



*Annual Report of FIDE Arbiters' Commission*  
*(January 2024 - September 2024)*

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This Annual Report presents the FIDE Arbiters' Commission's (ARB) activities in the period of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 – September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

It was prepared by Mr. Ivan SYROVY Chairman of the Commission and Mr. Nebojsa BARALIC, Secretary of the Commission.

*Note: other activities of the FIDE Arbiters' Commission are regularly reported on <https://arbiters.fide.com>*

**ARB ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD between FIDE Congress 2023 and FIDE Congress 2024**

During the period between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 in FIDE Arbiters Commission (ARB) we worked on the following topics:

**A) Changes in Regulations**

- 1) **Arbiter Stipend Regulations** (now in Handbook as B06.6.)
- 2) **Appeals Committee Procedural Rules** (now in Handbook as 11. Appeals Committee Procedural Rules, point 3.10.1)
- 3) **Arbiter Title Application forms** (now in Handbook as B06. – Annex 1)

**B) Education of Arbiters**

- 1) **International Arbiter Certification Seminars**
- 2) **FIDE Arbiters' Seminar**
- 3) **Refresher courses**
- 4) **Preparation of arbiters for Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary**
- 5) **Preparation of Hungarian arbiters**
- 6) **Lecturer Training program (LTP)**

**C) Arbiter Titles**

**D) Arbiter Categories**

**E) Appointment of arbiters for World events**

**F) Articles on our webpage**

**G) Arbiters' Manual**

**H) Questions & Answers**

- I) **Chess Olympiad in Budapest – selection of arbiters**
  - J) **100-year FIDE Awards**
  - K) **Guinness record**
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## A) **CHANGES IN THE REGULATIONS**

1. On March 24<sup>th</sup> 2024 (effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) our proposal of Arbiter Stipend regulations was accepted. This regulation is the result of cooperation of ARB with the other Commissions involved (GSC and EVE) and with the support of the FIDE Management Board and FIDE Council. The result is a compromise, respecting our approach to better the conditions of all arbiters (including match arbiters and local arbiters) but understanding the position of other involved bodies – organisers.
2. Appeals Committee Procedural Rules – the change in 3.10.1 proposal by GSC was discussed with our Commission with positive feedback and support for this proposal.
3. ARB Title Application forms – the change in B06 annex 1. According to the FIDE Regulations for the training of chess arbiters, starting from January 1st, 2024, each application to become an IA arbiter requires one norm from an IA Seminar. In the documents (IA2) so far, there is no place where information about the IA seminar was stated. Also, based on the experience of reviewing titles, we are using this opportunity to make some corrections to all application forms (IA1, IA2, FA1, FA2, IA3)

## B) **EDUCATION OF ARBITERS**

1. ARB succeeded in launching **International Arbiter Certification Seminars (IA Seminars)**. From January 2024 till September 2024 ARB organised seven (7) online International Arbiter Seminars and one is planned to take place with candidates present during the Olympiad as part of other events. Unlike the FA seminars with one Lecturer, IA seminars are supported by two Lecturers and in this way each lecturer can also benefit, getting new ideas through cooperation with his/her colleague. IA Seminars are important part of education of arbiters and every arbiter who would like to become an International arbiter needs to pass IA seminars. This step forward can help us to see on chess tournaments better prepared and educated arbiters. Together with FIDE arbiters' seminars and Refresher Courses we work on a good system of education.

The previously mentioned IA seminars were organized by the ARB Commission. For all of them, report and results have been published on the ARB website.

A few statistics (based on received reports to date):

171 arbiters from 56 Federations took part in 7 seminars.

170 arbiters took part in the exam.

142 arbiters passed the exam and achieved IA Norm

2. **FIDE Arbiter Seminars** are an important part of education of arbiters. Arbiters who successfully pass the exams should be prepared to act as arbiters on all FIDE events. Here we realised the difference between levels of FA Seminars, depending on the Lecturer. Therefore this was also a reason to review the list of Lecturers in the future. In the period from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 twenty (20) FIDE arbiter seminars were organized by the ARB Commission. Seminars for next Congress are not included

because the process is still ongoing. For all of them, report and results have been published on the ARB website.

A few statistics (based on received reports to date):

345 arbiters from 68 Federations took part in 20 seminars.

341 arbiters took part in the exam.

191 arbiters passed the exam and achieved FA Norm

3. **Refresher courses** – once we launched the project of IA Seminars we want to focus on Refresher courses. We realised it is not possible to ask arbiters and lecturers to participate on preparation of Refresher courses without providing them with fair conditions, so plan to present the project, first to our supervisor (FIDE President) and with his approval to PDC.
4. **Preparation of arbiters for Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary** Preparation of the arbiters' team was arranged in 4 online meetings with all arbiters for the Olympiad.

1<sup>st</sup> meeting: focused on the role of the arbiter, duties of match arbiters and sector arbiters and the cooperation between all roles,

2<sup>nd</sup> meeting: preparation for the matches and duties of the arbiter during the round,

3<sup>rd</sup> meeting: duties at the conclusion of a match

4<sup>th</sup> meeting: the topic for the last one was the cooperation with Fair play, TAP and questions of arbiters

During this period, we prepared the Arbiters' meeting in person in Budapest (planned for September 11<sup>th</sup>) and to contribute to other events taking part during the Olympiad

5. **Preparation of Hungarian arbiters:** On June 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> the Hungarian Chess Federation in cooperation with FIDE organised a seminar for Hungarian arbiters, having 41 participants: 8 IA, 8 FA and 25 NA, or in other terms 28 men and 13 women arbiters from all over Hungary. FIDE ARB supported this idea to enhance the quality of arbiters in Hungary. Lectures were given by IA Ivan Syrový (Chair of the FIDE ARB Commission), IA Nebojsa Baralic (Secretary of FIDE ARB Commission) and IA Laurent Freyd (Chair of the FIDE PDC Commission), the HUN ARB Commission was represented by its Chair, IA Miklós Orsó. Thanks to the organiser we could also visit the venue of the 45th Chess Olympiad (BOK Stadium). More detailed information can be found on the FIDE Arbiters webpage.

[Preparation of Hungarian arbiters for Olympiad in Budapest 2024 – Arbiters' Commission \(fide.com\)](https://fide.com/preparation-of-hungarian-arbiters-for-olympiad-in-budapest-2024-arbiters-commission)

6. **Lecturer Training Programme (LTP)** is designed to ensure that those presenting Arbiter Seminars are of a high quality. The Seminars provide the theoretical part of the knowledge required to become a FIDE qualified arbiter. There is also a practical part gained from officiating at events. The programme is restricted to International Arbiters of category A or B. The selection process tries to ensure that those who qualify are not only experienced arbiters but have an ability to teach others as well. There was a total of 32 applicants for the LTP. Each applicant was asked to outline their experience and to provide a sample of 5 multiple choice questions. Using these, and with consideration to geographical needs, the very difficult task of selecting a short list was carried out. 12 Arbiters have been chosen for the next stage. These 12 are currently preparing a short presentation of the type that would be given to students (National Arbiters) wishing to gain the Seminar norm for FIDE Arbiters. As the next step we asked the 12 candidates to give a presentation of this material, as if to a seminar, and interview was announced on October 2024.. Our goal is to have the optimum number of Lecturers which ensures that demand for arbiter training is met and that the quality of Lecturer is high. Lecturers must conduct seminars regularly to maintain a high standard and to ensure they keep up to date with changes in the Laws and Regulations applied by arbiters.

### C) ARBITER TITLES

In year 2024 Arbiters Commission received 410 Title Applications. Applications for the next Congress are not included because the process is still ongoing. Complete statistics can be found in the table below.

The Commission continued with the support process to the federations in the area of title applications. The benefit of this is to avoid having applications rejected in the recommendations sent to the FIDE Council, and Federations wasting money. As soon as the deadline given to federations was met, the Commission reviewed the applications and shared feedback to those who needed to fix some elements of their applications. As a result, more than 20% of the applications could be changed from “postponed” to “approved”. In the future it is advisable that we provide a checklist with necessary documentation for applicants, to reduce even more the discrepancies and make it easier for federations.

FIDE Council	Number of IA Applications	Number of FA Applications	Total Applications	Approved	Rejected	Postponed
FIDE Council Q1	82	168	250	198	29	23
FIDE Council Q2	35	125	160	119	26	15
In total	117	293	410	317	55	38

In this process, we have good cooperation with Baira Marilova from FIDE Elista office, who is always supportive in the case of questions and pro-active when needed.

#### Opportunities for improvement – checking tournaments

So far, this area requests a lot of manual processing although we could already implement some automated checks (Google Sheets). Those checks could be integrated to the FIDE website section for title applications and hence avoid huge double entries on the Commission side.

### D) ARBITER CATEGORIES

For the 1st and 2nd FIDE Council 2024, the Arbiters` Commission received 34 applications for Arbiters` classification upgrades:

- 2 category A
- 5 category B
- 27 category C
- 25 applications are approved, and 9 rejected.

FIDE Council	Applications for Category A	Applications for Category B	Applications for Category C	In total	Approved	Rejected
FIDE Council Q1	1	2	12	15	11	4
FIDE Council Q2	1	3	15	19	14	5
In total	2	5	27	34	25	9

### E) APPOINTMENT OF ARBITERS FOR WORLD EVENTS

Our goal is to know the list of World events for the next year in advance, so we can immediately start working on the list of principals for each of them in collaboration with GSC, EVE and the organiser. This way arbiters nominated and approved as principals can better plan their activities for the year and assist us with the team of arbiters for those events. We always keep in mind the

importance of nominating at least 25% women arbiters and proposing arbiters from different continents and giving a chance to new profiles. We face a problem when an organiser of a FIDE World event, because of financial problems, does not accept the list of arbiters approved by FIDE and decides to invite only the Chief Arbiter and Deputy Chief Arbiter from foreign countries, relying only on arbiters from the hosting country. We ensure that organisers who apply in the bid procedure are aware that a condition of being allowed to organise is that the event includes invitations to arbiters of all continents. Some organisers hesitate to contact us regarding nominations, they wait until the last moment answering only when they know the number of participants. This approach makes it difficult to plan nominations of arbiters.

#### **F) ARTICLES ON THE ARB WEBSITE**

The ARB Commission is active on social networks, presenting articles and useful information on its webpage. We are proud that arbiters share on their own profiles the articles published on the webpage not only dealing with arbiters but with chess in general. We are one family –every successful chess event, and every good performance of the team of arbiters contributes to it. Our member, IA Chanda Nsakanya conducts interviews with experienced arbiters so readers can get useful information about the career of the interviewed arbiter, preparation of the team of arbiters before and during the event, mistakes made during tournaments, evaluation of the team.

#### **G) ARBITERS` MANUAL**

We are proud to announce that the next version of the Arbiters` Manual is being presented during the Olympiad in Budapest. A team of experienced arbiters and members from other commissions was established, the leader of this team IA Rathinam Anantharam organized ZOOM meetings with its members. The Arbiters` Manual, its new edition for 2024, keeps up with all changes in the FIDE Regulations before July 2024 and explains some problematic parts, where arbiters ask for more detailed explanations. The team made a huge effort to prepare it. We believe this edition will contribute to the education of all arbiters so they get new ideas from experienced arbiters and can better understand the new regulations. In FIDE ARB we consider the Arbiters Manual not just as a book but as a part of our family. Once one edition is finished, we start thinking about a new generation with a new edition and further improvements.

#### **H) QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

FIDE ARB gets a lot of questions and the team, under the leadership of Mr. IA Anantharam Rathinam, answers them and in this way also contributes to the education of arbiters. Many respondents ask us if the arbiter acted correctly, we have to be careful, as we get only partial information, so mostly ask the involved arbiter to provide us with his/her opinion. Not only arbiters but also players continue sending us questions and proposals for change in the regulations. Our team replies to them quickly and in detail.

#### **I) OLYMPIAD IN BUDAPEST SELECTION OF ARBITERS**

In the FIDE Arbiters Commission we feel the importance of the upcoming Chess Olympiad in Budapest 2024. Thanks to FIDE President and FIDE's support and cooperation we got approved the whole list of arbiter positions (CA, DCA, TAP, Sector, and match arbiters). There was enormous interest from arbiters, and once appointed, almost every arbiter immediately confirmed his/her interest in becoming a part of the team. All match arbiters were already assigned into sectors and sector arbiters have started communication with them. Unfortunately, we face the problem with Schengen visa, so some arbiters were not able to join this event. Many arbiters preferred single rooms, but for match arbiters were available only double rooms. But we are part

of one FIDE family, so our utmost goal is to contribute to successful event, not to complain about accommodation.

We prepared a system of selection- after communication with Continental Arbiters' Commissions and National federations and collecting data about each arbiter who answered the Call of Interest, we presented the list of arbiters which included representatives from each Continent, had Women arbiters representation of at least 25%, and, even better, more arbiters able to include an Olympiad in their profile. The downside of this approach means that some arbiters with experiences from previous Olympiads did not get selected, but this is the only way to give a chance to newcomers at the Chess Olympiad.

In cooperation with both DCA's and IA Marika Japaridze we prepared a letter to Sector Arbiters and Match Arbiters which assigned duties (including, in part, how to prepare before the Olympiad for the role of arbiter). We would like to have detailed knowledge about each arbiter, including not just language skills but also details about the current stage with their visas, flight details, etc. At least one month before the Olympiad we will organise online seminars (3x, one each week) to prepare arbiters, additionally each sector arbiter is supported in planning the preparation of the team as well. We know some arbiters face difficulties – mostly regarding Schengen visas, insurance, appointments at Embassies for visas, expensive flight tickets and many other difficulties.

Not only was the selection of arbiters our task, the Chairman of ARB is Chief Arbiter and the Secretary of ARB is a Sector Arbiter, we closely cooperated with FIDE and LOCAL organisers, in cooperation with the Deputy Chief Arbiters (Sabrina de San Vicente and Jiaqi Zhu, TAP (Alex Holowczak as a Chair of TAP) and other sector arbiters.

#### **J) 100-YEAR FIDE AWARDS**

For this special year (FIDE 100) we participated with more commissions or in working groups. FIDE ARB Councillors prepared the list of arbiters for FIDE 100 Awards, so a jury can choose from this list the best arbiter.

#### **K) GUINNESS RECORD**

FIDE ARB was involved in the Guinness World record attempt. We published an article, shared a presentation on social media and contacted arbiters via Continental Arbiters' Commissions and directly. As it was an arbiter who was allowed to register the event for GWR, we were part of this goal. 350 arbiters participated in events held all over the world and thanks to them more than 75000 games were played OTB (over the board). Big thanks belong to PDC chair, Mr. IA Laurent Freyd for his contribution and cooperation with ARB.