



## COLUMNISTS

### ChessBase Cafe

Louis Lima



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## To Explain or Not to Explain

I wonder how much thought goes into deciding on the amount of verbal commentary and variations to present in a Fritz Trainer DVD on the opening. If the presenter puts the pedal to the metal and zooms past moves without any explanation, while jumping in and out of endless variations, then lower-rated players will often be at a loss and soon lose interest in their purchase. If the lecturer talks too much in basic positions, then advanced players might get bored and deem the material too superficial. It is difficult to serve two masters, and I suspect the commentary-length factor boils down to a matter of style and the subject matter. It is through this factor that I assess this month's Fritz Trainers.

*Scandinavian the Easy Way* (2nd edition) by Andrew Martin – Running time: 4 hours

The Scandinavian is somewhat of a controversial defense. We learn as beginners not to neglect development, and not to bring our queen out too early in the opening. However, this is exactly what Black does in the Scandinavian and many of us have fallen flat on our faces pushing our advantage with White, only to end up with misplaced pieces and subject to Black's counterattack. This is perhaps why the Scandinavian is so appealing at club-level.

*The Scandinavian the Easy Way* explores the variation after 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd6!?. It is commonly known as the Pytel variation named after IM Krzysztof Pytel. However, you'll see all sorts of names out there for this variation, including the Bronstein, Modern, Gubnitsky-Pytel, Pytel-Wade, and even a "Schiller-Pytel" mention. Maybe it should be called the Pytel-Tiviakov variation, after GM Sergei Tiviakov who has been testing this line at the grandmaster level.

Martin does a superb job at explaining the ideas behind this line, discussing both the advantages and disadvantages of 3...Qd6, as well typical piece placement and main strategic concepts after 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 5.Nf3 a6. One of the main ideas is for Black to prepare the liberating move ...c5, illustrated by Martin after 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 a6 6.Bc4 b5 7.Bb3 Bb7 8.0-0 e6 9.Re1 Nbd7



The first game featured in Martin's DVD is a sparkling win from GM Stripunsky against GM Goldin at the 2004 U.S. Championship. I'm fortunate to enjoy a monthly study group facilitated by Stripunsky and asked his thoughts on the Pytel. He commented that in some ways Black is trying to reach a Sicilian pawn structure. In the Sicilian we play 1...c5 and aim for the

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[ChessBase Magazine #132](#)  
Edited by Rainer Knaak



[ABC of Chess Openings](#)  
by Andrew Martin

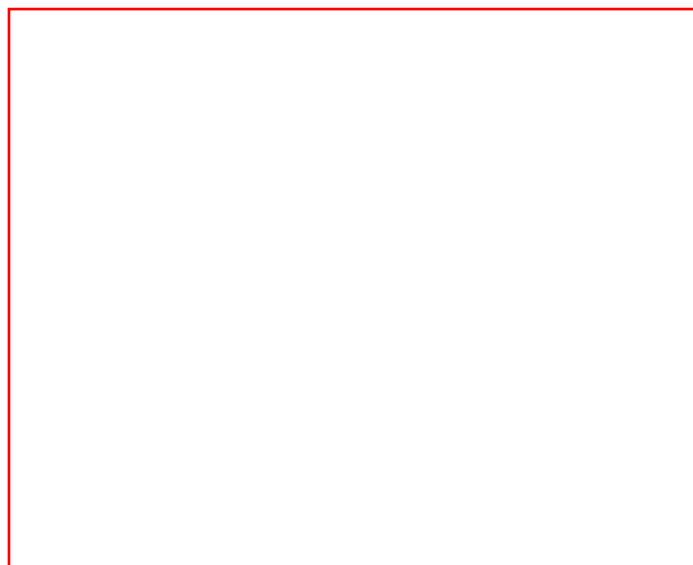
d5 pawn break. In the Scandinavian we immediately achieve d5 at the cost of some tempi, and then aim for c5. Martin often reinforced this and other ideas throughout his sample games in this DVD. For instance, one of the disadvantages of 3...Qd6 is that the queen often gets harassed from d6, and sometimes trapped altogether. Martin devotes a short lecture on ways to avoid this and shows a few examples of what can happen if Black is not careful.

This DVD covers the following lines:

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 a6. Several lectures look at White's possible responses, including 6.g3, 6.Bc4, 6.Bd3, 6.Ne5, 6.Bg5, and 6.h3.
- 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6. Here the lectures cover 5.Bc4 followed by 6.Nge2, 5.Be2, 5.Bd3 a6, and 5.Bg5
- 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.g3

Martin also provides us with several brief lectures discussing various sidelines. These bits are helpful starting points to investigate further and they include

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5. Here Martin explores 3.Nf3 and 3.d4 responses
- 1.e4 d5 2.Nc3
- Unusual second moves including 2.e5 and 2.d4 (Blackmar-Diemer Gambit)



Martin often recommends the plan with ...b5 and ...Bb7 against many White set-ups. However, the line 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 a6 6.g3 b5 has been refuted in recent play. This seems to have prompted an updated edition of *Scandinavian the Easy Way*, which is labeled as "2nd Edition with updates and advice in all critical lines" Somewhat naively; I was expecting re-recorded sessions with updated material, and when I opened the first lecture it seemed funny to me Martin was wearing the same shirt as in the "original" DVD. It took me a minute to realize the second edition is the exact same DVD, but with seven additional lectures labeled under "Scandinavian Update" and placed at the very end of the video clip page. This strikes me as rather lazy from Chessbase. Anyone picking up this DVD for the first time is likely to look at it in a linear fashion. Imagine making your way through an opening book, only to find out at the end that the lines are now considered dubious by the author.

Fortunately this only happens for the line with 6.g3 b5, as the rest are not really updates of critical lines, but alternative suggestions from the first edition. I would recommend buyers to first look at the introductory two lectures, and then move on to the updated content at the end of DVD before returning to the main content. The seven lectures in the Scandinavian update cover

- 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 a6 6.g3 Bg4 (Lectures

- 1-2)
- 1.e4 d5 2.exd4 Qxd4 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 c6 (Lectures 3-5)
  - 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nd4 Nf6 4.Nf3 Bf5 (Lecture 6)
  - 1.e4 d5 2.Nc3 (Lecture 7).

Aside from the Scandinavian updates, the games are not referenced in the database file. Instead, you are only able to see the moves as variations or sub-variations without any reference to the player's names or tournament event. This can be a minor inconvenience to the serious tournament player. Martin does tell you where the game comes from during the lecture, but the variations should be properly referenced in the annotations.

Overall, *The Scandinavian the Easy Way* is a terrific starting point for players wanting to employ the Scandinavian with 3...Qd6. Martin's generous verbal assessments and commentary throughout this DVD makes this opening accessible to any club-level player.

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[Order](#) *Scandinavian the Easy Way* (2nd ed.)  
by Andrew Martin

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*The Arkhangelsk* by Adrian Mikhalchihin – Running time: Five hours.

I approached the Arkhangelsk's review with great excitement, as one of my top five Chessbase Trainers is [The Secret Weapons of the Champions](#) with GM Adrian Mikhalchihin. Just as in this previous work, Mikhalchishin infuses his Arkhangelsk lectures with interesting historical references and anecdotes, increasing our chess culture and overall enjoyment of the game. You will not only immerse in "one of the youngest kids of the Ruy Lopez" as Mikhalchihin affectionately dubs this variation, but you will also learn about the history of the Ruy Lopez, the players, and key encounters that shaped Arkhangelsk opening theory.



The Arkhangelsk is a sharp attempt by Black to get an active middlegame position in the Ruy Lopez. After 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7, Black has been able to post his light-squared bishop on a strong diagonal, and will often bring his dark-squared bishop to c5, exercising strong pressure on White's center and generating attacking prospects on the kingside. This quick piece deployment comes at the expense of delayed castling, and White can try to exploit this. One illustration of this is the game **Acs, Peter (2542) – Beliavsky, Alexander (2640)** from the Hungary championship in 2000, which included in this DVD: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.c3 Nxe4 8.d4 Na5 9.Bc2 exd4 10.Re1 d5 11.b4 Nc6 12.Nxd4 Be7 13.f3 Nxd4 14.Qxd4 Nf6 15.Bg5 Qd6 16.Nd2 Qb6 17.Nb3 Qxd4+ 18.Nxd4 Kf8 19.Nf8 Bd8 20.a4!**



Mikhalchishin points out that "White has very good compensation because all Black pieces are badly situated. King has not castled, and rooks are not in the

game. So, for this reason, White's compensation is sufficient for the pawn."

Black's kingside can also be vulnerable when the bishop goes to b7. It is natural then, that the main line involves pinning the knight on f6 after 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.Re1 Bc5 8. 9.d4 Bb6 10.Bg5.

The Arkhangelsk includes a database file with forty-eight games; many of them heavily annotated with variations. This can serve as an excellent resource for further study. The lecture content includes:

- 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 – In two lectures Mikalchihin looks at 7.Ng5, 7.Qe2 and 7.d4 sidelines
- 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.Re1 Bc5 8.c3 d6 9.d4 Bb6 considered the main line. We have four lectures here covering 10.Bg5, 10.Nh4, 10.Qd3, 10.a4 and 10.Be3.
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.c3 – We learn from Mikhalchihin that this line usually leads to very sharp play where Black needs to be very careful, and devotes ten lectures to this line.
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.d3 – White take a positional approach but Black still needs to be careful. Six lectures are devoted to this line.

The DVD concludes with a twenty-two minute lecture titled "Kasparov Arkhangelsk" where Mikhalchishin analyses the Tukmakov-Dorfman game mentioned in Kasparov's book [\*Revolution in the 70s\*](#).

This DVD is for the advanced club-level player and beyond. Being a very strong grandmaster, Mikhalchishin speaks to us at that level. He often "fast-forwards" through several moves, either silently or calling out the moves, without any explanation until he reaches a position he feels worthy of comment. I felt visually overwhelmed most of the time, even after stopping the lectures and returning to the starting position, or clicking back to an earlier point in the DVD. This is not necessarily a criticism; after all, not all Chessbase trainers can be made for a specific level-audience. On the other hand, I feel this DVD is essential for those wanting to employ the Arkhangelsk. Thus, I would suggest that those rated lower than expert-level approach this DVD in the following manner:

- Look at the title of the lecture before opening it. The title will contain the variation that will be presented.
- Go to the attached database, and study the games first. An excellent way to do this is to use the training tab to play "solitaire chess," where the game notation is covered and you guess the next move. If the moves differ, try to understand why. If your move was wrong, the right response will usually make sense and give you insight into the way you think and assess a position.
- View the lecture. The moves will make more sense now and you will derive greater enjoyment and satisfaction from the learning experience.

I would recommend the Arkhangelsk for anyone wanting a deep immersion into this variation, with the caveat that U2000-rated players might need to do some preparation before sitting back to enjoy Mikhalchishin's lectures.

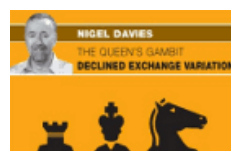
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[Order](#) *Arkhangelsk*  
by Adrian Mikhalchishin

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*The Queens Gambit Declined Exchange Variation* by Nigel Davies – Running Time: 4 hours

This is one of the most accessible Fritz Trainers for the average club-player by Davies. Advanced-level players who would like to verify their overall



understanding in the QGD Exchange can just sit back, relax, and enjoy these lectures while reinforcing their existing knowledge and learn some new things. Davies does a conscientious job of explaining the strategic concepts and ideas in this opening for the average player. He takes every opportunity to drive the main concepts home, and even the lecture titles are named after the main illustrative themes:



**Ten lectures under "Minority attack" labeled under the titles:**

- Introduction
- The weak pawn on c6
- The weak pawn on d5
- Black meets b4-b5 with c6-c5
- White suppresses c5
- Drawbacks of b7-b5
- Danger to the white king
- The black rook on the third rank
- The black knight on c4
- Black plays f5-f4

**Four lectures under "White castles long" are titled:**

- Introduction
- The attack wins
- Black counterattacks
- Black castles queenside

**Nine lectures under "White plays e4" titled:**

- Introduction
- White plays 11.Rae1
- The Karlsbad variation
- The Karlsbad antidote
- White plays f4
- Hybrid planning
- Application 1 (Caro-Kann, Exchanged Variation)
- Application 2 (Grünfeld Defense)
- Other applications

I wanted to provide some illustration of the amount of explanation Davies gives in key positions. In the second lecture introducing the minority attack Davies provides us with an old game between Steinitz, William - Lee, Francis Joseph. After 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Bxf6 Bxf6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.Qb3 c6 9.Bd3 Re8 10.Nge2 Nd7 11.Qc2 Nf8 12.0-0 g6 13.b4 Here Davies comments:

"And this is a very instructive moment, because we got this b4 plan coming in, in order to try and undermine this pawn on c6. When white plays b5 it presents black with a bit of dilemma as to what to do. If he takes himself on b5 with the c pawn, then he would leave the pawn on d5 rather weak. If he doesn't take white is going to take on c6 himself, and then if black were to take back on c6 with a piece he would still have a weak d pawn. Or if he were to take back with the pawn on b7 then he would have a backward pawn on c6 on an open file. So, it's not an easy plan to meet at all, and this is why it is such an effective strategy for White."



After 13...a6 14.a4 Be7 15.b5, Martin pauses again to discuss this position in great detail. Another typical example is the second game of the DVD featuring Byrne-Eliskases from the Helsinki Olympiad in 1952 he starts by commenting:

"Now, I mentioned earlier, the weakness on c6 that Black often contracts when he faces the minority attack – In case some of you were thinking that perhaps this is not such a great deal, Black can just defend it, then this game should serve as a warning. It's an example of Black being tortured just because of this weakness and ground down in a long endgame."

After the moves 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 c6 7.Qc2, he stops and comments:

"This move Qc2 is a means of stopping Black from playing the Bishop out to f5"

If you are still wondering why it matters to prevent f5, and what that has to do with minority attack, then don't worry because Davies will explain it:

"For example if White were to play 7.Nf3 here, then Black could play this move [...Bf5] and then white can't play his bishop out to d3 without the light square bishops coming off"

If you still don't get it, no worries, Davies continues:

"and we are going to go into this a little bit later, but this exchange of bishops makes the minority attack more difficult to engineer – because without these two bishops when white plays b4 this square often becomes weak and you can actually see a black knight jumping on this square and getting all sorts of irritation. So for this reason White really wants to keep the light squares on, and Black in turn often looks to exchange them. So this is why white's queen goes to c2, he is trying to ensure that white doesn't play f5. We could also play the bishop out to d3 in this position – that would be another way to do this."

I found Davies's approach incredibly helpful for the average club player like myself. This is one of my favorite Davies productions so far.

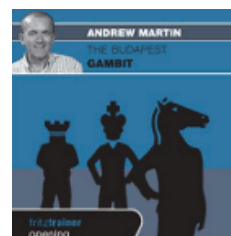
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[Order](#) *The Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation*  
by Nigel Davies

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*The Budapest Gambit* by Andrew Martin – Running time: 4 hours 20 minutes

Saving the best for last, *The Budapest Gambit* is an utterly delightful production by Martin and the ChessBase team. Being a 1.e4 player, I was surprised to find myself going back to see the entertaining lectures in this DVD. Before delving into specific variations, Martin begins with five





lectures outlying specific themes in the Budapest Gambit, which is characterized by the moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5!?



The "Theme One" lecture focuses on white's acquisition of the two bishops and how to play against this as black, the doubling of White's pawns on c3 and c4, active piece play and rapid development. To illustrate these themes Martin uses the inspiring game **Rubinstein-Vidmar**, which I imagine every Budapest Gambiteer knows by heart. Played in 1918 Martin tells us that Vidmar was at a loss as to what to play against Rubinstein, who had acquired an "impregnable" reputation with 1.d4. Talking with friends, someone recommended the Budapest Gambit as a way to surprise Rubinstein. Little did Vidmar know he would win in such style.

#### 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4

Life would be easy for Black if White allowed him to take the e-pawn back. Therefore, White's initial strategy is concerned with the best approach to defend the e-pawn. There is the obvious 4.Nf3, and Martin notes 4.e4 as a dangerous center-grabbing move by White. There is also 4.Bf4 played during the game, and several other sidelines covered on this DVD.

#### 4.Bf4 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bb4+ 6.Nc3 Qe7 7.Qd5 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3

Martin makes quick comments on almost every move, and pauses occasionally to explain the main themes in key positions in greater depth. Between 6...Qe7 and 8.bxc3 he comments:

"... You will note that Black is not blocking any pieces in this procedure and is ready to take on e5, so White has to do something drastic if he wants to keep this pawn on e5 and make Black's life uncomfortable, which Rubinstein does with a move which even at that was thought to be very dangerous for Black, the strange-looking Qd5. Now, it's obvious that move is going to be controversial. Yes, White does protect the pawn on e5 and yes he does make life difficult for Black to regain that pawn. Of course the downside of this move is firstly and foremostly that White allows Blacks to double his pawns. OK, White does have an extra pawn in this position, but how valuable is that extra pawn? These pawns are doubled and crippled, and it is playing against these pawns that characterize play in this particular variation from the Black point of view. How valuable is White's extra pawn in this position? OK White has two bishops. That has to be respected. If the game opens up they might show their strength. So Black creates these double pawns and plays against these pawns as the game progresses. Another plus point in Black's position is the position of the white queen..."

Martin continues with his above explanation, and this is a very typical. The viewer will get generous verbal commentary to help understand the ideas behind the Budapest.

#### 8..Qa3 9.Rc1 f6 10.exf6 Nxf6 11.Qd2 d6 12.Nd4 0-0 13.e3



*Black to move, what would you play here?*

#### 13...Nxd4!

What a bolt from the sky! I would have never thought of straightening White's pawn formation here.

#### 14.cxd4 Ne4

Martin comments:

"In the Budapest you have to be specific. You have to look for ideas which force White's hand... this move attacks the queen and drives her off this crucial diagonal (e1-a5) so when the White moves, Black checks on a5 and we see the whole point of White's idea..."

#### 15.Qc2 Qa5+ 16.Ke2



*"Tell me which move to make and I'll tell if you have the heart of a Budapest Gambiteer"*

#### 16...Rxf4! 17.exf4 Bf5

"It's a question of dynamics. It's not what Black is sacrificing here in this position. It's what remains on the board and active play" (Martin).

#### 18.Qb2 Re8 19.Kf3 Nd2+ 20.Kg3 Ne4+ 21.Kh4 Re6 22.Be2 Rh6+ 23.Bh5 Rxh5+ 24.Kxh5 Bg6+ 0-1

A good example of the educational value of this DVD can be found in his "Theme Two" lecture, where he discusses the dangers of White's center. The lecture features a game between Spassky and Illescas at the 1990 Linares tournament starting with the moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Nf3 Bc5. This placement of the bishop would make obvious sense to an IM such as Martin, and some presenters might just speed past this without any reference. Martin, however, realizes that a lower-rated player might be wondering why the bishop is on c5 if White is going retort with 5.e3. Martin comments

"It is worthwhile dwelling a little bit on the position of the bishop on c5. Because you begin to wonder the position of the bishop on c5 when you see the move e3, what is bishop doing there. White is putting a brick wall in front of that bishop. Well, in fact, in this type of position the bishop, on the face of it, attacks f2. But in fact what it's doing is prophylactic restraining of the white pawns. Black is aware that these pawns (f2 and e3) constitute a danger to him in the middlegame. If those pawns start to roll forward Black can be brushed aside... so it is worth bearing in mind that the position of the White bishop is not just aggressive but prophylactic."

Martin seems to always be thinking about how the moves might be perceived by amateur players, and this is what makes this DVD of high value. I also like the balanced approach Martin took in this video, showing the pros and cons of entering Budapest Gambit lines. The Spassky-Illescas game from the "Theme Two" lecture was a win by White showing what can happen when White's center gains strength.

Such is the dynamic nature of the Budapest Gambit that viewers new to this opening will find the games riveting. However, Martin should also get credit for choosing such entertaining examples. His "Theme Three" lecture features



an "absolute classic, which inspired a whole generation of players to take up the Budapest." This is the game **Oll-Romero Holmes** from the Groningen European Union even in 1984, which features Black's peculiar queenside rook lift and transfer to the kingside after **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Nf3 Bc5 5.e3 Nc6 6.Nc3 Ngxe5 7.Nxe5 Nxe5 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.b3 a5 11.Bb2 Ra6 12.Ne4 [12.Qd5 Qe7] 12...Ba7 13.Qd5 Rae6 [13...Rh6!]**.

The "Theme Four" lecture continues on the subject of restraining White's large center by means of active development, and features a game between Bacrot-Shirov played in 2000. As in all lectures, Martin takes his time to discuss the issues in the center. Other presenters might just delve into several variations and possibilities. We get minimal variations from Martin. His mission here is to ensure you leave with a firm understanding of all strategic concepts in the Budapest, and not with rote memorization of moves.

The last theme lecture focuses on Black's fight against the two bishops and Martin uses the game Brown-Speelman from the Taxco Interzonal in 1985. This couldn't be a Budapest Gambit DVD without a mention of the common trap **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Bf4 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bb4+ 6.Nbd2 Qe7 7.a3 Ngxe5 8.axb4 Nd3** mate, which Speelman obviously doesn't fall for, but which I could totally see happening to me. Martin often likes to include non-grandmaster games in his DVDs, which I think is a clever idea as long as the games are instructive.

The second section contains the following lectures:

- Introduction
- 4.e4 (Two lectures)
- 4.Qd4/5.Qd5/4.e6
- 4.Nc3
- 4.e3 Nxe5 5.Nh3
- 4.Nf3 (Seven lectures)
- 4.Bf4 (Eight lectures)

Martin is at his best on this DVD. He is cheerful and lively, and enjoys making prolonged eye-contact with the viewer when verbalizing his analysis. He speaks slowly and clearly, often pausing and always showing enthusiasm. One can see he is really enjoying himself and is excited about the games he is presenting. Anyone going through *The Budapest Gambit* by Martin should be able to play through a grandmaster game in this opening, and understand why many of the moves were played.

I highly recommend this DVD, and like me, you might find yourself returning to the lectures out of pure enjoyment.

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[Order](#) *The Budapest Gambit*  
by Andrew Martin

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