

Advance Motion 1. Create Superregional Scholastic Championships (This Advance Motion was presented at the TCA Annual Membership Meeting, September 4, 2022. By a 9-1 vote, this motion was tabled until the 2023 TCA Junior Chess Meeting.

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

The bylaws of the Texas Chess Association shall be amended to add the following subsection to section 1, Article IX of the bylaws, as follows:

V. Superregional Scholastic Championships. Any number of these championships may be held during the fall but shall not conflict with the Texas Grade Championships. Any two or more regions, as defined by Appendix I, may hold a superregional scholastic championship and be known as a super-region, but no combination may be used more than once in any year. The name of each superregional shall include a brief description of the super-region (e.g., the West Texas Superregional or the Northeastern Texas Superregional). At the option of the organizer, the superregional may be closed to scholastic players who are residents of the super-region or open to all scholastic players, but only residents shall be allowed to compete as teams or win the title of Super-Region Champion. Membership of the Association shall not be required, but the Association shall be entitled to a \$2.00 commission for every participant in the superregionals. The bidding deadline for these championships shall be March 31 of the year in which the event is to be held.

Discussion: When it comes to TCA scholastic events, organizers have a choice of big or small. They can go small with a regional championship, or they can go big with the State Scholastic Championships (or the Grade Championships). They cannot, however, take the middle route—because it does not exist! There is no Goldilocks chair for organizers to sit in. I propose that we build that chair. Last year, the regionals were either cancelled or converted into online tournaments due to the pandemic. The innovative part, however, was that, of the regionals that did occur, they were combined with other regions to form superregional championships. Now is the time to revive this idea of super-regional scholastic championships, but in an in-person format. For clarification, this proposal will not do away with the regional championships. Rather, it would create a new series of TCA scholastic tournaments that are based on multiple regions. Why would this be advisable? I can think of several benefits that superregional championships would bring to our organization and the chess players we serve, including:

- Superregionals would provide organizers with more opportunities to gain experience organizing TCA events that are significantly larger than regionals before taking on the whole enchilada (e.g., State Scholastics).
- Superregionals would provide another option to hold a TCA scholastic event for organizers who live in places unfavorable for regionals, such as near the boundary line between several regions or one of the less populated, Western regions.
- Superregionals would fill out our scholastic calendar more. TCA has a major scholastic tournament in both the first half of the year (State Scholastics) and the second half (Grade Championships), but only has smaller, minor scholastic tournaments during the first half. This motion would fix this problem.
- Superregionals would generate more revenue for the Association. Even if only two superregionals were held and each had an average player count of 200, TCA would receive \$800 in revenue from the \$2 commissions.

- Superregionals would also be very flexible. Organizers could design their super-regionals in any way they and the Association agree. There are also no inflexible, predetermined super-regions to stymie innovation.
- Superregionals would not significantly strain the existing resources of TCA. Nothing in this motion obligates the TCA to organize superregionals itself if no one else is willing. It would be up to the organizers. Instituting superregionals represents a great opportunity for our organization to further fulfill its mission of promoting chess while not incurring significant new burdens for its officers and volunteers to bear. For all these reasons, I ask for your vote in favor of this motion

Advance Motion 2. Make a Technical Correction Concerning Junior Voting

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

The bylaws of the Association shall be amended so that every member who is a resident of Texas and at least sixteen years of age is a voting member, except a Club Member or Junior Tournament Member.

Transitional Provision: This motion shall be applied retroactively so that any vote that would be permitted under this motion but was previously invalid due to membership class shall be valid for all intents and purposes whatsoever.

Discussion: As a member of the Bylaws Committee, I have recently been charged with updating the bylaws with such amendments as may have been passed previously but have yet to be included in the bylaws. One of my discoveries in this process was that, although the membership had previously required voters to be residents and at least sixteen years of age, it appears that they inadvertently disenfranchised Junior, Junior Online, Student and Student Online Members when they reformed the membership structure in 2010.

This effectively means that a resident who is 16, 17 or 18 can vote if he has a Patron or Regular Membership but not if he has a Junior or Student Membership. As no one should be disenfranchised simply because they paid three dollars instead of five, I am proposing this simple, housekeeping motion to resolve the issue.

As far as I am aware, no one has actually been disenfranchised due to this error. It has long been our practice that all resident members who are at least 16 (other than clubs and junior tournament members) are allowed to vote. However, there should be no doubt as to whether someone can vote or not. This motion simply legitimizes what we are already doing and makes sure that no one can dispute the validity of an election or motion simply because some of the voters technically were not supposed to vote.

To make this important technical correction, I ask for your support of this motion.

Advance Motion 3. Expand Junior Membership

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Every person who shall have participated in the State Scholastic Championship, or a regional scholastic championship, held during the present year, and is not a member of the Association, is hereby declared to be a Junior Online Member of the Association for a term expiring on March 31, 2024.

Transitional Provision: The Treasurer shall be under no obligation to include any person becoming a member by virtue of this motion in the membership list unless such person expressly requests to be included. For as long as applicable, the join page on the website of the Association, and the registration pages for TCA tournaments, shall state that anyone who played in one of the tournaments above is a member and need not purchase another membership to play in a TCA event held before April 1, 2024.

Discussion: Our membership is much smaller than it should be. There are over eight thousand USCF members in our state, and yet, TCA only has 489 resident members (excluding club members) according to the most recent count. Although a single motion cannot resolve this disjunction, there is an easy solution to improve the situation and in so doing significantly grow our membership.

But first, some data. Presently, junior and junior online members make up 24.1% of our resident human membership. If the scholastic players of family memberships were included, the percentage would probably be around thirty percent or so, but not more. By contrast, however, 46.2% of USCF members in Texas are 18 and under (as of January 29) as shown by using demographic queries on the USCF website. Moreover, of the USCF members in Texas who played in a rated tournament during the preceding twelve months, 68.0% of them were 18 and under.

Even though juniors make up the vast majority of tournament players in our state, our membership does not reflect this reality. Why? The reason is simple. For longer than I can remember, we have not enforced the bylaws requirement that everyone who plays in a TCA tournament be a member of the Association. Recently, scholastic tournaments have been exempted from requiring membership and instead their organizers have paid commissions to the Association. As a result, there has been less reason for scholastic players to become members than their older counterparts and so the membership is older than it otherwise would be.

The solution is to simply declare everyone who played in this year's scholastic championships to be members. If this was done, our membership would dramatically expand. Although the size of the Superstate Scholastic is unknowable as of the time of this motion's submission, if this Superstate is anything like previous years (2019 Superstate had 1,255 players while North and South combined were over 2,100 players in 2018), this simple act would, at the very least, immediately quadruple our membership and in so doing align it with the demographics of Texas chess as a whole.

If we were to do this, there would be no immediate cost to TCA. It could mean that membership dues would be slightly less than they would otherwise be, but this loss would be small in comparison to our total revenue. Meanwhile, TCA would gain more prestige as it could report a much higher membership count (i.e., it would be easier to fundraise) and possibly some of the newly created members would become more involved with TCA as a result. There is very little to lose by doing so, but so much to gain. It is an easy win-win for everyone.

To make the demographics of our membership more reflective of Texas chess and to grow our membership, I ask for your support of this motion.

Advance Motion 4. Move McLennan County to Region VI

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

The bylaws of the Association shall be amended to move McLennan County to Region VI.

Authority: This amendment directly affects junior chess because its passage would substantially affect the likelihood of a regional scholastic championship being organized in McLennan County. I will also note that four counties were unanimously moved to different regions on a binding basis at the 2011 Junior Chess Meeting.

Discussion: I will not beat around the bush. I live in McLennan County (the largest city of which is Waco), and as the President of Innovative Chess Solutions, I am the sole organizer of scholastic chess tournaments of any significant size in the local area. Most recently, I broke the record for the largest chess tournament in Waco (scholastic or otherwise) with over ninety registrants. I would very much like to bid on a regional scholastic championship to be held in Waco in the immediate future.

Alas, this is not something I can do. McLennan County is the southernmost county of Region II. This is a problem because most of my registrants come from the Austin area, which is in Region VI. For instance,

in my last scholastic tournament, 61 players came from Travis and Williamson Counties (i.e., Austin) while only 17 players came from the Dallas area (the rest were from Waco and the surrounding areas). This means that, even though McLennan County is in Region II, two thirds of players came from Region VI. This trend is also seen in tournaments run by the Waco Chess Club (the only other organizer of chess tournaments in the Waco area on a regular basis). According to Jason Howell (i.e., one of the people in charge with running the club's tournaments), there are "definitely more players from Austin than Dallas. By a long shot."

As Waco is in Region II, it would be impracticable to ever hold a regional scholastic championship there. Labelling any of my tournaments as "Region II" would discourage my Austin players from participating, and in the meantime, it is doubtful that I would pick up anywhere as many Dallas players to compensate. As long as Waco remains in Region II, neither I nor anyone else who may succeed me is likely to bid on a regional scholastic to be held in Waco. This means, of course, that there will be less regional rotation and the scholastic chess community of Waco will never get a chance to have a regional in their hometown. Even though more than 260,000 people live in McLennan County, scholastic players in Waco always end up driving an hour and a half to play in a regional scholastic championship. They never have the privilege of having a regional in their backyard as so many other students do. If McLennan County remains in Region II, this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future.

There is no reason why it needs to be this way. You, the members, have the power to amend the bylaws and move McLennan County to a region that aligns with the reality of its chess scene. It is not as if this never done before. By reading most of our old meeting minutes since 1991, I have found that TCA has frequently moved counties to different regions to meet local conditions. For instance, Bell County, which is adjacent to McLennan County, was moved to Region VI in 2013. Likewise, the membership gradually moved countries around to increase the number of regions from seven to ten, most recently by unanimously moving Star and Hidalgo Counties from Region VIII into a new Region X in 2014. The membership even unanimously moved Matagorda and Wharton counties from Region VII to Region V in 1995 for the express purpose of enabling a high school to compete in Houston instead of Brownsville. If the membership could change regional boundaries then, you can do so now with McLennan County. Keep McLennan County stuck in Region II and it will continue to its long track record of not hosting regional scholastic championships. Move it to Region VI and it will have the opportunity of holding one in the near future.

To empower the chess community of McLennan County and give them a chance of hosting regional scholastic championships, I ask for your support of this motion.

Advance Motion 5. Provide for the Election of Regional Directors

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

The bylaws of the Association shall be amended so that Art. IV, Sec. 1 read as follows:

Change From:

The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be elected by the membership; ten Regional Directors representing each region of Texas (as specified in Appendix I) who shall be appointed by the President. The immediate past president holds the same status as the Regional Directors and the Editor of Texas Knights who are all

advisory Board Members but not part of the Board of Directors. From time to time the Board of Directors will need to consider action necessary to carry out the business of the Association. When these instances occur, the Board shall inform the Regional Directors, the Editor of Texas Knights and the immediate past president in a timely manner. The President shall be Chairman of the Board.

Change To:

The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be elected by the membership; one Regional Director from each region of Texas (as specified in Appendix I) chosen by the voting members thereof; and; the Immediate Past President and Editor of Texas Knights. Each director shall have one vote. The President shall be Chairman of the Board.

Savings: Nothing in this amendment shall impair the term of any regional director chosen before the adoption of this amendment. This amendment does not apply to the election of a regional director from Region X nor does it affect the appointment of a regional director for the unexpired term if there are no nominees or the office is vacated.

Authority: This amendment directly affects junior chess because regional directors award bids for regional scholastic championships and those events directly affect junior chess. Also, if regional directors became voting members of the Board as herein proposed, the influence of their votes would doubtlessly directly affect junior chess.

Discussion: One of the newly uncovered amendments to the bylaws (and I thank the Treasurer for pointing it out to me) is a provision providing for the regional director of Region X to be elected by the school districts thereof, instead of being appointed by the President as is the case for the rest of regional directors. How did this come to be?

As I was not a member at the time, I cannot quite say. The only thing that the minutes make clear is that the vote was unanimous. However, it is obvious that the members of Region X must have concluded that they know better who should be their voice in TCA and who should award their regional scholastic championships. This obviously makes sense as people in Region X would have more information about the local chess scene than a President who lives in an entirely different region. Why, however, is this limited only to Region X?

There is no reason why other regions are not allowed to elect their regional director when Region X is allowed to do so. Indeed, if Region X is deserving of an elective regional director with only 14 members, why not Region III with 164 members, Region V with 90 members or Region II with 81 members?

If regional directors were elected by the members who reside within the region, they would be more representative of the people they represent, and the award of regional bids would better reflect local sentiments. Moreover, if they were entitled to vote in Board meetings, decisions made by the Board would better reflect the whole state, rather than just a few regions (all four voting directors presently live in Regions II, V and VI). The executive officers would also be regularly accountable to a Board whose voting members are mostly not executives (and surely accountability is good for any organization). Lastly, making regional directors elective would provide another avenue for members to become leaders in their organization and gain experience that will be useful if they ever become executive officers.

I should also note that this would not incur any great inconvenience or cost. ElectionBuddy, the service we used last year, allows for questions on a ballot to be limited to groups of voters (e.g., each regional director election could be limited to residents of the region). Elections that use voting groups cost \$99, regardless of how many questions are on the ballot or how many groups are used. As ElectionBuddy usually charges \$27 for elections with up to 350 voters, the additional cost of \$72 would be almost nothing compared to our revenue between election cycles. Also, with most of the votes being tabulated by ElectionBuddy (only six paper ballots, including one from a dead person who did not vote, were received last year), the additional work would also be unsubstantial. There is therefore no technical reason why we could not elect regional directors if we so chose.

To make regional directors truly representative of the members they represent and improve junior chess through more representative awarding of regional scholastic bids, I ask for your support of this motion.