

Mastering Chess Strategy

Johan Hellsten

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Johan Hellsten : Mastering Chess Strategy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mastering Chess Strategy:

46 of 47 people found the following review helpful. Hellsten did it again! By M. Ararat Author Johan Hellsten (Play the Sicilian Kan) and editor John Emms created a great book on Chess Strategy. What makes this book stand out: 1. The book is well structured. The introduction has definitions such as: dynamics, plan, initiative, typical position so author and readers will be on the same page. 2. From the start Hellsten makes it clear about the role of tactics in your game. A great strategic idea will fail if you do not recognize or stop your opponent's threats first. 3. A good balance between complete games and fragments. 4. Many ideas may be familiar to the reader, but the inclusion of training positions

will make the difference. The training positions help to add the strategic concepts to your chess intuition (during play).⁵ The games cover a wide range from the 50's up to 2009. The games and position are annotated with a balanced amount of word and variations, so you keep your attention on what is important and not on minor details.⁶ Sometimes the opening that originated a position is mentioned. For example Hellsten - Soppe Pinamar 2004 pag 176. Is this relevant, I think it is, in this particular game Hellsten give us the "HOW" to mobilize a kingside majority against strong Argentinian player (which by the way excel in this type of structures, just check your database).⁷ About the book: It is sturdy, the layout is easy on your eyes and you have 3-4 blank pages at the end to write notes or write your own opening index. Who will benefit from this book? that is a tough one... I think this book must be the second strategy book for a club player. A club player must work on a good primer on strategy such as Chess strategy for the club player (by Albur and Palatnik) or Euwe's books on the middlegame. These books will provide the background to tackle this book. Advance players will find a lot of positions to study and solve. Finally, Jhon Emms is doing a great work as Editor. This book remind me of the quality of Starting out the Scandinavian by Jovanka Houska (also edited by Emms) In my opinion this is a high quality book (my chess skill level is 1900 USCF). Disclaimer: I am not a professional reviewer, just a chess fan. UPDATE! November 24 2010 A review by Steven B. Dowd at ChessCafe [...] is available now. This reviewer has problems with his copy. According to him the book is falling apart... My copy is doing fine, the binding still intact. Mr. Dowd provided a more detailed review of this book than me. Please check it out if you have a chance. Thank you, 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Quantity over master level quality=excellent instruction By stampy I have gone through 2/3 of this excellent book, both the examples and the exercises. The strength of this book lies in the sheer weight of its examples and puzzles which illustrate each theme and sub-theme of chess strategy (there are at least 30 sub-themes, each with numerous examples and puzzles to solve). As has been noted, it is not suitable for a first book on chess strategy, and I'd say it is only for 1600 USCF or stronger (I am 1838 as of 15 years ago and am probably currently around 1900-2000). If you're the kind of chess player who can be shown one or two striking and exhaustively analyzed examples of, say, the power of two bishops, or the concept of exchanging pieces to reduce opponent activity, and then you immediately incorporate these concepts in your games, you don't need this book. For the rest of us, learning is a slower, more incremental process, and it takes a lot of exposure to begin to develop a positional "feel". I think that's what MCS does best, it develops your positional "feel," although it takes a lot of work on the reader's part. But who expects this to be easy? MCS is difficult yet not mind-numbing, and that's an important distinction. I find the depth of analysis to be just right on balance, considering the goal is learning by repetition. If the analyses were exhaustive, the book would be 2000 pages long. That said, the analysis of positions and problems are usually rigorous enough to make the point. Most of the game excerpts are biased toward modern chess (1950s to present), but I did just finish a puzzle from Teichmann/Bernstein, 1909. Again, the book is not heavy on brain-numbing tactics and variations (there are other books for that), but neither is it lightweight or superficial. It is geared squarely toward improving, relatively advanced class players, who need to be exposed to a lot of material in order to learn. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By julian Excellent book, highly recommended for positional study

This book provides a basic foundation of strategy in all three phases of chess the opening, middlegame and endgame as well as an abundance of carefully selected exercises to monitor progress.

From the Back Cover Study brings wisdom. Practice brings perfection. Grandmaster Johan Hellsten is convinced that mastering chess strategy just like chess tactics requires practice, practice and yet more practice! This outstanding book is a product of his many years' work as a full-time chess teacher, and is specifically designed as part of a structured training programme to improve strategic thinking. It focuses on a wide range of key subjects and provides a basic foundation for strategic play. Furthermore, in addition to the many examples, there's an abundance of carefully selected exercises which allow readers to monitor their progress and put into practice what they have just learned. Following such a course is an ideal way for players of all standards to improve. Although designed mainly for students, this book is also an excellent resource for chess teachers and trainers. *An essential course in chess strategy* Contains over 400 pages of Grandmaster advice *Includes more than 350 training exercises Johan Hellsten is a Grandmaster, a former Swedish Champion and a European Team Championship individual gold medalist. He's a renowned chess teacher and is firmly establishing himself as a writer with outstanding credentials.