

# BLenheim PALACE HOSTS THE 26TH DELANCEY UK SCHOOLS' CHESS CHALLENGE AS IT REACHES ITS GRAND FINALE

29 SEPTEMBER 2021



The 26th 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 9 and 10 October at Blenheim Palace 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 2,250 students representing over 800 schools and chess clubs competing online throughout the summer in the Megafinals and Gigafinals. Unfortunately, this is the second year in a row that the initial stages have been impacted by the pandemic, however this has not stopped these young chess enthusiasts, as more than 12,000 games have been played online and over half a million moves made. Young chess players have really taken to online chess and it has opened up new avenues for teaching, education and accessibility.

On 18 and 19 September the competition's first long-awaited 'over the board' tournament in two years took place at the Mercure Daventry Court Hotel with 200 eager players demonstrating their skills and endurance over nine tough rounds of chess to decide the final 10 spaces available for the Terafinal.

For further information,  
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Amongst the finalists are some big names to look out for including:

- 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.
- Frederick Gordon - under 12. Frederick is Scotland's most exciting junior chess talent and recently the subject of a BBC Article describing how he defeated Grandmaster Bogdan Lalic.
- 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.
- Kenneth Hobson - under 12. Kenneth came agonisingly close to winning the under 12 event in 2020 losing out in the final game despite having earlier had a winning position Kenneth stormed through the final preliminary stage scoring 6.5 / 7.
- Bodhana Sivanandan - under 8. 2020 and 2021 has seen many young players getting their first experience of competitive chess online. Bodhana is one such example- competing in her first UK Chess Challenge Bodhana stormed to 6.5 / 7 in the Gigafinal winning a great big trophy and a place in the Terafinal preliminary from which she then qualified for the Grand Finale.

Sarah Longson, Director of the Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge, said:

*"Junior chess in the UK has been booming for some time now and coronavirus hasn't really put a dent in this trend with thousands of young players flocking to the online platforms and developing their skills there. Many have taken the opportunity to get extra practise in and now that we are returning to 'over the board' action I am really excited to see the progress they have made with my own eyes.*

*As great as online chess has been (and will continue to be) there is nothing quite like the experience of playing chess face to face with your opponent. As Netflix's "The Queen's Gambit" has now shown to the public - the atmosphere of a chess tournament is something unique and exciting and something I believe every chess player should have the enjoyment of experiencing."*

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*After so many months of online competition, we are thrilled that this final stage can take place over the board at Blenheim Palace and we wish all the finalists the very best of luck.*

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**Jamie Ritblat,**  
Founder and Chairman,  
Delancey



Testimonial from Tanya, Member of Delancey UK Schools' Chess Challenge, wrote:

*"Dear Sarah, Alex and everyone at Delancey- Thank you for your amazing efforts keeping the UK Chess Challenge going! It is so great that the kids have had something to work towards. Thanks again and we look forward to next year's event."*

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 26th grand finale. There has been a recent surge in the popularity of chess, spurred by the success of Netflix's 'The Queen's Gambit', so 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. After so many months of online competition, we are thrilled that this final stage can take place over the board at Blenheim Palace and we wish all the finalists the very best of luck."*

The finals for each age group will take place on Sunday 10 October with the award ceremony to take place at 5pm, with around 100 guests set to enjoy the chess challenge at the country house in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England.

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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](http://www.delanceyukschoolschesschallenge.com)

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### 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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