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# Chess

## AWESOME ABDUSATTOROV!

Nodirbek Abdusattorov finishes top of the table at Arsenal to win the XTX Markets London Chess Classic with a round to spare

ISSN 0964-6221



FIDE World Cup - Daniel King on Javokhir Sindarov's success in Goa



British Winners - Major success for Shreyas Royal and Daniel Fernandez



Christmas Quiz - Graham Phythian will help while away the festive days

# Chess

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# Contents

<b>Editorial</b> .....	4
Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in the game	
<b>Awesome Abdusattorov</b> .....	9
The Uzbek no.1 pulled some two points clear at the London Chess Classic	
<b>60 Seconds with... Matt Piper</b> .....	12
We learn a little about one of the Classic's main organisers	
<b>How Good is Your Chess?</b> .....	13
Daniel King on Javokhir Sindarov's success at the FIDE World Cup	
<b>World Cup Endgames</b> .....	16
Brian Escalante Ramirez presents a collection of practical lessons from Goa	
<b>British Winners!</b> .....	20
Major tournament success for Shreyas Royal and Daniel Fernandez	
<b>Find the Winning Moves</b> .....	26
Can you do as well as the players at the European Teams and US Champs?	
<b>The Real Beth Harmon?</b> .....	30
Ben Graff looks back at the life and career of his near namesake, Sonja Graf	
<b>Hey Mr Christmas</b> .....	33
John Henderson tells the story of Rudolph and chess-playing Johnny Marks	
<b>Christmas Chess Quiz</b> .....	34
Graham Phythian will help you while away the festive period	
<b>Off the Shelf</b> .....	36
Sean Marsh reveals some more of the best chess publications of 2025	
<b>Ireland's Premier Chess Festival</b> .....	40
Craig DuBose takes us on a whirlwind tour of the Sligo Chess Festival	
<b>Never Mind the Grandmasters...</b> .....	42
Carl on the marmite nature of the Caro-Kann and a radical idea in it	
<b>How to Beat a Grandmaster</b> .....	44
Paul Littlewood looks at a typically creative effort from Daniel Fernandez	
<b>Beating a World Champion!</b> .....	46
Neil Hickman tells the story of how Gaprindashvili didn't defeat John Taylor	
<b>Home News</b> .....	48
10-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan is the UK Women's Blitz Champion!	
<b>Forthcoming Events</b> .....	49
Will you be playing at Telford, Bradford, Stockport or Sligo this month?	
<b>Overseas News</b> .....	50
Sindarov won the World Cup and Simon Williams triumphed at Kilkenny!	
<b>Solutions</b> .....	54
All the solutions to <i>Find the Winning Moves</i>	
<b>This Month's New Releases</b> .....	55
Reviews of recent releases on Capablanca and important chess principles	
<b>Saunders on Chess</b> .....	58
John on another fabulous instalment of the London Chess Classic	

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# 60 Seconds with... Matt Piper



**Born:** Truro, Cornwall, though I was only the second best chess player born in that hospital that week in November 1971.

**Place of residence:** Spitalfields, London.

**Occupation:** I work for Chess in Schools and Communities, and have recently spent most of my time organising the 2025 XTX Markets London Chess Classic.

**Enjoyable?** Of course! It's a privilege to be able to earn a living in chess.

**And home life?** Wife, two daughters, a dog (Lola), and a guinea pig (Janet) – I'm outnumbered!

**But sometimes good to escape to:** Cornwall. Most of my family still live there and I also run a business selling art from the county, so I'm back there regularly. It's a lovely place to visit, especially if the weather is good.

**Sports played or followed:** Cricket, with the emphasis on 'followed'. One huge bonus about working for CSC is that the office is a 20-minute walk from Lord's.

**A favourite novel?** The *Wolf Hall* trilogy. Thomas Cromwell's home was on Austin Friars, part of my regular dog-walking route. Hilary Mantel really brought him to life – I was hooked for over 2,000 pages.

**Piece of music?** For sentimental reasons, and for some great lyrics, 'Babies' by Pulp.

**Film or TV series?** I'm always last in line for the remote control (see above), so I've not really watched much TV for the past 10 years. The last film I watched was probably *Frozen 2*, the first half – I slept through the rest.

**The best three chess books:** 1. Fischer, *My 60 Memorable Games*, for the clarity of Fischer's ideas and for some of the most memorable chess quotes. 2. Bronstein, *Zurich 1953 International Chess Tournament* for some great explanations of middlegame strategies, and some incredible games. 3. Any book by Mihail Marin – I don't think you'll find a better contemporary chess author.

**What's the best thing about playing chess?** I'm a pessimist at the board, so that moment when you realise you are about to win a game always comes as an amazing surprise.

**And the worst?** That feeling of regret when only three moves into the game I remember that I still have nothing better to play than the Bogó-Indian.

**Your best move?** It wasn't particularly deep, but probably 40...♖xd4 against Stuart Conquest in the 2009 London Chess Classic FIDE Open.

## S.Conquest-M.Piper London 2009



40...♖xd4 41 ♜xd4 ♜xf1+ 42 ♖xf1 ♜e4 0-1

**But less memorable than your worst move?**

In the 1992 British Championships I started with a loss to Stuart and before I knew it – it was all a bit of a blur – found myself on 0/7. It's hard to pick a single bad move from the many I played in those games. They even reported it on Ceefax\* when I got off the mark in Round 8.

\* Look it up, kids, this is how we used to live!

**And a highly memorable opponent?** I once turned up for a London League match to find myself playing David Bronstein on board 2. He was very generous and offered me a draw about 20 moves in, when he could, no doubt, have ground me down.

**Favourite game of all time?** Karpov-Kasparov, Game 16 of their second world championship match. Kasparov gives up a pawn on move 8 and then demonstrates that the extra pawn gets in the way of White's play. As someone who is quite materialistic at the chess board, I find the whole idea quite unfathomable, especially in such an important game.

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

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜c6 5 ♜b5 d6 6 c4 ♜f6 7 ♜1c3 a6 8 ♜a3 d5! 9 cxd5 exd5 10 exd5 ♜b4 11 ♙e2

♙c5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♙f3 ♙f5 14 ♙g5 ♜e8 15 ♖d2 b5



16 ♜ad1 ♜d3 17 ♜ab1 h6 18 ♙h4 b4 19 ♜a4 ♙d6 20 ♙g3 ♜c8 21 b3 g5 22 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 23 g3 ♜d7 24 ♙g2 ♖f6 25 a3 a5 26 axb4 axb4 27 ♖a2 ♙g6 28 d6 g4 29 ♖d2 ♙g7 30 f3 ♖xd6 31 fxg4 ♖d4+ 32 ♙h1 ♜f6 33 ♜f4 ♜e4 34 ♖xd3 ♜f2+ 35 ♜xf2 ♙xd3 36 ♜fd2 ♖e3 37 ♜xd3 ♜c1! 38 ♜b2 ♖f2 39 ♜d2 ♜xd1+ 40 ♜xd1 ♜e1+ 0-1

**Is FIDE doing a good job?** Chess is booming, more than at any point in my lifetime, but I'm not sure how much of that is down to FIDE.

**Or your National Federation?** I know several brilliant people who work for the ECF, but somehow the organisation doesn't add up to the sum of the parts.

**Any advice for either?** I think there are enough people chipping in from the sidelines already – perhaps that's part of the problem. The ECF is in safe hands in Richard Walsh.

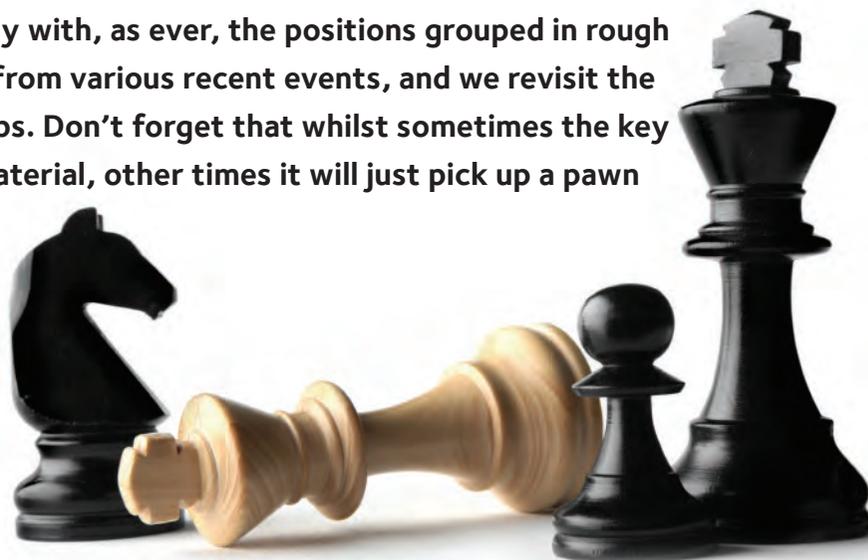
**Can chess make one happy?** Of course! Why are we all wasting so much time on it if it doesn't?

**A tip please for the club player:** Nobody is ever going to play into your main opening lines. Find a book on opening deviations instead (there are several good ones) – reading that will be far more productive than learning 20 moves of Poisoned Pawn theory.

# Find the Winning Moves

24 puzzles to test your tactical ability with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from various recent events, and we revisit the European Teams and US Championships. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just pick up a pawn or even be a quiet move.

Solutions on page 54.



## Warm-up Puzzles



**(1) D.Macias Pino-S.Del Rio de Angelis**  
La Nucia 2025  
White to Play



**(2) V.Anand-G.Kasparov**  
St. Louis (rapid) 2025  
Black to Play



**(3) L.Cornhill-E.Miller**  
York 2025  
White to Play



**(4) S.Moskalets-Li Hewei**  
Hoogeveen Open 2025  
Black to Play



**(5) R.Praggnanandhaa-L.Aronian**  
Sao Paulo (rapid) 2025  
Black to Play



**(6) B.Yeganegi-A.Fedosov**  
Dushanbe 2025  
White to Play and Draw

## Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54



**(7) P.Goldsworthy-P.Bruns**  
Bregenz 2025  
White to Play



**(8) D.Staples-P.Hopwood**  
York 2025  
Black to Play



**(9) M.Walker-T.Ansell**  
Horstead 2025  
White to Play



**(10) P.Barrionuevo-W.Graif**  
Titled Tuesday Blitz 2025  
Black to Play



**(11) N.Pavlov-J.Elias Reyes**  
Titled Tuesday Blitz 2025  
Black to Play



**(12) D.Swiercz-A.Liang**  
US Championship, St. Louis 2025  
White to Play



**(13) L.Jarocka-M.Hebden**  
4NCL, Dudley 2025  
Black to Play



**(14) N.Grandelius-S.Mihajlov**  
European Club Cup, Rhodes 2025  
White to Play



**(15) W.Bradley-I.Mestek**  
Nato Championship, Deblin 2025  
White to Play

## Harder Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54



**(16) D.Gukesh-M.Carlsen**  
St. Louis (rapid) 2025  
Black to Play



**(17) V.Mikhalevski-G.Buckley**  
World Senior Championship, Gallipoli 2025  
White to Play



**(18) P.Motwani-A.Raetsky**  
World Senior Championship, Gallipoli 2025  
White to Play



**(19) Wei Yi-V.Dragnev**  
German Bundesliga 2025  
White to Play



**(20) D.Yuffa-V.Sanal**  
European Team Championship, Batumi 2025  
Black to Play



**(21) W.So-A.Woodward**  
US Championship, St. Louis 2025  
White to Play



**(22) V.Murzin-D.Dardha**  
European Club Cup, Rhodes 2025  
Black to Play



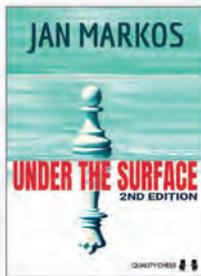
**(23) M.Boyer-V.Ivic**  
European Team Championship, Batumi 2025  
Black to Play



**(24) J.Kosakowski-A.Merry**  
4NCL, Dudley 2025  
Black to Play

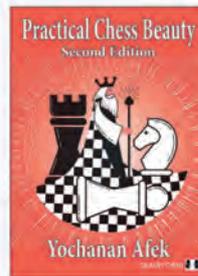


## NEW FROM QUALITY CHESS



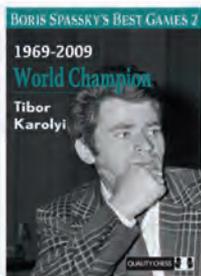
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This new edition adds four new chapters along with various improvements to the original content. Jan Markos shows how a grandmaster perceives chess, presenting his concepts as vivid, memorable metaphors such as Magnetic Skin, Karpov's Billiard Balls, and many others, which will come as revelations to even titled players. 352 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)



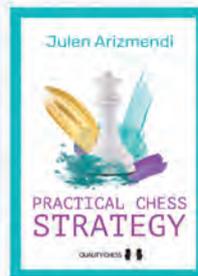
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Wouldn't it be nice if we had a set of rules that always directed us towards the best move in any chess position? *Practical Chess Strategy* will teach you to break down any position into its underlying elements and apply core concepts that will guide you towards the best move and plan. 424 pages €29.99 (pb) €34.99 (hc)

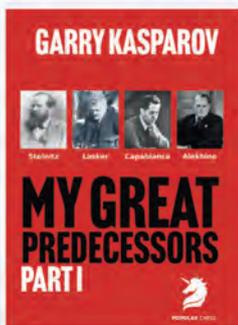


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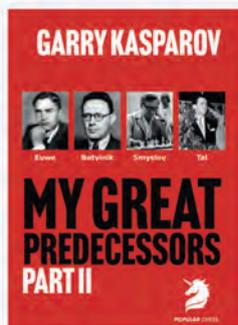
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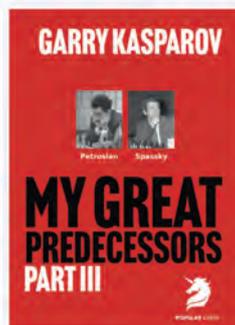
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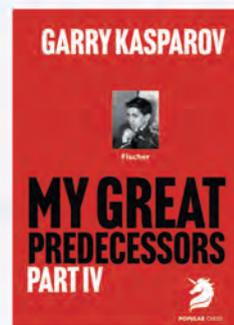
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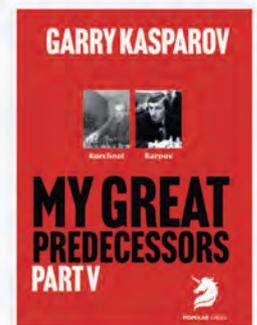
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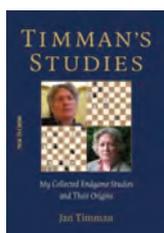
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# Off the Shelf



## Sean Marsh reveals some more of the best chess publications of 2025

Time now to round up a number of 2025 releases which deserve a mention, but were prevented from appearing in the main review pages due to lack of space.



### Timman's Studies

Jan Timman, 456 pages  
New in Chess

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Jan Timman, formerly tipped as the great Western hope to wrest the title of world chess champion from the firm Soviet grip, is now mostly associated with his excellent books for New in Chess. As the back cover explains, this new book concludes his highly-rated trilogy, with each volume focusing on a different aspect of the game.

"Jan Timman completes an impressive and fascinating trilogy with his collected studies. In *Timman's Titans*, winner of the 2017 ECF Book of the Year Award, he writes about the world champions he admires. In *Timman's Triumphs*, he annotates his hundred best games. In *Timman's Studies*, he offers his collected compositions of endgame studies."

It is interesting to note that even at the height of his playing powers, Timman was always deeply interested in chess studies – a crossover which usually does not exist outside the books of the late, great Mark Dvoretsky.

Here is a summary of the contents: "In this book, he presents 160 studies and explains how they were created, whether inspired by the works of other composers or game positions." There are seven chapters, with the first one quaintly covering "20th century studies" and subsequent chapters moving through the 2000s, before concluding a fine work with "New, unpublished studies".

I find it extraordinary that there are some who seek to heavily criticise Timman's studies, as he mentions in the preface: "In commentaries and jury reports, I have regularly read condescending remarks about my studies. Here are some examples of what various endgame study composers had to say: 'Annoying lines', 'It's not interesting', 'Noise and turmoil', and 'The fight is not really

memorable'. In actual fact, I was showcasing real chess – deep, rich variations that every practical player will appreciate. In that sense, this book can be seen as a manual; the subject matter consists of the depth and the beauty that lies hidden in the game of chess."

To my eyes, it is the very fact that most of his studies show what might well happen in over-the-board games which makes them more appealing, and I believe readers will have sympathy for this point of view. Practical players tend to be put off studies which look nothing like 'real' chess. It is the aspect of transferable skills which we are after.

This is a snippet from the end of one study. White has a difficult task to save the game, especially as the knight is cut off by the bishop in classic fashion.



White to play and draw

### 8 ♖f3!

"The only square for the king; White changes course. After 8 ♖f4 c4 9 ♙e3 ♗b6 10 ♗d4 ♗b5 Black wins easily; the knight remains locked up."

### 8...c4 9 ♖f4

"Mutual zugzwang."

### 9...c3

After 9...♗b7 10 ♗xf5 c3 11 ♗e6 White has a saving check on c5."

### 10 ♙e3

"Black cannot make progress since his pawn has advanced too far. On the next move, White can sacrifice his knight on d7 or e6."

This really is chessboard magic and very instructive indeed.

Small snippets of biographical material and anecdotes from Timman's life embellish the book, making it a very readable tome and a worthy continuation of his special run of books for New in Chess.

*Ed.* – A hardback version of Timman's *Studies* is also available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £31.95 or £28.75 for Subscribers.



### The Killer Colle-Zukertort System

Richard Palliser, 320 pages  
London Chess Centre Publishing

RRP £24.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.49**

Amid the surplus of books and games about the phenomenally popular London System, we hear the occasional voice speaking up in support of other queen's pawn systems. The Trompowsky, for example, periodically has its time in the sun, but, on the other hand, the Colle System struggles to find its 15 minutes of fame. This is a shame, because it can be hugely effective, especially at club level, partly because everyone spends so much time preparing anti-London lines and does not have the time to prepare against the Colle.

There are two ways to play the Colle System. The Koltanowski System, which sees White setting up a triangle of pawns on c3, d4 and e3, and playing for the e3-e4 push, is still potent, but is not covered here. Instead of that line, this book, penned by an author whose name should be very familiar to all readers of this magazine, shines the spotlight on the Colle-Zukertort System, which sees White loading up torpedo bishop number two on b2, to complement the other one on d3. With two bishops pointing directly at Black's kingside, the attacking intentions are quite clear.

This book is an updated edition of a Chessable course. Over to the author to explain what has changed for this new, printed edition:

"As you'll quickly discover, I've made good use of the opening in my own games over the years and here offer lines I very much believe in. There's a full repertoire for White after 1 d4 d5, as well as coverage of the Colle against the Queen's Indian (1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 e6 3 e3), and when Black attempts a Benoni-style approach (1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 e3). The second of those is new for this book, as is the Ding Liren-approved option of 4 ♗bd2 as an alternative to 4 dxc5 for White after 1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 e3 c5. I've also added a short

section on 3...a6!? there, but otherwise the material is largely the same as when it was first published on the Chessable platform as *The Killer Colle-Zukertort System*. It has though been fully revised and significantly updated in places, including the addition of a few more illustrative games."

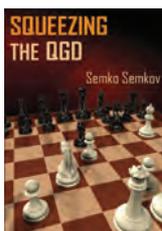
Major selling points for this book are that it offers a complete repertoire for White after 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3, based around a simple-to-learn set-up which offers good attacking chances. That makes it very appealing to club and tournament players, and there is no skimping on quality to make it fully accessible either; these lines are very potent and one slip by Black can bring a veritable torrent of trouble cascading down in the vicinity of the king. Here is a typical case in point, from over 100 years ago.

**A. Rubinstein-G. Salwe**  
3rd matchgame, Lodz 1903



Flexibility of thinking led Rubinstein to bring the best out of one of the torpedoed bishops with **26 a4!**. "A very nice touch, not failing to include the Zukertort bishop in the attack after all. Black's king won't now manage to run away." Indeed, after **26...b6 27 ♗a3**, annoying the king from a distance, Black had to block off the dark-squared pressure with **27...♖c5**, but even this desperate sacrifice of the exchange failed to keep the wolf from the door (1-0, 32).

It is time to move on from the London System and the Trompowsky, and to bring the Colle back into the fold. This book could help to make it the d-pawn system of 2026.



**Squeezing the QGD: Queen's Gambit Declined**  
Semko Semkov, 228 pages  
Chess Stars

RRP £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**  
I say it every year: books published by

Chess Stars deserve to receive a lot more attention. Semko Semkov once again provides us with an excellent and thoughtful opening manual, on one of the most popular openings, at least when people are not dodging the main lines with d4 spin-offs such as the Colle System!

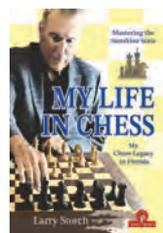
The popular Exchange variation, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♗g5, is the recommendation against the Queen's Gambit Declined. Early deviations by Black – some of which would have looked ridiculous in previous eras before strong players adopted an 'anything goes' policy – include 3...a6, 3...h6 and 3...♗e7, as well as 5...♗b4 here, all of which also receive coverage.

As usual, there are plenty of little theoretical twists in the material, such as this one.



The natural reaction, poised on a reflex response, is 8 ♗h4, but Semkov recommends **8 ♗f4!** instead, to "exploit Black's careless move order." This is interesting, because 8 ♗h4 would give Black the opportunity to initiate exchanges by moving the knight from f6 at some point, but the bishop on f4 has other ideas, including dropping back to g3. White may then play f2-f4, giving good attacking chances, including a rook lift via f3.

These are the sort of thought-provoking yet outwardly simple ideas I like in Semkov's books. Keep in mind that the book does not promise to crush the Queen's Gambit Declined (which is an opening unlikely to be refuted), but to squeeze it instead. I can recommend this book to tournament players who open with 1 d4 and 2 c4, and who would like to upgrade their opening weapons accordingly.



**My Life in Chess**  
Larry Storch, 320 pages  
Thinkers Publishing

RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**  
If you have some time to spare time over Christmas and there are no games for which you need to prepare, perhaps a change of pace would be in order. Autobiographical

books of players below world championship standard form a niche market, yet there are so many stories and games which we would never be able read about if publishers did not take a risk on such projects.

Who is Larry Storch? Let the blurb do its work:

"Larry Storch is a Life Master and a five-time Central Florida Chess Club Champion. He also won the Orlando Chess Club Championship twice. In addition, Larry and his teammates have won the United States Amateur Team South tournament five times. This is the story of his 43-year tournament career. It tells of the tournaments he played, and the rivalries and friendships made over the years. It also details his struggle to achieve the original Life Master title while working full-time and raising a family. The book tells of the battles of a veteran chess player getting older while opponents became younger."

His life story will no doubt resonate with many readers, especially as he starts with something very familiar to the rest of us: "Chess has always been more than just a game to me; it's a world of rewards and heartaches."

There are 121 games, with very good annotations. Storch's opponents include American luminaries such as Lev Alburt, Leonid Shamkovich and Arnold Denker. There are several occasions in which his more experienced opponents escape from difficult positions, such as this one.

**L. Storch-A. Denker**  
Jacksonville 1979



To where should the White king move?  
**49 ♖g3?**  
"Wrong direction. 49 ♖f4 c4 50 ♗xc4! ♖xc4 51 g5 hxg5+ 52 ♖xg5 and Black's knight is too far away."

The wily Denker now saved the game after **49...♗d3 50 f4 c4 51 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 52 g5 hxg5 53 fxg5** ("I thought I was winning here, but alas, it was not to be") **53...♗d5 54 ♖g4 ♗e6** with a draw.

We have all had similar experiences of having winning positions against the big guns only to see the advantage somehow slip away.

I found the life story very interesting and the games highly instructive. Therefore this

book can be recommended to anyone wanting a good book to actually read.



### Never Mind The Grandmasters

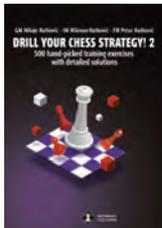
Carl Portman, 245 pages  
Steel City Press

RRP £14.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £13.49**

There is nobody quite like Carl Portman. His monthly column in this very magazine is surely one of the most popular and usually the first pages I turn to each time a new magazine lands on my mat. It is impossible to predict what Carl is going to write about in any given month, but entertainment is always guaranteed and for club players – the core group of the titular amateurs, the subtitle being ‘Here Come The Amateurs’ – there will frequently be moments of resonance. Yes, Carl is a unique character, but he is most certainly ‘one of us’.

This is a book with a wide-ranging scope: “Blending chess history with down-to-earth wisdom, Carl guides readers from pub function rooms to Europe’s grandest chess halls, celebrating the amateur players who form the bedrock of the game.”

It is good to have a permanent record of Carl’s columns, which form the backbone of this work, but there are plenty of embellishments and bonus items too.



### Drill Your Chess Strategy! 2

Miloje, Milovan & Petar Ratkovic,  
336 pages, Informant Publishing

RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

If hard work to improve your game is on the agenda over the festive break, then it could be time to delve into some serious problems posed in the latest volume of the ‘Drill’ series from Informant Publishing.

The majority of books with puzzles and problems feature chess tactics, but I have always maintained that those offering taxing material on the subject of chess strategy are more difficult – and, if the reader has resilience and determination, they could even prove to be the more rewarding of the two genres. However, the material is not for beginners: “These exercises are perfect for intermediate and club players aiming to reach a FIDE rating of 2200–2300. They’re also incredibly helpful for CM and FM-level players aspiring to become International Masters or Grandmasters.”

There are 500 exercises, taken from games over the last couple of years, presented without any sort of preamble or clues, although there is a star system to denote the difficulty of each position (one star for the easiest, and so on).

Here is one for you to try; a two-star problem.

### S.Atalik-M.Pap Serbia 2025



“What is the best way to proceed and win the game quickly?”

In fact, the end does come surprisingly quickly, as after **26 ♖xf8+! ♗xf8 27 ♕e8** “Black has no defense” because 28 ♕g6 is coming.

This book is definitely one for serious students who like to solve large numbers of difficult problems.



### ChessBase '26

various packages available (see pp.56–57)

I was very surprised, some years ago, when I found out that many of my chess-playing work colleagues had never used ChessBase, which has always proved to be a very valuable resource to me not just to maintain a database of my own games, but also for all of my online teaching.

With the release of this new version, now is the time to reverse the trend. As usual, there are several packages available, from starter to premium, plus various new add-on databases to make chess preparation easy [Ed. – see page 57 for details]. I still firmly believe that ChessBase is a hugely important tool for self-improvement and one which I can strongly recommend to all readers.

Now we have reached the end of this round-up, I am keen to see which books will grab my attention throughout 2026. Stay tuned, as more reviews will be coming your way very soon.



## A little bird just told me

### A round-up of what the top players and chess personalities have been saying on Twitter

#### London Chess Classic – @london\_chess

Given that the London Chess Classic has been going since 2009 and has featured several World Champions and a number of title challengers, we have to say that the winning, stylish and emphatic performance of @NodirbekAbd is one of the finest we have ever seen. Congratulations!

#### CHESS Magazine – @CHESS\_Magazine

His light squares might have been shot, but Luke McShane still wins at @london\_chess! So does @MickeyAdamsGM after a deep piece sacrifice and fine technical display. And Nikita wins too! A great day for @ecfchess players & @TelegraphChess...and then @GMGawain makes it 4/4! #chess

#### Malcolm Pein – @TelegraphChess

I bought tickets to #ARSBRE last night for three players and they all lost their games today. As a Liverpool fan it gives me no pleasure to bring you this information, but let it serve as a warning.

#### Anna-Maja Kazarian – @AMKazarian

My best performance so far. I achieved a WGM and an IM norm at @london\_chess and my live rating has surpassed my peak rating from 9 years ago. This is a dream come true!

#### Allison Badacsonyi – @ABadacsonyi

Such a great experience for Stanley. He gave Pragg a decent game and we’re so proud. And Pragg’s mum is lovely. Thank you @gmmds for all the support and excited updates today!

#### ChessBase India – @ChessbaseIndia

We have a new Ultimate Underwater Chess Champion – @HansMokeNiemann! In a 4-player Dive Freestyle Chess tournament consisting of Hans, Vidit, Sindarov and Caruana, Hans defeated Caruana in the finals, and went on to defeat the World Diving Chess Champion, Michal Mazurkiewicz in the Champions game!

#### Judit Polgar – @GMJuditPolgar

35 years ago, on this day, 4 December, the Hungarian women’s team – my sisters @SusanPolgar and #SofiaPolgar, #IldikóMádl, and I – won the Chess Olympiad in Novi Sad. We defended our title.

#### Hammersmith Chess – @hammer\_chess

A packed MindSports Centre listening to Jovanka! Jovi scores 18/21 in the simul, and leaves undefeated! Hope everyone had a good time!



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# Beating a World Champion!

Neil Hickman tells the story of how Nona Gaprindashvili didn't defeat John Taylor



Nona Gaprindashvili won the 1963/64 Hastings Challengers, but was not unbeaten, being outplayed by our former regular reader John Taylor.

John Taylor (1934–2021) was British Under-21 Champion in 1955 and at one stage was among the two dozen strongest players in Britain, but he remained an amateur all his life. He died just a couple of days after his near-contemporary Jonathan Penrose (1933–2021), and it was then remembered that, like Penrose, he had once defeated a reigning world champion.

The Georgian Nona Gaprindashvili (b.1941) was women's world champion from 1962 to 1978, and won the Hastings Challengers' Tournament of 1963-64. That qualified her to play in the following year's Hastings Premier, where she finished fifth with a respectable 5/9, behind grandmasters Keres (with whom she drew), Gligoric and Gheorghiu. In the Challengers' Tournament, however, she made the serious mistake of underestimating an opponent...

## N. Gaprindashvili-J. Taylor Hastings 1963/64 King's Indian Defence

1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♘g2 ♙g7 4 0-0 0-0  
5 d3 d6 6 e4 c5 7 ♗c3 ♗c6 8 h3 ♘d7  
9 ♗d2?!

Given that she has just played the prophylactic 8 h3, meaning that Black cannot play ...♗g4, it is not easy to understand why Gaprindashvili doesn't play the obvious 9 ♙e3. 9...♗h5?!

As recounted by Leonard Barden on the English Chess Forum, Taylor said of his own play: "If I remember rightly it was my only win since I drew most of my games. Nona evidently completely underestimated me on the evidence of those earlier games – and I didn't start the game well. She must have

switched off when I played an early ...♗h5 only to be forced back to f6 immediately".

10 ♗c4 ♗d4 11 g4

Gaprindashvili is quite content to be gifted two tempi towards a kingside attack.

11...♗f6 12 f4



This is starting to look threatening, and *Stockfish's* assessment that the position is level should be taken with a large pinch of salt. However, it is certainly the case that White's position is potentially loose, if Black keeps his head. Which Taylor duly does.

**12...♖e8!**

Coolly defending the d6 pawn and allowing...

**13 f5 e6**

...this response to White's pawn thrust.

**14 ♕f4 ♕c6 15 fxe6?**

White overlooks the fact that Black is now in a position to cause serious trouble on the queenside. She should, perhaps, have tried 15 a4, bolstering the knight on c4.

**15...♗xe6 16 ♖g3??**

A serious oversight. Understandably, White doesn't want to give up bishop for knight, but the move chosen gives Black just enough time to create winning threats on the other side of the board. If she was going to try and hang on to the two bishops, she had to try 16 ♕c1 and, of course, after 16...♕d4+ White's king position could politely be described as rickety.

**16...b5!**



Taylor may be facing a world champion, but he recognises that he has been handed an opportunity, and takes it with considerable vigour.

**17 ♖e3 b4 18 ♗cd5 ♕xb2**

We are always warned against capturing b-pawns, but Black is able to do so without suffering any positional disadvantage; indeed, rather the opposite. **19 ♗b1 ♕d4 20 ♖h1 ♗6c7! 21 ♗c4 ♗xd5 22 exd5 ♕b7 23 ♗e1 ♗c7 24 ♗xd6 ♕xd5 25 ♕xd5 ♗xd5**

While White still has (for the moment) one decently placed piece, Black has successfully forced off two pairs of minor pieces and is headed towards a very comfortable endgame. White has zero compensation for the pawn.

**26 c4 ♗c3 27 ♗b2 a5 28 ♖g2 ♗a6**



The utter logic of Black's play is impressive. White has one actively placed piece. So Black drives it away.

**29 ♗b5 ♗e6**

Black is going to win further material on the queenside, but before doing so he seizes the only open file, ensuring that White can get no counterplay. Again, utterly logical; Taylor is giving a very good demonstration of how not to assume that a bit of extra material will win the game by itself.

**30 ♗d2 ♗xb5 31 cxb5 ♗d5**

Another impressively logical move. Black centralises the queen and pins the g2-rook. White's passed pawn on b5 is irrelevant, so long as Black keeps his wits about him.

**32 ♗c2 ♗f8**

And, of course, the last guest comes to the party. By now Black's positional advantage is so great that *Stockfish* assesses the position as nearly '+5' in his favour (reasonable enough, as White has one rook that might as well not be there).

**33 ♗c4 ♗b7**



Exchange queens? Certainly not! Black has the ruinous threat of ...♗e2. Note, too, that the queen on b7 prevents the b-pawn from causing any trouble.

**34 ♗f5**

Utter desperation. But 34 ♖h2 ♗e2 35 ♗ff2 ♕xf2 36 ♕xf2 ♗f3 37 ♗xc5 ♗8e3 is too ghastly for words, and 34 b6 ♗e3 35 ♗xf7 ♗xf7 36 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 is no better. It would have been entirely appropriate for White to have resigned.

**34...gxf5**

Apparently there is a forced mate after 34...♗e1+ 35 ♕xe1 ♗xe1+ 36 ♖h2 ♗c7+, but Taylor takes the unflashy route of simply pocketing the offered rook. White gets nothing for it.

**35 gxf5 ♗e2 36 ♕f2+ ♖f8 37 ♗xc5+**

Recalled Taylor wryly: "[Gaprindashvili] wasn't especially gracious when she resigned; indeed towards the end of the game when it was clear to her and the spectators that her position was lost, she 'sacrificed' her queen for no compensation at all and then pushed all her remaining pieces into the centre of the board".

Certainly, resignation would have been preferable to this move.

**37...♕xc5**

Of course.

**38 ♕xc5+ ♗8e7 0-1**

Adroitly maintaining the lethal pressure against g2. If now 39 ♕xe7 Black plays 39...♕e8 with mate in two rather than 39...♕xe7, allowing White to delay matters for a move with 40 f6+.

What is impressive about this game is the way in which a world-class player, which Gaprindashvili certainly was, is made to look like a helpless rabbit for half the game.

A curious sequel followed the famous film series *The Queen's Gambit*. A character in the film (though not, apparently, in the book) says:

"The only unusual thing about [Beth Harmon], really, is her sex. And even that's not unique in Russia. There's Nona Gaprindashvili, but she's the female world champion and has never faced men".

Understandably, Gaprindashvili, who (apart from being proudly Georgian, not Russian) had played dozens of male opponents, not least Keres, Gligoric and Gheorghiu, was not best pleased, though as we shall see there is a delicious irony in her complaining of historical inaccuracy.

In an interview with *The New York Times* (quoted by Andrew Roth in *The Guardian* of 17 September 2021), she asserted: "They were trying to do this fictional character who was blazing the trail for other women, when in reality I had already blazed the trail and inspired generations..."

Vera Menchik might have had something to say about that.

Anyway, defaming someone in a film can be expensive. Back in the 1930s, MGM made a film which falsely implied that Princess Irina Yousouppoff had been raped by Rasputin. An English jury awarded her £25,000, equivalent to about £1.5 million today, and her enthusiastic lawyer sued in several other jurisdictions as well. I have seen it suggested that the Yousouppoffs made a total of about \$750,000, equivalent to over 20 times as much today.

And Gaprindashvili duly sued. The case against Netflix was settled in the autumn of 2022, with each side paying its own costs. As both sides said they were "happy with the settlement", it is generally thought that Gaprindashvili received an appreciable sum from Netflix.

The delicious irony? Gaprindashvili's lawyers included the following in their court submission against Netflix:

"21. Gaprindashvili's notable successes against men began with her successful entry into the Challengers Section of the Hastings International Chess Congress in England in 1963, which she won, defeating male players Heinrich Juhe, Ove Kinnmark, Dragoljub Baretic, John Taylor, and Henry Catozzi..."

She may have defeated Juhe, Kinnmark, Baretic and Catozzi, but as Taylor showed, great as Gaprindashvili was, she was not invincible.

*Ed. – For more from Neil, you may enjoy Memorable Games of British Chess, which is available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £17.99 or £16.19 for Subscribers.*



# Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pp.26-28)

## 1) Macias Pino-Del Rio de Angelis

**1 ♖d6! 1-0** There's just no good way to defend f7, and if 1...cxd6 2 exd6+ f6 3 dxe7.

## 2) Anand-Kasparov

**1...h3! 2 g4 d4** (Black's passed pawns are sufficiently far apart) **3 f5+ ♗g7 4 e6 h2 5 ♗g2 d3 0-1**

## 3) Cornhill-Miller

**1 ♖xd5! ♗f7** (1...cxd5 2 ♗xd5 would fork to leave White two pawns up after 2...♗c8 3 ♗xf5) **2 ♗c4! ♗h5 3 ♖c3** left White a pawn ahead and in complete control.

## 4) Moskalets-Li

**1...♗xa3! 2 ♖d1** (desperately trying to run away rather than allow 2 bxa3? ♗b1+ 3 ♖c2 ♗8b2#) **2...♗a1+ 3 ♖e2 ♗xb2 4 ♖f1 ♗b1 5 ♗g2 ♗e1+** (Black is winning in any case, but a neat alternative would have been 5...♖f5! 6 exf5 ♗e1+ 7 ♖f3 ♗xc3+ 8 ♖g4 exf5#, as pointed out by Chris Ward on ChessPublishing) **6 ♖f3 ♗xc3+ 7 ♖g4 ♗bb1 8 ♗f3 ♗b4 9 ♗a2 c3 0-1**

## 5) Pragganandhaa-Aronian

**1...♖xd4! 2 ♗d1** (2 ♖xd4? ♗xh2+ is mate next move) **2...♖xf3+ 3 ♗xf3 ♗xh2+ 4 ♖f1 ♗a6+! 5 ♖e1 ♗g1+ 6 ♖d2 ♗b4+ 0-1**

## 6) Yeganegi-Fedosov

Black has just picked the wrong square for the king and now runs into stalemate: **1 ♗h5+! ♗xh5 ½-½**

## 7) Goldsworthy-Bruns

**1 e6! fxe6** (both 1...♗xe6 2 ♗c3 and 1...♗xe6 2 ♗c3 also spell ruin on the long diagonal) **2 ♗c3 e5 3 ♗xe5 ♗g6? 1-0** 3...♗h6 was a better defence, if still hopeless for Black after 4 ♖c7 ♗b8 5 ♗d5+ ♗f7 6 ♖d6.

## 8) Staples-Hopwood

**1...♖g3+! 2 hxg3?** (White had to give up the exchange) **2...hxg3+ 0-1** 3 ♖g1 (or 3 ♖h3 ♗h4) 3...♗h4 4 ♖h3 ♗xh3 leads to mate.

## 9) Walker-Ansell

**1 ♗xf7+! 1-0** 1...♖f8 2 ♖g5!? is clearly hopeless, as is 1...♖h8 2 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 3 ♗d7 and 1...♖xf7? 2 ♖g5+ would force a classic mate via the f7-square.

## 10) Barrionuevo-Graif

**1...g5!** (a powerful early advance; Black will either win a piece or inflict significant structural ruin, as with 2 h3 ♖xg3 3 fxxg3 ♗d6 4 ♖f2 ♖e7! when the huge weakness on g3 leaves White in serious trouble) **2 ♖fd2? h4 3 ♖xe4 dxe4 4 d5?** (4 ♗e5 f6 picks up the bishop, but the game is even more brutal, as Harry the h-pawn runs amok) **4...hxg3 5 dxc6? ♗xf2+ 0-1**

## 11) Pavlov-Elias Reyes

**1...♖xe4! 0-1** This is even stronger than 1...♗xc3 2 ♗xc3 ♗xa2+ 3 ♖c1 ♗a1+ 4 ♖d2 ♖xe4+ 5 fxe4 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♗a5, as 1...♖xe4 2 fxe4 (2 ♖xe4? ♗xa2+ is mate next move) 2...♗xc3 3 ♗xc3 ♗xa2+ 4 ♖c1 ♗xc3 5 bxc3 0-0 leaves Black up on material and with a winning attack.

## 12) Swiercz-Liang

**1 ♗xe6+! ♖xe6 2 ♗xb6 ♗e5** (the best try, and clearly not 2...♗xb6? 3 ♗d5#) **3 ♗d5+** (3 ♗c2!? followed by ♗d5 or 3...b3 4 ♗d2 is a tempting alternative) **3...♗xd5 4 exd5+ ♖d7** and now perhaps the most precise option was **5 d6!** (5 ♗xa5 ♗c5 6 d6 ♗c6 wasn't quite so clear in the game, although White still went on to win) **5...♗d8** (5...♗xd6? 6 ♗xa5 ♖e6 7 ♗xd6+! ♖xd6 8 ♗xb4+ wins) **6 ♗c7 ♗xc7 7 dxc7+ ♖xc7 8 ♗xc4+** with good winning chances in the pawn-up double-rook endgame.

## 13) Jarocka-Hebden

**1...♖h3!** (threatening mate on the back rank; 1...♗h1+ 2 ♗g1 ♖h3! also works) **2 ♗e3?** (if 2 gxxh3 ♗xd2) **2...♗h1+ 3 ♖e2 ♗xa1** (plenty good enough, but there was 3...♖f4#) **4 gxxh3 f4 0-1**

## 14) Grandelius-Mihajlov

**1 ♗xc5! ♗xc5** (or 1...dxc5 2 ♗d8) **2 ♗c1 ♗f5** (2...♗xc7 3 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 4 ♗xa5 ♗c1+ 5 ♗f1 should be fairly straightforward too) **3 ♗e3!** (3 ♗d4! also works) **3...♗aa8** (this is hopeless, but so would be 3...♗a6 4 ♗b7) **4 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 5 ♗xe7 ♖g7 6 ♗xd6 1-0**

## 15) Bradley-Mestek

**1 ♖f7+! ♖g7 2 ♗g3+ ♖g6** saw Black escaping with a draw after 3 ♗xh5 ♗xh5 in the game, but **3 ♗f2!** would have won, as pointed out by Mike Read in *En Passant*, and if **3...♗f5** (or 3...♖d7 4 ♗g5) **4 ♗xg6+! ♗xg6 5 ♗xh4.**

## 16) Gukesh-Carlsen

**1...c6!** (not 1...e5?? 2 d5 when White would win) **2 g3 e5 0-1** Clearly 3 dxe5 ♖xe5 4 a3 ♖d5 is hopeless, as is 3 d5 cxd5 4 ♖e2 d4 5 ♖d2 e3+ 6 ♖e2 ♖e6 7 ♖d3 ♖d5 8 ♖e2 e4 9 ♖d1 d3 10 ♖e1 e2 11 ♖d2 ♖d4.

## 17) Mikhalevski-Buckley

**1 ♗xc8+!** (1 ♗d2? ♖xd4! 2 ♗xc8+! ♗xc8 3 exd4 ♗e8+ 4 ♗e3 ♗xe3+! 5 fxe3 ♗xe3+ enables Black to escape with a draw, in view of 6 ♗e2 ♗g1+ 7 ♖d2 ♗xd4+ 8 ♖c2 ♗c4+) **1...♗xc8 2 ♗h8! ♗c2** (so if 2...♖xd4 3 ♗xc8#) **3 g8 ♗d6 4 ♗d2 a5 5 ♗c1 1-0**

## 18) Motwani-Raetsky

**1 ♗f1! ♖c6 2 ♗a6! ♖d8** (or 2...♖xa5 3 ♗b3+ ♖b7 4 ♗xb7+ ♖d8 5 ♗c6 and wins) **3 ♗b5 1-0**

## 19) Wei-Dragnev

**1 ♗d5! ♖h8** (clearly if 1...♗xd5? 2 ♗xg7# or 1...♖e6 2 ♗xd7! ♗xd7 3 ♖f6+; in any case, there's simply no defence) **2 ♖c5! ♗f6 3 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 4 ♗d6! 1-0** Wei Yi is alert and avoids 4 ♗xd7?? ♗c6+, with the text a winner in view of 4...♗f7 5 ♖xh6!.

## 20) Yuffa-Sanal

**1...♗a4!** (taking decisive control of d1) **2 ♗f3** (Black is also too quick after 2 ♗f2 ♗d1+ 3 ♖a2 d2 4 h6 c4!) **2...♗c2+ 3 ♖a2** (3 ♖a1 d2 4 ♗d1 was the grim alternative when 4...♗xe4 5 h6 ♗xg2 6 ♗xf6 ♗e7 must still be lost for White) **3...d2 4 ♗d1** (this loses by force, as does 4 ♗d1, to 4...♗c4+ 5 ♖b1 ♗xf1!) **4...♗d3! 5 ♗g4+ ♖b7 6 e5** (or 6 h6 c4! 7 h7 ♗xa3+! 8 ♖xa3 ♗b3#) **6...c4! 7 ♖a1 f5! 0-1** 8 ♗e2 c3 leads to mate.

## 21) So-Woodward

**1 b5!** (1 ♖d3!? ♗h3 2 b5! also works and even transposes after 2...♗f1+ 3 ♖e3 ♗xb5) **1...♗xb5** (1...axb5 2 a6 ♗c6 3 a7 ♗b7 4 ♖xb5 is crushing, since only one king is really playing after 4...♖c6 5 ♖c3 ♖b6 6 ♖e4 ♖xa7 7 ♖f4) **2 ♖f5!** (the main point; White will now obtain a decisive passed h-pawn) **2...♗d7 3 ♖g3 ♖c5 4 ♖f4 ♖a4** (4...♖b5 5 ♖xh5 ♖xa5 6 ♖f6 ♗b5 7 h5 is similar) **5 ♖xh5 ♗c2 6 ♖f6 ♖b5 7 h5 ♖xa5 8 ♖e4 1-0**

## 22) Murzin-Dardha

**1...♗b5! 2 ♗e1?** (to really appreciate the strength of Black's last, you ideally spotted 2 ♗d2? ♗b3! when 3 axb3? ♗xe3+ 4 ♖f1 ♗b5+ forces mate; White is also crushed after the text and the only chance to prolong the struggle was 2 ♗f1!, pretty well though Black would still have been doing after 2...♗xb2+ 3 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 4 ♖xd2 ♗c8) **2...♗xb2+ 3 ♖g1 ♗c8! 4 ♗f1 ♗cc2 0-1**

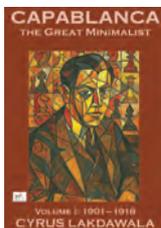
## 23) Boyer-Ivic

There's a forced win: **1...g5+!** (1...♗g2? 2 g5! ♗xh3+ 3 ♖g4 left Black unable to win in the game, which concluded: 3...♗d3 4 ♗c8 ♗h3+ 5 ♖h4 ♗f5 6 ♗g8+! ♖xg8 7 ♗a8+ ♖g7 8 ♗g8+ ♖xg8 ½-½) **2 fxxg5** (2 ♖xg5 h6+ 3 ♖h4 ♗g2 forces mate: 4 g5 ♗xh3+ 5 ♖g4 h5#) **2...♗g2 3 g6!? h6! 4 g5 ♗xh3+ 5 ♖g4 h5+ 6 ♖f4 ♗c6!** leaves White without a stalemate defence and set to be mated on f3.

## 24) Kosakowski-Merry

**1...♗xf2+!** (1...♗xe2 2 ♗xe2 ♗f8 3 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 saw White escaping in the game, where a cruel tragicomedy was to occur: 4 ♖c8+ ♖b8 5 ♖d6 ♗e5?? 6 ♗c8+ 1-0) **2 ♗xf2** (or 2 ♖xf2 ♗d4+ 3 ♖f1 ♗xe2 4 ♗xe2 ♗d1+) **2...♗xe2 3 ♗xe2** (the discovered checks also fail to achieve anything: 3 ♖c4+ ♗xf2 4 ♖xd6 ♗xe1+ 5 ♖xf2 ♗b1 is a straightforward win for Black, as is 3 ♖c8+ ♖b8 4 ♖xd6 ♗xe1+ 5 ♖g2 ♗8e2) **3...♗d1+ 4 ♗f1 ♗xe2 5 ♖c8+ ♖b8** leaves Black the exchange ahead, with an easy task.

# This Month's New Releases



## Capablanca the Great Minimalist – Volume 1: 1901–1918

Cyrus Lakdawala, 338 pages  
Elk and Ruby

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without...some more books by Cyrus Lakdawala to read. How does he write so many, and for more than one publisher? It seems virtually impossible, although, tying in with the Christmas theme, perhaps it could be said to be a minor miracle.

It has become ever more apparent that the chess-book-reading public still craves works on the old masters. Elk and Ruby do more than any other publisher to keep the historical flame alive and even Chessable joined the party with Alex Colovic's excellent *Capablanca's Endgame Technique*. That was reviewed here earlier in the year and was strong enough to make the shortlist for the English Chess Federation Book of the Year contest for 2025 alongside, as always, Capablanca's great rival Alexander Alekhine, in the form of *The Russian Sphinx: Volume I (1892-1921)* by Sergey Voronkov (Elk and Ruby). Strange – or fitting – how the two cannot be kept apart.

As the title of this book – the first of three volumes – suggests, we are treated to the games and biographical snippets of Jose Raul Capablanca from his earliest days up until the last year of the Great War, just three years away from the great Cuban's success in his world championship match against Emanuel Lasker.

There are 156 games (or game fragments, in some cases), played against a whole galaxy of chess stars. The games feature full annotations, in the style anyone familiar with Lakdawala will already be accustomed to, and they are replete with in-game exercises.

Top-level chess, with its confusing array of formats and time limits, is difficult to follow and, frankly, few games will be remembered in years to come. Everything is always so fast and so furious. I think that is one of the most appealing features of playing through the games of Capablanca and his contemporaries; we can never hope to emulate their excellence, but with decent notes, we can follow the narrative of the games and form a good understanding of what is going on.

Therefore, the games remain eternally instructive.

Such a natural talent even made an impression on his illustrious predecessor: "To players of that engine-free era, it sometimes felt as if Capablanca played perfect chess. The first time Emanuel Lasker met Capablanca and played blitz against him, he remarked that to his eyes, Capa never appeared to make a mistake."

It would be a mistake to think of Capablanca as a player whose dominance was solely in the endgame, despite his large number of exemplary victories in that department. According to the author, "He was one of the most tactically aware players of his era, rivalling both Lasker and Alekhine in this metric. Capa's speciality was short-range combinations, which he almost never missed."

The following snippet demonstrates two of the above points.

## A.Alekhine-J.Capablanca St. Petersburg 1913



Alekhine has just played 33 ♖c1?, which looks logical, but allows a smart and surprising reply:

### 33...♗c2!!

Not just for show; this is the only move to give Black a significant advantage. Readers can have fun working out what happens after each 34 e5, 34 ♖f1 and 34 ♖xc2. Alekhine actually played 34 ♖h2, but slid to an inevitable defeat (0-1, 42).

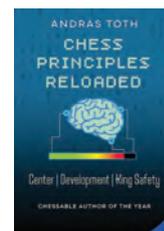
Two more volumes in this series will follow: one on Capablanca's prime years and one covering his latter years. It will be interesting to see if the author can unearth anything new on the 1927 title match with Alekhine in the second volume, but one suspects it will be another case of

highlighting the 'greatest hits' again. There is nothing wrong with that, of course; after all, it is a celebratory series on the third world champion and not an in-depth biography.

Summing up, anyone who wants to get back to real chess, away from rapid events and chess960 gimmicks could do a lot worse than re-enter the world of more classical times, typified by games in which two people battled it out for four or five hours at a time and then...Capablanca won.

Readers should know what sort of prose to expect from the prolific Lakdawala (repeatedly shortening Capablanca's name to 'Capa' is irksome and unnecessary, for example), but at least he always makes his books very accessible to club players.

Sean Marsh



## Chess Principles Reloaded

Andras Toth, 240 pages  
Chessable

£24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

Chess books with 'reloaded' in the title appear to have surpassed those with 'secrets' in their name. More often than not, the 'reloaded' aspect is revitalising older openings with new ideas, but here it is a different story.

"International Master Andras Toth is a full-time chess coach based in Australia, and he's had a revelation. His coaching experience has taught him that a universal weakness among ambitious improvers, club players and even seasoned experts is that they don't always fully grasp some of the basic principles of chess, or tend to neglect them."

The revelation in question led to the Chess Principles Reloaded series for Chessable, which aims to make you more confident in your decision-making by reviving the most essential principles of the game.

According to the author, the three most important of principles are: "Control the centre – when in doubt, centralize! Develop your pieces – make sure you have the right pieces in the right place at the right time. Be aware of king safety – if it is an issue, it's critical!"

The split of material is equally divided between centre, development and king safety, with five chapters on each subject. This is a very useful approach, as each of the

three principles mentioned above was a separate Chessable course and by combining them in a single volume, the recurring Chessable weakness of publishing books with low page-counts – which I have mentioned several times in these reviews – has changed. This is a big step forward, because everything else, including the colour diagrams and sturdy hardback bindings of Chessable books, is superior to the efforts of most other publishers and they could do without weakening their products with an inferior number of pages.

The content features a whole range of well-annotated games, all of which are highly intrusive. The illustrative games are prefaced by a short description of which principle is going to be examined. Here is an example from the chapter on 'Fighting back: reclaiming lost territory'.

"In the past three examples in the previous chapter, we saw how a sizeable pawn formation in the centre can become the main asset in building up an initiative, an attack, and ultimately scoring a fairly easy victory. Now, we are going to examine what to do when our opponents try to employ the same strategy. We are going to analyse the potential counter-measures and strategies to counter our opponent's ambitious central."

This leads us into a game which will be familiar to some, but new to others.

### R.Letelier-R.Fischer Leipzig Olympiad 1960



Fischer has experimented by delaying ...d6 in the King's Indian, prompting White to claim lots of territory. Time to start reclaiming some:  
**7...c5!**

"A great pawn sacrifice which intends to rip the pawns apart. This is a very common procedure when playing against pawns nicely linked together. Material is of no concern for Black, as the centre is much more important than a pawn or two!"  
**8 dxc5**

"Mission accomplished: White has accepted the inevitable separation of his pawns in the middle, and is happy to keep the extra pawn."  
**8...c6!**

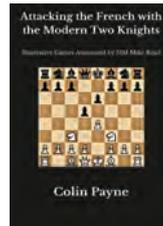
"Another awesome move that emphasizes Black's desire to fully take charge of the central squares. Black would, of course, love to see a mass of trades on d6 now as it would allow

him to regroup his poorly placed e8-knight too."

To cut a long story short, keeping the centre together was too much of a task for White and Black went on to win, with a queen sacrifice to boot (0-1, 23).

Reassessing – or reloading, as the title has it – chess principles sounds like a tough subject, but keep in mind that this book started life as a Chessable course, which means the material is extremely accessible, as the sample annotations quoted above should confirm. Therefore, this book will prove to be very useful and instructive for club and tournament players.

Sean Marsh



### Attacking the French with the Modern Two Knights

Colin Payne, 332 pages, paperback  
RRP £13.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £12.59**

Norfolk club player and seasoned chess writer Colin Payne believes that 1 e4 e6 should be met by 2 d3 f3 d5 3 c3, which he has deeply researched with the engines. The result is a detailed repertoire for White, which after 3...d6 4 e5 d7 5 d4 c5 covers both the main line with 6 dxc5 and the so-called Jackal Attack, 6 g5!?. Payne's enthusiasm is evident throughout and the repertoire is complimented by 21 illustrative games annotated by Mike Read.



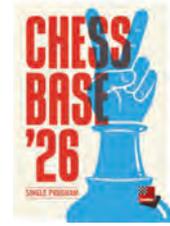
### Chess Duels 1893-1920: 260 Games Annotated by Alexander Alekhine

Vlastimil Fiala (ed.), 452 pages, hardback  
RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

Czech publisher Moravian Chess have long specialised in historical works and this first volume of four represents an impressive piece of research by Vlastimil Fiala. He has trawled the archives to find 260 games annotated by Alekhine, which appeared in newspapers, chess magazines and tournament books between 1893 and 1920. Alekhine's games and writings have always been popular, and many of the annotations in this volume will be new even to Alekhine aficionados.

Fiala and Moravian Chess have also released the companion volumes, *Chess Duels 1921-1924: 127 Games Annotated by Alexander Alekhine* (312 pages), *Chess Duels 1924-1926: 198 Games Annotated by Alexander Alekhine* (520 pages), and *Chess*

*Duels 1927-1929: 163 Games Annotated by Alexander Alekhine* (400 pages). Alekhine fans may also wish to know that all four volumes of Alekhine's annotations can be purchased together for the special price of £125.80.



### ChessBase '26 – Starter Package ChessBase

RRP £225.00 **SUBSCRIBERS £202.50**

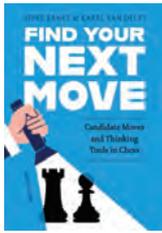
If you'd been looking out for *ChessBase 19* being released, you may have a while to wait, but there is a new version of the world's leading chess program out, *ChessBase '26*. The *Starter Package* contains the new program, which has a significantly expanded 'opening report' function, helping, for example, to identify the main plans in a specific variation. The *Starter Package* comes with the *ChessBase '26* program, as well as one-year premium ChessBase membership, the *Big Database 2026* with an update service to the end of 2026, and three copies of *ChessBase Magazine*. It comes either as a download or as a booklet with an imprinted activation key.

There's also the *Mega Package*, which is the same as the *Starter Package*, but comes instead with *Mega Database 2026*, as well as six copies of *CBM*. The *Mega Package* retails at £295.00 or £265.50 for Subscribers. For £425.00 (Subscribers – £382.50) there's also the *Premium Package*, which is the same as the *Mega* one, but includes too *Corr Database 2026* and 1,000 Ducats to use on the server playchess.com. At the other end of the scale is the *Single Program*, i.e. just *ChessBase '26* and which retails at £175.00 (Subscribers – £157.50). Note too that if you have *ChessBase 18* you can upgrade to *ChessBase '26* for £120.00 (Subscribers – £108.00), by supplying your existing program key.

ChessBase have also released new versions of their main databases. *Mega Database 2026* contains a whopping 11.7 million games, of which 114,000 are annotated. It's available for £195 (Subscribers – £175.50), or you can update from the 2025 version for £95 (Subscribers – £85.50) by supplying the existing program key. There's also *Big Database 2026*, which is the same as the *Mega* one, but without the annotated games and cheaper at £89.95 (Subscribers – £80.95).

For those who really like their theory, there's also the *Fritz Powerbook 2026*, which is available for £79.95 (Subscribers – £71.95), representing "the current theory with 1.7 million games". Those who have the 2025 edition can upgrade for £54.95 (Subscribers – £49.45), by supplying the existing program key. Finally, there's the *Corr Database 2026*, which contains 2.5 million

correspondence games and is available for £175.00 or £157.50 for Subscribers. Here too it's possible to upgrade from the 2024 version, for £90.00 (Subscribers – £81.00), again by quoting the existing program key.



### Find Your Next Move

Karel van Delft & Sipke Ernst, 288 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The subtitle of this notable publication from New in Chess is 'Candidate Moves and Thinking Tools in Chess', but how to identify the candidate moves in a position and then pick between them? That is the quest which the authors have set themselves. Dutch GM Ernst presents several positions over 30 short chapters, which help to reveal, for example, how certain candidate moves can be rejected. It is then psychologist van Delft's turn as he presents 30 thinking tools designed to help find the best candidate move, covering a wide array of topics, including common blind spots, piece co-ordination and motivation at the board. Finally, do note that a hardback version of this book is also available, retailing at £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers.



### Karsten Müller – Endgame Training

Karsten Müller, 172 pages, paperback

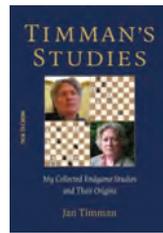
RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

While a great many books have been devoted to rook endgames, far, far fewer have covered endings with a rook and a minor piece on each side, as acclaimed German endgame expert Karsten Müller focusses on here. 15 chapters cover a range of piece configurations, with the most detail devoted to the endgame of rook and bishop against rook and knight. Each chapter begins with some well-chosen annotated games followed by sufficiently detailed solutions.

Publisher JVB Chess Books have also released *Typical Queen's Gambit: Orthodox Variation* (177 pages, paperback, RRP £19.95; Subscribers £17.95), which is also by Karsten Müller. Here he examines 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6, with a special focus on "effective middlegame training". This is a book which requires effort from the reader almost from the word go, beginning as it does with over one hundred exercises, featuring all manner of typical QGD middlegame positions. The

solutions contain the early moves, as well as plenty of detail, meaning that those who play the QGD and wish to improve their middlegame understanding of its typical arising positions should be able to do just that.

Karsten Müller has certainly had a busy 2025 as he has also produced *The Endgame Academy Vol.2* for ChessBase, which is devoted to theoretical rook endgames. Müller begins with the basics, such as the Lucena position, before gradually making the material more complex, with the examples used over three hours of video doing a fine job of highlighting the key techniques. Those can but be reinforced by the 60 interactive exercises on this video product, which is available from Chess & Bridge for £34.95 or £31.45 for Subscribers.

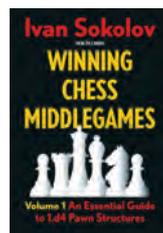


### Timman's Studies

Jan Timman, 456 pages, paperback

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

A fan of endgame studies all his life, Jan Timman now presents 160 of his own compositions, revealing in each case the cause of his inspiration. The bulk of Timman's composition has taken place this century, although he did compose some striking studies while at his peak as a player. This fine collection, which will certainly help the practical player, as Sean Marsh notes on page 36 of this issue, concludes with a lengthy chapter of previously unpublished compositions. Timman fans may prefer to purchase this work in hardback format, which is also possible, for £31.95 or £28.75 for Subscribers.



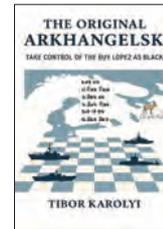
### Winning Chess Middlegames Volume 1

Ivan Sokolov, 344 pages, paperback

RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £28.75**

This is a comprehensively revised edition of Sokolov's classic work from 2009 and is "An Essential Guide to 1.d4 Pawn Structures". More than half the games have been replaced with more recent examples, all annotated in typically detailed but also clear fashion by Sokolov, who can be brutally honest at times about his own failings. His material is devoted to four common pawn structures which arise in many 1 d4 and 2 c4 openings: doubled pawns, isolated pawns, hanging pawns and pawn majorities. There's also a hardback version of this New in Chess publication available, retailing at £29.95 or £26.95 for Subscribers.

Nowadays a leading chess trainer and noted author, Bosnian-Dutch GM Sokolov has also recorded *Understanding Middlegame Strategies Vol.12* for ChessBase (RRP £34.95; Subscribers £31.45), which is devoted to "Reversed Colour Systems – King's Indian/Pirc Defence". In other words, his focus is on the King's Indian Attack, mixing classic games with modern analysis, while over six hours and 14 minutes of video revealing the key motifs for both sides in the most common KIA structures.



### The Original Arkhangelsk: Take Control of the Ruy Lopez as Black

Tibor Karolyi, 324 pages, paperback

RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

The Arkhangelsk variation occurs via 1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♖f6 5 0-0 b5 6 ♗b3 ♗b7. This dynamic line against the Lopez has been used by such players as Caruana, Shirov and Topalov. Black is fully allowed to handle the resulting early middlegames in quite aggressive fashion, such as by looking to break on the kingside with ...f5 or to advance through ...g5. In this new Elk and Ruby production, Hungarian IM Tibor Karolyi maps out a detailed repertoire for Black with the Arkhangelsk, one which is also available in hardback version should you prefer, for £34.95 or £31.45 for Subscribers.

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