

# Club Champ: Langley BC



by Victoria Jung-Doknjas



The Langley Chess Club (LCC) is one of the longest running chess clubs in BC, possibly dating as far back as the late 1970s. Even though the annual LCC championship started much earlier as an unrated tournament, the first CFC-rated LCC championship took place in 1999 when the then highest-rated club player and current LCC president, **Hugh Long**, won the championship with a perfect score of 5/5,

[http://www.chess.ca/crosstable?tournament\\_check\\_number=199911042&key=141028](http://www.chess.ca/crosstable?tournament_check_number=199911042&key=141028)

Fast forward 15 years and it's 2014 when 9-year-old **Neil Doknjas** captures the club championship title undefeated and as the youngest ever Langley Club Champion.

Over the years, the club, which convenes weekly on Monday nights, has changed locations until settling in at its current home at the Brookwood Senior Centre. As the name suggests, the activities at the senior centre cater mainly to

the 55 years old or better crowd. The Langley Chess Club also has its share of members who are retirees, including a former fire department Battalion Chief Brian Sullivan, former BC TEL employee Hugh Long, and Robert Barron; but, it also has members who are young dads like the club's promoter, Andrew Hoyer (who just welcomed the birth of his and his wife Natasha's third child) and its webmaster, three-times Club Champion and BC Closed Competitor Savvas Kyrakides; and still more members like BC Hydro employee Brian Davidson, who wears mul-

tiple hats at the club (Treasurer/Secretary/TD), IT professional Julius Briner, Engineer Steve Buchi, Attorney Amir Fazel, and Warden Mark Marten.

## Testbed for BC Juniors

Mixed in with the adult players, many up and coming BC Juniors have played at one time or another at the Langley Chess Club. The club has a solid adult group in the range of 1400 to 2000, so juniors often come to play this solid group of players to get more consistent and solid themselves.

Strong junior players like NM Ryan Lo (BC Closed Competitor), FIDE CM John Doknjas (3 times BC Closed Competitor and 2 times Langley Club Champion in 2012 and 2013),

NCM Joshua Doknjas (BC Closed Competitor), WFM Alexandra Botez (Women's Olympiad Competitor), Joanne Foote (2011 CYCC U14 Girl Champion), NM Tanraj Sohal (BC Closed Champion and 2008 Langley Club Champion), and Luke Pulfer (2013 National U10 Champion) have travelled from all parts of the Lower Mainland (Richmond, Surrey, White Rock, Coquitlam, etc.) to come to play at the Langley Chess Club.

## Neil Doknjas

Neil Doknjas is yet another BC Junior who has benefitted from the Langley Chess Club. Not only from the regular challenge of solid competition, but from the encouragement and amazing sportsmanship that the adult players provide win, lose, or draw. This is an important intangible that all juniors past and present have enjoyed and which has helped them in their growth in both strength and sportsmanship.

Prior to this recent club championship win, Neil won the Canadian Youth U8 Championship in 2012 and was the official U8 Open player to represent Canada



Neil Doknjas and LCC President Hugh Long

Chess Canada  
2015.03





# Chess Canada 2015.03

at the 2012 World Youth Chess Championship in Slovenia. He was also the official U10 Open player to represent Canada at 2014 North American Youth Chess Championship in New York. Provincially, Neil has won the BC Youth Chess Championship in 2012 (U8 Open), 2013 (U8 Open), and 2014 (U10 Open), and the BC Grade 3 Championship in 2014.

## 2014 Langley Championship

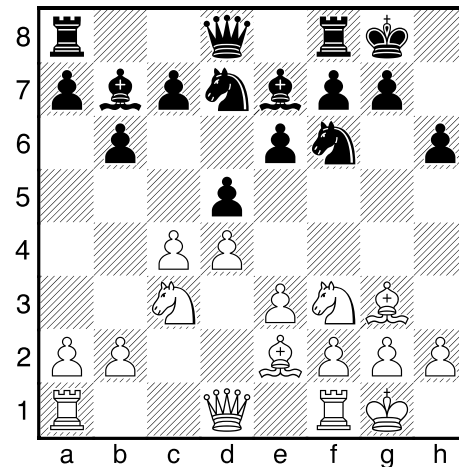
In this year's five-round club championship, which had a time control of 90 mins + 30 sec inc., Neil was paired in the 1st round with the highest rated player in the tournament, Hugh Long. Their game outlasted all the other games that night. In the end Neil won. In Round 2, Neil played Amir Fazel who Neil has never beaten or drawn before until that night...

**Fazel, Amir (1611)**  
**Doknjas, Neil (1507)**  
D58

*Langley Club Championship  
2014 (2), 29.09.2014*  
**Notes by Team Doknjas**

I knew that this would not be an easy game having lost to Amir two times previously, playing with the Black pieces.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6  
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.♗f3 h6 6.♙h4  
0-0 7.e3 b6 8.♙e2 ♙b7 9.0-0  
♗bd7 10.♙g3**



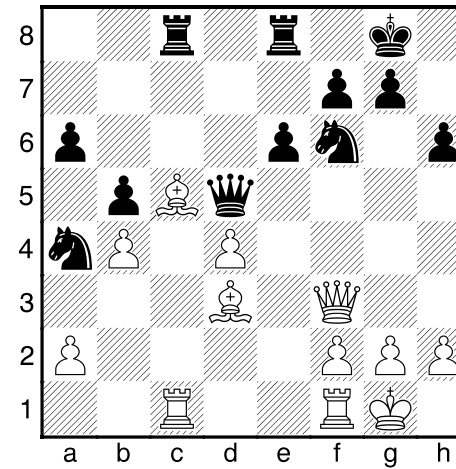
Here I was out of book.

**10...c5 11.♖c1 ♖c8 12.♗b5 a6  
12...♗e4!** This was a better move going for the Bishop pair and defending d6. **13.♗xa7 ♖a8.**

**13.♗d6! ♙xd6 14.♙xd6 ♖e8  
15.♙b3 cxd4 16.exd4 dxc4  
17.♙xc4 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 b5  
19.♙d3 ♗b6  
19...♙b6.**

*Neil Doknjas vs Amir Fazel*

**20.♙c5 ♗a4 21.b4 ♙d5**

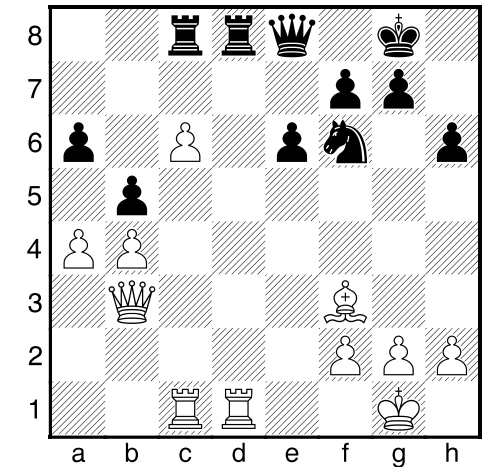


**22.♙e2?**

This allows Black to break with 22... e5!

**22...♗xc5  
22...e5!♣.**

**23.dxc5 ♙d4 24.a3 ♗d5  
25.♙c2 ♙g4 26.♙e2 ♙g5  
27.♙f3 ♙e7 28.♖fd1 ♖ed8  
29.♙b3 ♗f6 30.a4 ♙e8 31.c6**



**31...♖c7**

31...♗d5 keeps better chances of holding the position. **32.♙xd5**



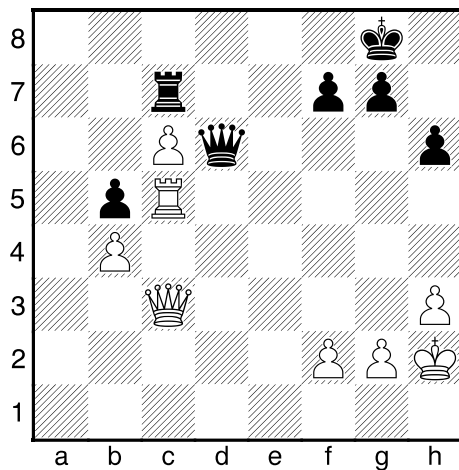


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exd5 33.♖xd5? ♜xc6! 34.♖xd8  
(34.♜xc6 ♚e1#) 34...♜xc1+  
35.♖d1 ♚e1+ 36.♜xe1 ♜xe1#.

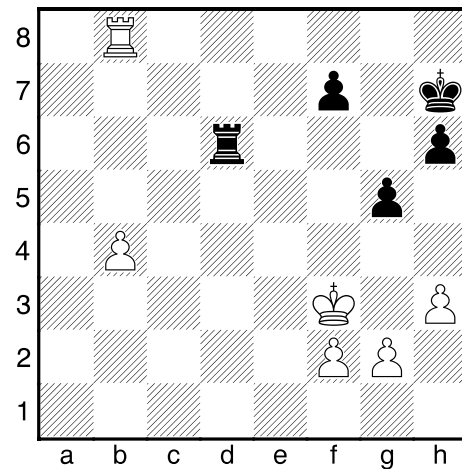
**32. axb5 axb5 33. ♜c5 ♘d5**  
♞33...♜xd1+ 34.♚xd1 ♘d5  
35.♜xb5 ♚xc6 36.♜b8+ ♔h7=.

**34. ♜dc1 ♜dc8 35. ♙xd5 exd5**  
**36. ♚xd5± ♜d8 37. ♚b3 ♜d4**  
**38. ♚c3 ♚d8 39. h3 ♜d1+**  
**40. ♜xd1 ♚xd1+ 41. ♔h2 ♚d6+**



**42. ♚g3?**  
♞42.g3±.

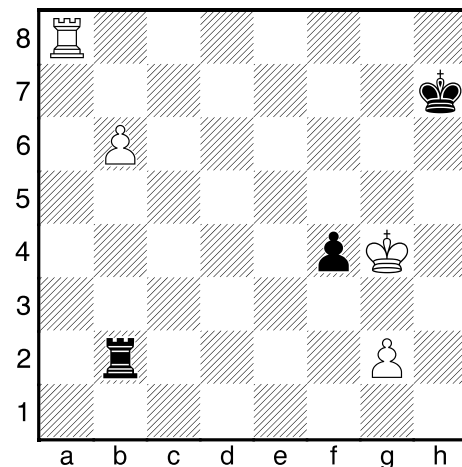
**42...♜xc6! 43. ♜xb5 ♚d1 44. ♚f4**  
**♜f6 45. ♜b8+ ♔h7 46. ♚e4+ g6**  
**47. ♚e5 ♚d6 48. ♚xd6 ♜xd6**  
**49. ♔g3 g5 50. ♔f3**



**50...h5**  
50...♜d2 51.b5 ♜b2.

**51. b5 ♜d3+ 52. ♔e2 ♜b3**  
**53. ♔d2 ♜b2+ 54. ♔e3 f5 55. b6**  
**f4+ 56. ♔f3 g4+**  
56...♔g7.

**57. hxg4 hxg4+ 58. ♔xg4 ♜xf2**  
**59. ♜a8 ♜b2**



**60. ♜a7+?**

60.♜a6+-

*editor* – 60.♜b8+- is the only other move that wins.

**60...♔g6□= 61. b7 ♜b4□**

*editor* – 61...♜xg2+?? 62.♔xf4  
♜b2 63.♔e5+-.

**62. ♔f3 ♔f5 63. ♜a5+ ♔g6**  
**64. ♔g4 ♜xb7 65. ♜a6+ ♔g7**  
**66. ♔xf4 ♔g8 67. g4 ♜f7+**  
**68. ♔g3 ♜g7 69. ♜a5 ♜e7**  
**70. g5 ♔g7 71. ♔f4 ♜f7+**  
**72. ♔g4 ♔g8 73. g6 ♜f1**  
**74. ♔g5 ♜g1+ 75. ♔f6 ♜f1+**  
**76. ♜f5 ♜xf5+ 77. ♔xf5 ♔g7**  
**78. ♔g5 ♔g8**

This was a long game and we were the last ones left in the tournament hall. The game went back and forth in various parts, so each player had to stay sharp throughout the whole game; otherwise the opponent would get the advantage and possibly the win.

1/2-1/2

In **Round 3**, Neil was paired with the tournament leader at the time, Brian Sullivan who had 2/2 com-

pared to Neil's 1½ pts. Neil was able to beat Brian and pull into the lead by half a point.

The first 3 rounds, Neil played against higher-rated players. In **Round 4**, he played Julius Briner who was lower-rated but up to the challenge. Neil and Julius drew, while Hugh and Brian Sullivan won their games, which caused a 3 way tie for first after Round 4: Neil, Hugh, and Brian Sullivan each having 3/4.

In **Round 5**, Hugh and Brian Sullivan faced off on Board 1 and Neil played the only other junior in the tournament, Jerry Chen. Even though all the other games ended in about 1 hour, the Board 1 game produced an epic battle that went on for 4½ hours. Neil having won his last game had 4/5 and would be in a tie for first place with the winner on Board 1. If a draw occurred, both players would fall ½ point short of tying for first place. Neil waited patiently for 3½ hours to see the result of Board 1's game, which would determine if a play-off game for 1st place is required. Both players pressed to win, knowing that they had a chance at the club championship title. The dark



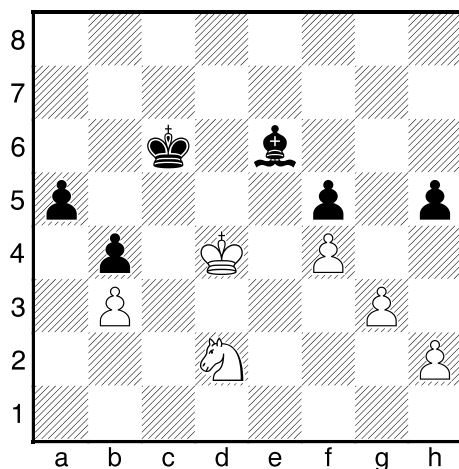


Bishops were exchanged and all 5 pawns on both sides were still on the board. Then with a pawn exchange in the centre, this left the players to decide which side of the board to play on...

## Long, Hugh Sullivan, Brian

Langley Club Championship  
2014 Langley (5), 10.2014

Reconstruction from notes by Victoria Jung-Doknjas.



White's Knight was previously on c4 where Black's Bishop could have initiated the exchange but did not. Perhaps looking for a 3-fold repetition White moved...

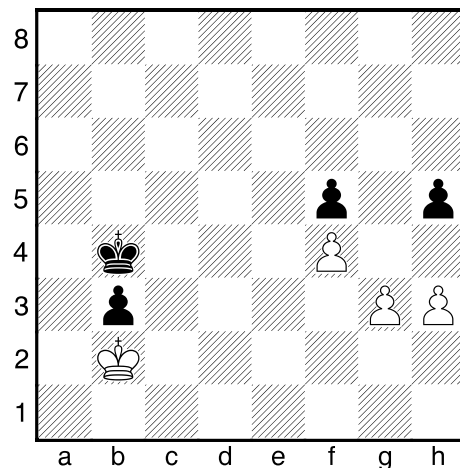
40. ♖c4?

...but *this* time...

40... ♗xc4!

Both players had less than 10 mins left on their respective clocks. The Kings mainly moved jostling for positioning...

41. ♔xc4 ♖b6 42. ♔d3 ♖b5  
43. ♔c2 a4 44. bxa4+ ♔xa4  
45. ♔b2 b3 46. h3 ♔b4



47. g4 hxg4 48. hxg4 fxg4  
49. f5 g3??=

Instead, ... ♔c5 brings the black King to stop the f-pawn from promoting and then Black's g-pawn will decide the game.

50. f6 g2 51. f7 g1 ♔ 52. f8 ♔+ =  
1/2-1/2

Congratulations to Neil Doknjas for winning the 2014 Langley Chess Club Championship; also to Hugh Long and Brian Sullivan for tying for 2nd place!

### Final Standings

[http://www.chess.ca/crosstable?tournament\\_check\\_number=201411001&key=141113](http://www.chess.ca/crosstable?tournament_check_number=201411001&key=141113)

## Langley Chess Club

The club meets weekly on Mondays 7pm to 10pm all year round. Membership ranges from 10 to 20 with new players dropping in all the time.

### Address

Brookwood Senior Centre,  
19899 – 36 Avenue,  
Langley, BC.

### Website

<http://langleychess.com/>

### facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/langleychess>

### Sitzfleisch Rules

Neil Doknjas waits while Hugh Long and Brian Sullivan play on.....





## Q&A: Neil Doknjas

**Q: What's your favourite...?**

**...colour?**

Neil: Blue

**...food?**

Neil: Lasagna

**...music?**

Neil: Rock 'n' roll

**...movie?**

Neil: The Lego Movie

**...TV show?**

Neil: Master Chef

**...book?**

Neil: 39 Clues

**Q: When did you learn to play?**

Neil: When I was 5 years old. Chess was a very popular activity in my family. I have two older brothers, Joshua and John, who at the time were playing tournaments at the provincial and national levels. My oldest brother, John, had already competed in the

2007 World Youth Chess Championship in Turkey. So, I decided to try it too, and I really enjoyed it.

**Q: How do you practice/study?**

Neil: I have a great coach, **IM Yan Teplitsky**. I have studied with him for a few years now. He helped prepare me to win the 2012 Canadian Youth U8 Championship when I was only 7 years old (in my junior year of the U8 section). I study and play training games with my older

brothers, who also help me in my review of openings and endgames. I also solve daily chess problems.

**Q: What do you like most about chess?**

Neil: I like that chess has a lot of tactics and that you always have to be sharp. I also like travelling to the different tournaments, e.g. Toronto, Victoria, New York, and Maribor, Slovenia.

**Q: What do you like *least* about chess?**

Neil: Nothing

**Q: Do you play online?**

Neil: Yes, I play online. There are tournaments and strong players online, I can practice against them.

**Q: When you play online, what servers and time controls do you usually play?**

Neil: I usually play on Chess.com with rapid time controls like 15 mins.

**Q: Do you have a favourite chess player? If so, who?**

Neil: IM Yan Teplitsky

**Q: Have you memorized any of that player's games?**

No, I have not memorized any of Yan's games.



### **Team Doknjas**

Neil and John play while Joshua kibbitzes.