

World Chess Champion Inspires Botswana



Mosah Mokganele, Correspondent: Former president Festus Mogae encouraged 40 chess players beaten by the world champion Viswanathan Anand on Saturday to pride themselves in having the chance to play the best man in the game. Mogae said it is a rare opportunity to play a champion.

Mogae was officiating at an event where the Indian Grand Master (GM) beat 40 players in Gaborone in simultaneous games. "Never mind that he beat you. He did that to everyone he played before. Be proud that you have played and lost to a world champion," Mogae told a cheering crowd.

The former president who was in his element kept the crowd laughing and said Botswana journalists have had the opportunity to report about the world's best chessman.

"Shakespeare said some people are born great, others achieve great things and others have greatness cast upon them and that is us today," he said.

After beating the 40 players, Anand told Monitor Sport that most of them showed a lot of potential and with proper development, Botswana can go a long way in chess. He said the players showed a lot of enthusiasm. Anand was in the country courtesy of NIIT and Botswana Chess Federation (BCF). He said through NIIT, he is prepared to help Botswana chess grow. He added that there are lessons that Botswana can learn from his country as India plays high-level chess. Anand said his visit is the beginning of good things for Botswana and India in chess. He was grateful for the warm welcome he got in Botswana.

He said the lesson that he will take home is that Botswana are a relaxed people.

BCF president, Tshepo Sitale said they will forever remain grateful for Anand's visit. He added that chess in Botswana has shown a lot of potential and with proper investment, it can grow to greater heights. He said BCF hopes to roll-out chess to all parts of the country in the near future. Anand was expected to play 30 players in simultaneous games yesterday.

<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=8&aid=31&dir=2009/August/Monday31>