

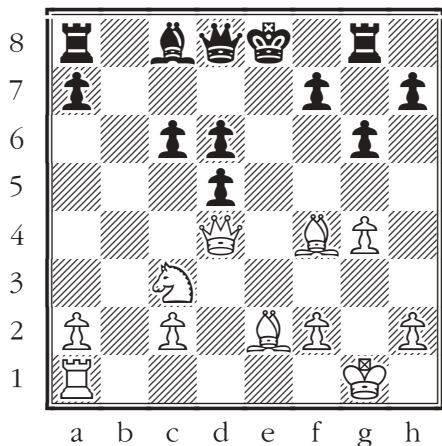
(Continued from Front) The answer to the question of whether *you* should take lessons from a chess coach depends on your answers to the following: **1)** Has your rating basically stayed the same (or dropped!?) over the past 3 years (or longer!?). **2)** Do your study habits seem unorganized and random? **3)** Are you simply not sure what you should be studying? **4)** Would you work harder if you knew somebody was going to be going over your games? **5)** Are you open to new ideas? **6)** Are you willing to admit you have weaknesses in your game? **7)** Is chess important enough to you that you would be willing to spend hard earned cash to improve?

Obviously, only you can decide if hiring a coach is right for you. If you are interested, I suggest asking around and getting feedback from other players. They will tell you which coaches really care about their students and which are just doing it for the extra income. One final thought: be patient. Taking lessons is not an instant cure for what ails your game. Instead, it's more of a tearing down and rebuilding process that takes time. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. However, if you are willing to put in the time, money, and effort, you *will* be rewarded with a much stronger game, more rating points, and the satisfaction of having set a goal and achieved it.

Game of The Month

Bashi, Ped (1619) - Hamer, Greg (1731)
2001 American Open
Sicilian Defense

1. e4 c5 2. d4 d6 3. dxc5 g6 4. dxc5 g6 5. Qc4 Qg7 6. dxc6 bxc6 7.0-0 d6 8. e5 d6 9. Qf4 h6 10. Bd2! d5? 11. g4! d5 12. Qe2 d6 13. exd6 Qxb2 14. d3 Qxa1 15. Bxa1 exd6 16. Bd4 Bg8? I suspect Black didn't like 16...0-0 because of 17. Bh6 f6 18. Bxf8. (See Diagram)



White to Move

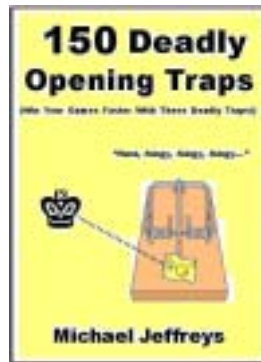
17. d6! cxb5 18. Qxb5+ Qd7 19. Bx1+ Qe7 If Kf8 20. Bh6+ Rg7 Qxg7# 20. Bxe7+ Qxe7 21. Qg5+ Qf8 22. Qxd7 Resigns 1-0

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