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Michael Basman

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Michael Basman : The New st George (Cadogan Chess Bridge Books) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New st George (Cadogan Chess Bridge Books):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great Intro to the St GeorgeBy x1134xThis book is a good introductory read to get you familiar with playing the St George defense seriously.Pros: Many master level games, and its an updated revision of "play the st george" originally by Basman. It contains many of his conclusions after playing the opening at the master level for over a decade. Most lines humans play against it are covered. He does introduce the concept of playing this as a "universal" opening, and playing the system as white. There are good discussions of rook exchange positions, and their analysis under the Owen's defense (1. .. b6) and how they are better off when using the St. George over the refuted Owen's defense.Cons: He uses the move 1. .. e6, rather than the traditional St. George move order of 1. .. a6 2. .. b5. When playing this opening you should play 1. .. b5 for all of white's first moves except 1. e3, e4, c4, Nc3 or Na3, and 1. .. a6 for the moves just listed for white. Playing 1. .. e6 for black can allow white to play much more powerful moves, and allows him to steer you toward french defense style positions where he may be much more prepared. Basman also does not discuss the concept of giving up a tempo with 1. b3 . . 2. b4 (or later c2-c3-c4)to play the opening as white with a perfect mirror of the black positions, so you only have to learn one opening for both white and black against king's pawn openings or queen's pawn openings by your opponent. This book was written over 20 years ago now, and the new chess engines for computers have weighed in and found that Tony Miles' handling of the opening (avoiding an early e6) is a better way to handle the opening.If handled correctly, the St. George defense

can severely limit the scope of white's kingside bishop, and unless white knows how to play like a computer and abandons some commonly held opening "scripture", they'll find their pawn center too exposed to counter attack. I like the St George defense because when you don't give white any targets at all to attack, the initiative gets transferred over to black quite quickly. For example: 1.e4 a6, 2. d4 b5, 3. Nf3 Bb7, and white is already having to defend his e4 pawn. 4. Bd3 Nf6 and black continues to pile on the pressure at e4, dictating that white again move to defend. Since white is on the defensive then, the lines are limited and easier to study. I'd definitely recommend this book since there's so little writing about the St George available, there's much to be learned from it. Likewise its very unlikely that your opponent even accomplished players are even remotely prepared for it, so that leaves you a leg up, rather than the leg down you'd be if you tried to tangle with them on their classical openings that they know better than you. If you're a young chess player, I'd recommend learning classical openings, you have plenty of time, if you're an older player looking for a system that will give you a sporting chance against players that have been memorizing classical openings since they were kids, I'd recommend using the St. George as your weapon. You get to take them out of their comfort zone at move one.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Confuse the opposition

By Bob Dickson

I'm not going to argue, as Basman does in his book, that the St. George is an altogether sound opening. Under tight scrutiny, it may not be. However, it is an exceptional opening for players of black who wish to draw opposing players onto unfamiliar ground. I do not believe the St. George is as quirky as its eccentric cousin, the Grob, which Basman also advocates for white in a different book. First off, the St. George is an opening for black, which means you are fighting just to gain equality, so why not complicate the issue with a unique defense? The positions created out of this opening are usually dynamic, and, depending on how white responds, may leave you walking a bit of a tightrope in some lines. The trade off is that you are most likely going to be playing a game that white is unfamiliar with. That's a huge advantage, especially in games with shorter time limits. The themes behind the opening are fundamental and easy to understand, and Basman does a good job of walking you through the possibilities. I have won many games with this fringe opening ... it works well against both the e4 and d4 openings. I've also been throttled by 2000+ players who had the time to pick apart some of the positional consolations the opening usually requires. Either way, it's a nice weapon to have in your arsenal for just the right opportunity ... great in blitz situations, for example! As an added benefit, studying this book will greatly improve your tactics, as the positions that ensue can be quite sharp.

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