

Garry Kasparov

- **Highest-rated Chess Player in the World**

Garry Kasparov was born on April 13, 1963 in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, then part of the USSR. Kasparov started playing chess at five and by the age of seven, he was a child chess prodigy. At nine, he had already won a semifinal of a 'blitz' championship for adults in Baku. He became the youngest player in history to win the Soviet Junior Championship (under 18), first when he was 12 years of age in Jan 1976 and then again aged 13 in 1977. In 1979 he celebrated his 16th birthday and for the first time, entered a foreign adult tournament. Garry finished first ahead of fourteen Grandmasters.



Garry Kasparov achieved Grandmaster status at age 17 (1980). In August 1980 aged 17, he won the World Junior Championship. In 1984 aged 21, Garry Kasparov was the youngest player in chess history to compete in a World Championship final match. At 22, on November 9, 1985 Garry became the youngest ever World Chess Champion when he beat Anatoli Karpov. This made him the 13th World Champion and he had already become the number one ranked player in the world.

In January of 1990, Kasparov created two milestones in chess history. First, he moved past Bobby Fischer's best ever point rating of 2785 and then in Nov 1989 in Belgrade broke the magical 2800 ELO ratings point sound barrier. He was the first player in Chess history to do so. It was the chess equivalent of breaking the four-minute mile. Garry Kasparov achieved the #1 ELO rating for the first time in the summer of 1984 at age 21.

In Nov 1999, after winning the three major events of that year, he created a new milestone by achieving an ELO rating of 2851, the only player in the history of chess to pass the 2850 level.

From December 1981 to February 1991, Kasparov made chess history by not losing a single official event for ten years. This was the period in which he created the reputation of invincibility.

He has made the #1 rating his own for most of the past 20 years, although for a brief period in January of 1996, Vladimir Kramnik joined him as co #1, each of them had a 2775 ELO points rating. Kasparov soon however opened the gap between himself and Kramnik who eventually fell to the #3 behind Vishy Anand. As of January 1st, 2005, Garry Kasparov retains his #1 rating, Vishy Anand is second and Vladimir Kramnik has since fallen behind Topalov to #4. Kasparov first was rated #1 in 1984 and except for the short period mentioned above, he has been the top rated player in the world for over 20 years (1984 – 2006).

In February 1996 in Philadelphia, he played IBM's Deep Blue computer. His opponent was able to analyze 50 billion moves in three minutes. In NYC in May 1997, Kasparov again played the monster computer. The series stands at one match each and the World Champion, backed by the world's estimated 200 million

Chess players, challenged IBM to a tie-breaking third match. IBM cashed in its silicon chips and sailed off into the sunset, satisfied with a tied series. These two matches created two incredible statistics. Chess received the greatest exposure the game has ever known and IBM's PR unit was quoted as saying that the company received over one billion dollars in quantifiable publicity and 72 million hits on their Internet site.

In Jan of 2003 FIDE's President, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov decided to hold a world championship challenge match between the world's #1 ranked player vs. the reigning world computer chess champion, an Israeli program called Deep Junior. The highly publicized and tightly contested event played in New York City saw Garry Kasparov battle the computer to a 3-3 draw.

The restless Russian is always looking for new challenges and for the past decade has astounded the Chess world by beating some of the world's strongest Olympic chess teams, playing four to six Grandmasters simultaneously.

Apart from his match against Deep Blue, Kasparov has always been at the cutting edge of innovations in chess. For four months in 1999, he battled THE WORLD on the internet in a Microsoft sponsored event which opened new frontiers for chess.

In 1988, a computer program was devised to analyze a vast collection of chess statistics in order to create a ranking of the all-time chess greats. Top of the list, above Capablanca, Karpov, Fischer and the rest was the twenty-five year old Russian Garry Kasparov.

The BRAIN CLUB & SYNAPSIA in London elected Garry as its first "Brain of the Year" and described him as "The World Chess Champion, athlete and humanitarian both, and a cultivated and curious man who closely follows literature, films and politics".

In March 2005, Garry Kasparov won the Linares Super Tournament for the ninth time in sixteen years (90, 92, 93, 97, 99, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005). Winning Linares, the "Wimbledon of Chess" for four straight years was one thing, but even more spectacular was that his win in Linares in 2002 made it ten super-tournament victories in a row for the world's number one.

He has been a regular contributor to the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal since 1991.

After the spectacular success of the multiple-volume *My Great Predecessors* which follows the history of the twelve world champions who preceded Garry Kasparov, he has followed up with a second chess series entitled *Garry Kasparov on Modern Chess*. In 2007, a mainstream book entitled *How Life Imitates Chess* was released and it has been published in 24 languages.

Kasparov has a passion for expanding chess into the educational system in the world at large. He is passionate about the Kasparov Chess Foundation which is headquartered in the US and is promoting chess in the classroom nationwide. The Kasparov Chess Foundation has published three volumes of "TEACHING CHESS" step by step. Book 1 is the "Teacher's Manual", Book 2 is "Exercises" and Book 3 "Activities". These volumes are available free of charge to schools worldwide who only have to pay shipping charges.

On Friday, 11th March, 2005 Kasparov announced his retirement from competitive chess after twenty two years as the Number One Ranked Player in the World.