



# STRONG SCHOOL SUPPORT

Press release

## ALEXFORBES BATTLE BOARDS CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP GAINS STRONG SCHOOL SUPPORT

**Johannesburg, 31 January 2024** - The highly anticipated Alexforbes Battle Boards Chess Championship has received overwhelming support from schools across South Africa.

Launched in December 2023, this online team tournament aims to break barriers and establish itself as the most accessible and affordable national high school sports tournament.

### KEY UPDATES

- Four provinces will be participating in this edition of the tournament, featuring 32 schools per province
- A total of 128 high schools and 1280 players from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North-West, and Western Cape will compete for the grand prize;
- The competition begins with provincial pools on 10 February 2024, leading to the final stages on 24 February 2024, where the top 32 school teams will compete for honours.

### GROWING THE SPORT

While chess is a major sport globally, it can still experience significant growth in South Africa with increased accessibility. Alexforbes is confident that the Alexforbes Battle Boards Chess Championship will address this.

Andre Lewaks, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of Battle Boards and President-Elect of the Chess South Africa Executive Board, emphasised the importance of the championship, adding that the tournament aims to contribute to the development of chess among learners, fostering a collective passion for the game within school communities.

"By embracing the inherently inclusive nature of chess, our goal is to make it even more accessible, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds can actively participate and enjoy the sport," says Lewaks.

## ENCOURAGING STRATEGIC THINKING

One of the life skills that chess develops is the ability to think critically which is a skill that is highly sought after by global employers.

Viresh Maharaj, Executive at Alexforbes, points out that the lessons and values of chess are relevant in many aspects of life, including investing for your future.

“Being able to plan ahead, making the most of the pieces on the board and adapting as circumstances change are skills we can all use. We believe that chess is a mechanism to develop these skills, and we want to make the game more appealing and accessible to a much broader audience across South Africa. Chess isn’t just for the few; it’s actually for all of us,” says Maharaj.

## CHOOSING THE BEST GROWTH MODEL

In line with global technological advancements and increased connectivity in South Africa, Alexforbes believes that the best growth model for chess would be online tournaments.

Duitser Bosman, Tournament Director of the Alexforbes Battle Board Chess Championship, highlights that the online competition model was designed to foster the development of the sport.

“Emphasising a collaborative approach, each team must have a minimum of ten players, encouraging learners to represent their schools collectively rather than participating individually. This strategic initiative is geared towards stimulating the growth of chess among the learners of the participating schools,” says Bosman.

## MOVING AHEAD

The national draw for the championship will be available on 7 February 2024 on the [Alexforbes Battle Boards Chess Championship](#) website where supporters can receive real-time updates or live stream matches.

Looking ahead, the Alexforbes Battle Boards Chess Championship is set to expand to all nine provinces in the future.

Visit [www.battleboards.co.za](http://www.battleboards.co.za) for more information.