

Wilshire Chess Society Newsletter

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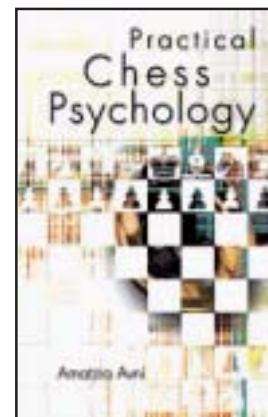


Book Review: Practical Chess Psychology by Amatzia Avni

I just picked up **Practical Chess Psychology** (Batsford, 2001, \$22.95) by Israeli Master **Amatzia Avni**. What a book! Avni has always been one of my favorite authors (*Creative Chess*, *Danger in Chess*, and *Surprise in Chess* are some of his excellent previous efforts), but this book is simply awesome for the tournament player. Here are two killer quotes:

On **goals**: "People see the goal, they set the goal, and then they don't enjoy themselves while they're doing it... we live our lives longer in the process than at the goals. You have to enjoy the path... For me, getting there is sweet, but I don't think it's any sweeter than the path." —GM Maurice Ashley

On **determination**: "Every chess amateur wants to win. But the best players really WANT to win. They are focused on and firmly insist on getting what they desire, and do not back off when confronted with obstacles." —Amatzia Avni



The book is sprinkled with dozens of these quotes along with excellent chess examples to back them up. *Practical Chess Psychology* is everything Rowson's *Seven Deadly Sins* wants to be, but doesn't come close. The reason for this comes down to one word: USABILITY. Where Avni's material seems extremely practical, Rowson's seems airy-fairy. Of course, this may have something to do with their areas of expertise: Avni is a behavioral psychologist and Rowson is a philosophy major.

As can be seen from the chapter titles, the book focuses on areas that most chess books either completely ignore, or barely spend more than a few sentences on: **1. Setting Goals, 2. Determination, 3. Concentration, 4. Learning to Learn, 5. Drawing the Right Lessons, 6. Thinking Tools, 7. Decision Making, 8. Style, 9. Encounters with Failure, 10. Handling Spectators, 11. Psychological Ploys, 12. Miscellaneous.** Indeed, in the introduction Avni says, "This book deals exclusively with the human factors in chess." This is good news for those of us who, like myself, have come to understand that your mood, concentration level and self-confidence are just as important in determining the outcome of a game as your skill level.

Avni define's **self-confidence** as: "the belief that one can successfully perform a desired behavior." He goes on to say, "It is a key personality trait of successful achievers in chess. If a player is unsure of himself, has constant reservations regarding the correctness of his calculations; doubts his chances in a certain game, or against a certain opponent; and is unsure of his overall abilities, then his results will suffer substantially."

And he defines **persistence** as: "persevering in our efforts for a considerable time, even though we do not quite see results and are not sure of gaining success at the end." I also like Avni's astute observation that while in life one can get by without setting goals, in chess goal setting is a must. *Bottom line: This book has much to offer all chess players whether you're rated 1200 or 2400. I give it a 9!*

- Congrats! to the winners of our July 28
- Tourn.: Quad 1: **Richard Henderson**; Quad
- 2: **Jesus Barraza, Jack O'Donnell, John**
- **Rolston**, (3 way tie); Quad 3: **Ed Driscoll**
-

See you August 25! Michael Jeffreys

Next W.C.S. G/45 Tournament August 25, 2002 - Sunday

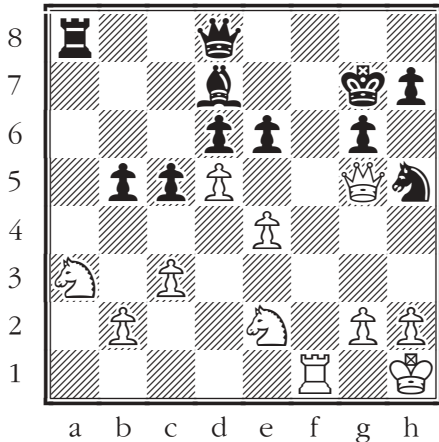
Westside Pavilion, Community Room "C"
10850 W. Pico Blvd., West Los Angeles
(3rd Flr., West of Barnes & Noble, next to
the SPCA pet adoption center)
Registration 10:30 am
Games from 11:00 am - 4:30 pm, 3-rounds
Round robin quads (groups of 4) by rating
Time control: G/45 mins. Entry fee: \$20.00
Prizes: \$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).

✓ out the WCS website at: www.geocities.com/mjshark1

Think psychology isn't a part of chess? ✓out these 2 Swindles!!

In keeping with the theme of Avni's book (winning with chess psychology), below are two examples of opponents being "psyched out."

Jeffreys, M. (1686) - Wilson, K. (1505)
2002 San Diego County Championship

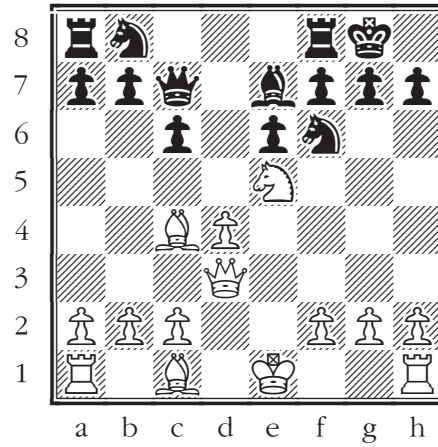


White to move

As White in the above position, I saw how I could win a pawn and played: **1.Qxd8 Rxd8 2. dxe6 Bxe6 3. Nxb5?** These moves were played very fast as I had seen the combination several moves earlier. However, I suddenly got a rude awakening: **3...Bc4!**

Oops! I had missed this fork at the end of the combination. Searching frantically for some type of compensation, I finally decided that there was none! However, I realized that there may be some swindling chances, so I played: **4. Nc7 Bxe2 5. Ne6+ Kh6? 6. g4!** And here I held my breath as I knew my opponent had a chance to go wrong. Sure enough, he played: **6...Bxf1??** I couldn't believe it! My swindle had worked! **7. g5#** As I played this move I blurted out, "Mate!" And my opponent almost fell off his chair. He couldn't believe it as he told me afterwards that he already was counting his chickens and assumed he had the win. This game is a powerful reminder of not relaxing and assuming the game is over until it really is!

Kavutskiy, A. (1479) - Gerson, K. (1476)
2002 Wilshire Chess Society



White to move

In the above position, White saw an interesting idea to win Black's queen. He played: **1. Bh6!?! gxh6? 2. Qg3+ Kh8 3. Nxf7+? Resigns??** And here Black believed White, i.e., that he was going to lose his queen, and resigned in a won position! Had White played the correct **3. Ng6+**, then Black would have indeed been busted. But the text allows the table turning: **3...Rxf7 4. Qxc7 Bb4+! 5. c3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Rxc7** and it is Black who is winning! The lesson here is NEVER take your opponents word for it. Just because a move looks good, doesn't mean there's not a refutation to it.

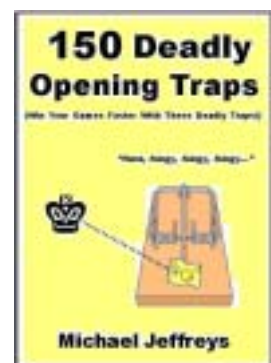
Announcing Michael Jeffreys New Book!

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