

Anderson School Chess Club Handbook



By
The Anderson Chess Parent Committee
Fall 2011

Did you know that....Chess improves concentration, memory, problem-solving, logical thinking, pattern recognition, good sportsmanship, and self-confidence? Chess is a “sport of the mind”, through which we learn how to analyze a situation by focusing on important factors, devise a creative solution, and put a plan into action.

To find out how easy and fun it is to get your child involved in Anderson’s Chess Club, just read on.....

ANDERSON CHESS CLUB

Q. Who can be in the Anderson Chess Club?

Everyone is welcome! The Anderson Chess Club is open to players of all levels and grades.

Q. How do you get started in the Chess Club?

Follow these steps:

1. Get your child involved in as many chess opportunities as possible:
 - Anderson has regular chess instruction in the curriculum once a week in kindergarten through 2nd grade.
 - “Lunch Time Chess” is offered once a week in the cafeteria during recess and lunch period for K-4th graders and is a great way to practice the game. No sign up necessary!
 - Mr. Michael Poukchanski offers afterschool chess classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact him by phone: (718) 897-3129 or email: nchesscoach@verizon.net.
 - The Anderson Chess Club will participate throughout the year in local, state, and national tournaments; participation in all tournaments is open to everyone, regardless of level, and one of the best ways to expose your child to chess.
 - Anderson will host 2-3 chess tournaments during the school year on Sundays.
 - We encourage you to go to as many local (NYC) tournaments as possible. These tournaments are open to all individual players. There is a growing Anderson presence at these tournaments so your child will likely see some familiar faces. A list of tournaments for the 2011/2012 school year will be

available on the Anderson website. The majority of these tournaments are held on Sundays. We will plan to target one tournament per month as an Anderson Club team practice tournament

2. Join the Anderson Chess Google Group
 - To join the Anderson Chess Google Group, simply email Veronica Chen (smokyduck@aol.com) and ask to be added to the list. Please include the word “Chess” in the subject title.
 - The Chess Parent Committee will keep you abreast of scholastic chess events and Anderson team events.
3. Check the Anderson Chess Page (www.andersonpta.org) on the PTA website for upcoming events and results.
4. Contact a member of the **Anderson Chess Parent Committee** with any questions.
 - Kindergarten + Grade 1 Contact: Elana Krieger (elanaz@yahoo.com)
 - Grade 2 + 3 Contact: Irena Knoff (teamknoff@rcn.com)
 - Grade 4 and up Contact: John Reeder (bebop.jazz@verizon.net)

CHESS TOURNAMENTS

Q. How do I know if my child is ready to play in tournaments?

There are a number of tournaments offered at schools throughout the city from September through June that provide different “sections” depending on your child’s level/grade of experience, but ANYONE is “good enough” to play if they know how to move the pieces. Your child can start in “unrated” or “rookie” sections according to his/her grade. Anderson Tournaments are a great starting place for beginners since the “home” environment is familiar to your child. Novice players from Anderson have taken part in many tournaments, such as those hosted by Hunter, PS116, Lower Lab and PS 6.

Q. How does my child progress to playing in rated tournaments?

- To play in “rated” tournaments, your child needs to be a member of the USCF (United States Chess Federation). You can register for a USCF scholastic membership online at www.uschess.org and you will then receive a membership card in the mail. You will need the USCF id number to register for rated tournaments (you don’t need to show your membership card). To find your child’s USCF id online, go to www.uschess.org, click Players & Ratings, click Player Rating Look Up, and enter your child’s name (last name, first name) the i.d. number is listed on the left.
- It is helpful to become a USCF member and to play in rated tournaments so that you can start to track your child’s progress over time. Children can start out as low as

100 and may move up to significantly by the time they have played 25 games. They will have a “provisional” rating until they have played more than 25 games.

- Official ratings are updated monthly when the USCF issues its “ratings supplements.” New supplements can include results from all tournaments reported by the first week of the previous month.

Q. How do the local tournaments work?

- Each school/organization runs their tournaments slightly differently (e.g., there are different levels/sections (“Novice”, “Primary”, etc.)). The section in which a particular player should play is typically determined by the player’s grade and rating, if rated. If you are not sure of the section that is appropriate for your child, contact the tournament organizer before you register. A tournament organizer’s contact information can generally be found in the tournament printed information or online.
- It is best to register ahead of time in order to save additional registration costs and alleviate the in person tournament registration rush; however you can generally register the day of the tournament. In regular tournaments, players complete 4 games, or “rounds,” starting typically around 9:30am and lasting until mid-afternoon (around 3:00pm or later for higher sections). It’s a full-day commitment. If you have a scheduling issue, it is often possible to take a “bye” for one of your games. By requesting a bye in advance, your child will not play the game, and will usually receive a ½ point towards his/her total score.
- Most regular tournaments include 4 games. As currently configured, the Anderson tournaments will have seven sections. Two sections are Unrated: Rookies (for beginners) where children will play three games in a shorter tournament, and K - 8th Grade (400 max rating) where your child will play four games. There are five sections that are Rated: K - 8th Grade (600 max rating), K-8th Grade (1000 max rating), Open I (Rating 1000 - 1200), Open II (Rating 1200 - 1400) and Open III (Rating over 1400). The pairings for each game are based on the Swiss system. The Swiss system was designed to accommodate many players competing in the same tournament and determines a clear winner even though the winner cannot play against everyone else in the tournament. Players who keep winning are matched together thus reducing the number of players who continue to win. Also, no one can play the same player more than once and many tournaments also avoid pairings from the same school.
- Scoring is for each game played with a win counting as 1 point, a loss as 0 points and a draw/tie as a ½ point.
- Tournaments usually give trophies to the top players. The number of trophies varies by tournament. After the last round and once scores have been tabulated, a small “awards ceremony” will follow. If there is a tie for first place, sometimes there may be a tiebreak round to determine the winner; otherwise, established tiebreak methodologies are used to determine the winner.

Q. *What do I need to bring to tournaments?*

- Tournament organizers typically supply chess sets; however, we encourage you to bring your chess set to warm up before and between games. As participants advance into higher levels of competition, they are often asked to bring their own chess sets and a chess clocks. You can often buy a standard roll-up vinyl board with pieces and clocks at some larger tournaments or online at www.uscfsales.com.
- There are scorebooks you can buy or score sheets provided at the tournament that your child can use to notate or record each game. Some tournaments strongly encourage that all players record their moves and at the higher levels it's mandatory. Chess scorebooks are for chess players to write down in abbreviated form each of their moves along with those of their opponents. Notating chess moves helps players to think about their moves a bit more before they make them, provides a record for settling disputes, and is useful for coaches to review the game afterwards and help players understand how they won or lost.

Q. *What should I do at tournaments and where do I go?*

- The tournament organizers will post a list of “pairings” within each section right outside or inside the tournament room that will show who your child will play for that round, what color (black or white) your child will play, and the number of the chess board your child will play. Tables are set up in a large room or several rooms usually in rows and numbered. Parents of younger children help them find their board; take out their clocks, scorebooks and pencils and then parents must leave the room.
- Once you get your child settled, parents are not allowed to stay in the tournament rooms. Most tournaments have general seating areas in a large hallway, cafeteria or auditorium where you can wait for your children until they are done with their games.

Q. *What are the “major” Scholastic Tournaments and when does The Anderson Chess Club participate as a team?*

- There are two big national tournaments: the National Scholastic K-12 Championship (November 18-20 in Dallas, Texas) and the 2012 National Elementary (K-6) Championship (May 11-13 in Nashville, Tennessee). There is also an All-Girls National Championship (April 20-22 in Chicago, IL) In addition, the New York City Championships in late January 2012 is the major New York City tournament and the New York State Championships in late February 2012 is the major New York state tournament. As with local tournaments, with the exception of the National Scholastic K-12 Championship, there are generally sections for players at various rating levels and ages/grades.
- The Anderson Chess Club would like to field as large a team as possible for these large scholastic tournaments, including beginners and more experienced players as it

is a great learning and team-oriented experience for all involved. Also, the more players who participate, the greater the chances for Anderson to win team trophies as they count the best four scores of all the players from a given school in each section.

- If you plan to attend any tournaments requiring travel, you need to anticipate expenses for travel, hotel, and Anderson coaching and/or team room fees, when applicable. Depending on the number of participants for a given tournament, we may hire a coach to travel with the team. For New York State Championships (Saratoga Springs, NY), the tournament is accessible by Amtrak train or car. For national tournaments, players and coaches generally travel by air. The hotels have reduced “chess” rates. Anderson team fees will be coordinated and collected by the Anderson Chess Parent Committee. All details will be sent out a few months prior to the event. To attend any out of town team event, participants must have an adult chaperone and the time commitment is generally two to three days over a weekend. These events are exciting and often a lot of fun for the kids.

OTHER RESOURCES

Q. Are there other resources available to support my child in chess?

- There are many books and online programs for children that can provide great practice for children. Many are available through the USCF’s online shop. You can access the USCF’s online shop at www.uscfsales.com.

A few recommended software programs:

- Learn to Play Chess with Fritz & Chester - Volume 1
- Learn to Play Chess with Fritz & Chester - Volume 2: Chess In The Black Castle
- Chess Tactics for Beginners
- Chess School for Beginners

A few recommended books:

- Chess Tactics for Kids
 - How to Beat Your Dad at Chess
 - Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess
 - Chess Fundamentals (Capablanca)
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- On short holiday breaks and in the summer months, there are also many different chess camps around town. Check the offerings at NY Chess Kids (www.nychesskids.com) and Little House of Chess (LittleHouseofChess@gmail.com), which is formerly Kids Chess Network.
 - The Anderson Chess Parent Committee will post a Scholastic Tournament Schedule for the 2011-2012 school year on the Anderson PTA website (Chess Page).

Q. Where can I buy the chess board, pieces, clock, scorebook, and carry bag?

- You can buy these supplies at your local chess stores and at many of the tournaments. You can also find a good selection at www.uscfsales.com.
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- Below are some recommendations:

Chess Boards

- Vinyl roll-up board with 2.25" squares

Chess Pieces

- Regulation 3.75" King (Single Weight)

Chess Clocks

- Digital

Chess Scorebooks (choose one)

- Hard cover book
- Scholastic Notebook