

Let's talk about playing chess You are obviously a strong player with a 2131 FIDE rating. What are the highlights of your chess career?

I was quite an active player till 8 years ago. My best result was a tournament in Groningen in 2010. I was close to an IM norm but lost the final two rounds. More recently I beat Wesley So in a Fischer Random game while most of the top grandmasters were kibitzing - but in Wesley's defense we played with time odds.

How much over the board competitive chess do you play? Do you play online?

It is hard to identify myself as a chess player these days as I play so little over the board and haven't really studied chess in the past 5 years. I do play on [chess.com](https://www.chess.com) and lichess – once I reach a decent rating on one platform I switch to the other platform to match that rating.

How did you break into photography and videography?

I bought my first camera to take videos at chess tournaments for a Dutch chess website. I made a big jump in the quality of my photos when I started to watch tutorials during the 2014 US Chess Championships. It was great to learn in the evenings and to bring that knowledge in practice the next day. I usually combine photography with operating the DGT boards, and that 'buy-one-get-two' combination earned me quite some invitations to tournaments.

Your photography work is extremely creative, delving deeper than the ubiquitous player or players over the board. How do you find inspiration at the big tournaments and events you cover?

That's something I wonder myself before every new tournament ;-) But once the games start and I feel the tension of the games, I absorb that competitiveness and get motivated to get the best out of every situation. But I have to admit that I certainly look at other photographers to spot new ideas and learn new camera angles.

Is the static nature of a chess contest easier to shoot and portray than fast moving sports like football and athletics?

On first sight chess should be easy to capture. But there are only a few tense and emotional moments in a chess game, while in any other sport you'll see emotions all the time. I strongly believe that it helps to understand chess to take a photo on the right moment.

You were at the 2019 World Athletics Championships in Doha; have you covered other major sporting events?

I love sports and attending sports events, but so far my photography is purely

focused on chess. A friend has tried to convince me to take photos at fencing events but haven't found the right moment yet. Maybe I should try capturing chessboxing events first?! :)

You are a man of many creative talents – photographer, videographer, broadcaster and producer working at some of the world's top tournaments. How stressful is this kind of lifestyle?

I work for 15-20 tournaments a year and travel a lot, but that's not very stressful to me. I try to take short holidays in between tournaments and try to take things easy. I guess the responsibility of organizing a local chess tournament at home would be more stressful for me.

With more sponsorship money coming into chess, is the game finally getting the recognition it deserves.

It is great for the World's best players that there is more money in chess and I believe that's partially because of the Magnus effect. We still haven't seen any interest from major tech brands, the online viewing numbers seem to stagnate and I don't see many young professionals who would like to work full time for chess organisations or tournaments.

In an interview with GM Maurice Ashley you talk about creating stories from tournament shoots. Please explain more about this.

It happens that I'm the only photographer at a tournament and that people follow the tournament through my lens I love bringing all the stories from the tournament hall to those following chess at home. I really get excited when Carlsen plays an grinding 7-hour game and to capture the excitement of the winner and the bitter disappointment of the loser.

What are your ambitions for the future?

I am setting up a photo exhibition at the Max Euwe Center in Amsterdam, which will be my first experience with printing photos. But my biggest ambition is to gather some young ambitious people to work with at chess tournaments. Chess can use some more creativity.

Photos:

Tatev Abrahamyan in Saint Louis:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/x1p5ea0suy7e5b4/LOC01172.jpg?dl=1>

Praggnanandhaa in

Kolkata: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cc92jo0qt6r3rh7/LOC07597.jpg?dl=1>

A young boy in

Norway: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/b10y9v2yn0ib8wd/LOC01642.jpg?dl=1>

Magnus Carlsen after a defeat in Saint

Louis: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/2u169gqqmd74pse/DSC04365.jpg?dl=1>

Manuel Bosboom in

Amsterdam: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/pr8egf1wjntm3vo/LOC06050.jpg?dl=1>