

(Free download) The Berlin Defence

## The Berlin Defence

*Igor Lysyj, Roman Ovetchkin*  
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**Igor Lysyj, Roman Ovetchkin : The Berlin Defence** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Berlin Defence:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Excellent work on the Berlin Defense.By Jeffrey IvinsI can hardly add much to the previous review, which was very detailed and on target, but I will just add a few personal observations. This book is more up to date than the Cox book, The Berlin Wall, so you have more current theory, although the Cox book is from 2008, hardly outdated.This opening is good for those who don't wish to study tons of theory, but wish to play something sound. Theoretically, maybe the best reply to the Ruy Lopez is 3...a6, but that requires much more studying. With 3...Nf6, you have a sound alternative which gives you good winning chances without undue risk ( And I am fairly confident that when Quantum Computing figures out the whole game for us, 3...Nf6 will be shown to lead to a draw! Heck, maybe even 3...f5 is a draw with best play, who knows?) The Berlin Defense requires learning common themes and ideas, rather than specific forcing lines.I found that with this book, I have more of an understanding of how to play it. I knew a lot of things already from the Cox work, but Lysyj and Ovetchkin mention a lot more of the sidelines, which you will see from time to time, as I have found out. Someone who is well prepared in a flaky line may beat you if you are unprepared.So I won't rehash all that is good in this book. Read the previous review. I will just mention a couple of negatives. I found the layout a bit off putting. I didn't like the "Quick Repertoire", "step by step", and "complete games" idea. My problem is that the Quick Repertoire does not

explain much. Better to start out explaining the themes and ideas, then move onto complete games, then give concrete variations. I would recommend perhaps doing the Step by Step first, then play over the games, then use the Quick Repertoire to keep things fresh in your head after you have finished everything else. The only other problem is the translation. I did not even have to open the book to figure out that the translator was not a native English speaker. From the back cover: "He won many times the students' championships and the Russia Universiades" or : "He participated in the team of Russia which won the World Students' Championship in 2008." It doesn't get much better after you open the book, either, but that is not why we buy chess books, is it? It is not a big deal and still an excellent contribution to chess theory. 26 of 28 people found the following review helpful. Another great contribution to the Berlin Defense Literature By WuvMuffin I don't believe this book will replace "The Berlin Wall" by John Cox as the absolute work on the Berlin but is quite a great addition to use with "The Berlin Wall." "The Berlin Defence" does cover a variation (9. ... Ke8 followed up with 10. h3 h5) which was still in the experimental stages during, and even a little before John Cox's "The Berlin Wall" came out. John Cox only covered the other alternatives to 9. ... Ke8 such as 10. h3 a5, 10. h3 b6, and 10. h3 Bd7 and 10. h3 Ne7 but you will have to sort out the move orders and transpositions as well as consult the variation index as well since ... Bd7, ... Be7 and ... Ne7 are usually played on move 9. One thing I really liked about "The Berlin Wall" by Cox is that the book itself was just generally well written. It wasn't just a theory book, it was a book about understanding the heart of the opening itself with many instructive examples. "The Berlin Wall" covers possible end games in the first section of the book and another section on the various position elements and the scope and function of every individual piece. In the theory section John Cox was surprisingly neutral in his assessments of the main lines suggesting improvements and even places for possible improvements for both sides. Definitely the book to have for players who play both White and Black (only if White is intending to play the main line of course). Cox only covers the Anti-Berlin lines for Black but does suggest that the line 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nc3! might be an interesting try for a small White advantage but waiting for Black to play ... d6 which will be met by a Na4 claiming the Bishop pair. "The Berlin Defence" by Lysyj and Ovetchkin is quite interesting in it's own right and they do recommend many variations that John Cox does not recommend for Black in the Anti-Berlin and they provide the reader with a repertoire that is currently in vogue (10. h3 h5) being championed by Aronian, Kramnik, Bacrot, Kariakin, Naiditsch and many other elite players that have embraced the Berlin or this variation in general (I think Carlsen and Harikrishna still play 9. ... Bd7). If you want to see what Chess Stars covers in "The Berlin Defence" go to their website where they have a pdf for the table of contents. Instead of discussing what they will cover in this book, I would like to make a few comments on their repertoire choices. Against the Anti-Berlin they cover 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. c3 0-0 6. 0-0 d6 I find this interesting because against the Italian Game Lysyj and Ovetchkin recommend 6. ... d5! In "The Berlin Wall" John Cox recommends 6. d5 which is only being consistently played by Bacrot (I'm going to refer to 6. ... d5 in the Berlin as the Bacrot variation throughout this review) which has been scoring very well for him. In the line Italian Game line with 6. ... d5 that Lysyj and Ovetchkin recommend you will probably notice that if White immediately plays 7. exd5 Black can't take back with the Queen on d8 because of the "Italian" Bishop on c4 and White can increase pressure on Black's ... e5 pawn with Re1 and meeting Black's ... Bg4 with h3 and g4. Of course if White wins the pawn in the Italian Game Black gets some pretty active counterplay based on White's weak Kingside and somewhat cumbersome development on an open board. In the Bacrot variation Black has the simple 7. ... Qxd5 which not only protects the ... e5 but also has the d6 square if the Black Queen on d5 gets harassed by Bc4. When I received this book I was surprised that Lysyj and Ovetchkin didn't recommend the Bacrot variation which makes learning ideas in the variation quite integral with their 6. ... d5 Italian Game repertoire choice in "The Open Games for Black". The Black player has to learn the 7. Bg5 of the 4. d3 Anti-Berlin anyway because White can transpose into this line from 6. Bg5 which requires Black to play ... d6 anyway. Instead Lysyj and Ovetchkin recommend that Black meet 7. Nbd2 with 7. ... a6 which transposes into a Moeller but plays out like the main line Quiet Italian playing with Black playing for Nc6-e7-g6 and c6-d5. In the end both lines seem equally valid to me but my personal preference still leans towards Bacrot's line. Some might argue that Black has more chances to play for a win in the "Moeller" line compared to Bacrot's line due to having maintained a lot more "tension" in the position. I personally don't have a clue which line is better but I will say that what I do understand of Anti-Berlins in general is that Black's opening problems are not only linked with solving the main line but also finding winning chances in those Anti-Berlin lines. Of course trying to find winning chances in the Anti-Berlins is only of secondary importance, but being able to have winning chances in the sidelines makes having the Berlin as a Black defense to be a great practical weapon. As for 4. Qe2 Lysyj and Ovetchkin recommend that Black play 4. ... Bc5 instead of John Cox's 4. ... a6 5. Ba4 b5 6. Bb3 Be7 7. c3 0-0 8. 0-0 d5 transposing into the main line Worrall Attack. Again, I feel that it should be the readers choice but I play the Closed Spanish as well so playing the main line Worrall was easily my choice if I wanted to save studying time. So you get the impression that Lysyj and Ovetchkin are catering for purist practitioners of the Berlin Defense while John Cox's repertoire choices against certain Anti-Berlin lines are tributes to players that play the Marshall against the Ruy such as Hebden, Bacrot and of course Marshall himself by recommending lines where Black plays in "Marshall style." As for the Chess Stars signature format of "Quick Repertoire," "Step by Step" and "Complete Games" this opening to me seems to be a natural fit for

that format (the only other book I have in this format by Chess Stars is *The Sharpest Sicilian*). In a way, this format is basically a repertoire book in Informant monograph style. Very cool idea. The Quick Repertoire is a pretty self explanatory section (you know, learning the necessities and figuring out the rest over the board) and actually works well with the Berlin Defense due to how nightmarish and confusing it is to navigate around subtle move-orders and transpositions. In fact I would say encyclopedic knowledge of the opening moves in the Berlin won't help you as much as one would think (or move orders, transpositions and whatnot). It is better to just understand what happened in the first 13-16 moves and some model games, then use basic ideas of the first 13-16 moves as a logical base for further operations so that those ideas will eventually be realized later on (assuming that you or your opponent haven't blundered yet, of course, always consider deviating from your intended plan if your opponent or sometimes you blunder or your opponent's plan is faster and more efficient than yours (it's usually better to be principled unless it's wrong to be principled)). In this case you should realize that your plan after 9. Nc3 Ke8 10. h3 h5 is to 1. Exchange a set of rooks on the d-file. 2. Utilize h5 to clamp down the White's Kingside majority with an eventual h4 thus making Pg2 backward. 3. Develop the light-squared Bishop to ... e6 and meeting Nd4, Nf4 or Ng5 with ... Rh6. Play ... Be7 to cover the hole on g5 as well as keeping options open regarding an exchange of a set of Knights. Otherwise meet a Bg5 with ... Be7 and recapture on e7 with a Knight thus beginning a Knight tour to either g6 to increase pressure on e5, to d5 posting a influential Knight thus stimulating an exchange thus fixing your structure and giving you Queenside majority or back to f5. That list of ideas is quite superficial but is a frame of mind when picking up the Berlin for the first time. The main line Berlin is strangely meta in terms of understanding, and play compared to a lot of main line openings seems to be of specialized importance, so patience and practice is required to play and study this opening. Just keep it simple in the Berlin when you start out playing the Berlin and the rest will come with time. But a good reason to play the Berlin is that it teaches the practitioner when to transpose into an endgame (even with the Queens removed it is still a middle game) and when to maintain the tension. The Step by Step section is where they provide you with a deeper coverage of analysis to supplement your Quick Repertoire which is linked with the complete games section. There are many novelties for both sides, explanatory prose and insight here. Of course, this is a repertoire for Black. All novelties they've shared for White either end with Black being better or is unclear. Still, they've gone beyond just giving the Black pieces repairs but have found novelties for White which they have meticulously researched for repairs to their own novelties. Kind of a finding the absolute truth in a strange way, but far stranger as this is for an opening book. I remember reading the chapter on the Breyer variation in "The Easy Guide to the Ruy Lopez" by John Emms and he ended the main line with Black having equality. I'm not sure whom are more honest between Emms or Lysyj and Ovetchkin, but Emms is definitely honest in that speculative, "what's to come" sort of way forcing the reader to keep track of new games in that line. With Lysyj and Ovetchkin, I figured that the book was written by Lysyj but was proofread by Ovetchkin. Lysyj mostly plays 1. d4 so I better hope he spilled the beans! Then the last section is the Complete Games which works with the Berlin Defense beautifully. Here they present theoretically relevant lines as well as instructive games being played with that line (chances are was cited in the Step by Step section). The annotations omits theoretical discussion seeing as it was covered in the previous two sections by showing their reader themes, ideas, tactics and variations that have gone beyond theoretical relevance. Overall this book is quite awesome. If you play either side of the Berlin this book is a must have because John Cox's "The Berlin Wall" doesn't cover this variation (maybe it does cover this variation, but I'm too lazy to dig through the transpositions) and of course it is a readymade repertoire. If you want to play the Berlin as Black, it doesn't hurt to have both books (John Cox's book is like having two books in one, so just use the first part of the book and ignore his theoretical coverage if you'd like). If you only want to play the White side of this opening you can just get John Cox's book just for the first section if you're confident that your database skills will compensate for not having "The Berlin Defence" as a source to consult while preparing. If you need to know what lines to prepare for, this book will probably do more than just help while preparing; it will probably consume you (and hopefully convert you).

A thorough examination of the popular Berlin Defence (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nf6).