



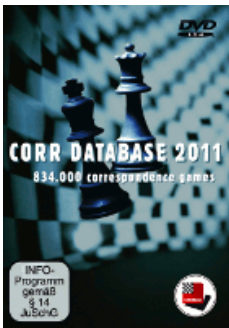
COLUMNISTS

CC Chronicles

Bo Bredenhof



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Advice from Experienced Players

The latest Swedish National CC Champion, Björn Fagerström, is someone who is willing to share his CC working methods. In a two-part article in the fine Swedish CC magazine Korrschack, he reveals some of his tools to winning tournaments:

- First, he collects games played by his upcoming opponents and plays through them to learn the opponent's opening preferences and playing style.
- He then looks for their FIDE rating. Computer programs often follow an incorrect plan in middlegame positions, but you can reckon with a strong player knowing what to do in such positions.
- Age is also a factor he considers. Many older players are still inexperienced when it comes to computer software (there are many exceptions of course). As we grow older, we also often get more risk adverse.
- In opening choices he looks for two patterns: classical chess openings and computer openings. A player who chooses classical openings can often be lured into complex positions where computer experience is important. Computer openings often feature long and complex variations in the Najdorf or Sveshnikov Sicilian, where the player trusts databases and book lines. In these lines, he can often find new ways to play.
- Reflection time is also considered. He tries to discover how many games his opponents are playing. If he finds a player with many games being played during the latest three years, he tries to lure this player into fast play. Such play can induce a bad move now and then.

From this information he selects a tailored opening variation and strategy against every opponent, and he has been very successful.

Another player, Thomas Johansson, was featured in the same magazine. He also revealed his preparation for his first high-level tournament in which he qualified for his first IM rating. He offered a few valuable hints:

- Select openings where chess knowledge is important in order to avoid a computer competition.
- Do not reduce yourself to being nothing more than a computer operator. This means you have to know your openings, positions, plans, and possibilities.
- Do not play any move without knowing why! If you follow this advice, you will not only develop your chess skills but also be more satisfied with your CC play.

The second place finisher at the latest Swedish National Championship was Björn Fagerström. Let's have a look at his game against Patrik Nilsson, who is also a very strong player. Fagerström researched his opponent and decided to play 1.d4, knowing that Nilsson would likely answer with the Semi-Slav. Fagerström also knew that Nilsson had problems with certain variations in this complex opening.

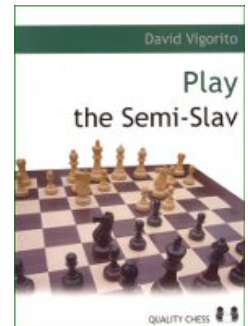
Björn Fagerström (2480) – Patrik Nilsson (2232)

Swedish National Championship, 2009

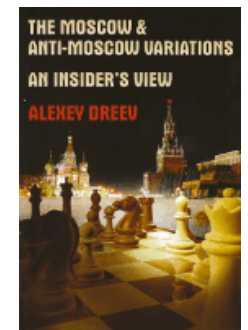
Semi-Slav [D43]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4

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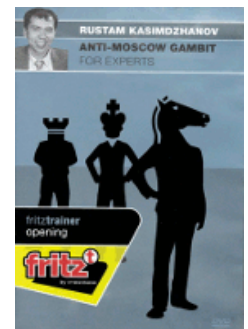


Play the Semi-Slav
by David Vigorito



The Moscow & Anti-Moscow Variations

by Alexey Dreev



Anti-Moscow Gambit

by Rustam Kasimdzhanov



[FEN "mbqkb1r/pp3pp1/2p1pn1p/3p4/2PP3B/2N2N2/PP2PPPP/R2QKB1R b KQkq - 0 6"]

This is the starting position of the Anti-Moscow Gambit in the Semi-Slav.

6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.Bg3 b5 9.Be2 Bb7 10.h4



[FEN "rn1qkb1r/pb3p2/2p1pn1p/1p4p1/2pPP2P/2N2NB1/PP2BPP1/R2QK2R b KQkq - 0 10"]

Fagerström noted he played this despite knowing that Black often gets a satisfactory position in this variation if Black knows what he must do. Still, it is a very complex position with plenty of possibilities for both sides. There are several other ways for White to continue.

10...g4 11.Ne5 h5?!

Nilsson selects an old way to play this position; one in which Fagerström had found an improvement in his preparations. If Black plays the modern 11...Nbd7, White will often have to play very energetically to achieve anything in this gambit.

12.0-0 Nbd7 13.Qc2 Nxe5 14.Bxe5 Bg7 15.b3



[FEN "r2qk2r/pb3pb1/2p1pn2/1p2B2p/2pPP1pP/1PN5/P1Q1BPP1/R4RK1 b kq - 0 15"]

Fagerström notes that White has a nice initiative; Black's king is still in the center and h5-g4 is a weakness in Black's position. 15.Bg3 has been tried before, but after 15...Qxd4 White is two pawns down and my feeling is that Black has at least a draw.

15...cxb3 16.axb3 0-0 17.Bg3 c5



[FEN "r2q1rk1/pb3pb1/4pn2/1pp4p/3PP1pP/1PN3B1/2Q1BPP1/R4RK1 w - - 0 18"]

This is a strange decision by Black and probably the losing move. If instead 17...Qxd4 20.Rfd1 Qc5 21.Bd6 Qb6 22.Bxf8 Rxf8 23.Qd3 a6, Black has a clear edge and can win with his free pawns on the queenside. So perhaps White should not allow this variation with 17.Bg3. On the other hand, White must do something with his pawn center and the d-file to uphold his initiative. This position clearly demonstrates the thin balance between success and failure in the Semi-Slav.

18.e5 Nd5 19.Nxb5 cxd4 20.Nd6 Rb8 21.Bc4 Nb4 22.Qd2 Bd5 23.Rfe1



[FEN "1r1q1rk1/p4pb1/3Np3/3bP2p/1nBp2pP/1P4B1/3Q1PP1/R3R1K1 b - - 0 23"]

Fagerström notes that the computer program evaluates this position as equal. In reality Black is almost lost! The black king is in big trouble, but White has to find the right way.

23...a5 24.Rac1 Qe7 25.Bf4 Kh7



[FEN "1r3r2/4qpbk/3Np3/p2bP2p/1nBp1BpP/1P6/3Q1PP1/2R1R1K1 w - - 0 26"]

Again Black makes a weak move. Much better was 25...f6 26.exf6 Qxf6 27.Be5 Bh6 28.Qxd4 Qxh4 with a much more active position and chances to a draw.

26.Bg5 Qa7 27.Bf1 Qb6 28.Qf4 d3 29.Red1 1-0



[FEN "1r3r2/5pbk/1q1Np3/p2bP1Bp/1n3QpP/1P1p4/5PP1/2RR1BK1 b - - 0 29"]

After 29...Bxb3 30.Rxd3 Bc2 31.Rxc2 Nxc2 32.Ne4, Black is defenseless.

If you want to research your opponents the same way as Fagerström, the [Corr Database 2011](#) by ChessBase is a convenient tool. And if you want to know more about the Semi-Slav, then refer to the book [Play the Semi-Slav](#) by David Vigorito.

Until next time, good luck with your CC play!

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CC Enthusiasts in the Spotlight

This month I would like to spotlight two genuine CC enthusiasts. There are many out there, of course, but these guys are special in that they have both played more than 2,000 CC games. In [CORR Database 2011](#), twenty players had more than 1,000 games, but only two had more than 2,000 games.

The leader is Peter Leisebein from Germany. He has played 3,006 tournament games! The last registered game is from 2007. In the ICCF database he has only thirty-nine games, so almost all his games have been played in national tournaments. His national rating was 2236 in 2005. With eleven players in a tournament, this means he has participated in at least 300 tournaments. Or ten tournaments a year for thirty years. A great achievement no matter how you look at it.

The strong number two is Lars Malmström from Sweden. He has played 2,739 tournament games so far. In ICCF's database he has 429 rated games with a current rating of 1868. In 1997 his rating topped at 2305. He is still active. This is also a great CC achievement.

Let's look at one game from each player.

Leisebein has played many Blackmar-Diemer Gambit (BDG) games as white – an all out attacking opening.

Leisebein, Peter – Baumann, Heinz
M2005 [www.desc-online.de](#) (1), 15.01.2005
Blackmar-Diemer Gambit [D00]

1.d4 Nf6 2.f3

In this way White assures a BDG and does not give Black any means to escape into other variations.

2...d5 3.e4 dxe4 4.Nc3 exf3 5.Nxf3



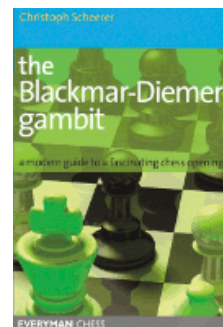
[FEN "rnbqkb1r/ppp1pppp/5n2/8/3P4/2N2N/PPP3PP/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 5"]

This is the starting position of the BDG. It is known as a somewhat suspect opening, but it is not easy to meet. Computer programs have difficulties with this positions – so beware. Black has to play energetically to avoid trouble.

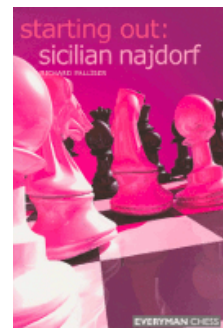
5...e6 6.Bg5 Be7 7.Bd3 c5 8.dxc5 Qa5 9.O-O Qxc5+10.Kh1 Nbd7

Black has not played particularly well and White already has an edge.

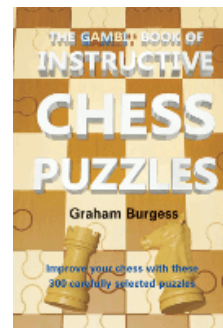
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11.Qe1 a6 12.Qh4 Qb4 13.Ne4 Qxb2

This is probably too greedy. Black is underdeveloped and has not secured his king.

14.Nfd2 Nxe4 15.Nxe4

Fritz10 thinks all is fine for Black here. But I don't. However, White is two pawns down and must be very aggressive.

15...f6 16.Rab1 Qe5 17.Bf4 Qd4 18.Qh5+ g6 19.Qh6



[FEN "r1b1k2r/1p1nb2p/p3pppQ/8/3qNB2/3B4/P1P3PP/1R3R1K b kq - 0 19"]

Fritz still evaluates the position as equal. But we can see that Black is in trouble: he has two rooks and one bishop out of play and the king is stuck in the centre! Black has only one move. One threat is Bd2-c3.

19...f5 20.Ng5 Nc5 21.Nf3 Qd8 22.Rbd1 Bf8 23.Qh3 Qe7 24.Rfe1 h5

Black is in a very difficult situation. 24...Bd7 was a bit better.

25.Qg3 Qh7 26.Ng5 h4 27.Qe3 Qe7



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/1p2q3/p3p1p1/2n2pN1/5B1p/3BQ3/P1P3PP/3RR2K w kq - 0 28"]

Now Black is totally lost; Bc4 or Bd6 are both decisive.

28.Bc4 Rh5 29.Be2 Rh8 30.Rd6 Ne4 31.Nxe4 fxe4 32.Red1 Kf7 33.Rd8 Qf6 34.Bg5 Bh6 35.Bxf6 Rxd8 36.Qxh6 Rxd1+ 37.Bxd1 Kxf6 38.Qxh4+ 1-0



[FEN "r1b5/1p6/p3pkp1/8/4p2Q/8/P1P3PP/3B3K b - - 0 38"]

It is fun to be the attacker and the BDG can be played against both 1...Nf6 and 1...d5.

Now let us have a look at a game by Malmström.

Malmström, Jan (2188) – Grabner, Helmut Dr. (2396)

EU/MSM/VII/prel3–5 corr ICCF, 2005

Sicilian Defense [B92]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be2 e5 7.Nb3 Be7 8.O-O O-O 9.Kh1 b6 10.a4 Bb7



[FEN "rn1q1rk1/1b2bPPP/pp1p1n2/4p3/P3P3/1NN5/1PP1BPPP/R1BQ1R1K w - - 0 11"]

We have one of many possible Najdorf positions on the board.

11.f3 Nc6 12.Nd5 Nxd5 13.exd5 Nb4 14.c4 a5 15.Bd2 Na6 16.f4 e4 17.Nd4 Nc5 18.Bc3 Qd7 19.g4



[FEN "r4rk1/1b1qbPPP/1p1p4/p1nP4/P1PNpPP1/2B5/1P2B2P/R2Q1R1K b - - 0 19"]

Black is already in trouble. He has no counterplay on the queenside, a weak e4-pawn, the centre is blocked by White's two pawns, and the black king looks a bit exposed. All in all; White has a clear edge.

19...Rfe8 20.g5 Bc8 21.Rg1 Bf8 22.f5 e3 23.Bf3 Ba6 24.b3 Ne4 25.Bxe4 Rxe4 26.Qf3 Rae8 27.Rae1 Bb7 28.Ne2 b5 29.Ng3 Rh4 30.axb5 a4



[FEN "4rbk1/1b1q1ppp/3p4/1P1P1PP1/
p1P4r/1PB1pQN1/7P/4R1RK w - - 0 31"]

Black has struggled to survive the last few moves and created some counterplay, but not enough. Now 31.Nh5 looks very strong, but Black can sacrifice the exchange and take the f5-pawn. Together with the e3-pawn that could be enough to push White into a defensive position. So White selects a safer variation.

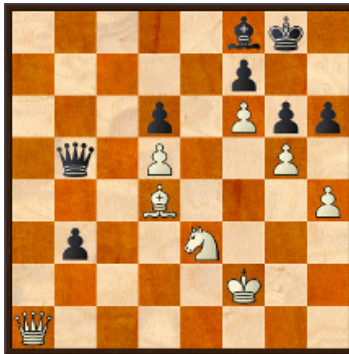
**31.Rxe3 Rxe3 32.Qxe3 axb3 33.Qd3 Qc8 34.Ne4 Rf4 35.Rf1 Rxf1+ 36.
Qxf1 Qa8 37.f6 g6 38.Qe2 Bc8 39.Kg2 Bf5 40.Bb2 Qa2**



[FEN "5bk1/5p1p/3p1Pp1/1P1P1bP1/
2P1N3/1p6/qB2Q1KP/8 w - - 0 41"]

White still has a clear edge, but Black has the bishop-pair and a strong b3-pawn. White has to find an "opener" to win the game.

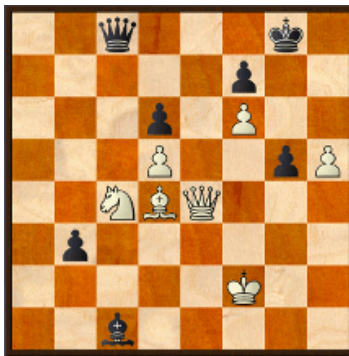
**41.Nf2 h6 42.h4 Qa4 43.Kg3 Qb4 44.Nd1 Bc8 45.Bd4 Bb7 46.Ne3 Bc8 47.
Kf2 Bd7 48.Qe1 Qa4 49.Qa1 Bxb5 50.cxb5 Qxb5**



[FEN "5bk1/5p2/3p1Ppp/1q1P2P1/
3B3P/1p2N3/5K2/Q7 w - - 0 51"]

White continued to strengthen his position and forced Black to take on b5. White's edge has increased considerably. Now it is about winning a won game and not slipping into a drawn position.

**51.Kf3 Qd7 52.Kg3 Qb5 53.Qb2 Qd3 54.Kf2 Kh7 55.Bc3 Qb5 56.Qd2
Qa4 57.Qd4 Qd7 58.Kg3 Kg8 59.gxh6 Bxh6 60.Nc4 Bc1 61.Qe4 Qc8 62.h5
g5 63.Bd4 Bf4+ 64.Kf2 Bc1**



[FEN "2q3k1/5p2/3p1P2/3P2pP/2NBQ3/1p6/5K2/2b5 w - - 0 65"]

65.Nxd6 1-0

Black sacrifices the d6-pawn to get some chances. But White's king goes to h3 and the white knight stops Black's free pawn. A fine game by Malmström with an interesting endgame against a strong opponent.

Until next time, good luck with your CC play!

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How to Win a CC Tournament

I recently registered for two new tournaments. Before they begin there is time to prepare and make any necessary changes. To win a tournament in modern CC chess is difficult. The margins are small between first place and the rest of the pack.

In earlier chronicles I have indicated several important ways to prepare; for example, to register in several tournaments to minimize random factors, to have a good control system to avoid mistakes, and to research your opponents whenever possible. But there is more to do.

The profile of a "normal" winner often looks like this: draws in all black games, and two or more wins as white with the rest drawn. Losses must be avoided if you aspire to first place. If you lose even one game, you would be very lucky to still win the event.

To achieve this it means you must have a very stable opening repertoire as black and a white repertoire with enough aggression to give you several wins. So while you are waiting for your tournaments to begin, take time to look at your openings. It is possible you need to change some of them; especially as black, where the slightest weaknesses can lead to a loss.

Another factor to consider is whether your chess software is up to date. And how well you understand its behavior in different positions, as programs behave differently. Some make more "human" moves, others are better in sacrificial positions, some are very fast, and so on. I use Fritz because it is very fast and the interface suits me. I still use Deep Fritz 11, but will upgrade to Deep Fritz 13 when it becomes available. Sometimes I consult Deep Rybka 4 to get a second opinion. This software also has a unique option: you can let two processors play your position against each other. This can give you a hint on a winning plan!

The tournament pairings are usually posted to the server a couple of weeks before the official start date; however, I advise that you not begin play right away. You do not want to give your opponents free extra reflection time, especially the stronger players. Use this time to research you opponents. A good CC database will help you discover further information about the other players.

Once play begins, be very careful in the opening phase. It is easy to play too fast. When there is a choice of sub-variations, always take extra reflection time and do some research. Examine how you played this before and the subsequent course of events. If not you did not get a good position before, then how should you this time? Search the database for similar positions and decide how to proceed.

Since I am playing in the recently started World Cup 18, I had a look at the latest World Cup finals to see who had won and how. I was stunned that the latest four finals (nos. 11-14) have the same winner!! He is Reinhard Moll from Germany, and his present rating is 2647. He has not lost a single game in these very strong finals; a remarkable achievement. He follows the "formula" I outlined above, with a very stable black opening repertoire and aggressive white play.

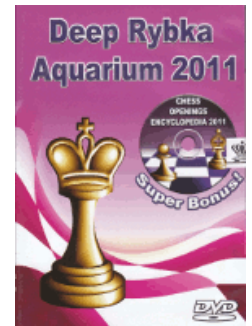
Let us have a look at a game from the [World Cup XIV Final](#):

Moll, Reinhard (2558) – Kudela, Stanislav (2477)
CT14/final ICCF, 15.06.2009

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Ruy Lopez [C88]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.h3

Black invites the Marshall Attack, but White steers for an Anti-Marshall variation.

8...Bb7 9.d3 d6

If Black wanted sharper play, the gambit with 9...d5 is a good alternative. Now play resembles a normal Ruy Lopez and that is generally not in Black's interest.

10.a4



[FEN "r2q1rk1/1bp1bPPP/p1np1n2/1p2p3/P3P3/1B1P1N1P/1PP2PP1/RNBQR1K1 b - - 0 10"]

Normally, White play 10.a3. The advantages of 10.a4 are that it avoids common variations and is more aggressive. It is also in line with White's general play in the Ruy Lopez. Black now selects a Chigorin-setup.

10...Na5 11.Ba2 c5 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.axb5 axb5 15.Nc3 b4 16.Nd5 b3 17.Bxb3 Nxb3 18.Rxa8 Bxa8 19.Nxf6 Qxf6 20.cxb3 Rb8



[FEN "br4k1/5pp1/3p1q1p/2p1p3/4P3/1P1P1N1P/1P3PP1/3QR1K1 w - - 0 21"]

It is hard to believe that Black loses from this position. The game is about level with perhaps a small edge to Black because of White's weak b-pawns and the black bishop. Still, he is a pawn down. Black should stop and think about a plan for the late middlegame and the endgame, improve his bishop's position, and not be defensive.

21.Qc2 Bc6 22.Nd2 Qe7 23.Nc4 Qe6 24.Na5 Bd7 25.Ra1 Qe7 26.Nc4 Bc6 27.Ra6 Qc7 28.Ne3 Kh7 29.Qd1 Rb5 30.Nf5 g6



[FEN "8/2q2p1k/R1bp2pp/1rp1pN2/4P3/1P1P3P/1P3PP1/3Q2K1 w - - 0 31"]

Black has played too defensively and without a plan. He has followed his chess software too much and is now worse. His bishop is doing nothing on c6. He should have opted for a scheme with ...Be6, ...Rb4, and ...Qc8. That would keep White busy protecting b3. With such an arrangement, Black would still have had a level game.

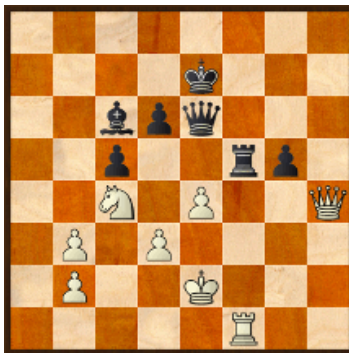
31.Ne3 Kg7 32.Ra3 Rb4 33.h4 h5 34.g4 hxg4 35.Qxg4 Qd7 36.Qg3 Rb8 37.h5 Rh8 38.hxg6 fxg6 39.Kf1 Kf7 40.Ke2



[FEN "7r/3q1k2/2bp2p1/2p1p3/4P3/RP1PN1Q1/1P2KP2/8 b - - 0 40"]

Now White has a clear advantage. Black has allowed White to destroy his kingside pawn structure, his bishop is still out of play, and he has no control of the b-file. White can continue being aggressive.

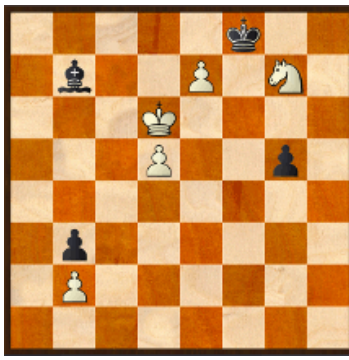
40...Rh3 41.Qg2 Rh8 42.Ra1 Rh7 43.Nc4 Rh5 44.Qf3 Rf5 45.Qg3 Rh5 46.Rg1 Qe6 47.f4 exf4 48.Qxf4 Ke7 49.Rf1 Rf5 50.Qh4+ g5



[FEN "8/4k3/2bpq3/2p2rp1/2N1P2Q/1P1P4/1P2K3/5R2 w - - 0 51"]

Black is now in great difficulties and will lose if White does not blunder.

51.Qh7 Rf7 52.Rxf7+ Qxf7 53.Qxf7+ Kxf7 54.Nxf6+ Ke6 55.Nc4 Bb5 56.Ke3 Bc6 57.Na5 Ba8 58.b4 cxb4 59.d4 Ke6 60.d5+ Kf6 61.Nc6 b3 62.Na5 Ke5 63.Nc4+ Kf6 64.e5+ Kf5 65.Kd4 Kg6 66.e6 Kf6 67.Ne3 Ke7 68.Ke5 Kd8 69.Nf5 Bb7 70.Kd6 Ke8 71.Ng7+ Kf8 72.e7+ 1-0



[FEN "5k2/1b2P1N1/3K4/3P2p1/
8/1p6/1P6/8 b - - 0 72"]

White's aggressive play caused Black to react passively. Black, a pawn down, selected a variation with many exchanges, and arrived at a position he could not handle.

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COLUMNISTS

CC Chronicles

Bo Bredenhof



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Solid Openings For CC

Let's begin this month's column by answering some comments from last month:

Roger from **Canada** asked if "using chess software to help find the best move is now accepted in CC?" The answer depends on where you play. It is allowed in the ICCF, but other organizations or national tournaments may not allow it.

Stephen from the **USA** expressed kind words about the column. Thank you, it inspires me to continue my efforts to provide useful and interesting material.

Leon from the **USA** commented that I always assume a player follows "his chess software too much," without developing a plan. Every player is unique of course. There are many very good players out there. I know because I play them every day and it is difficult to win. Currently, I have fifty-seven games in eleven different tournaments. I am experienced enough to see when an opponent plays without a good plan (it is not always easy to find one) and when he relies too much on chess software.

Now to this month's topic: I have tried a variety of openings in CC during the last twelve years, and I have researched even more in analysis and databases. I would now like to share some of my experiences. I will assume that you play in tournaments where computer assistance is allowed because this makes opening selection much more critical. Though my comments are also useful in general. Please do not be offended if I have critical comments about your favorite opening. I am only expressing my opinion, while your experience with a certain opening may have been much more positive. My focus will be on solidity in the chess software environment at a moderate level of CC. There are several other aspects of opening choice in certain tournament situations and this will be dealt with another time.

Let's look at some very solid openings:

Ruy Lopez: This is a very solid opening for White. Black will often struggle for a draw, especially when White plays d5. In this case, Black has problems with piece mobility. Perhaps Black's best option is 3.Nf6: the Berlin Wall. Black can also try the Marshall Attack, but he will have problems in some Anti-Marshall variations. The Petroff is the most solid option for Black, but then he must be prepared for the Four Knights also.

Sicilian: The Closed variation is very solid for White, as is the Sveshnikov and Classical for Black.

Queen's Gambit: Several main lines in the QGD are very solid for White, and the QGA and Tartakower for Black.

Slav: The quiet 4.e3 is very solid for White, and the Chameleon or 4...a6 for Black.

Nimzo-Indian: Black has solid play in this opening, independent of White's choice of main line. Therefore, White usually avoids it with 3.Nf3. Then Black have several options: 3...d5 (the very solid QGD), 3...b6 (Queen's Indian), or 3...c5 (Benoni).

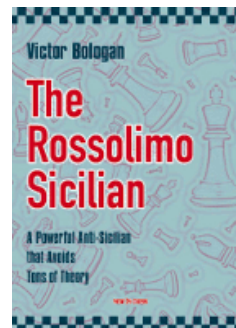
Semi-Slav: The Moscow variation with 6.Bxf6 is very solid for White.

Dutch: the Leningrad is very solid for Black, but White has several ways to avoid it.

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If you list these openings among your favorites, then you will have a sound and resilient repertoire. If you pick your variations cleverly, there will be many draws, some wins, and only a few losses. As long as you think solid and simple with your openings, you will often get away with at least a draw.

While these openings may be positional in nature, there is plenty of opportunity for active play in these variations. The main point in this selection is to achieve robust positions with a minimum risk of losing. Next month, I will recommend a more tactically inspired opening selection.

Can you win tournaments with these openings? Of course! The opening is only one aspect of play. If you play 2...Nc6 in the Sicilian, you will occasionally encounter the 3.Bb5 System. Let's have a look at such a game between to equally strong players:

Richter, Wolfgang (2305) – Ilyasov, Anatoly (2307)

ICCF WS/M/259 2010/11

Sicilian Defense [B30]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6

More common is 3...g6. Other alternatives are 3...d6 and 3...Nf6. If you play the Classical Sicilian, perhaps you would prefer 3...d6 to get a similar position.

4.0-0 Nge7 5.c3 a6 6.Ba4 b5 7.Bc2 Bb7



[FEN "r2qkb1r/1b1pnppp/p1n1p3/1pp5/4P3/2P2N2/PPBP1PPP/RNBQ1RK1 w kq - 0 8"]

White has lured Black into advancing on the queenside in order to attack it at once. The problem with this scenario is that it takes time.

8.a4 Ng6 9.axb5 axb5 10.Rxa8 Bxa8 11.d4 cxd4 12.Nxd4 b4 13.Nb5

This is a strange and weak move. White should play 13.Be3 and get on with his development. To start a pawn hunt early in a game is often very risky. After 13.Nb5, Black is already equal.

13...Qb8 14.Qe2 Bc5 15.Rd1 0-0



[FEN "bq3rk1/3p1ppp/2n1p1n1/1Nb5/1p2P3/2P5/1PB1QPPP/1NBR2K1 w - - 0 16"]

Now comes the punishment.

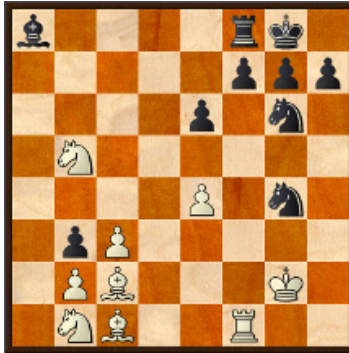
16.Rxd7 Bxf2+ 17.Kxf2

This is probably White's only move. After 17.Qxf2, the endgame seems lost. Black's queen, light-squared bishop, and the opening of the f-file would be too much for White.

17...Qxh2 18.Rd1 Nce5 19.Rf1 Qh4+ 20.g3

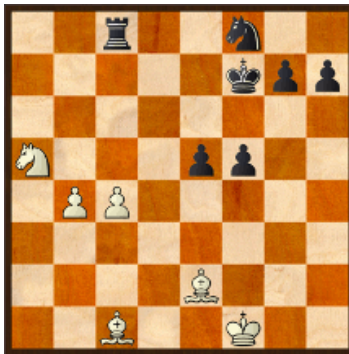
20.Kg1 only transposes.

20...Ng4+ 21.Kg1 Qxg3+ 22.Qg2 Qxg2+ 23.Kxg2 b3



[FEN "b4rk1/5ppp/4p1n1/1N6/4P1n1/1pP5/1PB3K1/1NB2R2 w - - 0 24"]

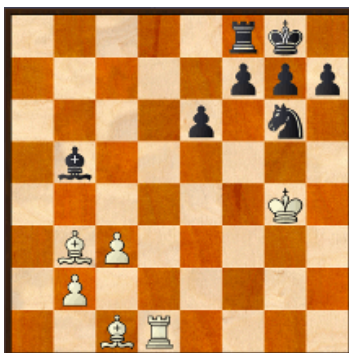
This is a critical position. White should now continue 24.Bd1 Bxe4+ 25.Kg1 (25.Kg3? loses a piece.) 25...Bxb1 26.Bxg4 Bd3 27.Nd4 Bxf1 28.Kxf1 e5 29. Nxb3 f5 30.Be2 Rc8 31.Na5 Kf7 32.c4 Nf8 33.b4:



[FEN "2r2n2/5kpp/8/N3pp2/1PP5/8/4B3/2B2K2 b - - 0 33"]

This interesting and difficult endgame position is about equal, with chances for both sides.

24.Bxb3? Bxe4+ 25.Kg3 Bxb1 26.Kxg4 Bd3 27.Rd1 Bxb5



[FEN "5rk1/5ppp/4p1n1/1b6/6K1/1BP5/1P6/2BR4 w - - 0 28"]

White is now behind two pawns and misses his good knight to support his passed pawns on the queenside. Black has a clear advantage, but it is still

interesting to see how he realizes it.

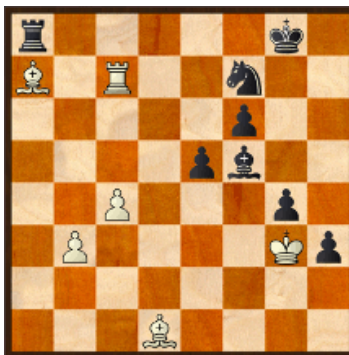
**28.Kg3 Rc8 29.c4 Be8 30.Ba2 Ra8 31.Bb3 Rb8 32.Bc2 f6 33.b3 Ne7 34.
Rd2 g5 35.Ba3 Nc6**



[FEN "1r2b1k1/7p/2n1pp2/6p1/2P5/
BP4K1/2BR4/8 w - - 0 36"]

Black has carefully blockaded White's passed pawns and begun advancing his own pawn on the kingside, without creating holes in the pawn chain. Black has a decisive advantage.

**36.Rd6 h5 (37.Rxe6 Nd4) 37.Bc5 h4 38.Kh3 Ne5 39.Bd4 Bg6 40.Bd1 Nf7
41.Rd7 e5 42.Ba7 Bf5+ 43.Kg2 Ra8 44.Rc7 h3+ 45.Kg3 g4 0-1**



[FEN "r5k1/B1R2n2/5p2/4pb2/2P3p1/
1P4Kp/8/3B4 w - - 0 46"]

Black played a very fine endgame.

From this game we can learn that pawn-hunting to the detriment of development is a bad idea, and not to give up too early. Even if you are in deep trouble, there can still be an escape (here 24.Bd1).

Until next time, good luck with your CC play!

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Tactical Openings For CC

I begin with addressing some Readers' Responses from last month:

Geert from the **Netherlands** would like to read more about "real" top players and not about today's computer programs playing against each other. If we want to find the top CC players without computer assistance, we would have to go back to the middle of the 1990s or earlier. Nevertheless, to gain a top place in a CC tournament today, on any level, one has to be a good chess player; a strong chess program by itself is not enough.

Mohan from **India** writes about how poorly chess programs behave in positions without queens. I agree. With queens, the positions are more tactical and that is the strength of the chess programs. In my experience the programs are weak in many endgame positions; particular in positions with two rooks on both sides apart from pawns and kings. The entire endgame must be handled with good "human" skills.

Gerald from the **USA** asks if I meant the Closed Sicilian with 2.Nc3 and 3.g3. Yes, and I agree with his assessment that chess programs are not particularly good at handling these positions. Most programs are tactically inclined and these positions require knowing the proper plans to be successful.

This month I would like to discuss tactical openings in CC. If you want to have fun, and not aspire to the top spots in a tournament, gambits are the place to go. I wrote about this subject in my [September 2011](#) column. Bird's Opening is another choice if your play is not results orientated. I especially like From's Gambit, but in today's CC it does not score well.

Of course, one's definition of "tactical" and one's opening choice is also a matter of taste to some extent. Some of us prefer calmer positions and some of us like chaos across the board. The latter is the reason for many CC players to have tactical openings in their repertoire. You must allow your opponent to go wrong, and it is more likely in a complicated tactical position. Yet, I must stress the importance of being aggressive in these openings. Playing too sedately often leads to a defensive and losing position.

The number one move in this respect is, of course, 1.e4. From there, it is up to the opponent. Let's look at the choices:

With 1...e5, we have the Open Games. The most tactical choice for White is the Scotch Game with 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4. It is a very tricky and complex opening. One will often end up in complicated endgames as well.

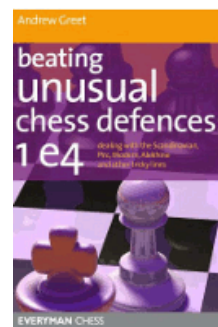
With 1...c5, we have a very common and tactical choice: the Sicilian. If White enters the Open variations with 2.Nf3, the Najdorf and the Dragon are the most popular choices.

With 1...e6, we have the French. This is a more positional choice in general but it can be very tactical. White should go for the Winawer variation with 3.Nc3 Bb4 and if possible the main line with 7.Qg4. This is a very sharp variation with a nice score for White in CC. Black often avoids it by selecting the Classical French with 3...Nf6, when White can play 4.Bg5, 5.e5, followed by 6.h4, and we have a very sharp position again.

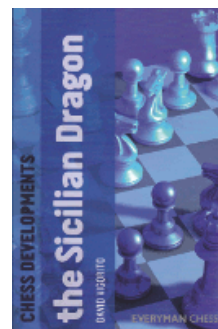
With 1...c6, we have the Caro-Kann. A very sharp variation is the Panov-Botvinnik Attack with 6.Nf3, 7.cxd5, and 11.0-0-0.

With 1...d6, we have the Pirc opening. There are many sharp sub-variations

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here. Black must know the opening very well to survive in CC. White has many choices; the sharpest of which is perhaps the Four Pawns Attack.

With 1...d5, we have the Scandinavian Defense. White gets plenty of action and attack for free in this opening, so perhaps Black should select something else in CC.

Black can also select 1...b6 (English Defense) and 1...g6 (Modern Defense), but my experience is that Black gets into too much trouble here in CC.

Many top players vary between 1.e4, 1.d4, and 1.Nf3 as white. As black, they go for the Sicilian or the Nimzo-Indian.

The CC game we spotlight this month shows that both sides have to be prepared for surprises in even the most conventional openings.

Wolf, Klaus (2474) – Efendiye, Enver (2466)

[ICCF WS/GMN/022](#) (ongoing)

1.e4 c5 2.c4 Nc6

A Sicilian for two moves, and then something else! Black selected a Symmetrical English in this game. According to Richard Palliser in [Fighting the Anti-Sicilians](#), Black can play 3...e5 and upon 4.g3, 4...h5. This is apparently an old suggestion of Keres.

3.Nc3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d6 6.Nge2 Nf6 7.Rb1



[FEN "r1bqkbnr/pp1pppp/2n5/2p5/2P1P3/8/PP1P1PPP/RNBQKBNR w KQkq - 0 3"]

White starts thematic play on the a- and b-files. I suppose Dragon players feel more at home in this kind of position, but they have no quick attack here.

7...a6 8.a3 h5 9.h3 Nd4 10.d3 Rb8 11.Be3 e5 12.b4 b5 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.cxd5 Bd7 15.bxc5 dxc5 16.Nxd4 cxd4 17.Bd2 Rc8 18.0-0 0-0



[FEN "2rq1rk1/3b1pb1/p5p1/1p1Pp2p/3pP3/P2P2PP/3B1PB1/1R1Q1RK1 w - - 0 19"]

The position is balanced. Both sides have passed pawns to work with.

19.Qb3 Re8 20.h4 Bf8 21.Kh2 Bd6 22.Bh3 Bxh3 23.Kxh3



[FEN "2rqr1k1/5p2/p2b2p1/1p1Pp2p/3pP2P/PQ1P2PK/3B1P2/1R3R2 b - - 0 23"]

This is the first decisive position in the game. Black decided on Qe7, followed by Bxa3, which is not a good plan. His bishop ends up locked in at a3 and White's center pawns become very dangerous. A better plan is Qd7+, followed by f5, and to keep the black bishop on the dark squares around the king. The game is then about even.

23...Qe7 24.Kg2 Bxa3 25.Ra1 b4 26.Qa4 Ra8 27.f4 Rec8 28.fxe5 Qxe5 29.Ra2 a5 30.Bg5



[FEN "r1r3k1/5p2/6p1/p2Pq1Bp/Qp1pP2P/b2P2P1/R5K1/5R2 b - - 0 30"]

Black is in deep trouble. Yet Deep Fritz10 still evaluates a strong edge to Black. 30...f5 looks best, but then comes 31.Qd7 Rc5 32.Bf4 Qf6 33.Bg5 Qf7 34.Qd6 Rac8 (34...Rc7 35.g4!) 35.Bf6 Rc2+ 36.Rxc2 Rxc2+ 37.Kg1 Qc7 and suddenly there is 38.e5 and White wins. If 30...Rc3, so 31.Qd7 Qc7 32.Rxf7 Qxd7 33.Rxd7, and White wins again, because black cannot advance his passed pawns. In the game black tries a third alternative.

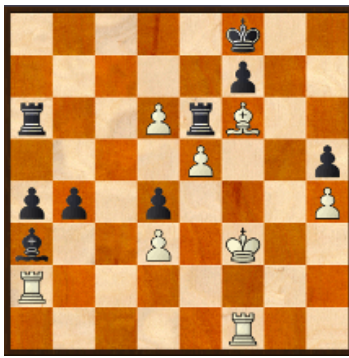
30...Qe8 31.Qxe8+ Rxe8 32.Bf6 a4

At depth 20, Deep Fritz still evaluates Black's position as OK; while you and I can see that Black is in serious trouble. His dark-squared bishop is out of play and it makes it impossible for him to advance his important passed pawns.

33.d6 Ra7 34.g4!

A clever way to soften up Black's kingside and prepare an attack along the g-file. Deep Fritz is, of course, against it because of potential loss of material.

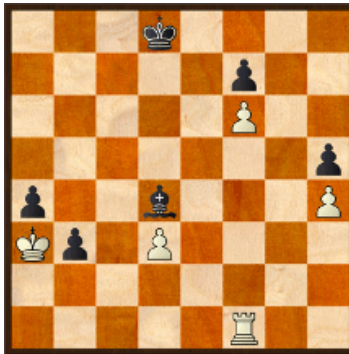
34...Re6 35.e5 Kf8 36.gxh5 gxh5 37.Kf3 Ra6



[FEN "5k2/5p2/r2PrB2/4P2p/pp1p3P/
b2P1K2/R7/5R2 w - - 0 38"]

Black is helpless, even though he is a pawn ahead.

**38.Rc2 Rxf6+ 39.exf6 Ke8 40.Rc7 Rxd6 41.Ke4 Rd7 42.Rc8+ Rd8 43.
Rxd8 Kxd8 44.Kxd4 Bb2+ 45.Kc4 b3 46.Kb4 Bd4 47.Ka3 1-0**



[FEN "3k4/5p2/5P2/7p/p2b3P/Kp1P4/
8/5R2 b - - 0 47"]

One continuation is 47...Kd7 48.Rf5 Ke6 49.Rxh5 Bxf6 50.Ra5 Le7+ 51.
Kxa4 b2 52.Rb5 Bxh4 53.Rxb2 and White's d-pawn decides.

This game also showed us the importance of being able to detect the critical
positions and develop plans five to ten moves further on.

Until next time, good luck with your CC play!

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