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MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | 19 OCTOBER 2026

CHESS SA CLARIFIES DATE CLASH BETWEEN THE MZANZI NATIONAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS AND THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Chess South Africa (Chess SA) wishes to inform players, parents, coaches, schools, provincial chess affiliates and other stakeholders of a scheduling clash between two important national chess events taking place in December 2026.

The Mzanzi National Chess Championships are scheduled for 14–19 December 2026 in Bloemfontein, Free State, while the National Schools Chess Championship is scheduled for 11–15 December 2026 in Gauteng. This overlap presents a challenge for young players who may wish to participate in both events.

EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE DATE CLASH

In the interest of fairness, and to give all athletes an equal opportunity to participate in both championships, Chess SA communicated with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) and requested that the National Schools Chess Championship be hosted on a alternative date.

Unfortunately, the request did not receive a favourable response because the logistical arrangements for the National Schools Chess Championship were already in place. Chess SA acknowledges these arrangements and regrets that a solution allowing athletes to attend both events could not be reached.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MZANZI CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Mzanzi National Chess Championships are one of Chess SA's flagship events. They offer players an important platform to compete, develop their skills and pursue further opportunities in the sport. The event also provides athletes with an opportunity to qualify for the Junior Closed Chess Championships, which normally take place in March 2027.

NOTICE TO PARENTS AND PLAYERS

Parents and guardians are requested to take careful note of the dates and venues of both championships and to register their children accordingly. Please consider each event's purpose, eligibility requirements and the qualification opportunity associated with the Mzanzi Championships when deciding which event your child will attend. Chess SA are unable to provide exemption to players who opt to play in the NSC 2026.

Chess SA encourages provincial affiliates, schools and coaches to share this information with affected players and families so that registration decisions can be made in good time.

Chess SA remains committed to fairness, athlete development and the continued growth of chess in South Africa. We will continue to engage relevant stakeholders to improve coordination between national chess events and reduce similar scheduling conflicts in future.

Issued by: Chess South Africa (Chess SA)
Media and Communications Office

ENDS

President: Andre Lewaks – Vice President 1: Lindokuhle Ngubane – Vice President 2: Shaun Levitan –
Treasurer: Liezl Bothma – Secretary: Chené Jeffries – Provincial Rep: Janine Fourie – Provincial Rep: Jeanette Mabitsela Provincial Rep: (Vacant) – Head Coach: Reuben Salimu – PRO: Gerold Neels – SASCA President: Fungile Ngqenga