Chess does not take a holiday in Holladay, Utah (by chess tutor Jonathan Whitcomb)

At least when school is in session, the royal game does not take a holiday in this community up against the mountain foothills in the eastern Salt Lake Valley. It's no news that chess has been promoted at Morningside school, with active annual participation in Utah's state **elementary school championship**. Chess instructor Jonathan Whitcomb, who photographed the 2016 championship, is now promoting activity in the game during the summer months, offering both a free tournament and $25 private chess lessons.



Morningside Elementary School, Holladay, Utah

Whitcomb is looking for a sponsor for small trophies to be awarded to the top players in a tournament, in the Salt Lake Valley, for chess players of all ages. (Details to be announced but probably to be held between July and October of 2016, not necessarily in Holladay but very likely in the valley).

Private Chess Lessons

The tournament is not directly related to the tutoring service offered by Whitcomb: private chess lessons in the Salt Lake Valley. In contrast to the upcoming free competition events in Utah, which he promotes or encourages, his private lessons are $25 each.

He’s the author of the instructional book *Beat That Kid in Chess*, which is for beginners who already know the rules of the game but who know little about how to win during competition.

For more information about personal chess lessons or about free chess tournaments, contact Jonathan Whitcomb at 801-590-9692 or send him an **email**.

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Morningside student just before the start of the 2016 state championship tournament

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Chess Lessons in Holladay, Utah

> *If you're reading this, you may have considered taking private chess lessons. If so, what first caused you to consider that way of learning chess? . . . I, Jonathan Whitcomb, can help you learn modern chess notation [which can greatly help in improving your chess-playing ability]*

Chess Tutor in Salt Lake

> *Chess lessons are available in many communities in the Salt Lake Valley of Utah, from chess coach Jonathan Whitcomb, who lives in Murray. . . . For most chess players, improving basic tactical ability is very important.*

Utah Chess Instruction or Private Tutoring

> *I'm the author of the beginner-book* ***Beat That Kid in Chess****, which uses a new teaching method of chess instruction: NIP (nearly-identical instructions). . . . Each chess lesson will be tailor-made for where you stand (assuming you take private lessons instead of group sessions).*

Salt Lake Valley Chess Coach – Whitcomb

> *Regular competition in a chess club can help a player improve in his or her abilities in the royal game. Learning to improve quickly, however, is more likely from private lessons with a good tutor, a chess-instructor specialist,* ***in combination*** *with playing experience.*

Sixth Grader at Morningside

> *Friday afternoon, Nicholas Shifrar, a sixth grader from Morningside Elementary School [Salt Lake Valley, Utah],*

delivered dozens of knitted caps to the U Hospital's Newborn Intensive Care Unit.

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Two Chess Books for Advanced Players

Modern Chess Openings **(14th edition) versus** ***Fundamental Chess Openings***

These two large books on chess openings are both broad in their coverage. They include the following openings (but are not at all limited to them):

- Alekhine Defense
- Austrian Attack (Pirc)
- Benoni
- Bishop's Opening
- Blumenfeld Counter Gambit
- Cambridge Springs Variation
- Caro-Kann Defense
- Catalan Opening
- Center Game
- Danish Gambit
- Dutch Defense
- English Opening
- Evan's Gambit
- Four Knights Game
- French Defense
- Giuoco Piano (Italian Opening)
- Grunfeld Defense

- Hedgehog System (of the English Opening)
- King’s Gambit (Accepted and Declined)
- Latvian Gambit (Greco Counter Gambit)
- Max Lange Attack
- Muzio Gambit (of the King’s Gambit)
- Nimzo-Indian Defense
- Petroff Defense (AKA *Petrov’s Defense*)
- Pirc Defense
- Queen’s Gambit (Accepted and Declined)
- Reti Opening
- Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)
- Scotch Opening
- Slav and Semi-Slav
- Stonewall Variation (of the Dutch Defense)
- Three Knights Game
- Torre Attack
- Two Knights Defense
- Vienna Game

Modern Chess Openings (MCO)

As of November 2, 2015, it has 38 customer reviews on Amazon:

34% five-stars

39% four-stars

16% three-stars

8% two-stars

3% one-star

Fundamental Chess Openings (FCO)

As of November 2, 2015, it has 62 customer reviews on Amazon:

55% five-stars

32% four-stars

7% three-stars

6% one-star

Conclusions

The Amazon readers reviews appear to favor FCO over MCO. Combine the top two ratings (those with favorable reviews):

MCO=73% and FCO=87% – that favors FCO

Combine the lowest two ratings (those with poor opinions of the books):

MCO=11% and FCO=6% – that favors FCO

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Chess Book for a Beginner to Win Games

> *If you already know the rules of chess but losing has cut down some of the fun, "Beat That Kid in Chess" puts back the fun. . . . See where you can get a checkmate and where a position is not quite set up for checkmate . . .*

Review of Some of the Best Chess Books

> *How is any publication a "best chess book?" That's too deep a subject to cover well in this post. What does the reader want from the book? That's easier to answer.*

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New Method in a Chess Book for Beginners

How does an average non-genius learn how to win a game of chess? The tradition method for a beginner is quite simple: Play chess games and learn by experience. Reading a chess book is the second most popular way for a novice to learn, but that does not usually work as well, for most chess books are not for beginners but for players of mid-level abilities at least.

The new paperback *Beat That Kid in Chess* may be the first publication to systematically use the teaching method called "nearly-identical positions" (PIN). It was also written especially with the "early" beginner in mind.



Beat That Kid in Chess – published by Createspace on September 2, 2015 – for beginners

Nearly-identical positions can help chess students catch onto tactics in a natural way, allowing novices in the royal game to gradually see tactical opportunities and avoid the pitfall

of overly-simplistic strategic generalities in their thinking.

Quoting Createspace

According to the publisher's page for this chess book, *Beat That Kid in Chess* gives these advantages:

1) Simple – It really is for the early beginner

2) Concise – no chess history or reciting the rules

3) Huge Diagrams – no magnifying glass needed

4) Win-focused – quickly learn to win a game

5) Two levels of exercises – learn at your pace

6) Reviews – appropriate repetition, as needed

7) Internal references – find things quickly

8) Two indexes – general and exercises

9) All three phases – opening, middle, end game

10) Critical tactics – pin, knight fork, etc

11) Checkmates explained – attack and defense

12) Common pitfalls explained – avoid errors

Quoting the Introduction in the book *Beat That Kid in Chess*

> *"If you know the chess rules but almost nothing about how to win, this book is for you. We'll keep to the basics that you need most . . . I must tell you something I've learned over the past half century: If your opponent has both a greater natural ability at chess and a greater drive to win, expect to lose at least a few games. . . . If you have a greater drive to win, however, you can combine that with what you learn in these lessons, and you can expect to beat a raw beginner more often than you lose, even if that person has*

> *more natural ability than you have. What better lesson to teach your opponent than humility?”*

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Chess Books for the Novice and Post-Beginner

Three chess books compared

How to Play Chess to Win

> *Winning consistently comes not from stepping through a chess game as if it were dancing . . . It’s more like dinosaurs attacking.*

Beginner Chess Book

> *I’ve read and studied dozens of chess books in the past 53 years. I don’t recall any of them that included nearly-identical positions for training. [aside from Beat That Kid in Chess]*

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Another Voice for the Benefits of Chess for Children

Susan Polgar, a former Women’s World Chess Champion, has said:

> *"According to research, [academic] test scores improved by 17.3% for students regularly engaged in chess classes, compared with only 4.6% for children participating in other forms of enriched activities."*

She has been promoting chess for children for many years in the United States, a nation that actively promotes sports for the physical development of students but promotes intellectual competition (like chess) much less than European countries promote the game in schools.

She has also said the following:

> *"You have to be responsible for your actions, you make a move, you had better think ahead about what's going to happen, not after it happens, because then it's too late. Chess teaches discipline from a very early age. It teaches you to have a plan and to plan ahead. If you do that, you'll be rewarded; if you break the rules, you will get punished in life and in chess."*

It's hard to object to that kind of logic.

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Chess for the Early Beginner

> *"This 194-page paperback was written with a modest goal: Teach and prepare the raw beginner to win a game of chess, even if it's against another raw beginner."*

Susan Polgar Foundation

> *"In approximately 30 nations across the globe, including Brazil, China, Venezuela, Italy, Israel, Russia and Greece, etc., chess is incorporated into the country's scholastic*

curriculum.”

Chess Benefits New York City Children

“Chess dramatically improves a child’s ability to think rationally”

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Chess Benefits New York City Children

The New York City Schools Chess Program Report

“The New York City Schools Chess Program Report is impressive, here is what Chrisine Palm writes in1990. In its four-year existence, NYCHESS has proven that:”

“a. Chess instills in young players a sense of self-confidence and self-worth

b. Chess dramatically improves a child’s ability to think rationally

c. Chess increases cognitive skills

d. Chess improves children’s communication skills and aptitude in recognizing patterns

e. Chess results in higher grades, especially in English and Math studies . . .”

(KSN) Some of the benefits of chess, for children, may be

related to the tactical combinations that often happen in the **chess middle game**. Mental calculations are essential in these complex chess positions, for chess players need to imagine future positions of pieces on the board.