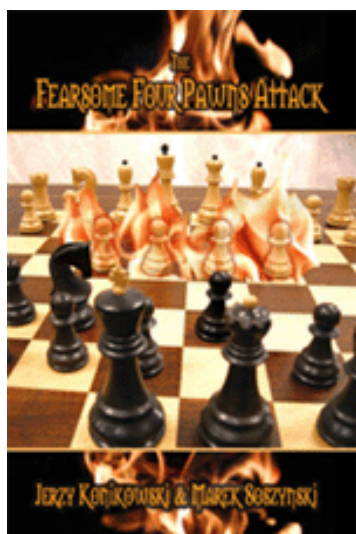




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Rating Chart**

– A poor book.



– Not very good.

Reviewed this month:***Understanding the King's Indian***

by Mikhail Golubev

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 79

by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

Geheimwaffe Philidor

by Christian Seel

French Advance

by Sam Collins

Summer Reading

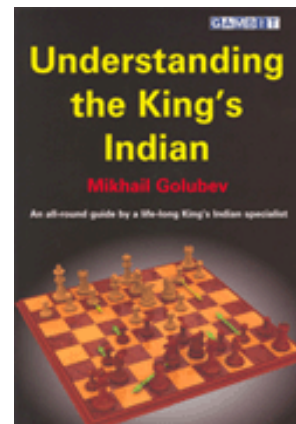
This month we'll take a look at four high quality works, which will not only help you with your openings, but will also help you get through the hot summer; although one of them can only be fully enjoyed if you understand a bit of German.

Understanding the King's Indian by Mikhail Golubev, Gambit Publications 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 208 pp., \$27.50

Few authors know the King's Indian as well as Ukrainian grandmaster Mikhail Golubev. He has played the opening for many years, and he assisted Karpov, in preparation for the match against Kamsky in 1996. He has also taught Ponomarev to play the opening as black.

The material is divided as follows:

- Introduction (4 pages)
- 1 Classical: 9 Ne1 (23 pages)
- 2 Classical: 9 Nd2 and 9 b4 (22 pages)



 – **A useful book.**

 – **A good book.**

 – **An excellent book.**

- 3 Classical: 7 0-0 and 7 Be3 (21 pages)
- 4 Classical: 7 d5 (9 pages)
- 5 Classical: Exchange Variation (9 pages)
- 6 Lines with h3 (14 pages)
- 7 The Averbakh Variation and Related Lines (17 pages)
- 8 The Four Pawns Attack (8 pages)
- 9 4 e4 d6: Rare Lines with Nge2 (11 pages)
- 10 The Saemisch (26 pages)
- 11 The Fianchetto Variation (31 pages)
- 12 Early Bf4 or Bg5 (4 pages)
- Index of Opponents (1 page)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)

The material is presented within 56 main games, all of which have been played by Golubev as black, including wins, draws and losses. The games represent all sorts of ideas and plans for both sides, but not all the lines are covered with equal effort. However, the book never claims to offer complete coverage, rather it will help you understand this exciting opening through the eyes of someone who has a lifetime of practice with it. For Golubev not only discusses the theory, he also relates his own experiences, the psychology of playing the opening, and his thoughts during the game. It is liberating when a player as strong as Golubev admits forgetting some of his games in a particular line or even previously prepared lines.

It is clear that Golubev is passionate about the opening and that he has carefully worked through his games. He is constantly offering suggestions and improvements, not just on the game at hand, but also on other players suggestions and the general state of available theory.

There are few opening books that are truly must-haves, but this is a book that players of both sides should study. You will learn a great deal about chess, in addition to being taught how to play this opening with greater confidence. Go get it!

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Understanding the King's Indian*
by Mikhail Golubev

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 79 by Genna Sosonko (ed.), Gambit Publications 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 208 pp., \$27.50

This volume of the long-running series features the young Norwegian grandmaster Magnus Carlsen on the cover, along with the caption “Black is not OK against Magnus in the Paulsen.” As you delve into the contents, you will realize you are dealing with quality chess by quality players and analysts discussing a variety of openings. The common thread throughout is the topical lines that are either being updated, analyzed, or rekindled. For the most part the editorial team does a good job of choosing content and does not just rehash the same old tired variations. The variety of the subject matter is just one of the main attributes of these yearbooks. Of course, it can happen that an opening becomes ridiculously popular and so warrants new surveys, as with the highly fashionable line in the Petroff: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nf3 Nxe4 5 Nc3 Nxc3 6 dxc3 Be7 7 Be3, where most of the top players can be found playing either side.



The material is divided as follows:

- **Opening Highlights** (2 pages – points out some of the more interesting surveys and features a few pictures of the authors or players who have contributed to the development of certain lines covered in this volume.)
- **Your Variations** (2 pages – the contents page, which is clear and easy to navigate. Note to the editors: do not change this format!)
- **Forum** (14 pages – the section where readers can write in with comments and/or relevant games)
- **Sosonko's Corner** (5 pages – Sosonko weighs in on a particular topic.)
- **Surveys** (208 pages – this volume features 32 surveys.)
- Sicilian Defense (8)
- Pirc Defense (1)
- French Defense (2)
- Caro-Kann Defense (2)
- Petroff (1)
- Ruy Lopez (2)
- Slav Defense (3)
- Catalan (1)
- Queen's Indian (2)
- Grünfeld Indian (1)
- King's Indian (2)
- Benoni Defense (3)
- Queen's Pawn Opening (2)
- English Opening (2)
- **Service** (8 pages – this section contains the New In Chess Code system, which explains the symbols used throughout the book. It also has Glenn Flear's review column. He normally looks at 4-5

books per volume, and it is always worth reading.)

The Forum section contains an interesting exchange between Kevin Cotreau of New Hampshire, USA and the Greek grandmaster Efstratios Grivas. Mr. Cotreau apparently takes umbrage with the fact that Grivas has named the 4...Qb6 Sicilian after himself. He states that since other grandmasters have played the line prior to Grivas, he has no right to name the line, and calls it a pitiful attempt to sell Grivas' [book](#) about the opening. Cotreau writes, "What we really have here is a 'grievous' attempt to take credit for something that really was not even close to his founding idea or even popularizing it." Grivas dutifully responds that he does not take credit for inventing the opening, and refers to those that concur with him naming the opening. After all, he has played it far more than anyone else, and was the driving force behind making it respectable. However, the reason I'm bringing this exchange to light is a comment made by Grivas: "I do not know Mr. Cotreau (and he probably does not know me), but I am really surprised that a chess player of a quite low status can be so rude to a GM (even an average one like me)." While I don't agree with Cotreau, it is pretty pathetic that Grivas resorts to the "how dare you criticize me, when I'm a GM and you are not" type of argument. Everyone is entitled to an opinion and open to criticism no matter what their rank or status happens to be. If anyone disagrees with me, they can send me a letter!

As for the chess content, I found a correspondence game submitted by Chris Fenwick so enjoyable that I will reproduce it here. The punctuation is Fenwick's, but for the rest of the annotations, you will have to buy the book.

Chris Fenwick-Jon Pugh

Correspondence David Parr Memorial 2005

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e6 7 g4!? E5 8 Nf5 g6 9 g5 gxf5 10 exf5 d5 11 Qf3 d4 12 0-0-0 Nbd7 13 Bd2 Qc7 14 Bg2!!?



[CH: A novelty by Fenwick, designed to stop Black from playing Qc6. For example, 14 gf6 dc3 15 Bc3 Qc6 16 Qg3 Bh6 17 Kb1 Bf4 18 Qd3 0-0 is OK for Black] **14...dxc3 15 Bxc3 Ng8 16 f6! a5! 17 Rhe1 Ra6 18 Qg3 Bd6 19 f4 Bc5 20 Bd5 Rd6 21 Qh4! H5? 22 Bxf7+! Kxf7 23 g6+ Kxg6 24 Qg3+ Kf7 25 Qg7+ Ke6 26 Rxe5+! Nxe5 27 f5+! Kf5 28 Rf1 Ke6 29 Qxc7 Rc6 30 Qg7**, and Black resigned as he will lose substantial

material.

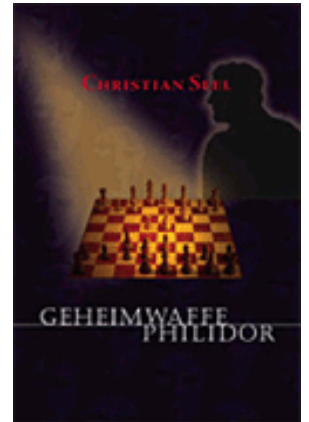
There is also an amusing entry from René Olthof, who describes how a game incorrectly entered in the databases ended up having some implications in this year's Morelia/Linares tournament.

Sosonko discusses early checks in the opening, while the survey section offers its usual great selection, with contributors such as Golubev, Nikitin, Marin, Kuzmin, Greenfeld, Stohl, Palliser and many others. All in all, there is plenty of interesting stuff for club and tournament players alike, and this is a must for the serious chess student.

My assessment of this book:

Geheimwaffe Philidor by Christian Seel, Chessgate 2005, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 132 pp., €5.80

I first became acquainted with Philidor's Defense in the 1980s, when I faced Peter Wells at Hastings with white. I couldn't understand why I didn't get much of an edge out of the opening, (it was supposed to be bad, wasn't it?) and the game ended in a draw. Then in 1992, the English grandmaster Tony Kosten wrote the compelling *Winning with the Philidor*, which was packed with original analysis, and it appeared to prove that Black was fine in almost every line. So I started playing it as black, and my results were amazing. At first I played the Improved Hanham Variation: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Nbd7 5 Bc4 Be7, but Black has problems if White plays 4 dxe5. Therefore, I began using the move-order 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 e5, which transposed after 4 Nf3 Nbd7. The fact that White could exchange queens with 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Qxd8+ Kxd8 didn't bother me, as it was usually only played by unambitious players, and if you pushed them for an extended period of time, you had excellent winning chances in the endgame.

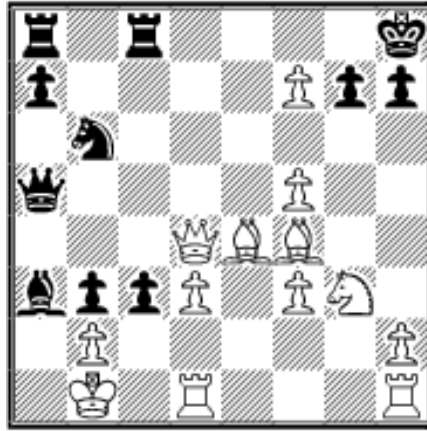


However, as more and more players became aware of the common pitfalls and standard strategies, my results suffered. So I again consulted Kosten's book and came across Antoshin's Variation: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7, which doesn't allow White to exchange queens. I have played this line in correspondence chess on numerous occasions and lost only one game, which was because of a clerical error on my part!

Fl.Nielsen-Ca.Hansen

Danish Correspondence Championship 1994

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7 6 Bf4 O-O 7 Qd2 c6 8 O-O-O b5 9 f3 b4 10 Nce2 c5 11 Nf5 (Seel claims 11 Nb3 is better.)
11...Bxf5 12 exf5 Qa5 (Seel only analyses 12...d5, which he gives an exclamation point.) **13 Kb1 d5 14 g4 d4 15 Ng3 Nd5 16 Bc4 Nb6 17 Bd3 Nc6 18 Be4 Rfc8 19 Qe2 Bf8 20 g5 c4 21 g6 d3! 22 gxf7+ Kh8 23 cxd3 Nd4 24 Qf2 b3 25 a3 c3! 26 Qxd4 Bxa3!**



27 Be5 (Here I thought he played 27 Qe5, which explains my next move.)
27...Bc5?? (Black wins after 27...Bf8, I was looking forward to playing the following line: 28 Qxc3 Rxc3 29 Bxc3 Qa2+ 30 Kc1 Rc8 31 Kd2 Rxc3! 32 Kxc3 Qa5+ 33 Kxb3 Qa4+ 34 Kc3 Bb4+ 35 Kd4 Bd2+ 36 Kc5 Be3+ 37 d4 (or 37 Kd6 Qd7+ 38 Ke5 Qd4+ 39 Ke6 Qf6 mate) Qc4+ 38 Kd6 Bf4+ 39 Ke7 Qc7+ 40 Ke8 Qd7+ 41 Kf8 Bd6 mate, which, believe it or not, was on my analysis board when I played 21...d3!. This was in the days before I had a computer.) **28 Bxg7 mate (Ouch!) 1-0**

I relate all this to give you an idea of how excited I was to learn of the present book, written by the young German international master Christian Seel. I was thrilled to discover that he was writing from Black's perspective, with particular attention given to the Antoshin Variation, as well as White's attempts to deviate from it. However, the book is written in German and there is a fair amount of explanatory text.

The contents are divided as follows: (translated from German)

- Forewords (2 pages)
- 1 Introduction (3 sub sections - 7 pages)
- 2 White's 3rd Move Alternatives (3 sub sections – 14 pages)
- 3 White's 4th Move Alternatives (2 pages)
- 4 Variations with 4 Qxd4 (2 subsections – 15 pages)
- 5 Side lines after 4 Nxd4 Nf6 (2 subsections – 5 pages)
- 6 Main Line 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7 (9 subsections – 75 pages)
- Bibliography (1 page)
- Symbols (1 page)
- Index of Players (3 pages)

This is exactly how I would have divided the material were I the author. The introduction consists of a quick discussion of move orders, as well as an overview of strategic ideas, and why the Philidor is such a great weapon as Black. Here is a game, which I will translate for you:

“The white pieces are being played by Oleg Korneev, a Russian super grandmaster, who has an ELO-rating of 2602. His opponent

is Carlos Milla de Marco, a Spanish amateur with an Elo of 2092. This should be an easy opportunity...

1 e4 d6

More about this in the section on move orders!

2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 exd4 5 Nxd4 Be7

Our starting position has been reached! Oleg Korneev chooses one of the main lines.

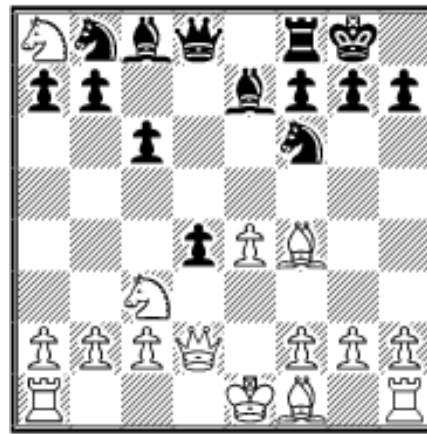
6 Bf4 0-0 7 Qd2 d5

The sharpest answer! The amateur doesn't shy away from a tactical battle with the "ELO monster"!

8 Ndb5 c6

Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu has in recent years used this move on several occasions. Black sacrifices a rook for counterplay in the center! [CH: Nisipeanu also wrote a foreword to this book.]

9 Nc7 d4 10 Nxa8



White can also consider the alternatives Ne2 and 0-0-0, both of which are analyzed later in this book.

10...dxc3 11 Qxd8 Rxd8 12 bxc3 Nxe4 13 Bxb8?!

The first inaccuracy! The main move is Bd3, which allows White to fight for the advantage.

13...Bf6 14 Bd3 Bxc3+ 15 Ke2 Bf5 16 Bc7?!

This illustrates that even a super grandmaster is able to make mistakes. It is obvious that Korneev, like many of his colleagues, has never studied this system seriously.

a) 16 Rad1?! Rxb8 17 f3 Nd6 18 Bxf5 Nxf5 19 Nc7 Rc8 20 Rd7 Ba5 21 Rhd1 Kf8, and Black wins the knight on c7, leaving him with two minor pieces for a rook and therefore with the clearly better chances.

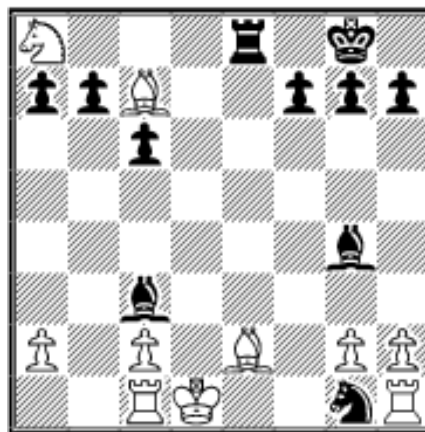
b) 16 Bxa7! is necessary: 16...Bxa1 17 Rxa1 Rxa8 18 Be3 Nc3+ 19 Kd2 Bxd3 20 Kxc3. This position was reached through a different move order in the game L'Ami-Pavasovic, Maribor (rapid) 2004. Because of a better pawn structure, Black has the slightly better chances.

16...Re8 17 Rac1?

After this error, White goes down without any further ado.

However, the situation is already critical. *Fritz* suggests 17 Rae1, but after 17...Bxe1 18 Rxe1 Rxa8 Black has the advantage because of his extra pawn.

17...Nd2+ 18 Kd1 Bg4+ 19 f3 Nxf3 20 Be2 Ng1!!



With this beautiful move, Black puts a worthy end to the game. Mate is unavoidable!

21 Rb1 Rxe2 0-1

As expected before the game: the result was a quick victory, but in this case for the amateur!!”

Who wouldn’t want to beat a grandmaster in this fashion?

While working my way through the variations in this book, I found that the author came to many of the same conclusions as I did in my home analysis. Overall, the quality of this book is of a very high standard with regard to author input, original analysis, improvements over existing theory, explanatory prose and even production value. I only wish that it was available in English, because it deserves a much wider audience. I highly recommend this book to anybody playing the Philidor as Black.

My assessment of this book: 

French Advance by Sam Collins, Everyman Chess 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 176 pp., \$23.95

The French Advance, 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5, has become more and more popular in recent years. Nowadays you can see strong young players like Grischuk, Motylev, Nakamura and Carlsen on the white side of this opening. This is billed as a “2nd Edition” of a 1998 work by Tony Kosten that was written for Chess Press, which seems odd, especially as the remnants of the original book are negligible at best.



Anyway, let’s see how Irish international master Sam Collins has divided the material:

- Acknowledgements (1 page)
- Preface (2 pages)
- Introduction: Key Concepts in the Advance French (8 pages)
- 1 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6 6 a3 c4 (26 pages)
- 2 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6 6 a3 Nh6 (24 pages)
- 3 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6 6 a3 Others (9 pages)
- 4 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6 6 Be2 (14 pages)

- 5 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Bd7 6 Be2 (30 pages)
- 6 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Bd7 without 6 Be2 (10 pages)
- 7 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 Nge7 & 5...Nh6 (16 pages)
- 8 4...Qb6 5 Nf3 Bd7 (19 pages)
- 9 Irregular Lines (7 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

The page allocation is quite reasonable based on the relative popularity of the individual lines. Both the acknowledgments and preface are written in a very entertaining and humorous fashion, while the introduction will give the average player a rudimentary understanding of the basic strategies to consider when playing the Advance French. I don't detect any prejudice for White's cause in this book, and he seems to address issues and improvements for either side with the same eagerness.

Each chapter begins with a short introduction, with references given to the main games, which makes it easier to navigate through the material. The games themselves offer a good balance of commentary and explanatory prose, along with hardcore theoretical discussions, with plenty of suggestions and improvements for both sides.

Here's a game, which will give you an idea of what to expect. I have considerably shortened the annotations by not including all of the theoretical game references.

J.Timman-S.Brynell

Bundesliga 2001

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 Bd7 6 Be2 f6 7 0-0

The text is normally played automatically but 7 Bf4 is an interesting alternative. I generally don't like this move in the French Advance, but if Paco plays like this it must have some merit: 7...Qb6 8 Nbd2 cxd4 (8...Qxb2 9 Nb3 Qa3 10 dxc5 leaves Black with some problems) 9 0-0 g5 (9...dxc3 10 bxc3 offers good compensation) 10 Bg3 g4 11 Nxd4 Nxd4 12 cxd4 f5 13 Nb3 left White with a comfortable advantage in F.Vallejo Pons-V.Spassov, European Team Ch., Plovdiv 2003.

7...fxe5

The most testing move, but it's far from clear that it offers better chances than the alternatives... [CH: Collins discusses 7...Qb6 at some length along with 7...Qc7 and 7...cxd4.]

8 Nxe5

The typical move and almost certainly the best in the current position. 8 dxe5?! has been played by several strong GMs, but without success; the c6-knight both pressurizes e5 and prevents the b4-break, and so must be exchanged.

8...Nxe5 9 dxe5 Qc7

[CH: Here Collins offers some examples of the alternatives 9...Bc6 and 9...Ne7, both leading to a better game for White.]

10 c4

The pawn sac is just temporary. 10 f4!? Ne7 11 Nd2 g6 12 Nf3 Bg7 13 Qe1!? was also better for White in E.Rozentalis-T.Pahtz, Schellenberg 1991.

10...Qxe5

Critical, but necessarily best...

[CH: Here the alternatives

10...Ne7, 10...d4 and 10...0-0-0 are examined.]

11 cxd5

The text is overwhelmingly the most popular move, but 11 Bh5+ g6 12 Bf3 0-0-0 13 Re1 Qd6 14 Nc3 is a good alternative and for example, 14...dxc4 15 Qe2 Nf6 16 Qxc4 (16 Bg5 Be7 17 Rad1 is also

strong) 16...Be7 17 Bf4 Qd4 18 Nb5 Bxb5 19 Bxb7+ and 1-0 was a nightmare for Black in O.Romanishin-V.Ivanchuk, Irkutsk 1986. [CH: It would be interesting to know why Collins doesn't offer an improvement for Black in this line; otherwise it does not make sense for White to play any of the alternatives.]

11...0-0-0 12 Bf3

In the closed structure with a white pawn on c4 and a black one on d4 this bishop is better placed on d3 but in the current position it should be clearly pointing at d5 and the black king.

12...exd5

12...Bd6 is an alternative, but it looks pretty dubious... [CH: Collins analyzes this to an advantage for White.]

13 Re1 Qd6

This is a critical position, but I don't know what black players find appealing about it. White can reduce the game to a dead draw, as well as explore several attacking options.

14 b4!?

Instead a draw was agreed after 14 Nc3 Nf6 15 Nxd5 Nxd5 16 Qxd5 Qxd5 17 Bxd5 Bf5 18 Bf3 Bd6 19 Be3 in S.Movsesian-A.Shirov, Istanbul Olympiad 2000, but 14 g3 Nf6 15 Bf4 Qa6 16 Nc3 d4 17 Ne4 Nxe4 18 Rxe4 left White with interesting compensation in E.Sveshnikov-A.Vaisser, Sochi 1984, which worked out well for White after 18...Bd6 (18...h5!?) 19 Rc1 d3 20 b4!, beginning an attack.

14...Nf6

This has been universally played but leads to a difficult game. In contrast 14...Qf6!?, a *Fritz* suggestion, could offer chances to defend, since 15 Qd2 (15 Na3 Ne7! leaves White without a clear continuation) 15...Bc6 16 Bb2 Qh6 17 bxc5 Bxc5 18 Qc2 Bd6 19 g3 Kb8 20 is unclear.

15 bxc5 Qxc5 16 Be3 Qa5 17 Nd2 Bc6 18 a4! Bd6 19 Nb3 Qc7

20 g3 Rhe8 21 Rc1 Kb8 22 a5

White has superb compensation and shortly gains a winning position.

22...Rc8 23 Qd4 b6 23 Qd4 b6 24 axb6 axb6 25 Na5 Rxe3

Neither would 25...Bc5 have saved Black due to 26 Rxc5 bxc5 27 Qb2+ Bb7 28 Rb1 and wins.

26 Nxc6+ Qxc6 27 Qxe3 Bc5 28 Qe5+ Kb7 29 Rcd1 Rf8 30 Re2 Bd6 31 Qe6 Bc5 32Qe5 Bd6 33 Qf5 Kb8 34 Re6 Qc5 35 Qd3 Ne4 36 Bxe4 1-0

Overall, this book is well-written and offers very decent coverage of the opening. However, there are times when a little more explanation is warranted as to why certain moves have fallen out of favor.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *French Advance*

by Sam Collins

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