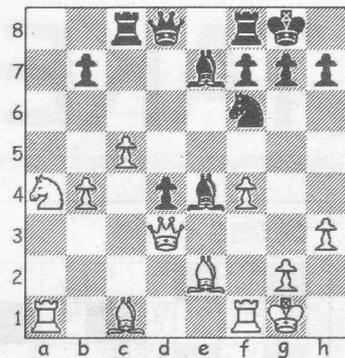
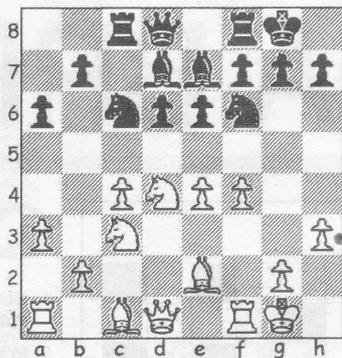


DIAGRAM 1 *23 JAN 2010*

DIAGRAM 2



WESSEX 1 have only a slim chance of qualifying for the final championship/promotion pool in Division 2 of the 4NCL after two disappointing defeats in their third and fourth round matches.

Following a heavy 2-6 loss to White Rose 2, in what should have been a close contest on a comparison of grades, the team performed creditably against Sambuca Sharks, the present leaders of the division, but still suffered a 3.5-4.5 defeat that sees them three points adrift of a qualifying place.

It is a different story for Wessex 2 in Division 3, as they have started their campaign with three victories and only one defeat, leaving the team on six points and just outside the promotion places on games difference.

The following game, taken from the recent Bournemouth League Division 1 top-of-the-table clash between Southbourne A and Wimborne A, is the critical bottom board encounter that springs into life after cagey opening play from the eventual winner.

Pegg, R – Willetts, G

Southbourne A v Wimborne A, 2010
Czech Benoni (A56)
[by transposition]

1.d4 Nc6 2.e3 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.c4 d6?! Almost anti-theoretical in concept, considering that 4...Bb4+ is the main line and this move curtails development of the king's bishop. However, Black's plan is to virtually play behind closed doors in the early stages of the game, drawing his opponent out in the process. 5.Nc3 Be7 6.Bd3 0-0 7.a3 Nb8 The knight is re-routed when 7...d5 would have led to equality, but

such a straightforward contesting of the centre is not consistent with Black's opening strategy. **8.0-0 c5** Despite the loss of tempi manoeuvring the knight, Black has managed to transpose into a Czech Benoni with White having played 7.a3, a rogue move in the set-up. **9.e4?! Weakening the pawn chain to provide free passage for the queen's bishop, White ignores the more natural development of 9.b3 followed by 10.Bb2, making use of the long diagonal. 9...cxd4 10.Nxd4 Bd7 11.h3 Nc6** Somewhat ironically, Black is first to complete his development! **12.Be2 a6 13.f4 Rc8 (Diag 1) 14.b4** Black exerts strong pressure on the queenside after 14.Be3 Na5 15.b3 b5! so the knight is restricted, but respite is only temporary. **14...a5! 15.Nxc6 Bxc6 16.Qd3 axb4 17.axb4 d5!** Probing at all but one of the weak pawns on the fourth rank, Black ensures an exchange that will improve the power of his bishops. **18.exd5 exd5 19.c5 d4 20.Na4** Placing the knight on the rim is a sad necessity and Black's passed d-pawn soon becomes a monster. **20...Be4 (Diag 2) 21.Qc4?** Missing a winning combination. Better is 21.Qg3 when Black must spot that the queen sacrifice, after 21...d3 22.Rd1 dxe2!, is viable due to 23.Rxd8 Rfxd8 24.Bb2 Rd1+ 25.Kh2 Ra8! securing more than enough material in return. **21...d3 22.Bg4 b5! 23.Qc3** Realising that 23.Qxb5 Qd4+ 24.Kh1 Nxc4 loses a piece as the queen's rook is hanging. **23...Nxc4** and White resigned rather than face the inevitable 24...Bf6 and a skewering of queen and rook.

● Email any enquiries regarding the Chess column to Alan Dommett at a.j.dommett@btinternet.com