

Jamaica Heads to 42nd World Chess Olympiad in Baku

Right on the heels of Jamaica's impressive showing in the recently concluded Rio Summer Olympics, led by the irrepressible Usain Bolt, another Jamaican team is off to battle the world!

Thirteen individuals (*of a fifteen-person delegation*) comprising players and officials left Jamaica on Monday, August 29 to compete in the 42nd World Chess Olympiad scheduled to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan from September 1-14, 2016. The delegation will travel via New York, USA and Kiev, Ukraine. They will be joined in Baku by Donald Miller and Rachel Miller, the other two members of the team who are travelling via Canada.

Jamaica debuted at the Olympiad in 1978 (*Buenos Aires, Argentina*) when it fielded only a Men's team. In 1984 a Jamaica Women's team debuted at the games in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Although Jamaica has had some impressive individual results the country's best team result was in 2010 when the women won the first place trophy for their category at the 39th edition of the games held in Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia, Russia.

The World Chess Olympiad is a biennial event that has been held since 1927. Men can lead a Women's team but cannot play on it; women can lead and/or play on an Open team (*originally a "Men's" team*). The defending champion is China after a maiden victory at the last games in Tromso, Norway, 2014; the Women's defending champion is many-time winner Russia.

Jamaica is fielding two teams at this year's event which will see approximately one hundred and eighty (180) countries participating. The details of the members of the two teams and the officials are stated below.

Jamaica's participation was made possible chiefly by sponsorship from the Government of Jamaica (*via the Sports Development Foundation*), the Jamaica Chess Federation ("**JCF**") and the Kasparov Chess Foundation.

JAMAICA'S WOMEN TEAM

1. **CANDIDATE MASTER RUSSEL PORTER (CAPTAIN) -**
This is his third stint as Captain of Jamaica's Women's team having first served in this capacity at Istanbul, Turkey (2012); he has represented Jamaica as a player at several Olympiads; was Jamaica Chess Champion in 1994; at the 2006 Olympiad in Turin, Italy, he defeated Finland's Grandmaster Heikki Westerinen. This was the first time that a Jamaican was defeating an international Chess Grandmaster at an Olympiad.

2. **WOMAN INTERNATIONAL MASTER ("WIM")
DEBORAH RICHARDS-PORTER** - Debuted in 2002 at the 35th games in Bled, Slovenia; Jamaica's record ten-time Women's Champion (2002-2011); led Jamaica's women's historic category-winning effort at the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia, Russia (2010); won the Women's Sub-Zonals in Barbados in 2016. This was the first time that a (*female*) player from the English-speaking Caribbean had won a Women's World Championship qualifying event; also made history by becoming the first female player from the English-speaking Caribbean to earn the "**WIM**" title; won the inaugural (2014) female

Chess player-of-the-year award at the RJR Sportswoman/man awards and repeated this feat for 2015.

3. **WFM RACHEL MILLER** – Debuted at the 2014 Olympiad in Tromso as a fourteen year-old; earned the Woman Candidate Master (“**WCM**”) title in 2012; earned the WFM title in 2014; first place in Under-15 Pan-American Scholastic Chess Championships in 2014; has won numerous local titles highlighted by the Jamaica Women’s Chess Championship title in 2014 at fourteen years old – the youngest person to do so.
4. **WCM ANNESHA SMITH** – A member of Jamaica’s historic category-winning Olympiad team in Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia, 2010; a strong, universal player she won the Jamaica Women’s Championship titles for 2013 and 2016, respectively.
5. **WCM ARIEL BARRETT** – Has represented Jamaica’s Women’s team at several Chess Olympiads; earned WCM title at the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk (2010) where she was a member of Jamaica’s historic category-winning team; won the 2015 Jamaica Women’s Championship title.
6. **WCM MELISHA SMITH** - Jamaica’s Junior Female Champion in 2006; placed second in the Margaret Prince Celebration, tournament in Barbados, 2010; placed second in the Jamaica Women’s Championships in 2014 and 2016, respectively; has represented Jamaica at several Olympiads; played well at the Olympiad in Istanbul, Turkey (2012) to earn the WCM title.

JAMAICA'S OPEN

7. **INTERNATIONAL MASTER JOMO PITTERSON (CAPTAIN)** – His first official stint as Captain of the Open team although he has been to a number of Olympiads as a player; scored an unbeaten seven, from a possible nine, points at the 2008 Olympiad (*Dresden, Germany*) to earn his Fide Master (“**FM**”) title; won the Sub-Zonals in Nassau, Bahamas in 2010. This was the first time that a (*male*) player from the English-speaking Caribbean had won this World Championship qualifying event. As a result he was awarded the “**International Master**” title – the second highest international, individual Chess title. He is the first Jamaican to accomplish this feat under the JCF banner.

8. **FM WARREN ELLIOTT** – Has represented Jamaica at many Olympiads debuting in 1998 (*Elista, Kalmykia*); obtained the FM title in 2001 due to his performance at the Sub-Zonals in Venezuela; captained (*for the first time*) Jamaica’s Open team at the last Olympiad (*Tromso, Norway, 2014*); in 2016 he won his eighth Jamaica Chess Championship title, surpassing FM Shane Matthews’ seven titles, thereby setting a new record; the only player to win the Jamaica Chess Championship title with a perfect score (*9/9 in 2001*).

9. **FM DAMION DAVY** – Attending his third straight Olympiad, having debuted in Istanbul, Turkey in 2012; Jamaica’s outstanding (*male*) player at the 2014 Tromso, Norway Olympiad where he earned the “**FM**” title; won three straight Jamaica Chess Championship titles (2010-2012); voted best chess player for 2014 at the RJR

Sportswoman/man of the year awards – the inaugural award.

10. **FM RAS MALAKU IMMANUEL TAFARI LORNE** – Debuted at the Olympiad in Calvia, Mallorca, Spain (2004); won the Bahamas Invitational tournament in 2006; earned the FIDE “Candidate Master (**“CM”**)” title after his solid performance at the 2014 Tromso Olympiad; won Jamaica’s Blitz (*Speed Chess*) titles 2012 and 2015, respectively; played stupendously to earn the **“FM”** title after finishing second at the 2016 Sub-Zonals in Barbados.

11. **CM BRANDON WILSON** – Won Caribbean Junior Chess titles in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, respectively, in 2007; became a National Master in 2007; debuted at the Olympiad in Dresden, Germany, 2008; played well at the last Olympiad (*Tromso 2014*) to earn the “CM” title.

12. **NM SHREYAS SMITH** – Calabar High School student making his Olympiad debut in Baku, Azerbaijan, 2016; won gold medals at 2013 CARIFTA Junior Championships; best schoolboy player in the past few years achieving the highest-ever local rating by a schoolboy (**2300+**); became a National Master in 2014; reigning three-time Jamaica Junior Champion; won the inaugural Chess Grand Prix in 2015 and voted best (*male*) Jamaican chess player for 2015 at the RJR Sportswoman/man of the year awards.

OFFICIALS

13. **IAN WILKINSON QC (CHEF DE MISSION; DELEGATE)**
– Will be attending his eighth straight Olympiad in various capacities (*chef de mission, delegate, journalist, manager and player*); President of the JCF since 2013; Jamaica’s reigning two-time Veterans Champion (*50+ year-old*); was the first person from the English-speaking Caribbean to be elected to FIDE’s Ethics Commission (*a disciplinary panel generally regarded as the “World Chess Court”*) and served for eight (8) years, the itinerant panel sitting in places such as Greece, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and Norway.
14. **IA CM ROBERT WHEELER** - Six-time Jamaica Chess Champion and a FIDE CM; Jamaica’s reigning two-time Seniors Champion (*65 + year-old*); currently Jamaica’s only International Arbiter; debuted as an arbiter at the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk (2010), repeating the role in 2012 (*Istanbul, Turkey*) and 2014 (*Tromso, Norway*) respectively; he is scheduled to do so again at the 2016 event in Baku, Azerbaijan.
15. **DONALD MILLER** – Currently Jamaica’s only FIDE Arbiter, a level just below “*International Arbiter*”; served as manager of the teams at the Olympiad in Tromso, Norway (2014); in Baku, Azerbaijan he will be the Deputy *Chef de Mission* and Manager.



The Jamaican delegation at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston, Jamaica before departing for Baku, Azerbaijan on August 29.

L-R: Robert Wheeler (Arbiter), Brandon Wilson, Deborah Richards-Porter, Russel Porter, Annesha Smith, Damion Davy, Ariel Barrett, Jomo Pitterson, Melisha Smith, Shreyas Smith, Ian Wilkinson (Chef de mission and Delegate), Warren Elliott and Malaku Lorne.

MISSING FROM PHOTO: Donald Miller (Manager and deputy Chef de mission) and Rachel Miller (player)

Ian G. Wilkinson QC
President, Jamaica Chess Federation
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