

Dear Players,
dear Jan Henric Buettner,
dear guests,



on behalf of the Emanuel Lasker Gesellschaft -briefly ELG- I welcome you all to our most important prize-giving ceremony of the year. Today we will award our Lasker 2024. The prize is named after Dr. Emanuel Lasker, the second World Chess Champion in history who held this title for 27 years from 1894 to 1921 -probably an all-time-record.

First I have to admit that ELG is not a chess club. Instead ELG is non profit organization which was founded in 2001 in order to promote chess worldwide as a cultural and educational asset. Our aim is to build a bridge between the world of chess to the world outside of chess for the benefit of all. As you all know the game of chess includes an extraordinary richness of secrets, a lot of wisdom and a mass of values. Among those values are especially respect, tolerance, civil courage and equal chances for all. We invite everybody in- and outside the world of chess to share these values with us.

This year you could smell chess history everywhere. The world chess federation FIDE will celebrate its 100th anniversary with a lot of events worldwide. Also 100 years ago Emanuel Lasker won the fabulous and famous Chess Tournament of New York, then one of the greatest battles in classical chess in which the elder generation of world class players were challenged by the younger generation of hyper-modern talents. Now, 100 years later, like New York 1924 chess is reaching a similar and even more attractive level with this tournament in freestyle chess. So it is perfect timing to honor the winner of our award at this tournament in this year.

For us the winner of our Lasker 2024 is a true ambassador for all what chess -old and new, classical or freestyle- is standing for. The Winner is the current World Champion in Speed- and Blitz-Chess. He has also been World Champion in classical chess -in years not as long as

Lasker, but for the last decade which due to the rise of computer chess and the amount of preparation work for each world championship match must have felt like more than 100 years. The winner is still the number one ranked player in the world. Moreover, the winner is a true sportsman, a role-model of fairness and integrity and gifted with a sense of humor I do appreciate very much.

My only and very personal remark is that some weeks ago the winner has taken away from me my old childhood dream to become the first player to beat a world class player -most probably the world champion or at last an ex-world chess champion- with black by answering 1. e4 with 1. h6 - by far the closest approach to freestyle play in classical chess. I do hope that Lasker who had the great ability to adopt all new styles of chess in his long-lasting career stays calmly in his grave and forgive me such opening-dream. Now this dream has gone. But I am not sad at all and instead very happy and proud because I have to confirm that only the winner of our Lasker-Award 2024 has the talent and ability to fulfill such chess dreams.

Now you surely all know the name of the winner of the Lasker-Award 2024. So let me hand over this trophy to this marvellous player and great personality who has opened new dimensions for our beloved game of chess all around the globe and without whom this special tournament and this moving moment would be unthinkable. Please Magnus come up on stage, this trophy is well deserved and truly belongs to you.

Weissenhaus, 11. Februar 2024