

CATERPILLAR SIMULTANEOUS – 2019/2020

Tuesday 3rd September 2019 saw the Opening Night of the Club's 2019/20 season get under way with the now traditional Caterpillar Simultaneous event. This year the following three members formed the Caterpillar:

Kyan Bui – Joint Club Champion (with Manuel Perez-Carballo who was unavailable)

Terry Whitton – Winner of the Roy Wagstaff Shield

Mark Murrell – Winner of the David Wood Memorial Board.

The event got under way at 7:45 pm and saw the Caterpillar facing 25 keen members of the Club with a grading range of between 44 and 201, some 157 grading points between top and bottom, which demonstrates the depth and breadth of the Club at this time in its long history.

Off to a flying start, the Caterpillar took three wins in the first 30 minutes with Wim De Jong, Fin O'Regan and Nic Charles all falling before 8:15 pm. This was promptly followed by wins over Michael Fleming, Sid Burns and Emmet Clarke (on his first visit to the Club) to net 6 points and make clear to the room that they were in for a night of hard play.

Just before 9 pm we saw the first +160 scalp taken in the form of Philip Staniland who fell into passivity and a crashing central advance nicely co-ordinated by a Caterpillar that, this year, seemed to be stylistically suited; if not always moving at an equal pace! There followed the resignations of Jean Mara before finally at 9:23 pm the Club members managed to knock back the onslaught with a win coming from the board of Larry Marden. Noting that Larry was a Rook for Bishop up and dominating the ending a pragmatic resignation from the Caterpillar allowing it to focus its forces on the remaining 16 boards.

Dave Rawlings was next to fall, followed in minutes by John Jestico who had managed to battle on from a poor opening position. At this stage things were beginning to look rather grim for the Club. However, John Keehner managed to outplay the Caterpillar to take a much needed point on the turn of 9:46 pm. **CATERPILLAR 10 CLUB 2.**

Next to fall was Anthony Fincham followed by Voldi Gailans who took the Caterpillar down to a Queen and Pawn ending in which the pressure of having to move consecutively upon the quick arrival of the beast placed him under ever increasing pressure leading to the loss, first of a pawn and then the game. A creditable battle though and one that the Caterpillar was, I am sure, happy to see end in their favour.

WHAT OF DRAWS? - Well Laurie Burt showed his usual solidity and after what was now 2 hours and 9 minutes of play the deadlock in their battle ended in equality with the draw logged at 9:54 pm. At this point in the evening things were heating up and the thinning of opposition numbers saw the pressure being ramped up for the remaining challengers of whom there were 10.

FROM 10 to 5 - Terry Skippen was faced with a very tactical battle in which, an exchange down, he had some compensation playing against the exposed White King. However, Kyan, known for making clever moves, spotted a key sequence (Rook for 2 Knights) which knocked Terry's chances of counter-attacking dead and left White a piece up with an overwhelming attack to follow – defeat agreed at 9:55 pm.

Alex Collyer, not being one to accept draws without a fight, eventually had to accept that his position was not going to get better than even and after a well fought 2 hours and 14 minutes the draw was agreed at 9:59 pm.

Not to be humiliated, it was Michael Wilson who refused to allow the Caterpillar its next point with a fine win against what was clearly a strong set of opponents. Defeat was agreed by Caterpillar at 10 pm on the nose; bloodied as it was.

At this late stage in the evening it was looking rather better for the Club as David Smith and Peter Nickals both appeared to have what can only be described as better/winning positions. Sadly the pressure of time and the relentless need to move on demand proved too much in David Smith's game as he fell to a mate whilst trying to drive home his pawns under a shower of Rook checks from behind. Not a position anyone likes to face; least of all under such unusual pressures. Defeat came at 10:14 pm.

Nigel White followed with a valiant attempt at defending a difficult position in which White eventually, with the help of an open b-file managed to take over with the invasion of his Rooks behind enemy lines. Defeat agreed at 10:18 pm

AND THEN THERE WERE 5

Peter Nickals is well known for his unorthodox style of play and so it fell to him to make good on his Rook for Bishop exchange up position, where White had done much of the work needed to lock things up and create the defence needed to force the draw. Just as the Caterpillar seemed to be succeeding in its objective Pete seized on an erroneous pawn move from White to get in and make the material count. A much needed win agreed at 10:21 pm.

With only four of the 25 remaining it was not to be Peter Toogood's night but what a fight he put up in an inferior King Rook and Pawn ending he mustered. To the last he was fighting for a chance and counter-play but alas it was White that proved to be just too good on the night.

Nearly at an end of the evening's activities the Club saw the spirit in which the event is undertaken in come forth in the form of Ben Harte who, taking pity on the tiring creature, accepted the offer of a draw at 10:23 pm. Ben subsequently reported that he was surprised how many computer-favoured moves were played by both sides in his game.

The penultimate game ended just one minute later as, at 10:24 pm, Paul Read decided that he had had enough and threw in the towel after being ground down all evening.

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE... - And as they say "save the best to last".

Always looking to be a tough opponent and easily the strongest player in the room on grade (201) was David Sands and he was not going to be defeated by a mere bug!

Looking to get activity out of the opening, David was to be disallowed by good containing play from the Caterpillar but ever resourceful the 'Sandman' decided that a positional exercise in quality play was in order and duly executed his plan in style to end up two passed pawns up against a Caterpillar that at this late point in the day was beginning to lose co-ordination between its front, middle and

rear. The final game was resigned at 10:28 pm bringing to an end a thoroughly enjoyable FIRST NIGHT with FINAL SCORES OF:

CATERPILLAR 18½ - CLUB 6½