

Annual Membership Meeting

Advance Agenda

The annual membership meeting of the Texas Chess Association will be held at 8:30am on September 1 in conjunction with the Southwest Open to act upon and consider the business described below:

1. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the 2023 annual membership meeting
 - b. Approval of the minutes of the 2024 junior chess meeting (North and South)
2. Financial report by the Treasurer
3. President's Report
4. Old Business
 - a. Reform the Texas Women's Championship (Tom Crane)
 - b. Allow for At-Large Members of the Scholastic Committee (Caleb S. Brown)
 - c. Add Awards for Top Girls at TCA Events to Promote Girls' Chess (David Ortiz)
5. Election
 - a. Announcement of election results by the Secretary
 - b. New officers are seated
6. New Business
 - a. Allow for Virtual Board Meetings (Caleb S. Brown)
 - b. Relieve the Immediate Past President of Chairing the Bylaws Committee (Caleb S. Brown)
 - c. Reform the Bidding Process (Caleb S. Brown)
 - d. Abolish the Defunct Organizer Committee (Caleb S. Brown)
 - e. Reform the Membership Structure and Save Money on Texas Knights (Caleb S. Brown)
7. Any other business properly presented at the meeting
8. Remarks from outgoing officers
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

Old Business Motion 1. Reform the Texas Women's Championship

Sponsor: Tom Crane

Currently written as:

Q. Texas Women's Championship. This tournament shall be open to all female players.

Proposed re-write:

Q. Texas Women's Championship. This tournament shall be open to all female players over the age of 16 as of the tournament date. The organizer is authorized to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale: The name of the event says Women's. Not scholastic players and I included The Texas Girls Championship listed as R. from the By-Laws for reference. The dynamic of women playing against other women is appreciated by the participants who have played the event in calendar years 2019 and 2022. Many of them will not play in events where there's scholastic players but they will come and play other adult aged women. I am also quite certain wherever you level the age at which a female is a woman it does not mean scholastic aged players. There's plenty of scholastic events including the one I listed below for reference. Let's do something to serve the adult aged women's chess player, by far the egregiously underserved demographic of chess.

R. Texas Girls Championship. Only Texas female residents or students enrolled in secondary or primary schools (including home schools) in Texas may play in this event. This event shall be held in the fall prior to the Texas Grade Championships. There shall be individual and team trophies. A team shall consist of any four players from the same school and may be designated at the conclusion of the tournament to include the top scorers from that school.

[Note: This motion was referred to the Bylaws Committee at the 2023 annual membership meeting. The report of the committee is attached as Appendix A.]

Old Business Motion 2. Allow for At-Large Members of the Scholastic Committee

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

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.

[Note: This motion passed at the North junior chess meeting by a 2-1 vote with seven abstentions. At the South junior chess meeting, however, it was postponed until the annual meeting by a 3-0 vote with no abstentions. Under Art. VI, Sec. 2 of the Bylaws, the contradictory actions of these meetings must be resolved at the annual meeting.]

Old Business Motion 3. Add Awards for Top Girls at TCA Events to Promote Girls' Chess

Sponsor: David Ortiz

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.

[Note: This motion was referred to the Scholastic Committee at the 2024 junior chess meeting (North and South). The report of the committee is attached as Appendix B.]

Advance Motion 1. Allow for Virtual Board Meetings

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article IV, Section 2 of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

A meeting of the Board of Directors may be held on the Saturday preceding Labor Day at the location of The Southwest Open upon call of the President or the Chairman of the Board. Special meetings may similarly be called at any major tournament sponsored by the Association.

Change To:

The Board of Directors shall meet upon the call of the President or any three elected officers of the Association. A meeting of the Board of Directors may be held at any major tournament sponsored by the Association or by video conference.

Rationale: It is not entirely clear under the Bylaws whether the Board of Directors can meet virtually. The current text seems to suggest that board meetings can only be held in person at major tournaments. This motion would ensure that decisions made in virtual board meetings cannot be legally challenged on grounds that virtual meetings are prohibited by the Bylaws.

Advance Motion 2. Relieve the Immediate Past President of Chairing the Bylaws Committee

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article VI, Section 4, Subsection A of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

A. The Bylaws Committee shall be a standing committee consisting of three to five voting Members appointed by the President, except for the Chairman, who will be the Immediate Past-President.

Change To:

A. The Bylaws Committee shall be a standing committee consisting of three to nine voting members appointed by the President.

Rationale: Presently, the Bylaws requires the Immediate Past President to chair the Bylaws Committee. This provision is untenable because the Immediate Past President may not always be interested in chairing the committee (including the current outgoing President). It is also problematic because if the Immediate Past President is dead there is no way to fill the vacancy, forcing the Vice President to preside until a new President is elected (possibly for years). This motion will allow the President to appoint the best person to lead the committee.

This motion will also provide much needed flexibility in the size of the committee. From my experience as a member of this committee three is too small for relatively simple issues like the qualifications for the Women's championship. We will certainly need more than five if wide-ranging complicated issues are referred to the Bylaws Committee.

Advance Motion 3. Reform the Bidding Process

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article IX, Section 3 of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

A. Nominations for Regular TCA Tournaments shall be submitted to the President by the June 1. Regular TCA tournament bids are due for the next tournament year. A tournament year is defined as the following January to December from the General membership meeting in September. If there are no nominations for a tournament (or tournaments), the Board of Directors shall solicit proposals for overdue tournament(s). The TCA Board of Directors can solicit bids for scholastic majors if there is no bid turned in two years ahead. On the non-scholastic majors, the TCA board of directors may choose to either wait until the one year deadline to see if a bid is submitted, or the TCA Board of Directors may vote to have TCA organize the event(s). If the Board of Directors cannot find organizer(s) willing to handle the overdue Major Event(s), they will organize the event(s). If a Regular TCA Tournament does not get timely bids for two years, then the Board of Directors can give future options when bids are submitted to the Board. A notice should be placed on the website within two weeks after the bidding deadline so that organizers who are currently working on a bid, can submit their bids. No decision should be made until at least one month after the bidding deadline.

B. Nominations for TCA Tournaments identified as a “Major Event” can be submitted up to two (2) years in advance. The bidding deadline is on July 15th. For major scholastic events in the South, however, the bidding deadline shall be the following January 15, with the bid being awarded at the junior chess meeting.

C. For every successful nomination of a tournament more than one year in advance (that is, receiving the most votes in the annual election), the affiliate will provide a refundable deposit of \$50.00 to TCA within 30-90 days of being notified that their affiliate’s bid won the nomination. TCA will refund the affiliate’s deposit within 30 days after the conclusion of the event.

D. One affiliate cannot host a single specific “Major Event” two years in a row unless there is no other comparable bid for the tournament. Cities within the same Texas Association region should not host a single specific “Major Event” two years in a row unless there is no other comparable bid for the tournament (e.g., cities within the same region should not host the Southwest Open two years in a row, but can host the Texas Junior Championship, the Southwest Open and the Texas State and Amateur Chess Championship in the same year.)

E. A “Priority Rotation Schedule” will begin in 1995 for TCA Tournaments. This rotation schedule will give a higher priority to a city/TCA Region making a comparable bid and, in some cases, this higher priority can result in an automatic award of the tournament to a bidding city/TCA Region. That is, the city/TCA Region which has had a longer time since hosting a tournament may be awarded the tournament without a vote if their bid is reasonably comparable to other bids made for that tournament. Also note that there should be TCA Regional rotation. For example, a Region should not have a tournament three out of four years if there are other Regions with comparable bids that would make the regional rotation more diverse. If there are multiple cities who have somewhat equal lengths of time since hosting the tournament, then the board will make the determination based on TCA Regional rotation. If there is a city with multiple comparable bids and no other cities or regions have bid on it, then award it to the organizer who has not had the tournament in the longest time. If the bids can still not be awarded by the previously stated criteria, ask the appropriate Organizer Committee for their opinion on which is the better bid.

F. The final approving authority for the comparability of bids and “somewhat equal lengths of time” for awarding a tournament to a bidding city shall be the Board of Directors, or in the case of major

scholastic events, the North Texas Organizer Committee for South Texas Scholastic Major Bids and the South Texas Organizer Committee for North Texas Scholastic Major Bids. They should consider the following factors: geographic location, drawing power of the area, finances, organizers' experience, size of the playing site, hotel contracts and that bids meet the TCA guidelines, profitability for the TCA and other relevant criteria. The Committee should first look to see if the bids are comparable while meeting all the guidelines. If the bids are not comparable then the best bid wins. If the best bids are comparable bids then the Committee should look at rotation per Article IX, Section 3 P.

G. The award of a bid is binding once it is made.

H. For all approved regional tournaments, in the event of competing bids, the ten Texas regions shall use the established system of bid rotation as stated in Article IX, Section 3.E. The Regional Director (or bid committee) shall make the awarding decision. Any appeals should be made to the TCA Board (or Scholastic Committee). Any bid guidelines for specific tournaments shall be posted on each regional web page.

I. In the case of an opportunity arising, the TCA may choose to run any of its events and/or accept a bid more than two years in advance and may organize the major tournament. The TCA may choose to hire an affiliate to run this event.

Change To:

A. The Board of Directors shall have power to award bids for all TCA events.

B. For regional tournaments, the regional director shall award bids with the consent of the President unless the Board of Directors otherwise provides. The Board of Directors may delegate the awarding authority for other events not awarding state titles to the President or one or more voting members appointed by the President for such purpose.

C. The Board of Directors shall determine the bidding deadlines for all TCA events.

D. One affiliate cannot host the same event two years in a row unless there is no other satisfactory bid for the tournament. A tournament shall not be held in the same city, county or region two years in a row unless there are no viable alternatives.

E. The award of a bid is binding once it is made.

F. TCA may organize any of its events and may hire affiliates to organize events on its behalf. TCA must organize any major event if there is no viable alternative for it to be held.

G. The Board of Directors and the membership shall have concurrent authority to create TCA events in addition to the tournaments enumerated in these Bylaws.

Rationale: This motion is intended to simplify and clarify the provisions of the Bylaws relating to the bidding process as well as provide the Board of Directors with the flexibility it needs to refine that process. Importantly, it will allow for bidding deadlines to be more easily changed to reflect the varying needs of different events and different situations, just as is the case with US Chess National Events that are bid out to affiliates. If passed, this motion will help TCA further its mission of promoting chess throughout Texas.

Advance Motion 4. Abolish the Defunct Organizer Committee

Resolved that Article VII, Section 5 of the Bylaws be deleted.

Text to be Deleted:

A. The Organizer Committee shall be broken up into a North Texas Organizer Committee with members from North Texas and a South Texas Organizer Committee with members from South Texas. See APPENDIX II. Each Committee must have at least three members. If a committee member has a conflict of interest or financial interest in the awarding of any bid, then that committee member must abstain. To be on the organizer committee, the member must have experience organizing tournaments at hotel/convention centers and Schools/Universities.

B. The Primary Responsibilities of these committee will be:

1. Award the Scholastic Majors when more than one bid. When only one bid, then the committee must also review the bid to make sure it meets the guidelines or to not approve the bid. Note that in the case of only one bid submitted by the bidding deadline, the committee can help the bidder to improve the bid. The North Texas Organizer Committee will award the South Texas Scholastic Major bids, while the South Texas Organizer Committee will award the North Texas Scholastic Major bids. When there is a super state (see Article IX, Section 1 E), the South Texas Organizer Committee awards the bid when it is the North Texas turn to host it and the North Texas Organizer Committee awards the bid when it is the South Texas turn to host it.

2. To act in an advisory capacity to the board with regard to tournaments and tournament bids.

3. In the case of having a major with no bid, the TCA is supposed to run the tournament. The Organizer Committee will advise the board on any questions the board may have and can volunteer to run the event or recommend an Organizer to run it.

Rationale: The organizing committee has not functioned since the pandemic. Since then, the decision to award bids for the scholastic majors has actually been made by the Board of Directors without any review by the committee even though that is in violation of the Bylaws. This motion will ensure that the Board of Directors can continue awarding bids without worrying about the possibility of those decisions being challenged. If this motion passes the President will still have the power to appoint committees to advise the Board of Directors on bids when needed.

Advance Motion 5. Reform the Membership Structure and Save Money on Texas Knights

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article III of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

Change From:

Section 1. Voting Membership Categories

A. Regular: Any Texas resident may become a Regular Member of the Association upon payment of \$10.00 for one year.

B. Regular Non-subscriber: Any Texas resident may become a Regular Non-subscribing Member of the Association upon payment of \$5.00 for one year. This class of membership does not receive Texas Knights but may participate in TCA tournaments and vote in TCA elections, and does not exclude juniors aged 16 (as of September 1st) or under.

C. Student: Any Texas resident who is a full-time student may become a Student Member of the Association upon payment of \$7.50 for one year.

D. Student Online: Any Texas resident who is a full-time student may become a Student Online Member of the Association upon payment of \$3.00 for one year.

E. Junior: Any Texas resident 18 years of age and under may become a Junior Member of the Association upon payment of \$7.50 for one year.

F. Junior Online: Any Texas resident 18 years of age and under may become a Junior Online Member of the Association upon payment of \$3.00 for one year.

G. Family: A household consisting of husband and/or wife, including children (if any) age 18 or under, being Texas residents, may take out a Family Membership upon payment of \$15.00 for one year. They shall receive one subscription to Texas Knights, and all shall be considered members eligible to participate in TCA events.

H. Family Online: A household consisting of husband and/or wife, including children (if any) age 18 or under, being Texas residents, may take out a Family Membership upon payment of \$10.00 for one year. They shall all shall be considered members eligible to participate in TCA events.

I. Life: Any person may become a Life Member of the Association upon payment of \$200.00.

J. Patron: Any member may become a Patron Member of the Association upon payment of \$25.00 for one year. Said Member shall receive Texas Knights by first class mail, have his name displayed in the Texas Knights "Hall of Honor" and be known as a generous supporter of Texas chess.

K. Patron Online. Any member may become a Patron Online Member of the Association upon payment of \$15.00 for one year. Said Member shall have his name displayed in the Texas Knights "Hall of Honor" and be known as a generous supporter of Texas chess.

L. Life Patron. Any member may become a Life Patron Member of the Association upon payment of \$500.00. Said Member shall receive Texas Knights by first class mail, have his name displayed in the Texas Knights "Hall of Honor" and be known as a generous supporter of Texas chess.

M. Blind Membership. A blind person may become a Special Member of the Association upon payment of \$2.00 for one year without the magazine, or \$5.00 for one year with the magazine.

N. Family Patron: Any family member may become a Family Patron Member of the Association upon payment of \$30.00 for one year. Said Member shall have their family name displayed in the Texas Knights "Hall of Honor" and be known as a generous supporter of Texas chess.

O. Family Online Patron. Any family member may become a Family Online Patron Member of the Association upon payment of \$20.00 for one year. Said Member shall have their family name displayed in the Texas Knights "Hall of Honor" and be known as a generous supporter of Texas chess.

Section 2. Nonvoting Membership Categories

A. Junior Tournament: Any Texas resident 18 years of age and under may become a Junior Tournament Member of the Association upon payment of \$2.00. This class of membership does not receive Texas Knights and carries no voting privileges, but may participate in one TCA sponsored tournament. College players in a TCA Scholastic Event with a Collegiate Section may participate as Junior Tournament Members upon payment of the \$2.00 fee.

B. Nonresident. Any person residing in a state other than Texas may become a Nonresident Member at the corresponding dues rate established for members who are Texas residents.

C. Affiliate: Any school, club or organization may affiliate itself with the Association for an annual affiliation fee of \$10. The affiliate shall have no voting privileges but shall receive Texas Knights by mail and one free quarter page advertisement each year in Texas Knights. Foreign affiliates shall receive Texas Knights by mail only if they pay an additional annual surcharge of \$30. Affiliates are not agents of the Association for any purpose.

D. Foreign Member: Any person may become a foreign member of the Association upon payment of \$10.00 for one year. Said member shall not receive Texas Knights and shall have no voting privileges.

Section 3. Renewals

Membership renewals shall be dated from the previous expiration date, if renewed within 30 days following expiration, or for a year from the date of renewal if necessary, to ensure that the renewing member is scheduled to receive one year's worth of Texas Knights before the new expiration date.

Section 4. Rights and Privileges

Every member of the Association who is at least 16 years of age as of September 1 and is a resident of Texas shall be a voting member. All voting members are entitled to vote at meetings of the membership and participate in all activities and tournaments sponsored by the Association, except that such events may require an entry fee. All Voting Members may hold office in the Association if duly elected or appointed. Only voting members may hold office or committee seats, and if such membership expires, the position held shall be vacated.

Section 5. Verification of Membership Status

If a person advises an Association Board Member that his dues have been paid and can produce a receipt, check, canceled check or other proof of payment, the person (or family) shall be listed on

the website list of current members. In the absence of proof of payment, the Secretary or the Treasurer or a majority of the Board of Directors may decide to honor or deny the player's request.

Section 6. Discounted Memberships

The Officers of the Association may authorize memberships at a discounted rate for disabled persons or senior citizens on applications stating a specific reason for this type of membership.

Change To:

Section 1. Membership Classes

A. Regular. Any person may become a Regular Member upon payment of \$5 for one year.

B. Student. A full-time student may become a Student Member upon payment of \$3 for one year.

C. Junior. Any person who is under 19 years of age may become a Junior Member upon payment of \$3 for one year.

D. Family. A household, consisting of parents and any children under 19 years of age (or under 24 years of age if full-time students), may purchase a Family Membership for \$10, and upon purchase all such persons shall be considered members for one year.

E. Life. Any person may become a Life Member upon payment of \$200.

F. Patron. Any person may become a Patron Member upon payment of \$25 for one year. Said member shall be recognized as a generous supporter of Texas chess in the Hall of Honor, which shall be published in each issue of Texas Knights and on the website.

G. Life Patron. Any person may become a Life Patron Member upon payment of \$500. Said member shall be recognized in the Hall of Honor.

H. Family Patron. A family may purchase a Family Patron Membership for \$30, and upon purchase all such persons shall be considered members for one year. A family name shall be recognized in the Hall of Honor.

I. Blind. A blind person may become a Blind Member upon payment of \$2 for one year.

J. Affiliate. Any club, school or organization may become an Affiliate Member upon payment of \$10 for one year. Affiliates shall have no voting rights but shall be entitled to one free quarter page advertisement in Texas Knights each year. Affiliates are not agents of the Association for any purpose.

Section 2. Rights and Privileges

Life Members and Life Patron Members shall have the option of receiving Texas Knights by mail without any additional charge. All members shall have electronic access to Texas Knights and may purchase paper subscriptions to Texas Knights at a rate not greater than 110% of printing and mailing costs. Members shall have the right to participate in tournaments and other activities of the Association, subject to any entry fees and such other reasonable limitations as may be consistent with the purposes of the activities concerned. Members with addresses outside of the United States who receive printed copies of Texas Knights may be required to pay additional surcharges.

Section 3. Voting Members

Every member who is at least 16 years of age as of September 1 and a resident of Texas shall be a voting member. Voting members shall have the right to propose motions and vote at membership

meetings. Only voting members may hold office or committee seats, and when such membership ceases, the office or seat held shall be vacated.

Section 4. Honorary Members

Any person who has rendered distinguished service to the chess community of Texas may be declared an Honorary Member by a two-thirds vote at the annual membership meeting. Honorary Members shall enjoy the rights and privileges of Life Members without any payment of dues.

Transitional Provision: Any member who purchased an annual membership carrying the right to receive Texas Knights by mail before the effective date of this amendment shall continue to receive the paper magazine for the unexpired term of the membership without any additional cost unless the member otherwise directs.

Rationale: Based on information provided by the Treasurer, TCA spent approximately \$9,500 on printing and mailing paper copies of Texas Knights over the most recent fiscal year (the amount for the last issue is estimated). If this was divided by the average number of members receiving paper copies, the per member cost is \$22.62 (i.e., an average of 420 copies were mailed; most members are online only). However, members only pay \$5 extra to receive the paper magazine, producing a total loss of approximately \$7,400 every year to TCA.

TCA cannot afford this loss. It does not match up with our 501(c)(3) educational mission of promoting chess in Texas. We should be using this money to help people in need, such as by sending needy scholastic players to national events or supplying chess sets to help start more chess clubs throughout the state. Losing this much money on paper and ink simply makes no sense. If people want paper, that is fine. They just should have to pay the cost of it. And if that is too much, they can read it online for free.

This motion will solve this problem by separating the magazine from the membership structure and requiring members to pay a print opt-in fee if they want to continue receiving the magazine by mail. This solution is almost identical to the change US Chess successfully implemented in 2019.

This motion would also make a few other changes to the membership structure, such as abolishing the obsolete junior tournament membership and expanding family memberships to include college students under 24. It would also allow for honorary memberships which have historically been awarded on several occasions but are technically not allowed under Robert's Rules of Order unless expressly stated in the Bylaws.

Appendix A. Bylaws Committee Report

The 2023 annual membership meeting considered a motion sponsored by Tom Crane to amend the Bylaws by changing the subsection on the Texas Women's Championship. The membership unanimously referred the motion to the Bylaws Committee.

Under the Bylaws, the Texas Women's Championship is open to all female players. When the tournament was organized by Jim Hollingsworth (2018 and 2019) and Tom Crane (2022), however, it was limited to female players who are at least 16 years of age. As submitted the motion would have incorporated this limit into the Bylaws with the possibility for the organizer to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

The committee considered alternatives that would allow the Women's Championship to be open to females of all ages. These alternatives included subdividing the tournament into age-based sections and creating a separate tournament for senior women. However, the committee agreed that it is important to preserve the age limit for the tournament because women are egregiously underserved in our community and deserve a place where they can interact with one another without the presence of scholastic players. This conclusion was also motivated by the reality that the tournament has historically included side events like women's banquets and guest speakers requiring a mature audience.

The committee also agreed that the age limit should be uniform without any possibility of exceptions being made by the organizer. Allowing the organizer to make exceptions would allow for younger players to be included or excluded arbitrarily, which could negatively affect TCA's reputation.

Accordingly, the committee recommends that the membership approve this motion without the provision allowing the organizer to make exceptions. As amended, the motion would read as follows:

Currently written as:

Q. Texas Women's Championship. This tournament shall be open to all female players.

Proposed re-write:

Q. Texas Women's Championship. This tournament shall be open to all female players over the age of 16 as of the tournament date.

This report was prepared by Caleb Brown. The Bylaws Committee is composed of Tom Crane (Chair), Jeff French and Caleb Brown. Jim Hollingsworth also participated in the committee's discussion of this motion.

Appendix B. Scholastic Committee Report

Dear TCA Executive Board Members,

I hope this email finds you well. On behalf of the Scholastic Committee, I am pleased to present our detailed recommendations for introducing top girl awards at various TCA events. This proposal, initially brought forth by David Ortiz, aims to encourage greater participation among girls in chess and recognize their achievements in a meaningful way.

Eligibility Criteria:

- General Eligibility: Girls listed as female in US Chess records.
- Event-Specific Eligibility:
 - Scholastic, junior, and collegiate events: All female participants are eligible.
 - Other events: Only participants under 16 years old are eligible.

Award Criteria:

- One top girl award will be given per section, provided the eligibility criteria are met.
- Primary Criteria: Highest score, excluding requested byes.
- Secondary Criteria: Use the existing tiebreak system in the event of no clear winner.
- Additional Considerations: Limit awards to sections with at least two girls or participants with positive scores.

Types of Awards:

- Awards should be of similar value to at least the third-place award in the section.
- Suggested types: Plaques, trophies, medals, chess books by women authors, or practical items like water bottles with a chess queen design.
- Awards should be classic and inclusive, appealing to a broad age range.

Implementation Guidelines:

- Integrate criteria and award types into TCA bidding guidelines.
- Address logistic issues:
 - Manage increased costs without raising registration fees.
 - Plan for ordering awards prior to registration close.
 - Avoid awarding girls who have not performed well, even if they're the only eligible players.

Special Considerations:

- If a girl wins both a regular top award and the top girl award, the top girl award should be something different and practical (e.g., a chess book or a water bottle with a chess queen design).

Implementation Timeline: We propose implementing these changes starting with the Texas State Scholastic Championship in March 2025.

Cost Implications: Estimated additional costs for these awards are expected to be no more than \$500 per event, depending on the number of eligible sections and the type of awards chosen.

Alignment with US Chess Policies: These recommendations align with existing US Chess policies and initiatives aimed at promoting girls' participation in chess.

Addressing Potential Concerns: We believe these awards will enhance inclusivity without detracting from the achievements of other participants. Our goal is to encourage and recognize girls' participation in chess while maintaining the integrity of the overall competition.

Feedback Mechanism: We recommend reviewing the impact and reception of these awards after one year of implementation and making adjustments as necessary. This will allow us to ensure the initiative is meeting its goals and address any unforeseen issues.

Conclusion: The Scholastic Committee unanimously supports the implementation of top girl awards at TCA events. We believe this initiative will promote inclusivity, encourage participation, and foster the growth of chess among girls in Texas.

We welcome any further input from the TCA board before finalizing our recommendations.

Best regards,

Victor Flores
Scholastic Committee Chair
Texas Chess Association

Appendix C. Other Helpful Materials

Members may find the following materials to be helpful:

- Minutes of the 2023 annual membership meeting: <https://texaschess.org/minutes-from-membership-meeting-2023/>
- Minutes of the 2024 junior chess meeting: <https://texaschess.org/2024-junior-chess-meetings-notes/>
- TCA Bylaws: <https://texaschess.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/TCA-Bylaws-11-Mar-2021.pdf>
- Two-Page Summary of Robert's Rules of Order:
https://assembly.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/roberts_rules_simplified.pdf