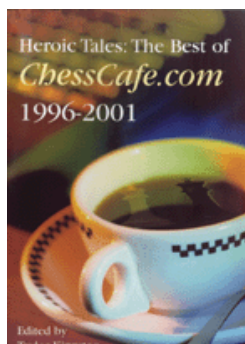




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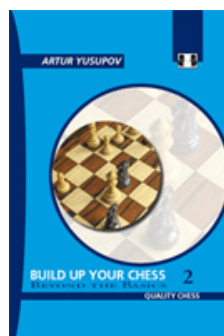


Explanations, Examples, & Exercises

Steve Goldberg

Build Up Your Chess: Vol. 2, Beyond the Basics, by Artur Yusupov, 2008
Quality Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 284 pp., \$29.95

The *Build Up Your Chess* series of books is intended to be a “complete course of chess improvement,” and this volume is the second to appear in this series. In his introduction, Yusupov clarifies the broad outline of the text, stating that is designed for “players whose playing level lies between Elo 1500 and 1800. The readers will receive the necessary basic knowledge in 6 different areas of the game – tactics, positional play, strategy, the calculation of variations, the opening and the endgame.”



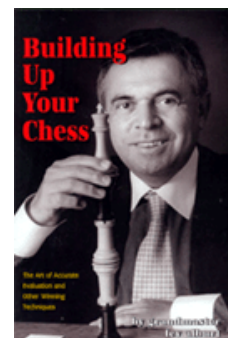
These six core facets of the game are covered over a span of twenty-four chapters and a test section:

- Mating combinations
- General endgame principles
- Combinations involving the back rank
- General opening principles
- The double attack
- Good and bad bishops
- Candidate moves
- The centre
- The pin and the discovered attack
- Zugzwang
- Deflection
- The Greek gift sacrifice
- Evaluating the position
- Planning in chess
- An opening repertoire for White after 1.e4 e5
- Destroying the castled position
- An opening repertoire against 1.e4
- Exchanging
- Priorities when calculating variations
- Pawn endings 1
- Decoying
- Time in the opening
- Improving the position of your pieces
- Pawn endings 2
- Final test

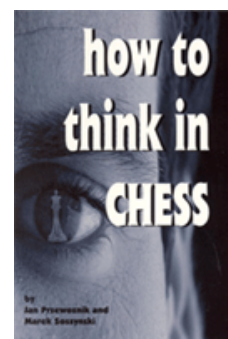
Each of these chapters consists of a brief introduction to the subject matter, followed by between seven and fourteen diagrammed positions. The reader is expected to take time to analyze the position and try to come up with a plan for the side to move. In most cases, there is no indication of what the reader is expected to look for, whether a forced mate or simply a winning series of moves. The solutions to these positions, combining brief textual explanations with relevant variations, actually make up the bulk of the educational material in the book. Each chapter then ends with twelve exercises of varying difficulty, for which the reader is to grade him or herself. Again, simulating an actual game environment, no hints are provided, just a position and an indication of which side is to move. Most players in that 1500-1800 rating range will find these exercises quite challenging.

The authors of many excellent chess books exert much effort in carefully explaining a number of difficult concepts, followed by exercises to test the reader’s grasp of the material. *Build Up Your Chess: Vol. 2, Beyond the Basics* is constructed a bit differently. There is not a great deal of prose – with this book the reader will benefit directly commensurate with the effort expended. Of course, this is so with most self-help books, chess and otherwise. But whereas some books will almost spoon-feed the intended audience, here the reader must be willing to seriously work at his game if he expects to reap the benefits of the author’s tutelage. Yusupov is clear that an aspiring chess student will improve the greatest and quickest with the use of a human chess trainer, but in the absence of such, this book is intended as a partial substitute.

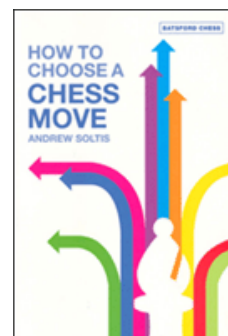
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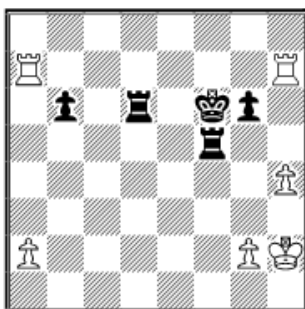
Fundamentally, Yusupov utilizes game annotations to present his material, sometimes for full games, but primarily game fragments. The goal is for the reader to see the principles in action. As a sample, in the Deflection chapter, Yusupov presents the following purely tactical example:



It is Black to move in the game Johner-Tartakower, Berlin 1928, and he played **1...Ng4**. Yusupov writes, “Black is offering to exchange bishops, or is he...? **2.Bxe7??** White has not seen the trap. Black has an intermediate move which will deflect the white knight on f3 from the defence of the h2-pawn. **2.g3** was necessary. **2...Nd4!** White resigned. After **3.Nxd4** there comes **3...Qxh2#**. If **3.Qd1**, then **3...Nxf3+ 4.Qxf3 Qxh2#**.”

In Chapter 18: Exchanging, Yusupov writes, “Exchanging is perhaps the most important element in positional play. In many games we can see a whole variety of exchanging operations. But frequently an exchange changes the situation on the board in favour of one or other player. Recognizing such situations is the art of the positional player. It is amazing how many advantages you can acquire as a result of skilful exchanges.”

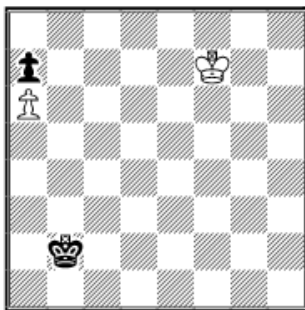
One of the exercises in this chapter is an instructive example:



It is White to move in this position from Spassky-Jansa, Tel Aviv 1964.

“White forces the transition into a pawn ending. **1.Rae7!** Threatening **Rhf7#**. **1...Re6** If **1...g5**, then **2.Rhf7+ Kg6 3.h5+-**. **2.Rhf7+ Ke5 3.Rxf5+ Kxf5 4.Rxe6 Kxe6 5.Kg3 +-** Black resigned, because it is very easy to convert the material advantage in a pawn ending.”

Intermediate players are notorious for having poor endgame skills, and Yusupov presents a simple but instructive example:



“**1.Ke6!** Distances on the chessboard are equal, whether the king goes to another square in a straight line or whether it follows a zigzag course. Both kings need exactly five moves to reach their goal: White to get to the a7-pawn, Black to get to the saving square c7. But the white king can hinder the approach of the black king. **1.Ke7?** would be wrong, in view of **1...Kc3 2.Kd7 Kd4 3.Kc6 Ke5 4.Kb7 Kd6 5.Kxa7 Kc7=**. **1...Kc3 2.Kd5!** The white king employs a bodycheck against its black opponent – or shoulders it off. **2...Kb4 2...Kd3** also loses a tempo. **3.Kc6 Ka5 4.Kb7 Kb5 5.Kxa7 Kc6 6.Kb8 +-**.”

The book ends with a final test of twenty-four positions, representing a randomized presentation of all the themes previously covered.

There were a few isolated small glitches, such as in diagram 3-1, a stronger defense is available compared to what is shown in one variation, and in diagram 4-1, it is White to move, not Black, as the diagram indicates. In a couple instances, a position is presented, say, with White to

move. An ambitious reader trying to find an advantageous continuation for White before checking the text may be frustrated when he finds that for the given example, White makes an error that Black pounces on. But the text itself makes clear what is happening.

Overall, the instruction appears quite appropriate and helpful for the target audience of players rated 1500-1800. Readers a bit above or below this range will likely benefit as well. Yusupov presents more variations than text, but one who toils through the instructive examples and challenging exercises will surely find his or her game moving to a higher level.

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