

Magnus Carlsen...Young Grand Master Lights Up Corus

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Magnus Carlsen

Magnus Carlsen was the very youngest grandmaster in history at the time he became grandmaster at 13 years old in 2004. (amazingly that record has already been beaten) His First GM norm was won in Corus in 2004 and was one of his more memorable performances. He actually won the C group of Corus...making it one of the most memorable performances of the tournament's history.

Corus is the renowned Dutch tournament held once in a year. It consists of 3 groups of 14 players totalling 42 of the world's top chess players. Traditionally the very top GM's in the world play in this tournament. When Carlsen played in 2004 he was in Group C dominated, earning his right to play in group B this year where he is again dominating the pack.

At the time of this article Magnus is 6.5 out of 8 against all GM opponents...woow!

Unlike Group A which has been dominated by two players, Topalov and Anand (widely considered the 2 strongest ACTIVE players in the world), the B section is being dominated by the 14 year old Magnus.

Already a star in the chess community in Norway, Magnus is a very well liked kid. He has a smile and natural charm that people love. Often he is observed playing with a football while waiting for his opponent to find a move (or resign).

In order to keep developing his chess he has to work very hard. Until recently it was 2-3 hours a day, now-a-days it is more like 4-5 hours. He spends many hours reading chess books (which he loves), playing on the Internet and training with his tutor. In addition, he also loves to play football, go skiing and even ski jumping! Scary.

To give him the opportunity to develop his talents his parents have sold their second car, rented out their house, and for a year they will be traveling around the world so Magnus can participate in chess tournaments. Magnus' school work is not neglected at all, but it has to be done in the back seat of a car, in hotel rooms, etc. Both his father and sisters participate in some of the tournaments as well. Traveling around to chess tournaments in different countries is not at all cheap, and it would not have been possible without financial aid.

Luckily he has now found a sponsor (Microsoft).

Magnus' memory is said to be photographic. His coach did a little stunt for some journalists: on TV he showed the boy a diagram from a position in a chess book Magnus immediately replied which game it was, from which book, and roughly how it went. His father also has stories of five year old Magnus reciting the name, size and population of all the 430 counties in Norway. This ability is undoubtedly very useful when keeping up-to-date on modern opening theory. One might assume this has been vital when building up his amazing opening repertoire.

Magnus' chess exploits include a draw against Kasparov (see picture).

His current fide rating is 2625, making him a top 100 GM...His goal is to reach 2700 which will put him up in the world's elite...possibly the top 10. His performance at Corus hints that it is just a matter of time...and this boy has lots of that.

With his kind of talent and his performance this year you can only wonder how he will perform in the "A" Group next year...could Magnus take over as the world's best??

Photos courtesy of Fred Lucas and Momentoo.com



A Young King



At 13 years old



His draw against Kasparov