



BOOK REVIEWS

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From the Archives...

Since it came online in 1996, [ChessCafe.com](#) has published thousands of articles, reviews, and columns. This high quality material remains available in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#). However, we decided that the occasional selection from the archives might be a welcome addition to the regular fare. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Clerical Error

Winning Endgame Strategy by GMs Alexander Beliavsky and Adrian Mikhalchishin, 2000 Batsford, Softcover, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 208pp. \$16.95

In the last few months, there has been a spate of new endgame books flowing from chess publishers. The latest entry by Batsford in this area is *Winning Endgame Strategy* by GMs Alexander Beliavsky and Adrian Mikhalchishin. It really is an expanded version of *Winning Endgame Technique*, produced by the same authors about six or seven years ago. According to the Introduction, *Winning Endgame Technique* is in fact the first part of the present *Winning Endgame Strategy*. "The present book is a direct continuation of *Winning Endgame Technique* and to some extent the second part in the sense that many themes, such as queen, knight and complex endings, were not dealt with in the previous book."

The densely packed 200+ double-column pages are divided into twelve chapters:

- Pawn Endings
- Knight Endings
- Rook Endings
- Shouldering: the struggle of the kings
- Complex Endings
- Defence in the Ending
- The isolated pawn in the Ending
- Rook and bishop against rook and knight
- Rook and two pawns against rook and knight
- Two minor pieces against a rook
- Rook against knight and pawn
- Queen endings

A few chapters are rounded out by Exercises whose solutions may be found in the back of the book. With one glaring exception – bishop endings – most commonly encountered endgames are covered.

The book's back cover claims that it "...presents a golden point- scoring opportunity to players willing to learn..." An examination of the book, however, reveals that any student who wants to get much out of it will have to be willing to do more than learn. Unfortunately, the presentation of the material is hardly conducive to easily learning endgame theory. The text is awkward and clunky in many places, and while many current examples are presented, we really must question their instructive value. Principles of endgame play are rarely discussed and when they are, it is doubtful that they will be of benefit to most readers.

In fact, what we really have here is a collection of annotated endgame positions grouped by material. The annotations are good, no question, but the

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ECE: Rook Endings by Chess Informant



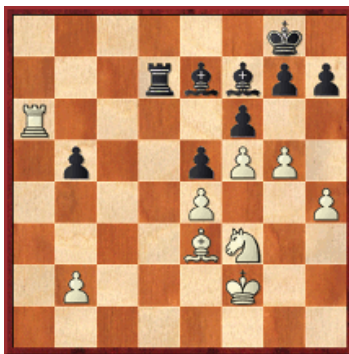
ECE: Queen Endings by Chess Informant



ECE: Minor Piece Endings by Chess Informant

continual failure of the authors to explain the underlying principles of endings calls the idea of this book having any use as an instructional manual into serious doubt. The following excerpt is typical:

From the "Complex Endings" chapter, we have **Nezhmetdinov-Luik**, USSR 1950:



[FEN "6k1/3rbpp/R4p2/1p2pPP1/4P2P/4BN2/1P3K2/8 w - - 0 27"]

White has the advantage on the king's flank plus a more active deployment of pieces – there followed

1 b4!

With the threat of 2 Bc5, whereas 1...Bxb4? is impossible because of 2 Ra8+ Bf8 3 Bc5.

1...Be8 2 Bc5 Kf7 3 g6+!

Completely cramping the opponent - not possible is 3...hxg6 4 fxg6+ Kxg6 5 Nxe5+.

3...hxg6 4 fxg6+ Kf8 5 h5 Bxc5

Already he has to allow White to create a passed pawn.

6 bxc5 Rc7 7 Ra8 Rxc5 8 h6!

Here also an advantage on the king's flank expresses itself in a tactical form.

8...gxh6 9 Nh4 Rc6 10 Nf5 Re6 11 Rb8

White plans to go with his king to h5, therefore he places his rook to hold up the b-pawn.

11...h5 12 Kg3 b4 13 Kh4 b3 14 Kxh5 b2 15 Kh6 Kg8 16 Rxb2

And as Black is in *Zugzwang*, he resigned.

In short, this book does not live up to its billing. It is neither complete nor instructive. As far as endgames are concerned, your winning strategy would be to get something else. Books by Albur, Pandolfini, Nunn, and Smyslov come readily to mind. They will also help if you happen to find yourself in a bishop ending.

This article first appeared at ChessCafe.com in April, 2000.

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