



Media Contact:

Brian Flowers

(314) 243-1571

brian.flowers@worldchesshof.org

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World Chess Hall of Fame Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Legendary 1972 World Chess Championship

American Bobby Fischer's historic win ended 24 years of Soviet dominance in the sport

SAINT LOUIS (August 4, 2022) - The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) pays homage to American chess phenom Bobby Fischer with the largest exhibition of its kind, [1972 Fischer/Spassky: The Match, Its Origin, and Influence](#), on view from August 18, 2022, through April 30, 2023. A [public opening reception](#) is happening on Thursday, August 18, 2022, 5-8 pm, with free admission. In addition, tickets to [a special celebration](#) at the World's Fair Pavilion in Forest Park on Thursday, September 1—the official anniversary date of Fischer's World Chess Championship win—being held in conjunction with the opening reception of the [2022 Sinquefield Cup](#), are available for purchase.

1972 Fischer/Spassky: The Match, Its Origin, and Influence celebrates the 50th anniversary of the American [Robert "Bobby" Fischer's](#) historic win over the Russian [Boris Spassky](#) in the legendary 1972 World Chess Championship, ending 24 years of Soviet dominance in the sport. The show features more than 500 artifacts, including chess pieces used in pivotal game three of the "Match of the Century," a replica of the tournament table created by the makers of the original and never-before-exhibited books from the personal library of Bobby Fischer. The exhibition also highlights pieces from the World Chess Hall of Fame collection, loans from the Fischer Library of U.S. Chess Hall of Fame Inductees [Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield](#) & [Rex Sinquefield](#) and from photojournalist and Fischer confidant [Harry Benson CBE](#) and recently-donated artwork by the [LeRoy Neiman & Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation](#).

"We are honored to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bobby Fischer's landmark chess victory," says Shannon Bailey, Chief Curator at the WCHOF. "The exhibition will explore the 1972 World Chess Championship, Fischer's formative years as a chess prodigy, his ties to Saint Louis and his long-lasting legacy and impact on American chess."

Additional highlights of the exhibition include a rare audio interview with Fischer after his victory in the 1972 World Chess Championship, which Grandmaster Lubomir Kavalek, who also assisted Fischer with the second part of the match, covered as a journalist for *Voice of America*. Artifacts related to Bobby Fischer's early training and achievements, including the furniture from the Hawthorne Chess Club, founded by U.S. Chess Hall of Fame Inductee [John "Jack" Collins](#), where Fischer spent hours daily playing and analyzing games, will be on display.

"Bobby Fischer's meteoric rise from promising young player to the king of the chess world brought new respect and media coverage to the game in the United States," says WCHOF Curator Emily Allred. "The spectacle of an American, taking on 24 years of Soviet chess dominance, gained resonance during an era while the two countries were competing in the realms of politics, technology, space exploration and sports."

To learn more about the exhibition or its events, please visit www.worldchesshof.org. For media interviews or a press kit, please contact Brian Flowers at brian.flowers@worldchesshof.org or (314) 243-1571.

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About the World Chess Hall of Fame

The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to building awareness of the cultural and artistic significance of chess. It opened on September 9, 2011, in the Central West End after moving from previous locations in New York, Washington, D.C., and Miami. Housed in a historic 15,900 square-foot residence-turned-business in Saint Louis' Central West End neighborhood, the WCHOF features World Chess Hall of Fame inductees, United States Chess Hall of Fame inductees selected by the U.S. Chess Trust, artifacts from the permanent collection and exhibitions highlighting the great players, historic games and rich cultural history of chess. The WCHOF partners with the [Saint Louis Chess Club](#) to provide innovative programming and outreach to local, national and international audiences. Learn more online at www.worldchesshof.org and on our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.

About Bobby Fischer

As the 11th World Champion from 1972-75, Bobby Fischer interrupted the Cold War Soviet hegemony of chess. His phenomenal skill was apparent from an early age. He won the U.S. Open in 1957 and was the youngest person to gain first place in the U.S. Chess Championship in 1957/58. He would go on to win all eight of the United States Chess Championships in which he participated, and in the 1963/64 competition, he became the only player to achieve a perfect score in the event. *My 60 Memorable Games*, which Fischer authored in 1969, is widely considered one of the greatest pieces of chess literature. He made valuable contributions to opening theory and was renowned for his opening preparation and endgame technique alike.

Fischer is best remembered, however, for his win at the 1972 World Championship, defeating Boris Spassky in the most famous match of modern times. From 1970 to 1971, Fischer won 20 consecutive games in world championship qualifying events—an all-time record. These included victories over world-class players such as Mark Taimanov and Bent Larsen. After defeating former world champion Tigran Petrosian in the 1971 Candidates Match, there was a record 125-point differential between the ratings of number-one ranked player Fischer and Spassky, the second-ranked player. The first non-Soviet player to earn the title in 24 years, Fischer won the championship after 21 games. His thrilling rise to the top of the world of chess and his landmark victory in the “Match of the Century” greatly increased the popularity of chess in the United States. Fischer’s world championship win was especially impressive considering that the American player lacked the state support that the Soviet Union offered to its champions. While there were only 5000 registered players in the United States in 1960, there were five million in the Soviet Union during the same year, making training for his eventual world championship run even more challenging.

Fischer declined to defend his world championship title in 1975, retreating from the chess scene until 1992, when he faced—and defeated—Spassky in an unofficial rematch in Yugoslavia. Since that country was then under a United Nations embargo, his participation violated an executive order by President George H.W. Bush, and Fischer spent the rest of his life in exile to escape prosecution in the United States. Though his reputation suffered during his later life, his accomplishments on the chessboard cement his reputation as one of the game’s greatest players.