

# Lessons and Coaches

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## I. Overview

Many people who do not even play at the MCC (MetroWest Chess Club) come across our website and hope that we can help them find the answers to a wide range of questions. This document attempts to provide some guidance for the most common questions related to **lessons** and **coaches**.

The guidance provided by this document is intended for:

- Youth and Adults who do not have a USCF rating or have a rating less than 1700.
  - At around a 1700 rating, what is needed to improve beyond that becomes very different from what it takes to reach that rating.

We do not endorse or necessarily recommend any person or organization that may be listed here. We are providing them only as sources you could find on your own if you knew where to look.

This document will progress from shorter discussions and answers to more verbose.

## II. The shortest answer we can give to where to find a coach or take lessons.

### FMCA (Future Masters Chess Academy)

This organization has a large Youth enrollment and teaches in a several school systems. Many of the players that pass through their system are the up-and-coming youth players in the region and regularly attend the local area chess clubs.

The FMCA offers instruction for:

- **Youth and Adults**
- On-site or Online
- Individual or groups
- A Team of coaches
- <https://futurechessmasters.com/programs>

### RSM (Russian School of Math)

The RSM in Framingham offers a chess class for **Youth** players.

- <https://metrowestschool.com/chess>
- [info@metrowestschool.com](mailto:info@metrowestschool.com).
- Phone: 508-283-1355

### III. A quick list of questions and answers

- Does the club provide Lessons?
  - No. We occasionally have guest lecturers provide a group class for a night or two for our members. These are not lessons that you enroll or regularly attend in an attempt to learn the game.
- Does the club know of chess coaches we can contact?
  - No. We have people who may coach who may attend but there are no affiliations with our club or method for us to relay inquiries to coaches.
- Where do I find a coach or get lessons for myself or my child?
  - A search of the internet and online chess sites will locate many coaches from around the world.
    - Selecting from among these choices is another matter. Read on for more perspective
  - The MACA (Massachusetts Chess Association) website has a listing but much of it is likely out of date and is not organized in a way to try to make an informed choice.
- Why should I consider getting a coach or taking lessons?
  - The right coach and lessons will accelerate your knowledge and your results.
    - Improvement of course rests with the students and their efforts but getting the needed information at the right time and guidance on where best to expend energy will speed improvement.
- Do I need a chess Master for a coach?
  - Consider, would you only get a world champion tennis player to teach your child or yourself as an adult to learn how to play? For some people the answer would be yes. For many, it would be overkill. Select a coach that is best suited to the persons age and current skills.
  - A good coach doesn't always have to be a very strong player. For young players this is especially true. You need an effective instructor who knows more about the material being taught than the student.
  - Depending on your level of play and your long-term goals, you do not necessarily need a Master to begin with. If you are an adult, someone who is rated about 400 points or more than your rating may be all you need for a while.
  - Keep in mind that at some point, for a variety of reasons, you will want or need to change coaches. Even the top players in the world change coaches. This is true in many sports as well.

## IV. Why bother with a coach?

### A. What value would a Coach bring to your learning?

Having a coach can provide you with information that would be otherwise harder for you to obtain on your own.

- What area needs to be improved first and by how much to improve your results.
- What is your style and how to improve or change or balance it.
- Engines show you what you could have done to reduce the problem you have in the game, a coach teaches you how to not have those problems occur.
- Specific answers to your specific questions

### B. Can't I just learn on my own, why do I need a coach?

There are enough books out there and Computer Engines that you can self-educate yourself without getting anybody's help. Bobby Fischer did it, so can you, provided you can put in the time and effort he did.

You can self-educate for most anything these days. Let's say you want to become a Lawyer or a Doctor. You could look at the tests and figure out a plan on how to prepare and take the tests to reach your goals. Alternatively, like most other people, you can enter a program at university, and they will jam you with everything you need to get to a particular level of skill in a well-established approach to reach those goals.

If only you could go to college and get that rating you always wanted, at least then you would know the time, effort and cost.

In the past ten years both the internet and technology have greatly improved the amount of knowledge and training available. Most major chess sites have training videos available from top players from around the world. These sites have puzzles, drills and self-paced training and engines to analyze your games.

Maybe this route can get you where you want to be. Try it for a while then do a trial period of a few lessons with a coach to see which you think will be more time and cost effective for you, then you'll have the answer that is specific to you

### C. Books

There's no shortage of books on chess. You can find many books on the same topic such as "A complete opening Repertoire" or "A complete defense to 1 d4". When you have a coach, they can guide you to the answers for these types of questions:

- Which openings are appropriate for my level and where I'm trying to get to?
- Which book by which author should I choose?
- What is my style and which Authors suite "my style"
- Which books complement each other so I have a complete repertoire of openings?
- Which chapters and sub-variations should I play in my books?
- Which chapters of my primary books are better to be learned from another book?