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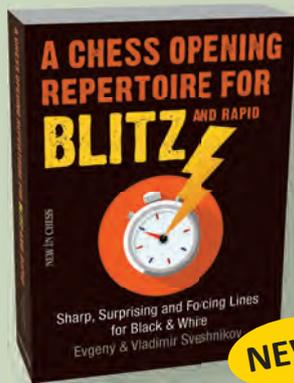
Get in the Festive Spirit with our Fiendish Christmas Quiz



Why I Switched to Wales by GM Nigel Davies



All Aboard the Chess Train - Phil Crocker reports on the tournament with a difference



NEW!

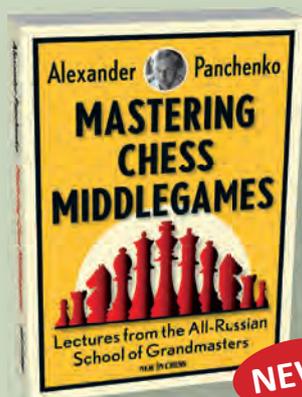
A Chess Opening Repertoire for Blitz & Rapid

Sharp, Surprising and Forcing Lines for Black and White

Evgeny & Vladimir Sveshnikov

416 pages - £19.99

Every day, countless numbers of rated blitz and rapid games are being played in online and over-the-board competitions. In blitz, even more than in classical chess, it is important to make the right decisions quickly and almost instinctively. World-famous opening expert GM Evgeny Sveshnikov and his son, IM Vladimir Sveshnikov, have created a repertoire that is forcing, both narrow and deep, and aggressive. The Sveshnikovs want you to end up in positions where it is relatively easy to keep finding the moves with the greatest practical effect.



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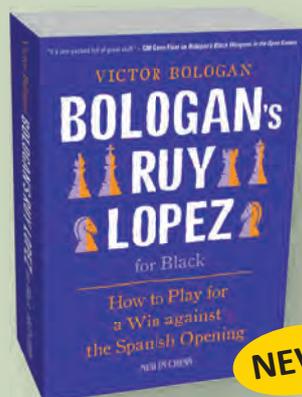
Mastering Chess Middlegames

Lectures from the All-Russian School of Grandmasters

Alexander Panchenko

272 pages - £16.99

The secrets of GM Alexander Panchenko's success were his dedication as a teacher combined with his outstanding training materials. Now, his classic *Mastering Chess Middlegames* is for the first time available in translation. It presents almost 450 examples and tests on the most important topics of middlegame technique. Defence and counterattack are two of his main themes, and his concise training material on realising the advantage and two minor pieces against a rook may be the best ever seen. Panchenko's didactic brilliance shines through in this book and his aim is always: taking practical decisions.



NEW!

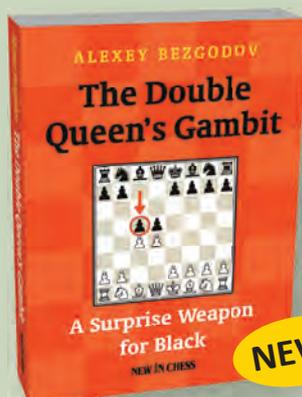
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How to Play for a Win against the Spanish Opening

Victor Bologan

544 pages - £22.99

With his bestselling *Bologan's Black Weapon's in the Open Games* he shook up the world of repertoire books. Now Bologan is back with the much awaited companion volume on the Ruy Lopez, presenting an eminently playable repertoire with hundreds of theoretical improvements, alternatives and fresh weapons. At its heart are the **Breyer Variation** and the **Marshall Attack**. Featured again are innovations such as 'The Fast Lane', the 'The Very Fast Lane' and the much-applauded 'Arsenal of Strategic Ideas'. Bologan presents two different options against every line: a common sense approach and an aggressive weapon.



NEW!

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Former Russian Chess Champion Alexey Bezgodov provides a complete repertoire for Black against 1.d4, starting with the sharp and surprising 2...c5! against both 2.c4 and 2.f3. There is comparatively little to study and Black is able to solve most of his opening problems and get a position that is both solid and active. "What more can one ask?", says Alexey Bezgodov. He provides dozens of exercises to test your understanding of his system. Bezgodov promises: "It will bring many practical successes and much creative satisfaction!"

Chess

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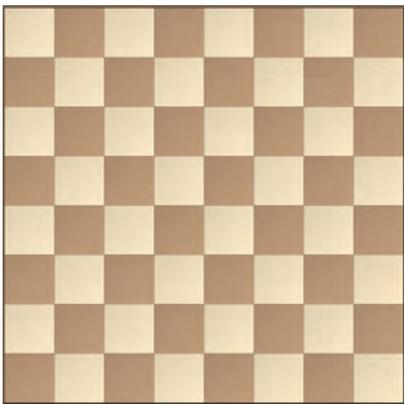
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Christmas Quiz

25 fiendishly difficult questions and puzzles to ponder over the festive break. Best enjoyed with a glass of sherry and a mince pie!

1. We start with a relatively simple puzzle.



This was the position between my children, Caissa and Caissium. Unfortunately our dog had just gone past them and swiped all the pieces off the board, with one flick of his tail. My children started crying. I tried to help them sort out where all the pieces were.

Cassium had a black king on a6. It was not in check. He also had a black queen on c6. His sister had pieces on a1, a4, a7, d6 and c8. She had a white king, queen, rook, knight, and bishop, but wasn't sure which piece was where. However she could remember that she was threatening to capture the black queen four times.

So, which piece belongs where?

2. It is White to play and mate in 22!



For bonus points – can this position be reached in normal play and why?

3. It was time for us to play our annual Christmas match with a neighbouring club. I asked my captain who I was playing. He said I was playing white against "The Mirror Man".

"The Mirror Man?" I repeated incredulously. "Yes," my captain said. "He is an extremely good player, but he has a fatal flaw. He will copy your first three moves, if he can legally do so. So, for instance, if you start 1 e4 he will copy with 1...e5, or if you start with 1 d4 he will always copy with 1...d5. If you can mate him on your fourth move with White, then great; if you get beyond that, he will simply outplay you."

What are the two ways of checkmating the Mirror Man on White's 4th move?



Jack was contemplating his 109th move when his flag fell.

"You've lost on time. I win," said Tom rather unsporingly.

"But you only have a knight left – you've not got mating material," pointed out Jack.

"Ah, but you have other material. If you just had a lone king it would be a draw, but because you have other pieces, it is not a draw."

At this point, Bill, the other team captain got involved. "Yes, but we are just 8 moves away from a draw because of 50 moves without a piece being captured or a pawn being moved. You can't reach a checkmating situation from this position in just 8 moves!"

I looked at the position carefully, and then said, "Yes, you can reach a position in 8 moves where Black checkmates White with his knight and king, and you can do it like this..."

So how can White, to move, co-operate with Black to bring about his own mate in just 8 moves each?

	White	Black
1	f3	
2	Kf2	
3	Kg3	
4	Kh4	
5		
6		Mate
7		0-1
8		

White had started with 1 f3, 2 Kf2, 3 Kg3 and 4 Kh4, and then Black had delivered mate. But what on earth had been Black's moves? Over to you, dear reader – what were Black's moves?

6. Do hope you have had a good year in chess, dear reader? We had an interesting incident at one match this year.



5. The next board was an interesting game too. Our player, Tom, was Black. He had a king on d2 and a knight on a6. His opponent, Jack, had his king on g2, queen on g3 and a bishop on d1.

In this game, a fire alarm had gone off while we were all deep in thought. On one board the players had rushed out without writing down their last two moves each. They had clearly reached this position with Black to play, as Black's clock was ticking, but what were the last two moves of each side?

7. I was playing with the black pieces against a beautiful woman. "I thought you were going to let me win?" she complained. I looked at the position.



"Well I could actually force you to checkmate, but first I would have to play nine moves without you replying." "Go on then," she continued. "Just make sure all your moves are legal."

So could do this, dear reader, and win the heart of this fair maiden?

8. What am I doing? Both of these involve endgame techniques.

- a) Building a bridge;
- b) It involves three triangles and a W-manoeuvre.

9. No christmas quiz is complete without a Christmas Tree Problem or two. This quiz involves three!



This first one is White to play and mate in two.



10. Our next puzzle has a helpmate theme.



White plays first and helps Black to mate in two moves – and what a wonderful, artistic and pure mate it is.

11. Now for the most difficult and famous of the genre, created by a truly excellent and prodigious composer, Thomas Rayner Dawson, known in chess problem circles as 'TRD', and who was rightly crowned the 'Oberon of Fairy Chess'.



This is widely believed to be the first-ever Christmas Tree-themed composition (albeit an inverted one), and was first published in *The Falkirk Herald* in 1914. It is White to play and mate in two, but first you'll need to ponder what Black's last move was...

12. Which chessplayer this year appeared in an issue of Playboy Magazine?

13. Which former child prodigy returned to chess this year after spending some time as a poker player?

14. Which famous chessplayer now has a minor planet named after them?

15. Which world championship title did Magnus Carlsen lose in 2015?

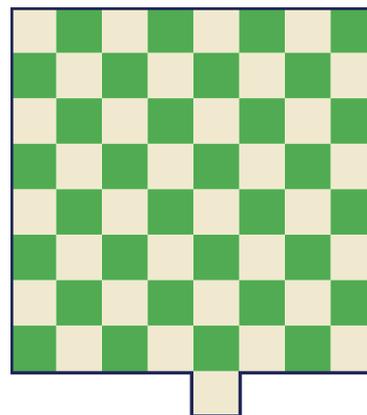
16. The recently released James Bond movie 'Spectre' featured a short chess scene. But which was the first Bond movie where chess appeared, and what game was the position based on?

17. Actor Arnie Hammer plays a Russian chess master in which 2015 film?

18. John Nunn was tormenting the VIP room at the London Chess Classic with a particularly fiendish reconstruction challenge. White's last move was 7 ♖a3 mate. What were the previous six moves?

19. Who was Bobby Fischer's first public opponent following his 1972 world championship match?

20. If you added the square "E0" to the chess board would it change the assessment that ♜♜ and ♞ versus ♞ is a draw?



21. Which Grandmaster withdrew from the British Knockout Championship due to illness, being replaced by Nick Pert who made it all the way to the final?

22. The game between Nikolic - Arsovic from Belgrade 1989 broke a record in chess, what record?

23. Name the GM who switched federations this year and who now plays for Azerbaijan.

24. Which former Scottish champion made Bobby Fischer cry?

25. WGM Sopiko Guramishvili (below) married which super GM in July of this year?



Questions 1-11 were kindly supplied by Charles Higgie with the remaining from your editorial team. The answers to the Christmas quiz will be published in our February issue.