

# Wilshire Chess Society Newsletter

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## So, I Hired a Chess Coach, but What Has He Done for Me Lately? by FM Carsten Hansen

*Note: Last month I wrote an article on hiring a coach from the students perspective. This month I'm pleased to present the coach's view by my own chess teacher, FM Carsten Hansen. Enjoy! -MJ*

You have hired a chess coach for your first lesson and now what? What can you expect? What will he or she do for you? Is it worth it? Does the coach care how you do? Does the coach want the same things as you? These questions and many more are very relevant, and it is therefore important that you answer them for yourself first, and then ask the coach you have just hired (*or are considering hiring!* -mj) the same questions. If the coach's answers and yours are similar, then most likely you will be on the right track to getting the results you are looking for.



*Carsten giving a "lesson" to world #1 Garry Kasparov (or was it the other way around??)*

I have coached chess players at just about all levels—from newly starting players to those rated around 2300. Of course, the things I teach and how I teach is different at each level. No two chess players have exactly the same needs; one may need to improve his tactical skills, another his endgame skills. However, my experience has shown that *most* chess players need brushing up in ALL phases of the game.

When I start out with a new student, I establish right away what the aim is for that person. Indeed, I like to set two ratings goals: a realistic one—and one a step further: one they can dream about. For example, if the person is now rated 1400; a realistic goal is 1600, and the one they can dream about is 1800. When setting your own goals, don't be afraid to dream a little: one of my current students jumped 250 points upward in just five months! You might say that

he was underrated before he hired me and that he had potential for more. I will not dispute that for one second, but if you are willing to hire a coach, you have already shown to me that you have potential for more.

Something I put high emphasis on is the willingness of the student to work alone, when the coach is not around. Does this sound like homework to you? Well good, I'm happy you understand! This may sound harsh, but if you are not willing to work by yourself on the information I or any coach gives you, you are just wasting your money. Your coach has to be honest with you, and you have to be able to take it. I know it isn't much fun to go through one of your games that you think you played well, and your coach finds 8 or 9 mistakes, some of which could have lost the game for you or saved a draw for your opponent. ***The bottom line is: if you are not ready to hear where you went wrong, you are not ready to improve your game, because self-scrutiny is the cornerstone of improvement*** in any area of your life: school, work, relationships, as well as (**Con't on Back.**)

- .....
- Congrats! to the winners of our June 23 Tourn.:
  - Quad 1: **Julian Landaw**; Swiss: **Alex Kavutskiy** (1st), **Elsagav Shaham** and **Joshua Shaham** (2nd - tie)
- .....

See you July 28! -Michael Jeffreys

### Next W.C.S. G/45 Tournament July 28, 2002 - Sunday

Westside Pavilion, Community Room "C"  
10850 W. Pico Blvd., West Los Angeles  
(3rd Flr., West of Barnes & Noble, next to the SPCA pet adoption center)  
Registration 10:30 am  
Games from 11:00 am - 4:30 pm, 3-rounds  
Round robin quads (groups of 4) by rating  
Time control: G/45 mins. Entry fee: \$20.00  
Prizes: \$50.00 per quad (35.00 1st, 15.00 2nd)  
WCS Membership required (\$15.00/year) as well as U.S.C.F. Membership (\$40.00/year).

## So, I Hired a Chess Coach, but What Has He Done for Me Lately? (Con't)

Chess. How do I, as a coach, prepare for a session? Well, it depends on the student, what kind of needs the student has and what I think is relevant for the student at his or her present level. However, before the first session, I always ask for some recent games played by the student. This includes, preferably, all the games from the latest tournament, both wins and losses. *Particularly the lost games are of importance, as they are the key to where improvement is needed.* I go through the games and find the key positions: positions where good or bad moves are being made. Then, at the first session, we go through the games together. We look carefully at the critical positions and establish why bad moves were made and the thought process (or lack of same) that went on in order to reach the decisions that were made throughout the game.

The lessons are then continued based on the student's games, classic games by great players from the past, and finally some of my own games or games I know particularly well. Slowly, more and more elements are built onto the students existing knowledge, in every aspect of the game, to create a stronger, more versatile and more confident player. In conclusion, you and your coach should be a bit like James Bond and "Q"—you go out on missions and he supplies the weapons and special effects! If you are not happy with the weapons that are being handed to you or you don't understand how to use them, you have to demand more from your coach. But at the same time, you cannot expect to improve greatly unless you are ready to work for it and apply what you have learned.

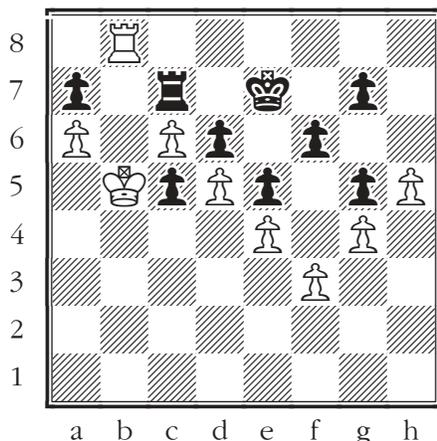
*My thanks to Carsten for taking the time out of his busy schedule to write this article. Look for his new book on 4. e3 in the Nimzo-Indian due out later this year. Below is a typical Carsten win where he destroys his opponent on the queenside. Enjoy! - MJ*

**Hansen, C. (2290) - Larsen, F. (2250)**

1992 Danish Championship

**Benoni**

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Be7 6.Be2 Nbd7 7.Nf3 Nf8 8.h3 Ng6 9.Be3 h6 10.a3 Nh7 11.b4 b6 12.g3 0-0 13.h4 Nf6 14.Nd2 Qd7 15.Rb1 Ng4 16.Bxg4 Qxg4 17.Qxg4 Bxg4 18.f3 Bc8 19.bxc5 bxc5 20.h5 Nh8 21.g4 Ba6 22.Ke2 Rfc8 23.Nb5 Kh7 24.Kd3 Bf8 25.Kc3 Be7 26.Nb3 Bxb5 27.cxb5 Bg5 28.Bxg5 hxg5 29.Na5 f6 30.Nc6 Nf7 31.Rb2 Rc7 32.a4 Nd8 33.a5 Rd7 34.Ra1 Kg8 35.a6 Kf8 36.Kc4 Nxc6 37.bxc6 Rc7 38.Rb7 Rac8 39.Rab1 Ke8 40.Rxc7 Rxc7 41.Rb8+ Ke7 42.Kb5 1-0 Black is in total zugzwang! Rather than deal with White's next move (43. Rb7), Black resigns.



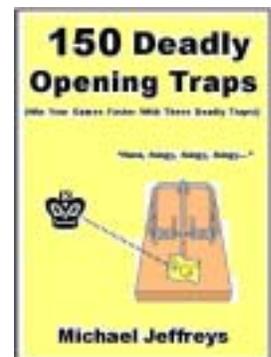
**Final position**

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