

Sports News Roundup Dec. 26



Ernesto's Dreams

Ernesto Miguel Pérez will turn 11 on Dec. 29 as a happy child gifted with a special talent for chess.

He has ambitious goals and promises with unusual certainty he one day will become a Grand Master and join the best 15 chess players in the world as his hero Leinier Domínguez.

"I know I can achieve this. I can make this sacrifice," Ernesto said with a surprising maturity in his voice as his expressive eyes glitter with slyness knowing how risky it is to predict the future.

Such optimism is justified in his case and will lead him to climb, step by step, the long path to success.

Ernesto goes to the talent school of the Latin American Chess Higher Institute (ISLA for its acronym in Spanish). He is champion among 10-11 year old children in Havana and winner of the sixth Chess and Nature National Cup.

These are enough results to end an excellent season but yet he ended between eight and 11 in the standings of the under 12 Pan American Chess Tournament in Mexico. He earned six points out of nine with four wins, four draws and one defeat.

"I felt comfortable playing but I didn't like the food because it was too spicy," Ernesto said. He added his performance improved this year because he only earned four points in his debut in a similar event last year in Brazil.

"I started playing chess thanks to my father, who used to play with my grandfather, he encouraged me to learn and after I started the game I liked it very much."

"My first contest was two or three months after I started to study at the institute. It was a tournament including children between 14 and 15 years old and I was seven. I remember I earned only two and a half points out of nine and as I didn't like to lose I started crying, something I don't do anymore."

"Black pieces are my favorite because I prefer the Alekhine defense. I play pawn-queen because I like this type of opening."

“Leinier and Ivanchuk are my favorite players. I like William Steinitz and Capablanca from other generations as well. They inspire me”

Ernesto has had only one professor in his short career since he was admitted to the chess talent school. Sergio Arteaga was then in charge of improving Ernesto's elemental instruction.

Arteaga was amazed from the beginning by Ernesto's easy way learning and memorizing new concepts and his ability to find a way so that pieces were not left “in the air” .

“He is a positional, solid and technical player and know how to finish a play when a tactic solution is required. He is skillful because he trains hard. We solve between 15 and 30 problems everyday.”

Ernesto is considered number one among the most outstanding children in a school from which current Masters graduated.

“He possesses a logical thinking. When I correct any mistake he grasps advice at a glance and put it into practice. This gives me room to carry out personalized work with him and obtain faster results,” says the expert.

Asked about Ernesto's set of openings, Arteaga said he is able to play with pawn-queen or pawn-king openings, besides he changes the defense with black pieces and this makes him a difficult rival. He doesn't allow his opponent to prepare for a specific system.

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