



Mastering the Sicilian Defense

By Danny Kopec

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Quite simply put the Sicilian Defense is the most popular and most complex of opening systems in chess. It has been the favorite of top players throughout modern times. There are a number of systems and variations to choose from such as the Scheveningen, Dragon, Najdorf, Boleslavsky, Kan, etc. There are also a number of sharp, complex, theoretical systems and that is why it is aptly named The Sicilian Jungle. IM Dr. Danny Kopec addresses the problem of trying to simplify the complexities of the Sicilian Defense from the perspective of STRUCTURE that is, sound structures for Black, particularly for the endgame. Dr. Kopec uses a unique method which he calls Mastery Lessons to guide the learner towards pawn structures and piece configurations which have been demonstrated to lead to success in certain Sicilian variations. This approach, developing heuristic packets, helped to achieve master level play in his work with computer chess programs.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Daniel Kopec (1954-2016) was an American chess International Master, author, and computer science professor at Brooklyn College. He graduated from Dartmouth College in the class of 1975. Kopec later received a PhD in Machine Intelligence from the University of Edinburgh. With Ivan Bratko he was the creator of the Bratko-Kopec Test, which was one of the de facto standard testing systems for chess playing computer programs in the 1980s. Kopec was one of the most talented home-bred players in the US. Dr. Kopec was New York High School Champion at 14, National Master at 17, Scottish Champion in 1980, 2nd-equal in the Canadian Closed in 1984, and International Master in 1985. He was an active player, journalist, writer, chess educator and scholar. His competitive results with top-flight chess professionals were remarkable. He delivered many chess courses, lectures, published seven highly recognized chess books, and developed eight highly regarded instructional videos (18.5 hours). Over the past 16 years Kopec's Chess Camp, had become world renowned. In parallel with his chess career, Dr. Kopec had pursued an academic career in computer science with research in artificial intelligence, software methodology, and computer science education. For more than 20 years Kopec tested and evaluated hundreds of human and machine chess players in the UK, Canada, and US in order to quantify their overall chess strength, their specific deficiencies and definite abilities. In bridging his chess and academic interests, Kopec developed a reputation as perhaps the world's greatest exponent of chess knowledge.

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