

Reisterstown Chess Club FAQ

What does it take to become a member of the Reisterstown Chess Club?

It's simple. Register online, send an email to reisterstownchessclub@gmail.com, or register in person the first time you attend.

What ages can participate?

All ages. There are no age restrictions in chess – it's never too early or late to learn!

Can you come to the club if you've never played chess?

Yes! Beginner, intermediate, and advanced players are all welcome at the RCC, including those who have never played the game. We will have special classes/workshops for those totally new to the game of chess.

Will the schedule change during the school year?

We are currently not planning to change the schedule. The RCC meets on Saturday mornings, from 9am-12pm. If this changes, we will announce it through all the normal channels (at the club, from our website, etc.)

Is this a drop-off club?

Yes and no. Yes, if your child is over the age of 10 and is mature enough to be by his/herself, they will be allowed to be dropped off. *There will be a sign in sheet that must be signed by the parent before each session.* **No,** if your child is not over the age of 10, or is not able to be themselves (is disruptive in his/her behavior, needs assistance for the bathroom), a parent, or someone over the age of 16 must accompany the player and stay with the player for the length of the club.

Note: *While all RCC leaders and volunteers have been background checked (see below), the members of the chess club, and those who just drop in to play, may not have been. Only you can decide whether such an environment is safe enough for your child. Nevertheless, the RCC will strive to keep the club environment as safe as possible for everyone.*

Are there behavioral guidelines or any other conditions that could result in someone being removed or banned from the club?

Yes. A comprehensive list of guidelines will be posted in the club. But in general, excessive cursing; being generally obnoxious or rude; yelling (meanly at another person); inappropriate physical contact (hitting, contact of a sexual nature, etc.); showing inappropriate things on a phone; loud discussion of inappropriate topics; distracting behavior near those playing games or giving lectures; violent outbursts (perhaps because of losing); *or any other form of disrespectful behavior or language is not permitted.* However, this does not include discussion of religious matters, or God, or politics, or tense social issues, etc., which are more than welcome, *given the specific person you're talking to isn't offended.* That is, if someone specifically asks you to stop talking to them about a particular topic, you should stop, even if that topic is "in bounds" at the club. The bottom-line is to treat everyone at the club with decency and respect, and if you can't say it in front of a child you probably shouldn't say it. The RCC reserves the right to make judgment calls at any time on any of the areas/issues listed above.

Can I volunteer?

Yes. If you are willing to submit to a background check, you can volunteer at the RCC. However, as with unruly children (see above), or unruly attendees in general, the RCC can end that role if (behavioral) issues arise.

In general, what types of activities take place at the RCC each week? That is, what can I expect at a typical club session?

A typical club session will include: (1) free-play for the entire three-hour block; (2) an optional 15–30-minute lesson/discussion on a particular chess topic, which will take place in an adjoining room to the free-play session; (3) a 30-minute beginners' class when enough people sign up; (4) club-wide chess tactic/puzzle challenges which can earn you points toward a prize (typically a chess set or chess book); (5) club tournaments from time to time; and (6) vibrant discussion about chess and other topics.

Will there be over-the-board play each week?

Yes. See above. One of the main features of the Reisterstown Chess Club is “over-the-board” play (OTB). OTB play will be available during all three hours of the club session. All other club activities, such as lectures, discussions, tournaments, etc. are optional. You may strike up a game with anyone at any point at the RCC.

I see this club is sponsored by a church, what does that mean exactly?

In short it means that a lot of people from one church really love chess, see a need for a club in our area, and want to create an environment for discussion and community.

What that means for meetings: (1) respectful talk/discussion about God and/or religious matters is permitted; (2) the club will host various activities/discussions related to Christianity, the Bible, God, or pressing social/cultural that are optional to attend and will not affect chess play; (3) there may be Christian-themed items in various parts of the club's rooms; and (4) we may pray to start or conclude a RCC session.

Note: *Most of the leaders and volunteers at the RCC are Christians, and the club is sponsored by Neighborhood Church (NC). To learn more about NC, visit us online. If you have any specific questions regarding the nature of this sponsorship, feel free to approach any leader at the club.*

I am not religious, nor do I want to be. Can I attend?

Yes. Non-religious players are more than welcome to attend. We will not force religion upon anyone at the club. We are a **chess club!** If such things make you feel uncomfortable, you may simply wish not to attend the RCC; although, we certainly hope you give RCC a chance.

Is there a fee to join? Or club dues to maintain my membership?

No. There are no fees or club dues whatsoever, and there is no plan to change this in the future. However, if you would like to donate to the RCC to offset costs, you are certainly welcome to do so. 100% of your donation will go to club maintenance and member benefits (chess books/sets given away as prizes; carpooling — gas is expensive now! — to external tournaments; rent; etc.).

Are the leaders background checked?

Yes. All the leaders and volunteers at RCC are background checked.

Will there be opportunities to improve my rating?

Yes. Your USCF rating should hopefully improve just from playing people at the club who are stronger than you, and by attending the various lessons and discussions on various chess topics (tactics, opening theory, strategy/positional play, end-game theory, etc.). Of course, for your USCF rating to *officially* improve, you need to participate in rated events (and win of course). While we will not house rated tournaments initially at the RCC, we eventually hope to have 1 to 4 rated tournaments a year (one-day tournaments of the smaller variety). In addition, we hope to attend external tournaments “together” as a club — preparing together, encouraging one another, and possibly carpooling to the tournament.

Will I/my child need to bring equipment?

No. The RCC has tournament chess boards, clocks, and notation pads for recording chess games. Of course, you're more than welcome to bring your own equipment if that's what you prefer.

Do we have to commit to attend every week for the entire three-hour time block?

No. Attendance to RCC is completely optional. You are welcome to be there for as long as you are able.

Is the room handicap accessible?

No. Unfortunately, the chess club room is currently not handicap accessible.

Will snacks and drinks be provided?

Sometimes. There *may* be coffee, water, and snacks at RCC sessions. There may also be sessions where snacks and drinks are not provided. So do not assume that snacks and drinks will be present, but feel free to enjoy them (free of charge) if they are.