

BRILLE CHESS ASSOCIATION  
Registered Charity no. 263049

Supporting chess players with sight loss

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Who are we?

We are the national association of VI chess players. Our aim is to encourage and support the playing of chess at all levels by blind and partially sighted people. Membership is open to blind and partially sighted people while sighted friends and family may join as associate members. Associate members play a vital role within the association and they are eligible to play in most of our tournaments. We were formed in 1932 and developed from a Braille correspondence chess organisation to a community of chess players taking part in correspondence chess and over the board tournaments, at home and abroad. This is why the word Braille is in our title but you do not have to use Braille to be part of our association as we now use a variety of means of communication.

What do we do?

We offer tuition and coaching from beginner to advanced level.

We sell good quality adapted chess sets and chess clocks.

We give advice on chess software suitable for blind people.

We run three chess tournaments each year, weekend events each spring and autumn, and a week long event in the summer. We also run correspondence events in which members send moves to each other in Braille, on tape or by email.

We offer practical help and advice to any group or association of visually impaired players wishing to form a chess club. This may include tuition and coaching or help with the provision of chess sets and chess clocks.

We run an audio library of chess literature in a variety of accessible formats.

We make some printed chess books available as e-books.

What material benefits do visually impaired people gain from joining the BCA?

Members receive generous subsidies on the adapted chess equipment we sell. They also receive subsidised rates for accommodation in events we run. Visually impaired UK residents receive free entry for their first BCA tournament, together with either free accommodation for a weekend event or a £100 reduction for a one week event. They may also be accompanied by a guide or companion who, in appropriate circumstances, will receive the same concession. In addition to the generous financial support we give to leading players in international events, we

encourage our members to participate in mainstream events and overseas events by offering them a grant to offset some of the costs of travel and accommodation.

What about young members?

Visually impaired UK residents under 25 receive free membership plus free entry and free accommodation in BCA events. In some circumstances the parent or guardian of a visually impaired child may also receive free accommodation. We also offer practical support and advice to schools, colleges and other units for the visually impaired which may include tuition and coaching and the provision of chess sets and chess clocks.

How does a totally blind person play chess?

Modifications to chess sets enable a blind person to examine the position of the pieces on the board by touch. The black squares are raised slightly above the level of the white squares with a hole drilled in the centre of each square. Each of the pieces has a peg in its base which fits into the holes in the board. The black pieces are distinguished by a small pin on the top. Each player uses a separate board and after making a move announces it to his/her opponent

How do we keep members informed?

By our quarterly newsletter, the BCA Gazette, which is available in Braille, print, large print, audio formats and email.

And by our website: [www.braillechess.org.uk](http://www.braillechess.org.uk)

We also run an email user group where members exchange information and opinions.

Do we participate at international level?

Yes, we enter teams and individuals in World and European championships for blind and partially sighted players. We also participate in less formal events such as a six nations tournament and an international event for visually impaired players and their sighted friends in Haaksbergen, in the Netherlands.

What does membership cost?

Membership costs just £10 per year or £20 for five year membership. Life membership is £50. Visually impaired UK residents under 25 receive free membership. UK sighted associate members under 18 receive free membership.

How can you find out more?

To join or to get more information about the Braille Chess Association, please use one of the following contact details.

Our website [www.braillechess.org.uk](http://www.braillechess.org.uk)

Our Publicity Officer, Voldi Gailans  
Email [publicity@braillechess.org.uk](mailto:publicity@braillechess.org.uk)

Our Secretary, Guy Whitehouse  
Email [secretary@braillechess.org.uk](mailto:secretary@braillechess.org.uk)

Our Chairman, Norman Wragg OBE  
Email [chairman@braillechess.org.uk](mailto:chairman@braillechess.org.uk)

Would you like to support the BCA?

Like all charities we rely on generous support from charitable trusts, businesses, other organisations, and individuals. Your support would be much appreciated.

Contact the Fundraiser, Mrs Julia Scott  
Mole End  
9 Rocheberie Way  
RUGBY  
CV22 6EG  
Email [j.scott@braillechess.org.uk](mailto:j.scott@braillechess.org.uk)

Just Text Giving by Vodafone  
Donate now, text BCAS01 £2/£5/£10 to 70070 eg. BCAS01 £5