

THE SICILIAN TAIMANOV: MOVE BY MOVE BY JOHN EMMS



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John Emms

The Sicilian Taimanov

move by move

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Review

If I were a player considering the Sicilian Defense and picked up John Emms' book, **The Sicilian Taimanov**, I'd start playing it the next day.

- Chess Life

I enjoy Emms' style in this book. There is a combination of a positive attitude towards the Taimanov and a confident voice behind the moves. This makes playing the line seem like a very pleasant possibility. I recommend this book to anyone thinking about going into a Sicilian full time, but doesn't want to be burdened with lots of heavy theory.

- NM Bill McGeary

From the Back Cover

This new series provides an ideal platform to study chess openings. By continually challenging the reader to answer probing questions throughout the book, the Move by Move format greatly encourages the learning and practising of vital skills just as much as the traditional assimilation of opening knowledge. Carefully selected questions and answers are designed to keep you actively involved and allow you to monitor your progress as you learn. This is an excellent way to study any chess opening and at the same time improve your general chess skills and knowledge. In this book, John Emms examines his favourite Sicilian variation, which is one of Black's most reliable answers to 1 e4. He shares his knowledge from over 15 years studying and playing the Sicilian Taimanov at grandmaster level, examines the opening from both sides of the board and offers answers to the all the key questions. *Essential guidance and training in the Sicilian*Utilizes an ideal approach to opening study*Includes a Sicilian Taimanov repertoire for Black

About the Author

John Emms is a Grandmaster and has captained the English Team at two Chess Olympiads. He's an experienced coach who has worked with many top players, including World Championship finalist Michael Adams. He's also a highly respected chess writer, with many outstanding works to his name.

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Most helpful customer reviews

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent introduction to this Sicilian variation

By Joshua Newsham

Opening books are harder to review than, say, middlegame and endgame books. I've seen many lauded opening manuals appear, only to be exposed as either full of errors (or perhaps one critical error that makes the entire repertoire dubious), or basically rip-offs (database dumps, copying earlier material without attribution, etc.). It takes a while for the public to know for sure if an opening book is quality.

Emms' Sicilian Taimanov: Move by Move interested me because I had never played the Taimanov, but had played the Paulsen/Kan and Scheveningen lines, and wanted to check out this "cousin" variation.

So far, I am completely impressed. The "Question and Answer" format is generally well used - the answers were good punctuations; they helped me to see that it was an important moment in the opening or game, and to take special notice.

Emms has played this opening for years, and clearly teaches us the thematic ideas of this line (in one fairly popular line, Black early on swaps his Queen and a Pawn for 3 minor pieces - a nice imbalance from which to outplay weaker or less prepared players).

If you are looking for a new, or a first, Sicilian to play as Black, the Taimanov seems ideal - much less theory than the Najdorf or Dragon, with many of the themes being typical to the "e6 Sicilians". If you master the Taimanov, I expect you will do at least as well as if you studied a more theoretical Sicilian (I am not talking about IM-GM level play, of course), and your "upkeep" should be easier - fewer 2700s playing your opening means less new material to have to find and digest.

If you care, my current USCF rating is 2159. Good luck in your Sicilian adventures!

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

An Outstanding and Comprehensive Review of the Taimanov!

By Cybertal

John Emms is a well known chess author, with numerous awards and accolades for the quality of his efforts. One of his latest efforts, The Sicilian Taimanov - Move By Move, easily matches the quality of his previous writings.

I'm a longtime Sicilian player, but wanted to give up the Najdorf for something quieter. Knowing virtually

nothing about the Taimanov, this book was an outstanding choice not only to grasp the thematic basics of the variation but to start on some of the finer theoretical points of the opening. Emms explains moves and concepts in a manner that I could easily imagine a 1500 grasping without much effort. The Taimanov has several themes that run throughout its variations: well timed ...h5s for counterplay/knight squares, dark square control through pieces rather than pawns, flexibility in placing the dark squared bishop and so forth. Emms repeatedly points out these themes throughout the different lines, explaining when different ideas are appropriate. Instead of simply spewing out the moves and expecting rote memorization, Emms constantly gives thematic signposts that aid in a deeper understanding of the moves.

As happy as this book would make a fairly modestly rated player, this book also made me quite happy (2350 USCF). Emms provides some real theoretical meat here, with serious analysis given of not only the main moves but interesting alternatives that might give Black more dynamic play. Emms provides this analysis with well parsed moves and insightful explanations - the fact that Emms is a longtime Taimanov player is quite evident, as his analysis isn't just vomited up from the bowels of the latest and greatest computer engine. Emms is also an outstanding writer. His words are never used clumsily, and always provide insight with occasional wit.

This book will provide outstanding instruction for even low rated players who are looking for a solid Sicilian variation that won't be threatened by the latest Houdini generated novelty at move 25. Emms makes this easily navigable to low rated players and still makes it theoretically relevant to higher rated players.

Five out of five stars, highly recommended!

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

A comprehensive, well-explained repertoire for meeting the open Sicilian
By Silver Moose

I used to play the Najdorf but decided to give it up because, while I enjoyed the complicated strategical play, I felt that many variations were so tactical and theoretical that victory would go to the best memory, not the best chessplayer. The Taimanov is a more solid, less theoretical, alternative to the Najdorf that retains the rich, positional play I enjoy in the open Sicilian.

I agree with the previous reviews regarding the very high quality of this book. I had never played the Taimanov before reading this book, but Emms clearly explains all of the strategical and tactical concepts of this opening. Emms's repertoire choices are excellent, and he provides coverage of all significant White choices after 4. ...Nc6. Emms is also flexible: in many cases Emms provides Black more than one alternative to a White strategy, and against one early White deviation, Emms recommends a variation of the Sicilian four knights as providing better play than a Taimanov-style setup.

An important feature of this book is that there are no holes in the repertoire. This book is written in a game format, and sometimes authors writing in this format neglect to consider important variations. This can't be said of Emms. For about the first 80% of the book, I studied along with a database to see whether there were any popular White moves that Emms failed to consider. I did not find this to be the case even once.

This may be the best opening book I have ever read, although Daniel King's old *Winning with the Najdorf* also impressed me greatly.

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