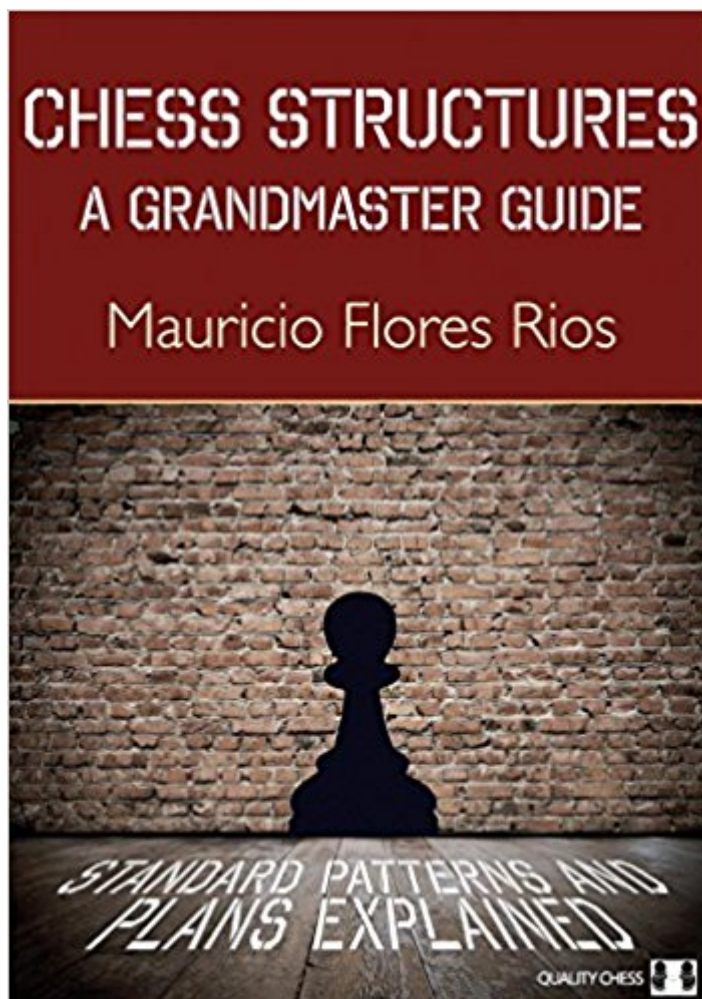


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Chess Structures: A Grandmaster Guide



Synopsis

Mauricio Flores Rios provides an in-depth study of the 28 most common structures in chess practice. In *Chess Structures: A Grandmaster Guide* you will find: Carefully selected model games showing each structure's main plans and ideas Strategic patterns to observe and typical pitfalls to avoid 50 positional exercises with detailed solutions

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mauricio Flores Rios is a grandmaster from Chile. He achieved the title at eighteen, and is a regular member of Chile's Olympic team. Mauricio combines his career as a chess player and trainer with his PhD studies in Mathematics at the University of Minnesota.

I'd consider myself an intermediate player and found this book very useful. I really like the layout of each chapter, where the author first gives general plans for both sides before illustrating these plans several times in the form of commentated games. Before and after each of the games presented in each chapter the author explains what the main idea is as far as the pawn structure is concerned. I'm not sure how much I subscribe to the notion that certain levels of players should buy certain chess books because they aren't advanced enough. Sure, if you're just beginning to play or only have a very rudimentary knowledge of the game then this book probably isn't for you. However, if that is your level of chess you're probably not checking this book out. This isn't advanced mathematics or theoretical physics ... it's a book about chess and anyone with the motivation to even think about buying a book like this will very likely get *something* out of reading it. Higher rated players will glean more from this book than lower rated players, but there is something useful

for almost everyone. Beyond the material itself I thought the physical book itself was well-constructed. It is printed on high-quality paper and the book is easy to work with. Unfortunately the package it was shipped in wasn't great and there ended up being some minor damage done to the outside front cover ... of course no knocks to the star rating of the book here. All together highly recommended!

I find the book highly instructive for several reasons. First, I find learning the structures and plans help me understand the opening I play a lot more than just memorizing moves. When the tactics run out, I am now less likely to drift as I know the basic plans to pursue. Second, the book goes beyond the structures, but also teaches basic middlegame and endgame principles. For this reason, I find myself going through games in the book, even those not in my opening/structure. Third, the author's writing is excellent and accessible to class players (I am a USCF class B). He knows when to add variations and when to keep going. It also reads like a college textbook. The beginning of a chapter has a summary of the basic plans, and every game has an introduction of the concept to be introduced and a conclusion of what was learned. This book is destined to be a classic.

The previous reviewer wrote a great review, so I'll just add or emphasize a few points.. Like the previous reviewer, I also view the target audience as 1800-2300 players. I also very much like the way the material is organized and presented. I also believe that the French defense section could be significantly improved if longer. There was no discussion of the French structures that can arise from the Winawer, McCutcheon, Burn, Rubinstein variations, for example. The three French Defense structures examined include one that typically arises from the Tarrasch with e6/d5 vs d4; one from the Steinitz variation after 7. Be3 cd4; and the d4/e5 vs e6/d5 structure (whether arising from the Advance French, Advance Caro-Kann, or some other opening). Despite this minor reservation, this is a great book, and in my opinion should be an early contender for Chess Book of the Year.

This is another sterling offering from Quality Chess. This 464-page book has been authored by a 24-year-old Chilean GM. It looks at strategic plans for white and black in the context of five "families" -- 1) d4 and ...d5, 2) Open Sicilian, 3) Benoni, 4) King's Indian, and 5) French. Each of these families is further subdivided thematically, with each theme receiving a chapter. For instance, d4 and ...d5 is divided into the isolated pawn, hanging pawns, Carlsbad formation, Caro-Kann formation, Slav formation, Stonewall formation, and Grunfeld centre. This first family alone takes up

125 pages of carefully annotated games, each with its own "lesson objective" and "final remarks." In a sense the book is like the tomes, "Mastering the Spanish" by Danny King and "Mastering the King's Indian Defence" by Bellin and Ponzetto except that it covers several structures and its coverage of each is perforce more brief. Flores argues that books on general chess strategy only take one so far. To get to the next level of expertise it's necessary to know what motifs and other strategic elements are important for a given pawn structure. The style and quality of annotation is reminiscent of Mihail Marin -- i.e., insightful and a perfect blend of explanation and variational analysis. Flores claims he looked at over 20,000 games to select the ones he analyses in his book. They are (virtually) all grandmaster games of the last few years (2006-2014). As with Jon Edwards' excellent "Sacking the Citadel," this book has been written with the help of ChessBase. In this case it means 1) identifying common pawn structures, 2) using ChessBase to find the games with a given pawn structure, 3) looking for common motifs and strategies, 4) finding the games that best exemplify them, and 5) annotating those games carefully and summarising the lessons. Target readership? Probably USCF 1800-2300 though players lower than 1800 and higher than 2300 can also expect to learn something. This is a book of enduring worth, like the trilogy of annotated games of Judit Polgar (also published by Quality Chess). If you are serious about your chess, buy a copy. Sell the family silver, remortgage your house, "do what you gotta do" to buy the book. My complaint is that the book is too short. It could easily have been three hundred pages longer. In particular, the section on the French -- at around 50 pages -- is woefully brief.

If you are rated 1500+ then this is a must book as part of your studies. The author breaks down the pawn structures via the different openings themes. Covers all the major openings, easy to read and follow. The exercises at the end of the book will only help you improve that much more in this complex understanding.

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