Albania Reflections Two (2) by Dr Lyndon Bouah

1. Introduction

When Chess South Africa selected the team in December 2025, we had to move quickly because the closing date was 19 February 2026. We then found flights at R14 000 return which we immediately snapped up. I was then appointed as manager and with the assistance of all the other members we quickly jumped into gear.

An interesting aspect was the e-visa process. This was quite a process as we needed to upload several documents that was required. We all followed through and after paying 25 euros we were issued our visa.





2. The World Senior Team Championship Invitation

FIDE
GENS UNA SUMUS

FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships

18-29 April 2026

Hotel Grand Blue Fafa (*****) Durres/Albania



1. Invitation

This is the official invitation to all senior women and men throughout the world to participate in the FIDE WORLD SENIOR TEAMS CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS (categories 50+ and 65+) organized in Durres (Albania) from 18th April (arrival) to 29th April 2026 (departure) under the aegis of Albanian Chess Federation and FIDE – World Chess Federation.

2. Participation

The FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championships is open to all players, regardless of rating and title, who reach their age of 50 and 65 by 31st December 2026 and represent National Chess Federations which are members of FIDE. Teams can register only through their national chess federations. There is no limit in the number of teams per federation (club teams, city teams, regional teams, national teams, etc. may start in the championship, there is no limitation). There is only one limitation – all team players must be members of the same chess federation. According to the FIDE tournament rules, the World Championship will be played in four categories: age 50+ and 65+ (Open and women). A separate tournament will take place only with a minimum of 10 teams from at least 2 continents. If these conditions are not met, then the teams may participate in the corresponding age category in the Open Section, or (in case of Women 65+), they can take part in the Women's section 50+. All teams are obliged to be accommodated in the official hotel through the organizer.



3. Registration fees and registration and Visa information

The Registration fee is 120 EUR per player and accompanying persons. It includes accreditation and transportation from / to Tirana airport and Grand Blue Fafa on 18 and 29 April. The registration period ends on 18th February 2026 (application deadline). Late registration entry fee is 240 EUR per player.

Requests for Visa invitation letter will be included in the application form and submitted before the application deadline. These requests can be processed earlier by e-mail if required.

The person responsible for the team's application will pay the entry fee for all players and the deposit for the accommodation of all players, including accompanying persons, until the end of registration.

The Organizing Committee will contact each of the teams to confirm the registration and booking
The rest payment for accommodation will be paid before the 1st round of the event
In addition to the written application, personal attendance and accreditation by a responsible person at the venue before the start of the tournament is also required.
Players who are not so accredited will not be included in the draw and their entry fees will be forfeited.
Access to playing areas, venues and the hotels will be allowed only to people accredited by the organizer.

4. Accommodation and boarding

The participating teams shall staying the official hotel for the championship. Bookings are possible only through the Organizing Committee.



OFFICIAL HOTEL: 5-star GRAND BLUE FAFA (*****)

 Full board included: breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily.

 Free Wi-Fi, use of hotel swimming pools and hotel parking.

 All taxes (including Municipality and Tourism Tax).

Prices in euros per person per day

Triple/quadruple room	Double room	Single room
69 euros	86 euros	116 euros

The deadline for registrations and bookings is 18th February 2025, together with a 30% deposit for accommodation package. The deposit payments shall be sent to the organizing agency's bank account, free of bank charges. Pro-forma payment instructions, including bank account details of the organizing agency, will be provided upon each confirmed application.

Full payment for the hotel accommodation of participants and accompanying persons must be completed before the start of the 1st Round.

Extra nights can be requested in advance and, upon availability, can be charged at the same rate





5. Tournament schedule

Day	Date	Hours	Activity
Saturday	18 April		Arrivals
Sunday	19 April	10:30	Technical meeting
Sunday	19 April	15:00	Round 1
Monday	20 April	15:00	Round 2
Tuesday	21 April	15:00	Round 3
Wednesday	22 April	15:00	Round 4
Thursday	23 April	15:00	Round 5
Friday	24 April		Free day
Saturday	25 April	15:00	Round 6
Sunday	26 April	15:00	Round 7
Monday	27 April	15:00	Round 8
Tuesday	28 April	14:00	Round 9
Tuesday	28 April	21:00	Closing Ceremony
Wednesday	29 April		Departures

6. Rules and regulations

The FIDE Tournament Rules should be followed. The championship will be played by a 9-rounds Swiss system. It will be played on 4 chessboards with 1 allowed reserve player (teams can consist of 4 or 5 members). The time control is 90 minutes/40 moves + 30 minutes for the rest of the game + 30 sec for each move from the first move. Default time for all 9 rounds is 30 minutes.

7. Anti-Cheating guidelines

The FIDE Anti-Cheating guidelines are also valid for the World Senior Team Chess Championship. During the championship random AC inspections are possible.

8. Appeals procedure

A protest against the decision of an Arbiter must be submitted in writing to the Chief Arbiter, within 1 hour after the end of the game. A protest fee of 200 Euro has to be paid to FIDE and it is refundable if the protest is upheld. The Appeals Committee may also decide to refund the fee if it considers the appeal was not frivolous.

9. Tie-break criteria

1. number of match points (win = 2 points, draw 1 point, lost game 0 points)
2. number of game points (score)
3. mutual game
4. Buchholz Cut 1
5. Buchholz
6. Sonneborn-Berger

The team with a free lot will obtain 2 match points and 50% of points to the score. If the opponent default the match, the team will obtain 2 match points and 100% of points to the score. Prizes for teams, which get the same number of match points and game points, are distributed according to the Hort system (among such number of teams which corresponds to the number of advertised prizes).

10. Chess equipment
The FIDE approved chess equipment will be used for the event.

11. Awards and titles
The winning team of the FIDE World Senior Team Chess Championship in +50 category receives the title "World Senior Team Champion 2026 in the category +50". The winning team of the FIDE World Senior Teams Chess Championship in +65 category receives the title "World Senior Team Champion 2026 in the category +65".
The winning women team of the FIDE World Senior Team Chess Championship in the women category +50 receives the title "World Senior Team Champion 2026 in the women category +50". The winning women team of the FIDE World Senior Team Chess Championship in the women category +65 receives the title "World Senior Team Champion 2026 in the women category +65".

12. Prizes (in EUR)

Prize fund	**WSTCC open**	**WSTCC open**	**WSTCC women**	**WSTCC women**
Rank	Category 50+	Category 65+	Category 50+	Category 65+
1	1500	1500	500	500
2	1000	1000	200	200
3	700	700	100	100
4	500	500		
5	300	300		
6	200	200		

13. Parallel activities
Rapid tournament during the free day

14. Airport transfer
The organizer arranges the transfer for participants and accompanying persons from the TIRANA airport (IATA: TIA) to the official hotel only on the arrival day (18th April) and back on the departure day (29th April) free of charge

15. Applications and information
Contact person: IO Nikos Kalesis
email: worldseniorteam@fide.com
website: worldseniorteam2026.fide.com

3. History of Albania

The Lonely Planet guide on Albania (2026 edition) describes Albania as that little flag in the middle of the rope in a tug-of-war, constantly being pulled back and forth between powerful empires. Ethnically and linguistically linked to the ancient Illyrian tribes that controlled the south-western Balkans, before Christ, Albania has been conquered by the Greeks, the Byzantines and Ottomans from the east, and the Germans, French and various Italian empires from the west at different points over the last few thousand years.

4. Famous people from Albania

John and Jim Belushi are American actors

Dua Lipa is an international famous pop singer.

Rita Ore is also a pop singer

Xherdan Shaqiri played for many clubs. Started at Basel and played for Liverpool where he made 45 appearances.

5. Interesting Fun facts

The Albania national football team, ranking 51st in the World in 2017 (highest 22nd on 22 August 2015) have won the 1946 Balkan Cup and the Malta Rothmans International Tournament 2000, but had never participated in any major UEFA or FIFA tournament, until UEFA Euro 2016, Albania's first ever appearance at the continental tournament and at a major men's football tournament. Albania scored their first ever goal in a major tournament and secured their first ever win in European Championship when they beat Romania by 1–0 in a UEFA Euro 2016 match on 19 June 2016.[394][395] The most successful football clubs are Skënderbeu, KF Tirana, Dinamo Tirana, Partizani and Vllaznia.

6. Interesting Facts about Albania and South Africa

At the Chess Olympiad in 1970 Albania famously forfeited its match against South Africa as a protest against apartheid marking significant moment in the sporting context. It affected their final standings but kudos to Albania for taking a stand in 1970 already. The sport boycott had already commenced as South Africa had been suspended from the Internal Olympic Committee in 1963 already.

7. Profile of the players

Anton Goosen (prepared by Anton himself)

I am Anton Goosen, a chess addict. I started chess at the age of 13 in grade 7 during 1974. My brother bought me the only Afrikaans chess book available at that stage" Skaak" from Martin Serfontein and Cor Nortje. At a later stage in my life, I met Martin personally and played games against him in tournaments. The book covered the Fischer vs Spassky world championship match of 1972. I lived in a rural town and that was my only source of chess. That was before TV, computers, chess videos, and other aids. Three years later in 1977 I won the Western Transvaal (North –West) Chess Open whilst in grade 10. The same year I played my first SA Schools with chess monsters like Donald MacFarlane and the mighty twins Kevin and Michael O` Sullivan.

I had the honour to play against four different GM players with of score 2/4.

I had a draw in the 1980`s against GM Michael Stean. I had a narrow loss against GM Ludek Pachman during the 1989 SA Closed. Watu Kobese also participated and later became Pachman`s student. In 2009 I played against GM Simen Agdestein (Magnus Carelsen first coach) in the Waterkloof Open in Pretoria and won. (He nearly fell from his chair.) During I think 2010 at the Durban Convention Centre I played against GM Popilski and had the better side of a draw.

At the Commonwealth Championship at the Emerald Casino in Johannesburg, I received a silver medal for the Senior 50 plus. (During the ceremony I was embarrassed when they called the under 100's to the stage).

As a chess coach I had the privilege to accompany various SA teams at the World Youth Championships in Greece, France, and Vietnam. I also represented SA in Namibia during 2018 at the African Amateur Championships.

In 2009 I attended and completed the FIDE Trainers Course which was held by GM E. Grivas in Johannesburg.

It is a privilege to represent SA at the FIDE World Senior Team Championships.

I intend to continue my chess journey like GM Korchnoi till the day I die.

Chess greetings

Anton Goosen



8. Results of Round two

SA drew 2- 2 with France. We drew on boars one with Lyndon playing a KID. On board 2 Shabier pushed hard but fell to an attack. On board 3 Anton Goosen sacrificed the exchange and in a wild tactical melee he secured the first win for SA. Andre Schutte played a measured game and drew the game with good technique.

