



COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:*****Chess Informant 91***

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

***Chess Informant 91* (CD-ROM)**

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

New In Chess Yearbook 73

by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

The Bishop's Opening Explained

by Gary Lane

Beating The Petroff

by Vassilios Kotronias & Andreas Tzermiadianos

Old Friends

This month we catch up with our old friends at Chess Informant and New in Chess; as well as review a couple of recent titles on some classic openings.

Chess Informant 91 by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2004 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 389 pp., \$36.00

Chess Informant 91 (CD-ROM) by Aleksandar Matanovic et al., 2004 Sahovski Informator, Figurine Algebraic Notation, CD-ROM, \$24.95



Over the years the Chess Informant volumes have helped my chess education tremendously. Not only did they keep me current on the latest developments in chess theory, in the days before chess databases, they also gave me access to games and annotations by all of the greatest players of the day.

I still find the volumes immensely enjoyable and of great quality, but the impenetrable shield that has kept them above criticism is beginning to crack. Many of the top players have annotated games for this recent volume, but several of them have only annotated one or two of their games, and some names are missing altogether. Radjabov hasn't annotated a single game; Peter Heine Nielsen, the leading

Scandinavian player, has never annotated a game for Chess Informant; Morozevich had a great year last year, but not a single game annotated by him; nor Topalov, the current # 3 in the ELO ratings. Is it that difficult to get the top players to write for you these days, are they just lazy or has active recruiting stopped? I'm saddened by the trend and it really concerns me that see such a great publication may decline, because I see the top names annotate their games in magazines, in other yearbooks and on the Internet. Why can't these annotations still be included?

I also very much enjoy the CD-ROM edition and find the database program to be of great quality. I think that a lot of players are reluctant to try it because they are busy with their current database program, be it ChessBase or Chess Assistant. People are also unsure of the compatibility between the data on the Chess Informant CDs and the other database programs. One solution would be to offer the material in four different formats, the CI Reader system from Chess Informant, the new ChessBase format, the latest Chess Assistant format, and PGN. If that was done then more people would be able to invest in these disks and enjoy the material that some of us do not want to be without.

In the past we have looked at novelties that received a "!!N" in the Informant, but this time we will examine the worst novelties; those that received the questionable honor of the "?N." It surprises me to see full time players, some even grandmasters, making such errors. But the top players are playing a wider variety of openings, and often with very little preparation time. So I'm sure they get surprised by their opponent and suddenly find themselves in unknown territory without a map, so to speak:

111: Sulskis (2582)-van Wely (2617)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Bg5 a6 8.Bxf6 gxf6 9.Na3 b5 10.Nd5 f5 11.Nxb5 axb5 12.Bxb5 Bb7 13.exf5 Bg7 14.0-0?, which gives away the initiative White sacrificed for.

152: Areshchenko (2568)-Volokitin (2600)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Be2 a6 7.0-0 b5 8.Nxc6 dxc6 9.f4 Bb7 10.Bf3 Bc5+ 11.Kh1 Ne7 12.f5 exf5? 13.exf5 Nxf5 14.Bg4, and Black is already facing severe problems.

193: Smirnov (2601)- Rublevsky (2671)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Qe2 a6 8.0-0-0 Qc7 9.g4 Nxd4 10.Rxd4 h6? 11.f4 b5 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 Nd7 14.Bg2 Rb8 and now White should have played 15.Bf4 with a clear advantage.

204: Kraai (2446)-Golod (2552)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.g4 h6 7.h3 a6 8.Bg2 Bd7 9.Be3 Nc6 10.Qe2 Qc7 11.0-0-0 Ne5 12.Kb1 g5 13.f4 gxf4 14.Bxf4 Be7 15.Nf3 b5?, which should have been punished by 16.Nd5!! exd5 17.Nxe5 dxe5 18.exd5 Bd6 19.Bxe5 Bxe5 20.d6 Qc5 21.Rd5 and White is winning.

207: Volokitin (2638)-Rublevsky (2686)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Be2 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.0-0 Be7 8.f4 0-0 9.a4 Qc7 10.Kh1 b6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 Nfd7 13.Bf4 Bb7 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Qg4 Nc6?



and now Volokitin uncorked an amazing attack: 16.Nd5!! exd5 17.e6 Qc8 18.Bh6 g6 19.Bxf8 Bxf8 20.exf7+ Kh8 21.Bf5 Qc7 22.Bxg6 Ne5 23.Qg3, and Black was toast.

208: Bologan (2665)-Schlosser (2564)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be2 e6 7.f4 Qc7 8.0-0 Be7 9.Be3 0-0 10.g4 d5 11.e5 Ne4 12.Bd3 Nxc3 13.bxc3 Qxc3 14.f5?, and now

Black could have punished Bologan by just taking 14...exf5!, which leaves White at a loss because he cannot play 15 gxf5 on account of 15...Bc5! and Black is winning.

222: Karjakin (2591) - Kramnik (2770)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.f3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.Be3 Nbd7 9.g4 Nb6 10.g5 Nh5 11.Qd2 Rc8 12.0-0-0 Be7 13.Kb1 0-0 14.Rg1 Qc7 15.Qf2 Nc4 16.Bxc4 Qxc4 17.f4 Nxf4 18.Bxf4 exf4 19.Qxf4 Rfe8? 20.h4 Bf8 21.h5 g6 22.h6, and White is control, while Black soon got himself into an even bigger mess.

237: Preuss (2376) - Golod (2551)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bd7 5.Nf3 Bc6 6.Bd3 Nd7 7.Qe2 Ngf6 8.Neg5 Qe7 9.Ne5 Nxe5 10.dxe5 Nd7 11.Nxh7?, which was immediately punished with 11...Rhx7!! 12.Bxh7 Qh4, and Black is already clearly better.

298: Gi. Garcia (2461) - V. Mikhalevski (2551)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Nxe4 6.d4 b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6 9.Nbd2 Nc5 10.c3 d4 11.Ng5 Qxg5 12.Qf3 0-0-0 13.Bxe6+ fxe6 14.Qxc6 Qxe5 15.b4 Qd5 16.Qxd5 exd5 17.bxc5 dxc3 18.Nb3 d4 19.Ba3 g6 20.Bb4 Bg7 21.a4 d3 22.axb5 d2 23.bxa6 c2 24.Nxd2 Bxa1 25.Rxa1 Rhe8 26.c6? which is a bit extreme, but as a matter of fact 26.Rc1! was played in a game between Morozevich-Ponomarev and lead to equal chances. In the game, Black just obtained a winning position.

340: Atalik (2570) - Naumann (2518)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.Bf4 Nc6 6.e3 a6 7.Rc1 Bf5 8.Nf3 e6 9.Qb3 Ra7 10.Ne5 Nd7 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Be2 Be7 13.g4? which throws away White's advantage that could have been maintained with 13.Na4 or 13.a4.

359: Acs (2548) - Korchnoi (2579)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 e6 4.e3 Nf6 5.Bxc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.Bb3 Nc6 8.Qe2 cxd4 9.Rd1 Be7 10.Nc3 0-0 11.exd4 Na5 12.Bc2 b5 13.Ne4 Bb7 14.Nc5 Bd5 15.Ne5 Nc6 16.Bg5 Rc8? and now White could just have won a pawn after 17.Nxa6 h6 18.Bxf6 Bxf6 19.Nxc6.

379: Halkias (2533) - Ki. Georgiev (2626)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.e4 Bb4 6.Bg5 c5 7.e5 h6 8.exf6


hxg5 9.fxg7 Rg8 10.Qc2 cxd4? which was duly punished in the game after **11.Qh7 Ke7 12.0-0-0 d3 13.Bxd3 Bxc3 14.bxc3 cxd3 15.Rxd3 Qe8 16.Nxg5 f6 17.Ne4 Qf7 18.Nd6 Qxg7 19.Nxc8+ Kf7 20.Qe4**, and White is winning.

384: Sasikiran (2666) - Ponomarev (2722)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.Bg3 b5 9.Be2 Bb7 10.Ne5 Bg7 11.f4? (11 0-0 is the normal) **11...Nfd7 12.Nxf7 Kxf7 13.Bh5+** and now instead of **13...Ke7?!** Black should have played **13...Kg8!** with a clear plus according to the analysis provided by Sasikiran, who went on to win the game.


Finding these miserable novelties helps us to put things into perspective because we see a wide range of strong players, including World Champion Vladimir Kramnik, making a mess of things in the opening, just as we are prone to do. But paradoxically such mistakes are not necessarily punished by their opponent. In fact, they often just as quickly throw away the advantage; so bad moves can be overcome by good fighting skills.

Volume 91 is great as usual, but I hope they will actively recruit the best players to annotate their games; otherwise it will inevitably lead to a decline in both quality and value.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Chess Informant 91*

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

My assessment of this CD: 

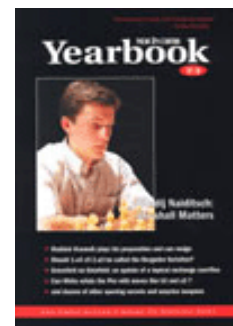
[Order](#) *Chess Informant 91* (CD-ROM)

by Aleksandar Matanovic et al.

New In Chess Yearbook 73 by Genna Sosonko (ed.), 2004
Interchess BV, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 243 pp.,
\$27.95

Like any other great book, you don't want your New in Chess Yearbook to end. Fortunately, whenever I have worked my way through one volume, the next one has arrived and I can repeat the process.

The material is divided as follows:




- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- **Forum and Sosonko's Corner**
- 8 letters (11 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (5 pages)
- **Surveys**
- 34 surveys, including: 7 on the Sicilian, 4 on the Ruy Lopez, 3 on the Caro-Kann, 3 on the Slav Defence, 2 on the Catalan, 2 on the Grünfeld, 2 on the King's Indian Defence and 11 others on different openings. (204 pages)
- **Service**
- Book Reviews by Glenn Flear (5 pages)
- Book Reviews by Sergei Tiviakov (3 pages)
- New in Chess Code System (1 page)

This volume gets off to a great start with a letter from grandmaster Alon Greenfeld on the critical main line in the Grünfeld Defence, as well as with other long letters that make excellent analytical points.

Sosonko's Corner pays homage to Ukrainian Grandmaster Oleg Romanishi, who once was one of the strongest grandmasters in the world. Today, at the age of 52, he has had problems showing the same kind of results, but he can still take down heavy prey, for example he defeated Ivanchuk in one of the first rounds of the 2004 Ukrainian Championship knock-out tournament.

As for the surveys, I keep finding intriguing new ideas that are worth testing. Of course, much of the quality of the yearbook depends on who has written the surveys, and the editor is doing a magnificent job because the standard of the surveys continues to improve and it is usually impossible to find one that is below-average. Among the survey authors are theoreticians such as Golubev, Marin, van der Tak, Lukacs/Hazai, Karolyi, Nikitin, Greenfeld, Kapengut, and I could go on.

Obviously, not every volume will interest you to the same extent, but for today's serious tournament player there will always be a need for lines that can be used once or twice to surprise unwary opponents. For the casual player, it may seem like too much of an investment to buy every volume; however, you can easily choose just those volumes that interest you. As with most of the previous volumes, I must give this my highest recommendation.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *New In Chess Yearbook 73*
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

The Bishop's Opening Explained by Gary Lane, 2004
 B.T.Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 160 pp.,
 \$21.95



Gary Lane has cornered the market on the Closed Sicilian and the Bishop's Opening. The openings are not that popular, but the chess book buying audience doesn't seem to mind. He has an attractive writing style and uses many short games that feature violent attacks and sacrifices, which despite not always being 100% correct give the defender enough opportunities to go wrong. Books of this kind are appealing, because you want to play openings that allow such games and with Lane happily supplying a fresh supply, including some of his own victories, you can't help but get caught up in the excitement.

With the present book, Lane reexamines the Bishop's Opening. His first treatise *Winning with the Bishop's Opening* was published in 1993, and just as he did then, Lane recommends a repertoire for White based on 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4. The title leads you to believe that everything will be considered for both sides and Batsford has the bad habit of picking titles that do not adequately describe the books content. One other recent example is *Winning the Won Game*, which I thought sounded like a great idea because of the difficulties many people, including myself, sometimes have converting their won positions to full points. But the book is a collection of games that won the beauty prizes at the US Championship. So the title hardly describes the topic of the book.

The present book divides the material as follows:

- Introduction (4 pages)
- 1 Paulsen Defence (19 pages)
- 2 Urusoff Gambit (14 pages)
- 3 Boden-Kieseritzky (7 pages)
- 4 Two Knights Defence (11 pages)
- 5 Closed Giuoco Piano (11 pages)
- 6 Vienna Copycat (6 pages)
- 7 Vienna 3...Nf6 (14 pages)
- 8 Vienna Options (16 pages)
- 9 Evans Gambit Accepted (23 pages)
- 10 Evans Gambit Declined (14 pages)
- 11 Unusual Replies (11 pages)
- Index of Illustrative Games (2 pages)
- Index of Main Variations (3 pages)

The critical lines in most repertoires are those that involve transpositions and Lane deserves credit for covering a somewhat overlooked possibility: 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nxe4 4 Nc3, which is the Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit; a dangerous gambit if accepted by Black with 4...Nxc3. However, transposing into a Four Knights with 4...Nc6 is far better and is generally considered pretty harmless for Black. Lane mentions it, but gives only one main game and less than two pages worth of coverage. Although most Black players will probably be unaware of this possibility, it should still be dealt with in a bit deeper detail. For example, after 5 Nxe4 d5 6 Bd3 dxe4 7 Bxe4, Lane only offers 7...Bd6, but alternatives such as 7...Bg4 and 7...Bc5 are

played with some frequency and therefore should be mentioned to provide a more complete picture. Also after 7...Bd6 8 0-0 0-0 9 Re1, the main game continues with 9...Re8 10 c3 Bg4, but 10...h6 11 d3 f5 as played in Barle-Pavasovic, Croatian Ch 2003 or 9...Nd4 as played in Sermek-Jo.Horvath, Croatian Team Ch 2003 are worth mentioning.

This argument can be raised at many points throughout the book, but because the book is aimed at average players the omissions may not be critical, although I would still prefer complete coverage. The back cover blurb tells us: “The Bishop’s Opening allows White to dictate the pattern of play from as early as the second move. It is ideal for club and tournament players as it leads to positions in which a successful outcome depends on knowledge of important ideas for both sides. The key plans and strategies are explained to make it easy for those who have limited time to study.” And that this book covers:

- How to play the opening successfully by using model games
- Explanations of the basic elements and strategies for both sides
- The tricks and traps in the opening for both sides
- How to play the middlegame following easy plans

If that is the object of the book, then it succeeds admirably well for average players.

My assessment of this book: 

The Bishop’s Opening Explained
by Gary Lane

Beating the Petroff by Vassilios Kotronias & Andreas Tzermiadianos, 2004 B.T.Batsford, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 240 pp., \$21.95

Some years back, Kotronias wrote an excellent repertoire book for Black called *Beating the Flank Openings*, which was followed by *Beating the Caro-Kann*. And fortunately for us he found his way back to the keyboard together with Greek international master Andreas Tzermiadianos.



Let’s see how they have divided the material:


- Contents & Index of Variations (3½ pages)
- Bibliography (½ page)
- Foreword and Short Introduction (2 page)
- *Part 1*
- Typical Ideas and Manoeuvres in the Petroff (24 pages)
- Typical Endings that arise in the Petroff (3 pages)
- *Part 2*
- Illustrative Games (38 Games - 202 pages)

The games in part two each illustrate a variation with the theory presented in the annotations to the games. The material is incredibly well-chosen and it has a great balance of games, variations and prose that contains, beyond a variety of generalities, elaborate explanations of strategies, typical ideas, things to look out for and much more.

The repertoire is amazingly deep and I haven't found any shortcuts in the lines I examined. The authors take on the heavy load of theory head first. The Petroff has gone through a tremendous development over the course of the last twenty or so years and most of the top grandmasters have played it.

The authors follow the main lines to a great extent and then suddenly veer off into uncharted territory. By doing so, they are able to present a broad and dangerous repertoire that is not at risk of running into refuted lines, thus making it an excellent choice for some years to come.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to the serious player who wants to have a complete repertoire for White to beat the Petroff. Furthermore, players who employ this opening as Black should get it without hesitation as they are very likely to encounter those same White players who are armed to the teeth and capable of posing Black severe problems. This book is aimed at those willing to put in a serious amount of effort on this opening from either side of the board.

My assessment of this book: 

Order *Beating the Petroff*

by Vassilios Kotronias & Andreas Tzermadianos

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