

Eleven-year-old Shreyas Royal is a CM and has a standard play grading of 2121(202 ECF) and is the top rated player for U13 age group in England and top 10 in the world. Recently he drew with GM Axel Bachmann (despite the result later being cancelled) and plays remotely in all forms of chess, holding his own in tournaments with titled players. His coach, IM Ravi Haria says: "In the past few months, Shreyas has really developed his calculation process. In addition to learning effective ways to cope with complicated positions, Shreyas has also been consolidating the basic fundamentals of middlegame planning and the importance of having ideas behind each move. His enjoyment of the game makes it a particular pleasure to work with him, and I look forward to helping him achieve more progress in the future."

Looking at the above introduction, are you surprised by what you have already achieved?

No, not really since I try to be as confident as possible believing I can do anything as long as I put my mind to it. Yes, sometimes I celebrate as if it was impossible but deep inside, I know I can do it.

At what point of your chess career did you think that you could go far. Was it a particular game, or was it a gradual process of getting stronger?

It was in the European Schools 2016 U7 when I came second with no real preparation or knowledge. Then I started to take it more seriously and started to work harder as it really boosted my confidence.

You were coached by GM Glenn Flear and your current coach is IM Ravi Haria. Describe your relationship with them and how they have helped you?

I have had good relationships with both these fantastic coaches. With Glenn we looked at a lot of aspects and I think I have improved in all places quite a lot so I am really thankful for that. Ravi has made the coaching much more advanced, working with lots of difficult calculation and positional problems. He also has given me tips some tips on how to look at the game in different ways. This has helped me become more e me more effective. We have also looked at opening structures which have also helped me.

What are your chess ambitions? On your website shreyasroyal.co.uk you make a claim that you could be world champion by 2030. Is that banter or do you really mean it?

I really mean it because I always have set my goals quite high knowing that nothing is impossible since records are there to be beaten.

Are you concerned that chess may have to take more of a back seat as you enter secondary education.

Absolutely, my studies have an impact on my chess. If you have some target in life to do something you have to be absorbed in trying to achieve that goal. I felt this at the end of last year during my Eleven-plus exam preparation and my chess had to take a back seat. I was offered places in two secondary schools that were not ready to give flexibility on chess. So with my parents we have decided I will be home schooled.

Please provide a link to your favourite game, and tell us why it is your number one.

Royal, Shreyas (1941) - Zapolskis, Antanas (2280) 11th CSC London Chess Classic
<https://old.chesstempo.com/gamedb/game/4483400>

My pieces were placed quite nicely throughout the game and I found an unavoidable mate on move 47 in a position that looked like he had perpetual checks.

Which chess players have most influenced your career?

In the early days it was Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer had a lot of influence because of their attacking style and brilliant sacrifices but from the age of eight I have become a devoted fan of Magnus Carlsen. His way of slowly squeezing water out of a stone is remarkable. I bought his movie so as to better understand his mindset. I always enjoy looking at his games.

Outside of chess and your studies do you have any other interests and hobbies?

I like sport, especially lawn tennis, cricket and football.

There will be a lot of junior players reading this interview. What advice can you give youngsters on how to improve their game?

Look at top players' games and take time as if was a live game, guess their moves and understand why they played them.

Did all the publicity and waiting for the decision from the Home Office that you could remain in the UK have an effect on your chess progress?

Yes, it did. So, I am thankful to everyone for the positive outcome.

Who is your favourite online chess commentator?

Daniel King is my favourite commentator because his methods are very instructive and effective. I recommend his Powerplay series.

Finally, the ECF members need to know – name the patzer who managed to get a game off you in the 2018 Sam Black Memorial Blitz?

Hmmm I wonder, was it comedian Lee Hurst or Mark Rivlin?