

Chess



CHESS IN THE OPEN AIR

ChessFest shines bright in London's Trafalgar Square

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Stunning Shak - The Grand Chess Tour returned in Romania, and so did Mamedyarov



Back to the Board - Ben Graff was in erratic form, but loved it at the 4NCL Congress



Celebrating 125! - Nigel Povah on Guildford Chess Club and its impressive milestone

Chess

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Back to the Board



Ben Graff was in erratic form at the 4NCL Major and loved every minute of it

Could we look into the head of a chess player, we should see a whole world of feelings, images, ideas, emotion and passion.

Alfred Binet

I had been crossing off the days, waiting for this weekend to arrive. If you had told me I would go 16 months without playing over the board, I would have been astonished, but it will be the same for all the players. Regular tournament chess was something I used to take for granted, but never will again.

I think lockdown has brought out the best in chess players. From online Covid-checkmate challenges, through to a myriad of other competitions and virtual touch points, we have all stayed connected. As a community, we know how to look out for each other. Even so, nothing can beat being together in person.

It is all so exciting. Boards of black and white, lifeless for so long, will soon be readied for action. Every game in this tournament will have meaning. A story behind it, a narrative that lasts. So different from the online world, where contests end with the click of a mouse and disappear instantly into the electronic ether.

Perhaps I might have used lockdown more productively. Over 7,000 online games, a number I am reluctant to share with my other half, should mean that I am not rusty. Yet I never did make a thorough study of Nimzowitsch's *My System* or brush up on my rook and pawn endings. The long overdue overhaul of my opening repertoire remains a future aspiration. Still, the books I bought to assist with all these subjects look good on my shelves and that must count for something.

A week before the 4NCL Congress, I caught up with ECF and 4NCL CEO Mike Truran. Mike told me how excited he was that the event was going to take place. That the 4NCL had wanted to be first with a big competition and this had not been easy to plan. He credited many people with giving good advice. While the hope was that social distancing rules were about to ease further, either way a template for getting events on was now in place. Mike said the philosophy had very much been, "Build it and they will come" and this had been evidenced by the keenness of people to enter.

The night before the tournament, Alex Holowczak hosts a Zoom meeting, to take the players through the rules and regulations. It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces in the pixelated boxes on my computer



*Ben (centre) catches up with the authors of *The Queen's Gambit* - Accepted!, Jonathan Arnott, who scored 50% in the Open, and Rosie Irwin who was making her tournament debut.*

screen. Alex's dark green slides are perhaps a sobering reminder that Covid still has us in its grip. Masks must be worn and players need to stay socially distanced. No analysis room and no spectating. Not ideal, but if this is what it takes, this is what it takes.

I would literally have driven anywhere in the country to play tournament chess and feel a little cheated that my journey to the venue takes all of 15 minutes. I get that sense of not having quite paid my dues and hope the chess gods will be forgiving. I arrive early. The evening is muggy. It is that time of year when the light will last long into the night, a metaphor perhaps for the new beginnings this tournament heralds. I have a nice chat with our section arbiter Ravi Sandhu. He smiles broadly as we agree how good it is to see everyone. For all the rules, the event is clearly in safe hands, run by people who love chess and want to make the weekend a success.

My first round opponent is Paul Seymour, who has travelled up from London. We exchange a few pleasantries that underscore how much this matters to both of us. We had both long wondered who our first real opponent might be. I am honoured that the legendary Brendan O'Gorman is kind enough to take a photo of us just before play commences.

I have the same feelings I always get before

a game. A mix of nerves, excitement, and that sense of being an imposter who is ridiculously underqualified to even attempt to venture onto the sixty-four squares. Then we start. I play my first few moves very quickly, as does Paul. I glance around the room and everybody else is playing just as fast. I wonder if we have all been ruined by too many hours of blitz. It seems entirely possible that the round will be over in about half an hour.

But then something happens. All the players slow down. The room fills with that air of concentration you only get at chess tournaments. The occasional click of a clock, a muffled cough, the hum of the water cooler. That is all there is. That and a world which has opened for all the players, a place as magical as that discovered by the children who walked through the back of the wardrobe and into Narnia.

Two hours later every game is still going. This will be a real night of competitive chess. I remember what it is to wait, to second guess. To try and read the body language of a flesh and blood opponent. I take on Paul's Scandinavian with a system I have picked up playing blitz and it seems to work. My knights are strong, and Paul has weaknesses to defend on his queenside. Every manoeuvre seems to give me options. I feel sure I must break through, but Paul keeps finding good

defences and seems to be blunting my attack. Then finally, around the three-hour mark he makes a slight slip. I pick up a couple of pawns and control of the a-file for my rooks.

I tell myself over and over not to do anything stupid. I know I do not have to find the best moves. Sensible choices will be enough. Around 10.30 Paul resigns. It would be disingenuous for me to say that winning the game was irrelevant. We all have enough bad days, so it is important to enjoy the good ones. Yet chatting to Paul afterwards, what matters most is that we have spent the evening together, thoroughly engrossed by our chess.

I always find it hard to sleep after an evening game, but I manage to get a few hours' rest, which is probably just as well. In round two I am on board one against top seed and Women's Candidate Master Anum Sheikh. It is rare for me to be in such lofty company, and I am determined to make the most of the opportunity.

Anum is White and we play down a variation of the French that she clearly knows better than I do. I struggle to match her fluency, but probably more by luck than judgement my position turns out to be solid enough. We both have chances. I offer a draw which is turned down. I become a little more adventurous, vaguely threatening to turn defence into attack.

Suddenly everything is extremely complicated. Neither of us are sure what is happening. Anum now offers me a draw. I hesitate. I suspect I am slightly better, but it is difficult, and we both have only minutes left. They say that fortune favours the brave. Except, of course, for when it does not. I have a flashback to a weekender before lockdown where I turned down two draw offers and went on to lose both games. We shake on the draw.

Over lunch I catch up with Jonathan Arnott and Rosie Irwin, authors of the excellent *The Queen's Gambit – Accepted!*, a book that charts Rosie's chess journey to date. This is Rosie's first over-the-board tournament, having become serious about the game during lockdown. It is great to see new players on the circuit. Rosie has already had two intense games and is clearly enjoying the experience. Jonathan and I offer Rosie some encouragement as we recognise tournaments like this can be tough. Anyone willing to give up a weekend to play is generally quite handy, whatever their grade. But Rosie knows this is how she will learn and is acquitting herself admirably, though she has to wait until the fourth round for her first victory.

In the afternoon, I play Manvitch Sandhu, and the wheels come off. Our arbiter Ravi's son, Manvitch is a promising player. This time I do not get away with my poorer knowledge of the opening, as he quickly builds up kingside pressure on the black side of a Nimzowitsch. I get that feeling I had almost forgotten, when you know that you are going to lose and there is little you can do, except wait and suffer for an exceptionally long time.

I notice the noise of the tournament hall. As other players finish, they discuss their



Ben Graff and Paul Seymour were clearly delighted to be back at the board when the 4NCL staged the first major UK chess event in 16 months, a weekend congress in Leamington Spa.

games at loud volume, seemingly oblivious to the fact that everyone else can hear them. I am momentarily irritated, but remember that I am here playing chess. Doing exactly what I want to do. Ultimately while I lose, I recognise there is much to be philosophical about.

Even if such equanimity can only stretch so far. On the Sunday morning I find myself on board 13, always a bad omen. I presume bringing my lucky-horse shoe would not have been consistent with the Covid secure environment, and that must explain what follows. I find myself comfortably on top against Colin Knight, but he knows how to complicate. How to make things hard for me.

I burn through time. I am winning, but it does not feel as easy as it should do. Then I make a move and freeze. I sense I have gone wrong before I realise the full horror of what I have done. Colin looks at me quizzically before swooping in to take my knight. In an instant a winning position is losing.

Some might wonder how after millions of games chess players can still make basic mistakes. Perhaps that is what makes the game so captivating and so frustrating. One moment, one slip and hours of work are down the drain. All credit to Colin, but what can you do?

Over lunch I chat with local players Nigel Morris and Jason Madden. I talk to Nigel about who the greatest player of all time might have been, the brilliance of the Polgar sisters and chess in New York. I swap thoughts with Jason about the football and the Leamington League. Simple things really, more precious for having been impossible for all these months.

I hear a bit of gossip from the arbiters. An

enterprising junior apparently tried to claim the point on account of his opponent's muttering. There have been various requests by players wanting to play two handed. As ever at these events emotions can run high and need to be soothed. I always think arbiters are part organisers, part counsellors and I salute them for their efforts.

In round five, I play Jamie Doyle. We are both a little punchy after four hard rounds of chess and the game is a messy one. But ultimately, I find a tactic to pick up the exchange and a pawn, and manage to nurse the position home for a point.

My tournament performance is hardly going to set the world on fire. But it has set *my* world on fire, just a little bit. Whatever our strength, we are all a part of the chess community. Able to experience triumph and disaster, to make friends and to create memories that last.

When chess historians look back at this, our first major event since lockdown, they will probably ask what was different. Masks and social distancing will doubtless be cited. Yet what counts more is what has remained the same. Chess is as magical now as it ever was, and this event truly heralds a new beginning.



Off The Board Chess

Andrew Smith explains how and why his recently self-published work, subtitled 'The Best Games and Chess Experiences', gradually came about

Almost every year, it's possible to see that chess is evolving and chess books are too. In 1996, the reigning world champion, Gary Kasparov, was still able to beat *Deep Blue*, the strongest computer in the world at that time, in a six-game match. But his landmark defeat in a subsequent match in 1997 saw chess change forever. Chess computer programs have gone from strength to strength which has perhaps generated too much of an over-reliance on computers for the good of the game and perhaps for the good of chess books.

Now, no self-respecting chess player approaches a tournament game without preparation stemming from a computer database and programs which can pinpoint your prospective opponent's weaknesses in the opening sphere of the game and in their overall style of play.

It also seems to be the case that chess writers are also very conscious of the correctness of play and critical of errors. Very few books or writers focus on the real-life pressures and drama of the competitive game. By that I mean, what happened in the 'lead-up' to the game that may have affected mood or psychology, as well as what goes through the mind of the player as he considers what move to play or plan to adopt, and then what actually happens, for example, in time-trouble. What were the thought processes?

Most books now give a stream of computer-generated analysis, highlighting missed opportunities or errors. One of my ideas in writing this book was to steer away from what a chess engine says was the best move, and instead concentrate on what was actually played and why. So what if the moves were poor or speculative? They reflect the ability of the players and what was going on in their mind.

In this book, I initially focused on the anecdote/story that I wanted to tell and, where appropriate, found the score of the game to go with it. Perhaps rather surprisingly, I found that there is nearly always some sort of story that can go with every game(!), although obviously some are more interesting or amusing than others. Having started out that way, I then expanded on my initial objective, in order to find reasons to include the most interesting games I have played (which often had stories anyway).

Being more or less 'computer/IT illiterate' was somewhat of a handicap, so I had to elicit the help of my Bourne End team-mate and friend, Roger de Coverly, to guide me a little on how to use the technology. He was an avid fan of Chess Assistant, so it came about that I used this program rather than the more

commonly used ChessBase.

As described in the foreword to the book, I actually started the process of writing whilst I was backpacking around the world for six months in 2002. On quiet secluded beaches in the South Pacific region, I cast my mind back to incidents that had occurred or interesting games or opponents I had played, and I wrote down the salient points. And so, the embryo of an idea had been sown in my mind and from there, this book eventually emerged.

You might ask why did it take so long to bring it to publication? I guess I could summarise my answer to that by saying life happens! So here is an extract from the self-published book. This particular game is an example of the hurly-burly style of chess that I have played most of my life. It's not correct chess, but it can be interesting. Kevin has long since given up chess, but at the time, he was an FM, higher-rated, far more experienced tournament player than I, and seeded to beat me in this game:



Andrew Smith has been a keen tournament player and most dangerous attacker all his life.

A.P.Smith-K.Wicker
100th Year Anniversary Tournament,
Lewisham Chess Club 1986
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e5 b6 5 g4?!

Kevin was a very strong positional player so I felt the best way to play him was to randomise the position (even more than usual!) as soon as possible. I knew he would be expecting 5 ♗g4 ♙f8 and he actually wrote down 5 ♗g4 before noticing the strange vision of a pawn on g4 instead! I played it purely for psychological impact!

Knowing Kevin's style, he would very soon be playing ...h5 in order to secure the f5-square for his knight so I thought 5 g4?! would upset the flow of his game!

5...h5!?



Anyway! My move 5 g4?! was supposed to deter 5...h5, but Kevin was never one to shirk a challenge! I was happy though! I was dragging Kevin into the type of game that in my opinion, did not really suit him!

6 gxh5! ♖h4 7 ♙b5+ c6 8 ♙e2 ♙a6 9 ♙f3 ♗xh5?

Bad judgement on Kevin's part. Why worry about recovering his sacrificed pawn? After this, my pieces all 'rocket out' developing a huge initiative!

10 ♙xh5 ♗e4+ 11 ♙e3 ♗xh1 12 ♗g4



Planning ♗xe6+. Mission accomplished! After 12 moves I think it is random enough. There is not going to be much call for positional manoeuvring from hereon in!

12...g6?!

I am not sure what Black should do, but one thing I am sure of is that this is not it!

The very provocative but obvious alternative 12...♖f8 also seems to fail after 13 0-0-0 (threatening to trap the queen with 14 ♘f3) 13...♙xc3 14 ♘f3 ♙xb2+ 15 ♖xb2 ♗xd1 16 ♙xf7! ♘e7 (also bad is 16...♙xf7 17 ♘g5+ followed by 18 ♗xd1 capturing the loose queen on d1) 17 ♙xe6 ♖e8 18 ♗h5+ ♘d8 19 ♗h8+ ♖c7 20 ♗e8 ♗xf3 21 ♗xe7+ ♘d7 22 ♗xd7+ ♖b8 23 ♗xc6 ♗f8 24 ♙xd5 ♗b4+ 25 ♙b3 and I'm winning.

13 ♙xg6!

No hesitation! I didn't need to think twice about this move!

13...fxg6 14 ♗xg6+ ♖f8 15 0-0-0 ♙xc3 16 bxc3 ♙c8?!



A luxury in this position to undevelop one of only two developed pieces! But what else?

17 ♘h3 ♗e4 18 ♙h6+! ♘xh6 19 ♗xh6+ ♖e8 20 ♙g1 ♖d8 21 ♗f8+ ♖c7 22 ♙g7+ ♙d7 23 ♘g5 ♗f5 24 ♘f7



Despite having an extra piece, Black is paralysed! The threat now is 25 ♗d8+ ♖b7 26 ♘d6+ winning the queen. So in the absence of any useful moves to make, Black decides to move the only piece that is not paralysed, and capture a pawn.

24...♗xf2 25 ♗d8+ ♖b7 26 ♘d6+ ♖a6 27 ♙xd7

What can Black do? If 27...♘xd7 28 ♗xa8 wins as there is no defence to 29 ♗b7 mating or 27...♗f1+ 28 ♖b2 and there are no more Black checks and his problems remain the same. If he plays 27...♗xh2 to restore material equality, then 28 ♗c8+ ♖a5 29 ♗xb8! ♙xb8 30 ♙xa7 is mate! So...**1-0!**

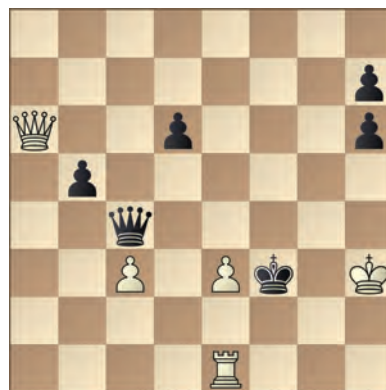


Studies with Stephenson

In the same way that many countries have their own chess magazines, many countries have their own chess composition magazines. In the Czech Republic that magazine is *Šachová Skladba*, which is published four times a year. It publishes chess compositions of all types, including endgame studies. The originals it publishes take part in its informal composing tourneys. For studies, they run a tourney every two years and the award for the years 2017-2018 has recently been published. Near the top of that award was our first study, an interesting tactical fight jointly composed by two of the world's currently most successful study composers, Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen of Denmark and Martin Minski of Germany.

Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen & Martin Minski

2nd Prize, *Šachová Skladba*, 2017-18



White to play and win

Black threatens 1...♗g4+ 2 ♖h2 ♗g2# and White has only three possibilities: 1 ♗a8+? ♖f2 2 ♙g1! ♗e6+ 3 ♙g4 ♗xe3+! (3...h5? 4 ♗a2+! ♗xa2 5 ♙g2+ ♖xe3 6 ♙xa2 wins) 4 ♖h4 ♗e7+! 5 ♖h3 ♗e3+ and 1 ♙g1? ♗e6+ 2 ♖h4 ♗e4+ 3 ♖h3 ♗e6+ both result in a repetition, so **1 ♗b7+!** must be played:

1...♖f2

Now, if White protects the rook with 2 ♗h1? he gets mated after 2...♗e6+ 3 ♖h4 ♗f6+ 4 ♖h3 ♗f5+ 5 ♖h4 ♗g5+ 6 ♖h3 ♗g3#, so **2 ♙g1!**, threatening to win with 3 ♙g2+ ♖xe3 4 ♗e7+ ♖d3 5 ♗xd6+ ♖e3 6 ♗xh6+ ♖f3 7 ♗h5+ ♖e3 8 ♗e8+ ♖d3 9 ♗e2+ ♖xc3 10 ♗xc4+ ♖xc4, is the way forward.

2...♗e6+

2...♖xg1? leads to 3 ♗g2#.

3 ♙g4! h5

3...♗xe3+ 4 ♖h4 ♗e5 5 ♗g2+ ♖e1 6 ♙e4+ and 3...d5 4 ♗xh7 h5 5 ♗xh5 win too.

4 ♗f7+!



This surprising sacrificial check forces an exchange into a won pawn ending.

4...♗xf7 5 ♙f4+ ♗xf4 6 exf4 The game ends in an unexpected whimper after all the action.

6...b4 Or if 6...♖e3 7 f5 b4 8 cxb4 (and not 8 f6? b3! 9 f7 b2 10 f8 ♗ b1 ♗) 8...d5 9 f6 d4 10 f7 and wins.

7 cxb4 d5 8 f5

But not 8 b5? d4 9 b6 d3 10 b7 d2 11 b8 ♗ d1 ♗ when Black escapes with a draw.

8...d4 9 f6 d3 10 f7

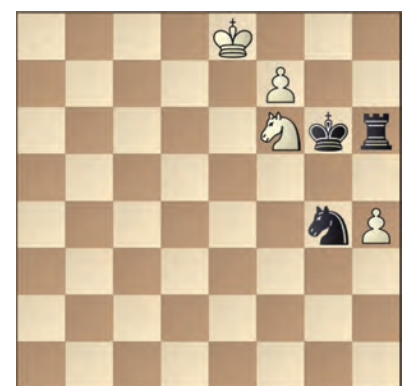
White will queen first and with check.

Further down the award is the following study by a French/Czech composing duo. It does not feature any fireworks, but during the solution White plays to the same square three times. Solve it and find out why he has to do that!

Jean Carf & Jaroslav Poláček

Honourable mention,

Šachová Skladba, 2017-2018



White to play and win

To enter email editor@chess.co.uk or send your name and address, with the main variations, to Chess & Bridge, 44 Baker St, London W1U 7RT, postmarked no later than August 31st. £30 of products from Chess & Bridge are available for the first correct entry drawn.



60 Seconds with... Andrew Smith



Born: 15th August 1959 in Lewisham to Irish parents.

Place of residence: Bourne End, Bucks.

Occupation: Dog walker, occasional chess teacher in schools.

Enjoyable? Yes. I love dogs.

And home life? We live in a nice area for scenic walks and good pubs!

But sometimes good to escape to: Anywhere – I love travel.

Sports played or followed: Follow most sports, but particularly football.

A favourite novel? *Alone in Berlin* by Hans Fallada.

Piece of music? Anything by The Pogues or The Cure.

Film or TV series? *Groundhog Day* and *Fawlty Towers*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? It's just a great game and a reason to travel to new places and meet new people.

And the worst? Playing in school halls or gymnasiums, which I find demotivating.

Your best move? Possibly 39...♙c4 against Colm Daly.

C.Daly-A.P.Smith
British Ch., Plymouth 1992
Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 d6 6 g4 a6 7 g5 ♘fd7 8 ♙e3 b5
9 a3 ♙b7 10 ♗d2 ♘b6 11 0-0-0 ♘8d7
12 h4 ♙e7 13 h5 ♗c7 14 ♖h3 ♘c4
15 ♙xc4 bxc4 16 ♗g3 g6 17 ♖h3 ♗g8
18 hxg6 hxg6 19 f4 ♘c5 20 f5 e5 21 f6
exd4 22 ♗xd4 ♗c8 23 fxe7 ♗hx3 24 e5
♗c8 25 exd6 ♘d7 26 ♙b1 ♖h8 27 ♙a2
♖h7 28 ♗d2 ♗e6 29 ♗a7 ♙f3



30 ♗xa6 ♖a8 31 ♘b5 c3+ 32 b3 ♘b8
33 ♘c7+ ♙d7 34 ♘xe6 ♘xa6 35 ♘f8+
♙c6 36 ♗d4 ♖h1 37 b4! ♙d5+ 38 ♗xd5
♙xd5 39 d7



39...♙c4! 40 ♙c5 ♘xc5 0-1

But less memorable than your worst move? A tense last round game, where both players were on 5/5. It's still a painful recollection, even now after 35 years!

Carr-A.P.Smith
Evening Standard Major 1975
Modern Benoni

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 ♘c3 exd5
5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 f4 ♙g7 8 ♙b5+ ♘bd7
9 e5 dxe5 10 fxe5 ♘h5 11 e6 fxe6 12 dxe6
0-0 13 exd7 ♗h4+ 14 g3 ♘xg3? 15 ♘f3?



After 15...♙xc3+ 16 bxc3 ♗e4+ it's anyone's game, whereas...

15...♗xf3??

...overlooked:

16 d8 ♗+ 1-0

And a highly memorable opponent? A five-minute game with Viktor Korchnoi at the Isle of Man tournament where he seriously underestimated me...

Favourite game of all time? Adolph Anderson - Jean Dufresne (Berlin 1852).

The best three chess books: *Tal Since 1960* by W.H. Cozens, Svetozar Gligoric's *Selected Chess Masterpieces* and, dare I say, *Off The Board Chess* by Andrew Smith!

Is FIDE doing a good job? Yes, as far as I can tell.

Or your National Federation? Again, yes, as far as I know.

Can chess make one happy? Definitely, yes! I love it. Always have, always will.

A tip please for the club player: Just enjoy the privilege of playing such a fantastic game.

Ed. - Andrew's Off the Board Chess, a collection of his favourite experiences and most memorable games, is now in stock at Chess & Bridge, retailing at £19.95. See pp.?? for more details.



Overseas News

CZECH REPUBLIC – Despite having been pretty much inactive since the 2nd Prague Masters in February last year, the occasional major online event including the Opera Euro Rapid aside, Sam Shankland ran out a convincing winner of the 3rd Prague Masters (June 13–20). The U.S. no.5 (no. 6 once Levon Aronian's change of registration goes through) outprepared and outplayed Jan-Krzysztof Duda in round 2 ahead of finishing undefeated on 5½/7, with wins also coming against Nijat Abasov, David Navara and Jordan van Foreest. Duda bounced back to claim second on '+3', a point ahead of Radoslaw Wojtaszek in third, in contrast to which both Navara and van Foreest were out of form and unable to win a game.

A strong square for the queen, who may emerge on h5 and also offers Black some useful extra power down the a2–g8 diagonal.

15 e4?!

15 d4 ♖c4 16 d5 ♘a5 17 e4 b6 should be comfortable enough for Black, but that or 15 ♘d2!? ♗ad8 16 ♖a4 would have been better than Navara's overly-ambitious advance.

15...♗a5! 16 ♘d2?!

Trying to avoid 16 d4 ♘c4 17 ♖c1, although that was the lesser evil.

16...♗ad8 17 d4 c6

Keeping White's centre in check, while hinting at ...b5 to control a certain outpost even more. White is already in some trouble, so Navara attempted to continue in forwards gear.

18 f4 exf4! 19 gxf4 f5

of the manner in which Black restrains then blockades the white centre.

20 e5 c5 21 ♘f3 ♙e7 22 ♖h1 ♘c4

Finally it's time to involve the knight.

23 ♖e2 ♖h5 24 a4 ♘b6!? 25 dxc5?

Voluntarily breaking up his own structure. 25 ♖f2 was a much better idea, but Navara had a flawed plan in mind.

25...♙xc5 26 ♖b5?

Even after 26 a5 ♗xd1+ 27 ♗xd1 ♘d5 Black would have dominated proceedings, but now he is able to begin a decisive invasion.

26...♙e3! 27 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 28 a5 ♘c4 29 a6

29 ♖xb7 ♙d5! 30 ♖c7 ♗e8 31 ♘g5 ♙xg2+ 32 ♖xg2 ♘xe5! would also have left White's entire position in a state of collapse.

29...bxa6 30 ♖xa6 ♙d5! 31 ♗d1

D.Navara-S.Shankland

Prague 2021

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 ♘c6 4 g3 d5 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 ♙g2 ♙c5!?

It was Alexander Grischuk then Michael Adams who really put this active deployment on the map back at the 2017 FIDE Grand Prix in Geneva, after which the line was enthusiastically taken up by Shankland's compatriots, Fabiano Caruana and Wesley So. One key point is that 7 ♘xe5 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 (or 8 ♙xc6+ bxc6 9 dxc3 ♖e7 when the bishop-pair supplies full compensation) 8...♘xe5 9 d4 ♙d6 10 dxe5 ♙xe5 11 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 12 ♙d2 c6 is very comfortable for Black.

7 0-0 0-0 8 d3 ♗e8

8...h6!? 9 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 10 ♙d2 a5 11 ♙c3 may also be fine for Black after 11...♖e6, whereas 11...♖d6?! 12 ♘xe5! ♙xf2+ 13 ♗xf2 ♘xe5 14 ♖a4 favoured White in Vachier-Lagrave-Giri, Zagreb (blitz) 2021.

9 ♙g5!? ♘xc3 10 bxc3 f6 11 ♙c1

Back again, but Navara was presumably keen to show up ...f6 as a weakness, not least if he could get in d3-d4. **11...♙e6 12 ♙b2 ♙f8 13 ♖c2 ♖d7 14 ♗fd1 ♖f7!**



Nimzowitsch would surely have approved



31...♙d2! 31...♘d2! was an even stronger way to deal with the threat of 32 ♗xd5, since there's just no way for White to avoid a significant loss of material.

32 ♙c1 ♖h8!

Freeing the bishop on d5 for action.

33 ♗xd2 ♘xd2 34 ♖a5?

White is undone on the light squares and his back rank after this, but 34 ♘xd2 ♙xg2+ 35 ♖xg2 ♖g4+ 36 ♖f2 ♖xf4+ would surely also have been effectively all over in view of White's far inferior coordination and king position.

34...♗d7 0-1

FRANCE – The French Top 12 took place in Châlons-en-Champagne (June 24 – July 4). Having only gained a last-minute travel exemption to play, Gawain Jones missed the first three rounds for the host side whilst quarantining. Keen to play over the board once again, he was quick to catch up, racking up 6½/8 for the best score on board 4. Bischwiller triumphed, winning ten of their matches and only conceding the one draw to Clichy Échecs 92, who finished third behind fellow Parisian club, Asnières Le Grand Echiquier. For the champions, Arkadij Naiditsch scored a huge 8½/10 on board 3 and one board higher, Markus Ragger chipped in with 8½/11.

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J.Song-G.Jones

Club 608 Paris vs Echiquier Chalonnais
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 ♟g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♟f3

Gawain was also in action after 5 h3 0-0 6 ♟e3 e5 7 d5 ♟a6 8 g4 ♟c5 9 f3 a5 10 ♟d2 c6 11 ♟ge2 a4 12 ♟g3 h5!? in Bluebaum-Jones, going on to triumph in a highly complex battle.

5...0-0 6 ♟e2 e5 7 0-0 ♟bd7 8 ♟e1 ♟e8 9 ♟f1 a6!?

A fairly clever semi-waiting move, with the idea of 10 d5 a5 11 b3 ♟c5 12 ♟b1 ♟d7 when White should likely avoid 13 a3 a4! 14 b4 ♟b3.

10 ♟b1 exd4 11 ♟xd4 c6 12 ♟f4 ♟e5 13 h3 ♟h5!?

An improvement over Wojtaszek-Jones, European Club Cup, Bilbao 2014, where 13...♟e6 14 b3 c5 15 ♟xe6 ♟xe6 16 ♟d2 ♟c6 17 ♟d3 was a little better for White.

14 ♟h2

It's not a London System and the bishop will never enjoy life here. 14 ♟e3! was much more to the point when 14...b5!? 15 cxb5 axb5 16 b4 is complex, but possibly a little better for White with a2-a4 on the way.

14...♟f6 15 ♟de2!?

15 ♟c2? ♟xh3! was even worse in Meins-Pachow, German Bundesliga 2000, but 15 ♟c2 or 15 ♟a4 would have left Black with no more than a comfortable set-up.

15...♟h6!



Clamping down on the f4-square and now White continued to misplace his pieces.

16 ♟g3? ♟f4 17 ♟h1 ♟e6 18 b3 b5!

Black already dominates on the kingside and now seizes a strong initiative right across the board.

19 cxb5 axb5 20 ♟d4? b4 21 ♟a4 c5! 22 ♟d1

Grim, but White's position would have begun to collapse too after 22 ♟xd6 c4! 23 ♟xb4 ♟ed3.

22...♟d7 23 ♟b6 ♟xa2 24 ♟xd7 ♟xd7 25 ♟b5 ♟xg2!

Crashing through as if 26 ♟xg2? ♟xf2+ 27 ♟h1 ♟xh2#. 25...♟xh3! 26 gxh3 ♟xf2 would also have more than done the business, and if 27 ♟e2 ♟d2.

26 ♟xd7 ♟xe1 27 ♟f5 ♟xe4

Ever forwards as Gawain continues to give

a masterclass in power play.

28 ♟xh6+ ♟g7 29 ♟g4 ♟xg4! 30 ♟xg4 ♟d3 31 ♟f1

31 ♟g3? would finally have involved the bishop again, but also left White getting mated after 31...♟xf2+ 32 ♟xf2 ♟xf2.

31...♟xf2 32 ♟g1 ♟b2



33 ♟g2

33 ♟xd6 ♟h2+! 34 ♟xh2 ♟f2+ 35 ♟g2 ♟xg4+ 36 ♟f3 ♟f2+! would quickly have led to mate.

33...♟f1+ 34 ♟g1 ♟f2+ 35 ♟xf2 ♟xf2 36 ♟g2 ♟xg2+ 37 ♟xg2 ♟b1 38 ♟a4 ♟f6!

Black's king arrives with plenty of time to help the rook shepherd home his four extra pawns.

39 ♟e3 ♟e5 40 ♟f3 c4! 41 ♟f4+ ♟e6 42 bxc4 b3 43 ♟e2 b2 44 ♟d2 ♟c1 0-1

HUNGARY – They keep getting younger, or at least Sergey Karjakin's record of 12 years and 7 months which made him the youngest ever grandmaster back in 2002 has been broken. Step forward Abhimanyu Mishra from New Jersey. Mishra was already the world's youngest ever IM and has now become a GM at the age of 12 years, 4 months and 25 days. His family temporarily relocated to Hungary in mid-April, allowing the wunderkind to play in a number of the famous First Saturday and fellow regular Vezerkepzo

tournaments in Budapest. That pretty much back-to-back playing reaped its reward as Mishra bagged three norms and saw his rating rise over 2500.

Some were a little sniffy about the youngster's achievements, and whilst in an ideal world it might have been nice had Mishra made norms in three strong opens in different countries, how else was he supposed to try and chase the record with the pandemic on? Laszlo Nagy's tournaments came to the rescue and, in any case, the talented 12-year-old looked far from out of place as he was eliminated by Baadur Jobava in the first round of the World Cup. We should also note that he studies with Pentala Harikrishna and thinks nothing of regularly working on chess "at least 12 hours a day".

RUSSIA – The Russian Championship Higher League took place in Cheboksary (June 26 - July 5), and was won by Pavel Ponkratov with 7/9. However, it was the performance of 22-year-old Aleksandra Goryachkina which really caught the eye, as she tied for second just half a point behind and so qualified for the next Russian Super-Championship while recording a 2714 performance.

In other news of Russian success, Vladislav Artemiev served notice that he might shine at the Goldmoney Asian Rapid by winning the Katara International on June 23rd. Once again Lichess hosted this strong bullet event, in which Artemiev crushed Alexander Grischuk 7-1 in the semi-finals, where Magnus Carlsen found American online speed expert Andrew Tang too good and exited 7-4. The final was pretty close, but Artemiev eventually ran out a 7½-6½ winner over Tang.

There was also the small matter of the FIDE World Cup, which was being held just outside Sochi in Krasnaya Polyana and underway as we went to press (play continues until August 8th). Levon Aronian was one player present who had to withdraw due to a Covid scare and even the FIDE officials must have wished they hadn't



The youngest ever grandmaster in chess history and a probable future star. Abhimanyu Mishra is pictured pre-pandemic in Saint Louis where he may well soon spend a fair bit of time.

expanded the tournament from a 128-player knockout by allowing a further 78 players into the first round (the top players received a bye), while also running a FIDE Women's World Cup alongside for the first time.

One player who enjoyed his trip to the Caucasus Mountains was Britain's sole representative Ravi Haria, who continued his good form by defeating the 44-year-old Russian GM Vadim Zvjaginsev. Ravi gave a textbook lesson in how to exploit a space advantage in the opening game, as we'll see below, before outplaying Zvjaginsev again in the return only for things to suddenly turn in a time scramble. Undeterred Ravi dominated the ensuing rapid play-off, advancing to take on French no.3 (Alireza Firouzja is now playing under the French flag), Etienne Bacrot. We saw Ravi's impressive second game comeback in this month's Editorial, but unfortunately this time he couldn't progress come the rapid tie-break.

R.Haria-V.Zvjaginsev
FIDE World Cup,
Krasnaya Polyana 2021
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 e5 ♜fd7 5 f4 c5 6 ♜f3 ♜c6 7 ♚e3 cxd4 8 ♜xd4 ♚c5 9 ♚d2 a6 10 ♚f2!?

A modern trend. White keeps his king in the centre in anticipation of the mass exchanges which now occur.

10...♜xd4 11 ♚xd4 ♚xd4 12 ♚xd4 ♚b6 13 ♚xb6 ♜xb6 14 ♚d3 ♚d7 15 ♜e2! f6 16 ♜d4

An ideal square for the knight. Black is quite solid, but also a little low on counterplay and undoubtedly slightly worse.

16...fxe5 17 fxe5 ♚e7 18 ♚d2

This feels natural, but the more vigorous 18 0-0!? ♚e8 19 ♚f3! ♜d7 20 ♚g3 was probably a stronger approach.

18...♚e8 19 ♚hf1 ♚g6 20 ♚f3 ♚af8 21 ♚af1



21...♚xf3?

Black has misjudged how useful the resulting mobile f-pawn will be for White. Instead, 21...♜d7 22 ♚xf8 ♚xf8 23 ♚xf8 ♜xf8 would most likely have led to a draw.

22 gxf3! ♜d7 23 f4 ♚f8 24 ♚f3

This turns out well, but 24 ♚e2! followed by ♚e3 and h2-h4 would have left White



As we went to press, Aleksandra Goryachkina was looking to build on her fine performance in the Russian Higher League at the FIDE Women's World Cup where she had reached the quarter-finals.

dominating the board.

24...♚xd3?!

Hoping for 25 ♚xd3? g5!, but 24...♚e4! would have been a much better try.

25 cxd3! g6 26 ♚e3 ♚c8 27 ♚h3 ♜f8 28 ♚d2

Naturally White wants to keep the black rook out ahead of beginning to press on both flanks, which is all made possible by that fine knight on d4.

28...♚c7 29 ♚g3 ♚e8 30 ♚g1 ♚e7

Zvjaginsev is unable to find a good plan and must simply sit and suffer.

31 b4! ♚c8 32 a4 ♜d7 33 h4 ♚f7 34 h5!

Levering open lines. **34...gxh5 35 ♚g5 h6 36 ♚xh5 ♚g6 37 ♚h1 ♜f8 38 ♚g1+ ♚f7 39 a5 ♜g6 40 b5!**



40...axb5

Now White's knight invades, but, of course, if 40...♜xf4?? 41 bxa6 bxa6 42 ♚f1.

41 ♜xb5 ♚g7 42 ♜d6 ♚a8

White also wins after 42...♚b8 43 f5 exf5 44 ♜xf5+ ♚h7 45 e6 ♚e8 46 e7!

43 ♜xb7 h5 44 ♚e3 ♚h6 45 ♜c5 ♜e7

46 ♚a1 ♜f5+ 47 ♚f2 h4 48 a6 ♚a7 49 ♜xe6 ♚h5 50 ♚f3 h3 51 ♚g1 ♚xa6?

51...h2 52 ♚h1 ♜h4+ 53 ♚g3 ♜f5+ 54 ♚f2 ♚xa6 55 ♚xh2+ ♚g6 was the last try.

52 ♜g7+! ♜xg7 53 ♚xg7 ♚a3 54 ♚h7+ ♚g6 55 ♚xh3 ♚xd3+ 1-0

Ravi knew that 56 ♚g4 is either an easy win with the connected passed pawns, whether Black retains the rooks or allows 56...♚xh3 57 ♚xh3 ♚f5 58 ♚g3 d4 59 ♚f3.

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This Month's New Releases

Chess Scribe

David LeMoir, 268 pages

David LeMoir Publishing

RRP £15.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £14.39**

"I [...] asked editor John Chapman what kind of subjects his readers might be interested in. He told me that many readers lacked time to study chess and needed some way of improving their results without putting in too much work. This rather tall order led me to think about that subject."

David LeMoir – *Chess Scribe*

There is a feeling we get at the chess board when things go right. It really is something to be able to reflect on one of our own games with a sense of pride as to what we have created. To be able to say, 'I made this'. I have long believed that all chess players, whatever their standard, are artists at heart. For LeMoir, the desire to create on the sixty-four squares has always been matched by a quest to write about the game. He is one of those rare talents with the necessary skill to help all his readers better understand their craft, and this makes *Chess Scribe* compelling reading.

From school chess magazines, through to first submitting an annotated game for our illustrious founding editor BH Wood, which to his "astonishment and delight" was published, over the following fifty years LeMoir's excellent articles have continued to feature in *CHESS* and elsewhere.

Chess Scribe brings this body of work together for the first time, along with extracts from his three books. Intertwined is LeMoir's personal story and his account of the role that both chess and chess writing has played in his life. Inevitably, the content of *Chess Scribe* is therefore eclectic, but LeMoir's writing has remained fresh across the decades.

Perhaps LeMoir was always better placed to be a chess writer than his modesty allows him to admit. Though not titled, as a former West of England, Norfolk and British Over-65 Champion, he is both strong enough to bring many technical insights to the fore, whilst also being able to translate difficult concepts into a form which weaker players can learn from.

His huge seller, *How to Become a Deadly Chess Tactician*, analysed the games of great tacticians from Anderssen through to Kasparov and provided the foundation for LeMoir's own chess philosophy as evidenced in much of his other writing. LeMoir highlights that the absolute best players are never

afraid to sacrifice material. Something they align with "a fertile imagination, fed by their hunger for beauty." They look deeper and hence see things that the rest of us might miss. An accolade that could equally be applied to LeMoir's capacity to offer insightful perspectives to those who are looking to learn or improve.

Matthew Sadler wrote of *How to Become a Deadly Chess Tactician* that "The book's 'Oooh!' and 'Ahhh!' factor is extremely high! [...]" his comments are always either entertaining or instructive." The same goes for all LeMoir's theoretical articles. Whether it be the silent sacrifice, decoys, passed pawns in the middlegame or chess traps, LeMoir helps the reader to look at the subject anew, making the topics feel both accessible and engaging. Because his writing is often very funny, LeMoir's ideas tend to stick in the memory and there is no higher praise than that.

Chess Scribe also represents an important contribution to our understanding of *CHESS* and BH Wood. Having been a long-time contributor, LeMoir would ultimately work for BH full time, both briefly and unhappily. In many ways the story LeMoir tells has parallels across lots of businesses which have a brilliant and charismatic founder who finds it difficult to let go. It is no great secret that BH struggled to delegate and that in his later years this could prove challenging. While things did not work out, happily LeMoir bounced back, and he would go on to write much more for *Chess* in future years.

Chess has lent itself to many of LeMoir's fondest memories. His articles on various matches, mainly county and for his beloved Drunken Knights, convey that sense of pride and belonging we all feel when playing for a team and are in the heart of the action.

LeMoir's essays on 'The History of *En Passant*' and 'You Too Can Be A Chess Author' should both be required reading for anyone who would like to write about the game. His piece on 'The Delicate Ego of The Chess Author' similarly so for anyone who has already put pen to paper. All writers both crave and fear reviews. LeMoir's writing on this is both amusing and well rendered.

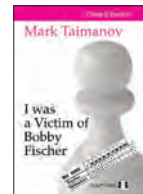
Undoubtedly, a better index and a concluding chapter would have further improved *Chess Scribe*. But these are my only challenges.

LeMoir highlights that "Playing chess is a joy. Reading about it is easier." He is quite right to note that improving your results without putting in the time is "rather a tall



order", whatever your editor says the readers may want. Yet, with a book as good as this, there is no reason for anyone to want to rush.

Ben Graff



I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer

Mark Taimanov, 248 pages

Quality Chess

£26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

It is often said that history is written by the winners. This applies not only on a universal scale, but also to our quaint game of chess. When the winners choose not to do any writing, others step forward to fill in the gaps. Bobby Fischer's journey along the road to seizing the ultimate chess title is a case in point.

Chess publishers are already making sure that the 50-year anniversary of Fischer beating Boris Spassky at Reykjavik in 1972 will be celebrated in style – by the written word, at least. Quality Chess and New in Chess were both quick off the mark. In addition to this hardback volume, Quality Chess will be publishing *The Road to Reykjavik* by Tibor Karolyi in October, followed by *Fischer-Spassky 1972* by the same author. Meanwhile, Jan Timman's latest book for New in Chess, *The Unstoppable American* [reviewed below – Ed.], also covers Fischer's extraordinary progress in the Interzonal tournament and Candidates matches to qualify to play against Spassky.

Hopefully there will be more Fischer treats in store over the course of the year, but it is unlikely they will offer anything approaching the perspective found in this book. After all, losers don't write history, do they? Especially if they manage to lose a match by the alarming score of 0-6. That was indeed the result of Mark Taimanov's 1971 Candidates match against the man who would be king. There was no sequel; no revenge; no redemption.

John Shaw, in his thoughtful foreword, is keen to show there is a lot more to Taimanov than a modern audience will know.

"So who was Mark Taimanov? I suspect younger readers might know him only for the Sicilian variation named in his honour, or for losing 6-0 to Bobby Fischer. In the pages that follow we shall learn all about that match, its origins and its aftermath, including severe

personal consequences for Taimanov. But there was so much more to Taimanov – he was one of the greatest chess players of the 20th century.”

Taimanov was also an optimist, and not just at the chess board; he became the father of twins at the extraordinary age of 78. He welcomed the chance to play a match with Fischer. As he “went first”, there was no indication that Fischer would be able to brush aside all before him in the four matches he won to claim the crown. Nobody could have suspected a 6-0 whitewash was on the cards.

The first version of this book was published nearly three decades ago, in Russian. There were certain conditions set for Quality Chess to follow: “The author is sadly no longer with us, having died at the age of 90 in 2016, but his wishes were clearly expressed to us by his Russian publisher and his widow: his title was to be used, his text was to be faithfully translated – a task Douglas Griffin performed admirably – and no computer corrections added in his main text. If we wanted to add text, we could do so at the beginning of the book and the end, but his story should flow as he intended in the heart of the book.”

The six games of the match are examined in great detail, with special attention given to the third one, which has acquired a degree of fame all to itself.

M.Taimanov-R.Fischer
3rd matchgame, Vancouver 1971



The games of the match are very exciting to play through, even now. This is the most famous position of the whole match. Taimanov, an expert on the white side of a King's Indian Defence, has Fischer, an expert of the black side, on the ropes. After thinking for 72 minutes, he played the timid **20 ♖f3?** “I simply collapsed psychologically. My energy dried up, apathy set in, nothing made sense anymore, and I made the first move that came into my head, which, of course, was a losing one...”

20 ♖h3! is the move Taimanov should have played. Instead, he lost “the most bitter game of my life.”

There are plenty of insights into Fischer's personality here which one will not find elsewhere. I was interested to read how nervous he had been during the 1970 USSR

vs Rest of the World match. We tend to overlook the normal emotions of Fischer, believing him to be a hugely confident chess machine, so it is good to be reminded of his human characteristics.

The additional material has been chosen carefully. Of particular interest is an interview with Taimanov from 2016, which adds more interesting colour to the story. For example, Taimanov recalls that he and Fischer communicated “in mixed Serbian-Russian.”

This is a fascinating book and we must be grateful to Quality Chess for making this enhanced edition available to the English-speaking world. It is a remarkable piece of work and it is hard to imagine another chess player who will be crushed in a match yet still write such a fine book on the experience, even taking many opportunities to praise the opponent along the way. Fischer fans will welcome this book and it will not do the chess world any harm at all to be reminded that Taimanov was a great player too. It turns out that losers can write history, after all.

Sean Marsh



Play the Budapest Gambit
Andrew Martin, 384 pages
Everyman Chess

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

The Budapest Gambit (1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e5) is a peculiar opening and one which is certainly not to everyone's taste. Virtually extinct at the higher levels – not that it ever enjoyed much of a run – it remains an occasional guest at club and tournament level without ever achieving anything even close to full respectability. A small number of club players will play it on a semi-regular basis, while they keep their fingers crossed behind their back, hoping for their opponents to fall into one of the standard traps.

Standard tomes advocating a 1 d4 and 2 c4 repertoire for White always give the Budapest Gambit a written pasting and quote miserable defeats for Black. Nevertheless, the blurb for this new book works hard to sell readers an opening that “is a great line for throwing opponents onto their own resources.” Furthermore, “A great number of materialistic but unprepared White players have found themselves swiftly demolished by Black's tremendously active pieces.”

It takes a good author to make people enthusiastic about an inferior opening. Viktor Moskalenko managed to do so in *The Fabulous Budapest Gambit* (New in Chess, 2017), and now it is the turn of another popular author to present his case.

“Experienced chess author and coach Andrew Martin examines all key variations of the Budapest. There is an emphasis on typical middlegame structures and the important plans and manoeuvres are demonstrated in

numerous instructive games.”

Martin is best known for his Foxy Openings videos, some of which have helped me to prepare for many important games over the years. His overwhelmingly optimistic appraisals of the openings in question act as a rallying cry as we head into battle. Such a stance is unlikely to pass muster in a chunky book, so I was intrigued to see just how much ‘selling’ would be found within the 384 pages.

First of all, it is very clear that Martin has put in a tremendous amount of work, freely admitting that “this has been a tough book to write.” He also states, “Below master level, I believe that the Budapest can be used on a consistent basis, whereas above, say, 2300 level, discretion is required. The element of surprise must play a role.” This is an early indication of what is to come; an admission that the Budapest Gambit is not going to hold up as part of a lifetime repertoire.

The material is split into two main parts. The first covers the normal Budapest Gambit (1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♗g4) and the second part examines the even rarer Fajarowicz Gambit (1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♗e4).

I enjoyed and appreciated the substantial opening chapter offering ‘A Budapest Timeline’, which presents a history of the opening in action. The first game in the timeline shows Maroczy, as Black, crushing Adler, in a game played in 1896. The timeline concludes with Black coming off worse in the game Fernandes-Santos, Pombal 2020. I like the balance of the book; Martin isn't trying to claim all is well in the black camp, but presents a very sober view of both the chances and pitfalls in store.

The chapters on the key strategic ideas for both variations are also of value. In the main chapters, there are numerous examples of Black coming out of the opening just a little worse. Generally speaking, this occurs when White avoids the traps and doesn't try for too much, too soon.

Black has more fun in the lines involving the rook lift from a8, enabling a direct attack on the white king. Here, for example, Black's aggressive pieces will be a cause for concern whether White is a club player or a grandmaster. Yes, the rook has travelled from a8 to h6 to join the party.

L.Oll-A.Romero Holmes
Groningen 1984



Black won this game in 30 moves, although in this position, instead of Oll's **17 h3**, Martin is "not sure that Black has anything better than perpetual check" after $17 \text{ fxe5 } \text{♖} \text{ h2+}$

It is a thorough book and Martin is careful not to hype Black's chances, even going as far as to say the Fajarowicz Gambit is "probably unsound" while maintaining that the Budapest Gambit is "playable at all levels". It has to be used as a surprise weapon though; a well-prepared opponent will undoubtedly make Black suffer. Nevertheless, this balanced and honest volume should be essential reading for anyone wanting to add the Budapest to their opening armoury.

Sean Marsh



**The Unstoppable American:
Bobby Fischer's Road to Reykjavik**

Jan Timman, 256 pages,
New in Chess

RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

In describing his 26-move loss against Bobby Fischer at the 1970 Buenos Aires tournament, Vladimir Tukmakov wrote that "Overall, before and after that dreadful game, I played pretty well, but in this I played timidly, haphazardly, passively". Other great players, however, also played against the American as if doomed. True, Tukmakov remarks, Fischer played very well in the tournament, but that couldn't "fully explain the strange passivity and despair of his opponents". Kasparov makes much the same point regarding the opposition Fischer faced at the Interzonal in Palma later that year and is similarly at a loss to explain it.

One doesn't have far to look. At Buenos Aires all of Fischer's 40-plus demands were met, including those on additional appearance fee, lighting, noise, photography, spectator distance, etc. He was allowed to turn up days late, and when he did so, all the other participants were presented to him, while, like some medieval monarch, Fischer remained in his chair and barely grunted in recognition. At Palma in the first round, one has the spectacle of FIDE's chief arbiter interrupting Fischer's game with Robert Hübner to whisper, "Would Mr Fischer like something to eat and drink?" During Hübner's move, of course, and while the American consumes six sandwiches and four glasses of orange juice, his opponent receives nothing. Presumably this happened in every round.

Both these episodes are described in Jan Timman's latest book which looks at Fischer's progress to the world championship in the years 1970-71, including his remarkable wins in the Candidates series, and the American's success in this period has prompted some heady evaluations of his play.

Timman notes that "Fischer was prepared to enter into all kinds of different types of play" and "clearly had a better command of all these types of play than the other top players of his time".

That is debatable. Petrosian and Korchnoi had greater mastery of closed positions, Geller's play was more profound, and all the Soviets knew of Fischer's weakness in irrational positions. Tukmakov, however, also writes of the "total, unconditional superiority of the brilliant American", but no other great player had such lack of faith in their ability and, as such, was so reliant on creating favourable conditions. At the Siegen Olympiad, for example, none of Fischer's demands were met and his result wasn't stellar.

However, if these conditions were obtained and his confidence secured, his crystal-clear classical style – paradoxically no tricks and no bluff – was given full expression and Fischer became nearly unplayable. Even 'Iron Tigran' wilted in the face of this, though he always recognised the "discrimination, offence and even humiliation" created by the imbalance of playing circumstances. The fun and games would get even wilder for the title match itself, but Fischer needn't have bothered as Spassky had no intention of winning it. A 'gentlemanly' loss would, he anticipated, lead to lucrative return matches and enough money to set up his own chess school in the U.S.

While Timman doesn't cover this – perhaps a follow-up is intended – Fischer's key games in the run-up are given splendid attention. As Daniel King has pointed out, Timman manages just the right balance of words and variations. The result can be wonderfully informative and instructional, as can his insights into individual playing styles. Key strategic themes are always identified and, in the process, Timman debunks quite a few myths: Taimanov should have won Game 6, not Game 3, and $22 \text{ ♖} \text{ xd7}$ in Game 7 against Petrosian – often outrageously overpraised – is relegated to its rightful status. And any new information on Rona Yakovlevna is a plus.

The book is not without flaws. The photographs are of very mixed quality, and the translation is often poor; it really did need a native English speaker. Similarly, some of the narrative is reheated from Plisetsky and Voronkov, and even Kasparov himself. The Soviet authorities' unwillingness to provide Taimanov with Tal as his second – "overly Bohemian", or as Timman puts it, "a rogue life filled with booze, women and cigarettes" – is, for example, seen as a mistake, but Kasparov already made the same point.

That said, Timman's personal voice is always engaging and worth listening to and, in many ways, he is taking over Genna Sosonko's mantle as the best chess writer around, with, of course, the bonus of actual games. Should New in Chess decide to ramp up their production values it really would be a stellar performance.

Stewart Player



Attacking 1...d5

Kiril Georgiev, 224 pages, paperback
RRP £20.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.89**

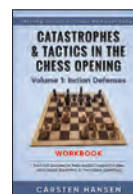
Chess Stars's latest work features one of their main and strongest authors, as well as their now-standard opening format, each chapter consisting of the main ideas, then step-by-step coverage and a few annotated games. Georgiev covers 1 d4 d5 2 c4 , looking to unbalance and even attack at an early stage. The repertoire is based around the Catalan, 5 g3 against the Semi-Slav and especially $2 \dots \text{c6 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 dxc4 5 e4 b5 6 ♕e2!?$, a modern interpretation of the Geller Gambit which Richard Pert has used with success.



Attacking the Strongpoint

Igor Zaitsev, 240 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

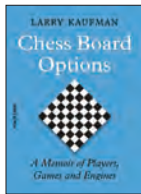
Subtitled 'The Philosophy of Chess', this is a fascinating new work from the famous Russian Grandmaster Igor Zaitsev, the man who found numerous opening ideas for Petrosian then Karpov, not least in his variation, the razor-sharp $9 \dots \text{♗b7}$ in the main line Lopez. Less well known is that Zaitsev was a deadly attacker in his own games and he certainly has some original attacking advice to impart. Other chapters are on harmony, strategy, 'Learning from the Cycle of Chess Epoch' and 'The Chess Law of Conservation of Energy', while the book begins with Karpov, Kasparov and Dvoretsky paying tribute.



**Catastrophes & Tactics in the
Chess Openings Volume 1 Workbook:
Indian Defenses**

Carsten Hansen, 348 pages, paperback
RRP £20.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.89**

The prolific Hansen's latest work is part of a new series, if another which is designed to help the club player win quickly. Here we don't see a series of instructive miniatures, but rather find 600 positions to solve from games which lasted no more than 15 moves. If you want to get on top of all the most common tactics and opening traps in the likes of the Grünfeld, King's Indian, Nimzo and Queen's Indians, this book should fit the bill.



Chess Board Options

Larry Kaufman, 224 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

State Champion at various times of Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia, Larry Kaufman is these days largely known for his work on the Komodo engine. Less well known to European readers may be his background not just in computer science and programming, but finance and maths. He is also a formidable Go and shogi player and has now put pen to paper about his fascinating life. Kaufman reveals all about his relationship with Diana Lanni, said to be Walter Tevis's inspiration for Beth Harman, his games and meetings with a number of chess greats, including Fischer and Larsen, and what it was like to work for Roman Dzindzichashvili.



Coffeehouse Repertoire 1.e4 Volume 1

Gawain Jones, 432 pages, paperback
RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

Gawain Jones is known for his attacking ability and has certainly worked extremely hard during this past year of restrictions to present a detailed new repertoire for Quality Chess (and, yes, a hardback version is also available for £29.50 or £26.55 for Subscribers). The underrated quality of many of the lines will certainly appeal to a great many club players, although only stronger ones will want to go deeper into the coverage. Whilst there are a lot of variations, there are also a number of illustrative games and a vast amount of textual explanation and pointers. In this first of two volumes, Jones tackles the Alekhine, Caro-Kann – met with 2 ♭f3 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♭e5!? – Scandinavian and especially the Sicilian, which is countered with 2 ♭c3, intending the Jones-Tiviakov variation, 2...♭c6 3 ♭b5, as well as 2...d6 3 d4!? and 2...e6 3 ♭f3.



Edgard Colle

Taylor Kingston, 272 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

Belgian Colle is nowadays best remembered for the opening which he gave his name to, but he was also a world-class

player in the 1920s and up until his early death in 1932 caused by a gastric ulcer. American chess historian Kingston sketches out a biography of Colle's all-too-short life before presenting tributes to him from Euwe, Knoch and Reinfeld. The meat of this new work, subtitled 'Caissa's Wounded Warrior', is 110 annotated games, which reveal that Colle was a deadly attacker and played in a very human style. Not only fans of the Colle Opening will be able to learn plenty from his games and Kingston's largely excellent notes.

Also new in stock from Russell Enterprises is Alex Fishbein's *The Exchange French Comes to Life*, which Sean Marsh reviewed in our June pages. You may never view 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 in the same light again if you dive into this new work, which runs to 240 pages and is available for £24.95 or £22.45 for Subscribers.



Eight Good Men

Dorian Rogozenco, 340 pages, paperback
RRP £22.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.69**

Kudos to Elk & Ruby for not immediately rushing out a book on 'The 2020–2021 Candidates Tournament', but rather allowing Romanian Grandmaster and experienced author Rogozenco plenty of time to analyse all the moves. Notably all 56 games are annotated and not only by the author: the 13 guest annotators include one Garry Kasparov. The notes are a good mix of variations and textual explanation. Rogozenco's work should serve as a fine tribute to this dramatic tournament, one which was not only halted for so long, but also contained a great amount of fighting chess. Fittingly, the work is illustrated with Lennart Ootes's photography from Yekaterinburg and you may even prefer a hardback version, which is also available from Chess & Bridge for £38.99 (Subscribers – £35.09).



Off the Board Chess

Andrew Smith, 416 pages, hardback
RRP £19.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.95***

* Please note that due to its size and weight, this work is not available postage-free for Subscribers,

FM A.P. Smith looks back on a rich chess career in this self-published labour of love. His anecdotes will both entertain and resonate with those who also have plenty of experience of the UK chess circuit, although at times eyebrows may raise. The games themselves are also pretty striking, since

Smith has long liked to aim straight for the opponent's king. For more on this fascinating book, do see pages 24 and 25 of this issue.



Rakhmanov's Secrets of Opening Preparation

Aleksander Rakhmanov,
360 pages, paperback

RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

Russian Grandmaster Rakhmanov freely admits that he likes to maintain control and reach a favourable endgame, while not being afraid of complications if they are favourable to him. As such, this new work from Thinkers Publishing should resonate with many positional players, especially those who place a high priority on the pawn structure. Rakhmanov takes the reader inside his opening laboratory, explaining not just how his repertoire came about, but how he likes to study and which players inspire him.

Look out too over the next few weeks for *The Modernized Philidor Defense*, which will also be released by Thinkers and features a no-nonsense repertoire for Black from Spanish theoretician Sergio Trigo Urquijo.



Secrets of Positional Sacrifice

Nikola & Dejan Nestorovic,
324 pages, hardback

RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

This is a detailed look at positional sacrifices from a father and son IM and GM team. Readers are quickly made aware of the five common areas of positional sacrifices (pawn, exchange, piece, queen and 'evergreen'), around which 64 detailed annotated games are fitted, as well as a number of exercises to solve. This work may be an impressive publication from Chess Informant, but the annotations are in pretty decent and detailed English and it's hard to believe any reader won't enjoy working their way through this treasure trove.

Also just arrived at Baker Street from Belgrade is *Chess Informant 148* (350 pages), containing all the usual features, including a number of interesting columns and articles these days, as well as all the latest leading games, novelties, endgames, tactics and studies. The latest 'Informator' is available for £32.99 (Subscribers – £29.61) or you can have the CD version too for £39.99 (£35.99 for Subscribers), or even just the CD version for £9.99 (Subscribers – £8.99).