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## ChessBase Training with GM Efstratios Grivas (Part 5)

28.01.2011 - How do you help talented young chess players to realize their potential? Working with a world-class trainer is a good way to start. ChessBase has started a program to sponsor a series of training sessions, which started, logically, in our offices in Hamburg. Five young talents got a full-day session with an internationally known chess coach, who has graciously placed his entire lecture at our disposal.



### Opening Encyclopaedia 2011

The ChessBase Opening Encyclopaedia 2011 features the complete coverage of all opening sectors, offering an optimal start for opening training. Many well-known specialists have made contributions in their field of expertise, such as Anand, Avrukh, Krasenkow, Kritz, Kuzmin, Marin, Moskalenko, Postny, Ribli, Rogozenko and Stohl. The DVD contains a separate directory with 580 special theory databases from the CBMs. For each of 500 opening sectors according to ECO standard there is at least one opening survey, so that the database is the ideal tool for building up a complete opening repertoire. [More...](#)

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## Training by GM & FST Efstratios Grivas

Schedule - **Hamburg, 22.01.2011**

10:30-10:50	Physical and Psychological Factors; Getting to know Ourselves
11:00-11:50	Building a Repertoire; Chess Literature
12:00-12:50	Activity of Bishops and Knights
Break	
14:00-14:50	The Backward Pawn
15:00-15:50	The Art of Exchanges
16:00-16:50	The Golden Rules of the Endgame; How to Think in Endgames

The aim of this series of lectures is to enable participants to teach young and gifted players in schools and chess clubs, and to educate trainers and chess teachers not only in their own countries but also on an international basis.

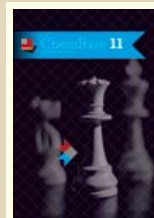


Successful chess trainer GM Efstratios Grivas

The material started to develop in early 2004 and was used Grivas' personal training sessions, where he developed a system based on serious sport (chess is treated like a sport) and chess material (focusing on middlegame and endgame). In 2005 this material was first printed in Greek, in a series of training books called 'Skakistiki Proponisi' (six volumes, 680 pages). It then appeared in an improved version in an English series 'Chess College' (Gambit 2006, three volumes, translator Sotiris Logothetis) and 'Practical Endgame Play' (Everyman 2008). It was also translated (in another improved version) into Turkish in 2009. Finally a further improved version appeared in the latest FIDE book for training the trainers called 'Syllabus' (FIDE 2010, proofer Andrew Martin).

"I use this material to make my students understand that health and other sport assets are valuable for a chess player's improvement, and not just never-end analysis in openings," says Stratos (as his friends call him). "For example in Turkey, where I am working on my program, all my trainees exercise some physical activity in accordance with their chess education." Since middle of 2006, when he started training youthful Turkish talents, three players have made their grandmaster norms and two more are close to this goal. And a number of IMs have also arisen in the process.

In the meantime Grivas, Adrian Mikhalchishin, Alexander Beliavsky and Georg Mohr are cooperating to produce a



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total training system, which will appear in 30 books (around 3,000 pages) based on the idea of full training in the middle and endgame. The work is being edited by the Turkish Chess Federation (which has the rights) and for the moment it is printed only in the Turkish language. The project started in early 2010 and it will be completed in 2012.

Trainers (and players) all over the world can use the series presented on the ChessBase news page freely. Any question can be addressed directly to the author: GrivasEfs (at) yahoo.co.uk.

## The start



*The training session in Hamburg started with something delicious. One of the participants, WGM Marta Michna, was celebrating her daughter's birthday and brought some Lindner cake for everyone.*



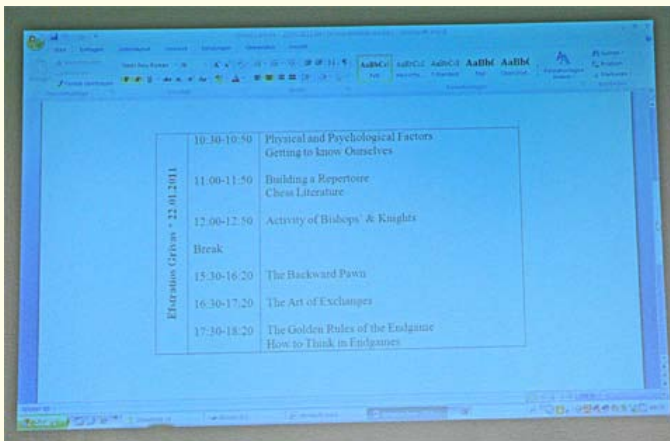
*Piece o' cake! Training with Efstratios Grivas and Marta Michna is quite enjoyable*



Marta was born in Poland and started her career as Marta Zielinska and played for her country in four Olympiads. She now lives in Hamburg and played at the last Olympiad for Germany, where she is the second-highest ranked female player in the country.



*After the cake the training session can begin*



*The program for the day, projected on the screen*



WIM Melanie Ohme, 20, has been the poster girl for German chess since her pre-teen days. IM and WGM Elisabeth Pähtz, who has just turned 26, is the highest ranked female player in Germany. "Elli" is the daughter of GM Thomas Pähtz and at nine won her first German championship in the under-11 age group. In 2005 she won the World Junior Chess Championship for girls.



FM Hagen Poetsch, 19, is rated 2408. Jonas Lampert is 13 and rated 2127

## Physical and Psychological Factors

Which physical and psychological assets are necessary for a successful chess career? Well, in the next pages we will be well informed on various subjects concerning a healthy sportsman's life.

### Chess Assets

On the basis of relevant research conducted since the beginning of the previous century, these assets are split in two main categories, innate and attainable.

#### **Innate Chess Assets**

1. Self-control
2. Ability to think on subjects
3. Intense mental activity
4. Obedience of will
5. Proper distribution of attention
6. Perception of position dynamics
7. Combinative creative skill

#### **Attainable Chess Assets**

1. Good health condition
2. Strong nerves
3. Perception of data conveyed by our senses
4. Objective thought-process
5. Powerful memory
6. High mental level
7. Self-confidence
8. Control of emotional urges
9. Feeling for the position (combination of thought and emotions)

The innate assets can be further enhanced and developed, but the attainable ones are purely a matter of education. Endless work and systematic training in order to improve our personal traits and the 'required assets' is essential for our overall chess improvement and the climb up to the highest title; that of grandmaster.

Naturally, without the help of a specialized trainer or advisor, the trainee finds it difficult to understand or try to improve the above-mentioned assets. After all, these assets are exclusively related to chess and have no direct bearing on our other interests. For example, 'powerful special memory' may refer exclusively to chess-related matters (data), as opposed to other matters; naturally, the opposite is also possible. Each of us is unique.

### Health Sports

Chess-players tend to grossly ignore the proper state of their health, consequently being in serious danger of suffering heart problems due to the combination of lack of physical training and daily stress stemming from preparation for and participation in competitions. Therefore, workout or sport activities in general is essential, not only to protect our precious health but also to ensure better results over a longer period of time.

Man's first kinetic activity, walking, does not require any specialized equipment, can take place everywhere and brings several dividends. It is one of the simplest methods of aerobic training, improving cardiac and respiratory functionality, and our physical condition in general. A routine of half an hour of walking and two hours at the gym can turn our biological clock six to eight years back. At the same time, it contributes to proper maintenance of weight and forestalls obesity. Finally, it helps reduce the amount of bad cholesterol (LDL) in our body. Research conducted by American universities has proven that this activity improves memory and mental focus, while the production of endorphins (substances that reduce physical and emotional pain, as well as creating euphoria) reaches extremely high levels.

### Training time-frame

Another topic that must be addressed is the 'time-frame' of training in relation to the scale of our mental activities, and how we are able to attain maximum performance in it. Science almost unanimously accepts the following categorization of people:

1. *Larks*: their mental processes are most efficient during the first half of the day, falling off during the second

half. Approximately 25% of the world's population belongs in this category.

2. *Owls*: their mental processes are most efficient during the second half of the day and especially during the evening hours. They usually go to sleep late and wake up accordingly late. Approximately 30% of the world's population belongs in this category.
3. *Arrhythmics*: for these people mental processes do not display any special ups and downs during the day or night. Approximately 45% of the world's population, the largest part, belongs to this category.

In practice, all top chess-players belong to the 'Owls' category! The explanation is simple and is directly related to the standard time-frame of chess competitions, which mostly take place during the second half of the day. Therefore, the chess-player 'must' place himself in this category (as far as possible) and adapt his training schedule accordingly.

But of course, if it is not easy to be adjusted in this 'new' time-frame, solutions exist. One of the most 'used' one for chess-players who are fundamentally larks is to take a nap in-between lunch and play, usually for 1 to 1½ hour. Then the mind is fresh again and ready to fight!

#### Nutrition

Another important topic is the chess-player's nutritional habits. In general he should not deviate from his customary diet as regards the type and quantity of food he consumes (no exertions!), as each organism has different needs and habits.

What can chessplayers do in order to improve and/or maintain healthy habits? Some very simple rules to be followed by young people are: proper lifestyle, proper sleeping patterns, consumption (in logical portions) of a variety of vegetables, fruits and natural fibres, along with one's favourite dishes involving fish, beef, chicken, ham and turkey. In other words, a healthy diet based on a variety of food, based on a weekly schedule. Soy milk, filtered water, tea (especially black or green), coffee, dairy products (such as butter, milk, eggs and cheese) should be rarely consumed within each week.

In our times, one dish rarely contains sufficient amounts of vitamins and minerals. Normally, a specialized food shop can provide a nutritional supplement to meet one's specific needs. Although these supplements are costly, just consider how much harm an illness or sickness can do to your game. So, a question is borne by all the above: what is the best diet for a chess-player, a sportsman? According to [Rebecca Scritchfield](#) (among others), following a healthy diet can be a key method of preventing heart disease. We can highlight five heart-healthy foods that can literally save our health. We recognize that these are not the only five foods that protect our heart, but they stand out as star performers and great additions to any diet.

1. *Garlic*: This herb is ideal for heart health. Numerous studies have shown the potential benefits of regular garlic consumption on blood pressure, platelet aggregation, serum triglyceride level, and cholesterol levels – all of which keep our heart performing. Garlic also makes a great seasoning for food so we can greatly reduce salt.
2. *Salmon*: Make the swap from a saturated fat burger to a salmon fillet. While some saturated fat is fine, a little goes a long way. The average cheeseburger has more than half a day worth of the artery clogging fat, which will increase our risk for a heart attack. Conversely, salmon lowers that risk thanks to heart healthy fats. Omega-3s can prevent erratic heart rhythms, reduce likelihood of blood clots inside arteries, improve the ratio of good cholesterol to bad cholesterol, and prevent cholesterol from becoming damaged, at which point it clogs arteries. Also, a combination of Omega-3 (fish oils), Omega-6 (borage oil) and Omega-9 (olive oil) looks excellent!
3. *Berries and Cherries*: Props must be given to nature's candy. These sweet treats are high in polyphenols, which prevent cell damage that creates unhealthy blood vessels and heart. During the winter we can opt for frozen berries. Try thawing a bag of frozen strawberries in the refrigerator. Then, add unsweetened, steel-cut oatmeal with the berries their juice and your heart will say thanks with each beat.
4. *Quinoa*: Often mistaken as a grain, this tiny sprouted seed is an excellent source of magnesium, the mineral that relaxes blood vessels. Low dietary levels of magnesium lead to some scary health issues like increased rates of hypertension, ischemic heart disease and heart arrhythmias. Quinoa cooks quickly and makes great leftovers. Toss with grilled veggies and roasted chicken for a delicious one-pot dinner, or try the [Red Curry Quinoa recipe](#).
5. *Hot Cocoa*: Hot cocoa is brimming with antioxidants – two-times more than red wine and three times more than green tea. The cool temperatures are no match for a mug of hot cocoa. A tip: since hot chocolate mixes are full of sugar, use 100% cocoa and combine with a teaspoon of sugar. Plus you'll sweeten with the natural sugars in the milk.

Special attention must be paid to the fact that many chess-players mistakenly support the concept of the 'empty stomach' during competitions. Consumption of food should take place 60-90 minutes before the start of play, as this time ensures the possibility of adequate absorption of the food, consequently providing the brain with 'fuel'. During the game one may consume small amounts of caffeine (1-2 cups of coffee or tea) as well as chocolate, which is quickly absorbed by our metabolism (in 2-3 minutes); this does not mean that any other light food is less useful. It is self-evident that alcohol is strictly forbidden.

#### Conclusion

You may be wondering how all this is related to your chess. But think about it. When you feel healthy, full of life and in spiritual upheaval, the four main emotional attributes of self-confidence, experience, concentration and adaptability strongly come to the fore. When your body and mind are in perfect shape, so will your chess.

*Further lectures to follow...*

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#### Efstratios Grivas

Efstratios Grivas is a grandmaster and highly experienced chess trainer and

chess author.

He lives in Athens, and he is also a FIDE Senior Trainer (Secretary of the FIDE Trainers' Commission), an International FIDE Chess Arbiter and an International FIDE Chess Organizer. He has represented his country on a great many occasions, winning the fourth position in the World Junior Championship 1985, an individual gold medal at the 1989 European Team Championship and an individual silver medal at the 1998 Olympiad.

In 2010 he was awarded the worldwide highly important FIDE TRG Awards – the Boleslavsky Medal (best author) for 2009.



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