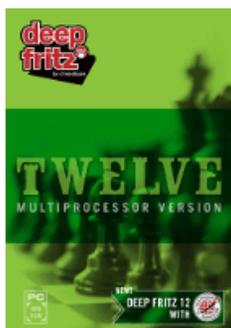




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Rating Chart

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

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All Openings are Created Equal, But They Don't Stay That Way

Sicilian Najdorf 6.Bg5, by Alexei Shirov, Running time: five hours

According to Garry Kasparov in his trio of Fritz Trainers on [How to Play the Najdorf](#), 6.Bg5 is the "sharpest, most complicated and the most aggressive line" in this opening. Kasparov goes on to explain why and gives us myriad examples of games. In fact, two of his three volumes deal with 6.Bg5. Yet that was done some time ago. Shirov, for his part, released a DVD of [Best Games in the Sicilian-Najdorf](#); however, it contains no games with 6.Bg5. Each of these DVDs belong in the Najdorf player's library.



On this DVD, Shirov tells us that if he plays the Najdorf as black, it means he wants to win the game, and he chooses the moves that give him the best chance of doing so.

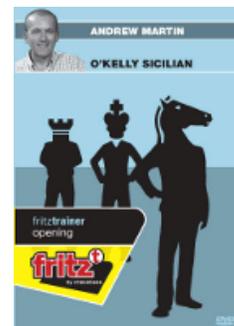
The contents are as follows:

- 01: Introduction
- 02: Shirov-Ibramihov
- 03: Spraggett- Vallejo Pons
- 04: Spraggett-Vallejo Pons
- 05: Shirov-Ferec
- 06: Alekseev-Karjakin
- 07: Spraggett-Cheparinov
- 08: Ponomariov-Ferec
- 09: Shirov-Anand
- 10: Shirov-Karjakin
- 11: Shirov-Ivanchuk – Something on Polugaevsky
- 12: Shirov-Ftacnik
- 13: Shirov-Wang Hao - Conclusion
- 14: Additional Shirov-Dominguez
- 15: Additional Shirov-Papaioannou
- 16: Additional corrections – Latest News and Corrections

With this DVD, I recommend that the viewer play the last clip first. A good deal of it pertains to mistakes that were caught by ChessBase after the DVD was completed, and it contains some new material that is pertinent to certain lines in the previous clips. Shirov admits that his manner of lecturing can be prone to tactical errors, because in many cases he does not check lines beforehand, rather he improvises during the lecture itself. To his credit, Shirov uses these errors as an opportunity to discuss more recent games that changed his opinion of certain lines.

In any event, the Najdorf with 6.Bg5 begins with the move order **1.e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5:**

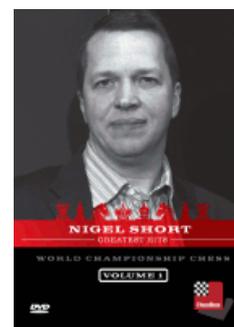
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by Daniel King



[Greatest Hits, Vol. 1](#)
by Nigel Short



[FEN "mbqkb1r/1p2pppp/p2p1n2/6B1/3NP3/2N5/PPP2PPP/R2QKB1R b KQkq - 0 6"]

This is not a DVD for those wanting to take up this opening for the first time. However, listening to Shirov present these games is a real treat for the seasoned Najdorf player. In the first game, against Rasul Ibrahimov, Shirov admits that he was expecting 6...e6, but instead was met by 6...Nbd7. He then remembered a move he had played two years before with good results, 7. Bc4, and so the game went. That's the thing about Shirov. He explains why he chose his moves, what the alternatives were, and why he did not choose them. It is as close as possible as seeing into the mind of Shirov during a chess game. This is what makes Shirov different from any other presenter, he is able to bring us into his games better than any other grandmaster.

The annotation for this game runs more than forty minutes, and at the thirty-five minute mark we are only at move twenty. When Shirov gives alternate moves, they turn into lines that sometimes turn into full games. Thus, the first game also includes a game between Radjabov and Ivanchuk. We can actually see how the various lines lead to a specific middlegame, and this makes us better Najdorf players than we are now.

For me, one of the high points of this DVD is Shirov's game against Anand, which went **6...e6 7.f4 Nbd7 8.Qf3** (Shirov admits that at this moment he didn't know whether he would play Qf3 or Qe2) **8...Qf7 9.0-0 b5 10.Bd3**. And now Shirov launches into the following variation to show why 10.e5 is only good for a draw at best: 10.e5 Bb7 11.Qh3 dxe5 12.Nxe6 fxe6 13.Qxe6+ Be7 14.Bxf6 (14.Bxx5 axb5 15.Nxb5 Qb6) 14...gxf6 15.Be2 h5 16.Nd5 Bxd5 17.Rxd5 Nb6 18.Bxh5+ Rxh5 19.Qg8+ Bf8 20.Qe6+ Qe7 (20...Be7 21.Qg8+ Bf8 22.Qe6+) 21.Qxb6 Rd8 22.Qc6+ Kf7 23.Rxd8 Qxd8 24.Rd1 Qe8 25.Rd7 + Be7 26.Qd5+ (26.g4 Rh4 (26...Rxx2 27.g5) 27.Qd5+ Kf8 28.Ra7 Qf7 29.Qa8+ Kg7 30.Qb7 Kh6 31.Qxe7 Qxe7 32.Rxe7 exf4) 26...Kf8 27.Ra7 exf4. This is the kind of analysis we have come to expect from Shirov and he delivers.

The game continued **10...Bb7 11.Rhe1 Qb6 12.Nb3 Rc8 13.Qh3**, when Shirov explains why this was a mistake and what the refutation is, which he calls "punishment." He further explains why he resigned on move thirty-five. How many other players put their major losses onto their DVDs?

This is not a clip that you watch just once. It is one that you watch over and over. Then comes the next clip where Shirov plays Karjakin, which will probably teach you even more about the Najdorf than the Anand game. By now you should be getting the idea. Each game was hand picked by Shirov to be in some way better than the previous one. You're sure to find your own favorites.

Shirov also lets us know where his home preparation ends and his over-the-board playing begins. For instance, in his game against Leinier Dominguez in Sofia in 2009, Shirov's preparation ended after the following sequence: **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 Be7 8.Qf3 Nbd7 9.0-0 Qc7 10.g4 h6 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.h4 Qb6**



[FEN "r1b1k2r/1p1n1pp1/pq1ppb1p/8/3NPPPP/2N2Q2/PPP5/2KR1B1R w kq - 0 13"]

The game ended in a draw because of time trouble for Shirov.

Careful study of this DVD will certainly improve your understanding of this opening. I don't think there are many better teachers of this line. I give this DVD my highest recommendation.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *Sicilian Najdorf 6.Bg5*

by Alexei Shirov

French Defence Strategy, by Nigel Davies, Running time: four hours

French Defence Strategy is not an introduction to the French Defense. It is an explanation of the strategies in the various French systems based on potential piece position and structures. This is a topic that is sadly overlooked in many opening DVDs. If you are looking for an introduction to the French Defense, [Ari Ziegler's](#) monstrous DVD is more relevant to that audience.



No defensive system is perfect. There is almost always an advantage for White that is at first academic, but then becomes practical as the game progresses. Every line of every opening will lead to certain pawn and piece structures. It is our job as a player to recognize these structures and to learn how best to deal with them. Thus, we need a DVD like this and I hope further strategy orientated DVDs are forthcoming for other openings.

The contents are as follows:

- 01: Introduction
- 02: Black's Queen's Bishop: Tarrasch-Teichmann
- 03: Black's Queen's Bishop: Timman-Seirawan
- 04: Black's Queen's Bishop: Hindle-Botterill
- 05: Black Queen's Bishop: Krogius-Karner
- 06: White's Pawn Wedge: Tarrasch-Von Gottschall
- 07: Super Quartz Grip: Konstantinopolsky-Lilienthal
- 08: Destroying White's Pawn Wedge: Reshevsky-Vaganian
- 09: White's pawn wedge attacking h7: Alekhine-Asgeirsson
- 10: White's pawn wedge attacking h6: Hartson-Portisch
- 11: Black's isolated d-pawn weakness: Karpov-Uhlmann
- 12. Black's isolated d-pawn strength: Tatai-Korchnoi
- 13. Black's backward e-pawn weakness: Karpov-Hort
- 14. Black's backward e-pawn strength: Govedatrica-Uhlmann
- 15. Black's hanging pawns weakness: Nimzowitsch-Salwe
- 16. Black's hanging pawns strength: Spassky-Petrosian
- 17. Black's broad pawn center: Trent-Davies
- 18. Countering Black's broad pawn center: Spassky-Korchnoi

- 19. Whites doubled pawn weakness: Smyslov-Botvink
- 20. White's doubled pawn counterplay: Planinec-Timman
- 21. White's tripled Pawns: Spassky-Korchnoi
- 22. Little center white pressure: Smyslov-Stahlberg
- 23. Little center counterplay: Balashov-Suba
- 24. Exchange center: Guervich-Short
- 25. Flexible center: Romanishin-Bareev
- 26. Summary and suggested repertoire

To get the most from this DVD requires a certain level of proficiency from the viewer. Davies does not hold your hand through the clips. This is a back to the basics DVD, but it won't provide you with easy answers to the various strategic problems. Each clip is only about ten minutes long. In some of the clips the structures are just pointed out and it is up to the viewer to figure out how to deal with it. Admittedly, this is not true in every case, but Davies expects a certain amount of expertise on the part of the viewer and in some cases the major points are not explicitly made.

In the Karpov clip we are told that there is an isolated black d-pawn as a result of the Tarrasch Defense.



[FEN "r1bqk2r/pp2nppp/2nb4/1B1p4/8/1N3N2/PPP2PPP/R1BQ1RK1"]

But beyond that there is no mention of how it hampered Black or whether it led to a victory for White. It is just pointed out that we have this isolated d-pawn. Davies scurries through the game without ever mentioning it again. I really would have expected more.

The next clip is all of seven minutes long and shows a quick victory by Korchnoi as black, even though he had an isolated queen's pawn. Other than telling us that there are natural strengths that belong to the possessor of the isolated d-pawn, there is no mention as to how it may have helped lead to victory. It seems to me that the presenter of any DVD of this sort should search for relevant games in ChessBase to find the structures and strategies that resulted in the most victories for one side.

The DVD begins with four clips about Black's light-squared bishop. The games illustrate why this piece is weak in the French, but it is up to you to use the games and the information to deal with the fact that the bishop is a possible source of trouble in the French. You have to figure out what to do with it based on the information Davies provides. Whether you should exchange the bishop is based on the position you are in. Here is a position in the Winawer where exchanging the bad bishop was the beginning of a victory for Black:

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Qd7 5.Bd2 b6 6.Nf3 Bf8 7.Be2 Ba6 8.O-O Ne7 9.Bxa6



[FEN "r1qkbnr/p1p2ppp/Bp6/3pp3/1P1PP3/5N2/P1PB1PPP/RN1QK2R b KQkq - 0 6"]

From there we go on to the five clips dealing varying pawn structures and wedges that may be advantageous to either Black or White. The white pawn wedge that occurs very early in this Tarrasch gives White a distinct advantage: **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6**



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/pp1n1ppp/2n1p3/2ppP3/3P4/2PB4/PP1N1PPP/R1BQK1NR w KQkq - 0 7"]

The Classical Variation features a classic confrontation in the center with White having a half-open e-file and Black with a half-open d-file: **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 Bxf6 7.Nf3 Nd7**



[FEN "rnbqkb1r/ppp1pppp/5n2/3p4/4P3/2N2N2/PPPP1PPP/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 3"]

Now it is up to White to either cramp Black or to start a ferocious attack on the black king. At the same time Black will try to extend control over his half open d-file. These are the goals that each side will try to meet. Unfortunately, for the rest of the game, it is almost as if this position is forgotten as the moves are analyzed.

Davies's summary includes a short repertoire based on the bulk of the DVD, but this just provides you with suggestions to play logical positional chess instead of memorizing theory. For example, to play on the c-file, advance your queenside pawns, attack White's weakened d-pawn against white's kingside pawn storm.

For what he is attempting to do Davies does a fair job. However, most of the information contained herein is already well known to the seasoned player of the French, so this would be most useful to intermediate players.

My assessment of this DVD: ❖❖

Order *French Defense Strategy*

by Nigel Davies

The Queen's Gambit Accepted, by Valeri Lilov, Running time: four hours, twenty-three minutes

I had never heard of Valeri Lilov before watching this DVD. According to the product packaging, "FM Valeri Lilov also known as Tiger Lilov is ... one of the most famous and quality online chess coaches that you will see on virtually all major chess websites on the internet." When I searched through his games in [MegaBase 2010](#), I discovered his rating to be around 2400. However, I became a bit skeptical when I saw that he has played very few rated games in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Still, after watching this DVD, I have to say that he has a warm and friendly teaching style that will appeal to the target audience of this DVD. It is best suited for those who are first learning this opening or rated lower than 1800. His commentary is adequate but simplistic, which is fine for this audience.



The contents are as follows:

- 01: Intro
- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4
- 02: Variations; 3.Nc3 and 3.Qa4 Alterman-Raetsky
- 03: Variation 3.e3 Short-Bareev
- 04: Variation 3.e3 Nc6 4.d5 Volkov-Ibramibov
- 05: Variation 3.e4 Nc6 4.Nf3 Yakovich-Kharlov
- 06: Variation 3.e4 Nf6 Plan with Nc6 Petursson-Anand
- 07: Variation 3.e4 Nf6 Plan with Nb6 Volkov-Mihhalchison
- 08: Variation 3.e4 c5 Gelfand-Anand
- 09: Variation 3.e4 e5 4.Nf3 Bb4 Van Wely-Azmaiparashvili
- 10: Variation 3.e4 e5 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Bxc4 Nc6 Karpov-Anand
- 11: Variation 3.e4 e5 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Bxc4 Bb4 Vyzmanavin-Rublevsky
- 12: Variation 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Kasparov-Petrosian
- 13: Variation 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Qa4 Ljubojevic-Anand
- 14: Variation 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Kasparov-Timman
- 15: Variation 4.e3 Bf4 Antunes-Miles
- 16: Variation 4.e3 e6 Classical Line Ulibin-Raetsky
- 17: Variation 4.e3 e6 classical line with a6 Botvinnik-Petrosian
- 18: Variation 4.e3 e6 classical line with a6 II Jussupow-Anand
- 19: Variation 4.e3 e6 classical line with a6 III Petrosian-Smyslov
- 20: Model Game I Lukov-Dlugy
- 21: Model game II Leitao-Ponomariov
- 22: Outro

As you can see, this seems like a complete presentation of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. When I began viewing the Alterman-Raetsky clip, where the acceptable but less played 3.Nc3 was met by 3...a6, and found that Lilov spent about twenty minutes on the first ten moves, my interest was piqued. In fact, because of the opening and the quality of his annotation I include it here.

Alterman, Boris (2600) – Raetsky, Alexander (2465)

Rostov on Don op 1993

Queen's Gambit Accepted [D20]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nc3

3.Qa4+ Nd7 4.e4 c6 5.Qxc4 e5 6.Nf3 exd4 7.Qxd4 (7.Nxd4 Ne5 8.Qc3 Nf6) 7...Ngf6 8.Bc4 Bc5 9.Qd3 Qe7.

move, such as "dxc4," he does not say "d takes c4," rather he says "d ex to c4." Four hours of listening to this was bothersome to me. Moreover, he does not use any recent games, the latest being from 2001. Even his model game with Max Dlugy is from 1989. If you are looking for new ideas in this opening, you will not find it on this DVD.

Nevertheless, Lilov is very thorough in the games that he did choose for this DVD. The DVD will help the beginner who is new to chess and is looking for an opening to play. For this audience, many of his annotations border on excellent.

My assessment of this DVD: 

**[Order](#) *The Queen's Gambit Accepted*
by Valeri Lilov**

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