

How to Win at Chess: A Complete Course

I.A. Horowitz

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I.A. Horowitz : How to Win at Chess: A Complete Course before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Win at Chess: A Complete Course:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Four Books in a Single VolumeBy KnightstalkerDuring the 1950s, I. A. Horowitz (b. 11/15/1907; d. 1/18/1973) wrote a series of books on the openings, the middle game, and the endgame. In 1968, the four books in this series were published as a single volume consisting of 815 pages. Horowitz added a 16 page introduction, "A picture Guide for Beginners." In his "Foreword" Horowitz defines the audience for whom this book is intended: "Each was a complete book in itself, and the four constitute a fairly complete Short Course in Chess Play particularly adapted to the beginner who has learned how to make the moves and how to read chess notation but is groping for signposts in the vast range of chess knowledge and literature."The following is a list of the four books that comprise this volume:(1) "HOW TO WIN IN THE CHESS OPENINGS,"(2) "MODERN IDEAS IN THE CHESS OPENINGS,"(3) "HOW TO WIN IN THE MIDDLE GAME OF CHESS," and(4) "HOW TO WIN IN THE CHESS ENDINGS."It should be noted that all four of these books use descriptive notation (eg., 1. P-K4 P-K4 2. N-KB3 N-QB3 3. B-N5 P-QR3, etc.). Today, chess books are written in algebraic notation (eg., 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6, etc.). Since it only takes a couple of minutes to learn either of these systems for recording chess moves, it behooves one to learn both notational systems.In reviewing this book, I will consider each of the books that make up this volume individually."HOW TO WIN IN THE CHESS OPENINGS" (199 pp.; copyright 1951) is a splendid introduction to the chess openings. Horowitz spends 29 pages on opening basics (Chapter 1, "Principles of Opening Play" and Chapter 2, "Exceptions to the First Principle"). In his chapter on "Exceptions to the First Principle,"

he makes the following observation: "... the first strategic principle points up the necessity for bringing maximum power to bear on the central squares in the shortest time. Likewise, it points out the fallacy of deviating from principle. Yet, while to toe the line with rigid obedience may be good discipline, it is wooden, unimaginative chess." These are opening concepts that every beginner should know (the exceptions will come later). Chapters 3 thru 15 cover individual openings. Each chapter ends with what Horowitz calls a "Chess Movie," i.e., an actual game, with many diagrams, illustrating the opening covered in that chapter. The openings analyzed in this book include the following:

Chapter 3: Giuoco Piano
Chapter 4: Ruy Lopez
Chapter 5: Ruy Lopez--The Open Defense
Chapter 6: Ruy Lopez--The Steinitz System
Chapter 7: French Defense--Classical Variation
Chapter 8: French Defense--Winawer Variation
Chapter 9: French Defense--Tarrasch Variation
Chapter 10: Sicilian Defense--The Modern Dragon Variation
Chapter 11: Queen's Gambit Declined
Chapter 12: Reti Opening--A Hypermodern Opening
Chapter 13: English Opening--Another Hypermodern Opening
Chapter 14: Alekhine's Defense--Hypermodernism in Defense
Chapter 15: Center Counter Defense

"MODERN IDEAS IN THE CHESS OPENINGS" (165 pp.; copyright 1953) begins with a four page review of opening principles. As he points out in a footnote, "These principles are explained in great detail, with many examples, in 'How to Win in the Chess Openings'." This book follows the format of his previous work on the openings. The following is a list of the openings included in this volume:

Chapter 2: Center Game
Chapter 3: Danish Gambit
Chapter 4: King's Gambit
Chapter 5: King's Gambit Declined
Chapter 6: Petroff's Defense
Chapter 7: Philidor's Defense
Chapter 8: Caro-Kann Defense
Chapter 9: Nimzo-Indian Defense
Chapter 10: Gruenfeld Defense
Chapter 11: Budapest Defense
Chapter 12: Dutch Defense

Horowitz ends this opening book, Chapter 13 ("Theoretically Important Games"), with twenty-two skimpily annotated games. Overall, a very, very disappointing chapter. Instead of this awkward chapter, Horowitz, in keeping with the format established in his previous volume, could have covered some additional openings (eg., the Benoni Defense, the King's Indian Defense, and the Queen's Indian Defense). It has been my experience that knowing the latest wrinkle in the openings or the latest, greatest opening (Benko Gambit, the Hedgehog, Trompowski Attack, and so forth) is of little value to the novice. Such knowledge can come at a later date. Horowitz exposes the beginner to a variety of openings and how these openings should be played. As a follow-up, I would suggest Reuben Fine's classic *The Ideas Behind the Chess Openings* (dated, but still worth studying). I would then recommend Stefan Djuric, Dimitri Komarov, Claudio Pantaloni's four volume *Chess Opening Essentials*. As a reference, I would suggest Nick de Firmian's "Modern Chess Openings." At this point, one can start developing an opening repertoire. There are a number of excellent books that help you to do this, for example, Lev Alburt, Roman Dzindzichashvili, Eugene Perelshteyn's "Chess Openings for White, Explained" and "Chess Openings for Black, Explained."

"HOW TO WIN IN THE MIDDLE GAME OF CHESS" (199 pp.; copyright 1955) is the third book in his series. In Chapter 1, "What Is the Middle Game?," he states: "The middle game is an arbitrary term applied to that portion of the game of chess following the opening and preceding the ending." Middle game books are generally concerned with two topics: strategy and tactics. Horowitz's book is no different. Chapters 2 thru 11 deal with tactics. These ten chapters cover the following topics:

Chapter 2: Middle Game Goal; The Pin; The Knight Fork
Chapter 3: Double Attack and Discovered Attack
Chapter 4: Discovered Check, Double Check, and the Overworked Piece
Chapter 5: Removal of a Guard, Queening Cobinations, and Underpromotion
Chapter 6: X-Ray Attack and Trapped Man
Chapter 7: Vulnerable First Rank and Interference
Chapter 8: Surprise Mating Attacks and Combined Operations
Chapter 9: Outcombining the Combiner and Sundry Combinations
Chapter 10: More Sundry Combinations--Castling and Zugzwang
Chapter 11: Drawing Combinations--Perpetual Check and Stalemate

An excellent follow-up to these chapters would be Irving Chernev *Winning Chess*, Fred Reinfeld's *1001 Brilliant Chess Sacrifices and Combinations*, and Georges Renaud Victor Kahn's *The Art of Checkmate*. If you prefer books in algebraic notation, then read John Nunn's "Learn Chess Tactics" and/or Martin Weteschnik's "Chess Tactics from Scratch." I would then recommend your reading Vladimir Vukovic's "Art of Attack in Chess." An excellent software program for honing your tactical skills is "Chessimo" (formerly known as the "Personal Chess Trainer"). A FREE trial version of this software can be downloaded from the Chessimo website.

The next seven chapters focus on strategy. These chapter are as follows:

Chapter 12: Strategy in the Middle Game--The Center
Chapter 13: Better Development
Chapter 14: Advantage in Space
Chapter 15: King-side Attack; Queen-side Attack; King in the Center
Chapter 16: The Minority Attack
Chapter 17: Weak Pawns and Strong Squares
Chapter 18: Material Advantage and Sundries

An excellent follow-up to these chapters would be I.A. Horowitz and Geoffrey Mott-Smith's "Point Count Chess," Ludek Pachman's "Modern Chess Strategy," and Jeremy Silman's "How to Reassess Your Chess" (4th edition). I would also recommend your reading Hans Kmoch's "Pawn Power in Chess" and Andrew Soltis's "Pawn Structure Chess."

"HOW TO WIN IN THE CHESS ENDINGS" (234 pp.; copyright 1957) has a total of 18 chapters. This was the fourth and last book in Horowitz's "How to Win ..." series. Excluding the last chapter, a 55 page discussion of practical endgames by Max Euwe, Horowitz devotes 40% of his book to K and P endings and 15% of his book to R and P endings. These are the very endings that, in my opinion, should be emphasized in an introductory book on the endgame. A perusal of this book indicates that Horowitz based a great deal of his material on Reuben Fine's "Basic Chess Endings" (copyright 1941). It should also be noted that Fine devoted 13% of his book to K and P endings and 30% to R and P endings. Since R and P endings are so important, I am surprised that Horowitz did not

devote more space to this topic. Since this is an introductory book, don't expect an in-depth coverage of the subject. In his first chapter, "Why the End Game?," Horowitz gives a very clear explanation of the "rule of the square" (probably the single most important concept in learning the endgame). This is followed, in the next chapter, by a thorough discussion of King maneuvers (some of these concepts are counterintuitive as was brilliantly shown in a study by Reti in 1921 [W: Kh8, Pc6; B: Ka6, Ph5] and Prokes in 1947 [W: Kd8, Pa5; B: Kd6, Ph7], so this chapter is very important). The "opposition" is another pivotal idea covered by Horowitz; in particular, how a lone King can draw against a K and P using the concept of "vertical" opposition. No book on the endgame would be complete without a thorough discussion of Philidor's drawing technique and the Lucena position. Both are covered in chapter 16, although Horowitz does not identify the Philidor method by name. Each chapter is relatively short (averaging approximately 10 pages per chapter), so you never feel overwhelmed. The explanations are succinct, the examples well chosen, and the writing crisp. The final chapter, by Max Euwe, is an additional bonus. The only mistake in analysis that I noted was to the Kling and Horwitz (1851) study given on page 128 [White: Kf7, Ng1, Pe6; Black: Kh8, Bh4]. Horowitz gives this as a win for white [1 N-B3 B-Q1 2 N-K5 K-R2 3 N-N4 K-R1 4 N-B6 Resigns]; in fact, this position, as was shown by Andre Cheron, is drawn. The solution should have read 1 N-B3 B-N4 2 N-K5 K-R2 3 N-N4 B-Q1 4 N-B6 K-R3 draws. There are a number of better books on the endgame. These are my recommendations: If you want a brief introduction to the endgame, then read Jeremy Silman's Essential Chess Endings Explained Move By Move; if you want a more thorough introduction to the endgame, then read Paul Keres's Practical Chess Endings. As a first book on the endgame, Keres's book can be very demanding. If you plan on purchasing only one book on the endgame, then Silman's Complete Endgame Course would be my choice, although I would want to supplement it with Muller and Lamprecht's Fundamental Chess Endings. As a follow up to any of the previously mentioned endgame books, I highly recommend Jonathan Hawkins's Amateur to IM: Proven Ideas and Training Methods. CONCLUSION: If you have never read a book on the openings, the middle game, or endgame, and you don't mind descriptive notation, then this is a good book to start with. Although, individually, I would not award any one of these four books a five star rating, as a complete course for the novice, this book is worthy of five stars. In short, the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great way to learn Chess By jjyoung51 This book shows the 1's and 2's of Chess basics, that is opening moves, control of board center, material, mid game and ending. Many classic Defenses and Gambits shown. I like to play them on my office chess set. If you like Chess, but never really had the time to learn past the rules of movement, this book has LOTS of games to follow on your own coffee/office table chess set. I love the "old style" naming of movement. P-K4. Enjoy! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book but a "translator" is needed because numbering has ... By Dirk Moonen Great book but a "translator" is needed because numbering has been changed to a more effective system. Still the moves, all of them are valid.

CHESS BOOK