



## *Annual Report to Scott County - 2024*

The Scott County Chess Club strives to promote the game of Chess in Scott County and Mississippi – providing opportunities for persons of all ages and skill levels to learn and play the game. We began publishing annual reports in 2022 to the community on our progress. Unless specified otherwise, reports only include new information between July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next. This report will cover activities from July 1, 2023, until June 30, 2024.

We begin by expressing our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the people of Scott County, and others outside the county, who have supported us since our inception. We could not have come this far without the support we have received.

We continue to use social media and a website for online publicity. *The Scott County Times* and *The Spirit of Morton* newspapers have remained generous in publishing stories. I send monthly email blasts to members and others. A club newsletter is produced and distributed monthly via email for members and others interested in our activities. We attend events and use display boards as well as distribute flyers for additional publicity.

We have received continued support from the business community in supporting our tournaments through sponsorships. We now have 10 businesses in Scott County who have helped to fund our events. Donations are first applied toward the prize money for winners. After that, donations are applied toward the trophies and medals. Registrations have been covering remaining expenses. Remaining funds are kept for use toward the next tournament and any operating expenses.

In September 2023, the club had a booth at the Wing Dang Doodle Festival in Forest and at Sebastopolooza festival in Sebastopol to promote the game to the public and raise awareness about chess and our Club.

On October 14, 2023, the club partnered with the Forest Library to host the first Randy Richardson Memorial Chess Camp for youth in the community. A \$1,000 donation from Michael Hawkins, a Forest native, was granted to the library for chess development. The library used half of the donation to purchase new chess books. Another portion of the donation was used to buy more chess sets for use in the library. The remaining funds supported the chess camp, named in memory of Hawkins' classmate who taught him chess when they were in school.

The camp, aimed at grade school students, included a morning of chess instruction and lessons while the afternoon was spent playing the game in a mock tournament format. The camp included 11 participants ranging in age from seven to 17. Trophies and medals were awarded as prizes.

On October 15, 2023, the club partnered with the Mississippi Chess Association in planning and participating in a display at the Mississippi State Fair in Jackson. Information was available about the game and there was a tremendous response as many people stopped at the display where they had the opportunity to play the game. It was great exposure for the game.

In November 2023, we hosted the third annual Roosevelt Chess Classic and again saw a tremendous turnout at Roosevelt State Park with 59 players from across the state and continued support from our sponsoring businesses. Participation included individual and team players.

On November 20, 2024, after all bills were paid and finances were settled from the Roosevelt Chess Classic tournament, I realized there were enough funds in our treasury to proceed with a longtime goal of acquiring our own chess board equipment for our tournaments. Until now, we had been borrowing chess sets and clocks from the Capital City Chess Club coordinator. I had grown concerned that one day one of our events may fall on a date the other coordinator had an event and therefore their equipment would not be available. If something happened at the last minute for one of my events that the coordinator could not attend, we would be in serious trouble.

I purchased 50 boards, sets, and clocks for the club using the same tactic that a fellow chess leader used in taking advantage of Black Friday sales in November with the U.S. Chess Federation. Now, we have our own equipment and can set up the day before our events. Additionally, we have earned extra money in loaning the equipment for other tournaments in the state with generous partnership with the Mississippi Chess Association. The 50 boards will seat 100 players and we have not come close to that turnout yet. *However, if we grow enough, we could do so and the next purchase would be for 25 additional sets if needed down the line. At that point we would be looking at accommodating 150 players.*

In December 2023, the club participated in the Forest Christmas parade to further raise public awareness of Chess.

In April 2024, we hosted the third annual Bienville Chess Classic and again saw a record turnout at Roosevelt State Park with 58 players from across the state and continued support from our sponsoring businesses. Participation included individual players. A change was made in the options of sections offered. Starting with this tournament and going forward, the spring and fall events will include the following sections: Open, U1200, U800, U400. This will help players compete on a more level playing field.

On May 27, 2024, I received my recertification exam to renew my tournament director license with the U.S. Chess Federation. The deadline for returning the completed exam was July 25. I completed the exam and passed to earn another 3-year license as a club level tournament director.

On May 30, 2024, I returned as a guest on “Good Things” with Rebecca Turner on the statewide radio network of SuperTalk Mississippi. This time, I was accompanied by Douglas Stewart - a fellow MCA board member, former 4-time state champion and participant at national tournaments. Discussion included history of chess in Mississippi, current trends and growth, with future plans noted.

On June 11, 2024, I met with the superintendents of the two public school districts in Forest and Scott County in separate meetings. We discussed opportunities and plans for potential chess participation in their districts and ways that the game may be promoted, and students participate. It was a great starting point to hopefully increase chess activity among students.

This concludes the club’s general annual report for FY 2024.

Sincerely,

*Chris Allen Baker*

Club co-founder and Coordinator  
Tournament Director