



BOOK REVIEWS



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## The Cream of the Crop

Eugene Manchester

*The Best of the Best – 1000* by Chess Informant, 2008 Chess Informant, Softcover, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 560pp., \$64.95

In 1966, a revolutionary new chess publication emerged, *Chess Informant*. Published in what was then one of the centers of chess in the world, Belgrade, it took the chess world by storm. Also known as *Informator*, it presented hundreds of deeply annotated games that had been recently played in the top international tournaments. The annotators were first class, including world champions and most of the best players of the day.



It was not as if there had never been a good game collection published. Far from it. But for the first time, very recent games from the top tournaments were presented, all with deep notes by either the players themselves or other top-notch analysts. And so that the games and their annotations would be accessible by as many chessplayers as possible, the publisher devised a clever system of symbols to communicate the annotations. The language-less *Informant* codes had arrived and they would turn the chess publishing world on its ear, and all for the better.

Originally, two volumes per year were published, presenting carefully selected games from the previous six months. However, a few years ago, the frequency was increased to three times per year. Each volume not only featured hundreds of deeply annotated games, but also included *Informant* “trademark” sections on combinations, endings, opening novelties, best games and more recently, biographical surveys.

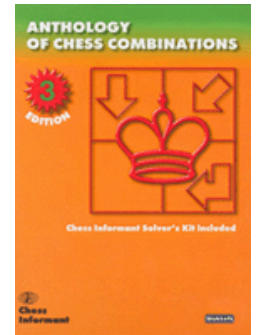
For each volume, the publisher would also present the results of voting by an elite “jury,” a group which would select the ten best games from the previous volume. So, for example, the jury formed to select the [ten best games](#) from [volume 100](#) consisted of Beliavsky, Christiansen, M. Gurevich, Matanovic, Mikhalchishin, Ribli, Speelman and Xie Jun. Their choice for the best game (the “Golden Game”) was Nielsen-Ivanchuk, played in Havana and won by the Ukrainian grandmaster.

The ten best games from each of the first 100 *Informants* have now been collected into one great game collection. These 1,000 games are presented along with their original annotations. For each volume, the reader is presented with the complete results of the jury’s voting, who was on the jury and how they voted as well as a photo or image of the winner of the “Golden Game” for that volume.

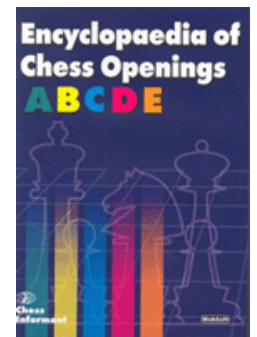
In addition, each game has the Elo rating of the players at the time the game was played, the location where it was played, the *Informant* opening code and the annotator. Indexes of players, annotators and even jury members round out the book.

Now, at this point in a review, an excerpt would most likely be appropriate. However, to give you the real “feel” of this book, I have

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scanned the game, Svidler-Adams, Elista 1998. It was selected as game seven in the top ten from volume 73. (For easier reading online, the game is presented in a single column, whereas in the book, the presentation is in a double-column format.)

**727.**

C 89

SVIDLER 2710 — MI. ADAMS 2715

Elista (ol) 1998

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 ♘f6 5. 0-0 ♙e7 6. ♚e1 b5 7. ♙b3 0-0 8. c3 d5 9. ed5 ♘d5 10. ♘e5 ♘e5 11. ♚e5 c6 12. d3 ♙d6 13. ♚e1 ♗h4 14. g3 ♗h3 15. ♚e4 ♘f6 16. ♚h4 ♗f5 17. ♘d2!? g5!? [17... ♗d3 18. ♚d4+-] 18. ♚h6 [18. ♘e4 gh4 19. ♘d6 ♗g6+] ♘g4 19. ♘e4 [19. ♚h5 ♗g6+-] ♘h6 20. ♘d6 ♗g6!? [20... ♗h3 21. ♗e2 ♙f5 22. ♙g5 ♘g4 23. f3 ♙d3 24. ♗d2±] 21. ♘e4 [21. ♘c8!? ♚ac8 22. d4∞] ♘g4!? [21... ♙f5 a) 22. ♘g5 ♙d3 23. ♘f3! ♙c4! (23... ♚fd8 24. ♘e5 ♗e4 25. ♙f4 ♙e2 26. ♗b1±) 24. ♘e5 ♗e6 (24... ♙b3 25. ♘g6 ♙d1 26. ♘f8 ♚f8 27. ♙h6 ♚d8±) 25. ♙h6 (25. ♘c4 bc4 26. ♙c2 ♘g4∞) ♗h6 26. ♘c4 bc4 27. ♗g4 ♗g6 28. ♗c4; b) 22. f3!? g4 (22... ♙e4 23. fe4) 23. ♙f4 (23. ♗d2 ♘g7∞) gf3 24. ♗f3 ♘g4 (24... ♙e4 25. de4 ♘g4 26. e5!) 25. ♘d6 ♙e6 26. ♚e1∞] 22. ♙g5 ♙f5 23. ♙f4 ♚ad8 24. ♗e2! ♚fe8 25. ♚e1 ♘g7 [25... ♘e5 26. ♙e5 ♚e5 27. ♘f6+-] 26. f3 ♘e5 27. ♙c2 c5! 28. ♗e3! f6 [28... c4 29. d4 ♘d3 30. ♙d3 cd3 31. ♗d3 ♚e7 32. d5±] 29. ♘h1! ♙e4?⊕ [29... c4! 30. ♘f6 (30. d4 ♘d3 31. ♙d3 cd3 32. ♗d3 ♚e7∞) ♘f6 31. ♙e5 ♘f7∞] 30. fe4± ♘d7?! 31. d4 cd4 32. cd4 ♘b6 [32... f5 33. g4!? (33. e5 ♗c6+-) fg4 (33... fe4 34. ♙e4+-) 34. ♙d3] 33. ♗f2 ♘d5 34. ♙d2! [34. ed5 ♚e1 35. ♗e1 ♗c2 36. ♗e7 ♘g6 37. ♗d8 ♗d1=] ♘e7 35. e5 f5 36. e6!+- ♗f6 37. ♙b3 ♘g8 38. ♚e5 ♘g7 39. d5! ♗e5 [40. ♙c3 ♗c3 41. bc3 ♘d5 42. ♗f5 ♘e7 43. ♗f7 ♘h8 44. ♙c2 ♘g6 45. e7]

1 : 0 Svidler

*Chess Informant* has earned a well-deserved reputation for excellence. For over forty years the chess world has waited, with high expectations, for the release of each terrific edition. Now, in one massive 560-page tome, you can enjoy the best of the first 100 volumes of *Chess Informant*. It looks like we have another book to add to the desert-island list. Bravo, *Chess Informant*!

#### Further Reading

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[The 1,000 Best of the Best, Part Two](#) by Zdenko Krnic

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