

# Play Magnus Group (PMG) - World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen Partners with Breakthrough Initiatives and Breakthrough Junior Challenge

(Oslo, 9 Mar 2021) – Magnus Carlsen has partnered with the Breakthrough Initiatives and Breakthrough Junior Challenge for his upcoming tournament, the ‘Magnus Carlsen Invitational.’ The partnership seeks to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first human flight to space.

One year ago, Magnus Carlsen created the ‘Magnus Carlsen Invitational’ tournament, which brought professional chess online for the first time. The tournament helped spark an online chess renaissance and became the first event of a series of online tournaments known as the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour. Repeating its success, this year’s Magnus Carlsen Invitational tournament in March partners with philanthropic Breakthrough Initiatives and Breakthrough Junior Challenge.

Breakthrough Initiatives is a suite of space science programs investigating the big questions of life in the Universe, such as whether primitive cellular life exists on nearby planets, whether there are other intelligent life-forms beyond Earth, and how far human civilization can voyage into space. Breakthrough Junior Challenge is a global science video competition for high-school students. Both projects were founded by tech and science investor and philanthropist Yuri Milner and his wife Julia and funded by Breakthrough Prize Foundation.

The partnership is testament to the renewed popularity of chess, attracting interest from some of the biggest names in the tech industry, and comes at a time when space exploration is celebrating significant past and present achievements – including the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first human flight.

Innovation and technology have made chess more accessible, and its popularity has skyrocketed in the last year due to a combination of Magnus Carlsen and other top chess players competing regularly online in the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour; increased cultural interest stemming from the Netflix series ‘The Queen’s Gambit’; and chess booming in popularity with Twitch streamers.

“The Breakthrough Prize Foundation is simply a great non-profit. I’ve been involved with the Breakthrough Initiatives from the start and am always curious and fascinated by their efforts in exploring life in the universe. With this partnership, I hope the best chess players in the world can come together and bring more awareness to the Breakthrough Junior Challenge, which inspires students from around the world to explore their favorite scientific theories,” says World Champion Magnus Carlsen.

“This partnership is a step change for chess and will help bring the sport to a larger audience. The chess world, the tech industry, and space exploration have a long history of intersecting with each other, and for us to now get the opportunity to partner with some of the greatest minds in the tech industry, using the game we love to promote space science is the culmination of many years of shared history,” says Andreas Thome, CEO of Play Magnus Group.

“Magnus, with his incredible mind and accomplishments, is an inspiration not only to chess players, but to millions of young people with curiosity about deep ideas,” said Julia Milner. “As the world celebrates

the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first human flight to space, we look to inspire continued scientific exploration, and it is our hope that this partnership will bring the Breakthrough Junior Challenge to new audiences for increased interest in science.”

Magnus Carlsen and the Milners have known each other for years, and Carlsen has been inspired by their interest in space. Five years ago, Carlsen was one of the co-signers of Breakthrough’s space initiative’s open letter, urging an investigation of intelligence in space. Drawing parallels between space and chess, Carlsen says:

“Just like space, chess is practically infinite. In fact, there are more potential moves in chess than atoms in the universe.”

### **Encouraging a new generation of scientists**

Having a shared interest in making the world a smarter place, Play Magnus Group and the Breakthrough Prize Foundation are equally passionate about youth talent development in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

While Play Magnus Group encourage youth to learn and study chess through their eLearning programs, the Breakthrough Prize Foundation have initiated a junior competition to inspire the next generation of scientists.

*Play Magnus Group have signed an agreement with the Breakthrough Prize Foundation for two of their programs, the Breakthrough Initiatives and the Breakthrough Junior Challenge, to be the presenting partners for the tournament.*

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### **About the 2021 Meltwater Champions Chess Tour**

The 2021 Meltwater Champions Chess Tour will, for the first time in history, determine the world’s best chess player over a full competitive season of online chess. Beginning in November 2020, the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour features monthly tournaments culminating in a final tournament in September 2021. The best chess players in the world will compete in a total of ten tournaments of rapid chess. All games will take place online on [www.chess24.com](http://www.chess24.com) with players competing for a total prize pool of USD 1.5 million.

The ‘Magnus Carlsen Invitational’ is one of ten tournaments in the ‘Meltwater Champions Chess Tour’ and will take place from the 13th – 21st of March. The tournament, Magnus Carlsen Invitation will be broadcasted on Eurosport and the online streaming platforms Twitch and YouTube across multiple languages.

### **About Play Magnus Group**

Play Magnus Group is a global leader in the chess industry focused on providing premier digital experiences for millions of chess players and students. The company offers e-learning and

entertainment services via its market leading brands: chess24, Chessable, iChess, CoChess, the Play Magnus App Suite, and the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour. The Group's mission is to grow chess to make the world a smarter place by encouraging more people to play, watch, study, and earn a living from chess.

## **About the Breakthrough Foundation**

### **About the Breakthrough Prize**

For the tenth year, the Breakthrough Prize, renowned as the "Oscars of Science," will recognize the world's top scientists. Each prize is \$3 million and presented in the fields of Life Sciences (up to four per year), Fundamental Physics (one per year) and Mathematics (one per year). In addition, up to three New Horizons in Physics Prizes, up to three New Horizons in Mathematics Prizes and up to three Maryam Mirzakhani New Frontiers Prizes are given out to early-career researchers each year. Laureates attend a gala award ceremony designed to celebrate their achievements and inspire the next generation of scientists. As part of the ceremony schedule, they also engage in a program of lectures and discussions.

The Breakthrough Prizes were founded by Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, Yuri and Julia Milner, and Anne Wojcicki. The Prizes have been sponsored by the personal foundations established by Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, Ma Huateng, Jack Ma, Yuri and Julia Milner and Anne Wojcicki. Selection Committees composed of previous Breakthrough Prize laureates in each field choose the winners. Information on Breakthrough Prize is available at [breakthroughprize.org](http://breakthroughprize.org).

### **About the Breakthrough Initiatives**

The **Breakthrough Initiatives** are a suite of space science programs investigating the fundamental questions of life in the Universe.

In July 2015, together with Stephen Hawking, Yuri Milner announced the launch of the \$100 million astronomical program *Breakthrough Listen*, to reinvigorate the search for extraterrestrial intelligence in the universe; and in April 2016 they launched *Breakthrough Starshot*, a \$100 million research and engineering program seeking to develop a new technology for uncrewed interstellar travel.

*Breakthrough Watch* is astronomical program to develop Earth- and space-based technologies that can find evidence of primitive life on Earth-like planets in our cosmic neighborhood. All these philanthropic initiatives are funded by Breakthrough Foundation established by Yuri and Julia Milner.

### **About the Breakthrough Junior Challenge**

The [Breakthrough Junior Challenge](#), founded by Yuri and Julia Milner, is a global science video competition, aiming to develop and demonstrate young people's knowledge of science and scientific principles; generate excitement in these fields; support STEM career choices; and engage the imagination and interest of the public-at-large in key concepts of fundamental science.