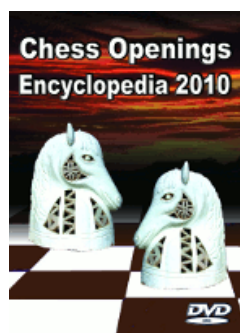




## COLUMNISTS

## Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



## Rating Chart

- ♦ – Poor
- ♦♦ – Useful
- ♦♦♦ – Good
- ♦♦♦♦ – Excellent

## CHESTHEATRE

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



## Reviewed this Month

*Alekhine Alert!*  
by Timothy Taylor

*Starting Out: Open Games*  
by Glenn Flear

*Find the Right Plan with Anatoly Karpov*  
by Anatoly Karpov & Anatoly Matsukevich

## En Passant

*New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 95*  
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

## New Ground

This month we break new ground by including a non-opening book: *Find the Right Plan with Anatoly Karpov*. This used to be one of my favorite books as a teenager. Below you can see whether my fond memories proved to be an accurate representation of how I evaluate chess books nowadays.

*Alekhine Alert! – A Repertoire for Black against 1 e4* by Timothy Taylor, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 285pp. \$27.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$22.95 )

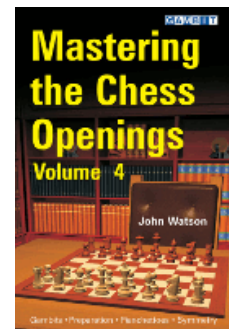
American international master Timothy Taylor is undoubtedly one of today's most entertaining opening book authors. His books are enjoyable, but not always flawless. He tends to focus on sidelines that are infrequent topics in mainstream literature, and then gives them the Taylor "twist and tweak" to make them more appealing to the reader. Sometimes it works, sometimes not quite as intended. In this volume, he presents a repertoire for Black in the Alekhine Defense: **1 e4 Nf6**.

The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Introduction (5 pages)
- World Champions Play Alekhine's Defence - Our Hero Alekhine (23 pages)
- Modern Variation 1: The White Pawn Wedge – Our Hero: Bagirov (17 pages)
- Modern Variation 2: A Danish/Latvian Co-Production – Our Hero: Kengis (32 pages)
- Modern Variation 3: Vikings Board the Alekhine Longboat – Our Hero: Carlsen (34 pages)
- Exchange Variation: The Ox is not a Scary Animal – Our Hero: Larsen (34 pages)
- The Four Pawns Attack – Fracture Him! – Our Hero: Sergeev (30 pages)
- The Chase Variation – Back to the Centre – Our Hero: Korchnoi (26 pages)



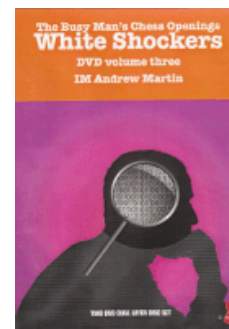
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by John Watson



[Guide to the Tkachiev  
Ruy Lopez](#)  
by Alexei Shirov




[Busy Man's Chess Openings:  
White Shockers](#)  
by Andrew Martin

- Fourth or Fifth Move Sidelines – Our Hero: Vaganian (16 pages)
- Third Move Sidelines – Our Hero: Varga (14 pages)
- Alekhine Declined - Our Hero: Taylor (36 pages)
- Repertoire and Final Note (1 page)
- Index of Variations (6 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (5 pages)

True to his nature, Taylor writes what he feels about each line, for better or worse. For instance, in chapter four, Black ends up with a solid, but passive position in Taylor's repertoire recommendation. Rather than making up an evaluation that is overly optimistic, he writes, "So one might say, why play Alekhine's Defence if this is the best you can do? Well, first of all, it's not that bad: I've let Fritz run for all the time I've been writing this note, and all it gives is that White has slightly the better of '=', that is, about 0.25 plus for White, or a quarter of a pawn. So if White knows his stuff, and plays in Anand/Kasparov style, he can get a quarter of a point advantage? Can't even make it to plus equals? That's not too tragic a road, nor is it that different from defending a more popular opening such as a main line Ruy. But yes, one must say that the resulting position is on the cheerless side, and Black can only play to equalize gradually and draw. If everyone played like Anand, then perhaps I could not recommend the Alekhine – but since the great majority of non-GM opponents play 'junk', then I think a little suffering for a draw in the main lines is acceptable."

Such honesty is rarely seen by any author in any kind of repertoire book. The book as a whole is typical of Taylor: non-traditional, provocative, entertaining, and mostly good. You can disagree with some of his statements and analysis, as well as some of the choices of lines for Black, but for the most part, Taylor is thinking about what is practical for his readers and not necessarily what theory considers the most accurate, particularly if the lines in question would be boring or sterile.

If you play the Alekhine as black and you are rated up to around 2200, you should definitely consider this book. If I fell into that category, I would buy it.

**My assessment of this book: **

**[Order Alekhine Alert!](#)**

by Timothy Taylor

*Starting Out: Open Games* by Glenn Flear, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 318pp. \$27.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$21.95)

I have reviewed no less than thirty-two titles in the *Starting Out* series since it commenced in 2002. The quality has generally been very good, though the approach chosen by the many different authors has varied tremendously.

The present volume covers the Open Game, which arises after **1 e4 e5**. This is undoubtedly the most frequently played opening between beginning players, and one that the author, English grandmaster Glenn Flear, has played since he was a child.



The contents are divided as follows:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Introduction to 1 e4 e5 (4 pages)
- The Quiet Italian (24 pages)
- Two Knights Defence (35 pages)
- Evans Gambit and Giuoco Italian (29 pages)
- Four Knights Game (24 pages)
- Scotch Game (25 pages)
- Central Gambits (18 pages)

- King's Gambit (25 pages)
- Vienna Game (24 pages)
- Other White Systems (20 pages)
- Black Avoids 2...Nc6 – Introduction (10 pages)
- Philidor's Defence (22 pages)
- Petroff's Defence (40 pages)
- Index of Variations (9 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (3 pages)

Rather bizarrely, the Spanish Opening or the Ruy Lopez, 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 is not covered in this volume. We never really get a proper explanation as to why the Spanish was excluded, though it was probably because of space restrictions.

Each chapter begins with a general introduction of the openings that are covered. There follows the sub-chapters; for instance, chapter six has sub-chapters on the Danish Gambit, the Goring Gambit, the Scotch Gambit, and the Urusov Gambit. Each sub-chapter then has a very brief overview of strategy and whether it is particularly theory laden. Some of these overviews are pointless because they are so brief that they really don't offer anything of significance. However, Flear more than makes up for that in his selection and annotation of main games. The annotations are kept relatively light, but have the right balance of theoretical coverage, analysis, and prose. The theory has been boiled down to what is relevant and thus not more than the reader needs to know; just enough to give a view of where the main alternatives can lead. The analysis is minimal, but this too is done very well. Flear only covers the obvious alternatives that would cause most players to wonder about the consequences, and when one player makes a bad move, he analyzes the better alternative. Finally, the prose is perfect. Flear like any experienced coach knows what to explain and what to omit. The book is better for this very reason.

The sixty-eight main games represent all aspects of the Open Games with regards to relevancy to beginning players. The games feature players from various levels and different eras. The games are by no means perfect, but they represent chess as it is played, with ups and down, change of advantages, blunders, and much more.

In many ways, this book has everything an inexperienced player can ask for. I, despite being a lot stronger than the target audience, rather enjoyed reading it. Any player below 1700 who plays 1 e4 as white or answers it with 1...e5 will learn a lot about the finesses and strategies in these openings. Buy this book, even if it doesn't cover the Spanish Opening.

**My assessment of this book:** ♦♦♦♦

**Order *Starting Out: Open Games***

by Glenn Flear

*Find the Right Plan with Anatoly Karpov* by Anatoly Karpov & Anatoly Matsukevich, Batsford 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 254pp. \$22.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$18.95)

One of my favorite books from my teenage years was the German volume *Stellungsbeurteilung und Plan*. My hope in reviewing the English edition was to share my excitement for the book. However, upon receiving it, I soon realized that my memory was rosier than reality.

The contents are divided as follows:

- A correct plan is the route to success (2 pages)
- Chapter One: With the sources (14 pages)
- Chapter Two: Evaluation a position. Reference



- points (14 pages)
- Chapter Three: The attractiveness of a concrete goal (16 pages)
- Chapter Four: Reference point – Open line (17 pages)
- Chapter Five: Pawn Structure. Weak and strong squares (29 pages)
- Chapter Six: The centre and space (25 pages)
- Chapter Seven: The most important law of chess (112 pages)
- Seven bases for restriction (4 pages)
- A lasso for the knight (14 pages)
- The bishop hunt (19 pages)
- How difficult it is to be a rook (19 pages)
- The queen: thorns and roses (25 pages)
- The obstinate pawn (7 pages)
- Kings under arrest (9 pages)
- Zugzwang (14 pages)
- Solutions (17 pages)
- Index of players of games (4 pages)

As you can see from the title and the contents, this book is supposed to be about the elements of positional evaluation and how to form a plan. Yet, it also contains a number of unconnected, confusing, and sometimes irrelevant topics that have nothing to do with this. Solving endgame studies can help you improve your game, but I don't think they should be included in a book of this type. It also has segments of opening disasters, which, while entertaining, have no relevance to the topic on hand. Nor do the authors clarify the benefit to the reader from playing through these short games, all of which are twelve moves or less.

The back cover tells us "The legendary Anatoly Karpov has won over 250 Grandmaster tournaments, many more than any other player in chess history. His games are characterized by the gradual and patient pushing of an opponent back to the wall, before finally finishing him off with a deadly blow. In this unique book, aimed at ordinary club players, Karpov gives a wealth of tips on how to incorporate this dramatic style of play into your own repertoire, through rigorous planning and evaluation of positions: looking at the fire-power of your forces, being aware of threats to your own king and how to safeguard it, and strategic control of open files. Warmly and accessibly written, but with Karpov's usual air of authority, this book makes you feel as if you are spending an evening with the man himself, and will help you absorb a little bit of the Karpov magic."

This sounds fantastic, and the principles presented in this volume are quite useful for the average player to improve their ability to evaluate a position and create a viable plan. However, words alone cannot reveal the entire picture. The choice of illustrative games is significant and the games presented here are poorly annotated, weak moves are seldom identified and proper analysis is rare.

In comparison to the German edition, the authors have added a number of additional games, though none of them are annotated well, and some seem to have been added simply to convey that the book is of a more recent vintage than is actually the case. The more I look at the book, the more disappointed I become, and this really irks me.

The only decent section is on the Karlsbad structure in the Queen's Gambit, but this stands largely unaltered from the 1987 German edition, with the most recent example being from 1975! I came to understand the fundamentals of the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation from this chapter and many other players could gain a deeper understanding of the pawn structure affiliated with this opening by the examples given here. However, it should have at least been computer checked, because some of the analysis is begging to be refuted.

The bottom line is that this is a very flawed book. The translation is uneven at times, the examples largely old and unsupported by proper annotations and analysis, and it is loaded with irrelevant topics and examples that do not belong in a book of this type. Not to mention that there are numerous typos, including misspelled names and locations. There is very little "Karpov magic" in this book. Of the books that bear Karpov's name on the cover, this is clearly

the worst. I cannot recommend this book to anyone.

### My assessment of this book: ❖

#### Order *Find the Right Plan with Anatoly Karpov*

by Anatoly Karpov & Anatoly Matsukevich

*New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 95* by Genna Sosonko (ed), Interchess BV 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 246pp. \$29.95

Once again, it is time for a new volume in this long-running series from our Dutch friends. The material is divided as follows:

- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- Your Variations (2 pages)
- Forum and Sosonko's Corner
- Forum (13 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (5 pages)
- Surveys (32 surveys – 212 pages)
- Service
- Book Reviews (6 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)



The Forum is the section where readers can submit their own games and ideas. This time the spectrum of submissions vary from grandmasters to amateurs, and the analysis reflects it. In one case, an enthusiastic reader suggests an apparently interesting piece sacrifice for black in the Budapest Gambit, but, as Moskalenko points out in a reply, White doesn't have to accept the sacrifice, leaving Black without compensation. In other submissions, there are improvements over some previously published analysis and quite a few entries from Managing Editor Peter Boel.

In "Sosonko's Corner," Genna Sosonko takes a look at some peculiar opening play in the Fantasy Variation of the Caro-Kann: **1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3**, including the fascinating continuation **3...Qb6 4 a4!? e5 5 dxe5 dxe4 6 a5 Qc7 7 f4!** as played in Nepomniachtchi-Jobava, Rijeka 2010.




[FEN "rnb1kbnr/ppq2ppp/2p5/P3P3/4pP2//8/1PP3PP/RNBQKBNR b KQkq - 0 7"]

In the Survey section, there are no less than three surveys on the Najdorf Sicilian, whereas most other openings are only represented with one or two surveys in widely different lines. Interesting, however, is the fact that the Nimzo-Indian is credited with two surveys, but, as a matter of fact, both lines are considered part of the Queen's Gambit: the lines in question are the Ragozin and Vienna Variations.

To round it all off, the volume closes with Glenn Flear's book review column, which is definitely worth reading. The New In Chess Yearbooks are generally aimed at an audience of, say, 2000 and up. If you are rated below that threshold, it can be difficult to glean the most from the material, as there is little supporting prose to the analysis. However, ambitious players should not

let this deter them.

**My assessment of this book:** 

*New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 95*  
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

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