

VOL. 5 ISSUE 2 · FEBRUARY 2026

CHESS JOURNAL

Official Newsletter of the Scott County Chess Club

Come join us on first Saturdays!

Our meetings are usually held on the **first Saturdays** of each month so everyone can plan ahead to join us.

We're Back on the First Saturday!!

The **NEXT regular meeting** will be held on **March 7*** at the Forest Public Library - 9 to 11 a.m. (210 S. Raleigh St.)

**This newsletter edition was finished after the February 7 meeting.*

Everyone is welcome!

All ages and skill levels

NO membership fee to participate

Players may bring their own chess set if they have one.

We have boards and sets to use.

(provided by Friends of Forest Library group)



scottcountychessclub



@scott_chess



Scott County Chess



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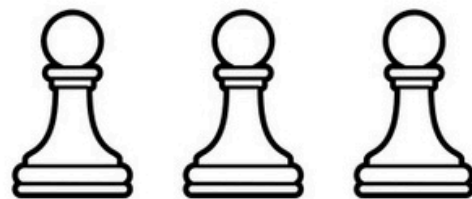
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Chess News Highlights

Women in Chess

Special documentary features Grandmaster Judit Polgar and her rise through male-dominated ranks

The world was introduced, again, to one of the most phenomenal chess players of all time late last week when a streaming service released a documentary production featuring **Judit Polgár.**



Polgár, 49, of Hungary, is widely considered the strongest female chess player of all time. She is the only woman to be ranked in the world top 10; the only woman to achieve a rating over 2700; and the only woman to compete in the final stage of a World Chess Championship. She was the top-rated woman in the world from January 1989 until her retirement from competitive chess in 2014.

At the age of 12, Polgár became the youngest player to break into the FIDE top 100. In 1991, she became the youngest player at the time to become a grandmaster at the age of 15 years and four months, breaking the 33-year old record previously held by former world champion Bobby Fischer.

On Friday, February 6, Netflix released a comprehensive documentary ***The Queen of Chess*** on its streaming service giving a detailed insight to Polgár's rise through chess and challenging a centuries held male dominance of the game.

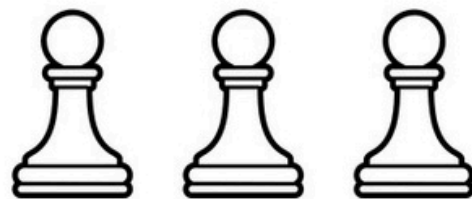


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Chess News Highlights: Women in Chess, Judit Polgar

Polgár was born on July 23, 1976, in Budapest to a Jewish-Hungarian family. Her sister Susan is a grandmaster and her other sister, Sofia, is an international master.

Traditionally, chess had been a male-dominated activity and women were often seen as weaker players, thus advancing the idea of a Women's World Champion. László Polgár disagreed with this notion and objected to his daughters having to participate in female-only events.

"Women are able to achieve results similar, in fields of intellectual activities, to that of men," he wrote. "Chess is a form of intellectual activity, so this applies to chess. Accordingly, we reject any kind of discrimination in this respect."

Therefore, through teaching chess to his three daughters, Polgár and his wife, Klara, conducted an educational experiment with the goal to prove women can learn and excel at chess, predicated on the thesis that "Geniuses are made, not born."

They received resistance from Hungarian authorities as home-schooling was not a "socialist" approach. They also received criticism at the time from some Western commentators for depriving the sisters of a normal childhood. This also put the Polgárs in conflict with the Hungarian Chess Federation of the day, whose policy was for women to play in women-only tournaments.

While László Polgár was credited with being an excellent chess coach, the Polgárs also employed professional chess players to teach their daughters, including Hungarian champion IM Tibor Florian, GM Pal Benko, and Russian GM Alexander Chernin. Susan, the eldest of the sisters, 5½ years older than Sofia and 7 years older than Judit, was the first of the sisters to achieve prominence in chess by winning tournaments, and by 1986, she was the world's top-rated female chess player.

Initially, being the youngest, Judit was separated from her sisters while in training. This only increased Judit's curiosity. After she learned the rules, they discovered Judit was able to find solutions to problems they were studying, and she was invited into the group. One evening, Susan was studying an endgame with their trainer, a strong international master. Unable to find the solution, they woke Judit, who was asleep in bed, and carried her into the training room. Still half asleep, Judit showed them how to solve the problem, after which they put her back to bed.

At age 5, she defeated a family friend without looking at the board. After the game, the friend joked: "You are good at chess, but I'm a good cook." Judit replied: "Do you cook without looking at the stove?" However, according to Susan, Judit was not the sister with the most talent, explaining: "Judit was a slow starter, but very hard-working." Judit described herself at that age as "obsessive" about chess. She first defeated an international master, Dolfi Drimer, at age 10 and a grandmaster, Lev Gutman, at age 11.

Her career would eventually include many achievements and battles with the best players in the game and winning deserved respect.

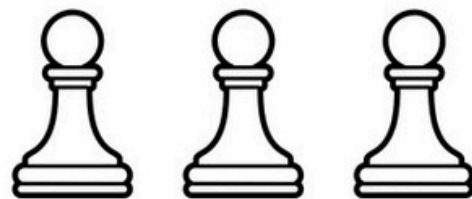


The Polgar family in Hungary gathers around chess as the father, Laszlo, conducted a famous educational experiment to prove that "geniuses are made, not born," training his three daughters, Susan, Sofia, and Judit from young age to become world chess masters.



(LEFT) Chess Grandmaster Gary Kasparov battles Judit Polgar in one of their multiple encounters. Polgar took several losses before finally defeating the world champion Russian. (RIGHT) The Polgar sisters celebrating their passion in chess, from left, Judit, Sofia, and Susan.





Black History Month in Chess

The game of chess is rich throughout history of cultures and civilizations around the world participating in this great game. We honor and salute them for their contributions. We recognize African-Americans who contributed and those who still serve to keep the game going to future generations of humanity. More information is on our web site.



Dr. James McCune Smith (1813) was the first Black American to hold a medical degree, which he earned in Scotland, not being permitted to study medicine in the United States. Smith was a passionate intellectual, a vocal and active abolitionist, a pioneer in modern medicine, and a great chess enthusiast.

Paul Morphy, the so-called Pride and Sorrow of Chess, one of the most celebrated chess players of all time, has some African heritage. This is quite a claim for Black Americans, and all of the Black chess community, as Morphy is arguably the most ingenious chess mind to have ever lived.



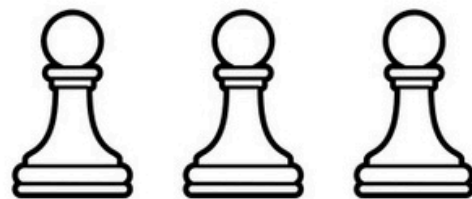
Maurice Ashley is a Jamaican-American chess grandmaster, author, and commentator. In 1992, Ashley shared the United States Game/10 chess championship with Maxim Dlugy. In 1999, Ashley became the first Black chess grandmaster.

Darrian Robinson is the highest-rated African American female chess player in the U.S. Chess Federation. Her USCF rating is 2086 and she holds the title of "Candidate Master." Her career became notable in 2006 when she ranked 6th in USCF's girls under 13 ranking. She represented the U.S. in Batumi, Georgia, at the World Youth Chess Championship.



'Chess is like life.
There are rewards for good choices, consequences for the bad choices.'





Chess Calendar

For more information about all listings:

see our website at scottcountychessclub.org

* **Scott County Chess Club** will hold a regular meeting

Saturday, March 7, 9-11 am, Public Library, Forest

*This newsletter edition was finished after the February meeting.

* **Tiger Pawns Scholastic Open**

Friday, February 20 - Hernando

* **PCS Scholastic Chess Tournament**

Saturday, February 21 - Hattiesburg

* **Pawns N' Pajamas**

Friday, February 27 - Olive Branch

* **Mississippi Girls Scholastic State Championship**

Saturday, February 28 - Flowood

* **MCSA Individual and Team Scholastic Championship Cup**

Saturday, March 7 - Mississippi State University, Starkville

* **Spring Break Chess Camp**

Monday-Thursday, March 9-12 - Dogmud Tavern, Ridgeland

*Tournament on March 12

* **Ole Miss Scholastic Chess Tournament**

Saturday, March 14 - University of Mississippi, Oxford

* **NEW Chess Club in Madison County!!!**

Mondays, 6 until 8 p.m., Panera Bread at Renaissance, Madison

* **Capital City Chess Club**

Tuesdays, 5:30 until 8:30 p.m., Scholtzky's, Flowood

Club tournaments and league games will continue at the Food Court at the Outlets of Mississippi mall in Pearl.

'I'm here
because I
was told
there would
be chess.'



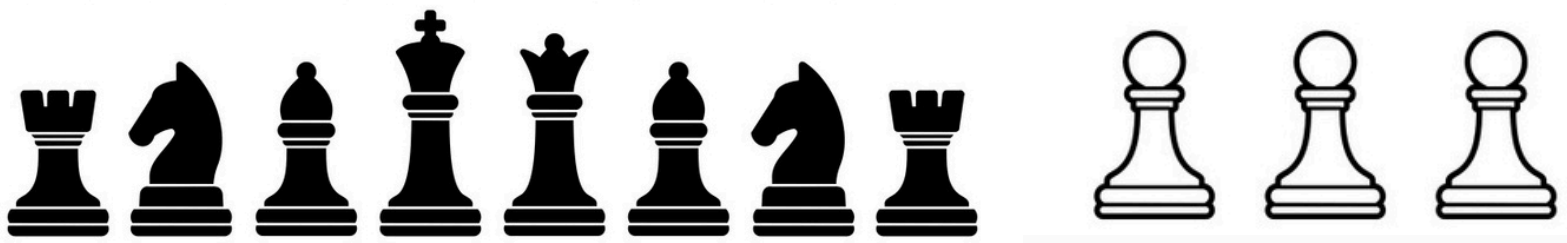
TOP TO BOTTOM CHESS:

* **Memphis Chess Club**

Weekly chess tournaments on Saturdays

* **Mississippi Coast Chess Club**

Thursdays- Newk's, Gulfport



Scott County Chess Club sponsored tournament

5th annual Bienville Chess Classic

MORTON – The 4th annual **Bienville Chess Classic tournament** is set for **Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at Roosevelt State Park in Morton. This event will feature only individuals playing rated and unrated games. **Registration is open!** Our first Bienville Classic in May 2022 attracted 32 players from Mississippi and we had players come from Louisiana and Florida. The player from Florida won the grand championship after driving 17 hours. In 2023, we attracted 45 players; 2024 Bienville tournament set a new record with 58 players; last year we had 38 players. This brought our Bienville overall total to 173 players - returning and first timers. Our combined turnout for all 11 tournaments held (including Roosevelt Chess Classic in the fall and Forest Chess Challenge in August) is now 507 players.

Recognition goes to our past sponsors who generously donated funds to help make our tournaments possible. This is a tremendous benefit because their contributions help keep the registration fees and expenses as low as possible which means funds left over after all bills are paid can be carried over to the next event. We really appreciate the support from the community and the businesses.

2026 Individuals Tournament

Roosevelt State Park, Alfreda-Harris Lodge, 2149 MS Highway 13, Morton

Exit 77 on Interstate 20

4 rounds – Swiss System – Game control: 45+3

active U.S. Chess Federation membership and notation required for rated games

RATED - Open (Cash - \$200 & plaque for 1st, \$100 & medal for 2nd; \$50 & medal for 3rd)

RATED - U1200 (Trophy and \$50 for 1st; medals for 2nd and 3rd)

RATED - U800 (Trophy and \$50 for 1st; medals for 2nd and 3rd)

RATED - U400 (Trophy and \$50 for 1st; medals for 2nd and 3rd)

REGISTRATION

\$35 early bird entry fee through **Saturday, April 11**

(at midnight April 12, **\$40 regular rate**)

(6 p.m. April 17 and thereafter, **\$45 late and on-site**)

To Register Online: Visit kingregistration.com/event/Bienville2026 (preferred).

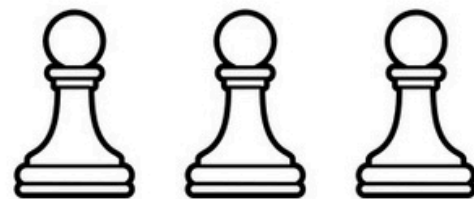
*This method allows immediate registration using **PayPal, Venmo**, and other credit card options.*

To Register via email: Send information to scottcountychessclub@gmail.com

Provide Name, U.S. Chess Federation ID Number, Desired section, and Desired method of Payment

(PayPal, Venmo, CashApp) **Email response will be sent upon receipt.**

On site payment is also available if necessary - **cash or check only** - we do not have debit card payment access at this time.



2025 Bienville Chess Classic - continued

Schedule

Registration and Check-in 8 a.m. until 9 a.m.

All players must arrive by 9 a.m. so tournament can start on time.

Welcome and Briefing of Rules 9:15 a.m.

Round 1 – 9:30 a.m.

Round 2 – 11:30 a.m.

Round 3 – 2 p.m.

Round 4 – 3:30 p.m.

*Awards – To be presented after final round
(Please try to plan to stay for awards if possible)*

Byes due to inability to pair = 1.0

Requested byes = 0.5 (make requests before start of round)

Players who have byes in the same round may request to play extra rated game.

Tiebreakers Ties will be settled by SwissSys computer program. Cash prizes will be split per USCF rules.

Computer tiebreakers will determine trophy and medal recipients.

Important Tournament Notes

Roosevelt State Park's daily admission fee is waived for those attending our tournament. *Players should tell the gate officer they are here for the tournament.*

- Registered players will receive a pre-event email on Wednesday or Thursday prior to tournament including important last minute details.
- Everyone is encouraged to bring chairs for lounging between rounds, lobby seating is limited; an outdoor patio is available.
- Food options will be available on site. Cash and electronic payments accepted
- Skittles rooms will be available.
- Please submit any requests for change of section by 6 p.m. Friday, April 17.

More information is available on our website scottcountychessclub.org

Send questions or requests via email to scottcountychessclub@gmail.com



Tournament action is all around

Many chess players are content to just play casually whenever the opportunity arises. This may include accepting a spontaneous invitation from a fellow chess player or attending a local chess club. However, there is another level to the game of chess - tournaments.

Tournaments are great ways to see how much progress a player is making in learning and growing in the game by discovering how they stack up against other players. It is also an opportunity to learn from other players in seeing a variety of strategies and styles of play. Like any other competitive activity, it is good to keep a healthy attitude and perspective, but playing in tournaments can reap many rewards.

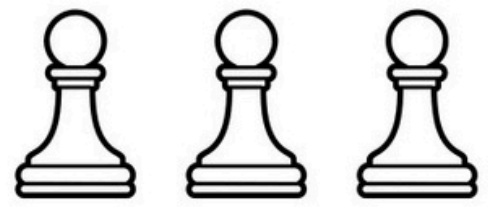
Some players enjoy just playing in a random tournament for fun and experiencing the opportunity to learn and grow. Other players are more competitive and really get into tournaments, seeking to win and advance as far as they can go. They may have aspirations for earning master, international master, or grandmaster status within the U.S. Chess Federation through their rating. It is up to each individual to determine what kind of chess life they wish to have.

In Mississippi, there are many opportunities to participate in tournaments. The Mississippi Chess Association sponsors a state tournament each fall for adults and youth. Youth may also participate in the annual scholastic tournaments. These events are precursors to representing the state on the national level at many events.

Tournaments usually include registration fees and players choose what sections they wish to participate in, based on their skill level as determined by their U.S. Chess Federation rating. **Players must be active members of the Federation to play rated tournaments.** Tournaments may also include team play where individual players' scores are combined and calculated for overall scores. Prizes may include cash, trophies, plaques, medals, ribbons, and certificates.

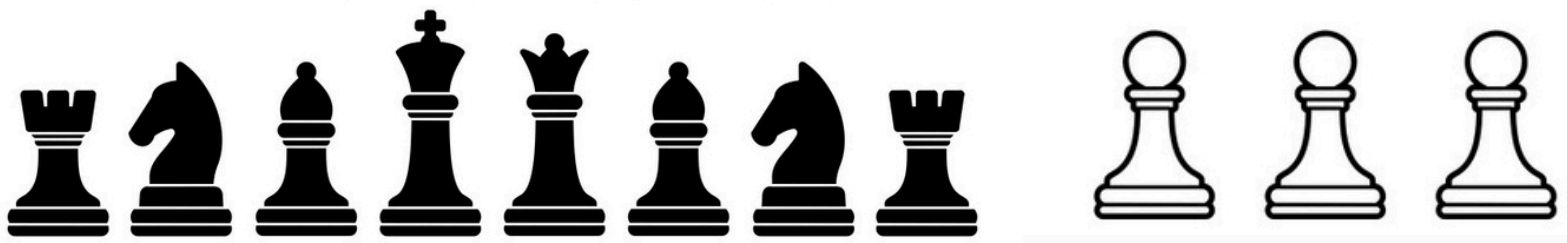
See calendar on page 5 and our website for more information!

scottcountychessclub.org



'A day
without chess
probably
wouldn't kill
you,
but
why risk
it?'





U.S. Chess Federation

The U.S. Chess Federation, now based in St. Louis, Missouri, regulates and governs the game in the United States. It sanctions tournaments and officials as well as oversees the ratings system that measures players' skills.

Chess is recognized as an essential tool that promotes inclusiveness and benefits education, rehabilitation, recreation, and friendly competition.

US Chess Goals

- Expand the educational, social, recreational and rehabilitative applications of chess.
- Increase the visibility of chess on mainstream communications channels.
- Develop the depth and breadth of our partnerships.
- Use chess to increase opportunities for under-represented segments of society.
- Continuously improve internal operations and member services.

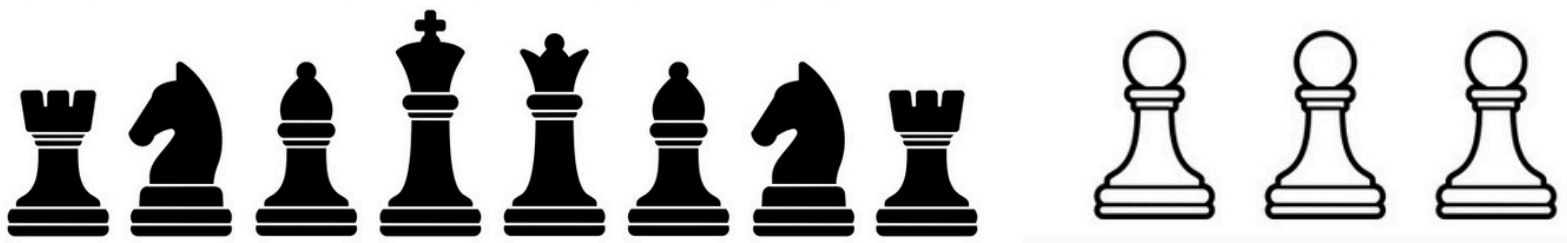
US Chess Core Values

- **Education.** We promote the transformative power of chess for lifelong personal growth.
- **Customer Service.** We endeavor to be responsive, adaptive and proactive in providing services to our customers.
- **Excellence.** We strive to be the best we can be as an organization and in service to the game.
- **Integrity.** We honor, preserve and promote fair play.
- **Inclusion.** We believe everyone has a seat at the chess table.
- **Love of the Game.** We embrace chess as a historic and iconic game, and we celebrate its history, growth and evolution in our activities and services.

Players must join the Federation to obtain a membership number which is required when registering for rated tournaments and other rated events. Tournament directors submit results to the Federation which impacts a player's rating.

For more information and to join, visit <https://new.uschess.org/join-us-chess>

USCF Membership makes for a great birthday or Christmas gift!!



Find Us On Social Media and the Internet itself

scottcountychessclub.org



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**Scott County
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