

CYPRAS, Inc. and Rochester Chess Center
221 Norris Dr.
Rochester, NY 14610

August 31, 2020

TO: Syracuse Region High School Principals
FROM: Scott Kroner, MasterMinds Commissioner
Ron Lohrman, Interscholastic Chess League Executive Director
RE: MasterMinds/Interscholastic Chess sign-up/registration for the 2020-2021 school year

MasterMinds and the Interscholastic Chess League (ICL) programs are now preparing for another season; a **season unlike any other in our history**. With the start of classes not far away, we ask that your school consider joining us for another fun and exciting year of interscholastic competitions. MasterMinds has grown as a valued part of the extra-curricular offerings among schools in the Greater Syracuse area, with two leagues of schools participating last year; part of more than 130 schools and more than a thousand students from across upstate NY. MasterMinds is an academic, quiz bowl-style team competition similar to the old College Bowl. Played at both the varsity and JV levels, it provides a competitive structure to recognize the strengths of academically talented students. A partner program — Interscholastic Chess League — allows students to test their analytical skills in the classic game of logic and strategy against the talents of students from other schools.

This year, for the first time ever, both programs will be offered with remote play. With schools limiting or even prohibiting interscholastic events, a remote play option gives your students an opportunity to participate and compete against students from other schools. While in-person play remains the gold standard for these competitions, given the current pandemic situation, remote play at this point is the only reasonable option. If circumstances allow us to resume live, in-person play later in the year, we would look to restart face-to-face competitions. But failing that, we are preparing to play the entire regular season remotely if necessary.

Also, recognizing that districts are facing unusual financial stress, the cost for this year's programs are being **frozen at last year's levels**. The fee for MasterMinds for the 2020-2021 season remains at **\$767/team** and the cost for the optional JV program is still **\$340** (with varsity participation as a prerequisite). The cost for a team in the Interscholastic Chess League still stands at **\$333**. Transportation is the responsibility of a school, although joint scheduling does allow savings on busing.

Schools that have not previously participated in MasterMinds may choose to field just a JV team. There are some limits on participation, such as no seniors and no playoffs, but it would allow a school a chance to participate at a lower cost as a sort of introductory test drive. Schools that have not played previously but sign up for both Varsity and Junior Varsity may field a JV for no charge. Schools that have participated at the varsity level in previous years and are adding JV participation may add a JV squad at a discounted rate.

To register and participate in MasterMinds and/or Interscholastic Chess for the 2020-2021 season, the enclosed registration form should be completed and returned, with a requested deadline of **Friday, October 30, 2020**. **Please note that this deadline is later than it has been in previous years.** With schools having such a disruption to their regular routine, having extra time to adjust to the new system is important. Even with the delayed start, we remain confident that an entire 12-game season will be possible. To assist with planning, a prescheduling form has been enclosed for your coach. If you are considering working with another school to field a joint team -- something that is permitted -- we encourage you to contact us to help with coordination. Previous non-participants in MasterMinds will still receive a new school orientation.

With so many schools having been participants, and more interested in joining — especially with the remote play — this is a good time to become involved! If you have any questions about MasterMinds, contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or by e-mail at nymasterminds@gmail.com. For the ICL, contact Ron Lohrman of the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or by e-mail at chesscenter@rochester.rr.com. You can also check out www.nymasterminds.com and www.nychess.org for additional information.

We hope to see your school become a part of these popular programs, and we look forward to hearing back from you!