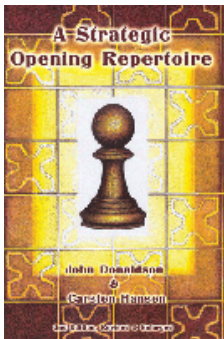




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Rating Chart

- ♦ – A poor book
- ♦♦ – Not very good
- ♦♦♦ – A useful book
- ♦♦♦♦ – A good book
- ♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book



Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

[The Complete DGT Product Line](#)

Reviewed this month:

Play the Slav
by James Vigus

The Chebanenko Slav According to Bologan
by Viktor Bologan

The Colle System (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

Torre Attack (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

London System (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

En Passant

Chesspublishing.com: Dragons
by Chris Ward

Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](#):



[Danish Dynamite](#)
by Karsten Müller & Martin Voigt



[The Fearsome Four Pawns Attack](#)
by Jerzy Konikowski & Marek Soszynski

Read an excerpt [here](#).

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

This month we will examine two recent books on the Slav, as well as DVDs on the Colle, the London System and the Torre Attack. When I was a teenager I considered these Anti-Indian openings as unsportsmanlike conduct, because they seemed to go against everything that was exciting in chess, and primarily because they prevented my favorite openings. Obviously there is much more to them than that and Davies aims to prove it on these three new releases.

Play the Slav by James Vigus, Everyman Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 224pp., \$24.95

This book must have been difficult to write because of the Slav's tremendous popularity at all levels of chess and the constant shift in theoretical currents. Not to mention the lengthy introductions and the explanatory prose that counterbalances the theory.



The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Preface (2 pages)
- Introduction (34 pages)
- 1 The Sokolov Defence (29 pages)
- 2 The Dutch Variation: Introduction and 9 Qe2 (17 pages)
- 3 The Dutch Variation: 9 Nh4 and Related Lines (14 pages)
- 4 Knight to the Right: 6 Nh4 (8 pages)
- 5 The Tolush-Geller Gambit: 5 e4 (10 pages)

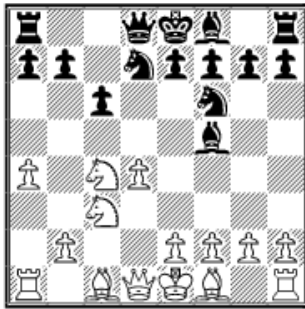


[The Modern Morra Gambit](#)
by Hannes Langrock

- 6 Fifth Move Alternatives: 5 e3, 5 Ne5 and 5 g3 (11 pages)
- 7 The Errot: 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 Bg4 (31 pages)
- 8 Quiet Queen Moves: 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Qc2 and 4 Qb3 (11 pages)
- 9 The Argentinean Defence: 3 Nc3 dxc4 (20 pages)
- 10 The Exchange Variation (19 pages)
- 11 Odds and Ends (9 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)

If you are wondering, as I was, about the Errot, Vigus explains that it is a setup for Black very similar to a Torre Attack with the colors reversed. Hence, the Errot is Torre spelled backwards!

The first chapter is devoted to the Sokolov Defence, which begins **1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bf5 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 Nxc4**



Now instead of the immensely complicated and extremely theory-laden 7...Qc7, Vigus prefers the far more solid and less theoretical 7...Nb6. According to Vigus this isn't even mentioned in a number of other books on the Slav. I find this refreshing in that the suggested line is not likely to be refuted or go out of fashion quickly. Vigus also follows Sokolov's footsteps in the Dutch Variation, basing his judgment on the

simple diction, if it is good enough for Sokolov, it is good enough for us.

Vigus steers clear of the popular 4...a6 Slav, but in the lines he does examine he offers a sizable amount of original analysis and improvements over existing theory. I checked several of the lines and found his conclusions to be somewhat on the conservative side but seldom wrong.

This book is intelligently written, with good choices of variations for Black, and a fine balance between prose and analysis. This is an excellent effort by Vigus.

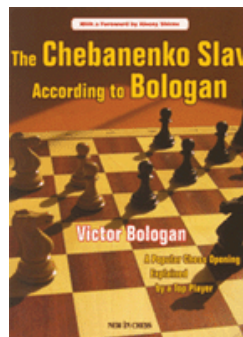
My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Play the Slav*

by James Vigus

The Chebanenko Slav According to Bologan by Viktor Bologan, New In Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 238pp., \$29.95

The Chebanenko Slav arises after **1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc4 a6** and is named after the highly respected opening theoretician and coach Vyacheslav Chebanenko. The opening is currently so popular that it can be seen in the games of most of the top players from the last decade.



The material is divided as follows:

- Foreword by Alexey Shirov
- Introduction
- Part 1: Various Replies on Move 5 (7 chapters - 52 pages)
- Part 2: Inserting 5 a4 e6 (3 chapters - 36 pages)
- Part 3: The Insidious 5 Ne5 (4 chapters - 18 pages)
- Part 4: The Solid 5 e3 (3 chapters - 30 pages)
- Part 5: The Strategic 5 c5 (5 chapters - 48 pages)

- Practical Examples (12 pages)
- Index of Variations (6 pages)
- Index of Players (7 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)

The author was one of Chebananko's students, and it was Bologan who introduced the opening to Alexei Shirov. As you can see, Shirov was so impressed with it that he agreed to write the foreword. Included in the introduction is the original article "A New System in the Slav Defense" by Viktor Gavrikov, which was first published in *Shakhmaty v SSSR* No. 12, 1983, and extracts from the books *Revolution in the 70s* by Garry Kasparov and *School of Chess Excellence 4 – Opening Developments* by Mark Dvoretsky. It is also revealed that the book was written with the participation of IM Barsky and GM Komliakov, which is quite a team.

This volume is densely packed with theory and analysis, while the explanatory prose is decidedly sparse. However, Bologan honestly appraises all the lines and adds a decent amount of original analysis and improvements over existing theory. His conclusions carry even more weight because of Bologan's status as a top player and as one of the leading practitioners of this variation. It is worth noting that Bologan does not cover the lines with 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 a6, as he considers them to be second-rate, despite their obvious popularity.

For serious players of 1 d4 and the Slav, this book is a must. It is simply outstanding. However, it is high-level stuff and players rated below 2000 may have difficulty assimilating the material without assistance from a coach or strong player or computer.

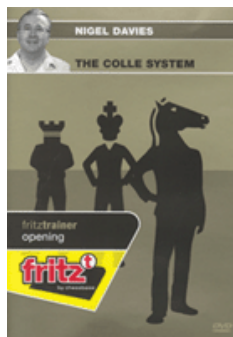
My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *The Chebanenko Slav According to Bologan*

by Viktor Bologan

The Colle System (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: approx 4 hours, \$39.95

On this DVD, Davies dismisses the line promoted by Palliser in his book on the Colle, saying that it does not really cause Black any problems. Instead, he focuses his attention on the so-called Colle-Zukertort Variation, where White employs a setup with b2-b3. To his credit, Davies tells the viewer when the Colle can be used effectively and against which setups it cannot.



The opening is infrequently played at top level, so several of the twenty-three games presented are familiar. It seems as if the same games are repeatedly used every time someone advocates this opening. However, I was surprised by the inclusion of the game Kramnik-Topalov, because I could not recall any encounter between these elite players where Kramnik chose something as pretentious as the Colle. Yet, this was an admitted case of move-order doctoring by Davies.

Davies also discusses Meran setups for Black, as well as the Slav with 4... Bg4 (called the Errot by Vigus). In these transpositional lines the coverage is very breezy with few improvements suggested for Black; at least I didn't see any. I also found the contents page lacking in that there are no labels in the overview to tell us which lines are covered. This is an annoying omission, because it makes the product much more difficult to navigate.


The following game is a good example of the flexibility in the repertoire Davies suggests. Rather than sticking to b2-b3, which would be rather harmless against the setup chosen by Black, White pursues an advantage with the more aggressive 6 c4:

Mamedyarov - Brodsky

Russian Team Championship (Sochi) 2006

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.e3 b6 4.Bd3 Bb7 5.0-0 g6 6.c4 Bg7 7.Nc3 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.b4 0-0 10.a4 Re8 11.Qb3 a6 12.Ba3 Nbd7 13.b5 axb5 14.axb5 Bf8 15.Rfc1 Bxa3 16.Rxa3 Rxa3 17.Qxa3 Qa8 18.Qb4 Rc8 19.h3 Qa7 20.g4 Ra8 21.Ne2 Qb8 22.g5 Ne8 23.Nf4 Qd8 24.h4 Nf8 25.Bf1 Ra5 26.Ne5 h6 27.gxh6 Nh7 28.h5 g5 29.Nfg6 Nd6 30.Qc3 Ne8 31.Nc6 Bxc6 32.Qxc6 Nhf6 33.Ne5 Qe7 34.Bd3 Ra3 35.h7+ Nxh7 36.Bxh7+ Kxh7 37.Qxd5 Nd6 38.Nc4 Nxc4 39.Rxc4 Kh8 40.Qf5 Ra8 41.Rc6 Kg7 42.h6+ Kh8 43.Rxc7 1-0

There is room for improvement on this DVD, but for players rated less than 2000, who are looking for an easy repertoire for white with 1 d4, this DVD will prove to be a step forward.

My assessment of this DVD: 

[Order](#) *The Colle System (DVD)*

by Nigel Davies

Torre Attack (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: approx 4 hours, \$39.95

Of the three Anti-Indians covered in this column, the Torre Attack is probably the most popular, and the one most likely to be seen in the games of higher-rated players. There are twenty-one games in all. The first, Torre-Lasker, functions as the general introduction to the opening. In this famous game, the young Mexican beat the former world champion in amazing fashion.



However, this game seems to set the tone for what follows with regards to an over-reliance on dated material. Only four games are played after 1990, and only one game is played after 2000. This means that it is likely you will already be familiar with many of the games. There is absolutely no reason for this, because there are plenty of quality games in this opening from the last decade.

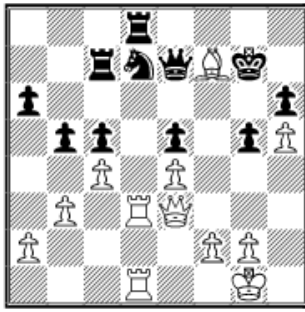
At least this DVD provides some measure of direction on the contents page, where we are told which setups go with which games. Plus, the presentation is quite instructive. Davies has a flair for highlighting what is important and what is likely to be missed by weaker and less experienced players.

One of my favorite games on this DVD is the following:

Yusupov - Karpov

Candidates Semi-Final London 1989

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 c5 4.e3 b6 5.d5 exd5 6.Nc3 Be7 7.Nxd5 Bb7 8.Bxf6 Bxf6 9.c3 0-0 10.Bc4 a6 11.0-0 b5 12.Bb3 d6 13.Qd2 Nd7 14.Rfd1 Bxd5 15.Bxd5 Rb8 16.Qc2 Nb6 17.Rd2 g6 18.Rad1 Qc7 19.Qe4 Kg7 20.h4 Qe7 21.Qf4 Be5 22.Nxe5 dxe5 23.Qg3 Rbd8 24.h5 Rd7 25.b3 Rfd8 26.e4 g5 27.Qe3 h6 28.c4 Rc7 29.Rd3 Nd7 30.Bxf7



30...Kxf7 31.Qd2 Ke8 32.Qa5 bxc4 33. bxc4 Rcc8 34.Qa4 Rc7 35.Qxa6 Rb8 36.Qg6+ Kf8 37.Rf3+ 1-0

Overall I found the coverage quite decent, if not particularly impressive. While the games are instructive, there is very little new material and hardly any original analysis. This DVD seems like it was produced in a hurry with no particular emotion or joy.

My assessment of this DVD: ❖❖

Torre Attack (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

London System (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: approx 4 hours, \$39.95

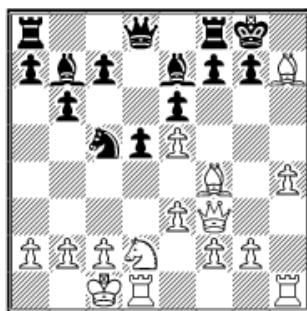
The London System refers to a white setup with 1 d4, 2 Nf3 and 3 Bf4, but the follow-up very much depends on how Black chooses to develop his pieces. While this opening is generally considered harmless, it has, as Davies tells us, been used by Bronstein, Spassky, Speelman and even Kasparov. It is an extremely easy opening to understand and play, and it carries quite a punch if Black doesn't take proper precautions in the opening.



After a brief introduction, the DVD opens up with the following game, which sets a nice tone for the rest of the material. The white pieces are orchestrated by [London specialist](#) Croatian GM Vlatko Kovacevic, and black is the Canadian IM Tom O'Donnell:

Kovacevic - O'Donnell
Toronto 1990

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bf4 Nf6 4.e3 Be7 5.Nbd2 0-0 6.Bd3 b6 7.Ne5 Bb7 8. Qf3 Nbd7 9.h4 Nxe5 10.dxe5 Nd7 11.0-0-0 Nc5 12.Bxh7+!?



12...Kxh7 13.Qh5+ Kg8 14.Nf3 f6 15. Ng5! fxe5 16.hxe5 Rf5 17.g4 Rxe5 18. Bxe5 Bxe5 19.f4 Bh6 20.g5 Qe8 21. Qh4 Kh7 22.Rdg1 Ne4 23.Rg4 d4 24. gxe6 g5 25.fxe5 Qg6 26.exd4 Nf2 27. Rf1 Nxe4 28.Qxe4 Rg8 29.Rf6! Qxe5+ 30.Qxe5 Rxe5 31.Rxe6 Be4 32.Re7+ Kxe6 33.Rxc7 a5 34.c4 Rg2 35.b3 Kg6 36.e6 Kf6 37.d5 Rg8 38.Rb7 Ke5! 39. Rxb6 Kd4 40.e7 Kc3 41.Kd1 Kd3 42. Ke1 Ke3 43.Rf6! a4 44.b4 a3 45.b5

Rc8 46.Ra6! Rh8 47.Rxa3+ Bd3 48. Rxd3+ Kxd3 49.Kf2 1-0

Here, again, the contents page is quite poor. The viewer is not told which lines are covered in which games, and so has to invest some time navigating between through the individual games. If the publisher can't be bothered to make a proper contents page, I suggest that the introduction be used as a navigation tool, where all the games would be listed in the presentation. But even this is overcomplicating what should

be a straightforward matter.

Davies does a fine job of choosing a repertoire for White, but one comment seems to have been made without full consideration of the consequences. In the annotations to Petrosian-Chistiakov, 1954, he mentions that after 1 d4 e6 2 Nf3, Black can play 2...c5 (2...f5 was played in the game), and then White will continue 3 c3, so as to answer 3...cxd4 with 4 cxd4. Davies doesn't go any further; however, after 4...Nf6 5 e3 Nc6 6 Nc3, we have a decidedly boring line of the Exchange Slav, which isn't discussed anywhere else on this DVD.

For those looking for a thorough theoretical presentation of the London System, this DVD will fall well short of the mark. The presentation is largely done without going into any particular details. However, if you just want to get an overview of how to play this opening as white, where there is a greater emphasis on explaining the basic ideas, then you will enjoy this DVD. Its target audience is players rated from 1200 to around 1800.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

[Order London System \(DVD\)](#)

by Nigel Davies

Chesspublishing.com: Dragons, by Chris Ward, Chess Publishing.com
2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

Of the many grandmasters and theoreticians writing on Chesspublishing.com, few are as clearly connected with an opening as is English GM Ward and the Sicilian Dragon. On this page, Ward covers the Dragon: 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6; the Accelerated Dragon: 2... Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6; the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon: 2...g6; and specialties such as the so-called Dragondorf, a Dragon/Najdorf hybrid.



It might surprise some to learn that there is sufficient material to make interesting updates on the Dragon every month, but Dragon fans are a faithful lot, who are always eager to see the latest developments. While the updates are often slimmer than in other sections, subscribers will not be disappointed with the quality of the analysis or with the insights Ward provides in each update.

As with the other pages, a subscription gives you access to all the previous updates. For the Dragon, this gives you access to almost a decade worth of material, all written by Chris Ward. In addition you can download e-books in both PDF and PGN formats, as well as about 650 fully annotated games. I don't think you will ever find a better deal for the money.

My assessment of this site: ♦♦♦♦

Chesspublishing.com: Dragons

by Chris Ward

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