

Minister without Portfolio (Sport) in the Office of the Prime Minister, Natalie Neita Headley, has congratulated the Jamaica Chess Federation (JCF) on the performance of the team at the World Chess Olympiad that was held in Istanbul, Turkey from August 27 to September 10.

Among the outstanding performances was that the open team (with male and female players) ended ten places above its World Chess Federation (FIDE) ranking, finishing top of Category B with an overall placement of 95 out of 150 teams. The women's team placed 97th.

"I congratulate the Jamaica Chess Federation for representing our nation so creditably in this truly international event. Your dedication shows that Jamaicans are passionate about matching our mental talents with the very best in the world. My heartiest congratulations go out to Damion Davy for achieving the level of International Candidate Master and Melisha Smith for achieving Women's Candidate Master status. This is exceptional as this was their first Olympiad. I urge team members to keep playing and rise through the ranks to become Grand Masters. This administration will continue to support you as you broaden appreciation for the sport and support more young people to play chess.

"Jamaica was pleased to be among several Caribbean and CARICOM nations that put in a good performance at the Chess Olympiad, including Cuba, whose open team placed eleventh; and Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, which placed 67th and 69th respectively. We are also pleased that CARICOM nations Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Haiti and Suriname are competing internationally," Minister Neita Headley said.

Jamaica first entered the Chess Olympiad in 1978 with a team of four male players. The 2012 delegation fielded ten players, five were women. According to the JCF, chess is the fastest growing sport in Jamaica with thousands of players in the public school system across the primary and secondary levels, and there are several other chess clubs.

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