



WEATHER TEMPERATURE 40 - 27 HUMIDITY 48-24%

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:05pm
Asr	3:35pm
Maghrib	6:15pm
Isha	7:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:30am



CHESS PRODIGY'S UNSTOPPABLE WINNING SPREE

STORY SHIRUTHI NAIR

My main aim is to be a Grandmaster but before that my first aim is the candidate master title," said 12-year-old Indian School Wadi Kabir student Jijo Joy who has already made a name for himself globally in chess.

Having discovered his passion for chess at the age of six, he enrolled himself in the International Chess Academy of Oman when he was nine. Since then Jijo has honed his skills and shown the world what he is capable of in terms of the game.

"I am a chess player with a standard FIDE rating of 1970. I have played around 20 FIDE tournaments and some rapid and blitz tournaments in many countries," he said explaining that FIDE stands for World Chess Federation, which is recognised by the International Olympic Committee.

Jijo has already managed to bag a considerable amount of respect for his handwork and skill from fellow chess players after his constant achievements and unstoppable winning spree.

"In 2015, I was placed third in the Under-16 category at the 22nd Abu Dhabi Chess festival tournament. In 2016, I was first in the Under-11 at the Robert Fischer Memorial Chess Tournament. In 2017, I won the first U-16 in Spain and was third in the Qatar gas tournament." Jijo added that he has participated and won numerous chess tournaments locally in Oman as well, irrespective of the age category.

"I have played in many tournaments in Ilari, Salalah, Soeb, Ruwi, and Sohar." Jijo doesn't just have a strong FIDE rating but also holds a



strong rank, ensuring that not too many people are better than him in the game, especially in his home country, India.

"As per September FRL, I am the first in U-12 Kerala and hold the 17th rank in India." He added, "My rating went up from 1647 to 1970 (323) in this very short period, making me one of the best increase ratings in the world for the same period (July to August 2017)."

In order to reach his ultimate goal of becoming a Grandmaster and receiving the candidate master title before that, Jijo needs an FIDE rating of 2300. "My rating now is 1970 so I want a good individual coach and the opportunity to play many



classical FIDE rated tournaments to reach my aim." He added, "At present there are no classical tournaments in Oman."

Since he started pursuing chess six years ago for the first three years, Jijo learnt the techniques and practiced the skills on his own.

His parents, along with some help from local clubs in Oman, have been supporting him all along but after having proved his talent time and time again, it has become clear that he is a level above and is capable of playing chess professionally.

World renowned players such as Vishwanathan Anand and others have vouched for his talent.

"To fulfil my dream, I have to play many good tournaments to increase my ratings. I also need individual coaching and thus long term financial support (sponsorship). Without sponsorship I cannot fulfil my dream," said the 12-year-old chess champion.

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OMAN

Oman's chess prodigy's unstoppable winning spree

'My main aim is to be a Grandmaster but before that my first aim is the candidate master title,' said 12-year-old Indian School Wadi Kabir student Jijo Joy, who has already made a name for himself globally in chess. Having discovered his passion for chess at the age of six, he enrolled himself in the International Chess Academy of Oman when he was nine. Since then Jijo has honed his skills and shown the world what he is capable of in terms of the game. "I am a chess player with a standard FIDE rating of 1970. I have played around 20 FIDE tournaments and some rapid and blitz tournaments in many countries," he said. >**A4**

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For onlookers, chess may seem like a simple two-player board game played on an 8x8 grid with 64 black and white squares. One might say that there is nothing significant about watching players get lost in their own world of pawns, knights, bishops, rooks and king and queens but chess is more than what meets the eyes – a game of strategy that requires a high level of cunning if one wishes to become a grand master.

Chess is often said to be the game of life where the queen protects the king and the final goal is to capture the opponents king. It is also game of tact that requires one to play with a calm and composed mind, making sure to make the right choices and intercept his opponents moves to make the final Check Mate.

Savely Tartakower, the famously known chess journalist and author once said, "The winner of the game is the player who makes the next to last mistake" and making very few mistakes is what a 12 year old boy from Muscat is doing. He is now slowly but steadily climbing the ladder to someday become the next Grand Master.

Jijo first started playing chess at the tender age of six after his uncle introduced him to the game. He easily grasped the working of the game and quickly built interest and developed his own tactics. Before his parents knew it, he was competing and winning in local games and tournaments in his community and school.

Jijo Jyo, studying in grade 7 in Indian School Wadi Kabir, has gained the attention of those in Oman and abroad with his impressive gameplay and knack for chess at such a young age.

Like some of his peers, Jijo loves swimming and reading books in his spare time but it is chess that he is utterly in love with.

Jijo first started playing chess at the tender age of six after his uncle introduced him to the game. He easily grasped the working of the game and quickly built interest and developed his own tactics. Before his parents knew it, he was competing and winning in local games and tournaments in his community and school.

Jijo's parents saw a unique skill in him and just like any other responsible parent, they think it is their rightful duty to support and encouraged him to do even better in his hobby. The Jyos are going all the way supporting their son even when he decides to go professional.

Rakhi, Jijo's mother said, "We wish for all parents to look into their children's talents and extracurricular



A young man's journey to becoming a grand master

activities and to support and encourage them to pursue their dreams."

With Jijo's talent in their mind, Rakhi and his husband enrolled him into professional chess training at the International Chess Academy in Muscat at the age of nine. There was no doubt about his immense talent as not long after, Jijo was competing at international tournaments and making a name for himself in the international arena amongst the other elite chess players.

Jijo's played his first international tournament at the young age of 10 at the 22nd Abu Dhabi International

Chess Festival under-16 Championship where he went on to win third place in his age group.

At this competition, Jijo won five out of the total seven games and drew two, leaving him unbeaten at his first international competition. Earlier in the year, he came first at the XVIII Obert Internacional de Eivueres Miquel Mas 2017, an international chess competition hosted in Spain.

Jijo shared that other than the incredible support that his parents provided him, there were many others along the way that continue to help him in order to achieve his goals. He is indebted and thankful to his



Jijo playing with former world champion Garry Kasparov



Jijo playing with Omani player Al Ansi Amin in Spain 2017

coach Ismail Karam at the International Chess Academy of Oman who not only encouraged him but has been guiding him for the past three years enabling Jijo to reach the great heights that he has achieved today.

He was also appreciative of his school and teachers for their support during his time away at training and competitions ensuring he is able to compete without hampering his education.

Other than the incredible support from his parents and coach, there were many other supporters that came out of their way to ensure Jijo's dreams come true.

In order to improve his performance and achieve a higher FIDE rating, Jijo needs to compete outside of Oman as the country currently does not host classical tournaments. He also needs to train for high calibre scientific chess trainings all of which requires a large financial backing.

To support the family and help Jijo, companies like Khuruj Ramdas Luxury & Lifestyle supported Jijo at his last international level competition in Barcelona, Spain. Some of his other well wishers have been Malabar Gold, Badr Al Sama, Habib Salam Electricals, the Indian School Board of Directors and the Indian Social Club (Kerala Wing) who have stood beside Jijo, supporting his talent and ensuring he reach his goals.

Currently, Jijo has a FIDE (World Chess Federation) ranking is 1966 and as of this October, he holds the 17th rank in India and 1st in his state of Kerala. This talented young man's short term goals include becoming a Candidate Master which is achieved by scoring an Elo rating of 2200 or more, and like other chess professionals, Jijo is also working hard towards reaching the ultimate and someday conquering the title of Grand Master – a title that is awarded to outstanding chess players by the FIDE, apart from being a World Champion, this is the highest title one can attain in chess.

Once achieved, the Grand Master title is held for life.

"There is no shortcut to success", says Jijo, who believes that through hard work, intensive training and support from his well wishers he would one day make a name for himself and hold the glorious title of Grand Master.