

Educational Value of Chess written by Wendi Fischer (reprinted with permission)

It's not about Kings, Queens, and Rooks, but rather, quadrants and coordinates, thinking strategically and foreseeing consequences. It's about lines and angles, weighing options and making decisions. Chess might just be the perfect teaching and learning tool. Since 2000, America's Foundation for Chess (AF4C) has been working with 2nd and 3rd grade students and their teachers to promote the use of chess as an educational tool. The goal of the First Move™ curriculum is to use the game of chess as a tool, to increase higher level thinking skills, advance math and reading skills, and build self-confidence.

Research shows, there is a strong correlation between learning to play chess and academic achievement. In 2000, a landmark study found that students who received chess instruction scored significantly higher on all measures of academic achievement, including math, spatial analysis, and non-verbal reasoning ability (Smith and Cage, 2000).

While studies have shown chess to have a positive impact on kids in elementary, middle and high school, AF4C targeted second and third graders as the evidence, and certainly our experience, suggests it's the ideal age. Eight and nine year-old minds and thinking skills are developing rapidly, and chess teaches higher level thinking skills such as the ability to visualize, analyze, and think critically.

If you teach an adult to play chess, they quickly comprehend where they should and shouldn't move pieces to capture or avoid capture. Young Kate knew the names of the pieces and how they moved, but initially moved her pieces randomly. Soon she was saying, "If I move my piece here, you could capture it, right? Then I'm not going to move there." You can almost see the mental changes taking place.

Chess has a unique and strong brand attribute, in that it is generally perceived that playing chess and being smart are connected. This can be very positive driver for young children, who, rather than being intimidated as many adults are, embrace the notion. As children get older, a stigma, or nerd factor attaches to "being smart." But in the second and third grade, kids want to be thought of as smart. It is also an important age for developing an attachment to school. If kids associate school and learning with fun, they will most likely develop a stronger attachment to school.

To be referred to as "the perfect teaching tool," chess would have to do much more than be age appropriate, and it does. As our classrooms become increasingly diverse, being able to reach all children becomes in-

creasingly challenging. Chess levels the playing field as it crosses all socio-economic boundaries. It is a universal game, with worldwide rule consistency. Age, gender, ethnic background, religious affiliation, size, shape, color, and language don't matter when playing chess. Everyone is equal on the chessboard. Students who are English language learners find success with chess, because they don't face language barriers on the chessboard. Principal Jeff Newport commented, "We have 34 different languages spoken at our school, and chess is now the one we have in common."



Many schools have after-school chess clubs that create a mix of fun, competition and learning. Predominantly the members are boys. An unintended consequence of these programs is that they often leave some kids behind who are not drawn to the competitive aspect of the game. By integrating chess into the classroom, we are able to reach all children and provide them with the benefits of learning through the game of chess. These benefits include the fact that students who wouldn't have thought to join the chess club on their own, are more apt to join after having been exposed to chess in their classroom. In Philadelphia, where 20 schools have implemented First Move™ during the school day, participation in chess club after-school increased in several schools that already had a chess club, and five schools created a new club in response to student demand.

The First Move™ curriculum was developed by a curriculum professional, and designed specifically to connect with National and State academic standards. For example, while learning about the chessboard, students are taught that each square has a name/location. You can find each square by using coordinates, a set of numbers, letters or a number and a letter, that tell you the exact location of something. On the chessboard, each square is located at the intersection of a file (vertical line) and rank (horizontal line). As they learn, students begin to talk in chess terms, i.e. "I am moving my c3 Knight to e4." This helps their chess game, and it also meets the Washington State Standards for math (1.5.1 and 5.3.1). (cont. p.3)

Introduction



"... accuse him of loafing and he claims he's studying to play blindfold chess."

Hi, my name is Jennifer Vallens. I am a chess mom living in the Conejo Valley in California.

Along with my chess partner Coach Jerry Yee, we have run five successful scholastic chess tournaments now and our Off da ROOK 6 is coming up May 29. You can register at offdarook.com.

Chess in Schools is a topic very dear to my heart. It is my hope to see chess built into our core curriculum so that all Primary and Secondary level students will reap the vast benefits of learning Chess and integrating those skills into other disciplines. Please check out interviews with Dr. Alexey Root and the "Chess Lady" Wendi Fischer who also are huge proponents for Chess in schools.

In addition to this chess effort, I have been working closely with my good friend GM Timur Gareyev. I am having a really exciting and interesting journey working with him as he trains for setting the World Record for Blindfold Chess. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

This newsletter is a labor of love. I do not charge for advertising or a subscription fee. Anything I promote in this newsletter, I full endorse and has the Chessmom seal of approval:) I created this newsletter because I want to support the chess community. I hope it informs and entertains you. If there is something you would like to see more of or less of, please let me know. I am open to ideas and welcome submissions. Please send all contributions to offdarook@gmail.com.

Look out for my new column "Strictly By The Book- TD Talks". This issue features the Tournament Director of the Pasadena Chess Club.

A special thank you to Larry Smith for helping me dot my "I's" and cross my "T's".



Now GO PLAY CHESS.....

Jennifer

Educational Benefit of Chess

"Chess will never show up on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning [test]" says Kent Ferris, Lafayette Elementary School, "but the confidence, focus, and academic skills our students are gaining through becoming analytical players will pay measurable benefits in the years ahead." Principal Michelle Hartman was concerned about her 3rd grade class because they were considered a "high-risk" group. At the end of the school year she noted, "Chess has really made a difference for these kids, and their test scores help prove it."

In any classroom, there are disparate levels of prior knowledge on any given topic; chess is no different. Teachers find some of their students already know how to play chess. This becomes an opportunity to place those children in leadership roles as teaching assistants for their classmates. The reason isn't clear, but in many interviews with children in the First Move™ program, they express their desire to teach others to play chess. Superintendent Reece Blincoe from Stockdale ISD reported his delight when his family gathered on the living room floor so his 3rd grade daughter could teach them all to play chess, based on the lessons she had learned during the school day in the First Move™ program.

The way chess can incorporate and relate to other core subjects makes it an amazingly powerful tool. In First Move™ Teacher Training Workshops, classroom teachers learn how to develop their core curriculum using chess. Chess is one big science experiment; every time you play a game you are testing hypotheses and learning by trial and error. Chess is rooted in history and can open a door to history knowledge. Our current game of chess developed in the Middle Ages in Western Europe, though it began in India at least 1500 years ago. The King, Queen, Bishops, Knights, Rooks, and Pawns are symbolic of real groups of people in the Middle Ages and studies of them can take children into an understanding of what life was like at that time.

As children play chess, they begin to see the importance of thinking ahead, trying to figure out what their opponent might do next and what their alternatives are too. This ability to anticipate outcomes can transfer to their reading comprehension. Students can predict outcomes, and realize that characters in their stories are interconnected, just as just as they and their opponent, and the pieces on the chessboard are.

In the First Move classroom, kids aren't thinking about the benefits of chess, and how it might help them on their standardized tests, but they are thinking while hav-

ing fun. Their teachers can see the benefits, however. Julie Doan, teacher at Medina Elementary says:

My students are more focused—chess certainly accounts for this. In math, for instance, students who had studied chess were able to read graphs and work with charts so much more smoothly than the students I had last year, who weren't even able to read a grid prior to the lessons in math class.

Wendi Fischer is the Scholastic Director of America's Foundation for Chess, a non-profit organization formed in 2000, dedicated to bringing chess into the schools so that all children can have the benefits of its lessons. Wendi becomes "Lady Wendolyn" in the DVD lessons that accompany the First Move chess program produced by the Foundation. Email: wendi@af4c.org



The always looking forward one



The one who's good with kitchen utensils



The one who cuts corners



The one with the awesome house



The scary one



The Lazy one

Why didn't the other pieces come to the king and queen's barbecue?

Because there were too many forks and skewers.

Why didn't the queen learn how to sew?

She was afraid of the pins.

Wendi Fischer interview

Hello and thank you for taking the time for this interview.

You have a background in Sociology and Education and are currently the Executive Director of American's Foundation for Chess. Can you tell me about this organization and how it came about?

It was a simple idea, Our Founder, Erik Anderson, grew up playing chess. He knew chess was good for kids, and schools need good tools, and felt if we could get the two together we would have something meaningful.

You are referred to as THE CHESS LADY. Please tell me about that.

I am the teacher on the curriculum video lessons. I tried to go by Lady Wendilynne, rather medieval sounding, but kids everywhere would just say, "the chess lady." So we embraced it and now I am The Chess Lady! (We even trademarked it).

When did you learn chess?

I was a former classroom teacher and I didn't know how to play chess when I went to work for AF4C

Do you play regularly now? What is your peak rating?

You have to compete to get a rating, I don't compete. I'm decent, but by no means great. It's funny, when I visit schools I will often get asked if I have ever lost a chess game; it makes for a good conversation about how *everyone* loses sometimes, even the best players in the world! What's important is to learn from a game you lose and to not give up.

How would someone go about getting the First Move program into their schools?

There has to be teacher buy-in. The best plan is to reach out to our office, info@af4c.org, and connect us with the school Principal.

Why is your program directed toward 2nd and 3rd grade?

Second and third grade is when kids are developing their foundation of thinking skills. Chess helps build a strong foundation. Engagement in school is so important at this age, and the First Move chess program is highly engaging and helps create a love of learning.

Can you address how chess meets Common Core standards?

Here is a very simple example of one of the standards:

CCSS.Math.Content.2.G.A.1 Recognize, define and demonstrate knowledge of horizontal, vertical and diagonal.

In the very first lesson of the First Move curriculum the kids are introduced to those terms along with rank and file (the chess vocabulary for horizontal and vertical.

Students identify the lines on the chessboard and they stand up and use their arms to show the various lines as part of a game.

What do you think about our Grandmasters getting younger and younger? We have a 12 and 13 year old playing in the US Women's Chess Championship this year. Do you think developmentally they are ready for this level of competition?

I believe with any sport or activity, if the drive is from a child's passion, that is good; if a parent is pushing, it's not good. The part I am most excited about is girls getting interested and competing. Chess is for everyone, and everyone should receive the benefits of learning to play chess.



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Magnus Carlsen, World Chess Champion

You want to know the difference between a master and a beginner? The master has failed more times than the beginner has even tried.

Local Club play

American Chess Academy

ACA offers group classes at Calabasas, Simi Valley and now Thousand Oaks locations Monday-Friday for kids 5-16 years. Visit <http://www.achessacademy.org/> for more information. Contact: Jerry Yee (818) 915-5572.

Los Angeles Chess Club

Weekend Tournaments. <http://www.lachessclub.com>
Contact: Mick Bingham at mick@lachessclub.com

Pasadena Chess Club

meets in the Elmer and Teen Slavik Memorial Building at the Boys and Girls Club, 3230 East Del Mar, Pasadena 91107
Contact: Scott C. Hunt 818-298-5255 or schkjv@yahoo.com

Royal Spartan Chess Club

Meets in backroom of Denny's in Sherman Oaks.
Meets first Sunday of every month at 7pm. \$20 EF, senior discount. Dbl RR, 5 minutes, no delay. Strict USCF rules apply.
Contact: Scott C. Hunt 818-298-5255 or schkjv@yahoo.com

Thousand Oaks Chess Club

Meets Mondays 6:00-8:45pm. Goebel Senior Center at 1385 E. Janss Road. Casual play and rated tournament play. All ages welcome. Contact: Cindy Garcia at thousandoak-schess@att.net

Ventura County Chess Club

Meets Mondays at 7pm. Grace Lutheran Church, 6190 Telephone Road, Ventura. Contact: Jack Cashman at rationality52@hotmail.com or (805) 487-2604 <http://www.vcchess.com/>

West Valley Chess Club

Meets Thursdays 6:30-10:30. 7353 Valley Circle Blvd., West Hills. Continuous rated tournaments, blitz, casual play. Contact Jerry Yee (818) 915-5572 or at jyee6@socal.rr.com.

Conejo Valley Parks and Recreation

The Conejo Parks and Rec offer Chess instruction at various park locations. See <http://www.crpdp.org/> for more details and registration.

Ventura Youth Chess League

Train with Women's Master Simone Liao. For more information, visit: <http://www.venturayouthchess.com/learn.html>

American Chess Academy



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and become a better
scholastic tournament player



WWW.ACHESSACADEMY.ORG

For more information, please contact:
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Email: americanchessacademy@gmail.com

ACA is a non-profit organization (EIN#26-3269678). Disclaimer: ACA is not affiliated with LVUSD & MUSD

If you live in Thousand Oaks or Ventura send Jack Cashman an email at rationality52@hotmail.com for information on summertime youth chess tournaments and chess camps.



Strictly by the Book—TD Talks

I met Scott Hunt when my son started playing at the West Valley Chess Club a few years back. We would hang out at tournaments and he gave me a few chess lessons. He even helped me when I played my first tournament at the Pacific Open in Agoura.

Scott Hunt was recently asked to take over running the West Valley Chess Club. This is the longest running club in the San Fernando Valley and has been in existence over 50 years. It is quite an honor that Jerry Yee is turning over his baby to Scott. Scott is strict, there is no doubt about it. But given the landscape of chess these days, it is refreshing to have a TD that takes pride in understanding the rules and strictly adhering to them.

I caught up with Scott and got his insight on running tournaments and chess in general.

Enjoy!

When did I start playing chess?

In June of 1998 on my birthday a friend of mine for whatever reason bought me a small electronic chess set. I never played, liked, or had any desire to play chess. I liked poker! Well I opened it up a few weeks later bored and decided to give this chess thing a try. It had 84 levels, self explanatory and I then started with the 1st level. Wow I beat it. I got addicted to that little chess game in just a few days and beat all 84 levels in about a couple of months. I was so proud of myself and wanted more. I found the West Valley Chess Club and joined my first tournament at 41 and a whole new world opened up to me. I still have that original game of chess.

My peak rating.

My highest rating is 1700. I've only played 299 rated games in the last 16 years. That's only about 13 games a year. Work and family just kept me away from the game to get that Master rating I wanted. No studying of any kind just OTB when I had the chance to play so 1700 isn't too bad.

Playing in tournaments.

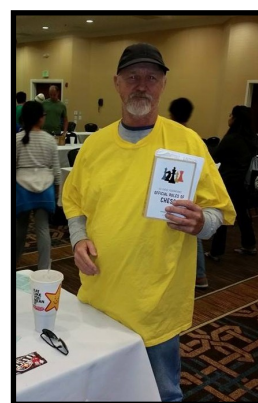
I have been playing in tournaments for about 16 years but it was always 1 game per tournament, or 6 months later another couple of games. No consistency with all the responsibilities at home. In my late 40's I was able to participate more fully.

Becoming a TD.

In a nutshell I was tired of seeing so many inconsistencies in rulings, no rulings, getting black all the time. One tournament in particular I was given black 6 games straight out of 7 until a Master friend of mine rescued me from 7 blacks in a row. My scores would be changed from a win to a loss and I ended up losing all my rating points I played so hard to get. No discipline at the chess club. Bias and favoritism. On and on. I had enough. I quit playing chess and decided to try and

become one of these magical TD's who gets to say and do whatever they want at their clubs with no repercussions for doing anything wrong. My motivation was very different than most TD's. I wanted to direct chess honestly, objectively, and professionally. Criticism intended. I told my fellow club members about becoming a TD and no one really took me seriously.

I called the USCF and they sent me a paper to sign and wow I was a club TD just like that. Then the reality came with the edition of the laws of chess I received and had to start studying big time. Gargantuan indeed.



What makes you different from other TD's?

The heart of what makes me different is that I treat every chess player exactly the same and I am committed passionately to them. All of my players get the same care, concern, fair and judicial treatment. I don't care if they are 5 years old or 100 years old. I look at them as if I'm their big brother, father, or best friend in the world. I want the best for them while maintaining professionalism. I'm not in this for money because if I was then why am I out thousands of dollars a year being a TD for free. I want my players to excel not only in playing the game of chess but in the knowledge of the rules, policies, and procedures governing chess at the club and big tournament levels. I want them as prepared as they can possibly be to play that best game or tournament of their life. I try to instill motivation and dedication to the game. Yes I am very strict and enforce the laws of chess but with care, heart, and patience that I have seen bring in many new players or bring back players who have become discouraged and quit. I had a Special Referee (only 8 in the USCF) ask me a week ago "then why don't 90 something percent of TD's not enforce these same rules?". He was upset with a certain ruling I had made. I told him because they are ignorant TD's who simply don't care and never will care about the rules or the players and should be decertified as USCF TD's as they prohibit the growth of every chess player they direct in their clubs. If I ever become like them I will gladly resign my position as TD. One other major difference is I study the Laws of Chess studiously. (cont. page 7)

Strictly by the Book—TD Talks

Running multiple chess clubs.

When I accepted being Chief TD at the Pasadena Chess Club I found the club highly undisciplined, noisy, kids running around, cell phones going off, players did not know basic chess rules, or even how to claim anything. I immediately designed and posted rules, policies, code of conduct, banned all cell phones, electronic devices and penalized accordingly but fairly. The players at all rating levels thanked me for bringing professionalism and order to the club. The players now understand that every game is a professional game, and every tournament is a professional tournament and they act professional themselves. I can unequivocally state that no chess club is run like ours. It's comparable to growing up in a well disciplined and loving home.

We are breaking attendance records and had a very nice review in Rank and File. We are far from a perfect chess club. We are all human but we endeavor to be the best and want to be a model for all other chess clubs. The club belongs to the players by the way, not the TD. The players receive 85% of all monies taken in every tournament as prizes and the TD simply guides as a leader should lead.

My taking the West Valley Chess Club has the same goals as stated above. My goal with all of the members is to re-establish the WVCC as the premier chess club in the San Fernando Valley. If you're in the area then the WVCC is the only place you should want to play chess. That is the reputation I'm working towards. The club is on a precipice at the present time and could go either way. My hope and desire is that along with myself and the players giving 100% together we will see the WVCC become revitalized. The 1st goal is to reach 100 players. I know it can be done.

What things do you think are most important with running a successful tournament?

Producing the best atmosphere possible for the chess players is tantamount to good chess play. A TD who will "stay" in the playing area throughout every game is of the utmost importance. The TD must aggressively warn and enforce rule infractions. Making eye contact with as many players as possible and letting them know their games are being carefully watched works wonders. I had a player express his relief that I was there watching the games so he in turn felt relaxed and could play his best. Believe it or not TD's you are being watched and evaluated by the chess players.

A TD must act on what he/she says, he/she will do, or he/she will lose all credibility with the players. Consistency will breed success.

I forcefully had to ban a GM (unnamed) from the playing area at one such Open for improper behavior. The organizers were not happy. I did not apologize and the GM came back later and apologized for the improper behavior.

Organizers must hire Chief TD's who have some backbone, in depth knowledge of the rules, can judge judicially, and will not overturn every decision the floor TD/TD's make. Good floor TD's are worth their weight in gold. No Tournament anywhere is any better than the experienced floor TD doing his/her job. Which is where I really love to be, with the action of the players.

Can you tell me about your involvement with US Chess events?

US Chess events are anything from a two player match to Millionaire Chess and everything in between. I run chess clubs, matches, blitz tournaments, and work events such as Pacific Coast Open and others. I stuck my foot in the door, asked to help for free, and here I am. I will be Director for the Super Youth Chess Championships this Memorial Day. I have to express my gratitude to Jennifer Vallens for promoting blindfold chess simulms with GM Timur. She is another highly motivated chess promoter and I wish her the best of success with her endeavors. *Awwww.thanks Scott.*

Any comments about how cheating is currently being handled at tournaments and what you think can be done to change it?

Cheating is on the rise. Especially as far as technology is concerned. It's tougher to get caught and therefore easier to cheat. I believe that most chess players are basically honest and want to play their opponents fairly and straight forward. Sadly technology has allowed the moral high ground to become more eroded.

One thing I do at every game I direct is ban any and all electronic devices. No player or spectator may have any type of communication device in their possession in the playing area ever. Zero tolerance.

During a National event last year I had just started the round and gave strict warnings about cell phones. Amazingly not one player had a cell phone. Wonderful! Until the amber alert went off and 9 players were severely penalized at the cost of their games.

Educating about what to look for is a good policy to institute regarding electronic devices. FIDE does a good job here as well as the Millionaire tournaments with metal detectors and undercover TD's. Just keeping our eyes open and staying alert is the best we can do. (cont. page 8)

Strictly by the Book—TD Talks

Are there any rules you would like to see changed?

I would like to see some variations removed. Rule 15A (Variation I) regarding score keeping is one that just causes confusion among chess players. Do we move first then write the move, or write first then record the move. Oh we can now do both depending on who's running the tournament. Criticism again. The same with using one hand or both. Both are legal and illegal depending on the organizer or TD. Confusion reigns with many of these contradictions. Yes, no, both? The USCF needs to amend these contradictory rules to coincide more with the FIDE rules. Chess play would be so much better.

Software.

I use Swiss Sys. I really enjoy the in depth searches and pairing logic. TD's must not use it as a final decision for tournament play though. TD's must master the pairing system as complex as it is. We are ultimately responsible for everything that happens in a tournament so don't rely on the computer too much. It is a great tool and time saver but there is no substitute for learning the why's and how's.

Electronic scorekeeping.

I honestly prefer paper scorekeeping. The score sheets must be visible to the TD and the opponent 100% of the time. No ambiguity here. It's on paper and whatever color you choose to write in. It's easy to cheat with an electronic score sheet. They are very difficult to see, some do not show the move order, they power down, batteries run out juice. I personally use paper score sheets for most of the players. So I'm not a proponent of electronic notation.

Difference between TD and Arbiter.

For myself none. The terms are interchangeable for the most part. The essence of both is the absolute total objectivity needed to fairly rule judiciously in all cases. FIDE has one up here on the USCF though. They are trained better and are more thoroughly than USCF TD's, I do not include myself here. I have a strict no nonsense policy of always competing with myself trying to build myself into a better TD and ergo Arbiter as well.

Biggest challenges.

I will be honest here. It's with the various chess organizations, TD's, Special Referees, the powers that be in the chess world. They seemingly circumvent the rules, policies, and procedures as they see fit with no thought for the real reason for chess. Which are the players themselves. I see too much politicking the more involved I become. Keeping true to yourself and to your members has to be the biggest challenge to anyone honest enough to be a good TD.

Biggest Rewards?

The appreciation shown to me by parents and players of all ages and ratings. There is no greater reward than that. When they show to me heartfelt gratitude and thanks for being their

TD that beats anything else hand down. This Christmas, a little 6 year old boy came up to me with no money for a present and said Mr. Scott I want to give you something for Christmas. I asked what? He handed me his favorite chess pencil. What's worth more than that? Nothing!

How does a club tournament differ from a national tournament? Are the challenges different?

Speaking for myself nothing at all. They are all equally challenging and fun. The real difference is trying to run the tournament professionally when the organizers and certain NTD's (National Tournament Directors) are sabotaging form the get go by disallowing me and other TD's to run the tournament in a professional manner. Let's get as many paying players as we can but don't enforce the rules. We wouldn't want to offend anyone by expecting them to act professionally at a professional sport like chess. Especially the ones with titles before their names like M, IM, WIM, FM, GM, and all the others. The club tournaments are the training ground like boot camp for the big events. Good chess clubs produce good chess players. There's nothing like my own players in a big tournament making a proper claim and I will stand there like Bozo the Clown who can't do anything because of the organizers. I don't!?

A great heartfelt thanks to Jennifer Vallens for allowing me to speak a few of my thoughts about the greatest sport I ever played and directed, and I have played most all of them. I personally appreciate her fervent spirit and dedication to promote the great game of chess.

Thanks and good chess,

Scott C. Hunt



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- David Bennett - USCF 2111

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Interview with GM Varuzhan Akobian



Varuzhan Akobian at the US Chess Championship 2016. Photo: Spectrum Studios

Where is home for you? North Hollywood ,CA

What age did you receive GM title? at 19 **What is your peak rating?** USCF 2758 Fide 2653

What has been your greatest chess accomplishment? Winning World Open tournament 3 times 2004,2007 2013. Not winning 2014 US Chess championship

You coach and you also compete. Which is your first love? I am more of coach now days but I also enjoy playing very much still.

Are you taking any new students? Yes, Do you do online lessons? Yes I do most of my teaching online but also in person.

How many tournaments a year do you play? 5 to 6 usually.

What is your favorite tournament to play and why? I like to play in US Championship.

How many hours a day do you study chess and what does your training process look like? I try to do 2 -3 hours a day.

Do you think kids should play at their level or play up in tournaments? I recommend my students play up a section in order to get experience playing stronger players.

Do you ever get distracted by all the media attention and spectators during a tournament game? not too much I am already used to it.

How do you recover from a loss? Celebrate a win? Usually I try to forget and focus on the next game .if I win a nice game against a strong player I feel happy and celebrate with friends by getting some good food.

What advice do you have for kids with regard to resigning a game. In other words, when is resigning considered quitting and when is it the only option.?

Never resign too early. Only when you are mated or about to next move .Maybe opponent can make a blunder and miss perpetual or stalemate trick.

Have you ever played blindfold chess? Yes many times against friends. Also I have done a blindfold simul once on 5 boards.

Are you competitive in other areas of your life? yes very much.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of chess? I like to work out regularly, eat good food in authentic restaurants, Sushi Thai, and others. I have passion for cars.

Cars? What do you drive and what is your dream car? I drive Lexus sc430 right now . I would love to drive Aston Martin or Lamborgini one day.

What are your chess goals? My goal would be to break 2700 fide in the next 2-3 years. **Life goals?** I have a great family and 1 year old daughter and everything is good.

Any last minute notes about your upcoming camp? I'm organizing my sixth annual summer chess camp. I believe this will prove to be a great learning experience for you as many strong players will be in attendance. The camp will begin on July 13and end on July 17. You are in welcome to attend in person or online. Although the camp is five days, you can attend as many days as you like. The cost to you will be according to how many days you attend. I've attached the flyer with all of the details. I am limiting the camp to 15 students only so if you're interested or if you have any questions, please contact me soon.

<http://akobian.com/>



Jerry Yee, GM Varuzhan Akobian and me at the West Valley Chess Club

What to expect at an OFF da ROOK scholastic tournament



Our goal for our tournaments is to introduce your child to competitive tournament play in a fun and supportive environment. First, children should understand their primary aim is to play their best, not necessarily to win. Parents should expect to console their children when they lose and encourage good sportsmanship regardless of the result.

How do I prepare my child for a tournament?

First and foremost, make sure your child has a good night's sleep the night before a tournament. Tournaments are an all day event and stamina is key. Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast and is well hydrated. Before each round, make sure your child has used the bathroom. If your child needs to use the bathroom during a game, he simply needs to raise his hand. However, breaks can often be distracting from your child's game.

What should I bring with me to a tournament?

You need to bring a chess board and a chess clock. I would suggest parents bring a chair, something to occupy your time such as a book or an Ipad and a sweater, as it can get chilly in the tournament hall. I also suggest bringing snacks and water or some cash if you would like to purchase food or merchandise.

Does my child need to record his moves?

All rated sections are required to record moves. We encourage recording moves for unrated section as well, but it is not required. Score sheets will be provided.

Does my child need to use a clock?

All players in the rated sections are required to use clocks. We encourage using clocks for unrated section as well and if time becomes an issue, we will require it for unrated as well.

Will there be food for sale?

Yes, there will be food for sale. We usually have pizza and chips and other snacks. We also sell water and other drinks. Since we are at a synagogue, all food brought in must be KOSHER.

Can I purchase a clock or board?

We do our best to keep a stock of chess boards and clocks for sale at our tournaments but they do sometimes sell out.

Will I be able to watch my child play?

Unfortunately, parents are not allowed in the tournament hall when the tournament is in progress. We have tables and chairs for Parents in the skittles room.

What is a Tournament Director?

You will probably see a tournament director (also called a TD) and several volunteers in the playing area. The TD uses software to pair the child for each round, he makes an announcement at the start of each round and settles any sort of disputes that arise during a game. Children should understand that if they have a question during the game or think their opponent made an illegal move, they should not talk to their opponent. Instead, they should stop their clock and raise their hand and wait for the TD. TDs often rule on claims of time forfeiture, draws and illegal moves. TDs have the authority to punish bad behavior or other rule violations by adding or subtracting time from a player, or by forfeiting a game.



How do the pairings work?

We follow the pairing rules developed by the US Chess Federation (USCF) on Swiss-System tournaments. This means that players are paired against others with similar scores. So after the first round, if you child won his game, he will play another child who has also won his game. Likewise, if you child lost his first game, he will play someone who also lost his first game. The pairing system is quite complicated and is performed by a computer program so the TD almost has no room for discretion. Although experienced TDs will review the pairings for accuracy (even the best program can have a few glitches), the TD never arbitrarily makes changes in the pairings the computer assigns.

If my child loses his game, is he eliminated?

No. All children will play all 4 rounds. (cont. page 13)

Our next TOURNAMENT

May 29, 2016

[REGISTER HERE](#)





**Off da Rook 6
Scholastic Chess Tournament**

WHEN: Sunday, May 29th, 2016

WHERE: Shomrei Torah Synagogue
7353 Valley Circle Blvd.
West Hills, CA 91304

Bring your own boards and clocks. Boards and clocks will not be provided, but may be purchased on site.



Food and beverage tickets for sale only on site



Outside food brought in must be Kosher

Section (circle one): K-12 Open K-12 U900 K-8 U600 K-6 U300 K-8 Unrated

Participant's Name: _____

USCF ID: _____ Rating, if known _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Email: _____ Phone: _____

I, as the parent or guardian of the above named child, hereby give permission for my child to participate in the programs and activities offered by Off da Rook. I and my child agree to accept and comply with all rules and regulations of the Off da Rook.

I hereby authorize any agent of the Off da Rook to act as agent for the understand to consent to any emergency medical treatment and/or hospital care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under, the general or special supervision of any physician and surgeon licensed under the provisions of the medical practice act, should an emergency arise and I cannot be located in a timely manner. I understand that the Off da Rook or Jennifer Vallens assume no financial responsibility for any such medical care.

I, on behalf of myself and my child, hereby waive any claim I might have against, and release, and agree to indemnify, save, and hold harmless, the Off da Rook program, even if my child turns 18.

Parent's Signature: _____

5 SECTIONS:

- K-12 Open
- K-12 Under 900
- K-8 Under 600
- K-6 Under 300

(sections above are rated and require a USCF membership ID number. Membership can be purchased at www.uschess.org)

(May USCF supplement ratings will be used.)

K-8 Unrated

4 ROUNDS:

- Round 1: 11:00 am
- Lunch Break 11:30 am—12:30 pm
- Round 2: 12:30 pm
- Round 3: 1:45 pm
- Round 4: 3:00 pm
- Trophy Ceremony at 4:00 pm

TIME CONTROL:

G/30 with 5 second delay

PRIZES:

Trophies to the top 8 players in each section based on a minimum of 25 players per section.

ENTRY FEE:

\$30 EF if registered by May 24.
After May 24, entry fee goes up to \$45

REGISTRATION:

Make checks payable to: Jerry Yee
or
pay online at www.offdarook.com

Mail check with registration to:

Jerry Yee
23541 Friar Street
Woodland Hills, C A91367

CONTACT:

Jennifer Vallens at (818) 674-2006
Jerry Yee at (818) 915-5572

What to expect at an OFF da ROOK tournament

What is a Bye?

Sometimes there are an odd number of players in a section. If this happens, the bottom player will not play a round. Even though they player does not play the round, he/she will receive a full point BYE. This is a full point as though they had won their game. If you need to miss a round, you can request a 1/2 point BYE prior to the tournament starting.

How do the points work?

Players earn one point for winning, a 1/2 point for drawing, and no points for losing a game.

What are tie-breaks?

In most tournaments, a pre-determined number of top prizes (trophies) are awarded at the end. When two or more players have won all of their games, our software will use a tiebreak system to determine placement based on the opponents' results in their games and the total score in those 4 games.

What is a rating and what if my child is playing in an unrated section?

If your child is playing in a rated game, the game is sanctioned by the US Chess Federation (USCF). Membership is required in order to participate in a rated game. Annual membership varies by age and the cost rates from \$17 to \$49. You can visit uschess.org and pay for a membership online.

The results will be submitted usually a couple days following the tournament. The USCF will assign a rating and will post that rating on their website. Ratings are valuable in that they help determine what section your child should be playing so that he/she is playing similar strength opponents.

If your child is playing in an Unrated section, he or she will NOT receive a rating.

When all the games are finished, do we leave?

There will be an awards ceremony after the last round. We strongly encourage you to stay for the awards. We like to recognize all the children at the tournament and give special prizes for sportsmanship.

Can I take photos of my child playing?

Parents are allowed to assist their child in finding their board and can take a quick photo at that time. But to avoid late start times, we encourage parents to quickly leave the room after announcements have been made. Our staff will be taking photos during tournament play and all photos will be posted on this website. We encourage you to take photos at the awards ceremony.

What if I need to leave the tournament early or need to miss a round?

Please tell the Tournament Director. It is critical that the TD knows who will be participating in the tournament each round. If you do not let the TD know, your child will be

paired with an opponent and that will result in a forfeit victory for another child (who was probably just hoping to play a game).

What if my child is losing and does not want to play the remaining rounds?

We strongly discourage withdrawing from our tournaments. Players who leave because they lose are missing some of the greatest benefits of the game.

Am I able to leave the tournament?

A lot depends on the age and experience of your child. You know your child. If you feel your child is mature enough to stay at the tournament on their own, you are free to leave. However, be mindful that younger players need a lot of support after their game. They want to share their wins, as well as be comforted when they lose.

But if you do leave, make sure you have communicated with your child beforehand and leave a cell phone number with us for emergencies.

You and your child are free to leave between rounds and get lunch or if local, go home and come back. However, part of the fun for kids is to play with other kids between rounds.

My child finished his game, should I ask him if he won or lost?

No. Your role as a parent is to be supportive. Leave that question up to your child's chess coach, if they have one.

Let your child lead you. The best question to ask your child when he finishes their round is "Did you have a good game?". Some of the best games a child can play are games in which they lost. It is more important that they played to the best of their ability.

If your child is crying, please give them a hug and/or space. The child needs time to process their feelings. Learning how to recover from a loss and regain composure is a valuable life skill.

If you have any other questions, please send us an email at offdarook@gmail.com



Photos from Off da ROOK 5 January 17, 2016 tournament



Abi Bowling and Jay Stallings



Avery Yu



Ryder Soukup and Parker Lauinger



Evan Vallens



Sarah Shundo Joshua Mehdian



Ethan Bowling



Natasha Mertens



Kai Lewis



Gabriel Lin



Rachel Burak, Jesse Lamon and Robert Liu



Armen Andranigian



Sahithya Saravanan



Varvara Okuneva

Blindfold Chess Adventures

I have been working with GM Timur Gareyev for the past 18 months setting up Blindfold Chess matches all over the world to help him prepare for the ultimate challenge of playing 47 games blindfolded simultaneously. This event is set for December 2-4 in Prague. Pavel Matocha of the Prague Chess Society is hosting this exciting event. This event will take place over three days and include several side events.

I am so excited to be heading to Prague in June to help with the planning and preparation for the World Record event. Timur will be doing a 15 person blindfold simul as part of the Cez Chess Trophy 2016 tournament to promote his ultimate challenge. You will be able to catch these games live on chess24. For more information on Timur and upcoming blindfold chess events, visit

www.blindfoldking.com

And like the Blindfold King Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/blindfoldchessking/>

Blindfold Chess World Record Event Prague December 24, 2016



We have had an incredible amount of support and interest in Timur and his blindfold chess adventures. Thank you to all the chess organizations that have embraced Timur with hosting or covering Blindfold Chess events and for those who have opened their homes to Timur in the last 18 months.

I'd like to give a special shout out and recognize the following:

*Jesse Rissman, Micah Johnson and Nicco Reggente, UCLA Memory Lab
Jay Stallings, California Youth Chess League
Lacey Hudec, Chicago Area Mensa
Randy Schine and Brian Wall, Denver Chess Club
Brad Lundstrom and Zach Bekkedahl, Chess Mates
Todd Andrews and Sherri Gough, Nashville Chess Center
Rebecca Ruttledge, Youth Chess Oklahoma
Robert Meyers, The Chess Academy
Mike Morris and Lennart Bjorksten, Portland Chess Club
Matt Benson, Chess Things
Ted Castro, Nor Cal House of Chess
Marck Cobb and Anna James, Karpov International Chess School
John Donaldson, Mechanics Club
Todd Chase, Waltham Chess Club
Bryan Quick and Frank Brady, The Marshall Chess Club
Charles Swartz, Boulder Chess Club
North Jeffco Chess Club
Gabby Kay, Coachella Chess Club
Deepak Aaron, Georgia Tech
Jon Haskel, Boca Raton Chess Club
Dr. Alan Sherman and Joel DeWyer, UMBC
Juan and Sabrina Jauregui, Las Vegas Chess Center
Kele Perkins, Whittier Chess Club
Judit Sztaray and Abel Talamantez, Bay Area Chess
Chuck Ensey, San Diego Chess Club
Mike Zaloznyy
Daniel Kipnis
Andrew McGregor
Jeffrey Plunkett
Sean Kruger
Jeff Connelly
Kostya Kavutskiy
William Huwang
Eliot Hearst
Thomas Bomm
Marc Lang
Eswaran Ramalingam and Tigran Darbinyan, XcellChess
Pavel Matocha, Prague Chess Society
Jake Moody and Joe Escano, Missing Frame Productions
Chessbase
Chess24
Mindfold
US Chess
Jamaal Abdul-Alim
Desert Sun News
Ventura County Star
The Acorn
The Whittier Daily News*

...and to the countless other Supporters.

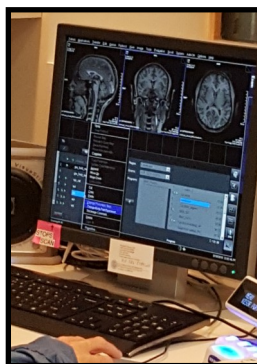
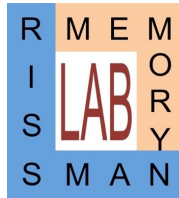
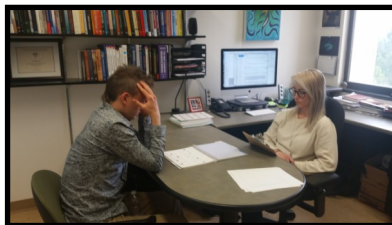
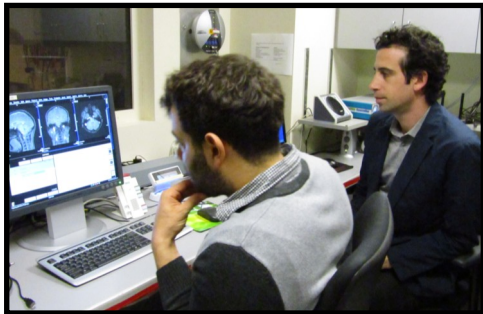
Thank you!

Blindfold Tandem Chess World Record Documentary by Thomas Bomm

<https://youtu.be/dxUSDmmcOsM>



Trip to the UCLA Rissman Memory Lab



Here are a few photos from Timur's testing at UCLA. Dr. Jesse Rissman is conducting the first ever Blindfold Chess study in an fMRI to determine how Timur's brain functions as he plays Blindfold Chess. Findings will be posted on www.blindfoldking.com as they are made available.

For a list of Dr. Rissman's publications, <http://rissmanlab.psych.ucla.edu/rissmanlab/>

Micah Johnson, GM Timur Gareyev, Dr. Jesse Rissman, Nicco Reggente, Jennifer Vallens

Blindfold Chess Adventures



Turner Gough and Josh Campbell assist Timur in demonstrating the Knight Tour at Georgia Tech.



21 Board Simul at Las Vegas Chess Center



Timur and me with Juan Juaregui



Timur giving a lecture at Georgia Tech



Gabby Kay, Coachella Chess Club



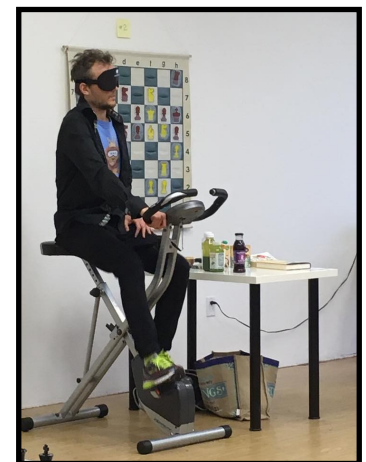
Simone Sobel tests her knight tour ability at Coachella Chess



Timur plays blindfold knock out with UMBC's top players. Seen here is IM Lev van Bregadze.



Timur gives lecture, blindfold simul and blindfold knock out event at UMBC



15 Board Simul at Bay Area Chess



Lecture at North Jeffco Chess Club

Blindfold Chess Adventure



10 board simul at the historic Marshall Chess Club

INBJUDAN FRÅN STOCKHOLMS SCHACKFÖRBUND, STOCKHOLMS SCHACKÄLLKAP OCH WABA BK

UTMANA BLINDSCHACKS- KUNGEN!

Starmästaren som vill sätta världrekord i blindschack

LÄS MER om GM Timur Gareyev rekordförbruk: www.blindschack.com

GM TIMUR GAREYEV, USA (2611)
aka "Blindfold king"
Stockholms Schacksalonger

Blindsimultan, fredag 20 maj kl 18.30

Anmäl dig genom att mejla till stockholms.schackforbund@talia.com
I anmälningen skriv **BLINDSCHACK**
Begränsat antal platser! DÖD till Kommet 50 kr. Använders är förstås välkomna



12 board simul at Whittier Chess Club



GM Giorgi Kacheishvili, GM Irina Krush and Dr. Frank Brady



With chess club president Bryan Quick



On the set of the Leo Laporte "Screen Savers" show



Timur breaks personal record of 35 board blindfold simul at Let's Play Chess



With Matt Benson and dad, Steven Benson



Only 1 loss out of 35 to team of 7 year old Vignesh Jami and UC Berkeley freshman, Arvind Sakar



With Leo "the tech guy" Laporte



Warm up with Tai Chi lesson

Interview with Dr. Alexey Root

Alexey Root was the 1989 U.S. Women's Chess Champion and is a Woman International Master. She earned her bachelor's degree in history at the University of Puget Sound and her doctoral degree in education at The University of California, Los Angeles. She has been a Senior Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Studies at UT Dallas since 1999 and is a prolific author.

Can you tell me a little about your background and how you got involved in Chess.

My dad taught me to play when I was five years old, and let me win for several years. Because he is not a tournament player, I was able to defeat him "for real" when I was nine years old. Then he took me to our local chess club in Lincoln, NE.

You have accomplished quite a bit in your life so far. Women's International Master, 1989 US Women's Chess Champion, Author of 7 books, champion for chess education. You hold a PhD from UCLA and are a Senior Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Studies at The University of Texas at Dallas. For what accomplishment are you most proud?

Can I pick two of those accomplishments? My books and my online courses have reached thousands. So I am proud of the impact that they have had on chess in education.

Can you tell me about your recent book, "Prepare with Chess Strategy"? What are the main points in this book? Is this book intended for school aged readers?

Prepare With Chess Strategy helps beginner- to intermediate-level players learn the common elements of chess strategy, such as Force, Space, Time, and Pawn Structure. Scouts and other players can practice chess with the book's exercises and test themselves with its end-of-chapter quizzes. Merit badge counselors, chess coaches, and teachers will find this book a valuable resource. It can also be read directly by school-age readers.

Can you tell me about your involvement with the Boy Scouts of America.

I am a Chess merit badge counselor. I have taught the badge at the National Scouting Museum and at a Merit Badge University held at the University of Texas at Dallas. My book

Prepare With Chess Strategy is licensed by the Boy Scouts of America.

If I understand correctly, you teach two online courses through The University of Texas at Dallas on how educators can incorporate chess into their classroom. Are these courses designed specifically for educators who teach Math?

The courses, and my books, are aimed at educators of grades 3-8. That is, teachers of all subjects not just math. Also, I have had educators of younger (pre-K through 2) and of high school students take my courses too. The courses will be valuable for educators looking for an inexpensive, time-efficient way to engage their students and teach them important subject matter concepts as well. The courses are available over the Internet, to anyone who is eligible to take college-credit courses.

Can you tell me more about the benefits of infusing chess into curriculum.

I answer these questions in my books, such as *Science, Math, Checkmate: 32 Chess Activities for Inquiry and Problem Solving* (2006, Teacher Ideas Press) and *Read, Write, Checkmate: Enrich Literacy with Chess Activities* (2009, Teacher Ideas Press). A short answer here will be misleading to such an important question!

What is your peak rating?

My peak US Chess rating was 2260.

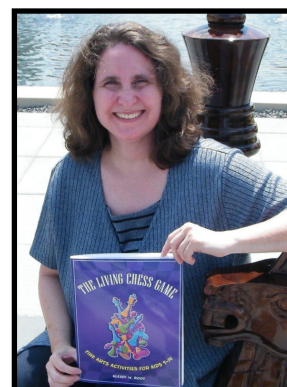
Do you still compete in tournaments? Why or Why not?

I played in two game/60 tournaments in 2015. I wrote about one of those tournaments in *Prepare With Chess Strategy* (2016, Mongoose Press).

How often do you play online? OTB?

See previous question re OTB and I don't play online.

(cont. page 20)



<https://www.utdallas.edu/is/chess-online/alexey-root/>

Interview with Alexey Root

I read your article you wrote for *Chess Life* magazine about chess and hoarding titled *It Only Feels Like Zugzwang*. It does seem like Chess Hoarding could be a DSM-5 category all on its own;) Do have any tips on how chess players can get a handle on their collections and where someone can donate chess books and magazines so they can share their passion and knowledge with others?

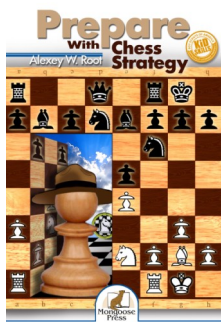
If a chess player has items of great interest to others, then the World Chess Hall of Fame might be interested in that donation. For more ordinary donations, local libraries or chess clubs might be interested in chess books or issues of chess magazines.

Can you tell me your opinion and experience with “chess flow”? Do you think this is something that can be taught or practiced or something that just is?

I would direct those interested in *flow* to read Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s books. Chess is only one of many possible activities, including other games and sports, leading to flow. Like those activities, chess engages us, which is important to educators facing students with short attention spans. As I wrote in my book *Children and Chess: A Guide for Educators* (2006, Teacher Ideas Press), “Chess has much to offer for students in grades 3-8. Chess enables experiences of deep concentration, sharpens competitive skills, activates multiple intelligences, and allows students to experience sacrifice, problem solving, and planning. . . . All students gain the important idea of thinking before taking action.”

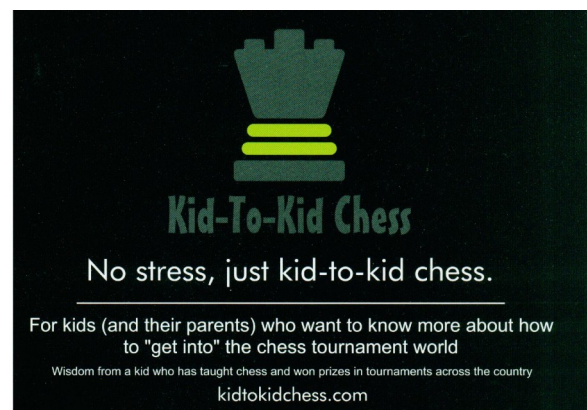
The US Chess Championship had some really young players competing this year. What are your thoughts about 12 and 13 year olds competing? As an educator, do you think developmentally they are ready or do you think these types of competitions put too much pressure on our youth?

As I wrote in *Children and Chess: A Guide for Educators* (Teacher Ideas Press, 2006), “Based on your learners or on school policy, competitive chess games among children may be inappropriate during classes. Chess competition entails all games where results are tallied. Losers sometimes cry, and reasons for their tears are discussed.” That chapter on competition answers what parents, tournament directors/organizers, and educators can do about that crying and about competitive pressures more broadly. However, the teenagers at the US Chess Championships are experienced competitors who can handle the ups and downs of tournament chess.



Dr. Alexey Root’s book “Prepare with Chess Strategy” can be found at a bookseller near you or online at Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.com/Prepare-With-Chess-Strategy-Alexey/dp/1936277697>



Turner Gough, Chess Coach and Founder of Kid-To-Kid Chess

Championship Chess

more than just a game

Common Core State Standards Connections

K-5 Mathematics, Language Arts and Physical Education

Chess is a learning tool for the development of the mind that just happens to be a game. Chess is already making a strong contribution to children's learning in schools across the country. Now, we can show you how the **Championship Chess (CC) Scholastic Chess Series** can help you meet Common Core State Standards as you enhance overall learning.

Mathematics	Two goals of the Common Core State Standards are to make mathematics literacy part of everyday decisions and to support mathematical thinking and problem-solving. The standards address mathematical practices, including problem-solving, mathematical reasoning, communication, representation and connections. Students are encouraged to think critically to discover different possible solutions. As in chess, reasoned, logical connections make mathematics understandable.	
K-5		
Counting and Cardinality (K)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students know number names, count in sequence and connect numbers to quantity. 	CC: As students count and use the ranks, files and diagonals on the chessboard, they apply numeration to identify how and how far the pieces move.
Geometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students reason with shapes and their attributes. (K-3) Students use the coordinate system. (4-5) 	CC: Students use the algebraic grid of the chessboard to identify relative positions of the pieces on the quadrants of the board and apply this to the annotation, evaluation and description of best moves.
Algebra (4-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students generate and analyze patterns. 	CC: The chessboard pattern and the relationships of the pieces help students organize ideas to solve problems with slight variations of place or sequence.
Mathematical Practices (K-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. (2) reason abstractly and quantitatively. (3) construct viable arguments; and, (4) model with mathematics and use appropriate tools strategically. 	CC: (1) Every time a move is made on the chessboard there is a new problem to solve. (2) Students have to analyze and evaluate to verify options and select the best move. (3) Using algebraic notation, students "speak chess," analyzing space and viewpoint to formulate and to answer questions. (4) Such concepts as even and odd; vertical, horizontal and diagonal; pattern recognition; and, solving multistep problems apply to chess play.

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For more information: <http://www.championshipchess.net>
chess@championshipchess.net

Benefits of Chess in Schools

<http://www.psmcd.net/otherfiles/TheBenefitsChessPresSlides.pdf>



To receive the full curriculum please contact Mike Klein or Christine VanCott at Questions@ChessKid.com -- ChessKid.com's Curriculum is free for use by school and may not be redistributed in any way for commercial use.

ChessKid.com Curriculum!

ChessKid is pleased to offer the world's first chess curriculum vertically aligned to meet Common Core State Standards. The curriculum is the only one of its kind, and is for use by educators both within the traditional classroom environment, as well as by professional chess coaches in after-school clubs / programs. Even better news? It's now completely FREE!

At the heart of the ideals of HOT (Higher Order Thinking) and Bloom's Taxonomy is the goal to improve every child's cognitive development and critical thinking skills. No game or sport marries itself more naturally to these missions better than chess. Inherent in the game of chess is the demand that a student or player remember what he or she has learned at the board, understand and then apply the proper approach to the repeating tactical and positional patterns present, and then use that knowledge to properly analyze, evaluate, and calculate their way to a victory.

[Download a sample of the chesskid.com curriculum](#)

English/ Language Arts K-5	<i>Research shows that to become more skilled and confident readers and communicators, students need multiple and diverse opportunities to build essential skills. The anchor standards address the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.</i>		
	<i>Reading: Foundational Skills (K-1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students identify and use upper and lower case letters 	CC: Using the algebraic grid and the letter designations for each piece, students use letters to identify and communicate positions on the chessboard.
	<i>Reading: Craft and Structure (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students use new words in oral and written language; students recognize multiple meanings of words. 	CC: The language of chess includes the special use of familiar words, such as <i>forks, pins, skewers</i> . Students read these words in books and use them in game analyses.
	<i>Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students use strategies to gain better understanding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Make predictions. (2) Recognize cause-and-effect relationships. (3) Interpret information from diagrams. 	CC: Chess requires many of the same skills that are needed for good comprehension. Playing chess gives students new and varied opportunities to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Make predictions within opening or endgame patterns. (2) Recognize that moves may cause specific reactions. Sometimes effects are predictable; sometimes they're not, but the relationship is clear. (3) "Read" the chessboard diagrams during play and in chess books. They learn to identify advantages, candidate moves, short-term tactical plays and long-range strategies.
<i>Speaking and Listening (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students practice communication skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Ask and answer questions. (2) Display turn-taking behavior. (3) Volunteer and solicit comments and opinions. (4) Cite and clarify rationale. (5) Actively listen and demonstrate knowledge gathered from others or a variety of media. 	CC: Chess activities require good communication skills. Although there may be little give and take across the chessboard, improving chess skills requires students to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Ask and answer questions related to classic games or their own games. (2) Take turns during play and during group analysis. (3) Listen to or question the opinion of others rationally (4) Clearly explain the rationale behind their moves. (5) Use a variety of media to gather information and improve their games. 	
Physical Education K-5	<i>Chess is a game with more mental than physical demands, but the goals of sportsmanship are still important.</i>		
	<i>Safety: Responsibility, Cooperation, Respect</i>	Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Recognize and follow rules; (2) Play cooperatively and respectfully; (3) Take responsibility for their actions. 	CC: (1) Players must follow rules, including touch/move. (2) Games begin and end with a handshake, a show of respect and cooperation that is integral to positive interactions within competitive play. (3) Players are solely responsible for their games—breaking rules means a forfeited game; inattentiveness to the board or an opponent's play may mean a loss.

English/ Language Arts K-5	<i>Research shows that to become more skilled and confident readers and communicators, students need multiple and diverse opportunities to build essential skills. The anchor standards address the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.</i>		
	<i>Reading: Foundational Skills (K-1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students identify and use upper and lower case letters 	CC: Using the algebraic grid and the letter designations for each piece, students use letters to identify and communicate positions on the chessboard.
	<i>Reading: Craft and Structure (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students use new words in oral and written language; students recognize multiple meanings of words. 	CC: The language of chess includes the special use of familiar words, such as <i>forks, pins, skewers</i> . Students read these words in books and use them in game analyses.
	<i>Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students use strategies to gain better understanding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Make predictions. (2) Recognize cause-and-effect relationships. (3) Interpret information from diagrams. 	CC: Chess requires many of the same skills that are needed for good comprehension. Playing chess gives students new and varied opportunities to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Make predictions within opening or endgame patterns. (2) Recognize that moves may cause specific reactions. Sometimes effects are predictable; sometimes they're not, but the relationship is clear. (3) "Read" the chessboard diagrams during play and in chess books. They learn to identify advantages, candidate moves, short-term tactical plays and long-range strategies.
<i>Speaking and Listening (K-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students practice communication skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Ask and answer questions. (2) Display turn-taking behavior. (3) Volunteer and solicit comments and opinions. (4) Cite and clarify rationale. (5) Actively listen and demonstrate knowledge gathered from others or a variety of media. 	CC: Chess activities require good communication skills. Although there may be little give and take across the chessboard, improving chess skills requires students to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Ask and answer questions related to classic games or their own games. (2) Take turns during play and during group analysis. (3) Listen to or question the opinion of others rationally (4) Clearly explain the rationale behind their moves. (5) Use a variety of media to gather information and improve their games. 	
Physical Education K-5	<i>Chess is a game with more mental than physical demands, but the goals of sportsmanship are still important.</i>		
	<i>Safety: Responsibility, Cooperation, Respect</i>	Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Recognize and follow rules; (2) Play cooperatively and respectfully; (3) Take responsibility for their actions. 	CC: (1) Players must follow rules, including touch/move. (2) Games begin and end with a handshake, a show of respect and cooperation that is integral to positive interactions within competitive play. (3) Players are solely responsible for their games—breaking rules means a forfeited game; inattentiveness to the board or an opponent's play may mean a loss.

End Game tips

When do we reach the endgame? For the most part, it is when most of your pieces are traded off the board and it is safe to activate your King.

Some endgame things to consider: (<http://www.chess-strategies-tactics.com/endgame-principles>):

Try out some endgame puzzles on Chess.com <https://www.chess.com/forum/view/endgames/endgame-puzzles2>

- Get your king close to the action – ideally in front of your own pawns.
- Cut the enemy king off from the action when you can.
- Rooks should be placed behind passed pawns – your pawns or your opponent's pawns.
- Advance your good pawns to increase your chances of creating a passed pawn.
- Attack your opponents weak pawns to force your opponent's pieces into defensive positions.
- Place your pieces on squares where they restrict the mobility of your opponents pieces.
- If you have a material advantage, it is good to exchange pieces but keep pawns. Exchanging pawns increases your opponent's drawing chances. The less pieces there are on the board, the more important the pawns become.
- If you have an advantage, you should leave pawns on both sides of the board so that your opponent will be forced to defend on both sides of the board.
- If you have one bishop, put your pawns on the opposite color squares – this way you can control squares with your pawns which the bishop can't control.
- The bishop pair (two bishops) are usually very powerful in the endgame, possibly worth at least an extra pawn.
- The best piece to block a pawn with is a knight. This is because the knight also attacks the squares from where other pawns can protect the blocked pawn.
- Passed pawns should be pushed forward and supported by all your pieces. Remember – promoting a pawn can often be as good as checkmate since you will be able to force a win with a new queen.
- Passed pawns on the edge of the board is a key advantage since you can use it to distract your opponent's pieces (or king) away from other targets.
- A bishop is usually slightly better than a knight when the action is on both sides of the board. However, when the pawns are only on one side of the board, the knight can be more useful since it can reach both the light and dark squares.
- Bishops on opposite color squares tends to often lead to a draw even when one player has an extra pawn or two.
- Create threats on both sides of the board. This may cause your opponent's pieces to become overloaded with defensive tasks and give you an opportunity to promote a pawn by a tactical combination.

ACA & CJA present...

Please see back for camp details.



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• Coaches Jay & Jerry get kids to the next level in fun ways!

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Cost varies with rating group.
Lunch buffet and evening activities included!
All details at: www.SoCalChessCamp.com

Evening activities include GM Simuls, Blitz, Bughouse and more!



If you like these end game tips, you will like this DVD which can be purchased at: <https://gumroad.com/l/pkPfQ>

Odds and Ends



For those of you attending this year's National Open in Las Vegas, the Las Vegas Chess Center is hosting a NO Warm Up tournament.

This event will take place on Saturday June 18, a week before the National Open. It will serve as a warm up for the Las Vegas Chess Festival where many of our players will attend.

Format:

The NO warm up.

5SS US Chess rated , G/30+ 10, EF \$25 early bird, \$35 at the door. Two sections if enough players. 70% of the entries back on prizes.

Round 1 starts at 11 am, lunch break after round 3. All chess equipment provided, plus water and coffee.

June Scholastic 2016.

5 SS US Chess rated , EF \$20 early bird, \$30 at the door, trophies for 1-4 and medals for the rest, two sections if we have enough players.

Lunch and all chess equipment provided, lunch break after round 3. Round 1 starts at 11 am.

To register go to

www.lasvegaschesscenter.com

or call us at 702-202-1797



My favorite Chess event is the annual Las Vegas International Chess Festival. It is chock full of chess fun. Some of the many chess activities include:

- **US Women's Open** on Wednesday and Thursday
- **Poker Tournament** on Thursday afternoon. Details
- **GM Alexey Dreev Simul** Thursday afternoon
- **Walter Browne Memorial Blitz Championship** Thurs 7:30 p.m.
- **Grandmaster Chess Camp** for Children and Adults on Thursday
- **Free analysis of your games by Our Guest GM's** Friday, Saturday & Sunday
- **Youth Simul** for kids 14 and under
- **Free Lectures** by Our Guest GM's
- **Book Signings**
- **TWO 10-12 player Blitz Sectionals** One each on Saturday & Sunday Nights
- **Winner's Circle** A reception and cash bar
- **The Spirits of Chess** Grandmaster Invitational Blitz – at the Winners' Circle
- **Youth Blitz** for kids 14 and under on Friday evening
- **Youth Puzzle Solving Competition** for kids 14 and under on Saturday evening
- **Free Daily Raffles.** Every player in the National Open is automatically entered in a free raffle before each evening round. Prizes include books, chess equipment and the **GRAND PRIZE: Free room and entry to the next National Open**

The Chess Event of the Year!

June 22-27

[Register here](#)