



C&O Family Chess Center

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Chess Analysis Symbols

Chess is usually a competition between two opponents. Chess players are among the toughest competitors mentally, partly due to the fact that they must take individual responsibility when they lose. There are no team-mates to blame, although even experienced players will sometimes seek excuses: “It was too dark (or bright)”; “There was too much noise”; “My opponent distracted me”; “I wasn’t feeling well”; etc. In the end we chess players know that it is our own moves, good or bad, that create the final result. It is the study of our own games (particularly our losses), and those of others better than we are, that allows us to identify (and ultimately to correct) our mistakes.

In presenting C&O chess game analysis, un-analyzed raw score (“the basic moves”) is usually presented first, often with a diagram after the first ten moves, or so. This is because so many student games contain errors in the opening, allowing an alert opponent to gain an early advantage. Such an advantage is often the key to winning or losing.

Partial, or full, analysis follows the raw score. Symbols and comments

are used to indicate good and bad moves. As it is errors (weak or bad moves) that allow an opponent to gain an advantage, these moves get most of the attention. A “key” to the symbols used most often by game annotators is presented here.

In my game analyses actual game moves are printed in “**bold**” type, commentary, move analysis and variations are in regular type. Variations are usually within [brackets].

Supplementary “master” games for study are often included in a special section at the end of our “Student Game Analyses” and may contain some of these symbols.

Basic Game Analysis

Some common symbols often used in game analysis:

- ? bad, or weak, move
- ?? blunder (really bad move)
- ! good move (or best choice)
- !! brilliant move
- !/? interesting move
- ?! dubious move
- ▷ Better is...
- ≤ Less good is...
- = position is even
- ± or +/- White has a slight advantage
- ∓ or =/+ Black has a slight advantage
- ± or +/- White has an advantage
- ∓ or -/+ Black has an advantage
- +− White has a winning advantage
- −+ Black has a winning advantage