

Research Paper-

How the blind players play chess-

I have had the opportunity to both play against and train blind chess players. It was a unique experience to learn and understand their methods of training and competing. I also got an opportunity to publish my book in a Braille version for my students at the National Association of the Blind, New Delhi. In this paper, I share my experience of working with the blind, and how their minds work.

Mr. Shailendra Yadav, the man behind my work at the NAB, who himself is blind, has been an asset in my entire research work. He has been a pillar of encouragement and support. The players at NAB have also been extremely enthusiastic and appreciative.

I would like to thank all of them for making this paper possible.

Chess is one game where blind players can compete against those who can see normally, at the same level. It is a game where these players can enjoy playing against tougher opponents and winning against them.

It is a unique way in which these blind players play the game. There is a separate chess board for them. This chess board is special because it has raised squares and each square has a pin in the centre for the pieces to stand. By feeling the pieces, the players are able to think about the game, and make their moves. The black pieces have a pin fixed on their heads, so that the players can distinguish between the black and white pieces. The black squares are also raised to make them different from the white ones.

During the game, the players have to call out each of their moves. The person with light has a normal chess board in front of him, so that he/she can make the moves on their own board. The blind player has his own special board. The moves have to be recorded by only the player who is able to see. The blind player can

either record the moves on a tape recorder or write the moves in Braille.

There is a special clock for the matches involving blind players. This clock called 'Kaissa' has a recorded voice transmitter, which tells the player's time on the clock. The player has to press the clock and then it will automatically tell the time remaining. This is a must in a situation where some players might take advantage of the blind players and tell the wrong time.

Although there may be some unfavorable circumstances against the blind players during their matches, the world body has made strict guidelines to follow. There can be no misuse of the moves during a game by the normal player. Thus, these unfortunate incidents are avoided.

While working with the students, I realized that they could probably do everything that a normal player could do. They could easily operate computers and play against it. They could also operate Skype and do audio conferencing. They could also watch films and videos

that I gave them. It was something that I thought would not have been possible. I also found that a tool called Daisy was used to convert anything into the Braille version. This was also used to convert my book.

It has been rightly said that chess is a game in which one goes blind after three-four moves. The battle is ultimately decided by how hard you can think and plan. I also found out about a software called Talk64 which has been developed by the All India Chess Federation for the Blind. It is a software that contains all the features necessary for any normal chess software. It has an engine, game databases, training modules, save game features, playing against the computer, and can be used through a keyboard and a mouse.

Solutions made for their training-

I have made online chess playing possible for the students. I have guided them on the websites they should use and I have also shown them many videos. I have conducted classes through skype. New boards have also been ordered for them.