



## COLUMNISTS

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Louis Lima



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## The Magicians

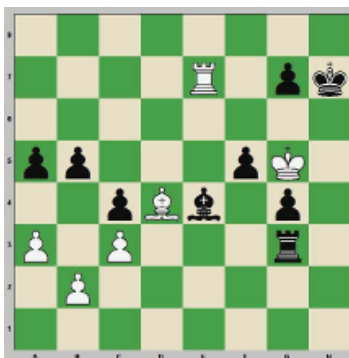
"Chess is an amazing, deep and difficult game, but at the end, in the highest sense, is logical, even if it seems paradoxical at first for the human mind." – Karsten Müller

*Magic of Chess Tactics*, by Claus Dieter Meyer and Karsten Müller, Running time: three hours, thirty minutes

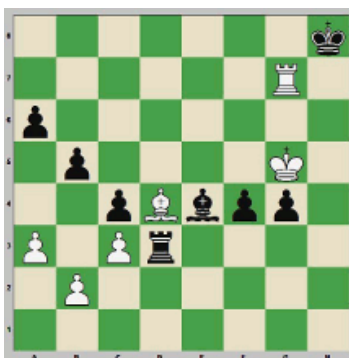
Prepare to be dazzled and challenged in this superb transformation of Müller and Meyer's book [The Magic of Chess Tactics](#) to Fritz Trainer format. Müller presents thirty-eight video lectures that highlight the creativity of some of the greatest magicians of the chessboard: Fischer, Shirov, Topalov, Bronstein, Tal, Nezhmetdinov, and many others. Combine this with Müller's entertaining and dynamic style and you come away with a high-quality production.



One of best ways to improve your tactical ability is to roll-up one's sleeves and get down to business solving puzzles. You can sit back and enjoy these fabulous lectures, but I suspect Müller will soon make you feel guilty. He often stops during the presentation to ask what would you do in a given position. His question is followed by a pause, and just when you think he's about to reveal the solution, he will say "go ahead, take your time." You simply marvel at the creativity of the magicians or take the opportunity to improve your tactical skills. Some video lectures can provide a full day's tactical workout, as in the second video lecture presenting the game Shirov-Lautier, Munich 1993. In this nineteen-minute lecture, Müller stops no less than eleven times to challenge the viewer. Here are the first three:



White to Move – Find the mate yourself



White to Move – Find the refutation to Rd3

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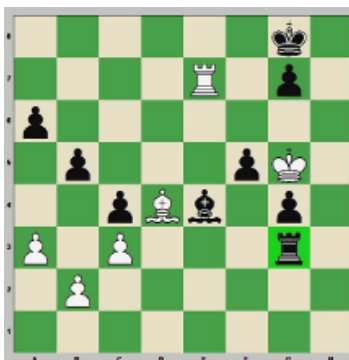
[Two Knight's Defence](#)  
by Lawrence Trent



[ChessBase Magazine 134](#)  
Edited by Rainer Knaak



[Deep Fritz 12](#)



White to Move – How to strengthen White's attack?

The puzzles range in difficulty, but they are geared towards intermediate to advanced players and beyond. Given the amount of training material provided, it is advisable to set-up the positions over-the-board, so you are not glued to the computer screen. *Magic of Chess Tactics* contains three and a half hours of video divided into the following lectures:

- 01: Intro
- 02: Fischer, R – Donner, J
- 03: Shirov, A – Lautier, J
- 04: Topalov, V – Shirov, A
- 05: Cross pin
- 06: Bronstein, D – NN
- 07: Bronstein, D – Korchnoi, V
- 08: Tal, M – Bronstein, D
- 09: Samsonov – Nezhmetdinov, R
- 10: Nezhmetdinov, R – Tal, M
- 11: Polugaevsky, L Nezhmetdinov, R
- 12: Stein, L – Birbrager, I
- 13: Stein, L – Portisch, L
- 14: Stein, L – Anikaev, Y
- 15: Spielmann, R – Gruenfeld, E
- 16: Spielmann, R – Thomas, G
- 17: Tal, M – Koblenz, A
- 18: Tal, M – Klamann, K
- 19: Tal, M – Smyslov, V
- 20: Tal, M – Benko, P
- 21: Tal, M – Nievergelt, E
- 22: Kunnemann, N.N.
- 23: Analysis of Kunnemann – N.N.
- 24: Queen and Knight: Anand, V – Radjabov, T
- 25: Attacking combination 01: Müller, K – Zagrebelny, S
- 26: Attacking combination 02: Caruana, F – Berg, E
- 27: Attacking combination 03: Rotlewi, G – Rubinstein, A
- 28: Attacking combination 04: Bagirov, V – Gufeld
- 29: Attacking combination 05: Maroczy, G – Romi, M
- 30: Attacking combination 06: Alekhine, A – van Mindeno, A
- 31: Attacking combination 07: Nimzowitsch, A – Vidmar, M
- 32: Attacking combination 08: Kasparov, G – Karpov, A
- 33: Attacking combination 09: Panczyk, K – Matlak, M
- 34: Attacking combination 10: Martorelli, A – Antunes, A
- 35: Endgame magic 01: Szyplowski, A – Silbermann, F
- 36: Endgame magic 02: Short, N – Cheparinov, I
- 37: Endgame magic 03: Geisler, F – Heissler, J
- 38: Endgame magic 04: Analysis of Kunnemann – N.N.

There is also a supplementary Chessbase file of 384 tactical positions from which the video examples were taken. If you choose the training tab to hide the answers, you can take a shot at solving the puzzles yourself.

Index	Name	Opponent	Year	Score	Rating	Opponent	Year	Score	Rating
1	The Magic of Chess Tactics (revised and enlarged)	Test				Test			
2	Foreword to The Magic of Chess Tactics - revised and enl.	Test				Test			
3	Introduction	Test				Test			
4	Chess Tactics	Test				Test			
5	The Authors	Test				Test			
6	100 Chess Tactics	Test				Test			
7	100 Chess Tactics	Test				Test			
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While he discusses the solution of a puzzle, Müller dispenses valuable advice, such as, Don't exchange your attacking potential; opposite-colored bishops favor the attacker, etc. There are some fantastic lectures here that you will return to time and time again. Two of my favorites were the mad dash of pins and cross-pins in the game Fahnenschmidt – Gutman, Germany Bundesliga 1987, and the epic duel Nezhmetdinov – Tal, 1961 USSR Championship. In the latter Müller paints a picturesque portrait of Nezhmetdinov with funny remarks such as "OK, this move is better, but of course Nezhmetdinov had to play the Nezhmetdinov move."

Overall, this is a superb production from Müller, Meyer, and the ChessBase team. Along with King's *PowerPlay* series and Mikhalechishin's [The Secret Weapons of the Champions](#), *Magic of Chess Tactics* is among my favorite Fritz Trainers of all time.

## Order Magic of Chess Tactics by Claus Dieter Meyer and Karsten Müller

*Trompowsky the Easy Way* (2nd ed.), by Andrew Martin, Running time: four hours

On his DVD on the [Queen's Indian Defense](#), Jacob Aagard takes a humorous jab at the Trompowsky, when, after 1.d4 Nf6, he comments, "We are not thinking about things like the London, the Trompowsky or all the other people who do not want to play real chess, but want to fight for an advantage with 2.c4." Martin, on the other hand, feels that the Trompowsky provides us playable positions with plenty of room for creativity. As Martin points out in *Trompowsky the Easy Way*, 1. d5 Nf6 3.Bg5 became widely popular in the '70s, providing white players with an automatic attacking game without having to learn reams of theory.



Martin's introductory games provide us with a bit of history on the Trompowsky, as well as a couple of questions to challenge our tactical know-how the first illustrative game is **Vaganian-Boterill 1974**. After **1.d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 g6 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Bg7 5.Ne2 b6 6.Nf4 d5 7.h4 h5 8.c4 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Bb7 10.Nc3 Bh6**, we reach the following position:



White to Move – What would you play here?

Vaganian found the tactical shot **11.Bxf7+! Kxf7 12.Qb3+ Ke8 13.Nxg6 Qd7 14.Nxh8 Qg7 15.Qe6+ Kf8 16.Nd5 Nd7 17.Ne7 Re8 18.Nhg6+ 1-0**

The second inspirational game is also another 1974 Vaganian encounter, this time against Jansa, at Kragujevac, and featuring the pawn sacrifice **1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.d5 Qb6 4.Nc3 Qxb2**. Martin puts both games into historical perspective and discusses how Black handles the opening these days, trying to play ...e5 (e.g., 5.Bd2 Qb6 6.e4 e5) before White does so himself. In the game, Black got steamrolled after **5.Bd2 Qb6 6.e4 d6 7.f4 g6 8.e5 Nfd7 9.Nf3 Bg7 10.Rb1 Qd8 11.e6 fxe6 12.Ng5 Nf8 13.Bb5+ Bd7 14.dxe6 Bxb5 15.Nxb5 Qc8 16.0-0 a6 17.Bc3 axb5 18.Bxg7 Rg8 19.Bxf8 Rxf8 20.Nxh7 Rg8 21.f5 gxf5 22.Qh5+ Kd8 23.Qf7 Re8 24.Rxf5 Qc6 25.Re1 Rxa2 26.Nf6 Rxc2 27.Qxe8+ Qxe8 28.Nxe8 Kxe8 29.h4 Rc4 30.h5 Nc6 31.Ref1 Kd8 32.R5f4 Nd4 33.Kh2 Nxe6 34.Rxc4 bxc4 35.h6 Ng5 36.Kg3 b5 37.Kg4 c3 38.Kxg5 1-0**

As with most of Martin's opening DVDs, his inspirational games are followed by a series of lectures focusing on specific themes. This allows a better understanding of the underlying ideas behind specific variations. Martin first discusses the imbalance arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 g6 3.Bxf6 exf6, in which White gives up the bishop-pair in exchange for ruining Black's pawn structure.

The second theme discusses the imbalance arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.e4 h6 4.Bxf6 Qxf6, in which White gives up the bishop-pair in exchange for a strong center. Martin also relates that the old move 5.Nf3 is viewed as less flexible, since it blocks the f-pawn, and explains that 5.c3, 5.Nc3, and 5.Qd2 are seen more often nowadays.

Because of the early departure of the bishop from the queenside, the b2-pawn can be a weakness, and White can sacrifice it to gain time for an attack. Martin looks at this theme in two lectures exploring 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bh4 c5 4.f3 g5 5.fxe4 gxh4 6.e3 Qb6 7.Nc3 Qxb2 and 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.Bxf6 gxf6 4.d5 Qb6 5.Nd2 Qxb2.

The appeal of the Trompowsky lies not only in the attacking chances it offers, but also in room for originality it provides. This is the last of the themes in Martin's video, and we are treated to the nice encounter Bellon-Kouatly, OHRA Open 1987.

The material is divided as follows:

- 01: Preintro
- 02: Intro and Game 1
- 03: Game 2
- 04: Bishop vs pawn structure
- 05: The big centre
- 06-07: White sacrifices for attack
- 08: Originality
- 09-11: 2...d5
- 12-16: 2...e6
- 17-20: 2...c5
- 21-27: 2...Ne4
- 28-29: Loose ends

- 30: Outro
- 31-36: Updates
- 37: Outro

It is often amusing to see what presenters have to say when making videos for both sides of an opening. On the DVD, [Queen's Pawn Openings](#), Martin comments that Trompowsky players are looking for an interesting position without having to think too much, but in fact only expose their own laziness. He advocates the system with g6 and d5, and comments that if White wants to get anything out of the position he has to play an early c4. The line he recommends goes 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 (or 2...g6) 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 g6. Surprisingly, Martin does not have much to say about this line on the Trompowsky DVD. He only mentions that against 2...g6 White should opt for the same strategy of playing 3.Bxf6 in order to ruin Black's pawn structure. Thus, the *Trompowsky the Easy Way* doesn't even say how to handle the author's own recommendation against the Trompowsky.

To be fair, Martin does give the Trompowsky its proper place in the opening hierarchy. He mentions that he is unconvinced White has any advantage whatsoever in the 2...e6 lines, and suggests 3.e3 over the more common 3.e4. This looks deceptively modest, but one idea is to potentially support an f4-push and create a favorable stonewall-like game. In the updates section, he also suggests 3.Nd2 as a surprise weapon.

Overall this DVD is a good introduction to this opening and the contents are neatly organized. Martin's target audience is the average improving player.

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**Order** *Trompowsky the Easy Way*  
by Andrew Martin

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*The Power of Exchange*, by Adrian Mihalchishin, Running time: three hours

Mihalchishin has a way of making the classical masters and their techniques accessible to chess lovers via his excellent ChessBase trainers. His other titles include [Winning Structures](#), [The Secrets Weapons of the Champions](#), and [Power of Planning](#). The *Power of Exchange* places great emphasis on various aspects of piece exchanges, an important aspect of technical mastery that is prevalent in the games of the famous Polish grandmaster Akiva Rubinstein.



Five video lectures are devoted to Rubinstein and the exchange, with six lectures covering various other topics related to exchanges in general. In his first video lecture Mihalchishin discusses topics such as when to exchange pawns and when to exchange pieces, transitioning to winning or superior endgames, the decisive role of the king in king in pawn endgames, creating a second weakens, and other subjects.

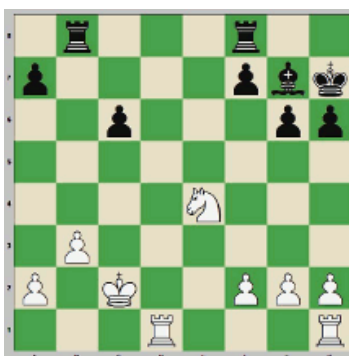
Mihalchishin's examples are highly illustrative of the topics he presents, and they are packed with terrific advice. One example is his lecture featuring the game Rubinstein-Tarrasch. His important rule here is "Don't look at the piece you want to exchange, but the pieces that remain on the board after exchange – look at the pieces remaining after the exchange and examine their activity."



Rubinstein-Tarrasch – White to Move  
– What would you play?

Here, the average player would likely consider where to develop White's bishop on c1 and connect the rooks, except that the bishop has no adequate square. Rubinstein recognizes that Black's knight is a strong piece and plays 21.Nd1 with the idea of playing 22.Ne3 to exchange the knight on c4. Along the way, Mikhalechishin discusses the characteristics of strong players, such as being able to choose multifunctional moves or the ability to find the simplest solution to a problem.

One of the enjoyable and educational aspects of Mikhalechishin's lectures is how he will illustrate a specific rule in one lecture, just to show that things are not so simple in the next. In the illustrative game **Zaichik-Mikhalechishin** he gives the following position:



Black to Move – What would you play?

Mikhalechishin points out how he failed to assess the position, believing that he was better on account of his bishop on g7 pressuring White's queenside pawns along the open diagonal. However, after **23...c5? 24.Nd6 Bd4 25.f3 Rb6 26.Nc4 Re6** he humorously points out that nobody cares about his "strong" bishop on d4, the real weakness being the pawn on c5. His lower-rated opponent capitalized on it after **27.Rde1 Rfe8 28.Rxe6 Rxe6 29.Kd3 Bg7 30.Rc1 h5 31.Rc2 Re1 32.Na5 a6 33.Nb7 Re6 34.Kc4 f5 35.Nxc5 Rd6**. The lesson is that chess is not so simple and that one cannot judge a position solely on a single factor.

My only reservation is that Mikhalechishin does not quiz the viewer or provide any practice material. Simply viewing the DVD increases our knowledge, but not necessarily our ability. Of course, the viewer can print out diagrams of key positions and make self-test exercises. I did this with Mikhalechishin's Secret Weapons of World Champion and it was very helpful to my chess improvement.

Overall, this is another excellent DVD by Mikhalechishin. I hope he continues to share his expertise through these instructive video lectures.



*The ABC of the Ruy Lopez* (2nd ed.), by Andrew Martin, Running time: four hours, fifty-four minutes

Martin's goal in the *ABC of the Ruy Lopez* is to provide the viewer with a working knowledge of this opening. He presents celebrated examples, offers repertoire suggestions, and comments on typical ideas to prepare us to employ the Lopez in our chess practice. Of the nearly five hour running time, ninety minutes is devoted to new material.

The contents, organized in Martin's typical manner, discussing main themes, and then moving on to the specific variations, are divided as follows:



- 01: Intro
- 02: Sustained Pressure
- 03: Simplicity
- 04: Solidity
- 05: The Lopez Grip
- 06: Black tries to smash the Ruy Lopez
- 07: Intro to Theory and Berlin
- 08: Berlin 1
- 09: Berlin 2
- 10: Schliemann
- 11: Bird
- 12: Cozio
- 13: Smyslov's
- 14: Classical
- 15: Berlin Classical
- 16: Chase Variation
- 17: Steinitz Deferred
- 18: Main Line 1 Steinitz 5.d3
- 19: Main Line 2
- 20: Main Line 3
- 21: Outro
- 22: Ruy Lopez Update 1/Berlin Defence; Zude-Strache
- 23: Ruy Lopez Update 2/Berlin Defence; Shirov-Levin
- 24: Ruy Lopez Update 3/Berlin Defence; Stellwagen-Carlsen
- 25: Ruy Lopez Update 4/Schliemann Defense; Carlsen-Radjabov
- 26: Ruy Lopez Update 5/Gajewski Variation; Le Gallo-Kosten
- 27: Ruy Lopez Update 6/Steinitz Variation; Tiviakov-Eljanov
- 28: Ruy Lopez Update Outro

The video lectures begin with the concept of sustained pressure through a wonderful example of the Ruy Lopez grip in the old game Dyke-Santasieri 1931. According to Martin, no other opening, after 1.e4 e5, gives White the chance to get a clear edge from the start of the game. Martin tells us that after 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 2.Bb5 White's goals are to put pressure on the e-pawn, attempt to dominate the center, and attack Black on the kingside. One of several examples of this is the miniature **Kulaots (2530) – Khudyakov (2365)** in the Berlin Classical variation after 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Bc5 5.c3 0-0 6.d4 Bb6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 d6 9.Qd3 Bd7 10.Nbd2 a6 11. Bc4 g5 12.Nxg5 hxg5 13.Bxg5 Kg7 14.f4 exd4 15.e5 dxe5 16.Qg3 Rg8 17. fxe5 Kf8 18.exf6 Ke8 19.Rae1+ Be6 20.Bxe6 fxe6 21.f7+ 1-0



One of the key differences between a DVD lecture and book is the amount of verbal commentary provided. Many opening books have a tendency to focus on variations, while the reverse can be true with DVD lectures. Thus, average players can glean the main ideas and capture the spirit of an opening in a short period of time with DVD training. For instance, here are some small excerpts from Martin's generous verbal commentary of the game **Anand-Milov, Sao Paolo 2004**:

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 d6**

"Here Anand's opponent Milov plays d6. We have already seen an example of this type of Steinitz-like passive approach. Really, it cannot be recommended to Black, even for very tough defenders, because when Black plays this way, it seems to me, Black is ceding the initiative to White, and secondly he is relying on White to make a mistake. This is really poor strategy. What I like about this game is how Anand develops his pieces: simply, forcibly, and accurately ..."

**5.d4 Bd7 6.Nc3 Be7**

"Now a very good move for Anand, one that probably wouldn't occur to a lot of players, simply taking the knight on c6. The idea of this is that when Black recaptures with the bishop, as it happened during the game, White simply plays Re1, and finally Black is forced to think about the pawn on e5. Now what is he going to do? If he decides to just leave it there and play Nd7, White wins a piece (to d5). So, Black has to cede center, which is what Milov does ..."

**7.Bxc6 Bxc6 8.Re1 exd4 9.Nxd4 Bd7**

"After seeing what happened in our first illustrative game where White damaged Black's pawn structure, and getting an advantage that's not easy to be shaken off, Milov decides to retreat the bishop. Now comes a nicety which a lot of players wouldn't observe, a typical Ruy Lopez move h3, preventing Bg4 ... Simple enough to understand but maybe not natural to a lot of players ..."

**10.h3 0-0 11.Qf3 Re8**

"And after this simple move [Qf3] Black has got problems. White threatens to centralize his pieces by playing his bishop out to Bf4 and swing his rook over to d1. At that stage, fully developed, White is probably threatening to move his e-pawn down the board ... with the queen on f3 White has options of Nf5 or Nd5 on the menu ... so you see White has all this options and Black has to sit and weather the storm. ... Well, don't take my word for it; let's just see how Anand demolished Milov in this game ..."

The contest ended quickly after **12.Bf4 c6 13.Rad1 Qb6 14.Nb3 a5 15.Bxd6 Bxd6 16.Rxd6 a4 17.Nd2 Qxb2 18.e5 Qxc2 19.Re2 Bf5 20.exf6 Rxe2 21.Nxe2 Bg6 22.a3 Re8 23.Qe3 1-0**



I enjoyed this video. The ABC series is aimed at introducing the flavor of the opening, rather than dishing out the latest theoretical trends. At the start of the DVD, Martin says that regardless of whether we play the Ruy Lopez or not, our chess will improve dramatically by learning about this opening. This is a somewhat extravagant statement in my opinion, but we will see in a year or so if my chess results prove him right!

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[Order](#) *ABC of the Ruy Lopez*  
by Andrew Martin

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