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RVC Student: Hail Grandmaster Girish

Mysuru Lad Becomes Third Chess Player From State And 63rd From India To Achieve The Feat

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru:



HALL OF FAME: Grandmaster Girish Koushik at his residence in Bengaluru after his month-long tour to Europe, on Tuesday

Mysuru's Girish A Koushik became the country's 63rd Grandmaster, realising his dream despite monumental odds in Europe last week.

Girish, a former world U-10 champion, who went on to dominate the age group scenario for a long time, achieved the live rating of 2500.7 ELO points at the Balaton International Chess Festival GM round-robin event last week.

Girish's month-long tour of Europe, where he played three tournaments in May and June were productive. He had a rating of 2444 and one GM norm, which he had won at the World Junior Championship in Chennai eight years ago.

Girish, 21, claimed his second GM norm at the Lluçmajor Open in Palma Mallorca, Spain, while pocketing 25.4 Elo points. The final norm came at the First Saturday GM Chess Tournament in Budapest, Hungary, where he also bagged 20.3 Elo points.

With all three norms under his belt and with a live rating of 2489.7, Girish had a fine run last week at the Balaton International at Balatonlelle, Hungary, finally sealing the issue with 11 rating points on June 19.

Girish is the third GM from Karnataka after MS Thejkumar and GA Stany. His feat came a month after Swayams Mishra of Odisha became the country's 62nd GM.

"I have a live ELO rating of 2501 now. It was a very proud moment for me to become a Grandmaster. I started learning chess from my father (Arun Koushik) at the age of 4. I wanted to become a Grandmaster right from the time I began playing chess tournaments at the age of 5. It is a dream come true for me and my family and I want to dedicate this title to my parents. Without their support, this would have never happened," said Girish, a former student of St Thomas High School in Mysuru.

A child prodigy, Girish showed immense potential in the age group tournaments after his maiden U-10 crown at the World Youth Championships at Batumi, Georgia in 2006. He claimed the silver twice in the U-16 category in 2012 & 2013 Worlds and the Asian medals in the U-8, U-10, U-12, U-14 and U-16 sections and also Commonwealth U-14 gold and silver medals in U-12 and U-10 categories respectively. He also won National U-9 and U-11 titles.

It wasn't easy to pursue his dream after a point without financial support. Following years of struggle, when his parents ran from pillar to post to raise funds, Girish decided to quit the sport and pursue engineering. "After I won my first GM norm, many expected me to become the GM in the following 2-3 years, but it was not that easy. I didn't have any financial support. I had to choose between academics and chess. I had seen many chess players suffer by not having education or an alternative career and I didn't want to be in that situation. Probably, if I had the financial support that I required, I would have become the GM by the year 2013 or 2014 and go on to bring more laurels for the country, but it was not meant to be that way!"

From 2012, Girish reduced his tournament appearances. In 2012 and 2013, he won the gold and silver respectively at the Asian Youth and World Youth championships, securing the second and third IM norms. He completed his IM title in 2013 and had an ELO rating of 2413. But GM title was still a distant dream. Girish topped the CET sports quota four years ago, studied electronic and communication engineering at RV College of Engineering here, played local tournaments to keep in touch with the sport before charting his way to the top last month.

"I used the money which I won from the local rating tournaments in the previous years to fund the Europe trip. On the day of my last exam (May 17), I packed my bags and started my journey

to Europe without much preparation. All this wouldn't have happened without the help of my college. I would like to thank RVCE for their support and encouragement," he said.

What next? "I have a job offer from campus placement and would also like to play as many tournaments as possible to cross the rating barrier of 2600. I also have plans to pursue MS abroad," said Girish.

GIRISH KOUSHIK

MAJOR WINS
World Youth Chess Championship:
U-10 champion, twice

Age: 21
Place of birth:
Mysuru

U-16 silver medalist

Asian Youth Chess Championship:
U-8 gold; U-10 silver; U-12, U-14 and U-16 gold

Commonwealth Chess Championship:
U-14 gold, U-10 & U-12 silver

FIDE Master:
2006

International Master:
2013

Grandmaster: 2019

ROUTE TO BECOMING A GRANDMASTER

- > Gained his maiden GM norm in 2011 at the World junior meet
- > Second GM norm at the Lucmajor Open in Mallorca, Spain in May 2019
- > Third GM norm earned at the First Saturday tournament in Budapest, Hungary this month.
- > With a third-place finish at the Balaton International chess festival crossed the 2500 ELO rating



Young Girish with the Asian U-12 chess gold medal

Young Girish with the Asian U-12 chess gold medal