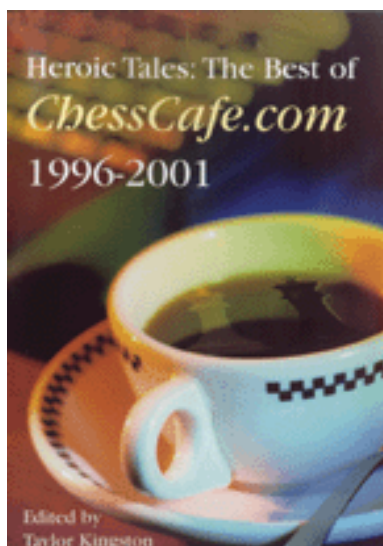




C O L U M N I S T S

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:*****Sicilian Kan***

by John Emms

Taming the Sicilian

by Nigel Davies

Accelerated Dragon Assault!

by Andrew Martin

Teach Yourself in Chess Openings: Sicilian Defence

by Alexander Kalinin

Tame Sicilians

Recently I had the pleasure of reviewing an excellent book on the Sveshnikov Sicilian by Yuri Yakovich, who is a renowned expert on this particular line in the Sicilian, and it clearly is reflected in his work. Two other major lines have been covered in detail in books by the British publisher, Gambit Publications, the Taimanov Sicilian by the hard-working editor Graham Burgess and the Sicilian Sozin by Ukrainian GM Mikhail Golubev. Strangely enough it has been



some years since there last was a thorough book in English on the Najdorf Sicilian. Since Nunn/Gallagher thoroughly worked on the Najdorf some years back, I only recall Tony Kosten's great little book on the Najdorf. Similarly on the Dragon, there have been two works of value, Ward's *Winning with the Dragon* and Golubev's *Easy Guide to the Dragon*, while Gufeld/Stetsko's two-volume "ultimate" coverage on the Dragon left a lot to be desired. In this column, I will look at four new works on the Sicilian.

Sicilian Kan by John Emms, 2002 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 192pp., \$19.95

The Kan Variation of the Sicilian is certainly a line that hasn't been covered in books in English for a while. In fact, I don't recall a book exclusively on the Kan in English at all. This is strange since it has for some time been a favourite of those players who needed a backup when they want to stay clear of the Najdorf, Sveshnikov and Dragon Variations, while still having a chance to play for a win. In the past many strong grandmasters have played this line, including Kasparov, who again used it against Junior in their match in New York. While keeping up with the developments in any of the above lines is almost a full time job, that hasn't happened yet with the Kan.



John Emms has for some years been one of my favourite opening book authors, although he too has had some modest efforts. However, in a broader chess audience I think he is mostly known for being part of the quartet that wrote *Nunn's Chess Openings*.

The Sicilian Kan hasn't so far caught the attention of too many lower-rated players, but I think that may be about to change with the emergence of this book. As Emms writes in the preface: "A major selling point, which cannot be overstressed is that the Kan is one of the easiest variations of the Sicilian to learn, unlike some of the more high-profile lines I could mention (the Dragon, the Najdorf and the Sveshnikov), the onus is not on the player with the black pieces to memorise reams of opening theory simply to stay on the board. Of course Black still has to play good moves, but it is much less likely to be at 'disadvantage' simply down to a memory loss. The Kan is a 'system' in that Black tends to react similarly regardless of how White plays it."

This is something I can easily confirm myself. In my younger years (at the risk of sounding old, I'm just 31), I played the Kan quite frequently with good results, mainly due to the players behind the white pieces not knowing how to react against it, using up a lot of time, while I found my way playing a Hedgehog set-up without spending too much time. Some years after, a teammate, Søren Søgaard (also known from *Seagaard Chess Reviews* on the net) introduced an interesting idea in the Kan

to our team at a team meeting before a critical match in the Danish League. It started out as follows: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 5 Bd3 (or 5 Nc3) 5...Qc7 6 0-0 Nf6 followed by ...b6, ...Bb7, ...d6, ...Nbd7, ...Be7 and finally 12...h5!?. This line was to be played pretty much regardless of how White set up his pieces. I can report back, that despite its odd look, it worked miracles in our last two matches, scoring some 4 points in 5 games. I still use the line in internet blitz games, both this original form and some accelerated forms that are not covered in the present book. But back to the book.

The contents page gives us the following distribution:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Preface (2 pages)
- Introduction (3 pages)
- **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6**
- **5 Bd3**
- 1 5 Bd3 Nf6 6 0-0 Qc7 7 Qe2 d6 (34 pages)
- 2 5 Bd3 Nf6 6 0-0 Qc7: Seventh move alternatives (14 pages)
- 3 5 Bd3 Nf6 6 0-0 d6 (22 pages)
- 4 5 Bd3 Bc5 (30 pages)
- 5 5 Bd3: Fifth move alternatives for Black (17 pages)
- **5 Nc3**
- 6 5 Nc3 Qc7 (27 pages)
- 7 5 Nc3 b5 6 Bd3 Qb6!? (17 pages)
- 8 5 Nc3 b5: Sixth move alternatives (9 pages)
- **5 c4**

- 9 5 c4 (9 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)


As you can see, this is one of the bigger books in this series by Everyman. I'm still puzzled as to why the book on for example the Queen's Indian had to fit into such a small format while the Sicilian Kan, which is far less popular than the Queen's Indian, is awarded some 40 or so pages more to cover it.

And again, the index of variations is missing from the line-up, I still don't understand why, but I will not stop mentioning it until it gets changed.

That being said, this book is probably one in this series that has the most author-input per page. I say that, because on literally every single page, Emms offer not only refinements, but also suggestions to changes in move orders, improvements over existing theory and very often big chunks of analysis of his own. This alone should make anybody playing the Sicilian Kan as Black or those who play the Open Sicilian as White, run to order this book immediately. There are so many ideas and novelties that are lined up to be tried for both White and Black, ideas that have to be tested in your games.

I will not go into details with variations and suggestions, but generally I found his analysis to be of excellent quality and standing up to closer scrutiny. In addition, his verbal annotations are also generally of a high standard, and I felt that I too learned a lot from reading this book, not only about the Sicilian Kan, but about the Sicilian, as well as

chess overall. I think that this book will make a good choice of any rated from around 1600 up to and including grandmasters.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Sicilian Kan* by John Emms

Taming The Sicilian by Nigel Davies, 2002
Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation,
Paperback, 144 pp., \$19.95

British GM Nigel Davies is as you may know the latest addition to the ChessCafe's roster of columnists. His first column debuted two weeks ago, and if you haven't read it, you should check it out. It is full of good advice for the improving player. In this column, we have also recently acquainted



ourselves with the works of Nigel Davies, his two most recent books *Alekhine's Defence* and *The Grünfeld Defence* (both published by Everyman Chess) are worthwhile additions to your chess library if you happen to play either of these two openings.

The Sicilian Defence, however, is another thing when it comes to opening theory, strategy or most anything else. Putting a repertoire together against

the various Sicilian lines has for many people, including myself at one point, been a major nightmare.

Needless to say, putting a repertoire together that will work for a longer period of time is a never-ending project. Attempts have been made in several books, most notably by Nunn (/Gallagher) in the *Beating The Sicilian* series, but the lines suggested became so popular upon publication of each volume that the suggested lines quickly got so outdated, that the books in many cases became obsolete.

No wonder that so many people have switched to the relative simplicity of the 2 c3 Sicilian or for that matter the Closed Sicilian, which for example was John Emms' recommendation in his *Attacking with 1 e4*.

Now, however, it is Davies' turn to take on the Sicilian, but as the title indicates, he doesn't suggest meeting it with very aggressive lines; he aims to tame it, which is also a more tolerable approach as an author. That means that he can offer relatively quieter lines for White that result in a pleasant or playable position that you may understand better than your opponent.

On the back cover blurb we are told the following: “In this book, Grandmaster Nigel Davies tackles the Open Sicilian head on, but still develops an easy-to-use system for White based broadly upon the fianchetto of the king's bishop. Davies arms the readers with an impressive repertoire that enables

them to face the Sicilian Defence with renewed confidence.”

The contents in the book is divided up as follows:

- Bibliography
- Introduction
- 1 The Najdorf Variation
- 2 The Classical Variation
- 3 The Scheveningen Variation
- 4 The Paulsen and Taimanov Variation
- 5 The Kan Variation
- 6 The Pelikan-Sveshnikov Variation
- 7 The Löwenthal, Kalashnikov and other ...e7-e5 Lines
- 8 The Dragon and other ...g6 Lines
- 9 Other Lines
- Index of Variations
- Index of Complete Games

In the introduction, Davies suggests the reader study the lines as follows:

1. **Familiarise** yourself with the basic patterns by playing through the games at speed. At this stage you should ignore the notes and sub-variations.
2. **Play** these lines in quick games at your local club or on the internet (www.freechess.org or www.chessclub.com).
3. **Look up** the lines that occurred in your games and cross-check your play against the lines that I recommend.
4. **Repeat** steps 2 and 3 for a month or two.

5. **Study** the book more carefully, working from cover to cover and making notes about any points of interest. Analyse the points of interest.
6. **Adopt** your new weapon in competitive games and matches.
7. **Analyse** your competitive games to establish what happened and whether either side could improve.

In my opinion, this approach is a very good way of really getting to know your systems before you use them competitively and also helps you to remember the lines, thereby giving you an advantage over your opponents.

As mentioned above, the repertoire is based around lines that involve a fianchetto of White's king's bishop; this choice is in my opinion a very reasonable choice, as the lines are not too difficult to memorise and understand, and in addition, they are not terribly popular, so your opponent may not know the lines particularly well, therefore enabling you to obtain a good position without too many headaches.

That being said, there is a very good reason why these lines are not terribly popular: they are quite tame. Having played various variations in the Sicilian over the years, I can safely say that it was not the fianchetto lines that kept me from sleeping at night. Not that I didn't study them, but against best play from Black, they are relatively innocuous, leaving Black with a relatively easy game, but of course this is where Davies enters to prove me, and undoubtedly many others, wrong.

In chapter one it is the Najdorf Variation that gets

the treatment, and frankly quite surprisingly, the very first game in the book is a dreadful loss for White, where one of the specialists in this particular line, GM Sergei Kudrin, loses relatively easy as White against GM Lubomir Ftacnik. But Davies does make some suggestions for possible improvements along the way, obviously so, because otherwise his system would have already been blown apart. But let's take a look at the game and Davies' suggestions. I have chosen not to include the annotations, and will therefore only look at his suggestions.

Kudrin-Ftacnik Wijk aan Zee 1985

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 g3 e5 7 Nde2! b5 8 Bg2 Bb7 9 0–0 Be7 10 h3 0–0

At this point, Davies mentions that Daniel King in a similar position "has proposed 10...h5!?, which restrains g3-g4 and asks where White's knight on e2 plans to go. On the other hand it is difficult to believe that gratuitous weakening of Black's kingside can be good. Tests are needed to determine its merit." Here I think that Davies gets around his task a bit too easy. How about suggesting a move for White, in case someone playing White doesn't have a clue what to do and may actually buy into GM Daniel King's concept? However, I too think that White should be better after for example 11 Bg5!? Nbd7 12 a3 Nc5 13 b4 Ne6 14 Be3 with a pleasant game for White.

11 g4 Nbd7 12 Ng3 b4 13 Nd5 Nxd5 14 exd5 g6 15 a3

Here Davies quotes the game Kindermann-Stohl, Trnava 1987, which continued with 15 Bh6 Re8 16 Qd2! (Davies illustrates why the immediate f2-f4 is weaker) 16...a5 17 f4 (17 a3!? is also possible, transposing to the next suggestion he has for White) 17...Bh4 18 Ne4 Nf6 19 Nxf6+ Bxf6 20 f5 and here comes the verdict "with pressure on the f-file". However, in the game continuation, Black promptly closed the f-file for some time to come with 20...g5, but after 21 Be4, White was slightly better and eventually won a long game. But what about 20...Ba6!?, activating the bishop and taking the f1-square away from White, e.g., 21 Rfe1 gxf5 22 gxf5 Kh8 with possible play along the g- and c-files looking quite decent for Black, while 21 Rf2 Bh4 22 Rf3 e4 looks downright better for Black. Also both Fritz8 and Junior6 claim 18...f5!? to be worthwhile for Black, although it looks somewhat weakening to me. There is enough to be analysed at this point.

15 ..a5 16 Bh6 Re8 17 f4?!

Now 17 Qd2 "with pressure against the b4-pawn" is suggested, although with no further analysis given. Something I think should have been there, just to illustrate the point, since 17...bxa3 18 Rxa3 Nb6 19 b3 a4, and it looks like it is possible for Black to neutralize the pressure, e.g., 20 Rb1 Qc7 21 Be3 axb3 22 Raxb3 Nc4 23 Qc3 Ba6 with approximately even chances. The rest of the game, I will leave unannotated, although Davies didn't do so.

**17 ..Ba6 18 Rf3 Bh4 19 Kh2 exf4 20 Rxf4 Bf6 21
axb4 Be5 22 Re4 Qh4 23 Bf4 Nf6 24 Bxe5 Nxe4
25 Nxe4 Rxe5 26 Rxa5 f5 27 Ng3 f4 28 Nh1 Qe7
29 Qd4 Re2 30 Qxf4 Rf8 31 Qg3 Re3 32 Rxa6
Rxc3 33 Nxc3 Rf2 34 Rc6 Qe3 35 Rc8+ Kf7 36
Rc7+ Ke8 37 Nh1 Qf4+ 38 Kg1 Rd2 0-1**

The above is what I found fairly typical throughout the book, i.e., the analysis was not particularly deep, while the explanations of general themes were generally quite good and helped the reader gain a better understanding of the opening overall.

Moving on to other chapters, the g3-line against the Classical Sicilian is in my opinion one of the least worrisome lines for Black in the present book. The existing theory doesn't regard it particularly highly, which is also reflected in Davies's choice of games; they either are played in the 1950s or by Nigel Short in the early 1980s, with only one recent game thrown in, Kaidanov-Yermolinsky, which was played in 1996. That surely tells us a story.

One problem with choosing the g3-line against the Classical is that the critical line will end up unlike the quiet waters of the other lines covered, but will rather transpose to something resembling the Yugoslav Attack in the Dragon Variation: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 g3 Bg4 7 f3 Bd7** (7...Nxd4?! is asking for trouble: **8 Qxd4 Bxf3 9 Bb5+ Nd7 10 Rf1** with a dangerous initiative for White) **8 Be3 g6 9 Qd2 Bg7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 g4**. This, I'm sure, is most likely not what White had in mind after playing the slow 6 g3. In

fact I found hundreds of games with this position, but having arisen with a Dragon move order and behind the black pieces, I found names like Tiviakov, Ward, and often Fedorov, all renowned Dragon specialists. I think it would be safe to say that the coverage in this book of this particular line leaves a lot to be desired, given that only one main game, Boleslavsky-Geller, Zurich 1953 and five other game citations were given. This is surely nowhere nearly enough to do anything but scratch the surface..


That being said, I think the coverage of the lines against the Scheveningen, Paulsen/Taimanov, Kan and Dragon variations to be considerably better, supported by more recent games, with generally a good selection by strong players such as Nunn, Adams, Timman and others.

There is of course the question whether all lines of the Sicilian are covered in the present book, and I must say that with the exception of one line, I found everything to be covered in one way or another. The one line I didn't see covered is one invented in Sweden and recently popularized by Swedish IM Jesper Hall: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 Nc3** (this is Davies move order recommendation in order to prevent the Pin Variation, which should be better for White, but is best prevented unless you like studying unnecessary theory) **3...Nc6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 Nf6** (the Sicilian Four Knights Variation, which by the way was used as a repertoire component in the book *Meeting 1 e4* by Raetsky) **6 Ndb5**, and now instead of the standard move **6...Bb4**, which is

covered quite well in the book, there is no mention of **6...Bc5!?**, which is a very tricky line.

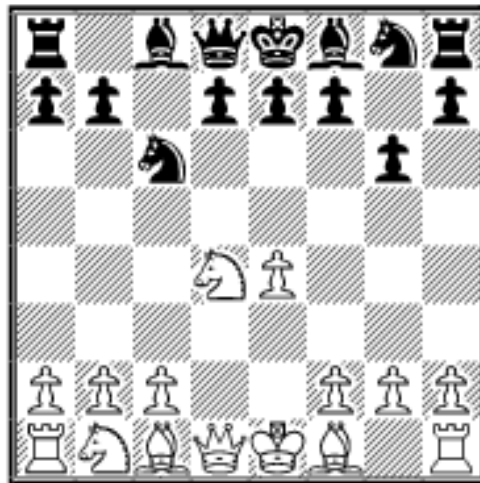
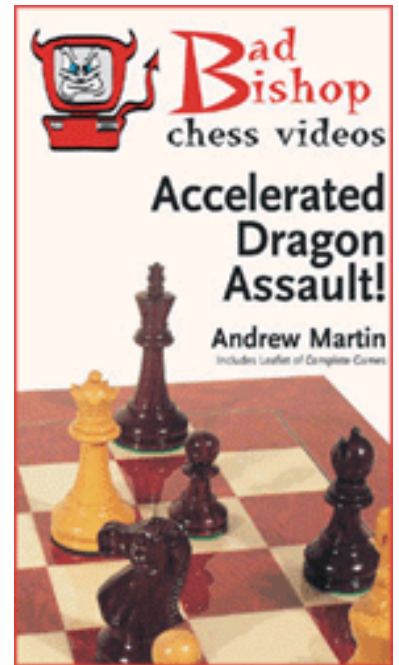
Before I end this review, I have to comment about the use of diagrams throughout the book. Common praxis is to use 1-2 diagrams per page; not in this book, however, where it is not unusual to find 3-4 diagrams per page. Adding up the space that these extra diagrams fill, it comes to quite a few pages over the course of this book. The question is whether or not it would have been far more useful to provide the reader with some more game examples or annotations instead.

I hope the above doesn't sound all too negative, because that would be wrong. The book does leave a pleasant impression, although there are issues that could have been tackled better or differently. The book does accomplish its main goal, which is to put a White repertoire in the Sicilian together, and at that one that doesn't require endless study and memorization of endless variations, that you will most likely never face. This book will probably make sense for players rated somewhere between 1300 and 2000.

My assessment of this book: 

Accelerated Dragon Assault! by Andrew Martin,
2003 Bad Bishop Chess Videos, Figurine Algebraic
Notation, VHS Tape, 2 hours running time., \$29.95

Opening theory on the videotape is certainly not something I'm very well acquainted with; this is certainly a new experience for me. However, as luck would have it, the opening covered on this particular tape, the Accelerated Dragon is one I know very well from literally nearly 20 years of experience and, most importantly, it was the subject of my first book (with GM Peter Heine Nielsen) *The Sicilian Accelerated Dragon*; it arises after the moves **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6**



The host on this tape is a person that many people should be familiar with, English IM Andrew Martin, who, over the years, has written a number of chess books and is hosting the King's Indian section on the chesspublishing.com website, that I have reviewed on a couple of occasions in this column. He is in England known as a good chess coach, which is something that seems fairly obvious in his presentation on this tape.

The material he presents on the tape is divided up in

the following segments:

- Inspirational Games
- Maroczy Pawn Structure
- Piece Placement
- Classical System 6 Nb3 Bxc3+
- Classical 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Be2 0-0 8 0-0 d5!
- Summary
- Pseudo-Yugoslav 7 Bc4 0-0 8 f3 Qb6!
- 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Bb3 a5
- 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Bb3 a5 9 f3 d5!
- 9 f3 d5 10 Nxd5 & main line 10 Bxd5
- 9 f3 d5 10 Bxd5
- Summary
- White's Early Nxc6: Galdunts-Kupreichik
- Delanoy-Wiersma
- Summary
- Maroczy Bind, Gurgenidze System:
Introduction
- White's early Be2 & Be3
- 7 f3 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 Bg7 9 Be3 0-0 10 Qd2 Be6
11 Rc1 Qa5
- 7 Be2 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 Bg7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Qd3
Leko-Anand
- 10 Qd3 Zvjaginsev-Sorokin
- 10 Qe3 Nijboer-Tiviakov
- Summary

This may look quite extensive, but the way it is presented actually makes it feel like a lot less than there actually is. In particular, I must say that the summaries are generally quite good, giving the viewer/student a good chance to sum up mentally what has just been explained on the tape.

But let's look at the contents. The inspirational games are well-chosen, although not all are from top-flight encounters, but that is not terribly important as they are only there to inspire us a bit. The games used in this segment can also be found on a flyer that accompanying the tape, albeit without annotations of any kind. The annotations of these inspirational games are quite light-weight and many of the critical lines for either side are not mentioned. The theoretical coverage is of course a very important aspect of this tape, so I will look a bit closer at this.

In the Classical segment he recommends the following line, among others:

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 Nc3 Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Be2 0-0 8 0-0 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxd5 Qxd5 11 Bf3 Qc4 which certainly is a decent choice for Black, but not at any point does he mention that White can play 12 Be2, which invites the response 12...Qd5, allowing the moves to be repeated after 13 Bf3. I don't quite understand why he hasn't instead used 11...Qa5 as the choice for Black, as it is as good (if not better) as 11...Qc4 and it doesn't allow the mentioned repetition of moves. Nielsen and I did mention that in our book, which makes me wonder why Martin doesn't mention it here, as I very certain that he has our book, as he quotes from it at several points in his presentation, although he at no point mentions his reference. The same goes for many ideas that he shows throughout the tape; they are from various games, of which only very few are credited. I only

recall Silman and Donaldson being quoted on one occasion, and their work on the Accelerated Dragon is like Nielsen and mine – quite essential for those who want to take up this particular line in the Sicilian. This way of presenting the material makes it look like he came up with everything himself, which clearly is not the case. It would have been correct to give credit to the people from whom he has lifted the ideas.


Martin makes an odd statement about the following position: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 Nc3 Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Bb3 a5 9 f3 d5 10 Bxd5 Nxd5 11 Nxd5 f5** "which is not mentioned in many theoretical works". I wonder which theoretical works he is speaking about. The aforementioned works by Silman and Donaldson and Nielsen and I both mention the move, so his statement seems inaccurate.

Also in the line **11 exd5** (moves 1-10 as above) **11...Nb4 12 Nde2 Bf5 13 Rc1 b5 14 0-0 Rc8 15 Nd4 Rxc3!?** **16 bxc3 Na2 17 Ra1 Nxc3 18 Qd2 Qc7** is according to Martin a novelty that was first played in Ramesh-Wajin, Calcutta Zonal 2001, but again I found this statement to be rather odd given that it was mentioned in our book, quoting the games Ivanovic-Cebalo, Yugoslav Ch. 1989, and there is an even older game, De Firmian-Iskov, Gausdal 1982.

Then I have to add a comment about his choice of the Gurgendidze System for Black against the Maroczy Bind. This is a perfectly solid line that

should equalize for Black, but is it really correct to bring it in on the *Accelerated Dragon Assault!* Video?. There is very little assault in the Gurgendidze System; in fact the main line can even make a young man grow tired, e.g., **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 c4 Nf6 6 Nc3 d6 7 Be2 Nxd4 8 Qxd4 Bg7 9 Be3 0-0 10 Qd2 Be6 11 f3 a6 12 b3 Qa5 13 Rc1 Rfc8 14 Na4 Qxd2+ 15 Kxd2 Nd7**, a line where Black generally cannot expect much more than a draw. This position can be reached in a number of different ways in the Gurgendidze System, and is in my opinion the biggest problem for Black if he intends to play for a win. There are so many other and more exciting systems to choose from for Black so it makes me wonder what made Martin settle on this one.

Overall I quite liked this tape, but I think the theoretical coverage could have been better and his sources should have been named. However, I think as an introduction to the Accelerated Dragon, this tape is a very good choice, especially for players rated below 2000.

My assessment of this book: 

Order: *Accelerated Dragon Assault!* by Andrew Martin, along with the Sicilian Dragon T-Shirt, as this week's **ChessCafe Special of the Week**

Teach Yourself in Chess Openings: Sicilian

Defence by Alexander Kalinin, 2003 Russian Chess House, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Hardcover, 274 pp., \$25.00

This is the first volume in a new series of books from a publisher with which I'm not terribly familiar. According to the advertisements in the back of the book, there are two other titles in this series, one on the French Defence (which I have also received and which I will review at a later time), and one on the King's Indian.



In order for you to know what these books are about, let me quote from the preface of the book:

"We hope that these books will help our reader to play their favourite openings well, while eliminating the danger of 'sinking' in the boundless flood of opening information.

"In contrast to the usual books on openings that contain only reference data, the Self-Tutor reveals to its readers the conceptual sense of the openings and their inseparable links with the middlegame, demonstrating typical plans, tricks and subtleties that are characteristic of the respective openings. At the same time, the reader will gain a complete impression of the modern theoretical situation. For this purpose, the Self-Tutor contains complete games from tournaments in the last decade of the 20th century, thus combining recent achievements in theory with examples of middlegame strategy. The approach enables the series to be used in

several ways: as a reference book on the opening theory, as a source for systematic study, and as a useful tool for broadening one's chess horizons.

"The compact symbolic language used in this book will not prevent the reader from finding typical plans, methods, and combinations that require his particular attention. All these important fragments are marked with TM ('typical method') sign."

It sounds pretty decent, when using their words, doesn't it? However, what they have written is quite different from the impression that I got from going through the book. First of all, expecting languageless annotations to be of much use to the improving player is really not right. In addition, very often critical lines are not mentioned, some games are decided without either side having made a mistake throughout the entire game, or least the mistake(s) isn't indicated anywhere. The annotations to the games mainly consist of database dump of little or no relevance, with some lines lifted from other sources such as Chess Informant with some loose variations given here and there.

Furthermore their 'TM' sign wasn't to be found in every game, even if a game had something that should have warranted a 'TM' sign. It is not clear what relevance a game might have when the annotations are weak, and a typical method or idea is not illustrated.

The material in this book is divided up by variation to which there is a short introduction, such as, for

example, the following from the chapter on the Rauzer Variation: "Another aggressive line. White castles queenside and presses along the d-file and the h4-d8 diagonal. A typical pawn structure arises after Bg5xf6 g7xf6 as compensation for his pawn weaknesses and spatial disadvantage, Black has the bishop pair and a strong central position."

This introduction is then given in German, Russian and Spanish as well. Let me add that a good number of the games given in this chapter do not feature what was mentioned in the cited introduction; instead they featured kingside attacks, play against the queenside, isolated pawns, etc etc.

In the chapter on the Dragon Variation, the only line covered was the Yugoslav Attack with 9 0-0-0 and 9 Bc4 Bd7 10 0-0-0 Rc8 11 Bb3 Ne5 12 h4. Nothing else, so no classical lines that otherwise also contain a lot of ideas that are quite essential to the understanding of this variation. Neither did the thematic break ...d6-d5 get the 'TM' sign, nor did for that matter the standard exchange sacrifice on c3.

I think it would be safe to say, that I'm not particularly happy about this book. It has a lot of decent material, but it is presented poorly.

My assessment of this book: 

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

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