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ECU Board Meeting  
in Monte-Carlo,  
Monaco

GlobalCell prepares  
special offer for  
chess players

SenseRobot special  
offer through  
ECUHub



## European Women's Rapid & Blitz Chess Champions 2025 crowned in #Monaco!

*In this edition of the ECU Magazine you may read about European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships 2025, ECU Board Meeting in Monaco, Invitation for European Individual Chess Championship 2026, activities of the ECU Commissions, and more...*

## ECU E-Magazine December & January





*Chess Makes You Smarter.*

## In December 2025 edition of the ECU E-Magazine you may read about:

- European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025
- ECU Board Meeting, Monaco
- Information for ECU General Assembly
- FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championship 2025
- Upcoming ECU events
- Activities of ECU Commissions

## Contents:



## In brief...

**European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships 2025** took place from 8-12 January in Monaco. The event gathered record-breaking 143 players in Rapid competition, while 120 players coming from 30 European federations took part in the Blitz Championship.

**GM Nino Batsiashvili (Georgia)** triumphed in the European Women's Rapid Chess Championship 2025, while **IM Eline Roebers (Netherlands)** triumphed in the European Women's Blitz Chess Championship 2025.

European Chess Union has its seat in Switzerland.  
European Chess Union is an independent association founded in 1985 in Graz, Austria. European Chess Union has 54 National federations members, and each year organises more than 20 prestigious events.  
Website: [europechess.org](http://europechess.org)

**The first quarterly ECU Board Meeting** took place on 11th of January 2025 in Monaco, during the European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025. Main information and decisions are published on the ECU Website, and added to this issue of the ECU Magazine.

# European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Champions 2025 crowned in Monaco

The European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships 2025 took place from 8-12 January in Monte-Carlo, Monaco.

The Championship gathered record-breaking 143 players from 30 European federations in the Rapid competition, while 120 players from 30 federations took part in the Blitz Chess Championship.

The event commenced with the European Women's Blitz Chess Championship 2025 which was played on Friday, 9th of January. The tournament was played in 13 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 3 minutes + 2 seconds increment.

The European Women's Rapid Chess Championship 2025 was played on 10-11 January in the same venue, with 11 swiss rounds, and time control of 15 minutes + 10 seconds increment.

The total prize fund of the event was 46.500 eur, with 15.200 euros in prizes for the Blitz Championship, and 31.300 euros of prizes in the Rapid Championship.

The event was organized by the Monaco Chess Federation, with the support by Mr. Evren Ucok, Ms. Inna Bazhenova, and Mr. Dmitry Samorukov.



# #EWRBCC2025, Monaco

The event commenced with the European Women's Blitz Chess Championship 2025 which was played on Friday, 9th of January.

The Winner of the tournament was determined in the dramatical final round and direct top place encounter between GM Bella Khotenashvili (GEO) and IM Eline Roebers (NED). Bella Khotenashvili had a full point edge upon the final round, but 19-year-old IM Eline Roebers scored a win in the final round to score 10/13 points, catch Khotenashvili on the top, and clinch the gold medal thanks to direct encounter tiebreak criteria!

As many as four players tied for the third place scoring 9.5 points each: IM Oliwia Kiolbasa (POL), IM Yuliia Osmak (UKR), GM Nino Batsiashvili (GEO), and WGM Alicja Sliwicka (POL). Having the best tiebreaks, IM Oliwia Kiolbasa claimed bronze medal.

A similar final-round scenario was seen at the European Women's Rapid Chess Championship 2025 which was played from 10-11 January in the same venue. Heading into the last round, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (SUI) had a sole lead with a full point edge over GM Nino Batsiashvili (GEO). The very last round featured a direct encounter between Batsiashvili and Kosteniuk who played for the trophy. Having White pieces, GM Nino Batsiashvili pushed for a win, defeated GM Alexandra Kosteniuk, and clinched the title with the final score of 9/11 points.

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk finished second, while six players tied for bronze medal scoring 8 points each: IM Sofio Gvetadze (GEO), IM Mai Narva (EST), IM Eline Roebers (NED), IM Ekaterina Atalik (TUR), FM Anastasia Avramidou (GRE), and IM Irina Bulmaga (ROU). Thanks to the best tiebreak criteria, IM Gvetadze Sofio won the medal.



GM Nino Batsiashvili clinched European Women's Rapid Chess Championship 2025, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk came second, and IM Sofio Gvetadze won bronze.





19-year-old IM Eline Roebers won the European Women's Blitz Chess Championship 2025, GM Bella Khotenashvili claimed silver, and IM Oliwia Kiolbasa won bronze.

Photos by Patricia Claros Aguilar



The Closing ceremony of the event took place yesterday evening in the playing venue with the attendance of the ECU President Mr. Zurab Azmaiparashvili, ECU Vice President and President of the Monaco Chess Federation Mr. Jean-Michel Rapaire, ECU Vice President Mr. Malcolm Pein, ECU Vice President Mr. Gunnar Bjornsson, ECU Vice President Mr. Alojzije Jankovic, ECU CEO Mr. Erald Dervishi, ECU Commercial Chief Advisor Mr. Moshe Slav, event's supporter Mr. Evren Ucok, and other distinguished guests.

The ECU President addressed the players, congratulated the Winners, and officially declared the event closed, and with the other distinguished attendees joined the Awarding ceremony for the medalists of the European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025, and winners of the special awards – the best veteran 50+ players, the best Monaco players, the best players in different rating categories, the best PACA players, and the best Alpes Maritimes player.

Final rankings and detailed information about the event can be found on the [ECU Website](#).

The European Women's Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025 was live broadcasted on the ECU YouTube channel with expert commentaries by GM Alojzije Jankovic, GM Amir Bagheri, and IM Almira Skripchenko. All videos can be replayed [here](#).

# ECU Board Meeting in Monaco

The ECU Board met on the 10th of January 2026 in Monaco under the great hospitality of the Monaco Chess federation and Mr. Jean Michel Rapaire.

## Main Information & Decisions

- The ECU General Assembly 2026 and elections will take place on Saturday, 18 July 2026, in Bucharest, Romania.  
<https://www.europechess.org/ecu-general-assembly-2026/>



- The Board appointed Mr. Jean-Claude Moingt (FRA) as Director of Corporate Chess.
- The Board discussed improvements for the European Blitz Chess Championships asking the ECU Arbiters Council to propose amendments in regulations concerning number of Arbiters, time schedule, procedure of recording the results and announcing the pairings.



- The ECU Board informed about the draft financial closing for 2025 and express its satisfaction for the positive results.



- The Board discussed the new IOC recommendations and the recent FIDE Congress decisions and issued a statement. ECU reaffirmed its alignment with IOC policy, deciding to readmit athletes and teams from Belarus to youth competitions.  
<https://www.europechess.org/ecu-statement-on-ioc-policy-and-fide-general-assembly-outcome/>



### European Chess Championships

- European Chess Super League (Open and Women) will be established as a new top-level competition. The regulations approved.
- European Women's Rapid & Blitz Chess Championship 2026 is awarded to the Monaco Chess Federation (7-11 January 2027).
- European School Chess Championship 2027 is awarded to Antalya, Turkey.
- European Youth Team Chess Championship 2027 is awarded to Mamaia, Romania and the European Youth Team Chess Championship 2028 is awarded to Budva, Montenegro.



- The new ECU official competition, European Junior Chess Championship U20 2026 awarded to Montenegro Chess Federation and the European Junior Chess Championship U20 2027 to Serbian Chess Federation.

- The option for the European Rapid and Youth Chess Championship 2028 is awarded to Serbian Chess Federation, under the conditions set by the ECU Board.

Detailed information can be found on the [ECU Website](#).



# Turkish Youth Chess Championships 2026 with nearly 3000 participants

The Turkish Youth Chess Championships 2026 took place from 24-31 January in Antalya Belek, with impressive participation of 2884 players!

The first move of the tournament was made by Zurab Azmaiparashvili, President of the European Chess Union. In one of the largest events in Europe and worldwide, a total of 2,884 players from across Turkey were competing in the championship (12 age categories from 7 to 18 years), aiming to be selected for the national youth squad of the Turkish Chess Federation.

Mr Zurab Azmaiparashvili, invited by the Turkish Chess Federation, spoke at the opening ceremony, strongly emphasized that chess is a universal sport appealing to individuals of all ages, and said that the high level of participation in the championship was extremely impressive. Azmaiparashvili stated that thousands of athletes encountering chess at a young age is a great source of pride, and that this interest is highly promising for the future of Turkish chess.

In his speech, President of the Turkish Chess Federation, Fethi Apaydin, emphasized that the organization has made a significant contribution to the systematic development of athletes



from a young age. President Apaydin expressed that the foundation of Turkish chess is growing stronger each year, and wished the athletes success, stating his belief that even greater achievements will be realized nationally and internationally in the coming years.

Detailed information about the event, links to standings and reports can be found on the [official website of the Turkish Chess Federation](#).



# Invitation

## ECU General Assembly 2026

**By decision of the ECU Board and with approval from the FIDE Council, the ECU General Assembly 2026 and elections will take place on Saturday, 18 July 2026, in Bucharest, Romania.**

The elections are scheduled in accordance with the ECU statutes and the completion of the current term of the ECU Board on 22 July 2026.

The ECU General Assembly will be hosted, unless there is an emergency NOC meeting, at the premises of the Romanian Olympic Committee, emphasising the European Chess Union's strong commitment to the Olympic family and its strategic goal of including chess in the Olympic Games.

The detailed invitation for the ECU Electoral Assembly 2026,

including the hosting conditions for delegates, will be published in due course, in accordance with the ECU statutes.

All the information and upcoming announcements can be followed through the [ECU Website](#).



# ECU Announcement



## EUROPEAN CHESS SUPER LEAGUE 2027

**European Chess Union Unveils the European Chess Super League 2027**  
The European Chess Union (ECU) is proud to announce the launch of the European Chess Super League, a groundbreaking new competition set to redefine the landscape of club chess across the continent. The inaugural edition will take place in 2027, with dates and location to be announced and a minimum budget of 500,000 euros.

**A New Era for European Club Chess**  
The European Chess Super League brings together eight of Europe's strongest chess clubs to compete for a prize fund of €300,000. The event will showcase world-class talent, thrilling matches, and a commitment to sporting excellence and innovation.

### Key Features:

- Elite Participation:** 8 clubs, including top 4 finishers from the European Chess Club Cup, the highest-rated club, the organizer's team, and two ECU wild cards available to any club in Europe and worldwide.
- Prize Fund:** €300,000, with €110,000 awarded to the champion.
- Format:** 7-round round-robin, 6 boards per team, two reserves allowed per team.

Main Partner and sponsor is the "SUPER Foundation" based in Bucharest, Romania - major supporter of Chess Top Events as the "Grand Chess Tour".

Detailed information and complete press release can be found [here](#).

### ECU President's Statement

"The European Chess Super League represents a bold step forward for chess in Europe. By assembling the top clubs & players, we are setting new standards for excellence and visibility in our sport," said Zurab Azmaiparashvili, President of the European Chess Union.

### Next step the European Women's Chess Super League 2028

The European Chess Union (ECU) is in advanced talks with Monaco Chess federation and major sponsors to launch the European Women's Chess Super League, with 8 elite clubs in 2028. The draft regulations having approved by the ECU Board as also the minimum budget of 400,000 euros. More details will follow.

# European Individual Chess Championship 2026 - Official Invitation

The European Individual Chess Championship 2025 will be held from 6 April to 20 April 2026 in Katowice, Poland.

The Championship will be played in 11 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 90 minutes for 40 moves + 30 minutes for the rest of the game with an increment of 30 seconds for every move, starting from move one.

The total prize fund of the event is 100.000 EUR, with 20.000 EUR reserved for the Winner of the event. The prize fund features 92.000 EUR for General prizes, and 8.000 EUR for special prizes.

The European Individual Chess Championship 2026 is part of the World Chess Championship Cycle, and according to the FIDE regulations for World Cup and the ECU Board decision, 20\* players will qualify. (*\*Under the current FIDE World Cup regulations, FIDE is the only body responsible for the qualification spots*)

The European Individual Chess Championship 2026 is open for all players from National Chess Federations members of the European Chess Union (ECU) without rating or title limitations. There is no limit of number of participants per federation, but



applications can only be sent by National Chess Federations or approved by the National Chess Federations. Players registered before to Belarus Chess Federation and transferred to FIDE flag can participate according to the special FIDE status.

All players shall register until the 28th of February 2026 (application deadline). The registration will be made exclusively online through the website: [www.eicc2026.eu](http://www.eicc2026.eu).

The playing venue of the Championship is Arena Katowice, and the official hotel of the event is \*\*\*\*Park Hotel Diamant. If the Hotel Diamant reaches full capacity, the organizer will arrange accommodation at another hotel. Transportation between the hotel and the playing venue (approximately 10 minutes) will be provided free of charge.

Detailed information and Official invitation for the Championship can be found on the ECU [Website](#) or [Official Website of the event](#).



# European School Chess Championship 2026

## Official Invitation



The European Chess Union (ECU), together with the Croatian Chess Federation, invite all National Chess Federations of ECU to participate at European School Chess Championship 2026, which will take place from April 26th to May 6th 2026 in Trogir, Croatia.

The event will be played in six age categories: U7, U9, U11, U13, U15 and U17, Open and Girls sections separately. Each Championship will be played in 9 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 90 minutes + 30 seconds increment for each move, starting from move one.



Trogir, Croatia (Photo Shutterstock)



Hotel Medena is the official hotel and the playing venue of the Championship

Each ECU member federation can register the unlimited number of players that meet the age requirements of each of the 12 respective sections. The Champions (1st place) in the previous European School Championships have the personal right, as invited players, to participate in the tournament of the corresponding age-category or a higher age-category, if they fulfill the conditions of ECU Rules (Article K.1.1).

In order to ensure proper championship standards, all players and invited players have to register through their national federations. The entry form should be filled in by the national federation on the official website of the championship. Registration must be done before March 27th (registration deadline).

The Official hotel of the event and the playing venue is Hotel Medena, Trogir, Croatia.

Gold, silver, and bronze cups will be

awarded for 1st , 2nd and 3rd place. Participants who finish between 4th and 10th place in each group will receive medals and a present from the organizers. The champions of each European School Championship category shall have the personal right to participate as invited players in the 2027 European School Championship

Detailed information about the event, general regulations and tournament invitation can be found on the [ECU Website](#).

# Tata Steel Chess 2026

The 88th edition of the Tata Steel Chess took place from 16th of January to 1st of February in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands.

The prestigious chess event, often called the Wimbledon of Chess, featured Masters, Challengers, and Amateur tournaments, as well as a variety of side events for chess enthusiasts and visitors.

GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov emerged as the sole Winner of the Masters tournament, scoring 9/13 points. GM Javokhir Sindarov came second with 8.5 points, while GM Hans Niemann, GM Vincent Keymer and GM Jorden Van Foreest tied for third place scoring 7.5 points each.

16-year-old GM Andy Woodward triumphed in the Challengers tournament with the score of 10/13 points and qualified for the next Tata Steel Masters tournament. Woodward finished half a point ahead of GM Vasyl Ivanchuk who came second with 9.5 points, and GM Aydin Suleymanli was third with 9 points.

15-year-old IM Christian Gloeckler won the nine-round Qualifiers competition with the impressive score of 8.5/9 points, and booked his seat for next edition of the Tata Steel Challengers!



Both Masters and Challengers tournaments were played as 14-player round-robin events, with 13 rounds and time control of 120 minutes for 40 moves, plus 30 minutes until the end of the game with increment of 30 seconds per move starting after move 40.

Detailed information about the event, final rankings and reports can be found on the [official webpage of the tournament](#).

*Photos by Lennart Ootes/ Tata Steel Chess*



# FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship 2025

FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships 2025 took place from 25-30 December in Doha, Qatar, bringing together the world's elite chess players and talents. The event was held at the Sports and Events Complex, Qatar University, with a total prize fund of over €1,000,000.

The first events on the schedule were the FIDE World Rapid Open and Women's Chess Championships 2025 which took place from 26-28 of December. Open tournament was played in 13 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 15 minutes + 10 seconds increment.

GM Magnus Carlsen (NOR) emerged as the sole Winner of the event with the score of 10.5 points and a full point edge over a group of four players who tied for second place with 9.5 points each. Carlsen clinched his sixth crown in the World Rapid (2014, 2015, 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2025).

GM Vladislav Artemiev (FIDE), GM Arjun Erigaisi (IND), GM Hans Niemann (USA) and GM Leinier Dominguez Perez (USA) tied for silver medal, but thanks to the best tiebreaks, GM Artemiev won silver and GM Erigaisi clinched bronze.

Women's Rapid tournament was played in 11 rounds, swiss system, with the same time control, in the same playing venue.

After 11 played rounds, GM Zhu Jiner (CHN), GM Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE), and GM Humpy Koneru (IND) tied for the first place scoring 8.5 points each. Zhu Jiner and Aleksandra Goryachkina had better tiebreaks, and the Winner was determined in the final two-game blitz mini match. Goryachkina quickly won the first and drew the second to secure the title, Zhu Jiner won silver, and Humpy Koneru claimed bronze medal.

Photos by Lennart Ootes/ FIDE





The Blitz championship was played in different format, with 19 rounds in the Open section which were played according to the swiss system and determined four finalists for stage two. In the Women's event, the first phase featured 15 swiss rounds, and the top four players qualified for the second stage.

After the initial 19 rounds in the Open event, GM Arjun Erigaisi (IND), GM Fabiano Caruana (USA), GM Magnus Carlsen (NOR) and GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (AZE) finished in the top four and went to the finals where Magnus Carlsen defeated Fabiano Caruana in the semifinals, and then beat Nodirbek Abdusattorov in the finals to clinch his 9th title in the World Blitz.

After 15 rounds in the Womne's section, GM Bibisara Assaubayeva (KAZ), GM Anna Muzychuk (UKR), GM Eline Roebers (NED) and GM Zhu Jiner (CHN) qualified for the final stage. GM Bibisara Assaubayeva defeated GM Zhu Jiner in the semifinals, and then took the win against GM Anna Muzychuk in the final match to claim her third World Blitz title and qualify for the 2026 Candidates.



Detailed information about the event, final rankings and final reports can be found through the [Official website of the Championship](#).

# Judit Polgar's story on Netflix - Premiere set for February 6th!

Netflix has released the official trailer for "Queen of Chess", a documentary about the greatest female chess player of all time - Judit Polgar! The movie directed by Rory Kennedy had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on January 27, and received the standing ovations. The Netflix premiere is scheduled for 6th of February, 2026.

"We are living in a moment when so many people are still fighting for equal footing — Judit's life shows what can happen when one person has the resolve to break through barriers," the producer Kennedy says. "I'm thrilled to be premiering Queen of Chess at Sundance, a festival that helped launch my career many years ago and means so much to me and Mark, my producing partner and husband. With this film, my team and I hope to give Judit Polgár, the greatest female chess player in history, the spotlight that her groundbreaking journey deserves. We are excited to bring Judit's story to Netflix, where people around the world will be able to witness just what is possible when we challenge assumptions about gender, talent, and opportunity."

The documentary "Queen of Chess" follows the life and career of Judit Polgar, and traces her chess journey from childhood through her rise on the top. Judit Polgar shattered barriers and redefined what was possible in chess. She proved that talent, dedication, and determination know no limits. Her fearless approach to the game and her competitive spirit inspired millions around the world. From her historic victories against world champions to her pioneering role in advancing chess globally, Judit's journey is a testament to excellence and perseverance.

Official trailer can be played here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8pmIgtLKBXg>



**Netflix premiere -  
6th of February, 2026!**

The documentary is produced by Rory Kennedy, Mark Bailey, and Keven McAlester.

# ECU Commission for Women's Chess



## European Women's Chess Trophy 2025 – Winners

ECU Commission For Women's Chess announced three years ago **“European Women's Chess Trophy”**, an initiative that aimed to financially reward women and girls who actively take part in the solely women's tournaments in Europe. **The project is supported by the FIDE Development Fund.**

It was great to see the growing number of female tournaments in Europe last year, as well as number of female players that had been considered for this trophy. The Winners were announced after calculation of points awarded according to placement of a player in tournaments listed in the regulations/criteria for the project. The Winners are announced for 4 categories: Juniors U20, Rating U2200, Rating 2201-2400, and 2400+.

### The Winners of Category Juniors U20:

1. Mariia Manko (Switzerland)
2. Eline Roebers (Netherlands)
3. Nadya Toncheva (Bulgaria)

### The Winners of Category U2000:

1. Anastasia Kirtadze (Georgia)
2. Gundula Heinatz (Switzerland)
3. Jovana Srđanović (Serbia)

### The Winners of Category 2201-2400:

1. Irina Bulmaga (Romania)
2. Andrea-Cristina Navrotescu (France)
3. Evgeniya Doluhanova (Ukraine)

### The Winners of the Category 2400+:

1. Stavroula Tsolakidou (Greece)
2. Teodora Injac (Serbia)
3. Mai Narva (Estonia)

Results published by the ECU Commission for Women's Chess as well as detailed information about the criteria, tournaments included in the list and other details can be found through the [ECU Website](#).

Activities of the ECU Commission for Women's Chess can be followed through the [Commission official webpage](#).

## Mission Statement

Established in 2014, the ECU Education Commission has been committed to advancing the role of chess in education, supporting and inspiring chess educators worldwide. Its core objective is to promote Chess in Education and to

advocate for its inclusion in schools, based on its educational value.

The Commission's approach has always been practical: helping educators to use chess as an effective learning tool in educational settings.

In 2017, it launched the ECU School Chess Teacher Title scheme, designed to recognise educators who demonstrate the knowledge and competence required to teach chess for educational purposes.

[Read more](#)

The ECU Education Commission places its emphasis firmly on the educational value of chess rather than on preparing children for competitive play.



While participation in tournaments can be a positive experience for some pupils, it is not the primary objective. The focus is on the transferable skills chess develops, such as concentration, problem-solving and emotional regulation, which are directly applicable across the curriculum and in everyday life.

Chess is used as a learning tool for everyone, not a talent-selection mechanism for a few. Its value lies in supporting personal development, inclusion and lifelong learning, ensuring that every child benefits from the game regardless of their competitive ambitions or playing strength.

# ECU Education Commission

## Collaboration with ChessKid to support ECU School Chess Teachers and their students

With ChessKid Gold, your students will have access to:

 Structured video lessons – step-by-step, child-friendly instruction from beginner to advanced levels  
 Puzzles & training – thousands of interactive

exercises to build tactical vision and calculation

 Safe online play – a child-safe platform, with no public chat and strong safety settings

 Online tournaments – you can organise events for your own groups and also join special ChessKid

events

 Official Girls Club & Boys Club – fun, moderated clubs with extra activities, events, and challenges

[Claim your ChessKid Gold membership here](#)



**GOOD NEWS!**

**Free ChessKid Gold membership**  
for all ECU School Chess Teachers  
(ECU101 course graduates)  
and their students for 6 months. ✨

In collaboration with ChessKid and ECU Education Commission



## Ask children how they believe chess lessons should be delivered

*"If I were a chess teacher, I would be supportive of children who aren't confident in playing chess, so they gradually get more confident and love chess more than before."*

Their advice is less about chess content and more about relationships. If we

read between the lines, they are telling us how they want adults to treat them in learning spaces: how they want to be supported, listened to and understood.

Their reflections offer a fundamental educational truth: children are well

aware of the emotional and relational dimensions of learning. When we take their perspectives seriously, we gain valuable insight into the conditions under which learning and confidence can genuinely develop.

[Read more](#)

### IF I WERE A CHESS TEACHER

Learner-centred  
philosophy of Chess  
in Education



## Where Chess Meets Creativity

As educators, we often talk about the application of chess “beyond the board”. It is great to see when Chess Federations help turn that idea into practice and encourage schools to use chess as an educational tool. [Vera Avramidou, ECU Chess in](#)

[Education Ambassador for Greece](#) and School Chess Officer of the Greek Chess Federation, shared a wonderful initiative that does exactly this. With the launch of the 2nd National Student Competition “Chess Creations with Verses, Colours and

Numbers”, Greece is demonstrating how federations can actively support creative, school-based projects that allow children to experience and explore chess through art, language and imagination.

[Read more](#)

**GREECE LAUNCHES THE 2ND NATIONAL STUDENT COMPETITION “CHESS CREATIONS WITH VERSES, COLOURS AND NUMBERS”**



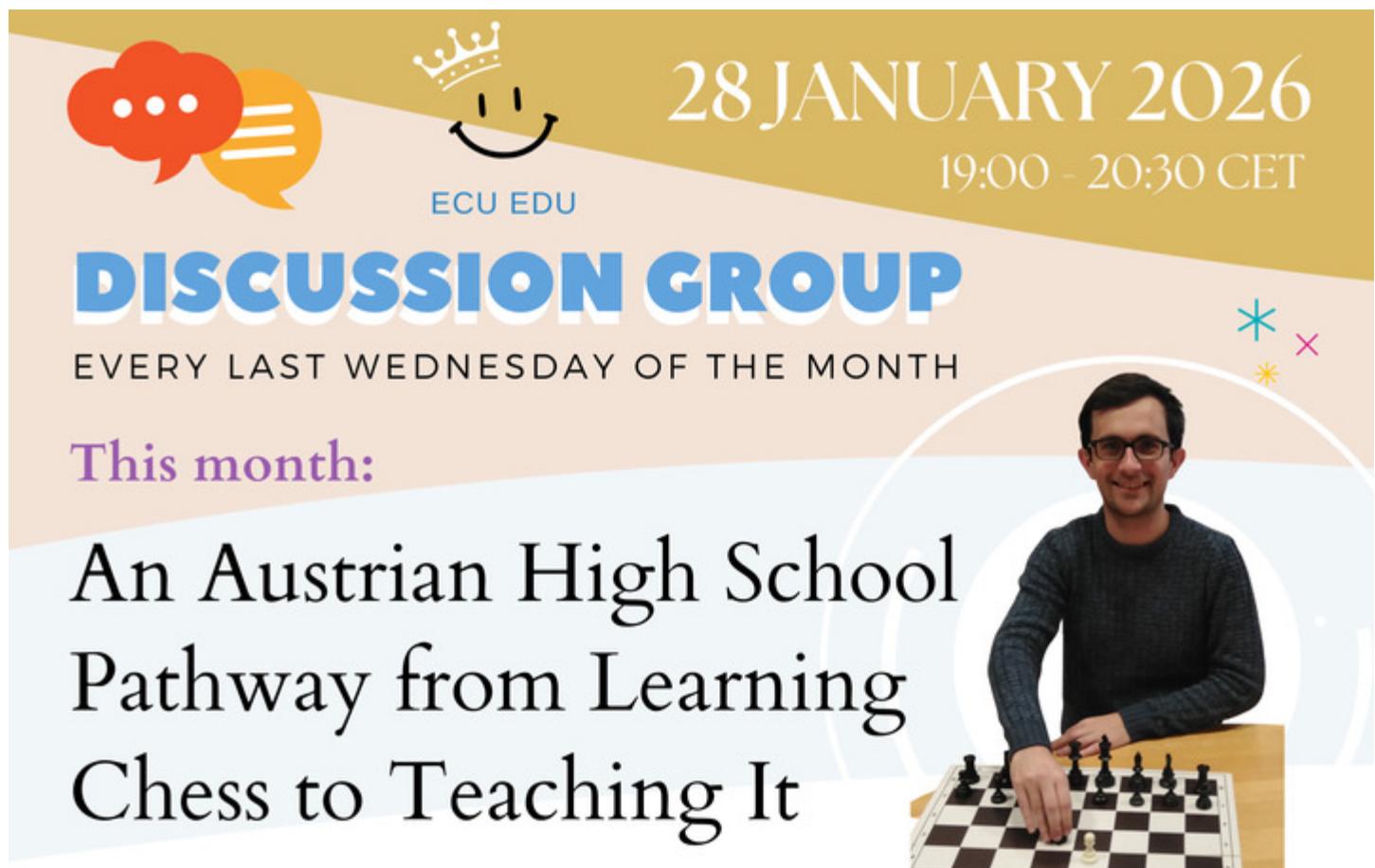
# ECU Education Commission

## With Chess to the Final Exam

This presentation introduces an innovative Austrian high-school initiative that embeds chess education directly into the formal curriculum. In Austria, students aged 16–18 (Grades 10–12) can choose optional subjects ("Wahlpflichtfächer") as

part of their upper-secondary studies, including subjects that may count towards the oral part of the final school-leaving examination. The course runs over approximately 160 hours and is open to all students, including complete

beginners with no prior knowledge of chess. What makes this project exceptional is its dual focus: pupils not only learn to play chess, but also learn how to teach it. **Join the discussion to learn more! Free event, [Sign up here](#)**



The banner features a yellow header with the date "28 JANUARY 2026" and time "19:00 - 20:30 CET". Below the date are two icons: a red speech bubble with three dots and a yellow speech bubble with an equals sign, followed by a crown icon and the text "ECU EDU". The main title "DISCUSSION GROUP" is in large blue letters. Below it, the text "EVERY LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH" is in smaller black letters. To the right, there is a photo of a man with glasses, identified as Hans-Jürgen Koller, sitting at a chessboard. The background is white with a light blue circular graphic on the right.

**This month:**

### An Austrian High School Pathway from Learning Chess to Teaching It

Hans-Jürgen Koller (Austria)

## What Is ENIGMAT?

ENIGMAT is a visual chess puzzle game. It is made up of 24 chessboards, each divided into four separate parts. Students must assemble the four parts to form a complete board that shows a checkmate position.

Children love ENIGMAT,

they are fully engaged with it, and I can assure you, ENIGMAT is great fun and a challenge for all ages who love chess and puzzles.

The tactile, hands-on nature of Enigmat as a logic puzzle makes learning checkmate

patterns and developing board vision especially appealing for students. It helps learners see the chessboard long before they are expected to calculate moves.

[Read more about the educational benefits of the game](#)



# ENIGMAT



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## Checkmate Puzzle Challenge

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# ECU Education Commission

## Share Your Best Chess in Education Lesson Activities with the World

We are inviting chess educators from around the world to help us build a free, open-access resource bank of fun and engaging Chess in Education classroom activities.

If you have an activity your students love and it works

well in real classrooms, we want to hear about it!

### Why Contribute?

Your contribution, big or small, can make a difference to hundreds of classrooms. By sharing your ideas, you are helping educators around the world with more tools to

make chess fun and meaningful for children. Your experience and creativity can inspire educators around the world and reach teachers and students in diverse settings, including schools with limited resources.

[Read more](#)

Created by educators, for educators

RESOURCES FOR CHESS IN EDUCATION

Got a favourite lesson activity your students love?

Share it with us!

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

www.edu.europechess.org

Help us create a free resource bank of engaging classroom activities

Chess in Education

**Lesson activity**

by ..... (from)

Activity title:

Objective / Skill Developed  
(What learning goal, knowledge or skill was designed to develop?)

Prior Knowledge    Age Group Level    Duration    Group Format    Resources Materials

How it Works:  
(Describe briefly: teaching instructions and what students do.)

Variations / Extensions

Why it Worked So Well:  
(What made it engaging or effective? What did the children say they enjoyed or learnt the most?)

Chess in Education Resources - [www.edu.europechess.org](http://www.edu.europechess.org)

# Chess in Education

# Lesson activity



by Brigitta Peszleg (UK)

Activity title:

## BINGO

### Objective / Skill Developed

(What learning goal, knowledge or skill was designed to develop?)

- Improve fluency in identifying and naming squares on the chessboard
- Strengthen board vision and coordinate recognition
- Develop collaboration and communication skills (paired activity)

Prior Knowledge	Age Group Level	Duration Time Required	Group Format	Resources Materials
Files, ranks, squares, coordinates	Primary school, age 6-11, beginners	10-15 minutes	Pairs (students work in teams of two)	Chessboards, pawns, demoboard

### How it Works:

(Describe briefly: teaching instructions and what students do.)

- Ask children to randomly place 8 same-colored pawns on their chessboard (any squares).
- Pawns become "frozen" and cannot be moved.
- The teacher calls out a square name (e.g., e4).
- Students have 7-8 seconds to find the square. If a pawn is on that square, they take it off.
- The teacher claps and says, "Next square," before calling out the following square and marking each one on the demonstration board (Logiqboard).
- The first team to remove their final 5<sup>th</sup> (6<sup>th</sup>,7<sup>th</sup>,8<sup>th</sup>) pawn calls "BINGO!" and wins.

### Variations / Extensions

- Call squares faster or slower to change pace
- Have students take turns calling squares to the group
- Use only squares from one quadrant to focus on specific board areas

### Why It Worked So Well:

(What made it engaging or effective? What did the children say they enjoyed or learnt the most?)

- Creates excitement through the increasing tension of getting closer to taking off their final pawn
- Encourages fast, repeated exposure to coordinates (high repetition = strong retention)
- Simple, active, and highly engaging. Students often request to play again
- Works well as a warm-up that energises the class and reinforces essential skills



# Lesson activity



by Frank Große (Germany)

Activity title:

## Flip the Board!

### Objective / Skill Developed

(What learning goal, knowledge or skill was designed to develop?)

- By pausing after a decisive mistake, the children will identify tactical motifs (forks, pins, hanging pieces), understand typical blunders and learn defensive techniques
- Cooperative learning, Peer teaching, Inclusion rather than exclusion

Prior Knowledge	Age Group Level	Duration Time Required	Group Format	Resources Materials
How the pieces move, knowing the basic rules	6-14, advanced beginners and intermediate	15-20 minutes	Pairs, in a full class	Chessboards and pieces, NO clocks

### How it Works:

(Describe briefly: teaching instructions and what students do.)

- Children play a game against each other and try their best, but as the number of participants in an after-school group increases, the problem arises that the differences in playing strength also become bigger. Then, many children no longer want to play against certain others, which leads to group formation and exclusion. To avoid this, a stronger and a weaker child are deliberately paired together. When the stronger child has a decisive material advantage, both players look together at how this happened and how the loss of material could have been prevented. Then the board is turned (colour swap), which means the weaker player now has the material advantage, and the game continues. Turning the board may be repeated several times until the end of the game. Always when the weaker player suffers a decisive material disadvantage.

### Why It Worked So Well:

(What made it engaging or effective? What did the children say they enjoyed or learnt the most?)

- With larger groups, the advantage is that children can help each other with explanations, because the chess tutor cannot be everywhere at the same time. The activity gives pride to the stronger player to teach their peers, and a meaningful challenge for the weaker one to support their development in recognising threats, responding to attacks, and applying defensive concepts.



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6-7, 13-14, 20-21 Februarie 2026



#### Data și ora

Vineri, **6,13,20.02.2026**, 18:00 - 20:00 CET

Sâmbătă, **7.02.2026**, 17:00 - 20:00 CET

Sâmbătă, **14,21.02.2026**, 18:00 - 20:00 CET



#### Instructor curs:

**Lejean-Anușca Mădălina-Maria**

Lider Program Național Educație prin șah  
Federația Română de Șah



#### Mai multe informații

**Limba cursului:** Română

**Locație:** Online Google Meet

**Taxă curs:** €90 (include certificatul ECU School Chess Teacher)

#### Înscriere:

<https://ecuhub.eu/course/the-smart-method-to-teach-chess/>

Contact: madalina.anusca@frsah.ro | info.edu@europechess.org



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20. - 22. Februar 2026



#### Zeiten

Freitag, 20. Februar, 18:00 bis 21:00 Uhr

Samstag, 21. Februar, 09:00 bis 15:00 Uhr

Sonntag, 22. Februar, 09:00 bis 13:00 Uhr



#### Kursleiter

**Lothar Handrich**

Referent für Breiten- und Schulschach  
beim Österreichischen Schachbund



#### Mehr Information

**Kurssprache: Deutsch**

**Ort:** Online Zoom Webinar

Kursgebühr: €90 (Including the ECU School Chess Teacher Certificate)

**Registrierung:**

<https://ecuhub.eu/course/the-smart-method-to-teach-chess/>

Kontakt: [lothar.handrich@bildung.gv.at](mailto:lothar.handrich@bildung.gv.at) | [info.edu@europechess.org](mailto:info.edu@europechess.org)



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07 - 08 March 2026



### Date and Time

Saturday, 07 March 2026

Sunday, 08 March 2026

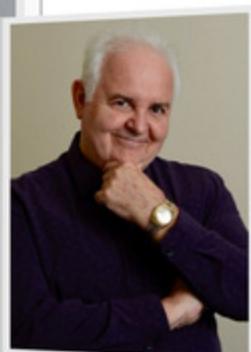
10:00 - 16:30 CET



### Course instructors

**Jesper Hall**, Chair, ECU EDU

**John Foley**, Member, ECU EDU,  
Director of ChessPlus



### More information

**Course Language:** English

Location: Online Zoom Webinar

Course Fee: €90 (Including the ECU School Chess Teacher Certificate)

### Registration:

<https://ecuhub.eu/course/the-smart-method-to-teach-chess/>

Contact: info.edu@europechess.org



# Arbiters Corner

## Advancing Arbiter Excellence: The ECU Arbiters' Council in 2025

The Arbiters' Council of the European Chess Union (ECU) played an important role throughout 2025 in strengthening the professionalism, education and international integration of the Arbiters across Europe. Through a variety of training programs, anti-cheating initiatives, administrative developments and operational support for European events, the Council supported key standards of adjudication and fair play in the European chess calendar.

In the following pages you can read about ECU Arbiters Council activities in 2025, and following topics:

Education & Training: A Year of Structured Professional Development, Call of Interest and Arbiter Appointments, Webinars, Seminars and Thematic Events in Practice, Support for Event Operations and Reporting, and Looking Ahead: Legacy and Influence.

Text was prepared by the Chairman of the ECU Arbiters Council, Mr. Takis Nikolopoulos.

Detailed information about the ECU Arbiters Council can be found on the [official website of the council](#).



Photo from the ECU Arbiters Council meeting during the ECU Congress 2025 in Batumi, Georgia

## **1. Education & Training: A Year of Structured Professional Development**

A major focus of the Council in 2025 was the participation in the Training and Innovation Hub, which was an ambitious training program designed by ECU, by organizing a Chess Arbiters Education Program to enhance the skills of arbiters at multiple levels:

- The program featured monthly Swiss Manager seminars, available in five languages, aimed at helping arbiters master tournament management software — from basic use to advanced functions — with certification provided upon completion.
- Parallel monthly Anti-Cheating seminars were organized throughout the year, equipping arbiters with practical skills to detect and handle cheating issues at ECU championships. These included demonstrations and video support and led to certification at the end.
- Advanced Education seminars brought deeper insights into the Laws of Chess and tournament case analysis, led by experienced arbiters as Takis Nikolopoulos and Tomek Delega.
- Additional specialised online sessions included Live Boards operations training, and informational webinars on Safe Play and harassment handling and CPR-BLS (basic life support), demonstrating a holistic approach to modern arbiter responsibilities.

In total 20 Seminars were organized during the whole 2025, where 295 Arbiters from 41 Federations participated. These training paths not only expanded technical skills but also supported arbiters in earning points toward ECU appointment consideration for match roles.

## **2. Call of Interest and Arbiter Appointments**

A significant administrative activity in early 2025 was the "Call of Interest" process for arbiters wishing to be appointed to European events organized by the ECU:

- This formal application window invited International and FIDE Arbiters under ECU-affiliated federations to submit their interest for match arbiter appointments in European Championships. The Council used this process to ensure that a portion of appointed arbiters was selected based on qualifications, experience and personal preferences.
- The deadline for submissions was January 15, 2025, with federations able to provide remarks through January 26.
- For the 2026 cycle closed in December 2025, the Council adjusted procedures: reducing the number of events an individual arbiter could request (to encourage "reasoned applications"), and establishing a new Head of Anti-Cheating application section within the process.

This structured nomination system underpins fair and transparent deployment of arbiters across major European competitions.

## **3. Webinars, Seminars and Thematic Events in Practice**

Throughout the year, the Arbiters' Council organized and reported on numerous thematic webinars and live seminars:

- Swiss Manager, Anti-Cheating and Live Boards seminars continued into mid- and late 2025, with instruction by experienced arbiters such as Marco Biagioli, Alex Holowczak, Matthew Carr, Stephane Escafre, Tania Karali, Chris Bird and Kleon Ballas.
- The ECU Safe Play Webinar on September 21, 2025, introduced arbiters to new policies and expectations on harassment and safe-play enforcement during competitions.
- Specialized sessions in Italian, German and Spanish (June/July/November 2025) brought the training to broader national audiences.
- Additionally, the Council provided for the ECU Magazine a reflective content like "Arbiters Corner" essays, including insights on the unique challenges of arbiting non-standard formats such as Freestyle Chess.

## **4. Support for Event Operations and Reporting**

The Arbiters' Council maintained its procedural framework for post-event reporting and evaluation:

- Per the ECU Rulebook effective from January 1, 2025, Chief Arbiters of European Championships are required to submit detailed Arbiters Reports — including evaluations, GDPR forms and narrative summaries — to the Council for review and archival.
- These reports contribute to quality control and help inform future training and appointment decisions.
- The Council's ongoing commitment to transparent documentation was reaffirmed via their "Arbiters Reports" archive.

According to these reports, in all the tournaments organized by the ECU in 2025 173 Arbiters (98 IA, 41 FA, and 34 NA) were appointed. Among them 55 were women.

The ECU Arbiters Council appointed 46 of them (28 men and 18 women).

## **5. Looking Ahead: Legacy and Influence**

The work of the Arbiters' Council in 2025 reflects its evolving role as both educator and regulator within the European chess ecosystem. By combining structured training, anti-cheating expertise, digital tool mastery, and transparent appointment procedures, the Council has helped establish stronger professional standards and greater connection among arbiters across Europe.

These initiatives not only ensured consistency in adjudicating continental events but also prepared Europe's arbiters for the expanding complexities of modern competitive chess — from rapid and blitz formats to safe-play and fairness concerns — setting a solid foundation for 2026 and beyond.

Text by: Nikos Sidiropoulos

# Problem Solving Chess



**Diagram 1:** White plays and mates in 2. Several knight moves create a threat, but which one (if any) is correct?



**Diagram 2:** White plays and mates in 3. An objectively difficult problem with many variations, created by the young Serbian solver and composer Ilija Serafimovic.

Speaking about the World Solving Cup, it began in October and already four events have taken place. The first one was on 11 and 12 October in Yerevan, Armenia. After a narrowly contested tournament Danila Pavlov (RUS) emerged first with 73.5/90 points, ahead of Aleksandr Bulavka (BLR) with 71.25 points, who made an impressive comeback after some time of inactivity and achieved a GM norm. Third was Ural Khasanov (RUS) with 70.25 points, while Davit Stepanyan was the first among the Armenian competitors. To give you a



**ECSC 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY 18<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN  
1<sup>ST</sup> LEG - ATHENS - GREECE CHESS SOLVING  
27<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025 CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

With this issue, we begin a new column dedicated to chess problem solving. Our objective is to journey through the thrilling landscape of international solving tournaments and to introduce chess friends to the captivating world of problems. We will follow the main tournaments and news from the international scene, as organized by the World Federation for Chess Composition (WFCC). This includes updates from the World Solving Cup circuit (WSC), news on major championships like the World and European Chess Solving Championships (WCSC/ECSC), and insights into the global community. Get ready for a regular dose of brilliant compositions, top solver rankings, and the sheer pleasure of solving!

taste of the competition, a problem from this event is shown on Diagram 1.

Pavlov repeated his success a couple of weeks later in Bern with 55 points out of a possible 60. Eddy Van Beers (BEL) was second with 54 points and the surprising young Ukrainian Taras Rudenko third with 52.75, achieving an IM norm in parallel. Roland Ott was the first among the Swiss solvers, thus gaining the national title. Partly due to its location at the heart of Europe, the Swiss championship has established itself as

one of the strongest tournaments of the year, attracting solvers from all over the continent (Benelux, Germany, Lithuania, Russia, etc.). The competition follows the WCSC format but with one problem less for each genre (i.e. 2 instead of 3), so that it can be completed in a single day.

In the diagram 2, you can try to solve the 3-mover which proved decisive for the top standings. Pavlov solved it completely (5 points), Van Beers missed a variation dropping a point, Rudenko didn't solve it at all.



On November 8, in his hometown of Geel, Eddy Van Beers became Belgian champion for the 25th time (!), prevailing with ease with 44.5 out of 60 points. Dolf Wissmann (NED) was second with 37.25 and Joost Michielsen (NED) third with 33.75. The Belgian competition follows the ISC format: a solver has to solve 6 problems—one from each genre—in 120 minutes, and after a short break, another set of 6 problems in a further 120 minutes.

Below is a 3-mover from the competition (Diagram 3). The first move for White ("key move" or simply "key" in chess solving terminology) is spectacular, but not very hard to spot for a suspected solver.



Caption text #3 13 + 10

The fourth stage of the 2025-2026 World Solving Cup (WSC) took place in the Romanian city of Cugir on the 22nd and 23rd of November. This event saw participation only from solvers of the host country. The winner was Daniel Dumitrescu (75.75/90), second was Razvan-Andrei Burja-Udrea (68.25/90), and third was Cristian-Daniel Oltean (65.25/90).

A 2-mover from the Cugir City Championship follows and is shown on Diagram 4. As this is our introductory issue, all displayed problems are orthodox with few moves; in later issues, we will move on to more hardcore solving territory.

In the overall standings of the World Solving Cup, Danila Pavlov leads with 36 points so far, followed by Eddy Van Beers with 28. It should be noted that the method of allocating points has changed this year to make the circuit more competitive. In the past, the most important tournaments awarded winners considerably more points than the others. Now, the system is much more balanced, meaning a solver must excel in many different events to win the Cup.

We will close this introductory article with some unfortunate news. This year's World Chess Solving Championship (WCSC) was scheduled to take place in early August in Sant Vicent del Raspeig, Spain. However, the Spanish organizers informed the WFCC that they had to cancel the event. As a result, the federation is now searching for an alternative host, with a final decision expected in February. Traditionally, though not always, the WCSC is held in the summer, while the other major competition of the year -the European Chess Solving Championship (ECSC)- takes place in the spring.

**Article and Diagrams prepared by Nikos Sidiropoulos,  
Contact: nikos7688@yahoo.com**



Diagram 4

#### Solutions of diagrams

- 1) None of them, the key is 1.Qh7! If 1.Nb7? Q:b7!, 1.Ne4? Qb6!, 1.Na4? Qa7!, 1.Nf7? Bf6!, 1.Ng4? Q:b5!, Aleksey Gasparyan, 9th WCCT 2012-13
- 2) 1.Qe6 threatening 2.R:e3 (and then either 3.Qe5# or 3.Q:e3#). Black defenses against the main threat are: i) 1...Rff4 2.Re4+, ii) 1...Rgf4 2.B:e7, iii) 1...Rf3 2.d6, iv) 1...Rf6 2.B:f6, v) 1...g2 2.d6, vi) 1...Bg2 2.Q:g4+, vii) 1...Qf2 2.Nf5+, Ilija Serafimovic, Original für die SLM 2025
- 3) 1.Qh3! threat 2.f4+. Defenses: i) 1...Qc5+ 2.R:c5+, ii) 1...Nd5 2.N8f7+, iii) 1...Nf5 2.N6f7+, iv) 1...N:c2/Ng2 2.f7+, Valery Shavyrin, Die Schwalbe, 2019
- 4) 1.Bb5. Some interesting tries: 1.Bb3? (threat 2.Na4#) R:a3!, 1.e3? (threat 2.Rc5#) Bg8!, 1.d7? (threat 2.Qe5#) Bb8!, 1.Rdd2? (threat 2.Bb4#) Nd3!, 1.Qg7? (threat 2.Q:f6#) B:b6!, Unto Heinonen, WCCT1 1972-75

# FUN ZONE

Back in time...

About legendary chess player - **Reuben Fine**

**Reuben Fine** (October 11, 1914 – March 26, 1993) was an American chess grandmaster, psychologist, and author from New York City, United States.

Fine learned to play chess at a young age and quickly became one of the strongest players in the United States. During the 1930s, he achieved international success and was widely regarded as one of the world's leading players. He won the U.S. Open Championship multiple times and competed in many major international tournaments.

His greatest achievement came in 1938, when he tied for first place with Paul Keres at the AVRO tournament, one of the strongest chess tournaments ever held. This result placed Fine among the top contenders for the World Chess Championship. After World War II, he declined to participate in the 1948 World Championship tournament and gradually withdrew from competitive chess.

Alongside his chess career, Fine pursued academic studies in psychology and earned a doctorate. He later became a professor and author, writing influential chess books, including *Basic Chess Endings*, which remains a classic work on endgame theory.



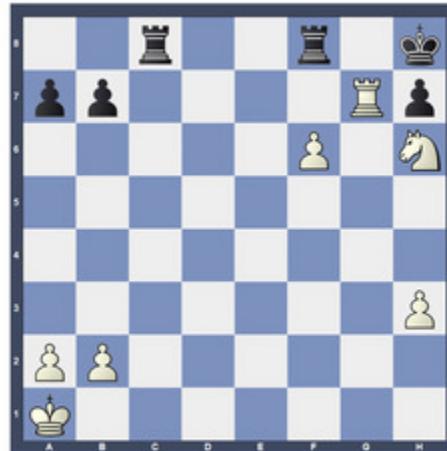
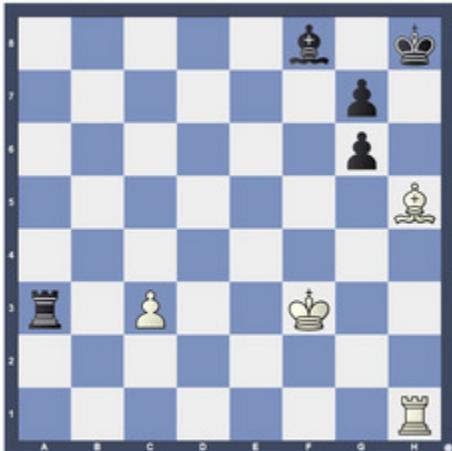
## Paul Morphy says about chess:

- Believe firmly that in chess there are no rules without exceptions.
- I'd rather have a Pawn than a finger
- Combinations have always been the most intriguing aspect of Chess. The masters look for them, the public applauds them, the critics praise them. It is because combinations are possible that Chess is more than a lifeless mathematical exercise. They are the poetry of the game; they are to Chess what melody is to music.

In this edition of the ECU E-Magazine we prepared three positions where white mates in two. Solutions will be published in the next edition.

Solutions from ECU E-Magazine November 2025

- #Puzzle 1: 1.Qxh6+!! Kxh6 2.Ne6#
- #Puzzle 2: 1.Kg6+ Rf6 2.Bxf6#
- #Puzzle 3: 1.Qf8+!! Rxf8 2.Rxf8#





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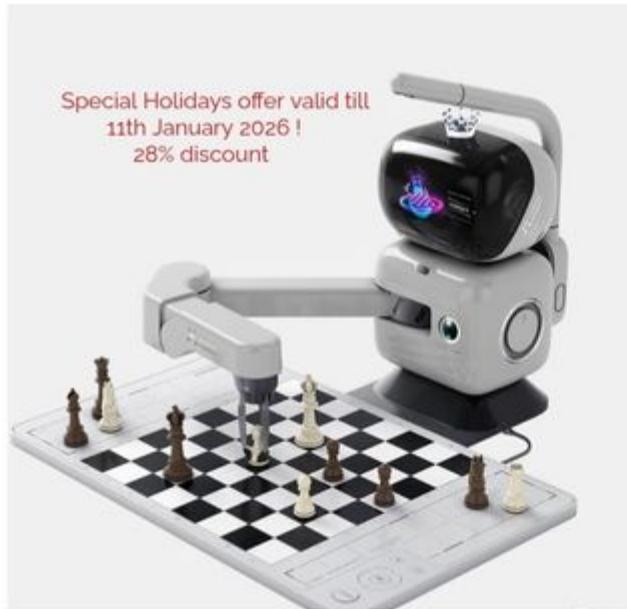
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