

## Use Psychology to Win at Chess

Have you watched any tennis or snooker recently. How many times have you seen the players stop dead before the serve or take a shot because someone in the crowd has coughed or flashed their camera. All these years practicing and a small noise can put them off so much that they refuse to play until the noise has abated. What has this got to do with chess strategies? Well I do not condone trying to put your opponent off but I have studied psychology at university and know that very small changes in behaviour can have a detrimental effect on your opponents concentration. And to me this is all part of the chess strategies we can use.

Here is an example. I played the other day against a player I know all too well. He attacks with his bishops, usually both on the same file and this can be devastating against an opponent. Now if you have read my previous essays you will have noted that I go against the grain and like to take at least one of my opponent's Knights out when I get the chance as I hate playing against 2 attacking knights and my opponent knew this as well. Nevertheless, 6 moves into the game and I changed strategies and exchanged his Bishop for my Knight. He was totally perplexed by this and I could see him trying to think of another strategy he could use which would not include 2 Bishops.

But more importantly was his attitude to the game. I could see from his expressions that he was desperate to beat me now but every time he developed a piece which looked threatening I would exchange it for one of my undeveloped pieces. In the end he made uncharacteristic mistakes and lost the game. I had totally put him off his stride and won.

During most games I have anticipated my opponent's next 3 moves at least. Therefore when it comes to my move I usually play quite quickly especially if I have set a trap and my opponent has walked into it. I think it is only human to play quickly straight after she has moved to show that it was a plan and you had calculated this out from the very start. My advice: Don't do it I have lost a number of games doing this where I thought I had considered every possible move my opponent could make only to find she knew one more and scuppered my strategy. Always take at least 1 minute to go over your next move again. Now his piece is in position it will be easier to see if there are any flaws in your plan. This is using psychology as it shows you think out every move thoroughly and this can install negative thoughts into your opponent.

By the way, on the subject of taking your time over each move, it is quite acceptable to stand up and stretch your legs. Take your eyes away from the board and rest them. Think about something else for a minute then come back to the board a little fresher. Have a look at the you and your opponents position and reevaluate it. It is amazing what you will find which you may have overlooked. Walk behind your opponent and have a quick look at the board from his end. You may be surprised and what the pattern of play looks like from this angle. Do not spill hot coffee down the back of his neck this is not acceptable. Taking a long time to think about your next move does agitate opponents. Does it not agitate you?

By the way, a short walk before any major chess game will help you feel refreshed and ready to go. A bar of chocolate and a cup of coffee have been proven to increase your brain power so go for it. Back to the game.

Never show any concern or emotions during a game of chess. Even if you lose your Queen in the first few moves. Play on as if it is a strategy and tactic which you always use. Remember it is a GAME of chess. What is the worst that could happen. Get over it and get on with the game. I have lost major pieces through my own carelessness at the beginning of many games and have fought back to win. Remember, a Queen is not usually used until the middle game as it is quite dangerous to bring her at the start as she is easily trapped. Therefore, use this knowledge to your advantage. At the beginning losing your Queen will not affect the game that much apart from psychologically. You must put it to the back of your mind and use all the pieces including the pawns to work as a unit to ultimately win the game. Take a leaf out of football's book. How many times has a player been sent off but the team playing with only 10 men hold out for a draw or even win. This is because all the players double their efforts. The pressure is off as they are not expected to win. They work as a single unit fighting and battling for each other. Remember, your opponent is a piece up and may now be complacent. Concentrate on traps and tricks, forks and pins to get your piece back. Pounce on any mistakes she makes. Try to spring an attack out of the blue on her King before she realises what has hit her.

As soon as you have made a mistake do not show any emotion but put a very slight rye smirk on your face. You want her to think this is a sacrifice and you are willing her to take the bait. Do not say anything as this would be deemed unsporting. You never know, she may refuse to take your piece if you put on a good act.

Finally, one of the oldest chess strategies is in the book to put your opponent off. Concentrate your eyes on one side of the board while planning to attack the other side. You can learn more chess strategies at: [chessstrategy.blogspot.com](http://chessstrategy.blogspot.com)

You can do it: Use psychology

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#### About the Author

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