

# JAMCHESS

December 2023



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*President - NM Peter Myers*

Dear Members of the Jamaica Chess Federation,

As we bid farewell to another calendar year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering commitment, dedication, passion and support for chess in Jamaica, which has been instrumental in propelling our Federation toward greater heights, and I am immensely proud of the strides we've made together.

As we step into a new calendar year, I wish to convey my sincerest wishes for joy, success, and fulfillment to you and your loved ones. May the upcoming year bring abundant opportunities for growth, both on and off the chessboard.

Looking ahead, one of our primary aspirations is to see Jamaica represented at a higher level, at the next and future Chess Olympiads and other key tournaments being held overseas. To achieve this goal, we are implementing strategies and action plans aimed at nurturing and improving the skills of our players, coaches and arbiters. Our collective efforts will focus on empowering our chess community, fostering a culture of growth and development, and elevating our performance on the global stage.

In our pursuit of advancing chess in Jamaica, we are embarking on a new fundraising thrust, with new and

dynamic leadership that the Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) has been lacking for some time. This venture seeks to garner support and resources that will enable us to host better and more substantial tournaments, create opportunities for high-level gameplay within and outside our borders, and reduce the necessity for our players to travel overseas for competitive experiences.

I warmly invite each member to actively engage with us by joining various committees dedicated to specific aspects of our Federation's growth. Your insights, expertise, and perspectives are invaluable assets that will contribute significantly to our collective success. If you wish to participate, please reach out to the Secretary, who will gladly provide further information on available opportunities.

As we embark on this exciting journey into the new year, let us remain united in our shared love for the sport and our unwavering commitment to the growth and prosperity of chess in Jamaica.

Wishing you all a prosperous, joyful, and chess-filled new year!

Warm regards.

**Peter Myers**

**President Jamaica Chess Federation**



# AAYUSH JAIN WINS FREDERICK CAMERON OPEN CHESS TOURNAMENT 2023

Kingston, Jamaica – Aayush Jain convincingly won the Frederick Cameron Open Chess Tournament 2023 played on December 16th and 17th at Calabar High School. The six-round event was played in four sections: Open, U1600, U1300 and U1300 Female. This twentieth (20th) staging of the annual event, is named in honour of Hall of Fame inductee, former Jamaican international representative, Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) Treasurer and President, Frederick Cameron, who is also a past student of Calabar High School.

The U1300 section was a five (5) round event with Jeavo Richards from Jamaica College emerging victorious with a perfect 5 points. On tie break, Dedipya Sunkara (Campion College) finished ahead of Darren Murphy and Jordan Mantock (St. Andrew Prep.), all of whom had 4 points.

Abigail Taylor finished with 4.5 points out of 5 games to win the U1300 Female section. Je-Anne Bonnick (Immaculate Conception High School) came second with 4 points and Nyah Wood placed third with 3.5 points.

JCF Chair of Public Relations and Publicity, Candidate Master Mark Cameron and son of the tournaments honouree, expressed, “It’s amazing that we have had 20 tournaments in my father’s honour. This final tournament of the chess year was another outstanding opportunity for players to benefit and improve their game, while enjoying playing chess. We look forward to an exciting 2024.”

Approximately, seventy-four (74) participants took part in this event. The first open tournament for 2024 will be IA FM John Powell Memorial Open Chess Tournament, to be held on January 20th and 21st, 2024.



*Aayush Jain receives his 1st place trophy from Nathan Belinfante- Tournament organizer*

Ardenne High School’s Aayush Jain won the Open section with 5.5 points from 6 games, the only blemish being a draw with rising star Angelus-Seren McDonald from St. Catherine High School. John Stephenson (Wolmer’s Boys High School), one of Jamaica’s outstanding juniors, was second with 5 points and Nathan Hare (Adult) was third on tie-break with 4 points. St Jago’s Nathaniel Hope also scored 4 points in finishing fourth.

The top female player in the Open section was Amy Stephenson, from Wolmer’s Girls High School, who finished with 3.5 points.

The best U1600 player was Jayden Foreshaw (St. Jago High School) who won on tie-break with 5 points. Second went to Ronak Shergil (Campion College), who also had 5 points. Glory Murphy was third with 4.5 points, with Arena Candidate Master Christopher Davis finishing fourth with 4 points.



*Aayush Jain wins Fred Cameron Open*

# MAGNIFICENT CONCLUSION TO THE WIM DEBORAH RICHARDS-PORTER LADIES CHESS TOURNAMENT

Kingston, Jamaica - December 4th, 2023 - The Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) marked the annual staging of the WIM Deborah Richards-Porter Ladies Chess Tournament, a highlight event on Jamaica's chess calendar, a magnificent success.

The tournament, which was held 2nd and 3rd December, at the prestigious Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, not only celebrated the strategic brilliance, camaraderie, and empowerment of female chess enthusiasts, but also signaled the dawn of a new standard of chess tournaments, which the JCF will be seeking to execute in 2024 and beyond.

The 2023 edition, named in honour of Jamaica's esteemed six-time Olympian and the English-Speaking Caribbean's strongest female player, WIM Deborah Richards-Porter, attracted an impressive gathering of 80 female participants in the rapid section. The vibrant chess atmosphere welcomed both novices and seasoned players, with the inclusion of girls as young as 6 years old, underscoring the tournament's commitment to nurturing chess talent from an early age.

Adding an international flair to the event, the online blitz edition featured formidable participants from Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, further showcasing the tournament's influence beyond national borders.

Amidst the checkmate duels, parents and friends played the role of the ultimate cheer squad, offering moral support and snacks throughout the 9-hour chess marathon. Their unwavering encouragement added a touch of heart to every move, turning the tournament into a true celebration of camaraderie.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, added "To our coaches, I want to implore you to create an enabling environment for our girls. Their families and communities are also an important part of that much needed support system. Their success will not only advance their own careers in the game but will also play a great

role in advancing our country's international ranking"

The success of the event was made possible through the generous support of sponsors and partners: General Accident, Magnificent Chess Foundation. JCF Long-Standing Partners: Jamaica Olympic Association, FIDE, Sports Development Foundation and our most recent new sponsor, This is Really Great Yogurt.

The Jamaica Chess Federation extends sincere gratitude to these sponsors and partners for their unwavering commitment to fostering excellence and promoting women's participation in chess.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of this year's event, the Jamaica Chess Federation looks forward to future initiatives that will further elevate and expand the chess community.

Winners on both days included:

## RAPID EVENT



*Amy Stephenson - Open winner*

### Open

- 1<sup>st</sup>-Amy Stephenson (Wolmer's Girls)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-Kaia Gayle (St. Andrew High School for Girls)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-Gabriella Watson (Immaculate High School for Girls)

### Under 12

- 1<sup>st</sup> -Victoria Aung (Hillel Academy)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> -Dina Dudnikova (Immaculate Prep.)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -Joelle Hamilton (Immaculate Prep.)

### Under 10

- 1<sup>st</sup> -Emilia-Rose Leake (Creative Kids Learning Academy)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> -Elisha Patel (Hopefield Prep.)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -Nyah Wood (Emmanuel Christian Academy)

### Under 8

- 1<sup>st</sup> -Rhea Gardener (Holy Childhood Prep)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> -Samakhya Singh (Creative Kids Learning Academy)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> -Dayna-Simone Swasey (Immaculate Prep)
- Best Prep/Primary  
Creative Kids Learning Academy  
Best High School  
Campion College

## BLITZ EVENT (Online International)

- 1<sup>st</sup> -Gabriella Watson (Jamaica)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> -Glory Murphy (Jamaica)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -Jessica Callender (Guyana)

- Deborah Richards-Porter



**Gabriella Watson- Online winner**

## FROM ST. CATHERINE TO SPAIN, WITH LOVE

Jamaican and St. Catherine High past and present students, Jhustice-Dimonte McDonald, Shaheem Richards and Angelus-Seren McDonald, journeyed far from St. Johns Road, Spanish Town, to take part in the 20th staging of the Gran Hotel Bali International Chess Festival, which took place from 1-10 December 2023 in Benidorm, Alicante, Spain.

The three St. Catherine residents participated in the Under 2000 section which had 328 participants and ended with creditable performances over 9 rounds.

Jhustice-Dimonte McDonald, who represented Jamaica at the 2022 Chess Olympiad held in Chennai, India, was the top Jamaican, after ending on 6 points with 5 wins, 2 draws and 2 losses, finishing 47th after starting as the 88th seed.

Angelus-Seren McDonald, who is still a student at St. Catherine High School, ended on 5.5 points with 5 wins, 1 draw and 3 loses finishing 80,th after starting as the 145th seed.

Shaheem Richards ended the tournament on 4.5 points with 4 wins, 1 draw and 4 loses, finishing 151st after starting as the 212th seed.

The participants acknowledged and thanked the St. Catherine High Alumni who covered all expenses to the event. Team captain Jhustice-Dimonte McDonald further shared that he was happy that they were able to gain valuable experience and FIDE rating points from the event.

- Richard Shaw/ Angelus-Seren McDonald



**JHUSTICE-DIMONTE McDONALD, SHAHEEM RICHARDS & ANGELOUS-SEREN McDONALD, trio to Spain.**



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM A LECTURE BY LEONTXO GARCIA ON “THE EDUCATIONAL POWER OF CHESS”

By Rowena Coe

## A Golden Period For Chess



**Leontxo Garcia in Port of Spain, Trinidad in August 2023 being introduced by Sonja Johnson, President of the Trinidad & Tobago Chess Association.**

In his opening remarks at the 2023 Central American & Caribbean Youth Chess Festival held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, Spanish educator Leontxo Garcia, referred to this particular moment in time being a golden period for Chess. He further explained his thinking a few days later at a fascinating and informative lecture held during the Festival on “The Educational Power of Chess”.

Garcia asserts that the recent surge in global chess participation owes its momentum partly to the impact of the ‘Queen’s Gambit’ movie, coupled with the widespread accessibility of chess during the Covid-19 Pandemic through online platforms. While acknowledging these factors, Garcia cautions that the necessity for chess has never been more pronounced. In this contemporary digital age, he echoes philosopher Sloterdijk’s sentiment: “The current life does not invite you to think.” He then went on to explain that the values of social media, the declining quality of our television content, and our rapid-paced lifestyles, collectively diminish the need to use our brains. He emphasised his point by referencing the concern among many scientists who believe that humanity is threatened like never before.

## Chess Proven to Increase Math & Reading Abilities

During the lecture, Garcia described the findings from various research studies that demonstrate the significant advantages of incorporating chess into students’ education. He highlighted the extensive body of evidence spanning the past 120 years, which consistently demonstrates major enhancements in Math and Reading among students. One notable study from the University of Trier in Germany, conducted a three-year experiment comparing two student groups. Group A received three hours of mathematics weekly, while Group B replaced one hour of mathematics with an hour of chess. The results unequivocally showed that Group B students outperformed their Group A counterparts in both mathematics and reading.

While the correlation between chess and mathematics and logic is evident, Garcia delved further, suggesting that the connection between chess and improved reading abilities is somewhat of an enigma for many. Garcia explains that through the education of chess, particularly when introduced from a young age, various practical skills that develop reading proficiency are instilled. He pointed out that chess helps with concentration, the recognition of symbols and signs (like letters and punctuation), and the ability to make conclusions based on assessments – all critical skills in learning to read, or learning to read better. He revealed that one of the key benefits of a chess education is that it teaches all these processes used in reading to become automated in the brain, especially when taught at a young age.

## Chess Develops Better Humans

Very interestingly, Garcia also pointed out that not only does research prove that educational chess students have a better academic performance, but they also develop greater intelligence in general, including emotional intelligence. He tells us that Harvard psychologist Gardner, says that we have not just one type of intelligence, but eight. Garcia then expounded on research he was involved in which revealed that chess players surpassed non-players in both cognitive

and emotional intelligence assessments, underlining the multifaceted developmental benefits associated with engaging in chess.

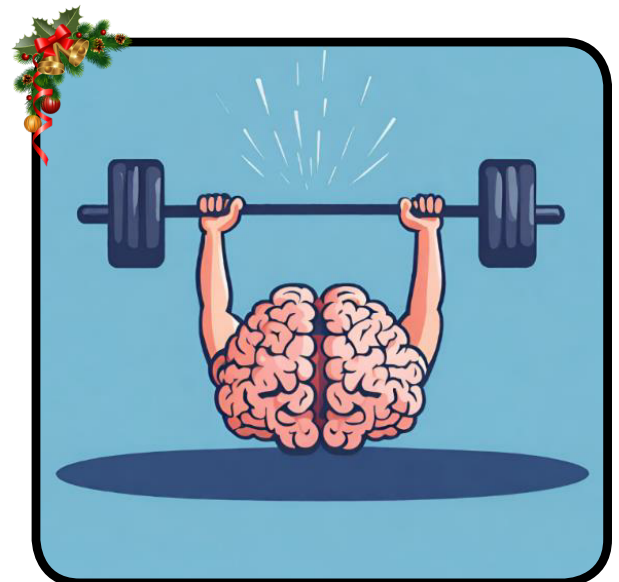


Garcia emphasises that chess should be used as an educational tool, and that this was way more effective in developing our children than just having them play chess. He stated that a chess education has the ability to be interdisciplinary, incorporating math, language, history, and foreign languages. He declared that we should be “educating little persons, not chess champions”. The most effective models he has encountered in chess education involve extricating chess from conventional settings, encouraging collaborative teamwork among children, and employing engaging mini-games that challenge them to

solve diverse problems using the chess board and pieces. These interactive activities not only foster arithmetic skills through understanding the intrinsic value of chess pieces and improving calculation abilities, but also impart several invaluable life lessons and skills. These encompass concentration, memory enhancement, motivation, impulse control, empathy cultivation, the recognition of a world beyond oneself, innovative thinking, adherence to rules, and fostering respect for others. Garcia underscores that even teaching young children a simple pawn game, holds the remarkable potential to impart this array of essential life lessons.

## The Clock is Ticking!

And what about the future? How can chess play a role? Garcia tells us that experts say that the world has changed in the last 25 years more than any other 25 years in the history of the world, and is expected to evolve even faster in the next 25 years. As such, he says “Flexible thinking is critical!” He believes that there will be a need to be permanently adapting to a reality that changes every day. This skill in adaptation will also, he says, need an emphasis on good decision-making, bearing in mind that “the clock is ticking!” just as it does in chess



## Chess & Its Social Benefits

Garcia highlighted additional benefits of chess, noting its efficacy in areas beyond academics. He emphasized its role in delaying brain aging and dementia and believes that “Chess is the best gym for the mind!” Likewise, he underscored that chess has been found to be beneficial in other social contexts. For example, he pointed out that chess has been useful in working with children with ADHD, Autism, and Cancer, given its ability to make neuronal connections, and regenerate neural pathways.

Garcia concluded the lecture by telling us that he firmly believes in the power of chess to equalise everyone. He quoted the Hindu Proverb “Chess is a sea in which a gnat may drink and an elephant may bathe” to illustrate the ability of everyone to derive a benefit from chess.

As another amazing example of the power of educational chess, he told us that he has personally found that chess works well with delinquency and in prisons. One of his prisoner students, has even become a model prisoner. This prisoner recently told him “Chess makes our time in here go faster. We are not thinking about how to get drugs, etc. and it forces us to think about the consequences of our actions before we actually proceed.”



Garcia successfully highlighted for us, that the benefits of chess are proven and numerous. He also opened our eyes to the fact that the value of chess clearly surpasses many perceptions.

Garcia, who sits on the Chess in Education Committee for FIDE, the world governing chess body, continues to travel across the world to encourage and educate governments, parents and educators on the benefits of chess. He truly believes that an adoption of chess into school curricula has the potential to make a significant positive impact on societies globally.

*Leontxo García Olasagasti (born February 12, 1956, in Irún, Guipúzcoa) is a Spanish lecturer, presenter, commentator and journalist specialized in chess.*

## ABOUT THE JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION

The Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) was founded in 1969 and has been affiliated with FIDE, the world governing body for chess, since 1972. In its capacity as the governing body for chess in Jamaica, the JCF is devoted to extending the role of chess in the Jamaican society.

### JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION

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