



COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



A Brilliance and a Bomb from Belgrade

THIS MONTH we continue the reviews of the individual pages on *Chesspublishing.com*, but before we get to that there we will have a look at a couple of publications from Sahovski Informator and a new book on the Hedgehog of the Symmetrical English.

The Hedgehog by Mihai Suba, 2000 Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 224pp., Price \$21.95.

The Rumanian GM Mihai Suba is probably not a GM that most people have heard of, but he is one of those chess players whose ideas I think should be more widely known. He is a highly original player and his analysis contains many noteworthy ideas.



Since receiving this book, I have spent hour after hour reading it, which usually is a good sign. But I said 'usually', and that's because I can't quite decide whether I love this book more than I hate it! This is because there are so many things in this book which could have been done much better, yet there are some other things that make your brain spark with renewed energy.

Let me give you some ideas of what I like and don't like and then you can decide for yourself.

First of all, the structure of the book is a mess. The organisation of the material makes little or no sense. I have recently finished a book on the Symmetrical English, which contains two chapters covering the lines that are in this book, and therefore I should know my way around in these lines. Yet when I attempted to look up two or three lines, I couldn't find them! I think they are covered, but I'm not sure how well or where. Part of the problem is the lack of an index of variations. However, this may have something to do with the organisation of the material inside the book.

For example, the game Andersson-Greenfeld (Thessaloniki OL 1988) started with the moves **1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 b6 4 Bg2 Bb7 5 0-0 c5 6 Nc3 Be7 7 d4 cxd4 8 Qxd4 d6 9 b3 Nbd7 10 Nb5 Nc5 11 Rd1 Nfe4!?**. Here Andersson continued with 12 b4, which gets an exclamation mark. This can be found on page 92. The next 11 pages cover various other lines including 9 Bg5, 9 Rd1, 9 e4, 8...0-0 9 Rd1 Nc6, 7 Re1, 6 d4, before we arrive at the game Kortchnoi-Greenfeld (Beer-Sheva 1990) which follows Andersson-Greenfeld above until White's 12th move, where Kortchnoi improves with 12 Qxg7!?. In the annotations we are now being told that 12 b4 can be met with 12...a6!. Why couldn't these games be right after another? Stuff like this happens

throughout the book and it is wildly annoying because you can't sit down and learn one line at a time because Mr. Suba slides around with no sense of direction. This is clearly something a conscientious editor should have picked up.

The book is divided into the following chapters: Introduction, History, The Middle Ages, The Hedgehog Reversed, Fine Points in the Hedgehog, Modern Hedgehog, Play Your Hand, Double Fianchetto Variation, Trends. Aside from the chapter called Double Fianchetto Variation, you really can't tell for sure what may be found in each chapter.

The 'Trends' chapter should really never have been included, but is a cop-out that can be used if the author has spent too much time writing the book, and developments in the opening have eclipsed some of his original suggestions. Therefore rather than separating the material, it should have been incorporated in the existing material.

Another thing I don't like is the large number of unannotated games which really don't belong in a serious opening book. But what bothers me even more is the way Mr. Suba has a main game followed by a sequel. The sequel often mostly contains explanations to his annotations of the previous main game, as well as the full scores (without annotations) of other games played with the same variation. I don't see why the material in the "sequel" couldn't have been included in the main game. It would have made the main games a bit longer, but it would also have avoided the nuisance of going back and forth between the main game and the sequel. By the way, what is the point of showing a game without any annotations? The reader can play it through, but does it enrich his or her understanding of the variation? I don't think so.

The last thing I will make an issue of is a concept that Suba introduces to chess books. In the opening, we often come across annotations like this: "(% Be7, a6, d6, Nc6, d5, Qc8)". You may wonder what on earth he is talking about. Apparently amazed by the wonders of today's databases, the above represents the frequency in descending order in which these moves have been tried out in the particular position. But he doesn't mention any other applicable parameters, if any, he has used. A very important parameter could be rating. But since we don't know which games Mr. Suba has in his database, we have to assume that it is the usual mishmash you find in most databases with games from events of all kinds including, for example, international championships for Under 10- and 12-year olds, where most of the games should be ignored. Therefore it really doesn't tell us anything. Nor does it tell us with what frequency the different moves are being used. In the above example, it could be that ...Be7 is used in 80% of the games, and the others about 4% each, who knows? Nor does he cover all the moves that he mentions. Why? Is it because some of the moves are weaker than the others? Probably, but why spare us the explanation. Not everybody is strong enough to tell which move is good and which is not, and more importantly, why.

One last item: On page 62, we see the following:

A Break

You deserve a break after your hard work on the intricacies of move-order. The connotation of the next header might confuse a chess player into thinking of help mates and the kind [sic!]. Rare White moves lead to "Fool's Mate" 1 f3 e5 2 g4 Qh4 mate [that should teach people not to play rare moves as White or what?!]. Apologising for such triviality, here is another story: Two beginners played a game. The complete score is not available, all we know is that White played **1 f3, 2 Kf2, 3 Kg3 4 Kh4** and was mated on the 4th move.

(1) For the addicts of "help mate in 5" from the starting position here are other curiosities:

(2) White mates in 5 with the h1-R.

(3) White mates in 5 with the a1-R.

(4) Black mates in 5 by promoting a pawn [which other piece can be promoted?] into a Q.

(5) Black mates in 5 by promoting a pawn into a R.

(6) Black mates in 5 by promoting a pawn into a B.

(7) Black mates in 5 by promoting a pawn into a N.

Solutions on page 65

Aside from the fact that the solutions cannot be found page 65, but on page 73 (which has a reference to these exercises being on page 54?!), and that he doesn't give a solution to exercises 4 and 5, other than "Too easy", how do these exercises fit into the format of this book? I don't see how, but perhaps the author and editor (who is not credited anywhere in the book) can explain this.

Yet, as I mentioned earlier, I don't exactly hate this book.

That Mr. Suba knows almost all there is to know about this opening shines through on almost every page and he is very eager to tell us everything. And despite the confusion and poor organization, you will inevitably come out knowing this opening extremely well, provided you sit down and go through his annotations systematically and take the time to understand what he is trying to tell you. At least that is the impression that I got from reading this book and I am sure many other people will have the same experience.

However, due to the above-mentioned problems, I cannot recommend this book to players below the 2000 rating range, because I think this book will confuse more than it will help.

Therefore...

My assessment of this book:

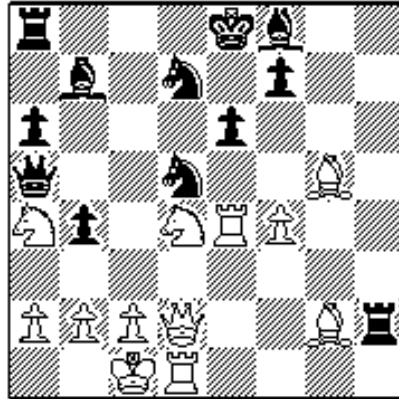
Informator 78 by Alexandar Matanovic et al., 2000 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, Price \$30.00

Some months back I declared my love for this series of yearbooks which have given me so much pleasure through the many beautiful and instructive games, fantastic combinations, amazing endgames and stunning novelties over many, many years. This love is still there, and I guess it will still be there for some time to come. Last month I went through some of the details, when I reviewed the electronic edition (EE) of this *Informator*. Therefore I will this time look at some of those features that cannot be found in the electronic edition.



First we are presented the best games of the preceding volume. The jury, consisting of Chandler, Christiansen, M. Gurevich, Illescas, Kortchnoi, Piket, Ribli, Shirov and Speelman, decided with a very small margin that Kasparov's win against van Wely from Wijk aan Zee 2000 deserved the honor.

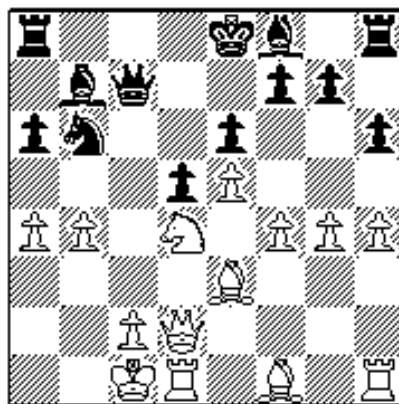
Let's remind ourselves of how that game went: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 f3 e6 7 Be3 b5 8 g4 h6 9 Qd2 Nbd7 10 0-0-0 Bb7 11 h4 b4 12 Na4 d5 13 Bh3 g5?! (not a very fortunate decision, better is probably the standard 13...Nc5) 14 Bg2 gxh4? 15 Rxh4 dxe4 16 g5 Nd5 17 Rxe4 hxg5 18 Bxg5 Qa5? (18...Qg5! was the lesser evil) 19 f4! Rh2 (See Diagram)**



20 Nxe6 fxe6 21 Rxe6+ Kf7 22 Qd3! Bg7 23 Qf5+ Kg8 24 Rxd5 Qxa4 25 Re7, and Black resigned. 1-0.

The competition was this time surprisingly close, the difference with Timman-van Wely from the same tournament being surprisingly small. Van Wely didn't have much luck in the English Attack as Black in that tournament. By the way, no less than seven different games received top marks from the jury, but only the Kasparov game received three of these.

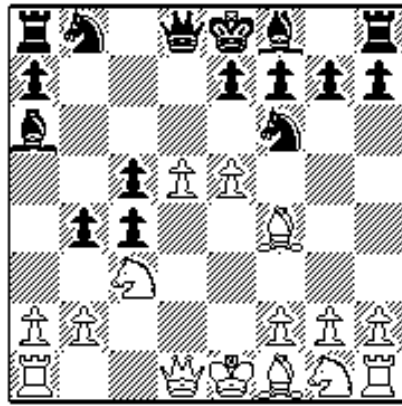
The second feature we come across is the most important theoretical novelties of the preceding volume. This time the jury consists of Anand, Bareev, Benjamin, Lutz, Matanovic, Salov, I. Sokolov, Timman and Yusupov. Quite a bunch, I'd say. Their choice is disappointingly predictable, although the competition turned out to be a bit closer than I would have anticipated. The winner was Grischuk's novelty in his game against Val. Popov from St. Petersburg 1999: **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 (this is usually only used if Black is uncomfortable with 3...cxd4 4 Qxd4 or 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 f3) 4 Nc3 cxd4 5 Nxd4 a6 6 f3 e6 7 Be3 b5 8 g4 h6 9 Qd2 Nbd7 10 0-0-0 Bb7 11 h4 b4 12 Na4 Qa5 (12...d5 was played in Kasparov-van Wely, above) 13 b3 Nc5 14 a3 Nxa4 15 axb4 Qc7 16 bxa4 d5 17 e5 Nd7 18 f4 Nb6, (See Diagram)**



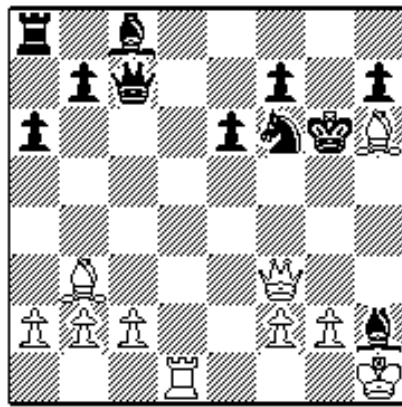
and now the not entirely surprising move **19 f5!**, with the position being evaluated as clearly better for White.

Similarly unsurprising is the fact that it no longer is considered that way, but that's the way it always is in highly topical lines such as this one. In fact ,this line was analyzed a bit in *New In Chess Yearbook 53*, and back then I took a look at it myself, including the above game, and while I still think it's problematic for Black, we will probably see this line develop further in the next couple of Informators, before Black scraps it all together.

The runner up is the following novelty from the game Sakaev-I.Ibragimov, Russia ch-m (4): **1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 Nf6 5 Nc3 b5 6 Bf4 Ba6 7 e5 b4 (See Diagram)**



8 e6!.
 Grischuk's move received 63 votes, including top marks from Anand (who used the move against Shirov in their show games during the Olympics in Sydney) and Salov, while Sakaev's move tallied 57 votes, with top marks from Lutz, Matanovic and Yusupov.
 Maybe you start wondering who will win the honors in the next volume. Well Morozevich's **1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 Ne7 4 d4 d5 5 Qe2!?** (against I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 2000) is very likely to be in contention, so is Khalifman's **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 Qxd5 5 Ngf3 cxd4 6 Bc4 Qd6 7 0-0 Nf6 8 Nb3 Nc6 9 Nbx4 Nxd4 10 Nxd4 a6 11 Re1 Qc7 12 Bb3 Bd6 13 Nf5 Bxh2+ 14 Kh1 0-0 15 Nxc7 Rd8 16 Qf3 Kxc7 17 Bh6+ Kg6 18 Rad1? Rxd1 19 Rxd1** (See Diagram)

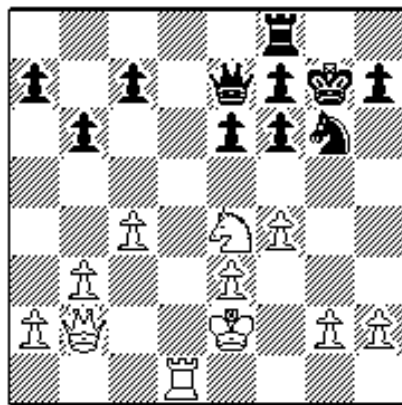


19...e5!, and Black won after two further moves: **20 Kh2 Ng4+ 21 Kg1 Kxh6, 0-1** (Zaw Win Lay-Khalifman, Sanur 2000).

Other contenders are Kasparov-J. Polgar (Wijk aan Zee 2000), Sakaev-Ulibin (Dubai 2000), Leko-Khalifman (Linares 2000), Shirov-Leko (Linares 2000), Anand-Shirov (Linares 2000), Ivanchuk-Beliavsky (Lvov 2000), Kasparov-Morozevich (Wijk aan Zee 2000), M. Gurevich-Sadler (Bundesliga 2000), Zhu Chen-Blatny (Waischenfeld 2000), Milov-Cu. Hansen (Essen 2000), Kortchnoi-Kasparov (Wijk

aan Zee 2000), Karpov-Milos (Sanur 2000), Topalov-Kasparov (Sarajevo 2000), Timman-Dautov (Bundesliga 2000), Zhu Chen-Bischoff (Waischenfeld 2000), and probably a game or two in the English Attack in the Sicilian.

The third section I will look at is the combination section. Here you will find 27 combinations of great variety. Some of them are fairly straightforward and easy to solve, some are much more difficult and finally some are quite beautiful. I like the following combination, which looks very straightforward, but contains a nice move (See Diagram):



Y. Gonzalez-Mendez, Cuba 2000: The combination starts off in fairly standard fashion: **1 Rd7! Qxd7 2 Nxf6** (the previous move gets '!!' and this move '!', which is quite ridiculous and way over the top, but often the annotator is so happy with his own masterful play, that they forget everything about moderation and celebrate themselves with the entire chess world watching...) **2...Nxf4+ 3 exf4 Qd8 4 Ne8+ Kg6 5 Qg7+ Kf5 6 Ke3!!** (this is the move that made me show this combination. The normal 6 Qxf8 is met with the powerful 6...Ke4! after which White will have to look hard for a win) **6...e5 7 Qxe5+ Kg6 8 Qg7+**

Kf5 9 Qxf8, and now Black doesn't have any counterplay.

Then there is the endgame section that I nowadays enjoy a lot, but as a teenager I

never really spent anywhere near enough time on this section. But this is my recommendation to the youth of today: study your endgame in depth; it will pay off to an extent you would never have thought possible. However, the endgame section in this volume is quite meager with only nine examples.

Finally there is a portrait of Kortchnoi, consisting of some of his best games, best novelties, combinations and endgames. Although I applaud the choice of portraying this wonderful fighter, there is no way a tiny section like this can due justice to Kortchnoi's contribution to the chess world.

Nonetheless...

My assessment of this book:

ECO A 3rd Edition (Electronic Edition) by Alexander Matanovic et al., 2000
Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Price: \$30.00

In the September issue of Checkpoint, I mentioned my disappointment with the new development that the ECOs no longer will be published in print, and therefore only can be obtained in an electronic edition.

The question is of course what the result is. Is it really worth buying the electronic version? I have spent a couple of hours comparing the main lines in the new electronic version with those in the second printed edition from 1996, and the results have not been encouraging.

In the first section A00 thru A09 I only found one minor change of a main line, but the evaluation didn't change. But I have checked more lines. A10 to A15 are also largely unchanged, so is A20-A21. The very important A30 (covering amongst the Hedgehog that is discussed earlier in this column) is almost identical with only two changes in the main lines and one change in evaluation. The Symmetrical English chapter (A30-A39) is practically unchanged, despite being one of the most popular openings under A in the Informator Code.

In the Modern Benoni, we see the same unfortunate picture . The Benko Gambit, Leningrad Dutch and pretty much everything else is the same, same, same & SAME!

Is it because the people in Belgrade haven't realized that the theory has been moving since 1996? Or is it because they hope that we blindly will accept everything they present us with? Or what is it? Capitalism at its ugliest, that has finally absorbed our friends in Belgrade?

Whatever it is, I'm not sure I want to know the answer!

But what I do know is that I cannot recommend anyone buy this product. Whether or not they claim it's a new product - it isn't. It's recycling of the worst kind. This is a development which some people who shall remain nameless (but regular readers of this column may be able to identify) probably will applaud, but it is something I despise.

I think we as chessplaying, book-buying consumers have a right to receive original material for our money or at least a worthy effort. Copying material from a book to an electronic media is neither. Had this electronic edition been advertised as a slightly edited second edition of Encyclopaedia A, my reaction would have been less aggressive; however, this is called a new edition with new material. I don't think so, and I don't think people should get away with it.

Therefore...

My assessment of this electronic book: ♦♦

Chesspublishing.com - The Last Batch...

Chesspublishing.com by Chris White et al. Figurine Algebraic Notation. Subscription one home page: \$18.00/year - Subscription, all home pages: \$90.00/year

We conclude our survey of Chesspublishing.com....

This internet adventure started last year with pretty much the same line-up as we see today. The idea is that you pay an annual fee to subscribe to one or more pages each covering a particular set of openings. Some sections contain many openings (like 1 e4 e5) and some just one (like the King's Indian). The division of the openings is logical, but then again it isn't. For example, in the Daring Defences section we find the Gruenfeld Indian, which really cannot be considered daring anymore. The Benko probably also should be grouped together with the Benonis. But these are the kind of problems that you run into when you divide things that are not meant to be divided; the heralded ECO has the same kind of problems.

1 e4 ... by GM Alexander Volzhin

Alexander who? That was my first reaction when I saw his name. I have since learned a lot more about this gentleman who wants to give his audience quality material with good annotations.



Volzhin's updates separate themselves from some of the others by usually only covering 1-2 opening lines each time, but in great detail. That way you catch up with the current status in a particular line and then it's easier for you to decide whether you want to consider it seriously. Occasionally he takes a little tour and looks at new moves in lines that falls within his area of coverage.

In fact, I had the pleasure of doing the July update for Volzhin, while he was touring Europe and winning a few tournaments. While it would have been easy to fill in for some of the other hosts, Volzhin, is a tough act to follow. His material is usually first rate, the games well chosen, the annotations frank and filling, and unlike many of the others, he is not afraid to reveal his findings, i.e., improvements over existing theory and other people's games.

Many hours were spent to present an update which I thought would suit Volzhin's followers. I didn't want his subscribers to feel let down while he was out playing some real chess.

I think that some of the other hosts could learn something from Volzhin's pages and invest in more background material. This kind of material can only help the readers get a better understanding of the particular lines and therefore also increase their success rate when they are trying the openings out in praxis.

Should you play the Pirc, Caro-Kann, Alekhine or Centre Counter (Scandinavian), then this page will definitely worth considering, and if you are 1 e4 player, then this page, along with Motwani's, is the best choice you can make.

My assessment of this section: ♦♦♦♦♦

1 d4 d5 by GM Ruslan Scherbakov



Another name that most people are not familiar with. Scherbakov is strong GM and like Motwani, he has to cover a lot of ground on his page. The various lines in the many different kinds of Queen's Gambits attract a lot of attention from the strongest players in the world, including Scherbakov, who, among other things, is a specialist on the Notebom Variation.

While I didn't quite know what to expect from this page, I have, after studying the material, included this page on my list of favourite pages.

Scherbakov goes in-depth with the annotations to the games, and his selection of games is second to none. His updates vary in style and form. Sometimes he covers a topic in depth (like in the August update where he covered the Tarrasch minus the main line, which will be covered in September) and other months he selects two or three main lines and then supplies the subscribers with a general update on this lines.

His background material is also first rate, although much more needs to be added, but given the pace that Scherbakov moves, most gaps will be filled soon.

This page is also one that is a must if you play 1 d4 and answer 1 d4 with 1...d5, most people will be able to benefit from studying these pages due to the excellent game annotations from Scherbakov.

Strongly recommended!

My assessment of this section: 

Pawn Specials by GM Aaron Summerscale

Once again the choice of host is spot on. GM Summerscale has authored a number of books on the openings in this grey area.

The openings covered on this page span from the interesting Trompowski and Torre Attacks to the London System, the Richter-Veresov, the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit and other openings, even bordering on the highly dubious.

Summerscale's updates usually survey the latest developments theoretically and most interesting games. They normally include about ten games, which generally are annotated quite well, although I could wish some more analytical input. This is clearly an area that needs to be improved upon.

I'm quite impressed with the quality of his background material, covering the topics very well, even in the lesser lines such as in the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit. But nonetheless I find that Summerscale should invest more time on adding more games to the background material on the openings, since far from all of the minor side lines are covered in sufficient detail.

My assessment of this section: 

King's Indian by IM Andrew Martin





Andrew Martin is another popular English writer. He isn't one of my favourites, as I think that he tends to generalise a bit too much. Often he presents some flashy games, lightly annotated, but fails to dig a bit further to let his readers know which moves are the most critical.

That's the feeling that I have gotten from reading some of his books (though admittedly most are above average) and articles. But that feeling didn't recur when I started looking through his material on the King's Indian page.

His updates are very interesting, usually with around 10 games, there is a lot of text, he uses diagrams in his Update text, which is quite unusual when you look at the other hosts. His game selection is very good too, and most of the annotations are informative and instructive.

However, he also crams in many, many unannotated games, which to me looks like overkill. In my opinion, these games only serve to confuse and smother the reader. In this case, the unannotated games don't add much to the learning process. The games should at least indicate where something went wrong and what way should have been chosen; and please include an evaluation of the position, otherwise it is in fact plain database dump.

One last point is that, I think that he should focus more on adding new games in the updates rather than older ones. The older ones should just be added to the background material, because they don't really constitute any new development, unless it's a game which has never been seen before. As it stands, the background material is alright.

My assessment of this section: 

Nimzo & Benoni by GM John Emms

As I have expressed several times before in my columns, John Emms is an excellent writer when it comes to openings, and I obviously hoped I would get the same feeling here. However, my feeling is that he lets his readers down. Before I proceed I should say that the name of this page doesn't quite cover the full contents, also the Queen's and Bogo-Indians are also covered here.



First of all his updates leave a very hurried impression. In these important openings, Emms (this year assisted by Chris Ward on the Nimzo section) has only once managed to reach 10 games in his updates this year. That's nowhere near enough on these extremely important openings. Recently, the Nimzo-Indian in particular has been covered poorly with only a couple of games in each update. In the August update, we are even told that in the last three TWICs, there has been a total of 100 games with the Nimzo-Indian, and 42 of these were with 4 Qc2. Yet we only get two measly games, one with 4 e3 and the other with 4 Nf3. Does this make sense to anybody? This is quite disappointing.

On the plus side, I have to admit that the game annotations generally are very good, but with two GMs covering a combined total 9 games each month, there would be no excuse if weren't.


I have one question for Emms and Ward: What about the Bogo? I have only found 1 (one) game on the entire page, and that dates back from last year! This is pathetic and sad, particularly since no background material was given on this opening. The Queen's

Indian also seems to have very little background material.

Furthermore ,the Traps and Puzzle section doesn't have a strong connection to the openings that are covered on these pages; the examples might as well have been taken from any other opening. Several of the examples are from positions so deep in the game that the normal characteristics of the particular opening that was played is gone. By the way, if by 'traps' opening traps is meant, then there is another problem, because in none of the examples are the opening sequence of moves given. This section needs to be changed.

The Success Rate section gives us the statistics of some of the lines in each opening. They are based on Megabase 99 (which is almost two years old) and TWIC 1-245 (we're at 303 right now). Obviously the statistics should be updated if they are to have any relevance, and working with ChessBase, this shouldn't take long.

With two strong names like Emms and Ward to cover these openings, you should be able to expect a lot, but what I have seen doesn't reach anywhere near my expectations.

My assessment of this section: 

Daring Defences by GM Jon Tisdall



This page started out being handled by Tisdall, but for the last several months, the updates have come from Neil McDonald, who also hosts – in excellent fashion - the page on the French Defence.

Let me start with the monthly updates. These updates are easily among the best updates overall. McDonald's comments and choice of games are outstanding. The number of games is equally impressive: August - 32; July - 26; June - 27. I mentioned above that Fedorowicz also has a lot of games, but hardly any annotations. That, however, isn't the case here. The games are annotated on in very instructive fashion. Typical ideas are explained, the theoretical coverage is adequate - enough to inform and not confuse.

Daring Defences is of course a very broad title, and it does cover a wide (very wide) range of openings (given in no particular order): The Dutch, Benko Gambit, Budapest Gambit, Blumenfeld Gambit, Gruenfeld Indian, Old Indian and English Defence. There is a lot of material to cover and it is done to near perfection in the hands of McDonald.

The background material is generally also okay.

My assessment of this section: 

Flank Openings by GM Tony Kosten

I have in earlier book reviews let my appreciation of Kosten's writing style be known, and therefore I had obviously great expectations for this page as well. It covers the English Opening, 1 f4, 1 b3, 1 b4, 1 Nf3, 1 g3 and some other oddities.

His updates don't have an awful lot of games; they usually average around 10-11 games which is reasonable, although I might want to see more games on openings other than the English. Regarding the rare



openings covered, it goes without saying that not a great number of these games are played by GMs (except for the English and Reti, of course), but since most of the readers are not GMs, so I'm sure they can live with seeing games played by non-GMs if only they got to see some games with their opening.

His annotations are also okay without being great. However, they are to the point and usually he is good at referring the reader to previous games that he has covered, even without the proverbial index on the page that should be there.


His background material is also okay, without being exceptional.

My assessment of this section: 

Double Trouble by GM Paul Motwani

This is something that 'Gold Card' Members (those who buy the entire package) get as an extra. It is more of Paul Motwani's interesting and entertaining material (where does he get the energy?), covering a wider span of things and a greater variety of openings.

I will not reveal more about, but when you buy your Gold Card Membership, this is definitely something that will provide many additional hours of enjoyment.

My assessment of this section: 

One thing that I saw repeated on one page after another is the so-called Review section. In that section, each host reviews the existing literature on the particular opening(s) they cover. But what is the point of this section if it is not kept up to date. In this regard, Tisdall's review section in particular is a sad sight. So many recent books are not mentioned, while the ones that are mentioned are completely out of date or out of stock. Therefore this section should either be included and then kept up to date or it should be left out altogether.

I would like to mention that indexes (particularly of openings and players) would be a tremendous help on most pages; only Motwani's pages has proper indexing. It makes it so much easier for the reader to get around to the right games, particularly on a page like Fedorowicz's, which contains a high number of games each month, and he rarely refers the reader to the previous games with a particular line. Perhaps he has lost track himself?

As you can gather from the above mini-reviews there is a lot of material. Some of it is excellent, some very good, some good, but also some that could stand improvement.

What I like and don't like is pretty obvious from the above, and I hope that those that I don't like or just get an average rating (***) will start doing something more about it. Those with 4- or 5-star ratings should keep it up and continue their quest to give the subscribers their very best.

Chesspublishing.com is definitely a good idea, but a good idea with a few flaws. If the hosts don't take care of their subscribers they will leave; some of hosts may be a little too arrogant to realise this.

In a couple of months, I will come back and give a short re-cap of the latest developments on each page.

<i>The Ratings</i>
 — A poor book, not recommended.
 — Not a particularly good book, but perhaps useful for some readers.
 — A useful book.
 — Good book, recommended.
 — Excellent book, highly recommended.

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