

Most Popular Sports Personality of the Year - Female

Dronavalli Haarika

When kids of her age were hearing stories of winged horses and beautiful princesses, she grappled with rook and bishop. When the girls of her age were having multi-coloured dreams, she was fascinated by black and white squares - sixty four squares. She ate, drank and breathed chess. She became inseparable from the game.

Yes... We are talking of Dronavalli Harika, who became a woman grand master at just 13 and found a place in the Indian chess team. Winning matches, trophies, tourneys and championships have become a habit for her. She made Indian Tricolour flutter proudly in the world of chess.

Born at Guntur in 1991, Harika took to chess like a fish takes to water. Her dad wanted her elder sister to become a chess player. But Harika, who accompanied her sister, picked the moves faster. She stopped schooling at 7 and turned a full time chess player. She was Under 9, Under 10 champion and became an international player. Viswanathan Anand, Kramnik, Judit Polgar became her role models.

Her day begins and ends with chess. She reads books on chess voraciously and plays the game for hours on end. She has 16 national medals and two bronzes in world championships. She became a woman grandmaster in 2004, international master in 2007, grandmaster in 2011. This Arjuna Awardee is ranked fifth in the FIDE women rankings.

Rivalry for her is only till the game ends. Once the game is over, her rival becomes her pal and she feasts her with a sumptuous home-cooked food.

Haarika likes low profile life and stays away from publicity and partying. She firmly believes that inspiration can be drawn from anybody and everybody. Sakshi is happy to award Sakshi Excellence Award 2016 for the most popular female sports personality of the year to this winner of gold medal at the women grand prix tourney in China.

Awards:

- **FIDE Women Grand Prix, Khanty Mansiysk** - 5th position
- **FIDE Women Grand Prix, Chengdu** - Gold Medal.
- **Asian Women Team Chess Championship, UAE - Member Indian Team**
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1. Individual Gold medal in Rapid format.
2. Individual Silver Medal on Top Board in Classical format.
3. Team won Bronze Medal in Rapid format