

ChessBase *Magazine*

FOR PROFESSIONAL CHESS



ChessBase

JULY / AUGUST 2026 | 21,90 €

#232

THE CARLSEN WHISPERER

Peter Heine Nielsen's impressions of TePe Sigeman 2026



FOR ALL
SYSTEMS!

INCLUDES:

6 HOURS
PROFESSIONAL
VIDEO TRAINING

A MODERN NIMZO-INDIAN

After 4.e3 O-O 5.Bd3 d5 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.Bxc4 c5, Andrei Volokitin takes the black pieces

STRATEGIES AGAINST THE EVANS-GAMBIT

Daniel King presents two promising concepts for Black in the video

"SPECIAL": JAVOKHIR SINDAROV

CBM authors annotate selected games played by the World Championship challenger

"NORMAL MOVES ARE NOT ENOUGH!"

Andy Woodward looks back at his loss to Magnus Carlsen at the 2026 Tepe Sigeman

Top-class training material for club players and professionals!

chessbase.com

CONTENT

TOP GAMES..... 6-7

TePe Sigeman 2026:

Magnus Carlsen returned to competitive play in Malmö, taking part in a classical tournament with a long time control. The former world champion got off to a slow start, but eventually secured three consecutive wins to force a tie-break against Arjun Erigaisi, which he won in blitz. Carlsen's long-standing second, Peter Heine Nielsen, and Andy Woodward each provide commentary on two games from Malmö for this issue.

MASTER ANALYSES..... 8-13

Peter Heine Nielsen comments on Carlsen's victory in the final round in Malmö against Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus, who had been level on points with him until then.

OPENING VIDEOS 26-29

Nico Zwirs provides an overview of the latest trends in the Queen's Gambit Declined with 4...Be7, using games from the 2026 Candidates' Tournament. Felix Blohberger takes the game Anand vs. Livaic from final round of the German Bundesliga 2026 as an opportunity to take a closer look at the Antoschin Variation of the Philidor Defence. And Daniel King demonstrates – using, amongst other things, the game Erigaisi vs. Abdusattorov (Tata Steel 2026) – two promising strategies for Black against the Evans Gambit.

Nico Zwirs: Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Be7

Felix Blohberger: Philidor Defence - Antoschin Variation

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Nxd4 Be7

Daniel King: Evans Gambit

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5/Be7

COLUMNS

“Special”: Javokhir Sindarov 30-31

The CBM editorial team is taking a closer look at 20 wins by the World Cup challenger between 2015 and 2026.

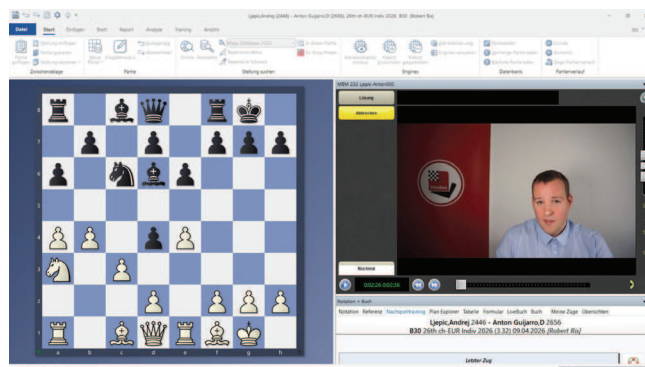
Markos: “Practical Tips” 34-35

In practice, ‘the eighth rank’ is by no means only relevant when it comes to checkmate patterns on the back rank. It can also be used to launch a backdoor attack with the rooks!!

Rogozenco: “The Fortress” 38-41

A pawn and an exchange down – surely you can just resign at this point, can't you? Dorian Rogozenco demonstrates a classic fortress motif with knight versus rook and pawn. Discover positions in which, despite the significant material deficit, you can save half a point with minimal effort!

Ris: “Move by Move”*



Robert Ris invites you to take part in an interactive training session based on the game between Andrej Ljepic and David Anton Guijarro (European Individual Championship 2026) – “an absolutely incredible game!”

In the download and Books versions, you will also find Dorian Rogozenco's column ‘Modern Classics’, as well as articles on strategy (Mihail Marin), tactics (Oliver Reeh) and endgames (Dr Karsten Mueller).

#232

OPENINGS 16-22

Christian Braun:

London System 3.e3 e6 4.Nf3 Bd6 5.Bd317

Andrei Volokitin:

Nimzo-Indian 5.Bd3 d5 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc4. . . . 20

FURTHER OPENING ARTICLES*

Evgeny Postny:

English 1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 c6 4.Nf3 e4 5.Nd4 d5

Spyridon Kapnisis:

Czech System 1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 c6

Martin Lorenzini:

Anti Najdorf 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3

Viktor Moskalenko:

French Advance Variation 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Nge7

Petra Papp:

Petroff 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nc4 Nxe4 5.Nc3 Nxc3 6.dxc3

Alexey Kuzmin:

Gruenfeld 4.Bg5 Ne4 5.cxd5 Nxe5 6.h4

Lars Schandorff:

Catalan 4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 Bd6 6.0-0 0-0 7.b3

Yago Santiago:

Sicilian 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.b4!?

TRAINING TASKS

9 combinations to solve..... 15

NEW: Key moves 25

9 strategy tasks to solve 33

9 endgame tasks to solve 37

All solutions 42

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



Defeated Vincent Keymer with 5.Bd3 in the London System in 26 moves: Jorden van Foreest



Our author, Andrei Volokitin, even beat Matthias Bluebaum in the Bundesliga with 'his' Nimzo-Indian



He dared to play the Sicilian with 3.b4!? against Magnus Carlsen: Norway's No. 2, Johan Sebastian Christiansen



OPENINGS OPENINGS OPENINGS



INVITING THE BISHOP TRADE!

Christian Braun counters the modern 4...Bd6 with 5.Bd3



CHRISTIAN BRAUN

1986, GER

Christian Braun is a German International Master, an experienced Bundesliga player and a licensed FIDE trainer. He has been writing for CBM for six years.



London System DO2:

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.Bf4 Nf6
- 3.e3 e6
- 4.Nf3 Bd6
- 5.Bd3

- A) 5...c5 6.dxc5 Bxf4 7.exf4,
 - B) 5...Bxf4 6.exf4 Qd6 7.Qd2 b6 (and other 7th moves),
 - C) 5...0-0 6.0-0 Bxf4 7.exf4 Qd6 (and other 7th moves),
 - D) 5...0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5 Bxc5 8.Nbd2 Nc6 (and other rare 8th moves),
 - E) 5...0-0 6.0-0 Bxf4 7.exf4 - sidelines,
 - F) 5.Bd3 - sidelines and
 - G) 5...0-0 6.0-0 b6 7.Qe2.
- A) 5...c5 6.dxc5 Bxf4 7.exf4**

Our starting position arises after **1.d4 d5 2.Bf4 Nf6 3.e3 e6 4.Nf3 Bd6** (the modern continuation, Black immediately challenges the London bishop f4) **5.Bd3!?**.

5.Bd3!? occurred in 845 games, scoring 56.9% and thus higher than **5.Bg3** (7.485 games/54%) and **5.Ne5** (3.171 games/58.7%). The advantage compared to those main moves is that we remain really flexible and can react on Black's different setups very well. For example, the queen's knight is usually developed to d2, but in some cases it also goes to c3 or even a3. In most lines White gets an easy and good development,

while Black has problems getting their pieces out, especially the bad bishop c8. I have been very much inspired by the game Van Foreest, J - Keymer, V 1-0 (Tata Steel 2026) where Jordan managed to crush Vincent with **5.Bd3!?** in barely 26 moves!

My game analyses are intended to help you better understand the resulting positions and to provide you with interesting ideas against one of the most frequently played variations of Black in the London System!

I will discuss the following continuations:



Black has induced White's pawns to capture away from the centre, and in the game Rapport, R - Sadhwani, R 1-0 now regained the pawn with **7...Qc7**. After **8.g3 Qxc5** (see the following diagram), White can follow up with **Nbd2-b3**, gaining firm control over the dark central squares d4



and e5, with potential to attack the enemy king. Meanwhile, Black remains very passive, and the bishop on c8 is an especially poor piece.

B) 5...Bxf4 6.exf4 Qd6 7.Qd2 b6 (and other 7th moves)



Black prepares c7-c5. The mentioned encounter Van Foreest, J - Keymer, V 1-0 saw 8.Nc3 (an unusual move in this line) c5 9.h4, intending h5-h6 to weaken the dark squares on Black's kingside. Note that White holds off castling and can still play both 0-0-0 and 0-0! Jordan beat Vincent right out of the opening. This was the game which inspired me to write this article. The annotations also deal with black alternatives on move 7.

C) 5...0-0 6.0-0 Bxf4 7.exf4 Qd6 (and other 7th moves)

Black attacks the pawn f4. The game Boehme, S - Heinemann, J



1-0 continued 8.g3 b6 (intending ...Ba6 to exchange the bad bishop) 9.Qe2 a5 (9...c5 10.c3) and here 10.Na3 would have been interesting -



White is ready to play c4 and has good knight control over the squares b5 and e5! The game notes also deal with black alternatives on move 7.

D) 5...0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5 Bxc5 8.Nbd2 Nc6 (and other 8th moves)

see the following diagram

Recapturing on c5 with the bishop (i.e. no exchange on f4) costs a tempo and thus gives White a small lead in development. Also, again Black's Bc8 is quite passive here and does not come into the game so fast. White has two levers to put the centre under



pressure, e4 and c4. In Salna, A - Svane, R ½-½, 9.c4! gave White the option to play on the c-file or to expand on the queenside with a3 and b4. The game notes also deal with black alternatives like 8...Nbd7 or 8...b6 (9.e4!).

E) 5...0-0 6.0-0 Bxf4 7.exf4 - sidelines



The game Indjic, A - Cremisi, D 1-0 continued 7...Nbd7 8.Nbd2 c5 9.dxc5 Nxc5, and now 10.Nb3!? Nxd3 11.cxd3!



would have given White nice control over d4 and e5, while Black (again!) is left with a bad white-squared bishop! Another nice manoeuvre in these lines with ...Bxf4/exf4 that I would like to point out here is White's rook lift via e1-e3 to the kingside. The game commentaries also discuss alternatives for Black on move 7.

F) 5.Bd3!? - sidelines

In the analysis of the game Rosen,E - Aarav,S 1-0 , we will look at positions in which Black does not seek counter-play with the important lever ...c5. Then, White's standard plan is to play Ne5 followed by h4, going for a strong attack against Black's king.

G) 5...0-0 6.0-0 b6 7.Qe2



6...b6 (without exchanging the bishop on f4) is a flexible move. Apart from preparing ...c5, Black can either continue ...Bb7 to control the e4-square and to put their Nf6 there, or exchange their bad white-squared bishop against White's good one via a6. **7.Qe2** prevents this. The high-class game Bluebaum,M - Vidit,S ½-½ continued **7...Ne4 8.Bxd6 Nxd6 9.Nbd2 Bb7**, and now the advance **10.e4!?**



gave White space advantage and a slight pull - **10...dxe4 11.Nxe4 Nd7 12.c4.**



Beat Keymer with 5.Bd3!? in 26 moves – Jorden van Foreest

Conclusion: I like the flexible **5. Bd3!?** very much. White still can decide where to put the Nb1, and Black does not get the control over the e4-square (as after **5.Ne5** for example). Very often, White gets the better development and simply has 'the stronger pieces' than Black. Another plus of **5.Bd3!?** is that the arising positions are not mainstream and still a little bit unexplored.

The type of position from the game Rapport,R - Sadhwani,R

1-0, with control over the squares e5 and d4 and with the potential to attack Black's king, will appear on the board quite often - this is actually my favourite variation for White! Also this line with **8.Nc3**, featured in the game Van Foreest,J - Keymer,V 1-0, shows how dangerous White's setup is when even a super solid player like Vincent Keymer gets crushed in just 26 moves! In my opinion the best Black can do is either **5...0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.dxc5 Bxc5** (see Salna,A

- Svane,R ½-½) or Vidit's setup in Bluebaum,M - Vidit,S ½-½.

So, I wish you good luck for your own games with **5.Bd3!?** - smash Black with the London System!

THE FULL ARTICLE CONTAINS:



- ✓ Overview
- ✓ 7 annotated sample games

VIDEOS VIDEOS VIDEOS



Anish Giri was also unable to gain any advantage against Javokhir Sindarov in the Queen's Gambit Declined

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED WITH 4...Be7



In his video, Nico Zwirs provides an overview of the latest trends in this classic and very solid opening. In his analysis, which lasts just under half an hour, he takes a close look at games from the 2026 Candidates' Tournament.

The two main protagonists of this variation were Andrei Esipenko and Javokhir Sindarov. On the fifth move, White has the choice between the 'old' 5.Bg5, 5.Bf4, 5.g3 (Catalan) and 5.cxd5 – Zwirs devotes the first part of his ana-

Queen's Gambit Declined D35:

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nf3 Nf6
- 4.Nc3 Be7



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.

lysis to the latter, using the game Sindarov–Esipenko as an example. Here, after 5...exd5 6.Bf4 0-0 7.e3, Black surprised with 7...c5. Sindarov continued with 8.Bd3, which brought him no advantage, but in the end the game swung in his favour. Two rounds later, Espienko repeated the variation against Bluebaum, who introduced an improvement on his predecessor's move with 8.dxc5. Although the game became rather flat quite quickly, Nico Zwirs demonstrates an idea with 15.Qd3 followed by 16.Ne5 that is worth trying out in practice. In the second part of the videos, Zwirs discusses a decisive game of the tournament, Giri vs. Sindarov (Round 13), in which the Uzbek held his own relatively easily in the variation 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 Nf6 and secured the tournament victory with the draw. Zwirs also discusses the game Praggnanandhaa vs. Sindarov, which Black won following a risky piece sacrifice.



**ALL
OPENING
VIDEOS.**

DESPITE ALL ENGINES



Philidor Antoshin Variation C41:

- 1.e4 d6
- 2.d4 Nf6
- 3.Nc3 Nf6
- 4.Nf3 exd4
- 5.Nxd4 Be7

The Antoshin Variation has come under heavy pressure in recent years – the engines have shown a clear bias in favour of Black. Felix Blohberger, who himself included the variation in his repertoire as a young player, sees the game between Vishy Anand and the Croatian GM Leon Livaic from the Bundesliga 2026 as a possible turning point, however.

The former world champion continued with the move that has been regarded in recent years as ‘the killer move’ of the variation: **6.Bf4** – with the standard plan of Qd2, long

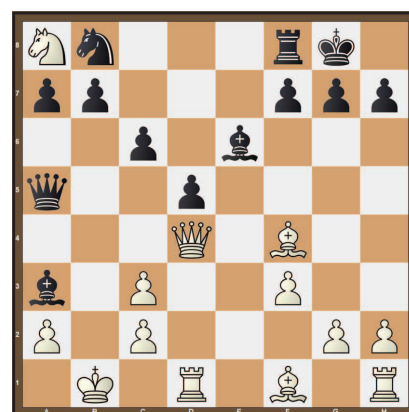
castling and a pawn storm on the kingside. After **6...0-0 7.Qd2**, Livaic opted for the central counterattack **7...d5**,



and following Anand’s **8.Ndb5**, the position became increasingly tense after **8...Bb4 9.0-0-0 c6 10.Nc7 Nxe4 11. Qd4 Nxc3 12.bxc3 Ba3+ 13.Kb1 Bg4!?** **14.f3 Be6 15.Nxa8 Qa5:**

see the following diagram

In this position, White has already made a few missteps. After e.g. **16 Bc1 c5 17.Qf4 d4 18.Bxa3 Qxa3**, White finds



themselves at a disadvantage. Blohberger explains why only **16.Bc7** (Anand’s choice) and the novelty **16.Bd2** keep White’s position alive.

“Overall, I am really excited about this game and especially Livaic’s preparation, which was really interesting and makes for a great advertisement for all the Philidor Antoshin fans.”



FELIX BLOHBERGER

2002, AUT

Felix Blohberger was awarded the GM title at the age of 19. The multiple Austrian national champion is himself a strong tournament player and worked for a time as a second to top player Pentala Harikrishna.



**ALL
OPENING
VIDEOS.**

STRATEGIES VS. THE EVANS GAMBIT



DANIEL KING

1963, GB

The likeable GM from London is well known as a commentator on major chess events. In Germany, he has won over many fans with, amongst other things, his 'Powerplay' series and the monthly 'Powerplay' show.



Evans Gambit C52:

- 1.e4 e5
- 2.Nf3 Nc6
- 3.Bc4 Bc5
- 4.b4 Bxb4
- 5.c3 Ba5/Be7

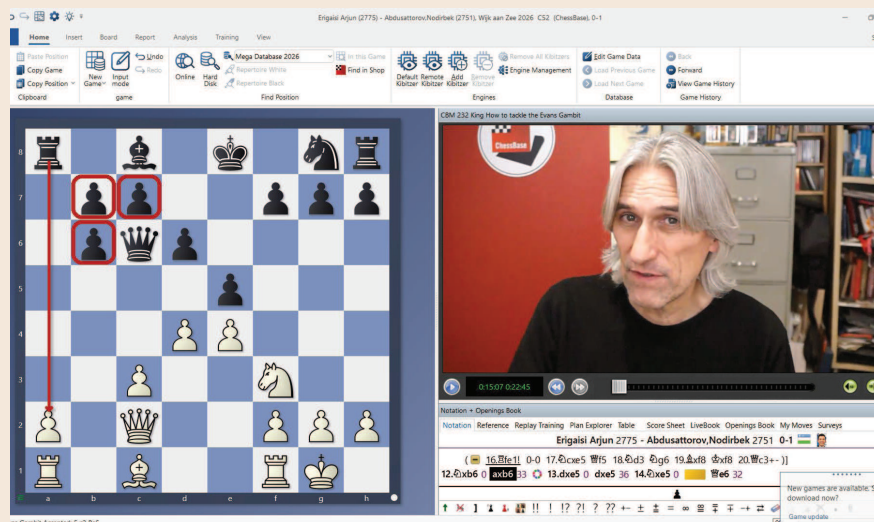
Intuitively protecting the pawn on f7 with 7...Qe7 would be a mistake due to 8.d5!, so Black must bring himself to play 7...Qd7. This then



To set the scene for his video analysis, Daniel King shows the game Evans vs. McDonnell from 1825 – a marvellous attacking game with checkmate on the 20th move! This is what can happen if you're not familiar with playing Black... The

main focus of the video analysis is on the encounter Erigaisi vs. Abdusattorov from the 2026 Tata Steel Masters. After 5.c3, Abdusattorov chose to retreat his bishop to a5. After 6.d4 d6 7.Qb3, Black already has to be on his guard.

leads to “the new main line for Black”. In the game, the Uzbek emerged from the opening with a slight advantage – mainly due to the better structure on the Queen's side. King then presents another approach for Black to gain a nice game against the Gambit. It begins with 5...Be7 6.d4 Na5 7.Be2, followed by the very logical 7...d6. Black is prepared to give up the pawn in exchange for a completely intact position.



ALL OPENING VIDEOS.