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2014-2024 by Chess Journalists of America!**

Front Cover

L-R: Washington Governor Bob Ferguson,
Northwest Chess Publisher Duane Polich,
Elaine Polich, Colleen Ferguson.

Photo credit: Nate Burgher Photography.

Back Cover

Outdoor night lights in Singapore with Sridhar Seshadri.

Photo courtesy of Sridhar Seshadri.

Submissions

Submissions of games (PGN format is preferable for
games), stories, photos, art, and other **original** chess-
related content are encouraged! Multiple submissions are
acceptable; please indicate if material is non-exclusive. All
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U.S. Mail to:

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Governor’s Inaugural Ball

By Duane Polich

The event was billed as “One of Washington’s Most Anticipated Events,” a small intimate gathering of 3000 guests to add to my must-do list. That sounded like quite some chess tournament. Well not exactly; it was even better. It was the 2025 Washington State Governor’s Inaugural Ball held at the Capitol Building in Olympia on January 15th, the day that former two-time Washington State Chess Champion Robert Watson Ferguson was crowned as the State’s 24th Governor.

Having known Bob since the late 1970s, I knew that this was an event that I couldn’t miss even if I did have to buy a new suit for the “black tie” affair.

My wife, Elaine, decided to join me for the evening, and we arrived in Olympia a little after 6:00 PM, with the doors set to open at 7:00 PM. We were instructed to park in the Capitol’s employee parking lot, where they had shuttle service to the event site. When we arrived, the line was already forming in the tent-like structure they had established outside the Capitol. We had to

go through a security line manned by the Washington State Patrol and show them the tickets we had purchased to attend. The event was hosted by the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce. (<https://wastategovball.org/>) Inside the tents it was already getting crowded as the guests milled about sipping various beverages and sampling the hors d’oeuvres prepared by the culinary schools of several community colleges. Of course, everybody was dressed up for the occasion.

The main event with all the ceremonies was inside the Capitol Building, so Elaine and I began to wend our way through the crowds to go outside and up the steps. Inside, we could see the various offices of the Treasurer, Secretary of State, Lieutenant Governor, and Bob’s new digs, the Governor’s Office. The program got underway around 8:30 PM with a performance from The Squaxin Island Canoe Family honoring the rich Pacific Northwest Native culture followed by newly and re-elected State officials, before Bob, his wife Colleen, and twin children Jack and Katie. Bob gave a short speech,


having been sworn in earlier in the day. Elaine and I watched the ceremony, which was at the confluence of the stairs on the third floor, in the comfort of the Senate Chambers. There was a projector and screen with the TVW coverage on it. Later we stood in line to have pictures with the Governor and his wife; when Bob saw me in the line, he called out. We embraced and I presented to him a congratulatory card on behalf of the Washington Chess Federation and *Northwest Chess* magazine. In the card it said, “From the State Chess Champion to the Governor, that’s quite a move!” It will be good to have a supporter of chess in the State’s highest office. The evening wrapped up with dancing to music from three different bands throughout the venue.

WCF is planning to hold a “Governor’s Cup” chess tournament in Olympia this July during the LakeFair celebrations. With legislative support, perhaps chess could be recognized as the State’s official board game.

Anyone up for a speed chess event at the Governor’s Mansion?

Sridhar Seshadri At Singapore International Open

Sridhar Seshadri

ridhar Seshadri played in the Singapore International Open, played November 29-December 5, 2024. This event was held in conjunction with the 2024 FIDE World Chess Championship.

He shared some of his games and photos with *Northwest Chess*, which we present here now, with annotations by our own games editor.

Sridhar Seshadri (1647) – Nathaniel Rajesh (1413) [D00]
Singapore International Open (Group B)
(R2), November 30, 2024
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.e3

This is Sridhar's patented opening. It's a rather passive approach, blocking in the c1 bishop and not fighting for greater central control, but staying solid and familiar, at least for the moment.

2...d5 3.Bd3 Bg4

3...c5 is common here. Black should anticipate facing some kind of Stonewall, likely including c3, f4, and Nf3.

4.Be2?!

Not a particular desirable choice for White, as the light-square bishop is nicely developed, and after an exchange, White is left with only the slightly bad dark-square prelate. 4.f3 seems the most natural, forcing the bishop to choose a

retreat.

4...Bxe2 5.Qxe2 Nbd7 6.Nf3 c6

A plan of development involving...e6 and...c5 makes sense.

7.0-0 Qc7

7...e6, bring out the bishop, castle... Pretty solid.

8.Nbd2 0-0-0?

The black king is decidedly less safe on the queenside. It's not too late for 8...e6 9.e4 dxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Qxe4 Be7, when White's tiny space advantage shouldn't mean very much.

9.c4

One other point: Black has nothing that can protect f7. 9.Ng5!±

9...e6 10.a3 h5 11.h3



Position after 11.h3

As a general rule, don't give your opponent hooks on the side where he's

attacking. Leave the kingside pawns alone and continue play on the queenside or center. 11.e4 dxe4 12.Nxe4 Nxe4 13.Qxe4±

11...Nh7 12.cxd5 exd5 13.h4?! f6 14.e4! Re8 15.Qd3 Nb6 16.a4?!

This helps Black secure the queenside. 16.e5±

16...a5 17.e5 g5?!

17...Bb4!

18.Qf5+

18.hxg5 fxg5 (18...Nxg5 19.exf6 Ne4 20.Re1±) 19.b4! is a cool line-opening sacrifice, courtesy of Stockfish. 19...Bxb4 20.Ba3 Bxa3 21.Rxa3±, followed by Rb1, R3b3, and major pressure.

18...Qd7 19.Qxd7+ Nxd7 20.exf6 gxh4 21.Nxh4 Nhxh4 22.Ng6?!

White races to exchange his developed piece, which could lead to some problems. 22.Nb3∞

22...Rg8 23.Nxf8 Rxf8 24.Nb3

24.Nf3 is a better direction. After 24...Ne4 25.Ra3 it's still easier to play Black.

24...b6 25.Nd2?!

With 25.f3 Ne8. the knight repositions to f5 via d6.

25...h4 26.Ra3 c5?!

Black doesn't need to open lines near his king. 26...Rg4± calls on White either



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to jettison the d-pawn or attempt an awkward defense.

27.Rh3 Rg4 28.dxc5 Nxc5 29.b3?!

It's more or less an even battle with 29.Nf3 Rxa4 30.Rxh4. There's still plenty of opportunity for error ahead.

29...Nfe4

Black could claim some initiative with 29...Rfg8.

30.Nxe4 Rxe4 31.Ba3



Position after 31.Ba3

31...Rff4?

Black is not worse after 31...Kb7, anticipating the pile-up coming against c5.

32.Rc1 Kb7 33.Bxc5 bxc5 34.Rxc5 Re1+ 35.Kh2 Rxf2 36.Rxd5 Ree2 37.Rg5 Kc6 37...Rf4 offers more resistance.

38.Rxh4

Here our version of the score reads 38.Rh5 Kb6 1-0, which makes little sense. Black would certainly take on g2 with check and equality. Much more likely is the capture on h4 threatening to roll up the board with the rooks and soon cashing in the two extra pawns.

38...Kb6

1-0



Sridhar Seshadri enjoying the night lights in Singapore. Photo courtesy of Sridhar Seshadri.

Peng-Qui Terrence Chua (1481) – Sridhar Seshadri (1647) [B02]
Singapore International Open (Group B)
(R5), December 2, 2024
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3

3.Nc3 is a sign that White wants to head back into known Sicilian territory. Instead, White could try to grab some space with 3.e5 Nd5, when play can transpose into the Alapin Sicilian (c3), or White can choose to go a different route, such as 4.Nc3 (Or 4.d4 cxd4 5.Qxd4 (5.c3 Alapin again.) 5...e6 6.Bc4 Nc6 7.Qe4±) 4...e6 (4...Nxc3 5.dxc3 Nc6 6.Bf4) 5.Nxd5 exd5 6.d4 Nc6 (6...d6 7.Bb5+ Nc6 8.0-0

Be7 9.c4) 7.dxc5 (7.c3 d6 8.Bb5 Be7) 7...Bxc5 8.Qxd5 Qb6 9.Bc4 Bxf2+ 10.Ke2 0-0 11.Rf1 Bc5 12.Ng5. This is an extreme case where it probably really helps to know what you're doing.

3...d5!

Black does not oblige by transposing into an Open Sicilian and instead starts the fight for the center.

4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Bc4

The principled move here is 5.Bb5+, which starts a complex skirmish for slight advantage.

5...e6 6.0-0 Nb6 7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Re1 Bxb5 9.Nxb5 a6 10.Nc3 Nc6 11.d3 Be7

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12.Bf4 0-0

The position is well-balanced.

13.Qd2?!

13.Ne5

13...Nd4

It's always nice to involve more pieces before undertaking offensive action.

13...Rc8

14.Nxd4

Taking on d4 gives Black an initiative on the c-file (which could be even stronger if that a8-rook was already developed). It's hard to admit the queen is a bit misplaced and retreat with 14.Qd1, but maybe that's the best option here.

14...cxd4. 15.Ne4 Nd5

15...Rc8

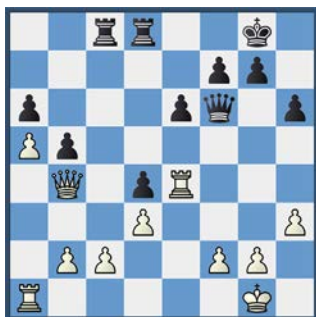
16.Be5 Nf6?!

16...Bb4 17.c3 dxc3 18.bxc3 Ba5.

17.Nxf6+ Bxf6 18.Bxf6 Qxf6 19.Re4 Rfd8 20.Qb4 b5 21.a4 Rab8

21...Rac8 Black seems to have an aversion to this development.

22.a5?! h6 23.h3 Rbc8



Position after 23...Rbc8

Yay!

24.Rc1 e5?!

24...Rd5. uses the fifth rank, with options to double on the c-file, swing over to the kingside, or perhaps support...e6-e5.

25.Rce1?

White is lured into counterplay against the e5-pawn. 25.Qd2 plans 26.f4, when the weakness of e5 starts to show up in truth.

25...Rxc2 26.f4?

Definitely not the time for this. 26.R1e2 Rdc8 27.Rxc2 Rxc2 28.Qe1 Qc6 29.Kh2 is quite good for Black as well, though.

26...Qh4

Black has definitely spotted some possibilities for kingside infiltration.

27.R1e2 Rxe2

27...Rc1+ 28.Re1 Rdc8 29.Rxe5 Qg3. 30...R8c2 is now a threat.

28.Rxe2 Qxf4 29.Qc5 f6 30.Qe7 Qc1+ 31.Kh2 Qc8 32.Kg3 Re8 33.Qd6 Kh8 34.Kh4?



Position after 34.Kh4

While it's not clear there's anything that will save the game in the long run, White's king is definitely running short. Cue the M*A*S*H theme song. 34.Kh2 Kh7 35.Re1 Re6+

34...Qf5 35.g4 Qxd3 36.Rf2 Rg8 37.Qxa6 g5+ 38.Kh5 Qxh3#

0-1

Sridhar Seshadri (1647) –
Yong Zhao Edwin Tan (1521) [D00]
Singapore International Open (Group B)
(R8), December 4, 2024
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 d5 2.e3 g6 3.Be2 Nf6 4.h4

A tad avant-garde, especially at this playing level. It's more important to focus on fundamentals: control the center; develop all the pieces; secure the king.

4...Bg7 5.h5 gxh5



Position after 5...gxh5

6.Bxh5

It's probably not worth spending the time to recapture the h-pawn here. Better to begin central play. 6.c4

6...Bf5 7.Be2 Nc6 8.c3 e5 9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.Nf3 Qe7 11.Qa4+ Bd7 12.Qc2?!

12.Qa3

12...0-0-0 13.b4?!

13.Nxe5 Qxe5 14.Nd2. Black is at least a bit better, with space and development.

13...Nxf3+

13...Ne4 14.Nd4 Rde8 15.a4 Qg5+

14.gxf3 Ne8 15.a4 Nd6 16.Na3 h6

16...Bxa4 17.Qxa4 Bxc3+ 18.Kf1 Bxa1



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19.Qxa7 Kd7 should be good for Black.

17.Nb5 Bxb5

The bishop-pair is valuable. 17...Kb8 18.Nxd6 Qxd6 19.Bb2 h5 20.f4 h4 Black's passed h-pawn could be dangerous.

18.axb5 Qg5?

Black makes a threat... 18...Kb8 19.Rh5

19.Bf1?!

...and White defends. 19.Rxa7!?

19...Kb8 20.Qa4??

White makes a threat...

20...Nc8??

...and Black defends. Unfortunately, both players appear to be thinking rather superficially here. 20...Bxc3+ 21.Bd2 Bxa1- is a better way to defeat the a-file attack.

21.Ra3 d4 22.cxd4 Bxd4 23.Rd3 Bb6 24.Rxd8 Rxd8 25.Qb3 Qf6 26.Bd2 Nd6 27.Rh3 Qa1+ 28.Ke2?



Position after 28.Ke2

White unnecessarily braves a possible king hunt. Better is 28.Qd1, since Black should decline the queen exchange. If 28...Qxd1+? 29.Kxd1 Black has trouble with his h-pawn and will have to deal with an active bishop-pair in the endgame. 29...Nf5 (29...Rh8 30.Bd3 Kc8 31.Bc3 Rd8 32.Ke2±) 30.Kc2±

28...Nxb5 29.Rxb6



Position after 29.Rxb6

29...Re8

Stockfish offers 29...a5! 30.bxa5 Rxd2+! 31.Kxd2 Bxa5+ 32.Kd3 Qxf1+ 33.Ke4 Nd6+ 34.Rxd6 (34.Kf4 Qxf2) 34...cxd6 35.Qxf7 Qxf2; or maybe even stronger, 29...Bd4! aiming to plop something on c3: 30.Rh5 (30.Qd3 a6 31.f4 Bf6 32.Qc2 Nc3+ 33.Bxc3 Bxc3-+) 30...Nc3+ 31.Bxc3 Bxc3 32.f4 Rd2+ 33.Kf3 Qxf1 with some attractive king hunts to follow: 34.Qxc3 (34.Qxf7 Qxf2+ 35.Kg4 Qg2+ 36.Kh4 Rd8-+; 34.Rh2 Qe2+ 35.Kg3 Rd8 36.Qxf7 Bxb4-+) 34...Qxf2+ 35.Kg4 (35.Ke4 Qg2+ 36.Ke5 Rd5+ 37.Kf6 Qg6+ 38.Ke7 Qe6+ 39.Kf8 Rd8+ 40.Kg7 Qg6#) 35...Qg1+ 36.Kf5 Qg6+ 37.Ke5 Qe6#; It would be surprising at this level even to intuit, let alone calculate, all of the computer tactics. However, 29...Qe5 is similar to, and perhaps slightly stronger than, the actual game continuation.

30.Rh4 Nd4+?

30...f5 31.Bh3 Qf6 32.Qc4 a6 33.Rh7 Rd8 Black's king is safer.

31.Rxd4 Bxd4 32.Qxf7 Qa4 33.Bh3 Qb5+ 34.Ke1



Position after 34.Ke1

34...Bb6??

34...Qe5!∞ maintains the pin and saves the extra material.

35.Bd7 Rxe3+ 36.fxe3 c6 37.Qe8+

37.Qf4+ Bc7 38.Qf8+ Bd8 39.Qxd8#

37...Kc7 38.e4 Qd3 39.Bf4+

1-0



Walk down the hall and watch the World Championship? Why not! Photo courtesy of Sridhar Seshadri.



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Washington Spring Fling

RAPID SCHOLASTIC CUP

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Format

A 7-round G/25; +5 Swiss scholastic chess tournament in 3 sections:

Murzin Championship

Grischuk U1400

Dubov U800

Entry Fee

\$60 by 2/22, \$70 after.

Rounds

Rd 1.: 10am

Rd 2: 11:15am

Rd 3: 12:30pm

Lunch

Rd 4: 2:00pm

Rd 5: 3:15pm

Rd 6: 4:30pm

Rd 7: 5:45pm

Awards ~ 7pm or asap.

Late start available for games that go long.

Byes

Up to 2 half-point byes available if requested before end of Rd 2.

Eligibility

Open to all chess players in grades K-12 as of the 2024-2025 school year. Out-of-state players welcome! Maximum of 30 players in each section and 75 players total. Please register early!

Prizes

Murzin Championship (Based on 25 paid entries)

1st \$200 + seed into Rising Stars section of 2026 WA State Championship.

2nd–5th: \$185, 170, 150, 110.

Grishuk U1400 (Based on 25 paid entries)

1st \$175 + seed into Prodigies section of 2026 WA State Championship.

2nd–5th: \$160, 145, 125, 85.

Dubov U800 (Based on 25 paid entries)

1st–5th: \$150, 135, 120, 100, 60.

Special Prizes: (per section) Biggest Upset Win: \$10/rd., Best Dressed: \$10, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$25.

Rating/Membership

Dual NWSRS + US Chess rated, with US Chess & WCF membership required in all sections.

Average of the February 27th NWSRS and US Chess regular rating will be used to determine section and pairings.



THE DETAILS

Procedure: Pairings and standings posted near the playing area before each round.

Online Registration:

nwchess.com/online/registration (pay by credit / debit / PayPal / Zelle / SettleKing), or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a processing fee of 4% will be added on, so consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead. **Registration and payment deadline: Friday, Feb 28th @ 5:00pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Questions? Josh Sinanan, WCF President,
206.769.3757,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com





Eastside Open



March 1-2, 2025

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Bellevue Open**, **Kirkland U1700**, and **Redmond U1200**.

Entry fee: \$100 by 2/22, \$120 after. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Bellevue Open or Kirkland U1700, respectively. Free entry for players rated 2100+ USCF. Maximum of 100 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 8-8:45am. Rounds: Sat @ 9am, 2pm, 7pm. Sun @ 10am, 3pm.
Closing Ceremony + Blitz Tournament: ~ 7pm or asap.

Time Control: G/90; +30. Late default: 30 minutes.

Rating: Dual NWSRS + US Chess Rated. Bellevue Open is also FIDE rated. Higher of current NWSRS or live US Chess rating as of Feb. 27th will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Memberships: US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships required; must be paid at the time of registration.

Prize Fund: \$5,000 based on 100 paid entries.

Bellevue Open: 1st-4th: \$450-\$350-\$250-\$200, 1st-2nd U2100: \$150-\$125, 1st-2nd U1900: \$150-\$125.

Kirkland U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1500: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1300: \$125-\$100.

Redmond U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$225-\$175-\$125, 1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Dressed: \$20/day.

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/Zelle/SettleKing or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a fee of 4% will be added on, so consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead. **Registration + payment deadline: Fri, Feb. 28 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from the Waitlist will be offered a spot.

Eastside Open Blitz Tournament: Sunday 7-9pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$25.

Format: A 7-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. US Chess Blitz rated. **TC:** G/4; +3.

On-site registration: 6:00-6:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 7pm, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8, 8:15, 8:30. Closing Ceremony ~ 8:45pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of March 2025 US Chess Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes. **Prize Fund: \$500** (based on 40 pd. entries)

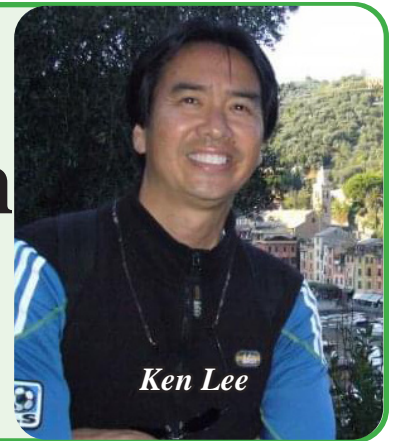
1st - 3rd: \$120-80-50, 1st U1900/U1700/U1500/U1300/U1100/Unrated: \$30. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

Questions – Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

Sage Advice From PNW Chess Coach Walter Guity

*“New City, Same
Passion, Chess is a
Journey.”*

Ken Lee



Ken Lee

Moving from the Bronx to Seattle when you're a high school freshman isn't easy. When you add growing up as a second-generation immigrant and speaking Spanish as your first language, the obstacles can feel overwhelming. Walter Guity utilized the life skills he learned from chess to carve out a lane for himself and his family. Now Walter owns and operates Sage Chess (<https://www.sagechess.com/>) and provides individual and group chess lessons to students throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Ken: When did you start playing chess?

Walter: I was in the sixth grade when my teacher noted that I displayed a talent in math, and he suggested I try chess. I took to the game immediately and I was hooked.

Ken: Did you have a lot of early success?

Walter: Actually, no. I remember going to my first tournament and losing every game. I went zero for five. Somehow, I didn't get discouraged, and I learned something new from all my games.

Ken: Who was your coach at that time?

Walter: I was living in the Bronx, New York at that time and my coach was IM Yury Lapshun. He was very encouraging and took the time to analyze all my games after that first tournament. A few tournaments later, I won first place. The contrast of those experiences was eye opening, and I instantly learned the value of losing.

Ken: What do you specifically mean by that?

Walter: Whether you're an adult or a child, it's so easy to get discouraged when you lose. If you reframe your mindset, you can gain a great deal of knowledge and confidence along the way. I learned that if you have the proper attitude, losing can create opportunities for amazing growth in your chess game and your personal life.

Ken: What was your chess life like in middle school?

Walter: I enjoyed competing in chess in middle school, and I was even able to go to a few national tournaments. I did relatively well but afterwards, my family moved to Seattle when I was a freshman in high school.

Ken: Wow, the transition from the Bronx to Seattle must have been challenging.

Walter: It was hard. Being from a Honduran family where Spanish was the dominant language and leaving the diversity of NYC for Seattle was quite a culture shock. We lived in Burien, and I attended Highline High School. I found my tribe, or rather I created my own tribe by starting the chess program at my high school.

Ken: How did you have the confidence to do that?

Walter: There wasn't a formal chess program at Highline High School, so I founded the first chess club there. Chess helped with the transition in high school because it gave me a sense of identity. I also played sports in school, but chess was really the place where I felt naturally gifted. That confidence helped me throughout middle school and my formative years in high school.

Ken: High school can be a very challenging time for young people.

Walter: Yes, there's so much going on inside and outside with a teenager. They are becoming connected to the world, to themselves, and to their families. They need that time to find their place.

Ken: If your high school was not part of the chess circuit at the time, how did you and your friends keep motivated to keep playing and learning?

Walter: It was casual. There were a lot of new players who wanted to learn how to play. We just kept going and eventually we were able to get funding for some boards and clocks. The process of running a club was very instructive.

Ken: What are your favorite chess books?

Walter: I always loved books with lots of puzzles like *More Chessercizes: Checkmate!* by Bruce Pandolfini.

But my all-time favorite chess book has been *My 60 Memorable Games* by Bobby Fischer. It's a classic because it's so rich with detail. The storytelling and commentary are so amazing. It's also hilarious reading Fischer's commentary, which is kind of unique for a chess book.

Ken: Coming from the Bronx, did you bring a certain style of play with you?

Walter: I think a certain type of aggressiveness and swagger comes with living and competing in the Bronx. Over there, you find out very quickly your place in the ecosystem. I always apply that sense of confidence when I sit across the board from anybody and feel like I have a chance of winning. It didn't matter their age or race. Being a minority, I often walk into spaces where I know that my community is not well represented. But inside, I tell myself that I belong just as much as the next person.

Ken: When did you first start coaching chess as a profession?

Walter: I was 20 years old, and I found out that Chess Wizards was looking for coaches. My hobby became a new source of income for me. Chess Wizards allowed me to travel and teach kids of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds. To me, it was a reminder of how far something will go if you plant the seed correctly into a child and let it grow.

Ken: What else propelled your chess coaching?

Walter: After a few years, the COVID pandemic happened, and I started teaching online. When I started teaching via Zoom, it became apparent that I could teach, manage classes, and coach on my own. I launched Sage Chess shortly thereafter: <https://www.sagechess.com/> I named my business Sage because it's another word for a wise person. I believe chess teaches us wisdom and allows us to apply it to our lives in very practical ways.

Ken: Your eldest daughter is also named Sage, yes?

Walter: That's right. That was something I wanted to pass on to her as well, an appreciation for wisdom. My daughters Sage (9) and Solange (5) both play chess, carrying on the family tradition.

Ken: What's something that distinguishes your style of coaching versus other programs?

Walter: One thing I see when many of my PNW students play in scholastic tournaments is that they want to win quickly and try to do a lot of tactical tricks. However, they often don't know how to properly finish a game. What I try to teach my students is not only how to gain an

advantage but also keep that advantage throughout the game. While it's nice to win quickly, when you play more experienced players you have to learn to play with endurance and accuracy. I try to separate myself by teaching my students good fundamentals throughout an entire game, not just short checkmates.

Ken: How do you sharpen your tool set and make sure you're staying ahead of your students?

Walter: I still play competitively myself so that keeps me sharp. More importantly, it also allows me to build empathy for my students. I know exactly what it feels like to be in a tournament. It's a mix of excitement, anxiety and self-doubt.

Ken: What else do you do to keep your coaching skills sharp?

Walter: I try to surround myself with players and coaches who are stronger than me. I ask them what kinds of things they are doing to develop their students, and we openly discuss what challenges we are facing as coaches. Learning and sharing with my peers is huge because I don't learn nearly as much sitting in front of a chess board by myself.

Ken: Is there a particular game from you or your students that you'd like to share?

Walter: Yes, here is one between two of my students who participated in the Sage x Wiiser Tournament in September. Here is that game.



Coach Walter congratulating his students after participating in the first Sage x Wiiser Quads. Photo courtesy of Walter Guity.

10.Qxd4 e5 11.Qxb4 Bf5 12.Nh4 Bxc2
13.Rac1 Be4 14.Nxe4 dxe4 15.Qxe4 c5
16.Bd3 b6 17.Qxh7#

1-0

Ken: Walter, can you discuss the difference between what you can coach online vs over the board?

Walter: There are benefits to both over the board and online coaching. With OTB, I can teach students to move their pieces with intention and precision. If they move with confidence, their opponent will feel that energy. In over the board chess, there's so much more body language being conveyed vs online chess. Also, a larger emotional investment in over the board games versus online. Over the board players practice emotional regulation more than online players. The games last longer and take an emotional toll while online games tend to be fast and if you lose, you can play another game right away so there isn't much time for reflection.

Ken: What does the future hold for you and Sage Chess?

Walter: I want to be able to share the bit of talent that God has given me with the next generation and to instill a love of chess in them. I think chess can teach kids to grow, learn, and face all kinds of challenges in their lives. I also like to encourage my students to stick to their path when things get tough. For some students, chess and the victories come easily. For others, they have to build that resilience over time. I tell my students that whatever they have a passion for, stick with it. It worked for me, and it can work for you as well.

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**Sage Guity (526) –
Kenzo Wang (227)
[D00]**
Sage x Wiiser,
09.2024

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nc6
3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5
Bg4 5.e3 e6 6.Bd3
Bb4 7.0-0 0-0 8.Bxf6
gxf6 9.Be2 Nxd4

Mukilteo Free Library Arena Tournament #1

Travis Olson

Part 1/3, Conception

I do not consider myself to be the “typical” chess player. Many chess players start playing chess as kids. Though technically still a kid, the first time I had ever heard that chess competitions of any form existed was at the ripe old age of 16! It was in my Kamiak High School precalculus class in 2008, where I learned that my teacher was the chess club coordinator at the school. I soon-after joined the chess team and started playing rated team competitions against other schools in the WESCO league. I played in my first official chess tournament in January of 2009, the High School Individual Championship, U1200 (or U1300, I can’t remember!) section, and from there I was hooked!

The rest is history! I continued playing chess over-the-board and online. I became president at the Chess Club at the University of Washington, my first year of college, in 2010/2011. I played in my first US Chess event in January of 2012. I got into chess coaching in the summer of 2012, when a parent from Mercer Island emailed the chess club at UW looking for

a coach for his elementary school son. I began teaching chess in schools in the spring of 2013 and have been doing so ever since. In 2016 I achieved a peak US Chess rating of 1961! I still continue to play in some tournaments to this day.

Throughout my chess journey, I had always thought “*Gee, if only I had started playing chess sooner, not only would I have become a better chess player, but my life would have taken a different turn entirely!*”. I had always noticed that most chess tournaments in the Seattle metro area take place in Seattle, Bellevue, and Redmond, or very close to those cities. I also realized that most chess companies, both for coaching and others, are located in those same cities. This led me to believe that where I grew up, Mukilteo starting in fifth grade and Renton before that, greatly determines my exposure, and therefore my success, in chess!

Now, I know that I am not alone. Many chess players don’t live in a metro

area at all yet have found success in chess! Granted, many of them still discovered chess competitions while they were in elementary school, the prime time for improvement in chess. Nonetheless, this was an inequality that I sought to help fix for the sake of future generations of potential chess players.

I also couldn’t help but notice another inequality. Many chess players (not nearly all chess players, obviously) who play in chess tournaments grew up, to put it plainly, financially well-off. Many of the best players attended a private school of some form. Now, I am not trying to throw shade to these players or discredit their accomplishments in any way. I only say this to draw attention to this inequality. The main reason why I didn’t play in my first US Chess tournament until 2012, and the main reason why I never had regularly scheduled private lessons with a titled coach, was because I could not afford them.



Aiden DeLorm shakes hands with his opponent before the game.
Photo credit: Jarianne DeLorm.



Daniel Sandoval, the youngest participant, fills out his scoresheet before his game against Manushi Garg near the end of the tournament. Photo credit: Berenice Bortoni.

Mukilteo Free Library Arena Tournament #1

#	Place	Name	Pre-	Post-	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Rd 11	Rd 12	Rd 13	Rd 14	Rd 15	Rd 16	Tot	
1	1-2	Slava Shinkarev	1569	1548	W10 (b)	L5 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W16 (w)	U--- (-)	W9 (w)	W8 (b)	W2 (b)	W7 (w)	W3 (b)	W6 (b)	W13 (w)	U--- (-)	W5 (w)	10	
2		Michael Makienko	500	1047	L5 (w)	U--- (-)	W18 (w)	W6 (b)	W9 (w)	W12 (b)	W11 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L1 (w)	W11 (b)	W6 (b)	W13 (w)	W5 (w)	W8 (w)	U--- (-)	10	
3	3-4	Annan Lin	1065	1057	L22 (b)	W16 (w)	W4 (b)	W18 (b)	U--- (-)	W15 (w)	U--- (-)	W11 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W9 (b)	L1 (w)	W7 (b)	U--- (-)	W4 (w)	U--- (-)	8	
4		Grayson Babik	400	790	W9 (b)	L15 (w)	L3 (w)	W21 (b)	W8 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W9 (w)	W15 (w)	W13 (b)	L10 (w)	W8 (w)	W9 (b)	L3 (b)	U--- (-)	8	
5	5-6	Karman Ginoira	1210	1244	W2 (b)	W1 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W22 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W13 (w)	W8 (b)	U--- (-)	W9 (w)	L2 (b)	W21 (w)	L1 (b)	7	
6		Massimo Pirelli	500	542	L8 (b)	W18 (b)	W13 (w)	L2 (w)	L16 (b)	W11 (b)	W17 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L8 (b)	W12 (b)	L2 (w)	L1 (w)	W21 (b)	W15 (w)	U--- (-)	7	
7	7-9	Amy Zhang	869	879	W16 (b)	W22 (w)	U--- (-)	W10 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W12 (w)	L1 (b)	W17 (b)	L3 (w)	W19 (w)	U--- (-)	6	
8		David Cijo Thomas	547	682	W6 (w)	W11 (w)	W15 (b)	W20 (w)	L4 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L1 (w)	W6 (w)	L5 (w)	U--- (-)	L4 (b)	W14 (w)	L2 (b)	U--- (-)	6	
9		Lincoln Holliday	400	490	L4 (w)	W24 (b)	U--- (-)	W16 (w)	L2 (b)	W17 (w)	W13 (b)	L1 (b)	L4 (b)	W17 (w)	L3 (w)	W23 (b)	L5 (b)	L4 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	6	
10	10-13	Forrest Taggart	400	827	L1 (w)	U--- (-)	W20 (b)	L7 (w)	U--- (-)	W22 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W15 (b)	W4 (w)	W11 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	5	
11		Beamer Chantarachoti	600	476	W18 (w)	L8 (b)	W16 (b)	W24 (w)	W17 (b)	L6 (w)	L2 (b)	L3 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L2 (w)	W12 (b)	L10 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	5	
12		Vira Lazar	500	273	L19 (b)	W20 (w)	L17 (w)	U--- (-)	W24 (b)	L2 (w)	U--- (-)	L13 (w)	W18 (b)	L7 (b)	L6 (w)	L11 (w)	W23 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W21 (b)	5	
13		Viktor Greer	300	543	W20 (w)	W19 (b)	L6 (b)	W22 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L9 (w)	W12 (b)	W16 (b)	L5 (b)	L4 (w)	U--- (-)	L2 (b)	L1 (b)	L14 (w)	U--- (-)	5
14	14-15	Aria Ajay	847	817	W21 (b)	U--- (-)	W19 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W21 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L8 (b)	W13 (b)	U--- (-)	4	
15		Brighton Chantarachoti	300	535	W24 (w)	W4 (b)	L8 (w)	W23 (b)	W21 (w)	L3 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L4 (b)	L10 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L6 (b)	U--- (-)	4	
16	16	Jason Austin	300	410	L7 (w)	L3 (b)	L11 (w)	L9 (b)	W6 (w)	L1 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L13 (w)	W23 (w)	W22 (b)	D20 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	3.5	
17	17	Daniel Sandoval	100	313	W23 (w)	U--- (-)	W12 (b)	U--- (-)	L11 (w)	L9 (b)	L6 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L9 (b)	U--- (-)	L7 (w)	W24 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	3	
18	18-20	Ellie Walker	600	155	L11 (b)	L6 (w)	L2 (b)	L3 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L12 (w)	L20 (w)	W19 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W23 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	2	
19		Aiden DeLorm	500	276	W12 (w)	L13 (w)	L14 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W24 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L18 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L7 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	2	
20		Rayan Roopbaksh	300	208	L13 (b)	L12 (b)	L10 (w)	L8 (b)	U--- (-)	D21 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	W18 (b)	U--- (-)	D16 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	2	
21	21	AnnaMia Jankowski	500	199	L14 (w)	W23 (b)	U--- (-)	L4 (w)	L15 (b)	D20 (w)	L14 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L6 (w)	L5 (b)	L12 (w)	1.5	
22	22-23	Shlok Bansal	400	444	W3 (w)	L7 (b)	U--- (-)	L13 (b)	L5 (w)	L10 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L16 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	1	
23		Aarushi Garg	200	100	L17 (b)	L21 (w)	U--- (-)	L15 (w)	U--- (-)	W24 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L16 (b)	U--- (-)	L9 (w)	L12 (w)	L18 (b)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	1	
24	24	Manushi Garg	200	100	L15 (b)	L9 (w)	U--- (-)	L11 (b)	L12 (w)	L23 (b)	L19 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	L17 (w)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	U--- (-)	0	

Consider also that many entry fees, even in local tournaments and especially in US Chess events open to adults, are over \$100, and even close to \$200! This is in addition to having to buy a US Chess adult membership for around \$50 and also having to buy a Washington Chess Federation membership for around \$30, with these prices increasing all the time. All of this, just to play four-six games of chess and receive a rating afterward, and maybe something tiny if you win. Chess is hard work! How do you expect new players to get into chess tournaments with such a high barrier to entry? It's as if you are saying *"Chess is an elite club, where only those who can afford it can play, and plus you are expected to know all the rules, including notation, just to play in your first event. And because you cannot win much, you are nothing special. Thanks for the \$300!"* Imagine also (you don't have to!) that a local tournament requires an entry fee of close to \$200, and even if you place clear first in your section, you can only win \$700! If you instead tie for second or third place, you are lucky to get your entry fee back. Also, the "based-on" prize system is corruptible. A tournament may say \$10,000 based on 200 entries. If the tournament gets 199 entries, the prize fund is reduced by a full 10%! If the tournament gets 220 entries, the prize fund is still \$10k! A fairer way to do it is to say that *"For each player in the tournament, \$100 goes to the prize fund, with a minimum total prize fund, guaranteed!"* This is easily verifiable to players by looking at the crosstable afterward, that the tournament paid out its prizes fairly. All this is a big reason why I stopped playing in the mainstream Washington tournaments, at least for

the time being for the past year. Every tournament would be a difficult decision *"oh, is it really worth forking over \$250 to play six games of chess this weekend?"*

Some chess players say that chess is the great equalizer. When actually seated at the board across from your opponent at a US Chess tournament, sure. But to be able to reach that point, for some players it is definitely easier than others.

These factors inspired me to want to hold my own chess tournaments, and to teach chess in my hometown. I did this before as early as 2012, volunteering at Columbia Elementary chess club, across the street from my high school. I also became a US Chess-certified tournament director in 2014, and in 2015 I ran a few tiny library tournaments. For at least one of these, I also wrote an article in *Northwest Chess* magazine. So, the idea of running library tournaments was not

new to me. Last year, in the 2023/2024 school year, I also ran chess clubs in two of my local schools. The experience I got and the people I met at these clubs are invaluable. I decided that 2024 was the time to run my own tournaments again, this time with bigger ambitions.

On the evening of November 30, less than three weeks before the event was set to take place, I conceived and booked my first tournament in years. My goal is to provide local Mukilteo players a chance to play in their first tournaments without traveling far, and to provide these tournaments free of charge, so that household income is not a factor in deciding whether to play in a tournament, whether it was their first tournament or not! Of course, I want the tournament to be open to anyone of any demographic and rating. During those years after I had graduated high school, I still wanted to play in tournaments, so for



Players listen intently to the rules before the games begin. Photo credit: Alex Tkachuk.

these tournaments I want to accommodate those players in similar situations as well.

Part 2/3, The Event

The first Mukilteo Free Library Arena Tournament (M-FLAT) was held on Saturday, December 21 of 2024 at the Mukilteo Library meeting room, from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

If you have ever played in a tournament on Lichess.org, then I don't have to explain how an Arena format tournament works. This was the first ever Arena tournament played in-person (that I know of!) Basically, there are no set rounds, and players can be paired again as soon as their game finishes. The website that I created and used for the tournament, MukilteoChess.PBWorks.com, explains this format in more detail.

24 players (the maximum allowed for this event) attended, many accompanied by their parents, given that they were kids. The tournament time control was G/25, d10, although a clock would not be placed at the board until 30 minutes had gone by in a game, and the clock therefore would read G/10; d10. All equipment was provided!

Although the event was open to adults, no adults played in this first installment. Our youngest participant was Daniel Sandoval, a first grader at A.G. Bell Elementary, all the way from Kirkland! This was his first chess tournament. Because of this, he was also our lowest rated participant, based on a NWSRS initial rating of 100. (For first-time tournament players, your

initial rating is 100 x your grade, with kindergarteners starting at 100 and adults starting at 1300.) Our oldest participant was Slava Shinkarev, a sophomore at nearby Kamiak High School, who plays for the chess team there on board one! He was also the highest rated (*although chess is a game where age really doesn't matter so much, as long as you practice!*), with a NWSRS rating of 1515 (at the time of writing) and a US Chess rating of 1459!

The players of the tournament represented several different schools, with some traveling over 20 miles to be there! Many of the players, a total of 14 of the 24, were from nearby Mukilteo schools, and for all of those except for Slava, it was their first in-person rated tournament! Some players who traveled longer distances were from Excel with Chess after school clubs, where I was one of the coaches. Others were seasoned tournament players who had caught wind of the event.

The breakdown of players from each school was as follows: Mukilteo Elementary had the most players at six! Followed by nearby Colombia Elementary with three players. Endeavor Elementary Mukilteo and Mark Twain Elementary in Kirkland each had two players. The remaining schools each had one player play in the event, including nearby Harbour Pointe Middle School and Explorer Middle School in Everett, where the gifted "Summit" program for the Mukilteo School District still resides. For many of these schools in the NWSRS rating system, these players became the first players on their rosters!

A total of 16 additional players signed up on the wait list! Unfortunately for them, none of the original 24 players dropped out at the last minute. Given that the event met the cap for attendance and given that every single game was eventually accounted for, despite difficulties from the T.D. with the relentless speed of games finishing, the event was a resounding success!

Here were our top six placers (top quartile)! Note that the first tiebreaker was the number of games played. They each earned a trophy:

First Place: Michael Makienko
ten points, 12 games

Second Place: Slava Shinkarev
ten points, 11 games

Third Place: Grayson Babik
eight points, 12 games

Fourth Place: Annan Lin
eight points, ten games

Fifth Place: Massimo Pirelli
seven points, 13 games

Sixth Place: Karman Ginotra
seven points, nine games

For 18 of the 24 players, (a full three quarters of the field!), this was their very first rated in-person tournament!

Each tournament game was inputted into SwissSys, and converted into a crosstable, which ended up being an astounding 16 rounds! The tournament was submitted to Kirk Winges for NWSRS rating on Sunday, December 22nd, at 11:22am. The crosstable was so wide that it had to be split into two halves



The overall winner, Michael Makienko, holds his first place trophy as he poses for a photo with the T.D. Photo credit: Alex Tkachuk.



The players focus attentively on their games. Photo credit: Jarianne DeLorm.

in order to be readable on ratingsNW.com! The tournament was rated on Thursday, January 2. A special thanks to Kirk for agreeing to rate the event, despite it being a brand-new in-person Arena format and having lots of “rounds!”

Part 3/3, Reflections and Going Forward

The main struggle with running a scholastic (*adults could play too, but none did this first time around*) Arena-style in-person tournament was that games would finish incredibly quickly! They would finish so quickly, in fact, that writing them down and recording them, and subsequently giving each player a fair next-game pairing, would take longer than some games would take to play!

The Solution: Our next event, to be held on January 25, will require notation for the Arena section. Because of this, and because I want to promote US Chess play as well, the Arena section will also be US Chess-rated! Requiring all players to write down all of their moves (*the new time control will be G/25; d30, to allow for this*), I believe, will slow down each game considerably, more-so than increasing the time control. We shall see how it goes!

Note that in Swiss tournaments, where all players must wait for every game to finish, plus wait for the T.D. to produce next-round pairings for all sections and players, and wait for players to take their seats, and wait for their opponent to show up if they are running late, chess kids will *still* move way too fast and finish their game in, in some cases, mere seconds! For these kids, a very small portion of the time they are at a Swiss tournament is spent actually playing a chess game! For parents especially, time is very valuable, and I am sure many of them want their



Tournament Director and Chess Coach, Travis Olson, makes an announcement before the games begin. Photo credit Jarianne DeLorm.

kids to play more games in shorter spans of time! For this library tournament, the games started at 1:30, and finished at 4:45. Only three hours and 15 minutes. Compare that to spending 8:30 AM (*so early for a Saturday!*) to 3:30 PM at a tournament, and only playing five games!

At our January 25 tournament, for those players who are new to chess tournaments, and who do not know how to notate, there will also be a Beginners section. Well, more like sections, as the beginners will be grouped into rotating triangles, quads, and even a dual format. The website, MukilteoChess.PBWorks.com, displays the rules in detail. Too long for a flier or article.

My plan going forward is to continue holding these free library events at most monthly. A third event, as of this writing, hasn't been booked yet, due to meeting room renovations set to take place in February at the Mukilteo Library. I also plan to rent and eventually lease a commercial space, so that I can hold more tournaments, and have them award hefty cash prizes!

I consider myself to be a pioneer, willing to try things that have never been tried before, such as Arena tournaments! I feel like most tournaments, particularly scholastic tournaments (*almost all are five rounds of G/25; d5, not much*

variety there!), are pretty much the same. Just one of the many ideas I have is to run a Chess960 tournament at a Classical time control, say 40/80, SD/30; +30, and also use my own Chess960 rating system, similar to NWSRS. The winner gets a large, engraved trophy, and first place will be \$1000 guaranteed!

All-in-all, the work I put into creating, promoting, and running this event was well worth it. If you are a person looking to host your own chess tournaments, I encourage you to do so! You can book a room at your local library and hold them for free! (Each library has its own rules for room reservations, so I encourage you to be familiar with those.) Some players and their parents are more than happy to donate afterward. After the event, we received a total of \$195 in donations from several different people! All (100%!) of which will go towards trophies, prizes, and US Chess memberships for those who are first-time members and cannot afford them, for our January 25 event. Stay tuned for my next article after that event takes place!



While games are in progress, Daniel Sandoval exchanges a few humorous words with his opponent, Massimo Pirelli, as Aiden DeLorm looks on.

Photo credit Berenice Bortoni.



YOU'RE INVITED

Join us for a special fundraising gala on March 21st, 2025, dedicated to supporting and empowering girls in chess. This elegant evening will include a gourmet dinner, complimentary parking, and the Mercer Island High School orchestra to make the night truly memorable. The auction will feature Metropolitan Market gift cards, Victoria Secret baskets, wine selections, stunning paintings, chess lesson vouchers and more.

This gala is not just an event, but a celebration of the potential and talent of young female chess players. By attending, you'll be contributing to scholarships, training, and resources that help girls thrive in the game, building confidence and skill in a traditionally male-dominated field.



DATE: March 21st, 2025
TIME: 6:30pm to 9:30pm
TICKETS: \$125 (18+ Only)
LOCATION: Hilton Bellevue Hotel
300 112th Avenue SE | Bellevue, WA



MyChessWorld.com

WA State Barber/Rockefeller

OPEN CHESS TOURNAMENT

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Chinook Middle School

2001 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



CLASSICAL SECTIONS

K-5 Rockefeller Open (Qualifier for Rockefeller Closed Event)

6-8 Barber Open (Qualifier for Barber Closed Event)

A 4-round Swiss. Longer time control for Intermediate to Advanced players. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Rated; US Chess membership required. Time Control: G/60; +10. Late default: 30 minutes. Rounds: 9am, 12pm, 2:45pm, 5:30pm. Awards ~ 8pm or asap.

RAPID SECTIONS

K-1 U700, 2-3 U800, 4-8 U900, K-3 Open, 4-6 Open, 7-12 Open.

A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss. Shorter time control for players of all levels. Rounds: 9am, 10:30am, 11:45am, Lunch, 1:15pm, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

ALL SECTIONS

Dual NWSRS and US Chess rated, with US Chess membership required. Establish or update your national rating! Chess clocks will be used from the beginning in all games. Chess notation required in all sections except for K-1 U700 and 2-3 U800. All equipment is provided courtesy of WCF.

ENTRY FEE

\$50 by March 16th, \$60 after.
Room for 250 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded in each section:
1st – 5th: \$90-80-70-60-50.

Team Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded to the top 4 players from the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections:
1st – 5th: \$30-25-20-15-10.

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

FOLLOW-UP INVITATIONAL EVENT

Top 6 finishing WA State residents in the K-5 Rockefeller Open and 6-8 Barber Open section (by MSCO tiebreaks) will qualify for the Rockefeller and Barber Closed Events on March 30 in Seattle. The other 6 spots in each closed event will be determined by rating. The winners of the closed (4-Round Swiss) events will earn a \$750 travel stipend (donated by the WCF) and will be the WA State representatives at the National Rockefeller (K-5) and Barber (6-8) Tournament of Champions, respectively, held concurrently with the US Open in early August.

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

Pay by

Credit/Debit/PayPal/Zelle/SettleKing. For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a processing fee of 4% will be added on, so consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead.

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat., March 22nd @ 5pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be withdrawn from the tournament.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12 as of the 2024-25 school year. Out-of-state players welcome!

RATING

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

Questions?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President at 206.769.3757 or WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Detective Cookie

CH^{ESS} CLASSIC

SUNDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2025

RAINIER BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER

8825 RAINIER AVE S, SEATTLE, WA 98118



Format

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

K-1 U700

2-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-8 U900

4-12 Open

Schedule

Arrival: 8-8:45am

Rd. 1 - 9am

Rd. 2 - 10:30am

Rd. 3 - 11:45am

Lunch

Rd. 4 - 1:15pm

Rd. 5 - 2:30pm

Awards ~ 3:45pm

Eligibility

Open to all students in
grades K-12 as of the
2024-25 school year.
Out-of-state players
welcome!

Entry Fee

\$40. Free for Detective Cookie
Chess Club students. Scholarships
available upon request. Max of 150
players; please register early.

Awards

Trophies awarded to the top-
finishing players in each section.
Team trophies awarded to the top 5
finishing teams (top 4 scores from
same school comprise team score)
across all sections. Medals for first-
timers, best female player, best
dressed, and biggest upset win in
each section.

Rating

NWSRS rated. Open sections also
US Chess Rated. Higher of current
NWSRS or April US Chess rating
will be used to determine section
and pairings.

**WA State Elementary
Qualifier!**

Registration

Register online at
nwchess.com/onlineregistration
Pay by
Debit/Credit/PayPal/Zelle/SettleKing.
For credit, debit, and PayPal payments,
a processing fee of 4% will be added
on, so consider saving by using Zelle or
SettleKing instead. 100% preregistered,
no on-site entries. **Registration +
payment deadline April 5th @ 5pm.** No
registrations accepted or refunds offered
after the deadline.

Clocks

Chess clocks will be used from the start in
the Open sections. Clocks not required
for the U700, U800, and U900 sections,
until a judge places one into unfinished
games set for G/10; +5 after 35 minutes
of play.

Questions?

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
206-769-3757,
washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

2025 Western States Regional Chess Championship for Girls & Women



Format

A regional tournament open to all female chess players in three sections.

Megan Lee Championship

A 5-round, G/60; +30 Swiss over two days (Sat-Sun). Tri-rated in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE. Rds.: Sat. @ OCA Seattle: 9am, 1pm, 5pm. Sun. @ Chinook: 9am, 4:30pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Divya Deshmukh U1300

A 1-day, 5-round, G/40; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & US Chess dual rated. Rds.: Sun. @ Chinook: 9am, 10:45am, 1pm, 4:30pm, 6pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Carissa Yip U700

A 1-day, 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & US Chess dual rated. Rds.: Sun. @ Chinook: 9am, 10:30am, 1pm, 4:30pm, 6pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Prize Fund: \$2,500 (Guaranteed, thanks to generous grants and donations from US Chess & My Chess World.)

Championship:

1st - 3rd: \$400, \$260, \$180
1st U1800/U1600/U1400: \$60

U1300:

1st - 3rd: \$180, \$140, \$110
1st U1200/U1000/U800: \$60

U700:

1st - 3rd: \$140, \$110, \$80
1st U600/U400/U200/unrated: \$60

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$10/round
Best Dressed: \$10
Best Etiquette: \$10
Kindness & Spreading Joy: \$10
Best Mother/Daughter Team: \$20

Sat-Sun, April 12-13, 2025

Sat – Orlov Chess Academy – Seattle

7212 Woodlawn Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115

Sun – Chinook Middle School

2001 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



Entry Fee: \$50 if postmarked or online by 4/5, \$60 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, and US Chess 2000+. Maximum of 30 players in Championship section and 150 players total, please register early.

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

Rating: Highest of April US Chess or current NWSRS rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Memberships: US Chess membership required. Membership must be paid at the time of registration.

WA State Elementary Qualifier!

Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/SettleKing.

Registration and payment deadline: Fri. 4/11 @ 5pm.

For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a processing fee of 4% will be added on, so please consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead.

Payment is also available via Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com).

Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation, c/o Orlov Chess Academy – 4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052.

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757,
washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

Fun Side Events!

Workshop for Girls and Women: Sun @ 12-1pm.
Includes complementary pizza lunch!

FM Megan Lee Simul: Sun @ 2:15-3:45pm.
EF: \$25. Max 25 players, please register early.

Puzzle Solving Competition: Sun @ 4-4:30pm. EF: \$10.



Samantha Smith Scholastic

Josh Sinanan

The inaugural Samantha Smith Scholastic chess tournament took place on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at Samantha Smith Elementary School in Sammamish. The event offered a rare Wednesday afternoon format due to weekend scheduling constraints at the school, with the first round beginning at 2:30 PM on Wednesday afternoon and subsequent rounds running every hour. Since Wednesday is an early release day for many Eastside schools, the schedule worked out well, since many of the attendees from the host Samamtha Smith team were already on site.

A strong showing of 100 scholastic chess players in grades K-7 participated in the event, with the majority hailing from the Sammamish/Issaquah area and schools on the Sammamish Plateau. The field was split across four sections parsed by grade and rating: K-3 U700, 4-6 U800, K-3 Open, and 4-12 Open. All games were dual NWSRS and US Chess rated, which helped players establish or update their local and national ratings in preparation for upcoming State and National competitions.

The Samantha Smith Elementary Chess Team, led by chess enthusiast and former ship captain Peter Zou, is one of the fastest growing chess programs in the State and is quickly establishing itself amongst Washington's strongest Elementary chess teams. The efficient and fast-paced structure of an afternoon tournament hosted on a weekday appealed to those with busy weekend schedules who might otherwise not have been able to attend. The afterschool start time made it easy and convenient for the Samantha Smith team, which comprised about 70% of the field, to attend. It remains to be seen if this model can be emulated successfully by other Elementary programs in the future.

While the event drew from primarily a Sammamish/Issaquah base, players from the following cities represented

in the five-round Swiss tournament: Sammamish, Gig Harbor, Redmond, Bellevue, and Seattle. The event was hosted by Samantha Smith Chess Club, organized by Captain Peter Zou, and directed by WCF Vice President

Rekha Sagar with assistance from Alex Byelashov and Michael Shapiro. Many thanks to the amazing chess families and volunteers who contributed to this fantastic event! Congratulations to the trophy winners:

Samantha Smith Scholastic Prizes

Section Prizes: Trophies

Section	K-3 U700	4-6 U800	K-3 Open	4-12 Open
1st Place	Henry Bogomolov	Vihaan Gaddam	Jeremy Ge	Peng-Ruei Pan
2nd Place	Pradhyun Sai Battala	Derek Xu	Easton Ren	Eugene Chou
3rd Place	Akash Phadnis	Maya Burmistrov	Emma Ge	Seojoon Oh
4th Place	Aaron Liu	Parth Anant Sundaram	Sofia Byelashova	Alex Ye
5th Place	Adwik De	Eric Peng	Suchir Iyer	Armin Puranik
6th Place	Stavya Sharma	Anay Sane	Aakash Bysani	Darya Byelashova
7th Place	Ananya Sreshta Devavarapu	Saanvi Phaneesh	Eason Chen	Shashwat Pranav Iyer
8th Place	Jeremy Li	Samay Sajeeth	Jiyong Ruan	Jinhan Zou
9th Place	Lucas Deng	Arjun Kini	Advit Goel	Neil Upasani
10th Place	Maitri Vatsan	Akshay Sharma	Peng-Yu Pan	Vidyuth Nandakiran

Team Prizes: Trophies will be awarded to the top four players from the top five finishing teams (top four scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections.

Place	Team (School)	Team Score (pts)
1st	Samantha Smith Elementary	19
2nd	Christa McAuliffe Elementary	14
3rd	Somerset Elementary	7.5
4th	Discover Elementary	7.5
5th	Sunny Hills Elementary	7

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

Section	Best Female Player	Best Dressed	Biggest Upset Win
K-3 U700	Ananya Sreshta Devavarapu		Ruiping Xu (314 pts)
4-6 U800	Maya Burmistrov		Parth Anant Sundaram (208 pts)
K-3 Open	Sofia Byelashova		Aakash Bysani (315 pts)
4-12 Open	Darya Byelashova		Shravan Gokul (293 pts)

WA Spring Mini-Teams

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP



Sunday, April 13, 2025

Chinook Middle School - 2001 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

FORMAT: A 5-round, Team (3-player) Swiss-paired tournament in four sections: **K-3, 4-6, 7-12,** and **Parents/Friends.** K-12 players may play up into higher grade sections and the Parents/Friends section is for post-high school players only. See "Scoring" and "Procedure" below for more information.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all students registered in grades K-12 and their parents/friends. Players are allowed to form their own 3-player teams, or else the TD will compose additional teams from the remaining individuals. Teams will be counted in the group of the oldest (by grade) player.

SCHEDULE: Arrival: 8:00- 8:45am. Rounds at 9:00am, 10:30am, 11:45am, lunch, 1:15pm, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

TIME CONTROL: G/25; +5. Late default: 15 minutes.

ENTRY FEE: \$50 (per player) by 4/6, \$60 after. Room for 150 players.

RATING/MEMBERSHIPS: Dual NWSRS & US Chess rated; US Chess membership required. Higher of US Chess Regular April supplement, or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings. Unrated players will count as follows for avg team rating: K-3: 175, 4-6: 500, 7-12: 950, Parents/Friends: 1300.

AWARDS: Amazon Gift Cards awarded to each player from the top-finishing teams in each section:
K-3: 1st – 3rd: \$70-60-50. 1st U700 avg: \$40.
4-6: 1st – 3rd: \$70-60-50. 1st U800 avg: \$40
7-12: 1st – 3rd: \$70-60-50. 1st U900 avg: \$40.
Parents/Friends: 1st – 3rd: \$70-60-50. 1st U1000 avg: \$40

Special Prizes (per section): Medals for first timers, best all-female team, and biggest upset win (by avg team rating). Highest-finishing team with all members from the same school: \$30. Best parent + child team (as scored by total number of points): \$30.

PROCEDURE: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Each round, a Team vs Team pairing will be announced, each Team's Board 1, 2, and 3 will play the other respective team's Board 1, 2, 3. Please contact Organizer Siva Sankrithi (sivas108@gmail.com) for any pre-determined teams. Team information will be kept on a spreadsheet [HERE](#).

THE DETAILS: Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/Zelle/SettleKing. For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a processing fee of 4% will be added on, so consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead. To register your team, please fill out the [Team Registration Form](#). Any **team member requests** must be received by Siva (either via the above form or email) by 5:00pm **Friday Apr. 11**, no exceptions. Players who register in the final 24 hours, along with those who have not registered a team, will be placed on a composed team. **100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Fri., April 11 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be withdrawn from the tournament.

SCORING: Standings based on Team Points. Each team receives 1 Team Point for winning a match (i.e., scoring 2.0 points or more across all three players), while the team losing the match gets 0 Team Points for that round. If a match is drawn (i.e., each team scores 1.5 points), both teams receive 0.5 Team Points. If needed to break ties in the final standings, total Board Points will be used (i.e., the total of the team members' individual scores).

QUESTIONS?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757,

WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Organizer: Siva Sankrithi, sivas108@gmail.com

Monroe Winter Rapid Championship

Josh Sinanan

The Monroe Winter Rapid Championship took place on Saturday, December 7, 2024, at the Monroe Community Senior Center. WCF Co-Vice President Rekha Sagar, who is herself a Monroe resident, set up, organized, and ran the event. The tournament attracted players across three sections named after local female chess legends: Chouchan Airapetian Championship, Selina Cheng U1300, and Lois Ruff U700. Chouchan Airapetian is an experienced chess coach, organizer, promoter, former US Women's Championship contender, and WCF Girls' & Women's Chess Director. Selina Cheng is the reigning Washington State Girls Champion, a star student at Detective Cookie's Chess Club in Seattle, and a junior liaison to the WCF board of directors. Lois Ruff is a long-time tournament player in the Seattle area whose career spanned three decades and achieved a peak rating of 1474 in the late 90's.

The 26-player event, co-hosted by WCF and the Monroe Chess Club had slightly lower than expected attendance likely due to the proximity to the Washington Class Championships, which were held in Redmond on the previous weekend. Participants in the Monroe Winter Rapid Championship ranged from unrated to master and hailed from cities throughout the Pacific Northwest including Sultan, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Mill Creek, Bothell, Duvall, Marysville, Maple Valley, Redmond, Monroe, and Sammamish.

NM Vidip Kona (2136 → 2149, 5.0) of Duvall topped the eight-player Chouchan Airapetian Championship section with a perfect five points from five games, defeating his nearest rivals Thahir (1710), Phan (1645), and Yu (2120) along the way. Two up-and-coming chess warriors shared second/third place honors two-points back: Ihsan Mohamed Nedumpurakkal Thahir (1710 → 1732,

3.0) of Redmond and James Phan (1645 → 1668, 3.0) of Bothell. A pair of chess pioneers, FM Peter Yu (2120 → 2100, 2.5) of Bothell and Rhadean Rubaiyat (1584 → 1602, 2.5) of Redmond, split the fourth-place prize to cover their gas money.

In the eight-player Selina Cheng U1300 section, young Komansai Kamisetty (721 → 904, 4.0) of Bothell emerged victorious with an impressive four points from five games, dropping only a single game to dark horse Ryan Lai (1088) in the third round. Three chess musketeers shared second-fourth place honors with three points apiece: Ryan Lai (825 → 853, 3.0) of Sammamish, Captain Fuxing (Peter) Zou (838 → 888, 3.0) of Sammamish, and Stephen Marsh (unrated → 1148, 3.0) of Marysville.

Monroe chess performer Dinesh Poka (701 → 658, 4.5) danced the "Chess Polka" won the ten-player Lois Ruff U700 with an undefeated 4.5 points from five games, allowing a single draw to Arjun Savaram (288) in the second round. Two rising chess stars, Ryan Kakar (597 → 577, 3.5) of Snohomish



Ishaan Prasad. Photo credit: Rekha Sagar.

and Tejal Guruswamy (148 → 357, 3.5) of Bothell, captured second/third place a full-point back. Youngsters Ishaan Prasad (149 → 266, 3.0) of Monroe and Abhinav Manikandan (131 → 283, 3.0) of Snohomish split the fourth place prize, each with a solid "plus one" score.

In addition to the overall prizes, several "special" prizes were also awarded in each section, for categories including Best Female Player, Best Dressed, Biggest Upset Win, Best Senior Player, and Kindness/Spreading Joy. Congratulations to the winners:

Monroe Winter Rapid Championship

Prize Fund - \$750 based on 30 paid entries.

Chouchan Airapetian Championship: \$100-75-50-38.

Selina Cheng U1300: \$75-50-40-30.

Lois Ruff U700: \$75-50-40-30.

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
Chouchan Airapetian Championship	Vidip Kona	Ihsan Moha Nedumpurakkal Thahir James Phan	Peter Yu Rhadean Rubaiyat	
Selina Cheng U1300	Komansai Kamisetty	Ryan Lai Fuxing Zou Stephen Marsh		
Lois Ruff U700	Dinesh Poka	Ryan Kakar Tejal Guruswamy	Ishaan Prasad Abhinav Manikandan	

Section	Best Female Player	Best Dressed	Biggest Upset Win	Best Senior Player	Kindness/Spreading Joy
Chouchan Airapetian Championship	N/A	N/A	Luke Dale	Paul Victor	Jude Merritt
Selina Cheng U1300	N/A	Tavishna Nandeesh	Phoenix Armitage-Selig	Nandeesh Yellappa	Elliot Golan
Lois Ruff U700	Tapasya Nandeesh, Aishini Reddy	Naksh Reddy Bodanapu	Arjun Savaram	N/A	Arjun Reddy Bodanapu

Co-hosted by Western WA University & WA Chess Federation



Bellingham Open

Sunday, April 20, 2025



Western WA University – Viking Union Building: Multipurpose Room
516 High Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Highest finishing WA resident in the Whatcom Open seeded into the 2026 WA State Championship – Challengers section.

Format: A 5-round Swiss tournament in two sections: Whatcom Open and Fairhaven U1700.

Entry fee: \$35 by 4/13, \$40 after. Free entry for WWU students. Need-based scholarships are available upon request. Maximum of 150 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: At-site registration & check-in: 9:15-10:15am. Rounds (5): 10:30am, 12pm, 2pm, 3:30pm, 5pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 6:30pm or asap. Players whose games run long may request a late start for the next round.

Time Control: G/30; +10 sec. increment per move starting from move 1.

Rating: Dual US Chess and NWSRS Rated. Higher of current NWSRS or April 2025 US Chess Regular Rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Memberships: US Chess membership required.

Prize Fund: \$1,400 (based on 80 paid entries)

Whatcom Open: 1st – 3rd: \$240-\$180-\$120. 1st U1900/U1800/U1700: \$50

Fairhaven U1700: 1st – 3rd: \$140-\$100-\$80, 1st U1500/U1300/U1100/U900: \$50, 1st Unrated: \$50

Special Prizes (per section): Best Upset Win: \$25, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$25, Best Dressed: \$20.

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. **Online registration + payment deadline: Saturday, April 19 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from the waitlist will be offered a spot. At-site registration: 9:15-10:15am. On-site payment available by cash, check made out to "WCF", SettleKing, Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com) or Venmo (@WChess).

Questions – Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

Washington Junior Invitational

(Liu tops Closed, Summerfield sizzles in Invitational, Ren reigns supreme in Rising.)

Josh Sinanan

The 2024 Washington Junior Invitational Chess Championship took place December 21-22 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue concurrently with the co-located Washington Winter Chess Classic.

The Caruana Closed, named in honor of the reigning four-time US Chess Champion GM Fabiano Caruana, consisted of an elite G/90; +30 six-player round robin featuring several of the highest rated junior players in Washington State. The 20-player So Invitational, honoring Filipino American GM Wesley So, was run as a five-round, G/90; +30 Swiss. The nine-player Aronian Rising, named in honor of Armenian American GM Levon Aronian, was run as a five-round, G/45; +15 double Swiss in which players played two games against each opponent, one as white and one as black.

Both the Caruana Closed and So Invitational sections and offered tri-rated games in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE, while the Aronian Rising was dual US Chess and NWSRS rated. With three rating systems operational in Pacific Northwest events, ambitious youngsters are always interested in improving their local (NWSRS), national (US Chess) and world (FIDE) ratings. The tournament was organized by Washington Chess Federation and directed by the fantastic team of FIDE Arbiter Manunthion Atikankhotchasee, WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, and WCF Scholastic

Director Allen Messenger.

Skyline High School sophomore NM Austin Liu (2184 → 2194, 4.0) of Sammamish convincingly won the Caruana Closed with an impressive four points from five games. For his efforts, Austin earns the seed into the Championship section of the 2025 Washington State Championship, taking place in February in Seattle! Chess minimalist Ryan Min (2087 → 2103, 3.5) of Bellevue earned second place a half-point back, managing only a draw in a must-win situation against Liu in their fourth-round game. Redmond chess ranger Harishkumar Karthikeyan (2019 → 2038, 3.0) captured the third place prize with a solid four draws and only one win against the luckless Vijay Patankar (1900) in the second round.

A pair of high school chess practitioners, Albert Eksarevskiy (1841 → 1842, 4.0) of Redmond and William Summerfield (1802 → 1817, 4.0) of Mercer Island, proved themselves worthy of a share of first place in the 20-player So Invitational section. Eksarevskiy recovered well after a slow two-draw start and won his next three games in a row, including a clutch final-round win against Summerfield to force a blitz playoff. Summerfield prevailed in Armageddon to earn the seed into the Challengers section of the 2025 Washington State Championship. Odbayar Yondon (1805 → 1792, 3.5) of Sammamish earned third

place honors a half point back. Seven lucky chess loyalists shared the fourth place prize with three points apiece: Vijay Nallappa (1712 → 1708, 3.0) of Redmond, Arnav Gadde (1617 → 1611, 3.0) of Mill Creek, Brook Ayalew (1574 → 1603, 3.0) of Seattle, Yuchen Zhou (1615 → 1599, 3.0) of Bellevue, Owen Scollon (1520 → 1553, 3.0) of Bellingham, Veronique Joseph (1440 → 1537, 3.0) of Seattle, and Tanush Bhatia (1513 → 1519, 3.0) of Sammamish. It was an especially good weekend for Veronique Joseph, who also won the best female prize with an impressive tournament performance rating (TPR) of 1743!

Christa McAuliffe first grader Easton Ren (801 → 949, 7.0) of Sammamish claimed first place in the nine-player Aronian Rising section, half-a-point ahead of his nearest rivals. A pair of future chess masters, Bihe Liu (806 → 833, 6.5) of Bothell and Ryan Lai (853 → 852, 6.5) of Sammamish shared second/third place honors despite not playing against each other. Sammamish chess stormtrooper Alex Ye (843 → 858, 6.0) won the fourth place prize thanks to a 2-0 win in his final round game. Samantha Smith Elementary second grader Emma Ge (721 → 794, 5.0) of Sammamish earned the best female prize for her efforts.

The future of scholastic chess in the Pacific Northwest is certainly bright with so many talented scholastic chess warriors playing regular tournaments and

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fine tuning their games! Many thanks to all who contributed to this event and congratulations to the winners.

Austin Liu (2202) –
Vijay Patankar (1939) [B61]
WA Junior Invitational Hotel 116
Bellevue, WA (R3), December 21, 2024
[Ralph Dubisch]
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nc3 cxd4
5.Nxd4 Nc6
Old school. 5...a6 is the Najdorf.

6.Bg5 Bd7
Far more common here are lines arising from 6...e6: 7.Qd2 a6 (7...Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4) 8.0-0-0 Bd7 9.f4, for example.
7.Qd2
While 7.Bxf6 gxf6 is a bit unbalanced, with the doubled pawns and bishop-pair for Black, it's hard to argue White has any advantage.
7...Rc8 8.0-0-0 Nxd4 9.Qxd4 Qa5 10.f4 10.Bd2!?

10...Rxc3!?
Maybe just “!” is correct. It’s certainly Black’s best chance to make something of the position.
11.bxc3 Qb6?
Through White’s move 11 is still technically theory, with the only way for Black to stay in the game going something like 11...e5! 12.Qb4 (12.Qc4 d5!) 12...Qxb4 (12...Qxa2? 13.Qxb7±) 13.cxb4 Nxe4 14.Bh4 g5! 15.fxg5 Be7 16.Bc4 h6 17.Rhf1 Be6 (17...0-0!?) 18.Bxe6 fxe6∞. Now Stockfish still likes

Washington Junior Invitational 2024: Caruana Closed										
#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prize
1	1	NM Austin Liu	2202	W4	W5	W6	D2	D3	4	\$350
2	2	NM Ryan Min	2128	D3	W4	D5	D1	W6	3.5	\$320
3	3	Harishkumar Karthikeyan	2021	D2	W6	D4	D5	D1	3	\$280
4	4	NM Vidip Kona	2201	L1	L2	D3	D6	W5	2	
5	5	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	2016	D6	L1	D2	D3	L4	1.5	
6	6	Vijay Patankar	1939	D5	L3	L1	D4	L2	1	

Washington Junior Invitational 2024: So Invitational										
#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prizes
1	1-2	William Summerfield	1936	W14	W10	W5	W4	L2	4	Shared 1st/2nd:
2		Albert Eksarevskiy	1841	D17	D6	W11	W14	W1	4	Shared 1st/2nd:
3	3	Odbayar Yondon	1851	D13	W19	D4	D9	W5	3.5	3rd: \$220
4	4-10	Brook Ayalew	1695	W15	W8	D3	L1	D6	3	Shared 4th: \$29
5		Vijay Nallappa	1774	W16	W7	L1	W13	L3	3	Shared 4th: \$29
6		Veronique Joseph	1548	D11	D2	D7	W15	D4	3	Shared 4th: \$29
7		Owen Scollon	1703	W18	L5	D6	W11	D9	3	Shared 4th: \$29
8		Tanush Bhatia	1704	W12	L4	L14	W16	W13	3	Shared 4th: \$29
9		Arnav Gadde	1695	D19	D13	W16	D3	D7	3	Shared 4th: \$29
10		Yuchen Zhou	1693	W20	L1	L13	W19	W14	3	Shared 4th: \$29
11	11-12	Selina Cheng	1764	D6	W17	L2	L7	W15	2.5	
12		Shawn Li	1548	L8	L15	D19	W18	W17	2.5	
13	13-16	Andy Chen	1565	D3	D9	W10	L5	L8	2	
14		Sarang Sankrithi	1618	L1	W20	W8	L2	L10	2	
15		Jimmy Yang	1315	L4	W12	W17	L6	L11	2	
16		Gavin Shi	1548	L5	W18	L9	L8	W19	2	
17	17-18	Daniel Polonsky	1557	D2	L11	L15	W20	L12	1.5	
18		Krishang Gupta	1479	L7	L16	H---	L12	W20	1.5	
19	19	Oliver He	1454	D9	L3	D12	L10	L16	1	
20	20	Jinhan Zou	1308	L10	L14	H---	L17	L18	0.5	

Washington Junior Invitational 2024: Aronian Rising															
#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Total	Prizes
1	1	Easton Ren	1178	W3	W3	W7	W7	L5	W5	W4	D4	L2	D2	7	1st: \$88
2	2-3	Bihe Liu	1102	W9	W9	L4	D4	W6	L6	W5	D5	W1	D1	6.5	Shared 2nd/3rd: \$77
3		Ryan Lai	1063	L1	L1	W8	W8	L4	W4	W9	W5	D5	D5	6.5	Shared 2nd/3rd: \$77
4	4	Alex Ye	1173	D5	D5	W2	D2	W3	L3	L1	D1	W8	W8	6	4th: \$65
5	5-7	Emma Ge	1006	D4	D4	W6	W6	W1	L1	L2	D2	L3	D3	5	Best Female Player
6		Ananya Sabarish	1049	H---	H---	L5	L5	L2	W2	H---	H---	B---	B---	5	
7		Skyler Qin	1125	W8	W8	L1	L1	H---	H---	H---	H---	H---	H---	5	
8	8	Yuwen Qu	884	L7	L7	L3	L3	W9	W9	B---	B---	L4	L4	4	
9	9	Talen Tan	494	L2	L2	B---	B---	L8	L8	L3	L3	U---	U---	2	

White, who does, after all, have the extra exchange, but practice doesn't agree, so we'll call it unclear.

12.e5!± Qxd4 13.Rxd4!



Position after 13.Rxd4

13...dxe5?

13...Ng4 14.exd6 e6 15.Bh4± (or 15.Bd3±)

14.fxe5 Ng4 15.e6!

Classic interference. White wins at least a piece: 15...Bxe6 16.Bb5+; 15...fxe6 16.Rxg5.

1-0



Caruana Closed winner Austin Liu (L) and WCF President Josh Sinanan.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

One More From Washington Class

This game came in last month, but was too late for me to put it into the issue. Vijay Nallappa was tied for first place in the Class B section of the Washington Class Championship 2024: Kasparov section.—Editor.

**Vijay Nallappa (1713) –
Tanush Bhatia (1677) [D02]**

Washington Class (Class B)
Redmond, WA (R5), December 1, 2024
[Vijay Nallappa]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Bf4 e6 4.e3 c5
5.Nbd2 Nc6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bg3 0-0 8.Bd3
c4!?

I was definitely a bit surprised, as this is quite a rare move. More common is 8...b6.

9.Bc2 b5 10.e4 Nxe4 11.Nxe4 dxe4
12.Bxe4 Bb7 13.Qe2 Qc7 14.0-0 Bxg3
15.fxg3

I liked this more than 15.hxg3 for the open f-file.

15...Ne7 16.a4

16.Bxh7+ was much stronger after 16...Kxh7 17.Ng5+ Kg6 18.Nxf7!! Rxf7 19.Qg4+ Kh6 20.Rxf7 with a winning attack.

16...a6?

Trading off the powerful e4-bishop was best. 16...a6 allows me to quickly gain a kingside attack.

17.axb5 axb5



Position after 17...axb5

18.Rxa8

Again, 18.Bxh7+ was stronger due to 18...Kxh7 19.Ng5+ Kh6 20.Rxa8 Bxa8 21.Rxf7 Rxf7 22.Nxf7+, where there is more than enough compensation for the piece. However, 18.Rxa8 is also winning.

18...Bxa8 19.Bxa8 Rxa8 20.Ng5 Nf5

If 20...Rf8, 21.Nxe6 fxe6 Qxe6+

21.Nxe6 Qc6 22.Rxf5

I decided to trade into an endgame where I was up a pawn. The pawn on e6 is also a permanent weakness.

22...fxe6 23.Re5 Ra6 24.Rc5 Qe8 25.h3
Qd7 26.Qe5

I have too many threats: Rc7, Rxb5, and Qb8+.

26...Rd6 27.Rxb5 Rd5 28.Qb8+ Qd8
29.Qxd8+ Rxd8 30.Rb7

The rook endgame is clearly winning.

30...e5 31.dxe5 Rd5 32.e6 Kf8 33.Rf7+
Kg8 34.Rd7 Rf5 35.Rd8+ Rf8 36.e7 Re8
37.Rxe8+ Kf7 38.Rh8 Kxe7 39.Rxh7
Kd6 40.Rxg7 Kc5 41.h4 Kb5 42.h5 Ka4
43.Rb7 Ka5 44.Rb4 Ka6 45.h6 Ka5
46.h7 Ka6 47.h8Q Ka7 48.Qb8+ Ka6
49.Qb6#

1-0

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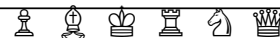
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Washington Class Puzzle Competition Solutions

(Puzzle set was published on page 19 of the February 2025 Issue)

Valentin Razmov

#1: FEN: 3r1qr1/pR1bk3/1b1p2Q1/
N4p1p/1PP2P2/4N3/4R2P/4B1K1 w - - 0 1
Q: White to move and mate in 1.
A: 1.Nc6#

#2: FEN: 3r1q2/2b1kp2/1RQ5/pK2N3/8/1P6/8/8 w - - 0 1
Q: White to move and mate in 2.
A: 1.Ng6+! fxf6 2.Qe6#

#3: FEN: 8/4QKp1/6rk/7p/6pP/6P1/8/8 w - - 0 1
Q: White to move and mate in 2.
A: 1.Kg8! followed by 2.Qxg7# or 2.Qg5#

#4: FEN: r1b1rk2/ppp3p1/2n4p/3B1q1Q/3PN3/8/
PP3PPP/4RRK1 w - - 0 1
Q: White to move and mate in 3.
A: 1.Qxe8+! Kxe8 2.Nf6+ and 3.Re8#

#5: FEN: 8/8/8/4b3/6p1/7k/4NK2 b - - 0 1
Q: Black to move and win.
A: 1...Bd3+! 2.Nxd3 g2+

#6: FEN: rn3rk1/1b1q1ppp/p2bnp2/1p6/3N4/
PP2PN2/1BQ1BPPP/2R2RK1 b - - 0 1
Q: Black to move and win material.
A: 1...e5! 2.Nf5 Be4 3.Bd3 Qxf5 (with possible continuation
4.Nh4 Bxd3 5.Nxf5 Bxc2 6.Rxc2 Ne8 7.Rd1 Bc7 -+)

#7: FEN: 1r2r1k1/pB3p2/6b1/6Rp/P5p1/2N1P1P1/
n4P1P/2R3K1 w - - 0 1
Q: White to move and win material.
A: 1.Rxg6+! fxf6 2.Bd5+ Kg7 3.Nxa2!

#8: FEN: 8/6kp/1Q2p1p1/p3K3/3PP1P1/P7/1P6/5q2 b - - 0 1
Q: Black to move and win.
A: 1...Qf6+ 2.Kd6 e5+ 3.Kc7 Qxb6+ 4.Kxb6 exd4 -+

Washington Senior Championship



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a tie for 1st place, two G/90 playoff games
will be played later in the year.*

#9: FEN: r5r1/5pBk/p1n2n2/1pb5/3pp2P/2P4P/
PP2BP2/1R1NK1R1 w - - 0 1

Q: White to move. What idea gives White their best chance to survive? Explain.

A: 1.Rg5! (counterattacking while preparing to unpin the bishop) Rxg7 (1...Be7 2.Bxf6) 2.Rxc5

#10: FEN: 8/8/2p1rp2/2P2R2/1P2P2p/4KPk1/8/8 w - - 0 1

Q: White to move. How can White press for a win in this endgame?

A: 1.Rf4! h3 2.Rg4+ Kh2 3.Rg6! +-

#11: FEN: 6k1/3n1p1p/q2B2p1/3P4/5QP1/7P/5PK1/8 b - - 0 1

Q: Black to move. What should be Black's defensive plan? Explain.

A: 1...Qd3! 2.Qf3 Qxf3+ 3.Kxf3 Nf6, or (almost as good) 1...Qb5 2.Qf3 (2.Qd4 Qb6) 2...Nb6 3.Qf6 Nd7!

Idea: Blockade and put pressure on White's d-pawn, while avoiding the trade of queens, unless that pawn will be won too.

#12: FEN: 3q1rk1/pb3p2/4pn1Q/3p4/7P/b1PB4/
P1PK1PP1/3R3R b - - 0 1

Q: Black to move. How should Black defend against White's strong attack?

A: 1...Ba6!! 2.Bxa6 (2.Ke1 Bxd3 3.Rdxd3 Ng4) 2...Ne4+ 3.Ke1 Qb6!

#13: FEN: 4q3/ppp2k2/2n2p1p/8/4r3/5N1P/PP3P2/3QR1K1
w - - 0 1

Q: White to move and win.

A: 1.Ng5+! hxg5 (1...fxg5 2.Qf3+) 2.Qh5+ Kf8 3.Qh8+ Kf7
4.Qh7+ Kf8 5.Rxe4 +-

Note, 1.Qd5+ Re6 2.Re4 Qc8 3.Rg4 Qd8 is a distant second best, giving Black reasonable practical chances to draw.

#14: FEN: r2r2k1/5pbp/1pq3p1/3npb2/p7/2P1BP2/
PP1NBQPP/R4RK1 b - - 0 1

Q: Black enjoys spatial advantage and active pieces. How should Black best proceed? Explain.

A: 1...a3! (creating weaknesses in White's position that can be exploited) 2.bxa3 Qxc3

#15: FEN: r3r1k1/1pq2pp1/2pR3p/8/p1P1p2b/
P1B1P1NP/1PQ2KP1/3R4 b - - 0 1

Q: Black has sacrificed material to put pressure. How should Black proceed? Explain.

A: 1...c5! (leaving White's rook pinned and vulnerable; otherwise White will support it with c4-c5.) 2.Qd2 (or 2.Be1 Bxg3+ 3.Kxg3 Re6) 2...Re6 (taking advantage of the pins on d6 and g3)

#16: FEN: 8/8/8/8/1R4K1/p3k3/r7 w - - 0 1

Q: White to move and draw. Explain.

A: 1.Rb2+! Kd3 2.Rg2! Kc3 3.Kg4! Kb3 4.Rg3+ Kb4 5.Rg2 =

Idea: Keeping Black's rook tied down to the defense of the a-pawn while giving distant side checks (and shielding White's king from checks simultaneously) in order to keep Black's king away from the defense of its own pawn. This is a version of the famous Vancura drawing technique.

Designed and compiled by Valentin Razmov

https://chess.com/member/coach_valentin



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Redmond Marriott

7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

Format: A 6-round Swiss tournament in 3 sections: **Open, Premier & Rising.**

Schedule: 3-day or 2-day option; up to 2 byes available.

Rating: Dual rated - US Chess & Northwest, plus FIDE rated in Open section.

Fun Side Events:

- Adult Swiss (Classical TC)
- Scholastic Championship
- Women's & Girls' Workshop
- Puzzle Solving Competition
- Rapid Championship
- Chess960 Championship
- "Knight-Time" Blitz
- And More...

Online Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

TOURNAMENTS



Venue

7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115

[info & events calendar](#)

www.seattlechess.club

[entries & inquiries](#)

SCC Tournament Director

same address as above

– or –

contact@seattlechess.club

March 9

Format: 4-round Swiss. **Time Control:** Game/50 + 10 sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$25 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). **Prize fund:** sum of \$14/entry. **Prizes:** 1st (35% of prize fund), 2nd (27%), bottom half (by rating) 1st (22%), 2nd (16%). **Registration:** 9:45-10:15am. **Rounds:** 10:30am, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30pm. **Byes:** 1 half-pt., commit at registration. US Chess membership req'd.

March Tornado

March 22-23

See below.

Seattle Spring Open

March 7, 14, 21, 28

One US Chess-rated round per Friday night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm. **Time Control:** 40 moves/90 minutes w/10 sec. increment, followed by sudden death 60 minutes w/10 sec. increment. **Entry:** Free for SCC members, \$5/night others. Drop in for any round!

March Winds

Entry fees
We accept Paypal, cash and check for
tournament entry fees. No credit cards.
Paypal: <https://paypal.me/seattlechess>.

*Wednesdays are for
casual play. It's free!
Come anytime 7-11pm.*

SEATTLE SPRING OPEN

March 22 - 23, 2025

A 5-round Swiss in 2 sections – Open & Reserve (U1600)
with time control Game/90 + 10 second increment

Prize fund: \$1,500 based on 40 paid entries & 4 per prize group

OPEN: 1st \$400 2nd \$260 U1900 \$150 U1750 \$90

RESERVE: 1st \$250 2nd \$140 U1400 \$110 U1200 \$70 unr \$30

- ✦ **Entry fees:** SCC & Seattle U. CC members \$65, others \$80. After 3/17 add \$10.
- ✦ **Registration:** 9-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm Saturday, 10:30am & 2:30pm Sunday
- ✦ **Venue:** Seattle University, Sinegal Bldg., Room 100-110, 12th Ave. & E. Marion St. (southwest corner), Seattle 98122.
- ✦ **Byes:** 2 half-point byes available. Commit at registration for Sunday rounds.
- ✦ **Max 60 seats.** Sign up at <http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration>. US Chess membership required.

Washington Girls Championship



MAY 17-18, 2025

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - GREENLAKE
7212 WOODLAWN AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98115

Highest finishing Washington resident in the Championship section receives the title of Washington State Girls Champion and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2025 Haring National Girls Tournament of Champions, held concurrently with the US Open in early August.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections:

- Elena Donaldson Championship: A 2-day (Saturday-Sunday), 5-round G/90; +10 Swiss tournament. Open to all girls desiring to play for the title of WA State Girls Champion. Dual US Chess and NWSRS rated; US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sun. 10am, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 6:30pm. A tie for first place in the Championship section will be resolved later in the year by two G/90 playoff games.
- Katerina Rohonyan U1400: A 1-day (Saturday only), 4-round, G/40; +10 Swiss tournament. Dual US Chess and NWSRS rated; US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 11am, Lunch, 1:30pm, 3:30pm. Awards ~ 5:30pm.
- Naomi Bashkansky U800: A 1-day (Sunday only), 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss tournament. NWSRS rated; US Chess unrated, no US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sun. 9am, 10:15am, 11:30am, Lunch, 1:30pm, 2:45pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

Eligibility: Open to all girls in grades K-12 as of the 2024-25 school year. Out-of-state players welcome! Players must be under the age of 19 as of Sept 1, 2025.

Rating: Higher of current NWSRS or US Chess May supplement rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

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

Entry Fees: Donaldson Championship: \$50 by May 10, \$60 after. Rohonyan U1400/Bashkansky U800: \$25 by May 10, \$30 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, or US Chess 2000+. Maximum of 32 players total & maximum of 20 players in a section - please register early to secure your spot.

Registration: Online registration available at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/SettleKing. For credit, debit, and PayPal payments, a processing fee of 4% will be added on, so consider saving by using Zelle or SettleKing instead. **Registration + payment deadline is Friday, May 16 by 5pm.** No registrations or payments will be accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster, and spots will be offered to players on the waitlist.

Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards prizes awarded in each section (based on 30 paid entries).

Elena Donaldson Championship: 1st - 3rd: \$120, \$90, \$60, 4th - Chess book.

Katerina Rohonyan U1400: 1st - 3rd: \$60, \$45, \$30, 4th - Chess book.

Naomi Bashkansky U800: 1st - 3rd: \$60, \$45, \$30, 4th - Chess book.

Special Prizes (per section): Best Upset - Medal, Best Dressed - \$10, Kindness + Spreading Joy - \$10.

Questions? Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President, washingtongirlschessfederation@gmail.com

