

Checkmate Your Summer 2026

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Checkmate Your Summer is an immersive educational program at Odyssey designed to help kids discover the game of chess. Over the course of the summer, we aim to teach students the fundamentals of the game while fostering critical thinking, analytical problem-solving, and patience: skills that will prove highly valuable in all areas of their lives.

Format of the Class

To keep students engaged and ensure they are grasping the tactical and theoretical sides of chess, the daily format of *Checkmate Your Summer* is broken down into three core pillars:

- **Classes and Lessons Taught by Our Volunteers:** We will begin with group lessons focusing on specific concepts (e.g., openings, tactics, and basic checkmates).
- **Guided Puzzle Solving:** Students will apply what they've learned by solving chess puzzles, which improves their pattern recognition and reinforces the lessons we taught them.
- **Over-the-Board Play:** The remainder of the class will be dedicated to matches against their peers. Students will play against one another in a competitive setting.
- **Group Work:** Scholars will be split into groups and go to stations where they will learn about distinct but interconnected topics to accelerate their growth.

Requirements, Expectations, and Chess Etiquette

Along with being engaged and focused, scholars are expected to:

- Play to the best of their ability in each chess game
- Analyze their games after playing them, regardless of the result (remember, you learn the most from your mistakes!)
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by:
 - Saying “good luck” to their opponent at the start of a game
 - Saying “good game” to their opponent at the end of a game, regardless of the result
 - Shaking hands with their opponent before and after a game
 - Resetting the board after each game
 - Otherwise maintaining respect towards opponents and teachers, regardless of performance in any chess game
- Being attentive during class
 - Not being distracting or preventing others from actively participating in class
 - Not talking over others, especially the teachers
 - Otherwise maintaining respect towards peers and superiors

Scholars are expected to uphold the standards above. If a scholar does not adhere to these guidelines, they may be barred from the program (need permission), and the scholar may not be considered for the following year’s ***Rule the Board*** scholarship program.

The Rule the Board Scholarship

Throughout the initial weeks of educating Odyssey's students in *Checkmate Your Summer* last year, we were blown away by the scholars' sportsmanship and eagerness to learn. Because some scholars enter with no prior knowledge of the game, it is incredibly rewarding to watch them quickly pick up and apply complex concepts.

We believe that the highest-performing students in our summer class deserve the opportunity to further their enthusiasm for the game and experience a true competitive setting. Therefore, we are proposing **Rule the Board** as a one-year scholarship program that will buttress these deserving scholars' ability to play, learn, and excel at chess year-round.

How We Select Scholars

Rule the Board will have 8 recipients this year (tentative). In partnership with Odyssey staff, we will select recipients based not just on their chess-playing ability but on the character they demonstrated during *Checkmate Your Summer*. We look for:

- An eager willingness to learn and an infectious enthusiasm.
- An engaged, present mindset and a positive attitude.
- Consistent adherence to the Chess Etiquette standards.
- Demonstrated talent, a notable potential to grow, and strong overall character.

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