

The Champagne Moment 2014/2015

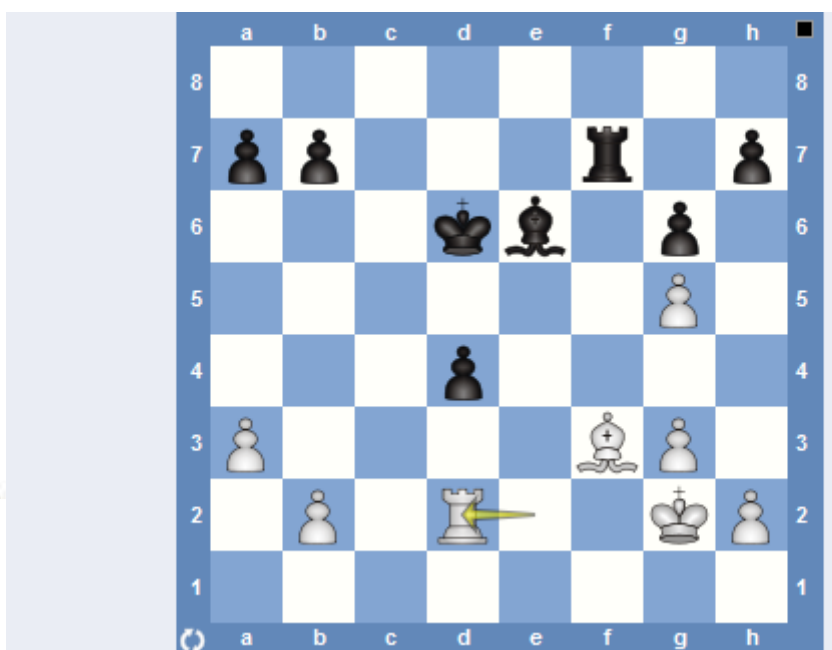
The Champagne Moment prize for the Club Championship is intended to reward the best or most entertaining one-off individual performance which may present it itself in any number of ways. Examples by way of illustration could be the biggest upset, the best game, the best finish to a game (sacrifice, combination), the best swindle. This is not intended to be an inclusive list, but you should get the idea.

If you think one or more of your games in any of the rounds or part of them would justify popping a cork then please present it to the Tournament Secretary. The award is decided by a majority vote of your Committee at its May meeting.

The 2014/15 Moment



Black to move – can you find it ?



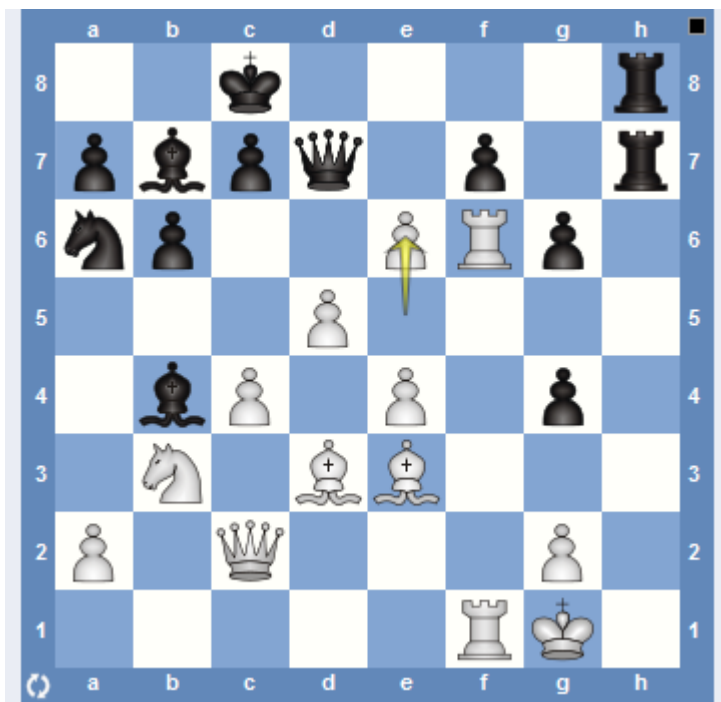
Steve Rix produced this year's winning moment above in his 7th round encounter with David Spearman along the way to winning the Club Championship. This and the other four submitted entries from rounds 1 to 8 are posted below for peer enjoyment, review & comment. Alternatively download [here](#) a pgn file, kindly produced by Ian Hunnable.

Lu, Andy – Murrrell, Mark

Wanstead Club Championship round 2, 21.10.2014

With commentary by Andy:

1.d4 b6 2.e4 Bb7 3.Bd3 e6 4.f4 Nf6 5.Nd2 Nc6 6.c3 Be7 7.Ngf3 d6 8.O-O Qd7 9.Qc2 (preparing 10.e5) **h6 10.b4 O-O-O 11.d5** (12...exd5 loses to 13.exd5 Nxd5 14.Bf5) **Nb8 12.c4 Ng4** (Attacking the e3 square and preparing ...e5) **13.Nb3 e5 14.h3 h5** (14...Nf6 is too passive and I was prepared to lose it for later counter play opportunities along the h-file) **15.hxg4 hxg4 16.Nxe5** (I got the Knight back sooner than I'd thought!) **dx e5 17.fxe5 Bxb4 18.Rf5 Na6 19.Be3 g6 20.Rf6 Rh7 21.Raf1 R dh8 22.e6**



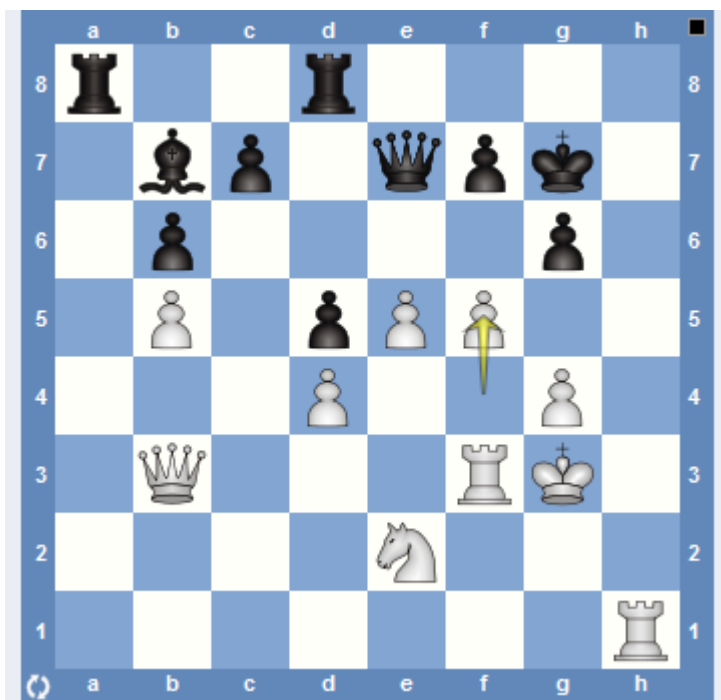
(I missed a mating opportunity here!! 22...g3 23.exd7+ Kd8 24...Rh1++)

22.....Qd6 23.Kf2 Bc5
 24.Nxc5 Nxc5 25.Bf4 Nxd3+
 26.Qxd3 Qe7 27.e5 fxe6
 28.Rxe6 Qh4+ 29.Qg3? (An uncharacteristic "blunder" for White as 29.Ke2 is better I think) g5 30.Qxh4 gxh4
 31.Rg6 g3+ 32.Kf3 b5! (If 33.cxb4 Bxd5+ and there is no way to save pawn on g2; If 33.Rc1 bxc4 34.Rxc4 Bxd5+ winning a Rook) 33.Kg4 bxc4
 34.Rd1 Rd7 35.e6 Rxd5
 36.Rxd5 Bxd5 37.Be5 Rh7 (Maintaining defence of the h4 Pawn)

38.Kh3 c3 39.Bxc3 Bxa2 40.Bb4 Bc4 (To guard against Ra6) 41.Rf6 a5 42.Bxa5 (If 42.e7 Kd7 43.Ba3 Rh8 44.Rf8 Be6++) Re7 43.Kxh4 Rxe6 44.Rf8+ Kb7 45.Kxg3 Rg6+ 46.Kf2 Bd5 47.g3 Rg7 48.Bc3 Rf7+ 49.Rxf7 Bxf7 (Game should be drawn from here) 50.g4 c5 51.g5 Kc6 52.Ke3 Kd5 53.Kf4 Kc4 54.Bd2 Kd3 55.Bc1 c4 56.Ke5 c3 57.Kf6 Bh5 58.g6 Bxg6 59.Kxg6 1/2 - 1/2

**Rix, Steven – Marden, Larry
 Wanstead Club Championship round 4, 05.01.2015**

With commentary by Steve:



1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Qf6 5.Be3 Bc5 6.c3 Nge7 7.Bc4 b6 8.0-0 Bb7 As in our two previous encounters in the club championship... 9.f4 0-0-0 10.Qd2 d5 11.e5 Qh4 12.Be2 Bxd4 13.cxd4 Nf5 14.Nc3 h5 15.Bf3 Nxe3 16.Qxe3 Ne7 17.Ne2 Nf5 18.Qd3 g6 19.b4 Qe7 20.b5 Kd7 Worried about a4-a5, followed by White opening lines against the Black king.
 21.a4 Ra8 22.Qb3 Qe6 23.g3 Rhd8 24.Rfd1 Ke8 25.Rd3 Kf8 26.Kg2 a6 27.Rc1 Rd7 28.Rdc3 Rc8 29.h3 Qe7 30.Rd3 axb5 31.axb5 Ra8 32.g4 Nh4+ 33.Kg3 Nxf3 34.Rxf3 hxg4 35.hxg4 Rdd8

Maybe Black needed to play ...Kg7 first, to contest the h-file.

36.Rh1 Kg7 37.f5 (see diagram above)

A champagne moment move, although I must confess one that was not actually played on the board!

I got a bit lucky here. First, the previous moves of tedious manoeuvring brought us to move 36 and thus the time control, so it now became possible to have a bit of a think. Secondly, Larry very quickly asked me to seal, which rather forced me to do just that (rather than continue playing at a minute per move, when White might have played something safe such as 37. Kf2 which allows Black to fight back with 37... Rh8). **Black resigned without resumption here, even without confirmation that 37.f5 had been the sealed move. However Black does seem to be lost all of a sudden, e.g.**

(a) 37...f6 38.fxf6 renews the threats against Black's queen and opens lines;

(b) 37...Qg5 38.f6+ Kg8 39.Kf2 Qxg4 40.Qe3 (e.g. 40.... Ra2 41. Rh8+ and mate in two more moves;

(c) 37...gxf5 38.gxf5 Rg8 Hoping that a discovered check might save the day after the pawn fork; else 38...Qg5+ 39.Kf2 Kf8 40.Qc2 Rd7 41.f6] 39.f6+ Kf8+ 40.Kf2 Qe6 and now simply 41.Nf4 leaves Black's queen nowhere useful to go given that 41... Qg4 allows 42.Qb4+ and mate on e7. Instead, 41...Qd7 defends e7 but blocks a flight square, potentially allowing a fancy finish such as 42.Rg3 Rxc3 43.Rh8+ Rg8 44.Rxc3+ Kxc3 45.Qg3+ Kf8 46.Qg7+ Ke8 47.Qg8#

Burns, Sid – Dixon, Terry Wanstead Club Championship round 7, 17.03.2015

With commentary by Sid:

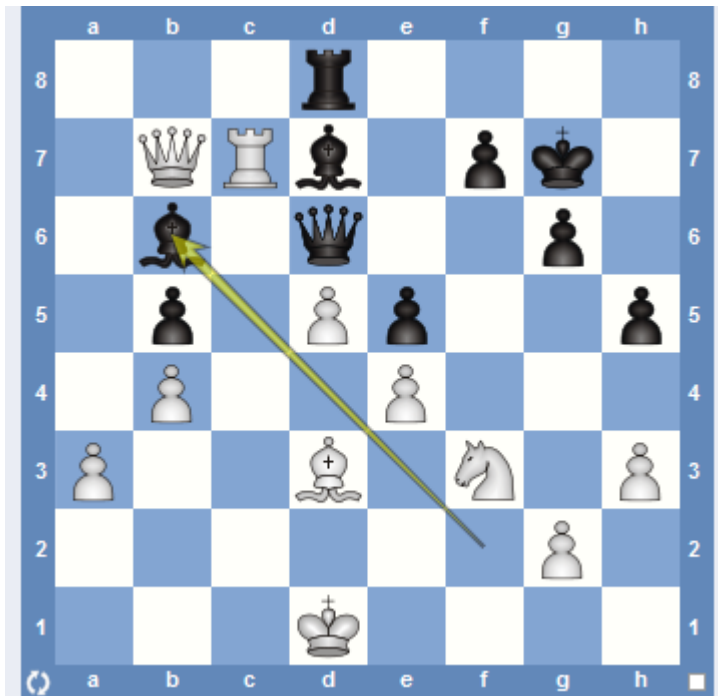


1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4 b5 5. Bb3 Nf6 6. d3 h6
7. c3 Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Re1
d6 10. Nbd2 Bd7 11. Nf1 Qc8
12. Ne3 Bh3 13. a3 (see
diagram) Nh5 14. Nd5 Qg4
15. g3 f5 16. Ne3 ϕ h8 17.
Nxc3 fxc3 [1-0]

On move 12 I declined the offer of taking Bishop for Pawn immediately as I wanted to snare Terry's Queen with Knight and Bishop in tandem by playing 13 a3 followed by Nd5 if he played Nh5 followed by Qg4 which he did. My move 15 g3 enticed Terry to play f5 exposing discovered check and loss of his Queen.

Murrell, Mark – Smith, David
Wanstead Club Championship round 7, 17.03.2015

With commentary by David:



1. d4 g6 2. e4 Bg7 3. f4 d6
4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Bd3 O-O 6. O-O Nc6
7. c3 e5 8. fxe5 dxe5 9. d5 Ne7
10. c4 c6 11. Be3 Ng4 12. Bc5 b6
13. Bxe7 Qxe7 14. Qe2 cxd5 15. cxd5
- Bd7 16. Nbd2 Rac8 17. Rac1 Bh6
18. Ba6 Rxc1 19. Rxc1 Be3+ 20. Kf1
- Qb4 21. Rc7 Rd8 22. h3 Nh2+
23. Nxe2 Bxd2 24. Nh3 Bf4 25. a3
- Qd6 26. Rxa7 Qc5 27. Qc4 Qe3
28. Rc7 Bg3 29. Qe2 Qb3 30. Bc4
- Qa4 31. Bd3 b5 32. Qc2 Qa6
33. Qc5 Kg7 34. Qa7 Qd6 35. b4 h5
36. Qc5 Qf6 37. Qe3 Qd6 38. Qa7
- Qf6 39. Ke2 Qd6 40. Kd1 Bf2
41. Qb7 Bb6 (see diagram)
42. Rxd7!!

I thought I was holding this position until Mark found the excellent exchange sac which I propose for the award (guessing that Mark probably did not wish to submit this for an award himself. The whole point of the combination is that White eventually wins the b pawn after which he has a massive white squared Bishop + two extra pawns. Not a quick win by any means (68 moves) but once those queen side pawns start rolling, the end is in sight.

42 Rxd7 Rxd7 43 Qc8 Rc7 44 Qe8 Re7 45 Qxb5 Rb7 46 a4 Rb8 47 Qc4 Bc7 48 b5 f6 49 Qc6 Qxc6 50 dxc6 Kf7 51 Nd2 Ra8 52 Bc2 Ke7 53 Nc4 Rd8 54 Kc1 Rd4 55 Ne3 Kd6 56 Kb2 Kc5 57 h4 Bb6 58 Nd5 Rxd5 59 exd5 Kxd5 60 Bxg6 e4 61 Bxh5 Kd4 62 g4 Kc4 63 g5 fxg5 64 hxg5 Kb4 65 Bd1 Bd8 66 g6 e3 67 b6 Bxb6 68 g7 Resigns

During committee consideration Ian Hunnab found the improvement for black with 44 ...Rc3! Then, after 45 Qxb5 you have 45 ...Rxa3 and White's pawns are no longer menacing; If instead White plays 45 Nxe5 Qf6 46 Bxb5 Rxa3 and once more the White threat is reduced. Black is winning.

2014/2015 Champagne Moment: Rix, Steven – Spearman, David
Wanstead Club Championship round 7, 17.03.2015

With commentary by Steve:

1. d4 Nf6 2. c3 g6 *It could be that 2...d5 is objectively better, if you haven't built a repertoire based on fianchettoing against 1. d4.*

3. Bg5 Bg7 4. Nd2 d6 *Again, maybe 4...d5 to fight for central control. After the text, White gets a big pawn centre but moves like 2. c3 and 4. Nd2 were fairly slow so Black has time to fight back.*

5.e4 0-0 6.f4 c5 7.d5 Qc7 8.Ngf3 e6 9.dxe6 Bxe6 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.Be2 d5
12.e5 Bg7 13.0-0 f6 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.Ng5 This would probably have
been better played at move 13. Black's reply has pros and cons: if the
White pawn on g5 gets to support a piece on f6 then he could easily
have a strong attack, but if Black avoids this then the pawn structure
would be winning for Black in a K+P ending as White's 3-vs-2 pawn
majority on the g & h-files cannot create a passed pawn.

15... Bxg5 16.fxg5 Rxf1+ 17.Qxf1 Nd7 Keeping an eye on f6;17... Nc6 may
well be fine, but looks risky if Black allows 18. c4 d4 19. Ne4 & Nf6+.

18.Nf3 Rf8 19.Qc1 Qf4 20.Qxf4 Rxf4 21.Rd1 Kf8 22.a3 Ke7 23.g3 Rf7
24.Kg2 Kd6 25.Rd2 Ne5 Premature; it would probably have been
better to play 25...Bf5, e.g. 26.Nh4 Be4+ 27.Bf3 Bxf3+ 28.Nxf3 Ne5.

26.Nxe5 Kxe5 27.Bf3 d4 This works out okay, but Black could have
been more patient and played 27... b6 or 27...Kd6 28.h4 Rf5 29.Kf2 Re5.

28.cxd4+ cxd4 29.Re2+ Kd6 30.Rd2 I now thought I might have blown my
winning chances, as 30... Ke5 31. Re2+ Kd6 32. Rd2 repeats the
position. Not that a draw would have been a disaster from the
tournament perspective, especially as I was only just getting back to
normal after a particularly bad dose of flu / man-cold (according to
whether you ask me or Mrs Rix) had knocked me out the previous week.
Nevertheless, I was pleased to check my calculations from a few moves
previously and go in for a pawn sacrifice to reach a K+P ending.

30... Bd5! (See Champagne diagram above) **The Champagne Moment, which
went a long way towards clinching Steve's first club championship!**

31.Rxd4 Rxf3 32.Rxd5+ Kxd5 33.Kxf3 Kc4 Although Black is a pawn
down, his king has a easy route into the queenside and will very
quickly capture White's a and b-pawns.

34.Kf4 Kb3 35.Ke5 Kxb2 36.Kf6 Kxa3 37.Kg7 b5 38.Kxh7 b4 39.Kxg6 Plus
White's king has had to go around the houses, in order to do likewise
on the kingside. But White's g-pawn now becomes an asset, now that it
has become an advanced passed pawn...

39... b3 40.Kf7 b2 41.g6 b1=Q Managing the unusual feat of queening
a pawn in consecutive moves, starting from the pawn's home square.
42.g7 Obviously White would be fine if he had just one extra tempo...

42... Qf5+ 43.Ke7 Qg6 44.Kf8 Qf6+ 45.Kg8 Kb4 Basic K+Q v K+P technique,
to force the K in front of the pawn thus gaining a tempo to bring the K
towards the pawn. With hindsight 45... Qf2 could have been a good time
to go pawn-grabbing, e.g. 46.h4 Qxg3 47.h5 Qg5 48.Kf8 Qh6! (or even the
simple 48...Qxh5 49.g8Q Qc5+, as White has to allow a Q exchange).

46.h4 a5 47.h5 a4 48.Kh7 Taking control of f5 first doesn't help:
48.g4 a3 49.Kh7 Qf7 50.Kh8 a2 51.g8=Q a1=Q+.

48...Qf5+ 49.Kh6 Qg4 0-1 Of course 50. g8=Q Qxg8 would have been
embarrassing if it had been stalemate; in fact 51. g4 is legal & after
51... Qxg4 the zugzwang means that White's last pawn drops as well. Or
50. Kh7 Qxh5+ 51. Kg8 Qg4 52. Kf8 Qxg3, happy to exchange the queen for
White's last pawn and let the a-pawn decide matters.