

Chessbase "1000 Opening Traps" review

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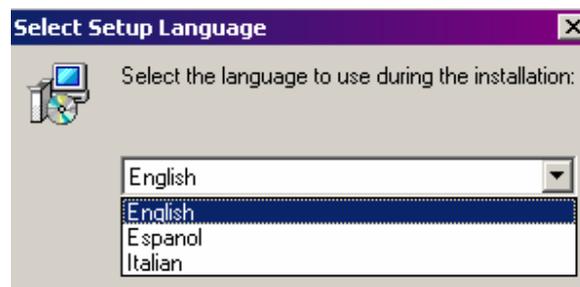
Test Machine:

Intel® Celerom™ CPU, 1.1 GHz, 128 MB RAM, Windows Millenium.

The CD comes wrapped up in a colorful box, with the installation CD, and a 19-page booklet catalogue of latest ChessBase products. Installation instructions are printed inside the box. It contains 23 megabytes of data, three work databases and the ChessBase Reader. Two pdf files are included, in English and German language, containing simple instructions for use of the popular free interface add-on.

Highlights:

1. Easy installation. The installation process is automated, and takes less than a minute, after which you're prompted to restart the computer.



2. ChessBase Reader

ChessBase Reader supports eleven languages! Below is the screenshot, prior to installing the software.



The installer does not support automatic full install (program + databases) on the hard disk.

After the restart, reinserting the CD activates the "Start" option, pressing which activates the CB Reader and one of the three pre-installed databases "1000 Opening Traps". There are also "Traps motifs" and "Traps Training" databases.



Above is the incomplete screenshot of the introductory text. You will notice the standard ChessBase Reader tabs, of which the first seven are active, the keys being left for the user to develop.

I recommend reading the introduction carefully, as it is very well done, in fluent and often entertaining English language. The text contains the usual and effective hyperlinks for games quoted in the introductory texts.

3. Work databases: 1000 Opening Traps

The authors ambitiously approached exploring the opening traps in all openings, or, more precisely, all five hundred ECO codes A00-E99! Before starting to learn, all codes have been conveniently divided into introductory texts, which, I remind again, you should not skip reading.

| |
|--|
| Introduction |
| Contents |
| Grandmasters get caught too |
| About this database / Sources |
| Various |
| A00-A39 |
| A40-A99 1.d4 Other |
| B00-B19 |
| B20-B99 |
| C00-C19 French |
| C20-C49 Various Open Games |
| C50-C59 Giuoco Piano + Two Knights |
| C60-C99 3.Bb5 - Ruy Lopez |
| D00-D09 Queen's Gambit - side lines |
| D20-D29 Queen's Gambit Accepted |
| D10-D19; D43-D49 Slav and Semi-Slav |
| D30-D42; D50-D69 Queen's Gambit |
| D70-D99 Grönfeld Defence |
| E00-E59 Catalan, Queen's Indian, Nimzo-Indian |
| E60-E99 Königsindisch |

The texts above are followed by exactly 1000 games.

Under reference number 21, the first annotated opening trap features a revelation of a small *GM secret*, a possible *refutation* of the Sokolsky opening! Grandmaster Knaak shares his experience from an OTB game.

Golyak - Knaak, Leipzig SG 1977 A00 (Knaak), 0-1

File Edit View Insert Game Engine Tools Window Help



Notation | Table | Training | Score sheet | Openings Book

Golyak, Isay G 2325 - Knaak, Rainer 2520 0-1
A00 Leipzig SG (11) 09.11.1977 [Knaak]

1. b4 c6 If you look in Megabase to see who first played this move, you will find games from East German tournaments of the 50s. People then knew the correct answer: 2. c4! 2. Bb2?! And White immediately falls into the trap: a5!
[2...Qb6?! can be met by 3. a3 a5 4. c4! see Thielemann, J-Meyer, J (2005)/Schleswig-Holstein-ch cand-A 50th 1995 (3)/0-1]

3. a3
[After 3. bxa5 White would have the poorer pawn structure.]

3...axb4 4. axb4 Rxa1 5. Bxa1 Qb6 6. c3 The ♔a1 is out of the game. Black is better off, but the win is still a long way off.
[6. Bc3?! would lose the ♠b4: Na6]

6...d5 7. Nf3 Bf5 8. d3 e6 9. g3 Nf6 10. Bg2 Be7 11. 0-0 Nbd7 12. Nbd2 Bg6 13. h3 h6 14. Qa4 0-0 15. Bb2 Qc7 16. c4 e5 17. b5 e4 18. Nh4 e3 19. Nxc6 fxc6 20. fxe3 Qxc6 21. Rf3 Qe1+ 22. Nf1 Qxe2 23. bxc6 bxc6 24. Bxf6 Nxf6 25. Qxc6 Kh7 26. cxd5 Qxd3 27. Kh1 Qd1 28. Qc4 Bd6 29. Qc6 Be5 30. Qe6 Re8 31. Qf7 Rb8 32. Kg1 Rb2 33. Rf2 Bh2+ 34. Kxh2 Rxf2 35. Kg1 Qe2 0-1

Brief comments are helpful for the user to grasp the basic ideas for both sides in the instructive example. All examples are featured with full game continuations, after the critical moments have been discussed in professional detail. With authors being established grandmasters and trainers, no less could be expected.

Remark: Moving on to the next game does not automatically "rewind" the moves, but continues at the move stopped in the previous game. This "bug" (which can maybe be used for other purposes), has been recently adjusted in a ChessBase 9 update (not included in this CD).

The Opening Traps database is pretty updated. It features examples dated from 1620, until 23.10.2005!

The authors emphasize that this product is "suited for advanced players", and the example in the incomplete screenshot below explains it well. GM Knaak did not mind his loss in this game, to add to the CDs unique value.

Knezevic - Knaak, Trnava 1983 E94 (Knaak), 1-0

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Notation | Table | Training | Score sheet | Openings Book

Knezevic, Milorad 2440 - Knaak, Rainer 2505 1-0
E94 Trnava 1983 [Knaak]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6 3. Nc3 Nbd7 4. Nf3 g6 5. e4 e5 6. Be2 Bg7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Bg5 Since with correct play Black relatively easily achieves equality, the text move is in the nature of a trap.
h6 9. Bh4 c6?!
[The straightforward 9...g5 10. Bg3 Nh5= secures equality.]

10. d5! cxd5
[After 10...c5 11. Ne1± it is too late for the manoeuvre g5 and ♘h5.]

11. cxd5 g5 Black can do without this move, but will then tend to end up with a passive defensive task.

I used the CB Readers excellent interface to quickly get an answer to whose games are represented here. There are a few hundred names, possibly even more, representing chess players from around the globe. Below are the ones most represented.

| Last name | First Name | Total |
|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Knaak | Rainer | 8 |
| Farago | Ivan | 6 |
| Anand | Viswanathan | 5 |
| Fischer | Robert Jam.. | 5 |
| Huebner | Robert | 5 |
| Ljubojevic | Ljubomir | 5 |
| Marshall | Frank James | 5 |
| Reti | Richard | 5 |
| Sax | Gyula | 5 |
| Botvinnik | Mikhail | 4 |
| Illescas Cordoba | Miguel | 4 |
| Kortschnoj | Viktor | 4 |
| Lukacs | Peter | 4 |
| McShane | Luke J | 4 |
| NN | | 4 |
| Spielmann | Rudolf | 4 |
| Tarrasch | Siegbert | 4 |
| Van Wely | Loek | 4 |
| Wahls | Matthias | 4 |

The other players names I checked promise a high-quality annotated game database.

The tournaments covered, show a remarkable number of the highest level tournaments present. Below is an impressive random view:

| Title | Place | Date | Type | Na... | Cat |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|-------|
| Sofia Mtel Masters | Sofia | 12.05.2005 | tourn | | XX |
| Buenos Aires Sicilian | Buenos Aires | 10.1994 | tourn | | XVIII |
| Amber-blind 9th | Monte Carlo | 16.03.2000 | tourn.. | | XVIII |
| Amber-rapid 9th | Monte Carlo | 16.03.2000 | tourn.. | | XVIII |
| Essent Crown | Hoogeveen | 13.10.2002 | tourn | | XVII |
| Linares | Linares | 03.1995 | tourn | | XVII |
| Linares 9th | Linares | 02.1991 | tourn | | XVII |
| Tilburg | Tilburg | 10.1991 | tourn | | XVII |
| Euwe mem | Amsterdam | 05.1991 | tourn | | XVI |
| Lost Boys 5th | Antwerp | 01.08.1997 | tourn | | XV |
| Bermuda-A | Bermuda | 25.01.2003 | tourn | | XV |
| Brussels blitz | Brussels | 04.1987 | tourn.. | | XV |
| Enghien les Bains 3rd | Enghien les Ba.. | 03.03.1999 | tourn | | XV |
| Linares 6th | Linares | 02.1988 | tourn | | XV |

Here is another sample opening trap that caught my eye.

Piket - Karolyi, Lvov 1988 D39 (Knaak), 1-0

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Notation Table Training Score sheet Openings Book

Piket, Jeroen 2470 - Karolyi, Tibor Jr 2475 1-0
D39 Lvov 1988 [Knaak]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.e4 Bb4 6.Bg5 c5 7.e5 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Qa5
9.exf6 Qxg5? [First 9...Bxc3+ is obligatory.]
 10.Qa4+ Nc6 11.Nxc6 Bxc3+ 12.bxc3 Bd7 13.Qb4! The queen gets out of the pin with the threat of mate; White keeps the extra piece. Qxf6 14.Nd4
 1-0

And an interesting short story, with a point, to go along with the example above. Tibor is a good friend of mine, we trained together in Singapore a couple of years ago, where I witnessed the exact moment, as on the diagram above, when one of his top students Evan, fell into the same opening trap(!), at a junior tournament, with Tibor instantly remembering this game and not believing it has happened again, 15 years later! This opening variation was then very new for black, the traps unknown. The excellent quoted advice given in the CD introduction, I will repeat again, as it suits this moment perfectly, with the screenshot below:

"How much book do I need to know?... The bare minimum is: You need to know the traps that come up in your openings"
(GM Andrew Soltis in Grandmaster Secrets: Openings)

Later Evan developed into a national Olympic representative.

Many examples in this database are deeply annotated, again, in the area important for explaining the surroundings that have led to the trap.

4. Work databases: Traps Motifs

Here is the screenshot advice from the authors:

Motif Database - many motifs keep recurring. So study these motifs, in order to find the correct move in all situations.

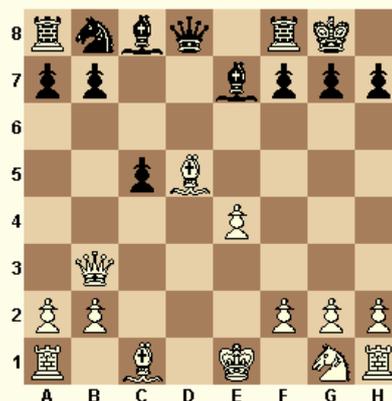
The Traps Motifs database is divided into eighteen sections: Attacks on f7, More motifs against kingside castling, Motifs against queenside castling, Tactical motifs in the Sicilian, Attack of the pawns, The e-pawn as a battering ram, etc. Each section features an introductory text, worth reading carefully.

Here is a nice example from the "Poisoned Pawn" section:

Poisoned pawn

T2

This links to the themes "Trapping the queen" and "Trapped pieces" and appears frequently. Good intuition is often the key to decision taking. Practise on the following examples!



Can White take on b7? [Jakab,A - Nemeth,Z 0-1](#)

and the solution:

Jakab - Nemeth, Budapest FS05 IM-A 2001 D20 (Mueller,Karsten), 0-1

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Notation Table Training Score sheet Openings Book

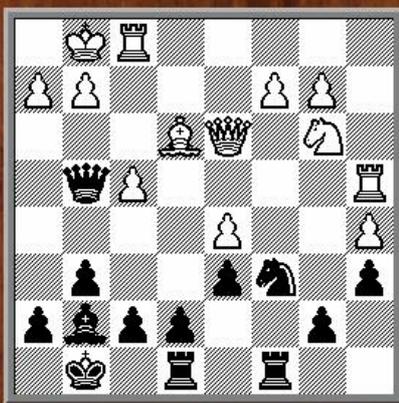
Jakab,Attila 2363 - Nemeth,Zoltan 2319 0-1
 D20 Budapest FS05 IM-A (5) 09.05.2001 [Mueller,Karsten]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5 4.d5 e6 5.Bxc4 Nf6 6.Nc3 exd5 7.Nxd5 Nxd5 8.Bxd5
 Be7
 [8...g6?? 9.Bxf7+-]
9.Qb3?! This double attack is not effective. White neglects his development too much. A typical warning
 signal.
 [⏏9.Nf3]
 9...0-0 10.Bxb7??? ♣ c4! 11.Qb5 a6 12.Qd5 Bb4+
 [12...Bb4+ 13.Bd2 (13.Ke2 Bxb7 14.Qxb7? Qd3#, 13.Kf1 Bxb7 14.Qxb7? Qd1#) 13...Bxd2+
 14.Kxd2 Bxb7-+]
 0-1

Many of the featured 300+ exercises are made in entertaining training style:

Short - Anand, FIDE GP+ Dubai rapid 2002 B93 (Mueller,Karsten), 0-1

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Notation Table Training Score sheet Openings Book

Short,Nigel D 2663 - Anand,Viswanathan 2757
 B93 FIDE GP+ Dubai rapid (3.2) 05.04.2002 [Mueller,Karsten]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.a4 Nc6 7.f4 g6
 8.Be2 Bg7 9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0 Bg4 11.Nb3 Qc8 12.a5 Re8 13.Ra4 Bxe2
 14.Qxe2 Qg4 15.Qd3 Rac8 16.Nd5 Nxd5 **17.exd5** ***

Training: Blacks move

How did Anand put his finger on White's weak spot?

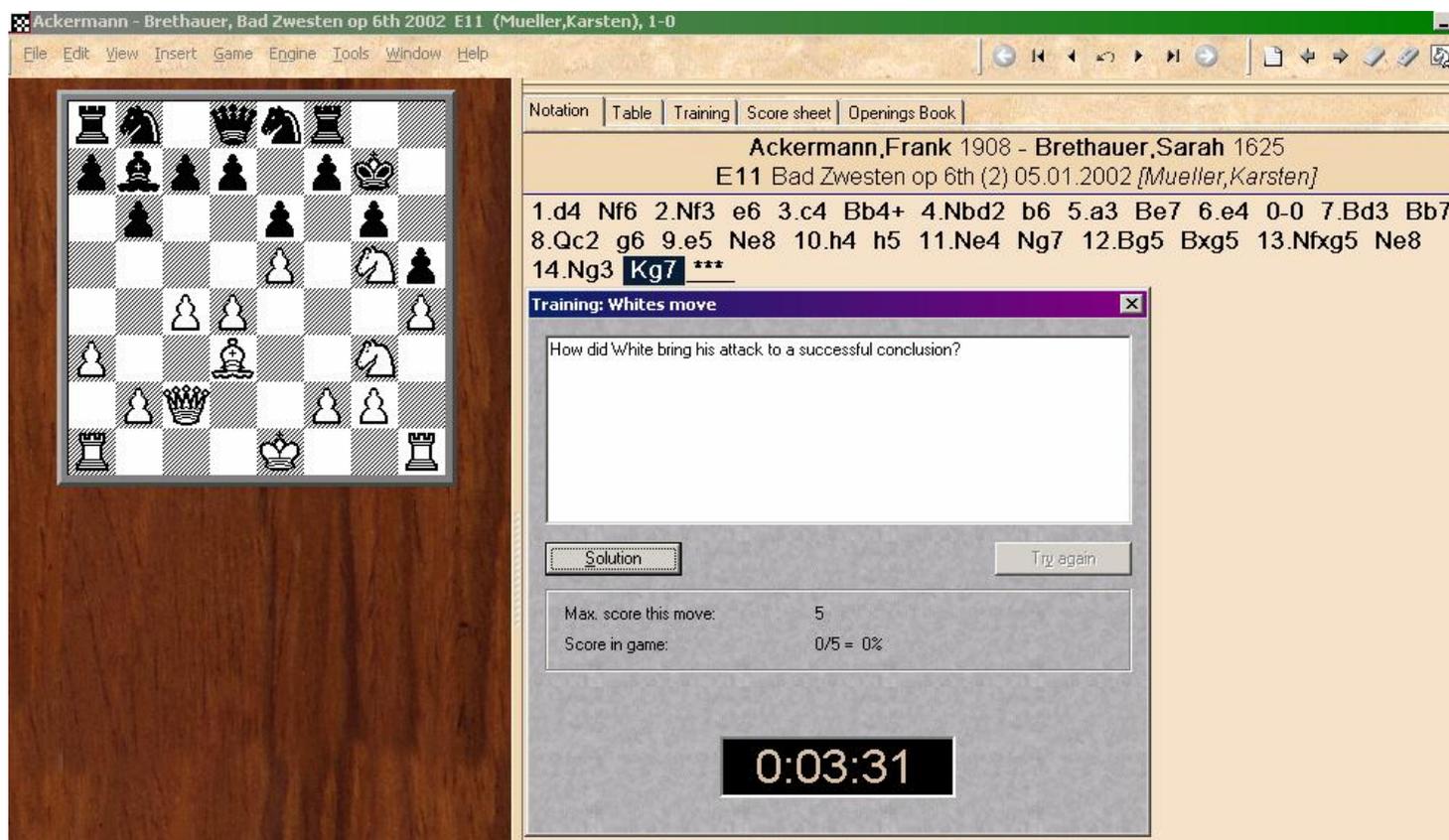
Max. score this move: 4
 Score in game: 0/4 = 0%

0:04:35

5. Work databases: Traps Training

142 instructive games, from the period 2000-2002(!?), conclude the three featured databases on this CD.

The first one is a small masterpiece (even if played by lower ranked players), I enjoyed seeing:



Each exercise has a different amount of time allowed for solving, hinting good work and thought put individually into all. There are also multiple question exercises.

Conclusion:

The authors of this CD have taken the term "Opening Traps" to another, higher level.

It was an enjoyable experience evaluating and reviewing this new product, in which an obvious effort was put into. Grandmaster authors shared their experiences and knowledge with all, to the benefit of ones who will study "1000 Opening Traps".

Featured texts and exercises would not hurt GM training camps, even if the CD was intended for "advanced players" only.

Additionally, professional CB Reader features allow the user to additionally analyze, annotate, comment and even print any exercise.

Some explanations require and presume previous knowledge of opening theory and, on various occasions, a higher level of understanding.

Featured 1.000+ examples are quite enough to keep you busy for a long while, not only solving, but studying and reading GM comments, which significantly add to the overall value.

After approximately 5 hours of browsing (typing included) - I can recommend the CD for FIDE Instructors, FIDE Trainers, FIDE Senior Trainers, and players FIDE rated 2000 and above and/or above 14 years of age, in the average.