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

March 5 for the April issue;
April 5 for May.

Submit all ads, donations, payments, changes of address and subscriptions to:

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Judged Best Magazine/Newsletter for 2009 and 2014-2025 by Chess Journalists of America!

Front Cover

Andrew Beck, winner of the ICA January Alchemist Coffee House Swiss. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

Back Cover

Tom Booth at the ICA January Alchemist Coffee House Swiss. Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

Submissions

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

**1514 S. Longmont Ave.
Boise, Idaho 83706-3732**
or via e-mail to:
editor@nwchess.com

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Photo credit: Winicjusz Drozdowski, Poland,
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

As we go to print, this sad news...
GM Jan Timman passed away
February 18, 2026 at the age of 74.
He was born December 14, 1951.

ICA January Alchemist Coffee House Swiss

Jeffrey Roland

The 2026 Idaho Chess Association (ICA) January Alchemist Coffee House Swiss tournament was held in Boise, Idaho on Saturday, January 24 at the Alchemist Coffee House on Five Mile and Overland. Seating was limited to 12 players, four-round Swiss, Game/20; +20 second increment, US Chess Rated, and players had to be okay with normal noises that would occur in the coffee house doing business. Since entry was free, there would be no prizes other than the normal reward for playing chess one gets (you know, “the thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat” kind of thing), so the tournament was not focused on money, politics, titles, or anything else. And as tournament director (TD), I decided right from the start that under no circumstances would I play in the tournament. My job would be focused on that of being the TD, and not that of being a regular- or house-player.

Pre-tournament promotions (the flyer) went out to the public on December 6, and the 12 slots filled up in less than 24 hours, with more than 12 players as alternates to boot. This tournament came

about because ICA President Adam Porth suggested that I might want to do a “get back in the saddle” tournament to get used to putting on tournaments in Boise again. Alex Machin just became the new Trustee for the West in the ICA, and this was a perfect way to have us work together and start organizing events in the Boise area.

When the day came for the tournament, it was 18° Fahrenheit at 9:00 AM when I arrived to begin setting up. It was so nice to be in a coffee shop to heat up! Check-in was between 9:30 AM and 10:00 AM, and all the players were either present, or enroute to arrive within five minutes, when the 10:00 AM start time happened.

Since I had all the players set up in advance, I “pushed the button” to make the pairings and start the tournament precisely on time! Play would be continuous round by round until done. The tournament was finished and rated by the US Chess Federation by 3:30 PM on the date of the tournament! Eight minutes later, I had taken the “victory pose” photo of the winner seen on the front cover of this issue!



Photos And Captions

All photos in this article are by Jeffrey Roland. Shown in the photo above is Andrew Beck in his game with Alex Machin in round four, which decided first place.

In the collage on the opposite page is L-R Top: Trevor Thomsen, Meckayden Niezgodka. Middle: Alex Machin (L) playing Dustin Lindgren, and L-R Bottom: Candice Liang, Ryan Wu, and Keneth Sengendo.

2026 ICA January Alchemist Coffee House Swiss

##	Name	Rating	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total	Solkoff
1	Andrew Beck	1598	W12	W6	W2	D4	3.5	8.00
2	Keneth Paul Sengendo	1524	W10	W3	L1	W6	3	9.50
3	Candice Liang	1731	W5	L2	W8	W9	3	8.50
4	Alex James Machin	1810	W11	D8	W7	D1	3	8.00
5	Ryan Wu	1412	L3	W10	D9	W8	2.5	7.00
6	Daniel Homa	872	W9	L1	W11	L2	2	9.00
7	Dustin Lindgren	1653	L8	W11	L4	W10	2	6.50
8	Griffin Rhys Baldwin	1312	W7	D4	L3	L5	1.5	10.50
9	Tom R. Booth	1500	L6	W12	D5	L3	1.5	7.50
10	Trevor Thomsen	966	L2	L5	W12	L7	1	7.50
11	Meckayden Niezgodka	1454	L4	L7	L6	W12	1	7.00
12	Louis Michael Bash	1237	L1	L9	L10	L11	0	7.00



**Meckayden Niezgoda (1454) –
Dustin Lindgren (1653) [B00]**
ICA January Alchemist Coffee House
Boise, ID (R2), January 24, 2026
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 e5

2...d5 is the main line Nimzovich Defense. White can choose between all three central responses: capture on d5, push past with e5, or support with Nc3.

3.d5

2...e5 used to be called the Kevitz variation, back when I played this stuff with both sides. The most likely transposition, though, is into the Scotch with 3.Nf3.

3...Nce7 4.Nf3 Ng6 5.c4

5.h4!? h5 6.Bg5 Nf6 7.Nc3

5...Bc5 6.Be2 Nf6 7.Nc3 a6 8.a3 Ng4

8...d6

9.0-0 d6 10.b4 Ba7 11.h3 h5

11...Nf6

12.Qc2

12.c5!? is similar to the next note.;
12.hxg4? hxg4 13.Ng5 Nf4!→

12...Nh4 13.g3?!

Weakens the kingside. 13.c5! Nxf3+

14.Bxf3 dxc5 15.b5! c4 16.bxa6 bxa6
17.Nd1±

13...Nxf3+ 14.Bxf3 Qf6 15.Kg2

15.Qe2∞ avoids the immediate tactics.

15...Nh2!! 16.Kxh2 Qxf3 17.Nd1

17.h4±



Position after 17.Nd1

17...Bd4

Black misses the breakthrough on this and the next move. 17...Bxh3! 18.Rg1 h4
19.g4 Bxg4 20.Rxg4 Qxg4+→

18.Rb1 h4

18...Bxh3! 19.Kxh3 h4+→

19.g4 b6 20.Rb3 Qf6 21.f4

21.Ne3

21...exf4



Position after 21...exf4

22.Bb2

22.Bxf4 could lead to a promising exchange sacrifice: 22...g5 23.Be3 Qxf1 24.Bxd4 0-0 25.Nf2, when White threatens Rb1, collecting the trapped queen. If 25...b5 26.Rf3 Qxc4 27.Qd2 White takes aim at the black king as well.

**22...g5 23.Bxd4 Qxd4 24.c5 bxc5
25.bxc5 Qxc5 26.Rc3 Qb5 27.Re1 Qa5**

27...0-0

28.Re2 Ra7

28...0-0 29.Rxc7 Qxa3∞

29.Qd3

29.e5 dxe5 (29...0-0 30.exd6 cxd6 31.Rxc8) 30.Rxe5+ Kd8 31.Nb2 with good coordination.

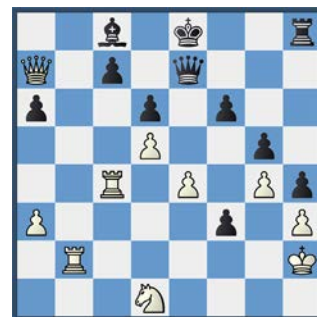
29...Qb5 30.Rc4 f6?

30...0-0∞

31.Rb2±

31.e5! fxe5 32.Qg6+ is a big attack.

31...Qd7 32.Qd4 Qe7?? 33.Qxa7 f3



Position after 33...f3

34.Qxc7

Even stronger is 34.Rxc7! Qe5+ 35.Kh1, which leaves Black with no reasonable checks and no defense.

**34...Qe5+ 35.Kg1 Qg3+ 36.Kf1 Qxh3+
37.Ke1 0-0 38.Qxd6 Qg3+ 39.Qxg3**



L-R F-B: Meckayden Niezgoda, Dustin Lindgren; Trevor Thomsen, Ryan Wu; Andrew Beck, Daniel Homa.



Position after 39.Qxg3

(time forfeit) Of course White is winning on the board after 39...hxg3 40.Ne3, but the clock is an important piece in the game!

0-1

Andrew Beck (1598) –

Alex James Machin (1810) [C78]

ICA January Alchemist Coffee House

Boise, ID (R4), January 24, 2026

[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6
5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bb7 7.d3 Bc5 8.a4

8.Nc3 is the other main move here, when 8...d6 9.a4 is a transposition to the game.

8...d6 9.Nc3 b4 10.Nd5

There's some point to 10.Ne2 0-0 11.Ng3, aiming at f5.

10...Na5 11.Bg5

11.Nxf6+ Qxf6 12.Ba2∞ I could be persuaded that White is marginally better, due to the over-concentration of black pieces on the queenside.

11...Nxb3 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.cxb3 f5



Position after 13...f5

14.d4!?

14.Rc1 Bxd5 (The attempt to encircle the d5-knight backfires: 14...f4 15.Nxe5 Bxd5 16.exd5 Bxf2+ 17.Rxf2 dxe5 18.Qh5±)

15.exd5 Bb6. The engine still prefers White here, despite the demolished pawn structure.

14...fxe4

14...exd4 seems harder to meet, as 15.Qd3 (15.Re1 Kd7!♠ is a Stockfish idea that's hard to believe would be played by biologicals.) 15...0-0 16.Nxd4 fxe4 17.Qxe4 Kh8 leaves White dealing with open diagonals and files aimed at the king.

15.dxc5 dxc5!

15...exf3 16.Qxf3 is not as good.; 15...Bxd5 16.Qxd5 exf3 17.Qxf3 is worse still.

16.Nxe5

16.Nxc7+ Qxc7 17.Nh4∞



Position after 16.Nxe5

16...Bxd5

16...Qxd5 17.Qxd5 Bxd5 18.Rac1 0-0-0 19.Rxc5 Rhe8 20.Nc4∞ It's almost cheating for the annotator to deliver an evaluation of unclear here. In fact, coming up with an accurate appraisal during the game is absolutely critical! Unfortunately it's also insanely difficult. There are so many subtle factors, too many slightly different move orders and targets, and endgames become unforgivingly concrete. 20...Bxc4 21.Rxc4 a5 22.Rfc1 Re7 23.Kf1 is called a slight edge for Black by Stockfish. But what if White goes after the a5-pawn? Does g2-g4 undermine the black pawn on e4, or does it become a weakness along the g-file? How strong is...Rd2?

17.Nc4 Bxc4 18.bxc4 Qxd1 19.Raxd1 Rd8 20.Rfe1

20.Rxd8+ Kxd8 21.Rd1+ Ke7 22.Kf1 is a slightly more efficient way to reach the position in the game. The extra black pawn doesn't feel like much.

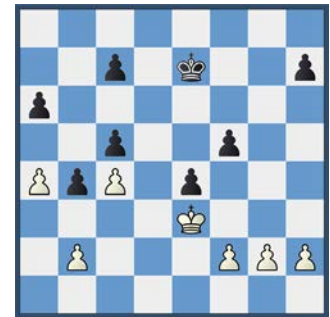
20...Rxd1

20...0-0♠

21.Rxd1 Ke7 22.Kf1 Rd8?

This could be a costly miscalculation of the king and pawn endings. 22...c6 denies the white rook entries.

23.Rxd8! Kxd8 24.Ke2 Ke7 25.Ke3 f5



Position after 25...f5

26.h4?

This soon locks up the position, securing the tournament victory with a draw against a higher-rated player. White, however, has excellent winning chances after 26.Kf4 –

a) White will either undermine e4 with h3/g4, or play a zugzwang tempo waiting game to dislodge the black king and infiltrate. 26...Kf6 27.h3 h5 28.a5 h4 (28...Ke6 29.h4 Kf6 30.b3! Ke6 31.Kg5 Ke5 32.Kxh5 f4 33.Kg4 e3 34.fxe3 fxe3 35.Kf3+-; 28...b3 29.h4! c6 30.g3!+-) 29.g3 hxg3 30.fxg3 when White will break with g4 and demonstrate the power of the outside passed pawn.;

b) 26...Ke6 27.a5! Kf6 (27...b3 28.h3! intending 29.g4.) 28.b3! Ke6 29.h3! h5 30.g4 hxg4 31.hxg4 fxg4 32.Kxe4 Kf6 33.Kf4+- I took an hour and had engine assistance with this ending. Good luck getting it exactly right with the clock ticking off your rapid time control.;

26...h5 27.f4 b3 28.a5

Even the apparently bland draws often have unseen depths.

½-½



WA State Barber/Rockefeller/Ashley

OPEN CHESS TOURNAMENT

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Chinook Middle School

2001 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



CLASSICAL SECTIONS

K-3 Ashley Open

(Qualifier for Ashley Closed)

K-5 Rockefeller Open

(Qualifier for Rockefeller Closed)

6-8 Barber Open

(Qualifier for Barber Closed)

A 4-round Swiss. Longer time control for Intermediate to Advanced players. Time Control: G/60; +10. Late default: 30 minutes. Rounds: 9am, 12pm, 2:45pm, 5:30pm. Awards ~ 8pm or asap.

RAPID SECTIONS

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

A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss. Shorter time control for players of all levels. Rounds: 9am, 10:30am, 11:45am, Lunch, 1:15pm, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

ALL SECTIONS

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

ENTRY FEE

\$55 by March 8th, \$65 after.
Room for 250 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded in each section:

1st – 5th: \$80-75-70-65-60.

Team Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded to the top 4 players from the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections:
1st – 5th: \$30-25-20-15-10.

Special Prizes (per section): Medals for first timers, best female player, and biggest upset win.

FOLLOW-UP CLOSED EVENT

Top 5 finishing WA State residents in the K-3 Ashley Open, K-5 Rockefeller Open, and 6-8 Barber Open section (by MSCO tiebreaks) will qualify for the Ashley, Rockefeller and Barber Closed Events on March 29 in Seattle. The other 5 spots in each closed event will be determined by rating. The winners of the closed (4-Round Swiss) events will earn a \$750 travel stipend (donated by the WCF) and will be the WA State representatives at the National Ashley (K-3), Rockefeller (K-5), and Barber (6-8) Tournament of Champions, respectively, held concurrently with the US Open in early August.

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

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

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat., March 14th @ 5pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be withdrawn from the tournament.

ELIGIBILITY

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

RATING

Highest of March USCF Regular or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings.

Questions?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President at 206.769.3757 or WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com



OPEN WINDOW SCHOOL SPRING TORNADO

SATURDAY MARCH 21ST, 2026

OPEN WINDOW SCHOOL

6128 168TH PL SE BELLEVUE, WA 98006



DUAL FORMAT

Rapid Sections:

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

K-1 U700

2-3 U700

K-3 Open

4-8 U900

Schedule:

Rd. 1 – 9 am

Rd. 2 – 10:30 am

Lunch

Rd. 3 – 12:30 pm

Rd. 4 – 2 pm

Rd. 5 – 3:30 pm

Awards Ceremony ~ 5 pm

Classical Section:

A 4-Round G/45; +5 Swiss in one section:

K-8 Open

Schedule:

Rd. 1 – 9 am

Rd. 2 – 11 am

Lunch

Rd. 3 – 1 pm

Rd. 4 – 3 pm

Awards Ceremony ~ 5 pm

ENTRY FEE

\$40. Maximum of 150 players.

AWARDS

Trophies awarded to the top-scoring players in each section.

Trophies awarded to the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections.

Medals for first-time tournament players who do not earn a trophy.

RATING

NWSRS rated. Open sections will also be USCF rated; US Chess membership required only for Open sections. Higher of current NWSRS and USCF Regular rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all students in grades K-8 as of the 2025-26 school year.

Out-of-state players welcome!

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

THE DETAILS

Registration & Payment

Registration and payment deadline
Fri 3/20 @ 5 PM at chessreg.com

(pay by credit/debit/PayPal). No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Concessions

Pizza lunch available for pre-order when registering. Other concessions will be provided for purchase on site.

Clocks

Chess clocks will be used from the beginning in the K-3 Open and K-8 Open sections. Clocks are not required for the other sections, until a judge places one in unfinished games after 40 minutes of play. All equipment is provided courtesy of OWS Chess Club.

Questions?

Parent Contact - David Lew,
davidglew@gmail.com
Tournament Director - Josh Sinanan, 206.769.3757,
joshsinanan@gmail.com

Chess Bingō

Christefano Reyes

Introducing Chess Bingō, a new way to enjoy chess, learn the lingo, and (when played with teams) turn up the heat, get competitive, and develop team-building skills.

I created and have used this new bingo format with my chess students as a fun teaching tool, and I've tested these scorecards with help from the McMinnville Chess Club with great success.

These scorecards are free for personal and chess club use, and I'm excited to share them with everyone in the club and beyond.

High quality PDFs are available upon request: <https://chesszendo.com/articles/chess-bingo>.

Since making these scorecards available, they've been downloaded by players and clubs all over the world, and by download counts Chess Bingō seems to have quite a following in Finland (hei, hyvät suomalaiset!), Latvia, and Hong Kong.

How to play

There are a few different ways to play. You can play Bingo and just try to cross off the squares (so the first to get Bingo wins), which teaches the positions and tactics but encourages making questionable moves just to get Bingo. This can be its own kind of fun, but if you wish you can play both Bingo *and* good chess and declare a winner if someone both gets Bingo and wins or draws the game.

I designed these scorecards so that it's theoretically possible to get four squares in a row in a single game of chess. With each scoreboard there are ten different ways to get Bingo in a single chess game, which is called a round. The theory behind this is fairly

complex, but the idea is that it's simply more fun to get Bingo in a single round.

Depending on a number of factors, such as your opponent figuring out which squares you're trying to get, it might not always be possible to get four in a row in a round. If the chess game ends and no one got 4 in a row, just keep your Chess Bingō scorecard, reset the chess board, and start another round until someone gets four in a row.

Playing with teams

Chess Bingō can be played between just two people, which I do in some of my lessons with my students. It can also be played with teams (I recommend no more than four members per team).

Divide your group into two or more teams. For example, with four players and

two chess boards, one team of two players sits on one side of the table playing another team of two sitting on the other side. Everyone on the same team gets a copy of the same scorecard.

There are three different Chess Bingō scorecards to choose from. Just be sure everyone on the same team gets the same one. Teams of two players can share the same physical scorecard.

It helps if you have a good mix of beginner and experienced players on each team so that the experienced players can give guidance and answer questions like, "Is this a knight outpost?" and "Is this a skewer or a pin?" With teams of three players, seat the most experienced player in the middle.

When one member of a team crosses off a square, all members of that team can



Teams playing Chess Bingō at McMinnville Chess Club.

cross off the same square. This encourages teamwork and uses verbalization and auditory learning to help accelerate learning the names of positions and tactics.

It can also get pretty exciting. I've heard "I need a pin!" and "I need a stonewall!" and seen teammates helping one another achieve a pin or stonewall in their game in order for the team to win. Through teamwork and communication, everyone on the same team can work together and cross off yet another square to get four in a row.

Notes

- Forks must attack pieces of same or greater value. For example, forking two pawns with a bishop or a knight doesn't count. Forking two pawns with a pawn does.
- Stonewalls must be in the center of the board. In other words, the connecting pawn in a stonewall must be on the d-file or e-file. This teaches that stonewalls are a *system* and not merely a simple pawn formation.
- Some players have discovered that they can't get any more squares and will abruptly resign just to start a new round. The "opponent resigns" square was added to help deter this. (thanks, Max!).
- Bingo scoreboards are usually five×five, and Chess Bingō uses four×four scorecards so that rounds go more quickly. This approach uses spaced repetition and reinforcement loops to help make learning positions and tactics more fun and effective.
- Translations welcome!
 - Spanish language translation courtesy of Ken Samuel Kyllingmark of the Salem Oregon Chess Club. <https://www.salemoregonchess.com/>

Chess Bingō is a work in progress.

Contact me at <https://chesszendo.com/contact> with your feedback and suggestions.

CHESS BINGŌ #1

MCMINNVILLE CHESS CLUB

KNIGHT OUTPOST	OPPONENT RESIGNS	DISCOVERED CHECK	SKEWER
FORK	DOUBLE CHECK	PIN	BACK RANK CHECKMATE
STALEMATE	STONEWALL	CASTLE QUEENSIDE	CROSS CHECK
CASTLE KINGSIDE	FIRST CHECK	PASSED PAWN	PROMOTE PAWN

NAME / DATE: _____

INFO@CHESSZENDO.COM • WWW.CHESSZENDO.COM • @CHESSZENDO
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CHESS BINGŌ #2

MCMINNVILLE CHESS CLUB

FORK	DISCOVERED CHECK	STALEMATE	STONEWALL
SMOTHERED MATE	BISHOP OUTPOST	MOVE ENTIRE LENGTH OF RANK OR FILE IN ONE MOVE	CASTLE KINGSIDE
DOUBLE CHECK	PIN	PASSED PAWN	OPPONENT RESIGNS
KNIGHT OUTPOST	BACK RANK CHECKMATE	PROMOTE PAWN	EN PASSANT

NAME / DATE: _____

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CHESS BINGŌ #3

MCMINNVILLE CHESS CLUB

OPPONENT RESIGNS	DISCOVERED CHECK	PASSED PAWN	STONEWALL
CASTLE KINGSIDE	SKEWER	FIANCHETTO BISHOPS	BACK RANK CHECKMATE
DOUBLE CHECK	PIN	MOVE ENTIRE LENGTH OF RANK OR FILE IN ONE MOVE	CASTLE QUEENSIDE
PROMOTE PAWN	FORK	DRAW BY REPETITION	EN PASSANT

NAME / DATE: _____

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AJEDREZ DE BINGŌ #1

CLUB DE AJEDREZ DE MCMINNVILLE

PUESTO AVANZADO DEL CABALLO	EL Oponente ABANDONA	JAQUE DESCUBIERTO	ENFILADA
TENEDOR	JAQUE DOBLE	CLAVADA	MATE DEL PASILLO
REY AHOGADO	STONEWALL	ENROQUE LARGO	CONTRA- JAQUE
ENROQUE CORTO	PRIMER JAQUE	PEÓN PASADO	PROMOCIONAR UN PEÓN

NOMBRE/FECHA: _____

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AJEDREZ DE BINGŌ #2

CLUB DE AJEDREZ DE MCMINNVILLE

TENEDOR	JAQUE DESCUBIERTO	REY AHOGADO	STONEWALL
MATE DE LA COZ	PUESTO AVANZADO DEL ALFIL	MOVER TODA LA FLA O COLUMNA EN UN SOLO MOVIMIENTO	ENROQUE CORTO
JAQUE DOBLE	CLAVADA	PEÓN PASADO	EL Oponente ABANDONA
PUESTO AVANZADO DEL CABALLO	MATE DEL PASILLO	PROMOCIONAR UN PEÓN	CAPTURA AL PASO

NOMBRE/FECHA: _____

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AJEDREZ DE BINGŌ #3

CLUB DE AJEDREZ DE MCMINNVILLE

EL Oponente ABANDONA	JAQUE DESCUBIERTO	PEÓN PASADO	STONEWALL
ENROQUE CORTO	ENFILADA	ALFILES EN FIANCHETTO	MATE DEL PASILLO
JAQUE DOBLE	CLAVADA	MOVER TODA LA FLA O COLUMNA EN UN SOLO MOVIMIENTO	ENROQUE LARGO
PROMOCIONAR UN PEÓN	TENEDOR	TABLAS POR REPETICIÓN	CAPTURA AL PASO

NOMBRE/FECHA: _____

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ST. ANNE CELTIC CHALLENGE SPRING 2026

In Memory of Coach Chris Hurley, 1965-2020.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026

ST. ANNE SCHOOL

101 WEST LEE ST SEATTLE, WA 98119



FORMAT

A 5-Round Swiss tournament in five sections:

♙ K-1 U700

♘ 2-3 U700

♚ K-3 Open

♜ 4-8 U900

♚ 4-12 Open

ROUNDS

Rd. 1 - 12:00pm

Rd. 2 - 1:10pm

Rd. 3 - 2:20pm

Rd. 4 - 3:30pm

Rd. 5 - 4:40pm

Awards Ceremony ~
6pm

TIME CONTROL

G/25; +5 sec. increment

**WA State
Scholastic
Qualifier!**

ENTRY FEE

\$25. Maximum of 150 players. Please register early to guarantee your spot!

AWARDS

Trophies awarded to the top-scoring players in each section. Trophies awarded to the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school count for team score) across all sections. Medals for first-time tournament players who do not earn a trophy.

RATING

NWSRS rated. Open sections also US Chess rated. Higher of current NWSRS or March 2026 US Chess rating will be used to determine section and pairings. US Chess membership required only for Open sections.

ELIGIBILITY

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

REGISTRATION

Online registration and payment deadline Sat 3/21 @ 5:00 PM at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

(pay by credit/debit/PayPal/Venmo)

No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

PROCEDURE

Pairings and standings will be posted near the playing area before each round.

CONCESSIONS

Available for purchase onsite.

CLOCKS

Chess clocks will be used from the start in the Open sections. Clocks not required for the other sections, until a judge places one set for G/10 minutes + 5 sec increment into unfinished games after 35 minutes of play. All equipment is provided courtesy of St. Anne Chess Club.

QUESTIONS?

Contact: Carlee Thorrington,
thorrington.mother@stannesea.org
St. Anne Chess Coach - Josh Sinanan,
joshsinanan@gmail.com

Promoting Queens

A Celebration Of International Women's Day The Chess Friends

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

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

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends! Welcome to March! Happy spring! Today we would like to talk about girls and women in chess, and most importantly, *listen* to them. The month of March is recognized as Women's History Month. This year, March 8 marks the [115th anniversary of International Women's Day](#). Created in 1911 to celebrate the amazing contributions of women, this day is a reminder that we all still have work to do to eliminate stereotypes and challenges that adversely impact women advancing, including in chess.

The first Women's Chess World Championship was held in 1927, more than 40 years after the men. Believe it or not, at that time, many countries didn't even let women vote. The US ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees women the right to vote, in 1920. Vera Menchik became the first official Women's World Champion at age 21, winning 10 games and drawing 1. She ruled the women's chess world during the next eight championships, and received invitations to play alongside men, the first woman to do so. She won against legends like Max Euwe and Samuel Reshevsky and continued to have many chess successes in men's tournaments, a hero ahead of her time. To this day, she is a big inspiration for many of us!

As for the first woman to become a Grandmaster, please welcome GM Nona Gaprindashvili! She achieved this milestone in 1978, after holding the crown of Women's World Chess Champion for 16 years! For decades after, she dominated the chess world, winning a whopping 25 medals in the Women's Chess Olympiad. She also mentored many rising chess stars. More recently, at the age of 81, she won her eighth Women's World Senior Championship title!

Of course, an article about women in chess wouldn't be complete without mentioning the greatest family of women chess players, the Polgár sisters: Susan, Sofia, and Judit. Judit Polgár is widely regarded as the greatest woman chess player of all time, reaching a peak ELO of 2735. Not only did she earn the title of Grandmaster at the age of 15, but she also reached the top ten chess players! The Polgár sisters are all incredible role models, working tirelessly to combat the feeling of isolation chess girls might experience, and helping them achieve their dreams. Susan is also a phenomenal chess educator and author, and has completely changed the landscape of the chess world with her work.

The reality remains, though, that the number of girls playing competitive chess is far fewer than the number of boys. As of 2025 in the US Chess Federation, only 19% of junior players (under 21) were girls. This number has been slowly rising, and a recent [study shows](#) that girls, if starting competitive chess at a similar age, have comparable chess improvement rates as boys. That said, by adulthood, the percentage of women competing drops

off significantly, to 5%.

Why is that? What pushes girls and women away from chess? Why do they leave the game at a rate higher than the boys and men?

With these questions in mind, and in the spirit of celebrating women in chess, we decided to ask our chess girl buddies, who are loving the chess world as much as we are, about their experiences and aspirations for the future. Let's hear what they say.

Siana Razmov (8)

(Interviewed by The Legend Vivaan)

I have known Siana for about three years now, and she is one of my closest friends. I've probably played over a thousand chess games with her and play with her at least once a week. She's over 1500 FIDE and over 1100 USCF and NWSRS and is one of the most patient, calculated chess players I know. She and I are also teammates on our WIISER Rookly team, which won the esports national championship! She's also vegetarian, like me!

V: How long have you been playing chess?

S: Around three years.

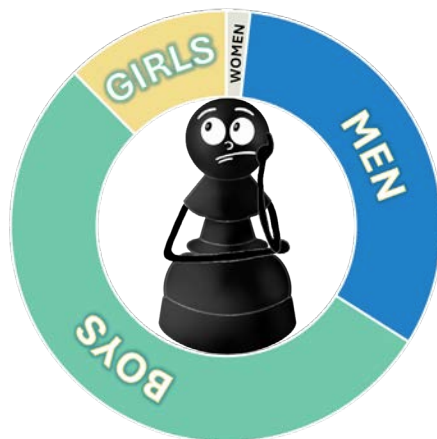
V: What got you into chess?

S: Since my brother and Dad both play chess, I thought it might be fun to play as well.

V: Who are your chess inspirations and why?

S: I am inspired by other chess players who are strong and are willing to teach me.

V: Do you prefer playing online or over-the-board chess? Why?



Peshka contemplating USCF active players demographics



Vivaan and Siana playing their weekly over-the-board game. Photo credit: Siva Sankrithi.

S: I prefer over-the-board because I can see tactics and variations better. There are some distractions in over-the-board chess though, but I can manage them.

V: Do you like girls only chess tournaments? What are the benefits?

S: I like girls-only tournaments because they give girls and women more chances to play. In the past, girls and women did not have the chance to play in tournaments at all.

V: What challenges have you experienced as a girl in the chess world?

S: I cannot think of challenges specific to being female.

V: Why do you feel so many girls quit chess? What has kept you excited about continuing to play the game?

S: They might quit because they have fewer of their friends playing chess. Maybe they compare themselves to other chess players and feel weak. I continue playing because when I go to a tournament, I see my friends and I want to achieve my goal of becoming a WGM (Woman Grandmaster).

V: How does being a girl in chess impact your playing style, if at all?

S: I don't think being a girl impacts my style. I choose my style depending on the opponent I'm playing.

V: If you met a young girl playing her first chess tournament, what advice

would you give her?

S: I would tell her that losing is learning and no one is perfect.

V: What have your experiences been traveling for chess?

S: It is fun to travel for chess. You can sightsee and make new friends.

V: What are some of the differences you've experienced playing chess abroad or in other parts of the USA?

S: Some playing halls are louder (if there are many young kids) and some are quieter (when there are more TDs (tournament directors)).

V: What is a favorite chess memory?

S: I remember playing a rapid game in which I got down to thirty seconds but won. Another favorite is when I watch videos of Magnus Carlsen playing chess because he is my favorite player.

V: What are your chess goals for the future?

S: My goal is to become a WGM (Woman Grandmaster).

Darya & Sofia Byelashova (11 & 8)

(Interviewed by The Man Benji)

If you ever attend a tournament in the Seattle area, you can't miss these two sisters, Darya and Sofia. Lively and curious, they are always surrounded by

lots of friends, and they make our chess community a better place. I have known Darya and Sofia for two years now, and one of the things we have in common is we can speak Russian! On one Sunday morning, we sat down over Zoom to discuss their chess journeys (though we talked in English!).

B: How long have you been playing chess?

D: I've been playing chess since I was seven.

S: I've been playing since I was five.

B: What got you into chess?

D: I would say my grandpa. Well, technically, my dad taught me chess, but I really liked it when my grandpa played chess. It was really cool.

S: My mom and dad both learned how to play chess, when they were little, from their parents and grandparents, so my dad taught me how to play chess. It pretty much runs in the family.

B: Who are your chess inspirations and why?

D: My grandpa.

S: Dina, Magnus Carlsen, Ted Wang, my grandpa, and my great-grandpa.

B: You mean Dina Belenkaya?

S: Yes, I like watching her streams. I also met her in a Las Vegas tournament and played blitz with her.

B: I like that you mentioned a local inspiration. Why Ted?

S: He received an FM title when he was 10, and he is already coaching others, helping them to get titles too.

B: Do you prefer playing online or over-the-board (OTB) chess? Why?

D: I like to play OTB chess because you get to review your game with your opponent, but I enjoy online chess too, because you can text with your opponent to say hello and ask where they're from, but playing OTB is still my preference.

S: I like OTB chess because if your opponent makes a mistake or if I make a mistake, we can say after the game, hey, you could've played this move in this position...

B: Do you like girls only chess tournaments?

S: I don't really like girls only tournaments. I prefer the open format.



Darya, Sofia, Benji (and Peshka!), talking chess over Zoom.

D: Yeah, I feel the same way. The reason is because the open format has fun side events happening, but the girls only tournaments usually don't have that. And it's good to make friends with both girls and boys when you play chess.

B: What challenges have you experienced as a girl in the chess world?

D: Nothing, really. I guess, the main challenge is to get checkmated, but that happens to everyone, boys and girls.

S: It doesn't really matter who you play, like if you play a boy and they start pointing, it doesn't matter to me.

B: Why do you feel so many girls quit chess?

S: I think some girls quit because chess can feel hard and not very fun at the beginning. If you don't play a lot yet, studying and tournaments can feel stressful instead of exciting.

D: Yeah, tournaments can be tiring too. Games can take a long time, and that can make chess feel like a lot of work.

S: And playing with a clock can be frustrating. If you run out of time a lot, it can feel like you're failing, even if you had good ideas. That can make people want to stop playing.

B: What has kept you excited about continuing to play the game?

S: We get to play lots of opponents, and even GMs, and you never know, you could actually win against some, and that could be very exciting. You make lots of friends too!

D: To me, it's just fun to play chess!

B: So, it's about the positions that arise on the chessboards that keep you going.

D: Yes, that's right.

B: If you met a young girl playing her first chess tournament, what advice would you give her?

S: I would give her advice that if you don't really like playing chess that much, try doing puzzles first, and if you lose your games, maybe you can get an online coach, and they can teach you some cool things.

D: I would tell her to always eat breakfast before playing chess!

B: That's gold! What have your experiences been, traveling for chess?

S: In the UK, sometimes, there's no carbon copy for the notation sheet, so you have to duplicate your game on another notation sheet. That once happened to me and Darya.

D: In Canada, the people are really nice, and the chess tournaments are pretty well organized; it's really nice there.

B: What is a favorite chess memory of yours?

S: My favorite chess memories are when I got to meet popular chess Youtubers, and famous chess players, which is really fun.

D: My favorite chess memory was when we went to Marbella, Spain for a chess camp, and I finally got to meet with my online chess coach. We played chess for 10 days; I really liked it. In the morning, we would go to the beach and swim, and then come back, eat breakfast, and study chess.

S: Yes, we would study chess for four hours, looking at very hard positions! I remember another fun story, when in the UK, I was playing in a chess tournament on my birthday, and I made a lot of friends who I invited for my birthday party. We even had a chess cake, and I won both my matches that day! That was the best birthday ever!

B: What are your chess goals for the future?

D: My goals are to become a WGM, play smart, and make zero blunders. OK, fewer blunders.

S: I also want to be a WGM. I want to become a coach and help others with chess.

Deeksha Shankaranand (13)

(Interviewed by The Myth Sarang)

I've seen Deeksha around the chess scene for many years and became close friends in the last year. We were in Milwaukee airport after the US Open waiting for our flight and realized we had a ton in common. She's nearly 1700 FIDE and USCF and over 1700 NWSRS. She's an awesome WIISER Rookly esports teammate, and I would describe her play as deeply positional, just like me. She's also vegetarian and a chess coach, like me!

S: How long have you been playing chess?

D: I learned chess when I was four and started playing tournaments when I was nine.

S: What got you into chess?

D: My grandpa taught me and I got attached.

S: Who are your chess inspirations and why?

D: I find tons of players inspiring, especially ones who are hardworking, and their hard work shows visible progress in their play.

S: Do you prefer playing online or over-the-board chess? Why?

D: I prefer playing online chess because I prefer being able to move or be wherever I want!

S: Interesting! Do you like girls only chess tournaments? What are the benefits?

D: I do like girls only chess tournaments but I have never been able to place why.

S: What challenges have you experienced as a girl in the chess world?

D: I have not experienced many challenges. I have had people look down on me and question if I should be there but it's very rare.

S: I'm sorry you've had to deal with trash talk but I'm glad it's rare. Why do you feel so many girls quit chess? What has kept you excited about continuing to play the game?

D: I was actually unaware that many girls quit chess and I don't know why. I still enjoy the excitement of playing the game.

S: How does being a girl in chess impact your playing style, if at all?

D: Being a girl in chess doesn't impact my playing style.

S: If you met a young girl playing her first chess tournament, what advice would you give her?

D: In my first tournament I lost all five games. Ironically it was also an all-girls event. I would tell that girl that she will face lots of challenges, setbacks, and losses, but that she should not give up.

S: What have your experiences been traveling for chess?

D: I don't travel often because I don't like flying, but when I do I enjoy the tournaments I play.

S: What are some of the differences you've experienced playing chess abroad or in other parts of the USA?

D: I haven't noticed any differences in other parts of the USA.

S: What is a favorite chess memory?

D: I had just finished a game in the afternoon, and I was eating my lunch and I saw this group of kids who couldn't have been older than eight. They were all laughing and playing chess with one another and it was so wholesome to watch.

S: What are your chess goals for the future?



Sarang and Deeksha about to enjoy some ice cream. Photo credit: Siva Sankrithi.

D: I want to improve my skill and rating, and talk to more people at tournaments.

Wow! Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with all the readers, Siana, Sofia, Darya, and Deeksha! We truly appreciate your time in helping us with this article, and, most of all, thank you for your friendship. We were very happy to see that, though some struggles were faced, for the most part, your experiences were overwhelmingly positive and that you enjoy the chess community and are in it for the long haul.

There's so much wisdom we can learn from you. You all value the power of hard work and friendship, and love the challenge of learning and improving in chess. Family inspiration was a common theme (yay for grandpas teaching chess!), and we agree that having friends and family who play goes such a long way in helping us grow in our love for chess.

"Losing is learning and no one is perfect" is sage advice from Siana.

"You will face lots of challenges, setbacks, and losses, but you should never give up" from Deeksha is exactly the motivation many of us need, to keep our heads up, even in the tough times.

"It's just fun to play chess!" Darya perfectly sums up the fundamental joy of the game we love.

We are rooting for our friends to follow their dreams: improve their chess, reach WGM titles, and make friends. And we salute Sofia highlighting her goal to *"become a coach and help others with*

chess." We can attest that helping others with their chess is even more rewarding than helping yourself, much like in other areas of life.

Though Siana, Sofia, Darya, and Deeksha are still early in their chess journeys, we hope their chess experiences and enthusiasm for competitive chess inspire you, our readers, as much as they inspire us! We also want to mention another dear friend and one of the greatest supporters of us, The Chess Friends, WIM/FM Megan Lee. She runs Snippet Studios and Cloth Tattoo, and has won multiple Washington State Championships, and finished fourth in the US Women's Championship. She's got IM and WGM norms already, and those titles should come soon! Go Megan!

As we close our March article, we should remember that March is only one month, and that we should celebrate the girls and women in our lives every day! As in the butterfly effect, when a butterfly flapping its tiny wings on a tiny meadow can cause a hurricane in the ocean, we hope that your flipping these delicate pages of the *Northwest Chess* magazine will produce a positive shift in the chess world where all who play can keep improving and enjoying the game for a long time!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

The Man Benji,
The Myth Sarang,
The Legend Vivaan



Happy March 8! (Art by Sasha)

Washington Girls Championship



MARCH 28-29, 2026

Sat – Country Inn & Suites by Radisson

19333 N Creek Pkwy S, Bothell, WA 98011

Sun – Orlov Chess Academy – Seattle

7212 Woodlawn Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115

Highest finishing Washington resident in the Championship section receives the title of Washington State Girls Champion and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2026 Haring National Girls Tournament of Champions, held concurrently with the US Open in late July.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections:

- **Elena Donaldson Championship:** A 2-day (Saturday-Sunday), 5-round G/70; +30 Swiss tournament. Open to all girls desiring to play for the title of WA State Girls Champion. Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE; US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 1:30pm, 6pm. Sun. 10am, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 6:30pm. A tie for first place in the Championship section will be resolved later in the year by two G/90 playoff games.
- **Katerina Rohonyan U1400:** A 1-day (Saturday only), 4-round, G/45; +5 Swiss tournament. Dual USCF and NWSRS rated; US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 11am, Lunch, 1:30pm, 3:30pm. Awards ~ 5:30pm.
- **Naomi Bashkansky U800:** A 1-day (Saturday only), 5-round, G/25; +5 Swiss tournament. NWSRS rated; USCF unrated, no US Chess membership required. Rounds: Sat. 9am, 10:15am, 11:30am, Lunch, 1:30pm, 2:45pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

Eligibility: Open to all girls in grades K-12 as of the 2025-26 school year. Out-of-state players welcome! Players must be under the age of 19 as of Sept 1, 2026.

Rating: Higher of current NWSRS or USCF March supplement rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

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

Entry Fees: Donaldson Championship: \$50 by March 21, \$60 after. Rohonyan U1400/Bashkansky U800: \$25 by March 21, \$30 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, or USCF 2000+. Maximum of 60 players total & maximum of 30 players in Donaldson Championship - please register early!

Registration: Online registration available at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration Pay by Zelle (ID: washingtonchess or washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation) or write a check made out to: WCF. **Registration + payment deadline is Friday, March 27 by 5pm.** No registrations or payments will be accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster, and spots will be offered to players on the waitlist.

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

Elena Donaldson Championship: 1st – 4th: \$120 – 90 – 60 – \$30.

Katerina Rohonyan U1400: 1st – 4th: \$60 – 45 – 30 – \$15.

Naomi Bashkansky U800: 1st – 4th: \$60 – 45 – 30 – \$15.

Special Prizes (per section): Medals awarded for: Biggest Upset Win, Best Dressed, Kindness + Joy.

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

2026 Western States Regional Chess Championship for Girls & Women



Sat-Sun, April 4-5, 2026

Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
19333 N Creek Pkwy S, Bothell, WA 98011



Format

A regional tournament open to all female chess players in three sections:

Megan Lee Championship

A 5-round, G/60; +30 Swiss over two days (Sat-Sun). Tri-rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 4:45pm. Sunday: 9am, 1pm, 5pm. Awards ~ 7:30pm.

Divya Deshmukh U1300

A 1-day, 5-round, G/40; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & USCF dual rated. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 10:45am, 1pm, 4:45pm, 6:15pm. Awards ~ 7:45pm.

Carissa Yip U800

A 1-day, 4-round, G/25; +5 Swiss. NWSRS & USCF dual rated. Rounds: Saturday: 9am, 10am, 11am, 1pm. Awards ~ 2pm.

Prize Fund: \$1,500 (Guaranteed, thanks to generous grants and donations from US Chess, WCF & My Chess World.)

Megan Lee Championship

1st - 3rd: \$400, \$300, \$200
1st U1800/U1600/U1400: \$75

Divya Deshmukh U1300

1st - 3rd: \$175, \$125, \$75
Trophies for 1st U1100, 1st U1000, 1st U900

Carissa Yip U800

Trophies for 1st - 10th Overall,
1st U600, 1st U500, 1st Unrated.

Special Prizes (per section):

Medals awarded for Biggest Upset Win, Best Dressed, and Best Mother/Daughter Team.

Entry Fee: \$55 if postmarked or online by 3/28, \$65 after. Free entry for WGMs, WIMs, WFM, and USCF rated 2000+. Maximum of 90 players, please register early.

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

Rating: Highest of April USCF or current NWSRS rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Memberships: US Chess membership required. Membership must be paid at the time of registration.

WA State Scholastic Championships Qualifier!

Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Pay by Zelle (ID: wa-chess or WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), SettleKing (ID: Washington Chess Federation), or write a check to WCF.

Registration and payment deadline: Fri. 4/3 @ 5pm.

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, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052.

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

Fun Side Events!

Workshop for Girls and Women: Saturday 12-1pm.
Includes complementary pizza lunch!

Women's Champion Simul: Saturday 2:15-3:45pm.
EF: \$25. Max 25 players, please register early.

Puzzle Solving Competition: Saturday 4-4:30pm. EF: \$10.



US CHESS
women

Harmon Memorial Chess Tournament



APRIL 11-12, 2026

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004

Highest performing WA players (by TPR) in the Open and U1700 sections seeded into the 2027 Washington State Invitational + Rising Stars sections, respectively.

Format: A five-round Swiss in three sections:

Gondor Open, Rivendell U1700 & Shire U1200

In case of a tie for 1st place, future follow-up playoff matches will determine the seeds for the Invitational and Rising Stars sections, respectively, of the 2027 WA State Championship.

Time Control: Round 1: G/60; +30.

Rounds 2-5: 30/75; SD/30; +30. Late default: 60 minutes.

Schedule: Sat @ 9 AM, 12:30 PM, 6 PM. Sun @ 10 AM, 3:30 PM. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

Prize Fund: \$5,500 based on 100 paid entries.

Gondor Open: 1st-4th: \$500-\$400-\$300-\$250,
1st-2nd U2100: \$175-\$150, 1st-2nd U1900: \$175-\$150.

Rivendell U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150,
1st-2nd U1600: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1400: \$125-\$100.

Shire U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$250-\$200-\$150,
1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Frodo Upset Win: \$20/rd., Best Galadriel Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Gandalf Senior Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Gimli Dressed: \$20/day.

Entry Fee: \$110 by 4/4, \$140 after. Free entry (pending completion without withdrawals) for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs. Chess Hobbits rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1600-1699 or 1100-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Gondor Open or Rivendell U1700, respectively. Maximum of 200 players.

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

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

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of April 2026 USCF 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 (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 4/10 @ 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

Legolas Blitz: Sunday 8-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30. **Format:** A 7-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual USCF Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated. **TC:** G/3; +2. **On-site registration:** 7:00-7:45pm. Rds. Sun @ 8pm, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30. Closing Ceremony ~ 9:45pm or asap. Current US Chess membership required. Higher of April 2026 USCF 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.

A Conversation With Alex Byelashov

Ken Lee

Alex Byelashov (bye-lashoff) astonished me when we discussed how he has managed to blend his multiple responsibilities (chess dad, TD, house player) with a fascinating international flair.

I sat down with Alex at the Midyear Scholastic Cup in Bellevue to chat about his family's journey into the world of chess. The interview continued remotely from Marbella, Spain, where his daughters were participating in an international chess camp.

Ken: Where did you grow up and when did you first learn to play chess?

Alex: I grew up in Odessa, Ukraine. My earliest memory of chess was playing with my grandpa during the warm summer months.

He was a merchant marine captain, and during those long months at sea, over-the-board chess was a way to pass the time.

I played chess from when I was five until I was eight.

Ken: Did you compete in any tournaments at that time?

Alex: Not at all. I only played for fun.

I took a break before I started playing chess again.

Ken: How long was the break?

Alex: Almost 40 years!

Ken: What inspired you to play chess again?

Alex: It was the birth of my girls Darya (ten) and

Sofia (seven) that reignited my interest in chess.

Ken: Was it an intentional choice to

introduce your girls to chess at an early age?

Alex: Absolutely. When Darya was about seven and a half, I was looking for a simple and natural way to introduce her to a game that promoted concentration and patience. At about the same time, we also discovered that Darya displayed a proclivity toward pattern recognition.

I thought back on my childhood and felt that chess might be a good way to capitalize on her strengths and provide a fun way to practice new skills.

Ken: How did you start?

Alex: After I taught Darya the basics, we went to our local library in Gig Harbor and met up with a local chess club. The club is led by Coach Robert Gifford, who has been very supportive of our family.

For Darya, it probably was the perfect way to introduce her to chess because it was informal and fun.

It was only later that we started working more systematically with chess coaches.

Ken: Did the girls enjoy chess tournaments right away?

Alex: Yes and no. Even though they enjoyed some early success winning three out of five rounds, they were a bit hard on themselves initially.

Ken: How did they learn to handle setbacks?

Alex: I think every tournament provides a unique opportunity to learn about chess and build resilience. Darya used her other hobbies to unwind and decompress after a tournament. She would draw and write creative stories after a tournament. Sofia is younger and perhaps a little more happy-go-lucky.

What I appreciate most is that they stay motivated. Even with the inevitable

ups and downs, they still love playing—and that's what matters.

Ken: How did your interest in out-of-state chess tournaments begin?

Alex: Fortunately, I can set my own schedule, and I travel often for work. I always loved the idea of having my family travel with me during my business trips. I started doing research about a year ago and discovered various chess events and tournaments in Canada and Europe.

Ken: What have you discovered to be some interesting benefits of competing in chess tournaments abroad?

Alex: These out-of-state tournaments are a great way to experience diversity in chess.

They are playing in different environments, seeing unusual openings, and eating different kinds of food.

So far, Darya and Sofia accept this unusual chess life as something that our family does naturally.

I believe it keeps the experience of playing chess fresh, fun, and meaningful. Let's be honest—chess tournaments can sometimes get repetitive. On weekends, kids are often stuck indoors, playing for hours in hotel ballrooms or small rooms without windows. That kind of environment can wear anyone down after a while.

When I was growing up, I spent most of my time outdoors—running around, exploring the world. I didn't want my daughters to miss out on that kind of stimulation and change of scenery. So, we've made a conscious effort to turn chess into a way to discover new places, meet new people, and learn through experience.

They've played all over the U.S.: Illinois, Nevada, Oregon, Ohio,

Missouri, Florida. They've also played internationally in the UK, Germany, France, and Canada. Right now, they're attending a chess camp in Spain. It's immersive: they live on-site with other kids, train for several hours a day, and have time for swimming, going to the beach, and just enjoying childhood. It's chess, but it's also life.

Interestingly, I've noticed that when they learn in new settings, the lessons tend to stick better. It's like their brains absorb the experience differently. That kind of exposure has been incredibly valuable, for both their growth as chess players and as individuals.

The bottom line is that I wanted my girls to fall in love with chess in as many ways as possible.

Ken: I understand that you have been asked to be a "house player" in various scholastic chess tournaments?

Alex: Well, I have been coming up to so many chess tournaments up in Bellevue and Seattle, that Jacob Mayer asked if I wanted to volunteer to be an assistant tournament director.

I guess I did my own calculation. I thought that it was an efficient way to utilize my time. I was already with my girls the whole weekend. I would learn something new. I could also help the chess community at the same time.

Ken: What steps did you take to become a TD?

Alex: I took a quick test and just asked a lot of questions.

When there was an odd number of players in a round, I would step in as a "house player" just to make sure every kid had an opportunity to play.

Ken: How has your experience as a house player shaped your perspective?

Alex: It's been eye opening. I developed more empathy for my girls. It's so easy as adults for us to say, "Just play. Have fun. Don't take it so seriously."

But in a real tournament, you often find yourself being stared down by a little kid who clearly has no fear and wants to crush you.

Your heart begins to beat a little faster and you understand, perhaps a little bit, about the amount of focus and proper state of mind required to compete.

It's a humbling experience but I enjoy every minute of it. My girls are better than me at chess now, and I'm perfectly comfortable with that.

Ken: As a chess dad, you speak the same language of chess to your girls. Do you ever use chess as a metaphor when you are discussing other important concepts with them?

Alex: I often talk to them about the benefits of slowing down and making good decisions. I also talk to them about the downsides of multi-tasking as well.

The biggest idea I like to convey is that if you want something to happen, you are going to have to put in a lot of hard work, and that hard work may not always be fun.

Ken: Can you expand on that idea?

Alex: Well perhaps playing a bunch of bullet games is a lot of fun but, in my opinion, it doesn't really help you in the long run. On the other hand, doing puzzles might be a grind, but it might be a much better use of your time.

Ken: It's amazing how chess became a central part of your family's identity.

Alex: I'm more surprised than anyone. As a family, we've been playing chess for about two and a half years now, and I love being a part of it.

Ken: What else do you do to support your family's interest in chess?

Alex: Lately, I've started putting in more intentional effort. I feel like if I expect my girls to practice and grow, I should model that too.

Kids pick up on what you do more than what you say. If they see me

enjoying chess — playing in the evening, watching a game or solving a puzzle — they naturally see that as normal and fun. I'm trying to lead by example.

Ken: Thinking about *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt, what is your opinion about screentime?

Alex: We try to keep their iPads focused only on chess: no YouTube, no other games, no distractions. That way, when they want screen time, it ends up being something productive. If their brains are looking for that dopamine hit from a screen, it might as well come from playing a game of chess.

Ken: What do you do to encourage more in person interactions?

Alex: We support the local chess scene here in Gig Harbor however we can. We help Robert Gifford to promote chess in our area and invite other kids to play in informal gatherings.

Recently, we spontaneously threw together a small unrated tournament at a pizza place.

We also meet up regularly at a local café with our friend Allen Messenger, a local tournament director, to play over-the-board games and keep the community vibe going.

Ken: What are some unique challenges and opportunities of encouraging girls in a male-dominated chess environment?

Alex: Believe it or not, my daughters don't even realize that chess is considered a male-dominated space. No one's told them that it should be intimidating or unusual to be a girl in chess, so they just don't think about it. They don't care about opponent age or gender. They're just there to play the game.

Ken: In your travels, what are some similarities and differences you've noticed in chess communities around the world?

Alex: What's amazing is how similar chess communities are, no matter where you go. It's one of the most inclusive environments I've ever experienced: people of all ages, backgrounds, and professions coming together over a board. There's a shared love for the game that brings people together instantly.

That said, each place has its own cultural flavor, and those differences often mirror the broader national culture.

“I wanted my girls to fall in love with chess in as many ways as possible.”

For example, in Canada, I noticed how polite and orderly everything was. Players followed the rules closely, and there were fewer disputes or issues during tournaments. The kids were generally more structured, less wandering, and more focused. It had a very calm, buttoned up feel to it.

At the British Chess Festival we attended last year, it was even stricter—FIDE rules enforced to the letter, metal detectors at the entrance, and very formal procedures.

In Germany, the culture was also very rule-based and structured. People were more reserved and direct, but again, respectful. You could feel that everyone took the game seriously, and the events ran like clockwork.

So yes, the chess world is incredibly diverse, but at its core, it's built on shared values: respect for the game, love of learning, and the joy of competition. The differences just add texture to the experience.

Ken: In your travels, how has the global chess community inspired you and your daughters?

Alex: One of the most inspiring things we've discovered through chess is how universal and welcoming the community is. No matter where we've gone, the spirit of connection around the game is the same. There's this unspoken understanding among players—a shared focus, curiosity, and respect—that transcends borders.

For my daughters, being part of this global chess world has opened their minds. They've learned to communicate through the game itself, building confidence and friendships along the way. It's shown them that they belong to something much bigger than their local club or weekend tournaments.

For me, it's been a reminder of how meaningful this journey really is. Chess has become more than a game in our family—it's become a way to explore the world, connect with others, and grow

together. The people we've met and the experiences we've had through chess have truly enriched our lives and deepened our appreciation for the game—and for each other.

Ken: What are your family's goals when it comes to chess?

Alex: My wife Alyona has always been part of this journey. We're not trying to raise grandmasters. Our main goal is to enjoy the game and the journey together as a family.

We want our daughters to remember this as a fun, enriching part of their childhood, not as pressure or obligation. Chess has become a lifestyle for all of us, something we genuinely enjoy.

We see it as a way to bond, learn, grow, and create memories. And if along the way the girls develop strong skills or reach milestones, that's great. What really matters is that they stay motivated, curious, and excited about the game. That's success for us.



Dayra is third from the left; Sofia is first from the right, Marbella, Spain. Photo courtesy of Alex Byelashov.

13th Annual Reno Larry Evans Memorial Open

Apr 3-5 or Apr 4-5, 2026, 3 Day or 2 Day Schedule

US Chess
150 GPP (Enhanced)

\$27,500!! (b/275)

\$17,000!! (Guaranteed)

F.I.D.E. Rated
OPEN Section

NEW LOCATION: J Resort Casino Hotel, 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno, NV 89501

Downtown Reno, formerly Sands Regency Casino Hotel

6 Rd Swiss ♦ 6 Sections ♦ 40/2, Game/1 - d5 ♦ (Open Section) 40/2, Game/55 - d5 ♦ 2 Day (Rds 1-3) G/1 - d5

Open Section, F.I.D.E. Rated (2200 & above) EF: \$194, (2000-2199) \$250, (1999/below) \$300; GMs and IMs free but must enter by 3/6 or pay late fee at door. Guaranteed Prizes; (1-7 in Open Section plus 1/2 of all other prizes).

Open Section \$2,000 - 1,000 - 900 - 800 - 700 - 600 - 500, (2399/below) \$1,000 - \$500, (2299/below) \$1,000 - \$500 (If there is a tie for 1st then a playoff for \$100 out of prize fund plus trophy).

Section Expert	(2000-2199)	EF: \$194 (2-day EF: \$190)	\$2,000-1,000-500-300-200
Section "A"	(1800-1999)	EF: \$193 (2-day EF: \$190)	\$1,800-900-500-300-200
Section "B"	(1600-1799)	EF: \$192 (2-day EF: \$190)	\$1,700-800-400-300-200
Section "C"	(1400-1599)	EF: \$191 (2-day EF: \$190)	\$1,500-700-400-300-200
Section "D/Under"	(1399-below)	EF: \$180 (2-day EF: \$190)	\$1,000-500-300-200, (1199/below) \$400-200-100

Top Senior (65+) - \$200; Club Championship - \$600 - 300.

Wed. 4/1: 7:00 pm - GM Sergey Kudrin Clock Simul w/ complete analysis of YOUR Game (Only \$30!-bring clock)

Thursday 4/2: 6 - 7:15 pm - Lecture by IM John Donaldson (FREE)

7:30 pm - GM Nick de Firmian Simul (\$20); Blitz (G/5 d0) Tourney \$25 - 80% of entries = Prize Fund

Saturday 4/4: 3 - 4:30 pm - Game/Position Analysis - IM John Donaldson (FREE)



Registration: Thursday (4/2) 5 - 8 pm. - Friday (4/3) 9 - 10 am. - Saturday (4/4) 9 - 10 am.

Round Times: (3-day Schedule) Friday - 12 Noon - 7 pm; Saturday - 10 am - 6 pm; Sunday - 9 am - 4 pm (2-day Schedule) Sat.- Rd 1 - 10:30 am, Rd 2 - 12:45 pm, Rd 3 - 3 pm, Rd 4 merge with regular schedule - 6 pm

For more information: Call, Write or E-mail Organizer and Chief TD, N.T.D. Jerome (Jerry) Weikel, (H) 775-747-1405 OR (Cell) 775-354-8728 • 6578 Valley Wood Dr., Reno, NV 89523 • wackyykl@aol.com

Room Reservation: Call J Resort Reno, 1-866-386-7829, Group Reservation Code: CHESS 42026

Hotel Rates: Sunday-Thursday \$92.66, Friday-Saturday \$149.41, all taxes and fees included. Reserve by 3/20

For TLA and to confirm receipt of entry see player list at: www.renochess.org

ENTRY FORM - 13th Annual Larry Evans Memorial Open - Reno, Nevada - Apr 3-5 OR Apr 4-5, 2026

Mail to: WEIKEL CHESS, LLC, 6578 Valley Wood Drive, Reno NV 89523

PRINT Name _____ Phone# _____ USCF Rating _____
 Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 USCF ID# _____ Exp. Date _____ **All pre-registered players check in at TD desk on arrival.**

ENTRY FEE ENCLOSED: (CIRCLE SECTION AND FEE BELOW) BYE(S) REQUESTED FOR ROUND(S): (circle)

1	2	3	4	5	6
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----- OPEN SECTION -----

EXPERT "A" "B" "C" "D/Under" UNRATED

GM/IM • Masters • 2000-2199 • 1999-Below 2000-2199 1800-1999 1600-1799 1400-1599 1399-Below Free With

3-Day EF	Free • \$194 • \$250 • \$300	\$194	\$193	\$192	\$191	\$180	USCF Dues
2-Day EF		\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190	\$190	USCF Dues

FEES ALSO ENCLOSED FOR:

- \$30 Wed. Clock Simul GM Kudrin
- \$20 Thu. Simul GM de Firmian
- \$25 Thursday Blitz (G/5 d0)
- \$20 Discount - Sr 65+ Age _____

POSTMARK BY March 6, 2026. Add \$11 after 3/6. Add \$22 on site.

Do not mail after 3/27 or email after 3/31. Make check / m.o. payable to WEIKEL CHESS LLC or provide credit card info and signature. \$7 service charge on credit card entries. Visa Master Card Am.Ex
 Name on Credit Card _____
 Expiration Date _____ ZIP Code _____
 Credit Card# _____ CVV Code _____
 Signature _____

- Check Enclosed
- Charge My Card

TOTAL FEES: \$ _____

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOLASTIC CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday, April 25, 2026

Greater Tacoma Convention Center

1500 Commerce St, Tacoma, WA 98402



ELIGIBILITY

Open to all WA students in grades K-12! Players in grades 1-6 qualify for Championship sections by scoring 3/5 or 2.5/4 in a State-qualifying NWSRS rated tournament.

FORMAT

A 5-round Swiss tournament in 19 sections:

- Kindergarten (no qualification required)
- 1st Grade → 6th Grade Championship and Premier
- Middle School Rapid Chess Championship U1500 & U1100
- Middle School Open Chess Championship (2 Day)
- High School Rapid Chess Championship Open & U1100
- Adult U1500
- See chessreg.com/wsscc for full breakdown of all sections.

ENTRY FEE \$45

Increases to:

\$60 on February 14th

\$75 on March 14th

\$90 on April 14th

SCHEDULE

7:00am – Doors open to public at the Tacoma Convention Center

8:30am – 1st round pairings available

9:00am – Round 1 start time

11:00am – Round 2 start time

Lunch between 2nd & 3rd rounds

12:45pm – Round 3 start time

2:30pm – Round 4 start time

4:15pm – Round 5 start time

Awards Ceremony – ASAP following conclusion of Round 5

**Round Times are Tentative*

AWARDS

All players participating will receive an award! Players who score 3.0+ will receive a trophy. Players who score less than 3.0 will receive a commemorative medal. Players will be able to collect trophies and medals following the completion of round 5.

For team award info, see state website:

wsecc.squarespace.com

RATING

NWSRS rated. Championship sections also USCF rated, with US Chess membership required. Current NWSRS rating will be used to determine sections and pairings.

DETAILS

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. **Registration cutoff is on Thursday April 23rd @ 11:00pm.** After the cutoff, you may register on the waitlist.

Championship sections require qualification at a state qualifier tournament during the school year. Premier sections are open to all students under the ratings threshold, regardless of qualification, including players who qualified for the Championship section but are below the ratings cutoff. Financial assistance for USCF membership is available upon request.

Qualified players list: ratingsnw.com/qualifiers.html

Online Registration:

chessreg.com/wsscc

WSECC Website:

wsecc.squarespace.com

QUESTIONS?

For registration questions, email Ben Radin, ben@chessreg.com. For all other questions, email State Organizer Jacob Mayer, jacob.mayerchess@gmail.com



Eastside Open



May 9-10, 2026

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116th Ave NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

Format: A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Bellevue Open**, **Kirkland U1700**, and **Redmond U1200**.

Entry fee: \$110 by 5/2, \$140 after. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Bellevue Open or Kirkland U1700, respectively. Players rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. Maximum of 140 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

Schedule: Arrival: 9-9:45am. Rounds: Sat @ 10am, 2:30pm, 7pm. Sun @ 10am, 3pm. Closing Ceremony + Blitz Tournament: ~ 7pm or asap. Games that go long may request a late start for the next round.

Time Control: G/75; +30. Late default: 60 minutes.

Rating: Triple rated in NWSRS, USCF, and FIDE. Higher of May 2026 USCF or current NWSRS rating used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF or foreign rating used at TD discretion.

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

Prize Fund: \$5,500 based on 100 paid entries.

Bellevue Open: 1st-4th: \$500-\$400-\$300-\$250. 1st-2nd U2100: \$175-\$150, 1st-2nd U1900: \$175-\$150.

Kirkland U1700: 1st-4th: \$400-\$300-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1600: \$125-\$100, 1st-2nd U1400: \$125-\$100.

Redmond U1200: 1st-4th: \$300-\$250-\$200-\$150, 1st-2nd U1000: \$100-\$75, 1st-2nd U800: \$100-\$75.

Special Prizes (per section): Clyde Hill Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Medina Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Hunts Point Best Senior Player (by TPR): \$50, Yarrow Point Best Dressed: \$20/day.

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

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 5/8 @ 5pm**. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Eastside Open Blitz Tournament: Sunday 7-9:30pm (after rd. 5 of main tournament). **Entry Fee:** \$30.

Format: A 9-Round Single Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. Dual USCF Blitz + FIDE Blitz rated.

TC: G/3; +2. **On-site registration:** 6:00-6:45pm. 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 May 2026 USCF Blitz or Regular rating used to determine pairings and prizes.

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

1st - 3rd: \$170-140-100, 1st U2000/U1700/U1400/U1100/Unrated: \$50. Biggest upset win: \$10/rd.

Questions – Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

20th Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls & Boys

2025



By SPFNO Organizers



The 20th Annual Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls and Boys took place at the Hilton Bellevue on the weekend of November 22-23, 2025. Scholastic chess players in grades K-12 from states including Washington, Oregon, Texas, British Columbia, California, and Colorado participated in the two-day chess fest. The SPFNO, now in its 20th year, was first hosted in Texas in 2006 by SPF Founder GM Susan Polgar and has blossomed into a premier national scholastic chess event. A total of 470 players competed across eleven sections parsed by grade level and rating: K-1 U700, 2-3 U700, 4-6 U700, K-3 Open, 4-6 Open, 7-12 Open, K-5 Girls, K-5 Open, K-8 Open, K-12 Girls, and K-12 Open.

The event was co-hosted by the Susan Polgar Foundation (SPF) and the Washington Chess Federation (WCF). SPF Founder Grandmaster Susan Polgar and SPF co-Founder Paul Truong were once again the guests of honor, in addition

to Rebel Queen Award Winners Orna Berryman and Claire Sumadiwirya, who were recognized for their leadership and achievements on Saturday afternoon. The experienced team of WCF President Josh Sinanan (Chief Organizer), Jacob Mayer (Chief Tournament Director), Ben Radin (Registration and Pairings Director), and Eddie Chang (Events Manager) organized the event and coordinate the weekend's busy slate of activities. The amazing group of dedicated volunteers, judges, and tournament directors included Norm May, Mani Atikankhotchasee, Allen Messenger, Ani Barua, Rekha Sagar, Shelly, Kevin, and David Hirschowitz, Valentin Razmov, Ian Holden, Duane Polich, Luis Ayala, Aditya Ponukumati, Stani Vlasseva, Daniel Wilke, Sangeeta Dhingra, Vignesh Anand, Nicholas Liotta, Walter Guity, Chouchan Airapetian, Angela Agaian, Detective Denise "Cookie" Bouldin, Alex Byelashov, Sridhar Seshadri, Face Painter Gabby Carrillo, and many others.

Amazing photographs and video

footage were chronicled throughout the weekend by the amazing Meiling Cheng. Throughout the weekend, SPFNO families had the opportunity to wander up to the third floor of the Hilton and sneak a peek of the SPICE Cup, which included five Grandmasters!

Along with the one-day Scholastic and two-day Championship sections, several fun and exciting side events enhanced the joyous ambience of the event and provided entertainment during the marathon stretch of intense chess competition. Saturday's busy schedule of events included a Parents and Coaches Seminar, Face Painting by local artist Gabby Carrillo, SPFNO Girls Workshop, Susan Polgar Book Signing, SPFNO T-shirt Sale, FM Megan Lee All-comers blitz, SPFNO Puzzle Solving Competition, and the SPFNO Blitz Championship. Sunday featured an additional Susan Polgar Book Sale + Signing (including Susan's best-selling Rebel Queen autobiography), a 19-player Susan Polgar Simul, and the final three

2025 SPFNO winners

Section	Winners	Score
K-1 U700	Ellie Han* Echo Fang*	4.5/5
2-3 U700	Dylan Glaser	5.0/5
4-6 U700	Gautham Satishkumar* Maximilian Lang* Tricia Thomas*	4.5/5
K-3 Open	Baoshuo Yao	5.0/5
4-6 Open	Aarav Kandar	5.0/5
7-12 Open	Jesse Aubry	5.0/5
K-5 Girls	Elina Khudiyev* Sofia Byelashova*	4.0/5
K-5 Open	Samik Kulkarni	5.0/5
K-8 Open	Ian Gagnier	5.0/5
K-12 Girls	Kylie Zhang	4.0/5
K-12 Open	Gordon Xu	5.0/5

* Co-champions

rounds of the challenging two-day Championship sections!

This year's SPFNO's 470-player attendance was the second most in the event's history, slightly down from last year's 488-player record. The inclusion of the highly sought-after FIDE-rated games



Susan Polgar (L) and Anyi Li.
Photo credit: Ani Barua.

SPFNO Team Awards

Place	K-3 Top Teams	Score
1	Open Window	14.5
2	Richmond Chess Champions	14
3	Fernwood Elementary	12
4	Medina Elementary	12
5	Jing Mei Elementary	11.5

Place	4-6 Top Teams	Score
1	Detective Cookie Chess Club	14
2	Medina Elementary	13.5
3	Evergreen Middle	10.5
4	Cascadia Elementary	10.5
5	Samantha Smith Elementary	10

Place	7-12 Top Teams	Score
1	Detective Cookie Chess Club	11
2	Odle Middle	10
3	Evergreen Middle	9.5
4	Overlake	7.5
5	NOVA Middle	6

Place	K-12 Top Teams (2-day)	Score
1	Skyview Middle	14
2	Open Window	13.5
3	Kokanee Elementary	13

in the two-day K-12 Championship sections was notable with 91 ambitious FIDE rating hunters participating across the K-12 Girls and K-12 Open sections. The organizers hope to make the SPFNO even bigger and better next year, having already started discussions with several Bellevue-area hotels! The two-day Championship sections, which feature both open and girls-only sections, were slightly weaker this year due to the many of the top local juniors taking part in the co-located SPICE Cup in search of norm opportunities. Nevertheless, this year's two-day K-12 Open still attracted a star-studded lineup of several strong players including NM Gordon Xu (2202), William Summerfield (2005), Saahil Gupta (1972), Nikhil Ramkumar (1917), Aarav B. Mohan (1899), Gavin Shi (1864), Odbayar Yondon (1861), Brook Ayalew (1857), and Vishnu Mohan (1811). Top seeds in the K-12 Girls section included last year's winner Emel Bayrambeyli (1918), Tanya Prabhu (1908), Kylie Zhang (1896), Varnika Jammalamadaka (1821), Ella Guo (1803), Selina Cheng (1743), Deeksha Shankaranand (1729), and Lily Deng (1731). Unfortunately, a change in leadership at Webster University resulted in the scholarships not being offered this year, and the organizers sincerely hope to bring them back in the future!

Parents And Coaches Seminar

The first side event to jump start the weekend's action-packed slate of chess activities was the Parents and Coaches Seminar, which took place Salon D of the Grand Ballroom on Saturday, November 22 from 10:15-11:15 AM. The one-hour seminar, which was led by Susan Polgar, provided parents and coaches with the opportunity to learn how to effectively guide children on their chess journey. The informal atmosphere was conducive for participants to ask questions, hear tips, and gather insightful feedback from Grandmaster Susan Polgar, who is herself a chess parent, lifelong chess educator, and former coach of the award-winning Webster University Chess Team.

Gabby Carrillo Smiley Face Painting

Face painter extraordinaire Gabby Carrillo was on-site on Saturday from 11:00 AM-3:00 PM on the Hilton foyer performing enchanting colorful and brilliant face painting designs, much to the delight and amazement of kids and their parents alike! Gabby's inspirational and detailed designs, which she performed non-stop for four hours, are simply remarkable. Many happy players could be seen showing off their on-fleek masterpieces, which were proudly displayed on their faces, arms, and even legs! As is often the case when Gabby is around, the line for a complimentary face paint just never seemed to end!



A chess dad dons his face paint.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

SPFNO Girls Workshop

The SPFNO Girls Workshop was held on Saturday from 11:15 AM-12:15 PM in Salon D. Special guests SPF Founder GM Susan Polgar and WCF Women's and Girls' Director WFM Chouchan Airapetian hosted the special one-hour workshop that focused on empowering girls through the game of chess. Workshop attendees enjoyed the interactive presentation and engaging discussion designed to explore how to best support and grow chess for women and girls on the locally, nationally, and even globally. Despite the intended female target audience, several chess dads and male coaches also took part, seeking advice from the experts on the best ways to help their chess-playing daughters and students continue to grow and thrive in the game of chess and in the game of life.



Susan Polgar (L) and Josh Sinanan during the puzzle solving competition.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Susan Polgar Book Sale & Signing

The Susan Polgar Book Sale & Signing took place on Saturday from 2:00-3:00 PM in Salon D and on Sunday from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM in the Redmond Room. GM Susan Polgar, the author of several books throughout her playing and teaching careers, was on site to sign autographs and take pictures. With the release of her best-selling autobiography *Rebel Queen* last March, many kids and parents were looking forward to the opportunity to purchase a copy and have it signed by the author! A variety of Susan Polgar books well suited for all levels of players were available for purchase: *Rebel Queen*, *Learn Chess the Right Way, Vols. 1-5*, *Breaking Through*, and *A World Champion's Guide to Chess*. Those who purchased five books or more received a complimentary SPFNO T-shirt, which were on sale in celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the event. The book sale and signing were tremendously successful, and we'd especially like to thank Megan Lee and her embroidery company for creating our wonderful SPFNO T-shirts!

Megan Lee All Comers Blitz

On Saturday afternoon from 3:15-4:30 PM, players and parents were treated to a special appearance by two-time Washington State Chess Champion

FM Megan Lee. Megan, who had been playing in SPICE Cup tournament on the third floor of the Hilton since Wednesday, took a break from her serious chess competition to play some All Comers Blitz in the Hilton foyer just outside the Redmond room. Several courageous players had the opportunity to challenge Megan Lee to a thrilling game of speed chess! Megan is an avid speed chess player who also enjoys bughouse and other variants. Despite several wild time scrambles and narrow escapes against her daring and tricky challengers, Megan emerged unscathed and made it through the afternoon undefeated!

SPFNO Puzzle Solving Competition

A total of 31 brave contestants were given a maximum of 30 minutes to solve 20 checkmate puzzles. An original set of challenging puzzles, which included four mates in one, four mates in two, six mates in three, four mates in four, and two mates in five, was personally designed by GM Susan Polgar herself especially for this competition. Contestants wrote their solutions on paper and were evaluated based on accuracy, completeness, and speed. A talented group of puzzle-solvers competed in this year's edition, with two contestants earning a perfect score! Especially impressive performances were achieved by Imai Maharaja (1680) of

Redmond and Odbayar Yondon (1853) of Sammamish, both of whom scored a perfect 20 points. Congratulations to the winners!

Name	Rating	Score	Time (min.sec)	Prize
Imai Maharaja	1680	20	13.27	1st 1000+
Odbayar Yondon	1853	20	17.15	2nd 1000+
Ziliang Ma	1418	19.5	29.42	3rd 1000+
Quinn Rampenthal	1421	19	17.08	4th 1000+
Anyi Li	1336	18	30	5th 1000+

Last Name	Rating	Score	Time (min.sec)	Prize
Haroon Qureshi	869	14	29.35	1st U1000
Sharanya Pingale	861	14	30	2nd U1000
Kriyaansh Banatwala	unr.	13.5	30	3rd U1000
Silas Coberly	816	13.5	30	4th U1000
Echo Fang	571	10	30	5th U1000

SPNFO Blitz Championship

The 2025 SPFNO Blitz Championship attracted 39 players and took place on Saturday at 6:30 PM in Salons A-C of the Grand Ballroom. The eight-round Single Swiss in two sections, K-5 and 6-12, was directed by FIDE Arbiter Mani Atikankhotchasee and WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua. The games were USCF Blitz rated with the time control of game in five minutes with no delay or increment. In the K-5 section, young Vivaan Sankrithi (7.0, First



Gordon Xu (L) vs. Johnny Tan during the SPFNO Blitz Championship.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Place), a second grade homeschooler and member of the WISER Chess Team, emerged victorious with an impressive seven points from eight games! Raymond Zhao (6.0, Second Place), a fifth grader from Portland, captured Second Place a full-point back with six points. Third place was awarded to Mingyang Zheng (5.5, Third Place) from Richmond Chess Champions in British Columbia. Ayyaan Roy Chowdhury & Anyi Li (5.0, =Fourth/Fifth) rounded out the K-5 trophy winners. In the 6-12 section, Lincoln High School junior sensation Gavin Shi (7.0, First Place) of Seattle topped the field with seven points from eight games, dropping only a single point against Californian master Gordon Xu in the seventh round! Second place was awarded to Arnav Gadde (6.5, Second Place), a seventh grader from Gateway Middle School in Everett. Inglewood Middle School seventh grader Odbayar Yondon (6.0, Third Place) drew his last two blitz games to finish a point ahead of the chasing pack. A sextuplet of rising chess stars shared =Fourth/Fifth place honors a full point back with five points apiece: Gordon Xu, Aarav B. Mohan, Vishnu Mohan, Joanne Wangluo, Johnny Tan, and Ziliang Ma. Congratulations to the winners!

GM Susan Polgar Simul

The Susan Polgar Simul took place on Sunday afternoon from 1:00-3:15 PM in the Redmond Room. An eclectic mix of 19 audacious scholastic and adult chess warriors took their seats and squared off with the black pieces against GM Susan Polgar. For most of the simul participants, it was their first time playing against a Grandmaster! After about two hours and 15 minutes of play, all the games finished in favor of Susan Polgar, a clean sweep! Although, no wins or draws were achieved this time, the last man standing was young Quinn Rampenthal (1421) of Seattle, who managed to last well into the endgame. Congratulations to the 19 fearless chess gladiators who took part!

**Susan Polgar –
Cedric Davies [A80]**

Susan Polgar Simul
Bellevue, WA November 23, 2025
[Cedric Davies]

1.d4 f5 2.Bg5 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 fxe4
5.Nxe4 Nf6 6.Nxf6+ exf6 7.Be3 d5
8.Bd3 Be6 9.h4 Qd7 10.Ne2 Nc6 11.c3
0-0-0 12.Qa4 Kb8 13.Bb5 Rhe8 14.0-0-0
Bf8 15.b4 Bd6 16.Bxc6 Qxc6 17.Qxc6
bxc6 18.Kd2 Bf5 19.Nc1 Kb7 20.Nb3
Kb6 21.a4 h5 22.Na5 Re7 23.Kc1 Rde8

24.Kb2 Be4 25.Rdgl

25.Rhg1 Bh2 26.Rh1

25...Re6 26.Kb3 Bd3 27.Ka3 f5 28.Rd1



Position after 28.Rd1

28...Be4?

28...Ba6 Engine gives about -1.41 eval 29.g3 (29.c4 Rxe3+ 30.fxe3 Rxe3+ 31.Kb2 Bxb4+ clearly winning) 29...Rxe3 30.fxe3 Rxe3 31.Kb2 Bxg3+

29.c4 dxc4??

I did not see the coming discovered check with d5.

30.d5+ c5 31.dxe6 Bd3 32.bxc5+ Bxc5+ 33.Bxc5+ Kxc5 34.Nb3+ Kb6 35.Nc1 Be4 36.f3 Bc6 37.Rhe1 Re7 38.Na2 Kc5 39.Re5+ Kb6 40.Rb1+ Ka6 41.Nb4+

1-0

Final Score:

GM Susan Polgar 19 - Simul Players 0

Duration: 2 hours, 15 min

Name	Rating	Result
Cedric Davies	1640	1-0
Vidur Ganesan	1638	1-0
Quinn Rampenthal	1421	1-0
Kriyaansh Banatwala	1397	1-0
Tom Jakubowski	1354	1-0
Paul Victor	1300	1-0
Rafael Frenk	1229	1-0
Blaise Fredette	1113	1-0
Clara Dragusanu	1036	1-0
Ishaan Mandore	1009	1-0
Vitality Astafiev	938	1-0
Olga Astafyeva	812	1-0
Lucas Shing	793	1-0
Ary Cheng	731	1-0
Daichi Isami	665	1-0
Echo Fang	571	1-0
Mi-Le Jakubowski	546	1-0
Leonard Berg	400	1-0
Pi Nouveau	343	1-0

Congratulations to all players and chess families who contributed to this year's SPFNO. We look forward to the continued growth and success of this event in the years to come!

WASHINGTON SPRING FLING

CHESS TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026

CHINOOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

2001 98TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



FORMAT

A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss in 4 sections:

K-3 U700

K-3 Open

4-12 U800

4-12 Open

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

SCHEDULE

Rounds: 9:15am, 10:45am, lunch, 12:30pm, 1:45pm, 3:00pm. Awards presentation ~ 4:30pm or asap.

ENTRY FEE

\$55 by April 5th, \$65 after. Room for 200 players.

AWARDS

Section Prizes: Amazon e-gift cards awarded in each section: 1st - 7th: \$70-65-60-55-50-45-40.

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

RATING

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

ELIGIBILITY

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

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF.

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat. April 11th @ 5:00pm. Unpaid players by the deadline will be withdrawn from the tournament.

WA State Scholastic Qualifier!

This event is a qualifier for the WA State Scholastic Championships on April 25, 2026, in Tacoma. Players scoring 3.0+ points will qualify for the Championship sections of State.

Pizza lunch and other concessions will be available for purchase on site.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President at 206.769.3757 or WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Washington Class Championships

Josh Sinanan

The 2025 Washington Class Championships were held over Thanksgiving weekend, November 28 – 30, at the Lynnwood Embassy Suites Hotel. It was great to be back hosting a WCF tournament at the “Lynnwood Chess Embassy” again for the first time since 2019! Lynnwood, the jewel of Seattle, is known as a popular shopping destination with noticeably more affordable prices found on the Eastside. The recently completed construction of a light rail station near the hotel made it easily accessible for those taking public transportation. A total of 197 chess players from throughout North America, including parts of Washington (184), Oregon (6), British Columbia (5), Texas (1), and Maryland (1) were represented in the three-day chess extravaganza. The event was hosted by Washington Chess Federation, directed by the team of FIDE Arbiter Mani Atikankhotchasee, WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, WCF co-VP Rekha Sagar, WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger, and organized by WCF President Josh Sinanan. WCF Treasurer Robert Allen, WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov, and WCF Photographer extraordinaire Meiling Cheng facilitated running the event. Due to the large number of scholarship entries, a slightly reduced prize fund of \$13,200 was paid out across the eight class sections, named in honor of the Classical World Chess Champions. The Erdogmus Thanksgiving Scholastic, which attracted 60 scholastic players on Black Friday November 28, was held alongside the Washington Class in the St. Helens Ballroom. A dizzying number of fun side events including the Gary Dorfner Memorial Adult Novice Swiss, Chess960 Freestyle Fischer Rapid, Robson Puzzle Solving, Deshmukh

Workshop for Girls and Women, August Piper Memorial Adult Swiss, Casablanca Rapid, Waldow Chess Rapid, Naroditsky Memorial Bullet, Carlsen Rapid, Aronian Bughouse, and “Knight-Time” Blitz topped off the immersive chessical experience!

Grandmaster Vladimir Belous (2578 → 2589, 6.0) of Texas topped the 22-player Carlsen 2200+ section with a perfect six points from six games. This marked the first time in recent memory that a GM has played in the Washington Class Championships, and we hope this trend will continue in future years. Redmond’s Harishkumar Karthikeyan (2066 → 2149, 5.0) earned second place honors, as well as the coveted seed into the Championship section of the 2026 Washington State Championship, thanks

to victories against FM Eugene Yanat (2274), NM Ryan Min (2132), and NM Vidip Kona (2204). A pair of FIDE Masters—FM Ted Wang (2289 → 2281, 4.0) of Medina and FM Ryan Porter (2279 → 2288, 4.0) of Bellevue—shared third/first U2300 honors with four points apiece.

Two rising chess stars—Varun Iyengar (1945 → 2003, 4.5) of Portland and Shawn Li (1743 → 1869, 4.5) of Bellevue—eclipsed the 20-player Anand 2000-2199 section. A trio of chess troopers shared third/first + second U2100 accolades a half-point back: CM Leonid Gavrysh (2023 → 2031, 4.0) of Brier, Jeffrey Wei (1953 → 1973, 4.0) of Hunts Point, and Sangeeta Dhingra (1923 → 1960, 4.0) of Seattle.



Aziz Degenbaev (L) vs. Vladimir Belous.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.



(L) Rian Raja vs. Zane Wirkkala.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Portland chess pioneer Saahil Gupta (1949 → 1970, 5.0) trailblazed the 23-player Kramnik 1800-1999 section with an undefeated five points from six games, allowing only two draws against Mill Creek chess god Arnav Gadde (1740) and Seattle sensation Brook Ayalew (1771). Gadde (1740 → 1857, 4.5) earned second place for his deified efforts. Seattle chess enthusiast Alex Chow (1844 → 1867, 4.0) captured third place honors thanks to a clutch final round win against the dangerous Vishu Mohan (1868). The first and second U1900 prizes were shared amongst a trio of tricksters: WCM Michelle Zhang (1847 → 1846, 3.5) of Medina, Brook Ayalew (1771 → 1809, 3.5) of Seattle, and Thrinay Subramanian (1761 → 1772, 3.5) of Bellevue.

Ravensdale chess prodigy Zane Wirkkala (1728 → 1756, 5.0) and Bothell chess bulldozer Rian Raja (1662 → 1744, 5.0) emerged victorious in the 36-player Kasparov 1600-1799 section. Anthony Lamb (1706 → 1724, 4.5) of Kent captured the third-place prize half a point back. Three chess ringers shared first + second U1700 honors with four points apiece: Cedric Davies (1611 → 1630, 4.0) of Bothell, Shanna Wu (1593 → 1640, 4.0) of Bellevue and her brother Harry Wu (1620 → 1650, 4.0) of Bellevue.

A pair of chess kings—Rushil Singh (1395 → 1518, 5.0) of North Bend and Alejandro Iglesias (1448 → 1519, 5.0) of Seattle—were crowned champions of the 26-player Karpov 1400-1599 section, each with five wins and one loss. Seattle’s Johnny Tan (1468 → 1491, 4.5) and Renton’s Andra Marinescu (1443 → 1502, 4.5) split third place honors a half-point back. Young Sanjay Urali (1193 → 1327, 4.5) of Bellevue earned the first U1500 prize thanks to two clutch wins in the final two rounds. The man with four names, Sai Navaneeth Satish Kumar (1267 → 1371, 4.0) of Olympia, captured the second U1500 prize with an impressive “plus two” score.

The 29-player Fischer 1200-1399 section saw experience triumph over youth, as Vilmos Foltenyi (1194 → 1367, 5.5) of Redmond dominated the field with an undefeated 5.5 points from six games, allowing only a single against Andrew Wiese (1236). Sammamish chess whiz-kid Easton Ren (1178 → 1340, 5.0) finished in second place with five points, losing only to Foltenyi. Brendan Keane (1006 → 1247, 4.5) of Renton captured third place honors a half point back. Four rising chess stars shared the first + second U1300 prizes for their youthful efforts: Viet Nguyen (1061 → 1064, 4.0) of

Redmond, Adheesh M. Sundaram (1335 → 1317, 4.0) of Bothell, Kaiyi Han (1077 → 1168, 4.0) of Bellevue, and Samik Kulkarni (1177 → 1189, 4.0) of Bothell.

Bellevue chess prince Felix Han (1049 → 1116, 5.0) topped the 25-player Spassky 1000-1199 section with an undefeated five points from six games, allowing just two draws against Jiyong Ruan (756) and Brayden Blodgett (825) along the way. Three chess musketeers—Ved Dixit (938 → 1067, 4.5) of Redmond, Elliot Lin (898 → 1050, 4.5) of Seattle, and Brayden Blodgett (825 → 1024, 4.5) of Bellevue—shared second/third/first U1100 accolades with 4.5 points apiece. Adult chess improvers Catherine Liguori (839 → 938, 4.0) of Lynnwood and Dillon Weber (1081 → 1056, 4.0) of Seattle split the second U1100 prize half a point back.

In the cottage-sized 14-player Petrosian U1000 section, Bellevue eighth grader Kaden Wun (511 → 862, 5.0) lived up to his namesake and won first place with a 5.0/6 score, dropping a single point against Bobby Chai (668) in the penultimate round. Redmond chess ringer Bobby Chai (668 → 780, 4.5) and Shoreline swindler Vitaliy Astafiev (873 → 878, 4.5) shared second/third place, each with a “plus three” score. Pranav Bharadwaj (718 → 771, 3.5) of Redmond took home the first U800 prize by winning his first three games and coasting to the finish line. Two chess warriors, Olga Astafyeva (819 → 740, 3.0) of Shoreline and Rohan Bharadwaj (557 → 624, 3.0) of Redmond, split the second U800 prize with a par score.

In addition to the overall, class, and special prizes, this year’s event once again featured a Mixed Doubles Competition in which the top three scoring teams, each consisting of a mixed gender (including male-female) two-player team, combined across all sections, qualified for a prize. A total of thirteen mixed double teams registered, including a few siblings teaming up and others with friends or acquaintances joining forces! Two teams shared first/second honors with a combined score of eight points apiece: the sibling’s team of Shanna & Harry Wu from Bellevue, and the adult-junior team of Andra Marinescu of Renton & Kshitij Narkhede of Sammamish. Two teams shared third place honors with combined scores of seven points apiece: Shuyi Han of Bellevue & Neevan R. Saddi of Issaquah and Michelle Zhang of Medina & Jeb Stroud of Bellingham.

Erdogmus Thanksgiving Scholastic

The Washington Class Erdogmus Thanksgiving Scholastic, named in honor of the young Turkish Grandmaster, was held on Black Friday, November 28, in the St. Helens room of the Lynnwood Chess Embassy. A modest turnout of just 60 scholastic chess players in grades K-9 participated from throughout the Pacific Northwest, including the cities of Bothell, Mill Creek, Bellevue, Mercer Island, Sammamish, Seattle, Woodinville, Vancouver (Washington), Kirkland, Shoreline, Issaquah, Renton, Richland, Snohomish, Redmond, Gig Harbor, Milton, and University Place! The lower turnout was likely caused by the abundance of scholastic events taking place around the same time as the Washington Class, including the SPFNO and K-12 Grade Nationals in Spokane. The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation, directed by WCF Co-Vice Presidents Rekha Sagar + Duane Polich, and popular chess coach Tim Campbell. Amazing photographs were taken throughout the day by photographer extraordinaire Meiling Cheng. The dual-

format offered four longer (G/40; +5) games for experienced players in the K-3 Open and 4-12 Open sections in addition to the traditional five shorter (G/25;+5) games for newer players in the K-3 U800 and 4-12 U900 sections.

Dorfner Memorial Adult Novice Swiss

The Washington Class Dorfner Memorial Adult Novice Swiss, named in honor of long-time WCF Board Member and legendary Tacoma Chess Club tournament director Gary J. Dorfner, was held on Friday from 11:00 AM-4:00 PM. Several parents whose kids were playing in the main tournament or Erdogmus Thanksgiving Scholastic threw their hats into the ring and kept themselves occupied for a few hours while their kids were otherwise engaged. The six-player, four-round adult Swiss featured a friendly time control of G/30; +5 and was unrated, with no memberships required. The event was run in a friendly and casual fashion, which made it perfect for adult chess learners seeking to dip their toe into the “chess pool.” The event was directed by WCF Scholastic Director Allen Messenger

and took place alongside the main event in the Rainer + Baker room. A trio of chess kings—Will Clausen of Lynnwood, Dillon Weber of Seattle, and James Yin of Burnaby—shared first-third place honors with three points apiece. Seattle chess guy Michael Saunders earned the first U900 prize with 2.5 points to cover his gas money. Richland chess ranger Curtis Larimer, whose two boys were playing in the Thanksgiving Scholastic in the adjacent room, won the first U700 prize. Redmond’s Rajshri Rajasekaran hung in there and took home the first Unrated prize for her perseverance.

Chess960 Freestyle Fischer Rapid

The Washington Class Chess960 Freestyle Fischer Rapid took place on Friday, November 28 from 2:15-4:30 PM between rounds one and two of the main tournament. Eleven adventurous chess fishers honored the eleventh World Champion Bobby Fischer as they mixed up the back-rank pieces and played Chess960, also known as Freestyle chess, beginning with a different starting position of the back-rank pieces each round!

Washington Senior Championship



APRIL 16 + 18-19, 2026

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - SEATTLE

7212 WOODLAWN AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98115

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

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.

Pay be Zelle (wa-chess),
SettleKing (Washington Chess
Federation), or write a check
made out to: WCF. Registration
deadline Wed. 4/15 @ 5pm.

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

Format: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss in two
sections: Championship & Premier U1800.
Sections with < 6 players may be combined.

Eligibility: Open to Seniors age 50+ (or
reaching age 50 by August 1, 2026).

Rating: USCF rated. Championship section
also FIDE rated. April 2026 USCF Regular
rating will be used to determine pairings and
prizes.

Entry Fee: \$55 by 4/9, \$65 after. Players rated
>1600 may play up if desired. Free entry for
GMs, IMs, WGMs, or 2300+ USCF.

Rounds: Thu: 6:30pm. Sat/Sun: 10am, 3pm.

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

Prize Fund: \$750 (b/o on 25 pd. entries)

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

1st U2000/U1900: \$80.

Premier U1800: 1st/2nd: \$100-\$70.

1st U1700/U1500/U1300: \$60.

*Highest finishing Washington resident in
Championship receives the title of
Washington State Senior Champion, a seed
into the Invitational Section of the 2027
Washington State Championship, and a \$750
travel stipend from the WCF to attend the
2026 Irwin National Tournament of Senior
State Champions, held concurrently with the
U.S. Open in late July. If needed to break a tie
for 1st place, two G/90 playoff games will be
played later in the year.*



Josh Sinanan and Rekha Sagar award Loida Guo her well-earned prize for the Carlsen Rapid.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

The starting positions were randomly determined by the players themselves by randomly drawing the pieces out of bag

each round. Such randomization produced some awkward starting arrangements, including: NQRKRNB (round one, Pos

#319), NRBNQBKR (round two, Pos #150), BBRNQKRN (round three, Pos #608), and QNBRKRNB (round four, Pos #295). In this era of information overload thanks to tools like Chessbase and Chessable, which allow for deep research and memorization into opening lines, Chess960 is a welcomed and refreshing alternative game that many original and creative players enjoy. Strategic planning and piece coordination must be improvised and decided based on intuition rather than relying on rote memorization. As is the custom in many Chess960 events, players were given two minutes to study the initial position at the beginning of each round before clocks were started.

National Master Vidip Kona (2236) of Duvall emerged victorious with 3.5 points from four games, allowing only a single draw against Neevan R. Saddi in the final round. Two Fischer fighters—FM Stephen Willy (2318) of Sammamish and Neevan R. Saddi (1999) of Issaquah—shared second/third place honors with three points apiece. A trio Fischer fanatics shared the first U2000/first U1700 prize with an even two-point score: Johnny Tan (1613) of Seattle, Alejandro Iglesias (1413) of Seattle, and Aksh Singhal (1423) of Portland. Newcomer Kaushik Rajan took home the first Unrated prize with a par score for his neophyte efforts. Young Siana Razmov, who regularly trains against her family members Valentin and Gabriel, earned the first U1400 prize for her determination.

Robson Puzzle Solving

On Friday afternoon at 4:45 PM, fourteen fearless puzzle solvers tested their analytical acumen and solved up to sixteen chess puzzles of varying difficulty in the allotted time of 45 minutes. The challenge set of puzzles, designed by Lakeside High School chess expert Gabriel Razmov, contained a balanced mix of tactical, positional, and strategic themes designed to test the knowledge, calculation, and intuition of the contestants. Solutions were written on paper and evaluated based on accuracy, completeness, and speed.

The puzzles are included on the next page for *Northwest Chess* readers to enjoy. How many can you solve? Solutions will be revealed in a future issue of *Northwest Chess*!

Washington Class – Robson Puzzle Solving Competition

Nov 28, 2025

Time allowed: 45 mins

(Designed, adapted, and compiled by Gabriel Razmov and Valentin Razmov)

Puzzle #1: White to move and mate in 1.

Solution: 1. _____



Puzzle #2: White to move and mate in 2.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____



Puzzle #3: White to move and mate in 3.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



Puzzle #4: Black to move and win material.

Solution: 1... _____ 2. _____



Washington Class – Robson Puzzle Solving Competition

Puzzle #5: White to move and win.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____



Puzzle #6: Black to move and retain material advantage.

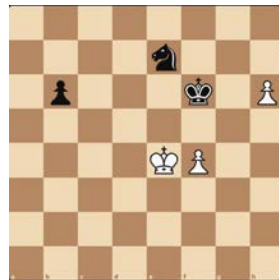
Solution: 1... _____ 2. _____



Puzzle #7: White to move and save the game.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____



Puzzle #8: White is ahead in development. How to best advance their initiative?

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



1 of 4

Washington Class – Robson Puzzle Solving Competition

Puzzle #9: White to move. How can White create pressure? Explain.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Idea: _____



Puzzle #10: How can Black best utilize White's weakened position? Explain.

Solution: 1... _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Idea: _____



Puzzle #11: White to move. How should White best defend this endgame? Explain briefly.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Idea: _____



Puzzle #12: White to move and win.

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____

Idea: _____



3 of 4

2 of 4

Washington Class – Robson Puzzle Solving Competition

Puzzle #13: White has a difficult position. How to best improve their chances?

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____

Idea: _____



Puzzle #14: Black has extra material, but White has attacking chances. How should Black proceed?

Solution: 1... _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____



Puzzle #15: White is under pressure. What to do?

Solution: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Idea: _____



Puzzle #16: White has some serious threats. How should Black best defend?

Solution: 1... _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____



4 of 4

Deshmukh Workshop For Girls And Women

The Washington Class Deshmukh Girls And Women Chess Workshop, led by WCF Director of Women's and Girls' Chess WFM Chouchan Airapetian and WCF Co-VP Rekha Sagar, took place on Friday evening from 6:00-8:00 PM in the St. Helens room. A congenial gathering of about a dozen girls and women attended the workshop and enjoyed some complimentary Jet's pizza and refreshments courtesy of WCF while discussing and brainstorming ways to develop and cultivate women's and girls' chess. The workshop was followed by a friendly and constructive Q&A session, in which attendees discussed issues that female players typically encounter during chess tournaments. Several entertaining blitz and bughouse games soon broke out to conclude the enchanting evening.

August Piper Memorial Adult Swiss

The Second Annual August Piper Memorial Adult Swiss took place Saturday-Sunday, November 29 – 30,

alongside the main tournament. Dr. August Piper (1944-2024) was the Seattle Chess Club President for 19 years and a beloved member of the Seattle chess community. Known for his quick wit and rash remarks, Dr. Piper preferred to play chess the old-fashioned way, often writing his moves in descriptive notation (or sometimes in German!) with one of his signature fountain pens. A champion of the hypermodern school of chess, August was particularly fond of the Reti Opening and Sicilian Defense. Active in the pre-safe play era, August's fuse was known to be short at times, especially when paired against kids!

The four-round, adult-only Swiss tournament attracted 16 players in one combined section. Originally planned for two sections parsed into the Botvinnik Open and the Korchnoi U1500, the sections were merged at the suggestion

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of legendary TD Fred Kleist, who was in attendance for part of the event and provided sage advice for new TD recruit Matthew Duran. The marathon G/120; +30 time control with just four games over two days was convenient for out-of-region folks and those on a tight budget, since only a single night hotel stay was necessary to play. Des Moines Chess Club Founder Matthew Duran directed the tournament, which was sponsored by the Seattle Chess Club with a generous guaranteed prize fund of \$1000 thanks to generous support from SCC board members Gerald Larson and Henry Yan.



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- Chess960 Rapid Championship
- Rapid Championship
- "Knight-Time" Blitz
- and more...

Online Registration (and an upcoming detailed flyer): nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Seattle chess stud Austin Wentz (1789 → 1824, 3.5) emerged victorious in the 16-player Open section by virtue of winning his first three games and drawing against Brian Kelly (1698) in the final round. A pair of chess kings shared second/third place honors a half-point back: Gerald Larson (2000 → 2009, 3.0) of Seattle and David Smygov (1642 → 1643, 3.0) of Everett. Former South Sound Chess Club President Kyle Boddy (1422 → 1458, 2.5) of Seattle captured the first U1500 prize with a “plus one” score. A trio of chess trainees shared the first U1650/second U1500/third U1500 prize with an even score: Christian Jordan (1256 → 1296, 2.0) of Edgewood, Olin Martin (1235 → 1255, 2.0) of Seattle, and Eliza Wheeler (1009 → 1015, 2.0) of Seattle. Tacoma tactician Matthew McKendry (1028 → 1026, 1.0) won the first U1300 prize for his sharp attacking efforts.

Casablanca Rapid

The Washington Class Casablanca Rapid took place on Saturday, November 29 from 2:00-5:00 PM between rounds three and four of the main tournament. “Casablanca Chess” is a chess variant in which each round starts in a new middlegame position from a historical game. Similar in procedure to Chess960, players were given two minutes before clocks were started to examine the initial position. The starting positions were carefully selected by national master and WCF President Josh Sinanan to provide balanced games with chances for both sides. Players competed over the course of four rounds with a fun time control of G/15; +5, which made for several exciting and imbalanced struggles! The starting positions featured in the tournament were as follows.

Lasker-Capablanca, 1921



Gukesh-Ding, 2024



Kasparov-Topalov, 1999



Anand-Carlsen, 2013



Sammamish chess prince FM Stephen Willy (2318) was crowned king the 20-player field with a perfect four points from four games, scoring victories against Stahl (1530), Maharaja (1680), Gao (1768), and Shenoy (2101) along the way. A trio of chess paratroopers shared second/third/first U2100 honors a full point back: Gabriel Razmov (2011) of Seattle, Joseph Frantz (2034) of Seattle, and Aksh Singhal (1423) of Portland. A duo of chess dynamos—Vidur Ganesan (1683) of Bothell and Brian Kelly (1699) of Redmond—split the first U1800 prize with a “plus one” score. Seattle chess socialite Alejandro Iglesias (1413) captured the first U1500 prize for his sophisticated efforts.

WaldowChess Rapid

The Washington Class “WaldowChess” Rapid took place during round four of the main tournament on Saturday afternoon from 2:45-8:45 PM and featured a massive \$5,000 guaranteed prize fund thanks to generous support from Mark Waldow, the inventor of WaldowChess. In “WaldowChess,” play begins with White to move having already played e4 and d4. For this event, games in rounds one-three started with

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the black king on e8 (as usual), but games in rounds four-six started with the black king on d8 (swapped with the black queen, which also flipped how castling works for Black). In all cases Black received draw odds. The generous prize fund attracted players ranging in rating from 1500 to Grandmaster, including one GM, four FMs, three NMs, and three experts! Players competed over the course of six rounds in a single 15-player section, which set the stage for many big matchups and exciting struggles!

After six rounds of wild and crazy WaldowChess action, two players stood above the rest and split the first + second place prizes: GM Vladimir Belous (2584, 5.0) of Texas and FM Daniel He (2389, 5.0) of Redmond. Three chess masters shared third-fifth place with four points apiece: FM Aziz Degenbaev (2393, 4.0) of Seattle, NM Siddarth M. Sundaram (2377, 4.0) of Bellevue, and NM Vidip Kona (2202, 4.0) of Duvall. Five fortunate freedom fighters shared sixth-tenth place with a solid “plus one” score and earned a nice payday for just a few hours of playing WaldowChess: FM Stephen Willy (2313, 3.0) of Sammamish, NM Samuel He (2264, 3.0) of Redmond, FM William Schill (2254, 3.0) of Seattle, Lucas Yao (2142, 3.0) of Pitt Meadows (BC), and Andrew Green (2001, 3.0) of Port Orchard. Young Michael Lin (1965, 2.0) of Sammamish, won the upset prize thanks to a first-round 348-point upset win.

Congratulations to the winners!

Naroditsky Memorial Bullet

The Washington Class Naroditsky Memorial Bullet tournament took place late Saturday evening from 9:00-9:50 PM shortly after the WaldowChess

Rapid event in honor of GM Daniel “Danya” Naroditsky, who passed away unexpectedly last October at the age of 29. The event was held as a five-round single Swiss in one section with a swift time control of G/2; +1. The expeditious pace of play appealed to speed-chess hustlers and bullet-wizards alike as they honored the legacy of bullet phenom and top internet speed chess player GM Daniel Naroditsky, whose speed chess prowess and insightful chess commentary earned him respect and admiration from players of all levels and garnered him a sizable global following. The formula one event took place under the direction of WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua and WCF Co-VP Rekha Sagar. Since it was too fast to be rated under any known rating system, the event was unrated and didn’t require any membership to play!

Fifteen chess daredevils ranging from Class C to FIDE Master competed in the 50-minute exposition, which featured one round every 10 minutes. Amidst several wild time scrambles with pieces flying in all directions, there was still some semblance of strategy as the players vied for bullet supremacy. After five topsyturvy rounds of play, top seed FM Daniel He (2389, 4.5) of Redmond emerged victorious with an undefeated four wins and one draw from five games. Daniel conceded a half-point against expert Sairam S. Gopal (2023) in the second round before kicking it into high gear and winning his last three games against his nearest rivals Kona (2236), Saddi (1999) and Iyengar (1968). Duval chess demon hunter Vidip Kona (2236, 4.0) finished in second place a half-point back thanks to clutch final round wins against Samuel He (2276), Daniel’s twin brother, and Neevan Saddi (1999). NM Samuel He (2276, 3.5) earned the third-place prize with a solid “plus two” score. Two chess tricksters—Varun Iyengar (1968, 3.0) of

Portland and Neevan R. Saddi (1999, 3.0) of Issaquah—split the U2000 prize with three points apiece. Edgewood chess everyman Christian Jordan (1447, 3.0) took home the first U1600 prize for his brisk efforts.

Carlsen Rapid

The Washington Class Carlsen Rapid, a four-round, G/12; +4 Swiss in two sections—Kasparov (1600+) and Anand (U1600)—took place on Sunday November 30 from 2:00-4:30 PM between rounds five and six of the main tournament. Named in honor of the undisputed chess king and former World Champion Magnus Carlsen, a total of 34 players turned out in the hopes of establishing or increasing their USCF Quick or FIDE Rapid rating. Players ranging from unrated to Grandmaster competed over the course of the afternoon, which made for many imbalanced struggles and unpredictable results!

In the 21-player Kasparov (1600+) section, FM Stephen Willy (1952 → 1990, 4.0) of Sammamish topped the charts with a perfect four points from four games. Along the way, “Wild Willy” scored key victories against Pikh (1539), Kona (1980), and Yao (1871). FM Megan Lee (1842 → 1884, 3.5) of Bellevue and GM Vladimir Belous (2667 → 2660, 3.5) of Texas shared second/third place honors a half-point back by virtue of drawing against each other and winning all their other games. A pair of Eastside chess princes—Akim Pikh (1539 → 1573, 2.5) of Sammamish and Neevan R. Saddi (1563 → 1583, 2.5) of Issaquah—shared U2100 royalties a full-point back. Seattle chess superstar Benjamin Frederick (1218 → 1316, 2.5) claimed the first U1800 prize with an impressive “plus one” score.

Auburn chess avenger Khang Minh



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Nguyen (unrated → 1741, 3.5) topped the 14-player Anand U1600 section with an undefeated three wins and one draw from four rounds. Nguyen's red-hot start with three consecutive wins against Will Clausen (1044), Patrick Zhang (925), and Johnny Tan (1299) set up a last-round showdown with Bothell chess battler Loida Guo (1187), which ended in a draw. Guo (1187 → 1233, 3.0) and Tan (1299 → 1361, 3.0) shared second/third place honors a half-point back. Kirkland chess kid Avyaan R. Chowdhury (1103 → 1123, 2.5) and Sammamish chess savant Patrick Zhang (925 → 994, 2.5) split the U1400 prize thanks to clutch final-round wins against Rao (1008) and Clausen (1044), respectively. The dynamic duo of Edward Esparza (550 → 533, 1.5) of Kirkland and Vicky Yin (450 → 466, 1.5) of Kenmore captured equal shares of the U1100 prize for their determined efforts.

Aronian Bughouse

The Washington Class Aronian Bughouse tournament was held in honor of Super GM Levon Aronian, an expert of many chess variants including bughouse who now plays for the United States after representing his home country of Armenia for many years. The popular tournament was held on Sunday November 30 from 3:00-4:15 PM in the spacious atrium of the Lynwood Chess Embassy and attracted 13 two-player teams of all ages and levels ranging from unrated to 3500 in cumulative rating. Due to the boisterous nature of bughouse, it was decided to run the event in different location from the Carlsen Rapid, which was taking place simultaneously in the adjacent St. Helens room. The bughouse event was hand-paired by tournament directors Siva Sankrithi and Ani Barua and run as a seven-round Single Swiss in one section. A maximum average

team rating of 1800 (3600 cumulative) was in effect to encourage balanced and fair competition over the course of the afternoon. The lickety-split time control of G/3; +0 was used to keep the festivities moving right along and avoid clashing with round six of the main tournament, which began at 4:30 PM.

After seven fun and friendly rounds of bughouse play, the team of Selina Cheng & Rian Raja (3500, 7.0) emerged victoriously with six points from seven games to claim the first-place prize. The chess dad/coach team of Siva Sankrithi + Tim Moroney (3500, 5.0) captured second place with five points despite losing their last two games. The Sankrithi brothers team of Sarang + Vivaan (3100, 5.0) earned first place amongst the K-6 teams taking part thanks to clutch victories against the teams of Jeb Stroud + Ziliang Ma and Khoa + Tuan Nguyen, respectively, in the final two rounds. The Odle Middle School team of Edwin Huang + Sanjay Urali (3000, 4.5) finished in third place a half-point back after scoring a rare bughouse draw against the team of Lewis Ma + Andrew Nguyen (1800).

“Knight-Time” Blitz

The Washington Class “Knight-Time” Blitz, a popular side event typically held late in the evening after the final round, took place in the St. Helens room on Sunday evening from 8:30-11:00 PM. WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua and WCF FIDE Liaison Mani Atikankhotchasee co-directed the seven-round, G/5; +2, single Swiss blitz tournament. The field was split amongst two sections, with sixteen players taking part in the Nakamura (1600+) and nine in Tal U1600. Both sections were USCF Blitz rated, and the Nakamura section was also FIDE Blitz rated, which attracted

several titled players hunting for FIDE points.

Duvall-based chess master Vidip Kona (2331 → 2336, 6.0) edged out his nearest rivals with an impressive six wins and one loss to clinch first place. Along the way, Kona vanquished his nearest rivals FM Lee (2083) and GM Belous (2530) in back-to-back games before being stopped by FM Willy (2149). The chess “power couple” of FM Megan Lee (2083 → 2106, 5.5) of Bellevue and GM Vladimir Belous (2530 → 2515, 5.5) of Texas shared second/third place accolades a half-point back thanks to a diplomatic draw against each other in the fifth round. Fellow Duvall resident Dann Merriman (1734 → 1811, 4.0) won the first U2000 prize with a “plus one” score thanks to several upset victories along the way. Based on the results of this tournament, residing in the town of Duvall seems to benefit one's blitz strength! Detective Cookie Chess Club student Johnny Tan (1488 → 1544, 3.5) of Seattle took home the U1700 prize for his hypersonic efforts.

A pair of chess kings were coronated with first place honors in the nine-player Tal U1600, each with six points from seven games: Alexander Wong (1538 → 1519, 6.0) of Sammamish and Ziliang Ma (1350 → 1354, 6.0) of Seattle. Wong conceded two draws against underrated upstarts Jinhan Zou (912) and Alejandro Iglesias (1057) while Ma recovered well after a third-round loss against Wong and won all four of his remaining games. Kirkland chess pal Aryan Pande (355 → 712, 5.0) earned the third-place prize a full point back, dropping only two games against the co-champions. Two up-and-coming chess stars shared the U1400 prize with three points apiece: Lewis Porad-Brand (708 → 715, 3.0) of Seattle and Jaxon Krogstad (unrated → 935, 3.0) of Renton. Detective Cookie Chess

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Coldwell Banker Bain

Club 11th grade student Andrew Nguyen (unrated → 550, 2.0) of Seattle earned the first U1100 prize for his courageous efforts.

As part of the annotate games competition, several players have annotated their games for the *Northwest Chess* readers to enjoy...

Jake Bravenboer (1423) – David Hendricks (1500) [D00]
WA Class Ch (Karpov Class C)
(R5), November 30, 2025
[Jake Bravenboer]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Bf4 c6 4.Nf3 Bf5 5.e3 e6 6.Ne5 Qb6!?

6...Bd6? This move does not meet the expectations of the position. It is passive in a bad way. 7.g4! Bg6 8.h4 h6 9.Nxg6 fxe6 10.Bd3 Kf7+- Absolutely winning.; 6...h6 This move is passive in a good way. 7.g4?! This is dubious because instead of getting the preferred line above, the bishop has safety on h7. 7...Bh7!

7.Na4 Qa5+ 8.c3 b5?!

Giving me the c5-square seems like too much of a stab to his own heart to make this move playable. I assume here that he wanted to get more tempi, but if after the ...b5 advance I had played more accurately, the game would be in my hands, not his.

8...Nbd7

9.Ne5 Bxc5 10.dxc5 b4 11.Rc1?!

My point was that I wanted another defender of c3, but the following line is best: 11.a3 bxc3 12.b4 Qd8 13.g4 Bg6 14.h4 h6 15.Nxg6 fxe6 16.Bd3 0-0 17.Bxg6+-

11...Qxc5?!

My point after this move was that I hoped that I could utilize the weak c6-pawn as a

potential target that I could eventually capture. 11...bxc3 12.bxc3 Ne4 13.Qb3 Here I missed the winning combination for black which pushes my position into a small little box. 13...Nxc5 14.Qb4 Qb6 15.Qxb6 axb6 16.c4 I thought this might be fine, but I missed the following crushing line. 16...f6 17.Nf3 e5 18.Bg3 Rxa2+-



Position after 11...Qxc5

12.Nd3?

This move is definitely a mistake. I tried this to either get development like what happened in the game or I get my b-pawn without the annoying check on b4. Even though this worked in my head, the best move was to try to stay consistent with my plan of g4. The following line was an improvement: 12.g4 Bg6 (12...Be4 13.f3 Bg6 14.Qd4 Qxd4 15.exd4 a5 16.h4 This is similar to the other line with g4.) 13.Qd4 Qxd4 14.exd4 bxc3 15.Rxc3 0-0 16.h4±

12...Bxd3 13.Bxd3 Nbd7 14.0-0 e5

This move is not bad at all, in fact I think it is a mature move to play, taking the center, not lashing out and starting to trade. In my mind though, this gave me some more hope than I already had because there was only one defender of the e5-pawn, and I thought that with enough weaknesses in the center, I could

eventually collapse his position.

15.Bg3

I realized that Bg5 was better because my g3-bishop could be a target, but I did want to maintain my pressure in the e5-pawn.

15...Rc8?!

This move makes a lot of sense—defending his c6-pawn so no tactics can occur. 15...0-0 16.cxb4 Qxb4 17.Rxc6. He wanted to avoid this line in the game, therefore he is required to defend his c6-pawn, the best way being Rc8.; 15...h5 16.h3 bxc3 17.Rxc3 Qd6 18.Qc2 c5 19.Bh4 0-0 20.Bf5 g6 21.Bxg6.

16.Bf5?!

The point was to trade on d7 so I could try to attack the e5-pawn. 16.c4 Rc7 17.cxd5 Qxd5 18.Bf5 Qxd1 19.Rfxd1 c5 20.Rd2 g6 21.Bd3 h5

16...0-0 17.Bxd7 Nxd7 18.e4?!

18.Qg4 f5

18...Rfe8?!=

18...bxc3 19.Rxc3 Qd6 20.f4 d4 21.Ra3 Rcd8 22.Qc2 Qc5 23.Qxc5 Nxc5 24.fxe5

19.cxb4 Qxb4 20.exd5



Position after 20.exd5

20...c5

This felt somewhat ingenious to me, not

losing his center seemed like a good plan, but I also realized that he has now given me a passed pawn to play around, along with a new weakness, c5. 20...cxd5!? Computer thinks this is fine, but after the following line I felt very comfortable as I had fulfilled my plan to capitalize on some of his weaknesses on the chess board. 21.Rxc8 Rxc8 22.Qxd5= Computer says equal, but I felt very good about my position after 22...Qd4 23.Qxd4 exd4 24.Rd1± White is at least better if you ask me, he might even be much better if Black is not careful about how he defends his pieces.

21.Qc2

This is not the best move, but I spent like ten minutes here considering my two best options, queen c2 and e2. 21.Qe2 Best move.

21...Nb6

...c4 seems like a better option, because with c4-c3 coming, he can start to break in to my position. 21...c4 22.a3 Qc5 23.Rfd1 Nb6 Similar to what happened in the game, except here he has a little bit comfort here, having more pressure on my position.

22.Rfd1 c4 23.d6 Rcd8 24.a3!?

This was not the best move, it lost forty centipawns but my point was that I wanted his queen in the c-file when I play b3. The best move is below: 24.b3 cxb3 25.Qxb3 Qxb3 26.axb3 Re6 27.Rc6=

24...Qc5 25.b3

I tried to win the c4-pawn for the d6-pawn, however I would have preferred my d6-pawn to stay on the chess board, it falling was not in my control.

25...Rxd6 26.Rxd6 Qxd6 27.bxc4 Qc5

Cute move here. His point is to take my c4 passed pawn off the board.



Jake Bravenboer (L) vs. David Hendricks.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

28.Qc3 f6 29.Qb4 Rc8 30.Qxc5?

This guarantees the loss of my c4-pawn for literally nothing. 30.Qb2 Nxc4 (30...Qd4 31.Qxd4 exd4 32.c5 Na4 33.Bd6 Nc3 34.Kf1 h5 35.f3 Rc6) 31.Qb7 Rc7 32.Qb8+ Kf7 33.h4 We go push the pawn closer to promotion and so it's ready to respond to g5 with hxg5.

30...Rxc5 31.f4 Rxc4 32.Rxc4?—+

32.Rf1 exf4

32...Nxc4 33.fxe5 fxe5 34.a4 Kf7 35.Kf2

This is good endgame play. Activating the king makes every single piece in the game active while still controlling the center and keeping your promotion

options open.

35...Ke6 36.Kf3 Kd5 37.Bf2?!

Attacking the a7-pawn. If he plays the move ...a5, I have a dark-squared weakness to attack. 37.Be1 a6 38.Bc3 Nb6 39.a5 Nc4 40.g3 Nd6 41.Bb4 Ne4 42.Ke3 Nf6

37...a6

37...a5 38.h4 Nb2 39.Bb6. My point explains itself. I am still losing, but it is possible that I could eventually pick up this pawn, making the position a bit more complicated.

38.h4

Trying to advance my pawn closer to

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promotion, so it can be a last resort if a trade is forced.

38...Nb2 39.a5 Nc4 40.Be1 Kc5 41.Ke4



Position after 41.Ke4

41...Kb5??=

41...Kd6 42.h5 Ke6 43.Bb4 Nd6+ 44.Kf3 Kd5 45.Kg4 Nf7 46.Bf8 g6 47.hxg6

42.h5?

I hoped this would improve my chance of promoting but it really just made my endgame dead lost. 42.Bc3 Holds the draw. Everything is defended and if Nxa5, Kxe5 is a move. 42...Nxa5 43.Kxe5 Nc4+ 44.Ke6=; 42.Kd5

42...Nxa5?

Just hanging his e5 pawn is not at all good for his position. In fact, this move loses almost all of his winning advantage. 42...Kc5 43.Bc3 Kd6 44.Bb4+ Ke6 45.Bf8 Nd6+ 46.Kd3 g5 47.g4 Kd5 48.Be7

43.Kxe5= Nc6+ 44.Ke6



Position after 44.Ke6

44...Nb4??

Now the knight is too far away from his pawns to save them from my invading king. 44...Kc4

45.Kf7+ a5 46.Kxg7 a4 47.Kxh7 a3 48.Bc3!

Blocking off the long diagonal. Now this pawn on the a-file will never get to

promote itself.

48...Kc4 49.Bg7 a2 50.Kg8 Nd5 51.h6 Nc3 52.Bxc3 Kxc3 53.h7 Kc2

53...a1Q 54.h8Q+ The relation between the a- and h-pawns promoting is simple. Whichever pawn promotes first wins. 54...Kc2 55.Qxa1

54.h8Q Kb1 55.g4 a1Q

A desperate attempt that is too slow. The king cannot make it in time to stop my g-pawn.

56.Qxa1+ Kxa1

1-0

Saahil Gupta (1972) –
Aarav Sai Bharathy Mohan (1899)
[E68] WA Class Ch (Kramnik Class A)
(R6), November 30, 2025
[Saahil Gupta]

1.c4

The final round of the tournament, and an important one for all of the players, or as WCF President Josh Sinanan often says, “The Money Round!” I was leading the tournament with four points, but three other people were at 3.5, which meant it was critical for me to win this game. I was playing against a very skilled player, who had a great tournament as well.

1...e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6

Already an interesting setup choice by him. I assumed this game would transpose into some Kings Indian type position.

4.Nc3 Bg7 5.Nf3 d6 6.d4 Nbd7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4

8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Be3 Ng4 10.Bg5 f6 11.Bd2 this line can be tried here, because Black has not included the move ...c6, a common idea in the King’s Indian fianchetto lines, which means I have a strong control over the d5-square.

8...Re8 9.Re1

9.d5 would have been a better option for me, taking more control, and again, using the fact that ...c6 had not been played.

9...h6

9...exd4 10.Nxd4 c6 11.h3 would transpose into a King’s Indian fianchetto line, where White has ideas of Be3, Qc2 and Rad1.

10.h3 exd4 11.Nxd4

At this point, I was feeling pretty happy with the opening stage of the game, even though the engine shows +0.00. I had

also built up a 26-minute time advantage, which was critical leading up to the middlegame.

11...a5

Nice choice by my opponent, trying to play for ...Nc5.

12.Be3 Nc5 13.Qc2 Ne6!?

13...Rb8 14.Rad1 Bd7 15.b3 b6 16.Ndb5 h5

14.Rad1 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 Be6



Position after 15...Be6

16.Nd5

16.e5! a beautiful move, and I didn’t even see it on the board. It’s not the hardest move to spot, but I was solely focused on Nd5 and b3. 16...Bf5 (16...Nd7 17.exd6 cxd6 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.Ne4!) 17.Qa4 dxe5 18.Bxe5

16...Bxd5 17.cxd5 Nd7 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.Qc3+ Kh7

19...f6 is what I think was a better move, not committing to the weak dark squares immediately.

20.f4

My goal was to get a strong pawn center with e5.

20...Nc5 21.e5 Qd7



Position after 21...Qd7

22.exd6?

This move neutralizes the position, as the

pawn center breaks. I had calculated that I win the a5-pawn, or get a strong e-file, but I should have stayed patient in the game.

22...Qxd6 23.Rxe8 Rxe8 24.Qxa5 b6

24...Re3! was perhaps a better move. Black's rook gains a lot of activity, and White's king will become slightly weak.

25.Qd2

After these moves, I was feeling confident, as the game on board two was looking like a draw, and I had a two-result position in my hand. Still, I wanted to make sure that I convert this position as seamlessly as I could.

25...Qd7

25...Ne4 26.Bxe4 Rxe4 27.a3 could have led to an interesting endgame, where Black's rook is much more active.

26.Re1 Rxe1+ 27.Qxe1 Kg7 28.Qc3+ Kg8 29.b4

This was my idea, and now I either force a queen trade, or make Black's pieces very passive.

29...Nb7

29...Na4 may have been a better try. 30.Qe5! centralizing the queen. (30.Qc6 Qxc6 31.dxc6 Nc3 32.a3 would have had better chances for Black to draw.)

30.Qc6 Qxc6

30...Qc8 31.a4 Nd6 32.a5 and I would have immediately had a passer on the a-file.

31.dxc6 Nd6 32.a4!

The easiest method to convert the endgame. I restrict Black's plans, and now always have a threat of pushing my passer, so Black can't take his knight too far from the a8 promoting square.

32...Kf8 33.Kf2 Ke7 34.g4

34.Ke3 Nf5+ 35.Kd3 Nxc3 36.a5!

34...f6 35.Ke3 g5 36.fgx5

36.f5 was the second line I was calculating, but in the end, I decided that the f5-square should be empty for my king, in case I want to penetrate Black's position from that side. In the end, that f5-square made the difference.

36...hxg5 37.Kd4 Nc8 38.Kd5 Na7 39.Be4 Kf7 40.Bf5

Trapping the black knight on a7.

40...Ke7 41.Bd7

Creating room for the king to go to f5.

41...Kf7 42.Ke4 Ke7 43.Kf5 Kf7 44.b5 Ke7 45.Kg6



Position after 45.Kg6

45...Kd8!

Fantastic awareness by my opponent! I have to be careful here, because there are some stalemate ideas.

46.Bf5

I didn't want any chance of stalemate, so I just made sure that the e8-square was always open for the black king. 46.Kf7! would have also won. 46...Nxb5 47.axb5 f5 48.gxf5 g4 49.f6 g3 50.Ke6 g2 51.f7 g1Q 52.f8Q# and I queen in time.

46...Ke7 47.Kg7

And my opponent resigned. This wasn't the smoothest game, but it presented a lot of ideas especially in the opening with pawn breakthroughs, and piece placement.

1-0

**Harvey Wang (1360) –
Aakash Mishra (1368) [C54]**
WA Class Ch (Karpov Class C)
(R2), November 28, 2025
[Harvey Wang]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6

3...Bc5 if he had played this I would have played the following... 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4

4.d3 Bc5 5.c3 d6 6.h3 a5

The point of this is to have a square for the bishop.

7.0-0 Ba7 8.Be3 Bxe3?!

It gives me doubled pawns but it also opens the f-file for the rook.

9.fxe3 0-0 10.Qe2

I was trying to maneuver my queen to the kingside but Qe1 is more efficient.

10...Be6 11.Bb3 h6 12.Nbd2 Ne7 13.Qf2

Ng6 14.Bxe6

I was deciding between this and Qg3.

14...fxe6 15.Qg3 Kh7 16.Nh4?

h4 was a better move.

16...Nxb4 17.Qxb4 c6 18.Rae1 Qb6 19.b3 d5 20.exd5 Nxd5?

He should have taken with the e-pawn to undouble his pawns. 20...exd5 21.Nf3

21.c4

Qe4 was a missed opportunity.

21...Nxe3 22.Qe4+ Nf5+ 23.Kh2 Qd4 24.Nf3 Qb2??

This allows me to win his knight with g4.

25.Re2 Qc3 26.g4 a4 27.gxf5 exf5 28.Qxe5 Qxd3



Position after 28...Qxd3

29.Rg1!!

Threatening mate on g7! Rg2 Rf7 Rg1 transposes into the game. 29.Rg2 Rf7 30.Rfg1

29...Rf7 30.Reg2!!

Threatening to take on g7 again. The knight is still hanging.

30...Rg8 31.Qe6 Qd7?!

Allows forced mate!

32.Qg6+!

On the path to mate.

32...Kh8 33.Ng5!!

Sacking the knight for mate!

33...hxg5

33...Qd6+ the only move to avoid immediate mate. Though it hangs the queen. 34.Qxd6 hxg5 35.Rxg5

34.Qh5#

1-0



WA Spring Mini-Teams

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday, April 12, 2026

Chinook Middle School - 2001 98th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98004



FORMAT

A 5-round, Team (3-player) Swiss-paired tournament in two sections:

K-8 Scholastic & Open

K-8 players may play up into Open section if desired. See "Scoring" and "Procedure" below for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all. Players are allowed to form their own 3-player teams, or else the TD will compose additional teams from the remaining individuals. Teams will be counted in the group of the oldest (by grade) player.

SCHEDULE

Arrival: 8:00- 8:45am.

Rounds at 9:00am, 10:30am, 11:45am, lunch, 1:15pm, 2:30pm. Awards ~ 4pm.

TIME CONTROL G/25; +5.

RATING

Dual NWSRS & USCF rated; US Chess membership required. Higher of 2026 April USCF regular or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings. Unrated players will count as follows for avg team rating: K-3: 175, 4-6: 500, 7-12: 950, Adults: 1300.

ENTRY FEE

\$25 (per player) by 4/5, \$30 after. Room for 120 players.

AWARDS

Trophies awarded to the top-finishing teams in each section:

K-8 Scholastic:

1st-3rd Place, 1st K-3/K-6 team

Open:

1st-3rd Place, 1st U1400/U1100 avg

Special Prizes (per section):

Medals for first timers, best all-female team, and biggest upset win (by avg team rating).

PROCEDURE

Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Each round, a Team vs Team pairing will be announced, each Team's Board 1, 2, and 3 will play the other respective team's Board 1, 2, 3. Teams are expected to order their players in order of playing strength / rating on the respective boards. Please contact Organizer Siva Sankrithi (sivas108@gmail.com) for any pre-determined teams. Team information will be kept on a spreadsheet [HERE](#).

THE DETAILS

Online Registration:

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF. To register your team, please fill out the [Team Registration Form](#). **Any team member requests must be received by Siva (either via the above form or email) by 5:00pm Friday Apr. 10, no exceptions. Players who register in the final 24 hours, along with those who have not registered a team, will be placed on a composed team. 100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Sat., April 11 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players by the deadline will be withdrawn from the tournament.

SCORING

Standings based on Team Points. Each team receives 1 Team Point for winning a match (i.e., scoring 2.0 points or more across all three players), while the team losing the match gets 0 Team Points for that round. If a match is drawn (i.e., each team scores 1.5 points), both teams receive 0.5 Team Points. If needed to break ties in the final standings, total Board Points will be used (i.e., the total of the team members' individual scores).

QUESTIONS?

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206.769.3757, WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com
Organizer: Siva Sankrithi, SivaS108@gmail.com

Mother's Day Scholastic

CHESS TOURNAMENT

MOTHER'S DAY SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116TH AVE NE, BELLEVUE, WA 98004



Format

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

K-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U900

4-12 Open

Schedule

Rd. 1 – 10am

Rd. 2 – 11:15am

Rd. 3 – 12:30pm

Rd. 4 – 1:45pm

Rd. 5 – 3pm

Awards ~ 4:30pm

Eligibility

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

Entry Fee

\$55 by 5/3, \$65 after.
Room for 60 players.

Awards

Section Prizes: Amazon e-gift
cards awarded in each
section:

1st – 4th: \$75-65-55-45.

Special Prizes (per section):

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

Rating

Dual NWSRS and USCF rated,
with **US Chess membership
required in all sections.**

Establish or update your
national rating! Higher of
current NWSRS or May 2026
USCF rating will be used to
determine section and
pairings.

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-3 U800. All equipment is
provided courtesy of WCF.

Registration

Register online at

NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/

Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess
Federation), Zelle (wa-chess), or write a
check made out to: WCF.

**100% pre-registered, no on-site entries
or payments. Entry + payment
deadline Sat May 9 @ 5:00pm.** No
registrations accepted or refunds
offered after the deadline.

Questions?

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

TOURNAMENTS



venue & mail
7212 Woodlawn Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98115
info & events calendar
www.seattlechess.club
club & tournament inquiries
contact@seattlechess.club

March 21 (Sat.)

3-round round-robin. 4-player sections by close rating. **Time control:** Game/85 + 10-sec. increment. **Entry fee:** \$15 (+\$20 day membership for non-SCC). 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! **Venue:** TBA. US Chess rated, US Chess membership req'd. **Sign up:** <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>.

March Quads

March 28-29 (Sat.-Sun.)

See below.

Seattle Spring Open

March 6, 13, 20, 27 (Fri.)

One US Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm. **Pairing:** Close ratings. **Time control:** 40 moves in 90 mins., then sudden death 60 mins.; 10-sec. increment in both TCs. Free for SCC members, \$5/night others. Play in any or all rounds! **Sign up:** contact@seattlechess.club. **Venue:** SCC, 28 players max.

March Winds

Coming up:

- **April Quads** – April 25; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Emerald City Open** – weekend in early-mid May; 2B confirmed

SEATTLE SPRING OPEN

March 28 - 29, 2026

A 5-round Swiss in 2 sections – Premier & Reserve (U1700)
with time control Game/90 + 10-second increment.

Prize fund: \$2,300 based on 50 paid entries, 3 per prize group

PREMIER: 1st \$600 2nd \$350 U1900 \$250 U1800 \$170

RESERVE: 1st \$360 2nd \$240 U1400 \$160 U1200/unr \$90

Biggest upset win, round 1-4 in each section: \$10

- ✚ **Entry fees:** SCC and Seattle University CC members \$70, others \$100. After 3/21 add \$10.
- ✚ **Play up fee** for USCF 1600-1699 playing in Premier section: \$40 SCC/SU CC members, \$60 others.
- ✚ **Check in:** 9-9:45am. **Rounds:** 10am, 2:00 & 6:00pm Sat., 10:30am & 2:30pm Sun.
- ✚ **Venue:** Seattle University, building and rooms to be announced.
- ✚ **Byes:** 2 half-point byes available. Commit at registration for Sunday rounds.
- ✚ **Max 60 seats.** Sign up at <http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration>.
- ✚ US Chess rated. USCF membership required.
- ✚ See tournament flyer on registration site for waitlist process and refund policy.

Detective Cookie

CH^ESS CLASSIC

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

RAINIER BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER

8825 RAINIER AVE S, SEATTLE, WA 98118



Format

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

K-1 U700

2-3 U800

K-3 Open

4-12 U1000

4-12 Open

Schedule

Arrival: 8-8:45am

Rd. 1 - 9am

Rd. 2 - 10:30am

Rd. 3 - 11:45am

Lunch

Rd. 4 - 1:15pm

Rd. 5 - 2:30pm

Awards ~ 4pm

Eligibility

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

Entry Fee

\$45. Free for Detective Cookie Chess Club students.

Scholarships available upon request. Max of 200 players; please register early.

Awards

Trophies awarded to the top-finishing players in each section. Team trophies awarded to the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections. Medals for first-timers, best female player, best dressed, and biggest upset win in each section.

Rating

NWSRS rated. Open sections also USCF rated. Higher of current NWSRS or May USCF rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

Registration

Register online at nwchess.com/onlineregistration

Pay by Pay by Zelle (wa-chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), or mail a check to WCF.

100% preregistered, no on-site entries or payments. **Registration + payment deadline Sat. May 16 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

Clocks

Chess clocks will be used from the start in the Open sections. Clocks not required for the K-1 U700, 2-3 U800, and 4-12 U1000 sections, until a judge places one into unfinished games set for G/10;+5 sec increment after 35 minutes of play.

Questions?

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

