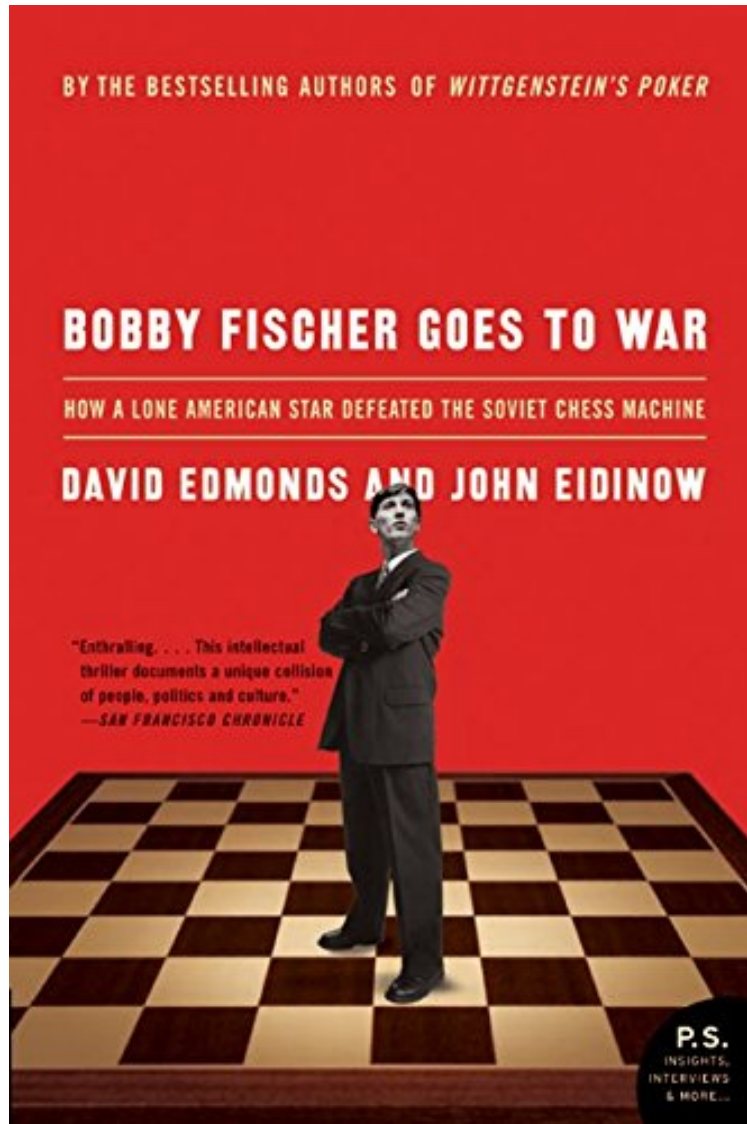


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Bobby Fischer Goes to War: How A Lone American Star Defeated the Soviet Chess Machine

David Edmonds, John Eidinow

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#1019783 in Books 2005-03-01 2005-03-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .87 x 5.311, 4.00 #File Name: 0060510250384 pages | File size: 17.Mb

David Edmonds, John Eidinow : Bobby Fischer Goes to War: How A Lone American Star Defeated the Soviet Chess Machine before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bobby Fischer Goes to War: How A Lone American Star Defeated the Soviet Chess Machine:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I think the book does a very good job giving the reader a feel for the personalities ...By Robert Lincoln This book focuses more on the background of the Fischer-Spassky match than the

actual games themselves. Very detailed biographies of Fischer and Spassky, and details of the Cold War context. There is also description of the match process leading up to the main event, and much detail of the antics surrounding all aspects of the main match. I think the book does a very good job giving the reader a feel for the personalities and feelings of both Fischer and Spassky, as well as many other surrounding figures. I enjoyed it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Match of the Century By Andrew The 1972 World Chess Championship probably attracted more widespread attention than any other chess championship before or since. Taking place during the Cold War, the match featured a duel between reigning champion Boris Spassky, from the Soviet Union, and challenger Bobby Fischer, from the United States. The book is an excellently detailed description of the match and the events that led up to it. The first few chapters of the book form a biographical background of the two opponents. Bobby Fischer grew up in the United States, mainly in New York City, and was a chess prodigy from a young age including winning many titles while still a teenager. Boris Spassky grew up in the Soviet Union. In the post-war world, the Soviet government saw chess as an important playing field to prove the superiority of communism over capitalism. Spassky, like many other Soviet chess players, would receive government support to enhance their chess skills. For the quarter of a century before 1972, the World Chess Championship was dominated by the Soviet Union often featuring a match only between players from the Soviet Union. Because of this, and the fact that chess was not very popular in the United States, these championship matches attracted little interest in the West. This changed as Fischer fought through the tournaments and won the right to challenge Spassky to the title of World Chess Champion. Fischer had a reputation for bizarre and stubborn behavior and his approach to the championship match was no exception. While Spassky wanted to compete out of the love of chess, Fischer had numerous demands. The book goes into detail about the peculiarities that went into the planning. Some doubted that the match would even be held at all. It seemed that Fischer was most interested in the large prize money, but wanted more. Eventually, a multimillionaire British businessman and chess fan donated a large sum to increase the prize to help entice Fischer to play. Fischer ended up showing up, in Reykjavik, Iceland for the match, late. Many breathed a sigh of relief when he finally showed up. But the drama would not end there. Fischer demanded that everything be set up according to how he saw fit. This went everywhere from the size of the squares on the chessboard, the type of chair he sat in, and the type of lighting to be used. Many people were frustrated over these numerous objections from Fischer, but for the most part they acquiesced. Game one went by with Fischer blundering causing him to lose. He ended up forfeiting the second game over objections that the match was being televised and claimed that the sound of the cameras disrupted his concentration. More frustration followed. Eventually the match continued with some more exciting games and some mundane ones until Fischer had won after the twenty-first game following Spassky's resignation. Following the championship, Spassky returned to the Soviet Union and continued to play chess, but eventually remarried and moved to France. Fischer became a recluse after the celebrations following his triumphant return to the United States. He stopped playing chess professionally and refused to defend his title in 1975 against challenger Anatoly Karpov. The organizers had apparently run out of patience in dealing with Fischer's antics. The last chapter of this saga would come in 1992 when Fischer and Spassky agreed to a rematch in Yugoslavia. It was the last time Fischer publicly played chess. He became a refugee after the U.S. government issued an arrest warrant for him because the chess match, with the large monetary prize, violated sanctions on Yugoslavia at the time. This is an excellent book detailing the behind-the-scenes actions of the 1972 World Chess Championship. One of the most impressive aspects was the Soviet side of the drama which features many people both working closely with Spassky and others in the Soviet government. This is not a traditional piece of chess literature and there is not much description about the games themselves. I would recommend this book to those interested in chess history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. You Couldn't Make This Story Up By stkevin You couldn't make up a story like this if you tried. Yet it all really happened. The book is very enjoyable and well researched. Although it does not contain a move by move analysis of any games, it is a good read for chess players and non-chessplayers alike. The Match was truly a spectacle rather than a normal world champion chess match, and the Book captures the events and the flavor perfectly. Fischer's unmatched feat of winning his first two of three Candidates (elimination) matches 16-0 (8 wins no losses against Taimanov, then 8 wins no losses against Larsen) in order to qualify to play Spassky, was impossible, yet it happened. In his last Candidates Match he easily beat former Soviet World Champion Tirgran Petrosian, although not 8-0. Everyone knew by then that an American, of all people, was going to beat the Soviets at chess -- but only if the match took place, which, because of Fischer's bizarre and erratic behavior, almost didn't happen. The antics before the match take up the first part of the book. There are way too many to describe here. For example, Fischer makes demand after demand, e.g., size of the table, placement of the camera, the type of lighting and where it's to be placed, how close the audience can sit, the stone carved chess pieces have too many spots in them, etc. He refuses to play unless his demands are met. A millionaire puts up more prize money, doubling the prize. Fischer still refuses to play because some of his many demands haven't been met. Calls from friends and officials all over the world can't change his mind. Then, a call comes from the White House - Henry Kissinger no less - who convinces Fischer to play. Fischer decides to play, he goes to the airport the day before the match is scheduled to begin so he can fly to Iceland where the match is being played, but gets spooked by the paparazzi, runs out of the airport, goes home, and decides not to play. And the whole process of convincing him to

play begins all over again. The match finally starts, days late (a story in itself), but the spectacle continues. One example of what kind of spectacle this match became, was the "CIA Chair Tampering" claims that made world headlines during the match. At the beginning of the match, Fischer replaced the plain wooden chair provided for him by the match organizers with his special, and much more comfortable, chair designed by the American chair making firm of Herman Miller. Fischer had taken this chair to each of his Candidate matches and had it flown in to Iceland specifically for his use. The Russians cried foul. Fisher then had an identical chair flown in from the US for Spassky. Later in the match, after Spassky started losing, the Russians came to believe that there was a difference in the allegedly identical chairs. The Soviets charged that Fischer's "special chair" had a mechanism implanted in it to cause Spassky to lose concentration. The organizers gave in to this ludicrous claim and had both chairs x-rayed. The x-rays showed a mysterious un-chairlike object in Fischer's chair but not in Spassky's. More x-rays were then taken a few days later, specifically to determine if Fischer's chair contained an implanted device of some kind. The mysterious object had disappeared! Even today, some of the Soviet participants (not Spassky) believe that the CIA tampered with the chair and used some kind of mind/thought control process to help Fischer. The few examples I've given here are representative of the entire match. The Book covers all the crazy events that happened. Enjoy the Book.

In the summer of 1972, with a presidential crisis stirring in the United States and the cold war at a pivotal point, the Soviet world chess champion, Boris Spassky, and his American challenger, Bobby Fischer, met in Reykjavik, Iceland, for the most notorious chess match of all time. Their showdown, played against the backdrop of superpower politics, held the world spellbound for two months with reports of psychological warfare, ultimatums, political intrigue, cliffhangers, and farce to rival a Marx Brothers film. Thirty years later, David Edmonds and John Eidinow have set out to reexamine the story we recollect as the quintessential cold war clash between a lone American star and the Soviet chess machine. A mesmerizing narrative of brilliance and triumph, hubris and despair, *Bobby Fischer Goes to War* is a biting deconstruction of the Bobby Fischer myth, a nuanced study on the art of brinkmanship, and a revelatory cold war tragicomedy. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

From Publishers Weekly The duo that crafted the bestselling *Wittgenstein's Poker* returns to chronicle "the most notorious chess duel in history," the 1972 match between world champion Boris Spassky and challenger Bobby Fischer. Although the competition has achieved iconic status, Edmonds and Eidinow do an excellent job of making the story fresh, recreating the atmosphere of controversy that surrounded both players long before they met in Reykjavik, not to mention the extraordinary hurdles tournament organizers faced in getting the already eccentric Fischer to even show up, which ultimately required a phone call from Henry Kissinger and prize money put up by an English millionaire. Fischer's troubling personality is a matter of common knowledge, but the thawing of the Cold War enables the authors to flesh out the Soviet side of the story, offering a fuller perspective on the friction between the rebellious grandmaster and Communist officials, and revelations about the very active presence of the KGB during the games, while debunking other rumors about plots to poison or brainwash Spassky. (Declassified FBI files also present groundbreaking information about Fischer and his family.) The actual chess has been analyzed to death elsewhere, so the authors don't delve into the games' details much except when the players made horrendous blunders, which segue into the underlying focus on psychology, addressing Fischer's ability to get away with bullying officials into meeting his exacting demands and Spassky's loss of confidence over the course of the match. Even if you think you know the story, this highly entertaining account will surprise and delight. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist From Edmonds, author of the unexpectedly popular *Wittgenstein's Poker* (2001), comes this intriguing look at the world of competitive chess, circa 1972. That was the year Boris Spassky, the Russian, and Bobby Fischer, the upstart American, fought it out for global chess supremacy. It was a match that held the world spellbound, a two-month marathon that hit the front pages (during the last stages of the Vietnam War and the early stages of Watergate) and turned millions of people into chess addicts. But, as the authors demonstrate, the story was not just about two chess masters; it was about politics, about two countries fighting a cold war. Could Fischer break Russia's decades-long hold on the world chess championship? And, by association, could the U.S. vanquish its nemesis? The narrative never really takes off here, as it did in *Wittgenstein's Poker*, but the book does a very good job of setting the scene, of making us feel as though it's 1972, and we are witnessing something of truly global importance. Good reading, especially for chess buffs. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved. Readers will savor a marvelous portrait of East against West, with perceived societal superiority as the real prize. (Kirkus s)[An] intriguing look at the world of competitive chess, circa 1972.... Good reading, especially for chess buffs. (Booklist)[A] praiseworthy, terrific book marvelous. (Chess Life) Bobby Fischer Goes to War tells the story in fine, brisk style conveying the richness of the world beyond the chessboard. (Time magazine)[Edmonds and Eidinow] show themselves once again to be grandmasters of nonfiction narrative. (Christian Science Monitor) The book will be one of the major sources of history for new generations of chess players. (Boston Globe) David Edmonds and John Eidinow have penned a delightful book about the politics of that legendary match.

(Washington Times)A superbly researched reminder of a 20th century culture clash. (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)A fascinating story well told. (Nashville Tennessean)Engagingly written... a real page-turner! (Library Journal)Enthralling. Edmonds and Eidinow are ideal guides through the history and psychology of chess. (San Francisco Chronicle)This is the definitive history of Fischer vs. Spassky. (Washington Post Book World)Note to Hollywood: Its Miracle meets A Beautiful Mind. Get on it. (Entertainment Weekly)The finest addendum ever to the 1972 chess world championship. (Los Angeles Times)Superbly researched. Bobby Fischer Goes to War fills an important gap in the literature on this showdown. (Florida Sun-Sentinel)