

Chess

VIDIT VICTORIOUS!

**GM Vidit Gujrathi beats a
star-studded field to win
the FIDE Grand Swiss**



Two World Champions! – English chess legends triumph at the World Seniors



The Sixteenth Game – A look at one of the most famous games in chess history



Trapping Heffalumps – How you might claim the scalp of a higher-rated opponent

Chess

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Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT
Tel: 020 7486 7015 (9:30am - 5pm Monday to Friday)
Email: info@chess.co.uk, Website: www.chess.co.uk

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess - Malcolm Pein
Twitter: @chessandbridge

Subscription Rates:

United Kingdom

1 year (12 issues)	£50
2 year (24 issues)	£90
3 year (36 issues)	£125

Europe

1 year (12 issues)	£60
2 year (24 issues)	£115
3 year (36 issues)	£165

Rest of World (Airmail)

1 year (12 issues)	£75
2 year (24 issues)	£145
3 year (36 issues)	£210

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editors. Contributions to the magazine will be published at the Editors' discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

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FRONT COVER:

Cover Design: Matt Read
Cover image: John Saunders

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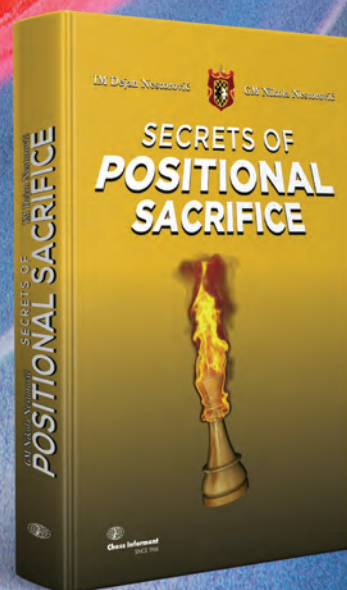
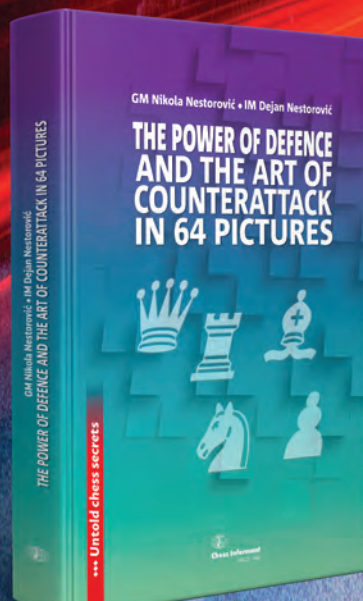
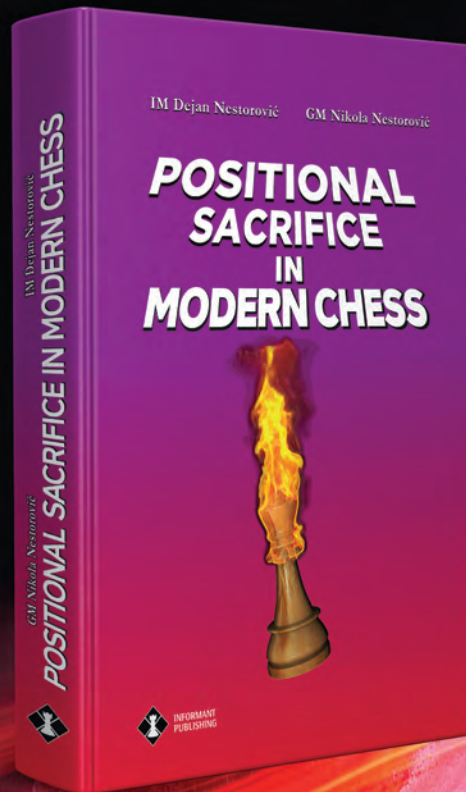
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Hard-Fought!

Sarah & Alex Longson report on a very successful 2023 Delancey UK Chess Challenge

The 2023 Delancey UK Chess Challenge concluded with the Terafinal held at Blenheim Palace over the weekend of 14th and 15th October. 60 players took part across five all-play-all age-group sections (Under-8, Under-10, Under-12, Under-14 and Under-18). All the players had done remarkably well to make it to this stage – the Terafinal is exceptionally difficult to qualify for. The quality of chess on display was very high indeed.

The 2023 Delancey UK Chess Challenge

The UK Chess Challenge is an annual competition for UK juniors (ages 5-18), which has run every year since 1996 and has seen over one million children participate. Many of the previous winners have gone on to become International Masters or Grandmasters, including Adam Hunt, Thomas Rendle, Lorin D'Costa, Stephen Gordon, Yang-Fan Zhou, Brandon Clarke, Marcus Harvey, Matthew Wadsworth, Joseph McPhillips, Harry Grieve and Yichen Han.

Headline numbers for the 2023 season:

- Over 1,000 schools represented
- Over 5,000 Megafinal entries
- 31 OTB Megafinals, with two online
- Three OTB Gigafinals, and one online
- The Challengers
- The Terafinal

To qualify for the Terafinal players first had to qualify via a Megafinal and then via one of the following strong National events:

- The Scottish Gigafinal, Broughton High School, Edinburgh, 24-25 June
- Northern Gigafinal, Wright Robinson College, Manchester, 1-2 July
- Southern Gigafinal, Sandown Racecourse, 22-23 July
- Online Gigafinal, 2-3 September
- Challengers, Northampton, 9-10 September

The 2023 Terafinal

Under-8s

The Under-8 section was jam-packed



The splendid setting of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire helped to inspire all the young talents in the Terafinal, the final stage of the popular and successful 2023 Delancey UK Chess Challenge.

with the UK's strongest under-8 players and it is amazing to see so much talent at such a young age. Many of these players would be competitive in much older sections and it is clear that the future of UK chess is looking bright in the hands of these players.

The battle for first place was dominated by two players; Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham (Sythwood, England), and Louis Cheng (Edinburgh Chess Academy, Scotland). The two met in round 9 with Dildarav half a point behind, but managing to gain a hard-fought victory to take a half-point lead which he didn't relinquish. Their final tallies of 10½/11 and 10/11 point to their dominance in the event.

Amy Ba (Oxford High) was the convincing winner of the top girl prize, scoring a very creditable 50% and finishing three and a half points clear of her nearest rival. Amy even won an Under-10 Gigafinal this season (playing up a category).

D.Lishoy Gengis Paratazham-R.Chotai

U8 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023
Sicilian Accelerated Dragon

1 e4 c5 2 d4 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 dxd4 g6 5 dxc3 g7 6 e3 a6?!
A very offbeat Sicilian, where already 7 d5! was strong.

7 g3 e6 8 g2 ge7 9 0-0 0-0 10 a4 c7 11 b3 d6 12 a5 d7 13 b6 b8 14 f4 c8 15 e3 c7 16 g4
Very direct. Black's next looks pretty risky, weakening the king.



16...xc3 17 bxc3 f5? 18 exf5 exf5

18...gxf5 19 gxf5 fxf5 20 g4+ also leaves the black king badly exposed.

19 e5+ g7

19...f7 is sad, but forced. Black loses at least an exchange, but keeps the king alive.

20 e4+

White's pieces now rip the black king to shreds along the wide-open diagonals.

20...xd4 21 xd4+ f6 22 g5 e7 23 xf6# 1-0

Under-10s

It was really difficult to predict a winner in this event where four nationalities were represented (English, Indian, Ukrainian and German). A case could be made for many players who have had strong seasons. The standings were close throughout and in the end first place was decided in the final round in the game between George Zhao (Westminster under School) and Junyi Zhang

(St Paul's). Junyi, needing a win, lost on time, although by then the endgame was difficult to save. George is already a multi-time winner of the event having won the Under-10s in 2022 and also finishing as runner-up in the 2021 Under-8 event.

The girls' prize was also decided in the final round clash between Sheng Lu (Chess Rising Stars Academy, Germany) and Aashita Roychowdhury. Aashita, needing to win, manufactured a winning pawn endgame, but it was tricky to convert and in pressing too hard even managed to lose the game.

A.Roychowdhury-S.Lu

U10 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023



29...♟f8?

Too passive and allowing 30 ♟f6!

30 e6 gxf5 31 gxf5 fxe6 32 ♜xe6 ♜xe6?

32...♞d8! offers defensive chances.

33 fxe6 ♟e7 34 ♟h6

34 ♟f5 is another way to win, either forcing the black king back or waiting for the black pawns to advance: for example, 34...c5 35 ♟e5 h6 36 h4 h5 37 ♟f5 b6 38 ♟e5 a5 39 ♟d5 and wins.

34...♟xe6



35 h4?

This is a very tricky and confusing endgame, involving zugzwangs and pawn advances on the queenside. White will win the h-pawn and Black's only hope is to keep the white king pinned to the side of the board and gain not one but two tempi on the queenside.

With 35 ♟h7! ♟f7 36 ♟h6 ♟f6 37 b4! White would have grabbed some space and prevented Black from creating those reserve tempi. After 37...b5 38 h4 c5 39 bxc5 a5

40 c6 Black only has one reserve move and so is lost.

35...b6?

35...♟f7 36 ♟hx7 c5!! is the only way to draw, and if 37 c4 a5 or 37 b4 c4, with lots of spare moves on the queenside.

36 ♟hx7 ♟f7 37 h5?

Now the position is drawn again. With 37 ♟h6 (or 37 b4 immediately) White wins: 37...♟f6 38 b4! (White is trying to put Black in zugzwang) 38...b5 (alternatively, 38...c5 39 bxc5 bxc5 40 c4 a5 41 b3 c6 42 h5 when there is no reserve tempo, so the white king escapes, or 38...a5 39 bxa5 bxa5 40 b3 c5 41 c4 and, again, Black hasn't enough reserve tempi) 39 h5! and the game is up (if not here 39 b3? c5! 40 h5 c4 41 bxc4 bxc4 42 ♟h7 ♟f7 43 h6 c6 with a draw).

37...c5 38 ♟h8 ♟f8 39 h6 b5 40 b4 c4 41 ♟h7 ♟f7 42 ♟h8 ♟f8



43 h7??

A win turns to a draw and now to a loss.

43...♟f7

Maybe White forgot there was a still a move with the b2-pawn?

44 b3 cxb3 45 c4 b2

And not 45...bxc4 46 b5 axb5?!, with stalemate.

46 c5 b1♞ 47 c6 a5

Or just 47...♞b2#.

48 bxa5 ♞e1 49 a6 ♞e8# 0-1

A heartbreaking defeat.

Under-12s

The race for first place in the Under-12s proved to be the closest across all the sections. In the end the trophy was decided on tiebreak, as Elis Denele Diden and Tom Junde He, both of Coventry Chess Academy, finished joint first on 8½/11, having drawn their individual game.

Elis is another multi-time winner, having won the Under-8 girls in 2019, Under-10 Girls in 2020 and the Under-10 Open in 2021. She is the only girl in the competition's history to win an open title and now she has done it twice. Elis is a member of the Chess Trust's Accelerator Programme and is currently the 17th-ranked girl in the world in her age category.

Coventry Chess Academy, under the stewardship of Paul Lam continue to produce some outstanding junior talents and this one-two is testament to their high standards.

Here Elis makes short work of a very talented junior, one with a bullet rating over 2700 on Lichess.

P.Zhu-E.Dicen

U12 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♟f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♙g5 c6 6 e3 ♟e7 7 ♙d3 ♟bd7 8 ♟ge2 h6 9 ♟h4 ♟h5 10 ♟xe7 ♞xe7 11 ♞d2 ♟b6 12 0-0 0-0 13 f3 c5!

A new move.

14 e4?

Too ambitious at this stage and 14 dxc5 ♞xc5 15 ♟d4 is the usual response, with a small advantage for White.

14...dxe4 15 ♟xe4 cxd4 16 ♟xd4



White's pieces look loose and the pawn on f3 is misplaced.

16...♞d8 17 ♟b3 ♟e6 18 ♟ec5 ♟xb3 19 ♟xb3 ♞f6 20 ♞ad1 ♟c4! 21 ♞e2 ♟xb2 22 ♞e4 ♟xd3

Black could safely take the exchange with 22...♟xd1, and if 23 ♞h7+ ♟f8 24 ♞h8+ ♟e7 25 ♞e1+ ♟d7.

23 ♞xd3 ♞xd3 24 ♞xd3 ♞d8 25 ♞b5 ♟f4 26 ♟c5? ♞g5



27 ♞f2

Losing immediately, but it was already too late in view of 27 g3 ♟e6.

27...♟h3+ 28 ♟f1 ♟xf2 29 ♟xf2 b6 30 ♞c6 ♞xc5+ 31 ♞xc5 bxc5 0-1

Under-14s

This was another heavily stacked section with multiple British Junior Champions,

former UKCC winners and two members of the Chess Trust Accelerator Programme. The deserving winner, Stanley Badacsonyi (Fortismere), went through undefeated, including decisive victories over the second and third-placed finishers. Stanley is fast making a name for himself as a very dangerous and quick player on the UK scene and it is fantastic that he has now achieved this latest accolade.

The girls' title was a close affair with Dhriti Anand (North London Collegiate) narrowly edging out Lindsay Pyun, in part due to her victory over her nearest rival in round 10. Dhriti also won the Girls' Under-12 title in 2022 and is now a multi-time winner.

A special mention to Kenneth Hobson (Cowley), who was runner-up at a Terafinal for the third time. Kenneth gained his CM title this year and defeated his first grandmaster – hopefully next year he'll make a run on the Under-18 Championship.

D.Anand-S.Badacsonyi
U14 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023



39...Rxe2!?

One thing we have noticed is that Stanley is not afraid to sacrifice the exchange for the initiative. Here he calculates that he will be able to eliminate White's annoying pawn on b6. **40 Qxe2 Qxa5**

Now b6 will be next and the position is definitely easier to play for Black.

41 Qf3 Qxb6 42 Qxb6 Qxb6 43 Rcd1 Qe2+

43...Qxd5! 44 Rxd5 Qc6 is even stronger.

44 Qxe2 Rxb2+ 45 Qd3 Qe4

Suddenly the white king is vulnerable and the white pieces are tied to his defence.

46 Rh7+ Qf6 47 Qg1 Qe5 48 Qc4 Qb4+ 49 Qd3 Qxd5 50 Ra7? Qb2 0-1

It will be mate next move.

The following game won a Mike Basman Best Game Prize. Both of these talented and hard-working players are on the Chess Trust's Accelerator Programme.

T.Khoury-K.Hobson
U14 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023
St. George Defence

1 e4 a6

A fitting tribute to Mike.

2 d4 e6

This has been played recently by Magnus Carlsen in some rapid games and even at the European Club Cup. Surprisingly, it isn't so bad.

3 Qd3

Instead, 3 Qd2 d5 transposes to a line of the French Tarrasch.

3...b5 4 Qf3 Qb7 5 0-0 c5 6 c3 Qf6 7 Qg5

7 e5! Qd5 8 dxc5 Qxc5 9 a4 puts Black under some pressure.

7...Qe7 8 Qbd2 d6 9 Qe1 Qbd7 10 Qe2

White has played sensibly and emerged with a small advantage.

10...0-0 11 Ra1 e5



The position now has some hallmarks of a Spanish Chigorin.

12 Qf1 Qh5 13 Qxe7 Qxe7 14 g3

Defending against ...Qf4, but this looks a little loose and now 14...exd4 15 cxd4 Qfe8 16 d5 Qhf6 seems roughly balanced.

14...g6 15 Qe3 Rac8

Again, 15...exd4 16 cxd4 Qfe8 would have been a better try for Black.

16 d5 c4 17 Qc2 Qg7

The knight ends up misplaced here and Black never gets the ...f5 break in.

18 Qh4 Qg5 19 Qg4?! 19 Qhg2 f5 20 exf5 gxf5 21 f4 is slightly better for White.

19...Qxg4 20 Qxg4 h5

And not 20...f5? 21 exf5 gxf5 22 Qh6+.

21 Qe3 Qc5 22 Qg2 Qc7 23 f4



White is the first to strike with the f-pawn.

23...exf4 24 gxf4

White now reorganises very effectively and threatens to make use of the mobile pawn centre. In the meantime, Black's knight on g7 is a problem piece.

24...Qe8 25 Qf1 Qce7 26 Qg3 Qc8 27 h3!

A useful piece of prophylaxis against ...Qg4.

27...Qh7 28 Qf3 f6?! 29 e5! Qf5

29...fxe5 30 fxe5 dxe5 31 d6 Qe6 32 Qg5+ picks up the exchange.

30 e6 Qxg3 31 Qxg3 Qb7

Maybe Black had to try 31...f5, but it doesn't look pleasant.

32 f5 g5



33 Qxg5+! Qg7

Or 33...fxg5 34 f6+ and wins.

34 h4!

Other moves are also good, but this one gets bonus points for style.

34...fxg5 35 hxg5 h4+ 36 Qg4 Qf8 1-0

The white pawns are too strong.

Under-18s

The oldest section included an International Master and a FIDE Master, and the standard of play was higher than ever. The two top seeds met in round six and Artem Lutsko (Tytherington School) was the decisive winner after Rajat Makkar's opening gambit backfired: **1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 Qc4 Qf6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 Qg4! 6 Qxf7+? Qxf7 7 Qg5+ Qg8 8 Qxg4 h6! 9 Qf3 d6.**



Already it is clear that White's opening gambit has failed and he was forced to retreat.

In the last 18 months many strong young players from the Ukraine have joined the England chess scene and junior chess has been greatly enriched by this. Artem becomes the UK Chess Challenge's first champion from the Ukraine and he did it in great style with a thumping 7/7 at the Northern Gigafinal and almost completed a clean sweep in the Terafinal, only being held to a draw in the very

last round by runner-up Aron Saunders.

Aron (Downend & Fishpond) also had a great tournament, going through undefeated en route to 9/11. Aron, or 'QED' to his online followers, has racked up some impressive achievements in speed chess and variants online, and it is great to see the results now following over the board.

In the battle for the girls' title, Tashika Arora (Oxford) narrowly finished ahead of Abigail Weersing after prevailing in their crucial round seven clash.

The following game fittingly won a best game prize.

J.Liu-M.Gera

U18 Terafinal, Blenheim Palace 2023
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♟f5 4 ♘d2 e6 5 ♘b3 ♜c7 6 ♘f3 ♘d7 7 ♟e3 ♘e7 8 ♟e2 h6 9 0-0 ♟h7 10 a4 a5 11 ♟d2 b6 12 ♜c1

White aims to open the c-file to exploit the position of the black queen.

12...♘g6

As the knight moves away from the d5-square, the c2-c4 break becomes more attractive for White. Instead, 12...♜b7 13 c4 dxc4 14 ♟xc4 ♘d5 is pretty solid for Black.

13 c4!



13...♜b7 14 cxd5

Of course, White opens up the position as Black's kingside is still undeveloped.

14...cxd5 15 ♟b5

This threatens ♟c6.

15...♜c8 16 ♜e2 ♜xc1 17 ♜xc1 ♟e7

Black would desperately love to castle.

18 ♟c6

Making way for the queen.

18...♜a7 19 ♜b5 ♟d8



The Under-18 Terafinal with Aron Saunders and Girls' Champion Tashika Arora first on the left.

Black prepares ...♘e7, trying to push White back. Now Jack finishes the game with great force and accuracy.

20 ♟xa5!! bxa5 21 ♘c5

With a triple-attack on d7.

21...♘gf8 22 ♘b7!

An easy move to miss as the knight seemed well placed on c5. However, it is heading with some force for d6.

22...♜b8

Alternatively, 22...g5 23 ♘d6+ ♟e7 24 ♘c8+ wins the queen, or if 22...♟e7 (guarding d6, but now the white rook plays a decisive role) 23 ♟xd7+ ♘xd7 24 ♜c8+ ♟d8 25 ♜xd8+ ♟e7 26 ♜xd7#.

23 ♘d6+ ♟e7



24 ♜xb8! ♘xb8 25 ♘c8# 1-0

A beautiful checkmate.

Taking Part in the 2024 UK Chess Challenge

Schools, junior chess clubs and parents can get involved in the 2024 Challenge, either by contacting the team (admin@ukchess.co.uk), or by visiting the website: delanceyukchoolschesschallenge.com

Schools or clubs taking part receive a school/club tournament kit containing all the materials necessary to run a chess tournament, plus prizes for all the players

including certificates, badges and a trophy.

For parents and the players, a Megafinal is often their first experience of competitive chess outside of the school environment, whilst the Gigafinals and later stages are some of the strongest junior competitions around. The Terafinal itself is fearsomely strong and notoriously difficult to qualify for!

Acknowledgements and Appreciations

We are extremely fortunate and grateful to be able to host the Terafinal at such a spectacular venue, and the team at Blenheim Palace once again made us felt very welcome and helped ensure we were able to run everything as planned – including using the Long Library for the prize-giving, which was literally a red carpet prize-giving.

Once again huge a thank you too to our sponsors Delancey, without whom this event couldn't take place.

We'd also like to express our thanks to our core team and the many helpers and organisers this year. In no particular order: Dominic Hare, Pat Armstrong, Rahil Ahmad, Pauline Whitehead, Alex Holowczak, Nevil Chan, Ken Regan, Matthew Carr, Emma-Jane Billington-Phillips, Sean Marsh, Jon Hunt, Ray Sayers, Ed Jones, John Upham, Maha Chandar, Jamie Mitchell, Jennifer Wilson, Harry Marron, David Eggleston, Julian Clissold, Ravi Kumar, John Stubbs, Oliver Stubbs, John Hipshon, Lara Barnes, Alex McFarlane, Chris Lewis, Daniel Knight, Mark Newman, Richard Croot, Mohammad Rezaul Islam, Thomas Evans, Ritika Maladkar, Andrew Smith, Jo Wildman, Andy Howie, Nilanga Jayawarna, Jorel Ali, Maria Manedilou, Chris Russell, James Corrigan and Adam Robinson. There are many others, of course – apologies if we have inadvertently missed you out.

This was the first ever Terafinal to take place without the original founder Michael Basman, who is dearly missed and to whom ourselves and UK junior chess are so deeply indebted.



60 Seconds with... Steffen Nielsen



Born: Aalborg, 13th August 1975.

Place of residence: Copenhagen.

Occupation: Journalist.

Enjoyable? My colleagues inform me that I am having fun.

And home life? I live with my lovely wife and three lovely kids. They more or less seem to tolerate chess.

But sometimes good to escape to: The streets of Copenhagen, which typically translates into taking out the trash.

Sports played or followed: I follow football closely, and cycling 21 days every summer.

A favourite novel? Either *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami or *The Ebony Tower* by John Fowles.

Piece of music? It changes every day; even the genre. Today my favourite is 'You Never Can Tell' (cover by Elise Legrow).

Film or TV series? For pure effect, I will have to say *The Secret in Their Eyes* (The Argentinean original). The birthday scene at the end of Mike Leigh's *Secrets and Lies* also gets me every time. Amazing acting.

What's the best thing about playing chess? That you are allowed to expand the game – finding new ways to command the pieces.

And the worst? I assume chess comes to an end when you die.

Your best move? I don't play good moves as such, but I once played a fun junior game against the co-author of *Endgame Labyrinths*, Jacob Aagaard. He probably doesn't remember it. But I do.

J.Aagaard-S.Nielsen

Skørping, early 1990s

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♙e1 b5 7 ♙b3 ♙b7?! 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♙xe5 ♘f4 12 ♙xf7+?

I had prepared this and Jacob has never really been into opening theory so he went along according to my plans.

12...♙xf7 13 ♙f5+ ♙f6 14 ♙xf4 ♖d3! 15 ♖h5+ g6?

Falling into the trap within seconds. He probably didn't take me seriously. Still doesn't. 12 d4! is correct and complicated, and 12 ♙f5?! is fun as well.

12...♙xf7 13 ♙f5+ ♙f6 14 ♙xf4 ♖d3!

This stronghold is well worth two pawns.

15 ♖h5+ g6?

15...♙e7! followed by a rook to e8 is actually close to winning, but my *Stockfish* wasn't strong at the time.

16 ♖e5 ♙he8!



17 ♖xf6+!

Avoiding all the traps, not least 17 ♙xf6+?? ♙g8 18 ♙e6 ♖d7! and wins.

17...♙g8 18 ♖f7+

Certainly not 18 h3?? ♙e1+ 19 ♙h2 ♙h1+!

18...♙h8 19 ♖f6+ ½-½

But less memorable than your worst move? My worst move was against Poul Erik Simonsen with Black. Something like this:



18...♖xd4?? 19 ♖xd4 1-0

Judging by my opponent's laughter, it was certainly memorable for him.

And a highly memorable opponent?

Watching live broadcasts of top games, I've noticed that smiles are very rare. I always enjoyed playing my compatriot Jakob Rathlev when we were on competing league teams. I almost always won from some swindle. Still, he was always smiling at the end of the games. That made it memorable to me.

Favourite game of all time? No doubt about that, the immortal draw Diemer-Trommsdorf,

Bagneux 1972. Look it up if you dare [Ed. – Or enjoy it in this month's PGN download file].

The best three chess books: I seem to regularly return to both Timman's *The Art of the Endgame* and *Secrets of Spectacular Chess* by Levitt and Friedgood. And, of course, every *FIDE Album* ever published.

Is FIDE doing a good job? I am happy that chess is booming, but I am not convinced that democratic principles are coming along.

Or your National Federation? No complaints lately.

Any advice for either? Support the niches and artists of chess.

Can chess make one happy? Not on its own. Happiness is made up of several pieces and they are not all chess pieces.

A tip please for the club player: Find your chess niche and stick to it!

Ed. – Endgame Labyrinths by Steffen Nielsen and Jacob Aagaard is available from Chess & Bridge for £29.50 or £26.55 for Subscribers.

New from Quality Chess!

Theoretical Rook Endgames



Rook endgames are the most important to study, because they are the type of endgame you will face most often over the board. Working on rook endgames gives the biggest bang for your buck.

World-class grandmaster **Sam Shankland** explains technical rook endgames in a way that is clearer, better organized, more concise, and easier to understand than any previous work. After learning the vital set positions, the reader is offered lots of rules and guidelines to cement their understanding. Shankland explains which endgames must be memorized, and which positions are best handled by considering general plans and principles.

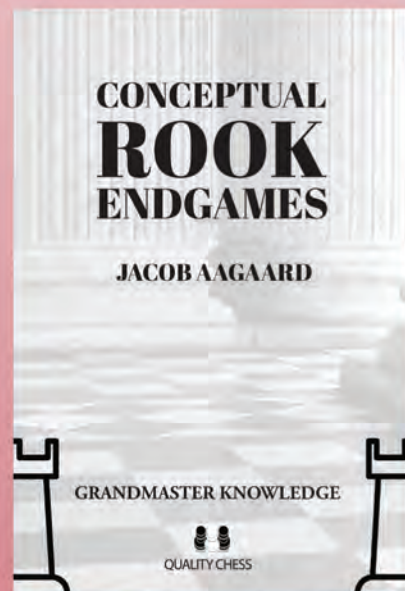
Sam Shankland's accolades include 2018 US Champion, 2016 Olympiad team gold medal winner, 2014 Olympiad individual gold medal winner, and all-round American Chess Hero.

Conceptual Rook Endgames

In this, the sister volume to Shankland's masterpiece, grandmaster and chess trainer extraordinaire **Jacob Aagaard** shows how the theoretical knowledge from Shankland's book is used in advanced practical play.

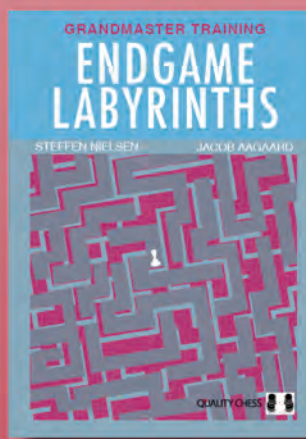
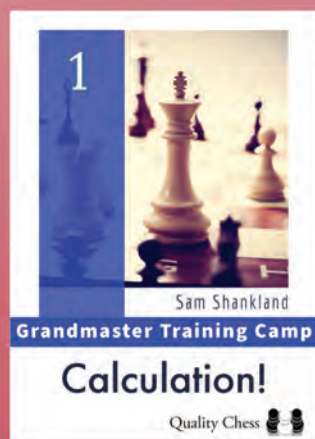
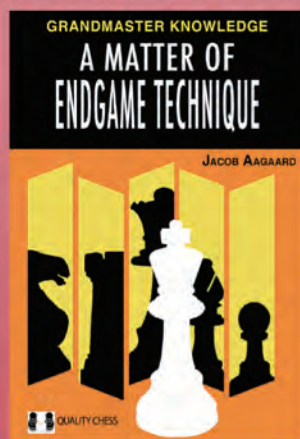
Focusing on two dozen underlying concepts, Aagaard explains the mechanisms of rook endgames in a novel way, by building foundations with simple examples, which can be seen in the most complicated examples as well. Rook endgames will remain rich and surprising, as they are for the greats, but armed with this book, your comprehension of them will skyrocket.

Jacob Aagaard is a multi-award-winning author and trainer, whose students have won virtually everything there is to win in chess.



2023 ECF
Book of the Year!

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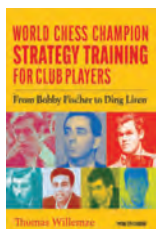
Christmas Stocking Fillers



**Uncertain what you want for Christmas?
Let Sean Marsh be your guide!**

We have reviewed many books over the course of 2023, but there were plenty more which we simply did not have the space to mention. Therefore, as we head towards the end of the year, it is time for a whistle-stop guide to some interesting books from a whole range of publishers, which would make ideal stocking fillers.

First, congratulations to the four books which made it to the shortlist for the English Chess Federation's Book of the Year Award: *Chess for Schools* by Richard James (Crown House Publishing); *How to Out-Prepare Your Opponent* by Jeroen Bosch (New in Chess); *The Pawn Study Composer's Manual* by Mikhail Zinar (Elk and Ruby); and the winner of this year's contest, the massive tome *A Matter of Endgame Technique* by Jacob Aagaard (Quality Chess). All of them should be candidates for your Christmas lists – but there are plenty more to consider.



World Chess Champion Strategy Training for Club Players

Thomas Willemze, 264 pages
New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Thomas Willemze's track record for New in Chess is impressive; his books read well and are always instructive. In this one, which is subtitled 'From Bobby Fischer to Ding Liren', "we will learn foundational techniques such

as: how to improve your worst-placed piece; how to exploit a lead in development; or make the right piece trade; and how to create a strong square; plus numerous others."

Essentially, there are seven chapters, one for each of the world champions if one follows the classically accepted lineage of Bobby Fischer, Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik, Viswanathan Anand, Magnus Carlsen and Ding Liren. Each of the players is given a brief introduction with a couple of instructive games and then the reader is asked to go to work on some key positions featuring the stars.

There are obviously parallels between the first and last players in that list; mainly the fact that they both stopped playing after taking the ultimate title. Ding Liren may well return to the board before waiting the 20 years Fischer did, but we'll see. Curiously, Ding Liren was born in 1992, the very year of Fischer's extraordinary – albeit temporary – return from chess wilderness. New in Chess have a full book on Ding coming out very soon, but this one offers an early assessment of his style and games.

The exercises are not easy, but a careful study of the answers should enable the reader to understand more about the strategies needed to lead to chess improvement. Here is one to try.



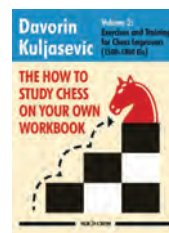
V.Anand-R.Buhmann
German Bundesliga 2002



"Anand has a very dominant position but has to be precise to bring home the full point. What should he play?"

The answer is the unexpected **30 b3!** "This is a beautiful prophylactic move. White takes away an important square from the black rook and creates a safe spot for his king. Next, he will continue with his deadly plan that consists of ♖g7, g4-g5 and ♕h5-e2-d3 to attack the h-pawn." Anand duly won (1-0, 38).

This is a great book for those who find it much harder to come up with strategic plans than tactical blows. The author consistently reiterates the key points to watch out for and it is hard to believe that careful study of such distilled chess wisdom will not enable readers to improve this difficult aspect in their own games. Additionally, it always a pleasure to see the finest games of the world champions and to remember just how incredibly well they played, going back to the days when the very idea of a chess-playing computer capable of playing a decent game of chess was still very much in the realms of science fiction.



The How to Study Chess on Your Own Workbook: Volume 2

Davorin Kuljasevic, 200 pages
New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Staying with New in Chess and the quest for chess improvement, Kuljasevic's new book is also deserving of a space in your Christmas stocking. As the blurb puts it:

"This second-volume workbook in Davorin Kuljasevic's *How to Study Chess on Your Own* series is optimized for chess players with an Elo rating between 1500 and 1800 but is helpful for anyone between 1200 and 2000. The astounding success of his *How to Study Chess on Your Own* made clear that thousands of chess players want to improve

their game and like to work on their training at least partially by themselves.”

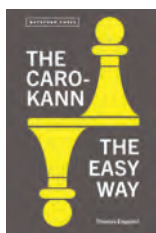
The 1500-1800 level is a growing target audience and here they will find a copious number of exercises on typical mistakes, visualisation, tactics, the middlegame and endgame. There are 145 exercises in all. Here is an example from the section on tactics training, which encourages readers to improve their visualisation skills.



“Please find a ‘hidden’ tactic in the following three-move sequence”: **27 ♖xd6 ♜f8 28 ♜f6+ ♔g7 29 ♖xd7 ♜xf6.**

The solution is that White can improve on the sequence with **28 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 29 ♜f6+ ♔g7 30 ♜xd7**, winning a piece.

Any book on self-improvement (chess or otherwise) is only going to be as good as the work one puts into it, but for readers who are serious about training themselves the books of Kuljasevic are certainly worthy of attention. This one makes a fine complimentary volume to the Willemze book mentioned above. Study both and carefully, and just imagine how much both your strategic and tactical play will improve.



The Caro-Kann: The Easy Way
Thomas Engqvist, 329 pages
Batsford

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Batsford used to be the undisputed kings of books on chess openings, but they rarely tackle the genre these days. However, this book may be a sign that the trend will change again. Engqvist, in his fifth book for Batsford, delivers the basics of the Caro-Kann via 44 model games. There are four more games in the introduction, starting with examples featuring Horatio Caro and Marcus Kann themselves.

The Classical variation of 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 (or 3 ♜d2) 3...dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜f5 forms the backbone of the repertoire and the Advance variation is met by a similarly straight bat: 3 e5 ♜f5, rather than the

trendier 3...c5. Those two variations take us to page 200 of the book's 329.

The Caro-Kann has a reputation for being solid but rather dull, but it is an excellent choice at club and tournament level due to its recurring themes and relative simplicity. Furthermore, the second player doesn't have to keep up with a rapidly-increasing body of theory (after 1 e4 c5 or 1...e5, for example) or spend most of the game wondering how to develop the queen's bishop (which can be the case after 1 e4 e6).

White can often build up an impressive-looking centre against the Caro-Kann, but a momentary lapse of concentration can bring the edifice crashing down, as shown in this historically important game.

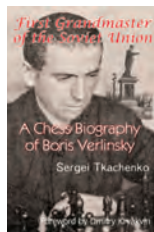
J.Mieses-M.Kann
Hamburg 1885



13...♜cxd4!

“Black exploits the fact that the compromising 6 f4 has severely weakened the classical diagonal a7-g1.” It got even worse for White after **14 ♜xd4 ♜c5 15 ♖d1 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4+ 17 ♖xd4 ♜c1!!** (0-1, 24).

These are the sort of saboteur tactics on which Caro-Kann players thrive. Anyone wanting to give the trusty defence a try will welcome Engqvist's well-explained guide to the opening.



First Grandmaster of the Soviet Union: A Chess Biography of Boris Verlinsky
Sergei Tkachenko, 418 pages, Elk and Ruby
RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**

Elk and Ruby continue to produce books which no other publisher does. Anyone interested in chess history simply cannot turn away from the Elk and Ruby catalogue. They repeatedly publish books of immense interest, more often than not offering an abundance of material which cannot be found elsewhere (unless one is prepared to

investigate the dusty chess archives of the world for oneself).

Who was Verlinsky? “Born in Bakhmut, Ukraine, and brought up in Odessa, Boris Verlinsky (1888-1950) was the first holder of the grandmaster title in the Soviet Union, and he was consistently one of the top Soviet players in the 1920s.”

He was an extremely sharp, attacking player, who had wins against some of the world's top players – such as Efim Bogoljubow, Akiba Rubinstein and Rudolf Spielmann. Verlinsky's games are exciting and his unpredictable style foreshadows a number of his successors, such as Mikhail Tal. Here is a case in point, against a reigning world champion.

J.Capablanca-B.Verlinsky
Moscow 1925

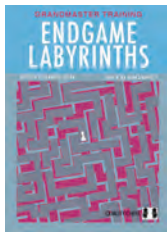


The material imbalance is certainly Tal-like and even the normally unflappable Capablanca failed to fathom out the complications and lost.

As usual with books on historical figures from the old days of the Soviet Union, there is a mixture of triumph and tragedy, as revealed by the large amount of biographical material presented in this fine volume. Childhood meningitis left Verlinsky almost completely deaf, for example. On a brighter note, one early story sees Verlinsky trying to win a problem-solving competition, facilitated by a local newspaper. He was hampered by being unable to receive points for solving the studies composed by...himself.

Verlinsky also benefited from the experience of playing several games against a young and rampant Alexander Alekhine. Going through the pain barrier of being on the wrong end of highly tactical skirmishes presumably influenced his own style. Incidentally, there are also claims that Verlinsky taught the father of Efim Geller, who was starting to shine brightly just as Verlinsky was nearing the end of his life.

Elk and Ruby continue to go the extra mile with their production values. This book comes with a hardback option [Ed. – retailing at £49.95 or £44.95 for Subscribers], and has the usual array of rare photographs. It can be heartily recommended not only to chess historians, but also to anyone who enjoys playing through very exciting games which, despite their age, will have a freshness about them due to being so obscure.



**Grandmaster Training:
Endgame Labyrinths**

Steffen Nielsen & Jacob Aagaard,
424 pages, Quality Chess

RRP £29.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.55**

To bring this selection of reviews full circle, we have another worthy endgame tome with a considerable number of pages by the same publisher and the same author – although this one has a co-author, Steffen Nielsen – the current world champion in study composition. This hardback volume “presents the reader with 1002 challenging studies selected and truncated, with their usefulness for the practical player in mind.”

The mention of ‘studies’ can put off practical players, who often find the concepts too deep or obscure. The authors take this into account.

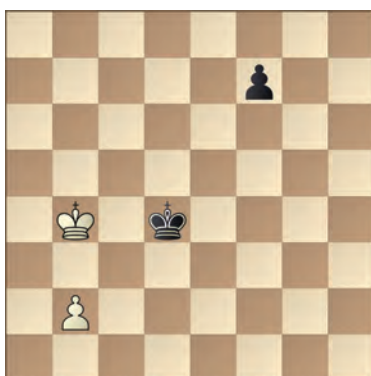
“It is common for studies to be extended by less interesting manoeuvres or by incomprehensible sequences, before the main themes come into play. The studies in this book have been pruned to leave the reader with 1002 clear and solvable challenges.”

1002 challenges! That should be more than enough to keep even the most diligent of chess students busy over the festive season. Imagine treating yourself to a mince pie every time you solved one of the studies.

In the words of Steffen Nielsen: “The endgame study is a piece of art that is closely connected to the game of chess. As a composer of endgame studies, I have two aims. One is purely artistic and the other is making my work accessible to the chess public.”

Here is one to get you started. Can you solve it? We are not going to make it easy by giving the answer here, but just remember that in king and pawns endings we must expect the unexpected, without forgetting the basics, such as the rule of the square.

J. Moravec
Ceske Slovo 1941



White to play and draw

The bottom line is that *Grandmaster Training: Endgame Labyrinths* “is a book for strong players wanting to improve their game through solving endgame studies.” If you can solve the one above, then you have only 1001 left to try. Time to bring forth the mince pies...

Well, dear readers, that is your Christmas list all sorted out for you. Simply print off these pages and leave them strategically placed, all around the house. Hmm...there is an easy starter for your strategy training, too.



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How To Trap Heffalumps... Quickly! Part One

David LeMoir reveals how you might claim the scalp of a higher-rated opponent

In his legendary 1978 book *Chess For Tigers*, Simon Webb included a chapter entitled 'How to trap Heffalumps'. Heffalumps are bigger and stronger than Tigers. Over the chessboard, Webb defined them as those opponents against whom you would expect to score only ten to twenty percent. I can translate that for you. With a 370-point deficit we would expect to score around ten percent, and with a 250-point rating deficit the score should be around twenty percent.

Webb's idea was that we Tigers should drag our Heffalump into the mire and trap him there. In the non-metaphorical world, that would mean:

In the opening, either play a main line, so that he is the first to vary – hopefully with a substandard move – or play a favourite gambit, especially if it isn't fashionable.

In the middlegame play actively, and target the king if possible. Also, randomise the position if you can, which increases the chance element. Either player could make a serious mistake in a crazy position, and – just possibly – it could be the Heffalump who commits it.

As for the endgame... don't go there! Don't swap pieces off; Heffalumps will eat even Tigers for breakfast in simplified positions, where the opportunities for complications are fewer and the superior technique of the Heffalump is so effective.

As regular readers of this magazine will be aware, I have been assiduously preparing a book on brilliant short games (twenty-five moves or fewer). I collated a large database for the purpose, and spotted that those games in which the winner overcame a sizeable rating deficit shared some common characteristics. The Heffalumps in question were not huge – the biggest rating gap was 305 (around a 15 percent anticipated score), and most gaps were between 200 and 150 (around a 25 to 30 percent anticipated score), but most of the Tigers used similar approaches to achieve their triumphs.

The closest to Webb's ideal was this game, where the rating gap was 195 (2245 vs 2440).

G.Kenworthy-P.Van der Sterren
Ramsgate Open 1981
Belgrade Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 d3 c3 d6 3 d3 f3 c6 4 d4 exd4 5 d5

The Belgrade Gambit. It is most often declined, but accepting it is perfectly

acceptable. Van der Sterren was an IM (later to become a GM) and his opponent... well he was just a player on his way to earning the FM title. What could possibly go wrong?

5...dxe4 6 e4 c4 e7 7 dxd4 0-0 8 d5 b5

The threat to the pawn at c7 helps to make the game very messy, and Black's clever reply makes things even murkier.

8...b4+ 9 c3 xf2



The Heffalump IM shows who is in charge here. 10 xf2 will be answered by 10...Wh4+, regaining the piece with two extra pawns to his name. It is hard to judge the resulting position from a distance, but, in fact, White would have plenty of compensation. Understandably, Kenworthy decides not to let his opponent have his own way and gives up the rook in the corner for the chance of a kingside attack.

10 Wh5!? d3xh1

It just so happens that 10...Re8+! 11 xf2 Re5 gives Black a winning position with perfect play. But why bother analysing a piece sacrifice when you can simply grab a rook without any apparent problems?

11 cxb4 d3xb4?

The Heffalump again shows how clever he is. The point is 12 d3xb4? We7+, regaining the piece, and meanwhile he prevents 12 e4d3 at the same time as threatening a knight fork to win another rook.

Unfortunately, pride comes before a fall; it is a losing blunder. He may have spotted White's response, thinking he has found a clever reply, but he has overlooked a deadly riposte. Once again, 11...Re8+! followed by 12...Re5 was the way to go and, with best play, Black should win.

12 e4g5!

Ouch! The f-pawn cannot block this attack on the queen in view of 12...f6 13 d3xf6+ e4h8 14 Wh7#.

12...Re8+ 13 e4f1 Re5



Too late. The rook pins the bishop that attacks the queen. Black is now attacking that bishop twice, but White can respond with a 'pin' of his own.

14 Re1!! 1-0

The pin is to e8. Black cannot capture twice on g5 due to back-rank mate, and meanwhile White has taken over control of e7. 14...Re1+ 15 e1xe1 We8+ 16 d2e7+ leads to a quick mate or winning Black's queen: for example, 16...e4h8 17 e4xf7 We8 18 d2g6#. So the Heffalump resigned.

I wonder how many Heffalumps have been turned over so quickly and prettily?

One way for a Tiger to beat a Heffalump is to engage him in an opening that involves lines that can lead to forced wins – opening traps, if you like. Unlike the Belgrade Gambit, which had been around for years when the previous game was played, the Portuguese Gambit was in its relative infancy when the next encounter happened. This too fits the Tiger pattern, being a speciality of the 2070-rated player of the black pieces, and clearly underestimated by his FM opponent, who was rated a huge 305 points above him.

The opening itself was enough to drag this Heffalump into the mire, and I think it is possible that the whole game – or most of it – was already known to Monange through his home analysis.

I.Burovic-S.Monange
Paris 1991
Scandinavian Defence

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 d6 3 d4 e4g4 4 f3 e5 5 c4

As far as I can tell, at the time of this encounter the best way to meet the gambit



Gary Kenworthy has claimed many scalps thanks to his attacking style and produced a lovely miniature against Paul van der Sterren.

(5 g4 followed by 6 c4) was not yet known. The earliest game in my databases that features that line was played five years later. It is hardly surprising that it took some time to find, as it is unnatural to weaken the kingside pawns so much. The point is that after 5 g4! ♗g6 (5...♗d7 is better, but Black struggles to prove compensation after 6 c4) 6 c4 e6 7 ♖c3 exd5 8 g5! ♗h5?, White ignores the d-pawn and plays 9 f4! when the dual threats of 10 ♗e2 and 10 f5 ♗xf5 11 ♖xh5 ensure that White wins a piece.

5...e6! 6 dxe6 ♗c6!

In this line, quick development and open lines are more important than pawns. This knight is headed for c2.

7 ♗e2 ♗b4 8 ♗g3 ♗c2+ 9 ♖f2 ♗g6 10 ♗e3 ♗c5!? 11 ♗a3

Now Black can play a fine combination. It can be avoided by 11 ♗c3!, when Black will capture the rook on a1 with a complicated game in prospect.

11...♗xe3!

There is no need to grab either the rook or the d-pawn.

12 ♗xe3



12...♗g4+! 13 fxg4 ♗g5+ 14 ♖f3 fxe6!

Now 15 dxc5 loses to 15...0-0+ 16 ♖e2 (16 ♗f5 ♗xf5 soon runs the king to ground)

16...♖e5+ 17 ♗d2 ♗ad8+ 18 ♖c1 ♖e3+, mating, so White has to return a piece.

15 ♗d3 0-0+ 16 ♗f5 exf5 17 dxc5

There is no defence, so he may as well go a piece up again before being mated.

17...fxg4+ 18 ♖g3 h5 19 h3 h4+ 20 ♗h2 g3+ 21 ♖g1 ♖e3# 0-1

The rating gap in the next game is 158 (2227 vs 2385), which means that White would expect to score three points in a ten-game match against his opponent – so this Heffalump was not so huge. Just as in the previous game, our Tiger used a gambit. This one is quite reputable and he clearly knew, and understood, it well. This time, Black understood enough to play a good novelty – which should have secured him a playable game. However, he then became overconfident, played to increase his material advantage and found that he had taken poison.

J.Converset-J.Rodriguez

Buenos Aires 2019

Sicilian Rossolimo

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 g6 4 0-0 ♗g7 5 c3 ♗f6 6 d4!?

Offering the e-pawn gains a lead in development and a space advantage for White, and also helps him to build up pressure on the e-file. In this game, that pressure turns out to be decisive.

6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♗xe4 8 d5 ♗d6 9 ♗a3 ♗e5 10 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♖e1 ♗f6 12 ♗h6

Another benefit for White is that Black will now struggle to get castled.

12...♗f5 13 ♖d2



13...♖b6

This move was new, and is the computer's favoured move.

Five months later, another giant-killing act (2432 vs 2658) almost occurred when T.Hansen-Shirov, Lund 2019, continued instead with the previously played 13...a6, and White replied 14 ♖ac1! ♗xh6 15 ♖xh6 e6 (15...axb5 16 ♗xb5 d6 17 ♗c7+ is winning for White) 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♖xe6+ ♖f7 18 ♖xf6+! ♖xf6 19 ♖c3! d5. Now White started to play indecisively. Instead of 20 ♖f3 ♗f5 21 ♗d3 followed by 22 g4, regaining the material with a likely win due to

the exposed black king, he played 20 ♗f1? ♗f5 and now, rather than 21 ♖f3 with some advantage, he opted for 21 ♖c7+? (21 ♖f3 is still better for White). Soon the attack ran out of steam and Shirov went on to win.

14 ♖ad1 a6 15 ♗d3



15...♖xb2?

Our Heffalump's novelty has made White take a backward step, which makes him feel that he has earned the right to grab another pawn. He has stopped calculating properly, as White's reply shows.

Necessary was 15...♗xh6 16 ♖xh6 when White continues to enjoy perfectly decent compensation for his pawn.

16 ♗xf5!

Exchanging bishop for knight was clearly a surprise for Black, but it cements the bishop's place on h6, leaving the black king in a lot of trouble. At this point our Heffalump may have seen the writing on the wall.

16...♖xd2

White would win beautifully following 16...♖xa3, when the glorious rook sacrifice 17 ♖xe7+!! crashes through.



Black can reply in three different ways, but none help:

a) 17...♖xe7 allows 18 d6+ ♖d8 19 ♗g5, winning at once.

b) 17...♖xe7 loses to 18 d6 ♖e5 19 ♖e1 and now 19...♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1+ ♖d8 21 ♗g7! ♗g5 22 ♗d4, mating, or 19...gxh6 20 ♖c3! ♖xe1+ 21 ♖xe1+ ♖d8 22 ♗g7! ♗h4 23 ♗d4 with 24 ♗b6# to follow.

c) 17...♗xe7 lasts longer, but White wins with 18 ♖e1 and now Black can choose to go down to 18...♖d8 19 ♖d4! f6 20 ♖b6+ ♖e8 21 d6, mating, or with 18...d6 19 ♖e2 ♗e6 20 ♗xe6! ♖d8 21 ♗xf7 ♗f6 (or 21...♗h4 22 ♗g7) 22 ♖e6 ♗c3 23 ♗e8!, etc.

17 ♖xd2 gxf5

17...♗c3 loses nicely to 18 ♖c4! when 18...gxf5 drops material to 19 ♖d6+ ♗d8 20 ♖xf7+. Instead, 18...♗xd2 19 ♗xd2 leaves Black helpless since 19...gxf5 is met with 20 ♖d6+ ♗f8 21 ♗h6+ ♗g8 22 ♖xe7 and mate next move, and 19...0-0 allows 20 ♖b6 ♖b8 21 d6 gxf5 22 dxe7 ♖e8 23 ♗f4, winning the rook on b8

18 ♖c4! ♗d8

Or 18...d6 19 ♖xd6+ ♗d7 20 ♖c4 ♖b8 21 ♖b6+ ♗c7, and now the simplest is 22 ♗f4+, winning the exchange.

19 d6!



19...b5

19...♗c3 loses at once to 20 dxe7+ ♗c7 21 ♗f8! and the pawn promotes. Following the alternative of 19...e6 20 ♖b6 ♖b8 21 ♖c2, White is suddenly trapping and winning the bishop on c8 with 22 ♖ec1.

20 ♖b6 ♖b8 21 ♖d5! ♖e8

Covering the e-pawn, which could not move without losing the bishop on f6. But now all of Black's chickens come home to roost.

22 ♖xf6 exf6 23 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 24 ♖e2+ ♗d8 25 ♗g7 1-0

Black cannot avoid mate in a few moves.

So, what have the games so far had in common? Firstly, all of the Heffalumps accepted gambits. In games two and three our Tiger seems to have known more about his gambit than did his opponent. Secondly, in the first and third games, the Heffalump exhibited the sin of Pride. In the first he was too clever for his own good, and in the third he presumed that his good play so far gave him the right to gobble a second pawn. In both cases, his pride meant that he underestimated his opponent and that he stopped analysing thoroughly.

This is a phenomenon that Webb didn't

cover in *Chess For Tigers*. A strong player can make losing errors simply because he knows that he is strong. He may grab material because he thinks his good play to date has deserved it; he may believe that his opponent has made an error that he, the stronger player has been able to spot, and he plays to exploit it; finally, he may play a nice tactic to win material that he, as the stronger player, has spotted, but his opponent has not. In each case, however, he may find to his cost that his opponent has lured him into a carefully concealed trap.

I have sprung many a trap in my chess life, and most of them have been against strong players. For those whose collections of *CHESS* go back that far, I refer you to my series of articles on traps (starting with 'Keep Your Traps Open') in the January, March, May and July 2010 issues, or pages 171 to 188 of my book *Chess Scribe*.

Next month, we can enjoy a few more delicious games in the same vein.

Ed. – David LeMoir's Chess Scribe: A 50-Year Anthology, featuring the best of his writing, is available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £15.99.



Forthcoming Events

December 2 Omagh Rapidplay
ulsterchess.org/events

December 3 Bolton Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/316/home

December 3 Ealing Rapidplay
londonfidecongress.com/ealing-rapidplay

December 3 Plymouth Rapidplay
plymouthchess.uk

December 5-9 Grandmasters Festival, MindSports Centre
chessengland.com

December 8-10 Ribble Congress, Leyland
congress.popmalc.org.uk/congress/345/home

December 9-10 Southall Congress
londonfidecongress.com/southall-congress

December 10 Bristol Open Blitz Championship
bristolcongress.co.uk/blitz

December 10 Lincoln Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/310/home

Dec 16-17 London Junior (Under-10 & Under-14)
ljcc.co.uk; also the Northwick Park Congress, but at the University of Westminster, Marylebone Hall

December 16 Sandwich Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/342/home

Dec 28 - Jan 7 Caplin Hastings International Chess Congress
hastingschess.com

Dec 28-30 London Junior & Christmas Congress
ljcc.co.uk; University of Westminster, Harrow Campus

December 28 Ulster Blitz Championship, Greenisland
ulsterchess.org/events

January 2-6 London Ealing International Congress
londonfidecongress.com/ealing-international

January 5-7 London Chess League FIDE Weekender
londonchess.org.uk; venue: London MindSports Centre

January 6-7 4NCL (Divisions 3B, 4), Telford
4ncl.co.uk

January 6-7 Hamilton Open
chessscotland.com/calendar/

January 7 Hull Rapid
hullandastridingchess.org/rapid+play+2024

And for the Online Connoisseur:

December 1-10 London Chess Classic
londonchessclassic.com; Gukesh, Niemann, Vitiugov, Adams, McShane.

Dec 26-30 World Rapid & Blitz, Samarkand
fide.com; Abdusattorov, Yakubboev, likely many 2700+ GMs

Congress organisers – Don't forget to email editor@chess.co.uk to ensure your event is listed, or if you really want to guarantee a good entry, contact Matt@chess.co.uk to discuss having it advertised.

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How to Beat a Grandmaster

Paul Littlewood features a game from one of the British chess success stories of the year

Steven Jones has always been thought of as a promising player, but he has never really made a breakthrough at the higher level...that is until the 2023 British Championship. Included in the field were five grandmasters and Steven did brilliantly to finish outright second.

In the first round he played the eventual winner, Michael Adams, and at one stage he was clearly better, but an injudicious move allowed Michael to sacrifice a piece for a very strong attack, which Steven was unable to counter. Despite this setback he came back strongly, scoring 6½/9 and outclassing several strong opponents on the way.

I asked him what he thought his best and most memorable game was, and rather than one from the Championship, he cited his first win against a grandmaster which took place in the 4NCL Congress at Leamington Spa in 2021.

P. Wells-S. Jones
Leamington Spa 2021
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟f3 ♟g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♟g2 d6 6 0-0 ♟c6 7 ♟c3 ♟b8 8 b3 ♟h5!?

As far as I can ascertain, this is a totally new move in this position. I certainly have never seen it before and I couldn't find any examples of it in various databases. I suspect both players were now totally on their own, which means that the outcome was likely to be entertaining.
9 ♟g5 h6 10 ♟e3 a6 11 ♟d2 ♟h7 12 d5! ♟a5

Peter has played sensibly and now has a small plus. A interesting and unusual idea would now be 13 c5! and after 13...bxc5 14 ♟xc5 b6 15 ♟d4 White has the better game as he can use the half-open c-file to his advantage.
13 ♟a7 ♟a8 14 ♟d4 ♟f6 15 ♟a4 c5 16 ♟c3

An alternative option would be 16 dxc6 ♟xc6 17 ♟b6 ♟e8 18 ♟d4 ♟d7 19 ♟c3 when White stands slightly better because of his central control. Understandably though, Peter prefers to keep the a5-knight out of the game, but he never actually succeeds in fully controlling it.
16...♟e4!? 17 ♟g5+! hxcg5 18 ♟xe4 ♟xc3 19 ♟xc3 g4 20 f3?!

After his excellent 17th move White has obtained a small advantage, with chances of a kingside attack. However, more forceful would have been 20 f4!, as the threat of 21 f5 would have forced Black's hand. In fact his best move is 20...gxf3, but then 21 ♟xf3

brings the white rook into the game.
20...b5!



Black must try and obtain some counterplay on the queenside and this pawn thrust is justified by the fact that after 21 cxb5? axb5 22 ♟xb5 then 22...♟b6! wins the pawn back because of the double threat of 23...♟xb5 and 23...c4+.

21 fxc4?!

This looks strong, but the resolute 21 ♟d3 keeps control of the queenside and leaves White with a definite plus.

21..bxc4 22 ♟f2 ♟xg4

If 22...cxb3 then White can consider simply recapturing with 23 axb3 as after 23...♟xb3 he has 24 ♟g5! ♟xa1 25 ♟xf7+! ♟xf7 26 ♟xg6+ ♟h8 27 ♟xf7 ♟g8 28 ♟xe7 ♟b3 29 ♟xd6 with a vicious attack, despite being a rook down. I suspect though that Peter was going to play simply 23 ♟af1, also with a decent attack.

23 ♟af1 ♟g7 24 ♟f4

Peter is still playing for a win as he could have instead played 24 ♟g5 when 24...f5 25 ♟xf5 ♟xf5 26 ♟xf5 e6! 27 dxe6 ♟xg5 28 ♟xg5 ♟xf1+ 29 ♟xf1 cxb3 30 axb3 ♟e8 31 ♟d5 ♟xe6 32 ♟f4 ♟f6 33 b4! ♟b3 34 bxc5 ♟xc5 leads to an equal ending.

24...♟h3?

Steven has defended well, but now he takes one risk too many as the bishop on h3 becomes exposed to attack. Instead, 24...♟d7 would have given equal chances.

25 ♟f2?

Peter is an intrepid attacking player and I am surprised that he played this passive defensive move. Much better was 25 ♟h4! ♟h8 26 ♟ff4 with a very strong position. For example, if 26...♟d7 then 27 ♟d1 ♟b7 28 ♟f2 winning, or if 26...♟b6 then 27 ♟xf7+! ♟xf7 28 ♟g5 ♟xh4 29 ♟xg6+ ♟g7 30 ♟h5+

♟f8 31 ♟xh4 with a winning attack.

25...cxb3 26 ♟h4 ♟h8 27 ♟g5 ♟xh4 28 gxf3?

28 ♟xf7+ ♟xf7 29 ♟xg6+ ♟g7 30 ♟h5+ ♟f8 31 ♟h6+ would have led to a draw by perpetual.

28...e5!

Suddenly Black has escaped and, as is often the case, when the attack is beaten back the defender obtains the better game.

29 ♟g3?!

29 dxe6 is stronger, but it still leaves Black with the better ending after 29...♟xg5+ 30 hxg5 ♟a7 31 exf7 ♟xf7, etc.

29...♟d7 30 h5 ♟g4 31 h6+ ♟g8 32 ♟xg4 ♟xg4 33 ♟f6 bxa2 34 ♟xa2



34...♟b7?!

Steven has seen a forced line which gives him a winning knight ending, but even stronger here was 34...♟xe2! 35 ♟xd6 ♟b5 36 h4 ♟c4 37 ♟f6 ♟d8 when White is totally lost with a two-pawn deficit.

35 ♟xg6 fxcg6 36 ♟xg6+ ♟h7 37 ♟xg4 ♟g8 38 ♟xg8 ♟xg8 39 ♟c3 ♟h7 40 ♟g2 ♟xh6 41 ♟g3 ♟h5 42 h4 ♟a5 43 ♟e4 ♟c4 44 ♟f6+ ♟g6 45 ♟e4 ♟f5

Also strong was 45...a5! 46 ♟c3 ♟b6 47 ♟g4 a4 48 h5+ ♟h6 49 e4 a3 50 ♟f5 ♟xh5 51 ♟e6 ♟c4, etc.

46 h5 a5 47 ♟h4 a4 48 ♟g3+ ♟f6 49 ♟e4+ ♟f7 50 ♟g5 a3 51 ♟c3 ♟e3 0-1
...and in this hopeless position White resigned.

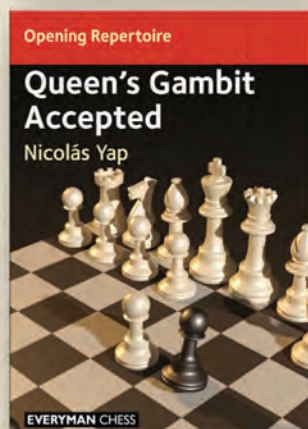
An interesting tussle. Peter certainly had his chances, but Steven kept on posing him tricky decisions and in the end, Peter cracked. I look forward to seeing how Steven progresses over the next few years. Meanwhile, if you have any games where you have beaten a grandmaster then please send them to me (plittl@hotmail.com), and if they are suitable I will include them.

GREAT NEW TITLES FROM EVERYMAN CHESS



The variation of the French that starts 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 (or 3 Nd2) 3 ... dxe4 is often called the Rubinstein Variation. It is a great way to simplify the position and ensure that the middlegame battle rewards strategic understanding rather than rote memorisation of opening moves. It is also a very useful weapon to defuse the attacking intentions of aggressive White players who plan an all-out assault in the main lines of the French Defence.

Paperback 368 pages



Yap analyses the line 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5!? in forensic detail. This is now almost the main line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted and there is currently very little theoretical material on it. Yap also investigates other popular, counterattacking lines such as 3 e3 e5!?

Paperback 280 pages



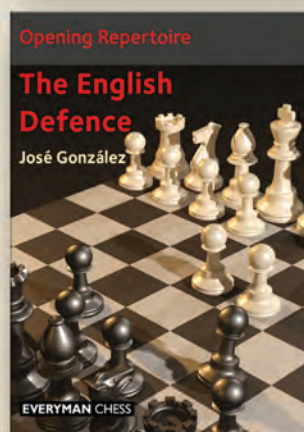
In this book the highly experienced grandmaster Milos Pavlovic outlines a powerful repertoire for White based on 1 d4. The variations are very much based on strategic themes where an understanding of plans is far more important than memorisation of lines and move orders.

Paperback 280 pages



Do you want a simple and practical method to counter Black's kingside fianchetto defences after 1 d4? A line that takes the initiative from a very early stage and creates difficult practical problems? If so, then The Harry Attack (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 h4!) is for you.

Paperback 240 pages



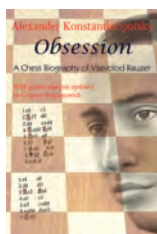
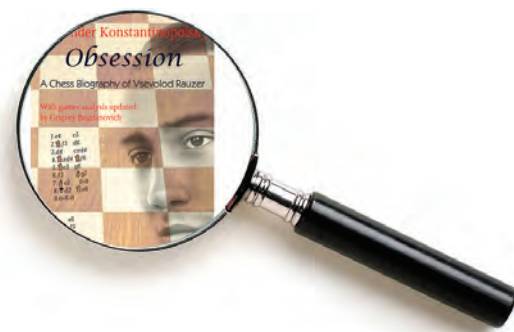
The English Defence (1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6) is a dynamic, counter-attacking line, initially investigated by English grandmasters. José González provides an excellent analysis of this complex opening and carves out a powerful repertoire for Black covering all lines after 1 d4.

Paperback 320 pages



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This Month's New Releases



Obsession: A Chess Biography of Vsevolod Rauzer

Alexander Konstantinopolsky, 240 pages
Elk and Ruby

RRP £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**

Who was Rauzer? I believe some people out there will think his full name was 'Richter Rauzer', due to the well-known variation of the Sicilian Defence. Yet Vsevolod Rauzer was so much more than half of a variation's name and he attracted praise from the highest of places; according to Mikhail Botvinnik, "His opening research [...] with linked middlegame plans, gives us every reason to place V. Rauzer among the founders of the Soviet chess school." Botvinnik was not noted for scattergun praise, so this assessment alone is significant.

The book has endured a lengthy gestation period. Alexander Konstantinopolsky died in 1990, but his son, Mark Konstantinopolsky, eventually managed to finish the book and it was published in Russia in 2022, a year before this new English version.

Various authors give an impression of Rauzer, his openings and games. The annotations – which are excellent and very engaging – are not just by Rauzer himself, but also feature a range of other authors. As for the book's title...well, most of us have been obsessed with chess at one time or another, but Rauzer reached the top level of obsession, bemoaning the fact that "Unfortunately, I just can't make myself work on theory of the game for more than 16 hours a day! My head can't endure more."

Rauzer's own obsession with chess led him on a mission to prove that 1 e4 was a winning move for White. 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 cxd4 6 axb4 dxc3 7 ♗f3! is one of his lines, which still hasn't been resurrected from Black's point of view. Indeed, the French Winawer often came under fire from Rauzer and here is an example of a tactical breakthrough in the late middlegame, which is typical of his sharp and creative style.



V.Rauzer-V.Alatortsev USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1937



23 ♖xc4! dxc4 24 ♜axa4 ♚xa4

"If 24...bxa4, then 25 ♜xc4+."

25 ♜xa4 bxa4 26 ♙xc4 ♘d7

"In view of the imminent time trouble, both opponents played the next stage of the game quite quickly. The black king is exposed, and it's impossible to defend it when facing the strong bishop pair." White won on move 40.

Unfortunately, Rauzer was plagued by mental problems and had to spend time in institutions. In fact, one could hardly call Rauzer lucky; he perished during the Siege of Leningrad, although sources vary on whether or not it was in 1941 or 1942. His mental problems manifested themselves in various ways. Even back in 1932, he resigned a game early (against his friend and the main author of this book, Alexander Konstantinopolsky), "explaining that the game had lost any theoretical interest for him" after failing to obtain an advantage with White in a Four Knights' Opening, which was one of his initial weapons in his quest to prove 1 e4 should win the game, regardless of Black's chosen defence.

Ultimately, Rauzer's legacy involves him being "one of those players whose work allowed [Soviet] chess thought to overtake that of foreigners in the 1930s." His opening ideas have outlived his own games and tournament results, and his name will continue to live on for as long as chess is played.

There is a short appreciation of the author by his son at the end of the book, augmented by a several pages of photographs, all of which were new to me. The book is therefore a dual tribute to both Rauzer and Alexander Konstantinopolsky. Once again, Elk and Ruby must be congratulated on bringing such an interesting book to the English-reading world.

Sean Marsh



Improve Your Chess Now (New Edition)

Jonathan Tisdall, 240 pages
New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

We don't always review reissues of books, especially when the content has barely changed, but for this one we would like to make an exception. The original version, published by Everyman Chess in 1997, accrued a rumble of favourable attention at the time, but has since has fallen into the 'forgotten' category. However, it is a genuinely useful book for chess self-improvement and it is good to see New in Chess stepping up to plate and offering a revitalised edition.

Not much has changed between editions. There is a new preface and the annotated bibliography at the end of the book references books published all the way up to the year 2020. The new preface is short (not quite stretching to one and a half pages). Tisdall "has one regret" and that is the book's title, which "never really sat well with me." A reminder that authors do not always chose the titles for their own books.

There has been a lot of water under the chess bridge since 1997, but this book has not suffered from the effects of the advancing years; the material is all still perfectly valid for those on the road to self-improvement. As Tisdall puts it: "You will find occasional dated references to the state of chess theory in those old days, and even a few antiquated engine opinions that should be viewed with historic interest. They give some context, but don't change the relevant focus of the book."

The main material is unchanged, with sections on The Fabled Tree of Analysis, Blindfold Chess and Stepping-Stone Diagrams, The Art of Playing Bad Positions, Training (and other useful exercises), Value of the Pieces, and Wisdom and Advice.

In most cases, I am sure people will remember two things above all others: Tisdall's scepticism of Alexander Kotov's famous tree of analysis and how to use candidate moves, as extolled in the classic *Think Like a Grandmaster* (Batsford, 1971), and the use of 'stepping stones' to help with blindfold analysis.

Regarding the former, I would never write

off any works or ideas by great Soviet writers, although I do remember Tisdall's advice felt liberating to club and tournament players at the time. As for the "stepping stones", the reader is encouraged to visualise – without the use of a board, set or online screen – a sequence of moves before working out what happened next.

There is a lot of prose in the book, which is a good thing; the explanations of the key ideas are very interesting and it makes a change to find a chess book one can turn to for a good read. Classic illustrative games don't lose their value and there is a nostalgic aspect here too; the fabulous combative attacks by (world champion at the time) Garry Kasparov and positional excellence by Anatoly Karpov are still more than worthy of attention. Here is snippet showing the latter utilising a counter-intuitive manoeuvre, taken from the section on Wisdom and Advice, and with the subheading of 'An unexpected deployment'.

A.Karpov-U.Andersson
Madrid 1973



19 ♖b7!!

Karpov followed up after **19...♖c7** with the unexpected **20 ♖a6**.

"Another striking bishop manoeuvre by Karpov. Although the diagonal taken up from a6 is short, it plays a much larger role in the coming battle. It also allows White to play f2-f3 comfortably later, which would have hemmed in the bishop if it remained on a conventional square like g2. The concept is highly unusual, but shows a deep understanding of the most vital aspects of the position."

It is easy to forget just how magnificent Karpov was for a couple of decades, so the historical examples given in this book should provide a timely reminder for all. Outplaying Ulf Andersson was never an easy task, but Karpov made it look easy in this game (although the game took eight more moves than those given in the book; Andersson resigned on move 38, after the bishop return from a6 just in time to sacrifice itself on g6).

The time between Batsford's original edition of *Think Like a Grandmaster*, published in 1971, and the time between the publication of first edition of *Improve Your Chess Now* and the present day are a perfect match of 26 years. Food for thought, as are

the contents of this great book. Even the late, great Mark Dvoretsky was impressed; with a top chess trainer's typically understated praise, he said: "I can recommend to read it and to think about it."

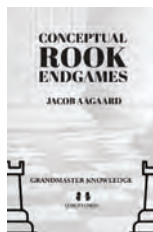
Sean Marsh



A Book of Bedtime Pawn Endings

John Beasley, 128 pages, paperback
RRP £9.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.95**

This self-published work by acclaimed chess problemist John Beasley aims to supply content which is "easily absorbed but leaves a sense of delight." Included are some classic pawn endings, which may still impress readers as much as when they first saw them, as well as a whole host of less well-known positions, ones which serve to remind us just how fascinating king and pawn endings can be.



Conceptual Rook Endgames

Jacob Aagaard, 416 pages, hardback
RRP £29.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.55**

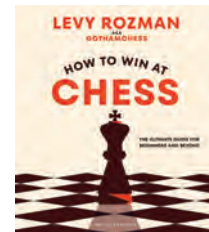
Danish Grandmaster Aagaard has certainly been busy of late with both his highly acclaimed chess training and working on chess endgames. Two of his books are referenced in this month's *Stocking Fillers* and there is also this new release from Quality Chess. Aagaard breaks down the fundamentals of rook endgames into two dozen major concepts, demonstrating how these exist in both simple and highly complex rook endings. Chapters include such topics as rook behind the passed pawn, shouldering, zugzwang and king activity, all of which are explained with customary lucidity by Aagaard. You may not always enjoy rook endgames, but they do occur quite frequently and this new work will surely but improve readers' understanding of them.



First Grandmaster of the Soviet Union: A Chess Biography of Boris Verlinsky

Sergei Tkachenko, 418 pages, paperback
RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**

This detailed and typically well-produced Elk & Ruby publication is devoted to Boris Verlinsky (1888-1950), a Ukrainian-Soviet Grandmaster who had become extremely strong by the 1920s, winning the Soviet Championship in 1929. Verlinsky's energetic, attacking games deserve to gain a new legion of fans and Sean Marsh also enjoyed this book of late – see page 34.



How to Win At Chess

Levy Rozman, 272 pages, hardback
RRP £20.00 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.00**

It's perhaps no surprise that when this book appeared from leading chess streamer GothamChess, aka American IM Levy Rozman, it quickly became something of a best-seller. We suspect that many new to chess or interested in taking up the game may be given this book for Christmas. Subtitled 'The Ultimate Guide for Beginners and Beyond', Rozman begins by covering the basics, split into four main categories: openings, endgames, strategy and tactics. The second half of the book is apparently for those in the 800-1300 range and sees Rozman building on his earlier coverage as he presents more advanced material, while throughout there are an abundance of tips, positions to solve and QR code links to further material on the author's teaching platform, Chessly.



Mega Database 2024

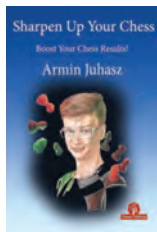
ChessBase PC-DVD
RRP £195.00 **SUBSCRIBERS £175.50**

It's that time of the year when the latest versions of ChessBase's famous databases are released from Hamburg. The premium database remains the *Mega Database*, which now contains a whopping 10.4 million games, of which 110,000 are annotated. Purchasing *Mega Database 2024* also gives users access to a weekly update service for the next year, which is likely to add over 5,000 games each week. Note too that owners of *Mega Database 2023* may upgrade for £84.95 – Subscribers: £76.45 – whilst owners of older versions can also upgrade to *Mega Database 2024* for £130.00 (Subscribers: £117.00). In both cases, please supply Chess & Bridge with the existing program key or return the DVD.

The same vast volume of material but without the annotations is available on *Big Database 2024*, which is also available for

£79.95 from Chess & Bridge (Subscribers: £71.95). Just out too is *Fritz Powerbook 2024*, which also retails at £74.95 and features 25 million opening positions, derived from 1.7 million high class tournament games – definitely something for lovers of chess theory and those who like to train their openings with the aid of the engines.

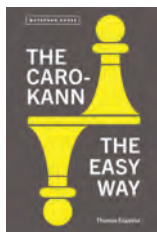
We should also mention that *CORR Database 2024* has also been released, featuring 2.2 million correspondence games from 1804 to this year. As a bonus the database now comes with 30 games from the 29th–33rd correspondence chess world championship cycles and Olympiads analysed in video format by such presenters as Mihail Marin, Nick Pert and Markus Ragger. *CORR Database 2024* retails at £170.00 (Subscribers: £153.00), and owners of *CORR Database 2022* may upgrade for £84.95 (Subscribers: £76.45), again by letting Chess & Bridge know the program key or by returning the DVD.



Sharpen Up Your Chess

Armin Juhasz, 376 pages, paperback
RRP £35.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £32.35**

This latest release from Thinkers Publishing boasts a striking subtitle: 'Boost Your Chess Results!' Hungarian IM Juhasz's emphasis is on general principles, practical chess and sharpening up the reader's play. Along the way he tackles such topics as feeling insecure against higher-rated opponents, poor technique in winning positions, tiredness leading to mistakes in the endgame, and hard work not leading to rating improvement. While there are plenty of exercises included, the book is also an enjoyable read, not least the opening chapters 'Unusual Openings, Quick Losses' and 'Grandmasters Get Tricked'. We may also infer that the publisher was especially impressed by the content, since a hardback edition is also available, retailing at £41.95 or £37.75 for Subscribers.



The Caro-Kann: The Easy Way

Thomas Engqvist, 329 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Experienced Swedish IM Thomas Engqvist has established a reputation as an excellent author over the past decade or so, and now maps out a repertoire with one of his

favourite openings, 1 e4 c6, for Batsford. See Sean Marsh's coverage on page 34 for further details.



The Sharp Scandinavian with 3...c6

Andrew Martin, PC-DVD;
running time: 5 hours

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Meeting 1 e4 with 1...d5 remains a popular and sensible choice at club level. After 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗d6 there is relatively not too much theory to learn, with the key structures and plans for Black fairly easy to understand. Unsurprisingly the highly-experienced IM Andrew Martin is an excellent guide to this variation of the Scandinavian and here maps out a sufficiently detailed repertoire for Black with it. Notably in the main line, 4 d4 ♗f6 5 ♗f3, Martin opts for the fairly sharp 5...a6, intending 6 g3 ♗g4, while also providing coverage of White's early alternatives, not least 3 ♗f3 when 3...♗g4 is proposed.



Theoretical Rook Endgames

Sam Shankland, 448 pages, hardback
RRP £29.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.55**

Released at the same time as Jacob Aagaard's *Conceptual Rook Endgames*, this is another important book from Quality Chess on the most important type of endgame. Shankland's knowledge and love of rook endings comes across as he aims to demonstrate which positions need to be memorised and which type of rook endings can be handled with general principles. Chapters are devoted to such topics as the Lucena position, lone connected passed pawns and four pawns against three on the same side.

As Karsten Müller explains in his foreword with regards to this and the new Aagaard work, "Whilst the study of each book will be equally valuable to the practical player, it would be preferable for the reader to start with obtaining a full understanding of the theoretical aspects of rook endgames from Sam's book. These provide the fundamental building blocks to the practical aspects of such endings as demonstrated in Jacob's book, which provides more advanced material."



A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

Sachin Tendulkar - @sachin_rt

Vidit Gujrathi and Vaishali R have gloriously captured the titles at the #FIDEGrandSwiss. Their triumph is a testament to their dedication & skill. A proud moment for Indian chess!

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) - @ONGC_

#PrideOfONGC Grand Master @viditchess has conquered the 2023 #FIDEGrandSwiss, securing a spot in the World Championship #Chess candidates tournament. A historic achievement, this makes the #ONGCian only the third Indian man and the first from Maharashtra to do so.

Vidit Gujrathi - @viditchess

Proud to be an ONGCian! I still remember how back in 2008 it started with a scholarship and the support has been constant until now. Thank you @ONGC_.

John Saunders - @johnchess

It seems I was the originator of the now heavily-overused line 'Veni, vici, Vidit' six years ago in a different context... #FIDEGrandSwiss

FIDE - @FIDE_chess

It is official! Vaishali has qualified for the Women's #FIDECandidates with a round to spare! She will join her brother, Praggnanandhaa, who already got his ticket to Toronto, winning second place in the #FIDEWorldCup. Congratulations!

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen

Was getting tired of 30+ and sun anyways. Always good to be back in Norway... Thanks to Mohammed Al-Modiakhi and the Qatar Masters for a good time, off the board at least! Now it's only 6 months of winter ahead, north of the wall.

Natasha Regan - @NatashaRegan123

Yes I'm planning a double pop-in to the World Seniors today, the openings at 2.15pm with @GMPeteWells and the middlegames / endgames / time scrambles with GM Danny Gormally at 5pm @ecfchess, @ECFonlinechess, @eternalhopeoaks (I just temporarily forgot your handle Danny!)

Malcolm Pein - @TelegraphChess

Tiebreaks Schimbrea a double gold for ENG at the @FIDE_chess World Seniors with @MickeyAdamsGM and Dr John Nunn taking the gold medals in the 50+ and 65+! Three golds in a couple of weeks for @ecfchess.