

Preface – a Note to the Reader

This is my third book on self-evaluation and the first of a planned series of books in “match” format. Perhaps you are familiar with my prior works – the original **Chess Exam and Training Guide** (IamCoach Press, 2004) as well as its successor – **Chess Exam and Training Guide – Tactics** (IamCoach Press, 2007). Both were welcomed by readers and critics alike.

Much like my previous two books, this book's objective is to educate and entertain you. When you are done reading it, I believe you will improve your understanding of the game of chess, and, if you so choose, will be able to identify your overall skill level (rating) as well as your weak and strong areas. Along the way, I will also supply you with plenty of tips, training suggestions and other ideas to improve your results as well as to increase your understanding and appreciation of this great game.

One thing that sets this book apart from its predecessors is a different format. Rather than solving a variety of puzzles based on the real games as well as composed positions of all kinds, in this book you are presented with examples from the games of one player! This player is **Robert J. Fischer**, 11th World Champion, who was never defeated in the official title match, and is considered one of the greatest chess players of all times.

Each position in this book is an unaltered fragment from one of Fischer's games and you are given chance to take the “seat” of his opponent and square off with the chess legend. In one game you will be Mikhail Tal battling Fischer in the World Championship Candidates match (1959), and in another one – Chuck Diebert playing in a simul in Chicago (1964). In each case you are given Fischer's last move, and it will be up to you to figure out Fischer's ideas and to find the response that would be best to play, as well as to justify it with your thought process. In essence, you will have a virtual match against the chess legend! He will put serious pressure on you, create threats and be evasive, attack with fury and fiercely defend. The positions range from Middlegame to Endgame, Tactics to Strategy, Easy to Complex, etc...I hope you will enjoy them.

You will be graded on each position in two different ways. The first one is fairly scientific, and very familiar to the readers of my prior books. The second is there mainly for entertainment purposes. More details can be found in the section **Final Comments: Scoring System** (page 28).

To summarize, in this book you will see:

- a warm-up section, as no one should play a serious opponent, especially the world champion, without a warm-up;
- 60 “games” split into 5 “matches” of 12 “games” each.
- “let’s take a break” sections between the “matches”;
- a rating tables section, where you get your overall rating and another 13 ratings for key sub-categories;
- an appendix with a bonus “match” that you can “play” on your own; a “sudden death” tiebreaker; tips and recommendations; the game index.

If you take your time and maintain your focus, you can do well. And if you can do well against Fischer, then you can play well against anyone. Just keep working on improving your skills and increasing your knowledge base.

Igor Khmelnsky

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P.S. I am planning to write more books in this new series and very much looking forward to getting feedback from the readers. Please contact me through my website <http://www.ChessExam.com/cef.htm>.