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Chess



DUTCH DOMINANCE

GM JORDEN VAN FOREEST
BECOMES THE FIRST DUTCH
PLAYER IN 36 YEARS TO WIN

WIJK AAN ZEE

ISSN 0964-6221



Tata Steel Masters - Top-flight chess went ahead at Wijk aan Zee. Yochanan Afek reports



The Windmills of Your Mind - John Henderson takes a look at *The Thomas Crown Affair*



The Roaring Twenties - Ben Graff explores chess in the 1920s and the parallels with today

Chess

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60 Seconds with... Jorden van Foreest



Born: 30th April 1999 in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Place of residence: Bruges, Belgium.

Occupation: Chessplayer.

Enjoyable? Loving every moment of it.

And home life? I've just moved to Bruges. It's a beautiful town and I am very happy here.

But sometimes good to escape to: Hanging out with friends, watching movies, going for walks.

Sports played or followed: None really.

A favourite novel? Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.

Piece of music? Currently listening to Coldplay – *Paradise*. And it's good!

Film or TV series? *Breaking Bad*.

What's the best thing about playing chess? One can put thousands of hours into studying chess, yet still discover new things and enjoy the beauty of the game.

And the worst? At the highest level, definitely the amount of memorisation of theory required at times.

Your best move? Can't remember too many games, so I'll go with my last game. Here I landed 21 ♖b5! against Nils Grandelius.



Ed. – Turn to page 15 to see how Jorden went on to win in further style.

But less memorable than your worst move? Too many to name.

And a highly memorable opponent? Magnus.

Favourite game of all time? Morozevich against Vachier-Lagrave.

A.Morozevich–M.Vachier-Lagrave
Biel 2009
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 f3 e6 7 ♙e3 b5 8 ♗d2 ♖bd7 9 g4 h6 10 0-0-0 b4 11 ♘ce2 ♗c7 12 h4 d5 13 ♘f4 e5 14 ♘fe6 fxe6 15 ♘xe6 ♗a5 16 exd5 ♗xa2 17 ♗d3 ♘f7 18 g5 ♘xd5 19 ♙h3



19...♘xe3 20 ♖d8+ ♙e7 21 ♘c6+ ♘f7 22 g6+ ♘g8 23 ♗xe3 ♙c5 24 ♗e4 ♘f8 25 ♗d8 ♙b7 26 ♗xa8 ♙xa8 27 h5 ♗h7 28 ♗e1 ♙xc6 29 ♗xc6 ♙d4 30 ♙d2

♗xb2 31 ♗c4+ ♙h8 32 ♙d3 a5 33 ♗c8 ♗a3+ 34 ♙e4 b3 35 cxb3 a4 36 ♗b1 ♗b4 37 ♗c4 ♗b7+ 38 ♗d5 ♗b4 39 ♗c4 ♗d2 40 ♙g4 a3



41 ♗f7 ♗c2+ 42 ♙d5 ♗c5+ 43 ♙e4 a2 44 ♗c1 a1♗ 45 ♗xc5 ♙xc5 46 ♗d5 ♗e1+ 47 ♙d3 ♗d1+ 48 ♙c4 ♗xd5+ 49 ♘xd5 ♙a3 50 ♙f5 ♙g8 51 ♙xe5 ♗h8 52 ♙d5 ♘h7 53 gxxh7+ ♘f7 54 ♙g6+ ♘f6 55 f4 ♙c1 56 f5 ♙d2 57 ♙d6 ♙e1 58 ♙d7 ♙b4 59 ♙c7 ♙e5 60 ♙d7 ♙a3 61 ♙c6 ♙d4 62 ♙c7 ♙c3 63 ♙d7 ♙b4 64 ♙d6 ♙xb3+ 65 ♙d5 ♙b2 66 ♙d6 ♙f6 67 ♙c5 ♙c3 68 ♙d6 ♙d4 69 ♙c6 ♗d8 70 ♙b6 ♙d5 71 ♙c7 ♙c5 72 ♙f7 g5 73 fxg6 ♗d6 74 ♙e8 ♙e5 75 ♙b7 ♗b6+ 76 ♙c8 ♙d6 0-1

The best three chess books: All of Kasparov's books, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* and *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* by John Watson.

Is FIDE doing a good job? I'm not following too closely, but I think so.

Or your National Federation? In all honesty, not really. For instance, they could help organise more events in the Netherlands.

Any advice for either? Chess is very popular now, so I think it's a good moment to look for sponsorship.

Can chess make one happy? To be truly happy about a game of chess does not happen often, but when it does it is the best feeling in the world.

A tip please for the club player: For those seeking to improve, don't work too much on your openings!

Howell's Hastings Haul

As Hastings went online, former local boy David Howell ran out a clear-cut winner

As we mentioned last month, David Howell was a worthy winner of the Caplin Hastings All-Play-All, which at least ensured that there was a version of Hastings this year. It may have been a 12-player online rapid, but what the tournament lost in terms of tradition, it made up for in strength.

Like many a tournament winner, Howell required a slightly fortuitous start. He appeared to be cruising to victory with a large positional advantage against Matthew Wadsworth in the opening round, but possibly hadn't fully adjusted to playing rather than commentating or to the 15+10 time control. Whatever the case, Howell incorrectly sealed up the kingside after which a strong central counter suddenly gave the Cambridge University IM dangerous counterplay. Indeed, Wadsworth should really have won before overlooking a resource which we'll see in this month's *Find the Winning Moves*.

After that dramatic beginning Wadsworth went on to record a pretty impressive result, as did Howell, who held tight against Gawain Jones before reeling off four wins in a row to finish the Saturday on 5/6, half a point ahead of Jones, with Adams and McShane a further half-point adrift. The three-time British Champion couldn't then have wished for a better start to the second day.

D.Howell-M.Adams Round 7 Catalan Opening

1 d4 f3 2 g3 c5 3 g2 f6 4 0-0 c6 5 d4 e6 6 c4

Taking play into Catalan waters and the players now hurtle down one of the main lines.

6...dxc4 7 dxc5 cxd1 8 fxd1 xc5 9 b2 c3 10 bxc3 0-0 11 b3 e7 12 c4 d7 13 b2 fd8 14 fd4

Opening up that key Catalan bishop. White's queenside pawns might be split, but his fine bishops and overall activity at least fully compensate.

14...f3 15 b5 b6 16 d6 xd6 17 fxd6 e8 18 d3 fd3!?

Adams switches the structure and aims for counterplay on the queenside. Previously, 18...b4 19 fxd8 fxd8 20 c3 c6 21 c1 c8 22 d2 had given White an edge and he went on to win in some 85 moves in Howell-Harikrishna, European Club Cup, Porto Carras 2018.

19 exd3 b4 20 f1 a4 21 f3!

Not forced, but decent prophylaxis to prepare a central advance without allowing

21 d4 e4!

21...d7 22 d4



Thus far Howell's play has been most unhurried and he might have continued in that stead with 22 c3! d5 23 d2 followed by f2 and possibly even a kingside expansion.

22...f6

Adams is normally most adept too at manoeuvring, but we shouldn't forget that the time control was only 15+10, otherwise he might well have found 22...b8! when it transpires that Black would have had sufficient counterplay after, say, 23 f2 d8c6 24 c3 d8 25 f4 c2, and if 26 d1 d2b4.

23 f4 f7

Regrouping with 23...b8! was still well worth a try.

24 d2! c2?!

A safer post for the knight and now White would be able to meet 24...b8 with 25 f2 (the more active 25 e4! is also an option) 25...d8c6 26 c1 d8 27 a3 a6 28 f3, thereby retaining central control.

25 a3 c6 26 f2 a5 27 c1 a4 28 e4



Black has lost time with his bishop and so come under pressure. Here 28...d8 would

have been sensible, but instead both players were to miss a resource.

28...c7? 29 c6

Far from terrible, but 29 c3! c6 (or 29...b3 30 b5) 30 f5! would have exploited the unfortunate line-up of black pieces, and if 30...exf5 31 d5 b7 32 b5 c5 33 d4.

29...b7 30 b4 b8 31 d6+ xd6 32 xd6 c8 33 c5!

Quite a transformation for the hanging pawns. They were once back on c4 and d3, but now the strong advanced c-pawn, allied to the bishop-pair, gives White decent winning chances.

33...c6 34 e3

Howell is sensibly in no rush, although he must also have been tempted by 34 f5!?, and if 34...exf5? 35 d5 e7 36 a6! d8 37 c4 with quite some initiative for White.

34...e7 35 g4 b3?



The decisive mistake. Adams would still have enjoyed some chances to hold after 35...c6 when Black is undoubtedly suffering, but is at least very solid.

36 xe7!

A perhaps unexpected but decisive transformation of the advantage.

36...xe7 37 cxb6! xc1

White's extra queen proves too strong after this, but he would have won even more straightforwardly after 37...d8 38 b7 b8 39 a6 d5 40 c8.

38 b7 xf1 39 b8 e5 40 xa7+ f8 41 f5!

Levering open lines and Howell now converted without any difficulty:

41...f3+ 42 e2 h3 43 b8+ e7 44 c7+ e8 45 xg7 hx2+ 46 e1 h1+ 47 d2 h2+ 48 c3 h3+ 49 b4 b3+ 50 a4 b7 51 xf6 d7 52 fxe6+ xe6 53 e5 b3+ 54 a5 c4 55 a4 d3 56 d5 b3 57 e6+ d8 58 g8+ d7 59 e6+ d8 60 d6

♖b7 61 ♜d5 ♗a7+ 62 ♘b6 ♗a6+ 63 ♘b7
 ♗xa4 64 ♗g5+ ♘d7 65 ♗e7# 1-0

As we saw in last month's Editorial, David Howell also outplayed Luke McShane in a humdinger of a game, finishing up on 9/11, some one and a half points ahead of Luke, while pocketing £1,200 to McShane's £800. In many ways he was a most appropriate winner, having grown up along the coast from Hastings in Seaford and even having turned out for Hastings Chess Club on occasions in his youth.

Howell's desire to win and ultra calmness with little time were especially evident in the final round as he got the better of Nick Pert in an extremely messy middlegame. Overall, he was simply the most impressive player at Hastings, grinding away in imperious fashion on a number of occasions and taking almost every chance he was presented with, although even the tournament victor did wobble a little and require a fair dollop of fortune in the penultimate round.

D.Gormally-D.Howell Round 10 Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♠f6 2 ♠f3 g6 3 c4

Danny Gormally has quite a wide repertoire and it's interesting that he decided to allow David Howell's favourite Grünfeld, that being an opening with which he too has had plenty of experience.

3...♠g7 4 g3 d5 5 ♠g2 dxc4 6 0-0 0-0
 7 ♗a3 c3 8 bxc3 c5 9 ♠b2

This is a fairly trendy line, rather than the solid 9 e3.

9...♗c6 10 ♗e1

White's aim is simple, namely to advance in the centre, and now 10...♠f5? 11 d5! ♗xd5!? 12 e4 ♠xe4 13 ♗xe4 ♗xc3 14 ♠xc3 ♠xc3 15 ♗b1 didn't give Black enough for a piece in So-Duda, Internet (blitz) 2020.

10...♗b6 11 ♗c4 ♗b5!?

A new try by Howell, 11...♗a6 12 ♗cd2 ♗d8 having been preferred in Haria-Howell, British Knockout Championship, London 2018, where 13 ♠f1!? might have left White slightly for choice.

12 ♗fd2 ♠e6 13 a4 ♗a6 14 ♗a3

The knight isn't so unhappy at having to reroute to b5, but is White going to maintain control of the situation or can Black demonstrate enough counterplay against White's centre and on the queenside? In other words, a typical Grünfeld middlegame is brewing.

14...♗fd8 15 ♗b5 ♗ac8

Bringing the final piece into play, although there was nothing wrong with 15...♗b6!?

16 e3 b6?

Arguably the decisive mistake. There is no time for this, whereas 16...♗a5! 17 ♠a3 ♗c4 would have left Black with sufficient counterplay.

17 c4!



Suddenly d4-d5 is a huge threat and Black finds himself driven back in disarray.

17...♗e8 18 ♠xc6!

An unstereotyped exchange and possibly what Howell had underestimated. In conjunction with White's next, it's the only way of preserving his powerful centre and by now large advantage.

18...♗xc6 19 ♗b3

Overprotecting the bishop on b2 and not 19 d5? ♠xb2 20 ♗a2 ♠g7! 21 dxc6 ♗a5 when there would have been absolutely everything to play for.

19...♠xd4

19...♠d7 is preferred by the engines, but even here 20 d5 ♗cc8 21 e4 looks rather ominous for Black.

20 exd4 ♗cc8 21 d5

Commencing a strong advance. As so often, White will exploit his central control to launch an attack on the under-defended black king.

21...♗b7 22 ♠xg7 ♗xg7 23 ♗e3 ♠f5

24 ♗f4 ♠d7 25 g4!

Rolling onwards. Now Black must either lose a big pawn on e7 or see a certain fish bone appear right in his king's throat on f6.

25...♠xb5 26 gxf5 ♠a6 27 f6 exf6 28 ♗e4!

Not only does White have the fabled attacking duo of queen and knight, but Black's queen and bishop are a long way from the defence of their king.

28...♗xc4 29 ♗xf6+ ♠g7



This position must have haunted poor Gormally for days after Hastings and, having already defeated Adams, albeit after a blunder or perhaps mouse-slip in a level late middlegame, he was on for a famous double. What clear win did he miss here?



Like many a tournament winner, David Howell needed a little fortune in the opening round, but then outplayed both Adams and McShane.

30 ♗h5+

As Gormally himself pointed out, 30 ♗e5 ♗h6 (how else to deal with the threat of ♗g4+?) 31 ♗a3 was not that hard to spot, and here 31 ♗e3+ is even stronger, since 31...♠g7 (31...g5 32 ♗h3+ ♗h4 33 ♗f5 is also crushing) 32 ♗h5+! leads to mate, as with 32...♠g8 33 ♗e8+! ♗xe8 34 ♗xe8#.

30...♠g8 31 ♗g5

It still wasn't too late for 31 ♗f6+ ♠g7 and then 32 ♗e5!.

31...♗c8 32 ♗f6+ ♠g7 33 ♗h5+ ♠g8

34 ♗f6+ ♠g7 35 ♗h5+

Acquiescing to the draw with little time remaining. Instead, 35 ♗e5? ♗h6 would have fought on, but White would still have been winning after 35 ♗a3! ♗f8 (and not 35...♗f5?? 36 ♗h5+) 36 ♗g3. This prevents ...♗f5 and leaves Black defenceless with ♗h5+ next up or if 36...♗d8 37 ♗f3 (threatening all of ♗e5, ♗h5+ and even ♗e7) 37...♗d6 38 ♗h3, which is some most deft manoeuvring by the white rook.

35...♠g8 ½-½

Final Scores:

1	David Howell (Battersea)	9/11
2	Luke McShane (Cambridge)	7½
3	Michael Adams (Taunton)	7
4	Gawain Jones (Sheffield)	6½
5	Danny Gormally (Alnwick)	6
6	Matthew Turner (Street)	5½
7-8	Matthew Wadsworth (Maidenhead), Keith Arkell (Paignton)	5
9	Nick Pert (Sandhurst)	4½
10-11	Mark Hebden (Leicester), Ameet Ghazi (Surbiton)	3½,
12	Glenn Flear (Montpellier)	3.



Home News

4NCL – The 4th 4NCL Online Congress attracted some 226 players (January 15–17), and judging from the impressively high scores in the Intermediate and Minor, we wonder if the 4NCL will soon have to introduce a sixth round with their popular 45+15 time control. At any rate, there was, perhaps unsurprisingly, plenty of success for young players and a number of ECF ‘supporters’ also did well – let us hope that some of that tier of new membership continue playing competitively over the board once the world has opened up again.

Open: 1 Arnim Bossy (Germany) 4½/5, 2–11 Philip Olbison (Manchester), Neil Thomson (Scotland), Martin Burrows (Wigston), Alex Bullen (Cardiff), Simon Smith (Oxford), Harry Zheng (Chelmsford), Peter Finn (Cambridge), Hieu Tran (Battersea), Oisín O’Cuilleainain (Cork), Nadia Jaufarally (St Albans) 4

Major: 1–2 Daniel Shek (Crowthorne), Alexander Littlehales (Worthing) 4½, 3–5 Rodolfo Padovan (Battersea), Jason Liu (Dublin), Dave Shapland (Hebden Bridge) 4.

Intermediate: 1 Reya Li (Oxford) 5, 2 Sylvan Clarke (Alwoodley) 4½, 3–7 Jai Kothari (Coulsdon), Michael Temporal (London), Angad Sarpotdar (Yateley), Tim Jones (Bristol), Zaid Ahmed (Richmond) 4.

Minor: 1 Yile Wang (Oxford) 5, 2–3 Colin Vernon (Worcester), Titas Vdovycia (Leighton Buzzard) 4½.

In other 4NCL news, we were pleased to see after all our coverage last summer that during the second season of the 4NCL Online League, just 11 players were banned by the league for fair play violations, while a further 11 were barred by playing platform host, Lichess. Only three of these were in the Junior 4NCL Online League, but it’s not all good news. The 4NCL also reported that: “There are approximately 25 players in 4NCL Online who we believe were probably cheating in Season 2 [...] amongst these 25 are three squad captains and an ECF arbiter.”

It does seem that so long as competitive chess is played online, there will unfortunately be a small minority who cheat. Let us at least hope that the numbers fall further during the current third season of the 4NCL Online League, which saw eight of the 32 top-flight sides winning their opening two matches. Special mentions to 14-year-old Julia Volovich, who defeated IM Jack Rudd, and to Chessable White Rose II top board Maaïke Keetman. The Dutch WFM followed up turning round a difficult position against IM Richard Pert by winning again, as she made fine use of a line recommended in her exciting Chessable course *The Fierce Nimzo-Indian* to defeat FM David Zakarian.

ECF – Last month we saw how Michael Adams needed a playoff to defeat Ameet Ghasi and become the inaugural British Online Chess Champion. The Caplin British Online Championships were certainly a major success (December 18 – January 3), with almost 800 entrants and 2,400 entries. The full list of champions was as follows:

British Online Champion: Michael Adams (Taunton).

British Online Rapidplay Champion: Harry Grieve (Guildford).

British Online Blitz Champion: Gawain Jones (Sheffield).

British Online Bullet Champion: Ameet Ghasi (Richmond).

British Women’s Online Champion: Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant (Edinburgh).

British Women’s Online Rapidplay Champion: Harriet Hunt (Cambridge).

British Women’s Online Blitz Champion: Trisha Kanyamarala (Dublin).

British Online 65+ Champion: George Green (Crowthorne).

British Online 65+ Rapidplay Champion: Paul Kemp (Linton).

British Online 50+ Champion: Clive Frostick (Farnham).

British Online 50+ Rapidplay Champion: Keith Arkell (Paignton).

British Under-18 Online Champion: Shreyas Royal (Battersea).

British Under-18 Online Rapidplay Champion: Oliver Stubbs (Bristol).

British Under-18 Online Blitz Champion: Omeet Atara (Guildford).

British Under-16 Online Champion: Maximilian Wilton (Brighton).

British Under-16 Online Rapidplay Champion: Aaravamudhan Balaji (Orpington).

British Under-16 Online Blitz Champion: Adam Sieczkowski (Witney).

British Under-14 Online Champion: Mohammed Ismail (Newham; also Under-14 Online Rapidplay Champion).

British Under-14 Online Blitz Champion: Arjun Kolani (Brighton).

British Under-12 Online Champion: Nishchal Thatte (Ealing).

British Under-12 Online Rapidplay Champion: Jude Shearsby (Kenilworth).

British Under-12 Online Blitz Champion: Stanley Badacsonyi (Barnet).

British Under-10 Online Champion: Frederick Gordon (Glasgow; also Under-10 Online Rapidplay and Under-10 Online Blitz Champion).

British Under-8 Online Champion: Patrick Damodaran (Coulsdon; also Under-8 Online Rapidplay and Under-8 Online Blitz Champion).

British Junior Online Bullet Champion: Finlay Bowcott-Terry (Halesowen).

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6TH 4NCL ONLINE CONGRESS

**Friday 26 March to
Sunday 28 March**

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(one round on Friday evening, two rounds each on Saturday and Sunday)

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and entry visit:

www.4ncl.co.uk

This Month's New Releases



Beat the French Defense with 3.♘c3

Pentala Harikrishna, 456 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £31.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £28.75**

Thinkers Publishing continue their prolific output and, looking at what is in their pipeline, it seems 2021 will be their busiest year yet. Time now to catch up with two of their new books on chess openings.

They have pulled off a major coup by adding Grandmaster Pentala Harikrishna to their ranks. Nor is this merely a case of stunt-casting and pairing up a strong player with an unrelated subject (oh, yes, that does happen). Harikrishna has history with the French Defence – and plenty of it, from both sides of the board.

“The French Defense was my main opening with Black while I was striving towards the GM title at the turn of the century. Quite often, I was able to use it to drag my opponent into a complicated maze of deep analysis, so I have intimate knowledge of the tricks used on the other side of the ‘barricades’. This helped me craft a solid base for our present repertoire, and many of the ideas presented in the book have brought me fine victories against some of the strongest French exponents as well.”

Defenders of the French Defence may find the Advance variation annoying and the Tarrasch dull, but most will agree that 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 is the biggest test of their loyalty to 1...e6. Black needs to know a lot of theory after both 3...♗f6 and 3...♙b4, with the latter, the infamous Winawer variation, being one of the sharpest and most complicated of all chess openings.

This is another very thorough book from Thinkers Publishing. Just like Ravi Haria's book reviewed below, Harikrishna leaves no stone unturned, with Black's oddball third-move options such as 3...h6 and 3...a6 receiving a fair amount of coverage too. Naturally, the meat of the book shows how to play against 3...♗f6 and 3...♙b4. There are two recommendations against the former: 4 e5 ♗fd7 5 ♘ce2 “sidestepping the heavy theoretical load” of the more complicated lines and then there is coverage of the more common 4 e5 ♗fd7 5 f4.

Never mind all that; French players will be more interested in what is recommended against the Winawer variation. I was expecting some very deep theory in the absolute main lines, but was surprised to find 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 exd5 as the weapon of choice, “Claiming that Black's dark-squared bishop is not well placed on b4.

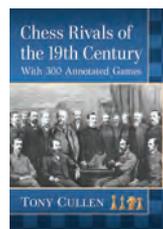
Although the position is quite symmetrical, we will often be able to make good use of the slightly misplaced b4-bishop and even launch an attack on the black king with quick queenside castling in some lines.”

Black can reply with either 4...♞xd5 or 4...exd5, with the latter option being the standard reply. After that Black needs to be careful not to ‘miss the moment’ when there is a decision to be made about the bishop on b4. Should it be exchanged for the knight on c3, or drop back to d6? Time could be an issue; that is something we can rarely afford to waste in the opening. However, leaving the decision until later can give White enough to play for an initiative. Here is a case in point.



White plays 9 ♘e2!. The knight is heading for g3, with aggressive intentions on the kingside. White also has easy access to the e-file for the rooks and a timely jab to the bishop with c2-c3 will bolster the centre with gain of time. This is unlikely to lead to a speedy attack and a knockout blow, but it is certainly enough to produce a significant edge, giving Black plenty of opportunities to watch the position slip away into something more serious.

Sean Marsh



Chess Rivals of the 19th Century

Tony Cullen, 480 pages

McFarland & Co.

RRP £39.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £35.95**

In his excellent debut work, Cullen invites us to pull up a chair and meet with the players

who defined their age. This is an opportunity to step into our predecessors' shoes, to share in their triumphs and disasters, and to enjoy three hundred fascinating games. As well as the usual suspects, Cullen has deliberately featured more obscure protagonists, including Schallopp, Englisch and Mason. As a result, readers are likely to both make new friends and renew old acquaintances within these pages.

Cullen's portraits of fifty masters and the extensive range of sources he draws on bring to life an era of profound change, both at and away from the chess board. A century that commenced with chess predominantly played in coffee houses, with no clocks and no tournaments to speak of, would much more closely resemble the modern-day chess scene before it was through.

Key progress included the first great International Tournament in London in 1851. In 1886 the first generally recognised world championship match took place between Steinitz and Zukertort, on which more later. Much chess literature was published, as the innovators of the 19th century further honed their theoretical knowledge, laying foundations we build on to this day. Staunton published his pioneering chess magazine, to which all subsequent chess periodicals, including our own, owe a spiritual debt. Interestingly, the best way to feature in Staunton's magazine was apparently to write a flattering letter about him, which he was generally all too happy to publish.

I enjoyed learning that we perhaps have Blackburne to thank for making simultaneous displays the positive experience they generally now are. In *Mr. Blackburne's Games at Chess* it was noted that: “Before his day it was customary to make a solemn function of these exhibitions – Lowenthal, whose very name will suggest a hundred droll stories to chess players – went in full dress, and was as silent and as pompous as a father confessor. He was shocked when Blackburne flung these traditions to the wind, met his audiences in ordinary apparel, and all the time he was playing bubbled over with chaff and irony all his own.”

For all the positive developments, being a chess master in the nineteenth century remained a precarious occupation. Many struggled to make money. Those who inherited sometimes found that what might have been a stroke of good fortune proved to be their undoing. De la Bourdonnais was ruined by “Property speculation and neglect.” The *City of London Chess Magazine* remarked

on De Vere's early demise that "to his great misfortune, a relative died who left him a few hundreds, and he threw up his situation in order what is called 'to enjoy himself.' Dead Sea fruit, however, all such enjoyment proves to be in the end. Mr De Vere has paid a heavy price for these his defects of character..."

Strong words indeed. The writers of the day had a vivid turn of phrase more generally when describing the players. William Napier wrote that, "Mason had the unique quality of competently simmering through six aching hours, and scintillating in the seventh. Others resembled him, but forgot to scintillate." Commentators described Bird's play as "essentially lively, eccentric and tricky." While, "In his best days, Mr Cochrane's style of play was attacking, rapid and brilliant, rather than profound or comprehensive." It is amusing to wonder how twenty-first century players might have been described by Napier and his peers.

Some of the excellent anecdotes in Cullen's book could only belong in the nineteenth century. Travelling home after victory at the first International tournament in London, Adolf Anderssen was stuck at a small railway junction "with a dreary night's waiting in front of him." The stationmaster had no idea who Anderssen was, but having established that he played chess "a little," took him to the stationmaster's chess club, to while away the time. Anderssen won a whole series of games at increasing odds, culminating in victory against the stationmaster (who was the strongest player in the district), despite giving away queen odds. I do not want to spoil the ending of the story, but Anderssen's response when the stationmaster asked if he was 'the' Anderssen is very funny indeed.

Camaraderie between chess players of all stripes was as important in the nineteenth century as it is today. From the stationmaster's chess club through to what remained of the chess café culture, the desire to meet, to play, to share stories and to laugh was strong. For example, Bird was a frequenter of Simpson's Divan which according to *BCM* in 1908: "was then almost sacred to the three C's. – coffee, cigars and chess [...] one could easily step in from the crowded Strand and as easily step out again. What a company too, Bird met in those early days. First, the renowned Howard Staunton – then in the flower of early manhood – the leader of English chess. The historian Buckle, not yet made famous by his book, *The History of Civilisation* [...] whilst occasional visitors included Capt Kennedy."

There are so many aspects of this book I could write about, but I will finish by returning to that first world title match in 1886 and the sting of defeat. Johannes Zukertort was thrilled to win four of the first five games against Steinitz. Sadly, according to Mieses, "The latter games in the match showed unmistakable signs of a moral collapse on the part of Zukertort, whose poor state of health obviously was not equal to the strain and excitement of a fight which lasted several months." Zukertort would eventually lose 12½–7½.

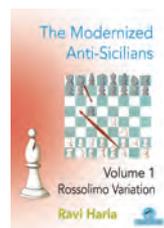
Mieses reflected that: "Zukertort's ambitious temperament never could get over his disappointment. His life's aim was the world championship, and to have been so near to realising his ambition and then to have failed was a death blow to his morale. From that time he considered his chess career as ended."

Zukertort was not the only one who found losing difficult. Staunton described defeat to Anderssen in the 1851 London International Tournament thus: "The opening of this wretched affair is a sufficient indication of how utterly unfitted Black was by suffering, to maintain his reputation in these encounters." Of his second loss to Anderssen, he said "Let the reader compare this game, which would be discreditable to two third-rate players of a coffee house, with any of the match-games in which Black has taken part hithertofore, and say how far the result of this mere mockery of Chess is a proof of the absolute powers of two men who are called proficient." Staunton apparently had a more general habit of ascribing great significance to his victories and would generally find reasons to discount his defeats. Perhaps this is not entirely to his credit, but resilience is always important.

Chess Rivals of the 19th Century is a real treasure trove. All the games Cullen covers are nicely annotated (in some instances by the players themselves, with a little help from today's engines here and there). The source material is fantastic, and it has clearly been a labour of love to bring this all together in one place. Many readers will also be pleased to learn that the late Steve Berry proofread and contributed to Cullen's work; another wonderful gift to the chess world on Steve's part.

My only mild criticism is that a concluding chapter from the author would have been helpful. I would certainly have enjoyed reading final reflections on both the players and their era, at the end of Cullen's journey. However, this is but a minor quibble. What struck me most was the sense of kinship we share with the players of the 19th century. A connection through the sixty-four squares that the passing of time cannot diminish, made stronger still through books like this. Anyone looking to escape the present day, if only for a little while, would do well to purchase a copy of *Chess Rivals of the 19th Century*.

Ben Graff



The Modernized Anti-Sicilians Volume 1: Rossolimo Variation

Ravi Haria, 520 pages

Thinkers Publishing

RRP £32.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.65**

It is hard to think of another opening which bends to fashion as much as the Sicilian Defence. It seems every time we see a new

book advocating the main lines, it is swiftly followed by at least one book on the Anti-Sicilians.

This is a big book, but is only the first volume devoted to Anti-Sicilian systems. Usually, lines keeping White out of the Open Sicilian woods need just one volume, so what is the difference in this case? According to the author, it is the desire to go beyond simply avoiding the main theoretical lines:

"For too long, Anti-Sicilian rhetoric has centred on the logic of simplicity, geared towards reaching playable positions with easy plans while simultaneously avoiding depths of theory. The danger of this logic is the ease with which we can fall into the trap of inactivity; of mindlessly playing an opening without striving to trouble Black; of solely playing an Anti-Sicilian to avoid theory."

Ravi Haria wants his books to offer more: "In contrast, throughout the volumes I will advocate an active approach – with continuous underlying themes of achieving rapid development, dynamic piece play and dominant central control, with an important focus on denying Black the counterplay that he seeks when choosing the Sicilian Defence." This explains the large page-count; the material is more comprehensive than I have seen in any other Anti-Sicilian tome covering 3 ♘b5.

Specifically, for the first volume, the lines start with 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘b5 – the Rossolimo variation. This has always been a frustrating sight for Sicilian fans, who are driven forcibly away from their deep preparation in then main lines. However, 2...♘c6 is popular at the moment, thanks largely to Magnus Carlsen, who used it in this 2018 title match with Fabiano Caruana as a way into the Sveshnikov Sicilian and which has remained a major part of his repertoire ever since.

Black has plenty of options. 3...♘f6, 3...d6, 3...e6 and 3...g6 all receive substantial coverage in this book – in that order of importance. Alternatives covered in the first chapter run all the way from oddities such as 3...d5 and 3...h5 to the early queen moves 3...♖b6 and 3...♗c7. Each line is taken seriously, complete with considerable analysis.

Some readers may find this a little too deep, but there is an important point in play here. None of the early deviations can prevent White from carrying out the desired plan and it is good to see how they unfold, relatively unchallenged: for example, it is important for White to develop a sense of when to play ♘xc6 followed by e4–e5.

Black is often punished for playing inaccurate moves early on in the game. At club level, the deviations from the more fully established lines are likely to be seen relatively frequently. When Black does though head into the strongest lines, White still has different paths to consider. 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘b5 g6 is a tough nut to crack. This book covers both 4 0–0 and the immediate 4 ♘xc6.

The appeal for White to voluntarily give up one of the bishops for a knight is that the game can very easily head into positions in which Black really has to know what to do to avoid becoming worse very quickly.

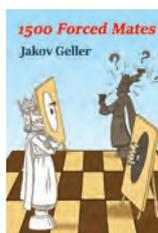


In this position, for example, attempts by Black to prevent the exchange of dark-squared bishops can end badly, and after 9...h6 10 ♕f4 ♖b7 11 ♕e5! the book's analysis shows how careful Black needs to be. In all such lines, it is clear that White's position is the more harmonious of the two and there are good chances of keeping potential counterplay at bay.

It is interesting to see how a former sideline has become enhanced – or entombed – by such a wealth of experience, theory and analysis. If you are a serious tournament player and you want to rob Sicilian players of their fun then this book will appeal to you. There is, of course, a lot of work in store for anyone wanting to master such a large amount of material.

Both of these new books from Thinkers Publishing offer significant depth for anyone wanting to take on the Sicilian and the French. Club players may find the page count on the daunting side and will be more comfortable learning from simpler books. However, the target audience is presumably serious tournament players and they will have plenty of ammo here to keep their opponents pinned down, regardless of how well-armed they may be.

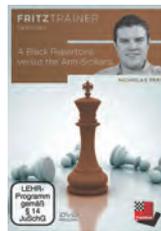
Sean Marsh



1500 Forced Mates

Jakov Geller, 364 pages, paperback
RRP £22.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.69**

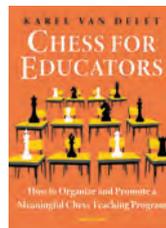
Moscow publishing house Elk and Ruby continue to spread their wings and now present a puzzle book containing 1,500 positions, of which some 1,380 are for the reader to solve. The strong Russian Grandmaster and trainer's focus is solely on forced mates, so on such attacks this work is even more comprehensive than Lakdawala's related work previewed below. Geller looks at such tactical motifs as deflection, windmills and X-rays, and the diligent reader who works their way through this work will surely somewhat improve their calculation, as well as attacking ability.



A Black Repertoire versus the Anti-Sicilians

Nicholas Pert, PC-DVD; running time: 6 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Nick Pert follows up his earlier DVD for ChessBase on the Kalashnikov variation by examining all White's deviations after 1 e4 and before 1...c5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 d4. While the Rossolimo variation, as enthusiastically promoted by Justin Tan (see above), does receive five separate videos where Pert explains clearly the key ideas and theory behind his recommendation of 3...g6, much of the DVD will also be of use to non-2...♘c6 Sicilian players, as the likes of the c3 Sicilian and Grand Prix Attack come under the microscope.



Chess for Educators

Karel van Delft, 272 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

The van Delft family have certainly been busy of late, son Merijn recording a new DVD for ChessBase (see below), and father Karel penning this work subtitled 'How to Organize and Promote a Meaningful Chess Teaching Program'. The author has a Master's degree in psychology and has long been recognised as a leading expert on the benefits of chess in education. Van Delft discusses such topics as how to improve your teaching, the importance of talent, are their differences between boys and girls when teaching chess, and how to handle parents.



Foxy Vol.189:

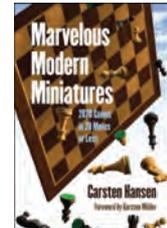
Learn the White Lion in 1 Hour

Andrew Martin, DVD;
running time: 1 hour, 20 minutes
RRP £12.99 **SUBSCRIBERS £11.69**

The ever popular and enthusiastic Andrew Martin returns to the Foxy Video study to record a DVD (one that will play in a standard DVD player without requiring any software) on the reverse of the Black Lion, namely the White Lion. Those who want to deploy this

reversed Philidor can begin with 1 c3, 1 d3 or 1 ♖f3 followed by the other two moves. In typical fashion, Martin quickly maps out the key ideas while presenting a number of instructive games to get the club player viewer quickly up and running with the opening.

Also recently arrived at Chess & Bridge in the same series and also by Andrew Martin are *Foxy Vol.190: Scholar's Mate Queen h5 Attack*, which takes a look at the shocking 1 e4 e5 2 ♖h5, and *Foxy Vol.191: The Jobava London*, both of which also retail at £12.99 or just £11.69 for Subscribers.

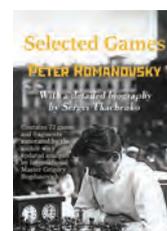


Marvelous Modern Miniatures

Carsten Hansen, 520 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Carsten Hansen is these days a pretty prolific and popular author. Some of his recent works have been self-published, but this one is from Russell Enterprises. Featuring some 2,020 games which last no more than 20 moves, it claims to be "the largest collection of miniature chess games played in the last half-century". Most of the players are IMs or GMs and the annotations are more detailed than one might expect, meaning that the reader should learn plenty about alertness, tactics and especially opening traps.

Also new from Russell Enterprises is *Understanding Rook vs. Minor Piece Endgames* by Karsten Müller and Yakov Konoval (232 pages, paperback), which retails at £24.95 or £22.45 for Subscribers. It's the third volume in the authors' 'Understanding Endgames' series and will certainly improve your knowledge of and ability to coordinate your rooks, bishops and knights.



Peter Romanovsky Selected Games

Sergei Tkachenko, 382 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Leading expert on Russian and Soviet chess history, Sergei Tkachenko, has supplied a detailed biography of Peter Romanovsky to go alongside 72 of Romanovsky's best games with notes by the two-time USSR Champion himself, updated thanks to the work of Grigory Bogdanovich. As Tkachenko shows in the first half of this book, Romanovsky might well have perished in both world wars, while in the second half Romanovsky's own annotations are refreshingly honest and reveal much about both positional and attacking play. That

is perhaps no surprise when we learn that he really was a forefather of the Soviet chess school, being the trainer of such players as Alatortsev, Averbakh and Zak. Do note too that a hardback version of this book is available, if you prefer, for an extra £10.00 (or just £33.25 for Subscribers).

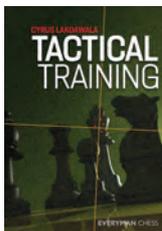


Practical Chess Strategy: The Bishop

Merijn van Delft, PC-DVD;
running time: 6 hours

RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

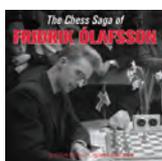
The strong Dutch IM Merijn van Delft has built up an excellent reputation as a coach and here focusses on just one of the pieces. Van Delft examines in some detail just 12 games, but these mini-lectures should be of great interest to the club player. They will get to discover much about why grandmasters love the fabled bishop-pair so much, as well as why they often tuck the bishop away back on its start square, with ♗e1 then ♘f1. Van Delft also shows why opposite-coloured bishops do not mean a definite draw and even takes a look at how to get the best out of so-called bad bishops.



Tactical Training

Cyrus Lakdawala, 496 pages, paperback
RRP £25.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £23.35**

As a professional coach, the prolific Californian IM is quite aware of the importance of tactical training for all levels of player. Here he begins by examining the key mating patterns with material which should be especially useful for the newer and average club player. Lakdawala progresses to cover what he considers to be the 32 most important types of combination before demonstrating how even Carlsen and Nakamura overlooked some tactical possibilities during their epic online match in last summer's Chess Tour final. Readers are invited to solve pretty much every position and there's little doubt that even the stronger club player will benefit from doing so, as some of the positions stem from pretty fiendish endgame studies.



The Chess Saga of Fridrik Ólafsson

Øystein Brekke & Fridrik Ólafsson,
288 pages, hardback
RRP £32.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £29.65**

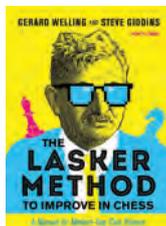
Fridrik Ólafsson is a legend of the chess world and still going strong at 86. We were delighted to see this new work on and by him appear from publishers Norsk Sjakkforlag. Way back in 1976 Ólafsson wrote a best games collection in Icelandic, and thanks to Norwegian journalist Brekke's work, those 50 annotations now appear in English for the first time. 64 other games have been added, ranging from Ólafsson taking on Savielly Tartakower in 1954 to facing David Navara in 2013. Along the way we learn all about the career of this strong grandmaster, lawyer, FIDE President (1978-82), and Secretary General of the Icelandic Parliament.



The Flexible Panov

Nico Zwirs, PC-DVD; running time: 8 hours
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

Dutch IM Zwirs believes in meeting the Caro-Kann head on with 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4, the Panov-Botvinnik Attack. While a number of IQP positions are covered, his primary focus is 4...♗f6 5 ♗c3 ♗c6 6 ♘g5 to which he devotes a lot of coverage, mapping out an unusually detailed repertoire for a DVD.



The Lasker Method to Improve in Chess

Gerard Welling & Steve Giddins,
240 pages, paperback
RRP £22.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £20.65**

Emanuel Lasker knew full well that the club player didn't need to cram their brain with opening theory, but rather required a set of clear principles and guidelines to follow. Based on his commonsensical approach, popular authors Giddins and Welling have combined to produce a work aimed squarely at the club player...and full of common sense. They show how to reach sound middlegames, which endgame principles are the most important to know, and along the way teach plenty about practical chess too.



The Modern Spanish:

Breyer and Zaitsev Systems

Vassilios Kotronias, 352 pages, paperback
RRP £26.95 **SUBSCRIBERS £24.25**

This new work from Russell Enterprises is likely to appeal to those well-versed in the Ruy Lopez, as well as those who remember some of the great Kasparov-Karpov encounters after 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♘b5 a6 4 ♘a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♘e7 6 ♗e1 b5 7 ♘b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3. In typically thorough fashion, Kotronias provides full coverage of Breyer's 9...♗b8 and Zaitsev's 9...♘b7, both of which he clearly believes in for Black and on which he has uncovered a number of new ideas for both sides.



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