



\$4.95

September 2025



Northwest Chess

September 2025, Volume 79-09 Issue 932

ISSN Publication 0146-6941

USPS publication 422390

Published monthly by the *Northwest Chess* Board.
To see the games from this issue online click:

[Issue Games Viewer](#)

To see photos from this issue click:

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POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to the Office of Record:

Northwest Chess c/o Orlov Chess Academy
4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M
Redmond, WA 98052-5164

Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, Washington
USPS periodicals postage permit number (0422-390)

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Ads and submissions must be received by the fifth of the month for the items to appear in the next issue:

**September 5 for the October issue;
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**Judged Best Magazine/Newsletter for 2009 and
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Front Cover

Owen Xu (Team WA) ponders his next move against
Kai Zhang at the 2025 WA vs BC Intermat.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Back Cover

Odbayar Yondon carefully adjusts his rook before the start
of his game at the Washington Father's Day Open.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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 submissions are subject to editing or revision. Send via U.S. Mail to:

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Answers to the puzzles (from page 35) in last month's issue.

(Puzzles designed by Gabriel Razmov. Adapted and compiled by Valentin Razmov, https://www.chess.com/member/coach_valentin)

Puzzle #1: Q: White to move and mate in 1.
A: 1.Bc8#

Puzzle #2: Q: White to move and mate in 2.
A: 1.Nxc6+! Rxc6 2.Qd7#

Puzzle #3: Q: White to move and mate in 2.
A: 1.Qh8+! Kxh8 2.Rxf8#

Puzzle #4: Q: White to move and mate in 3.
A: 1.Rxh7! Kxh7 2.Rh1+ Kg8 3.Rh8#

Puzzle #5: Q: White to move and win material.
A: 1.Qd3 g6 2.Qxa6

Puzzle #6: Q: Black to move and win material.
A: 1...e5! 2.Nxe5 Nxe5 3.Bxe5 Qa5+

Puzzle #7: Q: White to move and win.
A: 1.Ng5! Qd8 2.Rxf7

Puzzle #8: Q: Black to move and win.
A: 1...Rxd4 2.Rxa7 Rb4! 3.axb4 b2

Puzzle #9: Q: White to move and win. Show and explain your idea.
A: 1.Kc7! g2 (1...Kd5 2.Kb6) 2.Kb6 Kc4 3.Bc5—denying the Black king access to White's a-pawn, while stopping Black's g-pawn just in time.

Puzzle #10: Q: White's position looks lost. What is White's best chance to save the game? Explain.
A: 1.Re8+ Qd8 2.Rg8!!—a zugzwang forces a draw by stalemate or else a draw in a simple K+P vs K+P endgame.

Puzzle #11: Q: Black just started a tactic with ...Nfxe4. How should White defend? Explain briefly.
A: 1.fxe4 Nxe4 2.Bxg7! Nxd2 3.Bxf8—giving up a queen for adequate material, while eliminating some of Black's most dangerous attackers.

Puzzle #12: Q: Black's queen and king-side are under attack. Black to move. How to best proceed?
A: 1...Bxa3! 2.Nd4 Bxb2+ 3.Kxb2 Bg4 (3...Nf8) (3...Rxe1)

Puzzle #13: Q: White is under attack on several fronts. How can White avoid losing material?
A: 1.d5! Qb7 (1...exd5 2.cxd5 Qa4 3.Nxd6 Bxd6 4.Rxc8 Rxc8 5.Qf5 Rc2 6.Re1) 2.Nxd6 Rxd6 3.Rfd1

Puzzle #14: Q: What is Black's best chance to continue putting White under pressure? Explain.
A: 1...c5! 2.Rad1 (2.Red1 cxd4 3.cxd4 Rg4 4.Nxf3 Rxf3+!) (2.Re3 cxd4 3.Rxf3 dxc3 4.Nf5 d4) 2...cxd4 3.cxd4 Rxf3+! 4.fxg3 Qxg3+ 5.Kf1 f2!—breaking through in the center while constantly threatening a rook sacrifice on g3.

Puzzle #15: Q: Black to move. How can Black successfully convert their endgame advantage?
A: 1...f5! 2.Bc5+ (2.Rf4 Nc6 3.Bc5+ Kg7 4.Ke2 Rd5) 2...Kf7 3.Rg3 Rd5 (3...Nc6 4.Ke2 f4) 4.Ba3 Nc6

Puzzle #16: Q: White seems to be in serious trouble. White to move. How to best defend? Explain.
A: 1.Nc2+! Rbxc2 2.Bd4+!! Kxd4 3.h8=Q+ Rxh8 4.Kxc2—avoiding mate by forcing moves and eventually reaching a theoretical R vs N draw.

GM Kayden Troff Simul

(Bellevue, Washington, May 1, 2025)

Josh Sinanan

The Grand Knights Chess Academy and the Washington Chess Federation collaborated to co-host a simul with Grandmaster Kayden Troff on Thursday, May 1st at the roomy and luxurious Grand Knights facility in Bellevue.

This 12-board simul marked Troff's third such exhibition of the week just after playing at the Seattle Chess Club on Tuesday and the Issaquah Highlands Chess Club on Wednesday. Despite the relatively small number of players, the simul was nevertheless quite strong and demanded the Grandmaster's undivided attention on each move. Grand Knights Academy Founder and CEO Sloan Setiadikurnia and coach William Dann even jumped in at the last minute to spice up the competition!

The evening opened with opening remarks by Grand Knights Director Gelareh Golanbar, an introduction by WCF President Josh Sinanan, and a 30-minute lesson presented by GM Troff on a demo board in which he focused on the positional and strategic techniques developed by World Champion Anatoly Karpov. At the courtesy of the organizers, complimentary Papa John's pizza, fresh fruit, and beverages were provided for all attendees throughout the evening. The 12-board simul began around 6:45 PM with players ranging from unrated to expert in the vast playing hall of the Grand Knights facility. GM Troff had white on all boards and put pressure on his opponents from the get-go.

His brisk pace of play allowed for selective deep thinks in critical positions as they arose. After just two hours of play, all the games were wrapped up just, with several going well into the endgame. It was indeed a good "knight" for the two Grand Knights coaches, Sloan and William, who were the only two players to achieve victory against the Grandmaster! Redmond chess ringer Harishkumar Karthikeyan defended a level rook ending to earn a draw.



*Kayden Troff lectures on the finer points of Karpov-Spassky, Leningrad 1974 inspired by the positional guidance he received from his former coach GM Alex Chernin.
Photo Credit: Josh Sinanan.*



Congratulations to all the grand chess knights who battled against GM Troff:

Sloan Setiadikurnia
(2082, Bellevue)

Harishkumar Karthikeyan
(2027, Redmond)

Andrew Fletcher
(2025, Bellevue)

Rafael Palathingal
(1950, Bothell)

William Dann
(1642, Kirkland)

Vidur Ganesan
(1517, Bothell)

Jimmy Yang
(1490, Kirkland)

Jake Bravenboer
(1243, Newcastle)

Vidhyuth Arunkumar
(1218, Redmond)

Theodore Fan
(963, Bellevue)

Ankush Goyal
(907, Seattle)

Arman Sepehri
(unrated, Bellevue)

**Final Score:
GM Kayden Troff 9.5—
Simul Players 2.5**



Congratulations to the players who challenged themselves against their illustrious opponent.

Many thanks to Coach Sloan for compiling the games, some of which are presented here.

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Sloan Setiadikurnia (2082) [C29]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4
5.Qf3 Nc6 6.Bb5 Nxc3 7.dxc3 Qh4+
8.g3 Qe4+ 9.Qxe4 dxe4 10.Ne2 Bd7
11.Bf4 Nxe5 12.Bxd7+ Nxd7 13.Bxc7
Rc8 14.Bf4 Be7 15.0-0-0 Nb6 16.Nd4
0-0 17.Nf5 Rfe8 18.Rhe1 Bf8 19.Bd6
Re6 20.Bxf8 Rxf8 21.Nd6 Rd8 22.Nxe4
Rde8 23.g4 f5 24.gxf5 Rxe4 25.Rg1 Kf7
26.b3 Rf4 27.Rg5 Rf2 28.Rdgl Ree2
29.Rxg7+ Kf6 30.Rxh7 Rxc2+ 31.Kb1
Nd5 32.Rh6+ Ke5 33.Re1+ Kf4 34.Rh4+
Kg5

0-1

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Theodore Fan (963) [D02]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.Nf3 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Bf4 Nf6 4.e3 c5 5.Nc3
c4 6.Be2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Ne5 Nfd7 9.e4
Nf6 10.Bf3 Bb4 11.Bg5 Nc6 12.Nxc6
bxc6 13.e5 Be7 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.Bxf6
Qxf6 16.Re1 Re8 17.Qd2 Rb8 18.Rab1
e5 19.dxe5 Rxe5 20.Rxe5 Be6 21.Rbe1
Rd8 22.Qd4 Qe7 23.Bg4 Rd6 24.Bxe6
fxe6 25.f4 a6 26.f5 Qf6 27.Qc5 exf5
28.Re8+ Kf7 29.R1e7+ Kg6 30.Qe3 d4
31.Qg3+ Kh5 32.Rxg7 Qg6 33.Rxg6
Rxg6 34.Qf3+ Kg5 35.h4+ Kxh4 36.Qf4+
Kh5 37.Re7 Rxg2+ 38.Kxg2 h6 39.Re6
dxc3 40.Rxh6#

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Rafael Palathingal (1950) [C41]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 c6 3.Nf3 d6 4.h3 Nf6 5.g3
g6 6.Bg2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 Nbd7 9.b3
a5 10.Bb2 b5 11.d4 Qc7 12.d5 b4 13.Na4
cxd5 14.exd5 Bb7 15.c4 bxc3 16.Nxc3
Nc5 17.Rc1 Qb6 18.Ba3 Nfd7 19.Rc2
Rfe8 20.Nd2 Ba6 21.Nc4 Bxc4 22.bxc4
f5 23.Rb2 Qd8 24.Nb5 Ra6 25.Rbe2 Rb6
26.Qd2 Ra6 27.h4 e4 28.f3 Be5 29.f4
Bg7 30.Kh2 Kf7 31.Rb1 Bf8 32.Nd4 Qc7
33.Bh3 Nb6 34.Qc2 Ncd7 35.Rc1 Rc8
36.Qd1 Nc5 37.Bxc5 Qxc5 38.Rb2 Bg7
39.Ne6 Qa3 40.Rbc2 Bb2 41.Bxf5 Ke7

42.Rb1 Nxc4 43.Qe2 Qf3 44.Bg4 Qd3
45.Rcxb2

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Jimmy Yang (1490) [D02]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bf4 c5 4.e3 Nc6
5.Nc3 a6 6.dxc5 e6 7.Na4 Qa5+ 8.c3
Bxc5 9.Nxc5 Qxc5 10.Bd3 Bd7 11.0-0
0-0 12.Ne5 Qe7 13.Nxd7 Nxd7 14.Bg3
Rac8 15.Bc2 Nde5 16.Bxe5 Nxe5
17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qh5+ Kg8 19.Qxe5
Rc4 20.Rfd1 Qc5 21.Rd4 Rc8 22.Rxc4
Qxc4 23.Qd4 Qxd4 24.exd4 b5 25.a3
a5 26.Kf1 Kf8 27.Ke2 Rc4 28.Kd3 Ke7
29.h4 Kf6 30.g4 g5 31.h5 Kg7 32.f3 Kh6
33.Rc1 a4 34.Rb1 Rc7 35.b3 Ra7 36.bxa4
Rxa4 37.Rb3 Kg7 38.Kc2 Ra5 39.Kb2
Kh6 40.Ka2 Kg7 41.Rb1 Kh6 42.Kb3
Ra6 43.Rf1 Ra7 44.Ra1 Ra4 45.Ra2 Rc4
46.Rf2 Rc7 47.Kb4 Ra7 48.Ra2 Rb7
49.Kc5 Rc7+ 50.Kxb5 Rxc3 51.a4

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Vidur Ganesan (1517) [A36]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.c4 c5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 g6 4.e3 Bg7 5.Ne2
e6 6.Nbc3 Nge7 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 a6
9.0-0 0-0 10.b3 Qc7 11.Ba3 Re8 12.Ne4
Nxd4 13.Nd6 Rd8 14.exd4 Nf5 15.Nxf5
exf5 16.Re1 d6 17.Qd2 Bd7 18.Qf4 Bc6
19.d5 Bxa1 20.Rxa1 Be8 21.Qh4 h5
22.Bb2 f6 23.Qxf6 Rd7 24.Re1 Rdd8
25.c5 Bb5 26.c6 bxc6 27.dxc6 Rf8

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Arman Sepehri [D02]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nc6 3.d4 Bf5 4.Bg2
Nf6 5.0-0 e6 6.c4 Be7 7.Nc3 0-0 8.Bf4
Bd6 9.Ne5 Bxe5 10.dxe5 Nd7 11.cxd5
Ncxe5 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.Qb3 Nc5 14.Qb4
Qd6 15.Rad1 a5 16.Qa3 Qe7 17.Bxe5
Rad8 18.Nb5 c6 19.Bd6 Qd7 20.Bxf8
Qxd1 21.Qxc5 Qd7 22.Be7 Re8 23.e4
Bg6 24.Nd6 Rxe7 25.e5 Qc7 26.Qc1
b6 27.Qc4 Rd7 28.Qxe6+ Bf7 29.Qg4
Re7 30.Nxf7 Rxf7 31.e6 Re7 32.Rd1 a4
33.Rd7 Rxd7 34.exd7 Kf7 35.Bh3 Qd6
36.Qf5+ Ke7 37.Qe4+ Kf7 38.Qe8+ Kf6
39.d8Q+

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
William Dann (1642) [A01]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.b3 e5 2.Bb2 Nc6 3.e3 d5 4.Nf3 Bd6
5.Bb5 f6 6.c4 Nge7 7.Nc3 a6 8.Bxc6+
bxc6 9.d4 e4 10.c5 exf3 11.Qxf3 Bf5
12.cxd6 cxd6 13.0-0 h5 14.Ba3 Bg4
15.Qf4 Nc8 16.e4 Qa5 17.Na4 0-0 18.f3
Bd7 19.Bxd6 g5 20.Bc7 Qxa4 21.Qg3
Qxd4+ 22.Kh1 h4 23.Qe1 Ra7 24.Rd1
Qc5 25.Ba5 Re8 26.Bc3 Qf8 27.Qd2 Be6
28.f4 Nd6 29.fgx5 Nxe4 30.Qe3 Rh7
31.gxf6 Bg4 32.Qd4 Qf7 33.Rde1 Ng3+
34.Kg1 Ne2+ 35.Rxe2 Bxe2 36.Re1 Qa7
37.Kf2 Qxd4+ 38.Bxd4 Bh5 39.Rc1 Re2+
40.Kf1 Rc7 41.a4 Kf7 42.h3 Rc8 43.Bf2
Re4 44.Kg1 d4 45.Rc5 Be2 46.Be1
Kxf6 47.Bd2 Re5 48.Rc2 c5 49.Ba5 Bd1
50.Rf2+ Rf5 51.Rb2 Rb8

0-1

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Ankush Goyal (907) [A11]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 c6 3.Bg2 d5 4.Nf3 d4 5.0-0
c5 6.b4 Nc6 7.Qa4 Bd7 8.b5 Qa5 9.Qb3
Nd8 10.Ne5 e6 11.d3 Bd6 12.Bf4 Qc7
13.Nxd7 Nxd7 14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Nd2
Nf6 16.Qa3 0-0 17.Nb3 Nd7 18.Rad1
Qb6 19.e3 e5 20.Rfe1 Ne6 21.Qa5 Rfb8
22.a4 a6 23.Qxb6 Nxb6 24.a5 Na4 25.b6
Nc3 26.Ra1 Kf8 27.exd4 exd4 28.Rxe6
fxe6 29.Nxc5 Kf7 30.Nxb7 Ke7 31.Nc5
Kd6 32.Nb3 e5 33.c5+ Ke6 34.c6 Nd5
35.c7 Nxc7 36.bxc7 Rxb3 37.Bxa8 Kd7
38.Be4 g6 39.Rc1 Rc3 40.Rb1 Rxc7
41.Rb6 Ra7 42.Kg2 Kc7 43.h4

1-0

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Andrew Fletcher (2025) [A99]**
Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.b3 f5 2.Bb2 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 Be7



The spacious playing room at the Grand Knights Chess Academy in Bellevue played host to GM Troff's Thursday simul, the last of the three-part series. Photo Credit: Josh Sinanan.

5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.d4 Qe8 8.c4 Qh5
9.Nc3 Na6 10.e3 Bd7 11.Re1 Ne4
12.Nd2 Qxd1 13.Raxd1 Nxc3 14.Bxc3 c6
15.e4 f4 16.Bh3 Rad8 17.d5 e5 18.Bxd7
Rxd7 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.b4 Rb7 21.a3
Nc7 22.Nb3 Ne6 23.Rd3 fxg3 24.hxg3
Ng5 25.Kg2 Nf7 26.f4 Bf6 27.c5 dxc5
28.Nxc5 Re7 29.f5 Rc8 30.Red1 g6 31.g4
gxf5 32.gxf5 Kh8 33.Rd7 Rg8+ 34.Kf3
Rge8 35.Ne6 h6 36.Nc7 Rxd7 37.Rxd7
Re7 38.Rxe7 Bxe7 39.Ne6 Bd6 40.Kg4

1-0

5.b3 0-0 6.Bb2 b6 7.d4 Bb7 8.Ne5 Na6
9.c4 Qc8 10.Nc3 Rd8 11.cxd5 Nxd5
12.Nxd5 exd5 13.Rc1 Qe6 14.f4 f6 15.f5
Qd6 16.Nd3 c5 17.Nf4 Rac8 18.e3 Qd7
19.Qg4 Bf8 20.dxc5 Bxc5 21.Bd4 Bxd4
22.exd4 Re8 23.Ne6 Nc7 24.Rfe1 Nxe6
25.fxe6 Qd6 26.Rxc8 Bxc8 27.Qf5 Qb4
28.Rd1 Bxe6 29.Bxd5 Bxd5 30.Qxd5+
Kh8 31.Qd7 Qe7 32.Qxe7 Rxe7 33.Kf2
Kg8 34.Rc1 Kf7 35.Rc6 Ke8 36.Rc8+
Kd7 37.Rh8 g6 38.h4 Ke6 39.Ke3 Kf5+
40.Kf3 h5 41.Ra8 Rd7 42.Ke3 g5 43.Rf8
gxh4 44.gxh4 Re7+ 45.Kd3 Rg7 46.Re8
Kg4 47.d5 f5 48.Kd4 f4 49.d6 f3 50.Rf8
Kg3 51.Ke3 Rd7 52.Rg8+ Kxh4 53.Rg6
Rf7 54.Kf2 Kh3 55.Rg3+ Kh4 56.Rxf3
Rd7 57.Rf6 Kg5 58.Re6 h4 59.Kg2 a5

1/2-1/2

**Kayden Troff (2571) –
Karthikeyan Harishkumar (2062)**
[D02] Grand Knights Simul, 01.05.2025

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 e6 4.0-0 Be7

*Supporting and promoting chess related activities
throughout Washington State since 1946.*

Josh Sinanan
President

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NEW ADVENTURE SCHOLASTIC

CHESS TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



FORMAT

A 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss
tournament in four sections:

K-3 U700

K-3 Open

4-12 U900

4-12 Open

SCHEDULE

Rd. 1 – 9:00am

Rd. 2 – 10:30am

Lunch

Rd. 3 – 12:30pm

Rd. 4 – 1:45pm

Rd. 5 – 3:00pm

Awards ~ 4:30pm

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades
K-12 as of the 2025-26 school
year. Out-of-state players
welcome!

ENTRY FEE

\$50 by 9/20, \$60 after.
Room for 80 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards
awarded in each section:
1st – 5th: \$60–55–50–45–40.

Special Prizes (per section): Medals
for first-time players, best female
player, best dressed, and biggest
upset win. ***Top player (by TPR) in
each of the K-3 Open and 4-12
Open sections wins free entry
into the 2025 SPFNO!***

RATING

Dual NWSRS and US Chess rated,
with **US Chess membership
required in all sections.** Establish
or update your national rating!
Higher of current NWSRS or US
Chess regular rating will be used to
determine section and pairings.

CLOCKS + NOTATION

Chess clocks set to G/25; +5 will be used
from the beginning in all games. Chess
notation required in all sections except
for K-3 U700. All equipment is provided
courtesy of WCF.

REGISTRATION

Register online at
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by SettleKing/Zelle/Cash/Check.
**100% pre-registered, no on-site entries
or payments. Entry + payment
deadline Fri September 26 @ 5:00pm.**
No registrations accepted or refunds
offered after the deadline.

PROCEDURE

Pairings will be posted in the hallway
near the parent waiting area.

WA State Elementary Qualifier!

Questions?

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

A Conversation With FIDE Master Aziz Degenbaev

Ken Lee

Aziz Degenbaev (deh-gehn-bah-yev) is one of the newer faces to the Pacific Northwest chess community.

Originally from Bishek, Kyrgyzstan, Aziz moved to Seattle in 2023. At just 19 years of age, Aziz established an immediate presence in the Pacific Northwest chess scene winning many of the top tournaments with style and precision.

I sat down with Aziz to discuss the transformational power of chess, the myth of fast improvement, and what motivates him to keep studying chess every day.

Ken: Nice to meet you, Aziz. When did you first start playing chess?

Aziz: I started playing chess when I was seven years old.

Ken: What motivated you to start playing?

Aziz: My mom had a friend whose son played chess and also played the Komuz, which is the national

instrument of my country. She wanted me to follow in his footsteps. So, I played chess and the Komuz for several years. The chess club was just a two-minute walk from my house.

Ken: Did you love the game immediately?

Aziz: Actually no. I hated it. I was kind of a soft kid, and for the first

three years of chess competition I never medaled. I wanted to quit several times, but my mother wouldn't let me.

Ken: What turned it around for you?

Aziz: At the age of ten I started winning, and I transformed from a kid who wanted desperately to quit to a person who wanted to compete and win all the time.

Ken: What was instrumental in helping you make that transition?

Aziz: Looking back, I am thankful that my parents kept pushing me. They encouraged me to read books, work with my chess coach and play chess every single day. Of course, another big motivating factor was that I wanted to see my mother smile.

Ken: Do your parents play chess?

Aziz: No, they don't play chess, but thankfully they pushed me out of my comfort zone.

Ken: What was your favorite chess book at the time?

Aziz: It's a famous Russian chess book called *My System* by Aron Nimzowitsch. It's an older classic chess book.

[Editor's note: My System was written in German by the Latvian-born Danish Grandmaster Aron Nimzowitsch.]

Ken: How else did you progress in chess during your middle school years?

Aziz: My first coach was Baktygul Tilenbaeva. I worked with her for five years. I know she believed in me because

she patiently encouraged me during those early years.

Ken: What other ways did you change and grow as a player?

Aziz: As I competed in more tournaments. I became more confident and developed a killer instinct.

Ken: What other changes did you see in yourself?

Aziz: As I got older, my stamina slowly increased. I could focus throughout an entire tournament. Endurance is critical during long matches, and it often makes the difference between winning and losing.

Ken: What were other key steps in your development as a chess player?

Aziz: I think it becomes a matter of choice. By the time I reached 12, I made a choice to increase my attention on chess. That is when I started working with my first private coach. Emil Saper helped me grow as a player.

Ken: How many hours were you studying chess at that time?

Aziz: At the age of 12, I was devoting about three hours of study per day. By the time I turned 18, I was studying up to eight hours a day.

Ken: How did your training schedule break down?

Aziz: On Mondays, I worked on chess puzzles. On Tuesdays, I switched to middle game analysis. Wednesdays were reserved for end game study. On weekends, I would play lots of games online. Back in 2018, there was a lot of emphasis on studying openings because it was the hot topic. Looking back, I probably wouldn't have spent that much time studying opening theory until later in my career.

Ken: How did you make the transition to Seattle?

“Concentrate on your own individual journey as a chess player.”

Aziz: I decided to come to the USA, and I enrolled at Seattle Central College with a major in Computer Science.

Ken: Was it easy for you to plug into the Seattle chess scene?

Aziz: Yes, I went to a tournament at the Seattle Chess Club within two weeks after I arrived. I didn't have a US Chess rating, and I managed to win all five rounds. I think I've only lost one game since I moved here two years ago.

Ken: Did you get noticed quickly once you arrived in Seattle?

Aziz: I think I got noticed right away when I told them that I was a FIDE-rated player. It's rather interesting that I can travel to almost any part of the world and get a chess game. I speak Russian, Kyrgyz, and English, but for me chess is the ultimate universal language.

Ken: Do you work with a coach now?

Aziz: No, I continue to study on my own. I base my self-studies on my weaknesses. I just look at my games and work at my own pace. For me, this is just a natural way for me to work on things.

Ken: What have you observed about the chess scene in the Pacific Northwest?

Aziz: The kids in the Pacific Northwest are interesting. They are used to playing stronger players and are quite fearless. At the Washington Open tournament, I was playing some very strong young players. I actually sensed that they were stronger than me. They certainly were not intimidated by me.

Ken: How did you prevail?

Aziz: I eventually won because of my experience and training.

Ken: What tips do you have for improving quickly?

Aziz: In my opinion, you can't improve quickly. You have to train every day. You have to be passionate about chess. I tell players not to be afraid of losing. You must have the willingness to learn from your losses.

Ken: Do you have a vision for yourself of where you want to live and play in the future?

Aziz: At this point, I want to achieve my IM (International Master) title. I also want to continue to grow as a chess player and join a strong university chess team. My short list would include Webster University, St Louis University, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Ken: Do you have experience of playing on a chess team?

Aziz: Yes, I played on the Olympiad team for Kyrgyzstan in 2022. I achieved my main goal and played on board five. I didn't study and prepare enough in Chennai. I didn't play well during the actual Olympiad, and I was disappointed with my performance.

Ken: What did you learn from that experience?

Aziz: I learned that you have to change your mindset when you play team chess. You have to review all the games that are played and think about the goals of the team rather than focus on individual goals. It was a humbling experience.



Ken: How do you recover after a tough loss in chess?

Aziz: For me, I like to listen to music. It helps me get rid of my disappointment.

Ken: Any final bits of advice for chess players?

Aziz: It's important to remember to concentrate on your own individual journey as a chess player. It's not good to obsess about other players. That is their journey. While it's great to have goals and to track your progress, constant comparison to others will lead to frustration and disappointment.

Ken: I think your mother continues to be proud of you and will definitely smile when she reads this article!

Aziz: I think this is true. Thank you.



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Washington Father's Day Open

(The Galactic Report)

Mani Atikankhotchasee

A Galactic Congratulations!

From the Jedi Council of Chess...

In a thrilling battle across the stars of strategy and skill, we proudly declare the co-champions of the 2025 Washington Fathers Day Open: Kenobi U1800 division:

AFM Aadi Hetamsaria — 4.5/5 (Rating 1746)

Kenneth Yuodelis — 4.5/5 (Rating 1708)

Both warriors have proven themselves strong in the Force of chess. May their lightsabers (and rating points) continue to rise!

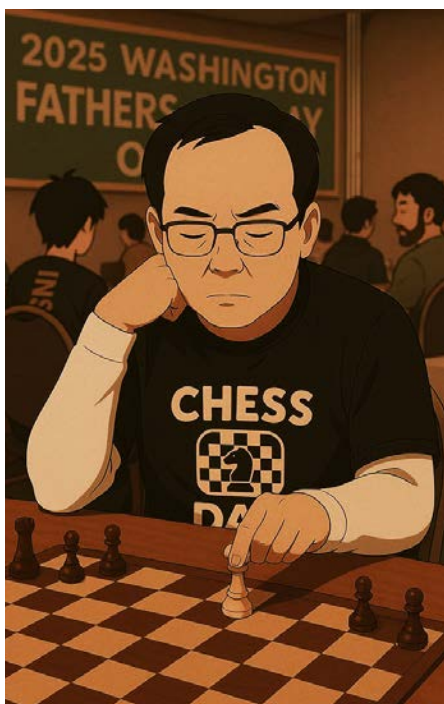


And a special salute to Shenghao Qin, honored with a triple title today:

Best Dad Player

Best Parent/Child Team

Best Dressed



His “Chess Dad” shirt was the perfect tribute to this Father’s Day galaxy-wide celebration — a true MVP of the day!

Thank you for bringing heart, style, and unforgettable vibes to the tournament.

A New Hope Rises in the Galaxy of Chess

From the outer reaches of the Solo U1400 system, two brave young padawans have emerged victorious...

Congratulations to the co-champions of the 2025 Washington Fathers Day Open: Solo U1400:

Easton Ren — 4.5/5 (Rating 1330)

Skyler Qin — 4.5/5 (Rating 1286)

These rising stars have shown great power in the Force — steady minds, sharp tactics, and fearless play. Their journey has only just begun.

The Force Was Strong With This One...

Final Transmission from the Skywalker Open

And now, from the top tier of today’s galactic battlefield —

we celebrate the mightiest warrior of them all in the Skywalker Open section:

Champion: NM Siddarth Meenakshi Sundaram

A flawless 5.0/5 performance

Rating 2433

A true Jedi Master in every round — undefeated, unstoppable, and in command of the Force!

Thank you to all players, families, and guardians who joined us on this Father’s Day journey.

Your presence brought joy, strength, and harmony to the galaxy of chess.

“Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is.” — Master Yoda

Until our next adventure...

Happy Father’s Day — and may the Force be with you.



Washington Father's Day Open

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 Washington Father's Day Open was held on Father's Day weekend, June 14-15, at Hotel 116 in Bellevue. Players traveling from multiple universes across the North American chess galaxy were represented in the two-day chess fest, including the cities of Seattle, Bothell, Bellevue, Redmond, Gig Harbor, Mountlake Terrace, Sammamish, Woodinville, Mill Creek, Brier, Clyde Hill, Los Angeles (California), Duvall, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Vancouver (British Columbia), Issaquah, Lynnwood, Kingston, Edgewood, Medina, Hunts Point, and Burnaby (British Columbia)!

WCF FIDE Liaison Mani Atikankhotchasee, WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger, and Chess Dad Alex Byelashov served as the chief tournament directors. The tournament attracted a whopping 94 players in three sections: the Skywalker Open, the Kenobi U1800, and the Solo U1400. Both the Skywalker Open and the Kenobi U1800 sections were triple rated in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE, which appealed to many up-and-coming chess warriors interested in establishing or improving their FIDE rating.

The intense five-round schedule, with three rounds of G/90; +30 on Saturday, appealed to serious and casual players alike. For those in favor of sleeping-in Saturday morning, a first-round half-

point bye was the popular choice, with seven players opting to jump in starting from the second round at 2:00 PM.

Jedi senior master Siddharth M. Sundaram topped the 31-player Skywalker Open with a perfect five points from five games. Along the way, Siddharth channeled the chess force and vanquished Jedi master apprentices Kona (2186), Porter (2299), and Wang (2239). Two rising members of the rebel alliance, NM Matthew Wilber and NM Vidip Kona, shared second/third place honors a full-point back with four points apiece.

FMs Ryan Porter and Ted Wang split the fourth-place prize, each with 3.5 points. Recent Interlake High School grad Pranav K. Anoop captured the first U2200 prize with 3.5 points thanks to a clutch final round win against the dangerous bounty hunter Yuchen Zhou (1741). A trio of intergalactic gladiators joined the resistance and earned the second U2200 prize with three points apiece: Harishkumar Karthikeyan, CM Vihaan Jammalamadaka, and CM Leonid Gavrysh. Four up-and-coming rebel leaders—Jeffrey Wei, Siddharth Shenoy, Akim Pikh, and Rafael Palathingal—earned the first/second U2000 prize, each with a solid "plus one" score.

Several players became one with the force and were each awarded a special prize for the biggest upset win,

best female player, best dressed, best dad player, and best parent/child team. Winning the biggest upset win prizes were Yuchen Zhou (round one, 302 points), Siddharth Shenoy (round two, 478 points), Vishnu Mohan (round three, 294 points), Siddharth Shenoy (round four, 477 points), and Akim Pikh (round five, 247 points). Veronique Joseph took home the Best Female prize with a tournament performance rating (TPR) of 1729, and reigning Washington State Champion FM Ryan Porter earned the Best Dad prize with a TPR of 2271. The stylish ewoks Siddharth Shenoy (Saturday) and Pranav K. Anoop (Sunday) were awarded the Best Dressed prizes for their fleek attire.

In the Kenobi U1800 section, two chess jedi grads, AFM Aadi Hetamsaria and Kenneth Yuodelis, both from Bellevue, topped the 28-player field each with an impressive 4.5 points from five games. Both warriors started off strong by winning their first four games against a field of chess wookies before drawing against each other in the final round. Jinmo Nam of Issaquah and Evan Takayoshi of Edgewood shared third/fourth place honors a half-point back with four points apiece.

The first/second U1700 prize was split between seven up-and-coming stormtroopers, each of whom scored three points from the five games: Rian Raja of Bothell, Lewis Ma of Bellevue,



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2025 Washington Fathers Day Open: Skywalker Open

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prize
1	1	NM Siddarth Meenakshi Sundaram	2433	W20	W10	W3	W4	W5	5	1st: \$392
2	2-3	NM Matthew Wilber	2209	W27	H---	H---	W23	W9	4	shared 2nd/3rd: \$262
3		NM Vidip Kona	2186	W15	W17	L1	W18	W13	4	shared 2nd/3rd: \$262
4	4-6	FM Ryan W Porter	2299	W21	W11	H---	L1	W15	3.5	shared 4th: \$87
5		FM Ted Wang	2239	D22	W24	W13	W12	L1	3.5	shared 4th: \$87
6		CM Pranav Kurungod Anoop	2161	D28	W29	L12	W21	W17	3.5	1st U2200: \$131
7	7-13	CM Vihaan Jammalamadaka	2108	W16	L13	W22	D15	D12	3	shared 2nd U2200: \$37
8		CM Leonid Gavrysh	2107	H---	D22	W25	L13	W24	3	shared 2nd U2200: \$37
9		Harishkumar Karthikeyan	2085	D29	W28	D23	W19	L2	3	shared 2nd U2200: \$37
10		Jeffrey Wei	1973	W26	L1	L18	W28	W23	3	shared 1st/2nd U2000: \$60
11		Akim Pikh	1953	W18	L4	L15	W25	W19	3	shared 1st/2nd U2000: \$60
12		Rafael Palathingal	1949	H---	W30	W6	L5	D7	3	shared 1st/2nd U2000: \$60
13		Siddharth Shenoy	1630	B---	W7	L5	W8	L3	3	shared 1st/2nd U2000: \$60
14	14-18	Pratik Thorwe	2043	L17	L15	W30	W22	D18	2.5	
15		Skylor T Chan	1821	L3	W14	W11	D7	L4	2.5	
16		Veronique Joseph	1782	L7	L21	B---	D20	X27	2.5	
17		Yuchen Zhou	1741	W14	L3	D21	W27	L6	2.5	
18		Vishnu Mohan	1679	L11	B---	W10	L3	D14	2.5	
19	19-26	NM Viktors Pupols	2200	W25	D23	H---	L9	L11	2	
20		Edward Li	1944	L1	D26	D28	D16	D21	2	
21		Erwin Mok	1937	L4	W16	D17	L6	D20	2	
22		Andrew Yin	1916	D5	D8	L7	L14	W28	2	
23		Odbayar Yondon	1887	X31	D19	D9	L2	L10	2	
24		Richard Lavoie	1851	H---	L5	W26	H---	L8	2	
25		Aiden Yin	1850	L19	X31	L8	L11	W29	2	
26		Thrinay Subramanian	1694	L10	D20	L24	D29	B---	2	
27	27	Siddharth Bhaskaran	1903	L2	H---	W29	L17	F16	1.5	
28	28-29	Aarav Bharathy Mohan	1793	D6	L9	D20	L10	L22	1	
29		Arnav Gadde	1750	D9	L6	L27	D26	L25	1	
30	30	Selina Cheng	1710	H---	L12	L14	U---	U---	0.5	
31	31	NM Vignesh Anand	2202	F23	F25	U---	U---	U---	0	

Evan Cen of Bellevue, Andy Chen of Bellevue, Imai Maharaja of Redmond, Oliver He of Sammamish, and Peng-Ruei Pan of Sammamish. Sambuddha S. Das of Sammamish and Naaditha Nawagamudewage of Lynnwood split the first/second U1500 prize each with a steady "plus one" score.

Several special prizes were also awarded to those who helped good prevail over evil in the chess galaxy. Winning the biggest upset prizes for their underrated efforts were ACM Terrick Evin (round one, 224 points), Kevin Zhang (round two, 104 points), Snehl Ghosh (round three, 100 points), and

Naaditha Nawagamudewage (round four, 113 points). Anyi Li of Mercer Island took home the Best Female Prize thanks to her TPR of 1285.

The well-dressed Ayaan Roy Chowdhury (Saturday) and Ziliang Ma (Sunday) were recognized for their classy ensembles.



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2025 Washington Fathers Day Open: Kenobi U1800

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prize
1	1-2	AFM Aadi Hetamsaria	1746	W13	W10	W6	W3	D2	4.5	shared 1st/2nd: \$305
2		Kenneth Yuodelis	1708	W22	W25	W8	W5	D1	4.5	shared 1st/2nd: \$305
3	3-4	Jinmo Nam	1709	W15	W11	W7	L1	W8	4	shared 3rd/4th: \$153
4		Evan Takayoshi	1692	L16	W18	W14	W12	W13	4	shared 3rd/4th: \$153
5	5-13	Rian Raja	1679	X---	D14	D12	L2	W15	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
6		Evan Cen	1676	W18	W16	L1	D15	D9	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
7		Andy Chen	1606	W23	W20	L3	L13	W19	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
8		Imai Maharaja	1602	W24	W27	L2	W16	L3	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
9		Oliver He	1582	L25	W22	W23	H---	D6	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
10		Peng-Ruei Pan	1564	W19	L1	L16	W26	W20	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
11		Lewis Ma	1517	W21	L3	W25	H---	H---	3	shared 1st/2nd U1700: \$28
12		Sambuddha Sekhar Das	1498	H---	W28	D5	L4	W21	3	shared 1st/2nd U1500: \$98
13		Naaditha Nawagamudewage	1493	L1	W24	W21	W7	L4	3	shared 1st/2nd U1500: \$98
14	14-16	Allen Chang	1530	W26	D5	L4	H---	H---	2.5	
15		Aayan Hetamsaria	1483	L3	W19	W20	D6	L5	2.5	
16		ACM Terrick Evin	1468	W4	L6	W10	L8	H---	2.5	
17	17-21	Deepak Sri Kartikeya Rao	1532	L20	L23	L18	B---	W26	2	
18		Snehil Ghosh	1432	L6	L4	W17	L19	W27	2	
19		Ziliang Ma	1379	L10	L15	B---	W18	L7	2	
20		Logan Kim	1363	W17	L7	L15	W23	L10	2	
21		Arihant Chaudhuri	1330	L11	B---	L13	W25	L12	2	
22	22-27	Ethan Ao	1475	L2	L9	D24	D27	D25	1.5	
23		Kevin Zhang	1428	L7	W17	L9	L20	D24	1.5	
24		Harvey Wang	1425	L8	L13	D22	H---	D23	1.5	
25		Avyaan Roy Chowdhury	1404	W9	L2	L11	L21	D22	1.5	
26		Anyi Li	1339	L14	H---	W27	L10	L17	1.5	
27		Darya Byelashova	1315	B---	L8	L26	D22	L18	1.5	
28	28	Kyle Boddy	1426	H---	L12	U---	U---	U---	0.5	

In the massive 36-player Solo U1400 section, a pair of “padapawns,” Easton Ren of Sammamish and Skyler Qin of Bellevue, emerged victorious, each with an undefeated score of 4.5 points from five games. For Easton, who is rumored to be a distant relative of Kylo Ren, the path to victory was smooth, as he won his first four games before taking a last-round half-point bye. Skyler became an honorary member of the Skywalker family, recovering well from a second-round draw against Sofia Byelashova and winning his next three games to keep pace with Ren.

A trio of X-Wing pilots in-training shared third/fourth/first U1200 honors a half-point back with four points apiece: Peng Li of Mercer Island, Rishabhdeva Patnaik of Sammamish, and Sofia Byelashova of Gig Harbor. Death Star destroyer Alex Ye of Sammamish earned second U1200 with a solid three points thanks to drawing his last two games against higher rated opponents. Three new recruits learning to fly the Millennium Falcon—Jacob Rish-Brown of Gig

Harbor, Zander Chim of Seattle, and Farhan Mohammed of Sammamish—shared the first/second U1000 prizes with an even 2.5-point score.

Proud would-be Jedi Master Yoda of the following special prize winners. Capturing the Biggest Upset Wins were Farhan Mohammed (rounds one and two, 249 and 306 points, respectively), Zander Chim (rounds three and four, 649 + 730 points, respectively), and Sofia Byelashova (round five, 188 points). Jedi princess Sofia Byelashova added to her royal winnings by taking home the Best Female Player prize with a TPR of 1498.

Light saber specialists Patrick Zhang (Saturday) and Shenghao Qin (Sunday) were awarded the Best Dressed prizes for their stylish efforts. Peng Li (TPR 1419), father of clone droids Emma and Edward Li, won the Best Dad Player prize. The dynamic father-son duo of Shenghao + Skyler Qin were honored as the Best Parent/Child team.

Congratulations to the winners!

Father's Day Blitz

The Father's Day Blitz tournament took place on the eve of Father's Day, Sunday June 15, shortly after the conclusion of the main tournament. The 40-player field consisted of a motley mix of dads, future dads, daughters, and sons. The nine-round Single Swiss tournament lasted around two and a half hours and featured players with ratings ranging from unrated to master level, many of whom were keen on establishing or updating their FIDE Blitz rating. The expeditious G/3; +2 time control made for many interesting games and wild time scrambles, some of which can be found on WCF's [YouTube channel](#).

Duval light-speed traveler NM Vidip Kona existed on his own wavelength and scored a sensational nine points from nine games, including wins against Jedi Masters Wang (2178), Vemparala (2239), and Wilber (2208) along the way! Medina Mandalorian FM Ted Wang captured second place honors a point and a half

2025 Washington Fathers Day Open: Solo U1400

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prize
1	1-2	Easton Ren	1330	W25	W15	W7	W10	H---	4.5	shared 1st/2nd: \$229
2		Skyler Qin	1286	W27	D5	W14	W9	W10	4.5	shared 1st/2nd: \$229
3	3-5	Peng Li	1306	W26	L4	W33	W24	W6	4	shared 3rd/4th/1st U1200: \$116
4		Rishabhdeva Patnaik	1211	W28	W3	L10	W7	W11	4	shared 3rd/4th/1st U1200: \$116
5		Sofia Byelashova	1026	W13	D2	W23	D6	W15	4	shared 3rd/4th/1st U1200: \$116
6	6	Shenghao Qin	1219	W20	W23	W8	D5	L3	3.5	
7	7-16	Isaac Wang	1392	W18	W11	L1	L4	W22	3	
8		Aiden Zhu	1388	W24	W12	L6	D16	D14	3	
9		Inura Nawagamudewage	1356	W33	D14	W21	L2	D16	3	
10		Warren Chung	1336	W16	W30	W4	L1	L2	3	
11		Justin Lee	1283	W34	L7	W25	W26	L4	3	
12		Anirudh Rengarajan	1229	W32	L8	L16	W33	W24	3	
13		Raghav Chaturvedi	1219	L5	W31	L26	W25	W27	3	
14		Kyle Jiang	1218	W35	D9	L2	W21	D8	3	
15		Ferris Samara	1214	W22	L1	W32	W27	L5	3	
16		Alex Ye	1150	L10	W36	W12	D8	D9	3	2nd U1200: \$65
17	17-22	Vihaan Chaurasia	1218	L21	L26	W31	W32	D20	2.5	
18		Jackson Rish-Brown	1205	L7	L27	W35	W28	D21	2.5	
19		Kaiyi Han	1188	L23	L32	H---	W36	W26	2.5	
20		Jacob Rish-Brown	999	L6	L33	W34	W30	D17	2.5	shared 1st/2nd U1000: \$51
21		Farhan Mohammed	969	W17	W29	L9	L14	D18	2.5	shared 1st/2nd U1000: \$51
22		Zander Chim	626	L15	H---	W29	W23	L7	2.5	shared 1st/2nd U1000: \$51
23	23-28	Julian Chen	1356	W19	L6	L5	L22	W34	2	
24		Eva Aksutina	1192	L8	W34	W28	L3	L12	2	
25		Richard Rogov	1130	L1	W35	L11	L13	W36	2	
26		Mithran Anbuselvam	1092	L3	W17	W13	L11	L19	2	
27		Patrick Zhang	1073	L2	W18	W30	L15	L13	2	
28		Kaspian Jung	unr.	L4	B---	L24	L18	W33	2	
29	29-32	Jordan Woltjer	1275	D31	L21	L22	H---	H---	1.5	
30		Leo Luo	1217	W36	L10	L27	L20	D32	1.5	
31		Samarth Swain	1048	D29	L13	L17	L34	W35	1.5	
32		Jonathan Wu	1047	L12	W19	L15	L17	D30	1.5	
33	33-36	Jayden Wu	1184	L9	W20	L3	L12	L28	1	
34		Vincent Gu	1068	L11	L24	L20	W31	L23	1	
35		Proud Tulsukchuantanat	920	L14	L25	L18	B---	L31	1	
36		Hongxi Tao	796	L30	L16	B---	L19	L25	1	

back with 7.5 points, losing only to Kona and drawing with Palathingal. Bothell chess bounty hunter Rafael Palathingal captured the third-place prize with 6.5 points thanks to a clutch final-round win against Wilber. Two rising chess officers of the First Order shared first U2000/U1800, each with an impressive six points: Neevan Reddy Saddi of Issaquah and Gavin Shi of Seattle.

Six star-destroyers shared the first U1600/U1400/U1200 prize with five points apiece: Rian Raja of Bothell, Deepak S.K. Rao of Bellevue, Imai Maharaja of Redmond, Samuel Cha of Kirkland, Ziliang Ma of Seattle, and Snehil Ghosh of Redmond. Seattle senator Jonathan Wu and Bellevue chess dad

Ankush Goyal split the first U1000 prize a full-point back. Newcomer Siddharth Shenoy of Seattle avoided the lure of the Dark Side and won the first unrated prize with a solid five points, having just made his return to tournament chess after a several-year hiatus on Dagobah!

To complement the overall and class prizes, several special prizes were awarded to those channeling the Force and performing well above their rating. The Biggest Upset Prizes were awarded in all nine rounds as follows: round one: Eli Zhang, round two: Farhan Mohammed, round three: Ziliang Ma, round four: Gavin Shi, round five: Jonathan Wu, round six: Siva Sankrithi, round seven: Inura Nawagamudewage,

round eight: Snehil Ghosh, round nine: Vivaan Sankrithi.

Many thanks to the players who came out and competed in these fun events!

**Akim Pikh (1953) –
Ryan W. Porter (2299) [B13]**

WA Father's Day Open: Skywalker
Bellevue, WA (R2), June 14, 2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6
5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Nf3 a6 7.h3 g6 8.c5 Ne4
9.Be2**

9.Bd3!?

9...Bg7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Be3

11.Na4!? e5 12.Nb6 Rb8 and now the

liquidation 13.Nxe5 Nxe5 14.dxe5 Bxe5 15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Nxd5 Nxc5 may leave White with a tiny edge: 17.Bh6 Rd8 18.Ne7+ Kh8 19.Rac1 Ne6 20.Nxc8 Rbxc8 21.Rxc8 Rxc8 22.Bf3

11...Nxc5!

A reliable equalizing tactic. An alternative central counter appears to gain space, but after 11...Nxc3 12.bxc3 e5 13.Rb1 e4 14.Ne1, White has a nice compact development and pressure on the b-line, while Black has yet to solve the bishops.

12.dxc5 d4 13.Nxd4 Nxd4 14.Bc4 Nf5 15.Qc1 Nxe3 16.Qxe3 Qd4

16...Bd4 17.Qh6 Bxc5?! allows White to develop an initiative. (17...Bg7 18.Qe3 Bd4 could repeat; 17...Bxc3 18.bxc3 Bf5∞) 18.Rad1 Qc7 19.Ne4 Qe5 20.Rfe1 looks ominous.

17.Qxd4

17.Bd5

17...Bxd4

Master + bishop-pair = potentially long grind.

18.Na4 Bd7 19.Nb6 Rad8 20.Rad1 Bc6 21.b4 Bc3

21...e5!?

22.a3 e6 23.Rb1 Rd2 24.Rb3

24.Bb3 Bb5 25.Bc4 (25.Nc4 Bxc4 26.Bxc4 Rfd8 27.Rb3 Bd4 It's generally easy to claim Black has at least a small advantage in many of these positions; it is another matter to figure out what to do with it.) 25...Rfd8 26.Bxb5 axb5 27.a4 bxa4 28.Nxa4 Bd4 29.Nb6. The white rooks appear a bit passive in defense here, but that knight promises to make a nuisance of himself while Black comes up with a plan to progress.

24...Bd4

24...Bf6 25.Rd3 Rd8 26.Rxd8+ Bxd8. is a different idea, aiming to exchange the potentially pesky knight.

25.a4?

Creates more possible targets. This is not the time to attempt aggression. White can nearly neutralize the d-file play with 25.Rd3 Rxd3 26.Bxd3 Rd8 27.Bc2 (27.Rd1 Bc3 28.Bc2 Rxd1+ 29.Bxd1 a5., creating some queenside pawn weaknesses on which the bishops can chew.) 27...Bb2 (27...Bc3 28.Ba4 Bxa4 29.Nxa4∞) 28.Rb1 (28.Nc4 Bb5 29.Nxb2 Bxf1 30.Kxf1 Rd2 31.Be4 Rxb2 32.Bxb7 is also interesting and imbalanced.)

2025 Fathers Day Blitz

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Total
1	1	Vidip Kona	2186	W16	W7	W3	W5	W2	W4	W10	W6	W11	9
2	2	Ted Wang	2178	W17	W12	W8	W4	L1	W11	W5	D3	W7	7.5
3	3	Rafael Palathingal	1945	W33	W26	L1	W15	L4	W14	W12	D2	W5	6.5
4	4-7	Nikash Vemparala	2239	W31	W24	W6	L2	W3	L1	W23	L5	W10	6
5		Matthew Wilber	2208	W15	W10	W11	L1	W23	W6	L2	W4	L3	6
6		Neevan Reddy Saddi	1989	W32	W19	L4	W26	W18	L5	W20	L1	W17	6
7		Gavin Shi	1479	W38	L1	W32	W17	W8	L10	W11	W9	L2	6
8	8-10	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1954	W22	W20	L2	D14	L7	L19	W27	W24	W16	5.5
9		Varin Nallabothula	1857	W28	D18	L23	W19	L10	W24	W16	L7	W20	5.5
10		Yuchen Zhou	1738	W37	L5	D18	W21	W9	W7	L1	W14	L4	5.5
11	11-18	Harishkumar Karthikeyan	2085	W21	W13	L5	W23	W12	L2	L7	W18	L1	5
12		Rian Raja	1497	W29	L2	W16	W20	L11	W27	L3	L17	W30	5
13		Deepak Sri Kartikeya Rao	1415	W40	L11	W35	L18	W17	L16	W30	D20	D14	5
14		Imai Maharaja	1394	L18	W39	W27	D8	W26	L3	W19	L10	D13	5
15		Samuel Cha	1271	L5	W37	W36	L3	L27	W28	W25	H---	H---	5
16		Ziliang Ma	1243	L1	W38	L12	W28	W30	W13	L9	W23	L8	5
17		Snehl Ghosh	1200	L2	W29	W24	L7	L13	W35	W26	W12	L6	5
18		Siddharth Shenoy	unr.	W14	D9	D10	W13	L6	W20	W31	L11	W26	5
19	19-22	Siva Sankrithi	1400	W34	L6	D21	L9	W37	W8	L14	D25	D22	4.5
20		Evan Takayoshi	1351	W35	L8	W28	L12	W32	W18	L6	D13	L9	4.5
21		Austin Deng	1139	L11	W40	D19	L10	L25	W37	L24	W29	W31	4.5
22		Naaditha Nawagamudewage	1138	L8	L35	W38	L30	W39	L26	W36	W28	D19	4.5
23	23-30	Akim Pikh	1877	W27	W30	W9	L11	L5	W31	L4	L16	U---	4
24		Sarang Sankrithi	1549	X	L4	L17	D37	W34	L9	W21	L8	D25	4
25		Walter Guity	1468	L39	L27	L29	W40	W21	W33	L15	D19	D24	4
26		Sambuddha Sekhar Das	1367	W36	L3	W30	L6	L14	W22	L17	W27	L18	4
27		Inura Nawagamudewage	1096	L23	W25	L14	W35	W15	L12	L8	L26	W32	4
28		Vivaan Sankrithi	1007	L9	W31	L20	L16	W36	L15	W34	L22	W35	4
29		Jonathan Wu	896	L12	L17	W25	L31	L35	W39	W32	L21	W36	4
30		Ankush Goyal	unr.	B---	L23	L26	W22	L16	W32	L13	W31	L12	4
31	31-36	Isaac Wang	1315	L4	L28	W39	W29	W33	L23	L18	L30	L21	3
32		Sruti Viswanatha	1139	L6	W34	L7	W36	L20	L30	L29	W37	L27	3
33		Eva Aksutina	1110	L3	L36	W34	W39	L31	L25	W35	U---	U---	3
34		Farhan Mohammed	335	L19	L32	L33	W38	L24	W40	L28	L39	W37	3
35		Sarat Viswanatha	unr.	L20	W22	L13	L27	W29	L17	L33	W38	L28	3
36		Moinuddin Mohammed	unr.	L26	W33	L15	L32	L28	W38	L22	W40	L29	3
37	37	Jayden Wu	988	L10	L15	W40	D24	L19	L21	W38	L32	L34	2.5
38	38-40	Aarav Bhandari	560	L7	L16	L22	L34	W40	L36	L37	L35	W39	2
39		Eli Zhang	467	W25	L14	L31	L33	L22	L29	L40	W34	L38	2
40		Avyukt Goyal	376	L13	L21	L37	L25	L38	L34	W39	L36	B---	2

28...Bc3 29.Nc4∞

25...Rd8 26.Rbb1 Kf8 27.Bb3 Be4 28.Rbe1 Rb2 29.Bc4

29.Rxe4 Rxb3 leaves b4 indefensible.

29...Bc6 30.Rb1 Bxf2+!



Position after 30...Bxf2+

One of those inherent tactics that have just been waiting for the opportunity.

31.Kh2 Rdd2 32.Rxb2 Rxb2 33.b5 axb5 34.axb5 Be4 35.Na4 Rc2 36.Bb3 Rd2 37.c6

37.Rd1 Rxd1 38.Bxd1 Bd4 39.c6 bxc6 40.b6 Ke7 41.b7 Ba7+

37...Bd4 38.Re1 Rxd2+ 39.Kh1 Re2#

A nice example of making the most of relatively small advantages.

0-1



King County Open



September 27-28, 2025

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



Format: A 5-round Swiss in two sections: **Kenmore Open** and **Kent U1500**.

Entry fee: \$100 by 9/20, \$120 after. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1400-1499 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing in Kenmore Open. 50% discount for Seniors (50+) and free entry for players rated 2200+ USCF. Open to all junior + adult players. Maximum of 110 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 8-8:45am. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sunday: 10am, 3pm.
Closing Ceremony + Blitz Tournament: ~ 7pm or asap.

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

Rating: Triple-Rated in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE. Higher of current NWSRS or September 2025 US Chess rating 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).

Kenmore Open: 1st-5th: \$550-450-400-350-300. 1st U2200/U2000/U1800/U1600: \$200.

Kent U1500: 1st-4th: \$350-300-250-175. 1st U1400/U1200/U1000: \$150. 1st Unrated: \$120.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$15/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Senior Player (50+, by TPR): \$50.
Best Dressed: \$20/day, Best Attack: \$25 – please submit nominations.

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), cash, or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. **Payment due upon registration; players listed as unpaid for more than 7 days after registering will be withdrawn from the tournament. Registration + payment deadline: Fri, September 26 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline.

King County Blitz: Sunday 7-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$25. **Format:** A 7-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual US Chess Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/5; +3. **On-site registration:** 6:00-6:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 7pm, 7:20, 7:40, 8, 8:20, 8:40, 9pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:30pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of current NWSRS, September 2025 US Chess Blitz, or September 2025 US Chess Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes. **Prize Fund:** **\$400** (based on 30 paid entries)

1st – 3rd: \$100-65-50, 1st U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000/Unrated: \$20.

Biggest upset win: \$5/rd.

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

King County Scholastic

CHESS TOURNAMENT

Sunday, September 28, 2025

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



FORMAT

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

K-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U1000

4-12 Open

SCHEDULE

Rd 1 - 9am

Rd 2 - 11am

Lunch

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

\$50 by September 21, \$60 after.
Room for 80 players; please register
early to reserve your spot.

AWARDS

Amazon Gift Cards awarded in each
section:

1st-4th: \$75, 65, 55, 45.

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

RATING

Highest of US Chess Regular
September 2025 supplement, or
current NWSRS rating used to
determine section and pairings.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12
as of the 2025-26 school year. Out-
of-state players welcome!

**Washington State
Elementary Qualifier!**

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

Pay by

SettleKing/Zelle/Cash/Check.

**100% pre-registered, no on-site
entries or payments. Entry +
payment deadline Sat. Aug 16 @
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.

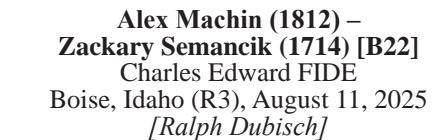
*Highest finishing player in the K-3
Open and 4-12 Open sections will
earn free entry into the 2025 Susan
Polgar Foundation National Open
for Girls and Boys, set to take
place November 22-23 in Bellevue.*

Questions?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF
President at 206.769.3757 or

WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Alex Machin and Ralph Dubisch



The 2.c3, or Alapin, Sicilian. White boldly prepares to control the center with a pawn duo on e4 and d4. The cost is an extra pawn move in the opening that isn't being used for direct development, and the loss of the c3-square for the b1-knight. 2.Nf3 followed by 3.d4 leads to the so-called open variations of the Sicilian, in which White develops quickly, and Black keeps an extra center pawn. 2.Nc3 could lead to a closed Sicilian, often characterized by a kingside fianchetto.

A standard counter to the Sicilian Alapin variation. Black allows the queen to be drawn into the center early, as White is unable to attack it with the usual Nc3. Another plan for Black is the Alekhine-esque development of the knight to f6, 2...Nf6, tempting White to gain space in the center while perhaps leaving weaknesses in the wake of the advancing pawns.

It's slightly unusual to capture on d4 this early. Black isolates the white queen pawn but tends to allow easy development for the white minor pieces and rooks, including the desirable Nc3. 4...Nf6 is the most popular choice here, often delaying a capture on d4 until the b1-knight has committed elsewhere.

The usual choice here, trying to maintain the queen on d5 for a while, and suggesting a center liquidation. As an alternative, Black doesn't appear to be doing too badly after 6...Bg4 7.Be2 e6 8.Nc3 Qa5

Northwest Chess

9.h3 Bh5, but White has the interesting pawn sacrifice 10.d5 exd5 11.Nd4 Bxe2 (11...Nxd4 12.Bxh5) 12.Qxe2+ Be7 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.0-0 when the pressure on the e-file is uncomfortable.

7.Nc3 Bb4 8.Bd2 Bxc3 9.Bxc3

9.bxc3 exd4 10.cxd4 Nf6 is fine for Black.

9...e4 10.Ne5

If theory is boring, 10.Nd2 Nf6 (10...Nxd4?? 11.Nc4+-) 11.Bc4 Qg5 (11...Qf5 12.Nf1 0-0 13.Ne3±) 12.d5 is a complex alternative to the main line. Stockfish evaluates this as quite even, but the small number of actual games I've seen tend to favor White by a rather large margin. 12...Ne5 (12...Qxg2 13.Rf1 Ne7 14.Bxf6 gxf6 15.d6 Nc6 16.Qb3 and Stockfish says White is ahead.) 13.Bb5+ Bd7 14.Bxd7+ Nxd7 15.0-0 0-0

10...Nxe5 11.dxe5 Be6?!

The bishop is going to be needed to block checks on the a4–e8 diagonal. The “right” way to defend the queen is 11...Ne7 12.Qa4+ (12.Be2 and; 12.Qe2 0-0 13.Rd1 are other tries, likely slightly favoring White, who does, after all, still have a pair of bishops.) 12...Bd7 13.Qa3 Qe6 14.Rd1 0-0. An astute observer might notice that play in this theoretical line is very similar to the game, with one big exception: Black is a whole move behind, having played...Be6–d7 instead of the recommended...Ne7/...Bd7.

12.Qa4+! Bd7



Position after 12...Bd7

13.Qa3

White follows the strong theoretical plan, interfering with Black's health and happiness by pressuring the a3–f8 diagonal. Stockfish also approves another idea, directly challenging the queen: 13.Bc4 Bxa4

a) 13...Qc6 14.Qb3;

b) 13...e3 14.Qb3! (14.fxe3±) 14...Qxg2

(14...exf2+ 15.Kf1+-) 15.Bxf7+ Kf8 16.0-0-0 with a decisive attack.;

14.Bxd5 Bc6 15.Bxc6+ bxc6 16.0-0-0 Ne7 17.Rhe1±

13...Ne7 14.Rd1 Qe6 15.Rd6 Qf5 16.Be2

White hints at g2–g4. 16.Bc4 is another aggressive development, perhaps adding to the impact of a future e5–e6.

16...h5

16...Bc6 17.g4 Qf4 18.Qc5 doesn't look like much of an improvement. Black is faced with a thankless defensive task.

17.e6



Position after 17.e6

17...Bc6??

17...Bxe6 18.Qa4+ Kf8 (18...Bd7 19.Qd4 Nc6 20.Qxg7±) 19.Qxa7! is fun, though White's actual advantage isn't yet decisive.

18.Bxg7 Rg8 19.exf7+ Qxf7

19...Kxf7 20.Rf6+

20.Bf6!



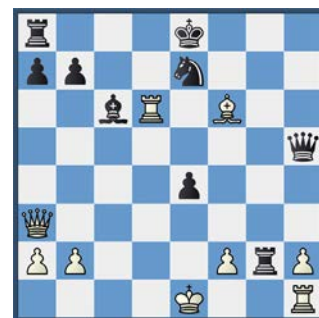
Position after 20.Bf6

20...Rxd6

20...Nf5 21.Qc5! Nxd6 22.Qxd6 (or 22.Bxh5+-) 22...Rg6 23.Bxh5+-

21.Bxh5! Qxh5

21...Ng6 22.Qc5! makes many threats, including the quiet line-interference Bg5!



Position after 21...Qxh5

22.Rd8+!!

Pow! 22.Re6?? The superficially attractive pile-on of the pinned knight would be a fatal error, allowing Black to escape with 22...0-0-0!+, threatening mate on d1.

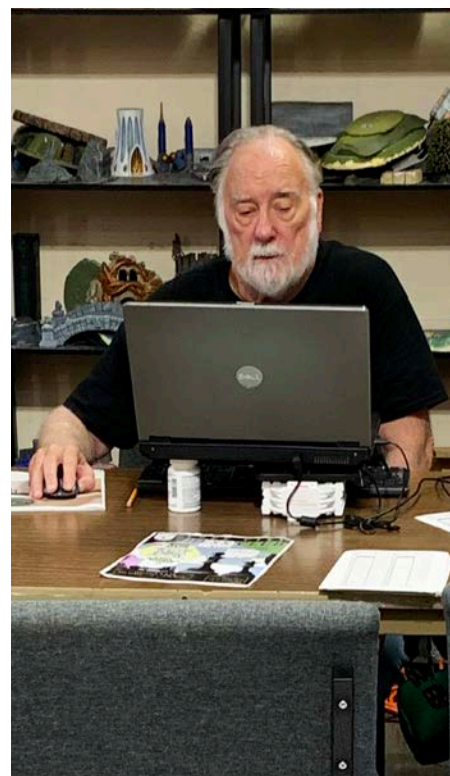
22...Kxd8

22...Kf7 23.Qxe7+ Kg6 24.Rd6, among others, wins.

23.Qxe7+ Kc8 24.Qd8#

A very fun game, at least for White.

1–0



Candid shot of FIDE Tournament Director George Lundy during the final round on August 18, 2025.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.



Fly or Drive! High Desert Open in Central Oregon October 4-5

Hampton Inn Redmond Bend Airport
3901 SW 21st Street
Redmond, Oregon
Co-sponsored by Bend Chess & Go Club
and Oregon Chess Federation

FORMAT: 5-round Swiss open to everyone. 48 player limit.
One half-point bye available if requested before round one.

RATINGS: US Chess regular rated. US Chess membership required.
Current published regular ratings (including provisional) will be used
for pairings and prize eligibility.

TIME CONTROL: G/90; inc10 (ten seconds added for each move).

SUPPLIES: Players must supply their own board, set and increment capable digital clock.
A few sets and boards may be available to borrow. Players are responsible for knowing how
to set their clock. Notation sheets and pencils or pens provided.

ROUNDS: Saturday 10:00-2:00-6:00 Sunday 9:00-1:00.

EF: \$50 in advance until 9/30, otherwise \$60. Onsite reg.: 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.
\$10 EF discount for new, unrated and U/1200 players; deducted from any of top four prizes.
Contact/Advance Registration: Blake Salisbury, salisbury.blake@gmail.com,
PayPal-Salisbury.blake@gmail.com, Venmo-Blake-Salisbury-1

PRIZES: \$750 b/30 (\$200/\$150/\$100/\$50, U/1600 \$100/\$50/\$25, U/1200/unr \$50/\$25)

HOTEL: Call 541-527-1948 or use link on NWC/OCF website. Group code CHHO CF.
Rate: single or double \$129 plus tax per night if reserved by Sept. 19.

National Chess Day Scholastic CHESS TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



Format

A 5-round, G/25; +5
Swiss tournament in
four sections:

K-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U900

4-12 Open

Schedule

Rd. 1 – 9:00am

Rd. 2 – 10:30am

Lunch

Rd. 3 – 12:30pm

Rd. 4 – 1:45pm

Rd. 5 – 3:00pm

Awards ~ 4:30pm

Eligibility

Open to all students in
grades K-12 as of the
2025-26 school year. Out-
of-state players welcome!

Entry Fee

\$50 by 10/4, \$60 after.
Room for 50 players.

Awards

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards
awarded in each section:
1st – 4th: \$70–65–60–55.

Special Prizes (per section): Medals
for first-time players, best female
player, best dressed, and biggest
upset win. ***Top player (by TPR) in
each of the K-3 Open and 4-12
Open sections wins free entry
into the 2025 SPFNO!***

Rating

Dual NWSRS and US Chess rated,
with **US Chess membership
required in all sections.** Establish
or update your national rating!
Higher of current NWSRS or US
Chess regular rating will be used
to determine section and pairings.

Clocks + Notation

Chess clocks set to G/25; +5 will be used from
the beginning in all games. Chess notation
required in all sections except for K-3 U800. All
equipment is provided courtesy of WCF.

Registration

Register online at
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by SettleKing/Zelle/Cash/Check.

**Payment due upon registration; players
listed as unpaid for more than 3 days after
registering will be withdrawn from the
tournament. 100% pre-registered, no on-
site entries or payments. Entry + payment
deadline Fri October 10 @ 5:00pm.** No
registrations accepted or refunds offered after
the deadline.

Procedure

Pairings will be posted in the hallway near the
parent waiting area.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

Questions?

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

Our Darkest Chess Hours

The Chess Friends

(The Man Benjamin Frederick, The Myth Sarang Sankrithi, and The Legend Vivaan Sankrithi)

<https://www.chessfriendsbooks.com/blog>



Peshka in the dark

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends!

After more than 15 blog posts (and counting!), you already know that just like the neighbor kids, we like a good joke. We live by a good joke. If we see a good knee-slapper, we pick it up and use it right away. Or, according to our parents, overuse it. But today, we don't want to share moments that made us want to joke (read about them [here](#)). Today we want to share our downfalls, our darkest chess hours, our struggles, and how we are dealing with them.

Sarang:

Before the pandemic, I got to around 1400 in my northwest chess rating. I was a very good trickster, with good tactics, and some calculated hope chess, meaning I would make so-so moves that often led to opponent blunders. Around that time, I began my battle with acute asthma, which makes it hard for me to breathe.

Over the next couple years, my rating dropped to around 1200. I was playing better players who wouldn't fall for my tricks, and I had to reinvent how I played as a chess player. It didn't help that I was in and out of

the hospital with asthma attacks and my chess practice wasn't as consistent. I also began my struggle with anxiety. Though things were looking rough, I loved chess and, like with my asthma, I had to keep fighting.

It was then that I discovered yoga. Yoga is now part of my daily life. It helps me focus, stay calm, and regulate my breathing. With all that under control, I have reinvented myself as a more patient, positional player, and I am well over 1500 in rating. Whatever struggles you may face in life, if you truly love something, as I love chess, you will always be able to overcome the struggles.

Vivaan:

I started my chess journey when I was two and began playing tournaments when I was three. I am seven now but reading and writing have always been tough for me. Handwriting has always been super hard, and I sometimes confuse and switch letters and numbers, or write them reversed. For years, notating my chess games was super stressful and would slow me down a lot, and I couldn't focus on the chess games because I was so worried about the writing.

In some K-1 events, they had a neat

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- Spokane City Champion 2022
- 2032 USCF Rating
- UW Grad
- Eagle Scout



Ryan Ackerman
Online Chess Coach

Orlov Chess Academy

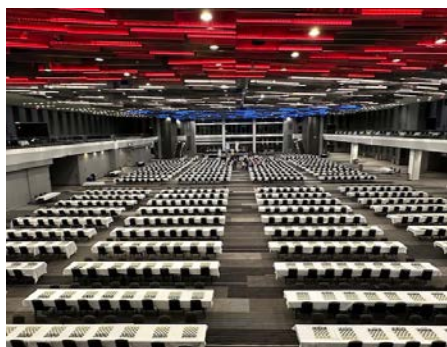
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Columbus, Ohio was the place to be in April, 2024!

notation sheet where you just highlight the letter, number, and piece, and those were ok. Writing between the lines in normal notation sheets, especially small ones, is very hard for me. Most of my notations are hard to follow so postgame analysis is hard, unless we do it right after the game, when I remember all the moves.

Now I use an approved device called a Chess NoteR ([ChessNoteR | The future of chess notation](#)). I still practice handwriting and reading and both are improving slowly. With the Noter, I can focus on my chess and analyze and learn better after. The way the Noter works is there is a picture of a chessboard on it and you touch the piece you want to move and then the square you move it to. Afterwards you can send all the moves with time stamps and everything as a document. I often share with my opponents who struggle with notation too!

Benji:

I remember going to the National Elementary Championship in 2024. I was in 6th grade, so it was my last opportunity to participate at the Elementary School National level. Leading to that, I was training hard, but still couldn't get past the 1300s USCF rating. I had been stuck in the 1300s for a long time! *This is it*, I thought. This National would be my moment to shine.

Oh was I wrong. I was not playing good chess. I blundered. I missed tactics. I placed my pieces on the wrong squares. I let my opponents take control. I lost where I could have drawn. I drew where I could have won, including opponents rated lower than me.

After the last round, which was another disappointing draw, I sat down in the hotel hallway. Without the chess

crowd, the place felt too quiet, like no chess battles, nothing happened earlier. The only reminder of the tournament was the mess the chess kids left on the floor: lost notation sheets, snack wrappers, empty food containers... Sitting there, with my participation medal, I felt like an empty container. I think I even cried that time. *What is wrong with my game?* I thought. The bad blunders were swirling in my head. I had three choices. One: To quit; only I couldn't quit. Two: To shrug it off and forget about it. It's just a game. But I couldn't forget. My third choice was to take this feeling of frustration and turn it into motivation, use it to push myself forward.

I promised myself that I would train even harder and come back stronger the next tournament. I studied what went wrong, and realized that I was never really attacking in my games. My mindset was on "how should I survive," and I needed to change it to "how should I attack." I decided I would try to get sharper and more tactical positions.

Then, one month later, I had my greatest tournament! I didn't lose a single game, and the 1300s USCF became a distant memory in my rear-view mirror. Did I have bad tournaments since then? Yes, I did. But I kept going. The chess journey continues.

When will I stop for lunch?
When I see a fork on the board!

Ha! You didn't think we would leave without a single knee-slapper, did you? Here are more chess jokes, to lighten up the mood!

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Alaska!
Alaska who?
Alaska TD!

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Orange!
Orange who?

Orange you going to make a move?!

Knock, knock!

Who's there?

Pudding!

Pudding who?

Pudding your King in Check!

Knock, knock!

Who's there?

Boo!

Boo who!

Are you sad you lost your game?

Why can a Knight see in the dark?

It has Knight vision!

That's all for today, Friends! Share some dark and light moments of your chess journeys in the comments!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends! Stay positive and play chess!

The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, The Legend Vivi



Peshka in the light

WASHINGTON CHALLENGERS CUP



SAT-SUN, OCTOBER 11-12, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest finishing Washington residents in the Gukesh + Pragg sections seeded into the 2026 Washington State Championship + Rising Stars sections, respectively.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in two sections:

Gukesh 1700+ & Pragganandhaa U1700

In case of a tie for 1st place, a future playoff match will determine the seed for the Championship or Rising Stars section of the 2026 Washington State Championship.

Schedule: Saturday 9 AM, 1:30 PM, 6 PM; Sunday 10 AM, 3 PM. Players whose games run long may request a late start for the next round.

Time Control: G/90; +30. Late default: 60 min.

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

Gukesh 1700+: 1st-4th: \$650-550-450-350.
1st U2100/U1900: \$300.

Pragganandhaa U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-350-300-250.
1st U1500/U1300/U1100: \$200; 1st Unrated: \$150.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: \$10/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Senior Player (50+, by TPR): \$50, Best Dressed: \$20/day.

Entry Fee: \$100 by 10/4, \$120 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs & WIMs and all chess Challengers rated 2300+ USCF. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1500-1700 in both NWSRS + USCF and playing in Gukesh 1700+. Maximum of 100 players – please register early to guarantee your spot.

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

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership/Northwest Chess subscription required. Other states accepted. Memberships must be paid at time of registration.

Rating: Triple-Rated in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE. Higher of current NWSRS or October 2025 US Chess rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), cash, or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. **Payment due upon registration; players listed as unpaid for more than 3 days after registering will be withdrawn from the tournament. Registration + payment deadline: Fri, October 10 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline.

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, Ste. M, Redmond, WA 98052

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President

Phone: 206-769-3757

Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Washington Women's Championship



SAT-SUN, OCTOBER 11-12, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest Finishing WA Resident in the Polgar section becomes WA State Women's Champion and is seeded into 2026 WA State Championship, Invitational section. If there's a tie for 1st place, G/90 playoff games will be played later in the year.

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

Polgar Championship: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss over two days (Sat-Sun). Tri-rated in NWSRS, US Chess, and FIDE. Rounds: Sat. @ 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sun. @ 10am, 3pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Wenjun U1300: A 6-Round G/75; +10 Swiss over two days (Sat-Sun). NWSRS & US Chess dual rated. Rounds: Sat. @ 9am, 12:30pm, 4pm. Sun. @ 10am, 1:30pm, 5pm. Awards ~ 8pm.

Koneru U700: A 1-day, 5-Round G/25; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & US Chess dual rated. Rounds: Sun. @ 10am, 11am, 12:30pm, 1:30pm, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 3:45pm.

Botez Casual/Unrated: A 1-day, 4-Round G/30; +10 Swiss. Open to players unrated – 999. Unrated; no memberships required. Rounds: Sat. @ 11:30am, 1:30pm, 3pm, 4:30pm. Awards ~ 6pm.

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

Entry Fee: \$50 by 10/4, \$60 after. Less \$20 for Koneru U700 & Botez Unrated sections. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, or US Chess Queens rated 2000+ USCF. Players rated 1200+ and 600+ in both USCF and NWSRS may play up 1 section into the Polgar and Wenjun sections, respectively. Maximum of 80 players total and 30 players per section, please register early.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. **Registration and payment deadline Fri. 10/10 @ 5pm.**

Eligibility: Open to all female chess players. Out-of-state players welcome!

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership required for Polgar, Wenjun, and Koneru sections; other states accepted. Membership must be paid at time of registration. No memberships required for Botez section.

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

WA State Elementary Qualifier!

Prize Fund: \$1,200 (based on 40 paid entries)

Polgar Championship: 1st-2nd: \$150-100. 1st U1800/U1600/U1400: \$75.

Wenjun U1300: 1st-2nd: \$80-60. 1st U1200/U1000/U800: \$50.

Koneru U700: 1st-2nd: \$50-35. 1st U600/U400/U200/Unrated: \$30.

Botez Casual/Unrated: 1st-3rd: \$50-40-30.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: \$5/round, Best Dressed: \$5/day, Best Etiquette: \$5, Fair Play/Kindness/Spreading Joy: \$5/day, Best Mother/Daughter Team (by avg TPR, across sections): \$15.

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

CHALLENGERS CUP SCHOLASTIC

CHESS TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



DUAL FORMAT

Rapid Sections

A 6-round, G/25; +5
Swiss in 2 sections:

K-3 U800

4-6 U1000

Schedule:

Rd. 1 – 9:00am
Rd. 2 – 10:30am
Lunch
Rd. 3 – 12:30pm
Rd. 4 – 1:45pm
Rd. 5 – 3:00pm
Rd. 6 – 4:15pm
Awards ~ 5:30pm

Classical Sections

A 3-round, G/50; +10
Swiss in 2 sections:

K-5 Open

6-12 Open

Schedule:

Rd. 1 – 9:00am
Lunch
Rd. 2 – 12:30pm
Rd. 3 – 3:00pm
Awards ~ 5:30pm

ENTRY FEE

\$50 by 10/5, \$60 after.
Room for 50 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift
Cards awarded in each section:
1st – 4th: \$70–65–60–55.

Special Prizes (per section):
Medals for first-time players,
best female player, best dressed,
and biggest upset win. ***Top
player (by TPR) in each of the
K-5 Open and 6-12 Open
sections wins free entry into
the 2025 WA Class
Championships!***

RATING

Dual NWSRS and US Chess
rated, with **US Chess
membership required in all
sections.** Establish or update
your national rating! Higher of
current NWSRS or US Chess
regular rating will be used to
determine section and pairings.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12 as of the 2025-26
school year. Out-of-state players welcome!

CLOCKS + NOTATION

Chess clocks will be used from the beginning in all
games. Chess notation required in all sections
except for K-3 U800. All equipment is provided
courtesy of WCF.

REGISTRATION

Register online at
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Pay by SettleKing/Zelle/Cash/Check.
**Payment due upon registration; players listed
as unpaid for more than 3 days after
registering will be withdrawn from the
tournament. 100% pre-registered, no on-site
entries or payments. Entry + payment
deadline Sat October 11 @ 5:00pm.** No
registrations accepted or refunds offered after the
deadline.

PROCEDURE

Pairings will be posted in the hallway near the
parent waiting area.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

Questions?

Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Washington vs. British Columbia Intermat

(Team BC Wins 34th Annual Event)

Josh Sinanan

The 34th Annual WA vs BC Intermat ended in a lopsided 33-19 victory for Team British Columbia. The Washington vs British Columbia International Scholastic Chess Match, known informally as the Intermat, was hosted on Sunday June 8 at the Bonsor Recreation Complex in Burnaby, British Columbia. The Bonsor Recreation Complex, a sprawling center for sports of all types located in the heart of Burnaby, made for an excellent venue.

Besides hosting the Intermat alongside an open chess tournament on the top level of the facility, many other athletes were also present engaging in sports including squash, basketball,

swimming and badminton. A separate skittles room located a short distance from the playing room was provided for parents to hang out and for players to analyze their games between rounds.

At the start of the match, Team WA was short of two players in the high school grades, as Haituka Anandkumar (grade ten) and Himank Yadav (grade 11) were missing in action! As substitutes, Team WA called up Angela Agaian, Captain Chouchan's daughter, and Bihe Liu, the second-grade younger brother of Bichen, to fill the missing spots. Nihanth Tatikonda, who withdrew the night before due to illness, was replaced by first-grade phenom Vivaan Sankrithi in the tenth-

grade section!

Team BC played White on all boards in the first round and obtained a solid 16-10 lead, with especially dominant performances in grades 8-12! Team WA players Odbayar Yondon (grade six), Rian Raja (grade seven), Bichen Liu (grade eight), and Owen Scollon (grade nine) achieved notable upsets despite significant rating deficits. Historically, the home team has the advantage since they can attract stronger local players to participate without having to travel a long distance. In the team match format, playing hard in every game helps the team, and each move is important, which WA Team Captain Chouchan Airapetain stressed to the players before each round.

In the second round, Team WA tried their best to mount a comeback with the white pieces, but were unable to overcome the rating superiority of the indomitable BC team. The BC players proved to be especially well-prepared in the King's Indian and Sicilian Defenses, which seemed to perplex many of the Washington players.

Despite the rating disadvantage, Team WA players fought valiantly and played hard in all games, scoring some key upsets in the younger and middle boards. Notable upsets were achieved by Callie Jiang (Kindergarten), Harvey Wang (grade two), Odbayar Yondon (grade six), Selina Cheng (grade seven), and Owen Scollon (grade nine).

Congratulations to Team BC on their fantastic performance and well-deserved win! Despite the



Vincent Xing (BC) (L) vs Liam Zeng (WA) alongside fellow Kindergarteners Yashitha Suresh (BC) vs Calling Jiang (WA) during the second round of the WA vs BC Intermat.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.



*Team Washington (L) (in green) alongside Team British Columbia (in blue) at the 2025 WA vs BC Intermat in Burnaby, BC.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*



*The sparkly trophy table at the 2025 WA vs BC Intermat.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

match already being decided on paper with a few games still going, players from both teams continued to fight and show their best chess up until the end. A short closing ceremony concluded the day's festivities, wrapping up just before 7:00 PM, after which Team WA players and their families headed home.

Special congratulations to our 2025 Team Washington All Stars, each of whom scored 1.5 or two points from two games: Callie Jiang (Kindergarten, two points), Easton Ren (first grade, two points), Ryan Lai (first grade, two points), Odbayar Yondon (sixth grade, two points), Owen Scollon (ninth grade, two points).

Special thanks to the BC Organizers Penny Pham, Long Le, Lara Lo, Michael Lo, and many others who made this match possible. Many thanks to all the amazing Washington families who made the trip up to Canada for the InterMat! Kudos to Chouchan Airapetian and her family kept us well fed and hydrated throughout the match. We look forward to continuing this great tradition for many years to come!

34th Annual WA vs BC InterMat						
Grade	Team WA	NWSRS	Score	Team BC	CFC (*CMA)	Score
K	Liam Zeng	665	1	Yaswitha Suresh	821	1
	Callie Jiang	603	2	Vincent Xing	600	0
1	Easton Ren	1354	2	Yuhong Chen	1067	0
	Ryan Lai	1247	2	Ron He	1050	0
2	Harvey Wang	1403	1	Daniel Zhu	1924	2
	Hengsheen Wang	1202	0	Xavier Zhang	1602	1
3	Daniel D Yun	1444	1	Aiden Zhu	1620	1.5
	Terrick Evin	1416	0.5	Evan Geng	1489	1
4	Shanna Wu	1637	0	Moses Li	1715	2
	Imai Maharaja	1562	1	Ishaan Jain	1491	1
5	Owen Xu	1876	0	Kai Zhongkai Zhang	1879	2
	Vihaan Pai	1458	0.5	Barath Subramanian Suresh	1872	1.5
6	Odbayar Yondon	1849	2	Bowen Wu	1941	1
	Sarang Sankrithi	1545	0	Zachary Chua	1872	1
7	Selina Cheng	1743	1	Zachary Liu	2130	2
	Rian Raja	1642	1	Jaydon Yuan	1890	0
8	Keshav Beegala	1833	0.5	Justin Gao	2168	2
	Bichen Liu	1781	1	Zhengyu Chen	1998	0.5
9	Owen Scollon	1743	2	Justin Xu	2169	1
	Jeb Stroud	1594	0	Minjun Koo	1939	1
10	Vivaan Sankrithi	1302	0	Aadit Arya	2032	2
	Bihe Liu	1189	0	Joey Xu	1977	2
11	Aadi Hetamsaria	1717	0	Nathan Ping-Ying Wu	2148	2
	Angela Agaian	1116	0	Daniel Ruohan Wang	1962	2
12	Kenneth Yuodelis	1705	0.5	Kaiqi Qin	2178	1.5
	Slava Shinkarev	1548	0	Kate Jiang	2018	2
			19			33

WASHINGTON Class Championships

Fri-Sun, November 28-30, 2025

Embassy Suites Seattle/North Lynnwood

20610 44th Avenue West Lynnwood, WA 98036-7701



Format: A 6-round Swiss tournament in 8 class sections.

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

Rating: Dual rated – US Chess & Northwest; top 4 sections also FIDE rated.

Fun Side Events:

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

Online Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

TOURNAMENTS



Venue

7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE, Seattle 98115

[info & events calendar](#)

www.seattlechess.club

[tournament signups & inquiries](#)

contact@seattlechess.club

– or mail –

SCC Tournament Director, address as above

Entry fees

We accept Venmo, Paypal, cash and check for tournament entry fees. No credit cards. Prepayment preferred!

Paypal: <https://paypal.me/seattlechess>

Venmo: <https://venmo.com/u/SeattleChessClub>

September 6

3-round round-robin. 4-player sections by close rating. **Time control:** Game/85 + 10 sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$15 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). Prepayment required. **Prizes:** winner of each 4-player quad wins free entry to next Quads played within 3 months. **Check-in:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm. **Byes:** 0 – must play all 3 rounds! US Chess membership req'd.

September Quads

September 21

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%). **Check-in:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 12:20, 2:40, 5pm. **Byes:** 1 half-pt., commit at registration. US Chess membership req'd.

September Tornado

September 5, 12, 19, 26

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

Autumn Leaves

Note: Autumn Leaves pairing is close-ratings.

Coming up:

- **October Quads** – October 4; confirmed
- **Seattle Fall Open** – October 18-19; confirmed
- **October Tornado** – October 26; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **November Quads** – November 8; tentative, 2B confirmed

Check our events calendar periodically for confirmed dates.

Club Notes

- We are seeking to expand our bench of USCF-certified tournament directors! If you're interested in TDing in our tournaments, please contact SCC Chief TD Nicholas Liotta at scctd2@gmail.com. We pay for TD time and will help with US Chess certification expenses.
- Starting in October registration for our 1-day weekend tournaments will be through the Northwest Chess Online Registration system.
- All SCC tournaments are US Chess Federation rated. Our larger 2-day tournaments may be FIDE rated. Read the specs for each tournament.

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

Go Mariners!

42nd Annual Reno Western States Open

An American Classic and Heritage Event

Oct 3-5 or Oct 4-5, 2025, 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: J Resort Casino Hotel, 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno, NV 89501

Downtown Reno, formerly Sands Regency Casino Hotel

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, F.I.D.E. Rated (2200 & above) EF: \$194, (2000-2199) \$250, (1999/below) \$300; GMs and IMs free but must enter by 9/5 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) \$2,000-1,000-500-300-200

Section "A" (1800-1999) EF: \$193 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,800-900-500-300-200

Section "B" (1600-1799) EF: \$192 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,700-800-400-300-200

Section "C" (1400-1599) EF: \$191 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,500-700-400-300-200

Section "D/Under" (1399-below) EF: \$180 (2-day EF: \$190) \$1,000-500-300-200, (1199/below) \$400-200-100

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

Wed. 10/1: 7:00 pm - GM Sergey Kudrin Clock Simul w/ complete analysis of YOUR Game (Only \$30!-bring clock)

Thursday 10/2: 6 - 7:15 pm - Lecture by IM John Donaldson (FREE)

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

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

     **Main Tournament**      

Registration: Thursday (10/2) 5 - 8 pm. - Friday (10/3) 9 - 10 am. - Saturday (10/4) 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 J Resort Reno, 1-866-386-7829, Group Reservation Code: CHESS102025

Hotel Rates: Sunday-Thursday \$92.66, Friday-Saturday \$138.06, all taxes and fees included. Reserve by 10/1

For TLA and to confirm receipt of entry see player list at: www.renochess.org

ENTRY FORM - 42nd Annual Western States Open - Reno, Nevada - Oct 3-5 OR Oct 4-5, 2025

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

3-Day EF	Free • \$194 • \$250 • \$300	\$194	\$193	\$192	\$191	\$180	USCF Dues
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2-Day EF	\$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 de Firmian
☐ \$25 Thursday Blitz (G/5 d0)
☐ \$20 Discount - Sr 65+ Age _____

POSTMARK BY September 5, 2025. Add \$11 after 9/5. Add \$22 on site.

Do not mail after 9/26 or email after 9/30. 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: \$ _____

