



ШАХМАТЕН КЛУБ

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ЗЛАТОГРАД

GOLDEN RHODOPES CHESS FESTIVAL 2026 – ZLATOGRAD

Chess Festival “GOLDEN RHODOPES” 2026

2–4 October 2026 | Zlatograd, Bulgaria

€5 000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND

€4 000 – Classical U2400

€1 000 – Blitz Open

Organizer: Chess Club “Leader” – Zlatograd

Venue: Aqua SPA Hotel Zlatograd, 1 Progress Street, Zlatograd

Dates: 2, 3 and 4 October 2026

1. PURPOSE AND FORMAT OF THE FESTIVAL

Chess Club “Leader” – Zlatograd organizes the inaugural edition of the GOLDEN RHODOPES CHESS FESTIVAL, a three-day chess festival combining high-level competitive chess with the opportunity to enjoy a relaxing SPA stay in the heart of the Rhodope Mountains.

The festival consists of two separate tournaments:

- A. GOLDEN RHODOPES CLASSICAL U2400 – a 7-round classical tournament rated for FIDE Standard rating;
- B. GOLDEN RHODOPES BLITZ OPEN – an open blitz tournament with a 3+2 time control, to be held on Saturday evening.

The total guaranteed cash prize fund is €5 000. Cups, medals and other non-cash awards are provided in addition to the cash prize fund.

2. GOLDEN RHODOPES CLASSICAL U2400

2.1. Eligibility

Bulgarian and foreign players with a published FIDE Standard rating of 2399 or lower are eligible to participate, as are players without a published international rating.

Eligibility and rating-category prizes will be determined according to the official FIDE Standard Rating List for October 2026.

Unrated players must have a valid FIDE ID or complete the required registration procedure through their national federation before the start of the tournament.

2.2. System

The tournament will be played over 7 rounds using the Swiss System – FIDE Dutch System, in accordance with the applicable FIDE regulations.

Pairings will be generated using pairing software approved for FIDE-rated Swiss tournaments.

2.3. Time Control

Time control:

60 minutes for the entire game, with a 30-second increment per move starting from move one.

The tournament will be submitted for FIDE Standard rating.

2.4. Scoring

A win scores 1 point, a draw $\frac{1}{2}$ point and a loss 0 points.

The final standings will be determined by the total number of points scored.

3. CLASSICAL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Friday, 2 October 2026

Time	Schedule
09:30–12:30	Arrival, registration and confirmation of participation
12:30	Technical meeting
13:00	Official opening
13:30	Round 1
17:30	Round 2

Saturday, 3 October 2026

Time	Schedule
09:30	Round 3
13:30	Round 4
17:15–17:45	Blitz Open registration
18:00	Opening of the Golden Rhodopes Blitz Open
18:10–20:30	Blitz tournament
20:45	Blitz tournament award ceremony

Sunday, 4 October 2026

Time	Schedule
09:00	Round 5
13:00	Round 6

Time	Schedule
17:00	Round 7
approx. 20:15	Official closing and award ceremony

The Organizer reserves the right to make minor changes to the schedule if necessary. Participants will be informed in due time of any such changes.

4. PRIZE FUND – CLASSICAL U2400

Place	Cash Prize	Additional Award
1st place	€1000	“Golden Rhodopes Champion” Cup + gold medal
2nd place	€600	Silver medal
3rd place	€450	Bronze medal
4th place	€300	
5th place	€250	
6th place	€200	

Total Main Prizes: €2 800**5. SPECIAL PRIZES – €1 200**

Category	Prize
Best female player	€100 + cup
Best U18 player	€175 + medal
Best U14 player	€150 + medal
Best S60 player	€175 + medal
Best player rated ≤ 2199	€200
Best player rated ≤ 1999	€175
Best player rated ≤ 1799	€125
Best player from Chess Club “Leader” – Zlatograd	€100 + cup

Total Special Prizes: €1 200**TOTAL CLASSICAL PRIZE FUND: €4 000**

The U18 category includes players born in 2008 or later.

The U14 category includes players born in 2012 or later.

The S60 category includes players born in 1966 or earlier.

Rating categories are determined according to the official FIDE Standard rating for October 2026. A player without a published FIDE Standard rating is not eligible for a prize in the U2200, U2000 or U1800 rating categories.

6. PRIZE DISTRIBUTION RULES

Cash prizes are not shared between players with the same number of points. Final placing will be determined by the tie-break criteria specified in these Regulations.

A player may receive only one cash prize.

If a player qualifies for both a main prize and a special prize, the player will receive the higher-value cash prize.

If the two prizes are of equal value, the main prize takes precedence and the special prize passes to the next eligible player.

Cups, medals and other non-cash awards may be received irrespective of this rule.

7. TIE-BREAK CRITERIA

In the event of equal scores, places will be determined by the following tie-break criteria, applied in order:

1. Buchholz Cut 1 (BH-C1);
2. Buchholz (BH);
3. Sonneborn-Berger (SB);
4. Direct Encounter (DE) – direct result, where applicable;
5. Number of Games Won (WON);
6. Number of Games Won with Black (BWG).

Tie-breaks will be calculated in accordance with the FIDE Tie-Break Regulations in force on the date of the tournament.

8. GOLDEN RHODOPES BLITZ OPEN

The Blitz tournament will be held on Saturday evening, 3 October 2026, as a separate event within the festival.

8.1. Eligibility

The Blitz tournament is OPEN to all players, with no international rating restriction.

This allows Grandmasters, International Masters and other players rated above 2400, who are not eligible for the Classical U2400 tournament, to participate in the Blitz Open.

8.2. System

9 rounds, Swiss System.

8.3. Time Control

3 minutes plus a 2-second increment per move starting from move one – 3+2.

The tournament will be submitted for FIDE Blitz rating.

8.4. Schedule

17:15–17:45 – registration and confirmation

18:00 – opening

18:10 – start of Round 1

approx. 20:30 – finish

20:45 – award ceremony

9. PRIZE FUND – BLITZ OPEN

€1 000 – Top Six Places

Place	Prize
1st place	€350 + cup + gold medal
2nd place	€220 + silver medal
3rd place	€160 + bronze medal
4th place	€110
5th place	€90
6th place	€70

TOTAL: €1 000

Cash prizes are not shared.

In the event of equal scores, the same tie-break criteria will be used insofar as they are applicable to the tournament.

10. TOTAL FESTIVAL PRIZE FUND

Tournament	Prize Fund
Golden Rhodopes Classical U2400	€4 000
Golden Rhodopes Blitz Open	€1 000
TOTAL	€5 000

Cups, medals and other non-cash awards are not included in the €5 000 prize fund and are provided additionally by the Organizer.

**The Organizer will withhold 10% tax from all cash prizes before payment where applicable under the tax legislation in force in the Republic of Bulgaria. All amounts stated in these Regulations are gross amounts.*

11. RULES OF PLAY

All games will be played in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess in force.

For the Classical U2400 tournament, the default time is 30 minutes after the announced starting time of the round. A player who does not arrive within this period will lose the game by forfeit, unless the Chief Arbiter decides otherwise due to duly established exceptional circumstances.

For the Blitz Open, a player may arrive no later than the expiry of their initial time, unless the Chief Arbiter announces otherwise before the start of the tournament.

12. FIGHTING CHESS RULE

In the Classical U2400 tournament, players may not agree to a draw before Black has completed move 30.

Before that point, a draw is possible only in cases provided for by the FIDE Laws of Chess, such as stalemate, threefold repetition or another valid claim under the Laws.

The purpose of this rule is to encourage meaningful and fighting chess throughout the festival.

13. ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND FAIR PLAY

FIDE requirements concerning mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic communication devices apply in the playing venue.

Mobile phones and other communication devices may not be used during a game.

The Organizer and the arbiter team may conduct checks in accordance with FIDE regulations and Fair Play principles.

Any attempt to cheat, use external assistance or otherwise violate sporting ethics may result in immediate removal from the tournament and reporting to the competent authorities.

14. RECORDING MOVES

In the Classical U2400 tournament, players are required to record their moves in accordance with the FIDE Laws of Chess.

Where possible, the Organizer will provide electronic DGT boards on the leading boards, and selected games may be broadcast online.

15. PUBLICATION OF PAIRINGS AND RESULTS

The starting list, pairings, results and final standings will be published on Chess-Results and through the festival's official information channels.

The pairing for the next round is considered official once it has been published by the arbiter team.

16. AQUA SPA HOTEL ZLATOGRAD – OFFICIAL FESTIVAL HOTEL

The festival will take place at Aqua SPA Hotel Zlatograd, 1 Progress Street, 4980 Zlatograd, Bulgaria.

Special GOLDEN RHODOPES – CHESS & SPA accommodation conditions will be arranged for participants and accompanying persons.

The following packages are planned:

CHESS & SPA PACKAGE – 2 NIGHTS

2–4 October 2026

Accommodation + breakfasts + dinners + use of the SPA area.

Price: [to be announced]

CHESS & SPA PACKAGE – 3 NIGHTS

1–4 October 2026

Suitable for players who wish to arrive in Zlatograd on Thursday.

Accommodation + breakfasts + dinners + use of the SPA area.

Price: [to be announced]

Separate rates will be announced for:

- single occupancy;
- double room;

- triple room;
- family accommodation;
- children and accompanying persons.

The SPA packages may include access to a mineral-water pool, Jacuzzi, Finnish sauna, infrared sauna, steam bath, salt room, relaxation area and fitness centre, as well as internet access and parking, subject to the conditions agreed with the hotel.

The booking procedure for the special tournament rates will be announced separately.

17. ENTRY FEES

Classical U2400

40 EUR

Blitz Open

20 EUR

50 EUR Both Tournaments

The Organizer may offer preferential entry fees to members of Chess Club “Leader” – Zlatograd, titled players and participants who book the official Chess & SPA package.

18. REGISTRATION

Advance registration is mandatory.

The following information is required for registration:

- full name;
- FIDE ID;
- federation;
- FIDE Standard rating;
- year of birth;
- club;
- contact telephone/e-mail;
- participation in Classical U2400;
- participation in Blitz Open;
- hotel accommodation requirements.

Deadline for advance registration: 30 September 2026.

Registration after this deadline is subject to availability and approval by the Organizer.

19. ARBITER TEAM

Chief Arbiter: Kyamran Bilyal

Deputy Chief Arbiter: [to be announced]

Arbiters: [to be announced]

All decisions concerning the Laws of Chess and the conduct of the competition will be made in accordance with the applicable FIDE regulations and these Regulations.

20. APPEALS

If required, an Appeals Committee consisting of three members and alternates will be appointed before the start of Round 1.

An appeal against an arbiter's decision must be submitted in writing within 15 minutes after the conclusion of the relevant game/round.

Appeal fee: €50.

If the appeal is upheld, the fee will be refunded.

21. AWARD CEREMONY

The Blitz Open award ceremony will take place on Saturday evening immediately after the tournament concludes.

The official closing and award ceremony for the Classical U2400 tournament will take place after the final round on 4 October 2026.

Prize winners are expected to attend the ceremony in person unless an acceptable reason for absence has been agreed in advance.

22. ORGANIZER'S RIGHTS

By submitting an entry, each participant accepts these Regulations and consents to their name, sporting results, games and photographs taken in the public areas of the event being used for coverage and promotion of the festival, in compliance with applicable law.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the Organizer reserves the right to make justified changes to the schedule and organizational arrangements without altering the principal sporting format or the announced guaranteed prize fund.

Any matters not expressly covered by these Regulations will be governed by the applicable FIDE rules and regulations.

23. CONTACTS

Organizer:

Chess Club "Leader" – Zlatograd

Tournament registration:

Chief Arbiter: **Kyamran Bilyal**

Tel.: +359 895474730

E-mail: k.bilyal@outlook.com

Hotel accommodation:

Information on bookings under the special Golden Rhodopes Chess & SPA conditions will be published together with the final package rates.

GOLDEN RHODOPES CHESS FESTIVAL 2026

THREE DAYS. TWO TOURNAMENTS. ONE CHAMPION'S WEEKEND.

€5 000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND

2–4 OCTOBER 2026

ZLATOGRAD • BULGARIA

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