

2020 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Inductee:

Ted Haugan

Ted Haugan was a chess coach at Lincoln Elementary School in Brooklyn Park from 1972-1982. He coached against strong teams from Noble, Meadowbrook, and Thorson. Despite this powerful opposition, he made Lincoln into a dynasty of scholastic chess.

Lincoln won four straight National Elementary Championships from 1977-1980, and was the runner-up in 1981. In two of those years 1978 and 1979, he coached the Individual National Elementary Champion. His 1978 National Elementary Championship team set the team scoring record of 24 points out of 32. Next year his 1979 National Championship team broke that record with 26 points out of 32. Then his 1980 National championship team broke that record with 27 points out of 32.

Over a ten year period his teams won seven state elementary titles (1973-1974 and 1978-1982) and finished in second place (1976-1977) twice. Five of his Lincoln players won the individual state title: Jim Muehlbauer, Dennis Olson, Joe Longen, Tim Radermacher and Peter Miller. He was the first coach to have two players finish with 7-0 records at state and during that 1978 season his team set the Minnesota record of scoring 26.5 points out of a possible 28.0. His seven state championship teams had an average team score of 25 points out of 28!

Ted Haugan, with the help of legendary coach and player R.K. Johnson, stressed fundamentals and hard work as the key to long-term success in chess. Develop pieces, middle game strategies, endgames, clock management, teamwork, and notation to name just a few.

These fundamentals were also helped by taking his players to one of the strongest chess clubs in the state, the NSCC (North Suburban Chess Club) and to TCCL (Twin City Chess League) to play against adult competition.

This nomination of Ted Haugan for the Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame is based on a sustained dominance in coaching. Other sports legends with similar records would be Bobby Orr (NHL hockey) and Vince Lombardi (NFL football). How a coach or player responds to adversity and brings out the best in their players is the hallmark of success. Going into the 1979 chess season his team was minus the National Elementary Champion and other key players. Despite these challenges, the team IMPROVED its score by two points, set a new scoring record in the process, and won the national elementary title and gained another Individual National Elementary Champion.

The results of Lincoln Elementary Chess would only have been possible with the dedicated coaching of Ted Haugan.