

## **Richard Shorman**

# Chess

### **IMPROVING YOUR CHESS PLAY By KEN SMITH**

(USCF master Ken Smith, editor of "Chess Digest Magazine," offers some sage advice on how to go about improving your game.)

#### **For Beginners Thru Published Class "D"**

When I say published, I mean published, not what you think your rating should be because of some good results:

(1) No less than three basic introductory books should be studied.

(2) Develop (on paper) a limited opening system. You must be able to get out of the opening with some kind of a decent game so that you are not fighting uphill all the time. You want progress and this will give it to you quickly. Now STOP working on openings.

(3) Go thru two combination books, followed by at least two "talking" endgame books like "Practical Chess Endings" by Chernev or "Practical Chess Endgames" by Hooper.

(4) Now play and lose, play and lose, play and lose, then play and win once in a while.

#### **For Published Class "C" Thru Class "B"**

This is your most important hill to climb, for here the basis must be laid for your future progress:

(1) Now you are ready for "treatises." How many? That's up to you.

(2) It is time to discard that limited opening system. You have got to establish openings that will make you an all-around chess player. It is not important as a Class "C" or "B" player to know all the variations, but do know your main lines. Now I am going to give you a "must" — most of you are either too stubborn or cowardly to do it. You must play some gambits. There is no substitute. Being a pawn down, you will have to dig into each position on each move, you will learn to use that extra space and tempo, you will develop that killer instinct, you will learn to handle open positions and be ready when that closed position will surely become open. Sure, you are going to lose some games because you played a gambit, but then (like something out of the blue) you will start to win, you will start being a strong player. Those who cannot stand to lose games and rating points because they are converting to gambit play are hopeless in my book. Once you have your system, STOP. Openings must not dominate your study time.

(3) At this point in your chess career tactics and combinations must be the highlight of your study. Go over every book on this subject that you can beg, borrow or steal. Repetition and more repetition with each book is your key to success.

(4) There are only two endgame books I recommend at this point, "Chess Endings: Essential Knowledge" by Averbakh and "A Pocket Guide to Endgames" by Hooper.

#### **For Published Class "A" Thru Expert**

These two classes of players are only a stepping stone of technique and experience to mastership (with work):

(1) 60 percent of your study time should be spent on openings. Make a decision on your White opening and Black defenses, making sure they are critical lines that are currently being played in master and grandmaster chess. Buy a book on each of them. You must have a basis to work from, so it does not matter if the book is a few years old. Pick out the variations you are going to play. Each month turn to the opening theory section of magazines and look for references to your variations. If you find any, go over them right then. All this will take only about a sixth of the 60 percent you have allotted to openings, but it is the basis for improving your game as a whole.

Buy the last three volumes of the "Chess Player" series and the last three "Informant" series. Concentrate only on these and any future ones that come out. Search for your variations in the "Chess Player" series first, the main reason being that they give all the games in major tournaments (so not only do you not miss any games, but also you know what is being played). They also try to get the player to annotate his own important games (thereby getting better notes), instead of doing like the "Informant" series, taking a group of games and having one master go over them. Next, the "Informant" series should be used to seek out games with your variations. Don't worry about duplication; in fact, hope that some games come up twice for repetition plus different viewpoints.

Now comes the most important part. Use this method on each game with your openings or variations that you want to go over. GO OVER THE COMPLETE GAME. Question quickly each move, especially any notes. Have small doubts no matter who the players are or who is annotating until you satisfy yourself (again, quickly) that you agree. Spend no more than 15 or 20 minutes on each game. Don't worry about an evaluation that shows your variation in a bad light. There are improvements and evaluation changes in all critical openings. You will be learning your middlegame and even your endgame ideas. You will be staying right on top of changes and you yourself will be able to add to the opening once you know it.

(2) 20 percent of your time should be devoted to reviewing your treatises and combination books. You are a strong player now and your comprehension is much greater than before. Hit those combination books again until tactics is one of your strong points.

(3) 20 percent of your time should be reserved for endgame study. Now and only now, tackle "Basic Chess Endings" by Fine. This, along with your study of the openings by going clear through each game to the end will be enough.

When you know your openings, when you are exposed to the intricacies of your middlegames and when you are forced to be a part of accurate endgames, then you will feel the power that radiates from your game.

(Edited from "Chess Digest Magazine," Aug. 1976, pp. 169-171)

**White: V. Pakhomov.**

**Black: V. Romanov.**

**Championship of Novokuibyshevsk, 1978.**

**Two Knights' Defense**

**INSERT**

**White: Sheveleva. Black: Kuritsyna. Altai, 1978.**

**Sicilian Defense 1 e4 c5 2 c3 Nc6 3 d4 cd 4 cd e6 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Ne2 Nf6 7 e5 Ne4 8 a3 Ba5 9 b4 Nc3 10 Nc3 Bb6 11 Be3 a6 12 Qg4 g6 13 Ne4 h5 14 Qf3 O-O 15 Nf6 Kg7 16 Qf4 Rh8 17 g4 h4 18 Bd3 Ne7 19 Nh5 Kf8 20 Qf6 Rh7 21 Bh6 Kg8 22 Bg5 Bc6 23 Qf4 Qf8 24 Nf6 Kg7 25 Nh7 Kh7 26 Bf6 Bd8 27 g5 Bf6 28 Qh4 Kg8 29 gf d6 30 Rg1 de 31 Rg6 fg 32 Bg6 Resigns.**

1 e4	e5	14 Rf1	Qe4
2 Nf3	Nc6	15 Kf2	O-O-O
3 Bc4	Nf6	16 cd	Rf8
4 Ng5	Bc5	17 Kg1	Qd4
5 Nf7	Bf2	18 Kg2	Qe4
6 Kf1	Qe7	19 Kg1	Rf1
7 Nh8	d5	20 Kf1	Bh3
8 ed	Nd4	21 Kf2	Nf6
9 c3	Bg4	22 g4	Ng4
10 Qa4	Nd7	23 Kg3	Qg2
11 Kf2	Qh4	24 Kh4	Nf6
12 g3	Qg6	25 Bf1	g5mate
13 Ke1	Qf3		