

IMPROVE YOUR RESULTS NOW!

**THE
SURVIVAL
GUIDE**

**TO
COMPETITIVE
CHESS**

JOHN EMMS

EVERYMAN CHESS

THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE CHESS

Are you making the most of your chess talent?

Do you always perform to the best of your ability?

Do your results match up with your understanding of the game?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no' then read on!

In *The Survival Guide to Competitive Chess*, Grandmaster and experienced tournament player John Emms reveals the secrets of how to maximize your potential and improve your results. Drawing upon his own over-the-board experiences, Emms tackles the all-important aspects of practical play: concentration and behaviour at the chessboard; playing for a win or a draw; winning good positions and saving difficult ones; handling time trouble; avoiding silly mistakes; understanding your strengths and weaknesses; building an opening repertoire; using chess computers and software; preparing for opponents; understanding and utilizing the finer points of the rules; and much more besides. Read this book and play every game with the confidence that you really can give it your best shot.

- A comprehensive guide to practical play
- Ideal for ambitious players
- Written by a battle-hardened expert

John Emms is one of the UK's leading Grandmasters and has captained the English Team at two Chess Olympiads. He's an experienced coach who has worked with many top players, including World Championship finalist Michael Adams. He's also a highly respected writer; previous works for Everyman Chess include *The Scandinavian* and the best-selling *Starting Out: The Sicilian*.

EVERYMAN CHESS

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Introduction

There comes a time when every chessplayer will look at himself and ask: 'Am I performing to the best of my ability? Do my results really match my understanding of the game? Why am I drawing games I should be winning, and losing games I should be drawing? Why am I making silly mistakes? And why is my rating not improving or, even worse, going down?' This has certainly happened to me on more than one occasion, and most recently I realized that some new action was needed. The results are within these pages.

The Survival Guide to Competitive Chess is largely based on my over-the-board experiences. In most cases I can recall what my exact thoughts were during the course of a game, and for a book of this type I felt it was important to have this knowledge. Clearly such information cannot always be guaranteed when you study games in which you were not involved. That said, I'm sure that many of my thoughts during games mirror those of other players. I guess some could argue that grandmasters generally make good 'grandmaster-type' moves and also bad 'grandmaster-type' mistakes, but I'm not sure this is necessarily the case. Look through these pages and you'll soon notice that many games are riddled with moves you could hardly call 'grandmasterly'! With this in mind, I hope that this book will be of use to players of a wide range of levels.

In Chapter 1 I deal with the tricky subject of calculation, but with an emphasis on how to make the most of what calculating powers you already possess. I focus predominantly on fairly straightforward tactics and combinations, and avoiding blunders. In Chapter 2 I move on to the results business: playing for a win and playing for a draw. (I confess I've omitted 'playing for a loss', but I didn't think much advice was needed here!)

Chapter 3 covers the perennial problem of time trouble, while Chapter 4 deals

with openings and preparation: choosing lines which suit you; dealing with opening surprises; making the most of a wide and flexible repertoire; and finally using computers to study and for specific preparation.

Occasionally I've decided to highlight various rules from the FIDE handbook; for example those that affect clock issues, the recording of moves, draw offers and draw claims etc. Put simply, a familiarity with some of the finer points of the rules will gain you points.

Finally, I would like to thank Richard Palliser, Andrew Greet, Chris Ward and Joseph Quinn for providing some material and thoughts.

Without further ado, let's prepare for the battles ahead!

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