

CORSICAN CIRCUIT, Rapid
(also: CORSICA MASTERS)



Annual Rapid chess festival organized by **Léo Battesti** in **Bastia**, Corsica Island. Mostly, the festival starts with an Open Tournament swiss system which qualifies 10 players who meet then (two to six) invited world top guests. All is now continued – and decided in a knock-out with the final played in **Ajaccio** (Corsican: *Aiacciu*), the birthplace of Napoléon Bonaparte.

[Napoleon](#) was born in 1769 in the Corsican capital of Ajaccio. His ancestral home, [Maison Bonaparte](#), is today used as a museum.

While being a part of France, Corsica is also designated as a territorial collectivity (*collectivité territoriale*) by law. Thus, Corsica enjoys a greater degree of autonomy than other French regions.

Corsica Island is located west of the Italian Peninsula, southeast of the French mainland, and north of the Italian island of Sardinia. Mountains make up two-thirds of the island, forming a single chain.

The surprising thing about Corsica is the inherent diversity of the small Mediterranean island, one of the regions under France. The geography is never constant – but the Festival!

This event has proved a real success since its creation in 1997. The Corsican Open Circuit has since become one of the world's most prestigious rapid chess tournaments. The event in Corsica is unique because it pits world-class grandmasters against club amateurs and children in the first round!

The mid-2000s faced further highlights, in association with the Ajaccio Chess Club, it was decided to organize a Corsican circuit with € 175,000 in prize money, comprising three separate open events (one at the **Ajaccio** conference centre, one at the **Bastia** municipal theatre, and one in **Venaco**). All together some 500 players, including the international elite, from more than 40 different countries.

Additionally, a Rapid Match of World Champions was held in 2009, Anand beating Karpov 3.5-0.5.

Hou Yifan won the 18th edition in 2014: In an exciting final, she faced and beat Sergey Fedorchuk from Ukraine who had eliminated Vishy Anand in his semi-finals:

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/hou-yifan-wins-corsican-circuit>

<http://www.chessdom.com/historical-win-for-hou-yifan-in-corsica/>

<http://theweekinchess.com/chessnews/events/18th-corsican-circuit-2014>

The 20th Jubilee Festival in 2016 started with an open tournament where the best twelve players qualified to the main Corsica Masters that had four players directly seeded, meaning these twelve were then joined by the seeded Vishy Anand (record winner), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Hou Yifan and Teimour Radjabov, all regular guests at the Corsican Circuit.

The main tournament was a sixteen-player Knockout. Each rubber had two games of 15 minutes plus 3 seconds time-control. A blitz play-off would occur if a match was tied. French hero Maxime Vachier-Lagrave beat Vishy Anand, the five-time world champion 1.5-0.5 in the finals to become the 2016 Corsican Masters champion.

The winners were:

1997 **Pavel Tregubov** (first edition, among the players top-seeded Valeri Salov, then Ilya Smirin, Sergei Tiviakov, Evgeny Agrest, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Vladislav Tkachiev, Josif Dorfman, Glenn Flear, veteran Boris Spassky, and youngster GM Etienne Bacrot, born 1983). Format: **Open** (no final knock out) with 200 players, incl. 25 GM, 14 IM. Time: 50 minutes plus 10 seconds bonus per move. Modus: swiss system of 9 rounds. Prize money: 250'000 FF. Playing venue at Bastia:

<http://www.theweekinchess.com/html/twic160.html#10%29>

1998 **Alexander Chernin**

1999 **Vladimir Akopian**

2000 **Vishy Anand (1)**

2001 **Vishy Anand (2)**

2002 **Vishy Anand (3)**

2003 **Vishy Anand (4)**

2004 **Vishy Anand (5-times series!!!!!);**

(2004 Topalov won the separate 1st Ajaccio Masters at Ajaccio)

2005 **Vadim Milov**, Switzerland (beating Anand in the final)

(2005 Sasikiran won the 2nd Ajaccio Rapid Masters, Anand won the 1st Rapid Open in Venaco)

2006 **Rustam Kasimdzhanov** (beating Anand in the final)

2007 **Hikaru Nakamura**

2008 **Shakhriyar Mamedyarov** (beating Milov, see picture below)

2009 **Open** (independently played, not as preliminaries, no following knock-out as in other years)

Ivan Sokolov won on tie-break from Vladimir Malaniuk and Hicham Hamdouchi, all scored 7.5/9

2009 + **Match of World Champions Vishy Anand** vs. **Anatoly Karpov** 3.5-0.5 (four games rapid)

2010 **Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (2)** (beating Radjabov, see video under the CNC link below)

2011 **Vishy Anand (record winner)** (beating Mamedyarov in the final)

2012 **Etienne Bacrot**

2013 **Ivan Saric**

2014 **Hou, Yifan** (Anand being eliminated by Fedorchuk in the semi-finals)

2015 **Vladimir Onischuk (not to mix with Alexander Onischuk)**

<http://www.corse-echecs.com/Vladimir-Onischuk-remporte-le-19e-Corsican-Circuit-dans-une-ambiance-de-folie- a1996.html>

2016 **Maxime Vachier-Lagrave** (beating Anand in the final) (20th edition, Jubilee)

<http://theweekinchess.com/chessnews/events/20th-corsican-circuit-2016>

See also: <http://www.corse-echecs.com/> (La Ligue Corse des Échecs)

[Léo Battesti](#) (Wikipedia biography of the founder and organizer, in french language)

http://www.chessnc.com/p_tournaments/item-56.html (CNC - Chess Network Company)



Vadim Milov (won the Qualification Open), Garri Kasparov, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (won the final of the K.-O. stage) and Sergey Tiviakov (runner-up, lost that final) at Corsica Masters 2008. Courtesy of ChessBase

Bastia 18/20 octobre • Ajacciu 22 octobre

A Corsica, 222 000 abitanti, ha u piacè d'accoglie

Les stars échiquéennes de 2 milliards 588 millions d'habitants au prochain Corsican Circuit



Vishy ANAND

INDE 1,237 milliards d'habitants
Champion du monde 2000, 2001,
2005, 2007, 2008, 2010 et 2012

Hou YIFAN

CHINE 1,351 milliards d'habitants
Champion du monde 2010
2011, 2013 et 2014

Hou Yifan won the prestigious Corsican Circuit (Corsica Masters), Rapid, in 2014! Organizer

2016, published in: <http://www.chessdiagonals.ch/>