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Chess



SO SUPREME!

**Wesley So left his best until
last at the Sinquefeld Cup**

ISSN 0964-6221



Masterclass - Michael Adams annotates key victories from the English and British



An Enigma - John Henderson takes a look at Bletchley Park's chess connections



A Tricky Anti-French - Junior Tay analyses the Anton Smirnov early queen sally

Chess

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Find the Winning Moves

A bumper 33 puzzles this month to help warm you up for the new season and to test your tactical ability with, as ever, the positions grouped in rough order of difficulty. The games come from various recent events, including the Las Vegas Freestyle and the Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force checkmate or the win of material, other times it will just pick up a pawn.

Solutions on pages 54.



Warm-up Puzzles



(1) P.Ponkratov-M.Erdogdu
Turkish Team Championship, Ankara 2025
White to Play



(2) F.Caruana-A.Erigaisi
Las Vegas (rapid) 2025
White to Play



(3) R.Palliser-'fortaleza1983'
Internet (blitz) 2025
White to Play



(4) W.So-W.Keymer
Las Vegas (rapid) 2025
Black to Play



(5) E.Goitia Tejado-H.Grieve
Vitoria-Gasteiz 2025
Black to Play



(6) R.Pragganandhaa-M.Carlsen
Las Vegas (rapid) 2025
Black to Play

Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54



(7) D.Fernandez-B.Bartodziej
Warsaw 2025
White to Play



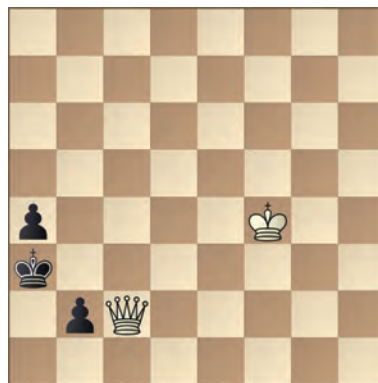
(8) M.Pert-P.Wells
British Championship, Liverpool 2025
Black to Play



(9) W.So-G.Oparin
Saint Louis (blitz) 2025
Black to Play



(10) A.Davtyan-A.Sarana
Aktobe 2025
Black to Play



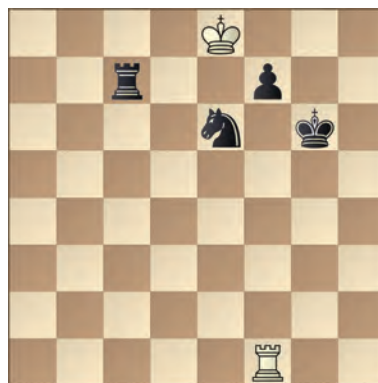
(11) O.Wartiovaara-T.Povilaitis
Parnu 2025
White to Play



(12) J.Pein-J.Perez Marimon
Oviedo 2025
White to Play



(13) P.Sowray-A.Hoffmann
Biel 2025
White to Play



(14) L.Dominguez Perez-F.Caruana
Saint Louis (blitz) 2025
White to Play and Draw



(15) S.Abasolo-D.LeMoir
Norwich 2025
Black to Play

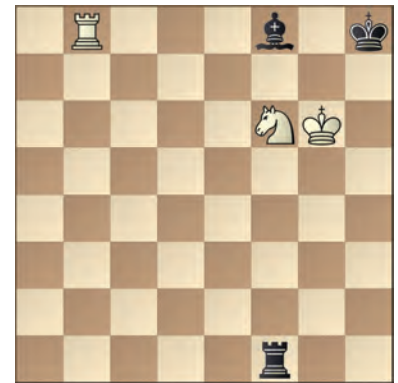
Intermediate Puzzles for the Club Player - Solutions on page 54



(16) J.Jermy-D.LeMoir
Norwich 2025
White to Play



(17) V.Vivaan-V.Plat
Budapest 2025
Black to Play



(18) L.Borrmann-M.Palczert
Heviz (rapid) 2025
Black to Play and Draw



(19) J.S.Christiansen-A.Greet
Scottish Open, Dunfermline 2025
White to Play



(20) M.Lagarde-S.Bazakutsa
Aix-en-Provence 2025
Black to Play and Draw



(21) D.Toyne-P.Jones
York 2024/25
Black to Play



(22) N.Yakubboev-B.Tiglon
Turkish Team Championship, Ankara 2025
White to Play



(23) D.Navara-A.Hakobyan
Biel (blitz) 2025
Black to Play



(24) N.Yakubboev-R.Wojtaszek
Polanica Zdroj 2025
Black to Play and Draw

Harder Puzzles for the Club Player – Solutions on page 54



(25) Y.Erdogmus–P.Svidler
4th matchgame, Marseille 2025
White to Play



(26) L.Aronian–Wei Yi
Yanchen (rapid) 2025
Black to Play



(27) C.Portman–T.Arora
Liverpool 2025
White to Play



(28) O.Bronstein–Q.Cao
Kavala 2025
White to Play



(29) R.Eames–E.Wilson
Kingston-upon-Thames 2025
White to Play



(30) N.Vitiugov–J.Willow
English Championship, Kenilworth 2025
White to Play



(31) S.Vokhidov–S.Sargsyan
Khanty–Mansiysk 2025
Black to Play



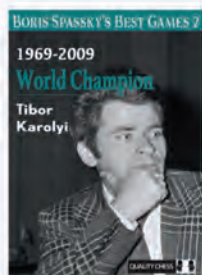
(32) Wei Yi–L.Aronian
3rd matchgame, Yancheng 2025
White to Play



(33) D.Lazavik–E.Gurel
Turkish Team Championship, Ankara 2025
Black to Play



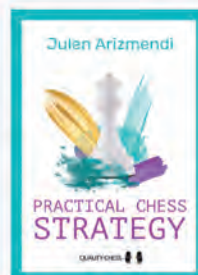
NEW FROM QUALITY CHESS



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.

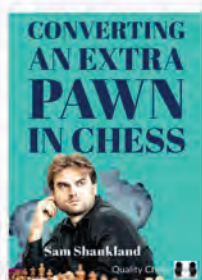
408 pages €29.99 (hc) €34.99 (hc) €25.99 (eBook)



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.

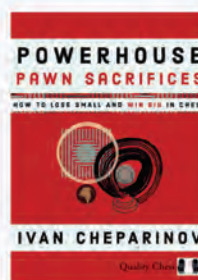
424 pages €29.99 (hc) €34.99 (hc) €25.99 (eBook)



Converting an Extra Pawn by Sam Shankland

In this groundbreaking work, 2018 US Champion Shankland shares his three-step process for handling positions with an extra pawn, using clear examples to illustrate his concepts. With this book, you too can become a master at converting the most common type of material advantage in chess.

368 pages €27.99 (hc) €32.99 (hc) €23.99 (eBook)



Powerhouse Pawn Sacrifices by Ivan Cheparinov

Pawn sacrifices can offer huge rewards for a small investment, but many players still shy away from them. In this illuminating book, GM Ivan Cheparinov covers dynamic and long-term pawn sacrifices, as well as pawn sacrifices arising in specific opening variations, connecting the different phases of the game.

304 pages €27.99 (hc) €32.99 (hc) €23.99 (eBook)



NEW FROM POPULAR CHESS



Exploiting a Space Advantage by Cyrus Lakdawala

In *Exploiting a Space Advantage*, Cyrus Lakdawala explains how to squeeze your opponents into submission, when a space advantage leads to attack, why we should be careful not to overextend, and more concepts that can help understand the concept of space.

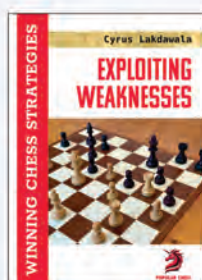
248 pages €23.95 (pb) €29.95 (hc) €20.95 (eBook)



Exploiting the Bishop Pair by Cyrus Lakdawala

All chess players have heard about the power of the bishop pair – but many have no real idea of when or why they are superior, and what to do with the advantage. Questions like these are answered in *Exploiting the Bishop Pair* by Cyrus Lakdawala.

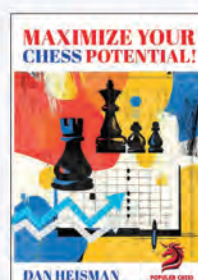
224 pages €23.95 (pb) €29.95 (hc) €20.95 (eBook)



Exploiting Weaknesses by Cyrus Lakdawala

Exploiting weaknesses is an integral part of building a Winning Chess Strategy. Hence, Cyrus Lakdawala tackles this multifaceted term, making it approachable for anyone wishing to learn how to identify and exploit the weaknesses in their opponent's camp.

296 pages €23.95 (pb) €29.95 (hc) €20.95 (eBook)



Maximize Your Chess Potential by Dan Heisman

The advice in this book represents ways to highlight and address the most common problems experienced by chess enthusiasts of all levels. Heisman also suggests ways to mitigate or even avoid these problems entirely and, by doing so, improve their chess play and learn to study more effectively.

368 pages €23.95 (pb) €29.95 (hc) €19.95 (eBook)

New Arrivals

Autumn - Winter 2025



NEW!

SPY'S MATE

Brad Buchanan

Historical chess-espionage thriller set in the late Cold War Soviet Union, it follows Armenian chess prodigy Yasha Basmajian as he navigates intrigue, manipulation, and ideological clashes en route to top-tier international competition. Described as a compelling crossover for fans of The Queen's Gambit, mixing tactical drama, Cold War politics, and espionage.

ISBN 9789083488233 - HB



Forthcoming

ALPHABETCHESS V3

Vishnu Warrior

Offers a fun and simple way for kids to learn chess while remembering the key rules. It's imaginative and packed with engaging tips! Each letter of the alphabet is paired with a key chess term, such as A for Attraction, B for Bishop, and C for Checkmate, brought to life through colorful illustrations and whimsical stories. This isn't just a book about chess—it's a book about discovery, designed to captivate children's imaginations while teaching them the basics of both the alphabet and chess.

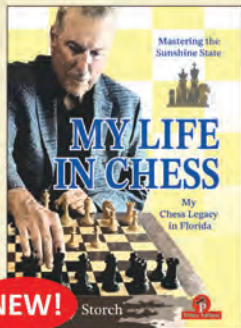
MY LIFE IN CHESS -

MASTERING THE SUNSHINE STATE

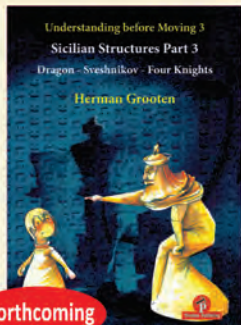
Larry Storch

More than just moves and variations, this book is a story of ambition, rivalry, resilience, and passion for the game. I believe you will find these games and the stories behind them every bit as thrilling and inspiring as I do. Along the way, I present some of my most memorable games—many shaped by deep opening preparation—offering readers unique insights into the drama and artistry of competition on the sixty-four squares.

ISBN 9789493435094 - HB



NEW!



Forthcoming

UNDERSTANDING BEFORE MOVING 3 - PART 3: SICILIAN STRUCTURES - DRAGON - SVESHNIKOV - FOUR KNIGHTS

Herman Grooten

You are holding before you the much-awaited final volume of my trilogy about Open Sicilians. I conclude the collection with a close look at the Dragon, Accelerated Dragon, Sveshnikov, Kalashnikov, and Four Knights variations. Each of these openings already has a vast body of literature devoted to it. While some theoretical detail is unavoidable, my goal—just as in the earlier volumes—is not to overwhelm you with analysis. Instead, I aim to highlight the broader ideas, typical plans, and the dynamic relationship between structure and strategy that define these variations.

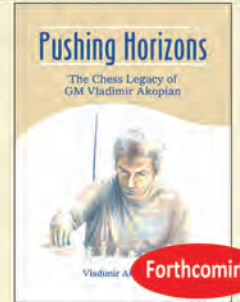
ISBN 9789464201826 - PB

THE CHESS LEGACY OF GRANDMASTER VLADIMIR AKOPIAN

Vladimir Akopian

In total, this autobiographic book contains 300 carefully selected items: 25 of Vladimir's most interesting games & life stories & 50 fragments & 75 studies & 150 problems. The author hopes that each of these 300 snippets offers something worthwhile and valuable to the reader.

ISBN 9789493435087 - HB



Forthcoming

THE MODERNIZED CATALAN - VOLUME 1

Balazs Csonka

If you're looking for an opening that combines strategic depth with long-term pressure, the Catalan Opening is a top-tier choice. It's favored by world champions like Vladimir Kramnik and Magnus Carlsen for good reason. Whether you're an ambitious club player or a seasoned tournament competitor, the Catalan gives you a strong foundation with plenty of room to outplay your opponent in a positional battle.

ISBN 9789493435049 - HB



NEW!

THE SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE REVISITED

Thomas Engqvist

In the Scandinavian Black has achieved an ideal exchange, and the core of the Scandinavian lies in the control of the d5-square. Black must, under no circumstances, allow White to support a pawn thrust with d4-d5, as this typically means White has effectively countered Black's pawn structure both technically and psychologically. In this book Thomas will become your perfect guide!

ISBN 9789493435070 - HB



NEW!

BATTLING THE AGGRESSIVE ITALIAN GAME

Milos Pavlovic

All the lines presented in this book are very old, some even dating back to medieval times! Lots of things were known about these systems before chess engines started to become very strong, but now we have completely new ideas from not only tactical, but also positional point of view. The rebirth of these lines has become so popular that during my work on this book we were amazed to see such a level of popularity.

ISBN 9789493435063 - HB



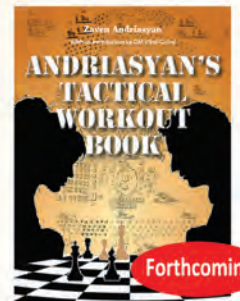
NEW!

ANDRIASIAN'S TACTICAL WORKOUT BOOK

Zaven Andriasyan

Armenian chess champion Andriasyan suggests to forget long theoretical explanations—this is pure action. Each puzzle is designed to challenge your calculation skills, train your pattern recognition, and build the instincts that separate winners from the rest. From stunning sacrifices to quiet moves that turn the game upside down, every page will keep you on the edge of your seat.

ISBN - on request - HB



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Overseas News

BELGIUM – Legendary 66-year-old Mikhail Gurevich has made a welcome return to playing regularly of late. The former top-ten player is still rated 2570 and won the Bruges Masters (August 9–15) with 7½/9. 13-year-old former Coulsdon player FM Elias Ruzhansky shared seventh place, a point behind, with IM Angus Dunnington back on 6/9, half a point ahead of FM Dan Bisby in this ever pretty popular 226-player Open.

FRANCE – 18-year-old Marc'Andria Maurizzi defeated Christian Bauer, Timothe Razafindratsima and Etienne Bacrot to reach the final of the French Championships in Vichy (August 15–24). There he would overcome Laurent Fressinet 2½–1½, while Yosha Iglesias defeated Mitra Hejazipour 1½–½ in the Women's final. There were various events held alongside, including a Veterans Open won by Tony Kosten with 8/9, which left him half a point ahead of fellow GM Nikolay Legky.

INDIA – The start of the Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters (August 6–15) was delayed by a day due to an electrical fire at the Hyatt Regency Chennai. When play got underway, there was fire on the board, a van Forest fire lighting up round one.

S.G.Vidit–J.Van Foreest Chennai 2025 King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♗c3 0-0 6 ♘ge2 ♗bd7 7 ♙e3 a6 8 ♗d2 b5!?

This remains a trendy line against the Sämisch and here 9 h4 h5 10 0-0-0 e5 11 d5 ♗b6 12 ♙xb6 cxb6 13 cxb5 axb5 14 ♗b1 b4 15 ♗b5 ♘xd5!! 16 exd5 ♙f5+ was the spectacular game Praggnanandhaa–Rapport, UzChess Cup 2025, as covered by Daniel King last month.

9 cxb5 axb5 10 ♗xb5 c6 11 ♗bc3 e5 12 ♘g3

This doesn't impress, but 12 d5 ♗b6 also looks quite attractive for Black. Quite possibly White shouldn't have captured on b5.

12...d5!

Blowing open the centre as Black enjoys excellent play for the price of a mere pawn.

13 ♙e2 h5!

Van Foreest continues energetically, refusing to allow White any peace even once he's castled.

14 exd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 cxd5 16 0-0 h4 17 ♗h1 ♙e8 18 ♙b5?

Vidit had defended well up to this point, but here 18 ♙fe1! would have been sensible

when, for example, 18...h3! 19 ♘f2 (19 g3?! ♙f6 is a bit awkward for White) 19...hxg2 20 ♙b5 would simply have been pretty unclear and roughly level.

18...exd4



19 ♙g5

Not ideal, but 19 ♙xd4? would have lost to a notable tactic: 19...♙a5! and one of the white bishops will fall.

19...♙b6 20 a4 ♙a6!!

Olé!

21 ♙xd7 ♙e2 22 ♗d1 h3! 23 ♘f2!

The best defence as 23 gxh3? would have allowed 23...♙c7 (or even 23...d3+! 24 ♘f2 ♙d4 25 ♙h4 ♗d6 with a decisive initiative for Black), and 23 ♙xh3? d3+ 24 ♘f2 ♙d4 25 ♙h4 d2 would also be all over, thanks to that mighty pawn on d2 and White's congested camp.

23...d3



24 gxh3?

24 ♙h4 ♙d4 25 ♙b1 had to be tried according to the engines, although even here 25...d2 26 gxh3 (26 ♙xh3 f5 27 a5 ♙a7 followed by ...♙d3 and ...♙ae8 wins) 26...♙c7 27 ♙b5 ♙xb5 28 axb5 ♙c4 29 ♘g2 ♙ae8 followed by finally ...♙e1 would have been winning for Black.

24...♙xb2??

Having played with such energy and creativity, this was a bad oversight from van

Forest. Instead, the calm 24...♙d4! 25 ♙h4 ♙d6! would have won, as we can see from 26 ♙b5 ♙xb5 27 axb5 ♙xa1 28 ♙xa1 ♙f4 29 ♙g3 ♙xf3 30 ♙a3 ♙e4 followed by ...d2.

25 ♙b1!

The welcome exchange of rooks turns White's position from losing to winning, although the drama isn't over just yet.

25...♙d4 26 ♙xb2 ♙xb2 27 ♗d2 ♙b3 28 ♙e3 ♙c3 29 ♗d1 ♙c4 30 ♘g2

Far from terrible, but 30 ♙b5! ♙xb5 31 axb5 ♙e8 32 ♙c1 was simpler, leaving White pretty much a clear piece to the good.

30...d2 31 ♙g1 ♙b4



32 ♙b5??

Vidit may have been ruing not playing this two moves earlier, but now it's a major mistake, whereas 32 ♙c2 d4 33 ♙g5 would have left White winning, albeit still needing to take a bit of care.

32...♙xb5 33 axb5 ♙e8!?

Ambition from Black, rather than 33...♙a1! 34 ♙c2 ♙e1 35 ♙d3 d4 36 ♙xd2 ♙xg1+ 37 ♘xg1 ♙xd2 38 ♘g2, with a likely draw.

34 ♙g5??

Another major mistake in place of 34 ♘g4 ♙e6 35 ♙b1 f5 36 ♙xb4 ♙xb4 37 ♙d1 fxg4 38 ♘f2, which would have led to a draw.

34...f6?

Returning the favour rather than win with 34...♙e1 35 ♙c2 ♙d4!. Black threatens to take on f2 and 36 ♙f1 ♙c4 37 ♙g1 d1♙! cleans White up in view of 38 ♘xd1 ♙xg1+ 39 ♘xg1 ♙d4+.

35 ♙xd2 ♙xd2 36 ♙b1

36 ♙c2! feels more natural and might have allowed White to press a bit after 36...♘g7 37 ♙d1 ♙e3 38 ♙xd5.

36...♘f7 37 ♙d3

Black has enough counterplay after this, something which would have been the case too following 37 b6 ♙c5 38 b7 ♙f4 39 ♙d3 ♙b8.

37...♙e3 38 ♙xd5+ ♘g7 39 ♙f1 ♙xf2 40 ♙xf2 ♙e5 41 ♙d7+ ♘h6

White might be two pawns up, but b5 is falling and his own king is a little too exposed

to allow him any hope of winning the game.
42 f4 ♖e4+ 43 ♜g1 ♜d5 44 ♜g4! ♜xb5
45 ♜f3 ♜b1+ 46 ♜g2 ♜e1 47 ♜f1 ♜b2+
48 ♜f2 ♜b1 ½-½

That same round also saw Vincent Keymer grind down Nihal Sarin and the 20-year-old German number one would dominate the tournament, finishing two points clear while performing at 2917, a result which lifted him into the top-ten for the first time in his career.

V.Keymer-M.Karthikeyan Chennai 2025 Sicilian Four Knights

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜c6
5 ♜c3 ♜f6 6 ♜f4!?

An engine-approved trend and now 6...♜b4 7 ♜db5!? ♜xe4! 8 ♜f3 d5 9 ♜c7+ ♜f8 10 ♜xa8 e5 quickly becomes extremely murky.
6...d6 7 ♜b5 ♜d7 8 ♜xc6 ♜xc6

The deep-learning modern engines have convinced us to reconsider the exchange on c6 in many Sicilian positions, often with good reason. Here though 8...bxc6! would be the traditional reason to pour at least cool water on White's decision to exchange and after 9 ♜a4 e5 (9...d5!? is also quite viable) 10 ♜g5 h6 11 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 12 ♜d3 a5 13 0-0-0 ♜e7 Black would generate enough counterplay, going on to win the key last-round encounter that was Abdusattorov-Praggnanandhaa, UzChess Masters, Tashkent 2025.

9 ♜d3! a6

Already matters aren't so easy for Black, as 9...♜e7?! 10 0-0-0 would hit d6, and 9...♜c8!? 10 0-0-0 ♜a5 11 ♜xc6+ ♜xc6 12 ♜b1 looks a little better for White, who is all set to seize the initiative with e4-e5 and/or ♜b5.

10 ♜xc6+ bxc6 11 0-0-0 d5 12 h4!



German Champion and no.1 Vincent Keymer became the latest member of the top-ten club after his dominating result in Chennai. Keymer would also do well at the FIDE Grand Swiss, but missed out on tiebreak for Candidates qualification, unlike compatriot Matthias Blübaum.



The German no.1 has prepared well. Black might have the bigger centre, but he can't immediately bring a rook to the b-file and White has a clear plan of kingside expansion.

12...♜e7?

Black was worse in any case, but had to try 12...♜d6! when 13 ♜xd6 (13 e5?! ♜c7 pins) 13...♜xd6 14 ♜e3 ♜g4! 15 ♜e2 ♜f4+ 16 ♜d2 ♜e5 would give him some counterplay.

13 h5! h6

Now 13...♜d6? fails to 14 e5 ♜c7 15 ♜g3 and even 13...0-0!? 14 ♜g3 ♜h8 15 h6 g6 16 ♜g5 would leave Black coming under increasing pressure.

14 ♜g3

Beginning to probe the black position, which is certainly creaking.

14...♜f8 15 ♜b1 ♜a7 16 ♜e5!

A fine spot for the bishop, for both offensive and defensive purposes.

16...♜g8 17 f4 ♜d7!?

Karthikeyan does his best to fight back on the dark squares while avoiding 17...a5? 18 f5! exf5 19 exd5 cxd5 20 ♜f3, which would have been positionally horrendous for Black.

18 exd5 exd5

Even after 18...cxd5!? 19 ♜d4 ♜b7 20 f5 White would be doing pretty well, and if 20...♜b8 21 ♜xb8+ ♜xb8 22 ♜he1 ♜a3 23 ♜a4, with ongoing heavy pressure.

19 ♜e2!



The knight heads for d4 to target the holes in the black camp.

19...♜b7

19...♜xe5? 20 fxe5 ♜b7 would leave only Black with a dark-squared bishop, but after 21 ♜hf1 White is positionally winning, including after 21...♜b8 22 b3 and there's also 22 ♜xf7+! ♜xf7 23 ♜g6+ ♜f8 24 ♜d4, with a winning attack.

20 b3 g5?

This desperate lunge only creates further weaknesses, but even after 20...♜c5 21 ♜f3 a5 22 g4 a4 23 ♜he1 White would have been in full control and doing extremely well.

21 ♜d3 gxf4 22 ♜xf4 ♜g5 23 ♜hf1

Involving the final piece. Black isn't going to be able to defend both his vulnerable queenside and against the threats down the f-file.

Quantbox Chennai GM Event - Chennai, India, 7-15 August 2025 (Category 20, ave.rating = 2700)

	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Vincent Keymer	GER	2730	*	½	½	1	1	1	½	½	1	1	7	2916
2	Anish Giri	NED	2748	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	5	2737
3	Arjun Erigaisi	IND	2776	½	½	*	½	0	1	½	½	½	1	5	2734
4	Karthikeyan Murali	IND	2658	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	½	½	5	2747
5	Nihal Sarin	IND	2692	0	½	1	½	*	½	0	0	1	1	4½	2701
6	Awonder Liang	USA	2696	0	½	0	½	½	*	½	1	1	½	4½	2700
7	Vidit Santosh Gujrathi	IND	2720	½	½	½	0	1	½	*	½	½	0	4	2654
8	Jorden van Foreest	NED	2697	½	0	½	0	1	0	½	*	½	1	4	2657
9	Pranav Venkatesh	IND	2597	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	3	2586
10	Ray Robson	USA	2687	0	½	0	½	0	½	1	0	½	*	3	2576

23...♖c5 24 ♖c3 ♜e4 25 ♜xc6 ♜d7 26 ♜d4!

Threatening ♜e6+ and already Black could easily resign.

26...♙xf4 27 ♜xf4 ♜d6 28 ♜e6+ ♜xe6 29 ♜xe6 ♜c3+ 30 ♙a1 1-0

There was also an all-Indian Challengers section, won with 6½/9 by 19-year-old Pranesh Munirethinam, who finished half a point ahead of Baskaran Adhiban, Abhimanyu Puranik and Leon Luke Mendonca, as both Harika Dronavalli and Vaishali Rameshbabu struggled and unfortunately propped up the tournament table.

POLAND – The world champion and Jan-Krzysztof Duda warmed up for their trip to St. Louis by contesting a blitz (3+2) match in Katowice on August 7th. Gukesh's struggles at blitz continued as he won the first game, but lost the remaining five.

Unfortunately, as he had feared in advance, Michael Adams found playing three events in quick succession one too many at the 61st Rubinstein Memorial in Polanica-Zdroj (August 15–24), where he would share eighth place in a fairly strong all-play-all. The winner at Prague earlier in the year, Aravindh Chithambaram, also struggled as he could only score 50%. In contrast, Nodirbek Yakubboev continued his rise up the ranks as he scored 6½/9 to win while performing at 2798. Meanwhile Radoslaw Wojtaszek bounced back to his best and was also unbeaten while finishing second on 6/9, half a point ahead of Matthias Blübaum.

PORTUGAL – Cuban GM Carlos Albornoza Cabrera racked up 8/9 to win the Leca Open (July 31 – August 6). The winner of South Wales, IM Aaravamudhan Balaji was unable to continue his good form and finished on 5½/9, half a point ahead of fellow Brits Aditya and Shlok Verma, of whom the former gained some 24 rating points.

There was also the Maia Open (August 22–30), won with 7½/9 by the Israeli GM Evgeny Postny, with Lan Yao back on '+3'.

SPAIN – The famous Sants Open in Barcelona (August 22–31) was won by the Lithuanian Grandmaster Valery Kazakouski with an impressive 9/10, leaving him half a point clear of Georgian IM Nikoloz Petriashvili. Continuing an almost non-stop August of chess, IM Brandon Clarke was back on 6½/9, half a point ahead of FM Laurence Webb, with Harry Zheng a further half-point back.

SWITZERLAND – The FIDE Office in Lausanne will have released the latest rating list on 1st October, but soon after the Sinquefield Cup, the top-12 compromised: 1 Magnus Carlsen (NOR) 2839, 2 Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 2816, 3 Fabiano Caruana (USA) 2789, 4 Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (IND) 2786, 5 Arjun Erigaisi (IND) 2775, 6 Dommaraju Gukesh (IND) 2772, 7 Wesley So (USA) 2756, 8 Vincent Keymer (GER) 2755, 9 Wei Yi (CHN) 2754, 10 Alireza Firouzja



Yet another very talented young Indian, the reigning world junior champion Pranav Venkatesh.

(FRA) 2753, 11 Nodirbek Abdusattorov (UZB) 2753, 12 Anish Giri (NED) 2745.

UAE – 18-year-old Belarusian no.1 Denis Lazavik edged out Zeng Chongsheng (CHN), Arkadij Naiditsch (BUL), Aleksey Grebnev and Maksim Tsaruk (both FID) on tiebreak after they had all scored 7/9 in the 31st Abu Dhabi Masters (August 15–24). Bodhana Sivanandan lost rating points, but will have learnt plenty, playing a field of just IMs and FMs, while drawing with four of them in this strong Open.

An even stronger event was the subsequent Fujairah Global Masters (Aug 25 – Sep 2), which was won by 18-year-old Pranav Venkatesh with 8/9. That left the world junior champion a point clear of Brandon Jacobson (USA), Jose Martinez Alcantara (MEX) and Amin Tabatabaei (IRI). Here Sivanandan too impressed, scoring 3½/9 to gain 13 rating points, while defeating two IMs in the shape of Trinidad and Tobago's Alan-Safar Ramoutar and Qatari Husain Aziz.

USA – Completing our coverage from earlier in the magazine (see pages 8–11), you'll find on the right-hand page the crosstable for the Sinquefield Cup, while the earlier rapid event saw this instructive encounter.

M.Vachier-Lagrave-L.Aronian Saint Louis (rapid) 2025 French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 ♜f6 4 ♙g5 dxe4 5 ♜xe4 ♙d7!?

A rare choice, but this delayed Fort Knox has started to gain some grandmaster traction over the past year or so.

6 ♜f3 ♙c6 7 ♙d3

Natural, but the critical line must be 7 ♜xf6+ gxf6 8 ♙e3 when Black might go 8...♜d6 followed by ...♜bd7 and ...0-0-0.

7...♜bd7

MVL had actually been here before,

7...♙e7 8 ♜ed2 ♜bd7 9 0-0 h6 10 ♙e3 0-0 11 c4 b6 12 ♜e2 ♙b7 having been very comfortable for Black in Vachier-Lagrave-Erigaisi, London (rapid) 2024.

8 ♜g3 ♙e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜e1 ♜e8

Aronian is happy to retain the Fort Knox bishop for now, but there was also 10...♙xf3!? 11 ♜xf3 and then not just 11...c6, but even 11...c5!

11 c3 a5!

Thematically gaining space.

12 ♙c2 a4 13 ♜d3 ♙xf3!

A well-timed exchange, to remove a potential attacker and break the white battery.

14 ♜xf3 c6 15 ♜ad1 ♜a5!



The logical follow-up to the advance of the a-pawn. The queen is en route to a5 and Black would simply appear to enjoy a fairly pleasant position.

16 ♙d2 ♜d5 17 ♜xd5 cxd5 18 ♙d3 ♜b8!?

With White having dissuaded the minority attack with ...b5-b4, likely in conjunction with ...♜b6, Aronian is content to manoeuvre...

19 b3?!

...and is quickly rewarded by this impetuous advance. Instead, 19 ♜f1 ♜c6 20 ♙f4 (Pein), or 19 a3 ♜c6 20 ♜e2 would have maintained the rough balance.

19...axb3 20 axb3 ♜a2

Black wastes no time invading the now vulnerable white queenside.

21 ♜e2 ♜c6 22 ♜c1?!

The knight might cover b3, but won't be so happy here. The engines prefer to grovel with 22 ♖f4 ♜ea8 23 g3 ♘a5 24 ♜b1 and only then if 24...♜a3, 25 ♘c1 followed by ♜e2.

22...♜a3 23 f3

White is in a bit of a tangle and 23 b4?! ♘a7! 24 ♘e2 ♜a8 25 ♜a1 ♘c8 would only have served to make matters worse, so Vachier-Lagrave tries to play on the light squares.

23...♘a5 24 ♖b5 ♜b8 25 b4?!

Except that this is a dark square, unlike 25 c4!? when 25...♘c6 26 ♖f4 ♜c8 is clearly better for Black, but at least White is fighting after 27 ♖xc6! bxc6 28 c5.

25...♘c4! 26 ♘e2

There's no real need to fear an exchange on d2, when at least opposite-coloured bishops are present, in contrast to 26 ♖xc4? dxc4 27 ♘e2 ♘d5 when White would have been positionally lost.

26...♘xd2 27 ♖xd2 h5



Seizing space, but Keith Arkell's favourite advance 27...g5! was a better way of doing so.

28 h4! ♜c8 29 g3 ♖d6 30 ♗f2 e5!?

This active choice isn't engine-approved, but it does grant Black easy play and at a quick time control, having the initiative can, of course, be pretty useful.

31 dxe5 ♖xe5 32 ♜d3 ♜a2 33 ♗f1 g6 34 ♜ed1 ♗g7 35 ♜e3 ♖c7 36 c4?

White has defended well, but needed to sit tight with 36 ♜ed3, with good chances to save the game, not make yet another impetuous and misguided pawn advance.

36...♜b2! 37 cxd5 ♜xb4

The preliminary 37...♖d6!? was likely even stronger.



Look out for Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa at the GCT Finals due to finish early this month.

38 d6! ♜xb5 39 dxc7 ♜xc7 40 ♘f4 ♜b2 41 ♜e2

Taking stock, we find Black a clear pawn to the good, but still with plenty of work to do to turn it into a win.

41...♜b3 42 ♗g2 b5 43 ♜d6 ♜b7



44 ♜a2?

This further active try quickly backfires. Moreover, 44 ♜d3 ♜b1 45 ♜ee3! would still have retained some chances to hold.

44...b4 45 ♜aa6 ♘d7 46 ♘d3?

A blunder in a largely hopeless position.

46...♜xd3! 0-1

47 ♜xd3 ♘c5 forks the white rooks, leading to a straightforward win after 48 ♜ad6 ♘xd3 49 ♜xd3 b3 50 ♜d1 b2 51 ♜b1 ♗f6 52 ♗f2 ♗e5 53 ♗e3 ♜b3+.

There is also news from Chess.com, who on August 26th staged the last Titled Tuesday Blitz split between early and late events. The former was won then by the Vietnamese Grandmaster Tuan Minh Le, who defeated Magnus Carlsen en route to a dominant 10½/11, while the latter was won by Serbian no.1 Alexey Sarana with 9½/11.

Then on September 2nd came the first Titled Tuesday staged in collaboration with Carlsen's Take Take Take app, who broadcast coverage from their Oslo studio, as Kaja Snare was joined by David Howell and Simon Williams.

From now on, the time control will be 5+0, not 3+2, the same format as the Esports World Cup, which the Titled Tuesday Grand Prix will help players to qualify for. That first new event was won too by Alexey Sarana, who defeated Magnus Carlsen before edging out Andrey Esipenko on tiebreak after they had both finished on 9½/11.

12th Sinquefeld Cup, Saint Louis, USA, 16-29 August 2025 (Category 20, ave. rating = 2750)															
	Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa	IND	2779	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	5½	2827
2	Wesley So	USA	2745	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	5½	2830
3	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2784	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	5½	2826
4	Levon Aronian	USA	2737	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	5	2794
5	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2736	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	4½	2751
6	Samuel Sevian	USA	2683	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	4½	2757
7	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	POL	2725	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	0	1	4½	2753
8	Dommaraju Gukesh	IND	2776	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	1	4	2704
9	Alireza Firouzja	FRA	2766	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	*	0	3½	2668
10	Nodirbek Abdusattorov	UZB	2771	½	0	0	0	½	½	0	0	1	*	2½	2581



Solutions

to Find the Winning Moves (pp.20-23)

1) Ponkratov-Erdogdu

1 ♖h8+! 1-0 The black queen is lost in view of 1...♗xh8 2 ♕xf6+. 1 ♖h1 ♗g7 2 ♕a2! also wins, if somewhat less emphatically.

2) Caruana-Erigaisi

1 ♖xe7+! 1-0 Either 2 ♖xc8 follows or 1...♖xe7 2 ♖f6+ and ♖xh5.

3) Palliser-‘fortaleza1983’

1 ♖xg6! (1 ♖xg6+ hxg6 2 ♖xg6 also mates, albeit more mundanely) **1...hxg6 2 ♖xg6# 1-0**

4) So-Keymer

1...♖e2+! 0-1 Either the queen is lost or it's mate on c2.

5) Goitia Tejado-Griever

1...♖a1+! 0-1 If 2 ♗xa1 ♖a4+ 3 ♗b1 ♖a2+ 4 ♗c1 ♖a1#.

6) Praggnanandhaa-Carlsen

1...♖xd1+! 2 ♖xd1 ♖e3+ 3 ♗c1 ♖xc4 4 ♖xc4 ♖fd8 saw Black quickly convert the extra exchange.

7) Fernandez-Bartodziej

1 ♖b3! ♖xb3? 2 ♖xe7+ ♗g8 3 ♖e8+ 1-0 Checkmate follows on h5.

8) Pert-Wells

1...♗xg2! 0-1 Mate follows, as with 2 ♗xg2 ♖g8+! 3 hxg8 ♖+ ♖xg8+ 4 ♗f3 ♖g4#.

9) So-Oparin

1...♖db8! 0-1 It's all over in view of 2 ♖xf6 ♖b2+ 3 ♗c1 ♖b1+ 4 ♖d2 ♖8b2#.

10) Davtyan-Sarana

1...♖xh2+! (or 1...♖g4!? 2 ♖xh3 ♖xh2+ and wins) **2 ♖xh2 ♖xf3+ 3 ♗g1 ♖g4 0-1**

11) Wartiovaara-Povilaitis

1 ♖b1! (essential, whereas stalemate saved Black in the game: 1 ♗e3 b1 ♖ 2 ♖xb1 ½-½) **1...♗b3 2 ♗e3 a3** (2...♗a3 3 ♖d3 ♗b3 4 ♖d2 a3 5 ♖d3 transposes) **3 ♖d3 a2 4 ♖c2+ ♗a3 5 ♖c5+!** (5 ♖c3+ ♗a4 6 ♖xb2 is simpler) **5...♗b3 6 ♖b5+ ♗a3 7 ♖c4** forces mate on b3, a5 or with **7...b1 ♖ 8 ♖a5+ ♗b2 9 ♖c3#**.

12) Pein-Perez Marimon

1 ♖xg7+! ♗xg7 2 ♖xe5+ ♗h7 (2...♗f7 3 ♖c4+ ♗f8 4 ♖xb8+ ♗e7 5 ♖c7+ also spells the end) **3 ♖c7+ ♗h8 4 ♖xb8+ ♗g7** (Black's king is caught in a mating net) **5 ♖c4 ♖d5 6 ♖e5+ 1-0**

13) Sowray-Hoffmann

1 ♖xa8! (the only strong move, thanks to

the follow-up) **1...♖a7** (1...♖xd6 2 ♖c6 is just an extra rook) **2 ♖d5! ♖xb5** (or 2...♖xd5 3 ♖xd5) **3 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 4 ♖xf8+! 1-0**

14) Dominguez Perez-Caruana

1 ♖f6+! ♗g7 (1...♗xf6 would immediately be stalemate and even 1...♗g5! 2 ♖f5+! ♗g4! 3 ♖xf7 ♖c6 4 ♖d7 ♖a6 5 ♖f6 ♖c5+ 6 ♗e7 ♖a7+ 7 ♗e8 would likely have led to a draw at such a high level) **2 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 ½-½**

15) Abasolo-LeMoir

1...♖e3! 2 ♖f3 (very ugly, but 2 ♖a4 would run into 2...♖xa3! and 2 ♖e2 ♖b2 should also be winning for Black) **2...♖xf3 3 gxf3 ♖b2 4 ♖c1 ♖d4 5 ♖e4 ♖xc2** left Black with excellent winning chances.

16) Jermy-LeMoir

1 ♖xb5! (even stronger than 1 ♖xb7+! ♗a8 2 ♖7xb5) **1...♖xe5 2 ♖xb7+! 1-0** Mate follows on the seventh.

17) Vivaan-Plat

1...♖c6! (a lovely way to create a deadly pin on the c-file) **2 dxc6 ♖xd1+ 3 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 4 ♖xf1 ♖xc5 0-1**

18) Borrmann-Palczert

1...♖g1+! 2 ♗f7 (2 ♗f5 ♖f1+ 3 ♗e6 ♗g7 4 ♖b7+ ♗g6 sees the black king escaping) **2...♖g7+! 3 ♗xf8** (3 ♗e6 can even be met by 3...♖f7!?) **3...♖b7! 4 ♖e8** (the simplest way to draw, as 4 ♖xb7 would be an immediate stalemate) **4...♖b8 5 ♖xb8 ½-½**

19) Christiansen-Greet

1 ♖b4! ♖xb4 2 ♖xa4 ♖e4 3 ♖xe4 dxe4 4 ♖xb4 left White clearly better, with two pieces for the rook and pawn, and the tournament winner went on to convert.

20) Lagarde-Bazakutsa

1...♖xc3+! (1...♖xd8?! 2 ♖b2 doesn't give Black quite enough for a rook, or 1...♖xe2 2 ♖xe2 ♖xa1 3 ♖xb7 ♖d4 4 ♖f1 for a piece) **2 ♖xc3 ♖xe2+ 3 ♗f1 ♖f2+ 4 ♗e1** (4 ♗g1 ♖d2+ is also a repetition) **4...♖e2+ 5 ♗f1 ♖f2+ 6 ♗e1 ½-½**

21) Toyne-Jones

1...♖a3! 2 bxa3? (2 fxe4 ♖xb3 3 axb3 ♖xe4 4 ♖d2 ♖e7 is excellent for Black, as is 2 ♖xa3! ♖xc3! 3 ♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 4 bxc3 0-0, but at least this way the game would have continued) **2...♖xc3+ 3 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 4 ♖b2** when Black went on to win easily after **4...♖a4**, and 4...♖b1! would have been even better.

22) Yakubboev-Tiglon

1 ♖xe4! ♖xe4 (1...♖xe4 2 ♖d3 also wins, followed by 2...f5 3 ♖c4+ ♗h8 4 ♖g5 or

2...♖f6 3 ♖e5) **2 ♖e5 ♖e2 3 ♖e1! ♖b5 4 a4 ♖a5 5 ♖xa5 bxa5 6 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 7 ♖c1 1-0** 8 ♖xc5 and 9 ♖c8(+) follows.

23) Navara-Hakobyan

1...♖xd4! 2 cxd4 ♖xf3+ 3 ♗f2 (or 3 ♖xf3 ♖xd4+ 4 ♗g2 ♖xa1) **3...♖xd4 4 ♖b2 g5 5 ♖ad1 ♖d8 6 ♗g1 ♖f3+! 0-1**

24) Yakubboev-Wojtaszek

1...♖g1! (threatening mate on g5) **2 ♖d8!?** (2 ♖xf5 gxf5 3 ♖d5 ♖c1+ 4 ♖d3 ♖d1+ is also perpetual check) **2...♖c1+! 3 ♖d2 ♖g1 4 ♖d8 ♖c1+ ½-½**

25) Erdogmus-Svidler

1 ♖xh6+! ♖xh6 2 ♖h1 1-0 2... ♗g7 fails to 3 ♖xh6!, and if 3...♗xh6 (3...♖h8 4 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 5 ♖c7+ ♗h6 6 ♖f7+ is also hopeless) 4 ♖h4+ ♗g7 5 ♖h7#.

26) Aronian-Wei Yi

1...♖g4! 2 g3 (not 2 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 3 ♖xf7? ♖e1# or 2 ♖xg4? ♖xg5) **2...♖xe5! 3 ♖xg4 ♖e4 4 ♖h3 ♖e1+! 5 ♗g2 ♖d1 6 ♖h4 ♖d3 0-1** 7 ♖f6+ ♗g8 8 g4 a5 is easy.

27) Portman-Arora

1 ♖a7!! (not the only good move, but the most forcing and the strongest) **1...♖f6?** (1...♖xa7 2 ♖xe5+ ♖f6 3 ♖d7! was the critical line, when White is winning after 3...♖c7 4 ♖xd5 ♖xe5 5 ♖xe5 ♖ff8 6 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 7 ♖b5! and 8 ♖e8(+), or 3...♖bb6 4 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 5 ♖d8+ ♗g7 6 ♖c5!, with the twin threats of ♖xf8# and ♖xa8) **2 ♖d7 ♖xd7 3 ♖xd7** left White the exchange up, which he quickly converted.

28) Bronstein-Cao

1 ♖xh5! gxh5 2 ♖f3 ♖g7 (2...♖h6 3 ♖xh5 ♗g7 fails to 4 ♖xe6+ ♗h7 5 ♖f4! followed by ♖f5+) **3 ♖f6!** (and not 3 ♖xf7? ♖c2 when White would have no more than a draw) **3...♖d2 4 ♖xf7** (this crashes through, unlike 4 ♖h6? ♖d3) **4...♖xf7 5 ♖xf7+ ♗h8 6 ♖g6 ♗g8 7 ♖xe6 1-0**

29) Eames-Wilson

1 ♖xh7+! 1-0 1...♗xh7 (1...♗f8 2 ♖h1 ♗e8 3 ♖h8+ ♖f8 4 ♖h6 doesn't especially help) 2 ♖h1+ forces mate, as with 2...♗g8 3 ♖e6+ ♗f8 4 ♖h8# or 2...♗g7 3 ♖h6+ ♗f7 4 ♖xg6+ ♗f8 5 ♖h6#.

30) Vitiugov-Willow

1 ♖xh6! ♖xd6 2 ♖f3! (the key follow-up, and not 2 exd6? ♖xe4) **2...♖e2** (likewise, 2...♖xe5 3 ♖h3 wins after 3...♖f6 4 ♖h7+ ♗f8 5 fxe5 ♖xe5 6 ♖h8+ and even 3...♖xh3 4 ♖xh3 ♖c6 5 f5 should result in a white win) **3 ♖h3 ♖h5 4 ♖xh5! gxh5 5 ♖h7+ ♗h8 6 ♖g6+ ♗g8 7 ♖h7+ ♗f8 8 f5! 1-0**

31) Vokhidov-Sargsyan

1...♖xb3! (1...♖g2!? 2 ♖e2 h4 is also very strong) **2 ♖xb3 ♖d3! 3 ♖xd3** (even 3 ♗h2!? ♖xe1 4 ♗xh3 ♖f3 5 ♖f1 ♖g4+ 6 ♗h2 ♖f3+ 7 ♗g2 ♖xe4 wins) **3...♖f3 4 ♖f1 ♖xf1 5 ♖xf1 ♖xe4 6 ♖xg5 ♖xd5 7 ♖c1 ♖c5 8 ♖e1 ♗g6 0-1**

32) Wei Yi-Aronian

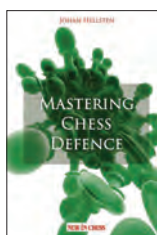
1 ♖h6!! (a bolt from the blue) 1...gxh6
2 ♜e6 ♙xe6 3 ♜xf6+ ♜g8 4 ♜xe6+
♜g7 5 ♜ed1! ♜d5! (5...♜c8? 6 ♜d7 would
be trivial) 6 ♜xc6 ♜b4 7 ♜f3 (threatening
♜c3+, as well as the black queen) 7...♜f6

8 ♜d7+ ♜g6 9 ♜g3+ ♜h5 (Black also
wouldn't survive after 9...♜f5 10 ♜ad1)
10 ♜h3+ ♜g6 11 ♜g3+ ♜h5 12 ♜ad1!
♜f5 (12...♜ad8 13 ♜h3+ ♜g5 14 f4+
overloads and wins) 13 h3! ♜g8 14 ♜xc7
1-0

33) Lazavik-Gurel

1...♜f2+!! 2 ♜xf2 (2 ♜xf2 ♜xd3+ 3 ♜g3
♜xb2 would be a clear extra piece)
2...♜xd3 3 ♜xg7 ♜xf2 4 ♜xf2 ♜xg7
left Black the exchange ahead, and he went
on to win.

This Month's New Releases



Mastering Chess Defence

Johan Hellsten, 440 pages
New in Chess

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Johan Hellsten's new book is a continuation of the 'mastering' series he started 15 years ago, with three prior volumes leading the way: *Mastering Chess Strategy* (Everyman Chess, 2010), *Mastering Opening Strategy* (Everyman Chess, 2012), and *Mastering Endgame Strategy* (Everyman Chess, 2013). Readers will spot there has been a change of publisher since then, but the book's style and livery both follow firmly in the footsteps of their predecessors.

Defence is a very tricky subject. As the introduction puts it: "Defence is probably one of the most challenging areas in chess." We do not need the 'probably' there; most players are much better at attacking than they are at defending, from juniors upwards (as evidenced by the fact that we still witness so many examples of Scholar's Mate). Long gone are the days of seeing Tigran Petrosian, Viktor Korchnoi and others grab a pawn and hold on to weather many storms to reach a winning endgame. Anyone seizing a strong initiative in modern chess is fully expected to win, no matter what level of play is involved.

Back to the book: "All chess players know that they need to study tactics, calculation, endgames, and openings, but when it comes to defence, far too many wait until they're under pressure. The truth is that more games are lost because of defensive mistakes than strategic ones."

Therefore, it makes good sense to spend some study time on enriching one's defensive arsenal. Hellsten presents his well-chosen material across 31 chapters, all the way from 'Detecting the threat' to 'Revolution'. The whole material is interesting. Here is a small sample from the chapter on 'Giving back material'.

"A reluctance to give back material is, at least from my experience, one of the key causes of defeat in defensive play." Furthermore, and very importantly, "It is worth noting that this idea is not always the first choice of chess engines [...] but in practical contexts – especially for humans dealing with nerves, time trouble etc – it is very useful." Indeed, juniors and club players are usually reluctant to give back some of their hard-earned booty, even when storm clouds are gathering around their kings.



Black to move

"Following up on a Greek Gift, White has just played ♜f3-g5. Black's best reaction?"

This is a basic example to show the principle in action, but Black needs to give back the piece with 1...♜f6! and, after 2 ♜c2 (because the queens were looking at each other and a trade would definitely suit Black), then 2...♜bd7! 3 exf6 ♜xf6 "and Black holds."

The slogan of the series is: 'Study brings wisdom. Practice brings perfection.' Of course, no chess player can achieve perfection, not even the ones who hide mobile phones about their person and surreptitiously refer to them during games, but it should be clear that chess study brings a greater understanding of any subject, which can only be beneficial for one's game and, eventually, one's results over the board.

Club and tournament players who understand that their defensive skill is lacking will learn a lot from this book.

Sean Marsh



Your Calculation Compass

David Navara, PC/MAC booklet or download;
running time: 1 hour, 34 minutes
ChessBase

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

David Navara is a very interesting chess player. Clearly a sensitive soul, he also has no qualms about sharing his chess knowledge. This DVD covers an unusual subject as he imparts "practical advice on when to calculate deeply in a position – and just as importantly, when not to."

A generation of chess players grew up 'thinking like a tree', thanks to Alexander Kotov in the intriguing book, *Think Like a Grandmaster* (many editions, the most recent of which is by Batsford, 2012). The idea was to analyse everything out in branches and to keep faith in one's calculations. The next generation planted seeds of doubt for the tree method although it must be said that Kotov's books – mainly forgotten now – remain highly instructive.

Navara gives advice, using plenty of practical examples, on how and when to calculate deeper, and when it is not necessary to do so. The specific subjects placed under the Navara microscope include: When simple, solid moves are better than deep calculation; How to identify situations that require precise calculation; The importance of candidate moves and systematic analysis; Common pitfalls like overcalculating or ignoring strategic factors; and The value of intermediate and hidden tactical moves.

He makes a lot of pertinent points along the way, such as: "Solving puzzles is good, but it is only a part of a healthy chess diet. Solving studies can also be good to train your calculation."

He goes deeper into everything and follows this up with: "That said, typical games differ a lot from both puzzles and studies, especially in the following aspects: 1) You are

not informed that you should search for a win *now*. 2) If you know nothing about positional chess and struggle with evaluation, you can still be great in solving puzzles and studies, but it will be harder in tournament games. 3) Puzzles and studies mostly have nice and aesthetically pleasing solutions (poetry). Brilliances are rare in everyday life (prose). 4) In tournament games the lines are mostly more chaotic, less clear, and sometimes calculation is not that important, understanding might play a bigger role. 5) Puzzles and studies usually contain great ideas, but tournament games are mostly not decided by great ideas, but by unnecessary mistakes and sometimes even silly blunders.”

The range of subjects covered on the DVD includes some of those one would expect to see – such as Candidate moves; Long variation, wrong variation; Intermediate moves and Radical measures – but also some which should come as a surprise, such as Seeking a unicorn. This is the process of “looking for something which doesn't exist” and is best explained by the following snippet.

D.Navara-A.David

Greek Team Ch., Patras 2019



White's position looks imposing, but lacks a crusher. However, it is comforting to know that even top players are not immune to chasing unicorns and wasting an awful lot of time trying to make 'something' work, when nothing will.

“Black had just a few minutes left till the time control, I still had a lot of time. Here I spent 55 minutes, first searching for a win, then for a big advantage, then for a small one. And found nothing, as the position is surprisingly equal.”

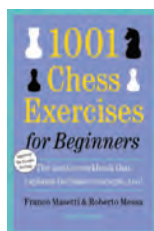
Ultimately, Navara could find nothing better than **26 h3** (at least he had the discipline not to go 'gung-ho' as most of us would do, to try and justify a long time thinking). He admits that he had not even considered his opponent's reply of **26...d5**, which just goes to emphasise one his main points: “Long calculations are overrated.”

The clock times suddenly became almost level. “Here I had six minutes left, and after the opponent's reply I consumed almost all of my remaining time.” White had therefore not only failed to find a way to play for an advantage, but he had also reduced the battle

to the lottery of a potentially chaotic time-scramble. Navara did eventually win the game after a further 10 moves, but it is clear that he was unhappy with the quality of his thinking skills and also his judgement of the position.

This is a very interesting DVD indeed. The core subject is unusual and it may not be as initially appealing as cramming another opening into your already bulging repertoire, but the thoughts behind the methods of calculation are enlightening. It is very thought-provoking throughout and can be recommended to strong tournament players who have ever wasted their time on chasing unicorns and other such fruitless tasks.

Sean Marsh



1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners

Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa,

224 pages, paperback

RRP £19.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.95**

This is a second edition of a popular puzzle book from New in Chess. The Italian authors explain all the key types of tactics, then supply a large number of exercises to solve on each theme. This version is essentially a new layout, which means there are now a user-friendly six puzzles per page.



ChessBase Magazine 227

ChessBase, PC/MAC booklet or download

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest edition of *CBM* features Vladimir Fedoseev on the cover and contains a detailed report on Biel. There is also a special feature on Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, as well as the regular contributions from Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller, Robert Ris and Dorian Rogozenko. In total there are over seven hours of video to enjoy, as well as detailed coverage of several opening ideas, including 1 b3 e5 2 ♟b2 ♟c6 3 e3 d5 4 ♟b5 ♟ge7!?



Exploiting a Space Advantage

Cyrus Lakdawala, 248 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Popular Chess, the successor to Everyman, have a new series, 'Winning Chess Strategies', kicked off by this helpful work on space by one of their main authors, Cyrus Lakdawala, whose target audience here is most certainly those fairly new to serious chess, as well as the weaker and average club player. He clearly shows why having a space advantage can lead to good attacking chances, as well as to concessions from the opponent. Readers also learn all about the dangers of both too little space and overextending, as well as handling opposing space advantages on the flanks.

Also new in the same series from Lakdawala are *Exploiting the Bishop Pair* (224 pages, £19.99; Subscribers £17.99) and *Exploiting Weaknesses* (296 pages, £19.99; Subscribers £17.99). Many players don't fully appreciate the bishop-pair, in which case the former will be a most useful guide, with Lakdawala succinctly showing which type of positions do and don't favour having the bishop-pair, as well as how one should play to obtain it and even fight against it. The latter explores in some detail the famed principle of two weaknesses, as well as such topics as weak pawns, vulnerable pieces, holes and weak colour complexes. Note too that hardback versions of all three books in the 'Winning Chess Strategies' are available from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £24.99 or £22.49 for Subscribers.



Fundamentals of Positional Play and Strategy

Lubomir Ftacnik, PC/MAC booklet or

download; running time: 12 hours

RRP £44.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £40.45**

This is a most detailed presentation from the famous Slovak Grandmaster, theoretician and trainer devoted to almost everything you might consider as strategic or positional. Ftacnik's aim is to teach viewers the most important strategic principles, while equipping them to outplay opponents who largely rely on tricks and calculation. Along the way he presents a number of handy rules, as well as examining such important topics as pawn structure, improving the pieces and restricting your opponent's possibilities.



Hübner Year by Year: Vol. I (1959-79)

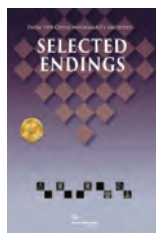
Tibor Karolyi & Hans Renette,

534 pages, paperback

RRP £41.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £37.75**

The legendary German Robert Hübner only passed away in early January and already Elk and Ruby have a publication devoted to the first half of his successful career. The same author team are responsible for the excellent series on Viktor Korchnoi and for this new work, Hans Renette managed to interview several people who knew Hübner well, as he paints a fascinating portrait of this talented polymath. Tibor Karolyi presents in some detail 159 games, showing not just Hübner's famed analytical ability, but highlighting too how strong an endgame player he was. Indeed, he saved difficult endings against Fischer, Karpov and Kasparov no less. As so often for an Elk and Ruby production, a number of fine photographs are included in

this fascinating, if detailed biography and games collection. Note too that a hardcover version is also available if you prefer, retailing at £53.95 or £48.55 for Subscribers.



Selected Endings

Chess Informant, 272 pages, paperback
RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**
Next year will be the 60th anniversary of

Chess Informant, who to mark the occasion have launched a new series, 'From the Chess Informant's Archives', beginning with this volume on the later stages of the game. A specialised endgame section first appeared in 'Informator 5' and as we're now up to no.164, that's a lot of high-quality endgame material. The majority of this book is devoted to rook as well as minor pieces endgames, but there are also chapters on pawn and queen endings, with the annotations presented in typically languageless fashion. These are all original, so the hard-working reader might, as a training exercise, wish to pick out some positions on which to practice their analytical skills, the aim being to corroborate the original notes, while looking for any mistakes.



Forthcoming Events

October 4-5 AlphaChess Classical, Potters Bar
congress.org.uk/congress/591/home

October 4-5 Norfolk County Championships, Coltishall
norfolkchess.org

October 4 Greater London Rapidplay, Orpington
congress.org.uk/congress/550/home

October 4 Isle of Wight Rapid & Blitz Championship
iowchess.com

October 4 Milton Keynes Rapidplay
mkbishopschess.co.uk/upcoming-events/

October 4 P & P Clarke Memorial Rapidplay, Devon
congress.org.uk/congress/621/home

October 4 Swindon Rapidplay
swindonchessevents.yolasite.com

October 5 Ealing Rapidplay
londonfidecongress.com/ealing-rapidplay

October 7 Muswell Hill Rapid
Muswellhillchess.blogspot.com

October 10-12 Dundee Congress
dundecongress.co.uk

October 10-12 Fareham Congress
castle-chess.co.uk

October 11-12 Leeds Congress, Guiseley
ilkeychesscentre.com/events

October 11 Barnstaple Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/616/home

October 11 Golders Green Rapidplay
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com

October 11 Stroud Autumn Rapid
stroudchess.club/autumn-2025-rapid-tournament

October 12 Northampton Rapidplay
chesseventsuk.co.uk

October 14 Muswell Hill Rapid
Muswellhillchess.blogspot.com

October 17-19 Leicester H. E. Atkins Congress
congress.org.uk/congress/643/home

October 17-19 Weymouth Congress
congress.org.uk/congress/635/home

October 18-19 Bury St Edmunds Congress
bsecongress.org

October 18 Jurassic Rapidplay, Axmouth
seatonchessclub.co.uk/index.php/events/3rd-jurassic-rapidplay

October 18 Oxford Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/512/home

October 18 Wells Rapidplay
congress.org.uk/congress/620/home

October 19-25 Guernsey International Chess Festival
guernseychessfestival.org.gg

October 24-26 Scarborough Congress
scarboroughchess.uk

October 25-26 South Wales Autumn Congress, Cardiff
welshchessunion.uk/Autumn25/index.html

October 26-31 Coventry International
englishchess.org.uk/coventry-international/

And for the Online Connoisseur:

Sep 28 - Oct 2 GCT Tour Finals, Sao Paulo
grandchesstour.org; Aronian, Caruana, Praggnanandhaa & MVL.

October 5-14 European Team Championship, Batumi
etc2025.com; England: Adams, Jones, Vitiugov, McShane & Royal, and Houska, Yao, Hunt, Mirzoeva & Sivanandan.

October 12-24 U.S. Championships, Saint Louis
saintlouischessclub.org; Aronian, Caruana, Mishra, Niemann, Shankland, So, etc; and Krush, Lee, Paikidze, Paragua, Yip, etc.

October 18-26 European Club Cup, Rhodes
ecc2025.com; Blackthorne, Cheddleton, Kingston, The Sharks.

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



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