



Shield in Harley's memory

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Dundee done

SPORT



Property Lift out



All the right moves

By Kyra Gillespie

At just 16 years of age, Pakenham teenager Victoria Hendrick is the best female chess player in the state.

Speaking with Star News's Pakenham Gazette at the start of the year when she was 15, Victoria was the best female player in her age group at the time.

Now, nearly a year on, she has surpassed her age category and is now the best in the open age section for the whole of Victoria.

Having only started playing in year seven at lunchtime at Pakenham Secondary College, Victoria is up against competitors who have many years of experience on her and who receive private chess tutoring.

But she doesn't seem too fazed - for Victoria, it's all about the joy of the game.

"I play because I love it," she said.

"Chess helps me to forget about stress at home and at school.

"When I'm playing I forget about all my troubles and just focus on the game.

"Even if you play and lose, you still win in that you learn something new in each game."

Chess tutors Christian Ampongan and Sergio De Lima both expressed pride in how Victoria is progressing.

"The event organisers were really impressed with how far she has come in such a short space of time," Mr Ampongan said.

"It just shows that hard work pays off."

Not only has Victoria outdone players in her age group, but she's even gone on to beat her teachers.

"She beats us all the time" Mr De Lima said with a laugh.

"Chess is quite a sexist sport as it is very male-dominated, but at our school the girls team are the strongest. It's fantastic."

Boys become quite disgruntled when they are beaten by Victoria, according to her tutors.

"She's got the will and determination and that will take her places," Mr De Lima said.

Victoria will be competing for the national title next month at the Victorian State Finals, but insists that her school holidays will be chess-free.

"I think I need a break, I've been playing way too much," Victoria said.



Above: 16-year-old Victoria Hendrick holding one of many chess awards she has won over the years. 173252

Left: Pakenham Secondary College teachers Sergio De Lima and Christian Ampongan have both been Victoria's chess tutors. 173252



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