



Q&A 5x5

WHERE GRANDMASTERS ADVISE YOUNG PLAYERS

01 What is the advantage of someone starting to play chess at an early age? When is it best to start? And for those who might be late in learning the game, are they able to get back on track to becoming a titled player?

Chess as a game is changing, and the earlier you start, the more chances you have to succeed. Most strong players begin at a very young age so that they get more time to learn this complex game. Also, children's brains are more adaptable than adults, meaning they can learn new skills and concepts better. I would suggest the best period to start playing chess is between 5 and 8. Of course, there is always time to start playing chess and reap the benefits of the game. However, beginning at an early age can give children a significant advantage. There are a few things that adults can do to get back on track to becoming a titled player: they should find a good chess coach who can help them develop their skills, join a chess club and play in tournaments where they can compete regularly.

02 If there are three main departments of the game opening, middlegame and endgame what portion of our time should we spend on each? And what is the most important?

At the end of the day, to become a strong chess player, one must master all three aspects of the game. The question of how much time should be spent on

each of these mainly depends on your level in chess and your strengths and weaknesses. At an early stage, I recommend focusing primarily on the middle and endgames, and as one gets stronger, the openings also start to play an important role. I would say that the middlegame is the most important as it decides the game, and middlegame understanding is what differentiates a strong from a weak player. So, the middlegame is something everyone should spend the majority of their time on – to study various aspects like piece placement, pawn structures, tactics, etc.

03 From your own experience can you recall any specific type of opening position or endgame theme that an aspiring chess player should be sure to study because of its particular importance?

The basic pawn and rook endgames. It's essential to know the basics of these endgames as they play a crucial role in either converting winning positions or achieving draws. The main reason for this is that, by the time you get to these positions, you have probably already played for 4-5 hours and are pretty exhausted, unable to think precisely, and then knowing these endgames will help us a lot. I remember my coach telling me that I have to know them so well that,



GM Rahul Peddi

India's 74th grandmaster

Student of Finance and Economics at the University of Texas in Dallas

Top scorer for his university chess team in the past two years

Thanks to playing chess, he has visited nearly 30 countries all over the world

even if someone wakes me up in the middle of my sleep, I should still be able to remember them!

04 Not everyone can be a chess world champion. But how can chess be of benefit in life and business?

Everyone should consider playing chess at some

point. If not professionally, at least as a hobby, as chess is not like any other sport. It challenges our brains in every way possible. One develops various skills by playing chess: problem-solving, critical thinking, planning, etc. And these skills are not just restricted to chess. They transfer to other parts of life like Business, Education, etc. As a student, I have experienced this myself – I can navigate through my college life much more easily thanks to the skills I have developed through chess.

05 Why would you recommend chess to youngsters? What joys may they expect to experience on this thrilling journey, in addition to those you have mentioned in your previous answer?

I highly recommend chess to youngsters. There are, of course, a lot of advantages to playing chess, like developing creativity, discipline, and focus. But I want to focus on something else – an important lesson that kids can learn is how to accept defeats. We always face setbacks, many things don't go as planned, but we have to learn to accept this and move forward. And this is something chess can teach! In chess, you lose all the time but play again, and you win, just like in life. This, for me, is the most significant skill I learned and used in other parts of my life.