

## FIDE MASTER SHREYAS SMITH JAMAICAN CHESS CHAMPION PAR EXCELLENCE



Every generation has its sports heroes, but there are rare, transcendental individuals whose names will be etched in the annals of sports history forever. Just to name a few: Athletics - Usain Bolt; Baseball - George Herman "Babe" Ruth; Basketball - Michael Jordan; Boxing - Muhammad Ali; Cricket - Brian Lara; Football - Edson Arantes do Nascimento ("Pele"); Golf - Eldrick Tont "Tiger" Woods; and Ice Hockey - Wayne Gretzky.

In international Chess history, those who have transcended to almost 'god-like' status include - Cuban great José Raúl Capablanca (the 3<sup>rd</sup> world champion); American legend Robert James "Bobby" Fischer (the 11<sup>th</sup> world champion); the Russian maestro Garry Kasparov (the 13<sup>th</sup> world champion); and the Norwegian phenom Magnus Carlsen, the reigning world champion.

### JAMAICAN CHESS GREATS

In the Jamaican context, there are a number of players who have indelibly etched their names in Jamaica's chess history. Among them are FIDE Master Warren Elliott (record 8-time national champion); Woman International Master Deborah Richards-Porter (the English-speaking Caribbean's first-ever Woman International Master and 10-time Jamaican Women's Champion); International Master Jomo Pitterson (Jamaica's first-ever International Master); International Master Shane "the Magician" Matthews (7-time national champion and Jamaica's second International Master); late International Arbiter FIDE Master John Powell (former Jamaica Chess Federation {JCF} President, master chess administrator and the only Jamaican male player to have won a medal at the Chess Olympiad - 1984 in Thessaloniki, Greece); National Master Sheldon Wong (former national champion who won a brilliancy prize at the 1976 World Junior Chess Championships in Groningen, The Netherlands); and the pioneering "triumvirate" - National Master Harold Chan, National Master Thomas Figueroa and Candidate Master Robert Wheeler - the first three persons to have achieved the National Master" title in Jamaica (1975).

### FM SHREYAS SMITH - DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

The latest player seeking to join the pantheon of Jamaican greats, is none other than the outstanding personality FIDE Master SHREYAS SMITH, the reigning Jamaica Chess champion, who has won Jamaica's premier chess crown on three occasions in the past four years.

Born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 1996, Shreyas' burning passion and insatiable appetite for Chess, buttressed by an incredible work ethic, has destined him for great things in the sport. His mother, Ms. Karen Silpatt, believes that the game was a perfect fit for him, having regard to his dedication and humility.

### THE EARLY DAYS

Having attended Duhaney Park Primary and Praise Tabernacle schools, Shreyas' thirst for Chess did not begin until his nascent days at Calabar High School, with encouragement from his friend Odean Wright. He developed rapidly under the guidance of his high school Chess coach, National Master Ryan Blackwood.

Shreyas had a voracious appetite for Chess knowledge and would consume the information supplied voraciously. He would walk long distances to training, including to coach Blackwood's house. He found Chess to be challenging, but also tremendous fun and highly satisfying.



## HISTORIC FIRST MAJOR TOURNAMENT VICTORY

After debuting at local tournaments, Shreyas' rapid improvement saw his "coming of age" in 2011 on his birthday, when, in an exciting game which featured the Sicilian Defence, he defeated the legendary Jamaican International Master Shane Matthews in the final round of the Frederick Cameron Open (at the Spanish Court Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica), to notch his first Open tournament victory with a perfect 4/4. This was all the more pleasurable as the event was named in honour of Frederick Cameron a former President of the JCF, who was also an alumnus of Calabar High School.

Although he has won several national championships, many Age-group national titles and numerous open tournaments, Shreyas identified the online/virtual staging of the 2021 Robert Wheeler Memorial Open as one of his most satisfying tournament victories. He won this signal event with a perfect 6/6 in honour of one of his mentors who had passed the previous year.

## LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

Shreyas acknowledges being inspired and motivated by the local masters and "Chess Olympians" to whom he refers as "the big four" - Warren Elliott, Shane Matthews, Jomo Pitterson and Duane Rowe. Another key source of inspiration for him was Robert Wheeler, with whom he shared the same

birthday - December 18! He is indebted to "Bob IA, CM Robert Wheeler" who gave him priceless advice and guidance which, among other things, helped him to rediscover his Chess form at a critical stage in his development as a player.

His game went to another level after he started working with former Jamaican National Champion FM Damion Davy, who recognized his enormous talent and capacity for hard work and broadened his repertoire to include 1.e4.

Two of his chief international influences are Norwegian GM Magnus Carlsen who has impressed Shreyas with his dominance and desire to win, and the American GM Sam Shankland who, to Shreyas, is the embodiment of self-belief, working in faith and an indefatigable spirit.

## THE WORLD CHESS OLYMPIAD - A WARRIOR IS BORN!

The redoubtable Shreyas got a taste of Chess at the highest level, when he witnessed the games of a Chess Olympiad for the first time - the 2010 edition in Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia. He was convinced that he had to become a Chess Olympian. This came closer to reality in 2014 when the JCF Executive Council decided to take him to Tromso, Norway as an "assistant coach" to develop his game.

He debuted as a player at the World Chess Olympiad in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2016, earning many accolades for his tenacity and tremendous fighting spirit.

His exciting victories included a blood-curdling win against a South African International Master, in which he avoided going over the precipice. He followed up with his sophomore appearance at the 2018 Olympiad at Batumi, Georgia where, again, he proved his undoubted class with some thrilling victories.

## CHESS SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

Shreyas' fantastic accomplishments on the Chess battlefield crowned him in further glory, when he was named the RJR "Chess Athlete Of the Year" for 2015, 2017 and 2018 at the annual, televised Awards, rubbing shoulders with the likes of the great athletes Usain Bolt, Veronica Campbell-Brown and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

## THE FUTURE

Regarding the future of Chess in the Caribbean, Shreyas would love to see the strength of Jamaican players develop and many more high calibre tournaments held in the English-speaking Caribbean. After debuting at the World Cup in 2021 and with a future that is extremely bright, he is perfectly placed to realize his dream of being the "best of the best".

As his former coach National Master Ryan Blackwood acknowledged, Shreyas is his most accomplished student and is "brilliant and resilient".

The sky is indeed the limit for Shreyas "The master slayer" Smith, already on his way to becoming a Jamaican legend.



# SHAW IS BEST PERFORMER AT FIDE WORLD YOUTH CADETS 2021



**WCM RAEHANNA BROWN**

The 2021 Online FIDE World Cadets Youth Chess Tournament was held via the Tornelo.com online Chess platform from August 1 to 20. Thirty-six (36) juniors took part from Jamaica in nine different age group categories, starting from U10 to U18 Open and female. Wolmerian Jaden Shaw who contested the U14 Open section, which included 214 juniors from across the world, emerged as the top performing Jamaican, after ending on 6.5 points from 10 games, which placed him in 37th position in the category, from a starting rank of 102.

Campion College's Darren McKennis, who contested the U16 Open section, emerged with the second best performance by a Jamaican after he ended with 5.5 points followed by Wolmerian John Stephenson on 5 points also in the U16 Open Section.



**JADEN SHAW**

Campion College's Woman Candidate Master (WCM) Raehanna Brown contested the U16 Female section where she emerged as the top Jamaican junior girl with 5.5 points from a possible 10 points, which placed her in 43rd position from a field of 110 participants. The second best performance by a Jamaican girl was from Immaculate Conception High School's Gabriella Watson who scored 5 points in the U14 section. The third best female performance came from Wolmerian Amy Stephenson who ended on 4 points in the U16 female section.

FIDE invited Federations to send 30 players, 3 per age group, after which Jamaica was awarded 6 wild cards entries. As Jamaica had no U-18 Girls, the U-8 players were invited to play in the U-10 section. The Jamaican team was selected from the Champions and the top finishers from the Online National Age-Group Chess Championships 2021.

## NO CATEGORY NAME POINTS FINISH

No	Category	Name	Points	Finish
1	Open U-14	Jaden Shaw	6.5	37
2	Girl U-16	Raehanna Brown	5.5	43
3	Open U-16	Darren McKennis	5.5	75
4	Girl U-14	Gabriella Watson	5.0	88
5	Open U-16	John Stephenson	5.0	89
6	Open U-10	Ronak Shergil	5.0	99
7	Open U-10	Tahir Tavares	5.0	110
8	Open U-14	Krish Khemlani	5.0	112
9	Open U-12	Corbin Harvey	4.5	114
10	Girl U-16	Amy Stephenson	4.0	78
11	Girl U-12	Zaina O'Connor	4.0	108
12	Open U-12	Najae Powell	4.0	139
13	Open U-12	Zahmir Smikle	4.0	144
14	Open U-14	Rohit Mahtani	4.0	156
15	Open U-10 (8)	Austin Xiang	4.0	174
16	Open U-18	Nathan Hare	3.5	110
17	Girl U-12	Kaia Gayle	3.5	125
18	Girl U-10 (8)	Emilia-Rose Leake	3.5	126

No	Category	Name	Points	Finish
19	Open U-10	Khaleel Johnson-Bartlett	3.5	183
20	Open U-10	Liam Logan	3.5	185
21	Girl U-16	Kaity Gayle	3.0	94
22	Open U-18	Omario Rowe	3.0	119
23	Girl U-14	Ruthann Collins	3.0	134
24	Girl U-10	Victoria Salazar	3.0	135
25	Girl U-10	Victoria Aung	3.0	137
26	Open U-16	Nathan Walsh	3.0	160
27	Open U-14	Luis Prata	3.0	185
28	Open U-14	Eric Min	3.0	187
29	Girl U-12	Niara McLeod	2.5	137
30	Girl U-10	Meghalaya Haughton-Pathaw	2.5	143
31	Girl U-14	Alyssa Stewart	2.5	144
32	Girl U-10 (8)	Dayna-Simone Swasey	2.0	148
33	Girl U-10 (8)	Esther Mullings	2.0	149
34	Girl U-14	Suraiya Matandara-Clarke	2.0	150
35	Open U-10 (8)	Raheem Gayle	2.0	217
36	Open U-18	Shamir Martin	1.0	131

# 2021 NATIONAL ONLINE AGE GROUP CHAMPIONS



**EMILIA-ROSE LEAKE**  
Under 8 National Absolute  
and Female Champion  
Creative Kids Learning Academy



**VICTORIA SALAZAR**  
Under 10  
National Female Champion  
Hillel Academy



**RONAK SHERGIL**  
Under 10  
National Absolute Champion  
Porter Centre for Knowledge



**ZAINA O'CONNOR**  
Under 12  
National Female Champion  
Meadowbrook High School



**NAJAE POWELL**  
Under 12  
National Absolute Champion  
Coral Springs Middle School



**GABRIELLA WATSON**  
Under 14  
National Female Champion  
Immaculate Conception High



**JADEN SHAW**  
Under 14  
National Absolute Champion  
Wolmers Boys High School



**WCM RAEHANNA BROWN**  
Under 16 National Absolute  
& Female Champion  
Campion College



**SHAMIR MARTIN**  
Under 18  
National Absolute Champion  
Glenmuir High School

# JAMAICA IS THE TOP PERFORMING ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN COUNTRY IN THE 2021 FIDE ONLINE CHESS OLYMPIAD



**WCM RAEHANNA BROWN**



**WIM RACHEL MILLER**



**FM JOSHUA CHRISTIE**

Jamaica finished third in division 3, pool E of the 2021 FIDE Online Chess Olympiad with 14 points, behind Venezuela on 18 points and El Salvador on 15 points.

Jamaica had 7 match wins against 2 losses and was the only team from the English-speaking Caribbean to advance to the Division 2 of the event. Jamaica's Candidate Master (CM) and Woman International Master (WIM) Rachel Miller, with 8/9 points and FIDE Master (FM) Joshua Christie with 7.5/9 points, were specially recognized by the organizers, as the overall top scorers in Division 3, Zone E play.

Jamaica faced greater challenges in Division 2, as they played much higher rated teams. Jamaica competed well in Division 2, finishing with 5 points, after defeating Guatemala and El Salvador by the same 5-1 scoreline, and tying with the strong Chilean team 3-3. Colombia went on to win Division 2 with 17 points, followed Cuba with 16 points and Paraguay with 12 points, the top 3 moved on to Division 1 play.

Division 2 consisted of 5 pools with 10 teams each, competing over 3 days, with the top three teams from each Pool qualifying for Division 1, from which only 8 teams will advance to the knockout phase from which the overall champion will be known.

Woman Candidate Master (WCM) Raehanna Brown played consistently well through-out the tournament finishing with 7/9 points in Division 3 and 6/9 points in Division 2

Team Captain, IM, Jomo Pitterson FT, had high praises for the team. He said, "The players played exceptionally well. Congratulations also to a very supportive Jamaica Chess Federation Executive Committee. Jamaica was the only English-speaking Caribbean nation to move forward to Division 2."

Team Manager, NA Terence Lindo NI, IO further stated, "Our team is made up of primarily players 21 years old and younger (9/12). The future of Jamaican chess is bright. "

The team's preparation for the Olympiad benefitted significantly from development funds provided by the World Chess Federation (FIDE), which was used to boost the coaching.

The FIDE Online Chess Olympiad began in 2020, in response to the pandemic and inability to have an in-person event. The 2021 event has been well- attended and has attracted participation from over 153 federations across the world and more than 1000 players.

## THE JAMAICA TEAM AND MANAGEMENT WERE MADE UP AS FOLLOWS:

Jamaica Team for 2021 FIDE Online Chess Olympiad	
Open	FM Shreyas Smith
Open	FM Joshua Christie
Women	WCM Adani Clarke
Women	CM, WIM Rachel Miller
Open Junior U20	FM Raheem Glaves
Female Junior U20	WCM Raehanna Brown
Reserve Open	IM Shane Matthews
Reserve Open	FM Ras Malaku Lorne
Reserve Women	Nickaylah Curwin
Reserve Women	Ashanti Blackwood
Reserve Junior U20	CM Akeen Brown
Reserve Female Junior U20	Alliyah Yankana
Captain	IM Jomo Pitterson, FT
Manager	NA Terence Lindo, NI IO

# ONLINE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL RAPID CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2021

St Jago High School "A" and Wolmer's Girls are the inaugural Champions of the newly created Online National High Schools Rapid Chess Championships.

The Championship, which was split into two sections and completed over three days starting on August 2-3 and concluding with the finals on August 5, was contested by 40 teams from 25 high schools across Jamaica, with over 150 participants.

After the first two days of intense competition and 11 preliminary rounds, the Open section saw St. Jago High School "A", Wolmers' Boys "A", Champion College "A" and Ardenne High School "A" qualifying for the four-team finals.

On the final day, the top 4 teams battled it out over the board at the Liberty Academy. St. Jago "A", the 11-time National Champions of the over-the-board format did not disappoint, with an unbeaten run in the finals, only drawing with Champion College "A", they claimed the title of the first ever Online event. Champion College "A" finished 2nd and Wolmers Boys "A" 3rd.

FM Joshua Christie of St Jago High school was named board 1 champion, Nathan Hare of Johnathan Grant High school, board 2 champion, McNamee Shelson of Glenmuir High school, board 3 champion and Shaheem Richards of St Catherine High school, board 4 champion.

St Jago High school "A" was the top rural school while Champion College "A" the top urban school.

In the High School Girls Championship, Wolmers' Girls led by Amy Stephenson finished atop the standings ahead of Immaculate Conception High School who took second place, Holy Childhood 3rd and Mount Alvernia 4th.

With the success of the Championships, the Jamaica Chess Federation has taken a decision to keep this format of the competition on its annual calendar. Online play will allow the participation of a number of rural schools that have had challenges with resources to travel to keep competing annually in the high school's competitions.

The event, which was sponsored by the Jamaica Chess Federation with the support of the World Chess Federation, FIDE, saw the removal of all registration and membership fees for the participating teams, as part of the effort to grow the sport, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic.



## ST JAGO "A" CHAMPIONS

JCF Sec Maxine Brown presents the winning trophy to St Jago coach, NM Mikhail Solomon,

Back row-L-R- FM Joshua Christie, WCM Adani Clarke, J-Loy Chin, Tajae Morgan



## CAMPION COLLEGE "A" – 2ND

JCF Sec Maxine Brown presents the 2nd place trophy to Champion College coach NM Ryan Balckwood.

Back Row – L-R Nathan Walsh, WCM Raehanna Brown, Darren McKennis, Rohit Mahtani



## WOLMERS BOY'S "A" 3RD

JCF Sec Maxine Brown presents the 3rd place trophy to Wolmers Boy's "A" coach FM Warren Elliott

Back Row- Jaden Shaw, Kamarie Stephens, John Stephenson, Orion Isaacs

## JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION

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