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# Chess

## GOLD & SILVER

Luke McShane helps England to a silver medal at the World Team Championships and picks up a gold medal on board two

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Gunina Gets Gold - the Russians dominated the inaugural Cairns Cup in St. Louis



James Sherwin - John Stubbs and Chris Beaumont interview the American legend



50 Years Ago - Ben Graff takes us back to 1969 and Petrosian vs Spassky

# Chess

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# Gunina Dazzles

**Irina Krush was up there throughout, but it was to be a Russian victory on American soil as Valentina Gunina saw off compatriot Alexandra Kosteniuk in the first Cairns Cup**

The inaugural Cairns Cup took place in that modern-day chess capital of not just the U.S., but almost the world, Saint Louis. Named after Rex Sinquefield's wife, Dr. Jeanne Sinquefield, née Cairns, the tournament was a prestigious 10-player all-play-all for many of the world's leading female players, as they battled for a \$150,000 prize fund.

Notably only two American players were invited, both former U.S. Women's Champions, namely GM Irina Krush and IM Anna Zatonskih, as the Cairns Cup, like the Sinquefield Cup each August, was very much an international event. There was an unfortunate lack of players from that modern-day powerhouse for women's chess, China, and neither Muzychuk was able to take part, but GM Dronavalli Harika represented India, while the first and third seeds both hailed from Russia, namely Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina.

Which country have we yet to mention which supplied the second and fourth seeds? You likely worked out it was Georgia, who were represented by Nana Dzagnidze and Bela Khotenashvili. IM Elisabeth Paetz from Germany, GM Marie Sebag of France and IM Zhansaya Abdumalik from Kazakhstan completed the stellar line-up. The majority of players were in their thirties, albeit with ages ranging from Zatonskih at 40 down to young Abdumalik who is still only 19 and a great prospect for Asian chess.

The early leader on 2½/3 was Kosteniuk, closely followed by both Gunina and Krush. The Sinquefields must have been delighted to see both an American player on a plus score and more than half the games being decisive. Both those trends would continue throughout the tournament, with 56% of the games featuring a winner, while even the only two games drawn in under 30 moves (by repetition) were not exactly dull.

Those early rounds largely set the pattern for the tournament. By the end of round 6 Gunina had caught up Kosteniuk, with Krush breathing down their necks on 4½/6. However, Kosteniuk would then draw her next two games, while Krush who would otherwise enjoy an excellent tournament, likely overplayed her hand as she went down to defeat against Sebag. That left Gunina to pull out a half-point lead entering the final round courtesy of victory over Zatonskih.

The ninth round saw the two leaders finally meet and this was no prearranged draw to maintain harmony between friends and potentially keep the Russian chess



*A tense final round encounter heads towards its conclusion. Valentina Gunina (right) no longer has her mighty pawn on a2, but would simplify the position to draw with Alexandra Kosteniuk.*

authorities happy. Kosteniuk became but the latest player to fail to impress in an anti-Berlin, quickly finding herself worse as White, tied down to a backward d-pawn. Eventually she got d3-d4 in and we pick up the action in the midst of the time scramble.

## A.Kosteniuk-V.Gunina Round 9



**35...d6**

Hitting the white queen, but Black should have taken control of the c-file. After 35...c7 36 b1 b6 White's defences would have been quite solid, but it wouldn't have been at all easy for her to find a way to try and win the game.

**36 h4 f7?**

This square was needed for the knight.

**37 b2**

Suddenly White threatens the queen and has ideas of dxe5. The initiative is Kosteniuk's.

**37...a7 38 c6**

38 f2! would have overprotected e3 and after 38...c7 39 a1 White's central pressure might yet have led somewhere.

**38...g8**

Wisely eliminating any notion of xf6. Now the machine argues for the sensible 39 h2, improving the king while keeping up the pressure. Kosteniuk, however, opted for full mobilisation of her pieces.

**39 c5? a8 40 bb6 a3**



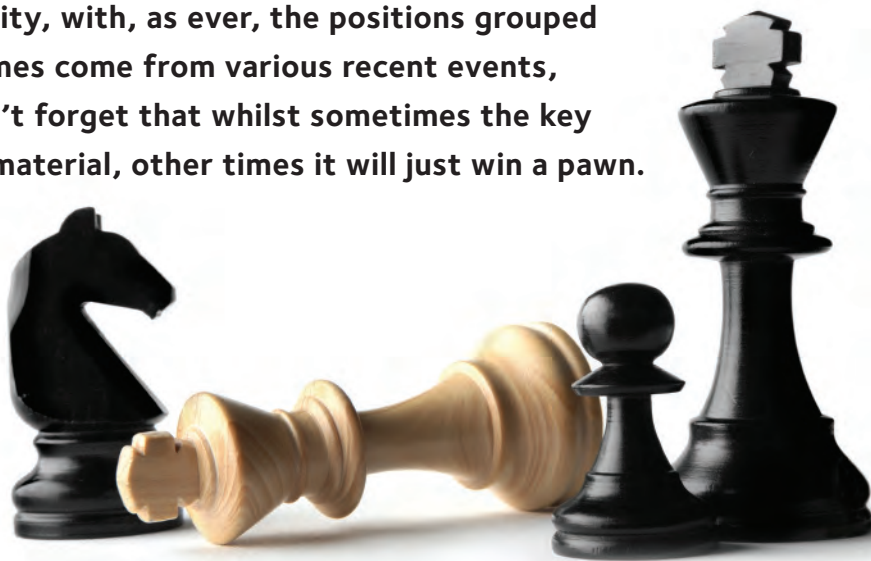
Reaching the time control. White is very active and had no doubt relied on her next move, but unfortunately would discover that she is not really attacking the black queen.

**41 a6 a2!**

# 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, such as the 4NCL and Gibraltar. 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.Gayson-P.Doherty  
4NCL, Horwich 2019  
White to Play



(2) S.Okhai-E.Alizada  
Kidlington 2019  
White to Play



(3) G.Trueeman-R.Cowan  
4NCL, Horwich 2019  
Black to Play



(4) D.Fridman-A.Tukhaev  
World Rapid Ch., St Petersburg 2018  
White to Play



(5) V.Kovalev-M.Aditya  
Moscow 2019  
White to Play



(6) K.Kulon-M.De Verdier  
4NCL, Telford 2019  
White to Play

# Young Stars Shine

## Bob Jones reports from the East Devon Congress held at Exeter's Corn Exchange

This popular event attracts many of the same faces year on year, but there can often be a sprinkling of newcomers to add to the mix, as was the case in 2017 when John Nunn entered at the last minute.

There were no Super-GM elder statesmen this year (9-10 March), but there were several first-time visitors among the younger age bracket that produced interest. 20-year-old and top-graded Will Claridge-Hansen, for example, recently arrived in Exeter from Chesham, Bucks, to read History at the University. Another was Shreyas Royal, who hit the headlines in the popular press last year when his father's work permit was due to expire, with the prospect of being forced to return to India. After much campaigning eventually the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, relented and agreed that the country could ill-afford to lose the boy's talents, nor his father's as an IT consultant, allowing them to apply for a UK passport, which will shortly be settled. Whatever the merit or otherwise of Shreyas's dodgy sobriquet of last year in the press of "the world's best 9 year old", a grade of 186 at that tender age is not to be sniffed at.

The pair make for an interesting compare-and-contrast exercise, being, as they are, at opposite ends of the junior chess trail. Will feels he has achieved enough in the past decade to satisfy himself for now – he's overtaken his father's grade (210), won a British title (Under-14), and represented his country in the Glorney Cup, etc. He's had a go at most of the junior tournaments and championships on the circuit, and would now like to ease off a bit and just enjoy playing for pleasure in local tournaments, like this one.

Shreyas, on the other hand, at just 10 is only at the beginning of his decade-long trail for honours in junior chess, and probably at senior level long before he's 20. His father, Jitendra Singh, explains how he set off by letting his son try all sorts of different sports and games, and it was the boy himself who felt a natural affinity for chess and wished to pursue that particular pastime. At the moment, mum and dad are happy to take him around the country at weekends to events like this, just for the experience of meeting players of all ages and experience. How far Shreyas climbs up the ladder of success remains to be seen, and will depend on how he responds to the increasingly tough challenges he meets on the way. At the moment though, the signs are looking very good indeed.

So how did they both fare in Exeter? With a grade of 222 Claridge-Hansen could have



Exeter undergraduate Will Claridge-Hansen moves against Exeter-educated John Stephens.

been expected to finish first or first equal, but in the fourth round he had to contend with that mercurial IM Jack Rudd, whose brain seems to work at speeds most of us can only imagine. Consequently, like many of Jack's opponents, Will got short of time in a playable rook and pawn ending, and this, coupled with Jack's recent coaching sessions with endgame suprema, Keith Arkell, tipped the balance in favour of the older player. So Will had to settle for second place on 4/5. Nevertheless, he was happy with this quick win in round 3 and kindly penned some quick notes.

### W. Claridge-Hansen - J. Tambini Exeter 2019



Black has somewhat underestimated White's attack, which now runs:

**18** ♖g5 g6

Forced, but very weakening.

**19** ♖e4! ♟f8 **20** ♜xe6!

So if 20...fxe6 21 ♖xe6#. 20 ♖h4 h5 21 g4 was also winning.

**20...♗e8 21 ♜xc6! 1-0**

With ♖d4 to follow, this is definitely winning.

In strong company at the top end of the Open, Shreyas scored 3/5. If he wanted to meet experience, he certainly found it in the fifth and final round when he was paired against John Wheeler. Born in Plymouth almost 80 years ago, John has been a stalwart player and organiser in Westcountry chess since childhood, and would have been more than happy to put the boy through his paces. The endgame was terrific to watch as John had a mate in one lined up, but Shreyas didn't panic, kept his cool and used his resources in a very open opposition to just keep the initiative and force mate himself a few moves later. What players! What a game chess can be when two enterprising players meet head on and ignore their 70 years age difference.

Shreyas chose it as his best game of the weekend and happily annotated it for us.

### Notes by Shreyas Royal

#### S. Royal-J. Wheeler

Exeter 2019

*Queen's Gambit Declined*

**1** d4 ♟f6 **2** c4 e6 **3** ♟c3 d5 **4** cxd5 exd5  
**5** ♟g5 c6 **6** ♟f3 ♟e7 **7** e3 ♟f5 **8** ♟d3

♙xd3

8... ♖e4 is also possible.

9 ♗xd3 ♜bd7 10 0-0-0 11 ♖ab1!

The main idea for White in these type of positions (the Carlsbad structure) is to play the minority attack, i.e. b4, a4 and b5.

11... ♖e8 12 b4 a6

Or 12...b5 13 a4! a6 14 a5!, preventing Black's knights from getting to c4 via b6. In the meantime he has a weakness on c6 which I can double or triple on the c-file against.

13 a4 ♖e4 14 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 15 ♜d2!? f5!

16 ♖e2 ♜xd2 17 ♗xd2 ♖f6 18 ♜g3

g6?! 19 ♖fc1 h5?!

Creating some weaknesses.

20 b5 h4 21 ♖e2 axb5 22 axb5 ♖e4

23 ♗e1



23...c5?

Black weakens his d5-pawn, freeing d4 for my knight and allowing me to control the a1-h8 diagonal. 23...♖ec8 is a better try, although White is still clearly better after 24 bxc6 bxc6 25 ♖c3!

24 dxc5 ♖ec8

24...♖xc5? 25 ♖f4 wins.

25 c6 bxc6 26 bxc6 ♖a6 27 ♖b7! ♖c7?!

If 27...♗d6 28 ♖d7 or 27...♗e6 28 ♜d4.

28. ♖b8+ ♖h7 29. ♜d4 ♖a2 30. ♜b5

♖xf2

30...♜xf2 would allow 31 ♗c3!

31 ♜xc7 ♗g5 32 ♗xf2 ♜xf2 33 ♖xf2?!



Youth versus experience is not such a rare sight in chess clubs up and down the land, but such a young player as Shreyas battling a much more experienced opponent is rare in an Open.

33 ♜xd5! is probably better.

33...f4 34 ♖e6! fxe3+ 35 ♖g1 ♗f6

Or if 35...♗e5 36 c7 e2 37 ♖e1.

36 c7



Bob: White is on the verge of being mated (again!), but calculates that he has enough

time and initiative to keep control of the situation.

36...♗f2+ 37 ♖h1 e2 38 ♖h8+! ♖xh8

39 c8♗+ ♖h7 40 ♗d7+ ♖h6 41 ♗g7+

♖h5 42 ♗h7+ 1-0

Resigns, in view of the unavoidable 42...♖g4 43 ♗xg6 mate.

After the game, Shreyas's father explained that his family were numerologists, not uncommon in India. In numerology it is believed that manipulating the digits involved in a child's time, day, week, month and year of birth will give clues as to their inborn talents and probable future career. In Shreyas's case the parents went to an expert who, after learning of the details, did some calculations and determined that his names should start with the letters 'R' and 'S'. The discussion continued and they settled firstly on Royal, one of the words that the English donated to Indian culture, and then agreed on Shreyas, meaning 'supreme'. All of which might account for how he has become, at such a young age, a supreme player of the Royal Game. It was written in the stars!

### Prizewinners:

- Open:**
- 1 Jack Rudd (Barnstaple) 4½/5,
  - 2 Will Claridge-Hansen (Exeter University) 4,
  - 3-7 Jasper Tambini (Surbiton), Paul Hampton (Seaton), Graham Bolt (Exeter), David Littlejohns (Taunton), Mike Stinton-Brownbridge (Plymouth) 3½.

- Major:**
- 1 Christof Brixel (Hammersmith) 5,
  - 2-3 Sam Cotterill (Coventry), George Lekoudis (Hastings) 4.

- Minor:**
- 1 Ray Hunt (Sidmouth) 4½,
  - 2-5 Paul Foster (Medway), Charles Doidge (Teignmouth), Colin Thompson (Chippenham), John Harris (Forest of Dean) 4.



Shreyas pictured with his parents, father Jitendra and mother Anju. The 10-year-old finished just outside the prizes in the East Devon Open, but did play a model Minority Attack.



# Home News

**BELFAST** – Ahead of venturing down to County Claire for the Bunratty Congress (see p.48), Luke McShane gave a simul at Belfast's Stormont Hotel on February 20th. Leading Strand CC member Gabor Horvath managed to win, with the Civil Service's Danny Roberts securing an honourable draw as the leading English GM won the remaining 27 boards on what was a memorable night for chess in Ulster.

**BLACKPOOL** – Mark Hebden and Joseph McPhillips each won £550 as they shared first prize in arguably Britain's most competitive weekend event overall, namely the Blackpool Congress (8-10 March).

**Open:** 1-2 Mark Hebden (Leicester), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4½/5, 3-9 Ismael Molano Lafiente (Spain), Phil Watson (Bradford), Matthew Parsons (Huddersfield), Stuart White (Bearsden), Peter Gayson (Dunstable), Roy Ellames (Lytham St Annes), Elliot Frew (Troon) 3½.

**Major:** 1-2 Nick Burrows (Cowley), Joshua Pink (Stockport) 4½, 3-6 Robert Newton (Rochdale), Chris Doran (Chester), Phil Bull (Wolverhampton), Ravi Wariyar (Forest Hall) 4.

**Intermediate:** 1 Martin Brejter (Edinburgh) 5, 2 Ralph Stirrat (Cumbernauld) 4½, 3-4 Robert Dean (Pudsey), George Harman (Worsley) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Zak Tomlinson (Doncaster) 5, 2 David Teague (Harrogate) 4½, 3-7 James Rigby (Liverpool), Pawel Szutkowski (Spalding), Noel Boustred (Gosforth), Jade Stirrup (3Cs), John Illingworth (Newham) 4.

**Standard:** 1 Robert Arthurton (Skegness) 5, 2 Phillip Shaughnessy (Urmston) 4½, 3-8 Jeff Foy (Liverpool), John MacDonald (Kings Head), George Vizokai (Maddocks), Kevin Waterman (Hartlepool), Nick Holmes (Shrewsbury), David Scorer (Clitheroe) 4.

**BRISTOL** – Keith Arkell was held to a draw in the final round by Chris Beaumont, but that ensured outright first for the weekend tournament expert in the FIDE-rated Open at the Bristol Winter Congress (15-17 February).

*Leading scores:* 1 Keith Arkell (Paignton) 4½/5, 2-3 Chris Beaumont (Bristol), Joseph McPhillips (Bath/Bolton) 4.

**COVENTRY** – The Warwickshire Open Championships took place in Coventry (22-24 February), with Nottingham teenager Jonah Willow winning the Open for the second successive year, while Henrik Stepanyan retained his Warwickshire title.

**Open:** 1 Jonah Willow 4½/5, 2-4 Aditya Munshi (both Nottingham), Henrik Stepanyan (Sutton Coldfield), Ranesh Ratnesan (Surbiton) 4.

**Under-1975:** 1 Graham Ashcroft (Preston) 4½, 2-5 Rohan Pal (Birmingham), Ben Graff (Kenilworth), Adithya Pramod Paleri (Wimbledon), Neil Homer (Northampton) 4.

**Under-140:** 1-4 Chinmay Monga

(Birmingham), John Conway (Coventry), Kate Walker (Shrewsbury), Tomas Fabik (Rugby) 4.

**Under-110:** 1 John Rayner (Nuneaton) 4½, 2-3 Ben Larkin (Stratford), Kajus Mikalajunas (Leicestershire) 4.

**DONCASTER** – The popular Doncaster Congress once again took place at Hall Cross Academy (22-24 February).

**Open:** 1-2 Peter Shaw (Wakefield), Ali Jaunooby (Denton) 4/5, 3-6 John Anderson (Lowestoft), Chris Izod (Jesmond), Yichen Han (Forest Hall), Leo Keely (Huddersfield) 3½.

**Major:** 1 Paul Robson (Chester-le-Street) 4, 2-6 Jim Davis (Worksop), Mark Collinson (Hull), Mark Whitehead (Rochdale), Tim Turner (Beverley), Karl Potter (Syston) 3½.

**Intermediate:** 1-5 Steven Watson, Phil Bawden (both Hull), Noel Stewart (York), Andrew Allen (Worksop), Chris Tinker (Wakefield) 4.

**Minor:** 1 Farrell Clifford (Doncaster) 4½, 2-7 David Dunne (Nottingham), Paul Gelder (Alwoodley), Dave Peardon (Hetton Lyons), Chris Stratford (Huddersfield), Roger Walker (Belper), Chris Fraser (Spondon) 4.

**GOODWICK** – The Dyfed Congress once again took place at the Fishguard Bay Hotel (22-24 February). Victory in the Open went to regular competitor FM Sven Zeidler, while one of the Under-1700 grading prizes went to 14-year-old Cardiff schoolgirl Susanna Fraser who performed some 350 points above her rating.

**Open:** 1 Sven Zeidler (Dezives) 5/5, 2 Gerry Heap (Carmarthen) 4, 3-9 Paul Byway (Hertford), Iolo Jones (Cardigan), Adam May, Alan Young (both Llanelli), Mike Waddington (Dorchester), John Waterfield (Caerleon), Howard Williams (Cardigan) 3½.

**Major:** 1 Scott Hammett (Haverfordwest) 5, 2 Ben Brewer (Cardigan) 4, 3-4 Paul Scott (Abergavenny), Robert Narayan-Taylor (Carmarthen) 3½.

**LEYLAND** – The Leyland Rapidplay saw a three-way tie for first in the top, Under-195 section on February 24th.

**Major:** 1-3 Phil Armstrong (Oldham), Peter Jowett (Preston), Graham Dobson (Lancaster) 4½/6.

**Intermediate:** 1 Phil Ramsey (Southport) 5½, 2 Kevin Winter (Bradford) 5, 3 Anthony Tatar (Hoylake) 4½.

**Minor:** 1 Edward Jackson (3Cs) 5½, 2-3 Andrew de Santos (Preston), David Willey (Carlisle) 4½.

**LONDON** – Former Latvian Minister of Finance and ECU Vice-President Dana Reizniece-Ozola gave a simul at the London Latvian House on February 15th. The event raised money for Latvian charities and saw the WGM finish with an impressive +13 =2 -0.

On 2nd March the 137th Varsity match took place at the RAC Club, Pall Mall.

Featuring Hou Yifan on top board, Oxford out-rated Cambridge by on average almost 200 points per board, but despite having white the Chinese star was fairly comfortably held by Matthew Wadsworth. Isaac Sanders, Filip Mihov and at the death Daniel Abbas won for the Dark Blues, as they were pushed all the way by a determined Light Blue side and only eventually got home 4½-3½. Both Gwilym Price and Gustavo Leon Cazares defeated higher-rated opposition for Cambridge who still lead overall by 59-56, with 22 draws.

**TELFORD** – A regular 4NCL venue also hosted this year's British Universities Chess Association (BUCA) Championships (23-24 February), in which Imperial College, London triumphed in both the Open and separate Plate competition. Meanwhile University College London won the Bowl, but the capital was denied a clean sweep as the University of the West of England, Bristol triumphed in the Shield.

Imperial's first team was Yeoh Li Tian, Constantin Müller, Aron Eu Wen Teh, and Adam A. Taylor. Their top board, a 2522-rated young Malaysian IM, certainly knows how to attack as seen in the following game:

## M.Fernandez-Yeoh Li Tian Southampton I vs Imperial I *King's Indian Defence*

In classic reversed KIA and *AlphaZero*-approved fashion Black had rammed the white kingside with his h-pawn and now struck. Note too how White had been far too slow to open queenside lines for counterplay.



**23... ♖xd4!**

The decisive blow is struck not on the kingside, but in the centre where Black is about to enjoy two highly dangerous and mobile pawns.

**24 exd4 ♗xd4 25 ♖d2 ♗f3 26 ♖e2 d4 27 ♖c1 e3 28 ♖xe3 dxc3 29 ♗d1 ♖f6 30 ♖d3 ♖xd3 31 ♖xd3 ♗xe3! 0-1**

Finishing in style by removing the guardian of f2.

# This Month's New Releases

## Learn from Michal Krasenkow

Michal Krasenkow, 408 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £29.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.99**

Thinkers Publishing are, just like Elk and Ruby (see below), an innovative publisher working hard to bring fresh new titles to the chess public. They have several titles by players we do not often see in print. Books by Kamsky and Tukmakov are in the pipeline, but first there is this very interesting volume by the Polish Grandmaster, trainer and writer.

The book is in three main parts. The first (and smallest) provides a relatively brief overview of the author's life and chess career. The second offers 54 annotated games, all of which are instructive. They are arranged by theme rather than chronology. The third part presents 12 interesting endgames from the author's games.

Krasenkow is a talented player, but makes no secret of the fact that progress was not always smooth – "My path to the top was by no means a speedy ascent", despite having several sessions in his younger years with luminaries such as Smyslov, Dvoretsky, Zlotnik and Razuvaev. He writes of the struggle to "overcome the symbolic barrier of a 2600 rating!" – a feat achieved only in 1996 after numerous near misses in the region of 2595.

This is a very honest and refreshing appraisal of his struggle to reach the top of his game and it will make a good connection with the vast majority of readers who also find chess improvement to be very hard work. The theme continues when Krasenkow admits his failings: "Unfortunately, throughout my life, I could not bring myself to work on chess regularly enough" and: "Poor memory was also a big disadvantage. Yes, such a player can sometimes achieve success, but does he have a chance to reach the world's top?"

Nevertheless, despite – or because of – the struggle to make significant progress – he reached one of the summits when he played in the 1997 FIDE World Championship, progressing well until being knocked out by Nigel Short, but still earning \$60,000 – his biggest-ever pay packet. "Never before, or later in my career, did I earn close to that amount in a single tournament."

One very positive aspect of the book is that the games will be very fresh to most readers. This became apparent when I looked at the section on 'Various and Memorable' games and found the encounter with Korchnoi was new to me, and a very interesting one it is too.

## M.Krasenkow-V.Korchnoi

Essen 2002



Krasenkow may have expected 15...♗b5 here, as "exchanging light-squared bishops, was a good positional idea, when Black would have been close to equality, but what my opponent came up with was completely unexpected."

**15...♗xe5!? 16 dxe5 ♖b6** "Hmm...has he overlooked a simple bishop lunge?"

**17 ♗b4**

This looks strong, as 17...♖e8 18 ♖fd1 ♗c8 19 ♗d3 leads to "a clear advantage for White" and 17...♗xc4 turns out well for the first player also. Things were never simple with Korchnoi though and he had planned the extraordinary:

**17...h5!?**

"Well, I saw this move from the corner of my eye, but couldn't believe it was possible. Korchnoi plays without prejudice."

Black is (temporarily) winning a piece, but he is clearly going to find his king in need of special care.

**18 ♖xh5! ♗xc4 19 ♖fd1 ♗e8 20 ♖d4**



There are two intentions here: capturing



the knight and swinging the rook over to h4. Korchnoi slipped up with **20...b5?!** and after many adventures found himself in an endgame a pawn down, which Krasenkow was able to convert on the 53rd move.

The game demonstrates Krasenkow's style, which is combative and original. Sometimes, games presented and annotated by the world's very best players leave the reader with the impression that the winner was more or less in control throughout the game, but the games in this book are all genuine struggles, with all sorts of twists and turns.

Essentially a 'best games' collection, this is a book showing the gritty side of chess battles at a level just below the absolute top. As such, club players will be able to relate to the struggles and will derive comfort from understanding that even strong grandmasters have their faults and their games are not always as smooth as others would have you believe.

Sean Marsh

## Smyslov on the Couch

Genna Sosonko, 200 pages

Elk and Ruby

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Sosonko follows up his books on Bronstein and Korchnoi with this new volume on Vasily Smyslov, which offers a completely new approach to the life and times of the great champion. There is only one chess game in this book and that is right at the end. It is Smyslov's own favourite and it was played when he was just 14. It was memorable to Smyslov as it was the first game of his to be published.

## K.Gerasimov-V.Smyslov

Moskvoretzky District Ch., 1935





19...♗d3! 20 ♖xb6 ♗xh3! 21 ♘d4 ♙h2+  
22 ♗h1 ♙xe5+ 0-1

Yes, it is a great finish – and one which impressed Mikhail Tal, but perhaps a strange one to choose from such a long and very successful career. Then Smyslov states his “Greatest success” came “at the Young Pioneers’ championship, when I won all eleven games. Not a single draw, not one!” A truly extraordinary choice for a player who played in three world title matches in the 1950s and who was still a serious candidate in the 1980s. It is quite typical of the eccentric nature of the seventh champion of the world.

Think of Smyslov’s games and one would immediately think of ‘harmony’, but what springs to mind when thinking of his personality? This is not so easy; he remained remarkably uncontroversial throughout his title battles with Botvinnik and anything written by Smyslov gives away very little about his own character.

Here we find a plethora of anecdotes and background information, derived from many years of discussions between writer and subject. Sosonko’s narrative does not follow a linear path; little stories come and go out of chronological sequence, almost as if Sosonko were relating them in person to the reader.

There are three sections: The Real Vasily Smyslov, Match Fixing in Zurich and the Soviet Chess School, and The Final Years. The middle section is somewhat tangential; it deals with Bronstein’s accusations that orders from ‘upstairs’ helped Smyslov win the 1953 Candidates Tournament. Bronstein still has many fans, but he was a very bitter man at times. Sosonko weaves in numerous other incidents from the Soviet days, but frankly they are not especially relevant to the Smyslov situation and would be better off as part of a separate book. There must be a great deal to reveal about the Karpov years, for example, when ex-world champions were careful not to disturb the peace.

Smyslov was a very eccentric character. He claims to have “organized the Kramnik–Topalov match in Elista” on the strength of an interview he gave to Radio Liberty. Other claims include strange forebodings of doom, including asking Spassky’s father-in-law to postpone a mountaineering expedition, only for disaster to strike when the man ignored the advice. These are the sort of stories which define the character of Smyslov. He appears rather detached from reality, inhabiting his only little world yet still believing himself to be somehow part of the bigger picture.

Smyslov remained dedicated to creating new chess studies right to the end, taking great pride in his compositions. Chess games took up less of his time, but there are interesting snippets here and there. “You know, Genna, Tal came to my place exactly a month before his death. It pained me to look at him. He was as sick as a dog. We started playing blitz, and he won every single game. Well, he won literally every position – where

he was better, when he worse – and all the endgames too.”

Elk and Ruby are doing a fine job in bringing out unusual and extremely interesting books. They have, for example, recently announced a forthcoming translation of Sally Landau’s autobiography, which promises to offer chess fans a lot of new material on another champion – for Sally was the first wife of Mikhail Tal.

Let’s be clear: one will not learn how to play better chess from *Smyslov on the Couch*; this is not an instructional book. It is, however, a gold mine of information on the real Vasily Smyslov, shining a bright light on one of the lesser-chronicled king of chess.

Sean Marsh



### A Complete Guide to Countering Offbeat Openings

Andrew Greet & Richard Palliser, 528 pages, paperback

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Everyman Chess continue to package up some of their classic works. The 1 e4 player could still do far worse than follow Andrew Greet’s recommendations against the likes of the Pirc and Scandinavian, with his *Beating Unusual Chess Defences: 1 e4* being joined under one cover by your Editor’s *Beating Unusual Chess Openings*, which offers a complete repertoire for Black against everything apart from 1 d4 and 1 e4.

Also just released from Everyman is *A Complete Repertoire Based on 1 b3 and 1...b6* (416 pages, paperback, RRP £19.99, Subscribers £17.99), which teams up Christian Bauer’s *Play 1...b6* with Jonathan Tait and Byron Jacobs’ *Nimzo–Larsen Attack*.



### An Attacking Repertoire with 1.d4! Vol.1

Nick Pert, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 35 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The first of a two-part 1 d4 and 2 c4 repertoire for ChessBase from the strong English Grandmaster and experienced coach. Unsurprisingly Pert recommends the Botvinnik and Kasparov-approved approach to the Exchange QGD, featuring an early ♗ge2 and ♕f2–f3. The QGA is also dealt with in aggressive fashion by 3 e4, but the choice of the Exchange Slav may raise a few eyebrows. Pert concludes his largely pretty detailed coverage by presenting a fairly quick repertoire against the likes of the Albin and Chigorin.

### An Attacking Repertoire with 1.d4! Vol.2

Nick Pert, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 50 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The bulk of the second stage of Pert’s repertoire consists of his tackling both the Nimzo–Indian, where 4 ♖c2 is the weapon of choice, and Black’s various Benoni systems. As on the first DVD, coverage is clear and pretty detailed, but prospective buyers should be aware that the Grünfeld and King’s Indian do not feature at all. As such, we wonder if a third DVD might be in the pipeline.

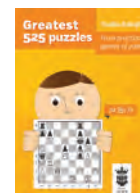
Do note that both *Attacking Repertoire* DVDs may be purchased together from Chess & Bridge for the special price of £52.00 or just £46.80 for Subscribers.

### ChessBase Magazine 188

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £17.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.15**

The latest edition of *CBM* is for ‘March/April 2019’. The emphasis is on Wijk aan Zee, from which Anand, Giri, Nielsen, Svidler and even Robert Hübner have annotated games. Elsewhere, in video format, Daniel King advocates Black meets the King’s Gambit with 2...exf4 3 ♗f3 d5!?, while Romain Edouard enthusiastically recommends 2 ♙g5 against the Dutch.



### Greatest 525 Puzzles

Csaba Balogh, 216 pages, paperback

RRP £17.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £16.19**

The Hungarian Grandmaster continues to turn out puzzle books for Chess Evolution, his latest collection of 525 positions featuring some quite tricky ones and with all the games played last year.

### Marin’s English Love – A Complete Repertoire for White after 1.c4 Vol.1

Mihail Marin, PC-DVD;

running time: 7 hours, 13 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

It’s been ten years now since Mihail Marin first began his series of repertoire works for Quality Chess devoted to the English. As such, this second new two-part DVD series from ChessBase is likely to be welcome by all ‘Marin disciples’ of 1 c4. This DVD covers both 1...e5 and a King’s Indian approach from Black. Against the former, Marin remains true to 2 g3, but does have some new ideas and approaches, such as with 2...♗f6 3 ♙g2 c6 4 ♗f3!?

### Marin’s English Love – A Complete Repertoire for White after 1.c4 Vol.2

Mihail Marin, PC-DVD;

running time: 6 hours, 37 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Against 1...e6, 1...c6 and 1...c5 Marin

remains true to a 2 g3 approach. This DVD once again blends a good description of the key ideas with some fairly cutting-edge theory, not least in the main line of the Reti and the tabiya after 1 c4 ♖f6 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 d5 4 ♖f3.

As with the Pert DVDs both volumes of *Marin's English Love* may be purchased together from Chess & Bridge for the special price of £52.00 or just £46.80 for Subscribers.



**Master Class Volume 11 – Vladimir Kramnik**

ChessBase PC-DVD;

running time: 9 hours, 36 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The *Master Class* team of Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller, Yannick Pelletier and Oliver Reeh once again team up well to examine all aspects of the play of one of the greats of the royal game, namely the recently retired 14th world champion, Vladimir Kramnik. The DVD contains all of Kramnik's games, as well as 399 interactive training positions taken solely from those games. Meanwhile the video presentations examine such facets as Kramnik's contribution to the Berlin and his endgame technique.



**Masterworks: Rare and Beautiful Chess Sets of the World**

D.L. McClain (ed.), 232 pages, hardback  
**SPECIAL PRICE £19.99**

Former *New York Times* chess columnist Dylan Loeb McClain has long been a fan of a beautiful chess set and in this hardback work presents some of the rarest, most artistic and most expensive sets ever made. The likes of Jon Crumiller supply detailed insights while throughout the photography is of a very high quality.



**Play the Alekhine Defence**

Alexei Kornev, 288 pages, paperback  
RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

It's been a while since we saw a repertoire work devoted to the Alekhine. Russian Grandmaster Kornev believes that 1 e4 ♖f6

is an ideal weapon for both faster time controls and for playing for a win against lower-graded opposition. After 2 e5 ♗d5 3 d4 d6 Kornev advocates both 4 c4 ♗b6 5 exd6 cxd6 and 4 ♖f3 g6.



**The Big Book of Chess Tactics**

Istvan Pongo, 800 pages, hardback  
RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**

This is a new version from Modern Chesspartner Publisher of a Hungarian chess classic, an extremely thorough work devoted to just about every imaginable tactic you can think of. The systematic coverage is divided into three main parts: tactics which win material, defensive tactics and the various types of mate. Those who really like tactics and beautiful moves will certainly appreciate many of the great number of positions within.



**The Bishop: Danger on the Diagonal**

Sergey Kasparov, 248 pages, paperback  
RRP £24.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.45**

It's clearly a good time of year for new series, with the Belorussian Grandmaster beginning his 'The Power of the Pieces' by looking firstly at the bishop for Russell Enterprises. The 140 or so game fragments unsurprisingly include ones connected to such topics as attacking with opposite-coloured bishops and the French bishop, while Kasparov also looks at various material imbalances, such as two bishops against bishop and knight.



**The Chess Gamer Volume 1: The Awakening 1989-1996**

Gata Kamsky, 440 pages, paperback  
RRP £30.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £27.85**

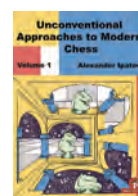
Kudos to Thinkers Publishing for convincing the American chess legend to publish with them, especially when we learn that "This is going to be my only work on chess, a subject that I feel I have learned enough about to share with you some of my knowledge." In this first of two volumes Kamsky covers his early chess life and the

best games of his first chess career, since he would retire after losing the FIDE world championship match to Anatoly Karpov in 1996.

**The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Essential Rook Endgames**

Adrian Mikhalchishin, 320 pages, paperback  
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Chess Evolution continue to publish their FIDE-approved definite endgame series, with the latest volume covering some of the most important of all the endings, rook endgames. Mikhalchishin is typically thorough and spends plenty of space examining those positions where one side has an extra flank pawn. He also takes a good look at the endgames of both Botvinnik and Smyslov, which further serves to show that his definition of 'essential' is actually quite an advanced one.



**Unconventional Approaches to Modern Chess Volume 1**

Alexander Ipatov, 360 pages, paperback  
RRP £28.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.05**

The Ukrainian-Turkish 2650-rated Grandmaster has his own views on how one should study and approach chess. Ipatov believes that all levels of player should work on their general chess education, while relying largely on offbeat and surprise opening weapons, as he himself has tended to do throughout his career. In this first volume of two Ipatov analyses in detail a variety of offbeat lines – all from Black's perspective – making this work suitable for those who like an early surprise or who want to add some new lines to their black repertoire.



**Understanding Minor Piece Endgames**

Karsten Müller & Yakov Konoval,  
384 pages, paperback

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

Anything by Karsten Müller on the endgame has to be taken note of and here the German endgame maestro teams up with Yakov Konoval, a former pupil of Botvinnik's and expert on endgame databases, to explore seven-piece minor-piece endgames in some detail. There are certain five- and six-piece endgames the authors believe the reader should simply know, but to help they are particularly good at listing and explaining the key principles in each type of endgame covered.