



Grandmaster Alex
Yermolinsky



House
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The 3rd Annual Okoboji Open represents the first major chess tournament to be held in northwest Iowa. It will be held from April 24-26, 2009, at Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center in Okoboji, Iowa.

The tournament is a World Chess Live Grand Prix (GP 20) and Junior Grand Prix event featuring International Grandmaster (GM) Alex Yermolinsky. GM Yermolinsky is a two-time U.S. Champion and recently won the Eastern Open held in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, International Woman Grandmaster Camilla Baginskaite, have two children and live in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where they are working to build chess, including the surrounding areas.

In addition to tournament play, it also includes a simultaneous exhibition and lecture by GM Yermolinsky. IASCA President, Tim Mc Entee, is asking its members to support the event and hopes to maximize their participation by scheduling the organization's annual meeting to coincide with the Okoboji Open.

This is the third year organizers, Jodene Kruse and John Flores, have held the event. They have organized and/or directed the event since the 2007 Winter Games when scholastic and open sections were held simultaneously. This year, the scholastic event remained part of the Winter Games and the open was moved to the spring to ensure good weather for those traveling from afar.

The organizers hope this year's event marks the first of many chess strides. They met with Dr. Steven Harder, Kevin Hlavac, Ana Smith and Sam Smith in Windom, Minnesota, last year to chart the growth of chess in the region. Their hope is to promote and encourage chess players to support events in neighboring states.

Furthermore, there is also a recognition and concerted effort to build scholastic chess. They hope to award their first chess scholarship award at next year's Okoboji Open.

The event is a five-round Swiss System tournament and sanctioned by the United States Chess Federation (USCF) and the Iowa State Chess Association (IASCA). It will be directed by Senior Tournament Director Hank Anzis.

Anyone interested in helping to build chess, sponsor this year's event or make a donation can contact Jodene or John by emailing sibley@fiorechess.org. The Sibley Chess Club also has a link to make online donations – the website is www.fiorechess.org.



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