

Chess Notes-

By- Devanshi Rathi

For all the enthusiastic chess players in the world

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Preface-

I first started writing this book in 2012. I always felt the need to write a simple and easy to understand self-help book for aspiring chess players who want to become better at the game. That's how it all began and four years since I have finally managed to complete this book. Chess Notes aims to provide novice players with basic chess knowledge. It also gives an insight into the lives of other young chess players who play on the national and international chess circuit. The tips that I given here are all the tips that I have collected through my chess journey so far. I hope that you all like the book and have as much fun reading this book as I had writing it. All the best for your future chess endeavors.

Devanshi Rathi

New Delhi, 2016

How to use the book

1. Always remember to use a chess board. Even if it is online you must have one for understanding the concepts better.
2. Go through the book yourself and try and make notes while learning.
3. Practice the positions and go through the games on your own before checking the answers.
4. The most important thing to remember is to enjoy when you're reading this book.
5. You can go through any chapter first.

Chapter 1 -An Introduction to Chess

History of Chess-

Chess has its origins in India. It was believed to have originated in the Lankan King 'Ravana's time'. Over the years chess had become widely popular across the world and spread rapidly across Europe. Today we play the newer version of chess which is taken from the European game. Chess had numerous players in the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries who were well known for their attacking play. The likes of Paul Morphy are known to be masters of the past before the Official World Championship Era. It was Wilhelm Steinitz who became the first Official World Chess Champion and that's how the world title came into being.

Today we have FIDE as the world body which supports and directs all the chess activities across the globe.

Chess also has many different variants and the one that we play today is extremely different from the original 'Chaturanga' played in the ancient subcontinent.

Why should one play chess-

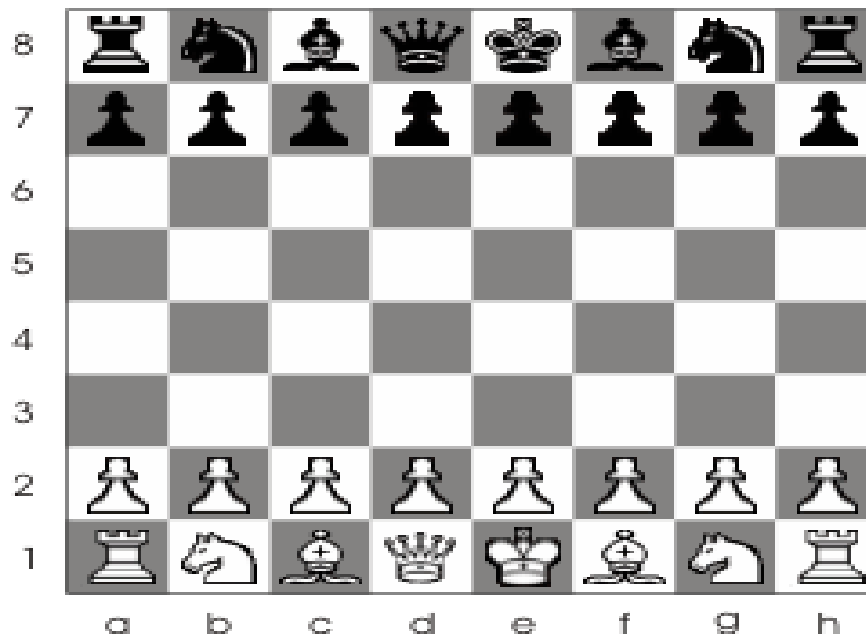
Chess should be played by one and all as it helps you in so many ways. We are able to do so many things by playing the game. Some of the most crucial benefits of playing are-

1. It helps us to analyze our problems
2. It helps us to think and plan for the future.
3. It helps us to concentrate and focus
4. It makes us sharper and is like a 'brain gym'.
5. It also helps to develop our creativity and imagination.
6. It makes us better and brighter individuals.

How to play the game-

1. Chess is a two player game.
2. There are two options to play with. You are either white or black.
3. Each player has 16 pieces on their side (White or Black)
4. The main objective of the game is to kill the opponent's king.

5. White always starts the game.
6. The pieces are-
 - Bishop (2 each)
 - Knight (2 each)
 - Rook (2 each)
 - Queen
 - King
 - Pawns (8 each)
7. There are 32 pieces on the board which has 64 squares of alternate colors.
8. The value of the pieces are-
 - Bishop and Knight (3 points each)
 - Rook (5 points)
 - Queen (9 points)
 - King (Infinite)
 - Pawns (1 Point each)
9. There are some special rules like 'en passant' and 'castling' which have their own benefits.
10. Here's how the board looks like-



The vertical lines (from 1-8) are known as 'ranks' and the horizontal lines (from a-h) are known as files. The squares from a1-h8 are known as diagonals.

Movement of the pieces-

Pawns-

1. They can only move straight and can capture diagonally.
2. Once they have been moved they can never come back to their original position.
3. They can be moved two steps only from the 2nd rank and thereafter they can move only one square at a time.
4. Once they reach the opponent's last row they can be promoted to any piece of a higher value except for the king.
5. En Passant- Once the pawn reaches the fifth rank it can capture the opponent's pawn which has just been moved two steps next to that pawn on the same rank either on the left or on the right. This capture is only valid for that move. It is possible for both white and black. In black's case the black and white pawns must be on the fourth rank instead of the fifth.

Bishop-

1. They can move and capture on any no. of squares diagonally.
2. There are two bishops on each side. One is the 'White Bishop' and the other is the 'Black Bishop' which move according to their colors on the diagonal. For example a black bishop will move only on the black squares and the white bishop will only move on the white squares.

Knight-

1. It moves two and a half steps at a time. In the shape of an 'L'
2. It can capture the pieces the way it moves provided the threatened piece is on the square where it can reach.

Rook-

1. It can move straight vertically and horizontally backwards and forwards any no. of squares at a time.
2. It can capture anything on its way.

Queen-

1. It can move straight, backwards, horizontally and diagonally.
2. It can capture anything on its way.

King-

1. It can move only one square at a time. It can either move diagonally, straight or backwards but only a square at a time.
2. It can capture on the square that it lands on.
3. There is a special movement on the queenside or on the kingside called 'castling'.

Key Terms-

1. Check- When the king is attacked by any other piece and has a square to move on from its current position, the king is said to be in 'check'.
2. Checkmate- When the king is under attack by any other piece and it has no other square to move to it is said to be checkmated. It is that point of the game when a player is declared to have won or lost accordingly.
3. Draws- It is a situation when both the players feel that they cannot checkmate their opponent's king. There are multiple kinds of draws-
 - a. Mutual Agreement- Draw agreed to by both the players
 - b. 50 Moves made in the endgame
 - c. Stalemate (the king is under no check and has nowhere to move and there isn't any other legal possible move to be made on that particular turn.
 - d. Perpetual check (continuous checks given to an opponent's king)
 - e. Repetition of the same position three times
 - f. King v/s King Only Draw (only the kings remain on the board)
 - g. King, Knight/Bishop v/s King Draw
4. Touch and move rule- This is extremely important as it is followed in all tournaments and competitive matches. Once you have touched a particular piece with your hand you cannot move any other piece besides that one on that particular move.
5. Phases of the Game- Opening, Middle game and Endgame

Notation-(algebraic version)

King- K

Queen- Q

Rook- R

Bishop- B

Knight- N

Pawn - Just the square name on which it is placed. (eg.e4)

Note- We use these symbols with the square name on which the piece is placed on. For e.g. If I move my rook to a8 then I will write Ra8.

For captures we will use the symbol 'X' and write Rxa8

Always remember the square on which we move the piece is the name of the square we write on the score sheet.

Other important symbols-

+ - Check

++ / # - Checkmate

+ - - Clearly better for white

-+ Clearly better for black

= - Equality

? - Blunder

!! - Good move/Excellent Move

Result/ Scoring System-

1-0 - White Wins

0-1 - Black Wins

1/2 - 1/2 - Draw

Time Control-

Classical Format- Long games

Usually 90 Minutes + 30 Seconds increment (additional/extra time) on each move

Rapid Format- Short Games

Usually 25 minutes + 30 seconds increment on each move

Blitz format- Shortest Games

3 minutes + 2 Seconds increment on each move or 5 minutes each flat game.

Rating-

It is the criteria to determine a player's strength and how he ranks in FIDE's World List. The higher the rating of a player, the better it would be for him/her.

You can get an Elo Rating by playing in rating tournaments and events across the globe. In order to get this rating one has to play against 9 different rated players and score at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ points against them. The higher players you beat the better chances of getting a higher rating.

There are separate ratings for the classical, rapid and blitz formats from the July 2012 FIDE Rating Lists.

One can also get online ratings and titles from now on in bullet (1 - 2 minutes games), blitz and rapid time controls. (For this you would have to create an account on FIDE's Online Arena)(Visit the website on www.fide.com)

So now that you have a slightly better idea about some of the basic chess terms and theory you must be eager to get started with your training. Here is all what you need to get started.

1. First of all you need to buy a chessboard or you can get one online.
2. You need to divide your time between openings, middle games and endgames.
3. You can also join a chess club or an academy near your city for practice against other players.

Now let's move on to some other aspects of chess learning in the second chapter.

Chapter 2- A game of Chess

'Chess is a game in which an ant can bathe and an elephant can drown.'

Interesting Facts about chess-

1. It is the world's most popular game.
2. You can continue to play chess even when you reach an older age and don't have to worry about life after retirement.
3. You can compete against players three times your age in open category events.
4. Chess can be played anywhere in the world. All you require is a board and your mind.
5. Chess is a mind sport and it not only builds up your mind but it also builds up your physical stamina as top level chess requires hours of physical training as well.

Things to remember while playing any sport-

A good sports person is always-

1. Focused
2. Does not get disappointed on losing and is not afraid of defeats.
3. A person who tries to learn from his mistakes and improve his game.
4. A person who is calm and relaxed at all times and has a healthy mind and body.
5. A person who is always passionate about the game/sport.
6. A person who is humble and generous after a victory.

Since we now have an idea about sportsmanship and chess we can now look forward to starting our first lessons. In this chapter you would get to know about some important principles in all the phases of the game namely the opening, the middle game and the endgame.

The Endgame-

1. The King is a strong piece in the endgame. One must use it wisely.
2. We must start thinking about the endgame in the middle game itself and see how to win the game from there on.
3. If one is a pawn or two ahead in this phase of the game, one should exchange pieces and not pawns and vice-versa if one is on the losing end.

4. If you think that you have an advantage you should not leave all your pawns on one side of the board as this can lead to all the pawns being exchanged or killed and the resulting game being drawn.
5. Double pawns (pawns one in front of the other), Isolated pawns (single pawn without any other pawns close to it or supporting it) are weak avoid them.
6. The rook should be placed behind the passed pawn. (the opponent's pawn which has a chance to get promoted to a higher piece)
7. Do not move the pawns on the color of your bishop.
8. A bishop is better than a knight in all endgames except a blocked pawn position (a position in which the moves cannot move)
9. If you have a passed pawn you must advance it as rapidly as possible (but do not allow it to get captured of course)
10. You should always try to get a better position if you are exchanging a piece.

Important tips to remember when playing an endgame-

1. Don't panic and stay calm.
2. Look for the best moves possible and watch out for your opponent's threats.
3. Watch out for opponent's tricks to make you nervous in a crucial position.

The Opening-

1. Always try to take control of the centre.
2. Do not bring your queen out early in the game.
3. Castle early and develop all your pieces.
4. Do not touch a single piece more than once in this stage unless required.
5. Always look out for your opponent's opening traps.
6. Always bring out your knights before your bishops.

Opening Traps-

There are always traps that are set by your opponent in any game that you play. Here are some simple traps in the opening. (Note- You will need your board to play out these moves)

1. f3 e5 2.g4 Qh4#

1. e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3. Qf3 Nc6 4.Qxf7#

Here is a sacrifice made in the opening

1. e4 e5 2.Nf3 f6 3.Nxe5 fxe5 4.Qh5+ g6 5.Qxe5+ Be7 6. Qxh8 (White takes black's rook with an excellent advantage)

The Middle game-

1. Bring your pieces to attack on the side where your pawns are more in number.
2. Bring your rooks to the open or semi-open files.
3. Try not to expose your king by pushing the pawns in front of it. However try to make the opponent's king get under pressure.
4. Look for tactics at all times.
5. If you are losing on material do not exchange pieces but exchange pawns.
6. If you are winning on material, exchange your pieces but not your pawns.

A short quiz on chess-

Q1. Who was the first world chess champion (unofficial)?

A1. Paul Morphy

Q2. Who played against Vishy Anand in the World Championship Match in 2013 and 2014?

A2. Magnus Carlsen

A chess activity-

For this activity you will need-

1. A piece of black cloth
2. A board with the pieces set on it

Method-

1. Set a position on the board and try to imagine that position in your mind after analyzing the position thoroughly.
2. Now remove the pieces from the board.
3. Ask someone to tie a black cloth over your eyes so that you cannot see anything.
4. Now try to remember that position which was set on the board earlier.
5. Place the pieces on the board with somebody's help and then check your answer.

After doing this activity you would have improved your memory by a small fraction and doing this regularly with different positions will not only make your chess learning exciting and fun it will also improve your mind.

Chapter 3- Improvement

Things you should keep in mind to become a stronger player-

1. Train for at least seven hours in a week.
2. Play against stronger opponent's to gain on experience and learn new tricks and ideas.
3. Analyze your previous games and see where you went wrong and work on those areas again.
4. Study the games of grandmasters and past world champions.
5. Think about chess at all times and even when you aren't practicing you should be thinking about something related to chess for at least a few hours in a day. This may be about the history or the latest news from the chess world for example.
6. Study, Study and keep on studying new themes and ideas in the form of positions.
7. Play on the internet and use chess software for faster improvement.

Things to help you learn faster-

1. Remember your mistakes from your past games to avoid repeating the same mistakes again.
2. Use interesting technology to make learning easier and more interesting.(e.g. Computer Soft wares and DVD's)
3. Make notes while learning and keep on reading and understanding them for better performances at tournaments.
4. Try to solve positions blindfolded or without moving the pieces on the board.
5. Use books which are easy to understand and are interesting for you to read. Otherwise you might just end up storing that book in your book shelf and never manage to complete reading it.

Remember- While improving you might face many difficulties and challenges. These are different for everybody and you shouldn't get disheartened. Winning and Losing is all part of the game and you will always win some and lose some. So don't be too overjoyed on a victory and too demoralized on a loss. Always keep your self confidence high.

I wanted to share a story with all of you. This happened with me when I was just eleven years old and it taught me a lot more in life than I had ever learnt.

In December 2011, I went to play my first ever Asian Championship. It was held in New Delhi (my hometown) and I was competing in the U-13 Age group which was an age category higher than my current age. The first match itself was a tough one and I got hammered badly. Over the course of the tournament I wasn't able to win even a single match out of a possible 9 points. I scored about three and a half points, earning all these points by drawing my matches. I had lost a lot of rating points in this event. However when I looked at my games and analyzed them after the conclusion of the event I was thrilled at the capacity at which I had played. I had gone deeper into my thinking and calculation and it was a huge success for me. After this tournament I managed to play and win many more tournaments. I never lost hope because I believed in myself and thought that I could achieve much more. So always remember that in a loss you always gain something or the other. Just don't ever give up.

Chapter 4- Chess Knowledge

As a chess player you must know all about the chess across the globe and the current happenings in the chess world. You could use the internet or read from the various books available. It will always make learning more interesting and fun for you and it will keep you at practicing all the time. Once you get into researching on chess believe me you will never be able to get out of it as its so interesting and so much of fun.

Here are some websites that you can visit for the latest chess news from around the world-

1. www.devachess.wordpress.com
2. www.chessbase.com
3. www.theweekinchess.com
4. www.chessbase.in
5. www.fide.com

Test some of your existing knowledge on chess with this short quiz-

Q1. Which player is known to be the greatest chess player of all time?

A1. Bobby Fischer

Q2. Who won the world championship in 2013 and 2014?

A2. Magnus Carlsen

Q3. Who is India's most successful player?

A3. Vishwanathan Anand

Q4. Who won the world title in 2008, 2010 and 2012?

A4. Vishy Anand

Here's a complete list of the World Champions-

1. Wilhelm Steinitz (1886-1894)
2. Emanuel Lasker (1894-1921)
3. Jose Raul Capablanca (1921-1927)
4. Alexander Alekhine (1927-1935,1937-1946)
5. Max Euwe (1935-1937)
6. Mikhail Botvinnik (1948-1957,1958-1960,1961-1963)
7. Vasily Smyslov (1957-1958)
8. Mikhail Tal (1960-1961)
9. Tigran Petrosian (1963-64)
10. Boris Spassky (1969-72)
11. Bobby Fischer (1972-75)
12. Anatoly Karpov (1975-83)
13. Garry Kasparov (1985-93)

FIDE WORLD CHAMPIONS-

1. Anatoly Karpov (1993-99)
2. Alexander Khalifman(1999-2000)
3. Vishy Anand (2000-02)
4. Ruslan Ponomarev (2002-04)
5. Rustam Kasimdzhanov (2004-05)
6. Vesselin Topalov (2005-06)

Classical World Champions (PCA)

1. Garry Kasparov
2. Vladimir Kramnik

Undisputed world champions-

14. Vladimir Kramnik (2006-07)
15. Vishy Anand (2007-12)
16. Magnus Carlsen (2013-present)

Chapter 5- It's not the end

After all the information that you've got from this book it's still not enough to become the best simply because there is something new to learn each day and no one is perfect. However with continuous practice and hard work one can try to achieve success in anything that you do and this is all that's required to become better and better.

Here are a few pointers to keep in mind en route to improving your game-

1. You should start doing the positions which tend to take more time for you to solve after you've solved all the easier ones.
2. At this stage you should focus more on the middle game and the endgame rather than memorizing thousands of openings.
3. Divide your time of studying according to your strengths and weaknesses.
4. Again look at top level games and try to incorporate those ideas into your own games.
5. Solve studies and keep your mind fresh at all times.
6. A thought should be given over quality rather than quantity. You should focus on reading one book at a time rather than ending up reading a couple of books at the same time and not remembering anything from any of the books.
7. Try to participate in as many tournament games/ practice matches as possible. The more you play in the beginning the better chances of your improvement. However don't ever compromise on your practice schedule.
8. You should also learn the most important opening theories in the lines that you want to play and not ignore openings completely either. But you shouldn't go too deep into calculation as players of your level wouldn't know grandmaster level opening theory.
9. Learn openings according to your style of play. If you are an aggressive player don't end up taking a passive opening etc.
10. Keep solving tactics daily to keep your brain in shape. Tactics are like working out in a gym to keep your muscles strong but here it's the brain muscles which get activated.
11. Read about chess theory and strategy and know the basic concepts of positional play.

12. Try to know about the basic endgame structures by practicing positions relating to a particular endgame theme.
13. Study the games of the greats like Bobby Fischer, Capablanca, Karpov and Carlsen to get a better idea of handling crucial endgames.

Chapter 6- A diet plan

Now since we've discussed a lot on chess improvement let's now get on with the other aspect of winning more matches. That is by staying healthy and leading a healthy lifestyle. I have always thought that if chess players eat well and maintain their fitness throughout a tournament, they can survive the strain that long and strenuous matches play on their bodies. Everybody has a different taste and have their own favourite things to eat during a tournament but here are a few things that I like to carry with me for my tournaments and matches.

What to have during a tournament-

1. Lots and lots of fluids like juices, shakes, water and other naturally prepared drinks. Avoid energy drinks and caffeine.
2. Lemons in water are also ideal.
3. Citrus fruits like tomatoes.
4. Green Vegetables and Salads.
5. Walnuts and Almonds
6. Fruits like Apples, Bananas, Strawberries, and Oranges etc.
7. Cereals
8. Whole wheat pastas and pizzas
9. Dark Chocolates
10. Yogurts

What not to have-

1. Too much of fats and oils.
2. Eating just before a match starts. Remember to eat in advance much before the match begins.
3. Caffeine products like coffee or tea.
4. Rice should also be avoided.
5. Eat small quantities and have at least six meals in a day after every two hours.

Fitness-

Fitness is essential for sports players and though players might think that chess doesn't require any physical fitness. However this is just a myth. Almost all top players work out regularly and keep themselves on their toes during and before tournaments

and events. If you want to achieve those scores eating well and working out well is a must.

1. Sports like swimming, tennis, squash, badminton, basketball or football can be played during rest hours.
2. Using the gym would be ideal.(But please consult your doctor before using any equipment of course)
3. Sprinting and cardio exercises
4. Cycling and yoga
5. Skipping is a must

Leisure time-

During your free time from your hectic practice and playing schedule it is a must to also learn to enjoy your life. You must find your own recreation activities besides chess. For me reading books, listening to music and painting are a few ways to relax when I'm not practicing.

Chapter 7- Stories, Stories and Stories

Congratulations! You have now come to the final chapter of this book. In this final chapter I would like to share some of the most memorable experiences while playing chess so far. I hope that you have enjoyed reading the book and have got to learn something new and interesting.

1. My First Rated Game (2010, April)

It was a hot and sunny April day in New Delhi when I played my first ever rated match. I was unrated at that time and had no idea about the rules of how to achieve a rating. I was playing with a strong player and he was the son of a well known chess coach in the city. However the boy forgot the golden rule of sportsmanship which is to never underestimate an opponent. He thought that I was just an unrated girl player and there was nothing to worry about as the match had already been won. He was so overconfident that he kept on playing rapidly and strolling about the tournament hall after each move. As a result he lost all his concentration while on the other hand I kept my calm and focus. The match finished in over an hour and a half and I won the game. I received my first major win against a rated opponent and it opened a newer horizon for me. It will always be a moment to treasure for the rest of my life. Remember not to underestimate or overestimate your opponent ever.

2. FIDE World Championship(2013, November)

I went to Chennai for the FWCC 2013 between Magnus Carlsen and Vishwanathan Anand which was clinched by the former by a whopping score of 6.5-3.5.

I was playing in a special tournament organized by the AICF and the FIDE in the mornings and during the evenings I would go to see the match which was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chennai. I was staying in the same hotel and co-incidentally I was staying on the same floor as Carlsen ,only two rooms away. I somehow managed to get his autograph despite the heavy security and that made my day.

The tournament and the experience that I gained was phenomenal. I also got a chance to see the two best players in the world play against each other live. I also took pictures on the board that they were playing on and saw the rooms that were filled with their food and drink items after the tournament concluded. The experience was 'real' and I also got a chance to meet the likes of 'Susan Polgar'. It will be a memory forever.

3. First State Championship Victory (April, 2014)

The Delhi State U-17 Girls Championship will always remain close to my heart. It was the first time that I had lifted a state championship prize since I had started playing. The tournament was tough with many stalwarts playing. I managed to score 3 out of 4 rounds and the last round was the decider. I had to win to stay in for a good chance to clinch the prize. I was playing against a girl against whom I had lost twice just a few weeks ago. I was in no mood to lose again. I ruthlessly claimed the victory and knew that I had clinched it but had to wait for the tie- break score result. In the end I had managed to win in one of the most crucial matches that I have ever played in. In a tensed atmosphere like this, winning made me all the more excited. I learnt to stay positive and calm in extreme situations like this.



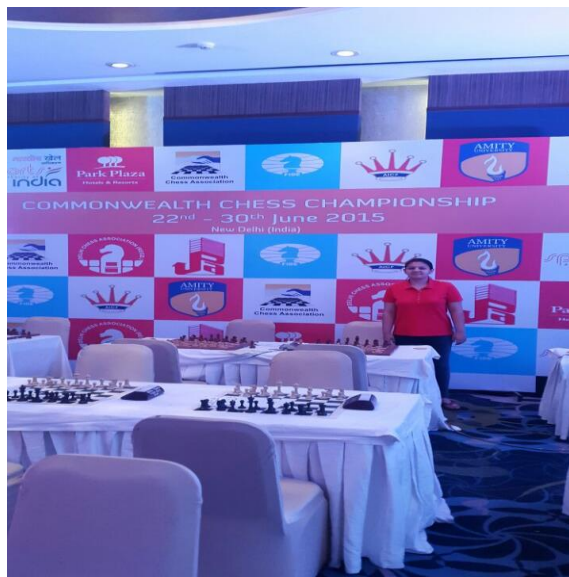
4. National Winner (November, 2011)

I had hoped and dreamt all through my playing career that one day I would be able to clinch the CBSE National Chess Championship Title and would be able to engrave my school's name on that prestigious trophy. Although the Zonal Championship had been dominated by our team throughout the National title had always eluded us. I was extremely excited for this event. My team had won the Zonals and we were representing the entire North Zone in the Nationals. I arranged for team practices in my house and made a detailed list of all the teams that were participating in our event and made a board order for my team accordingly. My plan was to defeat the team from Chennai which was the strongest team of the event. The first three rounds went on smoothly. We scored crushing victories. The fourth round was a decider. We were playing the team from Chennai. My prediction about the board order was right and we managed to draw against a much stronger team than ours. After this tensed match another one came along. We played against a team from

Kolkata and after a grueling match lasting over three and a half hours we managed to win the match and also lift the championship. My wait was over. My dream came true. It is rightly said that the more dreams you have and the more you work towards those dreams, they will definitely come true.



Some of the pictures from my tournaments that I wanted to share with you-



Conclusion-

I could go on and on with my stories but for now this is it. We have come to an end of our discussion and I really hope that you enjoyed this ride along with me. I hope that you would be able to achieve everything that you desire in your life. Always remember the golden rules of sportsmanship as that is the base of all glory and success. If you want to climb the ladder of success work hard and you would surely be able to do so. I hope that you have now understood something about how to improve your game and make it stronger. Thank you so much for reading this book and all the best for your future endeavors.

Acknowledgements-

I would like to thank all the people who have made my dream of playing chess possible. I would first of all like to thank my mother who has been the guiding force behind all my chess activities. I would also like to thank my father for providing me with whatever that I needed and supporting me in whatever way that was possible. I would like to thank all my family members for being so supportive and encouraging throughout. I love you all. I would also like to thank my coach Mr.Vishal Sareen for being a pillar of strength and helping me to develop my chess skills on a whole. I would also like to thank my school and the principal for being always so supportive and encouraging. Lastly I would like to thank you all for reading my book and encouraging my effort to write this for all of you.

About the Author-

Devanshi Rathi is a 16 year old girl studying in Modern School Vasant Vihar New Delhi. She has been playing chess for the past nine years and loves the game from the bottom of her heart. She is extremely passionate about the game and loves to promote the game through various ways. She has also started 'Project Checkmate' to teach chess to young children. She is extremely fond of sports and loves to play tennis and swim. She is a fitness enthusiast and loves to ride bicycles. She also likes reading and writing and maintains her own blog.



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