

The Xtreme Chess Championships Shows Fast Pace of Chess; Diverse and Hip Contestants

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 4th--The Xtreme Chess Championships is a made for TV competition that showcases the drama of chess and the rush of checkmate. The pace in this single elimination knockout competition, also known as X-Chess, is much closer to basketball than golf—each player has less than 20 minutes to complete all his or her moves. The first mini-season is set in the heart of New York City near Times Square. The season consists of four episodes, which will be released on YouTube in Winter 2012. Watch the first episode on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwxTuRHlrYM>

Over four million people "Like" Chess on Facebook and about three million chess boards are sold annually in the US. "X Chess" is the only show of its kind on the market, focused on entertaining and inspiring a wide audience via chess.



The featured competitors are all in their teens and early 20s with significant achievements in chess. The diverse cast includes Justus Williams, who broke the record for the youngest-ever African-American master in history in 2011; Alisa Melekhina, a law student and ballerina who earned a gold medal for the US at the 2009 World Team Chess Championship; Elliott Liu, a popular Stanford senior, who flew to compete in X Chess from Florence Italy; Shawn Martinez, who learned chess at the Brooklyn junior high chess dynasty IS 318 and later hustled in chess in parks all over New York.

The Xtreme Chess Championships is created by film-maker Daniel Meirom, US Chess League founder and International Master Greg Shahade and commentator and two-time US Women's Champion Jennifer Shahade. X Chess is hosted by model and actress Kacie Marie. *Jeopardy!* Champion Jonathan Corbblah, who has appeared on ESPN, *Cash Cab* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, provides accessible commentary with Jennifer Shahade. The event was hosted at Chess-In-The-Schools, a New York non-profit.

X Chess features several key innovations that will be particularly striking to the more experienced player.

1. Players must play on till checkmate, rather than "resign", the typical conclusion of games in master-level play.
2. White is an advantage in chess. To even this out, each player writes down a clock time less than 15:00. Whoever bids lower starts with that amount of time, and the white pieces.
3. If a game in X Chess is a draw, the players immediately begin a new, faster game, reversing colors but maintaining the clock times from their previous game.

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