



Tennessee Chess News

October 2026, Volume 71, Issue 3

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TN Open Results

Open Section

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1 Open

RegularSwiss6/90;+30GP 80 pts

#	Player	Pts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
1	James DOVE 30958912 / R 2029 → 2120	5.0	W 30	W 17	D 3	D 2	W 11	W 9
2	Graham HOROBETZ 12800231 / R 2320 → 2321	4.5	W 14	W 16	D 9	D 1	W 5	D 3
3	Ronald Wayne BURNETT 12093120 / R 2318 → 2313	4.5	W 35	D 8	D 1	W 7	W 15	D 2
4	Paul A LINXWILER 11272169 / R 2170 → 2166	4.0	W 32	L 10	W 34	D 12	W 17	H
5	Chris L. CHAMBERS 12168500 / R 2018 → 2026	4.0	W 33	D 23	D 8	W 19	L 2	W 18
6	Nathan ZEIGLER 17328765 / R 2008 → 1999	4.0	L 24	L 11	W 35	W 30	W 21	W 19
7	John Thienhy NGUYEN 31038666 / R 1977 → 1988	4.0	W 31	D 24	W 23	L 3	D 18	W 15
8	Beau SENSING 16381431 / R 1926 → 1948	4.0	W 26	D 3	D 5	D 21	W 14	D 11
9	David S ROSS 12481144 / R 2375 → 2357	3.5	W 13	D 21	D 2	H	W 16	L 1
10	Alexander B KING 12781369 / R 2373 → 2378	3.5	W 20	W 4	W 19	H	U	U
11	Alain CIERNA 15177443 / R 2104 → 2090	3.5	D 12	W 6	W 24	D 15	L 1	D 8
12	Owen McDEVITT 16024265 / R 1843 → 1879	3.5	D 11	D 35	W 30	D 4	H	D 17
13	Townes BUFORD 12863414 / R 1779 → 1787	3.5	L 9	D 29	L 25	W 28	B	W 24
14	Diego H DELGADO 16448875 / R 1745 → 1781	3.5	L 2	D 22	W 28	W 23	L 8	W 25
15	Peter W PRITCHETT 12616414 / R 2001 → 1990	3.0	D 25	W 28	W 18	D 11	L 3	L 7
16	Michael ROBERTSON 13841225 / R 1958 → 1953	3.0	W 22	L 2	D 21	W 24	L 9	H
17	Kenneth Gregory TURNER 12470290 / R 1927 → 1912	3.0	W 36	L 1	D 31	W 25	L 4	D 12
18	Ghanishth Prabhakar AWASTHI 30945382 / R 1898 → 1885	3.0	D 28	W 25	L 15	W 31	D 7	L 5

19	Rafi CHOWDHURY  13852335 / ● R 1862 → 1871	3.0	W 34	W 20	L 10	L 5	W 22	L 6
20	Patrick TABOR  30917661 / ● R 1816 → 1841	3.0	L 10	L 19	W 32	W 27	W 29	U
21	Cameron Zachary WILSON  14971863 / ● R 1620 → 1680	3.0	X 29	D 9	D 16	D 8	L 6	H
22	Navilon MUTHUKUMAR  32043495 / ● R 1536 → 1634	3.0	L 16	D 14	D 29	W 32	L 19	W 27
23	Austin HENNINGER  13569478 / ● R 1941 → 1903	2.5	W 27	D 5	L 7	L 14	L 25	W 30
24	Travis Faron MILLER  30355709 / ● R 1694 → 1727	2.5	W 6	D 7	L 11	L 16	W 31	L 13
25	Joseph C ALLEN  30500067 / ● R 1690 → 1722	2.5	D 15	L 18	W 13	L 17	W 23	L 14
26	Legend GAVIN  30637414 / ● R 1583 → 1582	2.5	L 8	L 33	W 36	D 29	L 27	W 31
27	Cedric EDWARDS  12455580 / ● R 1525 → 1515	2.0	L 23	L 30	B	L 20	W 26	L 22
28	Daniel W GREVEN  12838083 / ● R 1572 → 1565	2.0	D 18	L 15	L 14	L 13	B	H
29	Alan KANTOR  10118506 / ● R 2000 → 2000	1.5	F 21	D 13	D 22	D 26	L 20	U
30	Sachleen SINGH  30260371 / ● R 1704 → 1689	1.5	L 1	W 27	L 12	L 6	H	L 23
31	Irone Jacob WINSLEY  30203423 / ● R 1635 → 1606	1.5	L 7	W 36	D 17	L 18	L 24	L 26
32	Charlie DURHAM  20019228 / ● R 1814 → 1800	1.0	L 4	W 34	L 20	L 22	U	U
33	Carter Brennan BURGESS  13796997 / ● R 1731 → 1736	1.0	L 5	W 26	U	U	U	U
34	Nima AFLAKI  30217702 / ● R 1729 → 1701	1.0	L 19	L 32	L 4	B	U	U
35	Justin DANIELS  20021601 / ● R 1842 → 1833	0.5	L 3	D 12	L 6	U	U	U
36	Michael E SMITH  12557506 / ● R 988 → 985	0.0	L 17	L 31	L 26	U	U	U

Amateur Section

<> 22 Amateur		Regular		Swiss		🕒 G/90;+30		👤 66 Players	
#	Player	Pts	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	
1 TN	Kaishav SHELAT 31438301 / 🟢 R 1600 → 1617	5.0	W 30	W 18	W 34	W 17	D 4	D 3	
2 TN	Maxwell Miguel GARZA 32697873 / 🟢 R 1615 → 1627	5.0	W 45	W 15	L 11	W 14	W 19	W 12	
3 TN	Pareesh RAMANATHAN 31033708 / 🟢 R 1586 → 1607	5.0	D 12	W 27	W 13	W 7	W 10	D 1	
4 TN	Brad Craig SMITH 12266650 / 🟢 R 1524 → 1583	5.0	W 13	W 24	W 44	W 11	D 1	H	
5 TN	McAnthony TARWAY II 31495409 / 🟢 R 1530 → 1506	4.5	W 32	L 17	W 57	W 22	D 24	W 20	
6 TN	Jasmine LIN 30799882 / 🟢 R 1472 → 1460	4.5	W 31	W 23	L 10	W 46	D 11	W 21	
7 TN	Jacob Thomas VANN 30694481 / 🟢 R 1392 → 1406	4.5	D 14	W 40	W 36	L 3	W 16	W 24	
8 TN	Aiden GASKINS 30397751 / 🟢 R 1357 → 1341	4.5	D 9	W 41	D 29	W 34	D 20	W 23	
9 TN	Chuck WENZLER 14988025 / 🟢 R 1167 → 1203	4.5	D 8	L 14	W 41	W 42	W 26	X 17	
10 TN	Jasmine SEKYERE 31109764 / 🟢 R 878 → 1161	4.5	W 39	W 30	W 6	H	L 3	W 27	
11 TN	George CROUCH 33221162 / 🟢 R ---- → 1579	4.5	W 47	W 48	W 2	L 4	D 6	W 18	
12 TN	Ellie TSENG 32479504 / 🟢 R 1370 → 1437	4.0	D 3	W 45	W 15	W 37	H	L 2	
13 TN	Julian KANG 30440696 / 🟢 R 1341 → 1340	4.0	L 4	W 55	L 3	W 57	W 46	W 31	
14 TN	Mark LOUDERBACK 16878567 / 🟢 R 1171 → 1289	4.0	D 7	W 9	D 28	L 2	W 49	W 29	
15 TN	Aniketh ROSHAN 31299891 / 🟢 R 1167 → 1290	4.0	W 27	L 2	L 12	W 58	W 44	W 28	
16 TN	Gregory Walter RZECZKO 32878616 / 🟢 R 934 → 1146	4.0	W 33	L 44	W 48	W 29	L 7	W 30	
17 MS	Nicholas BOMBELLI 30429731 / 🟢 R 1399 → 1446	3.5	W 46	W 5	W 19	L 1	H	F 9	
18 TN	Vihaan NADELLA 31557574 / 🟢 R 1288 → 1282	3.5	W 21	L 1	W 60	D 23	W 33	L 11	
19 MS	Micah BRANCH 15750093 / 🟢 R 1300 → 1260	3.5	W 42	W 32	L 17	W 49	L 2	D 22	
20 TN	Sri Aashrith VITHANA 33132826 / 🟢 R 1181 → 1195	3.5	L 28	W 49	W 65	W 44	D 8	L 5	

21	Liam FITZPATRICK [TN] 32329656 / • R 1063 → 1062	3.5	L 18	W 62	W 39	D 26	W 37	L 6
22	Oskar Sinon MULQUEEN [TN] 31591248 / • R 1085 → 1106	3.5	L 29	W 63	W 62	L 5	W 56	D 19
23	Justin Eugene TROTTER [TN] 31811670 / • R 1033 → 1083	3.5	W 66	L 6	W 53	D 18	W 40	L 8
24	Agastya RANA [TN] 30858211 / • R 950 → 1113	3.5	X	L 4	W 56	W 28	D 5	L 7
25	Nikhil K SALIAN [TN] 13897481 / • R 909 → 1085	3.5	L 44	D 33	W 45	L 27	W 41	W 40
26	Jacob Haden TALAZAC [AL] 33056588 / • R - - - - → 951	3.5	L 54	W 64	W 35	D 21	L 9	W 42
27	Michael ABRON [MO] 11326846 / • R 1505 → 1500	3.0	L 15	L 3	W 47	W 25	W 34	L 10
28	Jasim JAINUDEEN [TN] 31465041 / • R 1470 → 1402	3.0	W 20	D 29	D 14	L 24	W 36	L 15
29	Travis Edwin DIRLE [MS] 17002774 / • R 1206 → 1209	3.0	W 22	D 28	D 8	L 16	W 48	L 14
30	Saketh SEGAVALU [TN] 30427003 / • R 1217 → 1175	3.0	L 1	L 10	W 66	W 60	W 35	L 16
31	Steven CONNOR [AL] 31218203 / • R 1158 → 1122	3.0	L 6	W 61	D 50	D 36	W 39	L 13
32	Chantelle MITCHELL [TN] 13392841 / • R 1047 → 1013	3.0	L 5	L 19	L 42	W 66	W 57	W 51
33	Rosalie M HAGEN [TN] 31211252 / • R 1004 → 991	3.0	L 16	D 25	W 55	W 50	L 18	D 37
34	Levi FITZPATRICK [TN] 32329705 / • R 1038 → 1041	3.0	W 51	W 60	L 1	L 8	L 27	W 49
35	Ari Jacob SCHRADER [TN] 16948586 / • R 923 → 908	3.0	L 37	W 58	L 26	W 64	L 30	W 56
36	Calvin TEITLER [TN] 30788736 / • R 905 → 1004	3.0	H	W 43	L 7	D 31	L 28	W 46
37	Leon FITZPATRICK [TN] 32702877 / • R 878 → 914	3.0	W 35	D 42	W 54	L 12	L 21	D 33
38	Noah CARRICO [TN] 32288569 / • R 674 → 713	3.0	L 63	L 39	W 59	L 56	W 58	W 47
39	Jenny M. DUGGAN [TN] 12911263 / • R 475 → 687	3.0	L 10	W 38	L 21	W 65	L 31	W 48
40	Scott KASSAN [AL] 30632514 / • R 1269 → 1200	2.5	D 41	L 7	W 43	W 54	L 23	L 25

41	Aaditya KARROTU TN 32386409 / • R 1027 → 1013	2.5	D 40	L 8	L 9	W 43	L 25	W 55
42	Joseph HUNGERMAN TN 32610595 / • R 980 → 965	2.5	L 19	D 37	W 32	L 9	W 50	L 26
43	Julian TEITLER TN 30788792 / • R 872 → 839	2.5	H	L 36	L 40	L 41	W 66	W 59
44	Daniel ALMODOVAR AL 33205732 / • R ---- → 1195	2.5	W 25	W 16	L 4	L 20	L 15	H
45	Zachariah R CARLSON AR 12841956 / • R 1480 → 1400	2.0	L 2	L 12	L 25	D 51	H	W 60
46	Tigo LE TN 15458906 / • R 1044 → 1014	2.0	L 17	W 57	W 58	L 6	L 13	L 36
47	Ernest SMITH JR. TN 13756435 / • R 996 → 936	2.0	L 11	L 56	L 27	W 52	W 64	L 38
48	Justin KANG TN 30966012 / • R 967 → 933	2.0	W 56	L 11	L 16	W 55	L 29	L 39
49	Seth PARSONS VA 32796302 / • R 822 → 804	2.0	W 53	L 20	X 63	L 19	L 14	L 34
50	Jonah VANN TN 32273899 / • R 691 → 661	2.0	L 60	W 59	D 31	L 33	L 42	D 53
51	Scott VANN TN 12783542 / • R 452 → 445	2.0	L 34	L 53	H	D 45	X 65	L 32
52	Gabriel GALINDEZ MS 33142625 / • R 432 → 380	2.0	L 58	L 54	L 64	L 47	B	W 66
53	Vernon SNYDER TN 31839509 / • R 307 → 420	2.0	L 49	W 51	L 23	H	U	D 50
54	Austin SELLERS MS 12754312 / • R 208 → 421	2.0	W 26	W 52	L 37	L 40	U	U

55	Alanna NORTH TN 30797080 / • R 150 → 150	2.0	B	L 13	L 33	L 48	B	L 41
56	Duong Quoc Thang NGUYEN TN 33236826 / • R ---- → 1040	2.0	L 48	W 47	L 24	W 38	L 22	L 35
57	Hayes DAUGHERTY TX 33099102 / • R 491 → 627	2.0	W 64	L 46	L 5	L 13	L 32	W 62
58	Dakota THOMAS TN 32581231 / • R ---- → 628	2.0	W 52	L 35	L 46	L 15	L 38	W 64
59	Rivers LAWTON TN 32586757 / • R 360 → 361	1.5	L 61	L 50	L 38	B	D 60	L 43
60	Silu Silvia WANG TN 33240476 / • R ---- → 694	1.5	W 50	L 34	L 18	L 30	D 59	L 45
61	Forrest WHITE TN 14704828 / • R 869 → 860	1.0	W 59	L 31	U	U	U	U
62	Tom FARRIS JR. MS 12456676 / • R 618 → 583	1.0	X 65	L 21	L 22	U	U	L 57
63	Brandon McINTIRE TN 33239356 / • R ---- → 946	1.0	W 38	L 22	F 49	U	U	U
64	Jeff RHODIN TN 30218990 / • R ---- → 436	1.0	L 57	L 26	W 52	L 35	L 47	L 58
65	Jeremiah PIERCE 33250226 / • R ---- → 555	1.0	F 62	W 66	L 20	L 39	F 51	U
66	Anupam AWASTHI TN 31374445 / • R 472 → 401	0.0	L 23	L 65	L 30	L 32	L 43	L 52

TCA Proposed Policy on Home School Students

Proposed Policy on Home School and Other Non-Traditional K-12 Students Playing in the TCA Scholastic Tournaments

The Tennessee Chess Association is in the process of updating its policy on home school and other non- traditional K-12 students and how they can participate in the Tennessee State Scholastic Tournaments. The main questions are to clarify how home school and non-traditional students can compete in the Harry D. Sabine Scholastic Team Tournaments either by forming teams or by joining a chess team in the student's appropriate local public school.

The revision to the existing policy (approved in 2011) is necessary because Tennessee's laws governing home school education have changed significantly since then, and especially because the Access and Opportunity Act provides a mechanism to allow home school students to participate in extracurricular activities in their local public school. The intent of this revised policy is to align as closely as reasonably possible to the US Chess Team Requirements for National Scholastic Events (which are combined Individual – Team events, and not true Team vs Team competitions) while recognizing the current (2026) structure of home school education under Tennessee law, including the Access and Opportunity Act. This TCA proposed policy is also cognizant of the current TSSAA guidelines on Non-Traditional Student Participation. Students attending online or virtual schools (either private or public) are not considered as home school students under current Tennessee Department of Education information, but are included in the TSSAA guidelines and are included here. Also, current Tennessee law regarding home school education does not include or define home school “cooperatives”, “associations” or “support groups”, but this proposed policy allows a chess team of home school students from a common local “cooperative”, using language borrowed from the US Chess Team Requirements for National Scholastic Events.

I have appended below a list of the online references I found most helpful followed by the proposed policy. I anticipate that the TCA Board will formally consider this policy proposal in November, so now

is the best time for you to share your advice and input with me. Please let me know by **November 14** if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding this proposed policy.

Paul Semmes, State Scholastic Coordinator

Email: Scholastic-coordinator@tnchess.us

References:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/families/school-options/home-schooling-in-tn.html> TN Dept of Ed Home School

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/nonpublic/Frequently_Asked_Questions_Home_School.pdf TN Dept of Education FAQs for Home School

<https://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/113/Bill/SB0443.pdf> Access and Opportunity Act

<https://tssaa.org/non-traditional-student-participation> Non-Traditional Student Participation | TSSAA

<https://new.uschess.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/us-chess-scholastic-regulations-2025-2026-2026.01.22-v2.1.pdf> School Year 2025-2026 National Scholastic Chess Tournament Regulations (see Section 5, Team Requirements for National Scholastic Events, pp 9-11)

Proposed Policy:

Tennessee Chess Association Policy on Home School and Other Non-Traditional K-12 Students Playing in the TCA Scholastic Tournaments

This policy applies to K-12 students in Tennessee attending school in a non-traditional setting, including:

- A student enrolled in a legally registered independent home school
- A home school student enrolled in a church-related umbrella school
- A student enrolled in an accredited non-public virtual (online) school
- A student enrolled in a public virtual school recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education

For a non-traditional K-12 student, the “local public school” is defined as the public school the student would attend if attending public school. For example, the local public school for a 3rd grade home school student is the local public school serving 3rd grade students whose geographic footprint, as defined by the local education agency, encompasses the student’s home residence address.

Non-traditional students may play in the TCA Scholastic Tournaments as follows:

1. Individual Regionals and Finals. Students being educated at home or enrolled in virtual/online schools in accordance with Tennessee law may play in these events in the appropriate section for their grade level.
2. Team Regionals and Finals. Students being educated at home or enrolled in virtual/online schools in accordance with Tennessee law may play in these events in the appropriate section for their grade level under any of the following conditions:

a) Home school students who reside within the boundary of the same local public school which they would all attend together may form a home school team. Only one team of home school students within a given local public school boundary may enter each championship section based upon the appropriate grade level.

b) A home school student may represent their local public school if permitted by the school and if the student resides within the boundaries of the local public school. The Regional or State Scholastic Coordinator may require a “Letter of Authorization” signed by a school administrator to document that the student is authorized to participate as part of the specific school’s team.

c) Home school students who are part of a common local cooperative, with shared academic courses, spaces or activities, may form a team. Note that the cooperative must not be formed solely as a chess club for the purpose of competing as a chess team.

d) Students enrolled in the same virtual/online school and who reside within the boundary of the same local public school which they would all attend together may form a team. Only one team of students enrolled in a particular virtual/online school within a given local public school boundary may enter each championship section based upon the appropriate grade level.

e) A student enrolled in a virtual/online school may represent their local public school if permitted by the school and if the student resides within the boundaries of the local public school. The Regional or State Scholastic Coordinator may require a "Letter of Authorization" signed by a school administrator to document that the student is authorized to participate as part of the specific school's team.

Any questions or issues must be referred to the State Scholastic Coordinator for resolution at least one week before registration for the tournament ends.

Cumberland County Fall Quads

1 Quads		Dual Swiss G/60;+5			
#	Player	Pts	R1	R2	R3
1 TN	Peter SUICH 12779311 / ● R 2273 → 2280 ● Q 2115 → 2125	3.0	W 2 	W 3 	W 4 
2 TN	William P FLYNN 15802340 / ● R 2066 → 2062 ● Q 1893 → 1891	1.5	L 1 	W 4 	D 3 
3 TN	Vadym DOVCHENKO 31624847 / ● R 1957 → 1966 ● Q 1827 → 1834	1.5	W 4 	L 1 	D 2 
4 TN	Lytic Connor AUTHIER 16538662 / ● R 1865 → 1845 ● Q 1698 → 1676	0.0	L 3 	L 2 	L 1 

4 QuadsC						Dual		Swiss	G/60;+5
#	Player	Pts	R1	R2	R3				
1 TN	William Connor JORDAN 32077481 / ● R 1139 → 1150 ● Q 1069 → 1086	2.0	W 2	W 3	L 4				
2 TN	Juddson Lee JONES 32399943 / ● R 1212 → 1180 ● Q 1159 → 1127	1.5	L 1	W 4	D 3				
3 TN	Bradley COX 31963596 / ● R 995 → 1025 ● Q 955 → 981	1.5	W 4	L 1	D 2				
4 TN	Lucas Jiachen LI 32007889 / ● R 999 → 998 ● Q 965 → 960	1.0	L 3	L 2	W 1				

5 QuadsD						Dual		Swiss	G/60;+5
#	Player	Pts	R1	R2	R3				
1 TN	Jason CORBETT 31457954 / ● R 958 → 976 ● Q 818 → 889	2.5	D 4	W 2	W 3				
2 TN	Oscar ZHENG 33309526 / ● R ---- → 922 ● Q ---- → 896	2.0	W 3	L 1	W 4				
3 TN	Thomas R RINK 12474655 / ● R 754 → 746 ● Q 774 → 752	1.0	L 2	W 4	L 1				
4 TN	Josh WILEY 31338523 / ● R 657 → 645 ● Q 662 → 643	0.5	D 1	L 3	L 2				

The Ellie Gambit: Can a Cat Change the Way You Play?

Submitted by Mary Giannone

My cat Ellie often sits on my lap while I play chess.

When I pet her, I feel calmer. That sounds simple enough. The trouble started when I asked a very chess-player question about it: does feeling calmer actually change how I play?

I had no data. I had a cat and a feeling.

Chess players are good at building explanations after the game. We remember the coffee, the bad sleep, the opening we liked, the walk before the round, the snack we skipped, the moment we felt rattled. Then an engine gives us a very precise postmortem, and it becomes tempting to connect the two.

So I wanted to know what it would take before Ellie deserved any credit at all.

Chess Looks Quiet. the Player Isn't Necessarily.

Chess is physically still compared with most sports, but that does not mean the body is doing nothing.

In a small 2009 study of 20 male chess players, average heart rate rose during play, and researchers also measured changes in heart-rate variability, or HRV. HRV is the small variation in timing from one heartbeat to the next. Researchers use it as one clue to how the body is responding to demand.

Another small study found that harder chess problems were associated with changes in HRV and brain activity. A more recent pilot study tested whether a short HRV-biofeedback session before a time-pressured chess task could change what happened next. The results were preliminary and mixed, but the question was useful: if you change the state of the player, can you change the quality of the decisions?

Stress and time pressure matter too. Acute stress can make working memory and mental flexibility harder, and recent chess research has found that even elite players become more error-prone when time to deliberate shrinks.

That made the first part of my theory easy to like. Chess places demands on the player. Ellie makes me feel calmer. Maybe the two were connected.

Then I got to the cat research.

The Cat Research Ruins the Easy Answer

The tidy version would be convenient:

Pet cat. Become calmer. Think better. Play better chess.

The evidence is not that cooperative.

In a 2023 study, 32 cat owners spent time either interacting freely with their own cats at home or resting without interacting. After spending time with their cats, the owners reported lower emotional arousal.

Good news for Ellie.

But the body measurements did not simply move in the direction we would casually call "relaxed." Heart rate rose, and one HRV measure connected with the body's rest-and-recovery response moved the other way. More petting was associated with a larger shift in that measure.

A 2026 daily-life study of 188 dog and cat owners complicated things again. Pet interaction was associated with more positive emotion and less negative emotion, but the researchers did not find a simple general stress-buffering effect.

That matters because my original evidence was entirely subjective: I pet Ellie and I feel calmer.

That feeling is real as a feeling. It is not a body measurement, and it is definitely not a chess result.

Annoyingly, that made the question better.

If "I feel calmer," "my body is calmer," and "I play better" are three different claims, Ellie has to survive three different tests.

So How Would We Test It?

The original version is awkward because it requires Ellie to report for duty on schedule. Cats are not famous for respecting experimental protocols.

A cleaner first test would happen before the chess task.

Recruit chess players who live with cats. Each player completes two matched, time-pressured chess tasks. Before one, the player spends a set amount of time voluntarily interacting with their own cat. Before the other, the player spends the same amount of time resting quietly. Randomize which condition happens first.

Then decide in advance what "better chess" means.

Researchers could choose one primary engine-based measure under standardized settings, then track secondary outcomes such as serious mistakes or blunders, clock use, and task score. Players could also rate how stressed they feel. If equipment were available, heart rate and HRV could show whether the body changed even when the chess did not.

Sleep, caffeine, time of day, player strength, task difficulty, and practice effects would all need attention.

And the cat gets a vote. No cat should be drafted into somebody's performance-enhancement program.

By then, my silly question had turned into a fairly respectable experiment.

Maybe Nothing Happens

The most useful result might be no result at all.

Ellie might change my mood and do absolutely nothing measurable to my chess. She might change physiology without changing decision quality. Some players might focus better after interacting with a cat while others become distracted. An apparent effect might disappear after enough games.

Any of those answers would teach us something.

That is one reason chess is such an interesting place to test our own stories. We can go back after the game and see the position, the move, the clock, and where an engine thinks things changed. But that precision can also make our explanations feel more certain than they are.

Maybe the coffee helped. Maybe the walk helped. Maybe the cat helped.

Or maybe we are very good at telling stories after the fact.

I started by wondering whether Ellie makes me better at chess. I ended up with a better question: what evidence would make that claim worth believing?

For now, Ellie still joins my games. I pet her. I feel calmer.

Maybe that matters. Maybe it does not.

Ellie supplies the question. She still supplies none of the statistical evidence.

Editor Source Notes

Troubat et al. (2009), European Journal of Applied Physiology:
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00421-008-0908-2>

Fuentes-García et al. (2019), Physiology & Behavior:
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2019.112609>

Shields, Sazma & Yonelinas (2016), Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2016.06.038>

Yunus et al. (2026), Perceptual and Motor Skills:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00315125261435294>

Vidulich & Tsang (2026), Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-026-00727-9>

Nagasawa et al. (2023), Animals: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani13132116>

Peeters et al. (2026), Frontiers in Psychology:
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1768288>

Letter from the President

Dear Tennessee Chess Community,

The energy across our state right now is incredible. Coming off the resounding success of the Tennessee Open, I want to share my heartfelt thanks with every player, parent, tournament director, and organizer who made our flagship event such a strong, smoothly run tournament. None of that success was accidental. It was masterminded round by round through the hard work, focus, and passion of this entire community.

As we plan our next moves for the organization, our leadership team is shifting as well. I want to personally thank Danny Mullinax and Mike Roberson for their dedicated service and steady presence on the TCA Board. Like any sound opening in chess, the long-term strength of our association relies on the quiet, essential groundwork laid well in advance. Danny and Mike have helped build a resilient foundation across Tennessee, and we are deeply grateful that they will continue to be active, supportive members of our chess family.

At the same time, please join me in giving a warm welcome to our newest board members, Joe Hungerman and Adam Johnson. Both bring sharp perspectives, thoughtful energy, and a real commitment to expanding chess access across our state. We are excited to put their strengths to work as we coordinate our initiatives from Memphis to the mountains.

Looking ahead, our sights are set directly on the upcoming scholastic season. Our K-12 players are the heart and future of Tennessee chess. As students, coaches, and school clubs begin preparing for their regional tournaments, I cannot wait to see what they accomplish over the board. Regionals are always a demanding test of skill, but more than that, they build resilience, discipline, and true sportsmanship in our young players. Be sure to check the official regional tournament flyer for specific dates, locations, and registration details for your area so your players are ready to compete.

Thank you all for your continued trust, your time, and your dedication to the game. I look forward to seeing everyone at the tables this season.

Christina Mullinax, President, Tennessee Chess Association

Bids and Announcements

Are you interested in hosting and organizing one of these upcoming tournaments?

The Tennessee Chess Association is responsible for several State level events each year. The Tennessee Open, Winter Open, Senior Open, All-Girls Championship, and Home School Championship. These events are open for outside bids if a person or organization wishes to host one of these events on our behalf, either by just providing a venue or taking full responsibility of the event. Please use the link below, which will also be posted on our Tournament Calendar, to submit your application to support these events.

Submissions will be reviewed by the Tournament Committee who will then make a recommendation to the Board of Directors to be voted on. The Board reserves the right to make final decisions for these events.

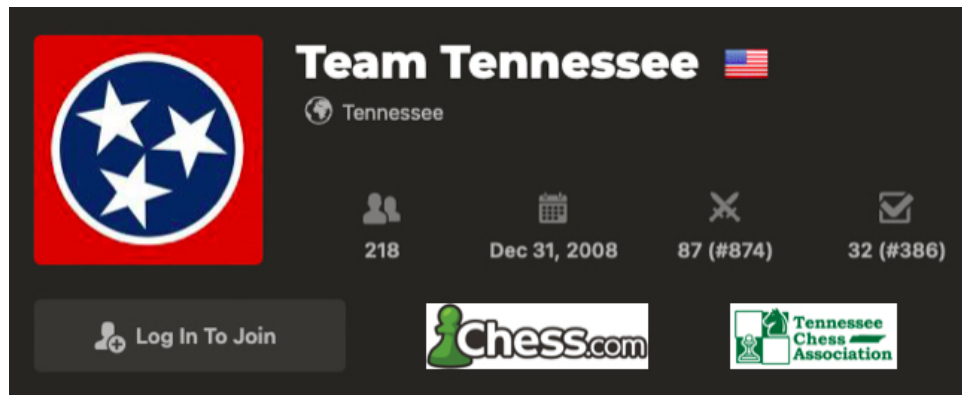
[Bid Form here](#)

Questions or comments can be sent to the Tournament Coordinator, Adam Johnson adamjohnsonchess@gmail.com

- TN Open: Target date Labor Day/September; **BID DUE: Feb 1**
- TN Home School State Championship: Target date November; **BID DUE: Feb 1**
- TN Winter Open: Target date weekend of MLK Jr day/January; **BID DUE: June 1**
- TN All-Girls State Championship: Target date April; **BID DUE: Nov 1**
- TN Senior Open: Target date May: **BID DUE: Nov 1**

Team Tennessee

Looking for more games? Join Team Tennessee on chess.com <https://www.chess.com/club/team-tennessee-chess> and help your state in the US Chess League and other team events!



Tennessee Chess Hall of Fame Call for Nominations

If you know someone deserving of recognition for their chess greatness, please nominate them for the Tennessee Chess Hall of Fame and Recognition Awards.

Use these links for more information about the [Tennessee Chess Hall of Fame](#) and [Recognition Awards](#).

Please send nominations with supporting materials to the [Tennessee Chess Hall of Fame Committee](#) no later than March 30, 2026.

Top 10 Active Tennessee Chess Players

1. Alexander Fishbein 2537
2. Alexander King 2378
3. Dean Lee 2367
4. David S Ross 2357
5. Graham Horobetz 2321
6. Mitch Fishbein 2315
7. Ron Burnett 2313
8. Andrew Whatley 2284
9. David Justice 2275
10. Peter Suich 2274

Recently Rated Current US Chess Members are shown. For more US Chess Top 100 Rating Lists, visit www.uschess.org

Tennessee Chess Patrons

The TCA wishes to send special thanks to the current Patron and Life Members. Without their contributions, much of what the TCA accomplishes would not be possible. Thank you Patrons!

TCA Patron Members:

- THE KLEIMAN FAMILY
- PAUL SEMMES
- DESTINI HAROLD

Life Members:

- R. K. SHIMABUKURO
- PAT KNIGHT SMITH

TCA Membership

The Tennessee Chess Association appreciates those who help sponsor the game and offers tax-deductible memberships to Patrons beginning at \$100 per year. Membership for all levels will be for 12 calendar months (including the month membership is paid). To check your membership expiration, please visit our [Current Members Page](#). Renew or join for as little as \$10 per year. Membership is required for participation in all TCA-sponsored chess events except certain scholastic-only competitions but even if you're not an active player, your membership helps support our mission: To broaden and develop chess as art and recreation as a significant element of culture in the state of Tennessee. To initiate programs, conduct tournaments and matches and to employ methods that will tend to promote the literary and educational benefits to be derived from the game of chess. To receive donations from the general public to enable the Association to conduct chess matches and tournaments and to award trophies and prizes to successful contestants. TCA is a 100% volunteer-run

organization so your donation and membership is 100% going to support Tennessee chess. Thank you for your support!

[Click Here to Renew or Become a TCA Member Today!](#)

Tennessee Chess Calendar

2026 Upcoming Events

October 24 – [Region 3 and 4 Susan E Kantor Regional Scholastic Individual](#)

October 24 – 30th Annual Bradley County Chess Championship - Register [Here](#)

October 25 – [Tennessee Tamizh Sangam Scholastic and Adult – Nashville Register](#)

October 31 – [Region 1 Susan E Kantor Regional Scholastic Individual](#)

November 7 – [Region 2 Susan E Kantor Regional Scholastic Individual](#)

November 7 – Nashville Catholic Diocese Scholastic

November 21 – Susan E Kantor TN Scholastic Individual Championship, Cookeville

November 14 – 2026 Fall Open at the University of Tennessee - Flyer below

November 21 – [TN Collegiate Individual Championship](#), Cookeville

December 5 – [Ensworth Scholastic](#) – Nashville (Nashvillechess.org)

December 5 – 2026 [Middle Tennessee Scholastic Chess Championship](#)@ Central Magnet School, Murfreesboro

Weekly Online Events

Mondays Murfreesboro Monday Team Battles @ at 7:00 PM CST
[HERE](#)

Last Sunday of Each Month Murfreesboro Classical Swiss
Tournament @ Online at 3:00 PM CST Join the club on chess.com

Have an Event to Share to this List?

To add your event to this list, please email flyer or pertaining details to
TCA Tournament Coordinator: adamjohnsonchess@gmail.com To
include your event on our front homepage sidebar, TCA membership
must be required for in-state players or it must be a scholastics only
event.

Upcoming Event Flyers

2026 Susan E. Kantor Tennessee State Scholastic Individual Chess Tournament

(Open to Tennessee Students or Residents Only)



**Tennessee
Chess
Association**

October 31st

Region 1
L&N STEM Academy
800 World's Fair Park Dr
Knoxville, TN 37902

November 7th

Region 2
Cleveland Middle School
3635 Georgetown Rd NW
Cleveland, TN 37312

October 24th

Region 3
Lighthouse Christian School
5100 Blue Hold Rd
Nashville, TN 37013

October 24th

Region 4
Lausanne Collegiate School
1381 W Massey Rd
Memphis, TN 38120

Sections:

High School (grades 9-12) Denker
Middle School (grades 6-8) Barber
Elementary (grades K-5) Rockefeller
Primary (grades K-3) Ashley

Format: Swiss System - Rounds based on attendance
<16 players in section = 4 rounds
17-48 players in section = 5 rounds
48+ players in section = 6 rounds (rds 1-3 G/30;d5)

Time Control:

Rounds 1&2 - G/30;d5
Remaining rounds G/45;d5
All participants are encouraged to bring their own clock

Awards: Top 8 (Additional prizes based on pre-registration.)

Awards ceremony immediately following last round in section.

On-site Registration: 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

All players must check in by 8:30 a.m. or they will not be paired for Round 1.

Round 1 starts at 9:00 a.m. Rounds 2-5 as announced.

Dues: No membership dues are required for Regional Qualifiers.

Byes: One one-half point bye is available for any round if requested at registration.

Tiebreaks: Only one champion! G/10 playoff for First Place each section. Otherwise:
(1)Modified Median, (2)Solkoff, (3)Cumulative,
(4)Opp. Cumulative, (5)Median, (6)Kashdan,
(7)Sonnenborn-Berger

Entry Fee: \$20 -- Late Entry \$30 on-site.

Pre-register online at tnchess.us

ENTRIES BY MAIL SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR (See Counties)

If you plan to mail your entry please discuss deadlines for entry with your coordinator.

Region 1
Christina Mullinax
193 Caramel Lane
Loudon, TN 37774

Region 2
Michael Ake
1004 17th St. NW
Cleveland, TN 37311

Region 3
Chris Prosser
733 Long Hunter Court
Nashville, TN 37217

Region 4
Arlene Kleiman
1614 Vance Ave
Memphis, TN 38104

2026 Susan E. Kantor TN State Scholastic Individual Entry Form

Name:		US Chess ID (if available):		
Address:		Region:	DOB:	
School:		Grade:	Phone:	
Section (circle one): K-3 K-5 6-8 9-12		Email:		
Bye Rd?	Entry Fee:	TCA Memb N/A	US Chess Memb N/A	Total



30th Annual Bradley County Chess Championship

All ages, all levels of experience welcome!

Not a Rated Tournament — No Membership Required

Saturday, October 24, 2026 @ Cleveland Middle School

Registration starts at 8AM • Tournament Time: 9:00 a.m. first game

Cleveland Middle School Dining Hall

3635 Georgetown Rd. NW Cleveland, TN 37312

Sponsored by Builtwell Bank (formerly Bank of Cleveland) & Mac PC Market

Entry Fee: \$10 registration. Pay at the door. Cash only please.

Pairings: David Hewitt • **Tournament Director:** Tim Sams

Host: Matt Rodante, Cleveland Middle School

Tentative Sections & Trophies	Tentative Schedule
Elementary (K-5th) • Trophies for 1st-5th	8:15-8:40 Registration
Middle (Grade 6th-8th) • Trophies for 1st-5th	8:45 Welcome and Instructions
High School (Grade 9th-12th) • Trophies for 1st-3rd	9:00-10:00 Round 1
	10:10-11:10 Round 2
Adult • Trophies for 1st-3rd Overall	11:20-12:50 Round 3
Championship Plaque with Overall winner's name	1:00-2:30 Round 4
	3:00 Awards

Tournament Guidelines:

- Touch move rules will apply.
- There is no scheduled lunch break. Concessions will be available for purchase.
- Tournament chess sets will be provided; however, please bring your own set for the skittles area if you wish.
- Rounds 1 and 2: G/30;d5. Rounds 3 and 4: G/45;d5.
- If you own a chess clock, please bring if you desire time control on all your games.

Visit www.bradleychess.org for more information and to register online.

—Entry Form (Please Print)-----Cut

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

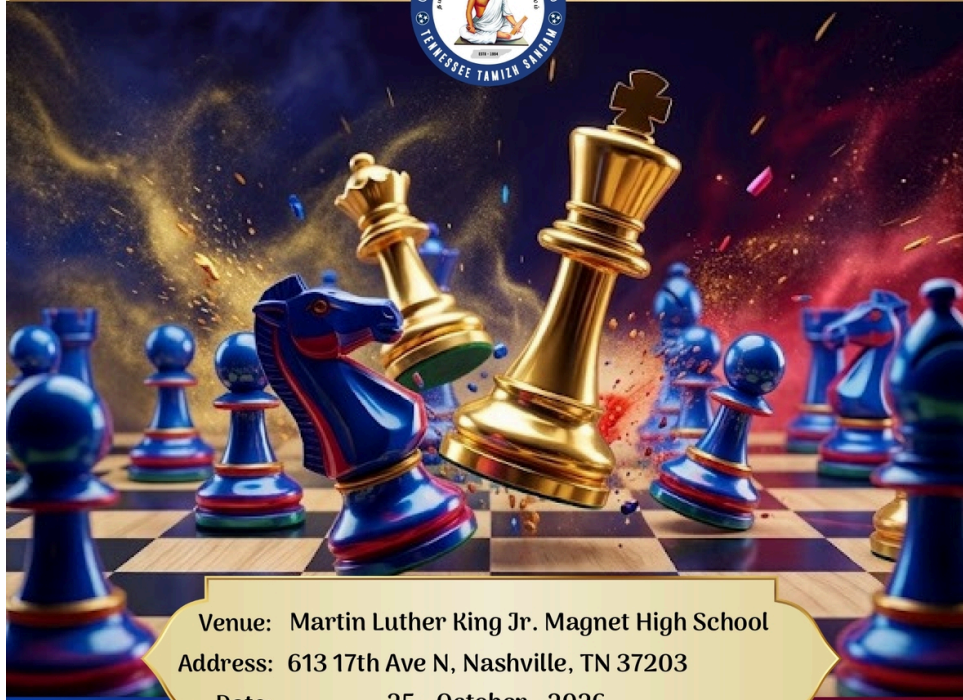
Desired Section (Circle One): Elementary / Middle / High School / Adult

USCF Member (Circle One)? Yes / No • Rating (if known) _____

Tennessee Tamizh Sangam

Sports Mania 2026

CHESS TOURNAMENT FOR ALL AGES



Venue: Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet High School
Address: 613 17th Ave N, Nashville, TN 37203
Date: 25 - October - 2026

USFC Rated/Unrated players are welcome to register
Scan QR code to Register and know more



All Skill Levels are welcome

2026 Fall Open at the University of Tennessee

Nov. 14, 2026 (Saturday)

Sponsor: Rocky Top Chess Club and Chess Club at UTK

Location: Room 270&281, Student Union, 1502 Cumberland Avenue, Knoxville, TN

\$1500 Prize + 6 pretty Trophies

OPEN SECTION (Open to all)		RESERVE SECTION (1200-1600)		AMATEUR SECTION (600-1200)		NOVICE SECTION (Under 600)	
1 st Place:	\$300	1 st Place:	\$200	1 st Place:	\$200	1 st Place:	Trophy
2 nd Place:	\$150	2 nd Place:	\$100	2 nd Place:	\$100	2 nd Place:	Trophy
Top Expert:	\$80	Top Class C:	\$60	Top Class F:	\$50	3 rd Place:	Trophy
Top Class A:	\$80	Top Class D & below:	\$50	Top Class G:	\$40	4 th Place:	Trophy
Top Class B:	\$60			Top Class H & Below:	\$30	5 th Place:	Trophy
						Top unrated:	Trophy
						6 th -10 th places:	Medals

Entry Fee (*Online registration required*)

Free entry for the first five registered US titled players
\$30 (Open, Reserve and Amateur), \$20 (Novice) if pre-registered by Nov. 7, 2026.
\$40 (Open, Reserve and Amateur), and \$30 (Novice) for online registration after Nov. 7, 2026

Registration will be closed at 12:00 am on Nov. 14. On-site registration is NOT permitted.

Format

4 rounds, Swiss System; G60; d5

Check in

Saturday 7:30 – 8:30 AM, Eastern Time (ET).

Rounds

First round: 9:00 AM, ET

Other rounds: as soon as previous round is over

Dues Required

USCF membership REQUIRED

No onsite USCF membership purchase available

One half point (1/2) bye is available. Must be requested before Round 1.

Please bring in your own clock if available.

Register online at <https://www.reg4chess.com/register.asp?tid=10896>

Email rockytopchess@gmail.com for any question

Free parking lot on Nov. 14, 2026: White Avenue Garage at 1621 White Ave, Knoxville, TN 37916

p.s. Results from previously successful Fall Open tournament can be found [2025](#), [2024](#), [2023](#), [2022](#).

2026 Susan E. Kantor Tennessee State Scholastic Individual Chess Tournament

(Open to Tennessee Students or Residents Only)



**Tennessee
Chess
Association**

State Individual Finals - Saturday, November 21, 2026

Location: Tennessee Tech University
Roaden University Center, 1000 N Dixie Ave, Cookeville,
TN 38505

Qualifications: Top 8 Individuals from each section
in each region may play.

Awards/Sections: Same as Regionals

Format: 5 Round Swiss

Time Control:

Rounds 1&2 - G/45;d5; Rounds 3-5 G/60;d5
All participants are encouraged to bring their own clock.

Tiebreaks: Same as Regionals, plus G/10 playoff for 2nd
place in HS section for scholarship prize (see below).

Check-In: 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. CT

All players must check in by 8:30 a.m. or they
will not be paired for Round 1. Round start times
are approximate. Rounds will start no earlier
than stated.

Round 1 starts at 9:00 a.m.

Round 2-5 as announced

Dues: US Chess (\$24 USChess.org) and
Tennessee Chess Association (\$10 tnchess.us)
memberships are required for all players.
Please have memberships up-to-date by
November 18th.

National Invitationals: The top players in the sections below will be invited to represent Tennessee in the
Tournament of Champions at the 2027 U.S. Open Invitationals August 2-8th, 2027 in Dallas, TX

- High School Champion: The Arnold Denker Tournament of High School State Champions
- Middle School Champion: The Dewain Barber Tournament of Middle School State Champions
- Elementary Champion: The John D. Rockefeller III Tournament of Elementary State Champions
- Primary Champion: The GM Maurice Ashley Tournament of Primary State Champions

Special Prizes:

Tennessee Tech University will award four-year Tennessee State Scholastic Chess Championship
Scholarships to the first place and second place winners of the High School Section as follows:
\$2,000 per year (first place), and \$1,000 per year (second place). For more information, about
scholarship opportunities at Tennessee Tech, visit www.tntech.edu/scholarships.

COUNTIES IN EACH REGION

Region 1: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson,
Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, Washington.

Region 2: Bledsoe, Bradley, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Jackson, Marion,
McMinn, Meigs, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Polk, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren, White

Region 3: Bedford, Cannon, Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Giles, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln,
Macon, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Moore, Perry, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Wayne,
Williamson, Wilson

Region 4: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry,
Lake Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, Weakley

MIDDLE TENNESSEE SCHOLASTIC CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

SPONSORED BY:

CENTRAL MAGNET SCHOOL

701 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130



Saturday, December 5, 2026



Come Compete for the Middle Tennessee Scholastic Championship and Earn Tournament Experience!

Rated Championship Sections: 5 round Swiss pairing G/30 with 5 second delay

Primary (K-3), Elementary (K-6), and High School (K-12)

Awards for top 10 individuals and top 3 teams per section

Rated section participation REQUIRES Current US Chess Membership ID.

Unrated Sections: 5 round Swiss pairing G/30 with 5 second delay

Elementary and Upper School (may vary based on the number of participants)

Each player completing the tournament receives a medal.

Early Registration Fee: \$20 must be RECEIVED by Tuesday Dec 1st (Cash or Check Only)

Late Registration Fee: \$30 after Dec 1st and day of the tournament. (Cash or Check Only)

On-site Registration and Check-In: 7:45 - 8:30 am

Registrations or Check-Ins After 8:30 may receive a half-point buy in Round 1

Round 1 begins at 9:00 am; all other rounds will start ASAP.

Concessions will be available throughout the day.

Make checks to Central Magnet School

Mail the entry form below with entry fee to:

Central Magnet School Attn: Charlyn King

701 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN, 37130

Information and questions:

Clark Blair BlairC@rcschools.net

Igor Zhislin Igorzhislin@gmail.com

-----< Tear off and return the form below with payment >-----

Entry Form PRINT Name _____

School _____ Grade _____ US Chess ID# (if you have one) _____

Circle Section: Unrated Elem. Unrated Upper Rated K-3rd Rated K-6th Rated K-12th

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

2026-2027 TCA Board of Directors

President: Christina Mullinax, clmullinax@lenoircityschools.net

Vice President: Alan Kleiman, akleiman12@gmail.com

Treasurer: Angela McElrath-Prosser, TCAnews@aol.com

Scholastic Coordinator: Paul Semmes, PaulSemmes@gmail.com

Secretary/Membership: Chris Prosser, Regioniii@aol.com

News Coordinator: Sarena Bemis, bemissarena@gmail.com

Internet Coordinator: Joe Hungerman,
joseph.hungerman@midtnchess.com

Tournament Coordinator: Adam Johnson
adamjohnsonchess@gmail.com

East Tennessee Director: Natosha Authier, nmauthier@gmail.com

Middle Tennessee Director: IM Ron Burnett, rburn2500@aol.com

West Tennessee Director: Mike Shuey, shueybalooey@gmail.com



The Tennessee Chess News is the official publication of the Tennessee Chess Association. Please share, distribute, and post this TCA publication as desired. For more reading and historical exploring all the way back to 1959, visit our [Newsletter Archive](#). To share your own TN chess news, photos, events, games, etc., please email Newsletter Coordinator, [Sarena Bemis](#). A very special thanks goes out to each of our contributors who volunteer their time to make each issue special! It takes the whole state working together to make this newsletter what it is. Thank you for reading and for supporting the Tennessee Chess Association!



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