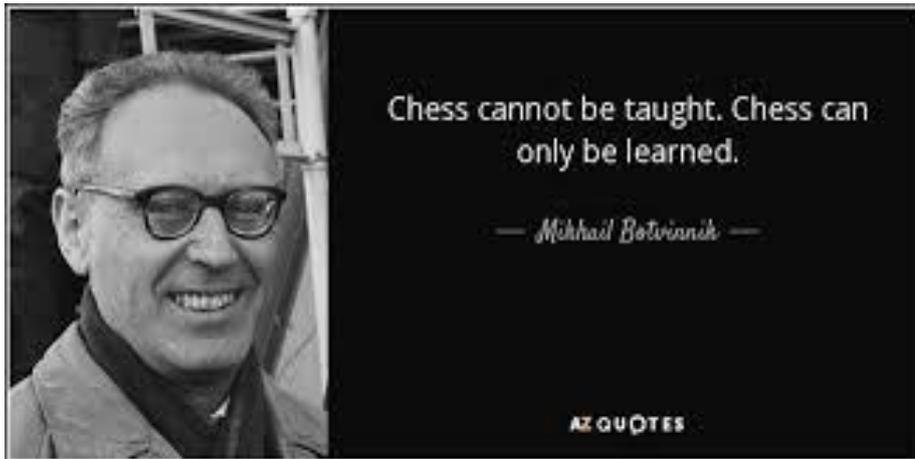


## Mikhail Botvinnik 6<sup>th</sup> classical world champ from 1948 - 1963



**Mikhail Moiseyevich Botvinnik** (Russian: Михайл Моисеевич Ботвинник, pronounced [mʲixɐˈil mɐiˈsʲejɪvʲɪtɕ bɐˈtvʲinʲnʲɪk].

He was the sixth player to become World Chess Champion (1948 – 1963). Botvinnik was a Russian chess grandmaster and World Chess Champion.

**Peak rating:** 2630 (July 1971)

**Country:** Soviet Union

**Title:** Grandmaster

**Died:** May 5, 1995 (aged 83);

Botvinnik learned chess at the age of 12, and two years later he defeated World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca in a simultaneous exhibition game. His chess continued to improve quickly during his teenage years. In 1927, he placed 5th in the Soviet Union Championships and earned his National Master title (at the age of 16).

In 1931, at the age of 20, Botvinnik won his first Soviet Championship in Moscow, scoring 13½ out of 17.

Working as an electrical engineer and computer scientist at the same time, he was one of the very few players who achieved distinction in another career while playing top-class competitive chess. He was also a pioneer of computer chess.

He also played a major role in the organization of chess, making a significant contribution to the design of the World Chess Championship system after World War II and becoming a leading member of the coaching system that enabled the Soviet Union to dominate top-class chess during that time. His pupils include World Champions Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik.

In 1938, he challenged World Champion Alekhine to a match for the title, which was accepted. Unfortunately, the rumblings of World War II and some other political factors put an end to this match. From 1939-1945, Botvinnik was unable to take part in International chess tournaments. In 1940, he won the tournament that crowned him the Absolute Champion of the USSR, ahead of Smyslov, Keres and others. In 1943 he won another strong

tournament in the USSR, ahead of Smyslov, Ragozin and others. Botvinnik would also win the 1944 and 1945 Soviet Championships.

By this time, Botvinnik was viewed by most as the rightful challenger to Alekhine. Botvinnik reached out to Alekhine and the British Chess Federation in an attempt to host a world championship match - but these talks were all cut short by Alekhine's death in 1946. This was the first time (and only time in the current history of chess) that the world champion had passed away while holding the title.

The chess world and many chess federations agreed that the new world champion would be the winner of an invitational tournament to be held in 1948. This event is historic because it crowned a new world champion, but also because it was the first time that FIDE would oversee the World Championship tournament and declare the rules for the events (something that FIDE still does to this day). Botvinnik was the favorite to win the 1948 World Championship tournament, and he did not disappoint. He finished in clear first, 3 points ahead of the field (which included Smyslov, Keres, Reshevsky, and Euwe). Subsequently, Botvinnik was crowned world champion.

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