

INVITATION LETTER

FIDE ISFC WORLD SCHOOLS

TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP 2026

AMERICAN CONTINENTAL STAGE



WORLD
SCHOOLS TEAM
CHAMPIONSHIP
2026



INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL CHESS
FEDERATION



FREEDOM



Chess in
Education
2026

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) and the International School Chess Federation (ISCF) invite all FIDE member federations belonging to the American zone according to FIDE division (https://directory.fide.com/list/member_federations/main) and eligible players to participate in the American stage of the World Schools Team Championship 2026. The competition will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica from 11th (arrival) to 16th (departure) August 2026. The venue is the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Cariari San Jose, located at *San Antonio de Belen Ciudad Cariari, San Jose, Costa Rica*.

1. General

1.1. The FIDE ISCF World Schools Team Championship 2026 (hereinafter referred to as WSTC 2026) is the flagship FIDE and ISCF competition among teams of general educational institutions for 2026. WSTC 2026 is divided into four continental stages (Africa, America, Asia and Europe) and a Grand Final with the continental stages' winning teams participating. The WSTC 2026 cycle shall be governed by the relevant FIDE Regulations, except where present Regulations override them.

1.2. FIDE will be responsible for the global promotion of the WSTC 2026.

1.3. WSTC 2026 is organized under the aegis of the FIDE Events Commission (hereinafter referred to as "EVE").

1.4. Teams of chess academies, chess clubs, chess departments of junior physical training clubs, specialized sports schools, Olympic reserve schools, or those that combine players from more than one general educational institution are not allowed to participate.

1.5. Players who were born on January 1st, 2012, and later but not later than on December 31st, 2018, are eligible for participation in WSTC 2026.

1.6. Each team shall consist of four main players, one reserve and one non-playing captain (an adult). Teams with fewer than four players (minimum three) must receive prior approval from the Organizer to participate.

All members of the team must have a FIDE ID.

1.7. Each team must include at least one boy and at least one girl.

1.7.1. In case the team represents "one gender only" general education institution, its participation in WSTC 2026 must be approved by the National Chess Federation on the basis of the official letter of the corresponding country's governmental (or municipal) structure responsible for education.

1.8. The National Chess Federation must conduct eligibility checks to verify that the children are educated at the same school that is entering the tournament during the 2025-2026 school year.

A team that is found to have an ineligible player will be subject to the following sanctions:

- The team and its individual players will be disqualified from the competition and shall forfeit all prizes they have won.
- The school will be banned from participation in the next edition of the competition. This ban may be extended by the FIDE Council.
- The National Chess Federation will be banned from entering teams into the next edition of the competition. This ban may be extended by the FIDE Council.
- The FIDE Council may report any of the parties involved to the FIDE Ethics & Disciplinary Commission for further investigation, which may lead to further sanctions

1.9. In case of any inconsistency between the General Regulations and the specific provisions of this Invitational Letter for the American Continental Stage, the provisions of this Invitational Letter shall prevail, subject to prior written approval by the FIDE Events Commission.

2. Schedule

WEEKDAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT
Tuesday	August 11	10:00 - 19:00	Arrival, Accreditation Technical meeting*
Wednesday	August 12	10:00 - 10:30	Opening Ceremony
Wednesday	August 12	11:30 - 13:30	Round 1
Wednesday	August 12	15:00 - 17:00	Round 2
Thursday	August 13	11:00 - 13:00	Round 3
Thursday	August 13	15:00 - 17:00	Round 4
Friday	August 14	11:00 - 13:00	Round 5
Friday	August 14	15:00 - 17:00	Round 6
Saturday	August 15	10:00 - 12:00	Round 7
Saturday	August 15	13:30 - 15:30	Round 8
Saturday	August 15	20:30	Closing Ceremony
Sunday	August 16		Departure

*The Technical meeting time will be announced later on the official website.

3. Registration

3.1. The deadline for registration is July 16, 2026, at 11:59 PM CET.

3.2. To ensure proper tournament standards, all participating teams must be registered exclusively through their FIDE member federation. Teams participating in WSTC 2026 via Wild Card slots may be registered directly by the Organizer.

3.3. Federations must fully complete the official online registration, accommodation, and travel form no later than the deadline specified for their respective Continental stage. Incomplete submissions or individual applications will not be accepted.

3.4. All registrations must be submitted through the official registration form in accordance with the published registration rules and procedures on the official website: <http://worldschoolteam2026.fide.com/registration-stage-america/>

3.5. There will be an option to submit passport data for a visa application.

3.6. After the registration deadline, late registrations are not guaranteed and are subject to availability under the following conditions:

- the respective FIDE member federation has informed FIDE and ISCF in advance about the later date of its national qualification event;
- visa requirements (where applicable) allow participation despite the later submission;
- acceptance is approved jointly by FIDE and ISCF. Late registration is not guaranteed and is subject to availability

4. Tournament format

4.1. The tournament will be an 8-round Swiss, played with two games per day over four (4) days.

4.2. The captain will provide their four main players and reserve in a fixed board order not later than the end of the Technical meeting. This order will be fixed for the duration of the tournament. There is no requirement to assign board numbers in rating order. If a team has three (3) players, they will be placed in the top positions in the team composition, the last board will be empty. A team may only forfeit boards starting from the lowest board upward.

4.3. The team composition for each round shall be submitted not later than 30 minutes before each round. At least one player from each gender from the team should play in at least four (4) rounds. If the team captain fails to submit their team composition in a round by the deadline, the team will be deemed to have chosen the first main players in their team, according to the Article 4.2.

4.4. The first-named team in a pairing shall have the white pieces on the odd-numbered boards, the black pieces on the even-numbered boards.

4.5. The time control will be 45 minutes, plus a 10 seconds increment per move starting from move one.

4.6. The default time is 10 minutes. Any player who arrives at the chessboard after the default time shall forfeit the game unless the arbiter decides otherwise.

4.7. The following FIDE regulations apply in full (see Annex 1):

4.7.1. Captains and Heads of Delegation

4.7.2. Appeals Committee Procedural Rules; the appeal fee will be 200 Euros.

4.8. Articles 3-11 of the Olympiad Pairing Rules (see Annex 1) will apply, except that:

4.8.1. Odd Number of Participating Teams (Article 2); this does not apply, and is replaced with, "If there is an odd number of participating teams in a section, the organizing federation has the right to enter another team into that section. If this team is paired and plays round 1, it shall remain in the tournament to the conclusion even if teams joining or withdrawing during the tournament results in there being an odd number of teams."

4.8.2. Ranking of Teams for Pairing Purposes (Article 3); for the purpose of this Article, players without a FIDE rapid rating will instead use their FIDE standard rating. Players with neither of these ratings shall be considered as having a rating of 1400.

4.8.3. Unpaired Teams (Article 10); Article 10.2 shall be "Any paired team that has less than three players for two rounds, consecutive or otherwise, will not be paired for the rest of the tournament."

4.8.4. Miscellaneous (Article 11); references to the "Global Strategy Commission" shall be to the "Events Commission".

4.9. Fair Play Protection Measures will apply (see Annex 1).

4.10. Team Rankings

4.10.1. The team rankings will be determined by Match Points:

- 2 for a match win (including by forfeit)
- 1 for a match draw or a pairing-allocated-bye
- 0 for a match loss (including the team is not paired)

4.10.2. In case of the same number of Match Points, ties will be broken by applying the following tie-breaks as defined in Play-Off and Tie-Break Regulations (see Annex 1) and codes as described in the Mandatory Tie-Breaks document:

- a. Extended Direct Encounter (see Article 13.3; code: EDE)
- b. Extended Sonneborn-Berger for Teams, variant EMGSB Cut-1 (see Articles 13.2.3 and 14.1.1.d; code: EMGSB/C1)
- c. Match Points or Game Points (see Article 13.1; code: MP vGP)
- d. Buchholz Cut 1 (see Articles 8.1, 13 and 14.1.1.a; code: BH:MP/C1)

4.11. The individual rankings for each board, including the reserve, will be determined for eligible players (at least six (6) games played) by the following criteria:

- a. Game Point Percentage (forfeit wins and forfeit losses count)
- b. Number of Games Played (forfeit wins count, forfeit losses do not count)
- c. Number of Games Won (forfeit wins count)
- d. Higher team ranking (see Article 4.10).

4.12. Prizes

The following prizes will be presented:

- 4.12.1. Participation certificates to all players, reserves and captains.
- 4.12.2. All players, the reserve and captain of the first, second and third-placed teams determined by Article 4.10 will receive cups (one for each team in teams' competition), and gold, silver and bronze medals respectively, and other memorable gifts.
- 4.12.3. The first, second and third-placed players on each board determined by Article 4.11 will receive gold, silver and bronze medals and certificates respectively

5. Participation

5.1. The Organizer grants support in the form of travel, full-board accommodation, and transfers to the following participants, with the specific amount and conditions determined by their category as set forth in Section 6:

- a. first 20 (twenty) teams registered by National Chess Federations in full compliance with the present Regulations are provided with:
 - full-board accommodation in accordance with the Article 6.2.1. of the present Regulations,
 - transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation in accordance with the art. 6.2.4. of the present Regulations,

- economy class flights from the member Federation country to the host city for the 4 (four) members of each team in accordance with art. 6.3.1. of the present Regulations; All other things being equal, the priority will be given to National Chess Federations that hold the national schools team competitions (for general education institutions).
- b. 2 (two) teams nominated by the FIDE Events Commission as a Wild Card are provided with:
 - full-board accommodation in accordance with the Article 6.2.1. of the present Regulations,
 - transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation accordance with the Article 6.2.4. of the present Regulations,
 - economy class flights from the member Federation country to the host city for the 4 (four) members of each team in accordance with the Article 6.3.1. of the present Regulations;
- c. 2 (two) teams nominated by the Continental Federation as a Wild Card are provided with:
 - full-board accommodation in accordance with the Article 6.2.1. of the present Regulations,
 - transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation in accordance with the Article. 6.2.4. of the present Regulations,
 - economy class flights from the member Federation country to the host city for the 4 (four) members of each team in accordance with Article 6.3.1. of the present Regulations;
- d. 1 (one) team representing the Host Federation as a National champion or the team, directly nominated by the Host Federation is provided with:
 - full-board accommodation in accordance with the Article 6.2.1. of the present Regulations,
 - transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation accordance with the Article 6.2.4. of the present Regulations,
 - economy class flights from the city of its location to the host city (if necessary) for the 4 (four) members of the team in accordance with the Article 6.3.1. of the present Regulations;
- e. 2 (two) teams nominated by the Host Federation as a Wild Card are provided with:
 - transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation in accordance with the Article 6.2.4. of the present Regulations;
- f. 3 (three) teams nominated by the ISCF are provided with:

- transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation in accordance with the Article 6.2.4. of the present Regulations.

5.1.2. In case of overlapping of teams nominated as Wild Card participants, the matter shall be settled through a joint decision by the Organizer, the National Federation, and the Continental Federation, in consultation with FIDE EVE.

5.2. Following the Continental Federation's request submitted to the Organizer not later than 10 (ten) days before the start of the respective WSTC 2026 event, the FIDE Events Commission and ISCF may accept other additional teams to attend the event at their own cost.

5.3. The participating teams shall be responsible for their own travel expenses, insurance, and other matters not indicated in the Article 5.1. and not covered in Articles 6.2. – 6.4. of the present Regulations. The National Chess Federation is allowed to assume this responsibility from the participating teams.

5.4. The set of rules, prescribed in Articles 1.5, 1.7., 1.7.1. and all related consequences thereof, shall not apply to the teams, granted Wild Card participation by the Organizer.

5.5. The players and the captains shall strictly abide by all internal rules and regulations of both the tournament venue and the official accommodation facilities as well as all the laws and rules prescribed by the national legislation of the host country.

6. Accommodation, air tickets and other services

6.1. The reservation of accommodation will be made on a "First Come, First Served" basis, according to the order of properly completed registrations submitted by the National Chess Federations in accordance with the present regulations.

6.2. ISCF, with the support of the host country' National Chess Federation and the respective Continental federation, will be responsible for providing:

6.2.1.1. Full board accommodation for the teams participating under conditions outlined in items a), b), c) and d) of Article 5.1. Each of the teams mentioned shall receive accommodation equivalent to two twin rooms and one single room for the players, and one single room for the captain (or an equivalent configuration in accordance with the on-campus or designated housing facilities of the venue), from the official Arrival day to the official Departure day of the event.

The Organizer will provide accommodation for participating teams under conditions outlined in items a), b), c) and d) of Article 5.1 at the official venue DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Cariari San Jose or Homewood Suites by Hilton Cariari San Jose, both located at San Antonio de Belen Ciudad Cariari, San Jose, Costa Rica.

The provided accommodation will correspond to the room configuration outlined in the Regulations.

Accompanying persons and additional delegates are welcome to stay at any hotel of their choice.

Please note that room availability for accompanying persons is subject to the hotel's capacity at the time of booking. The Organizer does not guarantee the availability of additional rooms and cannot assume responsibility for fully booked categories. However, upon request, the Organizer will make reasonable efforts to assist with coordination where possible.

6.2.1.2. Teams participating under conditions outlined in items e) and f) of Article 5.1 are invited to stay at the official venue DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Cariari San Jose or Homewood Suites by Hilton Cariari San Jose, both located at San Antonio de Belen Ciudad Cariari, San Jose, Costa Rica, at their own expense. Accommodation requests and booking details will be coordinated through the Organizers.

6.2.2. Accompanying persons and additional delegates of the teams participating under conditions outlined in items e) and f) of Article 5.1 are free to arrange accommodation independently and may stay at any hotel or accommodation facility of their choice.

6.2.3. Full board accommodation, tickets from the country of their permanent residence to the host country and back and stipends for tournament officials. The officials shall be appointed by a joint decision of FIDE, ISCF, and the respective Continental Federation. The appointed officials include one Chief Arbiter, one or more Deputy Chief Arbiters (in case there are multiple Deputy Chief Arbiters, one of them should possess the qualification of a Fair Play Officer and must therefore serve as Fair Play Officer), one Pairing Officer, one Fair Play Officer (in case there is only one Deputy Chief Arbiter), one FIDE Technical Delegate, three members of the Appeals Committee, and an appropriate number of Match Arbiters.

6.2.4. Transfers to and from the airport, as well as local transportation, shall be provided free of charge for all participants and tournament officials.

6.2.5. The venue for the event is prepared and equipped in accordance with the technical requirements provided by FIDE and approved by the Organizer.

6.2.6. Opening and Closing Ceremonies are conducted in accordance with FIDE protocol.

6.2.7. Refreshments (potable water) are available in the playing venue throughout the tournament.

6.2.8. Volunteers sufficient to support the smooth operation of the tournament.

6.2.9. Local promotion of the WSTC 2026 by the Organizer and Co-Organizer, including cooperation with educational institutions and media partners.

6.2.10. Additional cultural and educational activities where feasible, such as museum visits, excursions, and related programs.

6.3. Buying the tickets for Participating teams:

6.3.1. The Organizer shall cover:

- Economy class flights from the member Federation country to the host city are provided for: the 4 (four) members of each team, participating under items a), b), c) and d) of the Article 5.1., specifically:
 - first 20 (twenty) teams registered by the National Chess Federations,
 - 2 (two) teams nominated as a Wild Card by the FIDE Events Commission,
 - 2 (two) teams nominated as a Wild Card by the Continental Federation,
 - 1 (one) team representing the Host Federation as a National champion or the team directly nominated by the Host Federation.
 Any domestic/internal travel expenses from the city in which the school is situated to the airport (e.g. standard class rail fare, internal economy class flights) shall be provided to the same 4 (four) members of each team, mentioned above.
- Travel expenses of the teams provided with the Wild Cards for participation by the ISCF (3 (three) teams under conditions outlined in item f) of the Article 5.1.) and Host Federation (2 (two) teams under conditions outlined in item e) of the Article 5.1.) are to be covered by the teams themselves or National Chess Federations.

6.3.2. The Organizer will purchase flight tickets directly, once the team's participation has been officially confirmed according to the rules prescribed by the present Regulations. The Organizer may also assist (if possible) in booking tickets for team captains and team players exceeding the 4 (four) members mentioned in Article 6.3.1., such assistance shall be provided on the condition that the full cost of these tickets is covered by the National Chess Federation or teams on their own.

Accompanying individuals may be provided with the assistance in booking tickets (if possible), provided that the full cost of these tickets is covered by the accompanying individuals themselves.

The flight tickets purchased by the Organizer are issued only once based on the information officially provided by the respective National Chess Federation and are not subject to change or reissuance by the Organizer under any circumstances.

Any request for correction or modification of the issued tickets, including but not limited to changes of passenger name, travel dates, flight number, airport of departure or destination, or any other travel detail, shall be handled solely at the responsibility and expense of the respective National Chess Federation and/or participant concerned.

6.4. All participants will be provided with transport services on the official Arrival day as well as the departure transfer on the official Departure day. If any delegation arrives one or two days before the competition or leaves later, the same service will not be provided.

6.5. Delegations who make private transport arrangements and clearly indicate this in the registration form will be covering these expenses by themselves and be fully responsible for any issues they experience during arrival or departure.

7. Players and Captains Conduct

7.1. Each team shall wear a team uniform. The uniform can be created by a National Chess Federation or a team.

7.2. No players with inappropriate clothing (e.g. dirty, ripped) shall be allowed in the playing area.

7.3. The players and the captains are invited and expected to attend all official functions approved by EVE during the WSTC 2026 including the Technical Meeting, Opening and the Closing Ceremonies.

7.4. The players are expected to cooperate with the media.

7.5. By participating in the tournament, all players (and their legal representatives, in the case of minors) acknowledge and agree that the Organizer has the right to photograph, record, and livestream the event, including all participants, accompanying persons and others without the need for any additional consent or compensation. The resulting photos, videos, and other media materials may be used by the Organizer for promotional, educational, informational, or any other purposes across all media platforms (including print, digital, and social media), both during and after the tournament without any restrictions.

7.6. By registering a non-playing captain or any accompanying person, National Chess Federations confirm that these individuals are suitable and eligible to perform their roles at the World Schools Team Championship 2026 (WSTC 2026). Each Federation bears full responsibility for ensuring that all such individuals have successfully passed an appropriate check, in accordance with the legal and safeguarding standards of their respective countries.

The Organizer reserves the right to deny accreditation or access to the event to any accompanying person or non-playing captain if credible concerns regarding their eligibility or background arise.

7.7. All participating teams are fully responsible for ensuring compliance with all entry, health, vaccination and transit requirements applicable to Costa Rica and any transit countries along their route of travel. In particular, participants travelling from or transiting through countries designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as risk areas may be required to present a valid Vaccination Certificate or any other required document. Teams are strongly advised to consult the official information published by the World Health Organization (WHO) prior to travel, among others WHO International Travel and Health' on particular conditions such as: https://www.who.int/health-topics/yellow-fever#tab=tab_1

The Organizer shall not bear any responsibility for denied boarding, refusal of entry, quarantine measures, or any other consequences resulting from non-compliance with applicable health or vaccination requirements.

7.8. All participating teams and accompanying persons are required to obtain valid medical and travel insurance covering the entire duration of their participation in the Championship, including official arrival and departure dates. The insurance must include, at minimum, emergency medical coverage and travel-related incidents. The Organizer reserves the right to request proof of valid insurance coverage prior to issuing flight tickets and/or confirming participation conditions. Flight tickets supported by the Organizer shall only be purchased after the respective team has provided the required insurance documents to the Organizer.

8. Visa Information

8.1. Participants who require a visa to enter the territory of the Costa Rica must submit the necessary personal data no later than July 1st 2026, in order to receive an official invitation letter.

8.2. The Organizer will provide visa support in the form of official invitation letters from the Host Federation for all duly registered participants and, where possible, for accompanying persons.

However, the responsibility for securing visa appointments with embassies, obtaining entry visas to the host country, and arranging any required transit visas lies solely with the respective National Chess Federations and participating teams.

8.3 Useful information on visa is here: <https://worldschoolteam2026.fide.com/visa-information-stage-america>

8.4. Invitation letters will be issued **only after the participation of the team has been confirmed in** accordance with the present Regulations and after all required registration information has been submitted.

9. Contact information

Official email worldschoolteam@fide.com

Official website worldschoolteam2026.fide.com

Annex 1 – FIDE Regulations

Relevant FIDE Regulations can be found here:

FIDE Laws of Chess:
<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/E012023>

Olympiad Pairing Rules:
<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/OlympiadPairingRules2022>

Captains and Heads of Delegation:

<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/CaptainsHeadsDelegation>

Appeals Committee Procedural Rules:

<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/AppealsCommitteeProceduralRules>

Fair Play Protection Measures:

https://handbook.fide.com/files/handbook/FPL_Protection_Measures_2024.pdf

Play-Off and Tie-Break Regulations:

<https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/TieBreakRegulations082024>

Mandatory Tie-Breaks

<http://tec.fide.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MandatoryTieBreaks-TRF26.pdf>