

What a Mentee Needs

On May 17, 2014, our unit held a Mentor-Mentee game. For those not familiar with the event, it is an opportunity for less experienced players (mentees) to partner with experienced players (mentors). It is meant to be an encouraging, learning experience during which mentees can obtain feedback on their play.

As a mentee, I am very grateful to the mentors for giving up their time to help us develop our game and to the unit for arranging the event.

Mentees may have lots of experience in open games, some experience or none at all. For some, this event is their first time playing in “the big room” and they are terrified.

I have been very lucky with the mentors that I have been given. They have played my convention card, given me constructive feedback, corrected my errors in a supportive way and never once said “you should have known”, even if I should have.

Unfortunately, not all mentees have been so fortunate. I have heard horror stories of mentors dismissing the mentee’s convention card as not important and demanding that new methods be used, and of mentors being rude and impatient. All these things completely undermine the mentees’ confidence and make it impossible for them to benefit from the experience.

So, to make the event fun and productive for all, I would like share some things mentees need.

1. We need you to know that some of us are scared to death. Please be gentle.
2. We need you to play our convention card. We know this is difficult if you play in a more complicated way but any changes that you force upon us will derail us from the first hand.
3. We need you to understand that our mistakes are not a plot to drive you crazy. They are the reason we showed up. Please hide your frustration and remember a time when you made the same mistakes or didn’t use the best line of play. What is obvious to you may not be to us.
4. We need suggestions that correspond to our level of play. If you don’t know your mentee, ask them about their level of experience when you meet them. Is this their first open game? Have they been playing for years and just want to “tweak” certain parts of their game? How are they learning the game? A very new player will be overwhelmed by too many new ideas and an experienced mentee may want more detailed guidance on specific aspects of their play. Know your mentee.
5. We need you to be available for a short time after the game for questions and feedback.

Hopefully, these suggestions will help everyone have a wonderful experience. And if you have additional ideas, please share them with the organizers. Maybe the mentors have a wishlist of their own. See you at the next Mentor-Mentee game!

Sharon Allen