

Grandmaster Bobby Fischer

The year was 1972, in the middle of the Cold War between Russia and the United States. The two superpower countries were both trying to prove that they were more powerful and better than the other. In a small room in Iceland, they fought for power. But they didn't use bombs, guns, and airplanes. Instead, Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky fought for their countries using **rooks**, **knights**, and **pawns**². In total silence, Fischer leaned over the **chess**³ board, pushing back his light brown hair with one hand. He thought hard and then moved his bishop across the board. Big mistake! Spassky trapped the bishop with his pawns and quickly won the game.



Bobby Fischer playing chess in the year 1960

Bobby Fischer was angry and frustrated now. He **forfeited**⁴ (gave up) and walked away from the second game. Bobby ordered the news cameras to be taken out of the room. Then, he won the next game against his **opponent**⁵, Spassky. He continued to win four more games. Bobby Fischer beat Spassky and won the **tournament**⁶. He became the World Champion of Chess.

Past, Present, and Future Grandmasters

Fischer was 29 when he beat Spassky. He played his first game of chess at age six. He quickly learned the rules of the game and how the nine different types of pieces moved around the board. Nine years later, at age 15, Fischer won a championship in Yugoslavia and became an international grandmaster. To become a grandmaster, a player needs to have a **FIDE rating**⁷ of 2500 or above. The FIDE rating is figured out by seeing how many games a player wins and how well the opponents are rated. There are about 1,700 chess grandmasters in the world.

2 **Rooks, knights, pawns** – pieces in a chess game

3 **Chess** – a game played on a checkered board where players move their 16 pieces

4 **Forfeited** – gave up in the middle

5 **Opponent** – the person one is playing against

6 **Tournament** – a series of games played against an opponen

7 **FIDE rating** – a method of telling how good someone is at playing chess by giving them a number value