

JAMAICA CHESS FEDERATION - CELEBRATING "GOLDEN" JUBILEE

This year marks a truly significant milestone, a proud historic moment for chess in Jamaica. On **February 18, 1969**, the Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) was established by our "founding fathers", including our inaugural president Enos Grant and other influential figures such as John Powell and William Roper (all of blessed memory) and our magnificent "elder statesman" Frederick "Freddy" Cameron (first treasurer and future president), still with us at 79 years old.

The JCF will celebrate its "Golden Jubilee" this year and the organization has blossomed and matured tremendously. Chess (once "the game of kings" but now the "king of games!") has grown almost exponentially locally, making continuous strides in advancing not only the intellectual minds of Jamaica, but putting our beloved country on the international map as a strong chess- playing nation.

Our country, small in size but large in accomplishments, has done wonders on the international chess scene over the course of its history. Some of these grandeur achievements include:

- The JCF becoming a member of the International/World Chess Federation (**FIDE**) in **1972**.
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- Although only having a population of 2.8 million, Jamaica has a thriving **Chess-In-Schools** programme with more than **fifty thousand (50,000)** new players (students) in the past ten years.
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- Former Jamaica Chess Champion **Sheldon Wong** winning a brilliancy prize at the 1976 World Junior Chess Championships in Groningen, Holland after defeating the Israeli champion Nir Grinberg (a Grunfeld opening).
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- **1978** (Buenos Aires, Argentina) - Jamaica's men debuting at the World Chess Olympiad
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- **1984** (Thessaloniki, Greece) - Jamaica's Women debuting at the World Chess Olympiad
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- **John Powell**, founding JCF member, former Jamaica Heavyweight Boxing Champion and former JCF President, winning the country's first Olympic medal (silver) at the 1984 World Chess Olympiad in Thessaloniki, Greece.
- **Christine Bennett** becoming the first Jamaican female player to win an Olympiad medal (silver) at the 1990 World Chess Olympiad in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia.
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- **Ian Wilkinson** - Writing "***Magnificence In Bled: The 35th Chess Olympiad***" in 2004, the first chess book written in the English-speaking Caribbean.
- JCF President **Ian Wilkinson QC** being appointed to the World Chess Federation (FIDE) Ethics Commission ("the World Chess Court") in Italy in 2006, becoming the first person from the English-speaking Caribbean to achieve this honour. He served for eight years and deliberated on many matters including the "toiletgate" case involving world champion Russian GM Vladimir Kramnik and Bulgarian GM Veselin Topalov.
- **Jomo Pitterson** becoming Jamaica's first International Master (IM) after winning the 2010 Absolute Sub-zonal 2.3.5 in the Bahamas.
- The **2010 Women's Olympiad team** (Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia) consisting of Deborah Richards-Porter, Krishna Gray, Ariel Barrett, Margoe Williams and Annesha Smith won the category prize for the first time at an Olympiad, the first country from the English-speaking Caribbean to do so.
- Six-time Jamaica (Absolute) Champion and International Arbiter **Robert Wheeler** officiating at four straight World Chess Olympiads - 2010-2016.
- Chess becoming recognized by the local authorities with a category award at Jamaica's annual **Sportsman and Sportswoman of the year awards in 2014** .
- Jamaica creating history in **August, 2015** by becoming the first English-speaking country to win the Central America and Caribbean (CAC) Youth Chess Festival.
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- **Rachel Miller** becoming the youngest Woman FIDE Master in the English-Speaking Caribbean at the 8th Pan-American School Tournament in El Salvador in 2014, the same year she became the youngest Jamaica Women's Champion (**14 years old**).
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- **Deborah Richards-Porter**'s historic victory at the 2016 Female Sub-Zonal 2.3.5 in Barbados and record 4th place finish at the 2017 Zonal 2.3 in El Salvador. In 2014, Deborah became the English-Speaking Caribbean's first Woman International Master.
- **Joshua Christie** becoming the English-Speaking Caribbean's youngest FM as he finished tied first (second on tiebreak) in the 15th Central American and Caribbean Festival in Panama in 2017.

- The JCF becoming a full member of the **Jamaica Olympic Association** in August, 2017.
- Jamaica winning three **CARIFTA (Junior) Chess Championship** titles in 2013, 2017 and 2019, respectively, the most by any country in the region. The 2019 victory (in Curacao) was the first time any country other than the host country was winning the title.
- **Zaina O'Connor** becoming the English-speaking Caribbean's youngest Woman Candidate Master as she finished second in the **Under-8 Girls section** at the 15th Central American and Caribbean Festival in Panama in 2017.
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- Jamaica hosted the **2018 Subzonal 2.3.5** for the first time which saw seven-time Jamaica Absolute Champion Shane Matthews winning the championship title over many strong international players and becoming Jamaica's second International Master to date.
- JCF President **Ian Wilkinson QC's** appointment on October 3, 2018 at the FIDE Congress in Batumi, Georgia as an **Honourable Vice President for FIDE**. He was the first person from the English-speaking Caribbean to achieve this honour. This was in addition to his historic election to FIDE's Constitution Commission during the same Congress.
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- Jamaica having several persons appointed as FIDE Trainer, FIDE Instructor and FIDE International Organizer.
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- Jamaica staging a massive international chess festival in October 2017.
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- Jamaica - "Gifting" the world **Maurice Ashley** who became the first "black" International Grandmaster in 1999.

Jamaica Chess Federation

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