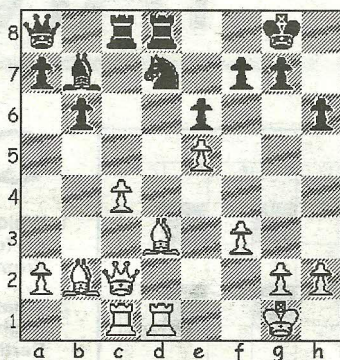


CHESS

DIAGRAM 1



Wessex 2 have taken over as leaders of the 4NCL Division 3 table after achieving a double success in the latest round of matches. The weekend started well with the 5-1 drubbing of Sussex Smart Controls and this was soon followed by a close-fought 3.5-2.5 win against KJCA Kings which secured top spot with two rounds still to be played.

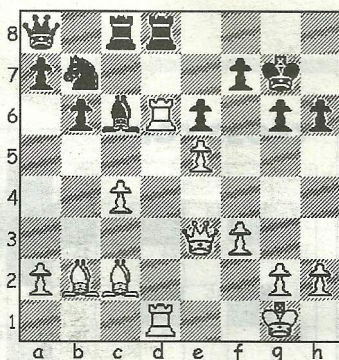
The remaining matches are likely to prove a difficult test for Wessex as both Celtic Tigers 1 and Oxford 2 are on the same 10pt score from the six matches played so far and these two sides will be their opponents in the closing rounds.

The following game is the top board clash in the Sussex Smart Controls match that sees Wimborne's Allan Pleasants emerge triumphant from a cagey middlegame.

Pleasants, A - Salimbeni, G
4NCL Sunningdale, 2011
English Opening (A13)

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.b3 A fianchetto of the queen's bishop, instead of the main line 3.g3, cuts a swathe through opening theory and often takes an opponent out of his comfort zone. **3...Be7 4.Bb2 0-0 5.e3 b6 6.d4 Bb7 7.Bd3** Added protection for the knight with 7.Be2 is too passive and in any event the queen's knight has a natural developing square at d2 and can do the job without disturbing either bishop's play on the long diagonals. **7...d5 8.Nbd2 Nbd7 9.Rc1** In Miles-Sowray (4NCL Slough-Wood Green, 1997) White chose to castle

DIAGRAM 2



but, after 9.0-0 Ne4 10.Rc1 Bd6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.Ne5, the odd symmetry amounted to no more than a draw in 46 moves. **9...Rc8 10.Qc2 c5 11.Qb1 dxc4 12.bxc4 Qc7 13.0-0 Rfd8 14.Ne4 h6** Black signals his contentment with the position and in the next passage of play both sides jockey for some improvement. **15.Rfd1 Qb8 16.Nxf6+ Nxf6 17.Ne5 Qa8 18.f3 Bd6 19.Qc2 cxd4** Breaking the tension in the centre and the game suddenly springs into life. **20.exd4 Bxe5 21.dxe5 Nd7 (Diag 1) 22.Bh7+!**? At first sight this seems to be merely a spite check, but White has plans to control the d-file... **22...Kh8 23.Rd6 Bd5?!**... and this superficial move only helps the cause! **24.Qd2! Bc6** After 24...Kxh7 25.cxd5 exd5 26.Rxc8 Qxc8 27.Rxd5 White achieves his aim. **25.Bc2 Nc5 26.Rd1** Mission accomplished and Black has no option but to retreat, burying his queen in the process. **26...Nb7 27.Qd3 g6 28.Qe3 Kg7 (Diag 2) 29.Qf4!** Threatening 30.Qf6+ followed by 31.Bxg6, leading to total carnage on the kingside. Black is therefore forced into a defence of his pawns and places yet another piece on the back rank. **29...Be8 30.Qf6+ Kh7 31.Be4** and, as a capture on d6 opens the long diagonal for a mate and all other moves end in heavy material loss, it was here that Black resigned.

● Any enquiries regarding the Chess column should be addressed to Alan Dommett by emailing a.j.dommett@btinternet.com