

## PATTERN RECOGNITION

I have recently acquired a little Chess Book, Pandolfini's Chess Challenges, 111 Winning End Games. There are 111 quirky, surprising, and fun tactical chess problems to improve anyone's chess. Designed to promote pattern recognition and creativity and imaginative play, all the problems are endgame miniatures, with seven or fewer pieces on the board. Answers include step-by-step explanations of the winning move and tactic. Points are awarded with each solution, so players can track their progress.

Bruce Pandolfini, one of the best-known chess teachers in the world, is a cofounder of Chess in Schools in the USA and was a key figure in the book and movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer*. His role was portrayed by the acclaimed Sir Ben Kingsley. It is recommended that trainers, parents and teachers watch this movie to avoid the hardship and pressure they exert on players and children.

Pattern recognition is one of the skills that make a master. It's not inherent; it's learned.

Why is one chess player a struggling club player and another a master? There are many skills that make a master, but one of the most important is pattern recognition. A beginner will look at a position and work out the legal moves one by one, perhaps overlooking the most important. An intermediate player will look at the position and see all legal moves without too much trouble, but will have some problem determining which moves are worth further consideration and which aren't. A master will look at the position, will see all of the legal moves without even thinking about them, will quickly decide which side is better, and will start examining the most promising continuations.

On the path to chess mastery, a player sees and studies many different types of positions. Every time a master encounters a new position, the previous experience helps to find the right path in the new position. This is pattern recognition.

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