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For Immediate Release

GCT announces launch of URS™ and 2017 wildcard selections

The Grand Chess Tour (GCT) is pleased to announce that the Universal Rating System (URS™) has formally launched and the first URS™ rating list for the month of January 2017 is now available at the official URS™ website <http://universalrating.com>. The methodology and philosophy behind the new site and system are explained in detail on the new website which officially launched on 1 January 2017.

Furthermore, we are also pleased to announce that we have finalised the 2017 GCT Tour wildcard selections and the following three players have been offered wildcards for the 2017 GCT Tour:

1. GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (RUS)
2. GM Sergey Karjakin, (RUS)
3. GM Viswanathan Anand (IND)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi earns his place due to his consistency across all time formats which sees him placed 5th on the URS™ rating list as at 1 January 2017. This earned him selection as the highest ranked player on the URS™ not already picked.

GM Sergei Karjakin was then selected as the second highest ranked player on the URS™ not already picked after a year that saw him compete in the 2016 World Championship match and secure the title of World Blitz Champion.

The final wildcard has been awarded to former World Champion Viswanathan Anand who is ranked 10th on the URS™ rating list as at 1 January 2017. He also tied for 4th place in the 2016 GCT tour despite only competing in three of the four events in 2016.

GM Levon Aronian has been selected as the first alternate and will be invited to join the 2017 tour as a full tour member if any player declines to participate for any reason.

The three wildcard selections join the 6 automatic qualifiers who secured their spots based on their 2016 GCT results or through their average FIDE classical ratings over the course of the 2016 calendar year. The six automatic qualifiers for the 2017 GCT Tour are:

1. GM Wesley So (USA) – 1st place, 2016 GCT
2. GM Hikaru Nakamura (USA) – 2nd place, 2016 GCT
3. GM Fabiano Caruana, (USA) – 3rd place, 2016 GCT
4. GM Magnus Carlsen (NOR) – 1st place, 2016 FIDE Average Rating
5. GM Vladimir Kramnik (RUS) – 2nd place, 2016 FIDE Average Rating
6. GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (FRA) – 3rd place, 2016 FIDE Average Rating

There will be fourteen event wildcards in the 2017 Grand Chess Tour with four in each Blitz & Rapid and one each in the Sinquefield Cup and London Chess Classic. The recipients will be announced in due course.

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About the URS™ (<http://universalrating.com>)

The Universal Rating System (URS™), is a revolutionary new sport's rating system designed to assess the relative strength of participants across a wide variety of competitor vs competitor sports or games. The URS™ was developed as the result of a collaborative research project funded by the Grand Chess Tour, the Kasparov Chess Foundation and the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis. The system is the product of detailed research conducted over more than two years by some of the world's leading experts in methods of rating chess players.

About the Grand Chess Tour (<http://grandchesstour.org>)

The Grand Chess Tour is a circuit of international events, each demonstrating the highest level of organization for the world's best players. The Tour was created in partnership between the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (Sinquefield Cup) and Chess Promotions, Ltd. (London Chess Classic). The legendary Garry Kasparov, one of the world's greatest ambassadors for chess, inspired the Grand Chess Tour and helped solidify the partnership between the organizers.

Grand Chess Tour



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