

# USA World Team Championships

*Hans Niemann chosen despite the lawsuit*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Hans Niemann is the surprise choice to play top board for the six-player US squad at the World Team Championship in Jerusalem on 19-26 November. It will be the 19-year-old's first event since launching his \$100m lawsuit against the world champion, Magnus Carlsen, and others.



Hans Niemann chosen to lead

Niemann is nationally ranked only No 8, so it is possible that some of those with higher ratings, including Hikaru Nakamura, who is among those being sued, and the current US champion, Fabiano Caruana, has declined to play in the same squad as the teenager.

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Niemann will play at Jerusalem in his first event since he launched his \$100m lawsuit against Magnus Carlsen and other”

*L O'Shea*

However, it is also true that many of the teams announced for Jerusalem are without their top players. That applies particularly to China, which is returning to competition after missing the Olympiad in Chennai but which will field a team consisting entirely of newcomers.

England did not qualify, despite finishing second to the now-banned Russians in 2019, the last year the event was held.

There will still be a significant English presence in Alex Holowczak, the chief arbiter. In former times, Leonard Rees was one of the founders of Fide, while Harry Golombek was an arbiter at the 1963 world title match and other major events. At just 32, Holowczak is almost a prodigy by normal arbiting yardsticks, yet he is already a proven success at events such as the Fide Grand Swiss and the online Olympiad.

Jerusalem is likely to be a serious test for the arbiters, since the presence of Niemann, who in the space of a couple of months has become the best-known US player since Bobby Fischer and his

favourite [chess pieces](#), will mean extra media attention for any incidents. Holowczak is calm and unflappable and can handle it. If there were Elo points for arbitrating, he would be closing in on 2800, in sight of the supreme appointments as chief arbiter of the individual world championship or the 180-nation Olympiad.

The Fischer Random world championship is in progress in Reykjavik this week, marking 50 years since Fischer defeated Boris Spassky there in the most famous match of all time. Fischer Random is a chess variant where the back rank pieces are placed randomly and is an effective way of escaping book openings.



Carlsen v Niemann

How effective was shown on Tuesday when the starting position included a white queen at a1 and a black bishop at h8. Nakamura opened 1 b2-b3, whereupon Carlsen nonchalantly replied 1...g7-g5, the trademark [chess set](#) to move that he had used in a recent Titled Tuesday and which then evoked a protest resignation from an opponent, who claimed lack of respect over the chess board.

In Reykjavik, 1 b4 g5 sacrificed a bishop on move one! It was a planned trap because Black would meet 2 Qxh8 by Nf6 and Rg8 eventually trapping and winning the queen.

At the end of Thursday night's group stage, Carlsen qualified for the semi-finals along with Nakamura, Ian Nepomniachtchi, and the impressive 17-year-old Nodirbek Abdusattorov, while the title holder, Wesley So, was eliminated.

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Stephen Moss

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The semi-finals, Carlsen v Nepomniachtchi and Nakamura v Abdusattorov, and the final between the two winners, are on Saturday and Sunday (3 pm GMT and free to watch live online).

Michael Basman, who has died aged 76, was a popular author who pioneered audio tapes, an advocate of opening with rook and knight pawns on the first two moves, and the founder of the annual UK Chess Challenge which over the years introduced hundreds of thousands of children

to competitive chess.

Two highlights of his playing career were the world student teams at Harrachov 1967, where his top board win against Vladimir Savon was part of an improbable 3-1 scoreline against the mighty Russians, and Hastings 1966-67, where he drew with the former world champion Mikhail Botvinnik and scored in fine style against a Brazilian prodigy, Henrique Mecking

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