



June 2026



Northwest Chess

June 2026, Volume 80-06 Issue 941

ISSN Publication 0146-6941

USPS publication 422390

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

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POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to the Office of Record:

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

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

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June 5 for the July issue;
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Liam Pham for Team Washington
at the 35th Annual WA vs BC Intermat.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Back Cover

Chessboards at the 35th Annual WA vs BC Intermat.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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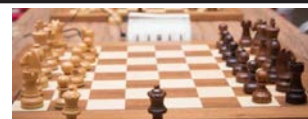
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2026 MID-YEAR SCHOLASTIC CUP

Sat-Sun, June 13-14, 2026



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

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

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757

Email:
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Registration and payment due by
Thu, Jun 11th @ 5pm. Unpaid players
will be removed from the roster after
that time, and players from the
Waitlist will be offered a spot.

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

Format: A 5-round Swiss event for K-12 students in
4 sections with rating cutoffs based on Jun 2026
USCF ratings: **1950+**, **1650+**, **1300+**, and **1000+**.
Play-ups are not allowed.

Max of 70 players total, and max of 20 players in any
given section. Register early to secure your spot!

Entry Fee: \$85 by Sat, Jun 06th; \$95 after.
Must be paid by Thu, Jun 11th @ 5pm.

No late or on-site registrations or payments. Players
who remain unpaid after the due date will be removed
from the roster.

Time Control: G/75;+30 in rounds #1-#3 (Sat);
G/90;+30 in rounds #4-#5 (Sun).
Late default: 60 minutes.

Schedule of Rounds:

Sat: 9:15 AM (rd#1), 1:30 PM (rd#2), 5:30 PM (rd#3);
Sun: 9:30 AM (rd#4), 2:30 PM (rd#5)

Check-in required by Sat @ 9 AM.

Note: Delayed round start available on request for
players whose previous game runs long.

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

Rating: USCF, FIDE, and NWSRS rated.
USCF (Jun 2026) ratings used to determine
sections, pairings, and prizes. Foreign ratings
(e.g., CFC) used at TD discretion.

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

Prizes (in Amazon e-gift cards) (based on 70
paid entries):

Each section:

- 1st-6th = \$150/\$120/\$100/\$80/\$70/\$60
- Best female player (by TPR, among at least 3
eligible participants) = \$60
- Best annotated game = \$30
- Best dressed player (per day) = \$20

Special prizes:

- Highest finishing players (by point total) in
each section also earn a free entry into a 2026
(WCF hosted) tournament of their choice.

More Games from the Washington State Championship

Stephen Willy

Stephen Willy (2283) – Vidip Kona (2246) [B12]
Washington State Championship
Championship (R1), February 6, 2026
[Stephen Willy]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.g4

I had just played Vidip a month earlier and opted for the Two Knights Caro. I thought this time I might try a sharper choice.

4...Be4 5.f3 Bg6 6.e6

Sacrificing a pawn to delay the development of the f8-bishop.

6...fxe6 7.h4 c5

A deviation from the mainline.

7...h5 is the mainline to prevent even more pieces from being boxed in by the pawns. ...h5 does weaken the g6-square though, and the position quickly becomes double edged 8.Bd3 Bxd3 9.Qxd3 Qd6

8.h5 Bf7 9.f4

I want to keep a bind on the e5-square to prevent Black's push of ...e6–e5 then if I take with a pawn, Black will go ...e7–e6 and mobilize his pieces.

9...Nc6 10.Nf3 cxd4 11.g5

There is no rush to recapture the d4-pawn and let Black push ...e5 and free up the pieces. Instead, the goal of g5 is to restrict the g8-knight from developing.

11...Qa5+

I get a tempo to develop, and the e5-square is still under my control.

11...Qc7 with intentions of playing ...e5 12.Na3 a6 13.b4! threatens b5 to dislodge the knight and baits the knight away from defending e5 if the b4 pawn is taken



Salome Jacob (mother), Stephen Willy, and Willy Johnson (father).
Photo credit: Ani Barua.

13...Nxb4

12.Nbd2

12.c3

12...0-0-0

I was surprised by this because the king is not very safe on the queenside 12...Nf6 sacrificing the knight may be mandatory and a good practical choice.

13.b4!

Sacrificing a pawn but opening the b-file

towards the king.

13...Qxb4 14.Rb1 Qd6 15.Nb3?

While this is still better for me I underestimated Black's response of ...e5. 15.Bb5 practically wins the game as I get full control over the e5-square, which means all of Black's kingside pieces will be stuck 15...Nf6 (15...Be8 16.Bxc6 Bxc6 17.Ne5) 16.Bxc6. It is even better to just ignore the hanging knight and take control over e5 16...Qxc6 17.Ne5 Qe8+



L-R: Vidip Kona, Stephen Willy.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

15...e5 16.fxe5 Nxe5

From here on, I decided it was a good idea to spend like 20 minutes on every move.

17.Nbxd4

Only one line of forced moves keeps Black under +1, the rest is over +2. 17.Na5 Rd7 18.Rh3. Somehow this is the best sequence of moves which I cannot explain why.

17...Nc4!

Threatening ...e5 and ...Qg3+

18.Nb5 Qg3+! 19.Ke2



Position after 19.Ke2

19...a6??

19...b6 Black's king needs the b7-square to survive in some subsequent positions.

20.Na7+??

For some reason this was the only move that came to mind. I did not need to move the knight. 20.Qd4! wins the game on the spot. 20...e5 attacking the queen and preventing Bf4 (20...axb5 21.Bh3+

e6 22.Bf4) 21.Qa7! The queen will be trapped on g3, and I have a strong attack 21...axb5 22.Rxb5 b6 23.Rg1.

20...Kc7 21.Rh4 Qd6 22.Nd4

22.Rxc4+ is also interesting 22...dxc4 23.Qe1 Kd7 24.Rxb7+ Ke8 25.Qa5 Bxh5 26.Bg2 "Equal position" but still a lot of fight.

22...Qc5 23.Qe1??

I wanted to set up Qf2 after Qxa7, but this allows ...e5, which allows the f8-bishop to defend the black queen. 23.Ke1 Who knew the best move would be setting up the chess board for the next game? My king gets out of many annoying checks, and my pieces are just active enough to be quite the nuisance. 23...Nf6 (23...e5 24.Ndb5+ axb5 25.Nxb5+ Kb8 26.Rxc4; 23...Qxa7 24.Qf3 Nf6 25.Bxc4 dxc4 26.Be3) 24.gxf6 exf6

23...Bxh5+?? 24.Kd3!

Somehow, I am not checkmated, and I have a lot of threats.

24...Bg6+ 25.Ke2

The best option for both sides is to repeat the position and make a draw. I suspect that due to my time usage Vidip did not want a draw.

25...Rd6?? 26.Qf2 Kb8

I have about ten minutes here and proceed to rush my next moves making many wrong decisions.

27.Qxf8+??

27.Ndc6+ was my initial instinct, but I

got scared. I couldn't take any material because my king was weak. 27...Rxc6 28.Nxc6+ Qxc6 29.Qxf8+ Qc8 30.Qxc8+ (30.Rf4+-; 30.Qxg7∞) 30...Kxc8 31.Bh3+ Kc7 32.Rxc4+ dxc4 33.Bf4+ Kc6 34.Bg2+ Kc5 35.Rxb7+-

27...Kxa7 28.Qxg7 Nf6 29.gxf6

I opt to take the knight instead of the rook because I thought the knight would be a promising attacking piece. 29.Qxh8 Ne4 30.Qg7 Surprisingly around equal however the position is very dangerous.

29...Qc8??

29...Rxf6 30.Qxh8 Bh5+ 31.Rxh5 Qxd4 32.Qxf6 Qxf6 33.Rh3 Qf5 34.Rhb3 Black is slightly better and has chances to press.

30.Bh3 Qb8



Position after 30...Qb8

31.fxe7??

Too rushed as now my pawn cannot promote easily because of how well-defended the e8-square is. 31.f7 one of the moves I was considering that happens to be winning 31...Rf8 32.Be6 My pawn becomes a huge threat.

31...Rg8 32.Rxb7+

32.Qh6 Bxc2 33.Bf4 Bxb1 34.Bf5 with an extremely messy position that is for some reason around equal.

32...Kxb7

32...Qxb7 33.Qxg8 I likely would have played this in the game (33.Qf8 Funny move that is also possible 33...Qb8 34.Qxb8+ Rxb8 (34...Kxb8 35.Rf4 Re8 36.Rf8 Kc7 37.Bg5) 35.Bg5) 33...Qxe7+ 34.Ne6 Qxh4 35.Be3+ Nxe3 36.Qg7+ Ka8 37.Qf8+ with an "equal position."

33.e8R+

When you have the chance always promote to a rook.

33...Rxg7 34.Rxb8+ Kxb8 35.Bf4 Re7+ 36.Kd1

The losing move which is just too passive. From here on Vidip converts well. 36.Be6 looks tedious but keeps just enough activity to save the game. 36...Kb7 37.Bxd6 Nxd6 38.Kf1

36...Re4 37.Bxd6+ Nxd6 38.Rxe4 Nxe4 39.Kc1 Kc7 40.Bf1 a5 41.Kb2 Kd6 42.Nf3 Bh5 43.Nd4 Bg4 44.a4 h5 45.Nb3 h4 46.Nxa5 Ng3 47.Bg2 h3 48.Bxh3 Bxh3 49.Nb3 Ne2 50.Nd2 Bc8 51.c4 d4 52.c5+ Kxc5 53.Nb3+ Kb4 54.Nxd4 Nxd4



Position after 54...Nxd4

55.a5

Keeping the pawn on the board might have made the checkmate easier due to less stalemate tricks but this works nonetheless.

55...Kxa5 56.Kc3 Nb5+ 57.Kd3 Kb4 58.Ke4 Kc5 59.Ke5 Nd6 60.Kf6 Kd5 61.Kg6 Ke5 62.Kg5 Ne4+ 63.Kg6 Ke6 64.Kg7 Bd7 65.Kg6 Be8+ 66.Kg7 Ng5 67.Kf8 Bh5 68.Kg7 Nf7 69.Kg8 Ne5 70.Kg7 Kf5 71.Kh6 Bg6 72.Kg7 Kg5 73.Kh8 Kf6 74.Kg8 Bf7+ 75.Kh8 Ng6+ 76.Kh7 Be6 77.Kh6 Bg8 78.Kh5 Ne5 79.Kh4 Kf5 80.Kg3 Ng4 81.Kf3 Bc4 82.Kg3 Bd5 83.Kh4 Kf4 84.Kh5 Bf7+ 85.Kh4 Ne3 86.Kh3 Bg6 87.Kh4 Ng2+ 88.Kh3 Kf3 89.Kh2 Bf5 90.Kg1 Kg3 91.Kf1 Bd3+ 92.Kg1 Nf4 93.Kh1 Be2 0-1

Stephen Willy (2283) –
Bertrand Wan (2233) [E90]
Washington State Championship
Championship (R3), February 7, 2026
[Stephen Willy]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.h3

This is the start of the Makogonov KID. The simple purpose of this early h3 is to stop any ...Bg4 or ...Ng4 ideas in the future. There is also potential for a future g4 which can gain space on the kingside and play against Black's main pawn break

of f5. 5.Nf3 Bg4 The knight on f3 can be quite a useful piece for supporting the center. This is why Black tries ...Bg4 in many positions to undermine control of central squares like e5 and d4.; 5.Be3 The bishop would often like to go to this square, but ...Ng4 is always an issue. 5...Ng4

5...Nbd7

This move prepares Black's advance of ...e5 while blocking the d-file so if I played dxe5 after ...dxe5 black does not have to worry about the queen trade. 5...e5 is also a move where the most logical reply is d5, however I have one other option that is prevented by starting with ...Nbd7 6.dxe5 (6.d5) 6...dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Nf3 Nc6 9.Be3 Be6 10.0-0-0 Nd7 11.Ng5 (11.c5 h6 12.g4 Kc8 13.Bb5 Bf8 14.Kb1 a6 15.Ba4 White maintains some endgame pressure.)

6.Nf3

This forces Black to commit for the ...e5 push. 6.Bg5 is perhaps a good alternative and positions become sharp.

6...e5 7.d5

Most logical move to close the center and restrict Black's pieces. It is possible for White to allow ...exd4, but it gives more practical chances for Black's pieces to mobilize. 7.g3 0-0 8.Bg2 exd4 9.Nxd4 Re8 10.0-0 This transposes to some lines seen in g3 KID positions.; 7.g4!? 0-0 8.Be3 (8.Bg2 b5??) 8...exd4 9.Nxd4 Re8 10.Bg2 Nc5 11.f3

7...h5

Now that the center is closed, Black's dark-squared bishop is staring into a pawn wall. Thus, the idea of ...h5 is to play ...Bh6 and trade off the bad dark-squared bishop for White's mobile dark-squared bishop.

8.Bg5

My idea is to force ...Bh6 because otherwise I play Qd2 and my g5-bishop will stay on the outpost forever. 8.b4 a5 9.a3 axb4 I cannot get away with 8.b4 because my rook on a1 is undefended.

8...Bh6 9.Bxh6 Rxh6 10.b4

This was the intention of forcing ...Bh6. Now if Black goes ...a5 I can respond with a3 and if ...axb4 axb4 Rxa1 my queen defends the a1 rook due to the c1 bishop moving.

10...b6

This is a slight inaccuracy as it surrenders the queenside space to White. The inclusion of a5 and a3 means I have to constantly be ready for ...axb4 in every position. 10...a5 11.a3 axb4 (11...h4 a better version of the position in the game because Black always has ideas of ...axb4 axb4 ...Rxa1 Qxa1 to deflect my queen from defending the kingside. 12.Be2 Nh5) 12.axb4 Rxa1 13.Qxa1 No c1-bishop in the way.

11.Be2 h4

Taking kingside space and attempting to outpost the knight via h5 to f4.



L-R: Bertrand Wan, Stephen Willy.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

12.0-0 Nh5 13.Ne1 Nf4 14.Nd3



Position after 14.Nd3

14...Qg5

The first serious mistake as if White doesn't get checkmated Black has completely abandoned the queenside. 14...g5 is somewhat counterintuitive as it surrenders any light-squared control completely. 15.Nxf4 gxf4 16.Bg4 At some point Black must move the d7-knight and the light-squared bishop trade would happen. The computer argues that despite the weakening of the light squares this is fine. 16...Rg6 17.Kh2 Kf8 Black slowly improves the position and then eventually plays ...Nf6.

15.Nxf4 Qxf4

This is too slow because White's breakthrough on the queenside is so fast. 15...exf4 gives up the d4-square for White, but it gives the e5-square for the black knight which in turn will open up the c8-bishop. 16.Nb5 Ne5 17.Kh1 Qd8 18.c5 (18.a4 g5 19.a5 bxa5 20.Rxa5 g4) 18...Kf8 19.Qc1 g5 20.cxd6 cxd6

16.Qa4

Threatening Qc6 as well as a potential c5-pawn break now that the d7-knight is pinned.

16...Kd8 17.Rab1



Position after 17.Rab1

I wanted to play c5 after ...Bb7 but this

move allows Black time to consolidate the position.

17...Bb7

Well obviously, I'm a time traveler. This is probably the mistake that ends the game as now my attack completely breaks through. 17...a6 gives space for Ra7 after Qc6 and it stops Nb5 in many lines 18.Nb5 I doubt these lines would have occurred in the game after a6 but it becomes very crazy (18.Rb3 Rb3 is best to defend the third rank from the upcoming attack. 18...g5 19.Nb5 Qxe4 20.Nxc7 Kxc7 21.Qc6+ Kb8 22.c5 b5 23.cxd6 Ka7 24.Bf3 Qf5 25.Bg4 Qg6 26.Bxd7 Qxd6 27.Rf3 Bxd7 28.Rxf7 Qxc6 29.dxc6 Rxc6 30.Rxd7+) 18...Bb7 19.Nxc7 Kxc7 20.c5 Qxe4 (20...Kd8 is another position where the lines get even deeper.) 21.c6 Bc8 22.cxd7 Bxd7 23.Qa3 g5 (23...Qxe2 24.Qc1+ Kb7 25.Qxh6) 24.Rfe1 Kd8 25.Bf3 Qg6 After a bunch of precise moves stockfish evaluates this 0.0 There is sometimes a difference between dead drawn and 0.0 by the computer. A dead drawn position is always 0.0, but 0.0 is not always a dead drawn position.

18.c5 bxc5 19.bxc5 Nxc5 20.Qa5 Rc8 21.Nb5 Kd7 22.Nxa7 Qxe4 23.Bb5+ Kd8 24.Bc6 Ba6 25.Rfc1 Rh8 26.Rb2 Rh5 27.Rb4 Qe2 28.Ba4 Qd2 29.Rxc5 dxc5 30.Qxc5

1-0

Megan Lee (2366) –
Stephen Willy (2283) [C11]
Washington State Championship
Championship (R9), February 22, 2026
[Stephen Willy]

1.e4

I can only preface this game by saying that we both were probably tired after four rounds of chess.

1...e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3 Be7 8.Qd2 0-0 9.Ne2

While this works in the lines where Black plays ...a6 this does not work here. Black can play ...a7-a5 in one go to expand on the queenside compared to positions where ...a6 is played instead of ...Be7, and I must spend another tempo to go ...a5. It makes sense to first undermine the center and provoke c3 before committing to any queenside expansion.

9...f6 10.c3 a5 11.h4

Thematic ideas with a6 however this plan is slow when I don't have a tempo wasted.

11...a4 12.h5



Position after 12.h5

12...a3

Normally it is good to push flank pawns all the way to the third rank (or sixth rank for White flank pawns) however in this case a3 does not weaken the queenside but it actually strengthens it because the c4-square is now defended. 12...Nb6 I saw this as soon as I played a3 and realized that it is much stronger as White struggles to defend against ...Nc4 and keep the center intact at the same time. The a4-pawn is important to prevent White from playing b3. 13.Ng3 (13.exf6 can be played first to reduce the impact of ...fxe5 in the line with Ng3 first. But White's center is still broken, and this is a huge success.) 13...cxd4 14.Bxd4 The pawn chain must be broken as if cxd4 I have ...Bb4 to win the queen (14.cxd4 Bb4) 14...fxe5 15.fxe5 h6 with a much better position for Black.

13.b3 Qa5 14.Rb1

I thought about playing ...cxd4 because White can't play cxd4 due to ...Bb4, but if I play ...cxd4 there is Nexd4 and my e6-pawn is hanging. What I missed was that I can do the same thing but starting with ...fxe5.

14...b6

My idea was to keep the central tension and make sure I can recapture on c5 with a pawn in case of dxc5. 14...fxe5 15.fxe5 cxd4 16.Nexd4 Ndx5 due to the f-pawn trade there is no f4-pawn defending the e5-pawn.; 14...cxd4 15.Nexd4 Ndx5 16.fxe5

15.f5

It is a bit too early to release the tension.

15...fxe5 16.h6 cxd4 17.hxg7 Rxf5 18.Bxd4 exd4 19.b4 Qa7

Still winning but ...Qa4 was more precise and less complicated. 19...Qa4 20.Qh6 Nf6 21.g4 Rxf3 22.g5 Qc2 and h7 is well defended unlike the game.

20.Qh6 Nf6 21.g4 dxc3

By sacrificing the rook back my king is safe for a while and I get a counterattack on the white king. 21...Rxf3 22.g5 Qa4. If I take on f3, the queen must go through a4 and c2 anyways. 23.gxf6 Qc2 24.Rc1 Rxf6 25.Rxc2 Rxh6 26.Rxh6 d3.

22.gxf5 e5

I wanted to get ...Bxf5 and defend h7 and my king forever. 22...c2 23.Rb3 Nxb4 White has no real threat in this position, so I didn't have to be so concerned about guarding my king.

23.Nxc3

It was after Nxc3 that I realized if I go ...Bxf5 there is the counter shot Nxd5! And I couldn't find a good response to Nxd5. So, I came up with a smart plan... play a move that loses anyways!!

23...Nxb4

I saw Rxb4 and either thought I could survive for some reason or just missed that my king is getting checkmated if I try to take the c3 knight.

24.Ne4

This move was a shock to see on the board. I completely missed it as I cannot take the knight with either piece. Luckily for me I do still have one defensive trick. 24.Rxb4 Bxb4 25.Qxf6 Qc7 26.Kd1 I cannot take the knight due to checkmate threats and the black king is way too vulnerable regardless.

24...Nc2+! 25.Kd1 Ne3+!

Now I deflect the queen and bring my knight back in time to help defend the kingside.

26.Qxe3

26.Ke1 Neg4 and now after Nxf6+ I can recapture with ...Nxf6 and keep h7 defended. 27.Nxf6+ Nxf6

26...Nxe4 27.Bc4



Position after 27.Bc4

27...Nf6

27...dxc4 28.Qxe4 Qd7+! This is what I missed as now Bb7 can be played because of Qxc4+ I have Qd5 29.Ke1 Bb7 30.Qxc4+ Qd5

28.Bb3

28.Rxh7!! White is suddenly back in the game and slightly better! 28...Kxh7

a) 28...Nxh7 29.Bxd5+ Be6! (29...Kxg7 30.Qg1+ and now White is winning) 30.Bxe6+ Kxg7 31.Qxe5+ Bf6 32.Qg3+ Kh8

b) 28...Qa4+ This is another way to survive where White plays a few only moves to get about a +1 position 29.Bb3 Qf4 30.Qxf4 exf4 31.Rh4! Kxg7 32.Rc1! Bd7; 29.Ke2 with the open g- and h-files this is dead lost.

28...Bxf5 29.Rc1 Be4

I went for the wrong pin as now White can play Rg1 with the threat of Qxe4

30.Rh4

30.Rg1 Bc5 looks like I am just winning the rook but- 31.Qxe4!!

30...Bc5

Qxe4 doesn't work here because I can take the queen and take the undefended pawn on g7.

31.Qe2 Kxg7 32.Nxe5 Re8 33.Qh2 Qe7 34.Qg3+ Kh8 35.Ng4



Position after 35.Ng4

Megan has 30 seconds and I have about 50 different winning moves surely I can't mess it up right (Black to play checkmate in five)

35...Bc2+!!

In my mind Rxc2 Qe1 was checkmate which would be correct if I nudged the queen to g2 so that it wasn't protecting e1. Also anyone who found Bf3+ or literally any move that doesn't hang a piece is officially better than me at chess.

36.Rxc2 Ne4

If I didn't have ...Ne4 I would be losing on the spot. 36...Qe1+ 37.Qxe1 oops.

37.Qe5+

Megan made this move with two seconds just in time to force the queens off to an equal endgame and reach the extra time on move 40.

37...Qxe5 38.Nxe5 Rxe5 39.Rch2 Re7 40.Bxd5

Under time pressure and wanting to make move 40 this was an unfortunate move and certainly not the way I wanted to win. In fairness I think Bc2 is a much worse move given I had 20 minutes compared to 30 seconds.

40...Nc3+ 41.Kc2 Nxd5 42.Rh5 Nf4

0-1



L-R: Megan Lee, Stephen Willy.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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

To OTB or Not to OTB

The Chess Friends

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

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

Howdy! It's The Chess Friends!

To OTB or not to OTB: That is the question that comes up in the lives of many chess players. We know it has in ours!

Why should we wake up so early to drive to a tournament to play over-the-board (OTB) chess? We can just play chess online.

Should we travel to a seven-day tournament? Drop everything and put our lives on hold to play chess?

How about a two-day tournament? Should we really spend our weekend staring at a chess board for hours while our peers enjoy time off from school, balling in the park, playing videogames, or chilling out with music and ice cream?

Now the simple OTB or not to OTB question turns into an existential one! One that deserves a play worthy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*!

Chess was already an ancient game during the life of William Shakespeare, and there is strong evidence that the English bard played chess.

We don't think that this line from



Miranda playing chess with Ferdinand,
by Gillot Saint-Evre, 1822, from
[The Musée de la Vie romantique](#) in Paris.

his tragedy *Richard III* is the evidence, but there is a chess scene in his play *The Tempest*, where a young couple, Miranda and Ferdinand, talk over the chess board (Act V, scene 1):

Miranda:
Sweet lord, you play me false.

Ferdinand:
*No, my dear 'st love,
I would not for the world.*

Miranda:
*Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should
wrangle,*

And I would call it fair play.

Talking about fair play in the early 1600s? Most definitely Shakespeare was a chess player!

To play OTB chess or not was an easy question to answer during Shakespearean times: it was the only way people played chess back then. Plus, there were no distractions like the internet and videogames; basketball wasn't invented yet, and ice cream was still an exotic dish. The answer was a no brainer: of course, let's play OTB! Even better: let's have a tournament so everyone can play!

The first international chess tournament took place in 1851 in London, organized by English Master Howard Staunton, who was also a Shakespearean scholar. The tournament was won by German Master Karl Ernst Adolf Anderssen, perhaps the best player in the world in the 1850s and 1860s. You may have heard of the Anderssen Opening (1. a3) or the Anderssen Attack in the Scotch Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 exd4 4. Bc4 Nf6 5. O-O Nxe4 6. Re1 d5 7. Bxd5 Qxd5 8. Nc3).

In 1886, the Austrian Wilhelm Steinitz and German Johannes Zukertort played the first official World Championship match, which Steinitz won 10-5-5. In

1924, the International Chess Federation, or as we know it, FIDE (*Fédération Internationale des Échecs*), was founded in Paris, France. FIDE's motto "*Gens una sumus*", Latin for "We are one family" highlighted FIDE's mission to bring together the chess community, a mission it continues today, both OTB and online.

Even before that, people longed to connect with each other to play chess, even when they couldn't meet OTB. The correspondence chess games were played via carrier pigeons and later the postal service! Those games must have taken a long time! Shortly after the telegraph was invented in the 1840s, chess matches started to happen faster, when moves were transmitted miles and miles through cabled wires. One of the first telegraph chess matches was played by... you guessed it, [Howard Staunton](#) again. What a legend!

Once the internet became more accessible, long-distance chess games grew astronomically in numbers. In 1992, the Internet Chess Club (ICC) was launched, letting players from all around the world play each other! In 2007, Jay Severson and Erik Allebest, two passionate chess friends who met in college, launched a new chess website called chess.com, and as the saying goes, the rest is history.

Now, to play chess, you simply go online and you can instantly play with your buddy or with someone from the other side of the world! There are almost 260 million members on chess.com and they host 10 million games a day, but there is no need to be intimidated! All you have to do is pick your favorite time control and start a fun game of chess! Ah, the convenience of modern technology! Carrier pigeons, be free!

But what about the good ol' OTB chess? Should we OTB or not? Why?

TO OTB OR NOT TO OTB, THAT IS THE QUESTION



The Legend Vivaan

To OTB or Not To OTB is not that big of a question.

Any chess, online or OTB, is good for me, and I am fortunate to always have both at my fingertips.

I'm growing up in a house where everyone plays chess and will play with me anytime. We even have a chess table that's always ready to go and multiple boards, sets, and clocks ready whenever we want to play bughouse! Most chess players aren't lucky enough to have this at home. This is why online chess is so amazing. People from all over the world can connect through the game we all love, and all they need is the internet!

I love that when I play online, I can get games very quickly, analyze all my games easily, and play bots whenever I want to assess my level. I can also do puzzles that adapt and grow as I improve. Bullet, blitz, rapid, or games of any time control you can think of, the variety of options online and the ability to grind and test lots of ideas quickly really can't be beat! Through FIDE Online Arena and worldchess.com, even titles are possible that never existed decades ago. In fact, I'm an AFM (Arena FIDE Master), which I got through blitz, as is my brother, through bullet, and my dad, through rapid.

FIDE adapted to changing times just like this *Northwest Chess* magazine. *Northwest Chess* was founded in November 1947 as the *Northwest Chess Letter* and remained as a print exclusive publication until December 2020, when it became widely distributed online as

well. Today, roughly 1/3 of subscribers get exclusively online editions, while 2/3 of subscribers get both, print and online editions, whatever they prefer. This is similar to chess. Some prefer it only online. Some may prefer it only OTB. That said, most like the best of both worlds!

Online chess has also evolved to be a place where you can make great friendships and compete as a team. I play weekly online through [Rookly.com](https://www.rookly.com), an esports platform for youth teams around the country! The Man Benji and The Myth Sarang are on my WIISER team, and [we won the National Championship in the fall!](#) The format is called an Arena, which many online platforms, including Chess.com and LiChess.org use. The idea is that there's a fixed time control, in our case ten minutes per player per game, and as soon as you finish a game, you get another one, and the goal is to get as many points as you can in a fixed amount of time, in our case, one hour.

The Myth Sarang

To OTB or Not To OTB: that depends

I make my decision based on what's going on in my life, while comparing pros and cons of both options.

Like my brother, I love online chess, but I do see the downsides. Online games can encourage speed over deep thinking, and cheating is way more common because players can access outside help or even use engines without people watching them. Cheating is sadly so rampant that even honest players could get banned just because there are a lot of trolls online who will try to ban anyone they play and lose to, so be careful. It particularly hurts when you get banned and haven't done anything wrong, which happens far too often, particularly for young players who are rising fast. The online chess playing experience is also way less social, so it may not build the same skills that OTB chess brings to the table.

There are several major strengths of OTB that the online just can't beat. It gives you a real tournament atmosphere, which can improve concentration and make games feel more meaningful. It also helps players learn skills like notating, handling a clock, playing under pressure, making friends in person, etc. There's something about face-to-face interaction, body language, the environment, the

pressure, and the competition that is just next level OTB.

OTB chess also has many drawbacks. Games often take way longer, so players can fit in fewer games in a day or week. It also requires travel, scheduling, and a proper quiet, large setting, which makes it less convenient than online play. The OTB matches are usually fixed time controls and round times, so you can't play your games whenever you want, unlike some forms of online chess. Affordability is another major drawback of OTB tournament chess, as there is also often a high-price entry fee. Of course, OTB playing with buddies in casual unrated settings is amazing, but there's also the challenge of coordinating schedules, etc., and it's often easier these days to set up friendly chess meetups online.

The Man Benji

To OTB or Not To OTB: that is a loaded question

One that requires soul searching and sometimes sacrifices. For me, traveling to a new place for a seven-day tournament means going out of my comfort zone and using expenses that could have been spent otherwise. A local chess tournament oftentimes implies that I will miss my volleyball practice or a volleyball tournament. I mean... I can just play a few games online in the evening instead, right? Right! I do play online, but not in tournaments (besides with our Rookly team that Vivaan mentioned above). I

A HORSE, A HORSE, MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE!



usually play blitz or rapid games online to test a new opening, or practice positional ideas I read about, or even for fun!

When the question to play in the OTB tournament or not comes up, I think really hard about it. The first criterion for me is the time control. When I want to play OTB chess, I don't like anything faster than G60 (60 minutes per game per side)! Once I decide to play OTB chess, that's it. I lock in. I need time to really slow down and dedicate all my brain power to the game.

The next criterion for me is my weekend schedule. I do have a few favorite yearly OTB tournaments that I go to, no questions asked. (Hello, Washington Open! Long time no see, US Open!) But the rest of them depends on the price, location, and my volleyball season.

When the volleyball season is slow, I go to some chess tournaments, here and there, not every week, and sometimes not even every month. I still find the time to play OTB regularly, as it is the best opportunity for me to practice my current skills and see how my training matches against opponents.

When I do play OTB, I savor every moment of it. You venture out from the warm depths of your home and whiz through traffic to come to your OTB tournament of choice. When you arrive, you feel the buzz in the air, clocks ticking, minds on the battlefield, and friends in the hall. OTB feels so competitive and lively, and there's something different about playing with real wooden pieces!

Now and then, there are times when other commitments, like volleyball or family, compete with the importance of going to a chess tournament. You feel torn between your choices. You wouldn't want to let your volleyball team down. You wouldn't want to miss the chance to meet with your family. You want to do everything, but it's impossible to be in two places at once (at least until the next science breakthrough). Having to choose might feel frustrating, but that's OK. There's always the next tournament to practice even harder for!

Let's take this home or to a tournament near you...

In OTB chess, the competition just feels more real, there are better tourney experiences, less cheating, and stronger focus. Online chess is much

more accessible, easier to get reps in, has flexible time controls, and is great for daily practice and quick games. In the end, OTB chess feels better for serious tournament play and handling real competitive pressure, while online chess is better for convenience and experimenting. Most strong players today use both, and this is what we would recommend for most of you:

Play online for daily practice and preparation for OTB, and once you're ready,

play OTB for real competitive growth.

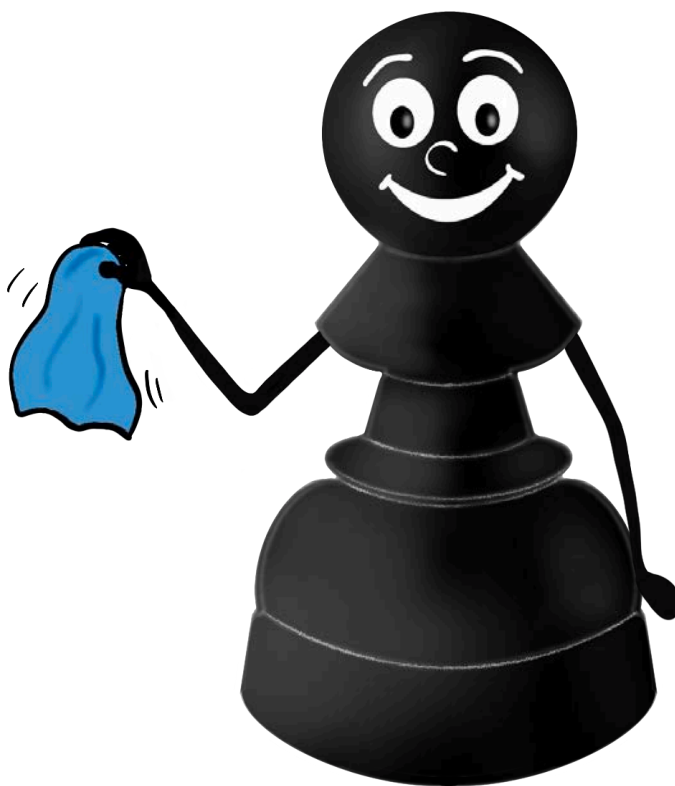
In the end, it's up to you. We're in a world today with an abundance of great choices. Choose your own adventure and find the balance that's right for you. To quote Shakespeare's *Hamlet* again:

"This above all: to thine own self be true."

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

The Man Benji,
The Myth Sarang,
The Legend Vivaan

GOOD NIGHT, GOOD NIGHT!
PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW,
THAT I SHALL SAY GOOD NIGHT
TILL IT BE THE
NEXT ISSUE OF THE NW CHESS!



Eastgate Cup



July 18-19, 2026
Embassy Suites Bellevue
3225 158th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98008



Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Newport Open**, **Somerset U1700**, and **Lakemont U1200**.

Entry fee: \$110 by 7/11, \$140 after. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in USCF and playing up in Newport Open or Somerset U1700, respectively. Players rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. Maximum of 200 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 9-9:45am. Rounds: Sat @ 10am, 2pm, 6pm. Sun @ 10am, 2pm. Eastgate Blitz Tournament: ~ 6pm 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 July USCF or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. CFC rating used for Canadian players if it is higher.

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.

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

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

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

Special Prizes (per section): Forest Drive Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Factoria Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Cougar Mountain Best Senior Player (by TPR): \$50, Newport Hills 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. 7/17 @ 5pm**. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Eastgate Blitz: Sunday 6-8:30pm (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:** 5:00-5:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 6pm, 6:15, 6:30, 6:45, 7, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 8:15pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of July 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

Buckendorf Senior State Championship

Jeffrey Roland

The Idaho Chess Association (ICA) held its final tournament on Saturday, May 16, 2026. The Buckendorf Senior State Championship was held in Boise in a location that most of the players and even the Chief TD could not find very easily! It was a place called NeighborHub at 190 N. 8th Street. Nine players played for the

title of Idaho Senior State Champion, and a chance to represent Idaho in the John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions to be held during the U.S. Open. The tournament was directed by Jeff Roland (Chief) and Brian Lange (Assistant) in his first event as a tournament director.

Jeff Gamble won first place with a perfect 4.0/4 score, followed by Brian Lange in second place with 3.5/4 points. Last year's winner, Zygmund Mayer, and Ryan Gallivan were third and fourth respectively. Former Idaho State Champion Michael Henderson and David Zaklan were fifth and sixth with 2.0/4 points. And in the final point group, Chris Pentico, Tom Booth, and playing in his first tournament, Richard Cordova with 1.0/4 points.

It was great to see these chess players and the good sportsmanship

and camaraderie that came along with it. These players have been around long enough to realize the value of over-the-board chess. To OTB or Not to OTB gets a solid vote for OTB here. Many of the players have been co-competitors and rivals as far back as the 1980's (seeing Chris Pentico and Michael Henderson play in round four, for example, showed players who have built decades-long respect for one another.)

This tournament was not at all blunder-free—on the contrary—but it was representative of the true spirit of chess and a great final tournament for the ICA. Two days later, on May 18, the Idaho Chess Network (aka Idaho Chess Federation) came into being, and Idaho Chess will see a new chapter, building respectfully and graciously on the old—with new leadership, vision, and energy going forward. ...and the beat goes on!



Jeff Gamble. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

2026 Buckendorf Senior State Championship												
#	Name	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	Tie-1	Tie-2	Tie-3	Tie-4	
1	Jeff S. Gamble	2132	W8	W5	W6	W3	4	6.5	10	19.5	6	
2	Brian S. Lange	1539	W9	D3	W7	W6	3.5	5.5	8.5	16.5	5	
3	Zygmund Mayer	1842	W7	D2	W5	L1	2.5	10.5	7.5	26.5	9.5	
4	Ryan Odell Gallivan	1428	L5	-H-	W9	W8	2.5	3	4	6	3	
5	Michael Henderson	1800	W4	L1	L3	W7	2	10	5	24.5	5	
6	David Allen Zaklan	1314	-B-	W8	L1	L2	2	8	6	19.5	4	
7	Christopher Pentico	1439	L3	W9	L2	L5	1	8.5	3	21	5	
8	Tom R. Booth	1500	L1	L6	-B-	L4	1	8	1	20	4	
9	Richard Cordova	Unr.	L2	L7	L4	-B-	1	7	0	15.5	3.5	

Tiebreaks: Solkoff, Cumulative, Cumulative Opposition, Modified Median.

Games

**David Allen Zaklan (1314) –
Brian S. Lange (1539) [A51]**

Buckendorf Senior State Championship
Boise, Idaho (R4), May 16, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.e3

The main lines of the Budapest Gambit are reached after 3.dxe5±, when Black can choose between the semi-respectable 3...Ng4 (and 3...Ne4, the highly speculative Fajarowicz variation.)

3...exd4 4.exd4 Bb4+ 5.Nc3



Position after 5.Nc3

5...Ne4?!

A little prematurely aggressive. 5...d5; 5...0-0

6.Qd3

6.Qc2; or 6.Qb3 seem more natural squares for the queen, leaving d3 for the light-square bishop.

6...Qe7

6...0-0

7.Be3



Position after 7.Be3

7...Nc6

7...d5 8.cxd5 Bf5± Black is better coordinated, with generally smoother development.



L-R: David Zaklan, Brian Lange. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

8.Nf3

8.Nge2 0-0 9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.Nxc3 Nxc3 11.Qxc3± gives White the bishop-pair and a central space edge.

8...0-0 9.Be2 Re8 10.0-0 Bxc3 11.bxc3 d6



Position after 11...d6

12.Rab1

Putting more major pieces on the b1-h7 diagonal. 12.Qc2 Bf5 13.Bd3 Bg6 14.Rfe1 is fine, but also draws attention to White's decision to place the queen on d3 back on move six.

12...Na5?!

12...Bf5! 13.Rxb7 (13.Rb5 Bg6 14.Re1 Nxf2!±) 13...Ng3 14.Qd2 Nxf1 15.Bxf1 Be4±

13.Rfe1 Bf5??

13...b6

14.Rec1??

14.Rb5!± is a fork.

14...Ng3!



Position after 14...Ng3

15.Qd2

Black is essentially winning, so one way to make things interesting and imbalanced is 15.hxg3 Bxd3 16.Bxd3± Sure, White is down a queen, but the solid wall will require some demolition before Black can prove the advantage.

15...Nxe2+ 16.Qxe2 Bxb1 17.Rxb1 f5 18.Qd3 Qe4 19.Qxe4 Rxe4 20.Nd2 Re7 21.Rb5 b6

Another way to shed the f-pawn is 21...f4 22.Bxf4 Re1+ 23.Nf1 b6+ with active rooks.

22.Rxf5 Rf8 23.Rd5

23.Rb5

23...Nc6 24.Nf3 Ref7 25.Ng5 Rf6 26.Ne4 Rf5 27.Rxf5 Rxf5 28.Ng3 Ra5+ 29.h3 Rxa2 30.Ne4 a5 31.Nd2 Rc2 32.Nb1 a4 33.Na3 Rxc3 34.Nb5 Rxc4 35.Nxc7 a3 36.Nb5 a2 37.Nxd6 a1Q+ 38.Kh2 Rxd4 39.Nf5 Rb4 40.Nd6 Qe5+ 41.g3 Qxd6

0-1

Christopher Pentico (1439) –
Michael Henderson (1800) [B48]
Buckendorf Senior State Championship
Boise, Idaho (R4), May 16, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 a6 6.Be3 Qc7 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bd3 Nf6 9.0-0 d5 10.exd5

10.f4

10...cxd5 11.Re1 Bd6 12.g3

12.h3

12...0-0 13.Bg5 Be7 14.Bf4 Qc6 15.h4 Bb7 16.Qf3 Qb6 17.Na4 Qb4 18.b3 Bc6 19.c3 Qb7 20.Qh1?!

20.Be5 d4 21.Qe2 Bh1 22.Qf1 and White is close to equality.

20...d4 21.Qh3 Rfd8

21...Bxa4 22.bxa4 dxc3

22.cxd4 Rxd4 23.Bf1 Bxa4 24.bxa4 Rxa4

24...Nd5

25.Bg2 Nd5



Position after 25...Nd5

26.Rab1

26.Rxe6! Rd8 (26...Nxf4 27.gxf4 Qb2 28.Rf1 fxe6 29.Qxe6+ Kh8 30.Bxa8; 26...fxe6?? 27.Qxe6+ Kh8 28.Bxd5 Qc8 29.Qxe7+-)

26...Rb4 27.Bxd5 exd5

27...Qxd5

28.Qf5 Bf6 29.Rbc1 Rc4 30.Rb1 Qc6 31.h5 d4 32.Be5

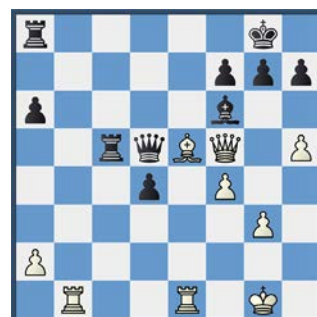
32.h6

32...Rc5 33.f4?

33.Qf4

33...Qd5?

33...Re8



Position after 33...Qd5

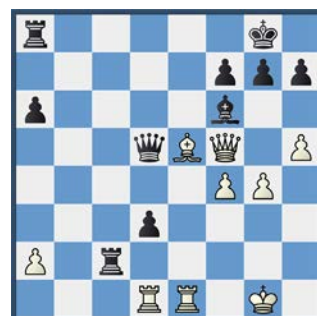
34.g4

White has a hard to see final saving tactic here. 34.Bb8!! Qc6!! (34...Qd8 35.Qxc5 Rxb8 36.Rxb8 Qxb8 37.Qc7! Qa8 38.Rb1+-; 34...Qxf5?? 35.Re8#) 35.Qxc5! Qxc5 36.Re8+ Qf8 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.Kf2, and Black's extra pawn doesn't confer any advantage. White has activity and the ability to restrict the black rook, while targeting the d-pawn. 38...a5 39.a4 Ra6 40.Rb5

34...d3 35.Rbd1

35.Bxf6 Qxf5 36.gxf5 gxf6

35...Rc2



Position after 35...Rc2

36.Re4

36.Qe4 Qxe4 37.Rxe4 Bxe5 38.Rxe5 d2 39.Rd5 Rxa2 40.R5xd2 Rxd2 41.Rxd2 a5 should be winning for Black, with the rook behind the extra passed pawn.

36...Qxa2

0-1

[If viewing online, click here for video of the final moments of the game.](#)



L-R: Chris Pentico, Michael Henderson. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.



CORVALLIS CHESS CLUB'S 3RD ANNUAL **DAN ROGERS** MEMORIAL

CHESS TOURNAMENT

July 18 and 19, 2026 • 5-SS, 90+10

📍 **Comfort Suites** at Linn County Fairground, 100 Opal Ct, **Albany, Oregon**



\$40 Entry Fee
(NTAFLOF)

REGISTRATION

\$40 EF! Visit corvallischess.org for the direct registration link, or scan the QR code. *Registration ends July 17 2026 at 5pm. No onsite registration. Registration will close at 120 players.*

SCHEDULE

Player's Meeting: Sat. 9:50am

Saturday: 10am, 2pm, 5:30pm, 9pm Blitz Tournament.

Sunday: 10am & 2pm.

Winners announced end of R5.

\$3000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND

OPEN: \$500-350-250. **Under 1600:** \$400-300-200. **Under 1000:** \$300-200-100.

Two half-point byes allowed, must request before first round. \$15 Play-Up fee.

BONUS PRIZES: **Top Female:** \$100 (NB allowed). **Mixed Doubles:** \$200 Best male+female 2-player team combined score among all sections. Team must average under 1900, may play different sections. Register (no extra fee) by 2pm Sat. **Top Unrated Player:** \$50. **Top Upset:** \$50.

5+3 BLITZ TOURNAMENT: **Sat. 9:00 pm**, register on site by 8:50 pm. \$10 EF. 80% prize payout!

USCF RATED - MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED - See uschess.org for details.

HOTEL RATE: \$169+tax double queen or king, includes free full hot buffet breakfast. Pool, sauna, gym, and other amenities. Reserve by 6/22/2026, call 541-928-0921 and request chess rates.

Tournament Organizer: **Jim Nelson** (CCC President) - jwnelson.nelson1@gmail.com

You can visit corvallischess.org for registration link and information.

Washington State Scholastic Chess Championship

WSSCC Organizers

The 2026 Washington State Scholastic Chess Championships (WSSCC) were held at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center on Saturday, April 25. Formerly known as the Washington State Elementary Chess Championships (WSECC), the event was renamed starting from this year with “Scholastic” replacing “Elementary” to reflect the inclusion of middle and high school sections in addition to the elementary sections, which comprise most of the field. This year’s event set a record for the largest chess event ever hosted in Washington State, with a whopping 1,538 players in attendance! The record attendance was up 41 players from last year and marked the first time the numbers have eclipsed 1,500 players.

The festivities kicked off on Friday evening with a fun puzzle solving competition followed by a bughouse tournament in the Courtyard Marriott across from the Convention Center. The main event started Saturday morning at 9:00 AM, with most games taking place on the fifth floor of the Tacoma Convention Center. As has become customary with this event, the Kindergarten section took place on the fourth floor and ran on an accelerated schedule, wrapping up just after 1:00 PM. The Middle School Open Championship two-day section took place at the Courtyard Marriott, with 20 players vying for the title of Washington State Middle School Chess Champion. Between all the players, parents, friends, tournament directors, vendors, and

convention center staff, the Greater Tacoma Convention Center was stretched to its limits and likely surpassed 6,000 persons on the premises during peak times throughout the day.

Besides the name change, the 2026 edition of the WSSCC brought back a few key events that existed pre-pandemic, including the two-day Middle School Championship section as well as the Friday night side events—puzzle-solving and bughouse! By popular demand, the Middle School Championship section, which was run on a one-day condensed schedule over the past few years, was expanded to a two-day event with a longer time-control to better serve the stronger players who use more time. With 20 players taking part in the two-day Middle School event, the organizers hope to continue growing this event in future years to better serve the middle school chess community. The Friday night side-events Puzzle Solving and Bughouse were brought back for the first time in six years to offer some fun warm-up activities for those arriving a day early and spending Friday night at a nearby hotel. Bughouse especially can be a great way to decompress and blow off some steam the night before the big event.

A constant stream of entries from across the state, often with inflections just before entry fee price-bumps, set the stage for this year’s amazing attendance record. In total, there were 19 distinct sections offered this year to serve players of all ages and levels: Kindergarten, First Grade Championship, First Grade Premier, Second Grade Championship, Second Grade Premier, Third Grade Championship, Third Grade



Overview of the playing hall. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Premier, Fourth Grade Championship, Fourth Grade Premier, Fifth Grade Championship, Fifth Grade Premier, Sixth Grade Championship, Sixth Grade Premier, Middle School Championship two-Day, Middle School U1500, Middle School U1100, High School Open, High School U1100, and Adult U1500.

A group of experienced chess organizers from throughout the United States collaborated to manage the logistics of hosting a tournament of such epic proportions. The gargantuan event ran incredibly smoothly in large part due to the efforts of the WSSCC Organizing Committee, tournament directors and judges, the Tacoma Convention Center Staff, and numerous supporters and volunteers! Several key staff members were recruited and flown in to serve in senior roles, including International Arbiters Chris Bird from Arizona and Glenn Panner from Chicago, as well NTD Maret Thorpe from Chicago. We would especially like to thank chief organizer Jacob Mayer, Master of Ceremonies Norm May, the dynamic pairings team of Ben Radin and Todd May, chief of staff James Stripes, MS two-day Championship TD Mani Atikankhotchasee, Kindergarten section Chief Lane Van Weerdhuizen, Kindergarten assistant TD and CEA Treasurer Gelareh Golanbar, lead runner Heather May, help desk supervisors Donna May and Marilyn Wilke, hand pairings team Brad Stensland and Tim Campbell.

Chess Enrichment Association (CEA) board members President Josh Sinanan and Edith Lau provided additional support along with numerous volunteers, scorekeepers, and floor judges including Siva Sankrithi, Sarang Sankrithi, Vivaan Sankrithi, Sangeeta Dhingra, Allen Messenger, Ani Barua, Christian Brickhouse, Trey Slaten, Jess Radin, Peter Zou, Sridhar Seshadri, Minda Chen, Henry Getz, Shuyi Han, Craig Moore, Mythri Achar, Vijay Sankaran, IM Anthony He, Daniel Qian, Selina Cheng, David Hirschowitz, Shelly Hirschowitz, Kevin Hirschowitz, Garima Chandra, Edward Cheng, Siddharth Agrawal, Detective Cookie, Durga Devaraj, Carola Sonder, Max Schmidt-Warnecke, Walter Guity, Daniel Wilke, Ethan Neff, David Hirschowitz, Adam Porth, Nicholas Liotta, Daniel Shubin, and Lennart Bjorksten. Special VIP guests included WIM Megan Lee, IM Georgi Orlov, IM Anthony He, GM Emil Anka,



Giant chess between rounds. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

and GM Vladimir Belous. Special thanks to our sponsors SettleKing and DiClano, Issaquah Highlands Chess Club, the Bolender Family, and the Levine Family.

The Tacoma Convention Center staff and security personnel seamlessly managed crowd control and the entrance to the playing hall, which only players and designated personnel with official badges were permitted to enter after the start of each round. Chess photographer and videographer wonder woman Meiling Cheng was once again our official photographer and captured many memorable moments through picture and video over the course of the day, all of which can be seen on the CEA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Chess-Enrichment-Association-103012328212247>.

Our official vendor this year was once again Northwest Designs Ink, a customized apparel company based in Bellevue, who were selling t-shirts and other customized chess-themed goodies. Our beloved chess book and equipment vendor John Dill from Spokane attended State but decided not to set up his vendor tables due to health issues, but we sincerely hope John will be back in future years! On the third floor just outside the parent waiting room, several vendors set up tables and had a steady flow of

traffic throughout the day, including: Chess4Life, Excel with Chess, Grand Knights Chess Academy, Cedric Davies, Chess Inclusive, and Embroiderrific.

As the USCF-rated Championship sections continue to grow and expand, more games begin with chess clocks used for the entire game, and the organizers are making a concerted effort to bring enough chess clocks to state each year. This year's state event had over 500 clocks ready to go in case games ran long, with most games in the Premier sections still starting without a clock. As the game gets faster and players continue to improve their skills, we encourage more players to practice using chess clocks and become familiar with their operation and best practices during the offseason.

After the marathon weekend of 3,000+ rated chess games, an awards ceremony was held Saturday evening to honor the top-scoring players and teams. In the spirit of expediency, those achieving a mere "plus" score of 3.0, 3.5, or 4.0 points were awarded a point-based trophy immediately following the completion of their final round game. Players who did not earn a trophy were awarded a commemorative participation medal. Special congratulations to the winners!

Kindergarten: Louis Xu (5.0, 875→922) and Yichen Liu (5.0, 797→877).

First Grade Championship: Baoshuo Yao (5.0, 1426→1456).

First Grade Premier: Ardthikshwar Sudhakar (5.0, 769→881) and Sathya Akshaj (5.0, 769→872).

Second Grade Championship: Easton Ren (5.0, 1498→1529)

Second Grade Premier: Isaac Avesar (5.0, 618→804), Dangdang Liang (5.0, 695→822) and Shirley Wang (5.0, 626→792).

Third Grade Championship: Mikhail Lagzdin (4.5, 1441→1469), Skandha Raj (4.5, 1562→1562), Kaiyi Han (4.5, 1322→1346), Loida Guo (4.5, 1539→1548) and Jeremy Ge (4.5, 1250→1348).

Third Grade Premier: Peter Goncharenko (5.0, 732→907), Eric Zhao (5.0, 774→917), Nolan Xie (5.0, 740→906) and Vihaan Ramana (5.0, 689→845).

Fourth Grade Championship: Anyi Li (5.0, 1421→1486).

Fourth Grade Premier: Alston Margetan (5.0, 819→1001), Golan Ben Simon (5.0, 781→955) and Brandon So (5.0, 828→1011).

Fifth Grade Championship: Aaron Huang (4.5, 1025→1343) and Adith

Vijay (4.5, 1351→1420).

Fifth Grade Premier: Vidur Jariwala (5.0, 984→1077) and Dhruv Deshmukh (5.0, 839→1006).

Sixth Grade Championship: Karsh Havaladar (5.0, 1530→1628).

Sixth Grade Premier: Maximilian Lange (4.5, 922→1019), Adam Swindell (4.5, 880→1005), Andrew Qi (4.5, 991→1035), Adhith Cheruku (4.5, 882→984) and Khai Tang (4.5, 877→963).

Middle School Open: Arnav Gadde (5.0, 1877→1930).

Middle School U1500: Austin Damrau (5.0, 1254→1424).

Middle School U1100: Anirudh Praveenkumar (5.0, 1145→1206), Kevin Jibin (5.0, 988→1140), and Arnav Shah (5.0, 1067→1165).

High School Open: Quinn Zhen Rampenthal (4.5, 1542→1604).

High School U1100: Pranav Annapureddy (5.0, 1095→1220).

Adult U1500: Rohit Singhal (4.0, 1326→1487), Brandon Turnbo (4.0, 1300→1606), Kashif Alam (4.0, 1300→1573) and Jianzhe Luo (4.0, 1323→1387).

In addition to the individual trophies, plaques were awarded to the top-scoring teams across grades K-6 for both the

Championship and Premier sections. Team score consisted of the top 5 scores from players attending the same school. Three levels of tiebreaks based on strength of opposition were used to break ties between teams with the same score. Congratulations to the top-scoring teams!

Top 10 Championship Teams

- First: Somerset Elementary (18.0, Bellevue)
- Second: Medina Elementary (16.0, Bellevue)
- Third: Open Window School (16.0, Bellevue)
- Fourth: Ella Baker Elementary (15.0, Redmond)
- Fifth: Bear Creek School (15.0, Redmond)
- Sixth: Chestnut Hill Academy (15.0, Bellevue)
- Seventh: Jing Mei Elementary (14.5, Bellevue)
- Eighth: Bellevue Children's Academy (14.5, Bellevue)
- Ninth: Evergreen School (13.5, Shoreline)
- Tenth: Cascadia Elementary (13.5, Seattle)

Top 10 Premier Teams

- First: Medina Elementary (19.5, Bellevue)
- Second: Christa McAuliffe Elementary (18.0, Sammamish)
- Third: Wedgwood Elementary (17.5, Seattle)
- Fourth: Thurgood Marshall Elementary (17.0, Seattle)
- Fifth: Cougar Ridge Elementary (17.0, Bellevue)
- Sixth: Endeavour Elementary (16.0, Issaquah)
- Seventh: Somerset Elementary (15.5, Bellevue)
- Eighth: Ruby Bridges Elementary (15.0, Bothell)
- Ninth: Kokanee Elementary (15.0, Woodinville)
- Tenth: Dutch Hill Elementary (15.0, Snohomish)

Congratulations to the amazing chess warriors who competed and many thanks to all who contributed to this fantastic event!

Pack your bags for State next year, set to take place at Spokane Convention Center on Saturday, April 24, 2027.



Players at the WSSCC. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

35th Annual WA vs BC Intermat

Josh Sinanan

The 35th Annual Washington vs British Columbia Intermat ended in a convincing 31-19 victory for Team Washington. The Washington vs British Columbia International Scholastic Chess Match, known colloquially as the Intermat, was hosted on Saturday May 9 at the Hotel 116 in Bellevue, Washington. Hotel 116, A Coast Hotel Bellevue, is conveniently located just off Interstate 405 near downtown Bellevue. Its central location and plentiful amenities—including an outdoor pool, fitness center, and attached Woods Coffee shop—made it an ideal location to host this international event. Besides hosting the Intermat, Hotel 116 was a happening place that weekend, with 130+ players taking part in the co-located Eastside Open, including a few players who were also playing in the Intermat! To discuss strategy and match planning, two team rooms were provided for the Team

British Columbia and Team Washington players, parents, and captains, with Team British Columbia taking the two parent waiting rooms on the lobby level and Team Washington operating on the foyer just outside the attached Woods Coffee Shop.

All players were present and accounted for at the start of the match, much to the relief of the captains and organizers! The British Columbia team had trouble finding a second kindergarten player, so the match was held with a total of 50 instead of 52 games to account for the missing kindergarten board. This meant that each kindergarten player for Team Washington only had to play one game against their Canadian counterpart, which kept the youngsters fresh and full of energy during their games.

On paper, Team Washington held the rating advantage in the younger grades

(K-5) while Team British Columbia held significant rating advantages in the high school grades (9-12), with several masters and experts playing. For the middle school grades (6-8), Washington brought balanced lineups (Grade six: 1700+1500, Grade seven: two x 1800, Grade eight: two x 1700), while Team British Columbia went with a more lopsided approach (Grade six: 2100 + 1500, Grade seven: 1700 + 1600, Grade eight: 1900 + 1700). In general, this seemed to favor Team Washington, since there were more players in the younger grades (12) where they held the advantage versus the older grades (8) where Team British Columbia was stronger.

Team Washington played White on all boards in the first round and obtained a strong 16.5-8.5 lead, winning the first 11 games in a row! Team Washington's rating advantage in grades K-5 was noticeable, as Team British Columbia



Team British Columbia and Team Washington. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.



Unpacking the team shirts.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.



Zooming in on the logo.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

struggled to score even a single draw. Especially noteworthy was Team Washington's momentum as the younger kids started rattling off the victories. Even eighth graders Selina Cheng and Rian Raja put their rally caps on and downed two higher-rated opponents with the white pieces. No doubt the pressure on Team British Columbia's middle boards to score some points after the thrashing in the younger grades took its toll. As has been the case in previous years, the home team typically has the advantage since they can attract stronger local players to participate without having to travel long distances. In recent years, many players have voiced concerns regarding travel visas and potential issues when crossing the USA-Canada border. As Washington Team Co-Captains Chouchan Airapetian and Josh Sinanan stressed to the players before each round, each move and decision is important and playing hard in every game helps the team.

In the second round, Team BC made a valiant comeback attempt with the white pieces, but they were unable to gain serious traction. The Washington players defended actively and launched well-timed counterattacks, which led to a 10.5-0.5 walloping of Team British Columbia in grades K-5. Only Team British Columbia's Josiah Lo managed to escape the wrath of his Evergreen opponent unscathed with a draw against Avyaan Roy Chowdhury in the Fourth Grade section.

Several unusual openings including 1.a3 and 1...a6 were employed by the British Columbia players to avoid preparation and take their Washington counterparts out of book. Despite dominating the high school boards as predicted, Team British Columbia was unable to take control of the middle boards, with Team Washington splitting grades six and seven 1-1 and winning grade eight 1.5-0.5 thanks to a clutch upset win by Rian Raja.

As this year's Intermat wound down, Team Washington celebrated their fantastic performance and well-deserved win with some Costco Pizza and refreshments from Metropolitan Market! Despite the match already being decided on paper with a few games still going, players from both teams continued to play fighting chess and show their best competitive spirit until the bitter end. A short closing ceremony concluded the day's festivities and wrapped up around 6:30 PM, after which several of the Intermat players from both teams jumped into round three of the Eastside Open. Some folks just can't get enough chess.

Congratulations to our 2026 Team

Washington All Stars: Louis Xu (kindergarten, one/one point), Liam Zeng (kindergarten, one/one point), Baoshuo Yao (first grade, two points), Liam Pham (first grade, two points), Easton Ren (second grade, two points), Felix Han (second grade, two points), Harvey Wang (third grade, two points), Mikhail Lagzdin (third grade, two points), Shawn Li (fourth grade, two points), Avyaan R. Chowdhury (fourth grade, 1.5 points), Riaan Babbar (fifth grade, two points), Imai Maharaja (fifth grade, two points), Odbayar Yondon (seventh grade, 1.5 points), Selina Cheng (eighth grade, 1.5 points), Rian Raja (eighth grade, two points).

Special thanks to the British Columbia Junior Committee FA Umang Banatwala, NM Ryan Leong, Eric Gu, and Gilian Mok, and many others who



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made this match possible. Many thanks to all the amazing Team BC families who made the trip down to Bellevue for the InterMat!

Kudos to Washington Team Co-Captain Chouchan Airapetian and her family for keeping everyone well-fed and hydrated throughout the match. We look forward to continuing this great tradition in the years to come!

Games

Selina Cheng (1742) –
Nicholas Pei-Chang Wu (1943) [B15]
 InterMat 35th Bellevue
 (R1.17), May 9, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6
 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.Nf3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0
 Bg4 9.c3 Nd7 10.Bc2 Re8 11.Qd3 Nf8
 12.Bd2 Bc7 13.Rfe1 Qd6 14.g3 Qd5
 15.Nh4 Ng6 16.c4 Qd7 17.Ng2 Rad8
 18.Bc3 Bb6 19.c5 Rxe1+ 20.Rxe1 Bc7
 21.Qe3 b5 22.b4 Be6 23.a3 Ne7 24.Bb2
 a5 25.Qd2 axb4 26.axb4 Be5 27.Nf4
 Bxd4

27...Bxf4 28.Qxf4 Nd5 Strongly posted knight.

28.Bxd4 Qxd4



Position after 28...Qxd4

29.Qxd4

35th Annual Washington vs British Columbia InterMat						
Grade	Team WA	USCF	Score	Team BC	CFC	Score
K	Louis Xu	821	1	Mahish Raj Sathish Raj	200	0
	Liam Zeng	712	1	N/A		N/A
1	Baoshuo Yao	1298	2	Echo Heming Fang	928	0
	Liam Pham	1224	2	Oscar Yuland Shi	892	0
2	Easton Ren	1505	2	Sage Wu	1020	0
	Felix Han	1390	2	Ty Shanmugam	661	0
3	Harvey Wang	1532	2	Che Rao	1497	0
	Mikhail Lagzdin	1383	2	Atharv Moorthy	915	0
4	Shawn Li	1815	2	Josiah Lo	1672	0.5
	Avyaan Roy Chowdhury	1474	1.5	Tyler Hun	1406	0
5	Riaan Babbar	1678	2	Kriyaansh Banatwala	1548	0
	Imai Maharaja	1658	2	Mingyang Zheng	1155	0
6	Miranda Meng	1726	1	Samuel Lu	2121	2
	Liam Glaser	1503	1	Kanish Raj Sathish Raj	1491	0
7	Odbayar Yondon	1874	1.5	Larry Yang	1753	1.5
	Aarav Bharathy Mohan	1842	1	Sining Lou	1622	0
8	Selina Cheng	1742	1.5	Nicholas Pei-Chang Wu	1943	0
	Rian Raja	1726	2	Jesse Law	1779	0.5
9	William Chen	1746	1	NM Justin Gao	2126	1.5
	Warren Chung	1428	0	Siyona Singh	1722	1.5
10	Rhadean Rubaiyat	1677	0	Minjun Koo	2203	2
	Aayan Hetamsaria	1416	0	Ryder Hsu	1877	2
11	Ihsan M. N. Tahir	1821	0	Aadit Arya	2122	2
	Jinmo Nam	1748	0	Joey Xu	2051	2
12	Aadi Hetamsaria	1760	0	Nathan Ping-Ying Wu	2201	2
	Austin Deng	1386	0.5	Daniel Wang	1973	1.5
31						19

29.Qe2 Qc4 30.Qxc4 (30.Bd3 Qxb4
 31.Nxe6 Rxd3! 32.Ra1! Ra3 33.Rd1 Nd5
 34.Nd4 Qxc5 35.Qe8+ Qf8 36.Qxc6 with
 complications leading to simplification.)

30...bxc4 31.Nxe6 fxe6 32.Rxe6 Nd5
 33.Re4 Nxb4 34.Rxc4 Nxc2 35.Rxc2

29...Rxd4 30.Nxe6 fxe6 31.Rxe6 Kf7

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32.Re4 Rxe4 33.Bxe4 Ke6 34.f4 Nd5
35.Kf2 f5 36.Bg2 Nxb4 37.Ke3 Nd5+
38.Kd4 b4 39.Bf1 Kd7 40.Bd3 g6
41.Kc4 Ke6 42.Be2 h6

42...Nf6 43.Bf3 Ne4 44.Kxb4 Kd5

43.Bf3 Kd7 44.h4 Kc7 45.Be2 Nc3 46.
Bf3

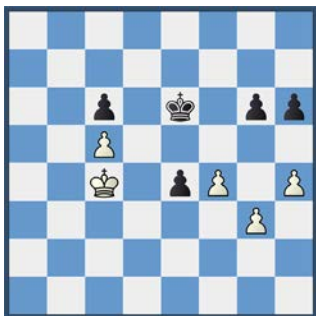


Position after 46.Bf3

46...Ne4?

46...Nd5 47.h5 (Not 47.Bxd5?? cxd5+
48.Kxb4 Kc6-+) 47...gxh5 48.Bxh5 Ne3+
49.Kxb4 Nf1 50.g4 Ng3 51.Kc4 Nxh5
52.gxh5 Kd7 53.Kd4 Ke6 Lots of side
lines to explore, but it's all under control
for both sides.

47.Bxe4! fxe4 48.Kxb4 Kd7 49.Kc4 Ke6



Position after 49...Ke6

50.Kd4?



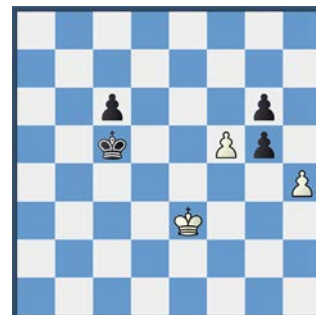
Selina Cheng (R) vs. Nicholas Pei-Chang Wu (L).
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Now we reach the moral of the game:
pawn endings are hard. 50.g4!! h5
(50...e3 51.Kd3 Kd5 52.g5! hxg5 (52...h5
53.Kxe3 Kxc5 54.f5!+-) 53.fxg5! Kxc5
54.h5!+-) 51.gxh5 gxh5 52.Kd4 Kf5
53.Ke3 zugzwang. 53...Kg4 54.Kxe4
Kxh4 55.Kf3+-

50...e3

The more obvious 50...Kf5 51.Ke3 h5
52.Kd4 Kg4 53.Kxe4 Kxg3 54.Ke5 Kxh4
55.Kd6 Kg3 requires counting out the
race. Black queens first, and the resulting
queen endgame might not look like
much—but Black will pick up a pawn and
certainly isn't losing. 56.Kxc6 h4 57.Kd6
h3 58.c6 h2 59.c7 h1Q 60.c8Q Qe4

51.Kxe3 Kd5 52.g4 Kxc5 53.g5 hxg5
54.f5



Position after 54.f5

54...gxh4??

54...Kd6! draws, after either 55.fxg6
(or 55.hxg5 gxf5 56.g6 Ke6 57.Kf4 Kf6
58.g7 Kxg7 59.Kxf5) 55...Ke7 (55...Ke6
56.hxg5 Ke7 is also fine.) 56.hxg5 (or
56.g7; but not 56.h5?? Kf6 57.Ke4 c5-+,



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when Black's separated passed pawns progress on their own.)

55.fxg6 h3 56.Kf2

1-0

**Rian Raja (1726) –
Jesse Law (1779) [D53]**
Intermat 35th Bellevue
(R1.18), May 9, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7
5.e3 Be7 6.Qc2 c6 7.Nf3 dxc4

7...0-0 There's normally a little tempo
game going on, where Black tries to
wait until the f1-bishop moves before
capturing on c4.

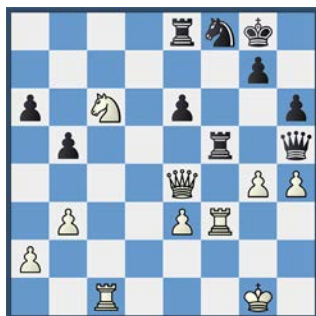
8.Bxc4 b5 9.Bd3 Bb7 10.0-0 h6 11.Bh4
0-0 12.Rfe1 a6 13.Rac1 c5 14.Bxf6 Bxf6
15.Be4 Bxe4 16.Nxe4 cxd4 17.Nxf6+
Qxf6 18.Nxd4 Ne5 19.b3 Rfd8 20.Qe4
Rd5 21.f4 Ng6 22.f5 Nf8 23.fxe6 fxe6
24.Nc6

24.Rc7!±

24...Re8 25.Rf1 Qg5 26.h4 Qh5 27.Rf3
Rf5??

27...Rd7∞

28.g4!



Position after 28.g4

28...Qxh4



Shawn Li (L) vs Josiah Lo (R).
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

28...Qg6 29.Ne5! (Also 29.h5 Qg5
30.Rxf5 exf5 31.Qxe8+-) 29...Rxe5
30.Rxf8+! Rxf8 31.Qxg6+-

29.Rxf5 Qg3+ 30.Kf1 Qh3+ 31.Ke2
exf5 32.Qxe8 Qg2+ 33.Kd3 Qd5+
34.Nd4 Qg2 35.gxf5 Qxa2 36.f6 Qg2
37.f7+ Kh7 38.Qe4+ Qxe4+ 39.Kxe4
Kg6 40.Rf1 h5 41.Ke5 Kh7 42.Ne6
Nd7+ 43.Kd6 h4 44.Kxd7 Kh6 45.f8Q
Kh5 46.Qxg7 b4 47.Nf4#

1-0

**Tyler Hun (1406) –
Shawn Li (1815) [D02]**
Intermat 35th Bellevue
(R2.9), May 9, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bf4 d5 4.a3

Of course, 4.e3 makes lots more sense
here.

4...c5 5.c3 Bd6 6.Bg3 0-0 7.e3 Qc7 8.Bd3
Nbd7 9.Nbd2 e5 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Be2
Bf5 12.Rc1

12.0-0; or 12.Nxe5 Bxe5 13.Bxe5 Qxe5
14.0-0? look survivable.

12...Nd3+ 13.Bxd3 Bxd3 14.Nb3 Bb5

Not to pick nits, but why not avoid
possible tempo hits like c4? 14...Ba6?

15.Nbd2

15.c4! is White's best chance to escape
the central trap. 15...Ba6? but things are
a bit messy again. (15...Bxc4?? 16.Bxd6
Qxd6 17.Rxc4+-)



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15...Rfe8



Position after 15...Rfe8

Sneaky.

16.a4??

16.c4! is again White's chance to avoid disaster.

16...Rxe3+!! 17.fxe3 Bxg3+ 18.hxg3 Qxg3#

0-1

**Larry Yang (1753) –
Aarav Bharathy Mohan (1842) [C05]**
Intermat 35th Bellevue
(R2.16), May 9, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Ndf3 Nc6 7.c3 cxd4 8.Nxd4

8.cxd4 is normal here, presumably to avoid positions with a black knight on e4.

8...Nc5 9.Ng3 Ne4 10.Bd3 Nxd4 11.cxd4

11.Nxd4 Qh4+ 12.g3 Nxd3 13.Nf3 Qh5 14.Rg1 might offer sufficient compensation for the pawn.; 11.Bxe4 dxe4 (11...Nxf3+ 12.Bxf3) 12.Nxd4 is interesting and different.

11...Bb4+ 12.Bd2

12.Kf1∞

12...Bxd2+ 13.Nxd2 Qh4+ 14.g3 Nxd3 15.Bb5+

15.Nf3 Qh6 16.Rg1 Ne4. The exchange of dark-square bishops weakens f4 compared with the similar line in the note to move 11.



Position after 15.Bb5+

15...Kf8

One complicated and completely not forced line here: 15...Bd7 16.Bxd7+ Kxd7 17.Nf3 Qh6 18.Qa4+ Kd8 19.Ng5 Qh5 20.Nxf7+ Ke7 21.Qa3+ Kxf7 22.Qxg3. White's king may be a bit less safe.

16.Nf3 Qh6 17.Rg1 Nf5

17...Ne4

18.Qd2 a6

18...Qh5!?

19.Bd3

19.Qa5! g6 20.Qd8+ Kg7 21.Qf6+ Kg8 22.Ng5 White's having more fun.

19...g6

19...Nh4∞

20.Rc1 Bd7 21.Rc7 Bc6 22.Bxf5 exf5 23.Ng5 Be8 24.e6!

White breaks through.

24...f6 25.Qb4+ Kg8 26.Qxb7 Rd8 27.Nf3 Rd6 28.Re7 Rd8

28...Qf8 29.Nh4 Rb6 30.Qxb6 Qxe7 31.Nxf5 Qf8 32.e7 Qf7 33.Nh6+

29.Rxe8+

1-0

**Ryder Hsu (1877) –
Rhadean Rubaiyat (1677) [D85]**
Intermat 35th Bellevue
(R2.21), May 9, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bd2 Bg7

5...Nb6!? 6.Nf3 (6.Bg5!? Bg7 7.e3 c5! (7...0-0?! 8.Nf3±) 8.dxc5 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Qxd1+ 10.Rxd1 N6d7 looks fine for Black.) 6...Bg7 7.Rc1 Nc6 8.e3 e5 with a game.

6.e4 Nxc3

6...Nb6 7.Be3 0-0 8.a4 a5 9.Rc1 seems more flexible for White.

7.Bxc3 0-0 8.Qd2 c6

A bit passive, more or less allowing White free rein. 8...c5; or 8...Nc6 put more immediate pressure on the white center.

9.h3 Nd7 10.Nf3



Position after 10.Nf3

10...Nf6

Once again Black could attempt action



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against the pawn center: 10...e5 11.dxe5 (11.Nxe5 Qe7 12.Be2 c5 13.Nxd7 Bxd7 14.0-0 Rfd8∞) 11...Qe7 12.Qd6 Qxd6 13.exd6 Bxc3+ 14.bxc3 Re8 15.0-0-0 (15.Bd3 Re6 recovers the pawn.) 15...Rxe4 16.Bd3±

11.Bd3 a5 12.a4 Qc7 13.0-0 Rd8



Position after 13...Rd8

It's easy to apprehend that White has a space advantage. An annotator would likely also say White has the initiative.

But why? What does it mean to have "initiative?"

Sometimes it's making direct threats, though if there are a series of direct threats, one might describe it as having the "attack," rather than initiative. Here, White isn't making direct threats. The situation here is that White has options, while Black must be prepared to deal with different plans. The mobile pawn center, while not actually threatening to advance right now, not only controls more space, but also hints at a future expansion. Black has trouble undertaking anything active, because White's potential central action must always be considered.

Meanwhile, White can build up and switch between potential plans, not committing to anything until there is a compelling reason to do so.



Riann Babbar.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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14.Rac1 b6 15.Rfe1 Ba6?!

It is approved strategy, when in a cramped position, to exchange pieces. In this position, the light-square bishop certainly looks limited, so attempting its exchange seems strategically reasonable. Unfortunately for Black, here it allows White to reposition the queen with gain of time, turning one of those central options into a favorable change of structure. 15...e6 might help restrain the d5 advance. It looks odd, because it really doesn't help the c8-bishop.

16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.Qe2 Raa8

17...Qb7 18.Ne5 (or 18.e5 Nd5 19.e6!?) 18...Rd6±

18.d5! c5 19.Qc4 Ne8 20.e5!

Even more space!

20...Qd7 21.Rcd1 e6

Black takes action. The other option is

to shift the queen around waiting while White sharpens the ax. 21...Qb7 22.Ng5 Bh6 23.Ne4 Bg7 24.h4±

22.d6± Rdb8 23.Qh4



Position after 23.Qh4

Oh look. There's a kingside.

23...Bf8 24.Ng5 h6 25.Ne4 b5? 26.Bd2!

White declines to be distracted. Of course

26.Nxc5 is also strong.

26...Kh7 27.Nxc5

Oh, ok. There's time for a snack.

27...Qc6 28.Ne4 bxa4 29.d7 Ng7

1-0

Nathan Ping-Ying Wu (2201) –

Austin Deng (1386) [B31]

Intermat 35th Bellevue

(R2.26), May 9, 2026

[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.0-0 Bg7 5.Re1 d6

Kind of creating a self-pin, though this isn't too terrible in this case. 5...Nf6; and 5...e5 are the main moves here, usually leading to different central structures.; For something unusual and yet sound, Black might try 5...Qb6

6.c3

6.e5!?

6...Qb6 7.Bxc6+ bxc6

7...Qxc6

8.d4 Bb7

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 Bg4 puts some pressure on the white center.

9.dxc5

9.e5! dxe5 10.dxe5 Rd8 11.Qa4 Nh6 12.Bg5 with initiative, since 12...Qxb2? 13.Nbd2 is just overwhelming development.

9...Qxc5 10.Be3 Qc4?!

10...Qa5±

11.Nbd2 Qa6 12.Nb3

12.e5!? dxe5 13.Bc5 Rd8 14.b4±

12...c5 13.e5 0-0-0 14.exd6

14.e6!?

14...exd6 15.Ng5



Position after 15.Ng5



Team WA players and captains celebrate the team's victory: (L-R) Josh Sinanan, Selina Cheng, Chouchan Airapetian, and Rian Raja. Photo Credit: Meiling Cheng.

15...Nh6

15...Rd7 16.Qg4 Nf6 17.Qh3 is a volatile and unclear sort of tactical position. The Stockfish engine suggests 17...Re8 18.Nxf7 Bd5 19.Nxd6+ Qxd6 20.Nxc5 Be6 21.Qf3 Bd5 22.Qh3 with a repetition! There are so many possible side lines there that I find it hard to credit this happening between real people.

16.Nd2

16.Bf4

16...Qc6 17.f3 Rde8?

17...Rd7∞

18.Nc4± Rd8 19.Na5 Qc7 20.Nxb7 Qxb7 21.Qa4 Nf5 22.Bf4

22.Bf2

22...Bh6

22...h6 23.Ne4 g5

23.Rad1 f6?!

23...Rh8 24.Nxh7 Bxf4 25.Qxf4 Rfe8 26.b3±

24.Ne6 Bxf4 25.Nxf4?!

25.Nxd8+-

25...Qd7 26.Qa6+ Qb7 27.Qc4 Rde8

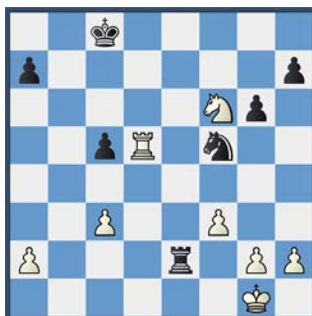
28.Nd5 Rh8 29.b4 Qc6 30.bxc5?

30.g4; or 30.b5 should win.

30...Qxc5+ 31.Qxc5+ dxc5 32.Rxe8+ Rxe8 33.Nxf6?

33.g4 Nh4 34.Kf2 offers White some chances.

33...Re2 34.Rd5



Position after 34.Rd5

34...Rxc2??

Oh no! 34...Rxa2 35.Rxc5+ Kb7 36.Nxh7 Ra1+ 37.Kf2 Ra2+ is a draw.

35.Kxc2

1-0



Jinmo Nam.

Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.



Vancouver Open

July 25 - 26, 2026

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
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay with Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com, Tag: WA-Chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), check mailed to address above, or cash at site.

Site: Hampton Inn & Suites, 315 SE Olympia Drive, Vancouver, WA 98684. (360) 891-3000.

HR: \$191 Standard King/Double Queen Room. Booking link: (coming soon). Use code 901 if booking by phone.

Format: A 5-round, USCF rated Swiss in two sections: Lewis Open and Clark U1700. Maximum of 70 players, please register early.

Time Control: Rd. 1: G/60; +10,
Rds. 2-5: 40/120, SD/30; +10.

Prize Fund: \$2,700 (based on 60 paid entries).

Lewis Open: 1st – 3rd: \$400, 325, 250.

1st U2000/U1800: \$150

Clark U1700: 1st – 3rd: \$300, 200, 150.

1st U1600/U1400/U1200: \$140, 1st Unrated: \$105.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset win: \$25, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Senior Player (50+, by TPR): \$50.

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

Entry Fee: \$90 if postmarked or online by 7/18, \$100 by 7/24, \$110 at site. \$45 play-up fee if rated U1700 USCF and playing in Lewis Open. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

At-site registration: Sat.: 9 - 9:30 AM.

Rounds: Sat. @ 10 AM, 12:30 PM, 6 PM.
Sun. @ 10 AM, 3:30 PM.

Rating: USCF rated. July 2026 USCF rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Memberships: USCF and WCF membership required, other states accepted.

TOURNAMENTS



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June 13 (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/>.

June Quads

June 27-28 (Sat.-Sun.)

See below.

Emerald City Open

June 3, 10, 17, 24 (Wed.)

Come to the club for casual chess anytime 7-11pm. It's free!

Casual Night

June 5, 12, 19, 26 (Fri.)

One U.S. Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm. **Time control:** 40 moves in 90 minutes w/10sec. increment, then sudden death 60 minutes w/10sec. increment. SCC members free, \$5/night others. Play in any or all rounds! **Sign up** at contact@seattlechess.club. **Venue:** Seattle CC, 28 players max.

It's Summertime

Coming up:

- **Mariners game** – July 5; SCC goes baseball, details on our website
- **July Quads** – July 18; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Seafair Open** – August 8-9; confirmed!

Check our events calendar periodically for confirmed dates.

EMERALD CITY OPEN

JUNE 27-28, 2026

A 5-round Swiss in 2 sections – Open and Reserve (U1800)

PRIZE FUND: \$3,000 BASED ON 60 PAID ENTRIES, 3 PER PRIZE GROUP

OPEN: 1ST \$780 2ND \$520 U2000 \$220

RESERVE: 1ST \$600 2ND \$400 U1600 \$200 U1400 \$120 U1200/UNR \$80

BIGGEST UPSET WIN, EACH SECTION, RDS 1-4 \$10

- ❖ **Time controls:** Round 1 – Game/60 + 10 second increment; Rounds 2-5 – Game/90 + 15 second increment
- ❖ **Entry fees** by 6/20: SCC members \$75, others \$105. After 6/20 add \$10. Unrated – free with purchase of 1-yr US Chess and 1-yr SCC memberships. **Entry fees must be paid within 72 hours of registering or face withdrawal!**
- ❖ **Play up fee:** for USCF 1700-1799 playing in Open section, \$40 SCC members, \$50 others.
- ❖ **Rounds:** Saturday 9:45am, 1:00 & 5:15pm; Sunday 11:00am & 3:15pm. **Check in:** 9:00-9:30am.
- ❖ **Byes:** 2 half-point byes available. Commit at registration for Sunday rounds.
- ❖ **Venue:** Seattle University, Center for Science & Innovation (Sinegal) Building, rooms 100-110. Building is at SW corner of 12th Ave. & E. Marion St., Seattle 98122.
- ❖ **Capacity:** 80 players max.
- ❖ **Register** at <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration>. US Chess membership required.

Waitlist process: SCC's policy is that the first player on the wait list by earliest date of registration is first to be allocated a seat if a seat opens up due to withdrawal or non-payment. The next player then moves up to first. However, SCC members have waitlist priority as follows: If a SCC member registers on the wait list, their registration date will be moved up by 3 days, which may put them above non-SCC waitlisters.

Refund policy: Refunds of entry fees for withdrawals up to 6pm 6/26 will be made subject to a \$10 processing fee + Paypal/Venmo fees. Refunds will not be issued for withdrawals after 6pm 6/26.

Questions? email contact@seattlechess.club.

BELLEVUE CHESS CLASSIC



SAT-SUN, AUGUST 15-16, 2026

EMBASSY SUITES BELLEVUE

3225 158TH AVE SE, BELLEVUE, WA 98008

Format: A 6-round Swiss in three sections:
Tiglon Open, Seirawan U1800 & Donaldson U1300.

Maximum of 200 players, please register early to guarantee your spot.

Schedule: Rounds (6): Sat @ 9am, 1pm, 5pm.
Sun @ 10am, 2pm, 6pm. Players whose games run long may request a late start for the next round.

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

Prize Fund: \$6,500 based on 100 paid entries

Tiglon Open: 1st – 3rd: \$650 – \$550 – \$450.
1st U2100/U1900: \$225.

Seirawan U1800: 1st – 3rd: \$550 – \$450 – \$350.
1st U1700/U1500: \$225.

Donaldson U1300: 1st – 3rd: \$450 – \$350 – \$250.
1st U1200/U1000: \$225, 1st Unrated: \$170.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$20 per round
Best Female Player (by TPR): \$75.
Best Senior Player (by TPR): \$75.
Best Dressed: \$20/day.

Entry Fee: \$125 by Aug 8, \$150 after. \$75 play-up fee if rated 1700-1799 USCF or 1200-1299 USCF and playing in Tiglon Open or Seirawan U1800, respectively. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, or US Chess 2300+. 50% discount for Seniors (50+).

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

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

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of August USCF or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. CFC used for Canadian players if it is higher.

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. 8/14 @ 5pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Bellevue Classic Blitz: Saturday 8-9:30pm (after rd. 3 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. Sat @ 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 August 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

