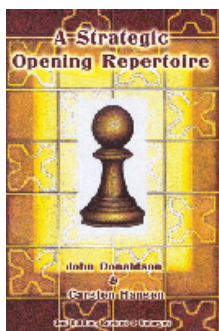




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Rating Chart

- ♦ – A poor book
- ♦♦ – Not very good
- ♦♦♦ – A useful book
- ♦♦♦♦ – A good book
- ♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book

CHESSTHEATRE

Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).



Reviewed this month:

7 Ways to Smash the Sicilian
by Yuri Lapshun & Nick Conticello

The New Sicilian Dragon
by Simon Williams

B33 Lasker Sveshnikov Sicilian Defence
by Aleksandar Matanovic et al

En Passant

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 92
by Genna Sosonko et al

Smash the Sicilian, Please

It was just in [July 2009](#) that I tallied the number of works that I have reviewed on the Sicilian Defense to be more than seventy. Now four months later, I can add another four titles to the count. So in line with the first title to be reviewed below: Smash the Sicilian, please.

7 Ways to Smash the Sicilian by Yuri Lapshun and Nick Conticello, Everyman Chess 2009, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 190pp., \$24.95

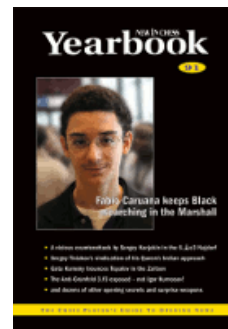
Last year I [reviewed](#) a book on 1 b4 by these same authors, and I didn't particularly like it. Now they are back with a decidedly different type of work; one that focuses on a number of typical sacrifices in the Sicilian Defense. In the introduction they present it as follows: "The sacrifices we will examine in separate chapters are those involving Nd5, Nxe6, Bxe6, Nf5, N (x)b5, and B(x)b5. The seventh chapter will consider Bd5, Rxf6 and other miscellaneous sacrifices, including queen ones. We did not, however, think it necessary to include any examples of a Rxh5 sacrifice, as this idea is now common in all sorts of openings, not just the Sicilian. (If you really want to see some examples of Rxh5, just curl up with a copy of Fischer's *My 60 Memorable Games* and study his victories over Larsen and Gligoric.)"



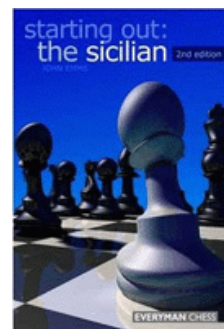
They continue with the following interesting statement: "Why devote an entire book to piece sacrifices in the Open Sicilian, you may ask. The reason is quite simple: *without a full understanding of these ideas you cannot win with White in this opening!*"

That is a rather bold point to make, especially since it isn't even close to being true. Sure, understanding these sacrifices will help you score some points, and if are the type who only plays the sharpest lines and always seek lines where White castles queenside, then understanding these sacrifices will score you a lot of points. Nevertheless, White can also play lines where he castles kingside and, for the players with such a positional repertoire, understanding these sacrifices will be of much less importance. Therefore, to claim to you cannot win as white without a full understanding of these ideas is false.

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NIC Yearbook #91
by Genna Sosonko



Starting Out: The Sicilian (2nd ed.)
by John Emms



Rybka 3
by ChessBase

All of the above sacrifices are relevant to the Sicilian, but others can be included as well. For example, Rxh5 in the Dragon Variation; yet, as they pointed out in the quote above, it can come from other openings too. Still, what about Black's ...Rxc3 sacrifice, if White doesn't understand it and know when it will work for Black and when it will not, then he might as well forget about studying the other sacrifices, because he may never get around to making his own sacrifices.

Before moving on, let's look at how the material is divided:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Introduction (5 pages)
- The Knight Sacrifice on d5 (31 pages)
- The Knight Sacrifice on e6 (24 pages)
- The Bishop Sacrifice on e6 (23 page)
- The Knight Sacrifice on f5 (29 pages)
- The Knight Sacrifice on b5 (23 pages)
- The Bishop Sacrifice on b5 (20 pages)
- Miscellaneous Sacrifices (16 pages)
- Index of Variations (8 pages)
- Index of Games (4 pages)

Certainly these sacrifices are relevant to understanding and playing the sharp lines of the Sicilian, but the question is how the ideas are communicated and illustrated. One of the things I didn't like about the previous work by these two authors was the quality of the analysis, and quality control would seem to still be an issue, but here it arises under different circumstances. As I browsed through the book, I came across the game reference Pedersen-Hallmeyer, Denmark 1973. Since I come from Denmark, I was surprised that I did not recognize the name of the player with the black pieces. I ran a database search and came up with nothing. However, I suspected the player in question to be Peter Gallmayer, and indeed a database search turns up Pedersen – Gallmayer, Denmark corr DSU, 1971.

The issue regarding the spelling of the name is relatively easy to explain, the source of the game came from material that was translated from Russian, making an original "G" into an "H." Reading the notes to the game, I surmised that it came from the excellent *The Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence* by Geller, Gligoric, Kavalek and Spassky, and was then curious to see to what extent the authors followed Geller's annotations, given the fact that they had not bothered to correct the misspelling of one of the player's names or find the first name of the other.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 b5 8.e5 dxe5 9.fxe5 Qc7 10.exf6 Qe5+ 11.Be2 Qxg5 12.0-0 Qe5

Here the authors refer to a game with 12...Ra7 between Leko-Ghaem Maghami that they are present in the next example.

13.Bf3 Ra7 14.Nc6 Qc5+?!

"14...Nxc6 15.Bxc6+ Bd7 16.Bxd7+ Rxd7 17.Qf3 Bd6! is the right way, as pointed out by Geller. He considers 18.Qh3 best, but then 18...b4! 19.fxg7 (19 Nd5? Qxd5 20 fxg7 Qd4+) 19...Rg8 20.Qxh7 Qxh2+ 21.Qxh2 Bxh2+ 22. Kxh2 bxc3 is assessed by him as 'no worse' for Black."

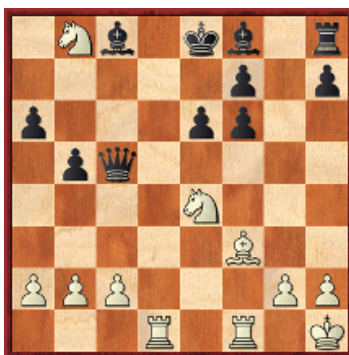
This would be all fine and dandy if either statement was correct. Let's start with the last mistake first: 20...Rxc7 (instead of 20...Qxh2+) wins for Black as I managed to spot even without a computer's help 21.Qh8+ is met by 21... Bf8, after which White cannot move the knight because of 22...Rxc2+ and Black wins the queen on h8; and the retreat 21.Qh3 loses a piece immediately to 21...bxc3. This is a rather stunning and surprising oversight. Secondly, Geller didn't consider 18 Qh3 to be best. In the book he wrote: "18 Ne4. The sharpest and strongest continuation. The threat is 19 fxg7 and 20 Nf6+, which is fairly unpleasant, but by 18...Qxh2+ 19.Kf2 Qe5! [CH: also of interest is 19...Be5!?, e.g., 20.fxg7 Bxc7 21.Rad1 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Qh4+ 23.Kg1 0-0, and Black has an extra pawn and the better chances], Black can obtain counter-

chances. For example, 20.g3 (if 20.fxg7 then 20...Bc5+ 21.Ke2 Rg8, and the threat of 22...f5 gives Black the initiative) 20...0-0 with a double-edged game." In my opinion, which obviously counts for less than Geller's, Black is better. This line definitely represents a better chance for White than the one that loses for White given by Lapshun and Conticello.

15.Kh1 Rd7

Here the authors only give "15...Nxc6 16.Ne4 and the threat of fxg7 and Nd6 + leave Black in a mess, such as after 16...Qd4 17.Nd6+! Qxd6 18.fxg7," which is a line given by Geller in the Najdorf book, but not attributed to him here. A far more interesting line was also offered by Geller: 16...Qb6 17.fxg7 Bxg7 18.Nd6+ Ke7 19.Bxc6 f5, and now White goes all in with 20.Nxf5+ exf5 21.Re1+ Kf6 22.Qd6+ Kg5, and here Geller concludes his analysis with the comment "White has a very strong attack." This can be confirmed by a line such as 23.h4+ Kxh4 24.Qf4+ Kh5 25.Bf3+ Kg6 26.Qg3+ Kf6 27.Rad1, and Black is struggling to get his pieces coordinated without losing too much material in the process.

16.Nxb8! Rxd1 17.Raxd1 gxf6 18.Ne4



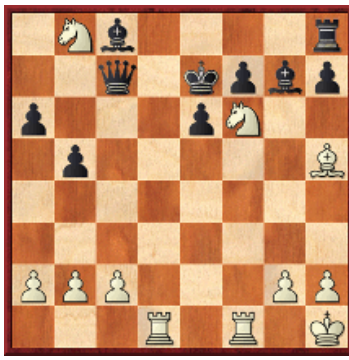
"Black has but one saving move..."

18...Qc7?

"But this is not it. Correct is 18...Qf5! 19.Nxf6+ Qxf6 20.Bc6+ Ke7 21.Rxf6 Kxf6 22.Nd7+ Bxd7 23.Rxd7 Be7 24.Be4 h6 25.Bd3 Rd8 with a virtually certain draw (analysis by Geller)." So here they give Geller credit for the analysis, but do not quote his assessment which goes as follows: "an endgame has arisen which is more favourable for White, but the bishops of opposite colour give Black hope of a draw."

It could also be added that 18...Qf5 has actually been tested in a subsequent game, which can be found using a database search on the position after 18.Ne4. The game, Ugilin-Hudovski, Yugoslavia corr 1979, also concluded in spectacular fashion: 19.Ng3! Qe5 [19...Qc5 is better and leads to a fascinating endgame that is at best marginally better for White: 20.Bc6+ Ke7 21.Nf5+! exf5 22.Rfe1+ Qe5 23.Bf3! (threatening Nc6+) 23...Qxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Kd6 25.c3 Kc7, and Black will start developing his pieces.] 20.Bc6+ Ke7 21.Rfe1 Qf4 22.Nf5+ Qxf5 23.Be4 Qf4?? (Obviously 23...Qxe4 24.Rxe4 f5 is obligatory, in this case Black would be worse but still in a position to fight. Now, however, the game is over...) 24.Nc6+ Ke8 25.Rd8 mate!

19.Nxf6+ Ke7 20.Bh5! Bg7



"Black avoids mate by 20...Qxb8 21.Ng8+ Rxb8 22.Rxf7+ Ke8 23.Rg7."

21.Nc6+! Qxc6

It should be added that 21...Kf8 is met by the devastating 22.Nd7+! with mate to follow (if you don't see it, try to work it out for yourself).

22.Ng8+! Ke8 23.Bxf7+ Kf8 24.Rd8+ 1-0

"This beautiful game, commended by the editors of *Informator*, is almost forgotten today. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*" (Thus passes the glory of the world).

So, with the above example in mind, we can conclude that the authors

- did not check the names of the players involved.
- quote analysis without proper attribution, and sometimes incorrectly.
- do not check the analysis; thus, repeating analytical blunders by others.

Perhaps this evaluation is somewhat harsh, as it might not apply to the entire book, but there are too many flaws in this one example. I was also annoyed that in chapter four they spent six examples on the line 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. Is this line really so crucial to the understanding of knight sacrifices on f5? I don't think so. Another thing is that the games in this chapter were rather old, the most recent dating back to 1996 and 1993 respectively. More recent relevant examples include Khalifman-van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2002 or Azarov-Jobava, Kemer ECC 2007 just to mention two.

There are occasional bolts of brilliance and sporadic excellent analysis, but the book is not particularly well-written and parts of it seem rushed, where neither the analysis nor prose is particularly inspired. The topics and the title for the book are well-chosen, but the rest falls short. While the book could have been better, it will undoubtedly be beneficial to players employing the Open Sicilian as white.

My assessment of this book: ❖❖

Order 7 Ways to Smash the Sicilian

by Yuri Lapshun & Nick Conticello

The New Sicilian Dragon by Simon Williams, Everyman Chess 2009, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 224pp., \$24.95

"What is the new Sicilian Dragon?" you ask. I know this, because I asked myself that same question. According to this book, it is the new hybrid between the Dragon and the Najdorf, the so-called Dragadorf, which was also the topic of a recent DVD by Andrew Martin. In my opinion, the author of this volume is the person who really put this opening on the map, chiefly because he played it against Shirov:





1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 a6 8.Qd2
Nbd7 9.0-0-0 b5 10.g4 Bb7 11.g5 Nh5 12.Nce2 Nb6 13.Ng3 Nxc3 14.hxc3
d5! 15.exd5?! Qxd5 16.b3 Qe5! 17.f4 Qd6 18.Bg2 Nd5 19.Bxd5 Bxd5 20.
Rhe1 Qa3+?! 21.Kb1 0-0 22.Qd3 Rfd8 23.Bc1 Qc5 24.Bb2 Bb7 25.Qe3
Rd7 26.Rd3 Rad8 27.Red1



27...e5?

27...a5! would have left Black with an advantage.

28.fxe5 Qxe5 29.Qxe5 Bxe5 30.Ne6 Rxd3 31.cxd3 fxe6 32.Bxe5 Be4 33.
Kc2 Bf5 34.Kc3 a5 35.a4 Rc8+ 36.Kd4 b4 37.Ke3 Rc2 38.Kf3 h5??

38...Rc5 draws without too many problems whereas Black now is lost. Time trouble...

39.gxh6 g5 40.g4 Bg6 41.Ke3 Rc5 42.Bg7 Rc8 43.Kd2! e5 44.Bxe5 Bf7 45.
Rf1 Bxb3 46.Rf5 Bxa4 47.Rxg5+ Kh7 48.Bf4 Rg8 49.Rxa5 Be8 50.Ra7+
Kg6 51.Re7 Rf8 52.Rg7+ Kf6 53.Bg5+ Ke5 54.h7 1-0

The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (10 pages)
- The Main Line: An early Bc4 (29 pages)
- The Main Line: Queenside Castling with g4 and h4 (26 pages)
- The Main Line: Queenside Castling and a quick Bh6 (15 pages)
- The Main Line: Positional Tries and Early Deviations (19 pages)
- The Accelerated Dragadorf (43 pages)
- Classical Lines for White (34 pages)
- Less Common Lines for White (29 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Games (2 pages)

As you can see, there is plenty of coverage on the Dragadorf. Even in last couple of chapters, which do not pertain to the main lines of the Dragadorf, the author has tried to include lines for Black where ...a6 and ...Nbd7 are played. The presentation of the material is based on main games with theory, explanatory prose, discussion of typical ideas and strategies being weaved into the annotations of the overall sixty-two main games.

Williams is an entertaining writer, which makes it a breeze to work your way through this book. In addition to the annotations, there is also a great deal of original analysis and improvements over existing theory, so that the book takes the theory a bit further than its current state. While the book is a bit long for a variation of such limited magnitude, Williams has done a good job of balancing the material in each line, while giving a little extra space where its needed.

All of the above give this book a wider potential audience than most opening books these days. Players rated 1600 or so will be benefit from this book, as

will players rated up to 2400. This is a very good book on a relatively rare line that avoids the massive waves of theory in one of the sharpest Sicilian lines.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *The New Sicilian Dragon*

by Simon Williams

B33 Lasker Sveshnikov Sicilian Defence by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.,
Sahovski Informator 2009, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 320pp.,
\$32.95

In contrast to earlier monographs published by Informant, this volume does not have a named author. It is wholly devoted to the theory of ECO code B33: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5, which is the traditional way of entering the Sveshnikov Sicilian. After the further 6 Ndb5 d6, the main line continues with 7 Bg5 a6 8 Na3 b5, when the two main continuations are 9 Nd5 and 9 Bxf6 gxf6 10 Nd5.



The material is divided as follows:

- Code System (3 pages)
- Classification of Openings (1 page)
- B33 (226 pages)
- 100 Selected Games (62 pages)
- Index (32 pages)

These lines have been ridiculously popular in top level chess for several years, and even though it is not seen as frequently in the games of the highest rated players, the line has never been refuted and still has a large following at grandmaster and international master level.

The material in this book is presented encyclopedia-style and annotated in Informator-style. This of course means language-less signs and symbols, which, according to one of my non-chess-playing colleagues, makes for a scary-looking book.

The book is incredibly detailed and contains an obscene amount of game references, which are, rather amazingly, all logged meticulously in the index at the end of the book. One thing that is missing is a bibliography. It is evident from the many references to analysis by players such as Rogozenko that they have used his book from a few years back as a source for many of the lines attributed to him.

This book is so complicated, and so loaded with theory on one line, that only those rated higher than 2100-2300 will benefit from this work. It is a tough book, with a very limited audience, and sadly the vast majority of the material is from existing sources.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦

Order *B33 Lasker Sveshnikov Sicilian Defence*

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 92 by Genna Sosonko et al, Interchess BV 2009,
Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 246pp., \$29.95

The [previous edition](#) of the *New In Chess Yearbook*,
put together by the editorial team of Genna Sosonko,



René Olthof, and Peter Boel, was one of the best volumes in the history of the series. And with this issue, they do it again!

The material is divided as follows:

- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- Forum and Sosonko's Corner
- Forum (12 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (6 pages)
- Surveys (33 surveys – 211 pages)
- Service
- Book Reviews (6 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)



The contributors this time include Peter Heine Nielsen, Sherbakov (who wrote an excellent survey on the Najdorf), Volokitin, Motylev, Kuzmin, Avrukh, Vitiugov, Gutman, Moskalenko, and Mikhalevski, just to mention a few. However, many well-known players and opening specialists have participated in the group effort that is required to make this volume match that of the previous one.

While these yearbooks are mostly for strong and ambitious players, they can most definitely be read by just about anyone for pleasure or practical use.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

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by Genna Sosonko et al

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