



FREESTYLE CHESS

Press Release

Freestyle Chess Round Table Results

Weissenhaus, February 10, 2025 – At a Sunday evening meeting in Weissenhaus with organizer Jan Henric Buettner, 12 Freestyle Chess Players Club members unanimously decided that the 2025 Grand Slam Tour winner in December (South Africa) will be titled “Freestyle Chess Champion.” They also plan to form their own independent association with a qualified legal team to represent their interests.

The Sunday evening meeting, following the first day of the quarterfinals, included all Freestyle Chess Grand Slam participants in Weissenhaus and remote members of the Freestyle Chess Players Club. They agreed to temporarily avoid using “world” to counter FIDE’s unfounded claims of ownership over such word.

“This was never our intention, as we have always called our events ‘G.O.A.T. Challenge’ or ‘Grand Slam,’” said Jan Henric Buettner. “It’s important to note that this decision was made by the players, not by Freestyle—and certainly not by FIDE.” The title “Freestyle Chess Champion” will apply for the 2025 season. At year’s end, organizers and players will review and discuss the 2026 Tour, including the title at stake.

Another key outcome of Sunday’s roundtable in Weissenhaus was the players’ plan to establish an independent association representing top chess players, staffed with a qualified legal team. This move comes in direct response to recent clashes with FIDE.

Last month, FIDE demanded that players sign a legally questionable document, setting an inconvenient deadline right after the Tata Steel Chess Tournament in Wijk aan Zee, where many were competing. The document required them to (i) acknowledge an alleged obligation not to compete in non-FIDE events crowning a World Champion or similar title and (ii) accept a ban from future FIDE World Championship cycles if they violated this rule.

The players, some still teenagers, were notified by FIDE’s Legal Director and were given no chance for legal counsel to review the demand. “These repeated harassments are outrageous,” said Buettner. “We strongly oppose FIDE’s coercive tactics, which pressure players to forgo their right to choose which events to play.”

„We were ready to take all necessary action to defend the freedom of the players.” But in Sunday’s meeting, players unanimously agreed to ignore FIDE’s demands, refusing to be forced into choosing between exciting new events and future FIDE participation.

Monday marks the second day of quarterfinals in Weissenhaus, the first of five tournaments in the 2025 Freestyle Chess Grand Slam, which features a \$750,000 prize fund.



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