

BLenheim PALACE HOSTS THE 27TH DELANCEY UK SCHOOLS' CHESS CHALLENGE AS IT REACHES ITS GRAND FINALE

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The 27th season of the Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge has now reached its nail-biting final stages after months of competition. The 'Terafinal' (the finale of the season) is taking place on 15 and 16 October at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, and will see 60 players spread across the five age group sections; under 8s, 10s, 12s, 14s and 18s competing for an array of monetary prizes and trophies.

The UK Schools' Chess Challenge, supported by its long-standing partner Delancey, is a multi-stage chess competition for UK based young chess players 18 years and younger. The competition welcomes players of all experience levels through from beginner to seasoned junior international.

It has been a long journey to the Terafinal with more than 5,000 students representing over 1,000 schools and chess clubs competing throughout the spring and summer in the Megafinal and Gigafinals. The most recent event, the 'Challengers', saw 200 players compete at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel for the final three Terafinal spaces.

Amongst the finalists are some big names to look out for including:

- Yichen Han - under 14 (playing in the under 18s). Yichen, originally from the Netherlands, is a UK Chess Challenge 'Hall of Famer' having won the 2017 (U11), 2018 (U10) and 2019 (U12) editions. This year is his second crack at the U18 championship where he'll hope to add to his list of awards.
- Elis Dicen - under 10. Under 8 girls champion in 2019 and U10 girls champion 2020. Elis is certainly making the boys sweat by winning some high-level blitz competitions this year. Elis is already a three time UK Chess Challenge champion winning the U8 girls title in 2019, the U10 girls title in 2020 and finally the overall U10 title in 2021 becoming the competitions first ever female champion. This year she is stepping up to the U12s where the competition will be tougher still.
- Bodhana Sivanandan - under 8. Bodhana only learnt how to play chess in 2021 and the Terafinal was her first ever over the board competition. In April 2022 Bodhana won three gold medals at the World Schools and World Cadets and came within a whisker of a draw against a Grandmaster at the British championships. Can she become the competitions second ever female winner?

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- Maksym Krystafor – under 8. Maksym is one of many Ukrainian players who have competed in the competition this year. Maksym's family fled the war first to Romania before settling near York in May. Maksym had only been in the country a few days before playing in his first UK competition. Maksym stormed to victory in the Northern Gigafinal held in Manchester and is amongst the favourites in the under 8 section.
- Rithvik Deepak Ambattu – under 8. Representing the Edinburgh Chess Academy, Scotland, Rithvik has already won the 2022 UK Chess Challenge U8 Blitz Championship and qualified for the Terafinal by winning the Online Gigafinal. Rithvik is part of a new generation of super-strong Scottish junior chess players and will be a serious contender in the Terafinal.

Taking place in the prestigious setting of Blenheim Palace, the Terafinal promises to be the strongest and most dramatic event in the UK chess calendar.

Sarah Longson, Director of the Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge, said: *"2022 has seen over the board chess bounce back strongly with lots of new organisers and events popping up around the country. It's been great to see children playing again face to face and the online chess boom has enabled many children to get very strong very fast as witnessed by the gold medals won by the England team at this year's World Schools and World Cadets championships."*

The Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge is designed to cater for all levels with inexperienced players getting the chance to play in their first tournament at the Megafinal stage and the UK's elite players congregating for the Terafinal. Once again it is a great pleasure to host the Terafinal at Blenheim Palace and we're looking forward to another memorable event."

Testimonial from Neil, Chess Parent, wrote about the 2021 Terafinal: *"Thanks for organising the Delancey UK chess challenge this year Sarah. It was extremely well organised and the grandeur of Blenheim for the final gave a perfect setting for what was certainly the highest standard of junior chess I have ever seen at a UK tournament. My son had some wins to smile about and made new friends too. Many relatives and club players watched the action from afar on the live feed and my son will I'm sure remember this event fondly for many years to come."*



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Testimonial from Sam, Chess Parent, wrote about the 2021 Terafinal: *"Very well organised and slickly run tournament in simply the most stunning location! Great for the parents to have a lovely environment to explore while the kids get stuck in with their games! Great idea - well done to your team and to Delancey. Honestly we both genuinely mean it - it was the best tournament we have been to in the UK, and a great role model for others to think about doing similar things."*

Founder and Chairman of Delancey, Jamie Ritblat commented: *"We are delighted to continue our headline sponsorship of the Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge as it reaches its 27th grand finale. This is an invaluable competition which not only unites children who share an interest in chess from across the UK but also provides an environment in which students are inspired to challenge themselves. We are thrilled that the grand finale can take place over the board at Blenheim Palace and we wish all the finalists the very best of luck."*



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Notes to Editors

About Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge

The Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge has run every year since 1996 and is one of the largest junior chess competition's with over 1,000 schools and 40,000 children taking part every year. The ethos of the competition allows every child to enjoy playing and learning in the early stages yet testing the mettle of the finest players towards the end.

Chess is a fantastic tool for children to develop their problem solving skills, creativity and imagination, as well as the ability to plan ahead and emotional resilience. It also teaches us that hard work and perseverance pay off and to have respect for the ideas of other people. Teachers and parents comment on the enormous enthusiasm amongst the children for their badges, gold spots and mascots. Junior chess clubs are springing up all over the country, both in schools and outside; numbers in existing clubs have mushroomed. All this shows that chess is one of the most enjoyable and exciting ways for children to learn how to think critically and to plan ahead.

www.delanceyukschoolschesschallenge.com

About Delancey

Delancey is a specialist real estate investment, development, and advisory company whose activities encompass retail, residential, logistics and commercial real estate across London and the UK. Collaborating on a wide range of assets, partners and clients, Delancey is recognised for its innovative and diverse approach to creating long term value from real estate. Delancey also advises clients on appropriate capital structures, financing and provides asset management and development services.

Delancey has a diverse portfolio of retail, residential, office and corporate assets across London and the UK, including the Alpha Plus schools group and the Elephant & Castle Town Centre Regeneration in Southwark. Delancey is also a pioneer in the private rented sector and has spent much of the last few years bringing the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics to life; it is delivering over 3,000 homes for rent at the multi-award winning neighbourhood East Village, the former London 2012 Athletes Village in Newham, and it transformed the 2012 press and media broadcast centre into world-leading digital campus Here East. More recently, the joint venture acquisition of the Earls Court development site was completed in December 2019. This iconic landmark, which sits within the boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham comprises London's largest cleared Zone 1 development site. Delancey, alongside its newly formed platform business The Earls Court Development Company, will lead the regeneration of this critically important London location, which has the potential to be a world class scheme, showcasing the best in sustainable, community focussed and environmentally enhanced design.



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