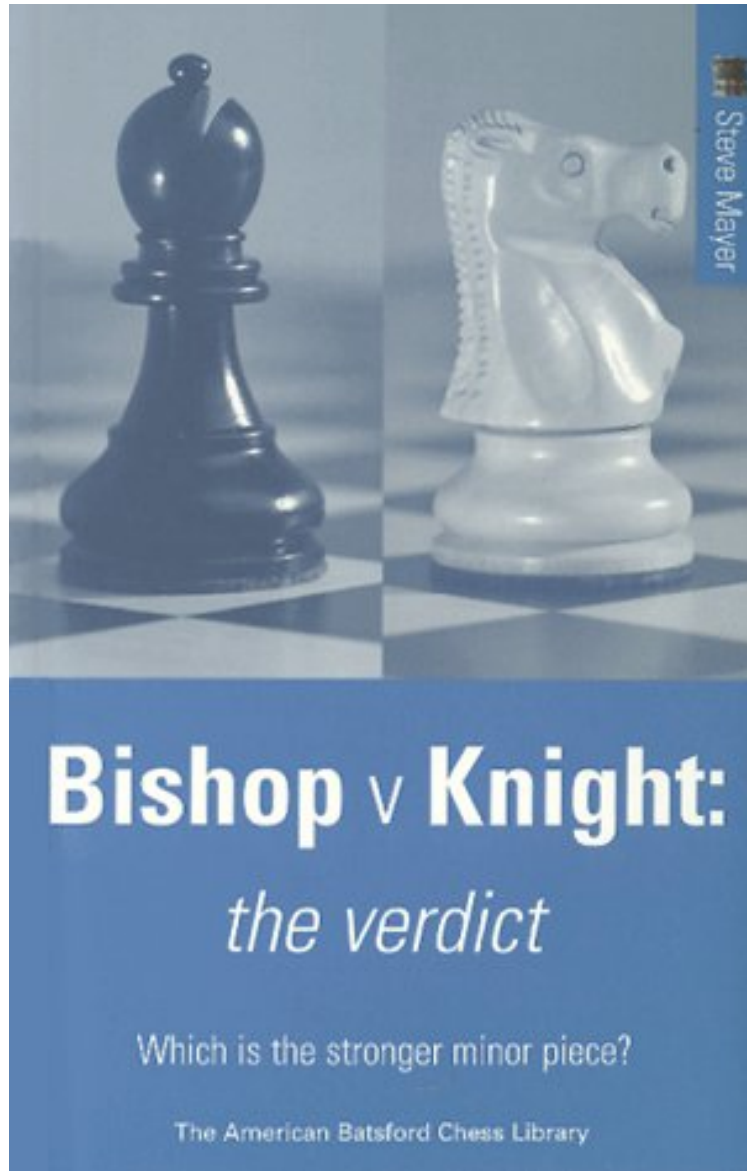


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Bishop Versus Knight

Steve Mayer

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Steve Mayer : Bishop Versus Knight before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bishop Versus Knight:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A REAL GEMBy SilverMalthusianFirst of all, let me tell you a little about myself. I currently have a rating of 1717. I rarely do any computer analyses of my games, instead I just go through my losses, myself work out where I went wrong or where my opponent came up with a brilliant idea. My

passion is for reading niche chess books e.g. about Isolani, Queen sacrifices, rook endgames etc. Of course, this book is amongst one of the best niche chess books I have ever read. The organisation of this book is almost perfect, if not perfect. The first chapter looks at the differences of how knights bishops move, the squares that they can cover where they are not optimally placed. I know, this is simple stuff, but it is logical to start with the basics. There are 17 chapters that cover all the sub-topics to this topic. The last chapter looks at Capablanca's theorem that a Queen knight are better more times than not to a Queen bishop in endgames, which is a sub-topic that is still contentious to this day. This book goes into the bishop pair, which sometimes is worth 9 points instead of just the usual 6, the misconception that Chigorin favoured knights over bishops, Steinitz's restriction method with the bishop pair etc. One criticism of this book is that some of the examples in this book I have read in other chess books, I suppose it is hard to overlook great games, which is understandable. While I am on this topic, is it just me or are Botvinnik games the most covered in chess books? His games seem to be analysed a lot more than anybody else's. How about the verdict? Well, it may be said that bishops are better than knights 60-70% of the time, however, after reading this book, maybe it is only a very slight majority of cases in which the bishop is better than a knight. A chess master made an analysis of the relative strength of the 2 minor pieces he found that it is 3.4 points for the bishop vs 3 for the knight, so this backs up my opinion, which would mean that the bishop is better 53.125% of the time. Of course, it depends on the position, how the position will change later in the game, your preference in the use of the minor pieces, what other pieces are left on the board, making sure that your opponent is left with the superfluous piece(s), light or dark square weaknesses etc. The bottom line is that when it comes to deciding whether to exchange a bishop for a knight or vice-versa, that you use your own judgement. Try to look at the position as completely as possible, ask yourself how it could change, what is your plan, be objective as possible (what's the point of having a knight on an outpost if it isn't achieving anything?) look at piece activity. I highly recommend this book for players with a rating of 1600-2000. Thank you Mr Mayer for your contribution to this, an analytical approach to one of the most asked questions in chess. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Everyone is a juror. By Hoa H When a friend saw me carrying this book, he asked me, "So, what is the verdict?" Maybe I hold back my one-cent until the end. For now, let's review the book first. It has 17 chapters, detailing various aspects of the battle between bishop(s) and knight(s). Chapters 2-4 show the traditional techniques to handle the bishop-pair and knight-pair. Chapters 5-8 clarify the problem and over-rating of minor pieces. Chapter 9, 10, 12, and 13 provide us some tactics and strategies to change the position dynamics, and some sacrifice to gain some critical tempi. Now, from personal experience. When I was a weak beginner, I often lost too early in the opening before the bishops could be fully utilized. Together with bishop's single color control, I felt the knights were stronger. Then from the teaching of Chernev's, I learned the strength of bishop-pair; and later learned two main themes. The first one is: in middle-game with packed center, the knights are stronger; with loose center, the bishops dominate. The other, generally in endgame: with pawns on both sides, the bishop is preferable; pawns on one side, bishop can at least hold a draw. Most GM like Botvinnik, Smyslov, and more prefer bishop-pair; while Chigorin, Reshevsky prefer knight-pair. However, they all can handle any combination of minor pieces skillfully. So, what is the verdict? The answer is their "relative space control with respect to other pieces" on the board. For example: without the queens, the long diagonal control of bishop(s) plus the rank and file control by the rook(s) (especially aiming at the enemy king) the bishop is stronger. Mayer mentioned this in chapter 16, the Grindable Ending. While in a crowded position (especially with many pawns) the knight is preferable. If somehow, the knight can established a strong outpost for a king-attack, with the penetration of the queen, the power of the knight can be decisive (Mayer: chapter 17, Capablanca's Theorem). Likewise, the position of the pawns (friends or foes) could magnify and/or neutralize the bishop's strength; and the pawns can dislodge the unprotected, far advance knights. Therefore, my one-cent summary is: a) Relative board control of the bishop and/or knight with respect to other pieces and pawns. b) Knowledge/experience of different types of these positions. c) Player's comfort and confidence in handling these minor pieces. And this personal opinion is not totally conclusive either. This is one of the first few books dealing solely with this difficult topic. I recall Pachman's Complete Chess Strategies having some sections dealing with this topic too. Both Mayer's and Pachman's books are for very strong (and master) players. Silman's Amateur's Mind gives lighter version and for single minor piece combat. This is a five-star book. 24 of 25 people found the following review helpful. EXCELLENT book for intermediate level players!! By A Customer "Bishop v Knight: The Verdict" is an excellent book for intermediate level players. I am amazed at how different I look at the minor pieces now compared to how I looked at them before I ever cracked open the book. Definitely a recommendation for those that intend to take chess seriously, and that hope to reach expert or master level. Before reading this book, I always said "Bishops are always better than knights" and yet someone else I know, who hasn't read the book, always thought, and still thinks, that knights are always better for him. Today, I beat him at least 90% of the time because this book has really helped me manage my minor pieces better. Also, when given the choice to trade a knight or bishop away for a minor piece of his, I make the better decision more often now than I did before reading the book. Anyone who has even the slightest bit of trouble managing their minor pieces, either in a middlegame, an endgame, or both, needs to get this book. I can't say there is another book of it's type.

The relative strengths of the Bishop and Knight have long been debated. Traditional thinking has been that the Bishop is better in open positions while the Knight is better in blocked positions. Top players differ in their views. Chigorin was a staunch advocate of the Knight, while Botvinnik was a master of the raking Bishops. Steve Mayer brings the reader practical examples to illustrate positions which favor one minor piece over the other and provides the first serious analysis of this long-debated topic. Some chapter titles are: The Problem Knight, The Problem Bishop, The over-rated Knight, The Ruy Lopez Ending, Shattered Pawn Positions.