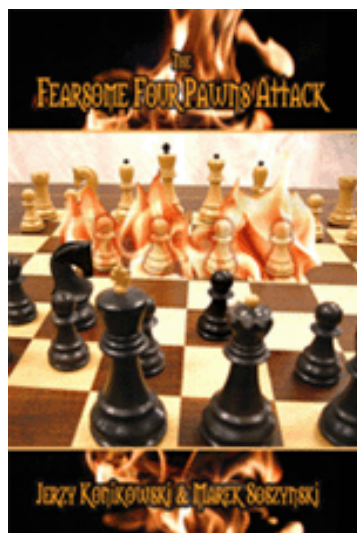




## COLUMNISTS

**Checkpoint**

Carsten Hansen

**Rating Chart**

♦ – A poor book.

♦♦ – Not very good.

♦♦♦ – A useful book.

**Reviewed this month:***Play the Ruy Lopez*

by Andrew Greet

*The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black*

by Sverre Johnsen and Leif Johannessen

*The Philidor Files*

by Christian Bauer

*Two Knights Defence (CD)*

by Reinhold Ripperger

***En Passant****My Best Games in the Petroff Defence (DVD)*

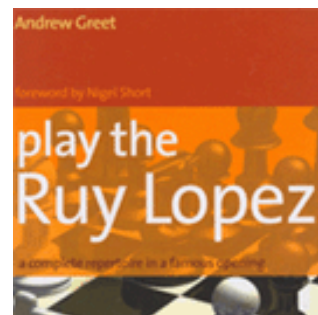
by Alexei Shirov

## Classic Choices

Fans of classical openings will have plenty to explore this month, as we hark back to the days when 1 e4 was almost exclusively answered by 1...e5. The first two books concern the Ruy Lopez (1 e4 e5 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5), one from White's perspective and the other from Black's. Next we feature a very attractive title on one of my favorite openings as Black, the Philidor Defense, and we finish with two digital releases from Ripperger and Shirov, respectively.

*Play the Ruy Lopez* by Andrew Greet, Everyman Chess 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 376pp., \$23.95

It is unusual for a chess book to span more than 300 pages, but then this is an extraordinary book. For starters, the author, a young British international master, has avoided all the main line theory by advocating the Worrall Attack (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3



♦♦♦♦ – **A good book.**

♦♦♦♦♦ – **An excellent book.**

Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 Qe2), a line that he had never played prior to writing this book. The book serves as the fruit of the author's research into a playable repertoire. Greet writes, "I have not held back any secrets, and I hope that this book will be viewed as one which will advance the theory of the lines covered."



The Worrall gained notoriety when Short used it with great effect in his 1992 candidates match against Karpov. In fact, Short has written the foreword to this book, where he makes the interesting admission:

"I will let you into a little secret: objectively speaking, Andrew's book is not the complete answer to White's search for a guaranteed opening advantage. That should not worry you though. The most important thing, at any level, is to know more than your opponent. By studying this book and understanding the ideas, and not just attempting to remember precise sequences of moves, you will be very well placed."

This is an important point, one does not need to memorize everything, one only needs to know enough to get a playable position that you understand better than your opponent. Let's look at one of Short's games against Karpov, as annotated by Greet in the introduction:

### ***Nigel Short - Anatoly Karpov***

World Championship Candidates Semi-Final (8) Linares, 1992

#### **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Qe2**

Nigel employs an alternative move order in order to eliminate the possibility of Black developing his bishop on c5. For more details about the subtleties of move order, please refer to Nigel's Foreword and the introduction to Part 3. [CH: It can be added that Nigel was certain that Karpov wouldn't play 5...Nxe4, as 5...Be7 had been a mainstay in Karpov's repertoire for decades, while the former hadn't been featured at all.]

#### **6...b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3 d6**

8...d5 is the other option, for which see Chapters 25-27.

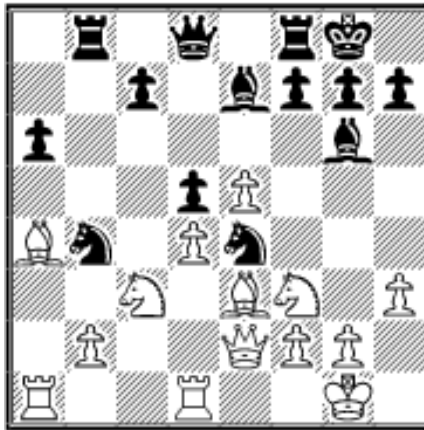
#### **9.d4**

This works perfectly in the present game, but I recommend the alternative 9.Rd1 in Chapters 23 and 24. Nigel himself opted for this path (N.Short-J.Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1997) although the final result was not so favourable for him on that occasion.

#### **9...Bg4 10.Rd1 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 Ne4 13.a4 bxa4?!**

13...b4 was more challenging, as mentioned by Nigel in the Foreword.

#### **14.Bxa4 Nb4 15.h3 Bh5 16.Nc3 Bg6 17.Be3 Rb8**



### **18.Na2!**

The key move of the entire game; once the b4-knight is eliminated, Black will have a hard time covering his queenside weaknesses.

**18...c5 19.dxc5 Nxc5 20.Nxb4 Rxb4 21.Bc6! Qb8**

If 21...Be4 then White can maintain the pressure with 22.Ng5!.

**22.Bxd5 Rxb2 23.Qc4 Rc2?!**

White enjoys a clear advantage due to his excellent piece coordination, and even a world-class defender such as Karpov is unable to withstand the pressure. 23...Rb4 would have given better defensive chances.

**24.Qg4 Qc7 25.Nd4**

White's beautifully centralized pieces make a powerful impression, and it is not long before he converts his positional advantage into a material one. Nigel executes the following phase of the game almost flawlessly, and the game is over in just eleven more moves.

**25...Rc3 26.Nc6 Re8 27.Bd4 Rc2 28.Nb4! Rd8 29.Nxc2 Bxc2 30.e6 Bf8**

30...f6 would have been refuted by 31.Bxf6 Bxf6 32.e7+.

**31.exf7+ Kh8 32.Re1 Bg6**

In case of 32...Rxd5, there is the beautiful finish 33.Re8 Qxf7 34.Qxg7+! Qxg7 35.Rxf8 mate.

**33.Re8 Rxe8 34.fxe8Q Bxe8 35.Bxc5 Bxc5 36.Qe6** and Black resigned.

The material is divided as follows:

- Introduction (8 pages)
- **Part One: Variations without 3...a6**
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Unusual Third Moves (8 pages)
- 2 Fianchetto Defence (3...g6) (10 pages)

- 3 Cozio Defence (3...Nge7) (18 pages)
- 4 Steinitz Defence (3...d6) (25 pages)
- 5 Bird Defence (3...Nd4) (21 pages)
- 6 Classical Variation (3...Bc5) (16 pages)
- 7 Schliemann Variation (3...f5) (20 pages)
- 8 Berlin Defence (3...Nf6) (13 pages)
- **Part Two: 3...a6 4 Ba4: Fourth Move Alternatives**
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 9 Unusual Fourth Moves (4 pages)
- 10 Deferred Fianchetto (4...g6) (3 pages)
- 11 Deferred Cozio (4...Nge7) (4 pages)
- 12 Deferred Classical (4...Bc5) (8 pages)
- 13 Deferred Schliemann (4...f5) (14 pages)
- 14 4...b5 5 Bb3: Unusual Fifth Moves (3 pages)
- 15 Norwegian Variation (4...b5 5 Bb3 Na5) (14 pages)
- 16 Deferred Steinitz (4...d6) without 6...f6 (16 pages)
- 17 Deferred Steinitz (4...d6): 6...f6 (21 pages)
- **Part Three: Worrall System (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 Qe2)**
- Introduction (3 pages)
- 18 Unusual Fifth Moves (9 pages)
- 19 Black delays ...b5 (11 pages)
- 20 5...b5 6 Bb3: Unusual Sixth Moves (5 pages)
- 21 Anti-5 Qe2 Variation: 6...Bc5 (18 pages)
- 22 6...Be7 7 0-0: Unusual Seventh and Eight Moves (4 pages)
- 23 Closed Worrall (7...0-0 8 c3 d6 9 Rd1): Introduction (16 pages)
- 24 Closed Worrall (7...0-0 8 c3 d6 9 Rd1): 9...Na5 (20 pages)
- 25 Open Worrall (7...0-0 8 c3 d5 9 d3): Introduction (17 pages)
- 26 Open Worrall (7...0-0 8 c3 d5 9 d3): 9...Bb7 (17 pages)
- 27 Open Worrall (7...0-0 8 c3 d5 9 d3): 9...Re8 (12 pages)
- Index of Variations (4 pages)

While the above list is intimidatingly long, it isn't nearly as bad as it looks, because Greet has chosen systems that do not require an overwhelming amount of memorization. So a good solid understanding will take you quite far. Of course, some lines need to be committed to memory, but, in general, he has chosen simpler lines that still carry a significant punch. Along the way, Greet injects a fair amount of his own ideas and analysis, such as when he recommends 4 Nxe5 in the Classical Variation (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Bc5). This line has been more or less condemned as an incorrect attempt to create something for White, but Greet makes a relatively convincing case for it and has even tested it himself over-the-board.

Overall, the author's original input is quite impressive, and when you add his disarming honesty and humorous interjections to the numerous explanations of strategic, positional and tactical ideas, it makes for an excellent opening book that will serve a broad range of players. I hope this book finds a wide audience, it certainly deserves it.

My assessment of this book: 

**Order *Play the Ruy Lopez***

by Andrew Greet

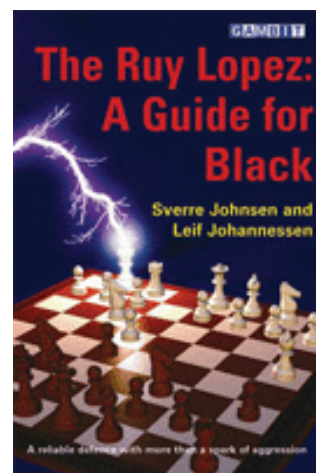
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*The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black* by Sverre Johnsen and Leif Johannessen, Gambit Publications 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 207pp., \$28.95

This book by Norwegian grandmaster Johannessen and his compatriot Johnsen presents a Black repertoire in the Ruy Lopez focusing in particular on the Zaitsev Variation.

The material is divided as follows:

- Prefaces (17 pages)
- **Part 1: Introduction** (6 sections - 25 pages)
- **Part 2: The Main Battleground** (3 pages)
  - 1 The Zaitsev Main Line (31 pages)
  - 2 The 17...c4 Zaitsev (9 page)
  - 3 Other Zaitsev Lines (16 pages)
  - 4 Regrouping System (15 pages)
- **Part 3: White Ducks the Challenge** (1 page)
- 6 Rare 8th and 9th Moves (23 pages)
- 7 5th and 6th Move Alternatives (19 pages)
- **Part 4: Exchange Variations** (3 pages)
  - 8 The Exchange Variations (16 pages)
  - 9 Delayed Exchange Variations (11 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)



The well-written preface and introduction serve as inspiration to take up the opening, but the first couple of chapters are intimidating when you realize that many lines don't start independently until around move twenty and there are often half a dozen alternatives to choose between. This is positively scary for the average player. Thankfully, the book also covers early deviations from the main line, including the Exchange Variation (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Bxc6), the Delayed Exchange Variation (4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Bxc6), the Central Attack (5 d4), the Worrall Attack (5 Qe2 or 6 Qe2) and many other lines that have a following at club level.

The book is amazingly thorough, with ample amounts of properly

referenced analysis, suggestions, and improvements over existing theory, loads of original analysis, and plenty of explanatory prose to support the variations. The author provides detailed descriptions of the strategies and long-term plans for both sides. Moreover, the illustrative games are expertly annotated and provide further material for the student to gain an understanding of the opening.

I highly recommend this book to players who are serious about their opening repertoires and about improving their overall game.

**My assessment of this book:** 

***The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black***  
by Sverre Johnsen and Leif Johannessen

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*The Philidor Files* by Christian Bauer, Everyman Chess 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 304pp., \$23.95

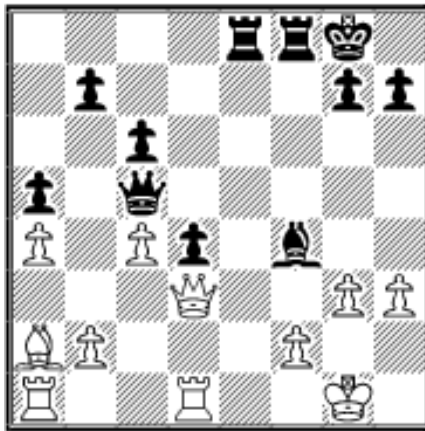
To be honest, I am quite jealous of grandmaster Bauer, because it was my dream to write the ultimate book on this opening. Even though I was beaten to the punch, I am happy that it was by someone who is truly a Philidor fan. He regularly plays the opening and he is not afraid to explore its sidelines.

Let's take a brief look at a game that highlights Black's potential for active counterplay, sans annotations:



***Yu Shaoteng (2542) - Christian Bauer (2599)***  
France-China match (Paris) 2006

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.a4 c6 8.  
Ba2 a5 9.Qe2 exd4 10.Nxd4 Nc5 11.Rd1 Qb6 12.h3 Be6 13.Nxe6  
fxe6 14.e5 Nd5 15.exd6 Bxd6 16.Nxd5 exd5 17.c4 Rae8 18.Be3 Bf4  
19.Bxc5 Qxc5 20.Qd3 d4 21.g3?**



21...Be3!! 22.Rf1 Rxf2 23.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 24.Kxf2 Re3 25.Qf1 Qe5 26. c5+ Kh8 27.Kg1 Rxc3+ 28.Kh1 Qe4+ 29.Kh2 Rf3 30.Qe1 Re3 31. Qf1 Re2+ 32.Kg3 Qe3+ 0-1

The material is divided as follows:

- Introduction (5 pages)
- **Part 1: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6**
- 1 Early Deviations (34 pages)
- 2 3 d4 exd4: Introduction and Larsen's Variation (39 pages)
- 3 Antoshin's Variation: Introduction (26 pages)
- 4 Antoshin's Variation: 6 Bf4 (23 pages)
- **Part 2: 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6**
- 5 Early Deviations and 3 f3 (15 pages)
- 6 3 Bd3 (17 pages)
- 7 3 Nc3 e5 (11 pages)
- 8 3 Nc3 Nbd7: Introduction and 4 f4 (22 pages)
- 9 3 Nc3 Nbd7 4 g4 (10 pages)
- **Part 3: The Philidor Hanham Variation (1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nbd7 4 Nf3 e5)**
- 10 Introduction and 5 g4 (11 pages)
- 11 5 Bc4: Introduction and Bxf7+ Lines (14 pages)
- 12 Main Line: 7 Qe2 and 7 a4 (15 pages)
- 13 Main Line: 8 Re1 without 8...b6 (33 pages)
- 14 Main Line: 8 Re1 b6 (19 pages)
- Final Thoughts (2 pages)
- Index of Variations (4 pages)

Here again, we have a massive 300+ page book, and this one on an offbeat opening. Hopefully this is the beginning of a trend where authors are allowed sufficient space to cover what they need in detail, so that the reader does not get shortchanged in the end. That said, some chapters seem a bit longer than they ought to be, mostly because Bauer often quotes entire games, when he could have stopped after move 15 or 20.

It appears that Bauer has put a great deal of his own ideas and analysis into the book; however, I found several instances where something that looks like a new idea from the author has actually been played before. Here is an example:



**1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.f4 e5 5.Nf3 exd4 6.Qxd4 c6 7.Be3 d5 8.exd5 Bc5**



Now Bauer writes: “9.Qd2 [CH: 9 Qe3 is his main line.] looks suspicious, but matters aren’t so clear: 9...Qe7 10.Nd4 Ng4 (10... Nxd5 11.Nxd5 cxd5, and here 12. Nf5 should be slightly better for White) 11.0–0–0 Qxe3 (11...Nxe3!?) 12.Re1 0–0 13.Rxe3 Qf6) 12.Re1 Bxd4 13.Nd1 Qxe1 14.Qxe1+, and now 14...Kd8 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.Qa5 + Bb6 17.Qg5+ Ngf6 18.Qxg7, or 14...Kf8 15.dxc6 (15.d6!?) 15...bxc6

16.Qe4. In both cases Black has rook, bishop and knight versus queen and two pawns, but he experiences difficulties coordinating his forces.”

Black does indeed have serious problems at hand. In the last line (14... Kf8), one line runs: 16...Bc5 17.Qxc6 Rb8 18.Ba6 Ke7 19.Bxc8 (also 19.Re1+ is very good) 19...Rhxc8 20.Re1+ Kd8 21.Qd5, and Black’s king is still stuck in the middle of the board, while White is fully developed and can expect to pick up further material. After 14...Kd8, White is also much better, e.g. 18...Rf8 19.g3 Bb7 20.Bc4.

Finally, the line that looks like it is a suggestion for an improvement “11...Nxe3!?) 12.Re1 0–0 13.Rxe3 Qf6,” turns out to have been played in the game Chernysov-Jovanovic, Szombathely 2003, where the idea didn’t bring Black much success: 14.Re4 Nb6 15.Nb3 (also 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.Nb3 Bd6 17.Rd4 Be7 18.Ne4 Qg6 19.Nd6 is very good) 15... cxd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Nxc5 Qc6 18.Re5 Nf6 19.Nb3 Bg4 20.Bb5 Qc7 21.Rhe1, and Black has absolutely no compensation for the lost pawn. Suggesting the move without analyzing it any further is an unacceptable shortcut.

Still, Bauer makes a fair share of original suggestions supported by his own analysis; as with any title, the reader should employ due diligence by analyzing the author’s recommendations before putting them into practice. Overall, the variety of lines and the inclusion of alternative move orders make this a worthy effort.

**My assessment of this book:** 

**Order *The Philidor Files***

by Christian Bauer



*Two Knights Defence* (CD) by Reinhold Ripperger, ChessCoach 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$23.95

This CD is similar to those published by ChessBase, but it is in fact self-published by the author. The Two Knights Defense arises after the moves 1 e5 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6, and there is any number of fascinating lines to choose between: the Max-Lange Attack, the Traxler Counter Gambit, the Fritz Variation, the Fried Liver Attack, and the Berlin Variation to name just a few. These have been subjected to a nearly endless amount of analysis over the last decade, even with computer assistance, yet countless new ideas and improvements continue to be found. If you enjoy tactical play, you will undoubtedly benefit from testing these lines, but there are plenty of positional lines as well; for example, 4 d3, instead of 4 Ng5.



The seven main texts of the CD are in English and German and are reasonably well-written; although the English isn't perfect, it is passable. However, I assume that most authors would have used more texts for the individual lines. There are 361 games linked into the texts, all of which have been annotated by Ripperger. Yet, he seldom quotes other sources for analysis and commentary, and there is no accompanying bibliography. I always find this disturbing, especially when the author is relatively unknown. He also tends to make random recommendations that are not substantiated by subsequent analysis.

The games usually contain a great deal of variations with very little prose, and the English in the game annotations is sketchier than in the texts. Often both languages appear next to one another as follows: "Better is Besser ist," but sometimes the German phrase comes first, and other times only one language is displayed (mostly German), and then there are times when the English comments don't resemble what was written in German. This is all very odd.

Most of the games are somewhat recent, but there are only two games from 2005-2006. This indicates that the majority of the work is likely a couple of years old, which makes some of the coverage unacceptably dated. Certainly, the material in the Traxler Wilkes-Barre variation seems out of touch with the most recent analysis published in the *New in Chess Yearbooks*.

This CD can be used as a decent introduction to the Two Knights Defense, but stronger players will find it wanting in regards to the latest analysis.

## My assessment of this CD:



### Order *Two Knights Defence* (CD)

by Reinhold Ripperger

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*My Best Games in the Petroff Defence* (DVD) by Alexei Shirov,  
ChessBase 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Running Time: 5+  
hours, \$34.95

The material on this DVD is divided into four parts:

- Intro & 4 Nxf7?! (1 game)
- Part 1: 3.d4 (5 games)
- Part 2: 3.Nxe5 and 5.Nc3 (3 games)
- Part 3: 3.Nxe5 and 5.d4 (4 games)

Shirov begins by explaining that the Petroff's reputation as a boring opening is undeserved, and that it has potential for so much more. As evidence, he shows the blitz game Short-Shirov, Dubai 2002, where White went for the Cochrane Gambit (1 e4 e5 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nxf7). Shirov relates how he studied the opening carefully and found that White has a hard time equalizing, he then quickly demonstrates how Black can achieve a winning position right from the opening.




As with earlier volumes in this series, Shirov rarely looks directly at the camera, yet his sense of humor is intact and he is quite funny, both when sharing anecdotes and delivering the material. Surprisingly, Shirov admits to having a bad score in this opening, with either color, and tells how he tends to overpress as White and that, as Black, he lost “an incredible amount of games” in his youth.

Overall the material is very good and provides excellent insights into the workings of this opening. The performance seems unscripted in that Shirov has the analysis of the games on a sheet of paper next to him, and he doesn't appear to give much thought to his dialogue. There are commentators so comfortable in front of the camera that it seems like second-nature, but Shirov is not one of them.

Still, I still enjoyed viewing this DVD. It provides a fine introduction to the Petroff and the viewer is bound to learn plenty about all the phases of the game and about chess in general. The viewer gains an insight

into how the strongest players prepare for games, how they think during the games, and which psychological decisions are made in regards to their opponents. Recommended viewing.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

[Order](#) *My Best Games in the Petroff  
Defence (DVD)*  
by Alexei Shirov

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