



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



August 17, 2021

TO: Buffalo Area High School Principals
FROM: Scott Kroner, MasterMinds Commissioner
Ron Lohrman, Interscholastic Chess League Executive Director
RE: Sign-up/registration for the 2021-2022 school year

Preparations are now underway for the upcoming season of MasterMinds and the Interscholastic Chess League (ICL); **a season that follows on the heels of a season unlike any other in our history.** MasterMinds is a team-based, academic quiz bowl-style competition similar to the old College Bowl program. It provides a competitive structure to recognize the strengths of academically talented students. The Interscholastic Chess League allows students to test their analytical skills in the classic game of logic and strategy against the talents of the brightest students from other schools.

Despite being unable to meet in-person for the 2020-2021 school year, complete seasons for both the Chess and MasterMinds programs were held. Utilizing Zoom as a communications tool, and using free web-based applications — www.lichess.org for Chess and www.buzzin.live for MasterMinds — we conducted a full regular season of interscholastic competitions, and held playoffs. During a year when so many extracurricular activities were dramatically scaled back or just outright cancelled, our programs gave students an opportunity to be participate and be involved.

In-person play remains the gold standard for both chess and quiz bowl. But recognizing that COVID and its variants remain a concern, we want to assure you that we are taking necessary steps to make our programs as vibrant and safe as we can. As such, until such time as health officials deem it unnecessary, we will be enforcing mandatory vaccinations and mask-wearing for participants in these programs. We know there may be some push-back from parents — especially the vaccine portion — but given that our in-person events bring together students from multiple schools, we believe a reasonable and prudent course of action is to require participants to be vaccinated and that all participants will wear masks when necessary.

Furthermore, if circumstances make in-person play for either program an unacceptably risky situation, we will convert to remote play until such time as officials deem it reasonable to resume in-person play. Having completed a full season of remote play, we know how to do it, and do it effectively.

With the start of classes not far away, we ask that your school make plans to join us for another fun and engaging year of interscholastic competitions. Both MasterMinds and Chess have been important parts of the extracurricular offerings at several dozen schools around the Greater Buffalo area for many years; all part of the more than 100 schools across upstate NY that participated last year. (Yes, more than 100 schools played!)

Recognizing that districts are facing unusual times, the costs for this year's programs are being **frozen at the same level as the previous two years.** The fee for MasterMinds for the 2021-2022 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.**

To register and participate in MasterMinds and/or Chess for the 2021-2022 season, the enclosed registration form should be completed and returned, with a requested deadline of **Friday, September 24, 2021.** If you are considering working with another school to field a joint/shared team -- something that **is** permitted -- let us know. Previous non-participants in MasterMinds will still receive a new school orientation.

Coming back from such a crazy year, this is a sensible time to become involved! For any questions about MasterMinds, contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or nymasterminds@gmail.com. For Chess, contact Ron Lohrman of the Rochester Chess Center at 585-442-2430 or 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!