



## C O L U M N I S T S

**Checkpoint**

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:**

***Play The Najdorf: Scheveningen Style***  
by John Emms

***The Marshall Attack***  
by Bogdan Lalic

***Starting Out: The Pirc/Modern***  
by Joe Gallagher

***Gambit Play - Sacrificing in the Opening***  
by Angus Dunnington

***The Grünfeld Defence Revealed***  
by Michael Khodarkovsky

**One, Two, Three Four & Five Stars**

Happy New Year! I hope you have gotten well into the New Year and that you are ready for another 12 months full of book reviews. Last year we saw a large number of really good opening books, but also a few books that should never have seen the light of day. I will start the year by reviewing new books by some familiar authors: English GMs Joe Gallagher and John Emms, the UK-residing Croatian GM Bogdan Lalic and we will also look at Angus Dunnington's attempt at letting us in on the fundamentals of gambit play. Finally, we have the first book by IM Michael Khodarkovsky. The quality of the books varies a great deal, and in fact this time around, I get to play the entire rating



scale. Thankfully, this doesn't happen every month.

*Play The Najdorf: Scheveningen Style* by John Emms, 2003  
Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback,  
192 pp., \$19.95

Last we had a visit from Emms in this column, and the subject of discussion was his excellent book on the Sicilian Kan. I tend to expect good things whenever I see Emms' name on the cover of a book. Why is that so? In comparison to many other authors, Emms actually seems to know what he is talking about, usually because he plays the opening from one side or the other, sometimes even from both sides. In addition, to a large extent he adds his own flavor to the subject that he covers. He does so by adding plenty of new ideas, improvements and original analysis of his own. This is usually done to an extent that few other authors match.



Before moving on, it makes sense to remind ourselves what Emms means by playing the Najdorf Scheveningen style. The standardized Scheveningen Sicilian move order is: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6. While Black objectively speaking should be fine against most of White's lines, the Keres Attack, 6 g4, in particular has caused Black a fair share of problems, and these in turn have made usual Scheveningen players seek refuge in other Sicilian lines and then only by transposition get back into Scheveningen positions. The other Sicilian lines are the Kan, Taimanov and very often the Najdorf. One of the biggest proponents for Black in the Najdorf, current World # 1 Garry Kasparov, also started his Sicilian career with the Scheveningen and co-authored an excellent book with his trainer on the opening. Despite being released almost 15 years ago, it is still one of the best books on the opening ever written.

## The contents:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Preface (2 pages)
- Introduction (3 pages)
- **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6**
- 1 6 Bc4: Introduction and Sidelines (22 pages)
- 2 6 Bc4 e6 7 Bb3 b5 8 0-0 Be7 9 Qf3 (21 pages)
- 3 6 Be3 e6: Introduction and Sidelines (8 pages)
- 4 6 Be3 e6 7 f3: The English Attack (25 pages)
- 5 6 Be2 e6: Introduction (13 pages)
- 6 6 Be2 e6: Main Lines (39 pages)
- 7 6 Bg5 (27 pages)
- 8 6 f4 (13 pages)
- 9 6 g3 (5 pages)
- 10 Other Sixth Move Options for White (4 pages)
- Index of Variations (4 pages)

This is both more pages and more chapters than Kosten had in his book *Easy Guide to the Najdorf* (128 pages over 8 chapters). Despite looking like the other books by Everyman Chess, this book makes a couple of significant departures from its standard format. The main difference is that rather than presenting the theory based on main games, the theory here is given in variation trees, which is also my personal preference. Also positive is the fact that the index of variations in its entirety is placed at the end of the book, rather than being fragmented at the end of each chapter, which often leaves the reader wondering in which chapter a particular line is covered because of various possible transpositions. These two differences make it, in my opinion, easier to determine whether the author has tried to sidestep covering a critical line.

From the Introduction: "The main objective of this book is to arm the reader with a reliable and yet ambitious defence to the Open Sicilian. The book is aimed at players wishing to take up the Najdorf as their main weapon against 1 e4 and

those who already play it but would like to increase their repertoire within the opening. I don't pretend to be the world's leading expert on the Najdorf and Scheveningen. I have plenty of experience in some lines and a sprinkling of knowledge in others. However, I jumped at the chance to write this book because I knew it would be a great learning experience to study one of the most important opening in the history of chess - a challenging, sometimes arduous, but overall rewarding task."

As with his other books, you can open this at almost any page and find some original input by Emms, who, in addition to improving or refuting other people's ideas, also has thrown in many of his own with original analysis. Let's take a look:

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e6 7 0-0 Be7 8 f4 0-0 9 g4**, which was played in Short-Ivanchuk, Shenyang 2000, a game that now continued with 9...Nc6 (Emms also covers that and finds it acceptable for Black), but in addition he also offers the following line (the notes are those by Emms in the book):

"**9...b5!?** is often premature in this line, but against 9 g4 it seems playable, for example: **10 Bf3 Bb7 11 e5** (the critical response to Black's early ...b7-b5) **10...Bxf3 12 Qxf3 dxe5 13 Nxe6 Qb6+ 14 Be3** (14 Kh1? e4! 15 Nxe4 Qxe6 16 Nxf6+ Bxf6 17 Qxa8 Nc6 18 Qb7 Qe4+ 19 Kg1 Bd4+, and Black wins) **14...Qxe6 15 Qxa8 b4** and the weaknesses caused by an early g2-g4 give Black excellent play for the exchange." I have to agree, after for example 16 Nd1 Nxg4 17 f5 Qc4, Black appears to be doing rather well.

I could easily have brought many more examples to your attention, but the result is usually the same. His analysis has been thoroughly checked and the result is quite impressive. On occasion he is, however, guilty of 'suggesting' a move that has been played before, making it look like the move

stems from him. One example is the following:

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e6 7 0-0 Be7 8 f4 0-0 9 Be3 Nc6 10 a4 Qc7 11 Qe1 Nxd4 12 Bxd4 e5 13 Be3 exf4 14 Bxf4 Be6 15 Qg3**, and now the main line that allows a draw by repetition continues with 15...Nd7. But instead Emms offers "15...Rfd8!?" avoids the forced draw and looks playable for Black, for example: 16 Bh6 g6 17 Kh1 (or 17 Bg5 Qc5+ 18 Kh1? Nh5!) 17...Nd7 18 Bg4 Ne5 19 Bxe6 fxe6 20 Qh3 Qd7 and Black will continue with ...Bf8." All's well it seems, and this appears to be another new idea by Emms, but it isn't. The move 15...Rfd8 has been played by several grandmasters. For example, in the games Dolmatov-Tal, USSR Ch 1979 or Psakhis-Polugaevsky, Moscow tt 1981, which are not exactly obscure games. While the move 17...Nd7 appears to be genuinely new (Tal played 17...Rac8), one of the stem games should have been mentioned.

Who is this book aimed at? I would say that you should probably be rated at least 1900-2000 in order to get the most out of the book, but other ambitious players should definitely consider it too. I believe that even very strong players, such as international masters and grandmasters will be able to use this book thanks to the many new ideas from Emms' laboratory. But for lower-rated players, this book doesn't contain enough explanations of basic ideas to make it useful, unlike what we saw, for example, in Wells' book on the Trompowsky in last month's column.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Play The Najdorf: Scheveningen Style*  
by John Emms

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*The Marshall Attack* by Bogdan Lalic, 2003 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 176 pp., \$19.95

When I first heard about this title coming out from Everyman Chess, I must admit I didn't immediately see the connection between the opening, the Marshall Attack, and the author, grandmaster Bogdan Lalic. And I still don't. In fact, a search on my database reveals that the author doesn't seem to have played the Marshall Attack as Black (although he has faced some of the anti-Marshall systems that are covered in this book, but he usually plays the Open Spanish as Black when allowing the Ruy Lopez) nor has he faced it as White. You may ask what business he has writing this book with no practical experience in this sharp opening. I cannot give you a good answer, but it wouldn't be the first time a grandmaster has written about an opening that he doesn't appear to be particularly familiar with. Another author who has pulled this off successfully is Joe Gallagher, who wrote a rather good book on the Caro-Kann published by Everyman last year. But the fact remains, that you write best about the things you know well.



However, this also hasn't necessarily been the case for Lalic, who wrote a mediocre book on the Classical variation in Nimzo-Indian (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2), and his book on the Bg5 System in the Queen's Gambit Declined also had its weak spots.

Let's have a look at how he has chosen to divide the material in this book:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6**

**Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0**

- **Part 1: The Main Line Marshall**
- **8 c3 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6**
- 1 The Old Main Line: 12 d4 and 15 Be3 (13 pages)
- 2 The Modern Method: 12 d4 and 15 Re4 (14 pages)
- 3 12 d3 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4 14 g3 Qh3 15 Re4 (29 pages)
- 4 12th and 13th Move Options for White (21 pages)
- **Part 2: Other Marshalls**
- 5 Alternatives to the Main Line 11...c6 (20 pages)
- 6 Steiner Variation: 9...e4 (9 pages)
- **Part 3: The Anti-Marshall**
- 7 Anti-Marshall with 8 h3 Bb7 9 d3 d6 10 a3 (23 pages)
- 8 Anti-Marshall with 8 a4 (15 pages)
- 9 Anti-Marshall with 8 d4!? (10 pages)
- 10 Other Anti-Marshalls (13 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (3 pages)

This looks reasonable, but the page allocation is cause for some concern. To give the 'Old Main Line' only 13 pages, while allotting 14 pages for the 'Modern Method' or while giving the anti-Marshalls so many pages is in my opinion quite absurd and an indication that he is already on the same terrible track that left his Nimzo-Indian book irrelevant - he simply didn't balance the material properly and paid far too much attention to a rather small part of the opening.

The next indication of Lalic's mishandling of the subject matter is evident in the bibliography. It's rather odd that he thinks the following list of books is sufficient: Informators 1-85, NIC Yearbooks 1-63, Chess Informant Monograph C89 by Anand, Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings: Volume C (4th Edition) and, as database, ChessBase's Mega Database 2002.

First of all, the database is not the most recent, and secondly, he doesn't list MegaCorr 3, the most recent database of correspondence chess games, something that should be



obligatory for all authors. Even worse is that he is missing *The Total Marshall* by Harding, Vitomskis and Benndik; this CD-ROM is easily is most important piece of source material that anybody even considering writing about the Marshall Attack must examine. (For my review of this CD-ROM, you may refer to the May 2002 *Checkpoint* in the ChessCafe.com Archives.) I could also mention other works such as Nunn and Harding's older book on the Marshall that still contains some relevant material. Or what about NCO, as well as Emms' *Easy Guide to the Ruy Lopez*?

The first chapter confirmed my worst expectations. Let's compare the first few games in the book with the coverage on *The Total Marshall* CD-ROM.

The first moves in the first three games are identical:

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0 8 c3 d5**



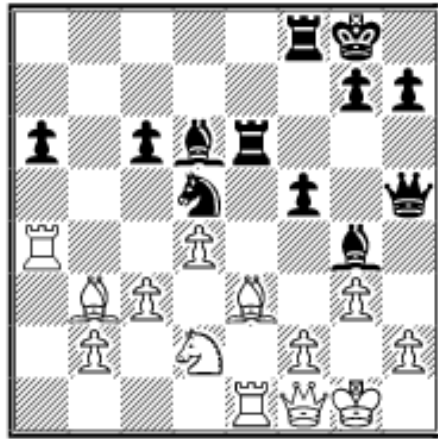
This is the starting position of the Marshall Attack.

**9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6 12 d4 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4 14 g3 Qh3 15 Be3 Bg4 16 Qd3**

In the introductory part of this chapter, Lalic writes: "In this chapter we deal with the old main line of the Marshall, where the real struggle begins around move 30. To complete the state of theory we have to thank a lot of correspondence players, although there are still a lot of positions that need to be tested. [CH: You would think that with such a thought running through his head, he had actually bothered to check a CC database or a publication on this opening by the leading publisher of material from the CC world, but as we have already noted,



that is not the case] The main continuation, 16...Rae8 17 Nd2 Re6, we see in Games 1-4. After 18 a4 bxa4 19 Rxa4 f5 20 Qf1 Qh5



we come to the critical position [CH: I though he just mentioned that the real struggle only begins around move 30] (Games 1-3). After 21 f4 (Game 1) Black does best by playing 21...Rb8, thus switching play to the b-file. Excellent attacking chances are given to Black after 21 c4? f4! 22 cxd5 Rxe3! (Game 2).

Ivanchuk's cold-blooded 21 Rxa6!? should have led to a draw in Game 3, if, instead of playing for a win with 28...h5?!, Black had played the correct 28...Rxf4!."

In Game 1, Lalic in fact only mentions 21...Rb8, while Harding (who surveys this particular line on the Total Marshall CD-ROM), has 21...Rfe8 as the main line, and also covers 21...Kh8!?, 21...g5?!, and 21...Rb8, about which Harding writes: "Threatens Rxb3 but the rook move may waste time and again Black's King position is uncomfortable. Nevertheless, this line may be just about playable for Black". After 21...Rb8, Lalic gives three moves: 22 Qf2?, which is his main game, and he also gives 22 Qxa6?, which is so bad Harding doesn't bother to mention it and 22 Rxa6, to which Lalic gives a '?!', but Harding gives it a '?!' with the comment "allows Black to carry out his threat but may not be as bad as was thought" and gives the following line: 22...Rxb3 23 Nxb3 Nxe3 (here Lalic writes that this "is very complicated but good for Black", but doesn't back it up with any further analysis) 24 Ra8+ Kf7 25 Qf2! Bh3 (quoting the game CC game Stern-Vitomskis) and now 26 Raa1 Nd5 27 Rxe6 Kxe6 28 Re1+ Kf7 29 Na5, quoting the game Hakala-Laisaari, which gives White an edge according to Harding. But interestingly enough,


Harding's preferred moves 22 Bf2!? and 22 Bxd5 (Harding's main line) are not even mentioned by Lalic. By the way, in an article by Lepeshkin in *Shakhmatny Biulleten* (February 1990), 22 Bxd5 is given as the main line. Hmm...

Then we have 21 c4, which is awarded a '?' by both Bennedik (who is responsible for this survey on the *Total Marshall* CD-ROM) and Lalic. Now Lalic continues with 21...f4, which he awards a '!' and the comment "Obviously Black has no choice because 21...Nxe3?! 22 fxe3 c5, although possible, would have kept Black's attacking chances on the kingside to a minimum." Curiously, Bennedik has 21...Nxe3 as his main line, giving it a '!' and attaches the comment "is a less thoroughly analysed line, which also gave Black good results in the games played so far. I am recommending it here for Black players who want to win, because in the line with 21...f4, White seems to be able to draw." Obviously Bennedik analyses a bit further and assesses his final position as unclear, an evaluation with which I agree. Lalic's main line is 21...f4, and now 22 cxd5 Rxe3! (Lalic also mentions the inferior 22...fxe3, while Bennedik also gives 22...fxg3 as leading to a draw) 22 fxe3 fxg3 24 dxc6+! Kh8 25 hxg3. This is given without mentioning any alternatives, but as Bennedik shows, White should play 25 Qxf8+! since the line Lalic gives is clearly in Black's favor. And, since Lalic doesn't come up with any revelations in the remainder of his coverage, we will follow Bennedik's coverage, which is based on a recommendation by John Fernandez in *ChessMail*: 25 Qxf8+ Bxf8 26 hxg3 Qh3 27 Bd5 Qxg3+ 28 Kf1 Bh3+ 29 Ke2 Bg4+ 30 Kf1 with a draw by perpetual check. So here too, Lalic doesn't cover the material properly.

Next in line is the coverage of 21 Rxa6 as played in Ivanchuk-Short, Riga 1995, which is Lalic's Game 3, and now 21...f4 22 Bxf4! (both Lalic and Bennedik agrees that this is the best move) 22...Bh3 (Benedik has 22...Rxe1 as the main line; Lalic also covers this line, and both agree that

this is better for White, although Bennedik quotes a handful games that Lalic doesn't mention at all) 23 Rxe6 Bxf1 24 Nxf1 Bxf4 25 Raxc6 Qf3, and now Lalic gives 26 Bxd5 Qxd5 27 gxf4 Qf3 28 d5, which allows Black to draw with 28...Rxf4! 29 Rc8+ Kh7 30 Rc7+ Kf8, which is what Lalic has as his only comment since the alternative on move 22. White instead should play 26 gxf4 Rxf4 27 Re8+ Kf7 28 Bxd5+ Qxd5 29 Rcc8 Kg6 (or 29...Qf3 30 Rf8+ Ke7 31 Rxf4 Qxf4 32 Ne3 Qg5+ 33 Kh1 Qb5 34 Rc5 Qxb2 35 Kg2, after which Bennedik comments "White seems to be better, but the position is still very complicated") 30 Rf8 Rxf8 31 Rxf8 Qb5 32 Rc8 Qxb2 33 d5 Qe2 34 Ne3 with a clear advantage for White according to Bennedik. I trust I have made my point.

This book by Lalic is of very limited use; it is a book that can best be described as inadequate.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *The Marshall Attack*  
by Bogdan Lalic

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*Starting Out: The Pirc/Modern* by Joe Gallagher, 2003  
Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback,  
192 pp., \$16.95

The 'Starting Out' series from Everyman has already produced a fair number of really good books, and the two previous titles by Gallagher in this series are no exceptions. The one on the King's Indian is outstanding, while the one on the Caro-Kann was also a cut above.



Gallagher has contributed to NCO and as had authored a couple of truly great books on the Sicilian and King's Indian. This time around, the Swiss-based British grandmaster takes on the Pirc/Modern complex which is generally characterized by Black fianchettoing his kingside bishop in answer to White's 1 e4. There quite a few permutations and variations to take into consideration, but since he is only dealing with a general picture rather than setting out every single theoretical variation, this should be possible.

The contents:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Austrian Attack: 5...c5 (20 pages)
- 2 Austrian Attack: 5...0-0 (23 pages)
- 3 Classical: 6...c6 (18 pages)
- 4 Classical: 6...Bg4 and 6...Nc6 (12 pages)
- 5 Classical: Related Systems (17 pages)
- 6 4 Be3 (15 pages)
- 7 White plays g2-g3 (14 pages)
- 8 4 Bg5 and 4 Bc4 (17 pages)
- 9 Odds and Ends (12 pages)
- 10 Modern with c2-c4 (Averbakh Variation) (16 pages)
- 11 Modern against 1 e4 (17 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

I have to admit that I'm not the greatest expert on the

Pirc/Modern complex, nor do I play 1 e4 that often anymore, other than in 3 or 5 minute games on the internet, so my experience in these lines is quite limited, but judging from the volume of material on my database the division of the material looks just about right.

But once you start reading the material in the book, it immediately becomes apparent it is much more than 'just about right'. I felt with every page I turned that I had learned something new about the Pirc or the Modern. Even if this book is aimed at players well below my level, I can confirm that there is plenty of material that even strong players will be able to benefit from.

The chapters are built up according to the traditional *Starting Out* formula: Introduction, discussion about the merits of the particular line, something about strategy and a little theory, then a short discussion about whether or not it is necessary to study the theory of a particular line, statistics, some illustrative games, and finally a summary at the end of the chapter.

Let's take a look at an example from the book. I have included some, but not all of Gallagher's annotations, as they cover a little more than two pages in the book. By the way, I think that Gallagher changed the move order a bit in the opening to serve his purposes better. This happens in most opening books to some extent.

***Zapata-Schussler***  
**Santa Clara 1996**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Be3 0-0 6 Qd2 c6**

This is one of Black's most popular set-ups in practice but, as someone who has played this system quite often with the white pieces, I was always happy to face it as it allows White to play in the desired manner.

Apart from 6...e5 (the previous game) Black has tried 6...Bg4 but this is well met by 7 Ng5. The point is that after 7...h6 8 h3! the black kingside has been seriously weakened. Instead the game Khalifman-Adams, World Championship, Lucerne 1997 went 7...Nc6 8 d5 Nb8 9 f3 Bd7 10 h4 h5 11 g4! with good attacking chances for White.

**NOTE: White meets ...Bg4 with Ng5 on a number of occasions in these variations. White should only consider this move when Black has already castled, otherwise it is likely to be just met by h6. It is also likely to have more effect if the dark-squared bishops are still on the board.**

### **7 Bh6 b5**

The text seems to be an automatic reaction on the part of many players but I have my doubts as to whether it is a good idea before White has castled long. Firstly it allows White to counter with a2-a4, as he did in the game, and secondly the inclusion of ...b5 and Bd3 means that the advance e4-e5 has to be taken seriously. Black can no longer exchange queens and he may also be weak on the h1-a8 diagonal...

### **8 Bd3 Bg4 9 a4**

Has White suddenly changed tack and decided to play for a queenside attack? No, his main idea is to transfer the knight on c3 to the kingside and by including the moves a2-a4 and ...b5-b4 he gains an important tempo...

### **9...b4**

After 9...bxa4 the black queenside would be a mess and White would indeed be sorely tempted to change plan. For example, 10 Bxg7 Kxg7 11 Qf4 (11 Ng5) Bxf3 12 Qxf3 followed by 0-0. White doesn't have to worry about 12...Qb6 because of 13 Na4! Qxd4 14 c3 Qe5 15 Nb6!.

**NOTE: Notice the use of tactics to control a positional**

**game. It is a common misconception that positional players are less good tactically. They are not, it is just that they don't like to lose control.**

**10 Ne2 a5 11 Ng3**

Now the knight is well placed for the coming kingside assault. Black must be constantly on the lookout for positional sacrifices on f5 or h5.

**11...Nbd7 12 h4 e5?!**

Of course traditional chess wisdom suggests that a wing attack should be countered in the centre. The text, though, does not achieve its aim as it allows White to stabilize this sector of the board after which he has a free hand on the king side...

**13 dxe5 dxe5 14 h5 Bxh5 15 0-0-0 Nc5**

Black could try 15...Bxh6 16 Qxh6 Ng4 17 Qd2 Ndf6 but after 18 Rh4! his pieces are in a tangle. White now targets the important pawn on e5. After it is lost Black collapses with remarkable speed.

**16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Qg5 Ne6 18 Qxe5 Bxf3 19 gxf3 Qd4 20 Nf5+ gxf5 21 Rdg1+ 1-0**

Very instructive annotations that most people will learn from.

Overall, I must say that along with his book on the King's Indian, this is one of the very best books in the series by Everyman Chess. I can highly recommend it to anybody playing or facing the Pirc/Modern or in fact anybody who wants to learn something about chess in general. The target audience starts at around 1500 and runs upwards to players rated around 22-2300. Go get it.



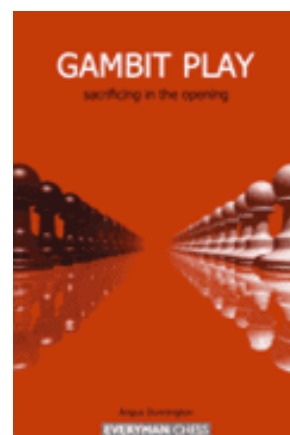
My assessment of this book: 

Order *Starting Out: The Pirc/Modern*  
by Joe Gallagher

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*Gambit Play - Sacrificing in the Opening* by Angus Dunnington, 2003 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 128 pp., \$19.95

"This book is a must for those wishing to sharpen up their play". Or so we are told on the back cover. After reading this book I tend to disagree, but only somewhat, because the book has its instructive moments.



Let's have a look at what the author has chosen to discuss:


- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Time (23 pages)
- 2 Open Lines (9 pages)
- 3 The Initiative (19 pages)
- 4 Outposts (24 pages)
- 5 Disruption (13 pages)
- 6 Structure (12 pages)
- 7 Miniatures (19 pages)

Before going any further, I have to let it be known that I have appear to have a conceptual difference with the author regarding what constitutes a gambit and what constitutes a pawn sacrifice. Let me give a couple of examples: 1 e4 e5 2 **f4** is a gambit, as is 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 c5 4 d5 **b5**, and I can mentioned a hundred other examples. But 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 g4 h6 7 h4 Nc6 8 Rg1

h5 9 gxh5 Nxh5 10 Bg5 Nf6 11 Rg3 a6 12 Nxc6 bxc6 13 Qf3 Bd7 14 0-0-0 Be7 **15 e5!** to me is a pawn sacrifice and so is 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 c5 5 Bxc4 e6 6 0-0 a6 7 Qe2 b5 8 Bb3 Nc6 9 Nc3 cxd4 10 Rd1 Bb7 11 exd4 Nb4 **12 d5!**. Aside from a few examples in the beginning of the book and the entire last chapter, it seems like the majority of the examples are pawn sacrifices rather than regular gambits. This is my biggest qualm with this book, one that is otherwise quite well-written and has plenty of good examples regarding how to use pawn sacrifices to interrupt your opponent's plans in all sorts of ways. The last chapter may be an exception. It supposedly showcases miniatures but in fact there are too many instances that feature ridiculously poor play by one side, for example: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ne4 4 a3 d6 5 exd6?! Bxd6 6 g3?? Nxf2! 7 Kxf2? Bxg3+ 0-1.

The author cites various sources throughout, so I think a bibliography might have been in order; the same goes for an index of complete games.

Overall though, I like some of the features of this book, although I would have liked the examples to be more specific regarding gambits rather than pawn sacrifices in general. Will it “sharpen your play”? Maybe. Maybe not. But it may open a few doors for many players at least as far as their approach to opening play is concerned.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Gambit Play - Sacrificing in the Opening*  
by Angus Dunnington

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*The Grünfeld Defence Revealed* by Michael Khodarkovsky,  
2003 Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 175

pp., \$21.95

This book is apparently the first in a new series of books from Batsford. On the backcover we are told that the series will be “on the major chess openings, incorporating fresh, clear presentation of the key ideas, explained in an entertaining and accessible way. The aim of this series is to provide the essential knowledge to play the opening, while revealing the current thinking of the world's elite players.” Each book will be divided as follows



- **First Moves** leads readers through the basic opening moves
- **Heroes & Zeros** gives examples of the best and worst performances with the opening
- **Tricks & Traps** reveals how you might catch out your opponent
- **What's Hot** pinpoints the very latest ideas from the world's best players
- **Detailed variations** are given at the close of the book, summarizing the main lines with assessments.

Much of this is reflected in the contents:

- Introduction (2 pages)
- First Steps (8 pages)
- Heroes and Zeros (36 pages)
- Strategy (28 pages)
- What's Hot (24 pages)
- Tricks and Traps (19 pages)
- Test Your Skill (10 pages)
- Test Your Skill - Solutions (13 pages)
- Details (29 pages)
- Definitions of Symbols (1 page)
- Before the Fight (1 page)

Before seeing this book, I was unfamiliar with the author, International Master Michael Khodarkovsky, who is touted as a friend and confidante of Garry Kasparov. On the back cover, we are even told that the author lets us into the secrets of Kasparov's opening preparation, explaining the most important elements of the Grünfeld as well as giving an up-to-date theoretical survey of the critical lines.

We are first presented the game in which the Grünfeld Defence was introduced, Becker-Grünfeld, Vienna 1921, and a game-related example, where White does everything wrong against Black's strategy and consequently gets a pretty horrible position after 13 moves at which point the illustration ends. Was it useful? Maybe to some, but there could have been more and better explanations to these basic moves.

The Heroes and Zeros chapter is supposed to show you some of the best and worst performances with this opening, but instead of adhering strictly to this formula, Khodarkovsky has chosen games by some of his friends and colleagues and then asked them to attach a few comments to the games. This has resulted in a collection of games by Zaichik, Shamkovich, Kasparov, Gulko and Tukmakov. Kasparov has three games included in this chapter, the others, one each. The games are fairly interesting, but it would have been easier to find different examples that might have been more useful to the reader, by, for example, choosing a game from each of the main lines. That notwithstanding, the games he has selected are quite instructive, so I will not complain too much about this.

In the strategy chapter, there is some discussion about the Exchange Variation and the 4 Bf4 system, but no other lines are covered nor are all the major lines within these two variations. For example, the 7 Nf3 in the exchange variation goes unmentioned.

As we saw above, the What's Hot chapter is supposed to present the most recent ideas in the opening, yet the author chooses to analyse only three games, one of which is Kramnik-Kasparov from their London 2000 match. Instead of focusing exclusively on the opening and early middlegame, he spends several pages annotating the late middlegame and endgame; this does not make any sense to me at all. This chapter would be much improved by presenting some of the latest trends, rather than just scratching the surface.

The Tricks & Traps chapter isn't much better either. You would think that some typical tricks and traps are discussed, at least that's what I think would be the obvious approach, yet the author, instead gives examples of some positional mistakes, but not enough to get anywhere close to covering the topic..

The test your skill chapters are not bad, with the caveat that there are not really enough examples.

Finally, the Details chapter is supposed to sum up the theoretical standing in all of the lines. This has been done, though the coverage doesn't appear to be particularly up-to-date. There also has not been any emphasis on which lines are the most popular right now, so that the reader could try to remember and understand the theory for these lines. As it is, it reminds me more of a database dump than anything else.

Overall I am not impressed by this book. The publisher and author have used an inefficient one-column format, which at times leaves the pages looking quite empty; this problem is particularly evident in the Test Your Skill section. Another problem is the lack of an index of complete games.

This book doesn't get close to delivering any of the promises made on the back cover nor does it fulfill the premises laid

out by the publisher and this makes its usefulness look rather questionable. If you want to learn how to play this opening and at the same time have the basic strategies and ideas explained, you should instead search out Nigel Davies' 2002 book on the same opening; you will be much better served by doing that, even if Davies' book stays clear of many of the theory-heavy variations.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *The Grünfeld Defence Revealed*  
by Michael Khodarkovsky

### *The Ratings*

 — 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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