

The Story of the Chess Composers Club (ccc.wfcc.ch)

Report by Nikola Petković

1. How It All Started

It all started on December 31, 2024, when Marjan Kovačević came up to me with an interesting project idea. His wish was to bring back the lively, good-natured vibe of traditional chess problemist clubs and translate it into a modern social networking platform. By taking the club virtual, the goal was to remove geographical barriers and allow for true worldwide participation. The vision was to create a friendly, accessible space where experienced mentors could easily guide new mentees, and where problem friends from anywhere in the world could hang out, chat, and exchange thoughts about compositions.

2. Philosophy of the Club

The core philosophy is not to function as a publication platform, but rather to offer controlled sharing in the spirit of modern social networks. Communication primarily takes place within dedicated groups, ensuring privacy so that nobody outside of a group can see what happens inside. Any user can create and lead a group, ask to join some public group, or invite and be invited to join a group.

3. The Journey to Launch

I took on the project and spent about 10 months developing the platform at my own pace, working on it steadily as my free time allowed.

- **November 1, 2025:** We officially presented the platform during the WFCC Online Meeting.
- **December 2025 – March 2026:** A closed beta testing phase was conducted to work out the bugs. A huge shoutout to the core testers—Kevinas Kuznecovas, Dmitri Turevski, Ilija Serafimović, and Anton Nasyrov. Towards the end of the beta, Julia Vysotska joined the team to help structure the homepage.
- **March 4, 2026:** The product officially went live!

4. Under the Hood & User Stats

- **Integrated Engines:** I integrated Popeye, Stockfish, and Stelvio natively into the platform so that users can validate the various problem genres.
- **Who's Using It:** About 60 users have signed up so far. Our mentors guiding the community are Marjan Kovačević, Vlaicu Crișan, Dmitri Turevski, Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen, Martin Minski, Kostas Prentos, Shankar Ram, and Silvio Baier, including 15+ mentees who signed up for mentorship, a couple of whom turned into regular members. Nikola Petković is currently the only admin.
- **Activity Levels:** Activity has remained steady since the beginning, with about 30 monthly, 20 weekly, and 10 daily active users.

5. Challenges

- **Accessibility:** Several users from Russia have reported that their access to the platform is blocked.

- **Engagement Disparity:** Users often read more than they contribute; we need to find a way to encourage users to share more because that is what makes it fun.
- **Time Constraints:** The time I have now for the project is less than I had last year.

6. Ideas for the future

- **Technical:** The next planned technical step is to add support for Fairy Chess.
- **Marketing:** We need to do another wave of marketing, since outreach was neglected after the launch, to help bring in more users.
- **Community:** We need to re-engage the community and revitalize specific sections that are currently less discussed, such as studies, three- and more-movers, and selfmates.
- **Features:** Extend the functionality of "groups" so they can also be used for collecting formal tourney problems and judging them.