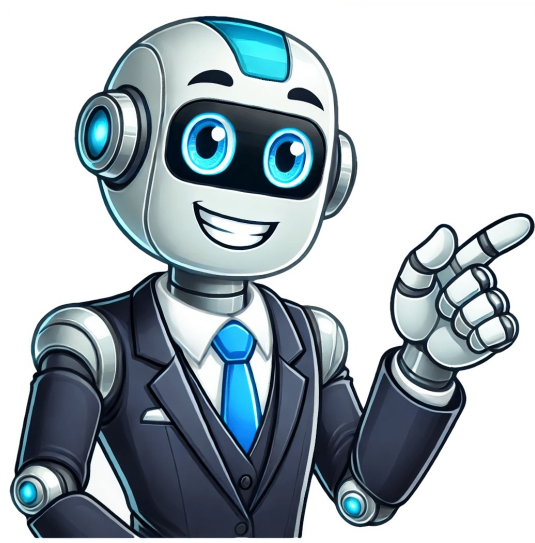


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In the last list of the top Grandmasters in each country series, we went over the best Female Chess players. Now in this article, we’re going through the ten best Chess players of all time. How Players were Picked For This List Putting together a list like this in any serious capacity is no easy task, so I used the following criteria in order to help with putting this list together. Context Resources Available Length of Career Consistency in Winning Time Period All of these factors were taken into consideration in ranking the players. The time period, or era, is one of the more important and often overlooked factors considered when discussing any sort of order in ranking the greatest Chess players of all time. With that being said, let’s start with number ten. 10. Paul Morphy Full name: Morphy, Paul Charles Born: 1837 Federation: United States of America World Ranking: N/A Rapid: N/A Blitz: N/A Classical (Std): 2689 (Converted to current standards) Profiles The Chess Journal Chessgames.com Paul Morphy is arguably the best player of all time with the consideration of this context in mind: the time period. Morphy wasn’t just beating the best players in the world at the time, he was better than the best by the equivalent to a 300 Elo point rating. Which is ridiculous. That kind of a gap in skill does not exist today and has never existed. The difference in rating between the top Grandmasters today is less than 20 points. It’s similar to Flo, the sprinter who set the record for the 100m in 198x. Her record still stands today and will likely never be broken. #2 isn’t even close, Flo won by such a huge margin. When he was 12 years old, Morphy took on a professional chess player named Johann Lowenthal and won twice and drew in the third encounter. Morphy learned by watching other people play. Morphy did not receive chess training from a grandmaster. He also did not get his unique chess talent from any expert. His father was a lawyer who served as an attorney general and supreme court justice. He did not yet have the legal age when he graduated from law school in 1857. He was unable to practice law as a result of this. Essentially, this would become the basis for Morphy’s professional chess. Because he was unable to practice, Morphy had a lot of leisure time on his hands. Morphy’s reputation grew, and he was dubbed the chess champion of the world. In 1867, Morphy played against five chess grandmasters and won three games, drew two games. Paul Morphy was under a lot of stress and abuse from the public and friends in 1864, which caused him to be a failure as a lawyer. This resulted in his stress coming to an end on his preference in 1859, he decided to retire from across chess competition. 9. Mikhail Botvinnik Full name: Botvinnik, Mikhail Title: Grandmaster Born: 1983 Federation: Israel World Ranking: 3040 Rapid: 2328 Blitz: Not rated Classical (Std): 2354 Profiles Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik was born in Finland. He is a six-time World Chess Champion and an electrical engineer and computer scientist who helped develop the fundamentals of computer chess. He was born in St. Petersburg, where he learned the game as a child and advanced quickly, winning his first of six USSR titles in 1931. Botvinnik was the USSR’s first world-class chess player. After World War II, he became a vital member of the coaching system that allowed the Soviet Union to dominate top-level chess during that period. Vladimir Kramnik, Garry Kasparov, and Anatoly Karpov are just a few of his prominent pupils. 8. Emanuel Lasker Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-14194 / CC-BY-SA 3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0 DE, via Wikimedia Commons Full name: Lasker, Emanuel Title: Grandmaster Born: 1868 Federation: Berlinchen Prussia Profiles The Chess Journal Chessgames.com Emanuel Lasker spent a large amount of his life playing chess. This is apparent since he began playing chess at the age of thirteen. Lasker was one of the most outstanding players in his day, and he is still considered one of the world’s greatest chess champions. Emanuel Lasker was a German chess player, mathematician, and philosopher who was world chess champion for 27 years, from 1894 to 1921, with the longest reign of any officially recognized world chess champion in history. He was also a gifted mathematician, developing game-theory ideas. It’s worth noting that his ideas were well received across the world. Furthermore, he’s putting a lot of effort into it through his brother and instructors. He was also eager to take on well-known chess players from all across the world and emerged victoriously. 7. Vladimir Kramnik Full name: Kramnik, Vladimir Title: Grandmaster (GM) 1992 Born: 1975 Federation: Russia World Ranking: 18 Rapd: 2756 Blitz: 2712 Classical (Std): 2753 Profiles Vladimir Kramnik, a former World Champion and previously one of the world’s best players of Russia in June 25, 1975. When he was young, Vladimir Kramnik was a student of Mikhail Botvinnik, the founder of the Soviet system. From 2000 to 2006, he was twice undisputed World Champion, defeating Veselin Topalov in 2006 to claim the 14th unquestioned title. He then won the unified championship from Garry Kasparov in 2000 and claimed supremacy over all other titles. The title was passed on to Viswanathan Anand in 2007, who is now the 15th undisputed (and previously former) World Champion. At the category 21 Gashimov Memorial in April 2017, Kramnik was second on tiebreaks over Wesley So and Veselin Topalov, scoring 5/9. Half a point behind winner Shakhriyar Mamedyarov. 6. Viswanathan Anand Wolfgang Jekel, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons Full name: Anand, Viswanathan Title: Grandmaster (GM) 1988 International Master (IM) 1985 Born: 1969 Federation: India World Ranking: 16 Rapid: 2748 Blitz: 2825 Classical (Std): 2753 Profiles FIDE Chessgames.com The Chess Journal Viswanathan “Vishy” Anand was the 15th undisputed World Champion, holding the title from 2007 until 2013. He also won FIDE World Championships in 2000 and 2002. Anand, along with seven other players, tops the list of Grandmasters with 2800 Elo. In March and May 2011, when he was world #1, Anand reached 2817 in the ELO ratings. For 21 months between April 2007 and May 2011, Anand was ranked world #1. Anand was born in Mayiladuthurai but was raised in Chennai. The Lightning Kid is the name given to him by his friends for his fast chess skills. Anand has always been known for his speed of calculation and movement. His early classical games were frequently played at or near blitz speed, and this skill has served him well in allowing him to become perhaps the most extraordinary blitz and rapid player of all time. 5. Anatoly Karpov Full name: Karpov, Anatoly Title: Grandmaster (GM) 1970 International Master (IM) 1969 Born: 1951 Federation: Russia World Ranking: 203 Rapid: 2583 Blitz: 2627 Classical (Std): 2617 Profiles Anatoly Karpov was 20 years old, Anatoly Karpov began learning chess and became a candidate master by the age of eleven. Mikhail Botvinnik’s chess academy accepted Karpov at the age of twelve. By finishing fourth in Caracas in 1970, he was elevated to International Grandmaster. He battled World Champion Robert James Fischer to compete in the Karpov – Fischer World Championship Match (1975). Karpov became the 12th World Chess Champion when FIDE ruled that Fischer had forfeited (1975), making him the youngest World Chess Champion during that time. In 1994, Karpov won the Linares tournament, edging over Kasparov by 2.5 points with a tournament performance rating of 2885. In May 1974, his rating was 2700, making him the second player (after Fischer) to reach this milestone during that time. 4. Jose Capablanca Full name: José Raúl Capablanca y Graupera Title: Grandmaster (GM) Born: 1888 Country: Cuba Profiles Chessgames.com The Chess Journal From his debut in 1922, José Raúl Capablanca was known as the “Human Chess Machine” for his remarkable endgame skills, accuracy, and speed. He was nicknamed the “Human Chess Machine” because of his legendary endgame abilities, precision, and quick play. The playing style of Capablanca significantly influenced the styles of subsequent World Champions Botvinnik, Robert James Fischer, and Anatoly Karpov. Before their encounter for the world championship made them bitter rivals, Botvinnik noted that Alekhine had received a lot of training from Capablanca in positional play. After quitting university and touring hundreds of cities across the United States, winning over 95 percent of his games, Capablanca rose to prominence as one of the world’s finest players, particularly after his victory in the Capablanca – Marshall (1909) New York match exhibition. He also wrote several books, including A Primer of Chess, Chess Fundamentals, and My Chess Career. 3. Bobby Fischer Full name: Robert James Fischer Title: Grandmaster (1958) Born: 1943 Country: United States Profiles Chessgames.com The Chess Journal At his unbelievably age of 13, he exhibited a stunning brilliance in 1956, which dubbed “The Game of the Century.” He was the youngest American Champion ever (1957/58), capturing the US Championship. At the age of 15, Fischer became both the youngest grandmaster (at the time) and the youngest candidate for the World Championship. He has won the United States Championship an incredible eight times by at least a point each time. He holds the tournament record for scoring the tremendous amount (11-0) in history. 2. Magnus Carlsen Full name: Carlsen, Magnus Title: Grandmaster (GM) 2004 Born: 1990 Federation: Norway World Ranking: 1 Rapid: 2842 Blitz: 2892 Classical (Std): 2855 Profiles FIDE Chessgames.com The Chess Journal The 16th undisputed World Champion is Magnus Carlsen (Sven Magnus en Carlsen). He took the title from Viswanathan Anand in November 2013, and he successfully defended it in a rematch with his prior title holder in November 2014. In November 2016, Magnus reclaimed his title when he beat Sergey Karjakin in the rapid game tiebreaker after the 12-game classical encounter was tied. In London in November 2018, he defended his title against Challenger Fabiano Caruana. Since Fischer is in this list as well, there is an article on Magnus Carlsen vs Bobby Fischer if you’re interested in a comparison. 1. Garry Kasparov Full name: Kasparov, Garry Title: Grandmaster (GM) 1980 International Master (IM) 1979 Born: 1963 Federation: Russia World Ranking: 2 Rapid: 2783 Blitz: 2644 Classical (Std): 2812 Profiles FIDE Chessgames.com The Chess Journal Garry was the 13th world champion. Kasparov was the undisputed World Champion from 1985 until 1993 and Classical World Champion from 1993 until 2000. His early primary influence was Alexander Alekhine’s combative and combinative style of play, which he learned as a child while watching his father. Garry is regarded as one of the chess all-time greats. Kasparov’s Elo ratings have been rated world #1 by Elo for the vast majority of his career, from 1986 until his retirement in 2005. Garry was the world’s top-rated player for a record 255 months, a record that far surpasses the best route to the top of the leaderboard, as judged by other top players. To recap, here’s the names of the best Chess players in history. Garry Kasparov Magnus Carlsen Bobby Fischer Jose Capablanca Anatoly Karpov Viswanathan Anand Vladimir Kramnik Emanuel Lasker Mikhail Botvinnik Paul Morphy That concludes the list of the ten best Chess players of all time. If you like list posts like this, you may also be interested in seeing the ten best Indian Chess players or the best Canadian Chess players. Aron Nimzowitsch is best known for his book ‘My System’. But does he belong here as a player? Sergey Karjakin held Magnus Carlsen to a 6-6 tie in classical games in their World Championship match. Hungary’s Lajos Portisch had a long and distinguished career. Lev Polugaevsky is a representative of an incredibly strong generation of Soviet players. Never in a title match, but very much a top player for 20+ years. Gata Kamsky emerges as a prodigy in the 1990s, takes time off from chess from 1996-2004, but returns in 2004 and goes on to win the 2007 World Cup. Marroczy was born in 1870 and was one of the leading players of his time. Enough! After becoming the youngest grandmaster in the world in 1994, Peter Leko played a World Championship match against Vladimir Kramnik in 2004, coming as close to the title as it gets. Winner is one of the premier players a looong time ago. Where does that rank him? Miguel Najdorf was one of the world’s best players in the 1940s and 1950s. The Dutch legend was considered “Best in the West” and was an absolute top player throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. “The Founder of the Soviet School of Chess” Gelfand came close to the World Championship title in 2012, when he lost to Vishy Anand by the smallest of margins. An amazing tournamentm player, Geller never got to a World Championship match, but had + scores against the likes of Fischer, Botvinnik and Petrosian. Harry Nelson Pillsbury only had a brief career, but his highs were incredibly high. Schlechter was the first player to seriously challenge Lasker in a World Championship match. Widely considered a chess genius, Ivanchuk enters the list. Dr. Tarrasch was maybe the world’s best player in the 1890s. The Armenian Superstar requires no introduction He did just fine in 1938. Another veteran, who played two World Championship matches. Reshevsky was a contender for the World Championship from the mid-1930s to the mid-60s. The Great Dane makes the Top 30. Another Great Dane explains why. The French master was considered to be the strongest player in the world in the early 1800s. Zukertort lost to Steinitz in the first World Championship match in 1886, but was a dominant player in the 1870s and 1880s. Anderssen won two big tournaments in 1851 and 1862, as well as giving the world the chess world’s most highly influential books. Howard Staunton was considered the world’s leading player from 1843-1851. He also gave us the Staunton chess set and the “Chess players handbook”. Akiba Rubinstein was one of the world’s best players in the early 20th century and leaves behind an impressive legacy of endgame technique and ideas. The Estonian master never got to the World Championship, but had an amazing long and successful career. Veselin Topalov was the FIDE World Champion in 2005 and lost World Championship title against Vladimir Kramnik in 2006 and Vishy Anand in 2010. Viktor Korchnot is widely considered one of the greatest players to never become World Champion. Fabiano Caruana is the current World Number 2. Philidor is by far the greatest player of the 18th century. Max Euwe is the fifth official World Champion. Boris Spassky is the 10th World Champion. Mikhail Tal is the eighth World Champion. Smyslov is the 7th World Champion. Wilhelm Steinitz is the first undisputed World Champion. Tigran Petrosian was the World Champion from 1963 to 1969. Kramnik defeated Kasparov in 2000 to become the Classical World Champion. Paul Morphy is one of the biggest phenomena the chess world has ever seen. Vishy Anand has won everything there is to win in chess. Mikhail Botvinnik won or drew 4 World Championships and stayed at or near the top of chess for 30 years. Jose Raul Capablanca is remembered as a great champion and one of the most accurate players ever. Anatoly Karpov dominated chess throughout much of the 70s and early 80s. Alexander Alekhine defeated Capablanca in 1927 to become the 4th World Chess Champion. Emanuel Lasker remained World Champion for 27 years. Magnus Carlsen was the reigning World Champion when this series was recorded. Garry Kasparov was the world number 1 for 225 months. USER CONSENT We at moneycontrol use cookies and other tracking technologies to assist you with navigation and determine your location. We also capture cookies to obtain your feedback, analyse your use of our products and services and provide content from third parties. By clicking on ‘I Accept’, you agree to the usage of cookies and other tracking technologies. For more details you can refer to our cookie policy. Please select (*) all mandatory conditions to continue. Our beloved game of chess has had many legends, world champions, challengers, world-class players, and grandmasters. The games of these masters delight, inspire, and teach us the ways of the royal game. It is common to discuss the greatest players of all time in chess circles—but the discussions always beg the singular question: Who was the best of all time? Here are the top 10 best chess players: Honorable Mentions The following players are all chess legends and are in the conversation for all time, but for one reason or another ended up just outside of the top 10. Paul Morphy Paul Morphy. Photo: Wikimedia. Paul Morphy was the embodiment of romantic attacking chess, the strongest player of the 1850s and the best player of the entire 19th century. There was no official world championship title during his era, but he was light years ahead of his competition and is recognized as an unofficial world champion. Morphy won the 1857 American Chess Congress and then traveled to Europe in 1858, winning every match he played against the world’s leading players. Morphy taught the chess world about sacrifices, development, attacking, accuracy, and more. His legendary Opera Game is considered one of the most famous chess games of all time and is still studied today. GM Bobby Fischer listed Morphy as one of the ten greatest players of all time. Tigran Petrosian Tigran Petrosian. Photo: Harry Pot/Dutch National Archives, CC. GM Tigran Petrosian, or “Iron Tigran,” was the world champion during 1963-1969 and a four-time Soviet champion. Undefeated the entire year leading to his world championship title (1962), he was known for his defensive prowess and his famous exchange sacrifices. According to GM Daniel Naroditsky, he was one of the “first elite players with a truly universal style.” Petrosian defeated the legendary GM Mikhail Botvinnik to become world champion in 1963, defended his title against GM Boris Spassky in 1966, and then lost the re-match to Spassky in 1969. In 1971 Petrosian was Fischer’s last stepping stone before facing Spassky for the world championship in 1972. His victory over Fischer in the second game of their candidates match stopped Fischer’s historical and unprecedented 20-game winning streak (although Fischer did win the match). Viswanathan Anand Viswanathan Anand. Photo: Peter Doggers/Chess.com, GM Viswanathan Anand was the FIDE world champion from 2000 to 2002 and the 15th undisputed champion from 2007 to 2013. He lost the title to Magnus Carlsen in 2013. Known for his brilliant and unique attacking style, Tal’s game has been an inspiration for attacking players for decades. One of his famous bone-chilling quotes is as follows: “You must take your opponent into a deep dark, where 2+2=5, and the path leading out is only wide enough for one.” His game collection The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal is a chess classic and is considered one of the greatest chess books of all time. #8 Emanuel Lasker Emanuel Lasker. Photo: German Federal Archives, CC. Emanuel Lasker was the second official world champion and held the title for 27 years. His reign from 1894 to 1921 is the longest of any world chess champion, and his playing career lasted five decades. Lasker defeated the first official world champion Wilhelm Steinitz in 1894, and he defended his title five times against a host of world-class contenders, including Frank Marshall, Siegbert Tarrasch, David Janowsky, and Carl Schlechter. In 1921 Lasker lost the title to Capablanca but continued to play at the highest level. He placed third in the 1935 Moscow tournament at the age of 66, half a point behind Botvinnik and Salo Flohr, but ahead of Capablanca, the first women’s world champion Vera Menchik and 15 other masters. #7 Vladimir Kramnik Vladimir Kramnik. Photo: Peter Doggers/Chess.com, GM Vladimir Kramnik was world champion from 2000 to 2007. He became the classical world champion by dethroning the legendary Kasparov in 2000, defended his title in 2004 against GM Peter Leko, and in 2006 faced the FIDE world champion Topalov in a title unification match. Kramnik defeated Topalov to become the first undisputed world champion since Kasparov in 1993. At his peak, Kramnik’s game had absolutely no weak points—he could do it all. He was known for his fantastic endgame play and his clean, tenacious, and positional style. Kramnik is considered one of the most difficult players to defeat in the history of the game. Kramnik was a top player for over 25 years before retiring in January 1999. #6 Mikhail Botvinnik Mikhail Botvinnik. Photo: Harry Pot/Dutch National Archives, CC. GM Mikhail Botvinnik is known as the “father of the Soviet chess school.” The sixth world champion reigned from 1948 to 1963 (with two brief intermissions) and was a top player for over 30 years. Botvinnik’s style was dictated by iron logic and flexibility, although he was extremely talented with methodical and tactical planning. His flexible style allowed him to adapt to all different types of play styles. He became world champion in 1948, defended his title against GM David Bronstein in 1951, and defeated GM Vassily Smyslov in 1954. In 1957 Smyslov defeated Botvinnik, who won their rematch the following year (at that time the world champion had the right to a rematch if they lost the title). In 1960 Botvinnik was defeated by Tal, but history repeated itself as Botvinnik won their rematch in 1961. Although his reign as world champion was brought to an end by Petrosian in 1963, Botvinnik continued to play at a high level until his retirement in 1970. Botvinnik started his chess school in 1963, and he was the teacher of three future world champions (Karpov, Kasparov, and Kramnik). #5 Anatoly Karpov Anatoly Karpov. Photo: R.C. Kroes/Dutch National Archives, CC. GM Anatoly Karpov was the 12th world champion and reigned from 1975 to 1985 while also being the FIDE world champion from 1993 to 1999. Karpov was an exceptionally well-rounded player, but his specialty was positional binds, prophylactic play, and wonderful endgame technique. Karpov became world champion by default when Fischer withdrew from their 1975 match because his demands weren’t met. Karpov defended his crown by defeating GM Viktor Korchnot in 1978 and again in 1981. In 1984 Karpov would have his first meeting with Kasparov, and the chess world was changed forever. In the first of five matches between the two legendary titans, the match was called early with Karpov leading five wins, three losses, and 40 draws. In 1985 Kasparov defeated Karpov and claimed the chess crown. They played again in 1986, 1987 and 1990 and when their matches were concluded their lifetime record in world championship matches was 19 wins for Karpov, 21 wins for Kasparov and 104 draws! In 1993 Kasparov broke away from FIDE (creating the PCA), and Karpov became the FIDE world champion. Karpov defended his FIDE world champion title by defeating GM Jan Timman in 1993, GM Gata Kamsky in 1996, and Anand in 1998 (on tiebreaks). Karpov refused to play in the 1999 FIDE world championship tournament after FIDE changed his rules. Karpov’s legendary games continue to be a source of inspiration for all positional and endgame players today. Tiber Karolyi’s two-volume work titled Karpov’s Strategic Wins is considered one of the best chess books ever at the age of roughly 22 and a half. He defended the world championship title against Karpov on three consecutive occasions in 1986, 1987, and 1990. In 1993, he broke away from FIDE and started the PCA—this break would create two different world championships until the reunification match between Kramnik and Topalov in 2006. Kasparov defended his title by defeating GM Nigel Short in 1993 and successfully defended his title again by defeating Anand in 1995. Kasparov and Lasker are the only two world champions to defend their titles successfully five times. In 2000 Kramnik defeated Kasparov, ending the reign of the best player of all time as world champion. However, Kasparov would continue playing in (and winning) tournaments until his retirement in 2005—he left the game as the number-one player in the world. Kasparov has remained active in the chess world after his effective retirement. He has played exhibition matches and even trained Carlsen and GM Hikaru Nakamura. His five-volume series titled My Great Predecessors is considered one of the best chess books ever. Chess, often referred to as the “Game of Kings,” has a storied history that spans centuries. Throughout this history, there have been countless grandmasters and brilliant minds who have graced the chessboard. Narrowing down the list to the top 10 best players of all time is a challenging task, as each player brings their unique style and contribution to the game. After adequate research, we settled with these names:Garry KasparovMagnus CarlsenBobby FischerEmanuel LaskerAnatoly KarpovJose Raul CapablancaMikhail TalVladimir KramnikViswanathan AnandPaul MorphyIn this article, we will delve into the lives and achievements of these chess legends.Garry Kasparov is considered by many to be the greatest chess player of all time.As the former World Chess Champion for over 20 years, his skill, strategy and competitive drive have made him a legend in the chess world.Kasparov began playing chess at the age of 6, showing a natural talent and passion for the game. By age 12, he had become the Soviet youth champion and went on to win multiple junior titles on his way to becoming the youngest World Chess Champion at age 22 in 1985.His matches against chess greats like Anatoly Karpov were epic battles that received worldwide media attention and boosted the popularity of chess.Kasparov’s attacking and tactical style of play, as well as his ability to calculate complex sequences far in advance, made him nearly unbeatable for decades.No one to rest on his laurels, Kasparov went on to have a successful career as a chess coach, author, political activist and speaker.He saw chess as a strategic game that could be applied to other areas of life, especially business and politics.Kasparov advocated for democracy and human rights, standing up against oppression in his native Russia.While Kasparov’s chess accomplishments alone cement his status as one of the best chess players ever, his passion for life, continual quest for challenges and desire to improve the world around him make him an inspiration.The chess master who once famously said, “Chess is mental torture” has given so much to the game that has defined his life.Magnus Carlsen Magnus Carlsen is a Norwegian chess grandmaster who has made an indelible mark on the world of chess.Born on November 30, 1990, in Tonsberg, Norway, Carlsen displayed his exceptional talent for the game at a very young age.He earned the title of Grandmaster at the age of 13, making him one of the youngest grandmasters in chess history.Carlsen’s rise to prominence in the chess world was meteoric. In 2010, at the age of 19, he became the youngest player to be ranked World No. 1, a position he holds till date.In 2013, he achieved the pinnacle of his career by winning the World Chess Championship, dethroning Viswanathan Anand.Carlsen’s playing style is characterized by flexibility and adaptability. He has a vast opening repertoire, and he’s equally comfortable in sharp, tactical battles as he is in maneuvering strategically complex positions.This versatility has made him a formidable opponent, as he can tailor his approach to exploit his opponent’s weaknesses.One of Carlsen’s distinctive strengths is his endgame prowess. He is known for grinding out wins in seemingly drawn positions, demonstrating exceptional patience and an ability to create winning chances where none seem to exist.His deep understanding of chess has earned him the nickname “The Mozart of Chess.”Outside of competitive play, Magnus founded the Play Magnus app, which allows players of all levels to take on a digital Magnus at different ages.He has also modeled for various fashion brands like C-Star Raw, proving he is a man of many talents. However, chess remains his greatest passion.Magnus continues to push the boundaries of chess mastery in pursuit of an ever-higher rating and cementing his status as the greatest player of all time.Bobby Fischer Bobby Fischer was a chess prodigy and true American legend.Born in Chicago in 1943, Bobby learned to play chess at age 6 and was already competing in tournaments by age 8. His raw talent and passion for the game were evident early on.At just 15, Bobby became the youngest U.S. chess champion. His star rose fast, winning eight U.S. titles in a row.In 1972, Bobby cemented his status as the world’s best player, defeating Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union to become World Chess Champion.The epic match against Spassky was seen as a symbolic battle between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War.When Bobby won, he became an instant American hero. His eccentric personality and brash confidence made him a pop culture icon.His stunning victory over Spassky gave the Western world renewed hope that the Soviets were not unbeatable.Sadly, Bobby descended into paranoia and reclusiveness later in life. However, his contributions to chess – demonstrating the importance of an aggressive, fighting style of play and expanding opening theory – will live on forever. Many consider him the greatest natural chess talent ever.While his life remains somewhat enigmatic, Bobby Fischer’s accomplishments at such a young age will likely never be matched.His games are still studied by chess players today, serving as a blueprint for creative attack and defense. There may never be another American chess prodigy like the legend of Bobby Fischer.Emanuel LaskerEmanuel Lasker, born on December 24, 1868, in what is now Poland, was a German mathematician, philosopher, and the second World Chess Champion.His remarkable tenure as the chess champion spanned 27 years, from 1894 to 1921, making him the longest-reigning world champion in chess history.Lasker’s contributions to chess extended far beyond his record-breaking championship reign.His ascent to the World Chess Championship began in 1894 when he defeated Wilhelm Steinitz, the reigning champion, in a match. This victory marked the beginning of his long reign, during which he successfully defended his title against a series of formidable challengers.What set Lasker apart was not just his chess prowess but also his pioneering work in the psychology of chess. He believed that chess was not just about moves on the board but also a psychological battle between opponents.His deep understanding of human psychology played a significant role in his success as he often outmaneuvered opponents by creating unbalanced and uncomfortable positions.Lasker’s versatility as a chess player was a hallmark of his career. He excelled in both tactical and positional play, making it challenging for opponents to prepare for his games.His ability to switch between different styles of play showcased his adaptability and chess acumen.Beyond his games, Lasker made substantial contributions to chess theory and opening play. His book “Common Sense in Chess” and his annotations in chess magazines were highly regarded and influenced generations of chess players.In addition to his chess pursuits, Lasker was a polymath. He obtained a Ph.D. in mathematics and made significant contributions to the field of mathematics, particularly in the areas of algebra and philosophy.His interests also extended to philosophy and the philosophy of mathematics, demonstrating his intellectual breadth.Emanuel Lasker passed away on January 11, 1941, in New York City.People who love chess and those who study it still celebrate and learn from his contributions to the game. He was a great chess player and champion, and his ideas and thoughts about chess are still important today.Anatoly Karpov Anatoly Karpov dominated chess in the 1970s and 1980s, holding the world championship title for a decade.As Kasparov’s biggest rival, Karpov challenged him for the world title five times. Though he only won once, Karpov proved a formidable opponent.Karpov learned chess at the age of 4 and was a grandmaster by the age of 19.His positional style of play, characterized by slow maneuvering and the accumulation of small advantages, earned him the nickname “The Boa Constrictor.” He would slowly strengthen his position and strangle his opponents. In 1975, Karpov became the youngest world champion at the time after Bobby Fischer refused to defend his title.Karpov held onto the championship for 10 years without defeat. His reign came to an end in 1995 when Garry Kasparov, a brash young star, defeated him.The Karpov-Kasparov rivalry became one of the greatest in chess history.They battled in five world championship matches throughout the 1980s, though Karpov only regained the title once in 1993.Their clashes were epic, attracting sponsors and spectators. Kasparov’s aggressive and tactical style contrasted with Karpov’s maneuvering, leading to clashes of “fire and ice.”Though overshadowed by Kasparov, Karpov deserves recognition as one of the greatest players of all time. At his peak, he was nearly unbeatable.Karpov won over 160 tournaments in his career, held the world No. 1 ranking for 90 months, and maintained an astonishing +700 score against the world’s top players.His games are still studied today for their brilliance and as examples of his signature gradual accumulation of advantages through precise positioning and Zen-like patience.Off the board, Karpov was also an influential voice in Russian politics and remains a controversial figure.Still, his chess legacy lives on as a model of excellence, professionalism and sporting achievement.You can read more about Anatoly Karpov hereJose Raul Capablanca Jose Raul Capablanca was a Cuban chess player who was world chess champion from 1921 to 1927. He was a chess prodigy and one of the greatest natural talents in chess history.Capablanca learned the rules of chess at the age of four by watching his father play. He quickly became an expert and by the age of thirteen won a match against Cuban champion Juan Corzo.His talent and skill seemed almost effortless. He was known for his patience, endurance, and his ability to see many moves ahead.Capablanca had a gift for logical and strategic thinking as well as intuition. He approached each game with a fresh perspective, focusing on the current position rather than following standard opening theory or endgame positions he had memorized.Some of Capablanca’s most famous games were his wins against Marshall, Lasker and Alekhine. He won several strong tournaments during the early 1920s and claimed the world chess championship in 1921 by defeating Lasker.Capablanca reigned undefeated for six years before losing to Alekhine in 1927. Though he continued to compete for over a decade more, he never regained the world title due to unsuccessful attempts to arrange a rematch.Capablanca’s style and mastery of chess fundamentals influenced many great players who came after him.His games are still studied today by chess students who want to learn strategy, tactics and endgame technique.Mikhail TalMikhail Tal, nicknamed “The Magician from Riga,” was a Latvian chess Grandmaster and the seventh World Chess Champion. Known for his aggressive and tactical style, Tal was one of the most exciting players to watch.Tal learned to play chess at age 8 and was competing in tournaments by age 11. His first major victory came at age 16 when he won the Latvian Chess Championship.Tal’s rise in the chess world was meteoric. By age 20, he earned the title of Grandmaster, making him the youngest GM at the time.In 1960, Tal defeated Mikhail Botvinnik to become the seventh World Chess Champion at the age of 23.As champion, Tal continued to employ his signature tactical style, described as “wild, original, and full of imagination.” His reign lasted just one year, as Botvinnik regained the title in a rematch.Though no longer world champion, Tal remained a formidable player for decades. He won four consecutive Soviet championships from 1972 to 1975.On the global stage, Tal won many international tournaments, including the Montreal 1979 Tournament of Stars where he edged out Bobby Fischer.Tal’s daring and romantic style made him a fan favorite and inspiration to younger players. Tragically, his career was cut short in his 40s due to declining health.But in his lifetime, Tal had a profound influence on chess. His creative genius and passion for attack reshaped theories of how the game should be played at the highest levels.Vladimir KramnikVladimir Kramnik is considered by many to be one of the best chess players of all time.In 2000, he achieved what was thought nearly impossible – he defeated Garry Kasparov to become the 14th World Chess Champion.Kramnik started learning chess at the age of 4 from his father. His immense talent was apparent early on.In 1991, at just 15 years old, he earned the title of International Grandmaster, making him the youngest person ever to achieve the title at the time.In 2000, Kramnik got the chance to prove himself against the dominant world champion Kasparov. In a 16-game match, Kramnik defeated Kasparov and ended his 15-year reign as champion.Kramnik’s victory shocked the chess world and cemented his status as one of the all-time greats in chess history.Kramnik successfully defended his title three times. His reign lasted until 2007 when he was defeated by Viswanathan Anand.Known for his deep understanding of chess strategy and endgames, Kramnik continued to compete at the highest level of chess for over 20 years.Some of Kramnik’s major accomplishments include:World Chess Champion from 2000 to 2007Chess Olympiad gold medalist in 1992, 2004World Cup Champion in 2019Ranked world No. 1 for several months in 1996 and 2000Though Kramnik officially retired from professional chess in 2019, his impact on the game will endure.Viswanathan AnandViswanathan Anand, also known as Vishy, is considered by many to be India’s greatest chess legend.Born in 1969 in Chennai, he became India’s first grandmaster at the age of 18 and went on to dominate the chess world for over two decades.Anand won his first world championship in 2000, defeating Alexei Shirov to claim the FIDE World Chess Championship.This victory at the age of 30 made him the first Asian to win a world chess title. Anand successfully defended his title in knockout matches three times before the championship was discontinued.When the “classical” World Chess Championship reunified in 2006, Anand had the chance to prove himself against the world’s best players in a series of matches.He won the title in 2007 by defeating Vladimir Kramnik and then defended it in 2008 against Kramnik and in 2010 against Veselin Topalov.Anand lost his title in 2013 to 22-year-old world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen but earned a rematch in 2014.Though he failed to reclaim the championship, Anand’s longevity and continued competitiveness against players half his age cemented his status as an all-time great. At age 53, Anand remains one of the world’s best players.Anand’s chess talent, sportsmanship, and status as a national hero have inspired generations of Indian chess players.With dedication and hard work, he overcame the notion that chess was a “Western” game and paved the way for the rising stars of Indian chess today.Today, we see other top players like Vidit, Prag, Gukesh and Vaishali following in that path.Anand’s many accomplishments and global impact make him a deserving inclusion on any list of the greatest chess players of all time.Paul Morphy Paul Morphy, born on June 22, 1837, in New Orleans, Louisiana, was an American chess prodigy and one of the most remarkable figures in the history of chess.Although his active chess career was relatively short, spanning from the mid-1850s to the early 1860s, Morphy’s exceptional talent and contributions to the game left an indelible mark.Morphy’s chess journey began with an early aptitude for the game, learning it from his family at a young age. His extraordinary ability quickly became apparent as he swiftly mastered the intricacies of chess.His breakthrough came in 1857 during the First American Chess Congress in New York, where he defeated several strong players, including Louis Paulsen and Alexander Meek, establishing himself as a formidable force in the chess world.What truly catapulted Morphy into international acclaim was his European tour in 1858.Here, he faced and defeated many of the leading European chess players, earning widespread acclaim. Notable victories against Johann Löwenthal and Howard Staunton solidified his reputation.Morphy’s playing style was characterized by aggressive, tactical brilliance. He possessed an exceptional ability to calculate variations and exploit weaknesses in his opponent’s positions. His games were marked by rapid development and a keen sense of initiative.Although he never officially held the title of World Chess Champion, Morphy was widely recognized as the world’s leading player during his era, earning him the title of the unofficial world champion.Despite his immense talent and success, Morphy’s chess career was relatively brief. He retired from competitive chess in the early 1860s due to personal reasons and never defended his unofficial world champion title. It is for this reason that Morphy is referred to as the pride and sorrow of chess.Paul Morphy’s contributions to chess theory and his remarkable games continue to be studied and admired by chess enthusiasts and players worldwide. His ideas and combinations remain a source of inspiration for generations of chess players.In his later years, Morphy lived a relatively private life, battling mental health issues. Tragically, he passed away on July 10, 1884, at the age of 47.Nevertheless, Paul Morphy’s extraordinary talent and his impact on the chess world during his prime solidified his status as one of the greatest chess players in history. Blog / All Articles / 12 Greatest Chess Players of All Time (2024) Explore Amphy Find Online Teachers