



COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Reviewed this month:

Easy Guide to the Sveshnikov Sicilian
by Jacob Aagaard

Easy Guide to the Classical Sicilian
by Jouni Yrjölä

The Taimanov Sicilian
by Graham Burgess

Sicilian Grand Prix Attack
by Jim Plaskett

B22 EE
by Evgenij Sveshnikov

Greetings from Sicily

Happy New Year!

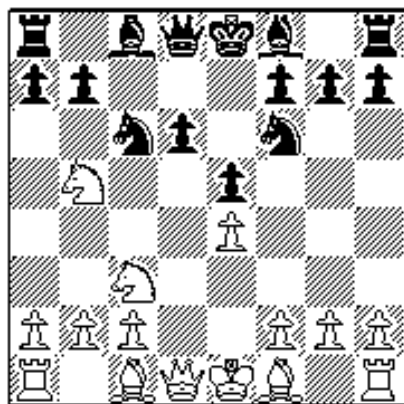
THE SICILIAN DEFENCE seems to be as popular as ever and particularly the Najdorf has been and still is the battleground where many of today's super-GMs go head to head. Therefore you would perhaps expect a bouquet of new books on the Najdorf to appear on the scene. But that's not the case. Since Kosten's book *Easy Guide to the Najdorf* appeared at the beginning of 2000, none of the major publishers has published anything on this exciting and topical line. However, in this month's edition of *Checkpoint* I will take a look on a number of other titles that have been published recently on other lines of the Sicilian.

Easy Guide to the Sveshnikov Sicilian by Jacob Aagaard, 2000
Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 144pp.,
\$19.95

This book is the second book by my compatriot, international master Jacob Aagaard; the first book being the well-received *Easy Guide to the Panov-Botvinnik Attack*, which was okay, but not exactly my cup of tea.

The present book covers the popular Sveshnikov Sicilian which normally arises after the following moves: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6** (*See Diagram*)





but also often occurs after Taimanov Sicilian move-order: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bf4 e5 8 Bg5.**

The material is divided into three parts which is then split into a total of 17 chapters.

Part 1 is *Strategic Introduction and Sidelines*. This part contains both what impresses me most and what I found most odd, but I will return to both things a bit later. Part 2 is *The Sveshnikov with 9 Nd5* and Part 3 covers *The Sveshnikov with 9 Bxf6 gxf6 10 Nd5*.

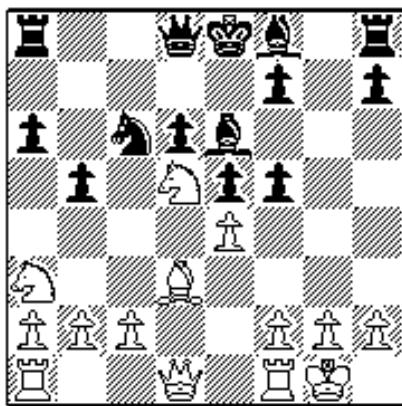
It's quite clear that the book is written from a black perspective, yet Aagaard manages to stay level-headed and doesn't make outrageous claims such as that Black can expect win no matter what White comes up with. The lines are well-documented and improvements are presented for both sides, which also makes this book of interest for those who play the open Sicilian as White. The positional assessments throughout the book are very objective; the book thus separates itself from the numerous one-sided monographs so prevalent from some authors.

Chapter 1, which really ought to be called the introduction, covers *How to Play the Sveshnikov* and is the best introduction I have seen in any opening book for a very long time. It's about 20 pages long. He starts by discussing Typical Plans and Structures, which in my point of view is essential when a book is aimed at a wide range of chessplayers. Next subject is the Piece Placement, where he explains the role of each piece (pawns and Kings excepted); this is also useful to those who are just taking up the opening. Finally, there is a selection of Practical Examples, 22 in all, reasonably well annotated, but all excellently chosen. By studying this introduction, any newcomer to the opening will feel a certain familiarity with the play that typically arises in this opening, when they first try this wonderfully exciting, but tactically and strategically difficult opening.

In chapter 4 (7 Nd5), I came across something that leads me to believe that this chapter was written before the introduction (not an uncommon procedure, since an author always should start with the coverage of those lines where theory develops at the slowest pace, since the number of theoretical corrections at the end will be fewer). It has as the only chapter some annotated practical examples. Although Aagaard appears to make a case for this addition, it really belongs with the other examples in the introduction.

My next and final point of criticism is perhaps not really criticism at all. In chapter 5, Aagaard gives a very brief look at the Larsen/Bird Variation (8...Be6), which is played very rarely and is, theoretically, a little better for White. Since the book is written mainly from Black's point of view, the inclusion of this line may seem a little puzzling at first, but it is another indication of the author's balanced approach.

The theoretical coverage is very solid and Aagaard provides us with numerous examples of his inventive and creative approach to chess as well as his total lack of respect for authority. His witty comments only add to this wonderful presentation; one of my favourites from this book is the following which follows White's 12th move in the following line: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bg5 a6 8 Na3 b5 9 Bxf6 gxf6 10 Nd5 f5 11 Bd3 Be6 12 0-0** (*See Diagram*)



Aagaard here comments: "This is not as active as 12 Qh5, but it is still a line where Black finds himself on shaky ground, if White follows the main path. My instincts tell me that Black is OK, but they have been proven wrong once or twice before. Still, if you don't feel safe playing the positions arising after this, then you should maybe find another opening."

Overall the material is well-organised, well-presented and well-annotated, and in conjunction with Aagaard's plentiful input of original analysis and ideas, this book is ideal for

anybody, weak or strong, playing this opening. An absolute must-buy for anybody with interest in this opening and one of the best *Easy Guides* to date. I can wholeheartedly recommend this great book.

My assessment of this book: 

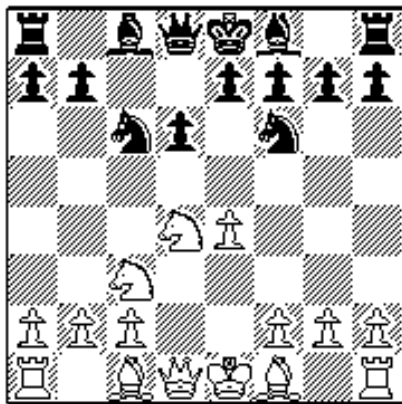
[Order](#) *Easy Guide to the Sveshnikov Sicilian*
by Jacob Aagaard

Easy Guide to the Classical Sicilian by Jouni Yrjölä, 2000
Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 128pp., \$18.95

Finnish Grandmaster Jouni Yrjölä, debuting with his first book, isn't a name familiar to most people, but nonetheless he is considered quite an expert in the lines that he writes about.



While the Sveshnikov Sicilian has been covered in several books over the last few years, the Classical Sicilian has not received the same attention. Just to clarify what we are talking about, the Classical Sicilian arises after **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6** (See Diagram)



The Richter-Rauzer (6 Bg5) has been covered in a separate volume by Peter Wells, but a general work that also covers the Sozin and Boleslavsky Variations, the Velimirovic Attack as well as the many minor options such as 6 g3, 6 f3, 6 h3 and 6 f4 has, as far as I know, never been covered in a single volume. I don't think that it would have been possible had the book not limited itself to focusing mainly on a repertoire for Black in the Classical Sicilian.

The book is split into eight chapters of which the first is the introduction. Unlike Aagaard's book, the introduction doesn't give examples of typical play, pawn structures etc. This material has been sorted into each chapter for the student better to able to relate it to the specific material presented. Instead, the introduction gives a little bit of history, discusses which lines are covered in this book, comments about transpositions, speculates why you should play these lines, warns you which names to look out for (The Specialists) and describes how the present book has been organised.

This last is particularly interesting because the material has been divided according to the typical pawn structures that arise, and then by theoretical variations. So, for

example, Yrjolä writes: "In the Classical [Sicilian], we encounter the following basic positions-types: Boleslavsky, Dragon, Velimirovic, Sozin, Rauzer without doubled f-pawns and Rauzer with doubled f-pawns. This is also the order they are introduced in this book." Yrjolä continues with: "In every section there is a strategic introduction to that position-type before the theoretical lines are discussed in detail. The lines are organized around base games, which usually represent the main line in this book. The main lines do not always coincide with those accepted by theory as the principal variation, but are those that I regard as important and playable. For example, the main line I have selected against the Velimirovic [Attack] is the one thing that is doing best in practice, but is not the most popular by any means."

I fully support this way of organizing the material, since it makes it easier for the student to understand the material if first there is a general discussion about typical plans, what to look out for, both as Black and White, and then to study the theory on top of this. For example, in Chapter 2, *The Boleslavsky Position-Type*, the author first discusses the two most common pawn structures insofar as which squares are important for either side and which plans usually are associated with the individual pawn structures. Then he moves on to cover Typical Methods for White, which according to the book is "Occupy the d5-square (sometimes f5)", "Attack on the queenside with the pawns", "Play on the light squares", "Manoeuvre the knight from f3 to e3", "Advance the f-pawn", "Keep the pawn-formation solid and watertight". After that the Typical Methods for Black are discussed, before we move on to the theory itself.

In general the author manages to cover the typical plans quite well, but unlike Aagaard, he doesn't give many practical examples to support his introduction, so the student has to find the examples in the theory section by him- or herself, which is not necessarily bad, just different.

Moving on to the theory, I have found the theoretical coverage to be quite good overall, a good selection of lines, not necessarily main lines, but lines that are easily memorized and that do not require an enormous amount of theoretical knowledge. In addition, Yrjolä presents us with quite a bit of his own analysis and new ideas compared to existing theory. This always pleases me, because I know that the author wants to give us something that we can't get somewhere else.

When I first browsed through the book, chapter 3, *The Dragon Position-Type*, struck me as quite odd, because not only does he cover non-Dragon lines where Black develops his Bishop to g7, he also covers lines that are regular Dragon lines, such as 6 g3 g6, which is the main line in the fianchetto line of the Dragon Variation. But after 6 g3, there isn't really much better for Black than to enter these lines, therefore Yrjolä does the correct but brave thing: to cover these Dragon lines. Many authors would have stuck to a purely Classical Sicilian approach, and would have suggested an inferior choice for Black in order not to extend themselves by offering the best possible, but more complicated, solution to the reader.

On top of the g3-lines, he also introduced me to a couple of lines which I have never seen before: 6 Be2 Nxd4 7 Qxd4 g6 and 6 f3 Nxd4 7 Qxd4 g6, both of which gets a bit of coverage, so the reader may be able to use the lines as surprise weapons.

In general, when reading the book and studying his recommendations, you really feel the author's sincerity and his firm belief that the recommended lines will serve you well. In repertoire books you often see those outrageous claims by the authors that White (or Black) is busted in every line; not so with Yrjolä, who manages to keep his head clear, being objective while guiding us through the Classical Sicilian jungle.

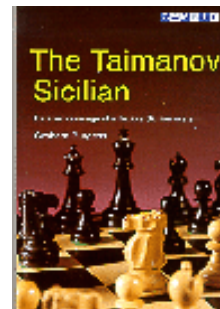
Overall, I found this book very satisfying and trustworthy, and so therefore I have no

problem recommending this book to anybody with interest in the Sicilian, both as White and Black.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Easy Guide to the Classical Sicilian*
by Jouni Yrjölä

The Taimanov Sicilian by Graham Burgess, 2000 Gambit Publications, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 208pp., \$21.95



Although Graham Burgess is one of the busiest chess book authors, this is the first book of his that I have reviewed at **The Chess Cafe**.

For those who don't know who Mr. Burgess is, I can inform you that he used to be the editor of Batsford, until he got together with John Nunn and Murray Chandler to start the hugely successful Gambit Publications that has released a long list excellent books, such as Watson's *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, Yermolinsky's *Road to Chess Improvement*, Sanakoev's *World Champion at the Third Attempt*, and perhaps most notably the best one-volume opening encyclopaedia to date, *Nunn's Chess Openings*, which was a co-production with Everyman Chess, but written by Nunn, Burgess, Emms and Gallagher.

Burgess has also written other opening manuals. His two books on the Alekhine Defence are mandatory for anyone who plays this opening. His book on the Morra-Gambit is also interesting, although now a bit outdated. His co-productions with Nunn on the King's Indian are also pretty much standard for anyone playing this opening while his Torre Attack book is the best available book on the market. Other titles include his *Mammoth Book of Chess*, which won the British Chess Federation's Book of the Year award a few years back, and the *Mammoth Book of the World's Greatest Games of Chess* (again with Nunn and Emms).

Aside from that, he is the chief editor for all books that are released by Gambit and several published by Everyman Chess (the two "easy guides" above are both edited by Burgess). Where does he get the energy? Don't ask me, but he is always courteous and very professional, yet flexible to work with. I should know because my first three books were all commissioned by him and the last two on the English Opening were both edited by him, as well as published by Gambit.

By the way, just the other day I read a very funny comment by John Watson in his most recent book reviews on TWIC: "I'm not impressed by the output by Graham Burgess. I'm convinced that there are two Graham Burgess, neither of which ever sleeps or has any vacation!"

Burgess is a very competent author and his books are all standard reference books in the openings he has covered. Now after a little break from opening books, he returns with a work on the Taimanov Sicilian, which has never really been the topic for a great number of books, and none in recent years.

The book starts with an interesting introduction, in which Burgess explains among other things the differences between the Kan, the Paulsen and the Taimanov Variations of the Sicilian. This book, in spite of the labeling, does also cover the Paulsen Variation in its entirety, however, but nothing of the Kan, where Black generally doesn't play an early ...Nc6.

It's of course of interest to find out how he works. Burgess gives us a peek in the introduction under the heading "How This Book was Written":

"Every time I write an opening book, it seems necessary to reinvent the writing process to cope with the constantly mushrooming amount of data, and to make best use of all the available electronic tools. My first step this time was to set Junior 6 to work, blunderchecking the main source data (annotated games from Mega Database 2000, ChessBase Magazine 73 onwards and

two correspondence databases, and all games from Informator and TWIC 266 onwards). I gave it enough time to analyse 2-3 million positions at each point. This saved a lot of time later, as it helped identify possible improvements and holes in published analysis (and it's amazing how many there were, even in recent games annotated by strong players, who have no excuse not to have checked their analysis properly). The bulk of the writing work was done inside ChessBase. I made extensive use of ChessBase 7's trees: in particular, by making a tree from the work I had done so far, I could see with one key press whether a given position was already discussed anywhere in the material so far written. This was a great help in tracking down transpositions. A similar process made it possible to determine quickly whether a position was discussed anywhere in the source data. I was assisted by several analytical engines (in addition to Junior): Fritz 6 (background analysis), Hiarc 7.32 and Crafty 17.11 (blunderchecks of the whole book), and the new tactical monster Goliath Light (for cracking tough positions). Using different engines to check the work at different stages should lessen the effects of certain engines being weak in

some types of position. Of course, human judgement (rightly or wrongly!) had the final say in all matters. I used BookUp's backsolving feature to help determine the assessment symbols that, where possible, are given where a transposition is indicated. These assessment symbols should be taken with a pinch of salt, since they are often based on a minimax of the assessments of several other variations." (My sincere thanks to Graham Burgess for e-mailing me this piece, so I didn't have to re-type the whole thing!)

I find the above very interesting, and I must add that his intelligent use of computers does cut down on the work that would otherwise have taken many, many hours. Having written three books myself, and only used computers in a very limited fashion on the analytical side, I can safely say that many analytical mistakes are avoided when working as Burgess does. However, I can also say that as a chessplayer your strength only truly increases when you analyse by yourself (even if aided by a computer).

But back to the book. There is a total of 10 chapters of theoretical coverage. These chapters are mainly theory and only a few explanations of the typical ideas, which must be extracted by the reader him- or herself by studying the presented material. This is quite demanding, particularly if you are not a very strong player, and therefore his book is best for players who have reached a certain level. But again, neither the Taimanov nor the Paulsen are really easy to understand, and therefore really only should be played if you can crunch the strategic ideas behind this openings yourself.

With everything checked and re-checked by various computer programs, I have had a difficult time finding anything that looked wrong in one way or the other, but a few interesting things have come up.

On page 88 there is coverage of an idea I looked at in the April 2000 Checkpoint. It is Ponomarev's sharp line: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Ndb5 Qb8 7 Be3 a6** (Burgess thinks that 7...Nf6 which transposes to a Scheveningen after 7...Nf6 8 f4 d6 9 Qf3 Be7 10 Bd3 0-0 11 0-0 a6 12 Nd4 Qc7 is the safest response to 7 Be3) **8 Bb6!? axb5 9 Nxb5** (*See Diagram*)

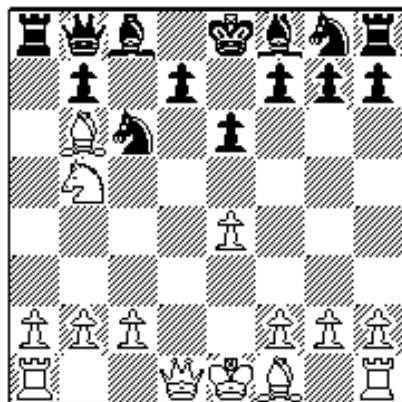
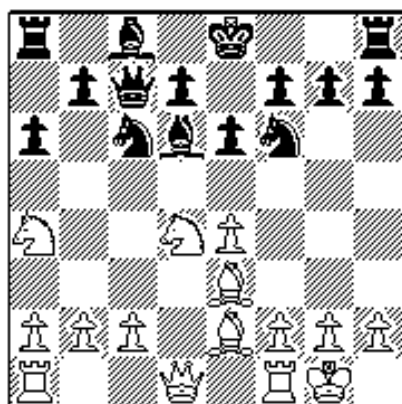


Diagram).

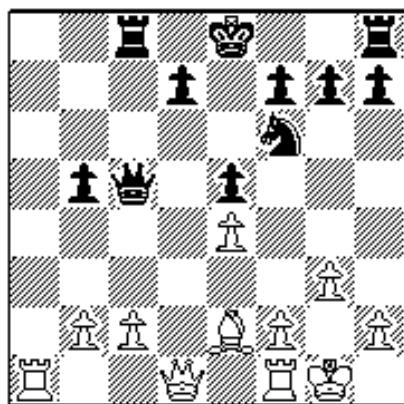
and now instead Burgess' main line 9...Bb4+, I had a brief look at 9...Ra5!?, which I found to be in Black's favour, but Burgess only writes "9...Ra5!? is an idea for the future" without going into any depth, which probably should have been done, since much of the future in this line likely will focus around this move.

Very recently, the following line was tried out between Shirov and Anand in Baghdad in their FIDE World Championship Final: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be3 a6 7 Be2 Nf6 8 0-0 Bb4 9 Na4 Bd6!?** (*See*



(and I'm quite sure Anand's too!) not because of the opening. The game continued with **13...Nxd4 14 Bxd4 e5 15 Be3 Bc5 16 Qd3**

Shirov tried 16 axb5, which is more aggressive, but cannot be right on purely positional grounds. Another try is 16 Bxc5 Qxc5 17 axb5 axb5 (*See Diagram*),



and here the original game between Suetin and Taimanov continued 18 Bd3 0-0 19 Ra5 Rb8 20 c3 with a small plus for White (even if my computer insists Black has equality after both 20...d5 and 20...Qc6, neither of which Taimanov played), who went on to win the game. In the game Mohaupt-Zitzmann DDR corr.-championship 1971, Black held a draw after the much more logical 18...b4, which moves the pawn to a dark square, where the white Bishop cannot attack it, but also restrains the white queenside. That game continued 19 Ra4 0-0 20 Qe2 Ra8 21 Rfa1 Rxa4 22 Rxa4 d6, and Black was doing just fine.

More critical is 18 Ra5 which forces Black to keep the b-pawn on a light square a bit longer. This approach was tried out in the game between Galkin (future World Junior Champ) and Beshukov (played in St. Petersburg 1997), who went on to equalize after 18...0-0 19 c3 Rb8 20 Qd3 Qc6 21 Bf3 Rfe8 22 Rfa1 Re6 23 R1a3 Ne8 24 Rb3 Nc7.

The game against Dolmatov showed a somewhat different approach by Dolmatov:

16 Qd3 Bxe3 17 Qxe3 0-0 (here Black can consider the somewhat odd-looking

17...bxa4, which pretty much looks like Black has abandoned his queenside, but it is surprisingly difficult for White to take advantage of it, e.g.: 18 Rxa4 Qxc2 19 Ra5 0-0 or 18 c3 Rb8 19 Rfb1 Qc6 or 18 Bxa6 Rb8, picking up either White's b- or c-pawn, but in each case Black doesn't appear to be worse) 18 g3 Qc5 (18...Qc6 is less forcing; keeping the Queens on appears to be in Black's interest, at least for now) 19 Qxc5 Rxc5 20 f3 Rb8 21 axb5 axb5 22 Ra5, and White already has a solid edge in the endgame since the black b-pawn is more or less fixed on a light square, and the Rook on c5 is quite passive, defending the weak b-pawn. The endgame was later won by White.

The above things are minor, but could easily have been covered more in-depth. Of course, every author has to draw a line somewhere, and while I would have preferred to show the most recent example in a particular line, Burgess chose to show an example by the inventor of the system.

I didn't find any errors, but Burgess felt compelled to point one out himself: on page 21, after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nb5 d6 6 Bf4 e5 7 Be3 Nf6 8 Bg5 a6, he fails to mention that 9 N5c3 transposes to Line F2, which makes one of his comments 'appropriate', but this is a very small thing which easily can be forgiven.

Before I finish this review, I must compliment Burgess on his implementation of putting transpositional lines in italics, which leads the student to material somewhere else in the book. In an opening such as this, where transpositions are found everywhere, this is a very important tool.

The Taimanov Sicilian has the best coverage of a line that is sure to gain popularity, given that Anand now is playing it regularly with solid results. The presentation is a bit dry without many verbal explanations, but at the same time it's very in-depth with loads of improvements over existing theory. The material is well-organised and for the serious student of opening theory, there is probably no way around this book, while if you have a particular interest in this opening with either colour, this is a must buy.

My assessment of this book: 

Order The Taimanov Sicilian
by Graham Burgess

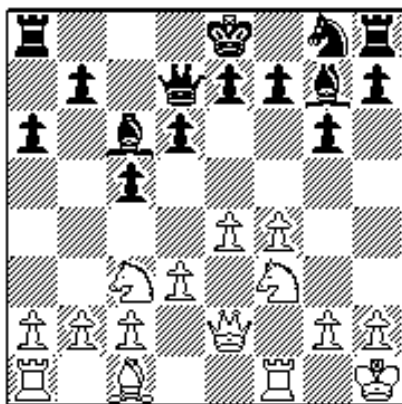
Sicilian Grand Prix Attack by Jim Plaskett, 2000 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 144pp., \$19.95

On the back cover of this book we are told that "Grandmaster James Plaskett is one of Britain's most imaginative and exciting players. With his dashing and uncompromising approach, the former British Champion has provided chessplayers with great entertainment over the years." They couldn't be more right. Plaskett's playing style should generate invitations from all over the world, because when he is on, he can crush even the strongest grandmasters in great combinational style. As an example of his practice in the Grand Prix Attack, I offer you the following which I found in the book (but has also been published many other places).



Plaskett-Shipov, Hastings 1998/99 (annotations are selected from those by Plaskett in the book)

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 d6 3 f4 Nc6 4 Nf3 g6 5 Bb5 Bd7 6 0-0 Bg7 7 d3 a6 8 Bxc6 Bxc6 9 Kh1 Qd7 10 Qe2 (*See Diagram*)



A new move, attempting to improve upon the usual 10 Qe1. However, in many ways 10 Qe2 is a more logical move. As Black players become more clued in, White is increasingly unlikely to get away with a crude mating attack based on Qe1-h4 and f4-f5. Therefore the idea of placing the queen on a different colour complex to the dark-squared Bishop, is logical and constitutes good positional play.

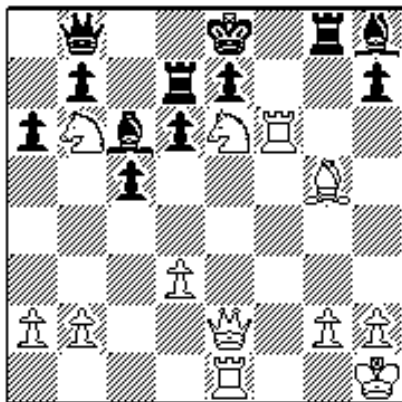
10...f5?

This is often a good method of blunting the power of a white kingside attack, but here the move is inappropriate. Black weakens the light squares in general and the e6-square in particular and does nothing for his development.

11 Nd5 Rd8? 12 Ng5! Nf6 13 Nb6

White's Knights are fantastic pieces and he is not about to trade them in for modest material gains. 13 Ne6 Nxd5 14 exd5 Bxd5 15 Nxd8 gives White a clear advantage, but I wanted to play for the attack.

13...Qc7 14 Nc4 fxe4 15 Ne6 Qc8 16 f5! Rg8 17 Nb6 exd3 18 cxd3 Qb8 19 fxb6 Bh8 20 g7 Bxg7 21 Bg5 Bh8 22 Rae1 Rd7 23 Rxf6! (See Diagram)



It is rather ironic that White has been declining to accept the advantage of the exchange over the past few moves and now chooses to sacrifice Rook for a Knight himself.

23...exf6 24 Nxc5+ Kd8 25 Nxd7 Bxd7 26 Qe7+ Kc7 27 Nd5+ 1-0

A beautiful effort by Plaskett.

I know that Plaskett wrote a book on the Taimanov Sicilian a few years ago, but to be honest I have never had a look in it, so I cannot comment on the content. But for those who want to see more and

read more about Plaskett, you may be lucky to dig up an old copy of his book *Playing to Win*, which came out many years ago, but has a good selection of his games.

The back cover blurb also gives us the following: "The sharp and dangerous Grand Prix Attack is one of White's most aggressive ways of countering the Sicilian Defence. It leads to very complicated play right from the first moves and contains of pitfalls for the unwary Black player. Here James Plaskett takes a new look at this dangerous opening. Whether you play the Sicilian as Black, or need an antidote for White, this book is an essential addition to your armoury."

It sounds okay, but after having read the book I'm not that enthusiastic.

The material has been divided into two parts, 2 Nc3 (with 3 f4) and 2 f4; there are a total of eight chapters.

The theoretical coverage is based around 91 main games. But the coverage is not particularly deep, and with few exceptions, I didn't find much independent work from Plaskett on the theoretical side. Many times (read: pretty much all the time) he merely quotes a game excerpt to move 18-25 without any comments, suggestions or explanations. That is not the way an opening book should be written. It appears as if

Plaskett knows that Black or White can improve in certain lines, but he never tells us why. In short, it is disappointing.

Therefore this book should merely be considered a selection of interesting games featuring the Sicilian Grand Prix Attack and nothing more. While Plaskett's run-through of the material and lightweight, but often amusing, annotations can be entertaining, I doubt that most players will get much benefit from this book. Therefore people with a specific interest in this opening can consider buying this book, but it is by no means an essential or a must-buy. Better books have been written on this opening.

My assessment of this book: ❖❖

[Order](#) *Sicilian Grand Prix Attack*
by Jim Plaskett

B22 EE by Evgenij Sveshnikov, 2000 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Electronic Edition, \$10.00 (approx.)

A couple of years ago the first (printed) edition of this book appeared under the phrase "Win or Draw!", and since it was a couple of years ago I was hoping that the material in this electronic edition had been updated to cover all the material up to 2000, but unfortunately it has not.



For those readers who are unfamiliar with the author, I can inform you that the Russian GM from Chelyabinsk in the Ural Mountains, more than anybody revived this line, and brought it up to its present popularity, just like he did simultaneously with the Lasker-Pelikan Sicilian, which now is just known as the Sveshnikov Sicilian (see the review above). He has been a firm believer of sticking to a few systems, which not only meant that he was the ultimate authority on these lines, but also made (and still makes) him an easy target for preparations. He is rated just below 2600 so he is still very much a strong grandmaster.

When the book came out it was pretty much the book to read on this opening, but since then there has been much water under the bridge and British-Swiss GM Joe Gallagher among others gave the opening a solid bust in his 1999 book on the c3 Sicilian. Gallagher simply questioned White's ability to produce an edge in most of the main lines. This makes it even more necessary for Sveshnikov's book to be updated, because he is very pro-White. For those who are interested, you can also visit kasparovchess.com, for which Sveshnikov wrote a series of articles on the c3 Sicilian, although the articles admittedly are very superficial.

You cannot call *B22* superficial; on the contrary it presents an abundance of material in ECO style, non-verbal, but coded evaluations. This is in contrast to Aagaard's *Sveshnikov*, where everything was balanced excellently and Plaskett's very 'chatty' style with almost no analysis.

It is very difficult to review these Informator Monographs because they are nothing but games, analysis and suggestions, no-verbal explanations to weigh which lines are to be preferred, except the evaluations at the end of each line.

But despite the recent developments in this opening, and despite my disappointment with the work not being updated before the re-release in this electronic edition, I can wholeheartedly recommend this book to anybody playing the c3-Sicilian or playing the Sicilian as Black, because you are bound to run into some of Sveshnikov's many recommendations (and there are really many) in your own games, and could it hurt if

you had a chance to look at them before it happened?

In my humble opinion, this is one of the best Informator Monographs to date. That being said, I'm still not too keen on the software, The Chess Informant Reader, which still is sub-standard for the ambition level of our friends in Belgrade. But it's workable. However, given the choice between the printed and the electronic editions, I would pick the printed edition every time.

My assessment of this book: 

<i>The Ratings</i>
 — A poor book, not recommended.
 — Not a particularly good book, but perhaps useful for some readers.
 — A useful book.
 — Good book, recommended.
 — Excellent book, highly recommended.

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