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Front Cover

Washington State Governor Bob Ferguson at the opening ceremony of the Washington State Governor's Cup.

Photo credit: Jim Kopriva.

Back Cover

AJ Jones contemplates his options in a sharp line of the London System at the Washington State Governor's Cup.

Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Submissions

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Mark Trevor Smith
(1946-2026)

Source: Return Home https://my.gather.app/remember/mark-trevor-smith-sep-2026

Mark Trevor Smith, educator and chess enthusiast, passed away peacefully on September 18, 2026, at the age of 80. Born on August 10, 1946, Mark had a generous, dynamic, and humorous spirit. He spent his life dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, the discovery of humility, and finding the beauty in everyday life. He studied English Literature at Yale University (B.A., 1968), University of Miami (M.A., 1978), and Stony Brook University (Ph.D., 1982).

After teaching elementary, junior high, and high school, he taught English Literature for 26 years at Missouri State University with a specialty in the poets of the British Romantic Era. Publications include the introduction and a contributing essay to *Blake and His Bibles*, ed. David Erdman (1990), and *All Nature is but Art: The Coincidence of Opposites in English Romantic Literature* (1993). Upon his retirement from secondary education, he moved to Seattle where he continued teaching youth chess for more than ten years as a private tutor and with the after-school program Chess4Life.

He was a self-professed "chess addict" who held the titles to prove it: six-time Springfield, MO Chess Champion (1984–1985, 1997, 2004–2006), Class A Missouri State Champion (2000), Senior Washington State Chess Champion (2010), and a top 50 rank in USA "Quick Chess" (2012). He will also be remembered for his love of music, comedy, and tennis.

Mark is survived by his daughters, Priscilla Rathbone and Catherine Blake Smith, and his grandson, Frost "Rock" Rathbone. He will be dearly missed. In lieu of a service, please leave a memory or a photo on his remembrance webpage.

You may also honor Mark's memory when you read a work by William Blake, John Keats, or P.G. Wodehouse, get the correct answer during an episode of *Jeopardy*, or hear the songs "Carry You" by Tim Minchin or "My Sweet Lord" by George Harrison.

"Kiss the joy as it flies."—William Blake

Chess Peace

The Chess Friends
The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, The Legend Vivaan

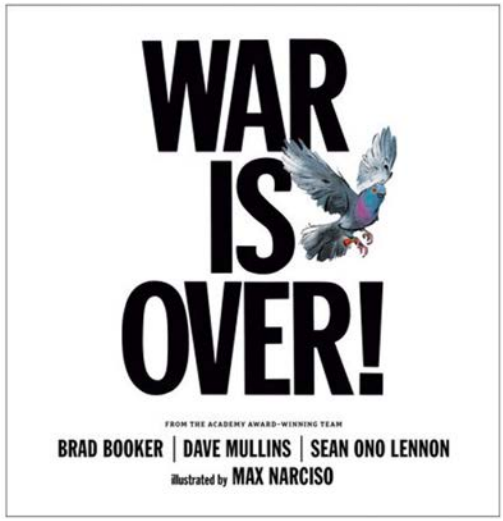
Howdy! It's The Chess Friends!

It's December! As the year winds down, we reflect on the ups and downs of the year that's been and look ahead hopefully toward the New Year. What do we wish for, in our chess world full of positional battles, tactical fights, victories, and defeats?

We wish for PEACE.







A movie poster for WAR IS OVER! *Inspired by the Music from John and Yoko (source: Wiki) and a cover for the picture book WAR IS OVER! by Sean Ono Lennon, Dave Mullins, and Brad Booker.*

There is this saying that chess is a representation of war. Maybe it was a thousand years ago, but times changed and the game evolved. People evolved. ***Chess became a symbol of peace.***

How else would you explain the fact that, when Sean Ono Lennon and his friends were creating the film *WAR IS OVER!* inspired by the song "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, they turned to chess as a symbol of peace between the two fighting armies?

The film went on to win the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 2024, and later was adapted into a picture book.

In this holiday article, we want to reflect on the idea that chess is a representation of peace. It is a centuries-old vehicle of diplomacy, collaboration, friendship, and learning.

Let's start with some history.

It is believed that chess originated in sixth-century India from the ancient strategy game of *chaturanga*. With its four divisions of an army on each side—cavalry, infantry, elephantry, and chariotry—and with the goal to coordinate them to surround your opponent's king, this early chess was indeed a war strategy game. "A war without bloodshed," as they said.

As people began realizing that conflict could be resolved by many means other than war, chess evolved from a game of war to a diplomatic instrument.

Shortly after the game was created, Devasharma, on behalf of the Gupta Empire, sent a beautifully made chaturanga set to the Persian king Khosrow I of the Sassanid Empire. The board was made with ebony and ivory, rubies and emeralds adorned the pieces, but no rules for the game were provided. The challenge for the Persian court was to figure out how to play and master the game, which wise vizier Bozorgmehr did. It was an early intellectual diplomacy act, when two legendary empires shared a game challenge, bringing out the best through competition and learning rather than war.

In the ninth century in the Abbasid Empire, Caliph Harun al-Rashid of

Baghdad used chess as his go-to move for diplomacy. Legend has it that he gifted Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne a chess set, to set up a strategic alliance between the empires. Shortly thereafter, Byzantine emperor Nicephorus I sent the Caliph a diplomatic letter detailing the geopolitical dynamics between their empires, using chess as the metaphor and common language. Fast forward to the 14th century and we see the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire of Turkey regularly exchanging the fancy ebony and ivory chess sets to show understanding, respect, and diplomacy.

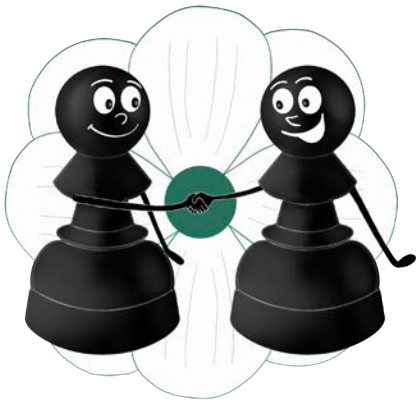
And let's not forget about Benjamin Franklin's efforts to find peace through chess! While serving in London in the 1770s as a spokesman for American colonies, he played several games with Lady Caroline Howe, whose family had close ties with the British monarchy. These chess games looked like friendly gatherings, a chance for Franklin to play a formidable chess opponent. However, they also doubled as secret meetings to find a peaceful compromise between Britain and America. These talks couldn't stop the impending war, but it was a noble effort nevertheless.



"Lady Howe mating Benjamin Franklin" by Edward Harrison May, 1867, from the Yale University Collection. Source: Wiki.

As life went on, chess spread and grew, and wasn't just a tool of diplomatic strategy anymore. Chess became its own world. Chess books were being printed, chess ideas were being exchanged, matches were being held, bringing people from all over the world to sit down together only a chessboard away. They didn't need to discuss any diplomacy, nor did they need to know each other's language. All they needed was to shake hands and begin the game.

That handshake itself is a deeply intentional sign of peace, goodwill, and the hopes of a good game. Traced way back before the invention of chess, handshakes are a symbol of trust and peace: you extend your right hand and shake it with your opponent's, to show that you came with no weapons or bad intentions. You came peacefully to find the truth that exists on the chessboard, in the chess world, aside from any politics.



The chess match that became widely politized was the 1972 World Championship between Bobby Fischer of the United States and Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union, the Match of the Century. With political tensions at their peak, non-chess players on both sides thought that a win would score a big cultural and intellectual triumph in the Cold War. After a long 21 games, Fischer was declared the 11th (and first American) World Chess Champion. America scored the big win. Fischer won for his country and for American pride. While differing media sources may have spun this in any number of ways, any chess player knows that you don't come to tournaments to play against enemies. You come because you enjoy chess, its intellectual challenge, and the fun of seeing what your opponent can think of no matter who they are. You come to try your ideas, get inspired, and learn something new together with your opponent, with chess as the vehicle for this peaceful learning and growth.

During the second round of the match, Fischer forfeited the game because he was annoyed by the distraction of the noisy photos and video recordings, and demanded that the match be held in a backstage room without spectators. Spassky could have said no to this demand. Then, he would have been guaranteed the world champion title, a victory for his country. But he declined an easy win. He agreed to Fischer's demands because he didn't come to win a Cold War match. He came to play chess. Later in the match, after Fischer brilliantly won the 6th game, Spassky, alongside the audience, stood up and applauded the great performance.

The dust settled, the time passed, the water flowed under the bridge, the chess champions changed, and the Cold War was no more. What was left of the Match of the Century, that at one point deemed so important politically? Mutual respect and friendship between Fischer and Spassky. They were never enemies. The game helped them to connect and become friends.

Fast forward a few decades and Dutch artist Felix Albers took the idea that chess connects people a leap further. In 2014, he created a spectacular modern chess variant *Paco Ŝako*, which means "peace chess" in Esperanto.



Paco Ŝako set, as seen on Amazon.

Paco Ŝako features the same board, with the same pieces and movements. The difference? Capturing is replaced with connecting. What a beautiful sentiment! Rather than removing each other from the board, opposing pieces form unions to share a square and move together. Each side can move the union—their peace and their partner—in the way their own piece moves, taking turns in the lead, like dancing on the board. Capturing no longer simplifies the board, and united pieces become shared opportunities. You win not by checkmate, but by joining one of your pieces to the opposing king.

The pieces themselves are beautifully designed, and when they merge into a union, the union's base resembles a yin and yang symbol of the Chinese philosophy of complementary forces converging for cohesion, a beautiful message that this game is all about.

If you want to learn more about this lovely variant, visit www.prodigystrats.com/post/paco-sako, and try playing it online at www.pacoplay.com. *Paco Ŝako* is growing: there are tournaments, world champions, courses, and educational work developed, including by the Rahimi sisters who were the first to teach *Paco Ŝako* at a school in Iran.

Fast forward another decade and we're in July 2026. The legendary GM Judit Polgar, the only super GM woman in the history of chess, who once peaked at eighth place in the world by rating, was nominated to become the President of Hungary. Was it because she is great at the strategic chess battles and has won many chess "wars"? Maybe. Was it because she is kind and generous and unites the world through chess? Definitely! Judit Polgar was nominated because her country needed a worldwide-respected leader who can bring peace and unity.



GM Judit Polgar in 2008.
Photo by Ygrek via Wiki

Why did Benjamin Franklin, and so many political leaders before and after him, use chess to stop a war, or to find a common ground? Why does the film *War Is Over!* use chess to represent a connection between fighting armies? How could Spassky, after a tragic loss, get up to applaud his opponent? Why would Judit Polgar be the best candidate to lead a country?

The answer to all these questions is that chess has the potential to bring out the best in people. After all, the best chess players are not only those who climb the highest peaks of chess mountains, but also those who use chess to find their inner peace. The peace to not worry about wins or losses. The peace to not worry about politics. The peace where we don't dwell on the past or fret about the future, but instead enjoy the greatest gift there is, the present! Playing chess is a fun opportunity to learn something new now. When we view the game of chess like that, we achieve the inner peace, and we start to understand that outer peace, the peace we feel toward others, comes from within us.

The current Dalai Lama said, "an atmosphere of peace must first be created within ourselves, then gradually expanded to include our families, our communities, and ultimately the whole planet."

We have the power to make history. We have the power to stop repeating past mistakes. We have the power to find worldwide peace and happiness through chess, a universal language that unites us all.

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends! Peace!

The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, The Legend Vivaan



Western Idaho Open

December 5th - 6th

ROUND TIMES:

Saturday - 10AM, 2pm, and 6pm.
Sunday - 10am and 2pm

TIME CONTROL:

All rounds G75 +15
No half point bye requests after round 2

LOCATION:

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Washington State HS/MS Mini-Teams

Randy Walther and Randy Kaech

On Saturday, November 14 at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, 43 mini chess teams (three players each) from 20 High Schools and two Middle Schools battled for five rounds. The Sehome A Mini Team with Owen Scollon 1876 at First Board, Owen Zhang 1682 at Second Board and Jeb Stroud 1612 at Third Board won all five of their matches scoring 12.5 out of possible 15 points. They won the Mini Teams Chess Championship in 2025 as the number one seed, but this year there were three other very strong chess teams to battle.

Round 1 **SHM A** won all three games vs Franklin HS B (finished with six points)

Round 2 **SHM A** won all three games vs North Kitsap HS B (finished 13th with nine points)

Round 3 **SHM A** won two games but lost on First Board vs North Creek HS (finished third with 11 points)

Round 4 **SHM A** won two games and drew on Second Board vs Interlake HS (finished second with 12 points)

Round 5 **SHM A** won two games but lost on Third Board against Hanford HS A (finished fifth with 11 points)

The six strongest teams in the 2026 State HS/MS Mini Team Chess Championship were:

Mercer Island HS with an average rating of **1736** (finished fourth with 11 points)

North Creek HS (Bothell) with an average rating of **1732**

Sehome HS A with an average rating of **1723**

Interlake HS (Bellevue) with an average rating of **1682**

Hanford HS A with an average rating of **1421**

North Kitsap HS A with an average rating of **1309**

None of 128 chess players in this event won all of their games. Only four players scored 4.5 (four wins and one draw) and they were awarded All Star Chess Medals.

2026 Mini Teams Tournament All Stars:

Owen Zhang Sehome, Elam Bouckenooghe Providence Christian, Jacob Baldinger Sehome, Cash Morrical Hanford, and Niko Erdmann Hanford.

Owen Scollon (1876) – Yuntao Liu (1745) [B00]
2026 Washington State Mini-Teams Ch
Mukilteo, WA (R4), November 14, 2026
[Owen Scollon]

Sehome was in second place going into our fourth-round showdown against Interlake. I knew this was a critical match, but I wasn't super confident going into the round. I had just played my worst game of the tournament, while my opponent had just pulled off a big upset win. I was also extremely tired from a long day of chess.

1.e4 b6

A very rare opening, coincidentally called the Owen Defense. It is, as the name suggests, the defense to play against me.

2.Nc3

I didn't feel like playing d4.

2...Bb7 3.d4 e6 4.a3 d5 5.e5 c5

I was tired enough that I was originally planning to play Bg5 here, but I realized just in time that it would hang the bishop.

6.Nf3

6.Bg5?? Qxg5

6...Nc6 7.Bg5 Qd7 8.Ne2?!

I wanted to play c3 and bring the knight





around to g3.



Position after 8.Ne2

8...Nge7?!

8...f6∓ Black's position would have been slightly better here.

9.c3 h6 10.Bd2 Nc8?! 11.Ng3 c4 12.Nh5!

I thought for a while before playing Nh5. The engine approves of this move.

12...b5?! 13.h4 Nb6 14.g4 0-0-0 15.g5 g6?!

...g6 allows the knight to go to f6, where the bishop is the only piece that can remove it.

16.Nf6 Qe7?

16...Qc7! With the queen on c7, Bg5 no longer targets the queen.

17.h5! Bg7 18.hxg6 fxg6? 19.gxh6 Bxf6 20.exf6 Qf7 21.Bg5 Nd7 22.Bh3 Rde8 23.Qe2

By this point, I was feeling pretty good about my position. However, I went below five minutes on the clock while my opponent still had around 15 minutes left.

23...Nxf6 24.Ne5 Nxe5 25.Qxe5 Ne4?! 26.Bf4 Kd8

[Diagram top of next column]

27.f3

Bxe6 would have been better, but f3 was still winning. 27.Bxe6! Rxe6 *(27...Qxe6 28.Qc7#)* 28.Qxh8+



Position after 26...Kd8

27...g5? 28.Qb8+ Bc8 29.Be5 Nf6? 30.Qd6+ Nd7 31.Qc7+ Ke7 32.Qd6+ Kd8 33.Qc7+ Ke7

I wanted to get a few extra seconds from increment. In doing so, I scared some of my teammates who thought I was going to take a draw.

34.Bd6+ Kf6 35.0-0-0 Kg6 36.Bg4?

Allows 36...Nf6, preventing Bh5 and threatening to trade queens. 36.Rdg1 would have been better than Bg4.

36...Rxh6??

36...Nf6 White would still be winning, but not as quickly.

37.Rxh6+ Kxh6 38.Rh1+ Kg7 39.Be5+ Nxe5 40.Qxe5+ Kf8 41.Bh5 Qf4+ 42.Qxf4+ gxf4 43.Bxe8 Kxe8

And Black is completely lost. Black's bishop is trapped behind its own pawns and the f4-pawn will fall soon.

44.Rh8+ Kd7 45.Rf8 Bb7 46.Rf7+ Kc6 47.Rxf4 Bc8 48.Rf7 Bd7 49.Kd2 a5 50.Ke3 Kd6 51.f4 Kc6 52.Kf3 Kc7 53.Kg3 Kd8 54.Kh4 Ke8 55.Rg7 a4 56.Kg5 Kd8 57.Kf6 Kc8 58.Ke7 Kc7 59.Rg8 Bc8 60.Rxc8+

1–0

Rian Raja –
Owen Zhang [E92]
2026 Washington State Mini-Teams Ch
Mukilteo, WA (R3), November 14, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.dxe5

This central exchange is considered to lead to immediate equality. The main line, by far, is 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7, when three moves are the most likely: 9.b4, 9.Ne1, and 9.Nd2.

7...dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Bg5

9.Nxe5 Nxe4 10.Nxe4 Bxe5

9...Re8 10.Nd5 Nxd5 11.cxd5 h6

This seems fine, but the white bishop may be slightly better placed on e3. 11...c6 is book, when 12.Bc4 cxd5 13.Bxd5 tends toward equality.

12.Be3 f5?!

This seems ambitious, but perhaps unnecessarily risky, opening up the king on the a2–g8 diagonal.

13.exf5

Exchanging on f5 makes the black pawn duo more mobile. Better is 13.Rc1, when advances or captures by the black f-pawn seem counter-productive, and 13...c6 14.Bc4 Kh7 15.h4 starts to look rather threatening.

13...gxf5 14.Rc1 f4 15.Bd2 e4 16.Nh4 Bxb2?!

16...Bf6 17.Ng6 *(17.Rxc7! Bxh4 18.g3 Bf6 19.gxf4* is a Stockfish-inspired piece sacrifice, intending to use the open lines to the black king for attack.*)* 17...f3 18.Bf1 Bf5 19.Nf4 with obscure complications.

17.Rxc7 Be5 18.Rc4 Bd6 19.g3?

19.Bh5! Rd8 20.g3! Nd7 *(20...fxg3 21.hxg3)* 21.gxf4 Nf6 22.Rg1+ appears to give White attacking chances.

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19...f3 20.Bd1 Nd7 21.Nf5?

21.0-0!? Nc5 22.Be3 b6 23.Re1



Position after 21.Nf5

21...Bf8

21...Nc5! 22.Nxd6? Nd3+ 23.Kf1 Bh3+ 24.Kg1 e3!! with the tactical point 25.Bxe3 Rxe3 26.fxe3 f2#

22.Nxh6+ Kh7?!

22...Bxh6 23.Bxh6 Ne5 24.Rc7 Nd3+ 25.Kd2 Nxf2 26.Rf1 Nxd1 27.Rxd1, and Stockfish claims White is slightly better.

23.Nf7 Kg6 24.Ng5 Ne5 25.Nxe4??

The pressure to navigate in these complex and treacherous positions almost inevitably causes errors—in this case it's immediately fatal. Instead, the exchange sacrifice 25.Rxe4 Bf5 (25...Nd3+ 26.Kf1 Rxe4 27.Nxe4 Bh3+ 28.Kg1 Bg2 (28...Rc8 29.Bxf3 Ne1! 30.Bd1! *(30. Bxe1?? Rc1-+)* 30...Bg2 31.Ng5 Bxh1 *(31...Bxd5!?)* 32.Kxh1 Nd3 33.Ne4. Who knows? Three connected passed pawns do count for something.) 29.Bc2 Ne5 30.h4 Bxh1 31.h5+! Kf7 *(31...Kxh5 32.Nf6#)* 32.Kxh1 is similarly chaotic, yet seems to favor White.) 26.0-0 Bxe4 27.Nxe4 works better for White.

25...Nxc4 26.Bc2 Bf5

0–1



Samuel Wang of Hanford High School with his Top Unrated prize. Photo credit: Korben Westergreen.



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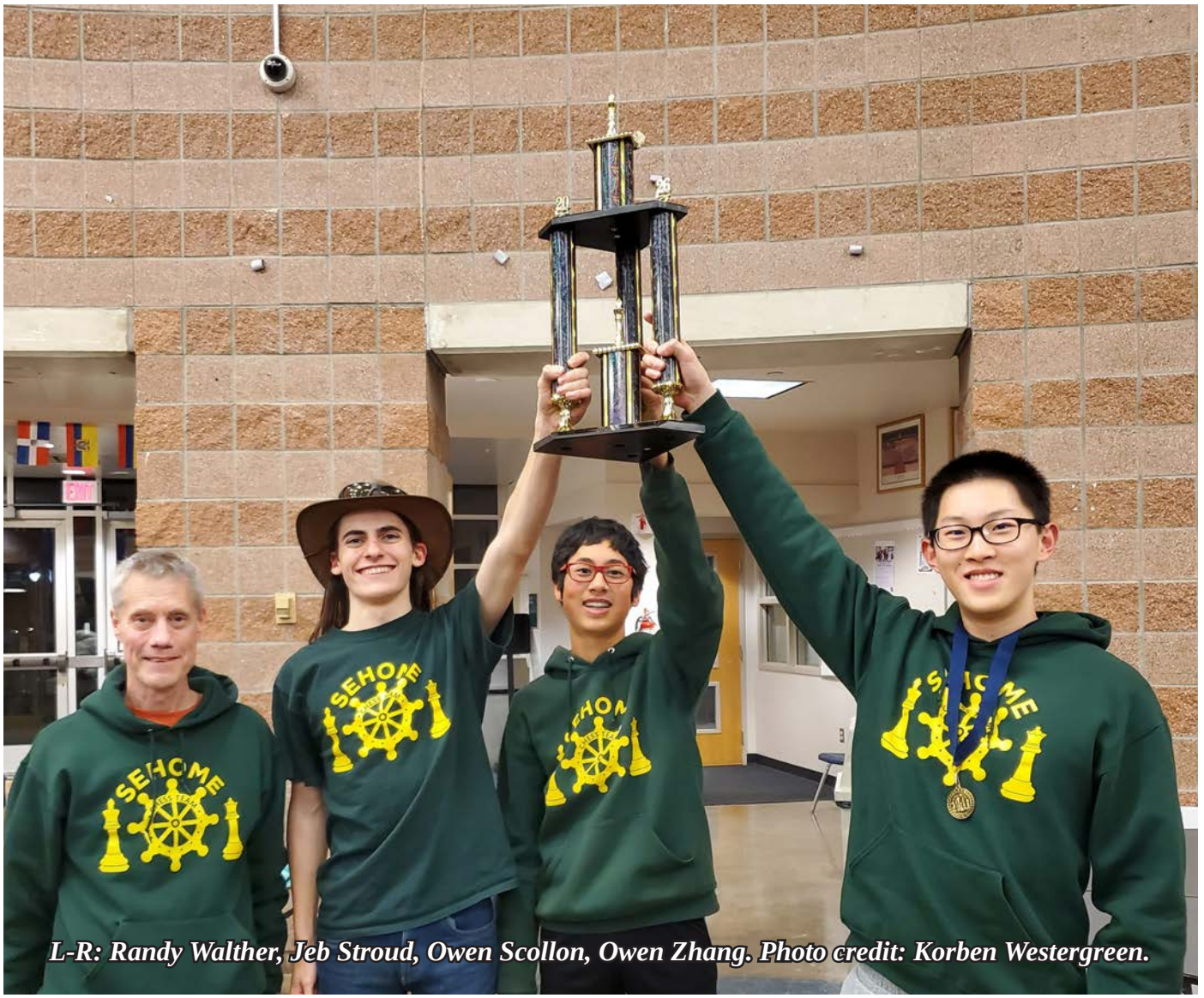
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L-R: Randy Walther, Jeb Stroud, Owen Scollon, Owen Zhang. Photo credit: Korben Westergreen.

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Washington Winter Classic

Sat-Sun, December 19-20, 2026

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Highest finishing WA player in the Elite and Advanced sections seeded into the Premier and Invitational sections, respectively, of the 2027 WA State Championship.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in four sections:
Elite (2000+), Advanced (1700-1999), Challengers (1300-1699) & Prodigies (U1300)
Maximum of 150 players total. A section with <10 players may be merged with the nearest section.

Note: In case of a tie for 1st place in Elite/Advanced sections, blitz (G/5; +2) and possibly Armageddon (G/6 vs G/4) playoff games after the final round will decide the seeds for the Premier & Invitational sections of the 2027 WA State Championship.

Time Controls:
- Elite, Advanced, & Challengers: G/90; +30 sec. Late default: 60 minutes.
- Prodigies: G/45; +15 sec (Double Swiss: two games with opposite colors vs each opponent)

Entry Fees: $120 by Sat, Dec 12; $140 after. Free entry into Elite for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, contingent upon proper completion of the event. Play-up into Premier & Challengers ($75 fee) allowed if USCF rating is within 100 points of the section's lower limit. No play-ups into Elite.

Schedule: Sat @ 9am, 2pm, 6:30pm; Sun @ 10am, 3pm. Games that go long may request a late start for the following round.

Prizes: $6,700 (based on 110 paid entries)
Elite: 1st–3rd: $500-$400-$300, 1st–2nd U2100: $250-$200
Advanced: 1st–4th: $350-$300-$250-$200, 1st–2nd U1850: $200-$170
Challengers: 1st–4th: $300-$270-$230-$180, 1st-2nd U1500: $180-$150
Prodigies: 1st–4th: $250-$220-$180-$150, 1st U1100 / U800 / Unrated: $130

Special Prizes (per section):
Biggest Upset Win (max 2 per player): $20/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): $75, Best Senior Player (50+) (by TPR): $75.

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

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

Rating: Dual USCF + NWSRS rated. Elite, Advanced, and Challengers sections also FIDE rated. Dec 2026 USCF ratings used to determine sections (but a player's Live USCF rating may be used upon their request before the event), pairings & prizes, except in the Elite section Dec 2026 FIDE ratings used for pairings & 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.

Registration: Online: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), cash, or write a check to Washington Chess Federation (see address below). **Registration & payment due by Fri, Dec. 18 @ 5pm.** No registrations or refunds after the deadline.

Info/Entries: If paying by check, make payable to Washington Chess Federation.
Mail To: Washington Chess Federation,
4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Ste. M, Redmond, WA 98052

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

Winter Holidays Blitz

Time: Sun, Dec 20 @ 7:30pm-9:30pm (after Main event).
Format: An 8-round Single Swiss in one section; 2 half-point byes available. **TC:** G/3; +2. **Entry Fee:** $30.
Rating: Dual USCF Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. Higher of Dec 2026 USCF Regular / Blitz ratings used for pairings & prizes. **On-site Registration:** 6:30pm-7:15pm.
Schedule: Sun @ 7:30pm, 7:45, 8, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15pm. Closing Ceremony ~9:30pm or asap.
Membership: Current US Chess membership required.
Prize Fund: $900 (based on 60 paid entries)
1st–5th: $170-$130-$100-$80-$60,
1st U2100 / U1900 / U1700 / U1500 / U1300 / U1100 / Unr.: $40. Biggest Upset Win (max 2 per player): $10/rd.

Wayne Hatcher

(1953–2026)

John Donaldson

Caissa has had few more dedicated devotees than Wayne Hatcher, who passed away on October 27, 2026 at the age of 73 in Duncan, Oklahoma, after over half a century as an active tournament player.

Wayne was just nine months old when he contracted pneumonia and in a diminished physical state was struck with polio. He would never walk and was in a wheelchair the remainder of his life, but this didn't prevent him from a full and vibrant existence which included graduating from Central Washington University with a degree in Sociology and working for the U.S. Forest Service in the Office of Budget and Finance for 30 years.

Wayne was very competitive by nature and loved to watch athletic competitions, especially when his older brother Lynn was playing, and followed professional sports events all his life. His ability to compete was tenacious and captured in playing chess which he learned in 7th grade. Wayne was top board for Mt. Rainer High School in Des Moines, Washington, his senior year and scored 4½ - ½ in the 1971 Washington High School Team Championship.

Wayne was a member of the Central Washington team in the 1971-72 Northwest Intercollegiate Chess Team Tournament held in Portland, playing alongside his lifelong friend David Collyer. Wayne scored 3-1 in the event, losing only to Master Jonathan Berry (the winning University of British Columbia team had future Grandmasters Duncan Suttles and Peter Biyiasas on the top boards).



Photo source: https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/wayne-hatcher-obituary?id=62886841

Wayne's greatest chess success was likely winning the 1973 Washington State Junior Championship over a young Yasser Seirawan, but even at the end of his life he was still playing actively and with good results. Wayne had a 2050 rating performance in the 24th Red River Shootout in early October and just nine days before his death competed in the 2026 Governor's Cup in Sioux Falls, scoring 3-2 for a performance rating of 2230. This was good for a whopping 54 rating point gain. Not a bad result for a septuagenarian in an age of underrated kids!

Rebecca Rutledge of the Oklahoma City Chess Club posted online:

"Wayne was one of the kindest people I've ever had the privilege of knowing. He was always positive, always encouraging, with a beautiful spirit that showed up in every interaction and a kind word for everyone lucky enough to meet him across the board."

Truer words have never been written.

One could also mention Wayne's unfailing optimism which had him hoping to achieve a USCF rating over 2000 in 2026 for the first time in his career. This might seem like an impossible target when most players his age are either long retired or on their rating floor, hundreds of points from their peak. This didn't deter Wayne from aiming big and as his last events showed he could still play not just at the Expert level, but even as a Master at times. His last USCF rating of 1938 was not far from his all-time high.

A discussion of Wayne's life cannot fail to mention the unfailing support Sharon Lien, his devoted wife of 39 years, who attended all of his tournaments.

Thank you to Duane Polich and Mike Mulford and Wayne's family for sharing their memories.

Presented by Eastside Oly Chess Club & WA Chess Federation

Thurston County Sheriff's Open

Saturday, January 9, 2027

The Rock Church - 1901 7th Ave SE, Olympia WA, 98501

Format: A 5-round Swiss tournament in two sections: **Sheriff Open** & **Deputy U1300**

Entry fee: $40 by 1/2, $50 after. Need-based scholarships available upon request. Free entry for Chess Sheriffs rated 2200+. Maximum of 50 players; please register early to guarantee your spot!

Schedule: At-site registration & check-in: 9:15-10:15am. Rounds (5): 10:30am, 12pm, lunch, 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/25; +10 sec. increment per move starting from move 1.

Rating: NWSRS rated. Sheriff Open is also USCF rated. Higher of current NWSRS or January 2027 USCF regular rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Memberships: WCF membership required, other states accepted. US Chess membership required only for Sheriff Open.

Prizes: $900 (based on 50 paid entries)

Sheriff Open: 1st: $150, 2nd: $100, 3rd: $75. 1st U1700/U1500: $50.

Deputy U1300: 1st: $100, 2nd: $75, 3rd: $50, 1st U1100/U900: $45. 1st Unrated: $40.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: $10, Best Female Player: $25, Best Senior (50+) Player: $25.

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

Concessions: Coffee, tea, and water will be provided courtesy of Eastside Oly Chess Club. Pizza lunch from Wicked Pies Pizza will be available for purchase (cash only) on-site. A variety of snacks will be available for purchase throughout the day.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. **Online registration + payment deadline: Friday, January 8 @ 5pm.** At-site registration: 9:15-10:15am. On-site payment available by cash, check made out to "WCF", SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation) or Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com).

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

Washington Junior Open

CHESS TOURNAMENT

Saturday, January 16, 2027

Highland Middle School

15027 NE Bel/Red Road, Bellevue, WA 98007

CLASSICAL SECTIONS

Open 1600+, Rising U1600, Challengers U1200

A 4-round G/45; +10 Swiss in three sections. Longer time control for intermediate to advanced players. Players rated 1500+ and 1100+ may play up into Open and Rising U1600 sections, respectively, for an additional $20. Rounds: 9:15am, 11:15am, Lunch, 1:30pm, 3:30pm. Awards ~ 5:45pm. Armageddon playoff if needed to break tie for 1st Place in Open section immediately following the last round: G/10 white, G/8 black with draw odds.

RAPID SECTIONS

K-1 U700, 2-3 U800, 4-12 U900, K-3 Open, 4-12 Open

A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss in five sections. Shorter time control for players of all levels. Rounds: 9:15am, 10:45am, Lunch, 12:45pm, 2:15pm, 3:30pm. Awards ~ 5pm.

ALL SECTIONS

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

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all juniors under 21 years of age as of the tournament date. Out-of-state players welcome!

ENTRY FEE

$60 by Jan. 9th, $70 after. Room for 320 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon e-gift cards awarded in each section: 1st – 10th: $65-60-55-50-45-40-35-30-25-$20.

Team Prizes: Amazon e-gift cards awarded to the top 4 players from the top 5 finishing teams across all sections:

1st – 5th: $30-25-20-15-$10.

Team score calculated from top 4 scoring players from the same school.

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

RATING

Higher of January 2027 USCF regular or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

DETAILS

Online Registration:
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), or mail a check to WCF.

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Fri. Jan 15th @ 5pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players by the deadline will be withdrawn from the tournament.

Highest finishing WA resident in the Open section seeds into the Closed section of the 2028 WA Junior Invitational.

This event is a qualifier for the WA State Scholastic Chess Championships on April 24, 2027, in Spokane. Players scoring 2.5+ points in the 4-round sections or 3.0+ points in the 5-round sections 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, 206.769.3757
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

WASHINGTON PRESIDENT'S CUP

SAT-SUN, JANUARY 30-31, 2027

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest finishing Washington resident in the Carter Open section seeded into the 2028 Washington State Championship – Invitational section.

Format: A five-round Swiss in three sections:

Carter Open, Reagan U1800 & Bush U1400

In case of a tie for 1st place, a future follow-up playoff match will determine the seed for the 2028 Washington State Championship.

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

Schedule: Saturday 9:30 AM, 2 PM, 6:30 PM. Sunday 10 AM, 3 PM. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

Prize Fund: $7,000 based on 100 pd entries.

Carter Open: 1st–4th: $640–540–440–340.
1st U2100/U1900: $300.

Reagan U1800: 1st–4th: $400–350–300–250.
1st U1700/U1500: $200.

Bush U1400: 1st–4th: $400–350–300–250.
1st U1300/U1100: $190; 1st Unrated: $190.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: $20/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): $75, Best Senior Player (50+, by TPR): $75, Best Dressed: $20/day.

Entry Fee: $130 by 1/23, $150 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs (pending successful/proper completion of the tournament). Chess Ambassadors rated 2200+ USCF receive a $50 discount. $65 play-up fee if rated 1600-1799 or 1200-1399 USCF and playing up in Carter Open or Reagan U1800, respectively. Maximum of 175 players, please register early.

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

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

Rating: Dual USCF + NWSRS rated. Carter Open and Reagan U1800 are also FIDE rated. January 2027 USCF rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF and CFC ratings used for Canadian players. Other foreign ratings are used for players with no USCF rating, or at TD discretion.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (ID: see email below), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 1/29 @ 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

Presidential Blitz: Sunday 7:15-9:15pm (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:** 6:15-7pm. Rds. Sun @ 7:15 or asap, 7:30, 7:45, 8, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:30pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of January 2027 USCF Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.

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

1st – 3rd: $150-125-100, 1st U2200/U1800/U1400/U1000: $75
1st Unrated: $40, Biggest upset: $5/rd.

TOURNAMENTS

Seattle Chess Club

venue & mail

7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115

info & events calendar

www.seattlechess.club

club & tournament inquiries

contact@seattlechess.club

December 5 (Sat.) **December Quads**

Format: 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). **Prizes:** winner of each 4-player quad wins free entry to next Quads played within 3 months. **Registration:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm. **Byes:** 0 – must play all 3 rounds! US Chess membership req'd.

December 4, 11, 18 (Fri.) **Chess City Swiss**

One US Chess-rated round per Friday night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm. **Time Control:** 40 moves/90 minutes w/10 sec. increment, followed by sudden death 60 minutes w/10 sec. increment. **Pairing:** Swiss. **Entry:** Free for SCC members, $5/night others. Drop in for any round! **Sign up** at contact@seattlechess.club. **Venue:** Seattle Chess Club, 28 players max. No game on 12/25 – **Merry Christmas!**

December 17 (Thurs.) **Simul with GM Dimitri Komarov**

Details at https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Coming up:

- **Seattle City Championship** – January 16-17; see below
- **January Quads** – January 30; tentative, 2B confirmed

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

2027 Seattle City Championship
& FIDE Blitz
January 16 - 17, 2027

5-round Swiss in 2 sections – Champion (USCF 1800+) & Reserve (U1800)
with time control Game/75 + 15-sec. increment
Both sections USCF rated; Champion section also FIDE rated
FIDE Blitz (Game/3 + 2-sec. inc.) on 1/17 following Round 5!

Prize fund: *$5,000* based on 90 paid entries

FIDE Blitz Prize Fund: *$600* guaranteed!

See prize distribution on tournament flyer at registration site.

- **Entry fees** by 1/9: SCC & S.U. Chess Club $100 ($25 Blitz), others $130 ($30 Blitz). After 1/9 add $30.
- **Play-Up fees:** USCF 1650-1799 based on Jan 2027 USCF Supplement Rating: $40 SCC members, $60 others
- **Rounds:** Saturday 10 am, 2:15 pm & 6:15 pm; Sunday 10 am & 2:15 pm. **Blitz:** Sunday 6:30 pm.
- **Venue:** Seattle University Student Center, Room 160 – 901 12th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122
- **Byes:** 2 half-point byes available. Commit at registration for Sunday rounds.
- **Register** at http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. **Max 100 seats.**
- **Requirements:** US Chess membership. FIDE ID also required if playing in Champion section or Blitz.

2027 Idaho Scholastic State Championship

Compete for the Idaho Scholastic Championship for a shot at Nationals!

Register here!

Choose your qualifier!

- NORTH - March 6th 2027
- SOUTH - February 6th 2027
- EAST - February 13th 2027
- WEST - January 30th 2027

How to qualify

- Place top 3 in your grade or section in a Scholastic Qualifier
- Earn at least 3 points in a single Scholastic Qualifier
- Play at least 6 USCF rated games since April 1st 2026
- Must be K-12th Grade and current Idaho resident
- Must have an Idaho Chess Network membership

Qualifier details

- Time control: (K-5th) G/30; D5 (6th -12th) G45; D5
- 5 Round Swiss
- USCF and ICN Membership required
- Four Sections: K-3rd |4th - 5th | 6th - 8th | 9th - 12th
- Top 3 in each Section qualifies + Trophy
- Top 3 each Grade qualifies + Medals
- Players earning 3+ points qualify

CONTACT US HERE! - EVENTS@IDAHOCHESS.NET - (208) 409-8457


holastic Chess Championship