COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

Rating Chart

– **A poor book.**

– **Not very good.**

– **A useful book.**

– **A good book.**

– **An excellent book.**

Reviewed this month:

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 84
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

Chess Informant, Vol. 99
by Zdenko Krnic (ed.)

Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol. 7
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

ChessBase Magazine #118 **(DVD)**
by Rainer Knaak (ed.)

The Maroczy System **(DVD)**
by Sergei Tiviakov

1...d6 Universal **(DVD)**
by Nigel Davies

Yearbooks and Serials

This month's reviews include some familiar titles, such as the latest yearbooks from *New In Chess* and *Chess Informant*, as well as recent volumes of *Secrets of Opening Surprises* and *ChessBase Magazine*. Then we will take a look at three new DVDs from ChessBase. I'm happy to say that all the products reviewed this month are very high quality and make for worthwhile reading and viewing.

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 84 by Genna Sosonko (ed), Interchess BV 2007, Softcover, 246pp., $28.95

Given that I just reviewed Vol. 83 last month, I will be brief in this review. As usual, the material is divided as follows:

- Forum (11 submissions – 13 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (4 pages)
- Surveys (33 surveys – 212 pages)
- Book Reviews by Glenn Flear (4 reviews – 5 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)

Sosonko's Corner returns to its usual high standards, with a look at the line 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bf5 6 e3 e6 7 a5!?. Sosonko opens his own treasure chest of analysis, done back when he was an active player, and looks at the development of this line, along with some of the refutations of his analysis and some of his games in this variation. Good stuff!

The surveys are always interesting. One of the highlights in this volume is a survey by Kolev on the line in the Najdorf Sicilian, where Ivanchuk beat Topalov in Morelia/Linares this year. Kolev, who co-authored *The Sharpest Sicilian*, provides detailed analysis of the games. If you play these lines, you will undoubtedly pick up some ideas. Kolev also authors a survey on an anti-Sicilian line that is likely to be encountered if Black tries to go for the Sveshnikov. And then there is a survey by Sveshnikov discussing his favorite 2 c3 against the Sicilian. There is an excellent survey by Marin & Stoica on the Classical Pirc, Olthof has a really good one on the Panov Caro-Kann, and French grandmaster Prie has written a survey titled "Königsspringerzurückhaltungspolitik Reversed," which pertains to a particular idea in the Scandinavian Defense. Since he is a specialist in this line, it is worth paying attention to what he writes, for you are bound to learn something. Also, Dutch theoretician A.C. van der Tak discusses the latest developments in the Siesta Variation in the Ruy Lopez, and concludes that Black is better off than he has ever

been! There are several other surveys that are required reading for those who play those lines, including surveys by Lukacs and Hazai, Mikhalevski, one by Greenfeld on the Hedgehog, and by Landa on the recently resurrected Blumenfeld Gambit. Fascinating!

The volume closes with the insightful book reviews by Glenn Flear. He writes well and has a knack for pinpointing what is both good and bad in the books under consideration. If you haven't read a yearbook yet, this is certainly a great issue to begin with. The variety of openings almost ensures that you will find something specific to your repertoire, or soon will be once you take up the recommended line. I simply love these yearbooks and I am confident that you will too. All serious players should read these outstanding books.

My assessment of this book:

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 84
by Genna Sosonko (ed)

Chess Informant, Vol. 99 by Zdenko Krnic (ed.), Sahovski Informator 2007, Softcover, 340pp, $27.95

As *Chess Informant* approaches its centennial issue, let's take a look at what this popular and long-running series of yearbooks has to offer. The contents are divided as follows:

- Contributors (2 pages)
- The best ten games of the preceding Volume (2 pages)
- The ten most important theoretical novelties of the preceding Volume (4 pages)
- System of Signs (3 pages)
- Classification of openings (6 pages)
- A (49 main games – 28 pages)
- B (134 main games – 87 pages)
- C (66 main games – 41 pages)
- D (86 main games – 47 pages)
- E (77 main games – 48 pages)
- Index of Players (9 pages)
- Index [of Commentators] (2 pages)
- Combinations (18 diagrams – 6 pages)
- Endings (18 diagrams – 10 pages)
- Studies (9 diagrams – 3 pages)
- Tournament [Tables] (10 pages)
- The Best of Chess Informant – Seirawan (16 pages)

Aside from the two segments pertaining to the preceding volume most of the material covers the first four months of 2007. Plus, there is the Best of Chess Informant section, this time focusing on Yasser Seirawan. It provides a potpourri of his best games, best novelties, best combinations, best endgames and some statistics on his choice of openings and how well he has scored with them.

One of the nice things about these volumes is that the games come from a variety of sources, including team tournaments, rapid tournaments, and correspondence events, which are often overlooked by the international Internet media and therefore are otherwise unknown to us.

The games are mostly annotated by the players themselves; this volume features notes by Adams, Anand, Beliavsky, Bologan, Bu Xiangzhi, Ehlvest, M.Gurevich, Ivanchuk, Karjakin, Kramnik, Leko, Marin, Morozevich, Motylev, Navara, Onischuk, Rublevsky, I. Sokolov, Stohl, Sutovsky, Svidler, Vallejo Pons, Van Wely and Volokitin, just to mention some of the more notable players. Nowadays, the games are structured so that some of the main games are actually fragments that end after twenty or thirty moves. At first I was critical of this innovation, because I viewed it as a devaluation of the material. However, I now see it as an improvement. Given the shorter time controls with quick play finishes and the inclusion of more rapid games, there is less relevance in seeing a hastily executed endgame, where one or both players were desperately short on time. It is far better to leave more space for the material that matters the most.

Chess Informant has a tremendous amount of interesting material to offer, whether

for opening studies, or for general training purposes. I for one would not want to be without it. I should also add that it is available in a very easy to navigate CD format.

My assessment of this book:

Order *Chess Informant, Vol. 99*
by Zdenko Krnic (ed.)

Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol. 7 by Jeroen Bosch (ed.), New In Chess 2007, Softcover, 143pp, $21.95

The ideas presented in this series are not meant to be the centerpieces of your opening repertoire; rather they are supposed to be surprises (thus the title of the series) that you spring upon an unsuspecting opponent. The material is written by qualified grandmasters or international masters, who have specialized knowledge of the variations in question. However, the actual surprise value of the ideas, their practicality, and their application are parameters that are very difficult to measure and evaluate. Many of these lines are not covered in detail in mainstream monographs, and the aim is that by studying some of these sidelines you will gain an advantage over your opponent. The danger in this is that an idea might backfire against a well-prepared opponent, or it might be something that a grandmaster can get away with, but a situation where an average player could easily go adrift.

One good thing about the series is that different variations are discussed in each issue, supplying us with a never-ending supply of novelties and tempting ideas. Let's look at the contents in this volume:

- The SOS Files (a round-up on developments of ideas presented in earlier volumes – 7 p.)
- J. van der Wiel – A Harmless Little Bishop Move
- J. Bosch – Sicilian: the O'Kelly Variation (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 a6)
- G.. Flear – Really Accepting the QGA (1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 Be6)
- F. Nijboer – The Shirov Gambit versus the Philidor (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Nbd7 5 g4!?)
- D. Rogozenko – Early Surprise in a Classical Nimzo (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 Ne4)
- A. Mikhalchishin – The Caro-Kann of Bukhuti Gurgenidze (1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 b5)
- J. Bosch – Bayonet Blow in the Bogo (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4 4 Bd2 c5 5 Bxb4 cxb4 6 g4!?)
- A. Kogan – Inspiration versus the Dragon (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 Nc3 Bg7 6 Nf3!?)
- J. Bosch – Chasing the 'Trompowsky' Bishop (1 d4 d5 2 Bg5 f6)
- D. Reinderman – Edgy Knight against the Bird (1 f4 Nh6)
- G.. Flear – The Semi-Slav with 6.a3 (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 a3)
- A. Finkel – Modern for Advanced Players
- J. Bosch – Taimanov's Surprise Sac in the Kan (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 c4 Qc7 6 Nc3 Nf6 7 a3 Nxe4)
- A. Mikhalchishin – Anti-Grünfeld and Anti-Volga (1 d4 Nf6 2 d5)
- I. Glek & J.-O. Leconte – French: the Gledhill Attack (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Qg4)
- H. Nakamura – Not Going for Scholar's Mate (1 e4 e5 2 Qh5)
- Who is Who? – Authors and their Subjects

Normally, I would not include the variations for fear of giving too much away, but I wanted to give prospective readers an insight into what's in store for them. As you can see some of the ideas can be sprung as early as move two, while others go a little deeper. It has to be said that some of the analysis is occasionally a little flawed and the authors are not always fully objective. After all, some of the ideas are obscure for a reason. However, I have always loved opening surprises, and to see the face on my unsuspecting opponent while he falls into a deep think in a position where he has no idea what to do next. If you hold a similar opinion, you are going to love this series. If you are a little more steadfast in your approach to the opening, then don't be surprised when one of your opponents leaves you thinking hard at the board.

My assessment of this book:

Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol. 7
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

ChessBase Magazine #118 (DVD) by Rainer Knaak (ed.), ChessBase GmbH 2007, $21.95

The variety and depth of the material on this DVD is quite simply mind-blowing. Let's first look at the contents:

- Highlights by Karsten Müller (Both database text and Multi-Media)
- Star Games annotated by Shirov, Nisipeanu, Sasikiran and Tiviakov (Multi-Media)
- Tournament Reports from 8 Top Events
- Opening Theory:
- King's Indian Attack A05 by Hannes Langrock
- Anti King's Indian A49 by Efstratios Grivas
- Hyper-Accelerated Dragon B27 by Andrei Kovalov
- Nimzowitsch Sicilian B29 by Jozsef Horvath
- French C10 by Emanuel Berg
- French C18 by Viktor Moskalenko
- Petroff C43 by Efstratios Grivas
- Ruy Lopez Marshall Attack C89 by Evgeny Postny
- The Slav 7...Nb6 D17 by Dorian Rogozenko
- Queen's Gambit Declined Ragozin D38 by Lars Schandorff
- Semi-Slav Defense D47 by Igor Stohl
- Queen's Gambit Declined Cambridge Springs by Dorian Rogozenko
- Grünfeld Defense 4 Bg5 D80 by Michal Krasenkow
- Blumenfeld Gambit E10 by Mihail Marin
- Queen's Indian Fianchetto E17 by Lubomir Ftacnik
- Daniel King: Move by Move (Database text)
- Oliver Reeh: Tactics (Both database text and Multi-Media)
- Peter Wells: Strategy (Database text)
- Karsten Müller: Endgames (Both database text and Multi-Media)
- Telechess (on Correspondence Chess – approximately 3000 games)
- Rainer Knaak: Opening Trap (Both database text and Multi-Media)
- New DVDs

As you can see there is simply an astounding amount of material: high-level theory in a wide variety of openings and all sorts of content for improvers (the column by Wells on strategy is particularly outstanding). Aside from this there are hundreds of annotated top games by grandmasters. This is truly one of the best bargains in chess today. I challenge you to finish the material on this disk before the next one arrives. My one complaint is the occasional mix-up in languages, such as when a text with links to tournament reports are all written in English, except for the Russian Team Championship, which is in German. For those of you who haven't bought a copy yet, now is the time to give it try. Enjoy!

My assessment of this DVD:

Order ***ChessBase Magazine #118*** (DVD)
by Rainer Knaak (ed.)

The Maroczy System (DVD) by Sergei Tiviakov, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Running time 3 hours 15 minutes, $32.95

I was quite excited about this DVD, because I have played the Accelerated Dragon (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6) of which the Maroczy Bind (5 c4) is an integral part. In fact, the Maroczy Bind is the reason why some players give up the Accelerated Dragon. However, Tiviakov is one of the leading proponents for Black against the

Maroczy – so here we have an expert discussing the finer points of his own favorite system.

Tiviakov immediately indicates that, because of the Maroczy Bind, the Accelerated Dragon is not an opening for thrill seekers who want to play for a win at any cost. Rather it is for those who want to play for equality and then build from that solid foundation if White overreaches. For example, Tiviakov tells us that his score from 80 games as black in the Maroczy Bind is +10 –10 =60! Yet against top class opponents, this is a decent score.

The contents are divided as follows:

- Intro (1 segment)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Bh6 (1 segment)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.Nc2 I-III (3 segments)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.f3 (1 segment)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.Be2 Nxd4 I-XI (11 segments)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.Be2 Bg7 I-III (3 segments)
- 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Bg7 (1 segment)
- Conclusion (1 segment)

Connoisseurs of the Maroczy Bind will immediately notice that many variations are absent, e.g. the lines with 5...Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Nc3 Ng4 or 7...b6 or any of the several other lines that Tiviakov did not include. One would think that these lines would need to be discussed on a DVD on the Maroczy Bind, but apparently Tiviakov thinks otherwise.

Tiviakov focuses on the lines that he knows best, such as the Gurgenidze system, signified by 5...Nf6 6 Nc3 d6 and then usually followed by ...Nxd4. He clearly knows his material and he speaks quite confidently during his presentation. However, he also speaks robotically. He knows English well, but each word is pronounced with equal emphasis and so there is no real flow. That said, his presentation on this DVD is better than the one on ChessBase Magazine #118, which appears to have been recorded on the same day. This brings to mind a tip: the presenter should not wear a striped shirt, as the resolution makes it look blurry, and in Tiviakov's case it makes his tie look enormous on his small frame.

Although this is one of the shorter DVDs from ChessBase, it is very good. For those who play the Accelerated Dragon or those considering it, this DVD is well worth the money and provides excellent instruction with regards to the typical pawn structures that arise. I wish there had been more original ideas and analysis, but Tiviakov still plays the opening as black, so we'll have to wait for his games.

My assessment of this DVD:

Order ***The Maroczy System*** (DVD)
by Sergei Tiviakov

1...d6 Universal (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Running time 5 hours, $32.95

One can assume that this is the companion volume to Davies' previous DVD on the Pirc, which I reviewed in June 2007. I found the contents to be very informative and the ideas well-presented. Davies appears very confident in front of the camera. He doesn't hesitate or lose his train of thought and this in turn bolsters the viewer's faith that Davies believes in the ideas he is presenting.

The material spans five hours and is divided as follows:

- Intro:
- 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nf3 e4 4.Ng5 f5 (3 segments)

- 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nf3 e4 4.Nfd2: (1 segment)
- 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nf3 e4 4.Ng1: (1 segment)
- 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nc3 exd4 4.Qxd4 (3 segments)
- 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.others (3 segments)
- 1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 Bg4 (5 segments)
- 1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.g3: (1 segment)
- 1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 g6 3rd Move Alternatives (1 segment)
- 1.d4 d6 2.Others: (3 segments)
- 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 f5 4.d4 e4 5.Bg5 (1 segment)
- 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 f5 4.g3 (1 segment)
- 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.g3 (1 segment)
- 1.Nf3 d6 2.g3 (1 segment)
- First Move Alternatives (1 segment)

Davies explains things in a way that makes it easy to understand. He discusses the aims for both sides and he gives you the impression that playing Black is almost easy. Not surprisingly, I found the coverage in some lines to be less than forthcoming in regards to the mischief that White can make, and as to the exact evaluations of certain positions, but only those who are very familiar with the English Opening as white or whose rating puts them beyond the target audience of this DVD will notice.

As with its sister volume, I really enjoyed this DVD. I am certain that a great variety of players will be able to benefit from the material and I am happy to recommend it. Now I will have to inspect the material even more closely, so as to still be able to win as white in the English Opening or with 1 d4.

My assessment of this DVD:

Order ***1...d6 Universal*** (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

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