

CALUM TAKES ON THE WORLD

EIGHT-year-old chess prodigy, Calum Fraser McDonald, of Leven, has become the only under-10 boy in the country chosen to play in this summer's World Youth Chess Championships.

The P4 pupil at Parkhill Primary School is also the youngest player involved in this year's Scottish Youth Team.

The World Youth Championships, at Belfort, France, in July, feature 11 five-hour games played over a two-week period, to decide the winner.

The competition is likely to be fierce, as chess is part of the school curriculum in some countries, and Calum wasn't sure if he'd win many games.

But, excited at the opportunity, he said: "I was hoping to play for Scotland some day but did not expect to make my debut at the biggest youth event in the world, especially when there will be Russians, Chinese, Indians, Americans and others all taking part."

Calum, a member of Glenrothes Chess Club, became interested in the game at an early age and was taught to play when he was four by his dad, Paul, a maths teacher at Bell Baxter High School.

He played fun chess at home for two years, then at six, played his first competitive game.

At seven, he won the Scottish under-eight title and began playing in adult events.

Last month, in Edinburgh, he won his first prize in an adult competition.

Calum's other interests include golf, martial arts, piano and violin, science, puzzles and magic tricks.

The Links Road youngster only receives partial funding from Chess Scotland for the big event and is hoping he might secure local sponsorship.

Later this year, he is planning to compete in the British Championships in the Isle of Man and hoping to gain further international selection to play in the European Youth Championships in Serbia and Montenegro.

Calum, who normally only competes in adult events, is hoping one day he can become a chess grandmaster.

He is already studying the games of Magnus Carlsen of Norway, the youngest grandmaster in the world.

