

David Everington (1948-2020)

A tribute by Carl Portman



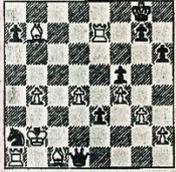
David Everington was a friend, mentor and inspiration. When I was young growing up in Shropshire, finding my way in the local chess scene David was always the 'go to' man to discuss chess matters. He had an anecdote for every occasion, knew so much about chess history and of course always had an idea or two about the opening phase of the game. I was at his house one evening in Shrewsbury, having just finished an

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CHES
by Raymond Keene

WINNING MOVE puzzles continue to provoke immense interest among *Times* readers. My recent correspondence includes a letter from a 103-year-old man, another from a 10-year-old girl and a fax from the House of Lords.

I start with the position from October 19 between Vastikov and Durazevic, Belgrade 1961. White has a beautiful bishop on d4, which proved to be the key to a winning combination. How did he continue?

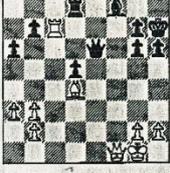


The solution as given was 1 Qxf8! Rxf8 2 Rxe7+ Kh8 3 Rxe6! Rf6 4 Kxf6, and the black queen cannot escape from the impending discovered check.

Both Lord Kilbracken and 100-year-old Dr Sydney Woodhouse of Wolverhampton suggest that Black can improve after 1 Qxf8 with 1... Qe1-2 Qf1 Qxf1+ 3 Kxf1 and now 3... Rf8+, when both correspondents suggest that Black might put up a fight with his passed d-pawn.

Nevertheless, after this sequence White still wins easily since his king and bishop will combine to blockade Black's passed pawn, while White's rook on the seventh rank will mop up further pawns, either that on g7 or b7 or both.

Carl Portman of Shropshire has submitted the extraordinary final position of his game as White against David Everington in the 1992 Shropshire Championship. In the following position (with Black to play) the players agreed to a draw. Was this the appropriate conclusion to the game?



Mr Portman suggests that the main line, justifying a draw is 1... Qxd4+ 2 Kxa2 Qc4+ 3 Ka3 Qc3+ 4 Ka2 Qc4+, with a draw by perpetual check. I have examined the alternative winning try for White 1... Qxd4+ 2 Kxa2 Qc4+ 3 Kbl Qxb4+ 4 Bb2 Qxe7 5 Rxa7, with the threat of 6 Bd5+, but in that case 5... Kh7 leaves Black secure and still in possession of his powerful passed e-pawn. So, a draw does seem justified.

If Black tries to win with 1... Nxb4, then the simple 2 Rxe3 solves White's problems and leaves him with the edge, since his two rooks and bishop against the black queen constitute a formidable material advantage.

Sarah Lee asks how she can take part in chess competitions. My advice in such cases is to contact the British Chess Federation (tel: 0424 442500), where help is always offered.

Final Christmas Tip

For those among you who are congenitally late Christmas shoppers, this week I offer my final tip. *Learn Chess with Garry Kasparov* (Batsford, 1995), by the world champion, is a book aimed at those who already know how to play, but wish to push their standard up a little. Very useful if your main opponent is the office computer.

Readers who write to me with queries are rewarded with a complimentary copy of the *British Chess Magazine*. Those whose queries are published here receive a six-month subscription.

entertaining draw in the Shropshire County Championship but I stayed a few hours longer to play through some openings and games. He knew that I liked the French Defence as Black so he said 'Have you ever seen the Tartakower Variation?' I hadn't.

It was 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. e5 **Ne4!** and I have played it many times ever since. Indeed, I showed it to FM Marcus Harvey when he was a youngster and he has played it too. David said it was dubious, but heck – it was fun, and chess was *meant* to be fun.

David has given me – and so many others – sage advice on any number of issues in chess and life in general. The end of one of our games was given in the *Times* Newspaper in December 1994. Whenever we engaged in chess battles, we had tense struggles and interesting games.

He won the Shropshire County Championship on nine occasions and was at his strongest in the 1970's winning it on six consecutive years. It was always an immense honour to play him. When I won the championship myself in 1998, he put on a Garden Party at his house in Shrewsbury and he ensured that former President of the

Shropshire Chess Association, Dr Hugh Gemmell was there to present me with the trophy. This was typical of the sort of thing that David would do.

He supported me when I organised the visit of chess legend Lev Polugayevsky who gave a simultaneous exhibition at the Buckatree Hall Hotel in 1992, by providing an official photographer and giving the event wide media publicity. He also made the opening and closing speeches; a role he was made for because he was so brilliant with words.

I still remember the gift he gave Lev, a book of poems by Rupert Brooke which Lev was delighted to receive.

David also compiled some lovely chess bulletins for Shrewsbury Chess Club but also '*Shropshire Chess 1933-1973*' and '*D is for Dummkopf!*' More *Shropshire Chess 1974/84*'. These are historical Shropshire Chess documents and I shall cherish my copies. He also wrote for the Shrewsbury Chronicle where he used some of that material for the bulletins.

David and I had talked a couple of times about jointly writing a book about the history of Shropshire Chess. I am very sad that this will not happen but if such a book is written in the future David will undoubtedly feature heavily.

In his opening to the 1933-73 bulletin, he writes '*Whilst the achievements of Alekhine will be available forever, chess at our level tends to fade into obscurity in a very few years. Who for example could tell you much at first hand about the almost legendary Lacy-Hulbert?*'

Only you, David, only you.

David Everington was for me the king of the Shropshire chess scene and was passionate about playing the game and sharing its joy with others. He was super-intelligent, generous and unstintingly kind. He was blessed with an acerbic wit, which went over the heads of some! I interviewed him for the British Chess Magazine in 2013 and one of the questions was 'What's so great about chess?' and his reply was '*Unlike football or cricket, you can carry on enjoying it for as long as you like despite the inevitable decline in performance*'.

Well David certainly enjoyed it for his whole life. I will miss him terribly – as will everyone who ever knew him. Shropshire chess should celebrate having such a man in its midst. I have been able to see a little bit further in my own life because occasionally I stood on the shoulders of this giant. Rest in Peace David.

