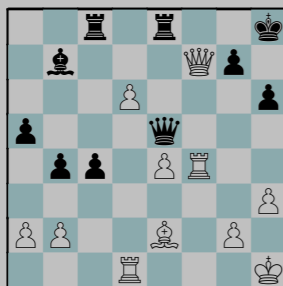




probably put up stronger resistance with the move 29...f6, when 30.♟f2 ♟fe8 31.a3 ♟c7 32.axb4 axb4 33.♟h5 ♟d8 34.♟a1 ♟a6 35.♟xe5 fxe5 36.♟f3 ♟b5 gives White only a slight advantage and Black should be able to hold the position.

30.♟xe5 Now the f-pawn falls, no matter how Black recaptures.

30...♟xe5 31.♟xf7+ ♟h8 32.d6



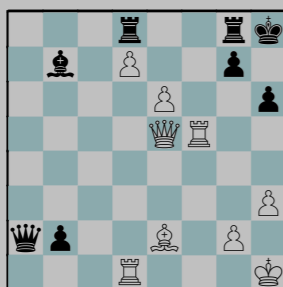
And now the pawn is going to be a problem for Black, forcing his rook to defend passively.

32...♟cd8 33.♟f5 ♟xb2 34.d7 ♟g8 This is a pattern worth remembering. A king on h8 with a rook on g8 and pawn on g7 can often lead to h-file tactics, and that is actually how the black king gets mated in this game!

35.♟xc4 a4 36.e5 The second of the hanging central pawns joins the attack.

36...b3 37.axb3 axb3 38.e6 ♟a3 In order to be able to advance the b-pawn, the black queen must abandon the long diagonal. This gives White the opportunity to pin the g-pawn against the king, leading to a mating attack.

39.♟c5 ♟a2 40.♟e5 b2

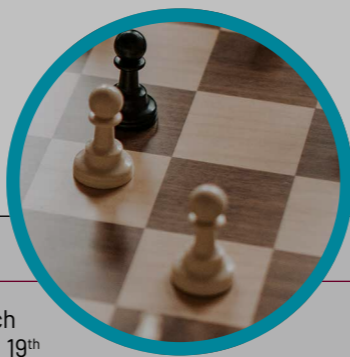


So now White needs to play a defensive move like 41.♟d3 to prevent the pawn from promoting, right?

41.♟h5!! Not so! As mentioned previously, Black's own rook and pawn box in his own king which will be mated!

41...b1♟ 42.♟xh6+ Black resigned as 42...♟h7 43.♟xh7+ ♟xh7 44.♟h5 is checkmate! This whole mating attack was made possible by the advance of the

hanging pawns in the center, forcing one rook to block the d-pawn, and leaving the other rook with nowhere to go except g8, leaving his own majesty with no breathing space!



Conclusion

The Carlsbad pawn structure has a very rich history. The formation itself dates back to the 19th century, but it only really became popular in the 1920s when openings such as the Queen's Gambit Declined were played intensively. Remember, the world championship match in 1927 between Alekhine and Capablanca featured solely QGD games except games 1 and 3! However the pawn structure discussed here got its name from its extensive use in the tournament in Carlsbad 1929.

The minority attack is still very popular today at amateur level. It is seen rather less frequently at top level because of its drawish nature. Black often gets a single weakness, but it is very difficult for White to create that second weakness which will stretch Black's defense to the limit.

Black can also try to prevent the minority attack with the move ...b7-b5, but he must make sure that White cannot lodge a knight on e5, exerting heavy pressure on his weak c6-pawn, and that he himself cannot be denied getting a knight to c4, typically by being prevented to play ...♟b6 or ...♟d6. If Black cannot plug the c-file with his knight, he is usually in trouble.

The Botvinnik pawn structure is a far more dynamic approach, and is still popular today. Black's life is a lot more difficult here as it is not about strong defense of one particular weakness, but rather a question of how to halt White's initiative, which leaves little room for error if Black wants to survive. We saw some beautiful attacks by Botvinnik, Reshevsky, Kasparov, and Naroditsky. The good thing about this pawn structure is that it is very rich in strategic concepts. It is also completely sound, highly popular today, and very well covered in literature. If you are interested in further research of this pawn structure, I would recommend the following:

- 1) That you obtain a used copy of *Middlegame Strategy with the Carlsbad Pawn Structure* by Robert Leininger as I am pretty sure it is out of print. It is an excellent book!
- 2) Next, I must suggest a 20-year-old classic that is still in print - Matthew Sadler's *Queen's Gambit Declined*. Although it does not exclusively cover the Exchange Variation, this pawn structure appears frequently in its pages, and in my opinion it is one of the best books ever written on the Queen's Gambit, adopting a Question-and-Answer approach to explain things.
- 3) Beyond that, there are many repertoire books on 1.d4 for White, or the QGD for Black. As far as White repertoire books are concerned, the vast majority of them recommend either the Exchange QGD or the Catalan against the Queen's Gambit Declined because the Exchange QGD is easy to understand (though not easy to execute!). The Catalan is a popular option because it can be used against both the QGD and Nimzo-Indian. So try to pick up one of the many books that recommend the Exchange Variation. For those playing Black, *Declining the Queen's Gambit* by John Cox is an excellent book which includes coverage of the Exchange Variation from Black's perspective.
- 4) I would also recommend studying Queen's Gambit games played by Botvinnik and Kasparov. Many wrongfully view Kasparov as more of a 1.e4 player, but the truth is that Kasparov is not another Fischer. He made major contributions to the Queen's Gambit in the final quarter of the 20th century, and he played 1.d4 just as often as he did 1.e4.

But even if you aren't a 1.d4 player, or one who plays the Queen's Gambit or Nimzo-Indian as Black, the Carlsbad pawn structure is well worth studying, if nothing other than for the purpose of learning overall sound chess strategy.

Fresh Leaves from the Bookshelf



By FM Carsten Hansen

Books, books, books. They never stop coming, and I am thankful for that because our game is so wonderful and broad that it can be enjoyed by enthusiasts at all levels – and indeed for all of us, who have not yet reached the very top echelons in the chess hierarchy, there is so much material and knowledge to be distilled and absorbed that we will never get bored.

This time we cover historical, biographical, and instructional books as well as a new opening manual; all with new interesting insights as well as what is already known – something for all of us to enjoy.

It would be remiss of me not to mention a couple of new books of my own – one jointly with Cyrus Lakdawala on English IM Michael Basman, who sadly passed away toward the end of last year, featuring his liking for 1.g4 and 1...g5, and the other the fourth and latest volume in the *Daily Chess Training Chess Tactics* series.

Last but not least, there's a new volume of Chess Informant available, the 155th(!!!) in the series. The format has changed over the years, but it is still a phenomenal read with lots of brilliant material.



Carsten Hansen is a FIDE Master and FIDE Trainer, residing in Bayonne, New Jersey. He has written more than forty books, mostly on chess openings and chess tactics. You can find his work on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

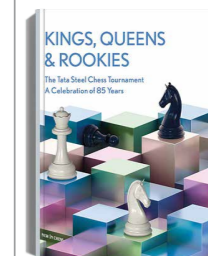
10 NOTEWORTHY BOOKS

- 01 **Kings, Queens & Rookies**
by Peter Boel & Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam (*New In Chess 2023*)
- 02 **A Chess Biography of Rudolph Spielmann**
by Grigory Bogdanovich (*Elk & Ruby 2023*)
- 03 **Typical Sicilian**
by Karsten Muller (*JBV Chess Books 2023*)
- 04 **Chessboard Combat**
by Joel Benjamin (*New In Chess 2023*)
- 05 **Battle of Endgames**
by Ray Cannon (*Self-published 2021*)
- 06 **Irrational Chess**
by Cyrus Lakdawala (*Everyman Chess 2023*)
- 07 **The Modern Gurgenzidze**
by Jaan Ehvest (*Russell Enterprises 2023*)
- 08 **Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen – Vol 2**
by Tibor Karolyi (*New In Chess 2023*)
- 09 **Chess Lessons from a Champion Coach**
by Thomas Engqvist (*Batsford 2023*)
- 10 **The Wizard of Warsaw**
by Tomasz Lissowski and Grigory Bogdanovich (*Elk & Ruby 2023*) 5*

01 Kings, Queens & Rookies – The Tata Steel Chess Tournament – A Celebration of 85 Years

Edited by Peter Boel & Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

\$24.99 (hardback) ★★★★★



This book is a celebration of a tradition that started back in 1938. Of course, the name back then wasn't Tata Steel, but the place Wijk aan Zee or Beverwijk is more or less the same.

The origins of the tournament were less auspicious than today when it is considered the Wimbledon of chess, where each winter, the top players congregate on the windswept beaches in the Netherlands. The book is beautifully produced in hardback with thick, high-quality glitzy paper and brilliant, mostly in color, photographs.

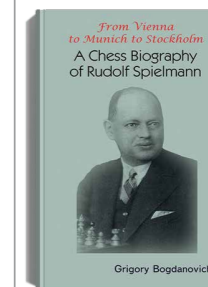
Aside from covering the history of the tournament, there are ten portraits and twelve annotated games, including some of the most brilliant games in chess history; who can forget that Kasparov – Topalov game from the 1999 edition?

It is a beautiful book, and for fans of this tournament, it could serve as a nice memento or coffee table book.

02 From Vienna to Munich to Stockholm – A Chess Biography of Rudolph Spielmann

by Grigory Bogdanovich

\$40.95 (hardback) ★★★★★



We start off with an amazing biography of one of the giants of the early 20th century – the so-called Last Knight of the King's Gambit, Rudolf Spielmann. If you're thinking, wait a minute, wasn't there another new book on

Spielmann, then your memory serves you well. This was *The Chess Diary of Young Rudolf Spielmann*, published by *American Chess Magazine*, which we covered very recently.

The present book is massive, 460 pages, and

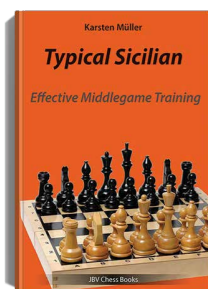
it is fantastic. I received the hardback edition, which makes it even more of a treasure. There are a total of 213 games, counting both complete and part games, which have been carefully annotated, leaning on both Spielmann's own and other contemporary annotations but then diving further into the analysis with the support of modern engines, though never leaving you thinking that the author is just reciting machine output. The notes are extensive, explaining both Spielmann's style, approach, and thinking, but also allowing the reader to follow the games and learn from the early 20th-century champion who won games from all of the best players in the world, including the world champions.

It is a truly wonderful book that I hope will find a broad audience because Spielmann's games were wonderful gems.

03 Typical Sicilian – Effective Middlegame Training

by Karsten Mueller

\$24.95 (paperback) ★★★★★



German Grandmaster Karsten Mueller is easily one of the most productive authors around today, we have covered several of his books in the past in this column, and before that, he established himself as one of the world's

leading authorities on endgames. But, of course, Mueller knows about more than endgames, and thus the topic of this volume is the Sicilian Defense, from which he has picked 156 training positions, all apparently from various variations of the Open Sicilian. The solutions are then carefully annotated in the second half of the book.

The material is well-selected and covers everything from the relatively straightforward to the very complex.

As has become the standard, each puzzle has a QR code accompanying it. When using it, it will take you to an unannotated, abbreviated version of the solution. It seems a little gimmicky, and I don't entirely love it, but Mueller apparently does because he has used it in all of his recent books from JBV Chess Books.

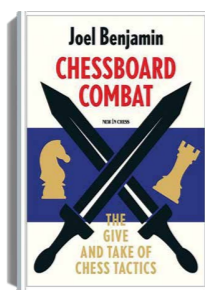
If you are entering the Open Sicilian as White but feel that your tactical radar is still not up to where you would like it to be, then this book can definitely get you quite

a bit further, particularly when studying the annotated solutions. A very solid and interesting book.

04 Chessboard Combat – The Give And Take of Chess Tactics

by Joel Benjamin

\$27.95 (paperback) ★★★★★



In the introduction to this new book, former 3-time U.S. Champion and Grandmaster Joel Benjamin confesses his love for Horowitz & Reinfeld's classic *Chess Traps, Pitfalls, and Swindles* and tells the reader that he hopes to capture some

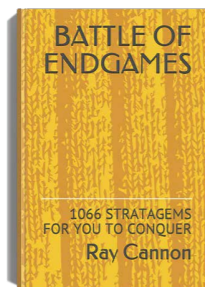
of that fun and enjoyment he found in that volume. The book is split up into nine chapters, each with a separate theme; for instance, chapter 1 is "Strike, Counterstrike". The chapter opens with a selection of puzzles, where you are given the names of the players and what the demand is, e.g., Black wins. Next follows a section of annotated games, some of which contain the solutions to the puzzles at the front, while others are there to delve further into the topic of the chapter.

In total, there are 129 annotated games, and frankly, it is pure joy to work your way through the material. So many brilliant games, stunning moves, missed resources, blunders, attacks, counterattacks, and everything else that falls under the topic of tactics. It is truly a joyous read.

05 Battles of Endgames – 1066 Stratagems for You to Conquer

by Ray Cannon

\$14.99 (paperback) ★★★★★



This book is admittedly a couple of years old, first published in 2021, but an editor sent it for me to check out, and I found myself entertained and intrigued.

Ray Cannon is an English chess player, and that's about all I know about him, other than that he occasionally frequents

tournaments in and around London.

The book is self-published via Amazon and has an absolutely hideous cover, which is one of the ones available to you via the Amazon cover generator, and the text on the back cover is difficult, if not nearly impossible, to read, in part because of the microscopic size and the poor choice of font.

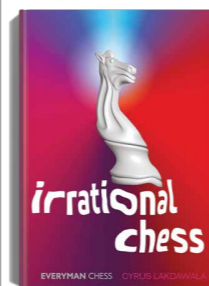
Thankfully, this is where the bad news ends because the material inside the book is quite excellent. It has 1066 puzzle positions of varying degrees of difficulty; some are rather straightforward, and others deviously difficult. The solutions are lightly annotated, but they suffice to make them much more interesting than just offering the moves by themselves.

For improvers, these puzzles will bring countless hours of fun and instruction. The book is very inexpensive (at the time of writing, it was even offered at the bargain price of \$10.29, which is almost too cheap), so check it out.

06 Irrational Chess

by Cyrus Lakdawala

\$29.95 (paperback) ★★★★★



We chess players like to put things into neat little boxes of classification, openings, tactics, endgames, positional play, etc. But quite frequently, and in recent years much more frequently, chess seems to have moved

in a different, more fluid direction, where those lovely boxes don't suffice to explain what is going on at the board. And not only that, most books have failed to cover this topic that is becoming more and more prevalent not only in top-flight chess games but also among mere mortals like you and me. This inspired Californian International Master, and my occasional co-author, Cyrus Lakdawala, to dive into this complex topic and sort out how to define this form of chess that he has labeled "Irrational Chess," which seems fitting for the madness that frequently ensues in the 88 games, some familiar, some completely unknown, he has chosen for this volume.

The material has been divided into eight sizeable chapters, and the book clocks in at a relatively modest, for Lakdawala, that is, 400 pages. The material is presented in Lakdawala's trademark style with lots of test questions, tactical puzzles, verbose and

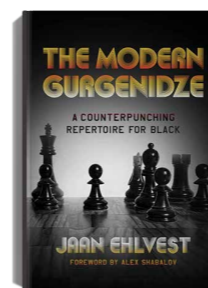
not-so-verbose explanations of the themes covered along with lots of lessons for those of us, which includes yours truly, who need someone to take us by the hand while guiding us through this jungle of madness that irrational chess represents.

Another great book by one of, if not the most productive (certainly in terms of page count) authors in history. I wonder if we one day will see Lakdawala in the US Chess Hall of Fame.

07 The Modern Gurgenzidze – A Counterpunching Repertoire for Black

by Jaan Ehvest

\$24.95 (paperback) ★★★★★



The author of this opening book should be a familiar name for chess fans. Originally hailing from his native Estonia, GM Jaan Ehvest shot to the top of the chess world in the late 1980s and early 1990s, being part of

the gold medal-winning Soviet team at the 1988 Chess Olympiad, and joined the top 10 highest-rated players in the world in 1990. He ranked in the top-100 in the world for almost another two decades, including after moving to the U.S. in 2006.

He has written a couple of other books, but this is the first for Russell Enterprises and the choice of topic is a good one: The Modern Gurgenzidze has, as far as I'm aware, never been previously covered in a single-standing volume. The Modern Gurgenzidze is sort of a hybrid between the Fianchetto Opening and the Caro-Kann, with many possible move orders available to Black, but the most common is 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♘f3 (or 4.f4) d5, and the battle ensues. It is solid, it is flexible, it is combative, and it is not widely well-known, which is a distinct advantage for those who like to give their opponents an opportunity to think for themselves right from the start of the game.

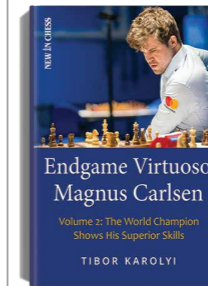
The material is split up into 10 chapters, featuring a total of 31 sample games (albeit with many, many more cited in the notes), including several of Ehvest's own. It is thoroughly researched and computer-checked, and as far as I can see from the sample lines I checked, it seems to hold up very well, even if your opponent remembers

and plays the opening like a computer. A very good opening book, probably mostly aimed at those rated above 1700.

08 Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen – Vol 2: The World Champion Shows His Superior Skills

by Tibor Karolyi

\$24.95 (paperback) ★★★★★



Magnus Carlsen may no longer be the World Champion, but he is, by some margin, still the strongest player in this galaxy, and he definitely was the world champion during the period that the games in this

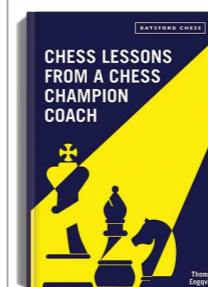
book were played. The present volume picks up where Volume 1 ended, and thus, the years 2018–2022.

A total of 104 partial games, obviously with an exclusive emphasis on the endgames, are thoroughly annotated by the author, Hungarian International Master, and esteemed author Tibor Karolyi. For serious players who want to improve their endgame play and understanding, not just hardcore technique, this book provides a treasure trove of instructional examples and is highly recommended.

09 Chess Lessons From a Champion Coach

by Thomas Engqvist

\$25.00 (paperback) ★★★★★



I'm beginning to feel that Batsford's publishing program for chess books boils down to how fast Andrew Soltis and Swedish International Master Thomas Engqvist can write books. Previously, Engqvist has penned the very good and

popular "300 Most Important..." series for them, and this book seems to be the first departure from that concept.

Each chapter covers a different player, each a significant name in chess history,

starting with Ruy Lopez and ending with Magnus Carlsen. The chapters vary in length and depth; some are brief, covering the player's contribution to chess and their place in chess history along with a game, and some cover more game material. Across the 30 chapters, there are a total of sixty games, all carefully annotated, mostly of the verbal variety with an emphasis on providing understanding to the reader.

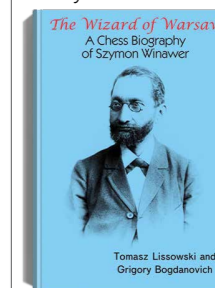
Therefore the material is mostly aimed at those rated below 1600–1800, but the rest of us can also enjoy the material and games.

10 The Wizard of Warsaw – A Chess Biography of Szymon Winawer

by Tomasz Lissowski and Grigory Bogdanovich

\$30.00 (paperback) ★★★★★
\$40.00 (hardback) ★★★★★

Many have heard of the Winawer variation in



the French Defense, but that is as far as our knowledge goes when it comes to the name of Winawer.

Polish chess historian *par excellence* Tomasz Lissowski and International Master Grigory Bogdanovich

(with whom you should be acquainted from the book on Spielmann above) intends to change that perspective. Over the course of two parts, 29 chapters and 132 games (complete and partial), they cover his life, his career, his contributions, and, of course, his games.

The book is well-written and well-illustrated, and many of the games are carefully annotated. Winawer is not as well-known as many of his contemporaries from the second half of the 19th century, but thanks to this wonderful volume, we are about to learn a lot more.



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