

The ChessBaron Guide to Chess Improvement

Introduction

This eBook discusses how to improve your chess game and what methods to use. Assuming some understanding of chess, it covers practice, use of chess computers, clubs, puzzles, problems, notations and more.

1. Practice

Well, you knew there was no shortcut to chess prowess didn't you? Nothing can be obtained without practicing again and again. The most common factor in chess champions is the practice they put in – often from a very young age. So you need to be prepared to put in the time to improve. Wise teachers and parents try to make this necessary time as enjoyable as possible.

Children who become chess champions have been exposed to chess from infancy. As they look back at their childhood they remember that 64 square board more than anything. The odd thing is that chess champions don't look back at a deprived childhood – they generally look back with pleasure that someone – often their parents – had the forethought to see that this child could achieve something special.

The other fact that comes out repeatedly with chess is that exposure to this cranial game helps us with other challenges in life. Most problems are better approached with the kind of analytical thinking demanded of chess.

2. Chess Computers

The use of chess computers has been an important method of improving chess since they became available in the 1980 onwards. The headline is of course taken by Big Blue, a chess computer made by IBM and which famously defeated, but was subsequently defeated by, Garry Kasparov.

Here are some examples of chess computers available which are made for serious players to improve:

The Saitek Expert: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-CM2010.htm>

The Saitek Master: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-CMD2012.htm>

The Novag Citrine: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-CMD2002.htm>

3. Clubs

Serious chess players cannot really operate without other players to compete with – their local chess club is an important route to improvement. There they have players of different strengths to compare and contrast their playing styles. The club is also the route to tournament play in higher and higher levels.

Many chess clubs also have associated experts that play demonstration rounds – these are classic opportunities to progress in the game and valuable to take advantage of.

The cost is usually minimal. ChessBaron is happy to supply clubs with equipment for a small charge.

4. Puzzles and problems

The essence of chess prowess is analysis. There are many sources of puzzles that require analysis to solve a particular situation. Look for websites that feature puzzles, and websites that have online computers – such as this one:

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/our-computer.php>. Another source of puzzles are the higher quality newspapers that generally have chess experts provide puzzles from famous games that really require in-depth thought.

5. Game Notation

It's actually a rule of chess that in tournaments the players must note down their moves as a record of the games. But this has an important role in learning and analysing games. It may be the drab side of playing chess, but poring over notes from our games makes an excellent way to improve, but noting the moves that were good and those that were sub-optimal.

This also works through other people games. Since there are now millions of games available to analyse, we can obtain expert games and look through them to see what went wrong and where it went wrong. There is little more useful in learning – even though it's not quite as exciting as actually playing the game.

6. Learning through failure

We like to be optimistic, but in chess more than any other discipline, it pays to really analyse why we lost that game. Where did it go wrong and what could we have done to avoid it happening again? It's a form of replaying the match and seeing what went wrong.

This e-book has been brought to you by ChessBaron in the UK – their website is at www.chessbaron.co.uk