
Northwest Chess
December 2025

Northwest Chess

December 2025, Volume 79-12 Issue 935

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:

Issue Photo Album

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)

Advertising & Copy Deadline

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

December 5 for the January issue;
January 5 for February.

Submit all ads, donations, payments, changes of address and subscriptions to:

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

businessmanager@nwchess.com
https://www.nwchess.com

Judged Best Magazine/Newsletter for 2009 and 2014-2025 by Chess Journalists of America!

Front Cover

Bertrand Wan after winning the King County Open.

Photo credit: Ani Barua.

Back Cover

TD Ani Barua (L) makes his opening announcements at the King County Open, while Josh Sinanan shows off the October 2025 issue of *Northwest Chess*.

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:

Jeffrey Roland, *NWC* Editor
1514 S. Longmont Ave.
Boise, Idaho 83706-3732
or via e-mail to:
editor@nwchess.com

Subscriptions / Premium Memberships *Individual residents of WA/OR only.* *Washington residents please add sales tax.* *Idaho residents see* *https://www.idahochessassociation.com/*		**Rate**
Adult	1 year	**$ 33.00**
	3 years	**$ 88.00**
Young Adult	1 year	**$ 30.00**
Age 19-24 at expiration	2 years	**$ 54.00**
Junior	1 year	**$ 27.00**
Age U/19 at expiration	2 years	**$ 50.00**
Scholastic	6 months	**$ 16.00**
Senior	1 year	**$ 27.00**
Age 65 or over	3 years	**$ 70.00**
Additional Family Members	1 year	**$ 11.00**
Residing at same address	2 years	**$ 20.00**
	3 years	**$ 28.00**
Tournament/Trial	1 month	**$ 14.00**
Online Subscriptions / Basic Memberships *Individual residents of Oregon only.*		**Rate**
Adult	1 year	**$ 17.50**
Junior (U/21 at expiration)	1 year	**$ 10.00**
Senior	1 year	**$ 17.50**
Additional Family Members	1 year	**$ 5.00**
Non-Member Subscriptions		**Rate**
U.S. addresses	1 year	**$ 33.00**
	3 years	**$ 88.00**
Canada	1 year	**$ 44.00**

Table Of Contents

Clicking on a Table Of Contents entry takes you to that page;
clicking on any page-footer will take you back to the Table Of Contents page.

Two Senior TD's—two friends in chess. Idaho's Adam Porth (L) and Iowa's Eric Vigil assist at the 2025 US Open held in Middleton, Wisconsin July 28-August 3, 2025. Photo courtesy of Adam Porth.

Chess Gifts

The Chess Friends

The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, and The Legend Vivi

https://www.chessfriendsbooks.com/blog

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends!

Happy Decembrrrr! With Christmas trees sparkling in many windows, and Christmas songs playing in every store, gifts are on our minds. 'Tis the season of giving!

No matter the season, chess is a gift that keeps on giving. In this article, we reflect on what chess has brought into our lives. There is this three-gift rule, from an old story about the Three Wise Men, now simplified to a common saying about giving someone three gifts only:

Something they want

Something they need

Something to wear or to read

Chess has given us everything from that list and beyond, something we didn't even know we wanted or needed! (Let's agree that everyone needs a good chess book and a nice pair of chess socks!) There are many material things like trophies, medals, and prize money, but also so many intangible things like friendship, fun, learning... that nice feeling of winning...

The Legend Vivi will highlight **The Wants**, The Myth Sarang **The Needs**, and The Man Benji will wrap up **The Wears and The Reads** with a bow! Our friend Peshka reminds us that 'tis the season of receiving also, joining us to show how to gracefully accept all the gifts! Let's get to it!

The Legend Vivi: *Something they want*

I want to learn. I want to make friends. I want to play chess. I want to help others. With these wants in mind, chess has given me concentration, friendship, and the ability to see patterns super-fast! Can you believe that I have played tournament chess for more than half my life?! I have

learned how to concentrate and stay at the board and analyze patterns in my brain even if it's during my opponents' time, rather than getting distracted. I am all about puzzles and think of chess as a giant puzzle with a bunch of little puzzles along the way. I can see patterns in my mind thanks to chess and do that in all aspects of my life!

One of the greatest gifts chess has given me is the ability to help others, via prize money! I may only be seven, but I have won several hundreds of dollars, if not more, playing adult chess tournaments. I try to donate all my winnings to causes that I care about, because the feeling of giving is amazing! One in particular is *Mission Cure (Mission:Cure - Home)*, an organization dedicated to helping those battling chronic pancreatitis, including my friend, who I love to support, when I can.

The Myth Sarang: *Something they need*

For me, the greatest gifts of chess that I really need are the three Fs: Friendship, Focus, and Fun! When I was little, I was quite shy, and it took me a while to open up in a group and make friends. It's still not easy, but chess has helped me so much! I now have hundreds of friends in the chess world, many local, and many afar. Even though I may not talk to most of them regularly, whenever we do meet at tournaments, we pick up right where we left off and have a ton of fun!

As a neurodivergent kid with various challenges that make focusing hard, not to mention numerous strengths that make chess easier, chess has helped everything. I still can't sit at a board for more than 30 minutes, but it's a huge step up from when it was probably five minutes or so! Chess is a game where you must be locked in, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to be locked to your chair! My love for the game has motivated me to figure out what focus looks like for me. While I still have a long way to go, chess has helped me progress a lot! This focus has helped me in all aspects of my life including my homeschool work, my music, my tennis, and more.

The Man Benji: *Something to wear or to read*

My extended family is not that into chess, not in a serious way. They don't know the difference between *zugzwang* and *zwischenzug*, and they probably wouldn't name the first world chess champion, but they still enthusiastically support me on my chess journey. Why? I couldn't figure that out for a long time, but now I get it. Because it's easy for them to pick gifts for me! From chess socks to chess-patterned shirts, from chess stamps to chess books, for any occasions, I keep receiving chess gifts from my relatives!

I have many LEGO chess sets, which I'm still going to play with even after I turn 67 years old! I have chess books on my shelf that I will probably read after I turn 67. I have a handmade wooden chess rubber stamp set that my grandma bought me somewhere in New York, turning Manhattan upside down to find it. I'll probably start using it after... you guessed it... I become 67 years old!

One of my aunts got chess forms for her kitchen so she could make a chocolate chess set, just for me as a present. The white and dark chocolate chess pieces looked so good I didn't want to eat them at first! Eventually I did, and they were delicious.

Is it foolish to get chess chocolate for a present that you don't eat, chess books that you don't read, and chess stamps that you don't use? Maybe it is, but that's not the point of these presents. As one of the greatest American writers, O'Henry, wrote in his Christmas story The Gift of the Magi, such gifts are the wisest of them all! Because behind those gifts are love and support, time and thoughts. That's why I treasure them. If chess were like Christmas, the biggest presents would be family and friends!

A common theme across our wants, needs, wears, and reads is friendship, the greatest gift chess has brought us. After all, we are The Chess Friends, and many of our other friends are from the chess world too. Thanks to chess and all the gifts it brings, we now have our book Q&A Chess Tournament Edition, a perfect "read" gift by the way! If you need "wear" gifts for people in your life, check out the store of our friend, FM/WIM Megan Lee, who makes custom

clothes designs, and who made The Chess Friends hoodies! (Cloth Tattoo and Snippet Studios)

Enjoy the holidays, everyone! Before you go, here are knee slappers, holiday edition, to share with your family and friends!

Where do Christmas trees learn how to play chess?

In elemen-tree school!

✻✻✻

Why did the Chess & Music blog post disappear from our website?

It went Christmas Chopin!

How are New Year and speed chess alike?

They both make every second count!

✻✻✻

What did Santa say to his helper before their chess game?

Good luck and believe in your-elf!

✻✻✻

Why did the elf lose his chess game in ten moves?

He didn't snow the opening.

✻✻✻

Why did the holiday meal lose the chess game?

It kept getting forked!

✻✻✻

What did Santa say after a long night of delivering presents?

Happy Christmas to all and to all a good knight! And a good bishop!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

The Man Benji
The Myth Sarang
The Legend Vivi

A Conversation With Valentin Razmov

Being intentional about who you are, what you do, and how you contribute

Ken Lee

Valentin Razmov is a chess coach who helps aspiring players to reach advanced levels. His students (both youth and adults) have won awards at a number of regional competitions. Valentin himself returned to active tournament play in 2020, many years after being trained to expert level as a youth in Eastern Europe. He is a board member and tournament coordinator of the Washington Chess Federation. Valentin regularly contributes to *Northwest Chess* magazine and is also the creator of puzzle competitions alongside the annual Washington Open and Washington Class chess events. He can be reached at VRazmov@gmail.com.

Meet the ultimate hyphenate in the world of chess—a chess coach, an active player, a chess parent, and a tournament organizer. I sat down with Valentin Razmov for a conversation about his intentionality in working within the chess community; how chess players can experience the game via different lenses; and what he described as a beautiful tapestry of individual chess journeys.

Ken: Good afternoon, Valentin. May I ask about your beginnings in life and in chess?

Valentin: I am originally from the Eastern European country of Bulgaria. I was first exposed to chess at home around the age of six, playing with my older brother and my dad. We played regularly in those first years. But once I started to outplay my brother often, he decided to take me to a local chess club where I could study more seriously.

Ken: How old were you at that time?

Valentin: At that time, I was ten. I would go to the chess club three times a week after school and also participate in tournaments. I was actively and regularly involved, though by today's standards the pace was much slower.

Ken: What do you mean by that?

Valentin: Kids in the PNW today can participate in tournaments throughout the year. When I was a youth, I played in about 15 tournaments in the span of four years—as many as were available in my region and appropriate for my level.

Ken: Did you continue to play in high school and beyond?

Valentin: During high school and for the following 15 years I shifted my attention more toward high-level mathematics and then to computer science. The emergence of online chess during and after my graduate school years reignited my interest in the game.

Ken: Where were you located when you started getting back into chess? And when did you move to Seattle?

Valentin: In 1998 I came to the United States to pursue graduate studies in computer science and engineering. That's when I arrived in Seattle (and the University of Washington).

Ken: Do you have clear memories of the chess scene in Seattle at that time?

Valentin: I resumed playing chess alongside colleagues from the Computer Science department. Several faculty, students, and guests regularly gathered on Friday afternoons to relax and connect over bughouse and blitz.

Over the years, I came to realize that many people in the sciences, math, and music often gravitate towards chess.

Ken: Let's fast forward to the present; I know that your son Gabriel (15) and daughter Siana (8) are very much involved in the chess world too. Did their involvement in chess happen organically or was it more intentional and purposeful on your part?

Valentin: I would say it was a little bit of both. I had just (re)started playing chess (online) more regularly when Gabriel was born. When he was two, he learned to move the pieces. He wasn't playing games yet but watched me play and thus developed an interest.

Unrelated to chess, I had decided to work with Gabriel on his intellectual development in an intentional manner.

Ken: What did that entail?

Valentin: While I hadn't yet conceived the idea that it would be in the form of home schooling, that's how it unfolded. Gabriel attended a small private school (PreK-1), quickly picking up English through his daily interactions.

As his intellectual skills developed at a rapid pace in multiple dimensions, the idea of accelerating his schooling (for the following three years) came naturally. This eventually included chess studies in addition to academics.

Ken: What tools were helpful to you at the time?

Valentin: As a teacher by calling, I found it both easy and exciting to piece together an academic home study program based on advanced materials and my own sense of Gabriel's interest and level in different subject areas. The resulting growth was fast, and the depth was well beyond his age. This is, frankly, to be expected for a home-schooled kid who receives intentional support. I hope other parents consider home schooling seriously for the many benefits that this method offers.

For chess, I started taking Gabriel to a local chess club led by an inspiring coach (Ray Easterday, of Orangutan Chess Academy). Tournament after tournament marked solid growth for him. I credit this in part to the coach, in part to Gabriel's inner drive to improve, and in part to the excellent study materials we used, which he devoured faster than I could keep up.

I admire those ChessKid videos—all high quality (in my view, better than most YouTube series), all thoughtfully building a student's chess skills to levels of 1600 USCF and beyond.

Over time, Gabriel received invaluable further training by IM Georgi Orlov and GM Alex Yermolinsky (both through Orlov Chess Academy).

Ken: Was it natural for Siana, being the younger sister, to want to follow in her big brother's footsteps?

Valentin: Yes. In our family the kids like many things that Mom and Dad enjoy too, and they also share activities with each other. This has brought great joy (and relief) to me. It means that we can all engage in seriously meaningful activities as the kids are growing up, not after. We share good books, watch and discuss thoughtful movies together, travel to experience new cultures, take walks, play badminton, and, of course, play chess.

Ken: You're very thoughtful and have a lot of intentionality around education in your family. Do you purposely adjust when switching between roles as a father, a coach, and a player?

Valentin: Ah, you'll need to also add a fourth lane—a chess event organizer!

Yes, indeed, I see my roles as a father, a coach, a player, and an organizer combining in an organic way.

Ken: Can you give me an example?

Valentin: For the past few years, I've been putting together puzzle competitions alongside several annual Washington Chess Federation events. As an organizer, I want to create events that are stimulating and rewarding to a range of participants of different ages, experiences, and skill levels.

As a dad, I wish to demonstrate how dedication can lead to good quality, and to emphasize how one can make unique and valuable contributions (e.g., most puzzles come from my own analyses or games). As a player, I want to experience the progressive depth of understanding that one can reach in tackling puzzles of varying difficulty (from beginner to master level). As a coach, I find myself thinking about the instructional value and the balance within the entire puzzle set I create.

"While for most of us, chess will not be a profession; I see it as an opportunity to learn to be better human beings."

So, yes, I am quite deliberate about my planning and execution. In preparing a puzzle competition event, I usually go through several passes of progressive refinement—to make sure that things would work well across all aspects.

Ken: Are there times and places in your children's development, either by age or experience, where you believe it would be beneficial for them to work with an outside coach?

Valentin: Both of them have worked, and still work, with outside coaches, at specific times and for specific purposes. While I personally feel qualified to coach my kids, there's a definite value in them experiencing an outside perspective that complements and reaffirms what they may hear from me or read in chess books. As they continue their growth, I will seek out more opportunities to further their development with the appropriate help of outside coaches and other resources.

Useful learning experiences can differ greatly depending on age, skill level, and personal preferences. For example, Siana gets stimulated by interactions with kids around her age, so we take her to many chess tournaments, in addition to weekly meetups with chess playing friends, as a way of complementing her rigorous at-home training. Gabriel, in turn, also thrives on interactions with chess peers, but at his level (nearing Expert) the necessary depth must be served by carefully selected tournaments and high-level training materials.

Ken: What methods of chess instruction from Bulgaria were different from those used in the USA?

Valentin: Being historically part of the Eastern European bloc, Bulgaria was naturally influenced by Russian traditions in many aspects of life. For the case of chess education, this means first studying endgames in some depth, then moving on to typical middlegame patterns, and eventually learning some opening theory. All along, there's a strong emphasis on proper technique and excellence through repetition.

In the modern Western world, I see much emphasis on studying openings in great nuances—much before a player acquires a solid grasp of middlegames or endgames. As a result, one often observes a steady decline in play quality as a game progresses.

As a coach, I strive to teach students to carefully think through and calculate during all phases of a game, not being overly reliant on memorized scenarios.

Ken: Could you expand on that idea?

Valentin: I have noticed how some young players don't progress much in chess, because they get into the addictive habit of learning tricky opening moves that may yield quick wins (against unsuspecting opponents) and thus bring instant gratification. We often call this "trap chess."

Ken: What do you mean by that?

Valentin: Trap chess is a style of play where one chooses moves, often of known inferior quality, primarily to provoke a blunder by the opponent.

But there is no long-term value in playing this way. While it occasionally brings some predictable and pleasant results, it discourages growth! The sweet pull of repeated easy victories leads to a bog of stagnation. I have observed juniors winning quick games by exploiting opening traps, but remaining rated below 1000 for several years, while their peers who practice principled chess outstrip them by hundreds of rating points in that time!

As a coach I explicitly forbid my kids—and discourage my students—to play "trap chess" (or play quickly when they have plenty of time on the clock). In principle, we do not seek easy or quick wins. Instead, we aim for meaningful skill growth over time and are ready for the effortful study that this requires.

The "old-school" practice of being prudent and deliberate in calculation and pacing throughout a game has been time tested and proven advantageous *in the long run* over alternatives.

Ken: Do you think that there is a vast difference in the way chess players perceive themselves around the world?

Valentin: While I do not know how this differs between cultures, I have observed many chess players identifying as a mix of three archetypes, with one being expressed predominantly in each individual. Chess is commonly seen as a combination of sport, science, and art.

A sports person thrives on competition. In their personality and style of play there is heavy emphasis on winning (even at the expense of accuracy or elegance). Those who see chess as a war game are likely viewing it largely from such a sporting perspective.

A scientist, in contrast, is a diligent and deliberate problem solver. They like to calculate, and they enjoy the process of untangling difficult conundrums (sometimes even at the expense of practicality). For such a player, a game is an object worth studying deeply.

An artist greatly enjoys the process of engaging in "a dance" with their opponent. Both sides participate in creating something beautiful and unique in real time. After a game ends, they look at it as a piece of artwork. The end result is often not as important to an artist; they are instead thriving on the creative process and the harmony they seek as part of it.

While I personally identify more with the artist and the scientist, I'm not suggesting that any one of these archetypes is superior to the others. They are simply what makes you tick.

Still, it is highly instructive for people to be consciously aware of what type of chess player they tend to be, and to appreciate the potential benefits of adopting (or switching to) other chess playing modes—either for training or for tournament purposes.

Ultimately, chess as a game allows each of us to experience and express many different facets of ourselves.

Ken: I think the outside world often sees a very one-dimensional aspect of chess. To them it can feel foreign and intimidating. In my *Northwest Chess* magazine interviews, I try to bring out the multi-dimensional aspects of chess.

Valentin: You are doing the chess community a real service with your work. What I really appreciate in your articles is how they probe different perspectives related to the game.

Although we are a friendly chess community, we don't get together often in a room to share how we think and feel. So, we don't know much about each other, and your work fills a void.

You are helping us to foster mutual understanding within our chess community. Your articles provide raw materials for us to become better chess parents, chess coaches, and chess event organizers. Thank you for doing that!

Ken: What is your vision for the future of chess in the PNW?

Valentin: Over the past five years with the Washington Chess Federation (WCF), I have enjoyed collaborating with our team to gradually improve the quality of local and regional tournaments. We strive to make them more diverse, reliable, efficient, and ultimately more rewarding for many. This work is ongoing.

It involves encouraging wider audiences to participate. It also means running tournaments with fewer or no glitches. Finally, it is about offering value to everyone, no matter their skill level, age, gender, or goals.

Ken: How do you plan to achieve that?

Valentin: WCF has been adding chess events in new locations; having more FIDE-rated events; offering new types of events (e.g., Casablanca chess, Chess960, hand-and-brain chess); encouraging tournament directors to learn from each other; significantly broadening award categories (so that more players feel acknowledged); etc.

We've also started adding new sections (e.g., for lower-rated players) to a number of premier tournaments. Both scholastic players and adults coming to

the game (or coming back after a hiatus) now have more opportunities.

For the Washington Open, the Washington Class, and the Washington State Championship, we now have sections to specifically cater to newer players—where previously they would have had no option or would have had to swim in deep waters against seasoned opponents from the very start. We see real interest in such an expansion of sections, as gauged by their respectable size.

Likewise with the side events that WCF organizes. Years ago, there used to be only a couple of side events at the Washington Open and the Washington Class. Nowadays we feature many more (e.g., puzzles, blitz, bullet, bughouse, chess960, novice/unrated, etc.), and many of those attract a crowd.

Ken: Anything else you'd like to see in the world of chess?

Valentin: I've been thinking about this, and I see your articles as supporting the big idea of bringing people together in our community in more meaningful ways. Like you, I look forward to us continuing to discover how each person can contribute to a better community.

Your contribution is integral to this mission, because you know how to build bridges between people and how to weave strands of individual stories into a beautiful interconnected tapestry.

While for most of us chess will not be a profession, I see it as an opportunity to learn to be better human beings.

We can all learn to treat each other with respect no matter the result of a game. We can appreciate what each person does and where they come from. We can be thoughtful about what we do and how we make our contributions.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the many individuals in our chess community who have helped us get to where we are and where we want to be.

Some of my heroes, from whom I've been learning much along my path, are:

- Josh Sinanan – always being the voice of openness, reason, and balance;

- Siva Sankrithi – helping to connect many of us behind the scenes, and acting with patience and tolerance;

Valentin Razmov.
Photo courtesy of Valentin Razmov.

- Meiling Cheng – openly embracing who we are, without judgment, and selflessly contributing everywhere;

- Dwight Barber – pointing the way of the wise, and guiding us toward the next level.

News Flash:

Bertrand Wan becomes National Master!

By Josh Sinanan

Congratulations to Bertrand Wan of Redmond, Washington, who recently became Washington State's newest National Master! Bertrand achieved a US Chess rating of 2205 as a result of winning the 2025 King County Open with a perfect 5.0/5 score followed by winning two more games at the recent SCC Pumpkin Spice tournament.

Bertrand defeated three National Masters—Vidip Kona (2206), Nikash Vemparala (2245), and Rishabh Chinni (2196)—on his way to winning the Inaugural King County Open, hosted by the Washington Chess Federation September 27-28, 2025 in Bellevue.

Bertrand continued his amazing streak with two more wins against Pratik Thorwe (1983) and Pavel Trochtchanovitch (2009) at the SCC Pumpkin Spice Friday Night tournament, hosted by the Seattle Chess Club October 3-24, 2025 in Seattle.

Important Instructions For Online Subscribers

Introduction

Northwest Chess is pleased to offer all our subscribers access to the magazine online via Google groups, regardless of whether subscribers also receive paper copies. However, to properly administer and manage the group, we need to know who's who, that is, which subscriber is associated with each email in the group. Since it's common to use a different email address for your Google account (often a gmail.com address) than you may use for other purposes including your chess membership/subscriber record, we have many group members who aren't properly identified. Beginning in January 2026, your Google group email address will need to match an email on file in your membership or subscription record, to avoid possible removal from the group. This should be easy to do. Here are the instructions for the different states where we have members/subscribers.

WCF members

The online registration system is now the official membership record for WCF members. Please visit https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/member.php, find your membership record, log in, and edit your email(s). Multiple emails separated by a semicolon are allowed. You should add the email you use for Google and delete any obsolete or unnecessary emails. Contact the WCF (washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com) or the administrator for assistance if needed.

OCF members

The OCF now uses the Chess Memberships system at https://chessmemberships.com/OCF. Click on "Member Login" and enter the username and password you were given or contact OCF for assistance if needed by sending email to support@oregonchessfed.org. Change your email to the one you use for Google (under "My Login & Security"), assuming you don't mind receiving all your OCF chess-related emails at this address. If you prefer to use two different addresses, please contact info@nwchess.com to request that you be added to an exceptions list, since the OCF membership system currently only allows one email for each member. When updating your email, you will need to receive and enter a verification code sent to your new email.

Other states and subscriptions

If you're not in Washington or Oregon, or are not an individual member, please contact *NWC* directly (via info@nwchess.com) to request having your subscription record updated to your Google-compatible (or registered) email. Please also supply your full name and previous email and tell us if you want to keep your previous email on file as an alternate address. If you're an Idaho resident with an ICA premium membership, this procedure will only update your *NWC* subscription record, not your ICA membership record. Contact ICA directly if you want to update it as well.

Note that gmail.com addresses are generally not required to use Google to view the magazine files, however, you do need a Google account, which may be created using an email from a different mail service.

You will also need to renew your membership and/or subscription when it's due to remain in the Google group for *NWC* magazine. We usually allow a two-month grace period before removal, but it's best to renew early. The WCF and OCF will normally require renewal when registering for a tournament if your membership expires before the tournament will end. The WCF and OCF plan to start sending email renewal notices from their new membership systems, however, if you're not certain about your expiration date, please log in to your membership system to check, or inquire with WCF or OCF.

Thanks,

Eric Holcomb (former Business Manager and current manager of the integrated *NWC* subscriber list)

Northwest Chess Hall of Fame Inductee

Russell (Rusty) Miller

John Donaldson

Organized chess in the Northwest dates back over a hundred and fifty years. During this time few individuals, if any, have done more to promote the game than the late Rusty Miller, May 30, 1942 – December 29, 2020. Rusty wore many hats, including those of organizer, tournament director, administrator, editor, journalist, and player in a roughly sixty-year career.

Rusty grew up in Chelan, Washington, and learned to play chess in high school, but only started competing in organized competitions while attending the University of Oregon. Rusty's tournament debut was the 1961 Interstate Open held in Portland in early March. The same month he appeared for the first time in the pages of the *Washington Chess Letter*.

Reading the *WCL* it's apparent that, although Rusty was a latecomer to the game, he caught the chess bug in a big way. The magazine reports him playing Sammy Reshevsky in a simul in Eugene in 1962 alongside Jim McCormick who was also attending the University of Oregon. The following year the two travelled to Chicago to play in the U.S. Open, the first of several that Rusty would attend.

Despite his late start and intuitive style that caused him to move very quickly, Rusty made it to Class A but playing the game was never his primary interest. That was organizing. One of his first efforts was the 1966 Seattle U.S. Open where he was a member of the tournament committee while also playing.

Rusty made a name for himself in the early 1970s when he single-handedly put together Jude Acers exhibition tours around the United States. The venues included not only chess clubs, but schools, prisons and shopping malls, and scheduling them in the pre-Internet days demanded a varied skill-set including the ability to deal with a number of unforeseen situations. One of the highlights of these transcontinental tours was Jude's setting a then world record with his 117-player simul at Portland's Jantzen Mall in 1974.

Another example of Rusty's organizing skill was his holding a tournament in every single county in Washington—39 in all—in the early 1970s. This unique series exemplified Rusty's commitment to grassroots promotion of the game. He was always thinking of new ways to get more people involved.

Northwest Chess was Rusty's second love, after his wife Kathy, and he served several times as its editor from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s. The issues Rusty edited showed the influence of his great predecessor Dan Wade—the magazine was to be a journal of record for chess in the Northwest. Rusty typed up hundreds of crosstables over the years and took countless photographs. His love for *Northwest Chess* also extended to preserving the magazine by scanning many years of back issues. These preservationist instincts and love for historical details could also be seen in his compiling lists of winners of many annual tournaments held in the Northwest. Rusty loved to research the past.

Kathy Miller (L) and Rusty Miller taken August 11, 2012 at the US Open in Portland, Oregon. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

Rusty organized the first tournament in the Northwest to offer IM norms, the West Seattle International, in 1991. He also served as the business manager of Yasser Seirawan's *Inside Chess*, where he occasionally, and presumably by accident, answered the phone, "*Northwest Chess!*"

Running a bookstore was one of the many dreams Rusty was able to realize. He loved to read and it was rare to find him without some books, particularly those by his favorite author, Northwest mystery writer J.A. Jance. He and Kathy, who like Rusty was honored by the USCF when the US Open was held in Vancouver in 2012, were big baseball fans. Rusty was also active in civic affairs and ran several times for city council while living in Yakima.

Readers are encouraged to check out the obituary for Rusty in the February 2021 issue of *Northwest Chess*, from which this Hall of Fame story was extracted.

Previously Covered

Articles of previous inductees are found in the following issues of *Northwest Chess*:

Viktors Pupols - January 2023

Richard Vandenburg - September 2023

Clark Harmon - March 2024

Daniel Wade - May 2025

Robert Karch - October 2025

YOU'RE INVITED

Join us for a special fundraising gala on December 6th, 2025, dedicated to supporting and empowering girls in chess. This elegant evening will include a gourmet dinner, and complimentary parking all to make the night truly memorable. The auction will feature gift cards, Victoria's Secret baskets, 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: December 6th, 2025
TIME: 6:30pm to 9:30pm
TICKETS: Adult $125 | Children $90
LOCATION: Hilton Bellevue Hotel
300 112th Avenue SE | Bellevue, WA

my CHESS world

Hello@MyChessWorld.com

CO-HOSTED BY WATA AND WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION

WATA SCHOLASTIC CHESS TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025

REDMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

16800 NE 80TH ST, REDMOND, WA 98052

FORMAT

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

K-1 U700
2-3 U700
K-3 Open
4-12 U900
4-12 Open

SCHEDULE

Rd. 1 – 10:00am
Rd. 2 – 11:30am
Lunch
Rd. 3 – 1:30pm
Rd. 4 – 3:00pm
Rd. 5 – 4:30pm
Awards ~ 6:30pm

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 11/16, $60 after. Room for 100 players.

AWARDS

Prizes: Trophies for 3 points and above in each section.

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

RATING

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

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

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-1 U700 and 2-3 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 December 5 @ 5:00pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

PROCEDURE

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

Questions?
Contact: Rekha Sagar, WCF VP,
rekha4chess@gmail.com,
425-496-9160

2025 National K-12 GRADE Chess Championships

Thu-Sun, December 11-14, 2025

Spokane Convention Center

334 West Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201

Eligibility

Open to all US students in grades K-12 as of the 2025-2026 school year.

Format

A 7-round, G/90; d10 Swiss tournament in 13 grade-level sections, K-12.

Entry Fees

$105 online or postmarked by ***10/27***
$160 online or postmarked by ***11/17***
$235 online **ONLY** by ***12/1***
$360 online **ONLY** by ***12/10***
$400 on-site until **10am Fri 12/12**
See Scholastic Regulations for details on required byes for on-site entries.
$40 for section changes requested **after 11/3.**
100% Entry refunds available if notified by email to nationalevents@uschess.org **by 11/3**.
Refunds requested **after 11/3** or in person at Chess Control by 11am PT on **12/11** will incur a $40 service charge.
No refunds after **11am 12/11**.

Schedule

Thursday 12/11: **Bughouse Championship** (11am-2pm), **National Puzzle Solving Championship** (3-4pm), **Blitz Championship** (5-9pm)
Friday 12/12: **Opening Ceremony** (12:30pm), Rd. 1: 1pm, Rd. 2: 6pm.
Saturday 12/13: Rd. 3: 9am, Rd. 4: 1:30pm, Rd. 5: 6pm.
Sunday 12/14: Rd. 6: 9am, Rd. 7: 2pm, **Awards Ceremony** ~ Sun. 6pm.
Note: K-1 sections start 30 min later for morning rounds and 30 min earlier for evening rounds. Please check full schedule for details.

Awards

All players who complete the event will receive an award! Medals awarded to the top-scoring players in each section. Players will be able to collect medals following the completion of round 7. For team award info, see Nationals Website.

Rating

US Chess rated. December 2025 US Chess rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Converted ratings used for players with higher NWSRS ratings. See page 7 of Scholastic Regulations for details.

Event Website

new.uschess.org/k12-2025-championships

Online Registration

kingregistration.com/event/2025nationalk12

Questions?

Josh Sinanan, WCF President,
US Chess Scholastic Council Rep,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com,
Call or text: 206-769-3757

SCAN ME

Washington Winter Classic

DECEMBER 20-21, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest finishing WA player in the Rudolph Open, Dasher U1800, and Prancer U1400 sections seeded into the Premier, Challengers, and Prodigies sections, respectively, of the 2026 WA State Championship.

Format: A five-round Swiss in three sections:

Rudolph Open, Dasher U1800 & Prancer U1400

In case of a tie for 1st place, follow-up playoff games will determine the seed for the Premier, Challengers or Prodigies section of the 2026 Washington State Championship.

Time Control: G/90; +30 sec. increment. Late default: 60 minutes.

Schedule: Sat @ 9 AM, 2 PM, 7 PM. Sun @ 10 AM, 3 PM. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

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

Rudolph Open: 1st–4th: $450-$350-$250-$200, 1st-2nd U2200: $150-$125, 1st-2nd U2000: $150-$125.

Dasher U1800: 1st–4th: $400-$300-$200-$150, 1st-2nd U1700: $125-$100, 1st-2nd U1500: $125-$100.

Prancer U1400: 1st–4th: $300-$225-$175-$125, 1st-2nd U1200: $100-$75, 1st-2nd U1000: $100-$75.

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

Entry Fee: $100 by 12/13, $125 after. Free entry (pending completion without withdrawals) for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs and chess Santas rated 2200+ USCF. $50 play-up fee if rated 1700-1799 or 1300-1399 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Rudolph Open or Dasher U1800, respectively. Maximum of 100 players – please register early.

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. Memberships must be paid at time of registration.

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of December 2025 US Chess or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF or foreign rating used at TD discretion.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration (pay by SettleKing/Zelle/check/cash). Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 12/19 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered 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, 206.769.3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Holiday Blitz: Sunday 7-9pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** $30. **Format:** A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual US Chess Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/3; +2. **On-site registration:** 6:00-6:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 7pm, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:15pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of December 2025 US Chess Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.
Prize Fund: $750 (based on 50 paid entries)
1st – 3rd: $170-120-90,
1st U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000/Unrated: $40.
Biggest upset win: $10/rd.

Ferris Samara reflects on his position while his captured bishop leans on its pawn for support at the King County Open.

Photo Credit: Meiling Cheng.

King County Open

(Wan, Inforzato, and Hyman crowned at Inaugural King County Open)

Josh Sinanan

The Inaugural King County Open—a tournament held in honor of the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in appreciation of the residents of King County—was held September 27-28, 2025 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue. The event coincidentally overlapped with the "No Kings" protests held throughout the United States the same weekend. Several keen observers were heard quipping that it's best for the King to just stay on the chess board where he belongs!

The tournament drew a robust turnout of 121 players across two sections, with 77 in the Kenmore Open and 44 in the Kent U1500, named after two of the cities which comprise King County, the most populous in Washington State. The typical FIDE time control of G/90; +30 second increment was used in both sections, both of which were five rounds and triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Despite the abundance of players hailing from cities within King County, several other counties were also represented, including Snohomish, Thurston, Multnomah, Pierce, Skagit, Kitsap, British Columbia, Montgomery, Mason, Jefferson, and Washington!

The event was hosted by Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF FIDE Liaison Mani Atikankhotchasee, Member-at-Large Ani Barua, and Scholastic Director Allen Messenger. Parents, spectators, and chess fans were able to watch the games of some of the top boards via a live broadcast on Clono and LiChess.org thanks to the tech-savvy efforts of Mani, who managed the recording tablets and set up the games broadcast at the start of each round.

After five topsy turvy rounds, Bertrand Wan (5.0, 2137 → 2195), a college student based in Redmond, was crowned king of Kenmore with a perfect five points from five games. Along the way, Bertrand vanquished fellow chess dignitaries including NM Vidip Kona (2206), NM Nikash Vemparala (2245), and NM Rishabh Chinni (2196) in impressive style. With such a strong performance, there's no doubt that Bertrand will achieve his National Master title soon! Chess czar FM Aziz Degenbaev (4.5, 2398 → 2402) earned second place a half-point back, winning four games and taking one half-point bye to join an out-of-town friend for dinner on Saturday evening. Six chess barons shared third/fourth/fifth/U2200 with four points apiece: NM Arjun C. Krishnamachari (4.0, unrated → 2319) of Bellevue, FM Stephen Willy (4.0, 2306 → 2313) of Sammamish, FM Megan Lee (4.0, 2281 → 2285) of Bellevue, FM Ryan Porter (4.0, 2281 → 2281) of Bellevue, and NM Rishabh Chinni (4.0, 2196 → 2199) of Bothell.

A quintuplet of chess bigwigs split the first U2000 prize, each with a solid "plus two" score: William Summerfield (3.5, 1916 → 1939) of Mercer Island, Neevan Reddy Saddi (3.5, 1981 → 1991) of Issaquah, Ujwal Garine (3.5, 1938 → 1932) of Redmond, Karthik Bimod (3.5, 1933 → 2003) of Portland, and Chad Boey (3.5, 1756 → 1824) of Seattle. Young Rian Raja (5.5, 1541 → 1625) of Bothell lived up to his name and claimed the first U1800 prize thanks to winning his last three games in a row! Bellevue chess kahuna Ankush Goyal (3.0, 1369 → 1593) won the first U1600 prize with an impressive "plus one" score. In addition to the overall prizes, several "royal" prizes were also awarded for the biggest upsets in each round, the best female player, best senior player, and the best dressed each day.

The following chess tycoons won the biggest upset prizes: Ankush Goyal and Raymond Zhao (round one, 380 points), William Summerfield (round two, 475 points), Ankush Goyal (round three, 317 points), Karthik Bimod (round four, 524 points), and Rian Raja (round five, 327 points). Former Washington Girls Champion Selina Cheng of Seattle won the Best Female Player prize with a tournament performance rating (TPR) of 1997 while Bellevue big cheese Paul Harwood earned the Best Senior Player prize with a TPR of 1798. Aussie chess queen Yiting Gui, Portland chess royal Saahil Gupta, and Seattle chess star Selina Cheng collected the Best Dressed prizes for their stylish wardrobes.

Two chess tycoons—Andrew Inforzato (4.5, 1305 → 1389) of Belfair and Daniel Hyman (4.5, 1379 → 1422) of Silver Spring (MD)—topped the Kent U1500 section, each with an undefeated 4.5 points from five games. Hyman started off strong with three consecutive wins against Naughton (unrated), Newland (359), and Wiese (1298) before being held to a draw by Boddy (1345) in the fourth round. This opened the door for Inforzato to take a modest half-point lead heading into the final round after winning his first four games against Byelashova, S. (1092), Fontenot (1076), Li (750), and Dahlke (1334). Hyman's clutch last-round win against Weng (1288) was just enough to catch Inforzato, who was held to a draw against the unpredictable Ma (1226).

A trio of chess princes shared third/fourth/U1400 honors a half-point back: Ziliang Ma (4.0, 1226 → 1300) of Seattle, Moses Li (4.0, 750 → 1040) of Bothell, and Richard Rogov (4.0, 1193 → 1310) of Kirkland. Bothell big shot Blake Anable (3.5, 1017 → 1218) claimed the first U1200 prize a half-point back. Edmonds newcomer Liam Naughton (3.0, unrated → 1243) won the first unrated prize, recovering well after a first-round loss against Hyman to finish with three points from his last four games. A quadruplet of chess moguls shared the first U1000 prize with two points apiece: Felicity Mei (2.0, 817 → 826) of Sammamish, Aariv Shah (2.0, 806 → 912) of Issaquah, Julian Tang (2.0, unrated → 1048) of Vancouver (BC), and David Newland (2.0, 359 → 465) of Seattle.

The following chess honchos were awarded the biggest upset prizes for their macho efforts: Aariv Shah (round one, 386 points), Julian Tang (round two, 934 points), David Newland (round three, 984 points), Aariv Shah (round four, 278 points), and Blake Anable (round five, 256 points). Gig Harbor chess demigod Darya Byelashova won the Best Female prize with a tournament performance rating of 1312. Bothell big wheel Clifford Dibble collected the Best Senior prize with a TPR of 817. Bellevue bigfoot Tom Zeitlin and Port Townsend pooh-bah Andrew Wises won the best dressed prizes for their lordly getups.

King County Blitz

The King County tournament took place on Sunday evening shortly after the last round of the King County Open to wrap up the busy weekend. A solid turnout of forty-five diehard chess deities took part in the seven-round Single Swiss tournament, which was directed by WCF FIDE Liaison Mani Atikankhotchasee with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua.

The blitz ran just a bit over two hours and featured players ranging from unrated to master level. The "luxurious" time control of G/5; +3 second increment was used for all seven rounds, which made for higher quality games that one might

find in most OTB blitz tournaments. The games were dual USCF Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated, much to the delight of many players seeking to establish ratings in both systems in preparation for upcoming national and international events.

A duo of chess heavyweights – NM Vinesh Ravuri (6.0, 2115 → 2156) of Bellevue and FM Ted Wang (6.0, 2117 → 2141) of Medina – dominated the field with an impressive 6.0 points from seven games to share first place honors. Vinesh, an expert in speed chess, started off red-hot with wins against Palathingal (1952), Willy (2181), and Sundaram (2227) before drawing with Ted in the sixth round. A last-round draw against Lee (2084) allowed Wang, who had conceded an early draw to Wong-Godfrey (1538) to catch up with him as Wang prevailed against wild Willy in the last round.

Chess supremo Sid M. Sundaram (5.5, 2227 → 2235) captured third place honors a half-point back, recovering well after a fifth-round loss against Ravuri and winning his last two games in a row. A trio of up-and-coming movers and shakers—Neevan R. Saddi (4.5, 1846 → 1845) of Issaquah, Akim Pikh (4.5, 1816 → 1808) of Redmond, and Emerson Wong-Godfrey (4.5, 1538 → 1587) of Seattle—tied for U2000 honors a full-point back. Duvall main man Dann Merriman (4.5, 1726 → 1734) earned the first U1800 prize thanks to clutch upset-wins against Chow (1803) and Garine (1873) in the final two rounds. Kent U1500 co-champion Andrew Inforzato (4.0, 1312 → 1394) of Belfair won the first U1600 prize with a "plus one" score.

Chess Dad and tournament newcomer Ankush Goyal (4.0, 1349 → 1532) of Bellevue captured the first unrated prize thanks to winning three of his last five games. Sammamish superstar Sambuddha S. Das (3.5, 1388 → 1470) and Redmond VIP Kevin Cui (3.5, unrated → 1316) shared the first U1400/U1200 prize for their efforts. Bellevue big boy Avyukt Goyal (1.0, 397 → 378) fought hard in every round and earned the first U1000 prize for his courage and perseverance.

Several biggest upset win prizes were also up for grabs and were won by the following nawabs: Ziliang Ma (round two, 576 points), Imai Maharaja (round three, 496 points), Dillon Weber (round four, 536 points), Andrew Inforzato (round five, 460 points), Sambuddha S. Das (round six, 404 points), and Andrew Inforzato (round seven, 583 points).

Thanks to all the chess kings, queens, and other royalty who came out and supported the King County events!

Games

Siddarth M. Sundaram (2463) – Karthik Bimod (1939) [B99]
2025 King County Open
Bellevue, WA (R4), September 28, 2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 Be7 8.Qf3 Qc7 9.0-0-0 Nbd7 10.g4 h6

Position after 10...h6

The packed playing hall at the inaugural King County Open.
Photo Credit: Meiling Cheng.

Still known theory, but more popular is 10...b5, when it's easily possible to play 20+ moves of "book." For example, 11.Bxf6 Nxf6 12.g5 Nd7 13.f5 Bxg5+ 14.Kb1 Ne5 15.Qh5 Qe7 16.Nxe6 Bxe6 17.fxe6 g6 18.exf7+ Kxf7 19.Qh3 Kg7 20.Nd5 Qd8 21.Qc3 Ra7 is arguably following the most popular choice at each move. Results from here are roughly equally split, with very few draws, despite the engine suggesting about +1 for White.

11.Bh4 g5 12.fxg5 Ne5 13.Qg3 Nfxg4 14.gxh6 Rxh6

14...Bxh4 15.Qxh4 Qe7 seems a crisper way to reach game-similar positions, as 16.Qxe7+? *(16.Qg3 Qg5+ 17.Kb1 Qe3∓* a tempo ahead of the game line, assuming the h-pawn won't run away somehow.*)* 16...Kxe7∓ definitely favors Black.

15.Bxe7 Qxe7 16.Be2

16.h4 prevents ingress for the black queen via g5, at least.

16...Qg5+ 17.Kb1 Qh4! 18.Bxg4

Position after 18.Bxg4

18...Qxg3

Correctly judging endgames to be at least equal for Black. Instead, 18...Nxg4?! 19.Qg1! Rg6 (19...Nf2?? 20.Nf3 *(*Or the more attack oriented *20.Qg8+ Ke7 21.Nf5+!! exf5 22.Nd5+ Kd7 23.Qxf7+ Kd8 24.Rhg1 Ng4 25.exf5+-* with overwhelming threats.*)* 20...Qf4 21.Qxf2+-, and if 21...Rf6 22.Qb6+-) 20.Nf3 with complications that appear to favor White, such as 20...Qh3 *(20...Qf2 21.h3 Qxg1 22.Rhxg1±)* 21.Qb6! Qxf3 22.Rhf1 Qe3 23.Qxd6 Qg5 24.Qc7 Qe7?? *(*Stockfish offers the defense *24...Rg7 25.Rg1 Qe7 26.Qf4 Qg5 27.Qd6 Qe7 28.Qd4* and still claims White is better, with more than sufficient compensation for the piece.*)* 25.Rd8+ Qxd8 26.Qxf7#

19.hxg3 Rxh1 20.Rxh1 Nxg4 21.Nf3

21.Na4

21...Ke7 22.Rh4 Ne5 23.Nxe5 dxe5 24. Kc1 Bd7 25.Kd2 Rg8 26.g4 Bc6 27.Ke3 Rg7 28.Ne2 Kd6 29.Nc1 b6 30.Nd3 Bb5 31.Ne1 Bc6 32.Nf3 f6 33.b3 a5 34.a4 Bb7 35.Nh2 Rc7 36.Kd3 Ba6+ 37.c4 Kc5

Position after 37...Kc5

38.Kc3?!

A very natural, even obvious, human move. Also, according to Stockfish, slightly wrong. The engine prefers the passive-looking 38.Nf3 Kb4 39.Nd2, claiming complete equality. 39...Rg7

a) 39...Bb7 40.Rh6 Rd7+ 41.Kc2 Rf7 42.g5 fxg5 43.Rxe6 Rg7 44.Rxe5 Ka3 *(44...g4?? 45.Kb2 Bc6 46.Nb1 Rh7 47.Na3 Rh2+ 48.Nc2+ Rxc2+ 49.Kxc2 g3 50.Kb2 g2 51.Rg5+-)* 45.Nb1+ Ka2 46.Nc3+ Ka3 *(46...Ka1?? 47.Rf5+-)*;

b) 39...Rd7+ 40.Kc2 Bb7 *(40...Rd4 41.Rh7)* 41.Rh6 Rf7 42.g5 transposes to the previous line.;

40.Rh6 Rxg4 41.Rxf6 Rg3+ 42.Kc2 Rc3+ 43.Kd1

38...Bb7

Position after 38...Bb7

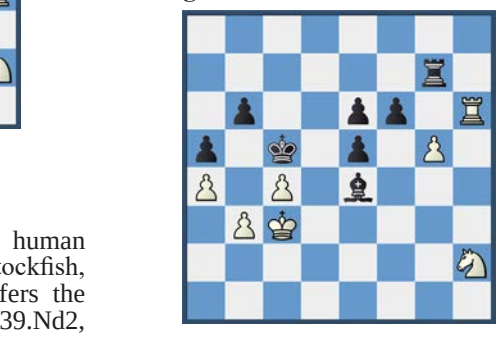
39.Rh6?!

Heading back to d3, despite the loss of two moves, appears the best chance. 39.Kd3 Kb4 *(39...Rd7+ 40.Ke3 Rd4 41.g5 fxg5 42.Rg4 Kb4 43.Nf3∓* The position still holds chances to complicate, such as *43...Rxe4+!? 44.Rxe4 Bxe4 45.Kxe4 Kxb3 46.Nxe5 Kxa4.* Now White must be very careful. *47.Nc6 Ka3 48.Nxa5! Kb4 49.Nb7 Kxc4 50.Nd6+ Kc5∓* may be best, though that knight must still scramble to stop all the runners.*)* 40.Rh6 Rd7+ 41.Ke3 Rd4 42.Rxf6 Rxe4+ 43.Kd3 Rd4+ 44.Ke3 Kxb3 45.Rxe6 Kxc4 46.Rxb6. Material is getting low.

39...Bxe4 40.g5

40.Rxf6 Rd7 41.Nf1 Rd3+ 42.Kb2 Kb4∓

40...Rg7!



Position after 40...Rg7

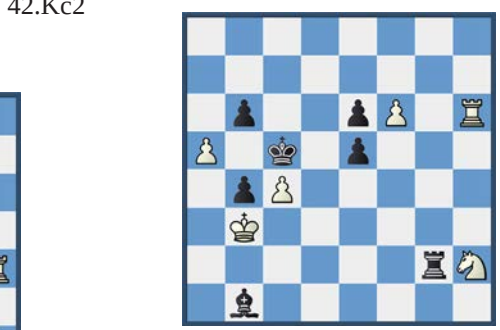
41.gxf6?

41.Rxf6 Rxg5 42.Rxe6 Rg3+ 43.Kd2 Rd3+ 44.Ke2 Rxb3 45.Rxe5+ Kd4 46.Rh5 Ra3∓ This is closer to winning than drawing.

41...Rg2!

The trap snaps shut.

42.b4+ axb4+ 43.Kb3 Bb1! 44.a5



Position after 44.a5

44...b5!

44...Ba2+ 45.Ka4 Bxc4 46.— Ra2# works as well.

45.cxb5 Kxb5 46.Rh4 Ba2#

0–1

Bertrand Wan (2145) –
Nikash Vemparala (2245) [D37]
2025 King County Open
Bellevue, WA (R4), September 28, 2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4 h6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5. Bf4 Bd6 6.Bxd6 Qxd6 7.e3 0-0 8.Bd3 Qe7 9.0-0 b6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.Ne5 Bb7 12.f4 c5

Position after 12...c5

13.g4!?

13.Rc1 Nc6 14.Bb1 looks natural, as Black cannot immediately take advantage of the weakness of d4. 14...cxd4 15.exd4 Qb4 16.Rf2 *(*Or *16.Ne2)* 16...Nxd4?? *(16...Qxd4?? 17.Nxc6 Qxd1+ 18.Nxd1+−;* Better here is something like *16...Rfc8 17.Rd2±)* 17.a3 Qc5 18.b4+-

13...Ne4?!

13...Nc6 14.Bc2

14.Nxe4

14.g5!? Nd7 *(14...hxg5 15.Nxe4 dxe4 16.Bc4±)* 15.gxh6 g6 *(15...Nxe5 16.hxg7 Kxg7 17.dxe5±; 15...gxh6 16.Qg4+ Kh8 17.Qxd7+-)* 16.Qg4±

14...dxe4 15.Bc4± cxd4 16.g5 Nc6 17.Ng6 Qc5

17...Qd6!? 18.Qh5 Kh7 19.Nxf8+ Rxf8 20.Rad1±

[Diagram top of next column]

Position after 17...Qc5

18.gxh6?!

18.Rc1 Qf5 *(18...dxe3 19.Bxf7+ Rxf7 20.Rxc5 bxc5 21.Qb3±* looks messy.*)* 19.Nh4 Qa5 (19...Qh3 20.Qh5! Bc8 (20...Qxe3+ 21.Kh1 Ne7 22.gxh6 Qh3 *(22...g6 23.Qe5+-)* 23.Qg5 *(*Or *23.h7+ Kh8 24.Ng6+ fxg6 25.Qxh3)* 23...g6 24.Qxe7+-) 21.gxh6 Qg4+ 22.Qxg4 Bxg4 23.Bd5±) 20.gxh6 gxh6 21.Qg4+

18...dxe3 19.Qg4

Position after 19.Qg4

19...Kh7?

With 19...e2+ accurate play seems to lead to equality. 20.Kh1 (20.Rf2 gxh6 21.Ne5+ Kh8 22.Qh5 Qd6 23.Nxf7+ Rxf7 24.Qxf7 Rf8

a) 24...Qd1+? 25.Kg2! e1Q *(25...Qxa1 26.Qg6 e1N+ 27.Kg3 e3 28.Qxh6#)* 26.Rxd1 Qxd1 27.Qg6+-;

b) 24...Na5 25.Be6 Qd1+ 26.Kg2 e3+ 27.Kh3 exf2 28.Qf6+ Kh7 29.Qf7+; 25.Qxb7 Qd1+ 26.Kg2 e1Q 27.Rxd1 Qxd1 28.Qxc6 Rg8+! 29.Bxg8 Qg4+ 30.Kf1 Qd1+) 20...exf1R+ 21.Rxf1 gxh6 *(21...Kh7 22.Nxf8+ Qxf8 23.hxg7 Qxg7 24.Qh5+ Qh6 25.Qxf7+ Qg7)* 22.Rg1 Kh7 23.Nxf8+ Qxf8 24.Qf5+ Kh8 25.Qf6+

20.Nxf8+ Qxf8 21.hxg7

21.Rfd1; or 21.Qd7±

21...Qxg7 22.Qxg7+ Kxg7 23.Bd5?!

23.Rfd1 Rg8 24.Kh1± favors White, but isn't yet decisive.

Position after 23.Bd5

23...Rd8?

23...Rb8 24.Bxe4 Nd4 25.Bxb7 Rxb7∞ Black's advanced pawn offers decent compensation for the exchange.

24.Bxe4 Rd2

24...Re8 25.Bf3±

25.Rfe1 Rxb2 26.Rxe3 Kf6

26...Nd8 27.Bxb7 Nxb7 28.Re7 Nc5 29.Rxa7 is likely winning, but does require work.

27.Rc1 Na5 28.Bxb7 Nxb7 29.Rc7 Nd6 30.Rxa7 Rb1+ 31.Kf2 Kf5 32.Rb3 Rc1 33.Rxb6 Ne4+ 34.Ke2 f6 35.Ke3 Re1+

Bertrand Wan (L) and Nikash Vemparala debate a trendy sideline of the Queen's Gambit Declined during their fourth-round game of the King County Open.
Photo Credit: Meiling Cheng.

36.Kf3 Rf1+ 37.Ke2 Rh1 38.Rh7 Rc1 39.Rh4 Rc5 40.Rh5+ Kxf4 41.Rxc5 Nxc5 42.Rxf6+

1–0

Ted Wang (2307) –
Jason Loving (2037) [B12]
2025 King County Open
Bellevue, WA (R3), September 27, 2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5

3...Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5

4.Nf3

4.dxc5 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bg4 would also reach the game positions.

4...Bg4 5.dxc5 Nc6 6.c3 e6 7.Be3 Bxf3

Of course not 7...Nxe5?? 8.Qa4+ Qd7 9.Bb5 Nc6 10.Qxg4+-

8.Qxf3 Nxe5 9.Bb5+ Nc6 10.c4

10.0-0 Nf6 11.c4 is more standard, and also the end of my theoretical knowledge of the line.

Position after 10.c4

10...Nge7?

Well, this can't be right. Now it will take two moves to complete development of the knight, and it also clogs up the e7–square, useful for both bishop and queen to at least pass through en route to someplace better than their home squares. 10...Qf6!? offers a pressure-relieving queen exchange while at least hinting at mayhem on b2. 11.Nd2

a) 11.Qxf6 Nxf6;

b) 11.Qg3! Qxb2 *(11...Rc8∞* is a safer, yet still complex, option.*)* 12.Qc7 Qxa1 13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.Qxc6+ Ke7**±** and while White certainly has a big attack, one might be a bit concerned about playing a rook down without plenty of home preparation.

Time to go down the rabbit hole:

b1) The principled continuation would be 15.0-0, when 15...Rd8 16.Qb7+ Ke8

b11) 16...Rd7 17.Qb8 Rd8 18.Qxa7+ Rd7 19.Qa3+-;

b12) 16...Kf6 17.Nd2 Qxa2 *(17...Qe5 18.Nf3 Qb8 19.Bd4+ Kg6 20.Nh4+ Kh6 21.Qxf7* definitely leads to mate.*)* 18.Qc7 h6 *(18...Ra8 19.Bd4+ Kg6 20.Qg3+ Kf5 21.Qf3+ Kg6 22.Qg4+ Kh6 23.Be3+ g5 24.Qxg5#)* 19.Qxd8+ Be7 *(19...Kg6 20.Qxf8)* 20.Qb8 Kg6 21.c6; 17.Qb5+ Ke7 18.c6 introduces a dangerous advanced potential shape-shifter to the action.;

b2) 15.Qb7+ Kf6 16.0-0 Re8 is certainly still an interesting attack, but appears to have given Black another option for development.;

b3) 15.Bg5+ f6 16.Qb7+ Ke8 17.Qxa8+ regains the rook with check, but also gives Black more space for the king, and incidentally also leaves two white pieces en prise. After 17...Kf7 18.0-0**∞** Stockfish calls it even.;

b4) White can, of course, bail out with an instant draw through perpetual check repetition: 15.Qc7+ Kf6 16.Qf4+ Ke7 *(16...Kg6?? 17.Qg5#)* 17.Qc7+;

11...Nge7 12.0-0-0!?**±** with bishop-pair and slightly preferable development, but lots of chess to go.

11.Nc3 dxc4 12.0-0

12.Rd1**±**

12...a6 13.Rad1 Qc7

13...Qc8 14.Bxc4 Ne5, but still good for White.

14.Bf4 Qa5 15.Bxc4 Ng6

Position after 15...Ng6

16.Ne4?

Here's where White misses a big opportunity. 16.Nd5!! Nxf4

a) 16...exd5 17.Qxd5+-, as f7 is exceedingly difficult to defend.;

b) 16...Nce5 17.Nf6+!! *(*Flashy, though the more prosaic *17.Bxe5 Nxe5 18.Qf4* is also very strong.*)* 17...gxf6 *(17...Ke7 18.Rd7+! Nxd7 19.Bd6+ Kd8 20.Qxb7 Nxf6 21.Qxa8++-* and wins: *21...Kd7 22.Qb7+ Ke8 23.b4 Qd8 24.Bc7 Qd7 25.Qb8+ Ke7 26.Bd6+)* 18.Qxb7 Rd8 19.b4 Qa4 20.Bb3 Qb5 21.Rxd8+ Kxd8

22.Rd1+ with a mating attack.;

17.b4! Qd8 18.Qxf4 Rc8 19.Nb6 *(19.Qe4; 19.Qg3; 19.Rfe1* are all good.*)*; Stockfish also suggests 16.b4!! since 16...Qxb4

a) 16...Qa3 17.Rb1! Nxf4 *(17...Bxc5 18.Bc1)* 18.Rb3+-;

b) 16...Nxb4 17.Qxb7+-;

17.Nd5!! is again winning.

16...Nxf4 17.Qxf4 Bxc5

Position after 17...Bxc5

18.Rd3?

18.Ng5 0-0 19.Nxf7 (19.Rd7!? Ne5! 20.Qe4! *(20.Qxe5?? Bxf2+; 20.Rxb7 Nxc4 21.Qxc4 Bxf2+ 22.Rxf2 Qxg5.)* 20...g6 21.Rxb7∞ since with the white queen on the h1–a8 diagonal, 21...Nxc4 is met by 22.Nxf7! Rxf7 23.Rxf7 Kxf7 24.Qxa8 and winning chances are sparse.) 19...Nd4 20.Rxd4 Bxd4 21.Bxe6 Qc5 appears to be heading for a draw by repetition.

18...Be7∓

Black calmly consolidates and begins to use the extra pawn to take over the game.

19.Rg3 Qe5! 20.Qxe5 Nxe5 21.Bb3 0-0 22.f4 Nc6 23.Rc3 Rad8 24.Rfc1 Rd4 25.Re3 Rfd8 26.Rf1?!

26...Na5 27.f5 Nxb3 28.axb3 exf5 29.Rxf5 Bf8 30.Nc3?!

30.Rff3 deters...Rd3, but Black's position is technically winning in any case.

30...Rd2 31.Re2 Rxe2 32.Nxe2 Rd2 33.Kf2 Rxb2 34.Rf3 b5 35.Rd3 a5 36.Kf3 a4 37.bxa4 bxa4 38.Rd8 g6 39.Ra8 a3 40.h3 Kg7 41.Ra5 Bb4 42.Ra4 Bc5 43.Ra5 Be7 44.Ra6 Rb3+ 45.Kf2 Bc5+ 46.Ke1 Rb2 47.Kd1 Bb4 48.Nf4 a2

0–1

Vidip Kona (2143) –
Bertrand Wan (2145) [A22]
2025 King County Open Bellevue, WA (3.4), 27.09.2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.g3 e5 4.d3 Be7 5.Bg2 0–0 6.0–0 Nbd7 7.Nc3 c6 8.e4 a5 9.d4 Re8 10.b3 Bf8 11.Re1 Qc7 12.Bb2 exd4 13.Nxd4 Nc5 14.Qd2 Qb6 15.Nf5 Bxf5 16.exf5 Ng4 17.Qd4 Ne5 18.Rad1 a4 19.f4?

Opens up some tactics on the g1–a7 diagonal and generally weakens the king position. Safer is 19.Ne4∞

19...Nxc4!

19...Ned7∓ is also quite acceptable, with queenside pressure.

Position after 19...Nxc4

20.Rxe8?

It's not necessary to surrender the e-file before countering with 20.Nd5, when after 20...cxd5 21.bxc4 Black doesn't have...Re2. 21...Rxe1+ 22.Rxe1 a3 23.Ba1 dxc4∓ White has at least partial compensation, even after queens exchange, in the active bishop-pair, queenside pawn weaknesses, and slightly awkward black knight.; Of course, White can't accept the piece: 20.Qxc4?? Nd3+ 21.Kh1 Nf2+ 22.Kg1 Nh3+ 23.Kh1 Qg1+ 24.Rxg1 Nf2# is the classic smothered mate.

20...Rxe8 21.Nd5 cxd5 22.bxc4 Re2 23.Bc3 dxc4 24.Bd5

24.Qxc4 Nb3+ *(24...Rc2!?)* 25.Bd4 Nxd4 26.Qxd4 Qc7∓

24...Nd7 25.a3

25.g4 Rxa2 26.g5 g6∓

25...Rc2 26.Bb4 Rc1 27.Kg2 Rxd1

27...Qxd4 28.Rxd4 c3 29.Be4 *(29.Bxb7 d5 30.Bxd5 c2 31.Rc4 Nb6-+)* 29...Nf6 30.Bd3 d5-+

28.Qxd1 Nf6 29.Bf3 d5 30.Qxa4

30.Bc3 Qb3 31.Bxf6 Qxd1 32.Bxd1 gxf6 33.Bxa4 Bxa3-+

30...Bxb4 31.axb4

Position after 31.axb4

31...Qa6?!

Unnecessary. Black can restrain the kingside and create a flight square against back-rank attacks with 31...h5-+

32.Qxa6 bxa6 33.Kf2 Kf8 34.Ke3 Ke7 35.Kd4 Kd6 36.g4 Kc6 37.g5 Ne4 38.h4

38.Bxe4 dxe4 39.Kxc4 e3 40.Kd3 Kb5-+ Outside (distant) passed pawns rule king and pawn endings.

38...f6?!

38...Kb5-+

39.Bh5

39.h5 makes things a little more difficult for Black. 39...h6 and don't take...hxg5, for sure, but there are also some queening races in which White appears a move or two slow, but it still poses questions.

39...Nd6 40.Bg4 Nb5+ 41.Ke3

0–1

Aziz Degenbaev (2408) – Siddharth Shenoy (2133) [C11]
2025 King County Open
Bellevue, WA (R4), September 28, 2025
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3 a6 8.a3 b5 9.Bd3 Be7 10.0–0 0–0 11.dxc5 Nxc5

Position after 11...Nxc5

Aziz now demonstrates a classic threat that always looms over the French Defense.

12.Bxh7+ Kxh7 13.Ng5+ Bxg5 14.fxg5 d4?

14...Nd7 15.Qh5+ Kg8 16.Rf3 Ndxe5 17.Rh3 f5 18.g6 Nxg6 19.Qxg6**±**

15.Qh5+ Kg8 16.Rf4 Nxe5 17.Rh4 f6 18.Bxd4 Ncd7 19.gxf6

19.Ne4 fxg5 20.Nxg5 Qxg5 21.Qxg5+-

19...Nxf6 20.Qxe5 Kf7?!

20...Qd7 21.Rd1 Bb7 22.Rd3 Rac8 23.Rg3 White dominates the board.

21.Rf1 Rh8

21...Bb7 22.Rxf6+ gxf6 23.Qh5+ Ke7 24.Bc5+ Kd7 25.Rd4+ Kc6 26.Rxd8 Rfxd8 27.Bb4+-

22.Rxh8 Qxh8 23.Ne4

1–0

King County Open: Kent U1500

	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total
1	1-2	Andrew Inforzato	1499	W28	W9	W4	W7	D3	4.5
2		Daniel Hyman	1264	W16	W34	W14	D13	W11	4.5
3	3-5	Ziliang Ma	1310	W41	D10	W26	W24	D1	4
4		Moses Li	1301	W43	W32	L1	W29	W13	4
5		Richard Rogov	1202	W17	L13	W12	W14	W18	4
6	6-10	Don Hack	1410	L24	W44	H---	W34	W23	3.5
7		Addison Dahlke	1335	W38	W37	W8	L1	D9	3.5
8		Darya Byelashova	1268	W33	W35	L7	D18	W24	3.5
9		Isaiah Fontenot	1221	W11	L1	W35	W20	D7	3.5
10		Blake Anable	1100	W27	D3	W21	L11	W19	3.5
11	11-16	Bright Weng	1461	L9	B---	W25	W10	L2	3
12		Patrick Zhang	1417	L37	W40	L5	W42	W29	3
13		Kyle Boddy	1408	W40	W5	H---	D2	L4	3
14		Andrew Wiese	1307	W42	W30	L2	L5	W32	3
15		Kaiyi Han	1187	L18	H---	D16	W41	W35	3
16		Liam Naughton	unr.	L2	D22	D15	W30	W26	3
17	17-25	Harvey Wang	1439	L5	W28	L29	H---	W34	2.5
18		Leo Saloranta	1425	W15	L24	W30	D8	L5	2.5
19		Kyle Jiang	1356	L25	W38	D33	W37	L10	2.5
20		Rishabhdeva Patnaik	1345	L30	W42	W43	L9	D25	2.5
21		Arihant Chaudhuri	1338	W31	D25	L10	H---	H---	2.5
22		Samik Kulkarni	1243	L35	D16	L34	W43	W37	2.5
23		Clora Huang	1240	H---	L26	W31	W33	L6	2.5
24		Matvei Ivanov	1166	W6	W18	H---	L3	L8	2.5
25		Jonathan Wu	1117	W19	D21	L11	H---	D20	2.5
26	26-35	Skyler Qin	1380	H---	W23	L3	H---	L16	2
27		Ferris Samara	1353	L10	W41	W32	U---	U---	2
28		Sofia Byelashova	1226	L1	L17	W38	L32	W41	2
29		Matthew McKendry	1124	H---	H---	W17	L4	L12	2
30		Yuvan Oruganti	1017	W20	L14	L18	L16	W42	2
31		Felicity Mei	982	L21	H---	L23	H---	W43	2
32		Aariv Shah	948	W36	L4	L27	W28	L14	2
33		Julian Tang	400	L8	W36	D19	L23	H---	2
34		David Newland	259	B---	L2	W22	L6	L17	2
35		Brannon Underwood	unr.	W22	L8	L9	W36	L15	2
36	36-38	Alex Ye	1334	L32	L33	X44	L35	D38	1.5
37		Mikhail Lagzdin	1171	W12	L7	H---	L19	L22	1.5
38		Vasishta Narayan Komara	961	L7	L19	L28	W40	D36	1.5
39	39-43	Brian Mack	1342	W44	U---	U---	U---	U---	1
40		Tom Zeitlin	1118	L13	L12	L41	L38	B---	1
41		Anay Khandelwal	945	L3	L27	W40	L15	L28	1
42		Krishang Benita-Nagdeep	879	L14	L20	B---	L12	L30	1
43		Clifford Dibble	866	L4	B---	L20	L22	L31	1
44	44	Shane Groff	1006	L39	L6	F36	U---	U---	0

King County Open: Kenmore Open (Part 1)

	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total
1	1	Bertrand Wan	2145	W18	W62	W10	W6	W7	5
2	2	FM Aziz Degenbaev	2408	W49	W14	H---	W12	W16	4.5
3	3-8	FM Megan Lee	2319	W50	W21	L8	W23	W19	4
4		FM Stephen Willy	2306	W25	W22	W19	H---	D8	4
5		FM Ryan W Porter	2287	W39	D16	H---	W47	W20	4
6		NM Nikash Vemparala	2245	X26	W30	W11	L1	W21	4
7		NM Rishabh Chinni	2196	W52	W23	W13	W20	L1	4
8		Arjun C Krishnamachari	2187	W27	W37	W3	H---	D4	4
9	9-18	FM Ted Wang	2307	W51	D29	L20	W39	W32	3.5
10		NM Vidip Kona	2243	W40	W34	L1	D24	W35	3.5
11		CM Ananth Gottumukkala	2156	W53	W48	L6	D37	W38	3.5
12		Siddharth Shenoy	2133	D54	W61	W46	L2	W37	3.5
13		William Summerfield	1988	W70	W44	L7	D38	W42	3.5
14		Neevan Reddy Saddi	1982	W63	L2	W50	D32	W33	3.5
15		Ujwal Garine	1956	D71	W64	D47	D17	W36	3.5
16		Karthik Bimod	1939	W67	D5	W29	W44	L2	3.5
17		Chad Boey	1801	L44	W56	W54	D15	W30	3.5
18		Rian Raja	1616	L1	D69	W74	W46	W31	3.5
19	19-28	CM Vihaan Jammalamadaka	2164	W41	W24	L4	W34	L3	3
20		CM Jason Loving	2037	W55	W28	W9	L7	L5	3
21		Akim Pikh	1981	W56	L3	W51	W49	L6	3
22		Jeffrey Wei	1958	W58	L4	L39	W53	W49	3
23		Albert Eksarevskiy	1939	W59	L7	W40	L3	W51	3
24		Alberto Rosales Infante	1926	W68	L19	W53	D10	D25	3
25		Arnav Gadde	1751	L4	W65	W45	D31	D24	3
26		Thrinay Subramanian	1743	F6	L72	W65	W54	W48	3
27		Selina Cheng	1698	L8	W77	H---	W29	H---	3
28		Ankush Goyal	1501	W35	L20	W48	H---	H---	3
29	29-43	Pratik Thorwe	1972	W57	D9	L16	L27	W52	2.5
30		Saahil Gupta	1950	W65	L6	H---	W41	L17	2.5
31		Leonardo Wang	1943	D66	W71	D32	D25	L18	2.5
32		Odbayar Yondon	1921	D60	W73	D31	D14	L9	2.5
33		Vijay Nallappa	1893	L61	W43	H---	W55	L14	2.5
34		Isaac Vega	1892	W76	L10	W52	L19	D39	2.5
35		Shawn Li	1881	L28	W70	D41	W61	L10	2.5
36		Paul Harwood	1871	D74	W42	L44	W43	L15	2.5
37		Aarav Bharathy Mohan	1859	W77	L8	W60	D11	L12	2.5
38		Yuchen Zhou	1858	D43	W74	H---	D13	L11	2.5
39		Yiting Gui	1746	L5	W67	W22	L9	D34	2.5

King County Open: Kenmore Open (Part 2)

	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total
40		Jinmo Nam	1724	L10	W76	L23	D60	W67	2.5
41		Andy Chen	1669	L19	W68	D35	L30	W69	2.5
42		Tejas Mulye	1580	H---	L36	W73	W62	L13	2.5
43		Darren Stahl	1433	D38	L33	W71	L36	W66	2.5
44	44-61	NM Siddarth M Sundaram	2463	W17	L13	W36	L16	U---	2
45		Michael Lin	1945	H---	H---	L25	W64	U---	2
46		Yuan Jiang	1941	W72	H---	L12	L18	H---	2
47		Darsh Verma	1927	D73	W66	D15	L5	U---	2
48		Alex Chow	1818	W75	L11	L28	W57	L26	2
49		David Smygov	1794	L2	W63	W72	L21	L22	2
50		Ziqian Gao	1786	L3	W58	L14	H---	D59	2
51		Vishnu Mohan	1766	L9	W57	L21	W72	L23	2
52		Rhadean Rubaiyat	1699	L7	W59	L34	W58	L29	2
53		Shanna Wu	1645	L11	W75	L24	L22	W71	2
54		Vihaan Pai	1615	D12	D60	L17	L26	W72	2
55		Imai Maharaja	1615	L20	H---	W66	L33	D60	2
56		Christopher Gilbert	1577	L21	L17	D76	W77	D61	2
57		Dheeran Koripella	1561	L29	L51	W68	L48	W73	2
58		Harry Wu	1553	L22	L50	W75	L52	W70	2
59		Lewis Ma	1531	L23	L52	W63	H---	D50	2
60		Sambuddha Sekhar Das	1516	D32	D54	L37	D40	D55	2
61		Raymond Zhao	1513	W33	L12	H---	L35	D56	2
62	62-69	Roger Hanson	1887	W69	L1	H---	L42	U---	1.5
63		Zoe Xu	1594	L14	L49	L59	H---	W77	1.5
64		Krishang Gupta	1583	H---	L15	D69	L45	D68	1.5
65		Jimmy Yang	1550	L30	L25	L26	H---	W76	1.5
66		Oliver He	1549	D31	L47	L55	W74	L43	1.5
67		Allen Chang	1535	L16	L39	H---	W76	L40	1.5
68		Merrick Liu	1528	L24	L41	L57	W75	D64	1.5
69		Bohan Li	1506	L62	D18	D64	D71	L41	1.5
70	70-75	Andra Marinescu	1596	L13	L35	H---	D73	L58	1
71		Riaan Babbar	1552	D15	L31	L43	D69	L53	1
72		Loida Guo	1541	L46	W26	L49	L51	L54	1
73		Terrick Evin	1529	D47	L32	L42	D70	L57	1
74		Aahan Sriram	1474	D36	L38	L18	L66	H---	1
75		Kshitij Narkhede	1418	L48	L53	L58	L68	B---	1
76	76-77	John Patrick Christy	1507	L34	L40	D56	L67	L65	0.5
77		Skandha Raj	1449	L37	L27	H---	L56	L63	0.5

King County Blitz: Open

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	1-2	Vinesh Ravuri	2333	W35	W12	W7	W4	W3	D2	D5	6
2		Ted Wang	2313	X46	D13	W41	W6	W5	D1	W4	6
3	3	Siddarth Meenakshi Sundaram	2413	W14	W15	D5	W8	L1	W10	W9	5.5
4	4-7	Stephen Willy	2301	W26	W17	W25	L1	W19	W8	L2	5
5		Megan Lee	2264	W36	W24	D3	W10	L2	W11	D1	5
6		Vihaan Jammalamadaka	2164	W37	D41	W13	L2	W34	W20	D8	5
7		Rafael Palathingal	2132	W18	W19	L1	W33	L10	W17	W15	5
8	8-14	Vidip Kona	2233	W27	W21	W20	L3	W17	L4	D6	4.5
9		Nikash Vemparala	2231	W31	L25	W30	W35	D20	W12	L3	4.5
10		Danny Pan	2170	W32	D23	W39	L5	W7	L3	W19	4.5
11		Neevan Reddy Saddi	1975	D39	W34	W23	L20	W14	L5	W24	4.5
12		Akim Pikh	1975	W44	L1	D36	W24	W22	L9	W23	4.5
13		Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1954	W42	D2	L6	L14	W37	W18	W27	4.5
14		Dann Merriman	1699	L3	D37	W28	W13	L11	W22	W21	4.5
15	15-19	Harishkumar Karthikeyan	2059	X47	L3	L35	W39	W23	W33	L7	4
16		Vikas Shiva	2012	W38	L20	L26	W43	W35	L19	W33	4
17		Pratik Thorwe	1972	X48	L4	W31	W26	L8	L7	W30	4
18		Andrew Inforzato	1306	L7	L30	W40	W31	W25	L13	W34	4
19		Ankush Goyal	unr.	B---	L7	W29	W25	L4	W16	L10	4
20	20-28	Aziz Degenbaev	2399	W30	W16	L8	W11	D9	L6	U---	3.5
21		Ujwal Garine	1873	W40	L8	L33	W32	D26	W36	L14	3.5
22		Alex Chow	1803	D28	L39	W37	W27	L12	L14	W36	3.5
23		Chad Boey	1801	W45	D10	L11	W41	L15	W26	L12	3.5
24		Siddharth Shenoy	1783	W43	L5	D27	L12	W42	W34	L11	3.5
25		Aarav Bharathy Mohan	1766	W33	W9	L4	L19	L18	D35	W37	3.5
26		Imai Maharaja	1516	L4	W44	W16	L17	D21	L23	W39	3.5
27		Sambuddha Sekhar Das	1369	L8	W40	D24	L22	W41	W29	L13	3.5
28		Kevin Cui	1004	D22	L29	L14	L37	B---	W44	W35	3.5
29	29-33	Ziqian Gao	1773	L41	W28	L19	W44	L33	L27	W43	3
30		David Smygov	1627	L20	W18	L9	L42	W44	W31	L17	3
31		Raghav Murthy	1325	L9	W43	L17	L18	W45	L30	W42	3
32		Vishal Suram	1322	L10	W45	L34	L21	W38	H---	H---	3
33		Liam Naughton	unr.	L25	B---	W21	L7	W29	L15	L16	3
34	34-41	Isaac Vega	1889	H---	L11	W32	W36	L6	L24	L18	2.5
35		Rian Raja	1576	L1	W38	W15	L9	L16	D25	L28	2.5
36		Krishang Gupta	1419	L5	W42	D12	L34	W39	L21	L22	2.5
37		Deepak Sri Kartikeya Rao	1313	L6	D14	L22	W28	L13	W42	L25	2.5
38		Daniel Hyman	1264	L16	L35	L42	D40	L32	B---	W44	2.5
39		Ziliang Ma	1227	D11	W22	L10	L15	L36	W40	L26	2.5
40		Sanjay Urali	1059	L21	L27	L18	D38	W43	L39	W45	2.5
41		Kaiqi Qin	unr.	W29	D6	L2	L23	L27	H---	H---	2.5
42	42-43	Dillon Weber	1064	L13	L36	W38	W30	L24	L37	L31	2
43		Rutvik Reddy Thati	unr.	L24	L31	B---	L16	L40	W45	L29	2
44	44-45	Jerome Edwards	1230	L12	L26	W45	L29	L30	L28	L38	1
45		Avyukt Goyal	579	L23	L32	L44	B---	L31	L43	L40	1
46	46-48	Lewis Ma	1529	F2	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0
47		Guru Harshith Reddy Avula	1296	F15	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0
48		Varshith Reddy Avula	1175	F17	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0

My Naroditsky Story

Adam Porth

(An assistant tournament director at the 2025 U.S. Open)

Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky played in the four-day section at the 2025 US Open and it reminded me of a player in Idaho called the "gentleman of chess." He was cordial, quiet, and respectful of chess etiquette before, during and after his games. As round one was about to begin, Daniel approached me with one of his friends and politely asked if there were pencils or pens available. "Of course," I replied. I quickly pulled out two pens and offered them up. Daniel said thank you and turned to his buddy and said, "See, it's good to be a grandmaster!" I laughed and also handed them a clock. In addition to the clock, he returned the pens after the round to my surprise.

Round six produced many anxious players as the starting times were wrongly reported on flyers. Despite this, most players showed up on time. In Daniel's case, he was paired against FM Julio Morella and was one of the top boards, but Julio was missing! I explained that Julio struggled with English and might not have understood our announcements. Daniel quietly nodded as many games were underway and walked the isles introspectively for nearly an hour observing games. Julio arrived, dripping with sweat and anxiety upon seeing the round underway. Oof! I nervously introduced them and Daniel explained to me that he would split the remaining time with Julio if we were okay with this compromise. Julio (and I) enthusiastically accepted, and they amenably shook hands, I set the clock, and the match began.

Daniel Naroditsky embraced the spirit of fairness and respect for his opponent, not often observed at this level.

Round six (in the four-day schedule). GM Daniel Naroditsky (L) vs FM Julio A. Morella.
Photo credit: Adam Porth.

New Adventure Scholastic

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 New Adventure Scholastic took place on Saturday, September 27, 2025 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue. Held adjacent to the King County Open on the other side of the room, it was a packed house as 66 juniors embarked on their first adventure of the 2025-2026 scholastic chess season, which typically runs from September through the end of April each year. Players in grades ranging from one to ten competed across four sections parsed by grade level and rating: K-3 U700, K-3 Open, 4-12 U900, and 4-12 Open. The popular G/25; +five-second increment, five-round Swiss format appealed to players of a variety and levels ranging from 100 to 1530, with many showing significant improvement in their chess skills developed over the course the summer months.

Players from throughout Washington State were represented at the New Adventure Scholastic, including the cities of Mill Creek, Lynnwood, Shoreline, Bothell, Seattle, Port Angeles, Newcastle, Bellevue, Sammamish, Tacoma, Fircrest, Puyallup, Mercer Island, Clyde Hill, Kenmore, Kirkland, Gig Harbor, Redmond, Vancouver, Shoreline, and Rainier!

The sense of adventure was strong throughout the tournament, with many daring attacks, fearless defenses, and enterprising sacrifices essayed by the courageous chess warriors taking part in the proceedings. The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and run by WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, and Chess Dad Alex Byelashov.

We wish everyone the best as they begin or continue their chess adventures this season! Congratulations to the winners:

New Adventure Scholastic Prizes

Individual Prizes - Amazon Gift cards awarded in each section.
1st - 5th: $60-$55-$50-$45-$40.

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place
K-3 U700	Rishabh Chanda (4.5)	Nivaan Anand (3.0) Kyle Zhang (3.0) Preme Tulsukchuentanat (3.0) Srivatsa Kondapi (3.0)			
K-3 Open	Bihe Liu (4.0) Aadya Telikicherla (4.0)		Liam Pham (3.5)	Dhruv Bangard (3.0) Vedanth Raghavendran (3.0) Roger Yutang Yao (3.0) Thanish Bhavanam Vivek (3.0)	
4-12 U900	Jethro Xia (4.0)	Naman Rusia (3.5) Krish Vijay (3.5) John Petito (3.5) Owen Chen (3.5)			
4-12 Open	Shashank Seela (4.5)	Austin Damrau (4.0) Leo Luo (4.0)		Anyi Li (3.5) Adith Vijay (3.5) Ethan Lin (3.5) Edwin Huang (3.5) Joyce Gui (3.5)	

Special Prizes - Medals for first-timers (awarded at-site), best female player, best dressed, and biggest upset win.

Section	First-Timers	Best Female Player	Best Dressed	Biggest Upset Win
K-3 U700	Diya Rusia	Preme Tulsukchuentanat (3.0)	Eric Kotsinyan	Preme Tulsukchuentanat (105) 482.0
K-3 Open	N/A	Aadya Telikicherla (4.0)	Claire Wong	Ary Cheng (601) 374.0
4-12 U900	Tigran Arutyunyan Lucas Gillilan Leo Kwon	N/A	Robert Kotsinyan	Venkatesh Srinivas (154) 303.5
4-12 Open	N/A	Anyi Li (3.5) Joyce Gui (3.5)	Aryan Pande	Vitaly Astafiev (606) 525.0

King County Scholastic

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 King County Scholastic took place on Sunday, September 28 on the second day of the co-located King County Open at Hotel 116 in Bellevue. Both the King County Open and King County Scholastic were held in honor of the great Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in celebration of chess across the King County Region, the most populous county in Washington State.

The event was played with a laid-back four-round format featuring a G/45;+5 time control designed as a steppingstone for scholastic chess players seeking to transition from rapid to classical chess. While many of the older players appreciated and used the extra time to deepen their thought process, most of the young players were at a loss for what to do with the extra thinking time and opted to speed through their games in any case.

A whopping 79 players in grades one-ten competed across four sections divided by grade level and rating: K-3 U800, K-3 Open, 4-12 U1000, and 4-12 Open. While the tournament drew primarily from cities within King County, there were several other cities (and counties) represented from locales including Woodinville, Bothell, Seattle, Sammamish, Bellevue, Redmond, Bellingham, Renton, Issaquah, Shoreline, Gig Harbor, Kirkland, Olympia, Kenmore, Snohomish, University Place, Snoqualmie, Mercer Island, Newcastle, and Milton.

The pace of play was deliberate and circumspect amongst the older players, with many games narrowly decided by small nuances. A more brazen and reckless approach was taken by most younger players, whose desire to stay ahead on the clock likely led to some impetuous decisions!

The King County Scholastic was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and overseen by WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua and chess Dad Alex Byelashov, whose daughters Darya and Sofia were playing in the King County Open over the course of the weekend.

WCF is blown away by thirst for chess in King County and hopes to expand to other counties within Washington State in the future!

Congratulations to the winners:

King County Scholastic Prizes

Individual Prizes - Amazon Gift cards awarded in each section.

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

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
K-3 U800	Leo Li (4.0)	Avyukt Goyal (3.0) Kristina Velichko (3.0) Ary Cheng (3.0)		
K-3 Open	Nickrad Ahsant (3.5)	Eric Yu (2.5) Leonard Bach Hoang (2.5) Felix Han (2.5) Kyle Liu (2.5)		
4-12 U1000	Anjalika Mukherjee (3.5) Alice Li (3.5) Anne Nishino (3.5)			Isaac McIntyre (3.0) David Hoffman (3.0)
4-12 Open	Ian Gagnier (3.5) Sanjay Urali (3.5) Jackson Rish-Brown (3.5)			Rahul Sreraman (3.0) Andrew Xing (3.0) Mufaddal Tinwala (3.0)

Special Prizes - Medals for first-timers (awarded at-site), best female player, best dressed, and biggest upset win.

Section	First-Timers	Best Female Player	Biggest Upset Win
K-3 U800	Shayanth Ande	Kristina Velichko (3.0)	Isaac Han (505) 251.0
K-3 Open	N/A	Claire Wong (1.5)	Nickrad Ahsant (965) 244.0
4-12 U1000	Kabir Sharma Akshaj Ande	Anjalika Mukherjee (3.5) Alice Li (3.5) Anne Nishino (3.5)	Aiden Lee (455) 400.0
4-12 Open	N/A	Yuwen Qu (2.5)	Yuwen Qu (1020) 377.0

DECEMBER TOURNAMENTS

Venue & mail
7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115

info & events calendar
www.seattlechess.club

club & tournament inquiries
contact@seattlechess.club

December 6 — **December Quads**

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 rated and US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

December 28 — **Holiday Tornado**

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 rated and US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

December 5, 12, 19, 26 — **Chess City Swiss**

See below.

Coming up:

- **January Quads** – January 10; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Seattle City Championship** – January 24-25; tentative, 2B confirmed

---

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

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

~ SCC Friday Nights ~

One U.S. Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm.
Time control: 40 moves in 90 mins. w/10 sec. increment, followed by sudden death 60 mins. w/10 sec. increment. Free for SCC members, $5/night others.
Play in any round! Email contact@seattlechess.club to sign up. 28 players max.

Chess City Swiss	*Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26*
January Thaw	*Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23*
Fifth Friday G/15 (multiple rounds)	*Jan. 30*
Cabin Fever	*Feb. 6,13, 20, 27*

WASHINGTON JUNIOR INVITATIONAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sat-Sun, January 10-11, 2026

Grand Knights Chess Academy
13620 NE 20th St, Suite K, Bellevue, WA 98005

Format:

An invitation-only junior chess tournament in four sections:

Caruana Closed: A FIDE-rated, 6-player Round Robin. TC: G/90; +30.

So Premier: A FIDE-rated, 5-round, G/90; +30 Swiss.

Aronian Challengers and **Mishra Rising:** 5-round, G/45; +15 Double Swiss. Play two games – one as White and one as Black – against each opponent.

Entry Fee:

$125 by Jan 03, $150 after.

Schedule:

Rd 1 – Sat @ 9am
Rd 2 – Sat @ 1:30pm
Rd 3 – Sat @ 6pm
Rd 4 – Sun @ 10am
Rd 5 – Sun @ 3pm
Awards – Sun @ 7pm or asap.

Late start available for players if previous game runs long. To resolve potential ties for 1st place in the Caruana Closed and So Premier sections, pairs of G/5; +2 blitz playoff games will be conducted on Sunday shortly after the final round.

Eligibility:

Open to WA players under age 21 as of Jan 1, 2026. The top 60 WA juniors will be admitted, based on the higher of Jan 2026 USCF or current NWSRS ratings, who register and pay by the **deadline of Wed, Jan 7th**. Of those 60, the top 5 by rating, plus the previously seeded winner of the 2025 WA Junior Open, qualify for the Caruana Closed section. The next 18 are seeded in the So Premier section, the following 18 in the Aronian Challengers section, and the remaining 18 in the Mishra Rising section.

Prizes:

Caruana Closed (guaranteed by WCF)
1st $350 + seed into Championship section of 2026 WA State Championship. 2nd $320, 3rd $280.

So Premier (based on 18 paid entries)
1st $250 + seed into Invitational section of 2026 WA State Championship. 2nd–4th: $235, $220, $200.

Aronian Challengers and **Mishra Rising** (based on 18 paid entries each)
1st–4th: $175, $160, $145, $130.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: $15/rd., Best Dressed: $10/day, Best Female Player (by TPR): $50.

Rating & Memberships:

Dual NWSRS + US Chess rated, Caruana Closed and So Premier sections also FIDE rated. US Chess & WCF membership required in all sections.

Byes:

No byes allowed in Caruana Closed section. Up to 2 half-point byes available in other sections, if requested before the end of round 2.

GRAND KNIGHTS CHESS ACADEMY

The Details:

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

Registration:
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration (pay online by Zelle / SettleKing), or write a check to Washington Chess Federation and mail to:
Washington Chess Federation
c/o Orlov Chess Academy
4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond WA, 98052.

Payment deadline:
Wed, Jan 7th @ 5pm.
No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from the Waitlist will be offered a spot. No on-site entries.

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