



133rd New Zealand Chess Congress

2-12 January 2026



Ascot Park Hotel – Invercargill

Proudly hosted by the Invercargill-Southland Chess Club and the New Zealand Chess Federation

Incorporating the:

- New Zealand Chess Championships
- New Zealand Major Open
- New Zealand Junior & Age Group Chess Championships
- New Zealand Junior U1000 Chess Championships
- New Zealand Rapid Chess Championships
- New Zealand Lightning Chess Championships
- Invercargill Open

Minimum Prize Fund of \$12,000

Free Entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs and WIMs

Prize fund

**NZ Chess
Championships**

1 st	\$1,600
2 nd	\$1,100
3 rd	\$750
4 th	\$500
5 th	\$400
U2100 1 st	\$200

Minimum of \$4,550

NZ Major Open

1 st	\$1,200
2 nd	\$800
3 rd	\$500
U1700 1 st	\$200
U1400 1 st	\$200

Minimum of \$2,900

**New Zealand Chess Championships & New Zealand Major Open****2-10 January 2026****Format:** 2 separate 9 Round Swiss tournaments.**Time Control:** 90 minutes for the first 40 moves followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game with an additional 30 seconds per move from move one.**Check-in:** Players must check in between 10:00am and 1:30pm on the 2nd of January either in person or by text message to the organiser (021 111 5662) or not be paired in the first round.**Players Meeting:** 1:30pm on 2 January 2025**Round Times:** 2:00pm every day**Entry Fees – NZ Championships**

Before 1 Dec (early bird entry)	\$200
1 Dec or Later	\$220

Entry Fees – NZ Major Open

Before 1 Dec (early bird entry)	\$140
1 Dec or Later	\$160

Rating Requirements: Players must have an NZCF or FIDE rating of 1800 or above to enter the NZ Championships..

Players must have an NZCF rating below 2100 or FIDE rating below 2000 to enter the Major Open.

Prizegiving will be at approximately 7:30pm before the banquet dinner.

Open to entries from players of all nationalities. The highest-placed NZ players in each tournament will be the 2026 New Zealand Champion and Major Open Champion.

The 2026 NZ Chess Champion automatically qualifies for the 2026 NZ Open Olympiad team if they are the outright champion (i.e. not shared) and eligible.

Rating bands (U1400 for example) in the prize funds subject to change depending on final entries.



chessventures



Prizegiving and Banquet Dinner

10 January 2026

Prizegiving

Time: Approx 7:00pm

Venue: Playing Venue, Ascot Park Hotel TBC



Banquet

Time: Approx 7:30pm

Venue: Analysis Room, Ascot Park Hotel TBC

Further details including menu and cost will be made known during the first few rounds of the Championships

Attendance must be confirmed by 5 January 2026



Prize fund

NZ Rapid Chess Championships

1 st	\$500
2 nd	\$300
3 rd	\$200
U2000 1 st	\$100
U1700 1 st	\$100
U1400 1 st	\$100

Minimum of \$1,300



chessventures

**New Zealand Rapid Chess Championships****11-12 January 2026****Format:** 9 Round Swiss tournament**Competition Rules:** Article A.5 of the Laws of Chess will apply.**Time Control:** 25 minutes for the game with an additional 5 seconds per move starting from move one.**Playing Schedule**

Sunday 11 January		Monday 12 January	
Entries Close	11:45am	Round Five	09:00am
Players Meeting	1:00pm	Round Six	10:15am
Round One	1:30pm	Round Seven	11:30am
Round Two	2:45pm	Lunch	12:45pm
Round Three	4:00pm	Round Eight	1:30pm
Round Four	5:15pm	Round Nine	2:45pm

Prizegiving will follow round 9 at approximately 4:30pm.

Entry Fee: \$70. No late fee – entries accepted until 8:30am, 11 January. Entries accepted until 11:45am, 11 January 2026.

Open to entries from players of all nationalities. The highest-placed NZ player will be the 2026 New Zealand Rapid Champion.

Rating bands (U1400 for example) in the prize funds subject to change depending on final entries.

Prize fund

**NZ Lightning
Chess
Championships**

1 st	\$300
2 nd	\$200
3 rd	\$150
U2000 1 st	\$100
U1700 1 st	\$100
U1400 1 st	\$100

Minimum of \$950



chessventures

**New Zealand Lightning Chess Championships****11 January 2026****Format:** 9 Round Swiss tournament**Competition Rules:** Article B.4 of the Laws of Chess will apply.**Time Control:** 3 minutes for the game with an additional 2 seconds per move starting from move one.**Players Meeting:** 8:45am on 11 January 2026.**Round Times:** First round at 9:00am, subsequent rounds will be paired after the last game finishes. Prizegiving will follow round 9 at approximately 11:30am.**Entry Fee:** \$40. No late fee – entries accepted until 8:30am, 11 January.

Open to entries from players of all nationalities. The highest-placed NZ player will be the 2026 New Zealand Lightning Champion.

Rating bands (U1400 for example) in the prize funds subject to change depending on final entries.

Prize fund

NZ Junior & Age Group Chess Championships

1 st	\$500
2 nd	\$300
3 rd	\$200
NZ Schoolgirls Champion	\$150
U16 Champion	\$50 + Book
U14 Champion	\$50 + Book
U12 Champion	\$50 + Book
U10 Champion	\$50 + Book
U8 Champion	\$50 + Book

Minimum of \$1,550
including 5 Book Prizes

NZ Junior U1000 Championships

1 st	\$200
2 nd	\$150
3 rd	\$100

Minimum of \$450

**New Zealand Junior & Age Group Chess Championships & Junior U1000 Chess Championships****3-9 January 2026****Format:** 2 separate 7 Round Swiss tournaments.**Time Control:** 60 minutes for the game with an additional 30 seconds per move starting from move one.**Check-in:** Players must check in between 8:00pm and 8:30am on the 3rd of January either in person or by text message to the organiser (021 111 5662) or not be paired in the first round.**Players Meeting:** 8:30am on 3 January**Round Times:** 9:00am every day**Entry Fees – NZ Junior and Age Group Chess Championships**

Before 1 Dec (early bird entry)	\$70
1 Dec or Later	\$90

Entry Fees – NZ Junior U1000 Chess Championships

Before 1 Dec (early bird entry)	\$50
1 Dec or Later	\$70

Prizegiving will be held after the last game on 9 January at approx. 12:30pm.

The NZ Junior and Age Group Championships are open only to juniors i.e. players born on or after 1/1/2006.

The highest-placed NZ player in each age group will be the 2026 New Zealand Champion for that age group. The highest-placed NZ player and female NZ player enrolled at and attending primary or secondary school in 2025 will be the 2026 NZ Schoolpupil Champion and NZ Schoolgirl Champion respectively. The highest-placed player overall will be the 2026 NZ Junior Champion and highest-placed female player over will be the 2026 NZ Junior Girls Champion.

Age group eligibility is based on the player's age on 31 December 2025, and only in the age group closest to the player's age e.g. a 13-year-old player is eligible for the under 14 title, but not the under 16 title.

The New Zealand Junior U1000 Chess Championships:

This event is only open to those juniors (see above) who have a NZCF rating of under 1000 in the latest rating list (or who are unrated). **Note that this event will NOT be FIDE rated.** This event requires a minimum of 6 players. – should less than 6 players enter, they will be given the option of moving up to the NZ Junior and Age Group Chess Championships or have their entry fee refunded.

Prize fund

Invercargill Open

1 st	\$150
2 nd	\$100
3 rd	\$50

Minimum of \$300



chessventures

**Invercargill Open****5 to 9 January 2026****Format:** 5 Round Swiss tournaments**Time Control:** 60 minutes for the game with an additional 30 seconds per move from move one.**Check-in:** Players must check in between 8:00pm and 8:30am on the 3rd of January either in person or by text message to the organiser (021 111 5662) or not be paired in the first round.**Players Meeting:** 8:30pm on 5 January**Playing Schedule:****Round 1** – Monday 5 January 9:00am**Round 2** – Tuesday 6 January 9:00am**Round 3** – Wednesday 7 January 9:00am**Round 4** – Thursday January 9:00am**Round 5** – Friday 9 January 9:00am**Entry Fee:** \$50**Note:** This event requires a minimum of 6 players. Should less than 6 players enter, they will have their entry fee refunded.



chessventures



Regulations

NZCF and FIDE Rating: Tournaments will be NZCF-rated and FIDE-rated where possible.

Pairings and Rating-Based Prizes: NZCF ratings will be used for pairings and rating-based prizes except for the NZ Lightning Championship which will use FIDE blitz ratings. Players without ratings may be assigned a rating by the Chief Arbiter. The most recently published rating lists will be used (January for NZCF and FIDE).

Pairings: Pairings will be done with the assistance of Vega. For standard tournaments, pairings will not be final i.e. published for the purposes of FIDE regulations until 30 minutes before the round start time.

NZ Player: Per NZCF regulations, NZ citizen or a player who is normally resident in New Zealand and has been resident in New Zealand for at least one year prior to Congress.

Multiple Prizes and Tiebreaks: Players may not win more than one cash prize in a tournament – the highest cash prize will be paid, and other prizes will be passed down to the next highest-placed player. Titles and cash prizes will be shared by eligible players on the same score, and ties will not be broken.

Players Meetings: Player's meetings will be held for all tournaments as noted in the individual tournament timetables. Players who do not attend the players meeting for a tournament may be excluded from the first round of that tournament.

Defaults: Default time is 30 minutes after the start of the round.

Appeals: A player may appeal against a decision of the Arbiter in a tournament other than the NZ Lightning Championship (no appeals allowed). Appeals Committees for each tournament will be appointed by the Organiser from the players. Appeals must be lodged in writing within 30 minutes of the end of the game (10 minutes for the NZ Rapid Championship). A fee of \$100 will apply, to be refunded if the appeal is successful or otherwise at the discretion of the Appeals Committee.

Fair Play Measures: In alignment with the recommendations put forth by the Fédération Internationale des Échecs (FIDE), we are committed to reinforcing the protection mechanisms of fair play for the upcoming New Zealand Congress 2026. The integrity of the game is paramount, and these enhanced measures are designed to ensure a level playing field for all participants.



chessventures



Regulations

Primary Measures

Prohibition of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

During a game, players are forbidden to have a mobile phone, electronic means of communication or any device capable of suggesting chess moves in the playing venue. Storage facilities will be available for such devices which should still be switched off. This includes smart watches but not standard analogue or digital watches.

This measure is essential to prevent any potential use of unauthorized assistance during the games.

Introduction of Scanners

Players are subject to random scanning for electronic devices by an arbiter using a handheld electronic scanner whilst in the playing venue or on entering or leaving the playing venue.

This will aid in ensuring that no prohibited items are brought in and that the security of the venue is maintained.

Strict Penalties for Violations

Any violation of the Fair Play Measures will result in an immediate loss for the offending player.

In cases where cheating is suspected, the entire game result will be annulled, and the matter will be reported to FIDE for a thorough investigation.

Installation of Cameras

Cameras will be strategically placed throughout the tournament venue. This will help in monitoring and recording the games, thereby deterring any attempts at cheating and providing evidence if required.

Anyone entering the playing venue is deemed to have given the organisers consent to be filmed.

Searches

Furthermore, the arbiter may require a player to allow his/her clothes, bags, other items or body to be inspected, in private. The arbiter or person authorised by the arbiter shall inspect the player and shall be of the same gender as the player. If a player refuses to cooperate with these obligations, the arbiter shall take measures in accordance with Article 12.9. of the FIDE Laws of Chess.



chessventures



Regulations

By implementing these measures, we aim to uphold the highest standards of fair play and sportsmanship at the New Zealand Congress. We appreciate the cooperation of all participants in adhering to these protocols, as they are crucial for maintaining the integrity of the competition.

Photos: Spectators may take photos during the first 5 minutes of a round.

Covid-19: If Congress is cancelled due to Covid-19, entry fees will be refunded. Organisers will not be responsible for any further compensation to affected players.

Small Entry: If fewer than 40 total entries are received in the NZ Championship and Major Open, the events will be combined with an adjusted prize fund. The Major Open Champion will be the highest placed NZ player with either NZCF or FIDE rating below 2100.

Small Entry to NZ Championship: If fewer than 20 players enter the NZ Championship, players may be asked to move up from the Major Open.

Prize funds: The **Small Entry** regulation above notwithstanding, prize funds shown are the minimum, additional or increased prizes may be offered depending on entry numbers.



chessventures



Accommodation

Ascot Park Hotel (Playing Venue)

The **Ascot Park Hotel** has reserved Hotel accommodation for this event. Please call or email the hotel directly by 31st November 2025 to make an accommodation booking at the special rate.

Accommodation Reservations

Phone: 03 219 9076 | 0800 272 687

Email: info@ascotparkhotel.co.nz

Accommodation Options:

- Superior Hotel Rooms @ \$196.00
King or x2 Queen size beds, en-suite bathroom, tea and coffee making facilities.
- One Bedroom Hotel Apartments @ \$222.00
Queen and single bed in the bedroom, en-suite bathroom with corner spa bath, kitchenette (no oven), lounge and dining area.

All rates quoted are per room, per night based on a single or twin share occupancy, additional guests are \$30.00 each per night

Other Hotels/Motels

There are plenty of other options as Invercargill is not a large city! Here are a few other possibilities.

Hotel/Motel	Booking.com Review	Distance from playing venue (km)
Hacienda Motel	8.2	0.4
554 on Moana	9.2	1
The Lodges at Transport World	9.5	1.5
Colonial On Tay	9.2	2.2
Tower Lodge Motel	9	2.9
Birchwood Manor	8.6	3
Kelvin Hotel	8	3.7
Langlands Hotel	9.6	4.1
Queens Park Motel	8.1	4.2

Or try www.booking.com

Other Options

www.airbnb.co.nz



chessventures

**Entries, payment and enquiries**

Please enter via this online form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/viEMjXdaYX>

Payment by Bank Transfer:

Please pay in to the following account (Organiser):

Acc Name: Richard Christie

Acc Number: 38-9014-0346070-04

Use Congress and your Surname as a reference,

Card payments via Humanitix (surcharges apply):

This option is currently unavailable, should be up and running closer to the time (before early bird entries close!)

Enquiries

Any enquiries to the Chief Organiser, Richie

Christie: chessventures@gmail.com or 021 111 5662

Things to do in Invercargill and surrounding areas

Places of interest to visit in and close to Invercargill include the likes of Bill Richardson's Transport World, Mecca Motorcycle Museum,



the World's Fastest Indian at E hayes and sons,

Oreti Beach, Demolition World, Dig This, Splash Palace, Queens Park, Riverton, Daffodil Bay/Sandy Point, The Catlins, the Invercargill Public Art Gallery, Nugget Point Lighthouse and Bluff.



Stewart Island, Te Anau, Arrowtown, Dunedin and Queenstown (to name just a few destinations) are all just a stone's throw away.



- Queenstown 2 hours 20 min
- Te Anau 1 Hour 50 min
- Dunedin 2 Hours 30 min

Invercargill is a charming city, full of parks and heritage buildings and some of the friendliest and most hospitable people you will ever meet (plus Henry the Tuatara)!

