

Madrid will host the crème de la crème of world chess



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Havana, December 29 (RHC)-- Magnus Carlsen wants to face only one rival, Alireza Firouzja, who will be one of the candidates to challenge the Norwegian in Madrid in 2022, according to what was reported today.

The news would be that the chess tournament to find an opponent for the Norwegian genius Carlsen will be held in the Spanish capital from June 16 to July 7 next year. But the background points to the figure of Firouzja, an 18-year-old Iranian who now competes for France and with the second highest ELO in the

world.

A few days ago, the Nordic player hinted that he would only defend against Firouzja the title he retained last December 10, when he beat Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi by 7.5 to 3.5 points.

Although it may seem a question of egos, the truth is that the trajectories of the two top chess figures at the moment are quite similar.

Carlsen became Grandmaster at the age of 13 and Firouzja at the age of 14. The Iranian is the youngest player to surpass 2,800 ELO points, to beat the record that belonged to the Norwegian.

So the odds are high that they will face each other for the world crown. Before that, however, Firouzja will have to face a group of super elites in Madrid: the American Fabiano Caruana, the Polish Jan-Krzysztof Duda, the Russians Sergey Karjakin and Nepomniachtchi and the Azerbaijani Teimour Radjabov.

Two places remain to complete the quota of eight, reserved for the top two finishers in the International Chess Federation (FIDE) Grand Prix, in three tournaments to be played from February to April 2022.

FIDE, the Chess.com platform as organizing sponsor, and the Scheinberg family as patron of the event, reached the agreement announced Tuesday regarding the Madrid event.

"The Candidates tournament is one of the most exciting on the calendar (...) its popularity has grown to the point of being comparable to that of the world title match. For FIDE, it is a great satisfaction to hold this event in Spain, a country that loves chess," commented the FIDE president, Arkady Dvorkovich.

For his part, the head of the Spanish Chess Federation, Javier Ochoa de Echagüen, was pleased with the venue of Madrid.

"Chess has always been very popular in our country, and it is widely used as an educational tool in many schools where hundreds of thousands of children participate in chess activities", he said.

Hosting a top level tournament like the Candidates helps to capture the interest of the media, and gives all those children and young players a reference and a stimulus to continue practicing this sport, he added.

Spain has been the scene of the most important events of the game of science, including the match for the World Championship between the Russians Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov, in Seville 1987; the Women's World Championship between the Hungarian Susan Polgar and the Chinese Xie Jun, in Jaén 1996; and the Chess Olympiad, in Calviá in 2004.

Likewise, the Iberian country hosted other relevant Candidates' tournaments, with the presence of Karpov, the British Nigel Short, the Dutchman Jan Timman and the Indian Viswanathan Anand, among others.

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