



GRAND CHESS TOUR™

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GRANDMASTER LEVON ARONIAN NAMED INAUGURAL 2017 SAINT LOUIS RAPID & BLITZ CHAMPION

Dominating Performance Leads Aronian to \$37,500 and 13 Grand Chess Tour Points

SAINT LOUIS (August 22, 2017) – With the eyes of the world on Saint Louis for the inaugural and historic Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz competition, the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (CCSCSL) crowned Levon Aronian the champion of the Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz and the fourth leg of the Grand Chess Tour (GCT).

“It’s an honor to win this incredible tournament against this level of competition, especially against some of my all-time chess idols,” said new Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz champion Levon Aronian. “I’m excited to carry this momentum into what I hope is a successful conclusion to the GCT at the London Chess Classic this upcoming December.”

To capture the tournament victory, Aronian dazzled the chess board with an incredible performance against nine of the world’s best chess players to take home the \$37,500 prize and 13 Grand Chess Tour points. Aronian’s win in Saint Louis moves the Armenian grandmaster into third place overall in the Grand Chess Tour Standings.

The Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz awards a total prize fund of \$150,000 and represents the fourth of five stops on the 2017 GCT – a circuit of international chess events featuring the world’s elite chess talent, created in partnership between the CCSCSL and Chess Promotions, Ltd. (London Chess Classic). In a special twist to the inaugural Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz this year, legendary world champion Garry Kasparov came out of retirement to play competitive chess for the first time in 12 years.

“From beginning to end, this year’s inaugural Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz was truly a tournament unlike any other in chess,” said Tony Rich, Executive Director of the CCSCSL. “It was incredibly special to witness history as an icon in our game – Garry Kasparov – returned to the chessboard and Levon Aronian put on a world-class display to take home the title and prize.”

Finally, at the conclusion of the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz, the CCSCSL hosted the much-anticipated Ultimate Moves blitz games on Aug. 19, 2017. Ultimate Moves, a fun event traditionally played following the Sinquefield Cup, consists of a lively series of blitz games among GCT players and special guests. This year’s Ultimate Moves competition pitted two teams managed by Rex and Randy Sinquefield, respectively. Team Rex consisted of Rex Sinquefield, Levon Aronian, Hikaru Nakamura, Sergey Karjakin, Ian Neopomniachtchi, Lenier Dominguez and special guest John Urschel, former Baltimore Raven offensive lineman and current PhD student at MIT. Team Randy consisted of Randy Sinquefield, Fabiano Caruana, Garry Kasparov, Vishy Anand, David Navara, Liem Le and special guest Rachel Li, the 7-year-old

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sister of Grandmaster Ruifeng Li. The competition went down to the wire, where a tiebreak match was held to determine the winner with Team Rex claiming victory.

For more information, visit www.saintlouischessclub.org or www.grandchesstour.org.

About The Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis

The Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that is committed to making chess an important part of our community. In addition to providing a forum for the community to play tournaments and casual games, the club also offers chess improvement classes, beginner lessons and special lectures.

Recognizing the cognitive and behavioral benefits of chess, the Chess Club and Scholastic Center is committed to supporting those chess programs that already exist in area schools while encouraging the development of new in-school and after-school programs. For more information, visit www.saintlouischessclub.org.

About The Grand Chess Tour

The Grand Chess Tour is a circuit of international events, each demonstrating the highest level of organization for the world's best players. The 2017 Tour was created in partnership between the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (Sinquefield Cup/Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz) 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. His tireless efforts to popularize the game around the world mirror the goals and ambitions of the Grand Chess Tour.

The 2017 Grand Chess Tour stops consist of the Paris Grand Chess Tour in Paris, France June 21-25; Your Next Move Grand Chess Tour in Leuven, Belgium June 28-July 2; the Sinquefield Cup in Saint Louis, USA Aug. 12-12; Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz Aug. 14-19 and the London Classic in London, UK Dec. 1-10, 2017.

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