



2026 (58th) Virginia Open

January 2-4, 2026

A Heritage Event!

A US Chess Junior Grand Prix Event (40 GRAND PRIX POINTS)

A VCF Cup Event – Some Sections are FIDE Rated



A VCF Cup Event – Some Sections are FIDE Rated

Hotel & Playing Site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Hotel, 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166. Make your reservation online ([click here](#)), or call the hotel at 703-471-9500 to get the Chess Rate for lodging. **Reserve your room no later than Friday, December 12th** (this is the cutoff date for securing the Chess Rate). If you decide to call the hotel to make your reservation, mention the “*Virginia Open Chess Tournament*” Group Name.

Traffic on Friday evenings in northern Virginia and Maryland can be unpredictable. We strongly advise players to plan their travel accordingly and allow enough time to arrive at the venue.

Tournament Format: 5 Rounds, Swiss System (*this is not an elimination tournament*). Championship and Amateur (Under 1800) Sections are FIDE and US Chess rated. The Novice Section (Under 1200) is US Chess rated only.

Sections: There are 3 Sections of competition to choose from. A 60-minute forfeit/no-show rule is in effect in ALL sections.

- **Championship:** Round 1 at 7:30 pm Friday, Jan 2nd. FIDE and US Chess rated. Minimum rating to play in this section is an over-the-board regular US Chess or converted foreign rating of 1600 at any time in the US Chess Members Services Area since January 1, 2021 (the last 5 years). Any player whose rating has not crossed 1800 since Jan 1, 2021, must pay a \$30 premium fee to play in the Championship Section. Ratings from systems such as Chess.com, LiChess, ICC, etc., do not count.

- **Amateur (Under 1800):** Round 1 at 7:30 pm Friday, Jan 2nd. FIDE and US Chess rated. Unrated players welcome.

- **Novice (Under 1200):** Games on Saturday and Sunday only (Jan 3rd and 4th), no games on Friday. Round 1 in the Novice Section is at 10 am on Saturday, Jan 3rd. US Chess rated. Unrated players are welcome to participate.

Prizes: **\$8,000 prize fund based on 140 paid players.** The values of the 1st-3rd place prizes **are guaranteed** in all 3 sections! In the last three years we've added as much as \$1,500 to the prize fund based on player attendance! So come out and play!!

- **Championship:** 1st-3rd Places \$1000+Plaque, \$700, \$550 all guaranteed. Top Expert \$250. Top U2000 \$240. Top U1800 \$225. Biggest Upset across Rounds 1-5 wins \$180.

- **Amateur (Under 1800):** 1st-3rd Places \$750+Plaque, \$550, \$400 all guaranteed. Top U1600 \$230, 2nd U1600 \$115. Top U1400 \$220, 2nd U1400 \$110. Top U1200 \$75. Biggest Upset across Rounds 1-5 wins \$165.

- **Novice (Under 1200):** 1st-3rd Places \$600+Plaque, \$400, \$250 all guaranteed. Top U1000 \$180, 2nd U1000 \$100. Top U800 \$165, 2nd U800 \$90. Top U600 \$100, 2nd U600 \$60. Top Unrated player \$150. Biggest Upset across Rounds 1-5 wins \$145. Includes Trophies for players who finish 1st or 2nd in the U1000, U800 and U600 groupings.

- **Unrated players must play in the Amateur or Novice Section** and are limited to \$300 in winnings in the Amateur Section, \$250 in the Novice Section. Unrated players do not qualify for “Under” prizes. See also “Ratings for Section and Prize Eligibility” below.

On-Line Registration & Fees: www.vachess.org.

- \$130 through FRIDAY Dec 26th

- \$160 starting SUNDAY Dec 28th

- \$190 starting WEDNESDAY Dec 31st and at the tournament site.

Notes: Any player whose US Chess or converted FIDE rating has not been 1800 or higher since Jan 1, 2021

(e.g., in the past 5 years), must pay a \$30 premium fee to play in the Championship Section. The VA Chess Federation will retain \$10 from any player who withdraws before Round 1.

On-Site Registration: At the hotel

- Friday, Jan 2nd, 4 - 6:45 pm. Championship and Amateur entries received after 6:45 pm on Friday will be paired for Round 2 on Saturday morning with a half-point Bye for Round 1.
- Saturday, Jan 3rd, 7:30 – 9:15 am. Novice Section entries received after 9:15 am will be paired for Round 2 with a half-point Bye for Round 1.

Optional Half-Point Bye & Re-Entry:

- **Half-Point Byes:** Each player has the option to take one Half-point Bye in any of the tournament's five rounds. Half-point Byes must be declared by players during Registration or 30 min before the start of Rounds 1 or 2. Requests for Half-point Byes made less than 30 minutes before the start of Round 2 will be considered Zero-point Byes.
- **Re-Entry:** A player who loses in Round 1 can Re-Enter the tournament for \$45 after Round 1. Re-Entry must be completed 30 min before the start of Round 2. A player who re-enters the event receives a Half-point Bye for their Round 1 score, but the game that was lost still counts for rating purposes.

Schedule - Championship & Amateur Sections: *FIDE Rules*. FIDE and US Chess rated, **60-minute default/no-show rule**. **Round 1 is on Friday at 7:30 PM**.

- Round 1: Friday, Jan 2nd, **7:30 pm**. Time Control is Game-90 with 30-sec time increment from move one.
- Round 2: Saturday, Jan 3rd, **10 am**. Time Control is 40/90, SD/30, with 30-sec time increment from move one. This time control means each player must make their first 40 moves in 90 minutes, then each player receives an additional 30 minutes for all remaining moves.
- Round 3: Saturday, Jan 3rd, **4:30 pm**. Same time control as Round 2.
- Round 4: Sunday, Jan 4th, **10 am**. Same time control as Round 2.
- Round 5: Sunday, Jan 4th, **4:30 pm**. Same time control as Round 2.

Schedule for the Novice Section: *US Chess Rules*. US Chess rated, **60-minute default/no-show rule**. **Round 1 is on Saturday at 10 am**.

- Friday, Jan 2nd: **NO GAMES on Friday in this section**.
- Round 1: Saturday, Jan 3rd, **10 am**. Time Control is G/60, with 10-sec time increment from move one. "G/60" means each player gets 60 minutes of thinking time to make all their moves, plus you get 10 seconds added to your clock as soon as you make your move and start your opponent's clock.)
- Round 2: Saturday, Jan 3rd, **1 pm**. Same Time Control as Round 1.
- Round 3: Saturday, Jan 3rd, **4:30 pm**. Same Time Control as Rounds 1 and 2.
- Round 4: Sunday, Jan 4th, **10 am**. Time Control is G/90, with 10-sec time increment from move one.
- Round 5: Sunday, Jan 4th, **2:30 pm**. Same Time Control as Round 4.

Ratings for Sectioning and Prizes:

- **Section Eligibility and Prizes:** We will use the higher of a player's Over-the-Board Regular and Online Regular ratings from the January 2026 US Chess Rating Supplement. Established ratings override provisional ratings; "stale" ratings will be reviewed by the Chief TD/Arbiter.
- **Am I an Unrated Player?** Any player who has a provisional US Chess Regular over-the-board or Regular online rating listed in the US Chess Member Services Area before the start of the tournament will NOT be paired as an Unrated Player. That rating will be used for pairing purposes, even if it is not listed in the January 2026 US Chess Rating Supplement. For players with no US Chess rating but who have ratings in other recognized systems (e.g., FIDE, Canada) their rating will be converted and assigned by the Chief Arbiter using the rating conversion formulas approved and published by the US Chess Ratings Committee.

Conditions for GM/WGM/IM/WIM titled by FIDE:

- FREE ENTRY for GM, WGM, IM, and WIM titled players. Expect HALF of the \$130 Early Entry Fee (e.g., \$65) to

be deducted from prize winnings. No other conditions. Contact the event organizer (Mike Hoffpauir, see below) for entry instructions.

Pairings: Players will be paired using their US Chess or equivalent converted ratings (see above). FIDE Pairing Rules are in effect for the Championship and Under 1800 Sections. US Chess Pairing Rules will be used in the Under 1200 Section.

Membership Requirements:

- All players must be US Chess members in good standing except Foreign GM/WGM, IM/WIM. Check the status of your membership, join, or renew it at www.uschess.org.
- Virginia-based players must be members of the VA Chess Federation. You can join as part of the tournament entry process or join later at www.vachess.org.

Mail-in Entries:

- We STRONGLY recommend players enter online due to the potential for US Mail to be slowed by holiday season mail traffic.

- Include Name, Address, Email, Phone Number, US Chess ID, Section Playing In, and whether you want an Optional half-point Bye.
- Make your check payable to VA Chess Federation or "VCF"
- **Mail your entry by Tuesday Dec 23rd** to Mike Hoffpauir, ATTN: VA Open, 405 Hounds Chase, Yorktown, VA 23693-3356

Info: www.vachess.org, or Chief Arbiter/TD Mike Hoffpauir, mhoffpauir@aol.com, text to 757-846-4805.