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SPEED DEMON

Hikaru Nakamura wins the London Chess Classic and 2018 Grand Chess Tour in final blitz game following draw epidemic

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It's a Knockout! - Gawain Jones wins at the Classic and annotates a key encounter



Is Hastings Dying? Danny Gormally was a little concerned despite sharing first place



Coming of Age - Adam Raoof has been delighted by junior success at Hampstead

Chess

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Contents

Editorial	4
Malcolm Pein on the latest developments in the game	
60 Seconds with...Chris Skulte	7
The captain of Celtic Tigers in the 4NCL certainly likes his chess	
Wars and Draws	8
A new format was trialled at the London Chess Classic	
Is Hastings Dying?	14
So pondered Danny Gormally after sharing first place there	
How Good is Your Chess?	21
Daniel King was very impressed by the <i>AlphaZero vs Stockfish</i> match	
Modern Chess: Part Two	24
Milos Pavlovic discusses the impact engines are having	
Find the Winning Moves	26
Can you do as well as the players at the Classic and Hastings?	
Never Mind the Grandmasters...	30
Carl Portman is fed up with the amount of clutter around the board	
The Life and Death of Grandmaster Blimp	32
Tim Wall reflects on a recent book on the Carlsen-Caruaena match	
Dangerous Moments	34
Amatzia Avni on the theme <i>embarras de richesses</i>	
Christmas Quiz	37
All the answers to last month's tricky questions and puzzles	
Studies with Stephenson	41
Brian presents an award-winning study by Oleg Pervakov	
A Fishy Tale	42
An novel attempt to create a rival to AlphaZero, by J. Corfield	
Forthcoming Events	44
Hampstead Congress Comes of Age	45
Adam Raoof has been delighted by junior success at his events	
Readers' Letters	47
Overseas News	48
Daniil Dubov & Magnus Carlsen are the World Rapid & Blitz Champions	
Three-Way Go	51
It's no surprise which teams are on 4/4 in the 4NCL	
Home News	52
The latest results and a tribute to popular FM Steve Berry	
Solutions	54
This Month's New Releases	55
Sean Marsh reviews Carsten Hensel's work on Vladimir Kramnik	
Saunders on Chess	58
John remains dedicated to furthering his chess education	

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Wars and Draws

The London Chess Classic and the 2018 British Knockout Championship trialed a new match format, combining classical, rapid and blitz to the delight of Hikaru Nakamura

It doesn't feel that old, but the 2018 London Chess Classic was already the tenth edition and saw some major changes. In came new sponsor, the Lohia Foundation, who support many important projects in the fields of education, healthcare and the arts. Also new was the format for the top section. Gone was the 10-player all-play-all we had become accustomed to; in was a new-look format for the finals of the 2018 Grand Chess Tour.

The semi-finals pitted the man who had topped the GCT leaderboard, Hikaru Nakamura, with Fabiano Caruana, whom readers may recall only qualified at the eleventh hour, overcoming Wesley So in a rapid play-off for the final berth straight after the Sinquefeld Cup. The other match-up saw two fighters and good friends face off, Levon Aronian taking on Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

The format was novel, but appeared well worth a try. Each match would begin with two classical games, worth six points for a win, at the time control of 40 moves in 100 minutes followed by an extra hour to finish the game, and with a 30-second delay from move one. The third and final day of each match would then see two rapid games (25 minutes with a 10-second delay), worth four points to the winner, followed by four blitz games, worth two points each and played with a 5-3 time control. As such, 15 points would suffice for victory.

After the 12 draws between Carlsen and Caruana, pretty much everyone was hoping that London would finally see a decisive classical game as the semi-finals began at the plush setting of Google HQ, just by King's Cross and the home of Demis Hassabis and his *AlphaZero* team. Unfortunately, the players didn't appear to have read the script or maybe the standard of play is so high these days, and the elite so used to playing each other, that a draw is simply by far the most likely result.

To be fair to Levon Aronian, another day he would have won the classical portion of his match 2-0. The Armenian legend introduced yet another new idea on the black side of his favourite 8 a4 b4 Anti-Marshall and quickly took over. Vachier-Lagrave was forced to ditch the exchange for a pawn, but Black never had a definite win, peace eventually being agreed after 74 moves. The French no.1 was again out-prepared in the return, a Symmetrical English, and this time had to give up a pawn ahead of another impressive defence and hold in 58 moves.

Meanwhile Fabiano Caruana knew that his best chance of getting past his compatriot, with the added bonus of reaching the top spot on the rating list, was to exploit the advantage of the white pieces in his first classical game, and he certainly went for it.

F.Caruana-H.Nakamura

1st matchgame

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♟f3 d5 4 ♟c3 ♟e7 5 ♟f4 0-0 6 e3 b6 7 ♟c2

Caruana preferred 7 cxd5 ♟xd5 8 ♟xd5 ♟xd5 9 ♟d3 ♟a5+ 10 ♟f1 in the rapid games, but after 10...♟a6!? Nakamura had made use of his slightly rare sixth-move choice, with 11 ♟xc7 ♟xd3+ 12 ♟xd3 ♟a6 13 ♟g3 ♟b4 14 ♟e2 ♟fc8 15 a3 ♟a4 16 ♟g1 ♟a2 leaving Black with some, if not objectively quite enough play for his pawn.

7...♟b7 8 ♟d1 ♟d6 9 ♟g3

Already a novelty, so rare is Black's set-up. **9...♟bd7 10 cxd5!**

Seizing central control in view of 10...exd5?! 11 ♟xd6 cxd6 12 ♟d3.

10...♟xd5 11 e4 ♟xc3 12 bxc3 ♟xg3 13 hxg3 e5?!

It's natural for Black to want to fight back in the centre, but he should really have preferred 13...♟e7, and if 14 ♟d3 c5 15 e5 h6 when nothing too terrible should happen.

14 ♟b5!

Caruana is quick to pinpoint the downside to Black's last.

14...c6

Blocking in his own bishop, but 14...exd4? 15 ♟xd4 c6 16 e5! g6 17 ♟d2 would have been game over.

15 ♟e2 ♟c7 16 g4!



A strong advance, preparing to cramp Black ahead of doubling on the h-file and, of course, 16...h6? 17 g5! couldn't have been tolerated.

16...♟fe8 17 g5 ♟ad8

17...exd4 18 cxd4 ♟f8 was the alternative, but after 19 ♟f1 or even 19 ♟e5!? White remains in charge of the position.

18 ♟f1

Caruana is in no rush, but a certain Garry Kasparov, who was visiting DeepMind that day, preferred 18 ♟c4!?. Needless to say he had a fiendish tactical idea in mind, namely 18...b5? 19 ♟xf7+! ♟xf7 20 ♟b3+ ♟e6 21 g6+! followed by 22 ♟g5(+) or 22 gxh7, with a crushing position.

18...b5 19 ♟h4 a6 20 a4 ♟a5

Trying to prevent White from having all the play on both flanks, but now Caruana can crash through.

21 g6! hxg6

Naturally not 21...fxg6?, in view of 22 ♟a2+ ♟h8 23 ♟g5 h6 24 ♟f7+ ♟h7 25 ♟xh6! gxh6 26 ♟f7+.

22 ♟g5 ♟f8 23 ♟d3!

The point of White's play. Black is set to be mated down the open h-file.

23...♟c8

Nakamura finds the only way to stay on the board for now.

24 ♟b3 ♟c7 25 axb5 axb5



26 ♟f3

Far from terrible, but 26 g4! would have regained control of h3 and after 26...♟e6 27 ♟dh3 ♟f8 28 ♟xe6+ ♟xe6 (or 28...♟xe6 29 ♟a3+ c5 30 ♟xb5) 29 d5! cxd5 30 ♟xb5 White would have been doing pretty well.

26...♟e6 27 d5

Consistent and fairly necessary, but Black is able to grab this pawn.

27...cxd5 28 exd5 ♟xd5 29 ♟xe6

29 g4!? ♟d7 30 ♟fh3 ♟f8 was no longer

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, not least the London Chess Classic, Hastings, and the World Rapid and Blitz. Don't forget that whilst sometimes the key move will force mate or the win of material, other times it will just win a pawn.

Solutions on page 54.



Warm-up Puzzles



(1) P.Sowray-A.Balaji
London 2018
White to Play



(2) R.Van Kemenade-D.Gormally
British Rapidplay Ch., Ilkley 2018
Black to Play



(3) D.Miller-S.Williams
Hastings 2018/19
Black to Play



(4) Y.Han-J.Willow
British Rapidplay Ch., Ilkley 2018
Black to Play



(5) R.Bates-K.Kulon
4NCL, Daventry 2018
Black to Play



(6) M.Burke-R.Van Kemenade
British Rapidplay Ch., Ilkley 2018
Black to Play

Three-Way Go

There's no real surprise which three teams have won their first four 4NCL matches

Only three teams won their first four matches during the opening 4NCL weekends of the 2018/19 season in Daventry: champions Guildford, perennial challengers Cheddleton and Manx Liberty, who until the 2015/16 season were SG Trier of the German Bundesliga.

Guildford are in the slightly easier Pool A and began by rather marmalising West is Best, Barbican and Oxford, winning all three matches by at least 7-1. In round 4 they were, however, made to work by Wood Green, who averaged a hardly shabby 2445 to the champions' 2607.

In the end there were just two decisive games after Gawain Jones somehow salvaged a rook ending two pawns down against Daniel Fernandez. One was on top board where new signing Michael Adams's bishop-pair proved too much for Jon Speelman to cope with, while Jean-Pierre le Roux rather crushed Adam Taylor. Le Roux now has 4/4, the only player on such a score this season, although his team-mate Nick Pert and also both Cheddleton's Jonathan Hawkins and Manx's Mircea-Emilian Parligras have racked up 3½/4.

R.McKay-V.Platt

Alba vs Guildford

Philidor Defence

1 d4 d6 2 e4 ♟f6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♟f3 ♚bd7 5 ♖g1 c6 6 g4 g6 7 ♙e3 ♙g7 8 g5 ♟h5 9 ♗d2 0-0 10 0-0-0 b5!?

The battle lines are clear, but now White might have advanced on the 'wrong' side with 11 a3!?, and if 11...a5? 12 d5! b4? 13 dxc6 bxc3 14 ♗xd6 or 11...♗a5 12 ♚b1 b4 13 ♚a2. **11 dxe5 b4 12 ♟b1?!** Leaving his king without a square. 12 ♟e2 ♗a5 13 ♗xd6! ♗xa2 14 ♗xb4 would have been critical. **12...♗a5 13 a3 ♟xe5 14 axb4? ♗a1 15 ♟xe5 ♙xe5 16 c3 a5!**



The a-pawn will wreak havoc.

17 f4 ♙g7 18 b5 a4 19 ♙d4 ♙e6 20 ♙xg7



A typical view of Keith Arkell, playing an ending, but he can also spot the tactics when required.

♟xg7 21 b6? 21 c4 cxb5 22 ♖g3! was the last try. **21...♖fb8 22 ♗xd6 a3! 0-1**

If 23 bxa3 ♙a2 24 ♗b4 ♙xb1 25 ♗xb1 ♗xc3+ 26 ♗c2 ♗e3+ and neither is White helped by 23 ♗b4 ♙a4!.

While Pool A has largely run according to seeding, in Pool B Celtic Tigers can be delighted with their 4½-3½ victories over Blackthorne Russia and 3Cs. Already Cheddleton and Manx Liberty are some four points clear on 8/8, both having overcome a small challenge in the shape of Guildford II. It was for Guildford II that Dutch IM Robert Ris enjoyed a memorable opening weekend, comfortably drawing with David Howell as White ahead of giving a model demonstration of the dynamic potential in an IQP position.

S.Gordon-R.Ris

3Cs vs Guildford II



White is under pressure and now 24 ♙d3 was necessary. **24 ♙f3? ♟xg3! 25 hxg3 ♗xg3+ 26 ♙h1 ♖xc1 27 ♗xc1 ♙xf4!**

Crunch. All of a sudden White's defences

are completely obliterated.

28 ♖e2 ♙g2+! Very neat. Ris has everything worked out. **29 ♖xg2 ♗h3+ 30 ♙g1 ♙xe3+ 31 ♗xe3 ♖e6 0-1**

In the second weekend, the best individual result must have been Blackthorne's Syringa Camp (née Turvey), who outplayed Cheddleton's Laura Stoeri, despite being out-rated by some 450 points, while the tactic of the weekend belonged to Stoeri's team-mate Keith Arkell.

K.Arkell-M.Foisor

Cheddleton vs Grantham Sharks



13 ♟xd5!

A common enough tactic in Exchange QGD and here it works due to the position of the black king: 13...cxd5 14 ♗a4+! ♙d8 (or 14...♟d7 15 ♟xd7 ♗xd7? 16 ♙b5) 15 ♗a5+ ♙c8 (if 15...♙e8 16 ♙b5+ or 15...♗c7 16 ♗xd5+ ♟d7 17 ♖ac1) 16 ♖ac1+ ♙b8 17 ♟c6+! bxc6 18 ♖xc6 and Black is quite unable to save her king. Instead, **13...♗d6 14 ♟xg4 ♙xg4 15 ♟c3** left Arkell a pawn to the good which he went on to smoothly convert.



Home News

BRIDGEND – The South Wales Winter Congress (4-6 January) saw a three-way tie for first in the Open.

Open: 1-3 Gregorz Toczek (Cardiff), David Sands (Barking), Conor Gay (Holmes Chapel) 4/5

Major: 1-2 Duncan Macarthur (Keynsham), Dai James (Pontypridd) 4½, 3-9 Stephen Williams (Cwmbran), Tom Bennett (Penarth), Scott Hammett (Haverfordwest), Les Philpin, Andrew Smith (both Swansea), David Parsons (Swindon), Mark Cooke (Barry) 3.

HASTINGS – Danny Gormally reported earlier in these pages on the Masters, the top section of the Tradewise Hastings International Chess Congress (28 December – 6 January). That is only one of the tournaments which make up this large and impressive event, another being the closing weekend which was won by David Howell no less.

Christmas 'A': 1-2 Chaski Patrick (Uckfield), Paul Batchelor (Brighton) 4/5, 3-7 Aditya Verma, Paul Jackson (both Coulsdon), Helge Hjort (Hendon), Chris Howell, Oliver Howell (both Redhill) 3½.

Christmas 'B': 1 Batuhan Kaya (Hastings) 4½, 2-3 Carl Gartside (Clay Cross), Edward Gray (Brighton) 4.

Christmas 'C': 1 Mason Woodhams 4½, 2 Marc Bryant (both Hastings) 4, 3 Lee Bullock (Hackney) 3½.

New Year Morning 'A': 1-3 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon), Richard Jennings (Aberdeen), Nigel Dennis (Maidenhead) 4.

New Year Morning 'B': 1-2 Chris Snook-Lumb (Wells), Mason Woodhams 4, 3-4 Jeremy Hudson, Andrew Watson (all Hastings) 3½.

New Year Afternoon 'A': 1-2 David Cutmore (Albany), Richard Jennings (Aberdeen) 4, 3 Jonathan Rubeck (Hendon) 3½.

New Year Afternoon 'B': 1 Chris Lake (Brighton) 4½, 2-3 Brendan O'Gorman (Coulsdon), Chris Hann (Hastings) 4.

New Year Afternoon 'C': 1 Peter Wood (Hastings) 5, 2-5 Colin Denham (Cardigan), Lee Bullock (Hackney), Mark Heffer (Bishops Stortford), James McKenna (Crystal Palace) 3½.

Weekend Open: 1 David Howell (Battersea) 5, 2-3 Madara Orlovska (Lewisham), Aditya Verma (Coulsdon) 4.

Weekend Intermediate: 1-2 Rajeiv Ratnesan (Surbiton), Adrian Waldock (East Grinstead) 4½, 3 Bernard Chan (Leeds) 4.

Weekend Minor: 1-2 Lee Bullock (Hackney), Barry Miles (South Norwood) 4½, 3-4 Adrian Riley (Cowley), Carlton Bradbury (London) 4.

HULL – The Royal Hull Hotel hosted a successful rapidplay for 70 players on 6th January.

Open: 1 Mike Surtees (Great Lever) 4½/5, 2-3 John Cooper (Hull), Miles Edwards-

Wright (Sheffield) 4.

Major: 1-2 Stephen Crow, Giles Dunn 4, 3 Bryan Hesler (all Hull) 4.

Minor: 1 Richard Atkinson 5, 2-3 Steve Thrower (both Hull), Steven Brooks (Doncaster) 4.

LONDON – The year began with sad news for the English chess community from St George's Hospital, Tooting, where popular 67-year-old FM Steve Berry passed away following complications arising from various causes.

A proud Yorkshireman, Berry graduated in history from the University of Hull before moving to Sutton Coldfield to work on this very magazine for BH Wood, often producing the *How Good is Your Chess?* column in the seventies. He would then emigrate to Germany to work in IT. There he encountered one of the all-time greats in a simul and would hold his own in a complex positional struggle.

V.Korchnoi-S.Berry Darmstadt (simul) 1980 *Nimzo-Indian Defence*

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 dxc5 ♙a5 9 e4 ♘c7 10 ♙d4 f6 11 ♙b4 ♘c6 12 ♙xa5 ♘xa5 13 ♙b1 e5 14 ♙d2 ♘e6?!

14...♙e6 followed by ...0-0-0 or ...♙c4 would have left Black with full play for his positional pawn sacrifice, which is nowadays one of the main lines.

15 ♙b5 ♘c6 16 ♙e3 ♙e7 17 ♙c4 ♘c7 18 ♙b1 ♙d8 19 ♘e2?!

Allowing the black knight to return to the rim with some effect. 19 f4! ♘a5 20 ♙e2 would have left White pressing.

19...♘a5 20 ♙a2 ♙d7?!

As Berry himself later indicated, 20...♙b8 21 ♘f2 ♙e6 22 ♙xe6 ♘xe6 23 ♙b4 ♙dc8

was correct.

21 ♘f2 ♙ac8 22 c4 ♘a6 23 ♙d2 ♘c6 24 ♙xb7 ♘xc5 25 ♙bb1 ♙e6



Even here Black retains a decent degree of positional compensation.

26 ♙e3 ♘a5 27 ♘c3 ♙d3 28 ♙hc1 ♘xc4 29 ♙xc4 ♙xc4 30 ♙xc5+?

Effectively acquiescing to a draw. There was a tactical solution available and 30 ♘b5! ♙dd8! 31 ♘xa7 ♘d3+ 32 ♙g3 ♘xc1 33 ♘xc8+ ♙xc8 34 ♙xc1 ♙e6 35 ♙c5+ would have left White with some chances in the resulting pawn-up endgame.

30...♙xc5 31 ♙b7+ ♙d7 ½-½

Steve Berry was known for his down-to-earth nature, frankness and dry sense of humour. His good friend Andrew Stone recalls once attending a Middlesex-Yorkshire cricket match at Lord's. "We wandered past the Nursery Ground and he stopped to see a Yorkshire batsman in the nets. The ball came down and the batsman took a good swing at the ball and missed. 'Well left Sir!' boomed Steve. The batsman turned round and looked at Steve totally bemused."

Like Korchnoi himself, Berry's strength hardly seemed to decline with age. He was still graded 221 and Surrey Champion at the point of his untimely death, while just last year he played for the England team as they finished joint fourth in the World Over-65 Team Championship. Indeed, Berry was a captain's dream, playing a great many



Nearest the camera, John Cooper takes on team-mate Dave Stephenson at the Hull Rapidplay.

matches over the years for Kings Head, Mitcham and especially in recent years, Wimbledon and Surrey.

Wimbledon CC colleague Paul Barasi recalls that Steve "liked to chat and relate to everyone. He was brave and relentless in attack. What impressed me was his intuitive understanding of positions. He'd say something like: positions like this are always a win for White – then he'd find how to win it, rather than analysing it first and then deciding who stands better. This may have helped him be such a strong player of resumed adjourned games and a good adjudicator."

Elsewhere in the capital, the latest Golders Green Rapidplay took place on January 5th.

Open: 1–2 V. Haribalu (India), Federico Rocco (Hendon) 5/6, 3 John Pigott (Kings Head) 4½.

Major: 1–2 Yaoyao Zhu (3Cs), Raghu Kamath (Richmond) 5, 3–4 Michael Saunders (London), Anum Sheikh (Ilford) 4½.

Minor: 1 Salvatore Pepe (Hendon) 5½, 2 Mohsen Abedian (west London) 5, 3–6 Luke King (London), Niall Clarke (Elstree), Paul Chantrell (south-east London), Dave Bluestone (London) 4.

Amateur: 1 Ashir Valjee (Metropolitan) 6, 2 Mark Johnson (Colchester) 4½, 3–5 Faye Ainscow (Kings Head), Timothy Demetris (Hendon), Nigel White (Wanstead) 4.

Improver: 1–2 Milo Mallaby (Ealing), Gul Kapur (Enfield) 5.

Earlier the London Junior Championships took place at the University of Westminster's Harrow Campus over the weekend of 15th–16th December and also the 28th–30th.

FIDE-rated Open: 1 Federico Rocco (Hendon; London Under-21 and Under-18 Champion) 5/6, 2–4 Aaravamudhan Balaji (Coulsdon), James Golding (Guilford), John Merriman (Petts Wood) 4½.

Under-16: 1 David Jacob Yoon (Enfield) 5½, 2–3 Shahjahan Saidmurodov (Newham), Alex Barlov (Richmond) 4½.

Under-14: 1 Malanta Eryl (Fleet) 5½, 2–6 Arjun Kolani (Brighton), Robert Akeya-Price (Coulsdon), Saahil Bansal (Orpington), Han-Sen Choong (Hampstead), Xavier Cowan (Richmond) 4½.

Under-12: 1 Edison Xu (Newport) 8/9, 2 Kennan Kesterson (Pimlico) 7, 3 Nadhmi Auch (Barnet) 6½.

Under-10: 1–3 Denis Dupuis (Battersea), Hou Ning Zhu (Maidenhead), Jude Shearsby (Coventry) 6/7.

Under-8: 1 Billy Fellowes (Warwick) 6½, 2–6 Sohun Kumar, Aayush Dewangan (both Maidenhead), Thisumi Jayawarna (Manchester), Patrick Damodaran (Kent), Kameron Grose (Wetherby) 6.

Of course, we mainly associate the period just before Christmas with chess at Olympia, which once again provided the main venue for the London Chess Classic (9–17 December). While the top players were absent from Olympia until the final weekend, each weekday hundreds of children received tuition from Chess in Schools & Communities ahead of the Open beginning at 4.30pm.



Federico Rocco (left) takes on James Golding en route to becoming London U-21 Champion.

Once again, the Open was a very strong, truly international event, with Nick Pert impressing en route to collecting £4,500.

FIDE Open: 1–2 Jules Moussard (France), Nick Pert (Sandhurst) 7½/9, 3–7 Sebastian Bogner (Switzerland), Daniil Yuffa (Russia), Andrei Istratescu (Romania), Tiger Hillarp Persson (Sweden), Ameet Ghasi (Richmond) 7.

Weekday Under-2050: 1–3 Jonathan Underwood (Seaton), Joel Bird (Muswell Hill), Robert Jacobs (Tunbridge Wells) 4½/5.

Under-1750: 1 Tibo Rushbrooke (Westminster School) 5, 2–3 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton), Sune du Toit (South Africa) 4½.

Weekend Open: 1–2 Koby Kalavannan (Surbiton), Ryszard Maciol (Cambridge) 4½/5, 3–5 James Holland (Surbiton), Michael Healey (Richmond), William Taylor (Drunken Knights) 4.

Under-2050: 1 Harry Li (Alwoodley) 5, 2–6 Ivan Myall (Chelmsford), Eldar Alizada (Cumnor), Brendan Ruane (Hastings), Jacob Watson (Petts Wood), Oliver Stubbs (Downend) 4.

Under-1825: 1 Finlay Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen) 5, 2 Oliver Finnegan (Loughton) 4½, 3–8 Matthew Hortin (Old Whitgiftians), Bernard Chan (Leeds), Lukasz Piecha (Winchester), Charles Musselman (USA), Rajeiv Ratnesan (Surbiton), Tim Valentine (Battersea) 4.

Under-1600: 1–2 Shir Satil (Israel), Samuel Ward-Riggs (London) 5, 3 Hengrui Cao (China) 4½.

TELFORD – Ameet Ghasi scooped the £1,000 first prize at the Shropshire Congress (4–6 January), where Mark Hebden and Alan Merry finished outside the prizes.

Open: 1 Ameet Ghasi (Richmond) 4½/5, 2 Tomasz Sygnowski (Sutton Coldfield) 4, 3–4 David Berczes (Hungary), Ryszard Maciol (Cambridge) 3½.

Major: 1 Graham Ashcroft (Preston) 4½, 2 Finlay Bowcott-Terry 4, 3–10 Dustin Bowcott (both Halesowen), Matthew Clark (Shrewsbury), Robert Dean (Pudsey), Ian Emery (Birmingham), Sam Gibbs (Lancaster), Ed Goodwin (Coventry), David Gostelow (Telford), Anita Somton (Nottingham) 3½.

Intermediate: 1 Gary White (Priorslee) 5, 2–3 Graham Shepherd (Church Stretton), Dimitar Kirachen (Oswestry) 4/5

Minor: 1 Jeff Wilson (Oldham) 4½, 2 Khalid Khan (Bradford) 4, 3–5 Ansh Agrawal (Harborne), Silas Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen), Ben Newnham (Tattenhall) 3½.

T.Sygnowski-A.Merry Telford 2019



36 ♖xg5+!

The less spectacular 36 ♖xe3 ♜xe3 37 ♜xf6 also works.

36...♘g6

36...fxg5 37 ♘h6+ ♙h8 38 ♙e5# is a lovely finish.

37 ♘h6+ 1-0

This Month's New Releases



Vladimir Kramnik:
The Inside Story of a Chess Genius
 Carsten Hensel, 256 pages
 Quality Chess
 RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

It is unusual for a new book to appear on an active player whose best days seem to be officially behind him. Kramnik's tenure as champion of the world came to an end more than a decade ago. A near miss at the 2013 Candidates event and a mid-table finish in 2018 suggest he may have missed his chance to return to the top of the chess world.

However, despite falling from the summit, Kramnik is still one of the world's top players and his road to the top coincided with pivotal moments in the history of chess. Indeed, the (in)famous 2006 title clash with Topalov is described as: "The most dramatic of all time. Aside from the 1972 match between Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer, no World Championship had ever attracted such powerful interest from the media." Students of Korchnoi's chess career may disagree, but there is no doubt a match temporarily derailed by a toilet represents a high watermark in chess absurdity.

Hensel is well-placed to write a book on Kramnik, as he was his manager for several years – a period of time which coincided with the Russian's acquisition of the ultimate title. This book presents Hensel's experiences from inside the world of Kramnik during his period at the top, coming to a halt after the loss to Anand in 2008. The work is quaintly split into 64 parts; one for each square of the chess board. Kramnik's thoughts are incorporated too, usually at the end of each major section. These do not amount to game annotations, but rather provide an insight into his thoughts in a more general fashion.

The world championship plays a central part in Kramnik's story. Not many would have predicted he would be able to end the reign of Garry Kasparov, which proved to be an important step in the eventual reunification of the title. The process was, however, far from plain sailing and it required a particularly difficult match against Topalov in 2006 (creating a personal rift that time has not healed).

Hensel compares the Kasparov match with the Foreman-Ali 'Rumble in the Jungle' of 1974. "Outsider Ali let himself be pummelled against the ropes by Foreman, as was Kramnik's tactic with Kasparov. Vladimir's ropes were the Berlin Wall and he knew, just like *the greatest whoever lived* once did,

precisely what he was doing." The course of the games doesn't fulfil the promise of the comparison. Kasparov's games with White were a severe disappointment and more often than not prematurely drawn. His penultimate White was a dreadful 14-move draw. There were clearly other issues in play in addition to any 'rope-a-dope' strategy by the challenger, but, frustratingly, they have yet to be revealed.

There are, however, numerous revelations from inside Kramnik's own camp. When covering the unsuccessful 2008 title match against Anand, Hensel shines a light on unsatisfactory preparation. Kramnik had asked his team to analyse an important line of the Meran System, but: "When he asked them about it, at midday the next day before the game, the grandmaster responsible had forgotten about this analysis. Kramnik reacted indignantly, and after that the communication between him and his seconds was compromised."

It got worse. "When I fetched Vladimir for the fifth game, he walked straight passed the workroom of his people. They were standing in the open doorway, but he ignored them. I had never seen Kramnik like this. His people obviously wanted to say something to him, but he simply took no notice of them."

This unfortunate state of affairs left Kramnik ill-prepared for the inevitable Meran and the game was Anand's best of the match, with a famous finish to boot.

hit Kramnik hard, but he remains full of praise for his conqueror. "The event set benchmarks and proved that even today the game of chess has lost none of its popularity. Under those circumstances it was of course regrettable to lose the match. That made me sad at first. But I did my best and found Viswanathan Anand a worthy successor who more than any other player at that time deserved the victory and the recognition."

The epilogue lists all of the world championship matches to date (only the result of the 2018 Carlsen-Caruaena contest is missing, as the book just predates the match), and follows up with the unannotated games of all Kramnik's own title bouts – 69 games in total, with the most recent being already 11 years ago. Another part of the epilogue provides pen portraits of the previous champions, at least those following the classical line, ending with Carlsen as the 16th champion. This is a curious little section, offering nothing new apart from some basic quotes from Kramnik which don't do more than scratch the surface. If such a section needed to be included at all, it would have worked better if Kramnik himself had written a short essay on his fellow champions.

The book is attractive, with a good selection of photographs (some in colour). It is a little smaller than the standard Quality Chess books and is available only in hardback.

I am not so sure the bulk of the epilogue adds very much – the space could have been put to better use with some newly annotated games – but within the bulk of the work there is certainly plenty of interest, offering a new perspective on the quiet champion.

Sean Marsh

V.Kramnik-V.Anand
 World Ch. (Game 5), Bonn 2008



34...dxe3! 35 fxe3 fxe3 0-1

Failing to retain the unified title must have



Practical Chess Beauty
 Yochanan Afek, 464 pages
 Quality Chess

RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

Mention chess studies and practical chess players tend to tune out because they feel the time could be better spent on other aspects of chess. This is a shame, because trying just the occasional study would be

beneficial to a student's powers of analysis and apart from approaching the genre from the mere practical point of view, it could also provide entertainment and instil a genuine sense of wonder.

Afek – who is, incidentally, an International Master, Grandmaster of Chess Composition, tournament organiser, trainer, arbiter and journalist; a rare combination of skills, indeed – has enjoyed a professional chess career lasting more than half a century and he has an oasis of knowledge and experience to share.

"I have devoted a great deal of my time and energy to promoting the endgame study as an excellent educational tool to develop a sense of aesthetics and precision, as well as practising how to estimate accurately the power and qualities of each piece *alone* and in harmony with other pieces. All these virtues are essential in shaping a complete and original player; no less so than the knowledge of opening theory and middlegame strategy."

There are 17 chapters, covering various topics all the way from The Ultimate Sacrifice (meaning the queen) to Stalemate. The majority of studies come from Afek himself, but the works of others are included too, as are real games featuring the relevant themes.

Here is an example of a particularly fine study.

Yochanan Afek

9th-10th Place, 9th WCCT 2011-13



White to play and win

This is extraordinary, beautiful and highly instructive. I don't want to quote all of the explanatory notes here; the moves themselves will stand tall enough to demonstrate to the reader just how exceptional this study really is, with its amusing promotions and final twist of the rarest of underpromotions: 1 ♖g7+ ♙xf5 2 ♜h8!! a1Q! 3 ♜xa1 a2! 4 ♜h8! a1Q! 5 ♜xa1 ♙xg3 6 ♜h8! ♙h4 7 ♜xh4 ♜xh4! (angling for stalemate after 8 d8♜+? ♙e5 9 ♜xh4) 8 d8♙!! ♙e5 9 ♙xh4 and wins.

Exceptional – and it makes one wonder just how good the other studies must have been to hold this one back in a share of ninth.

No digging around was required to find a wonderful example. Every page is replete with brilliance and the work as a whole is

absolutely ideal for dipping into. In fact there are several ways to study the material. A chapter-by-chapter methodical approach would take a long time, but the reader could focus on a particular theme of interest instead. Another approach would be to randomly select just one or two examples and enjoy them, as an antidote to a painful over-the-board defeat.

This is a very fine book indeed and, whisper it gently, but we may already have a strong candidate for Book of the Year.

Sean Marsh



World Chess Championship 2018: Fabiano Caruana vs. Magnus Carlsen

Jerzy Konikowski and Uwe Bekemann,

184 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.29**

The days of the 'instant' world championship match book appear, perhaps surprisingly, not to be fully over. German publishers Joachim Beyer Verlag were one company to rush out a full account of the Carlsen-Caruana match.

As you would expect, all the games are analysed in detail. In addition, the authors also take a look at Caruana's route to the final and the previous games between the champion and challenger. There are also interviews with various top players and experts under the title 'Predictions Before the Fight' – rounded off by a playful opportunity to compete with the champions: 'Try to Find Combinations Like Carlsen and Caruana!'

ChessBase Magazine 187

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest *CBM* is for 'January/February 2019' and unsurprisingly focusses on the world championship match. Adams, Anand, Duda and So are just some of the star names who analyse each of the 15 clashes. Elsewhere Karsten Müller pays tribute to Anish Giri's endgame ability, while Simon Williams looks at some attacking brilliance courtesy of Ding Liren.

Chess Coaching for Kids: The U10 Project

Thomas Luther, 256 pages, hardback

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

Long gone are the days in which few juniors played competitively before the age of 9; we now live in the age of the super prodigy and an abundance of tournaments for Under-10s and even Under-8s. As such, this work from FIDE Senior Trainer and German GM Thomas Luther is most welcome. Subtitled 'Surveys, Tests, Examples and Information about Chess U8/U10', Luther and his team

analysed 2,500 games from players who were aged under 10. The result is a summary of the most common mistakes, highly relevant training advice and plenty of other useful information for parents and coaches of such young players.

Chess Informant 138

Sahovski Informator, 352 pages, paperback

SPECIAL PRICE £24.99

The latest selection of top-flight games and leading novelties arrives from Belgrade. The bulk of the 'Informator' remains these languagelessly-annotated games, although there are also a number of interesting articles, including Ernesto Inarkiev's take on the world championship match entitled 'Bourne is not superior any more'.

Do please note too that if you'd like both the book and a CD of the same material for *Chess Informant 138*, that is available from Chess & Bridge for £39.99 (Subscribers – £35.99), or if you want the CD alone that can be purchased for just £9.99 (Subscribers – £8.99).



Crucial Chess Skills

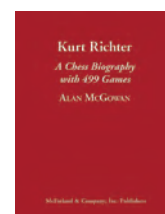
for the Club Player Volume 2

Robert Ris, 392 pages, paperback

RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

Acclaimed Dutch author and coach Robert Ris continues to provide plenty of handy practical material for the club player. Ris begins with the endgame, first demonstrating the power of the king before looking at bishop endings, both same-coloured and opposite-coloured ones, the latter not always being as drawish as you might think. He moves on to discuss which is better and when, the knight or the bishop, before concluding with a wealth of material relating to positional imbalances.

Those who are yet to read *Crucial Chess Skills for the Club Player Volume 1* and wish to purchase both volumes together may do so for the special price of £54.00 (Subscribers – £48.60).



Kurt Richter:

A Chess Biography with 499 Games

Alan McGowan, 356 pages, hardback

RRP £64.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £58.45**

McFarland's latest chess biography is

typically produced to a high standard and lavishly illustrated. Scottish chess historian Alan McGowan charts the career of 'The Executioner of Berlin', for, indeed, Kurt Richter was an extremely aggressive and dangerous opponent. Nowadays Richter (1900-1969) is a rather forgotten figure, but he was most certainly an accomplished player, theoretician and writer. We'll have much more on Kurt Richter in an upcoming issue.



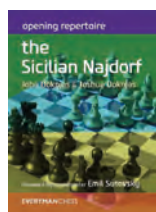
New in Chess Yearbook 129

Peter Boel & René Olthof (eds),

256 pages, paperback

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The latest *Yearbook* features Shakhriyar Mamedyarov on the cover alongside the headline 'Daredevil win by Shakh in the Open Ruy Lopez'. Inside, there are not only two detailed surveys on the Open Lopez, but five on the Sicilian and two on the King's Indian, including one from Baskaran Adhiban.



Opening Repertoire: The Sicilian Najdorf

John Doknjas & Joshua Doknjas,

352 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

The names of the Doknjas brothers might not be that well-known outside their native Canada, but kudos to Everyman Chess for commissioning this impressive Najdorf repertoire. FM John and National Master Joshua might not be the very strongest of players, if still pretty good, but their love of the Najdorf is undoubted. Their analysis is impressive too, both of the critical opening stage and throughout each of the 42 annotated games. Overall, this is a cutting-edge black repertoire, featuring the likes of 6 ♗g5 ♗bd7 and 6 ♗e3 e5 7 ♗b3 ♗e6 8 f3 h5, as played by Mr. Najdorf himself, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

Play the Dutch! Part 1

Tibor Karolyi, 256 pages, paperback

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Is there no halting the pen of Tibor Karolyi these days? The Hungarian IM recently produced a detailed theoretical work on the Semi-Tarrasch for Chess Evolution and now switches to the more exciting waters of the Dutch Defence. In this opening volume of a two-part series, Karolyi maps out a fairly

detailed repertoire for Black against White's many and varied alternatives to the main line, including 2 ♖c3, 2 e4, 2 ♗g5, which is met by 2...g6, and the dangerous 2 c4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 h4.

Play the Dutch! Part 2 is also available and sees Karolyi complete his repertoire for Black by advocating the Leningrad variation, specifically 7...c6 in the ultimate main line. This second volume also runs to 256 pages and is available from Chess & Bridge for £22.95 (Subscribers – £20.65), or you might prefer to purchase both works together for the special price of £44.00, which equates to just £40.00 for Subscribers.

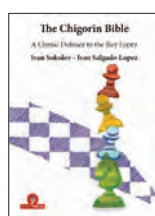


Play the Queen's Indian Defence

Evgeniy Solozhenkin, 320 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Hot on the heels of Michael Roiz's work on the Queen's Indian for Quality Chess, as listed last month, comes this new work for Chess Stars. As usual for their works, the format is clear and obvious too is the affection which the Russian Grandmaster has for the opening. The coverage can unsurprisingly become quite theoretical at times, with Solozhenkin recommending after 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 b6 4 g3 the fashionable 4...♗a6. Notable too is the opening chapter where a 1 ♗f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 move order is discussed before recommendations are presented for Black against the likes of the Colle and London Systems.



The Chigorin Bible:

A Classic Defence to the Ruy Lopez

Ivan Sokolov & Ivan Salgado Lopez,

350 pages, paperback

£27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

Thinkers Publishing continue to aim high, with this new work more than just a grandmaster level repertoire with 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♗e1 b5 7 ♗b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♗a5 10 ♗c2 c5. The Chigorin is both one of the oldest and one of the most important lines of the Lopez, while the resulting structures and associated plans play a big part in many Lopez and Giuoco Piano lines. As such, Sokolov and Lopez have annotated 32 games in detail, aiming to highlight the most important motifs for both sides.



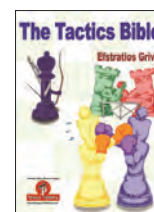
The Longest Game:

The Five Kasparov-Karpov Matches

Jan Timman, 356 pages, paperback

RRP £27.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.15**

Garry Kasparov has, of course, covered his matches with Anatoly Karpov in some detail, but the thoughts and insight of Jan Timman are always well worth reading too. The Dutch Grandmaster was, of course, one of the world's strongest players in the period 1984-1990, during which time all five matches occurred and with Kasparov only running out an overall winner by 73-71. Timman remembers the many twists of each match, supplies his impressions from the time and takes a fresh look at some of the most important games.

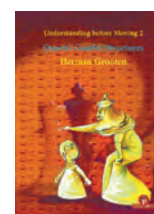


The Tactics Bible

Efstratios Grivas, 456 pages, paperback

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

Leading FIDE trainer and Greek GM Grivas has been collecting combinations for a great many years. Here he presents his 'magnus opus', a vast puzzle work which incorporates all the more common types of tactic, as well as some pretty rare examples.



Understanding Before Moving 2: Queen's Gambit Structures

Herman Grooten, 240 pages, paperback

RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

It is not just Robert Ris and Ivan Sokolov who have been kept busy writing follow-up works for Thinkers Publishing. Having begun his series by looking at the Ruy Lopez/Italian structures, Herman Grooten now moves on to consider the most important structures which arise within the realm of the Queen's Gambit. If you defend 1 d4 d5 or play 1 d4 d5 2 c4 and often find yourself struggling for a plan in the ensuing middlegame, a study of the key pawn structures and piece manoeuvres presented by the Dutch IM might well come in handy.