



Marquee Sessions

Keynote Address by Legendary World Champion Garry Kasparov

Mind & Body: The Making of a Chess Athlete

A cross-sport conversation about the mental preparation, physical discipline, competitive resilience, and sustained performance that shape elite athletes.

Moderator: **Maurice Ashley**

Panelists:

- Grandmaster & Five-Time U.S. Chess Champion **Fabiano Caruana**
- Grandmaster and Mizzou Head Chess Coach **Cristian Chirila**
- Professional Performance Coach **Seth Makowsky**
- WNBA Star **Aerial Powers**
- NFL Hall of Famer **Kellen Winslow**

Madwoman's Game: Screening and Panel

A screening and conversation centered on Madwoman's Game, a documentary following young chess player **Bianca Mitchell-Avila** and her journey through chess, competition, and life.

Featuring:

- Executive Producer **Carla Berkowitz**
- Film Subject and Executive Producer **Bianca Mitchell-Avila**
- Director **Zach Zamboni**

Women in Chess: Research, Practice, and Insights

A conference-opening exploration of current research, practical efforts, and emerging insights on women in chess. Panelists will be announced later.

2026 Preliminary Program Conference Schedule

Thursday, October 22

5:30–9:00 p.m.	U.S. Chess Championships Closing Ceremony
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Friday, October 23

7:30–8:30 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
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8:30–8:45 a.m.	Conference Opening and Welcome
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8:45–9:30 a.m.	Marquee Session - Women in Chess: Research, Practice, and Insights
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9:45–11:00 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions 1.1
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11:15–12:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions 1.2
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12:45–2:00 p.m.	Lunch and Marquee Session - Mind & Body: The Making of a Chess Athlete
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2:15–3:45 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions 1.3
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4:00–5:30 p.m.	Movie Screening, Chess Club Tour, or World Chess Hall of Fame Visit
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6:15–7:30 p.m.	Movie Screening, Chess Club Tour, or Dinner on Your Own
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8:00–10:00 p.m.	Kingside After Dark
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Saturday, October 24

7:30–8:30 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
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8:30–9:15 a.m.	Marquee Session - Madwoman's Game Screening and Panel
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9:30–10:45 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions 2.1
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11:00–12:15 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions 2.2
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12:30–1:45 p.m.	Lunch and Keynote Address by Garry Kasparov
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2:00–3:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions 2.3
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4:00–6:00 p.m.	Chess Tournament and Autograph Session
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6:00–10:00 p.m.	Cocktail Reception and U.S. Chess Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
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Concurrent Sessions

Education-Focused

Chess Education: Learning Theory & Cognition (Panel)

The Mind Game: Chess, Gifted Learners, and the Case for Cognitive Risk-Taking

Sunil Weeramantry: National Scholastic Chess Foundation; Robert McKenzie: Math Teacher/Chess Coach; Robert McLellan: co-author of Great Moves: Learning Chess Through History; Ian Harris: National Master

Chess Education: Curriculum & Platforms

Chess for Everyone: Applying the Duolingo Method to Chess Teaching

Elisa Camps Troncoso and Matthew Rathkey: Duolingo

Teaching Chess at Renert School and Using the Chessworld Curriculum

Vlad Rekhson: Renert School / Chessworld

Exploiting the Missing Gap: Math-Chess Game!

Theodore James Morrison: Georgia Tech / Moody's Analytics

Re-Wired: Adapting High School Chess Curriculum in Baltimore

Christopher Baron: Patterson High School, Baltimore

Chess Education: Learning Theory & Cognition

Chess and Critical Thinking: HOT Skills Workshop

Jerry Nash: FIDE Chess in Education Commission

Enhancing Social-Emotional Learning Skills through Chess

Fernando Moreno: School Counselor and FIDE School Chess Instructor

Chess and Effective Learning Objectives

Elizabeth Feters: Harford County Public Schools

Community-Focused

The Preservation of Chess Data in Support of Research and Education (Panel)

Introducing the American Chess Archive Platform

Joshua Anderson: President of Chess Journalists of America (CJA)

The American Chess Archive Use Cases

Jon Edwards, PhD: Vice President of CJA and the 23rd World Correspondence Chess Champion

Preserving American Chess Game Scores

Andy Ansel: Chess game preservationist

The American Chess Archive Scanning Effort

Mark Capron: Secretary-Treasurer of CJA

Chess and Underserved Communities

Breaking Barriers: How Chess Brings Cultures Together in Prisons and in Classrooms

Abel Talamantez: RISE Scholars / San Quentin Skunkworks

Beyond the Board: Using Competitive Chess to Build Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Skills in At-Risk Youth at Boys Town

Dmitriy Khots: Boys Town

Where Strategy Meets Social Justice: How Chess Became a Tool for Equity and Belonging

Qiana Spellman: New York City Department of Education / St. John's University

FIDE Infinite Chess Project (Chess for Kids with Autism Spectrum)

Ala Mishchanka: FIDE Infinite Chess Project Ambassador

Chess and Global Community Impact

FIDE Chess for Protection Project (Chess for Refugees)

Anastasiya Karlovich: FIDE Chess for Protection; Anastasia Sorokina: Chair of the Asian Social Commission

The Rehabilitation of Street Children in Ethiopia Through Chess

Getnet Tesfamariam Wube: Ethiopia

Developing Chess in Impoverished Communities and Turning Waste Into Opportunity

Kenneth Kaplan: Crossing Thresholds / Kibera Knights Chess Club

Chess and Life Skills

Beyond the Board: A Practitioner Model for Using Chess to Develop Decision-Making, Leadership, and Real-World Outcomes

Ashley Lynn Priore: Queenside Ventures / Queens Gambit

Decision Quality Under Pressure: A Practical Framework for Chess Performance

Saloni Sapale and John Coumbe-Lilley: Mind Over Moves Psychology

From Chessboard to Operating Room: The Neuroscience of Elite Decision-Making

Cristóbal Blanco Acevedo: Reina Sofía University Hospital of Córdoba / University of Córdoba / Maimonides Institute of Biomedicine of Córdoba

Building & Growing Chess Programs

Columbus Chess Academy: Rebuilding a Chess Community Through Schools and Service

Katherine Lin: Columbus Chess Academy

Operating a Chess Club as a Teal Organization: Leadership through Wholeness

Nick Mueller: Cochise Chess

The Gold Standard: A Data-Driven Analysis of Best Practices for State Scholastic Chess Championships

Adam Weissbarth: Silver Knights Chess Academy

Team Chess as a Leadership Lab: A Program Development Case Study

Victor F. Lopez: Learners Chess

Chess Organizations & Nonprofits

Putting Chess in the Public Eye Through Community Partnerships

Christina Schweiss: Hampton Roads Chess Association

Building and Growing an Impactful Chess Program

Cyrus Hayat: Coram Deo Academy, Collin County, TX

Beyond the Board: Building Sustainable Collegiate Chess Communities Through Leadership, Governance, and Educational Design

Jeremy Alexander: University of California, Riverside

Civic Chess: Building Connected, Thriving Communities Through Play, Reflection, and Shared Attention

Brandon Barnes: Rhetorician and Educator

Chess in the Digital Age & AI

The Chess Entrepreneur's Unfair Advantage: Applied AI for Coaches, Authors, and Organizers

Vishnu Warrior: AlphaBetChess

Give Chess Education the Stage It Deserves

Josip Asik: American Chess Magazine

Chess Projects from Scratch: Starting Out as a Complete Novice

Jonathan Zhi: Underpromoted

Chess History & Biography

The Milwaukee Playground Chess Program: 1934–1975

Michael Wierzbicki: Marquette University

The Pawn Who Would Be Queen: The Story of Alabama's First National Champions

Eric M. Nager (Presenter): US Chess Federation-certified National Chess Coach; John O. Woods: filmmaker / University of Southern California

Endgame of Empire: Sultan Khan, Asia's First Grandmaster

Atiyab Sultan: Harvard University

Chess Philosophy & the Human Condition

What Is Chess?

Benjamin Defromont: University of Lille

Chess and the Human Condition

Jarrold Brown: Franklin College; Jeff Day: Texas Tech University; Zackary Davis: Saint Louis University

Research-Focused

Chess as a Research Laboratory (Panel)

Chess as a Research Laboratory: Causal Evidence on Cognition, Society, and Behavior

David Smerdon: School of Economics, The University of Queensland; Eren Bilen: Dickinson College; Kenneth Regan: Department of Computer Science, University at Buffalo; Christopher Chabris: Decision Sciences, Geisinger Research Institute

Chess and Sex: The Data

Deconstructing the Gender Gap in Chess Ratings

Richard L. Smith: University of North Carolina; György Barabás: Linköping University; Nikos I. Bosse: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Jose Camacho-Collados: Cardiff University; David Smerdon: The University of Queensland; Hou Yifan: Peking University; Wei Ji Ma: NYU

The Incorporation Problem: Structural Measurement Error in Dynamic Rating Systems with an Application to Male-Female Performance Ratings Gaps in Chess

Guangli Zhang: WashU St. Louis; Michael Podgursky: University of Missouri; Michelle Wickman: SLU

Are Women Really Worse at Chess?

Sofia Doroshenko: Macalester College / Scientist

Chess and Women: Access, Retention & Culture

From Entry to Endgame: Structural Barriers and Actionable Pathways to Keep Girls in Chess

Luciana Morales: Women in Chess Foundation / Chessable

Girls Who Check: Exploring Gender Disparities in Scholastic Chess

Andrew Schleisman and Carlos Nicolas Gómez Marchant: The University of Texas at Austin

Males, Females and Competitiveness

Matthew Pepper: Basis Policy Research; Brian Kisida: University of Missouri; Jean Hoffman: Saint Louis Chess Club; Ben Underwood: Saint Louis Chess Club

New Research on the Impact of Chess

Examining the Effect of Chess Participation on Cognitive Functioning in Older Adults

Caton Tsao, Aman Sreshta, and Kaileigh Byrne: Clemson University

Can Chess Improve Math Skills in Title I Schools?

Jenny Ingber: Chess in the Schools; Susanne Harnett: Metis Associates

Escaping the Prison of the Mind: The Impacts of Chess on Incarcerated and At-Risk Populations

Jade Oldfield, Robbin Gibb, and Lance Grigg: University of Lethbridge

Chess Cognition & Decision-Making

Irrational Attention: Timing Out in Online Chess

Aleksei Chernulich (Presenter): Durham University; John Wooders: New York University Abu Dhabi

The Mechanics of Mastery: Quantifying Metrics to Reveal What Elo Cannot

Ben Underwood: Saint Louis Chess Club

How Much Can a Few Engine Moves Help? Quantifying Limited Cheating in Chess

Professor Daniel Keren: University of Haifa Israel

Chess, Women & Culture

Leveling the Board: Examining the Literature on Gender in Chess and Academic STEM Fields

Carolyn Barber: University of Missouri–Kansas City; Mark Barber: Raytown Quality Schools

Tipping the King: Challenging Chess Masculinities in the Streaming Era

Carlos Nicolas Gómez Marchant and Andy Schleisman: The University of Texas at Austin

Queen's Hearts: An Animated Chess Journey for All, Through a Girl's Eyes

Diego Garrido Prats (Presenter): Volusia County Chess Club; Mariel Lares Martiz: Researcher