

The Modern French

Dejan Antic and Branimir Maksimovic

The Modern French

A Complete Guide for Black

New In Chess 2012

© New In Chess 2012

Translated by Goran Urosevic and Dr. Aleksandar Davidovic

Published by New In Chess, Alkmaar, The Netherlands

www.newinchess.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission from the publisher.

Cover design: Steven Boland

Supervisor: Peter Boel

Proofreading: René Olthof, Steve Giddins

Production: Anton Schermer

Have you found any errors in this book?

Please send your remarks to editors@newinchess.com. We will collect all relevant corrections on the Errata page of our website www.newinchess.com and implement them in a possible next edition.

ISBN: 978-90-5691-399-1

Contents

Foreword	7
Your French Repertoire in a Bird's-Eye View.	9
Chapter 1 – King's Indian Attack.	11
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d3	
Chapter 2 – The Exchange Variation	45
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.e4xd5 e6xd5	
Chapter 3 – The Advance Variation.	59
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.e4-e5	
Chapter 4 – The Tarrasch Variation.	149
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.♟b1-d2 ♟f8-e7	(
Chapter 5 – The Steinitz Variation.	221
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.♟b1-c3 ♟g8-f6 4.e4-e5	
Chapter 6 – The McCutcheon Variation	297
1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.♟b1-c3 ♟g8-f6 4.♟c1-g5 ♟f8-b4	
Bibliography	347
Index of Variations.	349
Index of Players	355
New In Chess Code System.	363
About the Authors	365

Foreword

An important question that all chess players have to answer is how to select the right openings for their repertoire. This book examines the pros and cons of one of the richest openings you can ever play, the French Defence.

The French Defence combines subtle strategic ideas with tactical motifs. After the introductory opening moves, it is clear that his relative lack of space is something that Black will have to deal with. He compensates for this by undermining White's central pawns. The position is delicately balanced, and a slight error by either White or Black is often all it takes to end up in major trouble.

As evidenced by multitudes of games, a lack of understanding of the key strategic ideas can easily lead to a swift collapse of the black position. Likewise, we have seen countless brilliant victories by leaders of the black pieces. Once you master the secrets of the French Defence you will have a powerful weapon at your disposal, offering strong counterplay and plenty of winning chances.

Still, for most players the opening of choice against 1.e4 remains the Sicilian Defence. Does the Sicilian ultimately offer the best chances for Black? This is a matter of opinion, but what we do know for certain is that in French Defence battles many more subtleties lie hidden under the surface, requiring a deeper understanding and a more strategic approach compared to the typically straightforward Sicilian plans.

The French has been an integral part of many top players' repertoires, and it was the key weapon in the hands of old masters such as Botvinnik and contemporary stars such as Carlsen and Morozevich. When you look at their tournament results, it becomes clear that they choose the French Defence in important games, when they need to secure a win with the black pieces.

Over the intensive two-year effort of writing this book, the aim of the authors has been to present you with more than the traditional bone-dry analysis of all possible variations. To this aim, apart from explaining the essential strategies and plans pertinent to this opening, we also cover a multitude of complex plans and theoretical novelties as part of our new strategic approach.

All the popular and topical variations are covered in detail. We have omitted some rarely-seen sidelines such as 2.b3 or 2.f4 that are of little value, and pose no threat to Black. Through the extensive analysis of strategic plans from the basic to the most complex, we aim to address the needs of players ranging from the ranks of chess enthusiasts up to the level of professional grandmasters.

For example, the **King's Indian Attack** with 2.d3 has always been a weapon of choice of white players who want to avoid theoretical duels. We are offering an array of excellent possibilities that are on Black's disposal.

The Modern French

In the **Exchange Variation**, a seemingly drawish and symmetrical system, we have analysed a line with a very active approach for Black.

The **Advance Variation** is becoming increasingly popular thanks to the new ideas implemented by Grischuk, Movsesian, and of course Sveshnikov. Therefore, we have dedicated lots of space to an investigation of 5...♟d7, instead of the 'standard' 5...♞b6, which seems slightly shaken after the efforts of the above-mentioned aces.

In the **Tarrasch Variation** we propose Morozevich's line 3...♟e7. Although 3...c5 is more common in the tournament arena, we believe that Morozevich's idea offers lots of scope for exploring new possibilities.

In the **Steinitz Variation** we have devoted equal attention to the lines 7...♟e7 and 7...a6, as these two share some frequent strategic plans for the further course of the game. These lines are the most popular with black players and we believe that our contribution, filled with new ideas, cements their reputation as the best responses in the given position.

We are particularly proud of the ideas we have developed in the **McCutcheon Variation**. We believe that 4...♟b4 is a dynamic move in the full spirit of the French Defence. It is not our intention to downgrade the value of 4...dxe4, with which Black goes for a certain amount of simplification. But perhaps this is a good place to quote our older colleague grandmaster Vladimir Raicevic, a great expert on the French Defence, who once said: 'The key to a successful French Defence is in holding the pawn on d5 and not giving way in the centre!'

Through the extensive analysis of strategic plans, from the basics to the most complex, we have aimed to address the needs of players from the ranks of chess enthusiasts up to the level of professional grandmaster.

We'd like to relay an anecdote that took place while we were working on the book. After receiving the materials and going through them, one of the translators was so taken by what he saw that he exclaimed, 'This is so incredibly well-explained that I cannot wait to start playing the French Defence!'

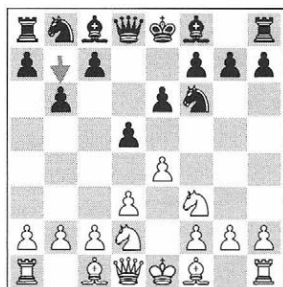
At a time when commercial aspects dominate the chess books publishing industry, the authors' primary aim has been to give you an evergreen work of art which at the same time will make you enjoy better winning chances as Black than ever before.

We thank all the people who have generously helped in the creation of this book: translators International Master Dr. Aleksandar Davidovic and Goran Urosevic, the editor of the Chessdom website, and the New in Chess editors for their active support and participation.

April 2012,
Dejan Antic
Branimir Maksimovic

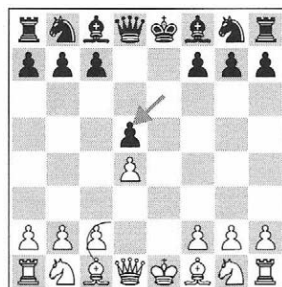
Your French Repertoire in a Bird's-Eye View

King's Indian Attack



1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.♘d2 ♖f6 4.♘gf3 b6

The Exchange Variation



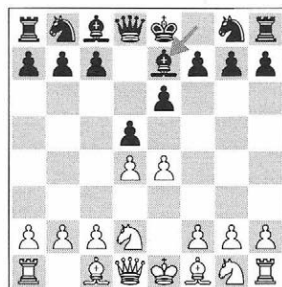
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5

The Advance Variation



3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♙d7

The Tarrasch Variation



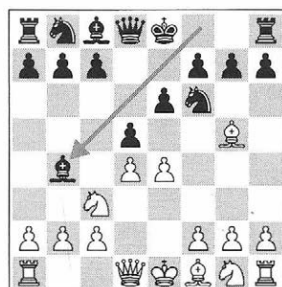
3.♘d2 ♙e7

The Steinitz Variation



3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6

The McCutcheon Variation



3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙b4

