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Play the Slav

James Vigus

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James Vigus : Play the Slav before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Play the Slav:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Best Book on the SlavBy Carolina ChessJames Vigus's book "Play the Slav" is an important upgrade in existing literature on the Slav defence. Until now the best introductions to the Slav were"The Slav vs 1 d4" by Silman and Donaldson, "Winning With the Slav" by Markov and Schipkov, and "The Slav" by Sadler. These are still useful albeit dated, and the later two are somewhat more comprehensive than Vigus's repertoire book (Silman and Donaldson is also a repertoire book), but Vigus has left them all far behind. If you buy one

book on the Slav, this is it. Supplemented by Burgess's "The Slav", the classic and very comprehensive theory book by Graham Burgess, this is all one needs today. Vigus's 34 page "Introduction" is alone worth the price. This is the best introduction and study of the Slav ever written in English. Through the study of about one dozen carefully selected games he covers the main strategic themes of the Slav: (1) Black's light square bishop, (2) the restraint pawn structure (c6/e6 vs d4/e3), (3) Black's doubled f-pawns, (4) Black's c6-c5 break, (5) Black's e6-e5 break, (6) the open centre, (7) Black's isolated e-pawn, (8) White's d5 break, (9) e5 vs e6 with open d and c files (which Vigus calls "Argentinean structures"), (10) in the spirit of Chigorin (Black's Bg4 and Bb4 ideas to exchange bishop for knight), and, lastly, (11) Symmetry. A day or two with this very well presented material, and you can begin to play the Slav and generate ideas straightaway. Vigus's repertoire choices won't please everyone. For example, he disdains the highly topical and very sharp 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 Nxc4 Qc7 !? for what he names "The Sokolov Defence" with 7...Nb6. He provides a more or less convincing argument by means of thorough analysis, and a smattering of TN. The explanations are clear, and the analysis by and large quite good. One cannot always agree with his evaluations, but Vigus gives us plenty to work with. Also, his unorthodox treatment of the Exchange Variation, with 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bf4 answered by the rare 6...Nh5, which Vigus names "The Russian Counterattack" will not be to everyone's taste, but it serves to liven up what can be the one boring reason not to play the Slav. Vigus treatment of the classic Dutch variation and the Tolush-Geller gambit (5 e4) are more traditional, but thorough and instructive. Vigus's writing is solid and enjoyable. His explanations lucid. The index and bibliography are a plus. He uses a number of complete (and near complete) games in the text, without adopting the often tiresome illustrative games approach of many opening books. Even though this is a repertoire book, it gives a broad and good overview by which one may learn the Slav. The binding is weak, typical of Everyman publishing, and after a year of use some of my pages and leaves are falling out. Recommended for players rated between about 1500 and 2200. Lower rated players will gain more from the introduction than from the rest of the book. There are some interesting ideas here for masters, as well, although they are scattered about in the analysis.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. really good book
By Aaron
The book is really good. The first 43 pgs gives you a really good idea of how to play the slav with some really good games. I felt like I was ready to play the opening immediately and I haven't touch any of the main chapters. Overall good book. Received the book much faster than what I expected. If anyone is looking to buy this book, it's worth the money.

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Okay, but not as a first book
By DNwilson
This book is okay. It would not be a first book about the Slav defense, although the introduction does have good ideas. Bottom line is that it is a repertoire book with a bunch of game snippets. The author recommends a lot of untested stuff and glosses over some obvious sticking points. I have been testing the lines against a chess engine. The results have not been altogether happy. I could wish that the author had done this before putting his ideas on paper. A warning would be to measure seven times before playing once. I also would fault the insistence of torturing all responses to white's moves into a perceived "Slav" type answer. I think that being flexible is a good thing.

The Slav has a well-deserved reputation as one of Black's strongest answers to 1 d4, and it's no coincidence that it has been used by almost all the World Champions in chess history. Put simply, the Slav is a classy opening, one which combines reliability with the promise of dynamic counterplay. In this book, James Vigus presents a comprehensive and trustworthy repertoire for Black. He outlines the main ideas for both sides and highlights the tactics to watch out for. This book will provide you with enough knowledge and skill to play the Slav with confidence in your own games.

The Pirc in Black and White is, without any doubt, the best book on the Pirc ever written. Award-winning author Jeremy Silman reviewing James Vigus' first book, The Pirc in Black and White. If you play the Pirc or are thinking about it you will want to have it. International Master John Donaldson reviewing The Pirc in Black and White. All in all a great effort and wonderful book. Bill McGeary reviewing The Pirc in Black and White for Chessville.com.