

Challenging the Sicilian with 2.a3!?

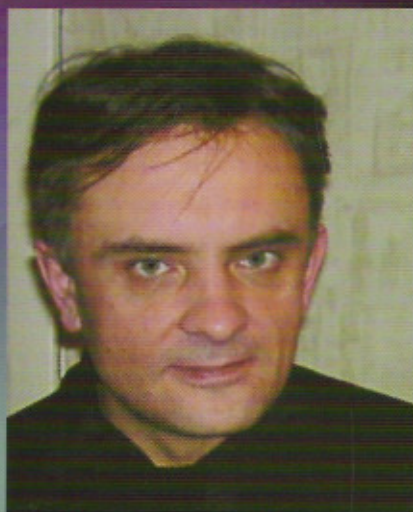
Current

Theory and Practice Series



Chess Stars
Openings

Alexei Bezgodov



Grandmaster Alexey Bezgodov is the winner of numerous international tournaments. He was champion of Russia in the year 1993 and vice-champion of Russia in 1999. He is a professional chess-journalist. He believes that "a well written chess-article should be as equally interesting to a grandmaster as to a reader who does not even know the rules of chess!"

The newest book of the series "Chess Stars Openings" is devoted to the enterprising and quite original and unexplored possibility for White - 1.e4 c5 2.a3!?

The strong practical players who do not have time or desire to go into long theoretical Sicilian battles can try to enrich their opening repertoire with this remarkable system. It cannot be refuted by any encyclopedia or database. In fact the author of the book has practically invented a new and quite interesting opening. His surprising ideas and thorough analyses require considerable precision from Black.

It is a remarkable phenomenon that such rare lines based on solid positional basis often yield much better practical results than the well tested routine main lines. Rare and original variations are just super effective in blitz too.



Preface

By the year 2002 I was already fed up with playing the old routine long theoretical lines of the Sicilian Defence with White. It was not that I had bad positions. No, not at all! I began to have the feeling that the universally familiar position after 1.â4 ñ5 should not necessarily lead to the thoroughly analysed theoretical lines. Was not there any other way for White to fight for an opening advantage? I began to think that there might be some new original and untried ideas at White's disposal.

I usually play sharp tactical chess and I do not avoid complications at all. I was not attracted by timid solutions. I wanted to find a way to attack right at the very beginning of the game. I was thinking about the gambit 2.b4, but that was a bit too much and unfortunately that gambit would not withstand the analytical test successfully.

It came to my mind then "Why not prepare the move b2-b4?! This in fact has a very reasonable positional idea – to eliminate the annoying enemy c5-pawn! But not with the help of the usual d2-d4, but in some other way, so that White's d-pawn remained on the board. **Why not then 2.a3!?**

At first it was immediately clear that White at least should not be worse after that move. Secondly the arising positions are so unusual and non-standard that practically every player might get confused right in the opening!

I shared my concepts with the chess-master and publisher Sergey Soloviov. He became immediately interested and so I began to write the **first book in the world** about that opening variation.

This however proved to be a really difficult task! This line is quite rare and naturally the attitude towards it not quite serious. Therefore there happened to be quite few practical examples with substantial theoretical value. It became a complex task to create new theoretical concepts right out of the blue...!

The most difficult problem was not so much to invent new lines. You are not going to impress anybody with that nowadays! The really challenging task was to create a logical and also really dangerous attacking system. I found a lot of new and original ideas, but all that happened after weeks and months of strenuous analytical work. As a result I became convinced that by playing in such non-standard fashion **White can really obtain and preserve an opening advantage!** Besides Black sometimes may get checkmated rather quickly!

In general I am content with the quality of my analytical work. I hope not to disappoint my readers with my book and I believe that my practical recommendations will bring them plenty of victories. I tried to comment verbally the games and lines in such way as to be maximally helpful to my readers.

This book was designed for whom?

At first I was planning to devote that book to the blitz-players. This is quite understandable, since White's chances are just excellent in an original super-unexpected opening variation in a situation with a reduced time-limit. It came to my mind only later that the variation might withstand the test of more serious tournaments. There are plenty of beautiful variations and the practical players can use that line quite successfully. Now I cannot even say for sure that Black can equalize after the opening. Generally speaking this is **a chess-book for all players.**

The book is now ready and you are holding it in your hands. In case you find something arguable or difficult to understand you can always test it in a blitz-game, or in a friendly game, or in a serious tournament.

I would also like to ask a favour from my readers. Please be as kind as to send me your games in the 1.e4 c5 2.a3 variation to my E-mail address: alexsvet@mail.raid.ru. I would like to use them in the next editions of that opening monograph. Naturally, all that depends entirely on the future interest of the readers.

I wish you success with all my heart as an author of the book!

*A.Bezgodov
Perm, June 2004*