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RADJABOV RETURNS

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FIDE World Cup – Radjabov was the last man standing in Khanty-Mansiysk

Coming of Age? – Andrew Ledger made his England senior debut in Croatia

My '59 Memorable Wins – Looking back at Tal's clean sweep over Fischer in 1959

Chess

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Stunning Blows

James Plaskett witnessed a couple of very impressive moves at the World Senior Team Championship, where England had hoped to challenge the USA for Gold

The 2019 World Senior Teams Championship was held on the Greek island of Rhodes back in April and in a hall of the seaside Olympic Palace Hotel that granted us a view of the Turkish coastline just 40 kilometres distant. I would sometimes gaze out on that, reminded of the condominium status of the not too distant Mediterranean isle of my own birth: Cyprus. The event followed straight on from an individual European Championship for seniors held at the same venue, so there were plenty of officials, arbiters, sets and analysis boards to hand – and some players!

England's star performer was John Emms, who turned in some outstanding victories before, sadly, missing an easy win in the final round and capturing a white piece on c6 not with his bishop from h1, but with another unit, thereby permitting his opponent a perpetual check.

What ought to have been the big match was our clash with the USA. Here are two games from it.

A. Yermolinsky-J. Plaskett

USA vs England I
Benko Gambit

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5

A few years since I essayed this.

4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 ♟xa6 6 ♞c3 d6 7 e4 ♟xf1 8 ♟xf1 g6 9 ♞f3 ♟g7 10 g3 0-0 11 ♟g2

Miles once wrote, "I gave up the Benko Gambit because it loses a pawn." Quite.

11... ♞b6

Something of a variance. 11... ♞bd7 being more usual.

12 ♞e1 ♞bd7 13 h3

Shutting out ... ♞g4-e5 manoeuvres.

13... ♞fb8

And the team have taken up their appointed slots.

14 ♞e2 ♞a6 15 ♟g5



It all got rather turgid in Piket-Topalov, Monaco (rapid) 1997, after 15 ♞e1!? ♞e8 (15... ♞b6 was an option) 16 ♟f4 ♟xc3 17 bxc3 f6 18 a4 ♞e5 19 ♟xe5 dx5 and was eventually drawn.

15... ♞b4

I thought 15...h6 something of a weakening here and so eschewed it, but had I known of the games Hjartarson-Alburt, Reykjavik 1986, and Gurevich-Koch, European Team Championship, Haifa 1989, I would have played it.

Each saw 16 ♟e3 ♞b6, whereupon Mikhail Gurevich's 17 b3 was met with 17... ♞f6xd5! when the white pieces trip over each others' feet. After 18 exd5 ♟xc3 19 ♟xh6 ♞xd5! 20 ♞c1 ♟f6 Koch stood better in the centre and on the queenside, and missed several easy wins before they agreed it drawn at move 34.

Hjartarson took care of the problems on the long diagonal by 17 ♞c1, but it made him cede his bishop and a quite splendid battle developed by 17... ♞c4 18 b3 ♞xe3+ 19 ♞xe3 ♞d7 20 a4 c4! 21 ♞b5 cxb3 22 ♞c7 ♞xa4 23 ♞xa8 ♞c5 24 ♞xc5?! dxc5 25 ♞c7 c4 26 e5 ♞a5 28 d6 b2 29 ♞b1 c3 30 e6 fxe6 31 ♞e1 exd6, whereupon it was Psakhis' pawns that were to win it for him in 51 moves.

I simply underestimated the reaction of ... ♞xd5 to White's projected e4-e5 advance.

16 a3 ♞b7 17 ♞c1 ♞c4 18 ♞cc2 ♞c4 19 e5

Action. Yermo conceded that he just didn't want the position to drift into one where the Benko pressurises his queenside.

19... ♞d7 20 exd6

A spectating Jaan Ehvest thought 20 e6 preferable, but that's another world and one which I was not too concerned to enter.

20... exd6 21 ♟c1 Tidying.

21... ♞de5 22 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 23 ♟f4



And we reach something by way of the game's first critical point. Here I had a long think, and not just concerning concrete variations. There were also considerations such as 'Do I have the right, even, in this sort of 'classic' Benko formation, to look for a plus?'. The opened e-file has altered things quite a bit.

23... h6?!

Obviously the critical line was 23... ♞d3 24 ♟xd6 ♞xb2 25 ♞xb2 ♞xb2 26 ♞xb2 ♞xd6. I guess here something like 27 ♞b5 ♞d7 28 ♞b1 c4 is far from implausible, when I rather fancy Black's chances of holding. But, like I said, I wasn't at all certain whether I ought to be content with just 'holding'.

24 ♞e4! ♞d3 25 ♟xd6 ♞xb2

Well, this much I saw, but not...

26 ♞h1!!



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He didn't take all that long over the move and told me afterwards that he couldn't recall ever producing one like it. Ever. The snag is that now 26...♖d3 meets with 27 ♗xc5 ♜xd6 28 ♗xb7 ♜xd5+ 29 ♖h2.

26...c4 27 ♖h2 ♗d3 28 ♗c5 ♗xc5 29 ♗xc5

Tenable now? Maybe, but it's not easy at all.

29...♞c8 30 ♖b4 c3

30...♖f8 may have proved tougher.

31 ♜e4 ♖h7 32 d6 ♞d7 33 ♜d5 ♖f6?

33...♞cd8 keeps Black alive.

34 ♞e7!



Ouch.

34...♞xe7 35 dxe7 ♖g7

On 35...♜e6 37 ♜f3 ♖xe7 38 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 39 ♗xc3 there are very few technical headaches ahead for White, as 39...♗xa3? loses to 40 ♜a8.

36 ♞xc3 ♞e8 37 ♞f3 ♜e2 38 ♖c3 1-0

Shabalov had turned in a monster performance in Dresden in 2018 on board 1 for the United States, but he did drop a half point there to Spess. Upon passing that game, circa move 23, I took Candidate GM Robert Bellin aside and, without analysing any variation nor suggesting who stood better, said that the situation on the board could only have arisen from a game of Speelman's. He glanced across...and concurred. In Rhodes these two warriors would cross swords again.

J. Speelman-A. Shabalov

England vs USA
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♖g2 ♖e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 dxc4 7 ♞c2 b6!?

The Bukavshin line, thus dubbed after a Russian GM who tragically died in 2016. This received more than one outing on Rhodes. The older 7...a6 8 ♜xc4 b5 does create something by way of a soft spot, if not yet a hole, at c5. Taking on c4 is now quite viable, but instead Spess "adventured" by:

8 ♗g5 c6

Still there is 9 ♜xc4, which now legitimately gambits after 9...♖a6 10 ♞c2 ♜xd4. Think I'd take the pawn and also Black then.

9 ♞d1 ♖a6



The gold-medal winning U.S. over-50 team in action (with England visible in the distance). Nearest the camera, Alexander Shabalov has black, while Joel Benjamin prepares to move.



To my mind hanging on to it is the only consistent play. There is the precedent of 9...h6 10 ♗e4 ♗xe4 11 ♖xe4 ♖b7 12 ♜xc4 ♗d7 and in Jumabayev-Repka, Batumi Olympiad 2018, Black relieved his squeeze by rapid queenside expansion with ...♞c8 and ...b5-b4. This didn't work out so badly, but he still lost.

Nobody has tried 9...b5 yet, although hanging on to the gambitted c-pawn in such manner is far from unknown in the Catalan.

10 ♗d2

Consistent, for now 10...♜xd4 fails to 11 ♗de4 and the win of material. Can't say I like 10 a4 so much. It stops the cementing of c4 with...b5, but cedes Black a healthy outpost – perhaps for a knight – at b4.

10...h6 11 ♗ge4

Shabalov told me he was expecting the retreat to f3, and I have to say that to me also looks the superior choice.

11...♗xe4

11...♜xd4 probably leaves Black not in a state of advantage following 12 ♗xf6+ ♜xf6 13 ♗xc4.

12 ♖xe4

12 ♗xe4 was a viable option, but our man may have wanted to train his horse at c4.

12...c3!?

"Take everything you are offered", was Bobby's motto, and here simply grabbing the d4-pawn with 12...♜xd4 to counter 13 ♗f3 with 13...♞c5 14 ♖e3 ♜h5 leaves Black on top. Shabba thought that a bit too "inconsiderate" of his other team members, though.

13 ♗f3

13 bxc3 ♖xe2 14 ♞e1 ♖a6 15 ♖b2 or 15 a4 would have left White with something by way of a similar degree of compensation, it seems to me.

13...cxb2 14 ♖xb2 ♗d7!?

Not a bad move, but keeping the material via 14...♖b7 or even the 'uglier' 14...f5 15 ♖d3 ♜d5 were possibilities.

15 ♖xc6!



Sound. But based on a major miscalculation.

15...♞c8 16 d5

On 16 e4, of course, there comes 16...♗b8 and after 17 d5, not too surprisingly, the active

bishop-pair enable Black to hold the balance: for instance, 17...♟xc6 18 dxc6 ♖e8 19 ♟e5 ♟b5 20 ♜ac1 ♟c5! 21 ♟d7 ♟xc6 22 ♟xf8 ♟a4 or here 22 ♜c3 e5! 23 ♟xf8 ♟a4 and Black's several tricks leave White with nothing better than 24 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 25 ♟xe5 ♟xd1 26 ♜xd1 ♟xf8 27 ♜d7 a5 and equality.

16...exd5 17 ♜xd5

The computeresque 17 e4 allows Black to reorganise satisfactorily via 17...♟c5 18 ♟xd5 ♜e8!

17...♜c7

Spess had thought 18 ♜d7 ♜xd7 19 ♜c3 to be winning – until he saw 19...♜g4! This proves Dvoretzky's observation that, in sharp positions, the outcome not uncommonly may hinge on just one move. So Jon had to come up with the still satisfactory:

18 ♜c1



Now 18...♟f6 19 ♜f5 would have left it all about balanced, but, naturally enough, Shabba played the more active

18...♟c5!?

A disorientated Speelman now, quite uncharacteristically, lost the thread. Shabalov thought White could now hold the balance by 19 ♟d7 ♜cd8 20 ♜cd1. Certainly that would have been superior to what he played, although even there I think Black may be a little better after 20...♜b7. But Spess blundered.

19 ♜e5?

This loses material.

19...♟f6 20 ♟d5 ♜d7

Taking the rook would also have worked.

21 ♜d2 ♟d3!



Shattering.

22 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 23 exd3 ♟xe5 24 ♟c4

A last hope. **24...♟xc4 25 ♟xe5 ♜d6!** 25...♜d5 would have permitted the fiendish 26 ♜c3 ♟a6 27 ♟c6!.

26 ♟xc4 ♜xc4 27 ♜e2 ♜c7 28 ♜e8+ ♟h7 0-1

Shabba's disruptive and quite unexpected 21...♟d3!, in a situation where White thought himself to be "going forward", triggered a memory of the only similar shot of my life.

That was against my fellow team member Keith Arkell back at Hastings 1996/97.

K.Arkell-J.Plaskett Hastings 1996/97



Keith threatened my kingside by **30 ♟e4** whereupon I played **30...♟d3!** and went on to win.

Kasparov also instructed me on how in his immortal victory in the 1985 match with Karpov, which made Garry world champion, one which he dubbed his "supreme creative achievement", his own black knight at d3, supported there by a light-squared bishop, constituted a paralysing tandem worth more than the pawn he sacrificed to get it there.

But I wasn't 100% convinced, and remain so. There were other salient features of that game, including the restrictive effects of the queenside pawns at b5 and a6 and the loss of time Anatoly suffered in transferring his king's knight so early on to the daft a3-square. But what did register was Kasparov's observation that "It is possible to trade material for time and quality". Although nobody has yet pinned down the ethereal nature of 'quality'.

Back on Rhodes, as they had done at Dresden in 2018, the USA had won and we, England I, who had that time won our individual match but finished in second place, this time came sixth.



Joel Benjamin (second left) enjoys the moment as he receives a gold medal alongside his teammates (from left-right): Alexander Shabalov, Igor Novikov, Jaan Ehvest and Alex Yermolinsky.



Home News

CREWE – IM Brandon Clarke defeated second seed Jonah Willow in the final round of the Crewe Congress (27-29 September), but had to settle for a share of first, having earlier drawn with Ali Jaunooby and because Rajat Makkar finished by reeling off four straight wins.

Open: 1-2 Brandon Clarke (Littlethorpe), Rajat Makkar (Reading) 4½/5, 3 Leysaa Bin-Suhayl (Peterborough) 4.

Major: 1 Joe Hirst (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 4, 2-8 David Patrick (Halifax), Reg Clucas (Altrincham), Carl Gartside (Macclesfield), Robert Clegg (Huddersfield), Kyle Pelling (Tameside), Peter Fisher (Wrexham), Sam Turner (Alsager) 3½.

Intermediate: 1 Julian Hawthorne (Kidsgrove) 4½, 2-3 Richard Szwajkun (Telford), Michael Carroll (Great Lever) 4.

Minor: 1-2 Patrick Coleman (Lytham St Annes), Paul Broderick (Newport) 4½, 3 Adam Miller (Wallasey) 4.

LONDON – John Saunders reports from a special anniversary:

On September 29th Barclays Bank Chess Club held a double GM simul at its Canary Wharf headquarters in London to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Some 80 players lined up to face the might of Mickey Adams and Matthew Sadler, mostly from Barclays Bank CC itself, but also including some invitees from other London financial institutions. The two English super-GMs played 40 opponents each, choosing to alternate colours rather than take white on all boards. The opposition was of disparate strength, ranging from the elementary level to ratings in excess of 2200.

The simul was opened by Barclays senior management and then organiser Daniel Lindner gave a quick but informative presentation of the club's history. It is curious how many chess clubs, particularly those of public sector organisation and businesses, started up after the First World War as returning soldiers yearned for a more metaphorical form of combat. The club played for decades in the London Bank Chess League, from 1999 in the Combined Banks and Insurance Chess League and, since 2014, in the City Chess League. A number of strong players have turned out for Barclays over the years, including one grandmaster. Keith Richardson (1942-2017) worked in the New Covent Garden Market branch of Barclays some years ago and in 1975 became the country's first correspondence GM.

The grandmasters proved a little too tough for the opposition, with Sadler only



Michael Adams was happy to alternate colours while giving an anniversary simul for Barclays Bank. Playing white in the near background is Chris Flowers who came very close to winning.

conceding two draws and Adams four. Neither lost a game, but Mickey Adams was pushed back on the ropes by Chris Flowers and needed all his magic to salvage a half a point. Perhaps having Magnus Carlsen as a playing partner in the 2017 London Classic Pro-Biz Cup had rubbed off on the American financier as he played really well. Another excellent performance was put in by Masrura Khakimova, who held Matthew Sadler to a draw and was rewarded with a prize of the Sadler and Regan book *Game Changer*.

Elsewhere in the capital, Ralf Schnabel (Germany) triumphed with 4/5 in the Open at the Muswell Hill Rapidplay on September 24th, finishing half a point ahead of Gwilym Price (Godalming) and Ben Keohane (London). Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) won the Major by half a point from Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon), while the Minor was won by David Lewis (Hendon) and Tony Bynnersley (West London). We should also mention that while reporting on the Muswell Hill results from July in our September issue we failed to mention that David Lewis shared second place in the Minor with Adah Simon Ogah on 4½/6 – our apologies to David.

THANET – Robert Page was present as a different anniversary was marked by the Thanet Congress (16-18 August):

The Thanet Chess Congress celebrated its 50th anniversary with some special

presentations to mark the occasion. Participants from the 1970 congress were invited to attend and seven took part. Each was presented with a souvenir personalised framed record of their achievement in the first congress, and unique king trophies were awarded to winners of each of the five sections. As has become tradition at the Thanet Congress, a charity bookstall was set up which raised £134 for The Royal British Legion. 112 players took part and the Open was won by IM Alan Merry, who defeated FM Martin Taylor in the final round.

Open: 1 Alan Merry (Bury St Edmunds) 4½/5, 2-3 Martin Taylor (Rainham), Partha Mulay (Wanstead) 4.

Challengers: 1-5 Trefor Owens (Broadstairs), Mike Taylor (Stockport), Patrick Burns (Bridge), Paul Jackson (Coulsdon), Zia Quader (Bury St Edmunds) 3½.

Major: 1 Robert Page (Broadstairs) 4½, 2-3 Polina Shchepinova (Horsham), Orla Dorman (Coulsdon) 4.

Intermediate: 1 Manoj Natarajan (Broadstairs) 4½, 2 Derek Hadley (Bloomsbury) 4, 3-6 Timothy Soar (Colwyn Bay), Chris Soltysiak (Athenaeum), Tyrone Jefferies (Swale), Terence Greenaway (Torquay) 3½.

Minor: 1-2 Charlie Ball (St Albans), John Couzens 4½, 3-7 Joshua Vaughan, Reg Pidduck (all Broadstairs), Aneesh Sagar (Petts Wood), Leon Garfield (Margate), David Archer (Godalming) 3½.

(...♟f7 would still have drawn), which was punished by: **1 ♖a7+! ♟e6** (1...♟f8 2 ♖a6 ♟f7 transposes and 2...h4 3 ♖xg6 ♖xh3 4 ♖f6+ also wins, so long as White then avoids 4...♟g8 5 ♖xf5? ♖g3! which cuts off his king, preferring 5 ♟h5!, and if 5...♖h1 6 e6 or 5...♟g7 6 ♖xf5 ♖h1 7 ♟g4 h3 8 ♖g5+ ♟f7 9 ♟f5 h2 10 ♖h5 when the connected passed pawns easily trump Black's lone foot soldier) **2 ♖a6+ ♟f7 3 ♖f6+** (the move Nepomniachtchi must have overlooked) **3...♟e7 4 ♖xg6 ♖xh3 5 ♟g5 1-0** Once again the connected passed pawns will prove decisive.

17) Karjakin-Vachier-Lagrave

1 ♟d3! (1 ♟b3! also does the trick, but not 1 ♟g2? ♖g3+! 2 ♟f1 ♖e1+, forcing a draw) **1...♖xd3+ 2 ♟h4 ♖d4 3 ♖f8+ ♖g7 4 g5# 1-0**

18) G.Jones-D.Jakovenko

1...♖a7! 2 ♟xc8 ♖f2+ 3 ♟h3 ♖f1+ 4 ♟g4 (having lost the first tie-break game White had to play for a win) **4...h5+ 5 ♟g5 ♖e1 6 ♟f5?** (collapsing with no time; after 6 ♖d4 ♖xg3+ 7 ♟g4 hxg4 8 fxg4 anything might have happened, but 8...♟e4 9 h5 f6+ 10 ♖xf6 gxf6+ 11 ♖xf6 ♖c7 is most likely drawn) **6...f6+! 7 ♟xg6 ♖e8# 0-1**

19) Escobar Forero-Dominguez Perez

1 ♖g5? e6 was OK for Black in the game, but the calm **1 ♟c1!** would have won: **1...♖c5** (overprotecting d4; 1...♖a5? fails to 2 ♖xd4! ♟xd4 3 ♖xg6+) **2 ♟e3 e5** (trying to avoid 3 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 4 ♖xg6) **3 ♟d5 ♖e8 4 ♖h4** leaves White dominating the board and with an attack which should prove decisive, as

shown by **4...♖a7 5 ♟h6** when Black lacks a single good move and ♖d3-h3 will follow.

20) Yankelevich-Perez Candelario

White looks lost and, indeed, he was unable to save the game after 1 ♖c8? ♖xh4+. 1 ♖h1 e4 is also of no use, but as pointed out by David Vigorito in his excellent ChessPublishing column on the King's Indian, **1 ♖xf4+! exf4** would have drawn, and if **2 ♟f1** (the king can also go to the g-file, but 2 ♟e2?? g5 3 hxg5+ ♟xg5 4 ♟f2 ♟f5 5 ♟g2 ♟e5! wins for Black) **2...♟g7** (or 2...g5 3 hxg5+ ♟xg5 4 ♟g2 ♟f5 5 ♟h3 ♟e5 6 ♟h4 ♟d4 7 ♟xh5, and if 7...♟e3?? 8 ♟g4) **3 ♟e2 ♟f6 4 ♟f2 ♟e5 5 ♟e2 ♟d4 6 ♟d2.**

21) Zou Chen-Sethuraman

1...♖xb3+!! 2 ♟a1 (2 axb3 ♖xb3+ 3 ♟a1 ♟b4 wins too, in view of 4 ♖c1 ♟c3+ 5 ♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 6 ♟a2 ♖xd5 7 ♖b1+ ♟c7! and ...♖d2+) **2...♖b2 3 ♖b1 ♟b4 4 ♖e3** (Black also wins after 4 ♖xb2 ♟c3 5 ♟b1 ♟xb2 6 ♖c4 ♟d4+ 7 ♖b3 ♖xb3+ 8 axb3 a2+! 9 ♟xa2 ♖a7+ 10 ♟b1 ♖a1+, as shown by Michael Roiz) **4...♖b5 5 ♖hd1 ♖c4 6 ♖xb2 axb2+ 7 ♟b1 ♖c7 8 ♖b6+ ♟a8 0-1**

22) Svidler-Albornoz Cabrera

1 ♟f4!! (1 ♖e5! ♟xe5 2 ♟xd5 ♖c6 3 ♖a5+ ♟e8 4 ♟g2 also works, as pointed out by Svidler) **1...♟xf4 2 ♟b5 ♖b6** (Black might like to return some material, but remains helpless after 2...♖xb5 3 ♖xb5, in view of 3...♟xe1 4 ♖c1!, and 2...♖b7 3 ♟a7! is a killer, as shown by 3...♟g7 4 ♟c6+ ♟c7 5 ♖ac1 ♟b6 6 ♖a5#) **3 ♟d4! 1-0** The weakness of d7 remains Black's major Achilles' heel and

3...♖b7 (or 3...♖b7 4 ♟c6+ ♟c7 5 ♖xf4+ ♟xc6 6 ♖ac1+) 4 ♟c6+ again cleans him up.

23) Anand-So

Black was able to escape and eventually hold in the game after 1 ♖f3 h6 2 ♟xb4? (2 a3! would still have left White clearly for choice after 2...hxg5 3 ♖b3! or 2...♖a4 3 axb4 hxg5 4 ♖d5+) 2...♖xb4 3 ♖d5+ ♟h8 4 ♟f7+ ♟h7 5 ♖f1 ♖e1 6 ♖xf5+ ♟g8, but the remarkable **1 ♖f1!!** would have won. The threat is 2 c5, with one very nice line running 1...h6 2 c5! bxc5 3 dxc5 ♟xc5 4 ♖c4+ ♟h8 5 ♖f7! ♖f8 6 ♖g6 ♖g6 hxg5 7 ♟c3. You might think that Black could save himself with **1...♖xa2**, but after **2 ♖e1 ♖f8** (2...♖xe1? 3 ♖xe1 creates too many threats) **3 ♖e2** the return of his queen gives White a decisive attack, as shown by **3...♟h8** (or 3...h6 4 ♖e6+ ♟h8 5 ♟f7+ ♟h7 6 ♟xh6!) **4 ♖h5** (4 ♟e6 also does the business) **4...h6 5 ♟f7+ ♟h7 6 ♟xh6! ♟g8 7 ♟xg7! ♟d3 8 ♖f1 ♟xg7 9 ♟xd6 cxd6 10 ♖g5+ ♟h7 11 ♖h4+ ♟g7 12 ♖g3+ ♟f6 13 ♖xd3** and wins.

24) Caruana-Nepomniachtchi

The game quickly concluded in a repetition: 1...♟f8 2 f3 ♖c4 3 ♖h1 ♖c7 4 ♖h2 ♟g7 5 ♖e2 ♟f8 6 ♖h2 ♟g7 7 ♖e2 ♟f8 8 ♖h2 ♟g7 ½-½. However, **1...♖xa3!! 2 bxa3 ♖xa3** would have won, in view of **3 f4** (3 f3 is similar) **3...♖a7!** (3...♖a4 also works), a remarkably calm retreat which leaves White completely unstuck due to the threat of ...b2: for example, **4 ♖gd1** (4 ♖d2 ♖a8 is the problem) **4...b2 5 ♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 6 ♟xb2 ♖f2+** and White will not survive on the dark squares.

This Month's New Releases

Coaching Kasparov Volume 1: The Whizz Kid (1973-1981)

Alexander Nikitin, 200 pages
Elk & Ruby
RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

Things that are undeniably great – *Breaking Bad*, *Wagon Wheels*, and Garry Kasparov at chess. In this book, the first part of a two-part volume by Kasparov's former trainer, Alexander Nikitin attempts to explain the role he played in establishing Garry as the pre-eminent player of his generation, and in fact one of the greatest players of all time. This first volume covers the early years of Kasparov's chess development.

This is not a new book. It was published in Russian in 1998, but this is the first English language version. One of the selling points of this new edition is the addition of all the

games from a friendly blitz match between the young Kasparov and Mikhail Tal. The fact that a blitz match takes up a reasonable amount of the book (32 pages) seems somewhat surprising. Yes, it's an important match, and didn't do Kasparov any harm, but 32 pages with the games extensively annotated? Part of me thinks, well, it's only blitz, so why bother, but part of me wonders whether I'm missing the point and that failing to recognise the importance of a blitz match demonstrates the lack of seriousness which has hampered my own career. That is, of course, something Kasparov never had a problem with.

It would be easy to suggest that Kasparov had such a unique talent that he would have made it to the top regardless, and you would probably be right. It also comes clear from reading this volume that Nikitin had a heavy

influence not only on Kasparov's chess, but also his life: for example, when he implored Kasparov's mother to change Garry's surname from Weinstein to Kasparov. It is the chess snippets that really interest us though. We first get an insight into the intense competitive nature of Kasparov, then aged 13, in a passing anecdote about a simultaneous display: "And in a simul against the fearsome grandmaster Romanishin he crushed his opponent, even though the latter was well aware of who he was facing."

The early part of the book is quite heavy going – it is more than 60 pages before we come across chess positions. Nikitin explains how he became involved in coaching ahead of a fateful meeting with the young Kasparov at a tournament in Lithuania. I found it just as interesting when he talks about his own career as when he recounts his time with Kasparov.



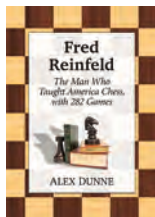
Maybe that's because the story of the professional chess player who didn't quite reach the top resonated deeply with my own experience.

As you'd expect, a lot of the games that can be found in this volume have been extensively covered elsewhere. Does that mean the book isn't worth buying? Not a bit, especially when you get insights like this: "If all your pieces stand optimally, then find an active pawn move." Some might find this straightforward – I don't; I find it priceless. I just wish there was even more such advice in the book, and indeed this is not really a training manual à la Dvoretzky, but more like a personal journal. Perhaps the book would have benefited from showing some of the training positions that the young Kasparov was confronted with and explaining how he got to grips with them.

Nikitin also relates the darker side of Kasparov. He writes, "The lad's sudden fame awoke and developed personality traits with him (and not only him) that I would never have noticed otherwise." His "Diseases became chronic and with every tournament it became harder to address them." Nikitin doesn't specify exactly what these diseases were, and it is left to the reader to guess them. That's the problem – after passages like this you are thirsting for even more gossip.

I find any book about Kasparov engrossing, and this one even more so, as it comes from someone who was deeply involved with the Kasparov camp. It's well written and a perfect addition to the library of anyone who has an interest in Kasparov, great chess or Soviet training methods. I just wish Nikitin had gone even further.

Danny Gormally



Fred Reinfeld: The Man Who Taught America Chess, with 282 Games

Alex Dunne, 194 pages
McFarland

SPECIAL PRICE £37.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £**

Fred Reinfeld is best known for his legendary output in the world of chess literature rather than his over-the-board prowess. Players of a certain age will have learned a great deal from Reinfeld's books, which were always instructive despite being haughtily dismissed in some quarters as 'potboilers'.

Little has been written about the man himself and I was intrigued to see what the McFarland treatment would unearth on this neglected chess personality. What was he like as person? What made him develop into such a prolific writer and how strong was he as a player? The blurb was promising: "This, the first book on Reinfeld, covers his remarkable contributions to the chess world, with many of his ideas and writings quoted in their

original context and with many of his famous annotations preserved for the modern reader."

The book works well when Reinfeld's personality is allowed to shine through and we can see the chess world through his observant eyes. A case in point is this snippet about Alekhine.

"Yet, for all his daring at the chessboard, he was burdened with strangely timorous quirks of character [...] for example, although he was virtually a chain-smoker, he always kept his cigarettes in his pocket. When he wanted to smoke, he would reach into his pocket and maneuver one cigarette out without removing the pack. In this way he avoided the social necessity of offering his companion or opponent a cigarette!"

However, overall, I was left feeling I didn't know an awful lot more about Reinfeld and his life. Maybe there just isn't much to know; as a hard-working author who died at the relatively young age of 54. There are very few photographs in the book – Reinfeld didn't like his picture being taken – which is another reason his personality remains somewhat illusive throughout the book.

Frankly, his chess results were mediocre compared to those of the star American players, although he could be a dangerous, albeit inconsistent opponent. For example, he finished in tenth place out of 12 at Pasadena in 1932, despite beating Reshevsky and drawing with both Alekhine and Kashdan who took the top two places.

It is particularly interesting that Reinfeld scored well against Reshevsky. The latter played uncharacteristically weakly at times in their encounters, regardless of colour. For example, it is not so easy to recall many collapses such as this one.

**S. Reshevsky-F. Reinfeld
Pasadena 1932**



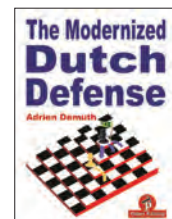
26...♖xc3! 27 ♙xc3 ♖xc3 28 ♚xc3 ♙xd4+ 29 ♚h2 ♙xc3 30 ♙xb7 ♚xb7 31 ♗d3 ♚e4 0-1

The majority of the games are presented without annotations of any kind. This makes it difficult to determine Reinfeld's style of play and it would have been much better if more games had been annotated.

No doubt the author worked hard to assemble the material, but one is left with a

feeling of disappointment that there is not a lot more of it, especially as it seems very unlikely that there will be more books on Reinfeld and that this one has been anticipated for so long. Curiously for McFarland, there are production issues too. The card cover is too thin with the result that it curls away from the book on its own accord, almost as if it is trying, in supernatural fashion, to reveal more secrets of the life and times of Reinfeld than can be found within its physical pages. In conclusion, this book feels like a missed opportunity.

Sean Marsh



The Modernized Dutch Defense

Adrien Demuth, 470 pages

Thinkers Publishing

SPECIAL PRICE £29.95 **SUBS' £26.95**

Thinkers Publishing continue to produce books at quite an alarming rate. This one takes a look at the Dutch Defence, using the Leningrad variation as the main line. Demuth, a French Grandmaster, also wrote the recent volume on *The Modernized Reti* for Thinkers Publishing, which was printed in December 2017 and has already gone to a second, revised edition (appearing in November 2018). We can safely conclude that Thinkers Publishing don't let the grass grow under their feet.

The author comes out of his corner fighting: "Throughout the book I have tried not only to look for variations where there is always life and winning chances for Black, but also to offer decent continuations, and not just say that 'Black has counterplay', when he might clearly be worse, which is the case in some books." His intended reach is ambitious too: "I believe that the material offered here can help players from club level to GM level."

The book starts with the 'Early Sidelines after 1 d4 f5', which covers the usual variety of weird and wonderful attempts to prove 1...f5 is simply a weakness. Demuth then moves on to the main lines, or 'Classical Systems', before concluding with coverage on how to play the Dutch against the Reti and English Openings. There could be an issue with nomenclature here, as players who prefer the Classical Dutch to the Leningrad will find themselves disappointed with the content in the 'Classical Systems' section.

There is a lot of untested material here. This is all very well and it always good to see authors not simply producing a lazy database dump, but I think the pudding has been somewhat overegged on this particular occasion. The problem is the book loses its focus as there is almost too much material. This would be all very well in an 'ideas' book, such as Minev's volumes on *New and Forgotten Ideas* in both the French (second edition, Thinkers' Press, 1988) and,

coincidentally enough, the Dutch (Thinkers' Press, 2003) – but it makes a repertoire book murkier than it needs to be.

One problem with trying to cram in too much material is that a lot of the lines just seem to peter out and we are left with one-line summaries that are too vague and general to be particularly inspiring.



In this position, for example, we are simply told: "The c4-pawn can be seen as a source of satisfaction for Black as long as it doesn't become a weakness." That isn't likely to help readers plan their next steps for the game.

Further vague comments include: "We have already seen this idea several times. It has worked really well for Black in practice, and I won't go any further into the specifics"; and "Our pieces have reached pretty active outposts, so it seems fully playable for Black." It is as if the author has spread himself too thinly over the course of the 460+ pages and has fallen between two stools.

There are other oddities, such as this one. After 1 ♖f3 f5 2 d3 ♘c6 3 e4 e5 Demuth mentions 4 d4, but says, "I won't analyse this position. I don't think your opponent is likely to play it", with the stated reason being it is a reversed Vienna Game (shouldn't that be Vienna Gambit?), and that "You can find some theory in the books, or just look at some games." I don't think it is out of the question that readers would have preferred some guidance in *this* book rather than have to dig around elsewhere.

There is so much material here that there is a real danger of being unable to see the wood for the trees. I am not convinced readers need to know in-depth coverage of lines such as 1 d4 f5 2 ♗d3, all the way down to new tries on the second move, such as the obscure 2...♘c6. It would have been very helpful if an essay had been included at the start of each section, laying out the basics of what will follow, or even a summary at the end of the respective parts. The book also desperately needs a section of well-annotated model games, which would be more valuable than a lot of the torso variations. Finally, the book section of the bibliography is surprisingly small and of the six books mentioned one is the author's own work on the Reti.

In conclusion, this book tries to do too much and ends up missing the mark. Club players will find it very difficult to wade

through the excess of material to put together a repertoire and stronger players will be disappointed by the vagueness of prose. A tough edit of the tome would be required to make it into a much more accessible and useful study of the Dutch Defence.

Sean Marsh



A Startling Chess Opening Repertoire

Chris Baker & Graham Burgess,
192 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Experienced IM Chris Baker has updated Graham Burgess' 1998 startling repertoire for White. The repertoire itself hasn't really changed, with its cornerstones of the Max Lange and 4 ♖xd4 and the Rossolimo against the Sicilian still very much intact, but all of the lines have been updated, with many new startling ideas uncovered for White along the way. If you want an exciting repertoire as White, as well as one which won't require excessive work, *A Startling Chess Opening Repertoire* should still do the business at club level.



Beyond Material

Davorin Kuljasevic, 336 pages, paperback
RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.79**

The autumn has been a golden time not just outdoors (when it's not been raining), but also for instructional material for the club and tournament player. On top of the new releases by Franco and Kislik (see below) comes this new work from New in Chess. Croatian GM Kuljasevic's mission is to explain how to accurately assess your compensation after a sacrifice by looking at such things as improved activity, time and outposts. Even the most timid reader will also realise that it's possible to remain material down for a significant amount of time, and yet not be losing. If you're looking to make your game less static and more dynamic, Kuljasevic should guide the way.

Bishop and Knight Save the Day

Sergei Tkachenko, 266 pages, paperback
RRP £11.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £10.75**

Endgame study and chess problem expert Tkachenko returns for Elk & Ruby by presenting '100 studies with just a bishop and knight in the finale'. Most of the solutions are, again, no more than six moves long, meaning that this work can be enjoyed not least by those who love their chess and commute by public transport.

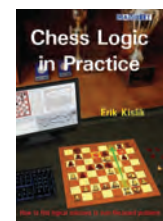


Chess Informant 141

Sahovski Informator, 350 pages, paperback
RRP £32.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.69**

Subtitled 'Infinimum', the latest 'Informator' brings together not just all the latest leading games, novelties, endgames and studies, but also several columns. These include a detailed report on the Riga Grand Prix, Michael Prusikin's recommendations for Black in the Exchange Lopez and a new column from Danny Gormally, 'Danny's Chess Diary'.

As ever, if you'd also like the material from *Chess Informant 141* in CD format, do just add £10 to your order (Subscribers – £9), while the CD alone is also available, for just £9.99 or £8.99 for Subscribers.



Chess Logic in Practice

Erik Kislik, 240 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

This follow-up work to *Applying Logic in Chess* sees the acclaimed chess trainer continue to map out a logical groundwork to help the reader succeed in their games. Kislik recommends certain thinking techniques as well as positional guidelines, while supplying fascinating if logical advice on how to play in certain types of better or worse positions. If you want to cut out such things as making painfully slow moves or struggling for a plan when your opponent is well centralised, or just want a thought-provoking read, this new work from Gambit could well do the trick.



Chess Middlegame Strategies Volume 3

Ivan Sokolov, 328 pages, paperback
RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

Ivan Sokolov concludes his guide to middlegame strategy for Thinkers Publishing with this third volume subtitled 'Strategy Meets Dynamics'. Through the course of seven chapters and 43 well-annotated games Sokolov looks at a number of dynamic middlegame positions, reflecting especially on the strategic considerations within each one. Not everyone will fully appreciate his coverage of the Anti-Moscow Gambit in the

Semi-Slav, rich though the arising middle-game positions are, but the coverage of both the exchange sacrifice and 'Karpov's King in the Center' cannot fail to educate and inspire most readers.

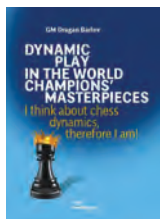
If you'd like to purchase all three volumes of *Chess Middlegame Strategies*, they are available together for the special price of £75 from Chess & Bridge or just £67.50 for Subscribers.

Coach Jay's Academy #1:

White Belt Chess Lesson Book

Jay Stallings, 36 pages, glossy softback
RRP £11.95

This is a book aimed at juniors who are brand new to the game and features leading Californian chess coach Jay Stallings' "Five Disciplines of Chess": Checkmate, Defence, Endgame, Strategy, and Tactics, all illustrated with the assistance of some comic-style characters. Various other books in the vast *Coach Jay's Academy* series are available from Chess & Bridge – do see the website or call 0207 486 7015.



Dynamic Play in the

World Champions' Masterpieces

Dragan Barlov, 272 pages, hardback
RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

This work for Chess Informant from a Serbian GM focusses on dynamic play. Barlov has selected 40 of his favourite dynamic games from the world champions to annotate and also supplies 120 exercises.



Improving Your Practical Play in the Endgame

Alexey Dreev, 268 pages, paperback
RRP £27.95

Thinkers Publishing certainly continue to attract big name authors, this new work by the strong Russian GM following hot on the heels of the second volume of Gata Kamsky's *The Chess Gamer*. Dreev is fully aware that rules and principles don't help in all endgame positions, but that even there certain things can really help the player striving for the full point, as well as the defender. The material is certainly quite advanced at times, but even the hard-working stronger club player should glean much from Dreev's advice on such topics as converting an advantage, hidden resources and prophylaxis.



Navigating the Ruy Lopez Vol. 1 to 3

Fabiano Caruana, PC-DVD;

running time: 16 hours, 18 minutes

SPECIAL PRICE £75. SUBSCRIBERS £67.50

This trilogy of opening DVDs may not at first seem cheap, but paying £75.00 for over 16 hours of instruction from the long-standing world no.2 is surely a bargain, that is at least if you play the Ruy Lopez as White. In discussion with IM Oliver Reeh, Caruana explains the main ideas for both sides in each often complex sub-variation, while mapping out a repertoire for White. That means that not only do the famous main lines, such as the Breyer and Chigorin, receive plenty of attention, but so does the Anti-Marshall with 8 a4, the Berlin and everything else, including all those tricky third move sidelines.



New in Chess Yearbook 132

Peter Boel, René Olthof & Jan Timman
(eds.), 256 pages, paperback

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The latest *Yearbook* features Ruslan Ponomarev on the cover with the strapline: 'Rossolimo secrets Magnus taught me'. Inside you will find all the usual features, including some six opening surveys on the Sicilian, including one on the Yugoslav Dragon. There's also a look at some important ideas from the correspondence world by Erwin L'Ami, while Glenn Flear compares some recent 1 d4 and 2 c4 repertoire works.



Planning: Move by Move

Zenón Franco, 416 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

The Paraguayan Grandmaster is developing a repertoire as an excellent author, not least when with it comes to general instructional volumes for Everyman's *Move by Move* series. Planning is one of those topics which often goes unstudied by the club player, but is a very important skill to master. Franco presents the typical plans in some of the more common pawn structures. He then examines how one must keep coming up with plans when

not just manoeuvring, but also when attacking and defending, while also presenting some very useful advice on simplification.

Also recently released by Everyman Chess is *Counterattacking Systems versus 1 e4 and 1 d4* (416 pages; RRP £19.99; Subscribers – £17.99), which fuses together Nicolai Pedersen's *Play the Benko Gambit* and Peter Lalic's *Play the Accelerated Dragon*.

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