



2026

NSW PRIMARY SCHOOLS CHESS TEAMS COMPETITION

The NSW Junior Chess League is pleased to invite your school to take part in the 2026 NSW Primary Schools Chess Teams Competition. The NSWJCL is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation which conducts tournaments and other chess activities for young people.

Schools are often surprised to find a large number of keen players who have learnt how to play chess with friends, family or, particularly in the Covid years, on the internet, and who jump at the chance of representing their school in chess. With increasing recognition of the benefits of chess to the cognitive development of young minds, more parents are willing to assist with transport and supervision so that their children may participate.

THE COMPETITION

Teams: Teams are of four players. The competition is organised on a regional basis, with each region being divided into geographical zones to minimise travel.

When and Where: The competition is held in second or early third term (followed by finals for zone winners).

- In most metropolitan areas (and some country areas) matches are played on Friday afternoons after school on a home-and-away basis, which means that approximately half the matches are played at your school. Preliminary rounds run for 7 to 11 weeks (followed by finals for zone winners – see below).
- In most country areas (and some metropolitan areas) the competition is held at a central venue on one day to reduce travel.

Games do not normally last more than an hour.

Grades: There are three grades in the competition – **Championship**, **Intermediate** and **Rookies** – to cater for players from experienced to novice levels. A school may enter any number of teams. To encourage team spirit we recommend that Championship and Intermediate teams always field the same regular team members, although reserves may be used in the case of illness, etc. However, in Rookies grade the four positions may be shared among any number of players.

It is up to individual schools to determine team membership and board order for their teams, according to the rules of the competition. Schools should also, subject to final approval from the Primary Schools Coordinator, determine which grade their teams are to enter, but new schools are **STRONGLY ADVISED** to contact the Primary Schools Coordinator for advice on placement of teams. There is no need to determine exact team membership at this stage – this can be finalized shortly before the commencement of the competition.

Finals: The winners in local **Championship** divisions go on to compete in finals against other divisional winners in the zone, then the region; and the regional champions then compete for the state title. **Rookies** grade is intended to give novice players the experience and fun of playing against other schools; there are no finals for this or **Intermediate** grade.

WHAT YOU NEED

1. A coordinator (teacher, parent or community member) to organise the teams, transport, etc. This person does not need any knowledge of chess at all!
2. Children (up to and including Year 6) who like playing chess – four players per team (plus reserves).

And where the competition is held in home-and-away format:

3. An adult to supervise home games. A supervisor does not need to be a good chess player, but should have sufficient basic knowledge to implement the rules. Schools are provided with the competition rules (they are also on our website).
4. A quiet area for home matches and a standard chess set of reasonable size for each team member for home matches.
5. Drivers for away games (to stay with the team).

WHAT YOU WILL GET

The school will receive the competition booklet containing details (including rules and instructions for recording and submitting results), the NSW Junior Chess League's quarterly magazine *Junior Chess* and, through the NSWJCL's website, the draw and progress results during the competition. Trophies are awarded to division winners in Championship and Intermediate grades. Participation certificates will be awarded to all players. The results of the games will be processed to give each player a chess rating, which is a measure of chess ability.

WHAT GRADE SHOULD YOU ENTER?

In most Metropolitan zones there will be at least two grades available – Championship and Rookies. If there are sufficient entries, Rookies grade may be further subdivided and offer Junior Rookies divisions for players in Year 3 and below. In areas where there are a large number of teams, Intermediate grade divisions may be available, but where numbers are small (as in some country zones) all levels may be combined into one ungraded division.

Note: Where the competition is run on one day (rather than weekly) it may be combined into one large division with the draw being prepared using computer pairing software – this will pair together teams with similar scores so that, after the first round or two, teams are playing against others of similar ability).

CHAMPIONSHIP GRADE is for experienced players – schools should aim to enter a team in this grade to compete for their Zone Championship.

INTERMEDIATE GRADE is for players beyond rookie (beginner) standard, but not yet up to Championship standard. Where there are insufficient entries for an Intermediate division, teams entered for this grade will be allocated instead to Championship or Rookie grade, as deemed appropriate.

ROOKIES GRADE is intended for relative beginners. (Please observe the spirit of this grade, and do not field players who are of a higher standard than beginner.)

Rookies – any year up to Year 6

Junior Rookies – Year 3 and below. (Not a reflection of chess ability but in recognition that some very young players may feel intimidated playing against larger children. This grade will only be available if there is sufficient demand, otherwise teams will play in other Rookies divisions.)

It is generally expected that where players have performed reasonably well in their grade they should enter a higher grade if available in the following year. It is suggested that schools do not only play Year 6 children – the younger ones will benefit and improve from the experience, and will thus be able to progress through the grades in future years.

If you need assistance in selecting grades please contact the Primary Schools Coordinator (see below).

ENQUIRIES

Primary Schools Coordinator: Richard Gastineau-Hills, mobile 0403 962 442, email RichardGH@nswjcl.org.au
NSW Junior Chess League Website: www.nswjcl.org.au

ENTRIES

Entry fee: \$33 per team, including GST. **Entries close: Friday 20 March 2026**

Enter: To enter online go to www.nswjcl.org.au and click on “Schools” in the homepage menu, then look under the heading “Primary Schools Competition” (top left) and click on “Entry Details” – or use the entry form supplied separately.

Competition Start: Matches in the zones held in weekly home-and-away format will commence on Friday 1 May. In zones held in one-day format the competition day will be in second or early third term.

The Competition booklet containing the rules etc. will be sent to participating schools before they start and these details will also be available on our website together with the draw.

PLEASE NOTE: You will NOT be expected to travel unreasonable distances. If you enter, or express a definite interest, and there are insufficient entries for a competition in your area to start with, we shall endeavour to find more schools to join you. Where a viable group cannot be formed, schools may be included in the finals after the preliminary rounds as “remote area schools”. Why not encourage the schools near you to enter too! If you know of a school that has not received an invitation, please tell us and we will send one (or you can refer them to our website).

WHY CHESS?

There are many benefits for children involved in the competition – intellectual stimulation, improved concentration, new friends and an opportunity to develop self-esteem. Chess provides an excellent opportunity for children who have not excelled in other competitive pursuits to find their niche! Chess is an equal opportunity pursuit, in which boys and girls are not disadvantaged through size, shape, language, learning problems etc. For information on the educational benefits of playing chess, please refer to Dr Peter Dauvergne's paper *The Case for Chess as a Tool to Develop Our Children's Minds* on our website, www.nswjcl.org.au.



NSW JUNIOR CHESS LEAGUE INCORPORATED

Players under 18 may join the NSWJCL for an annual membership fee of \$24. Members receive our quarterly magazine, and are eligible to take part in NSWJCL events, such as tournaments and coaching clinics, mostly held during school holidays. (Membership is not a prerequisite for our inter-schools competitions.)

Website www.nswjcl.org.au Email enquiries@nswjcl.org.au
Phone (02) 9498 2760 or 0403 962 442

Chess Equipment

Sets, boards, books, software, etc., are available from Sydney's main specialist chess supplier:

AUSTRALIAN CHESS ENTERPRISES

Phone (02) 4588 6156
Email info@chessaustralia.com.au
Website www.chessaustralia.com.au

The NSWJCL's Primary and Secondary Schools Competitions are sponsored by GBA Capital, a stockbroking and capital markets firm. The NSWJCL is grateful to GBA Capital for its generous support.