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*United States Chess Federation chess master*



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# *Chess Openings* FOR DUMMIES®

**by James Eade**



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## Chess Openings For Dummies®

Published by  
Wiley Publishing, Inc.  
111 River St.  
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774  
[www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2010930725

ISBN: 978-0-470-60364-2

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



# About the Author

Like many others, **James Eade** first got interested in chess thanks to legendary player Bobby Fischer. He played his first official tournament game in 1972, quickly became the top player at his high school, and represented the University of Massachusetts in the 1975 Pan-American Collegiate Games.

The United States Chess Federation (USCF) certified him as a chess master for over-the-board tournament play in 1981 and as a correspondence chess master in 1984. International organizations gave him the chess master title in 1990 (for correspondence chess) and in 1993 (for over-the-board tournament play). He represented the United States in a number of international correspondence chess team tournaments.

In the 1990s, he began to supplement his chess-playing career by writing about the game, organizing elite tournaments, and teaching. He has written several books on chess, including the bestselling *Chess For Dummies* (Wiley), now in its second edition, and *The Chess Player's Bible* (Barron's). He has written numerous articles for a wide variety of publications and has been the editor of two chess journals. He was elected president of the Chess Journalists of America in 1995.

James was also elected vice-president of CalChess (the Northern California Chess Association) in 1991 and became the CalChess president in 1995. In 1996 he was elected to be a member of the executive board of the USCF and served until 1999.

He was appointed zone president in 2000 to represent the USCF in Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE), the world governing body for chess, and served until 2002. He was elected to be a trustee of the U.S. Charitable Chess Trust in 2000 and became its treasurer in 2005, a capacity in which he continues to serve to this day.





# *Dedication*

To Sheri, whose steadfast confidence in me has been amazing.

# *Author's Acknowledgments*

I'd like to thank Sheri Anderson for all her support and encouragement over the years. She may not be a chess player, but she puts up with one.

I'd like to thank Stacy Kennedy for coming up with the idea for this project, for pitching it, and for getting it approved. Todd Lothery was the copy editor for this book, and I thank him for all the work he did cleaning up my submissions. I really appreciated my project editor, Vicki Adang, and her many contributions. She knows how to push without ever being pushy.

I want to give a special thank you to John Watson, who was more than just a technical editor. John caught mistakes, of course, but he also gave me advice throughout the course of the project. I've been a big fan of John's work, and it was a pleasure collaborating with him.

## **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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# Introduction

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**C**hess openings have been written about for centuries, but new books on the subject appear all the time. The analysis of leading experts has been augmented recently by sophisticated software and blindingly fast processing power. New insights are causing reevaluations of even the oldest of chess openings.

Chess has so many possible move orders, even in the opening phase of the game, that it's humanly impossible to commit them all to memory. Most players become specialists on a very small number of openings in order to avoid unfamiliar territory.

I looked at all these dense, technical, highly specialized tomes on chess openings, and I decided I wanted to write a different kind of book. I wanted to give average chess enthusiasts a way to choose an opening that would suit their style of play.

But the question is always, which of the myriad chess openings should you adopt for yourself? This book is intended to help you find the right chess opening for you.

## *About This Book*

No single book can comprehensively cover all the chess openings. Entire books have been devoted to a single variation on a single opening. You don't want to spend hours trying to memorize chess openings; you just want to be able to play them well and get to the type of game you enjoy.

What this book does provide is a guide to the general principles behind playing a chess opening well, and specific examples of practical play. I break down the openings into different types and include examples of wins and losses in the most common openings, which help you develop a feel for what type of game you'll be getting into if you decide to play one of them.

For each variation of an opening, I present a game in which White wins, followed by a game in which Black comes out on top. Throughout these games, I offer commentary that helps you see where a player's strategy succeeds or fails. Remember, no opening gives you a 100-percent success rate — you need to know the good and the bad in order to make an informed choice.

The great thing about this book is that *you* decide where to start and what to read. It's a reference work that you can jump into and out of at will. Just head to the table of contents or the index to find the information you want.

## Conventions Used in This Book

I use the following conventions throughout the text to make things consistent and easy to understand:

- ✓ I use *italics* to define chess terms that you may not be familiar with.
- ✓ I use **bold** to indicate a move in a chess game. Bold type distinguishes the actual moves made in the game from moves that appear in my comments about the game.
- ✓ Web addresses appear in `monofont`.

When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If you come across a two-line Web address, rest assured that I haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So when you're using one of these Web addresses, just type exactly what you see on the page, pretending that the line break doesn't exist.

## What You're Not to Read

You'll notice a few gray boxes that contain information or anecdotes that supplement the chapter text. These are called *sidebars*, and you can safely skip the information in them and not miss anything essential, although if you do read them, I think you'll find the info interesting.

## Foolish Assumptions

I may be going out on a limb, but as I wrote this book, here's what I assumed about you:

- ✓ You've played chess before and are familiar with the game's terminology.
- ✓ You're familiar with chess notation. (In case this is a particularly bad assumption, I include a short primer in Chapter 1.)

- ✓ You want to better your game, whether that means being able to beat your nemesis, play in a chess league, or join your school's chess team.
- ✓ You own a reference work such as *Chess For Dummies*, 2nd Edition (Wiley). A reference is a great help for when you run into something unfamiliar.

## *How This Book Is Organized*

This book is organized into six parts. The first part helps you understand chess openings in general terms. The next four parts get down to specific chess openings grouped together by opening type. The last part is the Part of Tens — a *For Dummies* staple that watchers of David Letterman's show will be familiar with.

### *Part I: Principles of Play*

In this part, I explain what an opening is, how openings vary from one another, and how they're classified. I also identify the type of player who enjoys playing the openings in each category so you can skip to the openings that sound like your style of play.

### *Part II: Winning with Open Games*

Games that begin 1.e4 e5 open up lines for speedy mobilization of your pieces and allow you to attack quickly. The openings I describe in this part are some of the oldest in the game, but they're also some of the most popular because they allow players to attack early and often.

### *Part III: Having It Both Ways with Semi-Open Games*

When you're playing Black and you want to shake things up, you can respond to 1.e4 with something other than 1....e5 and establish a semi-open game. These openings have fewer open lines, but they still feature plenty of piece mobility. The resulting games feature imbalanced positions in which White and Black are trying to achieve different goals, which leads to fighting defenses.

## *Part IV: Conquering with Closed and Semi-Closed Games*

When White's first move is 1.d4 and Black responds with 1....d5, you've established a closed game. Closed games require a lot of strategy and planning. You do more maneuvering and have fewer tactical battles in the early stages of the game with these openings. I also include responses to 1.d4 other than 1....d5 in this part.

## *Part V: Advancing with Flank Openings*

When you open with a flank opening, the pawns on the outer files make the first moves; you put the center pawns into play later in the game. The English Opening 1.c4 is by far the most popular flank opening, but there are others as well. These openings provide you with more flexibility in responding to your opponent's moves, and confrontations often come later in the game, after you've moved your pieces off of their starting positions.

## *Part VI: The Part of Tens*

The last thing you want to do is make an error in an opening, so I include a chapter on ten mistakes not to make. I also offer chapters on ten ways to study chess openings and ten great Web sites.

## *Icons Used in This Book*

**TIP**

To make this book easier to read and simpler to use, I include some icons that can help you find and fathom key ideas and information.

**REMEMBER**

This icon appears next to ideas that can help you understand a chess opening, or the game in general, a little more easily.

**WARNING!**

Anytime you see this icon, you know the information that follows is so important that it's worth reading more than once.

This icon flags information that means a mistake is about to be made.





This icon lets you know what type of chess player typically likes the opening under discussion.

## *Where to Go from Here*

This book is organized so that you can go wherever you want to find complete information. Want to know about the various types of chess openings? Go to Chapter 3. Want to know about the Sicilian Defense? Go to Chapter 9. You can use the table of contents to find broad categories of information or the index to look up more specific details.

If you're not sure where you want to go, you may want to start with Part I. It gives you all the basic info you need to understand chess openings, and it points to places where you can find more detailed information.

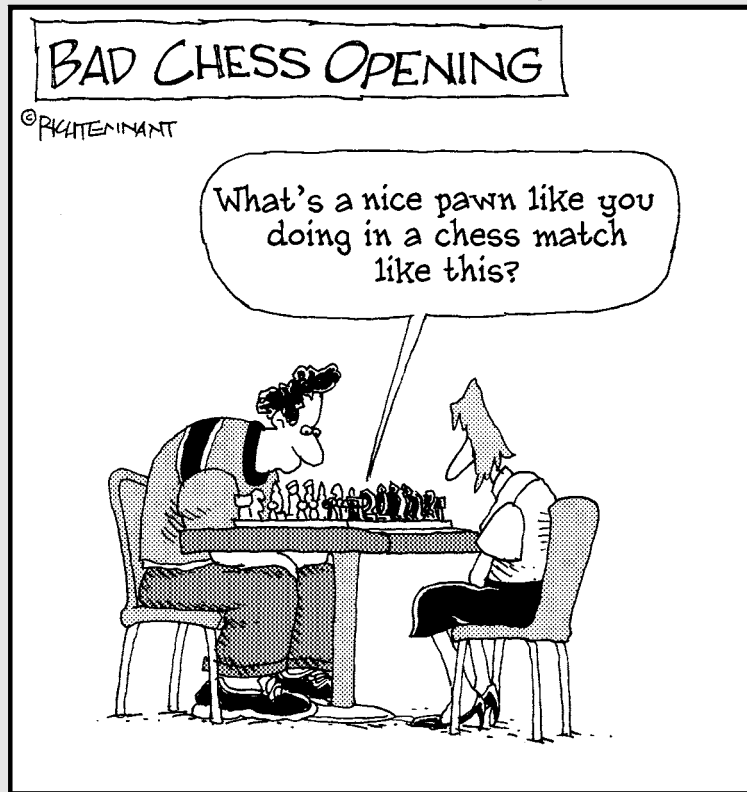


# Part I

# Principles of Play

## The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave

By Rich Tennant



### *In this part . . .*

**T**his part helps you understand what a chess opening is. First, I explain the various types of openings. Then I describe the style of play that's suited to each type of opening and provide a general overview of the principles of play in the opening phase of a chess game.

This part gives you the ammunition you need to understand specific opening strategies employed in different types of games. It helps you zero in on the opening that's right for you.

## Chapter 1

# Understanding Chess Openings

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Understanding what a chess opening is
- ▶ Choosing openings that fit your playing style
- ▶ Getting familiar with chess notation

Chess is typically divided into three phases: the opening, the middle-game, and the endgame. Although the exact point of transition from one phase to another can sometimes be ambiguous, each phase of the game has properties that distinguish it from the others. The opening phase of the game is all about mobilizing your forces as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

In this chapter, I explain how you know when an opening has been established. I also ask you to sit back and think about your style of play, because how you play the game helps determine what type of openings you favor. Finally, I include a quick review of basic chess notation.

## *Identifying a Chess Opening*

The first phase of a chess game is called the *opening*. Players concentrate on the rapid mobilization of their forces during this phase of the game.

In the following sections, I explain what makes an opening an opening, and I show you how one move turns into an opening.

### *Distinguishing “the” opening from “an” opening*

In chess, *opening* can mean two different but related things, and it all depends on whether *the* or *an* comes before *opening*.

- ✓ The phrase *the opening* refers to the phase of the game when you get your pieces (by *pieces*, I'm referring to the rooks, bishops, knights, queen, and king — basically, everything but the pawns) off the back rank and reposition them where they can do the most good. (The other phases of the game are the *middlegame* and the *endgame*.)
- ✓ The phrase *an opening* refers to a specific sequence of moves. When a move or a specific sequence of moves, by pawns and/or pieces, is given a name, you have yourself a chess opening. These openings are what I cover throughout this book.



There are many, many chess openings. Some are named after players. Some are named after locations. But to be considered an opening, for the purposes of this book, a sequence of moves has to have a name. (I cover chess naming conventions, which are frequently a source of head-shaking, in Chapter 3.)

Chess players and scholars generally agree on what to call a particular opening, but sometimes it depends on where you are. For example, the *Ruy López*, which I cover in Chapter 7, is called the *Spanish Opening* in some parts of the world. Throughout this book, I refer to the generally accepted opening names as they're used in the United States.

## Seeing how a move turns into an opening

Openings are defined and categorized by their pawn structure and piece placement. Although the pawns may not appear to have a lot of power when you're in the thick of a game, at the start of the game, they open lines for your pieces to take advantage of.

The most frequently played opening move is 1.e4 because it does the most to help you *develop* your pieces (or move the pieces off of their starting position). However, the move 1.e4 is not considered an opening (see Figure 1-1).

