

VOL. 5 ISSUE 3 · MARCH 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.

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

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.*



scottcountychessclub



@scott_chess



Scott County Chess



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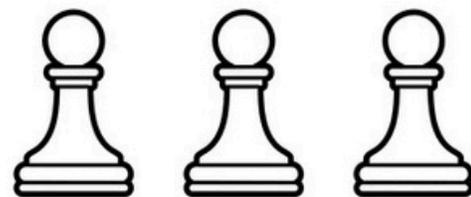
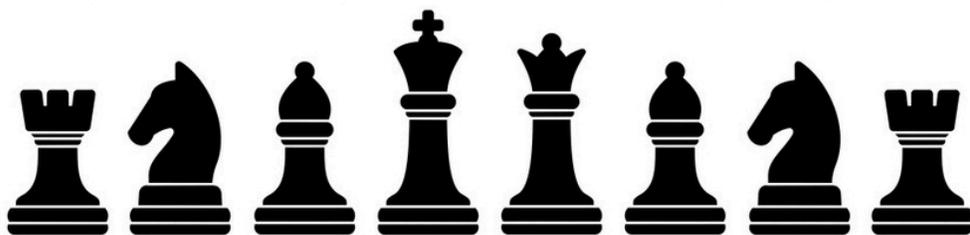
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Chess Thoughts

What do you say?

When people learn that you play chess and ask you about the game, what is your answer? Some people may ask how the game is played, how can they get involved, or why do you play. It is challenging enough to recruit new players and overcome the obstacles in that effort. Someone showing interest on their own puts you at the “white moves first” advantage. The next question is, what are you going to do with that advantage to reel them in to becoming a new player?

Our chess community’s growth and our opportunities to bring more people into chess can benefit based on your answers to questions from every person showing at least some interest in our beloved game.

First, **consider how and why you started playing chess.** Did a family member or friend teach you? Did you learn through a school program? Did you just decide to learn? Second, **what about the game helped to inspire you to learn and why do you keep playing?** Everyone’s chess story, motivation and view of the game is unique. Having concise answers to these questions can influence others. Help them be inspired by your efforts.

When I was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s in a small rural town in North Mississippi, the only ways a person would likely learn chess is either someone teach them or they learn from a book if they really wanted to do it. These two methods still hold true, but there are many more ways now more than ever to learn chess, mainly due to the internet.

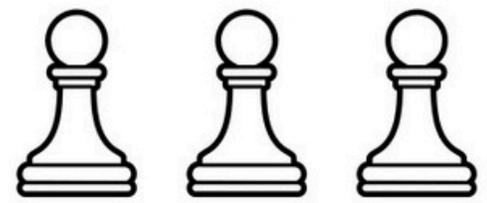
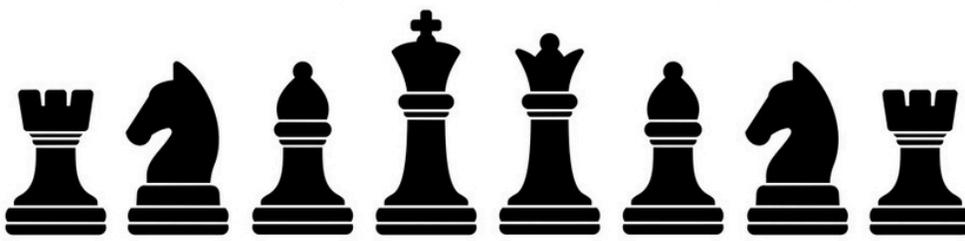
In a nutshell, my son taught me when he was in the second grade and learned through the gifted class at his elementary school. When he showed me how it works, I fell in love with it. I wish now I had learned it earlier in life. As for why I keep playing, it’s just fun and I love seeing the evolution of a game as it is played. For me, it is not just about whether I win or lose or how a game is started and finished, but *how my opponent and I proceeded through the game before it ended.*

Sponsors

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Bank of Morton
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Priority One Bank
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MS Scholastic Chess Association
Capital City Chess Club
Roosevelt State Park
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Andrew Jackson Council - BSA
Community Bank
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MS Secretary of State
Go Daddy (web hosting)
Ingram Printing
Scott County Times
The Spirit of Morton
SuperTalk MS
WLBT - Studio 3
Forest Chamber of Commerce
Town of Lake
City of Morton
Town of Sebastopol
King Registration
Friends of Roosevelt State Park



I tell people who I encounter about the game and invite them to a club meeting. When they show up, I ask what made a difference in their deciding to try. Some people noted my enthusiasm for the game inspired them to check it out. Anyone who knows me can testify to my excitement for chess. Enthusiasm is contagious and when people see that you're really into something, it can have a positive influence for them - especially when you invite them into trying it.

I hear the excuses a lot. "It looks too hard or complicated. That's a smart person's game." It is a challenge to get past these stereotypes of chess. At the same time, people generally want to feel welcome and supported. Helping them realize someone is there to teach them chess can make a difference.

If I can hold an interested person's attention long enough after *briefly* telling them how I got into chess even at a later age, I give them two basic points to consider. First, half of beginning a chess journey is simply learning how the pieces move. Focus on that until a solid comfort level is reached whereas the person knows exactly what each piece does almost instinctively. Second, I tell them don't try to learn chess all at once when thinking about strategies. Work on one opening, endgame, group of tactics, and move to another. Like anything else, it takes time and effort to have the desired level of success which can be different for every person.

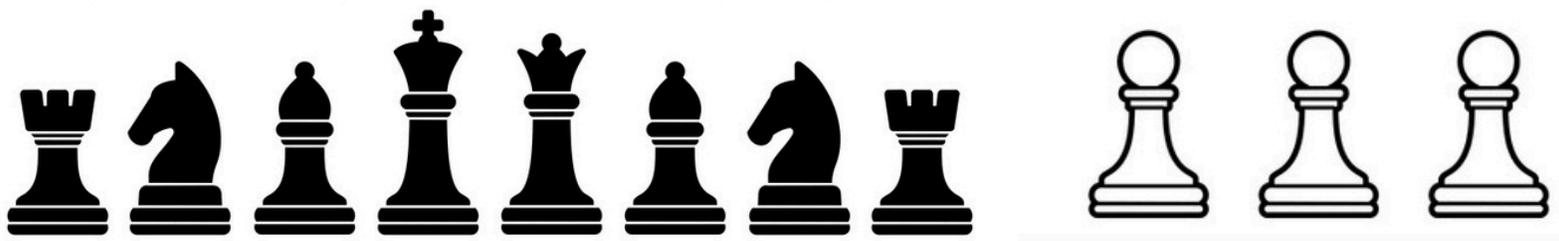
Regardless of skill level, *every chess player* in one way or another is an ambassador of the game. People who have not "discovered" their ability to play, but are intrigued by the possibilities, are looking to those of us who are already playing to show them the way. The manner in which we participate speaks volumes to others as to the game being a worthwhile activity to engage. In this manner, we can lead by example and the possibilities are endless.

A reason why chess has such a rich tradition and legacy is due to the players on all skill levels. Every player has their own chess story. For every person we bring into the game, we are writing chess' next chapter and each person who joins is our legacy. ***When asked how you started and why you play, what will your answer be?***

Chris Allen Baker

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





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)

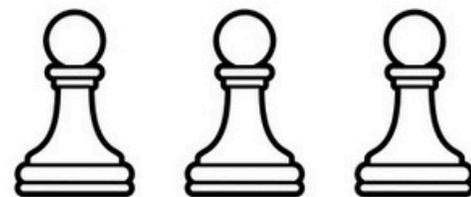
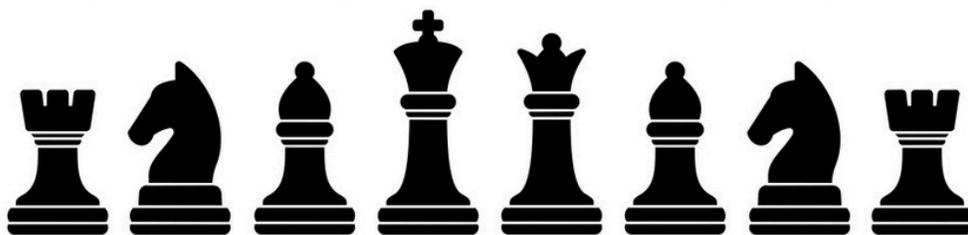
*This method allows immediate registration using **PayPal, Venmo**, and other credit card options.*

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.



2026 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.

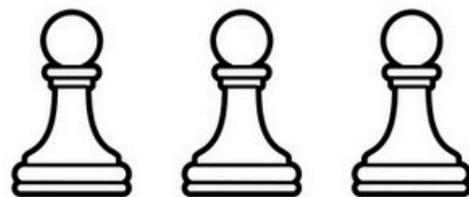
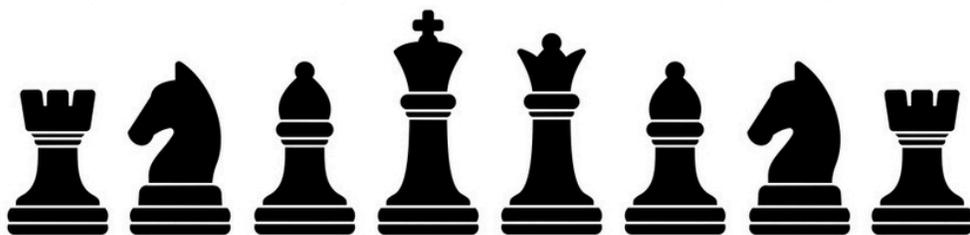
Important Tournament Notes

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



Chess Calendar

For more information about all listings:
see our website at scottcountychessclub.org

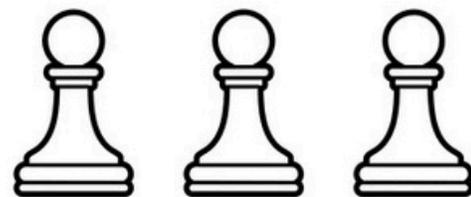
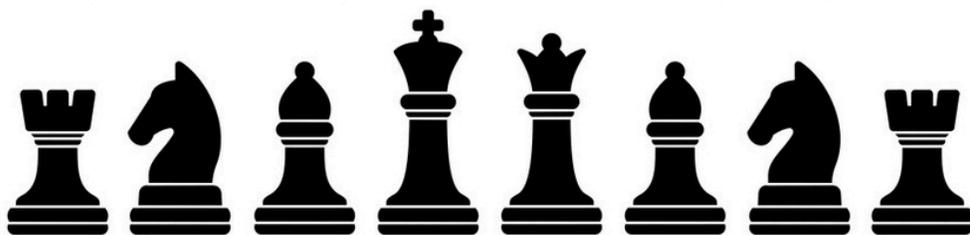
- * **Scott County Chess Club** will hold a regular meeting
Saturday, March 7, 9-11 am, Public Library, Forest
This will be our regular meeting - everyone is welcome.
- * **MCSA Individual and Team Scholastic Championship Cup**
Saturday, March 7 - Mississippi State University, Starkville
- * **Quads for Cash**
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
- * **MS Scholastic Team State Championship**
Saturday, March 21 - St. Andrews Episcopal School, Ridgeland
- * **Freestyle 960 Chess Challenge**
Saturday, April 4 - Food Court, Outlets of MS, Pearl
- * **MS Seniors Chess Championship**
Saturday-Sunday, April 11-12 - Nissan Training Center, Canton
- * **Bienville Chess Classic (Scott County Chess Sponsored)**
Saturday, April 12 - Roosevelt State Park, Morton
- * **Madison County Chess Club**
Mondays, 6-8 p.m. Panera Bread - Ridgeland

'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



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, 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.

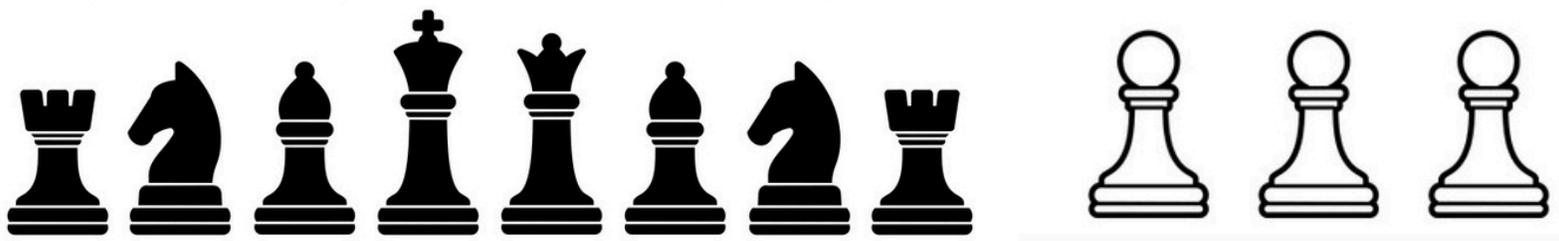
Tournaments usually include registration fees and players choose what sections they wish to participate in, based on their skill level as determined by their U.S. Chess Federation rating. Tournaments may also include team play where individual players' scores are combined and calculated for overall scores.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

See calendar on page 6 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.

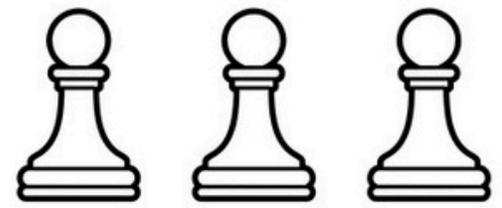
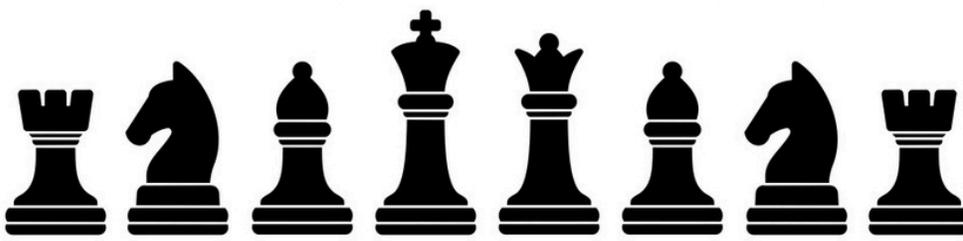
US Chess Core Values

- **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 gift!!



Benefits of playing Chess

- **Improves concentration and memory.** According to studies done at the University of Memphis, playing chess significantly improves children's visual memory, attention span, and spatial-reasoning ability.
- **Enhances reading and math skills.** With its focus on problem solving and move variables, chess can improve math skills. Studies show that chess improves reading skills as well.
- **Fosters logic, critical thinking, and creativity.** Chess favors the "if-then" thinker. "If I move here, then my opponent may move here, here, or even here." That's logic and critical thinking in action! Studies also show that chess boosts creativity, most dramatically in one specific area—originality. Playing chess helps unleash your originality, since it activates the right side of the brain, the side responsible for creativity.
- **Encourages and rewards hard work.** Chess offers immediate feedback. Lose your focus, lose a piece. Practice and study the strategies, win more games. In chess, you control your destiny.
- **Promotes brain growth.** Games like chess that challenge the brain actually stimulate the growth of bodies that send out signals from the brain's neuron cells. Communication within the brain improves and becomes faster.
- **It exercises both sides of the brain.** A study indicated that when chess players were asked to identify chess positions and geometric shapes, both the left and right hemispheres of the brain became highly active.
- **Raises your IQ.** At least one scientific study has shown that playing the game can actually raise a person's IQ.
- **Helps prevent Alzheimer's.** A study found that people over 75 who engage in brain-games like chess are less likely to develop dementia than their non-board-game-playing peers.
- **Increases problem-solving skills.** Chess requires fast thinking and problem-solving on the fly because your opponent is constantly changing the parameters.
- **Teaches planning and foresight.** One of the last parts of the brain to develop during adolescence is the area responsible for judgment, planning and self-control. Chess helps this area's development and helps teenagers make better decisions in all areas of life.
- **Optimizes memory improvement.** Playing chess improves your memory, mainly because of the complex rules you have to remember, as well as the memory recall needed when trying to avoid previous mistakes or remembering a certain opponent's playing style. Many chess players have exceptional memory performance and recall.
- **Improves recovery from stroke or disability.** Chess develops fine motor skills in individuals who have disability or have suffered a stroke or other physically debilitating accident. This form of rehabilitation requires the motion of chess pieces in different directions (forward, backward, diagonally forward motion, diagonally backward motion), which can help develop and fine tune a patient's motor skills, while the mental effort required to play the game can improve cognitive and communication skills. Playing can also stimulate deep concentration and calm, helping to center and relax patients who are experiencing different degrees of anxiety.

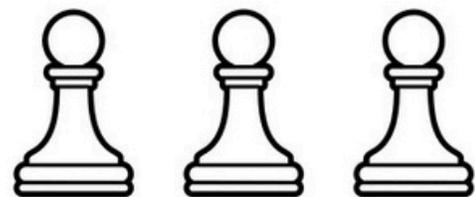
Most of all - Chess is FUN!

'Life is full of important choices.'

'In chess, there are no losers.'

Either you win or you learn ...

sometimes both.'



Find Us On Social Media and the World Wide Web



@scottcountychessclub

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**Scott County
Chess Club**

send questions to: scottcountychessclub@gmail.com

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