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CARUANA CROWNED!

Fabiano Caruana scoops his fifth US title and fourth in a row

2019 HIKARI NAKAMURA
2020 WESLEY SO
2021 ...
2022 ...
2023 FABIANO CARUANA
2024 FABIANO CARUANA

ISSN 0964-6221



How Good is Your Chess? - Daniel King on Caruana's remarkable consistency

Chess Fever Turns 100 - John Henderson celebrates the original chess film

Christmas Stocking Fillers - Let Sean Marsh be your guide for what to request

Chess

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Slava Ukraine!



The European Team Championships in Georgia were dominated by Ukraine and Poland, with a number of notable individual performances including Gawain Jones

A dramatic final round saw Ukraine prevail at the European Team Championships in Batumi. They led the Open section for most of the tournament until losing 2½-1½ to Azerbaijan in the penultimate round. However, come the final round the Azeris would stumble and lose 3-1 to Serbia, with Shakhriyar Mamedyarov blundering against Alexey Sarana on top board. In contrast, Ukraine were much more solid, three draws and a win on board four from rising star Ihor Samunenkov over Luke McShane giving them a 2½-1½ victory over England and the gold medals.

That result knocked England down to ninth place, while Ukraine pulled two points clear of silver medallists Azerbaijan, with Serbia taking bronze. The Ukrainians were actually only seeded ninth, but shone under the inspirational gaze of their captain, the legendary Alexander Beliavsky. Former FIDE world champion Ruslan Ponomarev drew all eight games on top board and while Andrei Volokitin and Anton Korobov weren't quite at their very best on 2 and 3, the damage was done lower down, Igor Kovalenko racking up a huge 6½/8 on board 4 and Samunenkov 5½/8 on the reserve board.

In contrast to Ukraine, top seeds Germany struggled, being stunned by Denmark in the opening round and never really recovering, despite another impressive performance from Vincent Keymer, his 7/9 sufficing for a 2838 performance, one only eclipsed on top board by Richard Rapport's 5½/7 and 2869 result for Hungary. The Germans lost for a second time in round four, 2½-1½ to Ukraine after an early blow on board 2.

M.Blübaum-A.Volokitin Germany vs Ukraine Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 ♖c2 d5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 ♖xc3 0-0 7 cxd5

White usually opts for 7 ♗g5 or 7 ♘f3, in part due to the active reply which Volokitin now deploys.

7...♗e4 8 ♖c2 exd5 9 ♗f4 c5!?

Another sharp move, forcing White to be careful as, for example, 10 dxc5? ♗c6 11 ♘f3 ♗f5 12 ♖c1 d4! would already be superb for Black.

10 f3! ♗g5!

This improves over the 10...♗f6 of Ouellet-Audi, Piastany 2024, when 11 dxc5!



Andrei Volokitin scored a crucial victory when he crushed one of the 2026 Candidates.

♗e8 12 e3 ♗h5 13 0-0-0!? favours White.
11 dxc5 ♗e6 12 ♗d6 ♗e8 13 ♖d1



13...b6

Striving to open lines, but it may be that 13...d4!? was stronger, and only if 14 e4 b6 when the engines suggest that Black should have enough compensation.

14 b4?

Both players have handled the early skirmishes well, but this is a definite error. White needed to either push the e-pawn or be brave and go in for 14 ♖xd5! bxc5 (14...♗b7?! 15 ♖d2 bxc5 16 ♖c3 ♗c6 17 e3 leaves White firmly in control) 15 ♖c3 when Black may not have quite enough for the pawn after 15...♗a6 16 e4 ♗xf1 17 ♗xf1 ♖b6 18 ♗e2 ♗d7.

14...a5!

Undermining White's advanced queenside. Blübaum was presumably relying upon his 17th move, but had overlooked an important detail.

15 e3 axb4 16 ♗b5

A hard move to criticise when you consider 16 axb4 ♗a6, after which White's position also quickly becomes a wreck: for example, 17 ♖b3 (or 17 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 18 ♗e2 ♖h4+) 17...d4!? 18 ♗b5 bxc5! 19 ♗xe8 ♖xd6 leaves Black with a virulent initiative and too much for the exchange.

16...♗d7!



17 c6?

This loses, but even 17 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 18 c6 ♗dc5 leaves White in serious trouble.

17...♗xc6! 18 ♗xc6 b3!

Even stronger than the scarcely shabby 18...♖c8.

19 ♖d2

Likewise, 19 ♖c3 d4! 20 exd4 ♗xc6 21 ♗e5 (or 21 ♖xc6 ♗xd4+) 21...♖c8 cleans White up.

19...♗xc6 20 ♗b4 d4!

Decisively ripping open lines with White still two moves from castling.

21 e4

White can't castle after 21 ♗e2 ♖h4+ 22 g3 ♖h3 and 23 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 24 ♖xd4 ♖g2 25 ♖f1 ♗b5 (Pein) would underline his chronic weakness on the light squares and in the centre.

21...♗b5!



This resource once again. The crushing threat is now ...♖c8 and ...♗c2.

22 ♖b1 ♘c5 23 ♘e2

White also wouldn't have lasted much longer after 23 ♗xc5 bxc5 24 ♖xb3 (or 24 ♘e2 ♖xa3) 24...♗c4 25 ♖b2 ♖xa3 26 ♘e2 ♗xe2 27 ♗xe2 c4.

23...♘d3+ 24 ♗f1 ♖c8 25 ♖xb3 ♘c1 0-1

For England, Nikita Vitiugov crushed Marc'Andria Maurizzi and contributed a very useful unbeaten '+1' on top board, while Gawain Jones was the star of the show. He fought hard throughout and rode his luck slightly at times, finishing with 6/8 and an individual bronze medal on board 3.

S.Kourkoulos-Arditis - G.Maroroa Jones Greece vs England



Black has been under the cosh and with move 40 starting to loom, has just offered a piece in return for a menacing looking line-up on the h-file. Should White take the offered piece or defend his knight on f6?

36 ♖ff6?

This lets Black right back into the game, although to make 36 ♖xe6! work you needed to have found the resource 36...♖xh6 37 ♖f7+ ♗a6 (37...♗c8 38 ♖xh6! isn't so hard to spot and leads to a winning ending for White after 38...♖xh6 39 ♖e8+ ♖d8 40 ♖ff8! ♖xe8 41 ♖xe8+ ♗d7 42 ♖xe5) 38 b5+!, which actually forces mate due to a stunning further resource: 38...cxb5 (somewhat more mundane would be 38...♗xb5 39 ♖b4+ ♗a6 40 ♖a4#) 39 ♖a5+! ♗xa5 40 ♖xa7#.

36...♗d7 37 ♖d6?

Carelessly abandoning the f-file. Instead, White needed to be brave and after 37 ♘f7! ♖h1+ 38 ♗f2 Black doesn't appear to have anything better than perpetual check.

37...♖f8!

Now the knight can't easily move from h6 and ...♗e8 is an issue.

38 ♖e2?

Collapsing. After 38 a4? ♗e8 39 ♖ge6 ♖f4 Black would have been doing very well, but 38 ♖xd7+! ♖xd7 39 ♘f5 might yet have enabled White to mount some resistance.

38...♖f4

Simple chess, threatening to check on c1. Similarly 38...♗e8 39 ♖ge6 ♖g5 would have won. **39 g3**



Gawain Maroroa Jones scored 6/8, featuring 2/2 with his beloved King's Indian Defence, including a wild victory over Baadur Jobava. He also defended for 143 moves to hold Max Warmerdam.

39 ♖e1 would have cut out the check, but after 39...♗c7! White can scarcely move and 40 a4 ♗e8 41 ♖ge6 ♖fh8 would have won the knight and the game.

39...♖c1+ 40 ♗g2 ♗e8 41 ♖ge6 ♗h5!



A neat blow as it's mate after 42 ♖xh5 ♖f1+ 43 ♗h2 ♖f2#.

42 g4 ♗xg4! 43 ♖xg4

This is pretty hopeless, but if 43 ♘g4 ♖h1+ 44 ♗g3 ♖h3#.

43...♖f1+ 44 ♗g3 ♖f2+ 45 ♗h3 ♖f3+ 46 ♖xf3 ♖xf3+ 47 ♗h4 ♖f2+ 48 ♗g4 ♖xc2 49 ♘f5 ♖g2+ 50 ♘g3 ♖h3 0-1

Some 31 places lower than England came Scotland for whom teenage IM Freddy Waldhausen Gordon only lost in the final round, against Swiss GM Sebastian Bogner, while recording a pretty respectable 50% score on board 1.

N.Saraci-F.Waldhausen Gordon Kosovo vs Scotland Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♘f3 h6 7 ♗h4 0-0 8 ♖c2 b6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗e2 ♗b7 11 0-0 ♖c8?!

11...♘e4! would be thematic and surely fine for Black after 12 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 13 ♖ac1 c6.

12 ♖fd1

This is far from bad, but 12 ♘b5! a6 13 ♘a7 ♖a8 14 ♘c6 ♗xc6 15 ♖xc6 would have netted the bishop-pair and a pretty pleasant edge for White.

12...c6 13 ♖ac1 ♖e8 14 ♖b1 g6 15 b4! a6 16 ♘e5

Black has been outplayed, with his kingside now looking a little vulnerable.

16...♘xe5 17 dxe5 ♘d7 18 ♗xe7

Retaining pieces is usually the way to go in such a scenario and, indeed, 18 ♗g3! ♗f8 19 f4 ♖e7 20 ♗g4 would have left Black firmly under the cosh.

18...♖xe7 19 ♗g4?



Underestimating Black's reply. Instead, 19 f4! followed by ♗g4 and ♘e2 would still have left White clearly better.

19...♘xe5!

An excellent exchange sacrifice. Black will obtain an outpost on c4, as well as the light squares and even attacking chances on the kingside.

20 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 21 ♖d4?

This fails to hold Black up. Likewise, 21 ♖c2 ♗f5 22 ♖e2!? ♘c4 23 a3 b5 24 ♖f3!? h5 feels quite unpleasant for White, but the engines opine that 25 h3! is



On board 2 in the penultimate round, England eventually drew with Holland after Gawain's save. Nearest the camera, Luke McShane (4½/8) makes his only draw of the event against Erwin L'Ami.

OK, since 25...♖xa3 26 ♖xd5! cxd5 27 e4 regains the piece with rough equality.

21...♖g5! 22 ♖e2?

22 f4? would have failed to 22...♖f3+ 23 ♖h1 ♖h5 when 24 gxf3 ♖xf3+ 25 ♖g1 ♖xe3+ 26 ♖h1 ♖g4 wins the house, but 22 ♖h1! ♖g4 23 ♖b2 ♖h4 24 ♖xg4! ♖xg4 25 ♖g1 would have enabled White to fight on, albeit a clear pawn in arrears.

22...♖f3+ 23 ♖h1 ♖h5!



Much stronger than reclaiming the exchange.
24 gxf3?

This loses by force, although even after 24 h3 ♖xd4 25 ♖xd4 ♖xh3! 26 gxf3 ♖xh3+ 27 ♖g1 ♖e5 28 ♖e2 ♖g5+ 29 ♖g3 h5 Black would surely have won.

24...♖xf3+ 25 ♖g1 ♖h3 26 ♖f4 ♖e5!

Inviting the final piece to the party is the straw that breaks the camel's back.

27 ♖xh3 ♖xh3 28 ♖xd5

There's just no good move, both here and after 28 f3 ♖xf3.

28...cxd5 0-1

Leading Scores:

| | | |
|------|----------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. | Ukraine | 15/18, |
| 2-3 | Azerbaijan, Serbia | 13, |
| 4-6 | Germany, Romania, Georgia II | 12, |
| 7-11 | Netherlands, Spain, England, Turkey, Hungary | 11. |

The Women's Championship was dominated by Poland, who lost to Ukraine, but won their other eight matches, including against top seeds Georgia, to take the gold medals, aided by an unbeaten 6½/9 and some fine use of the exchange sacrifice from Alina Kashlinskaya on board 1.

A.Kashlinskaya-Y.Osmak

Poland vs Ukraine



29 ♖d6+! 1-0

Even stronger than 29 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 30 ♖xg7, as 29 ♖d6+ ♖xd6 30 ♖xd7+ is mate next move.

The Ukrainians were without the Muzychuks, but still finished second on 14/18, a point ahead of Germany. The highly experienced duo of Anna Ushenina and Natalia Zhukova both won against the Poles, while racking up 6/8 each. England were one of Poland's victims and ultimately finished on 8/18 (5/8 for both Harriet Hunt and Elmira Mirzoeva, and a particularly impressive 4/6 from Bodhana Sivanandan on board 5), while Scotland were the bottom seeds and did finish last, despite an impressive 6½/8 on top board from Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant on her return to her mother country.



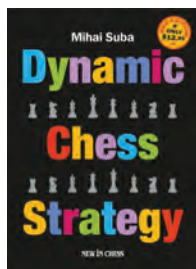
32-year-old IM Alina Kashlinskaya led from the front, scoring 6½/9 for Poland, whose consistency saw them become European Women's Team Champions, losing just three games.

Christmas Stocking Fillers



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

Time now to look at a selection of chess books from 2025, covering a wide range of subjects. Chess players: leave the magazine open on this page and place it in an obvious place, in the hope your partners, families and friends will take the hint and buy you something you really want.



Dynamic Chess Strategy
Mihai Suba, 208 pages
New in Chess

RRP £10.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £9.85**

Mihai Suba's reissued book may seem a strange place to start, but it is a classic and hopefully this new edition will help the book to reach a whole new audience. Although it does not appear to add anything new to the previous New in Chess edition (published in 2016), it remains an excellent book and one which definitely merits your attention.

Suba revolutionised people's thinking on the art of dynamic play when his book first appeared back in 1991, published by Pergamon Chess. The lessons of the book were accentuated by the presence of Suba on the UK chess circuit, with the North East being his place of residence for a number of years. We could all see, at first hand (and even from the other side of the board), his ideas in action. He was always approachable, forever willing to entertain post-mortems – which always went on for a very long time, but in a good way – and brightened up

the North East chess scene considerably.

As the back cover puts it: "In the battle of chess ideas, the publication in 1991 of *Dynamic Chess Strategy* was a defining moment. Before Mihai Suba's exceptional book, chess writers had neglected one of the most important factors of a chess position: its dynamic potential.

"Suba demonstrated that the traditional concept of 'improving the position' was often static and irrelevant, and that classical strategy, if applied dogmatically, can prevent you from finding the right plan and its subsequent moves."

In particular, Suba's trademark Hedgehog Defence against the English Opening was a recurring theme. The point he makes is that White easily sets up an ideal-looking position, complete with excellent squares for the pieces and an evident space advantage. However, it seems that White can no longer improve their position, but Black can and in so many cases, the Hedgehog's spines tear into White's pawns and pieces. Here is a case in point.

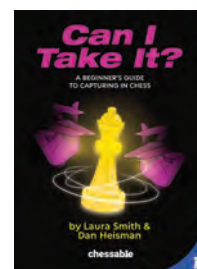
J.Garcia Padron-M.Suba
Las Palmas 1979



White now played **21 d2** and Suba comments: "Bored and disconcerted, White attacks a pawn. It is his first attack in this game, and at the same time his first mistake. Weakening the control over b5 allows Black to play his trumps."

After the further moves **21...b5! 22 cxb5 axb5 23 f3 b4 24 a4 d5** White is really struggling. Back to Suba: "Nobody knows how Black succeeds in playing both ...b5 and ...d5 in so many games, when White's principle concern should be to prevent them!"

All chess players should read this book, which is still as witty, entertaining and thought-provoking as it ever was.



Can I Take It?

Laura Smith & Dan Heisman
88 pages
Chessable

RRP £8.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.05**

Beginner's books often start off easily enough, but then the material becomes much harder very quickly. This one, subtitled 'A Beginner's Guide to Capturing in Chess', goes the other way, and keeps to a consistently basic level throughout.

The premise is far from pretentious: "You've learned the rules of chess and how the pieces move. Now what? You take your opponent's pieces, that's what! But as you may have experienced in your games, taking the wrong pieces – or taking with the wrong piece – can backfire horribly."

The theme, as the title suggests, is working out whether or not a piece is safe to capture. Here is position 76 of (105).

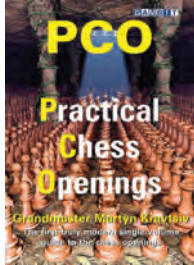


How should Black get out of check?
One for you to solve, dear readers.

There is nothing difficult here (I quite enjoyed getting everything right in a quiz book, for once), but for the target audience, which will be novices, it presents a very useful set of exercises to help players master the art of safe captures. Therefore, it will be

useful in the classroom, too.

Chessable books are always well-produced and attractive. The only recurring problem is the shortage of pages. Chess courses do not always transfer well into print in terms of length and that is very evident here. Indeed, it is a situation reminiscent of Batsford's fall from grace in the late 1980s, when impressive hardback volumes were replaced by very thin, sketchy paperbacks.



PCO: Practical Chess Openings
Martyn Kravtsiv, 544 pages
Gambit Publications

RRP £27.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.75**

Single-volume, all-embracing opening books were thought to be a thing of the past. Generations of chess players educated themselves with various volumes of *Modern Chess Openings*, *Batsford Chess Openings* and *Nunn's Chess Openings*. These titles were, of course, truncated into *MCO*, *BCO* and *NCO*, and now we have a new one: *PCO*.

This beast of a book aims to cover virtually every opening with a mixture of prose and accessible variations, to give club players a one-volume-to-turn-to tome to consult before heading off for their next league or club match.

I investigated a couple of bold, modern lines about which I know next to nothing to see how pertinent the lines and explanations would prove to be. Both lie in the Petroff:

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♜xe5



And now:

3...♞c6?!

This move, instead of the standard 3 ...d6, is a "far less viable line [which] has achieved an extraordinary degree of popularity in online bullet chess."

"One good answer is 4 d4, which is rarely played, but leaves Black's position looking very unattractive (e.g., 4...♞e7 5 ♞c3 ♞xe5 6 dxe5 ♞xe5 7 f4."

Meanwhile, after the curiously trendy **3...♞xe4**, White can avoid the unpleasant

lines by playing **4 ♞e2 ♞e7 5 ♞xe4 d6 6 d4 dxe5 7 dxe5 ♞c6** and then "the simple" **8 ♞c3 ♞xe5 9 ♞xe5+ ♞xe5 10 ♞b5** "forces Black to defend carefully in a rather tedious position."

It is remarkable that the author has managed to cram so much opening lore into one book and still find the room to add plenty of prose explanations and no-nonsense advice.

As the book's strapline has it, this is "the first truly modern single-volume guide to the chess openings" and it admirably kicks back against the tide of overcooked computer analysis and unfathomable variations. 'All killer, no filler' would be another suitable description and it is a real boon for club and tournament players to have everything available in a single volume, albeit one which will take up a significant chunk of space in one's tournament suitcase.



Ulf the Attacker!

Thomas Engqvist, 280 pages
New in Chess

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Ulf Andersson was once one of the best players in the world. Although he failed to make an impression in any of the world championship cycles of his time, he did play on board one of the famous USSR vs. Rest of the World match in 1984 and had a reputation of being an extremely difficult player to beat. Alongside that, there was also his reputation as a draw-master, with many short games and generally dull openings.

This book seeks to overturn such a reputation and to demonstrate that Andersson was more than capable of playing aggressively and beating the top players, including Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov. He was also, incidentally, one of few players of his generation to play against Bobby Fischer (game 20 in this book).

As the blurb puts it: "Every now and then, he found himself in a position on the board that demanded an attack. And then he would strike! He was fierce and decisive, showcasing his phenomenal talent and his incredible ability to sense any imbalance on the board."

The book covers the period from 1967 to 2018 and the material is presented via 56 well-annotated and sparkling attacking games. Starting with Andersson's junior years gives us the quaint sight of one of the kings of the closed games opening with 1 e4 and heading into the Ruy Lopez.

I find similarities within the games of Tigran Petrosian, who was, of course, another peaceful player, but one who, when

provoked, could play the most marvellous attacking games. Speaking of whom, one of the best games in the book features a Petrosian-like exchange sacrifice against none other than Anatoly Karpov, in the year he became champion of the world.

A.Karpov-U.Andersson Milan 1975



27 ...♞xe3!?

A very ambitious move. This is a great and instructive game to play through in its entirety [Ed. – See this month's PGN download!], but to cut a long story short, Andersson kept Karpov's legendary defensive powers at bay and maintained his advantage until the end of the game (0-1, 79).

This was Karpov's first defeat as world champion in what we now have to call classical chess. It is easy to forget too that Karpov hardly ever lost with the white pieces in his golden years (in fact, he hardly ever lost at all). Incidentally, to tie in with Suba's book, this game is one of several showing Andersson's Hedgehog skills. For a player with such a drawish reputation, he certainly played the Sicilian Defence very often with Black.

The book is enhanced by numerous photographs and is an impressive work. I very much doubt that anyone had a book showing Ulf Andersson's attacking prowess on their bingo cards for 2025, but Engqvist has done an excellent job in reassessing the subject's style of play.



**The Real Bobby Fischer:
A Year with the Chess Genius**

Petra Dautov, 192 pages
Russell Enterprises

RRP £19.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.95**

Just when you think you have read enough books about Bobby Fischer, another one comes along. Our fascination with the man

who won the ultimate title over 50 years ago continues unabated, but it is not so easy to find anything new to say about him.

This book is a translation by the ever-reliable Royce Parker of a book originally released in German in 1995. Petra Dautov, the author, had managed to strike up a very unlikely friendship with Fischer and the motivation to write about the experience is made clear very early on. "My intention in describing the experiences in this book was to show the human side of the chess genius and allow everyone to make up their own minds."

It is a very strange story, starting with Fischer testing Dautov's chess ability via a series of telephone calls before agreeing to meet with her.

Frankly, the frustrations, social and otherwise, are apparent – on both sides – from the first meeting in 1988 onwards. Dautov insists on visiting the beach, which

Fischer doesn't want to do, although somehow she made him agree to the expedition. Meanwhile, Fischer was obsessed with finding an ideal leather replacement for his worn-out chess travel set and was similarly fixated on finding a new pair of shoes to match the very old ones he was still wearing at the time.

There is no chess in this book and no photographs either, but anyone wanting to know what it was like to spend time with Fischer during his wilderness years (two years prior to the rematch with Boris Spassky in 1992) will find plenty of interest here. Fischer's booming voice, enormous appetite and unsavoury, highly outspoken views are all well to the fore here. Others may find it more of an invasion of privacy, but as mentioned earlier, Fischer still holds a certain fascination and probably always will.

Yet another new book, *Bobby Fischer's*

Chess Queen (subtitled 'The untold story of the Indian woman who captured the American World Champion's heart') by Shernaz Kennedy will be out from New in Chess by the time you read these pages. Perhaps it will make next year's set of reviews.

It is odd, but books on Fischer's obscure friendships and relationships would appear to have become, magically and mysteriously, a whole genre of its own.

And there we have it; a series of recommendations for players from novices upwards. Buy books for your chess friends as presents, drop heavy hints with family and friends that you would like some too and, above all else, never forget in this ultra-digital age that reading books is still the best and most enjoyable way to study chess. Turn off the screens, open the pages and get stuck in. It really is that simple.

Readers' Letters



Milner-Barry

Living in Munich, with a German passport since Brexit, I was particularly interested by John Henderson's article last month on Bletchley. I was surprised that Sir Philip Milner-Barry was first mentioned in the second half of it.

Some time ago, I read a German article about Milner-Barry and Bletchley, which described him as a brilliant mathematician. That author must have mixed him up with Hugh Alexander. Milner-Barry had studied classics and moral sciences at Cambridge. He revealed later that he had hardly understood the Bletchley maths and computing aspects, although his German language was excellent.

Like Milner-Barry and Alexander, my father, B. H. Wood, was also in the UK team at the 1939 Buenos Aires Olympiad when war broke out. He slightly resented the other English players rushing home to win the war, while he could hardly afford a basic steamer ticket.

I read maths at Cambridge, then got a computing diploma. At the dinner after the 1964 Varsity match, Alexander suggested I might like a job at GCHQ. Foolishly I turned down this kind offer. I said I expected some day to marry, and would like to be able to discuss my work with relatives. Indeed, even then I knew a bit about the secrecy of Bletchley and now know much more, including how Britain helped the USA to secretly crack the WW2 Japanese codes. Some Bletchley algorithms were of commercial value, but they were too secret to be patented, so the Americans got the patents instead.

Chris Wood, Munich

When in Newmarket...

I attach a picture of me beside a wall in Newmarket, Cambridgeshire. Most importantly: I didn't do it!

I was walking from a car to the East Anglian Chess Union venue in Newmarket town centre to play for Bedfordshire. I normally deplore graffiti, but I enjoyed this one, so appropriate to the occasion.

Paul Habershon, Bedford

Ed. - Our congratulations to Paul on winning both his games on November 9th, but can any Newmarket-based readers shed

any light on this unusual graffiti?

Yes, It Does Exist

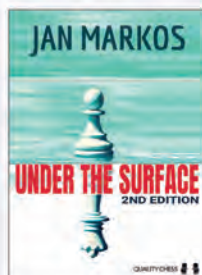
I was slightly stunned by the photo of young Bodhana playing the 'SenseRobot' in last month's Editorial, but having now visited your shop on Baker Street, I can confirm it very much does exist. It looks like a robot, plays like a robot and speaks like a robot – and isn't cheap [Ed. – *SenseRobot Chess* retails at £999]. I was pleased too to see that Chess & Bridge now has a second-hand book section – much cheaper!

A Miserly Technophobe, Surrey





NEW FROM QUALITY CHESS



Under the Surface – 2nd edition by Julen Arizmendi

This new edition adds four new chapters along with various improvements to the original content. Jan Markos shows how a grandmaster perceives chess, presenting his concepts as vivid, memorable metaphors such as Magnetic Skin, Karpov's Billiard Balls, and many others, which will come as revelations to even titled players.

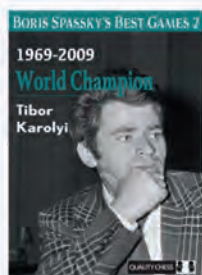
352 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)



Practical Chess Beauty – Second Edition by Yochanan Afek

Solving studies is well established as an effective method of chess improvement. Yochanan Afek is one of the world's greatest ever study composers, and in this new edition, he shares his finest creations, combining artistic beauty with practical relevance.

512 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)



Boris Spassky's Best Games 2 by Tibor Karolyi

Even after his famous defeat at the hands of Bobby Fischer in Reykjavik 1972, Boris Spassky remained among the strongest players in the world, and his masterpieces continued to delight chess lovers for decades to come.

408 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)



Practical Chess Strategy by Julen Arizmendi

Wouldn't it be nice if we had a set of rules that always directed us towards the best move in any chess position? *Practical Chess Strategy* will teach you to break down any position into its underlying elements and apply core concepts that will guide you towards the best move and plan.

424 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)

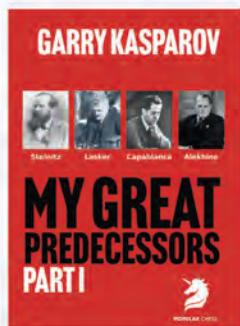


NEW FROM POPULAR CHESS

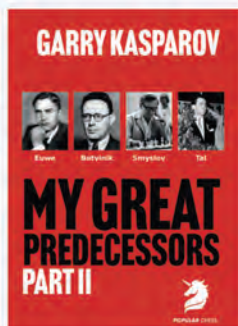
My Great Predecessors 1-5

by Garry Kasparov, the 13th World Chess Champion (1985–2000)

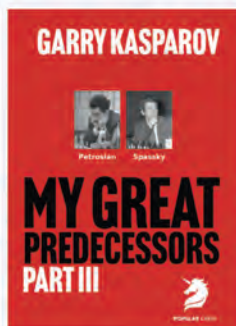
My Great Predecessors is rereleased in paperback and hardcover, enhanced in every way, with high-quality print, modern fonts, and an upgraded visual style.



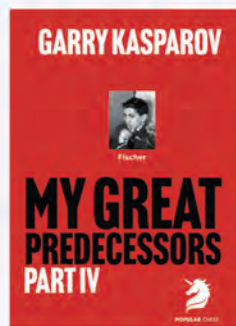
Part I
Steinitz, Lasker, Capablanca & Alekhine
576 pages
€34.99 (pb) €44.99 (hc)



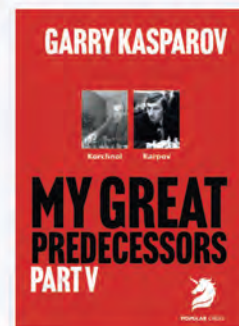
Part II
Euwe, Botvinnik, Smyslov & Tal
608 pages
€34.99 (pb) €44.99 (hc)



Part III
Petrosian & Spassky
416 pages
€34.99 (pb) €44.99 (hc)



Part IV
Fischer
640 pages
€34.99 (pb) €44.99 (hc)



Part V
Karpov
608 pages
€34.99 (pb) €44.99 (hc)



60 Seconds with... Abhimanyu Mishra



28 ♖b1! ♙c7 29 ♜f5+ ♔g7 30 g3 ♜e7
31 ♜xc8 ♜f8 1-0

But less memorable than your worst move? Not at all. I've played plenty of horrible games and moves, but the games that I remember tend to be the better ones.

And a highly memorable opponent? Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa. He was one of the first top players I beat, and every game we've played so far has been intriguing.

Favourite game of all time? Kasparov–Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1999. An absolutely timeless masterpiece.

The best three chess books: *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, *Positional Decision Making* by Boris Gelfand, and *Perfect Your Chess* by Andrei Volokitin and Vladimir Grabinsky.

Is FIDE doing a good job? Yes, FIDE is doing a good job keeping the reputation of the sport intact. The only suggestion I have, given the plan to shift to shorter time controls, is to keep tournaments like the Grand Swiss the same as they promote higher quality chess.

Or your National Federation? It's unfortunate that the US Chess Federation doesn't support its talents as strongly as other countries do.

Can chess make one happy? Yes, chess can make people happy! One thing I love about the game is how it's accessible to people of all ages and skill levels, and can be enjoyed by everyone – whether they're professionals making a career of it or casual players who simply love the game.

A tip please for the club player: Always, always analyse the games you've played.

Born: February 5th 2009, New Jersey.

Place of residence: New Jersey.

Occupation: Chess player/student.

Enjoyable? Definitely! It's quite exciting to be battling against the strongest in the world.

And home life? A relaxed one with my parents and sister.

But sometimes good to escape to: Talking to my friends or playing some mobile games.

Sports played or followed: None that I follow too closely, other than chess.

A favourite novel? Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

Piece of music? 'Lemon Tree' by Fools Garden.

Film or TV series? *Suits*. I liked how it was similar to chess in that both sides have to 'calculate ahead' and anticipate enemy resources.

What's the best thing about playing chess? The joy you feel after triumphing in a complex, fighting game where both sides gave it their all.

And the worst? When you play a great game and let the advantage slip in the final moments.

Your best move? 20 b6 against Raunak Sadhwani from earlier this year. Objectively, it's not too special, but I'm proud of finding this double pawn sacrifice in such a messy position!

A.Mishra-R.Sadhwani
Fujairah City 2025
Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 d3 ♘f6
5 ♙g5 d6 6 c3 h6 7 ♙h4 a5 8 ♘bd2 ♙a7
9 a3 g5 10 ♙g3 ♜e7 11 0-0 ♘h7 12 b4
♘f8 13 b5 ♘d8 14 d4 ♘g6 15 h3 h5
16 ♙e2 f6 17 ♘e1 g4 18 h4 f5 19 exf5
♘xh4



20 b6! ♙xb6 21 ♙b5+ c6?! 22 f6! ♜xf6
23 ♘e4 ♜e7 24 ♙xh4 ♜xh4 25 ♘xd6+
♙f8? 26 ♙c4 exd4? 27 ♘xc8 ♜xc8



Forthcoming Events

December 6-7 **Coulsdon Winter Congress**
ccfworld.com/Chess/Adult%20Competitions/Longplays_info.htm

December 6 **Northampton Rapidplay**
chesseventsuk.co.uk/tournament-information

December 6 **Warwick University Rapidplay**
warwicksu.com/venues-events/events/4117/27585/

December 7 **Bolton Rapidplay**
congress.org.uk/congress/638/home

December 13-14 **AlphaChess, Potters Bar**
congress.org.uk/congress/664/home

December 20-21 **London Junior Congress & Northwick Congress, Marylebone**
ljcc.co.uk & congress.org.uk/congress/658/home

Dec 28 - Jan 4 **Hastings International Congress**
hastingschess.com

December 28-30 **London Junior Congress & London Christmas Congress, Harrow**
ljcc.co.uk & congress.org.uk/congress/657/home

December 28-30 **Sheffield Christmas Congress**
sheffieldchessinternational.uk/fide-christmas-congress/

And for the Online Connoisseur:

November 26 - December 6 **London Chess Classic**
londonchessclassic.com; Abdusattorov, Adams, Eljanov, Firouzja, Jones, McShane, Mishra, Shankland, Theodorou & Vitiugov.

December 26-30 **FIDE World Rapid & Blitz, Doha**
worldrapidandblitz2025.fide.com; Abdusattorov, Aronian, Erigaisi, Gukesh, Ivanchuk, Murzin, Pragganandhaa, Vachier-Lagrave, etc.

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.



99th HASTINGS INTERNATIONAL CHESS CONGRESS

Sunday 28th December 2025 to Sunday 4th January 2026

All events held at the Horntye Park Sports Complex, TN34 1EX

Hastings Masters - Sunday 28th December to Friday 2nd January

A nine-round Swiss played over 6 days - FIDE rated - 26 Federations represented last year with 8 GMs and 11 IMs

Con Power Christmas Tournaments - Sunday 28th December to Tuesday 30th December

6-round Swiss tournament with rating sections

New Year Tournament - Wednesday 31st December to Friday 2nd January 2026

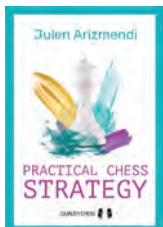
5-round FIDE-rated Swiss tournament with rating sections

Hastings Weekend Congress - Friday 2nd (evening) to Sunday 4 January 2026

5-round FIDE-rated Swiss tournament with rating sections, played over 3 days

For more information, visit: HastingsChess.com

This Month's New Releases



Practical Chess Strategy

Julen Arizmendi, 424 pages

Quality Chess

RRP £25.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.39**

This new self-development book sets itself a big task: "Wouldn't it be nice if we had a set of rules that always directed us towards the best move in any chess position? That is precisely what Grandmaster Julen Arizmendi has been searching for during his long and successful coaching career, and this is where he shares his verdict: it cannot be done, but we should still be trying!"

Furthermore, the book promises to "teach you to break down any position into its underlying elements and apply core concepts that will guide you towards the best move and plan." There is a note on terminology at the start of the book, specifically regarding the difference between strategic and positional play. According to the author, the terms:

"Are often used interchangeably, but they are, in my opinion, quite different. Strategy is the process of planning and carrying out long-term operations that change the position accordingly. It involves deciding how to place your pawns and pieces, and considering which pieces you want to keep or exchange. Positional play, on the other hand, is generally short term: the players maneuver their forces to profit from defects the opponent's position already has, or they place their pieces as harmoniously as possible hoping that an opportunity to do something more meaningful will arise. In this book, I want to discuss my approach to strategic thinking in chess and how to train it."

There are seven main chapters, running from material on king position to the bishop-pair, concluding with a series of tough exercises and their solutions.

The material is deep and covers a lot of ground, often going into detail on subjects other chess books leave behind. For example, there is an excellent and intriguing part on the queen against minor pieces, offering guidance through jungles of particularly dense plans and manoeuvres. We learn that "the queen's main priority in the battle against minor pieces is to open the opponent's king and create weaknesses", whereas the side with

the minor pieces should avoid a rook exchange "because it eliminates their best attacking unit."

The examples given in the book are complex and would baffle most – if not all – players if they had the task of navigating the complications over the board. Here is a case in point.

B.Ider-Hou Yifan

Gibraltar 2017

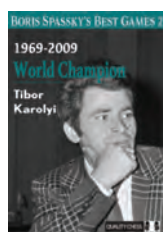


What a mess! The queen is looking dominant on the long diagonal and there appear to be many threats based on the theme of discovered check. Nevertheless, Black played the cold-blooded **45...Qxf1!!** when: "The discovered check seems dangerous, but the king can hide on g4, and the h-pawn decides." In a nutshell, that is exactly what came to pass (0-1, 52).

The point is that despite at various points not having enough material for the queen, Black was "able to compensate for the deficit with other, often neglected factors, positional in nature."

The exercises are difficult and would suit a scenario in which one has a training partner to help to go through the positions, move by move, in order to derive the maximum benefit from the material. This is a deep book and one which will suit advanced chess players looking to improve this rather obscure and neglected part of the game.

Sean Marsh



Boris Spassky's Best Games 2

Tibor Karolyi, 404 pages

Quality Chess

RRP £25.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.39**

This second of two volumes covering the best games of the 10th world champion examines the period of time from when he wrested the title from Tigran Petrosian (at the second attempt) to his final active year, 2009.

Boris Spassky had a very long and highly successful chess career, but he will, unfortunately, always be remembered for a match he lost. Replaced by Anatoly Karpov, against whom he had a suspiciously terrible lifetime record, as the great Soviet hope to regain the title from the dominant American (would Fischer have retired if Spassky had battled his way through the Candidates cycle?), Spassky fell into a drawish period for a significant amount of time, before returning to the front pages when he helped Bobby Fischer return to action, exactly 20 years after their famous 1972 match.

The fact is that Spassky's best days were behind him after he captured the title. He shone brilliantly throughout the 1960s, but despite a few notable tournament successes, his full strength manifested itself rarely. At best, there were one or two outstanding games in each tournament, usually when he had been provoked and taken away from his drawish mentality.

Fortunately, that means there are still plenty of chess gems over the course of the 40 playing years covered by this book and, as always, Tibor Karolyi has done an excellent job of assembling and presenting the material. The downside is that the gems will already be familiar to most readers. For example, Spassky's famous miniature against Bent Larsen in round one of the 1970 USSR vs. Rest of the World match and snippets from the inescapable 1972 title match with Fischer have already been overexposed over the years, but, of course, they still need to be part of any book on Spassky's best games.

Material already covered in Karolyi's other books, *The Road to Reykjavik* (Quality Chess, 2022) and *Fischer – Spassky 1972* (Quality Chess, 2022), on Fischer versus Spassky is avoided here. Apart from truncated coverage of the 1972 match, the 1992 rematch is covered in just a few words, which is a good thing.



Here is an example of a lesser-known game by the 10th world champion.

B.Spasky-A.Ostl German Bundesliga 1989



Spassky appears to be in a spot of trouble, but everything turns out to be under control.
47 axb6!!

"Spassky correctly assesses that he can ignore the threat to his rook, due to the devastating power of his two bishops."

47...f2+ 48 ♖g2 ♜e3!

"It looks like this pretty move wins, as White can't immediately take the queen due to ...♙g1 mate." Spassky, however, has seen a little further than his opponent.



49 ♙c4+!! 1-0

Defending the back rank with his rook and hitting the king hard. 49...♙h8 50 ♖xe4 and 49...♙h7 50 ♜d7+ both win easily, so Black resigned.

Summing up, despite being set after Spassky's peak years, this book acts as a fine souvenir to the skill of everyone's "second-favourite player". The notes are fine and, as Spassky is no longer with us, this volume acts as a timely reminder of another part of the rich chess heritage which has sadly slipped away.

Sean Marsh



Calculation Step by Step Vol. 1: Foundations

Surya Ganguly, PC/MAC booklet or download; running time: 4 hours, 11 minutes
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

ChessBase have clearly realised that a great many players struggle with calculation, as they follow up David Navara's recent *Your Calculation Compass* with this more detailed product from a leading Indian player and former Anand second. Ganguly aims to provide a clear path to better calculation for the ambitious club and online player. He begins by defining forcing moves and looking at common types of blunders, while introducing some useful thinking tools. Ganguly then explains how to train visualisation and learn how to appreciate which lines can be eliminated, where his 'floating moves' term should be of some use.

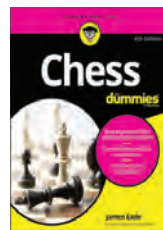
There's also a companion release, *Calculation Step by Step Vol. 2: Advanced Practice*, which also retails at £34.95 while offering four hours of video. This time Ganguly's focus is on providing a large number of exercises, designed to replicate common tournament situations, where both attacking and defensive skills, as well as clear calculation, will be tested. Both volumes of *Calculation Step by Step* may be purchased together for the special price of £62.90.



Capablanca the Great Minimalist – Volume 1: 1901–1918

Cyrus Lakdawala, 338 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Having written for Everyman/Popular Chess and also New in Chess, Lakdawala is now also producing his popular prose for Elk and Ruby, while delving into some interesting topics. He is the ideal author to write about a legendary world champion long acknowledged as a strategic genius, one who could somehow make chess look simple. Readers will learn how Capablanca made things appear so straightforward and successfully ground away, with Lakdawala annotating 156 of his games, often in relatively concise fashion and in this first work of a planned three-volume series.



Chess For Dummies

James Eade, 416 pages, paperback
RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**
This is a fourth edition of one of the bestselling chess books of all times. US Master Eade aims to quickly get the reader up

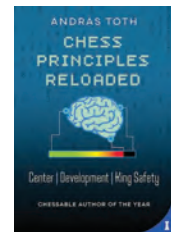
and running with playing the game, as well as learning about its many mysteries. Once the rules have been mastered, the powers of each piece are fully explained, as well as basic strategies and tactics, with plenty of advice too on the many chess resources nowadays available online.



The Killer Colle-Zukertort System

Richard Palliser, 320 pages, paperback
RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

Our editor has updated and significantly expanded his 2022 course for Chessable while turning it into book format. As well as detailed coverage of the key strategic concepts which underpin the Colle-Zukertort and a 'Quickstarter' repertoire to rapidly get the reader up and running with the opening, a full repertoire for White with 1 d4 d5 2 ♜f3 is provided, as well as a thorough examination of meeting both 1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 c5 and 2...e6 with 3 e3.



Chess Principles Reloaded

Andras Toth, 240 pages, paperback
£24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

This is a New in Chess production for Chessable, based on a bestselling course. IM Andras Toth has established quite a reputation as a coach in Australia and online, as well as for his YouTube channel, 'ChessCoach Andras'. Here he recaps the basic principles he's all too aware that even quite strong players don't follow as much as they should. As such, there is thorough coverage of the importance of centralisation, development and kingside safety; basic topics, but ones very well explained by Toth. His choice of material is especially impressive and even fairly experienced club players may enjoy the many striking games, none of which are too complex to easily grasp. A hardback edition is also in stock at Chess & Bridge, retailing at £28.95 or £26.05 for Subscribers.



Master Class Vol. 19: Wilhelm Steinitz

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

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

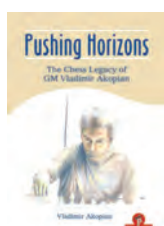
ChessBase have reassembled their fine team of Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller, Oliver Reeh and Dorian Rogozenco to tackle another of history's great players, the first official world chess champion. Viewers will become aware of not just Steinitz's important, if at times turbulent, life story, but how he approached his choice of openings, constantly honing his repertoire over time. His attacking play and strategic brilliance is also to the fore, while it becomes clear that Steinitz wasn't just an excellent tactician and calculator, but also no mean endgame player.



Practical Chess Beauty

Yochanan Afek, 512 pages, paperback
RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

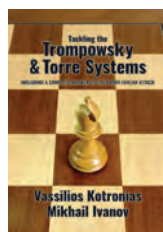
This is a new edition of one of world champion Gukesh's favourite chess books. Afek's 2018 work has been fully checked by the engines at great depth, with minimal updating occurring, and there is also plenty of new material: an extra 36 studies in all. The term 'chess study' will turn off some prospective readers, but do pay attention to the title. Afek's material is not only full of beauty, which can but inspire and perhaps even rub off in your own endgames, but has been selected with the practical chess player very much in mind. That means there are chapters on zwischenzug, mate and perpetual check, as well as stalemate, underpromotion and problem themes.



Pushing Horizons

Vladimir Akopian, 355 pages, paperback
RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

This work might be subtitled 'The Chess Legacy of GM Vladimir Akopian', but the Armenian-American Grandmaster (b.1971) is very much still alive and an active player. In this new work for Thinkers Publishing, Akopian explores in detail 25 of his most memorable games, including encounters with the world champions and several famous players. There is also plenty of interest in the section of memorable fragments, which includes some quite striking positions and situations before Akopian presents 75 of his own studies and 150 chess problems.



Tackling the Trompowsky & Torre Systems

Mikhail Ivanov & Vassilios Kotronias,
336 pages, paperback

RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

This new release from Russell Enterprises might best be thought of as a guide for the King's Indian or Grünfeld player when White neglects to play a quick c2-c4 after 1 d4 ♘f6. That said, the London is not on the radar of the grandmaster authors, rather they provide a detailed repertoire for Black with 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 ♖e4, while also showing how in fairly dynamic fashion to meet 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗g5 and 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♗f4. There's also a short chapter on 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 c5, meaning that even Nimzo and Queen's Indian players will find material of interest, especially if they're also keen on meeting the Trompowsky with 2...♗e4.

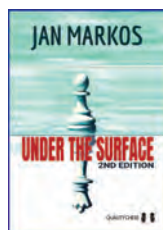


The Menacing Colle & Zukertort System for the Club Player!

Robert Ris, PC/MAC booklet or download;
running time: 5 hours, 41 minutes

RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

Dutch IM Ris is another to have tackled the Colle of late, in his case while making a welcome return to the ChessBase studio. He makes good use of some classic and striking examples to explain all the key ideas behind two club player favourites after 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♗d3, namely the pure Colle set-up characterised by an early c2-c3 and the Zukertort lines with an early b2-b3 and ♗b2.



Under the Surface

Jan Markos, 352 pages, paperback
RRP £26.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.29**

This award-winning classic is another work to have received the updated and expanded treatment from Quality Chess. Many players were inspired by the wide-ranging first edition, a work which, in a not dissimilar way to *The Seven Deadly Chess*

Sins, can only inspire much self-reflection from the reader, thought which may well enhance their game. Some of Markos's metaphors, not least 'Karpov's Billiard Balls', became quite well known and now he has added yet another enticingly-named concept: the Hannibal Manoeuvre. There are also new chapters on the bishop-pair, exchanging, and the battle between different pieces in unbalanced positions. Whether or not you've read the first edition, all those who dip into this new one are in for a treat.

Note that a hardback version of both *Practical Chess Beauty* and *Under the Surface* is also available, retailing at £31.99 or £28.79 for Subscribers.



Understanding before Moving 3: Sicilian Structures Part 3

Herman Grooten, 465 pages, paperback
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

The Dutch IM continues his detailed quest to reveal the most important features of the Sicilian Defence. This time his focus is on the Dragon, the Four Knights and the Sveshnikov. In each variation, Grooten begins with a useful discussion of the key motifs for each side before examining the most important lines in some detail, while offering some repertoire recommendations.

4NCL Bradford Congress 2026

Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th
January

To be held at:

Cedar Court Bradford,
Mayo Avenue, Rooley Lane,
Bradford, BD5 8HW.

**All Sections are 5 rounds
and are FIDE & ECF rated:**

FIDE Open, U2000, U1700

Prize Fund: £3,000

Entry Fee: £35

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SLIGO CHESS & CULTURE FESTIVAL

JAN 30 - FEB 8 2026

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