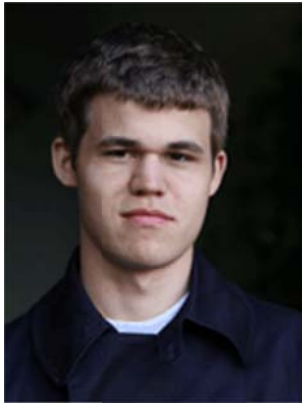




ACCENTUS- Grandmaster Tournament

Magnus Carlsen.....	2
Number 1, that's all.....	2
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.....	4
The other 1990 born Western European young talent.....	4
Alexei Shirov.....	5
The successor of the "Magician from Riga"	5
Fabiano Caruana	7
A citizen of the world with a classical education	7
Alexander Morozevich	8
At the crossroads	8
Yannick Pelletier.....	9
The return of the prodigal son	9



Magnus Carlsen

Norway, 20 yo

Elo: 2821

World ranking: 1

National ranking: 1

Best ever world ranking: 1 (first time in January 2010)

Date and place of birth: 30.11.1990 in Toensberg

Lives in: Haslum

Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 2007

Other times in Biel: 2005 (6th), 2006 (2nd), 2008 (3rd)

Number 1, that's all



After Capablanca, Euwe and Fischer, the Occident was looking for a worthy representative able to stand up to the powerful Soviet and post-Soviet armada. Vladimir Kramnik, who ended the reign of the Garry Kasparov generation, subsequently lost the world title against the Indian Viswanathan Anand. With the latter, the sceptre returned to his homeland but the Europe of old has had no say since the short reign of Max Euwe, the Dutch world champion from 1935 to 1937. The one who has been called up to carry the hopes of an entire continent was born in 1990 in

Norway.

After a meteoric rise, Magnus was quickly dubbed the "Wonderboy" by his first serious trainer Simen Agdestein. Grandmaster at the age of 13, he has seen neither landing nor stagnation in his ascent to the world number one spot which he reached at 19. Having won almost every tournament, such as Wijk aan Zee, the Melody Amber in Monaco, the Pearl Spring in Beijing, the London closed tournament or the Biel Festival, Magnus Carlsen can have no goal but becoming world champion.

He did not wish to enter the current cycle because he disagrees with the fact that the reigning world champion has the right to wait for his challenger in the final, but Magnus will be able to try his luck again in the next cycle. In the meantime, in addition to a promising modeling career for the G-Star company, which made him famous worldwide, Carlsen plays tournaments he fancies to keep in touch with competition. Biel was fortunate to receive him after having placed faith in him in 2005 (he was 14), giving him the chance to take on stronger players. Magnus won in 2007 and has remained faithful to the organisers since then.

This edition of the Festival will be an interesting test to see where his game stands. Indeed, having warmed up with a unique progression in the history of chess, the young Norwegian started the second half of 2010 with some opening licences that reminded him that he really was stronger than all the other players, but that he should at least pay respect to Caissa, the goddess of chess. He soon strengthened his game and improved his openings, but some reminiscences of a more flamboyant style remain here and there.

Garry Kasparov, who was Carlsen's coach for a short time, would thus complain at the London tournament in 2010 – a tournament he just won ahead of Anand and Kramnik (the last two world champions) – that his ex-protégé wasn't working enough. Having played only in Wijk aan Zee, at the Melody Amber and in Bazna in



2011, Carlsen has had ample time to meet the wishes of his illustrious adviser. In this respect, his opening choices and his play in Biel will be a very exciting indication of whether he will be the clear favourite for the next cycle or if he'll merely be another contender.

A first answer to this question has certainly been given in Bazna, in June, where the young Norwegian Mozart (the nickname he's always had) played head and shoulders above all his opponents to sit again on top of the July Elo rating list. In this regard, he is the first active world number one player to take part in the Biel Festival. If he keeps it going, perhaps he'll be able to show up one day in Biel as a world champion.

Alexandre Vuilleumier
(Translation : Nils Delmonico)



Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

France, 20 yo

Elo: 2722

World ranking: 22

National ranking: 1

Best ever world ranking: 18 (January 2010)

Date and place of birth: 21.10.1990 in Nogent-sur-Marne

Lives in: Nogent-sur-Marne

Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 2009

Other times in Biel: 2010 (3rd after tie-break)

The other 1990 born Western European young talent



The vagaries of life make certain birth years packed with talents, whereas others are devoid of any enchantment. Today it is possible to argue that 1990 will go down as the strongest in history – until the next, of course. Along with Carlsen, Karjakin and Nepomniachtchi, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave appears to be the proud representative of an epoch-making series of childbirths. All these players have in fact passed the 2700 mark, won titles and broken records.

While the first two aforementioned players are more gifted – as their rise was faster – the last two, as a result, have gone through a more human, maybe more solid, evolution. They are also very familiar with the atmosphere of open tournaments, where you have to kill or be killed, while their two mates found themselves in the comfort of closed tournaments very quickly. In other words, the battles that are taking shape between these four players may well hit the chess headlines for a long time.

Super talented like Carlsen, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave beats all records of precocity in France, where he became a GM at 14. Winner of the no longer existing but much liked Lausanne Young Masters in 2006 and French Champion in 2007, he confirmed these outstanding results at the strong closed tournament of Paks in 2008 and won the 2009 Grandmaster Tournament in Biel at his first participation, and then became Junior World Champion a few months later. Since then, his steady work backed by a private sponsor has enabled him to consolidate his game and pull off an excellent Wijk aan Zee this year.

After a long-drawn-out job with Nikolai Spiridonov and then Arnaud Hauchard, Maxime Vachier Lagrave will certainly bring about changes in his play over the coming months. As a prime example of what Kasparov calls “the Chessbase generation”, i.e that wave of players who learnt the game with a computer and followed the calculations of Fritz, Rybka or Houdini, the best engines through the years, Maxime has become an outstanding tactician who calculates certainly as well as his other friends born in 1990.

Having begun new collaborations with experienced trainers, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave will surely be able to expand his horizons further enough to soon aim for the world's Top 10. The French team championship, held in May 2011, might have been the tournament of adaptation to this new style. Biel could bring definite recognition. A.V. (N.D.)



Alexei Shirov

Spain, 39 yo

Elo: 2714

World ranking: 29

National ranking: 2

Best ever world ranking: 3 (January 1993)

Date and place of birth: 4.7.1972 in Riga (Latvia)

Lives in: Tarragona (Spain) and Riga (Latvia)

Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 1991

Other times in Biel: 1992 (7th), 1993 (13th out of 73 players, Interzonal Tournament), 1995 (2nd)

The successor of the "Magician from Riga"



The retirement in 2005 from professional chess of the strongest player of all time to date, Garry Kasparov, has revived the age-old debate about nature/culture that has constituted our Western civilisation since Homer. "The Ogre of Baku" had indeed the feeling that at 40 he had reached his limit and did not feel like doing three hours of sport a day to stay at the top, in the sense that he wasn't planning to "hang on to it" or just have a token role like Armstrong, Hingis or Schumacher. As Alexander the Great or James Dean, he was wise enough to retire at the height of his fame.

However, the problem about this biological vision of performance is that since then, Anand, Ivanchuk and Gelfand have all reached their chess peak once in their forties. Would this mean that experience in this endurance sport, as in the marathon or cycling, is more important than the intellectual fitness and that culture would therefore overcome nature? The debate rages on every time a tournament involves experienced players with

younger ones.

As the eldest player in this tournament, Alexei Shirov carries in himself the defence of culture. At almost 40, he seems to have found his balance and his best results came recently. After a meteoric rise up to world No. 3 in 1993, thanks to a win in Biel in 1991 in particular, the author of the chess best-seller *Fire on Board* has stabilised his presence in the world elite with ups and downs. His best results took him a few years: a win against Kramnik in the final of the Candidates Tournament for the World Championship in 1998 and above all wins at the MTEL Masters 2009 in Sofia ahead of Carlsen, Ivanchuk and Topalov and in Shanghai in 2010 ahead of Kramnik and Aronian.

World Championship finalist in 2000, Shirov never managed to reach his goal, but the above examples allow us to be optimistic about the future. As a player universally admired for his sacrificial dispositions that literally compel him to set the board on fire on every occasion, the Latvian-born Spaniard manages to create from nothing. In his hands, the driest positions become magical.

From a technical point of view, if he can always surprise the audience, it's partly because he follows by the book what could be called the "Shirov rule," a rule that he explains wonderfully in his DVDs for Chessbase: "If



my opponent attacks my pawns, I must attack his." In other words, defending is not in Shirov's vocabulary. If spectators want to entertain themselves during the games, they can force themselves to find a counter-attack when one of Shirov's opponents is threatening something. It is therefore very likely that the audience will sometimes be able to predict the moves of the successor of the "Magician from Riga," the missed world champion and Alexei Shirov's spiritual father: Mikhail Tal.

A.V.
(N.D.)



Fabiano Caruana

Italy, 18 yo

Elo: 2711

World ranking: 32

Junior World ranking: 2

National ranking: 1

Best ever world ranking: 25 (January 2011)

Date and place of birth: 30.07.1992 in Miami (USA)

Lives in: Lugano (Switzerland)

Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 2010

Other times in Biel: 2009 (6th)

A citizen of the world with a classical education



It was indeed possible to talk about a "Chessbase generation" – the Kasparovian terminology – as far as Carlsen and Vachier-Lagrave are concerned, but the 21st century evolves so quickly that Fabiano Caruana, born two years later, is already considered part of a next school year. He followed the typical programme with a trainer and discovered the treasures of the 64 squares thanks to the influence of the computer and the benefits of an early introduction to chess.

In other words, Caruana combines the Soviet training – having worked with renowned coaches such as Elizbar Ubilava, Anand's former second and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov's current coach, or Alexander Chernin – and the work and immersion in the computer's calculation. Grandmaster at 14, Caruana is a talent that can be compared to his two aforementioned opponents, except that he started working right off with world-class coaches. On paper, the young Italian-American living in Switzerland is definitely fearsome.

As a matter of fact, his positional style combined with an excellent tactical vision makes him a very universal player who can adjust to any situation. After winning the C group tournament in Wijk aan Zee and the Italian championship on numerous occasions, Caruana was brought to the public eye thanks to his participation in the A tournament in Wijk aan Zee after his victory in the B group in 2009. The high point of his career was undoubtedly his victory at the Biel Festival last summer, a title he intends to keep, this time against even more seasoned opponents.

A child prodigy as Carlsen and Vachier-Lagrave, Caruana has had a more adventurous life, as he has lived alternately in the United States, Spain, Budapest and then Lugano. The link between the new and the old world undoubtedly came from the young player's talent and his very early decision to turn professional, a step that someone like Vachier-Lagrave took only recently. With his family's support, Fabiano has shown very stable progress, which is currently not likely to stop. If he can manage to keep his title in Biel, Caruana will have dealt a remarkable blow on the world chess stage and will clearly establish himself as a future great.

A.V.
(N.D.)



Alexander Morozevich

Russia, 34 yo

Elo: 2694

World ranking: 48

National ranking: 12

Best ever world ranking: 2 (July and October 2008)

Date and place of birth: 18.7.1977 in Moscow

Lives in: Moscow

Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 2003, 2004, 2006

Other times in Biel: 2009 (2nd)

At the crossroads



With Alexei Shirov and Magnus Carlsen, Alexander Morozevich is clearly the most popular player in the world of the 64 squares. Just like his sidekick from Latvia, he never hesitates to set the board on fire and enter mind-boggling lines where words and variations are no longer any use to understand the position, and instead give way to instinct and imagination. And just like his Norwegian colleague, "Moro" happily uses marginal openings where talent and understanding will always prevail.

However, while Shirov always chooses complications but has a solid repertoire, and while Carlsen often switches openings but always chooses the objectively best move according to his judgement – or the one most likely to annoy his opponents –, Morozevich follows both these pacemakers in inventiveness, which causes him to show a more chaotic career than Mikhail Tal's heir or our Norwegian Mozart. Having a personal interpretation of the chess magics is definitely praiseworthy, but the sacrifice to objectivity that Carlsen and Shirov are making looks necessary.

Having long understood all that, Morozevich has been at an important crossroads in his career for some time. With a fluctuating Elo rating, he doesn't receive as many invitations when he is at a low ebb. Meanwhile, he perfectly realises that it's going to be all the more difficult to become world champion, which his pure talent may legitimately allow him to hope for. The Muscovite is now wondering about his career.

Morozevich is in a perfect line-up this summer and that could well give his career a boost. Indeed, there have been so many beautiful moments in Biel where the great Russian has already won three times, an absolute record that he shares with Anatoly Karpov! A favourable, familiar environment is often the key to success: "Back to basics!" as the great champions sometimes say. As a double Russian champion, winner at the Monaco Melody Amber, Pamplona or Bosna Sarajevo, all of that heavily spiced up with his Biel victories, with his highest Elo at 2788 and his former second place in the world rankings, Morozevich might as well rise back from the ashes as a Phoenix!

A.V.
(N.D.)



Yannick Pelletier

Switzerland, 34 yo

Elo: 2590

National ranking: 2

Best ever world ranking: 69 (January 2003)

Date and place of birth: 22.9.1976 in Biel

Lives in: Montpellier (France)

Best results in Biel GMT: 3rd in 2005 and 2007

Other times in Biel GMT: 1997 (6th), 1998 (5th), 1999 (5th), 2001 (4th), 2002 (5th), 2003 (4th), 2004 (4th), 2006 (5th), 2008 (6th)

The return of the prodigal son



Yannick Pelletier has been a French resident for a few years, but he remains the standard-bearer of Swiss chess. His return to the fold for the 2011 Festival attracts the attention of many of his fans from both the French and German parts, who are looking forward to seeing him cross swords again with some of the world's best players.

Yannick is more than a regular visitor of the Biel Festival. While it saw him brought to light by propelling him as a guest star of this world famous closed tournament, he has been able to return the favour by entertaining the crowd and fully justifying his invitations. His victory a few years ago against Magnus Carlsen, who had already become a "monster", is still remembered as perhaps the greatest achievement by a Swiss player in the world of the 64 squares. This year's double match against who has become the world's number one since then will undoubtedly lend a special flavour to our leader.

A solid player, theoretically well prepared and very popular in the chess world where he shines as a notorious polyglot, Yannick has quite naturally become French GM Etienne Bacrot's second over the recent years. This painstaking work seems to be bearing fruit at international level. Radoslaw Wojtaszek, Ivan Cheparinov and Peter Heine Nielsen are excellent examples of players who have reached the 2700 Elo points mark after collaborating with players competing for the title of world champion. This year, Vladimir Potkin, Ian Nepomniachtchi's second (the Russian Carlsen), has even been crowned European champion! Without doubt, Yannick will know how to follow these prestigious examples and draw inspiration from his work with Etienne Bacrot to bring his opponents out in a cold sweat in this tournament.

A multiple Swiss champion, as was demonstrated in the team championships with the Biel Chess Society, Yannick will have to take up a difficult challenge as he is a good hundred Elo points lower than his opponents. However, his brilliant past performances at the Festival and his famous solidity allow him to hope for more than the mere role of the local representative which he perhaps took on at the beginning. His two third places in similar situations in the past may pave the way for the wildest dreams ...

A.V.
(N.D.)