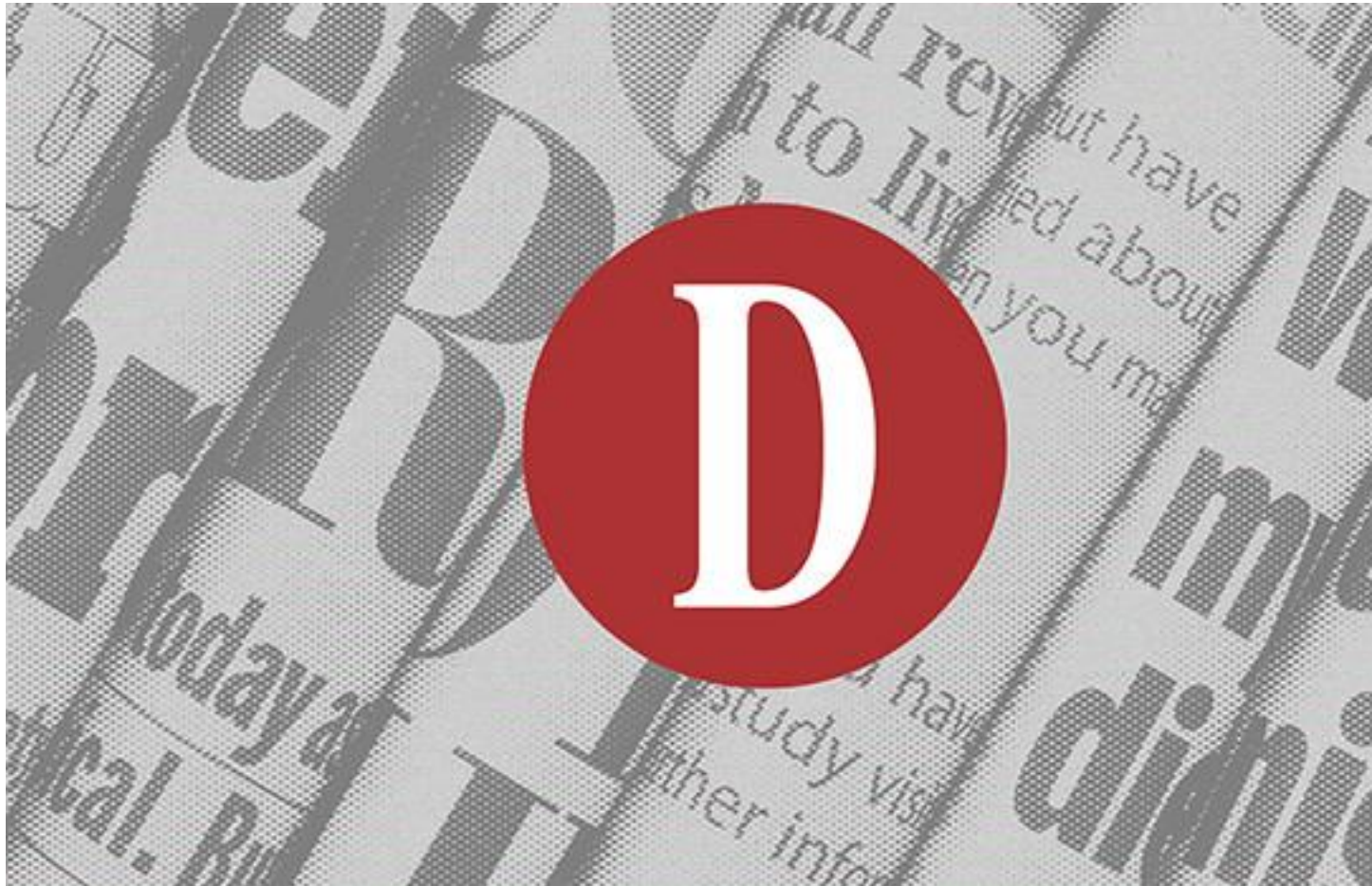


Our View: Benefits of chess go beyond the board

By [Dispatch Editorial Board](#) • 23 hours ago

• 3 mins to read



Sometimes, big things come from small beginnings.

We hope that's the case with the game of chess.

Last week, 10 Noxubee County school kids gave up their Saturday to spend a few hours in the high school gym to be introduced to chess. The Brooksville Beautification and Resource Committee, led by chairman Merrie Felder, hosted the event to help introduce members of the community, especially young people, to the game. Chris Baker, vice president for the Mississippi Chess Association and founder of the Scott County Chess Club, introduced the students to the game. At the end, a chess board was given to each child.

The game has long been known for its positive benefits, especially among children. It has been linked with improving children's concentration, problem-solving, critical, original and creative thinking – and even math skills.

In Europe, especially, the game is wildly popular.

The best example:

How many school children in Armenia play chess?

Since 2011, all of them.

That year, the small eastern European nation made chess a mandatory subject for children in grades 2-4.

Chess is an academic subject in more than a dozen countries, although only in Armenia is it mandatory.

There is no game that can compete with chess in the range of benefits it offers.

When we think of chess, we generally associate the game with gifted people, but research over the past dozen years indicates a surprising range of benefits even among students who struggle in academics.

A 2011 Italian study found that among children who started playing chess, those who were lower achievers improved their learning at greater rate than those who had been higher-achieving students.

Numerous studies have shown that chess has a positive impact on children with ADHD.

In Spain, a study found that chess training was an effective treatment for ADHD, with children with a high IQ benefitting most. In Lebanon, a study of ADHD children placed in a chess program showed a significant increase in the length of time for which children could focus on a particular task before disruptive behavior began.

Studies show that chess can be effective in helping children with other types of learning deficiencies.

A German study offered children with learning difficulties a one-year package of chess lessons in school. These children showed a significant improvement in simple addition and counting tasks compared with a control group.

When taken together, the research shows that chess can be a valuable asset for a child's academic and social development. It's also a lot of fun.

We hope the 10 kids who showed up for Saturday's chess program in Noxubee County will stick with the game and tell their friends.

It's a beautiful game with wonderful benefits, not just for serious competitors, but for those who play simply for the fun of it.

The Dispatch Editorial Board is made up of publisher Peter Imes, columnist Slim Smith, managing editor Zack Plair and senior newsroom staff.

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