



## Players

### Maxime Vachier-Lagrave



**France, 19 yo**

**Elo: 2723**

**World ranking: 22**

**Junior World ranking: 3**

**National ranking: 1**

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

**Lives in: Nogent-sur-Marne**

*Winner of the Biel Grandmaster Tournament 2009*

*Junior World champion 2009*

#### Title holder and Junior World Champion

He caused a stir one year ago for his first participation in the Biel Chess Festival. Undefeated after ten games, he won the Grandmaster Tournament at the age of 18, ahead of two former world number 2 (Morozevich and Ivanchuk), and enjoyed the most brilliant achievement of his young career in a closed tournament. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave preserved his faultless performance in Switzerland: he had already won the 2006 Lausanne Young Masters, when it was still the reference tournament for the world's best juniors.

His gold medal in Biel made a strong impression. His 8th round victory with the black pieces over Alexander Morozevich, selected as the best game of the Festival and highly praised in the whole chess world, was particularly striking. So much so that the Russian magazine ChessPro, referring to the opinion of 44 experts, gave this game the 5th rank of the best games of the year 2009.

Maxime didn't leave at that. In November 2009 he was crowned Junior World Champion in Puerto Madryn, Argentina – the kind of heraldic sign of a career at the top of the world hierarchy. The young Parisian, born the same year as Magnus Carlsen, world no.1, and Sergey Karjakin, is making no secret of it: he is aiming for a place in the top 10.

He wants to give himself the means to achieve it. Now that he's got his mathematics degree, the French no.1 is planning to start a full-time professional career. He has just received the support of a real estate consulting company, which will allow him to consolidate his team and work on his passion in the best possible conditions.

The son of a computer engineer (father) and a teacher (mother), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave has been pushing wood since he was 5, when he learnt to read on his own and started school one year in advance. His father taught him the chess fundamentals and then signed him up in a club. The budding genius got hooked and immediately scored victories in the U-8, U-14 and U-16 World Champion runner-up in 2003 and 2005 respectively. Maxime marched his pawns forward. He was to become the 8th youngest Grandmaster in history at the age of 14 years and 4 months.

In the summer of 2007, as precocious as ever, he wins the French Championships. He is 16 years old and 10 months, which makes him the 2nd youngest French Champion in history.





## Evgeny Tomashevsky



**Russia, 23 yo**

**Elo: 2708**

**World ranking: 33**

**Junior World ranking: --**

**National ranking: 9**

**Date and place of birth: 01.07.1987 in Saratov**

**Lives in: Saratov**

*European Champion 2009*

*Team World Champion (Russia)2010*

### The Professor

This Grandmaster from Saratov has just celebrated his 23rd birthday. He will be the oldest participant of the Biel Tournament and one of the candidates for first place. Now no. 33 in the world rankings, Evgeny Tomashevsky reached the 27th place in last autumn's FIDE list.

Evgeny Tomashevsky distinguished himself in his youth as a representative of the Russian hotbed of budding talents, winning many medals in his own country, in Europe and elsewhere. Russian Champion and U-10 EU Championships bronze medallist in 1997 are among his outstanding achievements. He then won the U-18 Russian Championship in 2001 at the young age of 13, and finished second at the U-18 World Junior Championship.

He pulled off a master stroke in March 2009 when he became the youngest European individual Champion in Budva, Montenegro, where after 11 games he finished even with 10 other first class players. Nerves of steel helped Evgeny force the outcome in the tie-breaks to bring the crown home – a beautiful success that made him a member of the national team. He became European team vice-champion in 2009 with Russia and did even better in January 2010 when he won the World team championship in Turkey.

His team mates have nicknamed him 'The Professor' because of his appearance and glasses, his father's title (a professor-engineer), and his keen interest in philosophy. Beside chess, Evgeny Tomashevsky is an Economic and Social Science student at the University of Saratov.



An International Master at 14, a Grandmaster at 18, the Russian player often wins with White (as happened for example at the 2007 Aeroflot Open in Moscow where he finished second), though he shows unflinching solidity with Black. To be followed closely in his first tournament in Switzerland.



## Fabiano Caruana



**Italy, 17 yo**

**Elo:** 2697

**World ranking:** 39

**Junior World ranking:** 5

**National ranking:** 1

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

**Lives in:** Lugano (Switzerland)

*National Italy Champion 2007 and 2008*

*Youngest Italian and American Grandmaster of all time*

### An international champion's Swiss touch

A world citizen, Fabiano Caruana, 17, will be the Grandmaster representing Switzerland at the Palais des Congrès. He and his family settled down in Lugano at the beginning of the year and he's been defending SG Winterthur's colours for a few months now in the Swiss Team Championship.

Born in Florida, brought up in New York, this is one more step by this talented globe-trotter who plays for Italy in the official competitions and obtained his GM norms in Budapest, his prior home before coming to Ticino, Switzerland. His manager is his father and he trains with several world famous Grandmasters who should lead one of the youngest prodigies to join the upper crust. He already ranks among the 50 best players.

Fabiano Caruana became a Grandmaster at the age of fourteen, 11 months and 20 days – a precocity record in the history of the United States and Italy, his two home countries. In 2003 he was the youngest American to beat a Grandmaster (Aleksander Witkiewicz), at only 10.

The Caruana family crossed the Atlantic when Fabiano was 12. They settled down in Spain, then in Budapest and currently reside in Lugano. Fabiano decided to defend the Italian banner when he was 13. His long list of achievements already include two Italian champion titles (2007, 2008) and the participation in many major tournaments.

Son to an American father and Italian mother, Fabiano played his very first games in a Brooklyn school, only a few blocks away from ex-World-Champion Bobby Fisher's house. His first famous trainers have been Bruce Pandolfini (from whom the film *Searching Bobby Fischer* drew its inspiration), Miron Sher and then Alexander Cherninn and Boris Avrukh.

Fabiano is in good shape. A prominent figure in 64, his club in the Russian league, he also won the Italian championship in May 2010 with Padova and then the Mitropa Cup (where young talents gather from 10 /West-European countries. As a result, his 2697 Elo points in the July list make it his best personal ranking yet.





## Wesley So



**Philippines, 16 yo**

**Elo:** 2674

**World ranking:** 60

**Junior World ranking:** 7

**National ranking:** 1

**Date and place of birth:** 09.10.1993 in Manille

**Lives in:** Bacoor Cavite

**His website:** <http://www.gmwesleyso.com>

*World Number 1 U18*

*Youngest player in the World Top-60*

### A self-made champion

At 16, Wesley So is already ranked world number 60 and bearing the honorific title of 'youngest Grandmaster in the Top 60' – an almost logical step as he had been the U-16 world number 1 before becoming the U-18 no.1.

Wesley So represents the Philippines, a country whose chess history is linked to former FIDE President Florencio Campomanes or to some eventful dates like the well-known 1978 World Championship match between Karpov and Kortchnoi.

Wesley So participated in the 2006 Chess Olympiads with the Philippines already at 12 years of age. He was also crowned U-16 team World Champion. A Master at 12 and a Grandmaster two years later, the champion from Manila managed a powerful rise among the best players of his generation. He has already won a total of twelve gold medals in his young career.

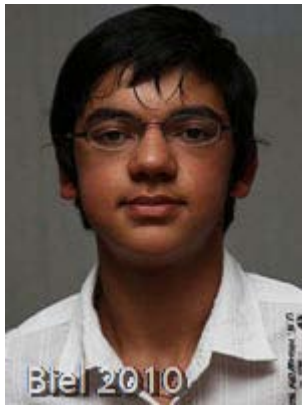
His most remarkable feat dates back to the 2009 World Cup, which was held in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, and which brought together 128 of the best chess brains. The 16-year-old Filipino gave his own history a boost after hoisting himself up to the 1/8th final. After Azeri Gadir Guseinov's (2625), he took Ukrainian Vassily Ivanchuk's scalp (2739, ex-vice World Champion) and then American Gata Kamsky's (2695), winner of the 2007 World Cup. Wesley So left the tournament only in the tie-breaks of the 4th round at the hands of Russian Vladimir Malakhov, and did so honourably.

Wesley So is a student at the Saint Francis of Assisi College of Bacoor Cavite, located in the south of the capital. Both his parents are accountants. His passion for chess began at 6; he started his first junior tournaments three years later, where his aggressive style and positional skills rapidly caught the country's best players' attention. Wesley cannot count on any worthy financial support apart from a limited help from his Federation, which makes his rise all the more impressive. A self-made champion.





## Anish Giri



**Netherlands, 16 yo**

**Elo:** 2672

**World ranking:** 62

**Junior World ranking:** 8

**National ranking:** 2

**Date and place of birth:** 28.06.1994 in Petersburg (Russia)

**Lives in:** Delft (Netherlands)

*National Dutch Champion 2009*

*Youngest Dutch and Russian Grandmaster of all time*

*Youngest player in the World Top-100*

### The new prodigy among the prodigies

His father is a researcher in hydrology from Nepal, his mother is from Russia. He started out with tournaments in Japan and speaks Japanese. A Russian citizen, he came to the Netherlands in 2008. Since then, he defends their colours and was crowned youngest champion in the history of the country in 2009 after he became the youngest Dutch and Russian Grandmaster. He is currently studying in Delft, Maths and Physics being his favourite subjects.

Such is 16-year-old Anish Giri's remarkable career, a prodigy among the prodigies and the youngest participant of the Biel Grandmasters tournament. According to many experts, his rise is similar to Carlsen's, the current World no.1 (who played four times in the Festival and won it in 2007). His most recent achievements include a victory at the Wijk-aan-Zee B-tournament (cat. XVI) in January 2010.

Born in 1994, Anish Giri is the youngest wizard of the junior world Top 20 – and in the Top 100 as well, a few months ahead of Wesley So. Already a world junior no.8, he has just reached the 62nd place in the professional rankings and is still waiting for the best as his last performances have confirmed his unrelenting rise towards the top. The insatiable adopted Dutchman (110 classical games in 2009) is now a very popular Grandmaster in the most prestigious events.

He was the youngest active Grandmaster in the world for a few months. Only three geniuses are now younger: Richard Rapport of Hungary (1996), Jorge Cori of Peru (1995) and Ray Robson of America (1994), but none of them plays in the same field as Giri, at least 110 Elo points higher than them.

Anish Giri is chess universality personified. As a polyglot he perfectly masters Russian, English, Dutch and has good knowledge of Japanese, Nepalese and German. Born in Petersburg, he spent the first seven years of his life in Russia before moving to Osaka, Japan, with his parents and two sisters. They then came back to his hometown in 2007 on account of his father's professional obligations. A few months later, in 2008, they moved to the Netherlands, whose chess Federation he subsequently joined.

Anish Giri works now with GM Vladimir Chuchelov, a professional coach of the Dutch Federation who will go with him to Biel. This association is bearing fruit: the July 2010 FIDE list indicates 2672 Elo points, his personal record and most likely step toward the 2700 mark. Anish Giri has gained more than 300 points in three years and he swiped 30 points in only two months (May and June 2010) thanks to excellent results in the French and Dutch team championships. He has just won the the Malmö tournament. And there's more to come...





## Dmitry Andreikin



**Russia, 20 yo**

**Elo:** 2650

**World ranking:** 86

**Junior World ranking:** 9

**National ranking:** 2

**Date and place of birth:** 05.02.1990 in Ryazan

**Lives in:** Ryazan

*Junior Russian Champion 2009 and 2010*

### Russian junior champion

It's not easy to make one's name when one comes from the Russian budding talents hotbed. Dmitry Andreikin may not be the best-known player abroad, but his record of achievements commands respect. Current junior world no.9, U-10 World Champion (Spain 1999), the winner of several opens, he clinched the much coveted Junior Russian Champion title in quick succession in 2009 and 2010.

He will start his first tournament in Switzerland as Junior Russian Champion, where he will be opposed to various rivals he has already faced repeatedly in international junior events – starting with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. During the 2009 Junior World Championship, Dmitry Andreikin had been among the leading players for a long time, aiming at a medal. But the French player stood against him in the 13th round, got the upper hand and took over the world crown at the last minute.

Born in Ryazan, Russia, 200 km south of Moscow, Dmitry plays the Russian team league with Economist Saratov. One of his team-mates is none other than Evgeny Tomashevsky, also here in Biel. In the autumn of 2009, Saratov achieved a brilliant performance in Macedonia by winning the European Club Cup ahead of 54 teams from 29 different countries.





## Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son



**Vietnam, 20 yo**

**Elo: 2617**

**Junior World ranking: 14**

**National ranking: 2**

**Date and place of birth: 23.02.1990 in Kien Giang**

**Lives in: Kien Giang**

*World Champion Under 10 (in 2000)*

### The fire-breathing Dragon from Vietnam

No Vietnamese player had ever set foot in Biel in the Festival's 42 years of history. It's all done now thanks to the coming of one of the international revelations. Surname: Nguyen. Middle name: Ngoc Truong. Name: Son, as his close relatives and friends usually call him.

Is the chess world in the year of the Dragon, one of these symbolic creatures from the Vietnamese mythology? Its two finest jewels are knocking on the greats' door. The first sign of this dates back to the 2008 Olympiads when Vietnam caused a stir and reached the 9th place. Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son was playing on board 1; Le Quang Liem on board 2.

The second breakthrough occurred in February 2010 at the Moscow Aeroflot Open, the biggest open in the circuit. Le Quang Liem (19) outplayed much better ranked players without any warning and won the Open. Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son (20), defeated in the last round by – guess who –, Le Quang Liem, did almost as well and hoisted himself to the 3rd final place (5th by tie-break).

Vietnam is showing that they can produce first class champions in a country where, as in so many Asian nations (including China), xiangqi is still putting the 'occidental' version of the game of chess in the shade. Playing the game of kings in Vietnam at the highest level is difficult due to the lack of sponsors and official tournaments. Truong Son has often had to travel in order to make progress.

He has nonetheless been rewarded and even nominated '2002 2nd Vietnamese sportsman' after winning gold at the U-10 Asian Championships. His most glorious title remains the U-10 World Championships, one year after Russian Dmitry Andreikin, whom he will face again in Biel.

Truong Son was born in the southern province of Kien Giang, next to the Mekong Delta. Both his parents are teachers and chess players; they started sharing their passion with their son when he was 4. Willing to improve, he went to Hungary when he was 13, from 2003 to 2005; his trainer was Hoang Minh Chuong, the father of a Vietnamese Grandmaster. The method bore fruit: he became a GM at barely 14 years of age. In Biel, Truong Son will be able to count on Hoang Minh Chuong's support...





## David Howell



**England, 19 yo**  
**Elo: 2616**  
**Junior World ranking: 15**  
**National ranking: 4**

**Date and place of birth:** 14.11.1990 in Eastbourne  
**Lives in:** Seaford

**His website:** <http://www.davidhowellchess.com>  
*Youngest British Grandmaster of all time*  
*British Champion 2009*

### The youngest British champion of all time

In the United Kingdom, Michael Adams's and Nigel Short's successors are not falling over each other to take over at the highest level, with the exception of David Howell, the youngest British Grandmaster in history (at 16 years and 1 month) and, since last year, the youngest UK Champion (at 18) after outplaying all his opponents. The national champion in rapid games as well has been crowned 'English sportsman of the year' four times. In 2008 he was also very close to the Junior World Champion title: still in the lead before the last round, the Brit cracked right at the finishing line in the decisive match against the future Champion.

David Howell played his first Grandmaster super-tournament (cat. XVIII) last December, in London, where he brilliantly passed his exam with a 3rd place, only behind Magnus Carlsen (World no.1) and ex-World Champion Vladimir Kramnik. In a few months' time he will be trying hard to do as well as in London.

His full name is David Wei Liang Howell because of his mother's Singaporean origins. Wei means big in Mandarin and Liang child. He doesn't fully master this Chinese language but he speaks fluent French and German (Biel's two official languages!).

He came into the world in Eastbourne in November 1990 and settled in with his family in Seaford, East Sussex. The chess pieces started to attract him when he was 5; he quickly learnt to defeat his father at the chessboard and was spotted by the Sussex Junior Chess Association where he received high quality teaching. David Howell didn't fail: he became the U-8, 9 and 10 British Chess Champion.

His reputation went across the Channel in March 2002 thanks to an unprecedented world record. At 11 years of age, in a blitz demonstration, he held Vladimir Kramnik to a draw, becoming the youngest wonderboy in the world to achieve such a result against a reigning world champion.







## Parimarjan Negi



**India, 17 yo**

**Elo: 2615**

**Junior World ranking: 17**

**National ranking: 6**

**Date and place of birth: 09.02.1993 in New Delhi**

**Lives in: New Delhi**

*Second Youngest Grandmaster of all time*

### The second-youngest Grandmaster of all time

In this increasingly younger world chess elite, Parimarjan Negi (17) may claim an almost absolute precocity. He obtained his third and last norm in 2006, at 13 years, 3 months and 22 days, becoming the second-youngest Grandmaster in chess history. Parimarjan Negi is only five days younger than Magnus Carlsen, but is beaten by Ukrainian Sergey Karjakin (titled at 12 years and 7 months).

On an official FIDE list for the first time in 2002 (2061 Elo points), the young Indian won the U-10 Asian Championships. He would need only four years to become a GM. In the country of World Champion Viswanathan Anand, Parimarjan Negi was not only the youngest Indian Grandmaster, but also the youngest International Master (at 12) – the youngest player to be crowned at the Junior World Championships and to hit 2600 Elo points at the age of 15 years.

Over these last two years, the big talent from New Dehli (vice-Junior World Champion in 2008) has won five opens: Kaupthing (Luxemburg), Philadelphia and the World Open (USA) in 2008; the Politiken Cup (Copenhagen) and the Malaysian Open in 2009, which pushed him up to his provisory peak of 2636 Elo points. Less efficient these last weeks and still waiting for a major international performance, Parimarjan Negi went down to 2615. Only to bounce back? He will not be in unknown territory in Biel as he has played the Master tournament many times, the last one being in 2007.

A proud representative of India, where chess is considered one of the main sports, Parimarjan Negi is receiving many awards that the Indian media always mention. Of course he hasn't been named, like Viswanathan Anand, sportsman of the year, but he has won many trophies, such as Dehli's best sportsman (2007), and has enjoyed the support of many important airlines and oil, gas or steel companies.





## Maxim Rodshtein



**Israel, 21 yo**

**Elo:** 2609

**Junior World ranking:** --

**National ranking:** 7

**Date and place of birth:** 19.01.1989 in Petersburg

**Lives in:** Holon

*World Champion U 16 (in 2004)*

*Silver medalist at Olympiads 2008 with Israel*

### The new talent from Israel

Just like almost all of the chess elite Grandmasters, Maxim Rodshtein comes from the ex-Soviet Union. At 21 years he embodies the biggest and youngest hope of the new generation, following the example of the old one, led by Boris Gelfand. (42).

In 1989, at the pivotal point of two eras, Maxim Rodshtein is given birth in a city that was still called Leningrad, before being renamed Saint Petersburg a few months later. He made his first steps in competition under the Soviet banner and then emigrated to Israel when he was 9 (in 1998), where he rapidly found his feet.

He didn't have to wait long to get his first laurels. He was the U-14 European vice-champion at 14, then U-16 World Champion in 2004 and destined for a successful career. A resident of Holon, Maxim Rodshtein belongs to the generation of prodigies but took somewhat longer speeding things up. He bounced back in 2007 and took over the Andorra Open, his most significant victory.

He was in his best form in November 2009 and contributed to a great extent to the silver medal that Israel won at the Olympiads of Dresde; this was the most convincing achievement of a whole chess nation. The Israeli media dedicated entire covers to the Olympic vice-champions. The youngest representative of the Hebrew state, Maxim Rodshtein finished the event undefeated on board 4, with 7/9 and a 2776 performance.

Without a break, Maxim Rodshtein reached his best world ranking (76, 2650 Elo points) and started working regularly with Boris Gelfand and Armenian Levon Aronian who are full of praise.

After taking part in the Masters Open of the Biel Festival twice (finishing 4th in 2007, 8th in 2009), and winning the Rapid Swiss Championships in 2007, the Israeli will try his luck in the Grandmasters Tournament. He will be the lowest ranked player in the starting list, which should boost his ambitions.

