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Edging out the Spring Chickens

How to Beat Younger Players by Nigel Davies – Running time: 3 hrs.

"A spring chicken may be a little naive or unseasoned at times, but it often makes up in physical agility." – Michael Pollick

Older chaps are well-aware of the challenges younger players present on the tournament circuit. They usually have higher energy levels, the ability to calculate effectively for longer periods of time, and are able to perform well under sustained tension and stress. They also have better memory and their familiarity with technology allows them to exploit the benefits of chess software and databases. As Davies points out, players these days study many variations that catapult them straight into the middlegame without difficulty.



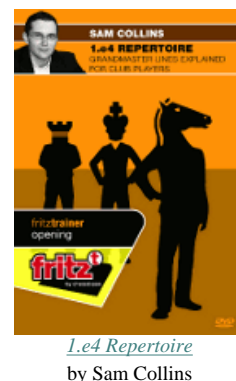
Following the devilishly entertaining [Chess for Scoundrels](#), Davies presents us with another fun and instructive subject. *How to Beat Younger Players* is a three hour guide to help older players steer the game towards positions where intuition and experience takes on particular importance.

The first of fourteen lectures serves as an introduction where Davies outlines the methods discussed on the rest of the DVD. Some of these methods include

- Reshaping your existing opening repertoire
- Drifting the game towards typical positions rather than theory-laden lines.
- Learning low-maintenance openings
- Choosing quieter, less tactical lines.
- Adopting strategies to reduce tension in the position
- Welcoming simplifications, even if they lead to equal or slightly advantageous positions
- Boning up on endgame knowledge
- Being happy with aiming for tiny advantages
- Repeating the moves to gain and advantage on the clock, reach time controls, or simply to clear one's head.
- Keeping fit, following a healthy diet, and reducing stress levels in one's life.

In 1995 Kasparov surprised Anand (and the chess world) by employing the ultra sharp Classical Dragon for the first time in world championship play. Davies uses this game in the second lecture to show the disadvantages of playing sharp openings, where a tiny slip often trounces the un-booked opponent. Playing the macho dragon requires constant knowledge-updating, and a desire to play a game of relentless tension.

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Not exactly the type of position Davies suggests.

The second game in this lecture features the Accelerated Dragon, which Davies suggests older players switch to or adopt against the Sicilian Defense. This system generally travels along positional lines where specific plans and ideas are generally more important than move orders. According to Davies, the worst that White can do against the Accelerated Dragon is to play the Maroczy Bind, and he provides the following sample game:

Nielsen, Tommy (2225) - Donaldson, John W (2430)

Owens Corning Wrexham (9), 22.10.1997

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Nc3 0-0 8. Be2 d6 9.0-0 Bd7 10.Qd2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.f3 a5 13.Rac1 Nd7 14.Bf2



In Maroczy-Bind positions the exchange of dark-squared bishops typically favors Black. This is somewhat counter-intuitive and Davies points out an instructive moment here. It would seem natural for White to want to play 14. Bxg7. However, after 14...Kxg7 15.Qd5+ Black has the retort 15...e5. After the queen retreat, Black can re-route his knight to d4 via c5-e6. The backward pawn on d6 cannot be exploited and neither the dark-squares around Black's king. Davies reasons that White retreated to 14.Bf2 based on the theoretical knowledge of avoiding this bishop exchange rather than understanding of the position, because after 14...a4 15.Rfd1 Nc5 16.Nd5 Re8 White decided to return the bishop to d4 with 17.Bd4 allowing 17...Bxd4+ 18.Qxd4 e5 The game ends with an instructive good knight versus bad bishop endgame, which is the dream endgame one gets in the Maroczy Bind when things go Black's way.

According to Davies 1.e4 is the most difficult move to meet for the older player because it channels the game into open games featuring theoretical struggles, complications and on-going tension. He offers several recommendations in his third video lecture for how to meet 1.e4 such as adopting the Scandinavian and Caro-Kann, and certain lines of the French Defense such as the Fort Knox variation after 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4. Bd7 with the idea of playing Bc6 and solving the problem of the French bishop. One of his sample games in this line was the game Xie Jun (2562) - Seirawan, Y (2618) from the 2002 Queens v Kings event in which Xie Jun pushed a little hard and ultimately collapsed in a one-move blunder.



White has just played 24.Bxf6.
What would you play here?

The game went **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bd7 5.Nf3 Bc6 6.Bd3 Nd7 7.0-0 Be7 8.b3 Ngf6 9.Ng3 0-0 10.Bb2 b6 11.c4 Bb7 12.Qe2 c5 13.Rad1 Re8 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.Ne5 g6 16.Be4 Qc8 17.Bxb7 Qxb7 18.Rfe1 Nf8 19.Ng4 Nxe4 20.Qxg4 Rad8 21.Nh5 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Rd8 23.Nf6+ Bxf6 24.Bxf6 Qe4 0-1** Davies's comments here are very instructive. He points out that his recommended opening repertoire steers the games into positions where patience and subtlety are required, and where experience and understanding is more important than specific variations. He also advises adopting openings that feature similar pawn positions, which helps make decisions based on general knowledge. For instance, all his recommended openings feature the same pawn structure of four pawns on the kingside, and standard operations along the d- and c-files.

In the fourth lecture, Davies suggest an opening repertoire for players of the French Defense that features 1...e6 against 1.d4. 1.d4 e6 leads to less theoretical lines such as 1.d4 e6 2.c4 Bb4, which Paul Keres played on occasion, as well as Franco-Indian and Bogó-Indian lines usually leading to exchanges. If you are interested in this approach, Davies has another ChessBase trainer titled [1...e6: A Solid Repertoire](#), which I reviewed in [December 2009](#). The games in this lecture were highly instructive in the way Black went about reducing the tension in the position, and he offered several suggestions for players looking to recalibrate their opening repertoire. For Kings Indian Defense or Modern Benoni Players, he recommends the Czech Benoni after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5, where general knowledge of blocked position theory is much more important than knowledge of any exact moves. (There is also a nice ChessBase trainer out there by Martin on the Czech Benoni). Other opening recommendations here include old lines of the Queens Gambit, such as the Lasker variation. There are just so many good generic ideas here by Davies, and he does show several ways to tone down one's opening repertoire, even in several major openings.

On lecture number five we get suggestions as White that includes adopting system-openings, such as the London, Colle, Colle-Zukertort, Torre, or Trompowsky. The game Smyslov–Xu was a wonderful example of the former champion employing a no-frills approach after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.e3. The game also begins to illustrate the concept of generating a quiet middlegame with a view to the endgame. Recommendations for readjusting one's white opening repertoire included going for same-side castling instead of the Yugoslav Attack in the Classical Dragon Sicilian, and switching to Closed Sicilian or the King's Indian Attack from open lines of the Sicilian Defense. He also recommends the Sicilian Kan as a very solid alternative for Black, and in Davies' excellent 1.e4 for the Creative Attacker there is an interesting approach with 1.e4 c5 2.Na3.

Lecture six involves some of Davies own games, which serve to drive the point of playing positions featuring several of the strategies presented. The seventh lecture discusses the advantages of being satisfied with tiny advantages, which are more likely to lead to rational positions where older players tend not to make mistakes and use their experience to the maximum. Often times these positions look quite benign and lull the opponent into a fall sense of security as in the sample game Petrosian-Veingold from the 1993 Keres Memorial.



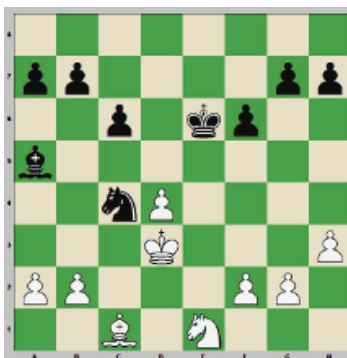
White wins in five more moves.

The game went **1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 b6 4.e3 Bb7 5.Bd3 d5 6.0-0 dxc4 7.Bxc4 Be7 8.Qe2 0-0 9.Nc3 Ne4 10.Nxe4 Bxe4 11.b3 c5 12.Rd1 Qc7 13.dxc5 Bxc5 14.Bb2 Qe7 15.Nd2 Bg6 16.a3 a5 17.Bb5 Nd7 18.Nc4 Rad8 19.b4 axb4 20.axb4 Bxb4 21.Ra7 Qc5 22.Raxd7 Ra8 23.Ne5 1-0**. Davies does a terrific job of discussing this game, weaving in previously outlined strategies, and providing some entertaining comments.

There were also some enlightening pointers by Davies to transition into the next lecture and they centered on endgame preparation. According to Davies, players who employ the "taking a little nibble rather than a big bite" approach need to be prepared to play endgames. If one can switch to a style of play where one is good at endgames, then we will be confident at playing simple positions and not mind simplifications. According to Davies, the greatest trump in the older player's arsenal is to have knowledge and confidence in the endgame. That means the older players is OK with more restrained positions and can play in a more relaxed style, rather than going after their opponent and exposing themselves in the process. To illustrate this concept of restrained play and endgame specialization, Davies uses the game Donaldson-Taimanov from the 1997 Owens Corning event where Black adopted a Bogo-Indian set up and drifted the game to a successful endgame.

How to Beat Younger Players runs for three hours, which is slightly shorter than the average ChessBase trainer nowadays. However, each lecture is packed with many useful suggestions. His ninth lecture advises older players to find positions that were popular before most opponents started playing chess. For instance, he suggests going back to the chess literature of the 70s or 80s and explore old lines of the King's Indian Defense, old Indians, and some Benonis, where the style is less forcing and based more on clean, classical play. Younger players might have forgotten or nor not be quite as up-to-date on these older lines. He presents us with some of his games in the King's Indian Attack, where he shows a clear connection between choosing an opening where one's experience counts. Needless to say, Davies also has a ChessBase trainer on the King's Indian Attack.

There are times when we know an opponent wants to beat us, and Davies discusses how we might turn this to our advantage by trying to make them overreach in simple positions. He calls this the frustration factor, and in the tenth lecture he offers a terrific example from the famous game Lasker-Euwe from Nottingham 1936. Lasker applied the concept of simplification; frustrating Euwe where he overreached and blundered.



What would you play in this position?

In the above position Lasker played the tactical shot 24.b4! winning material. The game ended **24... Bxb4 25.Nc2 Bd2 26.Bxd2 Nb2+ 27.Ke2 Kd5 28.Bc1 Nc4 29.Kd3 Nb6 30.Ne3+ Ke6 31.Nc4 Nc8 32.Na5 Nd6 33.Bf4 1-0**

The last lectures are devoted to Lasker and Smyslov who played until late in life, as well as Korchnoi and Karpov who continue playing actively today. The games include Lasker-Alexander (Nottingham 1936), Korchnoi-Tiviako (9th Open Banyoles 2006), Smyslov-Oll (Rostov 1993), and Kamsky-Karpov (Amber Rapid 1996). Davies extracts several educational moments in these lectures, in particular the games of Smyslov and seventy-eight year old Korchnoi whom Davies calls "the greatest biological miracle the chess world has ever seen."

I highly recommend this excellent DVD by Davies, who is very articulate and engaging here. It was painful to discover all the methods the veterans have inflicted on me at the local chess club, but it gave me many ideas for how to handle the younger lads. Now we just need a "How to Beat the Veterans" guide for the balance to be restored!

[Order](#) *How to Beat younger Players*
by Nigel Davies

The ABC of the King's Indian (2nd Edition) by Andrew Martin – Running time: 5 hrs.

[Last month](#) I had an opportunity to review Bologan's *King's Indian Defense DVD* in which he provides a specific repertoire, based mostly on his own playing experience. The *ABC of the King's Indian Defense* by Martin, on the other hand, is a "friendly tour" of the K.I.D. His goal is to entertain you, inspire you, and give you some ideas and occasional recommendations. His aim is to make you a K.I.D fan and set you on your way to learn more and hopefully try it out in your play. Therefore, what you get is a bunch of lectures loosely organized under broad categories. The reader can compare Bologan's DVD outline with the one below to get a further idea of the content.



- **Chapter One**
- 01: Introduction
- 02: Ljukamnov – Martin
- 03: Solution
- 04: Martin – Buckley
- **Chapter Two: Classical Games**
- 05: Introduction and Donner – Gligoric
- 06: Kortschnoj – Fischer
- 07: Ftacnik – Cvitan
- 08: Summerscale – Hebden
- 09: Vitiugov – Khismatullin
- **Chapter Three: Four Pawns Attack**
- 10: Introduction and Daces – Mrdja
- **Chapter Four: Samisch Variation**
- 11: Introduction and Karpov – Kasparov
- 12: Platonov – Shamkovitch
- 13: Some thoughts on 6...c5
- 14: Analysis against 6.Bg5
- **Chapter Five: Fianchetto**
- 15: Introduction and Matonen – Vooremaa
- 16: Burmakin – Morozevich
- **Chapter Six: Systems with an early Bg5**
- 17: Introduction and Schandorff – Nataf

- 18: Averbakh 6...Na6 analysis
- 19: Chernin – Cebalo
- **Chapter Seven: Other white systems**
- 20: Introduction and Behrmann - Tartar
- 21: Williams – Gallagher
- **Chapter Eight**
- 22: Closing remarks
- **King's Indian Updates**
- 23: Morozevich – Jones [Makogonov's system]
- 24: Wang Yue – Cheparinov [6...Nbd7 in the classical variation]
- 25: Johansen – King [Averbach system]
- 26: Hulak – Fedorov [The Panov in the Fianchetto variation]
- 27: Van Wely – Radjabov [Bayonet attack]
- 28: Grand Zuniga – Komljenovic [Four Pawn attack]
- 29: Williams – Hebden [Mar del Plata Variation]
- 30: Summerscale – Jones [Classical Variation]

Martin gets us started with one of his own games: Ljukmanov – Martin from the 1994 World Correspondence Semi-Finals. We pick up the action after 21. Bh6, and by the way, if you can solve these diagrams, the K.I.D. May be the opening for you.



Black to Move – What would you play?

Martin sacrifices his knight with **21...Nc4!**, which White is forced to accept. **22.bxc4 Rb8+ 23.Ka1 Bh8 24.Nfd1 Rab7 25.Re1 Ne5** Bringing all pieces into the attack. **26.Bf4 Nxc4 27.Qe2 Qa3 28.Qxc4 Qxc1+ 29.Bxc1 Rb1# 0-1**

Games like the one above abound in this DVD, and Martin surely knows how to entertain. One of the most amusing lines in the K.I.D. occurs in the classical variation when both opponents go about their own plans, largely ignoring each other. White expands on the queenside while Black builds his kingside attack. One of the most compelling examples of this in the DVD is the game Ftacnik – Cvitan from Bundesliga 1997 which went **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Nd2 Ne8 10.b4 f5 11.c5 Nf6 12.f3 f4 13.Nc4 g5 14.a4 Ng6 15.Ba3 Rf7 16.b5 dxc5 17.Bxc5 h5 18.a5 g4 19.b6 g3 20.Kh1 21.d6 Qh4 22.Bg1 Bh3 23.bxc7**



Black to Move – What would you play?

Cvitan finished off in spectacular style with mating sequence **23...Bxg2+! 24.Kxg2 Qh3+! 25.Kxh3 Ng5+ 26.Kg2 Nh4+ 27.Kh1 g2# 0-1**

The Classical Variation is typically where one sees these pretty kingside

attacks by Black. Another terrific example in the DVD was the game Summerscale – Hebden from the Great Britain Championship in 2000.



Black to Move – What would you play?

Here Hebden won a pawn with **19...Nfxd5!** since 20.exd5 gives entry to black's knight after 20...Nf5 21.h3 Ng3+ 22.Kh2 Bxh3.

Martin has a talent for explaining concepts and ideas for the average player, and his videos are replete with generous verbal commentary. In my review of Bologan's DVD, I quoted his explanation of the starting position of the Samish variation. Compare that with Martin's explanation of the Samish after 1. d4 Nf6 c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 and you clearly see the contrasting lecture styles.

"Right, so this is the Samish Variation, one of the most difficult variations to meet in the King's Indian. The pawn on f3 often gives White's center a rock-like quality and behind that center, White hopes to drum a kingside attack with ideas of perhaps Be3, Qd2 and then g4 and h4. There are different ways for Black to play this position but Shamkovich plays 5...Nc6 which is quite rare. Black normally castles before he takes any sort of action against White's center.

"Now, the possible drawback of the Samisch set-up is the d4 square. This is the soft spot in White's central pawn formation, so you often find Black bombarding this point in the Samish line. For instance after 5...0-0 6.Be3 Black can choose between playing 6...e5 or 6...c5. Each of these moves is connected with attacking d4 and forcing a slight concession - so if White plays, say, d5 (after 6...c5) the long diagonal is open. Or in the case of 6...e5 Black can sometimes get work with preparing the move f5. The blockage on the center makes it easier for white to engineer pawn levers on the flank.

"So 5...Nc6 what do we make of this? Well, it's almost as is Shamkovich is provoking the White center forward. It's almost as he wants White to play d5 because he understand that if White pushes early before developing his pieces behind this center there could be some weak squares to occupy or take advantage of. For instance after 7.Be3 Black is already in good shape to attack the center with c6. Meanwhile, if White is really tempted and got for 7.f4 then Black simply drops back and is ready to chip in the center with c6."

According to Martin, the K.I.D. player needs to be flexible, enjoy taking risks, have a good sense of timing, and enjoy experimenting with different types of positions. Martin also tells us that the K.I.D. player needs to "love chess and not results" and that it is an "artistic opening." My personal impression of what Martin means by an artistic opening is that to be a K.I.D. player one really needs to build very strong tactical acumen. There is no point in playing highly imbalanced games if Black lacks the tactical reserves necessary to find the winning combinational shots.

Bologan's K.I.D. is a more useful DVD if one is looking to seriously adopt the K.I.D. There are so many dangerous systems White can adopt against the K.I.D., as well various systems against Black's responses to White's, so Black really needs to know his stuff and learn reams of theory. On the other hand, Martin's aim is to inspire and provide an overall introduction to the opening,

which he delivers on both counts.

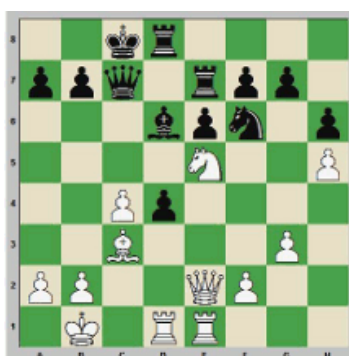
Order *ABC of the King's Indian*
by Andrew Martin

Power of Planning by Adrian Mikhalchishin – Running time: 3 hrs 19 min.

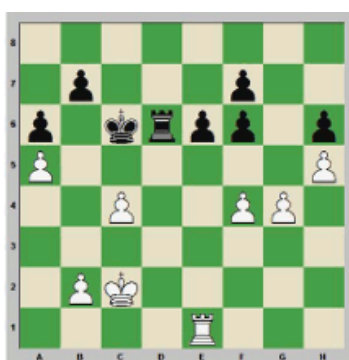
Mikhalchishin continues to enlighten us with highly interesting DVD topics, which include [Decision Making in Chess](#), [Power of Exchange](#), and one my all-time favorites the highly instructive [Secrets of World Champions](#). The *Power of Planning* is a series of twelve lectures discussing the element of pawn majorities and planning. Mikhalchishin is a strong grandmaster, author of several chess books, and renowned chess trainer, so we can expect outstanding examples illustrating his ideas.



Mikhalchishin begins this DVD discussing topics such the double-edge nature of pawn majorities, its various objectives, and when a pawn majority is meaningful or not. The first example is from the game Kasparov-Vukic from the European Championship in 1980.



Mikhalchishin points out here that Black's 4:3 pawn majority is difficult to advance on the queenside, but on the other hand the pawn being used to stop Black's majority is weak. White is better and he attributes this to the more mobile nature of White's 3:2 majority on the queenside. Mikhalchishin shows us how Kasparov exploited his pawn majority, culminating in the following position:

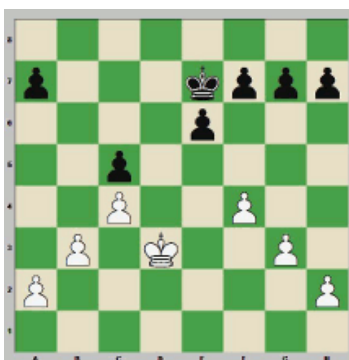


Kasparov forced resignation with **37.Rd1!** The game could have ended 37... Rxd1 38.Kxd1 Kd6 39.g5 Ke7 40.gxh6 Kf8 41.c5 Kg8 42.b4 Kh7 43.b5 axb5 and either the a- or c-pawn will promote.

There are a couple of other instructive examples, one a king, rook and pawn endgame showing how White exploited his 3:2 vs 4:3 majority on the

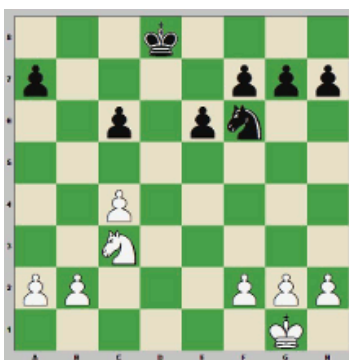
kingside, as well as a game featuring good vs. bad pawn majorities. All examples in each lecture are arranged by level of difficulty, making the content accessible to intermediate-level players and beyond.

In the second lecture, Mikhalkishin shows us several king, rook and pawn endgames featuring respective pawn majorities for each side, covering topics such as the sacrificed rook vs. passed pawn and standard methods for stopping pawn majorities. He also discusses taking into account additional factors besides the agile majority, as in his sample game Golod-Kosashvili:



Mikhalkishin comments that at first glance the position looks quite sound, but really the pawn structure on the queenside prevents white from preventing a passed pawn with 28...a5! and therefore Black's 4:3 majority on the kingside is more dangerous in this case. The rest of the game is equally instructive thanks to his interesting comments, and this special quality is consistent throughout all the chosen examples.

Occasionally, Mikhalkishin fast-speeds at a bullet pace through certain move sequences. It's almost comical to watch this when it happens, but he does such a wonderful job at choosing his material and interconnecting the lectures. For instance, his third lecture explores good and bad majorities in more detail, picking a similar example from the Golod-Kosashvili, but tiny details give a totally different assessment of the position:



This position is from the game Sveshnikov-Sokolov, Moscow Open 1997. White played **21.f3!** cementing e4 and providing White's king a speedy route to the center of the board. The move a5 here by Black wouldn't hold White's majority successfully on account of the knights being on the board. This game was another great example of how to exploit pawn majorities. The game ended **21...Nd7 22.Kf2 f5 23.Ke3 Ke7 24.b4 e5 25.a4 Kd6 26.Kd3 Nf6 27.c5 + Ke6? 28.b5! Kd7? 29.Kc4 Kc7 30.a5! a6 31.b6 Kb7 32.g3 h5? 33.h4!+- Nd7 34.f4 exf4 35.gxf4 Nf8 36.Ne2 Ng6 37.Nd4 Nxh4 38.Ne6 Kc8 39.Nxg7 Ng6 40.Nxh5 Kd7 41.Kd3 Kc8 42.Ke3 Ne7 43.Ng7 Nd5+ 44.Kf3 Ne7 45. Ne6 Nd5 46.Nd4 1-0**

The third, fourth, and fifth lectures covered several topics related to pawn majorities including how pawn minorities can fight majorities, destroying our opponent's majority right in the middlegame, and which factors play a role in deciding when to transition into the endgame positions. He also presents examples illustrating the importance of tactical know-how in order to exploit

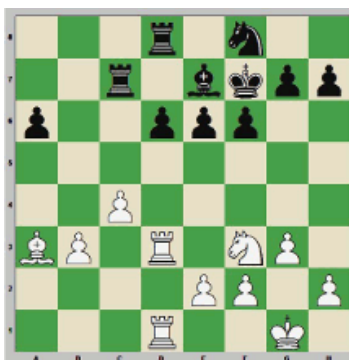
positional factors.

In lectures sixth through twelve Mikhalkishin immerses in a long range of topics related to planning. We learn what planning is, the advantages of finding the best move through proper planning versus brute calculation, elements to assess in a position, and static vs dynamic elements. "It's all about weaknesses" Mikhalkishin tell us, so through various examples he discusses topics like basing our plan on our opponent's weaknesses, the weak King, creating a second weakness, exploiting our opponent's bad pieces, how to spot and fix weaknesses, and many other practical subjects. Below are a couple of examples of such instructional moments in these lectures:



White to Move – Where is Black's weak spot in this position?

This is from the game Vallejo Pons – Martines Lozano from 1998 Spain Championship. Vallejo put his finger on Black's weakness with **25.Kh1 Qd8 26.Rg1!** (Kudos if you found the g-file to be the Black's weakness) **26...Re8 27.Bf3 Qb8 28.Qg2 b5 29.axb5 axb5 30.Ne4 Qd8 31.Nxd6 Re7 32.Nf5 1–0**



Black to Move

The above diagram is from the game Smyslov – Andersson, Biel 1976 in which Mikhalkishin highlights among other things, the different approaches to dealing with the attack of the d-pawn. Andersson went for passive defense with **30...Rc6?** and Mikhalkishin discusses dynamic defense with the variation **30...Rb8 31.Bxd6!? Bxd6 32.Rxd6 Rxb3 33.Rxa6 Rc3! (33...Rxc4? 34.Ra7) trapping the knight.**

There were several interesting comments by Mikhalkishin here; maybe they will make their way into "memorable chess quotes." On tactics: "Tactics is the accelerator of the plans." On creating a second weakness: "If you don't have stuff to make a shirt you can't make a shirt." On weaknesses: "A weakness is not a weakness at all if it cannot be exploited"

I enthusiastically recommend this DVD and kudos to Mikhalkishin and the ChessBase team for developing an entertaining and high-quality training product. *Power of Planning* is jam-packed with wonderfully instructive examples rich in ideas, and will increase your awareness of planning and decision making in chess.

The Caro-Kann by Viktor Bologan – Running time: 4 hrs. 40 min.

Bologan's goal in *The Caro-Kann* is to provide you with a repertoire, specific move orders, and knowledge. In his words, you simply need to watch this four hour DVD to have an idea on how to play all mainlines and sidelines. I agree that Bologan's explanations, while brief, are usually quite to the point. Still, beginner and intermediate-level players might benefit from a broader discussion, as Bologan's forte is to walk you through the specific recommended lines and not delve into long discourses that are helpful to average players.



Bologan follows the same effective approach from his [King's Indian Defense DVD](#), which I reviewed in [December](#) of last year. He is highly organized and consistent in his delivery. He first starts with a brief explanation of the particular system and recommended line, highlights a game, and ends with a short summary. Many of the illustrative games on this DVD are his own, so the content is based on his own knowledge and analysis. The recommended repertoire is what he has played or would play in the future, perhaps with some normal modifications. I wanted to see how he's been doing with the Caro-Kann since the creation of this DVD, but was only able to find one game, Okkes-Bologan from the 2008 Euro Club Cup in which he played 3...c5 against the Advanced Variation.

As most players know, the Caro-Kann has a reputation for being solid, but somewhat passive and leading to drawn games. According to Bologan, however, there are many opportunities for Black to capture the initiative, and the positions are often complex and nuanced. There are also many dynamic suggestions in his recommended repertoire. For instance, in the King's Indian Attack set-up against the Caro-Kann, he recommends the pawn sacrifice after **1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 e5 4.Ngf3 Bd6 5.Qe2 Nf6**, and if White goes for the pawn he gets fantastic compensation after **6.exd5 cxd5 7.Nxe5 0-0 8.d4 Nc6 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Nb3 Re8 11.Be3 Ng4 12.g3 Nxe3 13.fxe3 Qg5**. From a practical perspective though, it is unlikely your opponent will open up the center with his king still stuck in the center, or play 5.Qe2. Most K.I.A. players would continue with the common line 5.g3.

Bologan explains several plans and ideas in his variations, but the viewer obviously has to do his homework and not expect his recommended repertoire to play the game for them. An excellent example of this is his recommended line after **1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 e5 4.Ngf3 Bd6 5.d4 exd4 6.exd5 cxd5 7.Nxd4 Nc6 8.N2b3 Nf6 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 h6**



"Learning to play IQP positions"

Bologan very briefly discusses how to play isolated queen-pawn positions, but this is a big subject in of itself. Learning how to handle IQP positions requires familiarization, playing experience, and further research – all beyond the scope of the subject and objective of this DVD. I would highly recommend Daniel King's [Power Play 6](#), which provides great training material to develop a practical understanding of IQP positions for both sides. The overall PowerPlay series is worth every penny and some of the very best ChessBase

has to offer to average chess learners.

One would think there are no long move sequences needing to be memorized in the Caro-Kann, but there are some. One of them occurs after **1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Bg4 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 Nf6 6.d4 dxe4 7.Nxe4 Qxd4 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.Be3 Qd5 10.Rd1 0-0-0 11.Ng5 Ne5 12.Qxd5 Nxd5** and here Black needs to know the sequence **13.Bxa7 h6 14.Bf5+ e6 15.Nxf7 exf5 16.Nxh8 Bb4+ 17.c3 Bd6 18.f4 Nxf4 19.Bb6 Nfd3+ 20.Ke2 Rxh8 21.Rxd3 Nxd3 22.Kxd3 g6**. This is one of the few lines Black needs to remember in this variation otherwise nasty things can happen.

The content is broken into the following twenty lectures:

- 01 – 1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5
- 02 – 1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Bg4
- 03 – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3
- 04 – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.Bd3
- 05 – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4
- 06 – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.exd5
- **Advanced Variation: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5**
- 07 – 4th move sidelines)
- 08 – 4.c3
- 09 – 4.Be3/4.Nd2
- 10 – 4.h4 h5 5.c4 e6
- 11 – 4.Nc3 e6 5.g4 Bg6 6.Nge2 f6
- 12 – 4.Nf3 e6 sidelines
- 13 – 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6.Be3 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Ne7
- **Classical System: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3/d2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5**
- 14 – 5.Nc5
- 15 – 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.Nf3/N1e2/Bc4
- 16 – 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.Nf3 Nd7 8.h5 Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 e6 11.Bf4 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qc7 13.0-0-0 Ngf6 14.Qe2 (or 13.Qe2)
- 17 – 13.0-0-0 Ngf6 14.Ne4 0-0-0 15.g3 Nxe4 16.Qxe4 Bd6 17.Qe2
- 18 – 17. c4 c5 18.Bc3 cxd4
- 19 – 17. c4 c5 18.d4/18.Kb1/18.Qe2
- 20 – 17.Kb1

This is a good DVD if you are looking for a complete repertoire on the Caro-Kann. However, I would suggest buyers compliment this purchase with some broader materials that offer more explanations about ways to handle typical positions and pawn structures; otherwise they might not be able to get out of the theoretical jungle.

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by Victor Bologan

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