

Volume 83 No. 10 January 2019 £4.50

www.chess.co.uk

Chess



ISSN 0964-6221



Caru Couldn't - After 12 draws, Magnus proved too strong come the rapid tie-break



Late Drama - Jonathan Speelman examines the dramatic endgames from the match



Christmas Fun - Festive quiz, Seasonal reading & John Henderson's White Christmas

Chess

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Subscription Rates:

United Kingdom

1 year (12 issues)	£49.95
2 year (24 issues)	£89.95
3 year (36 issues)	£125

Europe

1 year (12 issues)	£60
2 year (24 issues)	£112.50
3 year (36 issues)	£165

USA & Canada

1 year (12 issues)	\$90
2 year (24 issues)	\$170
3 year (36 issues)	\$250

Rest of World (Airmail)

1 year (12 issues)	£72
2 year (24 issues)	£130
3 year (36 issues)	£180

Distributed by:
Post Scriptum (UK only),
Unit G, OYO Business Park, Hindmans Way,
Dagenham, RM9 6LN – Tel: 020 8526 7779

LMPI (North America)
8155 Larrey Street, Montreal (Quebec),
H1J 2L5, Canada – Tel: 514 355-5610

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Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT
Tel: 020 7288 1305 Fax: 020 7486 7015
Email: info@chess.co.uk, Website: www.chess.co.uk

FRONT COVER:

Cover Design: Matt Read
Cover image: Tao Bhokanandh/CHESS Magazine

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Printed in the UK by The Magazine Printing Company using only paper from FSC/PEFC suppliers www.magprint.co.uk

Late Drama



It was no great surprise to see a number of endgames in the world championship match. Jonathan Speelman takes a look at some of the more dramatic and instructive ones

The world championship match produced a number of fascinating endgames though the standard of defence was so high that, of course, the first decisive one was as late as the first play-off game, the thirteenth. Here I'm going to look at that breakthrough moment for Magnus Carlsen and first, three other games, two of which he was defending in and the third (mildly) attacking.

We begin with the wonderful fortress the world champion created to defend himself in Game 6.

M.Carlsen-F.Caruana Game 6



After an already fierce battle, Caruana had outplayed Carlsen who was now on the ropes. He decided to sacrifice a piece, but later admitted that for the second time this game, he had missed ...♙a3 blockading the a-pawn, which made it two pawns for the piece rather than three.

44 ♙xd5!?

If 44 ♗f1 ♗xf3 45 ♗xf3 d4+ 46 ♖e2 ♙b5+ 47 ♖e1 ♙d3 is very unpleasant though the engines claim, at least at first, that it's defensible.

44...♙xe3 45 ♙xc6 ♙xf4 46 ♙xb7 ♙d6 47 ♙xa6 ♗e4 48 g4

48 ♗f3 ♗xg3 49 ♙d3 ♗h5 50 a4 was also very complicated and would require a whole other skein of analysis.

48...♙a3!

Winning a queenside pawn.

49 ♙c4 ♗f8 50 g5 ♗c3 51 b4!

It is important to retain a passed pawn as far as possible from the kingside.

51...♙xb4 52 ♗f3 ♗a4 53 ♙b5 ♗c5 54 a4



White has just two pawns for the piece, but a clear advantage on the kingside which gives him chances of either exchanging or attacking when Black advances his king. It's also worth noting that if later Black is induced to capture the h-pawn with his own pawn then he will have the wrong rook's pawn.

54...f6 55 ♗g4!

The white king has to stay on the kingside, protecting his pawns and eyeing Black's.

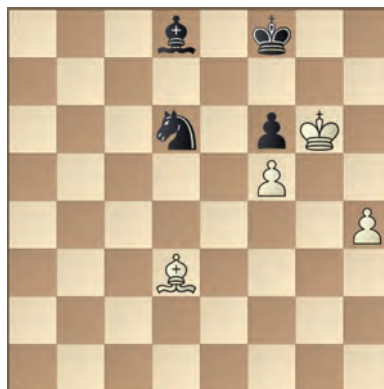
55...♗e4 56 ♗h5

Watching at the time, I imagined that if the black knight were on e5 then he would win, by playing ...♙e1, king round to h3 and ...♙xh4. However, of course when Black plays ...♗h3, White replies ♙f1+, so I'm not sure about that either.

56...♙e1 57 ♙d3 ♗d6

Carlsen now found a lovely way to create a fortress, though it was one requiring high maintenance and at one moment he fell into arrears.

58 a5! ♙xa5 59 gxf6 gxf6 60 ♗g6 ♙d8

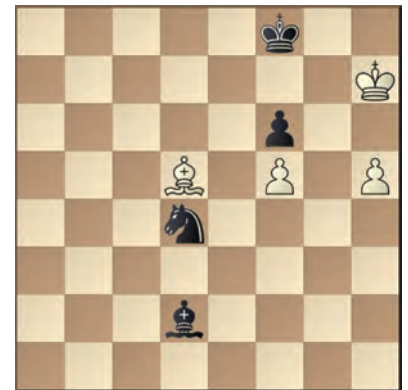


61 ♗h7!

Preventing ...♗f8-g8-h8 after which Black can force the h-pawn to advance and

then eventually capture it. For example, 61 ♙c2 ♗g8 62 ♙d3 ♗h8 63 ♙c2 ♙b6 64 ♙d3 ♙f2 65 h5 ♙h4 66 ♗h6 (or 66 ♙c2 ♙g5 67 ♙d3 ♗g8 68 ♙b1 ♗b5 69 ♙c2 ♗d4 70 ♙d1 ♗c6 71 ♙b3+ ♗h8 72 h6 ♗e5+ 73 ♗h5 ♙e3 74 ♙d5 ♗h7 and the h-pawn falls) 66...♗f7+ 67 ♗g6 ♗e5+ 68 ♗h6 ♙g5#.

61...♗f7 62 ♙c4 ♗e5 63 ♙d5 ♙a5 64 h5 ♙d2 65 ♙a2 ♗f3 66 ♙d5 ♗d4



67 ♗g6?!

In this extremely difficult position, Carlsen committed an almost imperceptible inaccuracy which 'should' have led to his defeat. Both players believed in the fortress by now, however, and unsurprisingly Caruana failed to realise that the moment was critical.

67 ♙c4 was correct and if 67...♙c3 68 ♙d3. Black wants to get his knight to g3 to force h6 and this will win if the bishop is on g5. However, with the bishop defending the pawn on the long diagonal, it's impossible to transfer it to g5 since after ...♙d2, say, ♗g6 will threaten both ♗xf6 and h7.

Another important position after 67 ♙c4 is that which arises following 67...♙g5 68 ♗g6. This is zugzwang. If it were White to move then he would have to allow either ...♗e2 or ...♗g8, and both would be fatal.

Too lazy to set-up the chessboard?

Download our free electronic database (available in both PGN & CBH formats) with all the chess and annotations from this, and every article – only at:

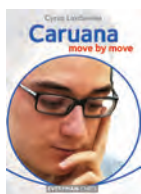
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A Year in Review

Continuing from last month, Sean Marsh presents more of the best works of 2018

What will the New Year bring? Lots of great chess books and DVDs, hopefully.

Time now to take a look at some recent products and to catch one or two that almost fell through the gaps of last year's reviews.



Caruana: Move by Move

Cyrus Lakdawala, 368 pages
Everyman Chess

RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**

It is interesting to see if this book, offering an optimistic viewpoint on the strengths of Caruana, matched the reality of the situation during the world championship. The author knew the match would be very close and writes: "I'm guessing that Carlsen is an approximate 55%-45% favourite to retain his title."

There follows an interesting comparison on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the two players, across a plethora of categories from opening preparation all the way through to converting an advantage. Carlsen comes out significantly ahead from the chosen criteria, but Lakdawala stuck to his close percentage opinion and predicted a 6½-5½ victory for Carlsen. Interesting!

There are six chapters, with each one covering a different aspect of Caruana's game: Attack, Defence and Counterattack, Dynamic Element, Exploiting Imbalances, Accumulating Advantages, and Endgame.

Defence and counterattack were very much on the agenda during the world championship match, so chapter two is of particular interest. The opening paragraph sums up the good and bad side of Lakdawala's prose: "Being in trouble is not the same thing as being in a crisis of faith and I'm pretty sure that some poet, somewhere, wrote that each passing day is a new beginning, no matter how bad your day was yesterday. In this chapter we examine Caruana's skill in positions where life has gone wrong and his position is under pressure, to one degree or another, or in positions where he must defend and counterattack accurately to consolidate."

The message is fine, but why not find a name and quote for the poem – or leave it out? To satiate the reader's inquisitive mind, the poem would presumably be 'Each Day is a New Beginning' by Gail Grierson.

*Each day is a new beginning,
If you don't dwell on the past;
Happiness will come to you
When you don't let sadness last.*

Wise words, which would have been pertinent to the title match, too.

Here is a particularly good example of Caruana on the counterattack against Carlsen, something he certainly had to do in London.

F.Caruana-M.Carlsen Sao Paulo 2012



It has been a turbulent game and Caruana now has a choice between the solid 79 ♖c1 and a big – but unclear – counterpunch. Interestingly, he chose the latter, which is questioned by Lakdawala, who prefers the former.

79 ♖xe4? dxe4 80 f5 ♕g2?

"After this mistake the assessment changes from winning for Black to equal. 80...♖b1! is winning, although the process remains lengthy."

81 ♖e3 ♖b2??

"81...♖b1! draws." Now the white pawns turn out to be too strong.

82 d5 ♖xc2 83 d6 c3 84 d7 ♖d2 85 d8 ♖xd8 86 ♕xd8 h4 87 gxh4! g3 88 f6 c2 89 ♕d2 e3+ 90 ♕xc2 e2 91 ♕a5 1-0

A game offering intriguing questions. Was 91 ♕a5 just outside of Carlsen's calculating horizon? Was he unused to an opponent offering such stern resistance over the course of such a lengthy game? Did he find it difficult to recalibrate his thoughts after Caruana's brave sacrifice of the exchange?

This book offers a sound examination of Caruana's game, complete with Lakdawala's trademark flowery prose, which will either delight or depress the reader. Here is a sample: "Fabiano succumbs to the temptation to punish Carlsen, since for the normally aggressive Caruana to play passively for so

long is the same feeling a chain smoker gets when having to go cold turkey without a cigarette on a 12-hour flight."

If we see another C vs C (remember when it was always K vs K?) title match in two years' time then it will be interesting to see if Caruana's play has improved further – and in which departments.

ChessBase continue to produce an admirable amount of instructional DVDs. Each one offers considerable value for money, with some of the running times extending beyond seven hours.

Perhaps it was the thought of the title match in London that made my thoughts gravitate towards this duo of world champion-related DVDs.



Master Class Vol. 10 – Mikhail Botvinnik

Marin, Müller, Pelletier & Reeh
ChessBase PC-DVD;

running time: 8 hours, 17 inutes

RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

Any chess player who has never studied the life and games of Botvinnik really is missing out. A dominant force at the top from the late-1940s to the mid-1960s, his terrific title matches against Bronstein, Smyslov, Tal and Petrosian offer a wealth of chess lessons in so many different areas. His strategic plans were always well to the fore, but his adaptability – based on his ultra-serious scientific approach to chess – saw him win back his title twice.

Very few people would have given Botvinnik a chance of beating Tal in their 1961 rematch, but nevertheless he did so – and in crushing style to boot. The story of his fabulous career also carries some unanswered questions, including mysteries featuring Keres and Bronstein. Were dark forces at work? We will probably never know, as the people who could (and probably should) have come clean are no longer with us.

There are various ways to study Botvinnik's games, with many available books, but this DVD adds a very welcome interactive touch, with numerous video lessons by Pelletier (on openings), Marin (strategy), Reeh (tactics), and Müller (endgames, of

course). A big database of 1,235 games is included, along with a short biography by Johannes Fischer, tournament crosstables, repertoire trees for both White and Black, and a tactical test.

Botvinnik was noted for his scientific style and deep preparation. Pelletier's videos cover the great champion's work and experience with the Dutch, Semi-Slav, Grünfeld and then his repertoire against 1 e4 (French and Caro-Kann), and anyone interested in those openings will find the presentations very interesting.

In fact there is much instructional material in all phases of the game. Botvinnik's endgame skill was extraordinary. Even after seeing certain positions so many times there still seems to be certain kind of magic in the air when one sees how he manages to outplay top-class opponents from positions others would give up as drawn.

A.Kotov-M.Botvinnik USSR Ch., Moscow, 1955



It must have taken great skill and extreme confidence to play **1...g5!!** in this position and then after **2 fxg5** (2 hxg5 allows the h-pawn to run) to follow up immediately with **2...d4!**. There is a lot happening here and Müller guides the viewer nicely through the intricacies.

There is room for improvement in the DVD. The short biography only scratches the surface and could easily be expanded. The annotations to the games in the database are the typical language-less affair. It would be good to see a selection of the best games with new annotations and how about a list of books by or about Botvinnik for further reading?

Nevertheless, there is a gold mine of instruction to be found in Botvinnik's games and anyone neglecting a study of the classics really is missing out on an excellent road to self-improvement. After all, he was a dominant force at the summit, with a world championship career lasting from 1948 to 1963.

Endgames of the World Champions – From Fischer to Carlsen

Karsten Müller, PC-DVD;

running time: 8 hours, 17 mins, ChessBase

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

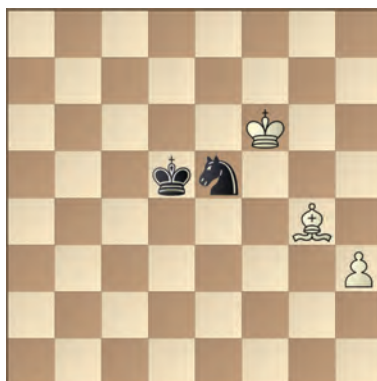
It is impossible to keep Müller away from endgames. This new DVD takes advantage of the publicity generated by the Carlsen-

Caruana match to offer the student a practical guide to a selection of endgames from some of the giants of chess. The champions in question are Fischer, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik, Anand and Carlsen.

We know what to expect from Müller: top-quality video lessons that manage to be highly instructive yet accessible to players of all levels. This DVD continues the trend.

We hear a lot about Carlsen's ability to win from an endgame position offering such slim chances of success, but it is easy to forget he was by no means the first player to be successful in this department.

R.Fischer-M.Taimanov 2nd matchgame, Vancouver 1971



Fischer crushed Taimanov 6-0 in this famous Candidates match. It should not be forgotten that Taimanov was one of the world's top players at the time. Fischer's ability to squeeze out the tiniest of winning chances brought him many important victories. Here he hasn't even got the 'correct' bishop to help promote the pawn by protecting the queening square and yet still manages to win.

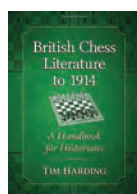
Müller points to three drawing moves for Black (81...♗d6; 81...♗d4; 81...♗d3), but a demoralised and tired Taimanov played **81...♗e4?** and that was all Fischer needed to help him win:

82 ♖c8! ♜f4 83 h4 ♜f3 84 h5 ♜g5 85 ♜f5 ♜f3 86 h6 ♜g5 87 ♜g6 ♜f3 88 h7 ♜e5+ 89 ♜f6 1-0

It is magical to see such a conversion.

Elsewhere Müller spends time looking at various drawing methods and zones, while supplying plenty of instruction in other departments, such as outside passed pawns, when to exchange, and how use the king actively.

Presumably more DVDs could eventually follow, focusing on other champions. Meanwhile, this one makes for excellent and instructive viewing.



British Chess Literature to 1914*

Tim Harding, 394 pages

McFarland

RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

I felt it was a quiet year for this famous American publisher. However, historians will be happy with Tim Harding's paperback treatise of chess literature, which shows an admirable depth of research.

The chess columns from 1813-1914 receive excellent coverage and are a reminder of just how popular chess was in the printed press of the bygone age. This book will have little appeal to the practical player, but it would be a shame if such books didn't receive a mention.



Catastrophes and Tactics in the Chess Opening Volumes 1-9*

Carsten Hansen, 300 pages

Self-published

RRP £12.99 (each) **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

Lovers of quick wins and opening traps need to investigate the new series by Carsten Hansen, which has now run to an impressive nine volumes.

"We all dream of winning our games fast, using excellent opening preparation, flashy tactics and then mate our opponents." These games "Are typically between players with a rating of at least 2350 and often well more than that", plus "Several games played by players rated over 2600."

Each book has an average of 140-150 examples of early catastrophes and some of the names who have been caught out are indeed big fish. It doesn't have to be the sharp openings that will induce early errors. Another way is to lull the opponent with a false sense of security by using a non-aggressive opening, such as the Torre Attack.

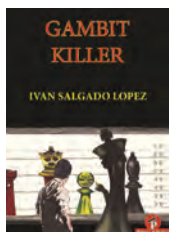
Ye Rongguang-L.Van Wely Antwerp 1997



It is clear that Black's position is not under pressure and as Hansen demonstrates, any of 7...♗c6, 7...♗b7 or 7...♗cd4 would have been fine. However, Van Wely preferred the

careless **7...b6??** and was no doubt shocked to see **8 ♟xf6! ♟xf6 9 ♟d5**, after which he played on just a little while longer before resigning.

These are exactly the sort of traps that can prove extremely effective at club level (I remember springing something almost identical via a Torre Attack many years ago), and this series will provide plenty more traps where that one came from. All the standard openings are covered and the brevity of the games makes them ideal for mini-lessons for tutors too.



Gambit Killer

Ivan Salgado Lopez, 208 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.35**

Sometimes it seems that every club player is waiting to spring a dangerous gambit. What to do? It is difficult to prepare for every eventuality; a well-written guide is required and in this one the author states: "I want to give you *only* the information that you need, no more, no less."

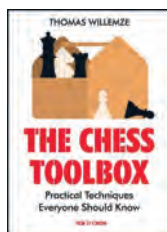
The organisation of the material is one of the book's great strengths. For each opening, the author offers an introduction, historical games, a quick-start theory guide, more in-depth theory, an investigation into the typical middlegames arising and, finally, complete games with exercises.

All of the lines arise from queen's pawn openings and they include some of the trickiest – yet respectable – gambits of all, such as the Budapest. This is met by **1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♟g4 4 e3! ♟xe5 5 f4!**.



"There are almost no games with this move [...] I could find only some correspondence games, but not a single GM has tried it! The point is very easy: I want Black to commit the knight, first. Once the knight is played to g6 or c6, I can plan how to place my pieces accordingly."

This is typical of the author's approach throughout the book, as he aims to throw the gambiteer back on his own resources. Yes, it is a tempting proposition and I am sure the lines in this book will allow club and tournament to change their way of thinking. Instead of fearing gambits (and hiding behind the fireproof London System), why not tackle them head-on and try to claim an early advantage? Studying *Gambit Killer* will undoubtedly be a big step in the right direction.



The Chess Toolbox: Practical Techniques Everyone Should Know

Thomas Willemze, 400 pages

New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

This book is "Written for the ambitious club player" and in his foreword, John Watson (no stranger to chess reviews) opines the author "Has made a unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature of chess improvement, as well as contributing new insights into several areas of the game." High praise indeed.

The author is keen to not bombard readers with an encyclopaedic coverage of techniques and ideas, but has essentially cherry-picked his way through the sea of chess ideas.

"When you study chess, it is much more effective to become an expert on a limited number of topics than to acquire only a shallow knowledge of almost everything. Drawing from my experience as a trainer, I have carefully selected the most important tools; the ones that I consider to be the most beneficial for your improvement."

The chosen examples are excellent and eye-catching, such as this unusual position.

Z.Efimenko-M.Sebenik
European Team Ch., Halkidiki 2011



White now played the obvious enough **44 ♟h1** and Black...resigned! The tripling up of White's major pieces is a fine example of Alekhine's gun. It is necessary to see a little further than the immediate exchanges to find the winning plan, which is revealed only after **44...♟e7** (as good as anything on offer for Black) **45 hxg5! hxg5 46 ♟xh7 ♟xh7 47 ♟xh7 ♟xh7 48 ♟xh7+ ♟xh7**. A glance will be enough to see that the knight cannot emerge without a sacrifice, but just how is White going to create a winning plan from this simplified and blocked position?

The answer lies in the fabulous **49 d4!!** when both **49...cxd4 50 ♟c1 ♟g7 51 ♟a3** and **49...exd4 50 ♟g1 ♟g7 51 ♟h2** represent a wonderfully memorable idea. Sebenik really must have had great faith Efimenko's ability to find **49 d4**.

As the author states, "The aim of this book is to make you a better chess player, but never forget: studying chess has to be fun!" He delivers – and in style. This book really does offer a fine combination of hard work and fun.

The products reviewed above are all worthy additions to any chess library. There is just enough space left to cast a backward glance and recall which books we reviewed during 2018 are likely to enjoy a lengthy shelf-life.

In addition to the English Chess Federation Book of the Year winner for 2018 and the candidates covered last time, the following will keep readers entertained for some time to come: *Evil-Doer: Half a Century with Viktor Korchnoi* by Genna Sosonko (Elk and Ruby), *The Woodpecker Method* by Smith and Tikkanen (Quality Chess), *Chess Calculation Training Volume 3* by Romain Edouard (Thinkers Publishing), *Applying Logic in Chess* by Erik Kislik (Gambit), and *Strategic Chess Exercises* by Emmanuel Bricard (New in Chess). If you missed them in 2018, make sure you add them to your collection as soon as possible during 2019.

I wonder which books will make the shortlist for the 2019 English Chess Federation Book of the Year? It's bound to be another interesting journey.

* - Limited availability. If interested in purchasing a copy of these books, please first contact Chess & Bridge on 020 7486 9848 or via info@chess.co.uk.



Christmas Chess Quiz



Overdosed on the mince pies and sherry? Then detox with our festive-themed quiz, full of all sorts of chess challenges, and brought to you by Charles Higgin and Matt Read

Last year we started the Christmas Quiz with a set of questions about chess players. This year we are starting with a set of questions about chess openings, the first with, naturally, a Christmas theme.

1) The composer of the song 'White Christmas' will lead you to this defence.

2) Which opening is an anagram of 'tier'?

3) Which opening variation takes its name from two monsters?

4) In 1961 Bobby Fischer claimed that 3....d6 was a refutation of which opening?

5) 'The Fried Liver Attack' is perhaps the only opening named after a food. It is a variation of which opening?

6) Which world champion lends his name to a Defence to the Queen's Gambit?

7) 'The Monkey's Bum' is a variation of which opening?

8) Which country produced 7 world champions, but hasn't got an opening named after it?

9) This defence is named after a city which is situated on a river. The settlement on one side of the river gives the first part of the city's name, the settlement on the other side gives you the second part of the city's name.

10) Which nationality lends its name to the most number of chess openings?

11) Many openings are named after countries, towns and cities, but can you name a defence named after a group of peoples living across many different countries?

12) In Bobby Fischer's 'Game of the Century' the game transposed into which opening?

13) The word 'gambit' comes from a word meaning 'to trip' – in which language?

14) Smyslov, Breyer, Chigorin, Steinitz, Bird and Schliemann all have a variation named after them – in which opening?

15) This opening could connect courage with double?

16) This opening could connect letters to kissing?

17) Which opening shares its name with an Ultravox hit?

18) Which chess opening is a Hebrew term meaning 'son of my sorrow'?

19) Which attack was famously used as a prepared variation against the then world champion José Raúl Capablanca in 1918?

20) Which opening variation was simultaneously played by Argentine players Panno, Pilnik and Najdorf who were facing the Soviet Grandmasters Geller, Spassky and Keres in a 1955 Interzonal?

Anagrams of Players' Names

Famously, 'It's Only Me' is an anagram of Tony Miles and was used for the name of the book containing writings by him and about him brought out after his death.

Can you find the players hidden in these anagrams?

21) On the girls

22) Shy and vain

23) Resignation trap

24) Banner lets

25) Uncle grass man

26) Slow Eyes

27) Hair I Sing

28) Thonged person

29) Alarming pic

30) Camel Limp No

It happened in 2018

31) 2018 was an Olympiad year. Which country cleaned up, winning not only gold medals in the Open and Women's section, but also gold medals for their board ones' performances?

32) 2018 saw a new women's world champion. What's her name?

33) Alongside the Olympiad in Batumi, FIDE held an election to determine its new President. Who emerged victorious?

34) Name the nine-year-old chess prodigy who has been saved from deportation following a protracted immigration battle.

35) Magnus Carlsen retained his world no.1 spot in 2018, a position he has held on every FIDE rating list since July 2011. Who was the previous world no.1?

36) This year's British Chess Championship saw some familiar names engraved on the trophies. The Open winner is now a six-time champion and the Women's Champion is now an eight-time winner. Name both.

37) Radoslaw Wojtaszek and Alina Kashlinskaya carried off both the major prizes at the Chess.com Isle of Man tournament. What else links the winners?

38) Javokhir Sindarov became a grandmaster in October at the tender age of 12 years, 10 months and 5 days, which makes him the second youngest ever. Who is the youngest?

39) Which country hosted the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz this November, marking the country's first-ever Super-GM tournament?

40) Which other tournament do Tata Steel sponsor and will do so again in 2019?



The Positions!

We hope you will forgive us if we begin with a couple from Charles' recent games? (At least that way they are fairly easy!)

queen) **2 f4+!** ♖xd5 (2...♗xf4 3 a7 ♖a2+ 4 ♗e1 leaves Black unable to avoid a deadly check) **3 f5 c4 4 f6 ♗e6 5 a7!** and after **5...♗xf6 6 ♖f8+ ♗e5 7 a8♗ ♖xa8 8 ♖xa8 ♗d4 9 ♗e2** the win shouldn't be too difficult.

23 McShane-Svidler

Unfortunately, Luke lost his way in this highly complex position: **1 ♖e3? g6! 2 g4 ♗g7 3 ♗g2 ♗c5 4 b4 ♗cd7 5 ♗d2 ♖c8 6 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 7 c5 dxc5 0-1**. Instead, 1 ♗d1! would have threatened 2 ♗g5+ and maintained the balance: for example, 1...♖a7

(1...♖a8?! 2 ♗d4 is risky only for Black, as shown by 2...g6 3 f3 ♗c5? 4 b4 ♗cd7 5 ♗c6+ ♗e8 6 c5! when the pin and queenside pawns should prove decisive) 2 c8♗! ♗xc8 3 ♗d4 (Black is a whole rook ahead, but unable to escape the upcoming perpetual check) 3...♖c7 (3...♖c5?! 4 ♗c6+ ♗f6 would be rather risky, although after 5 ♗e3 ♖f5 6 ♗d4 with 6...♗xf2! 7 ♗xf2 ♖e4 8 ♖f1 g5 9 ♗c6 ♖g6 Black may somehow be able to scramble his way towards a draw) 4 ♗c6+ ♗e8 5 ♗d4+ ♗e7 6 ♗c6+ and it's a draw, since Black cannot

allow either of 6...♗d7? 7 ♖h5 g6 8 ♖h4! or, more obviously, 6...♗f6?? 7 ♖f3+.

24) Peralta-Suarez Pousa

1 ♗xh6! gxh6 2 ♖h3! (2 ♖xh6 ♗f6! would be much less clear) **2...♗b4+** (desperation, but if now 2...♗f6 3 exf6 ♖xf6 4 ♖g3+ ♗h8 5 ♖xe8 and wins) **3 axb4 ♖e7 4 ♖xh6 ♖g7 5 ♖a3!? ♗h7** (5...♖e7 was better, as pointed out by John Emms, although after his further 6 ♗d2! ♗h7 7 ♖hg3 ♗h8 8 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 9 ♖xe6 Black would not have survived in any case) **6 ♖g3 1-0**

This Month's New Releases

Checkmate: TV Series One

3 DVD set; running time: 9 hours
Checkmate TV Show Ltd.
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

Many readers will have fond memories of the BBC series *The Master Game*, which brought chess to TV in an accessible way back in the 1970s and 1980s. The trump card of the production was the recreation of the players' thoughts and the way in which the entire game was condensed into an easily digested bite-sized cultural chunk.

The format has been overdue a revival, which is why the *Checkmate* project was greeted with enthusiasm. The presenters are Simon Williams and Anna Richardson. The former is, of course, the famous 'Ginger GM' who is already well-known to chess players via his own DVDs and other outlets. The latter is, perhaps, best known as the anchor and only permanently clothed person on Channel 4's *Naked Attraction*. Richardson and Williams work well together.

The programme, billed as 'The Master Game for a new generation', features a tournament of ten players: Nigel Short, Richard Rapport, Arkadij Naiditsch, Tiger Hillarp Persson, Igor Lysyj, Ju Wenjun, Irina Krush, Nino Maisuradze, Elisabeth Paehtz, and Jovanka Houska. Nigel Short represents an historical link to *The Master Game* and is likely to remain the only player to appear on both programmes (indeed, one of the DVD extras is an old episode of *The Master Game* featuring Short).

This is a three-disc set, with the first two covering the tournament and the third disc showcasing an extraordinary nine hours of game analysis by Simon Williams. There is no doubt at all that the set represents excellent value for money.

A typical show in this series starts with travelogue-style shots of Gozo, the sister

island of Malta, followed by Simon Williams teaching the basic moves of a piece to co-presenter Anna Richardson. There is also a run-through of the eight players. It is only then that attention turns to the actual games. The intention of appealing to the broadest possible audience is admirable, but this is a case of trying to cram in too much over a short period of time. The core audience will already know how to play chess and will be frustrated by the wait to reach the real action.

TV shows used to assume a lot more of their audience (go and watch some older documentaries, such as *The World at War*, to see how it was done before everything was dumbed down). On the subject of dumbing down, presenters should avoid the use of sloppy words such as 'dosh' and 'guys'. There is another issue with Simon Williams referring to rooks and bishops as guillotines and snipers respectively.

There is scope for improvement elsewhere too. The shoehorned graphics utilised to switch scenes lack subtlety. More time should have been spent watching the actual over-the-board footage and hearing the thoughts of the players, rather than cutting back to the presenters every couple of minutes. Simplicity was one of the great strengths of *The Master Game* and that is why the old show still stands the test of time. The problem with trying to cover all bases in each *Checkmate* show catches up with the production at the end, as the sixth and final episode has the unenviable task of wrapping up the tournament coverage which, up until that point, had only reached the halfway mark.

This may sound a shade on the critical side, but it should be taken as constructive. The chess action is entertaining; we just need to see more of it happening. The games are very interesting too. Perhaps the extra pressure of the cameras is to blame for some unusual errors, such as the one seen in the following position.



T.Hillarp Persson-N.Short Gozo 2015



White intended to castle here, but somehow managed to let go of the king on f1. The move stood and Short consequently gained an advantage.

It would not be sporting to name the winner of the tournament here as most readers will not have seen any of this series, even though it was shot back in 2015.

Overall, this is a very good start and hopefully the second series will sharpen up the soft edges to give a tighter feel and bring the main strength – the games themselves – into a much tighter focus.

Sean Marsh

Closing Gambit: 1978 – Korchnoi versus Karpov and the Kremlin

Alan Byron (director), DVD,
running time: 1 hour, 25 minutes
Screenbound Productions
RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

2018 brought a number of notable anniversaries, from the end of The Great War

to Elvis's '68 Comeback Special and many others in between. For the chess world, it brought a commemoration of the infamous Karpov-Korchnoi title match, played in Baguio City in the Philippines, back in 1978.

The clash was notable for numerous reasons. It was Karpov's first title match, even though he had been the champion since 1975. It also featured the Soviet Union's golden boy in action against the dreaded dissident, Viktor Korchnoi, who had been anything but quiet since seeking political asylum in Amsterdam in 1976.

Korchnoi had won successive Candidates matches against former colleagues Petrosian, Polugaevsky and Spassky to reach the final. Finding his best form at the age of 47 was a phenomenal achievement by anyone's standards (later Kasparov would be long retired at that age), but how would he fare against the machine-like Karpov, backed up by the might of the Soviet chess empire?

To cut a long story short, Korchnoi fought back from 2-5 down (this was back in the days when draws were not counted and six wins were required to win the match), to equalise the match before being completely outplayed in the fateful 32nd game. It is strange to think there was even more drama in Baguio City than in Reykjavik just six years before – and who would have believed, back in 1972, that the very next title match would be contested without Fischer or Spassky?

The documentary is not afraid to spend time building up the context of the clash, including some coverage of the 1974 Candidates Final between Karpov and Korchnoi (essentially a title match, as it was already looking likely Fischer would decline the conditions of the 1975 match). The downside of this is that it takes approximately half of the running time to reach Baguio City. There is so much to cover that this could have easily been extended to at least twice the length of the DVD.

There is an early attempt to compare the match to the contemporary Ali-Frazier 'Thrilla in Manila' bout of 1975, but it doesn't work and is quickly dropped. The footage of the match is, however, very welcome. It is a reminder of just how grand title matches were, with the massive names of the players displayed very prominently behind them.

Various people are interviewed, including Stean, Keene, Sosonko and Anand. Kasparov pops up occasionally, with his own agenda (as usual), keen to describe the shenanigans surrounding the match as "A clear demonstration of KGB dirty tricks". Their memories and opinions are all very interesting, but the most important person to offer his thoughts is Karpov himself, who comes across as a blameless and avuncular character. Clearly, this is far from the truth and he rather 'gets away with it' on this occasion. We could have done with a lot more interview footage of Korchnoi to balance the coverage; it is a real shame he was not the subject of an in-depth interview purely on the subject of Baguio while he was still around.

There is still plenty of ground left uncovered, even though plenty of boxes are ticked: the yoghurt; the cigar and soap incident; Dr. Zukhar, the infamous parapsychologist; the Ananda Marga Gurus; and various other outrageous aspects of the match. Korchnoi invested so much time and energy on off-board activities that he may well have been distracted on occasion at the board.

V.Korchnoi-A.Karpov 5th matchgame, Baguio City 1978



Korchnoi is winning, but in severe time-trouble he erred with 55 ♖e4+? and Karpov somehow survived to draw after 124 moves. Korchnoi could have forced checkmate in eight moves, starting with 55 ♖f7+.

On the other hand, all of the extraordinary incidents and aspects of the match are exactly why it retains such an interest all these years on.

Despite having a running time of just over 80 minutes, this documentary represents an admirable effort. However, a longer running time would have enabled a much more in-depth coverage, without running dry. As it stands, we have a documentary that is definitely entertaining, instructive and well worth the viewer's time, but in truth it only really scratches the surface. Recommended viewing, nonetheless.

Sean Marsh



A Complete Repertoire for Black for Strategically Minded Players

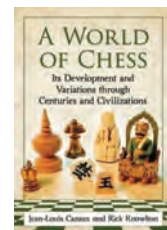
Yelena Dembo & Johan Hellsten,
516 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

At first thought the Grünfeld and Sicilian Kan might not seem like natural bed fellows, but they are both certainly strategic, as well as dynamic in nature, and both have long formed key components of the repertoire of Peter

Svidler. As such, quite possibly Everyman Chess were entirely correct to package up *Play the Grünfeld* along with *Play the Sicilian Kan* in their latest amalgamation work.

Also just out in the same series and also retailing at £19.99 (Subscribers – £17.99) is *A Complete Guide to Benoni Systems and Structures* by Raetsky, Chetverik and Vegh.



A World of Chess

Jean-Louis Cazaux & Rick Knowlton,
408 pages, paperback

RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

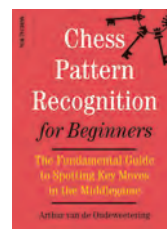
McFarland might have had a fairly quiet year, but their latest work offers something different from their standard historical works. The French and American authors look at our favourite game's 'Development and Variations through Centuries and Civilizations'. Cazaux takes a deep look at the origins of chess, while Knowlton is something of an expert on chess variants of which he discusses a great number. As usual for McFarland, lavish illustrations abound.

Chess Opening Traps for Kids

Graham Burgess, 128 pages, paperback

RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

With a similar cover and layout to the best-selling *How to Beat Your Dad at Chess* comes this new work from Gambit Publications, released in time for the Christmas market. Burgess aims to show juniors how to play the opening stage of the game. He breaks down his coverage into 100 sections, most featuring a basic opening trap followed by a more complex example. The result is an instructive guide, as well as an entertaining read.



Chess Pattern Recognition for Beginners

Arthur van de Oudeweetering,
224 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The Dutch IM follows up his earlier acclaimed works, *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* and *Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition*, by attempting the same approach for those fairly new to the game. Once again van de Oudeweetering's focus is pattern recognition and building blocks, whether he is discussing development in the opening or basic forms of attack.



Foxy 187: The Learn King's Indian in 1 hour for the Tournament Player

Andrew Martin, Foxy DVD,
running time: 84 minutes

SPECIAL PRICE £12.95

If anyone is going to be able to present the key ideas behind the King's Indian while mapping out the beginnings of a repertoire in little more than an hour, it is that highly experienced, popular presenter Andrew Martin, who here draws heavily on the games of Hikaru Nakamura.

Also new in the same series and available too for just £12.95 is Martin's *Foxy 188: The Sicilian Najdorf in 1 hour for the Tournament Player*.



Grandmaster Repertoire: The Queen's Indian Defence

Michael Roiz, 424 pages, paperback
RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

The Israeli Grandmaster and theoretician follows up his earlier Nimzo-Indian repertoire for Quality Chess by mapping out a sister repertoire with 1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 b6. Once again, the explanation is clear and the theoretical coverage, deep. If you want a dependable line to go with the Nimzo-Indian, one in good theoretical shape, but not too dry and so easily possible to play for a win with, then Roiz's coverage of the Queen's Indian might well fit the bill. Do note as well that if you'd like a copy in hardback version, that too is available for an extra £4.00.

Mega Database 2019

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £164.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £148.49**

Last month we listed the various new *ChessBase 15* packages. Those happy with their existing program may, however, still want to purchase a new database. The latest version of the *Mega Database* contains some 7.6 million games, of which 72,000 are annotated. There's also a new version of the Playerbase and included too is access to a year's worth of download updates, which should add 250,000 or so games to *Mega Database 2019* during the course of 2019.

Those looking to upgrade from *Mega Database 2018* may do so for £64.95 (Subscribers – £58.45), and by quoting the

serial number, while those wanting to upgrade from an older version of *Mega Database* or *Big Database* may do so for £114.95 (Subscribers – £103.45).

Also new from ChessBase is *Big Database 2019*, which is the same as *Mega Database 2019*, but without any annotated games and retails at £64.99 (Subscribers – £58.49). They have also released *Fritz Powerbook 2019* (£64.99 or £58.49 for Subscribers), featuring 25 million opening positions taken from 1.7 million high-class tournament games and which will really suit those who like their statistics and to study openings in tree format. Do note too that those owning *Fritz Powerbook 2018* and wishing to upgrade may do so for £39.95 (Subscribers – £35.95), and by quoting the serial number.

Keep it Simple: 1.e4

Christof Sielecki, 376 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

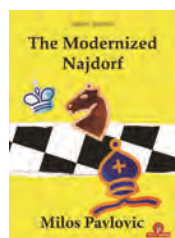
The German IM presents 'A Solid and Straightforward Chess Opening Repertoire for White', with the club player very much at the heart of his approach. The aim is to put some pressure on Black, but without taking much risk or having to memorise reams of moves. Instead, Sielecki has largely opted for manoeuvring-based openings, such as tackling 1...e5 with the Scotch Four Knights and meeting the Sicilian with 2 ♖f3 and 3 ♗b5(+). The explanation is clear and this repertoire may well prove popular.



Lasker: Move by Move

Zenon Franco, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

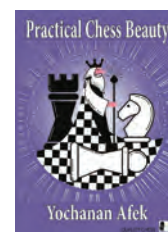
This is a detailed look at the life and especially games of the legendary second world champion, who reigned from 1894 until 1921. Lasker is often considered to be the first practical player, but just how true is that? Franco certainly has his views on Lasker's regular doses of "good fortune". Readers may be happy to sit back and enjoy a selection of extremely well-annotated games, but there are also plenty of pointers within which we can apply to our own games even in the 21st century.



The Modernized Najdorf

Milos Pavlovic, 308 pages, paperback
RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

As readers will be aware, Milos Pavlovic is quite the theoretician, as well as an expert on modern chess in general. Here he presents a detailed repertoire with one of the mainstays of his repertoire, the Sicilian Najdorf. Pavlovic covers a great number of topical lines, pointing out several improvements along the way, while this repertoire for Thinkers Publishing is centred around meeting 6 ♗e3 with 6...e5 and 6 ♗g5 with 6...e6 7 f4 h6 8 ♗h4 ♖b6.

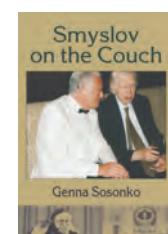


Practical Chess Beauty

Yochanan Afek, 464 pages, hardback
RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

Readers will be fully aware of the creativity of Yochanan Afek, as well as his huge knowledge of chess studies. Afek has certainly composed a great number and here presents his favourites, covering such topics as domination, under-promotion and zwischenzug. Those who really like to solve studies will find a great amount of material, but this lavishly produced work is even more likely to appeal to those who really enjoy the aesthetic element in chess.

As well as bringing out *Vladimir Kramnik - The Inside Story of a Chess Genius*, as we mentioned last month, Quality Chess have also recently released soft-back versions of *Small Steps to Giant Improvement* by Sam Shankland and Jan Markos' award-winning *Under the Surface*. Those are both available from Chess & Bridge for £22.50 and £19.99 respectively (or £20.25 and £17.99 for Subscribers; add an extra £4.00 if you prefer a hardback version).



Smyslov on the Couch

Genna Sosonko, 200 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Elk and Ruby continue to catch the eye with their recent releases, Sosonko moving on from his reflections on Bronstein and Korchnoi by reminiscing about the seventh world champion. Vassily Smyslov comes across as a warm, highly intelligent and empathetic man. He certainly suffered at times from always seeing the best in people,

not least when David Bronstein blew the whistle over what he perceived were 'thrown' games during the great Zurich Candidates tournament of 1953. All Smyslov fans, as well as those interested in what life was like in the USSR and then Russia after the fall of communism should be in for a treat.



Test Your Chess Skills

Sarhan and Logman Guliev,
180 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Subtitled 'Practical Decisions in Critical Moments', this new work from New in Chess is essentially a puzzle book which looks at a number of important topics. The reader will have to solve opening traps, as well as recognise key endgame motifs and find some positional masterpieces, while the solutions are quite detailed and contain plenty of helpful general pointers.



The Chigorin Defence: Move by Move

Jimmy Liew, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Following his earlier work on the Veresov for Everyman Chess, the Singaporean IM returns to map out a repertoire with another opening which has served him well for many a year, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♖c6. Liew isn't afraid to examine White's more critical tries, against which he has more than the odd twist ready, while throughout good use is made of the series' question-and-answer format.



Tigran Gorgiev, Maestro of Practical Studies: 100 short endgame studies

Sergei Tkachenko, 212 pages, paperback
RRP £11.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £10.75**

Tkachenko continues his series for Elk and Ruby looking at chess problems, here focussing on Gorgiev, a leading Soviet composer. As usual for the series, the solutions are usually no longer than six moves, making each position an ideal mini workout and/or piece of entertainment for the casual reader or public transport commuter.



The Grandmaster – Magnus Carlsen and the Match that Made Chess Great Again

Brin-Jonathan Butler, 224 pages, hardback
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

To coincide with Carlsen-Caruana, Schuster & Schuster released this book on the previous world championship match. It is no analysis of the games, rather journalist Butler aims to capture Carlsen at the height of his powers. We'll have a full review next month.



The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Typical Rook Endgames

Adrian Mikhalechishin, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The FIDE-approved, Chess Evolution-produced series continues with the highly experienced Slovenian GM and chess trainer tackling some of the most important endgames, rook endings. The well-chosen examples and layout both help to bring a high degree of clarity to what can become, once past the basics, quite a complex topic.



The Modernized Reti (Extended Second Edition)

Adrien Demuth, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Like Quality Chess, Thinkers Publishing aren't afraid to bring out second editions within a couple of years or even just a year of the original work appearing. Here the French GM updates his Reti repertoire for White based around 1 ♖f3 followed by 2 c4.

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