

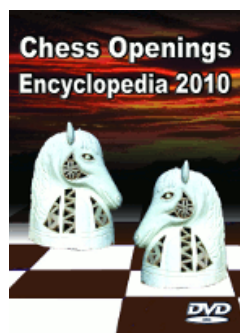


COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

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Rating Chart

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

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Reviewed this Month

*The Alterman Gambit Guide:
White Gambits*
by Boris Alterman

How to Win at Chess - Quickly!
by Simon Williams

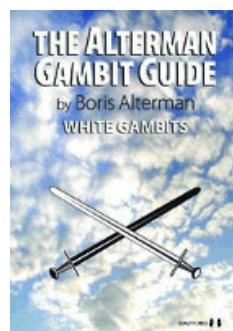
Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol.12
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

Surprise, Surprise!

In the opening phase of the game there are few things that rate as highly as springing a surprise opening variation on your opponent. It gives you a psychological head start, and your opponent is often immediately put under pressure. An opening surprise can come in all shapes and sizes; for instance, you can adopt an opening that you seldom play or you can choose a sharp gambit or an offbeat line. The books that we will look at in this month's column will mainly cater to those seeking the last two options: gambits and offbeat lines.

The Alterman Gambit Guide: White Gambits by Boris Alterman, Quality Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 448pp. \$29.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$24.95)

Israeli grandmaster Boris Alterman has been a member of both the Israeli team for the chess Olympiad and part of the team behind the Deep Junior chess engine that drew a match with Kasparov and defeated Radjabov. As far as I'm aware this is his first book.



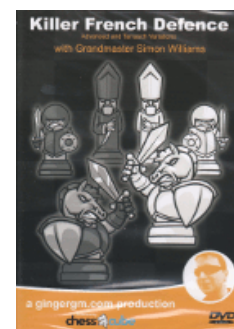
In the introduction, Alterman repeats the age-old assertion that chess is ninety-nine percent tactics and that playing Open Games (1 e4 e5) and gambits is good for developing your understanding of piece play and open positions. The book is based in large part on a number of lectures that Alterman made on an Internet playing server titled "Gambit Guide." Alterman tells us, "For this reason I also practiced the gambits in my ICC blitz and simultaneous events. By playing the gambits I had the chance to demonstrate the most important ideas behind the opening moves and explain the purpose of playing this or that move. Many of the games in this book were played between me and ICC members (some of them not so highly rated!) and these games have the purpose of showing the most typical mistakes and how to punish them."

He further states that he hopes study of the book will teach the readers tactics and typical combinations in the opening, how to study the principals of attack, and that the readers will use this book as a starting point when putting a repertoire together.

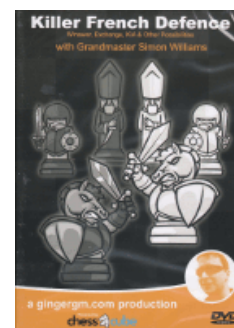
The material is divided as follows:

- Acknowledgements, Bibliography & Key to symbols used (1 page)

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*Killer French Defence,
Part One*
by Simon Williams



*Killer French Defence,
Part One*
by Simon Williams

THE CUTTING EDGE
Milos Pavlovic
The Open Sicilian 1



*The Cutting Edge 1:
The Open Sicilian 1*
by Milos Pavlovic

- Foreword by the Author (2 pages)
- The Danish Gambit (38 pages)
- The Urusov Gambit (34 pages)
- The Philidor (38 pages)
- The Cochrane Gambit (42 pages)
- The Morphy Attack (44 pages)
- The Max Lange Attack (28 pages)
- The Evans Gambit (72 pages)
- The Panov Attack (64 pages)
- The Morra Gambit (42 pages)
- The Milner-Barry Attack (34 pages)
- Games Index (2 pages)
- Variations Index (4 pages)

As you can see, the vast majority of the openings covered are from 1 e4 e5 openings, with one line discussed from each of the Caro-Kann (though the Panov Attack can't really be considered a gambit), Sicilian, and French Defenses. This is entirely in line with Alterman's principles for young and starting out players who are still developing their skills and understanding of chess.

Each chapter is structured with an introduction, illustrative games, a segment on "What we have learned," Theoretical Overview, and some Tests and Solutions. However, the chapters are never fully alike in structure or in the depth of the material presented, some seem to just skim the surface, such as the chapter on the Danish Gambit, others dig considerably deeper and cover more themes, have more recent games, thorough annotations, and so on.

The quality of the games also have to be called into question, I know that Alterman indicated that some of the games are used to illustrate typical ideas, mistakes, and combinations, but in my opinion this could be done in the annotations to the games rather than devoting a main game featuring poor play by one side, such as when black is meeting the Danish Gambit: 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 c3 dxc3 4 Bc4 cxb2 5 Bxb2, with 5...Qg5. Some of the games are even anonymous, which leads me to believe that the game was constructed for illustrative purposes.

In the chapter on the Morra Gambit, too much space is invested in examples where Black defends poorly, rather than presenting Black's strongest set-ups, many of which are not even hinted at. I supposed it could have been useful for the author to consult some of the more recent literature on these openings rather than just Kasparov's My Great Predecessors series and a stack of older books, the most recent of which seems to be the modern classic by Razuvaev and Murakhveri on Akiva Rubinstein.

While the book is thoroughly entertaining, it is mostly written for players below a rating of 1800; stronger players will find that too many critical lines are not covered in sufficient detail for it to work as a reference guide on the variation in question.

The book also seems to be unnecessarily long, which of course has something to do with the many, many games that have been included without any real reason in mind other than to show a pretty combination at the end. Another contributing factor to the length of the book is the use of a single-column format.

The book does accomplish what it set out to do and it is reasonably priced, but it could have been much better if more attention was given to the critical lines in which Black defends properly.

My assessment of this book: ❖❖

Order [The Alterman Gambit Guide: White Gambits](#)

by Boris Alterman

How to Win at Chess – Quickly! by Simon Williams, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 192pp. \$26.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$21.95)

The purpose of the present book is something along the line of squashing your opponent like a bug, preferably as quickly as possible. Though I have won my share of quick games over the years, I'm more a follower of the late Simon Webb's line of thinking in [*Chess for Tigers*](#): it doesn't matter how long it takes, as long as I win. However, a quick win is rarely something anyone will object to, and if you can put yourself in a better position by following Williams's guidelines, all the better.



The material is divided as follows:

- Introduction (8 pages)
- The Exposed King (24 pages)
- Exploiting an Advantage in Development (24 pages)
- Punishing the Pawn-Grabbers (20 pages)
- Gambit Play (24 pages)
- Play with Purpose! (25 pages)
- Crossed Wires (15 pages)
- Missing the Danger (18 pages)
- Unnecessary Pawn Moves (13 pages)
- Super h-pawn Power (14 pages)
- Index of Openings (1 page)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

In the Introduction, Williams lays out the foundation for his theory on how to win, and to avoid being on the losing side of, games in twenty-five moves or fewer, often referred to as miniatures:

"How and why do some chess players win their games in a much shorter time than others? Is it because they're lucky? Is it something to do with their style of play? Or maybe their opponents are just playing weak moves and making a lot of mistakes in the opening?

"I suspect that many players would love to be able to finish off their opponents in double quick time, maybe through a brilliant attack or a crafty trap that wins material. Well, this book aims to look at how and why players manage to win in under 25 moves.

"It is often a combination of factors that lets a player win quickly. After all, a player tends to make his own luck. He does this by picking the right opening and causing his opponent as many problems as possible, especially by throwing them on to their own resources at an early stage. Indeed, your style of play will have a big impact on the way that the game develops. If you play a slightly risky opening then you will have a better chance of winning quickly, but on the flipside you may also increase your chance of losing quickly. Indeed, you have to be wary about how you approach a game. It is often a good idea to take a bit of a gamble, but usually you must choose the right opponent to take this gamble against.

"Despite all of the above, it is still not easy to win in under 25 moves unless your opponent helps you. That is why during the course of this book I have concentrated on how the winner has ruthlessly punished his opponent's mistakes. We will also try to see why one side lost in under 25 moves and what can be learnt from the loser's mistakes. Indeed, having carefully selected the games and highlighted just what the key mistakes were, I hope that the reader will find each game a simple but instructive lesson. After all, we don't want to repeat the same mistakes!"

He then lists the most common mistakes that cause one side to lose such a game:

- A lack of awareness of the opponent's moves/plans.
- Reacting badly to an opening surprise.
- Playing without a plan.
- Playing into the opponent's hands.
- Defending too passively.
- Missing the critical moment.
- Forgetting chess basics.

Each one of these errors is elaborated in detail, but, in my opinion, the vast majority of miniatures fall under the "forgetting chess basics" category, such as getting too far behind in development, leaving an exposed king in the center, and so on. There are many excellent examples in the book, including quite a few of Williams's own games. This is a plus in that the reader gets to see that the author practices what he preaches.

The following game is from the chapter "Gambit Play." The annotations are selected from those in the book:

M. Hebden – S. Williams

Amersham 2009

"Next we will see me playing an old and rather forgotten idea, selected to get my opponent out of his comfort zone. Mark Hebden is happy in many positions, but he is not always so happy when the position becomes complicated. Moreover, this game was a morning affair, so both of us were still trying to wake up!"

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d5

"The problem with the move I usually play, 2...g6, is that Hebden is the world's leading expert on the Barry Attack which would arise after 3 Nc3. Moreover, this can lead to very dry positions; just the type of game that I was trying to avoid."

3 c4 e6 4 Bg5 dxc4

"I do not normally play this variation, but this was one game where my preparation worked out perfectly."

5 Nc3

"I would not be surprised if Hebden switches to the safer 5 Qa4+ after this game, rather than debate the main line Botvinnik."

5...c6 6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6 8 Bh4 g5 9 Nxg5 Nd5!?



[FEN "mbqkb1r/p4p2/2p1p2p/1p1nP1N1/2p3B/2N5/PP3PPP/R2QKB1R w KQkq - 0 10"]

"This is an old move which has not been played at the highest level for a long time. Black sacrifices the exchange in order to get an active and messy position. I suspect that this approach would completely throw a lot of people in White's shoes, as happens here. They are far more likely to be expecting 9...hxg5 when play normally continues 10 Bxg5 Nbd7 11 exf6 Bb7 12 g3 c5 13 d5 Qb6 14 Bg2 0-0-0 15 0-0 b4 with an exciting and very theoretical game.

10 Nxf7?!

"White bravely accepts the challenge. This is the best move and the only way to try and refute Black's set-up, but Hebden was not familiar with the position and it may well have been a better idea to have continued in a safer fashion. Again my marking of White's move as bad is purely on psychological reasons.

The safer 10 Nf3 is roughly equal. Black should aim to attack White's queenside as quickly as possible with 10...Qa5 11 Qd2 and now 11...Bb4 looks tempting. Black certainly has pressure on the queenside, but he is quite weak on the kingside.

10...Qxh4 11 Nxh8 Bb4 12 Qd2

"Hebden took a long time over this move which was a sign that he was out of his preparation and this gave game me a good deal of confidence.

[CH: at this juncture, he analyzes 12 Rc1! At length.]

12...c5!

"I must play actively.

13 dxc5

"A much better idea was 13 0-0-0 with a complicated game ahead, such as after 13...Nc6 14 dxc5 Nxe5 25 f4!.

13...Nd7

"Black's pieces are starting to come to life. My knight want t jump into the game via c5 or e5 and my light-squared bishop will find a great diagonal from b7.

14 Be2 Nxe5 15 0-0?

"A bad decision; the white king walk's straight into the attack. Instead 15 g3 Qf6 16 f4 Nd3+ 17 Bxd3 cxd3 18 Qxd3 Qxh8 would have been roughly equal.

15...Bb7

"The main threat is 16...Nf4 with 17...Qh3! to follow. An amazing idea.

16 f4

"This allows my dark-squared bishop to enter the game with deadly effect, but the alternatives could have been even worse: for example, 16 Rad1 Nf4 17 a3? Qh3!! and White cannot stop checkmate.

16...Bxc5+

"All of Black's pieces are attacking and White is already lost.

17 Kh1 Ne3!

"This unleashes the bishop on b7. 17...Be3 was also very strong, as shown by the possible continuation 18 Qe1 Nxf4! 19 Qxh4 Bxg2 mate.

18 Bf3

"Other moves do not help White's cause either:

18 fxe5 Bxg2+ 19 Kg1 Nxf1+ 20 Kxg2 Qxh2 and Black can capture White's queen at will.

I was amazed to find 18 Rf3 had actually been played in a previous game! White is still completely lost after 18...N3g4.

18...N3g4 0-1



[FEN "r3k2N/pb6/4p2p/1pP1n3/1bp2Pnq/2N2B2/PP1Q2PP/R4RK1 w q - 0 18"]

"White resigned here as he cannot stop checkmate: 19 g3 (or 19 h3 Qg3! 20 Bxg4 Nxc4 21 hxc4 Qh3 mate) 19...Nxf3 20 Qg2 (20 gxh4 Nxd2+) 20... Qxh2+ 21 Qxh2 Nfxh2+ 22 Rf3 Bxf3 mate.

Rarely does Hebden lose anything like as quickly as this, but this is undoubtedly a dangerous variation. I think that Hebden's main mistake was playing away from his strengths and into mine. He should have kept the game simple with the idea of outplaying me in a positional battle, as he had done so on a number of previous occasions."

So the big question is, of course, whether the study of this book will make you win more miniatures. The book will certainly put you in a position to know what is required to win these games, but there is another level of opening preparation that is not discussed in this book. Without thorough opening preparation and knowledge, you will usually not be in a position to win games this fast.

Still, the book is quite entertaining, the games are fun and interesting, and the annotations are good, so you will not have wasted your time or money upon studying the material in this book. It has also recently been released in [Ebook format](#) as well.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦

Order [How to Win at Chess - Quickly!](#)

by simon Williams

Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol. 12 by Jeroen Bosch (ed.), New In Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 224pp. \$21.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$17.95)

It's been a little while since we last looked at a copy of *Secrets of Opening Surprises (SOS)*, but it never fails to live up to my expectations.

As per usual, series inventor, editor and contributor, Jeroen Bosch opens the volume with some of the latest developments in some of the variations that have been covered in the past. Aside from a fairly sizable coverage on the Grünfeld Indian, there some other interesting games in this segment. The first one in particular was quite neat:



Dimitri Reinderman – Sybolt Strating

Hilversum 2009

1.e4 c6 2.Ne2

This variation was covered in *SOS 10* by Argentinean grandmaster Ruben Felgaer.

2...d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Ng3 Bg6 5.h4 h6

Felgaer gives 5...h5 as an improvement; after the text move, White can force Black to accept an awkward pawn structure.

6.h5 Bh7 7.e6! fxe6 8.d4 Qd6 9.f4

With a clear advantage according to Felgaer. Reinderman claims to be "less sure about the objective value of the position," but nevertheless was still quite pleased to have obtained the position in a practical game.

9...Nf6 10.Bd3 c5 11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4 Nc6 13.Nc3 Qb4 14.Nge2 Ne4?!

This is definitely not good. Reinderman mentions that Black should have castled, but also 14...Bf5 was worth a thought. I'm not sure what Black intended with the text move, and from what happened in the game it seems that even Black himself wasn't sure either.

15.a3 Qa5 16.Be3 a6 17.b4 Qd8 18.Qb1

White is completely winning, but Black struggles on, maybe one hoping to develop some pieces.

18...Nf6 19.Bxh7 Rxh7 20.Qg6+ Kd7 21.Na4 b6 22.Rc1 Rh8 23.f5

Reinderman mentions that Rybka indicates 23 Ng1! as winning, the idea is to play Ng1-f3-e5 and then when Black exchanges on e5, White recaptures with the d-pawn after which the bishop on e3 all of a sudden participates in the assault on Black's weak queenside.

23...exf5?

This doesn't help Black's situation either. Reinderman mentions that 23...Kc7 24 Nf4 Kb7 25 Nxe6 Qe8 was a tougher defense which is true, but if White instead played 25 fxe6, Black's situation was pretty grim too.

24.Nf4 e6 25.Qf7+ Qe7 26.Nxb6+ Kd6



[FEN "r4b1r/4qQp1/pNnkpnlp/3p1p1P/1P1P1N2/P3B3/6P1/2R1K2R w K - 0 27"]

Now White has a beautiful way to finish off the game:

27.Ng6!! Qxf7 28.Bf4+ e5 29.Bxe5+ Nxe5

Reinderman tells us that his opponent wanted to resign here, but agreed to carry on upon Reinderman's request.

30.dxe5+ Ke6 31.Rc6+ Bd6 32.Rxd6#

The final position deserves another diagram.



[FEN "r6r/5qp1/pN1RknNp/3pPp1P/1P6/P7/6P1/4K2R b K - 0 32"]

In the first chapter Bosch also comes to the defense of a dubious-looking line:

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d5

This strange move was the subject of an investigation in the very first volume of this series.

4.exd5 c6!?

The idea covered in the original article was 4...Nf6, which is decidedly more sane

5.dxc6 Nxc6 6.d5 Nb4 7.a3

This move is advocated by Khalifman; Bosch follows Khalifman's analysis for a while.

7...Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Nxd5 9.Bb5+ Kf8 10.c4 Ngf6 11.Ne2

This appears to be stronger than 11.Bh6+; e.g., 11...Kg8 12.Qd2 Qb6 13.Ne2 Ng4 14.0-0 Ndf6, and Black is doing rather well.

11...Kg7 12.Qd2

With a large advantage for White according to Khalifman; Bosch isn't so sure.

12...Nb6

An attempt to improve over Khalifman's analysis that carried on with 12...Nc7.

13.Qh6+ Kg8 14.0-0 a6 15.c5 Bd7 16.Bd3 Na4



[FEN "r2q2kr/1p1bpp1p/p4npQ/2P5/n7/P2B4/2P1NPPP/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 17"]

Here Bosch concludes his analysis: "This position requires practical tests. Black will win the c5 pawn, but White surely has compensation. Who is willing to try this?" I'm not sure who will be willing to risk playing this position as Black voluntarily. Despite the pawn that Black will win, the position is pretty ugly even if survivable. I have spent some time analyzing

the position, and while there isn't anything decisively wrong with the position, it requires a steady hand from Black to defend this position.

I should also mention that this volume's prize for best use of a previously covered *SOS* weapon went to the Dutch junior Robin van Kampen for his win against Sjoerd Plukkel from this year's C tournament in Wijk aan Zee.


The material is divided as follows:

- The SOS Files by Bosch (12 pages)
- Trompowsky: the Cinema Variation by Reinderman (7 pages)
- Alekhine: Hector's Way by Bosch (7 pages)
- The French a la Hector by Finkel (7 pages)
- Anti-Grunfeld with 5 h4 by Siebrecht (7 pages)
- English: Shirov's Pet Line by Vitiugov (8 pages)
- Bayonet Attack in the Grunfeld by Mikhachishin (6 pages)
- Taking the Lion by its Throat by Hendriks (8 pages)
- The Centre Game: A Romantic Weapon by Bosch (7 pages)
- Check like a Patzer in the Scandinavian by Reinderman (7 pages)
- King's Indian: A Dutch-KID by Rogozenco (4 pages)
- Pirc for Endgame Lovers by Finkel (7 pages)
- The Bird's Defence According to Bird by Flear (10 pages)
- The Mouse Sleep Slav Gambit by Kogan (8 pages)
- Dutch: Preparing the Staunton Gambit by Bosch (9 pages)
- Sicilian: the Intrepid 5...e5 by Glek (11 pages)
- Moscow Variation: A German Specialty (9 pages)

The chapter names only occasionally reveal the identity of the lines, but they cover everything from the absurd to something almost established, from very old to brand new. For example, 2700+ rated GM Vitiugov covers the line 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Bb4 3 Nd5 Be7, with which Shirov has enjoyed some success, including obtaining a quick draw against the Armenian top player Aronian. Then we have Bosch covering the very provocative 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 Qxd4 Nc6 4 Qe3 Nb4!?, which isn't nearly as stupid as it looks. Or Reinderman's examination of the 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qe5+, which is ugly enough, but he even analyzes the totally ridiculous 3...Qe6+, which require a heavy dose of brazenness and an even heavier shake of carelessness to take up in anything other than blitz games. Grandmaster Flear takes a look at an old and almost forgotten idea in the Ruy Lopez Bird Defense: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4 4 Nxd4 exd4 5 Bc4 (or 5 0-0) 5...h5!?, which was played by Henry Bird himself and has been tried by the adventurous top grandmaster Morozevich against Leko! Also very interesting is Kogan's coverage of a variation he came to play because of a mouse slip on the Internet: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 dxc4 5 a4 e5!?. Kogan found that the variation had actually been played by Morozevich and a few other strong players. Although it looks like Black is giving up a central pawn for nothing, it is still worth a try, particularly when playing against someone who doesn't expect such madness that early on.

This enjoyable series has the perfect blend of near-sanity and absurdity, a balance that is hard to establish, but Bosch and his team of contributors always seem to succeed. Granted, some articles and features are better than others, but some lines do merit a closer look than others.

The material is highly original and if you like living on the edge and experimenting with new ideas, even for a game or two, then you will never walk away disappointed in an *SOS*, they are great fun.

My assessment of this book: 

Order [Secrets of Opening Surprises, Vol. 12](#)
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

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