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Chess Update

Caruana Cruises

A First for Fabiano – Yochanan Afek watched the world no.2 dominate Wijk aan Zee

ISSN 0964-6221



Karpov vs Fischer! – John Saunders saw Karpov take on Robert Fischer at Gibraltar

Ending Masterclass – Jon Spielman presents two high-level, instructive endgames

An Introduction to Prophylaxis II – Jose Vilela demystifies this important concept

Chess

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Errata - Our apologies for the gremlins creeping in and the printing error on the cover of our previous issue, which was, of course, the February 2020 CHESS.



60 Seconds with...

Tania Sachdev



Born: 20th August 1986, Delhi.

Place of residence: Delhi.

Occupation: Chessplayer, commentator.

Enjoyable? It's a roller coaster. I do like roller coasters!

And home life? Doesn't suit chess players.

But sometimes good to escape to: White sandy beaches.

Sports played or followed: I play table tennis and love to watch football.

A favourite novel? *The Palace of Illusions* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Piece of music? Depends on my mood, but in general there is a Drake song for every mood.

Film or TV series? Anything Woody Allen, anything Leonardo Di Caprio, *Love Actually*, *Money Heist*, *Rick and Morty*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? All those powerful emotions it makes you feel.

And the worst? All these powerful emotions it makes you feel!

Your best move? Still to come!

But less memorable than your worst move? That was on the dance floor.

And a highly memorable opponent? Vishy Anand in a simul when I was about 10.

Favourite game of all time? I've seen Ivanchuk-Yusupov multiple times, but it blows my mind every single time.

V.Ivanchuk-A.Yusupov

Candidates match play-off,
Brussels 1991

King's Indian Defence

1 c4 e5 2 g3 d6 3 ♘g2 g6 4 d4 ♘d7
5 ♘c3 ♘g7 6 ♗f3 ♗gf6 7 0-0 0-0
8 ♖c2 ♗e8 9 ♗d1 c6 10 b3 ♖e7 11 ♘a3
e4 12 ♗g5 e3 13 f4 ♗f8 14 b4 ♘f5
15 ♖b3 h6 16 ♗f3 ♗g4 17 b5 g5
18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♗e5 gxf4 20 ♗xc6
♖g5 21 ♘xd6 ♗g6 22 ♗d5 ♖h5 23 h4
♗xh4!? 24 gxh4 ♖xh4 25 ♗de7+ ♗h8
26 ♗xf5 ♖h2+ 27 ♗f1 ♗e6! 28 ♖b7
♗g6! 29 ♖xa8+ ♗h7



30 ♖g8+ ♗xg8 31 ♗ce7+ ♗h7 32 ♗xg6
fxg6 33 ♗xg7 ♗f2 34 ♘xf4 ♖xf4
35 ♗e6 ♖h2 36 ♗db1 ♗h3 37 ♗b7+
♗h8 38 ♗b8+ ♖xb8 39 ♘h3 ♖g3
0-1

The best three chess books: Jonathan Rowson's *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, *Positional Decision Making* by Boris Gelfand and David Bronstein's *Zurich 1953*.

Is FIDE doing a good job? Yes! There have been lots of positive changes.

Or your National Federation? Also a yes!

Any advice for either? Can we have an Indian Chess League?

Can chess make one happy? That's a very existential question.

A tip please for the club player: Get your hands on a copy of *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*!



ENDGAME Masterclass



Jonathan Speelman found a couple of endgames from last year's London Chess Classic to be especially instructive, and kindly shares his thoughts on them

M.Vachier-Lagrave-Ding Liren

London 2019

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♗f6
5 0-0 ♗e7 6 d3 b5 7 ♗b3 d6 8 a3 0-0
9 ♗c3 ♗a5 10 ♗a2 ♗e6 11 b4 ♗xa2
12 ♗xa2 ♗c6 13 ♗g5 ♗d7 14 ♗xf6
♗xf6 15 ♗d5 a5 16 c4 ♗e7 17 ♗b3

Deviating from 17 ♗c2 ♗xd5 18 cxd5
axb4 19 axb4 ♗a4 20 ♗d2, which turned
out well for White in Carlsen-Ding Liren, Saint
Louis (rapid) 2017.

17...bxc4 18 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 19 dxc4
axb4 20 axb4 ♗c6 21 ♗e1 ♗xa2 22
♗xa2 ♗a8 23 ♗b3 g3



This would be very acceptable for White if
he could get the knight to a decent square
(most obviously d5), but his pawns are too
weak to survive if the knight attempts a long
journey and Ding can arrange to put the
bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal, after which it
is he who has the chances.

24 b5 ♗c5 25 ♗c2 c6 26 bxc6 ♗d8
27 ♗d2 ♗b6 28 ♗b3 ♗xc6 29 ♗a1 ♗c8
30 ♗c1 h5 31 h4 ♗a8 32 ♗a1 ♗xa1+ 33
♗xa1 ♗d7 34 g3



I was streaming at the time and asked
people whether Ding would try 34...g5,
which the silicon had flagged up. I'm very
impressed that he did, but of course if Black
doesn't strike now then it should end in a
fairly comfortable draw.

34...g5! 35 ♗d2

35 hxg5 ♗h3 36 ♗b3 ♗c5 (or 36...♗xf2+
37 ♗xf2 ♗h2+ 38 ♗f3 ♗h1+ 39 ♗e2
♗xa1 40 ♗b8+ ♗g7 41 ♗xd6) 37 ♗f3! h4
38 ♗b3! hxg3 39 ♗xc5 ♗h2+ 40 ♗f1 dxc5
(not 40...gxf2? 41 ♗d3 when White should
even win) 41 fxg3 ♗d2 leads to a draw.

35...gxh4 36 c5

The point of this is to deflect the bishop so
that it doesn't defend d8, thus setting up a
possible perpetual with ♗g5+ ♗f8; ♗d8+.

36...♗xc5 37 ♗g5+ ♗f8 38 ♗xh4 ♗e8

Even stronger was 38...♗g4! 39 ♗xg4
hxg4 40 ♗g2 f5, and if 41 exf5 e4 or 41 f3
♗f7 42 exf5 gxf3+ 43 ♗xf3 d5 44 ♗b3
♗a3 when apparently Black's connected
passed pawns should win, which is plausible,
but I certainly wouldn't have been confident
of this during a game.

39 ♗b3 ♗a4 40 ♗xc5 dxc5 41 ♗xh5
♗xe4 42 ♗h8+ ♗e7



With an extra passed pawn, his queen in
the centre and some pawn cover for his king,
Ding 'ought' to be winning. Vachier-Lagrave
now puts up maximum resistance.

43 ♗c8 ♗d4 44 g4 c4 45 g5 c3 46 ♗g2
♗d6 47 f3 ♗d2+ 48 ♗h3 ♗d5 49 ♗f5
♗c6

Engines tell us that 49...♗c4 50 ♗xf7+
♗d4 is winning because the checks run out
and the c-pawn rolls, while in one critical line
Black wins the white queen with a skewer.
But that would be incredibly hard to play: 51
g6 c2 52 ♗d7+ ♗e3 53 ♗xd2+ ♗xd2 54
g7 c1 ♗ 55 g8 ♗h1+ 56 ♗g4 ♗g1+.

50 ♗c8+ ♗d6 51 ♗f8+ ♗c6 52 ♗c8+
♗b5 53 ♗b7+ ♗c5 54 ♗a7+ ♗d6 55
♗b8+ ♗d5 56 ♗b7+ ♗d4 57 ♗e4+ ♗c5
58 ♗xe5+ ♗c4 59 ♗e4+ ♗b3

Ding has stemmed the tide of checks at



Ding Liren in action against a not-yet-under-pressure Maxime Vachier-Lagrave at the Classic.

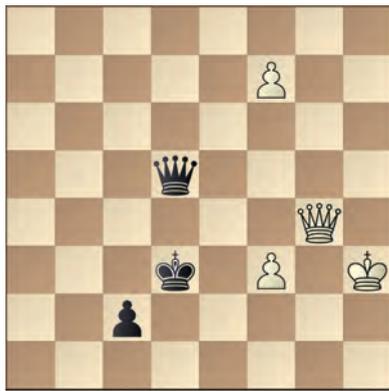


the cost of the e-pawn and now looks in full control.

60 ♖b1+ ♔a3 61 ♖a1+ ♔b4 62 ♖b1+ ♔c5 63 ♖f5+ ♗d5 64 ♖c8+ ♔d4 65 ♖g4+ ♔d3 66 g6 c2

Presumably Ding thought that he'd found a clear win and went with it, but 66...fxg6 67 ♖xg6+ ♔d2 was much more rational since White has no real counterplay with his pawn so far back (in fact it blocks possible checks along the third rank), and, indeed, tablebases confirm that this is winning for Black. However, from a spectator point of view it's excellent that he tried to win the four-queen ending.

67 gxf7



There are now just seven pieces on the board, so we can check everything exactly with a tablebase (I'm using the freely available one at Lichess.org), which tells us that the position is now drawn. It looks like an utter nightmare to defend, but Vachier-Lagrave did so perfectly.

67...c1♖

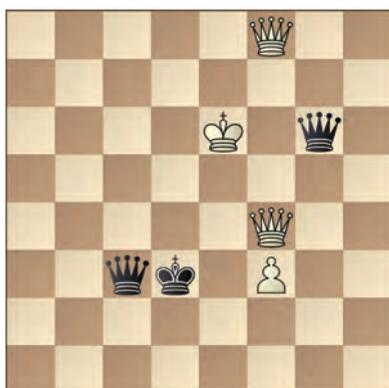
I've never seen an ending like this before in a real game, though there must be some studies.

If 67...♖xf7 White can defend himself with accurate checks, several of them only moves: 68 ♖e4+ ♔c3 69 ♖e5+ ♔b4 70 ♖d6+ ♔b5 71 ♖e5+ ♔c4 72 ♖e4+ ♔b3 73 ♖d3+ ♔b2 74 ♖d4+, etc.

68 f8♖ ♖h1+ 69 ♔g3 ♖e5+ 70 ♖gf4 ♖g1+ 71 ♔h4! ♖h1+ 72 ♔g3 ♖ee1+ 73 ♔g4 ♖hh4+ 74 ♔f5 ♖h5+ 75 ♔f6 ♖a1+ 76 ♔e6 ♖a2+ 77 ♔f6!

And not 77 ♔e7? ♖c5+ 78 ♔d7 ♖aa7+ 79 ♔e6 ♖a2+ 80 ♔d7 ♖ca7+! 81 ♔d6 (or 81 ♖c7 ♖2a4+ 82 ♔d8 ♖a8+) 81...♖b6+.

77...♖b2+ 78 ♔e6 ♖b3+ 79 ♔f6 ♖b2+ 80 ♔e6 ♖b3+ 81 ♔f6 ♖c3+ 82 ♔e6 ♖g6+



Maxime Vachier-Lagrave still came second to Ding, despite performing defensive miracles.

83 ♖4f6!

Side-stepping 83 ♖8f6? ♖c6+ 84 ♔e5 (84 ♔e7 ♖ge8#) 84...♖c5+ 85 ♔e6 ♖e8+ 86 ♖e7 ♖exe7#.

83...♖c6+ 84 ♔e7 ♖c5+ 85 ♔e6 ♖c6+ 86 ♔e7 ♖c7+ 87 ♔e6 ♖b6+ 88 ♔e7 ♖c5+ 89 ♔e6 ♖cf5+ 90 ♔e7 ♖c5+ ½-½

And it's a threefold repetition. Fantastic defence by Vachier-Lagrave.

M. Carlsen - M. Vachier-Lagrave London (blitz) 2019



This extremely difficult ending arose in their second blitz game. Black is better due to his connected passed pawns, but it seems that with accurate play Carlsen could have drawn.

33 ♖a7?

This makes it more complicated. It seems that 33 ♔d2! should hold when 33...♔f6 34 ♖a7 ♔e6 35 ♖xa5 ♖xc7 36 ♖b5 ♖c4 37 ♔d3 ♖c3+ 38 ♔d2 ♖c4 is an easy draw or 38...♖b3 39 ♔c2 ♖c3+ 40 ♔d2. Likewise, if 33...♖c5 34 ♔d3 ♔f6 35 ♔d4 ♖c1 36 ♔d5, so Black might try 33...♖c6 and after 34 ♔d3:

a) 34...♖c1 35 ♔d4 b3 36 ♔d5 (he can also go via e5) 36...a4 37 ♔d6 ♖c2 38 ♔d7 (the white king is just in time) 38...♖d2+ 39 ♔e7 ♖c2 40 ♔d7 ♖d2+ 41 ♔e7 and draws, but not 41 ♔c8? b2.

b) 34...b3 35 ♖xb3 ♖xc7 36 ♖a3 ♖a7 37 f3.



With the white king so near the a-pawn it should be a draw, though in a game and especially a blitz one, it would feel a bit uncomfortable for White. Some sample lines: 37...h5 38 ♔c4 ♔f6 (or 38...h4 39 ♖a4 ♖c7+ 40 ♔b5 ♖c2 41 ♔xa5 ♖xg2 42 ♖xh4 ♖f2 43 ♖h3!) 39 h4 ♔e6 40 ♔b5 (40 ♖a2 ♖a8 41 ♔b5 ♖b8+ 42 ♔c5 ♔e5 43 ♖xa5 ♖b2 44 ♖a7 ♖c2+ 45 ♔b4 ♔f6 46 g4 hxg4 47 fxg4 ♖g2 48 g5+ ♔g7 49 ♔c4 ♖g4+ 50 ♔d3 ♖xh4 51 ♖a5 also works) 40...♖b7+ 41 ♔c5 ♖b2 42 ♖xa5 ♖xg2 43 ♔d4 ♖h2 44 ♖a6+ ♔e7 45 f4 ♖xh4 46 ♔e5 ♖h3 47 e4 and White is very active.

33...b3 34 ♖xa5 ♖xc7 35 ♖b5 ♖c2+ 36 ♔f3 b2 37 ♖b6



Making it hard for the enemy king to advance.



Instead, 37 g4? ♔f6 38 h4 ♔e6 39 ♔g3 ♔d6 40 f3 ♔c6 41 ♖b8 ♔d5 is simply lost, since the black king gets in and White is far from creating serious counterplay.

You'd also wonder about 37 e4 ♔f6 38 ♔e3, but it seems that 38...♔e6 39 g4 ♔d6 40 h4 (or 40 f3 ♔c6 41 ♖b8 ♔c5 42 ♔d3 ♖f2! 43 ♔e3 ♖xh2) 40...♔c6 41 ♖b8 ♔c5 42 ♖b7 (42 g5 ♔c4 43 ♖c8+ ♔b3 44 ♖b8+ ♔a2 45 f4 b1♖ 46 ♖xb1 ♔xb1 47 ♔d4 ♖c6 is trivial) 42...♔c4 43 ♖c7+ ♔b3 44 ♖b7+ ♔a2 45 ♖a7+ ♔b1 46 ♖xf7 ♔c1 47 ♖b7 b1♖ 48 ♖xb1+ ♔xb1 won't save White.



It's far from obvious, but apparently, according to the engines, Black is winning: for example, 49 f4 ♖c3+ 50 ♔d4 ♖f3 51 f5 gxf5 52 gxf5 (or 52 exf5 h5 53 g5 ♖xf5 54 ♔e4 ♖a5 55 g6 ♔c2 56 g7 ♖a8 57 ♔f5 ♔d3 58 ♔g6 ♔e4 59 ♔xh5 ♔f5 60 ♔h6 ♔f6 61 ♔h7 ♖a7) 52...h5 53 ♔e5 ♔c2 54 ♔f6 ♔d3 55 e5 ♔e4 56 e6 ♖xf5+ and wins. **37...h5**

The obvious move, but given that a couple of moves later Carlsen could have drawn by inducing ...h4 and then attacking it, I wonder whether it was 'correct'?

38 h3 ♔f8 39 g4 h4



This looks very nice, fixing a weakness on h3, but it is also a weakness itself and it seems that Carlsen could now have drawn by jettisoning the f2-pawn. However if Black doesn't play 39...h4 then White can exchange on h5 when he should presumably at worst be able to draw with king and rook against king, rook, f- and h-pawns.

40 g5

Missing 40 ♔f4! ♖xf2+ 41 ♔g5 ♔e7 (or 41...♔g7 42 ♔xh4 ♖g2 43 ♔g5) 42 ♔xh4 ♔d7 43 ♔g5 ♔c7 44 ♖b4 ♔c6 45 h4 (45

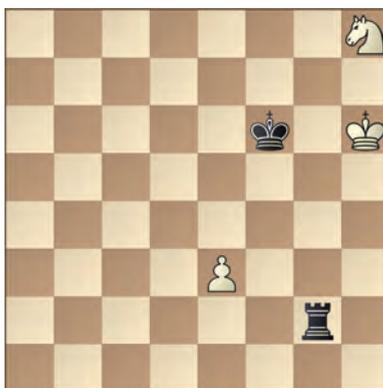
e4 ♔c5 46 ♖b8 ♔d4 47 h4 ♔c3 48 h5 gxh5 49 gxh5 ♖f1 is an easy win) 45...f5! (a brilliant try flagged up by the engine; 45...♔c5 46 ♖b8 ♔c4 47 h5 gxh5 48 gxh5 ♔c3 49 h6 is just a draw) 46 ♖b8.



Rather amazingly, this is zugzwang, though when I set it up and gave White the move there did seem to be a very narrow path to a draw (see below). Here 46...♖g2 47 ♔xg6 fxf4 48 ♔g5! draws, but not 48 h5? g3 49 h6 ♖h2.

Noteworthy too is the line 46 gxf5? ♖xf5+ 47 ♔xg6 ♖b5 48 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 49 h5 ♔d7 50 h6 ♔e6!. Without the e-pawn this would be a draw, since with the king on h8 and pawn on h7, White would be in stalemate, but here Black wins: 51 ♔g7 ♔e7 (51...♖g2+ 52 ♔f8! would draw without the e-pawn, but Black can just play 52...♖h2 then ...♔e7, transposing a couple of tempi later) 52 h7 ♖g2+ 53 ♔h8 (53 ♔h6 ♔f7 transposes to the previous note) 53...♔f7 54 e4 ♖a2 55 e5 ♖a8#.

Here, another interesting position occurs after 50...♔e7 (instead of 50...♔e6!) 51 h7 ♖g2+ 52 ♔h6 ♔f7 53 h8♔+ ♔f6.



This is pretty easy. Black wins the e-pawn through zugzwang and then just has to maintain control: for example, 54 ♔h7 ♖g4 55 e4 ♖xe4 56 ♔g6 ♖a4 57 ♔f8 ♖h4+ 58 ♔g8 ♖g4+ 59 ♔h8 (or 59 ♔h7 ♔f7) 59...♔f7 60 ♔h7 ♖g8#.

40...♔e7 41 e4 ♔d7 42 ♔e3 ♔c7 43 ♖b5



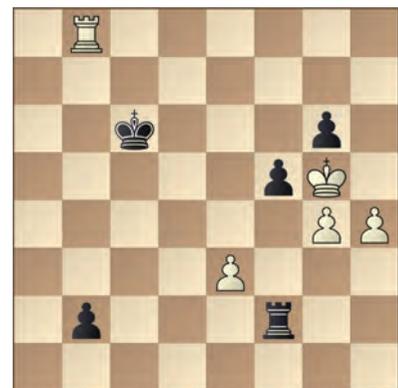
After 43 ♖b3 ♔d6 44 ♔d4 ♖xf2 45 ♖b7 ♖d2+ 46 ♔c3 ♖h2 47 ♔d4 Black can win by taking the h3-pawn and then arranging to capture the rest of White's pawns in return for his passed h-pawn: 47...♖xh3 48 ♖xb2 ♖g3 49 ♖b6+ ♔e7 50 ♖b7+ ♔f8 51 ♔e5 h3 52 ♔f6 ♖f3+ 53 ♔e5 h2 54 ♖b1 ♖g3 55 ♔f6 ♔g8 56 ♖h1 ♖g2 57 ♔e7 (or 57 e5 ♔f8 58 e6 ♖f2+ 59 ♔e5 ♖e2+) 57...♖xg5 58 ♖xh2 ♖e5+.

43...♔c6 44 ♖b8 ♔c5 45 f4 ♔c4 46 f5 ♔c3 47 ♔f4 White also fails to save the day after 47 ♖c8+ ♔b3 48 ♖b8+ ♔a2 49 ♖a8+ ♔b1 50 fxf6 fxf6 51 e5 ♔c1 52 ♖b8 b1♖ 53 ♖xb1+ ♔xb1 54 ♔d4 ♖h2 55 e6 ♔c2 56 ♔e5 ♖xh3 57 ♔f6 ♖e3.

47...♖g2 48 fxf6 fxf6 49 e5 ♖e2 50 ♖b6 ♔c2 51 ♖c6+ ♔d1 52 ♖d6+ ♔c1 53 ♖c6+ ♖c2 54 ♖b6 ♖c4+ 0-1

Driving the white king back before cashing in. With the king cut off there won't even be a race after Black takes the rook, so Carlsen resigned.

Let's now return to that zugzwang position, which arose in the notes to move 40 and see how it isn't quite a reciprocal one, since White to move can just draw.



46 ♖b3! ♖g2 47 ♔f4!

Black wins the e-pawn after 47 ♔xg6 fxf4 48 ♔g5 g3 49 ♔g4 ♖e2!.

47...fxg4 47...♖xg4+ 48 ♔f3 ♖xh4 49 ♖xb2 should be a draw too, as the tablebases confirm.

48 e4 ♔c5 49 e5 ♔c4 50 ♖b8 ♔c3

Or if 50...g3 51 e6 ♖e2 52 ♔xg3 ♔c3 53 ♖c8+ ♔b3 54 ♖b8+ ♔c2 55 ♖c8+ ♔d1 56 ♖b8 ♔c1 57 ♖c8+.

51 e6 ♖e2 52 ♖c8+ ♔b3 53 ♖b8+ ♔c2 54 ♖c8+

And White draws fairly easily after 54...♔b1 55 ♖e8! or 54...♔d1 55 ♖b8 ♔c1 56 ♖c8+.





24) Chigaev-Sarana

In the game White failed to find the only way to win, play concluding: 1 ♖c5 ♗e2 2 ♗d5 ♗d3 3 ♖e5 ♗e2 4 ♗g6 ♗d3 5 ♗f5 ♗e2 6 ♖f4 ♗h5 7 ♗g4 ♗g6 8 ♖g5 ♗d3 9 ♗f5 ♗e2 10 ♖f4 ♗h5 11 ♖e3 ♗d1 12 ♗g6 ♗g4 13 ♗e4 ♗h5 14 ♖f2 ♗g4 15 ♖g3 ♗h5 16 ♖f4 ♗e2 17 ♗f5 ½-½. As pointed out by Michael Roiz, **1 ♗d5!** was the key move, and if **1...♖h7 2 ♗xc4 ♗h3 3 ♗d3+**

♖xh6 4 c4 ♖g7 5 c5. It may look like Black's king is in time here, but in fact he is quite lost: **5...♗d7** (or 5...♖f7 6 c6 ♖e7 7 ♖c5 ♗d8 8 ♗d6 ♗g4 9 c7+ ♖e8 10 ♗b5+ ♖f7 11 ♗d7) **6 ♗d5 ♖f7 7 ♗d6 ♖e8** (7...♗a4 8 ♗e4 ♖f8 9 ♗c6 aims for a winning pawn ending and 9...♗d1 10 ♗b5 ♗f3 11 ♖c7 ♖e7 12 ♖b6 ♗d8 13 ♗a6 followed by ♗b7 is hopeless for Black, as shown too by Roiz in his ChessPublishing

column) **8 ♖c7! ♖e7 9 ♗e4** leaves Black in zugzwang, Roiz's sample winning line running **9...♗e8** (9...♗g4 10 c6 ♗e6 11 ♖b8 ♗g4 12 c7 ♗d6 13 ♗b7 is very similar) **10 ♗c6 ♗h5 11 ♖b6 ♗g4 12 ♗b5 ♗f3 13 ♗a6 ♗e4 14 ♗b7 ♗f5 15 c6 ♗d6 16 c7 ♗e6 17 ♗a6 ♗f5 18 ♖b7** when **18...♖c5 19 ♖b8 ♖b6 20 ♗c8 ♗d3 21 ♗e6 ♗a6 22 ♗d5!** is a final and fatal zugzwang.

This Month's New Releases

Attacking with g2-g4

Dmitry Kryakvin, 288 pages

New in Chess

RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

To play g2-g4 is quite possibly the ultimate indication of a lack of inhibition in the attacking department. Everyone knows to push h2-h4 against a kingside fianchetto, but there is something special about the lunge of the g-pawn, especially as it can prove to be extremely effective even when White has castled on the kingside. Russian Grandmaster Kryakvin has produced an interesting and original work devoted to this famous lunge.

The book is in five parts. The first one looks at Botvinnik's heritage and then everything is arranged via opening, with chapters on the Dutch Defence, Queen's Gambit Declined, Nimzo-Indian Defence, Slav Defence, King's Indian Defence and Grünfeld Defence. Some of the early g-pawn advances appear to be much better than others. It is to be expected in various variations against the King's Indian Defence, but Murey's 1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 g4 is unlikely to attract many adherents, because despite the initial shock value, it really isn't going to offer enough in return for the straightforward loss of a pawn.



If Black plays without prejudice and

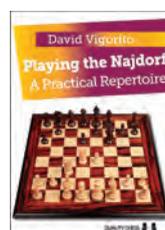
accepts the gift with 4...♗xg4 then White will be pushed to find suitable compensation. The author likes 4...c5 too, calling it: "Possibly the strongest reaction."

Flights of fancy aside, the g2-g4 advance has proved to be a very effective part of the arsenals of great players, all of whom learned from Botvinnik. Readers will probably find various Kasparov games in the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Gambit Declined spring to mind. The g4-baton was passed to Richard Rapport in recent times and he has brought the idea to the very early stages of the English Opening, with both 1 c4 c5 2 ♗c3 g6 3 g4!? and 1 c4 e5 2 ♗c3 ♖f6 3 e3 ♗c6 4 g4!? certain to cause even the most modern of eyebrows to rise.

Some of the prose will force the eyebrows north, too. In the notes to a game between Antoaneta Stefanova and Anna-Maja Kazarian (Riga, 2017), we learn that "The fairer sex is usually not prone to long vacillations and is used to resolving issues by immediately cutting the 'Gordian knot'" by way of explaining the early advance of the g-pawn. One wonders what Reuben Fine would have made of such a statement.

Chess-wise, readers will find some very interesting ideas with which they may seek to surprise future opponents, although fans of the Grob Opening will be disappointed to read the rallying cry of "Go on, push that g2-pawn!", only to find the earliest possible case of g2-g4 has been neglected. Fans of the Dutch will, however, need to tighten up their defence against the oncoming g-storm.

Sean Marsh



Playing the Najdorf: A Practical Repertoire

David Vigorito, 544 pages

Quality Chess

RRP £22.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.25**

At over 500 pages, U.S. IM David Vigorito's new work on the Najdorf is decidedly chunky. This opening has been popular at all levels for many years so there is a lot of theory. As a result, authors of books on the Najdorf have to make difficult decisions as to how much material to include and how to present it.

Vigorito, who has several other excellent books to his credit, sets out his approach in the very first paragraph, stating: "The purpose of this book is to *teach you how to play the Najdorf*. Of course a lot of theory will be discussed, but there will always come a point where we are 'out of book' – be it move 25 or move 10 – and then we have to understand what we are doing." However, that is only part of the story. Vigorito's book also aims at a comprehensive and deep coverage of all the important variations. Where other authors have focussed either on instruction and explanation, or on the depth of their analyses, Vigorito ambitiously seeks to provide both.

Najdorf players often have strong preferences and will want to know about the repertoire. Vigorito's repertoire is based on his considerable personal experience and this experience is evident in the quality of his explanation. However, as he himself acknowledges, some of his choices will be controversial.

The very sharpest variation, 6 ♗g5, is the most challenging for Najdorf players and also for the writer of a repertoire book. It is hardly possible to avoid tactical play and a lot of theory. Vigorito mentions 6...♗bd7 but, atypically, he doesn't express a view on it. He discusses the various options at move seven and goes with 6...e6 7 f4 ♗e7, the old mainline, arguing that it leads to fewer irrational positions than the Poisoned Pawn variation, which he admits "may be ultimately best".





Recent developments have left his line sharper than it used to be and, in my opinion, any advantage in rationality over other lines is strictly relative. Much of the theory is not too difficult to understand, but the key line with 6 g5 e6 7 f4 e7 8 f3 c7 9 0-0-0 bd7 10 g4 b5 11 xf6 xf6 12 g5 d7 13 f5 0-0!? looks truly scary and would test anyone's powers of calculation. In one of several lines from this point, and having been warned that memorisation is necessary, we reach the following position (from Konguyel-Narayanan, Kolkata 2012):



Here Black must play 17... f6! , of which Vigorito laconically remarks, "Not an easy move to spot". He goes on to say: "In the very first game to reach this position, our heroine erred with 17... e8?? which is already a losing move: 18 fxe6 d5 19 exf7+ xf7 20 c4+ - T.Kosinteva-Ju Wenjun, Ankara 2012. We have the advantage of hindsight."

The book goes on to work through the complications which continue for a few more moves. Best play results, not surprisingly, in a draw. Players of either colour may find themselves in trouble if they arrive in this sort of position and their memory fails them. Of course, it is easier to find the solution if you know that there is one, and if you're reasonably confident that you have not already erred. However, no one will feel comfortable playing this variation without some serious study.

Against 6 e3 Vigorito advocates 6... e5 , meeting 7 b3 e6 8 f3 with 8... h5 . To my mind this line, played by many strong grandmasters and recommended by other authors (including the Djoknas brothers, in their 2019 book) is a natural choice. Even players who favour the ultra-sharp pawn storm line advocated by Pavlovic in his 2018 work might like to have this ... h5 line ready for days when they don't want a theory contest. The other variations after 6... e5 are also well covered including the positional 7 f3 and the 7 b3 lines without f2-f3 .

Against 6 c4 Vigorito recommends 6... e6 followed by 7... c6 , transposing to the Sozin variation of the Classical Sicilian. His main argument against 7... b5 , the main line, is that it requires a lot of hardcore memorisation. As the author acknowledges, this will be controversial. 7... c6 has a less

forcing character than 7... b5 so the battle unfolds a little more slowly, but, just as with 7... b5 and the alternative 7... bd7 , this line is sharp and requires a significant amount of study.

Against 6 h3 Vigorito advocates 6... e5 , meeting 7 de2 with 7... h5 . This has become the main line against 6 h3 in recent years. 6... e5 is also his choice against 6 e2 , 6 g3 and 6 f4 . Most of the nine(!) variations in the Odds and Ends chapter are also met with 6... e5 .

At the end of the book the author provides an eight-page appendix on the anti-Sicilians from the perspective of a Najdorf player. The main focus here is on the Moscow variation with 3 b5+ d7 . I think the appendix is helpful, given that there are no recent books that cover this, but of course an in-depth discussion of what has become a very popular line would take much more than eight pages.

I remarked earlier that the author was highly ambitious in seeking to combine deep analyses with clear instruction. In my view he has succeeded fully. What we have is a book with the depth of the Grandmaster Repertoire books, but with much more detailed explanations.

Experienced Najdorf players might wonder how much of the instruction adds value for them. I think they'll be pleasantly surprised; as a recent Najdorf returnee, I found Vigorito's explanations to be really helpful. Conversely, a less experienced player might wonder whether the depth of analysis will be of value. I think that, even if he or she doesn't need much depth at the outset, the deep analysis in this book will turn out to be helpful. Very few readers start out by working through everything in an opening book; the rest of us read as deeply as we like and skim the other material, coming back to it later to build up our knowledge as we gain practical experience with the opening. At that point having comprehensive coverage is really valuable.

Vigorito's orientation towards helping the reader understand the opening pervades the book. He clearly explains the plans for both sides, as well as the tactics and positional points. He frequently explains which moves don't work as well as those that do, which is often the best way to understand what is going on and to get to grip with the various subtleties that make this opening so rich. He does not seek to make the material appear simpler than it really is, rather he guides the reader every step of the way.

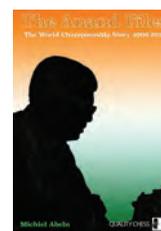
It's tempting for an author to focus on the sharp lines and those that are currently fashionable with the top players. At less exalted levels, players of the white pieces often adopt less fashionable lines or stick with the lines they grew up with. In addition, because it is so difficult for White to obtain any advantage against the Najdorf, both sidelines and offbeat lines are often adopted to gain an element of surprise, even by grandmasters. One of the strengths of this book is its coverage of these lines, which can

easily sting the unprepared.

Like other Quality Chess publications, this book is very well produced and edited. There are plenty of diagrams, and the layout and typeface are first rate. It is easy to navigate via the contents page and the variation indices at the start of the chapters. However, there is no index of variations at the end nor is there an index of complete games, presumably due to a need to limit the number of pages.

I highly recommend this book. It provides great coverage of the Najdorf and excellent explanations. Even more importantly, at least to me, it is enjoyable to read and a pleasure to dip into. The size of the book might put some potential readers off but, if you want to understand this much-played opening, I don't think there is a better guide.

John Pigott



The Anand Files

Michiel Abel, 512 pages
Quality Chess

RRP £27.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.19**

Subtitled 'The World Championship Story 2008-2012', this new book covers the tough title matches in which Anand defeated Kramnik (2008), Topalov (2010) and Gelfand (2012). It presents the inside story of the three contests.

"*The Anand Files* offers a detailed insight into the strategies Viswanathan Anand used to win three World Championship matches in a row. It takes the reader behind the scenes to show the inner workings of Team Anand, including pre-game planning and preparing opening novelties, some of which have yet to be used." Team Anand refers to the combined might of Peter Heine Nielson, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Surya Ganguly and Radek Wojtaszek, "Though other big names outside the core team also helped."

The book has had a long gestation period. The interviews with Team Anand started back in 2013 and the author, who "Had no experience in writing", clearly faced a major task in order to add a work of significance to the bursting libraries of books devoted to title matches. Clearly, this is not an 'instant' match book of the type made popular in the 1970s and 1980s (which, despite the trendy retro-continuity of criticism were actually very welcome works in the pre-Internet times), but rather a very well-structured and serious attempt to offer the best coverage of three very important matches.

It is a fast world and people tend to forget the past rather quickly. Is it necessary to study the games and ideas from 12 years ago? It depends on what one is seeking from





a chess book. The history of the world chess championship has long been a fascination to me and the contents of this book are extremely interesting. It is wonderful to be able to take the place of a fly on a historical wall to see just how Anand prepared for the three big matches. There is so much material here and plenty of original analysis, including much on the openings, which can definitely still be of use despite the passage of time.

How would one even start to prepare for a match with Kramnik? It is worth a thought. In 2008 he was so strong with the Berlin against the Ruy Lopez and with the Petroff standing by as a rock-solid alternative against 1 e4. Anand thus decided to play 1 d4 as his main white weapon; a major decision for a player who up until that point preferred 1 e4.

It is interesting to discover even world champions and their powerful teams can miss very simple ideas in their preparation. When Anand was ahead in his match against Kramnik, it was deemed the perfect time to wheel out the safest opening choices for White. This meant using the Exchange Slav, but Kramnik surprised his opponent with the move order 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 c6, completely ruling out Anand's intention of 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5. It is not what we would expect from chess preparation at this level, but it shows the honesty of the material and will perhaps help club players sleep easier when they make mistakes in their pre-game preparation.

Naturally, being surprised by a transposition from a not exactly rare second move was far from the norm in the preparation game. The depths to which the team had to dive down to were, generally speaking, extraordinary. Sometimes one part of the repertoire would end up taking up a lot of time and energy. "Preparation was very tense, and the calmness from a couple of days ago had completely disappeared. Additional stress came from one specific problem in the Vienna Variation that kept nagging away at the team."



"The team looked at no fewer than 18(!) alternatives for Black after 15 ♖h1, not liking any of them! This level of detail in opening preparation can seem absurd, and rightly so. However, the team felt the intended repertoire was busted and couldn't ignore this." Indeed, Kramnik did play 15 ♖h1 against Anand two years later – and the

game was drawn after 37 moves.

We think of the effect a tense match has on the players, not necessarily the team. Yet Kasimdzhanov was initially reluctant to rejoin Team Anand for the match against Topalov, as it had taken him 9 months to recover from the Kramnik match. His period of recovery included "A total lack of energy" and even nightmares.

The prose shines a light on the depth of preparation that goes into the run-up to a big match – and even then the players are not immune to being hit with a big surprise. For example, in the first game of the 2012 match, Gelfand varied from his usual narrow opening repertoire and shocked Anand with the Grünfeld Defence in the first game of the match. He repeated the procedure when Anand switched to 1 e4 in game five, where "The Sveshnikov Sicilian was a huge shock for Anand and his team". Anand has his own surprises planned too. He was interested in playing the French Defence with ...dxe4 against Topalov, but despite being an 'ambidextrous' player, the challenger avoided 1 e4 during the match.

The book is greatly enhanced by a large number of colour photographs, which will be new to readers. It is typical of Quality Chess to go the extra mile with the production values; note the large page count and the hardcover production.

I certainly learned a lot about the three big matches from this volume and Anand himself calls it "The definitive book on those three matches", which is obviously a major endorsement. I would be very interested in reading a follow-up on the matches against Carlsen, but I suppose history is still written by the winners. Meanwhile, this book can be recommended to anyone wanting to take a much closer look at chess at the top.

Sean Marsh

A Nightmare for the Najdorf

Sergei Tiviakov, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 20 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

We tend to associate the strong Dutch GM with 1 e4 c5 2 c3, but he has also played a great many games with 2 ♗c3, intending to wrong-foot many a Sicilian practitioner. Tiviakov's main goal is avoiding the Najdorf, so the bulk of material presented is devoted to 2..a6 3 ♗ge2 followed by 4 g3 and 2...d6 when he examines both 3 ♗ge2 and 3 f4. We wonder if a second volume will follow on 2...♗c6 3 ♗b5, which is sometimes known as the Tiviakov variation.

A Modern Approach against the Sicilian Vol. 1: The Rossolimo Variation

Jan Werle, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 30 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Dutch GM Jan Werle reminded the chess world at Gibraltar that he is still a pretty decent player, despite having previously pursued a career in law. Now back working full time in the royal game, he recently visited

the ChessBase studio to record this DVD devoted to 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5. Werle assumes little prior knowledge, making this product suitable for most levels of club player, with the repertoire centred around meeting 3...g6 with 4 0-0 ♗g7 5 c3.

There's also a companion volume, *A Modern Approach against the Sicilian Vol.2: The Moscow Variation*, covering everything you need to know to play 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 ♗b5+ in its eight(!) hours, while also retailing at £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers.

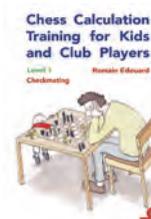


Bobby Fischer Rediscovered

Andrew Soltis, 312 pages, paperback

RRP £16.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £15.29**

The enigmatic eleventh world champion remains a source of fascination, as well as one of the greatest players of all time. The 72-year-old Soltis initially covered a player and man he knew well back in *Bobby Fischer Rediscovered* and has now updated that 2003 work for publishers Batsford, revising his earlier analysis, while adding an additional six new games, as well as various new thoughts.

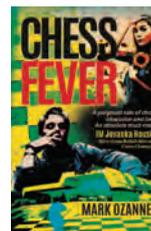


Chess Calculation Training for Kids and Club Players: Level 1 Checkmating

Romain Edouard, 152 pages, paperback

RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

The strong French Grandmaster presents 276 puzzles, while being fully aware of the need for his readers to have just the right thinking and calculation processes so that they can finish off opponents' exposed kings in their own games. Edouard has clearly put a lot of work into getting the structure of the work just right and it is certainly aimed at a lower level than his early puzzle-based works for Thinkers Publishing.



Chess Fever

Mark Ozanne, 168 pages, paperback

RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

We presented an extract from this gripping new novel in our February pages. Sam





Renshawe is giving up everything to follow his chess dream. It's 1990 and he's in Yugoslavia for the Chess Olympiad where he is playing the most important game of his career. However, events on the board cause him to reconsider his life, especially the recent split from his girlfriend caused by his chess addiction. How much is he willing to sacrifice to achieve his goals?

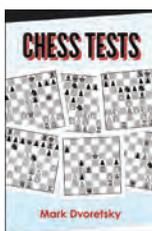


Chess Informant 142

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

The latest 'Informator' contains all the usual sections, not least the leading games and novelties, but also these days a number of columns, including 'Danny's Chess Diary' by Danny Gormally.

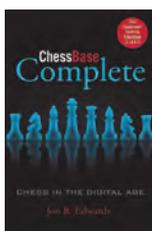
As ever, if you'd also like the material from *Chess Informant 142* in CD format, do just add £10.00 to your order (Subscribers – £9.00), while the CD alone is also available, for just £9.99 or £8.99 for Subscribers.



Chess Tests

Mark Dvoretsky, 208 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

The pen of the Mark Dvoretsky was rarely silent and it turns out that he had finished at least two works at the point of his untimely death in 2016. This new work is one of those and was intended to not only instruct, but also present the "tastiest examples" of various position types. Overall it's hard to disagree with Artur Yusupov's foreword that "*Chess Tests* offers chessplayers material of very high quality for working on various themes, from training combinative vision to techniques of realizing advantages."



ChessBase Complete: 2019 Supplement

Jon Edwards, 96 pages, paperback
RRP £14.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.45**

Back in 2014, *ChessBase Complete* was something of a hit for Russell Enterprises, explaining all about how to make the best use

of the many facets of the famous German database program. This supplement looks at the new features added by *ChessBase 13, 14* and *15*, not least all the cloud options, while once again providing a thorough guide to them.



ChessBase Magazine 193

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

This issue of *CBM* is dated 'January/February 2020' and has a special focus on the final legs of the FIDE Grand Prix. Other highlights include Mihail Marin taking a look at some of Korchnoi's legendary endgame play in his favourite French Defence, as well as an update on the notorious Traxler variation of the Two Knights.



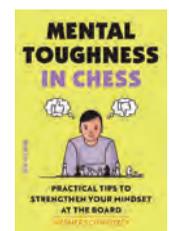
Mastering Pattern Recognition in the Opening

Robert Ris, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 40 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

We all understand that the world's best are partly so strong due to their excellent pattern recognition, but how to go about improving yours? In his latest presentation for ChessBase the acclaimed Dutch coach examines 10 key elements of opening play in his bid to help, before following up with a large amount of interactive and further training material.



Mental Toughness in Chess

Werner Schweitzer, 144 pages, paperback

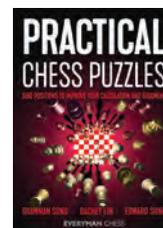
RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

Self-confidence is a key feature in many a strong chess player and, conversely, many suffer from a lack of it, which can, most commonly, lead to the repeated checking of variations one is calculating. The Austrian coach has studied mental strength in general and in this work, which will surely prove popular, addresses such issues as how to increase your concentration, how to handle disturbing thoughts and feelings during a game, and how to increase your self-confidence.

Old Wine in New Bottles

Mihail Marin, 380 pages, hardback
RRP £32.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.69**

This finely produced new work from Chess Informant features one of the world's leading chess analysts taking a detailed look at some of his favourite games from throughout chess history. Marin writes well, as ever, while aiming to leave his readers feeling "Enriched, technically and aesthetically".

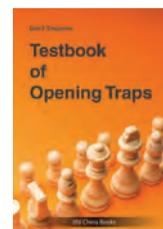


Practical Chess Puzzles

Guannan Song, Dachev Lin & Edward Song,
288 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The names of the Canadian and American FM and IM authors may not be too well known in Europe, but are of the belief that far too many puzzle books take an overly simplistic approach. Their 600 positions have been chosen for being both realistic and instructive, while along the way a scoring system will help readers keep track of their progress.



Testbook of Opening Traps

Gerd Treppner, 124 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Do you find yourself falling for opening traps too often or just enjoy trying to spring them? In this work written with the average club player squarely in mind, the late German FM presents 120 typical positions, in each of which the goal is to find the trap ready to be sprung.

The Chess GPS 2: Your Move – Your Choice

Sam Palatnik & Michael Khodarkovsky,
210 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The highly experienced American authors believe that it can be a mistake to look for the 'best' or 'strongest' move in a position. Instead, they aim to help the reader feel confident in playing the move which looks the most important on the board, such as improving the worst-placed piece. Plenty of examples demonstrate how the search for a good move should be linked to trying to improve the situation of your pieces on the board, while revealing much about how grandmasters think.

