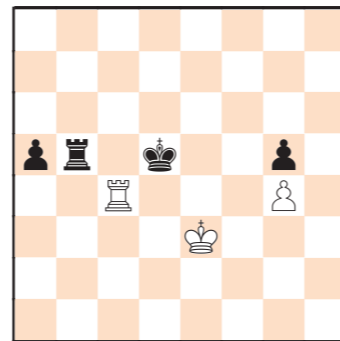
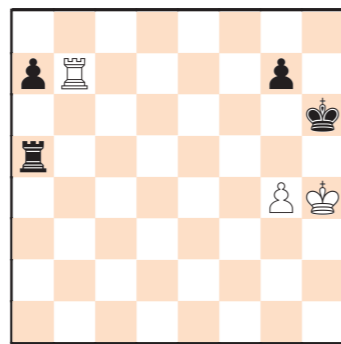
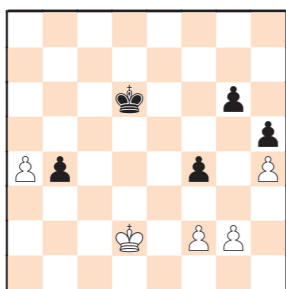




A) 39.♔d3? f3! 40.gxf3 (40.g3 ♖c5 41.♖c2 ♖b6 42.♖b2 ♖a6=) 40...g5 41.hxg5 h4 42.g6 ♕e7 43.a5 h3 44.g7 ♖f7 45.a6 h2 46.g8♗+ ♖xg8 47.a7 h1♗ 48.a8♗+ ♖g7, and this is a draw.  
 B) But the win is still there with 39.♔d2!!

Alexander Shabalov	2521
Leonid Sokolin	2497

U.S. Senior Championship, Saint Louis 2021



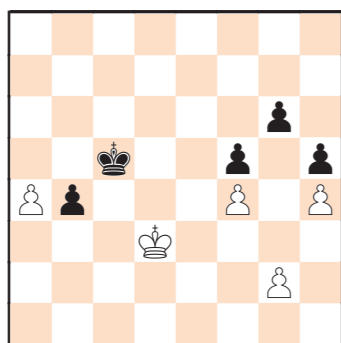
The black rook defends both pawns, but it is not easy for him to take his king where he needs to if White prepares the frontal defense.

This is not to force some sort of distant opposition, but because the king is much better placed here in the queen ending. I don't recall seeing a theme like this before. 39...f3! 40.gxf3 (40.g3? ♖c6=) 40...g5 41.hxg5 h4 42.g6 ♕e7 43.a5 h3 44.a6 h2 45.a7 h1♗ 46.a8♗ Black does not have any useful checks and will remain two pawns down. 46...♗h6+ (46...♖f6 47.♗c6+ ♖g7 48.♖e2 ♗b1? 49.♗b7+ ♖xg6 50.♗e4+-) 47.♖e2 ♗xg6 48.♗b7+ ♖e8 49.♗xb4+-, and this position is a win, in about 75 more moves.

39.♔d3 But now White wins easily, with reserve tempi on the kingside.

39...♖c5 39...f4 is too late: 40.a5 ♖c5 (40...f3 41.g3 ♖c5 42.a6 ♖b6 43.♖c4) 41.a6 ♖b6 42.♖c4.

40.f4



40...♔d5 41.♖c2 ♖c4 42.♖b2 ♔d5 43.♖b3 Black resigned, as after 53...♖c5 54.g3 (the reserve tempo) finishes the game.

In general, people who finished in the bottom half of the field had some problems in the endgame. Does endgame play suffer first when you run out of energy? By the way, I don't agree with the general perception that older players tend to be better in the endgame than younger players. Nowadays a lot of common themes, or exact positions, are known even to less experienced players. But endings often require precise calculation, as I am sure you have noticed here. They also require quick thinking, confidence, courage, decisiveness... all these qualities are fully developed in youth! More and more often I see younger players outplaying us old masters in the endgame. And if all the books, articles, and online classes we offer are helping today's generation to learn the fundamentals faster, then we are all the better for it! As I indicated, Leonid Sokolin was one of the endgame casualties in this tournament, but I would like to end with a victory he earned in round 3 over Alex Shabalov, which put him at +1 at the time. This looks like a simple draw, but the path from "0.00" on Stockfish to "½" in the crosstable can be thorny.

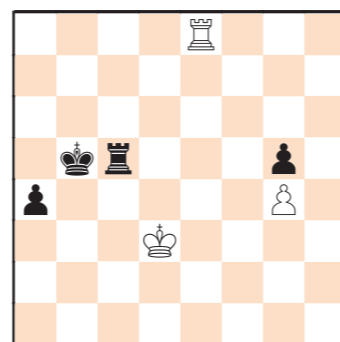
40.♖b3? Bad instincts here by Shabba on the last move of the time control. He was perhaps afraid of some sort of mate after ...♖a3, or the king being driven too far back with ...g5+ and ...♖a3+, but there is really nothing to worry about after 40.♖c7. As the game goes, it is still a draw, but not so easy.

40...g5+ 41.♖g3 ♖e5 42.♖f3 ♖g6 43.♖b7 a5 44.♖d7 ♖f6 45.♖d8 ♖e6 46.♖d4 ♖d5 47.♖c4 ♖b5 48.♖e3 ♔d5

49.♖d4+? The only move is 49.♖a4!, for example: 49...♖c5 50.♖a1! ♖b6 (50...♖b4 51.♖b1+ ♖c4 52.♖c1+ ♖d5 53.♖a1) 51.♖e4! (the king must be active) 51...♖a6 52.♖a2! ♖b3 53.♖a1 ♖b4+ 54.♖f5 ♖b5+ 55.♖e4 ♖c5 56.♔d4 ♖b6 57.♖e4 ♖b5 58.♖b1+ ♖c4 59.♖c1+ ♖b4 60.♖b1+ ♖a3 61.♔d4! ♖c2 62.♖b5.

49...♖c6 50.♖e4 ♖d5! Black is able to harmonize his pieces. White no longer has any defense.

51.♖e8 ♖b5 52.♖e4 ♖c5 53.♔d3 a4!



Smooth sailing now.

54.♖b8+ ♖a5 55.♔d4 ♖b5 56.♖c8 ♖b4 57.♔d3 ♖d5+ 58.♖e4 ♖c5 White resigned

Well, we have seen some howlers, but I think more often we have seen excellent, creative endgame ideas by the legends of chess. I hope that you have enjoyed this tour through the best senior endgame moments of 2021.

HINTS ON USE OF THE 2021 CHESSBASE OPENING ENCYCLOPEDIA

# NEVER RUN AWAY FROM DATA!

New books and new data are worthy of your time so long as they contain original and reputable ideas. You will not adopt every new system but knowing about different variations and their finer points can only serve to improve your chess.

By Jon Edwards

It is with that important point in mind that I offer a review of ChessBase's 2021 *Opening Encyclopedia*. Each year, the Encyclopedia assembles theoretical summaries and new ideas in several useful formats. Many of these items have already appeared in *ChessBase Magazine* (CBM) and so, if you subscribe to that, there will be little need to acquire the Encyclopedia too. For the rest of us who want access to all of this material is a well-organized, single product, the Encyclopedia provides the answer.

The traditional opening surveys have dominated the Encyclopedia for years, and many of these are updated yearly and then presented in an easily searched database. The major new surveys this year include extensive coverage in the Nimzo Indian (43 surveys), the Queen's Gambit

(43 surveys), Queen's Pawn various (77 surveys), the Ruy Lopez Archangelsk (47 surveys), and the Sicilian Rauzer (120 surveys).

My personal interest was quickly drawn to a line in the Nimzo that nearly figured in one of my WF-32 games:

See image 1

This image will give you a sense of the depth and breadth of the Encyclopedia's coverage.

The Encyclopedia has organized access to the surveys according to their ECO codes with textual descriptions that ease access for the uninitiated. The Encyclopedia has also clustered all of the surveys into a single database making



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it easy to search for all surveys in any opening. Here is the summary page for access to surveys in the Sicilian Najdorf. As is evident here, GM Ftacnik has been very busy indeed!

See image 2 (page 88)

In recent years, the Encyclopedia has added neatly formatted opening "Tutorials" with links to the relevant annotated games. Here, for example, is their summary for a popular line in the Sicilian Najdorf. In this regard, the Encyclopedia brings to mind the old *Modern Chess Openings* tomes which, in



Image 1

addition to analysis, provide some textual description at the beginning of each new section. The differences, of course, are striking, here essentially with a diagram on every move, easy searching, and easy integration and movement within the ChessBase environment.

See image 3

The Encyclopedia adds more than 39,000 annotated games, very often games that are not annotated in any way in ChessBase's *Mega Database*. For completeness, I therefore recommend that, as part of your opening investigations, you alternate between the *Mega Database* and the Encyclopedia as the ChessBase reference, to check a current opening position against the accumulated material in the Encyclopedia surveys and annotated games. It's a bit of work and may be somewhat unintuitive, but it will get the job done!

See image 4

One of the 39,000 annotated games in the 2021 *Opening Encyclopaedia*

ChessBase adds 40 videos a year to the Encyclopedia and so your comprehensive chess environment will require the updating of the Opening Encyclopedia yearly to obtain this bonus coverage. The new videos in the 2021 Encyclopedia come from many popular presenters including GMs Mihail Marin, Erwin L'Ami, Daniel King, Yannick Pelletier, and Simon Williams.

Here is IM Lawrence Trent reviewing

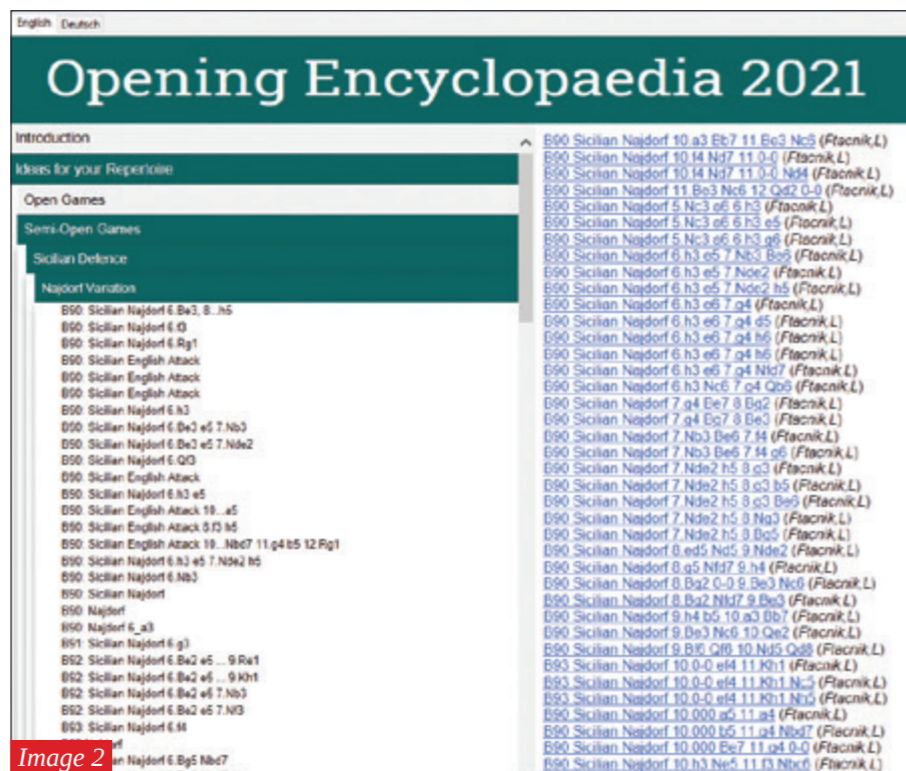


Image 2

an interesting novelty in the 6.♗e2 Najdorf. I find the analysis quite compelling. I have my own approaches against 6.♗e2 e6, and here is a useful possibility against the more popular 6.♗e2 e5.

See image 5

I am old enough to have purchased every edition of the MCO and ECO Opening Encyclopedias, all now gathering dust on my shelves. I am young at heart and still competitive enough to recognize that

our modern age requires some flexibility and recognition of the fact that this new environment is vastly more efficient. I find that I am using it every day. My only complaint is that ChessBase has not yet introduced a service to keep the Encyclopedia fully up-to-date as they have with the *Mega Database*. For that kind of coverage, a yearly subscription to *ChessBase Magazine* will also be required.

### SUGGESTIONS TO CHESSBASE DEVELOPERS

ChessBase has become the critical tool for chess professionals and amateurs alike, but no single tool is perfect. Cool features in the latest version of ChessBase appear to owe to suggestions from Fabiano Caruana. It seems to me that users, especially correspondence players who use the tool for many hours a day, might also help to improve the practical use of the program.

During one of my ongoing correspondence games, my opponent, Kurt Stein, asked if I had ever recommended new possibilities to ChessBase. I offered up the one item at the top of my ChessBase wish list, a split screen function that would permit me to compare positions within

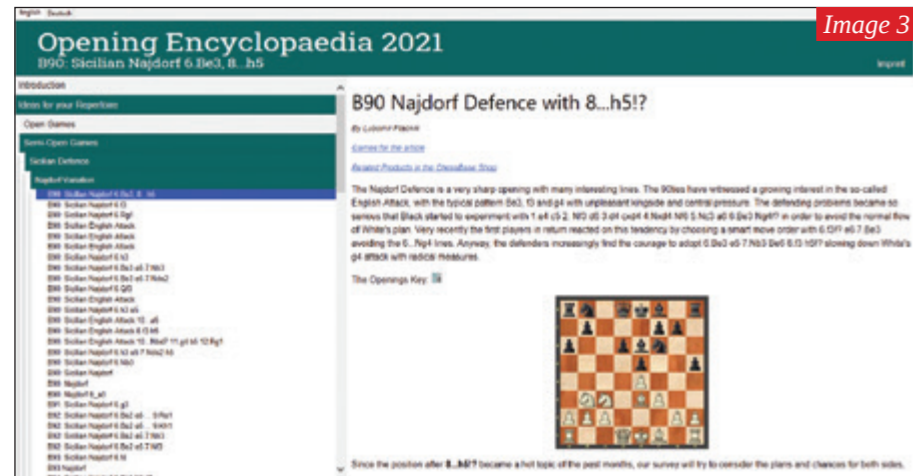


Image 3



Image 4



Image 5

a game. I currently use two examples of the game, side by side to do the task, but the task could be implemented within an individual game.

Stein loved the idea, although he thought that its implementation might strain developers' resources. He responded with his far simpler desire for additional symbols in both the symbol bar and within the Symbol Palette, most notably a new symbol for different drawing ideas, notably perpetual check and the 50-move rule. A symbol for a fortress would also be useful.

See image 6

Within ChessBase, you can bring up the Symbol or Annotation Palette with [=> Insert => Annotations] or [Ctrl+Alt+S].

He imagined being able to define his own symbols and to add them to the bar and palette. For example, to aid his careful correspondence analysis, he asked for a +== (plus with three bars) and ==+ (three bars with a plus) for engine values say +/- .13 to +/- .30 or so.

Stein added that he also has thoughts about simplifying the UCI interface, and I am rather sure that others share his enthusiasm there. We both agreed that it would be a good idea to open up the discussion and so I invite others to forward their ChessBase suggestions, if not directly to ChessBase, then here for consideration.

Feel free to write to jedwards.chess@gmail.com

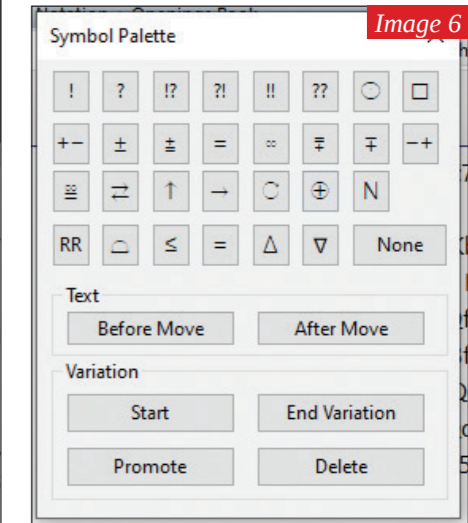


Image 6