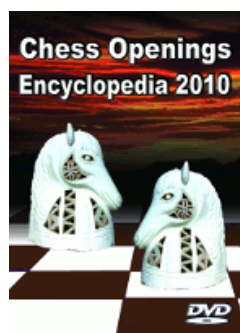




## COLUMNISTS

### Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



#### Rating Chart

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



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



#### Reviewed this Month

*Chess Informant, Volume 107*  
by Zdenko Krnic (ed.)

*The Modern Philidor Defence*  
by Vladimir Barsky

*The French Defence,  
A Complete Black Repertoire*  
by Nikita Vitiugov

*The Busy Man's Chess Openings, Vol. 3:  
White Shockers*  
by Andrew Martin

## Special Circumstances

It is sad news to hear that Zdenko Krnic, the editor of Chess Informant, died in a tragic hit-and-run accident. Krnic was the person who instituted many of the changes to the format of this well-respected publication. As a long-time fan and avid reader of Chess Informant, I hope that the publication will recover from this blow to their organization. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and colleagues. In this column, we will take a look at the most recent volume in this series of yearbooks. On a personal note, I was only able to complete this column because I happened to bring these items with me on a business trip. While I was away the three-story garage attached to my apartment building collapsed and the time-line for repair is now mid-November.

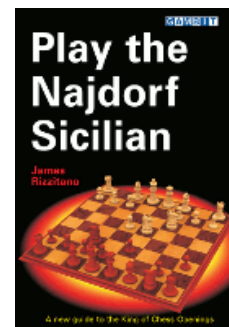
*Chess Informant, Vol. 107* by Zdenko Krnic (ed), Sahovski Informator 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 300pp. \$35.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$31.95)

As per usual, the material is divided as follows:

- Contributors (2 pages)
- The best ten games for the preceding Volume (2 pages)
- The ten most important theoretical novelties of the preceding volume (6 pages)
- System of Signs (3 pages)
- Opening Classification (6 pages)
- A (16 + 13 pages)
- B (29 + 27 pages)
- C (17 + 7 pages)
- D (32 + 17 pages)
- E (11 + 14 pages)
- Index [of Players] (9 pages)
- Commentators (1 page)
- Combinations (6 pages)
- Endings (8 pages)
- Studies (3 pages)
- Tournaments (17 pages)
- Modern Chess Theory (10 pages)
- The Best of Chess Informant – Magnus Carlsen (28 pages)



Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



*Play the Sicilian Najdorf*  
by James Rizzitano



*1.d4, A Classical  
Repertoire for White*  
by Lubomir Ftacnik



*Secrets of Opening Surprises*  
by Jeroen Bosch

- Chess Informant Informations (3 pages)

In comparison to the previous volume, the number of games annotated by the editorial staff ("RR") has dropped from 114 to 100, which is a positive development. Instead, they seem to have employed a couple of players to cover some of the important developments in certain openings. For instance, grandmaster Mikhalevich annotates several games in the Grünfeld and international master Visconze da Silva covers a few other openings. This improvement puts a recognizable name behind the annotations and suggestions. Moreover, the annotations are of very good quality. I hope that this trend continues and that more players will be employed to handle other sections to make the annotations by the editorial staff a much smaller part of the overall product. The Modern Chess Theory section is considerably shorter (by no less than twenty-five pages), but the material in other sections is a bit longer, bringing this volume in with seventeen fewer pages.

This volume features 736 games (295 full games and 441 fragments). Yet, the total number of games published in a year used to be higher, even when they were publishing just two volumes per year. Nowadays, given that there are more top tournaments, the overall pool of games should be much larger than in the past. Of course, with fewer contributors, it puts a heavy burden of the team behind the yearbook, but it seems to me that our friends in Belgrade should be able to manage it.

Still, this volume, as with previous ones, contains plenty of material for those interested in the latest theoretical development and for students who want diverse study material that includes annotated games, combination puzzles, endgame puzzles, and endgame studies. Therefore, this will be of use to a wide variety of players.

**My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦**

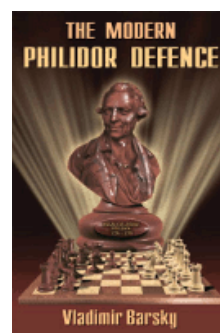
**Order [Chess Informant #107](#)**

by Zdenko Krnic (ed.)

*The Modern Philidor Defence* by Vladimir Barsky, Chess Stars 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 224pp. \$26.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$21.95)

In [March 2010](#), I reviewed the useful [The Scotch Game for White](#) by Barsky. Similarly, this is a repertoire book in the typical Chess Stars format of a Quick Repertoire, Step by Step Repertoire, and a section of complete games.

Barsky brings more passion for his topic in this book; however, the translation frequently becomes more colorful than could possibly have been intended by the author, and at other times the sentence constructions are just bizarre. Still, you will rarely misconstrue the author's intent.



The Philidor Defense normally arises after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6, but if Black's intention is to reach the Improved Hanham Variation, 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Nbd7 followed by 5...Be7, he will have to deal with the annoying 4 dxe5 Nxe4 5 Qd5, which is considered better for White. Therefore, we have seen the move order 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 e5 endorsed in several books, including [The Black Lion](#) (which was reviewed in August 2009). This has the advantage of avoiding the above-mentioned critical line and the exchange variation, 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Qxd8+ Kxd8 is fairly harmless for Black. It is also the move order preferred by Barsky; thus, the name *The Modern Philidor Defence*.

The material is divided as follows:

- 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6

- 3 Nd2; 3 f3; 3 Bd3 (48 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 without 4 dxe5 and 4 Nf3 (25 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 Qxd8+ Kxd8 (33 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 Nbd7 without 5 Bc4 (21 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 Nbd7 5 Bc4 Be7 6 Bxf7+; 6 Ng5; 6 dxe5 (22 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 Nbd7 5 Bc4 Be7 6 0-0 0-0 without 7 Re1 (33 pages)
- 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 Nbd7 5 Bc4 Be7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Re1 (33 pages)

Each section consist of a Quick Repertoire, Step by Step, and Complete Games sub-chapters. However, it is quite surprising that he spends forty-eight pages (almost twenty-one percent of the the book) on the relatively unimportant first chapter. This makes very little sense. The space could have been much better spent analyzing the main lines in much deeper detail. That said, most of the lines are covered adequately. There is a rather large number of complete games, fifty in total, and some are analyzed in considerable more detail than others.

Below is a representative game. I chose it for a number of reasons:

- I encouraged the player with the black pieces to take up the Philidor.
- I played the same line against the player with the white pieces in an earlier game (which I won).
- The game is an example of how sharp play can become if both players are up for it.

I have quoted everything as it is presented in the book, which will give you a look at the poor quality of the translation, as well as the almost humorous punctuation practices of the translator. My comments are in brackets.

**Jens Kristiansen (2455) - Steffen Pedersen (2405)**  
Aalborg 1995

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Qe2 exd4 8.Nxd4 Ne5 9.Bb3 c5 10.Nf5 Bxf5 11.exf5 Qd7**



[FEN "r4rk1/pp1qbppp/3p1n2/2p1nP2/8/1BN5/PPP1QPPP/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 12"]

**12.f4 Nc6 13.g4 d5 14.g5 c4 15.gxf6 Bxf6 16.Ba4 Qxf5 17.Qg2 Ne7 18.Ne2 b5 19.Bxb5 Qxc2 20.Nc3 Qxg2+ 21.Kxg2 Rfd8 22.Ba4 Rab8 23.Bd1 g6 24.a4 Nf5**



[FEN "r1r2k1/p4p1p/5bp1/3p1n2/P1p2P2/2N5/1P4KP/R1BB1R2 w - - 0 25"]

[CH: This is where the theoretical coverage in the theory section ends with the evaluation: "White has problems completing his development and coordinating his forces."]

## 25.a5

This is a very useful move, because three white pieces can occupy the freed a4-square. His attempt to try some active actions on the kingside would have backfired after: 25.Bg4 Nh4+ 26.Kg3 h5 27.Bf3 (But not 27.Bh3?, in view of 27...d4 28.Ne4 Rb3+.) 27...Nf5+ [CH: 27...Nxf3 28.Rxf3 d4 29.Ne4 Bg7 also looks rather good for Black] 28.Kh3 Rb3 [CH: This is just strange; Black is better after 28...d4 29.Ne4 Bg7] 29.Bd1 Rbb8, and White must either repeat moves, or he would need to go back to the plan with a4-a5, but with the loss of some tempi.

## 25...d4 26.Ne4 Bg7 27.Ra4

This is a reasonable decision, because the rook was idle on the a1-square.

## 27...Re8 28.Ng3

White fails to preserve his knight on its dominant in the centre of the board: 28.Bf3? Nh4+ 29.Kg3 Nxf3 30.Kxf3 Rb3+ and he loses a piece.

## 28...Nd6



[FEN "1r2r1k1/p4pbp/3n2p1/P7/R1pp1P2/6N1/1P4KP/2BB1R2 w - - 0 29"]

## 29.Bf3

It deserved attention for him to play 29.f5, in order to liven up a bit his bishop on c1.

## 29...d3

Black forces his opponent's pieces to take care of the protection of the b2-pawn.

## 30.Ra2 f5

He creates an outpost for his knight and restricts the mobility of the enemy knight on g3 in the process.

## 31.Bd5+ Kh8 32.Rd1 Re7 33.Kf1 Rb5

Black has better attack the enemy bishop and not the knight with - 33...h5. [CH: I disagree, after 34.Re1 Rbe8 35.Rxe7 Rxe7, Black is better.] He misplays completely the position and enables his opponent to bring his king into the fight against the passed pawn.

## 34.Bc6 Rb4 35.Re1

White exploits the fact that his opponent cannot play a restricting move of the type – Rb8-e8 and crosses with his king the important e-file.

### 35...Rxe1+

It was stronger for Black to play 35...Rc7 36.Bf3 Rb8, preserving more pieces on the board.

### 36.Kxe1



[FEN "7k/p5bp/2Bn2p1/P4p2/1rp2P2/3p2N1/RP5P/2B1K3 b - - 0 36"]

### 36...c3!?

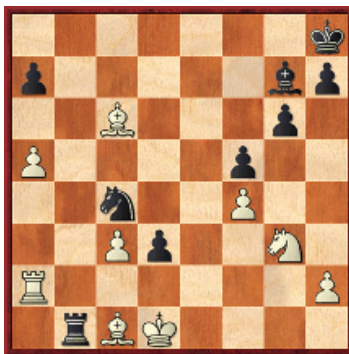
Generally speaking, this was just an adventure, but suddenly it ended up successfully. If Black had played in a calmer fashion, he would have hardly survived, for example: 36...a6 37.Kd1 Bf6 38.Nf1 Kg7 39.Ra4 with a clear advantage for White.

### 37.bxc3 Rb1 38.Kd1?

White was probably in a time-trouble, so he succumbed in the complications. He had to continue with 38.Kd2 Bh6 (38...Nc4+ 39.Kxd3 Rxc1 40.Kxc4 (40. Ne2!) 40...Rxc3+ 41.Kb5) 39.Ba3 Nc4+ 40.Kxd3 Nxa3 41.Rxa3 Bxf4 42.Ra4 with excellent winning chances.

### 38...Nc4

It is objectively stronger for Black to play 38...Bxc3 39.Bd5 d2 40.Rxd2 Bxd2 41.Kxd2 Rb5 42.Be6 Kg7 (42...Rxa5?? 43.Bb2+) 43.Ba3 Kf6 and he would have a slight edge [CH: This is definitely inaccurate; after 44.Bg8, Black will not have anything better than 44...Kg7 45.Be6 Kf6 46.Bg8 with a repetition of moves] (He would soon capture the a5-pawn and his rook and two pawns should be stronger in that endgame than White's two light pieces.), but realizing it would be hardly possible, because White's bishop would be very powerful in this open position. His task to find the move, which would have saved him in a time-trouble, was not easy either.



[FEN "7k/p5bp/2B3p1/P4p2/2n2P2/2Pp2N1/R6P/1rBK4 w - - 0 39"]

### 39.Nf1?

As could be expected, White failed to find the brilliant resource 39.Ne4! – he would not only prevent the move d3-d2, but would protect his c3-pawn in the process. Black cannot win 39...Ne3+ (After 39...fxe4 40.Bxe4 – the d3-pawn




is pinned and White will capture it on the next move. [CH: Not true: 40...Ne3 + 41.Kd2 Nf1+ 42.Kd1 Ne3+ is a draw]) 40.Kd2 Nf1+ 41.Kd1 fxe4 42.Bxe4 Bxc3 43.Bxd3 Ne3+ 44.Ke2 Rxc1 45.Kxe3=.

### 39...Bxc3

It is finished now – Black's pieces are all over the enemy king.

### 40.Bd5 Nb2+ 0–1

As you can see, the annotations are decent, but not flawless. The same can be said of the book as a whole. The author offers a fair amount of original analysis, some quite good and some that can be improved upon. Nevertheless, the book is a worthwhile addition on the topic. If you already own some of the more recent titles on the topic, it is not a must-buy. If you are ready to find a new opening for Black against 1 e4, this book could be a good place to start.

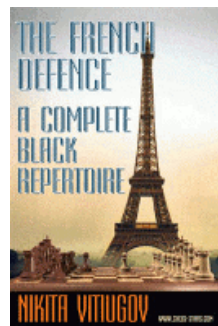
**My assessment of this book:** 

**Order [The Modern Philidor Defence](#)**

by Vladimir Barsky

*The French Defence, A Complete Black Repertoire* by Nikita Vitiugov, Chess Stars 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 228pp., \$26.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$21.95)

The author of this volume first came to prominence with his win in the Russian Higher League in 2007. Since then, he has been on a step by step journey towards the top of the chess world. On the live rating list, he is currently rated 2722. He has a bronze medal from the Russian Superfinal 2009, and is currently a member of the Russian team that won the World Team Championship. On top of that, the twenty-three-year old is often on the black side of the French Defense, which is conveniently the topic of the present book.




The material is divided as follows:

- Preface (3 pages)
- Part 1: White avoids the main lines – 1 e4 e6 (5 chapters – 21 pages)
- Part 2: The Advance Variation – 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Qb6 5 Nf3 Nc6 (5 chapters – 23 pages)
- Part 3: The Rubinstein Variation – 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nd7 (6 chapters – 47 pages)
- Part 4: The Morozevich Variation – 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Be7 (4 chapters – 35 pages)
- Part 5: The Tarrasch Variation with 3...c5 - 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 (4 chapters – 27 pages)
- Part 6: The Winawer Variation – 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 (4 chapters – 42 pages)
- Part 7: The Steinitz Variation - 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 (2 chapters – 23 pages)
- Afterword (1 page)

Against the Tarrasch variation, 3 Nd2, Vitiugov offers the solid 3...dxe4, the crazy and slightly dubious, according to the author, 3...Be7, and the best, also according to the author, 3...c5. Against 3 Nc3, Black can choose the solid 3...dxe4, the sharp 3...Bb4, or the dynamic and perfectly playable Classical 3...Nf6. Only against the Advance Variation, 3 e5, and the lesser lines, such as the King's Indian Attack and the Exchange Variation, does he offer only one line for Black. And he does keep it to the point, with fairly precise recommendations that do not stray far from the main line.

Meanwhile, the coverage in the other chapters is very impressive. The material is bang up-to-date with several examples from 2010. There are countless instances where he improves on existing analysis or recent games. In some cases he presents substantial original analysis, other times only a few moves, hinting that this is where players on one or the other side should look further. Note that the improvements are not only on the black side, he frequently points out where White can do better, only later to suggest where Black should probably vary from the main line.

The English translation is quite good by Chess Stars standards; at least, there doesn't appear to be any major linguistic collapses. It is quite clear that the author absolutely enjoyed writing this book and that makes it enjoyable to read as well. This book is a must-buy for French players and should also seriously be considered by 1 e4 players.

**My assessment of this book:** 

**Order [The French Defence:  
A Complete Black Repertoire](#)**

by Nikita Vitiugov

---

*The Busy Man's Chess Openings, Vol. 3: White Shockers* (two-DVD set) by Andrew Martin, Thinkers' Press 2010, Running time: approx. five hours, \$49.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$43.95)

If there is one person who is good at sifting through opening manuals and databases for interesting and dangerous ideas that are unassuming at first glance, but pack a solid punch, or look laughable, but are far from that once you know them, then it is definitely English international master Andrew Martin. Moreover, he is a very good presenter, with the good fortune of a great voice and a confidence instilling attitude.

The contents are divided as follows:

- The Ruy Lopez Exchange (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 Bxc6)
- Closed Sicilian Defense Extended (1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 g4)
- Prie's 1.a3 (1 a3 followed by a variety of set-ups including 2 c4, 2 d4 and 2 e4)
- Caro-Kann a la Short (1 e4 c6 2 Ne2)
- Scandinavian "new" (1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 Rb1)
- Old Speckled Hen (after a beer) (1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 g6 3 b4)
- Polar Bear (Reversed Leningrad Dutch) (1 f4 d5 2 Nf3 followed by 3 g3)

While the above list may look innocuous, the ideas definitely fit the mold of "shockers." They are sometimes radical, sometimes bizarre, and some look mildly ridiculous, but in each case Martin presents a decent case for why they can be employed with success. In many cases he shows very strong or fairly strong players utilizing this interesting mix of openings. For obvious reasons, these lines are not opening repertoire mainstays, but they will definitely serve as excellent surprise weapons.

*White Shockers* can be viewed on any DVD player. However, the sound is a little scratchy at times, particularly at the beginning of the first DVD and you don't see Martin on screen at any time during the presentation of the material. Also, some of the games feature fairly bad play on the black side, and only infrequently does Martin discuss the strongest moves in detail. This would leave White in dangerous territory if Black happened to know what he is doing.

Overall, the openings are entertaining; they will certainly create interesting and unusual games that may baffle your opponents and allow you to achieve good positions right out of the opening. Though the price for the product is fairly high, particularly considering it is "only" a DVD presentation, with no

compatibility to any kind of chess database.

**My assessment of this book:** ♠♠

**Order [The Busy Man's Chess Openings, Vol. 3:](#)**  
**[White Shockers](#)**  
by Andrew Martin

---

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

---

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE  
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)  
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)  
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.