

MY CHESS CHEAT SHEET

7th Edition

Tas Mihaly, 2026

Dedicated to my parents.

My father noticed the amount of chess knowledge that I had accumulated over the years, and suggested the possibility of writing a chess manual. I didn't want to write a thick book; so the result is this thin, practical book consisting of compressed content that can be remembered over the board.

At the time of writing this edition, my parents have been married for 60 years. Hence this book is dedicated to them, in light of this wonderful milestone.

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1. Introduction

Chess is a complex game to play effectively. It can be helpful to use a structured thinking system that helps you avoid overlooking crucial moves and threats. Without such a system, you may be missing important opportunities or making unnecessary blunders that can cost you the game.

In this short chess manual, we introduce a practical and analytical framework that helps to systematically evaluate every position, identify strong moves, and thus helps avoid mistakes. This thinking system consists of several components, each highlighting a specific aspect of chess thinking. This TAS+SWAMP+AM thinking system consists of:

- The abbreviation TAS for the overall steps
- The abbreviation SWAMP for (mostly tactical) pattern recognition
- The Activation Manual for the (mostly positional) steps to activate pieces and build up attacks

Other, well-known and excellent chess thinking systems are for example CCTO (by Pegasus Chess / J. Van Dael¹) and CCTA (by IM Yevhenii²). Their YouTube channels are highly recommended.