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**Chess**

# DING DOES IT AGAIN !

Fresh from capturing the Sinquefield Cup, Ding Liren defeats Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the Grand Chess Tour Final in London

ISSN 0964-6221



So Near, But Yet... - Luke McShane outplayed the world no.2, and almost won

Christmas Quiz - The Best from 20 years of Graham Phythian's Chorlton quizzes

Willy Hendriks - John Henderson enjoyed a Hendrix and Hendriks experience

# Chess

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# So Near, But Yet..

## Luke McShane outplayed the world no.2, but ran into stiff resistance

One of the highlights of the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss was the fifth round epic battle between Luke McShane and Fabiano Caruana, which we're delighted to bring you with notes from the player who came tantalisingly close to success.

### L.McShane-F.Caruana

Isle of Man 2019

Spanish Four Knights

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♖b5 ♖d6 5 d3 0-0 6 0-0**

I started to daydream for a few minutes about playing 6 g4!? ♗xg4 7 ♙g1 ♗f6 8 ♖h6 with an attack, before realising I had better do something sober.

**6...h6 7 ♗h1 ♙e8 8 ♖xc6 bxc6 9 ♗g1 ♖f8 10 f4 exf4 11 ♖xf4**

The position is unbalanced, but perhaps Black is to be preferred.

**11...d5 12 e5 ♖g4**

12...♗d7 13 ♙h5 is an unclear alternative.

**13 ♙d2 ♗h5 14 ♙ae1 ♙b8 15 h3 ♗xf4 16 ♙xf4 ♖h5 17 ♗d1 ♙b4 18 ♙f2 c5 19 b3 ♙b6 20 ♗f3 ♙be6 21 ♗e3 ♙d7?**



Suddenly, I noticed that this careless move allows me to pose serious issues. 21...f6 was the right move, with a small edge for Black.

**22 g4 ♖g6 23 ♗g2!**

Backwards knight moves are never easy to spot, particularly when there is a tempting move forwards to f5. I vaguely remembered the contours of my game with Sasikiran from Hastings, which perhaps helped me to notice this move. In that game the knight also occupied the g2-square, but later became a monster on d5: 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 ♖c4 ♗f6 4 d3 ♗c6 5 0-0 ♖g4 6 ♗bd2 e6 7 h3 ♖h5 8 c3 ♖e7 9 ♖b3



Luke McShane now writes every week in The Spectator, but remains very much an active player and made excellent use of the knight-pair to have Fabiano Caruana on the ropes.

**d5 10 ♙e1 0-0 11 ♙e2 b5 12 ♖c2 ♙c8 13 g4 ♖g6 14 ♗h4 d4 15 c4 ♗d7 16 ♗g2**



**16...bxc4 17 ♗xc4 e5 18 f4 exf4 19 ♗xf4 ♗ce5 20 ♖b3 ♗xc4 21 ♖xc4 ♗b6 22 b3 ♗xc4 23 bxc4 ♙b8 24 ♗d5 ♖d6 25 e5 ♙e8 26 ♖f4 ♖f8 27 ♖g3 ♙b7 28 h4 h6 29 ♙f1 ♗h8 30 ♙ae1 ♙c8 31 ♙f3 ♖h7 32 g5 hxg5 33 hxg5 ♙b2 34 ♙h5 ♙e6 35 ♙xf7 ♗g8 36 ♗f6+ 1-0, McShane-Sasikiran, Hastings 2002/3.**

**23...c4**

23...♖h7 24 ♗f4 ♙a6 25 e6! was my idea, and if 25...fxe6 26 ♗e5 ♙d8 (26...♙e7 is better, but still very awkward) 27 ♗h5 ♙xa2 28 ♙f7+ ♗h8 29 ♙e2 followed by the crude ♙e2-f2 and ♙xf8+.

**24 ♗f4 cxd3 25 cxd3 ♖b4**

25...♙a6 26 e6! wins an exchange in favourable circumstances.

## 26 ♖d1

A passive square, chosen reluctantly (26 ♖e2 c5 27 ♜xe6 fxe6 28 ♖d1 ♖f8 looked very active for Black), but it does defend the d3-pawn.

## 26...♗e7 27 ♜xa7

Why not?

## 27...♙h7 28 ♖d4 c5 29 ♜xd5 ♖a7 30 ♖c4 ♜xa2 31 g5 hxg5 32 ♜xg5



White is a pawn up and the knights are very dangerous, so I felt things were heading in the right direction. I handled the following moves well, but navigating this weird position put a strain on my nerves.

## 32...♖a8+ 33 ♙g1 ♖c6

33...♖b8! was a better defence. After 34 ♜d5 ♖xe5 35 ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 36 ♖f4 ♖xf4 37 ♖xf4 ♙g6 Black has reasonable chances to defend, as the bishop-pair is strong.

## 34 d4! ♙f5

A clever defence, since this appears to walk into my next move.

## 35 ♜d5 ♖d7

Posing a tricky question to the knight.

## 36 ♜e3!

I was pleased to alight on this calm response. 36 ♜xb4 ♖g6 37 h4 cxb4 is exactly what Fabiano was hoping for. White's exposed king is a real problem here.

## 36...♙g6 37 d5 ♖c7 38 ♜g4

So far, so good. The central pawns are ridiculously strong, so I have a decisive advantage.

## 38...♖d8



38...♖xe5 loses to 39 d6! ♖d8 40 ♜xf7! ♙xf7 41 ♖xf7.

## 39 e6?

Just before move 40, my brain was

beginning to melt, and I did not play this calmly. It is a bad move, but not for the reason that worried me. 39 h4 required more composure than I could muster, but maintains all White's advantages.

## 39...fxe6?

39...♖xg5! 40 exd7 ♖e4!! forces a draw, though it's extraordinary to leave the pawn on d7 like this: for example, 41 ♖a6 ♖xg4+ 42 hxg4 ♖xg4+ 43 ♙h2 ♖h4+ 44 ♙g2 ♙e4+ 45 ♖f3 ♖g4+ 46 ♙h2 ♖h4+ with a perpetual.

## 40 ♜xe6 ♖b8

Not 40...♖h4? 41 ♜f6+, while 40...♖xe6 is the move I had to calculate before pushing 39 e6, but it was making my head spin. After 41 dxe6 ♖xd1 42 e7+ ♖d5 I hallucinated a mate in two, with 43 ♖xd5+ and 44 ♖f8 mate, since in my mind's eye the g4-knight was on g5. Upon realising my mistake, I panicked, until I noticed that the prosaic 43 ♖xd1 wins instantly, since Black's queen is pinned.

## 41 d6!

Reaching the time control allowed for a long think. The first point of business is to prevent the check on g3, and after perhaps half an hour, I decided this looked very promising.

## 41...♖xd6 42 ♜c7+ ♖de6 43 ♖d7

All as expected. White's biggest threat here is 44 ♜f6+ gx f6 45 ♖xf6, when Black will soon be mated.

## 43...♙h8 44 ♖f4

A good move, as planned after the time control.

44 ♜f6 was also strong in theory, but 44...♖xf6 45 ♖xf6 ♖e4 didn't look all that simple to me. It turns out that 46 ♖a6! wins, due to the utterly cold-blooded 46...c4 47 ♖xg6! ♖f8 48 ♖a8!.

## 44...♖b6!

44...♖e4 45 ♖g5 wins.

## 45 ♜xe6 ♖xe6



Here I realised, with surprise and frustration, that my intended win by force actually leads to a draw: 46 ♖xg7 falls short: 46...♙xg7 47 ♖h6+ ♙g8 48 ♜f6+ ♙f7 49 ♜xe8+ ♙xe8 50 ♖f8+ ♙d7 51 ♖d1+ ♙c7 52 ♖d8+ ♙c6 53 ♖a8+ ♙b6 and there is no mate.

## 46 ♖d6 ♖e4 47 ♖g5

No matter. White is a clear exchange up, and I was sure that a few more good moves should seal the deal.

## 47...♙h7



## 48 ♖h4+!

Another move I was pleased with, since there was a tempting false path: 48 ♖d7 ♙c3! defends against both ♜f6+ and ♖h6+.

## 48...♙g8 49 ♖g3 ♙h7 50 ♜f2!

A further good retreat.

## 50...♖c2

50...♖f5 loses: 51 ♜d3 ♖e4 52 ♖f4 ♖e3+ 53 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 54 ♜xb4 cxb4 55 ♖h4+ and wins.

## 51 ♜d3 ♙e4

51...♖xd3 52 ♖xd3 offers Black very little in the way of hope, as White can attack on the light squares.

## 52 ♖g5

Threatening ♖h5+.

## 52...♖e2!



Another only move, and I marvelled at the tenacity. Instead, 52...♙g8 53 ♖d8 ♖xd8 54 ♖xd8+ ♙h7 55 ♖h4+ picks up the bishop.

## 53 ♜xb4

Seduced by yet another false path, I thought this was winning immediately.

53 ♜c1! was the way to do it. 53...♖b5 is the only way to defend the rook on e8, when one more subtlety is required: 54 ♖f4! ♙g8 55 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 56 ♖d5+ and wins.

## 53...cxb4 54 ♖d2 ♖a6

Even though White can finally give the check on h5, Black is still on the board, by a miracle. By now, I was exasperated that the game wasn't over.

## 55 ♖h5+ ♖h6 56 ♖xh6+

56 ♖xe8? would win, were it not for 56...♖g5+! and Black will take on d2 with check. This is what I missed when I took on b4. However, I still believed that trading queens would win without much difficulty.

## 56...♙xh6 57 ♖e1 ♖e5!





One last roll of the dice. Black prepares to meet 58...Rd4 with 58...Rg5+. So I just have to avoid the check, and Black should resign, shouldn't he?

**58 ♖h2?**

Simplest was 58 ♖g2 ♜xg2 59 ♜xe5 ♜xh3 60 ♜e4 and White will win, with a little care.

**58...♜d5!**

A cold shower. Now Black is very close to saving the game.

**59 ♜xd5?!**

A reflex. 59 ♜ed1 was better, though Black can keep fighting.

**59...♜xd5**

If Black can eliminate both b-pawns, the position will be drawn.

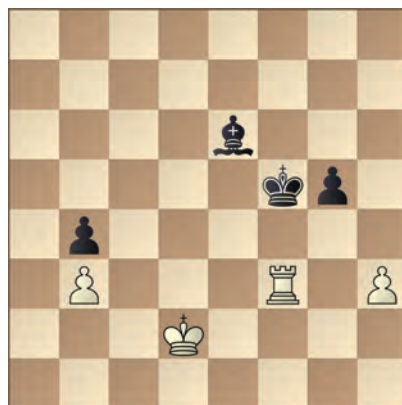
**60 ♜e3 g5 61 ♜g3?**

61 ♜g3! prevents 61...♜g6, on account of 62 h4, so White probably wins eventually.

**61...♜g6 62 ♜f2**

62 ♜g4 ♜f7 63 ♜e5 ♜xb3 64 ♜xg5+ ♜h6 would be winning if White could pick up the b4-pawn, but the unfortunate position of the white king allows 65 ♜b5 ♜d1+ and ...b3.

**62...♜f5 63 ♜g3 ♜e6 64 ♜e2 ♜d5 65 ♜d2 ♜e6 66 ♜f3+**



Around here, I knew that we were bound for a draw. 66 ♜c2 would win if White had time for ♜g3-g4, but there is 66...♜f4!.

**66...♜e5 67 ♜e3+ ♜f6 68 ♜c2 ♜f5+ 69 ♜c1 ♜e6 70 ♜d2 ♜d5 71 ♜c2 ♜e6 72 ♜b2 ♜f5 73 ♜g3 ♜e6 74 ♜d3 ♜e5 75 ♜e3+ ♜f6 76 ♜e4 ♜xh3 77 ♜xb4**

77 ♜c1! g4 78 ♜d2 g3 79 ♜e3 was better, but it seems Black still draws fairly easily: 79...g2 80 ♜f2 ♜e6 81 ♜xb4 ♜d5, etc.

**77...g4 78 ♜e4 g3 79 ♜c3 ♜f5 80 ♜e1**

**♜f4 81 b4 ♜f3 82 b5 ♜f2 83 ♜d2 g2 84 b6 ♜c8 85 ♜e2+ ½-½**



*Like most of the elite, Fabiano Caruana is never easy to put away, no matter how bad his position may appear, and Luke McShane was left to marvel at the world no.2's tenacity in their endgame.*



## Forthcoming Events

**Decr 26-28 London Christmas Congress & London Junior**  
www.ljcc.co.uk

**Dec 28 - Jan 5 Hastings International Congress**  
www.hastingschess.com or call 01424 445348

**December 28 Ulster Blitz, Belfast**  
www.ulsterchess.org/events

**January 3-5 Shropshire Congress, Telford**  
www.shropshirechesscongress.org.uk

**January 3-5 South Wales New Year Congress, Bridgend**  
www.welshchessunion.uk/calendar/ or call 01443 772750

**January 4 Golders Green Rapidplay**  
goldersgreenchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

**January 5 Hull Rapidplay**  
www.hullchess.com/Rapid+Play+2020

**January 11-12 4NCL, Daventry, Maidenhead & Blackrod**  
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

**January 11-12 Somerset New Year U175 Congress, Clevedon**  
someretchesscongress.webs.com or call 01209 217210

**January 12 Lothians Allegro, Edinburgh**  
www.chessscotland.com/events/ or call 0131 334 1062

**January 17-19 4NCL Congress, Harrogate**  
www.4ncl.co.uk or call 01993 708645

**January 18-19 Hampstead U2200 Congress**  
hampsteadchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

**January 18-19 Williamson Shield, Belfast**  
www.ulsterchess.org/events

**January 21 Muswell Hill Rapidplay**  
muswellhillchess.blogspot.com or call 07855 036537

**January 24-26 Simon Bartlett Memorial Congress, Torquay**  
www.budechess.co.uk or call 07771 544721

**January 25 Kingston Rapidplay**  
www.kingstonchessrapidplay.co.uk

**January 26 Stockport Rapidplay**  
www.stockportchessclub.org/rapidplay.html

*And for the Online Connoisseur:*

**January 10-26 Wijk aan Zee**  
www.tatasteelchess.com; Artemiev, Carlsen, Caruana, Dubov, So, etc.

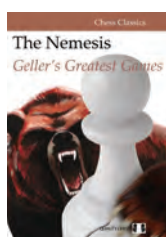
**January 20-31 Gibraltar Chess Festival**  
www.gibchess.com; Adams, Jones, Vachier-Lagrave, Vitiugov, etc.

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

# The Best of 2019

Following on from his Christmas suggestions, our review expert Sean Marsh rounds up his favourite books from the year that has just passed

It is time to round up some of the chess books I never managed to fit into the main review columns over the course of 2019, starting with an extended look at one of my personal favourites followed by a briefer look at some more titles I have thoroughly enjoyed reading and can highly recommend.



## The Nemesis: Geller's Greatest Games

Efim Geller, 480 pages

Quality Chess

RRP £26.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.85**

Efim Geller is very much one of the chess world's forgotten men. The two English-language books offering a selection of his games, namely *Grandmaster Geller at the Chessboard* (Bernard Cafferty, The Chess Player, 1969) and *The Application of Chess Theory* (Efim Geller, Pergamon, 1984) are still very good, but of course many years have passed since they were published.

*The Nemesis*, a translation of a recent work by the Russian Chess House, offers 135 games with Geller's own very instructive notes. The aim was to present a collection of all of the games annotated by Geller himself, which have been taken from various books and magazines to create a full set for the first time.

*The Application of Chess Theory* contained 100 games, again with Geller's notes and there is a natural overlap of material, albeit it with various differences in the respective translations. There are, however, some games that have not made it through from the earlier book and differences in the translations make this by no means a replacement; both books should sit proudly, side by side, on the 'special shelf'.

One example: in the preamble to Geller's encounter with Karpov at the 1976 USSR Championship, the earlier book has: "This game began, before we sat down at the board, with an interesting psychological duel. The point is that, not long before this, I was Anatoly Karpov's second in the Final Candidates match, and participated in his preparations for the World Championship

match with Fischer, which did not in fact take place. I was therefore familiar with the World Champion's opening repertoire."

The new Quality Chess work prefers: "This game began with an interesting psychological duel before we even sat down at the board. The point is that not long before, I had been Anatoly Karpov's second in his World Championship Candidates final match with Korchnoi, and had taken part in his preparation for the match with Fischer that never was – so naturally I knew the World Champion's opening repertoire."

There are some interesting nuances here, one of which is both historical and political; note that Korchnoi's name was not mentioned in the first example as was typical of the time due to his status as *persona non grata*.

The game itself famously angered Karpov, as Geller met his rare French Defence not with the expected 3...d2, which was presumably expected to lead to an easy draw, but with 3...c3, against which Karpov lacked experience and knowledge. Geller went on to crush Karpov, even sacrificing his queen along the way.

## E. Geller-A. Karpov USSR Championship, Moscow 1976



Karpov has just played 24...♔e8 and Geller comments: "Black brings his queen across to defend the vulnerable points g6 and e6, and at the same time seemingly forces a queen exchange." Geller, who has already sacrificed the exchange, now lets rip with something even more spectacular.

**25 ♖xe6!**

"It turns out that defending with the queen was insufficient after all!"

**25...fxe6 26 ♜fg6+ ♚xg6 27 ♜xg6+ ♜e8 28 ♜xh8**

And White proceeded to victory.

If that had occurred in a tournament anywhere else other than Russia – or if Karpov had failed to win the tournament – then Geller would have suffered upon his return, but it seems the risk was not so great when playing on home soil, although it was the only time Geller stepped out of line with the 12th world champion.

Geller's reputation is usually based on two main aspects: his deep grasp of opening theory and his remarkable record against world champions. He made (not counting draws) 4-1 against Botvinnik and 5-3 against Fischer, for example. His theoretical knowledge made him a very valuable assistant for Karpov (think of the champion's repertoire during the 1970s and early 1980s, with 6...e2 against the Najdorf, 3...d2 against the French and the sturdy Tartakower-Makogonov-Bondarevsky System as Black against the Queen's Gambit – all Geller specialities). Even Kasparov took Geller's advice on certain Ruy Lopez lines in his title match with Short in 1993.

However, on carefully studying Geller's notes, a definite pattern of a third aspect emerges and this is how effective he was at the psychological aspect of the game. He clearly thought very carefully about the character of his opponents and sharply exploited any deficiencies he had spotted in their game. Here are his thoughts on Fischer:

"It was already clear to me that double-edged, 'cliff-hanging', irrational positions were the American grandmaster's vulnerable point. In that type of struggle, Fischer would often fail to find the win even in an objectively won position. This prompted my decision to offer him a very sharp game – in his own favourite variation, too.' This was at Monaco in 1967 where Geller smashed Fischer in just 25 moves on the black side of a Najdorf, Poisoned Pawn Variation.

Geller was just half a point behind Petrosian at Curacao in 1962, as the world's top players queued up to try and qualify for a title match with an ageing Botvinnik. John Shaw, in his introduction, allows himself a little speculation as to Geller's chances in the match. It is an interesting question, but Geller did not excel at match play.

What did keep Geller from achieving greater success? How can a man who would

confidently beat the best players in the world just fail to go a little further? I was able to learn a little more about this issue when carefully studying *The Nemesis*.

Korchnoi, who knocked Geller out of the Candidates matches in 1971, assessed his rival as "Quite a good attacker, but he calculates variations badly – he wastes a lot of time, and often does not believe in himself" (*Chess is My Life*, Batsford, 1977). Geller admits to his failings several times in his own notes, which are surprisingly frank. The annotations to his game against Uwe Boensch, played at Sochi in 1984, reveal he spent half an hour on the first nine moves on the white side of a Scheveningen Sicilian.

"I had indeed played this position very many times, and without false modesty I may say that I have some ideas of my own here. But the whole point is that my opponent was practically unknown to me – and in situations like this I sometimes find it excruciating to choose between the continuations, or more exactly the systems, that can come about."

Yes, it becomes clear that Korchnoi's assessment was quite correct. If Geller had enjoyed more self-belief against opponents he didn't know as well as his major rivals then he would have had every chance of making more progress in the quest for the crown. Any weakness shown at match level is similar to showing blood to a shark; a predator such as Korchnoi would exploit it without mercy.

Geller remained a potent player, even in his latter years, although popular opinion may have convinced people otherwise. This very magazine, when reporting on the 1982 Philips and Drew tournament, captioned a photograph of Geller with the words. "Geller, who came to Phillips and Drew (and drew and drew and drew)." It is a good gag, but it doesn't show much respect for the man who was just one point away from qualifying from the 1982 Moscow Interzonal to take part in the next series of Candidates matches (the cycle Kasparov eventually won). This was due to a last-round loss to Sax; perhaps Geller's self-belief was at fault again. The more I read of this book, the more I understood Geller's character, strengths and weaknesses, all of which joined together some significant dots in my prior knowledge.

Jacob Aagaard, in his interesting essay at the start of the book, claims that "Rarely have we published such a rich book" – and I fully agree. I strongly suspect books on the greats don't sell as many copies as those on openings, but people who neglect the classics are missing out on a great deal. We still need a book to add more about Geller's life. Just imagine if he had written an autobiography, detailing his thoughts of his great rivals and his time spent inside Karpov's world. The most we currently have is a chapter in Sosonko's *Russian Silhouettes* (New in Chess, 2009), but there must be so much more to say.

*The Nemesis* is very fine collection of great games with excellent, thought-provoking and highly revealing annotations. Well played, Quality Chess.

### The King's Indian According to Tigran Petrosian \*

Igor Yanvarjov, 424 pages  
Russell Enterprises

RRP £34.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £31.45**

Igor Yanvarjov is an International Master and professional chess coach, who has worked with numerous top players. He is currently active with the Anatoly Karpov School of Chess in Moscow and formerly worked at the chess schools of Petrosian, Geller and Kasparov.

A lot of work has gone into this very interesting book, which bridges the worlds of a famous world champion and a very popular chess opening. The premise is explained thus: "The author's objective was, first of all, to reveal the richness of Petrosian's chess world and to follow the strategic development of the King's Indian Defence through the prism of Petrosian's creative work. He does this with the presentation of almost 300 deeply annotated, complete games."

Most readers will be familiar with Petrosian's reputation as a King's Indian crusher (Fischer kept away from it during both the Russia versus Rest of the World match in 1970 and also his 1971 Candidates match against Petrosian, which certainly says something), but it may not be quite so well known that the great champion frequently adopted the sharp defence as Black too, despite it appearing to be contrary to his style.

This book has a preface by Levon Aronian and a foreword by Igor Zaitsev, both of which are well worth reading. Each variation of the King's Indian then receives significant coverage, using Petrosian's games from both sides of the board. There is also a section on the Benoni plus a general appreciation of Petrosian's play and several other related items.

It is a wonderful sight to see Petrosian strangling a King's Indian Defence. This game has long been a favourite.

#### T.Petrosian-M.Bertok

Bled 1961



This is the position after 18 ♖hb1. Black is completely tied up all over the board and White is ready to break open the queenside with b2-b4. Petrosian's iron grip led to victory on move 62. He was never in a hurry.

This is an excellent book with wonderful and fully accessible annotations. It seems we can still learn such a lot from the former Soviet giants. As Aronian puts it, "No matter how many years pass, the mark left by Petrosian will not disappear!"

\* *Stock of the Petrosian title may be limited so do please contact Chess & Bridge before placing an order.*



#### Coaching Kasparov Volume 1: The Whizz-Kid (1973-81)

Alexander Nitikin, 200 pages  
Elk and Ruby

RRP £20.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.85**

Garry Kasparov may not play very much chess these days, but his name is always going to catch the eye, especially with a promise of previously unreleased material. Nitikin was a very significant figure from the start of Kasparov's career and is well placed to provide a unique insight into Kasparov's early years.

Elk and Ruby have included 14 previously unpublished games and the major attraction is that they are all from a 1978 blitz match against none other than Mikhail Tal. Honours ended even, but Kasparov had to fight back in style after finding himself 3-0 down. Indeed, his play in the early games, undoubtedly marked by nerves (can you imagine playing Tal at blitz?), looked way off the mark and in the first game he even allowed Tal to place one of his standard 'calling cards' on the black position.

#### M.Tal-G.Kasparov

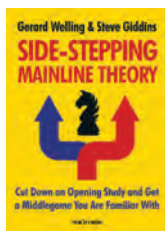
1st matchgame, Tbilisi (blitz) 1978



Kasparov's 16...♗c5? was naive and it allowed the crushing rejoinder 17 ♖xe6! (and 1-0, 24). It is a testament to Kasparov's strength of character that he was able to recover after such a bad start. Fans of the



13th world champion will find plenty of new stories in this book and once again we see Elk and Ruby gamely producing fascinating volumes which are of immense value to the discerning chess historian.



### Side-stepping Mainline Theory

Gerard Welling & Steve Giddins, 272 pages  
New in Chess

RRP £21.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £19.75**

The slightly clumsy strapline advises readers to 'Cut down on Opening Study and Get a Middlegame You Are Familiar With'. More often than not, this means playing the increasingly popular London System, but this book offers a different approach and one which, furthermore, can be played with both colours. Time is pressing for non-professionals and it is an impossible task for the busy club player to try to keep up with the latest opening theory. Adopting a universal system could be the answer.

"The present book aims to equip such amateur players with a sound, rock-solid basic repertoire, which can be learned in the least possible time and which once learned, will require the bare minimum of ongoing maintenance and updating."

To this end, the system advocated is based on 1...d6 systems, which means the Old Indian against 1 d4 and the Philidor against 1 e4. A similar set-up is given for White, using 1 e4 and an early d2-d3. Critics will accuse the systems of being cramped and unambitious, but they are very sound, virtually immune to theoretical bombs and offer steady plans of development. The authors are strong on prose explanations and cover all the tactical and strategical matters required to turn the system into a highly effective weapon at club level.

It is unlikely a player will become champion of the world using this repertoire, but it pays to be realistic and to manage expectations. And, yes, 1...d6 can be effective against the London System. In fact we go all the way back to Ostend 1907 to see Nimzowitsch chase away Erich Cohn's London bishop with 1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♗f3 d6 3 ♙f4 ♗h5.

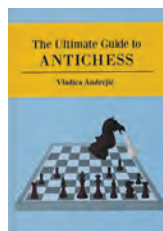
Players of a certain age will become misty-eyed when they find the Pickett Shuffle in Black's armoury. This was

advocated by Len Pickett back in the 1970s and is just as valid today.



Black plays 8...♗e8, with ...♙d8 to follow, when the passive bishop can slip out to c7 or b6 to take a more active part in proceedings.

It's the little twists and half-forgotten turns such as this one that could help make a thorough understanding of the system extremely potent at club level. This book is expertly written and should be of great use to club players who lack the time to prepare deeply and who would like to always play something fireproof that they really *understand*.



### The Ultimate Guide to Antichess

Vladica Andrejic, 256 pages

Sahovski Informator

RRP £39.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.99**

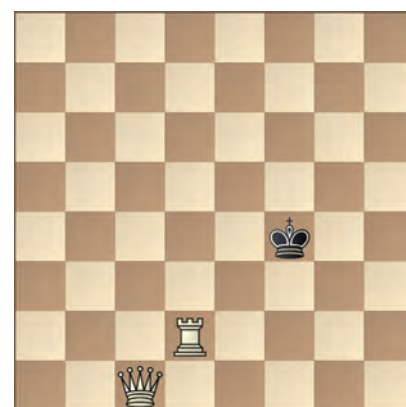
And now for something completely different. Antichess is the latest name given to one of the most popular of all chess variants. Take Me Chess, Losing Chess and, of course, the now non-PC Suicide Chess are just some of the many names given to the game in which the aim is to lose one's pieces in order to win. Nomenclature can be difficult in chess, as some will know 'Anti-Chess' to be one of the titles of Viktor Korchnoi's book on his extraordinary 1978 title match against Anatoly Karpov.

Children love Antichess – we call it Pirate Chess in our schools – and they can often see further ahead in this game than in normal chess.

This book is a fabulous resource for players wanting something a little different. It turns

out that 1 e3! is the best opening move and doesn't lose, by force, to 1...b5 as was previously believed in some circles. However, 1 e3! d6?? is apparently a forced loss...for Black. The problem is that White can exploit the predictable nature of the c8-bishop and force it to capture nearly all of the white army, starting with 2 ♗g4!.

The depth of this book is very impressive. Standard openings, tactics and endgames are all explained. There are even reciprocal zugzwang positions, such as this one.



The side to play loses. Try it!

Chess variants can be great fun, but they are also very good for improving one's thinking skills. This is a very interesting book which is unlikely to be surpassed.

## 24<sup>TH</sup> 4NCL FIDE RATED CONGRESS

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# 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 many recent events, not least some recent 4NCL Congresses, Guernsey and the European Team Championship. 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.

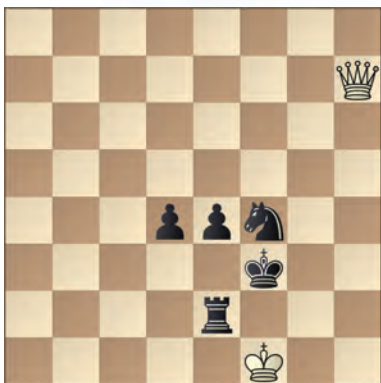
Solutions on page 54.



## Warm-up Puzzles



(1) D.Ireland-D.Simpson  
South Normanton 2019  
White to Play



(2) S.Vujovic-M.Van Wissen  
European Club Cup, Budva 2019  
White to Play and Draw



(3) R.Mounce-A.Brocklehurst  
Scarborough 2019  
White to Play



(4) M.P.Townsend-P.Cloudsdale  
York 2019  
White to Play



(5) M.Kelly-S.Scott  
Cork 2019  
White to Play



(6) K.Alekseenko-K.Piorun  
European Team Championship, Batumi 2019  
White to Play

# This Month's New Releases



## Navigating the Ruy Lopez: Volumes 1-3

Fabiano Caruana & Oliver Reeh;  
running time: 16 hours, 20 minutes  
(total for all three volumes)

ChessBase PC-DVD  
SPECIAL PRICE £75.00  
**SUBSCRIBERS £67.50**

It is impressive that ChessBase have managed to bring Caruana on board, especially as the subject is by no means a trivial one to tackle. The Ruy Lopez – or Spanish Game, to the teenagers – has a substantial history and has never been replaced as the number one choice of 1 e4 aficionados. Of course, the Italian Game (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4) is all the rage at the moment, but pushing the bishop one square further along the diagonal is likely to keep on testing the second player's resources for the foreseeable future. The intention across the three DVDs is to provide the first player with a complete repertoire after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5.

I was interested in two main things when I investigated this series: how deep is the material and is Caruana an effective presenter?

A previous ChessBase pairing of Wesley So and Oliver Reeh didn't hit the mark for me as So was too camera-conscious. On this set of DVDs, Reeh is fine in the role of host and Caruana appears very relaxed, in a professional kind of way. His voice carries a quiet authority, everything he says is on point and focused, and, as the most recent challenger for Carlsen's title, he clearly has a tremendous amount of top-level experience. That includes extremely deep preparation, of course – and as a very active participant at the highest level it is remarkable that he is happy to share his knowledge of such a key part of his repertoire with the masses.

It is made clear in the introduction that some of the lines will be covered in much greater depth than others, partly due to their relevance and partly due to the fact that some variations lead to very similar positions, with common middlegame structures and plans. I like this approach; it flies in the face of the modern trend to try and shoehorn in huge amounts of material for every line and variation, which is far too much for the club player.

Presumably most fans of 1 e4 will want to buy all three volumes, but it may be useful to break down the coverage in case prospective viewers are particularly interested in some lines more than others. Volume 1 covers the Anti-Marshall, Chigorin, Breyer and Zaitsev variations; volume 2 provides coverage of the



Archangel, Open, Berlin and Averbakh variations; volume 3 shows how to handle the Schliemann variation and the Smyslov, Cozio, Bird's, Steinitz, Modern Steinitz and Norwegian defences [Ed. – the three volumes are also available individually from Chess & Bridge, retailing at £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers].

The Ruy Lopez, despite its antiquity, is still a rich ground for new discoveries. Sometimes the novelties are so obvious it is a wonder they had not been played much earlier.

useful later on if Black tries to free himself with f7-f5 at some point." It also gives the queenside pieces new developing squares.

There is certainly a lot of material here and the DVD includes a bonus database of Caruana's own games, as well as an opportunity for students to test their Ruy Lopez knowledge and understanding online, against Fritz.

This is a set for serious students of chess. It is definitely not a quick starter guide to the Ruy Lopez, but rather an in-depth presentation which will appeal to seasoned tournament players who are keen to put in the time and discover some of the secrets of one of the most testing of all openings.

Sean Marsh

## V. Topalov-A. Shirov Linares 2004



White played **16 c4** in this position which arose from the Chigorin variation. Caruana comments: "Remarkably a novelty. Garry the Great has played b4 at this point. I guess one reason for preferring b4 over c4 is to protect a5, thereby freeing the rook on a1 for action on the queenside; c4, on the other hand, gives added support to d5, which can be

## Planning Move by Move

Zenón Franco, 414 pages  
Everyman Chess

RRP £19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

This interesting book deals with a subject somewhat neglected in chess literature. As the back-cover blurb puts it: "Planning is of crucial importance in chess and yet this is an area that has not been well discussed or explained to ambitious players who wish to improve."

Miguel Najdorf is quoted as having said, "First the idea and then the move!" and the author stresses the point: "It is essential to have some kind of idea of what you are trying to achieve and how to go about it." Franco, who represented Paraguay in seven Olympiads, presents a thoughtful study on the art of planning and splits the material into five main sections: Typical Structures, Space Advantage, The Manoeuvring Game, Simplification, and Attack and Defence.



In instructional books such as these there is a danger of merely assembling the 'usual suspects' in terms of examples and then grouping them together as loosely as possible, resulting in a grab bag of snippets with tenuous connecting threads. This one rises above the norm thanks to the excellent selection of material and thoughtful presentation.

There is a massive difference between the amount of time professionals and amateurs have to spend on chess study, which is why club players benefit from a well-structured book such as this. Magnus Carlsen makes it clear there is no easy route to mastering the art of planning. "The good players find the right plans most of the time because they have studied these patterns over hundreds and thousands of hours." Indeed, the games of the world champion are utilised many times in this book, but plenty of space is also given to the great players of former times.

The following position is taken from a real heavyweight encounter.

### V.Korchnoi-L.Polugaevsky 7th matchgame, Evian 1977



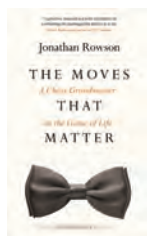
Korchnoi has been manoeuvring for some time to get his pieces into position for the attack. It seems, at first glance, as if Polugaevsky is doing fine. His centralised bishops look great and it is not exactly clear why Korchnoi would have wanted to reach this position. However, the next move sees Korchnoi bring together the various strands of his magnificent manoeuvring:

**30 ♖d6!**

Franco explains what is going on, calling this: "A neat invasion as if 30...♗xd6 then 31 ♖g5 wins. One idea now is 31 e6, since 31...♗xd6 still loses to 32 ♖g5. There is also a threat of 31 ♗f6, followed by e6." Polugaevsky defended gamely, but couldn't hold Korchnoi back indefinitely (1-0, 43).

Not many readers will be able to plan in the style of Korchnoi (especially of 1977 vintage), but by using the fine material presented in this book it should be possible to make small and steady improvements in one of the toughest aspects of the game. The material is fully accessible to all players from the experienced club player upwards. New Year, new plans!

Sean Marsh



### The Moves That Matter

Jonathan Rowson, 352 pages  
Bloomsbury

RRP £20.00 **SUBSCRIBERS £18.00**

In this thought-provoking, inspirational book, Jonathan Rowson explores what chess has taught him about life and shares a perspective likely to better equip all of us to reflect on our own. Beautifully written, warm and candid, *The Moves That Matter* is wise and funny and will enrich the inner life of chess and non-chess players alike.

At one level, *The Moves That Matter*, is structured around the big questions all of us inevitably grapple with, including thinking and feeling, winning and losing, truth and beauty, life and death. At another, this is the deeply personal story of a Type 1 diabetic growing up mainly in Scotland, within a family where both his father and brother face mental health challenges. Rowson goes on to win the British Championship three times and peaks at number 139 in the world. He marries, has children and finds new meaning and opportunities, away from the competitive chess arena. As he eloquently puts it, chess ultimately becomes more like his anchor and less like his sail.

In part, Rowson wrote this book as a means of "atonement", as he addresses the fact that for all chess gave him, his sense of achievement and fulfilment was less than total. Rowson trained with Yusupov and came to appreciate how precisely Super Grandmasters calculate concrete variations. Yusupov gets Rowson to watch a video of Mozart and Mozart's less gifted rival. Rowson takes the hint, noting that there were positions at a chess board he might strain to understand which Magnus Carlsen could fully assess in the blink of the eye.

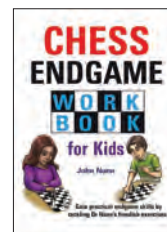
Whoever we are, whatever we do, there will always be something that feels as if it is just out of reach. Still more so given that even in victory, such moments are too short to live for to the exclusion of all else. Rowson is extremely insightful as to how to better understand our feelings and to seek new ways of seeing and making sense of the life we happen to find ourselves in.

Rowson's story about working with Anand to help him prepare for his 2008 world championship match with Kramnik is fascinating. Rowson gets to see "The grind behind the glory", and gives an insider account both on working with the very best and the role of computers in preparing for matches at this level. There are many other terrific chess anecdotes throughout this book. One of my favourites comes from Kasparov's earlier world title match with Kramnik in 2000. Raymond Keene, one of the leading organisers of the

match, accosts Kasparov after game seven, which has ended in a draw following a mere 11 moves. Kasparov apparently tells Keene: "You have your problems with the match, Ray, and I have mine."

As well as his personal story and many broader insights into the chess world, Rowson draws on a wide range of thinkers, writers and other sources to address the challenges that go to the heart of how we live, both at and away from the chess board. Always accessible and engaging, *The Moves That Matter* deserves to rank as the 'go to' work on chess and life. It is impossible to read without feeling the better for it. If Malcolm Gladwell was a chess player, this is the sort of book he might have tried to write. I do not think he would have written it as well as Jonathan Rowson.

Ben Graff



### Chess Endgame Workbook for Kids

John Nunn, 128 pages, hardback

RRP £12.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.25**

Nunn follows up his *Chess Tactics Workbook for Kids* by presenting a large number of endgame positions to solve. Each chapter is devoted to a particular type of endgame, with the puzzles frequently building on a motif found in solving an earlier one.

Young players or those wanting to improve their opening play may also enjoy *Chess Opening Workbook for Kids* by Graham Burgess, which contains 128 pages and is available for £12.50 (Subscribers – £11.25).



### Fritz 17

ChessBase, PC-DVD

RRP £69.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £62.95**

Billed as 'The Giant PC Chess Program', *Fritz* has come a very long way and now enters the AI revolution by containing *Fat Fritz*, ChessBase's neural net engine based on *LCZero*. The program also contains all the usual playing functions, both against an engine and online, as well as enough database and repertoire-building tools to keep most club players more than happy.

### Mega Database 2020

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £169.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £152.99**

It's that time of year when ChessBase release new versions of all their databases, of

which the Rolls Royce continues to be the 'Megabase', as it's often known. This now contains a whopping eight million games, up to October 2019, of which some 85,000 are annotated. Buyers also receive a year's 'update service', which enables them to keep their *Mega Database 2020* up to date by downloading 5,000 or so new games to it every week.

Readers who own *Mega Database 2019* may upgrade for £69.95 (Subscribers – £62.95), by returning the DVD or quoting the serial number when ordering from Chess & Bridge, while owners of older versions of *Mega Database* can do so for £110.00 (Subscribers – £99.00). Finally, if you simply want the games and none of the annotations, *Big Database 2020* should be for you, retailing at just £64.99 or £58.49 for Subscribers.

Also just out from ChessBase is *Corr Database 2020*, which contains some 1.6 million correspondence games, retails at £169.99 (Subscribers – £152.99), and contains 10 games from the 29th Correspondence Chess World Championship annotated in video format. Those who own *Corr Database 2018* can upgrade for £89.95 (Subscribers – £80.95), once again by returning the disk or quoting the serial number.

All those very serious about their theory should want to keep an eye on the latest correspondence games and may also find the *Fritz Powerbook 2020* of use, which contains some 25 million opening positions, derived from 1.7 million high-class tournament games. As such, users get a good snapshot of the latest state of theory in both the main and most topical opening lines. *Fritz Powerbook 2020* is compatible with both *Fritz 17* and *ChessBase 15* and retails at £64.99, or £58.49 for Subscribers.



### Monster Your Endgame Planning - Volume 1

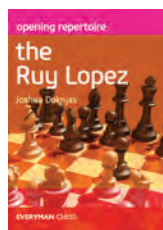
Efstratios Grivas, 288 pages, paperback  
C&B Price £23.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £21.55**

Following on from the success of *Monster Your Middlegame Planning*, Chess Evolution commissioned the highly-experienced author and trainer to tackle the endgame. In this first volume Grivas begins by examining pawn endings and covers the most common types of endgame. Each chapter contains some useful general advice and key tips before the reader has to solve a number of exercises, selecting the right plan from three options.

*Monster Your Endgame Planning Volume 2* is also out and available from Chess & Bridge for £23.95 or £21.55 for Subscribers, while running to 248 pages. This time Grivas tackles both queen and rook against an array of different pieces, as well as opposite-coloured bishop endings, the Lucena position

and the third-rank defence.

Both volumes can be ordered together from Chess & Bridge for the special price of £46.00 or just £41.40 for Subscribers, but do please check in advance on stock levels when ordering.



### Opening Repertoire: The Ruy Lopez

Joshua Doknjas, 288 pages, paperback  
RRP £18.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.09**

FM Doknjas follows up his earlier work on the Najdorf by tackling another of the most important of all openings. Just like Caruana, Doknjas is fully aware of the need to ensure readers understand a number of key middle-game motifs. As such, he has opted for the complete games approach, along with some useful summaries, while mapping out a fairly theoretical repertoire based largely on the main lines, but with 4 d3 advocated against the Berlin and the Marshall avoided with 8 a4.

Also just out from Everyman Chess is *Counterattacking Lines for Black Against the Ruy Lopez*, which packages together Glenn Flear's work on the Open Lopez along with Milos Pavlovic's Marshall-based repertoire, while running to 324 pages and retailing at £17.99 or £16.19 for Subscribers.



### Small Steps 2 Success

Sam Shankland, 360 pages, hardback  
RRP £27.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.19**

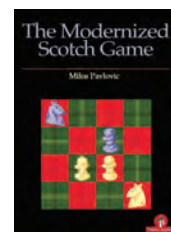
After writing his highly-acclaimed *Small Steps to Giant Improvement*, Shankland made giant leaps in his own game. Working on this follow-up book was also designed to improve his own game, with Shankland's focus now on passed pawns. We witness just about every facet of them, in both the middlegame and endgame, from motoring down the board to being blockaded and weak. Pawns are, of course, the soul of chess and once again studying some very important structures and strategies in the company of Shankland should but improve the play of the stronger club player.



### The Anand Files: The World Championship Story 2008-2012

Michiel Abeln, 512 pages, hardback  
RRP £27.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £25.19**

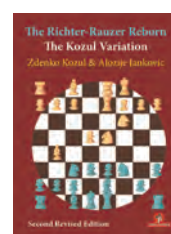
If you're looking for a late Christmas present for yourself, Quality Chess' latest work may be an ideal gripping read for those slow festive days. Belgian FM Abeln conducted a number of detailed interviews with Team Anand and presents their side of the 14th world champion's matches with Kramnik, Topalov and Gelfand. He reveals how the very top players prepare, come up with match strategies, and cope with the stress of such high-profile contests, while the book is lavishly illustrated with some 100 photographs and contains too some excellent games.



### The Modernized Scotch Game

Milos Pavlovic, 280 pages, paperback  
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗xd4 remains an important weapon and one in which theory continues to evolve after both 4...♗f6 and 4...♙c5. As such, those who play the Scotch or regularly face it may welcome Pavlovic's thorough coverage. The Serbian Grandmaster and noted theoretician covers all the key lines, along the way presenting plenty of new discoveries, while highlighting both the key strategical ideas and which sidelines he feels have been unfairly neglected for both sides.



### The Richter-Rauzer Reborn: The Kozul Variation

Zdenko Kozul & Alojzije Jankovic,  
398 pages, paperback

RRP £29.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £26.95**

As Sean Marsh has remarked before, Thinkers Publishing do not let the grass grow under their feet. Only four years have passed since the two leading experts on the Classical Sicilian mapped out a repertoire for Black with 1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 ♗c6 6 ♙g5 e6 7 ♗d2 a6 8 0-0-0 ♗d7, but in view of some new discoveries and the improvement in engine strength in recent years, Kozul and Jankovic decided that an update was required. The amount of updated material varies somewhat from chapter to chapter, but certainly if you're looking for an exciting Sicilian line which may catch white players out, the Kozul line of the Classical remains a decent fit.