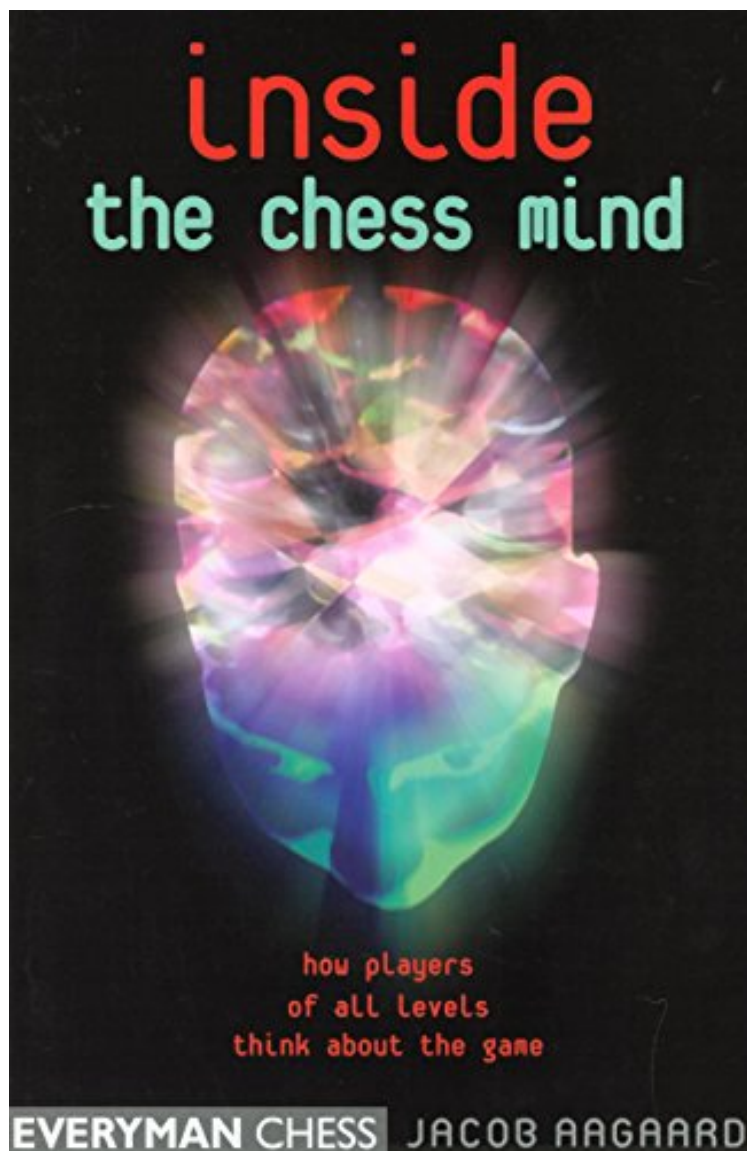


(Ebook free) Inside the Chess Mind: How Players Of All Levels Think About The Game

## Inside the Chess Mind: How Players Of All Levels Think About The Game

*Jacob Aagaard*

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**Jacob Aagaard : Inside the Chess Mind: How Players Of All Levels Think About The Game** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inside the Chess Mind: How Players Of All Levels Think About The Game:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Interestin book, but not every player enjoy itBy Norberto Martel

GutierrezOk, first I have to say that this book is a nice experiment of Jacob Aagaard. How does the book work? Jacob, make an experiment showing the same position to different skill players, from amateur, FIDE Master, International Masters and Grand Masters like Yusupov and chess engine like Fritz (8). You can see how all candidates' moves appear according to the player, from each level. Every player writes a foreword from each position's approach, this helps a lot to see how different are the thinking of the players. Just Yusupov's notes, is a plus value of the book. The only bad thing, there are approaches from very poor skill players, and this has not any value for me, maybe other readers could taste this, but even that I skipped it. I only focused on FIDE Master and higher players. But the book is good. Beginners may not enjoy the book, but will help but I am almost sure that this book, will not like many intermediate chess players. The player who wants to see why his chess stock, this could help to find the way. There are many positional approaches, this is not a tactical chess skill. OK. Enjoy.

5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Boring. By William J. Nicholas. I'm sorry to say this was a terrible purchase. I thought it was going to be like 'The Amateur Mind' by Silman which is excellent. Instead the book consists solely of players of different levels thinking their way through ten positions. What was supposed to be learned by this is beyond me. I guess the idea was you were to do your own analysis first and then somehow 'rate' yourself by comparing yourself with how others thought through the problems. Well, it's a process that does not work. I consistently did worse than the grandmaster, which somehow did not come as a surprise to me. Also I did consistently better than the beginners and novices, also no surprise. I consider this book the worst one I now -- unfortunately -- own.

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely essential reading for non-masters. By Richard C. Jensen. When I first started reading this book, I thought it would be a waste of money and time. This book is about 10 different tactical or positional situations on the board, and a whole lot of comments by players of all ratings commenting on them ad infinitum, ad nauseum. After I got through test position 1 (already having read about 4-5 hours through the book), I was mentally exhausted. How could I go through 9 more arduous, complicated tactical or positional puzzles? But by the end of test position 3, I was feeling a lot better about the book, since I actually got the question right(!). The rest of the book was more or less rewarding, and it certainly slowed down my over-the-board thinking which for a faster time control player is a good thing, at least in the slower time controls. The positions themselves are of course very complicated. You have several minutes to look at the position and find the best move. The participants in the test talked into a microphone about what they were thinking during the analysis, and this was of course all put into the book. This is what makes the book unique; that you can "see" the thought processes of players at various levels analyze a complex position. A 1400 player will actually find most of the good main lines, but will usually end up picking the wrong move. A grandmaster will usually find all of the good lines, and pick one of the better ones, if not the best. Even Fritz 8 got into the mix, and of course scored the best of all the "participants". I personally was not disappointed in my score of 3 / 10, since for my rating that was normal to above-average. Even Fritz did not solve all of the problems in the given amount of time! I was going to give all of the positions, with the correct and incorrect moves, but that would give away the whole book, and I don't think that the author and publisher would be very happy about that! Therefore, I'll simply give the results of the tests, not any test positions, and also comments on the differences between positional and tactical players, as well as their rating strengths.

5 of the problems appeared to be "tactical", and 5 "positional". I included Fritz 8, and also myself in the results, because the author did not include any human player with a rating between 1400 and 2050, so I serve as a nice "data point" there at @1800 (extrapolated to @1750 FIDE). So...buy the book, take the tests, and see how you come out! By the way, in test position "2", there is one move that draws instead of wins, and so I gave those players a point for the draw. The ratings below are FIDE, besides mine; Fritz I assume has a theoretical FIDE rating.

Name	Rating	Total Points	Tactical	Positional
Fritz 8	@3200	9/10	4/5	5/5
GM Peter Nielsen	@2650	6/10	4/5	2/5
GM Artur Yusupov	@2600	6/10	3/5	3/5
IM Jesper Hall	@2500	4/10	2/5	2/5
FM Ivo Timmermans	@2300	4/10	2/5	2/5
Peter Skovgaard	@2050	4/10	3/5	1/5
Rich Jensen (lol)	@1750	3/10	1/5	2/5
Tom Skovgaard	@2050	3/10	2/5	1/5
Sidsel Hoeg	@1400	2/10	2/5	0/5
Sten Vesterli	Unrated	1/10	0/5	1/5

As you can see, the points are very proportional to the ratings of the players. Fritz 8: It's surprising the Fritz did not solve all of the problems; interestingly the author had one of the makers of Fritz 8 by his side during the analysis of all 10 problems, so that the software engineer could explain why Fritz could or could not solve each problem. On one of the problems, Fritz alternated between the winning move and one of the two drawing moves for almost all of its allotted time (I and 3 others found one of the drawing moves; Fritz was the only one to find the winning move). It finally settled on the winning move before its thinking time expired, but it very possibly could have switched back to the drawing move later if given more time. It's puzzling that Fritz solved all five positional problems but actually had trouble with a tactical problem. This is because the problem involved an exchange sacrifice for a pawn, and the outcome of the game from there was far from clear. The exchanger already had two sets of doubled pawns, and Fritz was probably afraid to complicate the game further, if you can believe that! The correct move was not even in the first four preferred moves that Fritz wanted to make. All but one of the human players rated over 2000 found the correct move in that position, and Fritz didn't. On the other hand, the positional strength of Fritz has improved tremendously in the last few versions. You better believe that the Fritz software engineers are going to feed it a lot of information about the tactical position it missed; Fritz 9 is already out and may have the improvements. And by the way, for all of you computer chess program doubters, Fritz 8 IMMEDIATELY (within a few seconds)

found four of the 10 correct moves. You could not ask any World Chess Champion to do the same for problems of this complexity. GM Peter Nielsen: Obviously the two strongest human players in the test were GM's Nielsen and Yusupov. The difference is that Nielsen is still an active player and Yusupov isn't, at least right now. And this fact showed in the difference of their tactical ability in solving the problems. Nielsen was stellar with the 5 tactical problems, solving all but one of them, equaling Fritz's score! Obviously Nielsen got to the GM level by tremendous tactical vision and excellent calculating skills. His positional prowess was not nearly as good, but 2/5 was actually not bad for a human player, even if they are a GM. This is what really surprised me more than anything else in the test results: Fritz was perfect in positional problems, and no human solved more than 3/5 of the positional problems. This is why computer programs have gotten so strong of late: their positional evaluations have become... "superhuman". Remember when Karpov said that Topolov could never be FIDE World Champion because he lacked positional talent (paraphrasing)? Topolov of course did accomplish this in 2005, but he ran into a positional genius in the form of Vladimir Kramnik in 2006, and Karpov's prediction belatedly came true. Take away tactics, and a player is forced to play positionally. Anyway, Nielsen solved the tests with flying colors. 6/10 for a human is nothing to be ashamed of. One of the tactical problems he solved was solved only by Fritz and no one else. I was pleasantly surprised to have actually solved the one tactical problem that Nielsen faltered on. GM Artur Yusupov: As I mentioned above, Yusupov, at one time one of the strongest players in the world, was a bit rusty, although he did score well in the tests. He is the most balanced master of the human players. However, he didn't solve any of the toughest test problems like Nielsen did; all of the problems he solved, besides problem #2, were solved by at least three others. But remember that Yusupov was once much stronger than Nielsen, and this may very well be due to his positional prowess. He scored the best of any human on the positional problems, again lending evidence to Karpov's theory that World Champion Candidates need deep positional evaluation skills. IM Jesper Hall: Hall scored a balanced 2/5 tactically and 2/5 positionally. Hall's scoring was much like Yusupov's; all of the problems he solved were also solved by at least three others. FM Ivo Timmermans: Like Jesper Hall, Timmermans scored a very balanced 2/5 tactically and 2/5 positionally. In fact, he solved exactly the same four problems as IM Hall solved, except for that one tricky problem #2, where there are two winning lines and one drawing line. Timmermans missed this very complicated tactical problem. Peter Skovgaard: I guess the two Peters in this survey are both very tactically gifted. Tactically Peter Skovgaard was basically GM strength, but positionally he scored badly. Obviously, he got to expert strength mostly on tactics, as so many others have. He did find one of the two very tough winning moves for problem #2. I do have to give him credit for getting the one positional move right that both GM's missed. Rich Jensen: It was fun finishing up the exercises and the book itself. Everyone should get this book and see where they stand tactically and positionally. There are plenty of tactical puzzle books out there, but it may be hard for someone to see how they rate positionally compared to others with a similar rating. I scored about right; of course I did throw in that one drawing line in problem #2 to give me that extra point. That problem was really tough, but I simply took material and got my King chased across the board. IM Jesper Hall also played the same move I did for that problem. Like Peter Skovgaard, I also picked the correct move in (positional) problem #8 that both GM's missed. I also picked some bad losing moves; in problem #4, a tactical one, I was only one of two players to pick the wrong move, the other was Sten Vesterli, who just barely started playing in tournaments. Of the six problems I got wrong, three of them were unique moves that the nine others didn't make--I don't know if that's good or not, or how bad that is lol. Most of the time, if one player made a wrong move, most of the others made the same wrong move, but not me for some reason. The one problem I was really proud of was problem #3. I could not believe I made the right move, but I did! None of the other human players got problem #3 right--only Fritz did. I was also somewhat proud of getting tactical problem #10 right--Yusupov missed it. Tom Skovgaard: Tom did not score that great for his rating strength--his positional play is somewhat weak, just like his son Peter. He's another Expert that is decent at tactics, but could make Master if he improved his positional play. Of the three points Tom got, at least three other players made the same correct moves. For the seven wrong moves, Tom was the most like me--he made four uniquely wrong moves. He also was like me in that he got tactical problem #10 right; only Fritz and GM Nielsen were the others to get it correct. Sidsel Hoeg: I'm glad they put a 1400 rated player in the book to give the scoring some greater scale. She was the only female participant (I assume that Fritz is male!). She is probably a typical casual chess player; picked up tactical openings quickly and did decently with them, but as so many lower rated players, she cannot understand deep positional problems, and didn't get any of the five positional problems correct. I believe that this is a common problem among lower-rated players. The typical routine is to teach beginners tactical openings like the Ruy Lopez and Queen's Gambit, and then let them sink or swim afterwards. Positional openings like the Caro-Kann or the English are neglected because "That's the way things have always been taught". I wonder how many thousands, or even millions, of beginners quit chess because they did not like the tactical openings they were first exposed to. Fortunately for Sidsel, she is very tactically gifted for her rating. She even got problem #8 right that both GM's missed! Of the eight problems she got wrong, three were uniquely wrong, and five were commonly wrong. Sten Vesterli: Sten only got one problem right, a positional one. This problem, #7 (that I got wrong), was correctly found by Fritz and all of the Masters; neither of the Experts or Sidsel found it. I wonder how his rating would compare to Sidsel's if he played more. He may very well have some natural chess talent--who knows for now.

Once again, buy the book, don't cheat and look up the answers, compare your results and rating to the others, and have fun!

What separates a Grandmaster from an International Master? How do the thought processes of strong club players differ from that of middling club players? What techniques can enthusiastic chess players employ when striving to reach the next rung on the ladder? Jacob Aagaard provides the answers to these questions in this fascinating and entertaining new book. The material is based around numerous carefully selected tests which are offered to a group of players of a very wide range of ages and playing strengths. Once all the participants have attempted the tests, their discoveries, solving methods, and difficulties with the exercises are evaluated and compared, and conclusions are drawn. The players are also quizzed about their exercise techniques, ideas, and opinions about chess in general. Inside the Chess Mind enters fresh territory in chess literature by providing a thought-provoking insight as to how the chess brains of the great, the good, and the improver operate. Highlights include: \*Clarifies both the differences and similarities between Grandmasters and amateurs\* Suitable for players of all strengths \*Includes challenging puzzles\* Written by a highly experienced chess coach

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