

# Euwe at Weston

## Brian Gosling chronicles Max Euwe's success at Weston-super-Mare in 1924

The young Dutch player Max Euwe, a future world champion, enjoyed his chess trips to England and won many prizes. He stated that his chess career began at Hastings, although it was a modest beginning, competing in one of the lower sections. From the Victory Congress 1919 until Weston 1926, he made seven tournament visits to England, and his only real setback was London 1922, where he faced some of the world's elite.

For a time, Euwe cut back on his chess activities and concentrated on his mathematical studies, but in November 1923 he received his master's degree from Amsterdam University. And now again, he felt that pull from across the North Sea to attend the annual Hastings Christmas Congress. Euwe, the Dutch Champion, came ahead of Maroczy, Colle and Yates for his first tournament victory in this event (he was to win Hastings again in 1930/31, ahead of Capablanca, and in 1934/35 came first equal with Flohr and Thomas). It was here that he was invited to the Easter tournament at Weston.

The seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare is on the Somerset coast overlooking the Seven Estuary with panoramic views of the Welsh hills. Here, Marconi did some of his early experiments on wireless telegraphy. With the opening of the iconic Brunel railway line from Bristol to Exeter, thousands of visitors flocked to the town, many on works outings and family trips during bank holidays. In those days, the resort was fortunate to have two railway links. Besides the main Bristol-Exeter, a local line (WCPLR) ran north-east, connecting Weston to the coastal towns of Clevedon and Portishead, which ran close to my grandparents' house in Clevedon. Paddle steamers carried mining families from South Wales across the channel, docking at Weston's Birnbeck Pier.

A video of the 1920s gives a beautiful portrait of a vibrant seaside town with visitors taking the sea air, enjoying the many amenities: amusement parks, a beautiful sandy beach for sunbathing and swimming with donkey rides for the children. It did not bother the visitors that the tide never seemed to stay long as the Bristol Channel has the second largest tidal range in the world. These were economic boom years with people shaking off the gloom of the past war and the global Spanish flu pandemic.

Against this prosperous background, the town's chess club held three nationally



*A typically busy front at Edwardian Weston, after the Somerset town boomed in the 19th century.*

important tournaments (in 1922, 1924 and 1926), with the grand title of West of England Chess Festival. Play occurred in the impressive Town Hall during the Easter vacation.

Although there were different sections, we are concerned with the Major Open, in which Euwe competed against players of master strength. There would be ten players in a round-robin event with two rounds played on three days, enabling the contest to be concluded within a week. The hours of play were 9:30-1:30 pm, 3:00-5:00 pm (for adjourned games), and 6:00-10:00 pm (adjourned games on single round days if needed). In 1922 the English veteran J.H. Blake came first, ahead of the Hungarian

master Geza Maroczy, Sir George Thomas, and F.D. Yates.

For the 1924 festival, Euwe's main rivals are Sir George Thomas, Eugene Znosko-Borovsky, a former Russian master now living in Paris, and Edmund Spencer, a British championship contender. Still, he would meet stiff opposition from J.H. Blake and Capt. P.D. Bolland, the Somerset player. He would be fortunate in both games.

In the first round held on Saturday morning, Euwe played Sir George Thomas, who had won the British title the previous year at Southsea. Euwe was close to defeat for a long time, but showed his tenacity in defence and managed to draw.

### Euwe's schedule at Weston-super-Mare 1924

Round	Date	Day	Opponent	Euwe's Result	Progressive Score
1	19th April	Saturday	Thomas (W)	Draw	½
2			Drewitt (B)	Draw	1
3	21st April	Monday	Wainwright (W)	Win	2
4			Duffield (B)	Win	3
5	22nd April	Tuesday	Blake (B)	Win	4
6	23rd April	Wednesday	Mackenzie (W)	Win	5
7	24th April	Thursday	Bolland (W)	Draw	5½
8			Znosko-Borovsky(W)	Win	6½
9	25th April	Friday	Spencer (B)	Win	7½

## G.Thomas-M.Euwe

Round 1



White has two passed pawns on the queenside, but it is not easy to convert the advantage to a win, especially when the time is running down and with no increment! Euwe has just played **37...d5-f5**, guarding the f7-pawn and attacking the rook. Thomas replied **38 e2?** which was not the best (38 d2 should be winning), and now the play went **38...e5!** (Black will draw by perpetual check) **39 ex5 xf2+ ½-½**.

In round 2, Euwe faced J.A.J. Drewitt, a player of master strength who had played in the Hastings Premier of 1922/23 and who lived in the town. He was also a composer of endgame studies. In the morning, Drewitt lost badly to Znosko-Borovsky, so although he had the better position marginally [Ed. – See this month's .pgn file for the full score of this and all Euwe's games from Weston], he was satisfied to share the point with the Dutchman.

As Sunday was a rest day, the players took the chance to explore Weston's delights. After two rounds, the scores were: Blake, Spencer 2; Thomas 1½; Znosko-Borovsky, Bolland, Duffield, Euwe 1; Drewitt ½; Mackenzie, Wainwright 0.

The rest day benefited Euwe as the following day, he reeled off two quick wins beginning with Wainwright in round 3. George E. Wainwright was a veteran who had a long and distinguished chess career. A high point was a draw against Frank Marshall in the 4th Anglo-American Cable Match in 1899.

## G.Wainwright-M.Euwe

Round 3

*Four Knights Game*

**1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 c3 f6 4 b5 b4 5 0-0 0-0 6 d3 d6 7 g5 e7**

Interestingly, a few rounds later against Bolland, Euwe deviated with **7...xc3 8 bxc3 h6. 8 xf6 gxf6 9 h4 g6 10 xg6?**

Bardeleben recommended **10 f5!** as an improvement on exchanging the knights. With the opening of the h-file, Euwe obtains a nice attack.

**10...hxg6 11 f4 g7! 12 c4 c6 13 f3 h8 14 fe5 de5 15 g3 c5+ 16 h1 b5 17 b3 h5! 18 a4 b4 19 e2 e7**



James Wilson's Itallianate 1856 building remains in use as Weston-super-Mare's Town Hall.

**20 g1 d7 21 f3 ah8 22 ad1?**



This rook should have gone to e1 to stop Black's winning manoeuvre. Can you find it?

**22...e3! 23 e1 f4 24 h3 xh3! 25 gxh3 d7 0-1**

In round 4 Euwe was up against the strong Somerset player Cyril Duffield who could sometimes be a dangerous opponent. But, unfortunately, he had a game we all dread. He blundered on his eleventh move and resigned after White's reply.

## M.Euwe-C.Duffield

Round 4

*Giuoco Piano*

**1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 c4 c5 4 c3 f6 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 b4+ 7 c3 d5 8 exd5 xd5 9 0-0 xc3 10 bxc3 0-0 11 e1 a5??**



**11...e6** is much better, as in Leonhardt-Blackburne, Ostend 1907. Can you now find the winning move?

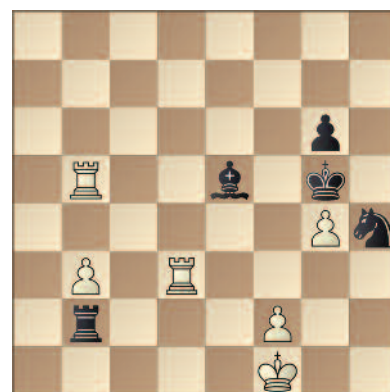
**12 xd5! 1-0**

**12...xd5 13 e5!** is a decisive skewer. Recently an American Grandmaster missed a similar tactic straight out of the opening. Psychologically the victim is not expecting the rook to be so active early in the game.

Euwe spent the rest of the session looking at the other games and was interested in the Thomas-Wainwright ending.

## G.Thomas-G.Wainwright

Round 4

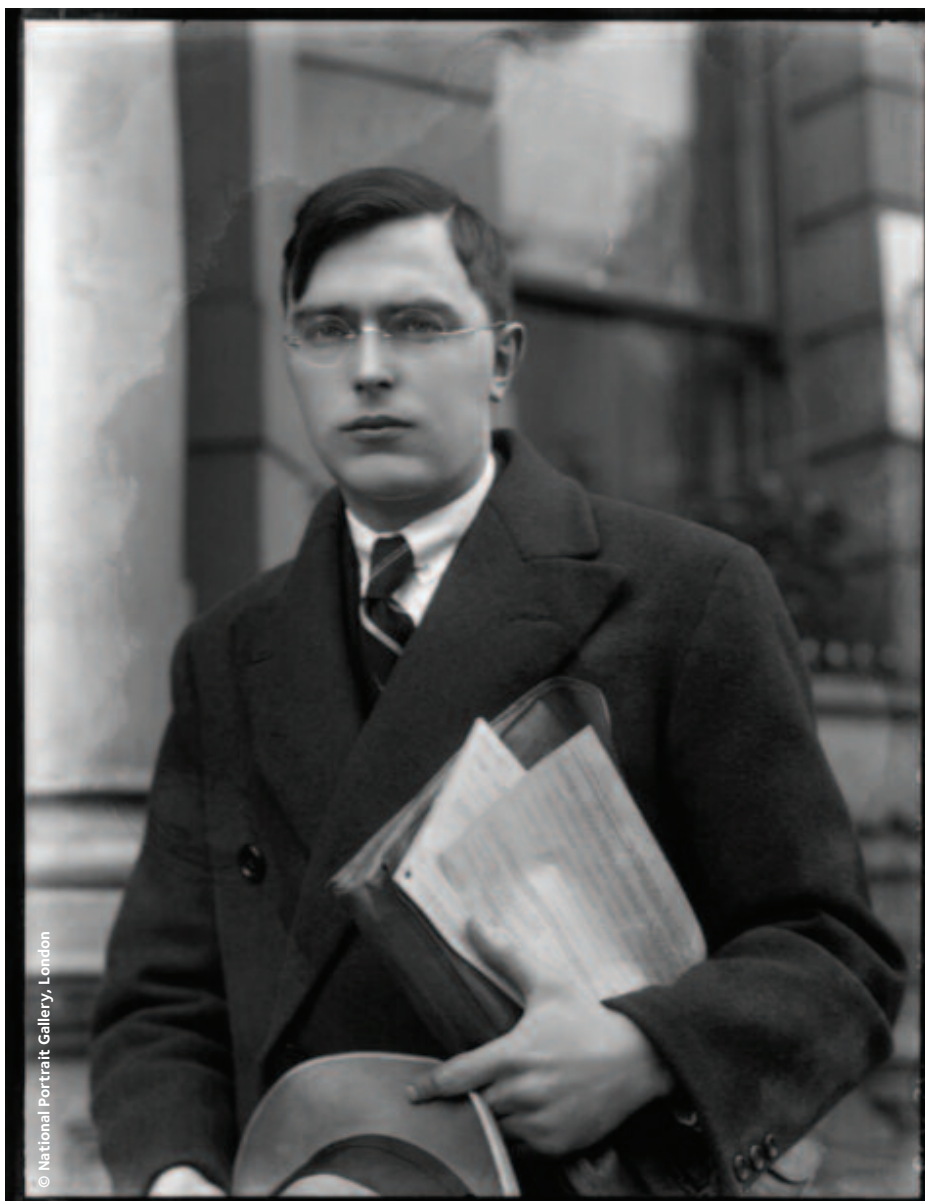


White had just played **35 b7-b5**, pinning the bishop, and Black answered **35...f6?**. Unfortunately, after **36 g5+** Black is forced to play **36...e6** and after **37 e3** could not escape losing the piece, so he resigned. He should have tried **35...f4!** **36 b4+ g5 37 d5 f3 38 g2 e1+ 39 h3 d3 40 xe5+ xe5 41 f4+ h6 42 fe5 e2**, which draws.

On the same day, the Dutch Champion and the British Champion had beaten Wainwright, and to cap it all, he had Euwe telling him he missed a draw against Thomas!

In round 5, Euwe was White against the English veteran J.H. Blake, the previous Weston winner in 1922. Blake had tied with H.E. Atkins for first place in the British Championship in 1909 and authored a handy





© National Portrait Gallery, London

Still looking quite youthful, if some six years since his victory as a 22 year old at Weston, Max Euwe is pictured at Hastings 1930/31, where he came first ahead of Capablanca and Sultan Khan.

little book called *Chess Endings for Beginners*, which went through many editions. He was also the games editor for the *British Chess Magazine*.

Euwe lost a pawn early in the opening and then another, and it looked like he was facing defeat.

### M.Euwe-J.Blake Round 5



### 49...♖a2 50 ♖xa2 ♜xa2

Blake did well to exchange one set of rooks, but he should have taken back with the other rook rather than the knight: 50...♖xa2+ 51 ♜f3 ♖a3 is winning.

### 51 g4 ♖c8 52 f5!

Euwe plays the rest of the ending in superb style, maximising his chances of a draw by: (a) opening the position to get his bishop into the game and (b) creating a passed h-pawn. **52...gxf5 53 gxf5 ♖c5**

And not 53...exf5? 54 ♖e2.

### 54 fxe6 fxe6 55 ♖d3 ♜c1 56 ♖g6+ ♜d8 57 ♖h7 ♖e5?

57...♖c3! was the way to go.

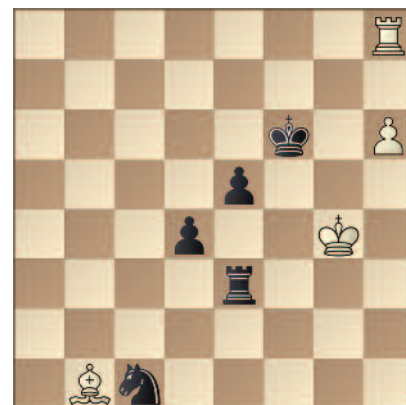
### 58 ♖xh6

White creates a dangerous passed h-pawn which will be pushed without delay.

### 58...d5 59 h4 d4 60 ♖h8+ ♜e7 61 h5 ♖e2+ 62 ♜f3 ♜f6 63 ♖b1 e5 64 h6



### ♖e3+ 65 ♜g4



### 65...♜d3?

A terrible blunder which throws away the draw. Can you find the correct approach?

65...d3! 66 h7 ♜g7 67 ♖c8 ♜xh7 holds.

### 66 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 67 ♖g8! 1-0

The h-pawn will queen.

A lost opportunity for Blake, but Euwe's good fortune found him as one of the co-leaders with Znosko-Borovsky and Spencer on 4/5 with four rounds to go. In round 6, he comes against a former Scottish Champion, A.J. Mackenzie.

### A.Mackenzie-M.Euwe

Round 6  
Semi-Slav

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♜f3 ♜f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♜c3 ♜bd7 6 ♖d3 dxc4 7 ♖xc4 b5 8 ♖d3 a6 9 0-0 c5 10 b3 ♖b7 11 ♖b2 ♖e7 12 ♖e2 0-0 13 dxc5 ♜xc5 14 ♖ad1 ♖a5 15 e4 b4 16 ♜a4 ♜xd3**

Even stronger than 16...♜xa4 17 bxa4 ♖xa4 18 ♖e5, and not 16...♜fxe4 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 18 ♖e5.

### 17 ♖xf6 ♖xf6

Side-stepping 17...gxf6 18 ♖xd3 ♖fd8 19 ♖e3.

### 18 ♖xd3 ♖c6 19 e5 20 ♜d4 ♖xa4 21 bxa4 ♖xa4 22 ♖h3 ♖ac8 23 ♖h5 h6 24 ♖g3



White's attack looks dangerous, but with his next move, Black takes control and wins on the queenside.

### 24...♖c3! 25 ♖g4 ♜h8 26 ♜e2 ♖c5 27 f4

♖xa2 28 ♖g3 ♜c2 29 ♖g4 g6 30 ♜c1  
 ♖c4 31 ♜d3 ♜d2 32 ♖h3 ♜g7 33 ♖gf3  
 ♜d8 34 ♜f2 ♜c5 35 g4 ♜d1 36 ♖g2  
 ♜d2 37 h3 ♖xf1+ 0-1

Euwe was still in front with Znosko-Borovsky with 5 points, followed by Thomas and Spencer with 4½. Znosko-Borovsky had beaten Blake after he again went wrong in a promising endgame. Blake was having problems with sleeplessness, and he never came close to his 1922 performance.

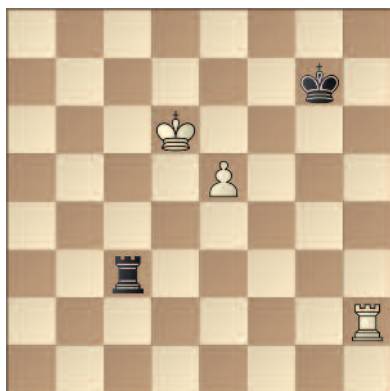
Thursday 24th was a crucial day, with round 7 in the morning and round 8 in the evening. Euwe's opponent for the morning game was Captain P.D. Bolland, a Somerset County player and future West of England Champion living in Winscombe, a village just outside Weston. He was involved in starting a junior section of the Bristol & District Chess League in the early days.

### P.Bolland-M.Euwe Round 7



Euwe has just played **25...f6-f5**. The queen is attacked. Can you find the best move for White?

Although Bolland found the correct move in the above position (**26 ♜d7!**, which should be winning for White), he went wrong later in a technically won rook and pawn ending. Here Euwe has just played **71...♜f6-g7**.



**72. ♜d7?**

72 ♜a2!, keeping the opposing rook away from the a-file, is the correct move, as endgame tablebases show: 72...♜b3 73 ♜a7+ ♜g6 74 ♜e7 reaches the winning Lucena position. Euwe now has no problem reaching

a drawn position with the 'long-side defence':  
**72...♜a3! 73 ♜c2 ♜a5 74 e6 ♜a7+ 75 ♜c7  
 ♜a8! 76 ♜c1 ♜a7+ 77 ♜d8 ♜f6 78 e7  
 ♜a8+ ½-½**

After seven rounds, the top scores were Znosko-Borovsky on 6, Euwe, Spencer and Thomas on 5½. In round 8, Euwe would be Black against the tournament leader. He had no choice but to play for a win as his opponent was half a point in front.

This game is of historical interest as Euwe had played the Sicilian Scheveningen against Znosko-Borovsky in the London tournament of 1922, and lost. Interestingly, Euwe was playing 6...e6 in the Sicilian a year before Scheveningen 1923, the tournament from which the variation gets its name. In his career, he was to have a lot of success with this opening.

### E.Znosko-Borovsky-M.Euwe Round 8 *Sicilian Scheveningen*

**1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♜e2 e6 7 0-0 ♜e7  
 8 ♜e3**

8 ♜h1 0-0 9 ♜e3 ♜d7 10 f4 ♖c7  
 11 ♜f3 ♜ac8 12 ♜db5 ♖b8 was the earlier Znosko-Borovsky-Euwe, London 1922.

**8...0-0 9 ♜b3**

And here after 9 ♖d2 a6 10 h3 ♖c7 11 f4 ♜a5 12 ♖d3 b5 Black won in 36 moves in Blake-Euwe, Hastings 1923/24.

**9...a6 10 f4 b5 11 ♜f3 ♜b7 12 ♜e2 ♜a5**

White cannot avoid the exchange of knights as ...♜c4 would be uncomfortable.

**13 ♜xa5 ♖xa5 14 ♜g3 ♜ac8 15 c3  
 ♜fd8 16 ♖b3 d5!**



Black decides it is time to play in the centre.

**17 e5 ♜e4 18 ♜e2 ♜c5 19 ♜xc5 ♜xc5  
 20 ♜ad1 ♜c4 21 ♜d4 g6 22 ♜h1 ♜a8  
 23 ♜e2 ♜c5 24 ♖c2 ♖b6! 25 a3 a5  
 26 ♜d3 b4 27 axb4 axb4 28 ♜b3?**

White is still OK after 28 f5 exf5 29 ♖b3.  
**28...♜cc8- 29 ♜xe4 dxe4 30 c4?**

30 ♖xd8+ was required, as Euwe pointed out.

**30...♜d5! 31 ♜d4**



A key position. 31...e3! is best, threatening the winning 32...♜xg2+. Black has an X-ray attack against the white rook at d4. The only way to stop this is to give up the exchange with 32 ♜xd5, but this is also lost. Instead Euwe made a temporary sacrifice of a piece.

**31...♜xc4? 32 ♜xc4 ♖a6 33 ♜d2?**

This move loses the game for White. Euwe annotated the game in the May *Tijdschrift van den Nederlandschen Schaakbond*. According to him, the best reply was 33 ♜a5! which Black answers with 33...♜c5 and regains the piece with the better game.

**33...e3 34 b3 exd2 35 ♜d1 ♜xc4 36 bxc4  
 ♖a3 37 g3 ♖c3 38 ♜e4 b3 39 ♜g2 ♖c2  
 0-1**

Going into the final ninth round, Euwe and Thomas were in the lead with 6½ points, followed by Znosko-Borovsky on 6, but he still had to play Thomas. Euwe was up against Edmund Spencer, who, in the first Chess Olympiad London (1927), picked up a bronze medal with the home team (+2 =3 -1).

### M.Euwe-E.Spencer Round 9 *Old Indian Defence*

**1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 d6 3 ♜c3 ♜c6 4 e4 e5  
 5 d5 ♜b8 6 g3 ♜e7 7 ♜g2 0-0 8 ♜ge2  
 ♜e8 9 0-0 ♜d7 10 ♜e3 ♜b6 11 b3 f5  
 12 f4 exf4 13 ♜xf4 ♜f6 14 ♜e6 ♜xe6  
 15 dxe6 ♜g4 16 ♜d2 ♜f6**



**17 exf5!**

Euwe links up his e6-pawn and goes for a powerful duo. He is not afraid of losing the



exchange. After 17...♙d4+ 18 ♖h1 ♘f2+ 19 ♜xf2 ♙xf2 20 ♖e2 ♜xf5 21 ♜f1 White is winning.

17...h5 18 ♖e2 ♙d4+ 19 ♖h1 ♜f6 20 ♜ac1 c6 21 h3 ♖e5 22 hxg4 ♙xc3 23 ♜xe5 ♙xe5 24 gxh5 ♙xg3 25 ♙c3 ♙h4 26 h6 ♙f6 27 hxg7 ♙xg7 28 ♙h3



Clearing the way for ♜g1+.  
28 ♙c8 29 ♜g1+ ♖h7 30 ♜c2



Threatening mate in a few moves via 31 ♜h2.  
30...♙xc3 31 ♜xc3 ♙e7 32 ♙f1 1-0

By winning his last-round game, Euwe

made sure of first place, but had to wait for the result of Thomas against Znosko-Borovsky to see if it was shared. Thomas had the advantage in a rook and pawn ending, but sadly he misplayed it and had to be content with a draw. Thus, young Euwe was the sole winner on 7½, followed by Sir George Thomas on 7 and Eugene Znosko-Borovsky on 6½.

The games indicated that Euwe was far from his best, but he showed his class by turning around some lost positions. His tenacity in defence is something we can all admire.

Euwe returned in 1926 to the last of the West of England Chess Festivals. That year was notable for the Dutchman because, besides getting married and obtaining a doctorate, he would play a match against the world championship contender Alekhine (soon to play Jose Raul Capablanca in a title match), which he only narrowly lost (+2 =5 -3).

#### Weston Super Mare, 19th - 25th April, 1924

Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts
1 Max Euwe	X	½	1	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	7.5
2 George Thomas	½	X	½	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
3 Eugene Znosko Borovsky	0	½	X	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6.5
4 Edmund Spencer	0	1	0	X	0	½	1	1	1	1	5.5
5 John Drewitt	½	0	0	1	X	½	½	1	½	1	5
6 Cyril Duffield	0	0	1	½	½	X	0	0	1	½	3.5
7 Joseph Blake	0	0	0	0	½	1	X	0	1	1	3.5
8 P.D. Bolland	½	0	0	0	0	1	1	X	½	0	3
9 Arthur Mackenzie	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	X	1	2
10 George Wainwright	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	1	0	X	1.5



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