



C O L U M N I S T S

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Reviewed this month:

French Winawer
by Neil McDonald

Vienna Game
by Gary Lane

The Art of the King's Indian
by Eduard Gufeld

The Traxler Counterattack (CD-ROM)
by Dan Heisman

Informator 79 EE
by Alexandar Matanovic et al

Best by Test?

"BEST BY TEST" - Fischer once wrote that in his legendary *My Sixty Memorable Games* about 1 e2-e4. This time, I am featuring two books and a CD-ROM that covers openings starting with 1 e2-e4. Then we have Gufeld's latest treatise on the King's Indian, which definitely has proven best by test for him. Finally, we have the latest *Informator*, undoubtedly the most influential chess publication in the past three decades, albeit this time in an electronic edition. Since this column will be my last this year, I wish all my readers a very happy holiday season.

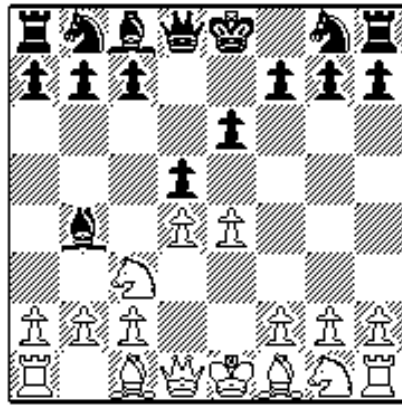
French Winawer by Neil McDonald, 2000 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 144pp., \$19.95

This year has seen a number of new books by the British Grandmaster Neil McDonald, something that I have been happy to see. As I have previously noted, his books are interesting, entertaining, full of chess wisdom, and you are bound to learn a bundle if you study them carefully.

In the present book, he covers a subject he probably knows better than any other, the French Winawer. McDonald has played the French for many years and since *Chesspublishing.com* was started, he has covered the French magnificently on its web pages.

The French Winawer (also sometimes called the Nimzovich Variation) arises after **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4** (*See Diagram*)





The book is divided into two parts: Part One, covering the main lines after **4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7**, which is split up into three chapters; Chapter 1: **7 Qg4 Qc7**; Chapter 2: **7 Qg4 0-0** and **7...Kf8**; and Chapter 3: **7 Nf3**, **7 h4** and **7 a4**. These three chapters are contained 62 pages of coverage.

Part Two focuses on the less played, but still interesting lines. Chapter 4 is what McDonald calls the Winawer 'Declined' - **4 e5 c5 5 a3 Ba5**, which, in particular the Armenians Lputian and Vaganian have endorsed, but also recently played by FIDE

World Champion Khalifman. This chapter only gets 10 pages, which perhaps is acceptable for its present popularity, but I imagine that this is a line which we will see much more of in the future.

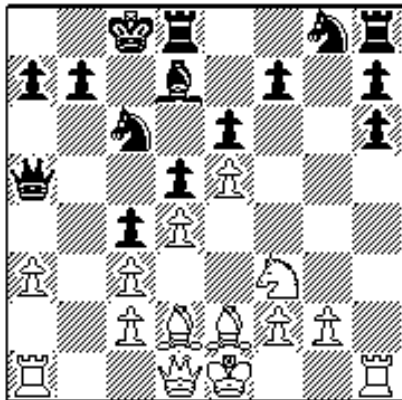
The last three chapters cover White's fifth move alternatives after **4 e5 c5** (chapter 5), positional fourth moves for White: **4 Qd3**, **4 exd5**, **4 Bd3**, **4 Ne2** and **4 e5 Qd7** (chapter 6) and tactical fourth moves for White: **4 a3**, **4 Bd2** and **4 Qg4** (chapter 7).

Before the theoretical chapters, there is a very good introduction, with several complete games, which are not particularly deeply annotated. The games, however, are well chosen and perfectly illustrate various aspects of the Winawer, both positionally and tactically.

As usual, McDonald's annotations are excellent, and carefully going through the games and annotations will benefit any chessplayer up to the 2200-2300 Elo level. The following game is from chapter three. It is one of the shorter games and the annotations are less extensive than most of the other main games, but nonetheless it's a great game from Black's point of view. The gentlemen behind the pieces are two wonderfully inventive Swedish grandmasters who bring plenty of entertainment to every tournament in which they take part.

Hector-Hillarp Persson, York 1999

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 5 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 h4 Nbc6 In this game Black prefers to avoid the complexities of Kasparov's pawn sacrifice in favour of a rapid deployment of his pieces. At the time of writing he has the theoretical upper hand here, thanks to his clever 13th move. **8 h5 Qa5 9 Bd2 Bd7** Here **9...cxd4 10 cxd4** [the book actually gives this as **9 cxd4**, but this is of course wrong] **Qa4 11 Nf3 Nxd4 12 Bd3** would transpose to Game 20. **10 h6 gxh6 11 Nf3 0-0-0 12 Bd3 c4 13 Be2 Ng8!** (*See Diagram*)

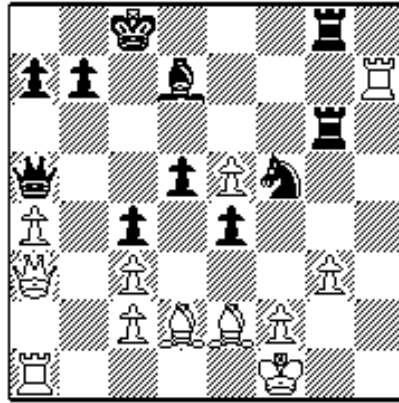


This ingenious retreat was first employed by Uhlmann. Besides holding up White's conquest of the h6-square, it aims to support an attack on White's centre with **...f7-f6! 14 a4?**

The plan of putting the Queen on a3 backfires as it becomes cut off from the struggle in the centre and on the kingside. However, Black also had the better chances after **14 Kf1 f6 15 Qe1 fxe5 16 Nxe5** (16 **dxe5 Rf8 17 g3 Qc7!** is also good for Black - Uhlmann) **16...Nxe5 17 dxe5 Ne7 18 Bxh6 Rhg8 19 Bf3 Be8 20 a4 Bg6 21 Ra2 Rd7** in Short-Psakhis, Isle of Man 1999. **14...Rf8** Black prepares to breakthrough on the f-file. Meanwhile

White has absolutely no counterplay. **15 Qc1 f6 16 Qa3 Rf7 17 Bf4 Nge7 18 exf6**

Rxf6 19 Bxh6 Rg8 20 Kf1 Nf5 21 Bd2 Rfg6 22 g3 e5! Having mobilised all his pieces for the attack, Black now uses his e-pawn to slice open the kingside. **23 Rxh7?** If 23 Nxe5 Nxe5 24 dxe5 Rxg3! 25 fxg3 Nxg3+ 26 Kf2 (26 Ke1 Nxh1) 26...Qb6+ 27 Be3 Ne4+ 28 Ke1 (28 Kf3 Rg3+) 28...Qxe3 wins for Black. The best chance was 23 dxe5, though 23...Rxg3!? 24 fxg3 Nxg3+ 25 Kf2 Qb6+ 26 Nd4! Nxd4 27 cxd4 Qxd4+ 28 Be3 Nxh1+ 29 Rxh1 Qxe5 30 Qc5+ Bc6 still leaves him facing some grave threats. **23...e4 24 Ne5** If 24 Nh4 Nxh4 25 Rxh4 Nxd4. **24...Nxe5 25 dxe5** (See Diagram)



25...e3! This smashes the white kingside. **26 Bxe3 Nxe3+ 27 fxe3 Rxg3 28 Kf2 Qb6 29 Rf1 Rxe3 30 a5 Rg2+! 31 Kxg2 Qg6+ 0-1** White loses the Rook on h7 and is quickly mated.

The annotations above are those by McDonald in the book.

While the theoretical coverage is good, it does not dig really deep, but still is certainly sufficient for most people interested in taking up the opening. Since McDonald is an expert on the lines covered in the present book, you could have wished for more independent analysis, new suggestions and

improvements over existing theory. There is a fair chunk, but there could have been even more.

This is still another great effort by McDonald, who ranks among my favourite opening book authors.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order French Winawer by Neil McDonald](#)

Vienna Game by Gary Lane, 2000 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 144pp., \$19.95

Fellow **Chess Café** columnist Gary Lane is the author of a number books, but this book is the first book of his that I have reviewed in this column. I did review his work on *Chesspublishing.com*, which didn't impress me too much, although it wasn't really bad.

Lane has previously covered a number of king pawn openings such as the Italian Game (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5), the Bishop Opening (1 e4 e5 2 Bc4); this time it is the Vienna Game (1 e4 e5 2 Nc3) which is the center of attention.

Before I move on to the contents of the book, I would like to point out a blooper by the editor/typesetter. On the page where the copyright, distributors, etc. are mentioned, I noticed the following amusing detail: "Copyright © 2000 Gary Lane" and then in the next line we find "The right of Glenn Flear to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988." I doubt Glenn Flear has had anything to do with the present book, but editor/typesetter (not mentioned by name, but it's probably Byron Jacobs) probably cut-and-pasted this page from the Flear book *Open Ruy Lopez*, and then forgot to change the name. But this of course has nothing to do with Gary Lane's work.



The book is divided into two parts: Part One: 2...Nf6, which covers six chapters and

108 pages; Part Two: 2...Nc6 and Other Second Moves for Black, which covers two chapters 24 pages.

After a very brief introduction, which easily could have been left out and substituted with more explanations in his game annotations, we move on to the real meat of the book.

In Part One, 3 f4 (chapter 1) takes up the biggest chunk of pages. This fairly harmless, but important line takes up no less than 32 pages. The coverage is interesting as Lane takes us through Black's many options, but while Lane is entertaining us with witty comments such as "A word of caution for White if Black plays 5...Qh4+ [after 1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 f4 d5 4 fxe5 Nxe4 5 d3]: It is not correct etiquette to jump up on to the table and start celebrating your imminent victory!", I think he has not done enough to offer improvements, new suggestions and independent analysis of his own. Often lines are quoted to move 20-25 without any alternatives and punctuation comments; this hardly aids the understanding of the student.

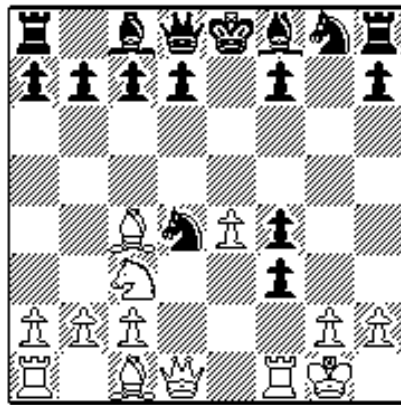
Some months back I reviewed Schiller's hopeless attempt at covering the Frankenstein-Dracula Variation of the Vienna (1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Bc4 Nxe4 4 Qh5 Nd6 5 Bb3 Nc6 6 Nb5 g6 7 Qf3 f5 8 Qd5 Qe7 9 Nxc7+ Kd8 10 Nxa8 b6), so I was obviously interested to see what Lane would come up with. While most of his material does not appear in Schiller's book, he too somewhat disappoints with the lack of original ideas. However, his game annotations are considerably better than those of Schiller, which, at best, were pathetic.

In Many places it seems as if Lane is skating through the material without really going into any depth. One such example is the following (game 69):

Tseitlin-Marciano, Bucharest 1993

1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 f4 exf4 4 Nf3 g5 4 Nf3 g5 5 d4 g4 6 Bc4 gxf3 7 0-0

Alekhine-Perez, Madrid 1943, went 7 Bxf4!? fxg2? 8 Bxf7+ Kxf7 9 Qh5+ Kg7 10 Rg1 Nge7 11 Bh6+ Kg8 12 Rxg2+ 1-0, but this is not mentioned by Lane; obviously both 7...d6 and 7...d5 are better than 7...fxg2?. **7...Nxd4!** (See Diagram)




This move has scored tremendously well for Black and it may cause White to put the Pierce Gambit in box of refuted openings. However, what Lane forgets to mention is that Tseitlin, a year prior to this game, allowed 7...Nxd4 and also lost quickly. No mention of what he might have had in mind. **8 Bxf4 Bc5 9 Kh1 d6! 10 Be3 Be6! 11 Bxd4 fxg2+ 12 Kxg2 Bxc4 13 Bxh8 Bxf1 14 Qxf1 Qd7 15 Qf4 0-0-0 16 Rf1 Nh6 17 h3 Rxh8 18 Qxh6 Bd4 19 Qh5 Rg8 20 Kh2 Qe6 21 Rf3 Be5+ 22 Kh1 Bxc3 23 bxc3 Qxe4 24 Qxf7 Rg3 25 Kh2 Rxf3 0-1.**

An impressive display by Marciano, but not by Lane who should be analysing this in more detail.

The majority of the main games throughout the book are reasonably recent, i.e., played within the last 5-10 years, all of them well-annotated, although some in much more detail than others.

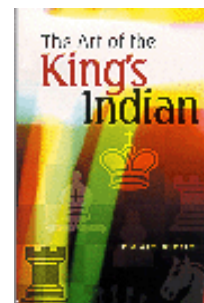
The overall impression of the book is not bad, but the lack of original input means a severe deduction in points. Although people who play the Vienna Game will have to have this book, others should think twice before opening their wallet.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order Vienna Game by Gary Lane](#)

The Art of the King's Indian by Eduard Gufeld, 2000 Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 221pp., \$22.95

It wasn't long ago that I reviewed Gufeld and Schiller's book on the King's Indian Defence (KID): *Secrets of the King's Indian*, which basically was quite awful. Not so much because of Gufeld, who more or less just had annotated some of his best games with the KID, but because of Schiller's hopeless lack of ability to write a decent book.



However, Gufeld also has his faults: his opening books are usually very superficial and he often makes his evaluations based on the result of a game rather than the inherent value of the opening line employed. In addition, he has the 'Schiller touch' regarding his use of the 'cut-and-paste' function in his word processing program. Therefore at the end of my review of the above-mentioned Gufeld/Schiller book, I predicted that in the present new book (which I hadn't seen at the time) by Gufeld, we would see a lot of repeat material from Gufeld's previous books.

Of course Gufeld didn't let me down; my suspicions were confirmed. Both the games annotated in *Secrets of the King's Indian* and those from an earlier Gufeld book, *Gewinnen mit Königsindisch* (Sportverlag Berlin 1990), are heavily represented in this new book. But it doesn't end there; the annotations are the same, *word for word, line for line, page after page*.

This naturally upsets me, because I despise this kind of work, which represents, in my opinion, the deepest disrespect an author can show his readers who pay for original work and not something published previously under another label.

On the other hand, in all fairness it has to be said that if you haven't seen any of Gufeld's previous books and you wanted to learn something about the KID, this book may just be alright for you.

The book covers every alternative for White in the KID, but the coverage isn't particularly deep and often only concentrates on lines Gufeld likes and not much else. For example, the Sämisch System, where Gufeld only offers the 6...Nc6 variation for Black; the Fianchetto Variation, only 6...Nc6 and 6...c5 are covered; the Averbakh Variation, only 6...c5 is covered; and in the Four Pawns Attack, he only mentions 6...c5.

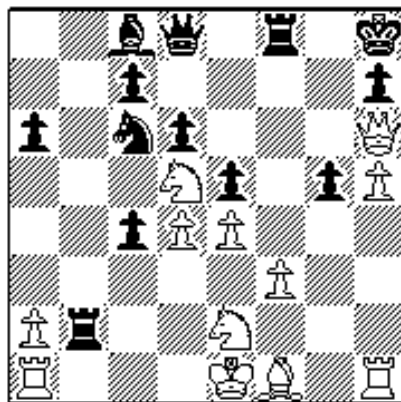
Interestingly enough, the essence of this book is not the lines are or are not covered, but the wonderful collection of games, consisting mainly of Gufeld's own games, and including a number of games by others.

One of the games in this selection is the game that Gufeld calls his immortal game; let's have a look at it. The annotations are from those by Gufeld in the book, where they take up more than five pages, a good example of how well these games are annotated.

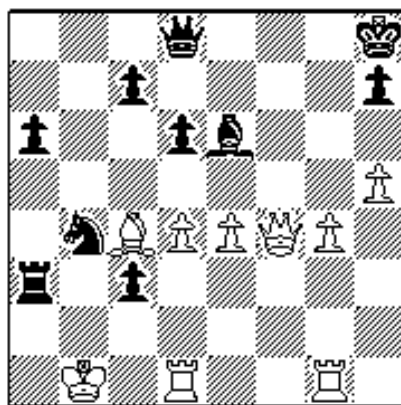
Bagirov-Gufeld, Kirovobad 1973

1 d4 g6 2 c4 Bg7 3 Nc3 d6 4 e4 Nf6 5 f3 0-0 6 Be3 Nc6 7 Nge2 Rb8 Before embarking on operations in the centre (...e7-e5) it is advisable to capture, by means of ...b7-b5, some space on the queenside where White's King is going to hide. This

sequence of moves, where the Rook first gets into a position on b8, was introduced into tournament play by Igor Zaitsev. The idea is that in the variation 8 Nc1 e5 9 d5 Nd4 10 Nb3 c5 11 dxc6 bxc6 Black prepares to open the b-file in double-quick time. However 7...a6 is now more played, so that 8 Qd2 can be met by 8...Rb8, setting up the counterblow ...b7-b5. In this game there was a transposition of moves, but after 8 a3 a6 9 b4, a8 is the best square for the Rook, since after the possible ...b7-b5 the a-file will be opened. **8 Qd2 a6 9 Bh6 b5** Later on I came to the conclusion that it is stronger to exchange the Bishop by 9...Bxh6 10 Qxh6, and then counterattack in the centre by 10...e5, taking advantage of the displacement of the Queen. **10 h4 e5 11 Bxg7 Kxg7 12 h5 Kh8** [At this point, Gufeld analyses the alternatives 12...Nhx5, 12...bxc4 and 12...Nxd4] **13 Nd5! bxc4 14 hxg6 fxe6 15 Qh6 Nh5!** A few months later when the Soviet chess players were flying to the interzonal tournament in Brazil, I suggested, as a warming up exercise, that we analyze this position. The discussion was really top level, and not only because the plane was flying 35,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean. At ground level I would never have managed to organize an analytical session in which such famous grandmasters as Smyslov, Keres, Bronstein, Vasiukov, Geller, Polugaevsky and Savon all took part. Almost all of them attacked Black's position. It was not until we had crossed a quarter of the earth's meridian that I succeeded in defending my opinion that the chances are equal. **16 g4** [Here Gufeld offers analysis of the alternative 16 0-0-0] **16...Rxb2! 17 gxh5 g5** (See Diagram)



Kb2 Rxf3! threatening 28...Rb3 mate) 27...Re2. **20...exf4 21 Nxf4?!! Rxf4 22 Qxf4 c3! 23Bc4 Ra3 24 fxg4 Nb4 25 Kb1! Be6!!** (See Diagram)



Chess is really an astonishing game. Just look at this position. The opponent has an extra piece and serious threats on the kingside. Nevertheless, Black manages to walk the tightrope. How can this be explained? It is the centre of the chessboard that matters most in this position and Black is striving to break it up, thereby nullifying his opponent's material advantage. **18 Rg1 g4! 19 0-0-0 Rxa2 20 Nef4** [Here Gufeld first analyses 20 dxe5 to a draw] ...An even more fantastic draw would have occurred after the problem-like 20 Bh3!! Rxe2 21 Bxg4 Rf7! 22 Bxc8 Qxc8 23 Nf6! Qb8! 24 Rg8+ Qxg8 25 Nxg8 Nb4! 26 Rd2 Re1+ 27 Rd1 (not 27

Calculating the variations I suddenly felt that the pieces on the chessboard were jumping about as in a kaleidoscope. This image, vividly reflecting the law of coordination in chess, helped me with my following moves. One piece gives way to the other, then the third piece comes, and so on until the final picture. The chaos is only apparent; very rigid logic is in operation and the pieces arrive at their destinations more punctually than trains... **26 Bxe6 Nd3!! 27 Qf7 Qb8+ 28 Bb3 Rxb3+ 29 Kc2 Nb4+ 30 Kxb3 Nd5+! 31 Kc2 Qb2+ 32 Kd3 Qb5+!** And White resigned because of 33 Kc2 Qe2+ 34 Kb3 Qb2+ 35 Kc4 Qb5 mate! 0-1

A beautiful game. The annotations are deep, entertaining, full of anecdotes and other goodies, and by studying the games carefully, you will, no matter which level you are currently at, learn quite a bit about the King's Indian.

Therefore, despite my genuine and pointed objections noted above, I can recommend

this book to anyone who employs or wants to learn the KID, with the exception of those who already own previous books by Gufeld on the KID. For those people I can recommend Bronstein and Najdorf's efforts in the King's Indian. In my assessment of the present work, I must make a deduction for unoriginality.

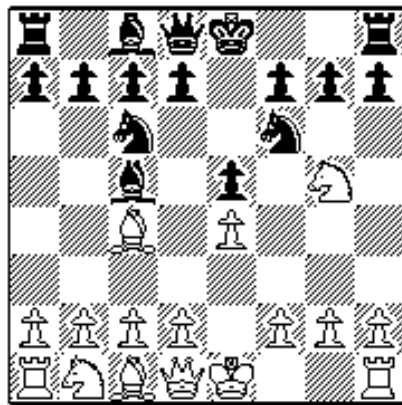
My assessment of this book:

The Traxler Counterattack (CD-ROM) by Dan Heisman, 2000 Pickard & Son, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$29.95

As far as I know this is Dan Heisman's first effort covering openings. His idea is to cover a complicated opening with more or less every book or article he could dig up, add all the games he could find and analyze everything down to a tee with the help of some powerful computers and strong chess software. Many will argue that this is the path that will destroy chess – at least that's what some people argued when GM John Nunn took a similar look at five-man-endings. I have to admit that I'm more enthusiastic about and welcome Heisman's effort.



For those who are not familiar with the opening, the starting moves are **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 Bc5!? (See Diagram).**



These lines are extremely hairy and very difficult to play by either side, mainly because it is tremendously difficult for any human being to physically remember all these lines and therefore to steer clear of the almost endless amount of dead ends and deep pits that you inevitably will come across; everything is so terribly complicated that it is almost impossible to calculate anything to the end.

That alone probably is what scares most people away from this opening. But of course, then we have the postal (or e-mail) players who can

analyze anything and everything (this of course is a bit exaggerated, but you get my point), and they obviously still can play these lines because they can consult their books, databases/computers and analyze the critical lines, because there used to be many unanswered questions in this line.

When I write "there used to be", it is because this CD-ROM changes this. I cannot imagine how many hours this project may have taken, but when you dive into any of the 53 surveys conducted by Heisman, you enter a never-never-land of fantastic spectacular lines that have never been published before and probably never will see the light of day except on this CD.

In the January 2000 *Checkpoint* column I reviewed Beliavsky & Mikhalechishin's book *The Two Knights Defence*. In that column I offered some analysis of my own over one of the lines given in that book. In my analysis, I made an error which was promptly pointed out by a few people, Dan Heisman among them, and this was when I first heard about the present project. I have been cited (but with my name misspelled) for the error, which happened because I didn't check my analysis with a computer.

In the introduction Heisman gives us some insight to his working process:

I knew from prior experience that no line under 7 ply is worth much, but at Pentium speeds, that is not a problem; Fritz 5 often got to the 8th ply fairly quickly. I almost always used at least 8 ply, and sometimes much more, in determining candidate moves. My portable computer, a Pentium2 300 MHz, is about 1 ply deeper for the same unit of time; therefore, it was easy to go 9 ply quickly with that computer; in fact, while writing much of this book, I had both(!) computers running at the same time looking at either different variations or the same variation forcing it to alternate lines. Indeed, this book took so long to write that much of the final analysis was checked on my new Pentium III 600 MHz computer using Fritz 6, which got to 9 and 10 ply quickly and easily allowed for 11-12 ply searches in a reasonable amount of time. I likened this improvement to astronomers suddenly having the Hubbell Space Telescope available for 'deeper, clearer images'! When the evaluation indicated that several candidate moves were close and I thought a deeper search might prove a differentiation (many Traxler lines change dramatically at high depth), I let the computer think for half and hour or even overnight. But I usually did this to determine one or more candidate moves, not the sequence of analysis (which I may or may not have used, depending upon how conclusive it was). Even if the computer thought overnight to 14 or more ply, I still would force the computer down the line, as often 14 ply is not nearly enough to find the "truth" about a variation.

Once a candidate move is identified, the process is repeated - force the computer to play one of the candidate moves and then identify candidate moves at the next ply. This is done until a verdict is clear(er); then one must go back and re-do the process for the other candidate moves at each ply. Anyone with a background in mathematics will realize that such a process would quickly involve a ridiculously large number of lines unless some pruning is applied. If the computer said that one line is much better than another AND I believed that the evaluation was reasonable, then sometimes I had to decide not to pursue the lesser branches - else you would never be reading this book! Of course, even this careful subjectivity still leaves great possibility for error; however, if this process is done carefully, it can yield quite a bit of meaningful analysis. By the end, I had spent about 2,000 hours of self-directed analysis on this book, far more than I ever dreamed I would spend.

After the principal lines were identified and each line evaluated, I tried to get to the point where I could apply an overall evaluation to the set of lines; in fact each Survey has an overall "evaluation" based on optimum play within that Survey. Sometimes the evaluation of each line was just the computer's (if the position was very clear); often it was a combination of what the computer thought and what I could see, like a trapped Knight or Rook in the corner that couldn't be won within the search window, and could not be evaluated correctly by the computer. After I was able to reach an evaluation, then I was able to "back-search" and figure out which the best lines were for each player. As a goal, the main lines in this book are supposed to represent better play than the sidelines. During the course of generating the analysis, this evaluation of which line was best would often change as more information became available.

While this method may sound subjective, in defense of the findings in this book it should be noted that in some lines the truth CAN be found. For example, suppose Black has sacrificed material and White is evaluated to be +2 pawns if he plays his best move, but losing by -3 or more with other

moves. Then in 98% of the cases that move is forced (since it was Black who sacrificed the material and if the evaluation is -3 then he has already gained it back with interest) and I could follow/force the analysis down the +2 path. So long as there are not many alternatives (especially for the "defense" - in this case White), this process can be continued until either the position becomes quiescent (in which case White is probably winning) or else the evaluation starts to change, sometimes dramatically, as the computer is forced deeper. For example, Black may overcome his material deficit and his attack is found to be winning. There are many such "forced" lines in this book, many of them novelties...

A great deal of the analysis in this book is either verification, augmentation, or refutation of the excellent work done before me by GM Estrin, Williams, and Cramer (see below). In addition, some recent postal tournaments - and computer analysis by others with similar tools(!) - have either verified some of my independent findings or opened up yet further new lines to research. Some of the nicest lines were originally found by my predecessors, and I used the computer to verify how forcing those lines were, what alternatives exist, and whether the conclusions were correct. Many of the lines were so deep that the computer, by itself, almost never would have found the right idea - so the human mind can take heart (pun intended). However, standing on the shoulder of these "Traxler Giants" is part of what makes this book valuable. I did not throw away old analysis, but used it like a treasure map. Of course, some of my favorite moments were when the computer obviously refuted what was previously thought a "best" line of analysis. These revelations happened often enough that a Traxler-savvy player will find this book to be quite a revelation!

About his intended audience he writes:

This book is aimed at several different possible audiences:

- The theoretician who wants to know what the best lines are in this (or any) opening.
- The correspondence player, who will now have a wealth of information with which to work.
- The advanced tournament player, who plays the Traxler for either side.
- The intermediate player who enjoys tactical variations.
- The intermediate player who wants to see how an opening is analyzed in detail.
- The beginning to intermediate player who would like to practice a lot of "Mate in X" variations from practical play.

I will agree to the first three, but I have serious doubt about the last three. I don't think beginners and intermediate players will derive any benefit whatsoever from studying this CD. In fact I think it will serve to confuse these players more than anything else.

However, that being said I think that Heisman has made a super effort to cover this opening, and while he certainly he has taken the analysis a giant leap further, there is still plenty of paths to explore for future researchers.

The bottom line: I can recommend this CD-ROM to those people who have a very particular interest in this opening, for everybody else, the material presented may seem like overkill.

My assessment of this CD-ROM:

Informator 79 EE by Alexandar Matanovic et al, 2000 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, \$36.00

It's again time for an Informator, this time the Electronic Edition (EE) of number 79. This volume has 569 games and 473 partial games from recent master practice.

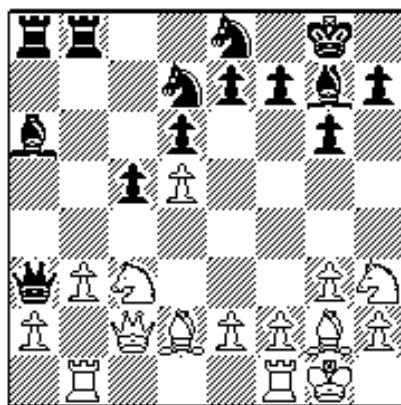
From a brief run-through, I can tell that the Symmetrical English is getting a lot of attention. So is the French, the Petroff with 3 Nxe5, the Catalan, and the King's Indian main line with 9 b4. As usual, the games are annotated by the players themselves, and in this volume we find annotations by pretty much all the top players, although I seemed to notice that Kasparov and Karpov this time are less evident.



I have previously mentioned that I would like the best novelties and best games from the previous volume given, as well as the sections on endgames and combinations included, but this has still not happened. The reason why still eludes me. I will go more into detail about the specifics of this volume of the Informator, once the printed edition is due. But here is a game, which I enjoyed from volume 79:

Korchnoi-Baklan, Neum 2000

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 g6 6 Nc3 Bxa6 7 g3 d6 8 Bg2 Bg7 9 Nh3 0-0 10 Rb1 Nbd7 11 0-0 Qa5 12 Bd2 Rfb8 13 Qc2 Ne8 14 b3 Qa3! N (See Diagram)



15 Nf4 Nc7 16 Bh3?! Ne5 17 Ng2? Bxe2! -+ 18 Nxe2 Qxa2 19 Qxa2 Rxa2 20 f4 Rxd2 21 Kf2 Nd3+ 22 Ke3 Rb2 23 Rxb2 Nxb2 24 Nc1 Nxd5+ 25 Kf3 c4 26 bxc4 Nxc4 27 Rd1 Nc3 28 Re1 e5 29 fxe5 dxe5 0-1

It's rare to see Korchnoi being downed like this, but sometimes White has to be punished in the Benko Gambit to remind him that Black has counterplay for the pawn. Baklan certainly did his part to remind the materialistic veteran fighter about this.

I have in previous columns discussed the positives and negatives of the Informator Reader which is an essential (but free) tool when working with the EE from Sahovski Informator. It's still far from perfect, which also reflects on my assessment of the present book...

My assessment of this book:

<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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