

NEWSLETTER

2026 ONTARIO YOUTH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP



ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT

The **Toronto Chess Centre**, in partnership with the **Canada Chess Youth Club**, co-hosted the 2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships on May 9-10 at St. Robert Catholic High School. The tournament brought together 267 talented young players from across the province. As one of the premier youth chess events in Ontario, the championship also served as a qualifier for the 2026 Canadian Youth Chess Championships, which will take place from July 6-10 in Ottawa.

The championship featured seven competitive sections: U18 & U16, U14, U12 Open, U12 Girls, U10 Open, U10 Girls, and U8. The tournament was played using a 45-minute time control with a 30-second increment per move. Organized as a five-round Swiss tournament, participants competed in three rounds on Saturday, followed by two rounds on Sunday.



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CHESS CENTRE**



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SECTION WINNERS

The winner of each section received a \$500 bursary toward participation in the 2026 Canadian Youth Chess Championships, while the top three finishers in every section earned vouchers valued at \$500, \$200, and \$100, respectively, for classes at the Canada Chess Youth Club.

The youngest competitors at the 2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships delivered impressive performances in the Under 8 sections. **In the Under 8 Open** section, **Vihaan Chutani** captured first place with a perfect score of 5.0/5. **Robert Shied** earned second place with 4.5/5, while **Harshil Swain** secured third place with an excellent score of 4.0/5.

The Under 8 Girls section featured a tightly contested battle, with **Anaisha Sharma** finishing in first place, while **Charlotte Qu** and **Anika Suresh** claimed second and third, respectively. All three players finished with 3.0/5.



The Under 10 sections featured many exciting games and strong performances from some of Ontario's rising young talents. **In the Under 10 Open** section, **Anagh Sahni** claimed first place with an impressive score of 4.5/5. **Ethan Wong** and **Daksh Saini** shared second and third place with excellent scores of 4.0/5.



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The **Under 10 Girls** section was equally competitive, with **Anushka Brijith** capturing first place with 4.5/5. **Sriyadhvi Vijay** earned second place with a strong score of 4.0/5, while **Rytee Hejazi** and **Anaya Kovuru** tied with 4.0/5 to share third place.



The Under 12 sections produced some of the most dramatic and hard-fought battles of the tournament. In the **Under 12 Open** section, **Shabd Dembla** and **Diyor Muminov** both finished with perfect scores of 5.0/5, with **Shabd** ultimately claiming the championship title after the blitz playoff tiebreaks. **Venkat Kola** secured third place with a strong score of 4.0/5.

In the **Under 12 Girls** section, **Arianna Yuan** captured first place with an excellent score of 4.5/5. **Gayathri Sreekumar** finished in second place with 4.0/5, while **Elena Sharafi Masouleh** earned third place with 3.5/5.



The Under 14 sections featured highly competitive games and several standout performances. **In the Under 14 Open** section, **Nihad Mammadov** delivered a dominant performance to capture first place with a perfect score of 5.0/5. **Sarthak Deshpande** earned second place with an impressive 4.5/5, while **Tai Hing Lee** secured third place with 4.0/5.

In the Under 14 Girls section, **Angela Wang** claimed the championship title with 4.0/5. **Nikita Kamath** finished in second place with 3.5/5, while **Raya Sahebgharani** earned third place with 3.0/5.



The Under 18 and Under 16 sections concluded the 2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships with a series of closely contested and high-level performances across all divisions. **In the U18 Girls** category, **Valerie Ruchinskaya** secured first place with a strong score of 4.5/5, ultimately winning in a blitz tiebreak and choosing the U18 Girls Prize.

In the U18 Open section, **Laksshana Deepak** claimed first place with 4.5/5, followed by **Chengzhang Yang** in second with 3.5/5 and **Ryan Saxena** in third with 3.0/5.



The U16 Open section saw **Noah Chung** take first place with 4.0/5, while **Brian Aytac-Kuliev** and **Antarip Das** shared second and third place, both finishing on 3.5/5.

In the U16 Girls section, **Sahansa Isuli Nisalana Weerakoon** secured first place with 3.0/5, with **Isabelle Guan** and **Darshika Arun** finishing second and third with 3.0/5 and 2.0/5 respectively.



COMMUNITY APPRECIATION

We are deeply grateful to the incredible team of volunteers and staff whose hard work and dedication made the 2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships a smooth and memorable experience for all participants and families. A special thank you goes to the arbiters **Gordon Zeng, Amy Sun, Jasper Xie, Ricky Chen, Elizabeth Brown, Tony Lu, Itay Bermanis, Bhagat Nath** and **Don Parakin** for their professionalism and commitment in overseeing the games throughout the weekend. **Sophia Li, Lauren Li** and **Tiffany Shen** also played a crucial role in crowd management, helping maintain a quiet and focused playing environment for the competitors.

In the skittles room, **Women FIDE Master Cindy Qiao, Joseph Leung, Bradley Tseng, International Master Mike Ivanov** and **Eddie Lu** provided valuable game analysis and mentorship to players between rounds, enriching the educational experience of the tournament.



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Alercio Alves Faria assisted with managing the speaker and microphone system throughout the weekend. We also extend our thanks to **Suen Chan and Christina Yan**, who served as the lead photographers, and to **Kennedy Cao and Sahar Karunaratne**, our videographers, for documenting many memorable moments from the event.

Finally, we would like to thank **Anthony Paraskeva** for his outstanding work in managing the championship's media presence, from graphic design and print materials to digital marketing. His efforts played an important role in capturing and sharing the excitement and atmosphere of the event with the broader chess community.

The **2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships** were honoured to welcome **Member of Provincial Parliament Billy Pang**, who attended the opening ceremony and delivered a brief address to motivate the young players.

The Toronto Chess Centre would also like to extend its **sincere thanks to all the parents and families who came out to support the players throughout the weekend**. Their encouragement, dedication, and commitment play an essential role in the growth and success of young chess players. With the championship taking place over Mother's Day weekend, the Toronto Chess Centre would especially like to wish a very Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers who spent their weekend supporting their children at the event. Their time, energy, and unwavering support are deeply appreciated by the entire chess community.



The Toronto Chess Centre is deeply grateful for the generous support of its sponsors and partners. **HappyLife Wealth Management Inc.** proudly served as the event's **Gold Sponsor**, providing valuable support that helped make the championship possible. The Toronto Chess Centre is also incredibly thankful for the financial support provided by the **Ontario Chess Association**. The contributions of these sponsors played a vital role in the overall success of the 2026 Ontario Youth Chess Championships, and their commitment to youth development and the chess community is sincerely appreciated.

