

SCHACHZENTRUM BADEN-BADEN | FREESTYLE CHESS – PRESS RELEASE

grenke Freestyle Chess Open und grenke Chess Open 2025 with Magnus Carlsen and Vincent Keymer

Baden-Baden/Weissenhaus, February 13, 2025 – The traditional chess festival in Karlsruhe is continuing in a new format. Instead of the Classic Tournament alongside the Open, there will be two major Opens this year from April 17 to 21: the **grenke Freestyle Chess Open** and the **grenke Chess Open**. The two tournaments combine Freestyle Chess and classic tournament chess under the roof of the Karlsruhe Convention Center – a unique concept.

Numerous top grandmasters are expected. The 18-time world champion **Magnus Carlsen**, number one in the chess world and a regular guest at the grenke Chess Festival, has already confirmed his participation in the Freestyle Open. The German number one **Vincent Keymer** will also be taking part. Carlsen may have the opportunity in Karlsruhe to get revenge on Keymer for yesterday's defeat in the semi-finals of the Freestyle Grand Slam in Weissenhaus.

The winner of the Freestyle Open (A) will receive a starting place for the next leg of the **Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour** in New York (July 17-24, 2025). The top ten finishers will win points for the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour 2025.

"We are very excited about the innovative new edition. Karlsruhe stands for size and class in one place like no other city. This year, the stars will play in the grenke Freestyle Chess Open, which is open to everyone. There is no better way to combine popular and competitive sports," says tournament director **Sven Noppes**. "With the combination of classic chess and classic freestyle, we are creating a festival that is a highlight for hobby players, amateurs and the absolute world elite, and a spectacle for all spectators on site or online."

Christian Bossert, chairman of the Baden-Baden Chess Center, expects the event to once again become the largest chess festival in the world, as it was last year, with around 2,600 participants.

Dr. Sebastian Hirsch, CEO of grenke AG: "grenke has been passionately committed to chess for decades. We invite the international chess elite to our region, bring them together and offer the winner a trip to New York. We are proud of the diversity and quality of the field of

participants and keep our fingers crossed for all players for a successful tournament. I recommend that everyone stop by, because the new grenke Chess Festival offers all chess enthusiasts and the curious an unforgettable experience in Karlsruhe."

Since the grenke Classic 2025 is not taking place, the qualification of the 2024 Open winner **Hans Moke Niemann** for the Classic 2025 is no longer valid. To emphasize the close ties between Freestyle Chess and longtime chess sponsor grenke, **Jan Henric Buettner**, CEO of Freestyle Chess, has decided to invite the US grandmaster instead for the next stage of the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour. The US grandmaster will receive a wildcard for the tournament in Paris (April 8-15).

"We are very pleased about the cooperation," says **Sebastian Siebrecht**, Chief Chess Officer of Freestyle Chess. "With the Open, we are able to make the Freestyle Grand Slam accessible to a wide audience. Every player has the chance to compete against the best and qualify for one of the major events in our series."

Two major open events, six rating classes

The Karlsruhe Chess Festival 2025 will combine two high-level tournaments, each with three rating classes:

- **grenke Freestyle Chess Open** with a prize fund of 225,000 euros:
 - **Freestyle Open A:** for players with an Elo or DWZ > 1950
 - → The winner qualifies for the New York leg of the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam
 - **Freestyle Open B:** for players with an Elo and DWZ < 2000
 - **Freestyle Open C:** for players with a DWZ < 1400 and Elo < 1600

- **grenke Open** with a prize fund of 70,000 euros:
 - **grenke Open A:** for players with an Elo or DWZ > 1950
 - **grenke Open B:** for players with an Elo and DWZ < 2000

grenke Open C: for players with a DWZ < 1400 and Elo < 1600

Switch between tournaments

A special feature ensures maximum flexibility: Those who participate in the grenke Chess Open can switch to the grenke Freestyle Chess Open up until the 5th round and keep the points they have earned so far. This means that the festival offers a unique opportunity to opt for the freestyle format during the course of the tournament.



Tournament mode:

Freestyle Open: 9 rounds Swiss system, 90 minutes + 30 seconds per move

grenke Open: same format as the Freestyle Open

Register now!

Registration is now open at www.grenkechessopen.de. All further information on the schedule, tournament format and prize money is available there.

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