

12 to 1: Adams leads field for British KO Championship

England No. 1 Mickey Adams will head a stellar lineup for the British Knockout Chess Championship 2018, where 12 of the UK's top players will battle it out for a total prize fund of £50,000 in four nail-biting KO rounds from December 8-17.

The winner will receive £15,000, and other prizes include: £10,000 for the losing finalist, £5,000 each for the semi-finalists, £2,500 each for the quarter-finalists, and £1,250 for the players knocked out in the preliminary round.

The Semi-Finals and Final rounds of the British Knockout will follow the same exciting format as the [London Chess Classic](#), the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour: 2 classical games, followed by 2 rapid and 4 blitz games, followed by 2 blitz playoff games and an Armageddon blitz game if required to decide the winner of each match.

After a preliminary qualifying round, involving eight players, the top 4 seeds join the action for the Quarter-Finals. After Semi-Finals at Google's HQ, the Final will take place at Olympia.

The invited players include members of England's team in the 2018 Batumi Olympiad Open competition, which finished in an impressive fifth, way above expectations; the UK's top two women players; two promising young UK masters; and two qualifiers from the recent 4NCL International event.

An impressive lineup

The players are seeded according to their November 2018 FIDE ratings in classical chess:

1 Mickey Adams (GM, 2706). The tournament is headed up by the legendary Cornishman, who has been a World Championship finalist in 2004, England's longtime No. 1 and six-time British Champion, most recently in Hull 2018. Mickey is renowned for his deep understanding of chess and his work as a second to World Champion Magnus Carlsen.

2 David Howell (GM, 2697), from Sussex, was England's top scorer at the 2018 Batumi Olympiad with 7.5/10. In 2007, he became the UK's youngest grandmaster and is one of a select group of English players to break through the 2700 rating barrier.

3 Gawain Jones (GM, 2683), two-times British Champion, from Sheffield, Yorkshire, who most recently impressed with a good Olympiad result and a sterling effort in the 2018 Tata Steel Masters alongside Magnus Carlsen and the world top 10 players.

4 Luke McShane (GM, 2667), from London, often described as the world's strongest amateur. Luke played Board 2 for England at the 2018 Olympiad, and combines a busy career in the City with excellent chess results.

5 Jonathan Hawkins, (GM, 2579), twice British Champion, from Consett, County Durham. The self-taught Grandmaster, who progressed from club player to strong GM in his twenties, is now a leading coach in London.

6 Dr. John Nunn, (GM, 2572). The former world top 10 player, legendary author and theoretician, is also renowned as the three-time World Problem Solving Champion, and is an acclaimed mathematician, the youngest-ever undergraduate at Oxford at the age of 15, and most recently served as the England Team Captain at the Batumi Olympiad.

7 Matthew Turner, (GM, 2536), representing Scotland, is a leading chess coach, teaching chess and mathematics full-time at Millfield School, Somerset;

8 Simon Williams, (GM, 2466), from Godalming, Surrey. The 'Ginger GM' is one of the game's most exciting players and popular commentators, with a large following on YouTube and the Twitch gaming channel, who likes nothing better than to give 'Harry the h-pawn' a push for swashbuckling attacks;

9 Harriet Hunt (IM & WGM, 2440), England's highest-rated female player, is a four-time British Women's Champion and a researcher in archaeogenetics at the University of Cambridge.

10 Ravi Haria (IM, 2436). The 19-year-old from Elstree, Hertfordshire, gained the IM title in 2017 and achieved an impressive first place on tie-break in the 2018 Pula International in Croatia.

11 Alan Merry (IM, 2429). One of the rising stars of English chess and a frequent winner on the British weekend circuit, the 22-year-old from Suffolk is playing in the British Knockout for the second year running,

12 Jovanka Houska (IM & WGM, 2419), an eight-time British Women's Champion, who this year led the England Women's Team at the Batumi Olympiad with great distinction. She is also the co-author with James Essinger of the hit novel, 'The Mating Game', about the fictional life and loves of a female grandmaster.

The road to the Final

The preliminary round (on Saturday December 8) sees eight players in action, playing two classical games to decide who goes through to the Quarter-Finals. If this match is a tie, rapidplay playoffs follow, and a final Armageddon game will decide if the players are still tied. The pairings are:

- 1 Jonathan Hawkins v Jovanka Houska
- 2 John Nunn v Alan Merry
- 3 Matthew Turner v Ravi Haria
- 4 Simon Williams v Harriet Hunt

On Sunday December 9, the top four seeds join at the Quarter Finals stage, with the same format of 2 Classical games, followed by a playoff of rapid games and an Armageddon game if necessary:

- 1 (Simon Williams or Harriet Hunt) v Mickey Adams
- 2 David Howell v (Matthew Turner or Ravi Haria)
- 3 Gawain Jones v (John Nunn or Alan Merry)
- 4 (Jonathan Hawkins v Jovanka Houska) v Luke McShane

Grand Chess Tour format for Semis & Final

The tension mounts with the Semi-Finals from December 11-13, held across town at Google's Kings Cross HQ, where artificial intelligence company DeepMind will simultaneously be hosting the London Chess Classic Semi-Finals. (Tickets to the matches in Google's offices are by invitation only.)

The British KO Final (from December 15-17) will be held at the Olympia Conference Centre, and tickets are available for anyone who would like to attend via [the London Chess Classic website](#).

The format for the Semi-Finals and Final will be two Classical games, two Rapid games and four Blitz games, followed by an Armageddon blitz game if required.

The British KO Semi-Finals and Final will follow the same schedule and scoring system as the London Chess Classic, the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour.

This is weighted, with 6 points for a win and 3 points for a draw in Classical games; 4 points for a win and 2 points for a draw in the Rapid; and 2 points for a win and 1 point for a draw in the Blitz.

A total of 15 points are thus required to win a match without recourse to a playoff.

The Semi-Finals, Final and Third Place Playoff will be held alongside the equivalent Grand Chess Tour London Chess Classic matches – enabling spectators to see all these great matches together.

All the games in the Semi-Finals, Final and Third Place Playoff will be played out, regardless of when the match is won, following the same practice as in the Grand Chess Tour.

Tournament Schedule:

Preliminary Round (Saturday Dec. 8) & Quarter-Finals (Sunday Dec. 9)

Game 1: 1100 - 1500; Game 2: 1600 - 2000; Playoffs: 2030 - 2200.

Time limits:

Classical games: 90 mins plus 30 secs per move increment throughout.
Playoffs (2 games): 10 mins plus 5 secs per move increment throughout.
If still undecided, Armageddon game 5 mins v 4 mins, with 2 secs increment per move from move 61.

Semi-Finals (Dec. 11-13), Final & Third Place Playoff (Dec. 15-17)

Venues:

Final: Olympia London, Hammersmith Rd, London W14 8UX

Classical Game 1: Tuesday December 11, 1400-2030

Classical Game 2: Wednesday December 12, 1400-2030

Rapid & Blitz Games: Thursday December 13, starting at 1400

Time Limits:

Classical: 40 moves in 100 mins, plus all remaining moves in 60 mins, plus 30 secs per move increment throughout.

Rapid: 25 mins plus 10 secs per move increment throughout.

Blitz: 5 mins plus 3 secs per move increment throughout.

Playoffs (2 games): 10 mins plus 5 secs per move increment throughout.

If still undecided, Armageddon game 5 mins v 4 mins with 2 secs increment per move from move 61.

Media enquiries:

For media enquiries related to the 2018 British Knockout Championship, the [London Chess Classic](#) and [Chess in Schools and Communities](#), please contact: Tereza Pribanova (tereza@chessinschools.co.uk)

The London Chess Classic is the flagship event of Chess in Schools and Communities. As the UK's largest chess tournament and the concluding leg of the Grand Chess Tour, an international circuit of world-class chess events inspired by legendary World Champion Garry Kasparov. Alongside this competition amongst the world's best players, Chess in Schools and Communities runs a range of amateur and age-grade competitions for 1,000s of children from the charity initiative nationwide. For more information, visit: Londonchessclassic.com