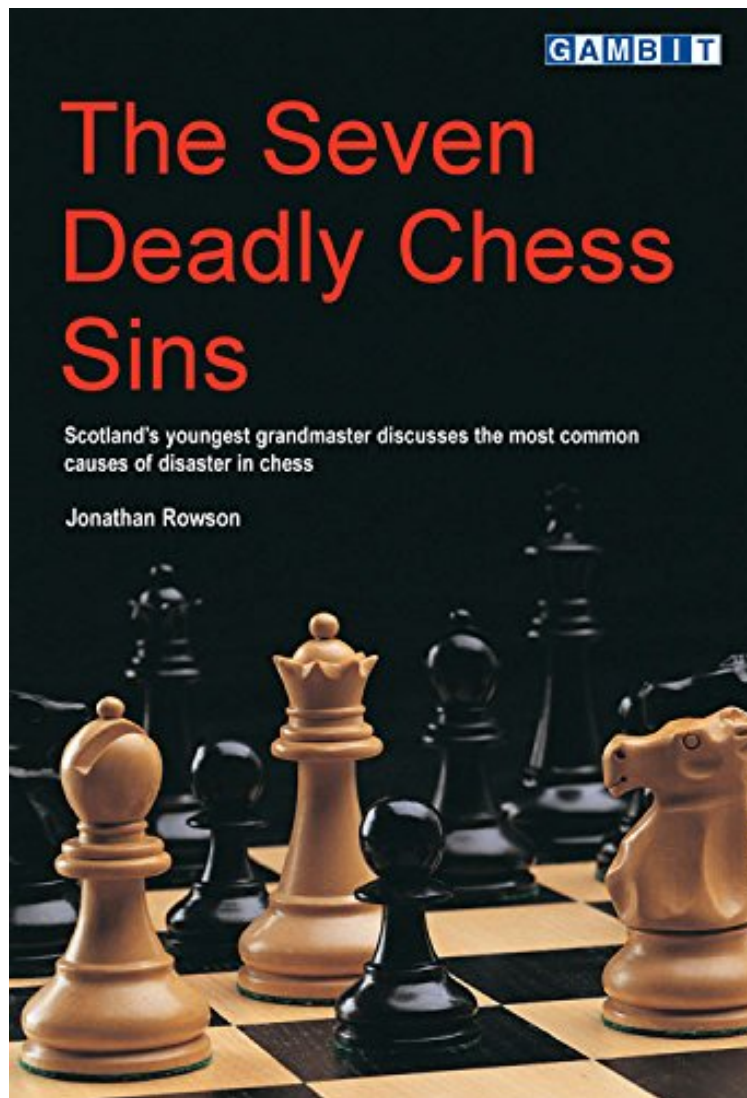


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The Seven Deadly Chess Sins (Scotland's Youngest Grandmaster Discusses the Most Common Ca)

Jonathan Rowson

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Jonathan Rowson : The Seven Deadly Chess Sins (Scotland's Youngest Grandmaster Discusses the Most Common Ca) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Seven Deadly Chess Sins (Scotland's Youngest Grandmaster Discusses the Most Common Ca):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Chess, Psychology and Philosophy By Randy This is a very different chess book than any I've ever read and I own quite a library. It explores the struggle of chess through the psychology

of the players. After all, chess is ultimately played between humans with emotions, faults, desires and egos. There is a lot of good chess advice like talking to your pieces during a game, reevaluating chess piece values and non-material factors, prophylaxis and much more. Rowson shares his discussions he has had with many grandmasters and how they evaluated certain positions, their thinking during a game and their thoughts on specific ideas in chess. It is interesting how he interweaves various psychological sources and philosophical ideas into his discussions about the chess topics he has chosen. One glance at the bibliography gives you an idea that it's a different kind of chess book. He certainly has done his research, but he seems to lay it out in a down-to-earth tone. The book sort of feels like an open-ended question in a sense, giving the reader a chance to think how it relates to their own play at the board. Although it does provide instruction and analysis in the games he has chosen, I don't really think of it as an instructional book and it doesn't pretend to be that, but I do think you will walk away with a new perspective on your own play. It is a fascinating read to anyone interesting in chess.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Real chess mind-expansion. By foghorn One of the most enjoyable and thought-provoking chess books I have ever read, and certainly one of the few that, if I was forced to give up most of my collection, would remain with me. This book is not for all chess players. It is not a book about tactics, combinations, opening, middle-game or end-game strategy. It is also not a book containing analysis of "famous" games. This book re-examines the intangible and cloudy thought process that the player goes through during a match, and proposes a new methodology ("approach" may be a better word) for "thinking" and "feeling" by identifying what the author considers the major mental "traps" of the chess player (hence the title "The Seven Deadly Chess Sins"). It is more philosophical and abstract in nature and is not really designed to improve your chess from a technical perspective. It does however, in great detail, show you how to re-evaluate how to "think" about chess. And in that sense this book is a delightful rarity and extremely valuable. What are the seven deadly sins? "Thinking", (yes, Rowson tells us you can think too much in chess!), "Blinking", "Wanting", "Materialism", "Egosim", "Perfectionism", and "Looseness". In a nutshell, Rowson explains that emotion is much more involved in our chess thinking than we would care to admit, and that emotion can manifest itself in these various "sins" without us ever realizing or caring to acknowledge it. The author has a great writing style that exudes his love for the game, that is one of the book's biggest appeals. Perhaps it is his Scottish lineage which makes for some interesting quips, like this one: "Black may point to them and say 'Look! Weak pawns: doubled and isolated!' But that is a bit like pointing to a mole on Cindy Crawford's face and saying 'Look! Black spot; obvious and protruding!' As with any face, you miss much if you look at the parts separate from the whole". The book is full of dry and humorous analogies like this one which make for a pleasurable read. It is true, as one reviewer noted, that Rowson delves into subject matter which may not be his area of expertise, but so what? His insights are interesting and in most cases quite relevant. A few reviewers have also said, they liked the book but claimed it wouldn't help their chess. I submit that, just as with concentrated study of chess "theory", this book will help, but first you must open your mind to Rowson's theories and "practice" them as you would any other technique. Chess is not for the lazy and applying Rowson's ideas are no different. There are hundreds of thousands of chess books available to choose from, but to me this one is a diamond in the rough. Simply put, if you love chess, you will love this book.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very engaging and stimulating book on chess thinking. By Tad Boniecki Jonathan Rowson is a GM and a three-time British champion. His "The Seven Deadly Chess Sins" is a book about how we think in chess. Although it is pitched at the level of expert players, even a wood-pusher like me found some valuable insights. Rowson writes engagingly and with considerable wit - this is not another dry-as-peeled-paint book about chess. It is a philosophical reflection on how chess is played at the highest levels and what we can all learn from this. The most fascinating part for me were Rowson's thoughts on objectivity. He makes two radical claims about objectivity in chess: (1) that it is impossible to be objective during a game (2) that it is not even desirable. Rowson, "When we make decisions from a 'subjective' viewpoint we tend to think that we are making some sort of mistake, and should strive instead to be 'objective'." Being 'objective' in chess means seeing the position as it actually is, uncontaminated by our own wishes and plans. Rowson believes this is largely a mirage: "...seeing things as they 'actually are' would be an enormous achievement which goes against the grain of human perception... humans by their very nature are enormously self-deceptive, will only see that which experience has shown them to be there, cannot help but want the position to be a certain way and will always see the position from a background of emotional memories and pre-established patterns... you cannot escape your subjective perspective during the game." Please note the word "during" - Rowson says it may be possible to annotate a game objectively after it has been finished. "To maximize your chances of competitive success, it is essential to be aware of your opponent's likes and dislikes and all their human fallibilities. You must remember that you are a subject playing another subject. Consequently, to view the position objectively is to miss an enormous reservoir of insights into the ways in which the game is perceived during play. To be 'objective' is to treat as an object that which is primarily a battlefield between subjects." By trying to be objective "... you undermine your capacity to sense your opponent's subjective perspective, and miss opportunities to exploit this." Rowson believes that his own development as a chess player was hindered by his striving to be objective: "I began to view chess more as a series of intellectual problems than a fight, and thus behaved more like an academic than a warrior... the pursuit of beauty and truth is incidental to the battle between psyches over the board... In games against grandmasters I found that they were almost

never asking 'is this move true?' but rather 'will this move work?'"I think Rowson is saying that if you are playing a person, rather than a computer, then you are handicapping yourself if you do not take psychology into account. Reading Rowson's book made me realise that it is crucial to see chess dynamically. It is wrong to evaluate a position without reference to the sequence of moves that reached this point, to momentum, to dynamics, to the trend of the game, and to the psychological flow in the minds of both players. Looking at a position in isolation from the flow of the game is like attempting to make sense of a movie by examining a single frame. Likewise, looking at the position from scratch on each move to find my "best move" in the current position is like designing a building one brick at a time. Each candidate move must be seen as part of a sequence of future moves designed to improve my situation. That sequence should embody a strategy or a tactic, and cannot just be made afresh on each move. Rowson contrasts the static method of position evaluation with a dynamic approach. The former considers factors such as material balance, king safety, badly positioned pieces, central control, space advantage, pawn structure, and bishops vs knights. The dynamic approach looks at the momentum or dynamics of the game, rather than the position frozen in time. It focuses on trends and how they change. He points out that there can be an upward trend for the player who currently has the inferior position. There is much else of considerable interest in this fine book. He goes a long way towards giving the role of emotion in chess its due importance. Rowson is arguing that we should apply a variety of ways of thinking about chess, avoid applying rules and heuristics, and jump out of our old thought habits. Instead we should make the most of each position while being alive to the trend that is current. In particular, to avoid the sin of egoism we need to adopt an "inter-subjective" perspective, ie remain fully aware of our opponent from a psychological point of view, as well as applying prophylaxis.

Everyone loses chess games occasionally, but all too often we lose a game due to moves that, deep down, we knew were flawed. Why do we commit these chess-board sins? Are they the result of general misconceptions about chess and how it should be played? And how can we recognize the warning signs better? In this thought-provoking and entertaining book, Jonathan Rowson investigates, in his inimitable style, the main reasons why chess-players sometimes go horribly astray, focusing on the underlying psychological pitfalls: * Thinking (unnecessary or erroneous) * Blinking (missing opportunities; lack of resolution) * Wanting (too much concern with the result of the game) * Materialism (lack of attention to non-material factors) * Egoism (insufficient awareness of the opponent and his ideas) * Perfectionism (running short of time; trying too hard) * Looseness (losing the plot; drifting; poor concentration)

From the Back Cover Everyone loses chess games occasionally, but all too often we lose a game due to moves that, deep down, we knew were flawed. Why do we commit these chess-board sins? Are they the result of general misconceptions about chess and how it should be played? And how can we recognize the warning signs better? In this thought-provoking and entertaining book, Jonathan Rowson investigates, in his inimitable style, the main reasons why chess-players sometimes go horribly astray, focusing on the underlying psychological pitfalls: * Thinking (unnecessary or erroneous) * Blinking (missing opportunities; lack of resolution) * Wanting (too much concern with the result of the game) * Materialism (lack of attention to non-material factors) * Egoism (insufficient awareness of the opponent and his ideas) * Perfectionism (running short of time; trying too hard) * Looseness (losing the plot; drifting; poor concentration) Jonathan Rowson became Scotland's third grandmaster in late 1999, within months of graduating from Oxford University. He was runner-up in the 1997 European Junior Championship, Scottish Champion in 1999 and winner of the Canadian Open in 2000. Rowson's first book, *Understanding the Grnfeld*, has been highly praised for the quality and originality of his writing, and freshness of approach. About the Author Jonathan Rowson became Scotland's third grandmaster in late 1999, within months of graduating from Oxford University. He was runner-up in the 1997 European Junior Championship, Scottish Champion in 1999 and winner of the Canadian Open in 2000. Rowson's first book, *Understanding the Grnfeld*, has been highly praised for the quality and originality of his writing, and freshness of approach.