



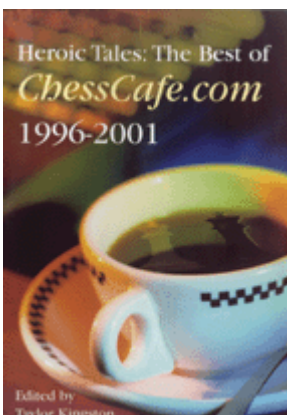
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COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Reviewed this month:

Modern Chess Openings - King's Indian Defence
(CD-ROM) by Alexander Kalinin

Giuoco Piano C50-C54
(CD-ROM) by Reinhold Ripperger

Chess Informant 88
(CD-ROM) by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

Novosibirsk Sicilian B33
(CD-ROM) by Boris Schipkov

The Italian Game C50-C59 - The Specialist Series
(CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer

The Scandinavian Defense B01 - The Specialist Series
(CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer

The Dutch Defense A80-A00 - The Specialist Series
(CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer

A Big Bunch of CDs

This month we review a long list of CD-ROMs, but several of them are quickly dealt with. The quality varies tremendously and fortunately some of them are more interesting than others. The main problem for purchasers of these products is that they cannot preview them prior to acquisition, and once the package is opened it is un-returnable.

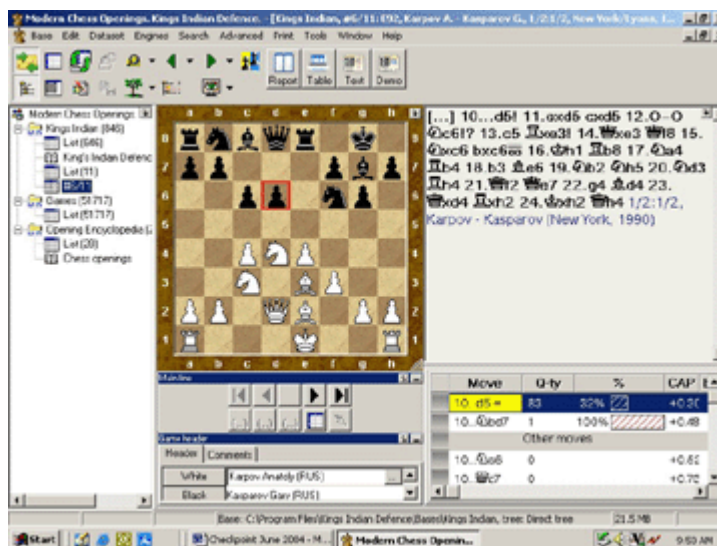
Even buying products 'written' by a familiar name and/or distributed by familiar publishers doesn't prevent disappointments. Just because an author has written a good printed book doesn't mean that a CD-ROM will be equally good, because it is an entirely different media. Similarly even if a publisher has a good reputation, like ChessBase for example, it doesn't guarantee that all of their products are good. In fact until I started this month's review, ChessBase has had the biggest variance in quality of any chess CD-ROM publisher.

Modern Chess Openings - King's Indian Defence (CD-ROM) by Alexander Kalinin, 2004 Convekta Ltd., Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$29.95

My last couple of reviews featured CDs on the French Defence and the Sicilian Defence by the same author and from the



publisher; therefore I will refer you to my previous reviews regarding the functions that are available (see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)). This is an excellent way of studying a new opening. There are numerous annotated games, and the games are organized in categories according to pawn structure, typical plans, opening code, variation, etc.



Aside from being an excellent learning tool, this program is possibly an even better database program, as it has even more functions that most standard database programs. In addition, this program will evaluate the positions, do blunder-checks, analyze the positions on screen, plus you can play against the program, as well as any number of other things.

The database contains 51,717 games, up to and including the games played in Linares this year, which is nearly as updated as you can get it. I sincerely recommend this program to anybody hoping to improve their understanding of the King's Indian, it will be well worth it.

My assessment of this CD: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Modern Chess Openings - King's Indian Defence*

(CD-ROM) by Alexander Kalinin

Giucoco Piano C50-C54 (CD-ROM) by Reinhold Ripperger, 2004 ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$29.95

This CD occasionally seems inspired, but unfortunately most of the time this isn't the case. The back cover states: "Whoever plays 1.e4 as White, has to ask himself what he intends to do after 1...e5 2.Nf3 Nc6. If you do not feel up to the heavy positional demands made on you by the Ruy Lopez, you more or less have to turn to 3.Bc4 and after the



strongest reply, 3...Bc5, you are into the Giuoco Piano."

Well, none of the above makes an awful lot of sense. For example, if you don't want the "heavy positional demands" of the Ruy Lopez, you also have the choice of the Scotch (3 d4) and the Four Knights (starting with 3 Nc3), along with some of the less positional lines in the Ruy Lopez, and yes, such lines do exist. And by the way, who said 3...Bc5 is Black's strongest reply. An argument can also be made for 3...Nf6, which can result in much sharper lines such as after 4 Ng5, while 3...Bc5 is more solid.

The database texts (which can be considered chapters) are divided as follows:

- Introduction
- Contents
- The 4.c3 Qe7 Variation
- The Main Line 4.c3 Nf6
- The Greco Variation 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 Bb4+
- Nicolas Rossolimo
- The Rossolimo Variation 7.Bd2
- The Cracow Variation 7.Kf1
- The Modern System 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3
- The Evans Gambit 4.b4
- The Evans Gambit Declined


Clearly the contents form an incomplete coverage of the Italian Game, for example the Italian Four Knights is missing. This is a line that is commonly seen in games by inexperience players, and it featured heavily in my games as a scholastic player. If this CD is aimed at club players, which is what we are told on the back cover of the jewel case, then this line should definitely have been included.

Furthermore I was thoroughly disappointed with the section on the Rossolimo Variation. The critical lines after 7...Bxd2+ 8 Nbx2 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Qb3 Nce7 are only covered in a badly played game from 1984 and two older games by Rossolimo himself. The games are poorly analyzed and there is nothing of interest regarding the later development of this variation. While in the database text, if one clicks on the link to the Rossolimo Variation 7.Bd2, then one is sent back to the introductory text at the link to the contents page. Also I don't understand why this text was included; as it covers a mere 12 lines and contains nothing of particular interest.

There are many other things that don't seem logical either. In the Modern System database text, we are introduced to a position after Black's 8th move, but we are not told how we arrived at this position. Moreover, in the theoretical presentation the most recent game is from 1999. Surely this isn't the most recent game of

theoretical interest in this variation. Two games that could have easily been included are Zhang Pengxiang-Karpov, FIDE KO Ch 2001 and Minasian-Mamedyarov, Dubai 2002. A similar trait can be found throughout the theoretical texts, which generally seem fairly outdated.

One positive thing is that the training questions/exercises are both instructive and informative. However, this hardly makes up for the failures in the other departments. This CD doesn't do half of what it could have done, and what has been done seems half-hearted and passionless.

My assessment of this CD: 

Order *Giuoco Piano C50-C54*
(CD-ROM) by Reinhold Ripperger

Chess Informant 88 (CD-ROM) by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2004 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$36.00

The material on the disk is more or less the same as in the book, so please refer to my February 2004 review for more details (see the [ChessCafe Archives](#)). Neither the combination nor the endgame sections are on the CD. To access the information on the CD it comes bundled with the light version of Chess Informant Expert, which can be bought online, and the Chess Informant reader, which is another support program that can be used to read the games.




I'm very impressed with the improvements in their supporting software, which is equivalent to most other database programs on the market. Unlike previous versions, you can now enter your own games, import PGN files, export the games to PGN, print them, analyze the games, add your own comments and much, much more. Many of the functions are actually considerably easier than in ChessBase.



This is a great alternative to the printed edition, and a worthwhile investment, as it

is extremely easy to browse through the latest games, search for the games of your favorite player, or from your favorite opening. Plus having the games available in PGN format allows you to import them into other database programs such as ChessBase or Chess Assistant. The possibilities are endless. Check it out.

My assessment of this CD: 

Order Chess Informant 88
(CD-ROM) by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

Novosibirsk Sicilian B33 (CD-ROM) by Boris Schipkov, 2004 Chess Siberia, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$29.95

The release of the above CD has probably gone unnoticed by most, but it is similar to those that are published by ChessBase. In fact Boris Schipkov authored a Chessbase CD on the Dutch Defense, which I wasn't exactly enthusiastic about.



Let's see what is included on this CD:

- 01 Novosibirsk Sicilian B33. Introduction
- 02 History of the Novosibirsk Sicilian B33
- 03 Basic Strategic Ideas of the Novosibirsk Sicilian B33
- 04 Basic Strategies of the Lasker-Pelikan System
- 05 Rare Variations after 5...e5
- 06 Various Lines after 6.Ndb5 d6
- 07 Rare Variations after 7.Bg5
- 08 Cheliabinsk Variation I 7...a6 8.Na3 b5 9.Nd5
- 09 Cheliabinsk Variation II 9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nd5
- 10 Novosibirsk Sicilian I 10...Bg7
- 11 Novosibirsk Sicilian II 10...Bg7 11 Bd3
- 12 Conclusion
- 13 Bibliography
- 14 Novosibirsk City

Additionally there is a learning database containing 2,647 games (along with the above fourteen texts), and a large database of 31,091 games with the most recent

On the learning database, 275 of the games have annotations by Schipkov. Some of the games are annotated rather thoroughly, while others are considerably sparse. My one quibble with Schipkov's annotations is that he leaves out references to other games played in the same line.

The texts are neither particularly instructive nor informative. There is very little

Here is a game annotated and played by the author:

18...Rd6 19 a4 f4!!



20 axb5

20 f3 Rh6 21 Qe1 e3 22 axb5 Qg5 23 Bd3 (23 g4 f5 24 Kh1 fxg4 25 fxg4 Bxg4 26 Bf3 Rxh2+! 27 Kxh2 Qh5+ 28 Kg1 Bxf3 29 Rxf3 Qxf3 30 Qh4 Kh8--+) 23 ..Qh5 24 h4 Bf6 25 g3 fxg3 26 Qxg3+ Kh8 27 Nc6 Bh3!-- 28 Qxh3 Rg8+ 29 Kh1 Qxh4 30 Qxh4 Rxh4#

20...Qh4!--+

Winning at once.

21 f3

21 Re1 Rh6 22 Bf3 (22 h3 Bxh3--+) 22 ..Qxh2+ 23 Kf1 Qh1+ 24 Ke2 exf3+ 25 gxf3 Qh5--+

21...Rh6 22 fxe4


22 h3 Bxh3 23 Qe1 Qg5 24 Rf2 e3--+

22...Qxh2+ 23 Kf2 Qg3+ 24 Kg1 Rh2

24...Rh2 25 Rf2 Qh4 26 g3 Qxg3+ 27 Kf1 Rh1#

0-1

There are other issues with this CD, such as the chapter on the Cheliabinsk Variation, which is tremendously superficial compared to what it could and should have been. Overall it has a few positive features, however, the vast majority of my findings have been negative, and therefore I will not recommend it. There is much more work that needs to be done before this CD can be worthy of consideration.

My assessment of this CD: 

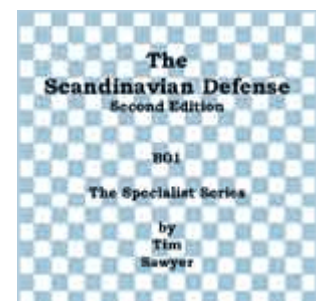
The Italian Game C50-C59 - The Specialist Series (CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer;
The Scandinavian Defense B01 - The Specialist Series (CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer;
The Dutch Defense A80-A00 - The Specialist Series (CD-ROM) by Tim Sawyer
 2004 Pickard & Son, Publishers, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROMs, \$19.95

I had some suspicions regarding the material I would find on these CDs, based on the book *The Alekhine Defense Playbook* that Sawyer authored a few years ago, as it had several references to blitz games played on internet servers. I have heard arguments that fast games played by strong players have theoretical relevance and I agree to some extent, but only when it comes to very strong players such as GMs and strong IMs.



However, the majority of the games are played by non-GMs or by GMs against non-GMs. What is the relevance of a 3-minute game where a GM tears his 1700-rated opponent to pieces?

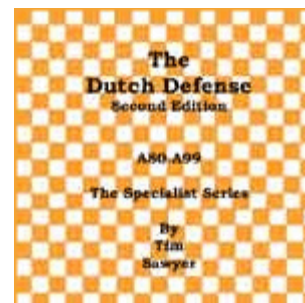
The back-cover blurbs are nearly identical on all three CDs. They tell us, with a few exceptions (opening name, number of games and classified positions):



“All chessplayers tend to specialize in only a few openings, and now a comprehensive database is available that focuses precisely on what you want to know. *The Specialist* zeros in on a particular chess opening - defined by its ECO code - and offer all available games in that range. Here is a

complete, no-nonsense collection of the games you have been looking for!

So if you want to study your favorite opening, why pay for millions of unrelated games? Get everything you need (and only what you need!) with *The Specialist*, your complete information age resource for today's chess openings. Each CD in *The Specialist* series comes with these features:



- About 60,000 games focused extensively on the ECO code in question. Thousands of corrected names, events and scores make these the cleanest collections around.
- Detailed opening keys to help pinpoint exact variations - find the games you want instantly!
- A massive Tree database designed to be an opening book for many playing programs, including Fritz5 or higher.
- A .pgn file of all games for non-ChessBase software, plus multitude .pgn files (about 7,500 games each for freeware users).

This second edition of the Italian Game features 60,493 games (up from 50,047 previously), and the opening Key has deepened considerably - 1,417 classification positions compared to 1,064 in the first edition! If you play 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nd6 3.Bc4, or have to face this opening as Black, you can't afford to be without the Italian Game. Become a Specialist today!"

Nothing of the above even slightly impresses me. One can easily compile a database with a high number of games from the Internet at no charge and the CDs in *The Specialist Series* have been pumped with blitz games from the ICC, causing a large disparity in the quality of the games. They ruin their own clean database by adding the ICC games. Also the Tree database is something that be created on your own with a minimum investment of time.

For a publisher such as Pickard & Son, it is surprising and disappointing that they release left-handed work such as this. I really cannot find anything positive to say about any of the three CDs from this series, so I will recommend that people do NOT buy them. They are a waste of time and money.

My assessment of these CDs: ❖



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