

## HOW TO BECOME A STRONG CHESSPLAYER

### THE OPENING

- 1.) Use a Stylistic Bias Sheet to determine which openings will suit you best as you form your repertoire.
- 2.) Have a definite opening repertoire.
- 3.) Stick with it - don't "hop around".
- 4.) Otherwise, you will not understand the typical middlegame pawn-structures that arise from standard openings.
- 5.) Study the opening repertoire that you do have very thoroughly.
- 6.) In casual, postal, e-mail, I.C.C., computer and blitz play, it is fine to look at other openings in order to avoid getting stale and "in a rut", but for your serious games it is essential to specialize, specialize, SPECIALIZE!
- 7.) Remember: if you have 100 hours to spend in study, it is far better to spend 25 hours each on 4 different lines than 4 hours each on 25 different lines.
- 8.) Specialization also facilitates analogous thinking which helps you to orient yourself in unfamiliar opening / early middlegame situations.
- 9.) There are vastly more books written on chess openings than you need to buy in order to become a very strong chessplayer; therefore, concentrate on books about your repertoire.
- 10.) The E.C.O. plus books on the specific variations in your opening repertoire are the best tools with which to develop your opening repertoire.
- 11.) Make sure that you consistently apply the 4 Basic Goals of the Opening:
  - a.) develop all your pieces off of their starting squares,
  - b.) control the center,
  - c.) castle early,
  - d.) connect your rooks.

## MIDDLEGAME-DYNAMIC FEATURES

- 1.) Dynamic features explained: they do change with an equal exchange of pieces.
- 2.) Basic books on combinations and calculation drills should in general, be studied before studying static features in great detail.
- 3.) Understand the basic definition of a combination.
- 4.) Understand the anatomy of a Combination.
- 5.) Learn The Compulsion Scale; what it is and how to use it.
- 6.) Definition of the Basic Tactical Devices.
- 7.) The best book on the Basic Tactical Devices is:  
Winning Chess by Chernev & Reinfeld.
- 8.) The best books on combinational themes classified by pieces are these:
  - a.) The Art of the Checkmate by Renaud & Kahn,
  - b.) The Basis of Combination in Chess by Du Mont and
  - c.) Tal's Winning Combinations by Tal & Khenkin.( Re: these 3 books, the definition of Batteries and Patterns should be explained ).
- 9.) Among the best books on combinational themes classified by sacrificial methods are:
  - a.) Test Your Chess I.Q. Books I and II by Livshitz, and
  - b.) Encyclopedia of Combinations by Chess Informant.( Note: These two books are essentially drill books with little text. )
- 10.) Two excellent books that cover a host of attacking ideas and techniques are:
  - a.) The Art of Attack in Chess by Vukovitch.
  - b.) The Modern Chess Sacrifice by Shamkovitch ( A good subtitle for this book would be: "How to get a pawn's worth of initiative in the opening"),

## MIDDLEGAME-STATIC FEATURES

- 1.) Static features defined: those elements of the game that tend to stay the same with an equal exchange of pieces.
- 2.) The Pachman series on middlegame static features is better than My System by Nimzovitch.
- 3.) Pawn Power in Chess by Kmoch is an important book in spite of its somewhat awkward nomenclature.
- 4.) Pawn Structure Chess by Soltis is also very good.
- 5.) The Middlegame in Chess - Static Features by Euwe and Kramer is outstanding.
- 6.) Think Like a Grandmaster by Kotov is a great classic.
- 7.) Play Like a Grandmaster also by Kotov is a very good book.
- 8.) Train Like a Grandmaster by Kotov however is terrible.
- 9.) Thoroughly understand the 6 Cases of the Classical Pawn Center.
- 10.) Thoroughly understand the 5 Basic Elements and Rules on Exchanging.
- 11.) Discuss the large Pawn Structure lecture; briefly enumerate types of same.
- 12.) Test Your Positional Play by Bellin and Ponzetto is really excellent.
- 13.) Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy by John Watson is world-class.
- 14.) Reassess Your Chess ( with workbook ) by Silman is very popular with many players.
- 15.) Winning Pawn Structures by Baburin provides the most comprehensive coverage of the very important isolated queen pawn structures.

## THE ENDGAME

- 1.) Essential Chess Endings Explained Move by Move by Silman is a very good book for inexperienced players.
- 2.) Chess Endings: Essential Knowledge by Averbakh is particularly useful for 1200-1600 rated players.
- 3.) Practical Chess Endings by Keres is the single best one-volume book on the endgame. It is particularly appropriate for players in the 1600-2000 strength range.
- 4.) Fundamental Chess Endings by Muller and Lamprecht is a close rival to Keres in quality.
- 5.) Just The Facts! by Krogius and Alburtt is a very good 1-volume general manual. It has fewer examples than the Keres or Muller books but it does have many useful G.P.'s.
- 6.) Grandmaster Secrets: Endings by Soltis is a humorous, frothy little endgame book with a number of useful tips.
- 7.) The Endgame Planning series of books by Shereshevsky are very good as far as they go, but these books are largely limited to endings that occur from a handful of very specific opening variations.
- 8.) The full, 5-volume Comprehensive Chess Endings series by Averbakh is extremely helpful in enabling a player to gain Master-level strength in the endgame.
- 9.) However, Secrets of Pawn Endings by Muller and Lamprecht, is even better than the Averbakh series book on pawn endings by Maizelis.
- 10.) Also, A Pocket Guide to Endgames by Hooper offers more useful practical tips for playing queen and pawn endgames than does the more encyclopedic book on queen endings in the Averbakh series.

## **GENERAL TRAINING, PSYCHOLOGY, ETC.**

- 1.) **The Inner Game of Chess** by Soltis deals heavily with the questions of calculation in practical tournament games.
- 2.) **The Seven Deadly Sins of Chess** by Rowson examines a number of chess “sins” that average players commonly make, although the lumping into 7 categories is rather stretched and artificial.
- 3.) **Chess for Tigers** by Simon Webb is a practical little book of modest depth that some intermediate club-level players have found useful.
- 4.) **Chess Psychology** by Krogus is a small but highly interesting book that deals with many issues of chess psychology. The section on time-pressure is the best ever published.
- 5.) The Dvoretsky series varies greatly in quality, with much of his material simply being detailed analysis of specific positions. This process often fails to produce any useful G.P.’s that can be applied to the rest of your game. However, Dvoretsky’s books still contain many interesting insights on how to improve your ability both to analyze and to plan.

### **GAME COLLECTIONS: - Individuals**

- 1.) **Chess Master vs. Chess Amateur** by Euwe and Meiden.
- 2.) **The Road to Chess Mastery** by Euwe and Meiden.
- 3.) **Understanding Chess Move by Move** by John Nunn.
- 4.) **My Best Games of Chess** by Alekhine.
- 5.) **Half A Century of Chess** by Botvinnik.
- 6.) **My 60 Memorable Games** by Bobby Fischer.
- 7.) **The Grand Master of Chess** trilogy of Paul Keres.
- 8.) Korchnoi's autobiographies.
- 9.) **125 Selected Games** by Vassily Smyslov.
- 10.) **The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal** by Tal.

### **GAME COLLECTIONS – Tournaments and Matches**

- 11.) **2nd Piatigorsky Cup** by Reshevsky et al.
- 12.) **Zurich 1953** by Bronstein.