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

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

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Front Cover

NM Daniel He (R), 2024 Washington State Champion,
along with organizer and WCF President Josh Sinanan.
Photo Credit: Ani Barua.

Back Cover

Siddharth Bhaskaran at the 2024 Washington State
Championship, Invitational section.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Submissions

Submissions of games (PGN format is preferable for games), stories, photos, art, and other **original** chess-related content are encouraged! Multiple submissions are acceptable; please indicate if material is non-exclusive. All submissions are subject to editing or revision. Send via U.S. Mail to:

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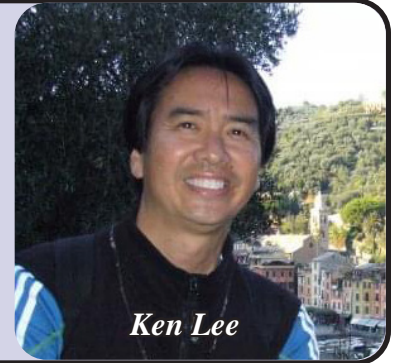
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Interview With Alexandra Botez

Ken Lee



Ken Lee

Alexandra and Andrea Botez are among the most popular chess streamers in the world. Through their Twitch, YouTube and Facebook channels, they reach millions of chess fans around the world.

I recently had the opportunity to talk with Alexandra Botez to discuss chess, choosing your own path, and the future of chess.

Ken: When did you start playing chess?

Alexandra: I started playing chess when I was six. My dad was the one who taught me how to play.

He had grown up in Romania and his mom taught him how to play. My grandmother also plays chess, so it is a game that has been passed on through the generations in our family.

Ken: What is your connection with the Pacific Northwest?

Alexandra: We moved to Canada when I was four and then we moved back to Washington when I was 13.

Later, we moved to Portland, Oregon and that's where my family still lives. I spent my teen years playing a lot of chess in the PNW.

I am not taking any interviews right now because I don't have time. I made an exception for *Northwest Chess* because of my strong personal connection with the Pacific Northwest.

Northwest Chess is one of the magazines that I saw my dad reading and this is a community I care about.

Ken: How did you sustain yourself during those early years when there were a lot of challenges?

Alexandra: I actually think when you're a kid you don't feel the pressure. My dad would take me to tournaments,

and I would just try my best.

I didn't really like doing lessons on the computer. We would always find some Eastern European grandmaster and we'd have lessons over World Chess Network and Skype.

My dad would always push me to study and train, but I think since I had such good tournament results, I didn't feel much pressure. That early success also gave me confidence.

It was a lot more challenging when I started playing chess for myself. It starts getting difficult when you don't have anybody pushing you.

When I got into high school, I realized that the top universities take into account all four years when considering your application.

I really wanted to get a full ride scholarship and I saw chess as a means of doing that.

I remember when I was 15, I won the Kasparov Chess Foundation All Girls Nationals for girls 18 and under. I won a full ride scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD).

But, by then, I had the realization that I didn't want to spend my entire life trying to get better at a board game.

At the same time, I found that chess teaches you to think through difficult things.

Ken: So, the correct question to ask yourself is what are the games you should be playing?

Alexandra: When I had that realization, I decided that I didn't want to go to UTD, and I would much rather get into a school that had the highest ceiling possible.

That's how I set my sights on Stanford which was my dream school.

Everybody applying to Stanford has perfect grades, great test scores, and good extracurriculars.

You really need ways to stand out. Chess was what tipped things in my favor.

When I was 16, I thought I could use social media to grow chess.

I started social media just to try to recruit students that I could teach online so that I could make some money.

Later, I got into Stanford and majored in International Relations.

By my senior year of college, I had 30,000 followers on my chess themed Facebook page, which seems like nothing today.

But back in those days, nobody was really working with chess on social media.

I got some criticism from people during those early days.

But the CEO of Chess.com noticed my Facebook page and he invited me to do commentary on chess.com.

I basically dove headfirst into streaming full time. At the start, it was just Twitch live streaming.

Now I am partnered with Chess.com and other sponsors.

“What I really respect about chess is that it teaches you how to work hard and how to think deeply. If you have those two things, you can apply them to anything and it's extremely powerful.”

We are going to be moving into higher quality productions, which is something my sister Andrea and I are really passionate about.

We are concentrating on new types of storytelling because when you're a content creator you realize that what works one day is not going to work two months from now. You have to constantly reinvent yourself.

Ken: It must be a difficult life lesson to be able to weather the criticism and comments from the trolls on the internet.

Alexandra: It's challenging.

It's even more challenging when you're live on Twitch and you're getting constant feedback about yourself.

The only time negative comments really get to me is when they echo the voice in the back of my head.

I've come to realize that the people who are commenting on these things are not the people whose opinion I would trust on anything else in life.

They are commenting on Alexandra — the product — not Alexandra — the human being.

They'll never know, nor do I know, that they have the emotional depths to understand who I really am.

I want to just start working on content that when I look at it, I think wow, this was a good piece of content. I don't care if other people don't like me. I care that I like me.

Ken: Do you have a vision about the future direction of chess?

Alexandra: I think I can create new and innovative chess content that will make chess more mainstream.

We're trying to combine storytelling with chess in new ways.

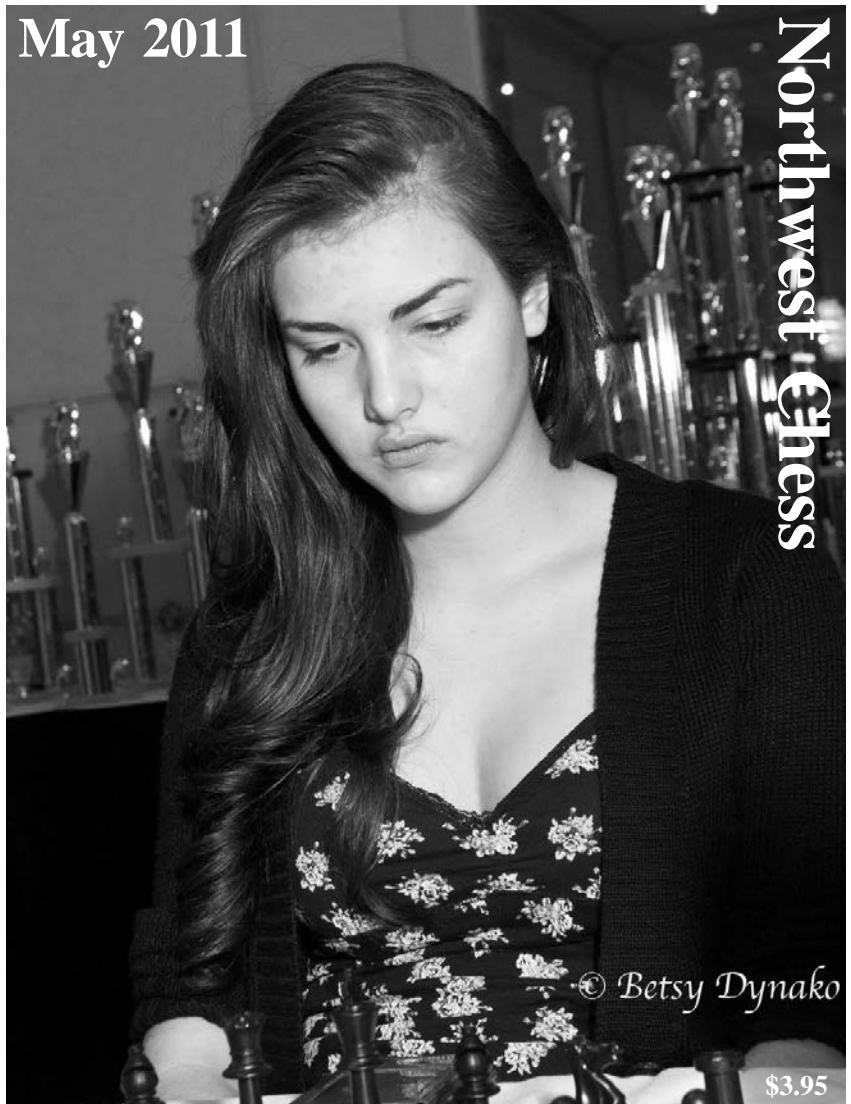
Andrea and I are going to be playing two tournaments in March back-to-back.

Later, we're going to launch our first new chess variant with a gaming studio.

It is the first chess idea I have seen over the last five years that I think has the potential to be a great game.

I think bringing a great game into the world, which is strategic, cerebral, fun, and social, is a good thing.

It's going to get more people interested in chess in general.



*V. Alexandra Botez. Photo credit: Betsy Dynako.
Reprint of the cover of the May 2011 issue of Northwest Chess, Ralph Dubisch, editor.*

Ken: What's it like working with your younger sister, Andrea?

Alexandra: When I was a kid, I always loved producing videos and I would force my little sister to act in them.

While my sister was still in high school, I was doing Twitch full time. I started inviting her to stream and I thought she was really talented and creative.

We like working together, and I'm honestly surprised that we survived four years of living and working together.

We're super close. Andrea and I are best friends so we spend a lot of time

hanging out even outside of work and it's really nice to not have to do this alone.

Ken: Do you have some overall bits of advice for the young readers of *Northwest Chess* who are making choices about studying and competing in chess?

Alexandra: What I really respect about chess is that it teaches you how to work hard, and it teaches you how to think deeply. If you have those two things, you can apply them to anything and it's extremely powerful.





WASHINGTON OPEN

Sat-Mon, May 25-27, 2024

Redmond Marriott

7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

\$11,500 Prize Fund
(based on 175 paid entries)

Main Event:

Format: A 6-round Swiss event across 3 sections: Open, Premier (U1800), Rising (U1400).

Time Controls:

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

Schedule:

- **3-day option:** Sat @ 10 AM, 5:30 PM; Sun @ 10 AM, 6 PM; Mon @ 10 AM, 4 PM.
- **2-day option:** Sun @ 9 AM, 11:45 AM, 2:45 PM, then join 3-day schedule @ 6 PM (from round 4 onward).
- WCF Annual Meeting & Elections: Mon @ 3 PM.

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

Entry Fee: \$130 by Sun, 04/28; \$140 by Sun, 05/12; and \$150 after 05/12 or on-site. Less \$50 for Seniors (age 50+). Playing up one section is allowed (for \$80 extra) if the player's ratings (*both* NWSRS and USCF) are within 200 points of the section's lower limit (i.e., min 1600 for Open, min 1200 for Premier). Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, and USCF 2400+. Re-entry for ½ of original entry fee. Canadians may pay CAD\$ at par.

Rating: Dual rated (USCF & NWSRS), plus Open section is FIDE rated (except G/55 games). Highest of May 2024 USCF, May 2024 FIDE, and current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections, pairings, and prizes – unless USCF and NWSRS ratings differ by >200 pts, in which case their avg is used. Foreign ratings used for players w/o USCF rating.

Registration, Information & Payment:

- **Before event:** Online (by Thu, 05/23 @ 5 PM) at NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ (pay by credit / debit / PayPal / SettleKing) or make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation. Mail to: Josh Sinanan, 4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052. Info: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com, 206-769-3757
- **On-site:** Sat, 05/25 @ 8-9 AM for 3-day schedule, or 4:30-5 PM if entering with 1 half-point bye. Sun, 05/26 @ 8-8:30 AM for 2-day schedule, or 9-9:30 AM if entering 3-day schedule with 2 half-point byes. Late registrations may receive a half-point bye for round 1. 2 half-point byes available; request before the end of round 2.

Hotel Info:

Redmond Marriott, \$125-\$135/night + tax. One King or two Queens or Doubles, single or double occupancy. Call (800) 228-9290 to request the WA Chess Federation block, or use the [online reservation](#). Group codes: WCFWCFQ or WCFWCFR. Cut-off date for discounts: Fri, May 03, 2024.

Prizes:

- **Open:** \$1000, \$800, \$600, \$500, \$400, \$300; U2100: \$225, \$175; U1900: \$225, \$175
- **Premier (U1800):** \$500, \$400, \$350, \$300, \$250; U1650: \$175, \$150; U1500: \$175, \$150
- **Rising (U1400):** \$400, \$350, \$300, \$250, \$200; U1200: \$175, \$150; U1000: \$175, \$150; Unr.: \$175, \$150

Championship Seeds: Highest finishing Washington resident in the Open and Premier section is seeded into the 2024 Washington State Championship, in the Championship and Challengers sections, respectively. Ties for a seed will be resolved by post-event playoff games.

Mixed Doubles Prizes: Best male-female 2-player team's combined score: 1st \$200, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$100. Average team rating must be under 2000; may play in different sections. Register (no extra fee) before round 3. Players may win a Mixed Doubles prize in addition to other prizes.

Special Prizes (per section):

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

Miscellaneous / Procedures:

Current US Chess and WCF / OCF / ICA memberships required; other states accepted. Memberships may be paid at the time of registration. Wheelchair accessible. Please bring a digital clock, if available. Pairings and standings will be posted before each round in the hallway near the play area.

WASHINGTON OPEN, May 25-27 (cont.)

Fun Side Events!

(many run between rounds of the Main Event)

Washington Open Abdusattorov Scholastic

Sat, 05/25 @ 9 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

Format: Dual sections – Open and Reserve:

- **Open sections:** A 4-round G/40; +5 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 Open** and **4-12 Open**. For intermediate to advanced players. Dual Northwest and US Chess rated. US Chess membership required. Clocks and notation required. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:45 AM, lunch, 12:45 PM, 2:15 PM. Awards presentation: ~4 PM.
- **Reserve sections:** A 5-round G/30 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 U800** and **4-8 U900**. For novice to low intermediate players. Northwest rated only. US Chess membership not required. No clocks used from the start, but a G/10; +5 clock will be placed into unfinished games after 35 minutes. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:30 AM, lunch, 12 PM, 1:15 PM, 2:30 PM. Awards presentation: ~4 PM.

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

Entry fee: \$45 if registered by Sat, 05/18, or \$55 after. Room for 132 players – please register early.

Awards:

- Overall prizes (per section) in Amazon e-Gift Cards: 1st \$65, 2nd \$60, 3rd \$55, 4th \$50, 5th \$45.
- Special prizes (per section): Medals for first-timers and biggest upset win.
- Top performing player (by TPR) in K-3 Open and 4-12 Open sections wins free entry into the 2-day option of the 2024 Washington Open (Main Event) (see previous page).

Rating: Higher of May 2024 US Chess or current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections and pairings.

Registration: 100% pre-registered (NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ - pay by credit / debit / PayPal / SettleKing); no on-site entries or payments. Registration & payment deadline: Wed, 05/22 @ 5 PM. Unpaid players will be withdrawn from the event.

Washington Open Adult Novice Swiss

Sat, 05/25 @ 11 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

Format: A 4-Round Swiss in one section, 1 half-point bye available.

Eligibility: U1200 or unrated adults (age: 18+). No memberships required. Unrated. TC: G/30; +5. EF: \$25. Registration: 10:30-10:50 AM. Rounds at 11 AM, 12:15 PM, 1:30 PM, and 2:45 PM. Prize fund: \$400/b20. 1st \$150, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$60, 1st U1000 / U700 / Unrated \$30.

Washington Open Fischer Chess960 Rapid

Sat, 05/25 @ 2:15 PM – 4:30 PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

Format: A 4-Round Swiss in one section, 1 half-point bye available. Unrated. TC: G/10; +3. EF: \$20. Registration: 1:30-2 PM. Rounds at 2:15 PM, 2:50, 3:25, and 4:00 PM. No memberships required. Higher of May 2024 US Chess and current NWSRS ratings used to determine pairings and prizes. A new (randomized) opening position for each round. Players will have 2 minutes before clocks start to examine the opening position. Prize fund: \$300/b20. 1st \$80, 2nd \$60, 3rd \$40, 1st U2000 / U1700 / U1400 / Unrated \$30.

Washington Open Robson Puzzle Solving

Sat, 05/25 @ 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

Format: Solve 15 chess puzzles in 45 minutes. Write solutions on paper. Evaluation based on accuracy and completeness. EF: \$15. Registration: 3:30-4:15 PM. No memberships required. Prize fund: \$150/b20. 1st \$50, 2nd \$35, 3rd \$20, 1st U1700 / U1400 / Unrated \$15.

Washington Open Kosteniuk Chess Workshop for Girls & Women

Sat, 05/25 @ 6 PM – 8 PM (during round 2)

Format: Workshop led by WFM Chouchan Airapetian (chornyaa@msn.com, 206-914-4252), experienced chess coach, organizer, and promoter, former US Women's Championship contender, WCF Girls' and Women's Chess Director. Registration: 5:45-6 PM. Entry fee: Free! Schedule: 6-7 PM: "How to develop & cultivate girls' and women's chess." 7-8 PM: Q&A, complimentary pizza & refreshments, and ladies' bughouse.

Washington Open 2nd Annual Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

Sun-Mon, 05/26-27 @ 11 AM and 4:30 PM (during rounds 3-6)

Sponsored by *Seattle Chess Club* with generous support from Henry Yan. **Format:** A 4-round Swiss in two sections: Botvinnik (Open) and Korchnoi (U1500); may be merged based on entries. 1 half-point bye available. US Chess rated only. TC: G/120; +30. EF: \$50 online (by Sat, 05/25 @ 5 PM) or \$60 on-site; \$10 discount for SCC members. EF waived for unrated players who purchase memberships. Registration: Sun, 05/26 @ 10-10:30 AM (unless starting with a half-point bye). US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships required. May 2024 US Chess rating used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Gtd. prize fund: \$1,000. Botvinnik: 1st \$240, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$120, 1st U1650 \$80; Korchnoi: 1st \$120, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$80, 1st U1300 \$60, 1st Unrated \$50.

Washington Open Carlsen Rapid

Sun, 05/26 @ 2 PM – 5 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

Format: A 4-Round Swiss in two sections: Kasparov (Open) and Anand (U1600); may be merged if too small. 1 half-point bye available. US Chess Quick rated. TC: G/15; +5. EF: \$35 online (by Sat, 05/25 @ 5 PM) or \$40 on-site. Players rated 1400+ may play up into Kasparov section for a \$10 fee. Current US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships required. Registration: 1-1:45 PM. Rounds: 2 PM, 2:45, 3:30, 4:15 PM. Higher of May 2024 US Chess Quick and current NWSRS ratings used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Prize fund: \$700/b25. Kasparov: 1st \$100, 2nd \$80, 3rd \$60, 1st U2000 / U1700 \$40, Biggest Upset Win: \$25; Anand: 1st \$90, 2nd \$70, 3rd \$50, 1st U1400 / U1100 / Unrated \$40, Biggest Upset Win: \$25.

Washington Open Firouzja Bullet

Sun, 05/26 @ 5 PM – 6 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

Format: A 6-Round Swiss in one section. 2 half-point byes available. Unrated. TC: G/2; +1. EF: \$10. No memberships required. Registration: 4:30-4:55 PM. Rounds: 5 PM, 5:10, 5:20, 5:30, 5:40, 5:50 PM. Higher of May 2024 US Chess Blitz and current NWSRS ratings used to determine pairings and prizes. Prize fund: \$200/b20. 1st \$50, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$30, 1st U2000 / U1600 / U1200 / Unrated \$20.

Washington Open Ignacio Perez Memorial Blitz

Mon, 05/27 @ 8 PM – 10:15 PM (after round 6)

Format: A 9-Round Swiss in two sections: Nakamura (Open) and Tal (U1600); may be merged if too small. 3 half-point byes available. US Chess Blitz rated. TC: G/3; +3. EF: \$30 online (by Sun, 05/26 @ 5 PM) or \$35 on-site. Players rated 1400+ may play up into the Nakamura section for a \$10 fee. Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership required. Registration: 7-7:45 PM. Rounds: 8 PM, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, and 10 PM. Higher of May 2024 US Chess Blitz and current NWSRS ratings used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Prize fund: \$600/b25. Nakamura: 1st \$100, 2nd \$80, 3rd \$60, 1st U2000 / U1700 \$40; Tal: 1st \$80, 2nd \$60, 3rd \$40, 1st U1400 / U1100 \$35, 1st Unrated \$30.

Washington State Championship

Josh Sinanan

The 2024 Washington State Championship took place at Microsoft Building 99 in Redmond on February 10-11 and 17-19. The annual multi-section round robin, the last state championship of its kind in the United States, continued to expand by popular demand and added a new sixth section called the “Prodigies.”

This was in addition to the other five ten-player round robin sections: Championship, Premier, Invitational, Challengers, and Rising Stars. The fields of each section were determined by seeding and rating, with the highest rating among the January US Chess regular, January 31st Northwest, and January FIDE rating considered when determining section. All games were tri-rated in the Northwest, US Chess, and FIDE rating systems.

Senior tournament director and national arbiter Fred Kleist directed the tournament with assistance from chief floor judge and WCF Community Outreach Liaison Suresh Balaji and WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, who provided excellent video coverage of key games throughout the weekend. The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and organized by WCF President Josh Sinanan.

Chess mom and WCF photographer extraordinaire Meiling Cheng was present through both weekends carefully documenting the proceedings.

Championship

Daniel He, a 25-year-old data scientist from Redmond, was crowned the 2024 Washington State Champion, scoring an impressive 6.5 points from nine games.

Daniel had a rough start to the event, suffering a first-round loss against defending State Champion Brandon Jiang and drawing against Stephen Willy in round two. However, Daniel picked up

the pace on day two with back-to-back wins against Daniel Shubin and Viktor Pupols.

He was able to keep the momentum going on the second weekend, scoring key victories against Rozenfeld, Sang, and Vemparala. Heading into the final round, four players were in contention for the title: He, Srivastava, Vijayakumar, and Willy. Of the four contenders, Daniel was the only one who managed to win, with a clutch final round victory against the dangerous Nikash Vemparala. Congratulations Daniel!

Two chess kings, Vikram Srivastava from Seattle, and Stephen Willy from Sammamish shared second/third place honors with six points apiece. A triumvirate of chess men shared the fourth/fifth place prize a half-point back: Tian Sang of Redmond, Daniel Shubin of Redmond, and Advait Vijayakumar of Bothell.

Premier

This year’s Premier section was an all-star tournament of sorts, with seven out of ten players qualifying for the Premier by seeding instead of by rating. With such a broad range of ratings from Class B to Master, matchups were more lopsided than usual, which resulted in mostly decisive games.

After the first weekend of play, it appeared that the younger ringer Vihaan Jammalamadaka was running away with the tournament, as he stood at a perfect 4.0/4. However, at the start of the second weekend, Jammalamadaka’s streak ended abruptly thanks to the efforts of Washington State High School Champion Carson Roesch in the fifth round.

This opened the door for rating favorites Nicholas Whale, David Zhou, and Leonid Gavrysh to catch up, with Whale ultimately prevailing. For his efforts, Whale took home the first place prize with seven wins and two losses and

is seeded into next year’s Championship section. Gavrysh and Zhou tied for second/third place a half-point back with 6.5 points apiece. Youngster Vihaan Jammalamadaka finished in fourth place with six points, and no doubt will be a force to be reckoned with in the years to come.

David Levine, the Premier’s lone master, finished on a “plus two” score of 5.5 points, which was good enough for fifth place.

Invitational

The Invitational section featured an interesting mix of youth and experience, with young guns Siddharth Bhaskaran, Vijay Nallappa, Albert Eksarevskiy and Ted Wang taking on the wily adult veterans, including former US Women’s Championship regular WFM Chouhanik Airapetian.

Unfortunately, Ryan Ackerman, a popular chess coach, was forced to withdraw from the Invitational section after losing track of time while working on a chess project and arriving over an hour late for his fifth-round game. The rules of round robin tournaments are quite strict, and players are not allowed to miss any games or take byes in such a prestigious event.

Due to the withdrawal of Ryan Ackerman after the fifth round, the Invitational section was reduced to eight rounds instead of nine for all players except those who had already played Ackerman.

When the dust had settled, the youngest player and rating favorite, Ted Wang, reigned supreme, with an impressive 5.5 points from eight games.

Tying for second-fourth a half-point back were Pratik Thorwe, Bental Tagor, and Siddharth Bhaskaran. Seattle-based expert Oscar Sprumont finished in fifth place with 4.5 points to round out the prize winners.

Challengers

The Challengers section featured perhaps the most balanced lineup of players of the six sections, with each player scoring at least 2.5 points and all players within 200 rating points of one another.

Seattle-based chess coach and WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov finished in first place with 6.5 points, winning six games along the way and allowing just a single draw against second place finisher Odbayar Yondon. Despite finishing undefeated with three wins, Yondon was unable to keep pace with risky Razmov, whose decisive approach in each game was crowned with success.

A pair of chess kings shared third/fourth place honors with 5.5 points apiece: Amana Demberel from Seattle and David Merrikin from Port Angeles. Duvall wonderkid Dann Merriman and Bellevue chess queen Nola Fung split the fifth place prize with an even 4.5 score, which was par for the course.

Rising Stars

The rising stars section, now in its second year of existence, attracted an abundance of young talent, with veteran starfighters Boas Lee and Saiya Karamali enlisted to supervise the youthful supernovas!

Fall City chess star Leonardo Wang broke the sound barrier with an impressive 6.5 points from nine games, dropping only a single game to runner-up Christos Boulis along the way. Boulis, a last-minute addition to the tournament coming off the alternates list, was pleased with his decision to play, finishing in second place a half-point back. Three interstellar chess explorers—Rafael Palathingal, Rishi Ramaswamy, and Gabriel Razmov—shared third-fifth place honors and earned their chess pilots’ licenses despite still being too young to drive.

The luckless chess lieutenant Boas Lee managed only two draws as his ship’s navigation malfunctioned and led him into a black hole!

Prodigies

The brand-new Prodigies section spoke for itself and attracted ten precocious youngsters, some of whom wish to one day become grandmasters!

Three up-and-coming Eastside chess super talents—Yuchen Zhou from Bellevue, Deeksha Shankaranand from Redmond, and Andy Chen from Bellevue—shared the tournament victory with 6.5 points apiece.

Chess queen Kate Wong, a fifth grader at Lakeside Middle School in Seattle, was awarded the fourth place prize a half-point back. Redmond whiz kid Kanav Shah finished in fifth place with a solid “plus one” score. Congratulations to the winners!

Several of the players have graciously submitted chess bios and annotated games from the tournament for the *Northwest Chess* readers to enjoy. Photos without captions were supplied by the players.



Daniel He

Daniel was born and raised in the Greater Seattle area, having mostly played at the Seattle Chess Club as he climbed the ranks. He achieved the National Master title in 2013 at the age of 14. He attributes his dynamic play style to playing lots of blitz online and solving tactical puzzles. He attended Redmond High School and he along with his twin brother Samuel founded the school’s chess club and formed a team.



Photo: Meiling Cheng.

Through weekly meetings to train together, he led Redmond to win their first ever Washington High School Team Championship in his senior year. Daniel took a break from competitive chess when he attended the University of Rochester to study data science and economics. Since graduating in 2021, he has picked up chess again while working as a data engineer in life sciences. His other interests include

weightlifting, playing board games, and listening to various podcasts.

Nikash Vemparala (2220) – Daniel He (2318) [B30]
WA State Championship (Championship)
Redmond (R9), February 19, 2024
[Daniel He]

I was in a four-way tie for first before this final round game, which meant this was a must-win game to ensure at least shared first.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6

A sideline of the Rossolimo behind the main moves 3...g6 and 3...e6. My plan for the opening is to get out of mainline theory early and keep pieces on the board for a complicated battle!

4.Bxc6 dxc6 5.d3 Qc7 6.e5

6.0-0 e5 The solid type of position I was expecting and a long game ahead.

6...Nd5 7.h3 h6

With intention of giving my light-squared bishop a retreat square on h7, but also the subtle idea of meeting 8.0-0 with ...g5!?

now that White has created a hook pawn on h3.

8.Nbd2

8.0-0 g5! Engines will still evaluate this position as equal, but practically White has all of the difficult decisions to make to avoid getting busted on the kingside.

8...Bf5 9.Ne4 0-0-0

A very imbalanced position. White has the better structure temporarily while Black has the bishop pair. The game revolves around Black’s ability to open up the light squares with ...c4. This would solve the doubled c-pawn issue and open up the central light squares while White is missing his light-squared bishop.

10.Ng3

10.Nxc5 Of course the c5 pawn is poison 10...Qa5+

10...Bh7 11.0-0?!

White forgets about ...c4, which blasts open the light squares. 11.b3 prevents my ...c4 idea but looks quite passive 11...g5 12.Bb2 Rg8. It’s hard to say at which side of the board White’s king is safest.

11...c4 12.a3

12.d4 would solidify White’s position if not for my next move: 12...Nb4! My light

squared bishop is living the dream on h7 uncontested. 13.Ne1 c5

12...cxd3 13.cxd3 g5 14.d4



Position after 14.d4

14...f5!?

Now White has to make a critical decision: Allow another pawn in the pawn storm or en passant and have no way in for his knights? Neither seemed ideal to White. 14...Rg8 Rg8 was my initial idea, but I noticed White's e6 pawn sac is annoying and takes full control over the e5-square 15.e6 fxe6 16.Ne5 There's no need to allow unnecessary complications here.

15.exf6 exf6 16.Qa4 Kb8 17.Bd2 h5

Preparing the deadly ...g4 break on light squares.

18.Rfc1

18.Nxh5 Be4

18...Rc8?!

A bit too compliant. I did not want to get provoked to play ...b6 after Ba5, but turns out I can continue my pawn storm and retreat with ...Nb6 to keep the queenside pawn structure intact. 18...g4! 19.Ba5 Nb6 20.Bxb6 Qxb6 completely winning.

19.Ba5 Qd7

Consistent with ...Rc8. ...b6 is objectively as strong but is less practical due to White's increased pressure on the c6-pawn base.

20.Nd2 h4

As a common theme regarding pawn breaks, it is important to play ...h4 before ...g4. If ...g4 first, h4 successfully locks up the kingside. 20...g4? 21.h4

21.Nge4 g4

Forcing a pawn-break, ensuring the g-file will open up.

22.Qb3 gxh3 23.Qxh3 Bf5 24.Qh2+ Ka8 25.Bb4 Bh6

It's not easy for White to deal with the deadly threat of ...Bf4.

26.Bd6

26.Qd6 Qg7. Unfortunately for White, he still has no major threats while his kingside is bare.



Position after 26.Bd6

26...h3!

White is forced to either allow ...hxg2 or shut his queen out of the game on h2.

27.Nc5 Qf7 28.Nc4 Bxc1 29.Rxc1 hxg2 30.Qxg2 Rcg8

Now many moves will win, but I find the

most forcing and fanciest sequence.

31.Bg3 Nf4 32.Qf3 Qh7!

White resigns as the knight on f4 can't be taken, and the threat of Qh2+ followed by Qh1 mate is unstoppable. A picturesque final position!

0-1

David Zhou

David started playing tournament chess after joining the McGill University chess team in 2012. In his first tournament (the 2012 Canadian University Chess Championship), he won an individual gold on board four and established a rating of 1643 CFC. He played chess infrequently, but barely two years later, he won the World Open U1800 with a scant 27 tournament games under his belt. David reached his peak FIDE rating of 2141 after 87 lifetime classical games, having achieved a 2270 FIDE performance and a win against GM Sevillano in the strong nine-round Calgary International Classic. Outside of competing in classical tournaments, he is also a blitz aficionado, with wins against numerous strong players, including GMs Hansen, Hambleton, and Aagaard, amongst others. He is now working towards his next goal of obtaining the FM title.

David Zhou (2080) – Nicholas Whale (2072) [D12]
WA State Championship (Premier)
Redmond (R7), February 18, 2024
[David Zhou]

With three rounds to spare, I was trailing the leader (Vihaan) by half-a-point. We had already faced off in the first round, so my best chance of overtaking him in the

Washington State Championship

\$1,500

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break(Berger)	Place	Prize
1	NM Viktors Pupols	2200	♔	0	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	1	2.5	10th	
2	NM Vikram Srivastava	2245	1	♔	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0	1	6	23	2nd-3rd	\$300.00
3	Yevgeniy Rozenfeld	2116	0.5	0	♔	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	2	7	9th	
4	NM Daniel He	2355	1	0.5	1	♔	1	1	0	0.5	1	0.5	6.5	26.75	1st	\$675.00
5	FM Tian Sang	2327	1	0.5	1	0	♔	0	1	0.5	0.5	1	5.5	20.25	4th-6th	\$75.00
6	NM Nikash Vemparala	2244	1	0	0.5	0	1	♔	1	0.5	0	0	4	13.5	7th	
7	NM Brandon Jiang	2257	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0	0	♔	0	0	0.5	3	13.75	8th	
8	NM Stephen Willy	2216	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	♔	1	0.5	6	24.25	2nd-3rd	\$300.00
9	NM Daniel Shubin	2265	1	1	1	0	0.5	1	1	0	♔	0	5.5	18.75	4th-6th	\$75.00
10	NM Advait Vijayakumar	2203	1	0	1	0.5	0	1	0.5	0.5	1	♔	5.5	20.25	4th-6th	\$75.00

standings was to play each of these final games for a win.

1.d4 d5

I had been hoping for a sharp and unbalanced position in the Dutch Defense, but my opponent deviates on the very first move from his round four game in which he quickly got a bad position.

2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nh4

Hunting for the bishop-pair should yield a stable advantage.

6...Bg6 7.Be2

There is no rush to exchange on g6 as the bishop has no squares to retreat to.

7...Nbd7 8.0-0 Bd6 9.g3 0-0 10.Nxg6

This is a sensible time to finally capture the bishop as Black can no longer hope to open the h-file on my castled king.

10...hxg6 11.Qb3 Qb6

11...b6, defending the pawn while keeping the queen on d8, should not change the nature of the position. I intended to continue as in the game with normal developing moves. 12.Bd2 Rc8 13.Bf3 White has ideas of eventually opening the center with e4 for the bishops.

12.Bd2

My plan is to slowly develop and open the position for the bishops once all my pieces are mobilized.

12...Rfe8 13.Rac1 Rac8 14.Rfd1

Now that I've centralized my rooks, I can consider Qc2 next, avoiding the queen trade.

14...Qxb3

Black goes for the trade, but White



David Zhou plays an impromptu blitz game between rounds at the Washington State Championship. Photo Credit: Meiling Cheng.

maintains a nagging edge in the queen-less middlegame.

15.axb3 a6

Black is very solid on the queenside due to my doubled b-pawns, so the break I should be playing for is e4.

16.Bf3

First, I must prevent Black's own breaks (...c5 and ...e5), which would activate his pieces before I manage to fully coordinate.

16...Red8 17.Kg2

17.g4 is a tempo faster than the game, but I can afford to play slowly as Black doesn't have real counterplay. 17...Bc7 18.g5 Nh7 19.h4±

Washington State Premier

\$1,250

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break(Berger)	Place	Prize
1	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1919	♔	1	0	1	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	2.5	7	9th	
2	NM David M Levine	2200	0	♔	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1	0	5.5	23.5	5th	\$62.50
3	Nicholas Whale	2072	1	0	♔	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	7	26	1st	\$562.50
4	Te Wei	1728	0	0	0	♔	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10th	
5	David Zhou	2104	1	0.5	0	1	♔	0	1	1	1	1	6.5	22.75	2nd-3rd	\$250.00
6	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	2030	1	0	0	1	1	♔	1	1	0	1	6	23	4th	\$125.00
7	CM Timothy Moroney	2158	0.5	0.5	0	1	0	0	♔	0	0.5	0.5	3	9	8th	
8	Dominic Colombo	1941	1	0.5	0	1	0	0	1	♔	1	0	4.5	11.75	6th	
9	Carson Roesch	1927	1	0	0	1	0	1	0.5	0	♔	0	3.5	10	7th	
10	Leonid Gavrysh	2056	1	1	1	1	0	0	0.5	1	1	♔	6.5	24.5	2nd-3rd	\$250.00

17...Bc7

17...g5! Black should have prevented my plan of dislodging the Nf6 with g4–g5.

18.g4!?

Intending to push the knight away to prepare the e4–break. 18.h4! without this preparatory move, Black will retain the possibility of preventing the advance of the g–pawn with g6–g5.

18...Nb6?!

18...g5! I can still break in the center with e4, but the liquidation of a pair of knights will allow Black to more or less maintain equality.

19.g5!

This is the point of White's last few moves.

19...Nh7

19...Ne8?! If Black does not gain a tempo by attacking g5, I can address the threat to c4 with 20.Na4 Nxa4, otherwise Nc5 will be annoying for Black to deal with, 21.bxa4 and after undoubling my pawns, I can play for a queenside break with b4–b5.

20.c5 Nd7 21.e4

Finally getting my desired break in.

21...f6? 22.h4

White retains a sizeable advantage here with all of Black's pieces passive. 22.exd5! We had both missed this strong piece sac which would leave White with a massive center of passed pawns. 22...exd5 23.Nxd5 cxd5 24.Bxd5+ Kh8 25.Bxb7 Rb8 26.Bxa6 Rxb3 27.d5! Despite the nominally equal material, White is winning. The unopposed duo of pawns will likely cost Black two minor pieces.

22...Rf8?

My opponent is intending to activate his knight by trading on g5 and playing ...Bf4, removing the only defender of the cramping g5–pawn.

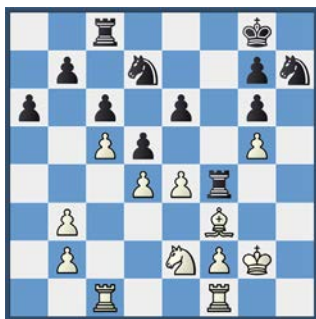
23.Rf1!?

Not fearing his Bf4 idea, I intended to simply strengthen my position and prepare a later f2–f4. 23.exd5! still works here, but again we both overlooked the strength of the knight sac. 23...exd5 24.Nxd5 cxd5 25.Bxd5+ Kh8 26.Bxb7 Rb8 27.Bd5+–

23...fxg5?! 24.hxg5?

The start of a miscalculated line. 24.Bg4! is the correct move order to keep the Nh7 out of play. 24...Rce8 25.hxg5 Bf4 26.Bxf4 Rxf4 27.Kg3! f4 will come next and Black is strategically lost.

24...Bf4 25.Bxf4 Rxf4 26.Ne2



Position after 26.Ne2

26...Rxf3

My opponent said after the game he felt lucky to have this resource after missing Ne2 in his calculation, but there was also a saving move on move 28 that would prevent the dark square clamp after the simple rook retreat to f8. We both thought 26...Rff8 didn't work for Black,

but he has a surprising resource. 27.Bg4 This was the point of my calculation starting on move 23. I move the bishop with tempo and will clamp down with f4. 27...Rce8? (27...Nxc5! 28.f4 Nf6! and with no good retreat square for the bishop, I must bail out into an equal rook and knight endgame. 29.fxg5 Nxc4 30.Kg3 Rxf1 31.Rxf1 Ne3 32.Rf3 Nc2 33.Rc3 Nb4 34.e5= With such a closed position, neither side will be able to make any progress and Black's extra pawn will not count for anything.) 28.f4±

27.Kxf3 Nxc5+ 28.Ke3 Nxe4

28...dxe4! This counterintuitive move would keep Black's knights more active. 29.Rg1 Nf3 30.Rxc6 Kf7 31.Rg3 Nf6 32.Nc3 Black would have to see this next critical move to confidently enter this line, however. 32...Nh4!= Black's active knights help him maintain equality.

29.f3 Nef6 30.Nf4 Kf7

30...g5 31.Nd3 Re8 32.Rg1 e5 33.Rxc5±

31.Rg1

31.Nd3!/? This was also an idea to clamp down on Black's only active break. 31...Re8 32.f4 Ne4 with no activity for Black 33.Ne5+ Nxe5 34.fxe5+ Kg8 35.Rf3 White will continue to push, but Black's strong knight and two passed pawns offer good compensation.

31...e5?

Black seeks activity for his rook, but the open files will only help White if I respond correctly.

32.Nxc6 Re8 33.dxe5?

A poor trade: I exchange my active knight and Black gets activity for his remaining pieces. 33.Rc2! and Black is paralyzed. I can continue improving my position

Washington State Invitational

\$1,000

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break(Berger)	Place	Prize
1	Pratik Thorwe	2003	♔	1	0.5	0	1	0	0.5	0.5	1	1	5	17.25	2nd-4th	\$166.67
2	Damarcus Thomas	1918	0	♔	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	7	9th	
3	Ryan Ackerman	1933	0.5	0	♔					0	0		0	1.5		
4	Bental Tagor	1943	1	1		♔	0.5	0.5	1	0	1	0	5	17.25	2nd-4th	\$166.67
5	Siddharth Bhaskaran	1867	0	1		0.5	♔	0.5	1	0	1	1	5	15.75	2nd-4th	\$166.67
6	Oscar Sprumont	2032	1	0		0.5	0.5	♔	1	0.5	0	1	4.5	19.25	5th	\$50.00
7	Vijay Nallappa	1713	0.5	1		0	0	0	♔	1	0.5	0	3	11.25	7th	
8	Ted Wang	2069	0.5	1	1	1	1	0.5	0	♔	0.5	1	5.5	21.5	1st	\$450.00
9	WFM Chouchanik Airapetian	2000	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.5	0.5	♔	0.5	2.5	10.5	8th	
10	Albert Eksarevskiy	1802	0	1		1	0	0	1	0	0.5	♔	3.5	11.25	6th	

with Rg2 next if Black does nothing. 33...exd4+ 34.Kxd4+-

33...Nxe5 34.Nxe5+ Rxe5+ 35.Kf2 Rf5 36.Ke3 Re5+ 37.Kd3?!

Of course, declining the repetition. 37.Kd2! would have been a better square for the king, preventing any tempi being gained by Nd7xc5+ or Nd7-e5+. 37...Rf5 38.Rcf1 (38.Rg3 Nh5 39.Rh3 Nf4 40.Rh8 Ne6 41.Rb8±) 38...Nd7 39.b4 Ne5?! 40.f4! Nc4+ 41.Kc3+-

37...Rf5 38.Rcf1?!

38.Ke2! Re5+ 39.Kd2 was a chance to put the king back on the right square.

38...Nd7!

I had missed how strong the knight would become after landing on c4.

39.b4 Ne5+ 40.Kc2?!

This move tries to hold on to my b-pawns, but Black will soon win the f-pawn, after which I would benefit greatly from having my king in front of his g-pawn. 40.Ke3! It was more prudent to give up the b-pawn and play for equality here. 40...Nc4+ 41.Ke2 Re5+ (41...Nxb2?! 42.f4! locks the rook out.) 42.Kf2 Nxb2 43.Rb1 Nd3+ 44.Kg3 Rg5+ 45.Kh4 This is the move I had calculated in-game. (45.Kh2= This would have been much simpler to prove equality, intending to recapture g1 with the king.) 45...Rxb2 46.Rxb2 Nxb4 47.Rb1! a5 This looked about equal to me during the game, but I would have needed to find the precise 48.Kg5!= and neither side can make inroads. (48.Ra1?? Nd3 49.Rxa5 Kf6 and it is White who will run out of moves as Black infiltrates the center.)

40...Rf4!

Given the chance, I will play f4 to keep his rook passive. 40...Nxf3?! 41.Kd1! White will be able to trade off a pair of rooks and gain counterplay against b7.

41.Kb3 Kf6!

41...Nxf3?! 42.Ka4! White will again be able to trade off a pair of rooks with Rg3 here.

42.Rh1

White's best try is to infiltrate and gain counterplay against b7. 42.Rg3? is bad since after the simple 42...g5, Black will soon win f3 and push the g-pawn to victory.

42...Nxf3 43.Ka4!

It's important to get closer to threatening counterplay on the b7-pawn while sidestepping the fork.

43...g5 44.Rh7 g4 45.Rf2!

Played to prevent g4-g3.

45...Kf5

45...g3? 46.Rg2 Rg4 47.Rh3 and Black will struggle after losing the g-pawn.

46.Rxb7 Ne5 47.Re2 Re4 48.Rf2+ Rf4 49.Re2

I don't seem to have much more than a repetition given Black's strong passed g-pawn, but I was hoping my opponent would play on and that I may have a chance to take over at a later point.

49...d4

He obliges and we have a game. Unfortunately, it's White who is walking the knife's edge in this position.

50.Re7 Re4 51.Rf2+ Nf3 52.Rf7+!

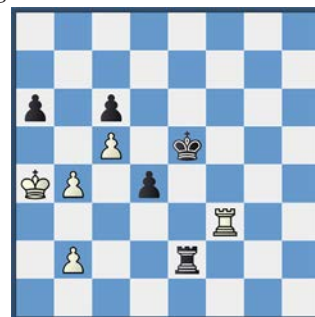
My only move is to bail out into a rook ending, but I burned too much of my

remaining time trying to calculate out all the details. Since we had already reached sudden death, this would come back to haunt me in the next few moves.

52...Ke5 53.R2xf3

53.Ka5?? d3 54.Kxa6 d2+-

53...gxf3 54.Rxf3 Re2



Position after 54...Re2

55.Ka5??

The first of three mistakes borne out of time pressure. 55.Rf8! Immediately placing my rook behind the passed d-pawn was the simplest way to draw. 55...Rxb2 56.Rd8 Ke4 57.Rd6= I will then seek my own counterplay with my c-pawn.

55...Rxb2 56.Kb6!?

Of course not taking a6 when Black has an easy win after ...Rxb4.

56...Rxb4+??

Black blunders the draw back. 56...Ke4! 57.Rf8 Rxb4+ 58.Kxc6 d3+- and Black will queen.

57.Kxc6 Ke4 58.Ra3??

The second and final decisive mistake in time pressure. 58.Rh3! Combining the idea of lateral checks with pushing

Washington State Challengers

\$750

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break(Berger)	Place	Prize
1	WCM Mary Kuhner	1805	♙	0	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	0	0	1	3	12.25	8th-9th	
2	Amana Demberel	1804	1	♙	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	1	1	0	1	5.5	20.25	3rd-4th	\$93.75
3	Odbayar Yondon	1754	0.5	0.5	♙	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	6	24.5	2nd	\$187.50
4	Valentin Razmov	1861	1	1	0.5	♙	1	0	1	1	0	1	6.5	26	1st	\$337.50
5	Dann Merriman	1662	1	0.5	0	0	♙	0.5	0	1	1	0.5	4.5	17.25	=5th	\$18.75
6	Abhinav Mishra	1747	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	♙	0.5	0	1	0	4	22.25	7th	
7	Nola Fung	1706	0.5	0	0.5	0	1	0.5	♙	1	0	1	4.5	16.5	=5th	\$18.75
8	Sankalp Koppala	1665	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	♙	0	0.5	2.5	8.5	10th	
9	David Merrikin	1764	1	1	0.5	1	0	0	1	1	♙	0	5.5	25	3rd-4th	\$93.75
10	Atharva Joshi	1827	0	0	0	0	0.5	1	0	0.5	1	♙	3	13	8th-9th	

the c-pawn draws. 58...Rc4 (58...Rb1 59.Rh4+ Ke3 60.Kd5 d3 61.Rh3+ Ke2 62.Rh2+= White will continue checking until Black steps in front of the d-pawn, at which point, he can push the c-pawn.) 59.Kb6 d3 60.Rh4+ Kd5 61.Rxc4 Kxc4 62.c6=

58...Rc4!

After this move, I can only hope to bail out to a queen vs rook ending.

59.Rxa6 d3 60.Kb5!? d2 61.Kxc4 d1Q 62.Re6+ Kf5 63.Rd6?

Running my clock down on move 52 costs me a final time as I choose the wrong square for my rook. 63.Rb6!? Black is theoretically winning in this position but must continue to grind to prove the full point. One thing to note is that if I manage to advance the pawn to the sixth rank, I have very good drawing chances. 63...Qa4+ 64.Kd5 Qe4+ 65.Kd6 Qe6+ 66.Kc7 Qe7+ (66...Qe3?? This move for instance would let me set up a fortress. 67.c6 Qe7+ 68.Kb8 Qd8+ 69.Kb7 Qd5 70.Kb8 Qd8+ 71.Kb7 Qd5=) 67.Kc6 Ke5 68.Kb5

63...Qa4+!

The c-pawn falls and with it the game.

64.Kc3

64.Kd5 Qe4#

64...Ke5 65.Rd3 Qb5

A hard-fought game where my opponent showed incredible tenacity in a worse position to keep counterplay and his own winning chances alive. With prescience of the remaining two rounds and final standings, I would have accepted the repetition on move 37 and won the Premier section a clear half point ahead

of the field. Alas, both my opponent and I would go on to win our round eight and nine games, leaving me half a point behind him in the final standings. A big congratulations to Nicolas for a clutch finish to secure the win in our section.

0-1

Damarcus Thomas



From the tender age of six, mesmerized by the intricate dance of pieces across the chessboard as my older cousins deliberated over their moves, my fascination with chess began to take root. Though my engagement with the game

was casual through my elementary years, it wasn't until the pivotal 12th grade that my passion for chess truly ignited. The vibrant chess scene in downtown San Francisco, particularly the historic halls of the Mechanics' Institute, became my sanctuary, where I honed my skills and deepened my love for the game.

As I transitioned to college life in Sacramento, my commitment to chess only intensified. I took on the mantle of President for the college chess team, leading and inspiring my peers. It was during this period that I received my first official rating, a respectable 1700, marking the beginning of a promising chess career.

Upon completing my college education, the bustling metropolis of New York City beckoned. It was here, amidst the city's legendary chess clubs and fiercely competitive environment, that my chess abilities flourished. Immersed in the rich chess culture, I evolved from an 'A' player to eventually achieving the esteemed title of 'Expert.' My encounters with formidable opponents, including a young Fabiano Caruana and a memorable draw against a Grandmaster at the iconic Marshall Chess Club, were defining moments in my chess journey.

My repertoire as Black is marked by a fondness for the strategic depths of the Philidor Defense and the dynamic possibilities of the Pirc Defense. While the Pirc remains a less frequent choice, it is a potent weapon in my arsenal, ready to surprise unsuspecting adversaries. As for my opening moves with White, I have traditionally favored e4, only recently experimenting with d4 in online play. This exploration of new strategies reflects

Washington State Rising Stars

\$500

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break (Berger)	Place	Prize
1	Arnav Gadde	1558	♔	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0.5	1	0	0.5	3.5	13.5	7th-9th	
2	Rafael Palathingal	1669	0.5	♔	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	5.5	22.25	3rd-5th	\$50.00
3	Boas Lee	1711	0.5	0	♔	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	4.75	10th	
4	Aarav B. Mohan	1667	0.5	0	1	♔	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	0	4.5	18	6th	
5	Christos Boulis	1763	1	0	0.5	0.5	♔	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	6	25.25	2nd	\$125.00
6	Leonardo Wang	1794	1	1	1	0.5	0	♔	0.5	0.5	1	1	6.5	25.75	1st	\$225.00
7	Rishi Ramaswamy	1726	0.5	0	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	♔	1	0.5	1	5.5	21	3rd-5th	\$50.00
8	Selina Cheng	1641	0	1	1	0	0	0.5	0	♔	1	0	3.5	15.25	7th-9th	
9	Gabriel Razmov	1774	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0	♔	1	5.5	21.5	3rd-5th	\$50.00
10	Saiya Karamali	1724	0.5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	♔	3.5	10.75	7th-9th	

my continuous quest for growth and adaptation in my game.

**Damarcus Thomas (1910) –
Chouchanik Airapetian (1945) [C83]**
WA State Championship (Invitational)
Redmond (R1), February 10, 2024
[Damarcus Thomas]

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6
5.0-0 Nxe4**

I was surprised that my opponent took on e4, I thought to myself, she just walked into my prep. This is the main line of the Ruy Lopez to me, as I have studied it all my life. I normally play 6.Re1 after 5...Nxe4, but I knew that 6.d4 was book and best. And since this is the WA State Championship, I will respect my opponent and play the best that I have.

6.d4

I must have sat for about 10–15 minutes trying to recall the whole sequence just in case we stay in book, I think she was impressed that I played d4 confidently eventually and then she blitzed out the next few moves.

**6...b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6 9.c3 Be7
10.Nbd2 Nc5 11.Bc2 Bg4 12.h3 Bh5
13.Re1 Bg6 14.Nd4 Qd7 15.Bxg6 hxg6
16.e6 Nxe6 17.Nxe6 fxe6 18.Qg4 Kf7
19.Nf3 Rac8 20.Bf4 Bf6 21.Bg3 Rh5
22.a4 b4 23.cxb4 Bxb2 24.b5!**

As I reflect, this was the winning move of the game, the response gave me a permanent advantage.

**24...axb5 25.axb5 Bxa1 26.bxc6 Qxc6
27.Rxa1 Qc3 28.Ra7 Re7**

I had looked deeply into the position at this point, I didn't know I was +5, but I knew how to win.

29.Ng5+ Rxg5 30.Qxg5 e5 31.Bh4 Rd7

**32.Qg4 Qc1+ 33.Kh2 Qf4+ 34.Qxf4+
exf4 35.Bg5 f3 36.g4 d4 37.Kg3 d3
38.Bd2 Ke6 39.Kxf3 Kd5 40.Ke3 Kc4
41.Ra4+ Kc5 42.h4 Rd8 43.g5 c6 44.Ra3
Rh8 45.Ra4 Rd8 46.Bc3 Rd7 47.Re4
Kb5 48.Rd4 Rf7 49.Rxd3 c5 50.f4 Kc4
51.Be5 Rb7 52.Rd6**



Position after 52.Rd6

My opponent was saddened by this ending, she did tell me with a sheepish grin that it looked like I took my hand off my rook as I slide it to Rd6, and suggested that I let it off at Rd5 instead, I simply looked back and smiled and said no way.

**52...Rb1 53.Rxg6 Rd1 54.Ke2 Rh1
55.Rxg7 Rxh4 56.g6 Rg4 57.Rg8 Kd5
58.Rd8+ Ke6 59.g7 Kf7 60.Rf8+**

1-0

**Valentin Razmov (1861) -
Dann Merriman (1662) [D35]**
WA State Championship (Challengers)
Redmond, WA (R8), February 18, 2024
[Valentin Razmov]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 Nxd5

A little surprise. The common response by far is 4...exd5 here, though I knew that 4...Nxd5 is not as bad of an option as its reputation used to be years ago.

5.e4

A principled response. 5.Nf3 c5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 leads to some of the same positions, with transposition.

5...Nxc3 6.bxc3 e5

The positions (and many ideas) in this line resemble those of Gruenfeld Defense, Classical variation, even though Black's dark-squared bishop is not fianchettoed here.

7.Nf3

7.Rb1 is known as the Kramnik variation in the Gruenfeld Defense context. 7...Be7

7...Nc6?

The second surprise to me. Although the knight move should be played at some point, the timing chosen by Black is odd—since White's center is still very potent. Normally, players choose to exchange in the center first: 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ (9...Qa5?! 10.Rb1! Bxd2+ 11.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2 b6 13.Rc1 0-0 (13...Ba6?! 14.Bb5+! Kd8 15.Ba4±) 14.Ke3 with visible advantage for White.) 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Bc4±

8.d5!

I spent a lot of time choosing whether to re-enter the familiar mainlines (after 8.Be2) or jump into this appealing sideline. Ultimately, my decision was based on a combination of factors: (a) the tournament situation (with one round to go) was such that I had to play for a win, in order to be able to claim first place in my section; (b) earlier in the tournament I had a game where I decided against playing more actively in the opening under similar provocative circumstances, and regretted my decision; and (c) despite calculation fairly long possible lines here,

Washington State Prodigies

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Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break (Berger)	Place	Prize
1	Yuchen Zhou	1477	♔	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	1	1	1	1	6.5	25	1st-3rd	\$141.67
2	Pranav Kokati	1481	0	♔	0.5	1	0	0.5	0	0.5	0	1	3.5	13.25	6th-7th	
3	Deeksha Shankaranand	1421	0.5	0.5	♔	1	1	1	1	0.5	0	1	6.5	25.75	1st-3rd	\$141.67
4	Kanav Shah	1460	0.5	0	0	♔	0	0.5	1	1	1	1	5	19	5th	\$25.00
5	Andy Chen	1564	1	1	0	1	♔	0	1	1	0.5	1	6.5	26.5	1st-3rd	\$141.67
6	Zoe Xu	1463	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	1	♔	0	0	0	0	2.5	14	9th	
7	Krishang Gupta	1485	0	1	0	0	0	1	♔	0	0	1	3	8	8th	
8	Samarth Bharadwaj	1461	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	1	1	♔	0	0.5	3.5	11.5	6th-7th	
9	Kate Wong	1392	0	1	1	0	0.5	1	1	1	♔	0.5	6	23.25	4th	\$50.00
10	Vihaan Pai	1303	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0.5	0.5	♔	2	7.25	10th	

I didn't see trouble for White anywhere ahead.

8...Ne7?



Position after 8...Ne7

It was obvious that my previous move had come as a surprise to my opponent. The above response was, again, not the move I expected. 8...exd5 9.exd5 Ne7 (9...Qe7+?! 10.Be2 Ne5 11.0-0±) 10.d6 Nc6 11.Bf4

9.c4?

Here I became a victim of my pre-game expectations. I had expected to play a possible long game, as I knew that my opponent was skilled. I did not even consider the possibility that my position could already be winning—and to look for that winning strike here. Under different psychological conditions I may have seen it: 9.Bb5+! Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.Ne5! and the black queen lacks squares on the a4–e8 diagonals in order to properly defend its king, e.g., 11...Qb5 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.Rb1! and White mates or wins major material.

9...Ng6 10.Bb2

Constraining the options for Black's dark-squared bishop while entering a desired long diagonal of influence. 10.e5! is objective best here, according to the engine, but would have felt a bit too adventurous for my taste and general



*Valentin Razmov contemplates his next move.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

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style. 10...f6 11.Bd3 exd5 12.exf6 gxf6 13.0-0±

10...Qa5+ 11.Nd2 exd5 12.exd5?!

I knew this was an important decision, and I made mine on known positional principles—opening the file of the opponent's king (which will be slow to castle), minimizing opponent counterplay (in this case on the queenside), etc. It turns out that for very concrete and subtle reasons the other capture is better here: 12.cxd5 Bd7 13.Rc1 f6 (13...Qxa2?! 14.Nc4 Qa4 15.Qd2) 14.h4 Bd6 15.h5 Ne5 16.Bc3 (16.Be2?! Ba4 17.Bc3 Bxd1 18.Bxa5 Bxe2 19.Kxe2 b5!±) 16...Qc7 17.h6 and although Black has managed to blockade White's central pawns and is somewhat ahead in development, Black has numerous weaknesses.

12...Bf5?!

A natural-looking developing move, but it gives White the initiative due to the unstable positions of Black's pieces. 12...Bd6 13.Bxg7 Rg8 14.Bf6 Bf5± is better in comparison, but in practice it can be hard to appreciate—especially from a distance—the real benefits of sacrificing the g7-pawn: (a) White's king may be unsafe too as the g-file has opened, (b) the Bd6 blockades White's passer and also supports other Black pieces around the center.

13.Qf3! Qb6 14.Bc3

I was aware that I had the option of 14.0-0-0 but given that I had visible advantage in the position already, this choice seemed to me to be handing the opponent some real hope of counterplay and even attack. Closer inspection proves that it's White who gets the attack instead: 14...Ne7 15.Re1 Bd7 16.Bd3 f6 17.Qh5+±; In contrast, the option 14.Qxf5 Qxb2 seemed truly unthinkable given how much my position was relying

on the strengths of White's dark-squared bishop. 15.Rb1 Qxa2 16.Rxb7 Qa1+ 17.Ke2 Who wants to bet on White's king safety here? :-)) 17...Be7 18.d6!+- 0-0 19.dxe7 Rfe8 20.Qb1!±

14...Ne7?!

Black refuses to retreat. By this point clearly both opponents had strong (and not necessarily correct) opinions on what should be happening in the game. 14...Bd7 15.Bd3±

15.Nb3?!

A move intended to prevent a long-castle by Black—and thus to keep the Black king in the center—on the threat of the possible skewer Ba5. 15.Ne4 threatening d5-d6 15...Bxe4 16.Qxe4 0-0-0 17.g3±

15...f6?!

Black is apparently tired of the pressure from White's dark-squared bishop on g7. 15...h5 16.h3 Qd6 would eventually achieve the (long) castle that Black may be desiring.

16.Bd3

Developing while eliminating one of Black's most active pieces.

16...Bxd3 17.Qxd3 0-0-0?!

Once again, impatience leads to inaccuracies in Black's play. A tell-tale sign was that by this moment White had spent ~95 minutes (of the available 120, plus increment, until move 40), while Black had thought for just under 25 minutes total. 17...Ng6

18.Ba5

Objectively not the best option, but at this point the (desired winning) end seemed well within grasp, so the excitement was high. I know to apply care, not to chase "pies in the sky," and to double check when things seem too good, but even

from that perspective the alternatives seemed too slow for me. 18.0-0

18...Qe6+!



Position after 18...Qe6+

An excellent and quick find of a tactical resource by Black! That I had missed to see this move ahead of time, despite checking for surprises, alarmed me. So, I slowed down to make sure I'm not playing on emotion (anymore).

19.Kd2! Qg4?

This is where Black really needed to invest more than two minutes. Now the game is easily winning for White. 19...Nxd5 20.Rhe1! Qg4 21.Bxd8 Nb4 22.Qe4 Qxe4 23.Rxe4 Kxd8 24.Na5 b6 (24...Kc7 25.a3) 25.a3 would lead to a winning advantage for White too, but nowhere nearly as quickly or obviously as the continuation in the game itself.

20.Bxd8 Kxd8 21.Nxc5 Qxg2 22.Qg3!?

White nearly "all roads lead to Rome" in a situation like this, there is nothing like the calming effect of removing the opponent's best attacker from the board—even when it comes at the cost of some mild concessions.

22...Qxg3 23.hxg3 b6 24.Ne6+ Ke8 25.Rae1 Kf7 26.Nxf8!?

Not the first move that would come to mind if you're a positional player—

An advertisement for chesswithryan.com. On the left, a list of credentials: 12 Years of Experience, Spokane City Champion 2022, 2032 USCF Rating, UW Grad, Eagle Scout. In the center, a photo of Ryan Ackerman, an Online Chess Coach, smiling and holding a grey cat. The background shows chess pieces on a board.

An advertisement for Sri Chess Academy. It features the academy's logo, "Two Eyes and 64 Squares", and contact information: 20405 123rd Ave NE, Bothell WA 98011. It states they teach online and in-person chess seven days a week, are conveniently located in Bothell WA, and cover all 50 states of the USA. Contact: Sridhar Seshadri, Ph 425-492-4176, Email: SSeshadri@srichessacademy.com.

giving up a powerful knight for a blocked, undeveloped bishop. But concretely here the simplifications make White's conversion job easier to do than if that bishop were to survive and (re)enter the game.

26...Kxf8 27.d6 Nc6 28.d7

White has seen a winning line, and is happy to make some concessions along the way in order to drive things in that direction using forcing moves.

In practice, it is very important to make move-choices that you know how to follow effectively towards your goal, even if they're not objectively the absolute best move. A win is a win, even if you get there via a different (but still reliable to you) route.

28...Kf7 29.Re8! Rxe8 30.dxe8Q+ Kxe8 31.Rxh7 Kf7 32.Rh8+-

This was the target position that White was aiming for in their calculations from several moves ago.

The assessment, as it turns out correctly made, was that it should be an easy win from here due to the power of the rook and the presence of weak black pawns. The rest is applying patience and simple endgame technique.

32...Ne5 33.Kc3 Ng4 34.f3 Ne5 35.f4 Nc6 36.Rc8 Ne7 37.Rc7 a6 38.Rb7 g5 39.Rxb6 Nf5 40.fxg5 fxg5 41.Rxa6 Nxb3 42.Kd3

While other paths toward the win exist for White, it's most prudent to make sure that the sole source of potential counterplay for the opponent—in this case, the passed g-pawn—cannot yield much counterplay anyway, as the White king approaches it in time to stop its forward motion.

42...g4 43.Ke3 Nh1 44.Rh6 Ng3 45.Kf4 1-0

**Boas Lee (1721) –
Leonardo Wang (1785) [D45]**
WA State Championship (Rising Stars)
Redmond (R8), February 18, 2024
[Leonardo Wang]

1.c4 c6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.e3 e6 5.d4

Here the game transforms from an English to a Slav Defense.

5...Nbd7 6.Bd2

This is a passive move, as the bishop is not doing a lot on d2.

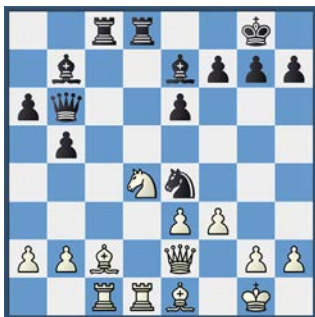
6...Be7 7.Be2 dxc4 8.Bxc4 b5 9.Bb3 a6 10.0-0 0-0 11.Rc1 Bb7 12.Qe2 c5

Usually if Black can play ...c5 in the Slav, he is fine. Here the position is about equal.

13.dxc5?!

This move lets me activate my d7-knight and threaten the b3-bishop.

13...Nxc5 14.Bc2 Qb6 15.Rfd1 Rfd8 16.Nd4 Rac8 17.Be1 Nce4 18.Nxe4 Nxe4 19.f3



Position after 19.f3

19...Nf6?!

Since the idea of f3 is Bf2, 19...Nc5 is a better move for me as it helps protect my queen from the f2-bishop after White plays e4.

20.Bf2

I missed Bf2, but after my opponent

played it, I realized that my queen does not have a good place to go.

20...Qa7

The idea is that I can play ...Qb8 if my opponent plays e4.

21.Nb3 Qb8 22.Bb1 Rxd1+ 23.Rxd1 Bd5 24.Bg3 Qb6 25.Bf2 Bxb3

Here I thought that it was worth giving up the bishop pair because White's pawns are now weak.

26.axb3 Bc5 27.Qd3 g6

This helps stop any Qh7 ideas, as I want to play ...Nd5. 27...Nd5

28.b4?

I'm not sure why my opponent played this, but now I have a better position because I'm up a pawn.

28...Bxb4 29.Kf1 Bc5 30.Ba2 Nd5 31.Bxd5 exd5 32.Qxd5 Bxe3 33.Bxe3 Qxe3 34.Qd4



Position after 34.Qd4

Here he was in severe time trouble, so he didn't calculate the queen trade. I decided not to take because my opponent's king is closer to the queenside.

34...Qe6

34...Qxd4 35.Rxd4 Rc1+ 36.Ke2 Rc2+ 37.Rd2 Rxd2+ 38.Kxd2 Kf8 39.Kc3 Ke7 40.Kb4

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35.Re1 Qc6 36.Ra1 Re8 37.Rd1 a5 38.Qd7

Here I'm forced to take, as Qc4+ goes nowhere after Qd3.

38...Qxd7 39.Rxd7 Re3 40.Rd2 Kf8 41.Kf2 Rb3 42.Ke2 Ke7 43.Kd1 Ke6 44.Re2+ Kd6 45.Kc2 Rb4 46.Rd2+ Kc5 47.Rd7 Rf4 48.Rd8 Kb4 49.Rh8 h5 50.Re8 Rc4+ 51.Kb1?!

This is a bad move, as White has trapped his own king on the queenside.

Here I decided to move my king over the kingside and go after his kingside pawns.

51...Rc6 52.Re4+ Kc5 53.Re5+ Kc4 54.Re7 f5 55.Ra7 a4 56.Rd7 Re6 57.Rb7 Re1+ 58.Ka2

I got distracted and missed Ka2. I thought after Kc2 I would win a pawn by force.

58...Re2 59.g3 Rxb2 60.Rg7 Rg2 61.Rxg6 f4!

Winning the g-pawn, as White can't take gxf4 because of ...Rxg6

62.Rc6+

62.g4 hxg4 63.fxg4 f3

62...Kd5 63.Rh6 Rxb3 64.Rxb5+ Kc4 65.Rf5 Rxf3 66.Rf8 Rf1 67.Rf5

Here I completely missed b4! which wins the game immediately.

67...f3

67...b4

68.Rf4+ Kd3 69.Rf8 Ke2 70.Re8+ Kf2 71.Rf8 Re1 72.Rf7 Re5 73.Rf8 Ke2

We both put up a good fight considering this was a five+ hour game.

0-1

**Gabriel Razmov (1774) –
Arnav Gadde (1556) [C00]**
WA State Championship (Rising Stars)
Redmond (R9), February 19, 2024
[Gabriel Razmov]

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2

I chose this sideline to avoid mainline French theory, which my opponent might be better prepared in. This variation leads to a complex fight that ends up quite like some King's Indian Attack positions.

3...Nf6 4.g3 c5 5.Bg2 Nc6 6.h3!?!N

An interesting novelty, played to avoid a future ...Ng4 by Black that could lead to a possibly weak e3-square. 6.Ne2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Nf4 is a more common variation.

6...Be7 7.Ne2 h6 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4?!

White begins to overextend here, dreaming about attacking and/or having major control over the center. Better was 9.c4, fighting for the d5-square. 9.c4 d4 and now (9...dxe4 is another try, after which 10.dxe4! Nh7 11.Nc3 b6 12.Nf3 Bb7 13.Bf4 g5 14.Be3 leads to a dynamic equality.) 10.f4 when White has a quite acceptable position.

9...d4?!

Closing the center, and wrongly so. Black should aim to open up the center to try to dispel White's ideas of kingside expansion. 9...dxe4 would be a better choice. After something like 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.dxe4 Qc7 12.Nc3 Rd8 13.Qg4 Nd4. Black would retain an edge.

10.Nf3± Qc7 11.c4?!

Aiming to control the d5-square, but missing that after Black captures *en passant* on c3, White cannot recapture with a-pawn. 11.g4! would have been the right move, following up on the plan for kingside expansion. Clearly

White's planning wasn't very consistent here. 11...e5 (11...a5 12.Ng3 a4 13.a3 c4 14.e5±) 12.f5± and White would have a very nice attacking position.

11...dxc3. 12.Nxc3

12.bxc3 would hand Black a good position after 12...c4 13.e5 cxd3 14.Qxd3 Rd8. when Black has a slight edge and the kingside is no longer a danger to them.

12...Rd8 13.Qe2 b6 14.e5?!

Attempting to expand even more in the center, but this ends up closing the center, which is not what White should aim for. In addition, it gives the d5-square to Black on a silver platter. 14.Be3 Ba6 15.Rfd1 Nd4 16.Qf2. retaining a complex position with chances for both sides.

14...Nd5±

Now Black owns the center, and White is clearly experiencing difficulties.

15.Nxd5 exd5?

An automatic and understandable choice, but an incorrect one. The d-file is more important, and White does not get that much pressure along the long diagonal, which is probably what Black was worried about. 15...Rxd5! 16.Ne1 Rd8 17.Be3 Bb7, and Black has stabilized the diagonal and retains an overall advantage.

16.a3?!

Trying to keep the Black knight off of b4, but this is a slow approach. 16.g4 was a better plan, once again going for a four vs three kingside expansion and attack. One defensive plan for Black may be 16...f5 17.exf6 Bxf6 18.g5 with a sharp position.

16...Be6?

An attempt at defense, but the bishop is misplaced on e6—the long diagonal would suit it better. 16...f5 is a more active defensive plan, leading to an



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*Gabriel Razmov in good spirits before his game.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

unclear and approximately equal position after 17.Be3 Be6.



Position after 16...Be6

17.Be3?

Once again, indecisive. White should go for the kingside attack, which he started pursuing early on. 17.g4! and White has a clear advantage after 17...Bc8 (17...g6?! does not work due to 18.f5 gxf5 19.gxf5 Bxf5 20.Bxh6) 18.f5 f6 19.Bf4

17...d4

Now, Black might get counterplay with

...c4 in the future. White must tread carefully.

18.Bf2= Rac8 19.Nd2 Qd7 20.Kh2?!

20.g4! is more accurate, keeping the balance. It also underscores how badly placed Black's Be6 is. 20...Bd5 21.Ne4=

20...Bd5?!

20...Na5! 21.Rac1 b5

21.Ne4 Bxe4?

A clear error, as the Ne4 wasn't going anywhere. Now White can pursue the kingside attack with energy and obtain a big advantage. 21...Na5! is a more active plan, aiming for ...c4 with lots of counterplay for Black. Both sides have chances, but Black easily has an edge. 22.Qh5 c4

22.Bxe4± f5 23.Bf3

23.exf6! Bxf6 24.g4±

23...Rf8 24.g4 Rc7?!

24...Bd8 25.gxf5+-

25.Bg3+-

Stabilizing the f4-pawn. Another strong continuation was to capture immediately. 25.gxf5 Rxf5 (25...Qxf5 26.Bg3+- with the same idea as the game.) 26.Bg4

25...fxg4?!

25...g6 26.Rg1 Kh7

26.Bxg4 Qd5 27.f5 Kh8 28.Rae1 Bg5



Position after 28...Bg5

29.e6?

Missing an immediate win, after which White's advantage begins to slide. 29.f6! is a neat tactic which takes advantage of the weak e6-square. White missed that after 29...gxf6 30.exf6 Rcf7 they have 31.Be6, winning material. 29...Qd8 30.Qe4 c4 31.dxc4 Na5 32.fxg7+ Rxg7 33.Rxf8+ Qxf8 34.Qxd4+- White is easily winning in this position.

29...Rce8 30.Bf3 Qb3 31.Be4?!

31.Bxc6! is an interesting opportunity aiming to remove any chances of a blockade on e7. After 31...Rxc6 32.Qh5! Qxd3 33.Rf2!+- with the idea to remove the rook from the vulnerable f1-square, thus preventing ...Rxf5. White has a winning advantage owing to their passed pawns.

31...Bf6 32.Qg2 Ne7 33.Rf2?!

33.Bd6± was slightly better, limiting Black's activity. At this point, White is still better, but no longer as convincingly.

33...Qa4?

A losing mistake, after which White converts smoothly. 33...c4! aiming for counterplay was once again the best defensive plan, though Black remains in difficulties after 34.Bd6±

34.Bd6 Qe8 35.Bb7 Rd8 36.Bc7

Winning an exchange via trapping the black rook.

36...Rc8?!

Essentially a resignation. 36...c4! tries to

fight on, though after 37.dxc4 d3 38.Bxd8 Qxd8 39.Be4+- White retains a winning position.

37.Bxc8 Qxc8 38.Be5 Bxe5+ 39.Rxe5 Qc7 40.Qg3!

Carefully unpinning the Re5.

40...Rf6 41.Re1 Qxg3+ 42.Kxg3 Nxf5+?!

Missing a tactic for White, although Black's position is objectively lost already.

43.Rxf5

My opponent resigned, seeing that the e-passer cannot be stopped. This was an interesting, back-and-forth game in which White did not stay consistent with the early plan of attacking on the kingside. As a result, Black had his chances with queenside and central counterplay, but missed opportunities to put pressure there and eventually, the pressure on him took its toll, so White was able to prevail. This win allowed me to tie for third place, which was quite pleasing after a loss on the previous day had taken me out of contention for first place in my section.

1-0

Saiya Karamali



*Saiya Karamali.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

Saiya Karamali played chess as a child and has recently returned to the game after making some new friends who got her excited about chess again. She is a member of the US Chess Federation's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee and is interested in making chess accessible to new players of diverse backgrounds. She is a PhD student in Linguistics at the University of Washington.

Boas Lee (1721) –

Saiya Karamali (1654) [B01]

WA State Championship (Rising Stars)
Redmond (R5), February 17, 2024
[Saiya Karamali]

This game ended suddenly, but looking over the game I was fascinated by the opening and early middlegame complexities. Both players were at the bottom of the standings going into the second weekend, and we were running out of chances to turn things around.

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.Nf3 Bg4 4.Be2 Qxd5 5.h3

Timely. Black would love to take on f3, but the endgame has never looked desirable to me, even though the computer likes it better. Instead, Black's position

Washington Senior Championship



MAY 17-19, 2024

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - REDMOND

4174 148TH AVE NE BLD. I, STE. M, REDMOND, WA 98052

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Registration **deadline Thu. 5/16 @ 5pm.**

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

Format: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss in two sections: Championship & Premier U1600.

Eligibility: Open to Seniors age 50+ (or reaching age 50 by August 1, 2024).

Rating: US Chess Rated. May 2024 US Chess Regular supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes.

Entry Fee: \$50 by 5/10, \$60 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

Rounds: Fri: 6:30 PM. Sat/Sun: 10 AM, 3 PM.

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

Prize Fund: \$750 (based on 20 pd. entries)

Championship: 1st/2nd: \$150-\$100. 1st U2000/U1800: \$80

Premier: 1st/2nd: \$100-\$70. 1st U1400/U1200/U1000: \$60

Highest finishing Washington resident in Championship receives the title of Washington State Senior Champion, a seed into the Invitational Section of the 2025 Washington State Championship, and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the [2024 Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions](#), held concurrently with the U.S. Open in early August. If needed to break a tie for 1st place, two G/90 playoff games will be played later in the year.

will quickly become cramped with her h5-bishop inhibiting the queen's lateral movement to f5 and h5.

5...Bh5

5...Bxf3 6.Bxf3 Qe5+ 7.Qe2 Qxe2+ 8.Bxe2 e5. Supposedly, this is equal, but White has the bishop pair in the endgame.

6.0-0 Nc6 7.d4 e6 8.c4 Qd7

8...Qf5 is the move I would love to play, but the piece sacrifice leads to an unclear position 9.g4 Bxg4 10.hxg4 Qxg4+ 11.Kh1 when Black has a strong attack, but it's hard to tell whether it's enough for the material.

9.Nc3

9.Be3 would have been more precise, with the bishop pointing towards White's queenside and discouraging Black from castling queenside. In the game, White could not play Be3 without sacrificing the d4-pawn. 9...Rd8 In his excellent book on this line, David Smerdon says of this position "White has achieved everything she could want from her opening... [but] Black's position is still very solid, and White is obliged to worry constantly about the d4-pawn." Still, I certainly would not love to be Black here!

9...0-0-0



Position after 9...0-0-0

10.Be3?!

This not only gives up a pawn, but takes some of the sting out of White's attack. 10.Qa4 is the most critical move, forcing Black to play precisely 10...Bxf3! 11.Bxf3 Nxd4 12.Qxa7 Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Qc6. Black is doing fine here, but it certainly looks scary.

10...Bxf3 11.Bxf3 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Qxd4 13.Qa4 a6??

13...Qb6 was the move I wanted to play, but I could not make it work. 14.b4 Qxb4 15.Qxa7 Bc5! the move I missed 16.Bxb7+ Kd7 Again, Black's king is

safe but it's tough to play this way.

14.a3??

Both of us missed 14.Bxb7+, winning material 14...Kxb7 15.Rad1.

14...Bd6 15.Rfd1 Qc5 16.b4 Qxc4!



Position after 16...Qxc4

The only move, after which Black is better, undermines White's attack. 16...Qe5 17.b5 White's attack breaks through.

17.Rac1 Bf4! 18.Rc2 Rxd1+ 19.Bxd1 Qd4

19...Rd8 20.Bf3 Rd2 would have been simpler, giving White fewer chances to drum up an attack.

WA Summer Bughouse Championship



Saturday, June 15, 2024

Lakeside Upper School

14050 1st Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125

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

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Online registration and payment
deadline 5pm on Friday, June 14, or else register at site.

Schedule: At-site registration:
Sat 5-5:45pm.

Rounds: Sat. 6 PM, 6:30, 7, 7:30,
8PM. Awards ~ 8:30 PM or asap.

Format: A 5-Round double Swiss in two sections: Mishra Open & Tang K-6 Scholastic.

Time Control: G/5; +0.

Entry Fee: \$25 if postmarked or online by 6/8, \$30 by 6/14, \$35 at-site. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

Prize Fund: \$640 (based on 25 paid teams).

Team Prizes (per section):
1st - 3rd: \$100-\$80-\$70.

Special Prizes (per section):

Best Dressed: \$20, Biggest Upset Win: \$20,
Best Team Name: \$10, Sportsmanship: \$20.

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

Memberships: No memberships required.

Rating: Unrated. Highest of current US Chess or NWSRS rating will be used to determine average team rating and pairings.

Rules: The tournament will follow current US Chess published bughouse rules, linked [here](#).

20.Bf3 Rd8 21.Qb3 Bd6

21...Ne4! another nice idea that leads to simplification. The knight cannot be taken on account of White's back-rank issues, and ...Nxc3 cannot be stopped. 22.b5 a5 and again ...Nxc3 cannot be stopped.

22.b5 Qe5 23.Re2??

Blundering into mate in two. 23.g3 a5 24.b6 c6 certainly looked scary as I was struggling to make time control. 25.Na4 Kb8 Black is winning here, but it would not have been easy to defend with only 20 minutes to reach move 40.

23...Qh2+

0-1

Selina Cheng (1543) –

Raphael Palathingal (1781) [C78]

WA State Championship (Rising Stars)

Redmond (R9), February 19, 2024

[Selina Cheng]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5

The Ruy Lopez.

3...a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 7.Nxe5

I have done this little fork many times in my previous games.

7...Nxe5 8.d4 Bxd4 9.Qxd4 d6



Position after 9...d6

10.Bg5

Here, I forgot about ...c5 and I played Bg5. Luckily, Rafael played ...h6, or I would've been down a bishop, and probably, lose the game.

10...h6 11.Bxf6

I captured to prevent ...c5. 11.Bh4 If I made this move I would be down a bishop. 11...c5 12.Qe3 c4 13.f4 Nc6 14.Bxc4 bxc4 and now I am down a piece.

11...Qxf6

He is threatening to go ...Nf3+. If I made a random move like h3, I would lose a

queen as the line below shows.

12.Qc3

12.h3 Nf3+ 13.gxf3 Qxd4

12...c5

Rafael is trying to trap my bishop.

13.Bd5 Rb8 14.f4 Nd7 15.e5 Qf5 16.Nd2 0-0 17.Rae1

I develop my rook.

17...Nb6 18.Be4 Qe6 19.exd6 Qxd6 20.b3

I did this to prevent ...Na4, and losing a pawn, as the following line shows: 20.h3 Na4 21.Qe3 Nxb2.

20...Be6 21.f5 Bd5 22.f6

I push this pawn to attack the king.

22...b4 23.Qe3 Rbd8 24.fxg7 Rfe8 25.Qf3 Be6 26.Bd3

I bring back my bishop to open the e-file.

26...Qd4+ 27.Kh1 Kxg7

Rafael had missed Rxe6, a move that would make him down a piece and potentially, mate. He should have tried to trade queens by ...Qg4, instead of this fatal mistake. According to the engine, there is mate in eight.



Position after 27...Kxg7

28.Rxe6

I hesitated to play this move because I was afraid that it would fail. I took a lot of time to think about this move. And eventually, I realized that this rook sacrifice would work!

28...Rf8

28...Qd7 Mate in 29.Qf6+ Kg8 30.Bh7+ Kxh7 31.Qxh6+ Kg8 32.Qg5+ Kf8 33.Rg6 f5 34.Qh6+ Kf7 35.Qg7#

29.Qg3+ Kh8 30.Rxh6#

And... checkmate.

1-0

Kanav Shah

My name is Kanav Shah, 10 years old from Redmond, WA. I started learning chess from my dad during COVID and loved the game from the first day. I mostly played online for the first few months and won my first local tournament on Lichess. I have an aggressive playing style and my favorite openings are Ruy Lopez, Sicilian and English. My role model is Gary Kasparov, and I love how he sacrifices pieces to get positional advantage. I have been pretty active in the PNW chess tournaments over the past year and have made new friends over the board. I aspire to become a titled player before I graduate from high school.

Kanav Shah (1200) –

Kate Wong (1277) [A21]

WA State Championship (Prodigies)

Redmond (R3), February 11, 2024

[Kanav Shah]

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Bc5 3.e3 c6 4.a3!?

d4 would be a normal move, but after pawn trade, ...Bb4 would be annoying pin, so a3.

4...Nf6 5.d4 exd4 6.exd4 Bb6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 Qe7+ 9.Be2 0-0 10.d5?!

Trying to take the space advantage and stopping opponents ...d5. Better would be Nf3 and castle.

10...d6 11.Nf3 Nbd7 12.0-0 Ne5 13.Nxe5



Position after 13.Nxe5

13...Qxe5?

This loses the pawn instantly, so better would be: 13...dxe5 14.Re1 Re8 15.Bf3±

14.dxc6 bxc6 15.Bg3 Qe6 16.Qxd6 Qxd6 17.Bxd6 Re8 18.c5!

Completely shutting down the dark bishop's diagonal and fixing the c6-weakness.

18...Bd8 19.b4 Be7 20.Bxe7 Rxe7 21.a4?

Missed the easy way to convert the

advantage. Though it's still better for White. 21.Bf3! Bb7 22.Rfe1 Rxe1+ 23.Rxe1 followed by b5.

21...Rc7 22.Rac1 Rb8 23.b5 cxb5 24.Nxb5 Re7 25.Bd3 Ba6 26.c6 Bxb5?!

Can't give connected passed pawns so easily.

27.axb5 Rc7 28.Ra1

Rule of two weaknesses: a7 and passed pawn.

28...Nd5 29.Ra5 Nb6 30.Rfa1 Ra8 31.Ra6

With the idea of Rxb6!

31...Rd8 32.Bc2 Re8 33.h3

Stopping the only threat that Black possesses, which is a back-rank mate.

33...Ree???

Forgetting the same back-rank mate for herself.

34.Rxb6!! g6

34...axb6 35.Ra8+

35.Rb8+

Rest is mere formality.

35...Kg7 36.Rb1 h5 37.Ba4 Kf6 38.b6

axb6 39.R8xb6 Re6 40.Rb7

Simplifying the material always helps.

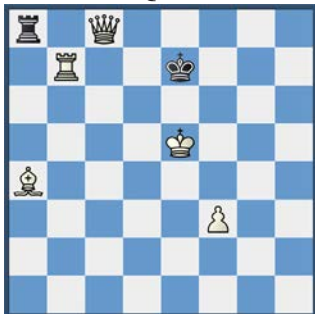
40...Ree7 41.Rxc7 Rxc7 42.Rb7 Rc8 43.c7

Clearer would be: 43.Rd7 Ke6 44.c7 blocking the king from attacking on c7-pawn.

43...Ke7 44.Kh2 Ke6 45.Kg3 g5 46.h4 f6 47.hxg5 fxg5 48.f4 h4+ 49.Kh3 gxf4 50.Kxh4 f3

Final desperation.

51.gxf3 Ke7 52.Kg5 Rg8+ 53.Kf4 Rc8 54.Ke5 Ra8 55.c8Q#



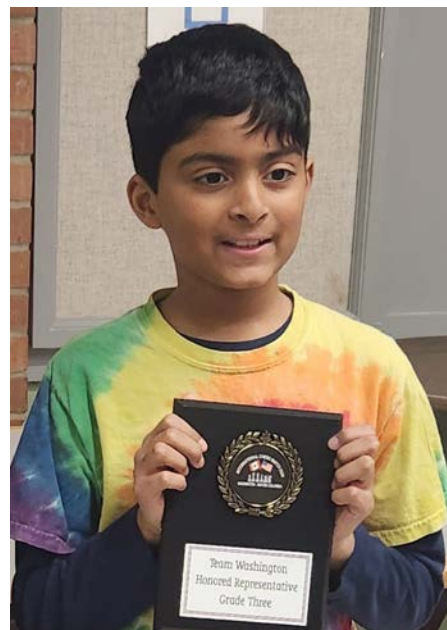
Position after 55.c8Q#

Very rare and interesting mate.

"Promotion mate"

1-0

Samarth Bharadwaj



Seattle Father's Day Open

Sunday, June 16, 2024

Lakeside Upper School

14050 1st Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125



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

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Online registration and payment
**deadline @ 5pm on Saturday,
June 15**, or else register at site.

Schedule:
At-site registration: Sun. 8-8:45am.
Rounds: 9am, 10:30am, Lunch
Time, 12:30pm, 2pm, 3:30pm.
Awards ~ 5pm or asap.

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in two sections:
Vader Open & Skywalker U1400.

Time Control: G/25; +10 sec. increment.

Prize Fund: \$1,500 (based on 60 paid entries).

Vader: 1st-3rd: \$210-160-120.

1st U1800/U1600: \$70

Skywalker: 1st-3rd: \$170-130-90.

1st U1200/U1000: \$70. 1st Unrated: \$70.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$25, Best Female Player (by
TPR): \$25, Best Dad (by TPR): \$25, Best Dressed:
\$10. Best Father/Son Team: \$50 (by avg. TPR)

Eligibility: Open to all junior + adult players.

Entry Fee: \$45 if postmarked or online by 6/9, \$55 by
6/15, \$60 at-site. \$25 play-up fee if rated under 1400
and playing in Vader section. Free entry for Jedis
rated 2000+. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

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 NWSRS + US Chess Rated. Highest of
June US Chess Regular or current NWSRS rating will
be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Samarth started playing chess when he was six years old. He has won the Washington state elementary chess championship and has finished 7th in the national grade chess championship in 2021. He loves creating chess puzzles. Apart from chess, he loves to bake and listen to music.

**Samarth Bharadwaj (1353) –
Zoe Xu (1217) [B56]**

WA State Championship (Prodigies)
Redmond (R4), February 11, 2024
[Samarth Bharadwaj]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6
5.Nc3 Nf6 6.h3

I thought my opponent would play ...e5 or ...e6 but I did not expect ...Bd7.

6...Bd7

I had not seen this move before.

7.Be3 g6 8.Qd2 Bg7 9.0-0-0 a6 10.f3
Qc7 11.g4 0-0-0? 12.g5!

I liked this move a lot as after 12.Nh5
13.Nd5 comes with a lot of force!

12...Nh5 13.Nd5! Qb8 14.Nxc6

I was trying to find a way to attack the king but could not find a blow.

14...Bxc6 15.Nxe7+ Kd7 16.Nd5 Bxd5
17.Qxd5 Ke7 18.Rg1?

I touched the rook on accident and played a nothing move as a result.

18...Rhe8? 19.Bc4! Rf8 20.f4!

Starting the attack!

20...b5 21.Bb3 Rd7 22.e5 Qb7 23.exd6+
Kd8



Position after 23...Kd8

24.Bb6+!!

Declining the queen trade in style.

24...Kc8 25.Qc5+ Kb8 26.Bd5!

Black is too cramped to reach the half point.

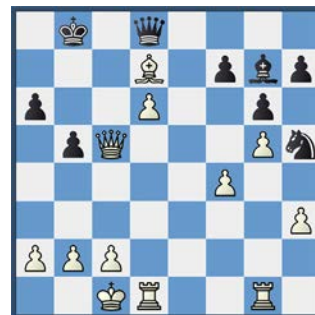
26...Qc8 27.Bc6!

27.Bc7+ wins only an exchange however
27.Bc6 wins two, therefore, what I chose.

27...Rfd8 28.Bxd8

If 28.Rxd8 29.Qb6+ is game over.

28...Qxd8 29.Bxd7



Position after 29.Bxd7

Up two exchanges conversion was simple.

29...Qxd7 30.Qb6+ Kc8 31.Rge1 Nxf4
32.Re7 Ne2+ 33.Kb1 Nf4 34.Rxd7
Kxd7 35.Qc7+ Ke6 36.d7 Kf5 37.d8Q
Nxf4 38.Qd5+ Kg4 39.Qc8+ Kg3
40.Rd3+ Kf4 41.Qe8 Nxf5 42.Qe3+
Kg4 43.Qexg5#

1-0

Seattle Father's Day Blitz

Sunday, June 16, 2024

Lakeside Upper School

14050 1st Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125



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

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Online registration and payment
**deadline @ 5pm on Saturday,
June 15**, or else register at site.

Schedule: At-site registration:
Sun. 5-5:45pm.
Rounds: 6 PM, 6:20, 6:40, 7, 7:20,
7:40, 8. Awards ~ 8:30PM

Format: A 7-Round single Swiss in one section.

Time Control: G/5; +3 sec. increment.

Entry Fee: \$25 if postmarked or online by
6/9, \$30 by 6/15, \$40 at-site. Free entry for
GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

Prize Fund: \$550 (based on 25 paid entries).

1st \$110, 2nd \$80, 3rd \$60. 1st Unrated: \$50.
1st U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200: \$50

Special Prizes: Best Dad (by TPR): \$25, Best
Female Player (by TPR): \$25, Best Dressed:
\$20, Biggest Upset Win: \$5/rd.

Eligibility: Open to all junior + adult players.

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

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

Rating: US Chess Blitz Rated. Highest of
June 2024 US Chess Blitz, US Chess Regular,
or current NWSRS rating will be used to
determine pairings and prizes.

Andy Chen



Andy started learning chess during the pandemic. He liked to watch chess kid videos and got excited playing chess. He is an active player and has attended several state tournaments. He currently lives in Bellevue and goes to Somerset Elementary School.

Kate Wong (1277) –

Andy Chen (1419) [B52]

WA State Championship (Prodigies)
Redmond, WA (R4), February 11, 2024
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+
Qxd7 5.0-0 Nf6 6.Re1 Nc6 7.c3



Position after 7.c3

7...g6

The sort of “normal” way to play this position is 7...e6 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.e5 Ne4 with rough equality. Development might continue 11.Nbd2 Nxd2 12.Bxd2 Be7 13.Rc1 0-0.

8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 Bg7

The reason 7...e6 is preferred over ...g6 is seen in the line 9...d5 10.e5 Ne4±, where Black’s bishop has a more limited role on g7, biting on the white central pawn chain.

10.Nc3

White can also consider the space-grab 10.d5±, here or on one of the next few moves, with a small edge: 10...Ne5 11.Nxe5 dxe5 12.Nc3.

10...0-0 11.Bg5 Rfd8 12.Qd2 Rac8 13.Bh6 b6?!

Weakening the c6–square, which has the potential to become an outpost for White. 13...e5 instead requests some central clarification, and after 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 Black’s disadvantage is manageable.

14.Qg5

It isn’t clear what this is intended to accomplish. 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.d5 Ne5 and now instead of capturing on e5 as in previous lines involving the d5 advance, 16.Nd4! eyes that c6–outpost square.

14...Qg4 15.Qxg4

15.Qe3±

15...Nxc4 16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.a3

Creating minor weaknesses. 17.Rad1 completes centralization with equality.

17...Na5 18.h3 Nf6 19.Rad1?

It suddenly becomes difficult to defend tactics involving the b2–pawn and under-defended knight on c3. 19.Rac1 was safer, adding protection to the knight on the open file.

19...Nc4! 20.Rb1 Nxb2

20...Nxa3! is more forcing, disallowing knight moves in reply by hitting the white rook.

21.Nb5!



Position after 21.Nb5

21...Nc4?!

Introducing various desperado-style tactics that muddy the position. 21...Rc2! 22.Nxa7?! Ra8 23.Nb5 Ra5±

22.Nxa7 Ra8 23.Nb5

23.Nc6 Rdc8 24.Nxe7 Rc7 25.e5!?!∞

23...d5 24.exd5

24.Nc7!?! Rxa3 25.Nxd5 Nxd5 26.exd5 Rxf3! 27.gxf3 Nd2 28.Kg2 Nxb1 29.Rxb1 with a position deserving an endgame study all its own. Evaluation? Certainly, no winning chances for White, but are there any for Black? No idea. Could be fun!

24...Nxd5 25.Rb3 Ra5 26.Rc1 Rc8 27.Rc2 Kf6?!

27...Rc6± prevents 28.Ne5.

28.Ne5 Ra4?! 29.Nc3

29.Rf3+! shifts the initiative to White! Since 29...Ke6?? 30.Re2 is winning for White, Black must retreat: 29...Kg7 (29...Kg5 30.Nxf7+±) 30.Rxf7+ Kg8 31.Rf3±

29...Nxc3 30.Rbxc3 b5 31.Nd7+

White plays for a repetition. 31.Rf3+ Ke6 32.Re2 Kd5 is probably heading toward a complicated draw.

31...Kg7 32.Ne5 f6! 33.Nd3?!

33.Nxc4 Rxc4 (33...Raxc4 34.Rxc4 Rxc4?? (34...bxc4: 35.Kf1 Kf7 36.Ke1! Ke6 37.Re2+! Kd6 38.Kd2 Ra8 39.Kc3.) 35.Rxc4 bxc4 36.Kf1 and White’s outside passed pawn is decisive.) 34.d5 f5 35.Rxc4 bxc4 36.Rc3 f4±

33...Rca8 34.Nb2 Nxa3 35.Re2 R4a7 36.Rb3?!

36.Rc5 Rb7 37.d5 leads to a tough defense, when Black certainly has some chances to convert the extra pawn.

36...Nb1?!

36...Rc8± puts Black’s rooks on both open files. Activity matters.

37.Nd1 Na3 38.Nc3

Now it is hard to hang onto the extra pawn, and even if Black manages to pick up the white d-pawn, four versus three on the kingside is a technically drawn single rook ending.

38...Nc4 39.Rxb5 Rd8 40.d5 Ra1+ 41.Kh2 Rd7 42.Re6 Rc1 43.Na4 Rc2 44.Rc5 Na3 45.Rxc2 Nxc2 46.Nb6 Rb7 47.Nc4 Kf7 48.Re2 Nd4 49.Rd2 Nb3 50.Re2 Nd4 51.Rd2 Nf5 52.d6 Rd7 53.dxe7 Rxd2 54.Nxd2 Kxe7 55.g4

Nd4 56.Kg2 Ke6 57.f4 Kd5 58.Kf2 Nc2 59.Kf3 Kd4 60.Nb3+ Kc4 61.Nc1 Kc3 62.h4 f5 63.gxf5 gxf5 64.Ne2+ Kd2 65.Ng3 Nd4+ 66.Kf2 Kd3 67.Nh5 Ke4 68.Nf6+ Kxf4 69.Nxh7 Kg4 70.Nf6+ Kxh4 71.Nd5 Kg4 72.Ne3+

A nicely-played tough battle.

Congratulations to the players.

1/2-1/2

Additional Chess Bios

David Levine

I started playing chess seriously in 1972 after watching the Fisher vs. Spassky match on TV. I was strongly influenced by Aron Nimzowitsch's book *My System* and took up many of the (sometimes dubious) hypermodern openings he championed. As I've gotten older, I've updated my opening repertoire to more classical openings. I mostly play blitz chess nowadays and come out once or twice a year to play in a classical tournament.

Vihaan Pai



My name is Vihaan Pai. I am nine years old. I started playing chess at home when I was seven years old and have developed a great interest in it. Having mostly played scholastic games during these two years, I am starting to transition to the longer format of the

game. Following are some of my proud achievements so far:

- first place in fourth grade U1100 section—US National K-12 Championship 2023 at Orlando, Florida.
- third place in 4-6 Open section—SPFNO 2023.
- Joint second place in U1100 section—2023 Oregon Open.
- four-point finish in Washington State Elementary Championship 2023.
- Winner of second-third U800 section—Washington Junior Open and Reserve 2022.

Krishang Gupta



Hi, I am Krishang Gupta and I am an avid chess player. I am a sixth grader in Everett School District. I am about 1500 NWSRS rated, but I am always learning and improving. If I am not playing chess, I am doing math or reading.

In the Washington State Championship, I was playing in the Prodigies section. My best game was against Pranav Kokati, when I sacrificed a knight with the black pieces while playing a King's Indian Defense. We reached the following position on move 19.



Here, my opponent had just played 19. Rd6, when I played a brilliant knight sacrifice 19...Nxc5! If White plays 20.Qxc5, then we play 20...Bf8 21.Rfd1 with all efforts to save the rook but we can play 21...Rd8. If my opponent takes my rook on d8, then I just take his queen on c5, otherwise he just loses a rook. This turned out to be a very good game for me.

Albert Eksarevskiy

Albert is currently a freshman at Lakeside High School who absolutely loves the game of chess, along with all of the lessons it has to teach. He enjoys being a regular tournament player at many Washington events throughout the year and appreciates all of the amazing people he has met through the game. He hopes to continue improving in the near future and is excited to play as much as he can throughout high school!



Washington Girls Championship



MAY 18-19, 2024

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - SEATTLE
7212 WOODLAWN AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98115

Highest finishing Washington resident in the Championship section receives the title of Washington State Girls Champion and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2024 [Haring National Girls Tournament of Champions](#), held concurrently with the US Open in early August.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in two sections: Championship and Challengers. Maximum of 30 players total & maximum of 20 players in a section - please register early to secure your spot. Great training for upcoming National events!

- **Championship:** A 2-day, 5-round G/90; +10 Swiss tournament. Open to all girls desiring to play for the title of WA State Girls Champion. Dual US Chess and NWSRS rated. US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sun. 10am, 2:30pm. A tie for first place in the Championship section will be resolved later in the year by two G/90 playoff games.
- **Challengers U1400:** A 1-day, 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss tournament. NWSRS rated, US Chess Unrated. US Chess membership not required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 10:15am, 11:30am, Lunch Time, 1:30pm, 2:45pm.

Eligibility: Open to all girls in grades K-12 as of the 2023-24 school year. Out-of-state players welcome! Players must be under the age of 19 as of Sept 1, 2024.

Rating: Highest of current NWSRS, or US Chess May supplement rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

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

Entry Fees: Championship: \$50 by May 11, \$60 after. Challengers: \$25 by May 11, \$30 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, or US Chess 2000+.

Registration: Online registration available at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/SettleKing. **Registration + payment deadline is Wednesday, May 15 by 5pm.** No registrations or payments will be accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster, and spots will be offered to players on the waitlist.

Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards prizes awarded in each section (based on 30 paid entries).

Championship: 1st - 3rd: \$100, \$80, \$60, 4th - Chess book.

Challengers: 1st - 3rd: \$50, \$40, \$30, 4th - Chess book.

Special Prizes (per section): Best Upset Win - Medal, Best Dressed - \$10 gift card, Kindness + Spreading Joy - \$10 gift card.

Questions? Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President, washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com



SEATTLE SUMMER KICKOFF

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 2024

LAKESIDE UPPER SCHOOL: 14050 1ST AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98125

CO-HOSTED BY WCF + CHESS MATES FOUNDATION

FORMAT:

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

K-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U1000

4-12 Open

SCHEDULE:

Rd. 1 - 9:00am

Rd. 2 - 10:30am

Rd. 3 - 11:45am

Lunch Time

Rd. 4 - 1:15pm

Rd. 5 - 2:30pm

Awards ~ 3:45pm

ENTRY FEE: \$45 before 6/8,

\$55 after. Maximum of 100
players. Scholarships available for
Chess Mates students.

AWARDS: Amazon Gift Card

Prizes awarded in each section:
1st - 5th: \$70-65-60-55-50. Medals
for first-timers, biggest upset win,
and best female player (by TPR).

RATING: NWSRS rated. Open
sections also US Chess rated, with
US Chess membership required.
Higher of current NWSRS and US
Chess Regular rating used to
determine section and pairings.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all
students in grades K-12 as of the
2023-24 school year. Out-of-state
players welcome!

REGISTRATION:

Register online at
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal/SettleKing.
100% preregistered, no on-site entries or
payments. Entry + payment **deadline**
June 14 @ 5pm. No registrations
accepted or refunds offered after the
deadline.

CLOCKS:

Chess clocks will be used from the
beginning in the Open sections. Clocks
not required for the U800 and U1000
sections, until a judge places one into
unfinished games after 35 minutes of
play.

QUESTIONS?

Contact: Rekha Sagar,
WCF Chief Tournament Director,
rekha4chess@gmail.com

Tournaments



Venue
 7212 Woodlawn Ave NE
 Seattle WA 98115
Info
www.seattlechess.club
Addresses for Entries
 SCC Tournament Director
 same address as above
 —or—
 contact@seattlechess.club

May 5 New date! **Sunday Tornado**
Format: 4-SS. **TC:** Game/50 + 10sec. inc. **EF:** \$18 (+\$7 day membership for non-SCC). **Prize fund:** sum of \$10/entry. **Prizes:** 1st (35% of prize fund), 2nd (27%), bottom half (by rating) 1st (22%), 2nd (16%). **Registration:** 10:30-11:15am. **Rounds:** 11:30am, 1:50, 4:10, 6:30pm. **Byes:** 1 half-pt., commit at reg. USCF membership req'd.

May 12 New date! **Adult Quads (new event!)**
Format: 3-RR. Open to players 18 years and older. **TC:** Game/60 + 30sec. inc. **EF:** \$16 (+\$7 day membership for non-SCC). **Prize fund:** \$48 per quad (4 entries). **Prizes:** \$48 (1st) per quad. **Registration:** 9-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm. **Byes:** 0. USCF membership req'd.

May 26-27 2nd Annual Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss @ Washington Open
 A 4-rd Swiss open to players 18 y.o. + at the Redmond Marriott. See <https://nwchess.com/calendar/WA%20Open%20May%202024.pdf> (2nd page, right side) for details and to register. Prize fund \$1,000 guaranteed!

*Wednesdays are
 for casual play
 Come anytime
 7-11pm*

SCC Annual Meeting

- *Friday, May 10, 7pm at the club*
- *come and hear about the club's past year accomplishments & future plans*
- *mix with other members and friends before the 8pm Friday game*
- *members vote on the club's Board of Directors for 2024-25*
- *light food and drink provided*

SCC Fridays

One USCF-rated round per night (free to SCC members, \$5 per night for others) normally played at a rate of 40/90 followed by 30/60. Drop in for any round!

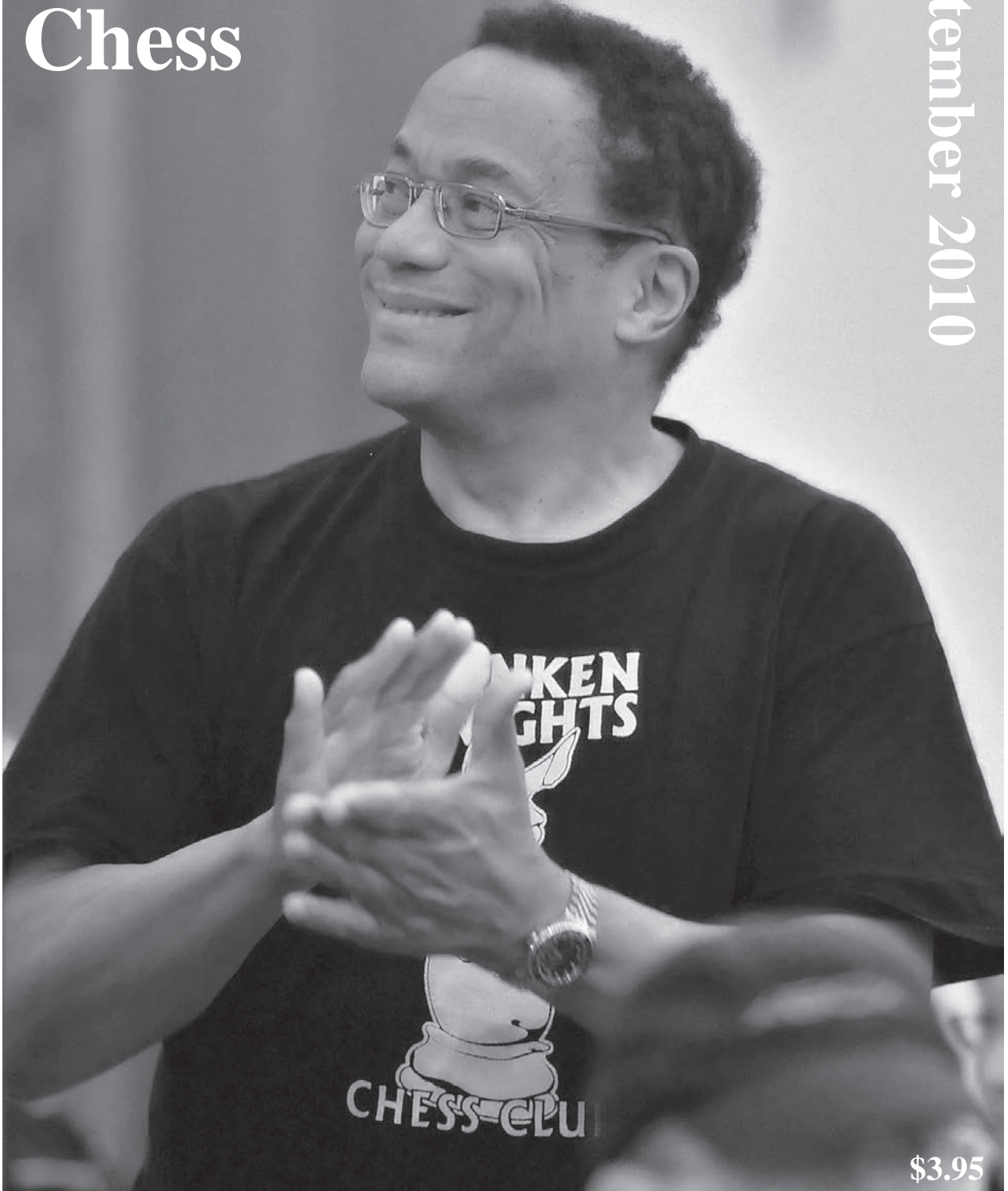
May Flowers: 5/3, 10, 17, 31.

Closed, Go to WA Open: 5/24.

It's Summertime! (close ratings): 6/7, 14, 21, 28.

Northwest Chess

September 2010



\$3.95

