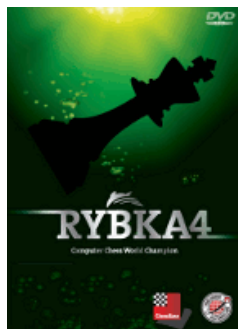




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ChessBase Cafe

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Rating Chart

- ♦ – Poor
- ♦♦ – Useful
- ♦♦♦ – Good
- ♦♦♦♦ – Excellent

CHESSTHEATRE

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You Can Squeeze the Slav into a Winning Structure

Power Play 13: The Squeeze, by Daniel King, Running Time: five hours

"The Squeeze" is the latest in Daniel King's series of Power Play DVDs. Earlier titles could each be considered as four-star additions to any beginner's library; however, some of the more recent titles have left a lot to be desired regarding topics and content structure. Beginner's are often taught that there are several methods of play that are available in terms of weakening one's opponent. These are capture, exchange, attack, and immobilize. It is this last concept that is the central focus of this DVD.

King says that it was the following position, in which he was black during a simultaneous exhibition by Andras Adorjan, that made him realize the importance of such play.



[FEN "3r4/p2rppbk/q1p1b1pp/2p1P3/PpP5/1P1P1N1P/1B2QPP1/3RR1K1"]

King was placed in a position in which he could do nothing to improve his position. It is this situation that King refers to as "the squeeze." According to King, to subdue the enemy without fighting is the motto of this DVD. It is the prevention of all of your opponent's active ideas that is the instructional goal herein.

The DVD contains fifty lectures:

- 01: Introduction
- 02: Test Positions
- 03: Petrosian-Bertok I
- 04: Petrosian-Bertok II
- 05: King-Barua I
- 06: King-Barua II
- 07: Petrosian-Georgadze I
- 08: Petrosian-Georgadze II
- 09: Petrosian-Simagin I
- 10: Petrosian-Simagin II
- 11: Bronstein-Winiwater I
- 12: Bronstein-Winiwater II
- 13: Bonstein-Winiwater III + Kavalek-Lengyel
- 14: Fischer-Weinstein I
- 15: Fischer-Weinstein II
- 16: Fischer-Weinstein III



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- 17: Karpov-Unzicker I
- 18: Karpov-Unzicker II
- 19: Karpov-Unzicker III
- 20: Karpov-Unzincker IV
- 21: Botvinnik-Alekhine I
- 22: Botvinnik-Alekhine II
- 23: Botvinnik-Alekhine III
- 24: Botvinnik-Alekhine IV
- 25: Botvinnik-Alekhine V
- 26: Botvinnik-Alekhine VI + Anand-Karpov
- 27: Levitt-King I
- 28: Levitt-King II + Socko-Wall I
- 29: Socko-Wall II
- 30: Short-Timman
- 31: Short-Berg I
- 32: Short-Berg II
- 33: Short-Berg III
- 34: Short-Berg IV
- 35: Short-Berg V
- 36: Short-Berg VI
- 37: Vaganian-Mecking I
- 38: Vaganian-Mecking II
- 39: Vaganian-Mecking III
- Solutions
- 40: Nunn-Upton
- 41: Petrosian-Kikolaevsky + Petrosian-Ivkov + Petrosian-Velimirovic
- 42 : Kramnik-Gonzalez
- 43: Lautier-Novik
- 44: Nielsen-Milliet
- 45: Spassky-Koch
- 46: Cordoba-Bandals
- 47: Petrosian-Karner
- 48: Miles-Pastor
- 49: Andersson-Eggleston + Andersson-Grohde + Andersson-Heimann
- 50: Janowski-Saburoff + Summary

The DVD is structured in the same way as his last few Power Play endeavors. King begins by giving you test questions to which the DVD will assist you in providing the answers. He then goes over the actual answers at the end of the DVD.

The main section of the DVD is devoted to games that have been divided according to their relation to the theme of immobilization. The games are suspended at a certain point, where you are then asked to guess the next move played. Most of the game are devoted to the white side of the picture, as black is the side that always seems to come out on the short end.

Here is an example of the first segment of a game between Fischer-Weinstein, with white to play: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 cxd4 12.cxd4 Bb7 13.d5 Bc8 14.Nbd2 g6 15.b4 Nb7 16.a4 Bd7**



[FEN "r2q1rk1/1n1bbp1p/p2p1np1/1p1Pp3/PP2P3/5N1P/2BN1PP1/R1BQR1K1 w -- 0 17"]

This is an entire clip. The next clip will pick up where this one leaves off.

Some games are divided into as many as five parts, and in each case King asks you to find the next move based on the principle of "the squeeze." King has hand-picked each example to illustrate a particular point. It is not likely that you will reach the same exact positions in your games, rather it is the general theme that is discussed. His annotations are good, though they do not extend much beyond the theme of the DVD. Still, he does present many other chess principles that will be useful to the player who is just starting out. King also has a great screen personality and he gets his points across in a very natural manner that is easy to comprehend.

The person for whom this DVD is aimed has an entire world that is opening up for him, and the prospective viewer should be sure to include print media, as well as a great deal of practical experience in their training regimen. I recommend this DVD with very few reservations. In closing, don't take the suggestion by King to use a real chess board too lightly when doing the exercises. It is an important part of your education.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

Order *Power Play 13: The Squeeze*
by Daniel King

Winning Structures, by Adrian Mikhalchishin, Running Time: five hours

This DVD is divided into two parts. The first contains eleven lectures on the pawn structure preferences of some of the greatest chess minds of the twentieth century, and the second is devoted entirely to the isolated pawn structure. Mikhalchishin begins the first section by noting how the great Akiva Rubinstein used double pawns to help him control the center of the board, and he presents a game where Alekhine used this structure against Rubinstein.



Almost all the game examples come from the Queen's Gambit and what Mikhalchishin calls a semi-closed structure. While presenting these structures, Mikhalchishin does an admirable job of annotating the games he has chosen as examples. The DVD contains a total of nineteen lectures:

- 01: Rubinstein 01
- 02: Rubinstein 02
- 03: Rubinstein 03
- 04: Rubinstein 04
- 05: Rubinstein 05
- 06: Keres 01
- 07: Keres 02
- 08: Keres 03
- 09: Geller 01
- 10: Geller 02
- 11: Geller 03
- 12: Isolated Pawn 1
- 13: Isolated Pawn 2
- 14: Isolated Pawn 3
- 15: Isolated Pawn 4
- 16: Isolated Pawn 5
- 17: Isolated Pawn 6
- 18: Isolated Pawn 7
- 19: Isolated Pawn Outro

The next lecture again shows Rubinstein demonstrating his understanding of pawn structures. He understood which squares he had to control and how to make use of them in setting up his attack.



[FEN "3r1rk1/1p1b1p1p/p1nqp1p1/3p3n/3N1P2/2PB1NP1/PP1QRP1P/R5K1"]

Mikhalchishin's lectures are useful in that they point out how each move contributes to a structure that brought Rubinstein closer to a winning position. He demonstrates how the giants of chess brought their games together to make a harmonious whole, and explains the plans and strategies that the players followed.

According to Mikhalchishin, Botvinnik always gave credit to Rubinstein with regards to pawn structures. In looking at the games of Botvinnik included on the DVD, one cannot help but note the similarities to Rubinstein's play. Mikhalchishin does a masterful job of pointing out how Botvinnik used the opponent's weak squares to mount an attack.

Mikhalchishin discusses how every great player had favorite structures in which they placed their pieces. In the first Keres lecture, he shows us two examples of the Fianchetto Grünfeld that met the needs of this great player. The next lecture presents a game from Romanishin in which he obtained the same central structure as Keres, but from a Réti Opening.

One of the high points of the DVD is the discussion of Efim Geller. Included in the lecture is Geller's beautiful victory over Bobby Fischer in the Sicilian Najdorf. Both Geller and Fischer believed that chess is timing and that in certain positions one must act immediately or risk losing an opportunity.

Mikhalchishin underscores how our understanding of different structures transcends almost all opening systems. One important structure that requires a great deal of time is the isolated pawn. This structure comes from many different openings and is one that all players must learn how to handle it. Here is a key position with an isolated pawn:



[FEN "mbq1rk1/pp2bPPP/4pn2/8/2BP4/2N2N2/PP3PPP/R1BQ1RK1"]

There are many possibilities for the player with the isolated pawn and Mikhalchishin shows us what they are and how to play them. He teaches us about blockades and how to play against them. He shows us how the masters played with the isolated pawn. He illustrates many methods of play for both sides of the structure, and he is sure to tell us which plans can succeed and which should be avoided, along with of the reasons for each one. This entire section is also loaded with examples from Mikhalchishin's own games.

According to Mikhalchishin, if you avoid playing with an isolated pawn, then

you are doomed to passivity, which will be exploited by your opponent. He spends about a half-hour on the most dangerous plan with the isolated pawn: a direct breakthrough in the center. It has to be carefully prepared, but he shows that it works. He makes many recommendations on how to play with this structure. The idea is to increase the activity and mobility of your pieces. Experience and knowledge are the prerequisites of the planning process and the setups that are required.

Mikhalchishin advises that in order to successfully play with the isolated pawn, you have to be able to play all sorts of structures and be able to adapt during the game based on the moves of your opponent. According to Mikhalchishin, the changes in structure are usually favorable to the side with the isolated pawn and he provides a few examples of changes in structure where both sides have to react or suffer the consequences.

There is a separate lecture in which Mikhalchishin explains which squares you have to avoid and which squares you have to control. He also covers which types of endgames that you can expect. In the twenty-three minutes allotted to this lecture, he just about presents an entire course on the endgame. There are basic rules that you have to follow or you are not going to win or draw. In fact, this is probably the most difficult lecture on the DVD given the amount of material you have to understand.

There is enough material contained on this DVD to last a player a lifetime. The subject matter is important to anyone who plays chess. However, in order to understand the material you have to be sufficiently advanced as a player. For this type of person, this DVD is a must buy.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

Order *Winning Structures*
by Adrian Mikhalchishin

The Slav and Semi-Slav Revisited, by Alexei Shirov, Running Time: eight hours

This is Alexei Shirov's second DVD for ChessBase on the Slav and Semi-Slav. Compared to the [first DVD](#), there is a self recognition on the part of Shirov that he is one of the trendsetters in some of the variants of this opening and he exudes excitement about the subject matter. There are very few players that can match his grasp of the opening and he displays this knowledge on lectures that sometimes last close to an hour. As someone who plays the Slav, I found much that can be learned from these lectures.



There are nineteen lectures on this DVD:

- 01: Intro
- 02: Buhmann-Shirov
- 03: Shirov-Svidler
- 04: Sargissian-Nejer
- 05: Shirov-Fridman
- 06: Braun-Fridman
- 07: Shirov-Rublevsky
- 08: Intro Meram
- 09: Lafuente-Shirov
- 10: Wang Yue-Kramnik
- 11: Akesson-Shirov
- 12: Ivanchuk-Aronian
- 13: Chuchelov-Shirov
- 14: Kramnik-Shirov
- 15: Shirov-Karjakin

- 16: Van Wely-Smeets
- 17: Topalov-Shirov
- 18: Carlsen-Shirov
- 19: Kasimdzhanov-Shirov

Whereas the title of Shirov's first DVD was: "My Best Games in the Slav and Semi-Slav," this one could aptly be titled "The Best Games in the Slav and Semi-Slav." Because, going by current theory, that is exactly what is contained on this DVD. The time goes by quickly as Shirov does his usual over-the-board calculations without the aid of computer. In the first video we not only see the game Buhmann-Shirov, we also see Shirov's game against Inarkiev, so that we may better understand his moves against Buhmann.

Shirov makes it clear that this will be a DVD about the Meran and Botvinnik variations. The latter of which he thought was incorrect on his first DVD, but he explains that he has changed his mind over the past two and a half years. He only briefly discusses the Chebanenko system with a game against Gata Kamsky. He recommends that you look at the games of Carlsen, Anand, and Kramnik for more on this variation.

One of the few white games by Shirov on the DVD is his game against Peter Svidler. Svidler chose a line that Shirov was not as familiar with as white, since he does not like to deal with the gambit like situations that occur in this line: **1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 e6 6.e3 c5**



[FEN "rnbqkb1r/pp3ppp/4pn2/2p5/P1pP4/2N1PN2/1P3PPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 7"]

This popular line transposes to the Queen's Gambit Accepted, where black has lost a tempo. Shirov claims that he is not in his sphere with this line of the Slav, and that he tried to remember the opening moves from his childhood work on the line. Judging from the current annotations it seems that this game is the current archetype for this variation of the Slav. The annotations for these games last for as long as forty minutes and are a window into Shirov's thought process.

Before beginning the section on the Meran and Botvinnik variations, Shirov annotates a game between him and Sergei Rublevsky in 2007: **1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 Bf5 6.Ne5 e6 7.g3**



[FEN "rn1qkb1r/pp3ppp/2p1pn2/4Nb2/P1pP4/2N3P1/1P2PP1P/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 7"]

Of the nearly 2,000 games in this line, 7.g3 was played in fewer than 140 games. Shirov believes that it is a viable alternative to 7.f3, and he believes

that this is an important game in this line. If we follow the game through to the end of move twelve, then we find that it had only been played twice. Once as the current win by Shirov and the second game a 1995 draw between Sokolov and Bareev. Shirov spends almost forty minutes in his annotation of this game.

The Botvinnik variation is played as follows: **1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5**




[FEN "rnbqkb1r/p4p2/2p1pn1p/1p2P1p1/2pP3B/2N2N2/PP3PPP/R2QKB1R w KQkq g6 0 9"]

Shirov presents the game between Loek Van Wely and Jan Smeets from 2009, which led him to the notion that the Botvinnik was alive and well. He does an excellent job of annotating this system, and he explains all of the options that are available to both white and black. He is always looking to the future of this variation and he has a great deal to say about current theoretical ideas.

In Shirov's two games in the Botvinnik variation, played in Sofia against Topalov and Carlsen, you can tell that he is really enjoying himself as he goes over these games that contain all of his current theory. It is as if all of his analysis and preparation were paying off. If you play this variation, then these two lectures are a must see. As Shirov makes clear, this system cannot be played by common sense, you must have the theoretical knowledge.

It seems that the DVD was originally prepared in May of 2009, but it says a great deal about Shirov that he made this last forty-five minute lecture in order to bring us up to date on the theory. I recommend this DVD to anyone who plays the Slav or Semi-Slav. Moreover, if you are interested in the development of chess theory, specifically in the Slav, then both of Shirov's DVDs should be in your library.

My assessment of this DVD: 

[Order](#) *The Slav and Semi-Slav Revisited*

by Alexei Shirov

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