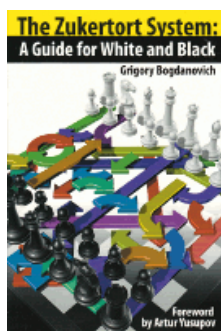




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

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Rating Chart

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



Reviewed this Month

Play the London System
by Cyrus Lakdawala

Play the Dutch
by Neil McDonald

In Your Face Chess Novelties
by Andrew Tocher

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 96
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

Novelties of all Kinds

Play the London System by Cyrus Lakdawala, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 256pp. \$26.95 (ChessCafe.com Price: \$22.95)

Cyrus Lakdawala is a strong international master who has won both the National Open and the American Open. I once had the opportunity to play against him and, true to his nature, he forced me to play a type of position that I didn't particularly enjoy. I only managed to escape with a draw in an opposite-colored bishop endgame. The London System is very much about taking players out of their comfort zone and into unknown territory, where things are neither as simple nor as boring as they may first appear.



I have always considered the London to be an anti-opening approach to chess, but in his entertaining introduction Lakdawala warns the reader about those who utterly negative comments about the opening in public.

He tells us that the book "is organized in games rather than analysis format. It's a book you can pick up and begin on any chapter. It is written to be absorbed and understood, not memorized. I didn't necessarily look for big names in the choice for games, and instead looked for games with original ideas. The book was written as if the reader were a student at my house discussing lines of the London. There will be no Mr. Spock-like lectures. Also, I hope the reader can forgive my unabashed bias towards the opening. You will notice a horribly lopsided win ratio in White's favour with only a smattering of token draws for which Black must beg!"

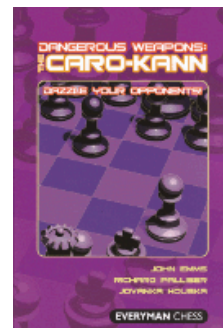
The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (5 pages)
- 1...d5 with an early ...e6 (30 pages)
- 1...d5 without an early ...e6 (35 pages)
- London versus Queen's Indian (32 pages)
- London versus Grünfeld (25 pages)
- London versus Reversed Reti (21 pages)
- London versus King's Indian (25 pages)

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



[Complete c3 Sicilian](#)
by Evgeny Sveshnikov



[Dangerous Weapons: The Caro-Kann](#)
by Emms, Palliser, & Houska



[Tricks & Traps Vol. 2](#)
by Nigel Davies

- London versus Dutch (20 pages)
- London versus Benoni (15 pages)
- Other Lines (17 pages)
- An Inconvenient Move Order (16 pages)
- Index of Variations (8 pages)
- Index of Games (3 pages)

This book is mainly written for those who already employ the London or those who are in desperate need of a weapon for white that doesn't require too much theoretical knowledge and can live with a balanced position right out of the opening.

I was planning on showing one of Lakdawala's own games with the opening, because quite a few of the book's main games are his, but then I saw the following game:

Arianne Caoili (2242) – Dragoljub Velimirovic (2425)

Czech Coal Match Marianske Lazne 22.11.2010

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bf4 d6 4.h3 Bg7 5.e3 0-0 6.Be2 b6 7.0-0 Bb7 8.Bh2 Nbd7 9.Nbd2 Qe8 10.Rc1 e5 11.c4 e4 12.Ne1 Qe7 13.b4 c5



[FEN"r4rk1/pb1nqbp/1p1p1np1/2p5/1PPp3/4P2P/P2NBPPB/2RQNRK1 w - c6 0 14"]

Black is doing absolutely fine at this point in the game, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with White's position either.

14.Nc2 Rad8 15.Nb1 cxd4 16.Nxd4 Ne5 17.Nc3 Rd7 18.Qa4 a6 19.Qb3 Rc7 20.Na4 Nfd7 21.Rfd1 Rfc8 22.Rc2 Nd3 23.Bg4 N3e5 24.Be2 h5 25. Nb2



[FEN"2r3k1/1brnqpb1/pp1p2p1/4n2p/1PPNp3/1Q2P2P/PNR1BPPB/3R2K1 b - - 0 25"]

If Black now played 25...Qf6 or 25...Qg5, he would have had a slight initiative, but still White's position in either case is fully playable. Instead Black, a veteran grandmaster, loses the patience against his much younger female opponent and gets punished accordingly.

25...Nc5? 26.bxc5 bxc5 27.Qa3 cxd4 28.exd4 Nf3+ 29.gxf3 Qg5+ 30.Kh1 Qh4 31.d5 Qxh3 32.Qe3!

This is possibly the move that Velimirovic had overlooked, when he started sacrificing on the kingside. Also in the remainder of the game Caoili keeps


her cold and wins with accurate play.

32...Re7 33.fxe4 Qxe3 34.fxe4 Rxe4 35.Bxd6 Rxe3 36.c5 Rce8 37.c6 Bc8 38.Bf1 Bf5 39.Rf2 Bg4 40.Rd3 Rxd3 41.Nxd3 Rd8 42.Ne5! Bxe5 43.Bxe5 Rxd5 44.Bf6! Rc5 45.Rd2! 1-0

Very nicely played.

This is not the stereotypical win for white in the London, but the London is all about patiently waiting for your opponent to overplay their position and then brutally taking advantage of it. That's exactly what happened above, White didn't do anything out of the ordinary, but when called upon to play accurately, she did so.

This book is clearly written for White, it is biased, it is fun, it is somewhat thorough, and the games are very well annotated.

My assessment of this book: 

Order [Play the London System](#)

by Cyrus Lakdawala

Play the Dutch by Neil McDonald, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 176pp. \$26.95 (ChessCafe.com Price: \$22.95)

According to the back cover blurb of this new book by grandmaster and experienced author Neil McDonald, this is "an essential guide to the Dutch Defence, a Grandmaster's repertoire against 1 d4, 1 c4 and 1 Nf3, packed with new ideas and analysis."

This certainly sounds and looks good, but I'm not entirely in agreement with the statement. Yes, it is a grandmaster's repertoire, because in some sense it is modeled after Nakamura's repertoire in the Leningrad Dutch. But I'm not so sure it is packed with new ideas and analysis, and it is definitely not essential.




The material is divided as follows:

- Preface (2 pages)
- Introduction (9 pages)
- Gambit Lines and Early Oddities (21 pages)
- White Plays 2 Nc3 (15 pages)
- White Plays 2 Bg5 (13 pages)
- White Avoids an early g2-g3 against a Leningrad Set-up (22 pages)
- Sidelines in the Leningrad Variation (28 pages)
- The Main Line Leningrad: 7 Nc3 c6 (25 pages)
- The Main Line Leningrad: 7 Nc3 Nc6 (15 pages)
- The Dutch versus 1 Nf3 and 1 c4 (7 pages)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)
- Index of Games (3 pages)

The choices of chapters and the allocation of pages per chapter all seems about right. However, once you dive into the games, there seems to be a distinct lack of theoretical coverage. There is some, but not what you would expect from a book that claims to provide a grandmaster repertoire, especially if you compare it with the series published by Quality Chess. Still, this is a solid book, even if it is not packed with new ideas and analysis or little original input. It covers the opening quite decently, and would make an excellent repertoire book for players rated up to 2000 or so. The main games are well-chosen and aside from the theoretical part, the annotations are excellent, full of explanations of all the usual themes, tactics, strategy and so on, everything that is required to play an opening with confidence, so that you understand what the opening is about, rather than just memorize the theory

and hope for the best.

I enjoyed reading this book, though the chapters on 1 c4 and 1 Nf3 are very superficial. Overall, I came away with a considerably more nuanced understanding of the 7...c6 and 7...Nc6 main lines of the Leningrad Dutch; lines that hadn't impressed me too much in the past. If you have some experience with the Dutch, or are just looking to beef up your repertoire against 1 d4, then this book could be useful.

My assessment of this book: 

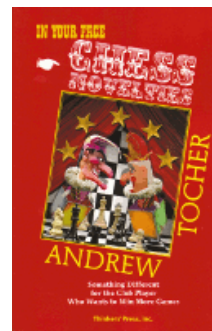
Order [Play the Dutch](#)

by Neil McDonald

In Your Face Chess Novelties by Andrew Tocher, Thinkers' Press 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 113pp. \$15.95 (ChessCafe.com Price: \$12.95)

Let's begin with an the overview of the contents of this book:

- A Long Introduction (5 pages)
- A Little Introduction (1 page)
- Hermes and a Word or Two about the Caro-Kann, Scandinavian, Bird's and English Openings (12 pages)
- The Latvian Gambit (22 pages)
- The Latvian Gambit (10 pages)
- Ruy Lopez' Opening (8 pages)
- The Orangutan Opening (14 pages)
- The King's Gambit (4 pages)
- Evans' Gambit, a Papal Tangent, and a Peek at the King's Indian Defence, Grünfeld's Opening, Robatsch's Opening, the Dragon Variation and 1 d4 (12 pages)
- Benko's Gambit (4 pages)
- The Bishop's Opening – Greco's Gambit (6 pages)
- A Conclusion of Sorts: Touching upon the Defenses: Petroff, Sicilian, Alekhine's French and Scandinavian, plus the Grob (5 pages)
- Opening's Index (4 pages)
- Colophon (1 page)



This confusing mishmash is the beginning of something quite unique. For starters, the book opens with an unusually long introduction by the publisher, Bob Long. Thus the "Long Introduction," where it seems as if he is trying to justify how he has not lost his mind by publishing this strange book. Yet no matter how many converts he wins in the opening monologue, the real test to the reader comes in Chapter One.

It begins: "According to the ancient Greeks, Hermes, the messenger of the gods, invented chess. It may have been way back in the 1850s when Adolf Anderssen was being mercurial playing a brand new pawn opening against New Orleans' great, Paul Morphy. Anderssen was a brave, innovative grandmaster to play a Rook pawn move, but since his kingdom fell the Rook pawn move has been good for little more than making sure that all the squares are dusted, and nothing more ever came out of it.

"When the apple fell on this Isaac Newton's head and I discovered 2.Ra2! and its counterpart ...Ra7! everything else that I had played in all my life hardly seemed even half as good. I am sure that no one could have made me play such a sacrilegious move when I was young, but Hermes with all the connections wit pillars, doors, and caves made me believe that this was my move."

Shortly after he illustrates his point as follows:

"The following game is a cute example of White being 'juke'd' by Hermes Opening.

1 e4 a6 2 Bc4 Ra7 3 Bxf7+ (given a diagram in the book) 3...Kxf7 4 Qh5+ g6 5 Qd5+ e6 6 Qd4 Qg5

g5 is the smartest place to put your Queen.

7 Kf1

7 g3 is complicated.

7...Nf6

What a lot of work it is making sure everything is right! Black only wins after White takes the a-file Rook.

8 Qxa7 Nc6 9 Qe3 Qh5 10 Nf3 Bc5 11 Qe2 d6 12 d3 Kg7 13 c3 Bb6 14 Be3 Bxe3 15 Qxe3..."

In this position, White is up a pawn and an exchange without any kind of compensation for Black. Nevertheless, no further analysis is offered until White's thirtieth move is given a question mark and an alternative is suggested. However, that White was "juke'd" into making a combination winning material for which Black has no compensation is hardly an accomplishment.

But if you thought the above "analysis" was unconvincing, then the next example is really going to blow your mind.

"...I was looking at the Caro-Kann just the other day, and what do you know but what just might be a workable strategy? Waking up the Rook.

1 e4 c6 2 a4 d5

Neither 2...e6 [CH: What??] or ...e5 make White regret moving the pawn on the a-file. 1 e4 c6 2 a4 e5 3 a5 Nf6 (something like 3...b6 loses [CH: hardly, but the unmentioned 3...Bb4 wins a pawn...]) 4 Ra4 d5 5 exd5 cxd5 [CH: My computer likes 5...Bd7, but the text also leads to a better game for Black] 6 Bb5+ Bd7 7 Qe2 Bd6 8 Bxd7+ Nbx7 9 Nf3... [CH: and here when Black has 9...Nc5 10 Ra2 e4 with an enormous advantage available, Tocher instead continues with the reasonable 9...0-0 and concludes his analysis at move ninety (!) with a "and White is winning" without offering any kind of alternatives, punctuation or alternatives.]

3 exd5 cxd5 4 Ra3 [CH: Okay??] 4...d4 [CH: I'm not sure about the motivation behind this move, perhaps to prevent Re3 or maybe Nc3, but you would think that simple development such as 4...Nc6 or 4...Nf6 would take preference...] 5 Bb5+ Nc6 6 Rg3 a6 [CH: 6...Nh6 intending ...Nf5 to dislodge the rook looks like a very decent alternative] 7 Bxc6+ bxc6 8 d3 Nf6..."

And from this position, which is slightly better for Black, Tocher analyzes forward to move fifty, again without offering any alternatives, punctuation, or other comments, concluding that White is winning in this line, too.

While it can be fun to pick at some of the gaping holes that can be found everywhere in this book, it becomes tedious rather quickly. It is just too easy to find the flaws. None of it makes any sense, and when you factor in the occasional grammatical and diagram errors, then it seems as if the joke is on the reader, as they are the ones who invested time and money on this book.

On the cover, the publisher has added "Something Different for the Club Player Who Wants to Win More Games." This is a questionable statement at best. No one should use the ideas proposed in this book in proper games.

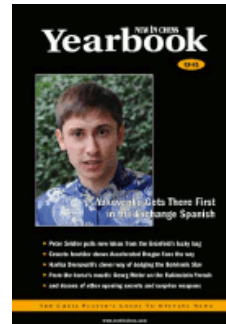
Order [In Your Face Chess Novelties](#)

by Andrew Tocher

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 96 by Genna Sosonko (ed.), Interchess BV
2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 247pp. \$29.95 (ChessCafe.com Price: \$25.95)

The *NIC YB* continues to be one of my favorite publications. As usual, the material is divided as follows:

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



In the Opening Highlights segment, the editors present some of the more interesting personalities that are connected with the present volume. This time presenting a truly positive development by Indian Harika Dronavalli's survey on the Anti-Moscow Variation in the Semi-Slav. Ms. Dronavalli is the first female to author a *NIC YB* Survey. Given that this is volume 96, I would say it is about time. Her survey is well-written and equally well-analyzed. Included is a game that she has annotated with a great deal of modesty:

Harika Dronavalli – Zhang Ziyang

Subic Bay Ach 2009

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9. Bg3

This was a complete surprise for my opponent.

9...Nd5 10.Nd2 Nd7 11.Be2 Bb7 12.a4

12.0-0 Qb6 13.a4 a6.

12...a6 13.0-0 Qb6 14.Nde4 Be7



[FEN"r3k2r/1b1nbp2/pqp1p2p/1p1nP1p1/P1pPN3/2N3B1/1P2BPPP/R2Q1RK1 w kq - 0 15"]

I didn't consider this move much because only one game had played with it.

15.Qd2

This could be dubious. Frankly speaking I didn't even analyse over the board and just followed Radjabov-Mastrovasilis without thinking. I now prefer 15. Nd6+ - this is certainly new and needs to be tested in tournament practice.

15...b4?!

This was a new move for me and it was time to think. I already had a 45 minute advantage on the clock! 15...h5?! 16.Nxd5 exd5? (16...cxd5 17.Nxg5 h4 18.Bf4 bxa4 19.Rxa4 White is better because of the his active piece play) 17.Nxg5+/- c5 18.Rae1 h4 (18...cxd4 19.e6 fxe6 20.Nxe6+/-; 18...Qg6 19.Nxf7! intending 20.e6) 19.Bf4 Nf8 20.e6 Nxe6 21.Bg4 Bxg5 22.Bxg5 cxd4 23.Qb4 1-0 Radjabov-Mastrovasilis, Warsaw Ech 2005; Black should play 15...c5! with good counterplay.

16.Nxd5

White can choose between 16.Nxd5 or 16.Nd6, leading to the same positions.

16...cxd5+/-

Even though Black's pawn structure is altered, White is better because of the bad bishop on b7.

17.a5

An intermediate move stopping Black from playing ...a5.

17...Qb5 18.Nd6+ Bxd6 19.exd6

White has extra advantages in the bishop pair and the weak dark squares in Black's camp.

19...b3?

I think this is the decisive mistake. 19...Nf6 or 19...0-0-0 may have been preferable.

20.f4+/- gxf4 21.Bh4!

Tightening the screws. Now Black's king is stuck in the centre. I had no problems in finishing the game.

21...Rh7 22.Qxf4 Nf8 23.Bh5 Kd7 24.Bxf7 Rc8 25.Be7 c3 26.Bxf8 1-0

In the Forum section, there is an interesting submission by Armenian international master Ashot Nadanian, who rocketed to worldwide recognition with his surprising idea in the Grünfeld Indian: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 Na4!/?/?. In this issue, he offers his latest idea to the world: **1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 g3**. Black has a number of acceptable options, such as 4...d5, 4...Bb4, 4...Bc5, and 4...Nd4. But Nadanian has something else in mind: **4...e4 5 Ng5 Ng4!?**.



[FEN"r1bqkb1r/pppp1ppp/2n5/6N1/2P1p1n1/2N3P1/PP1PPP1P/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 6"]

The thought is that 6 Ncxe4 and 6 Ngxe4 can be met with 6...f5. Nadanian presents some entertaining lines of analysis; e.g., **6 h4 Nce5! 7 Ngxe4 Nxc4**, and here his main line continues with 8 f3!?, but **8 Bg2** leads to even more original play: **8...c6! 9 b3 Na3!! 10 f3 Nh6!**



[FEN"r1bqkb1r/pp1p1ppp/2p4n/8/4N2P/nPN2PP1/P2PP1B1/R1BQK2R w KQkq - 0 11"]

According to Nadeau, "Black is fine here despite having knights on such unusual squares."

In "Sosonko's Corner," editor Genna Sosonko discusses the impact of surprising opening choices early in the game, such as Magnus Carlsen's recent use of the King's Gambit against Wang Yue. Even by Sosonko's usual high standards, this article is particularly potent and fascinating, he has found numerous good examples. Though one example lacking was used against Sosonko himself (as black) by Tony Miles at the 1984 Tilburg tournament: 1 c4 e5 2 Qc2!?. According to Miles, this was an attempt to lure Sosonko into a reversed Open Kan Sicilian (if Black were to play ...d7-d5), a line in which Sosonko had no experience with the opposite colors. In the game, Black never found his groove and was gradually pushed off the board, a good example to prove the efficacy of the theory.

The survey section features its usual outstanding articles. One short survey presents deep analysis by Georg Meier on a line in the Rubinstein French. Others include many more games and feature fairly surprising ideas, such as Sergey Kasparov's idea in the Advance Variation of the Caro-Kann: 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nf3 e6 5 Be2 Bb4+, which looks odd especially after 6 Nbd2 Nd7 7 0-0 Ba5 8 Nb3 Bc7. Another survey featuring incredibly deep analysis is a joint effort by a subscriber, Christian Hafner, and one of the editors, René Olthof, featuring a line in the Two Knights Variation, where Hafner found an improvement on move twenty-eight. However, I was disappointed by a survey on the Sicilian Accelerated Dragon, where Mikel Huerga Leache fails to present anything original, but merely rehashes known facts and offers only sparse annotations to the majority of the games. Let's hope part two of the survey, in the next volume, will offer something a little more original and interesting.

For strong or ambitious players, these yearbooks are a treasure trove of interesting ideas, stretching from curious sidelines to highly topical variations in the most fashionable openings. The charm is that new territory is charted in every volume, leaving you with plenty of ideas to expand your repertoire.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦

Order [New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 96](#)
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

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

Readers' Responses

Taylor Kingston from the **USA** - Concerning "In Your Face Chess Novelites" it should be noted that the author, Andrew Tocher, hardly seems to be benefiting from his own advice. His current USCF rating is a mere 1004,

and it has never gone higher than 1213. He seems about as well qualified to write about chess as a blind man is to teach photography.

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