

New Initiatives for 2019-2020

CYPRAS (and the MasterMinds program) and the Rochester Chess Center are pleased to announce a few new program options available for schools this year. For MasterMinds, the new initiatives feature holiday tournaments and ACRONYM, a pop-culture event. For Interscholastic Chess teams, team lessons and special pre-playoff preparations are now available.

Holiday tournaments have been available to MasterMinds teams for several years, but schools have not been able to take advantage of them. Patterned after the two-day basketball tournaments for boys and girls that are usually held around Thanksgiving or more frequently around New Year's, these one-day affairs follow the basketball pattern: two opening round games followed by consolation and championship games. Unlike basketball, the tournament is just one day. The registration form includes a check-off box, authorizing the billing of the fee: \$104, which is a discount off of the normal per-game cost of MasterMinds (due to economies of scale). This fee is for a single varsity team. Wins and losses in these tournaments do not affect the regular season standings for MasterMinds, and if a school ends up being unavailable to attend any holiday tournament, no fees will be billed.

The other MasterMinds initiative this year is a brand new program: ACRONYM. This event, a mirror of an event at the NAQT quiz bowl national championships, is a purely pop culture event. We won't even bother trying to pass this off as academic: it is not. There are certainly aspects of the competition that are meaningful: team-building, sportsmanship, handling winning and losing, and because the game format and the question style are like MasterMinds, there is value in sharpening listening skills and collaborative teamwork on bonus questions. It's just music, movies, TV, sports, video games and general pop culture. Schools can authorize the billing of participation at \$12 a player with a limit of 8 players. The ACRONYM event will be held on a Saturday in mid-March (exact date TBA) and should no students be able to attend, no fees will be billed.

The Rochester Chess Center is offering two new options for Chess schools this year. Schools signing up for this year's Interscholastic Chess League have two new options.

- 1) Schools can request an in-school visit from one of the Chess Center's advanced instructors. At any point in the season, schools can schedule a 90 minute, live instructional session, with the school choosing the topic(s) to cover: clock management, defensive play, end game play, etc. If a school waits until after their first meet, the instructor can even analyze the games if players have kept notation. This option costs \$88 and attendance is not limited; any number of students may attend. Schools may even request the lesson prior to the start of the season.
- 2) Schools can also sign up for pre-playoff practice scrimmages. These mini-events feature the school playing against another school with a live instructor monitoring play. Instructors will, essentially assisting both players, provide guidance — as well as some analysis — for both players as they develop their strategies. Actual play is limited to five players (identical to the playoff format), but any number of students can attend. Pre-playoff practices are held at the Chess Center and will be scheduled during the two week time-span prior to the date of playoffs. Schools will be paired against teams from leagues other than their own. If schedules do not work out and a school that signs up cannot attend, the school will not be billed.