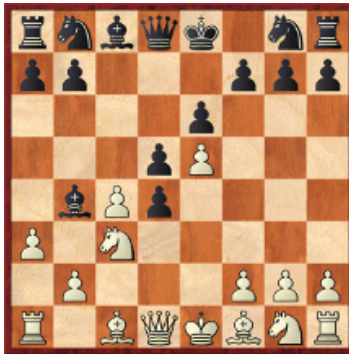


[FEN "2rq1r2/pb1nppkp/1p1p2p1/8/2PQPP2/1PN2B2/P5PP/R4RK1 b - - 0 15"]

If you have ever wondered why the Accelerated Dragon is so difficult to master then this game will help. Basically, the big problem for Black is that it is easy to drift into a dull, passive position where there is little chance of counterplay and White can continuously improve his pieces for the forthcoming attack. **15...Kg8 16 Rad1 Nc5 17 Bg4 Rc6 18 Nd5 Ne6 19 Qe3** The queen turns her attentions to Black's kingside where the defensive resources are woefully short. **19...Rc5 20 f5 Bxd5 21 exd5 Ng7 22 Qh6 gxf5 23 Rxf5!** Obvious and good. **23...f6** There is no hope as 23...Kh8 is soon punished by 24 Rd3 intending Rh3. **24 Rf3 Qe8 25 Rg3 Rf7 26 Bf5 1-0**

**J. Hodgson (2605) - Z. Rahman (2461)**  
British Championship  
Queen's Gambit Declined [D31]

**1 d4 d5 2 c4** In the past Julian has often toyed with 2 Bg5 at this stage and the Pseudo-Trompovski has served him well. However, in this crunch encounter from round nine, he prefers to employ the more established Queen's Gambit to stem the threat from his nearest rival. **2...c6 3 Nc3 e6 4 e4 Bb4 5 e5 c5** Rahman has a good record with 5...Ne7 including a win over Van Wely, but sensing preparation he deviates. In the game Dao Thien Hai Z.Rahman, Elista OL 1998, Black showed that he handles the resulting position well after 6 Nf3. A draw was the result after 6...c5 7 dxc5 Nbc6 8 Bd2 Bxc5 9 Be2 0-0 10 0-0 dxc4 11 Bxc4 Ng6 12 Re1 Nd4 13 Bd3 Bd7 14 Ng5 h6 15 Bxg6 fxg6 16 Nge4 Bb6 17 Be3 Bc6 18 Qg4 Qc7 19 Rad1 Qxe5 20 Ng3 Rad8 21 Qxg6 Qf6 22 Qxf6 ½-½. **6 a3 cxd4?!**



[FEN "rnbqk1nr/pp3ppp/4p3/3pP3/1bPp4/P1N5/1P3PPP/R1BQKBNR w KQkq - 0 7"]

An enterprising line by Rahman, but encouraging the cavalier Hodgson into uncharted areas is tempting fate. The solid 6...Bxc3+ is more sensible, when A. Shirov-R. Liiva, Tallinn rapid 1996, continued 7 bxc3 Ne7 8 Nf3 Nbc6 9 Bd3 cxd4 10 cxd4 b6 11 cxd5 Qxd5 12 0-0 Bb7 13 Bb2 Nf5 14 Re1 and White had a slight edge. **7 axb4 dxc3 8 bxc3 Qc7 9 Nf3 Ne7 10 Qd4 Ng6 11 b5!** After careful consideration, Hodgson reveals his plan to exploit Black's handling of the opening. He wants to make the most of the weak dark squares on the a3-f8 diagonal even if it is achieved at the cost of his e-pawn. At the end of the tournament, a naturally overjoyed Hodgson described this encounter in the commentary room as the most brilliant he had ever played, and said he felt he was playing like Kasparov. I don't know what Garry thinks about that but I suspect Julian was getting carried away after achieving his biggest ever payday. **11...Nd7 12 Ba3 Ndx5 13 Nd2** Black has won a pawn, but his king is currently stranded in the middle of the board, and castling queenside is fraught with problems. **13...b6 14 cxd5 exd5 15 g3** White concentrates on developing the rest of his pieces. If 15 Qxd5?, Black simply ignores the threat to the rook and continues 15...Qxc3 with much the better prospects after 16 Rd1 Rb8. **15 Be6 16 Bg2 0-0-0 17 0-0 Nc4 18 Rfd1 Nge5 19 Nxc4 Nxc4** If 19...dxc4, then 20 Bd6 wraps up the game. **20 Qxg7 h5 21 Bc1!**



[FEN "2kr3r/p1q2pQ1/1p2b3/1P1p3p/2n5/2P3P1/5PBP/R1BR2K1 b - - 0 21"]

The dark-squared bishop is causing havoc for Black and now Hodgson starts to manoeuvre it on to the kingside. **21...Rdg8 22 Qd4 Kb7 23 Bf4 Qc5 24 Qxc5 bxc5 25 Ra6 Nb6 26 Be3 Bd7** Black pieces are over-loaded with responsibilities as the usefulness of 26...Rc8 is quickly cancelled out after 27 Rda1. **27 c4 Be6 28 Bxc5 Nxc4 29 Rxa7+ 1-0**

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This article first appeared at [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) in August, 1999.

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