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Pawn Structure Chess



Synopsis

Pawns form the "playing fields" of chess, a semipermanent "structure" that can determine whether a player wins or loses. This major update to the classic guide to pawn structure, written by international Grandmaster Andrew Soltis, teaches readers how to handle their pawns. He explains where best to place them, which pawns to advance or exchange, and why certain structures are good and others disastrous. Pawn Structure Chess is a must-have for everyone who plays.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Some 250 years ago, the great Philidor wrote, "The pawns are the soul of chess." Although that statement is perhaps the most common cliché in the literature of the game, it is too often misunderstood. Pawns are usually considered weak because of their limited range of movement. But the pawns' restricted mobility is precisely what makes them so important strategically: they form a semi-permanent structure -- often called a "pawn skeleton" -- that establishes the territorial lines of the coming battle and thus the nature of the battle itself. Understanding how pawns affect strategy is the subject of this important book. In it you will learn:-- how to handle the characteristic pawn structure of each opening "family" and each major variation-- how to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of pawn chains-- when to exchange pawns in the center -- and when not to-- how to cramp your opponent's position and what to do if your opponent cramps yours-- how to create and exploit pawn "holes"...and much, much more, all copiously illustrated by complete games from actual play. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

International Grandmaster Andrew Soltis is a professional journalist who writes for the New York Post and a popular chess writer. His many books include *The Wisest Things Ever Said About Chess*, *Transpo Tricks in Chess*, and *How to Choose a Chess Move* (all Batsford).

I am reading *Pawn Structure Chess* right now. Here's the scoop. I have this book for about a year or so, skimmed it when it arrived, and then shelved it like so many others. A typical scenario I guess. I am an endgame player and until now have always spoken negatively about openings. Many authors such as Soltis himself, Dvoretsky, Aagaard, Giddins, and Nunn, just to name a few, have stated that (paraphrasing) openings are fashionable, or exhaustible. That is to say that what is here today may not be here tomorrow, but this in no way means that one cannot adopt any line of one's choosing and play it consistently. In *Studying Chess Made Easy*, also by Soltis, he pointed to the "paradoxical" (his word) relationship between memory and understanding i.e. between the openings, and the middlegame. He says 'what good is remembering how to reach a position, or tabiya, if when you get there you don't understand what is going on'? And conversely, what good is learning a middlegame position and its typical plans, if you don't remember how to get there in the first place? To my mind this is not paradoxical at all if the game is viewed as an organic whole. (I am not offering criticism of Soltis in any form. I am simply going to state that for me things took a different course. I have nothing but praise for Soltis and I recommend all of his books. I have six or seven. He is the only American chess author I read. He is a wonderful writer in general, and he really understands his audience). What *Pawn Structure Chess* does is familiarize you with typical methods of play that are organically connected to the opening. For example, I have (intuitively) played a Slav many times for both colors. But I did NOT know about Tchigorin's ...e5 Plan until Soltis brought it to my attention in *Pawn Structure Chess*. This 'plan' is well over a hundred years old! What does this mean? Well, it means that I have a lot of research to do. Sometimes, as it is this time for me, a chess book comes along at the right time and fills a gap. And so it is with *Pawn Structure Chess*. Basically the book is about typical methods of middlegame play based on pawn structure. This is why incidentally *Pawn Structure Chess* is not an openings book, but a middlegame manual. The layout is highly instructive, simple, and beautiful.

Andrew Soltis delivers a powerful teaching vehicle for understanding basic pawn structures and the strategic objectives for them. The book focuses on chess strategy as a consequence of the pawn structure; it does not concentrate on tactics or end game issues, and previous reviewers that knock

the book on those points neglect the author's goal. His teaching technique is synthetic rather than analytic. He discusses a pawn structure and possible strategies to consider and illustrates his thesis with one or more games. I like this approach because it allows the reader to see the pawn structure as it develops and then observe its influence on the middle game and the end game. This style also allows weaker players to study pawn structure without getting bogged down with technical issues like tactical concerns or trying to memorize a bunch of do's and don't's. Soltis makes no claim to exhaust the topic, though the many applications seem comprehensive enough for the non-master. An excellent book for the 1500-2000 player.

very accurate and comprehensive ... I can open the book to a random page and get useful help clearly explained ... for great education at the intermediate level, traverse the book in sequence playing through the examples with a physical set ... one of the two best books on pawns (Krnich's "Pawn Power in Chess" is the other)

In this book Andrew Soltis presents the fundamental and most common pawn structures along with the ideas in those structures.

A pretty difficult read, but if you put the time in, it will really pay off.

When I first bought the paper version of this book years ago, I was too much of a beginner to really read the variations and understand them. The knowledge contained in this book can greatly improve your thinking and planning, but it can not, in my opinion, be acquired without some hard work. Really understand this, you can't be in a hurry. I finally found the best way to proceed is to set up a board (computer or physical) and patiently play through the variations while reading the text. Of course, if you already have 5-10,000 positions memorized, reading it straight out might be fine. Great book, great knowledge, but be prepared to work hard to get it.

great book on pawn systems

Fine chess book. All that remains for the reader is to play over the positions and memorize the ideas and positions. Highly recommended!

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