



Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy

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It is now seventy years since Nimzowitsch wrote his monumental work *My System*. While it remains a fundamental work on chess strategy, the way chess positions are handled has changed greatly since Nimzowitsch's time - both refinements to existing ideas, and completely new concepts. John Watson's book fulfils the need for a thorough, profound work on the modern handling of chess positions, and how Nimzowitsch's theories - still controversial and revolutionary at the time *My System* was written - have been refined and used alongside classical concepts.

The first section of the book discusses how the understanding of classical themes, such as pawn majorities, the centre, and structural weaknesses, have been refined. Watson then moves on to discuss new concepts, including the willingness of modern players to accept backward pawns in return for dynamic play, the idea of a good 'bad' bishop, knights finding useful roles at the edge of the board and the exchange sacrifice idea that became prevalent with the post-war Soviet champions. This profound yet thoroughly practical work is rounded off with sections on prophylactic thinking, dynamism, modern concepts as they apply to the critical contemporary opening systems, and some thoughts on the future of chess.

Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy Details

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Sameer says

FANTASTIC! If you have read My System by Nimzowich, then you'd love this. After finishing with the text part, you gotta sit with a chess board to go through the games in this book. Magic!

Mr_Toad says

More than this (chess evolution), the book has forced me to re-evaluate my approach to the game - completely. It shows how a lot of reported chess wisdom is simply misleading. The rules that we absorbed as chess novices are called into question. John Watson "frees" us from our prejudices and may allow you to play "your own game". Frankly, I am now looking forward to a chess future where my own creativity can blossom and flourish - without worrying about the consequences of breaking the rules laid down in stone (which were actually millstones round my neck).

Gareth Griffiths says

An excellent book that I recommend to anyone who's read Nimzowitsch's *My System*. If you're looking for a book that tells you how to play then this is not it, but it will give you more things to think about while playing.

William Schill says

An amazing book, not a how to improve your play, rather an explanation of chess as a discipline and how it evolves. Fascinating!

Serge Pierro says

There is a reason why John Watson is considered to among the best chess writers, and this book is further proof. Watson shows the differences between the modern game and those from the days of Nimzovitch. Fascinating insight into the evolution of chess thinking.

Paul says

I've been flicking between Watson's update on chess thinking since Nimzowitch and Sammy Reshevsky's The Art of Positional Play and the difference between the two is a chess education in itself. While

Reshevsky's opening premise is largely derived from the theories of Wilhelm Steinitz, the first world chess champion, Watson stresses the importance of actual analysis of actual positions over general rules, which he argues is what distinguishes today's top players from the rest. As always he writes in a clear yet erudite way that engages as it teaches.
