

# The Mysterious Mr. X

I am pretty sure that everybody can point out an impotent trainer. Let's call him the mysterious Mr. X, as we will have to quote him at certain points.

I have in my mind my own Mr. X. An impotent trainer who really thinks he is a good one! When he attacks me I feel that I have made the correct decision! When I read his articles I understand why I can create good players and he cannot!

But I cannot really blame him, as the right to idiocy exists! All people have the right to be stupid. It's just that some abuse the right... And in the end you should never argue with an idiot. He'll drag you down to his level and then beat you with experience.

There were even times when I nearly hated Mr. X, but then I remembered that I should not hate my enemies, because I made them myself...

But what really proves the value of your profession? I think that the only real measure is results in your field - anything else is simply propaganda and lies.

In our chaotic chess training world we will meet many traps and a lot of fraud. The services offered by a lot of trainers nowadays are numerous and cater for every wallet. But money cannot always buy knowledge or maybe the expression that you 'get what you pay for' applies? Let's see some facts:

## ***Internet Training***

I have the feeling that there is a tremendous explosion of chess training demand worldwide or at least this is what I have been discovering in recent years.

Everybody offers chess lessons for a big range of fees (I noticed 10 to 150 euros per hour). You can even see players around 1200 rating strength advertising themselves as chess teachers, something unthinkable at the time that I was a junior...

Obviously the demands are rapidly changing and obviously there is nothing to accuse, as we live in a free market and anybody can offer his/her services to the potential 'customers'.

Of course, a vast amount of this training is taking place via the internet. With the help of Skype, chess programs and other applications, trainers and trainees are connected and have the opportunity to choose and to be chosen according to their offers, needs and prices!

## ***The Good and the Bad***

But with so much training on offer worldwide, a mess is created in the mind of the potential trainee. The adverts are huge and promise success in no time! They promise to make you a good player, ready to beat badly anybody just by spending some hours with them or with their products! My Lord, while reading all these adverts I thought they aren't trainers but magicians!

But still, even if you do not bite, the questions remain: how should I select a decent trainer? Jeremy Silman gives us an idea: 'Even the most highly regarded coach can be wrong for you if there's no connection, or if his expertise is in areas that don't affect your needs. But a chess coach (private lessons) can be hugely beneficial if he's a skilled/experienced teacher, if his rates fit your budget, if he genuinely wants to help your game, and if you feel in tune with him.'

A good chess teacher will tell you how to maximize your tournament experience. He will help you create an opening repertoire that suits your tastes, style, and skills. He'll make sure you know basic endgames. And he'll work on tactics and positional chess to make sure you're as well rounded as possible.'

Another nice guide (which I like a lot) has been made by Carlos Luis Pujol in <http://chess4real.com/ten-ways-to-know-when-a-chess-coach-is-good/>.

## ***Fraud***

Obviously there is a lot of fraud as well in the training field. People who call themselves trainers, coaches, captains, authors, analysts, etc, and have nothing to do

with that! They have their ways to convince you, either with their behaviour or with their low price offers.

Trainees tend to love low offers without thinking one of the most ancient proverbs: You get what you pay for... Like it or not, this is the plain truth. With so many trainers around, the quality is being sacrificed for the quantity. I've been talking with a GM trainer who works mainly in ICC and he told me: 'I pretend that I am training and they pretend that they are paying me'. Well, what he wanted to make clear is that he doesn't take his lessons seriously, as what he gets paid is peanuts. Everybody seems to be happy by the way...

Another fraud that I discovered is on the subject of FIDE certified trainers. It seems that a lot of adverts on the internet state that the trainer is FIDE certified, which in most of the cases is not true. Check yourself before you choose. It is rather likely that if the trainer is lying already once, he is/will lie as well about his other qualifications.

Do not believe what you read before you check it yourself. Ask for your potential trainer's CV and ask for a program. Check his background and how successful he has already been in his field. Compare what you get and what you pay for - do not be happy at once when you feel that you will pay peanuts, because in the end you will be the monkey!

### ***Chess Training***

How important is chess training? Lately the following question was given to ex-World Champion, GM and FST Garry Kasparov:

'In your opinion, can a less talented individual still succeed in chess, if he or she has the utmost passion in the game and a detailed plan to get there?'

Garry Kasparov answered: 'Sometimes, I find it hard to understand what it means when someone said, "Oh he or she is talented, but lazy"'. To me, this simply showed that there is a big gap in the person's character.

'Working hard is a form of talent - it is in fact, an important element of the person's

talent. By not working hard, how can your natural gift become real diamonds?'

'So, that is why I think working hard is sometimes just as important to having a talent. Of course, I must admit that it will be difficult for someone without a huge talent to be a world champion. But, you can still go very high up and achieve a lot, even with limited talent. Of course, when I said limited talent, please do not get confused with the term.

'People can get really confused as talent can mean anything, you know. Being number one in your school also requires some talent. Being number one in the world also requires talent, but these are very different forms of talent.

'That said, I am a great proponent of the concept that the ability to work hard is a unique talent and if you can work hard and if you can spend the long hours and if you can concentrate on the goal and if you can make detailed plans, you could still be ahead of your competitor even if you are less talented or less gifted in chess or anything else simply because he or she is not as good in organizing their work.'

### ***Trainers' Levels***

Chess books and databases can be of valuable help to the progress of an ambitious chess player. However, besides these indispensable tools, the role of the trainer is both significant and essential. This consideration immediately provokes the question: who should be the trainer?

Every trainer is useful in specific stages in the progress of a chess player. All the trainers of a chess player form a strong chain which should in no way break down. Each part of the chain is valuable and useful and should be not underestimated; 'basic', good education can be proven more important than anything else. We could try to categorize chess trainers as follows:

**First-Level Trainer:** The trainer who will teach the student the basics and bring him into contact with the world of chess. One of his main aims is to infuse the student with love and respect for chess (FIDE title: Developmental Instructor).

**Second-Level Trainer:** The trainer who will teach the student his first openings, simple tactical motifs and, generally, will introduce the student to the aspects of working and learning (FIDE title: National Instructor).

**Third-Level Trainer:** The trainer who will teach the student, first and foremost, the theory of the middle game and the endgame. He will work closely with the student towards the creation of the student's personalized openings repertoire, which he will also help enrich with new ideas (FIDE title: FIDE Instructor).

**Fourth-Level Trainer:** The trainer who will continue in the footsteps of the previous

one, but will also introduce the student to other important aspects of chess, such as the concept of and preparation for competitive success.

Trainers of such calibre and skill are very scarce, and are only necessary to those chess players who wish to reach a high level of play or seek competitive success in any form (FIDE title: FIDE Trainer).

**Fifth-Level Trainer:** The trainer who trains the trainers! Of course he also can do great things with trainees, but his main mission is to properly develop the future of chess training, to inspire, to encourage and to innovate (FIDE title: FIDE Senior Trainer).