

Chess Number One Magnus Carlsen visits San Francisco Bay Area

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by Tom Langland

While on his way to Mexico, the worlds' highest rated player Magnus Carlsen made a couple of stops in California. He met such notables as musician Fred Durst and had lunch with Art Levinson the chairman of the board of Apple. He also took the time to show off his chess skills in the San Francisco Bay area.



Local Prodigy Daniel Naroditsky versus Magnus

First he played a quick blitz game with local chess prodigy, and U-12 World Champion, Daniel Naroditsky followed by a studio interview with Silicon Valley Bank's Aaron Gershenerg. He spoke about how difficult it was to achieve his excellence in the game. Later, he did reflect upon a moment in time, right before he became a Grandmaster when all of his training allowed him to suddenly see everything at a new level. A link to the interview here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxNCMOrzz6A>



Magus with his back to his 4 opponents

Next, in an event organized by both the Silicon Valley Bank and the America's Foundation for Chess (AF4C), Magnus enthralled a crowd of 100 visitors, keen to watch a blindfold simultaneous exhibition by the Grandmaster. Held at the SVB World Headquarters in Santa Clara, youth players Elias Nasr, Reka Sztary, Agnes William and Anirudh Seela were the lucky four young players in attendance to be selected to play Magnus.

Reka was thrilled about being select as she has a poster of Magnus on her door at home. Reka had just switched to using the French Defense,

and in her game, Reka tried to castle queenside, which allowed Magnus to sacrifice the exchange on c6 and develop a quick mating attack. Elias fell prey to Magnus's Kingside fianchettoed bishop attacking his queenside rook on a8 along an open diagonal. Elias tried to save the rook by placing his unguarded bishop on b7 hoping Magnus would not "see" it. Of course Magnus quickly collected up the bishop and then the Rook. Magnus's highest rated foe was Anirudh at 1835, who kept the game score.

Magnus Carlsen Simul

White: Carlsen, Magnus

Black: Naroditsky, Anirudh

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. a3 Bb7 5. Nc3 Be7 6. d5 O-O 7. e4 Na6 8. Bd3 Nc5 9. Bc2 Rc8 10. b4 Na6 11. e5 Ne8 12. Qd3 g6 13. h4 h5 14. g4 Ng7 15. gxh5 Nxh5 16. Rg1 Qe8 17. Bh6 c5 18. b5 Nb8 19. d6 Bd8 20. Ng5 Nf4 21. Qe3 Ng2+ 22. Rxc2 Bxc2 23. h5 Bb7 24. Qg3 Kh8 25. hxc6 fxc6 26. Qh4 Kg8 27. Bg7 Bxc5 28. Qh8+ Kf7 29. Qh7 Rh8 30. Bxc6# 1-0

Anirudh tried to play conservatively, hoping that he could manage a draw against the topmost player in the World. Anirudh said he felt tense with the pressure of the simul, but excited throughout the game.

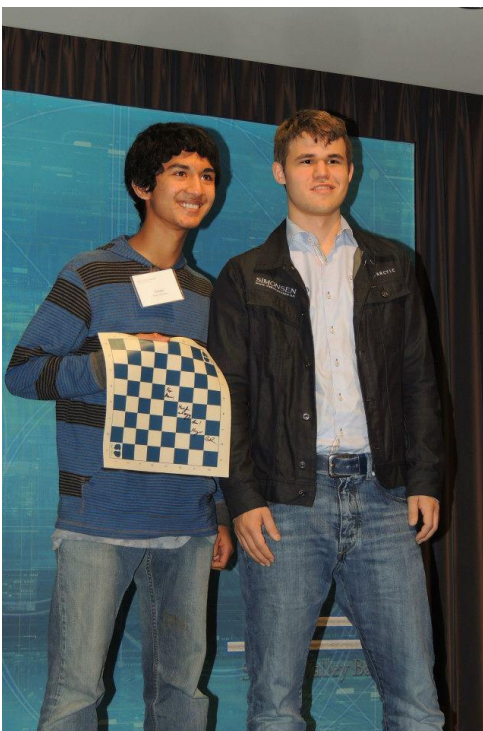


After winning all four games in a short 15 minutes, Magnus autographed the boards for the contestants as well as several other chess sets donated by the AF4C that were raffled off. During the autograph session, Magnus remembered which game was Anirudh's and suggested to him that he should have played 5. ... d5.

Next, Magnus graciously took questions from other youth chess

admirers in the crowd. When asked about what he does when he is not playing chess, he said he enjoys playing soccer, and was on a team when he was 16 or 17 and that it is fun to play with his friends. Magnus shared that he does not mind spending a lot of time to playing and studying chess because he still finds the game fun and enjoyable. Questioned about his favorite opening, he said he didn't necessarily have one in particular, but he does have many games with the Ruy Lopez both with white and black. He finds there are many chances for both sides with that opening, as well as the ability to generate complicated positions from the beginning, without having to play forcing lines.

Magnus was asked who his favorite player was, and he revealed that he doesn't really have one. He tries not to emulate any particular player, but he does try to learn from the contemporary champions as those from the past. He feels that if you have just one favorite player, it gives you too narrow a view of the game to become one of the best.



Finally, Magnus offered to take the time for all requestors to have their picture taken with the GM that many consider to be the next world champion.



