

Christian School Finals Competition

Lightning Chess

by Dr. Cal Easterling

ORU

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CSFC Event Highlight – Lightning Chess 111



If a competition event based on tactic and strategy mixed with mental toughness and the ability to think on your feet sounds appealing, we have the event for you—Lightning Chess (111). Chess has been described as an art, a science as well as a sport. However you define it, chess is highly competitive and is enjoyed by millions around the world.

Lightning chess is simply a standard chess game played at high-speed. The Lightning Chess event at

Christian School Finals Competition has a five-minute time limit per player. Chess clocks are used to regulate the time. Participants should be familiar with the basic rules of moves, capturing, checkmates and draws.

Dr. Cal Easterling, an avid chess player who constantly has a game of chess in play, has assisted with the CSFC Lightning Chess Event for several years and offers some advice for developing a winning game of Lightning Chess.

Lightning Chess

Lightning chess is an exciting form of play that introduces the element of time into a game that routinely has no form of time control. Excluding the time limitations, Lightning Chess looks and plays just like a regular chess game; therefore, understanding the basics of chess is essential to successfully compete in Lightning Chess. Here are a few suggestions I think will help as you prepare for the CSFC Lightning Chess event:



1. Know the rules. While at first chess can seem confusing with a lot of different rules for different pieces, the basic rules of chess are relatively easy to learn. Find a good summary of the rules and study them. Also, learn chess terms. Knowledge of the basics will enhance your game.

2. Study basic strategies and tactics. A strategy is an attempt to plan moves five plays out while tactics are used for the next one to two moves. Chess is known as a game of strategy, but because of its speed, lightning chess often tends to be more tactical than strategic. There are many books you can get to study strategies and tactics. One I suggest is *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess*.

“Understand the importance between responding as opposed to reacting – everything you encounter should not be a surprise.”

3. Learn opening concepts. Your opening moves will set the tone for the rest of your play. There are several books dedicated to chess openings to put your game in a good position.

4. Study endgames. Because you are not able to predict which chess pieces will still be on the board at the end of the game, you will not be able to memorize specific moves for this part of the game. While play at this point is more flexible, you can still learn to assess your position as well as the value of your opponent’s pieces to determine an endgame course of action.

5. Practice. Play as often as you can and continue to apply what you are learning from your study of openings and endgames.

6. Participate in as many tournaments as you can. Get a feel for the quick pace of the game. Learn how to keep your concentration in the fast-paced environment. Discover how to pace yourself—find a balance between feeling rushed and responding too slowly. Understand the importance of responding as opposed to reacting—everything you encounter should not be a surprise.

7. Have fun. While you always want to give your best in every undertaking, be sure to play fair, relax and have fun.



Studies report some of the benefits of learning chess include increased math skills, concentration, memory and self confidence. So while you may be thinking that you are simply learning a great game of strategy that challenges you to think and respond quickly as well as demonstrate calmness under pressure, think again—you are preparing for life!

The Game of Chess is not merely an idle amusement; several very valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of human life, are to be acquired and strengthened by it, so as to become habits ready on all occasions, for life is a kind of Chess, in which we have often points to gain, and competitors or adversaries to contend with, and in which there is a vast variety of good and ill events that are, in some degree, the effect of prudence, or the want of it. -Ben Franklin

Meet Dr. Easterling:

Dr. Cal Easterling, Director of Institutional Research at Oral Roberts University, is another faithful servant at CSFC. Dr. Easterling holds a PhD in sociology from the University of North Texas and has been at Oral Roberts University since 1990. Before joining ORU, he taught at several universities across Oklahoma and Texas. Additionally, he founded and has pastored at various churches in Oklahoma and is the current Sunday School Superintendent at Victory Christian Center in Tulsa. Presently, Dr. Easterling is engaged with contributing chapters to various publications in collaboration with other ORU faculty. Dr. Easterling assists with Academic Bowl and Lightning Chess at CSFC and is appreciated for the special sense of humor that he brings to everything he works with.



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