South Jersey Innovation Center

November 2026 Issue #1

Innovation Checkmate

South Jersey Innovation Center Chess Newsletter

Upcoming Tournaments

NOV 4 — ***SJIC Booster Tournament***

Format: Mock tourney; start at 6PM
Location: SJ Innovation Center

NOV 8 — ***SJIC Scholastic Play'n Go***

Format: 3 rounds; start at 10AM
Location: SJ Innovation Center

NOV 8 — ***SJIC Super Quads***

Format: 3 rounds; start at 1PM
Location: SJ Innovation Center

NOV 15 — ***SJIC Rapid Marathon***

Format: G/10&d2; start at 1PM
Location: SJ Innovation Center

NOV 22 — ***2026 NJ K-12 Championships***

Format: 5 rounds; register online!
Location: Lincroft, NJ

Visit *https://incntr.com/tournaments/* and *https://new.uschess.org/upcoming-tournaments* for more information

Recurring Events

Friday Night Chess Club

When: Every Friday at 7PM
Location: SJ Innovation Center

Upcoming at SJIC

Fall Session '26: *Registration Open!*

Classes offered:

Youth Chess*

+ Beginner	*M & W 6PM*
+ Adv. Beginner	*M & F 5PM, Th 6PM*
+ Intermediate	*M 7PM, W 7PM*
+ Adv. Intermediate	*W 5PM, F 6PM*
+ Elite	*W 6PM*
+ Teens	*Th 7PM*

*Coaches evaluate students prior to registration

Adult Chess

+ Adv. Beginner *M 6PM*
+ Intermediate *M 7PM*

Champions

T & Th 7PM
>1700+ USCF; led by IM Nikoloz Managadze

Private lessons:

Ideal for fast improvement & avoiding scheduling conflicts

Ask front desk for more info!

✦ News Spotlight ✦

Champions of SJIC's Friday Night Chess League Season 1

Meet the champions of season 1, the *Crimson Kings*! Hear from father-son teammates Adam and Owen Reese, and learn more about fellow teammate Fide Master Dov Gorman, SJIC's founder, in our coach highlight!

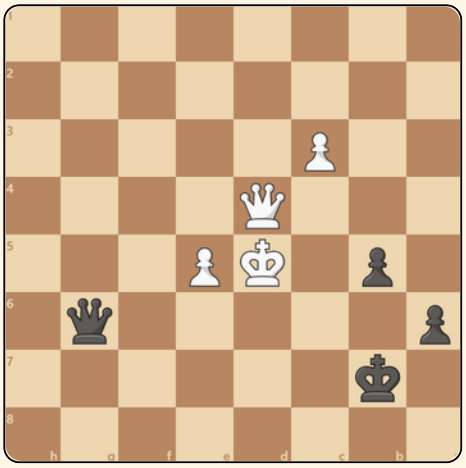


Read more... Pages 3-5

Puzzle Challenge

Chess Trivia: Why is a rook called a rook?

*Answers on pg. 2



1. Black to Move

Find the best moves!



2. White to Move

Major Current Events



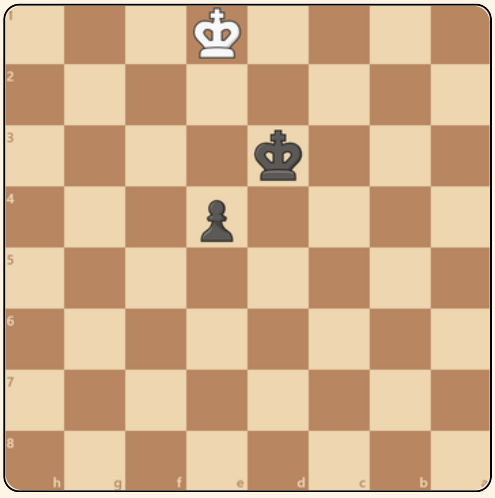
The countdown to the 2026 FIDE World Chess Championship is on. Reigning champion Gukesh Dommaraju of India and challenger Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan will face off in Geneva, Switzerland, beginning November 24. Both players will be just 20 years old, making this the youngest World Championship matchup in chess history. Gukesh became the youngest undisputed World Champion at age 18 in 2024, while Sindarov earned his challenge by winning the 2026 Candidates Tournament. The match will feature up to 14 classical games, with the first player to reach 7.5 points becoming the World Champion. Who do you think will take home the title?

Eleven-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan of England has become the youngest Woman Grandmaster in chess history! She earned the title after scoring an impressive eight points in eleven games at the 2026 Chess Olympiad in Uzbekistan, where she represented England on the women's team's top board. Bodhana first discovered chess during the pandemic and has quickly become one of the game's most exciting young talents.



Mini-Lesson: Opposition

What should Black play in this position?



1. **... Ke3!**

The game would continue:

2. Kf1 Kd2
3. Kc2 e3+
4. Kf3 e2
5. Kf4 e1=Q

Black promotes and wins.

If Black pushed the pawn to e3 on the first move, the game would end in a draw. This position demonstrates the critical concept of **opposition** in king and pawn endgames. The player who moves their king to directly face their opponent's king gains the opposition. In this case, the opposite king has to give way, which allows us to move forward and get a queen.

Tips:

- Gain the opposition by moving your king to face the other king (imagine a cowboy pistol duel).
- Activate your king to support its pawns, and save pawn moves to help you gain the opposition.

2026 National K–12 Grade Championships!!

(Orlando, December 11–13)

Join our SJIC team for the trip down to Orlando! It'll be more than a chance to compete in a major national chess tournament. Students will be able to face strong players from across the country, receive coaching and tournament support, and develop skills such as concentration, resilience, sportsmanship, and confidence. The experience will also give students a chance to travel together, build friendships, support their teammates, and create lasting memories. Regardless of the final results, students will return home with valuable tournament experience and a stronger connection to the SJIC chess community.

Please contact SJIC for Dov Gorman or one of the chess coaches for more information!

Meme of the Month

Calculating how to fit turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, and pie on one plate...



Puzzle Challenge Answers:

1. Mate in 1, *Qc6#*

2. Fork, *Rd8+* and Qxf8# if Bf8

Chess Trivia Answer:

The name comes from the Persian word *rukh*. The piece represented a chariot before becoming more castle-like.

SJIC's Friday Night Chess League: Season 1

Four boards, four games, and one shared goal: victory for the team! SJIC's Friday Night Chess League brings local players together for competitive chess and team camaraderie. With each player's result contributing to the team's aggregate score, teammates have plenty to play for — and plenty to cheer about.

The recently completed season (S1) featured ten teams from Camden, Willingboro, Voorhees, and beyond. Senior Master Leroy Dubeck, National Master Michael Katz, and expert Noah Xu were among the players in the talented field. Comebacks, close games, and shifting standings kept the race for first place exciting to the finish. Ultimately, the team "Crimson Kings" claimed the championship, with Fide Master Dov Gorman, Rishik Bhattacharyya, Leo Dubler, Adam Reese, and Owen Reese all contributing to a hard-earned team victory.

For Haddonfield father and son Adam and Owen Reese, the league offered a chance to spend time together doing something they both enjoy. Owen, a sixth grader at Haddonfield Middle School, has taken lessons at SJIC for about three years and attended its chess camp each of the past three summers. Last year, he also won the school chess championship at Elizabeth Haddon Elementary School. Adam, a urologist at the Fox Chase–Temple Urologic Institute, has played casually for about four years, mostly on Chess.com. Before joining the league, he had played fewer than ten rated games over the board.

As members of the Crimson Kings, Adam and Owen enjoyed meeting fellow chess enthusiasts from different backgrounds and cheering on their teammates after their own games ended. The team format brought extra motivation: both wanted to play their best and contribute to the team's success. Owen was quick to recognize his teammates' contributions: "Thanks to my Crimson King's teammates Dov, Leo, and Rishik for leading our team to the championship on boards 1 and 2."

One of those teammates, FIDE Master Dov Gorman, is also the founder of SJIC! Originally from Israel, Dov began playing chess at 13 and became a master by 17. His competitive accomplishments include a third-place finish at the U.S. Open at age 21 and victories over two players ranked among the world's top ten during his twenties.

Format and Details

- **Location:** South Jersey Innovation Center
- **When:** Every other Friday at 7 p.m.
- **Teams:** At least four players per team; alternates are welcome
- **Format:** One team match per night, with four games played per match
- **Games:** USCF-rated, with a 60-minute time control
- **Entry fee:** $80 per team
- **Prizes:** Plaques, medals, chess clocks (and of course bragging rights haha)
- **Current Season (Season 2):** October 16 through mid-December
- **Sign-up:** Register online or contact SJIC for more information



Father and Son, Adam and Owen Reese

SJIC's Friday Night Chess League: Season 1

Coach Highlight!!!

FM Dov Gorman, Founder of the SJ Innovation Center



Dov with Abhimanyu Mishra, the world's youngest GM



Dov with 13-year-old WIM Megan Paragua



Dov along with fellow SJIC Coach Bryce Bibelheimer

Dov Gorman also earned runner-up MVP honors with the Philadelphia Inventors in the USCF Pro League and reached a peak USCF rating of 2480.

Dov started coaching as a teenager. After time away from chess while working in software development and finance, he returned to teaching and has spent decades helping players improve. Five of his students have won national championships. This past season, Dov brought that experience to the Crimson Kings, helping lead the team through a closely contested championship race. His advice to players is short and direct: "Be serious." With a new season underway, the league offers another chance for local players to put that advice into practice, support their teammates, and enjoy an evening of chess together.



Here is a position from one of Adam Reese's games. Can you find the winning combination?

Answer:

1. ... *Qd4+*
2. *Kh1 Rd1+*
3. *Rxd1 Qxd1*
4. *Rxd1 Rxd1#*

Checkmate in 4 moves! Though White is up an extra pawn, all of his pieces are concentrated on the queenside, leaving his king unguarded and doomed.

Chess League Game Feature: FM Dov Gorman

FM Dov Gorman vs. Leon Alston (1-0) | SJIC FNCL Season 1



1. *c4 c6*
2. *e4 d5*
3. *exd5 cxd5*
4. *cxd5 Qxd5*
5. *Nc3 Qd8*
6. *Nf3 Nc6*
7. *d4 Bg4?*

(1)

(1) This opening, after the first two moves, is called the anti-anti-Caro-Kann defence! Generally in these types of positions, White has an isolated pawn but is slightly ahead in development and has more space. In this game, a seemingly harmless move made by Black was a major mistake: 7... Bg4, allowing White to dominate the center (with 8. d5). Black should have played 7... e6, and the game is +/=.

8. *d5 Bxf3*
9. *Qxf3 Ne5*
10. *Bb5+ Nd7*
11. *0-0 a6*
12. *Ba4 Ngf6*
13. *Rd1*

(2)



(2) Here, there already is a clear positional advantage for one side. White has castled, developed most of his pieces, and is controlling key areas of the board. Black is still yearning to castle and make his king safer. Computer evaluation reflects this, giving +5 for White. Though 13. Re1 was more accurate, controlling the semi-open file, White is already considered winning even with equal material.

13. *... g6*
14. *d6 b5*
15. *dxe7 Bxe7*
16. *Bb3 0-0*
17. *Bh6 Re8*
18. *Nd5 Ne5*
19. *Qf4 Nfd7*
20. *Nxe7 Qxe7*
21. *Bg5 Qf8*

(3)

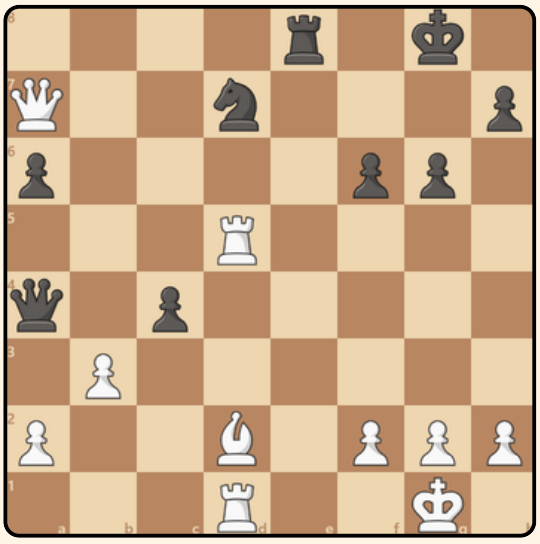


(3) Here, we see the power of having two bishops in an open position. The material is still equal, but FM Dov has a big advantage due to the long diagonals and weak squares around his opponent's king. Though bishops and knights are both worth three points, they thrive in different environments: bishops in open positions and knights in closed ones.

22. *Rd5 Ra7*
23. *Rad1 Nc4*
24. *Bxc4 bxc4*
25. *Qd4 f6*
26. *Qxa7 Qb4*
27. *Bd2 Qa4*
28. *b3*

Black resigned.

(4)



(4) FM Dov maneuvered his pieces onto optimal squares, forcing his opponent to give away material and ultimately to resign. Dov's game demonstrates a few crucial concepts: prioritize castling early especially if pawns are being traded in the center; mobilize your pieces quickly; evaluate your minor pieces (N's and B's); make sure every move has a purpose.

SJIC's Founding Story

South Jersey Innovation Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2016 by Dov Gorman, with the help of two concerned mothers who shared his belief that bright, motivated students were reaching the ceiling of what their school classrooms could offer them. Traditional curricula, designed to meet the needs of an entire classroom, often left ambitious kids without anywhere further to go. SJIC was created to fill that gap — giving students access to advanced engineering, mathematics, and critical thinking well beyond grade-level expectations, and challenging them in ways a standard school day rarely can.

We started small, renting rooms once a week at the Indian Culture Center in Marlton to teach classes in math, robotics, financial literacy, and chess. As demand grew, it became clear that the only way to truly develop our initiative was to have a home of our own, and we moved into 2003 Lincoln Drive in Marlton. With our own space, we expanded our programs into coding, AI, and virtual reality, and went deeper into each of our existing subject areas.

Then COVID hit. We closed our physical location but kept teaching without interruption, moving our classes online. When it was time to return in person, we relocated to a second location in Mt. Laurel, where we spent two years before moving to our current location three years ago.

Alongside our own campus, we began bringing our programs directly into local schools. Today, SJIC teaches in 10 different schools across Marlton, Voorhees, Haddonfield, and Moorestown — extending the same rigor and curiosity that started in a rented room to students across South Jersey.

Building a Chess Powerhouse

Chess has been part of SJIC's identity since its earliest days, and over time we built it into one of the most active tournament programs in the country. SJIC has hosted more than 1,000 rated tournaments, placing us among the most active tournament organizers in the United States.

We have hosted the New Jersey state championships for youth, women, and seniors, and more recently launched the South Jersey Chess League. Our events have attracted many of the nation's top players, including U.S. grandmasters — among them Abhimanyu Mishra, the youngest grandmaster in chess history.

For years, we funded the Philadelphia Inventors, a team in the U.S. Chess League and PRO Chess League. At its peak, the team was a playoff contender, featuring four grandmasters and three International Masters on its roster.

Join our SJ Chess League!

As described in this month's main headline, ***South Jersey Chess League*** is a competitive team league organized by the SJIC, featuring 10 teams of four players competing in Friday-night matches. Team captains manage weekly lineups and results, providing South Jersey players with regular tournament-level team competition close to home.

Please contact SJIC for Dov Gorman for more information

Parent Corner

What are the best ways to prepare for tournaments and improve in general?

1. Do daily tactics/puzzles (chesstempo.com is a great resource).
2. Study opening theory using online databases, and practice basic endgames.
3. Play practice games online that are no shorter than 15 minutes and analyze them.
4. Work with a coach that tailors lessons to your child's strengths and weaknesses.
5. Emphasize self-drive over rating.



Puzzle Prize!

Find white's best continuation to win a prize!
(See front desk)