



COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



The Gallery
A selection
from the
Edward Winter
Collection

**Reviewed this month:**

Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation
(CD-ROM)

by Vladimir Bagirov

1.Nc3 The Van Geet Opening
(CD-ROM)

by D.D. van Geet

Grob's Attack
(Electronic Book)

by Tim Sawyer

ECO C EE
by Aleksandar Matanovic et al

ECO C
by Aleksandar Matanovic et al

The Master's Choice

This month I will mainly focus on various electronic chess books. The first two are from *New In Chess* (NIC), under the heading 'The Master's Choice'. They have in the past issued various electronic books; Sosonko has authored treatises on the Catalan and the King's Indian Defense and Timman on the Scotch as well as some others. But now the software has been upgraded and been made more user-friendly. Then an effort from Tim Sawyer, published by Pickard and Son Publishers. Unlike the NIC books, published on CD-ROM, this book is only available online, where you can download it, much like the very interesting *Secret Matches: The Unpublished Training Games* by Mikhail Botvinnik, available here on **The Chess Cafe**. Sahovski Informator's latest edition of the *ECO C* is also available for download. For those of you who are thinking "You comment on everybody else's opening books, why don't write one yourself?", I'm pleased to announce that my latest book *The Symmetrical English* (Gambit) is now in the stores, so you can judge for yourself, if I'm getting it right.

Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation by Vladimir Bagirov, 2000 New In Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$23.90

Initially, I want to attach some comments about the 'reader' or associated program, which comes with the CD and has to be installed before you can make use of the CD. The program is the same you will use to read the electronic editions of the NIC Yearbooks.



The design of the program is quite pleasant to the eye, and fairly easy to find your way around in. But there are a few things that puzzled me a little bit. This may be due to me being inept when it comes to computer programs (which is not



totally improbable) or maybe they are bugs in the program.

When I clicked on the Help button to have a look at the index, it was listed part in English and part in Dutch: Change CD, Contents, database, Game Viewer, Introductie, Lijst partijen, Lijst surveys, Options and Tree. When I continued by clicking on one of them, the text was in German, which I can read, but anyhow found surprising.

Another thing, that bothered me is the way the program works together with the analysis engine. The Reader supports Rebel 9, 10 & Century, Fritz 4, 5& 6, Junior 6, MChess Pro 6, and 'Others with PGN'. When you make your choice, for me it was Junior 6, and then click on the button 'Opinion by Junior 6', it starts the Junior 6 program, but without anything further happening. I tried with Fritz as well, and the same thing happened.

Furthermore, if you in the game viewer search on the games by a player, for example Kasparov, the games by the particular person are listed with a lot of details, such as the particular NIC Code, the players, place, year, result, annotator, source and the length of the game. This is fine, but if you choose a game, look at it, and want to go back to pick another game on the list you can't. There is a button 'Select game from list', but if you click it, the only games that appear are the games you chose before repeated 2-3 times. Not having any luck with, I clicked the 'X' in the top right corner which sent me back to the introduction screen. This doesn't make sense and must be fixed, since it makes the program a bit annoying to work with. Back to the book itself.

The present book was written by the late GM Vladimir Bagirov, who was a great expert on the Alekhine's Defense as well as the English. He wrote several interesting books about both openings and in their time, they were quite good. The material is divided into an Introduction and nine chapters.

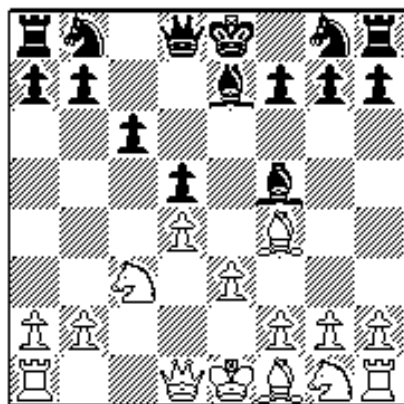
The Introduction is reasonably interesting. First there is an introduction to the minority attack, but discussion is a bit flaky and only scratches the surface. There is one game (which can be followed on a mini-game viewer next to the text) annotated in the text, one partial game as well as links to another handful of games.

Unfortunately, it is not explained how White should play against certain set-ups by Black. Many things go unmentioned, such as what to do when Black himself plays ...b7-b5, blocking the queenside and intending to put a knight on c4.

Then it discusses 'Central Play', 'Queenside Castling and Kingside Attack' [for White] and 'Tactics'. These themes are covered in an even worse way than the minority attack, quite superficially; the reader does not learn much from this. Particularly if you are playing Black, you may wonder what your plans should be, since in the Introduction, they are not discussed at all. (If you want to know more about how to play the Exchange Variation in the Queen's Gambit, I suggest you try to obtain a copy of Karpov and Mazukevich's book in German *Stellungsbeurteilung und Plan* (Sportverlag 1987) - the title translates into "Position Evaluation and Planning. My copy is a hardcover, but I know it was re-printed in paperback in the early 90s. It's a very decent book and has a very good look at the Karlsbad Structure of the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.)

Next the theoretical chapters follow, and I'm afraid that they didn't impress me either. They are structured like the surveys you find in the NIC Yearbooks: a short introductory text, a few opinions on the line in question, some links to notable games, and finally links to additional study material.

An example, taken from chapter 1 (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bf4 c6 6 e3 Bf5; *See Diagram*), is the following:



"Variation B: 7 Nge2

The last game [Flear-Beliavsky, Szirak 1987], and possibly others as well reduced the number of adherents of the continuation 7 g4. These days it is seen very rarely. More and more often the safer plan of development, starting with 7 Nge2 Nd7 8 Ng3 Bg6, enters the arena.

At first White played 9 Be2 Ngf6 10 h4 h5 11 Bf3, etc. Subsequently an active plan of defence was found: 9...Qb6! 10 Qd2 h5! 11 e4 h4!

(Ligterink-Geller, Amsterdam 1987). However, White too improved his play by means of 7 Nge2

Nf6 8 Ng3 Bg6 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 0-0 Nf5 (Dokhoian-Kuzmin, Sevastopol 1986). As a result Black, in order to avoid the exchange of light-squared bishops, started to withdraw to e6 (instead of to g6) with 7...Nf6 8 Ng3 Be6, protecting pawn d5 and counting on the central break c6-c5.

In recent years a lot of games featured this theme: Sokolov-Vaganian, Tilburg '94, Kasparov-Yusupov, Linares 1993 and Gelfand-Kasparov, Linares 1994.

In spite of the favourable results for Black, White's chances of success were clearly preferable. Probably the most accurate way to play for Black was shown in the game Lautier-Ivanchuk, Moscow 1994. Adopting an improvement on the twelfth move Black obtained a draw without difficulty. However, the game Lautier-Marciano, France 1998, proves that this case is still far from closed."

That's it, and by the way, when you click on the links to Lautier-Ivanchuk and Lautier-Marciano, you get unannotated games, something which makes little sense, since the comments indicate that these games are critical for the evaluation of the line. Overall, we find ourselves betwixt and between – not in-depth enough to satisfy the stronger player, while not basic enough to provide the not-so-strong players with guidance on how to play this line.

Going through the above chapters, the same picture repeats itself; in some cases the coverage is even more superficial, which make these surveys quite unnecessary because they provide no real valuable information of any kind. It should be noted that the surveys that have been presented in the NIC Yearbooks over the years have also been added on the CD, in this case a total of eight, four of which are by van der Sterren, three by Bagirov himself and one by I. Sokolov.

I have only managed to find a few pieces of analysis of interest, but hardly anything original from Bagirov, no powerful novelties, hardly any instruction and too many unannotated or lightly annotated games. All in all, a disappointing experience and a sad finale for great theoretician and original player.

My assessment of this CD:

1.Nc3 The Van Geet Opening by D.D. van Geet, 2000 New In Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$23.90

Back in 1991 when I was enjoying playing chess full-time and traveling all over Europe, I one day had to play Graham Burgess, now editor for Gambit, but back then already renown as an opening specialist. Since I had to win against him if I was to keep my hopes for an IM-norm alive, and not wanting to discuss mainstream theory with him, I picked up a book in my mom's chess store. It was a



pamphlet-like book by van Geet on 1 Nc3. He promised interesting games for those that gave it a try, which was all the persuasion I needed. Full of confidence, I played 1 Nc3 (to my opponent's big surprise - back then I more or less only played 1 d4 and 1 c4) and won convincingly.

That book was also published by NIC, and now they have apparently decided to give it another updated go in CD-ROM format.

For those of you who are not familiar with van Geet, I can tell you that he became IM in the 1960s, before he began to give preference to the slower paced, but by no means less demanding regimen as a correspondence chess player. In time he did so well that he became a CC grandmaster. This CD-ROM is set-up similarly to the above CD by Bagirov, with some notable differences.

The introduction is merely a view into the history of 1 Nc3, which was first condemned by Ruy Lopez (for the younger audience: yes, this was actually a person, not just an opening!) back in 1561! Basically van Geet tells us to give it a try, and if Morozevich can play it in Frankfurt last year, I guess most of us can try it too, at least if you don't mind a creative adventurous game that puts both you and your opponent to the test.

There follows five chapters:

- 1: Basic ideas and main variations
- 2: Provoking the advance of the d-pion [sic]
- 3: Rapid development
- 4: Bishop finachettes [sic]
- 5: Postponing d2-d4

Each chapter, with the exception of chapter 5, has some sub-chapters, but for some reason the index does not tell us which moves are contained in each sub-chapter. This makes it unnecessarily difficult to navigate your way around. This should definitely be changed for the next edition of this CD, if another edition is released.

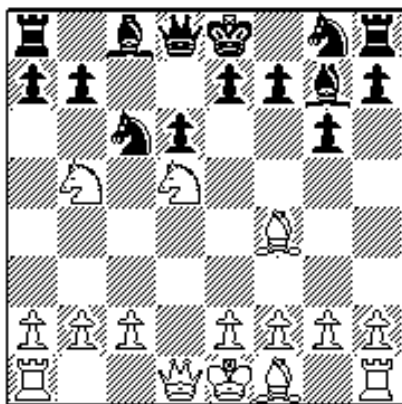
Chapter 1 is mostly chit-chat and some examples of how easily Black can lose if he is not careful. But the analysis is quite superficial, and in the examples that are given, Black's best moves are often not even indicated. It is rather stating the obvious that this would have been desirable.

Chapters 2-5 are much better in content. The theory is well annotated, plenty of examples given, strategic and tactical ideas are explained very well, and there are several links to other games. This makes for interesting and inspiring reading, and for improvers there are so many explanations of how to handle these positions strategically, that by careful study you will learn an awful lot about chess in general and not just 1 Nc3, no matter how interesting the opening may be.

An example of how easily even strong players can get into trouble is the following:

van Geet-Medina, Amsterdam 1971


1 Nc3 c5 Black invites White to transpose to a Sicilian, which White of course does not oblige to immediately. **2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 Bf4 Bg7?!** Here is 5...Nf6 is best. **6 Ndb5 d6 7 Nd5** (*See Diagram*)



Black is clearly already in some trouble. Here Black would have done best to play 7...Rb8, after which 8 e4 a6 9 Nbc3 b5 10 Qd2 +/- is best according to van Geet. **7...Kf8 8 e4 Be6?! At this point, van Geet gives 8...a6 9 Nbc3 b5 10 Qd2 b4 11 Nd1 as slightly better for White. 9 Ndc7 Rc8 10 Nxe6+ fxe6 11 Bc4 +/- Qd7 12 Qf3 Nf6 13 0-0-0 e5 14 Bg5 Nd4 15 Rxd4! exd4 16 Qb3 Rxc4 17 Qxc4 Nxe4 18 h4 Nxc5 19 hxg5 Qf5, and here White blundered a piece with 20 Nxd4?? Qf4+ after which Black easily won. Better was 20 Nc7! after which the white attack would have continued.**

My only point of criticism about this book is that the author is quite a bit too enthusiastic about White's chances and often loses objectivity. Similarly, Black's best options often go unmentioned, but that I guess is to be expected when an author plays the opening enthusiastically himself.

Overall, this CD is better than one above by Bagirov, but it could have been even better. More games in the database could have been annotated and those that are could have been annotated more in-depth and, as just noted, the objectivity is a bit flawed. Nevertheless, a solid performance, which may inspire more creative players to give this still relatively unexplored opening a try.

My assessment of this CD: 

Grob's Attack (Electronic Book) by Tim Sawyer, 2001 Pickard & Son Publishers, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Only available on-line, \$14.95

Grob's Attack (1 g4) has always had a strange attraction to me when I'm playing blitz and throwing down a beer or two as I play, but other than that, I have never played this opening. When playing Black, I have only faced it once, in my first-ever rated game, where I enthusiastically answered 1 g4 with 1...e5, hoping that my opponent would be stupid enough to play 2 f3 so I could finish the game with 2...Qh4 mate. Of course, that didn't happen, but I won in the end.



Last year, I reviewed Sawyer's *The Alekhine Defense Playbook*, which is an excellent introductory book to the Alekhine Defense. This book is very different, but still interesting in its own way.

First of all, I would commend Sawyer for not pretending that this opening is something that it is not, which is good! In his introduction he writes, the following, brutally honest piece:

"Why don't Masters often play the Grob? It is because the Grob has at least five serious problems. First, it gives Black a free hand in the center. Like it or not, whoever is strongest in the center is usually strongest in the game. Second, White does not directly pressure Black with 1.g4, and therefore White loses the advantage of the first move; that's not fatal, of course, since we all have to Black about half the time. Third, the pawn on g4 is undefended and can be easily attacked by the very natural 1.g4 d5. The biggest problem with that is there is no natural developing move for White to protect g4; thus White often falls behind in development to avoid losing material. Fourth, you will normally have to work harder to survive as White against stronger players when you play the Grob than you would have to work if you play 1.e4 or 1.d4. And fifth, it is generally much easier for Black to create open lines

against White's King in the Grob Attack by moves 15-20 than it is in most other openings. The White King may be safe in the center for a little while, but when pawns are exchanged and lines are opened, there can suddenly be major highways to the White monarch.

It is a great opening for you to play if surprise is very important to you. It is a great opening for you to play if your opponents lack the skill or knowledge to make you suffer from the drawbacks of the Grob. And it is a great opening for you to play if you would rather get a funny look from your opponent than a win over your opponent. Has any World Champion played the Grob Attack in a major tournament game as White? No. So, go out and Grob to your heart's content. Laugh and have fun, but don't bet the farm on this opening!"

Thank you. At least he has now told me that I don't have to suffer the usual rare-opening-author-rubbish, where the author tries to demonstrate, and often claims, an edge for party who plays the rare opening despite all logic.

After the introduction, follows another kind of introduction, a kind of overview to the 10 surveys that follow. Nothing too substantial, but still a nice overview of which lines are covered in the different surveys.

Then we arrive at the ten surveys:

- 1: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 c6 3 h3 e5 4 d4
- 2: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 c6 3 h3 e5 4 d3
- 3: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 c6 3 h3 h5
- 4: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 c6 3 g5
- 5: 1 g4 d5 2 h3
- 6: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 e5 3 c4
- 7: 1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 Bxg4
- 8: 1 g4 e5 2 Bg2
- 9: 1 g4 e5 2 d3
- 10: 1 g4 h5 and 1...d6

An amazing list, considering, that I think that White is positionally clearly worse after 1 g4.

Let's take a look what kind work we expect to see in the surveys. The following is from survey 1, and pretty much represents the average survey in this book. The annotations are those by Sawyer, although I have cut them down and added a few comments of my own in brackets.

Tuturin,S - Nikitin,A, Geller Memorial Moscow 1999

1 g4 d5 2 Bg2 c6 Black solidifies his center and now threatens to take on g4. **3 h3** This variation is called the "Short Spike." It is this variation that Michael Basman made famous with his book "The Killer Grob." **3...e5** Black's center is clearly strong. Of interest is that Black can reach this position via any order of moves. **4.d4** For other moves, see Game 2. **4...e4** This pawn drives a wedge into the White position and takes the natural f3-square away from the White Knight. 4...exd4 A good try. 5.Qxd4 This was the plan since Black cannot attack the Queen with a Knight. **A)** 5...Qf6 It is reasonable to confront the centralized Queen in this way. 6.Nf3 Qxd4 7.Nxd4 h5 8.g5 Ne7 9.c4 (9.e4!)?= seems to be very playable.) 9...dxc4 10.Nd2 Nf5 The pawn on c4 cannot be defended since the c6-pawn is pinned. 11.Nxf5 Bxf5 12.Nxc4 Na6 13.0-0 0-0-0 14.Be3 Bc5 15.Rac1 Bxe3 16.fxe3 This is unusual, but White targets f7. 16...Be6 17.Ne5 Rhf8 18.a3 Nc7 19.b4 Rde8 20.e4 Nb5 ½-½. Basman-Hebden, England 1981; **B)** 5...h5 This is typical for Black, and in this case neither side will be able to castle Kingside. 6.Nc3 hxg4 7.hxg4 Rxh1 8.Bxh1 Qh4 9.Bf3 Nf6 10.Qe3+ (10.Qe5+= is better.) 10...Be6 11.g5 Qh2 Black hits on the weak g1-Knight. 12.Kf1

Nfd7 13.g6 Bc5 14.gxf7+ Kxf7?? (Unfortunately this move allows White to escape with another check. Instead 14...Kf8!-+ is a subtle and brilliant improvement that Black missed. Now if the Queen moves away, Black will apply checkmate on f2.) 15.Qf4+ Qxf4 16.Bxf4 Na6 17.e4 d4 18.Nce2 Nb4 19.c3 dxc3 20.Nxc3 covering a2 just in time. 20...Nc2 21.Rc1 Nd4 22.Bd1 Bc4+ 23.Kg2 g5 This creative sacrifice works because of the position of White's King. Some fancy footwork led to a draw in bazar-wokzal-junior/ICC 3 0 Internet Chess Club 1999/1/2-1/2; C) 5...Be7!? 6.g5 (6.Qxg7? Bf6 and the Queen is trapped.) 6...f6 7.h4 Bf5 8.c4 dxc4 9.Qxc4 Nd7 10.e4 Ne5 11.Qc2 Bg4 12.f3 Be6 13.Nc3 fxc5 14.hxc5 Bxc5 15.Nge2 Bc4 16.f4 Nd3+ The beginning of a King hunt. 17.Kf1 Bxf4 18.b3 Bxc1 19.bxc4 Qf6+ 20.Kg1 Be3+ 21.Kh2 Nh6 22.Rhf1 Ng4+ 23.Kg3 Bf2+ 24.Kxg4 h5+ 0-1.

bazar-wokzal-D-Fridman, ICC 2000; D) 5...Nf6 6.g5 Nfd7 7.c4 Qb6! (The attack on the Queen is the only way for Black to defend d5 [CH: Really?! I think that 7...dxc4 8 Qxc4 Bd6 looks quite comfortable for Black]) 8.Qxb6 Nxb6 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.Bxd5 cxd5 11.Nc3 Be6 12.Nf3 Nc6 13.Be3 a6 14.Nd4 Bb4 15.0-0-0 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Ne5 17.f4 Nc4 (The Knight finds a powerful post here.) 18.Bf2 Rc8 19.f5, Black is mounting small advantages on the Queenside. Thus, White decides to press matters on the Kingside. [CH: here Sawyer follows the game until move 50, at which time Black was better and eventually won in bazar-wokzal-Psakhis/ICC 3 0 Internet Chess Club 1999] **5 c4** White attacks the backward pawn on d5 for a chance at eliminating the front pawn on e4. **5...Bd6 6 Nc3 Ne7 7 Qb3!** A thematic idea credited to Tim Wall. White targets d5 and b7. [CH: Here Sawyer also goes in-depth with 7 Bg5, which has been tried out by Basman a couple of times.] **7...h6** Black stops a Bishop pin on g5. [CH: Here Sawyer gives examples with 7...0-0, claiming an edge for White after both 8 Bd2 and 8 Bg5, when Black as far as I can see is doing very well after 8 Bd2 dxc4!? (Sawyer only mentions 8...Na6) 9 Qxc4 Be6 10 Qa4 f5 11 Qc2 Na6 12 a3 Nd5 13 gxf5 e3! or 8 Bg5, against which Sawyer only gives 8...f6, which is plainly bad for Black, whereas Black appears to be able to play the more aggressive and better 8...h6! 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 cxd5 e3! with a nice initiative for Black.] **8 Bd2** This not only develops a piece but also stops a check. 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.Nxd5?? would be a mistake. 9...Nxd5 10.Qxd5?? Bb4+ and Black picks up the Queen on d5. **8...Bc7** This increases the support of d5. **9 0-0-0 0-0 10 g5** White makes use of the advance pawn to pry open lines toward the Black King in an attempt to drum up an attack. **10...hxc5 11 Bxg5 dxc4 12 Qc2** White chooses to go after the pawn on e4 instead of the one on c4. 12.Qxc4 is also playable 12...b5 (12...Na6 13.Bxe4 Qd6 14.Kb1 Be6 15.Qd3 Nb4 16.Qf3±; 12...Be6 13.Qb4 f6 14.Qxb7 Nd7 15.Be3 f5 16.Bg5±) 13.Qb4 Bd6 14.Qb3 Be6 15.Qc2 f5 16.f3 += [CH: 15...f6!? 16 Bd2 f5 looks better for Black] **12...f6 13 Be3 Nd5** 13...f5 A a [sic!] reasonable attempt for Black to hold his e-pawn. 14.Bg5 Qd6 15.e3 Nd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bf4 Qb6 18.Bxc7 Qxc7=+ [CH: This is awful for White] **14 Nxe4 Be6 15 Nc5 Bf7 16 Qe4** Better is 16.Nxb7! Nxe3 17.fxe3 Qe7 18.Qc3 +/- [CH: This cannot be right, Black must at least be okay after 18...Bb6!? or 18...Na6!, intending ...Nb4-d5] **16...Re8 17 Qh4** White angles for a Kingside attack and eventually gets one. 17.Qf3!? is worth considering. [CH: Black is clearly better after 17...b6 18 Na4 Nxe3 19 fxe3 Bd5] **17...b6 17...Rxe3!** (The best continuation.) 18.fxe3 Nxe3-+. [CH: I don't think that Black is winning, although he definitely holds the better chances. White's best is probably something like 19 Be4. However, both 17...c3!? as well as the text move are quite good for Black] **18 Ne4 Qe7 19 Bd2 Na6 20 Nc3?** 20.Qg4= gives equal chances. [CH: Rubbish, Black is better after both 20...Rad8 and 20...Be6 21 Qh5 Rad8 or 21 Qg6 Qf7] **20...Nab4 21 Bxd5 Nxd5=+** [CH: This evaluation seems a bit strange, given that he claims Black to be winning two moves later, without him pointing out further mistakes by White] **22 Nf3** [CH: This is really bad, better is 22 Re1, although Black is still clearly better, but no comments to this move by Sawyer] **22...Nxc3 23 bxc3 Qxe2** 23...Qa3+!-+ 24.Kb1 Bg6+ and Black is better. [CH: "and Black is winning on the spot" would have been a clearer observation] **24 Rdg1 Qxf3 25 Rxc7+ Kf8 26 Qh6 Bf4 27 Bxf4-+** Here the

game score ends, and I believe that the players agreed to a draw. The obvious capture of the Rook on h1 is met by discovered check on g1, winning the Black Queen. Instead, taking on c3 with check seems to give Black some advantage. ½-½

While Sawyer includes a lot of material, the analytical effort on his part is absolutely minimal and in my opinion quite disappointing. As you can see above, even where he has made some analysis it is often quite flawed and even completely wrong.

Accompanying the survey is a base of some 2960 games, of which far too many are played on the Internet Chess Club with very short time limits, which make the games useless in most respects and the statistics generated by ChessBase terribly inaccurate.

While it's important that even highly irregular openings such as Grob are being documented and analysed, it could have been much better; The present book is entertaining but in many other aspects not worth another thought.

My assessment of this electronic book:

ECO C EE by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2000 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, \$33.00

ECO C by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2000 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Hardcover, 372pp., \$33.00

This is for obvious reasons a double review, two different editions of the same work, ECO C, which covers all openings starting with 1 e4 e6 and 1 e4 e5.

I have in the past made several comments in regards to the negative aspects of the Chess Informant Reader, which is available for free on www.sahovski.com, so I will not go into depth about this, but yet I want to say that it has to be made more user-friendly. Amongst others I think that it should be possible to add your own analysis to that given in the ECOs or Informators, but so far this is not case.



Another point I have made in the past is the lack of original input in ECO. Although generally more non-Informator games are being added in this edition in comparison with other new editions of ECO, I still have a problem with the material that makes its way to the final cut.

The main body of material in this edition of ECO stems from the 3rd edition; in addition, games from the most recent Informators and some of the comments been added. Finally, there is a limited number of non-Informator games being used. I don't mind the first two, but regarding the third, we only receive an evaluation of the position, and rarely any suggested improvements. Furthermore, it would be logical to include some material from the many opening monographs that are being published all the time. Particularly in those lines where no grandmaster would dare to set his or her foot, it would be useful to know what the latest analytical developments are.

Therefore while I would say that the main lines are covered reasonably well, the lesser lines live in oblivion. This problem will persist until the format is changed back to the way it was originally, where a GM was hired to write a chapter or a few variations. Significantly, the GM would recommend certain lines and give those improvements that he or she had in mind, but the anonymous caretakers do not make any effort to add any analysis of their own.

When I grew up as a teenage chess player, ECO was an invaluable tool, but nowadays I mainly use it as a reference work relying more on ChessBase and TWIC, which give

me information that I really need when I'm writing books and articles such as this one. There is rarely analysis contained in ECO that has not already appeared in a previous Informator.

While I like the printed editions, their value is diminished by not containing any original analysis. This makes room for the electronic editions, which, although using an inadequate reader, at least have the advantage of not taking up space on your bookshelf. Of course, ECO is ECO, and although the content is disappointing, you will still find information here that is not as accessible elsewhere as it is here.

My assessment of the electronic edition: 

My assessment of the 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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