

Promotional Memberships Report

The Bylaws mandate an annual report on promotional memberships before the Delegates reauthorize them for another year. This is the report for the 2020 Delegates Meeting.

The US Chess Membership System is changing from the in-house developed membership system we've used since 2005 to CIVI-CRM starting on July 7th. While that will not change the numbers in this report, there may be changes in how these numbers are computed for 2021 due to the changes in the membership system structure, so there may be some incompatibilities between the data in this report and the equivalent report for 2021.

As a result of the COVID-19 limitation on OTB chess, US Chess membership has dropped by about 15% since the end of February, this has also had some impact on various promotions and programs.

The two major types of promotional memberships currently in effect are the group membership (voucher) system and the two-month membership. During the past year we had a membership recruitment program in effect, though it was not widely used. This report also covers programs under which the US Chess membership requirement is waived for rated tournaments.

The group membership program is a voucher system. Affiliates purchase a block of memberships at a discounted rate (the rate varies depending upon the number of vouchers purchased) and are sent vouchers for those memberships which can be redeemed online. The group membership pricing plans started with as few as 25 memberships in the initial block. For more on the voucher program see <https://secure2.uschess.org/voucher>. Due to COVID-19, a number of vouchers have been extended.

Although the voucher system was designed so that the voucher could be redeemed by a parent, coach or TD, most of them appear to be redeemed by the organization which purchased the block of vouchers. Not all of these organizations supply us with the member's correct birthdate or mailing address.

During the previous fiscal year, vouchers were changed so that they are now valid for nine months rather than for six months (plus the fractional portion of the month in which they are issued) and when redeemed are good for a one year group membership that does not include a printed magazine. This means that vouchers purchased at the start of the school year are essentially valid for the entire school year.

At present the only vouchers we have issued may be redeemed on behalf of someone who is not a current US Chess member (or whose membership is about to lapse) and who is under 20 at the time the voucher is redeemed. In 2019, the Executive Board created a voucher membership for incarcerated individuals. Those vouchers can be purchased by affiliates. Vouchers for adult memberships have been discussed on several occasions but never implemented.

Usage of the block membership voucher program has increased significantly over the past several years.

During the 2019-20 fiscal year we issued 102 sets of vouchers to 71 different organizations totaling 13,313 vouchers. 3829 of those vouchers have not yet been redeemed. 365 of those vouchers expired without being used (272 on 6/30/2020) though it is possible that some of those vouchers might be extended, other vouchers that might have expired by now have already been extended. Of the vouchers purchased, were for incarcerated individuals.

During the 2018-19 fiscal year we issued 119 sets of vouchers to 77 different organizations totaling 15,384 vouchers. 1597 of those vouchers have not been redeemed and have expired.

During the 2017-18 fiscal year we issued 110 sets of vouchers to 69 different organizations totaling 14,891 vouchers. 1138 vouchers issued during the fiscal year expired without being used.

During the 2016-17 fiscal year we issued 101 sets of vouchers to 69 different organization totaling 12,483 vouchers. 776 vouchers issued during the fiscal year expired without being used.

In FY 2015-16 we issued 77 sets of vouchers to 46 different organizations totaling 10310 vouchers. 715 of those vouchers expired without being used.

In FY 2014-15 we issued 74 sets of vouchers to 43 different organizations totaling 7507 vouchers, in FY 2013-14 we issued 40 sets of vouchers to 17 organizations, totaling 3747 vouchers and in FY 2012-13 we issued 23 sets of vouchers to 9 organizations, totaling 2239 vouchers.

During FY 2019-20 there were 273 two-month trial memberships purchased by 251 different member IDs. 70 of those trial members subsequently extended their membership beyond the end of the trial month period. In FY 2018-19 there were 310 trial membership for 288 member IDs, 151 of those memberships have subsequently been extended.

The \$10 'TD fix' option for correcting membership issues discovered after the tournament ends was used 345 times in FY 2019-20 by 133 affiliates for 309 member ID. It was used 455 times in FY 2017-18 by 168 different affiliates, for 393 different members.

Usage of the 'TD Fix' code is routinely monitored by the office, there does not appear to be a significant pattern of abuse of this privilege by members, affiliates or TDs.

In October of 2012, an International Online membership was authorized by the Executive Board. This membership is \$20 for one year, is only available to members living outside the USA and members are expected to provide an email address. It does not include a printed membership card or any magazines. It is not available on the US Chess membership webstore

but can be sold by US Chess affiliates at tournaments. We sold 114 International Online memberships in FY 2019-20, 149 in FY 2018-19, 122 International Online memberships in FY 2017-18, 168 in FY 2016-17, 163 in FY 2015-16, 99 in FY 2014-15, 45 in FY 2013-14 and 6 in FY 2012-13. Usage of the International Online membership appears to have gone down in part due to the demise of the Millionaire Open.

We started another new member recruitment program in March of 2017 designed to encourage new members to play in their first tournament for a \$6 participation fee. This member recruitment program was been used a total of 16 times, 5 of those in the 2016-17 fiscal year, 6 times in FY 2017-19 and 5 times in FY 2018-19.

We also have the Junior Tournament Player program, which does not convey any ongoing membership privileges beyond participation in that event, but without any fee other than the ratings fee for that event.

There are two types of JTP events. Any affiliate may hold a Primary JTP event, one in which all players (including house players) are in the third grade or lower. A scholastic affiliate (the affiliate ID begins with the letter H) may also hold an in-school K-12 JTP event, one intended only for the students enrolled in that school and limited to students in the 12th grade or lower.

Adult players are not allowed in JTP events, not even as house players

Here's a breakdown on JTP events over the past several fiscal years:

32 affiliates used the Primary JTP program in FY 2019-20, the most frequent users of the Primary JTP programs are in Bloomington IL, Austin TX and Richmond VA.

Primary (K-3) JTP events

fy	sections	players	ids	nonmem	joined
2016-05-31	207	6111	3619	1642	374
2017-05-31	157	4904	3056	1474	415
2018-05-31	173	4156	2713	1131	307
2019-05-31	168	4085	2597	1174	212
2020-05-31	91	2326	1597	679	106

(Joined means the non-member joined US Chess within 90 days of the event.) .

17 scholastic affiliates used the K-12 JTP program in FY 2019-20, the most frequent users of the K-12 JTP programs are in Berkeley CA, Las Cruces NM, Dublin CA, and Durham NC.

In School (K-12) JTP events

fy	sections	players	ids	nonmem	joined
2016-05-31	201	3083	1188	745	202
2017-05-31	188	2993	1255	600	136
2018-05-31	219	3675	1524	932	225
2019-05-31	228	2909	1325	789	176
2020-05-31	202	2302	1066	740	263

We also have the longstanding Delegate mandated waiver of membership requirements for foreign IMs and GMs. (GMs who are registered with FIDE as USA players are entitled to a free USCF membership by Delegate mandate, IMs are not.) Foreign players do not earn Grand Prix points unless they are also paid US Chess members. During FY 2019-20 it appears that 132 foreign GMs, 86 foreign WGMs, 73 foreign IMs and 818 foreign WIMs played in US Chess rated events, including online events. Some of these individuals may have earned their current FIDE titles after those events and some of them may be dues-paying US Chess members.

There is also the longstanding waiver (dating back to 1989) of membership requirements for events that are part of sanctioned State Games (ie, sanctioned by the National Congress of State Games.)

The national governing bodies for most other sports extended similar membership waivers to NCSG sanctioned events in the late 80's and early 90's, the exceptions being ones where national membership also includes participant insurance, such as gymnastics and boxing.

At present, Nebraska and Kentucky have State Games that include chess.

We also have the 'house player' rule, which the Delegates sanctioned in 1990. At present each section of an event may have one non-member house player per round, though a house player may not compete in over half of the rounds in that section without a waiver from the US Chess office.