



COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Reviewed this month:

Opening for White according to Anand 1.e4 - Volume 1

by Alexander Khalifman

Secrets of Opening Surprises

by Jeroen Bosch

School of Chess Excellence 4: Opening Developments

by Mark Dvoretsky

Opening Encyclopaedia 2004 (CD-ROM)

by ChessBase GmbH

Chess Informant 88

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

Anand Uncovered

Opening for White according to Anand 1.e4 - Book I by Alexander Khalifman, 2003 Chess Stars, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 234 pp., \$26.95



In the last couple of years Khalifman has documented Karpov's opening repertoire as Black (in one volume) and Kramnik's opening repertoire as White (in five volumes). Now it is Anand's repertoire as White, based on 1 e4, which will cover four volumes:



Book I: Latvian, Philidor's, Petroff and Ruy Lopez with 3...a6 (the present volume)

Book II: Ruy Lopez with 3...a6 (already published - I will return to this in a later column)

Book III: French, Caro-Kann, Scandinavian, Pirc, Modern and Alekhine

Book IV: Sicilian

Books III and IV are scheduled to be published later this year, and those volumes will be the most interesting and will likely contain the most pages. Covering Anand's repertoire against the Sicilian in one volume will not be an easy task.

Let's see what is included in the first volume and how the material is divided:

- Preface
- **Part 1: Rare System; Latvian Gambit; Philidor's Defence**
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 without 2...Nf6 and 2...Nc6 (5 chapters - 38 pages)
- **Part 2: Petroff Defence**
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Ne5 d6 4 Nf3 Ne4 5 d4 (8 chapters - 43 pages)
- **Part 3: Ruy Lopez without 3...a6**
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 (16 chapters - 138 pages)
- **Index of Variations** (6 pages)

I have not specified what each of the 29 chapters contains as

it would take too much space and be of limited relevance. Even though this book is supposed to be based on Anand's repertoire, there is coverage of opening lines that he is unlikely to face in a serious game. I'm thinking about variations such as (after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3) 2...f6, 2...Bd6, 2...Qe7 and a selection of other dubious systems. Yet, the idea is to present a complete repertoire with consideration to Anand's preferences, the current standing of theory, and Khalifman's original analysis. While the first two considerations are fairly easy to find on your own, it is the author's presentation and original ideas that make these books worthwhile. It is rare that players at Khalifman's level write this kind of repertoire book and rarer still that they are as thorough as his work has proven to be.

Of the variations covered, there are two that are highly topical at the present time. These are the Petroff (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6) and the Berlin Defence in the Ruy Lopez (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nf6 4 0-0 Nxe4 5 d4 Nd6 6 Bxc6 dxc6 7 dxe5 Nf5 8 Qxd8+ Kxd8 9 Nc3 Bd7). In the latter Khalifman has taken the theory a good step farther and demonstrates White's chances of playing for a win in this line. Even after careful analysis I didn't find anything that I could fault. That being said, in some of the less important lines, such as in the Philidor, I did find that Khalifman sometimes reached conclusions that could be questioned.

As with many books written by non-native English speakers there are a number of grammatical irregularities, and while they rarely confuse the intention of the author, they do slightly subtract from the overall picture. I also found a few diagram errors, but this should not discourage the student too much.

This is a very good book that will well prepare you to meet any of the lines covered with confidence. It is variation-laden and the commentary is quite sparse in many places, but still sufficient to give you the essence of the positions.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Opening for White according to Anand 1.e4*
Volume 1 by Alexander Khalifman

Secrets of Opening Surprises by Jeroen Bosch, 2003 New In Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 206 pp, \$24.95

For regular readers of New In Chess Magazine neither the author nor the title of the book should be a surprise. For a number of years Jeroen Bosch has penned a column that has covered a variety of fascinating ideas; some of these have proved quite worthwhile and some have slid into the obscurity from which they originated. Yet the ideas certainly live up to their name, they have been a secret to most of us and they are surprising.



The back cover tells us what's included: "In this book you will find an extensive selection of the best SOS columns that Jeroen Bosch wrote for *New In Chess* Magazine. In addition you will find two chapters from Bosch's contributions to the *New In Chess* Yearbook. All of them have been reworked and updated."

It's time to see what's in the contents:

- **Section I**
- **The Left hook a3!?** (1 page)
- Chapter 1 The Gunsberg Variation (12 pages)
- Chapter 2 Your SOS weapon versus the Pirc (7 pages)
- Chapter 3 Outfox your opponent (10 pages)
- **Section II**

- **Surprising bishop moves** (1 page)
- Chapter 4 Sokolov's surprise (8 pages)
- Chapter 5 Play the Surprise Indian (9 pages)
- Chapter 6 TN on move 5 (7 pages)
- Chapter 7 A bishop's wonder move (7 pages)
- **Section III**
- **Early queen moves** (2 pages)
- Chapter 8 Alapin bites the Dutch (8 pages)
- Chapter 9 Another Tarrasch Variation (8 pages)
- Chapter 10 Surprising Hodgson (5 pages)
- Chapter 11 A surprising queen sortie (4 pages)
- Chapter 12 A tactical weapon (7 pages)
- **Section IV**
- **An SOS pawn thrust** (1 page)
- Chapter 13 Modern, Scandinavian or Alekhine? (7 pages)
- Chapter 14 Only Mad Dogs and Englishmen? (8 pages)
- Chapter 15 Trumping the Tromp (6 pages)
- Chapter 16 The improved Lisitsin Gambit (6 pages)
- **Section V**
- **Outflanking the French** (1 page)
- Chapter 17 French Wing Gambit (37 pages)
- **Section VI**
- **A surprising Sicilian** (1 page)
- Chapter 18 The Kupreichik Variation (34 pages)
- **Send us your SOS** (1 page)

Little of the above makes any sense unless you actually opened the book and checked out the contents. For instance Chapter 13 covers 1 e4 g6 2 d4 Bg7 3 Nc3 d5!? And Chapter 12 the Sicilian Sveshnikov: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Nd5 Nxd5 8 exd5 Ne7 9 Qf3; while Chapter 4 has 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bb5 Bd6!? that was once played by I. Sokolov in the Dutch Championship.

What all these lines have in common is that, at one point or another, they have been played by a grandmaster. That may

be a vote of confidence at some level, but I guess even grandmasters get bored and try something slightly crazy. Some of the openings could be worthwhile to undertake every now and again, but some of them I wouldn't touch in a serious game, even if they have been tried out by a grandmaster.

The openings are usually covered quite well. In fact for some of the lines I could barely find any games in my database. On occasion I found moves that should have been scrutinized not mentioned, for example after 1 e4 c5 2 c3 Qa5, it would have been obvious to mention 3 d4 (the move that 2...Qa5 is designed to prevent) 3...cxd4 4 Nf3 followed by Bc4 and 0-0. If Black accepts the pawn, his queen is developed far too early for the standard Smith-Morra Gambit.

Overall, I enjoyed the articles when they appeared in the magazine, and even now I still find them entertaining and worthwhile. I might even try a couple of them myself.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Secrets of Opening Surprises*
by Jeroen Bosch

School of Chess Excellence 4: Opening Developments by Mark Dvoretsky, 2003 Edition Olms, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 205 pp., \$29.95

This book is the last in a series of four that have been published by Olms in both English and German. The three previous titles are: 1) *Endgame Analysis*; 2) *Tactical Play*; and 3) *Strategic Play*.



While the current theme is *Opening Developments*, it goes well beyond that. Let's see what Dvoretsky has written for the back cover:

Compared with the other books in this series, substantially more space is given to the analysis of the opening problems that confront a player in a particular game. The first half of the book is devoted to opening preparation, and also in the second half nearly every game is accompanied by detailed opening information.

The main attraction of chess is its thematic content. I hope that this book will provide a guide for you through the rich and diverse world of chess ideas, will help you perceive the depth and beauty of schemes generated at the board, in tournament or match play, to disclose the causes of mistakes and to be aware of the hidden forces that determine the plans of chess encounters. As a result you will significantly improve your understanding of chess, and your practical playing strength will rise.

With that in mind, it's time to have a look at the contents page:

- Preface (2 pages)
- Part eight
- **The Opening** (2 pages)
- Opening disasters (4 pages)

- How a player develops (6 pages)
- Risk in a decisive game (6 pages)
- Playing for mate (8 pages)
- Dubious innovations (5 pages)
- 'Your own theory' (8 pages)
- Duels in the Pirc-Ufimtsev (6 pages)
- The ball is in White's court (7 pages)
- Opening subtleties (3 pages)
- Exercises for analysis (3 pages)
- Part nine
- **Games** (1 page)
- Who is attacking whom? (10 pages)
- The accumulation of small advantages (9 pages)
- Dispute of equals (7 pages)
- A desperate struggle for the initiative (9 pages)
- How to defeat Karpov (5 pages)
- A positional sacrifice (6 pages)
- Continuation of a discussion (12 pages)
- What is meant by high class (8 pages)
- A storm on the chess board (9 pages)
- Uneven play (8 pages)
- The treatment of hanging pawns (4 pages)
- From the opening into the endgame (9 pages)
- Advanced technique (9 pages)
- Exercises for analysis (1 page)
- **Solutions to exercises** (20 pages)
- Appendix
- Index of exercises by thinking skills and types of positions to be solved (2 pages)
- Index of Players (2 pages)

Of the usual features in an opening book, we are missing a bibliography, and what is typically important: an index of variations. Neither is particularly missed in the book and in fact the latter would have been entirely out of place, but an index of openings should have been included.

As we can see, the topics cover a lot more ground than just

openings, but usually the subject has some relation to the opening. However, there are some instances where the topic doesn't have any similarity with the title of the book, and perhaps its inclusion should have been reconsidered. The first part of the book fits in best with the title, whereas the second part covers such a variety of subjects that you might well have found such material in any of his other books, including the one on the endgame.

Having read the bulk of Dvoretsky's works, there were several parts of the book that are familiar and being a person who values original material this is a disappointment. There are, however, loads of other things to be excited about in this book. These include thorough analysis from all facets of the game; exercises, which vary from relatively easy to almost unsolvable; and the variety of advice on all parts of the game and beyond.

Let's look at one of the many exercises that you will find throughout the book:

Andersson-Karpov

Moscow 1981

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bg2 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 Qc2 a6 8 Qxc4 b5 9 Qc2 Bb7 10 Bg5 Nbd7 11 Bxf6 Nxf6 12 Nbd2 Rc8 13 Nb3 Be4 (An example with 13...c5 is also given at this point) **14 Qc3 Nd5 15 Qc1 c5! 16 Nxc5** (here he also discusses the merits of 16 dxc5)



Which would you prefer: 16...Bxc5 or 16...Qb6?

Knowing well what Dvoretsky has in mind, this was probably the easiest exercise in the entire book for me to solve, but for newcomers to the 'doctrine' of Dvoretsky, this is the kind of thing that will quickly open your eyes if you study his material seriously. The answer goes as follows:

The immediate exchange on c5 guarantees Black equality.

16...Bxc5! 17 dxc5 Qe7 18 c6 Nb4 19 Nd4 Bxg2 20 Kxg2 Nxc6 21 Nxc6 Qb7

It is time to agree a draw.

But in what way is **16...Qb6**, as recommended in *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings*, worse? That is what Karpov played. The game continued only a few more moves: 17 Qd2 Bxc5 18 dxc5 Bxg2 19 Rfc1 Rfc8 20 Rxc5 Qxc5 21 Ne1 Bxg2 22 Kxg2 Qe7. Draw.

Serious consideration should be given to the sacrifice of queen for rook, bishop and pawn. Let us ponder over the position arising after **17 Nxe4!** [CH: this is what I was talking about above] **17...Rxc1 18 Rfxc1.**

White intends 19 e3, then 20 Ne5 and the doubling of the rooks on the c-file. The attempt to exchange a pair of rooks by 18...Qb7 19 Ne5 Rc8 20 Nc3! followed by exchange of knights leads to the creation of a weak pawn at d5.

As can be seen, by sacrificing the queen you risk practically nothing, whereas the opponent has to be careful - otherwise White's initiative will

become dangerous. In my view, it is harder to play with Black in such a position than with White...

This gives you an idea of the level of player that this book targets; it certainly isn't for players rated below 2000, and if I should put a threshold of where you need to be to get the maximum out of this book, it would probably be somewhat higher. However, ambitious players rated slightly less than 2000 will also be able to derive much from this book even though some of the material is too advanced.

The book is intended for strong players and few others will be able to benefit from it. The theme of the book is a bit vague and wanders from the topic indicated by the title. However, for those who are devoted and energetic enough, the rewards from the study of this book will be almost endless. They will have a much better understanding of chess, in all of its phases, as well as for the preparation and the psychological factors that surround each game.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *School of Chess Excellence 4: Opening
Developments*
by Mark Dvoretsky

Opening Encyclopaedia 2004 (CD-ROM) by ChessBase GmbH, 2003 ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$110.00

Not knowing the target audience for this product, I have turned to the back of the DVD cover, and here read the following:



The ChessBase Opening Encyclopaedia 2004 features the complete coverage of all opening sectors [sic! I had no idea what this was supposed to mean, but it becomes apparent they meant to write 'sectors'!], offering an optimal start for opening training. Many well-known specialists have made contributions in their field of expertise, such as Anand, Bareev, Dautov, Dr Huebner [sic!], Jussupow, Kortschnoj, Krasenkow and Ribli.

For each of 500 opening sectors according to ECO standard there is at least one opening survey, so that the database is the ideal tool for building up a complete opening repertoire.

The game database includes 1.8 million games, about 68.000 of them with annotations. The new opening key has been considerably enhanced, providing even more depth (84.000 single keys) and clarity. Furthermore, the CD contains a separate directory with 86 special theory databases from the CBMs.

- more than 1.8 million games, all featuring ECO codes
- more than 68.000 of them annotated
- more than 3.200 opening keys
- access to the games with the new big opening key "Big Key"
- 86 special theory databases
- 2nd CD with big tree of all games

and for quick overview and statistics

Although I'm far from flawless in my handling of the English language, it doesn't take a scholar to understand this could have been written much better. Aside from that I also have issues with the statements that were made.

First, that this is complete coverage of all the openings is inaccurate. They also mention that each opening sector is covered with "at least one survey", this is true, but let's examine these surveys more closely.

As I browsed through the long list of surveys, the first one that jumped out was A11 - Reti/English. There are two surveys, one by Pe. Horn on 1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 Bg2 Bf5 4 0-0 and one by Stohl on 1 c4 c6 2 Nf3 d5 3 g3 Nf6 4 Bg2 dxc4. However, A11 encompasses far more than just these two variations. For starters it also includes 1 c4 c6 2 Nf3 d5 3 e3 Nf6 4 Nc3 a6 which is quite similar to the popular ...a6 variations in the Slav Defence in the Queen's Gambit. A11 also includes set-ups for Black with...g6 and ...Bg4. In addition, the survey that includes ...Bf5 only scratches the surface of this interesting variation. If you dig deeper you will notice that Horn only discusses about 5-10% of this important line.

I found similar problems in many other places, for example in the A70 - Modern Benoni. This covers the once popular 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 Nc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 Nf3 Bg7 8 h3 0-0 9 Bd3. But the three surveys exclude too many possibilities, the odd-looking move 9...Bd7 is one of them. In the latest edition of Sahovski Informator's ECO A it is claimed to gain equality for Black. Surely that should have been worth at least a brief discussion.

The coverage of the Sicilian Accelerated Dragon is so inadequate that anyone playing this opening as Black would love to have their opponent base their preparation on the few

lines given in these surveys.

The entire Philidor Defence is supposedly covered in one survey, which only pertains to the Hanham Variation, so those looking for coverage of the Antoshin, Larsen, and other variations will have to look elsewhere.

Some other examples that don't look right: The Italian Game/Evans Gambit - 6 surveys; The Berlin Wall Variation in the Ruy Lopez - 2 surveys (that don't mention Kramnik's 9...Bd7, because they date back to 1990!); The Marshall Attack in the Ruy Lopez (5 surveys, the most recent, dating back to 1996!); The Marshall Gambit in the Queen's Gambit (1 survey, from 1992!), and I could mention many more.

There are several problems with these surveys:

1. Many of them only cover a tiny part of the given ECO code, thus not giving a complete picture.
2. Many of them are completely outdated. Surveys on key lines in the Queen's Indian written in 1994 are no longer applicable.
3. There are many well-known names amongst the contributors, such as Anand, Jussupow, Cu. Hansen, Ribli, Krasenkow and Ftacnik. However, on an important opening like the Caro-Kann the main contributor is someone called Schippel. He has authored an amazing 338 surveys on this CD. But who is he? There are other unknown contributors, including the nameless 'ChessBase' moniker. I wonder who hides behind this alias, an intern at ChessBase, who knows?

Secondly, "more than 1.8 million games, all featuring ECO codes." The last comment is so insignificant, it isn't even funny. Of course all of the games have an ECO code; they always do on these databases. But far more importantly there are not 1.8 million games on this CD. The total for the database is 1,800,146 'games', but deducting the introduction

and the 3256 surveys, then the number is 1,796,889; close to 1.8 million games, but certainly not more than.

Third, "more than 68.000 of them annotated". When checking the annotators tab, the top listing is 'No Annotator.' The number of games for which this applies is 1,731,484. By deducting this number from the total amount of games, we reach the total of annotated games: 65,405. Of course, you can add the 3256 surveys, and then get the magic number of 68,000. But surveys are not games and therefore should not be counted. Who are the annotators? There is a long list of prominent names, but there are others such as 'Bulletin', with 3432 annotated games. Some game annotations are extremely detailed with both prose and plenty of variations, including references to other games, etc. However, we also have less insightful comments, as for example in the following game:

(10268) Pritchard,D - Hindle,O [E82]

BCF-ch Oxford (7), 1967

[Bulletin]

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 0-0 5 Be3 d6 6 f3 b6 7
Bd3 Bb7 8 Nge2 c5 9 d5 e6 10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Ng3 exd5 12
cxd5 Re8 13 Qd2 a6 14 Rae1 b5 15 h3 Rc8 16 Bh6 Bh8 17
Nf5 Ne5 18 f4 Nxd3 19 Qxd3 c4 20 Qf3 b4 21 Nd1 Qc7 22
Ng3 c3 23 f5 cxb2 24 Nxb2 Nxd5 25 fxc6 hxc6 26 Bc1 Nc3
27 Nd3 a5 28 Bb2 Ba6 29 h4 Bxd3 30 Qxd3 Qc4 31 Qf3
Qe6 32 h5 Bd4+ 33 Kh1 Rc5 34 Nf5? gxf5 35 Qg3+ Kh7
36 Bxc3 [36 exf5 Ne2] 36...Rxc3 0-1**



Needless to say, I'm neither pleased nor amused.

The eighty-six special theory databases are different from the opening surveys, yet are something you would already be in possession of if you subscribed to ChessBase Magazine. This also applies to the surveys. However, the special theory databases are worthwhile and the contributions by Curt

Hansen are particularly insightful.

The second disk contains a variation tree covering all the games in the database. While I'm not sure it's necessary, somebody may well find it useful.

All in all I'm unimpressed. The numbers of games are incorrect, many of the surveys are hopelessly outdated, and some do not encompass all that they should. I think it is a far better investment to buy the MegaBase along with some relevant books or CDs that are more up-to-date and pertain to the openings you play.

My assessment of this book:  

[Order](#) *Opening Encyclopaedia 2004* (CD-ROM)
by ChessBase GmbH

Chess Informant 88 by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2003
Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation,
Paperback, 382 pp., \$36.00

Sahovski Informator publishes its yearbooks three times per year and getting an update as to which direction theory is moving in, as well as getting a selection of the most important games, annotated in large part by the players themselves, cannot be matched by any publication in the world.



The latest volume includes annotations from: Adams, Anand, Azmaiparashvili, Bareev, Bologan, Dreev, Gelfand, M. Gurevich, Ivanchuk, Kasparov, Khalifman, Korchnoi, Leko, J. Polgar, Ponomarev, Shirov, and Svidler to mention but a few of the higher rated players.

The contents of the present volume are divided as follows:

- Contributors (2 pages)
- The Ten Best Games of the Preceding Volume (2 pages)
- The Ten Most Important Theoretical Novelties of the Preceding Volume (4 pages)
- Code System (3 pages)
- Classifications of Openings (6 pages)
- A (26 pages)
- B (114 pages)
- C (53 pages)
- D (55 pages)
- E (55 pages)
- Index (11 pages)
- Commentators (2 pages)
- Combinations (6 pages)
- Endings (6 pages)
- Tournaments (10 pages)
- The Best of Chess Informant - Ljubojevic (23 pages)

The sections A thru E are the games based on their opening classifications.


It is nice to see that Informator finally paid homage to Ljubojevic. He has a long list of great results, and the selection of games illustrate his showmanship, as well as some of his finest victories, including wins against Petrosian, Spassky, and Karpov.

The Best of Chess Informant section should also include the best tournament results of the featured player. Many of today's younger and stronger players have probably never come to realize how strong someone like Ljubojevic was at his peak. For example, some of them weren't even born when he beat Karpov at the Dubai Olympiad in 1986 or when he played that amazing novelty (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 7 dxc5!? Qa5 8 Bd3

Nfd7 9 cxd6!! - sacrificing a rook) against van der Wiel in Wijk aan Zee that same year.

Chess Informant is one of the best sources of study material for the serious student. Playing over, analyzing the games; and then comparing notes with the players is certain to improve your chess tremendously. In addition, studying the endgame section and sharpening your tactical skills by trying to solve the combinational puzzles will also add to your general level of understanding of chess.

Yet, because the entire approach is wordless - all moves and symbols, lower-rated players may find this above their level of understanding of the game. So my recommendation mostly goes to those who are serious about improving their chess. However, anyone can invest in a volume to see whether this is for them. I have enjoyed *Informant* since I was rated around 1700-1800, but to fully benefit from them, you should probably be rated at least 200 rating points higher.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Chess Informant 88*
by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

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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