

# TEXAS CHESS ASSOCIATION

## 2025 Junior Chess Meeting

The annual junior chess meeting of the Texas Chess Association was held at the Vista in Lewisville, TX, and simultaneously online on Zoom, on Saturday, March 1, 2025, in conjunction with the 2025 North State Scholastic Championship.

### Attendees

*Note: Attendance in person and on Zoom fluctuated throughout the meeting. Please advise the Secretary to add your name if you were present and not listed below.*

- Brauner, Sarah - Region VI Director
- Brown, Caleb - Vice President
- Callens, Esther
- Chedester, David
- Crane, Tom - Region II Director
- Degala, Siddharth
- Flores, Brandon
- Flores, Kevin
- Flores, Victor - Region VIII Director
- Garcia, Renate
- Goldberg, Doug
- Hardesty, Brenda - Region IX Director
- Jones, Amy - Secretary
- Jones, Leah
- Jones, Robert - Region III Director
- Liptrap, Jim (Non-Member)
- Marimuthu, Nithya
- Moore, Blake
- Moore, Robert - Region I Director
- Olivares, Maripaz
- Ortiz, David - President & Region X Director
- Pompa, Jeanette
- Reed, Louis
- Reed, Wendy
- Riley, Lori
- Shafer, Dan
- Shafer, Deborah - Facebook Administrator
- Soliz, Daisy
- Steiner, Tim
- Suruliraj, Suresh
- Swafford, Barb
- Ukoli, James
- Valverde, Augustine - Region IV Director
- Vasquez, Fausto
- Viswanath, Lakshmana
- Vuyyuru, Rekha
- Wong, Charles
- Wood, Chris - Website Administrator

- Yeru, Sheba
- Zuniga-Gonzalez, Anna - Treasurer

### **Call to Order**

The President called the meeting to order at 8:16 pm.

### **Reading and Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Secretary asked to waive the reading of the meetings from the Annual Membership Meeting as they were quite lengthy and had been available online for several months. Reading of the minutes was waived with no objections.

### **President's Report**

The President discussed the structure of the Board. He pointed out that members rejected a motion at the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting to reinstate Regional Directors as full Board members with voting rights. He noted the officers were elected in an historic election with a record number of votes counted and pointed to progress in initiatives to grow Texas chess and modernize TCA processes including updates to the website and an ongoing effort to completely automate the membership process. He noted expanded and enhanced events. He called on members to become or mentor new TDs, organizers, and FIDE Arbiters to continue growth and increase opportunities across Texas. He discussed a desire for more scholarships, and mentioned methods for making that effort sustainable and financially responsible. He stated that as a nonprofit, no individual should benefit or gain from TCA, but that TCA's assets should serve members and the organization's mission. With many new committees finally filled, work can begin to create opportunities, and recognitions, and with a common sense approach, can fund scholarships and initiatives through fundraising, grants, and perpetual funds. The President called for financial responsibility and long-term plans to grow, modernize, and elevate Texas chess.

Upon questioning by Tom Crane, the President shared that two grants applications had been filed to date and there is an upcoming fundraising event at a mall next weekend. The Vice President pointed out that fundraising will be a top priority of the Development Committee.

Tom Crane raised concerns about the Board's decision to utilize the Texas Junior Invitational event to select national scholastic invitational representatives. The President explained that the change reflects increased participation from across the state and elevates the selection process by providing an event in line with events used for collegiate events and the Kasparov Cup. The Vice President reiterated that the Board's timing and roll out was bad. Going forward, the issues with late communication will not be a problem. Brenda Hardesty and Rehka Vuyyuru expressed disapproval. The President re-emphasized that the selection process will ensure Texas representatives will be the best candidates. Rob Jones and Brenda Hardesty raised concerns about online cheating. The President explained that Fair Play rules, including cameras and monitoring by experienced TDs will be in place; the event is being run by the same people who run the Kasparov Cup, which is an elite and respected competition.

### **Vice President's Report**

The Vice President discussed scholastic chess and opportunities to get involved and contribute. He highlighted progress made with bids awarded, an increased number of active volunteers, and website updates.

Bids awarded include:

- Texas Scholastic Online Open Quick Championship (January 11) – 103 players
- Texas Quick Championship (Poison Pawns Chess Club) – held last year for the

- first time since 2005 with 45 players – coming again on April 26, 2025
- Texas Open (Coppell Chess Club; Dallas; date TBD) – first time since 2019
- Texas Junior Invitational (April 26; online) – first time since 2006
- All regions have regional tournaments this year
- Girls Regionals (Region I, II, and III last November; Region VIII on April 5)

The Vice President discussed the drive for volunteers to fill committee positions, noting that the pool of volunteers had grown from 10 active volunteers to 38, plus all regions currently have a regional scholastic representative. Improvements and additions to the website, such as the TCA Archives, Resource Page, Bidding Application, and TD Clearinghouse.

In his discussion of the State of Scholastic Chess, the Vice President noted challenges, concerns, and potential solutions. He explained that scholastic chess is not equally distributed across the state, with more activity in some areas, such as the Valley, while other rural areas are chess deserts with little happening. Girls are underrepresented, which is especially true for high schoolers. He noted that TCA needs to continuously innovate by creating grants, programs and initiatives that encourage more scholastic activity in all regions of this state.

The Vice President went on to explain the problem is constraints - we can have a lot of ideas but if we do not have the money, volunteers and systems to support them they are meaningless. He listed ways members can help.

- Renew as a Patron Member (\$25 yearly or \$500 for life)
- Volunteer for committees
- Bid on TCA Tournaments – contact the Vice President for help
- Open bids include: Texas Junior Open, Texas Junior Team Championship, Texas Action Championship, and Texas Armed Forces Championship
- Talk to your regional director about hosting a girls regional
- Spread the word about TCA and its events

Tom Crane noted that he did like the bidding application and automation of memberships.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer informed attendees that TCA had cash balances of \$19,669.53 and \$21,730.85 as of January 31, 2025 and February 28, 2025, respectively. Major income items for the month ended February 28, 2025 included \$3,735.45 in membership dues, \$4,251 in tournament revenue (offset by \$600 for TD fees), \$435 in donations and sponsorships, and \$880. Major expense items for the same period included \$1,810.56 for plaques and trophies, \$310.69 in PayPal fees, and \$315 for refunds and reversals. The Treasurer noted that she had only recently gained full access to bank accounts and would be issuing a report for the full six-month period ending February 28, 2025 soon. The Treasurer also shared that she had set up a fundraising event for TCA at Kendra Scott located at the mall in McAllen on March 9, 2025. She suggested that every region could host fundraisers, and even if they only collected \$250 each, the funds would add up to a sizable amount to fund TCA programs.

### **Discussion of the Treasurer's Report**

Christian Moore asked if receipts can be provided, to which the Treasurer responded that she could do that. Renate Garcia and Suresh Suruliraj asked about the \$250 fundraising number mentioned by the Treasurer. She explained that if each region raised \$250, the funds could be used for scholarships, player development. And travel funds. Brenda Hardesty asked to see who was at the meeting in-person. The Secretary used her computer to scan the room and show who was in attendance in person. James Ukoli

said he had a lot of ideas for raising money. The Secretary made a note to add him to the Development Committee. The President shared that funds can be used for membership development and mentioned the proposed sale of TCA Merchandise.

## **Advance Motions**

### **Advance Motion 1. Allow Flexibility for Girls Regionals**

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

See Appendix A for full text.

Doug Goldberg asked why only high school girls were extended invitations for the Texas Junior Invitational. The Vice President noted this was out of order as it did not pertain to the advance motion being discussed. Daisy Soliz asked if TDs at Girls Regionals were background checked, which the Vice President noted was already in the Bylaws. Brenda Hardesty was recognized on Zoom, but no one was able to hear her comments. Rob Jones mentioned that many TDs are teachers and have background checks taken care of. Daniel Shafer called to question and a vote was taken on the advance motion. The motion passed with 31 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

### **Advance Motion 2. Allow Scholastic Club Teams at TCA Scholastic Events**

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

See Appendix B for full text.

The Vice President mentioned that the Scholastic Committee had provided some feedback resulting in changes to the original motion. Chris Wood noted that he objected to the motion on the basis that it allowed a group to pick and choose to make a team. Daniel Shafer mentioned that a separate trophy for clubs might be an option. Sarah Brauner stated disapproval. Esther Callens asked for clarification. Tom Crane noted that current rules help prevent "superteams" from forming and ruining the nature of the competition for everyone else. Brandon Flores, the Region VIII Scholastic Representative, TD, coach, and school district employee stated that the Texas Junior Open provides an opportunity for club teams, which is good for summer. The idea of allowing a student to be part of a school and a team and count for both was noted to cause drama, ruin scholastic competition opportunities, and make for a pairing nightmare. Louis Reed mentioned the Texas Junior Teams Championship. The Vice President moved to refer the motion to the Scholastic Committee. Tom Crane seconded the motion to refer. The motion was referred to the Scholastic Committee by a vote of 27 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention.

### **Advance Motion 3. Texas EB Members on TCA Board of Directors**

Sponsor: Lakshmana Viswanath

See Appendix C for full text.

Because the motion could not be brought to a vote, Viswanath asked for a straw poll and indicated the motion be added to the agenda under old business at the Annual Membership meeting in August. Someone suggested the position might be advisory. The Secretary said she felt advisory was appropriate since a US Chess Executive Board Member was not elected by TCA Membership. Daisy Soliz moved to refer to the Bylaws Committee. Jeanette Pompa seconded the motion to refer. Brenda Hardesty objected to the motion being referred to the Bylaws Committee. The motion to refer passed with 27 in favor, 6 opposed, and 1 abstention.

**Motions 4 and 5 (below):** The Vice President explained to attendees that the next two motions are out of order as they are contrary to Sec. 10.26 of Robert's Rules of Order. Sec. 10.26 states that a main motion is out of order if it conflicts with procedural rules prescribed by federal, state or local law applicable to the organization. Both of these motions propose a vote to ratify allegedly defective corporate acts. However, Sec. 22.503 and Sec. 22.506 of the Texas Business Organizations Code impose procedural rules

governing ratification votes at membership meetings, including providing sufficient notice to members and the resolutions being first approved by the Board of Directors. Those rules were not followed in this case and therefore both of these motions are out of order. Additionally, the President ruled both motions out of order.

**Advance Motion 4. Bylaws Dispute and TCA Filing US Chess Complaint Against TCA**

Sponsor: Tom Crane

See Appendix D for full text.

**Advance Motion 5. Motion to Ratify Texas Titles Policy**

Sponsor: Louis Reed

See Appendix E for full text.

**Note:** The remainder of the meeting grew increasingly hostile and chaotic with many people speaking at once. Due to the situation, the Secretary has captured some key items with attribution to specific speakers not always clear.

Tom Crane expressed extreme displeasure with the President and Board. Due to words violating the rules of decorum, the Vice President called him out of order. More angry discussion ensued. Chris Wood called Point of Order. Tom Crane slammed a chair into the table and told everyone, "Get out! I'm locking up."

The meeting continued despite the order to leave. The President asked if there was any other Junior Chess Business. Louis Reed expressed anger that the Board was not listening. Chris Wood called to Appeal to the Chair and Appeal to the Parliamentarian. Louis Reed continued, saying he had posted objections to the Texas Title Policy and his objections were deleted. The President indicated they were removed because it was not the proper place for the comments. Daniel Shafer said that was censorship. The Vice President told the President to put the comments back up.

At this point, someone called to vote on the motions denied by the Vice President. The President called to take a vote to adjourn the meeting. Chants of "Vote! Vote! Vote!" grew. Tom Crane re-entered the meeting, and yelled for everyone to "get the hell out" and said he was turning off the lights. With no way to realistically count votes or tell what was being voted on, the motion to adjourn was declared passed 5-4 by members in attendance at the in-person meeting. In the chaos, the Secretary failed to write down the time the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amy Jones*

## Appendix A

### *Advance Motion 1. Allow Flexibility for Girls Regionals*

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article IX, Section 1, Subsection T of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

T. Texas Girls Regional Scholastic Championship. These shall be held in each of the Regions of the Association any time during the school year; provided that in lieu of tournaments in each region the regional directors of two or more regions may jointly sanction a superregional girls championship. These shall be organized according to the same guidelines as the Texas Girls Championship. At the option of the organizer, these shall be open only to female students residing in or attending school in the same region(s) as the tournament or shall be open to all female students regardless of geographic location. Only a resident of the region shall be eligible for a girls regional champion title and if a superregional is held there shall be regional champion titles for all regions involved. A TCA region that does not hold a girls regional forfeits its priority in the next bidding cycle for the Texas Girls Championship. If a regional draws less than 50 players the previous year (or is not held), then the next year the regional can be held as an open event. It will be up to the organizer to decide whether out of region players can win trophies.

Rationale: Presently, it is not clear that the Bylaws allows for girls regional championships of two or more regions to be combined even though that is very much needed for these events to be feasible for some regions. Also, when the Bylaws were amended a few years ago to allow regional championships to be held as open events (regardless of size) and remove the requirement about using certain guidelines the membership unintentionally neglected to also amend the provision about girls regionals to match those changes. By providing flexibility for girls regionals this motion will increase the likelihood these events are held throughout Texas in the years to come.

## Appendix B

### *Advance Motion 2. Allow Scholastic Club Teams at TCA Scholastic Events*

Sponsor: Caleb S. Brown

Resolved that Article IX, Section 1 of the Bylaws be amended as follows:

E. Texas Scholastic Championship: This tournament shall be a four-section individual event with team prizes. These sections may be subdivided with the approval of the Scholastic Committee. The Primary section will include kindergarten through third grade. The Elementary section will include kindergarten through sixth grade. The Middle School section will include fifth through ninth grade. Fifth and sixth graders in a middle school are not allowed to play down into the Elementary section. Ninth graders will be allowed to play up into the High School section. No player may play for a school that the player does not attend. The High School section will include ninth through twelfth grades. Ninth graders in high school will not be allowed to play down into the Middle School section. Home schooled and private schooled students will be delineated as follows: Primary K-3, Elementary K-5; Middle 6-8; High School 9-12. A scholastic team shall consist of any four students from the same school **or scholastic chess club**, and may be designated at the conclusion of the tournament to include the top scorers from that school **or club**. **The Scholastic Committee shall determine the definition of a scholastic chess club.** Team scores in the Primary section apply only toward Primary team prizes, and may not be transferred to the Elementary team competition. Only Texas residents or students enrolled in secondary or primary schools (including home schools) in Texas may play in this event. Students not assigned a grade in school will be assigned a grade at the tournament based on their age as of September 1 of that school year as follows: six years old is assigned first grade, seven years old is assigned second grade, and so on through grade twelve. Starting in 2017, this tournament will be split into a South Texas Scholastic Championship and a North Texas Scholastic Championship. Every three years, starting in 2021, there will be a 'super state'. That is where the North and South are combined into one tournament. The super state will alternate between North and South every three years. If no acceptable bid is turned in for a state scholastic, the ~~Texas Chess~~ Association will organize this tournament or hire someone to organize it for them. These are Major Events.

P. Texas Grade Championships. This event shall be split up into the South Texas Grade Championships and the North Texas Grade Championships. These events shall be held in the fall, concurrently with a separate tournament for each grade K-12. There shall be individual and team trophies. A team shall consist of any three players from the same school **or scholastic chess club**, and may be designated at the conclusion of the tournament to include top scorers from that school **or club**. Sections may be combined if deemed necessary, but trophies shall be awarded for all grades represented. This tournament is open to any pre K-12th grade student either living or attending school in Texas. Note that a South Texas player may play in the North Texas Grade tournament. A North Texas player may play in the South Texas Grade tournament. The Texas Collegiate Championship will be held at either the South Texas Grade Championship in even number years and at the North Texas Grade Championship in odd number years. If in an even number year there is no bid awarded for the South Texas Grade Championship, then the North Texas Grade Championship may host the Texas Collegiate Championship. Similarly, if there is no bid for the North Texas Grade Championship in an odd number year, the South Texas Grade Championship may host the Texas Collegiate Championship. These are a Major Event(s).

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 **or scholastic chess club**, and may be designated at the conclusion of the tournament to include the top scorers from that school **or club**.

Rationale: Presently, the Bylaws only allow for school teams at these events. This is a problem as it effectively bars players from schools without significant chess activity as well as homeschoolers from competing as teams. By leveling the playing field for team competition, this motion would encourage more participation in these events and support membership growth.



**Appendix C**

***Advance Motion 3. Texas EB Members on TCA Board of Directors***

Sponsor: Lakshmana Viswanath

Any elected US Chess executive board member from Texas, will be a member of the board of directors.

## **Appendix D**

### ***Advance Motion 4. Bylaws Dispute and TCA Filing US Chess Complaint Against TCA***

Sponsor: Tom Crane

For Reference excerpts from the TCA By-Laws

A. The annual junior chess meeting shall be held during the Texas 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.

2. Transaction of other business on issues that relate directly to Junior Chess may be approved by a majority vote of the voting Members.

Discussion: Without the knowledge of many involved in the Scholastic Chess Community, The Executive Board took action to change the process by which the Texas Scholastic Representatives to the Barber, Denker and Haring will be chosen. The policy below was then disseminated using the WhatsApp\_Group which is not the accepted standard for coordinating TCA Scholastic Business. The State North and South Scholastic meetings are the accepted method for discussion of policy pertaining to scholastic chess across the state.

Specific Motion: Since the accepted standard for conducting TCA Scholastic Business is not the Executive Board in a closed meeting deciding, then disseminating via the WhatsApp\_Group, and no agenda was published to the TCA website with these agenda items giving notification to those that might choose to attend, any policies coming from that meeting need to be withdrawn by the board, ratified by this Scholastic Meeting, or referred to committee for further study. If this board cannot utilize the accepted methods for conducting business for the Texas Chess Association that they were elected to SERVE this will be referred to the TCA Ethics committee and the US Chess State and Affiliates Committees for action.

*Editor's Note: The sponsor also included the text of the Invitationals Policy which can be found in the TCA Archives on the website. It is incorporated by reference.*

## **Appendix E**

### ***Advance Motion 5. Motion to Ratify Texas Titles Policy***

Sponsor: Louis Reed

The Texas Chess Association (hereby known as TCA) Board of Directors (hereby known as The Board) met at an unknown date and time and decided amongst themselves to create the Texas Titles System. This decision was in excess of the authority of The Board as outlined by the TCA bylaws. According to the bylaws, "From time to time the Board of Directors will need to consider action necessary to carry out the business of the Association." The creation of the Texas Titles system is clearly not necessary to the business of the association. Necessary business would be ensuring that contracted vendors and/or employees are paid in a timely manner. Since The Board operated in excess of its authority, I hereby move that the creation of the Texas Titles System be ratified at both the March 1, Junior Chess meeting as well as the general membership meeting to be held at the Southwest Open.

Should the motion to ratify the Texas Titles System pass at both meetings, then the Texas Titles System would be implemented as designed by The Board. Any Texas titles already awarded would remain in place without modification. Should this motion to ratify fail to pass at either meeting, the Texas Titles System itself would be nullified. Texas titles already awarded would also be nullified. Additionally, any Texas title applications under consideration would be cancelled. Any players suffering from nullified Texas titles and/or cancelled Texas title applications would receive an apology from The Board for acting in excess of its authority. The necessity for the motion to pass at both meetings is that the Texas Titles System affects all Texas players, both Junior and non-Junior players.

Additional information to consider is that not even the US Chess Executive Board took it upon themselves to take action unilaterally when making changes to the US Chess Titles System. According to [the US Chess Title System document](#), US Chess held "...about eight months of extensive discussion among the Ratings Committee members, along with the hard work of Mike Nolan at the US Chess office who ran simulations of various versions of the title system, the details of the system have been worked out." This extensive work ensured a well-planned and thought-out title system. The Texas Titles System has not had anywhere near this level of scrutiny and research applied to it. Since The Board wants to push forward with it anyway, the TCA members need to have a voice in whether the Texas Titles System is implemented or not.