

ChessBase

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL CHESS



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2021 | NO. 199 | 19,95 EURO



17 years old, second place at the
Altibox Norway Chess: Alireza Firouzja
is already among the Top 20

TOP GRANDMASTERS ANNOTATE:

Duda, Edouard, Firouzja,
Giri, Nielsen, et al.

AVRO TOURNAMENT 1938 -

CLASH OF THE GENERATIONS

Retrospective + 18 newly annotated
Keres games

ALL IN ONE: SEMI-TARRASCH

Igor Stohl condenses a
trendy opening

LONDON SYSTEM - NO REST FOR THE Bf4

Alexey Kuzmin hits with the
active 5...Nh5!?

THE MODERN BENONI UNDER FIRE!

Patrick Zelbel presents a pointed
repertoire with 6.Nf3/7.Bg5



DVD with first class training material for
club players and professionals!

EDITORIAL

The new chess stars: Alireza Firouzja and Beth Harmon

Now the world and also the world of chess has been hit by the long-feared “second wave” of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many tournaments have been cancelled. Nevertheless, the Norway Chess Tournament could be staged in Stavanger. Magnus Carlsen showed that at present he is in top form be it online or at the wooden board and won the tournament.

But one of the young players pressed hard against the world champion for victory in the tournament – Alireza Firouzja. By far the world’s best young player (he turned 17 in the summer), he took second place and gained 20 Elo points in so doing. It is hardly fantastic to imagine that Firouzja will soon be playing for the world championship – if there are again going to be world championships.

The shine has actually been taken off his appearance by the successes of Beth Harmon. ChessBase users will not find her games in the Mega database, since we are talking about a virtual person, an invention of Walter Tevis in his 1983 novel “The Queen’s Gambit”. That novel has now been filmed as a Netflix mini-series and is beating all audience records. The story is set at the start of the 1960s and actually follows the rise of Bobby Fischer, except that in this case we are dealing with a woman. The actress Anya Taylor-Joy provides the face of the novel’s character Beth and with her performance manages to render visible the whole fascination of tournament chess. She is curious and ambitious, her face showing tension, triumph and disappointment. In the series the two authors, Scott Frank and Allan Scott, reveal the many facets of chess. In the final episode Beth Harmon travels to

Moscow in order to measure herself against the world champion in a tournament. She is accompanied by a US official who warns her about the Soviets and advises her not to speak with anyone. And what happens? She is welcomed with enthusiasm by the population and properly honoured by the Soviet players for her successes. That is precisely what chess is – a bridge between nations. And Beth Harmon is now the best-known woman chess player in the world.

The series offers some consolation to chess lovers for the lack of the many tournaments which have been cancelled: no candidates tournament, no chess olympiad, no world championship. Nevertheless, some online tournaments, but that is not the same thing. Young players have hardly any opportunity to gather practical experience and to develop.

Vladimir Kramnik recently gave an interview for Russia’s Sport Express and expressed the opinion that for young players now was the decisive time at which they had to be establishing the direction of their future career: not enjoying themselves on the internet and wasting time, but working seriously on their chess.

The new ChessBase 16 arrives just at the right moment for that. For the 2021 chess calendar Hartmut Metz started a survey and wanted to know: what has changed chess the most? For Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Judit Polgar and many others the answer was quite clear: ChessBase! The new version ChessBase 16 now even provides automatic opening repertoires. What is left other than individual work?

Your André Schulz

CHESSBASE MAGAZINE

CONTENT OF THE DVD

TOP TOURNAMENTS

Norway Chess 2020: Carlsen's run of 125 classical tournament games without defeat came to an end, but in Stavanger he was victorious, ahead of Firouzja and Aronian. Duda annotates his win against the world champion, Firouzja puts three of his games under the microscope.

AVRO 1938: This classic tournament constitutes the focal point for this issue. Our authors, in their various columns, put the games of Alekhine, Capablanca Euwe, Botvinnik, Fine, Flohr, Keres and Reshevsky under the microscope (see page 8). Plus 18 selected games of the tournament victor, Paul Keres, with analyses by Yannick Pelletier, Michal Krasenkow, Karsten Müller, Emanuel Berg, Igor Stohl, Evgeny Postny et al.

OPENING VIDEOS (see page 25)



Erwin l'Ami shows why of late the Philidor endgame has become more attractive for White. Daniel King takes a close look at a new version of the Milner-Barry Gambit with which Carlsen was successful against Harikrishna. And Mihail Marin picks up an idea of Paul Keres in the Leningrad Variation with 7...Nc6.

Erwin l'Ami: The Philidor endgame

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Bc4

Daniel King: French Advance Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.Bd3 cxd4 7.0-0 Bd7 8.Nbd2

Mihail Marin: Dutch Leningrad Variation

1.c4 f5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.Nc3 d6 6.d4 0-0 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Na5 9.Qa4

OPENINGS (see pages 12-19)

Zelbel: Modern Benoni with 7.Bg5



Matthias Blübaum puts pressure on the Modern Benoni with 6.Nf3/7.Bg5

Quintiliano: English 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6

Demuth: Caro-Kann 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 dxe4 4.Nxe4

Postny: Rossolimo 3.Bb5 e6 4.0-0 Nge7 5.d4 cxd4

Ris: Classical Sicilian with 6.Nd5!?

Srinath: Winawer (III) 6...Ne7 7.Qg4 Qc7 8.Qxg7

Szabo: King's Gambit with 3...Nf6



Ding Liren succeeded with 3...Nf6 against the world champion

Braun: Italian Moeller-Attack with 9.d5

Papp: Ruy Lopez Anti-Marshall 8.h3 Bb7 9.d3 d5!?



Ivan Sokolov was one of the first to use 9...d5 at Grandmaster level in 2007

Kuzmin: London System with the idea Nf6/Nh5

Kapnisis: Queen's Gambit Vienna Variation 5...b5

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

DVD COLUMNS

All in One

Anish Giri and Igor Stohl continue the new column started in CBM #198. On the program this time are the Sicilian Najdorf B90: 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Rg1 and the Semi-Tarrasch D41: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5 (see page 9).

Williams: Move by Move

At the time of the AVRO tournament of 1938 the world champion was Alexander Alekhine. Simon Williams puts on his training plan Alekhine's game against a predecessor on the chess throne, Jose Raul Capablanca.

Rogozenco: The Classic

The game Botvinnik-Capablanca from the AVRO tournament of 1938 is famous above all for the final combination. But Botvinnik's game plan has also long since been recognised as a strategic classic.

Marin: AVRO 1938 Strategy

At that time all the subtleties which accompany doubled pawn structures had not yet been recognised. Find the best moves which were overlooked by the finest connoisseurs of the day.

Reeh: "Tricky trades and king actions"

The tactics article contains 30 games with training questions, 20 from the Russian Higher League in Sochi, 9 from AVRO 1938, plus one from the German Bundesliga. Oliver Reeh once again recorded his four favourite combinations in interactive video format.

Müller: Endgame highlights, then and now

Karsten Müller has contributed four articles, with above all a collection of the high points of the AVRO tournament of 1938 and from Norway Chess 2020. Moreover, in "Recent pawn endings" the endgame expert from Hamburg presents several instructive examples and training tasks.

Knaak: Topical opening traps

In Rainer Knaak's article eight traps from recent tournament practice are put under the microscope (including three FritzTrainer videos).

BOOKLET

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| Magnus Carlsen beaten, but victorious | |



Alireza Firouzja (17) came second behind the world champion

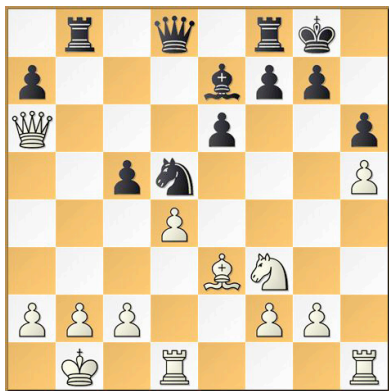
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TOP TOURNAMENT

NORWAY CHESS 2020

The 8th Altibox Norway Chess was a double-round-robin event, staged from October 5th to 16th in Stavanger. In view of the Corona virus, directly prior to the tournament the six participants - Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, Levon Aronian, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Alireza Firouzja and Arjan Tari - had undergone a couple of days of self-isolation to make over-the-board play possible.

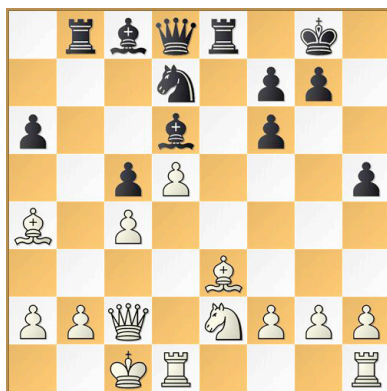
The scoring format was a bit unusual: three points were awarded for a victory in the classical game, and in case of a draw there was single Armageddon decider, netting the winner 1.5 points and the loser 1 point.



Round 1 saw two classical games being decided, with Firouzja scoring an impressive win over Duda. Attacking with the Caro-Kann! For his pawn Black has a strong initiative (see Duda, J - Firouzja, A 0-1, annotated by Romain Edouard).

Right from the beginning, there was a lot of change going on at the top. Caruana started with two wins, but on the fourth day was defeated by the world champion who thus took the lead himself.

Then came the notable round 5 ...



And yet another aggressive Caro-Kann - Black is going to sacrifice an exchange not on e3 but on a4!

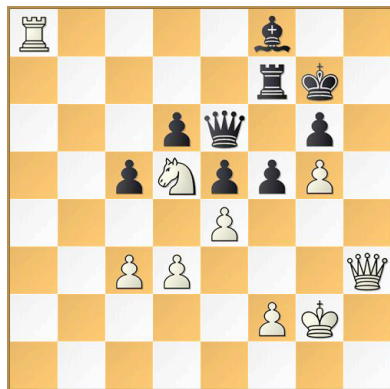
Duda, J - Carlsen, M 1-0 (extensively annotated by the winner), meant Magnus Carlsen's first loss after a streak of 125 games (or 801 days) in classical time control without defeat! The new leader was Aronian ("Not often that one doesn't make the top headlines beating the No. 2 in the world") after winning from Caruana. And the happy changing at the top continued. After round 6 (the "mirror" of the previous day, i.e. the same pairings with reversed colours) Firouzja was first, but soon after got overtaken by the world champion who crowned a positional masterpiece against his compatriot Tari (see Carlsen, M - Tari, A 1-0, annotated by Peter-Heine Nielsen) with a tactical finale.

See the following diagram.

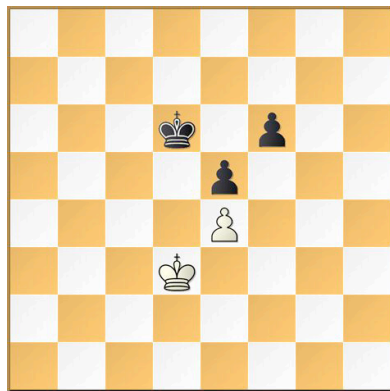
42.Re8! Qxe8 43.Qh6+ Kg8 44.Qxg6+ Kh8 45.Nf6 and Black resigned.

With Firouzja trailing Carlsen by only one

MERRY CHANGES OF LEADERSHIP WITH A CARLSEN-HAPPY-END



point, the race at the top was still a close affair, and who knows what would have happened if the youngster had not fatally blundered in their direct encounter in the penultimate round.



69.Kc3?? (69.Kd2! keeps the distant opposition and draws, see Karsten Müller's analysis of Firouzja,A - Carlsen,M 0-1 in his column "End-game highlights of Norway Chess 2020").

This three-pointer made the world champion the overall winner with one round to spare, rendering his second defeat in this tournament on the last day (Carlsen,M - Aronian,L 0-1, analysed by Michael Krasenkow) meaningless. Alireza Firouzja secured an excellent second

Norway Chess 2020

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Magnus Carlsen | 19,5 |
| 2. Alireza Firouzja | 18,5 |
| 3. Levon Aronian | 17,5 |
| 4. Fabiano Caruana | 15,5 |
| 5. Jan-Krzysztof Duda | 9,5 |
| 6. Aryan Tari | 3,5 |

place beating Duda (Firouzja,A - Duda,J 1-0), a game he has annotated himself and where he



surprised his opponent with the small but tricky novelty 14.Bc3!.



Alireza Firouzja enjoyed special observation in Stavanger

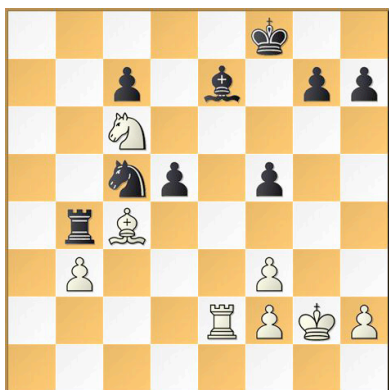
CBM SPECIAL

AVRO 1938

Review of one of the greatest tournaments in chess history

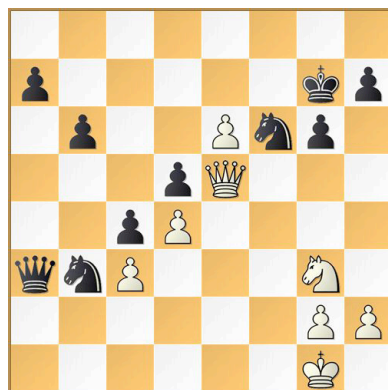
The AVRO tournament, staged from 6th to 27th of November 1938, saw the world's eight best players of that time fighting in a double-round-robin. With the reigning world champion and two ex-title holders - Alexander Alekhine, José Raúl Capablanca and Max Euwe - facing a bunch of aspiring young talents - Mikhail Botvinnik, Reuben Fine, Salo Flohr, Paul Keres and Samuel Reshevsky - the event was perceived by the public as a clash/change of generations and attracted a lot of attention.

Reuben Fine dominated the field from the start and after his victory over Alekhine in round six had a whopping 5/6. But on the next day the American was defeated by Paul Keres (see Renato Quintiliano's annotations in "My favourite game by Paul Keres" and also Karsten Müller's "Endgame Special").



Following the exchange sacrifice 29...dxc4! 30.Nxb4 cxb3, Black went on to win a fasci-

nating endgame. Fine remained half a point ahead of Keres until round 11 when he suffered yet another defeat, allowing the latter to draw level. The big highlight of that day, however, was Botvinnik's brilliant victory over Capablanca, culminating in a spectacular finishing combination.



White to play and win! The game is featured both in Dorian Rogozenko's "Classic" and in Oliver Reeh's "Tactics" column. On the last day, the duel between the two leaders ended in a short draw after 19 moves. The result of their direct encounter was to decide the overall outcome, and thus the Estonian Paul Keres was declared winner of the AVRO tournament 1938. Keres and Fine both scored 8.5/14; third was Botvinnik, a full point behind them.

On the DVD, Simon Williams invites you to replay the game Alekhine,A-Capablanca,J 1-0 in his interactive column "Move by Move".

ALL IN ONE

COMPACT KNOW-HOW

Anish Giri and Igor Stohl dissect two topical opening lines

In this issue of CBM, we have two prominent authors dissecting topical opening lines.

Anish Giri looks at the Sicilian Najdorf B90:

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Rg1.



With his last rook move, White prepares the advance g2-g4-g5 to chase away Black's king-side knight, hoping to reach a favourable version of the similar Najdorf line with 6.h3 e6 7.g4 or the original Keres Attack (5...e6 6.g4) respectively. After the sharpest reply 6...b5 (alternatively 6...Nc6, the standard 6...e5 7.Nb3 Be6 or "the 'funky' 6...h5!? not disliked by the engine", of course also analysed by Giri) the game saw 7.g4 Bb7 8.g5!? Nxe4 9.Nxe4 Bxe4 when White, having sacrificed his central e4-pawn, developed an initiative with 10.a4!?. Definitely "complicated stuff", as Anish Giri writes, and it's perhaps quite telling that even Magnus Carlsen lost his way in the jungle of possibilities and was crushed on the kingside within only 21 moves.

Involving the two greats mentioned above, **Igor Stohl's** object of investigation is the game Carlsen, M - Giri, A 1-0 (Chessable Masters 2020) which features the Semi-Tarrasch Defence D41: **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5.** Already from here, Stohl goes on to cover practically all alternative moves for both sides until reaching what might be called the starting point of the modern Semi-Tarrasch after **5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Bc4 Nd7 12.0-0 b6.**



Black has managed to trade off two sets of minor pieces which generally is in his favour. In the game, however, Carlsen's novelty **17.d5!?** was not designed to create a passer: **17...exd5** was followed by **18.e5 Ne4 19.Qe1** intending Nd4/f3, when White finally won in an impressive attack on the kingside. A strategic masterpiece by the world champion, extensively analysed by Igor Stohl - this is All in One at its best!

ANALYSIS

"4...Nf6!? WAS A REAL SHOCKER"

Jan-Krzysztof Duda analyses his victory over Magnus Carlsen

Jan-Krzysztof Duda – Magnus Carlsen
Norway Chess 2020

1.e4 The start of the tournament had been extremely bad for me, as I had scored 0.5 out of 4, and now had to meet Magnus two times in a row. Fortunately there was a free day in-between.

1...c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6!?
But this was a real shocker. I have always found it difficult to believe in this system, even though I have given it a try a few times myself.

5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5 That's the way they play these days, and it's the reason for the renaissance of this very variation.

10.Be3 Nd7 11.0-0-0 b5!?



This is the idea. Instead of the usual retreat,

Black aims for an instant counterattack

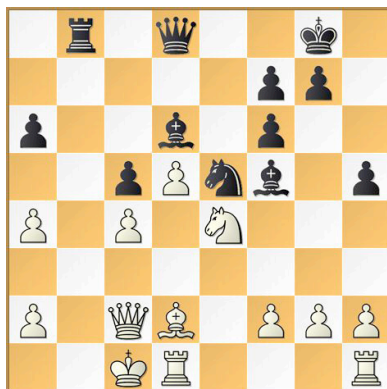
12.d5 c5 13.Bxb5 Rb8 14.c4 a6 14...Rxe3!?
is a very interesting idea I had seen in L'Ami's course before, and frankly speaking I was a bit surprised that Magnus didn't choose this.

15.Ba4 Re7 16.Ng3 Ne5 17.Ne4 17.Bd2!
seems to be better, not allowing the Rb4 idea as in the game.

17...Reb7 18.b3 Rb4! This surprised me, but in fact it's a brilliant idea, showing a good judgement by Magnus.

19.Bd2 19.Nxd6 Qxd6 is ok for Black.

19...Rxa4! 20.bxa4 Bf5



Black doesn't need to cash in immediately, he can rely on a long-term positional

"IT FELT GREAT TO BE THE ONE TO BREAK CARLSEN'S RECORD"

compensation here. Furthermore we were both approaching zeitnot, so basically it was getting random from now on.

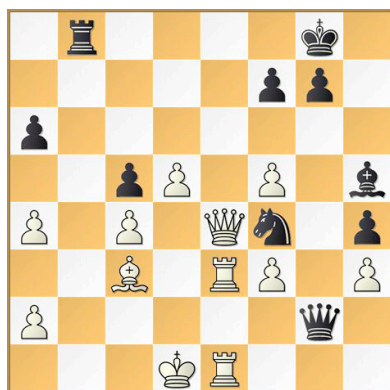
21.Rde1 h4 22.h3 Ng6 23.Re3 Nf4 24.g4 Bg6 25.Kd1 f5! Even though it's not good objectively, he had to do something.

26.Nxd6 Qxd6 27.gxf5 Bh5+ 28.f3 In computer language White is winning, but with so many targets on both flanks as well as shortage of time (only +10s increment), it's anything but easy to reduce Black's activity.

28...Qf6 29.Bc3?! 29.Rhe1 was perhaps more logical, in order to bring more toys to the party.

29...Qg5 30.Qe4? Objectively a poor move, however, it won the game pretty straightforwardly due to some lucky tactics in the game.

30...Qg2? The position is totally unclear after both 30...f6 (!) or 30...Kh7 (!)



31.Rhe1 I was lucky to have this move.
31...Qxa2? A tempting follow-up, but it's

even worse than the move before. 31...f6! would have been a real test.

32.Qc2! Now it's almost game over.

32...Qxc4 33.Re8+ Kh7!? 33...Rxe8 34.Rxe8+ Kh7 35.Rh8+! Kxh8 36.Bxg7+ must have been a tactic Magnus missed from afar.

34.Rxb8 Qxd5+ 35.Qd2!+- Bxf3+ 36.Kc1+- Qxf5 37.Re3 Ne2+ 38.Kb2 Nxc3 39.Qxc3 Qf4 40.Qd3+ 40.Qe5!+-

40...f5 41.Rf8 Qb4+ 42.Kc1 Be4 43.Qb3 Qd4 44.Qc3 Qd6 45.Rf7 Qg6 46.Rd7 Qg1+ 47.Kb2 c4 Magnus defends creatively, but the position is just too winable even for +10s increment.

48.Rxe4!? If you exchange something, you wouldn't blunder it later :)

48...fxe4 49.Rd4 Qf2+ 50.Qd2 c3+ 51.Kxc3 Qg3+ 52.Kb2 Qxh3 53.Rxe4 Qg3 54.Qd4 Qg2+ 55.Kc3 Qf3+ 56.Kb4 Qf8+ 57.Ka5 Qf5+ 58.Kxa6 g5 59.a5 h3 60.Re7+ Kg6 61.Qg7+ Kh5 62.Qh7+ Kg4 63.Re4+ 1-0

A nerve-wracking game, but I was on the happy side of it this time. It felt great to be the one to break Carlsen's record of not-losing in classical time control for 125 games and 801 days (or 802 nobody knows for sure) :)

1-0

You'll find the complete and much more detailed analysis by Jan-Krzysztof Duda on the DVD!

OPENINGS

7.Bg5 AGAINST MODERN BENONI

Patrick Zelbel presents a versatile weapon

Modern Benoni A61: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bg5



The Modern Benoni is one of the most active openings against 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 and has been in good shape lately. Players on the Black side found decent counter-chances against the Classical Line (7.Nd2 followed by 8.e4, 9.Be2, 10.0-0) and the Modern Main Line (7.h3 Bg7

8.e4 0-0 9.Bd3 b5!), so from a theoretical point they are fine here. The topical Bf4-system is a bit annoying for Black, but currently every second player who goes for the Modern Benoni will be prepared for it. So the strongest German chessplayer, GM Matthias Blübaum, looked for fresh ways against the Modern Benoni and explored the move 7.Bg5, also a favourite line of the famous GM Simen Agdestein, who has been a coach for many young talents - including Magnus Carlsen. Blübaum's recent games in 2019 and 2020 inspired me to take a close look at this surprise weapon.

The idea

The main point of this system is to get an improved version of the Classical main line against the Modern Benoni. We can compare our following theoretical lines with this opening sequence: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Bg7 8.e4 0-0 9.Be2 Re8 10.0-0 Nbd7 11.a4 Ne5, reaching one of the main battlegrounds of the Benoni. Here one try for White is the move 12.Ndb1!?, which can be explained with the limited prospects of our dark-squared-bishop. How great it would be if it were on g5 and we could go for a pawn march with f2-f4 and e4-e5? So playing **7.Bg5**, we try to get an extremely improved version of this standard line. The other side of the coin is that Black can challenge our bishop on g5 with ...h7-h6 and ...g6-g5 at some point. Then we have to allow its trade against the black knight, when, in return, will try to exploit the weakness of the f5-square with the knight tour Nf3-d2-c4-e3.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

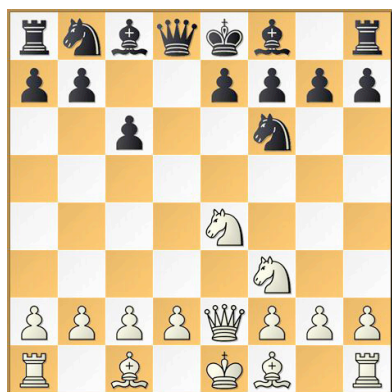


Matthias Blübaum - the German No. 1 - puts pressure on the Modern Benoni with 7.Bg5!

TWO KNIGHTS WITH 5.Qe2

Adrien Demuth shows a new way in the Caro-Kann

Caro-Kann B11: 1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Qe2



The Caro-Kann Defence is frequently seen among solid and positional Black players. It's often not to the taste of those who choose 1.e4 because they are looking for an attacking type of position. Recently, White came up with the Two Knights Variation 1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3 even at top level, while it was only considered a minor option before. This new status as a main line forced Black to find solutions. One of them is 3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 (against which White often transposes to the normal lines after 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.d4). But there is another interesting possibility, 5.Qe2, that we are going to discuss here.

So this is the starting position of this opening survey. White simply protects his knight, and he is not unhappy at having a centralised queen really early in the game.

We have four main possibilities for Black now:

A) A move from the b8-knight.

Unfortunately, the quite logical 5... Nd7 is happily met with 6.Nd6#. Instead, 5...Na6 seems to make more sense. After 6.d4 Qd5 7.Nc3 Qa5 the position looks a lot like a Scandinavian, where White has a strange queen on e2, but also the knight on a6 is quite misplaced.

Overall, it's not a problem for White to keep a slight advantage due to his centre.



This will be analysed in the game Ragger,M - Nisipeanu,L ½-½

B) 5... Bg4 - also a rather logical developing move, the bishop gets out before Black has to play ...e6. The best idea is to immediately challenge the bishop with 6.h3, forcing it either to trade or to go back to h5. And after 6...Bh5, the continuation 7.Nxf6+ gxf6 8.g3 has only been played once, in Vachier Lagrave,M - Shimanov,A 1-0, but I like it a lot for White!

C) In the same spirit, the move 5...Bf5 also has its followers. After 6.Nxf6+ gxf6 7.d3 there is a line that has been played a few times in high-level games going 7...Nd7 8.g3 Ne5 9.Nxe5 Qa5+ 10.Bd2 Qxe5. And now that Black has taken his piece back, we will discuss different way to play for White, all providing him with a slight edge, as in Schroeder,J - Wang,K 1-0.

D) The last option is also the main one:

6.Qxe4. Again, we have another crossroads: D1) 6...Be6 poses a few central threats, and the idea is also to develop the bishop while it's still possible. D2) 6...Nd7 - Black is obviously intending to gain a tempo on the exposed queen.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

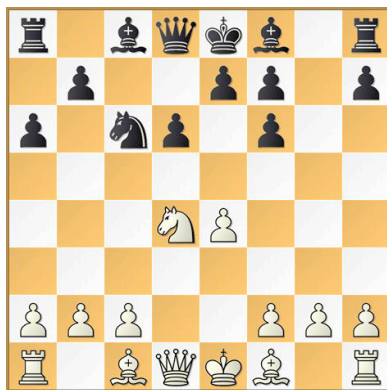
ONLY THE 14th CHOICE SO FAR!

Robert Ris investigates the tricky 6.Nd5!?

Classical Sicilian B56: 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Nd5



Nb5 anytime soon. In that case White gladly trades knights, since after 7.Nxf6+ gxf6



The Classical Variation (5...Nc6) has always been one of the more solid lines for Black in the Sicilian Defence. Personally, I have been struggling for years to find a nice variation against it which would match with my style and opening repertoire. In this opening article we will cover the very surprising move **6.Nd5!?**, which attracted my attention last year as it was played by some Dutch youngsters.

Little Trap

With his last move White leaves the pawn on e4 unprotected, but in various games I have seen Black players eagerly taking the pawn: **6...Nxe4?** 7.Nb5 when it's already about time to resign, in view of the knight fork on c7.

Being confronted with this rare move 6.Nd5, which according to the stats of the Online Database is White's 14th (!) choice ranked by popularity, it's very likely your opponent will be out of book as early as move 6!

Ignoring the knight move

A natural reaction is to simply ignore the knight on d5 and keep developing. For instance, a typical Sicilian move like **6...a6?!** seems to make sense, as it prevents White from playing

we reach a type of pawn structure which is familiar to most players with this opening in their repertoire. However, compared to the Main Lines where Bg5xf6 gxf6 is played, White still retains his dark-squared bishop on the board, which means that Black won't be able to compensate for the structural weaknesses by gaining control over the dark-squares with his bishop pair. Hence, in my opinion White is simply clearly better without risking anything.

A more common response is **6...e6**. After **7.Nxf6+ Qxf6** (7...gxf6 is similar to what we just discussed), White is recommended to proceed with **8.Nb5!** forcing the black queen to retreat to its starting square – **8...Qd8**.

White has an interesting choice to make here:

1) The immediate attempt to exploit the weakness on d6 with **9.Bf4** has mainly been met by **9...e5**. The ensuing structures with a hole on d5 are optically nice for White, and perhaps offer him a slight edge, but Black is very solid anyway. .

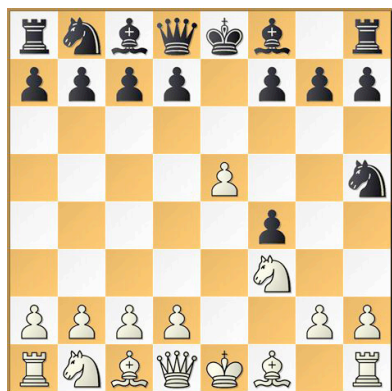
2) Personally I prefer to opt for a Hedgehog structure starting with **9.c4**.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

3...Nf6 VS. THE KING'S GAMBIT

Krisztian Szabo provides an update on the Schallop Defence

King's Gambit C34: 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e5 Nh5



The Schallop Defence is introduced by 3...Nf6. Unlike the more popular 3...g5, this choice doesn't weaken the kingside. Black makes a natural developing knight move instead, putting immediate pressure on the pawn on e4. Following the main continuation 4.e5 Nh5, his goal will be to show that a knight on the rim is not always dim. For the moment this piece indeed is safe enough on h5, and the f4-pawn will certainly be grateful for the support. On the other hand, even if the knight remains tactically safe for many moves to come, there is a danger that it could become sidelined in the event that a battle erupts in the centre.

From the diagram position above, I will have a look at four continuations for White:

A) 5.Bc4?!, B) 5.d4, C) Be2 and D) 5.Qe2 (Carlsen's choice!).

A) 5.Bc4?!

A typical move in all variations of the King's Gambit, but here it is outright bad due to the following reply: 5...d5 6.Be2 g5. This black move is less designed to protect the f4-pawn, but rather to create the threat ...g4. 7.0-0 g4 8.Ne1 Rg8. At first sight this looks strange because Black doesn't continue his development,

but he has to back up the g4-pawn. White is not well mobilised either, the centre is closed, so he doesn't have any attack. 9.d4 Nc6 10.Bb5 Qh4 with a promising position for Black, see Gashimov,V - Graf,A 0-1.



Ding Liren succeeded with 3...Nf6 against Carlsen

B) 5.d4

The most common move. 5...d6 6.Qe2 d5.

Black is happy to lose a tempo as the white queen is worse on e2 than on d1. 7.c4. This position has been recommended as good for White by some sources, but I don't believe it. 7...dxc4!. Continuing to play on the misplaced queen, which must now perform the recapturing task that 'rightfully' belongs to the f1-bishop. 8.Qxc4 c6 9.Nc3 Be6 10.Qd3 Na6 11.a3 Nc7 12.Be2 h6 13.Ne4 Nd5. Black is a pawn up, and while White has some compensation for it, it's not enough, see Milde,L - Hoexter,H 1/2.

C) 5.Be2

White's most accurate continuation. The immediate bishop move eyes the knight and prepares to castle. 5...d6. This time we see Black liquidating the centre instead of blocking it. In an ideal case White will win back the f4-pawn and be left with some kind of positional advantage based on his extra central pawn and the open f-file,

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

THE ITALIAN KILLER IS BACK!

Christian Braun shows a new idea in the Moeller Attack

Italian Moeller Attack C54: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Nxe4 8.0-0 Bxc3 9.d5!



In my article I would like to present you a new idea in the Classical Italian with c3-d4, to be more precise, in the Moeller Attack. This once popular "Italian killer" was considered more or less refuted by Black, but now I found a way to reanimate it!

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Before coming to Black's choices in the diagram above, we have to deal with a deviation for him one move earlier:

A) 8...Nxc3 (9.bxc3): Now 9...Be7? is already a grave mistake, allowing White to win by 10.d5! followed by 11.d6!, see Bartel, M - Polkowski, P 1-0. This d5-move is a very important one in the Classical Italian. White should usually prevent Black from playing ...d5, stabilising him in the centre. In turn, if White manages to get in d4-d5 himself (yep - the Moeller Attack!), this tends to grant him very active play - but in this line Black is even plain lost. By the way, note that in the diagram 9...Bxc3? is also bad due to the typical 10.Ba3!+- Having said that, Black's only move here is 9...d5!. 8...Nxc3 is often called a mistake, but in fact 9...d5! makes this continuation playable. To be honest, it's a very rare choice by Black. White has three interesting options here, 10.Re1+, 10.cxb4!? and 10.Bb5!?. In the game Boricsev, O - Sevostianov, P ½-½ I will show you how he can create the most problems for Black in this line.

So, once more back to our first diagram: Here Black can choose between B) 9...Ne5 and the main continuation C) 9...Bf6.

B) 9...Ne5

Black goes old-school – according to the Mega Database, this variation was first played in the game Greco, G - NN 1-0, 1620! After 10.bxc3 Nxc4 Black is temporarily a piece up, but now comes 11.Qd4 attacking both knights and g7. Now Black has the choice between giving the piece back (which is the best thing to do) or defending it (here White is always clearly better!). So, 11...0-0 12.Qxe4 Nd6 13.Qf4. Black has problems to mobilise his Bc8. White enjoys a space advantage and is better developed. He plans to pin the Nd6 with Ba3, threatening to trade ruining the enemy pawn structure.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

MARSHALL FOREVER!

Petra Papp relishes 8.h3 Bb7 9.d3 d5!?

Ruy Lopez Anti-Marshall C88: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.h3 Bb7 9.d3 d5!?**



After 1.e4, the most solid reply for Black is the symmetrical 1...e5, having the Ruy Lopez in his repertoire, of course. It is very difficult to prove any advantage, even in high-class play, against the Berlin Wall and the Marshall Gambit. In this article we will have a look at one of these lines where White, after 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0, tries to avoid the original Marshall (8.c3 d5) and continues 8.h3 Bb7 9.d3 which is very popular nowadays. However, Black can play 9...d5!? anyway, again in the spirit of the Marshall, i.e. he is ready to sacrifice a pawn for the initiative.

The Super-GMs Ding Liren and Levon Aronian have this in their main repertoire, while World Champion Magnus Carlsen has employed it few times as well. Black's plan is easy: active play based on using the light-squared bishop b7 on the long diagonal!

In the above diagram White usually takes on d5. After 10.Nbd2 or 10.Nc3 Black can simplify the position with 10...dxe4, often getting a slight advantage. See the detailed analysis in Tazbir,M - Sevan,S 1/2. So, **10.exd5 Nxd5**. White's main continuation in this position is accepting the

pawn sacrifice with C) 11.Nxe5, but apart from this he has two other logical moves:

A) 11.a4 The advance a2-a4 is always normal in the Ruy Lopez. White undermines the b5-pawn, while clearing the a2-square as a possible retreat for the bishop. **11...Nd4!** Black now wants to take on b3, opens the a8-h1 diagonal and frees the path of the c-pawn. **12.Nbd2 Nxb3 13.Nxb3 f6!** The most solid move.

14.Na5! This is the critical position of the line. Black should be precise here and use some tactical opportunities. **14...Qc8!** A very important defensive move, as in some lines the queen on b7 will be well placed. See Hasselmeyer,A - Kamody,M 1/2.



Ivan Soklov was one of the first to use 9 ... d5 at Grandmaster level in 2007

B) 11.Nbd2 The most serious alternative if White does not want to take the e5-pawn.

11...Qd7! I like this very much: Black leaves the e5-pawn undefended, and rather plays a developing move which connects the rooks. Now the way splits for White: **B1) 12.a4 f6!** Eventually Black defends the e5-pawn and prepares ...Na5. **B2) 12.Nf1 Bc5!** This is almost always played. Black leaves the e5-pawn hanging and goes for activity. **13.Ng3 Rae8** Having defended e5, Black's position is easier to play. The plan is ...Kh8 and then ...f6 or ...f5.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

ACTIVE VS. THE LONDON SYSTEM

Alexey Kuzmin examines Black's idea Nf6-h5

London System D02: **1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.e3 c5 4.Nf3/c3**



The question as to how in the London System Black can bring about a complicated system which would give him realistic chances of confusing and outplaying his opponent is of great importance for many players. The original plan with the early sortie Nf6-h5 represents an attempt to answer that question.

Our first starting sequence goes

1) 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.e3 c5 4.Nf3 Nc6

Here there are two continuations in the spirit of the London System: A) 5.c3 and B) 5.Nbd2.

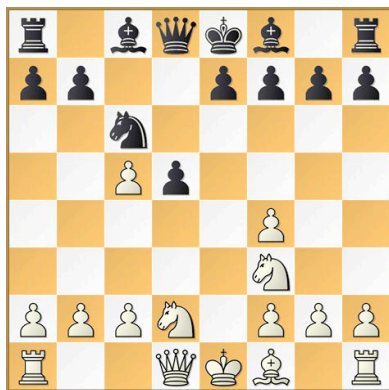
A) 5.c3 Nh5

Here this idea works particularly well. None of the possible bishop moves (6.Be5, 6.Bg5, 6.Bg3) causes Black any problems - see the annotations to the following game. The principled reply is 6.dxc5 Nxf4 7.exf4 e6 8.b4 as in Laznicka, V - Sorm, D 1-0, Pardubice 2020. But then Black either wins the pawn back and is left with a good game or else he obtains sufficient compensation in return for it.

B) 5.Nbd2

This move order was employed this year, e.g. by Carlsen, Grischuk and Aronian. In a certain sense it is aimed against 5...Nh5. **5...Nh5!?**

Here this move is somewhat risky. But if in the opening Black is aiming for a complex position with real counterplay, he must also be prepared to incur some risk – the only important thing is to correctly evaluate just how high it is. **6.dxc5** As is the case after 5.c3 Nh5 too, the moves of the white bishop also cause no problems, only 6.Be5 requires a precise reaction. For the specifics see Tang, A - Sarkar, J ½-½, Reykjavik 2019. **6...Nxf4 7.exf4**



Now Black has two options for generating counterplay. The consequences of **7...Qa5** are considered in the game Carlsen, M - Caruana, F 1-0, Lichess.org INT 2020. As for **7...g6** see Firouzja, A - Dubov, D ½-½, Wijk aan Zee 2020.

2) 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.e3 c5 4.c3

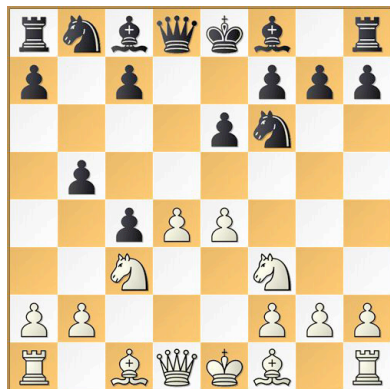
In practice, especially in less prominent tournaments, White often delays the development of his king's knight. This move order allows him to meet the Qd8-b6 continuation with Qd1-b3 and in addition excludes the possibility of Nf6-h5. But on the other hand this delaying the development of his kingside also has its disadvantages. **4...Nc6 5.Nd2 Bf5** Here White has two options available to him, but neither promised justified hopes of obtaining the initiative: **6.Ng3 Qb6!?** or **6.Qb3 Qc8**.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

DYNAMICS AT ITS BEST

Spyridon Kapnisis checks out 5...b5!? in the Vienna Variation

Queen's Gambit Accepted D24: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.e4 b5!?



This is an interesting sideline to the main move 5...Bb4. Black tries to complicate matters from the very beginning, and it's probably the most dynamic option for him to play in the Queen's Gambit Declined. The fact that it has been tried occasionally by Caruana and Duda proves that White shouldn't underestimate matters and prepare seriously against it.

Apart from these two mentioned, almost all strong juniors (Xiong, Maghsoodloo, Sarana, Esipenko to name a few) have included this line in their Black repertoire. Black's main idea is to force 6.e5 immediately, while taking on b5 will cost White a couple of important tempi. Black gets active piece play which often compensates for losing the weak c4-pawn.

Let's start by exploring White's options. 6.e5 is almost the automatic response. After 6...Nd5 7.Nxb5 Nb6 White has three ways to go: 1) 8.Bg5, 2) 8.a4 and the main line 3) 8.Be2.

1) 8.Bg5 – In the game Erenberg, A - Anton Guijarro, D 0-1 Black didn't face any problems and soon got the initiative and an easy win. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops is probably in Black's favour since he gets the e7-square for his pieces.

2) 8.a4 – This is a better try than 8.Bg5 and quite interesting in my opinion. White wants to force ...a5 so that Black will not be able to castle long, while he himself can use the b5-square for his knight.

3) 8.Be2 – The main line. After 8...Nc6 9.0-0 Be7 White can choose between a) 10.Be3 and b) 10.Qd2.

You'll find the complete article on the DVD!

Solutions to the combinations

30. Rxd5+! exd5 31. Qh3+ +-
- 1.Qxg6+! Kxg6 2.R1f6+ Kh5 3.Rf5+ Kg6 4.R7f6+ Kh7 5.Rh5+ Kg7 6.Rg5+ Kh7 7.Bf5#
- 30.Be4+! Kh8 31.Ng6+ Kh7 32.Ne7+ 1-0
31. Qe8+ Kh7 32. Qe4+! Kg8 33.Qg6 +-
- 23.Qa3! Rb6 24.Bxh7+ Kxh7 25.Qxf8 +-
- 23.Bh6! Rxg3 24.fxg3! Qc5+ 25.Kh2 +-
- 31...Rxh2! 32.Qxd2 Rxg2+ 33.Kh1 Rh6+
- 43...h4 44.Kxh4 Rg2 45.f4 Kh7 46.Ne4 dxe4 47.Ra5 Bg5+ 48.fxg5 fxg5+ 49.Kh5 Bg6#
- 26.Ne5! Rxf6 27.Rxf6! Qxf6 28.Nd7 Qf5 29.Qg6+ Qxg6 30.hxg6+ Kxg6 31.Nxb8 +-

Strategy solutions

- 20...Qg6 playing for the light squares
- 21...Nd7 Black must transfer his knight to c5
- 13...b5! Black clears space for his pieces and uses the knights on their actual squares
- 16.bxc5 would have cast serious doubt over Keres' last move
- 11...Nxe5 Only move to survive
- 15.Qd2! Develop the queen, connect the rooks!
- 16...e5! The clearest way to equality
- 15.h3! This intermediate move is the strongest
- 17.h3 It would have been very useful to prevent the bishop's return onto its initial diagonal

Endgame solutions

- 1...Kq7! 2.Rh5 Kg6! 3.Ra5 Nb3+ +-
- 61.Kg5! Kf7 (61... Rh8 62. Kg6) 62.Rxb2 1-0
- 65.Qh8! g5 66.Qf8+ Kg6 67.h5+ +-
- 56...g5! 57.fxg5 f4 58.exf4 e3 59.g6 Ke6 60.f5+ Kf6 61.Kxb3 e2 62.Kc2 e1=Q 0-1
- 104.Kh2! h4 105.g3! h3 106.Rc5+ Kd7 =
- 56.Bxb6! Nxb6 57. Ka5 Nd7 58.Kxa6 Ke8 +-
- 53.Kd2! Ra1 54.c5 Ra2+ 55.Bc2 Ra3 56.g7 +-
50. Qf7 Rb8! 51.Qa7 Rb6 52.Qf7 Ne7! 53.Qxe7 b2 54.Qf7 b1=Q +-
- 57...Kc7! 58.Kd2 Kb6 59. Kc3 Kb5 60.Kb3 Nd3 61.Kc3 Nf2 62.d5 c5 63.e5 Ng4 +-

STRATEGY



1. Reshevsky - Alekhine

How should Black handle this very tense position?



2. Botvinnik - Keres

Can you help Keres the way he helped himself?



3. Reshevsky - Keres

Which is Black's best chance for equality?



4. Euwe - Keres

White has a possibility to obtain a clear advantage. Which?



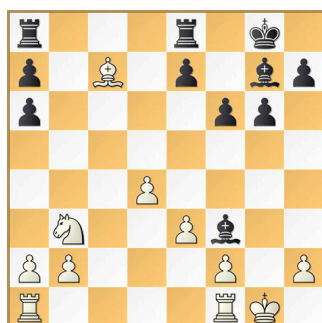
5. Fine - Capablanca

Black's approach now required radical measures



6. Alekhine - Keres

Try to think of Alekhine in his best days - what would you play?



7. Flohr - Botvinnik

Which is the best plan for Black?



8. Euwe - Flohr

What should do White about the queenside tension?

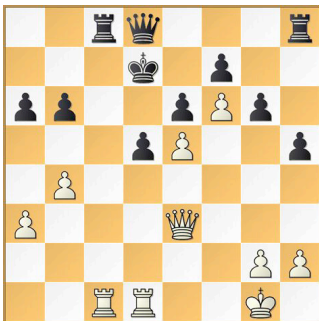


9. Reshevsky - Euwe

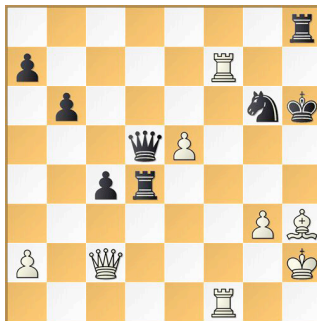
Which should be the highest priority for White?

Solutions on page 19. Mihail Marin's article on the DVD includes many more training tasks and a video!

TACTICS



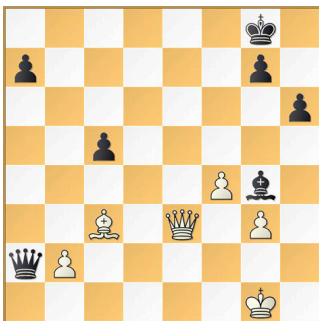
1. Bodnaruk - Solozhenkina
Why was 29...Rc8?? a blunder?



2. Beth Harmon - Beltik
How did Beth ("The Queen's Gambit") finish off her opponent?



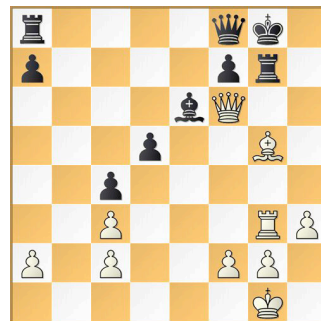
3. Euwe - Flohr
How did Euwe finish as White?



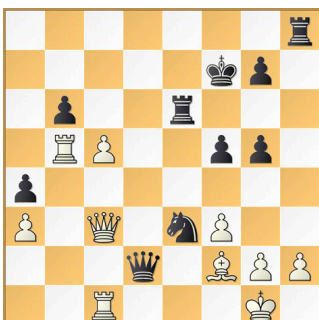
4. Rozum - Nesterov
How would you punish Black's ...Qxa2??



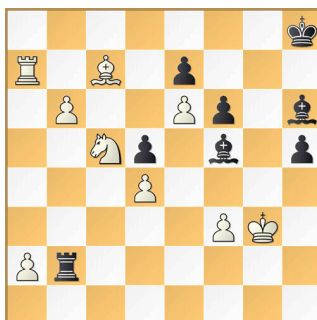
5. Mukhina - Mironenko
How can White win material here?



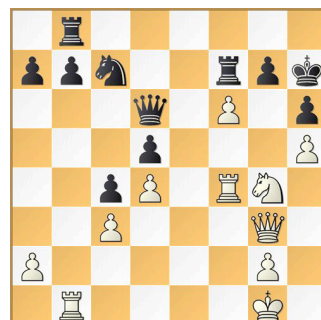
6. Lugoyskoy - Kardashevskiy
How can White achieve success?



7. Van Wely - Rapport
Black to play and win



8. Belenkaya - Kovalevskaya
Black can do nothing against the passer - or can he?



9. Paravyan - Gaifullin
How does White win by force?

Solutions on page 19. Oliver Reeh's article on the DVD contains 30 games with many training tasks!

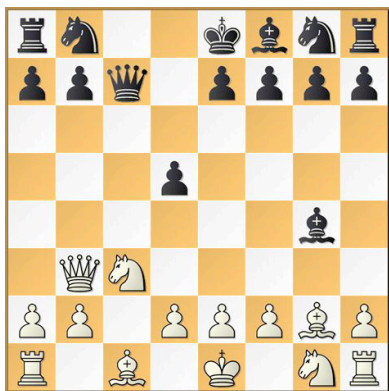
OPENING TRAPS

LURKING FOR THE NORMAL MOVE

Rainer Knaak presents a selection from his column

Grob's Attack A00

1.g4 d5 2.Bg2 Bxg4 3.c4 c6 4.Qb3 Qc7 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.Nc3



Black can do better on moves four and five (4...e6! or 5...e5), but the moves from the game occur frequently in practice. From the diagram 6...e6?? is the most frequently played move (7.Qa4+) and 6...Nf6? 7.Nxd5 Nxd5 8.Bxd5

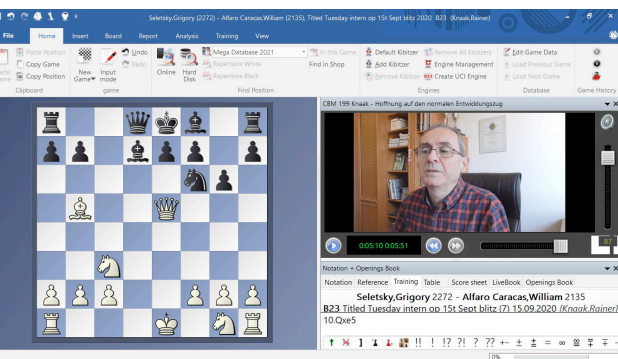
also leads to a winning position for White on account of the double attack on b7 and f7. Black has to play 6...Nc6 with a roughly level game, e.g. after 7.Nxd5 Qd7 8.Qa4.

Sicilian B21

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.Nf3 e5



First playing 2.d4 to fake a Morra Gambit, then playing 3.Nf3 – what is the point of that? Since on move three Black can play anything which would also be possible after 2.Nf3. But he still has the additional option of 3...e5 (since the pawn on e5 is poisoned on account of 4...Qa5+), which hangs on to the extra pawn. But that was just what White was hoping for. Since he then plays 4.c3! and 4...dxc3?! then finally falls into the trap; after 5.Nxc3 White has more than just compensation for the pawn. Anyone who is out for a brawl after the correct 4...Nc6, can play 5.Bc4 Nf6 6.Ng5 d5 7.exd5 Nxd5 8.Nxf7!? Kxf7 9.Qf3+ Ke6 10.a4! – with an objectively level position and thus a manageable risk.

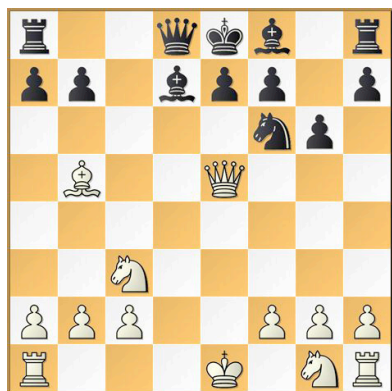


On the DVD Rainer Knaak presents three of his opening traps in video format

GROB'S ATTACK, SICILIAN, FOUR KNIGHTS GAME, CARO-KANN ETC.

Sicilian B23

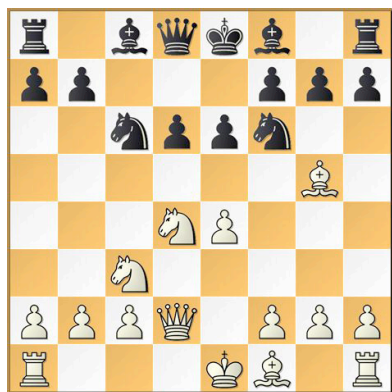
1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.d3 g6 4.Be3 d6 5.d4 cxd4
6.Bxd4 Nxd4 7.Qxd4 Nf6 8.e5 dxe5 9.Bb5+
Bd7 10.Qxe5



After 3...g6 has been played, the critical position in the diagram is reached almost by force and then White is hoping that Black will continue his development with the "obvious" 10...Bg7?. White then wins a piece with 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.Bxd7 Nxd7 13.Qb5. So Black should play 10...Bc6 or 10...a6.

Sicilian B66

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3
d6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2

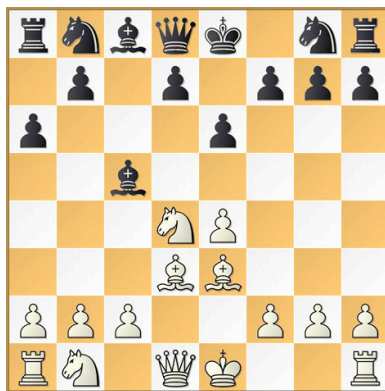


Here there are two possible ways of playing

...h6. The immediate 7...h6 is a trap, since 8.Bh4? is met with 8...Nxe4!. But 8.Bxf6! gxf6 brings White an advantage. First 7...a6 8.0-0-0 and then 8...h6 is on the other hand theory. Once again 9.Bh4 is not the best on account of 9...Nxe4! (although 10.Qf4! is playable); this time 9.Bxf6 is met with 9...Qxf6!.

Sicilian B42

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3
Bc5 6.Be3



Clearly the main move is 6.Nb3. If Black thought that 6.Be3 had to be refuted by the double attack 6...Qb6, then he would have fallen into a trap. After 7.c3! Qxb2 8.Nd2 Black finds it difficult to complete his development, and 8...Qxc3? 9.Rc1! Qxd3 10.Rxc5 Nc6 11.Qc1! leads to a winning position for White.

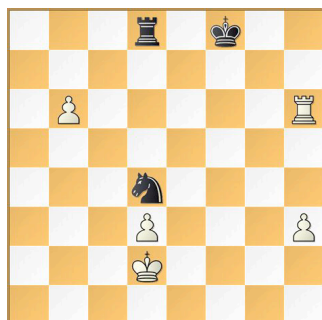
Four Knights Game C48

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Nd4 5.Ba4
Bc5

Take on e5 immediately or first castle? A recent game continued 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nxe5? and White had already fallen into the trap. After 7...d6 8.Nd3 Bg4 9.Qe1 the moves 9...Nf3+! already lead to a winning position for Black.

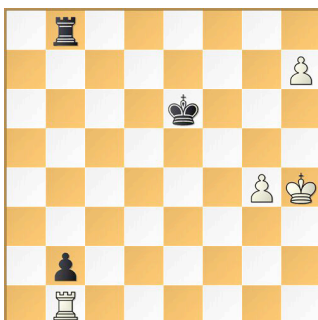
The complete article with all eight traps, analyses and videos can be found on the DVD.

ENDGAME



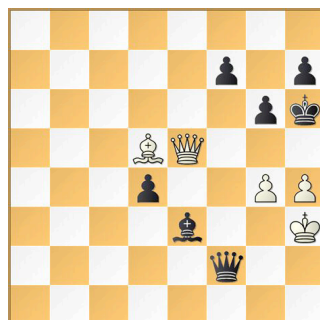
1. Townes - Harmon

How did Beth Harmon punish White's Rxh6??



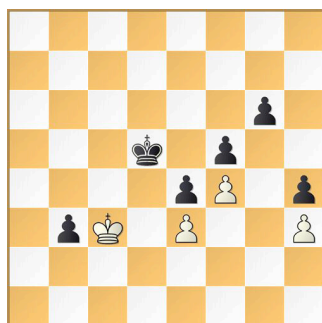
2. Fernandez Lledo - Domingo N.

Is it better to put the King ahead of the pawn?



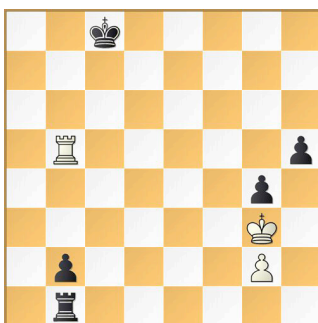
3. Blohberger - Donchenko

How did White strike first?



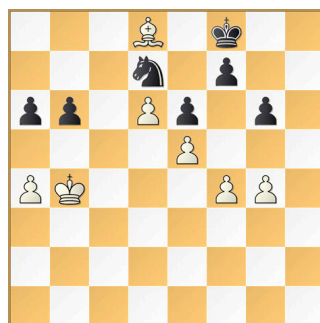
4. Pham - Khademalsharieh

How did Black get started?



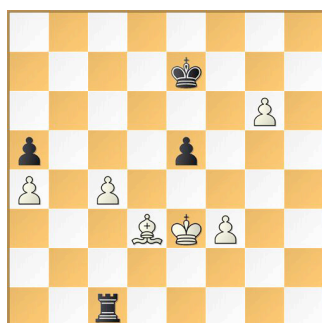
5. Budagova - Abramkina

Where should the white king hide?



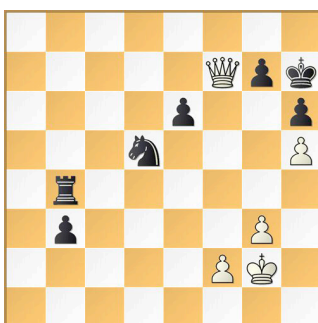
6. Paramzina - Fedorova

How did White storm the fortress?



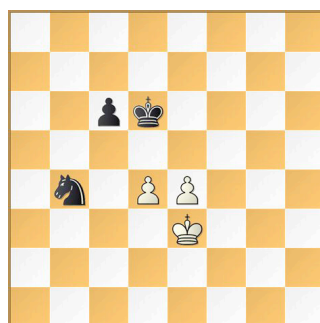
7. Amin - Seel

How did white light his passed pawn rockets?



8. Vogel - Sarin

Black to play and win



9. Gines Esteo - Yuffa

Which route should the black king choose?

Solutions on page 19. Don't miss Karsten Müller's four endgame articles on the DVD!

OPENING VIDEOS

Daniel King: French Advance Variation (Milner-Barry)



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6
6.Bd3 cxd4 7.0-0 Bd7 8.Nbd2

A game by the world champion is once again a starting point for Daniel King's video article. In the Milner-Barry-Gambit White plays 7.cxd4 Bd7 and sacrifices the pawn with 8.0-0. Against Harikrishna, on the other hand, Magnus Carlsen played the immediate 7.0-0. "Dangerous!", says Daniel King and thus also speaks of an "improved Milner-Barry Gambit". After 7...Bd7 8.Nbd2 White gets good compensation for the pawn. In addition, Black is immediately in danger of going wrong, like, e.g., the Indian GM did with 8...Rc8 9.Nb3 dxc3 10.bxc3 Qc7 11.Re1 Ne7 12.h4!

Erwin I'Ami: The Philidor endgame



1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Qxd8
Kxd8 6.Bc4

In the Philidor Defence White can go directly into the endgame or a queenless middlegame. That does not sit well

with most 1.e4-players. Erwin I'Ami demonstrates in his video, however, that the position also remains full of life even after the exchange of queens. He explains, e.g., why after 6.Bc4 Black should not play the traditional 6...Be6 (White obtains a very promising position after 7.f3 Bd6 8.Nh3 followed by the manoeuvre Nh3-f2-d3). After 6...Bb4 too, White can lay claim to a slight but lasting advantage after 7.Bxf7 Nxe4 8.Ne2. Erwin I'Ami considers the critical continuation to be 6...Ke8, and here his recommendation is to immediately exert pressure on the black position with 7.f4.

Mihail Marin: Dutch Leningrad Variation



1.c4 f5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.Nc3 d6
6.d4 0-0 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Na5 9.Qa4

Mihail Marin's video links to this issue's special theme: it is about an idea of Paul Keres, the victor in the AVRO Tournament of 1938, which he introduced in 1952 against the Dutch Defence. At that time a group of players from Leningrad were developing a new system. Against Keres Viktor Korchnoi played 7...Nc6, a thoroughly modern variation at the time. The Estonian grandmaster replied with the surprising 9.Qa4 and won quickly. 7 ... Nc6 never completely went out of fashion and is even today an occasional guest at grandmaster level. But the challenge linked to Keres' idea has never been properly solved.