

THE CHESS COACH

A Newsletter for Chess Coaches from Ashley-Parr, LLC

Welcome to the last issue of our newsletter for chess coaches!

We hope that this newsletter has been a valuable resource to chess teachers and coaches. We are moving the newsletter to a blog format. We hope you will all come join the conversation. We will continue to provide expert content, from ourselves and guests. We feel that the blog format is much more suited to generating a conversation about chess, training and the role of chess in education.

**JOIN THE DISCUSSION AT
BLOG.MAURICEASHLEYCHAMPIONS.COM**

NOTICE: We cannot and would not automatically subscribe you to the blog. If you want to continue receiving our content, you will have to subscribe to the blog by going to the blog site. Once subscribed, you can get automatic email or RSS feeds; however, you will need to go to the blog the first time to sign up. We apologize for any inconvenience, but we want to assure that we only send content to those who are interested. Thank you!

Please [email us](#) with your suggestions and comments.

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By Dr. Teresa Parr

TODAY'S TOPIC: ENCOURAGING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM



Introduction: Every teacher or coach knows that some kids are eager to participate in group discussions while others are more likely to hang back. Calling on different students can help, but it also risks making some kids uncomfortable. Most of us can remember occasions where we were terrified that the teacher would call on us, or the sinking feeling and embarrassment of not knowing the answer when we were called on. For most students, chess is a voluntary endeavor, so we are particularly motivated to do what we can to make the class a positive experience. So, how can we encourage active participation while reducing the probability of negative experiences? Here are a few ideas. If you have others, we would love to hear them. If you try any of these, send us an email, we would love to hear how it goes.

Automatic Pauses: Give an automatic 30-60 second pause after asking a question. You don't need to do this every time, of course. Develop a routine around when this applies so that students know what to do. Consider having students write or draw their answer on paper or a slate. Students can then hold up their answers or you can call on specific students to answer. Many students are more willing to answer if they have had time to think of it and/or don't have to answer out loud.

THE COACH'S CORNER

Tips from Grandmaster Maurice Ashley

TODAY'S TOPIC: CHESS VARIANTS

Welcome to the coach's corner with Grandmaster Maurice Ashley. Click on the button to the right to hear GM Ashley's discussion about chess variants and the benefits of progressive and give away chess.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHESS DVD

NEW RELEASE
Check out GM Ashley's new chess DVD. Using concepts from Aikido, the Japanese martial art, GM Ashley gives a new approach to improve your chess game. Click here for a review, or here to order.

NEW BEGINNER 5 BOOK:

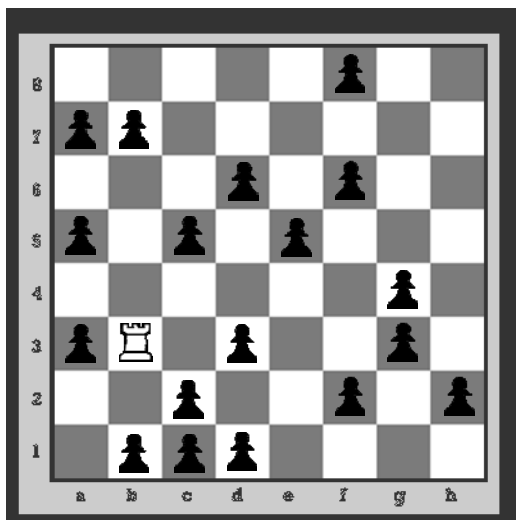
NEW RELEASE
GM Ashley's new book for teens and adult beginners has been released. [Click here](#) to order.



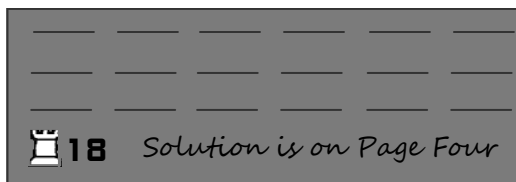
PAWN MOWER

PUZZLE ONE

How to Play: Use the given piece (in this case, the rook) to eliminate all the pawns on the board. Pawns are captured by moving to the square they are standing on. The number of moves in the solution depends entirely on the number of pawns to be removed (5 pawns will require 5 moves). You cannot move to an empty square.



TRY ANOTHER PUZZLE
ON PAGE 3



THE ADDICTIVE NEW PUZZLE ANYONE CAN SOLVE

PAWN MOWER IS A FUN TOOL
TO HELP STUDENTS
DEVELOP BOARD VISUALIZATION

BULK RATES
AVAILABLE

[Click Here](#) to learn more!

GUEST COLUMNIST

Sensei Brian Hill

TODAY'S TOPIC: CHESS & AIKIDO

INTRODUCTION BY DR. PARR:

SENSEI BRIAN HILL
 Brian Hill began studying Aikido in 1996. He was promoted to fourth degree black belt in 2010. He has participated in intensive training programs under Pat Hendricks sensei in CA, & Hitohiro Saito sensei in Iwama, Japan. Brian began teaching Aikido at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in the fall of 2001, and began River City Aikido in the Spring of 2005. You may contact him at 804.387.8879 or www.rivercityaikido.com

All of us who work as chess coaches and teachers have seen the remarkable benefits chess has to offer. From the purely academic to simple but profound life lessons, chess can have far reaching effects on children. While chess can help one improve in other areas, so too can training in other areas improve one's chess skills. A great synergy can develop where training in diverse activities rockets results across the board.

GM Ashley practices Aikido and has (very successfully) used some of the skills he learned to help his students improve their chess game. The idea that Aikido training can offer wisdom for chess players would make a great topic for classroom discussion. You might consider reading passages of this article to your chess class and seeing what ideas it generates among your students. If you encourage them to write down and systematically try some of the ideas, you will have fodder for a follow up discussion in future lessons. Some ideas, may seem counter intuitive and difficult to apply to chess (e.g., nonviolence—isn't chess all about fighting?), but that just makes them all the more interesting ideas with which to play. Can chess be cooperative when the goal is to checkmate (win) your opponent?



CONT. ON PG. 5

INVITATION TO SUBMIT A SUGGESTION

This section is a place for chess coaches to share what has worked well in their lessons we welcome suggestions about content, classroom management, making lessons more fun, running your business, helpful books or other resources (with reviews//personal comments), and other tidbits that you think others will find helpful. Although we appreciate all submissions, we regret that we can only publish a limited number of submissions.



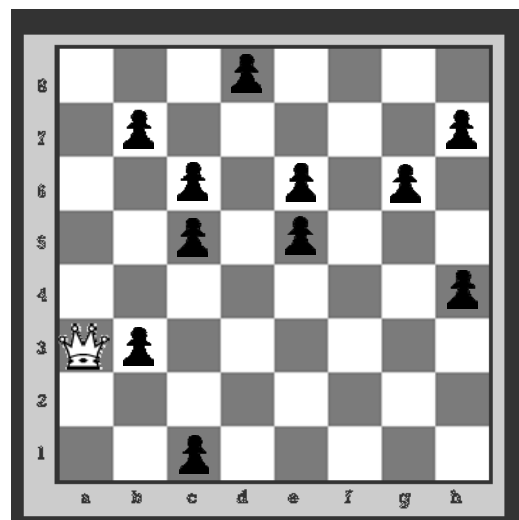
OUR WEBSITE

We are just fleshing out our resources section. Please let us know what you would like to see there. www.mauriceashleychampions.com.

Please [email us](mailto:) with your suggestions and comments.

PAWN MOWER

PUZZLE TWO



11 Solution is on Page Four

PAWN MOWER

The Addictive New Puzzle Anyone Can Solve

THE ORIGINAL CHESS PUZZLE MAGAZINE
MAURICE ASHLEY
TRAINING CHAMPIONS

Volume Two of Pawn Mower is now available. Each issue sells for only \$3.95. Bulk rates are available.

The puzzle magazine is fun for anyone, even those that do not play chess.

Pawn Mower puzzles help cement knowledge of piece movement and develop board visualization. While the beginning puzzles are simple, they become increasingly difficult. With over 100 puzzles per issue, players of all levels will find plenty of challenging puzzles. The magazine comes out quarterly.



Try out our sample puzzles on Page 2 & 3. This is a great instructional adjunct. Check out www.pawnmower.com for more information. While you are there, click over and check out our....[website](#).

PAWN MOWER PUZZLE ANSWERS:

Puzzle One: b7-b1-c1-d1-d3-d6-f6-f8-f2-h2-c2-c5-e5-a5-a7-a3-g3-g4

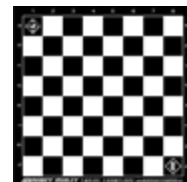
Puzzle Two: c1-c5-e5-e6-b3-b7-c6-g6-h7-h4-d8

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOGO CHESS BOARDS

Available Now!!

*Maurice
Ashley Trains
Champions
Logo boards
(cool reverse
image design)*



*and t-shirts now available
for Bulk Order pricing.
Please send us [an email](#) to
get more information.*

CHESS AND EDUCATION

Continued from Page One

TODAY'S TOPIC: ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Group Consensus: Divide children into groups, set a timer for a few minutes, and ask the group to come to a consensus and report back to the class.

Written Answers: Ask students to write down their answer, pass it to you, and you read the responses (without names).

Visual Answers: Have students hold objects that they can hold up to indicate their answer (e.g., a red gem for "no" and a yellow gem for "yes", a chess piece to indicate which piece should move next, a funny face for when you make a bad move and a smiley face for when you make a good move).

Physical Responses: Students can stand up or sit down to indicate certain answers. They may also act out answers (show how a knight moves by moving along floor tiles, or flap like a chicken for good moves, for example).

Taking Turns: For complex problems or questions, students can take turns coming to the board to add information to an answer (everyone adds something, even if it is just something to make the answer more visually appealing/memorable). Additions can be words, drawings, diagrams, or anything the student think will make a more thorough answer. If different questions/problems are available, students can be divided into teams, and each team can explain/show their answer to the other team.

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Guest Columnist

Aikido & Chess - Continued from page 3

Aikido is a modern Japanese martial art unique in its approach to resolving conflicts as non-violently as possible. The objective of Aikido is peaceful resolution. Aikido seeks the "win-win" solution. Morihei Ueshiba was the founder of Aikido, who developed it out of traditional Samurai martial arts including sword, spear, and hand-to-hand techniques. His insight was that real warrior arts are designed to forge the spirit of the practitioner, and so he began to modify the more deadly and violent applications inherent in the warrior arts to more clearly express being in harmony, increasing awareness, and seeking peace.

In any contest, clash, or competition, there is the meeting of at least two people. Each individual has his own agenda, his own needs, ideas, dreams, etc. Aikido teaches us that when we are in relationship with another person, whether that relationship be cooperative or confrontational, we can maintain our own viewpoint while honestly and fully taking the other person's perspective, to empathize with the other.

In a chess match, you may have a plan, a strategy, or a set of moves that you intend to utilize. However, you must have awareness of your opponent's strategy and be able to blend and modify your approach in response. In Aikido, you move with your partner or opponent's energy, you never resist. As the Borg say in Star Trek "resistance is futile." In Aikido, the first thing we teach is to get out of the way of the attack, and then blend. So a chess player should stay relaxed, try to not to react with anxiety or tense up. Instead, breath, be aware of the moves of your opponent, and respond in kind.

From the beginning, Aikido classes teach kids about how to be

centered. From the moment the child steps into the room, the centering process begins, with respecting the physical space of the dojo. Shoes come off, the child bows when entering the space, and they understand the rules are different in the dojo. Playtime prior to class is loud, wild, rambunctious play, as the children somehow sense they will need to contain themselves soon, and, so need to get it out while they can. But when I clap twice, play ceases immediately, and they fall quietly into line, kneeling, panting, each of them remembering to sit up as straight as they can, hands on knees, settling down. I have the singular privilege of watching the facial expressions of 12-18 kids as they go through this process. They may not realize it, but they are learning to center and calm themselves just in this simple process. Next, we go into warm-ups, stretching, and balancing. Spinning movements, stances that require bent knees and experimentation with different foot positions all begin to help the child become more familiar with their body, how it moves and how they respond.

I'm not a regular chess player, so I'm out of my element a little here. But from my perspective, chess is a mental game played out in the physical space of the board. One trains, one learns moves, one practices over and over again,

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CHESS AND EDUCATION

TODAY'S TOPIC: ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Making a Move: Students can answer by coming to the board and making a move (on a demo board or a standard board). Some students will be more comfortable answering if they do not have to speak out loud.

Answer Announcements: Students can be asked to announce the answers of other people—either other individuals or group answers. This can be done in any number of ways (e.g., write answers on paper, fold it up, put it in a hat, then, each person draws out an answer to read). This eliminates the fear of giving a wrong answer. Once students are in the habit of participating actively, they often become less self-conscious.

These suggestions offer other benefits as well. Some provide the opportunity for movement (getting up to draw or write on the board, holding up answers, etc.); others offer the chance to draw on other skills (drawing, for example). This gives those that may not be as skilled with chess to use other skills that are more well-developed, helping them to feel more comfortable in the class. Any time you require students to wait before responding, you give them a chance to develop greater impulse control and delayed gratification. And, of course, group activities offer the opportunity for cooperative learning and all of the benefits that entails (development of social skills, the opportunity to problem solve in a group and teach others, etc.). Last, but definitely not least, using these techniques can make the class more fun. We all know we learn better when we are having fun!

Guest Columnist

Aikido & Chess - Continued from page 3

increasing the range of moves, the familiarity with possible attacks and responses, constantly bettering one's game, preparing for a more challenging match in the future.

Then one day you realize that you are applying chess concepts and strategy to a conflict you are having at work or school. You see a similarity between how your argument with your spouse or your friends feels a little like a particular gambit you have worked on.

Aikido is the same way. We train, train, train, always learning new movements and refining the old ones. We forge our mental game by engaging in the physical manifestation of conflict resolution through controlled attack and response.

There are several aspects of Aikido philosophy that could help a chess player. Blending, absolutely. Blending is one of the central principles of Aikido. It emphasizes blending with an attack, using the force of the attacker (redirecting it) rather than meeting it head-on. "Rolling with Resistance" is another concept. Instead of fighting an opponent head on where they are strong, move to the side or behind their defenses. Don't meet force with force.

Stay centered and breathe. If you lose your balance in Aikido, you roll and get back up again. In a chess match, you may lose concentration and lose a piece, but you can breathe, center yourself, manage your emotions and continue with the match.

"Gambatte" is a Japanese word that basically means "GO FOR IT" or "try your best" which is a martial arts concept that we try to convey in class, but which can basically be applied to any arena in life. Throw yourself into your game with gusto and commitment and do your best. Be courageous even when you are afraid. That's a peaceful warrior's spirit.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts!

Please feel free to contact Brian at 804-387-2279 if you have questions or, if you are in the Richmond, Virginia area and would like to try a class, or visit www.rivercityaikido.com.

Calling All Coaches

Please contact us and let us know what you need. If you have a suggestion, something that is helpful to you, please, let us know. We would like this newsletter (well, the blog) to be a place we can share ideas that will help us all with our work teaching chess.

Be sure to check out the resources page on our website. There, we have free printables, chess projects, activities, etc.