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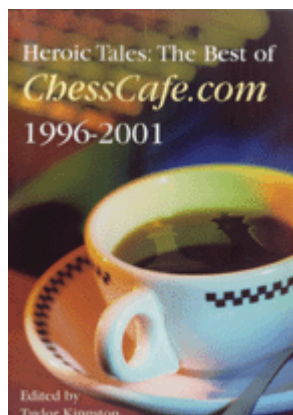
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COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Reviewed this month:

Play the French

by John Watson

Advance and Other Anti-French Variations

by Lev Psakhis

French Defence: 3 Nc3 Bb4

by Lev Psakhis

Modern Chess Openings: French Defence (CD-ROM)

by Aleksander Kalinin

New In Chess Yearbook -Volume 69

by Genna Sosonko & Paul van der Sterren

French Frenzy

This month we will take a look at some of the latest publications on the French Defence, which seems to have qualities to suit almost any style of chess, from solid positional chess for players like Dreev, to complicated messy chess à la Morozevich, and everybody in between. Not too long ago, we examined Psakhis' book on the 3 Nd2 French and in this column we will look at the next two volumes in this series. Next we have the software version of a book that I reviewed, and wasn't overly impressed with, by Russian GM Kalinin. Plus the long-awaited 3rd edition of Watson's standard work on the French has finally also appeared, and finally I will look at the latest volume from New In Chess Yearbook.

Play the French by John Watson, 2003 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 272 pp., \$24.95

These days there is no finer author on chess than John Watson. His opening books on the English Opening have been classics for many years and are nearly impossible to get hold of. His work on the Modern Benoni that came out a few years ago was also outstanding and years ahead of its time. His book *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* rightfully received several awards including the British Chess Federation Book of the Year award, and the follow-up volume, *Chess Strategy in Action* recently won the ChessCafe.com Book of the Year award. The latter book is even better than the former and easily one of the most



important chess books to be written in the last five to ten years.

The book that is the subject of this review is *Play the French*. Now in its 3rd edition, the book is just as groundbreaking and inspiring as the previous two editions were; in fact while reading the book, I started asking, if maybe it is time for me to start playing the French again! Great opening books have that effect on me.

Let's first have a look at how the material is divided:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Advance Variation: Introduction (12 pages)
- 2 Advance Variation: 5...Bd7 (17 pages)
- 3 Advance Variation: 5...Qb6 (19 pages)
- 4 King's Indian Attack (15 pages)
- 5 Exchange Variation (11 pages)
- 6 Tarrasch Variation: Introduction and 3...c5 (20 pages)
- 7 Tarrasch Variation: 3...Be7 (20 pages)
- 8 Winawer Variation: Fourth Move Alternatives (33 pages)
- 9 Winawer Variation: Fifth Move Alternatives (21 pages)
- 10 Winawer Variation: Main Line with 7 Qg4 (17 pages)
- 11 Winawer Variation: Positional Lines (20 pages)
- 12 Winawer Variation: 6...Qc7 (15 pages)
- 13 Classical Variation: 4 e5 (19 pages)
- 14 Classical Variation: 4 Bg5 (4...dxe4 5 Nxe4 Be7) (10 pages)
- 15 Odds and Ends (8 pages)
- Index of Variations (9 pages)

With a total of 272 pages, this is longer than the two previous editions, and with smaller fonts and bigger pages, there is a considerably larger amount of material.

Watson offers two or more alternatives for Black against each line, many of them new compared to the previous volumes, some were suggested in the first edition, discarded in the second edition, only to return in the present edition. One such line is the following: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 Qxd5. In the second edition, Watson instead offered the 3...Nf6 line, but because he didn't want to repeat most

of the material, and because the lines now required a large amount of memorization on Black's side, he skipped back to the move from the first edition.

Watson is rightfully famous for the large amount of original input (analysis, ideas and improvements) in his books, sometimes you almost lose your breath while attempting to catch up with his steady flow of ideas. Each page is absolutely a treasure trove for anybody playing the French. Some of ideas are analyzed in detail, while others are merely left hanging in the air. However, one thing is certain, whether you play the French as Black or attempt to knock it down as White, Watson's many suggestions will give you an almost limitless source of material for closer analysis.

Let's look at a random line. The punctuation is Watson's, except where otherwise indicated.

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bd2 dxe4

[CH: Watson also covers 4...Nc6 briefly.]

5 Qg4 Nf6 6 Qxg7 Rg8 7 Qh6 Qxd4!

[CH: This is line 8.31, while the alternative 7...Rg6 is discussed in line 8.32.]

8 0-0-0

[CH: 8 Nge2!? is also covered in slightly more than a column.]

8...Bf8

[CH: This is line 8.312, while 8...Ng4!? is line 8.311.]

9 Qh4 Rg4 10 Qh3 Qxf2 11 Be2

[CH: Watson also covers 11 Nb5?, 11 Bb5+? and 11 Be3?!]

11...Rh4

11...Qxg2!? 12 Bxg4 (12 Nb5 Na6) 12...Qxg4 13 Qxg4 Nxg4 14 Nxe4 Bd7! (14...Nd7!? 15 Nf3 b6!? 16 Rhg1 h5 17 h3 Bb7 18 hxg4 Bxe4 19 Ng5 Bg6= [CH: This looks correct in light of, say, 20 gxh5 Bxh5 21 Rdf1 Be7 with fairly even chances.] 15 h3 Bc6 16 hxg4 Bxe4 17 Rh3 (17 Rh4 Nc6 18 g5 Bg6 =+) 17...Nd7 =+ (17...Nc6 =+)

12 Qxh4 Qxh4 13 g3 e3

[CH: Watson also discusses 13...Qh6 14 Bxh6 Bxh6+ 15 Kb1 at length, analyzing the new move 15...a6!?]

14 gxh4 exd2+ 15 Kb1

[CH: Watson also covers 15 Kxd2, which isn't nearly as good as the game continuation.]

15...Bb4

15...Bd7!, and now Watson gives the following lines:

a) 16 Rxd2?! Bb4 17 Rd3 (17 Bf3 Bxc3 18 bxc3 Bc6) 17...Bxc3 18 bxc3 Ne4 19 Nh3 Bb5 etc.

b) 16 a3 Bc6 17 Nf3 Bh6 (17...Nbd7 18 Rxd2 Bh6 19 Rdd1 Ke7 is also fine) 18 Bb5 Ke7 19 Bxc6 Nxc6 20 Nxd2 Ng4! 21 Nde4 Ne3 22 Rd2 Nf5! 23 Rf2 Be3 24 Rff1 Rg8 25 Nd1 Bb6 when one prefers Black.

c) 16 Nf3 Bb4! 17 Nxd2 Bxc3 18 bxc3 Nc6 19 Rhg1 Ke7 20 Rg7 Rg8! 21 Rg5 h6 22 Rxg8 Nxg8 and again Black's pawns are the long-term factor, so White can hope for equality at best. [CH: White's play in this line doesn't make a lot of sense to me. The rook moves at the end of the line seem particularly pointless. White seems to be able to improve with 17 Nb5!? Bxb5 18 Bxb5+ c6 19 Bd3 and White has the better chances or 17...Ba5 18 Nxd2 a6 19 Na3 Bc6 20 Rhf1 Nbd7 21 Nac4 Bb4 22 c3 Bc5 23 Bf3 Bxf3 24 Nxf3 with clearly better chances for White or 17...Na6 18 a3 Bc5 19 Nxd2 Ke7 20 Rhf1 with an advantage for White. Because of this, Black may have to drop 15...Bd7 in favor of the main line move 15...Bb4.]

d) 16 Nb5 Bxb5!? (or 16...Na6 followed by ...Ne4) 17 Bxb5+ c6 18 Bd3 (18 Be2 Ne4) 18...Nbd7 (18...Bh6 19 Nf3 Ng4! 20 Rhg1 Nf2 =+) 19 Rxd2 Ne5 20 Ne2 Rd8 21 Rf1 Bh6 22 Rdd1 Ke7 leaves White looking for a plan.

16 Bf3

a) 16 Rxd2?? Bxc3 17 bxc3 Ne4+;

b) 16 Nb5 Ba5 (16...Na6 17 c3 Bc5 18 Nf3 Ne4) 17 Nf3 Nc6 intending ...e5 and answering 18 Nxd2 by 18...a6 19 Nc3 Bxc3 20 bxc3 e5 21 Bf3 Be6! 22 Bxc6+ bxc6 23 Rde1 Nd7.

16...Bxc3 17 bxc3 Nbd7 18 Rxd2 Ne5 19 Bg2 Nc4 20 Re2 e5

Also interesting are 20...Bd7 and even 20...c6!?, e.g. 21 Nh3 Nd5 22 Bxd5 cxd5 23 Rg1 Kf8 24 Rf2 Nd6.

21 Kc1 Be6!?

or 21...c6 22 Nf3 Bg4

22 Bxb7 Rb8 23 Be6+ Ke7 24 Nf3 Kd6 25 Be4


25 Ba4 Nd5 26 Bb3 Nxc3 =+

25...Bg4 with various threats and at least equal play.

An amazing amount of analysis and nearly all of it originates from Watson, only 11...Qxg2 and some of the alternatives that I mentioned stem from actual games. For comparison, Psakhis's book on 3 Nc3 Bb4 is of no use in the above line.

All of this can seem a little too complicated to handle for inexperienced players, but Watson also does well when it comes to explaining typical ideas and features in the various lines. This stretches the strength and target span for this work, which people rated anywhere from 1400 and up will be able to benefit from.

While the book has a few analytical errors and occasional typos, it is a must-buy for anybody who plays or faces the French, or for that matter even if you are interested in owning one of the finest opening books that has been released this year.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Play the French*

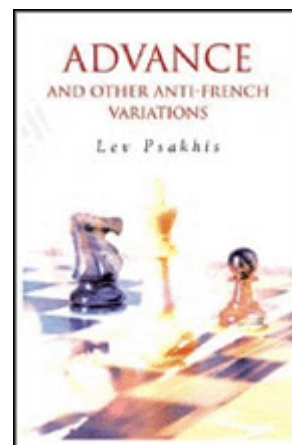
by John Watson

Advance and Other Anti-French Variations by Lev Psakhis, 2003 Batsford BT, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 160 pp., \$21.95

This volume is the second in what started out as a series of three books and has now been expanded to a series of four. Volume three is reviewed below.

Let's see which lines are covered in the present volume:

- Preface (1 page)
- Symbols and Abbreviations (1 page)
- 1: Rare Continuations (12 pages)
- 2: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 (15 pages)
- 3: Exchange Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 (13 pages)
- 4: Exchange Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 Nf3!? (16 pages)



- 5: Advance Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 (23 pages)
- 6: Advance Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 (13 pages)
- 7: Advance Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 Bd7 (23 pages)
- 8: Advance Variation 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6!? (39 pages)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)
- Index of Games (1 page)

As we can see the biggest emphasis has been put on the Advance variation, which has lately become more popular than it has been for decades. The exchange variation also finds its share of takers, mainly as a way of avoiding defeat as White. The material is presented through main games, giving the entire game rather than using variation trees, which I generally prefer as it reduces the risk of the author leaving out potentially critical material.


The games are annotated with both prose and Informant symbols. However, Psakhis too often forgets to post an evaluation after giving a variation. This isn't too much of a problem for the stronger part of his readership, but for those that are rated below 2000, it will not always be obvious who is stronger or why he stops a variation at a given time.

Even though Psakhis has played the French for over 20 years, he is not blind for improvements over White's play, and generally gives us a balanced presentation of the material. The present book is so densely packed with material that readers may have a hard time absorbing all the ideas from it. Yet, the absence of a bibliography is not acceptable. Obviously stronger players like Psakhis don't necessarily need other people's books to evaluate any given position, but he does refer to analysis given by other authors, and therefore his sources are relevant.

The present book is the best in the series so far. The presentation is clearer and easier to follow than in the other books. The prose is also very good and helps even relatively weak players get a good grasp of what's going on. However, there is a major problem, and it surprises me somewhat that Psakhis is so ignorant towards this. The King's Indian Attack is generally one of the most important anti-French lines there is and the coverage in this book is rather negligent in this aspect.

The chapter that is supposed to cover this variation is more like an easy guide for Black on how to face this line. In White repertoire books that feature 1 e4 openings, the King's Indian Attack is nearly always recommended against the French because it is easy to understand and the memorization of variations is rather limited. Therefore it is a major flaw on Psakhis's part that he has left out coverage of this crucial line.

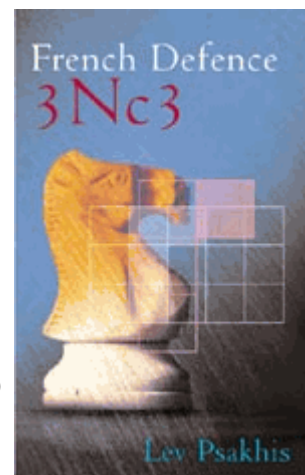
The remainder of the book, however, is rather excellent and is highly recommended, especially for those who play the Advance Variation as White. The book will also serve as a good reference work for those who play the French and want a balanced overview of all the variations.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Advance and Other Anti-French Variations*
by Lev Psakhis

French Defence: 3 Nc3 Bb4 by Lev Psakhis, 2004 Batsford BT, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 256 pp., \$22.95

This is volume three in this series on the French by Psakhis. Originally the entire complex of variations after 3 Nc3 was supposed to be covered in one volume, but evidently that was not to be. It isn't realistic to cover the 3 Nc3 French in one volume any longer if you are to do just a half-decent job. The volume of games is already astounding and doesn't show any signs of slowing down. So let's see how Psakhis has chosen to divide the material:

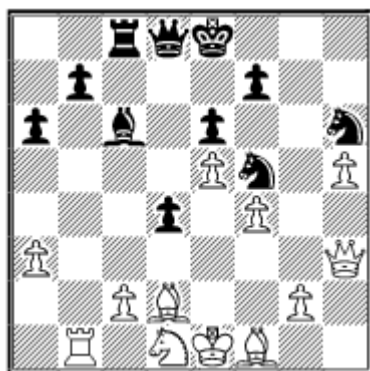


- Preface (2 pages)
- 1 Rare Fourth Moves for White (12 pages)
- 2 4 a3 and 4 exd5 (C15) (22 pages)
- 3 4 Ne2 (C15) (15 pages)
- 4 4 e5: Black Avoids 4...c5 (C16) (35 pages)
- 5 4 e5 c5 (C17) (19 pages)
- 6 4 e5 c5 5 a3: Black Avoids 5...Bxc3+ (C17) (27 pages)
- 7 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3: Rare Sixth Moves for Black (C18) (18 pages)
- 8 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 h4 and 7 a4 (C19) (23 pages)
- 9 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Nf3 (27 pages)
- 10 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 (C18) (23 pages)
- 11 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 0-0!? (C18) (25 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Games (1 page)

This division of the material looks entirely reasonable, although I wonder how it is possible to digest the material to chapter 11 down to a mere 25 pages, when you take into consideration that Kindermann/Dirr wrote a book about this line only. Moreover their book included more pages than this entire book by Psakhis. This

also shows the kind of job Psakhis had to perform – cover lines in sufficient detail, yet cut material to fit into this book. A nearly hopeless task, that for obvious reasons leaves some lines covered in less detail than they deserve.

While I generally found Psakhis to have done a reasonably good job, the coverage also has its flaws. One of the more odd ones is the following: **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 Ne7 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 Qg4 Qc7 8 Qxg7 Rg8 9 Qxh7 cxd4 10 Ne2 Nbc6 11 f4 dxc3 12 Qd3 Bd7 13 Nxc3 a6 14 Rb1 Rc8 15 h4 Nf5 16 Rh3 Nce7 17 Bd2 Bc6 18 h5 Nh6 19 Rg3 Rxg3 20 Qxg3 Nef5 21 Qh3 d4 22 Nd1 Qd8**




So far so good, now Psakhis' main line continues with 23 g4! with the comment: "White isn't scared of phantoms! After 23 Nf2? Ne3!, Black would be quite all right."

There are a couple of things wrong with this. First of all, it has been played before; in the game Psakhis-Uhlmann, Tallinn 1987, a draw was agreed after 24 Bxe3 dxe3 25 Qxe3 Nf5 26 Qd3 ½–½. This seem to support the previous statement that Black is all right, but Pedersen in his Gambit book on the French refers to a piece of analysis that improves on White's 26th move with 26 Qd2

Qh4 27 Rb3 Ng3 28 h6 Qh2 (28...Nxf1 29 Kxf1 Qxh6 (29...Qh2 30 Nh3) 30 Rh3 +/-) 29 h7 Nxf1 30 Rh3+-. The curious thing is that this analysis stems from Psakhis! So either he forgot about his improvement or he found an error in his analysis, which he didn't bother to tell us about. Actually I think it is probably a combination of both, after 26 Qd2 Qh4 27 Rb3 Ng3 28 h6 Nxf1 29 Kxf1 Qh2 30 Nh3, Black should be okay after 30...Qh1+, e.g. 31 Ng1 Rd8, and White is already forced to allow 32 Rd3 Bb5 or 31 Ke2 Rd8 32 Rd3 Qxg2+ 33 Ke1 Qh1+ 34 Kf2 Rc8, and Black will not lose. Instead of this line, White should probably opt for 30 g4!?, e.g. 30...Bd5 31 Rd3 Bc4 32 g5 with a complicated position with good chances for White.

Overall the contents of the book are of a good quality, with plenty of original analysis and ideas from Psakhis. My main problem with this volume is the structure of the material and how it is presented. Both main lines and main sidelines are given in bold, then some sidelines are listed as A, B, C, sometimes with further breakdowns like C1, C2, etc. The way the material is presented you're often in doubt whether you are following the main line or a sideline, or which sideline you are following. This could have been remedied by dividing the material in more chapters, making the main lines clearer, and by making some of the side lines main lines by themselves.

This series of books contain enough explanations to serve players rated from 1600 and up. I don't think the book is thorough enough on all variations to satisfy the strongest players, yet they would probably be interested to see what ideas Psakhis is propagating. If I was playing the French as Black I would without any hesitation choose Watson's book. However, Watson's book is a repertoire book and doesn't cover every line, and if I needed to get an overview of the entire opening as White, the choice could well be Psakhis's books instead.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *French Defence: 3 Nc3 Bb4*

by Lev Psakhis

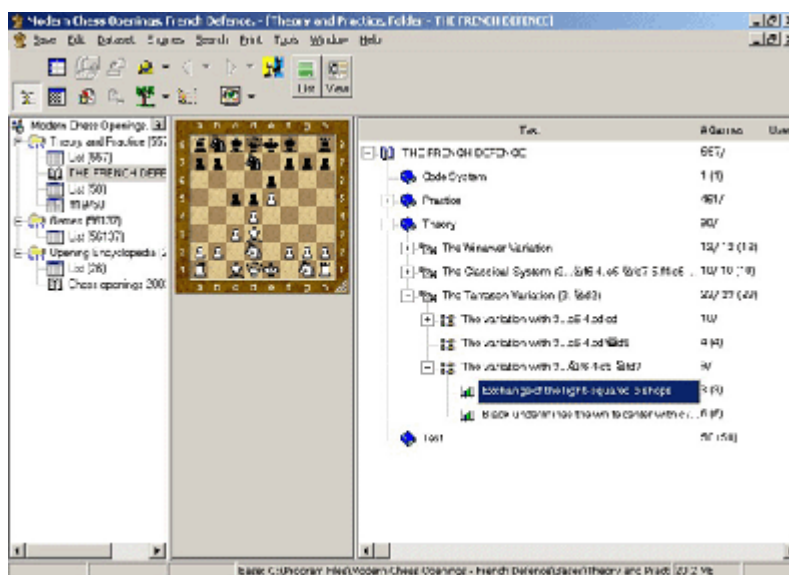
Modern Chess Openings - French Defence (CD-ROM) by Aleksander Kalinin, 2004 Convekta Ltd., Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$26.95

Last spring I reviewed the book that lays the foundation for this CD and I wasn't very impressed. I found the work to be somewhat superficial and wanting in many aspects, so when I received the present CD and realized that the material was the same I immediately became very skeptical. However, after working with the material I'm very excited about the presentation and about the entire Chess Assistant interface.



The presentation is very easy to follow and while the manuals don't provide all the answers regarding how to navigate the computer program, you certainly find more answers than you would find in the average manual from ChessBase.

The screens are easy to understand and learning the French opening from the material almost seems effortless. Let's have a peek at what the screens look like:






With the present CD you can study the opening, or play through the 550 annotated games, or any number of unannotated games with the support of a position evaluation system that has been generated for the entire opening, where lines are evaluated by grandmaster Kharitonov with the support of some computer engines.

You can also test your newly acquired knowledge through a series of tests that resemble those you will find in other programs from Chess Assistant, such as CT-ART 3.0. Even those who are relative newcomers to the Chess Assistant line of products will find them very user-friendly and enlightening.

Studying the French with the use of this CD came particularly easy and while a simple overview of the status of each individual line wasn't always easy to find, the overall learning process is much easier and much better than on similar CDs from ChessBase. I highly recommend this new product.

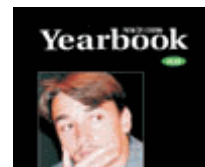
The system requirements for use of this CD-ROM are: IBM compatible PC, 64 Mb RAM, Hard Disk 200 Mb of free disk space, Windows 2000/NT/ME/XP/2003, and CD-ROM drive.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *French Defense* (CD-ROM)
by Aleksander Kalinin

New In Chess Yearbook - Vol 69 by Genna Sosonko & Paul van der Sterren, 2003
Interchess BV, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 233 pp., \$25.95

I wasn't always thrilled with the NIC Yearbooks, my main qualm was that the surveys were terribly inconsistent in quality, some were really good, many were fairly average to good, but often there were some that were just awful. Many of the games in the supporting material section lacked any



kind of annotation and the somewhat random book reviews were often inconsistent.

Nowadays we see a different picture. The good and excellent surveys are in the majority and the below par surveys are far in between. The book reviews are now handled very capably by English GM Glenn Flear, who does a particularly insightful job in the present volume. Plus they have also added a Photo Gallery, which shows pictures of some the contributors.

Let's see what is in this volume of the Yearbook:

- **Forum and Sosonko's Corner**

- Forum (10 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (3 pages)

- **Surveys**

- 33 Surveys including 7 on the Sicilian, 3 on the French, 2 on the Caro-Kann, 2 on the King's Gambit, 2 on the Queen's Gambit Declined, 2 on the Bogo-Indian as well as 15 others on various openings. (203 pages)

- **Service**

- Book Review (6 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)
- Photo Gallery (1 page)

The above is fairly normal in regards to the number of pages and division of material. While the specific openings covered will vary from volume to volume, this is part of the charm of these yearbooks, you never know what you are going to get.

The Forum is where the readers write in and the letters are very different in style, length, and quality. Each of the nine letters in this volume has something interesting to say. In the first, Cuban GM Jose Vilela raises some interesting points regarding the so-called Trajkovic/Hector Pseudo-Marshall Gambit, that arises after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 b3 Bb7 8 c3 d5!?. Vilela usually includes an interesting game or two, often played in local tournaments in Cuba.

The next few letters are also typical for this section. There is a correction letter from Golubev, then a letter from the correspondence player Mark Schroeder, who submits a couple of games of his own and some analysis regarding the move 5... Nc6 in the Catalan Opening after 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 c4 d5 4 g3 dxc4 5 Bg2. Schroeder's analysis puts the move back in business and that he has played himself in World Championship semifinals in correspondence chess obviously shows that he has completely faith in the move. The remaining letters include one from correspondence GM Morgado on the Petroff, where he thoroughly annotates a game from a tournament in Buenos Aires, another letter from Graham Free who used some analysis from an earlier volume to play 29 moves of theory and obtain a winning advantage to beat IM Sevillano in convincing manner. Another reader points to a new idea for Black in the Berlin Wall variation, while a letter from

Austrian Manfred Brod illustrates some of the finer points in the Scandinavian Defence and supports his observation with a couple of relevant games of his own. Another correspondence player sends an idea in the Sicilian Sveshnikov that he had faced in one of his own CC games. Finally, co-editor René Olthof shows the power of good preparation by giving a game where GM Hebden ran into a well-prepared van de Oudeweetering, who with his computer had found a huge hole in Hebden's opening repertoire and won a piece straight from the opening.


In Sosonko's corner, Genna Sosonko nearly always finds something to intrigue me. This time he discusses Morozevich's unusual opening antics and proves his point with two innovative ideas: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 d4 exd4 4 e5 Ne4 5 Qxd4 f5?! and 1 c4 e5 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 h6!?, both employed by Morozevich as Black in recent games that he won.

Overall, there were no decidedly weak performances in the surveys, while the following contributors have produced high quality surveys:

- - Lukacs/Hazai on the Najdorf Sicilian & on the Ruy Lopez - excellent theoretical introduction with thorough analysis of supporting games. They also have a survey on the Queen's Indian, but it doesn't reach the level of the other two surveys.
- - Tibor Karolyi on the Sicilian Rauzer - excellent theoretical introduction and good analysis of supporting games
- - Miso Cebalo on the Sicilian Rauzer - excellent theoretical and strategic introduction, probably the best in this volume, as well as good analysis of supporting material
- - Alexey Gavrilo on the Alapin Sicilian - excellent job on both introduction and game analysis
- - Tibor Fogarasi on the King's Fianchetto - excellent job on both introduction and game analysis
- - Emil Anka on the Bogo-Indian - excellent job on both introduction and game analysis
- - Glenn Flear on the Dutch Defence - good introduction, and more than sufficient, but slightly lighter job on the game annotations

Other good efforts are made by Boersma, van der Weide, Pliester, Olthof, A.C. van der Tak, Langeweg, and Bosch. The survey by Rogozenko on the Sicilian Kalashnikov is oddly inconsistent, the introductory discussion is really good, but in the supporting material many of the games are completely without annotations, and the only game with proper annotations is the one annotated by Radjabov. To some extent a similar pattern can be seen in the surveys done by Matamoros, L.B. Hansen, and van der Sterren.

It's difficult to be anything other than excited about these Yearbooks. The contents are first rate and so are the contributors. Strong or ambitious players from ELO 2000+, and even lower-rated players with an appetite for interesting ideas and the latest developments in theory, will be happy and satisfied with the material.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *New In Chess Yearbook -Vol 69*

by Genna Sosonko & Paul van der Sterren

| <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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