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30 December 2024

For Attention: Provincial Presidents
Provincial Secretaries
Provincial Executive Committees
National Schools structure

**Subject: Record-Breaking Participation in Chess South Africa Rated Tournaments
Official Announcement**

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pride and excitement that I announce a new milestone for Chess South Africa. We have achieved a record-breaking number of participants in Chess SA-rated tournaments this year!

While this achievement reflects significant growth, we also acknowledge that many players in South Africa, particularly in rural and disadvantaged communities, still face barriers to accessing rated tournaments. We are actively working on strategies to extend access to these areas and ensure chess reaches every corner of our nation.

Growth of Chess in South Africa

The number of active players participating in Chess SA-rated tournaments has grown remarkably in 2024, despite the challenges our federation has faced in recent years. I am pleased to share that the total number of active players has increased by 10.55%, rising from 25,052 in 2023 to an impressive 27,697 this year.

This figure not only marks the highest participation in Chess South Africa's history but also surpasses the previous record set just last year. Let us celebrate this significant achievement together and continue to work toward fostering inclusivity, accessibility, and excellence in South African chess.

President: **Andre Lewaks** – Vice President 1: **Lindokuhle Ngubane** – Vice President 2: **Vicky Magu** – Treasurer: **Carol Lfyedi**
Secretary: Acting **Nicole Peter** – Provincial Rep: **Nicole Peter** – Provincial Rep: **Nolwandle Khumalo**
Provincial Rep: **Jeanette Mabitsela** SASCA Convenor: **Fungile Ngqenga** Head Coach: **Reuben Salimu**

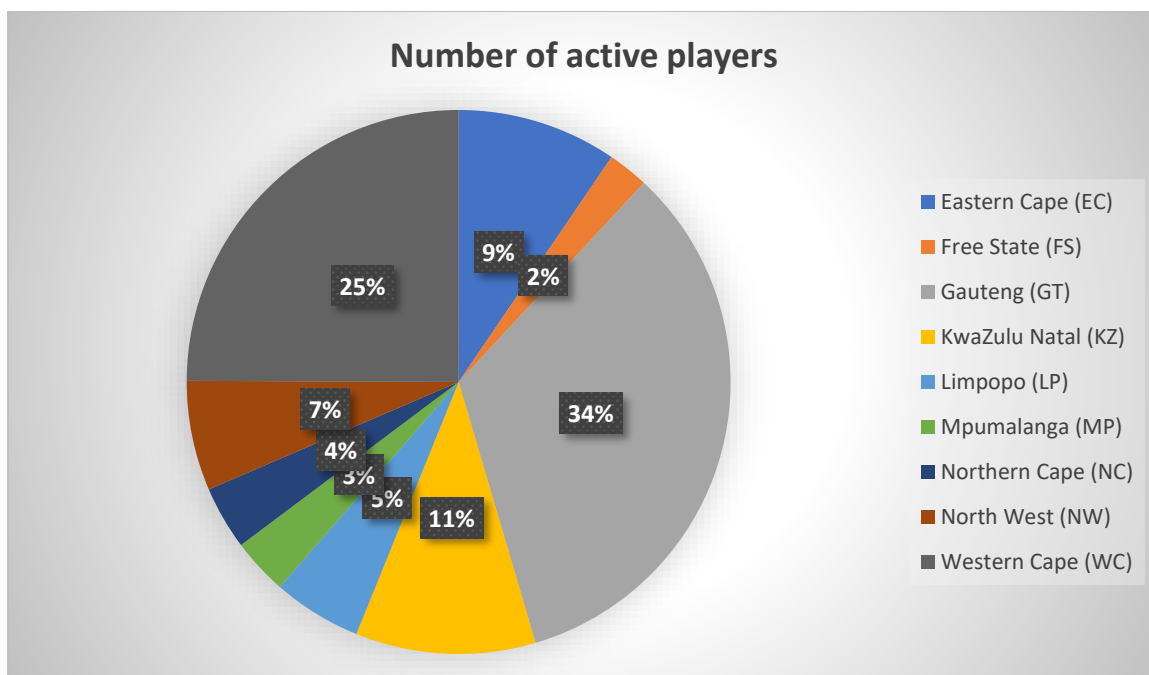


Figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates that **Gauteng Chess** leads the nation in the number of active players, achieving remarkable growth over the past year. The federation’s active player base increased by **16.27%**, rising from 7,983 in 2023 to 9,282 in 2024. **Western Cape Chess** recorded the second-highest percentage of active players, followed by **KwaZulu-Natal Chess** in third place, which accounts for 11% of the total active players. At the other end of the spectrum, **Free State Chess** recorded the lowest number of active players, contributing approximately 2% of the national total.

Several provinces achieved personal records for active player growth:

- **Limpopo:** 91.36% increase since 2023
- **Northern Cape:** 47.7% increase since 2023
- **KwaZulu-Natal:** 34.6% increase since 2023
- **North West:** 23% increase since 2023
- **Gauteng:** 16.27% increase since 2023
- **Eastern Cape:** 11.33% increase since 2023

Future Updates

We will release another circular to provide a detailed gender breakdown of active players, as well as statistics on adult and senior players. Current records indicate that **85% of our players are juniors**, highlighting the need to implement strategies for retaining players after they complete school.

Gratitude and Next Steps

A heartfelt thank you to all **provinces, regions, clubs, schools, arbiters, administrators, coaches, and parents** for their collective efforts in achieving this record-breaking year. This accomplishment underscores the growing popularity of chess in South Africa, which is made possible through the dedication and hard work of the entire chess community.

Let us celebrate our successes in 2024 and enter the new year with renewed energy to elevate Chess SA to even greater heights.

Have a blessed new year.

Yours in Chess,



Andre Lewaks

President

Executive Board of Chess South Africa