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# Northwest Chess

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Steven Breckenridge holding the Oregon State  
Championship trophy. Photo credit: Lilly Tang.

## Back Cover

Old School. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

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## News Flash: Vignesh Anand Becomes National Master!

**C**ongratulations to Vignesh Anand of Redmond, Washington, who recently became Washington State's newest National Master! Vignesh achieved a US Chess rating of 2202 as a result of scoring 4.0/4 points at the recent Plano Swiss, held in Plano, Texas on Saturday, May 10, 2025.

Congratulations Vignesh!



# Oregon Closed

Wilson Gibbins

This year's tournament marked Steven Breckenridge's return to the pinnacle of Oregon Chess. Steven won the Oregon Closed in 2011 and 2012 but did not play again until 2024. While he did not win last year, he was undefeated, finished second, and was the only player to hold 2024 champion Zoey Tang to a draw. This was in spite of the fact that he employed the risky King's Indian defense in an attempt to win with Black in the next to last round, as a win would have allowed him to catch Zoey in the standings.

In 2025 he had White against Zoey in round one. A win in a hard-fought game gave him a running start to the tournament, as he finished with 6.5/7. Zoey did not let this early setback ruin her tournament and fought back to finish

second with a score of 4.5/7. Jason Cigan, who has a series of good results in 2025, finished third with a score of 4.0/7.

Ishaan Kodarapu and Robert Fisette tied for first in the Challengers section. Ishaan won the tournament on tiebreaks and earned the invitation to the 2026 Championship section. Robert finished clear second in the 2023 and 2024 editions of this tournament, so he has a right to be disappointed to come so close. But in 2022 it was Ishaan who tied for first and lost the invitation to Austin Tang on tiebreaks. Hmmm, I wonder if there is any appetite for switching from arbitrary tiebreaks to rapid playoffs when tournament spots are on the line. Back to the chess results—Roger Tabet finished third with 4.5/7 points, including draws with both Ishaan and Robert.

Thanks to Zoey Tang for organizing this tournament and recruiting the 16 players, which must have been a distraction from playing in the tournament. Thanks to Milo and Lilly Tang for directing.

## Games

**Jack Buchanan (1968) –  
Corey Russell (2200) [B22]**  
2025 Oregon Closed Challengers  
Portland, OR (R4), February 16, 2025  
[Fritz 16 and Corey Russell]

All comments/variations/evaluations are Fritz 16's unless followed by my initials (cjr) – cjr

**1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nc6 5.Nf3 cxd4 6.cxd4 e5 7.Nc3 Bb4 8.Bd2 Bxc3 9.Bxc3 e4 10.Ne5 Nh6**

While I recognize that ...Nxe5 is probably better it seemed to offer White good chances with little to lose. It seemed like a long defensive battle, so I didn't want to go into that. – cjr

Black should play 10...Nxe5± 11.dxe5 Ne7

**11.Bc4± Qd6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Nxc6**

**13.Qh5±**

**13...bxc6= 14.Qd2**

14.f3

**14...Ng4 15.g3**

Threatens to win with Bb4.

**15...Be6?**

Fritz is of course correct ...Rfd8 is best. -cjr

15...Rd8=

**16.Bb4+-**

Skewer

## Oregon Closed Championship Section

Place	Name	Rating	State	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	Steven Breckenridge	2284	OR	W2	W5	W8	W6	W4	D7	W3	6.5
2	Zoey Tang	2369	OR	L1	D3	W7	D5	W8	D6	W4	4.5
3	Jason Cigan	2187	OR	W7	D2	D5	W8	D6	D4	L1	4
4	Nick Raptis	2348	OR	D5	W8	D6	W7	L1	D3	L2	3.5
5	Matt Zavortink	2283	OR	D4	L1	D3	D2	W7	D8	D6	3.5
6	Michael Omori	2199	OR	W8	D7	D4	L1	D3	D2	D5	3.5
7	Austin Tang	2203	OR	L3	D6	L2	L4	L5	D1	W8	2
8	Carl A Haessler	2200	OR	L6	L4	L1	L3	L2	D5	L7	0.5

## Oregon Closed Challengers Section

Place	Name	Rating	State	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	Ishaan Kodarapu	2175	OR	D5	W6	W7	D3	W8	W4	D2	5.5
2	Robert Fisette	2066	OR	W8	D4	D3	W5	W6	W7	D1	5.5
3	Roger Tabet	2134	OR	D4	W7	D2	D1	L5	W8	W6	4.5
4	Jack Buchanan	1968	OR	D3	D2	W5	W6	L7	L1	W8	4
5	Robert Hecht	2018	OR	D1	W8	L4	L2	W3	L6	D7	3
6	William Nobles	1906	OR	W7	L1	W8	L4	L2	W5	L3	3
7	Corey John Russell	2200	OR	L6	L3	L1	W8	W4	L2	D5	2.5
8	David Edward Murray	1926	OR	L2	L5	L6	L7	L1	L3	L4	0

16...Qd7 17.Bxe6 Qxe6 18.Bxf8 Rxf8  
19.Qf4

I don't think the wandering around of the white queen is the answer here. Just 19.f3 and it seems hard to get compensation for me. Note the Q on d2 also covers h2, so she's really already doing a good job where she is. -cjr

19...f5 20.h3

Better is 20.f3+- Nf6 21.fxe4 fxe4 22.Qf5

20...Nf6± 21.Qe5

Prevents ...Nd5

21...Qd7

When down material it's usually best to avoid trades. This also sets up a nasty trap ...Nd5 and White's queen would be

trapped with ...Re8 -cjr  
22.Qc5 f4



Position after 22...f4

23.Kh2!

Not 23.gxf4 Qxh3 24.Qa3 Qf5

23...Nd5 24.g4

24.Rae1±

24...f3

And now ...e3 would win. Black has compensation.

25.Rae1

White is on the road to losing. 25.Rac1! Rf6 26.Rg1

25...Qc7+-+ 26.Kh1

[Diagram on next page]

26...e3 27.Qc2

27.fxe3? perishes. 27...Qg3 28.Qc2 f2-+ (28...Qxh3+? 29.Qh2-+; 28...Qxh3+?



Championship Section: L-R: Nick Raptis, Zoey Tang, Austin Tang, Matt Zavortink, Carl A Haessler, Steven Breckenridge, Jason Cigan, Michael Omori. Photo credit: Lilly Tang.





Position after 26.Kh1

29.Qh2-+; 27.Rc1 e2

27...e2 28.Rg1 Kh8

Aiming for ...Nf4.

29.Qe4

White was low on time for the first time control and offered a draw here. My winning chances seemed excellent so declined -cjr

29.Qc5? Qf4 30.g5

29...Qf4 30.Qxf4

30.Qd3

30...Nxf4

Endgame. KRR-KRN

31.Kh2 Nd3 32.Kg3 Nxe1 33.Rxe1

KR-KR

33...g5 34.b3 Kg7 35.b4 Rf6

This is the maneuver White had missed. This move protects c6- and f3-pawns and also enables the black king to walk to the queenside (without interfering with the protection of his f3-pawn) and pick up pawns or to get to d2 to promote his pawn. As long as Black responds to any h4 with ...h6 the white king is bottled up and the white rook must always guard the first rank. It's over -cjr

36.a4 Kf7 37.b5 cxb5 38.axb5 Ke6 39.h4 h6

Hoping for ...Kd6.

40.hxg5 hxg5 41.Ra1

Black mates.

41...Kd5 42.Re1 Kxd4 43.Rc1 Re6 44.Re1 Kd3 45.Kxf3 Kd2 46.Rxe2+ Rxe2

KR-K3P

47.Kg3 Re5 48.f4 Re3+ 49.Kf2 gxf4 50.g5 Kd3 51.g6 Ke4 52.b6 axb6

0-1

**William Nobles (1906) –  
Roger Tabet (2134) [B35]**  
2025 Oregon Closed Challengers  
Portland, OR (R7), February 17, 2025  
[Roger Tabet]

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nge2 g6 4.d4 cxd4  
5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0-0 8.Bb3  
a5 9.h4?

An uncommon move. It feels too early.

9...a4!

9...h5= 10.f3 d5!

10.Bxa4N Nxe4!

10...Rxa4? 11.Nxa4 Qa5+ 12.c3±

11.Nxe4 Rxa4 12.c3 Qa5! 13.Nb3  
Qf5?!

13...Qa8! Such an unnatural move, but the correct move. It keeps the pressure on a2 and wins a pawn. 14.Nec5 (14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.cxd4 b5!?) 14...Rxa2 15.Rxa2 Qxa2?

14.Ng3 Qb5! 15.Nc5?! Rc4! 16.Nd3!  
Ne5!

16...d5! Also very good. 17.Qb3 Qa6 18.Nc5 Qa5 19.Nd3 Bxc3+!; 16...d6! 17.Qb3 Qa6 18.Rd1 Be6?

17.Nxe5 Qxe5?!?

17...Bxe5 18.Rb1 d6 19.Ne2 Bf5!

18.Qd2 f5?!

Actually not good. 18...b5 was much better. Now this is equal.

19.Ne2! =



Position after 19.Ne2

Controlling f4 and d4.

19...Qa5=

19...f4 20.Bd4 Qe4? 21.f3 Qf5=; 19...Qc7 was good too. 20.0-0-0 f4! 21.Nxf4 Rxf4 22.Bxf4 Qxf4 23.Qxf4 Rxf4 24.f3? I thought this was a hard win, but the computer likes it a lot.

20.h5!!

20.0-0-0? Qxa2 21.Bd4 Qa1+ 22.Kc2

Qa4+ 23.Kb1 e5-+; 20.Bd4 e5!

20...Rf6!!

This move came naturally. It protects the g6-pawn, and does a second-round rook lift in the same game by preparing to go to either d6 or a6 etc.

21.hxg6 hxg6! 22.Bh6 Bh8! 23.0-0-0!?

23.Bf8!= Such a tricky move 23...Rxf8 (23...Rf7!= This works too. 24.Qh6 Bf6!?) 24.Rxh8+! (24.Qh6?? Kf7!) 24...Kxh8 25.Qh6+ Kg8 26.Qxg6+ Kh8= 27.Qh6+ (27.0-0-0?? Rh4!) 27...Kg8=

23...Rd6!! 24.Qg5?

24.Qc2! was best.

24...Rxd1+?!

To deviate the h1 rook. 24...Bxc3!! 25.Rxd6 (25.Nxc3 Rxc3+!! 26.Kb1 Ra6!! 27.a3 Rxa3 28.bxa3 Qxa3-+; 25.Kb1 Bxb2-+) 25...Bd2+ 26.Kb1 Bxg5-+

25.Rxd1 Kf7 26.Nf4???

a3 or Kb1 was =. Now this loses a pawn.

26...Rxc3+! 27.Kb1 Rc6!

The only move to protect c6 and move the rook out.

28.Nd5!?

After all this, I am completely on the defensive, but with a pawn up. Can I get that bishop out into the action without giving back the pawn?

28...Qc5! 29.Qd2!



Position after 29.Qd2

Only move to cover c2 and d5. 29.Qc1? Qxf2!

29...e6??±

A bad move. Now White is better or just one move long. 29...d6 was much better to be able to get the bishop out. 30.Nf4 Qb5! 31.Qd5+ Qxd5 32.Nxd5 e5; 29...Rd6? 30.Bf4 e5 31.Be3 Qb5=

30.Nb4!

Incredible move on a weird square.

**30...Rc7?!**

30...Rb6?? 31.a3!!± (31.Be3?? Qxb4 32.Bxb6 Qxb6 33.Rc1 Qd8 34.Qc2 Qb6!=) 31...d5?? 32.Rc1+-; 30...Qb5! was correct 31.Nxc6 bxc6±

**31.Nd3??= Qd4= 32.Be3 Qe4 33.f3 Qd5 34.Bb6?!**

34.Bf4 d6

**34...Rc6 35.Bd8!?**

Such a weird idea to use the d8-h4 diagonal to get in with the queen.

**35...e5!**

35...e5 allows the control of f6 against Qg5, and e7 can be defended by ...Qe6.

**36.Qe1 Qe6?±**

36...e4! was better, but too complex with four minutes left on the clock.

**37.Qh4? Bg7± 38.Re1 d6?!**

38...f4! 39.Nxf4? Qf5+-+

**39.Nf4 Qd7!**



Position after 39...Qd7

**40.g4??**

I think he was trying to complicate things even further to play on my clock. 40.Nd5!

Rc5 41.Nf4 Rc6 42.Nd5 f4!

**40...Rc4??±**

Based on intuition with one minute on the clock.

40...fxg4! 41.fxg4 (41.Rf1 Qf5+ 42.Ka1 exf4 43.Qe7+ Kg8 44.Qe8+ Qf8) 41...Rc4!

**41.Nxg6??**

41.Nd5! Rc5±

**41...fxg4!**

The only move.

**42.Qh5?**

42.Nh8+ was better to try this but still does not work. 42...Kg8 43.Ka1 Qf5 44.Ba5 Bf6 45.Qh6 Bxh8-+

**42...Qf5+**

**0-1**



Challengers Section: L-R: David Murray, Corey Russell, Jack Buchanan, Robert Fisette, William Nobles, Ishaan Kodarapu, Robert Hecht, Roger Tabet. Photo credit: Lilly Tang.



# Meiling Cheng

## Reframing the Game of Chess One Photo at a Time

Ken Lee

**F**or anyone in the Pacific Northwest chess community, Meiling Cheng is a familiar face.

With her ready smile, friendly personality and handy phone, Meiling has been providing amazing photography for *Northwest Chess* magazine since 2021.

Meiling's three children—Howard, a sophomore at University of Washington in Bothell; Edward, senior at Garfield High; and Selina, seventh grader at Tillicum Middle School—have been a part of the chess community for many years.

I sat down with Meiling to discuss chess, photography, and her journey as a chess parent.

**Ken:** When did you first come to Seattle?

**Meiling:** I moved from Guangdong, China to Seattle in 2003 and had to learn to adapt to a completely new life. My kids were all born here in Seattle.

**Ken:** What got them interested in chess in initially?

**Meiling:** They were fortunate to have some great chess experiences as young kids. My sons got involved with chess early on at their elementary school in

South Seattle. FIDE Master (FM) Coach William (Bill) Schill and Steve Ryan from Seattle Chess School were my boys' first coaches at their elementary school. Later, they got involved with Detective Cookie's Chess Club.

Selina first started learning chess from Detective Cookie and Larry Greenawalt at the Detective Cookie Chess Club. She also worked with Coach Bill and Steve from her elementary school chess club. Both Edward and Selina learned a lot from National Master (NM) Coach Matt Fleury online during COVID.

Coach Ray Easterday from Orangutan Chess Academy has also supported my kids since we first met at the Seattle Public Library. Another amazing person has been Coach Valentin Razmov, who we met at a chess tournament. More recently, Woman FIDE Master (WFM) Coach Chouchanik Airapetian has been Selina's coach as well.

**Ken:** Wow, that's a lot of different coaches! Did you purposely plan to work with so many different coaches over the years?

**Meiling:** Well, believe it or not, that was unplanned. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to meet so many kind people who have helped us along the way. I figured that if a coach could inspire my kids to

be excited about playing chess, I would like to work with them. What a blessing for my kids to learn from such amazing coaches and friends.

**Ken:** I guess it pays to be friendly! Why did you want to support your kids' interest in chess?

**Meiling:** To be honest, it all kind of happened naturally. Even though I don't know much about the actual game of chess, our family felt like it was a great activity for our kids. It was clear to me that chess could help my kids develop and sharpen their strategic thinking, problem solving and decision making skills.

I also thought chess could help my kids learn to be more patient and resilient. Chess also taught them about goal setting and how to achieve those goals through dedication and hard work. Honestly, what I like most about chess is its energy. I think that the energy of chess and the intentionality of chess are good things for kids to experience.

**Ken:** Can you expand on that idea please?

**Meiling:** I believe that life is like a chess game. Chess is a journey filled with ups and downs, laughter and tears, joy and sadness, wins and losses. But for me, the most important thing about chess is that it's a boundless opportunity to learn something new, grow, and enjoy the process. Good sportsmanship is always something good for the entire chess community to embrace and promote.

**Ken:** How have your kids' chess experiences changed over the years?

**"The most important thing about chess is that it's a boundless opportunity to learn something new, grow, and enjoy the process."**



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**Meiling:** It was very challenging for my boys to continue with chess in middle school because most of the elementary school friends quit chess to pursue other sports or interests. Also, there wasn't a chess club in their middle school. It's the same now with Selina. Her current middle school does not have a formal chess club or chess coach. This makes it harder for her to continue playing. But she has adapted and continues to play more online games and compete in tournaments. While one of my boys continues to compete occasionally, the boys' interests have expanded into other areas.

**Ken:** How did you get involved with becoming a photographer for the chess community?

**Meiling:** I started taking photos as a volunteer for Detective Cookie and her chess events back in 2016. Then in 2021, I was invited by WCF President NM Josh Sinanan to take photos at various chess tournaments. I've been doing it for years now and I love it!

**Ken:** What makes a good chess photo?

**Meiling:** I think a good photo requires the right body posture, facial expression, and movement. It also requires the right chess player on the right board with the best possible chess position. When I am taking photos at a chess tournament, my focus is more on the players than on the board. To me, the board tells about the position in a game, while the players tell the story about what they have been going through in a game or tournament.

I have observed a wide range of emotions from players over the years. They vary from boredom, disappointment, anger, anxiety, stress, and frustration to relaxation, contentment, confidence, joy, surprise, excitement, and pride.

The challenge is that chess players must try to keep their emotions in check and refrain from showing their emotions to their opponents. I think it's an interesting skill set that is unique to chess.

**Ken:** What makes a perfect chess photo?

**Meiling:** A perfect chess photo is the one that captures the most critical moment in a match and conveys the story about the game as well as the players involved.

**Ken:** What else would you like to share with readers after witnessing

thousands of chess tournaments?

**Meiling:** I would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to all the chess players, families, volunteers, organizers and especially my WCF team members for your absolute trust, understanding, consideration and support with my volunteer work.

I really want to give Detective Cookie and WCF President Josh Sinanan a special shout-out in providing me the great opportunity to make my photographic journey possible.

**Ken:** What do you think is the future of chess?

**Meiling:** As a volunteer and chess parent, I am glad to see supportive chess coaches and parents always be there for the players whenever they need them. I

am also happy to see the chess players help and support each other. I would highly recommend players, families and coaches to volunteer at tournaments or other events whenever possible.

I would also like to see more players and parents share their experience and stories through *Northwest Chess Magazine*.

Your articles for *Northwest Chess* help bridge the gap between people who are inside and outside the community and are very inspiring to all of us. I will keep on shooting photos! Ken, please keep on writing!



*US Junior Open, Chicago 2024, Meiling Cheng (L) and Selina Cheng.  
Photo courtesy of Meiling Cheng.*



# Seventh Buckendorf Senior Championship

By Jeffrey Roland



*Idaho Senior Champion Zygmund Mayer.  
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*



The 2025 7th Buckendorf Senior Championship was held at the Riverside Hotel in Boise, Idaho May 17-18, a very rainy weekend—great for being indoors playing chess. The US Chess rated tournament, sponsored by the Idaho Chess Association (ICA), was directed by Jeffrey Roland and run “the old-fashioned way” with analog clocks only, no computers used for pairing—all done with pairing cards and manual wall charts and pairing charts.

This was the official tournament to determine not only the Idaho Senior Champion, but also Idaho’s representative to the Irwin Senior Tournament of Champions (which will be held July 28-31 in Middleton, Wisconsin alongside the 125th U.S. Open). The tournament winner, with a perfect 5.0/5 score, was Faris Gabbara from Westland, Michigan. But the top Idaho player was Zygmund Mayer of Twin Falls, Idaho with a score of 3.5/5 points—it is he, who as Idaho Senior Champion and top Idaho finisher, wins the right to represent Idaho at the Irwin Senior Tournament of Champions.

Brian Lang, Anthony Nakashima, and Christopher Pentico were only a half-point behind him with 3.0/5 points each and Steven Wlodek and David Zaklan were a half-point behind them with 2.5/5 points each, etcetera, so this was a very close event! And despite the fact that this was a tournament of seniors, many of which had vast tournament experience, even here in this tournament a *new* player (the mother of Anthony Nakashima) played in her first tournament as an unrated player. Welcome to the world of rated chess, Bernadette Whiting!

**Zygmund Mayer (1976) –  
Faris F. Gabbara (2016) [A00]**  
2025 7th Buckendorf Senior Ch.  
Boise, Idaho (R3), May 17, 2025  
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.g4 e5 2.Bg2 Nc6 3.c4 Bc5 4.e3 d6  
5.Nc3 Be6 6.d3 Qd7 7.h3 Nge7 8.a3 a5  
9.Nge2 Bb6 10.Bd2 0-0

The position is balanced, with White’s pawns, bishop, and knight offering good control over central light squares. Black plans to open the f-file with an...f5 lever, which highlights a potential drawback of White’s first move.

11.Na4?!



Position after 11.Na4

Definitely the wrong direction for this knight. On a4 it is a target, and its thematic central influence vanishes. There are several ideas that are more positionally consistent with the structure, including 11.Nd5 Ba7 12.g5!?, 11.Ng3 f5 12.Bd5!?, and 11.Qa4 f5 12.0-0-0!? when White offers a pawn or two to solidify the central light squares and open some kingside files.

11...Ba7 12.Qb3?! Rab8

12...b5! is pretty good here, immediately pointing out the problems with developing the queen to b3.

13.Nec3 f5! 14.gxf5

14.0-0-0!? fxg4 15.hxg4 Rxf2 16.Be4 may not offer quite enough attack, but at least it gets messy. Admittedly this idea would be better if that a4-knight was

closer to the kingside action...

14...Nxf5 15.Bd5 Nh4

Black can start the big attack now, with 15...Bxd5! 16.cxd5 (16.Nxd5 Nfd4 17.exd4 Nxd4 18.Qd1 Nf3+ 19.Ke2 b5-) 16...Ncd4 17.Qd1 (17.exd4 Nxd4 18.Qa2 b5 This move keeps cropping up.) 17...b5-+

16.0-0-0 Rxf2! 17.Ne4

Black had to calculate lines such as 17.c5!? Bxd5 18.Qxd5+ (18.Nxd5 Rf7) 18...Rf7 19.Rdfl. and be confident that there was an edge.

17...Rxd2!! 18.Kxd2

It’s marginally better to try 18.Nxd2 Bxe3

18...Nf3+ 19.Kc3

If 19.Ke2 Ncd4+

19...Bxe3 20.Nf6+

White can escape into a hopeless endgame with 20.Bxc6 Qxc6 21.Qb5 Qxb5 22.cxb5

20...gxf6 21.Bxf3 Nd4 22.Rdg1+ Kh8 23.Qd1 b5

Hello.

24.b3

24.cxb5 Qxb5+

24...bxa4 25.b4 axb4+ 26.axb4 Nf5



(L-R) Faris Gabbara and Zygmund Mayer. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

27.Re1 Bd4+ 28.Kd2 Rxb4 29.Bg4 Rb2+ 30.Kc1 Ra2 31.Qf3 c6 32.Rhf1 Qb7

It's mate in two from here.

0-1

**Faris F. Gabbara (2016) –  
Michael J. Presutti (1600) [B13]**  
2025 7th Buckendorf Senior Ch.  
Boise, Idaho (R2), May 17, 2025  
*[Ralph Dubisch]*

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.Bd3 Nc6  
5.c3 Nf6 6.Bf4 Qb6

6...Bg4 is the normal move here, generally continuing 7.Qb3, when Black can choose between 7...Qc8, 7...Qd7, or 7...Na5 (or perhaps even 7...Qb6) with decent chances.

7.Qd2

A slightly odd defense of b2, as it interferes with development of the b1-knight.

7...Bg4 8.h3 Bh5 9.Na3

9.Ne2

9...a6

Black doesn't really need this preventative, as 9...e6 10.Nb5?! Rc8 promises White nothing. 11.Nd6+? Bxd6 12.Bxd6 Nxd4

10.Ne2 e6 11.0-0 Be7

11...Bxa3 12.bxa3 Na5 is interesting.

12.Rfe1 Rc8 13.Bg5 0-0 14.Nf4 Bg6 15.Nxg6 hxg6 16.Nc2 Rfd8 17.Be3 Qc7 18.a4 Bd6 19.Bg5



*Position after 19.Bg5*

19...Ne7

Black defends and waits. A more active choice is something like 19...e5!? 20.dxe5 Nxe5 21.Nd4. It's easy to reject a line like this, because the position opens up, White has the bishop-pair, and Black's pawns



*Michael Presutti. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*

are variously isolated and doubled. Yet Stockfish likes this, claiming complete equality.

Why? Black's good coordination, centralized knights, safe king, and play on the half-open c-file, along with a very tiny edge in development, probably are clues. White will have trouble holding onto both bishops (and Black's not in a huge hurry to exchange one, either), and that isolated pawn isn't coming under real pressure anytime soon.

20.Re2 Kf8 21.Ne1 Re8 22.Nf3 Nd7 23.Rae1 Nc6

White has made progress coordinating and completing development over the last four moves, and can look for a breakthrough.

24.Nh4 Nf6 25.Nxg6+!? fxg6 26.Bxg6 Ne4

26...Re7 27.Bxf6 gxf6 28.Qh6+ Kg8 29.Rxe6 Rxe6 30.Rxe6 Qg7 31.Qh5±



27.Rxe4! dxe4 28.Rxe4 Kg8?

Limit the damage: 28...Ne7 29.Bxe8 Rxe8 30.Rxe6±

29.Qe2 Re7

Now 29...Ne7 30.Bxe7 Qxe7 31.Qh5 Qd7 32.Qh7+ Kf8 33.Qh8+ Ke7 34.Qh4+ Kf8 35.Re3+-

30.Qh5

1-0

**Brian S. Lange (1651) – Anthony Nakashima (1205) [A21]**  
2025 7th Buckendorf Senior Ch.  
Boise, Idaho (R2), May 17, 2025  
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Bb4 3.Nd5 Nc6 4.a3 Be7 5.d3 Nf6 6.Nxe7 Nxe7 7.Nf3 Ng6 8.g3 0-0 9.Bg2 c6 10.0-0 Re8 11.Bd2 d6 12.b4 a6 13.Ng5 h6 14.Ne4 Bf5 15.Nc3 Qd7 16.e4 Bh3 17.Qf3 Bxg2 18.Kxg2 h5?!

18...Qe6 (to defend the threat of Bxh6 and Qxf6) 19.h3 Rad8♣

19.Bg5 Qg4



Position after 19...Qg4

20.Bxf6??

White misses the intermezzo rejoinder. 20.Qxg4 Nxe4 21.h3 Nf6 22.Bxf6 gxf6 23.Nd1±

20...Nf4+!



Position after 20...Nf4+



(L-R) Brian Lange, Anthony Nakashima. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

and it's pretty much over. Black wins the queen.

21.Qxf4 exf4 22.h3 Qg6 23.Bh4 f5

23...Qh6

24.Rae1 d5 25.Ne2

Better, but still losing, is 25.cxd5+-

25...f3+ 26.Kxf3 fxe4+ 27.Kg2 exd3 28.Nf4 Qf5

28...Rxe1 29.Nxe6 d2

29.cxd5 Rxe1 30.Rxe1 cxd5

30...d2 31.Rd1 Qe4+ 32.Kh2 Qc2

31.Rd1 g5 32.Bxg5 Qxg5 33.Rxd3 Qf6 34.Rxd5 Qc6 35.Kh2 Qc2 36.Kg2 Rc8 37.Rg5+ Kf7 38.Nxh5 Qe4+ 39.Kh2 Rc1 40.g4 Rh1+

A slightly faster king hunt begins 40...Qh1+ 41.Kg3 Rc3+

41.Kg3 Qd3+ 42.f3 Qf1 43.Rf5+ Ke7 44.Nf4 Qe1+ 45.Kg2 Qg1#

0-1

## 2025 7th Buckendorf Senior Championship

Place	Name	State	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Points
1	Faris F. Gabbara	MI	2016	W10	W8	W2	W5	W4	5
2	Zygmund Mayer	ID	1976	W6	W9	L1	W8	D3	3.5
3	Brian S. Lange	ID	1651	W5	L4	D9	W6	D2	3
4	Anthony Kenji Nakashima	ID	1205	Bye	W3	L8	W7	L1	3
5	Christopher Pentico	ID	1400	L3	W11	B	L1	W8	3
6	Steven Wlodek	ID	1441	L2	W10	H	L3	W9	2.5
7	David Zaklan	ID	1335	L8	B	W11	L4	D10	2.5
8	Michael J. Presutti	ID	1600	W7	L1	W4	L2	L5	2
9	Tom R. Booth	ID	1519	W11	L2	D3	D10	L6	2
10	Gregory Parker	ID	1467	L1	L6	H	D9	D7	1.5
11	Bernadette Whiting	ID	Unr.	L9	L5	L7	H	--	0.5

# Monroe Rapid Knights Challenge

Josh Sinanan

The Monroe Rapid Knights Challenge took place on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at the Monroe Community Senior Center. WCF Co-Vice President Rekha Sagar, a Monroe resident who lives near the playing site, once again organized and ran the event.

The tournament attracted forty-seven players across three sections named in honor of local Pacific Northwest chess community leaders: Orlov Championship, Sankrithi U1300, and Dorfner U700. Georgi Orlov, an International Master and six-time Washington State Champion, is an experienced chess teacher and

organizer based the Seattle area since 1995. Georgi serves as the Executive Director of Chess Mates Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that runs after-school chess programs throughout the year in Seattle-area schools.

Siva Sankrithi is a chess dad, educator, and organizer based in Lake



*Derek Zhang (Front L) vs Vidip Kona alongside Ryan Porter (Rear L) vs Matt Wilber on the top boards of the Orlov Championships section during round three of the Monroe Rapid Knights Challenge. Photo credit: Rekha Sagar.*



Forest Park. Siva is the former head of the Lakeside High School Chess Team, where he taught math for many years before ‘retiring’ to raise his two boys Sarang and Vivaan. The late Gary Dorfner (1947-2022) was a long-time chess organizer and promoter based in Tacoma whose career began in the 1960’s. Besides being a major part of the Tacoma Chess Club, he was secretary of the Washington Chess Federation for many years and an active tournament director for many regional tournaments for adults and children.

The 47-player event, co-hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and the Monroe Chess Club, attracted participants ranging from unrated to master and drew from cities throughout the region including Snohomish, Monroe, Sultan, Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, Seattle, Bothell, Mill Creek, Shoreline, Mercer Island, Duvall, Marysville, Covington, and Lake Stevens.

Two chess knights of the round table, NM Vidip Kona (2224 → 2226, 4.0) of Duvall and NM Matt Wilber (2204 → 2217, 4.0) of Bellevue, topped the 14-player Orlov Championship section, each with four points from five games. Kona recovered well after a third-round loss against fellow national master Derek Zhang, winning his last two games including the clutch final-round duel with Wilber. Wilber vanquished NMs Ryan Porter and Derek Zhang in rounds three and four, respectively, before being

stopped by Kona to share the title. A pair of chess cowboys shared third/fourth place honors a half-point back: NM Derek Zhang (2295 → 2299, 3.5) of Bellevue and Lakeside High School senior Max Schmidt-Warnecke (1116 → 1203, 3.5) of Mercer Island.

In the 15-player Sankrithi U1300 section, Everett chess enthusiast David Smygov (1141 → 1207, 5.0) emerged victorious with a perfect five points from five games, scoring key victories against his nearest rivals Bondar (986) and Bochner (unrated) in the final two rounds. Redmond chess ranger Dmitriy Bondar (986 → 1078, 4.0) earned the second place prize, recovering well from his loss against Smygov with a fifth-round victory against Bellevue’s Jie Shan. Three up-and-coming chess musketeers shared fourth place honors with three points apiece: Akshayaa Venkataraghavan (1042 → 1004, 3.0) of Bellevue, Anish Reddy Kanchanakuntla (938 → 989, 3.0) of Snohomish, and Kevin Zhang (826 → 842, 3.0) of Bellevue.

Snohomish chess swindler Ryan Kakar (577 → 720, 4.5) pulled off some chess magic tricks to win the 18-player Dorfner U700 with a brilliant 4.5 points from five games, allowing only a single draw against Kruse (502) in the final round to lock in the victory. Two rising chess stars, Dinesh Poka (622 → 709, 4.0) of Monroe and Arush Tumkunta (unrated → 669, 4.0) of Snohomish, captured



*Trophies were awarded to the top finishers in the Sankrithi U1300 and Dorfner U700 sections. Photo credit: Rekha Sagar.*

second/third place honors a half-point back. Redmond chess wrangler Brian Kruse (502 → 547, 3.5) won the fourth place prize a half-point back with a solid “plus two” score.

In addition to the overall prizes, several “special” prizes were also awarded in each section, for categories including Best Female Player, Best Dressed, Biggest Upset Win, Best Senior Player, Kindness/Spreading Joy, and Best Sportsmanship. Congratulations to the winners.

## Monroe Rapid Knights Challenge Prizes

**Orlov: 1st – 4th : \$200-150-100-75.**

**Sankrithi: Trophies awarded on-site to players scoring 3 points or more.**

**Dorfner: Trophies awarded on-site to players scoring 3 points or more.**

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
Orlov Championship	Matt Wilber Vidip Kona		Derek Zhang Max Schmidt-Warnecke	
Sankrithi U1300	David Smygov	Dmitriy Bondar	Joshua Bochner	Anish Reddy Kanchanakuntla Kevin Zhang Akshayaa Venkataraghavan
Dorfner U700	Ryan Kakar	Dinesh Poka Arush Tumkunta		Brian Kruse



Section	Best Female Player	Best Dressed	Biggest Upset Win	Best Senior Player	Kindness/Spreading Joy	Best Sportsmanship
Orlov Championship	N/A	Viyaan Bhindi	Max Schmidt-Warnecke	Paul Victor	Adam Kozyra	Mithran Perumalsamy
Sankrithi U1300	Akshayaa Venkataraghavan Aria Ajay	Arnav Appineni	Ajay Sundaresh	Elliot Golan	Tristan Dong Jie Shan	Arnav Masanagi
Dorfner U700	Rhea Prasad	Viraj Bhindi	Sanjay Kaushal Mudragada	Brian Kruse	Abhinav Manikandan	Ishaan Prasad

# 2025 Presidential Scholastic

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 Presidential Scholastic chess tournament was held on President's Day Monday, February 17, at Chinook Middle School in Bellevue. A fantastic turnout of 242 scholastic chess players in grades K-12 participated in the event from throughout the Pacific Northwest, including the cities of Lake Tapps, Woodinville, Mill Creek, Sammamish, Bothell, Monroe, Redmond, Bellevue, Newcastle, Seattle, Richmond (BC), Everett, Yelm, Black Diamond, Bonney Lake, Olympia, Shoreline, Medina, Mercer Island, Renton, Lynnwood, Covington, Delta (BC), Dublin (California), Clyde Hill, Woodinville, Issaquah, Yarrow Point, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, University Place, Lake Forest Park, North Bend, Milton, and Kenmore!

The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation, paired by WCF Co-Vice President Rekha Sagar, and directed by floor TDs Mani Atikankhotchasee, Ani Barua, Allen Messenger, and Josh Sinanan. The five-round Swiss tournament consisted of seven sections parsed by grade level and rating: Kindergarten, 1-2 U700, 3-4 U800, 5-12 U1000, 1-3 Open, 4-6 Open, and 7-12 Open.

Due to the large attendance, the tournament was split between two gymnasiums, with notation required for players in the main gym and notation optional for the younger players taking part in the auxiliary gym. All the games were dual NWSRS and US Chess rated, with US Chess membership required in all sections.

Volunteers and judges included Peter Zou, Gavin Shi, and Nandeesh Yellappa. In addition to the Amazon gift cards awarded to the individual winners, team plaques were awarded to the top five



(L-R) Chouchan Airepetian, Rekha Sagar, and Josh Sinanan pose with winners from the 2025 Presidential Scholastic. Photo credit: Ani Barua.

finishing teams (top four scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections.

The Samantha Smith Elementary Chess Club from Sammamish brought 23 players, the most from any school, and

won an exclusive lesson with yours truly, national master and WCF President Josh Sinanan!

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who contributed to this amazing event!

Team Prizes - Plaques awarded to the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections		
Place	Team (School)	Team Score (pts)
1st	Samantha Smith ES	17
2nd	Kokanee ES	15.5
3rd	Open Window	14.5
4th	Medina ES	13.5
5th	Redmond MS	13.5



# Presidential Scholastic Prizes

**Individual Prizes** - Amazon gift cards (for 1st-5th place) awarded in each section.

1st - 5th: \$70-65-60-55-50.

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place
Kindergarten	Deethya R Sankar, Callie Jiang, Agasthya Konduri \$65/- Each			Pengyu Chen, Liam Zeng, Aishini Reddy \$35/- Each	
1-2 U700	William Zhang \$70/-	Vihaan Ramana, Vihaan Nair, Viraj Gaddam, Ishaan Prasad, Egan Ip \$46/- Each			
3-4 U800	Aaron Liu \$70/-	Cody Lin, Brody Lin, Charan Prasanna, Derek Xu, Ishana Datta \$46/- Each			
5-12 U1000	Abigail Lew \$70/-	Lalith Adithya Tirunagari, Anjalika Mukherjee, Leo Luo, Gabriel Wong, Robert Gridasov, Jethro Xia, Damien Davies \$33/- Each			
1-3 Open	Avyaan Roy Chowdhury \$70/-	Easton Ren, Atul Srinivasan, Jaxon Krogstad, Elina Khudiyev \$58/- Each			
4-6 Open	Aarya Patel \$70/-	Snehil Ghosh, Terrick Evin, Seojoon Oh \$60/- Each			Jinhan Zou, Jake Bravenboer, Jizhou He, Alisa Rachiba \$13/- Each
7-12 Open	Owen Scollon \$70/-	Deepak Sri Kartikeya Rao, Drew Kolenski, Ziliang Ma \$60/- Each			Jeffrey Chien, Atharv Rastogi \$25/- Each

Section	Best Female Player (by TPR)	Best Dressed	Best Sportsmanship	Biggest Upset Win
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Dhanvika Sapaharam	Pengyu Chen	Everett Szeto Rhea Prasad	Pengyu Chen
<b>1-2 U700</b>	Jingyi Pan	Advaith Sairam	Nivaan Anand Bobby Chai	Steven Liu
<b>3-4 U800</b>	Pearl Tulsukchuentanat	Aryan Gaddam	Corvin Gorski	Pratyush Choudhary
<b>5-12 U1000</b>	Clara Dragusanu	Abigail Lew	Sourish Panda Adheesh Meenakshi Sundaram Kevin Chen	Raunak Dinesh
<b>1-3 Open</b>	Felicity Mei Rebecca Li	Vincent Gu	Bihe Liu Jeremy Ge	Pavithran Meenakshi Sundaram
<b>4-6 Open</b>	Triaksha Sadhanala	Alex Ye	Andres Flores Uriegas Scott Liu Sri Jayraj Sampathi Rao Jonathan Lan Sabeer Shaikot	Nirvan Tummuru
<b>7-12 Open</b>	Elena Heider	Nathan Jiang	Vihaan Chaurasia Himank Yadav Rushil Singh Arjun Moghe Guru Harshith Reddy Avula Alex Xu Daniel Polonsky Keshav Deshpande	Anderson Gould

# A Game From Degenbaev

Aziz Degenbaev

**Aziz Degenbaev (2289) –  
Vladimir Georgiev (2371) [C34]**  
PNWCC IM Norm RR April 2025  
(R7), April 4, 2025  
*[Aziz Degenbaev]*

This game was played in the PNWCC IM norm tournament held in Bellevue. I was playing White against a grandmaster Vladimir Georgiev. Going into this round, I was sick a little and got crushed in previous round, I was serious about this game and chose to play a very interesting opening to present a compelling game.

**1.e4 e5 2.f4**

King's Gambit!

**2...exf4 3.Nf3 Ne7**

Having only prepared for 30 minutes before the round, I was unfamiliar with this line and had to rely entirely on my own calculation from here.

**4.d4 d5 5.Bd3 dxe4 6.Bxe4 Ng6 7.Nc3?!**

7.Qe2!? asking what he is going to do with his king. 7...Be7 8.h4!? With a little advantage in development, initiating kingside expansion was a logical continuation. For example, 8...h5 9.Bxg6 fxg6 10.Bxf4 0-0 11.Qc4+ Kh7 12.Qxc7∞ With an unclear game.

**7...Bd6 8.Qd3?**

An inaccuracy. I should have played more aggressively since I sacrificed a pawn. Now Black is just better. 8.h4!? Same expansion for the same reason as I mentioned previously. 8...0-0 9.h5 Ne7 10.Ne5 Bxe5 11.dxe5 Qxd1+ 12.Nxd1= Just equal. Pawn on f4 is falling and white have two bishops, but also a weak pawn on e5.

**8...0-0 9.Bd2 c6**



*Position after 9...c6*

**10.Bxg6?**

Giving a pawn and now two bishops. The evaluation clearly favors Black, and White has no compensation. 10.0-0-0 f5 11.Qc4+ Kh8 12.Bd3 b5 13.Qb3 Although

White is at a slight disadvantage, the game is still far from over, and White can seek counterplay.

**10...hxxg6 11.0-0-0 Bf5 12.Qf1**

I had no choice.

**12...Na6 13.a3 Nc7 14.Ne5**

I aimed to avoid giving Black attacking chances, exchange a bishop to neutralize some pressure, and then start an aggressive expansion with h4 and g4.

**14...Nd5 15.Qf3 Nxc3 16.Bxc3 Bxe5?**

Exchanging the bishop was a serious inaccuracy for Black, as it allowed White to neutralize the pressure. Black lost their advantage, and the position is now roughly equal. Instead, Black should have played 16...Bc7, preserving the pressure and the pair of bishops for a strong advantage. For instance, 17.g4 Be6 18.Rhg1 Bd5 19.Qf1 a5+-

**17.dxe5 Qg5 18.Rd4 Be6**

There was a key moment where I took some time to evaluate whether exchanging queens was the best option or if I could maintain the pressure without simplifying the position.

**19.Rxf4 Bd5 20.Qg3**



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I decided to exchange queens on g3, aiming to open my h-file. With opposite-colored bishops on the board, the key factor became who could generate the stronger attack.

20...Qxg3 21.hxg3 g5 22.Rf5 Be6



Position after 22...Be6

My opponent offered a draw here, but maybe as someone noticed, I always prefer to play for a win. I thought I could always accept a draw later if needed, and in the meantime, I decided to try to gain as much as possible from the position.

23.Rf1

Here I found some interesting tactic. Of

course not 23.Rxg5? g6, rook is in a trap.

23...Rad8 24.Rh2 Rd7 25.Bb4 Rfd8 26.Be7!

Creating a cage for the king.

26...Rxe7 27.Rfh1 f5 28.Rh8+ Kf7 29.Rxd8 Bd5 30.Rf1?

Just helping my opponent. In this moment, I overlooked the fact that when you have a big advantage, you should never relax or lose focus. 30.Kd2 Rxe5 31.Rd7+ Re7 32.Rxe7+ Kxe7 33.Rh8+-

30...Rxe5

I now realized I didn't have enough time to prevent the rook from getting to e2 and still be able to win the pawn on b7.

31.Rd7+?!

Slowly losing advantage. 31.g4 f4 32.g3 Ke7 33.gxf4! gxf4 34.Rb8±

31...Kg6 32.Rf2 b5 33.Rxa7 Kh5 34.Rxg7 Kg4

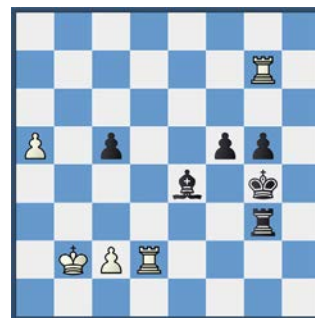
Now position is nearly equal.

35.Rd2 Re1+ 36.Rd1 Re2

36...Re3 More accurate 37.b3 Rxg3 38.Kb2 Rxg2 39.a4 Be4 40.Rc1 Kf3= The difference is that my rook is now on

c1, when in actual game it was on d2.

37.b3 Rxg2 38.a4 bxa4 39.bxa4 Be4 40.Rd2 Rxg3 41.Kb2 c5 42.a5



Position after 42.a5

42...f4??

A very serious mistake. Now Black losing. 42...Rh3 Instead, he should have brought his rook behind my pawn and then focused on pushing his own pawns toward promotion. 43.a6 Rh6 44.a7 Ra6∞

43.a6 f3 44.Re7 Ba8 45.a7 Rg2 46.Rd8 f2 47.Rf7 Be4 48.a8Q Bxa8 49.Rxa8 Kg3 50.Raf8 g4 51.Kb3

Zugzwang!

1-0

## 2025 MID-YEAR SCHOLASTIC CUP

Sat-Sun, June 28-29, 2025



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

**Mail To:** Washington Chess Federation  
c/o Orlov Chess Academy  
4174 148<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Building I, Ste. M  
Redmond, WA 98052  
**Contact:** Josh Sinanan, WCF President  
**Phone:** 206-763-3757  
**Email:**  
[WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com)

**Registration:** Online at  
[nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/)  
Registration and payment, deadline:  
Thu, Jun 26<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm. Unpaid players  
will be removed from the roster after  
the deadline, and players from the  
Waitlist will be offered a spot.

**Site:** Grand Knights Chess Academy,  
13620 NE 20<sup>th</sup> St., Suite K, Bellevue, WA 98005

**Format:** A 5-round Swiss event for K-12 students in  
sections of 7-10 players, grouped by closest rating.  
Max of 60 players total - please register early! If a  
section has <6 players registered, it may be merged  
with an adjoining section.

**Entry Fee:** \$80 by Sat, Jun 21<sup>st</sup>; \$90 after. Must be  
paid by Thu, Jun 26<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm; no late or on-site  
registrations or payments.

**Time Control:** G/75; +15 (i.e., with a 15-second  
increment per move). Late default: 60 minutes.

**Schedule of Rounds:**

Sat @ 9:15 AM (rd#1), 1:15 PM (rd#2), 5 PM (rd#3);  
Sun @ 12:30 PM (rd#4), 4:15 PM (rd#5)

Check-in required by Sat @ 9 AM.

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

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

**Rating:** USCF and NWSRS rated; top 3 sections also  
FIDE rated. Higher of USCF (Jun 2025) and current  
NWSRS ratings used to determine section, pairings,  
and prizes. Foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

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

**Prizes** (in Amazon e-gift cards) (based on 60  
paid entries):

Each section:

- 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> = \$90 / \$75 / \$60
- Best female player (among at least 3 eligible  
participants) = \$30
- Highest (USCF) rating gain = \$30
- Best annotated game: 1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> = \$30 / \$20
- Best dressed player (per day) = \$10

**Special prizes:**

- Highest finishing WA player in each section  
earns a free entry, respectively, into:  
*Section A* -> 2026 WA State Championship,  
Challengers;  
*Section B* -> 2025 WA Class Championship;  
*Section C* -> 2025 Susan Polgar Foundation  
National Open for Girls & Boys;  
*Sections D-F* -> another 2025 WCF  
tournament of the player's choice.
- Note: Ties for 1<sup>st</sup> place in a section will be  
resolved at a later date by rapid playoff  
games.



# 3rd Annual Eastside Open

**Josh Sinanan**

The Washington Chess Federation (WCF) hosted the third annual Eastside Open on the weekend of March 1-2 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue, a no-nonsense hotel located in the heart of downtown Bellevue just off Interstate 405. Blakely Hall in Issaquah, where the previous two Eastside Opens took place, increased their rentals fees significantly and priced themselves out of the hyper-competitive chess market!

The two-day, five-round Swiss tournament was split into three sections named after prominent Eastside cities: Bellevue Open, Kirkland U1700, and Redmond U1200. Several titled players turned out for the FIDE-rated Bellevue Open, no doubt on the hunt for those coveted FIDE rating points: NM Siddarth M. Sundaram, FM Aziz Degenbaev, FM Megan Lee, FM Ryan Porter, FM Stephen Willy, NM Digesh Malla, NM Vidip Kona, NM Nikash Vemparala, and NM Matthew Wilber.

Chess players from throughout the Pacific Northwest, though with a large concentration from the Eastside, were represented from cities including Auburn, Bothell, Seattle, Bellevue, Sammamish, Bainbridge Island, Redmond, Gig Harbor, Richmond (BC), Monroe, Snohomish, Mill Creek, Brier, Everett, Portland, Tenino, Clyde Hill, Duvall, Lynnwood,

Mercer Island, Renton, Tacoma, Issaquah, Federal Way, Newcastle, University Place, Carbondale (Colorado), Covington, Kirkland, Olympia, Beaverton (Oregon), Fall City, Medina, Vancouver (BC), and Hunts Point. The tournament was directed by FIDE Arbiter Mani Atikankhotchasee with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger, and Chess Dad Extraordinaire Alex Byelashov.

The field was rather top-heavy, with 59 in the Bellevue Open, 35 in the Kirkland U1700, and just 25 in the Redmond U1200 section. Those who were not quite ready for the “chessical” weekend to end concluded the festivities with an action-packed Sunday night blitz tournament!

NM Siddarth M. Sundaram, an Amazon software engineer who was once a promising junior talent when he lived in India, repeated as Champion of the Bellevue Open, scoring an undefeated 4.5 points from five games. Sid’s big victory occurred in round four of the tournament against FM Aziz Degenbaev (2375) when the latter over-pressed.

A solid fifth round draw against reigning Washington State Champion FM Ryan Porter clinched the victory for Sundaram. A quadruplet of chess kings

shared second–fourth place honors with four points apiece: FM Aziz Degenbaev of Seattle, FM Ryan Porter of Bellevue, NM Vidip Kona of Duvall, and soon-to-be master Ananth Gottumukkala of Sammamish! The U2100 prizes were shared between Luca Tessiere of Seattle, Emerson Wong-Godfrey of Seattle, and Leonid Gavrysh of Brier, each with 3.5 points.

A pair of up-and-coming eastside chess ringers, Michael Lin of Sammamish and Akim Pikh of Redmond, shared the U1900 prizes with a solid “plus one” score. Several special prizes including biggest upset win, best female player (by tournament performance rating), and best dressed player were also awarded in each section.

The Bellevue Open section winners were: Akim Pikh (round one, 472 points), Harrison Toppen-Ryan (round two, 346 points), Harrison Toppen-Ryan (round three, 440 points), Aarav B. Mohan (round four, 130 points), and Davey Jones (round five, 211 points); Shuyi Han, the best female player with a TPR of 2070; and the snappy dressers Saahil Gupta (Saturday) and Vidip Kona (Sunday).

Blackwell Elementary fifth grader Ziqian Gao of Sammamish emerged victorious in the 35-player Kirkland

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U1700 section with an impressive 4.5 points from five games, allowing only a single draw against Aiden Chan (1347) in the third round. A clutch final round win against the dangerous Jinmo Nam, who had the only perfect score in the section, secured the victory for Gao. Three Eastside chess musketeers—Jinmo Nam of Issaquah, Shawn Li of Bellevue, and Chen Yuan of Bellevue—shared second-fourth place honors a half-point back.

Sammamish chess stud Alexander Lebedinsky and Everett chess everyman David Smygov split the U1500/U1300 prize with 3.5 points apiece. Seven rising stars shone brightly and earned a share of the second U1500 prize with three points each: Riaan Babbar of Sammamish, Oliver He of Sammamish, Jimmy Yang of Kirkland, Daniel Polonsky of Newcastle, Krishang Gupta of Everett, Vihaan Pai of Sammamish, and Ziliang Ma of Seattle.

Young Jordan Szeto of Richmond (BC) scored an impressive three points and took the second U1300 prize with him back to Canada. The Kirkland U1700 special prizes were awarded to Sky Cui (round one, 219 points), Jizhou He (round two, 144 points), Anyi Li (round three, 222 points), Sky Cui (round four, 272 points), and Aditi Sembium (round five, 260 points); Kruti Thanikonda for the best female player (TPR: 1424), and the two fashionistas Andra Marinescu (Saturday) and Alisa Rachiba (Sunday).

The 25-player Redmond U1200 section, which had an eclectic mix of unrated adults and underrated juniors, was topped by newcomer Laurentiu Pavel, who was playing in his first ever OTB chess tournament. No doubt Pavel had some online experience that led him to a perfect 5.0/5 score, which became evident when he remarked to one of the tournament directors that the kids in his



*Aziz Degenbaev (front L) vs Siddarth M. Sundaram alongside Ryan Porter vs Harrison Toppen-Ryan and other top boards during round four of the Eastside Open.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*

section had no idea how to counter his Catalan opening.

Two rising chess stars—Hanish Tallapaneni of Covington and Joyce Gui of Bellevue—split second/third place honors a full-point back. A quintuplet of chess questers shared the fourth place prize, each with three points from five games: Martina Szeto of Richmond, Elina Khudiyev of Sammamish, Matthew McKendry of Tacoma, Clora Huang of Bellevue, and Ananya Sabarish of Redmond.

Former ship captain Peter Zou of Sammamish and his two first mates

Saahan Chadha of Sammamish and Eason Chen of Bellevue claimed the U1000 prizes with three points apiece for their seaworthy efforts. Open Window School third grader Alice Li captured the first U800 prize with two points while Rose Hill Elementary first grader Suryen C. Vinu earned the second U800 prize with one point.

The Redmond U1200 special prizes were distributed as follows: Shane Groff (round one, 243 points), Alice Li (round two, 310 points), Kyle Jiang (round three, 100 points), Saahan Chadha (round four, 126 points), and Sofia Byelashova (round five, 110 points); Joyce Gui for best

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female player (TPR: 1369), and Martina Szeto (Saturday) and Emma Ge (Sunday) strolled down the catwalk.

Just after the final round of the Eastside Open, a 34-player, seven-round, US Chess Blitz rated speed tournament took place to allow the players to blow off some steam after a weekend of intense concentration. Two intrepid blitz warriors, FM Aziz Degenbaev of Seattle and NM Vidip Kona of Duvall, emerged victorious with an impressive 6.5 from seven games after drawing against each other in the fifth round and winning all their other games.

Four Eastside chess masters shared third place honors with five points apiece: NM Matt Wilber of Bellevue, NM Sid M. Sundaram of Bellevue, NM Digesh Mall of Sammamish, and FM Ted Wang of Medina. Redmond High School Junior Varin Nallabothula of Redmond and WCF Vice President Duane Polich of Bothell split the U1900 prize, each with 4.5 points. Three emerging speed chess superstars split the U1700/U1500/U1300 prize with a solid “plus one” score: Snehil Ghosh of Redmond, Owen Scollon of Bellingham, and Ziqian Gao of Sammamish.

A pair of chess jousts, Jinhan Zou of Sammamish and Joshua Van Gorkam of Olympia, split the U1100 prize with two points apiece. Unrated adult ringer Laurentiu Pavel was at it again and took home the first unrated prize for his efforts.

The biggest upset wins were achieved by “Wild Man” Dann Merriman (rounds one+two, 689 + 531 points, respectively), Snehil Ghosh (round three, 652 points), David Smygov (round four, 743 points), Ziliang Ma (round five, 413 points), Jinhan Zou (round six, 812 points), and Joshua Van Gorkom (Rd. 7, 896 points). Congratulations to the winners, and many

thanks to all who contributed to this fantastic event!

**Ted Wang (2263) –  
Harrison Toppen-Ryan (1914) [B30]**  
Eastside Open Bellevue, WA  
(R2), March 1, 2025  
[Harrison Toppen-Ryan]

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

Sicilian Rossolimo Variation. When playing lower rated players, I typically see the Alapin (2.c3 or 2.Nf3 3.c3) variation in order to avoid theory. The Rossolimo becomes more popular once you play the WA State masters and 1800+ rated players.

**3...Nf6!?**

The fourth most popular move, but one that gets interesting positions. 3...Nf6 is a fighting choice with bringing out a piece and attacking the e-pawn right away! In this case, White does not have time to build up with c3 and d4 like in typical Rossolimo positions.

**4.Bxc6**

Other variations White could play are 4.d3, 4.Nc3 and 4.e5.

**4...dxc6 5.d3 Bg4**

it's important to play this move before White gets a chance to play h2–h3. Black's most difficult piece to develop is usually the light-squared bishop—getting it on g4 where it could go to h5 and g6/f7 is a small win for Black.

**6.Nbd2 Nd7!?**

Black wants to play ...f6 and ...e5 here in order to have more control over the center, alongside giving his king flexibility on where to castle.

**7.h3 Bh5 8.b3 e5 9.Bb2 f6 10.Nc4 Qc7 11.g4 Bf7**



*Position after 11...Bf7*

Black's dark-squared bishop is now a fine piece. ...Bxc4 is now an option if I don't believe that the light-squared bishop will have any future.

**12.Nh4 0-0-0!?** **13.Qf3 g6**

Stopping Nf5 ideas but also weakening the f6–pawn.

**14.a4 Be7**

14...Bg7 was probably slightly better—getting the bishop on the longer diagonal and defending the e-pawn.

**15.Ng2 Bxc4**

15...Nf8? 16.Bxe5 fxe5 17.Qxf7 allows White to win a pawn.

**16.bxc4 Nf8**

Now there's no lose f7-bishop for White to tactually take advantage of. Black's idea is to improve their worst piece by re-manuevering the knight to f8–e6–d4/f4 where it will be a strong piece.

**17.g5?!**

I was and still am a bit confused on what White's idea was here, I tried to look to see if ...Qf7 or ...Qg4 ideas were dangerous for me, but couldn't see anything concrete. This move just simply gives up a pawn if anything.

**17...fxg5 18.Ne3**

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18.Qg4+ Kb8 19.h4 gxh4 20.Nxh4 Bf6  
21.f4 h5 22.Qg2 Qd6 23.fxe5 Bxe5

**18...Ne6 19.Qg4 Qd6 20.h4?!**

Another weird pawn move on the kingside. I decided to not grab the other pawn and instead go for more activity.

**20...h5**

20...gxh4 is still good for Black, but I wanted more.

**21.Qg3 Nd4 22.c3?**



*Position after 22.c3*

This move makes White's position unplayable. White needs to rest the strong knight on d4 and keep the d3-pawn defended. This is a great exercise if you want to cover up the rest of the game and try and solve for Black's best move.

**22...Ne2!!**

"A bolt from the blue!" as Fischer would describe it. The knight is heading to f4 with an attack on White's queen. When your opponent's king has not castled, try to find ways open up the center. Here this reveals the batter on White's now weak d3-pawn. 22...Ne6 is also good for Black if they want to go for a more positional approach.

**23.Qh3+**

23.Kxe2 is no better due to 23...Qxd3+

24.Kf3 Rhf8+ 25.Kg2 Qxe4+ 26.Kg1 Rf3 27.Qg2 Rd2→ Black would have an irresistible attack.

**23...g4!**

In-between move.

**24.Qf1**

24.Nxg4? is not working for White thanks to 24...Nf4! in-between move again 25.Qg3 Qxd3!! threatening mate on e2 26.Qxd3 Nxg4++ Everything is hanging in the white camp.

**24...Nf4**

d3 is now a massive weakness.

**25.d4**

Desperation. No better is 25.0-0-0 Rhf8+

**25...cxd4 26.Ba3**

26.0-0-0 d3 27.Rd2 Rhf8 28.Kb1 Qe6 29.a5 Bc5 30.a6 b6 31.Bc1 Bxe3

**26...Qe6**



*Position after 26...Qe6*

**27.Nd5**

Pure desperation!

**27...Bxa3 28.Rxa3 cxd5 29.cxd5 Qb6 30.Qc4+ Kb8 31.Rb3 Rc8!**

White resigned. Black trades down the queens by force and will be a piece and a pawn up in a better position. White can't

even go for any counterplay in the center with: 32.Qxc8+ Rxc8 33.Rxb6 axb6 34.cxd4?? because Black wins a rook with: 34...Rc1+. Conclusion: 1.) Find ways to improve badly placed pieces. Black's 6.Nd7 followed by the knight going to ...f8-e6-d4 was a textbook example of improving bad pieces. 2.) If your opponent's king is not castled yet, *open* up the position using *forcing* moves. Black would not have won this game as quickly without his ...22.Ne2 resource.

**0-1**

**Harrison Toppen-Ryan (1914) – Megan Lee (2334) [D85]**  
Eastside Open Bellevue, WA  
(R3), March 1, 2025  
[Harrison Toppen-Ryan]

Before the game, I had gone to the park and took a walk with my wife during the sunset. I believe that helped me with my play and performance that you're about to dive into.

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5!?**

My opponent typically doesn't play the Grünfeld Defense. I was still ready for the challenge since this opening is known for being one of Black's best responses to 1.d4 openings.

**4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bd2!?**

Instead of pushing the pawn on e4 right away, White prepares this move with the intention to capture with the bishop. From here it will challenge Black's strong bishop on g7. The pawn formation on d5 and e4 will also restrict the rest of Black's minor pieces and hinder their development. 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 c5 is the main line.

**5...Bg7**

A sparing game I played against fellow



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Washington State Expert Kai Pisan went 5...c5!? 6.dxc5! Bg7 7.Qb3!? Nc7? (7...Be6 is best, giving up the b-pawn) 8.e4 Nc6 9.Be3 0-0 10.Rd1 Bd7 11.Nf3 Qc8 12.Be2 and Black didn't have enough compensation for the pawn.

#### 6.e4 Nxc3 7.Bxc3 c5 8.d5 Bxc3+

8...0-0 is considered a more accurate move order, although not by much.

#### 9.bxc3 e6 10.Bc4 exd5 11.Bxd5

11.exd5?! is not good because after 11...0-0 12.Ne2 Nd7 13.0-0 Nb6 and White will lose their c4-bishop in worse conditions than in the game. White's passed d-pawn is not as impressive as it could have been.

#### 11...Nd7!?

This and 11.O-O seem to be the strongest continuation. 11...Qf6 12.Qd2 0-0 13.Ne2!?!?

#### 12.Qb3 0-0 13.Ne2!?

I've given this move this annotation not for the move itself but for the context behind it. After this move was made, the knight landed awkwardly on the e2-square. I adjusted the piece after I had already hit my clock. My opponent then correctly informed me that I was not allowed to adjust pieces after I've completed my move by hitting the clock. I was not aware of this rule and felt slightly embarrassed. This is now something that I will remember in the future.

#### 13...Nb6

13...Nf6 was also playable with a similar idea.

#### 14.0-0 Qc7

14...Nxd5

#### 15.c4 Nxd5 16.cxd5



Position after 16.cxd5

We have an interesting imbalance. White has a connected passed d-pawn while Black has a connected passed c-pawn

and a three versus one majority on the queenside. Black also has a light-squared bishop against a kingside knight. Here are the standard plans for both colors in these types of positions: White: Get the passed d-pawn to d6 and the e-pawn to e5, push f2-f4 to reinforce the center, try to improve the f3-knight by putting it on e4 or d5 where it could potentially take advantage of Black's weak dark-squares around her king. Black: Find a way to blockade White's passed d-pawn. This is harder to do with rooks/bishops than with pawns/knights, however. Get the queenside pawns rolling with moves like b7-b5 and c5-c4. A king and pawn endgame with Black's king on d6 would be a win for Black since her three versus one majority on the queenside would be enough for a win.

#### 16...Bg4

16...Re8 17.Nc3 and Black cannot play ...f7-f5 yet due to d5-d6+ ideas.

#### 17.f3

It's in White's best interest to not continue trading pieces since I wanted to get my knight centralized in this semi-closed position. 17.Nc3 may be even better since it gets the knight in a more active square and stops b7-b5 ideas for now.

#### 17...Bd7

Here I felt White was slightly better due to my impressive center. That feeling began to fade after...

#### 18.Rac1!?

18.a4! delays ...b7-b5 ideas for Black. 18...a6 19.a5! Bb5 20.Rfe1 White would have a bind on the b6-square and the center.

#### 18...b5!??

I should have respected this idea by Black more. My opponent now executes the correct plan and now chances are unclear.

#### 19.Qc3 Rac8 20.e5 b4 21.Qe3 Bb5

This move improves a bad piece and threatens c5-c4. Even stronger is the immediate: 21...c4! 22.Ng3 (22.Nd4? Qc5) 22...c3 23.Nh5!? gxh5 24.Qg5+ is a perpetual.

#### 22.f4 Rfe8 23.Rfd1

White also improves a piece.

#### 23...f6?

Black begins a change of plans and ties to fight against White's center. But Black needs to stick to the plan that she

had already committed to and go for complications on the queenside. 23...c4 24.Ng3 is extremely unclear.

#### 24.d6 Qf7 25.Rd2?

I was scared about the Black queen eyeing my a-pawn. If I let it be captured, White would have three (!) connected passed pawns on the queenside. But White still has play with their strong center. 25.Ng3! fxe5 26.fxe5 c4 (26...Qxa2? 27.Ne4!?) 27.Qd4 and Ne4 follows with a strong initiative.

#### 25...fxe5 26.fxe5



Position after 26.fxe5

#### 26...Qf5??

This is the move where things began to go wrong for Black. The queen attacks the e5-pawn but does so on an awkward square that will come with consequences later. 26...Qe6 Sets up a bit of a blockade, but after 27.Rxc5 Rxc5 28.Qxc5 Qxe5 29.Qxe5 Rxe5 30.Nf4 this position looks slightly better for White as the passed d-pawn is still a threat. However, Black will still easily defend with a draw as the likely result.

#### 27.Rd5!

Attacking c5, defending e5, and improving (centralizing) a piece all at once!

#### 27...Bd7 28.Ng3

The knight hits the queen with tempo, showing to downside of Black's previous 26.Qf5 move. Once again, the knight landed awkwardly but this time on the g3-square. I almost adjusted the piece after hitting my clock, but caught this and stopped myself at the last possible moment. Not least of all before making the awkward movement with my right arm. This kingside knight is cursed!

#### 28...Qf7 29.Ne4!

Tactically improving the knight once again with tempo. The knight will soon penetrate decisively on the dark squares.



29...Kh8

29...Qxd5 30.Nf6+ is a family fork.

30.Qd2

I knew I didn't need to rush here. Nothing wrong with improving more of your pieces when in a better, closed position like this one. 30.Nf6?? Qxf6!-+ the e-pawn is pinned.

30...c4 31.Rf1



Position after 31.Rf1

31...Qg7

I had worried that 31...c3 was strong for Black. But after looking deeper I saw that this move was crushed by: 31...c3 32.Rxf7 cxd2 33.Nf6! Rc1+ 34.Kf2

d1N+ 35.Rxd1 Rxd1 36.Rxh7# mate.

32.Nf6 Rf8 33.Qxb4

Now Black's counterplay is gone.

33...Rb8 34.Qc3 Bf5 35.Rc5

Rook's belong on open files.

35...Bd3 36.Re1 Rb7 37.e6!!

The farther passed pawns are down the board, the more valuable they are! Here White can part with his f6-knight in order to promote one of his pawns.

37...Qxf6

37...Rxf6 38.Rc8+ Rf8 39.Rxf8#

38.Qxf6+ Rxf6 39.d7 Rb8 40.Rc8+ Rf8 41.Rxf8+

Black resigned. It's hopeless after 41...Rxf8 42.e7 Rb8 43.e8R+. The pawns promote. Conclusion: 1.) At tournaments, take walks in between rounds if you have the time. It makes your mind relaxed and less stressed out for the next game. 2.) Understand to *not* adjust pieces when it's not your move. Only adjust when it's your turn. 3.) Passed pawns involve knowing when to trade and when not to. If you're the only player with a passed pawn, *trade* minor pieces. If both sides have passed

pawns, try to evaluate whose minor pieces will be better-placed later on in the game. 4.) Find ways to *improve* your *worst*-placed pieces. Moves like 21.Bb5 by Black, 27.Rd5 and 28.Ng3 followed by 29.Ne4 by White are all examples of improving bad pieces. 5.) Be *careful* when deciding to mix/change plans. Black began to deviate from her original plan with the queenside pawn steamroller with 23...f6 and 24...Qf7, which is when problems for her position began. Staying committed to the queenside pawns would have lead to a more unclear position, but with better chances for Black. 6.) The *further* a passed pawn is advanced up the board, the more *valuable* it is. 37.e6 proves this point by departing with White's f6-knight but promoting in return. This is one of the most memorable games of chess I have or most likely ever will play. I hope that it made an impression on you, and it did to me.

1-0



# Vancouver Open

July 19 - 20, 2025

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

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

**HR:** \$185 Standard King/Double Queen Room. Cut-off date June 26, 2025. Book online [here](#).

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

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

**Prize Fund:** \$2,500 (based on 60 paid entries).

**Lewis Open:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$400, 300, 200.  
1<sup>st</sup> U2000/U1800: \$120

**Clark U1700:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$300, 200, 150.  
1<sup>st</sup> U1600/U1400/U1200: \$120, 1<sup>st</sup> Unrated: \$90.

**Special Prizes (per section):** Biggest Upset win: \$25, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$25, Best Dressed: \$15/day (may not win repeatedly).

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

**Entry Fee:** \$75 if postmarked or online by 7/12, \$90 by 7/18, \$100 at site. \$45 play-up fee if rated U1700 USCF and playing in Lewis Open. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

**At-site registration:** Saturday 9 - 9:30 AM.

**Rounds:** Saturday 10 AM, 12:30 PM, 6 PM  
Sunday 10 AM, 3:30 PM.

**Rating:** US Chess Rated. US Chess July 2025 rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

**Memberships:** US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA membership required, other states accepted.

# 2025 Washington Spring Fling Rapid Scholastic Cup

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 Washington Spring Fling Rapid Scholastic Cup was held on Saturday, March 1 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue alongside the Eastside Open. The purpose of the event was to provide Northwest junior players with an opportunity to face strong competition and build up endurance in preparation for state and national competitions.

Chess players from throughout the Pacific Northwest were represented in the 37-player field from locales including Woodinville, Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Seattle, Bellingham, Black Diamond, Bothell, Snoqualmie, Olympia, Mill Creek, Monroe, Beaverton, and Sammamish!

The event was hosted by Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger. The marathon one-day, seven-round Swiss was split between two sections parsed by rating: the Grischuk U1400 and the Dubov U800. Due to low attendance, the Murzin Championship section was cancelled, with most of the stronger juniors opting to play in the parallel Eastside Open instead.

All games were dual NWSRS + US Chess rated and played at a rapid time control of G/25; +5, which made for fun and exciting battles in each round. The sections were named in honor of Russian Grandmasters Alexander Grischuk and Daniil Dubov, both of whom are known for their brilliant and original attacking chess.

## Washington Spring Fling Rapid Scholastic Cup: Grischuk U1400 (Standings (no tiebrk))

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	1-2	Rian Raja	1507	U---	W22	W5	W14	W2	W7	W4	6
2		Sai Navaneeth Satish Kumar	821	W6	W3	W14	W7	L1	W8	W10	6
3	3	Deepak Sri Kartikeya Rao	1137	W16	L2	W19	L4	W11	W9	B---	5
4	4-5	Eliot Amalo	925	W20	W21	L7	W3	D8	W5	L1	4.5
5		Kevin Zhang	771	W17	W8	L1	W6	D7	L4	W12	4.5
6	6-11	Aiden Zhu	1350	L2	W16	W15	L5	D10	W13	H---	4
7		Weg Shukla	1279	W15	W9	W4	L2	D5	L1	D8	4
8		Vyom Joshi	1003	W13	L5	W20	W9	D4	L2	D7	4
9		Saarth Bhargava	894	W18	L7	W11	L8	W15	L3	W17	4
10		Alex Ye	858	W21	L20	D18	W17	D6	W14	L2	4
11		Vuong Tien Tinh Nguyen	unr.	W12	L14	L9	W19	L3	W16	W15	4
12	12-13	Skyler Qin	848	L11	L19	D13	W21	W22	W18	L5	3.5
13		Blaise Fredette	688	L8	D17	D12	D22	W19	L6	W20	3.5
14	14-16	Sriharsh Gokulakrishnan	932	W19	W11	L2	L1	W16	L10	U---	3
15		Lakshmanan Nachiappan	777	L7	B---	L6	W18	L9	W20	L11	3
16		Rohit Sreraman	760	L3	L6	W21	W20	L14	L11	W22	3
17	17-18	Rudran Srimurugan	1161	L5	D13	W22	L10	L18	W19	L9	2.5
18		Rahul Sreraman	536	L9	B---	D10	L15	W17	L12	L21	2.5
19	19-21	Patrick Zhang	601	L14	W12	L3	L11	L13	L17	B---	2
20		Tavishna Nandeesh	560	L4	W10	L8	L16	W21	L15	L13	2
21		Aarav Bhandari	unr.	L10	L4	L16	L12	L20	W22	W18	2
22	22	Samarth Swain	505	B---	L1	L17	D13	L12	L21	L16	1.5

## Washington Spring Fling Rapid Scholastic Cup: Dubov U800 (Standings (no tiebrk))

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	1	Madhav Mavila	445	W4	W2	W12	W7	W5	D3	W10	6.5
2	2	Mukund Mavila	105	W14	L1	D9	W13	W12	W7	D5	5
3	3-5	Tapasya Nandeesh	265	W13	L5	W8	W6	L7	D1	W11	4.5
4		Emily Cai	170	L1	B---	L6	W11	W10	D12	W7	4.5
5		Sanjay Kaushal Mudragada	102	B---	W3	L7	W9	L1	W6	D2	4.5
6	6-8	Hridik Sarkar	235	L10	W15	W4	L3	W8	L5	W12	4
7		Nolan Yin	229	W15	W10	W5	L1	W3	L2	L4	4
8		Shanyu Nandigam	unr.	W9	L12	L3	W14	L6	B---	W13	4
9	9-10	Swayam Senapati	204	L8	W11	D2	L5	W13	L10	W15	3.5
10		Joshua He	unr.	W6	L7	W14	D12	L4	W9	L1	3.5
11	11-12	Satvik Verma	449	L12	L9	W15	L4	B---	W14	L3	3
12		Ridhima Suram	186	W11	W8	L1	D10	L2	D4	L6	3
13	13	Gabriel Zarate	103	L3	B---	H---	L2	L9	W15	L8	2.5
14	14	Navika Koul	308	L2	B---	L10	L8	W15	L11	U---	2
15	15	Arjun Nandigam	unr.	L7	L6	L11	B---	L14	L13	L9	1



# Washington Father's Day Open



June 14-15, 2025

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

**Format:** A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Skywalker Open**, **Kenobi U1800**, and **Solo U1400**.

**Entry fee:** \$100 by 6/7, \$120 after. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1600-1799 or 1200-1399 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Skywalker Open or Kenobi U1800, respectively. Free entry for chess Jedis rated 2200+ USCF. Open to all junior + adult players. Maximum of 190 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

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

Closing Ceremony + Blitz Tournament: ~ 7pm or asap.

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

**Rating:** Dual NWSRS + US Chess Rated. Skywalker Open + Kenobi U1800 are also FIDE rated. Higher of current NWSRS or June 2025 US Chess rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

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

**Prize Fund:** \$5,000 based on 100 paid entries.

Skywalker Open: 1st-4th: \$450-\$350-\$250-\$200, 1st-2nd U2200: \$150-\$125, 1st-2nd U2000: \$150-\$125.

Kenobi U1800: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1700: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1500: \$125-\$100.

Solo U1400: 1st-4th: \$300-\$225-\$175-\$125, 1st-2nd U1200: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Best Female Player (by TPR): \$25, Best Dressed: \$20/day, Best Dad Player (by TPR): \$25, Best Parent/Child Team (by avg. TPR): \$25.

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

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration). Pay by Credit/Debit, PayPal/Zelle (ID: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com), Venmo (@WACHess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. **Payment due upon registration; players listed as unpaid for more than 3 days after registering will be withdrawn from the tournament. Registration + payment deadline: Fri, June 13 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline.

**Father's Day Blitz:** Sunday 7-9pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$25. **Format:** A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual US Chess Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/3; +2. **On-site registration:** 6:00-6:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 7pm, 7:15, 7:30, 7:45, 8, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:15pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of June 2025 US Chess Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes. **Prize Fund: \$700** (based on 50 paid entries)

1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$150-100-80, 1st U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000/Unrated: \$40. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

**Questions** - Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, [washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com](mailto:washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com)

# 2025 Intermat Candidates

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 Intermat Candidates Tournament took place on Sunday, March 2 at Hotel 116 in Bellevue. The four highest rated Washington players in each grade squared off in an intense three-round G/90; +30 quad to determine the two honored players who will represent Team Washington at the upcoming WA vs BC International Match (colloquially known as the “Intermat”) on June 8 in Burnaby, British Columbia.

The Intermat Candidates tournament was Triple rated in FIDE, US Chess, and NWSRS and directed by FIDE Arbiter Mani Atikankhotchasee with assistance from WCF officers Ani Barua and Allen Messenger.

The qualified players are shown below in **bold**. In some grades, fewer than three players registered for the Intermat Candidates tournament, so players were seeded directly into the Intermat. Sections with only three players were conducted as three-player quads with one player receiving a bye each round.

In the sixth grade section, Sarang Sankrithi and Harry Wu tied for second and played a series of blitz tiebreaker games, with Sankrithi ultimately prevailing in Armageddon! Plaques were awarded to the two highest-finishing players in each grade level.

Special thanks to all participants for competing and making this such a wonderful event. Best of luck to Team Washington in the 2025 WA vs BC Intermat!

## Standings: 2025 Intermat Candidates

Grade	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Total
<b>K</b>	1	<b>Liam Zeng</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>2</b>
	2	<b>Callie Jiang</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>1</b>
	3	Kheiron Chin	458	U	L1	L2	0
<b>1st Grade</b>	1	<b>Easton Ren</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>W4</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>3</b>
	2	<b>Ryan Lai</b>	<b>1187</b>	<b>W4</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>2</b>
	3	Vivaan Sankrithi	1511	L1	L2	D4	0.5
	4	Vincent Gu	1113	L2	L1	D3	0.5
<b>2nd Grade</b>	1	<b>Harvey Wang</b>	<b>1335</b>	<b>W4</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>3</b>
	2	<b>Hengsheen Wang</b>	<b>1220</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>D4</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	3	Julian Chen	1262	L2	L1	W4	1
	4	Kaiyi Han	1243	L1	D2	L3	0.5
<b>3rd Grade</b>	1	<b>Terrick Evin</b>	<b>1446</b>	<b>D2</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	2	<b>Daniel Yun</b>	<b>1444</b>	<b>D1</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	3	Ojas Hiremath	393	U	L2	L1	0
<b>4th Grade</b>	1	<b>Imai Maharaja</b>	<b>1643</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>D3</b>	<b>W4</b>	<b>2.5</b>
	2	<b>Shanna Wu</b>	<b>1561</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>W4</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>2</b>
	3	Sambuddha Sekhar Das	1510	W4	D1	L2	1.5
	4	Aiden Zhu	1440	L3	L2	L1	0
<b>6th Grade</b>	1	<b>Odbayar Yondon</b>	<b>1862</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>D2</b>	<b>D4</b>	<b>2</b>
	2	<b>Sarang Sankrithi</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>D4</b>	<b>D1</b>	<b>D3</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	3	Harry Wu	1542	L1	W4	D2	1.5
	4	Vishnu Mohan	1777	D2	L3	D1	1
<b>7th Grade</b>	1	<b>Selina Cheng</b>	<b>1727</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>2</b>
	2	<b>Rian Raja</b>	<b>1623</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>1</b>
	3	Ishan Nair	1322	L1	U	L2	0
<b>9th Grade</b>	1	<b>Jeb Stroud</b>	<b>1456</b>	<b>W2</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>2</b>
	2	<b>Owen Scollon</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>W3</b>	<b>1</b>
	3	Blane Hildenbrand	1534	U	L1	L2	0



# Washington State Championship CODA

(following up)

**Vivaan Sankrithi (1109) –  
Joyce Gui (611) [D00]**  
WA State Championship (Sensations)  
Seattle, WA (R5), February 15, 2025  
*[Vivaan Sankrithi]*



Hi Friends, My name is Vivaan Krishna Sankrithi, and I am seven years old. I won the Sensations section of the State Championship on tiebreaks and wanted to share my fifth round game vs Joyce Gui, who also tied for first. I had the white pieces, and we were both at 3.0/4 and tied for first heading into this game.

**1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bf4 Bf5**

I have been playing the Jobava London opening for about half a year now. I like it because I can follow this pattern against lots of variations and there are a lot of fun traps with Nb5 ideas and sac-ing the queen on the d5 pawn to family fork with Nxc7. Joyce didn't play into any of these traps.

**4.e3 e6 5.Bd3 Bxd3 6.cxd3**

I took with pawn here because I can always play e4 to challenge the center.

**6...Bb4 7.Nge2 0-0 8.Qc2**

I played this move because I like to castle the opposite direction as my opponent to build attacks on the king.

**8...Nc6 9.0-0 Re8 10.Rfd1**

I played this move to support an e4 pawn push.

**10...Nh5 11.Nb5**

I am not worried about ...Nxf4 as I can also play Nxf4 and activate my knight further.

**11...Nxf4 12.Nxf4 a6 13.Nc3 Ne7 14.e4 Re8 15.Qc2 c6 16.Qg4**

Overall, the position felt pretty equal, so I decided to put more pieces on her kingside to set up a big attack. Nh5 is a sneaky tactic in my plan. Do you see why?

**16...g6 17.Nh5 f5 18.Qg5 Rf8 19.Ne2**

Coach Tim always tells me to bring more pieces to support my attack so I am bringing my other knight to the kingside.

**19...Kh8 20.Nef4**

I'm pretty sure Joyce should've played ...Ng8 here, and she may have been fine, but she made a blunder on this coming move.

**20...gxh5 21.Nxe6**

You might think I'm just going to try to win an exchange here, but I have a sneakier plan! Do you see it?

**21...Rg8 22.Qf6+ Rg7 23.Qxg7#**

Interestingly I sacrificed pieces in all five of my wins in this tournament! I hope you all enjoyed my game. I hope to play with you in the future!

**1-0**

## Player Bios

**Darya Byelashova**

Originally from Texas and now in Gig Harbor, Washington, is a fourth grader interested in chess, books, piano,



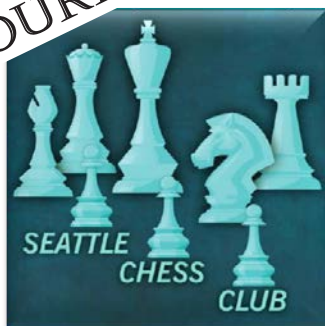
and cartoons. At nine, she became the top female chess player in Victoria and played in Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada. She was also a co-champion of the 19th Susan Polgar National Championship.

**Sofia Byelashova**



A second grader, born in Yakima, Washington, is passionate about chess, piano, vocal, fencing, cooking, drawing, and dancing. She has been playing chess for two years, competed internationally, and won several chess competitions. Sofia also shines on stage as a singer, earning awards for her vocal talents. In the future, she dreams of becoming both a singer and a chef.

# TOURNAMENTS



## Venue

**7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE  
Seattle, WA 98115**

info & events calendar  
[www.seattlechess.club](http://www.seattlechess.club)

tournament signups & inquiries  
[contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club)

– or –

SCC Tournament Director  
same address as above

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

## June 7

3-round round-robin. 4-player sections by close rating. **Time control:** Game/85 + 10 sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$15 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). **Prizes:** winner of each 4-player quad wins free entry to next Quads played within 3 months. **Registration:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm. **Byes:** 0 – must play all 3 rounds! US Chess membership req'd.

## June Quads

## June 21-22

See below.

## Emerald City Open

## June 6, 13, 20, 27

## It's Summertime

One US Chess-rated round per Friday night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm (arrive by 7:15). **Time control:** 40 moves in 90 minutes + 10 sec. increment, followed by sudden death 60 minutes + 10 sec. increment. Free for SCC members, \$5/night others. Drop in for any round!

## Coming up in July & August:

- **July Quads** – Saturday July 5 confirmed.
- **Seattle Seafair Open** – July 12-13 confirmed. 5-round Swiss, 2 sections, 150+ player capacity, Bellevue location.
- **Summer Adult Swiss** – July 26-27, tentative to be confirmed. 4-round Swiss, 48 player capacity.
- **August Quads** – Saturday August 2, tentative to be confirmed.

*Check our events calendar periodically for confirmed dates.*

## Entry fees

**We accept Venmo, Paypal, cash and check for tournament entry fees. No credit cards.**

**Paypal:** <https://paypal.me/seattlechess>

**Venmo:** <https://www.venmo.com/u/SeattleChessClub>

# EMERALD CITY OPEN

## JUNE 21 - 22, 2025

A 5-round Swiss in 1 section with time control of Game/90 with 15-second increment.

**Prize fund:** \$800 based on 24 paid entries, 3 per prize group.

<b>FIRST</b>	<b>\$280</b>	<b>SECOND</b>	<b>\$180</b>	<b>U1800</b>	<b>\$ 90</b>
<b>U1600</b>	<b>\$ 80</b>	<b>U1400</b>	<b>\$ 70</b>	<b>U1200/UNR</b>	<b>\$ 60</b>
<b>BIGGEST UPSET WIN, RDS 1-4</b>				<b>\$10</b>	

- ❖ **Entry fees** by 6/16: SCC members \$50, others \$75. After 6/16 add \$10. Unrated – free with purchase of 1-year US Chess & 1-year SCC memberships. Must pay entry fee by 6/19 to hold your seat.
- ❖ **Schedule:** Arrival 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** Saturday 10am, 2 & 6pm; Sunday 11am & 3pm.
- ❖ **Byes:** 2 half-point byes available. Commit at registration for Sunday rounds.
- ❖ **Location:** Seattle Chess Club, 7212 Woodlawn Ave. NE 98115. 26 players max.
- ❖ **Sign up:** email [contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club). US Chess membership required.



# Seattle Seafair Open



July 12-13, 2025  
Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



*Co-hosted by Seattle Chess Club and Washington Chess Federation*

**Format:** A 5-round, dual US Chess + FIDE Rated Swiss in two sections: **Open and Premier U1600.**

**Entry fee:** \$100 by 7/5, \$120 after. \$30 discount for SCC members. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1400-1599 USCF and playing in Open section. Free entry for all Seafairers rated 2200+ USCF. Open to all junior + adult players. Maximum of 190 players, please register early!

**Schedule:** Arrival: 9-9:45am. Rounds: Saturday: 10am, 2pm, 6pm. Sunday: 10am, 2pm.  
Closing Ceremony + Seafair Blitz: ~ 6pm or asap.

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

**Rating:** Dual-Rated in US Chess and FIDE. July 2025 US Chess rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Accelerated pairings may be used to reduce the number of potential perfect scores.

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

**Prize Fund:** \$4,500 based on 100 paid entries.

**Open:** 1<sup>st</sup>– 4<sup>th</sup>: \$600-500-400-300, 1<sup>st</sup> U2100/U1900/U1700: \$160.

**Premier U1600:** 1<sup>st</sup>– 4<sup>th</sup>: \$400-300-230-180, 1<sup>st</sup> U1500/U1300/U1100: \$160. 1<sup>st</sup> Unrated: \$100.

**Special Prizes (per section):**

**Biggest Upset Win:** \$20/rd. **Best Female Player** (by TPR): \$25. **Best Senior Player** (50+, by TPR): \$25. **Best Dressed:** \$20/day. **Best Annotated game:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$25. Minimum of 3 qualifying players required per section in contention for each best female/senior prize to be awarded.

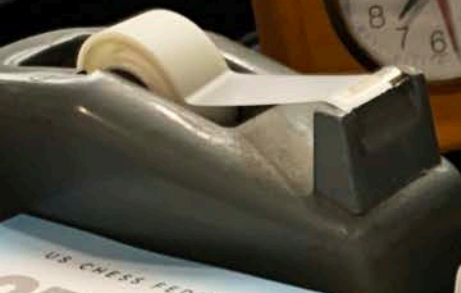
**Byes:** Up to 2 half-point byes available; if interested, requested before the end of round 2.

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration). Pay by Credit/Debit, PayPal/Zelle (ID: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com), Venmo (@WACHess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or write a check to Washington Chess Federation. **Payment due upon registration; players listed as unpaid for more than 3 days after registering will be withdrawn from the tournament. Registration + payment deadline: Fri, July 11 @ 5pm.** Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline.

**Seafair Blitz:** Sunday 6-9pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$25. **Format:** A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual US Chess Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/5; +3. **On-site registration:** 5:00-5:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 6pm, 6:20, 6:40, 7, 7:20, 7:40, 8, 8:20, 8:40pm. Closing Ceremony ~ 9pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of July 2025 US Chess Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes. **Prize Fund: \$800** (based on 60 paid entries)

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$200-130-100, 1<sup>st</sup> U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000/Unrated: \$40. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

**Questions** – Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, [washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com](mailto:washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com)  
John Selsky, SCC President, [contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club)



**US CHESS** 888.512.4377 (CHESS) **OFFICIAL SCORE SHEET**  
www.USCFSales.com

EVENT: 7th Buckland Senior DATE: May 18, 2025  
ROUND: 4 BOARD: 1 SECTION: 1 PAIRING NO. 1-0

WHITE: Paris Gabbard BLACK: Chris Pentico

	WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK
1	P-Q4	N-K3	P-K5	P-P
2	N-Q3	P-K3	P-P	P-P
3	P-K4	P-Q3	P-Q6	K-B1
4	P-Q4	B-K2	N-Q4	E-B2
5	B-KN3	P-QB4	N-K4	E-N3
6	P-Q5	Q-Q	P-K6	B-N1
7	P-Q6	Q-P	P-K7	
8	B-P	KD-Q2		
9	B-K2	N-Q4		
10	P-Q3	P-QK3		
11	P-Q4	P-QN3		
12	N-KB3	Q-N2		
13	N-Q2	B-N2		
14	O-O	P-B5		
15	P-KB4	N-Q6		
16	N-BP	N-QN5		
17	Q-Q2	Q-QN4		
18	P-P	P-P		
19	N-K3	N-B4		
20	R-R	R-R		
21	N-KB5	Q-B3		
22	Q-Q4	Q-Q		
23	N-Q	B-K1		
24	R-NP	R-K2		
25	N-B5	R-B2		
26	N-P	B-B3		
27	B-P	N-B4		
28	B-QN4	R-Q2		

WHITE WENT FIRST  
DRAW  
BLACK WON

**Official Score Sheet**

NAME: Zygodand Mayer  
EXP. DATE: 2025-11-20

Game	White	Black	Draw	Other
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				
28				

TOTAL: 10423905

**Official Score Sheet**

NAME: Steven Wlodex  
EXP. DATE: 2026-05-31

USCF ID No. 83706  
USCF ID No. 31212918

ENTRY FEE \$ 40  
OTHER \$ 14

TOTAL \$ 54

**Official Score Sheet**

NAME: Christopher Pentico  
EXP. DATE: 2025

USCF ID No. 12513987  
USCF ID No. 30

ENTRY FEE \$ 30  
OTHER \$ 14

TOTAL \$ 44