



COLUMNISTS

ChessBase Cafe

Steven B. Dowd



Translate this page



Rating Chart

- Awful –
- Poor –
- Uneven –
- Good –
- Great –
- Excellent –

Reviewed this Month

Mega Database 2012
by ChessBase

Gambit Opening Repertoire
by Valeri Lilov

The Dutch Stonewall
by Valeri Lilov

First Steps in Opening Play
by Andrew Martin

First Steps in Positional Play
by Andrew Martin

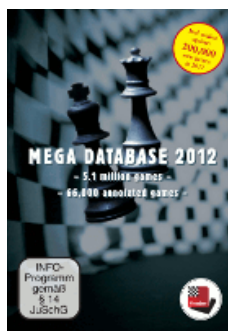
Purchases from our chess shop help keep ChessCafe.com freely accessible:



Fritz 13
by ChessBase



No Fear of 1.d4, Vol. 1
by Sergei Tiviakov



Something for Everyone

This month I review four trainers and the new Mega Database 2012. I had plenty of fun "playing" with the new Megabase, and the trainers are designed primarily for players of lower ratings, but have their value for high-rated club level players as well. Andrew Martin, with his solid teaching style, particular impressed me this month.

Mega Database 2012 (DVD), ChessBase, \$173.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$159.95)

Advertising itself as, "the exclusive annotated database," the newest Mega contains more than 5.1 million games from 1560 to 2011. There are 66,000 games with annotations by strong players, with ChessBase opening classification with more than 100,000 key positions, and the ability to access players, tournaments, middlegame themes, and endgames. There is a new edition of the playerbase. The insert states, "as usual, this is where most of the work was done." However, given the many errors that arise in historical games, I am looking forward to the day when this statement is instead, "as usual, great care was exercised in making sure historical games were accurate and annotated by strong players."

I am quite impressed with the database, but my quibble lies with not including the famous game Kujoth-Fashingbauer, Milwaukee 1950; one of the most fascinating non-master games of the last century:

1.e4 c5 2.b4 cxb4 3.a3 Nc6 4.axb4 Nf6 5.b5 Nb8 6.e5 Qc7 7.d4 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.c5 Nd5 10.b6 Qd8



First Steps in Defence
by Andrew Martin



[FEN "mbqkb1r/pp1ppppp/1P6/2PnP3/3P4/8/5PPP/RNBQKBNR w KQkq - 0 11"]

Yes, nothing but pawn moves by White so far – and Black is crushed.

11.Rxa7 Rxa7 12.bxa7 Qa5+ 13.Nc3 Nxc3 14.axb8=Q Nxd1+ 15.Bd2 Qd8 16.Kxd1 and White later won.

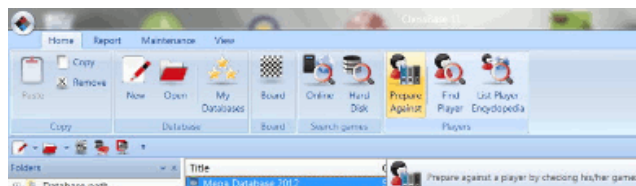
Is it because the game is still thought by some to be a fabricated game? Kujoth has dealt with that critique himself over the years and there should be little question that it should be included.

The package insert also states that CB11 is required and that "with ChessBase 10 or 11 you can download games for Mega 2012 for the whole year..." However, Mega2012 installed perfectly fine on my CB9, with the only caveat that I could not have received the updates. Nevertheless, using Mega in CB9 is hardly optimal; it is like putting retreaded tires on a Roll-Royce compared to what you get with CB11.

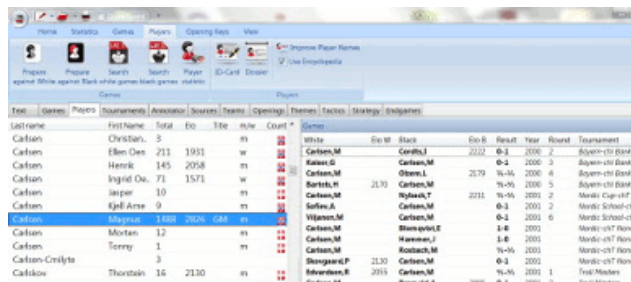
Although I had a long chess life without ChessBase, I cannot imagine one without it today. That being said, I have been a haphazard user of the database, and resolved to become more familiar with its features. For one, I used the database to extract all the featured games for the trainers below. One thing I could not do with CB9 was, for example, to find all of Meduna's games with Black to establish his opening repertoire and win/loss percentage. I was interested because Andrew Martin notes in his opening trainer (reviewed below) that Meduna is a particularly economical player of the black pieces.

With the help of Steffen Giehring from ChessBase I learned how it is done. By the way, I have always received timely help from ChessBase support, often in less than twenty-four hours, even before I started this column. Here is the explanation of how this is done (there are actually two ways to do it!), with illustrations:

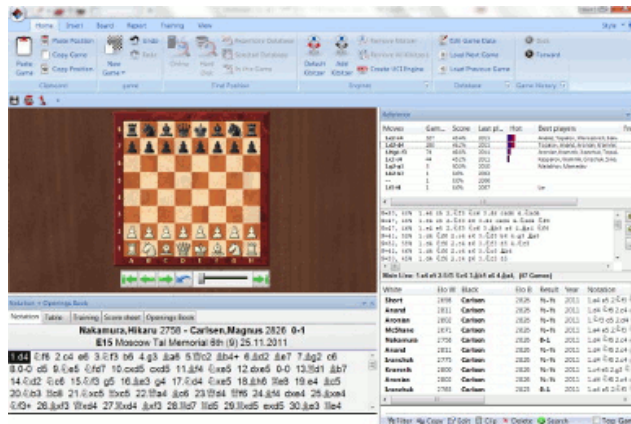
In CB 11 there is a prominent button right in the main screen especially for this purpose. It takes three clicks:



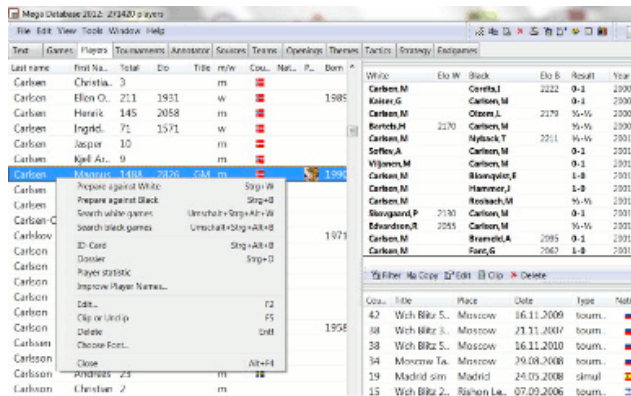
That brings up the players index of your Mega right away:



Now you select the player of your choice and simply click on the button "Prepare against White" or "Prepare against White" on the top. That will bring up the opening statistics for his games and the full list of his games. The opening tree gives detailed information about the number of games, score, when he last played a line, the opponents, etc.:



In CB 10 it works similarly. Open the Mega 2012 and click on the "Players" index. Select the player of your choice and click it with the right mouse. Again, click on "Prepare against White" or "Prepare against White," etc.



Finally, in both versions, there is also the "Dossier" feature.

Right click the player name in the players index and click on "Dossier." This feature takes longer because ChessBase creates a new text with all available information about the player from the databasae and also from the Players Encyclopedia.

Here is a sample of what you get when you search for Meduna:

Player	Date	Win	Loss	Draw
Vlasak, Ma	13/22	8/2	10/0	0
Lencik, A	8/12	6/12	0	100%
Lencik, S	5/7	5/7	0	100%
Danner, Se	4/5	4/5	0	100%
Suran, Ia	4/5	4/5	0	100%
Plachetka, Ja	12/22	10/17	0	100%
Prandstetter, Ed	10/17	10/17	0	100%
Binsky, Ja	7/11	7/11	0	100%
Smackal, Fa	5/5	5/5	0	100%
Medunova, Va	4/9	4/9	0	100%
Orsag, Mi	3/4	3/4	0	100%
Pisar, Mi	3/4	3/4	0	100%
Kaspar, Jo	3/4	3/4	0	100%
Wirthenschon, He	3/3	3/3	0	100%
Joubert, Z	3/3	3/3	0	100%
Chalupav, J	3/3	3/3	0	100%
Pfhar, Th	3/3	3/3	0	100%
Volkova, Je	3/3	3/3	0	100%
Konopka, Mi	3/12	3/12	0	100%
Nal, K	4/7	4/7	0	100%
Zvezda 40/2 2009	10	8/17	0	100%
CZE-07/2C 09/10 2009	10	8/12	1/8	100%
Morava-01 9/00 1999	9/	0/14	22/52%	55/57%
Leipzig BBL 1961	9/	0/17	0	41/58%
Decin-8 1976	10	8/4	2/100%	40/55%
Varna 19th 1980	9/	8/3	3/83%	34/61%
Timaria Tenava 1986	9/	0/42	1/100%	33/45%
Wroclaw-A 1981	8/	8/0	3/83%	29/51%
CZE-07 75/4 Bmo 1973	8/	0/11	3/33%	28/66%
Prague Abner Memorial 2007	8/	0/11	0	26/50%
Biel MTO op 1981	7/	0/19	0	23/60%
CZE-07/2 Czechia 1995	6/	8/1	0	23/56%
CSR 05-8 Haverov 1973	9/	0/18	1/90%	22/67%
CSR op Haverov 1970	8/	0/94	1/100%	22/30%
CZE-07/1c 84/97 1994	8/	0/10	5/70%	21/33%
Barca Memorial 1987	8/	0/12	2/75%	16/65%
CZE-07 08/9 2008	7/	0/15	7/90%	16/56%
Prague Vlas op 2005	7/	0/7	6/86%	15/43%
CZE Czechia-03 1993	7/	0/12	1/90%	14/57%
Decin op 1995	7/	0/6	6/86%	12/30%
Decin op 1996	7/	0/13	17/47%	9/55%
		0/15	3/83%	9/33%

You can research how well he has done against certain players, how he has performed in certain tournaments, and since I will never play GM Meduna, more importantly, his opening repertoire as black should I wish to see if he is really as economical in his play as Martin indicates. The value in this for players at my level (2200 and below) is that we can find high-class players to emulate, so long as they fit our style. I will speak more about using CB11 in coming months.

Everyone should get this database. It is obviously a must buy for any serious tournament player or analyst who uses ChessBase. There are flaws, mainly as I noted, in its approach to historical games, but many won't consider this serious.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order [Mega Database 2012](#)
by ChessBase

Gambit Opening Repertoire (DVD), Valeri Lilov, ChessBase, Playing Time: 4 hours \$30.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$26.95)

I love gambits; always have, and always will. I realize that as I have aged, I should look for a more sedate opening repertoire, but I simply can't. First sacrifice a pawn, then some pieces, and mate! I know it is a simplistic view of the game, but chess for me has always been fun, and I can't imagine just searching for "playable middlegames," as many of the experts suggest.



For lower-rated players though, gambits are one of the best means of learning tactics. In the introduction, Lilov indicates that everyone from beginner to below GM level should train in the open games, because this develops an ability to calculate, develops a feeling for tactical positions, and most importantly, develops an ability to attack. These are all wise words, but if you buy this DVD, I would ask you to start with the summary. It is here that Lilov gives the key.

If you are going to play gambits, you must learn them in depth and simply put, you have to study them. This does not mean simply memorizing some theoretical lines. This will not be a quick process, he notes, and the first question to be answered is, which gambits fit you well? This is an important question. With the exception of the Blackmar-Diemer, for example, I found I don't like gambits where I advance my f-pawn. I found over the years that central gambits are more my speed.

On all four trainers I review here, there is an emphasis on developing a personal system for study. For example, here Lilov notes three things you

must do to become a strong gambit player:

1. Work through games.
2. Make a database of your own, based on your own investigations,
3. Learn the opening through quick games. He considers time limits of fifteen to twenty minutes optimal. I believe correspondence games are also helpful, as they make you engage in deeper thought about the opening. The flaws of an opening become quickly apparent with time to think, and with so many free sites to play "turn-based" chess, it seems a waste not to take advantage of that option these days.

There should also be a fourth item here, one I call "Purser's Law" (after Tom Purser, who now runs a BDG blog and for years published *BDG World*). Purser's Law is that any gambit player must learn the pawn-down endgames that result from the gambits. The reason is that when the attack goes awry, you need to find a way to draw the game. Often the activity gained from sacrificing the pawn can carry into the ending, giving you "just enough" to draw.

The gambits presented are The King's, the Evans, Belgrade, Wing Gambit Deferred, Nimzowitsch, Rasa-Studier, The Mad Dog Attack, Alekhine Gambit-Omega Gambit, The Blackmar-Diemer (BDG), Staunton, Jaenisch/Rosseau, Marshall, Icelandic, Colorado, Fajarowicz, Schara-Henning, From's, and then four worthwhile games on gambits entitled "Gambit Strategy." I rather enjoyed his presentation of the Colorado Gambit (1.e4 Nc6 2.Nf3 f5?!) given with a wink and a nod, indicating maybe "it isn't as bad as it looks." And he is correct, it is one of those gambits opponents will want to blow off the board but will find that Black has all sorts of odd resources.

Lilov is an excellent and enthusiastic teacher. He has an accent, but strives to make everything he says clear, and he does an excellent job. The focus is on ideas here rather than specific variations. But that is one place Lilov also fails on this trainer, at least in two gambits I am very familiar with.

The first is in his presentation of the Henning-Schara gambit: **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 5.Qa4+ Bd7 6.Qxd4 exd5 7.Qxd5 Nc6 8.Nf3 9.Qd1 Bc5 10.e3 Qe7 11.Be2 0-0-0 12.0-0 g5**



[FEN "2kr2nr/pp1bqp1p/2n1p3/2bP2p1/3Q4/2N1PN2/PP2BPPP/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 11"]

Here he only considers 13.a3, which as has been known for decades as too slow. Only the counter-thrust 13.b4! is to be taken seriously (see the table from CB11 and the new Megabase below) and leads to complications that are beyond the scope of this column. I felt a bit betrayed, like I had bought one of those old opening pamphlets that only showed spectacular wins for the "correct" side, and ignored best defenses. Even if he wanted players to study that line on their own, he should have mentioned the possibility and encouraged them to research it on their own. It should also be noted that White has ways to avoid the Henning-Schara, and thus, Black must be prepared to play classical Tarrasch lines. I consider this exclusion much more significant than the next.

Notation	Reference	Table	Training	Score sheet	Openings Book	
Moves	Gam...	Score	Last pl...	Hot	Best players	Frequent players
13.b2-b4	126	67.9%	2011	■	Kasparov, Korobov, Yu, Portisch	
13.d2-d3	47	50.0%	2007		Kovcevic, Shtajler	
13.Nc3-d4	10	62.3%	2010			
13.Bc1-d2	11	54.5%			Leitzo	
13.Qd1-c2	5	60.0%			Naumkin	
13.Nc3-d5	3	66.7%				
13.Nc3-b5	2	100.0%			Hansen	
13.Nc3-a4	2	50.0%				
13.Be2-b5	1	100.0%				
---	1	50.0%	2001			
13.g2-g3	1	0.0%				

More puzzling was the exclusion of the Gunderam Defense from the BDG. "Gunderam's Opfervariante" (sacrificial variation) was one thing that got me interested in the BDG many years ago:

1.d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.f3 exf3 5.Nxf3 Bf5

Gunderam's Defense. Scheerer in his book *The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit* devotes twenty-seven pages to this defense; I highly recommend this book if you decide to take up the BDG.

6.Ne5 e6 7.g4 Ne4!? 8.gxf5?!

Later the in-between check 8.Bb5+ was thought to be better, but it turns out White wins this way.

8...Qh4+ 9. Ke2 Qf2+ 10.Kd3 Nc5+



[FEN "r2kb1r/ppp2ppp/4p3/2n1NP2/3P4/2NK4/PPP2q1P/R1BQ1B1R w kq - 0 11"]

And the complications are phenomenal (11.Kc4! is best and wins, according to Scheerer), having been argued for over fifty years now. I am not saying he should have included this particular variation, but to cover 5...c6 and not cover 5...Bf5 just didn't make sense to me.

Thus, this is a slightly flawed but useful introduction to various gambits. With only four hours to cover a cornucopia of openings, Lilov was bound to have to leave something out; only the above two examples gave me concern. So long as you realize you are only getting part of the story here, I don't hesitate to recommend it. Just realize you will have plenty of work ahead in learning the "meat" of the gambits you choose to play. But then again Lilov makes no pretense that you won't.

My assessment of this DVD:

Order [Gambit Opening Repertoire](#)

by Valeri Lilov

The Dutch Stonewall (DVD), Valeri Lilov, ChessBase, Playing Time: 4 hours, \$30.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$26.95)

This DVD covers both the classic Stonewall with ...Be7 and the so-called modern Stonewall with ...Bd6. This opening has always held a certain fascination



for me as it was played by the great Botvinnik. And, of course, Lilov uses a Botvinnik game as his stem game. My other interest is that it resembles a system with white advocated by Horowitz and Reinfeld in *How to Think Ahead in Chess: the Stonewall Attack*. Though, Lilov does not seem to mention the possibility of playing this system as white.



The content is divided equally between the two lines, which is appropriate. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were a number of leading GMs who played the modern version: Yusupov, Dolmatov, Short, and Agdestein. What surprised me though, was no inclusion of the Polish Immortal, the famous game where Najdorf sacrificed all four minor pieces in a blazing attack. Surely this game is a great advertisement for ...Bd6? There are some other classic games missing, such as Gulko-Zaitsev, Moscow 1968, that I believe should have been included. Also, of the four GMs mentioned earlier as proponents, only one game by Dolmatov is included.

The most telling counter to the modern Stonewall must be the systems where White plays b3 and tries to exchange off Black's strong bishop on d6, leaving him only with the "inferior" Bc8. Here he first presents a game of Botvinnik, but as white – the classic game Botvinnik-Ragozin, 1939. Ragozin of course failed to use Botvinnik's own opening against him. Then Dolmatov makes his entry with the move 7...Qe7 (after 1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg2 c6 6.b3 Bd6 7.0-0), and in the end, it still doesn't seem clear whether or not this is an effective counter. You will be treated to attacking games such as the following, featuring ChessCafe columnist and master teacher Mark Dvoretzky. In this game the Spanish master attempts the line with cxd5, which is not normally a good move for White in these sorts of positions.

Pascual Sauch, Angel (2210) – Dvoretzky, Mark (2475)

Terrassa open 1996

Modern Stonewall [A90]

1.Nf3 f5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.d4 c6 7.Bg2 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0 9.b3 Ne4 10.Qc2 Be6 11.e3 Nd7 12.Bb2 Qe7 13.Rae1 Rae8 14.Nd2 Ndf6 15.Ncb1 Ng4



[FEN "4rrk1/pp2q1pp/2pbb3/3p1p2/3Pn1n1/1P2P1P1/PBQN1PBP/1N2RRK1 w - - 0 16"]

16.Nf3

Here if 16.h3, Black has 16...Nxf2! and if 16.f3 Nxe2!, both very typical sacrifices for this opening. Both are well-worth analyzing on your own, especially if you have an interest in this opening.

16...Qf6 17.h3 Nh6 18.Ne5 Nf7 19.Nd3 g5 20.Nd2 Qh6 21.Nf3 g4 22.hxg4 fxg4 23.Nfe5 Nfg5 24.Nf4 Bxe5 25.dxe5 Nf3+ 26.Bxf3 gxf3 27.Qd1 Ng5 28.Qd4 Nh3+ 0-1

Lilov again emphasizes proper study techniques on the DVD, but his presentations are not as polished and he stumbles more. In general, it seems as if he did not put the usual preparation time into this one and it shows. I recommend this DVD only if you are sure the Stonewall is your opening.

Order [The Dutch Stonewall](#)

by Valeri Lilov

First Steps in Opening Play (DVD), Andrew Martin, ChessBase, Playing Time: 3 hours \$23.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$19.95)

I am a great fan of the "First Step" series and am increasingly becoming a fan of Andrew Martin's teaching style. He never lets the discussion get boring, although sometimes he speaks so quickly that I struggle to understand his accent. The overarching theme here is that if you don't know the opening, you won't get to the other two phases of a chess game! That will resonate well with lower-rated players, who often fret over this and being caught in traps. The package insert indicates that the series is for players below 2200, while Martin notes on the DVD that it is designed for players below 1500. Yet, even those over 1500 will derive benefit from his approach, which is a detailed study of master games.



I was especially impressed that further study methods were explained in some detail. When you get past what Martin calls, "the expert guiding you," as he does on this DVD, you have to get down to the real work of studying on your own. Martin especially stresses that one cannot progress in chess study unless one can find time to be completely focused on the material. It can be as little as half-an-hour at a time, but there must be a complete focus on chess during that time.

The master games all illustrate one poignant theme in opening play. Meduna's opening play as black is featured in three of the games on the trainer, primarily because Martin considers his play in the opening "economical." This could be, of course, the jumping-off point for the serious student to study Meduna's openings to see if his play matches their style. I was able to do a comprehensive search of Meduna's games as black using the new CB11 and Megabase 2012 (see the first review), and I must say he does have a simple but not simplistic approach to the openings that I wish I could emulate.

Unfortunately, the theme is not explicitly shown in the index, so when returning later to re-study a concept, you have to guess or remember which theme is covered in which segment (the only major negative I find for this trainer). For example, the following game illustrates the peril of commencing tactical operations before development is complete. By the way, I took it from Megabase 2012, which has the same notes by Martin! I have used it here only in abbreviated form. The notes to this trainer are simply excellent.

Jones, Gawain C (2418) – Bates, Richard (2373)

GBR-ch 2011

Sicilian [B21]

1.e4 c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.f4 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Be2!?

Gawain has just produced a book and DVD about the best way to tackle the Sicilian. Here he goes back to an old idea of Larsen, which is simply to play a Dutch in reverse with an extra tempo. This can hardly refute the Sicilian, but it puts Richard Bates to the test early on.

5...d6 6.0-0 Bg4

Ambitious and might work better if there was a knight on c3. There is a similar idea: 1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.f4 Nf6 7.0-0 Bg4!? 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Qxf3 0-0 and Black continues ...Nd7, ...Rb8, and ...b7-b5. Exchanging off the bishop clears the decks.

7.Qe1 c4!?

Continuing with his ambition. 7...Nf6 was of course, the less risky way. As you'll see below, this is not the first time Richard Bates has ventured this line.

8.dxc4N

8.Kh1 cxd3 9.cxd3 Nf6 10.Nc3 Nd7 11.Ng5 Bxe2 12.Qxe2 Qa5 13.Nd5 Rc8 14.b4 Qd8 15.Bb2 Bxb2 16.Qxb2 0-0 17.b5 Ncb8 18.Rac1 Rxc1 19.Rxc1 Nb6 20.Ne3 Qd7 21.f5± Cobb,J (2401)-Bates,R (2374), Plovdiv 2010 /½-½ (46).

8...Qb6+ 9.Kh1 Bxb2

The point of the small combination, although Black must be very careful now as he is leaving himself well behind in development.

10.Bxb2 Qxb2 11.Nc3



[FEN "r3k1nr/pp2pp1p/2np2p1/8/2P1PPb1/2N2N2/PqP1B1PP/R3QR1K b kq - 0 11"]

11...Bxf3?

He had to try 11...Nf6 and castle quickly. White can disrupt this plan after 12.e5! and then 12...dxe5 13.Rb1! Qxc2 14.Bd1! Qf5 15.fxe5 leaves Black precariously placed.

12.Bxf3

12.Rb1! Qa3 13.Bxf3 0-0-0 14.e5 also gives White a ferocious attack.

12...Qb4 13.Rb1

It's fair to say that from this point on, White's attack is too strong to meet.

13...Qxc4 14.Rxb7 Nd4 15.Nd5 Rc8 16.Rxa7

16.Rb4 Qc5 17.Qa1 e5 18.Rb7!+-.

16...Nxc2 17.Qb1 Qc5 18.Qb7 Qc6 19.Nc7+ Kd7

19...Rxc7 20.Qxc7 Qxc7 21.Rxc7 Nd4 22.e5 Kf8 23.a4+-.

20.Qxc6+


Leading to an attractive finish.

20...Kxc6 21.e5+ Kb6 22.Rb1+ Kxa7 23.Rb7# 1-0

A miniature that illustrates the peril of commencing tactical operations when development is not complete.

For those rated about 1500 this is a really good introduction to opening ideas and how to begin studying them. Those rated 1800-2000 may find some good

new ideas; I thought I had studied most of Larsen's ideas, and may have simply forgot this one, but this idea of playing the Sicilian as a Dutch with a move in hand certainly seemed new to me. This one I recommend without hesitation.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order [First Steps in Opening Play](#)

by Andrew Martin

Buy all four *First Steps* DVDs and automatically save an additional \$8.00!

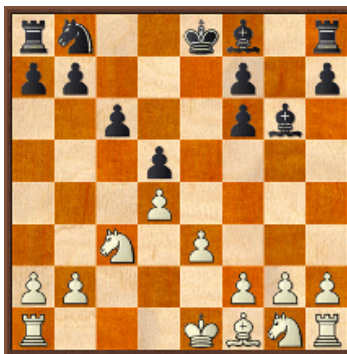
First Steps in Positional Play (DVD), Andrew Martin, ChessBase, Playing Time: 3 hours 20 min \$23.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$19.95)

First Steps in Positional Play was a bit trickier to review as everyone has a different idea on what constitutes "positional" play. Nevertheless, Martin gives most of the important seminal concepts for the intended audience. It is designed mainly for players below 1500. I normally prefer not to give the entire list of topics covered on a trainer, but in this case it seems important:



- Introduction
- A Routine
- Pawn Structure
- The Isolated Pawn I
- The Isolated Pawn II
- The Isolated Pawn III
- The Double Pawn
- The Passed Pawn
- The Passed Pawn
- The Pawn-Center
- The Pawn-Wedge
- Piece Activity
- The Initiative
- The Vulnerable King
- How to Outplay an Opponent
- The Weak King on Both Sides
- Good and Bad Pieces
- How to Outplay an Opponent II
- Power of Resolve I
- Power of Resolve II
- Outro

The notes are really great to this one, so it is easy to go back and review a lesson on your own without having to re-watch the video. The example game for doubled pawns is Ivanchuk-Short, Linares 1992, where Martin notes that, yes, in general, doubled pawns are bad, but there are ways of making them work for us with open lines and active pieces. This is the critical position:




[FEN "rn2kb1r/pp3p1p/2p2pb1/3p4/3P4/

Despite White's solid structure, the open lines and two bishops should allow Black to hold – and he did, the game ended in an interesting draw in thirty-five moves.

Martin considers Short, in his road to the world championship match, as a model in the effective use of structures with doubled pawns – of course this is the same Short who once noted, "Modern chess is too much concerned with things like pawn structure. Forget it, checkmate ends the game."

Some of the topics, such as "Power of Resolve," don't seem to belong here (although in and of themselves, they are quite instructive, indicating how beating stronger players requires more than just waiting for blunders), whereas some, like "Outposts" seem to be missing. I have no hesitation in recommending this trainer to its target audience – it's obvious Martin put a lot of time and effort into it and you will learn most of the important positional concepts if you pay attention and, as he suggests, put the study time in afterward. The *First Steps* trainers would also be great tools for teachers to use with their students as an adjunct to a lecture or home study material.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order [First Steps in Positional Play](#)
by Andrew Martin

Buy all four *First Steps* DVDs and automatically save an additional \$8.00!

© 2012 ChessCafe.com All Rights Reserved.

A PDF file of [this month's column](#), along with all previous columns, is available in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#).

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)

© 2012 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.