Richard Shorman

Chess

CHESS ADVICE FOR THE ENLIGHTENED FEW

By James Schroeder

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Ninety per cent of the chess books in print are worthless and most of them are harmful. There are not any good Opening books.

The best moves are not in the books.

Do not read Opening books until you are an Expert. And of course, that means do not read articles on Openings.

"Not all refutations are published the minute they are discovered. A Master prefers to spring them over-the-board, in the form of prepared variations." (Larry Evans)

Don't ever waste time on those things called "Modern Chess Openings" or "Encyclopedia of Openings", etc. They are compilations of selective data and contain thousands of mistakes in analysis and position evaluations.

So-called monographs of specific openings have no value. If written by a Master (For the purpose of this article, Master and Grandmaster are the same.), they are not truthful, and if written by a non-master, they are not knowledgeable.

Big books, which survey one opening, as in the "Chess Digest" series, are only useful to Masters, who are only interested in seeing what is currently popular and who can make their own positional evaluations.

Concerning the mis-named "Encyclopedia of Chess Openings", this book is neither complete nor accurate. I am not qualified to give opinions on analysis of every opening, but Masters who are (including some of the finest opening theoreticians in the world) inform me that this book is worthless.

In "Chess Life & Review" Lubosh Kavalek wrote: "...When I checked the variation in Encyclopedia of Chess Openings...I could not believe my eyes when I discovered that Black was judged better! However, I should not really be surprised, since I have found dozens of similar mistakes and misjudgments in that book."

I do know about the King's Gambit (having seen the unpublished analysis of Anthony Santasiere), and the section in this book is terrible.

I must correct the statement. "When a Grandmaster states that one side has a slight advantage...their judgments are more refined." Grandmasters do not give their thruthful opinion, and although their "judgments" are superior, they keep such judgments to themselves. And it is not true that "The Masters have not only selected the best of the current lines, but have gone back into history to record the lines popular fifty years ago or more, but now no longer played."

They have not selected the "best of the current lines", and whether or not they have recorded "lines popular fifty years ago" is of no value. Why not go back to a hundred and fifty years ago?
Articles on Openings written by amateurs but published by professional magazines are worthless unless you want to amuse yourself refuting the drive. "Chess" specializes in wasting enormous amounts of space on this type of article, issuing pages and pages of analysis about an absurd "innovation" which can be completely refuted on move five. They never publish the refutation, of course.

Many editors pander to the desire of some of their readers who are looking for the "easy" way to win, i.e., by springing a sensational opening innovation. The reason why "weak" games are published is that the editors can sell a paper and not worry about the hard work and time necessarily to be good players. Another reason is that they study Openings long before they can comprehend them. That is not entirely their fault, but it is a fault I would like to correct. After you become completely knowledgeable about how to play chess, and thoroughly understand the endgame, and know all the possible types of combinations and have played through at least a thousand master games, then you are ready to study the Openings. By that time you will be a Master.

When you see an Opening article based on a "cheap shot" that is actually terrible, you may believe you are gaining useful information but you are really wasting your time if you read it. If you cannot refute a bad move over-the-board, you will never be a good player: "I want to teach my pupil how to become primarily a natural player who burdens his memory very little. He applies logic only when deduction is called for, and he is ready to judge himself back him up in novel situations, for the natural player is a better type of man than the book player." - Emanuel Lasker

Playing chess is based on "input," and you should consider the "problem" the same as if you were programming a computer. Books and pamphlets called "Opening Systems" are not helpful. The only book you need to read is "The Game of Chess" by Siegbert Tarrasch. (Out of print. Please write the publisher and ask that they reprint it: David McKay Co., 750 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. Say Schroeder sends you it) Read "Manual of Chess" by Emanuel Lasker (Dober this book). The first book on the endgame that every player should read is "Practical Chess Endgames" by Hooper and Clarke.

For a free sample copy of "The Chess Correspondent," now edited by redoubtable chess crusader James Schroeder, please write to him at P. O. Box 3286, Cleveland, Ohio 44101. if you have any suggestions on how to improve your game, or if you are moving and want to make a change from the usual bland chess fare, then use your head to subscribe to the rejuvenated publication and participate in its vigorous growth. Schroeder also administers a national Prisoner Rehabilitation Fund to provide chess sets and books to inmates of penal institutions. Tax free donations of any amount may be sent to the same address.

WHERE TO PLAY CHESS
The Hayward Chess Club, Palma Ceia Park (corner of Miami Ave. and Decatur Way). Monday and Friday, 8-12 p.m.
Cherryland Cafe, 22472 Meadland Ave., Hayward (corner of A St. and Meadland Ave.). Evenings, except Monday and Tuesday, 7-11 p.m.
The San Leandro Chess Club, 205 Dutton Ave. (Washington School cafeteria, between East 14th St. and Bancroft Way). Monday, 7-11 p.m.
The Fremont Chess Club, 40264 Paseo Padre Parkway (near City Hall at Lake Elizabeth). Wednesday, 7-11 p.m.
The Livermore Chess Club, Fourth and J Streets. Friday, 1-12 p.m.