



Gukesh Dommaraju, World Chess Champ

By Bill Wall

On May 29, 2006, Gukesh Dommaraju (who prefers Gukesh as his name) was born in Chennai, India. His mother is a microbiologist. His father is a surgeon. Former world chess champion Vishy Anand is also from Chennai.

In 2013, Gukesh started playing chess. He was introduced to chess by his school, part of the Velammal group of schools that teach chess. . He was given one-hour chess lessons three times a week.

Gukesh's first coach was Mr. V. Bhaskar. He helped Gukesh become a FIDE-rated chess player within 6 months of learning the game.

In November 2013, Gukesh watched Magnus Carlsen and Vishy Anand play for the 2013 World Championship in his home town of Chennai.

In 2014, Gukesh got a new trainer called Mr. Vijayanand who had his own chess academy. Gukesh would start on his chess lessons at 9:30 am. He was given 70 chess puzzles to solve to help his tactical and positional awareness on the chess board. After that, he would take lessons on chess theory and middle game strategy.

In 2015, he won the under-9 section of the Asian School Chess Championships. He also earned the candidate master (CM) title.

In 2017, he won the Under-11 Indian Championship.

In March 2017, he completed the requirements for the title in International Master (IM). He scored high at the Cappelle-la-Grande Open in France.

In July 2017, he started training with noted Indian GM Vishnu Prasanna (1989-).

In 2017, his first International Master (IM) norm was gained at the First Friday tournament in Puchong, Malaysia.

In March 2018, his second IM norm was at the Moscow Open.

On March 10, 2018, he gained his third IM norm at Cappelle la Grande Open in France.

In April 2018, he finished equal third at the Bangkok Chess Club Open, scoring an undefeated 7 out of 9. He scored his first GM norm there. Gukesh was lucky when he beat GM Nigel Short in the tournament because Short forgot to press his chess clock in a superior position.

In 2018, he won the under-12 World Youth Chess Championship, held in Mumbai. He scored 10 out of 11.

In 2018, he won a record 5 gold medals at the 2018 Asian Youth Chess Championship. He won the individual rapid, blitz, and classical formats. He also won the gold medals for the team rapid and blitz events. He was the highest rated player (2360) at the event in Thailand.

In December 2018, he won his second GM norm in Paracin, Serbia. He scored 7.5 out of 9.

In December 2018 he played in the Sunway Sitges Chess Festival and missed a chance to get his final GM norm. He drew a must-win 9th round games, missing the GM norm by ½ point.

On January 15, 2019, at the age of 12 years, 7 months, and 17 days, he became the then 2nd youngest GM in the history of the game after scoring high at the 17th Delhi International Grandmaster Open. In 2003, Sergey Karjakin became the youngest GM at the age of 12 years and 7 months. In 2021, Sbhimanyu Mishra became the youngest GM at the age of 12 years, 4 months, and 25 days.

Gukesh played in 30 tournaments over a period of 16 months. He played 276 chess games in 13 countries.

In March 2019, he shared 2nd place in the 9th HD Bank Open, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In February 2020, he took 1st place in a tournament that celebrated the 110th anniversary of the Hillerod Chess Club in Denmark. The event had more than 10 GMs participating.

In March 2020, he took 1st place at the Cannes Chess Festival, scoring 7.5 out of 9.

In June 2021, he won the Julius Baer Challengers Chess Tour, scoring 14 out of 19.

In July 2022, he achieved a live rating of 2700, the fourth-youngest player ever to do so. (source: *chess.com* bio on Gukesh)

In August 2022, he won the team bronze and the individual gold medal on first board at the 44th Chess Olympiad, held in Chennai, India. He scored 9 out of 11.

In September 2022, Gukesh was part of the Indian team that won the silver medal at the Asian Games, held in Hangzhou, China.

In September 2022, his FIDE rating was 2726.

In October 2022, he defeated reigning World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen at the Airmchess Rapid Tournament, played online on Chess24. He became the youngest person to ever beat Carlsen.

In June 2023, he won the chess.com Junior Speed Chess Championship

In July 2023, he became the youngest player ever to reach a rating of 2750.

In August 2023, in the Chess World Cup held at Baku, he advanced to the quarterfinals, where he lost to Carlsen,

On the FIDE September 2023 rating list, he became the top-rated Indian player, surpassing Vishy Anand's 37-year record.

In December 2023, he won the Chennai Masters.

In December 2023, he qualified for the 2024 Candidates Tournament. He had taken 2nd in the FIDE Circuit, behind GM Fabiano Caruana. He was the third youngest player to qualify for a Candidates tournament, behind Bobby Fischer and Magnus Carlsen.

In January 2024, he tied for 1st in the Tata Steel Chess Tournament. He tied with Wei Yi, Anish Giri, and N. Abdusattorov. They all score 8.5 out of 13. He defeated Giri in the semifinals, but lost to Wei Yi in the finals.

In April 2024, he was part of the 8-player Candidates Tournament, held in Toronto. He won the event with 9 out of 14 (winning 5, drawing 8, and losing 1). He was the youngest ever winner of a Candidates chess tournament. He became the challenger for

the world chess championship and had to play world chess champion, 32-year-old Ding Liren of China for the title.

In 2024, at the 45th Chess Olympiad in Budapest, he won both the team and individual gold medal. He did not lose a single game and scored 9 out of 10. His performance helped India to win their first ever team gold medal at the Chess Olympiad.

On October 1, 2024, he entered the top-five in the FIDE rankings for the first time.

On December 12, 2024, Gukesh defeated Ding Liren 7.5 to 6.5 (after losing the first game) to become the 18th official World Chess Champion. The match took place between Nov 25 and Dec 12 in Singapore. At age 18, Gukesh became the undisputed World Chess Champion and youngest champion ever. He is four years younger than Garry Kasparov when Kasparov became world champion in 1985. In 2002, Ruslan Ponomarev became FIDE world champion at 18 years, 3 months, and 12 days. (source: Colin McGourty, *chess.com*, Dec 15, 2024)

Gukesh had an accuracy rate of 96.14% as compared to Carlsen's accuracy rate in world championship play of 94.6%. (source: *Reddit*, Dec 13, 2024)

As of December 2024, he is ranked #5 in the world, with a 2783 Classical rating, 2654 Rapid rating, and 2615 Blitz rating. (source: *chess.com* bio of Gukesh)

In the aftermath of the match, Ding Liren was accused of deliberately losing the match. The main accuser was Andrei Filatov, the Russian Chess Federation chief. He asked FIDE to open a probe and investigate the result. Former world champions Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik has also questioned the games. (source: *NDTV Sports*, Dec 16, 2024)

Gukesh will be honored by the Indian government and is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. (source: *Yahoo Sports*, Dec 16, 2024)