



Book Reviews



Translate this page



Rating Chart

- Awful –
- Poor –
- Uneven –
- Good –
- Great –
- Excellent –

Better Than Any Opening Book

by Michael McGuerty

Chess Evolution 2: Beyond the Basics by Artur Yusupov, Quality Chess 2012, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 303pp. Paperback \$29.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$24.95); Hardcover \$38.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$29.95)

Chess Evolution 2: Beyond the Basics is the third and final book in the *Beyond the Basics* series, and the eighth of nine books to be published. The nine-volume course is made-up of three levels: The Fundamentals, Beyond the Basics, and Mastery. These are being published under the three series of *Build up Your Chess*, *Boost Your Chess*, and *Chess Evolution*. The first series, *Build Up Your Chess*, won the 2008 Boleslavsky Medal from FIDE as the best instructional chess books, placing ahead of works from Garry Kasparov and Mark Dvoretsky.

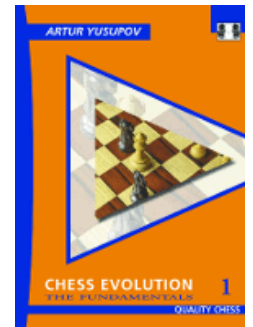
The volumes can be accessed in any order, though the intended structure is to begin with the three Fundamentals books (the first books from each series), then to the three Beyond the Basics (the second books from each series), and finally to progress to Mastery (the third books from each series, with the last yet to be published). According to a post at the [Quality Chess Blog](#), the confusing order of publication was a result of taking on the first three books of each series and then later accepting the entire publication run of nine volumes.

All together the nine-volumes offer "the necessary basic knowledge in six areas of the game – tactics, positional play, strategy, the calculation of variations, the opening, and the endgame." The topics are spread evenly throughout the set to allow the reader to increase their knowledge base as they work through the books, and, by way of reinforcement, many lessons cross reference earlier ones thereby unifying the material to a greater degree. The Fundamentals Series is said to be the easier one, with Beyond the Basics more challenging, and Mastery being difficult even for stronger players.

In the introduction, Yusupov writes that the material targets three groups according to rating strength: under Elo 1500, under Elo 1800, and under Elo 2100. In fact, again according to the publisher's blog post, the German title of the Fundamentals series "actually translates pretty closely into 'how to reach 1500 in elo,'" but Quality Chess changed the "title and all connection to it in the marketing (but had to keep it in the book) because we found it entirely bonkers." Jacob Aagaard writes that if the reader assimilates all the knowledge in these books their rating is going to be "beyond 2400" as long as they have the "practical experience as well."

The content is based on a three-year training program developed by Yusupov in his chess academy. This was adapted for online lessons at Chess Tigers University and the material then further expanded and updated for print publication. The goal is to present a teaching program suitable for most amateur players that could be used independently of, or in conjunction with, a chess trainer. Each stage consists of twenty-four teaching modules, twenty-four tests, and a final test at the end of the course.

Each chapter is meant to be a one or two hour lesson in which the reader is encouraged to set up the positions over-the-board, contemplate how they would proceed, and then play through the examples, including all variations. The second part of the lesson is comprised of twelve test positions ranging in difficulty from one to four stars, with the difficulty seeming to increase as you progress. The reader is encouraged to write down the variations during the



[Chess Evolution 1: The Fundamentals](#)

by Artur Yusupov



[The Fundamentals Series](#)

by Artur Yusupov



[The Beyond the Basics Series](#)

by Artur Yusupov



tests, compare their results with the solutions, and then retake the test if necessary. Each lesson is accompanied by a checklist of the themes included in the chapter and some lessons end with a list of guidelines to follow during play.

The books are structured with lesson diagrams on the far edges of the page-spread with the lesson content in between. Presumably this is done to allow the reader to study the diagrams without seeing the game continuations, though one is encouraged to set up the positions and try to solve them over-the-board.

Here is an excerpt from Chapter Ten, "The pawn phalanx"

Contents

- The strength of connected press pawns
- Blockade
- Material sacrifices

In the lesson on 'Pawn combinations' (Chapter 21 of *Build Up Your Chess I*), we saw some situations which showed clearly the strength of connected passed pawns. Of course such pawns become particularly dangerous the nearer they get to the queening square. For example, two connected pawns on the 6th rank can often be enough to defeat a rook.

Diagram 10-1, Black to move



[FEN "2b1r3/5pkp/6p1/1p2P3/1qp1PP2/
2R3PP/2Q3B1/6K1 b - - 0 36"]

A. Yusupov – G. Kasparov

Linares 1990

The black pawns on queenside will soon be ready to advance further. The white pawns in the centre, on the other hand, are not so mobile. Kasparov activates his pieces at once.

36...Qc5+ 37.Kh2 Qd4 38.Rf3

Hoping to play f4-f5 at a favorable moment.

38...b4!

What at first glance looks like an oversight is in reality a sound combination.

39.Qa4

Diagram 10-2, Black to move



[FEN "2b1r3/5pkp/6p1/4P3/QppqPP2/5RPP/6BK/8 b - - 0 39"]

This double attack is the final chance.

39.f5 is followed by 39...b3 40.f6+ Kh8 41.Qc1 b2 42.Qh6 Rg8 43.Rf4 Qd2—

39...c3!!

Black sacrifices the rook, and is even willing to go into the endgame!

40.Rxc3!

This is the best chance.

40.Qxe8 would be followed by 40...Qd7! 41.Qxd7 Bxd7 and White cannot draw the teeth from the pawn phalanx:

a) 42.Rd3 Be6 43.f5 gxf5 44.exf5 Bxf5 45.Rf3 c2 46.Rf1 Bd3! (but not 46...b3?! 47.Bd5! b2 48.Rxf5 with the idea 48...c1Q (48...Kf8! still wins) because of 49.Rxf7+ Kg6 50.Rf6+=) 47.Rc1 b3—

b) 42.e6 Bxe6 43.f5 (or 43.Rf1 c2 44.e5 b3 45.Be4 Bf5 46.Bxc2 Bxc2—+) 43...Bc4 44.f6+ Kg8 45.Bf1 Bxf1 46.Rxf1 c2 47.Ra1 h5 48.e5 b3 49.Ra8+ Kh7 50.e6 c1Q 51.exf7 Qd2++ White loses the rook.

Diagram 10-3, Black to move



[FEN "2b1r3/5pkp/6p1/4P3/Qp1qPP2/2R3PP/6BK/8 b - - 0 40"]

40...Bd7 41.Rc4! Bxa4!?

41...Qxc4 is possible: 42.Qxd7 Re6!—

42.Rxd4 Rb8 43.Bf1 Bc2 44.Bc4

44.Bd3 b3 45.Bxc2 bxc2 46.Rc4 Rb2—

44...b3 45.Bxb3

White has to give up the bishop for the b-pawn.

Attempting to counter-attack with 45.Rd7 comes to nothing: 45...b2 46.
Ba2 (no better are 46.Bxf7 Rd8!—+ or 46.Rxf7+ Kh8 47.Ba2 Bb3—+)
46...Ra8 47.Rxf7+ Kh8 48.e6 Rxa2 49.e7 Ba4—+

45...Rxb3 46.g4 Re3—+

Black won this ending since the e4-pawn could not be defended. You can find the remainder of the game in *Boost Your Chess 1* (Diagram 9-2).

This example is followed by two further illustrative game fragments, with seven accompanying diagrams, and then twelve exercises. Of these, three are one-star in difficulty; four are two-star; four are three-star; and one is four-star.

These books are all an improving player needs to achieve great results! Every serious player and legitimate chess coach should have the entire series. It is a far better investment than any opening book.

My assessment of this product: 

Order [Chess Evolution 2: Beyond the Basics](#)

by Artur Yusupov

Read an excerpt in our shop!

Order [Chess Evolution 2: Beyond the Basics](#) (Hardcover)

by Artur Yusupov

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