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AFRICAN CHESS CONFEDERATION NEWSLETTER

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Let's ensure that African women in chess realize their optimal potential- African Chess Confederation Women's Day Message

BY AFRICAN CHESS CONFEDERATION EXECUTIVE



The African Chess Confederation marked International Women's Day in March, recognizing the outstanding achievements and immense contributions made by women in chess throughout the continent, in pursuit of gender equality. We salute the strength, resilience and ingenuity of our mothers, sisters, daughters and leaders, who drive the growth and development of chess. As we converge under the 2025 theme, "Accelerate Action", it serves as a catalyst to propel forward, ensuring women in chess across Africa realize their optimal potential. We will persist in reaffirming our dedication to advancing gender parity in chess throughout our continent. On this International Women's Day, let us resolve to intensify our endeavors for the advancement and growth of Women's chess.

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Acknowledgement

MAGRET NGUGAMA CHAMPIONING CHESS IN SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

By African Chess Confederation Media

A transformative era is imminent for chess in Malawi's schools, with the Chess Association of Malawi's award for Best Executed Sports Development Programme at the 2024 Malawi Sports Awards serving as a testament.

The Chess In Schools Programme has a far-reaching impact that extends far beyond the chess board, creating an environment where every young chess enthusiast can learn about chess, play, compete, and be part of the chess community.

They have genuinely revolutionized the game of chess where the values of inclusivity, commitment, and passion for chess development shine brightly.

Magret Ngugama is instrumental to the achievements and advancements of the Chess In Schools Programme. Magret's chess journey commenced in 2010 as a schools patron, and before long, the Physical Education teacher was participating in chess competitions. She competed in her first tournament in 2011.

Hello Magret, thank you for taking the time to speak with us. Could you please introduce yourself to our readers and tell us more about yourself?

I am a dedicated Physical Education teacher at an international school in Blantyre, Malawi, I have cultivated a strong passion for chess education and development.

My chess journey began in 2010 as a school patron, where my interest quickly evolved from observing tournaments to participating in them.

Since my inaugural tournament in 2011, I have maintained an active role in chess as both a player and educator. I achieved the certifications of National Instructor (NI) in 2012 and National Arbiter (NA) in 2015, the same year I emerged victorious in the Mdina Malawi Open Ladies Chess Championship.

Through my collaborations with schools across Malawi, I have promoted chess, eventually assuming the role of Schools' Coordinator for the Chess Association of Malawi in 2018.

My leadership in chess has expanded to international representation, serving as Head of Delegation for Malawian chess teams at multiple international tournaments, including three African Youth Chess Championships, two Chess Olympiads, and regional competitions across Africa.

Additionally, I served as Ladies Captain for the 2018 Chess Olympiad in Batumi, Georgia.

In recognition of my contributions to chess education, I was awarded the Continental Outstanding Chess Educator in 2022 as part of the Women in Chess initiative. In 2023, I advanced to Lead School Instructor (LSI). In 2024 I became the first Candidate Fair Play Expert (FPE) and later in the same year Malawi's only female FIDE Arbiter (FA). This year I was honoured with the FIDE 100 Educator of the Year Award. I am passionate about empowering young minds through chess and continue to work with schools and communities to grow the game in Malawi and beyond.

How does it feel to win an award at the Malawi Sports Awards?

Honestly, it was a great honor for me to represent the Chess Association of Malawi (CHESSAM) at Malawi National Sports Awards, and winning was both a humbling and motivating experience. It validated the work we have put into chess development in schools as an association. More importantly, it was a win for chess in Malawi, proving that chess is gaining more recognition.

Who are the chess players, administrators, and technical officials you admire?

Players it has to be Judit Polgar who doesn't love a queen who can destroy kings. Magnus Carlsen he makes chess look way too easy And lastly GM Bassem Amin our African chess needs superheroes too!



"They have genuinely revolutionized the game of chess where the values of inclusivity, commitment, and passion for chess development shine brightly."

Administrators it has to be Arkady Dvorkovich, for running FIDE like a grandmaster. And then Tshepiso Lopang her ability to multitask, I suspect she has some extra hours in a day that the rest of us do not have.

And all those unsung heroes in African chess who juggle chess development with trying to explain to their families why they spend more time with pawns than people.

Technical Officials: Top-notch arbiters like Laurent Freyd, because without them, tournaments would be like a game of blitz with no clock, total chaos.

Where do you see yourself in the chess world in the next five years?

Hopefully, not still explaining to people that "chess is a sport." Becoming an International Arbiter, so I can travel the world while reminding grandmasters to press their clocks. Growing chess in Malawi so much that parents start saying, "You better do your chess homework first!" instead of math. Training and mentoring more girls in chess because we need more queens ruling the board! Lastly sitting at a Chess Olympiad, sipping tea watching my students crush the competition.

MONA EL-LABOUDY A TRAILBLAZER OF CHESS IN AFRICA

Written by African Chess Confederation

As the first Arabic woman to receive the International Arbiter title, Mona El-Laboudy is a pioneering force in African chess, inspiring positive change and empowerment through the game.

The veteran chess administrator is thrilled to see the surge in women chess arbiters and has pledged to continue empowering their growth, inspiring a global phenomenon.

Mona El-Laboudy, who has paved the way in chess arbitration for her daughters, told us that "You want the younger generation to look at you and think I can also do it."

Thank you, Dr. Mona El-Laboudy, for taking the time to speak with us. Could you please introduce yourself to our readers?

Thank you. I am Mona El-Laboudy. I earned a Ph.D. in Economics with highest honors from Cairo University and a Master's degree in Islamic Economics with distinction.

Additionally, I obtained a Diploma in Islamic Studies. These academic qualifications have provided me with a strong foundation in economic analysis and financial management, enabling me to hold leadership positions such as former General Manager at the Egyptian Tax Authority and lecturer in economics, accounting, and taxation at various educational institutions in Egypt and the UAE.

This has contributed to my success in fostering a distinguished generation of female arbiters in both Egypt and the UAE.

I began my journey in chess as a player and champion in Egyptian universities throughout my studies, captivated by the intellectual challenges and complex strategies the game offers.



Over time, and after assuming the position of coach at the UAE Chess Federation, I expanded my involvement to become an International Arbiter in 1986, being the first Arab woman to receive this title. I then became a certified trainer by the International Chess Federation in 2012, contributing to the development of many female players' skills.

Additionally, I held administrative roles, such as Head of Women's Activities and member of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Chess Federation during two terms (2004-2008 and 2018-2021), which allowed me to contribute to the development of chess at both national and international levels.

I have also made literary contributions to the field of chess by authoring the first Arabic book of its kind: "The Game of Kings: Genius or Madness and Its Impact on Life Aspects" (first edition 2022, second edition 2023), in which I explored the influence of chess on intelligence, academic excellence, and the treatment of certain diseases, relying on global academic studies.

Your efforts have paved the way for African women in chess arbitration. After decades, we are witnessing an increase in the number of African women holding arbitration positions. How do you feel about being a pioneer in this field and the growth we are seeing?

I feel proud and satisfied to see this progress. When I began my career as the first Arab woman to receive the title of International Arbiter in chess in 1986, the field lacked female representation. Seeing more African women taking on arbitration roles today reflects positive change and the efforts made to empower women in this area. This growth encourages me to continue supporting and mentoring the next generation of female arbiters. I believe I have made a contribution, albeit small, in this field. During my tenure as the first coach at the Sharjah Chess and Culture Club for Women for 25 years, I was part of the founding team of the club, making it the first official club for female chess players. I also contributed to graduating prominent figures in the chess field, including club board chairpersons, international arbiters, and international players. Additionally, during my presidency of the Women's Activity Committee at the Egyptian Chess Federation (2017-2020), I was keen to revive women's activities after a period of stagnation by organizing tournaments and training and arbitration courses for women, which contributed to increasing women's participation in this sport and led to the emergence of several distinguished female arbiters.

Maha Mahmoud, Merihan Mahmoud, Dr Mayada and Dr Marwa drew inspiration from their mother Mona El-Laboudy, a trailblazing figure who broke barriers as the first Arabic female International Arbiter.



You attempted to transition into chess administration; what challenges did you face?

Transitioning into administration in the field of chess was a challenge that required a deep understanding of the sport and the ability to organize and plan. One of the main challenges I faced was balancing multiple roles as a player, arbiter, coach, and administrator, alongside my professional career in economics. Overcoming these challenges required meticulous time management, developing multiple skills, and a continuous commitment to learning and self-development. The support of family and colleagues played a pivotal role in helping me overcome these challenges.

Your daughters are involved in arbitration and chess. Can you describe how you supported them in these endeavors, and how do you feel about their success?

Chess has had a significant impact on all members of my family. Academically, thank God, they all excelled in their studies; three of them became doctors, and the fourth is a risk manager. In terms of chess, the influence was evident, starting with my husband, Mahmoud Hussein, who obtained the title of International Arbiter in chess in 1986.

All four of my daughters are distinguished players; two of them, Maha and Merihan Mahmoud Hussein, are Former International Players Egyptian National Team, Fide Instructors and International Arbiters, with Merihan achieving this title at a young age, becoming the youngest International Arbiter, and their sister Mayada is a Fide Arbiter, while my eldest daughter, Marwa, chose to remain a player, mother, and wife.

I feel proud and honored that one of my daughters, International Arbiter Maha Mahmoud Hussein, is taking measured steps towards advancing in this activity. She was recognized as the Best Arab Chess Personality and obtained a trainer certificate from the International Chess.

Finally, I would like to offer advice to our youth to excel in chess by being passionate and dedicated, as these are the keys to success in any field. They should continue learning and training, and participate in tournaments to gain experience. I also recommend seeking mentors or experienced coaches to benefit from their guidance. Most importantly, they should have faith in their abilities and confidence that the effort they put in will eventually bear fruit.

During your upbringing, which chess figures did you consider role models and why?

Chess personalities who influenced me during my journey, Judit Polgár stands out as a prominent example in the chess world. She challenged the male dominance in the sport and achieved victories against world champions like Garry Kasparov and Magnus Carlsen. Earning the Grandmaster title at a young age demonstrates her excellence and proves that women are capable of competing and excelling in this field.

What is your opinion on a woman assuming the presidency of the African Chess Confederation for the first time in the sport's history?

Ms. Tshepiso Lopang's leadership of the African Chess Confederation is a significant step toward enhancing women's roles in sports leadership positions. This reflects progress toward achieving diversity and inclusivity in the chess community. Additionally, the election of Ms. Bouchra Kadiri as president of the Royal Moroccan Chess Federation serves as another successful example of women's ability to lead and develop chess in the continent.

What advice would you offer to aspiring chess arbiter and technical officials?

Deep Understanding of Chess Rules: Thorough knowledge of the chess laws approved by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) is essential to ensure correct application during matches.

Continuous Training: Engaging in ongoing training helps develop the skills and knowledge necessary for effective officiating.

Gaining Practical Experience: Working in local and international tournaments contributes to building valuable experience and handling diverse situations during games.

Maintaining Neutrality and Fairness: arbiter must be impartial and fair in all decisions, enhancing the integrity of competitions.

Developing Personal Skills: Abilities such as quick decision-making, neutrality, and handling pressure are crucial.

Networking with Experienced Arbiter: Interacting with seasoned Arbiters can provide valuable insights and advice.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW ON www.africanchessconfederation.com

ESWATINI CHESS NATIONAL TEAM WINS OUTSTANDING SPORTS TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD



The Eswatini Chess National team (open) was bestowed the honor of 'Outstanding Sports Team Of The Year' at the 4th edition of the Eswatini Annual Sport Awards.

The team consisted of CM Mbongwni Mabuza, CM Sikhanyiso Sihlongonyane, Philani Mtsetfwa, CM Similo Hlope and Simphiwe Dlamini.

The team secured the trophy as the team of the year following their outstanding achievement at the 2024 Chess Olympiad in Budapest where they won a bronze medal in Group E.

LESOTHO CHESS FEDERATION WINS FOUR AWARDS AT THE 2024 LASA

One of our affiliates, the Chess Federation of Lesotho, garnered four prestigious awards at the 4th edition of the Lesotho Annual Sports Awards.

Relebohile Ntsielo, a rising chess star, was honored as both the 'Junior Female Sportsperson of the Year' and 'Sportswoman of the Year'.

Lebajoa Ts'ephe received the 'Junior Male Sportsperson of the Year' award, while chess coach Moseli Phera was recognized as the 'Coach of the Year'.



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**CHESS FEDERATION OF LESOTHO
ESWATINI CHESS
CHESS ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI**

We would love to hear from you. Feel free to send your views,
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