

Tactics Time

Interviews w/ Chess Gurus

Joel Johnson Interview

Tim Brennan



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Joel Johnson Interview

Timothy Brennan: Hey everybody. This is Tim with <http://tacticstime.com>. And today I have a very special guest, Joel Johnson. Welcome, Joel.

Joel Johnson : Hi. How are you doing?

Timothy Brennan: Great. Thanks for joining me here today. How are you doing?

Joel Johnson : Great.

Timothy Brennan: My friend Anthea Carson lent me a copy of your book "Formation Attacks." And I was really impressed with it. It's kind of famous here in Colorado because you have a chapter on the "Fishing Pole," which is you know, really popular opening here and everybody thought that was really cool.

And my really good friend Francisco Baltier, you've won one of his games there as well when he beat Walter Browne in a simul. So, I thought that was really cool as well. So, I was really excited to see your book. And then you sent me an email the other day, you had sent me some games and so this worked out great. I'm really excited to have you here.

0:01:03.6 Joel Johnson : Well, there were a few Fishing Pole games in the first book. That Francisco Baltier is a very good game. You know, anytime you can beat Walter Browne. I mean, come on that's a great game. Anyway, but Walter Browne is quite a competitor.

Timothy Brennan: Yes. So, why don't you tell everybody a little bit about your book. Go ahead.

Joel Johnson : I was going to mention that I'm already 10 chapters into my next book.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson : And I do actually have a whole chapter on the Fishing Pole.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson : And Brian Wall has already read it. And he said it brings him to tears.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson : He's so excited he can't wait till the book comes out.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson : So, that I'd tell you.

Timothy Brennan: Wow. That's super. What's the name of your new book? Do you have a name yet?

Joel Johnson : Yes. "Formation Attacks Strategies."

Timothy Brennan: Oh. Super.

Joel Johnson : So, Basically like you know, the first book was kind of revolutionary because nobody really created an attack book where they used the pawn formations as the method of you know, separating the games out.

0:02:11.8 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : And actually talking about each weakness and how to actually go about all the different ways of smashing up pawn structure positions. And where all the weaknesses were. And if you look at like the other books, the other primary book the competition basically is the art of attack. And they go about it differently; they go out at it about like attack motifs basically.

They should take checks and all that kind of stuff. So, the new book is basically, it's the art of attack done in the formation attack style. So, it's by attack motifs. So, there is a chapter on the Fishing Pole which has like 34 pages long. It has some incredible games.

0:03:00.3 Timothy Brennan: Oh. Wow.

Joel Johnson : From a lot of games that even Brian had not ever seen before. I have been caught in my own games for quite a while now too in addition to all the Brian's games. I have hundreds of other games that I've seen.

Timothy Brennan: Wow that's great. So, I was going to ask you about how you divided up by pawn structure but I thought that was really cool. And just give the listener an idea of some of the topics you have like..

Joel Johnson : Well the idea behind that book is -you would look up a formation that you have and you would see all the different ways of smashing it. And so, then you would relate that to your game and say, "OK, I had this position, it was really dominant look liking, but I somehow messed it up and I don't know really what it should have done."

And this is a way to actually see well, maybe if I had the pieces on the right squares I could have done this or could have done that. And so, it allows you go through a whole slew of games with those formations and see how could players just crushed through these positions.

0:04:07.4 They just sort of seem to -sort of happens like through osmosis, but in reality the players know where to put the pieces to make them actually work so that they'll actually be able to finish the guy off. And so, I actually go into each of these with one example game after another. Showing you how to smash all the different responses that the person might have under a particular scenario.

Timothy Brennan: So, it's almost kind of like a reference book where you could go and you could see, OK my opponent had to open up file, so you could look it.

Joel Johnson : And look at that chapter, yeah. It's definitely a reference book. It's a lot of different things, I mean some people read it because they love all the games, the great games in that. I used a lot of classic games and a lot of mind games in the first book.

0:05:00.5 The second book is actually in some ways I think it's going to be a lot better because what I have done is I have gone through like thousands of thousands of games. And my goal in the second book is to actually -I'm still going to use a bunch of my games, but not as many as I did in the first book.

The first book I felt kind of tied down because I like wanted to use a lot of the famous attacking games, you know. It's kind of hard to get away from that. But the second book I have found loads of unknown games from players that even I haven't heard off before, you know. And I've done so much research.

I've spent the whole year researching looking for games. I'm still looking for more games always doing that. So, I've got games that people have never seen before. So, this is going to be exceptional that the games that are in the book very few people are going to know about these games which is kind of interesting.

0:06:03.5 Timothy Brennan: Well, that's great.

Joel Johnson : I think.

Timothy Brennan: That's very cool. So, how would you suggest the students study your book? Like I guess you said they could use it as a reference or just kind of go through it.

Joel Johnson : I think you read the book first and then you say, get the idea of how it's laid out and everything and play through the games and try to grasp as many ideas as you can. But then after that you have the book you say, "OK, I just played the game." What is it that I could have done better about these? How could I've gone about it? Did I have something similar to the games that really each chapter you see.

And how should I have gone about attacking the sky, you know.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : Because attacks can vary just by one piece like a knight on f6 and as oppose to a defensive knight on f6 or e7 makes a huge difference in the position.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : You know something as simple as that.

0:07:01.1 Well, in addition to pawns, like having a pawn on h6 or having it on h7. That also changes the position dramatically. So, the weaknesses are associated with the position based on pawn structure are really important. So, that's one of the reasons why the first book was written the way it was is because the pawn structure really dictates a lot of the piece placement.

And you want to put your pieces on the right squares. If you don't put your pieces on the right squares, you'll find out at the end oh, it doesn't work and if I just put my mate here instead of over there, I could have made this work.

Timothy Brennan: Right. And it seems like it's not just about calculation, it's kind of knowing the patterns and understanding the underlying..

Joel Johnson :Weaknesses.

Timothy Brennan: Right. Yeah, exactly.

Joel Johnson : This is actually a part of the game that weaker players have a hard time dealing with they don't really understand how do I focus in on weaknesses. What are the weaknesses in this pawn, pawn structure? How should I be going about attacking this? And that's what a lot of my book -the first book is about.

0:08:07.3 **Timothy Brennan:** One thing that I like about your book is you have a lot of terms that, I don't know if you made them up that I never heard of them before.

Joel Johnson : Yes, I'm a chess coach, you see. So..

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : I try to make things easier to understand. For example I could never understand why there's a term called 'Zwischenzug'. And what the hell does that actually mean, you see? And it's like you know, that means nothing to me, alright? And there are some things that don't have terms.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : So, what I do is I try to create terms that make sense that I teach a lot of kids, and kids don't really you know, if you say, Zwischenzug, they're going to be [Foreign Word]

[Laughter]

Joel Johnson : Did you just sneeze or something? What's wrong with you?

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And so, I say I'll give them other terms, things that they'll remember. So, like when I say, 'Invisible Defender', they get that. The piece that I should be able to take it, but there's a reason I can't take it. But, it's not because it's defended indirectly, not directly by some other piece. And they get that. That's really easy to understand.

0:09:11.5 Timothy Brennan: Yeah

Joel Johnson: The 'Replacement Attackers' and other one.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You sacrifice a piece and you replace it like does usually happens at rooks, you go the rook takes pawn check and the guys takes back and then you put another rook in that same spot, but that second rook is more powerful than the first one because whatever you took is not in the way anymore.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : You see. And so, that's what I call a 'Replacement Attacker'. That's really easy to understand, you know. Oh yeah, I'm just going to replace the guy that I have there with another attacker.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : Same type.

Timothy Brennan: I like your term "Threat Pin," as well. That was another one that I never heard anything like that, but it's very useful term.

Joel Johnson : Well, people don't really understand the types of pins. And that's a really important pin concept that you really need to understand. The fact that things are pinned, not necessarily because there's a king or a queen behind them, but because there's a real threat behind there.

0:10:13.8 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : Whether it be a checkmate or some other thing you can you know, combination that you can do or something like that. It's usually more sophisticated. But those are the ones that people have a hard time seeing those moves that seemed to be like magic, you know. You'll watch a master flying, you go, "I don't understand how he could even see that move."

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : It's because we don't think about just the way all very good players do. And that's actually a big topic in my next book. And I'm going to talk a lot about the views of the board. Like for example, I asked a student, "What's the plan in this position?" And immediately nine out of ten students will go, they should take knight, green takes pawn, blah blah blah. Start analyzing. I said, what I asked you what the plan was I didn't asked you to analyze.

0:11:10.6 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And then they don't have any clue what that means. What does that mean? And see this is what I'm going to talk about a lot of these kinds of stuff. Another thing I'm going to talk about a lot is about how we view the board differently. We actually looked at the board different than all very good players. When we analyze fore example, here's a simple example and I'm actually going to bring this up in the book, the next book. Most players go, "How can you play a three minute game like this?" And if you look at my last book you'll see I have some incredible three minute games.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You're like sitting there going, "I would probably -there's no way it could have even calculated that much in three minutes.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: It'll be impossible. Right? But the reality of it is, you know and even if you look at like Nakamura's splits games three minute games. They're just off the chart.

0:12:05.9 And you'd say, If I showed you that game -and didn't tell you who played the game, I want the time control wise you'd be saying, "Oh, yeah. That was the 40/2 played by like a 2500 player." Right?

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You'll go, "Oh no that was Nakamura playing a bullet chess.

[Laughter]

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: It's like ridiculous. How can they make move after move fast move in position with no time in their clock.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: How can they do that? The primary reason is because low-rated players over-analyze. They tend to try to analyze every freaking move, everything. Now, I could tell you the right move without actually analyzing almost nothing. I can see what the right move is, it's because we look at the position and we don't really analyze most positions. Most positions we look at, OK

0:13:07.7 That whatever little stuff maybe they analyze wherever there's like a conflict where you might -like where you trade some pawns or maybe do some trading. Right. Those are things we looked at and we say, "OK, we might have to analyze those." But if we realized that there's nothing there we don't have to analyze that really.

Mostly other thing is we're looking for good places to work our pieces a whole for a night, a nice stag for a bishop. Oh yeah. I get my rooks over there. And then at the end of the game when we're trying to finish them off, yeah we'll analyze what that combination to put them away. But for the most part, the opening part of the game, we know our openings called.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: So, we're playing moves like boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, right? Then we get to a middle game. And now all of a sudden we go into this mode where, OK, we're trying to improve our pieces. We're trying to keep these pieces away'. You can see that at a glance. You don't need to analyze. It takes no time at all.

0:14:08.1 **Timothy Brennan:** Right.

Joel Johnson: As a matter of fact your brain was much faster than your hand can move a piece. What we're actually thinking while we're actually moving you know, the mouse -put the piece on the square, we're actually still analyzing.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You know, we're all ready for the next move. So, it's like your brain can actually go warp speed. Another example I use related to this is -is if you've ever

played baseball. And you go to a batting cage.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah.

Joel Johnson: Now, if you step in the very, very fast one worth says like, 95 miles an hour.

Timothy Brennan: Yeah.

Joel Johnson: And you go to hit the thing, it's like your brain and your mind, and everything is like going in slow motion.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And seems like the ball is like 10 feet behind you before you even started to swing. But if you actually go from the -you know, you move your way up you start with the medium, and then you go a little bit faster, and a little bit faster, and then you work your way up to the very fast. Right after that you can actually foul the ball off.

0:15:14.7 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: Now, why did that happen? It was because your brain, and your mind, and your body is capable of operating at warp speed, but the problem is that you're accustomed to moving slow. So, most players say, "I can't move that fast." So the two issues are one, I'm not accustomed to moving that fast.

I don't feel comfortable doing it. And when you immediately drop me into the light, and say I need to move real fast, and not very successful, I get wiped out. And then I say, "Oh, I can't do this. There is no way I can do this." I think everybody can do it. I don't think there's anybody who can't do it. And it becomes then the issue becomes will or want not could or can.. You see?

0:16:03.6 Timothy Brennan: Yeah. I know one part of your book you talked about how some of your students, they're afraid to make mistakes and you know, it kind of hinders their learning.

Joel Johnson: Yes.

Timothy Brennan: You mentioned that.

Joel Johnson: They get hooked up on the rating system, you know.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: They have a lot of top 100 students in the class.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: I've taught at least 12 kids in the top 100. I have two twins that are on the list right now who just started in January. Their first ratings were 6-67. One of them has just broken 1900, we're talking like nine months ago. And one of them has broken 1900, the other one is like 1740 or something but they're both easily over 2000 strength. The one kid actually had a stretch he beat me 3 1/2 out of four.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson: And my rating was like 2332 when he did that. And he cost me a few points.

[Laughter]

0:17:03.3 So, I'm like just below 2300 now. And, I'm sure I'll get it back. Already beat them a couple of times since, but it's like brutal. I now realized I have to prepare for him.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: While I was just taking him for granted that I could just beat him just show off and beat him.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson: It has gotten to that point. Created a monster. Even Brian you know, Brian was tall and huge.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: It reaches a day when you realize, "Oh crap".

[Laughter]

Joel Johnson: This isn't going to work out so well.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You know, you have different hats, you have the coach hat.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And then you have the player hat. The player hat doesn't want to lose any games when I got that hat on. And then the coach hat wants to say, yeah great

job, but why do you have to beat me. Go beat somebody else up.

[Laughter]

Timothy Brennan: I was looking at your rating history and you've played an incredible amount of game. I think you're coming up on a thousand rated events here. I think that's great that you know, you're not just a chess author and coach, but you're also out there you know, playing and putting your rating on the line and you know, I think that's great.

0:18:07.8 Joel Johnson: You know that the sad part of that is?

Timothy Brennan: What's that?

Joel Johnson: That they're missing 30 years of my playing.

[Laughter]

Timothy Brennan: Well, right. Yeah. It only goes back.

Joel Johnson: That's only 1990, great. My best year so in the early '80s.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: I was like fourth in the Massachusetts in that early '80s.

Timothy Brennan: OK

Joel Johnson: So, it's like kind of funny that you know, the people say, "Oh, why you got a lot of games." I say, "They've wiped out over half of my games."

Timothy Brennan: You want to talk a little bit about how you got in to chess and kind of your chess background.

Joel Johnson: OK Well, I was born in Brockton, Massachusetts. And it's kind of a middle class town, tough town obviously. It's been a couple of well championed boxers from Brockton, Massachusetts. Marvelous Marvin Hagler, and Rocky Marciano were both from Brockton, Massachusetts.

0:19:12.7 And I lived there till I was nine. My mom used to drop us off -she was a sort of single. My dad got in a car accident when I was really young. And had permanent brain damage.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow. Sorry to hear that.

Joel Johnson: And so, what happened is -she used to drop us off at the wire lot. And

there were two older guys that used to play chess there all the time. I never played chess with them, but I used to sit and watch because I was really fascinated by the game. And I'd actually learned how the pieces moved and everything. And when my mom get re-married, we moved to Lowell, Massachusetts which is probably even more famous. It's also a tough town. There's a new movie out about one of the boxers the, Dick Eklund.

0:20:06.9 Because he's played by Mark Wahlberg in the movie.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, yeah I saw that movie, The Boxer or The Fighter or something.

Joel Johnson: Well, the funny part is that opening scene is very close to where I grew up.

Timothy Brennan: OK

Joel Johnson: In Lowell. So, from age 10 on I lived in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Timothy Brennan: OK

Joel Johnson: I know the tough town.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: So, I'm a big guy and I have like -we're a Brady Bunch family. There's three boys, and three boys and a girl. And I was like the oldest of five boys within four years. So, I was like always having to protect my brothers and stuff, from gangs and stuff.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: So, it was rough growing up. And so, I was more into sports growing up I didn't really play much chess. It seemed like every time I played somebody -the first person I played was my oldest stepbrother he's seven years older than me.

0:21:00.8 We played -we best to play for about six months. In the beginning I couldn't beat him, and at the end he couldn't win a game from me. So, it's just quick because it's like Harry is 17 years old, and he's losing to his 10 year old brother.

[Laughter]

This is not a good thing. So, then the next player that came along was a player much better. And he ended up marrying my older stepsister. So, he's again five or six years older than me. And he beat me for a few months and then I started beating him up.

And then so, he stop playing too.

And then the next person I met -I was originally a protestant and then when we moved. When my mom got re-married we all switched to Greek Orthodox because my stepdad is Greek. And so, what happens is on Sunday school, I met this player named Bill Minitus. So, I'm actually going to talk about him in the book.

0:22:03.8 He was really a good player. He was roughly 1800 strength, and we were like 14. And he literally beat the tire out of me game after game after game. I couldn't even tell you how many thousands of games I lost to him.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson: But it seemed like every week, I did not draw one game. I didn't win one or draw one. He just kept beating me and beating me. And this happened for like 2 1/2 years.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson: And I did not win one game or draw one game. I just couldn't believe somebody could be this good.

Timothy Brennan: Wow.

Joel Johnson: It's funny how you're perspective changes as years go by.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: Because we all know 1800 players really aren't that good. But at that time it seemed like, god. A chess god.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: So, then what happened I end up like -this was like 15 now. And I'm a sophomore in high school.

0:23:04.9 The next year, junior, I have a math teacher who happens to be the chess coach at the school at Lowell High School. And he sees them fantastic at math so he goes, he asked me if I play chess, and I go, "Yeah, I play chess." And so, I played a player at the club, I killed the first game, then I beat them two in a row. And then they've paired me against the best player in the club. I lose the first game, a really long game. And then I draw with them and then he go, "You're on the chess team.". And I go, "I am?" Those kind of a shock to me, because I hadn't played over a year.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: Anyway's, that year I started playing a lot. A lot of speed chess. And from there that coming summer after Junior, was summer of '72 which was Bobby Fisher's world championship.

0:24:05.3 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And I was on PVS with Shelby Lyman for who writes a column for The New York Times.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: Just for the New York Times. And actually that would turn out to be important in my life, but I'll get to that later. And some of the guys used to have in there were like Eugene Byrne, an International Master, who I actually played twice, which is funny because that's one of the games in the book is probably my most famous "King Hunt" is my game against him in the last round of the Bermuda International. I had black and I matched his King all the way, from h1 down the e7.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: We're from 8 am. That's really funny. Then a bunch of sacks and everything, it's just crazy. But, there's so much you could do about it.

0:25:00.9 So, anyway, so it happened that whole year I played loads of blitz, I met all these chess players, you know and I'm playing a lot. And during the summer time, they have the world championship match from watching that everyday studying. And then also a friend of mine had -the dad used to play most of the blitz with, a friend of his actually got out of the army and he used to play chess at the army. And his rating was around 1600 or so.

At the beginning of the summer, I was like about even with him and the other guy used to beat all the time. And then, by the end of the summer I can beat both of them like game after game after game. So, what happens is, now it's time I find out about USC afraid of chess. I had no clue there was even such a thing.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: And then as a senior somehow a flyer that put in my possession, I don't remember how. And about a chess tournament, so, I go to the chess tournament that the Prudential in Boston which is a huge building. One of the tallest buildings in Boston right?

0:26:12.4 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: So, I go there and they have it at the cafeteria because it's the Fisher Effect, everybody is playing chess now. All of a sudden it's like the thing to do you

know.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And it's like the places mobbed. This place is huge. The cafeteria holds like, I don't know 500 people and it's overflowing. There's so many people.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: And so I realized this is my first tournament I had no coach to tell me about you know, how to keep score, what a chess clock was, all of these things. And so, I was very green even though I was actually a pretty good player even out already.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: I understood a lot about chess, but I didn't really understand about tournament chess. You know, it's a big difference really.

0:27:00.6 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson : So, anyway's what happened is I go two on two against like four 1100 players. And then, the next tournament so I'm feeling much better about the next tournament. So, I immediately got a clock I started learning how to keep score. So, two weeks later I played in another tournament, this time I play, it's a much tougher tournament. And I beat like the 1200, I beat the 1400, and then in the third round I got paired with a 1650 and I drew.

And on the last round I'm playing like the second best high school player in the state. And his rating is like 19 something. And I haven't totally busted and I blew the game. I blew not only the win. I blew the draw. It's like a 90 move game, I'm totally exhausted. This is the last round, I've never played at tournament like this or played games like these. So, I end up chocking the game. So, I got 2 1/2 and 1 1/2 though that's pretty respectable.

0:28:08.0 Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: It's very much how I played. Much better than the first tournament. So, third tournament happens to be the high school championship from my area. So, I showed up, it's the Mary Magnolia High School championship. And I get there, I walked in the place, there are loads of players who I'm maxing and talk about the story in the next book.

Timothy Brennan: OK

Joel Johnson: So, anyway what happened is I show up there, I looked around, guess

who's there?

Timothy Brennan: Who?

Joel Johnson: That Greek kid that used to beat me.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: Like know the mark. What I found out, he's the defending champion.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: Yeah. And so, he's ranked actually number two in the tournament. There's another player slightly higher than him. So, they're like both 1800s, right? Anyway, so what happens this is the first round, I win. Second round, and I'm like so unready because in the old days they used to -the ratings took a long time to come out.

0:29:04.6 So, second round, I'm on board one playing the best player in the tournament with black. And he's sitting right next to me -my Greek friend.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And so, I clobbered the best guy in 20 moves, I absolutely paced him. His jaw just dropped, he's like he cannot believe this, right?

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow.

Joel Johnson: The third round I win that too, so this -and the last round, there's four of us with three points. I ended up getting paired against the other guy from his high school. And he got paired with the third rank guy and I won my game and he drew. And I took his title away.

Timothy Brennan: Oh, wow. That's great.

Joel Johnson: Yeah. So, that was pretty cool.

Timothy Brennan: That is cool.

Joel Johnson: Yeah. And my whole thing is that I tell the story to my students because you should never give up.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: And chess kind of personally and it's easy to take it as a loss kind of personal like I'm no good, like stink. I can't do this.

0:30:06.9 But the problem is in chess, there aren't enough really bad players, so what happens is you have to really like -it's like you have to try to make the like Myer Leagues from Little League. It's like the league that's so great.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: For a start because you have to think about all the knowledge you need to be competitive like even 1300 player.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: You might think that, 'Oh well, you know, 1300 is not that good', but the problem is from the beginner's stand point it's a huge leap to make it all the way up to there because there's not just that many players who are lower. There's a lot than quit. Because they just figure they can't do this, I just can't do this, you know.

Some people just can't accept losing. They can't see the long term goals and that all the great things that chess provides here. There's a lot of great things about chess. And it's worth it just stick it out because then you get to reap the benefits eventually when you do get better.

0:31:08.8 **Timothy Brennan:** Right. Well, that's a great story Joel. And that's a great point too because yeah, in the 1300 can be 99% of the U.S. population at chess.

Joel Johnson: Exactly. And usually you need to get to that strength in order to be able to compete at least on a minimum basis.

Timothy Brennan: Right.

Joel Johnson: If you go a tournament and you lower than that, you're going to get swamped.

Timothy Brennan: Right. Well, thank you so much Joel for your time today. I really enjoyed chatting with you and wish you lot of good luck with your next book. It sound wonderful. And I encourage everyone to check out your current book "Formation Attacks". If someone wants to get in touch with you, what's the best way to do that?

Joel Johnson: My Email is bigbear12@hotmail.com

Timothy Brennan:OK Great. Anything else you'd like to add before we go here?

0:32:00.0 **Joel Johnson:** Oh, that sounds pretty good. Maybe we'll talk some more some other time. There's a lot more things I can talk about.

Timothy Brennan: OK

Joel Johnson: If you get me started you see what happens, I start going like crazy.

Timothy Brennan: OK I'd love to do that. Because you know, my site focuses on tactics and you know, you're like a tactical genius. Looking at your games, and your books, and your writing. I'd love to talk again that would be great.

Joel Johnson: Clear. You make this the first part of two.

Timothy Brennan: OK.

Joel Johnson: We'll get together another time in a couple of weeks or something.

Timothy Brennan: OK. Well, thanks Joel. I appreciate it.

Joel Johnson: OK. We're good.

Timothy Brennan: OK. Thank you.

Joel Johnson: Have a good one. Bye-bye.

Timothy Brennan: You too. Bye.

I hope you enjoyed this interview with Joel!

Think about what he shared – then get out there and TAKE ACTION.

I'll talk to you again soon.

Your Friend,

Tim B

P. S. Joel shared some great ideas about improving your chess game. If you want to learn everything you need to know about raising chess your rating, you need to check out my **101 Tactical Tips** and **Tactics Time** programs. You can learn all about them below:



101 Tactical Tips is my **FREE** e-book that you get when you sign up for my newsletter on my website <http://tacticstime.com>.

Like the name implies it includes 101 tips that are my BEST, original ideas about how to improve your game in the area of tactics. Included are tips, tricks and thoughts taken from the chess world, as well as the worlds of psychology, self help, computer science and the success literature.

You will learn secrets that took me years to discover about how you can rapidly and painlessly increase your chess skills.

If you love chess you will love this e-book, and are sure to find it interesting.



Tactics Time is the single most effective way to raise your chess rating, FAST. It is no coincidence that every strong chess player you know has been a master of tactics. This program will show you how to make this powerful skill a permanent and natural part of your game, quickly and easily. It's filled with thousands of positions that you can start using TONIGHT to win games... from tactics in that blow out your opponent in the openings, to clever combinations in the middlegame, to subtle pawn pushes in the endgame, you'll learn something for every situation.

This program contains over 3000 tactics, plus bonuses you will love.

For more details go here: http://tacticstime.com/?page_id=2