European Online Chess Club Cup

European Online Chess Club Cup announced from 27th to 31st of March 2021.

Open Day for ECU Courses

Open Day to introduce the ECU certificated training courses, on Saturday 13th of February!

Training Course for Chess Teachers & Tutors

Jordden Van Foreest wins Tata Steel Chess 2021

Photo © Jurriaan Hoefsmit
ECU Board Meeting took place on the 16th of January with the schedule for 2021 as top item in agenda.

European Online Chess Club Cup will take place from 27th-31st of March 2021, on Tornelo online platform.

Open Day to introduce the ECU certificated training courses, will take place on Saturday 13th of February.

European Chess Union and ECU Arbiters Council organised two special courses for Chess Arbiters Online and a third announced for 23-26 February.

European Chess Union and European Chess Academy organise the third volume of the Lectures program “Improve Your Chess” with leading Chess Trainers worldwide from 22nd of February to 25th of March 2021.
COMMUNIQUE OF THE ECU BOARD MEETING

The first ECU Board meeting in 2021 took place on Saturday 16th of January 2021 through teleconference.

The main areas under discussion and decisions are published on the ECU website and presented in the monthly E-magazine.
Main information and decisions of the ECU Board:

European Championship/World Championship Qualifications

1. The European Open Championship in Reykjavik, Iceland is rescheduled for 22nd May to 2nd June 2021 as the final dates to be held to be included in the current FIDE cycle. The final decision about its conduct will be taken within February 2021, according to the deadlines set by the FIDE World Cup 2021 regulations.
2. If the pandemic conditions will not allow the organizers to issue an invitation by February or/and the situation in whole Europe will maintain restrictions to players travel, and so to postpone the EOC on a later period, the WC qualification stage will be organized in a hybrid-type rated event by May 2021 as was foreseen by the regulations for the FIDE World Cup 2021. ECU has already started the procedure to prepare the conditions and special regulations for such a competition if needed.
3. Parallel, ECU and Icelandic Chess Federation examine the possibility the European Championship 2021 in Reykjavik to be held in later dates in August/September 2021 and be included in the next FIDE WC cycle.
4. The European Women's Chess Championship 2021 in Mamaia, Romania is scheduled for 31st May-13th June 2021 but in the case of a postponement, is a part of the next Women's World Championship Cycle.

Online and Hybrid Championships

1. ECU has adopted the FIDE Online Regulations with few specifications for the European Championships that will be published.
2. ECU Board approved the following European Online/Hybrid competitions for the 1st half of 2021 while is expected to be possible more “over the board” championships to be held in the 2nd half of 2021 according to the ECU official calendar:
   A. The 1st European Online Open Club Cup will be organized in March 2021 in co-operation with Monaco Chess Federation from 27th to 31st March 2021.
   B. The 2nd European Online Rapid #Chess Championship in multiple rating categories and qualifications from one rating level to the next will be organized in April 2021.
   C. The 2nd European Youth Online/ Hybrid Rapid Championship will be organized by ECU in May 2021.
   D. ECU will host the 1st European Online Parliamentary Championship March or April 2021.

Educational and Training Programs

1. The ECU Arbiters Council organizes two Arbiter Online Certification Courses for titled Arbiters.
2. The European Chess Academy will organize the 3rd part of the program “Improve Your Chess” starting on the 22nd of February.
3. A partnership three-years was signed between ECU and the C.S.E.N. for the project “Chess: A game to spread at school” as a joint Erasmus+ Project.
4. A program of webinars will be scheduled and announced including the special info-webinar for Erasmus+ program.

Details can be found on the ECU website.

ECU notes that by the new system of World Cup as was announced by FIDE, forty (40) additional spots were set for the European players. ECU Board on its meeting on January 2020 in Larnaca, Cyprus decided not to keep 50% of these additional spots for the European qualification stages but to be distributed to forty (40) European federations. This decision ensured the wide geographical/federations representation to FIDE World Cup. For the rest qualification spots the priority is to give equal chances to all European top and strong players to qualify, competing in a chess tournament.
JORDEN VAN FOREEST WINS TATA STEEL CHESS 2021

After very intense finish of the 83rd edition of Tata Steel Chess, 21 years old Jorden Van Foreest (NED, 2671) won the event after taking a victory in the tiebreaks against Anish Giri (NED, 2764).
Jorden Van Foreest and Anish Giri tied for the first place after 13 played rounds, and the title needed to be determined in the tiebreak match. After two draws, the Armageddon brought to Giri white pieces, and Van Foreest needed only a draw to claim the title of the Winner.

In the exciting Armageddon, Giri took early advantage and reached a winning position but then made a blunder to enter the drawish endgame. With blunders and time trouble on the both sides, the game was ended as a loss on time for Dutch No.1 Grandmaster, Anish Giri, in the position where he had clear material advantage and winning position.

Jorden Van Foreest took the throne of the prestigious Wijk aan Zee event, as the first Grandmaster for Netherlands who won the event after 36 years, since 1985!

Third place came to another youngster, 18 years old Andrey Esipenko (RUS, 2677) having better tiebreaks than: Fabiano Caruana (USA, 2823) and Firouzja Alireza (FIDE, 2749) who had the same score of 8/13 points, each.

Details about the event can be found on the Official website of the event.

Wibledon of Chess
Tata Steel Chess

The 83rd edition of Tata Steel Chess took place from 15-31 January 2021 in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands. This year, Tata Steel chess oftenly called as Wibledon of Chess, comprised only Masters event.
European Online Chess Club Cup

European Online Chess Club Cup will be played from 27th-31st of March 2021, on Tornelo online platform.

The event is open to all European Chess Club, 100 teams will be accepted by priority. In the case of more applications, ECU has the right to accept additional teams.

1st European Online Chess Club Cup will be played within three stages:

Qualification phase (27th-28th of March) – Groups consisting of 8 or 10 teams, each, play the Robin round event of 7 or 9 rounds. Groups will be divided according to the average rating of the four (4) basic players, with FIDE March 1st, 2021 list taken in account. Two at least teams of each group qualify for Play-offs.

Play-offs (29th of March) – The qualifiers from the 1st phase. Best ranked 9 teams proceed to the Finals.

The final group (30th-31st of March) – 10 teams play Robin round tournament of 9 rounds. The 10th team is invited by ECU, the Winner of European Women’s Online Chess Club Cup- Cercle d’Echecs de Monte-Carlo.

Time control of the event will be 15 minutes + 5 seconds of an increment.

Each team consist of 4 basic players, and up to two (2) reserve players. The average FIDE standard rating of 4 basic players shall be at least 2000. Composition of teams is open without any restriction for players belonging to any FIDE federation member.

Each Team shall appoint one captain/representative for the technical meeting and communication during the event. The entry fee is 250 euros.

Total prize fund of 14,000 euros

The first ranked team of the Final group will become the European Online Club Cup Winner and will receive the "Coupe de Monte Carlo". The second and third team from the final group will win the silver and bronze e-medals.

Money prizes for Teams:
1st Winner Team- 4,000 EUR
2nd Winner Team- 3,000 EUR
3rd Winner Team- 2,000 EUR
4th Winner Team- 1,500 EUR
5th Winner Team- 1,000 EUR

Individual e-Medals are won by 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place of each board of final Group.

The first winner of each Board of the final group will receive 400 euros (5 x 400). Reserve players are calculated on the 5th Board.

The best game of the tournament will be awarded 500 euros.

ECU Certificates will be available for all Teams.

All the prizes awarded by tiebreaks and can not be shared.
Open Day to introduce ECU Certificated Training Courses

Open Day to introduce the ECU certificated training courses, will take place on Saturday 13th of February! The free entry Webinar will contain three sessions of 1.5 hours and 30 minutes Q&A to get insight on how ECU certificated teacher training courses can improve your chess teaching skills!

Register here: https://www.tickettailor.com/events/chessplus/476029
ECU101 - The SMART Method to Teach Chess

The ECU101 - The SMART Method to Teach Chess training course was designed by the leading chess educationists in Europe and is validated by the ECU Advisory Board which is an international academic panel with experts in disciplines from cognitive science and psychology to statistics and pedagogy.

The ECU101 course will take place from 20-21 February 2021, through the Zoom platform. The lecturers will be: John Foley and Jasper Hall. Registration are available on the chessplus website.

ECU102 - Teaching Mathematics through Chess

In ECU102 - Teaching Mathematics through Chess training course, mathematical ideas are expressed through chess - the board, the pieces and play.

The course will take place from 27-28 February 2021, through the Zoom online platform. Course Instructor: Rita Atkins

Registrations are available through chessplus website.

ECU103 webinar - Teaching Chess for Early Years is coming soon!

The exact dates and all the relevant information regarding the courses (time, fee, language, platform, instructor) can be found on the chessplus website.
European chess Union and European Chess Academy organise the third volume of the Lectures program “Improve Your Chess” with leading Chess Trainers worldwide from 22nd of February to 25th of March 2021.

ECU Online Training Program - Vol3 - Improve Your Chess

The lectures will be taking place twice a week, every Monday and Thursday, from 5pm – 7pm CET. Improve Your Chess Vol3 program is open for all, but recommended for players over 1500 rating.

The lecturers will be worldknown chess Trainers:
- GM Ivan Sokolov
- GM Efstratios Grivas
- GM Adrian Mikhalchishin
- GM Ioannis Papaioannou
- GM Shengelia David
- GM Jankovic Alojzije
- GM Mohr Georg
- GM Khalifman Alexander
- GM Solak Dragan
- IM Grabinsky Vladimir

You can select your preferred lecturers/dates:
> 5 lecturers (entry fee 50 €),
> 6 lecturers (entry fee 60 €),
> 7 lecturers (entry fee 70 €),
> 10 lecturers (entry fee 90 €),

and also, there are special offers for chess clubs.

Registration form is available on the European Chess Academy Website, as well as the contact details and details about the Training Program.

UPCOMING
ECU Arbiters Council organised two Online ECU Arbiters Certification course for the FIDE and International arbiters in period from 16-19 and 27-30 January 2021.

The webinars were open to all FIDE and International arbiters and all the 60 seats were booked shortly after the announcement of the Webinars.

After the huge interest was shown for ECU Arbiters Certification Courses, ECU Arbiters Council announced the 3rd ECU Arbiters Certification Course to be held from 23rd-26th of February 2021, through Zoom platform.

The Course is open to any FAs or IAs around the world. The certification will be required for European arbiters willing to work as an arbiter during the ECU online tournaments.

The cost is 30 Euro for the seminar and 20 Euro for the exam, with possibility for participants to only take exam, not to participate in the Webinar.

The seminar is limited to the 30 persons. The application deadline is 21st February.

The schedule and the course:
> Tuesday 23 February 2021 – 17:00 – 19:00 CET – on line chess and fair play regulations
> Wednesday 24 February 2021 – 17:00 – 19:00 CET – the platforms and zoom management
> Thursday 25 February 2021 – 17:00 – 19:00 CET – online chess tournament for arbiters
> Friday 26 February 2021 – 17:00 – 19:00 CET – the exam, theory and practice

More information can be found on ECU Arbiters Council Website.
he importance of online chess has grown up so fast and impetuously that FIDE felt as necessary to create a specific set of Regulations aiming to give a proper framework for future FIDE online official competitions. Just one year ago, nobody would have really ever predicted that a set of Regulations for tournament played at the computer would ever be created, but the times compelled us all to new challenges and unprecedented events need unprecedented answers.

FIDE Online Chess Regulations are now a reality, and ECU wasn’t unprepared in this field. ECU board hence approved, in its Jan. 16th session, a specific annex to these Regulations was passed. In general, the philosophy basing the ECU annex is that European Official competitions will apply FIDE Online Regulations (which are binding for FIDE official tournaments, but only recommended for any other online chess competition), with some adjustment required by the need of our events. This is exactly the content of art. 1 that states: “ECU online competitions apply FIDE Online Chess Regulations except for what is provided in the following articles”.

In general, European Championships will hence be regulated by FIDE Online Chess Regulations amended by the annex. It is very important to mention that art. 10 states “the arbiters shall ensure that the ECU online regulations are observed” in the European online championships so we strongly suggest every arbiter to take a look to them and learn the most important differences. Don’t forget that the ECU annex is a part of the Online Arbiter certification programme!

Another crucial point is that ECU online competitions will be played only in the format of “Online Chess with supervision” or “Hybrid chess”, while unsupervised chess is not considered valid to this purpose.

About the other points, ECU regulations will be, in general, stricter than FIDE ones, and will prevent the use of specific online tools (auto-promotion, pre-moves, automatic draws…) which are not compliant to FIDE regular Laws of Chess. Although, the Regulations are enough flexible to allow this tool, if really required.
In summary, the main differences are:
- The hosting internet platform (the virtual “playing zone”) will be always determined by the ECU board.
- Smart-moves, pre-moves or auto promotion, in general, will not be allowed.
- Idle time for the players, to start the game or to make the move, after which the game is forfeited, will not be allowed.
- Automatic award of threefold repetitions or 50 moves can be prohibited.
- For online supervised games, the default time of a game is equal to the total allotted time.
- In case of a disconnection, the CA has the right to stop the clock or adjust the clock of the player.
- Players are not allowed to play from a tablet or a mobile.

The Annex also provides specific definitions of cheating and the conditions to pursue it as well as the consequences for violations, specifically in terms of the score, that is described at Art.7: “The Chief Arbiter shall take fair play decisions as soon as it is possible, to avoid controversies with score revisions. In an individual Swiss tournament, the offender shall be excluded from the final ranking. Each of the offender’s games shall be considered a loss. All games shall be reported as unplayed (excepting the game where the breach was assessed). The opponent’s score will be determined according to the tournament regulations. In the team championships the Chief Arbiter shall take a decision in the best interest of the competition upon consultations with the Organisers. The team of the offending player shall be excluded from the final rankings”.

As a final remark, we believe that ECU and FIDE competitions will not be that much different since the top-level FIDE tournaments will probably be played according to high standards, comparable to ECU’s ones.

While the general Regulations are significantly similar to FIDE ones, and the amendments are just slightly different, the situation changes radically about Fair Play. ECU annex is consistently different from FIDE Online Regulations, in a stricter way, and, in general, Appendices to FIDE Online Regulations are not applicable to ECU tournaments because they provide procedures and internal working rules of the Commissions which are not consistent to ECU structure.

Going into details, in online supervised chess, ECU provides that the arbiters may always require a player to provide a second viewpoint of their venues (side camera) and that this may happen as mandatory from the beginning and not only in case of a specific request.

We strongly recommend every arbiter to take a look and read the official regulations available here: https://arbiters.europechess.org/wp-content/uploads/Documents/Legislation/ECU_online.pdf
1) What are You doing in life in the current moment?

"Standing athwart History yelling: ‘Stop!!’
Well, I am thinking , desperately, how to improve further and further deteriorating Russo- American relations .

2) Your recollections with meetings with the World Champions?

I’ve met all World Champions from Euwe on, played against most of them , consider them all but Fischer, not just great players but also remarkable, and good people.

3) Your best game?

Hort- Alburt, Decin,1977

4) Which Your achievement You consider to be the most important?

My greatest and most rewarding achievement: Helping to bring down the communist hell-on-earth, the Soviet Union. In 80-ies, I was a sort of liaison between anti-Soviet emigres and American Right. Alas, the collapse of the Soviet Union unfortunately led to dismantling of centuries-old Russian State — something I (like Solzhenitsyn, like Putin) deeply regret.

In chess: three-time Ukrainian and three-time US Champion.

5) Best and most important chess books?

My favorite chess books are , of course, mine: the Comprehensive Chess Course ( from beginner to master and beyond)series, which I (co-)authored and published, since 1987. And everything written by Botvinnik.

6) How did You start Your career?

I never was a child prodigy. My aunt taught me moves when I was 5, then my dad taught me how to play well.

7) Your favourite openings?

My trademark openings for Black: Alekhine and Benko. Dubious. For White , for long time, Veresov( dubious), later normal 1.d4 .

8) Who was the most difficult and the easiest opponent in Your career?

Anatoly Karpov wasn’t an opening theoretician and often settled with White for approximate equality, planning to outplay his opponent later. Not with me , alas. In 1971 semifinal, he used, for all world to see, a strong move sequence against my four knights Sicilian. Disgusted, I switched to Alekhine, only to learn from Tolya, in friendly conversations, how White achieves a huge advantage first in classic line I played, then in the new line currently dubbed “ Alburt Variation ” ( Big Deal !).So, when we met in 1980( Malta Olympics) I prepared a novelty on move five— only to be mercilessly crushed. Still, I drew Karpov once :1988, Mazatlan, Active chess championship. He played 1.c4 (Thanks!!), and I barely escaped.

My best results against a Grandmaster: 5.5-0.5 vs Eduard Gufeld. (My old friend Sam Palatnik bested me, however, with a perfect 6-0 score against same Gufeld.)


My favorite Russian writer is Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. To name just one book: perhaps “Lenin in Zurich ”.

Movie: Caesar and Cleopatra ( with Burton and Taylor).

Singer: Alexandr Zhurbin.

10) Favourite city, food and drink.

Favorite city: Sochi -Hotel “Pearl “;

Food: Eggplant caviar, Odessa-style;

Drink: Amarone ( red Italian wine)
In this edition of the ECU E-Magazine we prepared for you four positions where White mates in 3 moves!

Rueben Fine said about chess:

>Combinations have always been the most intriguing aspect of Chess. The masters look for them, the public applauds them, the critics praise them. It is because combinations are possible that Chess is more than a lifeless mathematical exercise. They are the poetry of the game; they are to Chess what melody is to music. They represent the triumph of mind over matter.

>Believe firmly that in chess there are no rules without exceptions.

>Chess is a contest between two men which lends itself particularly to the conflicts surrounding aggression.

>I’d rather have a Pawn than a finger.

Solutions from December 2020

#Puzzle 1
1.Qxh7+ Kxh7 2.Rh1#

#Puzzle 2
1.Rd7!! Qxd7 2.Qxh5!! Nf6 [2...Bxg5 3.Qh8#] 3.Bxf6 Bxf6 4.Qh7#
"Chess makes you smarter!"