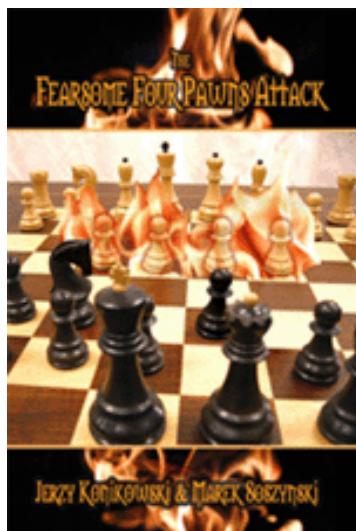




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

*Rating Chart*

– A poor book.



– Not very good.



– A useful book.



– A good book.

Reviewed this month:*New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 83*

by Genna Sosonko (ed)

Tactics in the Chess Openings 5

by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht

The Chigorin Defence According to Morozevich

by Alexander Morozevich & Vladimir Barsky

The ABC of Alekhine (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

Queen's Pawn Openings (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

What's New in Chess

This month I will review three recent releases from the excellent publishing house New In Chess and two new DVDs from ChessBase.

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 83 by Genna Sosonko (ed), Interchess BV 2007, Softcover, 247pp., \$28.95

Ukrainian grandmaster Sergei Karjakin is featured on the cover of the latest yearbook, under the heading “Sergei Karjakin adds a new dimension to the Sveshnikov Sicilian.” The four other surveys mentioned on the cover are:

- Vladimir Kramnik, the Catalan Strangler
- Forget the English Attack, play the Najdorf like Emanuel Berg
- Ponomarev tames Topalov's bishops in the Bogo-Indian
- Rogozenko takes a shortcut in the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon



As usual the yearbook is a treasure trove of interesting opening surveys, annotated games and much more. The material is divided as follows:



– An excellent book.

- Forum (11 submissions - 10 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (3 pages)
- Surveys (31 surveys - 214 pages)
- Book Reviews by Glenn Flear (5 reviews - 7 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)

The Forum is the section where anyone from grandmasters to average players can submit their games, ideas and analysis, often in response to surveys from earlier volumes. This makes for interesting reading, even if it is not always pertinent to my own repertoire; the games and ideas submitted are generally very entertaining.

Sosonko's Corner is often one of my favorite items in any given Yearbook. It usually spans between three and five pages and covers any variety of topics. However, this volume features one of his less inspired efforts: an item about Ukrainian grandmaster Vasily Ivanchuk. The games are quite good, two wins as Black against Kramnik and van Wely from Monaco, but Sosonko normally adds a compelling context that does not seem to be present this time around.

The surveys are the main substance of every yearbook. Quite notable in this volume is that several of the surveys offer game annotations containing plenty of prose as well as variations, rather than simple annotation symbols. For example, the very first survey, by the young Swedish grandmaster Emanuel Berg on the Najdorf with 6 Bg5, features six games by Berg where he illustrates the benefits of playing the old main line, rather than the more fashionable 6 Be3.

With previous yearbooks, I often preferred some surveys over others, but in the current volume there are so many good ones that it is impossible to highlight any favorites. Whether it was an interesting variation being discussed, or a particularly noteworthy introduction, or the impressive selection of annotated games, about half of the surveys qualify as outstanding and the others are still very good.

The last section of the yearbook always features Glenn Flear's excellent book reviews. Here he discusses two books on the Ruy Lopez, the new ECO C (5th Edition) and two further titles. Given that Flear plays 1 e4 e5 as Black, his opinions are all the more relevant. In general, *Yearbook* #83 has plenty to offer, whether you're an enthusiastic amateur or a battle-hardened professional. I highly recommend it.

My assessment of this book:



Order *New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 83*

by Genna Sosonko (ed)

Tactics in the Chess Openings 5 - Indian Defences Catalan & Benoni by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht, Interchess BV 2007, Softcover, 237pp., \$21.95

This is the fifth volume in a series of six books that focus on tactics in the opening. I reviewed volume two in [October 2004](#), and I liked it very much. The other volumes are:



- Vol 1: Sicilian Defence
- Vol 2: Open Games
- Vol 3: French Defence and other Semi-Open Games
- Vol 4: Queen's Gambit
- Vol 6: Gambits and Flank Openings



Volume six is scheduled to be released this fall. The entire series is a fully revised and updated translation of a book that was first released in 1998 in Dutch and written by the respected theoretician A.C. van der Tak.

Here the material is divided as follows:

- 1 Catalan Opening - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 (28 pages)
- 2 Nimzo-Indian Defence - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 (68 pages)
- 3 Queen's Indian Defence - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 (34 pages)
- 4 Grünfeld Indian Defence - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 (26 pages)
- 5 King's Indian Defence - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 (36 pages)
- 6 Benoni Defence - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 (24 pages)
- 7 Old Indian Defence/Benoni Wall - 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6/1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 (4 p)
- Index of Players (3 pages)
- NIC-Key Indian Defences (5 pages)
- NIC-Key at NICBase Online (1 page)

Dutch grandmaster Sipke Ernst and Belgian international master Geert van der Stricht present 230 games, most of which are very recent. It would be a mistake to think that this book is only a catalog of opening blunders. The games are all annotated at a decent level, sometimes quite thoroughly and other times somewhat sparsely, but always to the point. The authors do a good job of keeping their target audience in mind, say, those rated between 1300 - 2100, with the lower end of the spectrum deriving the most benefit. The first three chapters were written by van der Stricht and the remaining four by Ernst. However, not all the games seem to fall within the framework of the title; for example, take the following game:

Akopian-Kramnik

Moscow 2002

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.d4 dxc4 7.Qc2 a6 8.a4 Bd7 9.Qxc4 Bc6 10.Bg5 Bd5! 11.Qc2 Be4 12.Qd1 c5 13.dxc5 Bxc5 14.Nc3 Bc6 15.Ne5 Bxg2 16.Kxg2 h6 17.Bxf6 Qxf6 18.f4?! Qe7 19.Ne4 Rd8 20.Qb3 Bd4 21.Nf3 Nc6 22.a5 Rd5 23.Qa3 Qxa3 24.Rxa3 Ba7 25.Rfa1 Rb5 26.R1a2? Nb4 0-1

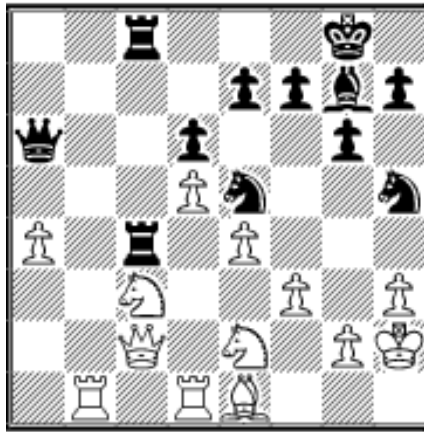
I'm rather underwhelmed by the display of tactics in this game and there are several others that similarly left me wondering what I missed. In some cases, the authors fail to point out where the players went wrong. For instance, in the following game, they don't give any of White's move a "?," and only suggest one improvement for White, when their "improvement" probably isn't even White's best move.

Gligoric-Nyback

Stockholm 2003/04

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 g6 6.Nc3 Bxa6 7.e4 Bxf1 8.Kxf1 d6 9.Nge2 Bg7 10.h3 0-0 11.Kg1 Nbd7 12.Kh2 Qa5 13.Qc2 Rfb8 14.Rd1 Rb4 15.

Rb1 Rab8 16.Bd2 Qa6 17.f3 Ne5 18.b3 Rc8 19.Be1 Nh5 20.a4 c4 21.bxc4 Rbxc4




22.Qb3

Here they indicate 22.Qb2! as “more accurate.” This is a bit of an understatement, since the game move loses on the spot. On the suggested improvement, Black can immediately win his gambit pawn back by 22...Rxa4, and be okay, e.g. 23.Qb7 Ra3 24.Qxa6 Rxa6 25. Rb7 Bf6. Another idea is the more restrained 22.Rb5!?, and while Black has some compensation for the pawn, White has the slightly better chances.

22...Rxc3 23.Nxc3 Nxf3+ 24.gxf3 Qf1 0-1

Despite these minor criticisms, this is an enjoyable and instructive book that will help improving players get a better grasp of many of the underlying tactical ideas in these popular openings.

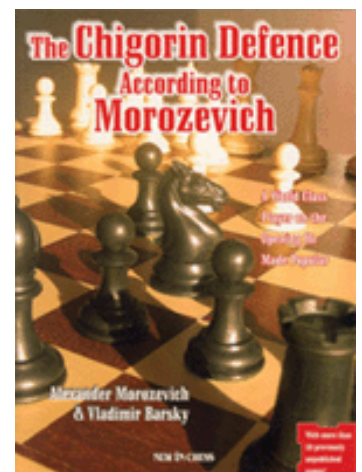
My assessment of this book: 

Tactics in the Chess Openings 5

by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht

The Chigorin Defence According to Morozevich by Alexander Morozevich & Vladimir Barsky, Interchess BV 2007, Softcover, 236pp., \$28.95

It is very rare when a top player writes candidly about one of his favorite openings, so when it occurs you obviously have to take notice. In this case Russian super-grandmaster Alexander Morozevich writes about the Chigorin Defence of the Queen’s Gambit, which arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6. This opening has been considered dubious since it was first introduced in the nineteenth century, but it is experiencing a revival because of Morozevich’s efforts among others.



In the introduction Morozevich recounts his early experiences with the opening, his first games against strong opposition and how his trainers tried to dissuade him from using an “inferior” opening. But having studied the opening in depth, with the co-author of this volume and others, attempts at refuting the opening were warded off, and Morozevich gained further confidence. He went on to play it against several of the strongest players in the world, such as Kramnik, Anand, Shirov, Beliavsky and Van Wely, to mention a few.

However, he does warn not to think of the opening as a magic wand. He writes, “its employment demands serious work at home. Generally speaking, it is not easy to play rather irrational positions on the basis of other players’ games; in order to understand this opening, you must experience it yourself. General reasonings fade into the background; here there is a continuous close-range fight. Fortunately, there is now the Internet, where one can experiment at will before switching to the practical testing of a new opening in serious tournament games.” This is certainly good advice, because the Chigorin is not for the weak-minded. It is for gladiators who like to think for themselves and are not afraid to force their opponents to do likewise. After all, these variations sometimes do not resemble normal chess: the queen is developed early, the same pieces move repeatedly in the opening phase, and pawns are advanced without considering long-term king safety.

The material is divided as follows:

- Foreword (8 pages)
- Chapter 1 - A Straight Fight: 3.cxd5 Qxd5 (3 sections -52 pages)
- Chapter 2 - From Steinitz To Kramnik (4 sections - 72 pages)
- Chapter 3 - Infantry Against Cavalry: 3.Nc3 dxc4 (2 sections - 70 pages)
- Chapter 4 - Chigorin Motifs: Without c2-c4 (4 sections - 24 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (2 pages)
- Game Index (2 pages)

The book does not comprise all the main lines of the Chigorin. It only focuses on those lines that Morozevich has employed. It also features more than fifty previously unpublished rapid and blitz games against top grandmasters, including games against Kramnik and Karpov from blitz training matches. The annotations offer plenty of prose and variations. Of course, many of the games contain blunders by both players, but they display the tenacity and punch of the opening. It is both inspiring and enjoyable.

Still, there are many variations pertaining to Morozevich’s repertoire that have not been covered, and improvements to these lines can be found in previously published works such as *The Chigorin Defence* by Valery Bronznik or *How to Succeed in the Queen Pawn Openings* by Watson and Schiller. From this perspective Morozevich’s book is a considerable disappointment, but it is not to be dismissed so lightly. Here is an example where Morozevich and Barsky could have benefited from other sources:

Veselin Topalov-Alexander Morozevich
Frankfurt 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6 3.cxd5 Qxd5 4.e3 e5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.Bxc3 exd4 8.Ne2 Bg4 9.f3 0–0–0 10.Nxd4 Nf6 11.Qa4

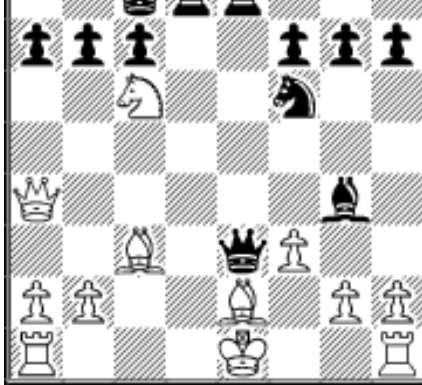
It is worth noting that Black’s piece sacrifice may be incorrect, as after 11.fxg4 Rhe8 12.Qe2 Nxd4 (12...Ne5 13.h3 Ne4 14.Qc2 is also insufficient for Black) 13. Bxd4 Qa5+ 14.Bc3 Qb6 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Rd1 Rxd1+ 17.Kxd1, Black doesn’t have enough for the piece.

11...Qg5 12.Nxc6 Qxe3+ 13.Be2 Rhe8



14.Ne5

Here Morozevich gives the line 14.Qc2



bxc6 15.fxc6 Nd5 16.g3 Re6 17.Rf1 with a clear advantage for White, but this line was analyzed in detail by Martin Breutigam on his [The Chigorin Defence](#) (CD), as well as by Bronznik. Breutigam elaborates considerably on the line given by Morozevich, whereas Bronznik analyses 14...Ne4!?, which he thinks may lead to a draw.

14...Bf5

Here Breutigam suggests the amazing 14...Bd7!, and after 15.Qd4 Qxd4 16.Bxd4 Ba4 17.Bc3 Nd5 18.Nxf7 Nxc3 19.bxc3 Rd5!, Black is in good shape.

15.Rd1 Rxd1+ 16.Qxd1 Rxe5 17.Bd4

Here White should have played 17.Bxe5 Qxe5 18.Qd2, which Morozevich doesn't mention, despite giving White's seventeenth a "?."

17...Qf4

Here everyone, including Morozevich, mentions that Black should have played 17...Bc2! 18.Qd2 Qxd2+ 19.Kxd2 Rd5 20.Kc3 Bg6, and Black is simply up a pawn. The remainder of the game isn't interesting for our purposes, so I will stop here.

There is no question that this book will inspire a whole new generation of players to take up this neglected opening. It is disappointing that the authors didn't research other publications, and it would have made more sense for the players index to be listed alphabetically, rather than by in order of appearance, but whenever a strong grandmaster shares his experiences in such a personal manner, you should jump at the opportunity to learn from it. This book is very instructive and worth reading. Seeing Morozevich battle against many of the strongest players in the world at all sorts of time limits will inspire you to take up the opening.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *The Chigorin Defence According to Morozevich*

by Alexander Morozevich & Vladimir Barsky

The ABC of Alekhine (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Running time: 5 hours 40 minutes, \$34.95

In the introduction, English international master Andrew Martin tells us that the repertoire he is about to suggest will be applicable for any player all the way up to grandmaster level. Well, no one is going to accuse him of being understated, but he does have several good ideas in side lines that have a decent reputation and don't carry an enormous load of theory.



The material is divided as followings:



- Intro
- Inspiring Game 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Modern Variation: 5.Nxe5 c6 6.Bc4 Game 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Modern Variation: 6.Be2 (1 segment)
- Modern Variation: 6.Bd3 and others (1 segment)
- Four Pawns Attack 1 + 2 + Summary (3 segments)
- Exchange Variation: Game 1-7 (7 segments)
- Chase Variation Game 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- 3.Nc3 Game 1 + 2 and Summary (2 segments)
- Unusual Lines 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- 2.Nc3 (1 segment)
- Outro (1 segment)

Of course, the above doesn't tell us much about Black's opening choices. The most notable ones are:

- a) 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 dxe5 5.Nxe5 c6. Martin calls this the Miles Variation in the introductory segment, but in the overview it is referred to as the Modern Variation. This has become a popular choice for black players who are not keen on playing the somewhat passive 4...Bg4 or 4...g6. 5...c6, intending 6...Nd7, makes perfect sense, mainly because the theory isn't as well-developed as in the lines after 4.Nf3. It is also quite solid and therefore less likely that Black will stumble into some sort prepared wickedness. But the theoretical burden is as much on Black as on White, and studying it isn't all that interesting.
- b) 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6 5.f4 dxe5 6.fxe5 c5 7.d5 g6!?. This is a rather rare move that I was not familiar with prior to this DVD.
- c) 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6 5.exd6 exd6. This is the most solid answer to the exchange variation, which is usually recommended in repertoire books for White in recent years.
- d) 1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.e5 d4. This continuation is pretty solid for Black, and it avoids some of the more common traps that White can set.

Martin gives a very decent presentation of the Four Pawns Attack, which left me wondering why this line isn't played more frequently. However, he doesn't mention perhaps the highest rated encounter in this variation, where White won an interesting game:

Sergei Movsesian (2624) - Zoltan Varga (2533)

Extraliga 2005

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6 5.f4 dxe5 6.fxe5 c5 7.d5 g6 8.Bf4 Bg7 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Qd2 e6 11.0-0-0 exd5 12.cxd5 Bg4 13.Re1 c4 14.h3 Bf5 15.g4 Bd3 16. Bxd3 cxd3 17.Qxd3 Na6 18.d6 Rc8 19.Kb1



19...Nb4

Martin only discusses 19...Nc4 20.Nd5 Qa5 21.Ne7+, but 21.Nf3 looks very good for White. Therefore, it would have made perfect sense for Martin to include the



move played by the Hungarian grandmaster.

20.Qd1 Nc4 21.Rh2

21.Re4 is also possible, but my analysis indicates that Black should be more or less okay; for instance, 21...Nxb2! 22.Kxb2 Qb6, and White has to play very accurately to stay on his feet.

21...Qa5 22.Nf3 Rc5

Here Black can consider 22...Na3+!?, e.g. 23.bxa3 Rxc3 24.axb4 Qxb4+ 25.Rb2 Qxf4, and Black is probably okay.


23.Rhe2 h6 24.Nd4 Nd5 25.Ne4 Nxf4 26.Nb3 Qb4

Black can improve with 26...Rd5!? at this juncture, e.g. 27.Nxa5 Rxd1+ 28.Rxd1 Nxa5, and White's advanced d-pawn compensates for Black's slight material advantage.

27.Nexc5 Nxe2 28.Rxe2 Nxe5 29.Qd5 b6 30.Nd3 Nxd3 31.Qxd3 Rd8 32.d7 Qa4 33.Rd2 Qc6 34.Nc1 a5 35.Ne2 Kf8 36.Rd1 Be5 37.Qe3 Qb5 38.Nc3 Qc5 39.Qxh6 + Bg7 40.Qd2 Qc6 41.Qd3 Bf6 42.Ne4 Rxd7 43.Qxd7 Qxe4+ 44.Qd3 Qg2 45. Rd2 Qh1+ 46.Rd1 Qg2 47.Qb3 a4 48.Qxb6 Kg7 49.a3 Qxh3 50.Qb4 Qg2 51. Rc1 Qe2 52.Ka2 g5 53.Rc5 Kg6 54.Ra5 Bxb2 55.Qxb2 Qe6+ 56.Ka1 1-0

Martin could also have been a more thorough in the 2.Nc3 d5 3.e5 d4 line, because he only discusses 4.exf6 for White, completely ignoring 4.Nce2, as played by numerous strong players, including former World Champion Mikhail Tal. It certainly represents more interesting play than the line Martin discusses.

That said, I found this DVD to be pretty good overall. Martin's chosen lines are not likely to be refuted in the near future, and this DVD will probably only help to make them more popular. If you are interested in the Alekhine as Black, I can easily recommend this DVD as a starting point to explore these lines further.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *The ABC of Alekhine* (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

Queen's Pawn Openings (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2007, DVD, Running time: more than 6 hours, \$34.95

The back cover blurb tells us: "IM Andrew Martin presents solutions for Black against the following remarkable array of QP Openings: The Trompowski, The Pseudo-Trompowski, The Torre attack, The Colle System and Colle Zuckertort



System, The London System, The Stonewall, The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, The Prie System 2 a3, The Reversed French, 1 d4 Nf6 2 g4 ?!. Move orders with 1 ...d5 and 1...Nf6 with either ...g6 or ...e6 are all covered. You may not agree with all of Martin's suggestions, but you will certainly get a decent position as Black with chances to play for the win every time! This is just what the club player needs. Video running time: more than 6 hours!"




It's odd that they misspell Trompowsky and Zukertort here, when they are spelled correctly on the contents page of the DVD itself. Anyway, this sounds like an awful lot of openings to cover, even with more than six hours of screen time available. Still, Martin is an experienced and resourceful presenter, so let's see how he has divided the material:

- Intro (1 segment)
- Stonewall 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Rare Lines 1-3 (3 segments)
- Blackmar-Diemer-Gambit 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Barry Attack 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Veresov 1-3 (3 segments)
- Trompowsky 1-4 (4 segments)
- Pseudo Trompowsky 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Torre Attack 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Torre vs. g6 (1 segment)
- Reversed French (1 segment)
- London System 1-5 (5 segments)
- Colle 1 + 2 (2 segments)
- Outro (1 segment)

Martin begins by telling us about a presentation he did for Foxy Openings about ten years ago on how Black should meet the assorted [Annoying d-pawn Openings](#). Of course, the terrain that is Queen's Pawn Openings has changed since then. The Trompowsky has been mapped out more accurately, and new ideas have arisen such as 1 d4 d5 2 Bf4 and 2 a3.

While Martin has updated his coverage with new material, some of his recommendations remain the same. I will not go into detail about the individual lines, but his emphasis is on lines that are relatively easy to memorize and don't put Black in any kind of danger from being blown away by a new idea or sharp move. Yet, even so, his recommendations against the Pseudo Trompowsky are considerably more dangerous for Black than he lets on, and experienced players would probably prefer to have more details in many of lines, because as Martin himself indicates, White often specializes in these lines and might have prior knowledge of his suggestions.

Nevertheless, the DVD is satisfactory and will undoubtedly find a wide audience. We have all had to deal with these openings at one time or another, and Martin's recommendations may even make you anticipate encountering them in your own games, when, perhaps for the first time, you will be properly prepared.

My assessment of this DVD: 

[Order](#) *Queen's Pawn Openings*

(DVD)

by Andrew Martin

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