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Chess



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Chess goes digital during the covid epidemic



A New Venture - The Magnus Carlsen Invitational was won by... Magnus Carlsen!



Champion Talk - With chess very much in the news, we get Garry Kasparov's take



A.R.B. Thomas - Bob Jones chronicles the life of a most talented British amateur

Chess

Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE. M.Sc †
Executive Editor: Malcolm Pein
Editors: Richard Palliser, Matt Read
Associate Editor: John Saunders
Subscriptions Manager: Paul Harrington

Twitter: @CHESS_Magazine
Twitter: @TelegraphChess – Malcolm Pein
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The End of an Era

Glenn Flear reports from the World Senior Team Championships in Prague

The Candidates wasn't the only chess event cut short in March. Prague too was abridged, but at the World Senior Teams, a sufficient number of rounds was played to be able to announce the winners.

First of all, the period leading up to the event was more animated than usual. Europe was starting to face up to the fact that COVID-19 was going to be nasty, which led to a number of participants (and whole teams) to withdraw. Because of health concerns, the England Over-65 team was missing most of its top players and the Over-50s had to replace Jon Speelman who pulled out late in the day. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic had hardly seen any cases, so the organisers decided that the event could go ahead, albeit with additional rules and advice to aim to keep everyone healthy.

Once the participants assembled on the outskirts of Prague and were ready for action, it was clear that there was only one major subject for discussion. Right from the beginning, the customary shaking of hands was often replaced by elbow bumps or knuckle knocks, and hand sanitiser was freely available. The fact that everyone seemed to be washing their hands, almost incessantly, had in my opinion a positive side effect: nobody at the event seemed to be suffering from even the slightest of colds!

After a few rounds, the Czech authorities took some pre-emptive action and decided to ban gatherings of over 100 people. Sure, the situation was worsening elsewhere, but the Czech Republic hadn't yet seen many more cases, so this was generally considered to be over-reaction by us natural born optimists. The championships were allowed to continue after splitting the two tournaments into a series of smaller playing halls (with a maximum of 12 matches, i.e. 96 players plus a couple of arbiters per room), and essentially banning all non-essential spectators.

When we arrived for the seventh round, much to our surprise it was announced that this was going to be the final one. Germany and Austria were limiting border crossings from that evening onwards, and new Czech rules were banning all meetings involving over 30 people. So despite all the organisers' earlier deft manoeuvring, it just wasn't going to be possible to carry on fiddling while Europe was heading headlong into a major crisis.

The tournament was well organised by an experienced team and the unfortunate cutting short of the event must have been tough for them, but turned out to be the right



The England Over-50 team defeated Germany Women 4-0. Pictured from right to left, and board 1-4: Keith Arkell, Mark Hebden, captain Glenn Flear (playing Black!), and Neil McDonald.

decision. This only became clear once the process of travelling home turned out to be somewhat more complicated than anticipated. Trains and buses to Germany and Austria were cancelled from that evening onwards, for example.

In my case, I checked in twice only to have my flights cancelled both times (with Brussels Airlines and then with Lufthansa). I was then offered a 24-hour delay to go on another Lufthansa flight, but started to suspect that something was wrong. The computer might have found a place for me, but the rules were changing daily and I felt there was a serious danger of getting stuck in no man's land. So, on the spur of the moment, early in the morning, I decided to go to the airport and try an alternative route home.

The complication for me is that although I'm a British citizen, I live in France and one of the employees at Air France told me that they would only take me if I had an up-to-date resident's card (which I haven't, and this of course wasn't required while we were bosom buddies in the EU, until 52% of UK citizens decided to change course). My wife sent tax statements by e-mail and I even had my French driving license with me (which has my address on it), but I was told that these weren't sufficient.

I was told to go to Czech Airways' handling (there was a long queue), and see if they could work something out for me. The 40-minute wait proved to be worthwhile, as the lady there did a great job and got me on an

afternoon flight to Paris with a desired connection to Nice. When I went back with crossed-fingers to Air France to check in, the personnel had changed and there was no problem for me. Curious. I suspect that the over-zealous employee from earlier was prematurely applying the rules that were going to come into force at the end of the weekend rather than the beginning.

Well, I got home in one piece (thank you, Air France; I'm your biggest fan), and next day decided to see if I would have been able to fly home with Lufthansa. No, that flight too was cancelled. What a relief that I had had the inspiration to leave the sinking ship while I could. What a captain!

The other members of the England Over-50s team had no serious problems getting home, even though they were leaving later (Ryanair, Easyjet and British Airways kept going longer than the Germany-based carriers). The hotel was closing for the duration after we all left and Keith Arkell was the last guest in the 411-room hotel. He did mention that he promised to turn out the lights when he went for his flight. Still, it was no surprise to me that thousands upon thousands of people were stranded by the present crisis in far-off lands. In the span of a few days one can be transformed from a welcome (or even honoured) visitor into an international pariah.

After this crisis comes and goes, I don't think the world will be the same again. It feels like the end of an era and not just for chess.

Hopefully, down the road, we will largely be more considerate to others, hygiene-minded, and particularly appreciative of things that we used to take for granted. Personally, I know that I am really looking forward to playing over-the-board chess again – what a wonderful way it will be of getting back to feeling free!

In Prague, the American Over-50 team were the strongest on paper and the favourites were in good form. There was no complaints about them earning the gold medal. England's only loss was to the champions, so there was no dishonour in our overall result.

A. Shabalov-V. Priehoda
USA vs Czech Republic II
Ragozin Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖c3 ♗b4 5 ♜a4+ ♖c6 6 e3 0-0 7 ♜c2

White has invested a tempo to make it difficult for Black to use his c-pawn (in order to counter White's centre).

7...♞e8 8 ♗d2 a6 9 a3 ♗f8 10 h3

There is no particular rush, as both players wait for the opponent to commit themselves.

10...h6

Further waiting, but moving a pawn in front of his king provokes the American GM to decide that it's time for active measures. In many similar positions, Black tries to free his game with ...e5!?, which seems to be playable here as well.

11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♗d3 g6 13 g4!?



Ambitious play, and yet another example of an early g2-g4 (you might recall too that in the Semi-Slav after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖c3 e6 5 e3 ♗bd7 6 ♜c2 ♗d6 Shabalov's name is often associated with 7 g4). **13...♗e6 14 0-0-0 ♖a5 15 ♗e1 ♖c4 16 g5 ♗e4**

It could be possible to continue with 16...hxg5 17 ♗xg5 b5, but why invite White's knight to the aggressive g5-square? **17 ♗xc4 ♖xc3 18 ♗xc3 dxc4 19 e4 c6**

Instead, 19...hxg5 20 d5 ♗c8 21 ♗hg1 gives White decent attacking chances for the pawn. **20 ♜d2 ♗c8!? 21 gxh6?!**

Not even bothering to defend the e-pawn. I'm not sure why Shabalov rejected 21 ♗de1. **21...♞xe4 22 h4 ♜d5 23 h5 ♗g4**

It feels that White is taking risks, but



The all-conquering senior stars from the USA. Yet again Alexander Shabalov (nearest the camera) led the way on top board, racking up 4½/6, despite losing to Germany's Graf.

whatever your engine says, it is he who has the safest king.

24 ♗e5 ♗xd1 25 h7+ ♖h8 26 ♗xd1



26...♗g7?

Black needed to play 26...gxh5! when I think that he should be able to repulse the attack.

27 hxg6 fxg6 28 ♜g5 ♗xe5?

This loses. After 28...♞xe5 29 dxe5 ♜f7 30 f4 ♞f8 the result is in doubt, even though White is better with the precise move 31 ♗b4!.

29 dxe5 ♜e6 30 ♗d6 ♜f5 31 e6+ ♖xh7 32 ♗d7+ ♖g8 33 ♗g7+ 1-0

It's mate next move.

I. Novikov-J. Meister
USA vs Lasker Schachstiftung
Bogo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♗b4+ 4 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 5 ♜xd2 0-0 6 g3 b6 7 ♗g2 ♗b7 8 ♖c3 d6 9 d5 exd5

More reliable is 9...e5, with a solid but slightly passive middlegame in prospect.

10 cxd5 b5!?

Trying for some dynamic play.

11 ♗xb5 ♗xd5 12 ♞c1 c6?!

Black would have a reasonable game following 12...♖a6 13 ♜a5 ♗c5!, as the tactics surrounding a white grab of the c-

pawn seem to work for him.

13 ♗c3 ♗e4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 0-0 ♜e7 16 ♞f1 ♗d8 17 ♜e3 ♜e8



Apart from his lead in development, White has one less pawn island and is thus happy to enter a simplified position with an enduring pull.

18 ♗d4 ♗xg2 19 ♜xe8+ ♞xe8 20 ♖xg2 a5

Accepting the loss of a pawn, but pinning his hopes on obtaining drawing chances in a double-rook endgame.

21 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 22 ♞xc6 ♞xe2 23 ♞cxd6

Winning an important tempo.

23...g6 24 ♞1d2 ♞ee8 25 ♞b6 ♞a7



How to win such a position? First of all,

Novikov makes sure that a5 is a fixed weakness for the foreseeable future.

26 a4 h5 27 b3 ♖c8 28 ♖h3!?

Just testing the water.

28...♗g7 29 ♖h4 ♖c3 30 ♖h3 ♖e7 31 ♖b5 ♖a7 32 ♗g2 ♖f6 33 ♖d6+ ♖g7 34 ♖db6 ♖c2 35 ♖b7 ♖a6 36 ♖5b6 ♖xb6

After 36...♖a8 37 ♖d7 ♖c5 38 ♖bb7 ♖f5 39 ♖d3 White will in any case be able to force the trade of one pair of rooks soon enough.

37 ♖xb6 ♖b2 38 h4 f6 39 ♖b5 ♖h6 40 ♖f3



The winning plan involves walking the king over to the queenside to obtain a two versus zero majority, which would certainly race up the board faster than anything Black would be able to conjure up on the kingside. So, rather than face this scenario, Meister lashes out:

40...g5! 41 g4!

A surprise, but it works.

41...hxg4+ 42 ♗xg4 gxh4

Interesting is 42...♖xf2 43 hxg5+ fxg5 44 ♖b6+! (if 44 ♖xa5?! ♖f4+ 45 ♗g3 ♖h5 46 ♖b5 ♖f1 with a better version of the game for Black and realistic drawing chances as the defending rook is able to get behind the a-pawn) 44...♗g7 45 ♗xg5 ♖f3 46 ♖b5 ♖c3 47 ♖f5 ♖f7 48 ♖e5 ♖e7 49 ♖d4 ♖h3 50 ♖c5 ♖d7 51 ♖b6 and the a-pawn is finally going to fall.

43 f3 ♗g6 44 ♖xh4 ♖d2 45 ♖xa5 ♖d3 46 ♖b5 ♖xf3 47 a5 ♖f4+ 48 ♗g3 ♖f1 49 ♖b4! 1-0

Now, with the rook able to go behind the a-pawn, it's clearly winning.

In the absence of Jon Speelman, Spanish-based James Plaskett was called in as a late replacement and should be commended for making the effort, despite a difficult travel itinerary. Both Jim and Neil McDonald were effective with the white pieces, but didn't find their best form with Black.

A.Yermolinsky-J.Plaskett USA vs England English Opening

1 ♖f3 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 b6 4 g3 ♖b7 5 ♖g2 ♖b4 6 d3 0-0 7 e4 d5 8 e5 ♖d7 9 cxd5

This seems to be something of a Yermolinsky speciality. Of 18 games on the

database, six of them involve him, the first of these being from 36(!) years ago.

9...♗xd5 100-0 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 c5 12 d4 ♖c6

An earlier game varied with 12...h6 13 ♖h4 ♗xg2 14 ♖xg2 ♖c6 15 ♖e1 ♖e8 16 ♖f4 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♖f8 18 ♗e3 ♖e7 and was fine for Black, Yermolinsky-Kovalyov, Montevideo 2015.

13 ♖g5 ♗xg2 14 ♖xg2



14...♖db8!?

An odd-looking move, but perhaps not bad. 14...♖e7 would be more conventional.

15 ♖f3 cxd4 16 cxd4 h6 17 ♖e4 ♖xd4!?

Maybe 17...♖d5 18 ♖d1 ♖d8 is playable, but the knight on b8 doesn't inspire confidence.

18 ♖a3!

The optimistic 18 ♗xh6 doesn't look correct, in view of 18...gxh6 (18...♖xe5 is also playable) 19 ♖f6+ ♗g7 20 ♖fe1 ♖d7! and Black isn't worse: for example, 21 ♖ad1 (21 ♖xc6 ♖xe5 22 ♖h5+ ♖h8 is much better for Black) 21...♖cx6 22 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 23 ♖xd7 ♖f5 24 ♖xf5 exf5 25 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 and although Black is a pawn up, a draw looks likely.

18...♖xe5

Or 18...♖d8 19 ♖ad1 ♖xe5 20 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 21 ♖f6+ gxh6 22 ♖xa8 when the rook and bishop are going to be a handful for the knights.

19 ♖f6+ gxh6 20 ♖xa8 ♖e8 21 ♖ad1 ♖a4



Black has enough material for the exchange, but his pieces lack coordination, so White keeps the better chances.

22 ♖d6 ♖a6 23 ♖d4! A fine move that activates the rook free of charge.

23...♖c6+ 24 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 25 ♖g4+ ♖h7 26 ♖c1 ♖a5

What's the expression for two knights on the rim?

27 ♖c3 f5 28 ♖h4 e5 29 ♖a4 ♖e6

30 ♖b4 ♖xb4 31 ♖xb4 ♖g6



Holding on to the seventh rank with 31...♖e7 might be more robust.

32 ♖c7 ♖f6 33 ♖h4

And not 33 ♖xa7? ♖c6.

33...♗g6 34 ♖a4 e4 35 ♖xa7

Now the a-pawn can be safely taken.

35...♖c6 36 ♖b7 ♖e5 37 ♖b4 ♖e8 38 ♖4xb6+ ♗g7 39 ♖b5 f4 40 gxf4 ♖d3

41 ♖f5 ♖f8 42 h4 ♗g6 43 ♖bb5 f6 44 h5+ ♖f7 45 ♖b6 ♖e7 46 ♖f1 ♖a8 47 ♖xf6 ♖xa2 48 ♖be6+ ♖d7 49 ♖xe4 ♖xf2+ 50 ♗g1 1-0

Keith Arkell took on the arduous board one role (and as usual had some very long games), and Mark Hebden on board two had some tough Blacks to navigate. Yours truly on board three played all the games and had a majority of whites – that's surely what being captain is all about!

G.Flear-B.Schulenburg England vs Magdeburg Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♖b4 4 e3

In Prague, I went back to my chosen set-up from 40 years ago. Logical perhaps, as I suppose that senior events are all about nostalgia?

4...b6 5 ♖ge2 0-0 6 a3 ♗e7 7 e4 d6

I was expecting 7...d5, after which I intended 8 e5 ♖e4 9 ♖xe4 dxe4 10 ♖c3 ♖b7 11 ♗e3, but the engines try to persuade me that the odd-looking 11...c5 is fine for Black. I have my doubts. Instead, 11...♖d7 12 ♖g4 f5 13 exf6 ♖xf6 14 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 was seen in Nakhbayeva-Ohme, Chotowa 2010, and now 15 ♗e2 would have made Black's 'resistance' more difficult.

8 ♖g3 d5?!

A tempo loss that came as a surprise. More prudent would have been 8...♖bd7 9 ♗e2 ♖b7 10 0-0 c5 with just a small space disadvantage.

9 e5 ♖e8 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖d3 c5

(see the diagram at the top of next page)

12 0-0?!

Not best, but at the time I was happy with my choice. That evening I was asked if I had considered 12 ♖xd5! to which I replied that I had indeed, but rejected it because of 12...♖xd5 13 ♗e4 ♖c4 14 ♗xa8 ♗a6. However, the engines dismiss my fears over my king position as nonsense.



12...♖c6 13 dxc5 d4 14 ♖e4 ♗b7 15 ♗d5

The position is opening up and White is ahead in development, so all is well. My opponent now tried to call on tactics to free his position, but it soon became clear that he had overlooked something...

15...♗xc5 16 b4! ♗xe5 17 ♖h5!



Black has more pieces, including his king, en prise.

17...f5 18 ♗xf5 ♗xd5

Now there is only one good move, but it's a very good one.

19 ♗e7+! ♗xe7 20 ♗xh7+ 1-0

It's mate in two.

G.Flear-K.Dolgitser England vs USA II



Up to here, my opponent had defended very well and my advantage of two bishops versus bishop and knight had gradually been nullified.

49...♗d8?!

The timely rejoinder 49...f5+! was correct:



The clash of the auld enemies. Keith Arkell defeated Douglas Bryson as the higher-rated England ran out 3½-½ winners, despite Andrew Burnett's lengthy defensive work on board 4.

50 exf6 ♗xf6+ 51 ♖e3 ♗d5+ 52 ♗xd5 exd5, which would have been highly drawish.

50 ♗f8 ♗e7 51 ♗xh6 ♗xb4 52 h4

The more double-edged nature of the struggle suits the owner of the bishop-pair.

52...♗e7

A lesser evil would have been 52...f5+.

53 h5 f5+?! Too late.

54 ♗d4!?

54 gxf5 gxf5+ 55 ♗d4 is perhaps even better.

54...fxg4 55 ♗xd5!



55...exd5

Black can put up more resistance by sacrificing a piece with 55...gxh5, but this feels like an eventual win to me: 56 ♗e4 b4 57 f5 exf5 58 ♗xf5+ ♖c6 59 ♗f4 ♗b5 60 ♗d7+ and so on.

56 hxg6

White gets there first.

56...♖e8 57 f5 g3 58 g7 ♖f7 59 f6 g2

Or 59...♗xf6 60 exf6 b4 when the best is 61 ♗e3, after which White's king mops up the b-pawn before moving in for the kill.

60 e6+ 1-0

A bit fortunate that one!

In the Over-65s, the Russians were dominant, but I was particularly impressed by the Frenchies, most of whom I know quite well. Their seemingly 'weakened' team pulled off a couple of upsets on their way to second place.

It had never crossed my mind, but just one hour before the prize-giving my wife told me that I had won a board prize. So after writing a few emails, I went downstairs to try and get a car to the venue. No chance it seemed, so I decided to walk for the first time. It should

have taken half an hour, but it took me longer as I took a wrong turn and ended up walking beside railway tracks on some ballast feeling rather daft.

I was faced with a selection of prizes, one of them being a little bottle with a liquid in it. I thought, what a good idea: hand sanitiser, so useful at the moment! So I decided to wash my hands with it during the closing ceremony. Why not? The next day it was explained to me that the little cloth that came with it demonstrated that it was actually screen cleaner and not for hands. OK, I felt daft again. You might chuckle. However, the good news is that one of the ingredients seems to be good against lead poisoning. That might come in useful one day...

J.Grant-G.Flear

Scotland vs England

Reti Opening

1 c4 e6 2 ♗f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 a6 5 b3 ♗d6 6 ♗b2 0-0 7 ♗e2

7 g4!? might appeal to some.

7...dxc4

I wasn't sure about this (giving up some central influence), but I wanted to ensure an open diagonal for my bishop.

8 bxc4 b6

I was toying with 8...e5, but found it hard to believe. Still, the principled line 9 c5 ♗xc5 10 ♗xe5 is perhaps not that much for White.

9 ♖c2 ♗b7 10 g4!?

Sitting on my desk at home I have several books waiting to be reviewed including Dmitry Kryakvin's *Attacking with g2-g4*. I was beginning to wish that I had paid it more attention in advance.

10...♗xg4

Mark Hebden, who was on the board next to me, said to me later that although he was aware that I had spent my youth grabbing hot pawns, he found it hard to believe that I would snatch this one. I knew I was pushing my luck, but the alternatives such as 10...e5 11 g5 ♗fd7 12 ♗e4 didn't appeal.

11 ♗e4!

I was expecting 11 ♖g1 f5 12 h3 ♗f6 which I thought was fine for me. The text is more dangerous.



My last round game against Jonathan Grant aptly involved Kafkaesque complications.

11...f5 12 ♖g5



It's the sort of position where you can feel that the storm clouds are gathering, but whatever you try, you can't escape getting caught out in the rain. The engines are not yet convinced, but can tell you that I was already feeling very uncomfortable.

12...♖e7 13 ♖g1 ♖f6?

Natural, but wrong. In the post-mortem, with Mark Hebden and Jim Plaskett assisting, we examined the critical line 13...h6! 14 ♖xg4 ♖xf3! 15 ♖xf3 hxg5 16 ♖xa8 fxg4, with a strange position where everything is possible.

14 ♖d4!?

14 c5! bxc5 15 ♖c4 brings up further ammunition. White seems to be better in all lines now: for example, 15...♖d5 16 ♖xd5 exd5 17 ♖xf5 d4 18 ♖e6.

14...♖xh2

OK, it looks like I've already decided that I may as well be hung for a sheep...

15 0-0-0 ♖xg1 16 ♖xg1 ♖bd7

Plaskett was keen on analysing 16...♖c8 (it might even be best), but I never really considered this painfully passive move. After 17 c5! b5! 18 ♖b3! ♖xc5+ 19 ♖b1 ♖d5 Black has reasonable chances to survive the onslaught.

17 ♖gxe6 g6



18 ♖xf8?

A human move, regaining material, but losing the impetus of the attack.

Best seems to be going the other way with 18 ♖xc7! (i.e. not capturing the in-play rook, but instead attacking the other more passive one, which is weird, even Kafkaesque) 18...♖h8 (after 18...♖ac8 then 19 ♖xf5! would be too powerful) 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8. Black survives for now, but White's pieces are all more active than their counterparts.

We spent some time looking at 18 ♖xf5, the prospect of which certainly had me wriggling in my seat. Still there seems to be more than one way to keep the ship from sinking straight away: 18...♖f7 19 ♖h3 ♖f8 is only a bit better for White, or 18...♖e4 19 ♖f4 ♖c5! (rather than 19...♖f7?! 20 ♖g5 ♖c5 21 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 22 ♖f5) 20 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 21 ♖f5 ♖xf5 22 ♖xf5 ♖e4 and the struggle continues; Black avoids getting his king battered, but it's more than probable that the two bishops are going to cause enduring problems for the knight-pair.

18...♖xf8 19 d3 ♖e8 20 ♖c3 ♖d6

Black has an extra pawn and White's threats suddenly seem less potent.

21 ♖f3 ♖xf3 22 ♖xf3 ♖e7!?

I had visions of walking to the queenside, but, with hindsight, this looks a bit optimistic. Instead, 22...c5 looks normal, aiming to stabilise the centre.

23 ♖a3 c5 24 d4 ♖e4

I played this quickly and then became concerned that my opponent could capture on c5.

25 ♖c2

After 25 dxc5 my opponent felt that Black could get away with the courageous 25...bxc5! (the endgame after 25...♖xc3 is safe enough, but I felt that it threw away a good part of Black's advantage; a sample line runs 26 cxd6+ ♖f8 27 ♖d2! ♖e4+ 28 ♖e2 ♖c8 29 ♖c1 ♖f7 30 ♖d4 h5 31 f3 ♖ec5 with only an edge), and the engine seems to agree with him: 26 ♖g7+ ♖d8 27 ♖xh7 (or 27 ♖d1 ♖e7) 27...♖d3 and Black is clearly better.

25...♖f7 26 ♖d1 ♖c7 27 ♖b2 cxd4 28 ♖xd4 ♖dc5

Or perhaps 28...♖df6!?

29 ♖d5 ♖d8 30 ♖e5+ ♖e6



Another extravagant king move. More sensible is 30...♖e8.

31 f3 ♖f6 32 ♖xd8?

After 32 ♖d4! it's difficult for Black to release the tension without giving White counter-chances, as after 32...♖cd7 (32...♖c8!?) 33 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 34 ♖b1 ♖c6.

32...♖xd8 33 ♖c6?

Time-trouble panic. 33 ♖h2 ♖d6 34 ♖h4 ♖a4 wouldn't yet have been all over.

33...♖d3 34 ♖d4+ ♖f7 35 ♖c3 ♖xc3+ 36 ♖xc3 h5 37 ♖e2 ♖e8 38 ♖e5? ♖d3+ 0-1



They may not look overjoyed, with the job of getting home still in front of them, but the USA again won the gold medals. From l-r: Yermolinsky, Benjamin, Shabalov, Novikov and Kaidanov.

Self-Isolating Pawns

Paul Conway reveals how lockdown has been for him and his Hackney clubmates

Like many people, I played online even before the current crisis. It's an easy thing to do too much, and there can be drawbacks – if I've been playing too much blitz then I can become impatient in slow-play games, not giving critical decisions enough thought; it can reinforce bad habits and is not a reliable path to improvement.

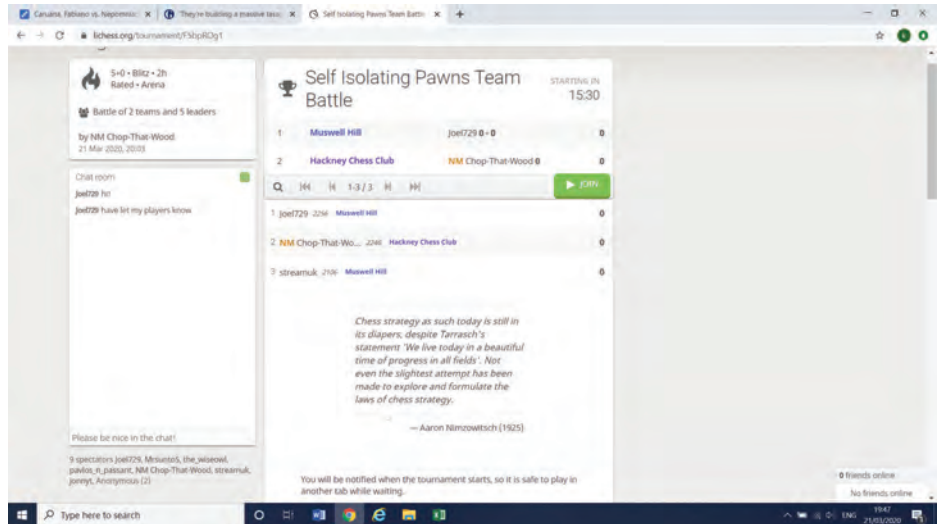
The best legitimate use I have for blitz is when I'm trying to learn a new opening. Having done the reading, I can roll it out online and look up the variation played afterwards. It's a way of becoming familiar with the types of position, without the risk of playing something new in a serious OTB game. It can also be valuable, if there's been a game played well by both sides, to analyse it properly afterwards rather than just clicking through to the next opponent. So don't do what I do, trotting out the same pet variations, with the nearest approach to post-game analysis being to look at the wins I'm pleased with on autoplay, like this one:

'NPassant' - 'kasper182' Internet (blitz) 2020 *Pirc Defence*

1 e4 d6 2 d4 d6 3 c3 g6 4 c4 g7
5 e3 f6 6 f3 0-0 7 d2 e5 8 g2
a6 9 0-0-0 e6 10 d5 xd5 11 exd5
xd4 12 xd4 e5 13 b3 d7 14 h6
h5 15 g4 f6 16 h4 e8 17 h5 c5
18 dxc6 bxc6 19 hxg6 xg6 20 xg7
xg7 21 f5+ h8



What an enjoyable hack. Since ...c5 was not played in the opening, the black queen cannot come out on the d8-a5 diagonal, so here White can crash through without any undue trouble. The free pawn-storm after Black's knight went the wrong way didn't do any harm, neither did giving White's bishop a line of sight to the king. White now mates in four.



22 xh7+! xh7 23 h6+ g8 24 xg6+ 1-0

Early on in lockdown there was the Candidates as a useful distraction. At the time of writing the Magnus Carlsen Invitational was drawing to a close. We now enjoy unprecedented access online to the top players in the world, and what a privilege it has been to hear the likes of Carlsen and Firouzja commenting on the games in Yekaterinburg, and to watch such strong players taking on all-comers at banter blitz. Understanding how the world's best think about the positions on the board is interesting, entertaining and must have a beneficial effect on our play.

I have largely been left to my own devices recently; the mobile, tablet and laptop have all seen heavy use. Lockdown will end at some point; social distancing is likely to continue for longer. What this means for normal league chess does not seem encouraging, yet in this seemingly unpromising position there are compensations.

One of these was down to my clubmate John Reid, who developed a good initiative in setting up team blitz matches on Lichess. For the first match we had the distant opposition, aka Muswell Hill, and a couple of other sides were also represented. These matches have continued from 8-10pm each Saturday night, and although the initial catchment was London clubs, at the last count 10 took part, including one from as far away as Edinburgh. Muswell Hill, Kings Head and Hammersmith have joined Hackney as the regular sides competing.

Keenly fought and with some high calibre opponents, the matches are also great fun. There is a chat field providing a source of entertainment – in the first week one player

typed that he was going to the bar, did anyone want anything? I asked for a Doombar, someone else wanted Corona. The atmosphere has a different feel to normal online blitz games which are often played against strangers. Playing from the comfort of our own homes is in marked contrast to 'The Roch', Hackney's usual and much-loved Saturday night stamping ground, with the fire alarm going off every few minutes.

This is from one of the early matches, a Hackney versus Hammersmith clash.

'Chop-That-Wood' - 'Bonn86' Internet (blitz) 2020 *Grünfeld Defence*

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 d5 4 f3 g7
5 f4 0-0 6 c1 c5 7 dxc5 dxc4 8
xd8 xd8 9 e4 f7 10 xc4 xc5
11 e2 c6 12 hd1 g4 13 e3 e6
14 xe6 fxe6 15 xd8+ xd8 16 e1
xf3 17 gxf3 e5 18 e2 d4 19 b3
dxe3 20 fxe3 c8 21 d3 f7 22 c2
e8 23 f4 d7 24 e5 h6 25 h4



Black's bishop is in lockdown.

25...a6 26 ♖e4 ♗xc2 27 ♗xc2 ♖c6 28 ♖d3
♗d5 29 b4 ♙g7 30 ♗c3+ ♖c6 31 ♗c4
h6 32 ♗e4 b5+ 33 ♖d4 ♙h8 34 ♗c5 g5
35 hxg5 a5 36 a3 axb4 37 axb4 h5 38 ♗e4
h4 39 ♗f2 ♙g7 40 ♗h3 ♙f8 41 ♖e4
♙g7 42 ♗f2 ♙f8 43 ♗h3 ♙g7 44 ♖d4
♙h8 45 e4 ♙g7 46 ♖e3 ♙h8 47 ♖f3 1-0

Around the same time that John set up the Lichess matches, Bob Eames arranged a Zoom meeting for the club, and these have also continued. Zoom allows for screen sharing, and in the first week we looked at some games from the Candidates on Bob's database, I demonstrated some of my blitz games, and we watched the clip of goats invading Llandudno – it's not all about chess. Zoom has also provided one means for chess tutors to continue coaching classes, and I'm sure this has been a respite for many parents.

In the short-term we are likely to see more online play at all levels. The 4NCL online is underway, the Saturday team blitz will



Hackney members making good use of Zoom as Bob Eames examines the Morra Gambit.

continue, and a slow-play London League is being set up. Great ingenuity in utilising technology has kept us engaged and in

contact. The strategies described in this article are all ways in which us self-isolating pawns have been able to feel more connected.

Johnnyovski

Steve Firth wonders whether a chess addiction lasts a lifetime

The Costly Cappuccino. Back in the day, George and I would have labelled such an establishment a citadel of mediocrity.

- 1970s Soviet architecture – tick.
- Recycled music – tick.
- Profits swelling a tax-evading corporate monstrosity's Swiss bank account – tick.
- Three-quid for a cup of frothy coffee – a tick, if ever there was one.

Yet here we were with our lattes and loyalty cards. The Angry Young Men had become Comfortable Old Comrades. Some people age worse than others.

"Chess?" I said, as if I barely recalled the word. "I thought you stopped in 2009 when the government legalised woodpushing."

"I'm back, Al," George said, straightening in his chair a little. "The prodigal son has returned."

So, the Great Recidivist had again chosen to dabble with his favourite class-A opiate. He looked good on it, healthy even. It couldn't last.

"Well," I said, "All that talk about any legalised activity being beneath your dignity. That was..."

"A young man's pride."

"You were forty-three."

His face reddened a touch. "Chess has changed, Al."

"Woodpushing never changes." I finished my latte and put the empty cup on the saucer. This conversation was heading to only one place and I wanted to prevent it from reaching its destination. "Woodpushing remains highly addictive."

"It's different now. The league's no longer divisions, it's tiers. I'm playing in the top tier: the Slimethorpe Paints Premiership."

I rolled my eyes. "Someone's written 'gullible' on the ceiling. You might want to check the spelling."

He waved his right arm, finishing off with a flick of the wrist, a table tennis player dismissing me with a backhand topspin. "Don't be like that, Al. Chess is great again. There are electronic clocks, Fischer time-controls and everything's on the internet. It's all brand-new and improved."

"I'm pleased to hear it." I feigned a yawn. "Now that's sorted I wonder if mankind will rouse itself enough to address more pressing issues."

He peeked at me over his silver-framed glasses and winked. "The rapidplay rules need some tweaking, if that's what you mean. Oh, and I thought you'd want to know, Grimtown Guerrillas Chess Club is thriving."

The power of speech left me.

For decades George and I had poured our souls into Brexitland's noblest chess club. In the end, it destroyed us, but not before we destroyed it. Or so I thought.

"Grimtown Guerrillas," I said, "I loved that club."

"I know you did. We both did." George put his arm around my shoulder, gave me a fatherly hug. "Al, are you OK? You don't look well."

"You surprised me, that's all." The Guerrillas thriving? Trying to process such news felt like

I had to rewire my brain, destroy all the old patterns, replace them with new ones. "How did it happen? We left the club in tatters. No players, no venue, no money."

"You and I should be proud of our recent efforts."

"What? We haven't done anything in ten years."

He smiled as he released me from his hug. "Our absence made all the difference."

So, that was it, all it took for the delicate flower to bloom again was to identify the disease destroying it and remove the plague. Then, out of the ashes, the phoenix rose and all was once again well. Or something like that. Oh, and in this chess paradise, George and I were now the most poisonous of pawns. What you reap, etc.

"Al, do you know what the most amazing thing is?" He rubbed his hands together with such intensity I wondered if he had visions of starting a fire, bushcraft-style. "It's that all the other woodpushers love me now. They've been chuffed to see me, wanting to chat about the old days."

"Time must be the greatest of healers."

Ignoring my sarcasm, he tapped lightly on the scarred, wooden table in front of us: he wanted to make an announcement. We eyeballed each other, two kids in the school playground waiting for the other to show weakness and blink. Before either of us

capitulated George asked, "What about one final shot at redemption?"

I tried to form a logical answer to an illogical question. "Is that even possible?"

He nodded his head at tempo. "One-hundred per cent. It'll be like old times. You and me, the Chuckle Brothers, taking on the world armed with our lethal weapon: the Stonewall Dutch."

The Stonewall Dutch, what memories. George, crushing people on the kingside, and me driving myself to distraction by endlessly trying to find a good home for my 'bad' bishop. How I'd missed woodpushing. Even after a decade away I remember the fun we had: the joy of a well-played game; the buzz of a club night; and the camaraderie of the Guerrilla unit. Excitement and possibility bounced around my brain. I felt youthful, vibrant, and for a moment I imagined I still had hair.

I caught myself. I was thinking like an addict.

The first rule of being clean is dump your addict friends. Any junkie in your orbit brings with them temptation. And woodpushers are the worst. Persistent. It's as if they're a pawn up in a rook ending and all they want to do is grind you down until they get what they crave: another victim. 'What's a little chess? You can handle it. C'mon, just try it once, you'll love it. If you don't like it, you can quit at any time.'

Except you can never quit. Once an addict, always an addict. Your darkest of places is only a moment of weakness away.

Not that I cared.

"The Stonewall Dutch, The Chuckle Brothers, redemption." I smirked, milking the moment. "Give me woodpushing. Bring. It. On." "Yes!" yelled George and punched the air.

A few customers turned to face us, frowns aplenty. Maybe they thought they were in a library.

I laughed. "I am Grimtown Guerrillas Chess Club."

"Do you know something, Al?" He paused, his age-old way of adding gravitas to his words. "Right now, we're the happiest people in Brexitland."

Rather than contemplate the misery of Brexitland's masses, I chose happiness and fantasised about Grimtown Guerrillas soon-to-be glorious future. My mind dared to imagine the club's road back to greatness. Maybe one day we'd even be able to field a team without defaulting on bottom board. Big dreams indeed.

I tapped George on the arm. "You've really built up this 2020 version of the Guerrillas. I can't wait to lay my hands on those beautiful Staunton pieces. I've missed their touch."

Silence.

I glanced at George. The Firestarter in him had died. "What's wrong?"

"There's one person who wasn't welcoming," George said, his voice so quiet I struggled to hear. "Johnnyovski."

Even now, a decade on, his name made me shudder.

Johnnyovski, aka John Broad. A man the



size of a bear with table manners to match. His exotic nickname came from his claim of Russian ancestry, though as far as anyone could tell his links to 'The old country' started and ended with owning a copy of *Spassky's 100 Best Games*.

"Earth calling, Al. Do you receive me? Is there anybody there? Houston, do we have a problem?"

Breathe, I said to myself, breathe. "I'm letting that name sink in."

"I saw him the other day, first time in ages. Do you know what he said to me?"

"Tell me it's not what I think it is, not after all these years," I said, my voice quivering. I should be over this.

Eyes to the floor, head almost imperceptibly dipping and rising, George nodded. "He asked if I remembered that game against you when he didn't resign. He's still fuming about it."

At once I stood up, my chair's wooden legs scraped along the polished floor drowning out Costly's piped music. "Let's get one thing clear. Johnnyovski resigned."

"Al, calm down!" His eyes flitted across the coffee shop to see who'd noticed my outburst. "Think of where you are."

George was mortified I'd raised my voice in a coffee shop. It'll snow green, as my late mum use to say. I sat down, pointed at him and whispered. "You know he resigned. You were there. You saw everything."

He couldn't look at me. "It was a long time ago."

I put my head in my hands. It didn't help. I leaned on the table, elbows on wood, and I rested my chin on my hands and went into that oh-so-familiar trance. The woodpusher within me danced.

"January 17th 2008," I said. "The day Johnnyovski drank more pints than there are pawns in a chess set. The day Johnnyovski, at the side of the chessboard, built a pyramid consisting of empty beer glasses. The day Johnnyovski received a time penalty for falsely accusing me of putting a rook on e1 not f1 when I castled. The day Johnnyovski, every time I made a move, recited the lyrics of Shania

Twain's 'That Don't Impress Me Much'. The day Johnnyovski whenever he moved his queen stood up and sang the National Anthem. The day Johnnyovski broke wind with the ferocity and frequency of the cannons at Waterloo. The day Johnnyovski in a totally lost position said: 'I'll give you that one.' The day Johnnyovski, half-an-hour after his verbal resignation, announced he never said anything of the sort and added yours truly must have heard 'Morphy's ghost'. The day Johnnyovski noted I'd forfeited on time as I'd 'Disappeared and was probably looking for acorns.'" I came up for air. "Happy days."

George's unblinking eyes never strayed from mine.

"Al, you really went off on one there. You had me worried for a while." He giggled. "It's the first time I've seen your face turn purple."

I shook my head. After all the hassle with Johnnyovski I lost my love for chess. I was finished with woodpushing. "I'll never forgive him for what he did to me that night."

"Maybe you should."

George let that statement have its space for a good half-minute. It was as if I'd been caught in an avalanche, snow enveloping me from all sides. I began to wonder if the world was upside-down or not.

"Fantastic news, mate," George said as he playfully punched me on the arm. "That's history and now you can start again."

He grinned. He knew he had me.

I inhaled, held the breath for as long as I dared, then let it go. I'd weaned myself off the Royal Game, become healthy in both mind and body. It had taken years, but I was drug-free. Today, I could be strong. And yet, I didn't need to be. Woodpushing, I'd finally realised, was no more a vice than dancing, darts or deep-sea diving. Chess was simply a game played by people, each person imperfect in their own way. And, to address my unique imperfections, chess taught me about forgiveness, friendship and redemption.

I made my mind up.

"My woodpushing days are over, George. I'm clean."

actually finished 1 ♖b3? ♙f1+! and 0-1, in view of 2 ♗xf1 ♕h3+ 3 ♗g1 ♘d4, forcing mate, as with 4 ♗xc3 ♘e2+ 5 ♗h1 ♕g2#) **1...♘d4** (1...♕h3 2 ♗xc3 now favours White, in view of 2...♙f1+? 3 ♗h2 ♕g2? 4 ♗g7# and 2...♘d4 3 ♘f6+ ♗f8 4 ♗xd4! ♙xd4 5 ♕xh3 when the two pieces ought to outclass the rook) **2 ♘f6+ ♗g7 3 ♘e8+** when Black should acquiesce to the repetition, not opt to lose after 3...♗f8? 4 c6+! ♗xe8 5 cxb7 ♖b1 6 ♗h2 0-1 or 3...♗h6? when White wins with the highly precise sequence 4 c6! ♘e2+ 5 ♗h2 ♙xf1 6 ♗f8+ ♗h5 7 ♗c5+! f5 8 ♗e3 f4 9 ♗xf3+ ♕g4 10 ♗d5+ ♕f5 11 ♗g2.

23) Shankland-Grandelius

1 ♖c7!! ♕xd6? (of course, if 1...♖e8? 2 ♕xe7

♖xe7 3 ♗xa8+, and even 1...♘xd6 2 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 3 ♗xa8+ ♘d8 4 ♗f3 leaves White with a huge positional advantage) **2 ♙xf7 ♕c5+ 3 ♙d4!** (an only move, but what an only move at that, and not 3 ♗f1? ♙xd1+ 4 ♗e2 ♘d2+ 5 ♗e1 ♕f2+ 6 ♗f1 ♘e3+) **3...♕xd4+ 4 cxd4 ♘d6 5 ♗e2** (5 ♖g7+! would have been "crisper", as pointed out by Glenn Flear, and if 5...♗xg7 6 ♗xe5+ ♗f7 7 ♘h5 with an overwhelming attack) **5...♘xf7 6 dxe5** (White's connected passed pawns combined with his attacking force of queen and knight now proves too much for Black to be able to cope with) **6...♖ac8 7 e6 ♖c1+ 8 ♗f2 ♘h6 9 e7 ♖e8 10 ♗e6+ ♘f7 11 ♘h5 ♖c2+ 12 ♗e3 1-0**

24) Durarbayli-Suleymanli

From this remarkable position, White had to resign after 1 d7? ♖c5! 2 ♘d1 ♘d8 3 e4 ♗e7 4 exf5 gxf5. Instead, 1 ♖c1? ♗xe6 2 ♖xc2 ♗xd6 3 c7 ♖5xb7 4 cxb8♖+ ♖xb8 would only have led to a lost rook endgame for him.

However, with 1 ♘d1! ♖5xb7 2 cxb7 ♘xe3 3 ♖e1 ♗xe6 4 ♖xe3+ ♗xd6 5 ♖a3 ♖xb7 6 ♖xa5 he would likely have drawn, or, even better, **1 e7!! ♖5xb7!** (1...♘xe3? 2 c7 ♖5xb7 3 d7 would echo McDonnell-De La Bourdonnais, and win, the same sentiments applying to 1...♗f7? 2 d7! ♗xe7 3 c7) **2 cxb7 ♗e6 3 ♖b1 ♗xd6 4 e8♗ ♖xe8 5 b8♗+ ♖xb8 6 ♖xb8 ♘xe3 7 ♖b7** when White surely wouldn't have lost the endgame and the Aeroflot Open (see last month's *Overseas News*) might have seen a different winner.

This Month's New Releases

Hein Donner: The Biography

Alexander Münninghoff, 272 pages

New in Chess

RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

With chess tournaments suffering an enforced relocation to the cold world of the Internet, players can be forgiven for feeling that serious preparation is superfluous until the current emergency has cleared. It is therefore very good news that we have two new chess biographies to savour. *Real* reading, with no need for readers to try and cram in an overloading amount of opening theory.

If the name of the now sadly late Alexander Münninghoff resonates in the chess brain, it will be due to his previous biography, the acclaimed *Max Euwe* (New in Chess, 2001). This new book is a translation of a Dutch book from 1994, which has been updated from various sources and includes an interview with Donner's great friend, Harry Mulisch, conducted by Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam in 2008.

Time has certainly moved on since the 1990s and in the new preface the author states that Donner was "A chess player of a type that has disappeared from the playing halls of this century. In my opinion, the current top players, and also those a little bit lower on the list, have started to identify dangerously closely to the calculating monsters they let loose on their concoctions after every game." It is an interesting point. Which of the current elite players will still have books published about them, several decades after their demise?

Jan Hein Donner was a legendary figure even in his own lifetime. Outspoken, uncompromising and confrontational, Donner was anything but dull. He was a witty writer and a successful player, winning the Dutch Championship three

times and representing The Netherlands in no fewer than 11 Olympiads. A collection of his best chess columns was made available twice by New in Chess, first as a hardback in 1998 and then as an updated softcover, entitled *The King: Chess Pieces* (New in Chess, 2007).

Anyone interested in reading the honest opinions about chess and chess players should definitely add *The King* to their library. *Hein Donner: The Biography* acts as an excellent counterweight to Donner's acerbic wit, offering a firsthand account of the man himself and how he was perceived by others.

The amount of research carried out by Münninghoff is evident from the start. We learn in chapter one that "The first Donner to enter our country was Gottfried Otto Donner, a Prussian hatter who came from the vicinity of Breslau. In 1776, at twenty years of age, he refused guard duty with Frederick the Great, and after an adventurous six-year-long peregrination through Central Europe he was hired as a mercenary by the Dutch Prince William V." Thus the Netherlands family line of Jan Hein Donner began, already in extraordinary circumstances.

An unusual child, gripped by chess during the terrible times of the Second World War, Donner was elated to be able to play a casual game against Euwe ("God" to him) in 1943, following a chance encounter with one of his daughters. Euwe was typically kind after the game, telling Donner's father, "Your son has an excellent view on the game."

Euwe continued to loom large in Donner's life and he often visited the former world champion to discuss chess. Sometimes other motives crept into the scenario too. Once when playing blitz with his friend, Tabe Bas, the two of them, hungry and "flat broke",



engineered a trip to see Euwe to discuss a novelty found by Donner, knowing they would be served food as Euwe's guests. Donner told his friend, "Now shut your face for a while, because I've got to think of something now." It was only then he was able to dream up a new move in the Nimzo-Indian Defence to take to Euwe.

It is not that Donner couldn't perform against the top players – wins against luminaries such as Smyslov, Spassky and Fischer provide ample proof as his skill – but consistency was a problem for him, which is what one can expect from such a mercurial character. By the time the 1970s arrived he was more likely to finish near the foot of a tournament table than the top. His most memorable game in that era was his famous one against Liu Wenzhe at the Buenos Aires Olympiad of 1978, which saw him horribly and rapidly crushed by a sensational queen sacrifice.

Liu Wenzhe-J.H.Donner

Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978



Donner is trying to evacuate his king from the danger zone, but alas... After **16 ♖xg6+!!** Black can do no better than make it checkmate in six more moves. Test your skill, dear readers.

Yet Donner had the ability to surpass expectations. The 1970 Leiden tournament was created to fill in a gap left by the proposed Botvinnik-Fischer match. Perhaps Botvinnik before retirement wanted to provide a detailed analysis of Fischer's play, especially as the American was clearly intent on bothering them for 'their' title at some point over the course of the decade. Fischer's conditions ended hope of the match taking place, but a four-player event featuring reigning world champion Spassky, Botvinnik, Larsen and Donner was an interesting replacement. Donner could easily have been completely out of his depth, but he lost only one game and took second place, just one point behind Spassky.

Such was Donner's resilience at this event that Botvinnik became very grumpy when he was unable to beat him in any of their four games. The former champion only allowed himself to be cheered up when he saw Donner hold Spassky in a dubious endgame, even bringing a rare laugh as he chided the champion of the world. "Noo, noo, Boris Vasilevich... You could not beat Donner from that position... I didn't expect that!"

Donner was also rather prone to blunders. Indeed, the selection of entertaining, lightly annotated games at the end of the book enters into the spirit of Donner's chess, giving examples of both sides of his chess-playing coin.

Donner suffered a catastrophic stroke in 1983, aged just 53. He spent the rest of his days in a nursing home, severely incapacitated, but learned how to type with one finger so he could continue writing about chess. Under the circumstances, he did well to live another five years. He was a remarkable man and Munninghoff's biography really brings the story to life. It is unclear whether or not one would have like Donner as a friend, but getting to know him at this safe distance has been a fabulously entertaining journey.

Sean Marsh



Sultan Khan

Daniel King, 384 pages, New in Chess
RRP £26.95* **SUBSCRIBERS £24.65**

The story of Sultan Khan is one of the most remarkable in the history of chess. We have often speculated about what would happen if a player from the past could be brought forward into a more modern chess arena. How would they cope with the lack of chess theory? How quickly could a strong player start to bridge the gap and become a threat to the elite group? Sultan Khan's experience is the closest we have been to

such time travelling antics.

Viswanathan Anand, in his very thoughtful foreword, calls him a "pioneer" and goes on to compare their respective chess lives. "Like him, I have had privileges, sometimes given, sometimes earned, and they have spurred me to exert myself." Yet, despite what Anand calls their commonality, there are big differences.

"Imagine how much more difficult it would have been for Sultan Khan, who had only just learned the rules of the international game, was largely unschooled in opening theory, and was unfamiliar with the etiquette of standard tournament chess."

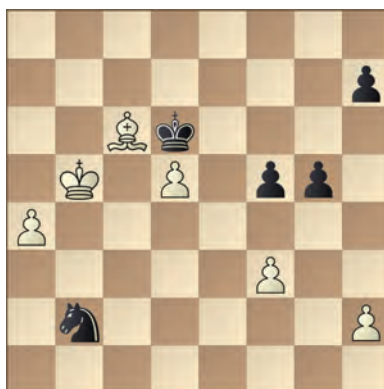
Sultan Khan's life makes for an extraordinary story, and it is one without parallel. Accompanying Sir Umar Hayat Khan, who was not only a nobleman, but also a politician, he was brought to England due to Sir Umar's official duties.

Sultan Khan was already a fine chess player before he had to learn the standard international rules, which brought a number of key differences to his game. For example, when playing in the Punjab, pawns were reduced to the move of a single square on the first move and another rule had it that when both players had just two pieces each the game was automatically declared a draw. Yet Sultan Khan not only mastered the new rules, he also went on to become British Champion three times, he represented the British Empire (a deft change of name to qualify his inclusion) in three Olympiads and took numerous notable scalps.

Two of England's finest players, Fred Yates and William Winter, were given the task of bringing Sultan Khan's game up to international scratch and according to Winter, "Yates and I discovered that although he knew nothing of the theory of the openings, his middlegame strategy showed great profundity and his endings were of master class." This speaks volumes of Khan's amazing natural ability.

He disliked draws and the level of his endgame skill was particularly high. Imagine being on the black side of an apparently losing position against Max Euwe, with so few pieces on the board. It looks very difficult to find anything with which to successfully combat the plan of advancing the a-pawn, but Sultan Khan proves equal to the task.

M.Euwe-Sultan Khan Hastings 1931-2



Black pounced with the surprising **43... ♗xa4!**. "Euwe described this moves as a 'rude shock' and that Khan had slipped past him like an eel."

After **44 ♖xa4 g4 45 fxg4 fxg4 46 ♖b4 h5 47 ♕e8 ♗xd5 48 ♕xh5 ♖e5 49 ♕xg4** the players agreed to a draw because, despite the obvious material disparity, it is another case of the wrong-coloured bishop which will not be able to force the black king away from the queening corner.

Daniel King spent quite some time in the British Library, researching newspapers from a bygone age, as part of his major exploration into the life of Sultan Khan. The little snippets he found add a significant amount to the finished work. For example, after Khan's win against Capablanca, *The London Evening News* reported: "It was generally expected that Sultan Khan would be handicapped by lack of 'book' knowledge in the opening, but to everyone's surprise it was Capablanca who 'made a bull,' as he termed it. Just one weak move and after that Sultan Khan held on to his advantage in magnificent fashion."

The *Daily Herald* had its front page scream "CAPABLANCA BEATEN" and *The Hastings & St. Leonards Observer* reported an overheard conversation: "Well if Capablanca cannot win, Sultan Khan."

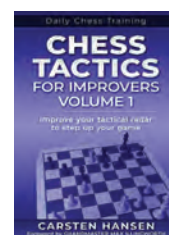
Sultan Khan had to return to India with Sir Umar in the autumn of 1933, which prevented him from making another appearance at the annual Hastings tournament. Chess would no longer play a major role in his life, even though he lived on until the year 1966.

Daniel King is an excellent writer. This is his most interesting work to date and at last we have a worthy successor to what has been the best book on the subject for many decades, namely *Mir Sultan Khan* by Richard Nevil Coles (Second Edition, British Chess Magazine, 1977). King has done a simply wonderful job of reanimating the life, times and games of the mysterious Sultan Khan, especially during his stay in Britain.

This book will keep readers entertained for as long as the lockdown continues. From that point of view, the two books reviewed this time could not have come at a better time. There is no point hesitating – get your orders in now!

Sean Marsh

* A hardback version is also available for £33.95 or £30.55 for Subscribers.



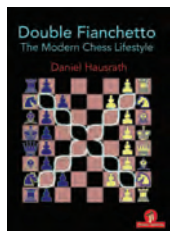
Daily Chess Training: Chess Tactics for Improvers Volume 1

Carsten Hansen, 334 pages, paperback
RRP £9.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £8.99**

This is a decent puzzle book for those

fairly new to the game, as the Danish FM presents 880 positions from games played last year to solve, the majority being fairly easy and straightforward, at least when seen from the perspective of the experienced club player.

Also new from Carsten Hansen are *Catastrophes & Tactics in the Chess Opening: Selected Brilliances from Volumes 1-9* (160 pages, paperback), retailing at £5.99 or just £5.39 for Subscribers, and *The Nimzo-Indian 4 e3* (344 pages, paperback), a reprint of his 2002 work, available for £14.95 (Subscribers – £13.45). If you're interested in any of these Hansen works, do please contact Chess & Bridge before placing your order as stock may be low.



Double Fianchetto: The Modern Chess Lifestyle

Daniel Hausrath, 282 pages, paperback
Special Price £25.00 **SUBSCRIBERS £22.50**

Despite Covid, Thinkers Publishing remain busy and continue to present both mainstream material (their new Caro-Kann repertoire can be found below), and more eclectic but also very interesting material. German GM Hausrath is a big fan of fianchettoed bishops and presents 11 chapters covering common structures involving not one, but two fianchetti: five from White's perspective and six from Black's. The standout chapter is the first, where Hausrath explains how after 1 d4 f3 he likes to counter the King's Indian with a quick double fianchetto.

Fundamentals of Chess Tactics

Qiyu Zhou, PC-DVD; running time: 7 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The Canadian WGM is determined to help the weaker club player quickly identify tactical opportunities in their games. Viewers learn about candidate moves, as well as much about forks, pins, skewers, X-rays, discovered attacks and plenty more.

Also out is Qiyu Zhou's accompanying DVD *Fundamentals of Chess Openings* (running time: 5 hours, 50 minutes; available from Chess & Bridge for £26.95 or £24.25 for Subscribers), in which she aims to get viewers up and running at the start of the game, mapping out a number of important general considerations before looking at a few common openings in a little more depth.



On the Origin of Good Moves

Willy Hendriks, 432 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

The author of *Move First, Think Later* is back as Willy Hendriks takes a deep, and at times controversial, journey into the history of the royal game. Not for Hendriks was Steinitz the father of positional play, as a number of lesser players receive their moment in the spotlight. It's little surprise that evolution is considered the driving force behind improvement in chess, but along the way, as well as pulling a few punches, Hendriks presents a large amount of often beautiful and still very instructive material.

Opening Encyclopaedia 2020

ChessBase PC-DVD

RRP £89.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £80.95**

If you like your theory, ChessBase's latest product might be right up your street as the Hamburg chess specialists present 1,160 opening articles on just about every line you can think of. The majority of the material is taken from *ChessBase Magazine*, but acclaimed theoretician Lubomir Ftacnik has added a great number of new surveys and 14 hours of video coverage is included.

It's possible to upgrade from *Opening Encyclopaedia 2019* for £54.95 (Subscribers – £49.45), simply by returning the disk or quoting your serial number. We should also mention that *ChessBase Magazine 195* is out (£17.95; Subs' – £16.15), featuring state-of-the-art opening surveys, as well as contributions from the like of Viktor Moskalenko and Simon Williams.



Opening Repertoire: The Modern Benoni

John Doknjas, 448 pages, paperback
£19.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £17.99**

Canadian brothers John and Joshua Doknjas collaborated on *The Sicilian Najdorf* before the latter presented a repertoire with the Ruy Lopez for Everyman (see our January pages), with the former now returning with a slightly more eye-catching repertoire choice. 1 d4 f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 d3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 has long been an underrated choice for the more dynamic or attacking-minded club player. Doknjas fully believes that strong players too can still adopt the traditional Modern Benoni move order, presenting fairly detailed coverage to show how to counter the critical 7 f4 g7 8 b5+. Coverage is based on complete games, with a good blend of variations and textual commentary.

Power Play 27: The King's Gambit

Daniel King, PC-DVD;

running time: 5 hours, 50 minutes
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Who would have thought that Daniel King

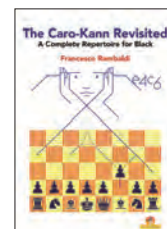
would be a fan of the King's Gambit, but as the man himself showed in these pages last month, he very much is. In typically lucid and enjoyable fashion, King looks at all Black's options after 2...exf4 3 d3 f3 g5 4 d3 c3, as well as on moves 2 and 3, while summarising the latest state of theory and mapping out a dangerous and practical repertoire for White.

The Benoni is Back in Business

Rustam Kasimdzhanov, PC-DVD; running time: 5 hours, 45 minutes

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

It was clearly time for the Modern Benoni to make a comeback, although unlike Doknjas, Fabiano Caruana's trainer only likes to reach it via a 1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 d3 c3 c5 move order, and if 4 d5 d6 5 d3 c3 exd5 6 cxd5 g6. Kasimdzhanov shows that 7 h3 g7 8 e4 0-0 9 d3 b5 continues to hold up well for Black, while also mapping out a repertoire against the likes of the Classical and Fianchetto variations, as well as the modern 7 f4 where he still believes in 7...g7.



The Caro-Kann Revisited

Francesco Rambaldi, 308 pages, paperback
Special Price £27.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.75**

The Italian Grandmaster likes 1 e4 c6 as it is in good theoretical shape, seen somewhat less than 1...e5 and 1...e5, and because it rarely leads to early forced draws. Interestingly both 5...d6 and 5...e6 are covered against the Panov, but elsewhere Rambaldi generally sticks to one main choice: 3...c5 4 dxc5 e6 against the Advance and 4...f5 in the main line. Coverage is along theoretical lines, while it should be pointed out that Rambaldi's English is good as he includes a number of important general pointers along the way.



Your Jungle Guide to Rook Endings

Efstratios Grivas, 402 pages, paperback
Special Price £27.50 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.75**

The Greek GM continues to find more endings to cover and in this new work for Thinkers Publishing examines the most common type of endgame. Grivas begins with the basics, but soon moves on from the Lucena and Philidor positions to an examination of 4 vs 3 situations, both with all the pawns on one side and when a passed pawn is present. Throughout there are a number of striking examples, and much practical advice is presented for just about every common type of rook ending.