CHESS GUIDE

Who Manages Chess?

FIDE (World Chess Federation)

FIDE is the international governing body of chess. It sets the official rules of chess, awards international titles, and manages international ratings.

African Chess Confederation (ACC)
This organisation manages chess across Africa and organises continental competitions.

Chess South Africa (CSA)
Chess South Africa is the national governing body for chess in South Africa. It manages national ratings, national tournaments, and selects teams to represent South Africa internationally.

Provinces and Regions
Chess in South Africa is organised through provinces and regions.

- Provinces (such as **Mpumalanga Chess**) manage chess in the province.
- Regions (such as **Gert Sibande Chess Association**) organise chess locally and run school programmes, development activities, and regional tournaments.

Types of Chess Tournaments

School Tournaments

School tournaments form part of the school's chess programme.

- Learners from affiliated schools participate free of charge because the school pays an annual affiliation fee.
- Schools that are not affiliated pay an entry fee per learner before each school's tournament.
- School uniform is compulsory.
- There is no prize money.
- Tournaments are played in **age groups**.
- Only learners from that **municipality** or **region** may participate.

Players get selected to represent their municipality**,** then their regions, and can go all the way to get a chance to make it into the Provincial squad.

Players that excel get to represent **Mpumalanga** at national schools' tournaments.

Players stand to be awarded **colours**.

Club Tournaments

Club tournaments are organised by local chess clubs.

- Players may pay a small entry fee.
- The purpose is practice and improvement.
- Open to club members or invited players.

Regional Tournaments

Regional tournaments are **open competitive** events.

- Players pay entry fees.
- Prize money can be won.
- Open to anyone, including **adults** and players from **other regions** or provinces.
- School uniform is not required.

These tournaments help players gain experience, improve their ratings, and compete against stronger opponents.

Chess Ratings

A **rating** is a number that shows how strong a player is compared to other players.

Chess SA Rating

- A national rating used in **South Africa**
- Earned by playing in Chess SA rated tournaments

FIDE Rating

- An **international rating** recognised worldwide
- Earned in FIDE rated tournaments

How a player gets their first rating and Chess SA ID

A player who participates in a Chess SA rated tournament for the first time is issued with a Chess South Africa ID and given an initial rating of **1200**. This ID number identifies the player on the Chess South Africa database and should be kept safely to ensure that the player's rating points are allocated correctly and not recorded under another player.

When it is said that a tournament is **Chess SA rated**, the results of the games played in that tournament are submitted to Chess South Africa and used to calculate each player's rating, which goes up or down depending on the result and the strength of the opponent.

Chess is played in three formats based on the thinking time given to each player. Each player has their own clock which counts down while they think. **Standard (Classical)** chess is the longest format, with at least 60 minutes per player. **Rapid** chess gives each player at least 10 minutes but less than 60 minutes. **Blitz** chess is the fastest, with at least 5 minutes but less than 10 minutes per player. Each format is rated separately, so a player can have different ratings in **Standard, Rapid, and Blitz.**

Chess Titles

Strong players may earn international titles awarded by FIDE:

- **Candidate Master (CM)** – 2200+ rating
- **FIDE Master (FM)** – 2300+ rating
- **International Master (IM)** – 2400+ rating
- **Grandmaster (GM)** – 2500+ rating
- **Elite Grandmasters ("Super GMs")** – 2700+ rating (This is not an official FIDE title, but is used informally to recognize elite chess players)