

Hip-Hop Chess Tournament/Festival

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Josh W and Adissa B

By Dr. Alan Kirshner

Once again I am uploading the press release I received from Adissa Banjoko one of the co-founders of the Hip-Hop Chess Federation. In case there are any questions—I am not tied to the organization in any way. In fact, I know nothing—and, I mean nothing about Hip-Hop music and the renowned people that will be featured at the upcoming event on October 13. Well, I do know Josh Waitzkin and Governor Schwarzenegger. I can even spell their names—I think. No, "Arnold" has not indicated too date that he will be there, but, Chessmaster and the HHCF are still in contact with his office. As many of you know, the Governor is a chess player.

I came to know about the organization from Adissa, who lives in Fremont with his family. His third grade son went to one of my camps a few years back and has started attending my Weibel Chess Quads. I have been pleased to introduce Adissa into the Bay Area Chess Community and I convinced him to have the Hip-Hop Chess event rated under the USCF. He was able to get Chessmaster to agree to pay for the memberships of all competitors. The match was to coincide with the release of CM 11, but I understand that the date for its premier is being delayed.

I was talking with NM Eric Schiller at Salman Azhar's CalClassic on Saturday (August 25) and we were both amazed at how much media coverage and publicity the Hip-Hop Chess Federation is receiving. Eric and I are both aware of the difficulty in getting media coverage for chess. We have failed too often. But, then again, we don't have the star power of these Hip-Hop artists.

The photographs I have attached to this news story I took at the last HHCF event in May. The official press release follows with a couple of minor additions on my part approved by Adissa:

The Hip-Hop Chess Federation and the Makers of the Chessmaster Video Game Announce the 1st Annual Chess Kings Invitational

Wu-Tang Clan, Ralek Gracie and DJ QBert Gather for All-Star Chess Tournament

The Hip-Hop Chess Federation (HHCF), an organization that uses music, chess and martial arts to promote unity, strategy and non-violence, and Ubisoft, one of the world's largest video game publishers are proud to announce the 1st Annual Chess Kings Invitational to be held at the prestigious San Francisco Design Center, 2 Henry Adams Street, on Saturday, October 13th from 1pm to 5pm.

The 1st Annual Chess Kings Invitational will kick off with HHCF's Life Strategies All-Star Panel. The Life Strategies panel will feature multi-platinum rappers RZA and GZA from the Wu-Tang Clan, chess icon Josh Waitzkin, turntable wizards DJ QBert and DJ Disk and other surprise guests in a discussion about how music, chess and martial arts have guided them in their paths to success.

"We are excited to be a part of the 1st Annual Chess Kings Invitational," said Tony Key, vice president of marketing at Ubisoft. "The HHCF has used the connection between hip-hop and chess to make the game not only accessible, but cool to a new whole audience. The Chessmaster series of video games does the same thing; inviting people of all ages and skill levels to engage in the timeless art of chess. It was a natural connection for us to become partners in bringing this great event to the community."

The Invitational includes an all-star chess tournament rated by the US Chess Federation that will pit some of America's top rappers, DJs, martial artists and others in a head-to-head battle of the brains in which the winner will walk away with the HHCF Chessmaster championship belt. Competitors include RZA, award-winning MMA fighter Ralek Gracie, Casual of the Hieroglyphics, Sunspot Jonz of the Living Legends and other special guests. Rakaa of Dilated Peoples will host the event. Dr. Alan M. Kirshner, a well know chess organizer in the Bay Area, will be the Tournament Director.

"We are amazed by how well we have been received since our first event earlier this year," says HHCF co-founder Adisa Banjoko. "By celebrities donating their time, it really sends a message that they care about the state of our communities. Their presence will greatly assist us in raising money to provide scholarships to local schools."

The HHCF has also invited four youth teams to participate in the Invitational's Scholarship Tournament. Players will compete for a chance to win a variety of educational scholarships, among other prizes.

Guests will enjoy multiple events throughout the day, including open chess gaming, Kung Fu films and information sessions regarding educational opportunities. Other events will include an auction featuring items donated by various celebrities, chess-inspired graffiti art created by legendary graf writers and a few more surprises. All proceeds collected from the auction will directly benefit schools in local underserved communities.

"We are proud to host an event that showcases an authentic, intelligent trend in Hip-Hop," states co-founder Leo Libiran. "Hip-Hop has always been about more than bullets and bling and the fact that so many fantastic rappers, chessmasters, martial artists and graf writers have donated their time to the children is proof of this in itself."

About the Chessmaster Video Game

Chessmaster®: The Art of Learning for the Nintendo DS™ system and Chessmaster®: Grandmaster Edition for Windows® PC will be released in October/November 2007. In both games, Josh Waitzkin, International Master and eight-time National Chess Champion, coaches players to grasp the basic fundamentals of chess and to master the game through exciting courses and tutorials.

About HHCF

The Hip-Hop Chess Federation, founded by award-winning lecturer and author, Adisa Banjoko and Leo "Blast" Libiran, uses music, chess and martial arts to promote unity, strategy and nonviolence. The organization focuses on giving urban youth effective life strategies to scholastic and financial success. Programs include chess tournaments, scholarship programs, mentorship, lectures and more. For more information, visit: www.hiphopchessfederation.org.

About Ubisoft

Ubisoft is a leading producer, publisher and distributor of interactive entertainment products worldwide and has grown considerably through a strong and diversified line-up of products and partnerships. Ubisoft has offices in 21 countries and sales in more than 50 countries around the globe. It is committed to delivering high-quality, cutting-edge video game titles to consumers. Ubisoft generated sales of 680 million Euros for the 2006-07 fiscal year. To learn more, please visit www.ubisoftgroup.com.

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Board Candidate Kurt Garbe at HHCF



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