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WIM RACHEL MILLER MAKING BIG MOVES IN CHESS

Just a little over a month after having turned 20, Rachel Miller now becomes Jamaica's second Woman International Master (WIM), after WIM Deborah Richards-Porter achieved the title in 2014. Rachel is currently the highest rated active Female player from Jamaica and the second youngest in the Caribbean to be awarded this title. Her recent performance at a FIDE tournament in Ottawa, Canada takes her over the elusive 2,000 rating bar, and satisfies her last requirement to becoming a WIM even though still in her final year playing as a Junior (Under 20). WIM Rachel Miller was recently awarded the Prime Minister Youth Award in the category of Sports for her accomplishments in chess. WIM Rachel Miller is an inspiration to many young female (and male) players in Jamaica and across the Caribbean. Her story is one of hard work, dedication, and perseverance, and she provides a shining example to other young people in sport.

A Mother's Intuition

Rachel Miller's chess journey began at the age of 9, when her prep school started a chess club, which her mother encouraged her to join. Rachel protested as she thought chess was for nerds, as many people still do, and her mother insisted it would help her with her GSAT scores later on. Rachel ended up loving the chess club, and receiving a Government Scholarship to Champion College which she attributes greatly to her involvement in chess. She did very well in local tournaments and then went on to play internationally with the assistance of Coach Warren Elliott, who is an 8-time National Champion, a FIDE Master, and still one of Jamaica's highest rated players. She became known as "the girl who was really good at chess" through her high school years and then into University in Canada, where she now resides.



The Opportunities

Chess would take Rachel all over the world – Azerbaijan, Barbados, Costa Rica, Columbia, El Salvador, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Norway, Panama, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, the USA, and Venezuela, among other countries. She says of her travels, "Each international chess tournament is a growing opportunity. Whether it is growth in chess knowledge, cultural knowledge, or character, I always come back from a tournament changed somehow."

She now represents Jamaica at the highest levels of chess on the Women's World Olympiad Team for Jamaica, and hopes someday to become Jamaica's first Woman Grandmaster.

While an obvious benefit of Rachel's chess journey has been her international exposure, chess has evidently helped her in school. She asserts that chess has helped her to think critically, which has been hugely beneficial in many of her university courses. Chess has also enabled Rachel to handle university stress, having learned from an early age how to manage the demands of juggling chess training and arduous competition, along with schoolwork.



World Youth Chess Championships
Greece, 2015

The Sacrifices – For Rachel and Her Parents

The biggest sacrifice in Rachel's chess journey has been time. The time it takes to improve is extraordinary. Apart from training for hours on a daily basis, local tournaments take up an entire weekend and international tournaments can take up entire weeks. This takes away from other activities, friends, family, and work opportunities; so while chess has brought so much to Rachel's life, she has also made huge sacrifices.

Janice Miller, Rachel's mother, acknowledges that Rachel's chess journey has been a family endeavour. Rachel's father took on the role of manager, while she and Rachel's sister provided a lot of emotional support. In fact, Rachel's sister, Rianna, became her biggest cheerleader. Mrs. Miller states that, "Our standard rule has been that once she enjoyed playing chess, we would support her to the best extent possible. We are also deeply appreciative of the roles played by the Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF), her coaches, sponsors and all others in Rachel's journey."

When asked what advice she would give to other chess parents, Mrs. Miller says: "Support your child by being an active part of their chess life." She notes, "You have to be the mental, emotional, physical and, yes, financial support. And know that being there at the end of a match – win, lose or draw, is important to your child." She goes on to lament the fact that chess as a sport does not attract the level of sponsorship that is needed for kids to get the international exposure required for development, and that parents face significant constraints in developing talented children. She acknowledges, however, that she has started to see some signs of positive change, with the support of the Government of Jamaica and the Olympic Association.

A Message to Aspiring Athletes

Rachel's message to other aspiring chess players could apply to young athletes in any other sport. She says that first and foremost she would tell juniors to never give up. She says sometimes it may seem as if you are not progressing significantly despite deliberate practice, but she has a goal of improving daily, even if it is only by 1%. It has taken 5 years for her to secure this latest title, which brings her one step closer to becoming a Woman Grand Master. Dedication and perseverance are evidently critical components to reaching one's goals. She also believes you need to work hard and work smart, since time is always a factor, especially when you have other responsibilities. As she nears the end of her university years and will enter the working world, time management will become even more

critical in her chess journey, but she does not show any signs of giving up on her dream of becoming Jamaica's first Woman Grandmaster.

Rachel also recommends that young people believe in themselves. She thinks it is really important to trust yourself and believe that you set your own limits, and that no one else's success should define the extent of your own potential. After all she says, "Where would Usain Bolt be if he thought he could not compete with athletes from countries like the United States?"

What Does The Future Hold?

Rachel's chess journey continues to evolve. Rachel is a Life Sciences Major at Queen's University and she is now giving back to society through chess. While balancing student life, she volunteers at a local hospital, where she has created a volunteer chess program, which she believes has many benefits for patient recovery, for example, in helping to rehabilitate stroke victims. She says, "God has bestowed a talent on all of us and we have to use it as effectively as we can. Mine is chess, so I believe I have to use it to benefit and inspire myself and others to do great things."

Rachel says: "Chess is a game of mental strength. People can turn losing games into winning ones as long as they don't think negatively. Underdogs beat champions even when no one else believed in them." She goes on to say, "It is a game where anything is imaginable as long as you persevere and believe, and I really think that chess mimics life. As shown in the movie, The Queen of Katwe, pawns really can become Queens."

As she continues her journey into chess mastery, we will be wishing Rachel the very best in all her endeavours. We have no doubt that her future will be very bright indeed!



WIM RACHEL MILLER



At Age 12, Rachel became a Woman Candidate Master, and the youngest internationally titled player in the English-speaking Caribbean at the time.



At age 14, Rachel won the Female section of Jamaica's National Championship in 2014 and then went on to become Jamaica's youngest Woman FIDE Master.



In 2018, CM Miller was representing Jamaica for the third time on the Women's National Team at the 43rd Chess Olympiad.

WIM RACHEL MILLER OVER THE YEARS IN CHESS



ANOTHER FEMALE RISING STAR IN CHESS



WCM ADANI CLARKE

JAMCHESS caught up with WCM Adani, to gain insight into her chess journey, read as she shared her wonderful story;

I was always eager to try something new and to explore my capabilities from a tender age. At the Bread Of Life Christian Academy, I was a member of the Speech club for 6 years, the Dance Society for 4 years and the president of the Early Act Club. Notably, it was out of curiosity and the desire to develop my critical thinking skills that my chess journey began, in the form of Chessmatics by my coach, National Master Mikhail Solomon. I entered my first International tournament, the Carifta Games, in Grade 4, which was hosted in Jamaica at the time, and placed 3rd in the U10 female section. I continued to play nationally and won the National U12 female championships in 2014 and 2015.

Furthermore, I represented Jamaica in the Carifta Chess championship in the same categories in Martinique and Barbados respectively, and emerged as U12 female champion 2014 and 2015.

While excelling at chess, I also performed well academically. I attained an average of 98.2 in my GSAT Examinations and was selected as Valedictorian of my graduating class. I was placed at my school of choice, St. Jago High School which is renowned for its excellence in academics and extra-curricular activities, particularly in chess.

In the summer of 2015, I also obtained a Silver medal in the Carifta U16 female category which was held in St. Croix.

I WAS INITIALLY INTRODUCED TO CHESS AT THE AGE OF EIGHT



In 2017 I placed second in the female section of the National Grade 8 Championship, 5th in the National Women's Championship and 4th in the CAC championships held in Panama. I was also the National U14, U16 and U20 female champion, the Carifta Champion in the female U16 section and was a member of the winning team in the National High School Chess Championship.

Moreover, in 2018 I once again placed 5th in the National Women's Championship and defended my titles as the National U20 female champion and The Carifta under 16 female Champion in Suriname. I was the captain of the St. Jago High female chess team where we won the National High school Female chess championship on our debut. I was also a member of the National Women's Team who represented Jamaica in the World Chess Olympiad in Batumi, Georgia.

In 2019 I was a member of both the absolute and female National High school Championship teams as well as the National U16 female champion and the Grade 10 female champion. I also placed third in the Carifta U16 Championship.

My most recent accomplishments in 2020 are being the National U18, U20 and National Women's Champion of Jamaica, as well as a member of the champion team of the National High school Chess Championship, winning our 7th consecutive title.

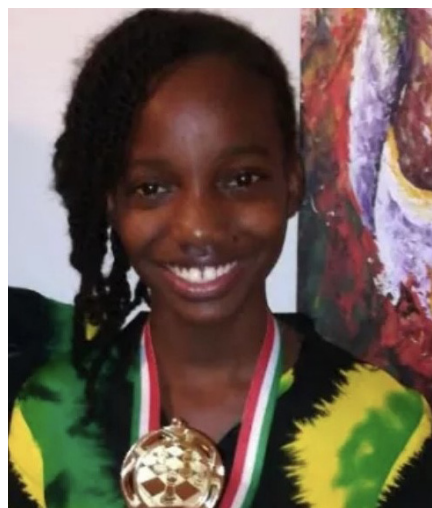
Undaunted by the outbreak of the corona virus and its implications on my education,

I sat 10 CSEC subjects namely, Additional Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, English Language, English Literature, Information Technology, Mathematics, Physics, Social Studies and Spanish, and attained Grade ones in all. These feats were as a result of my tenacity and the many hours dedicated to training and studying over the years, I was also able to improve by mentoring my younger sister Tsahai Clarke, who was the National female Under 8 champion in 2019, as well as the female grade champion in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2.

While at St Jago, I mainly focused on chess and academics but was also a member of the Drama Club and Robotics Club. I am presently enrolled in the sixth form programme at St. Jago High where I am a member of the prefect body. This academic year my goal is to further my exploits in chess with hopes to attain a Women's Fide Master Title by the end of this year as well as to perform academically well in my CAPE Examinations. I am also keen on being an active member of the school's Key Club so that I can help to execute community service projects and give back to the society and by extension making an invaluable contribution to nation building through service.

In closing, I would like to thank God for my talents as they unfold, my mom for being there every step of the journey with me, my coach NM Mikhail Solomon for making chess so easy to learn, all those hours he spends working with me as my game develops, the BOLCA and St Jago school communities and finally, the Jamaica Chess Federation for allowing me to represent while reaching for the stars in my Chess journey.

ADANI OVER THE YEARS IN CHESS



LEARN TO PLAY CHESS WORKSHOP

A JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION INITIATIVE



On Saturday December 19, 2020, The Jamaica Chess Federation hosted its first **Online Learn to Play Chess Workshop**. More than 350 participants registered to participate in five (5) age categories each at the beginner and intermediate level (7-10, 11-13, 14-17, 18-35 and 36 & over). 51% of registrants were female and though most registrations came from Kingston, St. Andrew and St. Catherine, all parishes were represented.

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Create awareness among the average Jamaican about the JCF and its initiatives and by extension boost popularity of the sport.
2. Add to the JCF database contact listing for persons across the island who have an interest in learning and playing the game.
3. Increase the number of chess players across the island and lay a foundation for future JCF online “learn to play chess” workshops.

By way of radio and social media platforms the JCF was able to reach a diverse group of Jamaicans ranging from kids to adults to include notable celebrities. Eight (8) coaches were contracted to teach on the day and by all indications, the three main objectives were met.

What next

The question of what next has been echoed by several participants. Currently, there are ten (10) active WhatsApp groups in which participants have been advised that it will be used to keep them posted on upcoming JCF activities. Participants have also been using it as a means to send chess challenges to other members. On a broader scale however, based on the success of this workshop I believe we now have a product that if maximized, the JCF and stakeholders can benefit tremendously. JCF Online Workshop Series 2021 Unlike a tournament which caters to persons who already know how to play and who are fearless enough to venture out, a workshop caters to

everyone who has an interest in learning or improving their game. As such, we can reach a much wider cross-section of persons. This makes the product more marketable and by extension more attractive to potential sponsors.

In 2021, the JCF will aim to host three (3) main online learn to play chess workshops (March/April, July/August, December) each catering to 500 participants, host three (3) smaller online workshops, one within each county (total 9 workshops) each catering to 50-100 participants. Create a twitch account and YouTube account and organize a live stream once per month in which local and international coaches can be invited to participate. Organize weekly/biweekly tournaments per quarter (like a ladder) in which workshop participants and members can participate. Organize a major online tournament at the end of the series in December with the aim of having 500-1000 participants.



SKYLER ELLIOTT | WECHES

FIDE WORLD CADETS AND YOUTH ONLINE RAPID CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2020

BEAUTIFUL ENDGAME PROPELS WCM RAEHANNA BROWN INTO THE FINALS, AMONG THE WORLD BEST CHESS JUNIORS



WCM RAEHANNA BROWN



CAC Chess championships, in Tegucigalpa,
Honduras, 2019

After 3 days of intense competition against the strongest players from 27 countries across the Western Hemisphere, Woman Candidate Master (WCM) Raehanna Brown emerged as the sole Jamaican representative from the 13 member Jamaican contingent to advance to the finals of the FIDE Online World Cadets and Youth Rapid Championships.

Competing in the Girls Under 16 section, Raehanna finished on 5 points in second place ahead of 4 other players who also ended their campaign on 5 points. Apart from her loss to Peruvian Woman FIDE Master (WFM) Heidi Nicole Garcia in the fifth round, WCM Brown had victories against much higher and titled chess players which saw her finishing well ahead of her starting rank of 14. Her final round victory was a bittersweet moment as she applied the initiative gained from her spatial advantage to beat Costa Rican Kristel Meliss Diaz in a beautiful endgame. This victory guaranteed the National Under 16 Age Group Girls Champion a spot in the finals of the championship.

In the finals WCM Raehanna Brown (1594) faced Cuban WFM Ineymig Hernandez (2348) where she went down 2-0. Game 1 saw Raehanna getting into opening difficulties, which her opponent continued to press from a positional advantage to a time advantage that Raehanna could not recover from. Her best chance of the game was to trade queens and go into an endgame, there was also a slight disadvantage with bishop versus knight with rooks on board.

-WCM Raehanna Brown receives an award from the Ministry of Sport representative Mr. Ali McNab at the JCF 50th Awards Ceremony in 2018

Game 2 saw a more confident Raehanna at the board in a must win game playing with the white pieces. A win would force a playoff and Raehanna came out with all guns blazing creating problems for her opponent straight out the opening. Playing her C4 English opening Raehanna pressed and eventually won a pawn in the opening but not without compensation in actively for her opponent. The Cuban master with the bishop pair and two active rooks set out make sure Raehanna would not enjoy the pawn she had worked for. It was shortly after, on move 21, Bd2 that Raehanna eventually succumb to the pressure of activity, mobility and initiative, Raehanna's lesser developed pieces were feeling the pressure which led to her second defeat and elimination from the finals.

Coaches WIM Deborah Richards-Porter, IM Jomo Pitterson and NM Ryan Blackwood all shared how proud they were about the performances of the team, with Richards-Porter adding, Raehanna's performance in making the finals of the FIDE world event speaks volumes to the strength and future of women's chess in Jamaica.

The Jamaican team was completed by WCM Adani Clare, Victoria Salazar, Victoria Powell, Jahiem Smart, Antonic Chung, Darren McKennis, John Stephenson, Amy Stephenson, Ronak Shergil, Kaia Gayle, Tajae Morgan, and Khaleel Johnson-Bartlett.



**THE CHESS COMMUNITY BID FAREWELL TO OUR FRIEND
CM, IO ROBERT "BOB" WHEELER
18.12.1959 - 30-6-2020.**



(left - right)

FIDE VP, QC Ian G. Wilkinson, IM Jomo Pitterson, CM Dr Kevin Brown, FM Shreyas Smith, NM Mikhail Solomon, photo of CM IA Robert "Bob" Wheeler, IO Terence Lindo, WIM Rachel Miller, JCF President, NM Peter Myers, FM Warren Elliott, CM Mark Holness, IM Shane Matthews.



IM Jomo Pitterson



(L-R) FM Shreyas Smith, NM Mark Holness,
NM Peter Myers



NM Mikhail Solomon

Rest in Peace

JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION

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  jamchess
  Jamaica Chess Federation
  www.jamchess.com

Email: jamchessfed.president@gmail.com | jamchessfed.secretary@gmail.com | jamchessfed.publications@gmail.com