

World Cities Chess Team Championship

For the Sheikh Zayed Cup



FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and Asian Chess Federation president Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifah Al Nahyan, chairman of the Organizing Committee, lead dignitaries at the opening ceremonies where the draw for groups was conducted. With them at the groups board are, at left, Ibrahim Al Bannai, president of the Arab Chess Federation and, right, Saeed Al Megbali, president of the UAE Chess Federation.

The World Cities Chess Team Championship got off to an exciting start as teams started jockeying for position in their Round Robin preliminary groups to aim for the top two slots and advance to the knockout phase.

FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifah Al Nahyan led colorful opening ceremonies where captains drew lots for grouping.

In group A, Dhaka, Bangladesh beat host Al Ain, UAE 3:1 while Lund, Sweden upset London, England 2.5-1.5

In group B, Tashkent, Uzbekistan crushed Chennai, India 3.5-0.5 to take a commanding lead as Saratov, Russia could only edge Ptuj, Slovenia 2.5-1.5

In group C, Lviv, Ukraine blanked Canberra, Australia 4:0 while Riga, Latvia shaded Athens, Greece 2.5-1.5.

In group D, Baku, Azerbaijan smashed Istanbul, Turkey 3:1 while Astana, Kazakhstan beat Timisoara, Romania 2.5-1.5.

In group E, Chicago, USA took hours to subdue a stubborn Kampala, Uganda 3.5-0.5 while top seed Paris, France smashed Tehran, Iran 3:1.

In group F, Hoogeveen, Netherlands whitewashed Cairo, Egypt 4:0 while Novi Sad, Serbia creamed Wu Xi, China 2.5-1.5.

Aside from the top two of each group, the best third place complete the teams advancing to the Round-of-16 knock out match.

At the opening ceremonies, the 24 teams were ranked into four categories by average rating. Team captains per category took turns to draw for groups and pairing numbers. Chief Arbiter Casto Abundo and Mehrdad Pahlevanzadeh conducted the draw.

The upset of the opening round was the victory of Lund, Sweden over higher ranked London, England on wins by Swedish GM Carlsson Pontus and IM Axel Smith. Pontus crushed the French defense of British GM Simon Williams in 54 moves. Swedish IM Axel Smith used the Sicilian defense to beat Zhou Yang Fan in 53 moves. Lund top board GM Nils Grandelius sealed the win by holding English GM Nigel Short to a draw in 34 moves of a Ruy Lopez.

At stake in the first knock out team competition in FIDE is the Sheikh Zayed Cup and a total of \$150,000 in cash prizes. Visit the official site at <http://worldcitieschess.com/> to watch games live and download pgn files of all games. Follow results and pairings at chess-results.com.

Concurrent with the World Cities is the \$30,000 Al Ain Classic. Players whose teams are eliminated in the World Classic can carry over their points to the individual Swiss System. Players from 52 federations are competing in the open with 6 Grandmasters, 3 WGM, 14 IMs and 3 WIMs.

This unique Al Ain system has been approved by FIDE as an international title tournament under normal rules for players who play nine games. The total number of players will increase after the elimination of teams from the World Cities preliminaries, Round of 16 and quarterfinals.

A youth championship is also being held concurrently in the chess festival.

In the mornings players can attend the FIDE Trainers Seminar conducted by GM Adrian Mikhailechisin and GM Efstratios Grivas, Chairman and Secretary, respectively, of the FIDE Trainers Commission.



Photos:

Above, flags and players name hang behind each match from the control tower at center which houses the computer control room for live broadcast of games.

Top: At the Opening Ceremony, Chief Arbiter Casto Abundo prepares to conduct the draw for groups, similar to the football World Cup system.

Middle: IA Mehrdad Pahlavanzadeh of the Asian Chess Federation raises the group A ball drawn by GM Salem A.R. Saleh (right) of the UAE. By order of category, each captain took turns drawing balls with group names hidden inside.

Bottom: Once their group is known, captains draw pairing numbers for the Berger table. At right, USA Team Captain Sevan Muradian draws pairing number 1 from a basket of plastic eggs.





Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifah Al Nahyan starts the clock of GM Salem Saleh of Al Ain at the start of the round.



Four games of each match are displayed on monitors to let spectators to conveniently watch games and players.



A view of the playing hall with three tournaments, the World Cities Chess Team Championship in the center, the Al Ain Classic in foreground and the youth championship in background.

Group A

1.1	1	Al Ain - UAE		1 - 3	4	Dhaka - Bangladesh	
1	GM	Salem A.R. Saleh	2536	½ : ½	GM	Murshed Niaz	2464
2	IM	Hassan Abdullah	2378	0 : 1	GM	Rahman Ziaur	2518
3	IM	Omar Noaman	2316	½ : ½	IM	Minhazuddin Ahmed	2401
4	CM	Faisal Abdulla	2255	- : +	IM	Abu Sufian Shakil	2364
1.2	2	Lund - Sweden		2½ 1½	3	London - UK	
1	GM	Grandelius Nils	2583	½ : ½	GM	Short Nigel D	2692
2	GM	Tikkanen Hans	2575	0 : 1	GM	Howell David W L	2634
3	GM	Carlsson Pontus	2518	1 : 0	GM	Williams Simon K	2515
4	IM	Smith Axel	2484	1 : 0	IM	Zhou Yang-Fan	2419

Group B

1.1	1	Chennai - IND		½ 3½	4	Tashkent - UZB	
1	IM	Shyam Nikil P.	2431	0 : 1	GM	Dzhumaev Marat	2530
2	FM	Rajesh V A V	2370	0 : 1	IM	Kvon Andrey	2501
3		Navalgund Niranjana	2169	0 : 1	GM	Barsov Alexei	2510
4		Karthikeyan Murali	2315	½ : ½	GM	Iuldachev Saidali	2455
1.2	2	Saratov - RUS		2½ 1½	3	Ptuj - SLO	
1	GM	Tomashevsky Evgeny	2725	½ : ½	GM	Lenic Luka	2637
2	GM	Lysyj Igor	2617	½ : ½	GM	Beliavsky Alexander G	2630
3	GM	Romanov Evgeny	2616	½ : ½	GM	Borisek Jure	2560
4	GM	Shaposhnikov Evgeny	2544	1 : 0	GM	Skoberne Jure	2549

Group C

1.1	1	Athens - GRE		1½ 2½	4	Riga - LAT	
1	GM	Papaioannou Ioannis	2618	1 : 0	GM	Miezis Normunds	2596
2	GM	Banikas Hristos	2620	0 : 1	GM	Neiksans Arturs	2534
3	GM	Halkias Stelios	2561	0 : 1	GM	Sveshnikov Evgeny	2514
4	IM	Tzermiadianos Andreas	2434	½ : ½	GM	Starostits Ilmars	2468
1.2	2	Lviv - UKR		4 - 0	3	Canberra - AUS	
1	GM	Moiseenko Alexander	2710	1 : 0	FM	Wallis Christopher	2283
2	GM	Kryvoruchko Yuriy	2671	1 : 0	IM	Feldman Vladimir	2230
3	GM	Fedorchuk Sergey A.	2661	1 : 0		Schon Eugene	2175
4	GM	Kravtsiv Martyn	2593	1 : 0		Zelesco Karl	2154

Group D

1.1	1	Baku - AZE		3 - 1	4	Istanbul - TUR	
1	GM	Safarli Eltaj	2626	1 : 0	GM	Esen Baris	2576
2	GM	Guseinov Gadir	2628	½ : ½	GM	Can Emre	2448
3	GM	Mamedov Rauf	2647	½ : ½	FM	Sanal Vahap	2382
4	GM	Durarbayli Vasif	2587	1 : 0	FM	Ali Marandi Cemil Can	2354
1.2	2	Astana - KAZ		2½ 1½	3	Timisoara - ROM	
1	GM	Kazhgaleyev Murtas	2596	½ : ½	GM	Lupulescu Constantin	2618
2	GM	Jumabayev Rinat	2567	0 : 1	GM	Parligras Mircea-Emilian	2628
3	GM	Kotsur Pavel	2550	1 : 0	GM	Marin Mihail	2564
4	GM	Ismagambetov Anuar	2463	1 : 0	GM	Nevednichy Vladislav	2545

Group E

1.1	1	Chicago - USA		3½ ½	4	Kampala - UGA	
1	GM	Akobian Varuzhan	2622	1 : 0	CM	Kawuma Patrick	2245
2	GM	Ehlvest Jaan	2603	½ : ½	FM	Wanyama Harold	2252
3	IM	Hungaski Robert Andrew	2469	1 : 0	CM	Bibasa Bob	2218
4	GM	Finegold Benjamin	2498	1 : 0	FM	Kisuze Stephen Ssemango	2150
1.2	2	Teheran - IRI		1 - 3	3	Paris - FRA	
1	GM	Ghaem Maghami Ehsan	2572	½ : ½	GM	Vachier-Lagrave Maxime	2711
2	IM	Darini Pouria	2522	0 : 1	GM	Fressinet Laurent	2700
3	GM	Golizadeh Asghar	2476	0 : 1	GM	Edouard Romain	2686
4	GM	Mahjoob Morteza	2426	½ : ½	GM	Hamdouchi Hicham	2610

Group F

1.1	1	Novi Sad - SRB		2½ 1½	4	Wu Xi - CHN	
1	GM	Ivanisevic Ivan	2633	½ : ½	GM	Wang Yue	2696
2	GM	Markus Robert	2619	0 : 1		Ji Dan	2341
3	GM	Perunovic Milos	2614	1 : 0	IM	Li Wenliang	2424
4	GM	Sedlak Nikola	2572	1 : 0		Fang Yuxiang	2103
1.2	2	Hoogeveen_NED		4 - 0	3	Cairo - EGY	
1	GM	Giri Anish	2720	1 : 0	GM	El Gindy Essam	2486
2	GM	Sokolov Ivan	2667	1 : 0	IM	Shoker Samy	2490
3	GM	Tiviakov Sergei	2663	1 : 0	IM	Ezat Mohamed	2450
4	GM	Smeets Jan	2614	1 : 0	IM	Labib Ibrahim Hasan	2432

World Cities Chess Championship (Sheikh Zayed Cup)

The new format of the World Cities Chess Team Championship 2012 has started in Al Ain, UAE on 21 September. 24 teams from 24 cities from all over the world came to Al Ain to participate in the championship. The format of the championship allows chess players to play further in an individual competition in case of being eliminated from the main team tournament.

This is a new format which has been well accepted by all the participants. The total prize fund is 150,000 US dollars. The Paris team is top seed, followed by Hoogeveen team from the Netherlands.

An individual competition, the Al Ain Chess Classic with a total prize of 30,000 US dollars has gathered a lot of FIDE rated players who will be joined by knocked out participants of the World Cities championship starting from Round 4.

Concurrent with these two tournaments, a FIDE trainer's seminar will take place as well conducted by GM Adrian Mikhaïlchisin and GM Efstratios Grivas.

The Opening Ceremony of this big chess festival took place on 21 September. The FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov thanked the Al Ain Chess Club, Asian Chess Federation and personally it's President, his Highness Sheikh Sultan Bin Khalifah Al Nahayan for presenting such an opportunity for the best players to come to the beautiful city of Al Ain to fight for the Sheikh Zayed Cup. He expressed his confidence that the participants of the championship would do their best to show interesting battles which would attract a lot of chess fans' attention.

His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Khalifah Al Nahayan in turn welcomed all the participants of the tournaments. He expressed his pride on behalf of Al Ain city and Al Ain Chess Club to host an event of a new format. He also expressed his hope that the Al Ain Chess Classic would become a traditional chess competition. His Highness thanked the Al Ain Sport Club for providing the playing venue with excellent facilities as well as the Organizing Committee, volunteers and everyone who contributed to make the tournament happen.

Sheikh Sultan also hoped that the online games and video would be positively appreciated by chess lovers.

The traditional UAE dances followed the Opening Ceremony. The bright neon show produced a good impression on the chess players and guests.

The Chief Arbiter Casto Abundo conducted the drawing of lots. The teams were divided into 6 groups which will compete according to the World Cities Chess Championship regulations. We are sure that the tournament will be watched and followed by many chess lovers and fans from all over the world.

Official website

<http://worldcitieschess.com/> with online games, photos and videos.

Round 1 report

Round 1 of the World Cities Chess Championship – Sheikh Zayed Cup started at 18.00 in the Al Ain Sport Club on 22 September. Chess players from 24 teams have come to the playing hall in time.

Such big chess names as Nigel Short of England, Wang Yue of China, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Laurent Fressinet of France, Papaioannou, Banikas and Halkias of Greece, Ghaem Maghami of Iran, Giri, Sokolov of the Netherlands, Lupulescu and Parligras of Romania, Tomashevsky of Russia, Beliavsky of Slovenia, Bars Esen of Turkey, Moiseenko and Kryvoruchko of the Ukraine. Salem A.R. Saleh of the UAE, Varuzhan Akobian of the USA and many others headed their teams in a nicely prepared hall of Al Ain Chess Club.

The design of the tournament hall was made in a circle way so that the spectators could promenade around the playing area with a splendid opportunity to watch the games of all teams.

Later on the chess professionals sat at their boards to start their first round as well as the participants of the Al Ain Chess Classics. The first round did not bring any unexpected results.

Tomorrow 23 December, Round 2 will start at 18.00 (local time) in Al Ain Chess Club.

