

TEXAS CHESS ASSOCIATION

2024 Junior Chess Meeting (North)

The Junior Chess Meeting of the Texas Chess Association was divided into two meetings. Accordingly, the membership assembled for the North meeting at the Houston Marriott Westchase and by video conference on Saturday, March 2, 2024. As the Secretary was absent, Caleb Brown was appointed Acting Secretary for the duration of the meeting and captured the following minutes.

Attendees:

- Alexy Root
- Barbara Swafford, Treasurer
- Caleb Brown
- Dan Shafer
- David Ortiz
- Deborah Shafer, Facebook Administrator
- Franc Guadalupe, President
- Lakshmana Viswanath
- Peter Craney
- Sarah Brauner, Region VI Director
- Tim Steiner

Absent:

- Darryl West, Vice President
- Richard Garcia, Secretary

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30pm.

Reading of the Minutes

The Acting Secretary reported that the minutes of the 2023 annual membership meeting had been posted on the website. Without objection, the reading of the minutes was waived.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported the following fund balances: Bank of America, \$26,509.21; Certificates of Deposit, \$5,114.03; and; Paypal, \$3,253.54. It was also noted that the organizers of the South Texas Scholastic Championship are requiring players to be TCA members and that they expect to receive about 1200 players. As a result, the Treasurer had more than 500 unopened emails providing notice of membership purchases.

There was no written report. The Treasurer said that the report would be posted on the website. Caleb Brown asked when that would be. The Treasurer said she would try to finish it by the end of the month.

President's Report

The President thanked Barbara Swafford for hosting the North Texas Scholastic Championship, saying that she did a great job and that about 400 players registered. He also explained the rules of the meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

As four advance motions had been submitted for the advance agenda, the membership took up the advance motions in the order in which they had been received.

A. Allow for At-Large Members of the Scholastic Committee

Caleb Brown introduced the following motion.

Moved that Article VII, Section 2 of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

A. The Scholastic Committee shall be a standing committee consisting of ten Resident Members appointed by the President.

B. A reasonable effort should be made to find a member from each region. Having more than two members from the same region should be avoided if at all possible.

Change To:

A. The Scholastic Committee shall be a standing committee consisting of the Scholastic Chair, two at-large members and one scholastic representative from each region, all of whom shall be appointed by the President.

B. A reasonable effort shall be made to appoint scholastic representatives who reside within the regions represented. Appointing nonresidents shall be avoided if at all possible.

Rationale: Generally, only one resident of each region may be appointed to the Scholastic Committee (except for the committee chair). Although regional representation is useful, maintaining a near absolute prohibition against multiple members from the same region is unnecessarily inflexible and could lead to the exclusion of valuable perspectives that could significantly contribute to the work of the Scholastic Committee. This motion would provide the President with the flexibility to appoint up to two at-large members (in addition to the chair) while preserving the overarching principle of regional representation.

Lakshmana Viswanath seconded the motion. Peter Craney asked about the role of the at-large members. Caleb Brown explained that they would be part of committee discussions and votes like any other committee member. Lakshmana Viswanath pointed out that the committee had not met for fifteen years. Barbara Swafford said that the committee communicates by email and that stuff comes up. Lakshmana Viswanath said that the committee needs something to do.

On this question, the yeas were two and the nays was one, with seven abstentions. The motion passed.

B. Reunite the Junior Chess Meeting

Caleb Brown introduced the following motion.

Moved that Article VI, Section 2, Subsection A of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

A. The annual junior chess meeting shall be held during the North/Central Texas Scholastic Championship and the South Texas Scholastic Championships, or in every third year, the Super State Scholastic. The tournament director or organizer shall plan for this meeting to take approximately ninety minutes. The agenda shall focus on issues unique to Texas junior chess. If North/Central and South Texas Scholastic meetings pass contradictory motions, the matter will be

Change To:

A. The annual junior chess meeting shall be held during the State Scholastic Championship when it is held as one event and shall alternate between the North Texas Scholastic Championship and the South Texas Scholastic Championship in all other years. Voting members may participate and vote in-person or by video conference. The tournament director or organizer shall plan for this meeting to take approximately ninety minutes. The agenda shall focus on issues unique to Texas junior chess.

Transitional Provision: The determination of whether the alternation of junior chess meetings shall begin with North Texas or South Texas shall be decided by a coin toss at the meeting at which this motion is approved. Heads shall be North, and tails shall be South. The President shall flip the coin.

Rationale: Originally, the junior chess meeting was held as only one meeting every year in conjunction with the State Scholastic Championship. However, at the 2017 annual membership meeting, the junior chess meeting was divided into two meetings (for non-superstate years), matching the split of the State Scholastic Championship into North and South championships. That was a mistake.

Requiring that motions be approved at two separate meetings in the same exact form is unnecessarily time-consuming and burdensome. There is no reason to hold two meetings weeks from one another when everything that needs to be done can be done in one meeting. By unnecessarily spending more time in meetings, our volunteers have less time to spend promoting chess across our state.

I should also point out that this arrangement is especially inconvenient for those who are expected to attend in-person (like officers and chairs of committees with reports) as they may have to incur unnecessary, unreimbursed lodging and transportation expenses to attend both meetings, even though their duty could be just as ably discharged if there was only one meeting. Lastly, if members are allowed to participate by Zoom call (as will be the case at this year's junior chess meeting), the geographic barrier that would otherwise prevent many members from participating withers away, thereby rendering the divide between North and South meetings redundant.

Lakshmana Viswanath seconded the motion. He also suggested that for future meetings a television be set up so that in-person attendees can see members attending virtually.

On this question, the yeas were eleven and the nays were zero, with no abstentions. The motion passed.

C. Add Awards for Top Girls at TCA Events to Promote Girls' Chess

David Ortiz introduced the following motion.

Awards for Top Girls in Sections at Tournaments

- All participants in scholastic, junior and collegiate events who are listed as female in US Chess records shall be eligible for these awards. In all other events, participants who are under sixteen years of age and are listed as female in US Chess records shall be eligible.
- The criteria for determining the top girls in each section shall be based on performance within their respective sections, considering factors such as number of wins, tiebreaks, and overall performance against their peers.
- The awards may include but are not limited to trophies, certificates, or other forms of recognition deemed appropriate by the tournament organizers.
- These awards shall be incorporated into the TCA bidding guidelines for future events, specifically applying to TCA events that have not been bid out.

Rationale: The motion to add awards for top girls in sections at TCA tournaments directly aligns with the educational and instructional purposes outlined in Article II of the TCA Bylaws. By recognizing and celebrating the achievements of girl players, it promotes inclusivity, encourages participation, and fosters the growth of chess among girls in Texas, contributing to the diversity of the sport.

Caleb Brown seconded the motion. Several members expressed the sense that this was a good idea but that the details need more work. Lakshmana Viswanath moved to refer to the Scholastic Committee with instructions to report with recommendations.

On this question, the yeas were eight and the nays was one, with two abstentions. The motion was referred.

D. Create Texas Scholastic Chess League

David Ortiz introduced the following motion.

Texas Scholastic Chess League

- A Texas Scholastic Chess League shall be established, open exclusively to students who reside in Texas or are enrolled in primary and secondary schools.
- Participants are required to register for the league and adhere to all rules and regulations set forth by the league administrator. A registration fee shall be determined by the league administrator.
- Matches within the league shall be organized and scheduled through an online platform chosen by the league administrator, ensuring flexibility and accessibility for all participants.
- The league shall comprise divisions based on age groups or skill levels to ensure fair competition and suitable challenges for participants.
- At the conclusion of the season, a playoff knockout bracket shall be conducted to determine a champion in each division.
- Trophies shall be awarded to the most valuable player and the winning team in each division at the conclusion of the league season.

- Fair play is paramount in the Texas Scholastic Chess League. Any instances of cheating or unfair play will result in immediate disqualification from the league.

Rationale: The establishment of a Texas Scholastic Chess League utilizing online platforms, along with a football-style season and playoff knockout bracket, provides an engaging and competitive format for students across Texas to participate in organized chess matches. This league promotes the educational and instructional purposes of the Texas Chess Association by fostering interest in chess among students, providing opportunities for skill development and friendly competition, and promoting the growth of chess in the scholastic community. The football-style season and playoff bracket add excitement and structure to the league, enhancing the overall experience for participants.

Caleb Brown seconded the motion. A very lengthy discussion ensued. Tim Steiner said that he had a dozen questions, including who was going to run it and when it would be held. David Ortiz offered to do it for free. He also noted that timing would be dependent upon what worked best for the schools involved. Peter Craney asked whether TCA membership would be required, which David Ortiz answered in the affirmative. Lakshmana Viswanath observed that as this would be a TCA event it would be subject to the same bidding process as other TCA events. David Ortiz explained that his intention was for this event to be organized by TCA directly and that it would be revenue generating for TCA. Alexy Root was concerned about the cost. Peter Craney was unsure about how outreach to thousands of schools would work. Sarah Brauner believed that it was a good idea in theory but that executing it practically would be difficult. Lakshmana Viswanath said that David Ortiz should run it independently of TCA. Dan and Deborah Shafer suggested that TCA can help advertise the league without it being a TCA event.

Lakshmana Viswanath called the question. On the motion for the previous question, the yeas were ten and the nays were zero, with no abstentions. Accordingly, the membership immediately voted on the advance motion, on which the yeas were two and the nays were eight, with one abstention. The motion failed.

General Discussion

Caleb Brown mentioned the need to focus more on collegiate chess. Lakshmana Viswanath asked if it is an election year. Caleb Brown confirmed that it is an election year. The President announced that he is not seeking reelection and that someone else is running to replace him. Caleb Brown announced that he is running for Vice President. No other announcements were made.

Adjournment

Peter Craney moved to adjourn. Lakshmana Viswanath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Accordingly, the meeting adjourned at 9:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caleb S. Brown