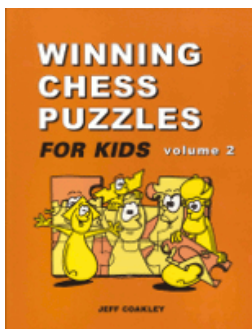




Book Reviews

[\[Find us on Facebook.\]](#)

[Translate this page](#)



[CHESSTHEATRE](#)
 Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

Free Shipping!
 On all Orders
 More than \$75!
 UPS GROUND Only. 

Thought Provoking, Fun, and Instructive

By Dan Heisman

Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 2, by Jeff Coakley, 2010 Chess'n Math, 307pp., Large Format Paperback, Algebraic Notation, \$29.95 (ChessCafe Price: \$24.95)

It is rare to come across a book that is as unusual, challenging, fun, and instructive as *Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 2 (WCPK2)*. It is true gem.

Jeff Coakley is an outstanding author, and each of his three previous books was excellent in its own right:

Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 1 – the only one of the four that is really just for kids and beginners.

Winning Chess Strategy for Kids – an excellent intermediate book introducing an entire spectrum of strategical considerations, plus a bundle of good basic tactics problems. Strategy is recommended for players of all ages up to mid-intermediate level.

Winning Chess Exercises for Kids – In my opinion, the best intermediate puzzle book ever written. The questions and answers are both well chosen and comprehensive. By the latter part of the book many of the puzzles are quite challenging, even for me, so anyone who thinks this book will be easy is in for a shock. In fact, of all the books I have ever recommended, *Exercises* gets the single best feedback from adult students.

When *Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 2* arrived in the mail a few weeks ago, I mistakenly thought it was more of *Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 1*.

I should have known better! *WCPK2* is an amazing puzzle book and the title is somewhat misleading. Yes, it contains a fair dose of what I thought it would contain: tactics puzzles more difficult than in *WCPK1*. But it's what's in between these tactics problems that makes the book such a gem: a treasure trove of assorted board vision, chess/math, helpmate, and retrograde problems.

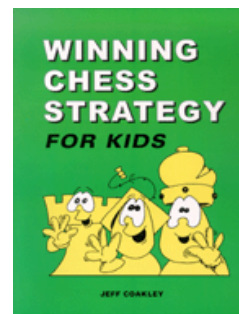
Some examples will whet your appetite:

One type of problem Coakley calls a "Double-Whammy": White is to play and make two moves in a row and checkmate Black. The only caveat is that the first move may not be check. I gave the following Double-Whammy to three players in the 1900-2200 range at our Main Line Chess Club last week:

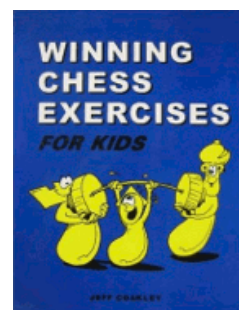


[FEN "r1b3nr/p2nR1Qp/1pk3p/"]

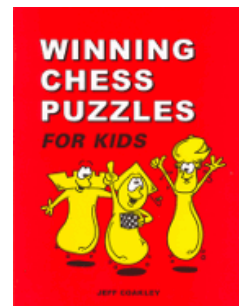
Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



[Winning Chess Strategy for Kids](#)
by Jeff Coakley



[Winning Chess Exercises for Kids](#)
by Jeff Coakley



[Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 1](#)
by Jeff Coakley

You might think that all three would solve a problem from a "Kids" book quite quickly. But, as you can see, this problem is challenging.

My first try at a solution was 1.Rc3 to pin the bishop on c5. This type of move is often the answer, as then a second move like 2.Nb4+ can safely cover both the c6- and d5-squares. Unfortunately, this still allows 2...Kb7.

I can cover b7 and d5 easily enough with a move such as 1.Rxd7, but then all my checking moves are met; e.g., 2.Re6+ Bd6.

So then I noticed that to guard d5, c6, and b7 I need a bishop or a queen on the long diagonal. But the bishop on e2 is covering b5 as well, so b5 needs guarding. This led me to 1.Na3 and then 2.Bf3, which is a checkmate pattern – if it were legal! Unfortunately the queen on a2 would then be checking the white king – I am sure this is not coincidence!

The only idea that works is the startling 1.Qa1 and then 2.Qh1#. This is very difficult to see for a variety of reasons:

- The first move is a long diagonal retreat. Such moves are difficult to spot even for players with good board vision.
- The queen at a1 is *en prise*, so our "normal" chess vision steers us away from this "unsafe" move.
- The action is all in the upper left part of the board and the first rank is clean, so our eyes are drawn away from an attack from the lower right.

None of the three players was able to find this checkmate within the first few minutes.

This all brings up the reason why "regular" chess players looking to improve should consider doing these types of non-traditional puzzles: not only are they fun and challenging, but they specifically work on the types of "vision" needed to play good chess:

Board vision: the ability to see what is happening on the chessboard.

Visualization: the ability to keep track of the pieces as you analyze possible future positions.

Tactical vision: the ability to spot patterns that can forcibly win material and checkmate.

The above Double-Whammy utilizes all three of these. For example, you need to visualize all the possible two-move patterns; you are attempting to see if the positions these produce are both legal and checkmate.

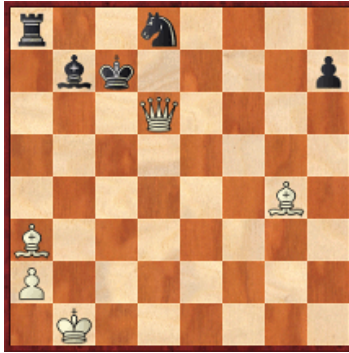
Another challenging type of problem in *WCPK2* is the "Switcheroo" – in this type of problem you may switch *any* two pieces on the board regardless of color (e.g., if White has a queen on b2 and Black has a pawn on h7, you can place a black pawn on b2 and a white queen on h7 instead) and the goal is to create a legal checkmate of the black king. Pawns cannot be switched onto the first or eighth ranks. This sounds easy, but it can be quite challenging. Here are three examples:



[FEN "r4rk1/1p1nbppp/p1b5/q2p2N1/
8/2NB1P2/PPPQ2P1/2KR3R"]



[FEN "r1bq3k/p3R1b1/npp2npQ/
5p2/1PB5/P4PB1/2PN3P/5KNR"]



[FEN "r2n4/1bk4p/3Q4/8/6B1/B7/P7/1K6"]

In the first Switcheroo the first thought is to switch the pawn on h7 with the queen on d2. But although this puts Black into checkmate, both kings are in check, so that switch is not legal. Switching the black king with the knight on c3 is not checkmate (...Kd4) and is not legal, as there is no way that a pawn on b2 and a queen on d2 can both check a king on c3. In fact, there is no way a pawn that has not moved can ever check a king. So the only answer is to *switch the white knight on g5 and the black king on g8*, as the knight on g8 would now guard the only escape square on f6!

In the second Switcheroo, Black is in check, but there are several ways to escape before the switch. Switching the bishop on g3 and the knight on f6 pins the bishop on g7 and stops ...Nh7, but unfortunately after switching the black knight on g3 checks the white king, so that switch puts both kings in check. Switching the white knight on d2 and the black pawn on g6 looks promising until you realize that the double check between the knight on g6 and the queen on h6 is impossible, and thus illegal. The solution is to *switch the black knight on f6 and the black bishop on g7*, solving both pieces ability to stop the checkmate.

In our final Switcheroo, Black is already in checkmate; all we have to do is find a switch that will preserve this. Unfortunately, that seems impossible, as every switch seems either illegal or stops the mate. For example, you can't switch the white king on b1 with the black pawn on h7, as this places a black pawn on the first rank. You can't switch the white king with the black rook on a8, as both kings would be in check. You can't switch the black bishop on b7 with the black rook on a8, since both kings would be in check, as would also be the case if you switch the black pawn on h7 with the white pawn on a2. The answer is to *switch the two white bishops!* This is the only move that retains the status quo; so easy, yet so difficult to spot, as your brain tells you that this accomplishes nothing. However, accomplishing nothing is exactly what you want!

If you have attempted to solve the above four puzzles, I think you get the gist of the contents. It is far from being an "average" chess puzzle book. There are Helpmates, Who's the Goof? (retrograde problems where you have to spot the illegality), Chess Mazes (a la ChessCafe.com's Alberston), the Chess-o-Word (the common word puzzles where you have to find the hidden words in

a jumble of letters, but this time chess words), and many more puzzles.

This is a book that not only provides a fascinating variety of puzzles that's sure to please almost everyone, but also delivers in quantity. There are 249 pages of puzzles and fifty-six or so to provide answers. I think I found only two errors among the many puzzles I solved, and proving those errors required plenty of thought. At one point a student and I thought we had found another error, but after a while I realized that Coakley's answer was indeed correct.

If you are looking for a book that is thought provoking, fun, and instructive, then *Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 2* will more than fill the bill.

Order [Winning Chess Puzzles for Kids, Vol. 2](#)

by Jeff Coakley

Purchase all four *Winning Chess* volumes by Jeff Coakley and automatically save an extra \$10.00!

Comment on this week's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

Readers' Responses

John from Australia - I agree the book is a standout!

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.