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Chess Update

The Chess Centurion

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Chess's First Centenarian
Grandmaster, Dies at 100

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There's another Van Foreest! - Lorin D'Costa on two successful WIM norm events



The English Nimzowitsch? - Russell Sparkes pays tribute to Gerald Abrahams



Chris Ross & Blind Faith - Jonathan Arnott on Britain's best blind chess player

Chess

Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE. M.Sc †
Executive Editor: Malcolm Pein
Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Advertising: Tao Bhokanandh

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Blind Faith

Jonathan Arnott discusses Steel City Press's latest release, 80 instructive games by Britain's strongest blind player Chris Ross

If you're looking for a well-rehearsed clichéd comment about chess, I'm sure you'll be delighted for me to point out that chess, like the Berlin Defence, is a great equaliser. Whether you're 8 or 80, from whatever background, the game is played on the same 64 squares. From watching the old man Korchnoi devour the heralded Caruana at Gibraltar 2011, to seeing an 8-year-old Ukrainian refugee win the Durham Minor a few days before writing this article, I've been constantly reminded that this particular cliché is only a cliché because it's true.

So when I was approached about the prospect of publishing *Blind Faith*, the annotated games of Britain's strongest ever fully blind player, I'll admit I was intrigued. How, I wondered, does a blind player visualise the board? I've known Chris Ross for many years, as anyone on the Sheffield – or Cleveland, or York, or London, or Northampton – chess circuit will.

He's a confident character; unlike Churchill's description of Atlee as "a modest man who has a great deal to be modest about", Chris Ross backs up his confidence and oozes talent at the board. But although he can play tactical chess, and does at times in this book, when I started to read it his positional flair really struck me. The book chronicles Chris's development from strong club player to 2250 strength, which, as I'm sure many readers will know from personal experience, is a tough journey to undertake.

As a chess coach myself, I'm looking for books providing explanations which actually help you to improve as a player. Chris revels in the nuances of positions. One of the positives is that I found myself learning plenty of new concepts as a 2100+ player. It is rare to find a book which players of such a wide variety of strengths can learn from: whether you're 1200 or 2200, there is certainly plenty to enthuse over.

Let's begin with one really modest example which comes up as a theme in a number of games: pawn-to-rook-three moves. Be honest: who reading this article hasn't fallen foul of them in the past? We've all done it, weakened our pawn structure by playing ...h6, sniping at a bishop on g5 that wasn't doing anyone any harm. Or perhaps a prophylactic a3, guarding against a phantom threat of ...b4 which really wouldn't have achieved anything. Then, with the unerring

accuracy of a well-honed dart zoning in on the treble-twenty, our rook's pawn starts to become a target. Chris takes great pains to explain why such a move can be bad, but also considers when it might be good.

Let's examine an seemingly innocuous example in Ross-Borrowdale. After **1 e4 e6 2 e5 d6 3 exd6 cxd6 4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♗f3 ♖c6 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♙e1 ♙c7 9 c3 ♙e8 10 ♙g5** we reach this position with Black to move. Predictably, Black is about to reply with **10...h6?!.**



I won't provide the rest of the annotation (you'll have to buy the book for that), but the laser-like focus on Black's 10th move is rather telling.

"It is lamentable", says Chris, "how many times pawn-to-rook-three moves have to be criticised. Here, ...h6 is seemingly irrelevant to the structure but how this move will come back to haunt Black and, ultimately, prove his downfall. Pawn-to-rook-three moves should only ever be played with a deeper intent in mind, such as placing a pawn on a desired coloured square, giving a flight square from the back rank and other such essential intentions. Playing them for the sake of it should never be undertaken. Black's idea here is to enable an exchange of dark-squared bishops and, essentially, weaken the f4-square, but this intermezzo move is not required to achieve it. The pawn on h6 is not just an anchor to be targeted in the future, but, importantly, weakens some critical squares in the black kingside."

Now fast forward a few moves: **11 ♙h4 ♗d5 12 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 13 ♙c2 ♗f6 14 ♗bd2 ♗b8** (played with reluctance) **15 ♗f1 ♗bd7 16 ♗g3 ♗f8 17 ♙d2.**

White's attack is starting to show signs of breaking through; Black's h-pawn has become problematic. As Chris comments on 17 ♙d2, "Developing the white queen and protecting the f4-square, the only weak point in the white camp. Black is not able to occupy this weak square easily as ...♗g6 has been ruled out [...] The white plan is obvious, easy and fluid. Black's strategy and plan not so."

Could we, hand-on-heart, have predicted that 10...h6 would cause a problem for Black's c6-knight because it would be unable to move from f8 to g6 safely? No, of course not. But we could, armed with the knowledge gleaned from this book, predict that the weakness created had a greater chance of doing harm than good.

That is the essence of positional play: to be able to assess the long-term pluses and minuses of any move, even when the tactical rationale is still many moves off. White did not know precisely what ...h6 would risk, but he understood the high probability that such a weakness would eventually prove problematic for Black.

So far, we've dealt almost exclusively with positional considerations. Chris is fundamentally a positional player, so it's unsurprising that the reader will learn a lot about how to play positionally. For those (and yes, you know who you are) players who think "positional equals boring", I must inform you that you're wrong!

Positional play is what gets your pieces the energy they need and creates the conditions for that beautiful tactic you're dreaming of. Improve your positional play, and you'll get more tactical opportunities. As Chris says, "the little combinations always reveal themselves when you are so positionally

dominant”.

The Ross-Borrowdale game continued **17...♔d7 18 ♖f5 ♜ee8**. Now that the positional battle has been won, the tactics naturally start to fly. **19 ♗xh6+ gxh6 20 ♜xh6 ♜6h7** seemed indicated, but how to continue the attack?



White has already sacrificed, so we're very much into tactical calculation mode. But here, too, Chris describes his decision: "The black knights are defending each other and, by doing so, are creating a barrier that is unsustainable. By snapping that link, White loosens the sole remaining knight's defensive power. Also very important is that Black has the possibility of playing ...f7-f5, thereby cutting out the power of White's light-squared bishop. If it is to be cut out, then why not trade it for a potential defender? The thrust ...f7-f5 needs to be played to give the black queen access to the defence along the second rank."

Is **21 ♗xh7+!** a tactical move or a positional one? I suppose the answer is that it's a tactical move derived from positional considerations. So after **21....♗xh7 22 ♜e4 ♜f8?** (the game was already lost), White has a forced checkmate: **23 ♜g4+ ♜g6 24 ♗h4** removes Black's last defender, and resignation followed next move.

Now let's look at the reverse side of the coin, in the game Ross-Dimic from the 2017 IBCA Olympiad. The game began, in typical style, with a Rossolimo: **1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 ♜f6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5 d3 ♗g4 6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♜xf3 g6 8 0-0 ♗g7 9 ♜c3 0-0 10 ♗e3 ♜d7 11 ♜g3 e5 12 ♗h1 ♜e8 13 ♜ad1 b6 14 ♜e2 ♜f8 15 c3 ♜e6 16 f4 exf4 17 ♗xf4 ♜d7 18 ♜e2 ♜f8**.



Chris Ross pictured with his trusty set at Sheffield Hallam University, where he holds a senior management role. Britain's best-ever blind player supplies plenty of handy instruction in Blind Faith.

This is one of those positions where an engine will prove spectacularly useless in suggesting a move to play. It's the dreaded '0.00' after a selection of white moves, but as we all saw in Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi, '0.00' may well end in victory even at the highest echelons of the non-silicon game.

Chris is acutely aware that he is facing a higher-rated player. Black's last move, retreating the knight to f8, starts a logical train of thought for Chris: "This retreat indicates that he's got something in mind, otherwise the centrally placed knight would remain on its outpost. The natural development of the queen's rook was the obvious plan. This telegraphing of an intention should ring warning bells for the white player."

White has followed a manoeuvring plan for a number of moves. Against a lower-rated opponent, the player with the black pieces might well feel obliged to attempt to force the action. The pawn on a2, following Nunn's maxim, is a 'loose piece' which might well 'drop

off' in the future. Here, **19 a3** subtly improves White's position. More to the point, it intends "to lure Black into a false of security. Thinking that he needed to generate some action and tactical opportunities, Black is suckered..."

19...c4?

Black's knight retreat to f8 makes little sense without this move, so White was correct to employ 19 a3 as a high-class waiting move. Switching from Nunn to Napoleon, of course we should never interrupt our opponent in the course of making a mistake.

The silicon graph is no longer flatlined. The game continues **20 dxc4 ♜e6 21 ♗d4 ♜xc4 22 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 23 ♜d4 ♗g8** (Black's cheeky draw offer here being summarily rejected) **24 ♜f5 ♜xe4 25 ♗h6+ ♗g7**. Admittedly, Black's play has been (if you'll excuse the understatement) sub-optimal since the last diagram. But even a cursory glance at the position should have you reaching for tactical calculations. It's White to play and win here.



The elementary **26** ♖xf7 decides the game, and play concludes **26...♔e3 27 ♖h4 ♕e4 28 ♖f6+ ♘g8 29 ♖h8 mate**. Unbelievably, Black is checkmated six moves after offering a draw. The game deservedly won the David Hodgkins Best Game Award.

Of course, Chris Ross offers a much fuller annotation of these games. I'm merely picking up one point to demonstrate his positional thinking, and my main takeaway from his comments on the subject is essentially that pawn-to-rook-three moves should be treated with a fair amount of respect. We shouldn't just chuck them in at random whenever we feel like it.

Chris's book, to me, is a treasure trove of useful tidbits which will give the reader a new sense of perspective on common positions. But I've always thought that how we respond to reading a book is also important. In this article's sample theme – and now I'm borrowing terminology from real-life principles of crisis management – we've seen the 'what' (pawn-to-rook-three moves require a critical eye) and the 'so what?' (getting the decision right has tactical consequences later). But 'now what?'. In other words, how should we react to learning

from Chris' book – or from anyone else's for that matter?

A couple of my students are currently dabbling with the Nimzo-Indian, and I've taken to asking them the question about whether to respond with 4...h6 against the Leningrad variation (1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗b4 4 ♗g5).



It's a matter of personal taste, but I want them to appreciate the nuances involved in making the decision. First, the case for the prosecution:

By playing ...h6, you're weakening your position especially as you're likely to end up castling on the kingside. You create a target for your opponent to attack and the g6-square becomes weaker, especially given that Black's c8-bishop might not be able to challenge the b1-h7 diagonal. The h6-square could, potentially, be needed for a rook lift later on in the game.

And now the case for the defence:

There's nothing wrong with ...h6 if it has a useful rationale behind it. The g5-square is the only intersection of the c1-h6 diagonal (White might wish to retreat ♗d2) and the h4-d8 diagonal (pinning the black knight to the queen). By playing ...h6, we force our opponent to make a choice. We might have

ideas of playing ...♗e4, or of bringing the queen out to a5 and hitting White on the a5-e1 diagonal. After, for example, 4.h6 5 ♗h4 c5, White probably shouldn't play 6 e3 because of 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♖a5.

The upshot is that we're making an informed decision. Theory is somewhat divided on whether or not 4...h6 should be played, but I hope that my students will take away the idea that there exists a trade-off between the long-term positional weakness and the concrete short-term benefit. Even when there's no clear right or wrong answer, I'd like my students' choices to be based on a solid foundation. That, I think, is what Chris Ross offers in this book. If you put the work in to studying and understanding his comments, then reflect upon them to develop your own game, I'm sure that your chess will reap the rewards.

Don't expect your entire game to be transformed by a single transformative 'ah-ha' moment by reading Chris's work, but do expect a whole host of little nudges which will guide your game in the right direction. As we've seen, and for me the number one theme in this book, is how one seemingly inconsequential decision can make all the difference. You can aspire to deep positional understanding because you feel it's how the game ought to be played, or because you want to win, or merely because sound play gives birth to tactics. Whatever your reasoning, improving that understanding should always be a top goal.

Ed. – Blind Faith was published by Steel City Press in May in paperback (420 pages) and ebook (768 pages) formats. It consists of 80 annotated games with explanation, together with a foreword by Neil McDonald and an introductory chapter providing insight into Chris personally. Paperback copies are, of course, available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £19.99 or £17.99 for Subscribers.

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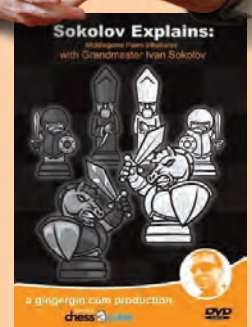
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60 Seconds with... GM Murtas Kazhgaleyev



Born: 17th November 1973, Uralsk, west Kazakhstan.

Place of residence: Tashkent.

Occupation: Chess player, coach, writer, poet, performer.

Enjoyable? For sure!

And home life? Oh, no, no.

But sometimes good to escape to: The theatre or a rock bar.

Sports played or followed: In 2015 in Moscow I ran a marathon and was quite happy to do it in four hours and four minutes.

A favourite novel? Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

Piece of music? Anything by The Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival or Deep Purple.

Film or TV series? *Les Valseuses* ('Going Places'), *Manhattan*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? To play the last round on the top table.

And the worst? Not playing on board one.

Your best move? Getting married and divorced at the right moments.

But less memorable than your worst move? I've made a lot of bad moves, but I never regret playing chess.

And a highly memorable opponent? Anatoly Karpov.

Favourite game of all time? Game 16 of the 1985 rematch.

A.Karpov-G.Kasparov
World Championship (Game 16),
Moscow 1985
Sicilian Taimanov

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6
5 ♘b5 d6 6 c4 ♘f6 7 ♘1c3 a6 8 ♘a3 d5
9 cxd5 exd5 10 exd5 ♘b4 11 ♙e2 ♙c5
12 0-0 0-0 13 ♙f3 ♙f5 14 ♙g5 ♙e8
15 ♙d2 b5 16 ♙ad1 ♘d3



17 ♘ab1 h6 18 ♙h4 b4 19 ♘a4 ♙d6
20 ♙g3 ♙c8 21 b3 g5 22 ♙xd6 ♙xd6
23 g3 ♘d7 24 ♙g2 ♙f6 25 a3 a5 26 axb4
axb4 27 ♙a2 ♙g6 28 d6 g4 29 ♙d2
♙g7 30 f3 ♙xd6 31 fxg4 ♙d4+ 32 ♙h1
♘f6 33 ♙f4 ♘e4 34 ♙xd3 ♘f2+ 35 ♙xf2

♙xd3 36 ♙fd2 ♙e3 37 ♙xd3 ♙c1



38 ♘b2 ♙f2 39 ♘d2 ♙xd1+ 40 ♘xd1
♙e1+ 0-1

The best three chess books: Bronstein's classic *Zurich 1953*, Larsen's *My Best Games* and *Fire on Board* by Alexei Shirov.

Is FIDE doing a good job? Sometimes, but we always want them to run things better.

Or your National Federation? The Kazakh Federation have no strategy at all, but do sometimes put on good events.

Any advice for either? Don't think, just do things!

Can chess make one happy? Yes, if you love the game.

A tip please for the club player: Try to play strategically, but never forget that you win or lose due to tactics.

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Never Mind the Grandmasters...

Here come the amateurs - by Carl Portman (carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk)

Is our chess playing style simply a reflection of our character? This is a question that has taxed minds since the game began and my own view has fluctuated to and fro over the years. I think that it is far too easy to say 'yes' to that question.

People, like chess itself, are more complex than that. I have known reserved people play the most aggressive chess and vice versa. Beware the individual who has an iron hand in a velvet glove. Be equally wary of those with a velvet hand in an iron glove. Both show strengths and weaknesses. Your job is to identify and deal with them at the board. Suffice to say that we all have the ability to surprise our opponents with a style contrary to our character. This is one of the great joys of the game.

I was thinking about this recently when I read *Chess Queens* by Jennifer Shahade, and in particular the chapter about Alexandra Kosteniuk. It is fascinating to gain an insight into the lives of players away from the chess board and try to understand a little more about what makes them tick. Their habits, preparation and indeed overall character are very often hidden, and often with good reason. Chess is a world of strategy, tactics and immense preparation for battles to come. One does not reveal everything about oneself in such situations.

I learned though that Kosteniuk was the tenth woman ever to become a grandmaster and she reached a peak rating of 2561 in January 2018. She was also the twelfth women's world chess champion. Chess players will know that she is also queen of social media, effortlessly streaming, making videos or modelling, but let's concentrate on the chess.

I already knew that she was an attacking chess player, but I have never really played through many Kosteniuk games. I was suitably inspired then to look her up in my database and it is not without a certain humour that the first game I clicked on at random was one that began 1 g4!?. Yes folks, Kosteniuk played the mighty Grob. I laughed aloud, of course, and instantly knew that I would have to share the game in this column.

I was expecting some sort of 'classical chess style' from a Russian, but not a bit of it. Those days are long gone and we live in a world of early h-pawn pushes and games without castling for heaven's sake. Let us enjoy the game then. It may be blitz chess, but it is still instructive in its own way.



Former women's world champion Kosteniuk is still a formidable player - and once played 1 g4.

A.Kosteniuk-Z.Vukovic Titled Tuesday Blitz 2021 Grob Opening

1 g4!?

Ye gods, the Grob! It's a bit like the monster under your bed. I believe it is named after a Swiss player called Henry Grob (1904-1974), and many people don't take it seriously. That's all well and good, but Black still needs to have an idea what to play against it. Nakamura and MVL have played it a few times, albeit not in classical chess. Imagine Magnus playing 1 g4 in a world championship match! The world would go into meltdown. It would be a bit like picking a

Bulldog to win Crufts dog show. 1 g4 is la Noche Oscura del Alma (the Dark Night of the Soul), and a magic not to be dabbled in without courage.

1...d5

Certainly the most popular response. It centralises a pawn (logical), and the bishop on c8 attacks the pawn on g4. What is wrong with that?

2 ♖g2

2 h3, is of course, the other sensible option.

2...c6

2...♗xg4 is just a pawn for nothing, isn't it? Well, Grob must have been high on strong Swiss cheese when he came up with this stuff.

3 c4

White just attacks the centre and snipes from the wings with that Grob bishop on g2. There are several options here. What do you fancy, dear reader? That g-pawn still looks rather juicy. Why not just take it? I have a booklet written by IM Michael Basman entitled *The Macho Grob* and there is some pretty wild stuff in there, I can tell you. It pays to know what to do on both sides.

3...dxc4

After 3...dxc4 the g-pawn is dead. Long live the g-pawn! Black is a pawn up, but why would White gambit the pawn? Think further into the game. If Black castles short then the g-file is free for a white rook to attack the g7-square and perhaps with the help of a bishop on b2, for example, it could all become rather fraught.

4 h3

What do you think of 4 b3? White just wants activity, space and lots of play. Who cares about pawns? Well, Philidor and Nimzowitsch did, but that is another story.

4...h5



I find it interesting to see how often the Grob provokes Black into playing moves that he or she would not normally make. Perhaps 4...e5 was fine here, but Black wishes to immediately undermine the audacious pawn advance.

5 g5

One does not take the pawn in the Grob. One pushes on like a Sherpa on the mountain.

5...f5 6 c3 e6

Note that the light-squared bishop is now outside the pawn chain.

We should also look at 6...b5. What if Black tries to hold on to that c-pawn? It is playable, but note that cheeky bishop on g2. It's locked and loaded on the h1-a8 diagonal. This is a position that I would refer to as 'messy'.

7 f3 d7 8 h4

Supporting the g-pawn. Now the knight on f3 is free to move.

White could also have played the pawn to e4 and asked a question of the bishop: 8 e4 g6 9 d4 cxd3 10 Wxd3 c5 and Black is fine. As White you would have to decide whether or not to exchange queens here. Personally I would not as I see no obvious counterplay after that. Black is still a pawn up, after all.

8...c5

I actually prefer Black to be honest, but

the engine has it as about even.

9 e5

A nice move, attacking c4 and c6.

9...d4



OK, it is blitz, but this is not a move I would have played. Instead I like 9...c7, just playing steadily. Vukovic was rated 2406, so who am I to say?

10 xc6

Indeed.

10...bxc6?!

Sorry, the 'dubious' mark is not mine, but the engine prefers something else and, yes, 10...d6 does seem more logical to me.

11 xc6+ d8 12 xa8

What could Black play next? It really is a messy position now and a draw is not going to be the outcome, either way. That's the nature of the Grob, I suppose.

12...d3+



I bet that came as a shock to Kosteniuk. Almost anything else is a bit better. It smacks of desperation, and I very much suspect that Vukovic knew it when he played it.

However, I am beginning to appreciate more the idea of playing this sort of chess. What I mean is, the strategy of setting constant problems, bamboozling the opponent, even if it does the very same to me. Set problems, ask questions, why be predictable? GM Julian Hodgson played this way for years.

13 exd3 xd3

It looks a bit scary for White. Whatever happened to kings being castled into safety for either side and, anyway, who cares about silly pawns?

14 f3

White is just winning. Black is unable to thrust a sword into the side of the white king.

14...c5 15 e4

I like this move a lot. I am wondering if I would have seen it myself if I were White in this position. Maybe.

15...e7

Black really needs to develop and fast.

16 xd3

Swapping off pieces whilst material ahead is entirely sensible, especially if the position is still good for you afterwards.

16...cxd3



This is still interesting. Black is material down, but looks to be dominating the squares around the white king. The white bishop is about as useful as the 'p' in Pterodactyl. Where's my counterplay?

I am reminded of something that Matthew Sadler said, especially if White were to play a2-a4 at some point. The move a4 develops the rook on a1 without that rook actually being moved. It now has two more squares (on a2 and a3) to move to. Clever, eh?

17 h3!

Cool. There it is. The influential pawn on d3 must fall.

17...d5 18 Wxd3

Another one bites the dust.

18...xf2+

Message for White: keep calm, and carry on.

19 d1 e7 20 xd5+ exd5 21 e2+ 1-0

Simply swap it all off. Well that was fun.

In my youth, I used to enjoy playing the Grob. Didn't we all at one time? Perhaps, after seeing this game it is time to dust it down and play it again, just to cock a snook at the weary world.

I wonder if we should describe people by their opening choices. 'Watch her' they might say – she is a Grob player; or 'you are in for a very boring evening' as he plays the London System. Maybe we should declare our opening preferences on a first date and just get it out of the way. One should be especially wary of dating anyone who plays the Exchange French, for example, but I can only imagine the merriment of an evening out with an individual who essays the Danish Gambit.

Can chess really give us a glimpse into the human soul? Answers on a postcard...

Find the Winning Move

EXTRA!

8 additional puzzles to those of the tactical genius that was Gerald Abrahams. They should also test your tactical ability, with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from various leading recent events and don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 54



(1) R.Starley-J.Heritage
4NCL, Daventry 2022
White to Play



(2) B.D.Deac-V.Nevednichy
Romanian Rapid Ch., Bucharest 2022
Black to Play



(3) Ding Liren-Bai Jinshi
Hangzhou 2022
White to Play



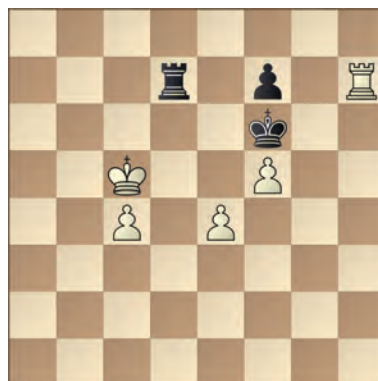
(4) A.Ozsoy-M.Yilmazyerli
Kumru 2022
Black to Play



(5) M.Golubev-M.Horak
Titled Tuesday Blitz 2022
White to Play



(6) S.Mamedyarov-M.Vachier Lagrave
FIDE Grand Prix, Belgrade, 2022
Black to Play and Draw



(7) R.Rapport-V.Fedoseev
Berlin Grand Prix 2022
White to Play



(8) A.Sarana-F.Caruana
Chess.com Rapid 2022
White to Play



Solutions

to Gerald Abrahams – Find the Winning Moves (pages 36–38)

1) Abrahams–Booth

1 f6! gxf6 (if 1...xf6 then 2 xd6+) **2 g4 hxg4 3 h5 f8 4 h6 xh6 5 xd6+ cxd6 6 c7** and queens.

2) Abrahams–Thomas

1 d5! 1-0 If 1...xb5 2 xc7+, and if 1...b4, simply 2 xb4. Best, but still hopeless is 1...xd2+ 2 xd2 xd5.

3) Rubinstein–Abrahams

1...e3! 2 fxe3 xg2 3 0-0-0 xg3 and Black duly won.

4) Fish–Abrahams

1...xf3! 2 gxf3 h3+ 3 g1 xd4 4 d1 e1+! **5 e1** (or 5 f1 xf1+) **5...xf3# 0-1**

5) Abrahams–Thynne

1 xg8+! e7 (if 1...xg8 2 g6 and 3 h8#) **2 xf7+ d8 3 d1+ d7 4 g6 f6 5 xe8+ 1-0**

6) Abrahams–Spencer

1 xf7+! xf7 2 b3+ f8 3 g7+! xg7 4 xe7+ h6 5 xd8 1-0

7) Golombek–Abrahams

1...e5 2 h4 c7+ 3 b5 f6 4 c5 xc5+ ½-½ 5 xc5 is stalemate. 2 h4 was weak; it was better to get the c-pawn rolling with 2 b6! xe4 3 c5 xf5 4 c6, etc.

8) Abrahams–Cukierman

12 f4! “Initiating a sacrifice that lasts for ever and wins” – Abrahams. Alekhine wrote: “Very interesting chess, as the soundness of the sacrifice only becomes apparent after a dozen moves. The attacking scheme is rather original, and makes the game one of the most entertaining of the Congress.”

9) Abrahams–Cukierman

19 f1! “I could regain my piece by 19 xg7+ xg7 followed by 20 f5+ and g7. But a good attacker hates recapturing” – Abrahams.

10) Abrahams–Cukierman

34 xh7+ f6 35 f4+! xe6 36 xh3+ “and mates in five on e1”: 36...e5 37 f5+ d4 38 d5+ e3 39 f3+ e2 40...d3+ e1 41 f1 mate. “A brilliant struggle” – Alekhine.

11) Mieses–Abrahams

1...a3+! when 2 d5 d3+ 3 c5 (3 d4? allows mate at b5) 3...b6+ 4 xb6 e3+ 5 d4 f3+ 6 c4 e4+ wins a rook, or if **2 b4 c3+ 3 c4 b6+** and wins, in view of 4 d5+ d3+ or the game’s **4 xb6 e5+.**

12) Abrahams–Winter

1 h5+ xh5 2 xf5+ h6 (or 2...h4 3 g3#) **3 xe4! xe4 4 d7** wins.

13) Abrahams–Winter

1 f8! 1-0 Abrahams told Tartakower, who was watching, that the move was prompted by the need to prevent Black giving perpetual check by 1...c1+ and 2...h6+.

14) Lupi–Abrahams

Abrahams rejected the winning continuation **1...xc3+! 2 bxc3 h8.**

15) Abrahams–Christoffel

1 xg6+! fxg6 2 f6+ f8 (and not 2...h8?? 3 h7#) **3 h6+** results in perpetual check.

16) Winter–Abrahams

1...e5+! 2 xe5 g4 3 h2 f3 4 g4 g2 0-1

17) Abrahams–Alexander

1 dxc6! xc4 2 a8+ c7 3 a7+ d8 would have drawn.

18) Abrahams–Zita

1 g5! xc4 (if 1...xg5? 2 e7#) **2 xf6 xe6 3 e7+ g8 4 xe6+** and wins.

19) Abrahams–Canal

1 h5! h6 2 e4 does lose a piece, but only in return for a winning attack: **2...f5 3 xe6+ h8 4 h4 fxe4 5 xh6 f7 6 f5 h5 7 xg7+ xg7** (if 7...xg7 8 xh5+ g8 9 e6+ f7 and now at last 10 xa5!) **8 g5+ f7 9 e6+ e8 10 xh5+** and wins. “A very fine performance” – Tartakower.

20) Purdy–Abrahams

1...f3! 2 xf3 exf3 3 d1 xg2+ 3 h1 e5 and ...h5 will mate. As such, White should have played 1 h3 to reduce the stress on the back rank.

Find the Winning Moves (p. 48)

1) Starley–Heritage

1 d8+! 1-0 If 1...xd8 2 xc5.

2) Deac–Nevodnichy

White has just blundered with 1 f7??: **1...g3! 0-1** 2...f2# follows.

3) Ding Liren–Bai Jinshi

1 xg6! fxg6 (or 1...hxg6? 2 d8+, and if 2...g7 3 h8#) **2 d7 f7 3 f6 c1+ 4 h2 1-0** 4...f5 fails to satisfactorily defend the rook and bishop in view of 5 d8+.

4) Ozsoy–Yilmazyerli

1...xe4! 2 xe4 xxb2+ 3 c1 (3 a1 xc2+ is clearly hopeless too: for example, 4 d4 xd2 5 xd2 xd4+ 6 xd4 a5 7 a2 b8 8 b1 xb1 9 xb1 e1+ 10 c1 d5 when the extra queen and pawns outclass the white pieces) **3...b7 0-1** There’s simply no good defence in view of 4 d2c3 b1+! 5 xb1 b2#.

5) Golubev–Horak

1 xg6! (ripping open the black defences, although 1 b4! would also do the trick, and if 1...b6 2 xg6 or even just 2 f5) **1...fxg6** (1...b4 also fails, due to 2 h7!, and if 2...xh7 3 xh7+ f8 4 xg7+ e8 5 g8#, or 2...bxc3 3 xf7+, forcing mate, as with 3...xf7 4 xg7+ e8 5 h8+, as shown by Chris Ward in his Dragon column for Chess Publishing) **2 xg6** (with the deadly threat of 3 h7) **2...f7 3 h8+! xh8 4 xf7 1-0** Mate follows down the h-file or on g7.

6) Mamedyarov–Vachier Lagrave

1...c1+! 2 xc1 xd3+ 3 a1 a6! 4 b1 (4 c3 also deals with the threat of mate down the a-file, but after 4...xc3 5 bxc3 d3!? White would be advised to force a draw with 6 xg5+ h7 7 h5+) **4...d3+ 5 a1 a6 6 b1 ½-½**

7) Rapport–Fedoseev

1 g4! (threatening mate with 2 g8+ h7 3 f6#, in contrast to which 1 fxe4? xe4+ 2 g4 f5 would see Black saving the day) **1...h7 2 fxe4 e5** (and not, of course, 2...xe4? 3 f6+) **3 f6+** (3 d7 also works, and if 3...g8 4 g3!) **3...g6 4 d6 e2 5 g8+ g7 6 xh6 xe4 7 f5+ h7 8 h6+ g8 9 xb6** saw White bagging a pawn while maintaining a virulent initiative. Rapport converted with ease: **9...f4 10 g5 f6+ 11 h6 e2 12 h4 f7 13 b5 b2 14 b8 d5 15 h5 e4 16 d6+ e7 17 xe4 b4 18 b6! f5 19 gxf5 xe4 20 b7 f6 21 d8 1-0**

8) Sarana–Caruana

1 hxg6! (in the game, 1 h6? a5! created a fortress: 2 h7 f7 3 g3 h8 4 e3 f7 5 f2 h8 6 f3 f7 7 g4 h8 8 h2 ½-½) **1...e8** (now there’s no time for 1...a5 on account of 2 g7! f7 3 g3) **2 a5! bxa5** (2...d7 3 axb6 axb6 4 g3 h5 5 h2 d6 6 c3 e6 7 b3 overloads the defence too, as pointed out by John Emms in his excellent notes for Chess Publishing) **3 f2!** (a final precision; Black would yet escape with half a point after 3 c3? a4! 4 b2 d6) **3...d6 4 c3 g7** (4...a4 5 b2 changes little) **5 b3 c6 6 a4 cb6 7 g3** and, finally, a pawn will decisively fall.

This Month's New Releases



Think Like a Super-GM

Michael Adams & Philip Hurtado, 464 pages
Quality Chess
RRP £29.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.55**

This book has been eagerly anticipated for some time and, let me say right at the start, it has been worth the wait. The title suggests readers can aspire to think in a similar way to players of the highest level, although editor Andrew Greet struggled to sum up the content in succinct fashion: "This is a chess book unlike any other. Even the authors have had a hard time summarizing the content, producing no less than six mini-introductions between them! If I had to summarize this book in just a few words, I would say: 'Puzzle book meets *The Master Game* meets Science.'"

The book is billed as a "unique collaboration combining the chess insights of an elite grandmaster with a scientific investigation into thinking at the chess board" and to that end puts a range of players to the test.

"40 chess puzzles were shown to a panel of players ranging from occasional club players up to Super-GM and co-author Michael Adams. Researcher Philip Hurtado recorded not only the moves chosen, but also the detailed thought processes of every player in order to shed light on the mystery as to what exactly defines superior chess strength."

The premise is not entirely original. It is highly reminiscent of the excellent 'Beat the Masters' feature which was a monthly staple of this very magazine in the late 1980s and into the 1990s.

Adams was brought in by a 'cold call' email via his website, "Enquiring if I would be interested in collaborating on a book. Having been intrigued by his idea, we had a long chat on the phone, and I was excited to join the project. Part of the initial appeal for me was that working with a co-author seemed less daunting than taking on an entire book project personally, but subsequently I became so interested in the subject that my input expanded considerably."

The overall conclusion should not come as a surprise: "That Super-GMs evaluate better is a fact which has been demonstrated throughout this book. The stronger a player is,

the closer their evaluations are to those of *Stockfish*. Of all the participants in these puzzles, Michael Adams was the one who gave the overall closest evaluations to that of the chess engine."

However, it is the journey that is the important thing here and whatever the reader's current playing strength, a careful study of this book will provide a multitude of ideas on how to progress to the next level. Just imagine sitting down with Michael Adams and listening to him explaining which moves he thinks are best and, more importantly, the decision-making process behind them.

Eight bonus problems are given after the main body of 40. Here is a sample puzzle, which, strangely enough, features one of the authors in action.

M.Adams-D.Navara

Biel 2015



It is fascinating to read the thoughts of numerous players on a single position. For this one, Ray Carpenter (Elo 1767) and Andrew McCumiskey (Elo 2017) both thought that 30 ♕d5 would win the bishop cleanly. However, Juan Reyes (Elo 2451) and Julio Granda (Elo 2630) spotted that Black could reply with 30...♗xh4! with a draw (31 g×h4 ♖g4+ 32 ♖f1 ♗d1+ being the simplest example). Therefore, the best move was deemed to be 30 ♗d7!, which Adams explains as: "Taking a time out to secure White's own king before upping the pressure on f7." Adams won the game after 56 moves.

The difference, according to Hurtado, is that "Strong players, as I have said many times throughout this book, notably put themselves in the opponent's shoes, and

work hard to find all the available resources."

There is also "A fascinating Eyetracker experiment showing where different players focused their attention on the board." The eyetracker experiment came at the suggestion of Adams. This shows on which areas of the board the respective solvers spent the most time looking and analysing. The time used on each subject was just one hour; Hurtado admits it would have been better if more time had been available. This is an intriguing feature with plenty of useful analysis. For example, Adams's eyetracker revealed that "The first thing Michael looks at when he focuses his eyes on the board is the position of the king. He is already focused on this after one second."

This is a fine book and one which should be genuinely useful to anyone wanting to improve their chess thinking skills. It is especially good to have new material from Michael Adams and hopefully he will be inspired to return to the keyboard in the near future. After so many years at the top, there has got to be plenty more of his wisdom he can share.

I would be surprised if *Think Like a Super-GM* didn't turn out to be a serious contender for the English Chess Federation Book of the Year award.

Sean Marsh



Fabiano Caruana: 60 Memorable Games

Andrew Soltis, 448 pages
Batsford

RRP £16.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £15.29**

Grandmaster Soltis is certainly being kept very busy for Batsford. This new volume on Fabiano Caruana follows in the footsteps of two similarly-named books. The ghost of Bobby Fischer certainly looms large, even before the first page is turned. That is, of course, due to the unsubtle appropriation of the title of his own book, *My 60 Memorable Games* (most recent edition, Batsford, 2008). Soltis also penned 2020's *Magnus Carlsen: 60 Memorable Games*, so it is clear that this is an ongoing series. Indeed, Batsford are quite active this year and this book was

one of three they released at the same time.

The blurb sets the scene: "This book dives into how he wins by analysing 60 of the games that made him who he is, describing the intricacies behind his and his opponent's strategies, the tactical justification of moves and the psychological battle in each one."

Soltis starts with a 16-page introduction, entitled 'The Caruana Difference', which sums up the American's life and chess strengths to date. The 60 main games are set out to mimic the famous Fischer book, with a snappy title, a brief introduction and then the moves of the games, with a mixture of prose notes and analytical variations. There are no photographs and the style of the book could be called old-fashioned without fear of successful contradiction.

Caruana's biggest chance to secure chess immortality came and went in London, in 2018, when he held Magnus Carlsen to a 6-6 draw in their title match, only to succumb in the rapidplay tie-breaker. I wasn't alone in thinking Caruana would bounce back in the next cycle, but Ian Nepomniachtchi had other ideas. This year's Candidates tournament is going to represent a case of make or break for Caruana and his contemporaries.

The problem with borrowing Fischer's book title is that the word 'memorable' lacks the personal touch. It must remain unclear exactly how memorable the 60 games presented here are to Caruana himself, especially as they stretch from 2002 to 2021. Nevertheless, the games do provide snapshots of Caruana's chess development over the decades.

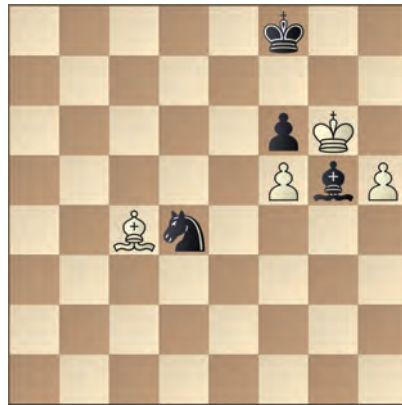
I was initially interested to see how much coverage there would be of the 2018 world chess championship and pleased to discover that the chosen game was game six – the one which I saw 'live', together with a party of CSC Teesside children, on one of our big days out.

Caruana missed a big chance in this game. Relying on the Petroff Defence (formerly considered the vampire of 1 e4 energy, prior to the ubiquitous modern way of playing the Berlin Defence to the Ruy Lopez grasping the proffered baton), Caruana cannot have been disappointed to see the world champion avoid the main lines with the peculiar **1 e4 e5 2 f3 f6 3 xe5 d6 4 d3**. Indeed, with the queens coming off early and a symmetrical pawn structure firmly in place, a draw looked likely for a long time, but Caruana gradually "stepped into Carlsen's own back yard" and started to outplay him, developing serious winning chances deep in the endgame.

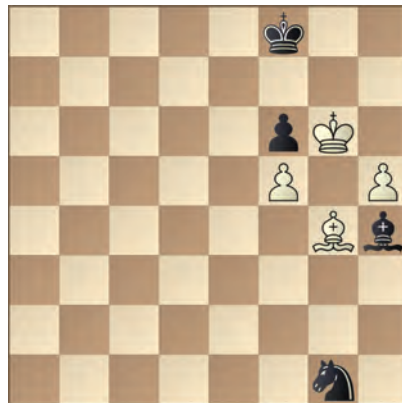
Eventually, despite famously saying he doesn't believe in fortresses, Carlsen had to play for one – a task he accomplished only after Caruana missed a remarkable chance to win the game. Here is how Soltis handles the big moment.



M. Carlsen-F. Caruana World Chess Championship (Game 6), London 2018



"The stage is set for one of the most remarkable events in a world championship match. The critical variation is 68...h4. After passes such as 69 d5 e2 70 f3 Black plays 70...g1!! and allows 71 g4."



"Black stalemates his knight in order to set up zugzwang." Remarkably, this position is winning for Black. Garry Kasparov's comment at the time was: "No human would willingly trap his knight like that."

Caruana opted for **68...f3?** and the game was drawn on move 80. "After the game Carlsen joked about his earlier comments on fortresses. 'It's a good thing they exist, right?'"

Books on Caruana – and every other Candidate, for that matter – will obviously receive a boost in interest and sales if the subject can battle his way through to the next title match. Indeed, in a sense, this book may have appeared a little too late to make the type of impact created by a champion or the current challenger. If it had appeared before the last Candidates tournament (or even during the year-long hiatus suffered by the event), then it would have been a much easier 'sell'.

The page count shows Soltis has put in a shift with this book and the games are very interesting. Yet the real Caruana remains frustratingly in the shadows. 'Best game' books – especially those latching on to the 'memorable' epithet – are always enhanced

by the personal touch from the player in question.

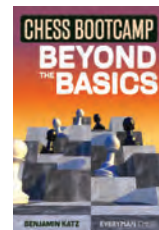
I think we are unlikely to see anything of the sort from Caruana himself, unless he becomes champion of the world (and only then, sometime afterwards). Until such a time occurs, *Fabiano Caruana: 60 Memorable Games* will help to fill in some of the gaps, albeit from a distance.

Sean Marsh



300 Most Important Chess Exercises
Thomas Engqvist, 412 pages, paperback
RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

Engqvist hopes you will study chess five times a week, but even just reading this new work from Batsford once a week is likely to help most players. The material is clearly designed to aid the hard-working club player, with the puzzles split into four blocks of 75: exercises covering positional ideas in the opening and middlegame; the endgame; tactical exercises in the opening and middlegame; and tactical endgames.



Chess Bootcamp: Beyond the Basics
Benjamin Katz, 352 pages, paperback
RRP £16.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £15.29**

Katz is an experienced coach and co-founder of the Growing Minds Chess Academy, which has been making waves in New York. He now sets out his training program in this new work for Everyman, which should be of interest to both coaches and the club player. The endgame is most certainly not neglected and neither is the importance of having fun and practical issues, such as knowing how to handle things when you get stuck. Katz then rounds off this interesting work by mapping out a basic repertoire for both White and Black.



She Plays to Win
Lorin D'Costa, 484 pages, paperback
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.55**

Those who've already read our tournament

coverage will be fully aware of how much Lorin D'Costa does to promote women's and girls' chess. He is also a highly successful coach in London and has now written a detailed and impressive work for Thinkers Publishing, from which readers of any gender should be inspired and learn plenty from. The 91 featured games take readers on a history tour of the women's world champions and other very notable female players, both around the world and in the UK. D'Costa then moves on to cover the best chess of some rising talents, chess streamers and even Beth Harmon. Notably he won't be taking a single penny for this book, with all his royalties going to the She Plays To Win charity.



**Top Choice Repertoire:
Play the French Defence Vol.1**

Rustam Kasimdzhanov, PC-DVD;
running time: 5 hours

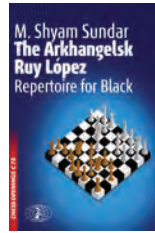
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

You may not associate the French with top-level chess, but Carlsen and Vachier-Lagrave have dabbled in it of late, while the opening has been part of Kasimdzhanov's repertoire throughout his career. After presenting three inspirational model games, Caruana's no.2 proceeds to map out a fairly detailed repertoire with 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♗f6, his main recommendations being the sharp 4 e5 ♗fd7 5 f4 c5 6 ♗f3 ♗c6 7 ♙e3 cxd4 8 ♗xd4 ♖b6 and Morozevich's old favourite 4 ♙g5 dxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♙e7 6 ♙xf6 gxf6.

Top Choice Repertoire: Play the French Defence Vol.2 (RRP £26.95, Subscribers £24.25) completes the Kasimdzhanov repertoire in a further five hours and 45 minutes of video. The Advance is met with the main line, 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♗c6 5 ♗f3 ♖b6, while against the Tarrasch Jonathan Levitt's old favourite 3 ♗d2 c5 4 exd5 ♖xd5 5 ♗g3 cxd4 6 ♙c4 ♖d6 is recommended.

Also recently arrived from Hamburg is *ChessBase Magazine 207* (PC-DVD; RRP £17.99, Subscribers £16.19), featuring Igor Stohl on the topical Harry Attack (1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 h4!), as well as annotations from Andrey Esipenko and Anish Giri. We were also very interested to see *Opening Encyclopaedia 2022* appear, which now contains some 7,347 opening surveys, 1,300 opening articles and 60 videos. Those who really like their theory may be pleased to know that this PC-DVD is also available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £89.95 (Subscribers –

£80.95), or £64.95 (Subscribers –£58.45) if you're upgrading from *Opening Encyclopaedia 2021*.



The Arkhangelsk Ruy Lopez

M. Shyam Sundar, 182 pages, hardback
RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

Indian Grandmaster Shyam Sundar has worked for Vishy Anand and here presents a dynamic repertoire for Black against the Ruy Lopez. He is fully aware of the need to present the key motifs, as well as of practical issues, meaning the top line of the engines is not always recommended. As such, a rather interesting repertoire has been mapped out, one which should cause even experienced 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♙b5 practitioners some problems after 3...a6 4 ♙a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 b5 6 ♙b3 ♙c5.

Also recently released by our friends in Belgrade is *Chess Informant 151 – Eternally Puzzled* (336 pages, paperback), which is available for £32.95 or £29.65 for Subscribers. Elshan Moradiabadi reports on the final leg of the FIDE Grand Prix in Berlin, Nigel Davies takes a detailed look at the 3...♖d6 Scandinavian, Ian Rogers recalls the 1992 Manila Olympiad, and all the leading games and novelties are presented in typically languageless fashion. If you prefer, it's possible to instead purchase this latest 'Informator' in CD format, for £19.95 or £17.95 for Subscribers.



**The Chess Scalpel:
32 Master Games Dissected**

Zenon Franco, 288 pages, paperback
RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.35**

Evidently Franco isn't just writing for his own publishing company, but also Thinkers Publishing. This is a workbook, along not dissimilar lines to our popular *How Good is Your Chess?* feature. Readers are invited to spend at least an hour and a half on each of the 32 games, regularly having to guess the next move. Points are available and every move is clearly explained in typical Franco fashion.

Also recently released by Thinkers is Boroljub Zlatanovic's *The Essence of Chess Strategy Volume 1* (528 pages, paperback, RRP £29.95, Subscribers £26.95), which is subtitled 'Strategic Elements'. There is plenty of good material within, on such subjects as the centre, good and bad pieces, and

exploiting open files.



The Smyslov Workbook

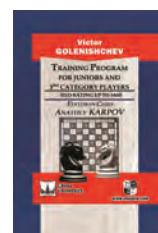
Cyrus Lakdawala & Carsten Hansen, 190 pages, paperback

RRP £21.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.79**

Designed to "improve your ability to find combinations, construct plans, and calculate long, forcing variations", publisher Hansen is joined by Lakdawala in this look at many of Smyslov's best games, tactics and endgames. Unsurprisingly the level of instruction is high and this work should appeal to all fans of both Lakdawala and the seventh world champion.

The two authors have also teamed up on *Magnus Carlsen's Norwegian Rat* (216 pages, paperback, RRP £18.99, Subscribers £17.09), which is part of Hansen's 'Opening Hacker Files'. And what is the Norwegian Rat? It's 1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗f6!?, intending 3 e5 ♗h5. Despite White's success in Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010, the opening is playable and certainly carries shock value.

Hansen has definitely been busy of late, also releasing *Catastrophes & Tactics in the Chess Opening Volume 2 Workbook: 1 d4 d5* (388 pages, paperback, RRP £18.99, Subscribers £17.09), which features over 600 positions to solve taken from miniatures after 1 d4 d5, as well as reprinting two of his classic, former Gambit works, *The Guide to the English Opening: 1...e5* (276 pages, paperback, RRP £18.99, Subscribers £17.09), and *The Symmetrical English* (276 pages, paperback, RRP £18.99, Subscribers £17.09).



Training Program For Juniors and Chess Players: 3rd Category (ELO up to 1400)

Victor Golenishchev, 188 pages, hardback
RRP £22.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.69**

This Russian Chess House production does what it says on the tin, as Golenishchev's famous training program continues to be translated into English and also updated with many modern examples. Golenishchev was a Soviet master and famous trainer, and this work, which is based around the material for 75 lessons, is likely to especially be of interest to those who coach young players.

