



COLUMNISTS

ChessBase Cafe

Lance Martin



Rating Chart

- ♦ – Poor
- ♦♦ – Useful
- ♦♦♦ – Good
- ♦♦♦♦ – Excellent

CHESSTHEATRE

Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).



A Magazine that Really Talks Chess!

This month I am going to take a look at *ChessBase Magazine*. This is published every two months on DVD, with an accompanying printed booklet. If you haven't purchased one lately, you should be aware that ChessBase changed the format of the printed magazine to make it more professional, while also providing a plastic slipcase for the DVD. Furthermore, the printed magazine is now bound instead of being stapled, so it can be properly placed on your book shelf. This is a testimonial to their commitment to chess excellence in their commercial endeavors.

The printed booklet is provided in both English and German. This issue begins with an editorial that tries to predict the openings for the then upcoming world championship match. Their prediction of 1.e4 from Anand proves how hard it is to foretell future events. The contents of the printed magazine serves as a summary of what can be found on the DVD. I find this very useful, as I can sit on my couch and read the magazine and get a good idea of what to find on the DVD. However, the heart of the product is the actual DVD.



The DVD comes bundled with the CB Reader, so no other software is necessary to access the contents. However, if you own the ChessBase database program or one of the Fritz family of programs, you can use these to watch the DVD. I recommend that you install the magazine on your hard drive, so that you will always have its components available to you.

The DVD begins with a video introduction by the inimitable Karsten Müller, who previews the major features in this issue. Müller's sense of humor and questioning about positions in the various games really make the DVD a more enjoyable experience. He spends about one-third of the introduction going over some of the more important games from Wijk aan Zee and points out which games will be in Fritz Trainer format. He also highlights some of the more interesting openings from the thirteen opening surveys that are provided on the DVD. He spends a particularly long time on the Najdorf game between Naiditsch and Sjugirov from the Moscow Aeroflot tournament. He then mentions all of the remaining columns on the DVD and provides hints for some of the questions provided therein. Müller ends the introduction with an unanswered question that can only be found in one of the upcoming columns. All in all, it is a great way to begin the magazine.

Purchases from our [shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



[ChessBase Magazine #136](#)
by ChessBase



[Greatest Hits, Vol. 2](#)
by Nigel Short



[The Advance Caro-Kann](#)
by Alexei Shirov

Next up is a video presentation by Dorian Rogozenko of the two major super-tournaments: Linares and Wijk aan Zee. Rogozenko explains that Wijk aan Zee was a Category 19 tournament and that his hero of the first half of the tournament was the then unbeaten Alexei Shirov. Rogozenko examines a few of Shirov's games and indicates that Shirov's time trouble in several games led to his second-third place finish. As for Linares, Rogozenko explains that it was a six-player tournament that was made more interesting by the play of Topalov. The bulk of the time is spent on a Najdorf between Topalov and Grischuk.

The second video by Rogozenko describes the two strongest tournaments from the beginning of the year: The Moscow Open and the Aeroflot Open. The winner of the Moscow Open was Konstantin Chernyshov who won six out of nine games. The winner of the Aeroflot Open was Le Quang Liem, a Vietnamese player. Also mentioned is The Gibraltar Tournament won by Michael Adams and the stunning loss by the all-star team from Baden Baden in the German League.

There follows a link to the Wijk aan Zee results that are either in game, audio, or video format. First up is a theoretical survey of the various openings used in Wijk ann Zee by Mikhial Marin. He tells us that the Arkhangelsk variation of the Ruy Lopez was tested in four games during the tournament: **1.e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 7.c3 d6 8.a4 Rb8 9.d4 Bb6 10.Na3 0-0 11.axb5 12.Nxb5 Bg4**

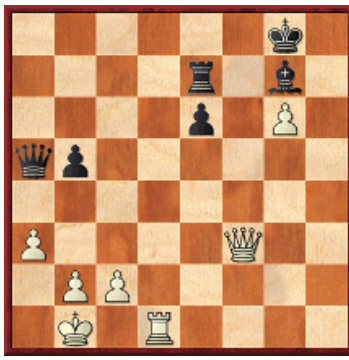


[FEN "1r1q1rk1/2p2ppp/pbnp1n2/1P2p3/3PP1b1/NBP2N2/1P3PPP/R1BQ1RK1 w - - 0 12"]

We then are presented with deeply annotated games that were played from this position. All the games from the tournament are extremely well annotated by either Marin or Krasenkow. Each game is deeply explained and no favoritism toward any opening is shown.

The next highlight of the front page is a link to the Karjakin-Carlsen game in the French Defense, won and honestly annotated by Carlsen. His comments were a real high point for me. Next up is a Petroff between Anand-Kramnik. This is annotated in audio format by Anand and, having been spoiled by the Fritz Trainer video format, it is somewhat difficult to acclimate to the presentation.

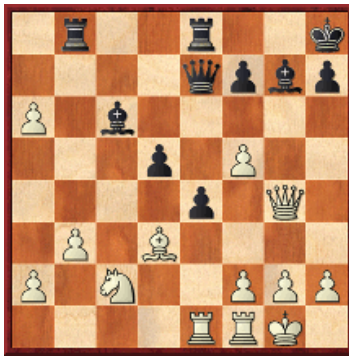
For instance, this pales in comparison to the video analysis by Alexei Shirov of his game against Dominguez in the Najdorf. This is a full twenty-five minute presentation, and to understand the story behind this game you have to watch the whole video. Anyway, had Shirov played 31.b4 in the following position, instead of agreeing to a draw, he would have won Wijk aan Zee:



[FEN "6k1/4r1b1/4p1P1/qP6/8/P4Q2/1PP5/1K1R4 w - - 0 31"]

It is apparent that Shirov felt bad about missing the move, especially when so many players around him had seen it. Yet, he was in time trouble and that is the nature of chess. He displays a real champion's attitude toward the game.

Shirov's next video is his game against Carlsen. He had beat Carlsen nine months before in Sofia in the same opening. However, at Wijk aan Zee, Carlsen found the move that saves the draw. In the following position, Carlsen found the improvement **22...Bc3!**.



[FEN "1r2r2k/4qpbP/P1b5/3p1P2/4p1Q1/1P1B4/P1N2PPP/4RRK1 b - - 0 22"]

In Sofia, he lost after 22....Be5 23.Be2 d4 24.Bc4 Rg8 25.Qh3 Rg7 26.g3 Rbg8 27.Qh6 Qc7 28.Nb4 Ba8 29.Nd5 Qd8 30.Rxe4 1-0. In Wijk, the game continued **23.Qh3 Qf6 24.Be2 d4 25.Bc4 Rg8 26.g3 Rbe8 27.Rd1 e3 28.fxe3 dxe3 29.Be2 Re4 30.Qg2 Re7 31.Qh3 Re4 32.Qg2 Re7 33.Qh3 1/2-1/2**

It is games like this that make chess such an enjoyable activity for me. Chess is my life, and my life is made a little bit better by such games. I devote this column to those that think the way I do.

Another highlight of *CBM #135* is a video analysis by Nigel Short in a game against Kramnik using the Petroff. This video is a testimonial for thinking for one's self. Short remembers the days before computer reliance for an opening repertoire and he insists that a computer would not have found the same moves that he played. In any event, after the match both participants agreed that had Short played 30.h4!, instead of 30.Qxa4, in the following position he would have gained the upper hand.



[FEN "3r3k/6pp/2p3b1/2B3b1/p1Q5/"]

Every chess player should have a copy of *CBM* in order to gain the insights of these top players. For example, Short claims that he played like a "total Patzer" by permitting Kramnik to escape from a lost position. This game just hurts him to replay. He says that someone rated 2696 should "not be so stupid" as to miss some of the moves that he did.

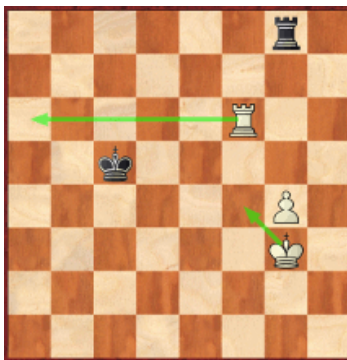
The games from Linares are annotated by either Marin or Ftacnik, and they do a really great job. Of special note is the game between Topalov and Grischuk with a novelty on move ten in the so-called Adams Attack in the Najdorf. This game is worthwhile for many reasons. I was enlightened by Ftacnik's annotations the game.

However, there is more to the DVD than coverage of major tournaments. The magazine also contains thirteen opening surveys on everything from the Poseidon Variation of the Grivas Sicilian to an interesting article on the Réti Gambit in the French by Victor Moskalenko. Kuzmin's article on the Najdorf has an interesting idea on a heretofore dubious move, and you can read the full excerpt [here](#). The surveys begin with an article on a particular opening, followed by a number of annotated games. These opening surveys are a large part of the draw of this magazine and they will provide you with plenty of food for thought for your next games.

And yet we are still not done exploring the contents of this DVD! For instance, Rainer Knaak supplies a pretty good video on an opening trap in the Vienna. There is also an opening video on the Queen's Gambit by Adrian Mikhalechishin and a twenty-minute video by Lilov on the Dutch Stonewall. This is a typical Lilov video in that it is an excellent introduction for beginners in this opening. This is followed by a video from Nigel Davies, giving us an example of the Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation.

Finally, we get to the training part of the DVD. This includes the *Move By Move* column by Daniel King, where we are asked questions about the best moves in a couple of games. You must "Enable Training" in order to use this feature. The *Tactics* column by Oliver Reeh presents you with a number of positions of varying degrees of difficulty. Endgames are covered by Karsten Müller, and we are presented with a total of seven videos devoted to various types of rook endings. Both his wit and charm are on admirable display as he teaches the principles of endgame theory. He provides us with test questions and then proceeds to explain the answers.

Here is an example of a cut off along the rank:




[FEN "6r1/8/5R2/2k5/6P1/6K1/8/8"]

Note how the rook shields its king so that it supports the advance of the passed pawn. The first three of his seven videos are all about cut offs. These alone are worth the price of the magazine. Now if we could only remove the word "tenacious" from Karsten's vocabulary.



In between each issue of *ChessBase Magazine*, an "Extra" DVD is released. These usually contain a large database of games and several Fritz Trainer videos. For example, [CBM #134 Extra](#) contains a database of 20,788 games played between December 2009 and February 2010 and three Fritz Trainer videos: Leonid Kritz shows a classical game Botvinnik-Tal, Moscow 1961; Andrew Martin refers to his own DVD "The Budapest Gambit"; and Valeri Lilov presents Aronian-Nakamura, Bursa 2010. *ChessBase Magazine* is probably one of the best values in chess. I recommend it to all chess players no matter what their level of play.

My assessment of this DVD: 

[Order](#) *ChessBase Magazine Subscription*
by ChessBase

© 2010 ChessCafe.com All Rights Reserved.

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](#)

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

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.