

2019 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Inductee:

Brian Ribnick

Brian Ribnick deserves induction into the MSCA Hall of Fame. As the chess coach for 48 years, the past 36 at Metcalf Middle School, Brian has contributed, uniquely, to the development of chess in Minnesota. His coaching has used Chess to teach abstract thinking, concentration, discipline, respect, teamwork and honor. His students (players) have been, literally, 1000's of kids – at Metcalf, in SCA camps, in junior League or on opposing teams. The virtues of Chess have been spread via Brian Ribnick – the kids he has coached (and their parents) are continually, openly grateful for the opportunity their kids had - to be coached by “Ribby”.

An underrecognized role for chess in developing kids is the importance of a wholesome competitive activity during their awkward teen age years. Between 4th and 8th grades kids quit many and sometimes all extracurricular activities. Attendance for all sports and activities declines. This is precisely when the Metcalf Chess club kicks in. Most clubs have 4-5 kids during these ages – Ribby's clubs have typically 70 players. He instructs his players with a rigid curriculum and they stay in the club! Their sense of teamwork and accomplishment is nurtured through chess. Dozens of games are played in preparation for competing in Junior League, the Minnesota Open, the MSCA Scholastic and, eventually, the National Junior High Championships. Nationals are held throughout the United States where his kids compete and often win – 19 National Championships with 6-7 individual Champs. At the National Championship locations, Metcalf players always tour the cities (Portland, New York, Orlando, Sacramento....) – often for their first adventure away from Burnsville.

Another understated benefit from Chess is the bridge it provides for kids with problems – a bridge to reach an age where their problems can be sorted out, grown out of, or effectively treated. Ribby can cite dozens of examples of kids from his club with ADHD, anxiety disorders, Tourettes syndrome or simply frank behavioral issues. And many boys are squandering their days on video game playing. Without a specific treatment plan, Ribby directs their attention to chess throughout this difficult era. The reputation and attendance of his club is a testament to the effectiveness of this “treatment”.

While teams at Metcalf have been highly successful, his graduates often moved on to the successful program at Burnsville High School where they received instruction from Master Ed Zelkind – a previous Hall of Fame inductee.

Further accomplishments of Brian Ribnick include:

- MSCA Junior High Championship Team coach – 31 years
- Junior League Manager – 40 years
- Coached 10 individual National Junior High champs – 4 in the Open section
- Vice President of the School Chess Association – decades with Larry Lampert (HOF inductee)
- USCF Scholastic Committee - Current
- MSCA Board of Directors – 12 years
- Coached 2 National Open Blitz co-Champions – Nathan Graham, Alan Polk
- Coached multiple State and Junior High individual Champions
- MAEF – Coach of the year 2003

The Hall of Fame for the MSCA is the highest-recognition award to our members. Brian is a lifetime member of the MSCA and he has been a member for more than 50 years!! The penultimate coach is Brian Ribnick who richly deserves induction into the MSCA Hall of Fame.