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**Judged Best Magazine/Newsletter for 2009 and
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Front Cover

Bertrand Wan after winning the King County Open.

Photo credit: Ani Barua.

Back Cover

TD Ani Barua (L) makes his opening announcements at the
King County Open, while Josh Sinanan shows off
the October 2025 issue of *Northwest Chess*.

Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Submissions

Submissions of games (PGN format is preferable for
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Two Senior TD's—two friends in chess. Idaho's Adam Porth (L) and Iowa's Eric Vigil assist at the 2025 US Open held in Middleton, Wisconsin July 28-August 3, 2025. Photo courtesy of Adam Porth.

Chess Gifts

The Chess Friends

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

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

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends! Happy Decembrrrr! With Christmas trees sparkling in many windows, and Christmas songs playing in every store, gifts are on our minds. 'Tis the season of giving!

No matter the season, chess is a gift that keeps on giving. In this article, we reflect on what chess has brought into our lives. There is this three-gift rule, from an old story about the Three Wise Men, now simplified to a common saying about giving someone three gifts only:

Something they want

Something they need

Something to wear or to read

Chess has given us everything from that list and beyond, something we didn't even know we wanted or needed! (Let's agree that everyone needs a good chess book and a nice pair of chess socks!) There are many material things like trophies, medals, and prize money, but also so many intangible things like friendship, fun, learning... that nice feeling of winning...

The Legend Vivi will highlight **The Wants**, The Myth Sarang **The Needs**, and The Man Benji will wrap up **The Wears and The Reads** with a bow! Our friend Peshka reminds us that 'tis the season of receiving also, joining us to show how to gracefully accept all the gifts! Let's get to it!

The Legend Vivi: *Something they want*

I want to learn. I want to make friends. I want to play chess. I want to help others. With these wants in mind, chess has given me concentration, friendship, and the ability to see patterns super-fast! Can you believe that I have played tournament chess for more than half my life?! I have



learned how to concentrate and stay at the board and analyze patterns in my brain even if it's during my opponents' time, rather than getting distracted. I am all about puzzles and think of chess as a giant puzzle with a bunch of little puzzles along the way. I can see patterns in my mind thanks to chess and do that in all aspects of my life!

One of the greatest gifts chess has given me is the ability to help others, via prize money! I may only be seven, but I have won several hundreds of dollars, if not more, playing adult chess tournaments. I try to donate all my winnings to causes that I care about, because the feeling of giving is amazing! One in particular is *Mission Cure* ([Mission:Cure - Home](#)), an organization dedicated to helping those battling chronic pancreatitis, including my friend, who I love to support, when I can.

The Myth Sarang: *Something they need*

For me, the greatest gifts of chess that I really need are the three Fs: Friendship, Focus, and Fun! When I was little, I was quite shy, and it took me a while to open up in a group and make friends. It's still not easy, but chess has helped me so much! I now have hundreds of friends in the chess world, many local, and many afar. Even though I may not talk to most of them regularly, whenever we do meet at tournaments, we pick up right where we left off and have a ton of fun!

As a neurodivergent kid with various challenges that make focusing hard, not to mention numerous strengths that make chess easier, chess has helped everything. I still can't sit at a board for more than 30 minutes, but it's a huge step up from when it was probably five minutes or so! Chess is a game where you must be locked in, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have to be locked to your chair! My love for the game has motivated me to figure out what focus looks like for me. While I still have a long way to go, chess has helped me progress a lot! This focus has helped me in all aspects of my life including my homeschool work, my music, my tennis, and more.



The Man Benji: Something to wear or to read

My extended family is not that into chess, not in a serious way. They don't know the difference between *zugzwang* and *zwischenzug*, and they probably wouldn't name the first world chess champion, but they still enthusiastically support me on my chess journey. Why? I couldn't figure that out for a long time, but now I get it. Because it's easy for them to pick gifts for me! From chess socks to chess-patterned shirts, from chess stamps to chess books, for any occasions, I keep receiving chess gifts from my relatives!

I have many LEGO chess sets, which I'm still going to play with even after I turn 67 years old! I have chess books on my shelf that I will probably read after I turn 67. I have a handmade wooden chess rubber stamp set that my grandma bought me somewhere in New York, turning Manhattan upside down to find it. I'll probably start using it after... you guessed it... I become 67 years old!

One of my aunts got chess forms for her kitchen so she could make a chocolate chess set, just for me as a present. The white and dark chocolate chess pieces looked so good I didn't want to eat them at first! Eventually I did, and they were delicious.

Is it foolish to get chess chocolate for a present that you don't eat, chess books that you don't read, and chess stamps that you don't use? Maybe it is, but that's not the point of these presents. As one of the greatest American writers, O'Henry, wrote in his Christmas story [The Gift of the Magi](#), such gifts are the wisest of them all! Because behind those gifts are love and support, time and thoughts. That's why I treasure them. If chess were like Christmas, the biggest presents would be family and friends!

A common theme across our wants, needs, wears, and reads is friendship, the greatest gift chess has brought us. After all, we are The Chess Friends, and many of our other friends are from the chess world too. Thanks to chess and all the gifts it brings, we now have our book [Q&A Chess Tournament Edition](#), a perfect "read" gift by the way! If you need "wear" gifts for people in your life, check out the store of our friend, FM/WIM Megan Lee, who makes custom



clothes designs, and who made The Chess Friends hoodies! ([Cloth Tattoo](#) and [Snippet Studios](#))

Enjoy the holidays, everyone! Before you go, here are knee slappers, holiday edition, to share with your family and friends!

Where do Christmas trees
learn how to play chess?

In elemen-tree school!

Why did the [Chess & Music](#) blog
post disappear from our website?

It went Christmas Chopin!

How are New Year and
speed chess alike?

They both make
every second count!

What did Santa say to his helper
before their chess game?

Good luck and believe in your-elf!

Why did the elf lose his chess game
in ten moves?

He didn't snow the opening.

Why did the holiday meal
lose the chess game?

It kept getting forked!

What did Santa say after a long
night of delivering presents?

Happy Christmas to all and to all a
good knight! And a good bishop!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master
Chess Friends!

The Man Benji
The Myth Sarang
The Legend Vivi



A Conversation With Valentin Razmov

*Being intentional about who you are,
what you do, and how you contribute*

Ken Lee

Valentin Razmov is a chess coach who helps aspiring players to reach advanced levels. His students (both youth and adults) have won awards at a number of regional competitions. Valentin himself returned to active tournament play in 2020, many years after being trained to expert level as a youth in Eastern Europe. He is a board member and tournament coordinator of the Washington Chess Federation. Valentin regularly contributes to *Northwest Chess* magazine and is also the creator of puzzle competitions alongside the annual Washington Open and Washington Class chess events. He can be reached at VRazmov@gmail.com.

Meet the ultimate hyphenate in the world of chess—a chess coach, an active player, a chess parent, and a tournament organizer. I sat down with Valentin Razmov for a conversation about his intentionality in working within the chess community; how chess players can experience the game via different lenses; and what he described as a beautiful tapestry of individual chess journeys.

Ken: Good afternoon, Valentin. May I ask about your beginnings in life and in chess?

Valentin: I am originally from the Eastern European country of Bulgaria. I was first exposed to chess at home around the age of six, playing with my older brother and my dad. We played regularly in those first years. But once I started to outplay my brother often, he decided to take me to a local chess club where I could study more seriously.

Ken: How old were you at that time?

Valentin: At that time, I was ten. I would go to the chess club three times a week after school and also participate in tournaments. I was actively and regularly involved, though by today's standards the pace was much slower.

Ken: What do you mean by that?

Valentin: Kids in the PNW today can participate in tournaments throughout the year. When I was a youth, I played in about 15 tournaments in the span of four years—as many as were available in my region and appropriate for my level.

Ken: Did you continue to play in high school and beyond?

Valentin: During high school and for the following 15 years I shifted my attention more toward high-level mathematics and then to computer science. The emergence of online chess during and after my graduate school years reignited my interest in the game.

Ken: Where were you located when you started getting back into chess? And when did you move to Seattle?

Valentin: In 1998 I came to the United States to pursue graduate studies in computer science and engineering. That's when I arrived in Seattle (and the University of Washington).

Ken: Do you have clear memories of the chess scene in Seattle at that time?

Valentin: I resumed playing chess alongside colleagues from the Computer Science department. Several faculty, students, and guests regularly gathered

on Friday afternoons to relax and connect over bughouse and blitz.

Over the years, I came to realize that many people in the sciences, math, and music often gravitate towards chess.

Ken: Let's fast forward to the present; I know that your son Gabriel (15) and daughter Siana (8) are very much involved in the chess world too. Did their involvement in chess happen organically or was it more intentional and purposeful on your part?

Valentin: I would say it was a little bit of both. I had just (re)started playing chess (online) more regularly when Gabriel was born. When he was two, he learned to move the pieces. He wasn't playing games yet but watched me play and thus developed an interest.

Unrelated to chess, I had decided to work with Gabriel on his intellectual development in an intentional manner.

Ken: What did that entail?

Valentin: While I hadn't yet conceived the idea that it would be in the form of home schooling, that's how it unfolded. Gabriel attended a small private school (PreK-1), quickly picking up English through his daily interactions.

As his intellectual skills developed at a rapid pace in multiple dimensions, the idea of accelerating his schooling (for the following three years) came naturally. This eventually included chess studies in addition to academics.

Ken: What tools were helpful to you at the time?

Valentin: As a teacher by calling, I found it both easy and exciting to piece together an academic home study program based on advanced materials and my own sense of Gabriel's interest and level in different subject areas. The resulting growth was fast, and the depth was well beyond his age. This is, frankly, to be expected for a home-schooled kid who receives intentional support. I hope other parents consider home schooling seriously for the many benefits that this method offers.

For chess, I started taking Gabriel to a local chess club led by an inspiring coach (Ray Easterday, of Orangutan Chess Academy). Tournament after tournament marked solid growth for him. I credit this in part to the coach, in part to Gabriel's inner drive to improve, and in part to the excellent study materials we used, which he devoured faster than I could keep up.

I admire those ChessKid videos—all high quality (in my view, better than most YouTube series), all thoughtfully building a student's chess skills to levels of 1600 USCF and beyond.

Over time, Gabriel received invaluable further training by IM Georgi Orlov and GM Alex Yermolinsky (both through Orlov Chess Academy).

Ken: Was it natural for Siana, being the younger sister, to want to follow in her big brother's footsteps?

Valentin: Yes. In our family the kids like many things that Mom and Dad enjoy too, and they also share activities with each other. This has brought great joy (and relief) to me. It means that we can all engage in seriously meaningful activities as the kids are growing up, not after. We share good books, watch and discuss thoughtful movies together, travel to experience new cultures, take walks, play badminton, and, of course, play chess.

Ken: You're very thoughtful and have a lot of intentionality around education in your family. Do you purposely adjust when switching between roles as a father, a coach, and a player?

Valentin: Ah, you'll need to also add a fourth lane—a chess event organizer!

Yes, indeed, I see my roles as a father, a coach, a player, and an organizer combining in an organic way.

Ken: Can you give me an example?

Valentin: For the past few years, I've been putting together puzzle competitions alongside several annual Washington Chess Federation events. As an organizer, I want to create events that are stimulating and rewarding to a range of participants of different ages, experiences, and skill levels.

As a dad, I wish to demonstrate how dedication can lead to good quality, and to emphasize how one can make unique and valuable contributions (e.g., most puzzles come from my own analyses or games). As a player, I want to experience the progressive depth of understanding that one can reach in tackling puzzles of varying difficulty (from beginner to master level). As a coach, I find myself thinking about the instructional value and the balance within the entire puzzle set I create.

So, yes, I am quite deliberate about my planning and execution. In preparing a puzzle competition event, I usually go through several passes of progressive refinement—to make sure that things would work well across all aspects.

Ken: Are there times and places in your children's development, either by age or experience, where you believe it would be beneficial for them to work with an outside coach?

Valentin: Both of them have worked, and still work, with outside coaches, at specific times and for specific purposes. While I personally feel qualified to coach my kids, there's a definite value in them experiencing an outside perspective that complements and reaffirms what they may hear from me or read in chess books. As they continue their growth, I will seek out more opportunities to further their development with the appropriate help of outside coaches and other resources.

Useful learning experiences can differ greatly depending on age, skill level, and

personal preferences. For example, Siana gets stimulated by interactions with kids around her age, so we take her to many chess tournaments, in addition to weekly meetups with chess playing friends, as a way of complementing her rigorous at-home training. Gabriel, in turn, also thrives on interactions with chess peers, but at his level (nearing Expert) the necessary depth must be served by carefully selected tournaments and high-level training materials.

Ken: What methods of chess instruction from Bulgaria were different from those used in the USA?

Valentin: Being historically part of the Eastern European bloc, Bulgaria was naturally influenced by Russian traditions in many aspects of life. For the case of chess education, this means first studying endgames in some depth, then moving on to typical middlegame patterns, and eventually learning some opening theory. All along, there's a strong emphasis on proper technique and excellence through repetition.

In the modern Western world, I see much emphasis on studying openings in great nuances—much before a player acquires a solid grasp of middlegames or endgames. As a result, one often observes a steady decline in play quality as a game progresses.

As a coach, I strive to teach students to carefully think through and calculate during all phases of a game, not being overly reliant on memorized scenarios.

Ken: Could you expand on that idea?

Valentin: I have noticed how some young players don't progress much in chess, because they get into the addictive habit of learning tricky opening moves that may yield quick wins (against unsuspecting opponents) and thus bring instant gratification. We often call this "trap chess."

Ken: What do you mean by that?

"While for most of us, chess will not be a profession; I see it as an opportunity to learn to be better human beings."

Valentin: Trap chess is a style of play where one chooses moves, often of known inferior quality, primarily to provoke a blunder by the opponent.

But there is no long-term value in playing this way. While it occasionally brings some predictable and pleasant results, it discourages growth! The sweet pull of repeated easy victories leads to a bog of stagnation. I have observed juniors winning quick games by exploiting opening traps, but remaining rated below 1000 for several years, while their peers who practice principled chess outstrip them by hundreds of rating points in that time!

As a coach I explicitly forbid my kids—and discourage my students—to play “trap chess” (or play quickly when they have plenty of time on the clock). In principle, we do not seek easy or quick wins. Instead, we aim for meaningful skill growth over time and are ready for the effortful study that this requires.

The “old-school” practice of being prudent and deliberate in calculation and pacing throughout a game has been time tested and proven advantageous *in the long run* over alternatives.

Ken: Do you think that there is a vast difference in the way chess players perceive themselves around the world?

Valentin: While I do not know how this differs between cultures, I have observed many chess players identifying as a mix of three archetypes, with one being expressed predominantly in each individual. Chess is commonly seen as a combination of sport, science, and art.

A sports person thrives on competition. In their personality and style of play there is heavy emphasis on winning (even at the expense of accuracy or elegance). Those who see chess as a

war game are likely viewing it largely from such a sporting perspective.

A scientist, in contrast, is a diligent and deliberate problem solver. They like to calculate, and they enjoy the process of untangling difficult conundrums (sometimes even at the expense of practicality). For such a player, a game is an object worth studying deeply.

An artist greatly enjoys the process of engaging in “a dance” with their opponent. Both sides participate in creating something beautiful and unique in real time. After a game ends, they look at it as a piece of artwork. The end result is often not as important to an artist; they are instead thriving on the creative process and the harmony they seek as part of it.

While I personally identify more with the artist and the scientist, I’m not suggesting that any one of these archetypes is superior to the others. They are simply what makes you tick.

Still, it is highly instructive for people to be consciously aware of what type of chess player they tend to be, and to appreciate the potential benefits of adopting (or switching to) other chess playing modes—either for training or for tournament purposes.

Ultimately, chess as a game allows each of us to experience and express many different facets of ourselves.

Ken: I think the outside world often sees a very one-dimensional aspect of chess. To them it can feel foreign and intimidating. In my *Northwest Chess* magazine interviews, I try to bring out the multi-dimensional aspects of chess.

Valentin: You are doing the chess community a real service with your work. What I really appreciate in your articles is how they probe different perspectives

related to the game.

Although we are a friendly chess community, we don’t get together often in a room to share how we think and feel. So, we don’t know much about each other, and your work fills a void.

You are helping us to foster mutual understanding within our chess community. Your articles provide raw materials for us to become better chess parents, chess coaches, and chess event organizers. Thank you for doing that!

Ken: What is your vision for the future of chess in the PNW?

Valentin: Over the past five years with the Washington Chess Federation (WCF), I have enjoyed collaborating with our team to gradually improve the quality of local and regional tournaments. We strive to make them more diverse, reliable, efficient, and ultimately more rewarding for many. This work is ongoing.

It involves encouraging wider audiences to participate. It also means running tournaments with fewer or no glitches. Finally, it is about offering value to everyone, no matter their skill level, age, gender, or goals.

Ken: How do you plan to achieve that?

Valentin: WCF has been adding chess events in new locations; having more FIDE-rated events; offering new types of events (e.g., Casablanca chess, Chess960, hand-and-brain chess); encouraging tournament directors to learn from each other; significantly broadening award categories (so that more players feel acknowledged); etc.

We’ve also started adding new sections (e.g., for lower-rated players) to a number of premier tournaments. Both scholastic players and adults coming to



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the game (or coming back after a hiatus) now have more opportunities.

For the Washington Open, the Washington Class, and the Washington State Championship, we now have sections to specifically cater to newer players—where previously they would have had no option or would have had to swim in deep waters against seasoned opponents from the very start. We see real interest in such an expansion of sections, as gauged by their respectable size.

Likewise with the side events that WCF organizes. Years ago, there used to be only a couple of side events at the Washington Open and the Washington Class. Nowadays we feature many more (e.g., puzzles, blitz, bullet, bughouse, chess960, novice/unrated, etc.), and many of those attract a crowd.

Ken: Anything else you'd like to see in the world of chess?

Valentin: I've been thinking about this, and I see your articles as supporting the big idea of bringing people together in our community in more meaningful ways. Like you, I look forward to us continuing to discover how each person

can contribute to a better community.

Your contribution is integral to this mission, because you know how to build bridges between people and how to weave strands of individual stories into a beautiful interconnected tapestry.

While for most of us chess will not be a profession, I see it as an opportunity to learn to be better human beings.

We can all learn to treat each other with respect no matter the result of a game. We can appreciate what each person does and where they come from. We can be thoughtful about what we do and how we make our contributions.

I'd like to conclude by thanking the many individuals in our chess community who have helped us get to where we are and where we want to be.

Some of my heroes, from whom I've been learning much along my path, are:

- Josh Sinanan – always being the voice of openness, reason, and balance;

- Siva Sankrithi – helping to connect many of us behind the scenes, and acting with patience and tolerance;



Valentin Razmov.

Photo courtesy of Valentin Razmov.

- Meiling Cheng – openly embracing who we are, without judgment, and selflessly contributing everywhere;

- Dwight Barber – pointing the way of the wise, and guiding us toward the next level.

News Flash:

Bertrand Wan becomes National Master!

By Josh Sinanan

Congratulations to Bertrand Wan of Redmond, Washington, who recently became Washington State's newest National Master! Bertrand achieved a US Chess rating of 2205 as a result of winning the 2025 King County Open with a perfect 5.0/5 score followed by winning two more games at the recent SCC Pumpkin Spice tournament.

Bertrand defeated three National Masters—Vidip Kona (2206), Nikash Vemparala (2245), and Rishabh Chinni (2196)—on his way to winning the Inaugural King County Open, hosted by the Washington Chess Federation September 27-28, 2025 in Bellevue.

Bertrand continued his amazing streak with two more wins against Pratik Thorwe (1983) and Pavel Trochtchanovitch (2009) at the SCC Pumpkin Spice Friday Night tournament, hosted by the Seattle Chess Club October 3-24, 2025 in Seattle.

Important Instructions For Online Subscribers

Introduction

Northwest Chess is pleased to offer all our subscribers access to the magazine online via Google groups, regardless of whether subscribers also receive paper copies. However, to properly administer and manage the group, we need to know who's who, that is, which subscriber is associated with each email in the group. Since it's common to use a different email address for your Google account (often a gmail.com address) than you may use for other purposes including your chess membership/subscriber record, we have many group members who aren't properly identified. Beginning in January 2026, your Google group email address will need to match an email on file in your membership or subscription record, to avoid possible removal from the group. This should be easy to do. Here are the instructions for the different states where we have members/subscribers.

WCF members

The online registration system is now the official membership record for WCF members. Please visit <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/member.php>, find your membership record, log in, and edit your email(s). Multiple emails separated by a semicolon are allowed. You should add the email you use for Google and delete any obsolete or unnecessary emails. Contact the WCF (washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com) or the administrator for assistance if needed.

OCF members

The OCF now uses the Chess Memberships system at <https://chessmemberships.com/OCF>. Click on "Member Login" and enter the username and password you were given or contact OCF for assistance if needed by sending email to support@oregonchessfed.org. Change your email to the one you use for Google (under "My Login & Security"), assuming you don't mind receiving all your OCF chess-related emails at this address. If you prefer to use two different addresses, please contact info@nwchess.com to request that you be added to an exceptions list, since the OCF membership system currently only allows one email for each member. When updating your email, you will need to receive and enter a verification code sent to your new email.

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If you're not in Washington or Oregon, or are not an individual member, please contact NWC directly (via info@nwchess.com) to request having your subscription record updated to your Google-compatible (or registered) email. Please also supply your full name and previous email and tell us if you want to keep your previous email on file as an alternate address. If you're an Idaho resident with an ICA premium membership, this procedure will only update your NWC subscription record, not your ICA membership record. Contact ICA directly if you want to update it as well.

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You will also need to renew your membership and/or subscription when it's due to remain in the Google group for NWC magazine. We usually allow a two-month grace period before removal, but it's best to renew early. The WCF and OCF will normally require renewal when registering for a tournament if your membership expires before the tournament will end. The WCF and OCF plan to start sending email renewal notices from their new membership systems, however, if you're not certain about your expiration date, please log in to your membership system to check, or inquire with WCF or OCF.

Thanks,

Eric Holcomb (former Business Manager and current manager of the integrated NWC subscriber list)

Organized chess in the Northwest dates back over a hundred and fifty years. During this time few individuals, if any, have done more to promote the game than the late Rusty Miller, May 30, 1942 – December 29, 2020. Rusty wore many hats, including those of organizer, tournament director, administrator, editor, journalist, and player in a roughly sixty-year career.

Rusty grew up in Chelan, Washington, and learned to play chess in high school, but only started competing in organized competitions while attending the University of Oregon. Rusty's tournament debut was the 1961 Interstate Open held in Portland in early March. The same month he appeared for the first time in the pages of the *Washington Chess Letter*.

Reading the WCL it's apparent that, although Rusty was a latecomer to the game, he caught the chess bug in a big way. The magazine reports him playing Sammy Reshevsky in a simul in Eugene in 1962 alongside Jim McCormick who was also attending the University of Oregon. The following year the two travelled to Chicago to play in the U.S. Open, the first of several that Rusty would attend.

Despite his late start and intuitive style that caused him to move very quickly, Rusty made it to Class A but playing the game was never his primary interest. That was organizing. One of his first efforts was the 1966 Seattle U.S. Open where he was a member of the tournament committee while also playing.

Rusty made a name for himself in the early 1970s when he single-handedly



Kathy Miller (L) and Rusty Miller taken August 11, 2012 at the US Open in Portland, Oregon.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

NORTHWEST CHESS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE RUSSELL (RUSTY) MILLER

JOHN DONALDSON

put together Jude Acers exhibition tours around the United States. The venues included not only chess clubs, but schools, prisons and shopping malls, and scheduling them in the pre-Internet days demanded a varied skill-set including the ability to deal with a number of unforeseen situations. One of the highlights of these transcontinental tours was Jude's setting a then world record with his 117-player simul at Portland's Jantzen Mall in 1974.

Another example of Rusty's organizing skill was his holding a tournament in every single county in Washington—39 in all—in the early 1970s. This unique series exemplified Rusty's commitment to grassroots promotion of the game. He was always thinking of new ways to get more people involved.

Northwest Chess was Rusty's second love, after his wife Kathy, and he served several times as its editor from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s. The issues Rusty edited showed the influence of his great predecessor Dan Wade—the magazine was to be a journal of record for chess in the Northwest. Rusty typed up hundreds of crosstables over the years and took countless photographs. His love for *Northwest Chess* also extended to preserving the magazine by scanning many years of back issues. These preservationist instincts and love for

historical details could also be seen in his compiling lists of winners of many annual tournaments held in the Northwest. Rusty loved to research the past.

Rusty organized the first tournament in the Northwest to offer IM norms, the West Seattle International, in 1991. He also served as the business manager of Yasser Seirawan's *Inside Chess*, where he occasionally, and presumably by accident, answered the phone, "*Northwest Chess!*"

Running a bookstore was one of the many dreams Rusty was able to realize. He loved to read and it was rare to find him without some books, particularly those by his favorite author, Northwest mystery writer J.A. Jance. He and Kathy, who like Rusty was honored by the USCF when the US Open was held in Vancouver in 2012, were big baseball fans. Rusty was also active in civic affairs and ran several times for city council while living in Yakima.

Readers are encouraged to check out the obituary for Rusty in the [February 2021](#) issue of *Northwest Chess*, from which this Hall of Fame story was extracted.

Previously Covered

Articles of previous inductees are found in the following issues of *Northwest Chess*:

[Viktors Pupols - January 2023](#)

[Richard Vandenburg - September 2023](#)

[Clark Harmon - March 2024](#)

[Daniel Wade - May 2025](#)

[Robert Karch - October 2025](#)



YOU'RE INVITED

Join us for a special fundraising gala on December 6th, 2025, dedicated to supporting and empowering girls in chess. This elegant evening will include a gourmet dinner, and complimentary parking all to make the night truly memorable. The auction will feature gift cards, Victoria's Secret baskets, stunning paintings, chess lesson vouchers and more.

This gala is not just an event, but a celebration of the potential and talent of young female chess players. By attending, you'll be contributing to scholarships, training, and resources that help girls thrive in the game, building confidence and skill in a traditionally male-dominated field.



DATE: December 6th, 2025

TIME: 6:30pm to 9:30pm

TICKETS: Adult \$125 | Children \$90

LOCATION: Hilton Bellevue Hotel
300 112th Avenue SE | Bellevue, WA



Hello@MyChessWorld.com

CO-HOSTED BY WATA AND WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION

WATA SCHOLASTIC CHESS TOURNAMENT



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025
REDMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
16800 NE 80TH ST, REDMOND, WA 98052



FORMAT

A 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss tournament in five sections:

K-1 U700

2-3 U700

K-3 Open

4-12 U900

4-12 Open

SCHEDULE

Rd. 1 – 10:00am

Rd. 2 – 11:30am

Lunch

Rd. 3 – 1:30pm

Rd. 4 – 3:00pm

Rd. 5 – 4:30pm

Awards ~ 6:30pm

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-12 as of the 2025-26 school year. Out-of-state players welcome!

ENTRY FEE

\$50 by 11/16, \$60 after.
Room for 100 players.

AWARDS

Prizes: Trophies for 3 points and above in each section.

Special Prizes (per section):

Medals for first-time players, best female player, best dressed, and biggest upset win.

RATING

Dual NWSRS and US Chess rated, with **US Chess membership required in all sections.** Higher of current NWSRS or US Chess regular rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

CLOCKS + NOTATION

Chess clocks set to G/25; +5 will be used from the beginning in all games. Chess notation required in all sections except for K-1 U700 and 2-3 U700. All equipment is provided courtesy of WCF.

REGISTRATION

Register online at
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by SettleKing/Zelle/Cash/Check.
100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Fri December 5 @ 5:00pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

PROCEDURE

Pairings will be posted in the hallway near the parent waiting area.

Questions?

Contact: Rekha Sagar, WCF VP,
rekha4chess@gmail.com,
425-496-9160

2025 National K-12 GRADE Chess Championships

Thu-Sun, December 11-14, 2025

Spokane Convention Center

334 West Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201



ELIGIBILITY

Open to all US students in grades K-12 as of the 2025-2026 school year.

FORMAT

A 7-round, G/90; d10 Swiss tournament in 13 grade-level sections, K-12.

ENTRY FEES

\$105 online or postmarked by **10/27**

\$160 online or postmarked by **11/17**

\$235 online **ONLY** by **12/1**

\$360 online **ONLY** by **12/10**

\$400 on-site until **10am Fri 12/12**

See [Scholastic Regulations](#) for details on required byes for on-site entries.

\$40 for section changes requested **after 11/3**.

100% Entry refunds available if notified by email to nationalevents@uschess.org by **11/3**.

Refunds requested **after 11/3** or in person at Chess Control by 11am PT on **12/11** will incur a \$40 service charge.

No refunds after **11am 12/11**.

SCHEDULE

Thursday 12/11: **Bughouse Championship** (11am-2pm), **National Puzzle Solving Championship** (3-4pm), **Blitz Championship** (5-9pm)

Friday 12/12: **Opening Ceremony**

(12:30pm), Rd. 1: 1pm, Rd. 2: 6pm.

Saturday 12/13: Rd. 3: 9am, Rd. 4: 1:30pm, Rd. 5: 6pm.

Sunday 12/14: Rd. 6: 9am, Rd. 7: 2pm,

Awards Ceremony ~ Sun. 6pm.

Note: K-1 sections start 30 min later for morning rounds and 30 min earlier for evening rounds. Please check full [schedule](#) for details.

AWARDS

All players who complete the event will receive an award! Medals awarded to the top-scoring players in each section. Players will be able to collect medals following the completion of round 7. For team award info, see [Nationals Website](#).

RATING

US Chess rated. December 2025 US Chess rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Converted ratings used for players with higher NWSRS ratings. See page 7 of [Scholastic Regulations](#) for details.

EVENT WEBSITE

new.uschess.org/k12-2025-championships

ONLINE REGISTRATION

kingregistration.com/event/2025nationalk12

QUESTIONS?

Josh Sinanan, WCF President,
US Chess Scholastic Council Rep,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com,
Call or text: 206-769-3757



Washington Winter Classic



DECEMBER 20-21, 2025

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest finishing WA player in the Rudolph Open, Dasher U1800, and Prancer U1400 sections seeded into the Premier, Challengers, and Prodigies sections, respectively, of the 2026 WA State Championship.

Format: A five-round Swiss in three sections:

Rudolph Open, Dasher U1800 & Prancer U1400

In case of a tie for 1st place, follow-up playoff games will determine the seed for the Premier, Challengers or Prodigies section of the 2026 Washington State Championship.

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

Schedule: Sat @ 9 AM, 2 PM, 7 PM. Sun @ 10 AM, 3 PM. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

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

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

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

Prancer 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): \$50, Best Senior Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Dressed: \$20/day.

Entry Fee: \$100 by 12/13, \$125 after. Free entry (pending completion without withdrawals) for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs and chess Santas rated 2200+ USCF. \$50 play-up fee if rated 1700-1799 or 1300-1399 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Rudolph Open or Dasher U1800, respectively. Maximum of 100 players – please register early.

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

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

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of December 2025 US Chess or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF or foreign rating used at TD discretion.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration (pay by SettleKing/Zelle/check/cash). Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 12/19 @ 5pm**. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

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

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

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757

Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Holiday Blitz: Sunday 7-9pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30. **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 December 2025 US Chess Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.

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

1st – 3rd: \$170-120-90,

1st U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000/Unrated: \$40.

Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

DECEMBER TOURNAMENTS



Venue & mail

7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115

info & events calendar

www.seattlechess.club

club & tournament inquiries

contact@seattlechess.club

December 6

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). Prepayment required. **Prizes:** winner of each 4-player quad wins free entry to next Quads played within 3 months. **Check-in:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2 & 6pm. **Byes:** 0 – must play all 3 rounds! US Chess rated and US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>

December Quads

December 28

4-round Swiss. **Time Control:** Game/50 + 10 sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$25 (+\$10 day membership for non-SCC). **Prize fund:** sum of \$14/entry. **Prizes:** 1st (35% of prize fund), 2nd (27%), bottom half (by rating) 1st (22%), 2nd (16%). **Check-in:** 9:15-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 12:20, 2:40, 5pm. **Byes:** 1 half-pt., commit at registration. US Chess rated and US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>

Holiday Tornado

December 5, 12, 19, 26

See below.

Chess City Swiss

Coming up:

- **January Quads** – January 10; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Seattle City Championship** – January 24-25; tentative, 2B confirmed

Entry fees

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

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

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

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

~ SCC Friday Nights ~

One U.S. Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm.

Time control: 40 moves in 90 mins. w/10 sec. increment, followed by sudden death 60 mins. w/10 sec. increment. Free for SCC members, \$5/night others.

Play in any round! Email contact@seattlechess.club to sign up. 28 players max.

Chess City Swiss

Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26

January Thaw

Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23

Fifth Friday G/15 (multiple rounds)

Jan. 30

Cabin Fever

Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27

WASHINGTON JUNIOR INVITATIONAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sat-Sun, January 10-11, 2026

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

Format:

An invitation-only junior chess tournament in four sections:

Caruana Closed: A FIDE-rated, 6-player Round Robin. TC: G/90; +30.

So Premier: A FIDE-rated, 5-round, G/90; +30 Swiss.

Aronian Challengers and **Mishra Rising:** 5-round, G/45; +15 Double Swiss. Play two games – one as White and one as Black – against each opponent.

Entry Fee:

\$125 by Jan 03, \$150 after.

Schedule:

Rd 1 – Sat @ 9am

Rd 2 – Sat @ 1:30pm

Rd 3 – Sat @ 6pm

Rd 4 – Sun @ 10am

Rd 5 – Sun @ 3pm

Awards – Sun @ 7pm or asap.

Late start available for players if previous game runs long. To resolve potential ties for 1st place in the Caruana Closed and So Premier sections, pairs of G/5; +2 blitz playoff games will be conducted on Sunday shortly after the final round.

Eligibility:

Open to WA players under age 21 as of Jan 1, 2026. The top 60 WA juniors will be admitted, based on the higher of Jan 2026 USCF or current NWSRS ratings, who register and pay by the **deadline of Wed, Jan 7th**. Of those 60, the top 5 by rating, plus the previously seeded winner of the 2025 WA Junior Open, qualify for the Caruana Closed section. The next 18 are seeded in the So Premier section, the following 18 in the Aronian Challengers section, and the remaining 18 in the Mishra Rising section.

Prizes:

Caruana Closed (guaranteed by WCF)
1st \$350 + seed into Championship section of 2026 WA State Championship. 2nd \$320, 3rd \$280.

So Premier (based on 18 paid entries)
1st \$250 + seed into Invitational section of 2026 WA State Championship. 2nd–4th: \$235, \$220, \$200.

Aronian Challengers and **Mishra Rising**
(based on 18 paid entries each)
1st–4th: \$175, \$160, \$145, \$130.

Special Prizes (per section): Biggest Upset Win: \$15/rd., Best Dressed: \$10/day, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50.

Rating & Memberships:

Dual NWSRS + US Chess rated, Caruana Closed and So Premier sections also FIDE rated. US Chess & WCF membership required in all sections.

Byes:

No byes allowed in Caruana Closed section. Up to 2 half-point byes available in other sections, if requested before the end of round 2.



The Details:

Procedure: Pairings and standings posted near the playing area before each round.

Registration:

nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration (pay online by Zelle / SettleKing), or write a check to Washington Chess Federation and mail to: Washington Chess Federation c/o Orlov Chess Academy 4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond WA, 98052.

Payment deadline:

Wed, Jan 7th @ 5pm.

No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from the Waitlist will be offered a spot. No on-site entries.

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



