Malta Open Rapid and Malta Open Blitz Championships 2026

21-22 November 2026

Tournament regulations

- Eligibility to play: Open to all players licensed with FIDE.
- Eligibility for *Malta Rapid Champion* and *Malta Blitz Champion* titles: players meeting all criteria per MCF Statute to play in the national championship – these are reproduced at the end of this document.
- Registration shall be through the form at https://forms.gle/Qge4yH5PtMzSAEfAA by 20 November 2026 22:00 local time and in person at the venue prior to round 1 of the respective competition, between 09:30 and 10:00. Late entries shall be accepted up to before the pairings for the competition's third round are published. By registering to participate in either competition, players shall be agreeing to this protocol in its entirety.
- Pairing System (subject to a minimum of 13 entries):
    - Rapid: 7 rounds, FIDE Swiss Rules - FIDE (Dutch) System, pairings engine.
    - Blitz: 7 double-rounds (14 rounds), FIDE Swiss Rules. The Pairing System and the result assigned to the Pairing Allocated Bye for the entire competition will be announced prior to the start of the first round.
- Scheduled play:
    - Rapid: Saturday, 21 November 2026, first round starting at 10:00 local time.
    - Blitz: Sunday, 22 November 2026, first round starting at 10:00 local time.
- Venue: Institute of Engineering and Transport (IET) Penthouse, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Paola, Malta. 35.877795 N, 14.504560 E https://maps.app.goo.gl/KXv8hk9YP9LP62JU7
- Time control:
    - Rapid: 10 minutes per player for the entire game with an addition of 5 seconds per move starting from move one (**G/10m+5s**).
    - Blitz: 3 minutes per player for the entire game with an addition of 2 seconds per move starting from move one (**G/3m+2s**).
- Games will be rated for the Rapid and Blitz FIDE Rating List, respectively.

- Played under the FIDE's *Laws of Chess*, including *Appendix A. Rapid chess* and (in the case of the Blitz) *Appendix B. Blitz chess*. Article A.5 and (in the case of the Blitz) Article B.3 shall apply for the entire event. Refer to: FIDE Handbook FIDE Laws of Chess taking effect from 1 January 2023 (https://handbook.fide.com/chapter/E012023)
- General Regulations for Competitions, Tie-Break Regulations, and Ethics & Disciplinary Code shall all apply. The Malta Chess Federation's Code of Ethics shall also apply.
- Default time: **Zero**. A player who is absent without notifying the arbiter shall be considered as withdrawn (to have withdrawn), unless the absence is explained, with acceptable reasons, before the next pairing is published.
- For the final tournament standings, participants shall be ranked in the order specified by the respective tie-break below, starting from the first specified tie-break and moving to the next in the list whenever a persisting tie cannot be broken. When the tie-break list is exhausted, any remaining tie should be broken by the drawing of lots.

  The tiebreaks shall be defined and applied in accordance with FIDE's Playoff and Tie-Break Regulations.

  Rapid tie-breaks:

  - Game points (win = 1 / draw = ½ / loss = 0)
  - Direct Encounter **(DE)**
  - Buchholz Cut-1 **(BH-C1)**
  - Buchholz **(BH)**
  - Number of Games Played with Black **(BPG)**
  - Number of Games Won **(WON)**

  Blitz tie-breaks:

  - Game points (win = 1 / draw = ½ / loss = 0)
  - Direct Encounter **(DE)**
  - Buchholz Cut-2 **(BH-C2)**
  - Buchholz **(BH)**
  - Number of Games Won **(WON)**
  - Number of Games Won with Black **(BWG)**
- Entrance fees (must be settled prior to the pairing of the first round):
  - MCF Members (any flag): €15 per competition, or €25 for both.
  - Non-MCF Members (foreign flag only): €25 per tournament, or €45 for both.

- Prizes, per competition:
    - Top 3: Trophies (in accordance with tiebreaks) and prize-monies (split equally between players tied on game-points): 1st: €300, 2nd: €150, 3rd: €100.
    - Category prizes, subject to a minimum of three contenders: Best Female, Best U1900, Best U1600, Best Unrated (players with a standard FIDE rating are treated as if rated).
    - A competitor may only win one prize.
- Electronic devices:
    - During a game, a player is forbidden to have any electronic device on their person. Such devices may be stored as agreed with the arbiter, provided the device is completely switched off.
    - If it is evident that a player has such a device on their person in the playing venue, the player shall lose the game. The opponent shall win.
    - Special arrangements may be made for genuine cases such as doctors on-call.
- If a player has to stop taking part or needs to miss a certain round, they shall inform the arbiter so they are not paired (zero-point bye).
- Please keep the club clean. Do not use the paper bins inside the club; there are waste bins just outside the club.
- All participants are to provide valid FIN, email and phone contact details at registration.
- Chief Arbiter: IA Noel Grima; Arbiters: NA Peter Sammut Briffa, NA Sarah Cachia Falzon.
- Appeals may only be lodged within one minute after the end of the last game of the round. The Appeals Committee shall be selected before the first round.
- The organiser reserves the right to resolve any unforeseen situations, ambiguities, or disputes not explicitly covered by these Regulations, provided that any such resolution is consistent with the sporting integrity and objectives of the competition.

Summary of eligibility criteria

Extract from the MCF Statute, Appendix 2

2. Only persons who are
(a) members of the Malta Chess Federation,
(b) registered and licensed as players with FIDE under the Maltese flag,
(c) are Maltese citizens (as defined in Cap. 188 of Maltese law) or who as at 1 January of that year had been ordinarily resident in Malta for a period of at least six years in the preceding eight calendar years can participate in the Open, Women's and Juniors' National chess championships of Malta.
Furthermore, persons who are members of the Malta Chess Federation, and who as at the start of that calendar year (a) were aged less than 14 years, and (b) had been ordinarily resident in Malta for an aggregate period of ***N minus 2*** years ("**minimum residency**") during the preceding ***N*** calendar years ("**lookback period**"), may also participate in the above National chess championships of Malta.

Where N is equal to half the person's youth/cadet age group (i.e. their age at the start of the year, rounded up to the next whole even integer), as follows:

Age group/s	**Lookback period N (calendar years)**	**Minimum residency (years)**
U20, U18, U16	8	6
U14	7	5
U12	6	4
U10	5	3
U8	4	2