

'TheChessPlace'
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Washington State has some of the best Scholastic Players in the nation. In support of these players there are top quality coaches and Organizations that are fostering these young minds in excelling in the fine game of chess.

As part of the WCF and NWC support of Scholastic Chess, this will be a series that will showcase some of the better Scholastic players, Coaches and Organizations at all levels of Scholastic Chess from Elementary up to High School.

This month we start with a young man that many of you may not have heard about but who, in his own quiet fashion, has been excelling in chess year after year.

At last years Washington State High School Chess Championships the cross table had some expected results with the winner being local Master Ricky Selzer and in second place the local Expert Andy May.



But in third place and rated as a high A Player was a young man named Devon Manber.
(Photo: Devon at the 2008 Nationals.)

Who is he? How did he ascend to the heights of a solid A Player? Where did he come from? How did he get here, placing a solid third in a strong Washington State HS Championship?

Let's meet one of the top upcoming High School chess players in Washington State –

MR – Very nice to get a chance to meet you and introduce you to the readership of the NWC Magazine.

DM – Thank you very much for the opportunity to being Interviewed by you, this is truly a first for me.

MR – Who taught you the game initially?

DM – My Dad who would often play with me on the weekends.

MR – At what age did you start to play chess regularly?

DM – At the age of 4 years young in Pre-School.

MR – Did your schools have any Chess Clubs as an after school program?

DM – Yes in 1st Grade at Greenlake Elementary School they had a formal Chess Club on Friday afternoons. About 20 kids would show up. It was quite an active club! Then in Middle School at Washington Middle School in the Central District. At Washington MS our Team was quite strong and we won the Washington State Middle School Champs in 2004 – 2005, when I was in 6th Grade. Some of my teammates were Tanaka and Keith Saver who both became about 1900+players.

MR – Then you attended Garfield HS where are you are now a Sophomore. Who is your coach there?

DM - At Garfield High School the Chess Coach there is Jeff Nomura.

MR – How did Coach Nomura help you in chess and your overall improvement ?

DM - He had an extensive library that we often looked through and analyzed games in those books to get ideas and review tactics with Coach Nomura and with the other chess players on the team.

MR – Have you had any Chess Coaches?

DM – Yes my parents found me a coach in the 6th Grade. I was coached for 3 years until there were some schedule conflicts when I started to get busier in High School.

MR – Who was your Coach at this age?

DM – It Coach Matt Fleury, the local Master.

MR – How did Coach Fleury help you get better in Chess?

DM – By mostly emphasizing good analysis techniques and the study of Tactics. Also he made it fun to learn Chess!

MR – Do you play Tournament Chess?

DM – Yes as often as I can.

MR – In Washington State what are some of your favorite Tourneys?

DM – The Washington Class and the Washington Open.

MR – How about out-of-state - What are your favorite tournaments?

DM – I have played quite often out of state. Mostly in Las Vegas and since 6th Grade in every National Championships, whether Elementary, Middle, or High School. I love these tournaments.

MR – In the future, do you see yourself continuing to playing chess?

DM – Absolutely, as time allows with everything going on.

MR – How so, doing what?

DM – Keep playing in tournaments to get better and improve.

MR – Who are some of your favorite GM?

DM – Kasparov

MR – What is it about him that you like?

DM – Kasparov because he plays an aggressive game.

MR – Do you have any favorite local chess players?

DM – Mostly Yasser Seirawan

MR – What is it that you like about him?

DM – Because Yasser he was a strong local player that did well eventually internationally, beating all the Ks - Kasparov, Karpov and Kamsky or Kramnik, one of those. Of course he also went to Garfield High School!

MR – Do you have any chess books?

DM – Yes of course, they are important to getting better in chess.

MR – How many chess books do you have and what type's?

DM – About 20 books in my library. About 10 on Tactics, 3 on End Games, and about 5 on strong GMs.

MR – Do you get NW Chess Magazine?

DM – Yes, for about 5 years now.

MR – Does this magazine help your game?

DM – Yes when there are good games that are well annotated so that I can get good ideas to use in my games.

MR – Do you use computers to analyze with?

DM – Yes mostly Fritz.

MR – How do you think computers help your chess?

DM – I think computers help my chess because I can use them to analyze my games more accurately and see exactly what the best moves are, so I can see how to improve.

MR – How do you think computers hurt your chess?

DM – I think computers hurt my chess because I often rely on them to analyze my games and I don't analyze the games as much myself, on my own.

MR – Have you attended any chess camps locally?

DM – Yes, In Seattle, I went to summer chess camps with Leo Stefurak (at the Evergreen School) and Georgi Orlov (at the Tops School) camp a couple of times.

MR – Have you attended any chess camps any outside the state?

DM – I have attended the National Camps sponsored by the USCF that invites some of the Top 100 players in different age groups. I was in the Top 100 in 7th Grade, 8th Grade and again in 9th Grade. The camps were held mostly in Tampa, Florida.

MR – Who were the Coaches at these national Summer Chess Camps?

DM – The coaches include GM Gregory Kaidanov (KY), IM Renier Gonzalez (FL), GM Yuri Shulman (IL), GM Nick DeFirmian (CA) NM Eduardo Cruz (FL), NM Brian McCarthy (NJ)

MR – How long were these National Camps and what did they cover?

DM – The camps lasted about one week each time. They covered all aspects of the game. Each Coach focused on a specific part of the game, whether Opening, Tactics, Analysis, or End Game.

MR – This summer you were a paid Intern at a Summer Chess Camp sponsored by the organization called TheChessPlace at Garfield Community Center. Can you tell us a little about the tables being turned and instead of you being the student you were the Coach?

DM – Yes I really liked this experience, it taught a lot about how one learns' chess and how to teach it to young up and coming players. Teaching younger kids from the schools that surround Garfield HS was really cool. In fact these are the future players for Garfield HS.

MR – Do you plan on continuing to coach in the near future?

DM – Yes I do, coaching kids is really fun. I want to give back to where it all started for me at my initial Elementary School, Greenlake ES. I will probably be a chess coach at Green Lake ES through ChessMates this year, if we can make our schedules work out.

MR – What are some of your Hobbies?

DM – Mostly Ultimate Frisbee.

MR – What else do you like to do in your Free Time?

DM – Watch TV.

MR – Favorite movies?

DM – Mostly Comedies and good Animation

MR – Favorite food/s?

DM – Steak

MR – Favorite hang-out?

DM – My House!

MR – Thank you very much and good luck this year with your schooling and chess. Maybe you will win the Washington State HS Championships and you will be the Arnold Denker representative!

Below are 2 games that Devon selected and Annotated from last year's National HS Championships –

High School National Championship - 4/19/08

Manber, Devon (USCF 1854, WA.) - **Khojandi, Aryan** (USCF 2029, VA.)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.g3 g6 7.Bg2 Bg7 8.0–0 0–0 9.Kh1 *In this position, Kh1 did not help my position very much. I should have played 9.h3, which allows me to control the g4 square. 9...Qc7 10.f4* Now I am advancing my kingside pawns, preparing an attack. **10...Nc6 11.Nxc6** Here I was worried about leaving the d4 Knight there, but Nxc6 was uncalled for. I should have just defended it with Be3. **11...bxc6 12.f5** I played this move too soon. I first should have moved h3, developed the rest of my pieces, and only then make a break on the kingside. **12...Rb8 13.g4** Again I should have waited to push my kingside pawns. Better was Rb1 followed by the deployment of my dark-squared bishop. **13...Nd7 14.g5 Be5 15.Qg4 Rb4 16.Rf3** A mistake, allowing ...Nc5, although my opponent did not find that move. **Re8 17.a3 Rb8 18.Qh4 Bh8 19.Nd1 d5 20.Ne3** Better was 20.fxc6, followed by Rh3 **20...dxe4 21.Rh3 Nf8 22.Bxe4 Qd6 23.Qf2** A passive retreating move that gives up my advantage. Better was a move like 23.c3, solidifying my position, keeping the queen on h4, and preparing to continue my attack in a successful way (23...gxf5 24.Nxf5 Qd1+ 25.Kd2 Qe2+ 26.Kg1 Qd1+ Kd2 leaves white with a large advantage). 23.Bd2 almost works, but doesn't quite make it (23.Bd2 Qxd2 24.Rd1 Qa5 25.fxc6 fxc6 and after most moves, including Bxc6, comes Bxh3 and if 26.Rf3, then Black will be safe and go on to win with the extra piece).

MR – This is one of the Critical Positions in the game –

General Position Considerations are:

(W) – Does not have his Rooks connected and needs to complete before he can attack the (B) King (or does he?).

(B) – Has almost ALL his pieces on the 1st Rank and they are rather uncoordinated. The Bishop on h8 esp. limits the squares for the (B) King.

The main Candidate moves in this interesting position are –

A.) 23.Ng4 B.) 23.Bd3 C.) 23.c3 D.) 23.Bd2

I will only quickly look at A.) 23.Ng4, but all the other moves are worth careful analysis also!

A.) 23.Ng4

23.Ng4 Qd1+; Kg2 Ba6; Nh6+ Kg7; f6+ ef6; gf6#

23.Ng4 Qd1+; Kg2 Qe2+; Kg1 Bf5 (If - Qd1+; Kf2 Bd4+; Be3 Be3+; Re3 Qa1; Nh6+ Kh8; Nf7+ Kg7; fg6 Qb2; Qh6+ Kg8; gh7+ Kf7; Rf3+ Bf5; Rf5#); Nh6+ Kg7; Bf5 gf5; Nf5+ Kg8; Nh6 Kg7; Be3 e5; Rf1 Rb7; Rf3 Re7; Nf5+ Kg8; Ne7+Re7; Qb4 Re8; Bc5 (If - Ng6; Qb8+Nf8; Bc5!)

23.Ng4 Qd1+;Kg2 Qe2+;Kg1 Bd4+; Be3 Be3+;Re3 Qb5; Bd3 Qc5; b4 Qb6; c4 Bf5; c5 Qc7; Nh6+ Kg7; Bf5 gf5; Nf5+ Kh8; Qh6 Ne6; Re8 Rg8; Re7+ -

23...gxf5 24.Bxf5 Bxf5 25.Nxf5 Qd1+ 26.Kg2 Qd5+ 27.Rf3 Bg7 28.Bd2 *Nxg7 was better, preventing the loss of the b2 pawn.* **28...Ng6 29.Kg1** *Again, I should have played Nxg7.* **29...Ne5 Bxb2** *would have been much better.* **30.Rg3 Nc4** *Here he could have played his back to g6 and left me with what would still be a good sized advantage, but not the win he allowed here.* **31.Rd3 Qe6 32.Re1 Qg6** *(32...Ne5 33.Rde3)* **33.Nxe7+ Rxe7 34.Rxe7 Nxd2 35.Qxd2 Bf6 36.Qf4 Qxg5+ 37.Qxg5+** *Here I missed the obvious 37.Rg3, but the game is over anyway.* **37...Bxg5 38.Rg3 h6 39.Ra7 Kf8 40.Rxa6 Rxb2 41.Rxc6 Ke7 42.Rb3 Rxb3 43.cxb3 Kd7 44.Rc4 Be7 45.a4 Kd6 46.Kg2 Kd5 47.Kf3 Bd6 48.h3 f5 49.a5 Bb8 50.a6 Kd6 51.Ra4 Ba7 52.Kf4 Ke6 53.b4 Bb8+ 54.Kf3 Ba7 55.b5 Kd6 56.b6 Bxb6 57.a7 Bxa7 58.Rxa7 0-1**

Aradhyula, Vaishnav (USCF 2214, AZ.) - Manber, Devon (USCF 1854, WA.)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Bg5 Ne8 *The normal move here is Nd7 to defend c5, but I played Ne8 because it defends the d6 and c7 squares.* **10.Nd2 f5 11.f3 h6 12.Be3 f4 13.Bf2 g5** *Here the interesting ...c5 seems to be effective in defending the queenside.* **14.c5 Kh8 15.Rc1 Ng8** *This move is the epitome of my play early on in this game: too slow and all about building up an attack.* **16.Nc4 h5** *More effective (quicker) for my attack is ...Ngf6, which also eyes the g4 square.* **17.cxd6 cxd6 18.Qc2 Rf7** *A better defensive move would have been Bd7, but Rf7 is in line with my slow, building plan.* **19.Nb5 b6 20.a4 Bf8 21.a5** *It was not the best for him to use a pawn break here. He should have built up more first.* **21...bxa5 22.Ra1 g4 23.Nxa5 a6 24.Nc6 Qg5 25.Na3** *He did not need to move his knight in this position and it proved to be a costly mistake after:* **25...g3 26.Be1 Qh4 27.h3 Bxh3 28.gxh3 Qxh3 29.Bd1 g2 30.Qxg2 Rg7** *And I win the queen.* **31.Rf2 Ne7 32.Qxg7+ Nxg7 33.Nc4** *33.Rh2 would have been much better, improving the rook's position and pushing my queen back.* **33...Nxc6 34.dxc6 Qe6** *Here, I just did not realize how good ...d5 was. After 34...d5 35. exd5 Nf5, black has won the game.* **35.Rc2 d5** *This move is not good anymore. I should defend the c7 square.* **36.Nb6 Ra7 37.Nxd5 Ne8 38.Bf2 38...Rg7+ 39.Kf1 Nc7** *Again, I missed my opportunity. ...Qh3+ would have been dominant, and definitely much better than Nc7.* **40.Nxc7 Rxc7 41.Rxa6 Qb3** *This move really hurts my position. Better was h4.* **42.Rd2 Qb4 43.Rd8 Kg7 44.Rd7+ Rxd7 45.cxd7 Be7** *And I can save the position.* **46.Ra7 Kg6 47.Be2 h4 48.Ra8** *Not good at all because it allows the move that I played, Qd2, which gives me a large advantage.* **48...Qd2 49.Ra6+ Kg7 50.Re6 Qxd7** *And I finally capture the pawn that bothered me for so long.* **51.Rxe5 Kg6 52.Rd5 Qc7 53.b3 h3 54.Kg1** *In this position, he still would have a good chance to save the game and draw with 54.Bc4. But Kg1 just allows me a simple win.* **54...Qc2 55.Bd1 h2+ 56.Kg2** *And black went on to win in a few more moves.*