

The 10th Youth Chess Composing Challenge - 2025

Introduction

The tenth edition of the Youth Chess Composing Challenge (YCCC) brought together 32 young composers under 23 from 12 countries, who contributed with 58 chess problems and studies. The new generation was represented by participants from Azerbaijan (2), Brazil (1), Canada (2), China (3), the Republic of Korea (1), India (1), Latvia (1), Romania (5), Russia (8), Serbia (1), Ukraine (5), and the USA (2).

The standard YCCC team of 11 judges, together with two organizers, once again devoted their time and energy to the competition with great enthusiasm. Hans Gruber was again a driving force behind Section C, serving both as a judge and as assistant to the long-standing YCCC director, Julia Vysotska.

As in previous years, the competition featured three sections: **A – thematic twomovers**, **B – endgames without a set theme**, and **C – problems of all kinds, without restrictions on content**. This year brought an exciting new feature: for the first time, Section C included a separate **U13 category** for composers born in 2013 or later. The experiment proved highly successful. The ten youngest participants produced a wealth of promising work and clearly demonstrated that they deserve special attention in the years ahead.

The U13 results also highlighted a broader trend: the youngest generation is rapidly making its presence felt, not only in solving but also in composing. Several of these cadets have already achieved international recognition. Egor Malanin is a medalist in the Cadet Solving Championship, Maksym Kryshafor won Category B of the British Solving Championship, and Denys Farkash led the Ukrainian U12 team to a silver medal at this year's European U12 Team Championship.

The strength and depth of the "new wave" were evident in the overall standings:

1. **Renārs Mūzis** – 31 points
2. **Stefan-Constantin Harnagea** – 29.83
3. **Ural Khasanov** – 25
4. **Anton Nasyrov** – 20
5. **Ilija Serafimović** – 19
6. **Ben Smolkin** – 17.5
7. **Shang Riye** – 17
8. **Maxim Nyrkov** – 12.5
9. **Lao Cutian** – 11.5

The five highest-placed composers from five different countries earned €500 vouchers for participation in WCCC/ECSC 2027, generously provided by the Fujairah Government. The next four composers in the ranking will have reserve status.

One of the most remarkable stories of YCCC-10 was the meteoric rise of **Renārs Mūzis**. In just one year, he progressed from being a newcomer to the overall winner, displaying remarkable imagination and a strong artistic sense across several genres. The race was extremely close, with **Stefan-Constantin Harnagea** once again producing ambitious and sophisticated ideas and improving on his third-place finish in 2025.

Last year's convincing winner, **Ural Khasanov**, tops the group of the five already established composers, while **Maxim Nyrkov** and **Lao Cutian** made an especially strong impression in their very first YCCC appearance. The three Chinese participants, competing in different sections, also made their mark and suggested that China's growing presence could bring significant changes to the international chess-composition landscape.

The outstanding success of YCCC-10 is all the more encouraging because several regular participants were unable to take part this year. Their messages, however, were a heartening reminder that chess composition attracts remarkable and multifaceted personalities, many of whom combine their passion for composing with achievements in completely different fields. Despite busy studies, demanding careers, and other commitments, they remain eager to return to the chessboard and continue creating.

Among the messages we received were these inspiring words:

“Unfortunately, I have to turn in my Ph.D dissertation by the end of the month, and I’m going to have a hard time composing something for July 10. That said, I’m not going to stop composing just because I’m moving on to a different category! On the contrary, I see it as an activity that will be with me throughout my life, and I fully intend to keep composing in the future, even though there will likely be some periods quieter than others.”

Another composer (in chess and music) wrote:

“This past year, I've been busy studying math and music in college, and I'm occupied with a full-time job this summer. Consequently, I've been unable to compose anything for YCCC-10. My most recent problem is included in the Team USA entry to WCCT-12. I want to thank you for connecting me with Mike Prcic and Team USA... I hope to return to writing problems in the near future!”

And one participant explained the lack of time for composing with an exceptional academic achievement:

“Just wanted to tell you about my grade 12 IB exam results. I am really glad to say that I got a perfect 45/45 overall, placing me in a small batch of world toppers!”

These messages capture something essential about the YCCC: it is not simply a competition, but a community in which young people with diverse interests, talents, and ambitions can share their enthusiasm for chess composition with experienced colleagues, ready to support them.

Get ready for YCCC-11! You can already start preparing your entries for Sections B and C, while waiting for the set theme for Section A. In the meantime, consider joining the [WFCC Chess Composers Club](#) and getting in touch with experienced composers who are always ready to offer advice and encouragement.

Marjan Kovačević

YCCC Coordinator

10th YCCC 2026 – List of Participants ordered by the year of birth

No.,	Name	Country	Year of birth
1	Ilija Serafimović	Serbia	2004
2	William Dolmer	Canada	2004
3	Alexandru Mihalcescu	Romania	2006
4	Anton Nasyrov	Russia	2006
5	Ben Smolkin	Canada	2006
6	Lao Cutian	China	2006
7	Lin Chituo	China	2006
8	Pranav Surapaneni	USA	2006
9	Shang Riye	China	2006
10	Ural Khasanov	Russia	2006
11	Anirudh Daga	India	2008
12	Iancu-Ioan Sandea	Romania	2008
13	Aayush Wadhwa	USA	2009
14	Jessica Jiyeon Kim	Republic of Korea	2009
15	Renārs Mūzis	Latvia	2009
16	Stefan-Constantin Harnagea	Romania	2009
17	Maxim Nyrkov	Russia	2010
18	Mykhailo Konnov	Ukraine	2010
19	Andrei Moga Crăciun	Romania	2011
20	Georgy Eruslanov	Russia	2011
21	Mustafa Hamzazade	Azerbaijan	2011
22	Taras Rudenko	Ukraine	2011
23	Arseniy Saga	Russia	2013
24	Flora Sarmento	Brazil	2013
25	Lev Galchenko	Russia	2013
26	Oleksandr Veksler	Ukraine	2013
27	Denys Farkash	Ukraine	2014
28	Eldar Aghajanov	Azerbaijan	2014
29	Maksym Kryshafor	Ukraine	2014
30	Egor Malanin	Russia	2015
31	Teodor Hentea	Romania	2017
32	Mikhail Shishov CC	Russia	2018

Oldest participant - 22 years old; Youngest participant - 8 years old.