



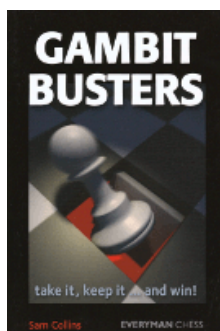
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Reviewed this Month

*Beating 1 e4 e5*  
by John Emms

*Understanding the Marshall Attack*  
by David Vigorito

*Black Repertoire against 1 e4, Vol. 1:  
The Marshall Attack (DVD)*  
by Jan Gustafsson

*Black Repertoire against 1 e4, Vol. 2:  
The Open Games (DVD)*  
by Jan Gustafsson

*Killer French Defence:  
Advanced and Tarrasch Variations (DVD)*  
by Simon Williams

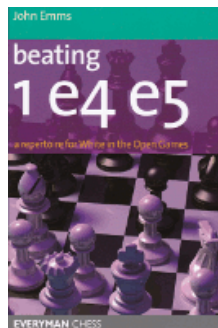
*Killer French Defence:  
Winawer, Exchange, KIA & Other Possibilities  
(DVD)*  
by Simon Williams

Between Beatings and Killers

This month's column covers an interesting mix of openings, from the mundane Italian and Bishop Games to the very sharp Marshall Attack to the French Defense. What all the products have in common is that they are all very good and enjoyable. I hope you have a happy and healthy new year!

*Beating 1 e4 e5* by John Emms, Everyman Chess 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 223pp. \$26.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$20.95)

For a while it seemed that the commissioning editor at Everyman Chess, English grandmaster John Emms, focused on editing books and contributing to the *Dangerous Weapons* series, but with this book he is back in the environment where he first made a name for himself – writing opening monographs. He has previously written *Play the Open Games as Black* featuring a black repertoire after 1 e4 e5, and *Attacking with 1 e4* where he also advocated the Bishop's Game after 1 e4 e5, which is a good transpositional tool to the Italian Game that prevents the Two Knights Game.



The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (4 pages)
- Italian Game: Modern Variation (Part I) (40 pages)
- Italian Game: Modern Variation (Part II) (31 pages)
- Italian Game: Classical Main Line (44 pages)

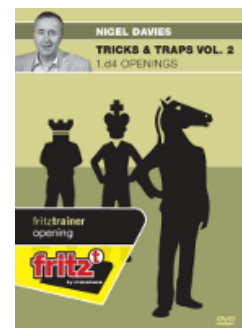
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*Complete c3 Sicilian*  
by Evgeny Sveshnikov



*How to Play Against 1.d4*  
by Richard Palliser



*Tricks & Traps Vol. 2*  
by Nigel Davies

- Italian Game: Two Knight Defence (38 pages)
- Italian Game: Other Lines (13 pages)
- Bishop's Opening (44 pages)
- Index of Variations (3 pages)
- Index of Games (2 pages)

According to the back cover blurb, "The lines he recommends are built upon a sound yet aggressive system of development which can be deployed against virtually every Black defence. The emphasis is firmly on understanding and executing key positional and tactical ideas, rather than the arduous process of memorizing theory."


As with other Emms books, you get a very thorough presentation of the material that delivers a nuanced view of the situation, meaning that you don't get a one-sided presentation of how to beat your opponent to pulp, because in practical chess terms that is simply not realistic. Instead, you are shown how to effectively deal with each set-up from Black, along with what happens if White doesn't play accurately. In fact, some of the main games and several of the comments to the main games show white players being routed who were a little too cavalier in regards to development and creating premature weaknesses in front of their king.

The presentation is based around forty-six main games with plenty of material included in the notes. This is chiefly to be found in the first part of the games; thus, leaving the latter part of the games with sparser annotations.

In general the book has a very good balance between games, analysis, and explanatory prose. The latter is of Emms's usual high standards, which by the way can be said about the entire book.

While the topics covered, the Italian Game and the Bishop's Game, are not the most exciting openings, they are popular at club level and even employed at grandmaster level by Tiviakov and Emms himself. Emms definitely succeeds in his task of presenting a viable repertoire for White in these openings. White can aim at getting out of the opening with an edge or better.

For players rated 1600 and up, this book is very good indeed.

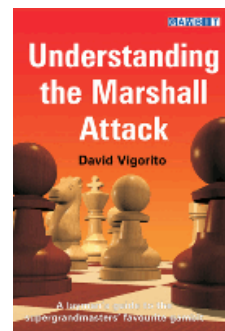
**My assessment of this book:** 

**Order [Beating 1 e4 e5](#)**

by John Emms

*Understanding the Marshall Attack* by David Vigorito, Gambit Publications 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 191pp. \$23.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$19.95)

While the Marshall Attack is one of Black's sharpest responses to the Spanish Opening, it has come to be considered a solid choice for Black to equalize. Nowadays the opening is much more refined than when it was first introduced by the American grandmaster Frank Marshall, and it is included in the repertoires of countless top players. Vigorito names the following impressive list in the introduction: "Anand, Kramnik, Ivanchuk, Leko, Adams, Kamsky, Bacrot, Svidler, Short, Grishchuk, Shirov, Ponomarev, Yakovenko, Beliavsky, Harikrishna, Kasimdzhanov, Akopian, I. Sokolov, Khalifman and especially Aronian." It is also noteworthy that Kasparov normally didn't allow the Marshall Attack in any of his games, though he never played it himself either.



Back in [September 2009](#), we reviewed [Fighting the Ruy Lopez](#) (Everyman Chess 2009) by grandmaster Milos Pavlovic, who had played the Marshall

rather extensively. The same can be said about Gustafsson, the author of the DVD reviewed below. However, this cannot be said of international master Vigorito. Still, he is an excellent author who has proven his ability to take on an enormous topic and present it in a digestible format. See, for instance, [Chess Explained: The Main Line Semi-Slav](#) (Gambit Publications 2009), which was reviewed in this column in [June 2009](#).


The material is divided as follows:

- Symbols/Dedication/Acknowledgements/Bibliography (1 pages)
- Introduction (5 pages)
- Recommendations (2 pages)
- Typical Ideas in the Marshall Attack (8 pages)
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0
- Part 1: Main Lines with 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6 12 d4 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4 14 g3 Qh3
- Spassky Variation (11 pages)
- Old Main Line: 18...f5/18...bxa4 (20 pages)
- 15 Be3: Other Lines (23 pages)
- Modern Variation: 15 Re4 (18 pages)
- Part 2: Other Lines after 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6
- Refined Rook Lift: 12 d3 (16 pages)
- Elite Equalizer: 12 d3 Bd6 13 Re1 Bf5 (12 pages)
- Early Deviations (17 pages)
- Part 3: Anti-Marshall
- Anti-Marshall: 8 a4 (18 pages)
- Anti-Marshall: 8 h3 (15 pages)
- Other Anti-Marshall Lines (20 pages)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)

For an opening as complex and massive as the Marshall Attack, the above looks like a rather bare-bones breakdown of the material, but this is hardly the case. He has cut many of the junk variations that are not relevant for the purposes of this book: lines such as 9...e4, 11...Nf6, and 11...Bb7. The same goes for several of the lines in the Anti-Marshall chapter, where the material had been discussed in great detail in [The Ruy Lopez: A Guide for Black](#) by Sverre Johnsen and Leif Johannessen (Gambit Publications 2007). It seems surprising that they chose to refer the reader to a three-year old book, but that is their choice.

Vigorito contributes a great deal of original analysis and improvements over existing theory, but one gets the impression that he doesn't write with the same intensity and understanding as Pavlovic and Gustafsson. Having played the positions themselves against top opposition, they have a better feel for what works and how to make the opponent uncomfortable. This is especially evident in the chapter on recommendations, which is often quite unspecific. Also, lesser lines frequently go without comment or are not highlighted as interesting options. If Vigorito had more experience with the opening, he could probably explain why these lines have been ignored, but it goes unsaid.

Nevertheless, Vigorito does admirably well in his efforts to explain typical plans, tactics, and strategies for both sides. This book is largely for an audience rated from 2000, or more likely 2200, and upwards. The lines are long, complicated, and often nearly impossible to understand, even with Vigorito as a guide. By itself this book is difficult to work with because it gives relatively little guidance in regards to repertoire choices. However, if you combine it with the below DVD by Gustafsson, you may have a winning combination.

**My assessment of this book:** 

**Order [Understanding the Marshall Attack](#)**

by David Vigorito

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*Black Repertoire against 1 e4, Vol. 1: The Marshall Attack* by Jan Gustafsson, ChessBase GmbH 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, DVD, Running Time: 3 hours 45 minutes, \$38.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$32.95)

German grandmaster Jan Gustafsson is one of the top experts on the Marshall in top-level chess nowadays. With a rating of 2646 (at the time of production) and having worked with former world championship challenger Peter Leko, he is a very strong player with a reputation as a theoretician and analyst. Aside from this, it emerges on the DVD that he has a tremendous sense of humor, enabling him to make a rather entertaining presentation from the countless long lines in the Marshall Attack.



Gustafsson plays down the fact that the lines are long and complicated, and the need to understand the nuances to a very large degree, by saying that he himself can't remember everything and that it has never been a problem, even when playing the Marshall against 2600-2700 opposition.

Gustafsson's English is more or less flawless. He speaks clearly and confidently and peppers the presentation with humorous quips. One example is "It is now 4 a.m. in the ChessBase headquarters, so it is the last video for tonight before they let me sleep in corner for two hours. So you will be able to tell that in the next video I might be wearing different clothes if I have to change tomorrow in the morning."

The material is divided as follows:

- Intro
- Marshallattack: [sic]
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 BLb3 [sic] 0-0 8 c3 d5
- Intro
- Old Main Linee [sic] 15 Be3
- 15 Re4 g5 16 Qf3 and 16 Qe2
- 15 Re4 and 16 Qf1
- 15 Qe2
- 12 d3
- 12 Re1 and 13 g3
- Marshall Sidelines
- Antimarshall: [sic]
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 0-0
- Antimarshall [sic] intro
- 8 h3 Bb7 9 d3 d5
- 8 h3 Bb7 9 d3 d6 10 a4 and 10 c3
- 8 h3 Bb7 9 d3 d6 10 a3
- 8 a4 b4 9 d4 and 9 a5
- 8 a4 b4 9 d3
- 8 d4
- Antimarshall [sic] Sidelines

The material is mostly for players with an ELO of 1900 or more. It is an unnecessary investment of time for weaker players to spend countless hours trying to understand and memorize lines where the theory doesn't end until move thirty or beyond. Moreover, the most significant developments have happened in recent years, and this can make it difficult for the average player to navigate the theory without losing sight of the overall situation.

Nevertheless, Gustafsson makes the presentation easy to follow by not overloading the viewer with too many lines: just enough to make the viewer feel comfortable that not too much is left unsaid. It seems by Gustafsson's casual attitude that he is making the entire presentation from memory. His recommendations, and the fact that he only discusses the lines relevant to the proposed repertoire, makes the viewer's task somewhat more manageable.

Gustafsson delivers a few, but very high quality novelties that will definitely

make Black's life easier. He also provides additional insight to why he considers certain lines to be less attractive. Should the viewer need a deeper knowledge of the theory of the Marshall than what Gustafsson discusses, then additional theory and analysis is provided in the games section on the DVD.

The prospective student will be well served by investing in both this DVD and the Vigorito book reviewed above to have both Gustafsson's repertoire guidance and the book's larger volume of theory. Before we conclude, I want to present a game where Gustafsson beats the highest-rated German player down with a heavy Marshall stick. Gustafsson admits that the entire game came from home preparation, but that doesn't make it any less stunning. The annotations are those by Gustafsson from the brand new Mega Database 2011 to which I expect to return in the February column.

**Naiditsch, Arkadij (2654) – Gustafsson, Jan (2588)**

EU-ch 8th Dresden (8), 11.04.2007

It feels a little silly to annotate a game in which I didn't make a single move on my own, just following my preparation all the way. It also might look like the only games I'm ever giving comments on are my wins against Naiditsch. Its nothing personal, he just happens to be the only decent player I beat once in a while! And since this game was crucial for me qualifying for the World cup and is sort of pretty too, I hope the reader will forgive me for my lack of creativity over the board.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/2ppbppp/p1n2n2/1p2p3/4P3/1B3N2/PPPP1PPP/RNBQR1K1 w - - 0 8"]

[CH: This is the starting position of this DVD]

No surprises so far. I've hardly been playing anything but the Marshall recently, and whilst Arkadij has tried the Italian or the exchange Spanish once in a while, he also sticks to the mine line this time.

**8.c3**

Allowing the Marshall! Few players have dared to enter it in the last games I've seen, and personally I'd just be way to afraid to get checkmated as White too. Then again, the alternatives 8.h3 and 8.a4 don't seem to offer that much either, so this is obviously the critical choice.

**8...d5**

No more chickening out!

**9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxe5 Nxe5 11.Rxe5 c6**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/4bPPP/p1p5/1p1nR3/8/1BP5/PP1P1PPP/RNBQ2K1 w - - 0 12"]

[CH: Note that this is the only version of the Marshall Attack that is covered on the DVD. Two alternatives are Marshall's original choice, the dubious 11...Nf6?!, and the interesting, but still rather rare 11...Bb7.]

### 12.Re1

Not the main line, but White reserves the right to transpose of course. 12.d4 Bd6 13.Re1 Qh4 14.g3 Qh3 15.Be3 Bg4 16.Qd3 Rae8 17.Nd2 Re6 18.Qf1!? Qh5 19.f3 was the way Kramnik beat Aronian in their recent match and might become the new fashion?

### 12...Bd6 13.g3

This is a clever move order actually. Whites point is that after the normal 13...Qd7, he goes 14.d3! Qh3 15.Re4, tricking Black into a slightly unfavourable line. So we need another way...

### 13...Bf5!

13...Bh3 was my choice against Nisipeanu, but I wasn't too happy with it after the accurate 14. d3!.

### 14.d4 Qd7

From just looking at the position, it feels like Black should have enough play here. However, looks mean little nowadays, so I was basically happy to (accidentally) be very familiar with this variation...

### 15.Be3 Rae8 16.Nd2 Bg4 17.Qb1 Bf5



[FEN "4rrk1/3q1ppp/p1pb4/1p1n1b2/3P4/1BP1B1P1/PP1N1P1P/RQ2R1K1 w - - 0 18"]

So far were following some heavyweight games from the likes of Anand and Aronian. Whites next move is when it really becomes interesting.

### 18.Bc2?

This move was recommended in Informant some time ago, giving some analysis claiming that White is much better here. This matter came to my attention when GM Gyimesi wrote me a "panic" email about this line. We had

studied the Marshall together some time ago and I guess I got lucky he brought this to my attention , as I actually had to have a look at it and managed to find a pretty convincing recipe. I guess we won't see much of 18. Bc2 after this game anymore, as it might be already the losing mistake! 18. Qc1 is the main line, when Black has a choice between 18...h5 (18...Re7; 18...Re6 all of which seem to offer fair compensation.)

### 18...Bxc2 19.Qxc2 f5

At this point I already knew there was quite a high chance I was gonna checkmate him in a couple of moves. So I became sort of nervous and starting wondering if I should spend some time acting or just play the moves quickly. I went for an intermediate approach, taking some time, but not a lot. Cause you never know what happens, I might need the time later... I also felt this was a pretty good training for my poker face, something I definitely gotta work on.

### 20.c4?

This is White's point. 20.Nf3 is better, but hardly something to write home about after ... f4.

### 20...bxc4!N

A fairly obvious novelty. Earlier, 20...Nf6 was played, giving White an edge after 21.Bg5.

### 21.Nxc4 f4 22.Bd2 f3

This is the first move not mentioned in Chess Informant. Again its pretty obvious, but the key is the next move. Nowadays engines spot it very quickly, but when I was looking at it some two years ago, it actually required some brain power... 22...Bc7 23.Rxe8 Rxe8 24.Qd3+/-.

### 23.Qd3



[FEN "4rrk1/3q2pp/p1pb4/3n4/2NP4/3Q1pP1/PP1B1P1P/R3R1K1 b - - 0 23"]

23.Kh1 Qh3 24.Rg1 Re2 25.Raf1 Bxg3-+.

[CH: Here Gustafsson gives the viewer a few seconds to find the winning combination – see if you can spot the combination before moving on.]

### 23...Re2!

This is the key. Black blocks the white queen on her way to f1 and manages to get to the king. I was very happy when I found this idea, but it turned out I didn't need to. Preparing for the game, I followed my routine of visiting my friend Peter Heine Nielsen to annoy him with question about the latest theory developments. He said: "Well there is this one Marshall line you should know about, 18.Bc2. " And I was happy to replay "Oh, that doesn't work, Re2 and mate" – "OK, no more questions". I'm glad I actually knew about it beforehand, else I would owe Peter even more payback for opening ideas then I do already. And since coaching him in Poker hasn't yet netted the results I was hoping for, I'm running out of ideas how to pay him back...


## 24.Rxe2 Qh3 25.Ne3

After this its curtains immediately. 25.Qxf3 Rxf3 26.Nxd6 Nf6 27.Rae1 h6 (27...Ng4?! 28.Re8+ Rf8 29.Rxf8+ Kxf8 30.Re8#) 28.Re3 Rxe3 29.fxe3 (29. Bxe3 Ng4 30.Nc4 Nxe2 31.Ne5 g5 32.g4 h5 33.gxh5 g4) 29...Ng4 30.Re2 Nxe2 31.Rxe2 Qxe2 32.Rg2 Qxd6 is fairly hopeless for White too, though.

## 25...Rf4! 0-1

A pretty finale. I was obviously hoping for the beauty prize sacrificing both my rooks and all, but OK, Im afraid requirements are one makes a move of his own for that it seems. Something I could avoid doing in the last five rounds in Dresden. Silly game, this chess. Oh wait, maybe its just me? 25... Rf4 26.Qxa6 (26.gxf4 Bxf4) 26...Rh4 27.Qa8+ (27.Qc8+ Qxc8!) 27...Kf7 28. Qe8+ Kxe8 29.Ng2+ fxe2 30.Nxe4 avoids the mate, but isn't really worth playing on.; 25...Rf6? 26.Qe4.

The DVD is mainly for an audience of 1900 and above, but even very strong players will be able to benefit from the guidance and analysis provided.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order [Black Repertoire against 1.e4, Vol. 1:  
The Marshall Attack \(DVD\)](#)

by Jan Gustafsson

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*Black Repertoire against 1 e4, Vol.2: The Open Games* by Jan Gustafsson, ChessBase GmbH 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, DVD, Running Time: 5 hours 34 minutes, \$36.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$30.95)

I just received this DVD shortly before deadline, but I am happy to report that the level of chess guidance, humor, and everything else continues uninterrupted on this volume.

The material is divided as follows:

- Intro
- Spanish 6 d3
- Spanish 5 d3
- Spanish 5/6 Qe2
- Spanish 6 Bxc6/6 d4
- Spanish Exchange Variation
- Italian Game: Guico [*sic*] Piano
- Italian Game: Evans Game
- Italian sidelines
- Scotch
- Scotch Four Knights: 4 d4
- Spanish Four Knights: 4 Bb5
- Four Knights sidelines
- Ponziani
- Bishop's Game
- Vienna Game
- King's Gambit 3 Nf3
- King's Gambit sidelines
- Center Game




This DVD is nearly two hours longer than volume one, which makes it a tremendous value for the money. Moreover, this DVD will appeal to a much wider audience than volume one. They can be enjoyed independently, though I think most viewers will benefit from buying both.

The segments I looked at all had excellent recommendations to White's options, not all of them the most common ones, but usually the choices

Gustafsson uses himself as black, which should add an additional stamp of approval. He looks at each line critically enough to make you feel confident that you have all the knowledge that you need in order to play the recommended lines.

He does occasionally skate through the material a little too fast, but he warned about this at the beginning of the DVD. He recommends if you are not sure about something, then pause the DVD and go over it yourself. This will also enable you to understand the material even better.

As with volume one, I find the material and the presentation to be first class and a true joy to watch. You will learn a lot from this DVD and your opening repertoire will be much stronger by using Gustafsson's recommendations.

**My assessment of this DVD: **

**Order [Black Repertoire against 1.e4, Vol. 2: Open Games \(DVD\)](#)  
by Jan Gustafsson**

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*Killer French Defence: Advanced and Tarrasch Variations* by Simon Williams, Chesscube.com 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, DVD, Running Time: 4 hours 30 minutes, \$29.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$24.95)

We already know English grandmaster Simon Williams from his DVD *The Killer Dutch*, which was reviewed in the June 2010 column. I quite enjoyed his work on the Dutch; it was entertaining, instructive, and informative. With the French being a considerably larger topic than the Dutch, it evidently needed two DVDs to present the material. This first one covers the Advance Variation (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5) and the Tarrasch Variation (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2).




The contents are divided into twenty-eight segments, which seems a little excessive to list. However, the material is divided by introductions to each line, introductory games to each line, and then theoretical segments.

Williams has played the French as far back as I can remember and knows the opening incredibly well. In addition, he has a natural flow to his presentation that makes it a pleasure to watch. He explains the ideas of the individual lines, pawn structures, and tactical points extremely well. This will help the viewer to take up these lines with a great deal of confidence. The intended audience is around 1500 to 2000 in rating, but even players outside this range will be able to benefit from it.

The DVD is easy to navigate to find the lines you want, just as with the scene finder function on any normal movie DVD. It would have been nice to have the database files available with the games included in the presentation, along with additional theoretical material, but that is sadly not available. Therefore, for the stronger part of the intended audience, it is recommended to study additional material on the lines covered on the DVD, something that Williams himself suggests as well. He also advises that the viewer study the games of key players of a particular line to see which plans they employ in their games and how they approach the variation.

I found the presentation very good and instructive. Williams plays out the moves on a regular board (although it is difficult to follow the moves at times) with a computer generated board on screen to the left of him. Though I did notice that the contrast to the background seemed a bit off.

Whether you play the French or wish to, this DVD is a good place to start and is an excellent value for the money spent.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

**Order [Killer French Defence, Part One \(DVD\)](#)**

by Simon Williams

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*Killer French Defence: Winawer, Exchange, KIA & Other Possibilities* by Simon Williams, Chesscube.com 2010, Figurine Algebraic Notation, DVD, Running Time: 5 hours, \$29.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$24.95)


As mentioned above, this DVD accompanies the volume on the Advance and Tarrasch Variations. It is identical in terms of production values and presentation style, though it is slightly longer and offers forty-one segments in total.



Of particular importance is the coverage of the Winawer Variation: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4. Williams recommends some seriously sharp stuff in the main line, which will not be to everybody's liking. The problem in the French Winawer is that you either play something critical that demands some degree of understanding and theoretical knowledge or something that is slightly rubbish.

Unlike many other DVDs, Williams spends a considerable amount of time explaining pawn structure, typical ideas, weak squares, and tactics of all kinds. All of which contributes to the viewer's improved understanding of the opening and the material at hand.

Once again, if you play the French or are just thinking about it, this is a set of DVDs you should certainly consider.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

**Order [Killer French Defence, Part Two \(DVD\)](#)**

by Simon Williams

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