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Chess



Over 20,000 Attended as the UK's Largest Chess Event Returned to Trafalgar Square in July

ISSN 0964-6221



Nervy Norway - Simon Williams was ringside at a dramatic Norway Chess



Relevant Simuls - Ben Graff took part as Kenilworth hosted Michael Adams



Perfect Prep - Junior Tay on the delight of executing the perfect ambush

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
Proof readers: Adi Shylaraj and Timothy Johnson

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Competing with the Greats

WIM Natasha Regan reveals her experience of the World Rapid and Blitz Teams



When the announcement came that London would host the 3rd FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Team Championships, I knew this was the kind of chess event you don't just watch – you join. That's how the 'Sassy Seniors' were born.

We were a group of seasoned players, with one conspicuous exception, who banded together not just to compete, but to embrace the chaos, joy, and occasional absurdity of playing against some of the world's best at lightning speed. I came up with the team name – a cheeky nod to our, shall we say, chess maturity – and knew I'd struck gold when the arbiter greeted us each day with a grin and a now customary "Great team name!".

We even had uniforms, which made the whole experience feel that much more professional. Our logo – a knight in shades – was designed by Steve Dishman with a little help from ChatGPT. We looked the part, and in our own way, we played it too.

Fun with Teeth

Each team was required to field at least one female player and one player rated under 2000 in every round. In theory, this would level the playing field. In reality, some of those 'recreational' players were ferocious – I heard whispers of Chess.com ratings brushing 2900, and many were highly talented juniors whose FIDE ratings hadn't caught up with their blitz strength. There were some very sharp teeth indeed, lying in store for the innocent or other sharks.

This added an unpredictable edge to every match. You could be up against a grandmaster one round and a 10-year-old tactical prodigy the next – and both games required maximum respect.

The Draw of a Lifetime

In round one of the rapid, held at the Novotel in Hammersmith, fortune gave us the ultimate welcome gift: a match against the mighty WR Chess team, a super-squad



Sassy Seniors take on the might of WR Chess, with Jonathan Parker tackling Maxime Vachier-Lagrave's Queen's Indian, while Rajko Vujatovic was up against Jan-Krzysztof Duda.

featuring the likes of Alireza Firouzja, Hikaru Nakamura, Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Hou Yifan. One of our players, Rajko Vujatovic, took one look at his pairing against Duda and said, "That alone was worth the entry fee." He wasn't wrong. Rajko also made sure that he clocked up the celeb handshakes, by shaking hands with not just his opponent, but their five team-mates in each match.

I personally had the unexpected honour and challenge of facing former women's world champion Hou Yifan. There's nothing quite like shaking hands with a legend across a board in a real tournament setting. You're excited, terrified, and determined not to blunder in the first five moves – in that order.

The Sassy Lineup

Despite our team name, not all of us were in our golden years. Dildarav Lishoy Gengis Paratazham – our surprise weapon – may not have looked intimidating, but his deep and patient thinking style left quite a few opponents scratching their heads. Remarkably, he didn't lose a single game until the very final round.

We also had two GMs on board for the rapid section: Matt Turner and Jonathan

Parker. Having them on the team gave us both a competitive edge and street cred – even though Jonathan was called away mid-tournament to Korea by a major client, and ended up cheering us on from afar during the blitz.

As captain, my role was not only to play and motivate, but to stay on top of administrative details. Chief among them: submitting our board order on time every round. It's amazing how much adrenaline you can burn just trying to enter a team list before the clock runs out.

Chess Celebs and Casual Moments

The real delight of the event was rubbing shoulders – quite literally – with the titans of the game. One of the first messages in our team chat set the tone: "For anyone who arrives early, I'm in the lounge – Vishy on the next table." Casual sightings of Anand, Navara, Kosteniuk and Aronian were commonplace. And while the chess was intense, there was also something gloriously human about seeing such players chatting, laughing and relaxing between rounds, just like the rest of us.



WR Chess unsurprisingly proved popular with the crowd. Here we see them tackling German and Friends with Alireza Firouzja on board one.

Juniors Shining Bright

It was inspiring to see so many young English talents stepping up on this global stage. Aaravamudhan Balaji impressed for the Wood Green Youth team, while Supratit Banerjee showed real maturity and flair playing for the English Knightmares. And then there was Bodhana Sivanandan, whose blitz performance for e-Therapeutics turned heads. Gaining 75 FIDE blitz rating points in one weekend? Fearsome stuff.

Blitz Battles and Malcolm's Mates

One of our blitz encounters that gave us the most excitement was against Malcolm's Mates – a team packed with top English talent including Mickey Adams, Nikita Vitiugov, Gawain Jones and Luke McShane.

I should acknowledge that behind the scenes, the entire event was made possible thanks to the vision and drive of Malcolm Pein, who worked tirelessly to bring the World Rapid and Blitz Teams to London. His efforts – allied to all the logistics worked and carried out so well by his team from Baker Street – gave players from across the rating spectrum a rare and exciting stage on which to compete.

We certainly enjoyed our day of blitz, even if we were never going to qualify for the second day and knockout stage. Rajko was really chuffed to get a draw with Le Quang Liem, although I think he enjoyed the moment even more when Anish Giri told him that "I have your socks at my house!" That caused much hilarity amongst our team, but turned out to be true as when Anish helped Rajko to win the Pro-Biz at the London Ches Classic some years ago, he was rewarded by Rajko with a pair of gingham checkered Thomas

Pink socks as a thank you.

Blitz, Banter, and the After Party

After three days of rapid chess (a 15+10 time control), the blitz (3+2) section brought fresh energy – and faster heartbreaks – as the time controls tightened and the games got sharper. There was less time to think and even less time to regret mistakes. The atmosphere in the hall was electric: ticking clocks, muttered calculations, and sudden bursts of laughter when a trap worked, or didn't.

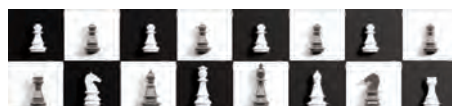
The social element of the event was also handled beautifully. The after party gave us a rare chance to unwind, meet players from other teams, swap stories – and yes, play more blitz. Because, of course, we did.

Final Thoughts

For most of us, this event was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to play the kinds of opponents we'd only ever seen on screens or in our databases. And what made it all the more special was how seamlessly the tournament blended professionalism with playfulness.

Whether it was facing Hou Yifan in round one, watching juniors outperform their ratings, or sharing a coffee near Vishy Anand, the 2025 World Rapid and Blitz Team Championships reminded me what makes chess so enduring: its power to bring people together across age, rating, and geographic boundaries – all bound by a shared love of the game.

Would the Sassy Seniors do it again? In a heartbeat.



The Winners

Headed up by Arjun Erigaisi, MGD1 scored 21/24 to win the 2025 FIDE World Rapid Team Championship, in large part thanks to 7½/8 from Indian GM Buddy Pranav, as well as a huge 11/12 on the amateur board from 24-year-old Atharvaa Tayade, whose only loss came in the final round against Murat Omarov.

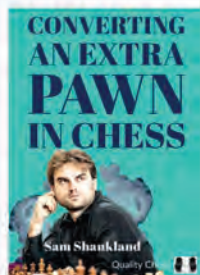
Second place with 20/24 went to Hexamind, who had Levon Aronian on board 1 and Anish Giri on board 4, where he picked up 8/11, with Vidit Gujrathi (7½/10) and Divya Deshmukh (8/12) also doing especially well. There was then a gap back to three teams on 17 points, with Freedom (Vishy Anand scored 5/7 on top board and Sam Sevian 8/11 on board 3) edging out Uzbekistan and top seeds WR Chess to win the bronze medals.

Malcolm's Mates were the top-scoring UK side, finishing ninth on 14 points, with the aforementioned Omarov scoring 5/5. Plenty of other English teams impressed at times too, such as when Sharks' captain Ben Purton defeated Croatian no.1 Ivan Saric, while Armeet Ghazi overcame David Navara and Alexei Shirov no less. We should also mention Freddy Gordon's 8/11 for Wood Green Youth, which included a draw with Vidit.

The Blitz Championship was won, not without some drama, by WR Chess, who defeated KazChess 4-2 and 4-2 in the final, having got the better of Malcolm's Mates 5-1 and 4½-1½ in the last sixteen. The day before, Malcolm's Mates had finished fourth in the English-dominated Group B, with Omarov this time racking up 9/11 and Luke McShane 10/12. There they overcame Sassy Seniors 4½-1½, but we should also note that Natasha Regan's tournament ended on a high as she amassed a highly credible 8½/12 for the Seniors in the blitz.



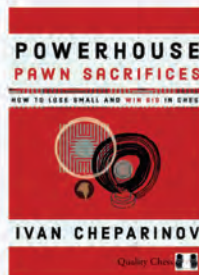
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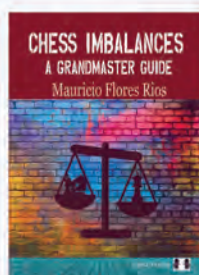
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Mastering Chess Exchanges by Jacob Aagaard & Renier Castellanos

Few books have dealt with the topic of exchanges in chess, leaving this important part of chess strategy a mystery to most. In *Mastering Chess Exchanges*, grandmasters Aagaard and Castellanos break down the topic into crystal-clear themes, including piece preferences, tension, weaknesses, colour complexes, king safety and endgames, illustrating the concepts with illuminating examples.

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Chess Imbalances by Mauricio Flores Rios

Material imbalances are a fundamental part of almost every chess game, yet have not received much attention in chess literature. In this illuminating book, GM Mauricio Flores Rios breaks down this universal topic into categories such as bishop vs knight, opposite-coloured bishops, possessing and playing against the bishop pair, and various scenarios with a queen or rook being traded for several pieces.

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Many reasonably strong players aspire to become international masters. Cyrus Lakdawala explains at length the steps needed to improve one's skills from those of a very good player to those who are IM strength. He is brutally honest about his failures along the way, which will help readers avoid all the natural pitfalls.

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Benoni Mayhem by Andrew Martin

The hallmark of this opening is that Black makes the positional concession of allowing White a central majority and hopes for counterchances via active piece play in return. However, as the very experienced chess coach and author Andrew Martin demonstrates in this highly engaging book, there are many other weird and wonderful ways to handle these 'Benoni structures'.

320 pages €23.99 (pb) €29.99 (hc) €19.99 (eBook)



Accelerated Dragon by Nigel Davies

Highly experienced chess trainer Nigel Davies outlines a repertoire for Black in the Accelerated Dragon. This is a creative opening where complications can arise at an early stage. This is a complete repertoire for Black against 1 e4 based on a strong, counterattacking line where 'natural' moves can be disastrous for White.

392 pages €23.99 (pb) €29.99 (hc) €19.99 (eBook)

CHESSFEST

FRIENDS • FAMILY • FUN



Over 20,000 attended this year's edition of ChessFest at London's Trafalgar Square on Sunday 13th July, again making it the UK's largest chess event of the year. The event is organised by Chess in Schools & Communities and sponsored by XTX Markets.



The centrepiece of ChessFest is always the living chess displays. This year the talented troupe of actors were dressed up as characters from the classic Frank Baum novel *The Wizard of Oz*, and reenacted the famous Evergreen Game, Anderssen-Dufresne, Berlin 1852, with 21 ♖xd7+!!.



The casual chess zones were full to capacity throughout most of the day, with over 800 people playing simultaneously at many times.



FunMasterMike (centre) from ChessKid, aka FM Mike Klein, flew over from the US for ChessFest in Portishead then Trafalgar Square, where he ran an interactive PuzzleRush competition – children could compete at tactics, with a live leaderboard on the giant screen.



The Giant Chess Blitz Challenge made a popular return in 2025, with FM Jonathan Pein almost losing on time on a number of occasions before overcoming Roman Ismailov. A five-second increment isn't especially generous when playing on an eight-metre chessboard!



A rolling 32-board simultaneous display was held throughout the day with top players, such as GM Stuart Conquest (pictured), taking shifts.



Not everyone that comes to ChessFest is a diehard fan of the game. Some were new to chess, whilst others had never ever played, but popped in as they passed Trafalgar Square. The 'Teaching Zone' had 50 Chess in Schools tutors on rotation to offer free lessons covering everything from how the pieces move to the nuances of the Sicilian.



The most popular activity is always the 'Challenge the Master' tent, where ten titled players, including GM Nikita Vitiugov (pictured), were taking on all comers. The Masters were given three minutes on their clock with the public getting five minutes on theirs. In total over 500 games were played and, yes, there was the occasional upset!



A transatlantic battle of the prodigies saw FM Supratit Bannerjee and WFM Bodhana Sivanandan take on American FM Linxi Zhu and WFM Ashley Qian from Canada. The match ended 3½-½ in England's favour, much to the delight of the London crowd.





60 Seconds with... Andrew Greet



Born: 5th October 1979, Cornwall.

Place of residence: Glasgow.

Occupation: Chief Editor at Quality Chess.

Enjoyable? Yes! I love working with our authors, editors, cover designer and so on, to make our books the best they can be.

And home life? I have a house near the centre of Glasgow, where I live with my two wonderful cats.

But sometimes good to escape to: Scotland is the perfect escape zone. I especially enjoy Scottish islands – I've been to

36 different ones so far, and I always have a few future island trips sketched out.

Sports played or followed: I hold a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and go to circuit/HIIT classes several times per week. I've followed the sport of MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) since the early 2000s. I enjoy sports in general and when Glasgow hosted the Commonwealth Games in 2014, I took a full week off work and watched as many events as I could get tickets for.

A favourite novel? Nope! Reading novels is too similar to chess for my taste. Instead, I like varied experiences such as being outdoors, cooking and spending time with my girlfriend.

Piece of music? I find it hard to name one, as I'll favour different types of music according to my mood. I'll name Mark Knopfler as my favourite music artist though.

Film or TV series? I mostly enjoy action/adventure films. The *John Wick* series stands out for elevating choreographed violence to fine art. I don't watch many TV series, but I loved the first two seasons of *Hannibal*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? It allows you to concentrate your intellect, creativity, tenacity, character, nerves and flaws into mental warfare. Which is nice, if you like that sort of thing.

And the worst? When you make one bad decision that ruins an otherwise well-played game – or even the entire tournament or match outcome.

Your best move? That's not easy to answer, as I don't exactly have a spectacular style of play. However, I was proud of a game I played a few months before I achieved my final IM norm.

T.Hinks-Edwards-A.Greet
Crowthorne 2005



When the time is right, I want to walk my king to e6 without allowing a ♖xd6 trick.

29 h3 ♖g6 30 ♖f1 h5 31 ♖h2 ♗d8 32 ♖f5 ♗h6 33 ♖c1 ♗h7 34 a4 ♖d7 35 ♖e3 ♖e6

Black's triangle of dark-squared pawns is perfectly supported by the king and bishop. Some years later, I became aware of the game Ivanchuk-Anand, Linares 1992, in which the Indian maestro played for a structure much like the one I have here.

36 ♖f1 ♗b8 37 ♖d2 f5 38 ♗d1 ♖c8 39 ♖b4 ♖c6 40 ♗1d2 ♗g7 41 ♗g2 ♖g5 42 ♗g1 b5! 43 ♗gd1 ♗d7 44 axb5 axb5 45 c5 d5 46 ♗a1 e4 47 ♗dd1 ♖e7 48 c4 bxc4 49 bxc4 d4 50 ♗a5 h4! 51 ♖g2 hxg3 52 ♖xg3 ♖d8

Mission accomplished: my three central pawns dominate the board, and the rest was easy.

53 ♗a8 d3 54 ♖f4 ♖c7+ 55 ♖e3 ♗g7 56 ♖e8+ ♖f7 57 ♗h8 ♖e5 58 ♗h4 ♗g3+ 59 ♖f2 ♖f3+ 60 ♗g2 ♗g6+ 61 ♖h1 ♖f2 62 ♗d2 ♖f1# 0-1

But less memorable than your worst move? Unfortunately, this was much easier to recall. I've made all sorts of atrocious blunders, but this particular abomination stands alone for the way it turned a certain win into an agonising defeat.

R.Richmond-A.Greet
4NCL, West Bromwich 2004



I knew I'd made the time control, but played one more quick move 'just to be sure'. An instant after releasing the king, I realized how unspeakably idiotic I'd been. After any sensible bishop move – 41...♖b5, for instance – White can resign, and even 41...♖d7 would be fine.

41...♖d5?? 42 b7 ♖xb7 43 e4+

White picked up the bishop and I suffered through 15 more moves of vehement self-loathing before resigning.

And a highly memorable opponent? At the risk of forcing you to rename the feature *60 Minutes*, I'd like to tell you about two. Firstly, I had the incredible privilege of spending a few days with Viktor Korchnoi in 2009, just a few months after I joined Quality Chess. Viktor had agreed to write a book or two for us, and I was assigned the enviable task of

visiting him and his wife Petra at their home in Switzerland, to show him how to work better with ChessBase and that sort of thing. The books never materialised, but that doesn't matter.

As it turned out, we worked for a while each day before turning to the far more serious business of several hours of blitz chess! Viktor was 78 at the time, while I was a few months shy of 30. I didn't keep score, but I would estimate that he won about twice as many games as me, with a sprinkling of draws. A few times, when I won an especially nice game, he would stop the clock and say: "You outplayed me." That will stay with me forever.

Secondly, I had the wonderful experience of playing Fabiano Caruana at the 2016 Olympiad in Baku, when playing on board 1 for Scotland. He won, unsurprisingly, but it was an action-packed game. After we shook hands at the end, I asked him if he wanted to look over the game. I didn't expect him to say yes, but a wise man once taught me: "If you don't ask, you don't get!" Well, Fabiano said yes and we had the most fantastic post-mortem, where I was able to witness the astonishing analytical capabilities of Fabiano and several other famous players who took an interest in proceedings.

A day or two afterwards, someone showed me a YouTube interview from the evening of the Scotland-USA match, in which Fabiano spoke about our game and said how much he enjoyed the post-mortem, adding it was the first time he had sat down and analysed with an opponent in about two years.

Favourite game of all time? After pondering, I'm going with Game 4 of the second Karpov-Kasparov match from 1985.



Karpov continued 21 ♖xe6 fxe6, going on to outplay Kasparov beautifully. [Ed. – see *this month's PGN file*.]

I first saw this game as a junior and much later, by the time I achieved the IM title in my mid-twenties, I became quite adept in positions with opposite-coloured bishops. I can't be sure, but it's possible that Karpov's masterpiece planted a seed somewhere in me.

The best three chess books: That's a tricky one, because I have yet to read some of the classics that often appear in such lists. I'll name three that influenced my development as a player or made a powerful impression in some other way:

1) *Secrets of Grandmaster Play* by John Nunn and Peter Griffiths – I read this in my early twenties when rated around 2250+ and some of Nunn's teachings really resonated with me. This book played a big part in elevating me towards IM level.

2) *The Opening According to Kramnik/Anand* series by Khalifman, which were so far ahead of any other opening books I'd read at the time. I learned a ton, including about the transition from opening to middlegame.

3) *Pump Up Your Rating* by Axel Smith. Well, I had to pick something from Quality Chess! I love the boldness of it, from the title we chose to the confidence of the relatively unknown author sharing his ideas about chess improvement. Readers loved the book and it became a springboard for our highly influential *The Woodpecker Method* exercise books.

Is FIDE doing a good job? I've never been especially drawn to chess politics, and don't know enough about the workings of the current FIDE administration to venture an opinion.

Or your National Federation? Chess Scotland has some great people and I believe they are doing the best they can with the limited resources they have available.

Any advice for either? I would love it if Chess Scotland would campaign to get our Olympiad team sponsored by one or more of the big Scotch whisky distilleries. Cash sponsorship would be nice, but I'll wear someone's logo for a bottle of something fabulous and cask-strength!

Can chess make one happy? I can't speak for everyone – but you want to hear a strong opinion, so I'll say the answer is probably 'No' for most people. True happiness is something I would associate with internal self-worth, a sense of purpose and sense of fulfilment in one's life; it's hard to imagine chess being at the root of those things.

A tip please for the club player: *Stockfish* is a wonderful tool, but remember: you need to operate the engine, and not the other way around! For instance, if you are analysing one of your games or preparing an opening variation, it's not enough just to notice that the machine recommends a move – you need to understand why. If it's not immediately obvious, play a natural move for the other side and keep digging until you'd be able to explain and demonstrate to another player why the machine evaluates things the way it does.

Recently, I was preparing for my next opponent in the Scottish Championship [Ed. – *where Andrew retained his Scottish title*], and I checked an engine improvement over a recent game involving my opponent. The position was objectively favourable for my side, but I rejected that entire direction because the lines were too computery – none of it fitted with the way I think at the board. So pay attention to the engine – it's an amazing tool – but never follow it blindly.



Overseas News

BELGIUM – 19-year-old Belgian no.1 Daniel Dardha set a new world record for simultaneous play when he took on 50 opponents with an average rating of 1834 on June 9th in Deinze. Dardha won 40 games, drew seven and lost only three.

CHINA – The China YanCheng GM match saw Wei Yi take on Levon Aronian in Yancheng (July 2-6). A fine king hunt helped Wei Yi to win the classical part of the contest 2½-1½ before he also won the first two rapid games to secure overall victory.

CROATIA – As we saw in the Editorial, the SuperUnited Croatia Rapid and Blitz was a tale of two tournaments in Zagreb (July 2-6). Dommaraju Gukesh impressed as he won the Rapid with a huge 7/9, including defeating Magnus Carlsen, albeit while losing to Jan-Krzysztof Duda. The Polish no.1 finished second with an undefeated 5½/9, with Carlsen back on 5 points or rather 10 as Rapid points count double in Grand Chess Tour events, as this was.

Come the Blitz, Carlsen was utterly dominant, racking up a whopping 7½/9 on the first day ahead of scoring 5/9 on the second day, which saw him scoop the \$40,000 first prize after finishing on 22½/36, two and a half points ahead of Wesley So, who also shone come the blitz where he made 12/18. In contrast, Gukesh completely bombed, scoring just 1½/9 on the first day and so would only finish third overall.

There were also the Zupanja Celebrates Chess norm tournaments (June 10-23), in which FM Koby Kalavannan came second on 6/9 in the IM2 event where Indian teenager K. Adharsh made a norm as he racked up 7½/9. A further series of norm tournaments followed and this time Kalavannan did make a norm, scoring 7/9 in the IM3 event to finish joint first with American FM Bryan Xie.

Right on the other side of Croatia, the Pula Open won outright with 7½/9 by Catalan GM Daniel Alsina Leal, who plays for White Rose in the 4NCL. IM Andrew Ledger was back on '+3'.

GERMANY – Organised by Sebastian Siebrecht, the Munich Chess Festival followed hot on the heels of the German Championships, as we noted last month, and ran from May 29th until June 14th. The Munich Open was won with a dominant 7½/9 by Pavel Eljanov, which left him a point clear of Slovak GM Milan Pacher. There was also a Whitsun Open, won jointly with 7½/9 by 20-year-old Norwegian Elham Aman and fellow GM Eltaj Safarli, as well as five norm

all-play-all. Sohum Lohia impressed in the GM1, where he finished on 6/9 as Latvian GM Nikita Meshkovs triumphed with 7½/9, while prodigy Supratit Banerjee scored 2½/9 in the GM3 event.

HOLLAND – The van Foreest family had a successful time at the Dutch Championships in Venlo (July 5-12). Top seed Jorden overcame Thomas Beerdsen and Liam Vrolijk to reach the final, where he would destroy Loek van Wely's Scheveningen en route to taking their mini-match 1½-½. Not to be outdone, his 17-year-old sister FM Machteld defeated Colleen Otten, Anna-Maja Kazarian and then Robin Duson to win the Women's Championship.

HUNGARY – IM Tamas Vanczak defeated Danny Gormally en route to winning the Janos Rigo Memorial in Balatonlelle (June 21-27), scoring 6/9, which didn't quite suffice for a GM norm.

ICELAND – The Icelandic Chess Federation celebrated its centenary by staging the Icelandic Open in Blonduos in the north of Iceland (June 15-21). Vignir Vatnar Stefansson edged out Ivan Sokolov on tiebreak after they had both finished on 7/9.

NORWAY – Norway Chess Women took place alongside Norway Chess in Stavanger (May 26 - June 6), and with equal prize money. That meant that like Magnus Carlsen, Anna Muzychuk took home the equivalent of just over £50,000 after winning a hard-fought tournament with 16½/30, which left her just half a point ahead of Lei Tingjie. Humpy Koneru was leading with two rounds to go, but finished on 50%, with Ju Wenjun back on 13½/30 and ahead of Vaishali Rameshbabu and Sara Khadem.

RUSSIA – Vladislav Artemiev dominated the Chess Stars 5.0 tournament in Moscow (June 26-30), winning both the rapid and blitz sections. Artemiev scored 7/9 in the rapid, finishing half a point ahead of 19-year-old Indian Raunak Sadhwani, with Evgeny Tomashevsky a further point behind and Sergey Karjakin and Teimour Radjabov back on '+1'. The schedule was exactly the same as a Grand Chess Tour event and after three days of rapid, two days of blitz followed in which Artemiev racked up an impressive 14½/18 to pull some two and a half points clear of Karjakin, with Sadhwani back in third.

SPAIN – Vishy Anand failed to win an 11th Leon title as he was defeated by Le Quang Liem in the final of the 38th Leon Chess

tournament (July 4-6). After four draws at rapid with 11-year-old Faustino Oro, Anand won the ensuing playoff, with Le Quang Liem also needing blitz games to overcome Jaime Santos Latasa. Clearly not at his very best, Anand would lose the subsequent final 3-1 to the Vietnamese star.

There was also the 1st Vitoria-Gasteiz Open, where we were delighted to see Harry Grieve triumphing on tiebreak after finishing on 7½/9 alongside Spanish IM Juan Mellado Trivino and Juan Ruiz Abad. En route Grieve actually defeated Mellado Trivino and also overcame veteran Chilean GM Javier Campos Moreno in a dramatic encounter.

SWITZERLAND – After Norway Chess and UzChess (see below), Magnus Carlsen remained top of the FIDE rating list, with the latest one set to be published by the FIDE Office in Lausanne on August 1st. Carlsen is on 2839, with Hikaru Nakamura on 2807 and then something of a drop to Fabiano Caruana on 2784. Notably the three leading Indian stars come next, in the order, as we went to press, of Praggnanandhaa, Erigaisi and Gukesh. We should also note that Hans Niemann is up to 2736 and world no.18, while Carlsen also dominates the rapid and blitz rankings, leading the former on 2810 and the latter with a huge 2881.

UAE – 18-year-old Russian GM Aleksey Grebnev won the Dubai Open (May 27 - June 4) on tiebreak from Spain's Alan Pichot after they had both finished on 7/9, with top seed Nihal Sarin back on 6 points and joint sixth.

USA – Carissa Yip played a typically uncompromising tournament en route to victory at the Cairns Cup in Saint Louis (June 10-2). Her 6/9 was sufficient for not only the \$65,000 first prize, but also her second GM norm. 15-year-old Alice Lee also impressed, unlike Tan Zhongyi who unusually failed to win a game. While Rex Sinquefeld and wife Jeanne (née Cairns) must have been delighted with the American success, the game of the tournament was arguably Lee's only defeat, to GM-elect Bibisara Assaubayeva.

B.Assaubayeva-A.Lee

Saint Louis 2025

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♜c6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♙c4 d6
5 d3 ♙e7 6 ♘d2 ♙g5 7 h4!? ♙h6 8 ♖h5!

Probing. The resulting weakness will be worth the two tempi.

8...g6 9 ♗d1 ♘d4?!

White is able to play around this knight and development with 9...♘f6 was likely a better course of action. Then 10 ♖f1 ♙xc1 11 ♗xc1 ♙e6 12 ♗h6 ♗e7 can't be too bad for Black.

10 ♖f1

Thematic, but so would have been 10 h5! when 10...♙e6 11 a4! followed by ♘d5 would have left White in control.

10...♙xc1 11 ♗xc1 ♖f6 12 ♘e3 ♗b8 13 a4 a6?!

Creating another weakness. Instead, 13...♘h5 14 ♘cd5 0-0 15 c3 ♘e6 16 ♗d2 would have left everything to play for, if with White slightly for choice.

14 a5!



Clamping down on b6 and now 14...b5?! 15 axb6 ♗xb6 16 ♗a2 followed by ♘cd5 would have left White in full control.

14...♘c6?!

This materialistic retreat also fails to impress and Lee would have done better to keep lines closed with 14...h5.

15 ♘ed5 ♘h5

15...♘xd5!? 16 ♘xd5 ♘xa5 would have been consistent when 17 ♗h6 ♘xc4 18 ♗g7 ♗f8 19 dxc4 ♙e6 20 ♖f6+ ♙e7 21 f4!? is quite dangerous as well as unpleasant for Black, but also arguably a better try than the game.

16 ♗g5!?

Probing once more. The immediate 16 ♗h6 would also have been strong.

16...f6?

Black won't get another chance after this and simply had to grovel with 16...♗xg5 17 hxg5 ♙f8, clearly better though White would be after 18 ♘d2.

17 ♗h6 ♘xa5? 18 ♗g1!

Preparing to drive away the defensive



Bottom seeds Carissa Yip (left) and Alice Lee do battle in St. Louis, where they would both do well.

linchpin on h5, then invade with the queen.

18...♘xc4 19 g4!?



Even the straightforward 19 dxc4 and only then g2-g4 would have been pretty strong.

19...♖f4?

No doubt stunned by how quickly things have gone wrong, Lee completely collapses. 19...♙xc4 20 ♗xg4 ♘b6 was fairly essential, if still extremely good for White after 21 ♗xg6 ♘d7 22 ♗g2 ♘xd5 23 exd5 ♗e8 24 ♘e4.

20 ♗g7!

Threatening ♘c7+, as well as the rook.

20...♘d7 21 ♗xh8+ ♙f7 22 ♗xh7+ ♙e6 23 dxc4 b5 24 ♘xf4+ exf4 25 ♘d5 1-0

UZBEKISTAN – The man pictured on the cover of our July issue, Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa, scored his third major victory of the year and the third in a playoff after emerging victorious at the 2nd UzChess Cup in Tashkent (June 18–28).

Pragganandhaa's success appeared unlikely after he suffered back-to-back defeats in rounds five and six, one of which will feature in detail in our next issue. However, he outplayed Arjun Erigaisi in the penultimate round and then won on demand as Black against a slightly hesitant Nodirbek Abdusattorov, who had been a point clear. That led to a three-way blitz playoff between Abdusattorov, Pragganandhaa and Javokhir Sindarov, which finished all square after a double-round 3+2 all-play-all. A further round was held, in which Pragganandhaa defeated Sindarov to prevail with 1½/2 and so claim the \$20,000 top prize while extending his lead in the FIDE Circuit.

R.Praggnanandhaa-S.Vokhidov

Tashkent 2025

English Opening

1 c4 ♖f6 2 ♘c3 e5 3 g3 ♙b4 4 e4!?

d6 4...♙xc3 5 bxc3 ♘xe4 6 ♗e2 regains the pawn with a small plus as 6...d5?! 7 cxd5

5th Cairns Cup 2025 – Saint Louis, USA, 10-20 June (Category 10, average rating = 2482)															
	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Carissa Yip	USA	2431	*	½	0	1	½	1	1	0	1	1	6	2612
2	Alice Lee	USA	2389	½	*	½	½	1	0	½	1	½	1	5½	2572
3	Harika Dronavalli	IND	2483	1	½	*	0	½	½	1	½	½	½	5	2524
4	Humpy Koneru	IND	2543	0	½	1	*	½	1	1	0	½	0	4½	2475
5	Alina Kashlinskaya	POL	2459	½	0	½	½	*	½	0	1	1	½	4½	2484
6	Bibisara Assaubayeva	KAZ	2509	0	1	½	0	½	*	0	1	½	1	4½	2478
7	Nana Dzagnidze	GEO	2505	0	½	0	0	1	1	*	½	½	1	4½	2479
8	Mariya Muzychuk	UKR	2492	1	0	½	1	0	0	½	*	½	½	4	2437
9	Tan Zhongyi	CHN	2546	0	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	3½	2394
10	Nino Batsiashvili	GEO	2462	0	0	½	1	½	0	0	½	½	*	3	2359

♞xd5 8 ♙g2 wouldn't be wise for Black.

5 d3 ♘c6 6 h3!?

A new move, keeping Black out of g4 while intending to advance there one day himself.

6...a6 7 ♘ge2 b5 8 ♙g2 ♞b8 9 0-0 ♙c5

Taking stock, we find a typical Botvinnik English position where Black should have sufficient counterplay on the queenside to balance White's impending kingside advance.

10 ♞b1 0-0 11 ♙h2!



11...h6

Preventing ♙g5, but also the type of move which Daniel King and Simon Williams are rarely keen on. Rather than potentially weaken his king position, Black might have continued actively and 11...♘d4!? 12 ♙e3 (12 ♙g5?? fails to 12...♘g4+!) 12...c6 would have been fine for him, including after 13 b4 ♘xe2 14 ♞xe2 ♙d4!?

12 f4

Thematic and this is why the king went to h2.

12...bxc4 13 dxc4 ♘d4 14 f5!

Seizing space and menacing g3-g4-g5.

14...a5! 15 g4 ♙a6 16 b3 c6

This is OK, but 16...a4! would have been more vigorous, and if 17 ♘xa4? ♙xc4.

17 ♘g3

Threatening g4-g5 now that the white queen covers g4, ruling out any ...♘(x)g4+ issues.

17...♙h7!

Good defence, keeping the kingside situation under control.

18 ♘h5 g6?!

This risky move was likely based on a misassessment. Instead, 18...a4! would have been consistent and given Black decent counterplay: for example, 19 ♙d2 axb3 20 axb3 ♙b4 when even after 21 f6 g5! it isn't so easy for White to make progress on the kingside.

19 ♙h6!



Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa won on demand and as Black in the final round to catch up Nodirbek Abdusattorov before overcoming the Uzbek no.1 and Javokhir Sindarov in a playoff.



A powerful blow and now Black has only one acceptable move.

19...gxh5?

This isn't it. Vokhidov had to find 19...♞h4! when 20 fxg6 fxg6 21 ♙xf8 ♞xf8 22 ♞xf8+ ♙xf8 would simply have been extremely unclear. The knight on h5 hangs and, for instance, 23 ♞c1!? (23 ♘g3? ♙c8! leaves Black dominating the dark squares and kingside) 23...♘g5! (23...gxh5 24 ♞h6+ ♙g8 25 ♞f1 forces 25...♞e7 and leaves White pressing after 26 ♞g6+) 24 ♞f1+ ♙e8 25 ♘f6+ ♘d8 26 ♘g8 ♙c8 would have left all three results very possible, with White only fractionally for choice in the view of the engines after 27 ♘e2.

20 g5!

The key follow-up to placing the bishop on h6. White doesn't want the rook on f8, but rather to

rip open lines to the black king with his pawns.

20...♙h8

This doesn't especially help matters, but even after 20...♙b4 21 ♘e2 d5!? 22 ♘xd4 exd4 23 ♞xd4 f6 24 g6 White should be winning.

21 ♞xh5 ♞g8 22 g6

The culmination of Pragganandhaa's fine play. Black is now swept away.

22...fxg6 23 fxg6 ♞b7



24 ♞f7! ♞xf7 25 gxf7 ♞g7 26 ♞f1 ♞f8

Likewise, 26...♘e6 27 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 28 ♞g4+ ♘eg5 29 h4 ♙c8 30 ♞g3 wins.

27 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 28 h4!

Preparing to improve his worst-placed piece and especially to clear the g-file as Pragganandhaa finishes clinically.

28...♙c8 29 ♙h3 ♙xh3 30 ♞g1+ ♙f6 31 ♞g8! ♞xf7 32 ♞h6+ ♙e7 33 ♞g7 1-0

2nd UzChess Cup Masters - Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 18-28 June 2025 (Category 19, average rating = 2724)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	R. Pragganandhaa	IND	2767	*	1	1	1	0	½	0	1	½	½	5½	2799
2	Nodirbek Abdusattorov	UZB	2767	0	*	½	½	1	0	1	1	½	1	5½	2799
3	Javokhir Sindarov	UZB	2710	0	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	5½	2805
4	Arjun Erigaisi	IND	2782	0	½	½	*	½	1	½	1	½	½	5	2760
5	Parham Maghsoodloo	IRI	2691	1	0	½	½	*	1	½	0	½	½	4½	2727
6	Nodirbek Yakubboev	UZB	2659	½	1	½	0	0	*	½	½	½	1	4½	2731
7	Richard Rapport	HUN	2714	1	0	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	4½	2725
8	Shamsiddin Vokhidov	UZB	2644	0	0	½	0	1	½	½	*	1	½	4	2689
9	Ian Nepomniachtchi	RUS	2757	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	3½	2640
10	Aravindh Chithambaram	IND	2749	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	*	2½	2555

This Month's New Releases

Powerhouse Pawn Sacrifices

Ivan Cheparinov

Quality Chess, 368 pages

RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

When sacrificing pawns, we are hoping “to lose small and win big in chess.” We have all seen manifold examples of dramatic sacrifices by the pieces and, in many ways, they are easier to understand than knowing how, when and why to give up a humble pawn. For instance, a Greek Gift Sacrifice (♘h7+ or ...♘h2+) is always going to damage a castled king’s position. The basic idea is easy to understand, even though the specifics will need assessing before the capture is made.

According to the back-cover blurb: “A pawn is the smallest unit of material in chess, but a well-executed pawn sacrifice can yield huge rewards. Still, many players shy away from such possibilities when they are uncertain of the consequences. *Powerhouse Pawn Sacrifices* contains everything you need to master this crucial area of chess. In addition to covering dynamic and long-term sacrifices, Grandmaster Ivan Cheparinov also discusses pawn sacrifices arising in specific opening variations, connecting the different phases of the game, while sharing valuable insights that will be transferable to other scenarios.”

The genesis of the project was a series of online lectures, delivered by the author as part of the Killer Chess Training Academy. Transcribing lectures and putting them into book form is a more difficult task than it is commonly believed to be. A lot of work is required.

The material is split into three main, self-explanatory chapters: Reasons to Sacrifice a Pawn, Typical Cases, and How do the Greats do it? The bulk of the games are from Cheparinov’s own practice. The two main reasons for sacrificing a pawn are “dynamics” and “long-term factors”. Readers are confronted by a series of difficult exercises from the very start. Here is a sample of what to expect.



I. Cheparinov–A. Yusupov

Amsterdam 2007



“Black is threatening to play ...c5-c4, immobilizing the white queenside pawns. How should White respond to the threat?”

18 c4!

“White sacrifices a pawn.” There follows a very detailed discussion about why this is a good idea, with one important point being that if Black accepts the sacrifice, his pawn majority on the c- and d-files is significantly devalued, as there will be tripled and incompetent pawns butting up against a single white c-pawn. Meanwhile, White’s own pawn majority – four vs. three on the kingside – remains as a potentially significant plus, especially as Black will no longer have any meaningful counterplay on the queenside.

Black played the holding move **18...c6**, understanding that the two most obvious alternatives are not good for him. For example: “18...d4? loses immediately to 19 ♖b5 ♗e7 20 ♜c6, as the c5-pawn falls”. Meanwhile, “18...dxc4?! is also not a good idea: 19 ♙e4 ♜ad8 (19...♙ab8 is even worse after 20 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 21 ♜a3, and two pawns on c5 and a7 are attacked) 20 ♜b7. The weakness of the black queenside pawns is a recurring theme.”

After the further moves **19 ♗e3! ♗e7 20 c3!** Black relented with **20...dxc4** (otherwise a soon-to-be-launched f4-f5 lunge would ask questions too difficult for the bishop to answer; at least it can now go to d5). Ultimately, Black could not stop the kingside attack and had no source of counterplay elsewhere; a poor predicament with only one outcome on the cards (1-0, 36).

There are lots of very advanced and challenging ideas in this book, but readers will



have to work very hard to derive the most benefit from the material. Club players will find themselves out of their depth, but strong tournament players will embrace the challenge of working on examples featuring such a difficult subject. Exactly the same comments apply to the next book, which is linked in a couple of ways.

Sean Marsh



Converting an Extra Pawn in Chess

Sam Shankland

Quality Chess, 272 pages

RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

I am sure it cannot have been accidental or coincidental scheduling which brought about the simultaneous release of books dealing with two sides of the same coin: first, we are encouraged to sacrifice pawns and then we are taught how to convert a one-pawn advantage if our opponents sacrifice, blunder or otherwise find themselves parting with a foot soldier.

Here is what to expect: “Winning a pawn is a common occurrence in chess, but many players have no idea what to do with an extra pawn, aside from the vague notion of ‘exchange pieces and win the endgame’. Grandmaster Sam Shankland knows better – and after reading this book, you will too. In this groundbreaking work, Shankland shares his three-step process for handling positions with an extra pawn, using perfectly chosen practical examples to illustrate the themes.”

Just as is the case with *Powerhouse Pawn Sacrifices*, this book started life as a series of online lectures for Killer Chess Training. Shankland’s initial motivation for the project was self-improvement: “Anyone who has ever read any of my previous work knows why I create chess content – namely, to make myself a better player. Every single word I have ever written has been because it was with respect to a topic that I was interested in, and writing a book on the topic would provide me with an opportunity to do the necessary research, leading me to grow my own knowledge of the game.”

Described as “one of the most common kinds of advantage in chess”, the art of converting positions with an extra pawn is

broken down to the following parts: Stabilize, Make the Right Changes, and Plan for the Pawn. The point is made that in most cases, all three methods will need to be utilised in order to make the extra pawn count.

10 of the 29 illustrative games are Shankland's own. Elsewhere, Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Magnus Carlsen are among the players represented. The oldest game, by some distance, is the first game of the ultimately aborted 1961 match between Samuel Reshevsky and Bobby Fischer, during which "Fischer himself definitely demonstrated a lack of understanding that I would not expect from a player of today's era." A rare negative assessment of Fischer's play.

Fischer's immediate predecessor and successor both feature in the very next game.

A.Karpov-B.Spassky World Team Ch., Lucerne 1985



All of the games in the book feature plenty of mistakes, as nobody can play like a top chess engine. As the games are generally quite long and not featuring a checkmating attack, it is easy to understand why there will always be plenty of twists, turns and inaccuracies. Even a prime Karpov made mistakes on his way to converting the extra pawn. However, in this key position, the reader is invited to answer the question: "which is the worst-placed piece?"

The knight on f3 is the culprit and knowledge of this helped Karpov to improve his position with **40** ♖d2! and after Spassky's **40...♗b6**, the reply **41** ♙c2!, with the aim of supporting the knight on its journey to d6, shows just how subtle Karpov could be, with his notorious quiet moves. Spassky still had numerous chances to draw, but over the board, the task of holding back a superior player (his score against Karpov was dreadful) for an extended period of time is incredibly difficult (1-0, 90).

Make no mistake, the material in these linked books is very difficult – even more so, when stripped of the online lecture format. However, both books – which are definitely aimed at advanced players – will make the reader start to think in different ways, which can only be a good thing.

Sean Marsh



PCO: Practical Chess Openings

Martyn Kravtsiv

Gambit Publications, 544 pages

RRP £27.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.75**

Quite simply, I was astonished to find out that this book had been published. The continued proliferation of chess databases and computer-generated analysis seemed, to me, to have made writing any book about the current state of opening theory incredibly difficult and impractical.

Even *New In Chess Yearbook*, a publication that concentrated on individual variations, came to an end in 2021. The reason given was that amateur and professional players alike were increasingly turning to online resources for up-to-date opening theory and recommendations. Once that happened, I thought that the days of single-volume works covering all the openings were numbered.

After my initial shock had subsided, I wondered how the author had gone about their task. In hindsight, he took the only logical approach by starting from scratch – something that became immediately clear in the introduction. There, Kravtsiv re-examines the age-old question: "What are the general principles of development in the opening?". I think many readers will find his suggestions and supporting examples interesting food for thought.

Then, it's on to the bulk of the book, which covers all chess opening classifications (A00–E99). Out go the tables and footnotes format of its Great Predecessor *Nunn's Chess Openings* (NCO), and in comes a variation tree format with textual explanations.

It's at this juncture that the secret sauce of this book starts to reveal itself. My astonishment that I referred to earlier was based on what I consider to be the two most difficult challenges facing authors of openings books. Firstly, which lines to keep in and which to leave out, and, secondly, how do you 'futureproof' such a book?

The answer to both questions is: human chess still contains a significant practical element. Therefore, Kravtsiv has presented the lines that he thinks will be of the greatest practical use to the prospective reader. He thinks those lines are the ones that are most popular in current practice and where, based on computer analysis, he thinks future developments are most likely to take place.

Offbeat and unsound lines are covered with the minimum amount of fuss and variations. Then, in the major opening complexes, key main lines and sub-variations are each covered in one variation tree. Again, only the lines that were deemed to fit the above criteria are presented, along with some textual explanation of key ideas for both

sides.

To give you a good example of just how selective the author has been, I present the following example:

1 e4 c5 **2** ♖f3 d6 **3** d4 cxd4 **4** ♗xd4 ♗f6 **5** ♗c3 a6 **6** ♗g5 e6 **7** f4 h6 **8** ♗h4 ♖b6 (the Delayed Poisoned Pawn variation sees Black aiming to achieve an improved version of the standard Poisoned Pawn, 7...♖b6) **9** a3!?



Kravtsiv regards this as the only critical try – therefore, it is the only move that gets presented. After **9...♗c6** **10** ♗f2 a summary of White's main ideas is presented – and that's it.

Then, to further enhance the practical advice for the reader, a conclusion is given after each variation or related series of variations. Following on from the above example, 6 ♗g5 against the Najdorf is regarded as a good attempt to catch out an opponent who has not recently reviewed the theory due to the variation's suitability for analysing with an engine and the complex positions that usually arise.

A concise and easy-to-follow index makes this book an extremely comfortable one to navigate, and rounds out a work that this reviewer regards as a very impressive attempt to show that there is still a place in the world for such books.

In an age of neural networks and cloud analysis, I think this book has the potential to revive the single-volume openings encyclopaedia. If it does, then it will have done so by adding more of the human element back into openings analysis. Whether you want to build or refresh your opening repertoire, or want an idea of where to target future analysis, this book is highly recommended.

Paul Hopwood



Battling the French & Caro-Kann

Alexey Kovalchuk, 340 pages, hardback

RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

This detailed new release from Thinkers Publishing sees Russian theoretician Kovalchuk

present two weapons for the 1 e4 player, ones designed to surprise and discomfort French and Caro players. The currently trendy Exchange variation receives the nod after 1 e4 e6, if not also after 1 e4 c6 where 2 c4 is advocated. Kovalchuk has certainly done his research and those 1 e4 players who like to study their theory, as well as new ideas, may well find much of interest within.



Botvinnik's Best Games

Alexander Khalifman, 448 pages, paperback
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

What more could one want than a world champion writing in detail about another world champion? Alexander Khalifman may have 'only' been a FIDE World Champion, but the knock-out championship which he won at Las Vegas in 1999 was a very strong event and he was an extremely strong player at his peak. Unsurprisingly his deep understanding shines through as he annotates 50 of the sixth world champion's best games. Mikhail Botvinnik (1911 – 1995), 'the Patriarch', was renowned for his strategic and often dynamic play, and his games still have a vast amount to teach us, not least when studied alongside Khalifman's detailed annotations.

Note that a hardback version of this New in Chess publication is available if you prefer, retailing at £30.95 or £27.85 for Subscribers. Note too that the two Quality Chess books reviewed by Sean Marsh above are also available in hardback format, the Cheparinov and Shankland books both coming in at £29.50 or £26.55 for Subscribers.



Drill Your Chess Endgames!

Mikhail Bryakin & Jovana Srdanovic,
320 pages, paperback
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

This detailed publication from Informant Publishing aims to improve the reader's endgame technique and features "500 hand-picked training exercises with detailed solutions". The positions range from the relatively basic to ones which will test and educate even a pretty strong player. Slowly going through this work from the Serbian GM and WIM authors will undoubtedly increase the store of positions and key motifs in your endgame memory bank.



How to Play the Anti-Sicilians

Andrew Martin, PC/MAC booklet or download; running time: 5 hours
RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

This recent release from ChessBase is arguably slightly misnamed – it should perhaps be titled 'How to Play Against the Anti-Sicilians'. Indeed, Martin maps out a highly practical repertoire for 1 e4 c5 players when opponents, as so many do, decline to enter the Open Sicilian. Against 2 c3, Martin looks at both 2...d5 and 2...d6; he also explores both 2 d3 d6 and 2...d6, even recommending 3...d4! as a surprise weapon against the Rossolimo. The Closed Sicilian, Grand Prix and Morra Gambit receive plenty of coverage too, certainly enough for the club player to cure any issues against certain Anti-Sicilians they may be experiencing.

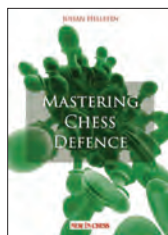


Master Your Technique Vol. 2:

Winning Strategies You Must Know

Adrian Mikhachishin, PC/MAC booklet or download; running time: 5 hours, 5 minutes
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

The famous chess trainer Adrian Mikhachishin aims to improve the viewer's technique, such as converting an extra pawn or endgame advantage. Unsurprisingly the important principle of two weaknesses gains plenty of attention, but there are also some more surprising topics, ones explained too by some wonderfully clear examples. The Ukrainian-Slovenian Grandmaster even looks at attacking down the g-file, how best to use the rook's pawns and when a piece sacrifice for a mobile pawn armada can be a good thing.



Mastering Chess Defence

Johan Hellsten, 440 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The Swedish GM and highly experienced chess coach will be well-known to many readers for his trilogy of books for Everyman Chess (*Mastering Chess Strategy*, *Mastering*

Opening Strategy and *Mastering Endgame Strategy*), which also proved very popular when turned into Chessable format. Now Hellsten is back with a new book, one in exactly the same mould, if this time for New in Chess. Defence is never going to be the most sexy topic, but it is an important one, as well as one unsurprisingly well covered by Hellsten. Over 31 chapters, he looks at such topics as returning extra material to deflect an attacker, counter-attacking, flight squares and finding 'lifelines' to escape from the seemingly inescapable.



Maximize Your Chess Potential!

Dan Heisman, 304 pages, paperback
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Leading American coach and author Dan Heisman has now been teaching chess full-time for almost 30 years. His 'chess tip of the day' on Twitter has long been worth a glance and in this new release by Popular Chess, he presents 164 of his most useful and instructive tips, expanding each one well beyond 140 characters. There are chapters on general improvement, the thought process, psychology, tactics, strategy, openings and endgames; in short, an awful lot of useful material for both those fairly new to the game and the club player. As now seems to be standard for Popular Chess (formerly Everyman Chess) works, this one is also available in hardback format for £24.99 or £22.49 for Subscribers.



The Top-Tier Trompowsky

Robert Ris, PC/MAC booklet or download; running time: 8 hours

RRP £42.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £38.65**

Like the Martin and Mikhachishin releases from ChessBase, this one also contains plenty of video and comes in the new, interactive ChessBase 'book' format, which makes study somewhat easier. Ris aims to present a repertoire which can be quickly picked up and will be especially of use as a surprise weapon and at faster time controls. Notably after 1 d4 d6 2 g5 d6 he advocates 3 h4!?, just as a certain recent work from Popular Chess has done. Both *The Tricky Tromp* and Ris also recommend 2...c5 3 d5 and 2...d5 3 d2, but against 2...e6 Ris prefers the aggressive 3 e4 to 3 d2. He also, very usefully, supplies coverage of 1 d4 d5 2 g5 and even Black's alternatives to 1 d4 d6 and

1...d5, against which aggression is still the order of the day, as in the case of 1...g6 2 h4!?



Openings: The English Opening Volume 2

Jerzy Konikowski & Uwe Bekemann,
180 pages, paperback

RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

The highly experienced German authors continue to explain how to handle 1 c4 as part of Joachim Beyer Verlag's 'read – understand – play' series. Here both 1...e5 and 1...d6 are examined, with all the main lines, bar a King's Indian type set-up, explored in fair detail. The emphasis is on the key moves and strategic motifs, and this work should suit the harder working club player keen to improve their knowledge of the English.



The Modernized Catalan: Volume 1

Balazs Csonka, 640 pages, hardback
RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

This is an expensive, but also large volume, the first part of a repertoire for White with the Catalan from Thinkers Publishing. You might know of the strong Hungarian IM Balazs Csonka from his appearances for Manx Liberty in the 4NCL and he certainly understands the Catalan extremely well. While his coverage is unsurprisingly pretty detailed at times, Csonka generally aims for lines where strategic understanding, not memorisation, is key and simply going through this work can but improve the reader's knowledge of this rich and famous opening.



Ulf the Attacker!

Thomas Engqvist, 280 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The legendary Swedish Grandmaster Ulf Andersson is now 74 and remains revered for his positional mastery. However, there was also another, somewhat less well-known side to his game, the ability to attack. When the position demanded that he attacked, Andersson most certainly could and here we get to see 56 impressive attacks from him, all annotated in typically lucid and instructive fashion by Swedish IM Thomas Engqvist. This work too is available in hardback should you prefer, retailing at £30.95 or £27.85 for Subscribers.



Forthcoming Events

August 9 **Cathcart Allegro, Giffnock**
chessscotland.com/calendar/cathcart-allegro-2025/

August 10 **Greenwich Peninsula Rapid**
gpchess.com

August 10 **Lincoln Southside Rapidplay**
congress.org.uk/congress/598/home

August 12-16 **Kingston Invitational**
kingstonchess.com/kingston-invitational/

August 13-18 **London MindSports International**
chessengland.com

August 15-17 **Edinburgh Park Standard & Blitz**
congress.playchess.org.uk/congress/600/home

August 15-17 **Lancaster Congress**
lancasterchessclub.co.uk/congress/20250815.html

August 15-17 **Manchester Summer Congress**
congress.org.uk/congress/606/home

August 15-17 **Newport Congress**
newportchesscongress.uk

August 15-17 **Thanet & East Kent Congress**
congress.org.uk/congress/612/home

August 16-17 **Southall Congress**
londonfidecongress.com/southall-congress

August 16-17 **Staffordshire Congress**
northstaffschess.com/p/staffordshire-chess-congress-2025.html

August 16 **Greater London CC Rapidplay, Bloomsbury**
glcc.org.uk/summer_rapid2025.html

August 20-25 **Northumbria Masters, Darlington**
northumbriamasters.com

August 22-25 **Swindon Congress**
swindonchessevents.co.uk

August 23-25 **Leyland Congress**
congress.org.uk/congress/501/home

August 23-25 **Ulster Championships, Belfast**
ulsterchess.org/events

August 23 **Brentwood Rapidplay**
britishchess.co.uk/events/

August 30 - September 5 **Torquay Riviera Congress**
congress.org.uk/congress/583/home

August 30-31 **Cambridge Congress, Whittlesford**
congress.org.uk/congress/529/home

August 30 **Darnall & Handsworth Rapidplay, Sheffield**
dhchessclub.co.uk

August 30 **UK Open Blitz Ch. Qualifier, Hampton**
englishchess.org.uk/uk-open-blitz-championships-2025/

August 31 **Scottish Women's Rapidplay Championship**
chessscotland.com/calendar

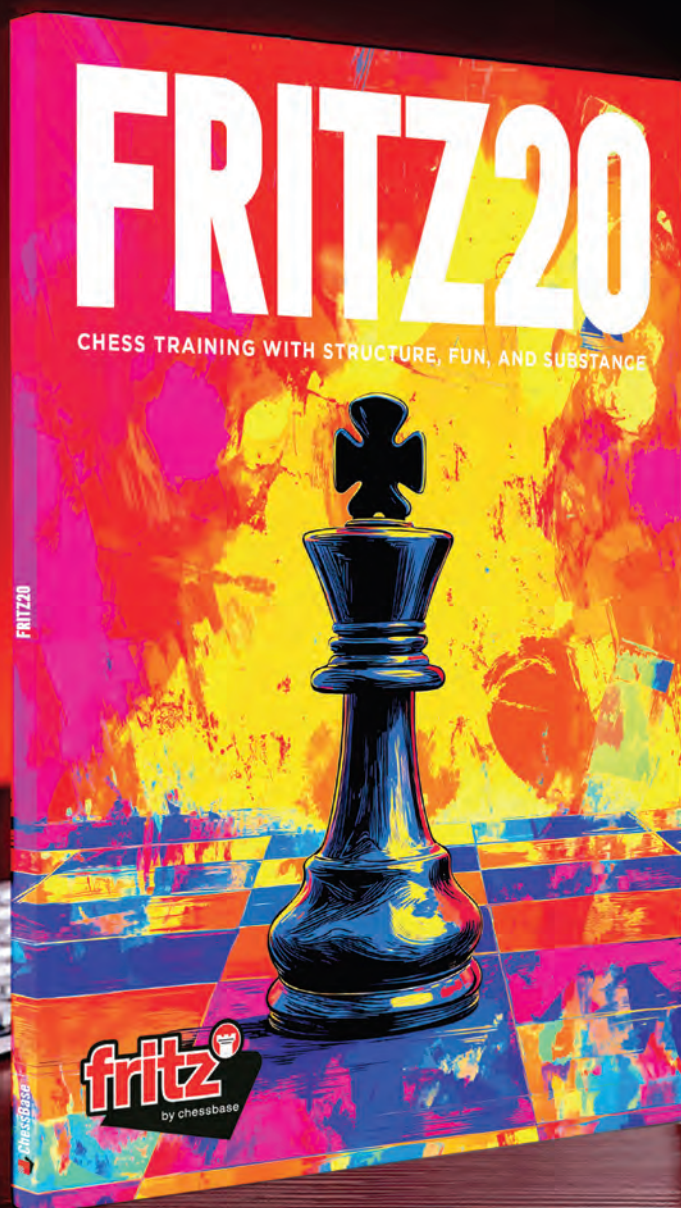
And for the Online Connoisseur:

August 10-14 **Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz**
grandchesstour.org; Abdusattorov, Aronian, Caruana, Dominguez, Gukesh, Le, Oparin, Shankland, So & Vachier-Lagrave.

August 17-28 **Sinquefield Cup, Saint Louis**
saintlouischessclub.org; Abdusattorov, Aronian, Caruana, Duda, Firouzja, Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Sevan, So & Vachier-Lagrave.

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

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