Reflections on the CT 2026 Chess League by Dr Lyndon Bouah

In June 2026, various clubs under the leadership of Chess Western Province registered for the Cape Town chess league. I am very excited to play this year as I took a sabbatical in 2025, but this year I am again looking forward to participating in the league. This year an incredible 72 teams have registered for the City league! The league commences at the end of July.





So before we get to the modern day lets reflect a bit. The next few pages if from my second book called Chess In the Rainbow Nation: my Journey.

Chess WP League (1992-2019)

1.Introduction

After we returned from the Olympiad in Manila, in June 1992, I travelled to play in the university chess championships in Durban. We travelled by bus for twenty hours from Cape Town to Durban. I won that event and then it was homeward to Port Elizabeth to meet my family.

After resting for a short while, I needed to prepare for my deferred exams which I wrote as soon as I was back in Cape Town. I was glad that I was able to complete all the courses. I wrote exams on the Law of Things, Roman Law, English, and other legal courses, passing them all.

The month of July was the start of the Chess Western Province (CWP) League, which kicked off on 28 July 1992 as the first unified League. The July start allows students from University of Cape Town (UCT), University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Stellenbosch University (US) to also participate in the Chess Western Province League, as the second semester would normally commence around mid to late July. It was an exciting time, because for the first time in many a decade, clubs from across the racial divide would be competing against each other. Let us look a bit at the history of the CWP League.

2. History of league chess in Cape Town

Leonard Rietstein records in A History of Chess in South Africa (2003, page 91), that the idea of a union of clubs came from Mr H.G. Lambrick, President of Woodstock Chess Club in 1907, who suggested that the local clubs should come together to organise the interclub matches on a League basis. In May 1907, representatives of four clubs: Cape Town, YMCA, Tokai and Woodstock

met and formed the Western Province Chess Union (WPCU). Mr A.J.A. Cameron was elected President, Mr H.M. Boddy Vice President, and Mr G. Chart of the YMCA, Secretary Treasurer. Each club entered one team to compete in the League, at a fee of 1-1-0 pound (this is how currency was written in 1907) per team.

Teams of five competed in the first competition. The final results in 1907 were:

Club	Match Points
1. Cape Town	10
2. Woodstock	9
3. YMCA	6
4. Tokai	0

Rietstein notes in his wonderful book that Cape Town sensationally lost in the opening round to Woodstock, a club barely a year old, and had to field their strongest team in the return match, which they won by a single point.

The results in 1908 were:

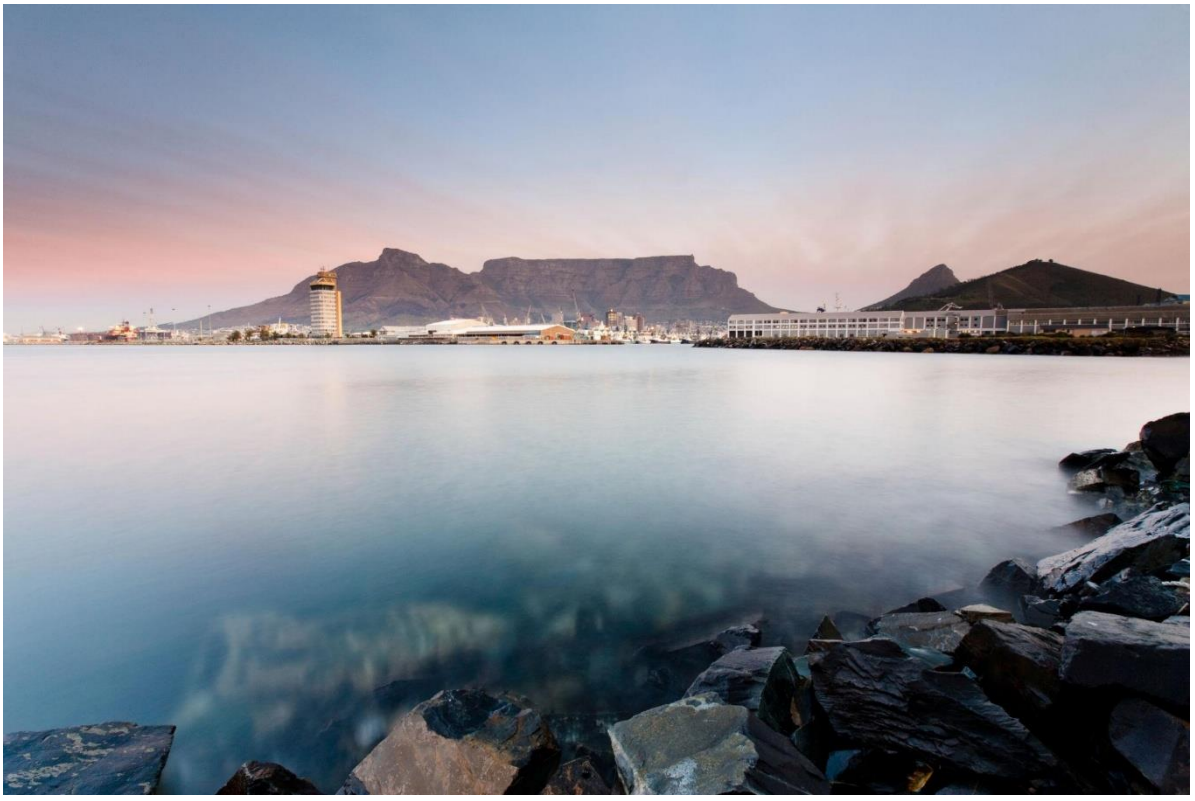
Club
1. Cape Town
2. Observatory Chess Club
3. Civil Service
4. YMCA
5. Woodstock

In 1909, teams were increased to ten players. Cape Town Chess Club won again. In 1910, Woodstock Chess Club and Observatory Chess Club joined forces under the banner Suburban. Civil Service ceased functioning, but a Railway Accountants team replaced them, while a new club in Sea Point joined. Cape Town Chess Club lost their title for the first time to the YMCA, with Sea Point in third behind Cape Town. In 1911, a new club called the Judeans won the League. In 1912 Cape Town established their dominance again by winning the League. After this, the League stopped for ten years.

In 1922, the League was revived. Rietstein notes that Cape Town entered three teams, with Roedebloem and the University of Cape Town (UCT) also now playing. The Cape Town “B” team, led by H. Meihuizen, A. Feinhols and F. Buckley won the league with 8 points, followed by UCT (led by W.S. Mackie (who later became Professor Mackie), H.J. Mandelbrote and D.M. Beach. In 1923, UCT won for the first time, but the League did not continue again for a long time. The union was disbanded and only reformed again in 1950.

3. Starting again I have not yet determined when the League restarted again, and I am still busy with that research. I have however determined the following winners of the Western Province Chess Union League, from 1966:

Year	Club
1966	Cape Town West
1967	Claremont North
1968	Claremont North
1969	Cape Town West
1970	UCT and Cape Town
1971	Claremont
1972	Cape Town
1973	Cape Town
1974	Claremont
1975	Cape Town
1976	Cape Town
1977	Stellenbosch University



4. Two WP Leagues

In 1976, South Africa was burning, with the Soweto riots taking place in June 1976. South Africa was effectively banned from most international bodies. The South African Council On Sport (SACOS) was formed in 1973 and started establishing themselves in Cape Town and elsewhere. Part of the philosophy of SACOS was that no normal sport should be played in an abnormal society. South Africa had been suspended from FIDE in 1974 and the subsequent reports to the international chess bodies attempted to show that integration existed in South African society because a large number of black players competed in the white Western province Chess Union (WPCU) events.

Mr Andre van Reenen decided to break away from the white Western Province Chess Union as part of the SACOS philosophy and to intensify the struggle against Apartheid. By establishing a separate body, the white chess body which was government supported, would not be able to claim that integration existed. This was important, as the suspension of South Africa would be discussed at the FIDE Congress that would be held in 1977. South Africa was subsequently expelled in 1977 from FIDE. In 1977, Mr van Reenen established the Western Province Chess Association (WPCA). The establishment WP Chess Union would have mostly white players, whilst the WP Chess Association would have mostly coloured and black chess players.

The League results for the two Leagues are now given as far as I could determine. I have used publications of the WPCA dated 1983, 1984, 1986 and 1988. The WPCU League winners were gleaned from various trophies and the South African Chessplayer.

Year	Western Province Chess Union	Western Province Chess Association
1978	Claremont	Manyanani
1979	UCT	Manyanani
1980	Claremont	Grassy Park

1981	UCT	Steinitz
1982	UCT "A"	Steinitz
1983	UCT "A"	Grassy Park
1984	UCT "A"	Grassy Park
1985	UCT "A"	Steinitz
1986	UCT "A"	Mitchells Plain
1987	Cape Town "A"	Steinitz
1988	UCT "A"	Mitchells Plain
1989	Claremont "A"	Mitchells Plain
1990	Bellville	Mitchells Plain
1991	Cape Town "A"	league not completed

5. Unified League

In 1991, unity talks started between the establishment WPCU and clubs such as Bellville South and the University of the Western Cape (UWC), led by Berte van Wyk who is now Professor van Wyk. I joined Bellville South in my first year as a student at UWC. I played one league game for Bellville South at Modderdam High School in April 1991. At that first meeting Mr Andre van Reenen denounced those who had started talking to the establishment body of the white chess administrators. His criticism was so strong that Bellville South did not continue the league after that first round. As I was one of the supporters of Berte van Wyk, my league ended before it began in Cape Town. I was immensely disappointed at this because I had for two consecutive years been the SA Schools champion and had just ended second behind Deon Solomons in the SA Closed Chess Championship in March 1991.

Unity talks commenced, and in June 1991, a chess summit was held at the Bellville South Library. In August 1991, a friendly match was held between Cape Town Chess Club and a Bellville South/UWC combined team. Cape Town Chess Club won decisively and at the end of the year a unity tournament was held in Cape Town.

In 1992, after South Africa was allowed back into international chess, a league started in Cape Town under the banner of a unified Chess Western Province. The league was played by clubs at their respective venues. Clubs then faxed (yes faxed!) and telephoned the results to the league secretary.

The winners of the unified Chess Western Province League are:

Year	***Club***
1992	*University of Cape Town*
1993	*Steinitz*
1994	*Cape Town A*

1995	*Manyanani*
1996	*Mitchells Plain*
1997	*Claremont*
1998	*Steinitz*
1999	*Claremont*
2000	*Cape Town*
2001	*Steinitz*
2002	*Steinitz*
2003	*Claremont*
2004	*Mitchells Plain*
2005	*Mitchells Plain*
2006	*Steinitz*
2007	*Stellenbosch*
2008	*Stellenbosch*
2009	*Steinitz*
2010	*UCT*
2011	*Steinitz*
2012	*Chesscube*
2013	*Steinitz*
2014	*Steinitz*
2015	*African Chess Lounge*
2016	*African Chess Lounge*
2017	*MRL*
2018	*Steinitz*
2019	*Steinitz*
2022	*Steinitz*
2023	*Stellenbosch*

2024	*Blackjacks*
2025	*Manyanani*

6. CWP League 1992-1997

I have decided to break up the CWP League into periods and, for this purpose, the first period will be 1992 to 1997. I played for Bellville South in the first two years of the League (1992 and 1993) and in 1994 and 1995 I played for UWC, and since 1996 I have played for Steinitz Chess Club.

In the early years, we travelled to the different chess clubs. It was a journey of discovery, because we did not know that the home venue of False Bay Chess Club was a tennis club in Fish Hoek. The different clubs had their own chess history. Cape Town Chess Club was the club with the longest history. Other clubs were Bellville, Goodwood and Claremont. Players from different communities got to know each other. Coffee and biscuits would normally be provided by the home team.

The CWP League was and still is an exciting one. In 1992, in the first season, UCT won the Premier Division of the League. They had players like George Michelakis (later IM) playing for them and they made a great start to the unified League. In 1993, Steinitz Chess Club won the Premier Division of the unified League for the first time. Deon Solomons (later FM and Dr Solomons) and Nazeem Mustapha (later Dr Mustapha) joined the club and with the formidable Willenberg family won the unified League. The League win was very historic as Steinitz was a club from Bonteheuwel, a tough area on the Cape Flats.

In 1994, Cape Town Chess Club started to show their strength and won the WP Premier Division of the chess League. Players such as Mark Levitt, IM David Gluckman and others all played for the club and they were simply unstoppable. In 1995, an interesting turn of events occurred when Manyanani, a club striving for multi-culturalism, recruited some Jewish players and then proceeded to win the league. This meant that the crossover of players to different clubs was no longer on the basis of colour, but players started going to areas and clubs where they felt comfortable and were not constrained by race, religion, or geography.

In 1996, Mitchells Plain won the league for the first time. This team was spearheaded by the Solomon family and had players such as CM Maxwell Solomon (Olympian 1992, 1994 and 2000), Kenny Solomon (Olympian in 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016, 2018 and 2022), who later became South Africa's first Grandmaster, and the late Graham Solomon. They were ably supported by other Mitchells Plain stalwarts such as Wilfred Nelson, Reggie Sinden and the late Rodney Williams.

In 1997, Claremont Chess Club won the League for the first time. Claremont was the club with the best home base in Cape Town. They met under Belmont Bridge and attracted players from all over Cape Town because they had a secure venue that was specifically set up for chess. CWP played all its early tournaments at this venue, which was situated at Rondebosch library. Claremont had a regular Thursday club activity and had a section for senior players (over 60) that met in the mornings.

I played board one in the league for my various clubs during those years. The league was tough because it was possible to play top players from all over Cape Town. Cape Town has a long tradition and history of chess. Many chess players are thus skilled in the nuances of chess. Players that may never have won a South African or Western Province championship could, on their day, beat any top player because they were experienced and could compete in the league.

Let us have a look at the top placements of the League in the early years and draw some conclusions from that period:

Year	Winner	2nd place	3rd place
1992	UCT	Not known at this stage	Not known at this stage
1993	Steinitz	UCT	Grassy Park
1994	Cape Town	Claremont	Grassy Park
1995	Manyanani	Cape Town	Claremont
1996	Mitchells Plain	Cape Town	Not known
1997	Claremont	Cape Town	False Bay

7. Conclusions from the first five years of chess unity for WP league chess

7.1 The first few years of unity did not show dominance from any particular club. UCT won the first League competition in 1992 and came second in 1993 but, as with all student teams, once the one or two top students completed their degrees and leave, they struggled to become a strong challenger again for some time and did not become a league winner until nearly twenty years later, in 2010.

7.2 Grassy Park was a consistent force in the early years after unity but faded somewhat later on.

7.3 Cape Town was always a medallist in the early years of unity. From being a winner in 1994, they also ended in second position from 1995 to 1997.

7.4 The winners represented the different chess groupings within the unity process. UCT, Cape Town and Claremont represented the former WP Chess Union while Steinitz, Manyanani and Mitchells Plain represented the former WP Chess Association.

7.5 No clear dominance was really established, and the league was well contested, with the majority of Olympiad players of South Africa coming from this league.

8. League period 1998 to 2010

Year	Winner	2nd place	3rd place
1998	Steinitz	False Bay	Claremont
1999	Claremont	Steinitz	Cape Town
2000	Cape Town	Mitchells Plain	Steinitz
2001	Steinitz	Stellenbosch	Claremont
2002	Steinitz	Stellenbosch	Mitchells Plain
2003	Claremont	Steinitz	Mitchells Plain
2004	Mitchells Plain	Steinitz	Claremont

2005	Mitchells Plain	Stellenbosch	Claremont
2006	Steinitz	Stellenbosch	Mitchells Plain
2007	Stellenbosch	Steinitz	Claremont
2008	Stellenbosch	Steinitz	Bellville
2009	Steinitz	Manyanani	Bellville
2010	UCT	Steinitz	Stellenbosch

In this period, the league under Chess Western Province settled and grew considerably. WP juniors dominated many of the national titles and one can see this reflected within the results of the clubs. In 1998, I rejoined Steinitz after having travelled back to Port Elizabeth in 1996. I was immediately offered board one by the club and this also coincided with the rise of the Willenberg boys, Kenny and Craig Willenberg. Between them, they dominated the junior circuit and won the South African Junior championships on more than five occasions. We also had Mark Lewis, Roland, Athon and Glenn Willenberg and Ashley Schüller back in the team as well. From 2001, Deon Solomons, who had just completed his doctorate, also rejoined the club and this showed in the results of the team. Between 1998 and 2010, Steinitz won the CWP League 5 times and ended second on 6 occasions and in third position once. Steinitz was always a challenger for League honours during this time. I generally played between boards one and three. Around 2000, Steinitz also experimented with Kenny Willenberg getting top board so that he could develop his chess against the top players. This has been a hallmark of Steinitz and they have always placed organic growth before anything else as a club. Steinitz was also strengthened by the arrival of Calvin Klaasen (later FM) from the Eastern Cape in 2006.

Claremont was the other dominant club in this period, winning the League in 1999 and 2003. With their solid home base, they attracted many top players, and this showed in this period. Mitchells Plain came to prominence as well because Kenny Solomon was now coming into his own. He became an International Master in 2003 and a Grandmaster in 2014. He had already won the SA Open in 1999, at the age of 19, and the SA Closed in 2003. With Kenny supported by his brothers Maxwell, Aubrey and the late Graham Solomon, as well as Wilfred Nelson, Lourenzo van Niekerk, Reggie Wilson and others, Mitchells Plain Chess Club became a force to be reckoned with.

Stellenbosch also won the League in this period and this coincided with the rise of Henry Mohamed Steel. Steel had been a strong junior, stopped playing and then restarted again. This allowed him, supported by his father Sarel Steel, Stefan Wagner and an assortment of strong Stellenbosch university players, to dominate the League for two years.

In 1999, the league format changed and the League was played at one venue. The reason for this was because some clubs could not find the venue of the other clubs and then forfeited the match because they did not arrive at the correct venue. I then sponsored a motion that UWC would host the league, and from 1999 all league matches were played in one venue. This allowed players from all clubs and teams to meet one another, and one could also follow the games of all the top players. The league was generally played in the prefab buildings at UWC.

Clubs brought their own boards, pieces and clocks. No matches could really be postponed because all the dates were known well in advance. The league started to expand and by this time a third division was started and later a fourth division. This was due to the tremendous growth spurt that started around 2000.

9. League period 2011 to 2019

Years	Winner	2nd place	3rd place
2011	Steinitz	UCT	Manyanani
2012	Chesscube	Steinitz	Stellenbosch
2013	Steinitz	Chesscube	Manyanani
2014	Steinitz	Manyanani	ACL
2015	ACL	Manyanani	Steinitz
2016	ACL	UCT	MRL
2017	MRL	ACL	Steinitz
2018	Steinitz	Stellenbosch	MRL
2019	Steinitz	MRL	UCT

The Chess Western Province League experienced a huge growth during this period. The league started having unique problems that would be welcomed by most codes of sport. The Chess Western Province League started running out of venues that could accommodate all the teams!

Venues such as Curro School in Century City and the Proteaville Hall in Bellville South started being used, as they could accommodate a large number of players. In 2001 CWP had 352 members that played League chess and in 2019 it had 900 players. A fantastic growth spurt over the two decades!

Steinitz started off the decade dominating League chess and had Premier League wins in 2011, 2013 and 2014. An interesting debate started to take place in CWP ranks. The key question was the merits of game points versus match points. Both systems had merit. Game points had been used up till 2014.

In 2015, the League voted to change the format to match points. This meant that big match victories did not count for much. As long as you won the match, then all the match points would be yours. Match points rather than game points were now the decider. African Chess Lounge (ACL), who had recruited most of the Chesscube players, dominated the League and won it for two years in 2015 and 2016.

In 2017, MRL, who had worked their way through the various divisions, burst on to the scene and scored an emphatic Premier League victory. Spearheaded by FM Calvin Klaasen, CM Maxwell Solomon and Graham Solomon, they proved to be a tough nut to crack and proceeded to defeat all the clubs in the Premier Division in 2017.

Roland Willenberg, Leon de Jager and I then met in 2018 to discuss this state of affairs and we decided that we would have a change in approach as Steinitz. Some players were moved to the “B” team and others were promoted to the Premier Steinitz team. We also promoted some juniors that we felt had potential. This worked out very well and Steinitz was able to win the League again in 2018 and 2019 and 2022. Online leagues were held in 2020 and 2021.

10. Concluding remarks on the CWP League over the last decade

I love statistics and it is so important that we sometimes reflect on our growth as a sport. In 2012, Dr Ivan Meyer, the then Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, declared that he wanted chess to be a revolutionary code and that more resources should be placed at the sport's disposal. Chess was one of five codes that became revolutionary. In the Western Cape, these announcements were taken to heart and funds were set aside to host major chess events in the Western Cape, contribute to funding players travelling overseas, to bring clubs into the club development program and establish leagues throughout the Western Cape, amongst other initiatives.

Later, the National Department of Sport and Recreation declared that chess would become one of the sixteen priority codes in South Africa. This was an important announcement, as it allows chess to be promoted and funded by national, provincial and local government. In South Africa there are 74 sporting codes associated with SASCOC (the National Olympic body) and for chess to be chosen amongst the top 16 priority codes was indeed an honour.

Let us look at the number of players for the CWP league since these announcements. I give the year, total, division names and tally where available:

Year	Total	Premier Division	B Division	C Division	D Division	E Division
2013	394	136	134	144	276	-
2014	-	143	-	-	-	-
2015	690	136	134	144	276	-
2016	536	173	177	186	-	-
2017	881	171	158	181	371	-
2018	615	156	156	140	130	189
2019	892	164	160	159	157	252

The Premier Division has 12 teams, with 8 boards playing. The B, C and D Divisions have 12 teams with 6 boards playing. The Premier and B, C, D play a round robin. The E Division has any number of teams that register. In 2019 there were 36 teams playing a Swiss tournament in the E Division. For the last two years the Premier Division has been FIDE rated. The number of players competing in the League has grown exponentially over the last few years. The average number of players, over the last five years (between 2015 and 2019), is a phenomenal 722! This growth is at a tremendous rate and all clubs and administrators in Chess Western Province must be commended for this.

The fact that 2019 showed close to 900 players was a magnificent feature and achievement for the league. Players and clubs came from all communities in the Western Cape. There were also teams competing from the Cape Winelands. Drakenstein Dragons won promotion in their division (based at Wellington) whilst Stellenbosch Chess Club had an array of teams in all divisions. Stellenbosch University (also known as Maties) fielded teams in the lower divisions. Players such as Jacques Basson

and George Lawerlot from the West Coast and Eden respectively represented MRL in the Premier Division of the CWP League and acquitted themselves well on their boards.

Let us have a look at the cross tables for the Premier Division over the last five years. The tables make for interesting comparative studies and allows us to draw conclusions that about the League.

2015

Rank	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	Pts.
1	African Chess Lounge A	*	5½	4	3½	6	3½	4	5½	5½	6	7	7	22	57½
2	Manyanani A	1½	*	4	3½	4	5	5½	5½	6	6½	7	4	20	52½
3	Steinitz A	3	3	*	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	6½	6	18	56½
4	Stellenbosch A	3½	3½	3	*	4	4	4	5½	6½	6	5	5½	18	50½
5	University of Cape Town A	1	3	3	3	*	5½	4½	4	4	6	4½	6	14	44½
6	MRL A	3½	2	1	3	1½	*	6	4½	4	4½	6	4½	13	40½
7	Cape Town A	3	1½	1	3	2½	1	*	2½	5	4	5½	5	8	34
8	Bellville A	1½	1½	1	1½	3	2½	4½	*	4½	3	4½	3½	7	31
9	Blackjacks A	1½	1	1	½	3	3	2	2½	*	4	2	4	4	24½
10	Belhar Knights A	1	½	0	1	1	2½	3	4	3	*	4½	1½	4	22
11	Capablanca A	0	0	½	2	2½	1	1½	2½	3	2½	*	4	4	19½
12	University of the Western Cape A	0	3	1	1½	1	2½	2	3½	3	5½	3	*	3	26

In 2015, the winning score that African Chess Lounge achieved was 22 match points and 57.5 game points. They drew twice, lost twice and won seven times.

2016

Rank	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	Pts.
1	African Chess Lounge A	*	5	4½	3	5½	6	6½	5½	7½	4½	6	6	20	60
2	University of Cape Town A	1	*	4½	4½	4½	½	5	6	7½	6	7	6	18	52½
3	MRL A	3½	3½	*	5½	4½	4	6	5½	7½	5	6½	5	17	56½
4	Stellenbosch A	5	3½	2½	*	5½	6½	3½	6½	5	5	7½	4½	16	55
5	Manyanani A	2½	3½	3½	2½	*	4½	6	4½	7	7	8	5	14	54
6	Steinitz A	2	7½	4	1½	3½	*	7	6½	7	5½	3½	6	13	54
7	Mitchells Plain A	1½	3	2	4½	2	1	*	3	4½	4	5½	4½	9	35½
8	Cape Town A	2½	2	2½	1½	3½	1½	5	*	3	4½	5½	4½	8	36
9	University of the Western Cape A	½	½	½	3	1	1	3½	5	*	4	6½	5½	7	31
10	Bellville A	3½	2	3	3	1	2½	4	3½	4	*	5½	4	5	36
11	Capablanca A	2	1	1½	½	0	4½	2½	2½	1½	2½	*	6½	4	25
12	Blackjacks A	2	2	3	3½	3	2	3½	3½	2½	4	1½	*	1	30½

In 2016 African Chess Lounge achieved 20 match and 60 game points. They lost one match and won ten.

2017

Rank	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	Pts.
1	MRL	*	4½	5	5½	4½	5	7½	7	5½	5½	6½	7	22	63½
2	African Chess Lounge	3½	*	3	5½	6½	3	5	6	5½	5	6	7½	16	56½
3	Steinitz	3	5	*	4½	3½	4	5	6	8	3	6½	6	15	54½
4	Manyanani	2½	2½	3½	*	5	8	6½	3	6	4½	7½	7½	14	56½
5	Stellenbosch	3½	1½	4½	3	*	8F	5½	7	3½	5	6	8F	14	55½
6	University of Cape Town	3	5	4	0	0F	*	2½	4	3	5	5	7½	10	39
7	University of the Western Cape	½	3	3	1½	2½	5½	*	4½	5	4	3½	7½	9	40½
8	Cape Town	1	2	2	5	1	4	3½	*	4	6½	4	5½	9	38½
9	Grassy Park	2½	2½	0	2	4½	5	3	4	*	4	4	5½	9	37
10	Bellville	2½	3	5	3½	3	3	4	1½	4	*	4	6½	7	40
11	Mitchells Plain	1½	2	1½	½	2	3	4½	4	4	4	*	6½	7	33½
12	Uitsig	1	½	2	½	0F	½	½	2½	2½	1½	1½	*	0	13

In 2017, MRL scored 22 match points and had 63.5 game points. They won all eleven their matches to secure the full house of 22 points, as a match win is worth 2 points!

African Chess Lounge continued to show their strength with a solid performance, although they lost to MRL and Steinitz.

Steinitz lost to MRL, Stellenbosch and an unexpected loss to Bellville ended their League campaign.

MRL was simply unstoppable in 2017. To win every match in the Chess Western Province League was a great achievement and showed astute leadership under Lourenzo van Niekerk.

2018

Rank	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	Pts.
1	Steinitz	*	4	4½	4	6	5	4	6	6½	6½	7	7	19	60½
2	Stellenbosch	4	*	4½	4	3½	6	4½	5½	4	4½	5	5½	17	51
3	MRL	3½	3½	*	4	1½	6½	6½	6	5	4½	7½	6½	15	55
4	African Chess Lounge	4	4	4	*	4½	4	4	6½	5	3½	6½	6	15	52
5	Manyanani	2	4½	6½	3½	*	2½	5	4	5½	5½	5½	6½	15	51
6	University of Cape Town	3	2	1½	4	5½	*	6½	6	5½	5	7	4	14	50
7	Blackjacks	4	3½	1½	4	3	1½	*	4	7	4½	4	5½	10	42½
8	Bellville	2	2½	2	1½	4	2	4	*	4	2½	7½	4½	7	36½
9	Cape Town	1½	4	3	3	2½	2½	1	4	*	4	4½	4	6	34
10	Grassy Park	1½	3½	3½	4½	2½	3	3½	5½	4	*	3½	3	5	38
11	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	1	3	½	1½	2½	1	4	½	3½	4½	*	5	5	27
12	University of the Western Cape	1	2½	1½	2	1½	4	2½	3½	4	5	3	*	4	30½

In 2018, Steinitz scored 19 match points and 60 game points. Steinitz drew three times and won eight matches. This showed the competitive spirit of the League.

Stellenbosch showed they meant business by fielding IM Henry Mohamed Steel on board one, but they had an unfortunate loss to Manyanani, which scuppered their chances.

MRL continued to be a force to be reckoned with but three losses in this League would be too much to recover from, though their third place achievement showed their character.

2019

Rank	Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MP	Pts.
1	Steinitz A	*	4	7	5½	7	4½	5½	6½	6½	7½	6	7	21	67
2	MRL A	4	*	5½	3½	5½	4½	6½	6½	6½	6	5	7	19	60½
3	UCT A	1	2½	*	3	5½	5½	8	5	5½	7	6½	7	16	56½
4	African Chess Lounge A	2½	4½	5	*	4	5½	4	5	3½	4½	5	7	16	50½
5	Stellenbosch A	1	2½	2½	4	*	6	6	5	4½	4½	6	8	15	50
6	Manyanani A	3½	3½	2½	2½	2	*	7	3	5	6½	4	7	9	46½
7	Cape Town	2½	1½	0	4	2	1	*	4	5	4	4½	5	9	33½
8	Mitchells Plain A	1½	1½	3	3	3	5	4	*	3½	3	7	7	7	41½
9	Blackjacks A	1½	1½	2½	4½	3½	3	3	4½	*	3	4	5½	7	36½
10	GPCA A	½	2	1	3½	3½	1½	4	5	5	*	2½	6	7	34½
11	Bellville A	2	3	1½	3	2	4	3½	1	4	5½	*	6	6	35½
12	Belhar Knights A	1	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	2½	2	2	*	0	15½

In 2019, Steinitz scored 21 match points, which consisted of one draw against MRL and ten wins, and had accumulated 67 game points out of a possible total of 96. The League was clearly strong with MRL only suffering one loss against African Chess Lounge and then drawing with Steinitz. The League winners are averaging 20 points, which effectively means that a team wishing to win the league should be going for ten match wins. MRL continued their good showing, but the third place showing of UCT was unexpected and proved that the students had potential within their ranks and could compete!

During the Covid period between 2020 and 2021 online leagues were held which was won by Steinitz and UWC. I have not counted them as OTB leagues and the OTB restarted again in 2022.

Year	***Club***

2022	*Steinitz*
2023	*Stellenbosch*
2024	*Blackjacks*
2025	*Manyanani*

Steinitz continued to show their dominance by winning the league in 2022, but interestingly since then, different clubs have emerged as league winners. In 2023 Stellenbosch won the league , 2024 it was Blackjacks and in 2025 it was Manyanani. The depth of the Premier league is certainly shown by the ability of different clubs to not only compete but also challenge for league honours. The Chess Western Province League is in my opinion, one of the best leagues in the country and possibly on the continent. Chess Western Province can be proud of this magnificent event.

2. Teams in the League

11.2. LEAGUE TEAMS 2026 - A DIVISION:

A Division	
No	**Team**
1	**Cape Town (A)**
2	**African Chess Lounge (A)**
3	**Kraaifontein (A)**
4	**UCT (A)**
5	**Blackjacks (A)**
6	**Manyanani (A)**
7	**Observatory (A)**
8	**Crossroads (A)**
9	**Stellenbosch (A)**
10	**Grassy Park (A)**
11	**Steinitz (A)**
12	**MRL (A)**

LEAGUE TEAMS - 2026 B Division:

2026 B Division Teams:

LEAGUE TEAMS – B DIVISION:

B Division	
No	**Team**
1	**Bellville (A) ↓**
2	**Kraaifontein (B)**
3	**Helderberg (A) ↑**
4	**CPUT (A)**
5	**Stellenbosch (B)**
6	**Delft (A) ↓**
7	**Manyanani (B)**
8	**Observatory (B) ↑**
9	**Drakenstein Dragons (A)**
10	**UWC (A)**
11	**Elsies River (A)**
12	**Steinitz (B)**

LEAGUE TEAMS - 2026 C Division:

11.2.3. 2026 C Division Teams: **LEAGUE TEAMS – C DIVISION:**

C Division	
No	**Team**
1	Helderberg (B) ↑
2	Mother City (A)
3	Blackjacks (B) ↓
4	Kraaifontein (C)
5	Stellenbosch (B)
6	Crossroads (B) ↑
7	Zutari (A)
8	Mitchells Plain (A)
9	Capablanca (A) ↓
10	UCT (B)
11	Grassy Park (B)
12	Steinitz (D)

LEAGUE TEAMS – D DIVISION:

11.2.4. 2026 D Division Teams: **LEAGUE TEAMS – D DIVISION:**

D Division	
No	**Team**
1	**Royal Alphas ↑**
2	**Bellville (C)**
3	**African Chess Lounge (B)**
4	**Fish Hoek (A) ↑**
5	**Steinitz (E)**
6	**Manyanani (C) ↓**
7	**City of Cape Town (A)**
8	**Blackjacks (C)**
9	**Four Seasons (A) ↑**
10	**Bellville (B)**
11	**Elsies River (B) ↓**
12	**Stellenbosch (D)**

LEAGUE TEAMS – E DIVISION:

11.2.5. 2026 E Division Teams: **LEAGUE TEAMS – E DIVISION:**

To be confirmed based on team registrations. Deadline for registration is, 9 August 2026 at 22h00.

E Division	
No	**Team**
1	**UWC (B)**
2	**Fish Hoek (B)**
3	**MRL (B)**
4	**Gugs (A)**
5	**Observatory (C)**
6	**Grassy Park (C)**
7	**Helderberg (C)**
8	**Sicilians**
9	**Bellville (D)**
10	**Freedom Farm (A)**
11	**Four Seasons (C)**
12	**Freedom Farm (B)**
13	**Gugs (B)**
14	**Fish Hoek (C)**
15	**Titans Girls (A)**
16	**Mitchells Plain**
17	**2 Knights (B)**
18	**Mighty Falcons (B)**
19	**Four Seasons (B)**
20	**Freedom Farm (C)**
21	**Titans Girls (B)**
22	**2 Knights (A)↓**
23	**Kraaifontein (D) ↓**
24	**Crossroads (C) ↓**

D ted Dates, times, and playing venues A - D DIVISIONS:
a E division is below.

Round #	Day	Date	Starting Time	Venue
1	Saturday	01-August	09h30	TBA
2	Saturday	01-August	14h30	TBA
3	Saturday	15-August	09h30	TBA
4	Saturday	15-August	14h30	TBA
5	Saturday	22-August	09h30	TBA
6	Saturday	22-August	14h30	TBA
7	Saturday	12-September	09h30	TBA
8	Saturday	12-September	14h30	TBA
9	Saturday	19-September	09h30	TBA
10	Saturday	19-September	14h30	TBA
11	Sunday	20-September	09h30	TBA

Round #	Date	Starting Time	Venue
1 - 3	15 August 2026	09h30 12h00 14h30	TBC
4 - 6	22 August 2026	09h30 12h00 14h30	TBC
7 – 9	12 September	09h30 12h00 14h30	TBC



I trust that you have enjoyed this journey through the cape Town league history.

Do come watch and participate.

Regards

Dr CM Lyndon Bouah