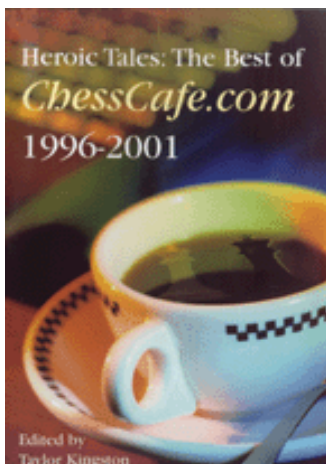




BOOK REVIEWS



The Perfect (Pawn) Storm

Steve Goldberg

Fritztrainer Power Play3: Pawn Storm (DVD), by GM Daniel King, ChessBase 2006, \$37.95

Power Play3: Pawn Storm is the third volume in this DVD series. [Power Play1: Mating Patterns](#) (reviewed [here](#)) covered recognizing the early outlines of mating patterns, and [Power Play 2: Attacking the King](#) discussed how to attack by involving the queen and rooks, creating space, and advancing the g-pawn.

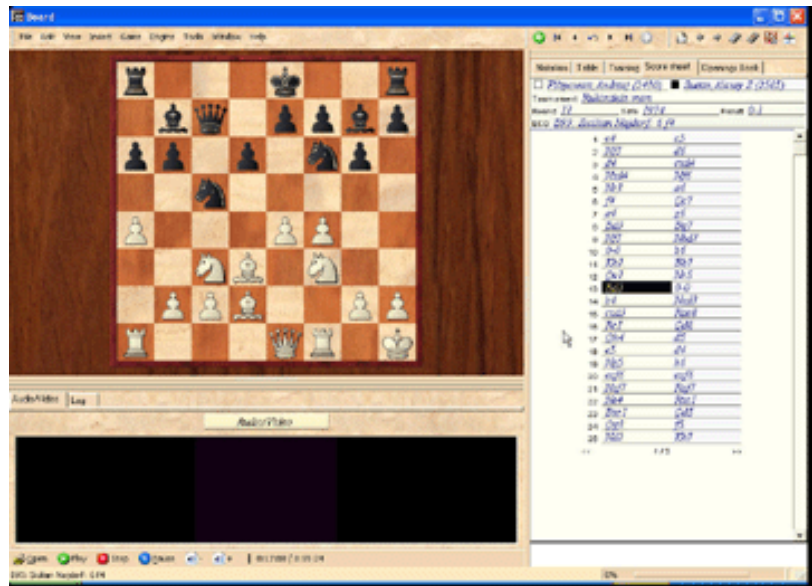
Volume 3 has a very narrow focus. The entire DVD is devoted to attacks leading with either the f-pawn or the h-pawn. It's a stand-alone video that does not require the viewer to have already seen the first two DVDs in the series.

GM Daniel King is a professional chess player, coach, commentator and author. I found his language to be clear and his demeanor engaging and pleasant, but not overdone – it's very conversational in nature. The sound quality is excellent, and the video and game board graphics are of typically high ChessBase quality.



PowerPlay3: Pawn Storm consists of thirty-nine separate video segments: the introduction ("Intro"), f-pawn presentations 1 through 11, h-pawn videos 1 through 9, puzzles 1 through 17, and the final summary (labeled as the "Outro"!).

Each video segment is short enough to be completed in one sitting, yet packs enough information to be instructive. The puzzle videos are generally fairly brief, averaging about six minutes, whereas the f-pawn and h-pawn segments vary from five minutes to seventeen minutes in length. All told, over 5½ hours of instructional material is provided.



In addition, forty-three complete games are included in the database, most of them containing annotations by King. Several of his own games are among them, including a couple of losses he wasn't particularly proud of, but which contain important lessons.

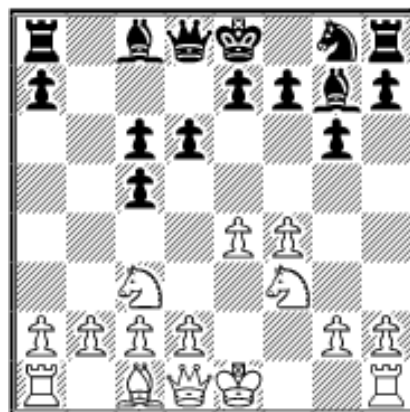
King notes in the introduction that it is "a huge help" to have a physical set and board to work with as one proceeds through the video. He says "ideas go into your head far more effectively if you actually move the pieces instead of just looking at this screen."

In both the f-pawn and h-pawn videos, King presents a number of successful as well as unsuccessful pawn storm attacks, from both sides of the board. This results in a balanced approach that demonstrates the power and the risk of such attacks. The viewer will learn when it is appropriate to initiate such an offensive, and will also learn what tools may be employed to repel the attack.

Let's look at an example from one of the f-pawn segments. The notes below are based on King's commentary:

Nowakowska, Agnieszka (1757) – Kasperek, Joanna (1898)
POL-ch U16 Girls Leba (4), 27.03.2006 [B23]

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Bb5 d6 6.Bxc6+ bxc6



White captured on c6 in order to produce the rather inflexible pawn structure at c5, c6 and d6 for Black.

7.d3

King likes the c2-d3-e4 pawn structure for White, acting as a sort of protective wall in the center. He refers to this basic setup for White as the Grand Prix Attack.

7...Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe1

This is a typical move in such positions, preparing to

bring the queen to g3 or h4.

9...Ba6 10.f5

King notes that if White is able to get in the move f5, the opening can be considered a success. He repeatedly stresses that advancing the f-pawn “is only going to work if you control the center, or if you manage to block the center so there’s no counterplay coming through.” With the c2-d3-e4 “wall” and knights posted at c3 and f3, White is ready to roll.

10...c4 11.d4

Shutting off the Black bishop at a6 and strengthening the central control that is critical to the success of the wing attack.

11...Qc7 12.Qh4 Rae8 13.Bh6 Bh8 14.fxg6 hxg6 15.Ng5



White’s pieces are beautifully coordinated, with the rook at f1 eyeing the Black knight at f6, with possible mate at h7.

15...e5 16.Bxf8 Nh5 17.Rxf7 Qd8 18.Raf1 exd4 19.g4 Re5 20.Be7 Rxe7 21.gxh5 Rxf7 22.Rxf7 gxh5 23.Qxh5 Qxg5+ 24.Qxg5+ Kxf7 25.Qf5+ Ke7 26.Qh7+ 1–0

After showing this game, King assumes the side of the defender and says, “That’s the problem. Now we’ve got to look for the solutions.” Among the dangers that White has to be aware of when advancing the f-pawn

are:

- a weakened e3-square
- potential Black attacks along the a7-g1 and a8-h1 diagonals
- Black infiltration of the second rank, attacking g2 or h2

Several games and game segments are then reviewed, demonstrating how Black can successfully defend against White’s threats; counterplay in the center or blockading the White f-pawn by ... f5 are a couple of the motifs King suggests.



At the conclusion of the final f-pawn video, King says, “Now we’re going to move over a couple of files to the right to look at attacking with the h-pawn.” He adds that some of the positional

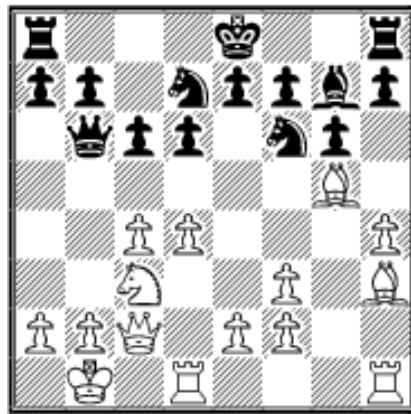
dangers inherent with the advance of the f-pawn (addressed above) are not present when White maintains his f-pawn at f2. “That’s why, for me, moving the h-pawn up the board is such an attractive method of attacking,” King notes.

He adds, “When you can’t think of anything else, when the f-pawn is not really going anywhere, or other attacking ideas don’t seem to quite click, think to yourself, ‘Is it possible to advance the h-pawn?’, or sometimes the a-pawn. Sometimes, it just does enough to turn the game, to give you that little hook in your opponent’s position.”

King then follows the same model from the f-pawn videos. Successful h-pawn advances are demonstrated, followed by successful defenses against such moves. As with f-pawn attacks, King maintains that h-pawn advances only work if the attacking side has control of the center.

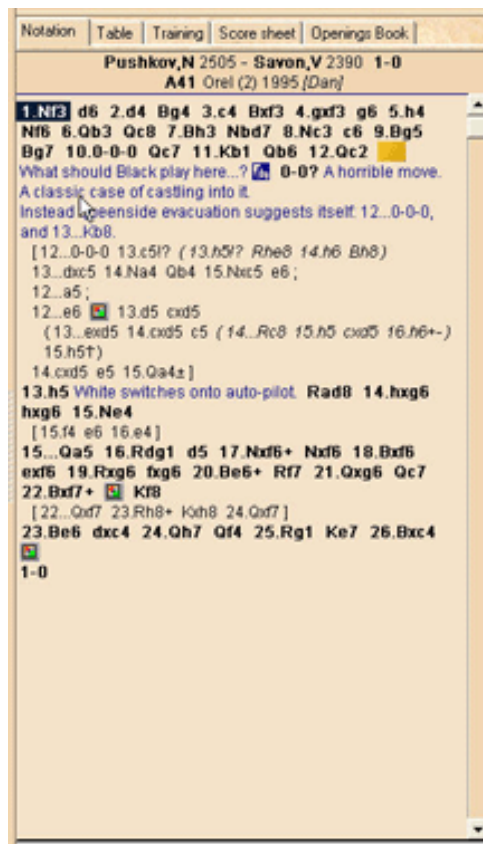
The seventeen puzzle videos present a starting position in which the viewer is asked how to proceed. King states, “In some positions, it’s better to attack, and in some it’s better to compromise. You’ll have to work that out.” In a couple of the problems, King asks the viewer to decide how best to defend against the impending attack.

Here is one such example, with Black to move:



In his answer, King suggests ...0-0-0, although he also considers ...a5 and ...e6. In the actual game, Black played 12...0-0, which King describes as “A horrible move. A classic case of castling into it.”

The puzzle videos are much more than simple “find the best move” tactical exercises. As noted above, they average about six minutes in length. Typically, King will provide a brief introduction to the position, then ask the viewer to pause the video, analyze the position, and come up with an answer to the question he has posed. Then King provides his solution to the problem, along the way reviewing alternative variations and sometimes variations within variations.



The nature of the material is that it can be a bit dry and technical, but Daniel King’s personality adds spice to the instruction. On more than one occasion, I found myself smiling at his explanations. After discussing successful f-pawn attacks, he turns to less-successful attempts, which he describes as “horror stories.” Another time, he feels that one side made a poor move. He responds, “Oh, golly!” and contorts his face, showing his discomfort with the move. He frequently uses hand motions, “body language” and facial expressions to complement his verbal instruction.

While reviewing the game Bruzon-Topalov from Wijk aan Zee 2005, King declares: “I have to say, if I had this position as White, and my opponent played Bg4 and had voluntarily given me the bishop-pair, I would be absolutely delighted.” He then adds, “Right, every chance I’m going to beat this bunny,” but then goes on to show how Topalov’s strategy proves its worth in the game.

There were only a couple of things I was troubled with. In the final video segment labeled “Outro,” King briefly summarizes the salient points in this DVD, but the board graphic shows the last position from the previous segment, Puzzle 17. I found myself waiting for him to add another comment about this position, but it wasn’t referenced in the Outro. An empty board or a board with the starting position would have avoided this distraction.

Another technical shortcoming is that when watching a video segment, the video title is not displayed, so that when the viewer returns to the starting menu, he has to remember which video (i.e. f-pawn VI or f-pawn VII) he had been watching in order to proceed.

Nevertheless, King’s animated, engaging character and clear, reinforced instruction make this an easy DVD to recommend – unless you’re my next opponent.



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