

JAMAICA'S NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS – 2025/26

Date: January 12, 2026

To: The Principals of All Secondary Level Educational Institutions in Jamaica

From: The Intercollegiate, Junior & Schools Committee Chair of the Jamaica Chess Federation

The Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) extends its support to our high school chess family, some of whom, especially in the west, we know have been significantly impacted by the passage of Hurricane Melissa. As a result of the hurricane, we are starting **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships** later than usual.

Last summer at the Smart Moves Summit, a global education conference focusing on the transformative power of chess in education, held in Washington D.C. the importance of chess was noted "as a mechanism for non-violent conflict resolution and strategic critical thinking" ... and how the sport "promotes critical thinking over propaganda, strategic planning over impetuous behaviour, and non-violent, diplomatic resolution over violence."

Against this background we are endeavouring to stage **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships** which has fifty (50) years of legacy. We are committed to ensuring that it is completed before the start of the third school semester.

The JCF therefore invites all secondary level schools in Jamaica, to participate in **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships – 2025/26**. The defending champion for this tournament is Wolmer's Boys School.

Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships will be executed across three (3) phases - **The Preliminaries, The Playoffs and The Best of the Best - Finale**.

The Preliminaries will take the form of a series of two (2) - day Swiss events across six (6) zones islandwide, which selects the top six (6) teams to go directly to the finals. There will then be a two (2) - day **Playoff** with the remaining top sixteen (16) teams selected from across all zones also played in a Swiss format to choose the additional ten (10) teams completing the best sixteen (16) teams for **The Best of the Best – Finale** in a two (2) - day event in March 2026.



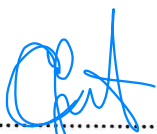
Immediately after the completion of **The Best of the Best – Finale** all schools have the option of entering a team of two (2) to play in the **Best in Blitz Champs**.

We are asking that school administrators carefully read the details of this correspondence re this event noting refinements to requirements for participation.

The deadline for the submission of entries is **Midnight Monday February 2, 2026**

We are particularly excited about this year's competition as the JCF has already secured a major title sponsor which will facilitate the smooth running of the event and the awarding of key prizes. More details will be revealed after we receive, and process, the entries.

The JCF reserves the right to apply modifications to the announced format and timeline of the event.



.....
Dr. Claire Grant

Chairperson, Intercollegiate, Junior & Schools Chess Committee

Jamaica Chess Federation

Tel: 876-878-2222

E-mail: - JamChessFed.Junior.Chess@gmail.com

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A. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships

For **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships**, the entry fee is \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars), which allows a school to enter one (1), two (2) or three (3) teams. To add an additional team, that is, a fourth team, an additional fee of \$5,000 (five thousand dollars) is required. **The maximum teams that any school can have in the competition is four (4).** A team consists of four (4) players and two (2) reserves. [the naming of reserves is optional].

Best in Blitz Champs

For the **Best in Blitz Champs** the entry fee is \$2,000 (two thousand dollars) which allows a school to enter one team. **Schools are only allowed one (1) team in this competition.** A team for the **Best in Blitz Champs** consists of two (2) players and two (reserves). [the naming of reserves is optional].

The entry process for these championships requires the school to complete and submit an electronic form in the link provided with the following information:

1. Name of School Team(s), (e.g. School A, B etc) for **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships**.
2. Names of each player and the board order of the players for **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships**. *NB: Board order once established **CANNOT** be changed in any phase or round in a phase of the championships. Reserves will play on board 3 and 4 if both reserves are used, or board 4.*
3. Date of Birth of each player.
4. Name of School Team for the **Best in Blitz Champs (optional)**
5. Names of each player and the board order of the two (2) players and reserves (optional) for the **Best in Blitz Champs**.
6. Name and contact number for school appointed liaison for the event
7. Up to date JCF membership for the school or individual junior membership for all players on the team(s). Schools can be members of the JCF for \$15,000 (fifteen thousand dollars) a year. Individual junior membership is \$2,000 (two thousand dollars) a year. *NB school membership means that **ALL** students in the school will be able to play in any JCF registered tournament during the year without having to pay an individual membership fee.*

Please complete entry form from through this link <https://form.jotform.com/260087038441050>

The deadline for the submission of entries is **Midnight Monday February 2, 2026**

B. PAYING ENTRY AND MEMBERSHIP FEES

Entry and membership fees must be paid for school to participate in the event. Payment can be made at any BNS Branch or directly transferred to:

Jamaica Chess Federation,
BNS Account #010315516,
Branch code #50575

If schools require invoices to execute payments for entry and membership fees, please submit requests for invoice to jamchessfed.junior.chess@gmail.com

Proof of payment of entry fees and JCF membership fees **MUST** be emailed to jamchessfed.junior.chess@gmail.com by **February 2, 2026**

C. PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

ZONE A: Kingston & St. Andrew

Thursday & Friday, February 5th and 6th 2026 | Venue: TBC

ZONE B: Kingston & St. Andrew

Thursday & Friday, February 5th and 6th 2026 | Venue: TBC

ZONE C: St. James, Westmoreland, St. Elizabeth, Trelawny, Hanover

Thursday & Friday, February 12th and 13th 2026 | Venue: TBC

ZONE D: Manchester, Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. Ann, St. Mary

Thursday & Friday, February 12th and 13th 2026 | Venue: Knox College

ZONE E: Manchester, Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. Ann, St. Mary

Thursday & Friday February 12th and 13th 2026 | Venue: Knox College

ZONE F: St Thomas, Portland

Monday & Tuesday, February 9th and 10th 2026 | Venue: Titchfield High

The winners from zones A, B, C, D, E, F [a total of six (6) teams] qualify and advance directly to the group of sixteen (16) teams to play in the finals.

D. PLAYOFFS

This group consists of the second and third placed teams from zones A, B, C, D, E, F plus the four strongest fourth place finishers [a total of sixteen (16) teams]. The top ten (10) finishers from the playoffs complete the group of sixteen (16) teams to play in the finals.

Thursday & Friday, February 26th and 27th 2026 | Venue: TBC

E. THE BEST OF THE BEST - FINALE

These are the strongest sixteen (16) teams, sixty-four (64) players from the six (6) zones who will play for the final time to determine the overall champion.

Monday and Tuesday, March 30th and 31st 2026

Venue: JCF Headquarters, Oakton House, 5-7 Hagley Park Road (Half Way Tree behind Popeyes)

F. BEST IN BLITZ CHAMPS

Teams registered in **the Best in Blitz Champs** play to determine an overall champion.

Monday and Tuesday, March 30th and 31st 2026

Venue: JCF Headquarters, Oakton House, 5-7 Hagley Park Road (Half Way Tree behind Popeyes)

Please note that teams are not required to bring sets. The JCF will provide adequate numbers of sets and clocks for the Preliminaries, Playoffs and Finals.

G. DRESS CODE AND PRIZE GIVING

Players are required to wear their school uniforms to all three events on all days. Penalties, including forfeiting matches, may result if players do not adhere to these rules.

There will be a prize giving ceremony at the end of the finals. All players at the Best of the Best Finale and invited prize winners from the Preliminaries and the Playoffs are required to be in attendance for the prize giving as a part of respect for the players, the event, the sponsors and the game.

H. FORMAT

The tournament is FIDE rated. The **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships** is scheduled to begin with the Preliminaries on Thursday & Friday, February 5th and 6th 2026. **The Playoffs** are on Thursday & Friday, February 26th and 27th 2026. **The Best of the Best - Finale** is on Monday and Tuesday, March 30th and 31st 2026. **The Best in Blitz** is scheduled for Tuesday March 31, 2026

Each day for each phase of the Championships will start at 9am.

Matches will start on time, and the clocks will be started for all games at 9am. If a player fails to turn up 40 minutes after the clock has been started, they will have lost the game.

Time control

The time control for the **Jamaica's National High Schools Chess Championships** games is 60 minutes. **The Preliminaries** and **the Playoffs** are six (6) round Swiss. The final will be a five (5) round Swiss. **The Best in Blitz** time control is five minutes. (Rounds TBD)

Tie break rules

In the event of a tied score the following methods of breaking the deadlock will be applied to determine a clear winner starting with tie break 1 sequentially to tie break 4.

Tie break 1 - Match points

Tie break 2 - Game points

Tie break 3 - Head-to-head

Tie break 4 - Team Armageddon (Armageddon is a tie-break where draw odds are assigned to Black: if the game ends in a draw, Black is declared the winner. To compensate, White receives more time on the clock). Time control for the Armageddon TBD

The JCF reserves the right to apply modifications to the announced format of the event.

SCHEDULE

The schedule will be finalised and shared with all schools once all the entries are in and pairings are complete. Any outstanding information such as venue will be in the schedule document.

PRIZES

Details of the prizes will be announced before the finals in March 2026. There will be trophies, medals, and chess support material as prizes. Prizes will be awarded from all phases of the championships from the Preliminary, Playoffs and Finals.

Past champions

| | | | |
|------|---|------|-----------------|
| 1975 | Kingston College | 2009 | Camperdown High |
| 1976 | Cornwall College | 2010 | Camperdown High |
| 1977 | St. George's College | 2011 | Campion College |
| 1978 | St. George's College | 2012 | St. Jago High |
| 1979 | Kingston College | 2013 | Glenmuir High |
| 1980 | St. George's College | 2014 | St. Jago High |
| 1981 | St. George's College | 2015 | St. Jago High |
| 1982 | Jamaica College | 2016 | St. Jago High |
| 1983 | Jamaica College | 2017 | St. Jago High |
| 1984 | Jamaica College / St. Jago High (shared) | 2018 | St. Jago High |
| 1985 | Jamaica College / Kingston College (shared) | 2019 | St. Jago High |
| 1986 | St. Jago High | 2020 | St. Jago High |
| 1987 | St. Jago High | 2021 | St. Jago High |
| 1988 | Kingston College / Mannings High (shared) | 2022 | St. Jago High |
| 1989 | Campion College | 2023 | Wolmer's Boys' |
| 1990 | Campion College | 2024 | Campion College |
| 1991 | Campion College | 2025 | Wolmer's Boys' |
| 1992 | St. George's College | | |
| 1993 | Mannings High | | |
| 1994 | Mannings High | | |
| 1995 | Mannings High | | |
| 1996 | (no champion) | | |
| 1997 | Camperdown High | | |
| 1998 | Camperdown High | | |
| 1999 | Camperdown High | | |
| 2000 | Wolmer's Boys' | | |
| 2001 | Meadowbrook | | |
| 2002 | Meadowbrook | | |
| 2003 | Campion College | | |
| 2004 | Campion College | | |
| 2005 | Glenmuir High | | |
| 2006 | Campion College | | |
| 2007 | Glenmuir High | | |
| 2008 | Camperdown High | | |