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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:

April 5 for the May issue;
May 5 for June.

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

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Front Cover

Nick Raptis (left) and Matt Zavortink tie for first place in the 2026 Oregon Closed Championship Section.

Photo credit: Wilson Gibbins.

Back Cover

Karthik Bimod, winner of the Oregon Closed Challengers Section. This photo taken at the 2026 Oregon Junior Closed.

Photo credit: Wilson Gibbins.

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**

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editor@nwchess.com

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<https://sites.google.com/view/idaho-chess-association/home>

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Senior	1 year	\$17.50
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News Flash!

Derek Heath Becomes National Master

Congratulations to Derek Heath, a tenth grader from Camas, Washington, who recently became Washington State's newest National Master! Derek achieved a US Chess rating of 2201 as a result of winning his first three games in the ninth Annual Neil Dale Memorial, hosted by the Portland Chess Club January 3-4, 2026 in Portland, Oregon.

Along the way, Derek scored victories against Elijah Barish (1705), Santiago Tenesaca Argudo (1905), and NM Jason Cigan (2217).

Here is the link to the 2026 Neil Dale Memorial rating report: <https://ratings.uschess.org/event/202601040253?section=0>

2026 Western States Regional Chess Championship for Girls & Women



Sat-Sun, April 4-5, 2026

Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
19333 N Creek Pkwy S, Bothell, WA 98011



Format

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

Megan Lee Championship

A 5-round, G/60; +30 Swiss over two days (Sat-Sun). Tri-rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 4:45pm. Sunday: 9am, 1pm, 5pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Divya Deshmukh U1300

A 1-day, 5-round, G/40; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & USCF dual rated. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 10:45am, 1pm, 4:45pm, 6:15pm. Awards ~ 7:45pm.

Carissa Yip U800

A 1-day, 4-round, G/25; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & USCF dual rated. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 10am, 11am, 1pm. Awards ~ 2pm.

Prize Fund: \$1,500 (Guaranteed, thanks to generous grants and donations from US Chess, WCF & My Chess World.)

Megan Lee Championship

1st - 3rd: \$400, \$300, \$200
1st U1800/U1600/U1400: \$75

Divya Deshmukh U1300

1st - 3rd: \$175, \$125, \$75
Trophies for 1st U1100, 1st U1000, 1st U900

Carissa Yip U800

Trophies for 1st - 10th Overall,
1st U600, 1st U500, 1st Unrated.

Special Prizes (per section):

Medals awarded for Biggest Upset Win, Best Dressed, and Best Mother/Daughter Team.

Entry Fee: \$55 if postmarked or online by 3/28, \$65 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, and USCF rated 2000+. Maximum of 90 players, please register early.

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

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

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

WA State Scholastic Championships Qualifier!

Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Pay by Zelle (ID: wa-chess or WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), SettleKing (ID: Washington Chess Federation), or write a check to WCF.

Registration and payment deadline: Fri. 4/3 @ 5pm.

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

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

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

Fun Side Events!

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

Women's Champion Simul: Saturday 2:15-3:45pm.
EF: \$25. Max 25 players, please register early.

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



US CHESS
women

Judgment in Chess

A Comparison Between Computers and Humans

“A Senior Project”

Nihanth Tatikonda

Most people view chess engines as brute-force machines that simply calculate every possible move and choose the best option. However, they’re far from that. Oddly, chess engines resemble human reasoning in many ways.

The reason modern chess engines are so powerful is their ability to combine two components of chess: searching (exploring possible moves) and evaluation (judging which positions are best). Human chess players, including even the best of the best, use the same approach, but in a different balance. Since humans can’t search millions of patterns, we rely on pattern recognition, strategy, and heuristics to make practical decisions.

The Twofold Process

Fundamentally, engines choose moves based on two components.

Search: If I play this move, what move can be played next?

Evaluation: How good/bad is the resulting position?

The chess engine never knows the best move instantly. Rather, it reasons by considering various options for moves, then using evaluation to rank them in order of most advantageous. After spending a predefined amount of time and computational power, it plays the

best move based on its ranking. Yet, this is also why two chess engines can often disagree. Engines can search similarly but then have different evaluation metrics, resulting in different positional rankings and, in turn, different moves.

Why Don’t Computers Just Calculate Everything?

Curiously, despite being a fairly simple game, there are many more possible chess games than the number of atoms in the observable universe. From any position, you can easily have 20 to 40 legal moves, with each and every move branching into another set of moves, resulting in an incredibly large number of games. Evidently, searching the entire tree of moves for a given position is impossible. Chess engines instead use techniques that allow them to filter unimportant moves and consider only the important branches.

Pruning

One of the most important methods that chess engines use is alpha-beta pruning. In essence, it allows chess engines to stop further examining a game branch if it is clear that it cannot be better than another branch that has already been looked at. If the branch is guaranteed to be worse than the current best branch, the engine will immediately stop looking

at it. This idea drastically reduces the number of branches that must be looked at and substantially increases efficiency.

Move Ordering

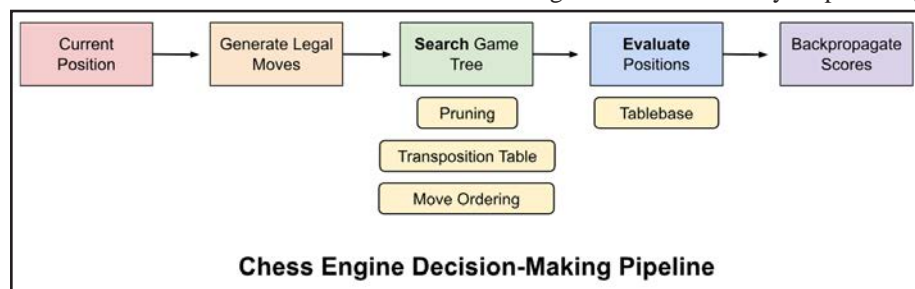
To take maximum advantage of pruning, chess engines try to look at moves that seem stronger first. This allows for pruning to start earlier, as the “current best move” will be at a higher benchmark from the beginning, meaning the engine is able to discard more weaker moves. Optimizing move ordering can make searching much more efficient, especially by choosing the best moves from the start.

Transposition Tables

The same chess position can be reached with different move orders. For example, moving your pawn up two squares and then moving your rook up 1 square would result in the same position as playing the same moves in opposite order (contingent on your opponent playing the same move in both scenarios). Therefore, chess engines store their analyzed positions in transposition tables. This ensures that they don’t have to repeatedly calculate the same exact position, making their decision-making faster and more consistent.

Iterative Deepening

Most chess engines search different depths at a time. They’ll start at depth one, then two, then three, and so on, while keeping track of the “current best move” at each depth. This process of iterative deepening allows engines to function properly under time and computational constraints. If engines were to search each branch to maximum depth, they may cover a few branches deeply but not even



Chess Engine Decision-Making Pipeline

look at others under time constraints. Iterative deepening allows engines to look at all the necessary branches under constraints; even if the engine has to stop analysis early, it still has a high-quality best move available to play.

What Makes Engines So Good at Tactics?

Engines are extremely good at tactics because of their method of analysis. When a position is unstable or chaotic (often meaning there is a tactic in the air), engines analyze it accordingly. For context, a tactic is a short-term sequence of moves, often forcing, where pieces aren't stable, and each decision is critical. If you stop searching prematurely and end your calculation of a game branch too early, you can incorrectly evaluate a move as advantageous even though it would collapse shortly after (beyond your depth of calculation).

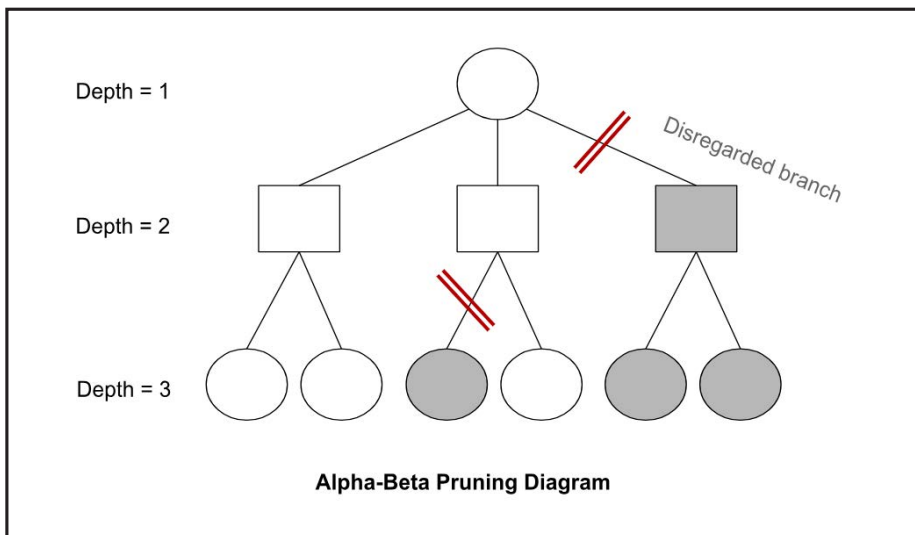
Therefore, engines use the **quiescence search** algorithm. Instead of stopping at a fixed depth, the engine continues to calculate uncertain/chaotic positions (positions where there are a lot of captures, checks, and threats on the board). It searches and evaluates until it reaches a quieter, calmer position, with a more trustworthy evaluation score. One of the largest reasons for blunders made by humans in chess games is that they stop calculating too early. Even grandmasters (a title given to the highest-level of chess players) have their limits, so this issue affects players even at the pinnacle of chess. Engines, on the other hand, are much less likely to make this mistake.

The Growth of Chess Engines

Beyond search, evaluation is the other crucial half of chess engine logic. Even if an engine can search deeply, it will play poorly if it cannot evaluate positions correctly. Evaluation is how an engine judges how good or bad a position is.

Traditional Evaluation

Traditionally, engines used features that are manually input to evaluate a position. They used to have an evaluation function calculated by material and thousands of heuristics for king safety, pawn structure, piece activity, passed



Alpha-Beta Pruning Diagram

pawns, and other positional traits. Essentially, evaluation looked something like this:

Evaluation score = material + positional bonuses

In old-school chess engines, evaluation was based on simply calculating a number.

Modern Evaluation

August of 2020 marked a major turning point in the strength of chess engines due to the introduction of NNUE. Simply put, an NNUE, or an Efficiently Updatable Neural Network, is a compact neural network that can evaluate positions extremely quickly. Rather than raw computation of a score, they are deep learning models: NNUE engines are trained on millions of positions and their evaluations to learn positional traits and how to evaluate them.

A key part of NNUE's efficiency is its ability to update. Once a move is played, NNUE engines can simply update the evaluation efficiency rather than recalculating everything. This is important because evaluation is called constantly during search at every single move; small improvements in efficiency matter at an exponential rate.

Therefore, modern engines are more human-like than traditional engines. As they employ an ML-based approach, they are able to truly learn positional patterns and play more like a human, rather than playing based on a hard-coded evaluation score.

AlphaZero-Style Neural Searching

AlphaZero was a revolutionary chess engine a few years ago because of its unique approach to chess. Rather than relying on alpha-beta search or manual evaluation, AlphaZero-style engines learn on their own by playing against themselves, using deep reinforcement learning to train neural networks in the process. Then, by learning how to guess good moves and position evaluation, they use search methods like the Monte Carlo Tree Search to find the best move. The way it is different from NNUE engines is that NNUE models still use deep levels of raw calculation and a shallow neural network evaluation system, while AlphaZero-style engines use deeper neural networks and emphasize positional understanding rather than raw accuracy. In simple terms, AlphaZero thinks more like a human; it prioritizes evaluation and chess understanding over extensive search & calculation.

AlphaZero's deep reinforcement learning approach is displayed in Leela Chess Zero, a more modern chess engine. Stockfish, which uses an NNUE, often interprets positions differently from Leela Chess Zero. Yet, both engines are extremely powerful, much beyond human capability. Grandmasters even review their own games using both types of chess engines simultaneously because of their different interpretations of positions. While Stockfish plays more tactically and concretely, Leela prioritizes long-term positional ideas and riskier moves.

This stark difference in chess engines is very fascinating. Despite both engines being extremely good at chess, they still play in different styles, resulting in different outcomes in the game. Not only does this show the extent to which AI systems can diverge, but it also demonstrates the complexity of chess and how the best move in a given position is rarely certain.

How Do Grandmasters Choose Moves?

Grandmasters also use search and evaluation, but their balance is different. Since humans can't evaluate millions of positions, we rely more heavily on heuristics and evaluation. For example, humans use techniques such as:

Candidate moves (selecting only a few moves that seem strong to analyze)

Pattern recognition (decision-making based on common ideas & familiar positions)

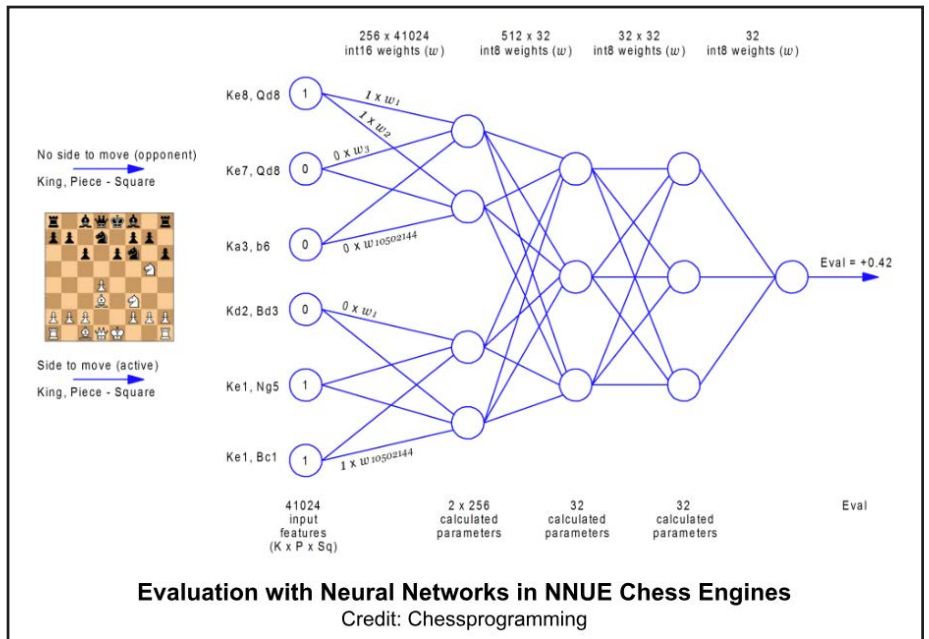
Plans (long-term goals such as piece improvement, targeting weaknesses, pawn advancement that guide moves)

Consideration of the opponent (choosing moves that make it hard to play and make decisions as the opponent)

Even the strongest players don't spend forever calculating. They only calculate what's necessary. Oftentimes, getting stronger at chess means gaining an intuition for which positions and moves require more calculation, and becoming better at weighing positions against each other. Yet, this is the reason why chess engines often choose moves that don't make sense for humans to play. Engines can recommend moves that seem ineffectual, and their purpose often isn't clear without deeper calculation beyond human ability. On the other hand, humans choose moves that have a clear purpose: "I'm attacking the kingside," "I'm simplifying the position," or "I'm improving this piece." NNUE engines don't choose by purpose; they choose algorithmically based on their search and evaluation.

Certainty in Chess: Endgame Tablebases

Though chess is full of uncertainties, there is one portion that is certain: the endgame. For positions with 7 pieces or



fewer, tablebases (essentially a type of database for chess) can evaluate positions as winning, losing, or drawing with certainty, given perfect chess play from both sides.

The starting and middle of the game are based entirely on approximation; chess engines use search and evaluation to choose the best outcome based on estimation. Yet, interestingly, engines base their decision-making towards the end of the game (with fewer pieces) on certainty and exactness. The idea of tablebases demonstrates how chess engines are multi-layered intelligent systems, with the ability to use multiple different tools to play chess.

Conclusion: Chess and AI

Before the advent of strong chess engines, reviewing chess games was difficult, as it often required another chess player along with deep, prolonged consideration of each position. Yet, chess engines have made game analysis much more accessible and easy to do.

Chess engines are truly fascinating due to their ability to make approximate decisions despite the immense depth of chess. Due to their combination of multiple intelligent methods (pruning, iterative deepening, transposition tables), they've grown to be incredibly powerful tools over the past few decades. Beyond chess skills, creating powerful chess engines requires considerable knowledge

about every part of the AI pipeline, from input to output.

That's why chess engines are one of my favorite applications of AI. Both humans and chess engines solve the same problems, in the same probabilistic way, but they do it slightly differently with starkly different strengths. Even within chess engines, different models do it in different ways. All in all, I believe that the comparison between humans and engines provides a clear window into how reasoning in intelligent systems actually works.

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Stockfish Team. Introducing NNUE Evaluation. <https://stockfishchess.org/blog/2020/introducing-nnue-evaluation/>

Stockfish Documentation. NNUE Overview. <https://official-stockfish.github.io/docs/nnue-pytorch-wiki/docs/nnue.html>

Chessprogramming Wiki. Main Page (engine search, pruning, evaluation concepts, diagrams). https://www.chessprogramming.org/Main_Page

Silver, D., et al. A General Reinforcement Learning Algorithm That Masters Chess, Shogi, and Go Through Self-Play. Science. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aar6404>

Harmon Memorial Chess Tournament



APRIL 11-12, 2026

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest performing WA players (by TPR) in the Open and U1700 sections seeded into the 2027 Washington State Invitational + Rising Stars sections, respectively.

Format: A five-round Swiss in three sections:

Gondor Open, Rivendell U1700 & Shire U1200

In case of a tie for 1st place, future follow-up playoff matches will determine the seeds for the Invitational and Rising Stars sections, respectively, of the 2027 WA State Championship.

Time Control: Round 1: G/60; +30.

Rounds 2-5: 30/75; SD/30; +30. Late default: 60 minutes.

Schedule: Sat @ 9 AM, 12:30 PM, 6 PM. Sun @ 10 AM, 3:30 PM. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

Prize Fund: \$5,500 based on 100 paid entries.

Gondor Open: 1st-4th: \$500-\$400-\$300-\$250,
1st-2nd U2100: \$175-\$150, 1st-2nd U1900: \$175-\$150.

Rivendell U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150,
1st-2nd U1600: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1400: \$125-\$100.

Shire U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$250-\$200-\$150,
1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section):

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

Entry Fee: \$110 by 4/4, \$140 after. Free entry (pending completion without withdrawals) for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs. Chess Hobbits rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1600-1699 or 1100-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Gondor Open or Rivendell U1700, respectively. Maximum of 200 players.

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 April 2026 USCF 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 (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 4/10 @ 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

Legolas Blitz: Sunday 8-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30. **Format:** A 7-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual USCF Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/3; +2. **On-site registration:** 7:00-7:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 8pm, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:45pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of April 2026 USCF 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.

Idaho Chess Association Board Announcement

(Emailed to members and posted to ICA website on March 16, 2026)

Passing the Torch:

Dear Members,

The current Board of Directors of the Idaho Chess Association has decided to step down from their positions after the resignation of the President this past week. The upcoming **Scholastic State Championship** will be the final tournament organized and directed by the current board (April 26).

To ensure the continued operation of the Idaho Chess Association, we are asking members who are interested in helping lead and support chess in Idaho to consider serving on the Board of Directors. The association depends on the involvement and dedication of its members, and we welcome volunteers willing to help organize tournaments, support scholastic chess, and continue the work of the organization.

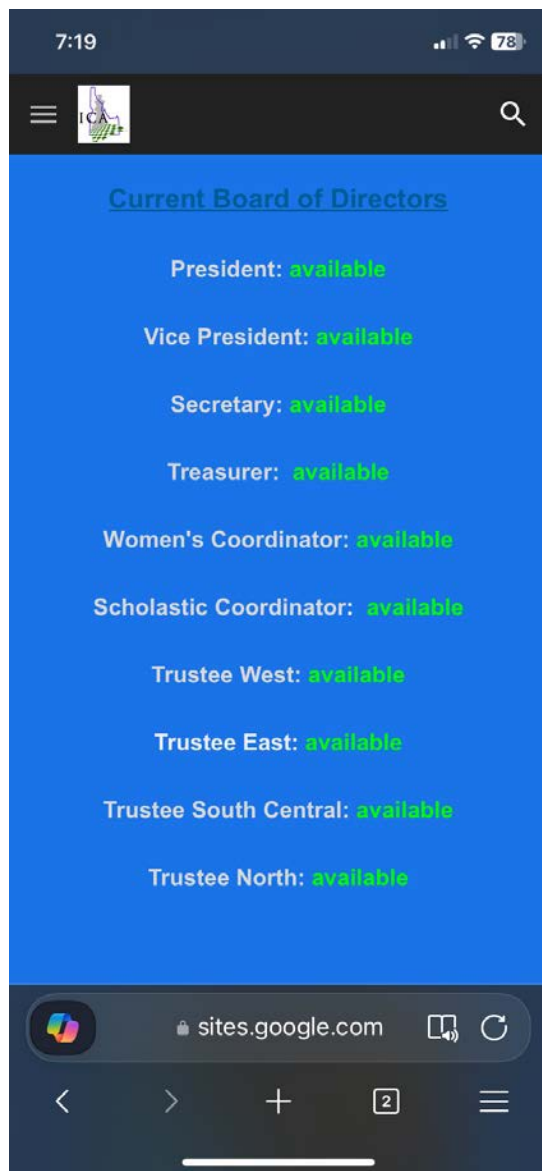
Members interested in serving on the board or learning more about the responsibilities involved are encouraged to contact the Idaho Chess Association.

Thank you for your continued support of chess in Idaho.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors
Idaho Chess Association

Idaho News: The rumor mill abounds, please avoid heresay—NOBODY WAS REMOVED FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS POSITIONS—there were resignations and expirations.



WASHINGTON SPRING FLING

CHESS TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026

CHINOOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

2001 98TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



FORMAT

A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss in 4 sections:

K-3 U700

K-3 Open

4-12 U800

4-12 Open

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

SCHEDULE

Rounds: 9:15am, 10:45am, lunch, 12:30pm, 1:45pm, 3:00pm. Awards presentation ~ 4:30pm or asap.

ENTRY FEE

\$55 by April 5th, \$65 after. Room for 200 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon e-gift cards awarded in each section: 1st - 7th: \$70-65-60-55-50-45-40.

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

RATING

Higher of USCF April regular or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12. Out-of-state players welcome!

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF.

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat. April 11th @ 5:00pm. Unpaid players by the deadline will be withdrawn from the tournament.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

This event is a qualifier for the WA State Scholastic Championships on April 25, 2026, in Tacoma. Players scoring 3.0+ points will qualify for the Championship sections of State.

Pizza lunch and other concessions will be available for purchase on site.

QUESTIONS?

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

A Conversation with NM Vignesh Anand

Ken Lee

Vignesh achieved a US Chess rating of 2202 and the title of National Master by scoring 4.0/4 points at the Plano Swiss, in May 2025.

I sat down with Vignesh to discuss resilience, tactics vs positional play and his advice for young chess players.

Ken: When did you first start playing chess?

I was about four years old and we had a small plastic chess set that I found under the TV stand.

My dad knew a little bit about chess because my grandfather taught him. I was hooked immediately.

My dad taught me the basic moves but, because of my interest in chess, my parents immediately enrolled me in Chess4life classes. I also had a few private lessons with NM Elliot Neff of Chess4Life.

Ken: What was it about chess that intrigued you as a kid?

Vignesh: I like the strategy and beauty of the game, and it really was the first game that sparked my interest.

I was also making a lot of friends and it gave me something to look forward to including lessons and tournaments.

Ken: When did you start participating in chess tournaments?

Vignesh: I was placed in the lowest

quad for my first four tournaments.

I think I lost most if not all of my games, and I was very discouraged. To be honest, I wanted to quit right then.

Ken: What stopped you from quitting?

Vignesh: My mom convinced me to continue playing because I think she had an intuition that chess would be good for me.

At my very next tournament, I did a bit better, and it gave me just enough motivation to keep playing. So, I overcame my first setback at about five years of age.

Ken: It's interesting that it's such a vivid memory for you.

Vignesh: Yes, I have to say that my journey in chess has been a long one.

I've had to overcome many setbacks and I'm proud of what I've accomplished.

Ken: What additional coaches did you start working with?

Vignesh: My first private coach was Tim Campbell.

My best friend and I would take lessons from him, and we had a lot of fun playing, practicing and studying together.

I progressed to about 1300 to 1400 ELO and then he told my dad that if I wanted to grow as a player, I should get a new coach.

Ken: How did you feel about that?

Vignesh: I was actually a bit upset about that because I had such a great rapport with Coach Campbell.

Ken: How about your middle school years?

Vignesh: I worked with a few different coaches including a GM from India and another GM from St Louis. I think my rating peaked at about 1600 to 1700 at that time.

I also remember competing in the Under 12 youth category in Mexico City.

Ken: What about high school?

Vignesh: I didn't have a coach during high school. I had moved from a very small private school to a big public high school in Redmond and so I switched my attention to other things.

But I did manage to self-study on my own. And, of course, the COVID pandemic happened during my high school years. Unlike a lot of younger kids who actually started and did a deep dive into chess during the COVID pandemic, I actually took a break during that time.

During my high school years, I got stuck at the 2100 ELO and, to be honest, I would get quite discouraged after a tournament loss.

Ken: What was the most effective way for you to study and accelerate your growth as a chess player during those times?

Vignesh: I bought ChessBase and used other resources like Chess Tempo to help me train.

I would create my own lesson plans by focusing on opening prep. I worked hard to make sure that I had my openings down solid and then I would spend a lot of time doing tactics. I would also read a

"I think the biggest piece of advice is playing every chess game like you're starting a new journey. You can't let your past wins or losses effect you. Just play each individual game like a fresh start."

lot of chess books by GM Jacob Aagaard. I think his series of books are brilliant.

Ken: What else kept you motivated during those high school years?

Vignesh: Again, my mom would encourage me. I wasn't a little kid anymore but, occasionally, she would gently bring up the subject.

She would say "Vignesh, ever since you were seven, you had a dream to be a titled player. You should keep pursuing your dream. You can do it."

Ken: How did it feel to have the support of your family?

Vignesh: It was great. They knew that I put most of the pressure on myself, but it was good to give me space.

During my senior year, I decided on a new plan to pursue my goals.

Ken: What new plan did you come up with?

Vignesh: I made a conscious decision to study chess with more intention while I was also pursuing my University studies.

Ken: How did you do that?

Vignesh: I decided to attend the University of Texas at Dallas to major in Criminology. I also did a lot of research and found a strong chess program at the University level.

I was very aware of the strong chess program at University of Texas at Dallas and their coach, GM Julio Sadorra. Even with a very busy schedule, I knew I would be able to play and study with top notch players.

Ken: Were you playing on the University Team?

Vignesh: No, the top players at the University of Texas Dallas were already IMs and GMs. But I took the opportunity to train, study and play with some of the top players. That really helped my game.

Ken: How has your chess game evolved over the last few years?

Vignesh: I think what's contributed most to my personal growth as a chess player was working on my transitioning from a tactical to more of a positional player.

Ken: Can you expand on that idea?

Vignesh: Tactical play focuses on sharp moves and calculation. Positional play is much more subtle and requires



Vignesh Anand

thinking of long-term consequences.

At the higher levels of chess, I think positional play is absolutely required because it demands deeper levels of understanding about yourself and the game.

Ken: What other decisions did you make during your University years?

Vignesh: I made the decision to enlist in the Marine Reserves so that I could make a little money and study at the same time.

In November, I will transfer to active duty. This means that I will be deployed to either Japan, Korea or some other part of the world.

Ken: When did you feel that you were definitely going to get your NM Title?

Vignesh: I was so sure that I was going to get my NM Title at a particular tournament that I told my friends and family. Unfortunately, it didn't happen so I had to gather up my strength, pick myself up, and fight again at another tournament.

Ken: When did it finally happen?

Vignesh: It was at a small tournament

in Plano, TX that I finally got my NM title in May 2025.

Ken: Wow, that's an amazing story of resilience and growth for you as a chess player and as a young man.

It's interesting that you almost quit chess entirely when you were five years old. Then, when you were in high school you took a long break from chess.

Vignesh: Chess is a lot like life. It's impossible to predict the ups and downs. You just have to make the best possible decisions based on what's presented to you.

Ken: So, after this incredible journey, what advice do you have for young chess players in the community?

Vignesh: I think the biggest piece of advice is playing every chess game like you're starting a new journey. You can't let your past wins or losses adversely impact you. Just play each individual game like a fresh start.

When I reflect on my own path, I think the biggest takeaway for me was just being able to consistently improve over time.

Ken: Check and mate.

WA Spring Mini-Teams

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday, April 12, 2026

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



FORMAT

A 5-round, Team (3-player) Swiss-paired tournament in two sections:

K-8 Scholastic & Open

K-8 players may play up into Open section if desired. See "Scoring" and "Procedure" below for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all. Players are allowed to form their own 3-player teams, or else the TD will compose additional teams from the remaining individuals. Teams will be counted in the group of the oldest (by grade) player.

SCHEDULE

Arrival: 8:00- 8:45am.

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

TIME CONTROL

G/25; +5.

RATING

Dual NWSRS & USCF rated; US Chess membership required. Higher of 2026 April USCF regular or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings. Unrated players will count as follows for avg team rating: K-3: 175, 4-6: 500, 7-12: 950, Adults: 1300.

ENTRY FEE

\$25 (per player) by 4/5, \$30 after. Room for 120 players.

AWARDS

Trophies awarded to the top-finishing teams in each section:

K-8 Scholastic:

1st-3rd Place, 1st K-3/K-6 team

Open:

1st-3rd Place, 1st U1400/U1100 avg

Special Prizes (per section):

Medals for first timers, best all-female team, and biggest upset win (by avg team rating).

PROCEDURE

Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Each round, a Team vs Team pairing will be announced, each Team's Board 1, 2, and 3 will play the other respective team's Board 1, 2, 3. Teams are expected to order their players in order of playing strength / rating on the respective boards. Please contact Organizer Siva Sankrithi (sivas108@gmail.com) for any pre-determined teams. Team information will be kept on a spreadsheet [HERE](#).

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF. To register your team, please fill out the [Team Registration Form](#). **Any team member requests must be received by Siva (either via the above form or email) by 5:00pm Friday Apr. 10, no exceptions. Players who register in the final 24 hours, along with those who have not registered a team, will be placed on a composed team. 100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat., April 11 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players by the deadline will be withdrawn from the tournament.

SCORING

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

QUESTIONS?

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757, WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com
Organizer: Siva Sankrithi, SivaS108@gmail.com

Chess Smiles

The Chess Friends

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

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

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends!

When you open the *Northwest Chess* magazine in April, the month where the first day is celebrated as the day of jokes and pranks, you had better believe that The Chess Friends wrote a fun article!

The tradition of joking around on April 1st originated in the late Middle Ages. Historians don't know exactly how this holiday came to be, but, [according to one theory](#), it had to do with the world switching from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. In the old calendar, New Year's Day was often celebrated after the spring equinox, around April 1st, but, with the adoption of the new calendar, the start of the new year was moved to January 1st. Back in the day, without phones, the internet, and New Year's bots on chess.com, it took a while for everyone to catch on to the calendar switch, so people who still celebrated New Year's in April got pranked on!

We, The Chess Friends, aren't big fans of practical jokes; we are more of the classy-type fun people who like a good joke that everyone can laugh about. Humor, when used positively, helps us make new friends or push through difficult times, like blundering in a completely winning position. Humor in chess is so important that GM Viswanathan Anand, the 15th World Chess Champion, dedicated a whole chapter to it in his new book, *Lightning Kid*. He says, "Humor helps you enjoy the moment and see things in a new light, so don't forget to laugh." *Gelotology*, a branch of science that studies laughter and its effects on the mind and the body, [confirms](#) that, after all, laughter is the best medicine!

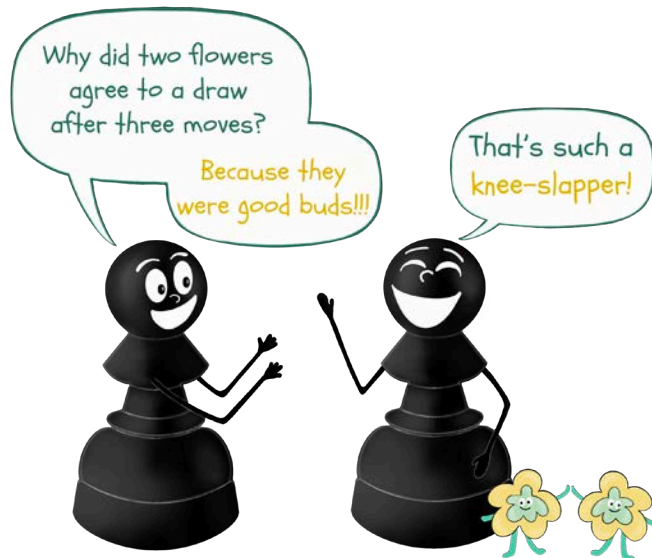
Today, we're going to describe our favorite categories of chess humor: dad jokes, situational jokes, and jokes that only chess players understand, including everyone's beloved chess memes!

As usual, our buddy Peshka is here by our sides to bring more smiles to your face!

Dad's Jokes! The term *dad's joke* appeared in the dictionary only six or seven years ago. It is a wholesome type of humor that parents approve, and kids pretend they don't like, but secretly enjoy. You make a dad joke, also known as a pun, by breaking language norms or by playing with double-meaning or similarly sounding words. We are not sure why these jokes are called "dad jokes" rather than "mom jokes;" we think our moms are pretty fun too!

For example, recently, when we asked our moms:

– Should we play chess in April?



They answered:

–May as well!

We call such jokes "knee-slappers" and often share them in our articles and blogs. A key to a good knee-slapper is to deliver it in an absurd Q&A format! Here is our latest collection, spring edition!

What did the tree say when it checkmated its opponent with a second left on the clock?

What a re-leaf!

What do you tell a baby cow who wants to play a late-night blitz event?

It's pasture bedtime!

How did the egg feel after a long chess game?

Egg-zausted!

Did you hear about the cloud that was about to play chess on April 1st?

It was so excited, it wet its plants!

Did you hear about a cherry tree that got an IM norm after a tournament in April?

It was an unbe-leaf-able performance!

And, at the same tournament, a pickle got its first GM norm!

It was a big dill!

What do grapes say when you ask them to play a chess game with you?

Wine not!

What did the mama flower say to her kids when she saw they played chess online for three hours?

Stop playing chess and clean your bloom!

OK, we will stop here, even though Peshka says there is no such thing as too many knee-slappers!

Situational jokes! These jokes happen spontaneously, when you least expect something funny, like in a conversation when people are discussing serious business. For a joke to make people laugh, you have to say something surprising that is simple and true at the same time. That's the key. The joke is in the truth.

I remember that once in a local tournament, the first round was delayed because it took time for the TDs to assemble the tables and boards in a new location. When they finally set everything up, and grumbling chess players were seated, the TDs made their pre-game announcement, apologizing for the delay and asking:

“Please double-check your boards. Is anyone missing any of their pieces?”

There was a silence, then came a grave voice from the middle of the room:

“I will soon!”

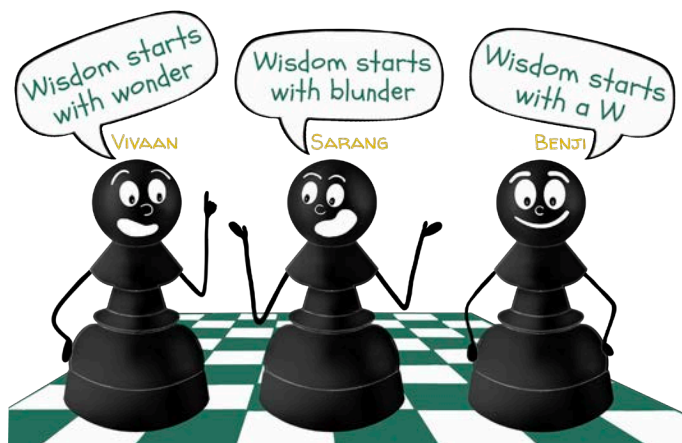
The tournament hall exploded with laughter, the tension disappeared, and everyone had a great time!

Peshka remembers how once The Chess Friends had a serious conversation about what wisdom in chess is:

Chess jokes! These jokes are the ones that only chess players would understand, because of their chess knowledge, the emotions around wins and losses, or what it feels like playing late-night blitz! These jokes often don't need a spoken language to be delivered; chess pieces are enough.

For example, in an online tournament in 2021, Magnus Carlsen was paired against Hikaru Nakamura in the last round. After Magnus played 1. e4, the commentators were predicting the game to enter a Ruy Lopez or an Italian or something, but, after Hikaru's 1. ... e5, Magnus played the shocking... (at least to us, the chess folks) 2. Ke2! Hikaru responded with Ke7, and both players couldn't hold their laughter! They just repeated king moves and the game ended in a draw. Then the opening went on to have a name, the Double Bongcloud! Was that funny?

CHESS WISDOM



It probably was, but you have to be a serious chess player to understand the joke!

Another example came from the Reykjavik Open, a serious classical event, where Anna Cramling, a famous chess streamer who invented the Cow Opening (you can read about her opening on [our blog here](#)), sat down for a serious game. She shook hands with her opponent, pressed the clock, and locked in. Her opponent, playing White, made the first move: he glided his pawn to e3 (the beginning of the Cow), kept it there for a second, before sliding it all the way to e4, as if to say “Hello there, nice to meet you! I follow you!” Classy. Anna just smiled.

If you want more humorous chess situation, the books by Dewain Barber [Humor In Chess](#) (2019) and [Humor In Chess II](#) (2021) have hundreds of pages filled with funny but true anecdotes from chess life! In *Humor In Chess II*, The Myth Sarang and The Legend Vivaan's Dad, Siva, submitted a story, titled “The TSA At Work.”

On the internet, chess jokes are often delivered in the form of *memes*, when an existing image, chess or not chess related, is paired up with a caption usually describing “me doing this” or “me feeling that,” like in these images of Peshka, from our book:



I first thought that's how the word "meme" came into existence, but its roots go a lot deeper. The term was coined by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in the 1970s, who spoke about cultural evolution and needed a name for his introduced concept of the smallest transmittable unit of culture, similar to the "gene." So, he took the Greek word "mimoiúmai" which means "to imitate," and shorten it to rhyme with "gene," and voila, the word *meme* appeared! With internet, the word took off to have life of its own, but it still does basically the same: conveys human shared experience, only in a humorous way. It is so popular that it appeared in the [New York Times crosswords](#) many-many times!

Speaking of crosswords, we made something just for you, our dear readers of the *Northwest Chess* magazine, something that is equally good as a chess knee-slapper! It's chess crossword games that bring joy and challenges! We invite you to take out your pens or pencils and have some fun!

Let's start with a good old word search puzzle. You can play it online at <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9501938> and design your own through The Word Search!

Chess Ideas Word Search

K	I	D	Z	F	Y	N	L	A	F	O	R	K	L
W	A	T	C	W	Z	C	W	N	D	E	E	D	U
R	P	L	R	E	I	I	F	E	N	D	N	O	F
D	N	H	L	E	N	S	N	I	C	F	K	M	T
O	A	S	I	D	B	P	C	L	E	Z	N	T	B
S	I	D	M	L	A	U	E	H	U	E	C	E	D
P	T	I	E	S	I	E	C	G	E	C	I	I	S
Z	L	H	S	R	H	D	Z	H	P	N	E	I	G
L	S	A	E	A	G	W	O	I	E	C	Z	N	A
L	N	I	N	E	A	E	N	R	N	T	I	U	A
T	B	Z	H	N	R	E	W	E	K	S	O	S	G
L	I	U	G	D	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y
I	F	F	I	A	N	C	H	E	T	T	O	G	O
C	T	T	D	E	F	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	I

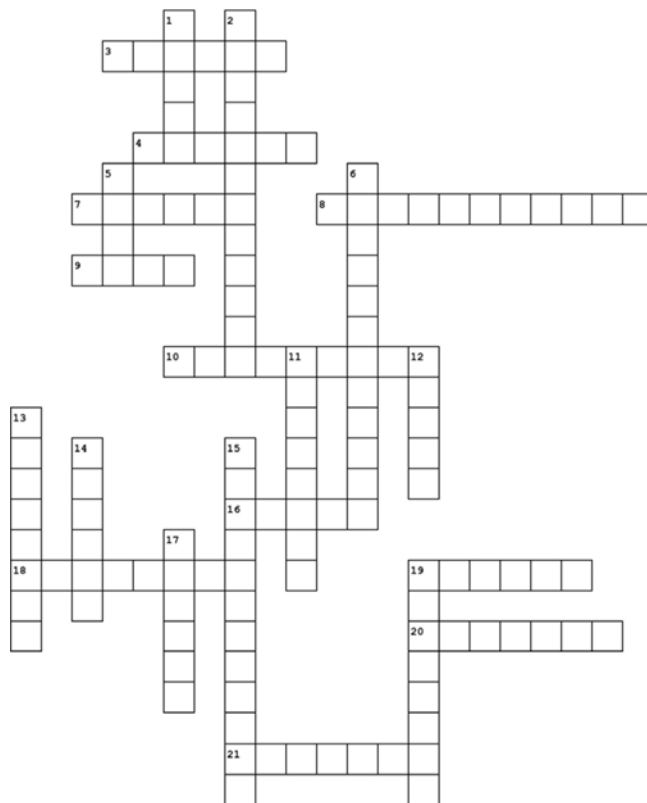
Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9501938/>

How'd that go for you? Ready to ramp up the challenge? Try our *Northwest Chess* Legends crossword! If you'd like to try it on your phone or computer, you can do so at <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/northwest-chess-legends>, and even make your own at Crossword Labs!

Didn't see your own legendary name in the puzzle? Please don't take it to heart! We'll make more! We just wanted to pick a few legends for our first one spanning WA, OR, and ID and several roles in the chess world!

If you have some name suggestions for future crosswords, let us know at chessfriendsbooks@gmail.com. Before we let you go, let's test your chess openings with another crossword we created! You can also try it out online at <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/chess-opening-crossword>.

Chess Opening Crossword



Across

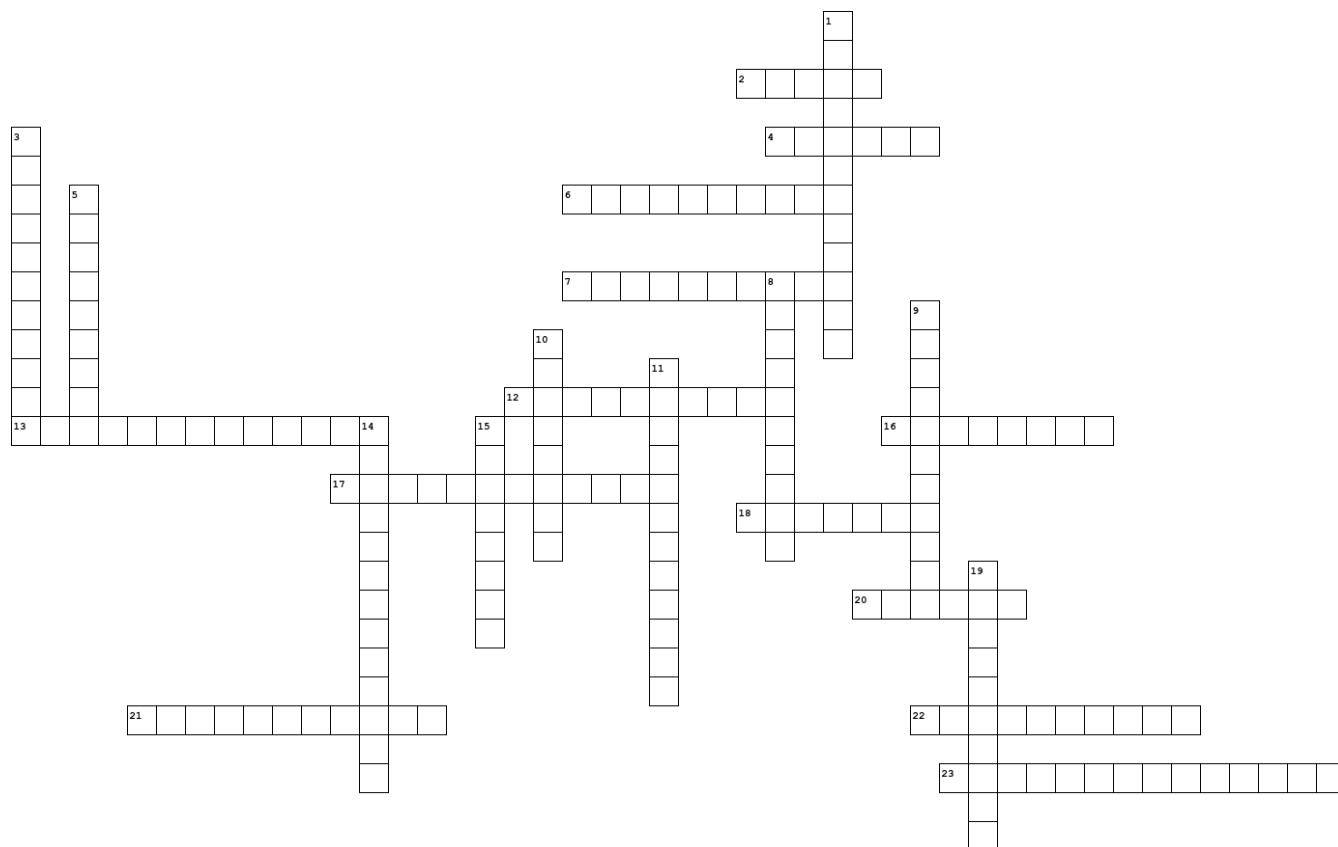
3. Popular defense infamous for its blocked light squared bishop
4. Popular White system where White usually makes a "pyramid" of pawns
7. Defense vs the Ruy Lopez named after the capital of Germany
8. d4 Nf6 opening with a fianchettoed bishop on g7
9. Flank opening named after a 19th century Englishman
10. Nonsense opening made famous by Magnus and Naka
16. White gambit named after Welsh sea captain
18. Opening family that includes the O'Kelly and Kalashnikov variations
19. Anti-18-Across played at the club level
20. Flank opening that begins after 1. c4
21. Maybe the best beginner White opening from the country of panettone

Down

1. Black gambit named after Hungarian-American grandmaster Pal
2. Nordic dweller
5. Slovak GM rhyming with a famous snowman

- 6. Flexible Animal Defense System
- 11. A popular opening vs 1. e4 that is currently often referred to by kids as the 'meta'
- 12. Black opening vs 1. d4, named after Holland's main language
- 13. Commonly called Modern
- 14. An adult beverage
- 15. Standard 1. d4 opening that has its own Netflix mini series
- 17. Aggressive White opening after 1. e4 from the city that first invented croissants
- 19. Fourth World Champion

Northwest Chess Legends Crossword



Across

- 2. PNW Sister Streamers
- 4. NW Chess Cartoon Pawn
- 6. FIDE Arbiter Scholastic State Man
- 7. Blazers Champ
- 12. OR Champion Raptor
- 13. NW Legend who's bested Fischer
- 16. WIM/FM WA Champ
- 17. Current WA State Champ
- 18. FM 12yo
- 20. NW Chess Interviewer
- 21. WCF President
- 22. WFM Airapetian

- 23. IM ID champ Luke

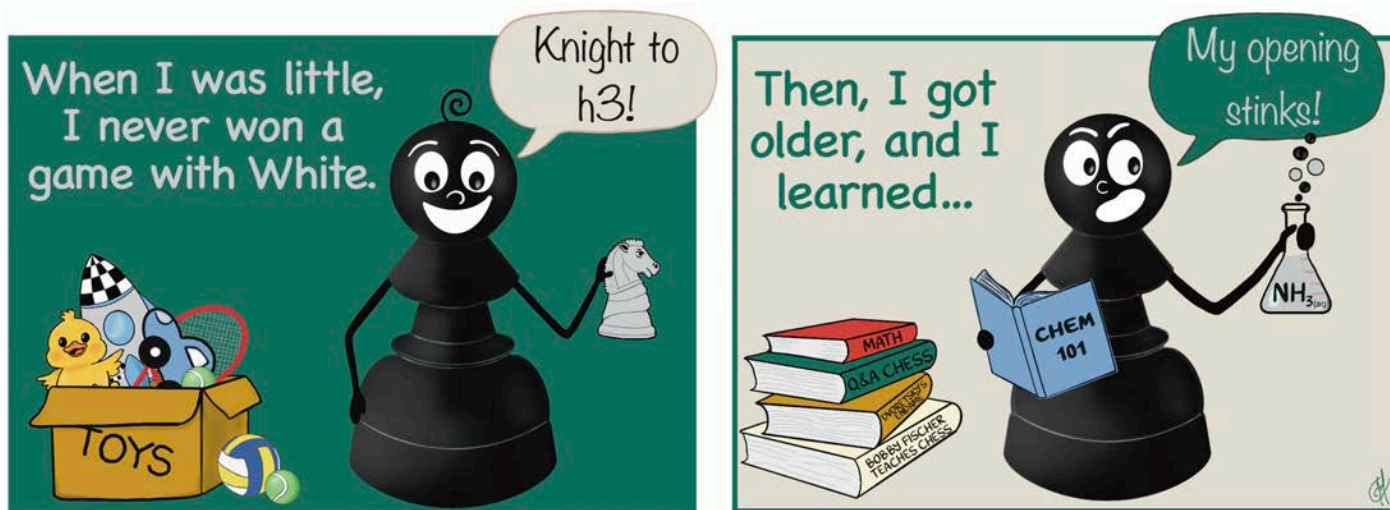
Down

- 1. NW Chess Kid Authors
- 3. IM Coach legend
- 5. Oregon Champ Matt
- 8. Local GM Coach
- 9. WA kid turned GM in 2024
- 10. OG WA GM Yasser
- 11. 18-time ID State Champ
- 14. Grand Knights Founder Sloan
- 15. WGM/FM OR Champ
- 19. NW Chess editor from ID

Well friends, that's what we have for you this month. We hope you enjoyed our fun and funny article, and we look forward to seeing you at a chess event soon!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

And Peshka says its goodbye with a bonus comic!



The Man Benji,
The Myth Sarang,
The Legend Vivaan

Washington Senior Championship



APRIL 16 + 18-19, 2026

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - SEATTLE

7212 WOODLAWN AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98115

Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan,
WCF President, 206-769-3757,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Pay by Zelle (wa-chess),
SettleKing (Washington Chess
Federation), or write a check
made out to: WCF. Registration
deadline Wed. 4/15 @ 5pm.

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

Format: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss in two
sections: Championship & Premier U1800.
Sections with < 6 players may be combined.

Eligibility: Open to Seniors age 50+ (or
reaching age 50 by August 1, 2026).

Rating: USCF rated. Championship section
also FIDE rated. April 2026 USCF Regular
rating will be used to determine pairings and
prizes.

Entry Fee: \$55 by 4/9, \$65 after. Players rated
>1600 may play up if desired. Free entry for
GMs, IMs, WGMs, or 2300+ USCF.

Rounds: Thu: 6:30pm. Sat/Sun: 10am, 3pm.

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

Prize Fund: \$750 (b/o on 25 pd. entries)

Championship: 1st/2nd: \$150-\$100.

1st U2000/U1900: \$80.

Premier U1800: 1st/2nd: \$100-\$70.

1st U1700/U1500/U1300: \$60.

*Highest finishing Washington resident in
Championship receives the title of
Washington State Senior Champion, a seed
into the Invitational Section of the 2027
Washington State Championship, and a \$750
travel stipend from the WCF to attend the
2026 Irwin National Tournament of Senior
State Champions, held concurrently with the
U.S. Open in late July. If needed to break a tie
for 1st place, two G/90 playoff games will be
played later in the year.*

2026 Oregon Closed

Wilson Gibbins



L-R: Nick Raptis, Austin Tang, Wilson Gibbins, Matt Zavortink, Corey Russell, Jason Cigan, Carl Haessler, Roger Tabet.
Photo credit: Norm May.

Fifteen of Oregon's finest players and inexplicably your author invaded the Portland Chess Center on President's Day weekend. Eight of them were fighting to be crowned Oregon Closed Champion, and eight were battling for a qualification ticket to next year's event.

Before the second round some of the players started discussing "When was the last time someone won the Oregon Closed after losing a game?" The answer to that question is 2026, as co-champion

Matt Zavortink started the tournament with a loss to third-place finisher and Oregon Junior Closed champion Austin Tang. Matt responded to this setback by vaulting back into contention with four straight wins, including a third-round win over co-champion Nick Raptis. Chess rewards those who keep their composure in the face of adversity and both co-champions managed to do so, scoring five points out of seven, with Nick notching a round five win over Austin along the way.

Karthik Bimod took a less chaotic

approach in the Challengers Section. He won three games, drew four, and finished clear first to nail down an invitation to the 2027 Championship section. You may recognize Karthik's name from the February 2026 issue, as he finished tied for first in the Challengers Section of the Oregon Junior Closed. There was a log jam at second place, with Yogi Saputra, Robert Hecht, and Hayul Lim tying with 4.5 points.

Thanks to Zoey Tang for organizing this tournament and recruiting the 16

Oregon Closed Championship Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total	T-SB	T-1-on-1
1	Matt Zavortink	2285 (2151)	L3	W8	W2	W7	W6	D5	D4	5.0	15.25	1
2	FM Nick Raptis	2331 (2212)	W7	W6	L1	D4	W3	W8	D5	5.0	14.75	0
3	Austin Tang	2190 (1978)	W1	D4	D5	W8	L2	D7	W6	4.5	14.25	0
4	Jason Cigan	2221 (2095)	D5	D3	W8	D2	D7	L6	D1	3.5	11.75	0
5	Wilson Gibbins	2223 (2122)	D4	W7	D3	L6	L8	D1	D2	3.0	11	0
6	Carl A. Haessler	2200 (1936)	L8	L2	W7	W5	L1	W4	L3	3.0	8.5	1
7	FM Corey John Russell	2200 (2084)	L2	L5	L6	L1	D4	D3	W8	2.0	6	1
8	Roger Tabet	2144 (2034)	W6	L1	L4	L3	W5	L2	L7	2.0	6	0



L-R: Hayul Lim, Karthik Bimod, William Nobles, Michael J Pendergast, Robert Hecht, Santiago Fernando Tenesaca Argudo, Ethan Morehouse. Yogi Saputra is not pictured. Photo credit: Norm May.

players. Thanks Norm May for directing another drama-free tournament, taking the pictures you see alongside this article, and simultaneously directing the Portland Amateur Championship, won by David Murray. And finally, thanks to Matt Zavortink and Corey Russell for their game analysis which you can read below, along with Nick Raptis and Karthik Bimod for providing me with a few of their games to annotate.

**Austin Tang (2197) –
Matt Zavortink (2285) [B45]**

Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R1), February 13, 2026
[Matt Zavortink]

This game was a really abysmal self-inflicted loss, following the same pattern of some other games I've lost in the last

few years. It's really important to learn and improve after poor games, and I hope that some of my comments here may be helpful for other players who have self-destructed in a similar manner! I'll keep my comments somewhat sparse on this one and focus on where and why my brain started to lose its attachment to reality.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6

We've had this position one time before, in an Oregon Open. I remember that game well, mostly because part way through the opening phase, right as Austin started to think, a homeless man barged into the tournament hall and threw several cups of water into the air, splattering some of the players.

6.Ndb5

Avoiding my preparation in the 6.Nxc6

line we'd played previously. And bluffing that he's well-prepared in the Sveshnikov. But also calling my bluff that I'm ready to play the Sveshnikov.

6...Bb4

A sad, insipid move. People have been arguing about this move for decades, with most of the debate centered on how bad it is. Is it really bad, or just a little bit bad? I figured with this move I could at least reach a solid position and not have to navigate any crazy lines he had prepared. 6...d6 7.Bf4 e5 8.Bg5 a6 9.Na3 b5 transposes to the (old) main line of the Sveshnikov.; 6...Bc5 Another interesting move that has become popular in the last few years. But this is very sharp, and I didn't want to see whatever he had prepared.

7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Nxc3 d5 9.Bd3!?

Oregon Closed Challengers Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total	T-SB	T-1-on-1
1	Karthik Bimod	2003 (1862)	D8	D4	W2	D7	W5	W6	D3	5.0	17	0
2	Yogi Saputra	2039 (1945)	W5	W7	L1	L6	W3	W8	D4	4.5	13.75	1.5
3	Robert Hecht	2012 (1944)	W6	D5	W8	W4	L2	D7	D1	4.5	13.75	1
4	Hayul Lim	2070 (2015)	W7	D1	W6	L3	W8	D5	D2	4.5	12.25	0.5
5	William Nobles	1953 (1887)	L2	D3	W7	W8	L1	D4	W6	4.0	10	0
6	Ethan Morehouse	1994 (1716)	L3	D8	L4	W2	W7	L1	L5	2.5	6.75	0
7	Santiago Fernando Tenesaca Argudo	1888 (1927)	L4	L2	L5	D1	L6	D3	D8	1.5	5.5	0.5
8	Michael J Pendergast	2069 (2129)	D1	D6	L3	L5	L4	L2	D7	1.5	4.5	0.5

9.exd5 The main line, giving Black an isolated pawn.

9...dxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bxe4 Qxd1+ 12.Kxd1

White is probably slightly better though the king on d1 somewhat balances the bishop pair.

12...Bd7 13.Re1

He blitzed this move out, so I figured he must still be in his preparation. But I didn't understand the point.

13...0-0-0 14.Bd2

He blitzed this out as well. Now I really didn't understand what was happening though as I thought Black's next move was obvious and strong.

14...Nd4

Isn't Black fine? Isn't this totally equal? I will get to play ...Bc6 next and trade off White's bishop pair. If White shields the g2-pawn with a move like f3 I can play ...Bc6 Bd3 Nb3! and I get to trade a bishop anyway.

15.b3

White is intending Kc1 and Kb2 at some point, though this felt very slow to me. I think this is where I really started to lose my objectivity. I felt like White had already committed some kind of inaccuracy. After all, this line with 9.Bd3 is perhaps objectively slightly better for White. But here I can already immediately trade off the bishop pair, the thing that's supposed to give White an advantage. And b3 seems so slow! I also noticed that there were some forcing lines in the position, like ...f5 Bd3 Bc6 which makes two threats! It would be really nice if all of these things meant that Black is better, which I started to believe, despite the fact that all of the lines I calculated looked completely equal.

15...e5

I should probably do 15...Bc6, following up on the original idea of ...Nd4. First just trade off the bishop pair, then think about what to do next! 15...f5 16.Bd3 (16.Bf3 lets Black double White's pawns, but is it really so bad with opposite-colored bishops and a big weak square on e5?) 16...Bc6 threatening to take g2 and to take b3. 17.Bf1 Be4. I looked at this for a

while but just couldn't see any follow-up after White defends c2. This is very risky as I've passed up my chance to get rid of White's bishop pair and severely weakened my structure. So, I better have something good if I go for this!

16.Bc3

Now again I got sucked into looking at some ridiculous lines and wasting time. Just go ...Bc6 and create an equal position!

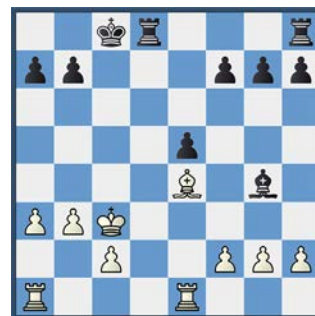
16...Bg4+

16...Bc6 17.Kc1 f6= (17...Bxe4 18.Rxe4 Nc6 I remember looking at this during the game, which is also totally fine. I think I didn't like letting him go f4 and trade a bunch of pawns, again, because I had some unjustified feeling that I should have more of an advantage.) 16...f5?! 17.Bxd4 Be6? I got tempted by this for a couple of minutes 18.Bd3 Rxd4 19.Rxe5 Bxb3 Looks promising as I'm threatening ...Rxd3. Eventually I realized White will just move the king to unpin the c2-pawn and I will drop f5.

17.Kc1 Ne2+

17...f5 Again, I think I wasted some time looking at this move, which is completely equal like everything else. 18.Bd3 Nxb3+ 19.cxb3 Rxd3 20.Bxe5=

18.Kb2 Nxc3 19.Kxc3



Position after 19.Kxc3



Games front to back: Hayul lim vs Robert Hecht, William Nobles vs Michael Pendergast. Photo credit: Norm May.

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Ok, I did finally actually capture a bishop, so that's good. But I spent almost an hour of time on the last three moves! I was still in denial about how equal the position is. Realizing I needed to play faster, I quickly committed a blunder.

19...Rd4?? 20.f3 Be6

Now while he was thinking I realized I had missed f4 when I'm completely busted.

21.Rad1??

Giving me another chance! Now this is a classic case of one mistake leading to another. I recognized that my previous move had been a blunder, but in this position, I still wanted to find a way to make use of the rook on d4, rather than admit that putting it there was simply wrong.

21.f4 Cleanly wins a pawn, with interest: 21...f6 (21...f5 makes things even worse: 22.Bf3 Rxf4 23.Rxe5 Bd7 24.Re7 White is threatening Rxe7 but also Bxb7+ followed by Rxd7 so I'm completely busted.) 22.fxe5 fxe5 23.Bf3 and I can't defend e5.

21...Rhd8?

21...Rxd1! is the best move. But it's difficult to accept that ...Rd4 was stupid and that the rook should immediately move again. 22.Rxd1 Kc7 White's rook looks nice on the d-file but Black is not any worse and can start pushing the kingside majority. I looked at this and calculated the following completely nonsensical variation. 23.Kb4 f5 24.Bd5?? (24.Bd3?) 24...Rd8 25.c4 I thought I shouldn't allow this but probably because I let my preconceived notion that I didn't want to play ...Rxd1 bias my perception. In fact Black is winning here! 25...Bxd5 26.cxd5 Kd6 Eventually White will lose the d-pawn.

22.Rxd4 exd4+

22...Rxd4?? allows the same tactic as before: 23.f4+-

23.Kd3

I thought I would be able to easily hold this position despite my isolated pawn, since I should be able to organize a bishop check to drive White's king away whenever he brings the rook to attack the pawn. But this was wildly optimistic. White has many ways to approach the position, and this is clearly a lot less practical than trading rooks on d1 on move 21.

23...h6

23...g6± Better according to Stockfish.

24.f4

The difficulty of this position is highlighted by Stockfish's strong assertion that Black must play ...b6 here. When Stockfish begins running, it evaluates this position around +1.2, but as it "thinks" longer it figures out ways for Black to hold.

24...Rd6 25.a4 Kc7 26.f5 Bc8 27.Kc4



Position after 27.Kc4

Stockfish says I can draw with ...a5!, giving away my d4-pawn but getting my remaining pawns on the correct color relative to the bishops.

27...b6?? 28.b4+- h5 29.Rf1 a5?! 30.b5 Bd7 31.h3 g6 32.fgx6 fgx6 33.Bd5 Bf5

34.Kxd4 Kd7 35.c4 Bc2 36.c5 bxc5+ 37.Kxc5 Bf5 38.b6 Be6 39.Bxe6+ Rxe6 40.Kb5 Re2 41.Ka6

1-0

**Nick Raptis (2331) –
Corey Russell (2200) [E01]**
Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R1), 13.02.2026
[Wilson Gibbins]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.g3 e6 4.Bg2

Nick's move order strives for a Catalan without allowing some of Black's trickier lines involving an early ...d5xc4 or ...Bf8-b4+. But it does allow Black some alternative approaches, and Corey tries one of them.

4...c5 5.c4 exd4 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Nxd4

Nick and Corey have conspired to reach a reversed Grünfeld position.

7...Bc5 8.Nb3 Be7 9.cxd5 exd5

White scores well after 9...Nxd5, but none of White's tries impress Stockfish. 10.Nc3 (10.e4 Ndb4; 10.Bd2 a5 11.a4 0-0 12.Nc3 Ncb4) 10...Nxc3 11.Qxd8+ Nxd8 12.bxc3 Bd7 13.Be3 Bc6 Nick was fortunate that Stockfish declined its invitation to the Oregon Closed this year :-). Seriously, practical chess plays out very differently from what your annotator sees with an engine running.

10.Nc3

And now we have sort of a Tarrasch variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

10...0-0 11.Bg5 Be6 12.Bxf6

White doesn't have to cash in. 12.Rc1±; 12.Qd3±

12...Bxf6 13.Nxd5 Bxb2 14.Rb1 Ba3 15.e4 Qd6

Not a mistake, but an inaccuracy. This



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gives Nick a target, and he takes aim with the next move. 15...Re8=; 15...Rc8=

16.Nd2

Threatening both Nd2-c4 and Rb1xb7

16...Bxd5?

Stockfish suggests 16...Ne5 and believes Black's two bishops are sufficient compensation after 17.Rxb7 Qa6 but it isn't obvious to me.;

The more human move 16...Qd7 defends the pawn on b7 and gets the Black's queen out of range of the knight attack when it reaches c4. After 17.Qa4 White has a slight edge.

17.exd5 Na5

17...Ne5 18.Rxb7±

18.Qa4!



Position after 18.Qa4

Equal material, opposite-colored bishops, yet White is winning. Nick will demonstrate White's advantage with a precise sequence of moves.

18...b6 19.Ne4 Qe7 20.d6! Bxd6 21.Nxd6 Qxd6 22.Bxa8 Rxa8 23.Rfd1 Qg6

Black has a pawn to compensate for the exchange deficit, but it doesn't make any difference. White's major pieces dominate the board, and Black's knight is only a spectator.

24.Rbc1 h5 25.Qd7 h4 26.Rc8+ Rxc8 27.Qxc8+ Kh7 28.Qh3 Qh5 29.Rd4 g5 30.Qf5+ Qg6 31.Qxg6+ Kxg6 32.gxh4 gxh4 33.Rxh4 Nc6 34.Rc4 Ne5 35.Rc7 a5 36.f4

1-0

Wilson Gibbins (2223) – Corey Russell (2200) [A30]

Oregon Closed - Championship Section (R2), February 14, 2026 [Fritz 19 and Corey Russell]

So all comments are Fritz 19 with my comments denoted by a —cjr at the end.—cjr

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 b6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 e6 6.0-0 a6 7.d4 cxd4 8.Qxd4 d6 9.b3 Nc6

9...Nbd7± I had great difficulty in thinking clearly this game. This was the first game of the Closed and also there are no masters in Southern Oregon where I live other than myself so don't much practice playing masters over the board. As is typical when away from home, I got little to no sleep at the hotel. That's not really an excuse.

I know the knight belongs on d7 as it shores up b6. For some reason I was worried about losing my pawn, but I have resources which I wasn't able to see over the board. For example, 9...Nbd7 10.Ba3 Nc5 is an effective defense.

Also, I've played the hedgehog many times and normally know the knight doesn't belong at c6 and there's a potential drawback which we will discuss shortly.—cjr

10.Qf4± Qc7 11.Bb2

11.Rd1±

11...Be7

White is slightly better.

12.Rac1

Threatens to win with Nd5!

12...Rd8?

Still fixated on the defense of the d-pawn. Due to the variation Fritz points out, I need to do ...Qb8 with the idea of ...0-0 and ...Rfd8. White is clearly better due to my sloppy opening play.—cjr

12...Ne5!±

13.Rfd1?

13.Nd5+- is more deadly. 13...exd5 14.Bxf6 Bxf6 15.cxd5

13...0-0?



Position after 13...0-0

13...Ne5±

14.Nd5!+-

This positional sacrifice should not have surprised me, as I have used this very positional tactic myself many times. As I mentioned I had difficulty thinking clearly.—cjr

14...exd5 15.cxd5 Qd7?

15...Nxd5 16.Rxd5 Qd7 17.Bxg7 Kxg7

16.dxc6 Bxc6 17.Qc4?

Over the board I would have done the exchange sac too, as it looked quite devastating. I was sure Qc4 was an inaccuracy although White's position is

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Bellingham Open

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Highest finishing WA resident in the Whatcom Open seeded into the 2027 WA State Championship – Challengers section.

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

Entry fee: \$35 by 4/11, \$40 after. Free entry for WWU students. Need-based scholarships are available upon request. Maximum of 150 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

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

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

Rating: Dual USCF and NWSRS rated. Higher of current NWSRS or April 2026 US Chess Regular rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Memberships: US Chess membership required.

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

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

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

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

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. **Online registration + payment deadline: Friday, April 17 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from the waitlist will be offered a spot. At-site registration: 9:15-10:15am. On-site payment available by cash, check made out to "WCF", SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation) or Zelle (Tag: wa-chess, ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com).

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

so good he can get away with it.—cjr

17.Rxc6+- has better winning chances.
17...Qxc6 18.Nd4

17...Bb5± 18.Qc7

White has more active pieces.—Fritz.

Also there is a very strong positional basis for White's move as he has the far superior pawn structure, so it will be hard for Black to avoid a loss in an endgame.—cjr

18...Qxc7

18...Rc8± 19.Qxb6 Bxe2

19.Rxc7+- Rd7

19...Bxe2? 20.Re1 Nd5 21.Rxe2+-

20.Rc2 Rdd8 21.Nd4 Rc8

21...d5 keeps fighting. 22.Nxb5 axb5

22.Rdc1

22.Rxc8?! Rxc8 23.a4 (23.Nxb5 axb5
24.Bxf6 gxf6+-) 23...Bd7+-

22...Rxc2 23.Rxc2

Nxb5 would now be deadly. 23.Nxc2?!
Rc8±

23...d5

If I don't give my e7-bishop some moves, then Nf5 will be disastrous which is why I sacked this pawn. Also, there was a possibility of bishops of opposites which may give me some chances to draw.—cjr

24.Nf5 Bc5 25.Bxf6 gxf6 26.Bxd5 Rd8

I had a neat tactic here I was hoping he would fall for but of course he didn't. E.g., 27.e4? Bd3 28.Rd2 Rxd5! 29.exd5 Bxf5 and I could think about winning it. Also, of course after Rd2 not ...Bxe4? as Bxf7 would win my rook.—cjr

27.Be4 Rd1+ 28.Kg2 Bd7 29.Kf3 Bxf5
30.Bxf5±

Endgame. KRB-KRB

30...a5 31.Rc4 Rf1 32.e3 h6 33.Bd3 Rd1
34.Rg4+ Kf8 35.Bc4 Rd2 36.a4 Rb2
37.Rf4 Kg7 38.Ke4 Bd6 39.Rf5 Kg6
40.h4

Black has one last idea to hang on. First, he needs to recognize the most straightforward plan for White is to sac his rook for the black bishop, then have his king mop up the queen side pawns and the white a-pawn wins the game.

Therefore, Black must play 40...Rd2 here to stop that. Then Black just plays moves like ...Rd2, ...Rd1, etc.

If White trades rooks, the bishop endgame is easily drawn.—cjr

40...Bb4

40...h5± was called for. 41.Rd5 Bb4

41.h5+- Kg7



Position after 41...Kg7

42.Kd5! Rd2+ 43.Kc6 Bc5?

43...Rd8 44.Kxb6 Rd6+ 45.Kc7 Rd2

44.g4

44.Rxc5 bxc5 45.Kb6 Rxf2 46.Kxa5

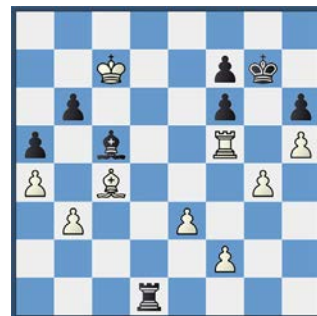
44...Rd6+

44...Rd8 might work better. 45.Kb5 Rc8

45.Kc7

And now Rxc5! would win.

45...Rd1?



Position after 45...Rd1

45...Bb4 46.Rb5 Ba3

46.Rxc5! bxc5

KR-KB

47.Kb6 f5 48.gxf5

48.Kxc5? is the wrong capture. 48...fxg4
49.Be2 Rc1+ 50.Kb5 f5+-

48...Rh1 49.Kxa5

49.Kxc5 Rxh5 50.e4 Rh1♣

49...Rxh5 50.Kb6 Rxf5 51.a5 Rf6+
52.Kxc5 Rxf2 53.a6 Ra2 54.Kb6 h5
55.a7 h4 56.Bd5 h3 57.a8Q

Less strong is 57.a8B Rb2±

57...Rxa8 58.Bxa8

Weighted Error Value: White=0.29
(precise)/Black=0.65

1-0

Matt Zavortink (2285) –
Roger Tabet (2144) [E94]

Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R2), February 14, 2026

[Matt Zavortink]

After losing the first game the night before I figured there was no way I could win the tournament, so I just needed to show up

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- See chessreg.com/wsscc for full breakdown of all sections.

ENTRY FEE \$45

Increases to:

\$60 on **February 14th**

\$75 on **March 14th**

\$90 on **April 14th**

SCHEDULE

7:00am – Doors open to public at the Tacoma Convention Center

8:30am – 1st round pairings available

9:00am – Round 1 start time

11:00am – Round 2 start time

Lunch between 2nd & 3rd rounds

12:45pm – Round 3 start time

2:30pm – Round 4 start time

4:15pm – Round 5 start time

Awards Ceremony – ASAP following conclusion of Round 5

**Round Times are Tentative*

AWARDS

All players participating will receive an award! Players who score 3.0+ will receive a trophy. Players who score less than 3.0 will receive a commemorative medal. Players will be able to collect trophies and medals following the completion of round 5.

For team award info, see state website:

wsecc.squarespace.com

RATING

NWSRS rated. Championship sections also USCF rated, with US Chess membership required. Current NWSRS rating will be used to determine sections and pairings.

DETAILS

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. **Registration cutoff is on Thursday April 23rd @ 11:00pm.** After the cutoff, you may register on the waitlist.

Championship sections require qualification at a state qualifier tournament during the school year. Premier sections are open to all students under the ratings threshold, regardless of qualification, including players who qualified for the Championship section but are below the ratings cutoff. Financial assistance for USCF membership is available upon request.

Qualified players list: ratingsnw.com/qualifiers.html

Online Registration:

chessreg.com/wsscc

WSECC Website:

wsecc.squarespace.com

QUESTIONS?

For registration questions, email Ben Radin, ben@chessreg.com. For all other questions, email State Organizer Jacob Mayer, jacob.mayerchess@gmail.com

and try to play my best. I got lucky in this game and was able to win directly out of my opening preparation, only needing to think deeply one time.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.d4

Objectively this is a nonsensical move order, first avoiding the Grünfeld with 1.Nf3 but now allowing it. But I had my reasons based on my opponent's repertoire.

4...0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 Na6 7.0-0 e5 8.Be3 Ng4

I had a feeling I would reach this position and had prepared quite a bit. The database shows ...Ng4 as the most popular move, but looking through the games it's clear that really strong players have moved on to other options in the last decade!

9.Bg5 Qe8 10.h3

This position was a bit of a chore to prepare and remember because Black has many options. Black can retreat with ...Nf6 or play ...exd4 first and then ...Nf6 or ...Ne5. And Black can throw in ...h6 first and then try to play either of those two options! But I was confident I remembered my analysis.

10...h6 11.Bh4 exd4

11...Nf6 One of the main positional ideas of h3 can be seen in this line: 12.Bxf6 Bxf6 13.c5! Black's structure gets completely trashed, for example: 13...exd4 14.Nd5 Bd8 15.Bxa6

12.Nd5!

This idea is somewhat less good if Black hasn't included the moves ...h6 and Bh4 because there ...f6 will come with tempo against the bishop on g5, allowing Black to drive the knight back with ...c6.

12.Nxd4?! In this case Black's knight clearly belongs on f6: 12...Nf6 White must make some kind of positional concession

to defend e4, so Black is probably doing alright.

12...Ne5

12...g5 Probably Black's best option, this was one of the crazier lines I had prepared, and I was trying to remember the details at the board: 13.hxg4 gxh4 14.Nxh4 c6 15.Nf4 A pretty weird position where White will soon lose the e4 pawn. But the engine gives about +1 since White has great control of the weakened light-square on the kingside, with moves like Nf5, Nh5, and Bd3 in the air.

13.Nxd4

Here I knew that Black's best move according to the engine was the sad ...g5, and that the evaluation was about 1.5 in that case.

13...Kh8?

Now I'm out of my preparation. I did my

normal 20-minute think and found the strongest way to continue.



Position after 13...Kh8

14.f4!

14.Nb5 is good according to Stockfish, but messier than necessary: 14...g5 15.Bg3 (15.Nbxc7 Nxc7 16.Nxc7 Qd8 17.Nxa8 gxh4 not so clear to me during the game, and not really a good use of



*L-R: Karthik Bimod vs Yogi Saputra.
Photo credit: Norm May.*

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Eastside Open



May 9-10, 2026

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

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

Entry fee: \$110 by 5/2, \$140 after. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Bellevue Open or Kirkland U1700, respectively. Players rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. Maximum of 140 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 9-9:45am. Rounds: Sat @ 10am, 2:30pm, 7pm. Sun @ 10am, 3pm. Closing Ceremony + Blitz Tournament: ~ 7pm or asap. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

Time Control: G/75; +30. Late default: 60 minutes.

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of May 2026 USCF or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF or foreign rating used at TD discretion.

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

Prize Fund: \$5,500 based on 100 paid entries.

Bellevue Open: 1st-4th: \$500-\$400-\$300-\$250. 1st-2nd U2100: \$175-\$150, 1st-2nd U1900: \$175-\$150.

Kirkland U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1600: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1400: \$125-\$100.

Redmond U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$250-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section): Clyde Hill Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Medina Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Hunts Point Best Senior Player (by TPR): \$50, Yarrow Point Best Dressed: \$20/day.

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 5/8 @ 5pm**. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Eastside Open Blitz Tournament: Sunday 7-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30.

Format: A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual USCF 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 May 2026 USCF Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.

Prize Fund: \$750 (based on 50 paid entries)

1st - 3rd: \$170-140-100, 1st U2000/U1700/U1400/U1100/Unrated: \$50. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

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

time to calculate whether or not you can extract the a8-knight when there are simpler options.) 15...Qd8 is maybe not so bad for Black, White's knights will get kicked back by ...c6; 14.Nf6?? Qe7? This is the point of Black's ...Kh8 move.; 14.Bf6 A bit tempting, trying to go Qd2 next to threaten the h6-pawn! But White's pieces get driven back: 14...Bxf6 15.Nxf6 Qd8 16.Nd5 c6 Black misses the dark-squared bishop but the position isn't so obviously bad with ...Nc5 coming next.

14...Nc6

14...Nd7 prevents Black's queen from defending c7 and thus loses tons of material: 15.Nb5 During the game I was happy to see that the attempt to complicate with 15...Qxe4 gets crushed by 16.Bd3 when the queen has to retreat to e6 or e8 and get forked by Nxc7 next.

15.Nb5 Qd7

A very sad position for Black with all of the pieces bottled up on the queenside. Given enough time, Black would like to move the c6-knight and force White back with the threat of ...c6, so I thought it was important to maintain the forward momentum here.

16.f5

Threatening to trap the bishop with f6. 16.Bg4 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 This is an achievement for White, weakening Black's structure. But what's the follow up idea? I thought the game continuation was cleaner.

16...Be5

Black admirably tries to give material and complicate the position in typical King's Indian style, but thankfully it's easy to maintain control as White. 16...g5 17.f6 gxh4 18.fxg7+ Kxg7 Black gets crushed by many moves, a nice one is 19.Rf6 planning Qd2 and Raf1.

17.fxg6 f5



Position after 17...f5

One more long-ish think here to find the most precise way forward.

18.exf5 Rxf5 19.Rxf5 Qxf5 20.Bd3 Qf8 21.Qh5!

I was happy to spot this idea back on move 18. Black cannot defend h6 because I have ideas like Rf1-f7 and Bg5.

21...Be6 22.Rf1 Qg7 23.Bg5 Kg8 24.Nf6+ Bxf6 25.Bxf6

Black resigned since ...Qf8 will be met by g7 and Qxh6.

1-0

**Nick Raptis (2331) –
Matt Zavortink (2285) [E94]**
Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R3), February 14, 2026
[Matt Zavortink]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 0-0 6.Be2 Na6

Having just beaten this variation as White, I decided to try it as Black.

7.0-0 e5 8.Re1

This is the main alternative to the main line with Be3 as I played in the previous game.

8...Bg4 9.dxe5

Here I felt a bit foolish for not knowing the move. Especially as in my pre-tournament notes I had identified this line with Re1 as something Nick might try against me. Unfortunately, there are a lot of weird tactics in the position that I had to waste time calculating.

9...Bxf3

9...dxe5 I really felt like I should be able to play this move but couldn't quite work out how I would get my sacrificed pawn back. Here are some of the lines I calculated. 10.Qxd8 Raxd8 11.Nxe5 Bxe2 12.Rxe2 Nc5! Threatening to take on e4. (12...Rfe8 13.Nf3 Nc5 14.Bg5 I thought White just keeps the pawn here. The typical King's Indian Defense response to Nxe5 doesn't work: 12...Nxe4?? 13.Rxe4 and the e5 knight is defended.) 13.Nf3 (13.f3? Nfxe4 14.Nxe4 Rd1+! 15.Kf2 Bxe5 16.Nxc5

Bd4+ showing why Black needed to throw in ...Rd1+ earlier!) 13...Nfxe4 14.Nxe4 Rd1+ 15.Ne1 I made it all the way here during my in-game analysis. But didn't find the one good move for Black, which is very obvious when you actually see the position: 15...Nd3!?

10.Bxf3

After my 20-minute think, Nick blitzed this move out instantly. 10.exf6 I wasted a lot of time looking at this line, particularly White's queen sacrifice. 10...Bxe2 11.fxg7!? (11.Rxe2!? Qxf6 Stockfish thinks White is slightly better here, though the edge is a lot smaller than what White typically gets in this structure since Black has already succeeded in trading a couple pieces.) 11...Bxd1 12.gxf8Q+ Qxf8 13.Rxd1. For whatever reason, I really had to convince myself that this position was alright for Black. It felt a bit scary to give up my dark-squared bishop and face a possible attack from moves like Nd5 and a future Bb2. Stockfish says it's -1, which is exactly what the material balance is. 13...f5 I was planning this move. 14.exf5 Qxf5? Looking at the position now it's more obvious to me that Black is getting good play on the weakened light squares with moves like ...Nb4/c5 and of course ...Re8.

10...dxe5 11.Be3

He played this move quite quickly, and I realized that I probably could've gotten here with either 9...dxe5 or 9...Bxf3, as playing this kind of position was probably his plan all along. So, I felt mildly annoyed at having spent a bunch of time calculating back on move nine! But I suppose it was important. We've reached a standard King's Indian exchange structure. As is typical, Black's pieces currently don't look too active, and White will be able to develop a slight initiative with moves like Qb3 and Rad1. But in

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Mother's Day Scholastic

CHESS TOURNAMENT

MOTHER'S DAY SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026

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 – 10am

Rd. 2 – 11:15am

Rd. 3 – 12:30pm

Rd. 4 – 1:45pm

Rd. 5 – 3pm

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

\$55 by 5/3, \$65 after.
Room for 60 players.

Awards

Section Prizes: Amazon e-gift
cards awarded in each
section:

1st – 4th: \$75-65-55-45.

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

Rating

Dual NWSRS and USCF rated,
with **US Chess membership
required in all sections.**
Establish or update your
national rating! Higher of
current NWSRS or May 2026
USCF 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 (Washington Chess
Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or write a
check made out to: WCF.
**100% pre-registered, no on-site entries
or payments. Entry + payment
deadline Sat May 9 @ 5:00pm.** No
registrations accepted or refunds
offered after the deadline.

Questions?

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

the long run Black's structure is healthier since I have an outpost on d4. I'm also happy to have achieved ...Bg4xf3 as this leaves me with three minor pieces that can access d4 to White's two. White needs to be very careful about entering any endgame where the light-squared bishop remains stuck inside of the pawn structure, especially if Black succeeds in getting any minor piece to d4. The next several moves are critical. Black needs to figure out how to defend while maintaining a harmonious position.

11...c6

There aren't really any other moves to consider, if I start with something like ...Qe7 then Nd5 is awkward.

12.Qb3

White attacks b7. Here I spent 20 minutes and was happy with the solution I found. Black needs to defend b7 and also be able to start rerouting the offside a6-knight, which would clearly like to go to e6 to eye the d4-outpost. To achieve this, Black will have to play one weird move! There's simply no way to do it with normal, intuitive, forward moves.

12...Qe7

12...Qa5? I really wanted this move to work as it seems like the most active option in the spirit of the King's Indian. But it just doesn't! 13.Qxb7 Nb4 I am threatening ...Nc2 and also maybe to draw with some kind of perpetual attack on White's queen. (13...Rfb8 14.Qxc6 Nb4 15.Qa4! Qxa4 16.Nxa4 Nc2+- I win an exchange but White has won two pawns and has an easy plan to start pushing forwards on the queenside. White is just winning.) 14.a3 I was happy to spot this move during the game which I thought just definitively refuted my idea and allowed me to mentally move on! 14...Nc2 15.b4 Qd8 Now White can play either rook to d1, saving the material. I also noticed that White can play Qxc6, just giving an exchange but getting a lot of space and activity on the queenside in return. So, this idea seemed like a dead end. Though now when I analyze the position with a more powerful cloud engine it actually thinks Black is OK here! Though I still think practically it was correct to avoid all of this. 12...Qc7 seemed a bit weird, but Black does have the idea of playing ...Nd7 followed by ...Nac5-e6. It just didn't seem to work though: 13.Rad1 Nd7 (13...Rfd8?! It was important to see that most versions of this

move blunder a pawn: 14.Rxd8+ Rxd8 15.Bxa7) 14.Qa3!± Black's pieces look quite clumsy. 12...b6 doesn't really help: 13.Qa4± I have to play a clumsy move like ...Qc8 anyway.

13.Rad1



Position after 13.Rad1

13...Rfb8!

This is the point of ...Qe7. I was very happy to find this somewhat bizarre-looking move which just fixes all of Black's problems. I overprotect b7 to free up my queen, but the main point is that now I can play ...Nc5 and not fear Qa3 because I am able to play the typical King's Indian move ...Bf8! breaking the pin and activating my dark-squared bishop. 13...Rfd8? once again loses a pawn: 14.Rxd8+ Rxd8 15.Bxa7±; 13...Nc5? walks into a pin: 14.Qa3 b6 (14...Nfd7?? 15.Rxd7+-) 15.Na4 Nfd7 16.Bg4± Things are starting to go wrong for Black. 13...Rfc8 The engine very mildly prefers this move but it's inhuman. If I'm going to move the rook somewhere weird, I might as well just defend my b7-pawn to avoid having to calculate Qxb7 on every turn. Stockfish also likes 13...h5!? which I find interesting, highlighting that White isn't actually threatening anything and doesn't really have an obvious way to make progress on the queenside or on the d-file. One follow-up idea is ...Kh7 and ...Bh6.

14.Rd2 Nc5

14...Nc7!? I guess this move keeps more pieces on the board and more life in the position, to be honest, I didn't even consider it.

15.Bxc5

I was surprised he played this. It feels like this move admits that White has nothing. Which might be true but also doesn't seem like a thing Nick would do! 15.Qa3 Bf8 is the point when I can probably continue with ...Ne6 next. I am somewhat

surprised he didn't play 15.Qc2. To be honest, I hadn't considered this position much, I just assumed I must be OK with my knight getting to e6, which Stockfish confirms is true. But perhaps here there's more room for him to try to outplay me than in the game continuation. 15...Ne6 16.Red1 b6= preparing ...Rd8 without hanging the a7-pawn seems logical (16...h5!/? Stockfish move, of course! 16...Qf8!/? preparing ...Bh6 to weaken White's control of d4.)

15...Qxc5 16.Red1

Over the last few moves, I have made a few small positional gains. I have gotten rid of my out of play a6-knight and traded it for White's bishop pair, which has gotten me closer to isolating White's bad f3-bishop. Here I wasn't exactly sure what to do and of course had already spent too much of my precious time, so I figured I should just try to trade off White's active rooks. As far as I could tell the order of moves made almost no difference in this position.

16...Bf8

Hinting at ...Qb4 and preparing ...Be7 to support ...Rd8.

17.a3 Qb6 18.Qc2 Rd8

The position is still objectively equal, as long as White finds the correct plan, which of course Nick does.

19.Na4! Qc7 20.c5!

Improving the relationship between White's minor pieces and pawn structure. Once White plays b4, the f3-bishop can try to become more active on the a2-g8 diagonal. c5 also creates an outpost for White on d6. This is a really essential plan for White in the exchange KID structure and often the only way white is able to maintain an equal position.

20...Rxd2

Trying to play quickly, again I really couldn't tell if anything mattered, I can probably go ...Be7 first or even start undermining White's queenside pawns, I thought it was all just equal.

21.Qxd2 Be7

21...b5!? I did not consider this move that immediately forces cxb6 when Black must be at least equal.

22.b4 Rd8 23.Qc2

Here I spent a decent chunk of my remaining time as it is important for me to ensure I can deal with White's idea

2025 Washington Class Puzzles Solutions

(Solutions to the puzzles found in the March 2026 issue, page 35.)

Q1) 1.Bb5#

Q2) 1.Rxc6+! bxc6 2.Ba6#

Q3) 1.Rh8+! Kxh8 2.Rh6+ Kg8 3.Rh8#

Q4) 1...f5 2.Qxb7 Rfb8

Q5) 1.Qg4+! Kh7 2.Ne4

Q6) 1...Ra1+ 2.Kg2 Rg1+!

Q7) 1.f5! Nxf5 (1...Nc8 2.Kd5) 2.h7 Nd6+ 3.Kd5 Nf7 4.Kc6!

Q8) 1.Bf4! Nh5 (1...cxb2 2.Rb1!) 2.Nc7+

Q9) 1.c5! Rf7 2.Ba3 bxc5 3.bxc5

Q10) 1...Bh6! 2.Bxh6 (2.Bxc5 dxc5) 2...Qh4+

Q11) 1.Re8+ Kh7 2.Re7 Rf6 (2...b3 3.Rxf7) 3.Rf3 (3.Re5 slightly inferior, but probably okay to draw)

Q12) 1.Be7! Bxe7 2.d6+ (2.Rexe7 also okay, but significantly inferior; anything else is equal or worse)

Q13) 1.e4! (1.Nf2 or 1.Rae1 also follow the idea and are slightly inferior; must be followed by 2.e4)

1...Rhe8 2.Rae1 (2.Nf2 is again slightly inferior)

Q14) 1...h4! 2.Nh5+!? Nxh5 3.Qg5+ Kh7 4.Qxh5 Raf8!

Q15) 1.Na5! Nxa5 2.Rfc1 (2.Rac1) Nc6 3.Bf4!

Q16) 1...Nf7! (not 1...Bd4? 2.Qe8!) 2.Qf6 Ne5! 3.Qxe5 Rxc6+ 4.Kd7 Rc5!



SEATTLE UNIVERSITY CHESS CLUB **CHESS CLASSIC**

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY- 901 12TH AVENUE, SEATTLE, WA 98122

Format: An Open Swiss chess tournament in three sections:

- **Championship:** A 4-round, G/50; +10 USCF rated Swiss open to players rated 1600+ USCF. Rounds: 9am, 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5pm. Entry Fee: \$55. \$35 play-up fee if rated 1400-1599 USCF. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs.
- **Premier U1600:** A 4-round, G/50; +10 USCF rated Swiss open to players rated U1600 USCF. Rounds: 9am, 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5pm. Entry Fee: \$55.
- **Casual (18+):** A 5-round, G/25; +5 unrated Swiss open to players from unrated to 1000 USCF. Rounds: 9am, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 2pm, 3:30pm. Entry Fee: \$25. Free entry for Seattle University students.
- **Registration:** nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

of Nb2–c4, creating pressure against e5 and possibly occupying the d6-outpost. I think a stronger player would see the solution to these problems way faster than I since they would have more knowledge of the typical middlegame maneuvers in a position like this one.

23...Rxd1+ 24.Qxd1



Position after 24.Qxd1

24...h5!

I thought this was an important move to prevent White from activating the bishop with Bg4. For instance, if I had instead played 24...Qd7?, White would play 25.Qxd7 Nxd7 26.Bg4 when the idea of Bc8 next will probably cost me the game.

25.Nc3

Prophylaxis against my knight maneuvers. Against 25.Nb2, I was planning a simplifying move, though in reality I think Nick may have avoided this because he saw a more ambitious plan for Black. 25...Nh7!? Really interesting idea that I didn't consider until after the game. I think this may be why Nick didn't play Nb2. Black wants ...Ng5–e6–d4, finally claiming the d4-outpost. White is not quite in time to stop it. (25...b6 This was my planned move which is just very equal. 26.cxb6 axb6=) 26.Nc4 (26.Be2 Ng5 The best route for the knight because it attacks e4, meaning that White does not have time to get in Bc4 to capture the knight when it lands on e6. Stockfish says 0.00 but I think from a human perspective it looks like something has gone mildly wrong for White.) 26...Ng5 27.Qa1 Bf6 28.Nd6 Ne6 Another scenario where it looks like White has messed up. Although White's knight has temporarily made it to the outpost, Black is ready to play ...Nd4 and then ...Be7 to boot the knight out. As always, the evaluation of the position depends on some very specific details, here Stockfish again says 0.00. I found the following engine sequence extremely instructive: 29.Be2 stopping



Championship Section round one games front to back: Nick Raptis vs Corey Russell, Roger Tabet vs Carl Haessler, Austin Tang vs Matt Zavorotnik, Jason Cigan vs Wilson Gibbins. Photo credit: Norm May.

...Nd4 because of Bc4. 29...b5 stopping Bc4! 30.Bd1 Hoping for the same idea on b3. 30...Nd4 stopping Bb3, now Black is ready for ...Be7 winning material. 31.Qa2! Stopping ...Be7 which would now hang f7 and preparing Bb3 which will force Black to play ...Nxb3. Stockfish shows many paths to equality: 31...Bg7 rerouting to attack the knight from f8, without interfering with the queen's defense of f7. 32.Bb3 Nxb3, only move to defend f7. 33.Qxb3 Bf8 34.Qd3, only move to defend the knight. 34...Qd8= At the end of all that, both sides appear a bit stuck. White's knight looks nice but does not threaten anything. It's also pinned to White's queen. Then again Black

probably shouldn't take it and give White a passed pawn after cxd6. So, Stockfish shuffles around and makes a variety of draws.

25...a5

Again, being a bit low on time, I am just trying to simplify the position. I still thought everything was very equal. Now 25...Nh7 is too slow to do anything: 26.Be2 Ng5 27.Bc4 White is ready to take the knight before it can get to d4.

26.Be2

Objectively not bad, but maybe not recognizing the potential danger. 26.Na4 axb4 (26...Nh7!? Once again, I can consider this.) 27.axb4 Nd7 It's very

Detective Cookie's

CH^ESS CLASSIC

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

RAINIER BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER

8825 RAINIER AVE S, SEATTLE, WA 98118



Seattle
Parks & Recreation



Format

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

K-1 U700

2-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U1000

4-12 Open

Schedule

Arrival: 8-8:45am

Rd. 1 - 9am

Rd. 2 - 10:30am

Rd. 3 - 11:45am

Lunch

Rd. 4 - 1:15pm

Rd. 5 - 2:30pm

Awards ~ 4pm

Eligibility

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

Entry Fee

\$45. Free for Detective Cookie's Chess Club students. Scholarships available upon request. Max of 200 players; please register early.

Awards

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

Rating

NWSRS rated. Open sections also USCF rated. Higher of current NWSRS or May USCF rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

Registration

Register online at nwchess.com/onlineregistration

Pay by Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF.

100% preregistered, no on-site entries or payments. **Registration + payment deadline Sat. May 16 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Clocks

Chess clocks will be used from the start in the Open sections. Clocks not required for the K-1 U700, 2-3 U800, and 4-12 U1000 sections, until a judge places one into unfinished games set for G/10;+5 sec increment after 35 minutes of play.

Questions?

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



Challengers Section round one games front-back, Ethan Morehouse vs Robert Hecht, Karthik Bimod vs Mike Pendergast, Santiago Fernando Tenesaca Argudo vs Hayul Lim, Yogi Saputra vs William Nobles. Photo credit: Norm May.

equal as Black can play ...b6 or ...b5 next.

26...axb4 27.axb4 b6

Now suddenly the position becomes practically difficult for White. Nick found the correct idea that Stockfish plays, but unfortunately an inferior version.

28.Bc4?!

28.cxb6 just loses a pawn: 28...Qxb6 29.b5 cxb5 30.Bxb5. Now there are multiple ways to win a pawn, strongest according to Stockfish is 30...Bc5 31.Qe2 Ng4 32.Nd1 Bxf2+ 33.Nxf2 Nxf2 34.Qxf2 Qxb5+; 28.g3! This bizarre move is Stockfish's recommendation. Basically it's just fixing White's back-rank issues and will then play a slightly faster version of the idea Nick played in the game. 28...bxc5 29.b5! cxb5 30.Bxb5 White is ready to go Bc4 and then Nd5,

supporting the loose minor pieces with Qd3 if necessary. Critically, setting up the idea in this way takes only three moves (Bb5, Bc4, Nd5), compared to the four moves required in the game (Nxb5, Nc3, Bc4, Nd5)! Once White gets Nd5 in it's clear that the position should be a draw; Black's extra pawn is permanently blocked, and Black actually must be careful about potential pressure on the f7-pawn.

28...bxc5 29.b5 cxb5 30.Nxb5 Qa5!

White isn't quite in time to reach the desired setup.

31.f3?!

31.Qd3? Qe1+ 32.Qf1 Qxe4+; 31.h3! Stockfish still holds on with this move since 31...Nxe4? runs into 32.Qb1!! when black is still improbably equal after the

forced move 32...Ng5 allowing 33.Qxg6+ Kf8=

31...Qb4



Position after 31...Qb4

31...h4!♣ Stronger according to Stockfish.

32.Qb3??

An uncharacteristic blunder. 32.Qc1 I was anticipating this move when I was planning ...h4 beginning to soften White's king position, though even better is 32...Nd7! planning ...Nb6 to break the blockade, though to see that this is good requires you to see the line 33.Nc7 Nb6 34.Nd5 Nxd5 35.Bxd5 Bg5!± when the bishop activates a different way; 32.Qd3♣, still holding.

32...Qe1+ 33.Bf1 c4!

Very thematic. Breaking the blockade and activating the dark-squared bishop wins on the spot. White resigned. If anyone actually read this far, I'll let you figure out why for yourself. As I was packing up Carl walked by, looked at the position for a moment and said "oh you guys agreed to a draw here?"

0-1

Karthik Bimod (1972) – Yogi Saputra (2001) [E42]
Oregon Closed - Challengers Section (R3), February 14, 2026
[Wilson Gibbins]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3

The Rubinstein variation of the Nimzo-Indian—a mature opening choice from a young player.

4...c5 5.Nge2

By developing his knight to e2, White avoids the doubled pawns that often occur in the Huebner variation of the Nimzo-Indian. For an example of how it might turn out badly for White, check out game five from the 1972 Fischer-Spassky

match. 5.Bd3 Nc6 6.Nf3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 d6 8.e4 e5 9.d5 Ne7 10.Nh4 h6 11.f4 Ng6 12.Nxg6 fxg6 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.Be3 b6 15.0-0 0-0 16.a4 a5 17.Rb1 Bd7 18.Rb2 Rb8 19.Rbf2 Qe7 20.Bc2 g5 21.Bd2 Qe8 22.Be1 Qg6 23.Qd3 Nh5 24.Rxf8+ Rxf8 25.Rxf8+ Kxf8 26.Bd1 Nf4 27.Qc2? Bxa4!0-1 Spassky,B (2660)-Fischer,R (2785) World-ch27 Fischer-Spassky +7-3=11 Reykjavik 1972 (5).

5...d5 6.cxd5

6.a3 is the main line, but Karthik's move is natural too.

6...exd5 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Nxc3

And after these normal moves we are in a roughly equal position that surprisingly appears only nine times in my database. Chess isn't played out yet.

8...c4?!

This gets Black into trouble. Since White has the bishop pair it seems logical to keep the game closed and create the possibility of a pawn roller on the queenside with b7-b5 and a7-a5. But it doesn't work out that way. 8...cxd4 9.exd4

9.Bd2

9.b3! b5?! (9...cxb3 10.Qxb3 is similar to the game continuation and better for White.) 10.bxc4 (10.Nxb5? Qa5+) 10...bxc4 11.Bxc4! and Black can't recapture, as 11...dxc4? 12.Qf3! recovers White's material investment with interest.

9...Nc6

9...a6! gives Black the chance to get his pawns rolling on the queenside. 10.b3 (10.e4!? dxe4 11.Bg5 h6! (11...b5?! 12.a4 Bb7 13.axb5 axb5 14.Nxb5? Qa5+) 10...bxc4 11.Bxc4! and Black can't recapture, as 11...dxc4? 12.Qf3! recovers White's material investment with interest.) 10...b5 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.Bxc4? dxc4 13.Qf3 Ra7 The move 9...a6 gave Black's rook a place to hide.

10.b3! cxb3 11.Qxb3

White is a little better here. His bishops are not yet active, but Black must be careful not to open the position. The isolated pawn on d5 is easily defended for the moment, but Black must always keep a piece or two committed to it. White continues to make minor threats, Black occasionally has to weaken his position a little in response, and the bishops eventually stretch the defense to the limit.

11...0-0 12.Bd3 Na5 13.Qb4 Bg4 14.f3 Be6 15.0-0 Rc8 16.Rfc1 b6 17.Nb5 Qd7 18.Rab1 Rfd8 19.Rxc8 Rxc8 20.Qd6

Qxd6 21.Nxd6 Rd8 22.Nb5 Nc6 23.Rc1 Bd7 24.Be1 Re8 25.Kf2 h6 26.Nd6 Re6 27.Nf5 h5 28.Ng3 g6 29.Ne2 Kf8 30.Nf4 Re8 31.Bb5 Rc8 32.Kf1 g5 33.Nd3 Ne7 34.Rxc8+ Nxc8 35.Bb4+ Ke8 36.Ba6 Bf5 37.Ne5 Bd7 38.Kf2 h4 39.Ke2 Nh5 40.Kd2 f6 41.Nxd7 Kxd7 42.Bb7 a5 43.Bf8 Ne7 44.Bxe7 Kxe7 45.Bxd5 Kd6 46.Bb3 Ng7 47.Kd3 Nf5 48.e4 Ne7 49.g3 b5 50.gxh4 gxh4 51.f4 f5 52.exf5 Nxf5 53.Ke4 Ng7 54.f5 Nh5 55.Kf3 a4 56.Ba2 Nf6



Position after 56...Nf6

57.Ke2?

White has played well in this ending and has kept Black under pressure. But this minor slip lets Black back into the game. 57.Kf4+-

57...h3!

Black seizes his chance for a draw.

58.Ke3 Ng4+ 59.Kf4 Nxb2 60.Kg3 Nf1+ 61.Kxh3 Ne3?

Perhaps Black has winning chances? If the black king can cope with White's central passed pawns, then Black's distant passed pawns will be hard to stop.

Only one move draws 61...Nd2! 62.f6 Ne4 63.f7 Ke7=

62.f6!

All other moves lose.

62...Nc2 63.d5! Nxa3

Black's queenside majority could win if he had the time, but White strikes first.

64.f7 Ke7 65.d6+ Kf8 66.d7

1-0

Matt Zavortink (2285) – Corey Russell (2200) [A49]

Oregon Closed - Championship Section (R4), February 15, 2026
[Matt Zavortink]

Another lucky, mercifully easy game that

I won as a direct result of my opening preparation.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.b3!?

I remember thinking this move looked ridiculous the first time I saw it, but it makes it surprisingly tough for Black to play typical King's Indian or Grünfeld moves on autopilot.

3...Bg7 4.Bb2 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.d4

I used to really enjoy playing this position as White, but I eventually became disillusioned with the number of weird moves Black can play here that are OK. For instance, ...b6, ...b5, and ...a5 are all close to equal according to Stockfish! This is an issue with a lot of flank openings. But I chose this line for this game because I was suspicious that my opponent was going to do something very old fashioned and very bad!

6...e5?!

This move was recommended in the ancient book *The Unconventional King's Indian* by Watson. But modern engines have not been kind to it. 6...Nbd7 If Black wants to play this ...e5 idea they should at least play this move first since White has nothing better than castling kingside: 7.0-0 e5 (7...Re8!) 8.dxe5 Ng4 9.Qd2 Ngxe5 10.Nxe5 Nxe5 11.c4 White has reached a nice version of the typical Budapest Gambit pawn structure (maybe there's a more appropriate name for it?) and should have a solid edge with ideas of Nc3-d5 or e4 and f4. But I think some King's Indian players could be happy shuffling around and defending this position, despite Stockfish's grim assessment!

7.dxe5 Ng4 8.Nc3!

A weird option that is only available to White in this exact version of the ...e5 idea.

8...Nxe5 9.Nxe5 Bxe5

9...dxe5 Usually engines prefer to play this structure as Black, though this version is quite bad: 10.Qxd8 Rxd8 11.Nd5 Rd7 12.0-0-0 Black is in a strange bind.

10.Qd2 a5 11.0-0-0

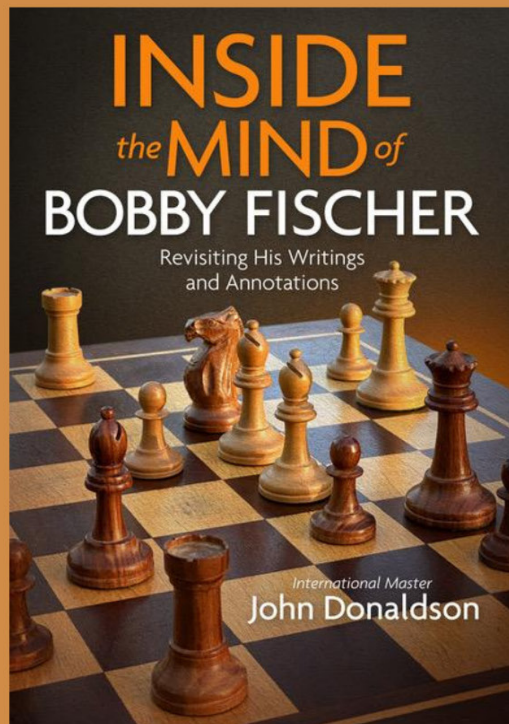
This is White's idea. We want to launch an attack with h4-h5 next and probably

Oregon Closed story continues on page 38.

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Nd5 to trade the dark-squared bishops.

11...Na6

Now I was out of my preparation. Actually, I was annoyed at myself because I did remember that ...a5 and ...Na6 were the moves Stockfish wanted to play for Black! Though I didn't look at them because they had almost never been played in the database!

12.h4

What else?

12...Nb4

I thought this was a bit optimistic. Now I was amused, because in all of the games I had quickly perused in this line, I kept seeing grandmasters play Kb1 when I didn't understand why they weren't just blasting ahead with h5. Often Stockfish agreed with me that White should just go h5. But in this case Black is threatening to take on c3 and take on a2, so I felt forced to play the GM-approved Kb1 after all!

13.Kb1

13.h5 Actually this is still playable! 13...Bxc3 14.Bxc3 Nxa2+ 15.Kb1 Nxc3+ 16.Qxc3 White's attack looks pretty dangerous! 13.a3 Bxc3 14.Bxc3 Na2+ 15.Kb1 Nxc3+ 16.Qxc3 h5. White should be a bit better here, but why not keep more pieces on the board? Especially since Black's knight on b4 is not stable and the bishop on e5 can be harassed by White's kingside pawn storm.

13...Bf5

I did not understand this move. Surely it improves my position to play e4?

14.e4 Bg4 15.f3 Be6

Now I did my first long think of the game. I considered h5 immediately, f4 first, and a3 first.

16.f4

16.h5 g5 I didn't really like this. Ok, in a way I was definitely overthinking things, since basic chess logic would suggest that if Black has to play ...g5 their position must be extremely bad. But it wasn't clear to me what my plan is after 17.f4 Bf6 Black is getting entrenched on the kingside dark squares and I didn't see an easy way to make progress. A really cool way suggested by Stockfish is: 18.e5 dxe5 19.Ne4! Qxd2 20.Nxf6+ Kg7 21.Rxd2 Kxf6 22.Bxe5+ Ke7 23.fxg5. White has simply won a pawn with a completely dominating position.

16...Bg7

16...Bf6 I guess I wasn't sure what I was going to do after this since h5 would transpose to the previous line, though there I've maintained some other options as well.

17.a3

It seemed prudent to kick away Black's knight and reduce Black's attacking chances. 17.h5 a4 shouldn't really work, but I thought it was giving Black more play than they deserve: 18.Nxa4 Nxa2 I didn't think there was a reason to let things get this messy, though of course now when I look at this position for a moment I find some winning ideas very similar to what occur later in the game.

17...Nc6 18.h5 Nd4

I didn't understand this move at first. I was probably planning Nd5 soon anyway, and now it also creates a discovered attack against Black's knight? But then I realized Black is intending to meet Nd5 with ...c5, the idea being that they have shielded their bishop on g7, keeping their king (somewhat) safe.

19.hxg6 hxg6

Kind of shocking to me, I figured of course he was going to take with the f-pawn to keep the h-file closed. Now I looked at the line 20.Ne2 Nxe2 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 22.Qxe2, when White is probably winning, but didn't see an immediate knockout. But visualizing this line and seeing Black's king on g7 caused me to immediately see the strongest idea:

20.f5!

Throwing in this move first greatly improves the above variation.

20...gxf5 21.Ne2 c5

Black pitches a pawn to keep things closed. 21...Nxe2 22.Bxg7 Kxg7 The difference here, compared to the previous variation, is that with the inclusion of f5 and ...gxf5 I can just mate Black! 23.Qh6+ Kg8 24.Qh7#

22.Nxd4 cxd4 23.Bxd4 f6 24.exf5 Bf7

Now I thought for a couple minutes, I have won a pawn and could play a move like Bb2 to win d6, but I found the most precise and aggressive continuation: 24...Bxf5 25.Bd5+-

25.Rh4 a4 26.Rg4!

Switching the attack from the h-file to the g-file.

26...Bh5 27.Rxg7+ Kxg7 28.Qg5+

1-0

Nick Raptis (2331) –

Austin Tang (2197) [A00]

Oregon Closed - Championship Section (R5), February 15, 2026

[Wilson Gibbins]

Going into round five, Austin and Matt Zavortink are tied for first at 3–1, with Nick and Jason Cigan a half point behind at 2.5–1.5. Nick needs a win.

1.g3 e5 2.Bg2 d5 3.d3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Bd6 5.0-0 0-0 6.Nc3 Re8 7.e4 d4 8.Ne2 c5 9.Nd2 Ne6

Engines prefer Black in this position—Black has more space. Engines are confident in their ability to maneuver with the extra space and defend against tactics. Nick doesn't care—he has a reversed King's Indian position and attacking chances on the kingside.

10.h3 Rb8 11.f4 b5

Black has a winning position on the queenside, if he can get there before White crashes through on the kingside.

12.f5 Na5

This seems logical, supporting the c5–c4 pawn break. Stockfish says it is too slow. 12...a5 13.g4 h6!? I wouldn't want to create a hook for White to open lines on the kingside, but Stockfish says it is a good idea to hold up the g-pawn's advance, sometimes to buy time for a king evacuation. (13...c4 14.Nf3 (14.dxc4? bxc4 15.Nxc4 Bc5 16.Kh2 Ba6?) 14...h6 15.Kh1 Kf8.) 14.Nf3 Kf8.; 12...c4 13.g4

13.g4!±

Nick is in his element. Austin won't blunder, but Nick will steadily improve his attacking position on the kingside. Note to self—avoid King's Indian positions against Nick.

13...c4 14.Nf3 Nd7 15.Ng3 b4 16.b3 cxd3 17.cxd3 Nc6 18.g5 g6 19.h4 a5 20.h5 Kg7 21.Nh4 Nf8 22.Qf3 Rb7

One of the advantages of Black's space advantage is that this rook on the queenside can help defend his kingside. It isn't enough—Nick's attacking potential is too great.

23.Bh3 Kg8 24.Bg4 Rc7 25.Bd2 Na7 26.Rac1 Nb5 27.Rxc7 Qxc7 28.hxg6 hxg6 29.Bh5



L-R: Yogi Saputra vs. Hayul Lim.
Photo credit: Norm May.

White has other moves to retain his overwhelming advantage, but this is the flashiest.

29...gxh5

29...Bc5 30.fxg6 fxg6 31.Nxg6

30.Nxh5 Nd7 31.Nf6+ Kf8

31...Nxf6 32.gxf6 Rd8 tries to make a path for his king to flee, but 33.Bh6 keeps Black's king in the checkmate zone.

32.Qh5 Ke7 33.Nd5+

1-0

**Carl Haessler (2200) –
Matt Zavortink (2285) [C00]**

Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R5), February 15, 2026
[Matt Zavortink]

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.Ng3

I've had something weird prepared here for a while, but this was my first chance to play it in an over the board game!

4...Nc6 5.g3?!?

5.c3! is generally considered White's best move as really knowledgeable King's Indian Attack players want to avoid the line mentioned below (not the stupid line I played!) If Black tries to play in the same style, White will simply develop the bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal: 5...dxe4 (5...e5!/? reaching some kind of Reversed Philidor?; 5...a5!/? The main move, waiting to play ...dxe4 until White

commits to g3. Now after 6.e5 Nd7 7.d4 we've reached a Guimard Variation where White has wasted a turn, but Black has gained the move ...a5, which is not bad but certainly not the most productive thing either!) 6.dxe4 e5 7.Bb5±; 5.e5 Nd7 6.d4 We've reached a Guimard variation where black has an extra tempo, which should be enough to make it = 6...f6.

5...dxe4 6.dxe4 b6!?

6...e5 is generally Black's idea in this line, arguing that White's bishop on g2 will be no better than king's bishop on c5. I won from this position in a past state championship against Ryan Richardson.

7.Bg2

Falling for it.

7...Ba6

Now it's a bit awkward for White.

8.Bf1

Blitzed out instantly. I assume he thought he could play Kxf1. 8.c4 Qd3 I've had this a lot online, the database tells me I have scored 2/3 from this position in Titled Tuesday!

8...Bxf1

8...Bb7!?

9.Rxf1

Now I did my normal long think. It's clear Black has won the opening battle, but it wasn't obvious to me how I'm supposed to develop. I figured castling queenside

made sense to quickly get a rook on the d-file, Stockfish mildly disagrees. 9.Kxf1? Nxe4

9...Qd7=

I thought about 9...Qe7 hoping for some awkward ...Qb4 stuff but didn't really believe it. 9...Be7!. The engine wants to play the most normal moves possible, ...Be7 and ...0-0. Shocking! 10.Qe2 0-0 This is quite awkward for White and Stockfish suggests bizarre moves like Rg1, Rh1, and a3. 11.b3 (11.c3 Nd7! maneuvering towards the weak d3 square.) 11...Nd4!±

10.Qe2 0-0-0 11.c3

Here I realized I may have been overestimating my edge a bit. I was planning to allow ...e5, but realized ...Ng4 Qe4 is awkward. So, I thought for 20 minutes and during this time Carl fell asleep!

11...e5

11...Ng4 going to e5 and then d3. I wanted this to win but it just doesn't. 12.Nc4 b5?! Trying too hard. (12...f5!/?= Interesting engine move I didn't think about at all!) 13.h3/; 11...g6 I wanted to prepare ...Bh6 since he is probably going to go b3/Bb2/0-0-0, but I got spooked by e5 again: 12.e5 Nd5 13.Ne4 Stockfish still says it's equal after ...h6, but then what was the point of ...g6?

12.b3?!?

Carl took ten minutes to play this move but it's because he was asleep for eight minutes and then spent another minute trying to figure out what my last move had been. Stockfish really prefers b4 with an equal position since that improves White's chances in the ...Qd3 variation below.

12...g6?!±

The second strongest move. 12...Qd3! This obvious move is the best move, but I miscalculated one line. 13.Qxd3 (13.Bb2? Qc2-+ Stopping him from castling.) 13...Rxd3 14.Ng5 This is the move I completely miscalculated. I figured the idea of getting my rook to d3 isn't very good if I just have to come back to d7 or play the backwards ...Nd8 after which White can go Bb2 and drive my rook back. (14.Bb2 Nxe4 cleanly wins a pawn. 15.Nxe4 (15.Ke2 Nxd2) 15...Rxf3) 14...Rxc3! 15.Nxf7 Rg8. Black is simply completely winning here as I've gained access to d4 for my knight and b4 for my

bishop! Stockfish says -3!

**13.Bb2 Bh6 14.0-0-0 Qd3 15.Qxd3!
Rxd3 16.Kc2! Rhd8 17.Bc1!**

Carl finds a string of good defensive moves, and now I wasn't sure if I really had an advantage.

17...b5!

Hoping to go ...b4 and gain control of the d4-square.

18.a3

It's only move 18, but in typical style my time was already getting lower than it should. I thought perhaps ...a5 intending to meet b4 with ...a4 could be best, fixing White's pawns on the dark-squares, and Stockfish agrees. But I couldn't really figure any of it out and it seemed a bit risky to give him a later c4-break, so I decided to just pass.

18...a6 19.Ne1 R3d6 20.f3=

White has fixed most of his problems.

20...Na5

I played this move quickly, threatening some cheap tactics on d2/b3.

21.Ng2!

He played this quickly as well, I guess appreciating that my tactic doesn't work!

21...Rd3

21...Bxd2 appears to win a pawn, but it does not: 22.Rxd2 Rxd2+ 23.Bxd2 Nxb3?? White's king is overloaded, but: 24.Bg5+- and both of my knights are hanging.

22.b4

I don't think White needed to rush with this move. I figured I should occupy c4 while I had the chance.

22...Bxd2 23.Rxd2 Rxd2+ 24.Bxd2 Nc4



Position after 24...Nc4

Now an interesting moment. During the game I was wondering if I was really any



Portland Amateur Championship (which ran along-side the Oregon Closed), David Murray vs. Kevin Abihai. Photo credit: Norm May.

better if White plays the calm Bc1 simply defending. My knight looks nice on c4, but I have no way to make progress on the queenside. Even if I get in both ...a5 and ...c5, maybe supported by ...Kb6, White can just sit, and trading pawns on b4 obviously doesn't help me. Instead, Carl blundered a pawn, I believe because he thought everything was working the same way as in the previous Bg5 tactic.

25.Bg5??

25.Bc1=

25...Nxa3+ 26.Kc1

26.Kb3 He was counting on this move, when again both of my knights are hanging, but he missed: 26...Nc4 27.Bxf6 Rd2!+- Threatening the knight and mate on b2 (...Nd2 is also good, but this is better).

26...Rd6 27.Ne3

27.Bxf6 I thought he would do this: 27...Rxf6 28.Ne3 Rc6 29.Kb2 Nc4+ 30.Nxc4 Rxc4 I thought I would have winning chances with so many pawns still on the board. Stockfish says ...bxc4! is even stronger, supporting ...Rd3 when I can walk my king up and break with ...c5.

27...Nd7

27...Rd3! A nice Stockfish move I didn't

consider: 28.Kb2? Rxe3 29.Bxe3 Nc4+-+

28.Kb2 Nc4+ 29.Nxc4 bxc4 30.Kc2 Rd3 31.Bc1

31.f4 I believe against this move I was planning to blunder with: 31...Re3?? (31...exf4! I'm sure I would have noticed the mistake and hopefully I would have found this!) 32.fxe5 Rxe4 33.Rxf7 Something has clearly gone wrong for me.

31...c5!-+

31...Nb6 bringing my knight to a4 looks nice but won't do much once White plays Bd2.

32.Ba3 cxb4 33.Bxb4

Now I really need to think about what I'm going to do against f4. At first, I was thinking I will always meet f4-f5 with g5 to keep things closed, so I played slowly here. But in a couple moves I got scared about letting him claim that much space and about putting my pawns on the same color as his bishop. So here something more active was called for.

33...Nb8?

33...Kb7! 34.f4 exf4! 35.Rxf4 Ne5-+ Just a much faster version of the game since my knight doesn't take the scenic route through b8. 33...f5, another good way to

go, I didn't think about 34.exf5 gxf5+ and I'm able to meet g4 with f4 or f4 with e4.

34.f4. Nc6 35.Bc5

Now I spent nine of my remaining 13 minutes, entering a mild panic in the process as nothing really made sense to me!

35...exf4?!=



Position after 35...exf4

35...Kc7 seems to improve my king but really gets in the way of my own tactics: 36.fxe5 Nxe5 37.Rf6 Nd7. This move doesn't work now because my king is on c7. 38.Rxf7+-; 35...Kd7 36.fxe5 Nxe5 37.Rf6. Very annoying, I just lose a6!; 35...h5! Inhuman engine suggestion. But it does make sense since none of the seemingly "productive" moves actually accomplish anything! 36.fxe5 Nxe5 37.Rf6 Rf3 38.Rxa6 Ng4. Objectively White should hold though this looks very tricky!

36.gxf4??

Played instantly for no reason. Bad time management (not that I'm one to talk!) Wasn't White's idea to activate the rook? 36.Rxf4 Rd7. I was planning this move, hoping to get my knight to e5. 37.Rf6 Kb7= I think Black can still try things, though it's simply 0.00 according to Stockfish. If I ever play ...Ne5, White will go Rb6+ to win my a6-pawn and get some counterplay.

36...Na5!-+

Now he thought for 20 minutes. I was happy to have some time to think and was able to appreciate that Black is just completely winning.

37.Rf2

Grimly defending. 37.f5 Nb3 38.fxg6 fxg6 39.Ba3 Rd2+ 40.Kb1 Rxb2+- Like many lines it feels a bit "unlucky" for White here that ...Nd2+ is going to

threaten so many pieces! 41.Rf8+ Kd7 42.Rf7+ Kc6 43.Rf6+ Kb5 I can run over here to avoid the checks. 44.e5 Re2 45.e6 Nc5+- I made it this far in my analysis during the game.; 37.Ra1 I think he was counting on activating his rook this way. 37...Nb3 38.Rxa6 (38.Ra4 looks tempting, but this really highlights how White's pieces are suddenly on all the wrong squares: 38...Rd2+ 39.Kb1 Rxb2 He can't take c4, and if he takes a6, I can pick up e4.) 38...Rd2+ 39.Kb1 Rxb2+- Once again very annoying for White that ...Nd2 will pick up the e4-pawn.

37...Nb3 38.Bf8 Re3 39.e5 Kd7 40.Bh6

Great cheapo attempt, my life briefly flashed before my eyes when I saw ...Ke6 f5+ and for some reason felt like it had already occurred on the board!

40...Re1 41.Kb2 Ke6 42.Ka3 Nc5!

Not letting his king do anything.

43.Rd2

43.Kb4 Nd3+

43...Nd3 44.Ra2 Rb1 45.Ka4

Now we're all working together to create a nice helpmate!

45...Nc5+

0-1

Karthik Bimod (1972) – William Nobles (1922) [E44]
Oregon Closed - Challengers Section
(R5), February 15, 2026
[Wilson Gibbins]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4

If the Rubinstein variation worked for Karthik in round three, maybe it will work in round five. Spoiler alert—it does.

4.e3 b6 5.Nge2 Bb7

Looks like a normal developing move, but Black often tries something tricky in this position. 5...Ba6 6.a3 Be7 7.Nf4 d5 8.cxd5 Bxf1 9.dxe6!; 5...c5 6.a3 Ba5!; 7.Rb1 Na6; 5...Ne4!?

6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.Nxc3 d5 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Bb5+ Nd7 10.Nxd5 exd5 11.Qg4!

After using the Rubinstein variation to grind down Yogi Saptura in round three, Karthik uses it for a direct attack against William Nobles in round five. The Nimzo-Indian rewards players who take an open-minded approach to chess.

11...Qe7 12.Bd2

12.Qxg7 0-0-0 13.Qh6 is playable too, but why defend a pawn up when you can attack?

12...0-0-0 13.Rc1± Kb8!

The best defense. Will never goes down without a fight.

14.Qf4 Rc8 15.Bb4 Qe6 16.0-0 g5 17.Qg3 h5

The pawns are looking dangerous, but...

18.Rxc7! Rxc7 19.Bd6!

19.Rc1? Ne5!∞

19...Rhc8 20.Rc1 h4 21.Bxc7+ Ka8 22.Qxg5



Position after 22.Qxg5

Black has pinned White's bishop on c7, but cannot attack it with another piece, so White can unwind and keep his two extra pawns.

22...a6 23.Bd3 f6 24.Bf5 Qd6 25.Qf4 Qe7 26.Rc3 Rg8 27.Bd6 Qg7 28.Bh3 Bc8 29.Rc7 Qg6 30.Qf5 Qf7 31.Qe6 Qxe6 32.Bxe6

1-0

Austin Tang (2197) – Corey Russell (2200) [B06]
Oregon Closed - Championship Section
(R6), February 2026
[Fritz 19 and Corey Russell]

All commentary including evaluations and variations for Fritz 19 unless denoted by—cjr, which are my comments.—cjr

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 b6 4.Be3 Bb7 5.Qd2 e6

5...d6

6.h4± h5 7.Bg5 Ne7 8.0-0-0

White is better.

8...d6

8...d5±

9.f3

Better is 9.d5+-

9...Nd7 10.g4 hxg4 11.fxg4 Nf6 12.Qf4 Nh7 13.Nf3

During the game I was wondering why Austin just didn't do 13 Bh6 straight away, but in post-mortem he pointed out that 13.Bh6 Bxd4! wins me a pawn (14. Rxd4 e5 forks major pieces)—cjr

13...f6

13...Qd7±

14.Bh6+- Bxh6 15.Qxh6

Threatens to win with d5.

15...Qd7 16.Bb5



Position after 16.Bb5

Pin

16...c6 17.Bd3

Aiming for h5.

17...0-0-0 18.Qe3 d5

Even though Fritz says my ...d5 move is wrong. What Fritz doesn't realize is that my opponent is a young player and probably doesn't have extensive experience with games with locked center pawns. This estimation seems spot on as Austin only started making inaccuracies once the position was closed.—cjr

18...Kb8± 19.g5 Rdf8

19.e5 f5 20.g5

20.gxf5+- Nxf5 21.Bxf5 gxf5 22.Ne2

20...Rdg8

20...c5± is a better defense. 21.Nb5 (21. dxc5? d4-+) 21...c4

21.Ne2

Black is weak on the dark squares.

21...Nf8 22.Nf4 Qe8

22...Kb8 might work better. 23.h5 c5

23.Be2 Rg7 24.Nd2 Rgh7 25.Qf2

White is much more active. The black rooks are passive.

25...Kb8 26.Rdg1 Qc8 27.Kb1 c5 28.c3 c4 29.Rh2 b5 30.Rgh1 Qc6

30...a5

31.h5±

And now hxg6 would win.

31...Bc8

31...Qc7± 32.hxg6 Nexg6

32.hxg6+- Rxh2 33.Rxh2 Rxh2

33...Rg8 34.Rh6 b4

34.Qxh2 Nfxg6 35.Nxg6 Nxg6 36.Qh7?

36.Qh6+- is more deadly. 36...Ne7 (36...Nf4? 37.g6+-) 37.g6

36...Nf4± 37.g6 Nxe2?

37...b4±

38.g7?

My opponent had a very confident demeanor during this move, and probably figured after queening he could force mate or trade queens in short order. The thing is nothing is stopping his g-pawn so he had time to stop my counterplay cold with Fritz's recommendation of Qe7. But young players want their extra queens...—cjr

White must play 38.Qe7+-

38...b4! =

Strongly threatening ...Qa4.

39.g8Q

39.g8R? loses. 39...bxc3 40.bxc3 Nxc3+ 41.Kc2 Nxa2+-

39...Qa4!

It's worth noting that trying to sac back with Qxc8+ doesn't work, as Black will keep moving his from b8 to b7 to prevent his e6-pawn being lost with check. Due to Black's threats White has to trade queens with Qxb4+ to keep the game going, but that leads to a much worse endgame for White.—cjr

40.Qh1

Wards off ...Qd1+

Don't blunder 40.Nb3? cxb3 41.axb3 Qxb3+-

40...bxc3 41.bxc3 Nxc3+ 42.Kb2 Nxa2

Diagram top of next column

(→ ...c3+)

43.Nxc4 Qb4+

43...Qb5+= 44.Ka1 (44.Kxa2 Qxc4+ 45.Kb2 Qe2+ 46.Kc1 Qe3+ 47.Kc2 Qe2+



Position after 42...Nxa2

48.Kc3 Qe3+ 49.Kc2 Qe2+ 50.Kc1 Qe3+ 51.Kc2=) 44...Qxc4

44.Kxa2

44.Ka1± Qxc4 45.Qb1+ Nb4 46.Qg5

44...Qxc4+

The position is equal.

45.Kb2 Qe2+

So, White's only hope of connecting his king with his queens (note the queen on h1 is the worst possible square for a queen) is to try run to the king-side. But Black will keep checking laterally on the second and third ranks, which means only way is try to use the first rank. However that would lose as a skewer would pick up the white queen on h1 then Black would be winning!—cjr

46.Kc3 Qe3+! 47.Kc2 Qe2+ 48.Kc3 Qe3+!

Black defended with fortune. Weighted Error Value: White=0.39/Black=0.30

½-½

Corey Russell (2200) – Roger Tabet (2144) [E74]

Oregon Closed - Championship Section (R7), February 16, 2026 [Fritz 19 and Corey Russell]

All commentary, evaluations, and variations are Fritz 19 unless denoted by—cjr, which are my comments.—cjr

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5

I figured Roger had extensive experience playing against the Classical, so thought maybe if I play a side-line maybe I can catch him off-balance. I could see my opponent's face was visibly disheartened after playing this, which seemed to confirm I took him out of his comfort zone.—cjr

6...c5 7.d5 Qa5 8.Qd2 a6! 9.Bh6

This was the last round and I still hadn't garnered a win so I was out for blood. I had an interesting attacking idea behind Bh6. If Black plays 9...Bxh6 10.Qxh6 Nxe4 11.h4! Nxc3 12.Qd2, and White gets his piece back. Note that in one fell swoop both defenders by the black king are now gone, and lines are about to be opened with h5. I also saw that if Black tried to slow me down with ...h5 then Bxh5 gxh5 Qg5+ is a draw in hand, so I had little to lose.—cjr

9.f3= remains equal.

9...b5! 10.f3

10.cxb5? Bxh6 11.Qxh6 Nxe4+

10...Nbd7

10...bxc4= 11.Bxg7 Kxg7

11.g4

We have now reached a fairly typical Saemisch KID structure. My next few moves are thematic with this structure—cjr

11.cxb5 Bxh6 12.Qxh6 axb5♣; 11.Bxg7± stays ahead. 11...Kxg7 12.cxb5

11...Ne5

This was a very strong move and was a thorn in my side the whole game as it was preventing my breakthroughs on the king side.—cjr

11...Bxh6♣ 12.Qxh6 Ne5

12.h4

White is going for broke. I neither care about winning pawns nor even keeping my pawns which is why I do nothing about my c4 pawn.—cjr

12.Bxg7= Kxg7 13.cxb5

12...bxc4

Black should try 12...Bxh6♣ 13.Qxh6 bxc4 (13...Nxc4 14.Bxc4 bxc4 15.h5±)

13.h5



Position after 13.h5

13.Bxg7. Kxg7 14.h5

13...Rb8

13...Bxh6!♣ 14.Qxh6 Rb8

14.Bxg7. Kxg7 15.hxg6

15.Nh3= keeps the balance.

15...fxg6♣ 16.Qh6+

Better is 16.Nh3!♣

16...Kg8+

About here I realized the thematic breakthrough of 17.g5 Nh5 18.Rxh5 gxh5 19.g6 doesn't work as the black knight covers it. Which means I must cover b2.—cjr

17.0-0-0

17.Qd2

17...Bd7

After this move my internal alarm bells starting going off as I realized Black's plan is not ...Qb4 which is easily defended by Rd2 his plan is ...Rxb2! Direct defense seemed ineffective as he can double rooks and then make his breakthrough. Even though it seemed very dangerous, it seemed like I could run to the king-side for safety. The other thing, if I let him sacrifice, this means that even if he's technically winning, if he makes a mistake I can win with the material. So, I figured I might as well develop a piece and maybe get my own attack going, if my king can run to safety.—cjr

18.Nh3?



Position after 18.Nh3

18.Qe3 was forced.

18...Rxb2!!

Decoy

19.Kxb2

Rb1 is the strong threat.

19...Rb8+ 20.Kc2

And now Rb1 would win.

20...Ba4+ 21.Nxa4 Qxa4+ 22.Kd2 Qa5+

22...Qxa2+ 23.Ke1±

23.Ke3 Qc3+

23...Qxa2 24.Ng1 (24.Rd2? Rb2+)

24...Rb2 25.Qh3+

24.Kf2



Position after 24.Kf2

Aiming for Qe3.

24...Nexg4+ 25.fxg4+- Nxe4+ 26.Kf1 Rf8+ 27.Nf4 Rf7

Finally with my mate in one threat, my opponent has to defend and he didn't find the best defense! The best defense is the very computer like move ...Ng5! Qxg5 Qe3 with a likely continuation Rh2 Rxf4+ Qxf4 Qxf4+ Rf2 Qxe4 Bf3 and it does look like White can hold, but despite two rooks and a bishop for a queen, there's no way that can win with next to no cover for the white king.—cjr

27...Ng5 28.Kg2 (28.Qxg5 Qg3=) 28...Qe3

28.Rb1

White wastes no time in initiating his counterattack, material be damned! Anyways White has a bit of material to spare...—cjr

28...Nd2+ 29.Kg2 Nxb1 30.Rxb1

Threatening mate with Rb8+.

30...Rf8 31.Ne6 Rc8 32.Rf1

This seemed to be a tough loss for Roger to stomach (assuming this as he put his head down on his arms right after the game). He probably figured there was a win in there somewhere and well he isn't wrong in that. The other thing is the only reason he lost was my extra material but the only reason I had the material is Roger intentionally gave it to me. All the same, I appreciated Roger's generosity, as he had wins in the tourney, but this was my last chance to get one. Till next time...—cjr

1-0



WASHINGTON OPEN

Sat-Mon, May 23-25 2026

Redmond Marriott

7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

\$15,000 Prize Fund
(based on 200 paid entries)

Main Event:

Format: A 6-round Swiss across 4 sections: Elite (1800+), Premier (U1800), Rising (U1500), and Dynamos (U1200).

Time Controls:

- **3-day:** 30/90, SD/30; +30. Late default: 60 minutes.
- **2-day:** G/55; +15 (rds. 1-3), rds. 4-6 same as for 3-day.

Schedule:

- **3-day option:** Sat @ 10 AM, 6 PM; Sun @ 10 AM, 6 PM; Mon @ 10 AM, 4 PM.
- **2-day option:** Sun @ 9 AM, 11:45 AM, 2:45 PM, then join the 3-day schedule @ 6 PM (from round 4 onward).
- WCF Annual Meeting & Elections: Mon @ 3 PM.

Note: We encourage you to play in the Main Event *and* take part in some side events too (see next page). The schedule permits doing this with minimum or no half-point byes!

Entry Fee: \$150 by Sun, 04/26; \$165 by Sun, 05/10; and \$180 after 05/10 or on-site. Less \$50 for Seniors (age 50+). Playing up one section is allowed (for \$80 extra) if the player's *USCF Regular OTB rating* is within 100 points of the section's lower limit (i.e., min 1700 for Elite, min 1400 for Premier, min 1100 for Rising). Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, and USCF 2400+. Re-entry for ½ of original entry fee. Canadians may pay CAD\$ at par.

Rating: Dual rated (USCF & NWSRS), plus Elite, Premier, and Rising sections are FIDE rated too (except G/55 games). Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF and CFC ratings used for Canadian players. Other foreign ratings used for players with no USCF rating, or at TD discretion. Elite, Premier, and Rising sections are paired by USCF rating; Dynamos section is paired by NWSRS rating.

Registration, Information & Payments:

- **Before event:** Online (by Thu, 05/21 @ 5 PM) at NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ – pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation) or Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com, Tag: wa-chess), or write a check (payable to WCF; mail to: Josh Sinanan, 4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052). Info: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com, 206-769-3757
- **On-site** (cash possible too): Sat, 05/23 @ 8-9 AM for 3-day schedule, or 4:30-5 PM if entering with 1 half-point bye. Sun, 05/24 @ 8-8:30 AM for 2-day schedule, or 9-9:30 AM if entering 3-day schedule with 2 half-point byes. Late registrations may receive a half-point bye for round 1. Max 2 half-point byes available; request before the end of round 2.

Hotel Info:

Redmond Marriott, \$133-\$143/night + tax. One King / Queen / Double or two Queens, single or double occupancy. Call (425) 498-4000 to request the WA Chess Federation block, or use the [online reservation](#). Group code: CFOCFOR. Cut-off date for discounts: Fri, Apr 24, 2026.

Prizes:

- **Elite (1800+):** \$1100, \$900, \$750, \$600, \$450, \$350, \$250; U2100: \$225, \$200; U1900: \$225, \$200
- **Premier (U1800):** \$600, \$450, \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225; U1600: \$200, \$175
- **Rising (U1500):** \$450, \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225, \$200; U1300: \$175, \$150
- **Dynamos (U1200):** \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225, \$200, \$175; U1000: \$175, \$150; Unrated: \$175, \$150

Championship Seeds: Highest finishing Washington resident in the Elite and Premier section is seeded into the 2027 Washington State Championship, in the Championship and Challengers section, respectively. Ties for such a seed will be resolved by post-event playoff games.

Mixed Doubles Prizes: Best mixed gender (incl. male-female) 2-player team's combined score: 1st \$220, 2nd \$170, 3rd \$110. Average team rating must be under 2000; may play in different sections. Register (no extra fee) before round 3. May win a Mixed Doubles prize in addition to other prizes.

Special Prizes (per section):

- **Best Female Player*:** \$75. Requires min 3 eligible players.
- **Best Senior Player* (age 50+):** \$75. Requires min 3 eligible players.
- **Highest (USCF) Rating Gain*:** 1st \$60, 2nd \$30. Requires an established (non-provisional) rating. May not be combined with Biggest Upset Win.
- **Biggest Upset Win (per round):** \$30. Max one per player.
- **Fair-Play, Kindness, Spreading Joy:** \$30. Please nominate.
- **Best Dressed (per day):** \$25. Max one per player.
- **Best Annotated Game:** 1st \$75, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25. Submit one annotated game that you consider to be interesting and/or well-played. A panel of judges will select winners.

Note: * = May not be combined with equal or higher prizes.

Memberships / Procedures / Miscellaneous:

Current US Chess and WCF / OCF / ICA memberships required; other states accepted. Memberships may be paid at the time of registration. Please bring a digital clock, if available. Wheelchair accessible play area. Pairings posted near the play area and online ~20 mins before each round. If withdrawing or skipping a round, please inform the organizers at least 30 mins before the start of the round.

WASHINGTON OPEN, May 23-25 (cont.)

Fun Side Events!

(many run between rounds of the Main Event)

Washington Open Faustino Oro Scholastic

Sat, 05/23 @ 9 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

Eligibility: Open to students in grades K-12. Out-of-state players welcome!
Format: Classical and Rapid sections:

- **Classical sections:** A 4-round G/40; +5 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 Open** and **4-12 Open**. For intermediate to advanced players. Dual NWSRS and USCF rated. US Chess membership req'd. Clocks and notation req'd. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:45 AM, lunch, 12:45 PM, 2:15 PM. Awards: ~4 PM.
- **Rapid sections:** A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 U800** and **4-12 U900**. For novice to low intermediate players. Dual NWSRS and USCF rated. US Chess membership req'd. Clocks req'd. Notation req'd in 4-12 U900, but optional in K-3 U800. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:30 AM, lunch, 12 PM, 1:15 PM, 2:30 PM. Awards: ~4 PM.

Entry fee: \$55 if registered by Sat, 05/16; \$65 after. Room for 132 players.
Awards (per section):

- Overall prizes (in Amazon e-gift cards): 1st-5th: \$70 / \$65 / \$60 / \$55 / \$50.
 - Special prizes: Medals for first-timers and for biggest upset win.
 - Top performer (by TPR) in K-3 Open and 4-12 Open wins free entry into the 2-day option of 2026 Washington Open (Main Event) (see prev. page).
- Rating:** Higher of May 2026 USCF or current NWSRS ratings used for sections & pairings.

Registration: 100% pre-registered (NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/) – pay by SettleKing, Zelle, or check (see above page for details) due by **Fri, 05/22 @ 5 PM**; no on-site entries or payments. Unpaid players will be withdrawn.

Washington Open Gary Dorfner Memorial Adult Novice Swiss

Sat, 05/23 @ 11 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

A 4-Round Swiss in one section. 1 half-point bye available. For U1200 or unrated adults (18+). No memberships req'd. Unrated. TC: G/30; +5. EF: \$25. Registration: 10:30-10:50 AM. Rounds: 11 AM, 12:15, 1:30, and 2:45 PM. Prize fund: \$400/b20. 1st-3rd: \$150 / \$100 / \$60, 1st U1000 / U700 / Unr \$30.

Washington Open Fischer Chess960 Rapid

Sat, 05/23 @ 2:10 PM – 4:50 PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

A 4-Round Swiss in one section, 1 half-point bye available. Unrated. TC: G/12; +3. EF: \$20. No memberships req'd. Registration: 1:30-2 PM. Rounds: 2:10 PM, 2:50, 3:30, and 4:10 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used for pairings & prizes. Rules: A randomized new opening position explored in each round. Players have 2 minutes before clocks start to examine that opening position. Prize fund: \$300/b20. 1st \$80, 2nd \$60, 3rd \$40, 1st U2000 / U1700 / U1400 / Unrated \$30.

Washington Open Jiner Chess Workshop for Girls & Women

Sat, 05/23 @ 4:30 PM-5 PM and 6 PM-7:30 PM (before & during round 2)

A workshop led by WFM Chouchan Airapetian (chornyaa@msn.com, 206-799-6087), experienced chess coach, organizer, and promoter, former US Women's Championship contender, WCF Girls' and Women's Chess Director. Registration: 4-4:30 PM. EF: Free! Schedule:

4:30-5 PM: "How to develop & cultivate girls' and women's chess" + Q&A.

6-7:30 PM: Complimentary pizza & refreshments, and ladies' bughouse.

Washington Open Evening with IM John Donaldson

Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM – 5:45+ PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

Led by IM John Donaldson, former coach of the US Olympic Team, former WA State Champion, chess author and historian. EF: Free! Schedule:

5-5:30 PM: Presentation based on a new book about Bobby Fischer.

5:30-5:45 PM: Q&A.

5:45+ PM: Book signing.

Washington Open 4th Annual Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

Sun-Mon, 05/24-25 @ 11 AM and 4:30 PM (during rounds 3-6)

Sponsored by *Seattle Chess Club (SCC)*, with generous support from *Henry Yan*. Format: A 4-round Swiss in two sections: Botvinnik (1500+) and

Korchnoi (U1500); may be merged if small. 1 half-point bye available. USCF rated only. TC: G/120; +30. EF: \$50 online (by Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM) or \$60 on-site; less \$10 for SCC members. EF waived for unrated players who purchase memberships. Registration: Sun, 05/24 @ 10-10:30 AM (unless starting with a half-point bye). US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships req'd. May 2026 USCF rating used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Guaranteed prize fund: \$1,000.

Botvinnik: 1st \$240, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$120, 1st U1650 \$80.

Korchnoi: 1st \$120, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$80, 1st U1300 \$60, 1st Unrated \$50.

Washington Open Talk by IM John Donaldson

Sun, 05/24 @ 1 PM – 1:50 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

Led by IM John Donaldson, former coach of the US Olympic Team, former WA State Champion, chess author and historian. EF: Free! Topic: "The History of the Washington State Chess Championship."

Washington Open Carlsen Rapid

Sun, 05/24 @ 2 PM – 5:40 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

A 5-Round Swiss in two sections: Kasparov (1600+) and Anand (U1600); may be merged if small. 2 half-point byes available. USCF Quick rated; Kasparov section is FIDE Rapid rated too. TC: G/15; +5. EF: \$35 online (by Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM) or \$40 on-site. Players rated 1500+ may play up into Kasparov (\$10 fee). Current US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA membership req'd. Registration: 1-1:45 PM. Rounds: 2 PM, 2:45, 3:30, 4:15, and 5 PM. Highest of May 2026 USCF Quick and current NWSRS rating used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Prize fund: \$1,000/b30.

Kasparov (1600+): 1st-3rd \$150 / \$110 / \$80; 1st U2100 / U1900 / U1700 \$60; Anand: 1st-3rd \$100 / \$80 / \$60; 1st U1400 / U1200 / U1000 / Unrated \$40; Biggest Upset Win: \$25 and Best Sportsmanship: \$20 (in each section).

Washington Open Awonder Liang Bughouse

Sun, 05/24 @ 3 PM – 4:15 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

A 7-round Single Swiss in one section. 2 half-point byes available. Max avg team rating: 1800. Unrated. TC: G/3; +0. EF: \$20/player. No memberships. Register: 2:15-2:45 PM. Rounds: 3 PM, 3:10, 3:20, 3:30, 3:40, 3:50, 4 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF Blitz and current NWSRS ratings (if unrated, up to 1300, based on age) used for pairings & prizes. Team prizes: \$400 (based on 20 teams): 1st-3rd: \$100 / \$70 / \$50; 1st-3rd K-6: \$50 / \$40 / \$30; Biggest Upset Win: \$30; Best Sportsmanship: \$20.

Washington Open Casablanca Chess Rapid

Mon, 05/25 @ 2 PM – 3:45 PM (between rounds 5 & 6)

A 4-round Swiss in one section. 1 half-point bye available, if requested by end of round 2. Unrated. TC: G/8; +3. EF: \$20. No memberships req'd. Registration: online (by Sun, 05/24) or on-site (Mon @ 1-1:45 PM). Rounds: 2 PM, 2:25, 2:50, and 3:15 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used for pairings & prizes.

Rules: Each round starts in a new *middlegame* position from a historical game. Players have 2 mins before clocks start to examine initial positions. Prize fund: \$400/b20. 1st \$100, 2nd \$80, 3rd \$60, 1st U2100 \$50, 1st U1800 \$40, 1st U1500 \$30, Biggest Upset Win: \$20.

Washington Open Ignacio Perez Memorial Blitz

Mon, 05/25 @ 8 PM – 10:30 PM (after round 6)

A 10-round Swiss in two sections: Nakamura (1600+) and Tal (U1600); may be merged if small. 3 half-point byes available. USCF Blitz rated; Nakamura section is FIDE Blitz rated too. TC: G/3; +2. EF: \$30 online (by Sun, 05/24 @ 5 PM) or \$35 on-site. Players rated 1500+ may play up into Nakamura (\$10 fee). Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership req'd. Registration: 7:30-7:50 PM. Rounds: 8 PM, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10, and 10:15 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF Blitz and current NWSRS ratings used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Prize fund: \$850/b30.

Nakamura: 1st \$120, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$80, 1st U2100 / U1900 / U1700 \$60; Tal: 1st \$90, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$60, 1st U1400 / U1200 / U1000 \$40, 1st Unr. \$30.

TOURNAMENTS



venue & mail

7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115

info & events calendar

www.seattlechess.club

club & tournament inquiries

contact@seattlechess.club

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>

April 18 (Sat.)

3-round round-robin. 4-player sections by close rating. **Time control:** Game/85 + 10-sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$15 (+ \$20 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! **Venue:** TBA. US Chess rated, US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>.

April Quads

May 3 (Sun.)

4-round Swiss. **Time Control:** Game/50 + 10 sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$25 (+ \$20 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, US Chess membership req'd. **Venue:** SCC. **Sign up:** <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>.

May Tornado

April 3, 10, 17, 24 (Fri.)

See below. Close-rating pairings.

April Showers

Coming up:

- **May Quads** – May 17; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Emerald City Open** – weekend in June; tentative, 2B confirmed

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 minutes w/10 second increment, followed by sudden death 60 minutes w/10 second increment. Free for SCC members, \$5/night others. Play in any or all rounds! Email contact@seattlechess.club to sign up. **Venue:** Seattle Chess Club, 28 players max.

April Showers

April 3, 10, 17, 24

May Flowers

May 1, 8, 15, 29 (no game on 5/22)

It's Summertime

June 5, 12, 19, 26

Hot as Hades

July 3, 10, 17, 24

Fifth Friday G/15 (multiple rounds) July 31

Washington Father's Day Open



June 20-21, 2026

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Yoda Open**, **Boba Fett U1700**, and **Chewbacca U1200**.

Entry fee: \$110 by 6/13, \$140 after. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Yoda Open or Boba Fett U1700, respectively. Chess Jedis rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. Open to all junior + adult players. Maximum of 200 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 8-8:45am. Rounds: Saturday @ 9am, 2pm, 7pm. Sunday @ 10am, 3pm.

Father's Day Blitz: ~ 7pm or asap.

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

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of June 2026 USCF or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF or foreign rating used at TD discretion.

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

Prize Fund: \$5,500 based on 100 paid entries.

Yoda Open: 1st-4th: \$500-\$400-\$300-\$250. 1st-2nd U2100: \$175-\$150, 1st-2nd U1900: \$175-\$150.

Boba Fett U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1600: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1400: \$125-\$100.

Chewbacca U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$250-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section):

Skywalker Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Leia Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Han Solo Best Dressed: \$20/day, Obi-Wan Best Dad Player (by TPR): \$50, Darth Vader Best Parent/Child Team (by avg. TPR): \$50.

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 (Tag: wa-chess, ID: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 6/19 @ 5pm**. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Father's Day Blitz: Sunday 7-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30. **Format:** A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual USCF 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 June 2026 USCF Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.

Prize Fund: \$750 (based on 50 paid entries)

1st - 3rd: \$170-140-100, 1st U2000/U1700/U1400/U1100/Unrated: \$50. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

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

