

2026 (87th) Virginia Closed Chess Championships

A HERITAGE EVENT! A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT!

SATURDAY SEPT. 5 – MONDAY SEPT. 7, VIRGINIA

INCLUDING BLITZ AT 7:30 PM FRIDAY, SEPT. 4

**Over \$5,600 in prizes based on 100 paid players, with 1st-3rd places guaranteed in all three sections!
Last Year we increased the Prize Fund to \$6,250 based on strong player turn-out!!**

VA Chess Federation Membership Meeting at 9:30 AM on Saturday, Sept. 5th at the venue.

Hotel & Playing Site: Hilton Garden Inn Innsbrook, 4050 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA. Call the hotel at (804)521-2901 **by Thursday August 13th** and request the "Virginia Chess Federation" rate. The chess tournament rates are \$129/night-King and 139/night-Double Queen, plus taxes. You also can reserve your room online through the VA Chess Federation's home page (<https://www.vachess.org>). Room rate includes "Deluxe Continental Breakfast" (vouchers issued to you during Check-in).

Format: Swiss System (this is not an elimination tournament). All sections are US chess rated.

- **Championship and Amateur Sections:** 6 Rounds with **two Schedules**, a Long Schedule for players wanting to start at 1 pm on Saturday, and a Short Schedule for players whose other commitments do not allow them to start until 5 pm on Saturday. There are Virginia residency requirements, see "Eligibility" below. Current VA Chess Federation membership and US Chess Federation membership is required of all players.

- **Novice Section:** 5 Rounds, with **all games on Saturday and Sunday only**. [Click here](#) to learn about a Swiss System chess tournament. **This section does NOT have Virginia residency requirements**, so anyone can play. VA Chess Federation memberships are not required for out-of-state players.

- **Blitz Tournament:** Friday evening, Sept. 4th at 7:30 pm. Blitz is open to ANYONE, there are no Virginia residency requirements for Blitz. See the Tournament Announcement for Blitz on our website at <https://www.vachess.org>.

Eligibility:

- **Championship and Amateur Sections:** Residency requirements--the Championship and Amateur Sections are only for Virginia residents, military stationed in Virginia, and students attending any Virginia school or college (please be ready to show a student ID or other proof of Fall 2026 school enrollment).

- **Novice Section:** This section is open to all players; there are no Virginia residency requirements.

Sections and Prizes: Compete in a Section based on your playing strength and competitive desires. Each Section crowns a "state champion" and ensures your name becomes part of Chess History in the Commonwealth!

- **Championship:** 1st-\$900+2025 VA State Champion's Plaque; 2nd-\$650+Plaque; 3rd-\$450+Plaque; Top Expert and Top Class A and Top Class B, \$200 + Plaque; Top Upset-\$125. Players rated **between 1600 and 1799** in the September 2026 US Chess Rating Supplement must pay a \$25 premium to play in the Championship Section unless they have had a post-tournament rating of at least 1800 in their US Chess post-event record at any time since Sept 2024). ***Players rated under 1600 or who are Unrated cannot compete in this section.*** Players without a US Chess rating might not be "unrated" if they have an over-the-board rating in another country's chess rating system or the FIDE system. Online ratings in any other rating system other than US Chess are not considered (e.g., LiChess, Chess.com, etc.).

- **Amateur (Under 1800):** 1st-\$600+2025 VA Amateur Champion's Plaque; 2nd-\$400; 3rd-\$275; Top Class C & Class D, \$150 each + Trophy. Top Unrated-\$125. Top Upset=\$110. Winnings for an Unrated player are limited to \$300 (does not include Top Upsets).

- **Novice (Under-1200):** 1st-\$400+2025 VA Novice Champion's Plaque; 2nd-\$300+Trophy; 3rd-\$200+Trophy; Top Unrated-\$100; Trophies also to Top and 2nd place U-1000, U-800, and U600. Top Upset-\$100. Winnings for an Unrated player are limited to \$250.

Entry Fee:

- \$100 through Tuesday Aug. 25th.

- \$125 starting Wednesday Aug. 26th.

- \$150 starting Tuesday Sept 1st and at the Tournament Registration Desk at the hotel on Friday and Saturday.

- The VA Chess Federation will retain \$10 from any player who withdraws before Round 1.

- Players entering the Championship Section who are rated from 1600 to 1799 in the September 2026 US Chess Rating Supplement **must pay a \$25 premium unless they have had a post-tournament rating of 1800 or higher in their event record** or in a US Chess Rating Supplement in the past two years (e.g., since Sept. 2024).

3 Ways to Register for and Enter the Tournament:

- **Online:** www.vachess.org
- **US Mail:** Check payable to VA Chess Federation or "VCF", please include Name, Address, Email, Phone Number, US Chess ID, Section Playing In, Long Schedule or Short Schedule, and your Bye selections if any. Mail by Saturday Aug. 29th to Mike Hoffpauir, ATTN: VA Closed, 405 Hounds Chase, Yorktown, VA 23693
- **Onsite:** Friday, Sept. 4th, 3-7 pm. Registration also is open on Saturday, Sept. 5th from 8 am to Noon. Long Schedule entries received after 12-noon may have to wait until Round 2 to play. Short Schedule players can register from 1:30 pm to 4 pm on Saturday afternoon.

Optional Byes & Re-Entry:

- **Championship & Amateur Sections:**
 - + Byes: Up to two (2) half-point byes allowed per player. These are optional. Declare your Bye(s) during Registration or no later than one hour before the start of Round 2 for your section of play. Requests made after that time become Zero-point Byes. A zero-point bye request for the final round of the tournament is the same as a withdrawal and the player will not be eligible for prizes. Half-point Byes are not allowed for both Rounds 5 and 6.
 - + Re-Entry: Players who lose in Round 1 can Re-Enter the tournament for \$40 after Round 1 and receive a half-point Bye as their Round 1 score. As an alternative, a player in the Long Schedule who loses in Round 1 can also opt to enter the Short Schedule for the same re-entry fee. The Short Schedule's players will merge with the Long Schedule players for Round 3 on Sunday morning.
- **Novice Section:** One (1) half-point bye allowed per player. Bye must be declared during Registration or at least 30 min before Round 2. [Click here](#) to learn more about Byes and Bye Requests. Re-Entries also are available in this section for \$40 (see above).

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULES FOR EACH SECTION

LONG Schedule (Championship & Amateur Sections only): Time Control is 30/90, SD/1, d5 (e.g., 30 moves in the first 90 minutes per player, then complete the game in 1 hour per player, with a 5-second time delay throughout the game).

- **Saturday: Rounds 1 and 2 at 1 pm and 7 pm.** All Half-point Byes for Rounds 2-6 must be "locked in" by 6 pm.
- Sunday: Rds 3 and 4 at 11 am and 5 pm.
- Monday: Rds 5 and 6 at 10 am and 4 pm; only one half-point Bye allowed on Monday. A zero-point Bye for Round 6 (see "Optional Byes" above) is the same as a tournament withdrawal and removes a player's prize eligibility.

SHORT Schedule (Championship & Amateur Sections only): 2 rounds on Saturday evening, then players merge with the Long Schedule sections for Sunday morning. Time Control for the Saturday games is G/60, d5 (e.g., 60 minutes per player, with 5-second time delay).

- **Saturday: Rounds 1 and 2 at 5 pm and 8 pm.** Players in the Short Schedule must lock-in their Optional half-point Byes for Rounds 2-6 by 7:30 pm Saturday.
- Sunday and Monday: Players from the Short Schedule will "merge" with the Long Schedule on Sunday for Round 3 and all remaining rounds.

NOVICE (Under 1200) Section Schedule: All games are on Saturday and Sunday only. **No games on Monday.** This section is open to players from outside of Virginia!

- **Saturday: Rounds 1, 2 and 3 at 10 am, 1 pm, and 5 pm.** Time control is Game-60, delay 5 (each player has 60 minutes to complete all moves, with 5-seconds of time delay for each move).
- Sunday: Rounds 4 and 5 at 11 am and 3:30 pm. Time control on Sunday is Game-90, delay 5.

Ratings for Sectioning, Pairings, and Prizes: For section eligibility, pairings, and prizes we will use the higher of each player's Over-the-Board (OTB) Regular and On-line (ONL) Regular ratings from the **September 2026** US Chess Rating Supplement. Established ratings have priority over provisional ratings, and the recency of players' OTB and ONL ratings are reviewed by the Chief TD. Players with no US Chess rating, but who have ratings in other recognized rating systems, will have those ratings converted by the Chief TD into a US Chess equivalent for sectioning and prize purposes. We do not recognize or consider ratings from online platforms outside of a player's US Chess Online Regular rating (e.g., ratings from Chess.com, Chesskid.com, LiChess, ICC, etc., are not considered).

Tie-break Systems We Use: To determine winners of non-cash prizes (e.g., plaques and trophies) the Chief TD will use the tiebreak systems shown below. [Click here](#) to learn more about Tie-break systems used in chess tournaments.

- **Championship and Amateur Sections:** Cumulative, Modified Median, Solkhoff, and Cumulative of Opposition.
- **Novice Section:** Modified Median, Solkhoff, Cumulative, and Cumulative of Opposition.

Membership Requirements:

- US Chess and VA Chess Federation memberships **are required** for all players in the Championship and Amateurs Sections, and for Virginia residents in the Novice Section. Please join or renew your membership(s) before the tournament and avoid the need to pay onsite (go to <https://www.vachess.org>) to renew either or both memberships. The VCF offers Virginia residents a discount on US Chess memberships.

What to Bring: Please bring your preferred pencils and pens. We supply the chess sets, chess clocks, and scoresheets. Any player can use a US Chess-approved Electronic Notation Device (ChessNoteR, PlyCount, and Monroi). Players are welcome to use their own chess sets and clocks if they comply with US Chess specifications. Personal chess notation books also are permitted. Leave the Star Wars chess set at home!

Policy on Cell Phones, Smart Watches, Smart Glasses, etc: Players who bring such devices into the playing hall **must turn them off** and place them on the player's table or store them in a chess bag or purse. Any electronic device capable of transmitting or receiving information found on a player during play results in immediate loss of the game. The Chief TD will impose a 10-minute penalty for a phone, smart watch, or other device that rings or buzzes. The penalty shall be half of your remaining time if you are within 10 minutes of the first or second Time Control. A second occurrence will result in the loss of your game; occurrences are "cumulative" (e.g., a violation in Round 1 and again in Round 4 is two violations). See the Chief TD if you have a medical need or another reason to leave your phone on.

Info: Go to www.vachess.org or contact Mike Hoffpauir by email to mhoffpauir@aol.com, text to 757-846-4805. We also will schedule and hold two (2) Information Meetings using Zoom 1-2 weeks before the tournament. Keep an eye on the VA Chess Federation website for details.