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FIDE Freestyle
Chess World
Championship

Women's moves,
Lively squares -
Chess Unites Greece

SenseRobot special
offer through
ECUHub

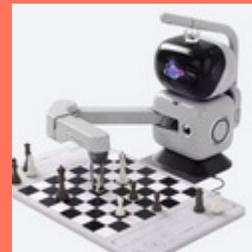
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ECU E-Magazine February 2026



Prague Chess Festival 2026 - Winners crowned in Czech Republic!



In this edition of the ECU Magazine you may read about Prague Chess Festival 2026, Freestyle FIDE World Chess Championship 2026, Women's Moves, Lively Squares: Chess Unites Greece event, upcoming ECU events and tournaments, ECU General Assembly 2026, and more...



Chess Makes You Smarter.

In February 2026 edition of the ECU E-Magazine you may read about:

- Prague Chess Festival 2026
- FIDE Freestyle World Chess Championship 2026
- InformatioWomen's Moves, Lively Squares: Chess United Greece event
- Upcoming ECU events
- Activities of ECU Commissions

Contents:



In brief...

The 2026 International Prague Chess Festival took place from 24th of February to 6th of March 2026 in the capital of Czech Republic. The Festival featured Masters, Challengers and Futures round-robin events that were simultaneously played in the same venue, and included Open tournaments, Rapid events and side chess tournaments, simul exhibitions and much more.

The Festival, with special emphasizes on the Futures tournament, was supported by the European Chess Union.

During the free day at the Festival, the participants of the Futures tournament had a chance to meet and play simultaneous exhibition with legendary Swedish Grandmaster and former World #1, GM Pia Cramling.

The participants also experienced playing with the chess robot - SenseRobot, and during the event, the European Chess Union donated SenseRobot to the Czech Chess Federation.

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

Prague Chess Festival 2026

Prague International Chess Festival 2026 took place from 24th of February to 6th of March in the capital of Czech Republic, featuring nine exciting days filled with rich chess programme.

The Festival was supported by the European Chess Union, especially the organization of the Futures tournament which gathered ten girls, young chess talents, who competed under exclusive playing conditions identical to those provided for the participants of the Masters and Challengers events.

The ECU President Mr. Zurab Azmaiparashvili attended the event, and officially opened the final round of the tournament. Before the start of the final round, Mr. Azmaiparashvili addressed the players and praised the organizers. Mr. Zurab Azmaiparashvili then inaugurated the round with the Tournament Director Mr. Petr Boleslav, after making the first ceremonial move in the game between Prague Chess Masters Winner – GM Nodirbek Abdustorov, and GM Hans Niemann.



Opening of the final round of the event / Photo by Prague Chess Festival - Official Facebook page

Winners of Prague Chess Festival

The Prague Chess Masters tournament was the highlight of the Prague Chess Festival festival, gathering ten world-class grandmasters who competed for the title. After nine played rounds, GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (UZB, 2751) emerged as the sole Winner of the event with the score of 6 points. Abdusattorov finished a full point ahead of GM Parham Maghsoodloo (IRI, 2708), GM Aravindh Chithambaram (IND, 2700) and GM Jordan Van Foreest (NED, 2705) who tied for the second place.

16-year-old IM Vavlav Finek (CZE, 2538) won the Challengers tournament with the score of 6.5 points and booked his seat for the next issue of the Prague Chess Masters. GM Daniil Yuffa (ESP, 2604) finished second with 6 points, while GM Divya Deshmukh (IND, 2497) came third with the score of 5 points.

Supported by the European Chess Union, the Futures competition format and time control also followed those of the Masters and Challengers tournaments.

After nine played rounds, Kaja Rzadzowska (POL, 1906) won the event with the score of 7 points. Christina Jordan (SUI, 1889) came second with the score of 6.5 points, while three players tied for third place scoring 5 points



each: Zuzana Stara (CZE, 1976), Clio Alessi (ITA, 1886), and Bao Anh Angelina Nguyen Doan (POL, 1853). Having the best tiebreak criteria, Zuzana Stara (CZE, 1976) climbed the podium and finished the event in the third place.

The ECU President Mr. Zurab Azmaiparshvili attended the Closing ceremony of the event and presented trophies to the best-ranked Futures players together with ECU Tournament Director Mr. Petr Pisk.

Photos from Prague Chess Festival- Facebook page



Women's Chess Day in #Prague



The rest day of the main tournaments at the Prague International Chess Festival was dedicated to supporting women's chess and celebrated the International Women's Day. At the Grand Hotel Prague Towers, VIP guests and friends of the Festival gathered to continue last year's tradition - celebrate young chess talents from around the world.

It is the second year of the Futures category, which features an exclusively female line-up. This year's patron is the tournament ambassador and former world #1, Grandmaster Pia Cramling.

The legendary Swedish Grandmaster Pia Cramling first delivered an expert lecture for the Futures participants at the Don Giovanni Hotel and then headed close to the walls of Vyšehrad, where she played an attractive simultaneous exhibition against the Prague Futures players.

During the event, the participants of the Futures tournament had a chance to play chess with European Chess Union's official AI training partner - SenseRobot.

The SenseRobot was donated by the European Chess Union to Czech Chess Federation.

The Chess Women's Day was also attended by Czech actress and five-time Czech Film and Television Academy Award winner Aňa Geislerová. Indian champion and Challengers participant Divya Deshmukh introduced her to the secrets of the royal game.



The participants had a chance to play chess with SenseRobot!



More information about the event can be found on the [Official website](#).

More information about the SenseRobot, official ECU partner and the first home robot that plays, teaches and speaks, can be found on the [ECU Website](#), or the [ECUHub](#).

Magnus Carlsen wins FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship 2026

The inaugural edition of the FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship 2026 took place from 13-15 February 2026 in Weissenhouse, Germany.

The event featured rapid round-robin phase, knockout phase, and final & placement match phases.

Magnus Carlsen emerged as the winner of the event after first emerging as the best-ranked player of the round-robin event. Carlsen then faced Nodirbek Abdusattorov in the semi-finals, defeated him and advanced to the finals where he faced Fabiano Caruana.

The final match consisted of four games, with the first two ending in draws. Fabiano Caruana had a completely winning position in the third game, but Magnus Carlsen managed to turn the tables and score a crucial victory! After drawing the fourth and final game, Carlsen secured the match win and the title!

In the match for third place, Nodirbek Abdusattorov defeated Vincent Keymer. The medalists (Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana and Nodirbek Abdusattorov) have qualified for the 2027 championship.

Clinching the FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship 2026, Magnus Carlsen claimed his 21st world champion title! Carlsen is now a five-time FIDE World Classical Champion, six-time Rapid World Champion, nine-time Blitz World Champion, and Freestyle World Chess Champion!

Detailed information about the event and all results and final rankings can be found on the [official website of the event](#).



Photo by Freestyle Chess/ Lennart Ootes

International Women's Day

Women's Moves, Lively Squares: Chess United Greece



To mark International Women's Day, Greek Chess Federation, through its Committee for Women's Chess & Gender Equality, organized a nationwide, simultaneous chess event on Sunday, 8 March 2026, titled 'Women's Moves, Lively Squares: Chess Unites Greece'.

Hundreds of women and girls gathered in 14 Greek cities, in squares and clubs across the country, to play chess and compete in simultaneous exhibitions, celebrating the International Women's Day. The event was dedicated to strengthening the presence of women in chess, promoting chess in public spaces. The action was supported by ECU.

European Women's Individual Chess Championship 2026 – Invitation



The European Women's Chess Championship 2026 will take place from 24th of May to 6th of June, 2026 in Batumi, Georgia.

The European Women's Chess Championship 2026 is part of the FIDE Women's World Chess Championship cycle and gives qualification spots for the FIDE Women World Cup. According to the decision of the ECU at least 10 players(*) will qualify. (*Under the current FIDE Women World Cup regulations, FIDE is the only body responsible for rules of the FIDE Women World Cup qualification spots.)

The total prize fund of the Championship will be 60.000 EUR, with 10.000 EUR reserved for the Winner of the event.

The European Women's Chess Championship 2026 will be played in 11 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 90 minutes for 40 moves, plus 30 minutes until the end of the game, with 30-second increment for each move, starting from the move one.

The Official hotel of the event will be *****Euphoria Hotel Batumi, and the playing venue of the event will be located within the Hotel complex.

The event is open to all female players representing federations listed as the ECU members, without rating or title limitations. Each national federation member of the ECU has the right to register unlimited women players. In order to ensure proper tournament standards, ECU member federations must fully complete the excel registration form (see on the website) and send it back to the contact person before the registration deadline – April 10th, 2026. Incomplete registrations will not be accepted.



Batumi, Georgia will host the European Women's Chess Championship 2026



Detailed information about the event, schedule, prize list, and regulations can be found on the [ECU Website](#).

European Junior U20 Chess Championship 2026 – Official invitation

Montenegro Chess Federation (MCF) and the European Chess Union (ECU) have the honor to invite all the National Federations members of the European Chess Union to participate in the European Junior U20 Chess Championship 2026 which will be held at Hotel Grand, Cetinje, Montenegro, from 5th August to 16th August 2026.

The event will be played in two categories: Open U20 and Girls U20, with 9 swiss rounds in each competition, and the time control of 90 minutes for the first 40 moves, followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game, with a 30-second increment per move, starting from the move one.

The event is open to players born on or after 1st of January 2006, representing National federations listed as the ECU members. Each ECU National Federation can register one invited player in one of the categories, open or girls. The players placed 1-3 in the 2025 European Open and Girls Youth U18 Chess



Championships have the right to participate as invited players. In addition, ECU member federations have the right to send unlimited number of the additional players in both categories.

All registrations shall be submitted through National Federations until the registration deadline – 5th of June 2026.

Prize fund

The total prize fund of the event is 15.000 EUR, with direct titles awards and qualification spots for FIDE World Junior U20 Chess Championship.

The title awards for each section are as follows:

Girls section:

- Gold - WGM norm
- 1st equal - WIM title, silver & bronze - WIM norm
- Silver and Bronze - WFM title

Open section:

- Gold - GM norm
- 1st equal - IM title, silver & bronze - IM norm
- Silver and Bronze - FM title

The complete list of prizes can be found in the official invitation of the event which is published on the [ECU Website](#).

The playing venue of the event will be Hotel Grand Cetinje, which is also the official hotel of the tournament.



European Youth Team Chess Championship 2026 – Official regulations



Pardubice, Czech Republic will host the European Youth Team Chess Championship 2026



AVE CHESS z.s., the Czech Chess Federation and the European Chess Union have the honour to invite all European Chess Federations to participate in the EUROPEAN YOUTH TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2026 organised in Pardubice, Czech Republic from 25th July (arrival) to 2nd August (departure) 2026.

The event will be played in two age categories: U12, and U18, open and girls sections separately. The playing members of the teams shall not have reached the age of 12 or 18, depending on category, by 1st January 2026. Teams consist of four players and one reserve in the open competitions and two female players and one reserve in the girl competitions.

Each tournament will be played in 7 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 90 min. + 30 sec. increment for every move played starting from move 1. If there are eight teams or less in a competition, the competition will be played as a Round Robin tournament. In such case, the drawing of lots will take place at the Captain's Meeting.

The playing hall is the multi-purpose "Enteria Arena" (ice hockey stadium).

The winning team of the open

competition receives the title "European Youth Team Champion 2026" in its respective age category and the winning team of the girls competition receives the title "European Youth Team Champion for Girls 2026" in its respective age category. The winning team of the combined age category of the competition (sum of the match points from both tournaments open & girls, then, if equal, sum of the game points) receives the title "Absolute European Youth Team Champion 2026" in its respective age category.

The first three (3) teams in each competition will receive trophies. Each member of the winning team (players, reserve and captain) will receive a gold medal. The members of the 2nd and 3rd placed teams will each receive a silver and bronze medal respectively.

Detailed information about the event, official regulations, and contact information can be found through the [ECU Website](#).

European Senior Team Chess Championship 2026 – Invitation

The European Senior Team Chess Championship 2026 will take place from 26th August to 5th September 2026 in Hersonissos, Crete, Greece.

The event will be played in two age categories: 50+ and 65+, open and women's sections separately. Each championship will be played in 9 rounds, swiss system, with the time control of 90 minutes for 40 moves + 30 minutes for the rest of the game+ 30 seconds increment for every move played. A separate Women's Championship will be organised if there are at least 8 teams in the respective age category. Otherwise, the Women's Championship shall be merged with the respective Open category with separate prizes.

Each National Federation of the European Chess Union has the right to register an unlimited number of teams in both categories: Open and Women 50+ & 65+. Each team should consist of four (4) players and optionally one (1) reserve player. The teams may represent a National Federation or any regional structure of a National Federation (club teams, city teams, regional teams, national teams, or simply friends, etc. -there is no limitation), but all players must be members of the same federation.



The playing venue of the Championship is the Conference room of the official hotel of the event – ****Hotel Royal Belvedere Hersonissos.

The total prize fund of the event is 16.000 EUR and the Winners of the European Senior Team Championships 50+ and 65+ will be awarded the title "European Senior Team Champion 2026".

Official regulations of the event can be found on the [ECU Website](#).



ECU General Assembly 2026 - Invitation

By the 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 at the premises of the Romanian Olympic Committee, emphasizing the European Chess Union's strong commitment to the Olympic family and

its strategic goal of including chess in the Olympic Games.

Schedule:

- Arrival of Delegates (17th of July)
- ECU General Assembly & Elections (morning and afternoon sessions, 18th of July)
- Departure of Delegates

The detailed invitation for the ECU Electoral Assembly 2026, including the hosting conditions for delegates can be found on the [ECU Website](#).



Upcoming

Chess Party 2026, Stockholm, Sweden

European Chess Union and its ECU Education Commission are proud to announce to be partners of the huge Chess Party 2026 which will take place in Stockholm, Sweden.

A two-day chess festival will be held on April 17th and 18th, in Avicii Arena, bringing chess to the people where absolutely everyone is invited - from new beginners to experienced players, Grand Masters, Super GM's and people just interested and curious about chess wanting to see and learn how to play in a fun way. Children, youngsters, families and adults and participants from all over the world are more than welcome.

Henrik & Magnus Carlsen, Levy Rozman aka GOTHAMCHESS, Judit Polgár, Anna Cramling, Pia Cramling, Andrea Botez, IJustWantToBeCool, Nils Grandelius, Jesper Hall, and many more will contribute during Chessparty 2026.

The social aspect is key and the festival focuses on giving all the people visiting an awesome experience being activated, having fun, getting thrilled, engaged, inspired and entertained and maybe also feel mastery by learning something new from some of the best in the world of chess.

The Chess Party 2026 includes chess tournaments, lectures, courses on all levels, simultaneous exhibitions, World Record Attempt - Biggest Chess Lesson Ever, meetings with the honoured guests and Grandmasters.

All the information and detailed programme can be found on the [official website of the event](#).

CHESS PARTY 2026
STOCKHOLM
Biggest chess happening in Sweden ever!

GOTHAMCHESS LIVE
Show (Saturday)

Read more at www.chessparty.com

A FESTIVAL BRINGING CHESS TO THE PEOPLE - FOR ALL AGES, FROM JUST **CURIOUS** TO NEW **BEGINNERS** AND **SKILLED PLAYERS**

AVICII ARENA
Fri April 17th
Sat April 18th

GOTHAMCHESS LIVE - MAGNUS CARLSEN - IJUSTWANTTOBECOOOL
JUDIT POLGÁR - ANNA CRAMLING - ANDREA BOTEZ - NILS GRANDELIUS

Make New Chess Friends • Discover & Learn Chess In A Fun Way • Improve Your Game • Compete • Join Tournaments & Courses On All Levels • Experience Engaging Talks/Lectures/Debates • Henrik Carlsen (Story Of Magnus) • GM Pia Cramling • Thousand Player Tournament (Tusenmanna) • Meet & Greet Chess Superstars • Christer Sturmark & Victoria Larm Talkshow With Isabella Löwengrip & Peter Doggers • Jesper Hall • Michael Wiander • Awesome Simul Shows • Thrilling Exhibition Chess Matches • Play GMs • World Record Attempt (Biggest Chess Lesson Ever) • Schackfyran/56an (District Final By Stockholm Chess Federation) • Concerts • Shows • Awards & Much Much More! Entertaining Expo Including: Gaming • Board Games • Giveaways • Svarta Hästen Pop-Up • New Tech • Shops • Exciting Merch/Products++

OUR PARTNERS:



IN MEMORIAM:

Grandmaster Jan Timman (1951–2026)

The European Chess Union (ECU) mourns the passing of Grandmaster Jan Timman, one of the most celebrated Dutch chess players and a towering figure in the international chess community. Timman, who passed away in February 2026, leaves behind a legacy marked by brilliance, creativity, and a lifelong dedication to the game.

Born in Amsterdam in 1951, Jan Timman rose to prominence as a leading contender on the world stage, earning the title of International Grandmaster in 1974. He was renowned for his imaginative play, deep strategic understanding, and his fighting spirit at the board. Timman competed at the highest levels, including Candidates matches and World Championship cycles, and was widely regarded as the strongest non-Soviet player of his generation.

Throughout his illustrious career, Timman was not only a formidable competitor but also an influential author and editor. His books and analyses have enriched chess literature, inspiring countless players across Europe and beyond. His contributions to chess journalism and his role as editor of "New In Chess" magazine further cemented his impact on the game.



On behalf of the European Chess Union, we extend our deepest condolences to Jan Timman's family, friends, and the entire Dutch chess community. His passion for chess, his sportsmanship, and his unwavering commitment to the game will continue to inspire generations. We honor his memory and celebrate his extraordinary life and achievements.

Jan Timman's legacy will forever remain a part of European and world chess history.



Role models work best when they feel reachable

A well-known study linked to the film *Queen of Katwe* offers an important insight for chess educators, particularly for those working with diverse communities.

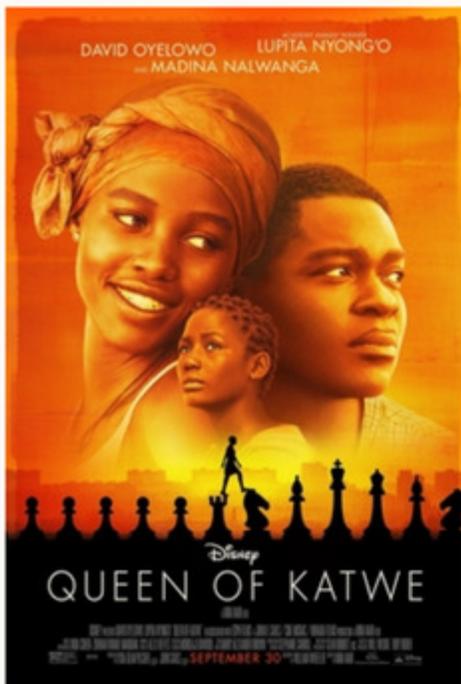
In *Chess in Education*, we often talk about skills such as problem-solving,

decision-making, focus, and resilience. But there is another ingredient that also shapes learning outcomes, who students believe chess is “for.” And that belief can be deeply influenced by role models.

A powerful study from Uganda helps us

understand why role models matter, how they work, and what chess educators can do differently in their classrooms.

[Read more](#)



A FILM, A MATHS EXAM AND A MINDSET SHIFT

Role Models in *Chess in Education*

What does research say?



ECU Chess in Education Ambassador – Czech Republic

The ECU Chess in Education Partnership Agreement was signed with the Czech Chess Federation, and we are happy to welcome Mgr. Venuše Souralová, MPA, ECU Chess in Education Ambassador for the Czech Republic.

The European Chess Union has launched the ECU Chess in Education Partnership with National Chess Federations to help promote chess as an educational tool in schools and institutions across Europe and beyond, strengthening the

connection amongst National Federations and the broader educational community.

ECU EDU's goal is to increase the visibility of the National Chess in Education initiatives...

[Read more](#)

The graphic features the ECU logo in a blue box at the top left. To its right is the European Chess Union logo, which includes a checkered square and the letters 'CU' above the text 'European Chess Union'. Below these logos, the text 'CHESS IN EDUCATION' is in blue and 'AMBASSADOR' is in red. To the right of this text is a black chess king piece. Below the text, 'Czech Republic' is written in black, and 'Venuše Souralová' is written in red. To the right of the text is a heart-shaped logo with the colors of the Czech flag (blue, white, and red). On the right side of the graphic is a framed portrait of Venuše Souralová, a woman with brown hair wearing a dark blue jacket with a circular badge on the lapel. The background is light orange with white circular patterns.

Forest Chess Pedagogy: Strategic Thinking Tools for Education and Sustainability

Forest Chess Pedagogy is a new interdisciplinary educational concept that combines chess-based strategic thinking with systems approaches used in forest science and sustainability education.

Join the next Discussion Group Meeting on

Wednesday, 25 March 2026, with Vitalie Gulca, a forestry expert and researcher with over 30 years of experience from Moldova.

The presentation explores how structured chess teaching methodologies can support scenario

thinking, strategic planning and systems understanding relevant to environmental education.

[More info and Registration](#)



DISCUSSION GROUP

EVERY LAST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

Forest Chess Pedagogy: Strategic Thinking Tools for Education and Sustainability

Join the Discussion!



ECU EDU

25 March 2026
19:00 - 20:30 CET



Vitalie Gulca (Moldova)

ECU Education Commission

Join the *Chess in Education* community at our events

We are incredibly proud to provide a collaborative platform through our training courses, discussion group meetings and various projects where educators can exchange ideas, resources and support each other with their expertise. This

vibrant community has tremendous knowledge, experience and willingness to learn from one another.

We offer [FIDE-endorsed training courses](#) for professional development and monthly [Discussion Group Meetings](#) to connect chess educators

from around the world.

[Visit our website for more info, dates & times](#)

We hope to see you at our courses and events



UPCOMING COURSES & EVENTS

Chess in Education



www.edu.europechess.org

Chess Party in Stockholm (Sweden)

A two-day chess festival bringing chess to the people where absolutely everyone is invited - from new beginners to experienced players, Grand Masters, Super GM's and people just interested and curious about chess wanting to

see and learn how to play in a fun way. Children, youngsters, families and adults and participants from all over the world are welcome.

Henrik & Magnus Carlsen, Levy Rozman aka GOTHAMCHESS, Judit Polgár, Anna Cramling, Pia

Cramling, Andrea Botez, IJustWantToBeCool, Nils Grandelius, Jesper Hall, and many more will contribute. The social aspect is key and the festival focuses on giving all the people visiting an awesome experience.

[Read more](#)



The poster for Chess Party 2026 Stockholm features a central graphic with the text "CHESS PARTY 2026" in large, stylized white letters. Below it, it says "STOCKHOLM Biggest chess happening in Sweden ever!". The background is a collage of chess-related images, including a person playing chess, a "GOTHAMCHESS LIVE" sign, and a group of people. At the bottom, there are five circular portraits of chess players: Nils Grandelius, Judit Polgár, Magnus Carlsen, Anna Cramling, and Andrea Botez. The dates "FRI APRIL 17th & SAT 18th" are displayed in a white box, and the venue "AVICII ARENA" is at the bottom.

CHESS PARTY 2026
STOCKHOLM
Biggest chess happening in Sweden ever!

Nils Grandelius
Judit Polgár
Magnus Carlsen
Anna Cramling
Andrea Botez

FRI APRIL 17th & SAT 18th

— AVICII ARENA —

Chess, AI and Educational Innovation Conference in Menorca (Spain)

The IV International Congress – Chess, Artificial Intelligence and Innovation in Education explores the evolving relationship between chess, emerging technologies, and modern pedagogy.

The congress brings together educators,

researchers, AI specialists, and chess professionals to discuss how artificial intelligence is reshaping the way chess is taught, studied, and applied in educational contexts. Through presentations, discussions, and shared experiences, the event

highlights innovative approaches that combine chess, digital tools, and research to support strategic learning in the classroom and beyond.

[Read more](#)



The Challenge of Placing Name Cards in Mega Events

Being an arbiter in chess events entails many chores and obligations. Some of them regarding the implementation of the Fide Laws while others are technical in nature.

One of the chores is placing players' name cards prior to each round.

That is done to show the players where they play and to display to spectators the identity of players.

Now, if you have the World Championship Match or a closed 10 player RR, this is not an issue. However, if we have a 400 player 11 round Swiss, like you have in European Championships, that daunting task becomes much more challenging.

The question is how do you distribute the name cards each round in the most efficient way. It is not an easy task. Each round you need first to assemble all name cards into one location, sort them out and prepare them to be placed in accordance with the round's pairings. It helps to have a good fast efficient system to breeze through that chore every round.

Throughout my tenure, I've seen many methods employed. Some set the names alphabetically, some in point groups, some according to federations, some without order at all. Each CA has his method and as long as it works for the team – All is good.

In this article I shall present my preferred method.



1. Assigning Numbers

The first task of the method is to assign each name card a number. Each player gets his ranking position number (also called Starting Number / Seed Number / Sno.). The rationale is that it's much easier and faster to identify numbers than to identify names. You are treating each player as a number (no offence).

In preparation for the event, you want to initially have the name cards prepared in a form which would allow to conveniently write the numbers on the flipside.

Following the first round's pairings, you assemble all name cards and place them in numerical order. Then you write the corresponding ranking list number on the back side of each name card.

You figure out how to write the numbers. You want them to be clear but take into consideration that if the digits are too large, it would be difficult to set them one next to the other. If numbers area on the right side you can set them as shown in the picture. It's best to use a thick highlighter to have the numbers visible and clear.

So, you set all name cards in ranking list order and then write all corresponding numbers on the flipside.

At the end of the day, you have let's say all 400 players set in numerical order with numbers 1 to 400.

Then you place all name cards in a service area (can be a table, floor, whatever you have), in a way that all numbers of all name cards are visible. You can set the name cards as you see fit. It depends on the size of the name cards and the space you have. You figure it out.

2. Printing the pairings

Have the pairings printed, making sure that the players' ranking list numbers appear in the printout. As mentioned, the numbers here are more important than the names.

**Text prepared by
IA Alon Shulman**

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

Arbiters Corner

3. Setting the name cards

Better work in groups. After the name cards are placed, have each team member in charge of a group of name cards. Then you hold the printed pairings sheet and start reading number after number, get each name card and set the piles. I do it in 2 piles. First I retrieve all players who play black starting at the last board pairing and move up all the way to board 1. Then I do the same process with retrieving all players playing white from bottom to top. At the end of the process, you had established 2 piles, "White" players and "Black" players. The reason to start with the last board, is that as a result of that sequence, the upper name card is the top board. It's easier to start distributing names from the top board all the way to the last board.

For example, (picture above), we have 41 players, 20 boards. We start with board 20, the player playing black. Number 20 is Machin Arbelo Pedro Alexis. Then number 40 M. Ashbrooke



Bo.	SNo.	White	Pts	Res.	Pts	Black	SNo.
1	1	GM Blohberger Felix	0	0		Morris Pete	21
2	22	WCM Prado Alexandra	0	0	IM	Krastev Alexander	2
3	3	IM Risteski Emil	0	0		Gulljord Birk	23
4	25	Melling Jonathon	0	0	FM	Willems Niels	4
5	5	FM Collins Adam	0	0		Webb Nick	26
6	27	Stokes Stephen	0	0	FM	Ribero Gustavo	6
7	7	Rosol Philip	0	0		Alvarez Jimenez Alfonso	28
8	29	Kelbas Dany	0	0	IM	Rakhmangulov Andrei	8
9	9	FM Liu Jason	0	0		McGill Derek	30
10	31	WCM Smith Lynda	0	0		Saine Zachary	10
11	11	Hushpit Lukian	0	0		Bienko Jagoda	32
12	33	Salmin Vitaliy	0	0	CM	Ivanov Andrey A.	12
13	13	Bartczak Komelusz	0	0		Dolan Peter	34
14	35	Kim Jimin	0	0	CM	Fernandez Manrique Agustin	14
15	15	Barnes Oliver	0	0		Ranade Akshay	36
16	37	Kong Jon	0	0		Halvorsen Benjamin	16
17	17	Woods Yannick	0	0		Vitukov Mykhailo	38
18	39	Armstrong Chris	0	0		Fathallah Joe	18
19	19	O'Flaherty Kevin	0	0	WCM	Ashbrooke Monika	40
20	41	Mabheba Vladimir	0	0		Machin Arbelo Pedro Alexis	20
21	24	Gallagher Brian	0	0			

and so on until we reach board 1 black who is number 21, Pete Morriss. We have a pile of 20 card names where the bottom one is number 20 while the top one is 21. Then we do the same with the white players starting with number 41 (24 Brian Gallagher is not paired) all the way to number 1 Felix Blohberger. Following the completion of piling, we have 2 piles – 20 name cards each.

4. Distributing the name cards

After the 2 piles are ready, you head on placing them on the corresponding boards. You start with board 1 all the way to the last board. Have one arbiter place all "Whites", another for the "Blacks" and a third arbiter following them with the pairings list verifying in actual time that there are no mistakes. You don't want mistakes. A little mistake and you have to fix many boards.

5. Cross Checking

After all names are placed, do another cross checking. One arbiter reads names while another confirms all names are in order. Pay special attention that the colors are correct. When done correctly this system should work perfectly.

Advantages of the system

A. No Mistakes - The main advantage is – no mistakes with names. Many names are similar to others. With numbers there could virtually be no mistakes.

B. Clear Inventory

You have a clear inventory count each round. Each round you need to collect all 400 players. With only names there is no way to know if you have all players accounted for. With numbers you know immediately if all are here and if not - who is missing.

C. One central HQ

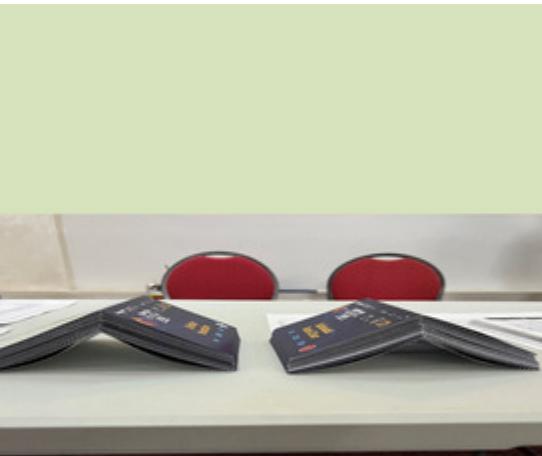
In mega events, you might have several playing halls. However, players generally move up and down all the time. You win you go up to hall 1, you lose you go down to hall 4. You must have one central operations zone where all name cards are assembled and then distributed back to their respective playing halls.

D. Operation Flows

The operation of placing the name cards just flows like a bird on a wing. Doesn't matter if you have 400 players or 4,000 players. You will see.

E. A social event

The process of setting the name cards can be actually a fun activity for the arbiters. A reason for all arbiters to meet after the round and exchange their daily experiences.



Text prepared by
IA Alon Shulman

Problem Solving Chess



GM Kacper Piorun won the Polish Chess Solving Championship 2026 which took place from 10-11 January 2026.



Figure 1. With the temperature falling to -10 at nights, Oder was completely frozen.

On the weekend of 10–11 January, the Polish Chess Solving Championship took place—arguably the strongest competition outside of the World and European Championships. Poland is an established chess-solving superpower, having produced three world champions among its ranks. Apart from the local participants, many distinguished solvers from abroad arrived in the freezing but always beautiful city of Wroclaw (see picture below). As a result, four of the top six solvers from the last World Championship were present, and the average rating of the top ten participants was 2568.86! Some of the high-rated participants (including myself) were essentially “norm-hunters”, having come to Wroclaw with ambitions for a good performance that would enable them to earn a norm.

It should be noted that titles and norms in chess solving are considerably more difficult to obtain than in over-the-board (OTB) chess. For example, to become a Grandmaster, a solver must cross the 2550 Elo rating threshold and achieve three GM norms, one of which must be earned at a World Chess Solving Championship (WCSC) or European Chess Solving Championship (ECSC). Achieving a norm itself is very difficult, as it requires a performance rating above 2650 in a very strong competition. In practice, few competitions satisfy all

the criteria for norm allocation, and often solvers only have a realistic norm opportunity at a WCSC or ECSC. For this reason, the participation of some elite solvers in a given event has a cascade effect: it encourages even more top solvers to join, since the event then has enough high-rated participants to make norms achievable.

Kacper Piorun was, as last year, the winner and Polish champion with 82.5 points (out of 90). Martynas Limontas (LTU) was second with 77, and Kevinas

Kuznecovas (LTU) took third with 75.5, earning his second GM norm. Piotr Murdzia (POL) finished fourth with 74 points, and I was fifth with 73—a performance close to my Elo rating, but a couple of points behind the score I needed for my final GM norm. After the end of the competition, the winner Kacper Piorun, six times World Champion and twice European Champion, had the kindness to answer some questions posed to him. It is always interesting to look into how a world master approaches his domain.



Diagram1

Q1: You consistently enter almost every tournament as the favorite. How do you personally manage the weight of expectation and transform that pressure into a performance advantage?

K.P. I rarely consider thinking about pressure. Experience from OTB chess games often helps, because there you compete against another opponent who may influence the pressure by his/her appearance. In solving your only opponents are: yourself and the problems which you have to solve during the round.



Diagram2

Q1: You consistently enter almost every tournament as the favorite. How do you manage the weight of expectation and transform that into a performance advantage?

K.P. I rarely consider thinking about pressure. Experience from OTB chess helps, because there you compete against opponent who may influence the pressure by their appearance. In solving your only opponents are: yourself and the problems which you have to solve during the round.

Q3: Among all your individual titles, which one holds the deepest personal significance for you, and why does that particular victory stand out?

K.P. Obviously the first world championship title in 2011. That was so unexpected, because I arrived in Jesi (Italy) after a horrendous World U-20 Chess Championship, so my only plan was to enjoy the event. And then I won both the Open and the Main Event, where the strongest players in the field at that time participated (Nunn, Murdzia, Evseev).

That was my breakthrough point in my chess solving career, and after that many more titles came.

Q4: Helpmates or selfmates? Which of these genres do you prefer and in which do you believe you are stronger?

K.P. Selfmates. For me it's easier to combine ideas in this type of problem with calculation. It's usually harder for me to create, so creating a mate sequence in helpmates is still tricky for me, even though I've worked a lot on solving them.

We will close this issue with some good news. The deadlock caused by the cancellation of the WCSC 2026 has finally been resolved. The German team has stepped in and successfully secured the organization of the 68th World Congress of Chess Composition (WCCC) and the 49th World Chess Solving Championship. The events will be held in Magdeburg from 8 to 15 August 2026.

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

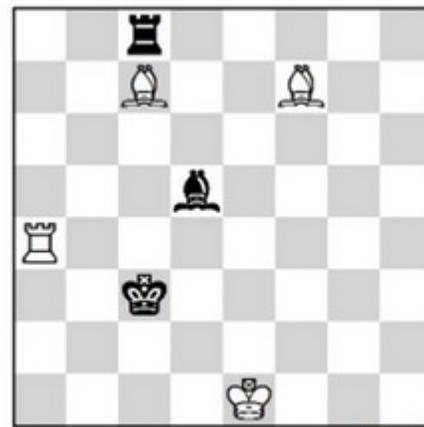


Diagram 3

Solutions of diagrams

- 1) Quite often in 2-movers a knight standing next to the black king (not diagonally) is the one which makes the key move. But problems of this kind are time consuming, as the solver under time pressure has to examine every possible knight move to find the correct one. 1.Nb3! (L.Salai jr., Martin 1993)
- 2) 1.Nc4 threatening 2.N :e3 R:e3 3.Q:e6#. Black defenses against the main threat are : i) 1...c1=Q/B 2.Qe2, ii) 1...Nf1 2.Rd5, iii) 1...Nc5 2.R:g5 iv) 1...Rb6 2.R:g5, v) 1...Bd5 2.R:g5, vi) 1...Bb6 2.Bd5, vii) 1...Rd5 2.Bf3. Remember a solver has to write all these variations to score full 5 points on the problem. (M.Keller, 1.pr.Deutsche Schachzeitung 1983-84)
- 3) 1.Be5 (1.Ba5? Kb3 2.Rb4 Ka3 3.B:d5 Rc5= as black picks up a bishop) Kb3 2.Ra8 Rc1 (if 2...Rc5 3.Bd6 Rb6 4.Rb8! R:b8 5.B:d5+- or 3...Rc1 4.Kd2 Rc2 5.Kd3 Rc3 6.Kd4 B:f7 7.Ra3+-) 3.Kd2 Rc2 4.Kd1 (4.Kd3? Bc4=) Rc5 5.Bd6 Rb5 6.Rb8 Ka4 7.Be8 (M.Minski, spez. h.m. Phenix 2016)

Chess4Hope - Greece 2025

Empowering Neurodiverse Youth through the Power of Chess (Ionia, Thessaloniki, Greece)

This initiative is part of the broader FIDE Social Commission's Chess for Hope pilot program launched in 2025 and implemented locally by Chess Club Ionias Thessalonikis, in partnership with the Club of Disabled Persons "Artemis" and support of the Municipality of Delta at Nea Magnisia. The Greece chapter focused on creating a safe, inclusive, and structured after-school environment for children with disabilities—where chess served as a medium to foster emotional resilience, cognitive development, and community integration.

Participants: 6–10 school children with neurodevelopmental and physical disabilities

Frequency: Weekly sessions on Tuesdays 19:30 - 20:00 (2 semesters)

The lessons were tailored for neurodiverse learners, incorporating visual aids and supportive repetition.

1st Semester (Feb – June 2025):

Introduction to chess basics: piece movement and board setup, Understanding rules like castling and en passant.

2nd Semester (Sept – Nov 2025):

Tactical training: checkmate in one and two moves; Endgame strategies: King + Rook vs King, and King + Queen vs King; Mini classroom tournaments to encourage peer engagement and reinforce learning.



Focused Learning, Shared Joy:

Smiles and focus around the board as children practice tactical moves—demonstrating joy and competence in a structured social activity.

The program offered integrated psychological support and fostered multiple layers of personal growth:

- Improved logical reasoning and strategic thinking
- Stronger emotional self-regulation and focus
- Greater confidence and social participation

The Chess4Hope – Greece chapter is an example of how chess can bridge ability gaps and nurture hope.

Rooted in the values of compassion, equal opportunity, and structured empowerment, this initiative has created a model of care, learning, and inclusion for neurodiverse youth in Thessaloniki. With continued support, this project has the potential to inspire similar programs across Europe and beyond ensuring that every move truly counts.



A Community of Care:

Intergenerational participation and community involvement reflect the project's broader social mission: to bring people of all backgrounds and ages together through chess.



Inclusive Foundations:

An inclusive classroom setting, where neurodiverse students are fully engaged in learning and supported by mentors



"Chess makes you smarter!"