



“Gens una sumus”

2026 Sahel International Chess Festival

Monastir, Tunisia



October 24 – November 01, 2026

INVITATION

The Carré Royal Association of Ksibet El Mediouni, in collaboration with Smart Chess Academy, under the auspices of the Tunisian Chess Federation, cordially invite all national chess federations that are FIDE members to participate in the 2026 Sahel International Chess Festival, sponsored by Chess Mall (CHESS MALL).

This is the second edition of this prestigious event, building on the success of the 2025 Festival, which was also held in Monastir and received wide recognition. An article published on the FIDE website may be consulted here:

<https://www.fide.com/from-norway-to-north-africa-johan-sebastian-wins-inaugural-sahel-chess-festival-in-tunisia/>

and a Chessbase article here:

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/sahel-chess-festival-2025>

1. Dates, Location, and Travel.

1.1 Event program and venue



The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival will be held in Monastir, Tunisia from **October 24, 2026** (Arrival Day) through **November 01, 2026** (Departure Day). The tournament will take place at **Hotel El Habib**. The street address is BP327 avenue Habib Bourguiba, 5000 Monastir, Tunisia. Access to the playing venue will require accreditation badges.

Monastir is a coastal city in the Tunisian Sahel, located in central-eastern Tunisia. It lies on a peninsula southeast of the Gulf of Hammamet, about twenty kilometers east of Sousse and 162 kilometers south of Tunis.

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Monastir is an excellent destination in Tunisia, appreciated for its blend of beautiful beaches, rich historical heritage (such as the Ribat and the Bourguiba Mausoleum), and its friendly atmosphere, offering a perfect balance between seaside relaxation and cultural discovery.

It is often perceived as more authentic and less touristy than other resorts, featuring lovely beaches, a marina, lively souks, and a strategic location for exploring the region.

2. Eligibility to Participate; Official Players; Delegations.

2.1 Eligibility.

The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival is open to players representing national chess federations from all FIDE member countries and FIDE Affiliated Members. Every player must possess a FIDE ID to register. Parents of younger players who do not yet have a FIDE ID should obtain one from their national federations prior to attempting to register.

2.2 Tournaments.

The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival is comprised of five standard-control (classical) tournaments based on FIDE Standard rating (Elo) and player age.

Tournament A “Élite”: Elo 2000 and above

Tournament B “Ascension”: Elo 1700-1999

Tournament C “Progression” :Elo 1500-1699

Tournament D “Étoiles montantes”: Elo 1499 and below

Tournament E “Chemin des Sages”: Player age over 50 y.o. (born in 1975 and earlier)

The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival will also feature a Blitz tournament.

2.3 Playing Up and Rating-List Reclassification

Players may request permission to compete in a higher tournament section under the following conditions:

- A player rated up to 30 points below the minimum rating for Tournament A “Élite” may request to play in Tournament A “Élite”. This applies to players rated 1970 to 1999. A maximum of four (4) such players may be accepted.
- A player rated up to 60 points below the minimum rating for Tournament B may request to play in Tournament B. This applies to players rated 1640 to 1699. A maximum of ten (10) such players may be accepted.
- No requests to play up from Tournament D to Tournament C will be accepted.

All such requests must be made in writing at the time of registration and are subject to approval by the Organizing Committee.

Section eligibility and any required reclassification will be determined using the FIDE Rating List (FRL) in effect for October 2026 (the “October FRL”). After the registration deadline, and in any event prior to the publication of pairings for Round 1, the Organizing Committee will automatically move a player to the appropriate section if the player’s rating on the October FRL falls outside the published rating band of the section in which the player registered (for example, a player registered in the 1700-1999 tournament whose October FRL rating is 2005 will be moved to the 2000+ tournament).

Except for automatic reclassification under the October FRL and any organizer-initiated corrections, a player’s section, once approved by the Organizer, is final and may not be changed.

3. Technical Information and Schedule.

The tournament will be conducted in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess, as well as the official FIDE and FTE regulations for competitions. The Technical Regulations for the 2026 Sahel Chess Festival, which form an integral part of this Invitation, can be found in the second half of the present document. The detailed schedule is also included in the Technical Regulations.

4. Accommodation and Meals.

Official Hotel: Hotel El Habib (4-star) – Monastir

Accommodation formula: Soft All Inclusive – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and non-alcoholic drinks.

For the stay from 24 October 2026 through 1 November 2026 (eight nights), the rates are as follows, per person:

- €480 in a double or triple room.
- €330 for a child under 12, when accompanied by an adult
- €550 in a single room

The above prices already include:

- the tourism tax (€30 per person),
- the individual license fee required by the Tunisian Chess Federation (€20 per person),
- the registration fee for the classical tournament, and
- the cost of one official excursion.

Important:

All reservations must be made exclusively through the festival organization and not directly with the hotel. Otherwise, the player will incur penalties and will have to pay separate registration fees mentioned above.

5. Travel and Transfers.

For participants traveling from certain countries, **flight + hotel packages** are currently being arranged.

Round-trip car transfers between the airport and the official hotel are available at the following rates:

- **Monastir Airport**
 - €30 for 1 person
 - €15 per person for 2 to 4 persons
- **Tunis–Carthage Airport**
 - €80 for 1 person
 - €40 per person for 2 to 3 persons
 - €30 per person for 4 persons

For group airport transfers, please contact the Organizers by email in order to receive a tailor-made quotation.

6. Registration and Deadlines.

6.1. Player Registration

Player registration shall be completed through the online form available on the Festival website at

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<http://www.sahelchessfestival.com/>

(please follow the registration link to <https://tinyurl.com/sahelfestival2026>).

For any questions, participants may contact the Organizers at:

sahelchessfestival@gmail.com

Registration deadline: **15 October 2026**

For players **not accommodated at the official hotel**, the fees are as follows:

- **Registration fee: €60**
- **Tunisian Chess Federation licence fee: €20**

Exempt from registration fee: GM, IM, WGM, WIM

Blitz tournament entry fee:

€20 per participant, payable no later than the preceding day.

A deposit of at least **50% of the total registration and accommodation costs** must be paid by **30 September 2026** in order for the player to be listed on **Chess Results**. The balance must be paid by **15 October 2026**.

Bank account for payments:

Nom: **CARRÉ ROYAL**

Bank Name: **STB Ksibet El Mediouni**

Swift bank: **STBKTNTT**

Account No.: **10603 086 1030046 788 58**

Cancellation Policy:

Before September 24, 2026: 20% administrative fee applies to any cancellation.

From September 24, 2026 onward: no refunds.

The total capacity of the Festival is 300 players. Priority will be given first to players registered in the higher sections, in the following order: A, B, C, and D. Within these sections, places will be allocated according to the order in which registration and payment are completed. Section E (age 50+) is considered separately. The final participant list will be published on **Chess-Results**.

6.2. Registration of Accompanying Persons

Every minor player must be accompanied by a responsible adult (parent, legal guardian, coach, or another explicitly designated adult), who must register as an Accompanying Person.

7. Tournament Principals; Additional Arbiters.

Organizer: Carré Royal Association in collaboration with Smart Chess Academy

Chairman of the Organizing Committee and Festival Director:

International Organizer (IO) Chaher Eddine Miladi

Deputy Directors: Hassen Abdellali and IO Vadim Tsypin

Chief Arbiter: International Arbiter (IA) Mohamed Ali Baktache

Deputy Chief Arbiter: International Arbiter (IA) Diana Tsypina

The Organizing Committee will appoint the Appeals Committee Chairman, and other Tournament Principals, including the Pairings Officer, in due course. Additional arbiters will be appointed according to FIDE guidelines, with the final number determined by the competition size.

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8. Prizes.

Total Prize Fund: approximately €8,200

Prize Category	A	B	C	D	E	Blitz
Eligibility / Type	Elo \geq 2000	1700 \leq Elo \leq 1999	1500 \leq Elo \leq 1699	Elo \leq 1499	S50	Open Blitz
Total equivalent	€2,480	€1,565	€1,080	€760	€900	€1,120
1st Prize	€1,000 + Trophy + Gold Medal	€450 + Trophy + Gold Medal	€240 + Trophy + Gold Medal	€180 + Trophy + Gold Medal	€300 + Trophy + Gold Medal	€300 + Trophy + Gold Medal
2nd Prize	€600 + Silver Medal	€300 + Silver Medal	€180 + Silver Medal	€150 + Silver Medal	€230 + Silver Medal	€240 + Silver Medal
3rd Prize	€350 + Bronze Medal	€200 + Bronze Medal	€150 + Bronze Medal	€120 + Bronze Medal	€170 + Bronze Medal	€180 + Bronze Medal
4th Prize	€200	€150	€120	€90	€110	€150
5th Prize	€150	€90	€90	€70	€90	€90
Best Female Player	€90	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	—	€75 (Chess Mall gift)
Best U20 Player	€90	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	€75 (Chess Mall gift)	—	€75 (Chess Mall gift)
Best rating category 1	—	1900–1999 Elo: €75 (Chess Mall gift)	1600–1699 Elo: €75 (Chess Mall gift)	—	—	—
Best rating category 2	—	1800–1899 Elo: €75 (Chess Mall gift)	1500–1599 Elo: €75 (Chess Mall gift)	—	—	—
Best rating category 3	—	1700–1799 Elo: €75 (Chess Mall gift)	—	—	—	—
Other special prizes / notes	—			U16 medals (boys and girls) + Chess Mall gift	Minimum 20 S50 players required; otherwise players join other events by rating, and a Best S50 prize of €75 will be awarded in each tournament.	Best Player over 50: €75; Chess Mall gift prizes

Note:

Prizes are not shared. They are awarded according to the final ranking. It is not possible to win two prizes; a player will receive only the highest prize for which they qualify.

9. Satellite Events.

Several satellite events will be held, including a FIDE-rated Blitz, lectures, and tourist excursions. For dates and times, please refer to the Schedule tournament of the Technical Regulations. Details

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about format, time control, fees, and prizes will be published on the Organizer’s website. Registration will be available online and on-site.

10. Visa Information.

Players and other delegation members who require a visa to enter Tunisia must contact the Organizer before September 01, 2026. Invitations for visas will be provided only after complete player registrations and payment, as described in Articles 5.1 and 5.2.

11. Medical Requirements, Vaccination, and Masks.

During the Championships, all participants must strictly adhere to the medical protocols established by the Tunisian Ministry of Public Health. The Organizer will provide timely updates on any changes to these medical requirements.

If PCR or other pre-departure tests are required for participants to return to their home countries at the time of the tournament, the Organizer will attempt to arrange on-site access to these tests. Fees may apply for services provided by a medical establishment.

Currently, face masks are not required for entry to the playing venue. However, this policy is subject to change based on the sanitary situation, health conditions, and regulations in effect at the time of the tournament. Even when masks are not mandatory, participants are encouraged to wear them, and it is recommended that anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms or not feeling well for any reason wear a mask throughout the event. Please be considerate of others' decisions regarding mask use.

Organizers and Arbiters reserve the right to request that any player or Accompanying Person wear a mask if deemed necessary for the safety of others. Non-compliance may result in restricted access to the playing venue.

12. Contact Information.

The Sahel Chess Festival 2026 Organizing Committee:

E-mail: sahelchessfestival@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.sahelchessfestival.com/>

WhatsApp: +216-52-219-319

13. Language.

A courtesy translation of this invitation will be available in Arabic, French, Spanish, and Russian. In case of discrepancies, the English version shall prevail.

Chaher Eddine Miladi IO
OC Chairman and Festival Director

Hassen Abdellali
Deputy Festival Director

CHANGE LOG

Version	Release date	Notes
1.0	2026-Mar-11	Initial version
1.1	2026-May-21	Technical edits



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TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

14. Governing Regulations.

The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival will be conducted in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess, FIDE General Regulations for Competitions, applicable FTE Rules, and these Technical Regulations. Any unforeseen circumstances not covered by the above regulations will be referred to the Chief Organizer, whose decision will be final.

15. Format & System.

Each tournament that has more than ten (10) registered participants will be played as a nine (9) round Standard Swiss system event. If a tournament has exactly ten (10) participants, it will be played as a nine (9) round Round Robin event. Pairings will be made by the Pairings Officer using FIDE-certified software, under the supervision of the Chief Arbiter.

16. Player Ratings.

Tournament composition is determined by player ratings.

- If a player has a published FIDE standard rating, that rating will be used.
- If a player does not have a FIDE standard rating, the highest available rating (e.g. FIDE Rapid, USCF, DWA, etc.) might be used at the Organizer's discretion.

The starting list and all pairings will use the FIDE Standard Rating List valid as of October 02, 2026.

All tournaments of the Festival will be rated with FIDE.

17. Time Control, Default Time, Forfeits.

The time control for all games is 90 minutes for each player, with a 30-second Fischer increment per move starting from the first move (90' + 30" increment from Move 1).

If a player arrives at the chessboard more than thirty (30) minutes after the actual start of the round, they will lose the game by forfeit. The result "0F" will be recorded, and the player will not be paired for subsequent rounds unless decided otherwise by the Chief Arbiter at his sole discretion.

18. Schedule.

Day of the week	Date	Time	Activity
Saturday	October 24		Arrival (all day)
Saturday	October 24	10:00	Accreditation of foreign players starts
Sunday	October 25	12:00	Accreditation of local players starts
Sunday	October 25	13:00	Technical Meeting
Sunday	October 25	14:00	Final player lists published
Sunday	October 25	15:00	Round 1 pairings published
Sunday	October 25	15:45	Opening Ceremony
Sunday	October 25	16:00	Round 1
Monday	October 26	09:00	Round 2
Monday	October 26	16:00	Round 3
Tuesday	October 27	09:00	Organized excursion (incl. in the package)
Tuesday	October 27	16:00	Round 4
Wednesday	October 28	09:00	Round 5
Wednesday	October 28	16:00	Round 6
Thursday	October 29	09:00	Round 7
Thursday	October 29	20:00	Blitz Tournament
Friday	October 30		Free time (extra excursions might be offered)
Friday	October 30	16:00	Round 8
Saturday	October 31	09:00	Round 9
Saturday	October 31	15:00	Closing Ceremony, Awards Presentation
Saturday	October 31		Departure
Sunday	November 01		Departure of foreign participants

19. Tie-breaks.

No playoff games will be held; all places in each tournament will be determined by tiebreak criteria. The 2026 Sahel Chess Festival will use technical tie-breaks as per the FIDE Play-Off and Tie-Break Regulations effective from March 1, 2026.

For the tournaments where the competition is played as a Swiss system event, the final ranking order of the players is determined by the number of points scored. If at the end of the tournament, two or more players are tied, the tie shall be broken as follows:

- 1) Direct encounter
- 2) Buchholz Cut 1
- 3) Buchholz
- 4) Number of games won over the board (excluding unplayed games)
- 5) Number of games won with Black over the board (excluding unplayed games)

If there is a tournament where the competition is played as a Round Robin event, the final ranking order of the players is determined by the number of points scored. If at the end of the tournament, two or more players are tied, the tie shall be broken as follows:

- 1) Direct encounter
- 2) Number of wins (including forfeits)
- 3) Sonneborn-Berger
- 4) Koya System

20. IDs and Memberships.

Every player must already possess a FIDE ID to register. Parents of younger players who do not yet have a FIDE ID should obtain one from their national federations prior to attempting to register. Players under Tunisian flag shall hold FTE licenses valid through the last day of the festival. For foreign players staying in the official hotel, the license cost is included in the registration package.

21. Withdrawals.

If a player wishes to withdraw from the tournament, they must communicate their request in writing to an arbiter using a prescribed form no later than during the preceding round. Once the pairings for the new round are published, they cannot be changed. Any late withdrawal requests will result in a forfeit of the game for which the player has already been paired.

Players who missed a round without informing the Chief Arbiter in writing will not be paired for the subsequent round. Players who missed two rounds in a row without informing the Chief Arbiter will be considered withdrawn.

22. Playing venue.

As per FIDE Laws of Chess, Art. 11:

- The 'playing venue' is defined as the 'playing area', rest rooms, toilets, refreshment area, area set aside for smoking and other places as designated by the arbiter.
- The playing area is defined as the place where the games of a competition are played.
- Only with the permission of the arbiter can:
 - o a player leave the playing venue,
 - o the player having the move be allowed to leave the playing area.
 - o a person who is neither a player nor arbiter be allowed access to the playing area.
- During play the players are forbidden to use any notes, sources of information or advice, or analyze any game on another chessboard.

Spectators, including parents and Accompanying Persons, are not allowed in the playing area when rounds are underway. Spectators are not allowed to communicate with players anywhere in the playing venue (e.g., in the toilets or in the hallway).

Parents and Accompanying Persons are welcome to take photographs before rounds begin. Spectators must leave the playing area five minutes before each round starts. An official photographer will attempt to take photos during rounds, which will be made available to parents and players.

23. Fair play; electronic equipment.

Fair play measures will be implemented as per the FIDE Anti-Cheating Guidelines. In accordance with FIDE Laws of Chess, Article 11.3.2, players are forbidden from having any electronic device not explicitly approved by the arbiter in the playing venue. Any electronic device must be stored in a player's bag and switched off completely. This bag must be placed as agreed with the arbiter. Players are forbidden to use this bag without the arbiter's permission. If a player is found near any non-stored electronic device during the round anywhere in the playing venue, including in the toilets, the penalty will be automatic forfeiture of the game.

Players are not allowed to wear watches of any kind (electronic or mechanical). Accompanying Persons are also prohibited from using electronic devices in the playing venue, except for taking photographs before the start of the round, when explicitly approved by the arbiter.

24. Player conduct.

All participants are bound by the Laws of Chess and must behave at all times during the tournament in accordance with FTE and FIDE statutes, demonstrating the highest standards of sportsmanship.

Players and Heads of Delegations must attend the Technical Meeting. The Chief Arbiter may call additional Technical Meetings if necessary.

Players are expected to attend all official events held by the Organizer, including the Opening and Closing ceremonies. Players are required to cooperate with the media and be available for brief interviews immediately after each game. Players must maintain a dignified appearance throughout the event.

25. Appeals Committee.

The Organizer will appoint the Chairman and two (2) other members of the Appeals Committee, all from different national chess federations, as well as two (2) reserve members. All appointments will be announced no later than the conclusion of the Technical Meeting before Round 1.

If a dispute involves two players from the same national chess federation, the original Appeals Committee member from that federation will participate in the decision. If a dispute involves a player from their own federation and one from a different federation, the Appeals Committee member must recuse themselves, and a reserve member will take their place.

Only a player or a Head of Delegation may lodge a protest. All protests must be submitted in writing to the Appeals Committee within one (1) hour after the completion of the relevant game or the alleged occurrence being disputed.

Each protest must be accompanied by a deposit fee of fifty (50) Euros in cash. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be refunded; if rejected, the fee will be forfeited to the Organizer.

The Appeals Committee may decide on:

- a) An appeal against an arbiter's decision,
- b) A protest regarding a player's behavior,
- c) Other matters the Committee deems relevant.

No appeals will be accepted against pairings generated by FIDE-certified tournament management software.

The written decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

26. Recording Moves and Marking Results.

As per FIDE Laws of Chess, Art. 8.1.1:

“In the course of play each player is required to record his own moves and those of his opponent in the correct manner, move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible, in the algebraic notation (Appendix C), on the ‘scoresheet’ prescribed for the competition.”

Parents and legal guardians should ensure that their younger children practice recording the moves well before the tournament.

When the game is finished, each player shall clearly mark its result on his or her scoresheet as “1-0”, “½-½”, or “0-1” and sign this scoresheet. Then, the player shall cross-sign the opponent’s scoresheet and ask his opponent to cross-sign his. Once both scoresheets have results and two signatures, players shall remain seated and raise their hands without talking in order to attract the attention of an arbiter on the floor. The arbiter will come to the table, check the result, indicate it on the official pairings sheet, and will collect both scoresheets. The players can only leave when an arbiter tells them so. If one or both players does not follow this procedure and leaves before an arbiter explicitly allows them to do so, the result of the game can be entered in any way including “0-0” at the sole discretion of the Chief Arbiter.

Parents shall explain this requirement to their children. Parents are encouraged to “role-play” the end-of-game situation with the children, taking upon themselves first the character of their child’s opponent, then that of an arbiter.