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## Front Cover

Aziz Degenbaev, winner of the 2024 Washington Open.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

## Back Cover

Seattle-based expert Oscar Sprumont  
plans his next move at the 2024 Washington Open.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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## Letter to the Editor



Hi Jeffrey,

I have attached a photo from the [World Open 2024](#), which took place in Philadelphia from 7/3 to 7/7, for your consideration for publication in *Northwest Chess* magazine.

The photo features Te Wei (left) and Rafael Palathingal (right), both Washington chess players. Rafael is my son, and I have Te's permission to send the picture. I have also included Te in this email. Te and Rafael won a prize as [mixed doubles partners](#).

Te competed in the U1800 section and scored 7.0/9, while Rafael participated in the U2000 section and scored 5.0/9.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Xavier

# Washington Open (Part One)

Josh Sinanan



*Chen Yuan (L) and Riaan Babbar  
analyze a king and pawn ending.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*





The 2024 Washington Open was held over Memorial Day weekend May 25-27 at the Redmond Marriott. Located in the heart of Redmond Town Center, the Marriott has become quite a popular venue for WCF tournaments, favored by many for its easily accessible location, abundance of nearby food options, and free parking. Chess players from throughout North America including parts of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Hawaii, Montana, British Columbia, and Ohio, were represented in the three-day chess extravaganza.

The event was hosted by Washington Chess Federation and directed by Senior TD Jacob Mayer with assistance from Nicholas Liotta, Allen Messenger, and WCF Co-Vice President Rekha Sagar. WCF President Josh Sinanan and Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov orchestrated the busy slate of events that spanned the holiday weekend. Hundreds of photographs were taken throughout the event by chess photographer extraordinaire Meiling Cheng. Unfortunately, our regular vendor and chess bookseller John Dill from Spokane couldn't make it this year due to car trouble.

A total of 274 players participated in the main three-day tournament, a six-round Swiss tournament across three sections: Open, Premier U1800, and Rising U1400. Players had the option of entering the three-day or two-day schedule depending on their weekend plans and preference for classical or faster time controls, with most players in the Open section opting for the three-day schedule and more players in the Rising section preferring the faster-paced games offered in the two-day.

The Washington Open Abdusattorov Scholastic, directed by WCF Co-VP Rekha Sagar, FM Slava Mikhailuk, and Tim Cambell, attracted a record 149 juniors on Saturday, May 25! The immersive chess experience featured a non-stop frenzy of fun side events including the Adult Novice Swiss, Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss, Fischer Chess960 Rapid, Robson Puzzle Solving, Kosteniuk Chess Workshop for Girls and Women, Carlsen Rapid, Firouzja Bullet, and Perez Memorial Blitz!

National Master Aziz Degenbaev (2307 → 2352, 5.5) of Seattle was crowned the 2024 Washington Open



*A packed playing hall at the 2024 Washington Open.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

Champion in the 90-player Open section. Aziz, a North Seattle college student originally from Kyrgyzstan, started off well, winning his first three games in a row in the three-day schedule against Federal Way's CM William Wachira (1876), Joint Base Lewis McChord's David Paez (1993), and young Redmond phenom Vidip Kona (2071).

When the schedules merged on Saturday evening, Aziz scored a clutch victory against National Master Vikram Srivastava, setting up a big board one showdown with Canadian IM Bindi Cheng (2499) in the fifth round. An opening misfire by Cheng allowed Aziz to obtain a dangerous initiative as Black in a King's Indian, and the end came swiftly after Aziz penetrated decisively down the f-file while Cheng's queen found herself a bit offside on a1!

A solid draw in the sixth round against the reigning Washington State Champion NM Daniel He secured Aziz's victory and a seed into the 2025 Washington State Championship. Two chess heavyweights, IM Georgi Orlov (2504 → 2503, 5.0) of Sammamish and NM Daniel He (2326 → 2340, 5.0) of Redmond, shared =Second/Third place a half-point back, with Orlov pressing hard in the final round to overcome the defense

of Ananth Gottumukkala (2142), the 2022 Washington Open Champion.

A septuplet of chess gents shared the combined Fourth-Sixth/First U2100/Second U2100 prize with 4.5 points apiece: IM Bindi Cheng (2499 → 2491, 4.5) of Coquitlam, FM Tian Sang (2308 → 2319, 4.5) of Redmond, NM Stephen Willy (2190 → 2183, 4.5) of Sammamish, NM Nikash Vemparala (2237 → 2248, 4.5) of Redmond, CM Ananth Gottumukkala (2142 → 2177, 4.5) of Sammamish, Vihaan Jammalamadaka (2080 → 2102, 4.5) of Redmond, and Eddie Chang (2033 → 2061, 4.5) of Bellevue.

Four rising chess knights – Ryan Leong (1880 → 1927, 3.5) of Richmond, Arnold Yang (1789 → 1837, 3.5) of Portland, Vijay Patankar (1842 → 1925, 3.5) of Redmond, and Christos Boulis (1757 → 1852, 3.5) of Redmond – split the =First/Second U1900 prize with a plus one score. Several special prizes were also awarded in addition to the overall and class prizes to recognize the achievements and efforts of other players and to give the event more of a "festival" feel.

The Biggest Upset Wins were earned by Ryan Leong (round one – 422 points) of Richmond, Robin Tu (round two – 148



*Austin Deng (L) vs Edward Cheng at the start of their first-round game in the star-studded Ignacio Perez Memorial Blitz side event. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

points) of Seattle, Jamie Zhu (round three – 382 points) of Sammamish, Owen Xu (round four – 202 points) of Bellevue, Vijay Patankar (round five – 249 points) of Redmond, and Christos Boulis (round six – 272 points) of Redmond. The Highest US Chess rating gains prizes were awarded to Rafael Palathingal (first place – 72 points) of Bothell and Karl Reutter (second place – 64 points) of Bellevue.

Classiness was in full display at the Washington Open, with three players taking home the Best Dressed prizes: Gabriel Razmov (Saturday) of Seattle, Vidip Kona (Sunday) of Redmond, and Stephen Willy (Monday) of Sammamish. Roger Tabet of Portland, always a good-natured fellow in victory or defeat, won the “Fair Play, Kindness, and Spreading Joy” prize! Chess queens Te Wei (1649 → 1667, 2.0) of Kirkland and Shuyi Han (1746 → 1746, 2.0) of Bellevue shared the Best Female prize.

Two living chess legends, NM Viktors Pupols (2200 → 2200, 4.0) of Kingston and Leonid Gavrysh (2062 → 2054, 4.0) of Brier, split the Best Senior prize to add to their retirement funds.

Seattle Chess Club regular Jackson

Subcleff (1754 → 1781, 5.5) of Woodinville topped the 80-player Premier U1800 section with an undefeated five wins and one draw! Along the way, “action” Jackson scored wins against Pablo Manzon (1500), Mike Tie (1466), Allen Chang (1359), David Marcelia (1450), and Anand Gupta (1782), allowing only a single draw against the solid Arnav Gadde (1650) in the fourth round. For his victory, Subcleff is seeded into the Challengers section of the 2025 Washington State Championship.

High school chess stud Rishi Ramaswamy (1755 → 1765, 5.0) of Bellevue earned second place honors a half-point back, allowing only two draws against veteran Mary Kuhner (1700) and risk-averse Arnav Gadde (1510). Eight up-and-coming chess dudes shared the combined =Third-Fifth + First/Second U1650 + First U1500 prize with 4.5 points apiece: top seed Anand Gupta (1782 → 1784, 4.5) of Sammamish, Keshav Beegala (1751 → 1750, 4.5) of Sammamish, Anthony Lamb (1726 → 1732, 4.5) of Kent, Abhay Adury (1670 → 1661, 4.5) of Richfield (Ohio), Arnav Gadde (1510 → 1622, 4.5) of Mill Creek, Bichen Liu (1350 → 1477, 4.5) of Bothell, Benjamin Frederick (1311 → 1578, 4.5)

of Seattle, and David Marcelia (1310 → 1461, 4.5) of Issaquah. Four chess buccaneers – Arjun Yadav (1370 → 1466, 4.0) of Sammamish, Rhadean Rubaiyat (1353 → 1524, 4.0) of Redmond, Brook Ayalew of (1281 → 1501, 4.0) Seattle, and Gavin Shi (1280 → 1444, 4.0) of Seattle – captured second U1500 honors with four points each.

In a section loaded with numerous underrated sharks, upsets were happening left and right. Those claiming the biggest scalps were Arjun Yadav (round one 1 – 255 points) of Sammamish, Satish Kumar Ramachandran (round two – 266 points) of Olympia, Kedar Venkatachalam (round three – 316 points) of Redmond, Rhadean Rubaiyat (round four – 238 points) of Redmond, David Hirschowitz (round five – 440 points) of Mercer Island, and Brook Ayalew (round six – 280 points) of Seattle.

The highest US Chess rating gains were achieved by Allen Chang (first place – 170 points) of Mountlake Terrace, and Dheeran Koripella (second place – 127 points) of Sammamish. Three stylish individuals took home the Best Dressed prizes for their on-fleeck ensembles: Devansh Sharma (Saturday) of Redmond, Selina Cheng (Sunday) of Seattle, and William Dann (Monday) of Kirkland.

Balbir Singh of SeaTac, perhaps the kindest guy you’ll ever meet, was awarded the “Fair Play, Kindness, and Spreading Joy” prize for the light and warmth that he emits. University of Washington geneticist WCM Mary Kuhner (1700 → 1708, 4.0) of Seattle earned the Best Female prize and Kent chess king Pablo Manzon Jr. (1500 → 1500, 3.0) added the Best Senior Player prize to his royal treasury.

For the second year in a row, the Rising U1400 attracted an impressive turnout of 104 players. With a strong influx of many new and unrated players, the chess boom shows no signs of slowing down! Chess dad Tian Li (unrated → 1559, 6.0) of Kirkland, playing in only his second-ever rated tournament, swept the field and won the First Unrated prize with an impressive six points from six games! Tian’s kids, Emma and Ethan, have no doubt inspired their dad to play and can now consider themselves to be a bona fide “chess family.” Since Li is unrated and only qualifies to win the First Unrated prize, it was Oregon’s Eric Spletstoser (1251 → 1329, 5.5) of Pendleton who



emerged victorious and won the First-Place prize. Along the way, Eric won against Devin Flavin (1001), Riaan Babbar (1029), Frazer Case (unrated), Gregory Lee (1301), and top seed Patrick Perry (1399), allowing only a single draw against Matthew McKendry (1165) in the third round.

Vishnu Vijayanandh (1049 → 1206, 5.0) of Redmond won the Second-Place prize with five points by virtue of being the only five-point scorer with an established rating. The other two five-point scorers – Trenton Marzano (unrated → 1480, 5.0) of Orting and Andrei Gaivoronski (unrated → 1418, 5.0) of Bellevue – shared the Second-Place Unrated prize. Apparently, it can be advantageous to have an established rating!

A sextuplet of chess warriors shared the Third-Fifth Place prize a half-point back: Glen Dawson (1210 → 1299, 4.5) of Seattle, Steve Shuman (1312 → 1300, 4.5) of Seattle, Daniel Polonsky (1190 → 1209, 4.5) of Newcastle, Gregory Lee (1301 → 1274, 4.5) of Seattle, chess dad Kefu Zhao (1130 → 1137, 4.5) of Bellevue, and Jeb Stroud (1013 → 1100, 4.5) of Bellingham. Simon Thornock (1253 → 1267, 4.5) of Wenatchee and Aayan Hetamsaria (1033 → 1130, 4.5) of Bellevue shared the First/Second U1200 prize with an impressive “plus three” score.

Olympia’s Sai Navaneeth Satish Kumar (402 → 849, 4.5), a chess warrior with four names, earned the First U1000 prize with an incredible 4.5-point score! Young rising chess supernova Jimmy Yang (945 → 1033, 4.0) of Kirkland captured the Second Place U1000 prize. The Biggest Upset-Win prizes were awarded to Portland chess wizard Aditya Alok (round one – 654 points), Kalispell’s (Montana) David M. Wilson (round two – 452 points), Gig Harbor’s Sofia Byelashova (rounds three+four – 564 + 645 points, respectively), and Olympia’s Sai Navaneeth Satish Kumar (rounds five+six – 692 + 531 points, respectively)!

The highest US Chess rating gains (amongst players with established US Chess ratings) were achieved by Sammamish chess ringers Pranavarjun Thungathurthi (first place – 137 points) and Max Chen (second place – 133 points).

Four players went above the call of fashion duty and were recognized for their fine attire with the Best Dressed



*Rich Lavoice (L) vs Tian Sang and other top boards of the Open section during the first round of the three-day schedule. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

prizes: Vladimir Fedorov (Saturday) of Sammamish, Joshua Pantea (Sunday) of Renton, and the Byelashova sisters, Darya and Sofia, (Monday) of Gig Harbor. Inglemoor High School chess pal Oliver Wakeman was awarded the “Fair Play, Kindness, and Spreading Joy” prize for his fantastic attitude and ability to raise the mood in any room that he enters.

Redmond chess diva Lakshana Anand (981 → 945, 3.5) won the Best Female prize for her “plus one” performance while Lake Forest Park chess elder Breck Haining (1300 → 1300, 4.0) brought home the Best Senior Player prize for his efforts.

**David Murray (1968) –  
Gabriel Razmov (1815) [E17]**  
Washington Open,  
Open section  
Redmond, WA (R5), May 26, 2024  
[Gabriel Razmov]

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Bg2**

White chooses the Catalan Opening, a potent system to play against the black configuration. I decide to aim for a Queen’s Indian structure instead.

**4...b6 5.0-0 Be7**

**5...Bd6 6.d4 0-0**

**6.b3**

**6.cxd5 exd5 7.d4 0-0**

**6...Bb7 7.Bb2 Nbd7 8.d4 c5**

So far both sides have tried to maintain some flexibility in their options.

**9.cxd5 exd5 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.Rc1 Re8 12.Qc2 Rc8**

With both sides having completed development, middlegame plans must now be made and put into action. Black wants to keep tension in the center and control e4, while White will try to eventually attack on the kingside.

**13.Qb1 Bf8 14.e3 g6**

Maneuvering the bishop to the long diagonal, in order to make the kingside safer.

**15.Ne5?!**

A natural move, but it offers Black a chance for an advantage via an exchange sacrifice. I saw the option for that but didn’t appreciate how good it was for Black. **15.Rfd1 Bg7 16.Ne1 Qe7±**

**15...Bg7?!**

An automatic move that misses to take



Varin Nallabothula (L) vs Fritz Scholz, who celebrated his 80th birthday on Monday, May 27!  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

advantage of the opportunity, and allows White a free hand to expand on the kingside. 15...Nxe5! would instead seize the edge, since 16.dxe5 Ng4 17.Rfd1 (17. Bh3?!



analysis diagram after 17.Bh3

is what I was worried about, but after 17...Nxe5! (17...h5) 18.Bxe5 Rxe5 19.Bxc8 Qxc8 Black stands better due to the central control and the diagonals opening up for an attack.) 17...Qe7 18.Nf3 Bg7 and the e5-pawn is very weak.

**16.f4 Nxe5?!**

Unnecessary at this point, since White doesn't threaten anything concrete: attempts at a direct attack fail, e.g.: 16...Rc7 17.f5? (17.Rfel h5 18.h3 Qe7) 17...Nxe5 18.dxe5 Ng4 19.f6? Bh6

**17.dxe5 Nd7 18.Nc4!± dxc4?!**

I remember playing this move very quickly, not realizing that there was another viable option. White now obtains a clear advantage. 18...Bf8 could be a better alternative, though White's position remains pleasant after 19.f5 Qg5 20.Rf4±

**19.Bxb7 Rc7 20.Bd5?**

The hanging nature of White's bishop allows Black to regain some chances. 20.Ba6!? would instead create an uncomfortable situation for Black. After 20...cxb3 21.axb3 Qe7 22.Bc4± White is ready to attack on the kingside, and Black will have a hard time defending.

**20...Nxe5**

A typical tactic. 20...c3!? is another strong idea that I missed. If 21.Bxc3 Nxe5!± where White would have a relatively worse structure.

**21.Rcd1**

This move puzzled me, so I spent a long time deciding between ...Rd7 and ...Nd7. As it turns out, I chose incorrectly. 21.Bxe5 Bxe5 22.Bxc4 Bf6

**21...Nd7?**

An error that gives White a close to winning position. 21...Rd7! is the more

active and sensible option. I cannot remember why I didn't choose this. I must have been spooked by 22.bxc4 Ng4 23.Bxg7 Kxg7 24.Bc6 but then after 24...Rxd1 25.Rxd1 Qe7! 26.e4 White is only slightly better. (26.Bxe8?? would lose instantly to 26...Qxe3+ 27.Kh1 Qf3+ and mate follows.)



Position after 21...Nd7

**22.e4??**

A critical tactical oversight, possibly born out of choosing between several pleasant options for White. As a result, the course of the game now changes radically. Black suddenly finds themselves in the driver's seat. 22.f5! is strongest, and would instead have given White an excellent attacking position. After 22...Kh8 (or 22...c3 23.fxc6±) 23.Bxg7+ (23.Bxf7?! c3) 23...Kxg7 24.Bxf7 White should go on to win.

**22...c3!**

Suddenly the tide has turned, and Black is the one with a large advantage.

**23.Bc1?**

A decisive mistake. 23.Ba1 looks awkward, but is far more resilient concretely, e.g., 23...Bd4+ 24.Kh1 Nf6 25.Bxc3!? Nxd5 26.Bxd4 cxd4 27.Rxd4 Rd7 28.exd5 Rxd5 29.Re4 where despite Black's advantage in the heavy-piece endgame White still retains practical drawing chances.

**23...Bd4+ 24.Rxd4**

Desperation, but there is no defense for White at this point. 24.Kh1 loses to 24...Nf6+ when Black wins another pawn and dominates.

**24...cxd4+ 25.Qd3 Nf6 26.Qxd4 Nxd5 27.exd5 Rc5 28.d6**

28.Rd1 also loses after 28...c2 with ...Re1+ or ...Rxd5 to follow. (28...Rxd5 is another way to win, slower perhaps, based on tactics: 29.Qxd5 Re1+ 30.Rxe1 Qxd5 and the c-pawn will decide shortly.)



28...Re6 29.Ba3 Rxd6 30.Qa4 Ra5

Now Black is up an exchange and still has the passed c-pawn on top of that.

31.Qb4 Rd4



Position after 31...Rd4

This move is simplest, forcing queen trades or a win of the bishop. Given Black's material advantage, White chose to resign here.

This was an interesting and at the same time humbling game, since as I analyzed it afterwards, it turned out that many positions and options that I thought were okay weren't, and vice versa.

0-1

**William Dann (1611) –  
Karthik Bimod (1730) [B23]**

Washington Open,  
Premier U1800 section  
Redmond, (R3), May 26, 2024  
*[William Dann]*

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.d4!?

This interesting line has been dubbed the Magnus Sicilian, and is my current favorite way to play these positions. This became popular after Magnus Carlsen used it to beat Wojtaszek in 2018. The plan is not to play Bb5, but to play the simple b2-b3, Bb2, O-O-O, and usually attack on the kingside. The white king is very secure in these positions, and as a bonus if Black plays Nc6 the knight is misplaced as d7 is the usual Najdorf post for the queen's knight. Check out Carlsen – Wojtaszek Shamkir 2018 if you're curious about the game that served as inspiration for this line!

3...cxd4 4.Qxd4 Nc6 5.Qd2 Nf6 6.b3 a6 7.Bb2 e5?

This plan is very slow and will allow White to take over the game.

8.0-0-0 Be6?!

This bishop will be a target after White is



*The affable William Dann relaxing between his games.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

able to play f4. 8...Be7 9.Kb1 0-0 10.f4 exf4 11.Nge2!? b5 12.Nxf4 Ne5 13.Nfd5 Nxd5 14.Nxd5 Bb7 may be a safer try, but I still like White!

9.f4



Position after 9.f4

In hindsight this may be rushed. Kb1 is almost always a useful move to insert in these positions. There is a note later where I almost get punished for omitting this move.

9...b5?!

9...Be7 10.Kb1 0-0?! 11.f5 Bd7 12.g4! is a very common idea to remember when Black castles kingside in these lines! 12...Nxc4 13.Nf3 Nf6 14.Rg1 and White has a very strong attack for the pawn; 9...g6 10.Kb1 Bg7 11.Nge2 0-0 12.h3 b5

13.g4 b4 14.f5! bxc3 15.Nxc3! (15.Qxc3? Nxe4 16.Qxc6 takes back the material but at a huge cost! 16...gxf5 17.Bg2 Rc8 18.Qxa6 Qc7 Black is now the one with a terrible attack) 15...Bc8 16.g5 Nh5 17.f6 Nxf6! (17...Bh8 18.Qxd6 Is truly awful!) 18.gxf6 Bxf6 19.Qxd6. All that and I'd still prefer White.

10.f5!?

10.Nf3! shows that Black is not really making a threat to take on e4, as that opens lines in front of their king! 10...b4? 11.Nd5 Nxe4 12.Qe3 Nc3 13.Bc4!? Be7 (13...Nxa2+ 14.Kb1 Nc3+ 15.Bxc3 bxc3 16.fxe5+-) 14.Bxc3 bxc3 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Bg5. This is why everyone plays Kb1 first! We can get away with it here, amazingly. 17.Nc7+! Kf8! 18.Nxe6+ fxe6 19.Rhf1+ Ke8 20.Rf4! Qa5 21.Kb1! Don't get mated after all that! 21...Qxe5 22.Qxe5 dxe5 23.Re4 White's doing great now. My opponent and I did not come close to seeing any of this in the game, for sure.

10...Bc8 11.Qe1!?

Not allowing the b4 and takes on e4 idea while putting the queen on the same file as the king. Nd5 may still open the e-file if Black does not castle right now. I figured this was the best way to defend



Albert Eksarevskiy (R) ponders his next move after playing an offbeat Grob opening in his final round game against Nayele Straginski. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

the threat, although again it may not be a threat at all!

11...Bb7 12.Nf3



Position after 12.Nf3

12...Qc7?

Fatal. This only adds force to my planned Nd5 to open the position. 12...Be7 13.g4! Nxg4 14.Rg1 Nf6 15.Rxg7 failed easily, though; 12...Qa5 13.Kb1 Rc8 14.Rg1 Be7 15.a3! and Black is getting counterplay (15.g4 Nb4 16.a3 Nxc2! 17.Kxc2 Bxe4+ would be a disaster!)

13.Nd5! Nxd5 14.exd5

Because:

14...Ne7 15.Nxe5!

[Diagram top of next column]

15...f6?



Position after 15.Nxe5

15...dxe5 Is the lesser evil 16.d6 (16. Bxe5!? was my original idea before I realized the simple d6 was better 16...Qb6 17.d6 0-0-0! 18.dxe7 Rxd1+ 19.Qxd1 Bxe7. Somehow Black survived only down a pawn, which I did not think was possible during the game.) 16...Qc5 17.dxe7 Bxe7 18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.Bxe5 and Black is still in the fight!

16.Nd3 Qd7 17.Nf4 0-0-0 18.g4

The knight's job for now is to support d5 until it can stand on its own.

18...Kb8 19.Bg2 Rc8 20.Ne6 Ng8 21.Bd4 Be7 22.Bf2 Nh6 23.Qe3 Ba8

It's amazing there is no immediate mate here!

24.h3 Nf7 25.Qb6+ Qb7 26.Qxb7+ Bxb7 27.Nxg7 Ne5 28.Kb2 Rhg8 29.Nh5

Stopping pawn h5, treating the g3-pawn like a hook. No reason to allow Black to do something.

29...Rc7 30.Nf4 Rd7 31.Bd4 Kc8 32.Rc1 Kb8 33.c4 bxc4 34.bxc4 Bf8 35.Bxe5 dxe5 36.Ne6 Be7 37.Rhd1 Bc8 38.c5 Rb7+ 39.Ka1 Bd8 40.d6 Bd7 41.Bxb7 Kxb7 42.Rb1+ Ka7 43.Rdc1

Black resigns.

1-0

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Herr - Toppen-Ryan, Bellingham 2024



**Arnav Gadde (1650) –  
Vijay Nallappa (1781) [D27]**  
Washington Open,  
Premier U1800 section  
Redmond, (R3), May 26, 2024  
*[Arnav Gadde]*

In the third round, I entered the game with a 2.0/2 record. Although I was aware that Vijay had secured the title in the same tournament last year, I remained determined to give my best effort. After all, every game is an opportunity to learn and grow.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.e3 a6**

I chose 5.e3 over e4 because in the 5.e4 variation, my pawns appeared vulnerable.

**6.Bxc4 b5 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.0-0**

Here I felt that Vijay's position is slightly better because his pieces look better than mine.

**8...c5 9.Be2**

I didn't take the pawn on c5 because I didn't want the bishop to come out. I played Be2 because I wanted to defend my f3-knight with my bishop because I can move the queen without worrying about knight being captured and weakening my king.

**9...Nc6 10.a3!?**

I played this move because I wanted to go dxc5 Bxc5 and then go b4 and fianchetto my dark-squared bishop.

**10...Qc2?!**

I thought he just needed to move his bishop back and I will develop my bishop on the next move, but the move he played now was unexpected, and he also spent about 20 minutes on this move!

**11.dxc5 Bxc5 12.b4 Rd8 13.Qc2?!**

**[Diagram next column]**



*Arnav Gadde at the Seattle Chess Club facility in Greenlake.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*



*Position after 13.Qc2*

**13...Nxb4!!**

I did not anticipate the 13...Nxb4 sacrifice.

**14.Nxb5!? Nxc2?! 15.Nxc7+ Kd7  
16.Ra2 Nxe3! 17.Nxe6 Kxe6 18.Bxe3  
Bxe3 19.fxg3 Bxf3 20.gxf3 Rd6 21.Rb1  
Rc8**

Both sides take open files. At this point it looked to me like a drawn game.

**22.Rab2 Nd5!**

Black is bringing the knight into the game.

**23.Kf2 Nc3 24.Rg1**

I played this move to attack the g7-pawn, bring my rook to g4, and control the fourth rank.

**24...g6 25.Rg4 Nxe2 26.Re4+**

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*Davey Jones (L) vs Seth Machakos during their extra rated game.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

Throwing in a check before taking the knight. This move also controls e-file and defends the a-pawn when it moves.

**26...Kf6 27.Kxe2 Rc3 28.a4 Rcd3 29.h4**

I made this move with the intention of preventing the opponent's king from reaching the g5-square. Additionally, I ensured that I wouldn't lose my pawn even if there were potential checks on the second rank.

**29...Rd1 30.Rf4+ Kg7 31.e4**

Here I played e4 to make breathing space for my king so I can get my rook on b2 to go to the seventh rank.

**31...R1d4 32.Rb7**

I thought of 32.e5 Rxf4 33.exd6 Rd4, but I felt it would be better with two rooks on the board.

**32...Rf6?! 33.Rxf6 Kxf6 34.Rb6+ Ke5 35.Rxa6**

Here the engine thought Rxa6 was an inaccuracy, but in the game my thought process was to make my opponent think for a long time as he was already down in time.

**35...Rb4 36.Ra7 Rb2+ 37.Ke3 Rb3+ 38.Kf2 f6?**

38...f6 is a mistake because it loses another pawn.

**39.Kg3**

This move stops any ...Kf4 threats.

**39...Ra3 40.Re7+! Kd6 41.Rxh7 Rxa4 42.Rh6!?**

I considered the move Rg7. However, I hesitated because I anticipated that Black might check my king. If I were to move my king in response, Black could then attack my vulnerable pawn on h4. Balancing risk and reward, I opted for an alternative move.

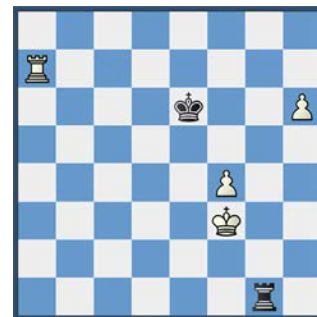
**42...Ra1 43.Kf4 Ke6 44.Rxg6 Ra5 45.Rg7**

I made this move with the intention of preventing the opponent's king from advancing to the seventh rank. By restricting their king's movement, I aimed to gain a positional advantage.

**45...Ra1 46.h5 Rh1 47.Rh7 Rh2 48.h6 Rh5 49.Kg4 Rh1 50.f4 f5+ 51.exf5+ Kf6 52.Ra7 Rg1+ 53.Kf3 Kxf5?! 54.Rf7+??**

My move was a significant error, resulting in the position now being a draw. Specifically, after 54...Ke6, the subsequent moves 55.Ra7 and 56.Rh1 failed to secure an advantage.

**54...Ke6 55.Ra7**



*Position after 55.Ra7*

**55...Kf5?**

Vijay's move 55...Kf5 proved to be a critical error, granting me back an

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advantage. However, the optimal sequence would have been 55...Rh1, followed by 56.Kg4 and 56...Rg1+. Unfortunately, time pressure could have led to this as he was low on time.

**56.Ra5+! Kg6?!**

56...Ke6 and Black could try for a draw, but then White will play 57.Rh5 and promote his pawn.

**57.Rg5+ Rxg5+–**

White forced simplification and will win the game.

**58.fxg5 Kh7 59.Kf4 Kg6 60.Kg4 Kh7 61.Kf5 Kg8 62.Kf6 Kh7 63.g6+ Kh8 64.g7+ Kg8 65.h7+**

In a hard-fought game lasting five intense hours, Black eventually resigned. White's unstoppable pawn promotion (queening) left Black with no viable moves. The opening phase saw Vijay with an advantage, but as the game progressed, it reached a draw. Unfortunately for Vijay, a time pressure blunder led to his defeat. This pivotal match significantly boosted my confidence. Despite struggling in my online games and doubting my ability to defeat higher-rated opponents, this victory showed me that I could achieve anything. With a perfect score of 3.0/3, I entered the subsequent rounds. Although I secured draws against the first and second place players, a half-point bye in the final round allowed me to finish with 4.5/6 points, tying for third place overall.

**1–0**

**Alec Beck (2131) –  
Rafael Palathingal (1759) [E01]**  
Washington Open,  
Open section  
(R3), May 26, 2024  
[Rafael Palathingal]



*Vinesh Ravuri (L) vs Harishkumar Karthikeyan and other top boards of the Carlsen Rapid kick off their second round. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

**1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 c6**

I am planning to enter a Semi-Slav after Nc3 by playing e6.

**4.Qc2**

I have never seen this line with Qc2.

**4...e6**

I'll just do what I usually do in the Semi-Slav.

**5.g3 Bd6 6.Bg2 Nbd7**

Following the main line of the Semi-Slav, except he has a bishop on g2.

**7.0-0 0-0 8.Nbd2 e5**

I got this move from a game of my opponent versus Nikash Vemparala where the position was similar to the position that we're in now.

**9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.Nxe5 Bxe5 11.cxd5 Nxd5**

With this move I'm avoiding the IQP (Isolated Queen's Pawn).

**12.Nc4 Bf6 13.Rd1 Qe7!**

This is a good move because I get out of the pin, and I stop him from going 14.Bxd5 because after 14...cxd5 15.Rxd5 Be6 16.Rd1 Rac8 his knight on c4 is lost.

**14.e4!**

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*Chess coaches Harrison Toppen-Ryan (L) and Sloan Setiadikurnia analyze on the big chess set. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

This is a good move because it attacks my knight on d5, it gains some space in the center, and it prepares a future Bf4 and e5 where my bishop on f6 won't be happy.

**14...Nb6**



*Position after 14...Nb6*

Offering an exchange which he shouldn't accept because he has more space, and when you have more space, you should keep more pieces on the board.

**15.Ne3?!**

I think this move is not that good because it is not a good place for the knight; it blocks the bishop on c1 from potentially going to f4, and there is a better square from which the knight could control more squares and obstruct my pieces—d6 is that square.

15.Nd6! is the best move in the computer's opinion and also mine. Here is a sample line from which you can see how many good moves you have to find as Black to equalize: 15...Be6 16.Bf4 Rad8 17.e5 Bg5 18.Bxg5 Qxg5 19.Nxb7 Rxd1+ 20.Rxd1 Qxe5 21.Bxc6 h5 22.b3 Bg4 23.Rc1 Rc8 now Black is fine because of the counterplay against the white king and because of the pin on the c6-bishop and there are only two moves to keep a +0.14–0.61 advantage.

**15...Be6 16.Bd2?!**

This is not the best place to develop the bishop, it is better to play 16.f4 g6 17.e5 Bg7 18.b3 and then Bb2 and the bishop will be a good piece.

**16...Rfd8 17.Bc3?!**

This move allows too many trades which will help me solidify my position and get a draw.

**17...Bxc3 18.Qxc3 Rxd1+ 19.Rxd1 Rd8 20.Rxd8+ Qxd8 21.b3 Qd6**

Just waiting around in this drawn endgame, but after further analysis, I realized that the best plan was 21...Nd7 22.f4 f6 23.h4 Qc7 24.Kh2 Qd6 25.a4 b5 26.axb5 cxb5 27.b4 Nb6. This was the best plan because I wouldn't have to play passive if I went for this.

**22.f4 f6 23.Bf1 Qa3 24.Qd2 Qe7 25.Kf2 Bd7 26.Bd3 Be6 27.Kf3 Qd7 28.Qc3 Bf7 29.Bf1 Be6**

So far so good, I've still kept it to a draw.

**30.h4 f5?**

I don't want to just sit and wait, but I'm pushing on the side where I'm worse, the kingside, so I shouldn't push f5, I should go 30...h6 31.g4 Qd6 32.h5 Nd7 33.Bc4 Nf8 34.f5 Bxc4 35.Qxc4+ Kh7 36.Qf7 Nd7 37.Qg6+ Kg8 38.Qe8+ Kh7 39.Qg6+ Kg8 40.Qe8+ Kh7 41.Nc4 Qd3+ 42.Kf4 Qf1+ 43.Kg3 Qd3+ 44.Kf4 b5 45.Qg6+ Kg8 46.Qe8+ Nf8 47.e5 bxc4 48.e6 cxb3 49.axb3 Qd4+ 50.Kg3 Qd6+ 51.Kf3 Qc5 52.e7 Qc3+ 53.Kf4 Qb4+ 54.Ke3 Qxb3+ 55.Kd4 Qb4+ 56.Kd3 Qd6+ 1/2–1/2 I managed to push on the queenside, but he got enough counterplay to get a draw.

**31.exf5 Bxf5**



*Position after 31...Bxf5*

**32.Qe5?!**

This move doesn't win the a7-pawn, he should have gone 32.Qa5 Be6 33.Qxa7. He wins the pawn and maybe even the game.

**32...Be6 33.f5 Bf7 34.g4 Nd5 35.Qb8+ Be8 36.Bc4?!**

This move is not that good because the threat of Bxd5+ and the threat of ...Qxa7 can easily be solved, better would have been 36.Qe5 Nxe3 37.Kxe3 h6 38.g5 hxg5 39.hxg5 Qd8 40.f6 Bf7 41.Bd3 gxf6 42.gxf6 Kf8 43.Be4 a5 44.Qc5+ Ke8.

This position can be held, but there are some positions where you have to be really precise to hold on to the draw as Black.

**36...b5!**

I deal with the threat of ...Qxa7, and the threat of Bxd5 or Nxd5 at the same time.

**37.Bxd5+ cxd5 38.Qe5 Bf7?**

This move is bad because it allows the idea of Nc2–d4–e6 with a very strong



passer after Bxe6 fxe6.

### 39.Qd4?!

This move is not that good because the queen does nothing on d4 that it doesn't do on e5 except attacking the well defended pawn on a7.

### 39...a6

I move my pawn to a6 to solidify my pawn on b5 and then he has no way to win this endgame because I have only one weakness, the d5-pawn, which can't be attacked by more than two pieces, and it is defended by my queen on d7 and my bishop on f7.

### 40.b4 h6 41.g5 hxg5 42.hxg5 g6 43.fxg6

It is a clear draw now because he didn't keep his passer with f6, he went fxg6 possibly miscalculating with like 10 minutes on the clock that I can hold this endgame a pawn down. 43.f6 is only +1.42, but it is practically very hard to play this as Black. 43...Qh3+ 44.Kf2 Qh2+ 45.Ng2 Qd6 46.a3 Qc7 47.Nf4 Qd6 48.Kf3.

It is so hard to keep your pieces passive when you see that your opponent will keep on maneuvering in this +1.97 position which I probably couldn't hold.

### 43...Qh3+ 44.Kf2 Bxg6 45.Qxd5+ Bf7 46.Qd8+ Kh7 47.Qe7 Kg8 48.Qd8+ Kh7 49.Qd3+ Bg6 50.Qd4 Qe6 51.Nd5?

Now the g5-pawn is lost, and so are the winning chances for White.

### 51...Qf5+ 52.Nf4 Qxg5 53.Qd7+ Kh8 54.Nxg6+ Qxg6 55.Qh3+ Kg8!

I noticed that in the Qg3 Qxg3+ Kxg3 line I will have Kg7 with distant opposition. 55...Kg7 also works, but the defense is harder because it's not a simple distant opposition position.

56.Qg3 Qxg3+ 57.Kxg3 Kf7 58.Kf3 Ke6 59.Ke4 Kd6 60.Kd4 Kc6 61.Ke5 Kb6 62.Kd6 a5 63.a3 axb4 64.axb4 Ka6 65.Kc6 Ka7 66.Kxb5 Kb7 and it will be a draw.

### 56.Qg3 Qxg3+ 57.Kxg3 Kg7

The opposition is here, so no win for White.

### 58.Kf4 Kf6 59.Ke4 Ke6 60.Kd4 Kd6 61.a3 Kc6 62.Ke5 Kb6 63.Kd6 a5 64.Kd5 axb4 65.axb4 Ka6 66.Kc6 Ka7 67.Kxb5 Kb7 68.Kc4 Kc6 69.Kb3 Kb5 70.Kc3 Kc6

1/2-1/2

**Stephen Willy (2219) –  
Robby Hecht (2081) [C48]**  
Washington Open,  
Open section  
Redmond, (R6), May 27, 2024  
[NM Stephen Willy]

### 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5

Not very interesting... or is it?

### 4...Nd4 5.Bc4 Nxf3+ 6.gxf3!?

Why play Qxf3 when you can play gxf3?

### 6...Bc5 7.d3?!

Rg1 was a better move order. Now he has some ideas with Nh5.

### 7.Rg1

### 7...c6 8.Rg1 b5?

No need to force my bishop to b3. It was better to keep ideas to play d5 with tempo. 8...g6 is just safer and simpler in my opinion.

### 9.Bb3 0-0

Here is where the fun begins!

### 10.f4!

I don't need to be worried about him having some counterplay strike like ...d5 here with the bishop on b3 instead of c4.

### 10...Qb6?

I can deal with the threat of ...Bxf2 very simply, and now the queen also can't help with defense. 10...exf4

### 11.Qf3 exf4 12.e5

I wanted to kick the knight back and maybe have Ne4 ideas to join the attack in the future. 12.Bxf4 The computer likes this even better because it prevents him from playing ...d5 like he did in the game.

### 12...Re8

I feel like there is no need to do this since the f6-knight is bad anyways and if it went to e8 at least it defends g7 and the rook defends f7.

### 13.Bxf4

13.Qxf4 just threatening Qxf6 is simpler. I don't know why I didn't consider this super seriously 13...Rxe5+ decoy idea since my queen is defending the f2-pawn. 14.Ne4 And the threats on f6/f7 are too strong.

### 13...d5!

This was his plan with ...Re8 and I am lucky I haven't thrown away my advantage.

### 14.0-0-0 Nd7

Puzzle time! Find the combination I played that somehow took stockfish some time to fully understand its power.

### 15.Rxg7+!!



Position after 15.Rxg7+

No time to consolidate with ...Bf8 (that rhymes...)

### 15...Kxg7 16.Bh6+!!

The king cannot take due to mate, so I get my bishop in a key position.

### 16...Kh8

16...Kxh6 17.Rg1! Not a check! I must cut the king from going back to the g-file and this is game over.

### 17.Rg1!

And this simply forces mate due to two key factors: 1) I control the g-file fully.; 2) I control the g7-square. And both of those contribute to forced mate. (Black resigns)

### 17...Bf8

This move doesn't work due to the g-file 17...Rg8 18.Rxg8+ Kxg8 19.Qg3+ Kh8 20.Qg7#; 17...Bxf2 18.Bg7+! Kg8 19.Bf6+! If you don't defend g7 this pattern is the winning idea I saw 19...Bxg1 (19...Kf8 20.Rg8+ Kxg8 21.Qg4+ Kf8 22.Qg7#) 20.Qg4+ Kf8 21.Qg7#; 17...Nxe5 18.Qf6#!

### 18.Bxf8 Rxf8

### 18...Nxf8 19.Qf6#

### 19.Qg2

### 1-0

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*End of Part One. Part Two  
will continue next month...*

# SEATTLE *SUMMER SIZZLER*

## CHESS TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 2024

LAKESIDE UPPER SCHOOL

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### *FORMAT*

A 6-Round G/25; +5 Swiss  
in five sections:

**K-1 U600**

**2-3 U700**

**K-3 Open**

**4-6 U900**

**4-12 Open**

### *SCHEDULE*

Rd 1 – 9:00am

Rd 2 - 10:15am

Rd 3 - 11:30am

Lunch Time

Rd 4 - 1:30pm

Rd 5 - 2:45pm

Rd 6 - 4:00pm

Awards ~ 5:30pm

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### *CLOCKS + NOTATION*

Chess clocks set to G/25; +5 will be used  
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### *QUESTIONS?*

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President,  
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# SEATTLE CHESS CLASSIC



SAT-SUN, AUGUST 17-18, 2024

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**Format:** A 6-round Swiss in two sections:

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**Schedule:**

Rounds (6): Sat/Sun @ 9am, 1:30pm, 5:30pm.

**Time Control:** G/70; +30 sec increment.

Late default: 1 hour.

**Prize Fund:** \$4,000 (based on 60 paid entries)

**Tiglon Open:**

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$530 - \$440 - \$320

1<sup>st</sup> U2100/U1900/U1700: \$200

**Seirawan U1600:**

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$360 - \$320 - \$260

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1<sup>st</sup> Unrated \$150.

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**Byes:** Two half-point byes available. If interested, request before end of round 2.

**Memberships:** Current US Chess and WCF membership required, other states accepted. Memberships must be paid at time of registration.

**Rating:** Dual US Chess and NWSRS Rated. Highest of August US Chess, current NWSRS, or August FIDE rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration) **Registration + payment deadline: Fri, Aug 16 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Payment also available via SettleKing, Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com) or Venmo (ID: @WACHess). Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from a waitlist will be offered a spot.

**Info:** Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757, [washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com](mailto:washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com)

# A Conversation with Viktors Pupols

Ani Barua



*Yasser Seirawan (seated) and Viktors Pupols  
at the 2012 U.S. Open, in a photo reenactment of  
the memorable January 1975 cover of Northwest Chess.  
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*



AB: *Do you mind going over the history of how you started playing chess and how it all happened?*

VP: I was seven years old, and I was rummaging through cabinets in the house. I came across this set and asked my father what it was. He told me it was a chess set, showed me how the pieces moved, and left it at that. So, after that, it was simply just a solitary pursuit.

AB: *Can you explain what it was like growing up in Latvia during the Soviet Union era?*

VP: Well, when I was in first grade, it was the Soviet Union that had occupied the country, and on the first of May, we were all given little flags to wave and go out there. If you lost the flag, being a first grader, the teachers would supply you with another flag. But on June 14, 1941, the city of Riga, which is about the size of Seattle, saw about 30,000 people deported because both Communist Russia and Nazi Germany had their lists of people they considered undesirables. With the Nazis, it was easier to tell who was on the list; with the Communists, it could be anybody, even denunciations by your neighbors. Although they had agreed to split Europe, about a year later, Hitler decided he hadn't had enough, so he invaded the country, and for the next three or four years, it was under German occupation.

AB: *How did you end up in the U.S.? What was the journey like, if you don't mind sharing?*

VP: By the end of the war, troop ships were coming in with soldiers and ammunition, and they were going back empty. So, everybody who did not want to experience Communist Russia again went west. On the last day of the war, I was actually at a point between the armies. I wasn't certain whether I would reach the Allied armies before the Russians; it was about a half-hour difference, and we were on foot. It was May 8.

I was ten years old, wearing a winter coat and carrying everything I could because that's what you had to do—carry whatever you had with you. Over the next five years, people like myself were in a refugee camp in Germany, in Allied zones. They were not called refugees because where would you be refugees

from? Our allies, the Soviet Union? So, they were called displaced persons.

AB: *And when you came to the U.S. as a refugee, how did you survive?*

VP: See, when you come from a background like that, you don't have any relatives, friends, or network to rely on. So, you start gradually working your way up, you know, like two or three jobs. In your free time, you can still play chess if you have a mind to. And, of course, in those days, any chess activity would be on the east coast in New York or possibly in Los Angeles, and there was no air traffic. So, if you wanted to go to a place like that, it would take like two days by train or bus. Obviously, you didn't have the same kind of advantages that people have now. It used to be that you could have just coaches and training in golf or tennis; now it's possible in chess also. So, when Bobby Fischer played in the 1955 U.S. Junior Championship in Lincoln, Nebraska, he would have got there by train or bus over two days.

AB: *I want to go back to talking about Bobby Fischer; but I'd like to follow a chronological order. So, how did you end up choosing Seattle?*

VP: Well, after Nebraska, we found that the winters were okay, but the summers were humid and hot. So, we exchanged letters with other people, and they said the climate out on the west coast is much more agreeable. So, we got the car and went to Washington state. Been in Washington State since 1953.

AB: *And at that time what was the chess scene like in Washington state in 1953?*

VP: There were some tournaments; there was even the state championship also because I first played in the state championship in 1953. They were in the basement of a hotel downtown on Seventh and Madison. The freeway goes through there now, so there's nothing there. It was, let's say, a third-rate or fourth-rate hotel.

AB: *Did the Washington Chess Federation existed in 1953?*

VP: Yes, it did. But like I said, tournaments were more local because New York or Los Angeles were unreachable, even if you had the time and inclination. .

AB: *Tell me some stories of the 1955 U.S. Junior championship tournament?*

VP: Bobby was 12 at the time. By the time he was 15, he was not only the US champion but also competing for World Championships and so on. However, in that particular tournament, he drew most of his games. He was by himself and stayed with the tournament organizer's family. His mother told him on the telephone to keep going to San Diego to another tournament, but he was reluctant; he really didn't want to. That's another two or three days on the bus.

AB: *Did you had any interaction with Bobby Fischer beside the game?*

VP: Only in the sense that, you know, after hours we would be at the tournament organizer's home, and well, there wouldn't be any video games in those days. We probably played poker or something like that, and Bobby was sitting on the floor analyzing on his little chess set because he was younger than the rest of the people. Matter of fact, you know, there are stories like when he was between 12 and 15 and going to these tournaments, he didn't fit in well with people that were a few years older, so, you know, there were fights and crying.

AB: *What was Fischer's reaction after he lost the game? Did he cry? Did you analyze the game with him?*

VP: No, he didn't cry, but he looked like he might be close to that. He was down. And of course, I get the opportunity to rub it in, you know, and said, 'Your pawn, the black pawn, was on h3, and when you captured it, I could put my queen on the h-file, exchange queens, and win material. But if you had played king g1, drawn the pawn to h2, and then went to h1, that would not have happened.' Well, this is not a good analysis. It's an attempt to rub it in again! He did sign his score sheet. So yes, he's not illiterate, but it was in block letters!

AB: *When did you first go to The Last Exit on Brooklyn?*

VP: It would probably be around 1965 or 1970; that's roughly when the University District had... when the university didn't own all the property around there. So, you could have small businesses and small landholdings, and private houses, and so

on. By that time, I already had a job in Kitsap County, which is where I live now. So, you know, I would drive in and out just to go to The Last Exit to play chess. It was not a chess club, but it was kind of a hangout where all kinds of people went. You know, some that were activists, some that were stoners, and some that were professors.

AB: *I know Yasser Seirawan used to play a lot in The Last Exit, can you share some stories about him at the Exit?*

VP: Well, mainly we had an in-crowd; we knew each other, you know. Then all of a sudden, Yasser shows up, and he rides a bicycle in from Garfield High School, and he wants to play. Again, just like when there's an age difference, you kind of tease the person: 'Did you hear something? Was it under a table?' You know, 'Is there somebody under a table making comments about the game?' (laughs). But he was not offended. He was a nice kid, and so he simply, you know, learned what he could on the spot.

AB: *So you were kind of like his coach, in a sense, right?*

VP: We played probably more games than he has played with anybody else, and I probably have more wins against Yasser than anybody else has against him. But this was simply when he was moving up.

AB: *So, were these like blitz games?*

VP: Well, yes, there were clock games going on. There were some tournament games. As a matter of fact, there was one tournament in a state championship where everybody was like, 'Ah... Yasser, young prodigy!' you know, and paying a lot of attention to him. So, when it was my turn to play Yasser, I pretended to be half asleep and decrepit and kind of out of it, just to give him a contrast.

AB: *I heard a story where you hid the State Championship trophy after some disagreement. Do you mind sharing that story?*

VP: Well, they (WCF) had an activity requirement, and you had to play three tournaments in Washington state. I had played two tournaments and played to represent the state of Washington up in BC, a state versus province match, and they didn't count that. They said that I

was disqualified because I had not met the activity requirement. I said, 'Okay, well, this probably would be '89,' which is, I think, the last time I won the state championship. So I said, 'If that's the case, you're not going to get your trophy back.' Eventually, cooler heads intervened about a year later or thereabouts, and so on. But in the meantime, yes, I had put the trophy in a plastic bag, and it was on an island in the Anacortes city forest lands in a lake.

AB: *I heard some interesting stories of you and Jim McCormick from back in the days. Do you mind sharing some stories about your relationship with him?*

VP: Well, he had a way of commenting on games because he would play the Sicilian Defense, and I would play long endgames, you know. So, he'd come back or come around from time to time and make a comment like, "So this is what he has come to after 40 moves of playing," and things like that, you know. So, I complained to the tournament director. No action was taken because I felt there was prejudice. On a couple of occasions, I would simply wait when there was no action by the tournament director. The next time this happened on Sunday at that round, I would hit him! But I would hit him at a particular moment when Bob Lundin, who is about as big as you or bigger, was close by and could separate us immediately so he couldn't hit back. There were several occasions like that because, after all, I feel that if you've exhausted the legal defenses, what else is left?

AB: *So this physical altercation happened during ongoing games?*

VP: Yes, during a tournament and while games were going on. There was one time the tournament was at the YMCA and was on the sixth floor, so between moves, I went down in an elevator and got a cup of coffee. Then I found out the elevator was not working, so I had to walk up six flights to get to the tournament room. Then I found out McCormick was holding the elevator door open. Well, there were incidents like that, you know. In the interest of fair play, what I like to do is exhaust the legal defenses, you know, and complain about it and see if there's any action. Just like, you know, if something happened to you, you'd probably call the police. If the police don't act, you call the mayor. If the mayor doesn't act, you go to

the hospital, and you have to wait for nine hours or something like that. Well, in that case, it's basically up to you.

AB: *Did you play any famous players over the years you can share?*

VP: Over the years, I have played in 24 states and in four foreign countries. So, I've been to a lot of places to play chess. Matter of fact, the most interesting one might be... usually, I would leave work on Friday early afternoon and get back Monday early afternoon, and in the meantime, I could be anywhere. One time, I looked at the tournament calendar and had a choice of Berkeley or Muskogee, Oklahoma. Well, Berkeley is full of all kinds of zombies walking the streets and talking to themselves, but Muskogee, Oklahoma, well, that sounds good because there was a hit song at that time: "I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee, a place where even squares can have a ball, they still drink white lightning by the courthouse," and so on, you know. So, it was kind of like a counterculture against hippies. So yeah, Muskogee, yes, and yes, I went there, played in the tournament, and got back on Monday to go to work.

AB: *But did you play anyone famous like Mikhail Tal?*

VP: No, but I did play Viktor Korchnoi and, well, all the US Masters. There were three "B's" — Arthur Bisguier, Pal Benko, and Robert Byrne. I've beaten two of them, but not Robert Byrne. There were other grandmasters that I have played over the years, like Walter Browne. I didn't win all my games, but I have a win and several draws against Browne. I played Korchnoi just a few years ago in Las Vegas. I had gone canyoneering, hiking in the Grand Canyon, and took a first-round bye. I expected to be around board 40, but to my surprise, when I dragged myself in, I was on board one against Korchnoi. He had drawn in round one, and his contract said that no matter how he was doing, he was playing on board one. So, that's when I had to play Korchnoi. I didn't last very long.

AB: *You once mentioned your wife met Garry Kasparov. Do you mind sharing that story?*

VP: Well, she manages to make friends with everybody and talks to everybody, you know, and I guess that draws them



out because Kasparov does not have a good reputation in conversation. Yet, you know, while I was playing chess, she had engaged him in a conversation because she asked him if his application for Latvian citizenship had come through. He had left Russia and was looking to acquire a residence permit someplace else, in some other country. He said no, they had been dragging their feet, so he got Croatian residency and maybe citizenship. They went on from that, they had a long talk.

AB: *Many people ask, "How do you keep going? How is that possible? Is it some kind of genetic thing? What do you say to that? Your chess games are always long, lasting five or six hours. How do you manage it?"*

VP: Well, basically, we are in this world for the long run. I prefer one job, one marriage partner, and so on, living in the same place. That's about the way I play chess. Now, I'm a little more scatterbrained than that, but generally speaking, yes, I would play very solid and lengthy games.

AB: *Speaking of your marriage partner, do you mind sharing how you met your wife?*

VP: Well, she worked at The Last Exit, and from time to time, when I was there, I knew her enough to say hello. Then one day in Kitsap County, she walked into my business looking for a job. She wasn't living with much money, and I took one look at her and said, "Oh! I know who you are, you're hired!" You could do that back then. This was in 1974. Shortly thereafter, I found out that if I was getting any kind of feedback from the boss or some kind of undermining, she was protecting me.

As I said, she's a religious person and has her own way of doing things. Particularly, there was one time when I was in the store with a security guy to put in cameras, and she showed up for work early and found the door locked. She knew I was in there, and the security guy said, "Go get rid of her, tell her to come back later." So I did that, and within the next five minutes, the telephone rang, and she said, "I know you're in the store and not by yourself. There's somebody else in the store with you. Tell me what's going on, or I'm going to call the police." The security guy said to let her in because she was doing the right

thing. There were other incidents similar to that.

So basically, over time, although we were married to other people at the time, I knew who I could count on and rely on. When you're 18 or so, you don't have a record of what people are like, but later on in life, you do, and you know who you can count on. So eventually, I would have walked on hot coals for her.

AB: *Coming back to chess, a lot of young people nowadays depend on computer analysis. You're from a different generation when there was no Stockfish, no Komodo, or anything like that. What do you have to say to the younger generation that always depends on chess engines?*

VP: It's fine. You know that way they can get stronger faster, and they can probably pick up in six weeks what might have taken me six years to do, because I'm entirely self-taught.

AB: *So, you support that way of learning?*

VP: Just the way it is. Doesn't matter, that is the way it is. And so, you have to deal with things the way they are. Yes, the net result is that you can see that people don't leave pieces hanging, and they have some positional understanding. They are stronger than the average field would have been years ago. This is good because when I was in school, a teacher said that if you can get knights, bishops, and rooks to act in harmony, it is a transferable skill. It's like apples and oranges; if you can do that, you can use similar skills or a similar way of thinking in other fields of life.

AB: *Growing up did you have any favorite chess book that inspired you?*

VP: Not really. Basically, I'm self-taught, and I like to experiment, like I wonder where this goes. Say you're driving on a forest service road, and there's a fork in the road; you wonder where it goes. Sometimes, to your detriment, sometimes things don't work out that well, but you're satisfying your curiosity. That's what it's all about—curiosity. Computers and artificial intelligence can tell you what's already there, but they don't give you room for creativity.

AB: *Do you have any message for the younger generation who want to improve their chess or have a long chess career like you?*

VP: If you enjoy doing it, go ahead and do it. If you switch to something else later in life, enjoy doing that and do whatever is possible for you. Because, like I said, when I came to this country, there was no networking, there was no air traffic—I mean, it's a different world. You make do with what you've got the best you can.

AB: *How would you want your legacy to be remembered?*

VP: No reason to do that. The good that people do is often interred with their bones; the evil lives on after them. (laughs)

AB: *Before I end the interview, I wanted to ask you: What do you think of the current World Championship? Do you follow top-level chess?*

VP: I do, but there's too much of it because I always find the same names. There's a group of about ten or 20 people at the top, and they keep playing each other all the time. Well, you know, just think if it was like that in football—the 49ers and Chiefs played each other every weekend. After a while, it gets kind of... you can't follow it all because there's too much to follow. That's another problem with the computers and everything like that—there is too much information.

AB: *Uncle Vik, thank you for the interview. It's been really great. Before we end, do you have anything else to say, like any message or anything?*

VP: Well, keep your chin up, stay out of trouble, and be polite.



Viktors Pupols. Photo credit: Ani Barua.



# 2024 Reykjavik Open

*(with annotated games by David Zhou, Kai Pisan,  
and Emerson Wong-Godfrey)*

**David Zhou**



*The playing hall comfortably fit over 400 players in a bright and spacious venue.  
Photo credit: Emerson Wong-Godfrey.*

The 2024 Reykjavik Open is a nine-round Swiss open that was held March 14-21 in Reykjavik, Iceland. It is the 35th installment of this annual open tournament that started in 1964 as an elite round robin won by former world champion Mikhail Tal.

This year's event had over 400 participants and was held in the beautiful Harpa Concert Hall in downtown Reykjavik. Atop the initial seeding were super GMs Bogdan-Daniel Deac (the eventual winner) and the legend Vasyil Ivanchuk. Three Washington players (Emerson Wong-Godfrey, Kai Pisan, and I, David Zhou) made the 7.5 hour non-stop flight through the Arctic Circle to play in this international event featuring players from nearly 50 countries. We will

each present an annotated game.

Overall, the tournament was very well-organized, with great attention to detail. High quality pens and bottled Icelandic water were provided to players throughout the event. The venue had abundant natural light streaming in through floor to ceiling windows overlooking the Faxa Bay. Furthermore, all boards featured player name cards, with the player's rating and federation country flag, so players could feel like they were playing on the big stage even on the last boards.

Whereas many tournaments in the US try to cram five to seven rounds of classical chess into a two- or three-day weekend, the Reykjavik Open schedule

allowed players ample time to prepare between rounds, relax, and explore the beautiful volcanic scenery of Iceland (including the many natural volcanic hot springs within a short drive of the city). Most days only had a single round in the afternoon, though two double-round days kept the tournament to a manageable seven days between start and end. On single-round days, side events were organized, such as trivia night, a blitz tournament, and a full-day guided tour of the Golden Circle.

An opening party was held on the evening prior to the first round, allowing players to socialize and familiarize themselves with the venue. I even had the opportunity to test Ivanchuk with a mind-boggling tactic from one of my games



(which I needed the engine to point out in analysis).

**(WFM) Erin Bian (1994) –**

**David Zhou (1963) [C97]**

WA State Championship Premier  
Seattle, WA (R9), February 20, 2023



Black to play and win. Test yourself against a former world number two, who had under ten minutes to consider the above position.

**1...Qxe5!**

After only five minutes of thought, Ivanchuk correctly pointed out that the knight can be taken. In the game, I played ...Bd6 after a seven-minute think and won in 77 moves.

**2.Bf4 a3!!**

The point of the queen sacrifice and the only winning move. Ivanchuk had suggested other interesting options such as ...Bd6 and ...Qxf4, where Black has decent compensation, but White is much better.

**3.Bxe5 axb2 4.Bc2 bxa1Q 5.Qxa1 bxc2 6.Bxb8 Rxb8 7.Rc1 Ba4**

With three minor pieces for the queen, material is roughly level, however, White will pay dearly to prevent the c2–pawn from queening.

**0–1**

This international event was an excellent opportunity to play stronger opposition, especially against the 2250+ FIDE range, which is often unrepresented in the Washington tournament scene. Personally, despite playing nearly 100 classical games in the past few years, during this tournament I faced my four(!) highest-rated opponents since 2018 and managed a score of +1=2-1. The following is the last of those games.

**(IM) Benjamin Haldorsen (2426) –**  
**David Zhou (1954) [B44]**

Reykjavik Open

Reykjavik (R8), March 20, 2024

[David Zhou]

In the eighth round, I faced my strongest opponent of the tournament, an IM with a peak rating of 2477. This was my first time playing an IM in classical time controls and to add to the challenge, I had the black pieces against a player who has assayed nearly every reasonable first move.

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Bf4!?**

My opponent delivers the first surprise of the game. He had previously played several topical lines in both the open and closed Sicilians, but I was already on my own as early as move five. 5.Nc3 Nf6 6.Bf4 is a similar new idea that offers White a fresh position.

**5...Qf6**

5...Qb6?? 6.Nb5 e5 7.Be3 Qd8 8.N1c3 a6 9.Nd5! is a typical way for Black to immediately lose on the dark squares.; 5...d6!? 6.Nb5 (6.Nc3 e5 7.Nxc6 bxc6=; 6.Nb3 Nf6= A Scheveningen position with Bf4 can't be bad for Black.) 6...e5 7.Be3 Nf6=

**6.Be3 Bc5 7.c3 Nge7!?**

My move invites White to change the character of the position.

**8.Nb5!?**

White gains a strong outpost on d6 and stifles Black's queenside development, but in exchange, gives up the e5–outpost and central pawn flexibility.

**8...Bxe3 9.Nd6+ Kf8 10.fxe3 Ne5**

10...Ng6 11.Be2 Qe5 12.Na3± with Nac4 coming next, White retains an iron grip on d6.

**11.Nd2**



Position after 11.Nd2

**11...h5!?**

A useful move that supports a later ...Ng4, helps activate the uncastled kingside rook, and prevents any ideas of g2–g3.

**12.N2c4!?**

The knight will prove to be unstable on c4. 12.Nf3! Ng4 (12...N7c6 13.Be2 Nxf3+ 14.gxf3 Qh4+ 15.Kd2+- is an even worse position with queens still on the board.; 12...Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Qh4+ 14.Kd2 Nc6 15.Kc2 Qf2+ 16.Qe2 Qxe2+ 17.Bxe2 Ke7 18.Rad1+- is a very tough endgame for Black after White's doubled pawns have been fixed.) 13.Qd2 Qh6 14.Ke2 h4 (14...Nc6? 15.h3+-) 15.h3 Nf6± Black retains good counterplay on the dark squares despite White's strong outpost.

**12...N7c6 13.Qd2?**

13.Be2 Nxc4! (13...Qg5?! 14.0-0 (14.Qd2 Qxg2 15.0-0-0 Nxc4 16.Nxc4 Qxe4 17.Qd6+ Kg8 18.h4!± Despite Black's two extra pawns, his path to completing development remains unclear. In the meantime, White has easy moves to increase pressure on Black's king.) 14...f6 (14...Ke7? 15.Nf3+!+-) 15.Rf4 h4 Black will struggle to develop his queenside, but he is not without counterplay on the kingside.) 14.Bxc4 Qh4+! provoking a weakening of the light squares and a hook for a future h5–h4 before pivoting to the queenside. 15.g3 Qd8 16.Rf1 f6 17.Qd2 Qc7 18.0-0-0 Ke7 19.Nb5 Qb8= Black's king may look vulnerable on e7, but his excellent control of the dark squares and the outpost on e5 offer him a very solid position.

**13...Qh4+! 14.Kd1**

The only move. Any queen trade will allow Black to comfortably park his king on e7 and slowly develop the queenside.

**14...Ng4**



Position after 14...Ng4

**15.Kc2**

15.g3!? An engine move that attempts



David Zhou. Photo credit Hallfríður Sigurðardóttir.

to counter Black's main idea on the next move. However, it is difficult to weaken one's own kingside and give Black counterplay with h5-h4. The struggle remains highly dynamic after 15...Qg5 16.h3 b5! 17.hxg4 bxc4 18.Bxc4 Ne5 19.Be2 Nxg4

### 15...b5!!

The star move of the game without which Black's queen and knight sortie would simply be beaten back with a quick Be2 and Rf1. Black's main goal is to achieve Qh4-f2 without allowing White to avoid the trade of queens. 15...Qf2? accomplishes nothing after 16.Be2+-

### 16.Na3

16.Nxb5? Nf2 17.g3 Qxe4+ 18.Bd3 Qxd3+ 19.Qxd3 Nxd3 20.Kxd3 d5! ♣; 16.g3!? My opponent spent nearly 30 minutes trying to make tactics work in this line, but it would have been more effective a move prior. 16...Qg5 17.h4 (17.h3 Nf6 18.Na3 a6 19.Bg2 Ne5 20.Raf1 Ne8! ♣ If White does not voluntarily exchange knights, Black will break the blockade with Ke7 next.) 17...Qc5 18.b4 Nxb4+ 19.cxb4 Qc6 20.e5 bxc4 21.Bg2 Qa4+-+ is a sample line that my opponent was looking at that we discussed in post mortem.

### 16...Qf2

The safe and simple approach. Black's position will be more comfortable after

queens come off. 16...a6!? leaves Black with active pieces but allows White to keep queens on the board.

### 17.Naxb5?!

17.Bxb5 It made more sense to activate White's last piece. 17...Nxe3+ 18.Kc1 Qxd2+ 19.Kxd2 Ng4 (19...Nxg2?? taking the pawn will lead to trouble. 20.Raf1 f6 21.Bxc6 dxc6 22.Nxc8 Rxc8 23.Rhg1 Nh4 24.Rf4+-) 20.Bxc6 dxc6 21.h3 Ne5 22.Nac4=

### 17...Nxe3+

17...Ke7! A highly instructive move that makes clear that White has no good way to improve his position or avoid the queen trade. 18.Be2 Nxe3+ 19.Kc1 f6 ♣

### 18.Kc1 Ng4?!

18...Qxd2+ 19.Kxd2 Ng4 20.Be2 Nge5 ♣ is also very comfortable.

### 19.Be2 Qe3

19...Qxg2 My opponent thought I could take this pawn, but I didn't seriously consider it as the game quickly enters far more double-edged territory. 20.Rf1 Nce5 21.Nc7 Rb8 22.Nxe6+ dxe6 23.Nxf7 Qxf1+ 24.Bxf1 Nxf7! (24...Kxf7? 25.h3 Nf6 26.Qf4+-) 25.Qd4! Black's lack of coordination and weak king provide White great chances despite the nominal material deficit.

### 20.h3 Qxd2+ 21.Kxd2 Nge5 22.Ke3

22.g3?! This strategically desirable move, preventing Black from fixing the kingside pawns as weaknesses, wastes a valuable tempo and allows Black to break the blockade on d6. 22...Ke7 23.Rad1 a6 24.Nc7 Ra7 25.Nxc8+ Rxc8 26.Nxa6 Rca8 27.Nc5 Rxa2.

### 22...h4!? 23.b4 Ke7 24.Rhd1 Ba6

24...a5!? My opponent was concerned about this move, but it allows him to immediately force a repetition. 25.Nc7 (25.Nxc8+?! This attempt to play on leads to trouble. 25...Rhxc8 26.Nd6 Rc7 27.b5 Nd8 (27...Na7! is even more accurate, with the point that 28.b6 is met by 28...Rxc3+ 29.Kd4 Rc2 30.bxa7 Kxd6!-+) 28.a4 Rb8+- My opponent correctly assessed in this position that his protected passer is securely blocked and that I'll soon break the blockade on d6.) 25...Ra7 26.Ncb5 Ra8 27.Nc7=

### 25.a4 Rh6 26.Rab1

Freeing the c-pawn to advance. 26.Nxa7!? Rxa7 27.b5 Rg6 28.Kf2 Rg3 29.bxa6 Ra8 30.Rac1 g5= It's difficult for either side to make active plans here.

### 26...Rg6 27.Kf2 Rg3 28.c4 Rb8!

White is nearly in zugzwang, but both players were approaching time trouble at this point with a dozen moves to go.

### 29.c5 Bb7?!

29...g5! This is another instructive squeezing move that highlights White's lack of active plans.

### 30.Nd4 Nxd4

After this exchange, we were both down to less than five minutes to make the remaining ten moves.

### 31.Rxd4 Ba8 32.b5?! Rc3 33.b6



Position after 33.b6

### 33...Bc6?

With only a few minutes to make time control, I miss a simple tactic to reach a technically winning endgame. 33...axb6!



34.cxb6 (34.Rxb6 Rf8+ or any other rook move; c5 will fall next.) 34...Rc6 I missed this fork, picking up a pawn. 35.Nc4 Nxc4 36.Rxc4 Rxc6 37.Rxb6 Rxb6 38.a5 Rb2+

### 34.Nb5 Rxc5?

34...Bxb5! Having missed the simpler win on move 33, I was unlikely to find this more hidden win. 35.Rxb5 a6 36.Rb2 Rxc5 37.Bxa6 Nc6!+ The point is that after the rook retreats, Rc5-a5 will force the win of one of the queenside pawns.

### 35.Nxa7 Ra5 36.Nxc6+ Nxc6

The dust has settled and White's connected passers are firmly blockaded, however, Black has no realistic plan to apply any further pressure on them. 36...dxc6! is another way to keep the game going. White's pawns are firmly blockaded, and he must contend with ideas of Nd7 and Kd8-c8-b7, attempting to win the b-pawn. A sample line if White decides to sit still is: 37.Rdb4 Nd7 38.Ke3 Kd8 39.Bd3 Kc8 40.Be2 Kb7 41.Bd3 Rba8+

### 37.Rc4 Ne5 38.Rcb4 Nc6 39.Rc4 Ne5 40.Rcb4 Nc6

Having made the time control, I realized there were no more winning chances to pursue.

### 41.Rc4 Ne5



Position after 41...Ne5

With this draw, I ended the Reykjavik Open with my personal best rating performance to date (over 2300 against an average opposition of 2200) and the prize for third highest performance of the tournament. 41...f6!? My opponent thought that I should continue to play on without risk, but I didn't see how I would create any real play. 42.Ke3 Ne5 43.Rcb4 Kd8 44.Kf2 White will always have a timely check when Black tries to cross the c-file. 44...Kc8 45.Rc1+ Kd8 46.Rcb1=

1/2-1/2



Kai Pisan visiting Bobby Fischer's grave. Photo courtesy of Kai Pisan.

**Kai Pisan (1897) –  
Thomas Stenzel (2175) [E62]**  
Reykjavik Open  
Reykjavik (R9), March 21, 2024  
[Kai Pisan]

This was the last round of the Reykjavik Open tournament, held in Iceland. All the games were played with a time control of 90 minutes, 30 second increment and a special delay of 30 minutes on the 40th move. So far, I had a score of 4.0/8 and was gaining 20 FIDE rating points. Going into the final round I was rated 1897 and I recall my opponent being about 2100. This game was a must win for me, because I would get 33 rating and achieve 1950. This mattered for a future tournament I wanted to play in. I hope you enjoy the analysis!

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 d6 4.Bg2 Bg7**

### 5.Nc3 0-0 6.Nf3 c6 7.e4 Qa5!?

The first move away from my theoretical knowledge. I expected 7...Bg4 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 with an attacking game ahead.

### 8.0-0 Qh5 9.Nd2?!

Better was 9.e5 dxe5 10.Nxe5 Qxd1 11.Rxd1 where White has a significantly better position.

### 9...e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.a3 Na6 12.b4 Nc7 13.Bb2 Rd8

I had to trade queens here and the engine agrees, giving a slight advantage to Black with other moves. Previously, I hoped for Black to trade and activate one of my rooks.

### 14.Qxh5 Nxh5 15.Rfd1 Be6 16.b5?!

This is a very dubious move by me. I was trying to open up the position, but in

doing so went against some of the plans in these structures. It was important to wait with something like 16.Bf1, but I was impatient.

#### 16...Bh6

The best move and causing practical problems. I was lucky I had the following sequence of moves.

#### 17.Nf3 f6 18.Bf1 Bf8 19.Kg2

The struggle here was finding a plan for White. I didn't see any easy way, without conceding something to Black.

#### 19...Ng7 20.a4 Bf7 21.Ne1 Nge6 22.Nc2 Nd4 23.Rac1 Nce6.

This position is very hard to play for White, and Black is better. I had come to terms with defending the position for a while.

#### 24.Ne3 Rd7 25.Ne2 Rad8 26.Nxd4 exd4 27.Ng4 Bg7

Even though the position is more simplified, my pieces are still badly placed and pushed back.

#### 28.f3 Nc5 29.Ra1 f5 30.exf5 gxf5 31.Nf2 d3 32.Bxg7 Kxg7 33.Rac1 Rd4



Position after 33...Rd4

My opponent is doing a great job converting the advantage, and the computer is showing -2 on depth 25. This, of course, is a human game though, so he still must play accurately.

#### 34.bxc6 bxc6 35.Rc3 Bxc4 36.a5 R8d7 37.Nh3 Na4 38.Ra3 Nb2 39.Rd2 Rb7 40.Nf4 Kf6 41.Kf2 Ba6 42.Rc3 Bc4

This move throws away most of the advantage for Black and doesn't have any clear follow-up.

#### 43.Ke3?

My move gives all the advantage back, but from a human perspective I think it's reasonable. Black is still much better.

#### 43...c5 44.Nxd3 Re7+ 45.Kf2 Nxd3+ 46.Bxd3 Red7 47.Ke3+

This is almost -3 and the position is simple enough to be relatively easily converted into a win for Black.

#### 47...Ba6?

A serious mistake by Black that allows Bxf5! and fighting chances for White.

#### 48.Bxa6??

A massive blunder by me, -5 evaluation. During the game, I thought c4 was a threat and completely missed Bxf5.

#### 48...Rxd2?!

This move still holds the advantage, but my coach pointed out when reviewing the game that the position was still complex. Although 48...Re7+! more easily converts the game.

#### 49.Rxc5 Rxh2??

A blunder by my opponent that brings this back-and-forth game to equal.

#### 50.Bd3 f4+ 51.gxf4 h5 52.Rc6+ Kg7 53.Rg6+ Kf8 54.Rh6 h4 55.f5 Ra2 56.Be4 Rxa5 57.Rxh4=

The computer is showing a dead draw on depth 46. Practically speaking, only White has chances here. In the game, I remember thinking this was a draw and I wouldn't be able to win, so I offered two draws about ten moves apart.

#### 57...Rd6 58.Rh8+ Kg7 59.Ra8 Ra1 60.Kf4 Rd7 61.Kg5 Rg1+ 62.Kf4 Kf7 63.Bc2 Rc7 64.Be4 Rd7 65.Bc2 Ke7 66.Ke5 Re1+ 67.Be4 Kf7 68.Rh8=

There was lots of shuffling by both sides. I think my opponent was also struggling to realize that this wasn't winning for him.

#### 68...Re7+ 69.Kf4 Kg7 70.Ra8 Rh1 71.Kg5 Rg1+ 72.Kf4 Rg2 73.Bd5



Position after 73.Bd5

#### 73...Rd2??

The decisive mistake by him and the first time in the game I was much better (+5).

#### 74.Rg8+ Kh7 75.f6

This position is too simple for me to mess up and I had plenty of time.

#### 75...Rd4+ 76.Kg3 Rd7 77.f7 Rxf7 78.Bxf7 Rd1

78...Rd7 would have been a better try by him, but ultimately the same result.

#### 79.Ra8

White wins. With this unexpected win, I gained 33 FIDE rating and got to 1950. This qualified me for a subsequent tournament's higher section. Overall, a very back-and-forth game that ended my tournament on a spectacular note.

#### 1-0

### Rohilla Shivika (2003) – Emerson Wong-Godfrey (1799) [E90]

Reykjavik Open  
Reykjavik (R8), March 20, 2024  
[Emerson Wong-Godfrey]

This tournament was probably the best tournament I have ever had, having 5.0/9 and a performance of over 2100. I also got a chance to play the famous streamer and chess celebrity Dina Belenkaya. This game was the best game I played in the tournament. I was playing Black against a WFM in round eight of the Reykjavik Open. I hope you enjoy!

#### 1.Nf3

I prepped against my opponent before this tournament and I saw that she played many different openings in the past, such as d4 and e4 and Nf3. I decided it wasn't worth my time to prepare all of these openings and just play some chess.

#### 1...Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4

Rats! My opponent had forced me to play into a King's Indian Defense, a defense I have never even played before. Well, this will be interesting.

#### 4...d6 5.d4 0-0 6.h3 Nbd7 7.Be3 e5 8.d5 a5 9.a3 b6?!

My point with pushing my pawn to b6 is to—at some point—have a reasonable place to develop my light-squared bishop, but this plan is too slow.

#### 10.b4?

10.g4! A prophylactic move! Black's dreams of playing ...f5 one day is severely crushed. White has many plans of rolling the pawns and starting a decisive attack. 10...a4 11.Nd2 Nc5 12.f3 Nfd7 13.h4 and White is ready to begin the attack.



10...Ne8 11.g3 f5 12.Bg2 Ndf6 13.b5?

Personally, I think this deserves a question mark because White locks up the queenside, which was a place to counterattack Black's kingside advance. Furthermore, White opens up a possible outpost on c5 that can be used in the future.

13...Nxe4 14.Nxe4 fxe4 15.Ng5 Nf6 16.g4 Bd7



Position after 16...Bd7

17.Nxe4??

The first big error. 17.Ne6! waiting to take the pawn was a better choice. After 17...Bxe6 18.dxe6 Qe7 19.g5! Nh5 20.Bxe4 Rae8 21.h4. It is now clear that White is the one with the advantage. The light-squared bishop is deadly, and the pawn cannot be taken because of Bd5! winning the queen and the game.

17...Nxe4 18.Bxe4 Qh4!

The only move to maintain the advantage in this position. Black is now threatening to play a positional masterpiece.

19.Qd2 Rf4!!



Position after 19...Rf4

We sacrifice THE ROOK!!

20.Bxf4 exf4

Now the dark-squared bishop has opened its eyes on the long diagonal.

21.Ra2

Also possible was 21.0-0-0 Qf6! 22.Bb1



Emerson Wong-Godfrey. Photo credit Hallfríður Sigurðardóttir.

Rf8 23.a4 Qa1 24.Qa2 Qc3+ 25.Bc2? f3. The dynamic play between the dark-squared bishop and the queen is worth more than the exchange.

21...Re8 22.Qe2 h5 23.Kf1 Bf5!!



Position after 23...Bf5

Yet another sacrifice!

24.gxf5 25.Rg1?? gxh5

White now crumbles. Being low on time and having to defend an unstoppable attack, it is understandable to make mistakes. Yet this one decides. Some other possible moves were 25.Bf3! Rxe2 26.Rxe2 a4 27.Re6 Bf6 28.Rg1+ Kh7 29.Ke1 Bc3+

30.Ke2 Bd4=; 25.f3?! A slight inaccuracy, but still possible. 25...fxe4 26.Rg1 (26.fxe4?? f3!-+) 26...Kf8 27.Qg2 Qf6 28.fxe4 f3 29.Qd2 Rxe4=

25...Qxh3+ 26.Bg2 Rxe2 27.Bxh3 Rxa2 28.Bxf5 f3!

White not only loses the pawn on a3, but loses the rook, and with that, the game.

29.Be6+ Kf8

White resigned in view of 30.Ke1 Ra1+ 31.Kd2 Rxe1+

0-1



Don't miss out on the opportunity to make your next move in the game of real estate. Your kingdom awaits!

Contact Lin S. Shih  
(206) 954-0963  
lin@linshih.com

Coldwell Banker Bain

# SEATTLE CLASSIC SCHOLASTIC

## CHESS TOURNAMENT

Sunday, August 18, 2024

Lakeside Upper School

14050 1st Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125



### FORMAT

A 4-round G/45; +5 Swiss in four sections:

**K-3 U800**

**K-3 Open**

**4-8 U1000**

**4-12 Open**

### SCHEDULE

Rd 1 - 9am

Rd 2 - 11am

Lunch Time

Rd 3 - 2pm

Rd 4 - 4pm

Awards ceremony ~ 6pm.

### RATING

Dual US & NWSRS Rated.  
US Chess membership and clocks required in all sections. Notation required in all sections except for K-3 U800. All equipment is provided courtesy of WCF.

### ENTRY FEE

\$45 by August 11, \$55 after. Room for 100 players; please register early to reserve your spot.

### AWARDS

Amazon Gift Cards awarded in each section:

1<sup>st</sup> \$80

2<sup>nd</sup> \$70

3<sup>rd</sup> \$60

4<sup>th</sup> \$50

Special Prizes (per section):  
Medals for first-timers, best female player, and biggest upset win.

### RATING

Highest of US Chess Regular August supplement, or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings.

### ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12 as of the 2023-24 school year. Out-of-state players welcome!

### THE DETAILS

#### Online Registration:

[NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/](http://NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/)

Pay by

Credit/Debit/PayPal/SettleKing.

**100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments.**  
**Entry + payment deadline Sat. Aug 17 @ 5pm.**

No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster and waitlisted players will be offered a spot.

*Highest finishing player in the K-3 Open and 4-12 Open sections will earn free entry into the 2024 SPFNO, set to take place October 25-27 in Bellevue.*

#### Questions?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF  
President at 206.769.3757 or  
[WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com)



# Another Game from Reykjavik

## Sridhar Seshadri

**Sridhar Seshadri (1458) – Benjamin Signoli (1883) [D05]**  
Reykjavik Open  
Reykjavik (R1), March 15, 2024  
*[Ralph Dubisch]*

**1.d4 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.Bd3 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nd2?! e6?!**

White's rather passive treatment of the opening, mostly deferring the development Nf3 or choosing a system with f4 here on move five, allows Black to take the central initiative with 5...e5!

**6.Ngf3 Bd6 7.h3 Qc7 8.0-0 0-0 9.e4 cxd4 10.cxd4 dxe4 11.Nxe4 Be7 12.Bg5 Nxe4 13.Bxe4 Bxg5 14.Nxg5 g6 15.Bxc6 Qxc6 16.Qb3 b6 17.Rac1 Qd6 18.Rfd1 Bb7 19.Qe3 Qd5 20.f3 Qxa2 21.Rc7 Bd5?!**

Black must challenge the knight with 21...h6, when something like 22.Rxb7 hxc5 23.d5!? (23.Qxg5 is also possible.) 23...exd5 24.Qxg5 Qxb2 25.Rxd5 gives White activity for the pawn.

**22.Qf4 Qa4??**

Black had to accept inferiority here after 22...e5 23.Qh4! h5 24.dxe5

**23.Rdc1??**

We'll explain the punctuation on these two moves at the end of the game.

**23...e5 24.Qxe5 Qb3 25.R1c3 Qd1+ 26.Kh2 Rad8 27.Qf6 h6??**

**27...Rde8#**

**28.Nxf7!! Bxf7 29.Rxf7 Rxf7 30.Qxd8+ Kg7 31.Rc8 g5 32.Qh8+ Kg6 33.Rc6+ Kf5 34.Qe5#**

A nice tactic to complete the 400–point upset victory. Looking back at move 23, White missed a similar tactical stunner with 23.Nxf7!! Qxd1+ (23...Qe8 24.Nh6+ Kh8 25.Qe5+) 24.Kh2, and Black cannot avoid mate.

**1–0**



*Photo courtesy of Sridhar Seshadri.*

## Washington Women's Championship



**SAT-SUN, SEPTEMBER 7 - 8, 2024**

**MICROSOFT BUILDING 99 – ROOM 1919**

**14820 NE 36TH ST., REDMOND, WA 98052**

**Info/Entries:** Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757, WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration). Registration and payment **deadline Fri. 9/6 @ 5pm.**

**Eligibility:** Open to all female chess players.

**Memberships:** Current US Chess and WCF membership required, other states accepted. Membership must be paid at time of registration.

**Byes:** Two half-point byes available. If interested, request before end of round 2.

**WA State Elementary Qualifier!**

**Dual Format:** A Swiss-style tournament in three sections. Sections with <6 players may be merged.

**Polgar Championship/ Yifan U1300:**

A 5-Round G/90; +30 Swiss.

**Koneru U700:** A 5-Round G/45; +15 Double Swiss – Play 10 games – 1 as W and 1 as B – vs each opponent.

**Rating:** Dual US Chess and NWSRS rated. Highest of September US Chess or current NWSRS rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

**Entry Fee:** \$50 by 8/31, \$60 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, or US Chess 2000+. Players rated 1200+ and 600+ in both USCF and NWSRS may play up 1 section into the Polgar and Yifan sections, respectively. Maximum of 60 players total and 30 players per section, please register early.

**Rounds:** Sat: 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sun: 10am, 3pm.

**Prize Fund:** \$2,000 (based on 60 pd. entries)

**Polgar Championship:** 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>: \$200-\$150. 1<sup>st</sup> U1800/U1600/U1400: \$100.

**Yifan U1300:** 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>: \$130-\$100. 1<sup>st</sup> U1200/U1000/U800: \$80.

**Koneru U700:** 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>: \$130-\$100. 1<sup>st</sup> U600/U400/U200/Unrated: \$80.

**Special Prizes (per section):** Biggest Upset Win: \$10/rd., Best Dressed: \$10/day, Best Etiquette: \$10, Fair Play/Kindness/Spreading Joy: \$10/day, Best Mother/Daughter Team (by avg TPR, across sections): \$30.

*Highest Finishing WA Resident in the Polgar section becomes WA State Women's Champion and is seeded into 2025 WA State Championship, Invitational section. If there's a tie for 1st place, G/90 playoff games will be played later in the year.*

# 2024 WA vs BC Intermat

*(Team BC Reigns Supreme*

*in 33rd Annual*

*Washington vs British Columbia  
International Scholastic Chess Match)*

**Josh Sinanan**



*The WA vs BC Intermat perpetual trophy chronicles the history of the match.  
The scale has tilted north in recent years. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*



The 33rd Annual Washington vs British Columbia International Scholastic Chess Match, known colloquially as the Intermat, was hosted by WCF at Microsoft Research Building 99 in Redmond on Saturday, April 20, 2024.

This marked the Intermat's return to Washington State since it was last hosted in Seattle in the Amazon Houdini Building in 2019. Microsoft Building 99, which WCF typically rents to host the Washington State Championship in February, served as an excellent venue for the Intermat.

It offered convenient parking, plenty of space for parents to wait and players to rest between games, and a spacious playing room just about the right size for a 50-player event of this size. Private team-rooms for both Team Washington and British Columbia were located a short distance from the playing room, wherein parents could hang out and players could analyze their games between rounds.

Team Washington Co-Captain Chouchan Airapetian and her family organized a delicious lunch and snacks served throughout the day for families on each team to enjoy. As usual, players enjoyed the complimentary cold beverages and coffee available in Building 99, where much of Microsoft's AI research is conducted.

After the welcome and opening remarks from both Team Captains and Tournament Director Jacob Mayer, Team British Columbia presented their players with commemorative trophies, courtesy of the British Columbia Chess Federation Intermat Committee. Team Washington players, on the other hand, had already received their plaques upon qualifying for the Intermat at the Intermat Candidates Tournament, which was held at Lakeside School in Seattle on Saturday, March 2.

Players and captains from both teams picked up their Intermat T-shirts, green for Team Washington and Blue for Team British Columbia, to showcase their team spirit over the course of the match.

Team Washington played White on all boards in the first round and struck early with wins by both Kindergartners, Skyler Qin and Vivaan Sankrithi, in a style that could best be described as "caveman" chess! Other results were the clean 2-0 sweeps in the 12th Grade by NM Jason Yu and Eddie Chang.

# 2024 WA vs BC Intermat Results

Grade	Team WA	NWSRS	Score	Team BC	CFC (*CMA)	Score
K	Skyler Qin	923	1	Ron He	629	1
	Vivaan Sankrithi	859	1	Alvin Zhang	500	1
1	Harvey Wang	1165	1	Jimmy Rao	911	1
	Hengsheen Wang	996	0	Karson Lu	841	2
2	Terrick Evin	1545	1.5	Evan Geng	1066	0.5
	Daniel D Yun	1300	1	Aiden Zhu	1044	1
3	Andy Chen	1552	0.5	Moses Li	1353	0.5
	Samarth Bharadwaj	1444	2	Sky Cui	1010	1
4	Dann Merriman	1656	0.5	Andrew Yin	1515	1.5
	Yuchen Zhou	1558	1.5	Aiden Yin	1513	0.5
5	Odbyar Yondon	1785	1.5	Bowen Wu	1558	0.5
	Aarav B. Mohan	1612	1	Larry, Yang	1363	1
6	Nikhil Ramkumar	1805	1	Zachary Liu	2214	2
	Selina Cheng	1629	0.5	Nathan Yang	1569	0.5
7	Darsh Verma	1821	0	Erwin Mok	1935	1.5
	Shuyi Han	1689	1	Justin Gao	1861	1.5
8	Owen Scollon	1779	1	Justin Xu	1824	2
	Abhinav Mishra	1724	0	Minjun Koo	1735	1
9	Ryan Min	2163	2	Joey Xu	1829	0.5
	Haituka Anandkumar	1579	1	Ryan Yu	1699	0.5
10	Zane Wirkkala	1657	0	Aiden Leong	2103	2
	Sid Siddem	1575	0	Maximilian Mueller	2027	2
11	Atharva Joshi	1799	0	Kaiqi Qin	2147	2
	Sam Maurer	1766	0	Kate Jiang	2096	2
12	Jason Yu	2245	2	Reece Harms	1970	0
	Eddie Chang	2048	2	Joshua Imoo	1698	0
Totals			23			29

Unfortunately, things did not go so well for Team Washington on the middle boards, with Team British Columbia scoring 2-0 sweeps in grades eight, ten, and 11 despite playing the black pieces. Historically, the home team has the advantage in the first round, since they play White on all boards and can attract stronger players to participate without having to brave the three-hour commute, which includes crossing the Canada — USA border.

As Team Washington Co-Captain Chouchan Airapetian reminded the players before play commenced, each move of every game is important in the team format and helps the team. During the team meeting, players were also encouraged to play conservatively and stick with positions and openings that

they know well. A prestigious match such as the Washington vs British Columbia Intermat is not the time to experiment with new opening or risky gambits, which could put the team in jeopardy if things don't work out.

When the dust settled after the first round, Team British Columbia led the match 14-12, and it was clear that Team Washington would need to play catch-up in the second round.

After the lunch break, the second round of play commenced at 2:30PM, with Team Washington playing Black on all boards. Right off the bat, Team British Columbia kindergartners Alvin Zhang and Ron He struck back and scored upset victories against their young counterparts, which signaled difficult times ahead for the Washington team.

The British Columbia Team players came armed with several tricky Queen's Pawn Opening variations, which seemed to catch the Washington players off guard, since many of them are used to only facing the King's Pawn Opening in local competition. The slow, grindy, and strategic approach that Team British Columbia took with the white pieces made it difficult for the Washington players to find winning chances, and several games ended with draws, especially in grades four and five, in which all four games ended peacefully.

Team Washington's woes continued in the high school grades, as Team British Columbia once again swept Team Washington in grade ten and 11 for the second time in a row. Only grades two and 12 proved to be bright spots for Team Washington, with second graders Terrick Evan and Daniel Yun and high school seniors Jason Yu and Eddie Chang scoring convincing 2.0/2 victories against their lower-rated rivals. Team British Columbia's impressive 2.0/2 sweeps in the kindergarten, first grade, tenth grade, and 11th grade sections were the nail in the coffin, leading Team British Columbia to a solid 15-11 victory in the second round and an overall match victory by the score of 29-23.

Congratulations to Team British Columbia on a well-played match and a hard-earned victory! Many of the games amongst the older players went deep into the endgame and could have gone either

way. Both teams showed tremendous fighting spirit, with many players staying until the bitter end to support their teammates and analyze with their opponents.

A short closing ceremony concluded the day's festivities, after which the Team Washington and Team British Columbia captains enjoyed a celebratory dinner at the Cheesecake Factory in Bellevue Square!

Special congratulations to our 2024 Team Washington All Stars, each of whom scored 1.5 or 2.0 points from two games: Terrick Evin, Samarth Bharadwaj, Yuchen Zhou, Odbayar Yondon, Ryan Min, Jason Yu, and Eddie Chang.

It was a pleasure for the Team Washington Captains Josh Sinanan and Chouchan Airapetian to analyze games with the talented players representing Washington state. British Columbia Team Captain Penny Pham and British Columbia Internat TD Long Le followed the match games closely, with many of their students from Penny Chess Club, which they co-founded, taking part in the match.

Congratulations to the players from both teams on an exciting and hard-fought match once again! Team Washington has some work to do in the off-season, and hopefully will return stronger next year, when Team British Columbia hosts the 2025 Internat.



Team BC's Maximilian Mueller (L) vs Team WA's Sid Siddem play alongside fellow tenth graders Aiden Leong (BC) and Zane Wirkkala (WA) during the first round.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

**Jason Yu (2247) –  
Reece Harms (1949) [C58]**  
Internat 33rd Redmond  
(R1), April 20, 2024  
[Ralph Dubisch]

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6**

The Two Knights Defense.

**4.Ng5**



Position after 4.Ng5

Historically, this and 4.d4 were the most common ways to go for White. Nowadays, White tends to essay the more conservative 4.d3, transposing into a very quiet Giuoco Piano (or Pianissimo), and in fact this seems to be the main way to reach these positions, rather than the formerly standard 3...Bc5. However, they all tend to meld back into each other, showing remarkable subtleties revolving around the exact placement of pawns and pieces on both wings.

What I would like to rant about here, though, is the current rage of claiming 4.Ng5 is the Fried Liver Attack. This is historically incorrect. The Fried Liver only arises after 4...d5 5.exd5 Nxd5?? when White sacrifices 6.Nxf7! with a big attack. There are many other named variations surrounding 4.Ng5 that are quite separate from the blunder that leads to the Fried Liver.

**4...d5 5.exd5 Na5!**

I believe this main line is called the Polerio Defense. Other interesting attempts include 5...Nd4, the Fritz Variation, possibly continuing 6.c3 b5 7.Bf1 Nxd5, and 5...b5 The Ulvestad, though due to possible transpositions, these latter two are sometimes combined as the Fritz/Ulvestad. White should not take the pawn, instead continuing 6.Bf1 (6.Bxb5 Qxd5 seems fine for Black.) 6...h6.

**6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Qf3!?**

[Diagram top of next page]

More popular are retreats such as 8.Be2





Position after 8.Qf3

h6 9.Nf3 (9.Nh3!?) 9...e4 10.Ne5; or 8.Bd3 Nd5 9.Nf3 Bd6 10.0-0.

### 8...cxb5!?

The most common move for Black here is 8...Rb8 when 9.Bd3 h6 10.Ne4 Nd5 11.b3 g6 12.Qg3± is complex, but perhaps slightly preferable for White. Simple development with 8...Be7 9.Bd3 (After the greedy 9.Bxc6+ Nxc6 10.Qxc6+ Bd7 11.Qf3 0-0 12.d3, Black takes the

initiative with something like 12...Ng4 13.Nh3 (13.Ne4 f5 14.Nec3 e4!) 13...Rc8 14.Nc3 Rc6, which is certainly more fun to play with Black, despite White's two extra pawns.) 9...0-0 is not at all bad for Black, however. The consensus in most of these Two Knights variations with 4.Ng5 is that Black is at least equal and possibly slightly better, having more than adequate compensation for the pawn. Here White's development lags, and it's hard to coordinate against Black's activity.

### 9.Qxa8 Qc7 10.0-0

Run away! 10.Qf3.

### 10...Nc6 11.Nc3

[Diagram top of next column]

### 11...a6?!

11...Be7! 12.Nxb5 Qd7, and faced with the threat of...0-0 and trapping the queen on a8, White will need to do something radical. 13.Nxa7 Nxa7 14.Qf3 Nc6 leaves two pieces against rook and three pawns.



Position after 11.Nc3

Here the pawns are not yet particularly threatening, and Black's activity suggests the position favors the pieces—but there's still a battle.

### 12.d4 exd4?

12...Bd6 seems necessary, with complex and roughly balanced chances. 13.d5 (13.dxe5 Bxe5 (13...Nxe5 14.Nge4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Be7 16.Nc3± White's queen will find safety, and the extra exchange



Team WA High school seniors Jason Yu and Eddie Chang (L) vs Team BC's Reece Harms and Joshua Imoo.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

matters.) 14.Nge4 Nxe4 15.Nd5 Qb7 16.Qxb7 Bxb7 17.Re1 f5 18.f3 Nd4. does not seem navigable by a human over the board for either side.) 13...Nd4 14.Nge4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 0-0 16.Nxd6 Qxd6 17.Qa7 and Stockfish calls this dead equal.

**13.Bf4!**



*Position after 13.Bf4*

**13...Qd7 14.Nce4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Be7**

Stockfish suggests avoiding White's next move with 15...f5 16.Ng5 Be7 17.Rfe1 h6 18.Ne6±, though White still stands clearly better at the end.

**16.Bd6! 0-0 17.Bxe7 Nxe7 18.Qb8 Qc6 19.Qe5 Nf5 20.Rfe1 Qxc2**

White's queen has escaped the trap, and now the extra exchange should win. If 20...h6, simply 21.Qc5 with near total board control, so Black chooses to grab some pawns.

**21.Rac1 Qxb2 22.Ng5**

Or 22.Ng3! Nxe3 (22...g6 23.Ne4) 23.Rxc8+-

**22...Qb4**



*Position after 22...Qb4*

**23.a3!**

Distracting the queen. Also strong is the (perhaps unnecessarily) complicated 23.Nxf7! h6 (23...Kxf7 24.Rc7+ Kg8 (24...Kg6 25.g4) 25.Rxc8 Rxc8 26.Qe6+ and mates shortly.) 24.Rc7 d3 (24...Kh7 25.Qe4+-) 25.Nxh6+! gxh6 26.Rxc8 Rxc8 27.Qe6+ Kg7 28.Qd7+ Kg6

29.Re6+ Kg5, and now 30.h4+! Kxh4 (30...Qxh4 31.Qxc8 is similarly winning due to the exposed black king.) 31.Qxc8 d2 32.Qd8+ (32.g3+ Nxg3 33.Qd8+ Kh3 34.Rxh6+ Kg4 35.Rh4+ may be even faster.) 32...Kg4 33.f3+ Kf4 34.Qb8+ Kg5 35.Qg8+ Kh4 36.Qd8+ Kg3 37.Rg6+ Kf4 38.Rg4+ Ke5 39.Rxb4+-

**23...Qd2**

23...Qxa3 24.Rxc8 h6 25.Qxf5 hxg5 26.Qd7+-

**24.Nf3 Qa5 25.Rxc8 Qxe1+ 26.Nxe1 Rxc8 27.Qxf5 Rc1 28.Kf1**

**1-0**

**Joshua Imoo (1694) – Jason Yu (2247) [C54]**  
 Internat 33rd Redmond (R2), April 20, 2024  
*[Ralph Dubisch]*

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.d3 Nf6 5.c3 a6 6.0-0 d6 7.Bb3 h6 8.Nbd2 Ba7 9.h3**

Creating a hook for Black to leverage. 9.Re1 g5 (9...Ng4 10.Re2; 9...0-0 10.Nf1± heads back into normal lines.) 10.Nf1 g4 11.N3d2 is roughly equal.

**9...g5!**

Black takes advantage of a highly transpositional move order to expand on the kingside instead of the standard idea of kingside castling. The engine approves.

**10.Nh2 g4 11.hxg4 Rg8 12.g5 Rgx5**

Or 12...hxg5!, eventually advancing the new g-pawn toward g3 to create more kingside weaknesses.

**13.Ndf3 Rh5 14.Be3 Ng4! 15.Nxg4 Bxg4 16.Bxa7**



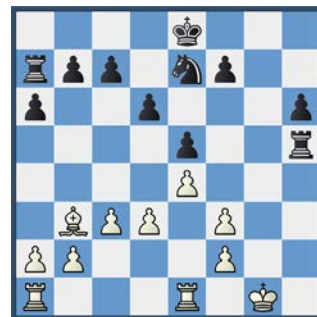
*Position after 16.Bxa7*

**16...Rxa7**

Interestingly, Black doesn't need to recapture this piece right away! Instead, 16...Qf6! 17.Bd5 (17.Be3 0-0-0! 18.Re1

Rg8 19.Kf1 Rh1+ 20.Ke2 Rh2! 21.Rg1 Rxg2! and Black collects interest on the investment.) 17...0-0-0 18.Re1 (18.Bxc6 Bxf3 19.Bxb7+ (19.Qxf3 Qxf3 20.gxf3 Rg8#) 19...Kxb7 20.Qb3+ Kxa7 21.Qc4 Rc8 and the threat of...Qg6xg2# can't be stopped by g3 or Kf1 due to...Rh1#.) 18...Rg8 19.Re3 and only now 19...Nxa7±.

**17.Re1 Qf6 18.Qe2 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Qxf3 20.gxf3 Ne7**



*Position after 20...Ne7*

**21.Kf1?**

White must act quickly in the center before Black locks things down with his knight outpost on f4. 21.f4! Ng6! (21...exf4?! 22.Kg2 Rg5+ 23.Kf3 Ng6 24.Rh1 h5 25.Rag1 Rxg1 26.Rxg1 and White has well-coordinated, active pieces to compensate for a weak extra black pawn.) 22.fxe5 dxe5 23.d4 Nf4± and while not completely thrilled with the position, White has at least avoided the worst of the cramp.

**21...Ng6 22.Ke2 Nf4+ 23.Kd2 Rh3?!**

Black misses an opportunity to force White to misplace a rook. 23...Rh2 24.Rf1 (24.Ke3 Ng2+) 24...Ke7 25.d4 h5 26.Ke3 h4±

**24.Bd1?**

24.Rg1!? aims for activity to compensate for the offered pawns. Is it enough? 24...Rxf3 (24...Kf8 25.Rg3 Rh2 26.Ke3±) 25.Rg7 Rxd3+ (25...Rxf2+ 26.Ke3 Re2+ 27.Kf3 Rxb2 28.Rh1±) 26.Kc2 Rf3 27.Bxf7+ Kf8 28.Rh7 Rxf2+ 29.Kb3 Rg2. and Stockfish suggests Black is ahead by about half a pawn. A quick count shows two extra pawns, suggesting there's significant compensation. Perhaps this was White's best chance to mix it up. (29...c6 30.Rg1 Rg2 31.Rxg2 Nxg2 32.Be6±)

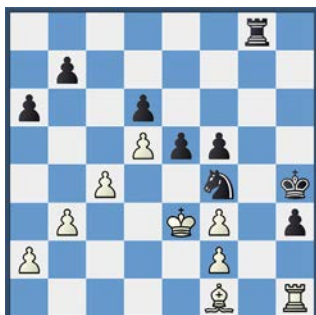
**24...Rh2 25.Rf1 Ke7 26.Ke3 Ra8 27.Bb3 Rg8 28.Rh1 Rxh1 29.Rxh1 h5 30.d4 h4 31.d5 c6 32.c4?**



Better to wait with 32.Kd2 Rg2 33.Ke3. 32...cxd5 33.exd5 f5

33...Rc8!? ties the bishop to the defense of the c-pawn for a while.

34.Bc2 Kf6 35.Bd3 h3 36.b3 Kg5 37.Bf1 Kh4



Position after 37...Kh4

38.Bd3?

Allowing a decisive simplification. Sometimes you just need to wait

passively. 38.Kd2 Rc8 39.Rh2 b6 40.Rh1 a5 41.Rh2 is a computer line, with Stockfish claiming a two-pawn advantage for Black after 41...Kg5 42.Rh1 Rh8 43.Rh2 Rg8. Sure, Black's position looks great... but, how to make progress? That is far from clear.

38...Nxd3! 39.Kxd3 Rg2 40.Ke3

White can make things more exciting with 40.c5, but it doesn't change the evaluation. 40...dxc5 41.Kc4 (41.d6 Rg6!) 41...Rxf2 42.Kxc5 (42.Rd1 Rc2+ 43.Kd3 Rxa2 44.d6 Rg2 45.d7 Rg8 46.Ke3 (46.Kc4 Rd8 47.Kxc5 Kg3 48.Kd6 h2 49.Ke7 Rh8 50.d8Q Rxd8 51.Kxd8 Kxf3+) 46...Rd8 47.Kf2 Kg5 48.Kg3 Kf6 49.Rd5



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Ke6 50.Rxc5 Rxd7+) 42...h2 43.Kd6 Kg3 44.Kxe5 Kxf3 45.d6 Kg2+

40...h2 41.c5 dxc5 42.d6 Kh3 43.d7 Rg8 44.Rd1 Kg2 45.f4 e4 46.Ke2 h1Q 47.d8Q Rxd8 48.Rxd8 Qf1+ 49.Ke3

49.Kd2 Qxf2+

49...Qe1#

0-1



Team Washington (L) in the green alongside Team British Columbia in the blue just outside Microsoft Building 99, the site of the 2024 Internat. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.





# 76th Idaho Open

*(Niall wins again)*

**Jay Simonson**



*Niall McKenzie and Jay Simonson.  
Photo credit: Tilly Backstrom.*



*Back row standing, L-R: Raul Villacorta, Jacob Dickson, David Wilson (standing in front of Jacob) Josh Wilson, Seth Machakos, Niall McKenzie, Josh Price, Zach Fritchen, Cody Gorman, Alexandra Henninger, Paul Debbas, Gary Owen, Robert Otterstein, Manes Cristiano, Frank Albert, Finn Belew, Ryan Reboiro, Tanner Hunter (in front of Ryan); Front Row: sitting: Hans Morrow, Raj Ramirez, Nobel Ang; standing: Tyler Maldonado, Sophie Ma; sitting: Dewayne Derryberry, Jay Simonson.  
Photo credit: Tilly Backstrom.*





Niall McKenzie won from among twenty-four players who came to the Idaho State University, Student Union, Salmon River Suites, in Pocatello, Idaho on June 22, 2024, playing for a chance to win the title of Champion in the 2024 Idaho Open Chess Championship. This was a five-round, Swiss System tournament, directed by veteran tournament director Jay Simonson, from Idaho Falls, Idaho. Tilly Backstrom, who now resides in Boise, Idaho, excellently served as assistant TD. Players came from Idaho, Montana, Utah, and one player came from far away Tennessee.

The challenge began even before the first round, as the parking lot was all torn up and not available, so players had to find parking across the street and wherever there was space. The elevator was also out of service. Despite the parking and elevator challenges, some mix-ups in the registrations, two players with expired or no US Chess memberships, and some last-minute entries, the tournament started on time.

In the last round, Niall McKenzie, 2023 Idaho Open Champion, of Pocatello Idaho, who had 3.5/5 points, played Zachary Fritchen, from Idaho Falls, Idaho, who had 4.0/4 points. Niall was able to pull off the win after 59 moves. This gave Niall 4.5/5 points and the title of 2024 Idaho Open Chess Champion. He received a plaque and \$100.

Zach, Finn Belew, and Cody Gorman all tied for second through fourth place, with four points each. Finn is from Boise, and Cody is from Nampa, Idaho. They each shared part of the combined second and third place combined prize and each received \$33.33. Three players also tied for the Top Under 1400 prize: Tanner Hunter and Ryan Reboiro, from Rexburg, Idaho, and young David Wilson, from Kalispell, Montana. They each received \$13.33.

### Tanner Hunter (1304) – Niall McKenzie (1832) [E11]

76th Idaho Open  
Pocatello, ID (R2), June 22, 2024  
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 Bxd2+ 4...Be7; and 4...Qe7 are more popular choices.

5.Qxd2 0-0

5...d5

6.Bg2 d5 7.Nf3 b6

7...Nbd7 8.0-0 b6 (8...c6 heads in a different direction.) 9.cxd5 exd5 10.Nc3 could transpose.

8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 Nbd7 10.Nc3 Bb7 11.Rac1 Ne4 12.Nxe4

12.Qf4!?±

12...dxe4 13.Ng5

Ne1–c2–e3 was an interesting alternative.

13...Nf6 14.e3

14.Qf4!?

14...Rc8

14...c5!?

15.Bh3?

15.Nh3∞

15...Rb8?!

A missed opportunity based on the lack of retreat squares for the knight on g5: 15...h6! 16.Bxc8 Qxc8, and Black wins material.

16.Bg2 h6 17.Nh3 Qd6 18.Nf4 Rbd8 19.Qc2 Rd7 20.a3 Re8 21.Bh3 Rde7 22.Bg2 Nd5 23.Nxd5 Bxd5 24.Qe2 c6 25.Rc3 b5 26.Rfc1 Qf6 27.Qc2 a6 28.a4 Qd6 29.axb5 axb5 30.Ra3 Rb7 31.Rca1 Rbb8 32.Ra7 Qf8 33.Bh3 Red8?!

33...Re7

## 76th Idaho Open

#	Name	State	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prizes
1	Niall McKenzie	ID	1832	W12	D11	W9	W6	W2	4.5	1st Overall
2	Zach Fritchen	ID	1751	W19	W14	W6	W3	L1	4	2nd-4th (Tie)
3	Finn Belew	ID	1833	W24	W10	W8	L2	W7	4	2nd-4th (Tie)
4	Cody Gorman	ID	1870	L14	W19	W13	W11	W8	4	2nd-4th (Tie)
5	Raul Villacorta	ID	1632	W17	L6	W15	D9	W11	3.5	
6	Josh Price	ID	1926	W13	W5	L2	L1	W14	3	
7	Seth Machakos	ID	1845	W15	L9	W14	W10	L3	3	
8	Ching-E Nobel Ang	ID	1567	W21	W22	L3	W12	L4	3	
9	DeWayne Derryberry	ID	1531	W18	W7	L1	D5	-H-	3	
10	Paul Debbas	TN	1435	W23	L3	W20	L7	W15	3	
11	Tanner Hunter	ID	1355	W20	D11	W22	L4	L5	2.5	Top U1400
12	David Wilson	MT	771	L14	W21	W16	L8	D13	2.5	Top U1400
13	Ryan Reboiro	ID	1257	L6	W23	L4	W20	D12	2.5	Top U1400
14	Josh Wilson	MT	1149	W4	L2	L7	W19	L6	2	
15	Jacob Dickson	UT	995	L7	W18	L5	W16	L10	2	
16	Gary Owen	ID	1467	L22	W17	L12	L15	W19	2	
17	Tyler Maldonado	ID	365	L5	L16	W21	L18	W24	2	
18	Robert Otterstein	ID	Unr.	L19	L15	L19	W17	W20	2	
19	Raj Ramirez	ID	512	L22	L4	W18	L14	L16	1	
20	Alexandra Henninger	ID	785	L11	W24	L10	L13	L18	1	
21	Frank Albert	ID	Unr.	L8	L12	L17	D24	-H-	1	
22	Hans Morrow	UT	1900	W16	L8	L11	---	---	1	
23	Cristiano Manes	ID	Unr.	L10	L13	W24	---	---	1	
24	Sophie Ma	ID	782	L3	L20	L23	D21	L17	0.5	

34.Bd7

34.Bf5± could reach the game position with an extra move for White: 34...Re8 (34...Qe8 35.Qc5±) 35.Bd7 Red8, and it's now White's move, with the option to try 36.Rc1 or 36.Qc5.

34...Qd6 35.Bf5 Re8 36.Rd7 Qf6 37.Bh3 Ra8 38.Raa7 Rxa7 39.Rxa7 Re7 40.Qc5 Rxa7 41.Qxa7 Qf3 42.Qa8+ Kh7 43.Bd7??

White makes a potentially fatal last-second blunder. 43.Qa1 is entirely safe.



Position after 43.Bd7

Apparently Black was satisfied with the draw here. Better, of course, would have been 43...Qd1+ 44.Kg2 Bc4 which shortly forces mate: 45.Bf5+ g6 46.Bxg6+ Kg7—+

1/2–1/2

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.0-0 a6  
5.Bxd7+

5.Bd3 seems more thematic, keeping the bishop, repositioning it to the b1–a7 diagonal, and claiming that knight on d7 is misplaced. 5...Ngf6 6.c3 b5 7.Bc2 Bb7 8.Re1 and Black might continue with 8...e5 (or 8...c4. The position often becomes more Ruy Lopez/Spanish Game than Sicilian Defense—which is rather the point of 3.Bb5, whether in a Rossolimo against 2.Nc6 or in a Moscow line as seen here.)

5...Bxd7 6.d4 Bg4

The question I usually ask myself when considering these pins is, does Black really want to trade the bishop for the knight? 6...cxd4 7.Qxd4 is theory here. White has a little more central space and a tiny temporary lead in development. Black should be pretty happy with the opening, though, having the bishop-pair and more center pawns. (White's "normal" Sicilian recapture, 7.Nxd4, slightly favors Black. White has spent time exchanging the useful light-square bishop for a knight and has committed his king to a short castle, so there's less chance of a kingside pawn-storm attack. Black is ready to develop the rook to c8, the knight to f6, and choose either a Dragon or...e6 small-center structure, according to taste. 7...Nf6 8.Nc3 e6, for example, and Black really has no worries.)

7.c3 g6

I'm not convinced that the fianchetto development is ideal here. First, it takes away g6 as a possible retreat for the bishop (...Bg4–h5–g6 in response to h3, for example). Second, the bishop on g7 would have a limited role facing white pawns on b2 and c3, if White chooses to capture on c5 or advance to d5. Also, there's not much immediate pressure on the white center, allowing White some flexibility in arranging his pieces.

8.h3 Bxf3 9.Qxf3 Bg7 10.Qd3?!

White starts here with a minimal development edge. 10.dxc5 dxc5±; or 10.Rd1 seem more natural than moving the queen again to defend the d-pawn.

10...Nf6 11.Be3 0-0 12.dxc5 dxc5  
13.Qxd8 Rfxd8 14.Bxc5

14.Nd2 is still fine for White, if not exactly an exciting advantage, as that c5–pawn needs looking after.

14...Nxe4 15.Bxe7 Rd7 16.Bh4

We start to see the problem with the pawn grab. The bishop has no happy retreat, and those queenside pieces are feeling a bit left out.

16...b5

16...g5 17.f3 (17.Bg3 Nxg3 18.fxg3 Re8 becomes very hard to defend against Black's active rooks.) 17...gxh4 18.fxe4 Re8 and Black is doing nicely.

17.Re1?!

17.f3 Nc5 18.Na3 b4!? 19.cxb4 Bxb2  
20.bxc5 Bxa3 21.Bf2 Rc7

17...f5

17...Nc5 aims the knight at a4 and d3.

18.f3

18.a4 distracts a bit from the strong knight on e4, and could end up with a level position along the lines of 18...b4 19.cxb4 Rb8 20.f3 Bxb2 21.Ra2 Bd4+ 22.Kf1 g5 23.fxe4 gxh4 24.e5 Rxb4, and for all the chaos, not much has really happened.

18...Nd2?

18...Nc5±

19.Nxd2 Rxd2 20.Rab1

Suddenly, White has an extra pawn and no clogged queenside pieces.

20...b4 21.cxb4

21.Bg5 Rc2 22.Rec1 Rxc1+ 23.Rxc1

21...Bxb2 22.Bf2

22.Red1 Rc2 23.a4±

22...Rc8

22...Rb8 23.Bc5 Ba3

23.Be3 Bd4

23...Rdc2±

24.Bxd4 Rxd4 25.Rb2 Rb8

25...Kf7 White rooks occupying the seventh rank is a bigger worry right now than that extra pawn.

26.Re6

26.a3 Rd3 27.Re7 Rxa3 28.Rc2±

26...a5?

26...Rxb4 27.Rxb4 Rxb4 28.Rxa6 Kg7 Positions with the white rook in front of the passed a-pawn are typically theoretical draws.

27.b5 Kf7 28.Rc6 Ke7 29.b6 Rd6?  
30.Rc7+

30.Re2+ Kd7 31.Rc7+ Kd8 32.Ree7

30...Rd7 31.Rc6

31.Ra7

31...Rd6 32.Re2+ Kd7 33.Rc7+ Kd8  
34.Rxh7 Rxbx6 35.Ree7 Ra6 36.Reg7  
Re6 37.Rd7+ Kc8 38.Rc7+ Kd8 39.Rcg7  
a4 40.Rh6 a3 41.Rg8+

Clearly White hasn't figured out how to make progress, but giving up control of the seventh rank doesn't seem the most promising start. Maybe fix the g-pawn with 41.h4 first. You can always throw checks around on the ranks and files later.

41...Ke7 42.Rg7+ Kf8 43.Rb7



Position after 43.Rb7

43...Reb6??

43...Re7! 44.Rh8+ Kg7 45.Rxe7+ Kxh8 and of course White still has the advantage, but at some point he'll need to find a winning plan.

44.Rxb6??

White apparently overlooked his primary threat. 44.Rh8# shortens the game considerably. Fortunately, the rook behind the black a-pawn thing also seems to work.

44...Rxb6 45.Rh8+ Kf7 46.Ra8 Rb1+  
47.Kh2 f4

If there is a defensive structure with a chance to hold, it would require no further kingside weaknesses, keeping the white rook tied down in front of the a-pawn, and hiding the black king on h6. 47...Rb2 48.Rxa3 Kg7 could extend the torture for quite a while. Likely White wins eventually in any case.

48.Rxa3 Ke6 49.Ra6+ Kf5 50.a4 Ra1  
51.a5 Kg5 52.Ra8 Kh6 53.a6 Kg7 54.h4  
Ra2 55.Ra7+ Kf6 56.Kh3 g5 57.h5 Ra1  
58.Kh2 g4 59.fxg4 Kg5

1–0



# 74th Oregon Open

August 31-September 2, 2024, Labor Day Weekend

Sponsored by the Oregon Chess Federation (OCF) and Portland Chess Club (PCC)

**FORMAT:** The tournament is a 6-round Swiss paired event with two rounds per day and is open to everyone, regardless of residency or age. Up to two half point byes are available if requested before round one.

**SECTIONS:** There are five sections: 2000+, U2000, U1700, U1400, and U1100. **Players may play up one section for a \$25 play-up fee (can't play up more than one section).** The official August US Chess over-the-board regular ratings are generally used for section eligibility, pairings, and prize eligibility. Unofficial US Chess over-the-board regular ratings, US Chess online regular ratings, or converted foreign ratings are generally used for players with no official US Chess over-the-board regular rating.

**TIME CONTROL:** G/100;inc30 (one-hour forty minutes per player with thirty seconds added for each move). **PLAYERS MUST SUPPLY THEIR OWN BOARD, SET, AND INCREMENT CAPABLE DIGITAL CLOCK FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY.** A limited number of sets and boards will be available to purchase at the tournament for \$20 each. Players are responsible for knowing how to set their clock. Notation sheets and pens/pencils are provided for tournament play only.

**SCHEDULE:** A players meeting is at 9:45am on Saturday. There is no need for registered players to "check-in" prior to round 1. The rounds start at 10am and 3:30pm each day.

**RATED:** All the sections are US Chess regular rated. The 2000+ and U2000 sections are also FIDE standard rated.

**ENTRY FEE: \$130 if registered by Friday, August 9; \$140 from August 10 until Friday, August 30 at noon.** Free entry for GM's and IM's with up to \$130 deducted from any prize won. US Chess membership is required for all players. Oregon Chess Federation membership is required for Oregon residents.

**PRIZES:** \$13,000 total prize fund based on 150 players. The prize fund is adjusted proportionally if there are a different number of players except \$6500 is guaranteed.

**2000+ Section:** 1st-\$1550, 2nd-\$1250, 3rd-\$900  
U2150: 1st-\$400, 2nd-\$300, 3rd-\$200

**U2000 Section:** 1st-\$500, 2nd-\$400, 3rd-\$300  
U1850: 1st-\$400, 2nd-\$300, 3rd-\$200

**U1700 Section:** 1st-\$500, 2nd-\$400, 3rd-\$300  
U1550: 1st-\$400, 2nd-\$300, 3rd-\$200

**U1400 Section:** 1st-\$500, 2nd-\$400, 3rd-\$300  
U1250: 1st-\$400, 2nd-\$300, 3rd-\$200

**U1100 Section:** 1st-\$500, 2nd-\$400, 3rd-\$300  
U950: 1st-\$400, 2nd-\$300, 3rd-\$200

Unrated players are eligible for all the prizes in their section except the U950 prizes in the U1100 section. Prizes are combined and/or split if there is a tie. Players winning \$600

or more must complete an IRS form with their Social Security number before receiving their prize. Foreign players may be subject to withholding taxes. Prizes are paid via check or PayPal.

**QUALIFIERS:** The 2000+ section is a qualifier for both the Championship and Challengers sections of the Oregon Closed and all the sections are a qualifier for the Oregon Scholastic Chess Federation (OSCF) State Championship.

**LOCATION:** Lloyd Center DoubleTree Hotel, 1000 NE Multnomah St, Portland, OR 97232. There is free parking in the hotel parking garage, Hotel rooms for any of the nights of August 30- September 3 are available at a special chess rate of \$149 plus tax per night for either a room with one king bed or two queen beds. **The hotel chess rate is not guaranteed to be available after August 7, or even earlier if the rooms are sold out.** Use [this link](#) or call 1-800-996-0510 to reserve a room. If reserving by phone, use the following group SRP code: OOC.

**REGISTRATION:** Register online at [onlineregistration.cc](http://onlineregistration.cc) (no mailed or on-site registrations are allowed). **The deadline to register is Friday, August 30 at noon.** Email [support@oregonchessfed.org](mailto:support@oregonchessfed.org) if you encounter any issues while trying to register online, need to withdraw after having already registered, or are unable to pay the entry fee online via credit card, debit card, or PayPal.

**TOURNAMENT RULES:** The FIDE rules are used in the 2000+ and U2000 sections while the US Chess rules are used in the U1700, U1400, and U1100 sections. The following applies to all sections: **1) Players are not allowed to have a phone or other electronic device capable of chess analysis or communication on their person during their games.** Any such device a player has with them must be turned off and stored in the player's bag (backpack, chess bag, etc.). The penalty for possessing such a device is at the discretion of the chief tournament director. **2) You must let the tournament staff know at least thirty minutes prior to the start time of the next round if you decide to withdraw from the tournament or skip that round.** If you decide to withdraw or skip a round and are not on-site, send us an email to [support@oregonchessfed.org](mailto:support@oregonchessfed.org) letting us know. Any player who forfeits a game without a valid reason in the judgement of the chief tournament director will not be allowed to play in the Oregon Open next year.

**SIDE EVENT: Blitz** - starts at 8:30pm on Saturday, August 31. There will be \$450 in prizes based on 30 entries, \$225 guaranteed. See detailed information at [oregonchessfed.org](http://oregonchessfed.org) or [pdxchess.org](http://pdxchess.org).

**QUESTIONS:** Send an email to [support@oregonchessfed.org](mailto:support@oregonchessfed.org) if you have any questions.

# 2024 Washington Senior Championship

Josh Sinanan



*2024 Washington State Senior Champion Leonid Gavrysh.  
Photo credit: Ani Barua.*



The 2024 Washington Senior Championship took place at the Orlov Chess Academy in Redmond from Friday, May 17 to Sunday, May 19. This year's event was split into two sections by rating: Championship and Premier U1600, which made for more competitive and harder-fought games throughout the weekend.

Veteran chess warriors from throughout the Pacific Northwest were represented in the respectable 23-player field, from cities including Newcastle, Mukilteo, Brier, Renton, Tenino, Bellevue, Fall City, Olympia, Auburn, Elgin, Seattle, Kirkland, Portland, Mineral, Edmonds, Gig Harbor, Federal Way, and Bothell.

The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua. Barua, not quite yet a senior himself, enjoys directing this tournament and will always fondly remember the 2023 edition, which marked his first tournament acting as the chief TD!

Leonid Gavrysh, the Ukrainian chess wizard and 2023 Senior Champion,

successfully defended his title with an undefeated 4.5 points from five games, allowing only a single draw against FM Bill Schill (2273) in the fourth round. Leonid is no stranger to the chess spotlight, achieving a peak FIDE rating of 2237 back in 2014 while still living in Ukraine.

Along with Viktor Pupols, Leonid is one of Washington's most active senior players and frequents the Seattle Chess Club. For his victory, Leonid receives the title of 2024 Washington State Senior Champion and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2024 Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions, which will be held concurrently with the US Open in early August in Norfolk, Virginia. Congratulations Leonid!

National Master Juan Leon Jimenez, who divides his time between the Pacific Northwest and Costa Rica, captured second place honors a half-point back. Jimenez recovered well after his first-round loss to dark horse Rich Lavoice and managed to squeeze out a win in a level endgame against Schill in the final round.

Two chess knights, Seattle Chess

Club board member Rich Lavoice from Kirkland and Drunken Knights Chess Club Founder Dave Juchau from Seattle, shared First U2000/U1800 honors with three points apiece.

In the cottage-sized seven-player Premier U1600 section, Derek Adair from Newcastle emerged victorious with an impressive 3.5 points from four games. Due to the small size of the field and several early withdrawals, the Premier section was held with just four rounds instead of five. Michael Morrison from Seattle finished in Second Place a half-point back, taking a first-round half-point bye and drawing his game with Adair in the third round.

Two chess kings, Benji Johnson from Elgin (OR) and Allen Messenger from Gig Harbor, split the First U1400/U1200 prize with an even two-point score. Olympia chess aficionado Colin O'Sullivan captured the First U1000 prize with one point to round out the prize winners.

Congratulations to the winners, and many thanks to all who contributed to this fantastic event!

### 2024 Washington Senior Championship: Championship

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total pts	Prize
1	1	Leonid Gavrysh	2035	W13	W8	W5	D3	W4	4.5	1st
2	2	NM Juan Leon Jimenez	2241	L4	W13	W9	W5	W3	4	2nd
3	3	FM William Schill II	2273	W15	W6	W4	D1	L2	3.5	
4	4-5	Richard Lavoice	1751	W2	W14	L3	X12	L1	3	Shared 1st U2000 / 1st U1800
5		Dave Juchau	1607	B---	W12	L1	L2	W11	3	Shared 1st U2000 / 1st U1800
6	6-8	Paul Harwood	1873	W7	L3	D8	D11	D10	2.5	
7		Phil Long	1650	L6	W10	L12	D9	W13	2.5	
8		Ralph Anthony	1623	W16	L1	D6	L10	B---	2.5	
9	9-11	Roger Oscar Hanson	1800	H---	W11	L2	D7	U---	2	
10		Sridhar Seshadri	1737	L14	L7	D13	W8	D6	2	
11		Bruce W Gregg	1700	H---	L9	W15	D6	L5	2	
12	12-13	Charles Augustus Smith	1830	H---	L5	W7	F4	U---	1.5	
13		H G Pitre	1703	L1	L2	D10	B---	L7	1.5	
14	14	NM Gerald A Larson	2080	W10	L4	U---	U---	U---	1	
15	15	Michael James Hosford	1808	L3	H---	L11	U---	U---	0.5	
16	16	Kent McNall	1867	L8	U---	U---	U---	U---	0	

### 2024 Washington Senior Championship: Premier U1600

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4		Total pts	Prize
1	1	Derek Adair	1569	W3	W4	D2	W6		3.5	1st
2	2	Michael Morrison	1200	H---	W7	D1	W4		3	2nd
3	3-4	M Allen Messenger	1226	L1	W6	L4	W7		2	Shared 1st U1400 / 1st U1200
4		Benji Johnson	1157	B---	L1	W3	L2		2	Shared 1st U1400 / 1st U1200
5	5-7	Michael Francis Shaw	1579	W6	U---	U---	U---		1	
6		Henry Louie	1300	L5	L3	W7	L1		1	
7		Colin O'Sullivan	810	X---	L2	L6	L3		1	1st U1000

# 2024 Washington Girls Championship

Josh Sinanan



*Kruti Thanikonda at the Washington Girls Championship.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*



The 2024 Washington Girls Championship took place at the Orlov Chess Academy in Greenlake on May 18-19. Female chess warriors from throughout Western Washington were represented in the modest 12-player field, including the towns of Shoreline, Seattle, Bellevue, Sammamish, and Redmond. The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation directed by WCF Co-Vice President Rekha Sagar.

The tournament featured eight players in the five-round Swiss Championship section and just four in the Challengers U1400 section, which was converted into a double Round Robin.

Selina Cheng, a sixth grader attending Tillicum Middle School in Bellevue, was crowned the 2024 Washington State Girls Champion with an impressive 4.5 points from five games, allowing only a single draw against Zoe Xu in the third round. Top seed and rating favorite Erin Bian (2166) withdrew from the tournament due to illness, which opened the door for Cheng and Iris Zhang, the other 1600 in the field. Selina has had an impressive run recently, raising her Northwest rating from the mid-1500s to 1700+ in the past few months and becoming the Washington State Sixth Grade Champion along the way. No doubt Selina has a very bright future on and off the board, especially under the guidance of her coaches, including Detective Denise “Cookie” Bouldin and WFM Chouchanik Aիրpetian.

For her victory, Selina receives the title of 2024 Washington State Girls Champion and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2024 Haring National Girls Tournament of Champions, taking place concurrently



2024 Washington State Girls Champion Selina Cheng.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

with the US Open in late July in Norfolk, Virginia. Congratulations Selina! Iris Zhang, a freshman at Redmond High School, earned second place honors with four points, losing only to Cheng in the second round.

Somerset Elementary School fourth grader Zoe Xu finished in third place with a solid “plus one” score of three points from five games and claimed the Biggest Upset prize by virtue of her third-round draw with Cheng.

Sammamish Chess Queen Aashi Mathur earned the fourth-place chess book prize with two points. Bellevue Children’s Academy third grader Aditi

Sembium arrived dressed to the nines and was awarded the Best Dressed prize for her stylish fashion sense. Kruti Thanikonda, a third grader from Christa McAuliffe Elementary in Sammamish, always wore a smile on her face and won the Kindness and Spreading Joy prize for her unconditional kindness and amazing attitude.

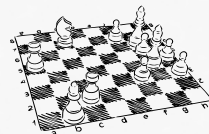
In the four-player Challengers U1400 section, two rising chess stars tied for first place with 3.5 points each: Somerset Elementary School fourth grader Clora Huang from Bellevue and Bellevue Children’s Academy first grader Felicity Mei. Clora and Felicity tied their first round mini-match 1-1 before scoring 2.5 points from their remaining four games. Felicity also earned the Biggest Upset prize for her first-round win against Clora.

Hazelwolf K-8 first grader Siana Razmov claimed third place honors a half-point back with three points and took home the Best Dressed prize for her scrupulous attire. Kaiyi Han, a first grader from Somerset Elementary in Bellevue, earned the fourth-place prize with two points in addition to the Kindness and Spreading Joy prize, for which she was a unanimous winner. Congratulations to all of the amazing chess ladies who contributed to this fun event.

Washington Girls Championship: Championship										
#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total pts	Prize
1	1	Selina Cheng	1621	W6	W2	D3	W7	W5	4.5	1st
2	2	Iris Zhang	1601	W7	L1	W6	W3	W8	4	2nd
3	3	Zoe Xu	1362	W8	D5	D1*	L2	W7	3	3rd + Biggest Upset Win*
4	4-5	WFM Erin Bian	2166	W5	H---	H---	U---	U---	2	
5		Aashi Mathur	1309	L4	D3	H---	W8	L1	2	Chess Book
6	6-8	Shanna Wu	1183	L1	L7	L2	B---	H---	1.5	
7		Aditi Sembium	1134	L2	W6	D8	L1	L3	1.5	Best Dressed
8		Kruti Thanikonda	1108	L3	B---	D7	L5	L2	1.5	Kindness + Spreading Joy

Washington Girls Championship: Challengers U1400								
#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Total pts	Prize
1	1-2	Clora Huang	1041	WL2	WL4	WD3	3.5	Shared 1st-2nd
2		Felicity Mei	744	W*L1	DL3	WW4	3.5	Shared 1st-2nd + Biggest Upset Win*
3	3	Siana Razmov	797	WL4	WD2	DL1	3	3rd
4	4	Kaiyi Han	830	WL3	WL1	LL2	2	4th

# INAUGURAL SNOHOMISH COUNTY OPEN



**Saturday**  
**August 24th, 2024**



**Co-hosted by Everett and Lake Stevens Chess Club.**

**Place: Mukilteo Presbyterian Church, 4514 84th St SW, Mukilteo, WA 98275**

**Format: A 5-round Swiss tournament in three sections: Open, U1500, and Unrated.**

**Entry fee: Open to all ages & no play up fees. Open: \$50 U1500: \$40 Unrated: \$30.**

**Early Bird Entry (received by Monday July 29th): Subtract \$10. On Site entry: Add \$10.**

**Lake Stevens/Everett/Boeing Chess Club members: Subtract \$10. Early Bird and Club discounts cannot be combined. Free entry for IM/WIM/WGM/GM. Maximum of 100 players, please register early to reserve your spot!**

**Schedule: Registration & Check-in 9-9:30am. Rounds (5): 9:45am, 11:15am, Lunch Break, 1:45pm, 3:15pm, 4:45pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 6:15 pm or asap.**

**Time Control: G/25 + 5 sec. increment per move starting from move 1.**

**Rating: Open and U1500 sections US chess (USCF) rated (Regular + Quick rated).**

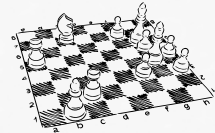
**August 2024 US Chess Regular Rating will be used to determine pairing and prizes.**

**Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.**

**Membership: US Chess (USCF) membership required for Open and U1500 section; no membership required for Unrated section. Memberships must be paid at time of registration.**



# INAUGURAL SNOHOMISH COUNTY OPEN



**Saturday**  
**August 24th, 2024**



**Prizes (based on 50 paid entries):** Open: 1st \$300 2nd \$180 3rd \$125; U1500: 1st \$180 2nd \$110 3rd \$70; Unrated: 1st \$120 2nd \$75 3rd \$50

Registration:



<https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/member.php?mode=search&tournamentid=885>

**Online registration + payment deadline: Fri Aug 23rd @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after deadline, and players from waitlist will be offered a spot. At-site registration: 9:00–9:30am. On-site payment available by cash, check made out to “Lake Stevens Chess Club”, or Venmo. On-site credit card payments accepted (3% fee).

**Byes:** Up to 2 half-point byes available if requested before the end of round 2.

**Misc:** Please bring a tournament chess set and clock if you have one!

**Parking:** Free parking available behind church (100+ spaces). To get to location w/o a car from Seattle take bus #512 from Northgate to Lynnwood Transit Center and from there take Bus #113 to Mukilteo (HWY 525 & 84th St SW). Walk east (up the hill) about 0.3 miles to the venue. Please make arrangements and check bus schedule ahead of time.

**Food:** Restaurants within walking distance include Taco Bell, Sabor A Mexico, Z’s Burgers, Brooklyn Bros. Pizzeria, and Mukilteo Thai (all about 0.3 mi).

**Health/Safety Protocols:** Face masks optional for players and spectators. If interested please bring your own masks.

# TOURNAMENTS



## Venue

7212 Woodlawn Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

Info & events calendar

[www.seattlechess.club](http://www.seattlechess.club)

Addresses for entries

SCC Tournament Director  
same address as above

– or –

[contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club)

## Notice: New entry fees

We're forced to raise our entry fees for the first time in over 7 years, starting in July. The new fees are shown in red in the listings above. Prize funds and prizes are increased accordingly.

## August 10

**Format:** 3-RR. 4-player sections by close rating.  
**TC:** Game/100 + 15sec. inc. **New EF:** \$15 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). **Prizes:** winner of each 4-player quad wins free entry to next Quads played within 3 months. **Registration:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2:15 & 6:30pm. **Byes:** 0. US Chess membership req'd.

## Saturday Quads

## August 25

**Format:** 4-SS. **TC:** Game/50 + 10sec. inc. **New EF:** \$25 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). **New Prize fund:** sum of \$14/entry. **Prizes:** 1<sup>st</sup> (35% of prize fund), 2<sup>nd</sup> (27%), bottom half (by rating) 1<sup>st</sup> (22%), 2<sup>nd</sup> (16%). **Registration:** 10:45-11:15am. **Rounds:** 11:30am, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30pm. **Byes:** 1 half-pt., commit at registration. US Chess membership req'd.

## Sunday Tornado

## August 2, 9, 16, 23

See below.

## Dog Days

## August 30

Fifth Friday of the month special! **Format:** 4 or 5 rounds (depending on turnout), Swiss paired. **TC:** Game/15, no inc. **Starts** at 7:30pm. Scoresheets not req'd. US Chess Quick rated.

## Fifth Friday G/15



## SCC Friday Nights

One US Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm (new start time). **New TC:** 40 moves in 90 mins. w/10 sec. inc., followed by sudden death 60 mins. w/10 sec. inc. Free for SCC members, \$5/night others. Drop in for any round!

*Hot as Hades*

7/5, 12, 19, 26

*Dog Days*

8/2, 9, 16, 23

*Pumpkin Spice (close ratings)*

9/6, 13, 20, 27

*Autumn Leaves*

10/4, 11, 18, 25



# 41st Annual Reno Western States Open

An American Classic and Heritage Event

Oct 4-6 or Oct 5-6, 2024, 3 Day or 2 Day Schedule

US Chess  
150 GPP (Enhanced)

**\$27,500!!** (b/275)

**\$17,000!!** (Guaranteed)

F.I.D.E. Rated  
OPEN Section

**NEW LOCATION: CIRCUS CIRCUS RENO, 500 N. Sierra Street, Reno, NV 89503 (Downtown Reno)**

**6 Rd Swiss ♦ 6 Sections ♦ 40/2, Game/1 - d5 ♦ (Open Section) 40/2, Game/55 - d5 ♦ 2 Day (Rds 1-3) G/1 - d5**

**Open Section (2200 & above)** EF: \$194, (2000-2199) \$250, (1999/below) \$300; GMs and IMs free but must enter by 9/6 or pay late fee at door. Guaranteed Prizes; (1-7 in Open Section plus 1/2 of all other prizes).

**Open Section** \$2,000 - 1,000 - 900 - 800 - 700 - 600 - 500, (2399/below) \$1,000 - \$500, (2299/below) \$1,000 - \$500 (If there is a tie for 1st then a playoff for \$100 out of prize fund plus trophy).

**Section Expert** (2000-2199) EF: \$194 (2-day EF: \$190) \$2,000-1,000-500-300-300

**Section "A"** (1800-1999) EF: \$193 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,800-900-500-300-300

**Section "B"** (1600-1799) EF: \$192 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,700-800-400-300-300

**Section "C"** (1400-1599) EF: \$191 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,500-700-400-300-300

**Section "D/Under"** (1399-below) EF: \$180 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,000-500-300-200, (1199/below) \$300












**Top Senior (65+) - \$200; Club Championship - \$600 - 300.**

**Wed. 10/2: 7:00 pm** - GM Sergey Kudrin Clock Simul w/ complete analysis of YOUR Game (Only \$30!-bring clock)

**Thursday 10/3: 6 - 7:15 pm** - Lecture by IM John Donaldson (FREE)

**7:30 pm** - GM Melikset Khachiyani Simul (\$20); Blitz (G/5 d0) Tourney \$25 - 80% of entries = Prize Fund

**Saturday 10/5: 3 - 4:30 pm** - FREE Game/Position Analysis - IM John Donaldson

     **Main Tournament**      

**Registration: Thursday (10/3) 5 - 8 pm. - Friday (10/4) 9 - 10 am. - Saturday (10/5) 9 - 10 am.**

**Round Times: (3-day Schedule) Friday - 12 Noon - 7 pm; Saturday - 10 am - 6 pm; Sunday - 9 am - 4 pm**

**(2-day Schedule) Sat.- Rd 1 - 10:30 am, Rd 2 - 12:45 pm, Rd 3 - 3 pm, Rd 4 merge with regular schedule - 6 pm**

**For more information: Call, Write or E-mail Organizer and Chief TD, N.T.D. Jerome (Jerry) Weikel,  
(H) 775-747-1405 OR (Cell) 775-354-8728 • 6578 Valley Wood Dr., Reno, NV 89523 • wackyykl@aol.com**

**Room Reservation: Call Circus Circus Reno, 1-800-648-5010, Group Reservation Code: SRRWS24**

**Hotel Rates: Sunday-Thursday \$81.32, Friday \$139.21, Saturday \$177.80, all taxes and fees included.**

**Reserve by 9/17 • Best way to reserve is Hotel Link: <https://book.passkey.com/go/SRRWS24>**

**For TLA and to confirm receipt of entry see player list at: [www.renochess.org](http://www.renochess.org)**

**ENTRY FORM - 41st Annual Western States Open - Reno, Nevada - Oct 4-6 OR Oct 5-6, 2024**

**Mail to: WEIKEL CHESS, LLC, 6578 Valley Wood Drive, Reno NV 89523**

**PRINT Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone#** \_\_\_\_\_ **USCF Rating** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**USCF ID#** \_\_\_\_\_ **Exp. Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **All pre-registered players check in at TD desk on arrival.**

**ENTRY FEE ENCLOSED: (CIRCLE SECTION AND FEE BELOW)** **BYE(S) REQUESTED FOR ROUND(S): (circle)**

1	2	3	4	5	6
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**----- OPEN SECTION -----**

**EXPERT "A" "B" "C" "D/Under" UNRATED**

**GM/IM • Masters • 2000-2199 • 1999-Below**

**2000-2199 1800-1999 1600-1799 1400-1599 1399-Below Free With**

<b>3-Day EF</b>	Free	•	\$194	•	\$250	•	\$300		\$194	\$193	\$192	\$191	\$180	USCF Dues
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<b>2-Day EF</b>	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190	USCF Dues
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## FEES ALSO ENCLOSED FOR:

- ☐ \$30 Wed. Clock Simul GM Kudrin  
☐ \$20 Thu. Simul GM Khachiyani  
☐ \$25 Thursday Blitz (G/5 d0)  
☐ \$20 Discount - Sr 65+ Age \_\_\_\_\_

## POSTMARK BY September 6, 2024. Add \$11 after 9/6. Add \$22 on site.

Do not mail after 9/27 or email after 10/1. Make check / m.o. payable to WEIKEL CHESS, LLC or provide credit card info and signature. \$7 service charge on credit card entries. ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Am.Ex  
**Name on Credit Card** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Expiration Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP Code** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Credit Card#** \_\_\_\_\_ **CVV Code** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Check Enclosed  
☐ Charge My Card

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**FEES:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

