ChessBase Magazine

FOR PROFESSIONAL CHESS

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026 | 21,90 €

#234



THE KINGS OF SAMARKAND

Uzbekistan has once again won Olympic gold on home soil.

FOR ALL SYSTEMS!

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CHESS OLYMPIAD 2026

Analyses by Abdusattorov, Adams, Bjerre, Duda, Giri, Gledura, Grandelius, Gurel, Kasimdzhanov, So, Vitiugov, Wei Yi et al.

"DON'T UNDERESTIMATE IT!"

Yago Santiago sharpens Caruana's blitz weapon 1.e4 e5 2.d3!?

STRATEGY: WHEN DOUBLE PAWNS START ROLLING

Mihail Marin analyses the c4-c5 and f4-f5 breakthroughs

THE INFECTION EFFECT

Practical tips for tournament players by Jan Markos

Top-class training material for club players and professionals! **chessbase.com**

CONTENT

TOP GAMES 6-7

2026 Samarkand Chess Olympiad:
Gold for the home team, Uzbekistan; silver for defending champions India; bronze for Germany! Those are the final standings in the Open Tournament. In the women's competition, China took the title ahead of Kazakhstan and India. For this edition, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Michael Adams, Jonas Bjerre, Alexander Donchenko, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Anish Giri, Benjamin Gledura, Ediz Gürel, Wesley So, Nikita Vitiugov and Wei Yi, amongst others, have provided analyses of their best games!

OPENING VIDEOS 22-25

Nico Zwirs presents the sideline 6...Bb4 in the Caro-Kann Defence, with which his training partner and friend Max Warmerdam has recently enjoyed success. Daniel King demonstrates the ingenious idea 5.Nd5 against the Sicilian Dragon Variation – a speciality by his compatriot IM Andrew Smith. Ivan Sokolov puts Daniil Dubov's 5...Bc5?! in the Jaenisch Gambit to the test.



Nico Zwirs: Caro-Kann
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.h4 h5 5.c4 e6 6.Nc3 Bb4

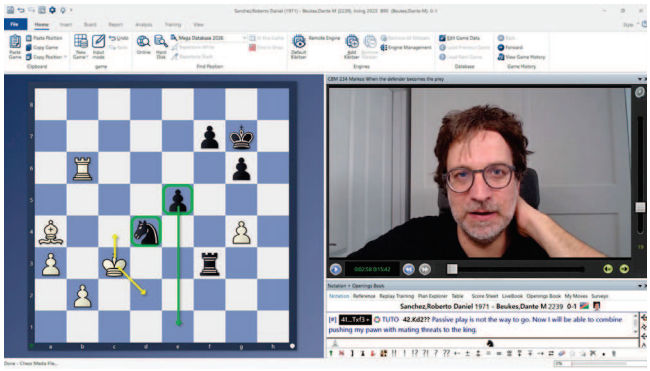
Daniel King: Sicilian Dragon Variation
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Nd5

Ivan Sokolov: Jaenisch Gambit
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 f5 4.d3 fxe4 5.dxe4 Bc5!?

COLUMNS

Markos: Practical tips for tournament players...28-29

Jan Markos explores a little-known phenomenon in chess: the 'infection effect'. This refers to the way in which a piece's weakness is transferred to the piece brought in to defend it. How can this effect be explained? And what can be done about it?



Rogozenco: Modern Classics 32-33
In the game between Kiril Georgiev and Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu (2006), the action got underway right from the opening (Blumendfeld Gambit). The top Romanian player sacrificed a knight on move 14, increased the pressure and ultimately won with a spectacular king hunt – "just like in the good old days!"

Ris / Breutigam: Move by Move 34-35
Martin Breutigam and Robert Ris have each chosen a game from the Chess Olympiad for their interactive training columns. In the German video series 'Zug für Zug', Frederik Svanes's winning game against Hans Move Niemann is featured. And in 'Move by Move', the game between Baduur Jobava and Toivo Keinanen, featuring the French Exchange Variation, starts off very calmly, but then...

In the download version and in the ChessBase Books version, you will also find Dorian Rogozenco's column 'The Fortress', as well as articles on strategy (Mihail Marin), tactics (Oliver Reeh) and endgames (Dr Karsten Mueller) with many training tasks and interactive videos!

#234

OPENINGS 10-15

Krisztian Szabo: Spanish Keres Variation (Part I)
8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Nd7 12.Nbd2. . . 11

Alexey Kuzmin: Bogo-Indian
4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 Bxd2+ 6.Qxd2 Nc6 7.Nc3 d5!? 14



He enriched chess theory with many ideas: the great Paul Keres.

FURTHER OPENING ARTICLES*

Lars Schandorff: Delayed Orangutang (Part II)
1.Nf3 d5 2.b4!?

De Deboushnik: Accelerated Dragon
3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Bg7 6.Be3 Qb6!?

Sergej Grigoriants: French McCutcheon Variation
4.Bg5 Bb4 5.e5 h6 6.Bd2! Bxc3 7.bxc3 Ne4 8.Bc1!?

Petra Papp: Sicilian Najdorf
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Qd3

Martin Lorenzini: Caro-Kann Flohr Variation
4...Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+

Balázs Csonka: Gruenfeld
3.g3 c6 4.Bg2 d5 5.Nf3 Bg7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3!?

Yago Santiago: Caruana's blitz weapon
1.e4 e5 2.d3!?

Evgeny Posty: Nimzo-Indian
4.e3 b6 5.Bd3 Bb7 6.Nf3 Ne4 7.0-0 f5 8.Ne2



In the Bogo-Indian, Praggnanandhaa likes to play it safe with 7...d5!?.



"6...Qb6 offers an ambitious way of avoiding some of the better-known positions in the Accelerated Dragon."

TRAINING TASKS

9 combinations to solve 9

9 key moves to find 17

9 strategy tasks to solve 27

9 endgame tasks to solve 31

All solutions 36

**These contributions are only included in the download and CB Books version!*





Photo: Michal Walusza / FIDE

"MORE VICTORIES TO COME!"

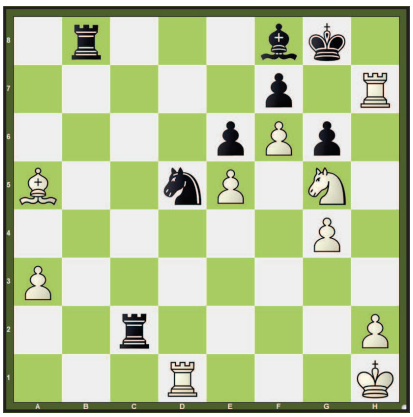
The team from Uzbekistan is sending a clear message for the coming years

The Chess Olympiad is regarded as the largest team tournament in the world of sport, and the 46th edition, held from 16 to 27 September 2026 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, set a new participation record with a total of 400 teams.

In the Open Tournament, three countries still had a clean slate after five rounds, including Germany, which went on to defeat the top-seeded USA 2.5–1.5 the following day – you can replay Frederik Svanes' 'supposedly easy victory' against Niemann in the video alongside Martin Breutigam (the video is available in German only, see page 35)!

However, this was followed by a setback for the German team against China, meaning that Uzbekistan took sole possession of top spot for the first time with a victory over India and was able to extend its lead to two points with a subsequent win against China.

But in the eighth round, the German team made its next big statement: The 3–1 victory over the previously undefeated Uzbeks (the Svane brothers were the match-winners) meant they shared the top of the table, with eight teams lurking just one point behind. In the next round, Germany lost to India, whilst Uzbekistan beat the USA – a result that even the World Championship challenger's sole defeat in this tournament could not alter.



After **40.Bb4!**, White was clearly winning in So,W – Sindarov,J 1–0:

the f8 bishop cannot move, and Black is simply two pawns down. In the end, White's pair of rooks on the seventh rank decided the game – Wesley So comments.

Going into the final round, Uzbekistan led by one point ahead of India, with Germany, Ukraine and Hungary lurking behind. With a hard-fought 2½–1½ victory over Ukraine (match-winner Mamadinov in the rook endgame against Dehtiarov), the home team sealed the deal and, following their 2022 triumph in Chennai, claimed their second Olympic gold in front of their own fans.

Nodirbek Abdusattorov went one better by winning individual gold on the top board - including match-deciding victories against Caruana and Ding. Abdusattorov has commented in detail on these two victories for this issue!

Germany defeated the Netherlands to take bronze behind the Indians, who were level on points

Chess Olympiad 2026

1		Uzbekistan	20-2	32.5
2		India	18-4	28.5
3		Germany	18-4	28.5
4		United States	17-5	29.0
5		Azerbaijan	17-5	28.5
6		Armenia	17-5	27.0
7		Hungary	17-5	24.5
8		China	16-6	28.0
9		France	16-6	28.5
10		Spain	16-6	28.5
11		Ukraine	16-6	28.0
12		England	16-6	27.5
13		Turkey	15-7	27.5
14		Poland	15-7	28.5
15		Iran	15-7	28.5
16		Netherlands	15-7	26.0
17		Romania	15-7	28.0
18		Uzbekistan II	15-7	25.5
19		Vietnam	15-7	30.5
20		Croatia	15-7	29.0
21		Czech Republic	15-7	27.0
22		Serbia	15-7	26.0
23		Argentina	15-7	27.0
24		Israel	15-7	25.5
25		Kazakhstan	15-7	27.5

206 Teams



With their victory over the hosts in Round 8, the German team paved the way for the bronze medal!

Photo: Nils Rohde (ChessBase)

– their first team medal at a Chess Olympiad since 2000. Frederik Svane had double cause for celebration: he repeated his individual gold from 2024!

The 'bronze-winning' move:



With the double attack **29.Qa3!** in the game Bluebaum, M – Van Foreest, J, White gained a material advantage and converted it confidently.

For this issue, many more players have commented on their games from Samarkand, including Michael Adams, Jonas Bjerre, Alexander Donchenko, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Alexander Fier, Anish Giri, Benjamin Gledura, Nils Grandelius, Ediz Gürel, Nikita Vitiugov, Wei Yi and more!

In the women's tournament, there was a start-to-finish victory: the Chinese team (without world champion Ju Wenjun) won nine matches in a row, conceding only a draw in the penultimate round, and ultimately secured gold in commanding fashion. Silver went to Kazakhstan, whilst India claimed bronze on tiebreakers ahead of four teams, all on 17 points.

ALL GAMES.
ALL
ANALYSES.

OPENINGS

OPENINGS
OPENINGS



SPANISH WITH A FULL BOARD

Krisztian Szabo examines the Keres Variation (Part I)



KRISZTIAN SZABO
1989, HUN

Szabo was awarded the GM title in 2010. His personal best Elo rating is 2564. At the European Team Chess Championship, he won silver for Hungary in 2006 and gold in 2007.



Spanish Tschigorin Variation C96:

4.La4 Nf6
5.0-0 Be7
6.Re1 b5
7.Bb3 d6
8.c3 0-0
9.h3 Na5
10.Bc2 c5
11.d4 Nd7
12.Nbd2

In the Chigorin Variation (**9...Na5**), the classical main line is 11...Qc7, getting a new piece into play. **11...Nd7** starts the Keres Variation, though at first sight it might not be clear why we move back an already developed knight from the centre.

Well, Black wants to regroup their pieces via ...Bf6 and ...Nb6 - the passive e7 bishop is activated, and the knight on b6 helps on the queenside. **12.Nbd2** is White's main continuation. The alternative **12.d5**, closing the centre, will be dealt with in Part II of this survey in the next issue of CBM.

In the above diagram, Black should start their play on the dark squares by capturing on d4 (else, White might favourably close the centre with 13.d5!). There are two ways to do it, and they both lead to entirely different types of positions!

A) 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 Nc6
Black is ready to take on d4 followed by ...Bf6, with a strong bishop controlling the dark squares.

see the following diagram

Here 14.d5 Nb4 15.Bb1 a5! is harmless. White has two ways



to keep the tension: **14.Nf1** and **14.Nb3!**.

A1) 14.Nf1.
This seemingly logical move allows Black to execute his plan with mass exchanges in the centre: **14...Nxd4 15.Nxd4 exd4 16.Qxd4 Ne5!.** This is where the knight belongs. If White doesn't watch out, there is a tactical threat of ...Bxh3! intending the fork ...Nf3+. **17.Qd1**



and now Black should have played **17...Bf6** or **17...Be6**, with a rich middlegame and chances for both sides, see Deepan Chakkravarthy,J - Short,N 0-1.

A2) 14.Nb3!



This is the best place for the knight. Now 14...exd4 15.Nbxd4 Nxd4 16.Nxd4 would play into White's hands. **14...a5**. Planning ...a4 to drive back the knight on b3. **15.Bd3!**. White ignores the opponent's idea and creates a mighty threat of their own: Bxb5!. **15...a4**.

Anyway, Black sacrifices a pawn for the pair of bishops and some pressure on the queenside. **16.Bxb5 Qb6 17.Bxc6 Qxc6 18.Nbd2**



and it is not clear how Black will equalise, see Szabo,K - Romanishin,O 1/2.

B) 12...exd4 13.cxd4 Nc6!



This is the main line these days, leading to very sharp positions. Here White has no better than **14.d5!** creating a Benoni-type pawn structure. Obviously, on g7 Black's bishop would be more active than on e7.

On the other hand, White's typical central breakthrough with e4-e5 is very difficult to achieve. **14...Nce5 15.a4!**. This is the precise move order; 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.a4 would allow 16...Bd7.



White threatens axb5. Black has two ways to keep his queenside pawn structure intact: **15...Bb7** or **15...Rb8**.

B1) 15...Bb7



The bishop is not doing much here (except Black manages to blow up the centre with ...f5, when the d5 pawn may fall). **16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.f4!**.

White forces the knight to leave the centre, **17...Ng6**. Black keeps fighting for the dark squares on the kingside. **18.Nf3**. White con-



centrates his forces on the kingside. **18...Re8 19.Kh2!**.

We already saw this idea before. The king controls the vital g3 square, and a promising middlegame beckons for White, see Duda,J - Bartel,M 1-0.

B2) 15...Rb8

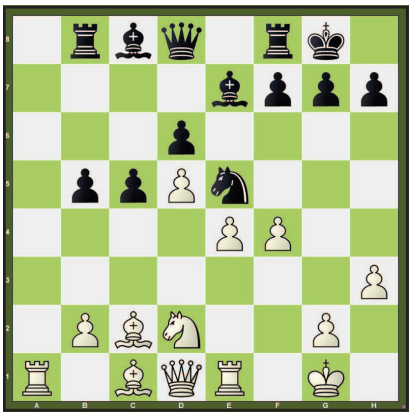
This is the most flexible defensive move. The light-squared bishop is better on the c8-h3 diagonal than on b7. Giving up the a-file is not

the end of the world.



16.Nxe5 Nxe5 and now, of course, the advance **f4**. The question is: Should White play axb5 first or not?

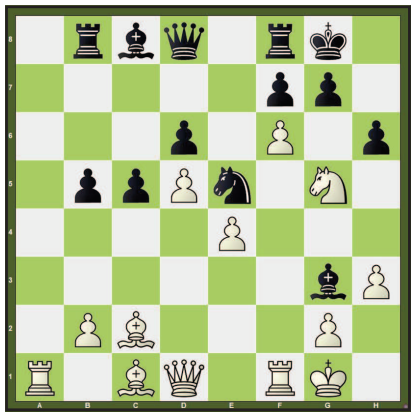
B21) 17.axb5 axb5 18.f4



White drives away the knight, getting some attacking chances in the centre and on the kingside. **18...Ng6 19.Nf3 Bh4!.**

The battle for the g3 square begins. **20.Rf1!**. On the f-file, the rook supports a potential f5-f6 advance. **20...Bg3**. The bishop is quite annoying here. **21.f5!**. Since the e4-e5 breakthrough is difficult to achieve, White continues the attack in a more direct manner. **21...Ne5**.

The downside of White's advance is the weakening of the e5 square. **22.Ng5!**. A direct attack on the black king is launched. **22...h6! 23.f6!**.



23...gxf6! (accepting the piece sacrifice with 23...hxg5? leads to a quick collapse) **24.Nf3 Kg7** with an extremely complicated position, see Areshchenko,A - Banusz,T 1-0.

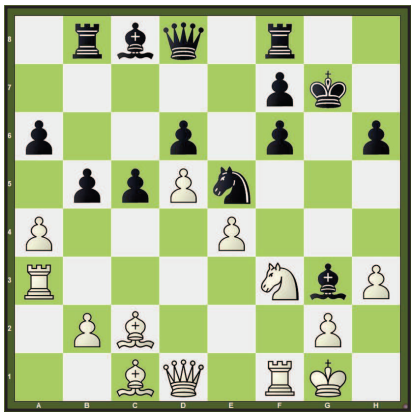
B22) 17.f4!



In my opinion, White should get immediately active without opening the a-file. There follow the same moves as in the variation above: **17...Ng6 18.Nf3 Bh4 19.Rf1 Bg3 20.f5 Ne5 21.Ng5 h6 22.f6! gxf6! 23.Nf3 Kg7** and now **24.Ra3!**,

see the following diagram

At the moment, this appears to be



the best attacking move. Without axb5 axb5, Black lacks the ...Ba6 or ...Ra8 resource in some later variations. In the game Firouzja,A - Martinez Alcantara,J 0-1, **24... Ng6?** (24...b4!?) ran into **25.Nd4!**, with a clear advantage to White.

Conclusion: In the Keres Variation, Black has two options after **12.Nbd2**. After **12...cxd4 13.cxd4 Nc6**, White can play **14.Nb3!** and likely holds a slight advantage. The current main line is 12...exd4 13.cxd4 Nc6! 14.d5; this leads to a Benoni-style pawn structure in which White has attacking chances on the kingside as well as a potential central breakthrough.

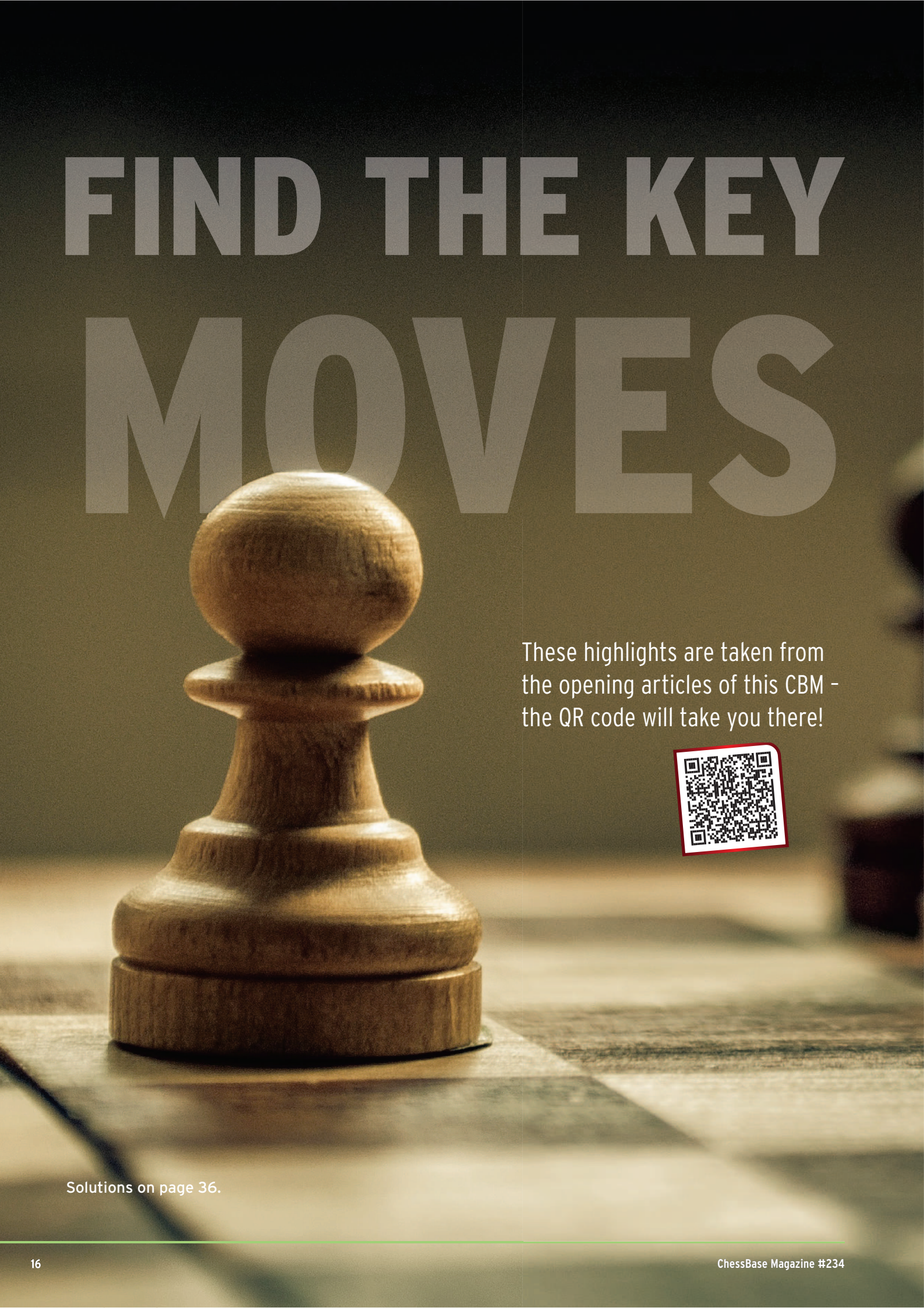
The play is highly tactical, so computer engines are essential for analysing the variations. Theoretical knowledge and a good memory are important. All in all, a fascinating subject for both sides!

THE COMPLETE ARTICLE CONTAINS:

✓ **Overview text**

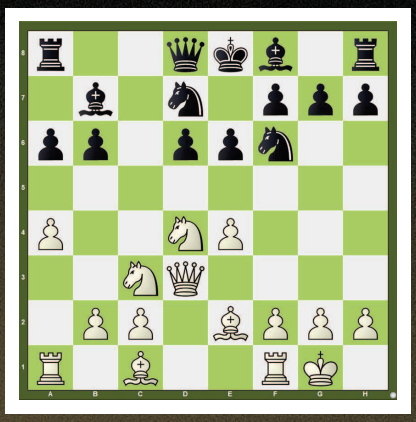
✓ **5 annotated sample games (by Duda, Firouzja et al.)**

FIND THE KEY MOVES



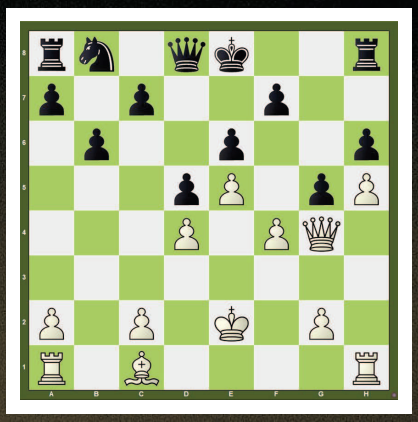
These highlights are taken from the opening articles of this CBM – the QR code will take you there!

Solutions on page 36.



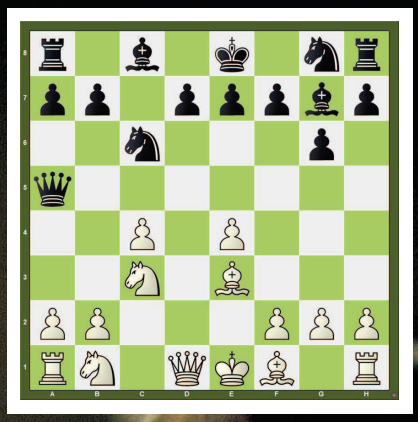
Sicilian Najdorf

What is the most effective way for White to continue?



French McCutcheon-Variante

How does Black start counterplay?



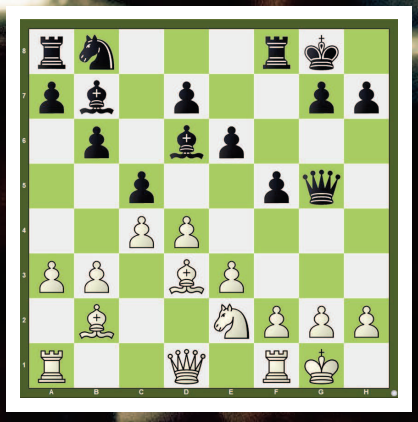
Accelerated Dragon

What does the author recommend for Black?



1.e4 e5 2.d3

Spot Caruana's bold move for White!



Nimzo-Indian

Can you find the strong novelty for White?



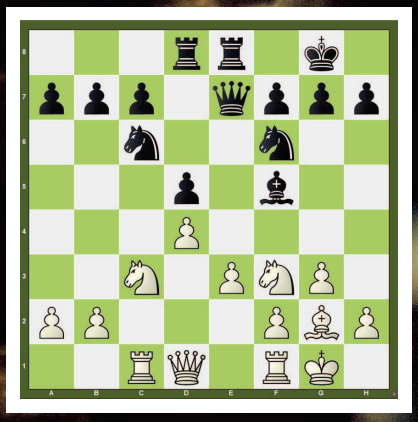
Delayed Orangutan

How does White gain an advantage?



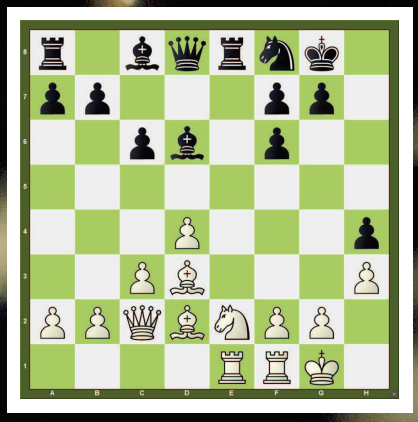
Spanish Keres Variation

White wants to attack on the kingside, but first...



Bogo-Indian

How can Black improve his Nc6?



Caro-Kann

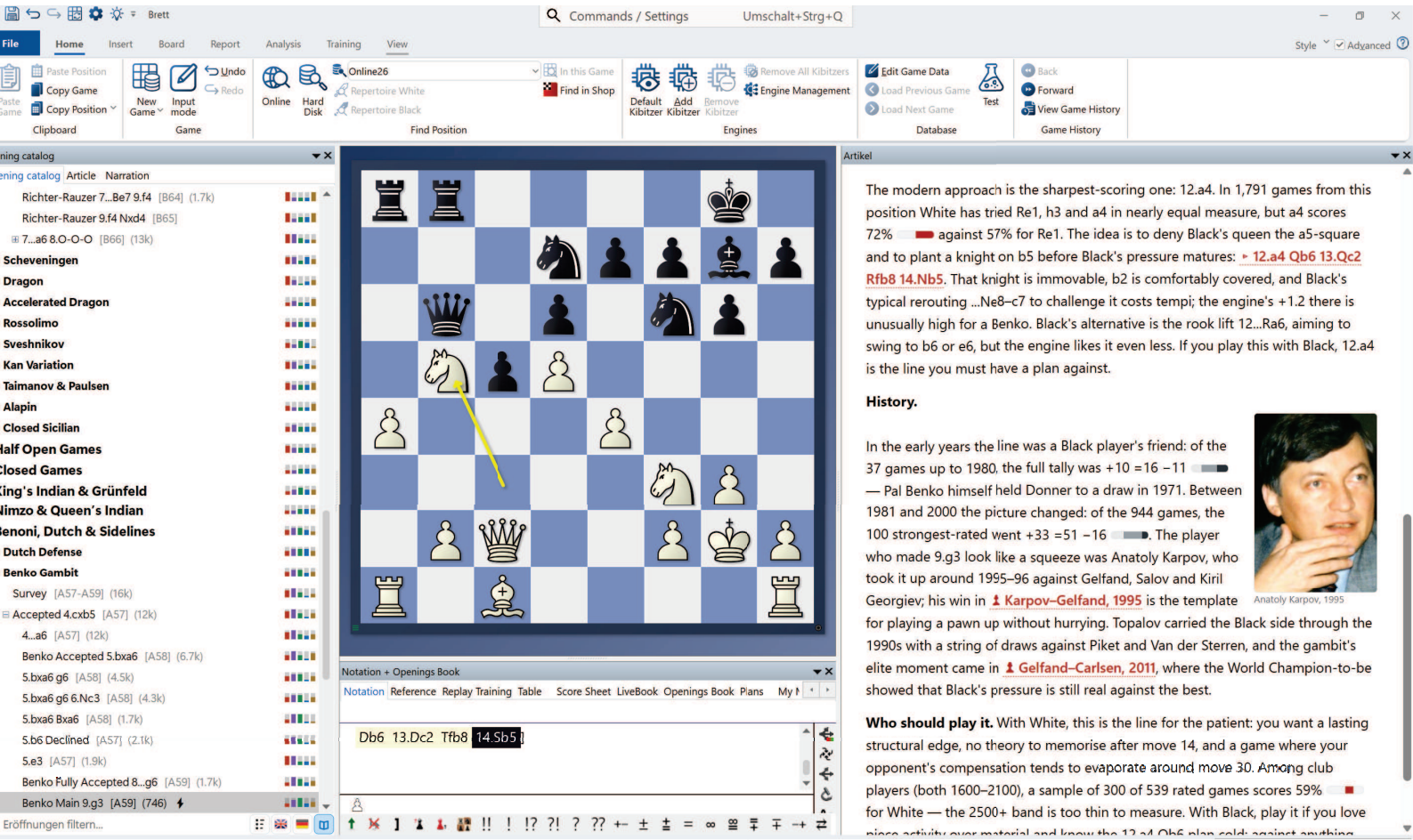
White is planning f4-f5 – what should Black do?

NEW RELEASE

NEW RELEASE

NEW RELEASE

NEW RELEASE



MORE POWERFUL THAN ChatGPT & CO

Matthias Wüllenweber presents the key new features in ChessBase 27



MATTHIAS WUELLEN-WEBER
1961, GER

Matthias Wuellenweber founded ChessBase in 1987 together with Frederic Friedel and, as chief programmer, played a key role in shaping the development of computer chess.

As chess players we have long been accustomed to the influence of machine intelligence on our world. Even so, we are experiencing the current upheaval of software development through AI as something profound. In it, we encounter a far more general form of intelligence.

This has consequences for the new ChessBase version. What used to take a week of work is now solved in hours.

This allowed us to thoroughly overhaul the existing database technology and, in places, speed it up considerably. The machine's cold gaze upon our millions of lines of code is helpful, not least because it also brings hidden old bugs to light.

There are two fresh features that really pack a punch. My colleague Jeroen van den Belt has created a system to support coaches that makes chess lessons a true pleasure. My task was an opening catalog in which hundreds of opening systems are explained simply and vividly. No more inferior sidelines played out of fear of theory!

From now on, you put your opponent under pressure with the optimal main systems, because you simply understand them better.

Benko, you have haunted me long enough!

This new opening catalog sits in the board window of ChessBase 27 (see the two screenshots on the left and below). It is built on the ECO system and is refined wherever the evolution of chess theory requires it. At the moment it has around 2,000 entries.

Each variation comes with a short graphical characterization: sharpness, drawing margin, center type, branching density, and endgame probability.

The real power of the catalog, however, lies in hundreds of opening articles on all the main systems. They place a variation in context, explain its historical development, and visualize what is played today, why, and which type of player it suits.

In four to five minutes, you can grasp the essential ideas. You don't even have to read these articles yourself. They can be read aloud by a narrator and, above all, demonstrated on the board as you listen.

My knowledge of theory is out of date, which led to quite a few 'aha' moments. Take the Benko



Gambit Accepted: for 20 years I have played the setup with the artificial castling 9.g3 and 10.Kg2. Twenty years ago it was fashionable to defend the b2 pawn from the side with Rh1-e1-e2 and prepare e5. Far too tame! ChessBase 27 explains how to neutralize a Benko player with the setup 12.a4, 13.Qc2 and 14.Nb5. With it, White scores over 70%. If only I had known that earlier!

This large and constantly updated body of articles is written using a novel, chess-specific way of directing AI. If you ask a system like ChatGPT yourself, „What should I play against the Benko?", the result these days will be reasonable, but always noticeably paler.

ChessBase provides the AI with a large toolbox that it uses independently for research: online database, Live Book, engine, positional features, etc. This lets it, for example, compare variations statistically at GM and club level and answer far more concisely. Most articles come with podcast-style spoken versions with visualizations on the board. These can also be downloaded as ready-made videos for on the go. The format is optimized for social media.

Chess lessons by QR-Code

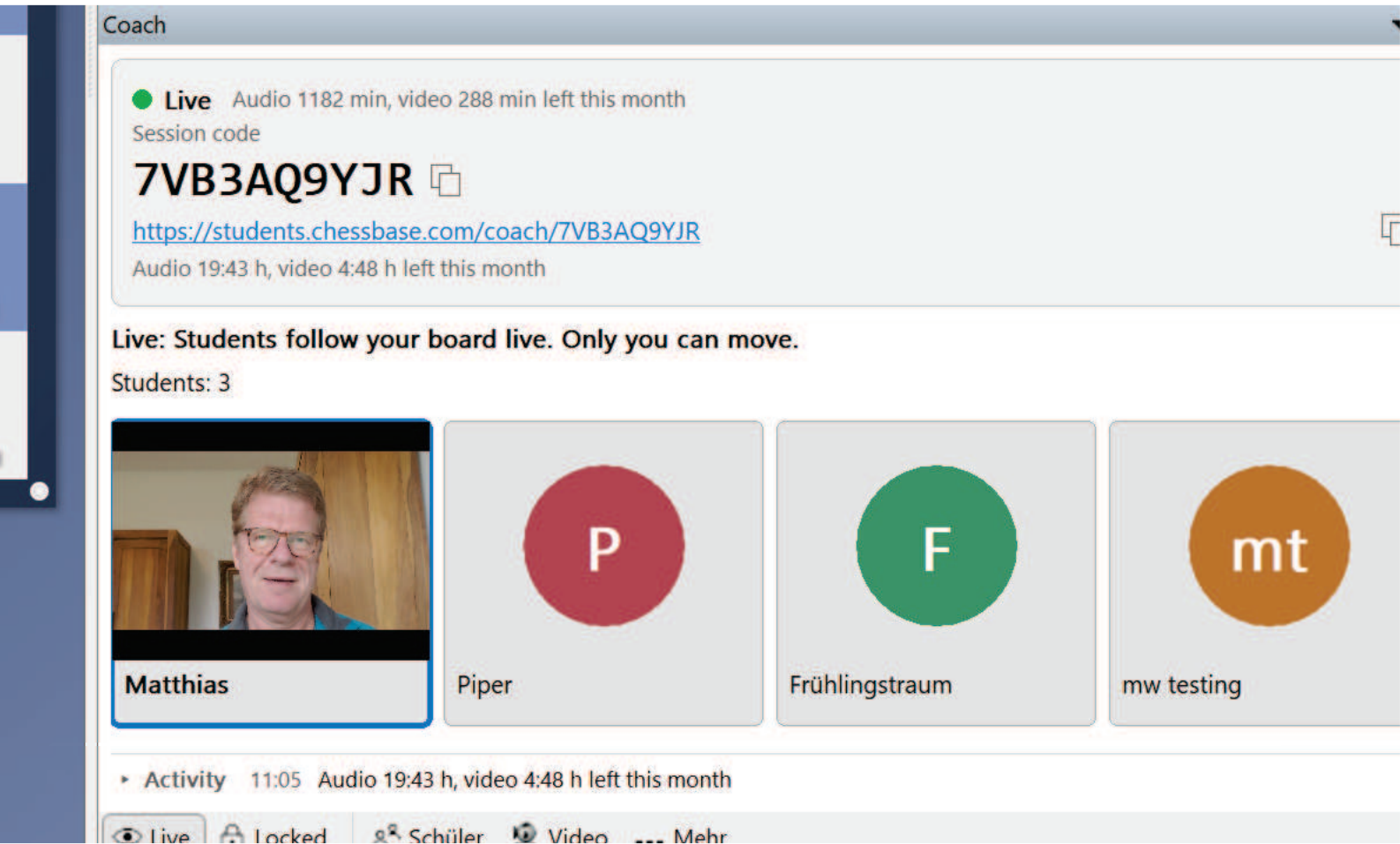
Youth training at the chess club: every student is to propose a move and back it up with a short variation. The coach has prepared the material in ChessBase 27.

The players receive a link or QR code for their phone or tablet and work with a free web version. The coach demonstrates a game whose notation only they can see. Or they load a position. Now everyone can analyze this position on their own. The coach sees what a student enters and can discuss it individually. This works just as well with a single person as with an entire group.

The coach doesn't even need to know their students. They can simply post the link on their website or in a livestream and then interact with the viewers.

Further new features

Lichess opening tree with one billion games - Full support for Chess960, e.g. in tactical analysis - In every opening position, a list of all typical plans with the associated games - Free arrangement of the database icons in the start window - Reference search responds almost instantly - Filter the online database by Classical/Rapid/Blitz/Correspondence.



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Subject to errors and technical changes. As of October 2026.

VIDEOS



With a little help from my friend – Max Warmerdam played the Caro-Kann with 6...Bb4, which he had prepared with Nico Zwirs
Photo: Nils Rohde (ChessBase)

6...Bb4 - A VERY FIGHTING MOVE!



NICO ZWIRS
1994, NED

The IM from the Netherlands plays in several European leagues. His greatest success to date was winning the A-Open at the 2024 Dortmunder Schachtage. Nico Zwirs has already recorded numerous video courses for ChessBase.



Caro-Kann B12:

1.e4 c6
2.d4 d5
3.e5 Bf5
4.h4 h5
5.c4 e6
6.Nc3 Bb4

Nico Zwirs's analysis stemmed largely from his work as Max Warmerdam's second during the 2026 Dutch Championship. In the Caro-Kann Attack variation with **4.h4 h5 5.c4 e6 6.Nc3**, the main continuations for Black are 6...Ne7 and 6...dxc4. The move **6...Bb4** – although common in the variation with 4.c4 – introduces a secondary variation that has scarcely been played to date. The bishop is intended to exert pressure on the Nc3; Black often exchanges it on c3 as well, in order to pursue a light-squared strategy. In the game between Ivan Saric and Max Warmerdam at the 2026 Spanish Team Championship, the sequence was **7.Qb3 Qa5 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.Qxc3 Qxc3 10.bxc3 Ne7 11.cxd5 cxd5**. The light-squared strategy is clear: the bishop controls the b1–h7 diagonal, the knight on e7 can move to f5 or g6, and the other knight can aim for the c4 square. In this game, Warmerdam managed to outplay his opponent in the queenless middlegame.



Generally speaking, an early exchange of queens plays into Black's hands. In his analysis, Nico Zwirs therefore examines the further options for White on the seventh move: cxd5, Ng2, Bd3 and a3.

In the critical variation **7.cxd5 cxd5 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3**, White has a slight advantage, but Black's plan of play is clear and easy to implement. And after **7.Ngge2 Ne7**, White must not be tempted to play **8.Ng3**, as Black can already gain a slight advantage here with **8...c5!**, followed by



9.cxd5 Qxd5!

ALL OPENING VIDEOS.

A TRICKY LINE AGAINST THE DRAGON



Sicilian Dragon B70:

1.e4 c5
2.Nf3 d6
3.d4 cxd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 g6
6.Nd5

The idea **6.Nd5** can be traced back to the English IM Andrew Smith, and of course this repeat move with the queen's knight contravenes a fundamental rule of the opening. Daniel King examines the various responses that this 'breach of the rules' can elicit from Black. **6...Nxe4?** is a gross mistake, because after **7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Qe2 Bxb5 9.Qxe4** White is already winning! Most commonly, Black responds with **6...Nxd5**. Andrew Smith continues here with **7.Bb5+**. (Daniel King shows that the novelty (!) involving a pawn sacrifice – 7.exd5 Qa5+ 8.c3 Qxd5 9.Qb3 – appears to be perfectly playable.) After the main line, **7...Bd7 8.exd5** follows, and after **8...Bg7 9.0-0 0-0**, King recommends retreating the bishop with **10.Be2**, resulting in a very comfortable position. Black should therefore exchange the light-squared bishops on the eighth move with **8...Bxb5**. After **9.Nxb5 Qa5+ 10.Nc3 Bg7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Re1 Re8 13.Bg5**, Black



may well start to have second thoughts given the pressure on the e-file. Anyone who now focuses on defending the pawn on e7 will soon leave the game entirely in White's hands. The critical variation, on the other hand, is **13...Bxc3 14.bxc3 e5!?** – but that requires a great deal of courage from Black.

After **6...Bg7 7.Nxf6+ Bxf6**, Smith opts for 8.Bh6 to prevent his opponent from castling short, but after **8...Qb6 9.c3 Qxb2**, Black gains the upper hand. King recommends instead **8.c3 Nc6 9.Nc2 Bg7 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0**,



resulting in a solid position on the queenside.

ALL OPENING VIDEOS.



DANIEL KING
1984, GB

The GM from London is well known as a commentator on major chess events. He has gained many fans through his 'Powerplay' series and the monthly 'Powerplay' show. King regularly presents new opening ideas in CBM.

GOOD FOR JUST ONE SURPRISE



IVAN SOKOLOV
1968, NED

Over 20 years ago, Ivan Sokolov was among the very best in the world. Today, he is one of the most sought-after coaches worldwide! 'Understanding Middlegame Strategy' is one of ChessBase's most successful series.



Jaenisch Gambit C63:

1.e4 e5
2.Nf3 Nc6
3.Bb5 f5
4.d3 fxe4
5.dxe4 Bc5!?

Daniil Dubov is known for his creative and ambitious style of play. At a rapid chess tournament in Moscow in May this year, he tried out the move **5...Bc5!?** – a move that had scarcely been played before and had met with little success – in the Janisch Gambit against Alexander Grischuk. Ivan Sokolov has analysed this game in detail and, at the start of his video, explains the reasoning behind Dubov's move: in the main line 5…Nf6, after 6.0-0 Bc5 7.Bxc6 bxc6 8.Nxe5, Black struggles to demonstrate sufficient compensation for the pawn. After **5...Bc5!? 6.0-0 d6**, on the other hand, there is no capture on e5. In the Grischuk–Dubov game, this was followed by **7.Be3 Bxe3 8.fxe3 Nf6**, and Black emerged from the opening with a very comfortable position.

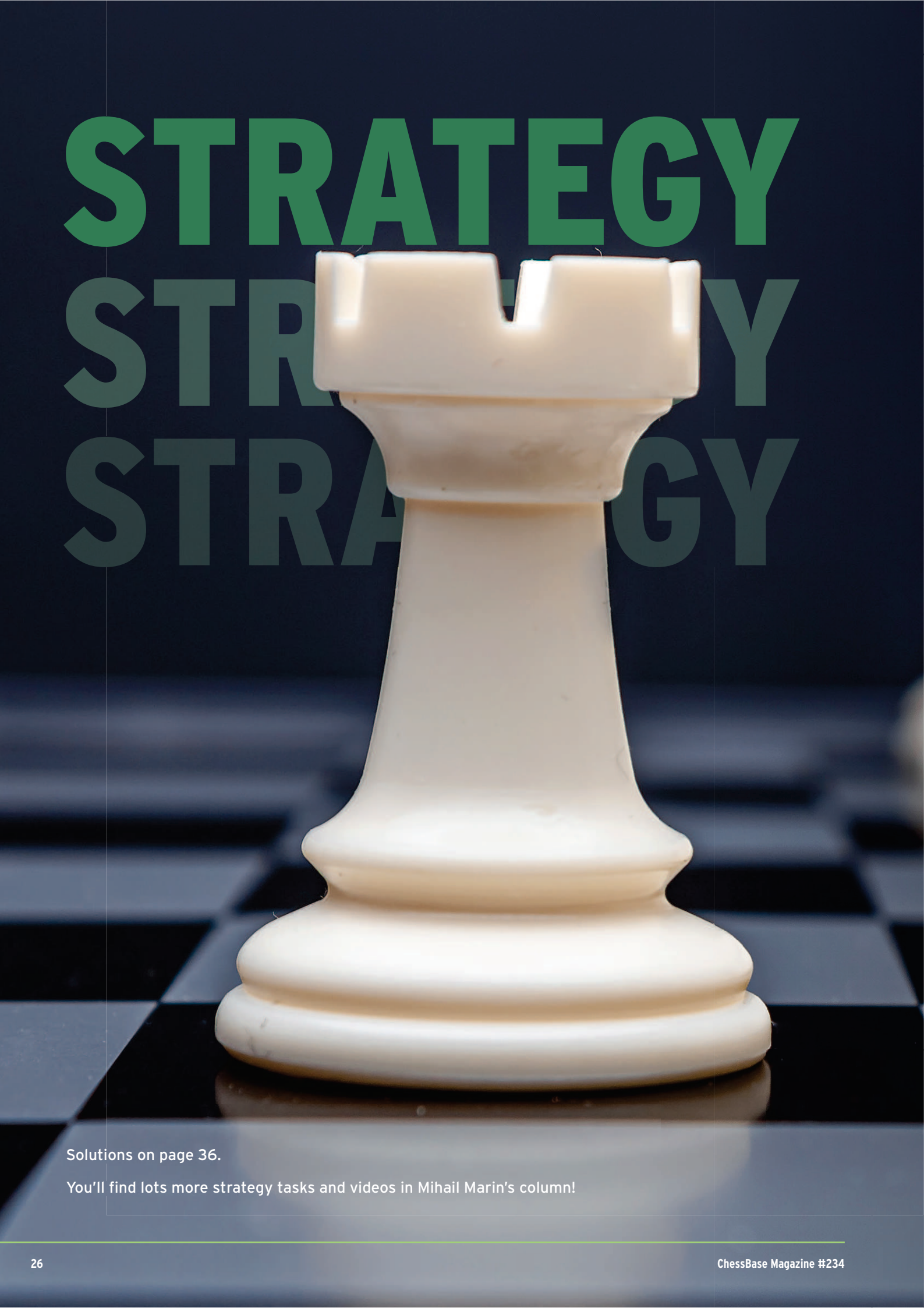


So far, so good. But where does the weakness of this new idea lie? Instead of 6.0-0, White can play **6.Bxc6 bxc6 7.Nxe5** straight away – that is the real challenge for Black. In his analysis, Ivan Sokolov shows that after **7...Qe7**, White can maintain their claim to an advantage with **8.Qh5+ g6 9.Nxg6**. The forced line continues with **9...Qxe4+ 10.Be3 Bb4+ 11.c3 Nf6** – in this sharp position, White has a range of options



to choose from, none of which leads to a clear advantage – but in most variations, Black has to fight hard to demonstrate compensation for the lost pawn.

ALL OPENING VIDEOS.



Solutions on page 36.

You'll find lots more strategy tasks and videos in Mihail Marin's column!