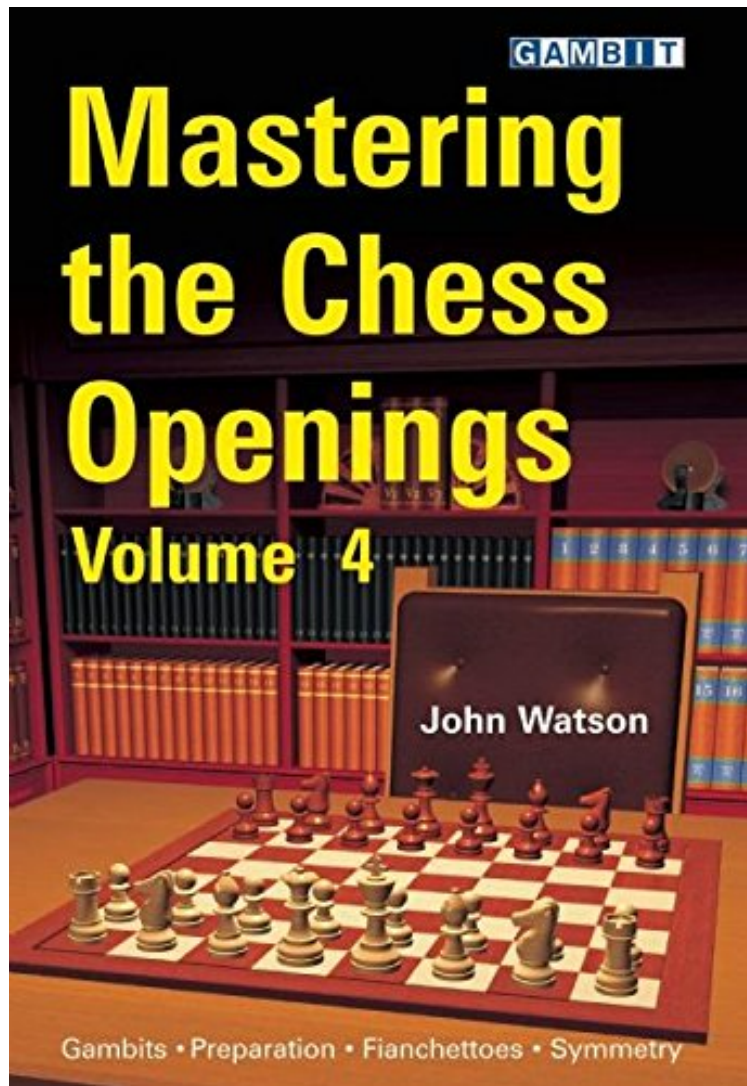


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Mastering the Chess Openings volume 4

John Watson

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John Watson : Mastering the Chess Openings volume 4 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mastering the Chess Openings volume 4:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great and Unique Opening StudyBy R. TobiasThis is the last volume in IM Watson's excellent opening series. This is a unique series in more than one way. Firstly, it is neither a repertoire, nor is it a comprehensive survey of openings. Rather, Watson has selected various openings for their instructive value, especially for the typical player. He treats openings as an organic whole, and ties them together, finding similarites in openings that you would normally think should be considered totally separately. Another unique feature is simply that Watson is one of the world's leading opening experts, and a very experienced instructor of

average players. So the material in this series is of unusually high quality. This vol. focuses on 'odds and ends' openings not covered in the first 3 vols. In particular, Watson looks at the Reti Opening, symmetrical openings like the Petroff, gambits (including 'primitive' old fashioned gambits, and modern sophisticated gambits like the Benko), Reversed Openings, Double Fianchettoes, and irregular openings like Owen's Def, Larsen's Op. and even rare oddities like 1.g4. A special feature of this Vol. is a section on how to select your openings, which is in several sections aimed at players of various strengths. This could be THE most important section of the whole series for the developing player who has taken the typical haphazard trial and error approach that most of us seem to take. There is something in this series for players of a wide range of strengths, from serious post-beginners all the way up to masters and even beyond. I think that for anyone who has not already reached a rather high level of opening expertise, a series like this, which is based on understanding key opening principles, is of more value than picking up a monograph on the latest hot opening and memorizing reams of lines. Yes, if you want to be a titled player, you have to memorize a lot, but for us non-masters, we would be better off learning the 'nuts and bolts' strategic and tactical principles that underlie all openings first. This series is a great place to get that education. Highly recommended, along with the other three volumes in the series.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. In-depth Coverage of Less Common Openings
By Matt Morgan
It took joining a local chess club and repeatedly getting clobbered right out of the opening to realize that in order to stand much of a chance I needed to invest more time in the study of opening theory. I already have a copy of MCO but it is heavy on spewing out moves, light on explanation and has more than a few typos that sometimes make following the variations difficult. I researched books on opening theory and finally settled on Watson's Mastering the Chess Openings series. This is a somewhat more costly resource than many of the others available (four volumes instead of a single book) but it's a worthwhile investment. Volume 4 of the series covers a lot of odd openings that did not fit into the other three volumes, some of which are not often seen in higher levels of play but are very useful for the surprise factor. Of the four volumes, this one is the one I use and appreciate most. It covers the following openings and systems:- Reti: Open and Closed Variations- Reti: Slav Variations- Modern Kingside Fianchetto- Modern Queenside Fianchetto- Gambits- f-Pawns and Reversed Openings (this includes the Dutch and Bird Openings)- Symmetry and its Descendants (Petroff, Four Knights and two variations on the English Opening)It also includes a couple of chapters that suggest how to select openings for study and also try to predict the trends in opening theory.I was especially interested in the Dutch Defense and this volume really helped me to understand the themes behind it. I have been successful with it though I still have more to learn.Watson does a great job of explaining all of these opening systems (or opening defenses as appropriate). That is, rather than give a summary blurb about the opening and then just prattling on with move after move, he walks the reader through the opening, explaining the purpose behind each move. Then, once finished with the main sequence of moves, he includes one or more instructive games with relevant analysis and variations. This is so much more helpful than a cold and clinical presentation of silent moves.Watson's writing style is very clear and approachable. He neither talks down to his readership nor does he assume that everyone has a doctorate in chess.This is a superb series on chess openings which will leave the reader with a much clearer understanding of not just the moves involved in the openings but also an understanding of the purpose and goals of any given opening and variation covered. Although the cost of the series is more than that of a single volume it is well worth it.

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Must have for every serious chess player
By K. Yee
I like the way Watson gives the basic ideas of the more unusual openings especially the part on gambits. When I first started out in chess I use to follow the way Paul Morphy played and practically gave pieces away on purpose for more activity. I later had to temper that against better players but through the explanations and ideas of how gambits are suppose to work I may have a change of heart and go back to that style of play with a much better understanding. The break down of "primitive" gambits and 'positional' gambits is outstanding and feel that part of the book to me was worth reading.

Helps chess-players achieve a more holistic view of the openings

From the Inside Flap In this highly-acclaimed series, John Watson helps chess-players achieve a more holistic and insightful view of the openings. He explains not only the ideas and strategies behind specific openings, but also the interconnections of chess openings taken as a whole. By presenting the common threads that underlie opening play, Watson provides a permanent basis for playing openings of any type. This final volume draws together many themes in a wide-ranging discussion of general opening topics. By looking at familiar situations from new angles, Watson helps us greatly increase our understanding of them. In the process, he covers a wide variety of opening structures and variations not seen in the earlier volumes and presents a great wealth of original analysis. * Rti and Fianchetto Systems* Reversed Openings* Symmetry* Irregular Openings* Gambits: Primitive or Positional* Universal Openings In the final two chapters, Watson presents his views on the importance of opening study and explains how players should best prepare and choose their openings for the level at which they play. He looks at the future of chess openings and explains which skills will be most important as chess evolves in the forthcoming decades.